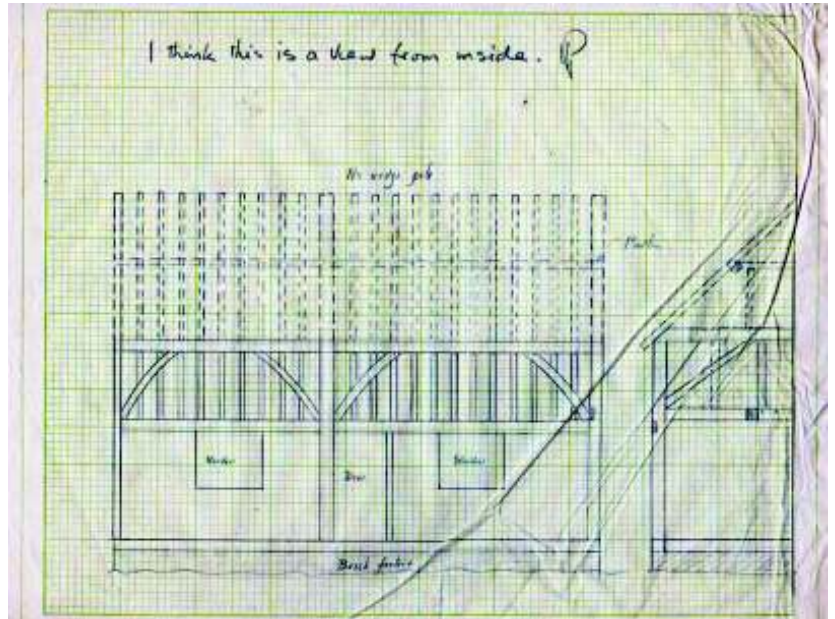


My Great Great Grandfather William Pankhurst lived there with a fairly large family and several lodgers. He was not T. Pankhurst as stated in *Hatfield and its People*, but William, a lowly rat catcher He lived with his wife, Martha née Bligh, their sons, William, Edward and Mark, daughter Winfield, (yes that is how her name was spelt), my Great Grandfather Arthur, James, and a final daughter, Sarah. The others in the house were Henry Bligh, a relation of Martha along with Samuel and Susann [sic] Turner. Their relationship to the family is unknown. How twelve people fitted into such a small building is hard to comprehend.

In 1952 the house still existed. In our present climate I am sure it would have been grade 1 listed, saved and restored, probably to become a “desirable residence”; but in the post-war years of the early 50s it was demolished as part of the new Hatfield development, along with many sadly missed buildings. I have provisional notes and a wealth of plans with dimensions of its construction, made by the WEA at the time of its demise, but these are incomplete and lack details on the timber infill, roof tiles, windows and outside appearance. I have tried all the usual sources for information but to date cannot find a picture of Pepper Hall.



William Pankhurst died in 1858. By then the family had moved to the more up-market New Town development at St. Albans Road Cottages. After being widowed Martha moved again and away from her children, and in 1871 lived back at Waltraps Green in Waltraps Cottages [shown in the centre of map opposite]; also mentioned in *Hatfield and Its People* (book 2, page 11). Pictures of these cottages seem equally as elusive.

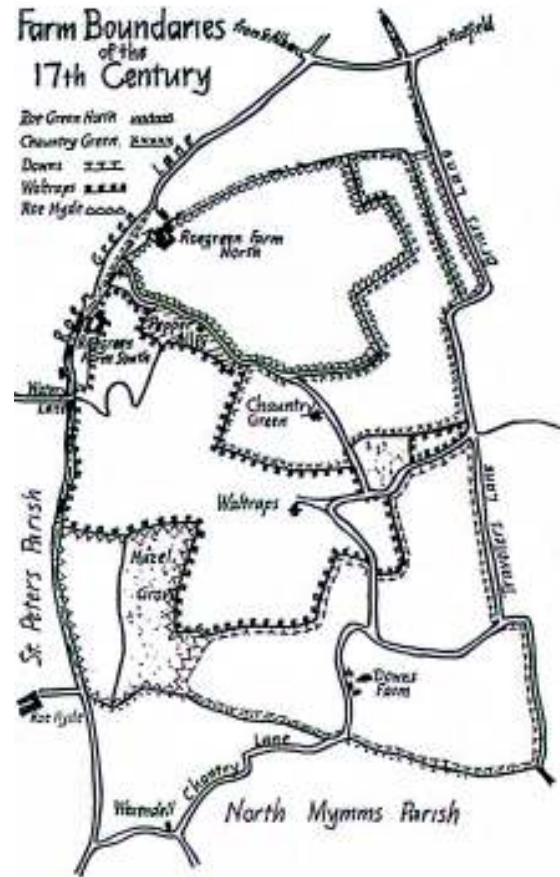
By answering *No* in the 1841 census William Pankhurst indicates he was not born in this county – but in which county? In the 1851 census we get the answer, Lye, in Kent. That gives the clue as to where to look for his family. He did not live to see the next census year; he died, aged 72, on 12 August 1858 at Chantry Green, Hatfield, and was buried at Bishops Hatfield three days later.

Martha Pankhurst proved most elusive. She was last seen at Waltraps Cottages at the top of Bishops Rise, where the University of Hertfordshire now stands. She did not appear in the 1881 census and presumably died in the years between, but I could find no trace of her death. Not even the General Register Office had a certificate for it. It took me 26 years to find her – in the most unexpected location.

Once Ancestry and Find My Past had indexed parish records and censuses on line, I had the opportunity to tidy up loose ends. I started looking through the records for some

of William and Martha's children. Sarah Pankhurst who later, when married, became Sarah Marsh, she was the key to finding Martha's death.

Martha was found quite by chance, living in Wood Green, Tottenham, North London. I had searched all deaths for any Martha Pankhursts who died between 1871 and 1881. It's surprising how many people have the same name: I found a Martha Pankhurst of the right age in Kent, but this proved to be the wrong person. I tried a variant spelling: *Parkhurst*. This threw up a Martha Parkhurst in North London, so I took a chance and bought the death certificate. I had resisted doing this previously because it was the wrong name and location but the correct age – not a great chance that it was correct. When it arrived, at first glance this was indeed the wrong person: many of the details it contained were incorrect. Her name was



Parkhurst, her husband was named as James, not William, and she died in the wrong place; she had lived in Hatfield, not North London. The deciding information that proved she was the correct Martha was because of the person "present at death". That turned out to be Sarah Marsh, Martha's daughter. Further research into the Marsh family proved that without doubt Samuel and Sarah Marsh lived at 3 Witch Cottages, Myddleton Road, Tottenham, where Martha died.

Did Martha become infirm and go to live with her daughter, or was she just visiting when she died? How Sarah could have registered so many wrong details is hard to understand. It took me a long 26 years to find Martha; it was a great moment when she was found. Now I have to find where she was buried, and that is not proving easy.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ESTEEMED ORDER ...

John Dean records changing prices locally through the twentieth century.

My late father, Edward Victor (Vic) Dean was born in Hatfield in 1902 and lived there all his life. He was named after the new King, Edward VII and the late Queen Victoria.

He saw the small country town expand between the Wars and become a New Town from the 1950s onwards. When he died, in 1987, I discovered receipts for goods that he had bought throughout his lifetime.

The first is dated 21 March 1929 when he purchased a BSA motor cycle for ten guineas (a guinea was one pound, one shilling; a shilling is now five pence in decimal currency).

The vendor was Ernest G. Ewens of 66 Brampton Road, St. Albans. It was a legal requirement that receipts should have a twopenny stamp stuck to them (there were twelve pennies in a shilling), over which the vendor signed his name. Mr Ewens actually wrote across two one-penny stamps.

On 15 February 1932 my father bought another motor cycle from S.W. Cull of 23 Glebeland, Hatfield. This was an AJS at a cost of seven pounds ten shillings.

When my father was looking to start a career there

were three major employers in the town; the brewery of Pryor, Reid & Co Ltd., Hatfield Park – Lord Salisbury’s estate, and the Great Northern Railway. He chose the railway and was working as an engine driver during the Second World War. This was a Reserved Occupation which excused him from being called up to serve in the Armed Forces.

My parents married in August 1944 and lived with his mother and stepfather in Primrose Cottages, Endymion Road. These names had connections with Benjamin Disraeli who was twice Prime Minister. Primroses were his favourite flower and he wrote a novel called *Endymion*. He was created Earl of Beaconsfield, hence Beaconsfield Road nearby.

In October 1944, only six weeks after my parents’ marriage, a flying bomb severely damaged their home. Hatfield was a target because

the de-Havilland Aircraft Company was based in the town. This bought about a move to Gracemead, where were the railway houses. Asda’s supermarket is now on the site.

The first receipt in their new home was for a red-brick fireplace installed by J. Naden, a local builder, in May 1947. The following year my parents purchased a three-piece suite for the front-room. It was luxurious compared to the drab furniture elsewhere but the front-room was ‘out of bounds’ except for special occasions.

I was born in hospital but my sisters had home-births in 1948 and 1950. In both cases my mother used the County Council Home Help Service whilst she was convalescing, the payments for which are duly recorded.



We got our first television in 1951 which cost over £56. This seems a lot, allowing for inflation. Then in 1952 there are records of my first pair of glasses which was prompted by my copying something from the school blackboard which my mother said was 'gibberish'. She then realised that my sight was defective – which was a surprise as neither she, nor my father, had poor eyesight. Both my sisters were subsequently diagnosed as short-sighted.

In 1952/3 my parents bought the *New Book of Knowledge*, an eight-volume encyclopaedia, for fifteen guineas. The payment card records monthly instalments of one guinea. It was intended as an educational aid for me and my sisters, from which we got much help and enjoyment. It is now in my possession; very battered, but still useful.



Hatfield was satisfactory for day-to-day shopping, but my mother would go to St. Albans for anything else. Receipts show mattresses re-sprung at Black & Dowell, 10 Dalton Street; a bureau from S. Matthews & Co., 27 Market Place and a carpet and underfelt from S.

Halpern, 4 High Street. Details on Halpern's receipt include 'phone order, all in stock, deliver today, cash on delivery'. How times have changed!

My mother probably used a public telephone box; we didn't get our own phone until the 1960s, when I had one installed.

Then there are receipts for my first uniform at senior school in September 1957; two bedside cabinets for my sisters in October 1958; my mother's first washing machine in December 1958; and a family holiday in Ventnor in August 1960, when we rented 2 Richmond Cottages for a fortnight at a cost of twenty-five pounds, four shillings.

We moved to South Hatfield on 27 May 1964. The removal expenses were ten guineas. Not long afterwards my parents bought a second-hand *Ercol* dining room suite from a private address in Welwyn, consisting of a sideboard, plate rack, five Windsor chairs with cushions, and a table. They paid for everything in cash or used postal orders or money orders. The first indication that my father had a cheque book was in 1965, by which time he had taken voluntary redundancy from the railway and needed a bank account to receive his wages from his new employers.

I celebrated my 21st birthday in October 1966; there is a receipt for a pair of binoculars which my father gave me, the only present from that day to survive the passage of years.

My sister's wedding reception in August 1968 is duly recorded. The cost for 53 people was just over £100 including three guineas for the hire of the hall and one guinea to pay the fee for the extension of the licence.

The receipts diminished after that. My father retired and then bought fewer items whilst my mother was working and replaced carpets and furniture as required.

However, my father still paid the electricity bills at the showroom in St. Albans Road and the water bills at the company's office in Bishops Rise. They still had the statutory twopenny stamp affixed until this fee was abolished about 1970.

Water is one item that seems to have gone up out of all proportion. The yearly charge for 1972 was just £7.84!

SOCIETY NEWS

Message from the Committee

You are invited to attend the Society's 31st AGM, which will be held on 10 June 2024 and followed by a talk (see below).

Diary Dates

The following meetings have been booked with Hatfield Social Club (76 Great North Rd, Hatfield AL9 5ER) for the rest of 2024:

- Monday, 10 June 2024 (7-9 p.m.): AGM followed by "Fiction Written in Our Landscape: the history-inspired stories from *What the Wind Saw: Short Stories from the Heart of Hertfordshire* – a talk by Zoe Jasko
- Monday, 9 Sept. 2024 (7-9 p.m.): "The Architecture of Hatfield New Town: Success or Failure?" – a talk by Geoffrey Hollis
- Monday, 9 Dec. 2024 (3-5 p.m.): Christmas social meeting

Admission: £1 for members, £2 for non-members

Annual General Meeting (AGM)

Agenda

- | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1. Apologies | 5. Treasurer's report |
| 2. Approval of minutes of the 30th AGM, held 12th June 2023 | 6. Election of accounts examiner |
| 3. Matters arising not covered elsewhere | 7. Election of committee members |
| 4. Chairman's report | 8. Proposed increase in Society fees |
| | 9. Any other business |

Paper copies of the agenda and the 2023/24 accounts will be provided. Please send any motions for the AGM by email to contact@hatfieldhistory.uk or by post to Mrs Chris Martindale, 30 Elm Drive, Hatfield, Herts AL10 8NU.

World War One Research

For the centenary of WW1 we researched the men from Hatfield that died during the conflict; this culminated in the publication of the 'Hatfield Parish In Memoriam 1914-1918'. The complete album has now been added to the 'Digitised Publications' section of the '*Herts at War*' website. Also, all the information on the Hatfield men has been added to the 'Roll of Honour' section. Visit www.hertsatwar.co.uk and, from the Home Page, navigate to / archive / digital-publications - books-and-publications / books-on-locations&memorials / – then click on 'hatfield-parish-in-memoriam' on the left-hand side.

Chris Martindale

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<https://www.hatfieldhistory.uk/newsletters/>
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