

## Order outside the Manor

Each county was divided into 'hundreds', and Hatfield lies in the Broadwater Hundred of Hertfordshire, named after the original meeting place of the Hundred Court near Stevenage. The Court chiefly dealt with breaches of the peace, where the court of the manor concerned had not acquired the right to handle such cases or where the matter affected more than one manor; but it also had certain duties of a local government nature to perform such as the maintenance of important highways and bridges. Before the Norman conquest the Earl presided over justice in the hundred and shire courts, but this now became the work of the Sheriff. Twice a year the Sheriff attended at the hundred courts to hold his "tourn", that is to judge the more serious cases coming before the court. All free men of the hundred owed suit to (i.e. had to attend) the hundred court, and a man called the hundredor presided for ordinary business, with a jury.

The Sheriffs, who before the Conquest had been less powerful than the Earls, became more and more powerful and oppressive. In 1170 King Henry II conducted an "Inquest on Sheriffs" when their activities were enquired into and many removed from office. Edward II, in 1315, made the office a Crown appointment because too many improperly qualified men were being elected. Nevertheless, in the fourteenth century Sheriffs were very unpopular, and their prestige declined.

Edward III therefore found it necessary from time to time to appoint persons in each county to hear and determine felonies. The first appointment of these "Keepers of the Peace" was in 1327 when Robert de Kendall, Hugh Fitz Simon, and John de Blomvil were commissioned for Hertfordshire. In 1336 Edward III being at Hatfield appointed seven men for Hertfordshire. They were William de Shuneshull (Seneschall?), William Trussel senior, John de Molys, Hugh Fitz Simon, John de Blomvil, Thomas de la Haye, and Roger de Louth. Hugh and Roger (see Book 2, page 8) were leading Hatfield citizens, and probably the others were all local men. From 1350 onwards these men, who came to be called Justices of the Peace, met once a Quarter at Quarter Sessions, and with the aid of the juries of the hundreds tried criminal offences. The Hatfield cases were all heard at the Hertford Quarter Sessions as they are today. The office of Justice of the Peace was formally defined in the statute of 1360; and he carried out duties similar to those of the Sheriff's tourn, taking over more and more of his authority.

In the 1590's there were thirty-five Justices of the Peace within the county of Hertford, among whom we find such familiar Hatfield names as Sir John Brocket, Knight, Sir Philip Boteler, Knight, and Sir Henry Boteler, Esquire.

An Account for the year 1839 gives the following prices for produce:

	l. s. d.
28 stone pig at 4/- stone ...	... 5 15 0
7 stone sheep at 4/3½d. stone ...	... 1 10 0
4 pigeons at 6d. each ...	... - 2 0
3 dozen eggs at 1d. each ...	... - 3 0
58 gallons milk at 1/- gall. ...	... 2 18 0
3 ducks at 2/6d. each ...	... - 7 6
* 13 chickens at 2/- each ...	... 1 6 0

#### B. 1824 FARM MAP

There exist for Hatfield Parish three valuable sources of detailed information about our farms in the nineteenth century. The first of these, which is kept at the Parish Church, is a pre-Tithe Award series of farm plans giving the following information: names of farms, owners, occupiers, size of farms and fields, amounts of arable, pasture and woodland and field names. By comparing this with the 1838 Tithe Map, which gives almost the same information, and an 1855 Land Terrier, which has everything except a map, a very accurate study can be made of such things as changes in land uses, frequency of tenant and owner changes and enlarging of farm and field sizes.

In the early nineteenth century, Hertfordshire was one of the six most arable counties in the country owing to extensive corn crops for supplying the London markets and local breweries, and until railways provided quick transport, these ready markets made life easy for Hatfield farmers. In 1824, taking into account all farms of more than thirty acres, 70% of our land was arable.

A typical small farm consisted of a homestead usually surrounded by three small meadows for a few domestic animals such as one horse, four cows and a few sheep and poultry. Around this would be about twenty arable fields, most of them not more than eight acres in size. Most farms also had their own brewhouse. We know from an 'Abstract' that in Hatfield in 1822 there were 670 families and of these 369 were engaged in agriculture.

The following chart gives an analysis of the size of farms showing that there were fifty nine farms and small holdings at this time, with most of them in the fifty to two hundred acre group.

Between 30 and 59 acres	... 7 farms
Between 50 and 100 acres	... 17 farms
Between 100 and 200 acres	... 16 farms
Between 200 and 300 acres	... 8 farms
Over 300 acres	... 11 farms

It was in size that one of the biggest changes was to take place for by the end of the century the 59 farms had been reduced to 32. In 1824 there were four un-named farms at Cromer Hyde with separate tenants, five at Handside, three at Symondshyde, three at Ludwickhyde and three at West Hyde. All of these changed to one or two farms and a corresponding single tenant mainly after 1875, when small scale farms suffered worse as a result of bad harvests, cheap American corn, imports of frozen meat, the earlier repeal of the corn laws and easier transport to London for more distant counties.

In 1824 there were numerous instances of land still cultivated in strips of a few acres in the Common Fields surrounding Handside Farm, between Mill Green and present-day Welwyn Garden City, and along our present-day St. Albans Road and Roe Green Lane. Stockbreach Common Field (behind Cinema) was owned by Mr. Hall (five acres in pieces), Mr. Whittard (five acres in pieces), and a few acres by Lord Marlborough, owner of Astwick, Mr. Gape, owner of Roe Green and Mr. Cannon of Nast Hyde. The complete holdings of Leggs Farm (Charity Land north of Mill Green) and three West Hyde Farms and one Ludwick Hyde Farm were still arranged in strips as in the middle ages. (See Fig. 3, P. 8). The whole of an area east of the River Lea from Stanborough to Lemsford was also still arranged in strips, but mostly cultivated by the two larger Handside Farms in scattered groups of joining strips and looking rather like a patchwork quilt on these coloured plans.

Nine owners possessed fifty farms or nine-tenths of all the land in Hatfield and most of these were titled or wealthy families.

OWNER	AMOUNT	No. OF FARMS
1. Lord Salisbury	3,000 acres (in addition to Park and Home Farm)	20
2. Lord Melbourne (of Brocket)	1,500 acres	10
3. Earl Cowper (of Panshanger)	1,000 ,	6
4. Lord Marlborough (owner of Astwick)	750 ,	2
5. J. H. Busk, Esq. (of Ponsborne)	685 ,	2
6. John Fordham, Esq. (owner of Symondshyde)	600 ,	1
7. Lady Ottway Cave (owner of Holwell)	600 ,	4
8. John Church, Esq. (of Woodside)	250 ,	3
9. Mrs. Gaussin (owner of Brookmans Park Manor)	220 ,	2

When the Brocket and Panshanger lands were joined after the death of Lord Melbourne without children in 1853, two main owners were left. The Cecil Estate was increased by the addition of part of Holwell Manor in 1836, Suttons Farm before 1838, Symondshyde in 1852 and two Roe Green Farms in 1829, so that by the middle of the century two families owned over three-quarters of our parish.