



## **Hatfield Regis**

### **Local History Society**

**President: William Gosling Lord of the Manor**

## **PROGRAMME SYNOPSIS 2015**

**24 March 2015**

### **The Stag Publication – Frank Walsh and Ivan Cooper**

Following the Annual General Meeting of HRLHS a launch took place by Frank Walsh of his book, the 'Story of the Stag Public House'. It covered the period from 1723 until the present day when renovations took place following its sale. A visual presentation of the chronological details commissioned by Tim Mascall from the Colchester Archaeological Trust and work carried out was provided by Ivan Cooper covering the 5 phases from 1723 to 2015.

**21 April 2015**

### **Hatfield Heath Magazine from 1893 to 2015.**

#### **Bruno Scheggia**

An entertaining evening having the benefit of Bruno's interaction with an attentive audience contained a great many facts and a great deal of humour. Initially first published in 1894 as a Parish Magazine provided the starting point for Bruno's talk and presentation. Some interesting statistics from 1894 when the magazine cost 1 penny (old money), later editions cost subscriptions of £2.50 until 2005 when it was backed by a Parish plan grant which enabled it to go to the whole village free. Within a very short time, within a year or so, the magazine became self-sufficient financed solely from advertising enabling a free magazine delivery to each household. Bruno took a 'walk' through with supporting images of several old issues that also highlighted the number of cover changes which had taken place over the 112 years of the magazines existence (In all some 7 changes from the 1894 edition). The magazine continues to go from strength to strength by virtue of the Editor (Bruno and his wife Barbara) and the 22 Volunteers.

**19 May 2015**

### **Audley End – Ted Pretty**

The recent presentation for HRLHS was an extremely interesting and humorous talk by Ted Pretty MBE. Although retired for 20 years from his work at Audley End House an enthusiasm for his trade, as a plumber, specifically working with lead, was all embracing. A six month trial with the promise of a contract extended to 38 years and 4 months but still no contract. He gave accounts of work carried out supported by a series of photographs with reference to Houses of Parliament, Tower of London and close views of Ted's affinity to 'lead' featuring piping, roof coverings and the way application of lead was used in a range of workings at Audley End. A visual tour around the house included the Great Hall, Salon, the Popes Chair, an antique French clock which had been found in the roof of a stable block, State bedroom, Red

Drawing Room and Chapel with a picturesque stained glass window from the inside but a clear glass look from outside. Grounds of the house and parklands divided by the River Cam and a restored walled Victorian kitchen. Several questions from an intent audience were answered by Mr Pretty with a knowledge significant of a man who has an appetite and keenness still thoroughly involved with his 'craft'

### **School Project – 'Our Village' - Year 6 Hatfield Heath Community Primary School**

Six Pupils of Year 6 from a total of 30 entries received certificates for their approach to the theme of 'My Village'. An important element of some work they produced related to



earlier participation in producing their own Parish Plan comments. Frank Walsh and Ivan Cooper, who judged the project, were very positive when presenting the certificates. *'It is a credit to the School and Pupils of the*

*quality, content and enthusiastic approach in producing a diverse range of interesting projects'* said Frank when addressing the Pupils. Before the presentation of the certificates a short slide show on the renovation of 'the Stag' public house, Hatfield Heath, describing its history from 1723 to the present was given by Ivan. An annual event the School has already expressed an interest to continue for 2016 when it is possible they will be joined by Pupils from Hatfield Broad Oak Primary School.

### **23 June 2015 – Summer Outing – Gardens of Easton Lodge**

Seventeen members of the Society made their summer visit to Easton Lodge Gardens. A guided tour of the grounds by preservation trust volunteers Claire Matthews and Jim Boutwood provided an insight into the historic property. Gardens date back more than 400 years with possibly the most renowned owner Countess of Warwick, Mistress of the Prince of Wales, later Edward VII. In 1902 designer Harold Peto created the formal yet romantic gardens. In 1939 the War Office commissioned Easton Lodge for use by the Army Home Guard and in 1943 trees felled to accommodate an airfield and US Airforce residence. From 1950 for almost 45 years the garden was forgotten and everything was covered in brambles, nettles, fallen and unwanted trees but a dedicated team of Volunteers restored the gardens revealing the 'glories' of over 100 years ago. Historical details of the house, gardens and owners were covered from the Countess of Warwick to the Creasey family who have played a major role enabling gardens to be enjoyed by the public.

**15 September 2015**

### **Footpaths in Hatfield Heath - Stella and Ian Hughes**

An informative talk by Stella and Ian Hughes on the 'Footpaths of Hatfield Heath' defined a historical and current perspective. The background to how footpaths provided a commuter route between farms and villages and the effect of the 18/19 Century enclosure acts was described in some detail. An evening divided into a number of parts included references to signage, types of rights of way and the use of local authority maps. Using a range of dated maps to illustrate footpath

details reflecting interesting comparisons of how some footpaths appeared to have changed. The maintenance responsibilities of footpaths for Councils, Farmers and Walkers was highlighted and detailed maps of local routes shown. Four compass points of Hatfield Heath footpaths generated facts and figures to this extent. The detailed work produced for these maps is symptomatic of the way in which Stella and Ian have approached the importance that they place upon their appointment as Wardens.

### **20 October 2015**

#### **Hatfield Heath Players – Steve Foster**

A 'dramatic' evening with Steve Foster in the main role. A retrospect of the Hatfield Heath Players conveyed the period from 1968 to the present. Humorous and intellectual but not developing into a Whitehall farce provided a large audience with memories of the Players. Many remembered in great detail not only the performances but their own involvement during the years. Using a scrapbook on a lectern, but not delivering a sermon, Steve used the audience to engender an active response. His chronological approach created a template to ensure that nothing was missing from the many years and performances which had been staged. Mention had to be made of Christopher Timothy who spoke at the Sheering WI and was the catalyst for starting the Hatfield Heath Players. From 1969 onwards the Players have presented 110 performances and with '60 Years of Radio Comedy will bring up the English Nelson of 111. A completely different approach to direct a radio presentation as Steve described. In 2003 they were entered for the first National Finals and in 2015 with a performance of 'Bombers Moon' swept the board at Hertford and Woking (for the National Awards) winning five awards. The memorabilia displayed was eagerly handled and reviewed. Interest generated over the years have captivated audiences and provided many of the cast with positive opportunities.

### **17 November 2015**

#### **Allotments History and Eden Cottage Hospital Frank Walsh and Ivan Cooper**

Frank Walsh developed the history and current situation of the allotments while Ivan Cooper gave a precis account on Eden Cottage Hospital. This talk presented with an emphasis on its history and content for a pamphlet being produced. The small **original allotments site** at the rear of Broomfields was part of nearby Little Heath Farm and owned by the

Houblon Estate and occupied by John Pamphelon. Its first use as allotments is unknown for certain but is believed to have been from the 1950s when there were 12 full plots in regular use. The land was given for that purpose by Mr John Robarts but by 2006 only Gerald Pearson cultivated a single plot. Following an informal meeting in 2010 a voluntary management committee was set up which became linked to a plan for affordable housing and in October 2012 outline planning application ultimately gained approval. A process of clearing the site took place and a group of applicant volunteers and Hastoe employees marked out the plots. Almost six and half years after the inaugural meeting the allotments were allocated to the applicants on Monday 16 November 2015

There is evidence **that Eden Cottage Hospital** stands on the site of a 12<sup>th</sup> Century monastery dissolved in 1536 by Henry VIII. Some parts of the priory church remain as part of St Mary's Parish Church. The building was once a silk mill but in 1894 it was opened by Lord Rookwood as a cottage hospital and named the Eden Cottage Hospital after his late wife Lady Eden. From 1902 to 1929 Dr J T White was the most notable Medical Officer and from 1946 when the National Health Service was formed Bishop's Stortford Hospital Management Committee was responsible for running Eden Cottage Hospital until its closure in 1958. In 1959 Dr John Bennison and his wife bought the property to make it their home and surgery. It was originally based in their house in Hatfield Broad Oak, and was combined with a mobile surgery which they drove around the Villages. When the Drs Bennison retired in 1988, the practice at Hatfield Broad Oak moved into temporary accommodation and then moved again to Cannons Lane in 1989 under Drs. Gilchrist, Katharine and Peter Orton.

### **8 December 2016**

#### **The Tunnellers –Pat Schorah**

A joint meeting with the Royal British Legion and Hatfield Regis History Society concluded the programme for 2015. The content of Pat Schorah's talk on the Tunnellers was focused upon personal reflections of her Grandfather. Born in 1884 William Parry Davey at the age of 11 entered the mine as a coal hauler. Following his work in the mine as a young man he enlisted in the Rifle Brigade and saw service in Malta and India. In 1914 he went with the BEF to France and like many WWI soldiers who have a record in two regiments William was transferred to the Royal Engineers. The description of exploits and methods used by the Tunnellers provided some interesting studies. Detailed entries into war diaries, which contributed to intelligence summaries, provided descriptive comments on daily actions and yardage completed. Pat depicted how the Tunnellers lived a relentless existence in the depths of the battlefield for almost two and a half years, enduring physical and mental stresses that were often more extreme than their infantry counterparts. She explained how their lives were reduced to a complex war of silence, tension and claustrophobia, leading up to the most dramatic mine offensive in history launched on 7 June 1917 at Messines Ridge. Although this was a very personal approach researched for a family archive it clearly expressed the way in which that part of the war was conducted.

**It has been a particularly busy year for the Society and a full programme for 2016 has already been arranged. A major event is planned for July with a four day exhibition taking place from 8 to 11 July 2016 at Holy Trinity Church Institute. A time line covering part of the Victorian era through WWI, WWII and Village life demonstrating current changes which have taken place.**

*Ivan Cooper, Local History Recorder*