

Hello to all Fleetville Diaries members and friends.

VE DAY AND ST ALBANS MUSEUMS WEBSITE

Some readers will have become engrossed in the collections' page of St Albans' Museums website, entering search terms for items of potential interest. Browsing the resulting images already digitised passes an enthralling hour or two. Only two VE street parties have so far come to light in its collection: Tavistock Avenue and Pageant Road. Longacres also appeared in last week's Herts Advertiser, source unknown, and a party in an unknown street. Now, where that might have been, we wonder? Mike also has pictures from Elm Drive on VJ Day. We all understand why taking photos might have been difficult, with film being in short supply. But if anyone possesses pictures they think might have been taken at a street party, whether VE, VJ, Coronation or any other event, it would be great to have an archive copy.



Clearly a T junction, with a terrace along the connecting road. Suggestions anyone?

CONFUSING DETAILS ALONG ALBAN WAY

Shortly before lockdown began Alex took a walk along Alban Way from Fleetville to the next waymarker, Salvation Army, where the rotting sleeper platform remains. The blue bridge is one of many changes to this location but is not why Alex took an extra interest. Two companies, neither extant, made use of the branch railway line in their time: Sander's Orchids and Salvation Army Printing Works. There were also two platforms, the present one replacing an earlier version, for passengers to alight or board, mainly employees but occasionally visitors. Each firm had a siding to load and unload from goods trains, and a narrow bridge was attached to the side of the track bridge over Camp Road. These changes appeared to happen at different times and may or may not have been connected to each other. Alex writes, *"I am gradually putting together a coherent account of the development of the site."* He is hoping to untangle some of the misinformation which is in the public domain. We look forward to a better understanding, Alex.



GROUP OF SMART HOMES

David has been alerted to a collection of images belonging to Marconi Instruments Heritage Collection. They are labelled *Prefabs in Hill End Lane 1953*. His contact says *"I recall these buildings and believe that they stood on the land between Hill End Lane and the railway line."* The company came to St Albans in 1939 and grew quickly. It frequently pressed the council for houses for its growing numbers of employees, and was awarded homes, or sites for homes, in Charmouth Road, Drakes Drive, and possibly Sutton Road. And now a share of a delivery of prefabs. It is believed these were sited on the former rail siding at Hill End Station just along the road from the company's entrance. If any of our readers has further details about these well-kept homes, do let us know.

We believe a generation of park homes occupied this site after the prefabs were moved on. Part of this land was used to park cars belonging to Marconi staff. One or two peak time journeys from St Peter's Street, using single decker buses, served Marconi and waited on the siding site. It would be great to see pictures of the sidings in the early days post-war.



ANOTHER SCHOOL FOUND

Not previously known, but now appearing on the list of schools having evacuated to St Albans in 1939 (see St Albans Museums' website). is New End in Camden. Today New End is a primary school in Hampstead, but before post-war re-organisation of education it seems to have been an elementary school. It appears to have been allocated to Beaumont Schools, Oakwood Drive. Juniors and infants from New End must therefore have shared a school elsewhere. At present this is the only information we have, unless any reader can help. But here is a photograph of New End Primary School today on its original site.



SUNDAY SCHOOL TREAT

Alex discovered the following in a 1900 edition of the *Herts Advertiser*:

"The scholars attending the school in connection with the Wesleyan Mission Hall had their annual treat on Wednesday afternoon at Butterwick Farm, Smallford. The children journeyed by rail, and through the kindness of the G.N.R. Co., they started from Sanders' siding, and also alighted at the same place on their return journey, this being in close proximity to the homes of the children. Tea was provided in a large marquee, 110 children and 40 adults sitting down. During the afternoon various amusements were provided, including swings, pony and donkey riding, etc. The teachers generously distributed toys, books, etc, to the scholars. The weather was all

that could be desired, and everyone expressed delight at the enjoyable afternoon spent with the children."

The church, now known as Hatfield Road Methodist, also had treats to St Julian's Farm, as shown in the above photo, courtesy of Christopher Hancock. The exciting adventure of making such journeys at the turn of the twentieth century!

CHANGING LIVES

Fleetville Diaries has always recognised the value of the experiences and life stories of members of its own community; a number of these are available to read on its website www.fleetvillediaris.org. The latest to be added is the story of Mumtaz Begum, who our member Romayne was privileged to converse with at the beginning of this year.

The Fleetville district is much enriched by having enterprising and adventurous men and women from across the globe. Mumtaz began her enjoyable young life in north-west Pakistan. As with many families Mumtaz followed her husband to the UK in 1970 after he had become economically secure. We would all understand the feeling of insecurity experienced by newcomers as they established themselves in a new country with new language and new almost everything else.

The story of Mumtaz, and other recollections on the website, are such an inspiration.

Do take the time to read Romayne's transcription of the story of Mumtaz. You will find it in the website's *Fleetville Home From Home* section.

WHAT USED TO BE HERE

We will probably recognise this group of flats to the west of the CAMRA building in Hatfield Road. Unfortunately the bus shelter hides the full frontage, but it is one of those changes along the streetscape we often ignore until something draws our attention to it. It's clearly modern; and we struggle to recall what it replaced.



There were fields until 1930, when the County Council purchased land for the school. The most valuable parcels were along the road and these were sold for commercial

development, mostly for shops and businesses. But on one site was a pair of semi-detached homes; *St George's* on the left and *Moorhill* on the right. From 1945 *St George's* was the home of Howard Edwards who launched a signs and display company from the house. As the business – and the displays – grew Mr Edwards moved to Victoria Street as *Falcon Displays*. The company is still successful in Wantage.

NEXT NEWSLETTER

We hope you enjoy receiving these little newsletters – by all means pass them on to friends. We will have another collection of news for you shortly. You can also contribute and we will be delighted to receive pictures, news, discoveries ... and as you see, they can be brief.

Email Mike at mikeneighbour@mac.com to comment or to add contributions.

