

Why the name Hatch Road?

Meet James Troup Hatch and his charity

by Amy Myers

Over a hundred years since it was set up, the Hatch Charity is alive, active and a great benefactor to the village. James Troup Hatch was descended from the Hatch family, famous for its bell foundry established in the sixteenth century. Having retired from farming at Old Shelve Farm he was living in Grove House with his wife Edith in 1913 when he established the charity for the good of the village. It was funded by his conveying Forge House by deed of gift to the charity, so that the monies received by letting it out could be used for charitable purposes. These were clearly defined; first the charity had to maintain Forge House, the current vicar was to receive five guineas a year (a guinea being £1.05) in order that he should preach a Christmas Day sermon; as James Troup was a Hatch, the bell-ringers weren't forgotten – they were given five guineas a year to ring the bells on Christmas Day; the poor of the village were given five shillings (25p) at Christmas; and the trustees were asked to help any parishioners who fell on hard times. Since 1913 times have changed and in 2007 the trust's deeds have been changed, with proceeds from the sale of Forge House now helping not only parishioners, but organisations and societies of the parish; and the Christmas gift to the poor has been replaced by gifts to older members of the parish for the contribution they have made over the years to village life. Since then grants have been given to organisations contributing to community life, including the church and Community Centre.¹

When the First World War broke out, James Hatch was too old to fight on the front line, but he not only established a local volunteer battalion, but after the war ensured that the 260 Lenham men who served in the war should not be forgotten. He compiled a list of them, and posted it in the church for families to add to it or amend it. He then gave the document to the charity for its safekeeping. One hundred years later the Hatch charity found the list, and on the 100th anniversary of the outbreak of the war published a book recording all the men, what happened to them both during the war and how the village coped with the challenges of war.² James Troup Hatch died in 1933 and is buried in the Lenham cemetery. His tombstone bears the sad legend 'The last of his race' but his charity lives on.

¹ Information from the Hatch Charity, included in *Lenham and the Great War*, Amy Myers, The Hatch Charity, 2014

² *Idem*