



Hatfield Regis

Local History Society

President: William Gosling Lord of the Manor

Programme Synopsis 2014

May 20

Nottingham – A Historical Review through the Years

Sandra Saban

It was a very successful evening with Sandra providing an interesting picture and background of Nottingham and the surrounding area from her early years. A detailed account that included churches, architecture, silk, cigarettes and the bike industry.

17 June

Visit to Great Dunmow Museum

A group of 21 members from the Society spent an interesting and enjoyable evening on Tuesday 17 June 2014. The Museum has found a home in the Maltings when a project to restore the building was started in 1996 with funding raised from a number of sources. Steve and Pat Schorah, who have been instrumental in managing the Museum since it was opened in 2001 provided a detailed tour of the varied range of exhibitions. Both Steve and Pat explained in detail the way the Museum worked. Luckmans and Ashards shops, John Fordham clocks, Dumow trade tokens, the railway, Fire engines and equipment are included as a regular part of the Great Dunmow Heritage.

School Essay Competition

Five Pupils of Year 6 from a total of 28 entries received certificates for their imaginative and factual writing on WW2 in Hatfield Heath. All Pupils demonstrated confidence, ability and approach to the content and delivery of their submissions. Judge Frank Walsh commented on the quality of sentence construction and spelling that contributed to a difficult decision in choosing

the five winning entries. This has become an annual event between Hatfield Regis History Society and the School setting a project which is totally supported by the Head, John Clements and Sharon O'Mahony, Year 6 Teacher. It offers the Pupils an opportunity to extend part of their curriculum and move from Primary to



Secondary School with added confidence.

HRLHS Chair, David Parish presented the Certificates and Fellow Judge Ivan Cooper showed images and answered Pupils questions on the POW Camp 116 which was one of the topics researched.

22 July

Firefighting in Essex during the Great War

Mick Ford

Volunteer Essex Fire and Rescue Service

Mick Ford gave a graphic account of the part which Essex Fire Brigade played in the Great War. Following a general introduction which provided details of changes from current practice to earlier Brigades he interspersed his interesting talk with a series of slides showing a range of appliances, fire stations and details of attacks made by Zeppelin and Gotha bombers. Throughout the talk the work which the Fire Brigade was engaged upon over various Counties, Towns and Villages became clear with some descriptions adding humour to the evening. Concluding with comments on how strategies used in WW1 had relevance to WW2 for planning, organization, innovation and radical approaches led to a question and answer session from an interested audience.

23 September

History and Renovation of Hatfield Mill

Ivan Cooper

History and renovation of Hatfield Mill was the subject of the latest Society's presentation. Reference to the sail mill, 'Merchants Mill', built in 1842 and demolished in 1909 provided the prologue to the talk.

After an introductory reference to the historical background the talk concentrated mainly on how the new owners, SKK Design, had refurbished existing structure and fabric but sympathetically

retained, as far as possible, existing elements and historical features. Images of the external façade of the building demonstrated changes which continued to the interior and structural changes which have taken place.

The Mill still consists of four floors, a basement, ground, first and second floors which are now occupied by SKK Design and William Morris. There have been certain changes to the ground floor at an earlier date with some of the central columns presumably to create more space for machinery. The only surviving item of machinery



is a chain hoist in the roof of the second floor opposite the lucam. This has been retained as a feature forming part of the renovation. All offices have been completed

to a very high standard contributing to current technological requirements but retaining historical aspects because of its significance for local industrial heritage. HRLHS acknowledges with thanks and appreciation the help which the Mill Owners have provided in researching and documenting this project,

It is the intention of the Society to produce a booklet on the Mill and its renovation which will be available in the New Year.

21 October

The War Memorials of Hatfield Regis

John Sly

As an introduction to the talk reference to social aspects, differentials and quality of life pre WW1 were examined. A series of pre 1914 photographs were shown to illustrate the Village environment and an organisation chart of regiments highlighting the structure of the British infantry. In 1908 reforms took place which created a British Expeditionary Force (BEF). In 1914 the 'New Army' comprising Service Battalions was formed. Mass enlistment took place (Kitchener – 'Your Country needs You') with Recruiting Sergeants capitalising on a joining commission. Following this general introduction John concentrated on the work carried out in researching the book. He explained the difficulty in researching documents and Army records.

Several local names formed the basis for a continued presentation referring to his book in some detail. His research also uncovered the fact that several men who were born in the villages and who died in the war were not commemorated locally, an issue which he indicated would be addressed in the second edition of the book to be produced before the 1914-1918 Memorial period has ended. During the interval books containing census, birth certificates and other documents used in the research were available for the group to examine. A discussion followed the break with a range of questions and answers which encapsulated an interesting and enjoyable evening.

18 November

United Reformed Church

Ivan Wybrew

The two Churches of Hatfield Heath formed the introduction of his talk which was to focus on the history of the United Reformed Church and should be proud of its inheritance as it was one of only 400-500 Independent Churches. The early Reformed Church built in 1726 was believed to be from the personal resources of Reverend George Wiggett. Ivan's talk continued covering a series of Ministers from James Small to Samuel Gaffee leading to the 'Golden Age of Hatfield Heath Chapel' and Cornelius Berry who served the Community for 53 years from 1811 to 1864. During his Ministry in 1856 a school was built and in June 1875 the foundation stone for the new Chapel was laid with the Chapel finished in 1876 at a cost of £3,300. The Church School, built in 1857 known as the British School, appointed two of its most successful Head Teachers, Edward Rogers (1895-1921) and Ralph Dix (1921-1932). In 1932 the British School merged with the Church of England National School under the authority of the Essex Education Authority with Ralph Dix becoming Head Teacher. In 1924 the Afternoon Women's Meeting was revived and for over 60 years was a most important factor in the 20th Century Church. Margaret Taylor (1987 to 1997) was its first women Minister. After her retirement the Church went for a long period without a regular Minister until the Reverend Terry Keen was appointed in 2009 and still officiates today. The URC halls are increasingly used by Village organisations but entering into its

350th year and looking ahead there appears to be an uncertain future. A challenge to individuals, also the Village and surrounding population to engender the enthusiasm and dedication which is evident from the present congregation.

5 December

About Anglia – ‘The Four Seasons’

A talk and presentation by Dudley Chisnall

A joint meeting with the Royal British Legion and Hatfield Regis History Society concluded the programme for 2014. Combining a social event with an extremely interesting talk by Dudley Chisnall was the culmination of a very successful year for both groups. Mr Chisnall's walking tour of East Anglia supplemented with excellent photographs created a backdrop that enabled the viewer to become totally involved in the countryside. The pictorial walk and descriptive dialogue offered the opportunity for the audience to participate in recognising areas, wild life and architecture which included coast, market towns, villages and churches. An evening which was both entertaining and educational.

It was pleasing to note the increase of members joining the History Society this year and a programme for 2015 is being prepared and will be available for publication early in the New Year.

Ivan Cooper