

From Hetfelle to Hatfield - over 1000 years of history

HATFIELD LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER No. 121 June 2021

HATFIELD'S F2 WORLD CHAMPION

In Newsletter 117 we recounted the famous Breaks Youth Centre's motorcycle display team of the early 1960s which comprised club members. They started learning their routines in the dancehall, riding bicycles, before progressing to use motorbikes on the football field. Eventually, they participated in choreographed display events with plenty of hair raising – and eyebrow singeing – stunts.

But later, one of their members decided there could be more daredevil thrills to be had in another motor sport: Stock-car racing.

The sport had arrived in Britain in the mid 1950s and initially the vehicles were usually just old family cars, but over time modifications were allowed and all manner of custom-built motors evolved. The bumping and colliding of vehicles became an accepted part of the sport too, adding to the excitement.

After the Display Team disbanded, member Ron Innocent, now with his eyebrows and lashes regrown, became restless, and with a group of novice would-be mechanics they set about building a stock-car from scratch. Over time they built four from their base at Breaks. Ron became the driver and began racing their creations in around 1964 – mostly at the Harringey track. Ron became a 'star grade driver', and this meant he could paint the roof of his stock-car red in honour of the recognition.

In September 1969 Ron had the race of his life when competing in the Junior F2 World Championship at Brafield in Northants. His car that day was a hybrid, comprising a Fiat body, a Ford E93A engine and Ford chassis. With no sponsors, he had to fund his own racing and his car that day cost him £200 in parts – the equivalent of £3,400 today.

But it all became worth it when he crossed the line in first place to become a World Champion. He could now re-paint his car roof in gold.



Ron Innocent (far right) and team with their world-beating stock-car



Ron receives the World F2 Trophy in 1969 from TV celebrity Willie Rushton

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Chairman: **Phil Marris**



MORE ABOUT TINGEY's 1909

The 1909 ledger By Janet Robinson (nee Tingey)

When I was small, on the bench where orders were packed in Tingey's the Grocers there was a thick ledger on which rested a stick telephone. The cover was missing and people had doodled on the first pages while they answered the phone. When Tingey's closed my father brought the ledger home and it sat in a cupboard for years. Eventually I opened it up to find out what some of the residents of Newtown bought from Tingey's, which was then in the little shop in St Albans Road opposite the bigger shop which John Tingey had built in 1928.

Each page was headed 'Dr'. followed by the name. In my innocence I first thought "Good heavens! What a lot of doctors they had as customers," but then I realised it meant 'Debtors' and that it was a listing of goods bought and paid for, usually each week, though sometimes longer. Many of the names were familiar: Brittain, Hulks, Gray, Bassill. There was also the Marquis of Salisbury and the Hatfield Union – 'Debtors' of very different means.

So, what did they buy? There are so many names that I can only take a small sample. Besides, whichever of my ancestors wrote in the ledger had execrable handwriting and also used abbreviations which I can neither read nor understand. However, I can manage some examples.

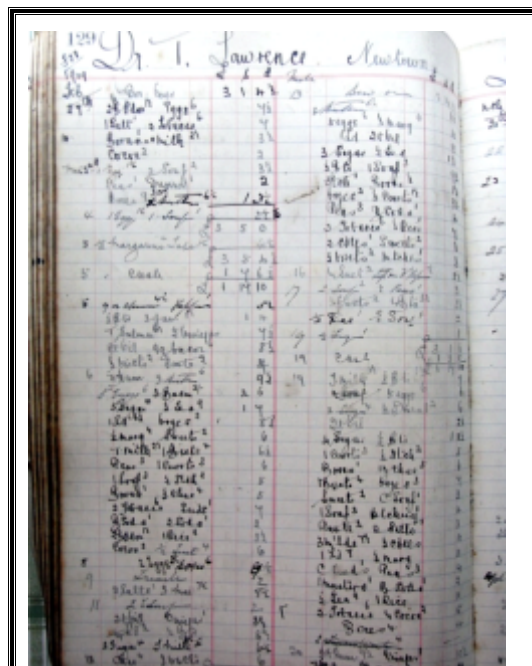
The Salisburys mostly bought items of hardware: brooms and shovels, balls of string and gallons of paraffin and turps.

I am sure they bought food from more impressive shops than Tingey's. They paid regularly every month.

The Hatfield Union in the 1911 census, and probably about the same numbers 2 years earlier, listed 76 'inmates, patients, casual' plus the Master and his family, so their grocery order was formidable: such as 16doz eggs @ 15/4d, 1cwt of soap, 7lb treacle.

The families living in the little houses of Newtown varied in their purchases according to income and family size. Take one of the Lawrence families: In 1911 Thomas Lawrence, a foreman platelayer on the G.N. railway, and his wife, Edith, lived in the Third Right of Way.

They had five daughters and three sons, the oldest being eleven. A large family to feed. Perusing the two pages of goods listed it seems that Mrs. Lawrence bought most goods on a Saturday – presumably pay day was Friday evening. She would go into the shop two or three times during the week for other items. On Saturday also, she would pay all she owed. Well, not quite all. Often, she paid most of the bill carrying over a few shillings until the following week. What did she buy? Again, the items are difficult to read. '1 carrots, is probably 1lb, and '2 Tobacco' = 2ozs and since the 3 bacon she ordered cost 2/-, I imagine it was 3lb. Eggs were not bought in ½ doz. One day Mrs Lawrence might buy 5 eggs and two days later another 3. They were 1½ d each but there was a discount for quantity!



A page from the ledger of 1909

Here, as far as I can decipher is the order for 6th March 1909:

¼ Ham 4d	5 sugar 6d	½ Marg 4d	Peas 3d	Borax 1d	Bi.soda 1d
½ Butter 6d	½ tea 9d	Sweets 2d	1 carrots 3d	½ Cheese 4d	2 Soda 1d
5 eggs 6d	1 Lard 6d	T Milk 3d	1 Soap 3d	2 Tobac. 6d	Rice 2d
3 bacon 2/-	½ Suet 4d	1 Biscuits 4d	½ Starch 2d	Seeds 1d	Cocoa 2d

That added up to 8/5d. In the next three days items were added, which made the total spend 12/5d.

She would have also visited Hulks, the baker for, probably, large amounts of bread. Did the family have meat or fish? There was no butcher listed in Newtown in 1911. I cannot therefore be precise about the amount that was spent on food.

Mr. Lawrence probably earned between 17/- and 21/- a week and their rent was very likely c 2/- a week. Mrs Lawrence may have had a small cleaning or washing job not listed in the census. But do some adding up and you will see that there was little left for clothes or luxuries. Interesting to note that the cost of food came to around 50 % of the wage, while rent was a much smaller percentage. Quite the reverse today for most people.

A family of very different means were the Elmsalls. Mr. Elmsall was a Director of the Hatfield Brewery in 1909 and he and his wife Lilian lived in Newtown House. They had three servants.

The Elmsalls were able to pay the full amount, but paid fortnightly. They, or a servant came into the shop quite as often as Mrs. Lawrence.

This is one week's typical bill:

1 digestive 7d	1 jam 6d	½ lb cocoa 1/1d	3x3 bacon 2/11½d	4lb.S.Soap 1/2d
2 tea 2/8d	2 marg 1/4d	Bar sunlight 7½d	T. Brasso 5d	C.sugar 11d
potatoes 2/-d	2lb cherries 1/9½d	C.flour 8½d	Buttons 1d	Browning 10 ½d
4 sugar 9d	2 biscuits 7½d	Doz.matches 5½d	Blanco 3d	1 coffee 1/3d

One or two luxuries there – coffee, cherries and more bacon. That week the bill came to £1.1.0 ½ d, nearly twice as much as that of the Lawrences.

Items bought varied little. And to list any more would bore you, but I will just select two more households. The first was that of Thomas (60) and Maria (62) Grey and their unmarried daughter, Elizabeth (33,) who lived in the Robin Hood Right of Way. Thomas was a platelayer's labourer, probably working under Mr. Lawrence. They were very careful, paying their small bills in full every 3 days, but their spending in August shows they only spent between 6/- and 7/- a week. Perhaps they shopped elsewhere?

Henry Hembury (27) and his wife Sarah, living in the 5th Right of Way, was a labourer at the Brewery and they had 3 very young children. A sister-in-law (21) a domestic servant, was living with them at the time so perhaps that meant there were two incomes. One comparatively large weekly bill in August was 18/9 of which they paid off 17/6.

Of course, these are mere snapshots of the purchases of four households. I can deduce little from the goods bought, or the cost of living. The census does not often record the employment of women – unless they are heads of a household. Many wives may have had part-time cleaning jobs or piece work. This makes it even more difficult to estimate the spending power of a household. All I can say from perusing the 1909 ledger is that for any family there was little choice and that for most of the residents of Newtown in the early 1900s, there was probably very little money to spare.

FAREWELL TO MORE ARCHITECTURAL HISTORY

In 1919, a large new furniture store was designed for Tingey's by architect Percival Blow, featuring a trademark dome on a high corner of the store; it was soon given the nickname 'Taj Mahal'. But a year short of its centenary it was demolished as part of an early phase to develop a new block of flats on the site. The next phase required the demolition of the buildings opposite, designed in 1931 again by Blow, for Tingey's to create a parade of shops. Both the furniture store and shops were built by Shadbolt & Nash and had frontage along the St. Albans Road, although they were separated by French Horn Lane (see below). Those retail areas changed use many times over the decades, but during the late 1960s the parade had a Grays car showroom and a Chinese restaurant upstairs named the Golden Bird. A job recruitment agency, newsagent, Butler the butcher and Blue Seas fish & chip shop were among others there at the time. But flats are also scheduled for this site, and about half the parade has now been demolished. Some new shop units are proposed too.



1920: The newly built 'Taj Mahal' Tingey store.



c1969: Looking down French Horn Lane By Ken Wright



2021: The parade ready for demolition



2021: The 'Town Centre Regeneration' shop. Says it all!

ODE HATFIELD: A nursery rhyme

In 1786 Amelia, Lady Salisbury, donated the carillon 'music machine' to St. Etheldreda's Church and for the best part of the next 200 years the jaunty, but not commonly known tune, 'Old Belle Isle March', played four times every Wednesday - being one of seven daily tunes which rang out from the tower at the top of Fore Street every three hours from 9am.

When I was a bachelor, a-living by myself, all the bread and cheese I got I put upon a shelf.
The rats and the mice they led me such a life, that I had to go to London to get myself a wife.
Going up to London, Going up to London, going up to London to get a little wife;
Fine shoes and stockings, fine curly hair, ruffle raffle round her neck and not a smock to wear
The fields they were so broad, the lanes they were so narrow,
The only way to get her home was to wheel her in a barrow
The wheelbarrow broke, my wife she got a fall
A plague take the wheelbarrow little wife and all.
Going up to London, Going up to London, going up to London to get a little wife ... Rpt

Message from the Chairman

AGM: Last year's AGM was due to be held on 8th June 2020 but, with Covid-19 restrictions in place, the committee resolved that it should be postponed. Now, with restrictions continuing well into 2021, we have regretfully decided to postpone this year's AGM for a while longer. However, the papers below, including the Society's accounts for the last two years, will hopefully provide members with a reasonable idea of our current health. We hope to organise a proper AGM later during the year – Covid-19 restrictions permitting.

Papers: These are shown below and comprise Chairman's reports, Treasurer's reports, financial accounts for the last two years and the minutes of the last AGM (held 10th June 2019). If you have questions, please send email to contact@hatfieldhistory.uk or telephone me on 01707 892597.

Phil Marris (Chairman)

Chairman's report for the year just ended (2020/21)

After the first talk in early March 2020, the society's business came to a shuddering halt with the arrival of the first Covid-19 "lockdown". Unfortunately, our talks, events and social meetings remain on hold, although our newsletter editors have continued to produce the quarterly newsletters to their usual high standard.

During the "lockdowns", the committee has been using the Zoom video-conferencing software for its meetings and I take this opportunity of thanking them for their sterling work. Until we can hold a proper AGM, members cannot formally accept the accounts (below), nor vote for the election of committee members. However, I am pleased to say that the current committee have agreed to continue in their roles in the meantime – viz: Phil Marris, Chris Martindale, Terry Cull, Jane Teather. Margaret Stevens and Alastair Cameron.

Thanks are expressed to our newsletter editors, Jon Brindle and Sheila Whittingham, and to Hazel Bell who indexes the newsletters for our website.

Chairman's report for the previous year (2019/20)

At the AGM held on 10 June 2019, and after many years of service, Chris Martindale stood down as chairman; likewise Heather Richardson as treasurer. I was honoured to be elected as the new chairman, while continuing my existing roles as webmaster and publications editor. Chris took on the role of secretary and we were fortunate in attracting Terry Cull as our new treasurer and membership secretary. Alastair Cameron also stepped forward to join the committee. Jane Teather continued as publications officer and Margaret Stevens as events organiser. Business continued as usual during the year with regular talks, events and social meetings.

Treasurer's report for the year just ended (2020/21)

2020/21 showed a net gain on the Society's funds of £374.87, mostly due to book sales. The PayPal bank balance is mostly from book sales, with sales-profit in total amounting to over £500 for the year. With no meetings, there was no income from entrance fees, although these are usually swallowed up by the speakers' fees. In general, the "lockdown" has had a positive effect on the accounts as we did not have to pay for the hall. There was a bi-annual payment to LCN, our website hosts, of £230.88.

In general, the accounts are healthy, with annual income and expenditure more or less equalling each other. If in the future additional expenses are incurred or book sales drop, the society may incur a small loss on coming years but in view of the healthy bank account, this shouldn't be a problem.

Terry Cull Treasurer

Latest annual accounts (1st April 2020 – 31st March 2021)

Income	£
Subscriptions	708.00
Donations	0.0
Meetings	0.0
Post	0.0
Outings	0.0
Book sales	322.30
Total	1,030.30
Expenditure	
Hall	30.00
Speakers	0.0
Post	314.17
Printing	259.50
PayPal	8.44
LCN website management	230.88
Book printing	176.29
Brit. Association for Local History (Insurance)	75.00
Total	1,094.28
Excess expenditure over Income	63.98
Bank balance at 1st April 2020	4,618.09
Bank balance at 31st March 2021	4,554.11
Add PayPal bank balance at 31st March 2021	326.63
Sub-total	4,880.74
Deduct uncashed cheques at 31st March 2021	0.00
Total assets at 1st April 2021	4,880.74

Treasurer's report for the previous year (2019/20)

The previous year (2019/20) showed a profit in the society accounts in the sum of £1075.72, which was a healthy situation, but mainly accrued by a generous donation of £1,000 from a member who wished to remain anonymous.

Apart from the donation, the income and expenditure were pretty much as expected – with the addition of two capital items in the sum of £101.98 for the purchase of a cable protector and a PA system to aid our speakers at the hall.

Terry Cull (Treasurer)

Previous year's accounts (1 April 2019 – 31 March 2020)

Income	£
Subscriptions	751.00
Donations	1,000.00
Meetings	77.00
Post	2.66
Outings	133.00
Book sales	291.06
Total	2,254.72
Expenditure	
Hall	120.00
Speakers	80.00
Post	123.55
Printing	448.50
Outing	65.00
MiniBus	69.00
Cable protector	30.00
PA System	71.98
Book printing	75.97
Brit. Association for Local History (Insurance)	75.00
Herts. Association for Local History (Memb. Fee)	20.00
Total	1,179.00
Excess income over expenditure	1,075.72
Add bank balance at 1st April 2019	3,542.37
Bank balance at 31st March 2020	4,618.09
Add PayPal bank balance at 31st March 2020	0.00
Sub-total	4,618.09
Deduct outstanding uncashed cheques at 31st March 2020	112.22
Total Assets at 1st April 2020	4,505.87

Minutes of the 28th AGM (10 June 2019) held at Friendship House

1. Apologies: Jean Cross, Audrey Parris, Anthony Starkey, Mavis Stoker, Carol Mullander, Mr. R. Moore.

2. Minutes of the 27th AGM were accepted.

3. Matters arising. None

4. Chair's report.

The History Society has come through another year. Meetings have been fairly well attended and we have had three interesting talks: "Discovering Essendon", "Julian Grenfell, Hertfordshire's War Poet" and, lastly, "The Rise and Fall of the Victorian Public House". We have also had two entertaining social meeting where members have had a chance to talk and reminisce. Our annual outing in May was to Place Hall House. I hope those who went enjoyed finding out about this historic building.

The Society has had stalls at two events, one at the Old Hatfield Residents Assoc. picnic in August and secondly, in April this year, at Lady Salisbury's Coffee Morning in the Old Palace. It would have been great if we had been able to attend more events in order to raise our profile, but with volunteers short on the ground we have been unable to do so.

Our WW1 exhibition was very successful. The first showing was at our July social meeting. The exhibition was then at St Etheldreda's for the summer. In September it was at the University and then in November at Hatfield House for the Remembrance weekend, after this it was in Hatfield Library for a month. The last showing was at Mill Green Museum in January. I hope as many people as possible managed to see the exhibition and found it interesting. We hope, eventually, to put all our WW1 research on to one of the websites the Society looks after.

Our own website is now fully secure, it gives information about our Society meetings, talks, events and is a platform to sell our publications. Our newsletters are there with an index and there is now an 'In memoriam' list of soldiers who left Hatfield and died in WW1 as well as a list of Gallantry awards.

Finally, as this is my last Chairman's report, I must say a big thank you to all those volunteers who helped over the last 11 years, there are too many names to mention here but I have been very grateful for all their support. I must also give a big thank you to our present hardworking committee and our newsletter editors.

Sadly, the future of our Society is uncertain, if no volunteers come forward in the next few months we will be closing at the end of this year after our Christmas meeting.

Christine Martindale

5. Treasurer's report.

The balance in the bank is £3542.37 and PayPal has £99.89. Membership stands at 124.

6. Election of accounts checker

It was agreed to do without an accounts checker as the society has a very small income.

7. Election of committee members.

There are a number of changes to the committee. Phil Marris has offered to stand as the Chair, Terry Cull as the treasurer, Chris Martindale to be secretary, Jane Teather as publications officer and Margaret Stephens as Events organizer. Albert Jackson proposed and Alastair Cameron seconded. The motion was passed.

8. AOB.

Discussed what we would do with our assets if the society was to be dissolved.

Thanks were given to Chris Martindale and Heather Richardson for their years of service.

There will be an update on the state of the society in the September newsletter.

The AGM was followed by a talk "Hatfield Photos: Old and New" taken by Michael Stevens". The talk was given by Christine & Derek Martindale.