

SECRETARY: Mrs. C. Martindale
EDITOR: Mr. F.J.Cox

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

31 members were present Terry Pankhurst was in the chair

Terry reported another successful year

Members meetings were well attended and the visit to Nast Hyde, organised by Tony Lodge was nearly sold out.

A revised edition of the book of street names, to include the airfield sites is being worked on by Joan Cobern. Frank Cox is producing a book about Dagmar House School and Reg Coleman is researching the evacuees from Stroud Green School. He would appreciate information from any one who can remember them.

The Housing Partnership on the British Aerospace site is thinking of buying back the old navigation beacon as an artistic centrepiece on the site.

Terry thanked the committee members for their hard work, particularly Frank Cox as Treasurer, Membership Secretary, Newsletter Editor and more.

Treasurer's and Membership report

We have lost four members but gained fourteen! Total membership now 110.

Frank explained the major items in the accounts.

He expressed his thanks to Maurice and Heather Richardson for auditing the accounts.

Reg Coleman proposed the accounts be accepted, Joan Cobern seconded. and all agreed.

Appointment of auditor

Maurice and Heather have kindly agreed to audit the accounts again. Frank therefore proposed they be appointed, Chris Martindale seconded and all agreed.

Election of committee members

Frank Cox, Reg Coleman and David Willson have agreed to stand again. Mrs. Jean West volunteered to serve on the committee. The above four people were then elected unanimously.

The meeting was followed by a talk entitled 'A knight, a countess and a packet of sandwiches' by Terry Cox. We all left the meeting very much more knowledgeable about the Irish Easter uprising of 1916.

Pat Sherrard.

MUSEUM RESOURCES ROOM

A number of visitors and researchers have already used this comprehensive store of archive photographs, local history information files, family tree resources and research library. This free service is available on a drop-in basis on Thursday mornings between 10am and 12 noon when a local history society member will help you find what you need. Alternatively you can make an appointment for another day by calling 01707 271362.

Why not come and chat on Saturday 12 August or 16 September (Heritage Open Day at the Museum) when Museum Staff and local history volunteers will welcome you.

Bring your local queries.



Museum Resources Room

CHALK MINES

From Hatfield and its People Book 2

"Few places can have as many Dells as the Roe Green neighbourhood for they include Dellfield, Fiddle Dell, Dip Dell, Little Dell, Vixen Dell (earlier Wexen Dell), Dell Mead, Water Dell, Chalk Dell and Howe Dell. All of these occur within a short distance of one another and for the most part indicate a worked-out chalk pit. At Roe Stock, only a mile away, is an inn called "The Chalkdrawers Arms" to remind us of the quarrying which was common from Roman times until this century. The chalk was used for liming the heavy clay soil and this process was known as "marling". There was a lime kiln at the edge of Hazel Grove from early times.

As Dell occurs very early in a field name, in 1294 in "Dell Mead", and in a man's name "atte Delle" at the same time, this seems to suggest that the Dells may have existed before the land round about was taken into cultivation. Perhaps people from Hatfield came to Roe Green for their chalk, or maybe the first inhabitants of Roe Green earned their livelihood by "chalk drawing".

This we know was done in various ways. Sometimes a team of three men travelled the countryside, cut a hole until an outcrop of chalk was found and then erected a primitive shaft for pulling up the chalk in buckets. This sometimes resulted in a Grecian vase-shaped formation when the chalk was some distance underground. Three pits of this type were recently filled in at The Spinney in Chantry Lane where one was found to be 65 feet deep. The open dells which were deserted when the chalk was exhausted became colonised by grass, shrubs and trees.

Another method was sometimes used even until the beginning of the 20th century and was described recently by Mr. Sinclair, of Tollgate Farm, Roestock. When chalk was found during ploughing or digging, a hole would be dug, the chalk harrowed away and immediately the hole filled up and ploughed over so that no evidence of the operation remained. Sometimes the fields in this area were white with spread chalk. There was a spell during the 1930s when chalking was almost discontinued because of the expense of refining it for modern usage and the added expense of having to provide a machine to distribute it, and the land became impoverished.

Of course, not all our dells are disused chalk pits, some must obviously have been dug for flints, and some were of natural formation probably caused by swallow holes for we still have many of these in the neighbourhood.

Much of the material for the construction of St. Etheldreda's church came from the chalk pit where the old Salisbury Square was located. The flints were used to build the church and the chalk no doubt was used for manurial purposes."

The current problem in Briars Lane is still ongoing, in fact it has escalated to the extent that the old Forum car park is now closed while investigations are proposed to establish whether the mines did extend that far.

English Partnerships has pledged to pay half of the estimated £4m cost of repairing the ground at Briars Lane if the treasury pays the other half.

Grant Shapps, the Welwyn Hatfield member of parliament is pressing for a resolution and will be asking questions in the House of Commons.

THE RABBIT HOLE

Terry Pankhurst

Just after Christmas six bombs were found on the British Aerospace site at Hatfield. The first I knew about it was a call from the local paper asking what could I tell them about it. Nothing was my reply. It did, however, make me swing into action as I anticipated a little history being revealed. I knew the site had been bombed once during the war. Several scenarios sprang to mind. Were these unexploded bombs from that raid and if so they would give a clear line for the direction of the aircraft on it's bombing run? Or were the bombs buried at the explosion site and been covered over in the rebuilding of the factory? Or was there another raid when bombs were dropped and simply failed to explode? I needed to know just where the bombs were found.

I visited the site and by chance found the bomb disposal man in charge. He showed me the spot where the bombs were found, which would have been under the South car park behind Harpsfield Broadway shops.

What an anti climax, the bombs proved to be Spigot mortars, an Anti-Tank weapon probably from the Home Guard. Clearly our own bombs. The only story is how did they come to be buried? It seems this is not unusual for the bomb disposal teams. They use a rather interesting term for this sort of find. They term it being "rabbit holed".

After the war what else did you do with six bombs that you no longer wanted and may be shouldn't have had in the first place. Stuff them down a rabbit hole, of course.

If anyone had home guard experiences and knows of such events I would be pleased to hear about it, or what you rabbit holed!

THE GREENHAM FAMILY

Richard W. Greenham

I have been trying to research the Greenham name for about 3 years now.

I have visited Hatfield twice regarding the location of where some of my ancestors lived, for example; Park Street, the old Salisbury Square before the name was moved to another part of the town, the bottom of Cage Hill and Church Street where one of my uncles (Frank Greenham) had a hairdressing shop in approx. 1900. Also, the area where Primrose Cottages used to be. I believe it was near to Beaconsfield Terrace area.

I believe some of my ancestors were married and laid to rest in the beautiful St Etheldreda's Church and graveyard and also the St Lukes Church and graveyard where I discovered my Grandfather Arthur Greenham was laid to rest in 1916. With him, in this grave was his daughter May Mabel who tragically died in child birth in 1922, her husband Fred Bright who I have been told died of a broken heart while driving his bus and Arthur's wife Annie nee Warner who died in 1949.

All my brothers were born in Hatfield or near to that area. I was born in 1947, in Lytham, Lancashire as my father was stationed in this area in the second world war. My parents never seemed to talk much about the families in Hatfield as I recall.

When my oldest brother Ron was alive, during my initial research he told me that quite a lot of Greenhams were from Hatfield. He gave me a little bit of information and a few descendants who live in Hemel Hempstead.

When I first visited Hatfield with

my daughter, we went to see my cousin, Bett and her sister Janet. They gave me quite a bit of information on the Greenham families, most of this was remembered from their younger years.

During my second visit, Bett found quite a few old postcards and photos regarding my family etc. These were passed down to her from her mother Kate Greenham (born 1898 died 1962). But with the passing of time, she could not name all of them unfortunately.

With my research, I have been able to trace the name to approx. 1690 to a Richard Greenham who married Elizabeth Blunt (?). Obviously this is only sparse information but I have been able to name quite a lot of Greenhams from a Richard Greenham baptised 17 March 1770, Hatfield died unknown. He married Elizabeth Cook at St Peter's Church, St Albans (?) 30 October 1793. They had 5 children; Richard, Ann, Anna, Ruth and Mary (?).

The son Richard's first marriage (18 March 1819) was to Martha Humphrey born 1803 and they had 5 children. But sadly, Martha died in 1829. Richard's second marriage (23 Sept. 1832) was to Mary Ann Basil or Bassil born 1806 and they had 5 children (?).

One of his children, Henry born 27 July 1833 died 1898 was my Great Grandad.

These are the families I can trace from but they seem to go in every direction! And with not much information on some of the families, I have no birth or deaths or where they are buried but I would like to find out exactly where they are laid to rest. So that on my next visit to Hatfield, I would like to pay my respects to them.

Are there any books or old postcards/memorabilia on Hatfield that you would recommend? As I am a collector of old postcards.

Do you know where I can obtain a burial plot/list or map on St Etheldreda's Church or St Luke's?

If anyone can help with my research I would be very grateful.

THE FAITHFULL FAMILY

The Rev Francis Joseph Faithfull, born in 1786, became curate in Hatfield in 1812 and was Rector from 1819 until his death in 1854. He was one of the longest serving clerics in the parish, living in the Parsonage now known as Howe Dell School.

His daughter was married in Hatfield church in 1844 to the Rev Richard Davies and they moved to Brenchley in Kent where he became vicar. Sadly he died in 1853.

Their son, Robert Faithfull Davies carried on the family tradition and became a clergyman in Beckenham in Kent where he lived with his wife Ellen.

Theodore their eldest son dropped the surname Davies and as Major T J Faithfull served in WWI. He had married the daughter of a clergyman in 1910 and they had a son named Glynn who was born in 1912. As a major in the Intelligence Corps in WWII Glynn met and married Eva von Sacher-Masoch, born in Budapest, in 1946. Eva was a ballet dancer in Vienna when they met.

Their daughter Marianne was to become a world famous pop singer and actress.

F. C.

GENTLEMEN WAITED ON AT OWN RESIDENCES

H. R. TAYLOR

1 CHURCH STREET, HATFIELD, HERTS

Hairdresser - Tobacconist
and Gramophone Dealer

A SELECTION OF THE LATEST RECORDS ALWAYS IN STOCK

Repairs and Accessories a Speciality

Street Number Mystery

A while ago a query was submitted to the museum at Mill Green regarding a record sleeve presumably supplied by H R Taylor of Church Street, Hatfield. Remembering Harry Taylor's hairdressing establishment and assuming this was the same man, it was decided to carry out some research.

Kelly's Directory for Hatfield shows Frank Henry Greenham, hairdresser in Back Street in 1901. By 1903 this was renamed Church Street but no numbers were allocated to the various residences.

In 1923 we find Hy Rd Taylor there as a hairdresser, still no street numbers.

1925 shows Cage Hill as part of Church Street but still no numbers up to 1931.

In 1933 the One Bell, previously shown as in Fore Street is now listed as 41 Church Street and H R Taylor is now at No. 35 with a Mrs. Greenham living at No. 33.

How Harry Taylor came to show his address as 1 Church Street is still a mystery, but show it he did as in the advertisement in the Dagmar and Alexandra School Sports Programme of 1923 shown above.

FAMILY MOTORING EVENT MINI RALLY

CARS, VANS, MOTOR CYCLES

SUNDAY 23 JULY 2006

2.00PM UNTIL 5.00PM

MILL GREEN
MUSEUM AND MILL

Letters

Salford

My inquiry concerns German Prisoners of War held at Hatfield House during World War II.

The person I am interested in is Von Sponek (Sponeck) - I'm afraid I don't have a Christian name.

Do you have any information about those day? Do you have any lines of enquiry to suggest to me? I shall be most grateful for any help at all that you can give.

Mary Campion McCarren

Autumn/Winter Meetings 2006

Monday

11 September 7.30

Anne Grimshaw

THE WORLD OF THE WORKING HORSE

A Quick Gallop through the past 200 Years
Showing how Vital the Horse was to Britain

Thursday

12 October 2.30

David Pearce

A JOURNEY ALONG THE RIVER LEA

Monday

13 November 7.30

Member of Staff
St Alban's City Museum

VERULAMIUM

Monday

11 December 2.30

CHRISTMAS OPEN MEETING

All at Friendship House
Wellfield Close