

From Hetfelle to Hatfield - over 1000 years of history

HATFIELD LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

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HATFIELD FETE MAKES NATIONAL NEWS (78 Years ago!)



The above photo accompanied an article from the Daily Sketch newspaper of July 31st 1933. A whole page was dedicated to the forthcoming Tudor Fete, with other photo's of actors in fine period costume.

They were rehearsing for 'The Bias' a play by Miss H.V.T. Burton, described as "an echo from a Tudor bowling green", in the sunken garden of the old Palace of Hatfield...." Miss Margery Pickard was to appear in the role of Queen Elizabeth and Miss Mary Antrohan was to be the princess in a tableau entitled, "The Princess Elizabeth and her Attendant", to be shown in her actual prison chamber in the tower of the old palace.

**This cutting was given to us by Paul Whittingham, son of late HLHS member, Dick.*

Contact the Editors:

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Chairman: **Mrs Chris Martindale**



HLHS member Janet Richardson (nee Tingey) writes:

I wonder if you could publish a question in the next Hatfield LHS newsletter :

I have been sorting some papers relating to the Tingey family - both the grocers and private houses etc - before depositing them in the Herts Archive.

I have come across a "Western Garage" which, in the twenties, seems to have been near the junction of St Albans Road and Lemsford Road and contained also a bungalow and shed etc. It was operated for a while by "Messrs Geoffreys & Edwards" , the Landlord being the Salisburys. Then, it would appear that my grandfather, John Tingey became tenant for a few years(?) it does not ring a bell with me at all but it might with one of your members. I'd be grateful for any clues.

HATFIELD HOUSE ARCHIVES VISIT

On May 25th some HLHS members were delighted to be given a guided tour of the archives at Hatfield House by Robin Harcourt Williams. It's taken 400 years to arrange, but it was worth the wait!

Robin, the Head Archivist, led us through a maze of labyrinthine passages to a particular archive room that stored some incredible documents.

There were over 200 weighty volumes of The Cecil Papers alone, which recorded much in the way of State correspondence involving this powerful family.

We were shown a letter written by Elizabeth 1st when she was aged 9. Her handwriting was exquisite as was her brother Edwards' too at the same age. Both a credit to their tutor Robert Asham.

We saw another beautifully written letter by the 15 year old Elizabeth, denying that she was pregnant by Rear Admiral Thomas Seymour. Then, as a 46 year old Queen, we saw her love letter to '*my frog*' - her French suitor, the 24 year old Francis Duke of Anjou.

Elizabeth signed off her letters to him with a dollar sign, \$, which was symbolic of our modern 'X' for a kiss! But she was finally dissuaded from marrying him, notwithstanding there were concerns that, at her age, she may not be able to bear children.

We saw several ancient maps too. One, dated 1608, was of Hatfield Park, showing its old Palace. This was just three years before it was largely demolished to provide building materials for the current stately house (completed in 1611). Another showed a proposed coastal fortification plan for Yarmouth, to thwart the expected Spanish invasion of 1588.

Moving on a few hundred years, there was much correspondence between Queen Victoria and thrice Prime Minister, the 3rd Marquess of Salisbury. She clearly held him in high esteem, and even begged that he prevent that 'revolutionary madman' Mr Gladstone from becoming Prime Minister.

There were many photographs from the late 1800s, with various Heads of State visiting Lord Salisbury here in Hatfield - including one of the Shah of Iran in 1892.

With reference to the Siege of Mafeking during the Boer War, we were shown an entertainment programme of events to commemorate the '19th day of the Siege' . Presumably there were some more similar events to boost moral, as the British in the town were under siege for another 198 days before liberation!

In Germany, 1935, two important dinners were attended by Viscount Cranborne. His host was Adolf Hitler whom he described as 'entering the room like a king' - but not properly attired in his ill fitting suit. Other Nazi's came in for some criticism too; Goebbels looked like a sharp suited 'gangster' and Luftwaffe commander Hermann Goring's light blue tunic was so adorned with medals and gold braid, 'that he must have designed it himself!'

Whilst studying a reprint of the local 1919 Ordnance Survey map, I noticed that a golf course existed at, what was to become, the Smallford end of the DH runway area. It would appear that the course covered part of the Great Nast Hyde Estate land that stretched down from the St.Albans Road towards Beech Farm near Coopers Green Lane.

Frustratingly this 1919 map also showed the Aerodrome too, although the London Flying Club didn't arrive until 1930, some 11 years after the map was first published! Clearly there was some cartographic licence going on. Seemingly some features were put on the map for later orientation purposes only eg Welwyn Garden City was also printed on it but, in 1919, this town didn't exist either!

The same map also showed a golf course in Hatfield Park, some 2 miles distant. As all three of the latter features did exist at one time or another, it was reasonable to assume that there must have been a golf course on land at the far end of the runway too. But *when* was that?

Local archives and books on De Havillands failed to provide any reference to the course. However, HLHS member Mrs Jill Beresford, the daughter of DH's first Agricultural Manager, Reg Sutterby, did throw some light on the matter. As her family came to live in DH houses bordering the airfield site, Jill spent a lot of her childhood playing in the fields around the aerodrome.

I asked her about one derelict building near the large circular banked area where jets would roar at the end of the runway that had always intrigued me. It was about 18ft x 29ft. Single storey, made of blockwork, rendered with mortar and pebble-dashed. It had also clearly suffered fire damage at some time.

But the really distinctive feature was its three 6ft wide and, almost, semi-circular windows. "We called that the golf hut" Jill said, although she didn't recall any golf being played there, when a girl, during the 1940s. But it was a 'eureka' moment for my research.

Aside from Jill, nobody else I'd previously spoken to had any knowledge of this building or the golf course.

A further look at the 1910 Inland Revenue tithe map revealed that somebody, later, had written 'Golf House' next to icons of two buildings on the site. This seemed further evidence that a golf course existed, but still not wholly conclusive.

The remains of Jill's 'golf hut' building was finally demolished, and rubble removed, in August 2010. But a little investigation afterwards revealed a bit more of its former appearance. The final piece of documentary evidence came from the website of the De Havilland Aeronautical Technical School Association.

Ted Lawrence, one of its members, provided a facsimile of an original 1935 booklet entitled *HATFIELD AERODROME*, which describes the facilities at Hatfield that were then the established home for the London Aeroplane Club, De Havilland School of Flying and Royal Airforce Flying Club. It boasts that the '*Hatfield Aerodrome is undoubtedly the largest and finest private flying ground in Great Britain*' and goes on to describe some of the amenities. It notes the restaurant, tennis and squash courts, swimming pool and a '*putting course*'.

The 'putting course' may well have been what golfers would now term a pitch & putt golf course (usually par 3 all round) - rather than a large putting green with a few holes. Reg Sutterby mentioned its 'bunkers' in the 1952 Ford Magazine. This clearly indicates the presence of a larger golf course than a mere 'putting course' that was described in 1935.

Golf course continued..

It seems that the onset of WW2 put an end to both the golf course and the London Aeroplane Club who, due to necessity, moved to Panshanger c1940. We'd be grateful to know if any HLHS member has a recollection to share with us, or a photo of the course.



THE LONDON FLYING CLUB GOLF HUT

The photo was taken c2009 and shows two of the three arched windows and burnt timber roof trusses. HLHS member, and architect, Terry Cull, provided the artists impression. The building was probably used for refreshments as a half way house and shelter, being so far (¼ mile) from the main clubhouse. It appears too well designed to be simply a remote store for golf course green-keepers, notwithstanding much more groundwork equipment would've been required to maintain the grass runway and gardens nearer to the clubhouse!



We are sure that most HLHS members will instantly recognise this famous roadside landmark. It is, of course, the Nags Head pub in Bishops Stortford. Similarities with Hatfield's Comet Hotel are purely intentional as they were both designed in the art deco style for Benskins Brewery by Ernest Brander Musman in 1932. His design was 'loosely' based on the Queen Mary liner.

HOGS YEOTHAM: Make mine a half!

HLHS member Terry Pankhurst recently paid this ancient local settlement a visit and unearthed an unopened half pint bottle of Dragon's Blood ale, still with its contents, two thirds full. This was supplied by the JW Green (Luton) brewery who sold their business to Flower's in 1954 - thus giving our bottle a 'latest date'. Whilst Terry thought that this strong ale was undrinkable, he may be further disappointed to learn that there will be no 'thruppence' deposit to collect on upon return of the empty bottle, as the Flower's brewery business then yielded to Whitbread in 1961. Whitbreads then ceased brewing in 2002.

