

From Hetfelle to Hatfield - over 1000 years of history

HATFIELD LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER No. 114 September 2019

ANOTHER LANDMARK PUB HAS GONE

Many people with a connection to Hatfield will recognise the photo of 'The Bull' at Stanborough. But now, alas, that iconic landmark has gone and housing is soon to be built on the plot.

The last pint was pulled there on 31st December 2017 and the honour of supping it fell, fittingly, to Andy Chapman of the Lemsford Local History Society. He also wrote about its demise in an article for CAMRA's Pints of View magazine.

A pub has stood on or near the site next to the Great North Road for over 300 years and WEA research notes that a previous inn there - possibly the first - was called The Seven Stars and, by 1756, this was renamed the Horse & Jockey (or Horse & Groom). It was sited a little to the north of the current plot. Then in the early 1800s, the Great North Road was realigned with the consequence that in 1822 a new public house was built close to the earlier one and then called The Bull.

By 1928 it was owned by the Cannon Brewery who were compelled to demolish it in the early 1930s when another realignment of the Great North Road took place.

In 1938 a new public house, again called The Bull, was built on the plot we know today. But more name changes were to follow. In the 1970s the pub was named The Cavalier which eventually became a 2-4-1 budget diner.

However, for the final 10 years it was known as The East – a Chinese restaurant.



In early 2019 builders set up on site to begin the demolition of The East aka The Bull.



Weeks later the 1938 building is being reduced to rubble.

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THREE DECADES OF FLOWER ARRANGING AT ST. ETHELDREDA'S

By Jackie Fry

A very special Christian, but quite unconventional Rector by the name of The Rev'd. W. C.D. Todd, arrived in the Parish of Bishop's Hatfield in 1972 and caused quite a whirlwind by all accounts. He inherited a Congregation of nineteen and a Curate by the name of The Rev'd. Peter Lewis, and by the time my family arrived in 1975 to live in Butler's, Fore Street, there was a vibrant church community in place with at least one hundred communicants on a Sunday morning.

Father Todd or simply "Bill" as he affectionately became known was rather like Marmite. People either loathed him or loved him! Others such as my family were rather in awe of him, but it soon became clear that whenever hardship of any kind was encountered, his true worth and humbleness came to light. As in Trollope's Day, Fr. Todd's Ministry revolved around the community, in Church, in the Street and in the Pub. In fact, the Horse and Groom became affectionately known as the Rector and Curates as the Church family increased and more Curates arrived.

Flowers have always held a special place at St. Etheldreda's, and there was a hardworking flower team by 1975, the Queen Bee of whom was Mrs. Tingey. At that time, and influenced by the Rector's high presence in the community, it was not unusual for four or five weddings to take place every Saturday and the many flowers added not only beauty to the Church but also to the worship.

With so many weddings, baptisms, civic services, funerals, growing Church services, an extra week day Mass plus Choir activities within, Mrs. Tingey was assisted by an able band of wonderful flower ladies. I recall Nancy Greatrex, a Mrs Dollimore, Bessie Shepherd, Peggy Simmons, Vera Bennett, her sister in law, Joyce Roland Smith, and Joan Bloomer to name but a few. The Church thrived with beautiful arrangements and the glorious scents of the blooms certainly enhanced all aspects of church life and worship within.

Not coincidentally perhaps, the names of the above will immediately be recognised, but my being a stranger to Hatfield, it took a while to realise these ladies were the wives of the prominent owners of the Town's many thriving businesses as well as Rotarians, who in turn contributed greatly to the wealth and well being of community life in Hatfield generally.

Flower arranging was becoming almost a full time job for these ladies who were all then approaching retirement and younger blood was sought, and that was how I came to be involved in Church flowers !

A knock on the door in the form of a young Curate, Andrew Mottram, had been despatched to request I join the flower team. I do smile at the recollection now because although I agreed, I had never arranged a flower in public in my life. The flower team was very welcoming and indeed did everything to ensure I picked up the tricks of the trade as quickly as possible. I can recollect Mrs. Simmons patiently explaining how to make a carnation look presentable when it had not fully opened. It was a miraculous transformation because by gently and smoothly prising open the petals they quickly resemble the flower we love and immediately enhanced the arrangement.

Shortly after I joined the ladies, Mrs Tingey retired as Queen Bee and the chalice was passed to Joan Bloomer. As a trained flower arranger and teacher she was a more exacting task master and my early efforts were rigorously checked from every angle to ensure perfection. Most of these ladies in the team lived in Cranborne Road so were neighbours and friends. Every flower lady enjoyed a "station" in Church which was jealously guarded - Mrs. Simmons enjoyed doing the pedestal to the left of the High Altar, and in varying degrees of importance, other ladies did arrangements on the Chancel steps, in front of the Pulpit, all eight windows, the Font and north Porch. The two back windows, I hasten to add, being reserved for beginners where any incompetence - perish the thought - would not be so obvious, with flowers arranged in the Brocket and Salisbury Chapels only on special occasions.

Pew ends became popular with so many weddings undertaken by senior arrangers. This hierarchy puzzled and amused me until I read Alan Bennett's short stories which had just been published and which left me in no doubt about the vicissitudes of Church flower arranging. One day Joan Bloomer called us all together and announced that we were very honoured to have been requested to participate in the forthcoming Flower Festival in St. Albans Abbey which was to be designed by Grizelda Morrison. St. Etheldreda's had been assigned the Shrine area and the flowers to be used were dahlias and gladioli in clashing shades of red and orange.

My heart sank and inwardly groaned as I realised I was the only able bodied member of the team who could climb a ladder which would be essential to reach the top of the Shrine. "Help" I screamed inside, and that instinct subsequently proved to be correct when my assigned ladder was not high enough to reach. Before panic set in, I spotted a very distinguished male arranger attacking very grand and enormous pedestals in the High Altar area of the Abbey. With great relief I approached him and he agreed to lend me a taller ladder; but talk about being thrown in at the deep end and fully dressed!

We were all very proud of our efforts and the Abbey looked stunning and attracted many thousands of visitors. It gave enormous pleasure and made a great deal of money too. Soon afterwards, I was asked to co-ordinate flower duties in St. Etheldreda's which, although jolly hard work, was rewarding and enjoyable. The original team was aging and it soon became clear reinforcements were required if the high standard and commitment to the

job was to be maintained. Easier said than done because in the intervening decades life had changed considerably and young wives were now working whilst bringing up their families so commitment to a flower rota was becoming harder. However, success prevailed and a new generation of arrangers was born which I would like to write about another time.

But this article would not be complete without paying tribute to Mr. Alf Walters, Verger (gold plated) a wonderful gentleman who ran St. Etheldreda's with military precision for three decades. His duties of course did not encompass flowers but without his help my watch would have been very different. **PTO**



A still of Jackie Fry taken from the documentary film about St. Etheldreda's Church in 2016.

His official duties were taken with much diligence, hard work and efficiency, whether in his robes with Rod or escorting and welcoming dignitaries to special Services or to preserving a gleaming, tidy and sparkling Church fabric. There was never a dimmed light bulb, unpolished floor or cobweb in his day as he ran a very tight ship.

Arranging flowers is the nice bit, but as with most things worthwhile in life a lot of hard work is required behind the scenes as flowers need constant maintenance, conditioning and watering, not to mention the huge task of clearing out and dismantling for the arrival of the following week's creations. Therefore, it is with heartfelt thanks to Verger and Rector alike for making those decades and the nature of flower arranging possible.

Finally, it was made clear that our work in the Church should be an enjoyable task because it was done for love not money, and it did not matter whether one had expertise or not as God was not going to judge the arrangements and was appreciative of any offering be it in a jam jar or massive pedestal. Children were encouraged initially with the Easter Garden which was great fun, and I think in time everyone concerned came to realise as I had years previously, that flower arranging was a very great privilege and a huge gift which He had individually bestowed upon us to enhance and beautify His place of Worship.

BOB-A-JOB WEEK

Another 70th anniversary took place this year as, on the 18th April 1949, the first 'Bob-a-Job week' began when 440,000 British Scouts started a campaign across England and the rest of the UK, to raise £22,000 needed to cover the deficits of the Scout movement.

But, incredibly, they raised a whopping £60,000 in that first year!

The scheme was first introduced as a 'good turn day' in 1914 by scout movement founder Lord Baden-Powell, but the week known as Scout Job Week, was actually started during Easter week 1949 and became an annual fixture.

For a small payment, boy scouts would take on such things as gardening jobs, car cleaning, shopping, path clearing and a plethora of household chores - and legend has it that one 13 year old spent four hours cleaning the silver at 10 Downing Street!

Bob-a-Job got its nickname from shilling, colloquially known as a 'bob', that the youngsters were paid for completing their good turn. Today it would be worth 5p. During the 1980s over £100,000 was raised per year for the scout movement and distributed to its regional divisions to be used for their various activities such as camping and the purchasing of equipment and uniforms.

However, health and safety fears and the rise of the compensation culture saw it scrapped in 1992.

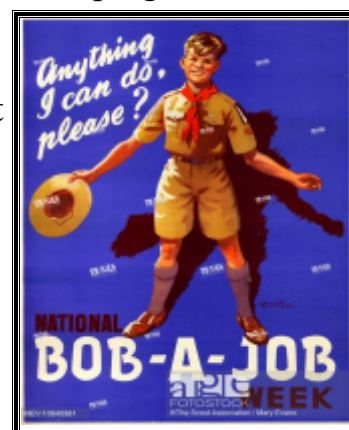
But 20 years later in 2012, Bob-a-Job week was revived by the Scout Association, as leaders attempted to rebuild the movement's traditional commitment to helping others, and it was renamed as Scout Community Week.

Ex scout Gyles Brandreth, the broadcaster and MP recalled:

"There was an old gentleman who kept his [dirty] shoes and just waited all year for us to turn up and clean them"

And TV Producer David Wickham experienced something quite different; "One particular old lady just kept me talking for ages... and then she gave me five bob – a fortune!"

Do any ex scout HLHS members have recollections of jobs they did back in those more innocent days?



Committee Changes

Changes to the committee were agreed at the AGM held on 10th June 2019. The appeal for more volunteers was successful and the committee now comprises:

Chairman – Phil Marris

Secretary – Chris Martindale

Treasurer – Terry Cull

Events organiser – Margaret Stephens

Publications officer – Jane Teather

Newsletter editor – Jon Brindle

Web master – Phil Marris

Publications editor – Phil Marris

Committee member – Alastair Cameron

In addition, Heather Richardson, who resigned as Treasurer after more than ten years in the role, has kindly offered to remain available to ensure a smooth handover to Terry Cull.

From the floor, Paul Savage offered his continued support in the photo-editing of old photographs (using his Photoshop skills). There were also offers from the floor to help out on an *ad hoc* basis at our occasional events.

Dates for your Diary

2019

Mon. 9 Sep. (7.15 for 7.30 p.m.), “Revd Henry Small and the Missing £20,000”, a talk by Jon Mein – see overleaf for a synopsis.

Mon. 9 Dec. (2.15 p.m.). Christmas social meeting

2020 (provisional dates – to be confirmed in the December newsletter)

Mon. 9 Mar. (2.15 p.m. for 2.30 p.m.) – talk (topic t.b.d.)

Mon. 8 Jun. (7.15 p.m. for 7.30 p.m.) – AGM followed by talk (topic t.b.d.)

Mon. 13 Jul. (2.15 p.m.) – Summer social meeting

Mon. 14 Sep. (7.15 p.m. for 7.30 p.m.) – talk (topic t.b.d.)

Mon. 14 Dec. (2.15 p.m.) – Christmas social meeting

Meetings are held at Friendship House, Wellfield Rd, Hatfield AL10 0BU. Non-members are welcome. See also www.hatfieldhistory.uk for latest information about our talks, events and publications, as well as past newsletters going back to Issue 1.

“Revd Henry Small and the Missing £20,000”

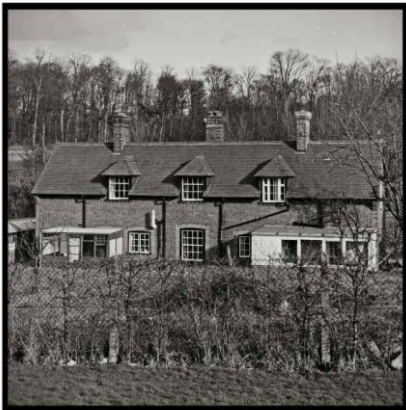
In 1815, Revd Henry Small was appointed rector of the Abbey parish in St Albans. Late in 1834, he fled to France leaving behind substantial debts out of kilter with his income. Based on new research, Jon Mein’s talk in September will explore a surprising story that attracted the attention of the then Prime Minister and found an inspiring solution. The talk will also consider Small’s actions as part of a series of local scandals that affected everyone in St Albans, rich and poor, during 1820-50.



The Abbey, 1832, by John Buckler

Do you recognise these views of Old Hatfield?

Following the June AGM, Chris & Derek Martindale presented a slide-show of photographs taken by Michael Stevens in the 1960s when Michael was a member of Hatfield & District Archaeological Society. Michael revisited Old Hatfield in 2018 and photographed the same locations. A few of the “then” photographs were not recognised by the audience. If you recognise them, please contact Chris & Derek at contact@hatfieldhistory.uk. And look out for more “unknowns” in the next newsletter.



No 85 (1969)



No 86 (1968)



No 87 (1968)



No 88 (1968)



No 89 (1969)



No 90 (1969)