

## **The Burgess Blue Plaque**

If any of you are walking to Old Hatfield through the underpass nearest to French Horn Lane, look up and you will see a Blue Plaque above the entrance. This celebrates the achievements of the Burgess family who have been in business in Hatfield since 1700. The plaque reads: -

This Site was the former home and business premises of the  
Burgess family from 1700 to 1969 prior to the redevelopment of  
the OldTown

Beehive Makers, Builders, Bark & Timber Dealers,  
Clock Makers, Funeral Directors & Monumental  
Masons, birth place too to what would later become the  
Merryweather Fire Engine and domestic Bean Slice  
both invented by James John Burgess

Justin Burgess writes that his "Grandfather's brother did not wish to be involved with the business as he was somewhat of an inventor, amongst other things he designed and invented the domestic bean slice and a pump fire engine that he sold to Merryweather".

Due to a funding shortage at the Council, this plaque was paid for by the Burgess family.

## **St John's Ambulance Building**

The St Johns Ambulance Building next to St. Luke's Church, Hatfield Town Centre, was built in 1889 by Lady Salisbury to mark the Golden Jubilee of Queen Victoria. The building was to be used as a Reading Room and Social Club by the residents of Hatfield New Town.



The building was extended in 1908 (to the left of the entrance) by the Fourth Marquess. This almost doubled the size of the building. After the First World War the building was sometimes known as the Newtown Recreation Room. It was around 1938 that St. John's Ambulance started using the building for ARP training. In August 1941 the building was requisitioned by Hertfordshire County Council at first being used as a nursery centre. The St Johns Ambulance Service brought the building from the Hatfield Estate in 1960 for £300

The sad news is that, at the time of writing a planning application has been submitted to demolish the building and to replace it with a two-story block of flats.

Thank you to Mr Robin Harcourt Williams, Librarian & Archivist at Hatfield House, for providing the information.

## Dates for Your Diary

**Thursday 9th June, 2.15 for a 2.30 start** - Our Summer open meeting, a chance to socialise, talk and share memories of Hatfield.

**Monday 12<sup>th</sup> September, 7.15 for a 7.30 start** - Jenny Oxley, 'Mill Green and Museum'

**Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> October, 2.15 for a 2.30 start** - To be announced

**Monday 14<sup>th</sup> November, 7.15 for a 7.30 start** - Tom Doig, 'Folk Cures and Remedies'

We are also helping to organise this year's **Welwyn Hatfield Heritage Fair** which will be held on **Saturday October 1<sup>st</sup> at Birchwood Leisure centre.**

More news about this event in our next newsletter.

## 20<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting held on 9<sup>th</sup> May 2011

25 members attended this year's AGM. The Chairman reported that we have had a quiet year and unfortunately a sad one after losing two committee members.

Meetings had been fairly well attended and the subjects of the talks wide ranging. Thanks to Miriam Gaskin for arranging the speakers. We would also like to thank our newsletter editors Jon Brindle and Sheila Whittingham, and all those who have made contributions to the newsletter. Please keep them coming.

This year we have continued our involvement with the University of Hertfordshire's de Havilland Project. The University has produced a booklet 'The de Havilland Legacy' and recently published a leaflet for the Heritage Trail. In September we had a stall at Hatfield Market with a display about the Birchwood area. Committee members have been attending Welwyn Hatfield Heritage Forum meetings. Projects this year have unfortunately come to a standstill, but Frank Cox has produced three new booklets, details of which are in previous newsletters. Thank you to Frank and to Jane Teather for helping with the publications.

Heather Richardson our treasurer presented the accounts. The total balance is £4095.15. We have made no loss this year. The biggest expenditure comes from printing the newsletter. Our membership stands at 147.

Jim Parker and Miriam Gaskin were re-elected for another term on the committee and a new committee member Ron Wheeler was also elected. Lastly all committee members were thanked for their support throughout the year especially Heather Richardson in what must have been a very difficult year for her.

The business of the AGM was followed by a talk given by Louise Reed on 'Eccentric Women Travellers'.