

## THE BEGINNING OF THE SALISBURY DYNASTY

*Paul Savage tells the story of the earliest generations.*



**Robert Cecil  
1st Earl of  
Salisbury**

Immediately after the first Lord Salisbury had settled at Hatfield he initiated a scheme for the relief of the poor there by means of the establishment of a weaving industry, and in December 1608 he made an agreement with one Walter Morrall, by which Morrall was to teach his art to fifty persons to be chosen by the earl in the parish of Hatfield.

Robert Earl of Salisbury died in 1612, and was succeeded by his son William, who took the side of the Parliament in the Civil War, and subsequently sat in Cromwell's Lower House, though he had received a 'marquessate' by vote. Charles I, while in the custody of the army, was at Hatfield House at the end of June 1647. The Earl of Salisbury was, however, reconciled to the king at the Restoration, and was appointed high



**William Cecil  
2nd Earl of  
Salisbury**

steward of St. Albans in 1663. He died at Hatfield in December 1668, leaving as his heir his grandson James, the son of his younger



**James Cecil  
3rd Earl of Salisbury**

son Charles Viscount Cranborne and Diana daughter and co-heir of **James** Earl of Dirletoun. The third Earl of Salisbury died in 1683 and was succeeded by his son and namesake, who became a Roman Catholic and was made high steward of Hertford by James II in 1688. In the following year he was impeached, but was discharged after two years' imprisonment. He died in 1713, leaving as his heir his son James, who died in 1728 and was succeeded by his son of the same name, the sixth earl.



**James Cecil  
4th Earl of Salisbury**

With the seventh earl, a fifth James who succeeded his father in 1780, began a revival of the political traditions of the family. He had been M.P. for Great Bedwyn for six years (1774–80) and was elected for Launceston, when his father's death transferred

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**James Cecil  
5th Earl of Salisbury**

him to the House of Lords; in the same year he was made treasurer of the household and a privy councillor. He was Lord-Lieutenant of Hertfordshire from 1771 to 1823, and from 1773 to 1815 Colonel of the county Militia. In this double capacity he entertained King George III on the occasion of a great review in June 1800. ‘Their Majesties in a post-chaise and four, and their Royal Highnesses the Princess Augusta, the Princess Elizabeth and the Princess Mary in a post-coach and four, attended by the



**James Cecil  
6th Earl of Salisbury**

Countess of Harrington, arrived at Hatfield at ten minutes before nine’ in the morning on 13 June and ‘breakfasted in the summer dining- room.’ The review was held immediately after breakfast, and ‘His Majesty and Their Royal Highnesses passed the highest encomiums on the appearance

of the troops. Afterwards they ‘walked on the lawn, and saw the different corps march into the square where the tables were laid for their reception’ and ‘then adjourned to the library and waited there until dinner was ready; when “The Roast Beef of Old England” was played as they passed through the gallery.’



**James Cecil 7th Earl  
and 1st Marquess of  
Salisbury**

The seventh Earl of Salisbury was created Marquess 24 August 1789 and four years later was elected K.G. He married in 1773 Mary Emilia Hill, daughter of the Earl of Downshire, a sportswoman whose



**Mary Emilia  
1st Marchioness of  
Salisbury**

fame is still remembered. She played a conspicuous part in the meetings of the Archery Society and was for many years Master of the Hatfield Hounds, only resigning when, at the age of seventy-eight, she found it wiser to go through gates than to jump them; it is recorded of her that even then she considered herself well able to hunt with the harriers. She survived her husband and perished in the great fire which burned the west wing of Hatfield in 1835.

James Brownlow William, second Marquess of Salisbury, who had taken by royal licence the surname of Gascoyne before that of Cecil, on his marriage to Miss Frances Mary Gascoyne of Childwall Hall, Lancashire, in 1821, succeeded his father in 1823. He had already been in Parliament ten years, as a member for Weymouth from 1813 to 1817 and for Hertford from 1817 to



**James Brownlow  
William 2nd  
Marquess of Salisbury**



**Robert Arthur Talbot  
3rd Marquess of Salisbury**

1823. From 1818 to 1827 he was a commissioner for Indian affairs and was elected K.G. in April 1842. He was visited at Hatfield in 1846 by the Queen and Prince Consort, in honour of whose visit he placed new entrance gates of elaborate French metal work to the park. He was Lord Privy Seal in 1852 and President of the Council 1858–9. He died in April 1868 and was buried at Hatfield.

Robert Arthur Talbot, his younger but eldest surviving son, succeeded him as third marquess. He had already achieved some political distinction, having been M.P. for Stamford in four Parliaments (1853–68) and Secretary of State for India 1866–7, an office which he resumed on the return of the Conservatives to power in 1874. He was ambassador in 1876 to the Conference at Constantinople and joint

ambassador to the Congress at Berlin in 1878; on his return from this mission he received the order of the Garter. In this year also he entered on that distinguished administration of the Foreign Office which will always remain his chief title to fame. In 1885 he became Prime Minister, continuing as Foreign Secretary until 1886, when he became First Lord of the Treasury. In the following year, however, he resumed his work at the Foreign Office, where he remained until the Conservatives lost power in 1892; and on the return of his party in 1895 he again became Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary, continuing in both offices until 1900, when he gave up the latter for the less arduous duties of Lord Privy Seal. During this period Hatfield became the scene of 'great official garden parties with their strange congeries of Eastern statesmen, Indian chiefs and Negro kings; warriors and diplomatists; the great world of London; the little world of the country; Tory members whom it was a duty to invite and Radical members who were delighted to be asked.' One of the

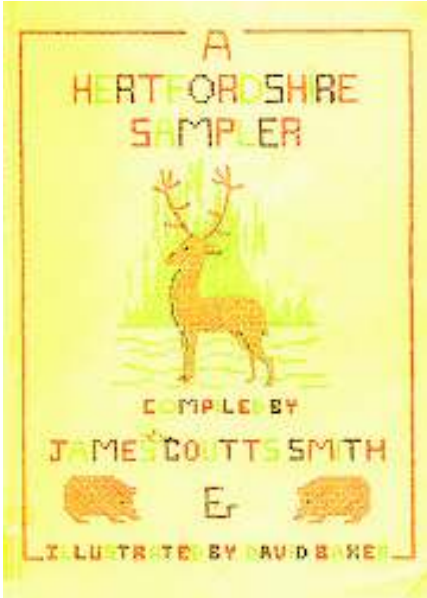


**James Edward Hubert  
4th Marquess of Salisbury**

most important of these took place in July 1887, when Queen Victoria and many distinguished foreign visitors, who had come to England for her Jubilee, were present. The weather on this occasion was beautiful, but the Hatfield garden parties were not always fortunate in this respect, for the first visit of the Prince and Princess of Wales and the Crown Prince and Princess of Germany in 1885 and that of the Shah of Persia in 1889 were overshadowed by 'sullen and menacing' or 'positively weeping skies.' The last of these great garden parties was held in the coronation year of King Edward VII, in which year Lord Salisbury resigned. He died 22 August 1903, and was succeeded by his son James Edward Hubert, the 4th marquess.

## ***A HERTFORDSHIRE SAMPLER – UNFAIR TO HATFIELD?***

Our December 2018 newsletter quoted extracts from Beatrix Potter’s journal that appear in *A Hertfordshire Sampler* (1). This 158-page volume is described in its preface as comprising “sad, gay, serious, light-hearted, learned and naive combinations of the alphabet by observers of the Hertfordshire scene, from Julius Caesar to an anonymous airman of the Great War, from Poet to Peasant, and all walks of life between, illustrated by the ‘decorative devices’ of David Baker.”



It includes many extracts from diaries, letters, magazines and books referring to Hertfordshire, its towns and villages, as well as twelve appropriate poems and ten unusual epitaphs – for example this, for a knife-grinder:

Aaron Fisher is my name;  
Hitchin, Hertfordshire, I came.  
When I'm dead, my grinding done,  
I hope you will employ my son.

Apart from the pages Beatrix Potter wrote about Essendon, Hatfield is not well represented in this anthology – not when compared to Hitchin, which boasts nine references; St Albans with six (including a two-page poem claiming to “mention the name of each pub in town”); and Welwyn, with four, including a four-page poem entitled “Welwyn Boundaries”. Hatfield makes only two appearances.

First there is the quatrain dating from 1610, when Robert Cecil, 1st Earl of Salisbury, earned such unpopularity by enclosing Hatfield Great Wood:

Here lies, thrown for worms to eat,  
Little bossive Robin that was so great.  
Not Robin Goodfellow, nor Robin Hood,  
But Robin the encloser of Hatfield Wood.

The second mention of Hatfield is from John Byng’s *Torrington Diaries* (2). Byng writes that, in 1789, when he reached Hatfield Park Gates, a storm caused him to pull up by the Grey Hound [*sic*] Inn (near the Woodside Gate of Hatfield Park – now “St Michael’s” house). He continues:

The Hostler was eager to tell me of a poor Mr T—t’s being confined there, from a sad overturn in a Stage Coach ... I ascended to his Bed Room; and found him recovering from an accident he was happy to relate, and at which I cou’d scarcely refrain from Laughter.... The Coach was broken down near this Inn-Door, and Mr T. fell under 5 female Passengers ... When the Roof breaking in sent an upper Cargo upon Him, which added to his former Load, bruis’d him, and cut his Head so much as to confine him here for several Days.



The earls of Salisbury receive two further mentions in the sampler. In 1606, the last year when the Salisbury family lived at Theobalds, in Cheshunt, before being obliged by James I to exchange that residence for Hatfield House, according to a letter from Sir John Harington, Kings James I of England and Christian IV of Denmark were entertained at Theobalds, and:



Theobalds Park

“One day a great feast was held; and after dinner the representation of Solomon his Temple and the coming of the Queen of Sheba was made or (as I may better say) was meant to have been made, before their majesties, by Device of the Earl of Salisbury and others. But alas! ...”

Alas, indeed – it all went sadly wrong: a farcically disastrous performance. The same Robert Cecil, first Earl of Salisbury, slandered above, was that discomfited host.

Later, the *Sampler* features *The Hertford and Ware Patriot*, a polemical journal that crusaded for reform. In reporting an inquest held at Watton-at-Stone in 1833, on a labourer killed in a fight with a policeman, the editor “virulently attacked the Tory party, its members and all its works, including the local aristocracy and squirearchy, ... and the new police force; reserving particular venom for James, 2nd Marquess of Salisbury, as the local Tory despot, wittily nicknamed by *The Patriot* “Jerry Sneak” (3).

Truly, Hatfield and its aristocratic family cannot be said to appear to advantage in this archival anthology.

*Hazel K. Bell*

## References

1. *A Hertfordshire Sampler* edited by James Coutts Smith; Hertfordshire Publications, 1980
2. Byng, John, *The Torrington Diaries*, ed. C. B. & F. Andrews; Eyre, 1954
3. Moodey, Gordon E. in *The East Herts Archaeological Society Newsletter No. 20*, 1967



## SOCIETY NEWS

### Diary Dates

Four meetings have been booked for 2024, all at our usual venue, Hatfield Social Club (76 Great North Rd, Hatfield AL9 5ER). Speakers are still being planned:

- Monday, 11 March 2024 (3-5 p.m.): “The Old Palace, Hatfield House, the Cecils and some Notable Visitors” – a talk by Dermot Burke
- Monday, 10 June 2024 (7-9 p.m.): AGM plus talk (tbd)
- Monday, 9 Sept. 2024 (7-9 p.m.): talk tbd
- Monday, 9 Dec. 2024 (3-5 p.m.): Members are invited to bring along local-history items that may interest other members.

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

### Committee Members and Roles

As announced in the December 2023 newsletter, I resigned as Chairman from the end of 2023, whilst retaining my other roles. I am pleased to announce that the committee has resolved to take on the Chairmanship on a rotational basis. We are also fortunate to have co-opted two new committee members: Paul Cooper and Terry Pankhurst. With these extra pairs of hands, we will have four meetings in 2024 as above.

Here is the new list of Committee members and their roles:

- Chairmanship – Rotational
- Alastair Cameron – Events, booking speakers, display boards.
- Paul Cooper – Assisting the committee with HLHS administration
- Terry Cull – Treasurer & membership secretary
- Phil Marris – Webmaster, publications editor, newsletter reviewer, liaising with STEPS, setting up equipment at meetings. etc.
- Chris Martindale – Secretary, posting newsletters, booking the social club etc.
- Terry Pankhurst – Helping Alastair with displays
- Margaret Stephens – Helping Alastair with events and speakers
- Jane Teather – Publications Officer

### Hatfield and its People – Compendium

The consolidated edition comprising the original twelve parts of the series plus Hazel Bell’s cumulative index runs to 588 pages, paperback. Print quality is good and we hope to have copies available for sale in the Spring.

*Phil Marris*

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