

From Hetfelle to Hatfield - over 1000 years of history

HATFIELD LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

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Strange Monument in South Hatfield

Is it an ancient standing stone? Is it a weird gravestone? No, it's Trig Point 5318!



Denise and Richard from Birmingham pay homage to the pillar at South Hatfield

Have members ever wondered what the concrete pillar in the middle of a field near the cemetery in South Hatfield is for? It is actually an Ordnance Survey (OS) triangulation pillar, or 'trig point'. A recent television programme as part of the BBC's 'Timeshift' series entitled "A Very British Map: The Ordnance Survey Story" led us to look into the history of these pillars (of which there are approximately 5,500 still standing in Great Britain), and of the Ordnance Survey itself.

The Ordnance Survey originated from the 'Board of Ordnance', a government body established in Tudor times, with its headquarters in the Tower of London. It was responsible for artillery, transport and

supplies, and had a duty to maintain and build harbours and fortifications. In the 1790's, with the threat of Napoleonic invasion, a department of the Board of Ordnance was tasked with drawing up a set of accurate maps of the south coast in order to defend the nation. This department developed into the Ordnance Survey, which remains in place today as Britain's national mapping agency.

Our pillar is listed by the OS as trig point TP5318, Parsonage farm, grid ref TL22426 06018. It was built in 1948 as part of the re-mapping of Britain. The project was the hardest and most important project undertaken by the OS in the whole of the 20th century. The original 19th century measurements were out of date and needed to be revised; to do this a new metric grid system was devised, which divided up the country into squared sections. Each section of the grid would have its own map, on the detailed scale of 1:25,000, equivalent to 2 ½ inches per mile.

The leader of the project was Brigadier Martin Hotine, a WW1 veteran who was a stickler for accuracy. His idea was to build an extensive system of four foot pillars across the UK, from which the new measurements could be taken. The pillars provided a solid base for the theodolites used by the survey teams, thereby improving the accuracy of the readings obtained. The OS teams built the pillars themselves, carrying the

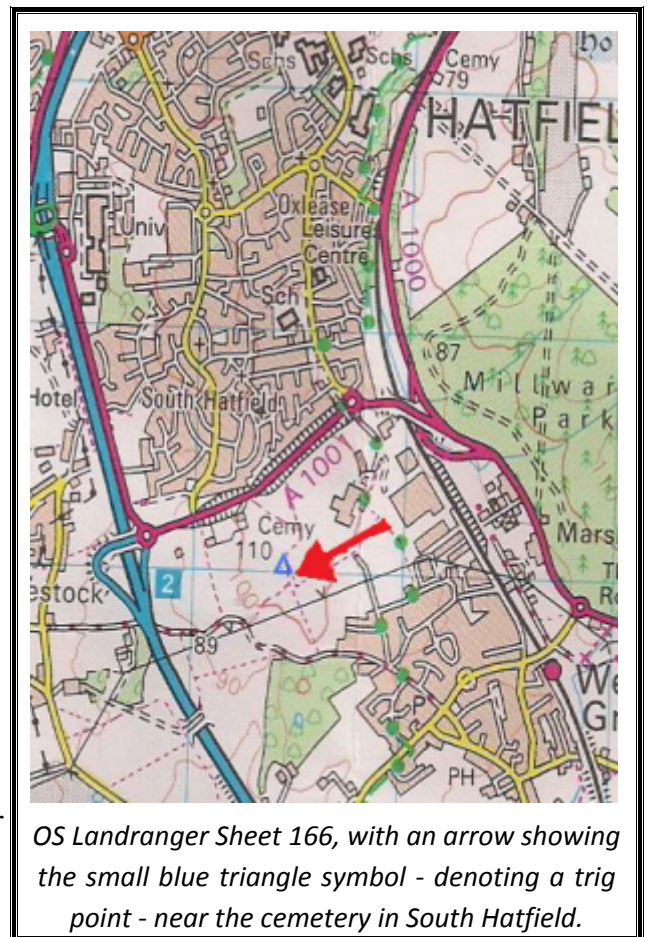
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Chairman: **Mrs Chris Martindale**



often heavy materials such as a wood frame, and sand and cement, up to the high points of the land to construct them. They were built to last with very deep foundations. The idea was that three pillars were in view of each other – which they may not be now, due to subsequent vegetation growth! Careful measurements of the angles between the lines-of-sight of the other trig points then allowed the construction of a system of triangles, which could be referenced back to a single baseline. From this baseline the OS built up a network of points which provided a template for the precise re-mapping of Britain. On low ground or flat areas, ‘Bilby Towers’ were used; these were temporary steel towers, built in two to three days to a maximum height of 100ft. There was a platform near the top, on which the surveyor stood to take the readings. The towers were dismantled after use and could be re-used at a different location. All of the trig points were constructed between 1936 and 1962, the 26 year period during which the ‘retriangulation of Great Britain’ took place under Hotine’s leadership. The project was disrupted by the outbreak of WW2 and wasn’t completed until 17 years after the war ended. By the late 1960’s new maps were being produced. The production of maps is now largely digital, and maps are available online. Satellite Navigation or ‘Sat-Nav’ could be said to negate the need for maps. However, the OS paper maps remain extremely popular with ramblers due to their accuracy and attention to detail.



OS Landranger Sheet 166, with an arrow showing the small blue triangle symbol - denoting a trig point - near the cemetery in South Hatfield.

Other local trig points denoted by the blue triangle symbol are shown near Essendon, and at Hertford Heath. Other benchmark points, which do not have pillars and may not still exist, were on flat roofs and high points. Interestingly, some local points were listed as de Havilland North and South, and Control Tower, listed as rivet points; Hatfield House vane; Tyttenhanger Farm, listed as a buried block; and Birchwood, listed as a block, destroyed in 1974.

A hobby amongst map enthusiasts has arisen, known as ‘trigpointing’. These people identify the blue triangles on a map and travel to them, recording their visit in order to ‘collect’ as many as possible. There are websites dedicated to the activity, where the pillars and other types of benchmarks are listed, and people can log their visits and add photographs. The editors have, in a small way, become trigpointers ourselves, using the OS map to find the Essendon pillar (pictured, right). It was covered in ivy within woodland, and surrounding it was a large moat c80 yards in diameter. Presumably it was once the site of an important building! And what a coincidence that when



The pillar near Essendon: TP1377, Grid Ref TL 284058

we visited the Hatfield pillar to get our photograph - enthusiasts Denise and Richard McLellan from Birmingham, were leaning up against it having their picnic lunch!

WORLD WAR 1 OVERSEAS CLUB



New member Gill Skidmore has kindly donated these colourful and well preserved certificates from the WW1 Overseas Club which were awarded to her father, local schoolboy Arthur Kitchen.

The Overseas Club was a charity which launched an appeal to raise money to supply men on the front line with Christmas gifts to raise their spirits. Sir Edward Ward, who was in charge of the charity, wrote to children asking

them to imagine 'how unhappy the soldiers must be...when they have to stand hour after hour, in the trenches, often deep in water, with shells bursting all around.' Money raised was used by the charity to fill the boxes with small, useful presents to make soldiers' lives more comfortable, such as socks, chocolates and cigarettes. Children who raised over a certain amount of money received a certificate praising their efforts. Arthur Kitchen was sent an Overseas Club certificate for his fundraising work in 1915, and again in 1916. The 1915 certificate shows two children passing presents to a soldier and a naval officer. The 1916 certificate depicts two soldiers happily receiving a gift in the post.

At the bottom of the 1915 certificate there is a seal of approval and the aims of the Overseas Club are written out, including: 'to help one another' and to 'draw together in the bond of comradeship British people the world over'.

Arthur later worked for the Agriculture Dept at De Havillands with Reg Sutterby.



MY WW2 PENPAL By Jean West

As a child, my mother's home town on the North East coast had been shelled by the German Grand Fleet during the First World War; her brother and four other relatives served in the armed forces during the Second World War and she saw my father age as a result of long hours worked at de Havilland's aircraft factory plus his Home Guard duties. So she had no great love of the Germans. After the war, in 1946, I asked if I could have a German penpal, but she was hardly enthusiastic!

However, the correspondence began that winter at a time when Germany still lay in ruins, and despite herself, she took an interest to the boy I wrote to.

His name was Eckhard.

Refugees

His family were from Silesia (now part of Poland) and his father had fought on the Eastern Front. With his mother, Eckhard and his younger brother had trekked from Silesia to land up in Schleswig in the northern corner of the British Zone of Occupation. They lived with many other refugees in a castle with little heat or comfort and they heard nothing from his father. Eckhard was a cheerful boy despite all their difficulties, and his English improved

rapidly. I don't think my German was ever anything other than moderate but sometimes he'd write in his language and I wrote some bits in English, so we got along quite well. Although he did not dwell on his difficulties and hardships, mentioned in one letter that his mother had no needles or thread to mend their clothing, and was it possible to have a packet of needles? Such was the lack of basic goods in Germany at the time!

Parcel of Friendship

My mother responded by sending me round to Richardson's (a drapers shop, then well known in Hatfield) and needles, thread, darning wool etc were purchased. When I returned, she had assembled other things she thought Eckhard's mother ought to have – including some margarine, sugar, tea, dried fruit and flour. Feeling vaguely heroic, I contributed a small bar of the hard plain chocolate that comprised a weekly sweet ration. The parcel was duly sent and received.

The letter of thanks we got, including a note from Eckhard's mother - Frau Hammer – was more than adequate recompense for the giving up of some of our rations for this family who had so little. They made a cake from our gift, and the chocolate had been a very special treat for them. My mother said little, but I could sense she was well pleased at the reception of her gift and by this act of hers which brought some cheer to Eckhard's family at Christmastide.

A NEW MEMBER WRITES....

It is always nice to welcome somebody new to the Society, and especially so when they are moved to write in. Satya Ghatia is our latest member and we thank him for his comments and invite him, as with all others, to contribute an article concerning some historic aspect concerning Hatfield. Satya writes:

Dear HLHS,

Thanks for the Newsletters.

On going through them, I am impressed with the good quality work being done by the HLHS. Being an Indian, I am happy to observe that Hatfield has historical linkages with India, as is evident from the article "On the trail of the East Indian Chief".

Though I am totally new to Hatfield, I am feeling blessed to be here surrounded by the pastoral ambience created by the abundant greenery, quietude and the streets/lanes named after the flora and fauna of yore.

With my diverse interests in Business History and English Literature, I am happy to be associated with HLHS.

It will indeed be a pleasure to attend the 14th December meeting.

Regards

Satya Ghatia

It is with sadness that we inform you of the death on 14th November of HLHS member Daisy Brindle, aged 92, the mother of co-editor Jon. Daisy was born in 1923 in South East London. She moved to Hatfield in 1953, where her husband Bill worked for de Havillands. The family lived firstly in Aldykes, then Cherry Way and de Havilland Close. During her life in Hatfield she worked at the Lone Star factory; Grays garage as a telephonist/receptionist; Green Lanes school as a 'dinner lady'; and in the White Hart pub behind the bar. Jon remembers going into the White Hart with his friends, who Daisy would serve with the drink of their choice; but Jon, however, could only have Guinness because, as the advert used to say, "Guinness is good for you!"

HATFIELD POP MUSIC SCENE IN THE EARLY 1960s

Members may recall our Rock Around The Block book which chronicled local popular music and dance between the years 1940 -1990. One oversight was the omission of a band called The Vincents. Band member David Lickman recalls:

Many years ago I began working for Sidney Rumbelow as a warehouse stockman in old Hatfield. I sometimes went with the van driver to deliver to the several shops he had. We went to the Boreham Wood shop and I saw a second hand Harmony electric guitar. I couldn't play one then but also purchased Burt Weedon's Play in a day self tutor. When I'd learnt a bit I joined Charlie Belcher's group from the Hilltop, The Cheetas. We gigged locally at youth clubs and church halls etc. In 1962 I began working at The Universal Music Company in Hatfield's new town centre. Claude Charles, a band drummer in his 40's had bought the shop from a Mr Simmonds. He had a son, Simon, who was the lead guitar in a St Albans based group called the Vincent's.

Many people came in to the shop, some to hang around and some, thankfully to buy something. We sold acoustic and electric guitars from the Dallas Ranger at £15 right up to top of the range Fender, Gibson, Gretch and Rickenbacker. Amplifiers ranged from the Watkins Dominator through Vox, Marshal up to the Fender Showman. A popular echo box was the tape Watkins Copycat and if you could afford it the Gibson Echorette which operated on a metal disc similar to the DVD recorders of today. Most groups purchased the Selmer PA system with Vox Reslo ribbon microphones and WEM speaker cabinets. We also sold drum kits by Premier, Sono, and Ludwig.

We specialised in "Group equipment" but also sold flutes, clarinets, saxophones, trumpets, in fact everything bar pianos (too heavy to heave up the stairs). I built up good connection with all the local groups and nearly all came in to buy from us. Money was tight even then so I persuaded the boss to do HP, which we did. A 10% deposit, proof of ID plus dad's signature and you could take it away with you. Talk about a dollar down and a dollar a week, but this is how everyone got the instruments they wanted, me included. Dave Webster, vo-

calistand Colin Shipton, drummer of the Vincents came in one day and told me they were looking for a lead guitarist as aforementioned Simon was leaving to join a pro band called Johnny, Mike and the Shades. I left the Cheetas and joined the Vincent's. Well what a difference, instead of youth clubs and church halls once a month, the Vincent's were playing every Thursday, Friday and Saturday all over Hertfordshire, Essex, Bedfordshire, Norfolk, Suffolk, the Midlands and London and the South East.

We had our own van and travelled miles coming back at 3 or 4 in the morning. We were good enough to be spotted and John Schroder, an A and R man of Pye Piccadilly records, signed us up and "One Fine Day", a cover of the Chiffons song was made and released. The " B" side was written by Me and Dave Webster. It sold about 3000 in the UK as a whole, and I recall we sold 450 in Hatfield from UM and another 500 in the 2 record shops in St Albans.



The Vincents

I remember receiving a Royalties cheque for £18.13s.2d. Dave got the same. During all this time I was still at Universal Music but now I was also getting commission on every sale I made, so at 18, I was pretty well off compared with others of my age. The Juniors purchased their first electric guitars from UM, Selma Futurama's. Mick Taylor bought his in red as did Alan Shacklock. Mick returned a few months later and purchased a Fender Jazz master. Paul Griggs, pre Guys and Dolls, also purchased a Futurama. I was friends with Donovan Leitch and I distinctly remember that his father was against him buying a guitar so after selling him what he wanted, he kept it at my house for a couple of months. He went on from busking at the Hilltop to appearing on Ready Steady Go. Even with an appearance on that show he hitched hiked in to London. I learnt a lot of my guitar runs in UM when a local guitarist used to come in and play He was Andy Jenner of the Blue Notes. He was a master and willingly showed me jazz and blues riffs. There was also another StAlbans group called Jonny Flood and the Trespassers, they didn't get the breaks that the Vincent's got but they were good. After the Vincent's record, my boss got in to financial difficulties and told me he had to sell the business. I became disenchanted with the Vincent's so I left. They replaced me with Mick Taylor and then found out that Pye would not record them again unless Dave Webster was replaced. Mick knew Malcolm Collins from the Juniors and he took Dave's place. They also changed the name to "Hudson's Night Train" but because no gigs came in and no record deal, they broke up. Colin Shipton contacted me a few months later with a plan to form another group with Ken Hardiman the bass player from the Vincent's and a guitarist/singer called "Bone". We were together for about 6 months as The Move but decided that we were going nowhere so broke up. That's about it for now. By the way the coffee bar in Hatfield was the "Wander Inn" and was opposite the old Lloyd's bank when the road ran from Tingey's corner to the Cinema, but recollections from there are another story.

HISTORIC HATFIELD BEERS

A year ago, members may recall that beers from the old Hatfield Brewery were recreated. Britain's top beer writer, Roger Protz of CAMRA, wrote about them:

Two historic beers from a Hatfield brewery that closed in 1920 have been revived, using original recipes, and will take centre stage at this year's St Albans Beer Festival. The beers are the result of collaboration between the 3 Brewers, Hatfield Local History Society and the Dead Brewers' Society. Between them they researched and found recipes from Pryor Reid that enabled Nick Zivkovic, head brewerto faithfully recreate the beers..which...enable today's drinkers to taste samples from more than 100 years ago. The mild ale is 3.5% and was brewed for people working in agriculture in the Hatfield area. The full name of the stronger beer is Entire Butt Porter and weighs in at 5.5%. This is a beer style that originated in London in the early 18th century. The strongest version of porter was called stout. Porters are in vogue again and the Pryor Reid version gives drinkers the opportunity to taste a genuine 19th century version. The beer is astonishingly complex with a fascinating past and a firm future.



Wishing all our members a very merry Christmas and a Happy
New Year