

## **THE HATTERY CRASH TO ZETA-ALPHA**

**BY RICHARD THOMAS**

The revelation of the financial fraud of Charles Hattery in 1929, coupled with the collapse of the Wall Street financial world, disturbed Britain's economy and led to a great recession. The town was affected by this and perhaps particularly those whose businesses were in Leeds/Bradford, where many of the residents of the Duchy Area worked and from whence they derived their income.

After their working day they would return home to their houses in Clarence Drive, York Road, Duchy Road etc.

According to 'British Townscapes' by Ewart Johns in 1965, these houses 'may be thought of as either large and very individual versions of picturesque cottages or small samples of Romantic Villas'.

They 'are built in a fine gritstone, the sombre grey of which is relieved by the liberal use of decorative window frames, doorways and porches'.

In the 1920's there had been a considerable revival of building activity. Many of the new properties had been built with brick and pebble-dash in contrast to the pre-war stone. There are three splendid inter-war houses in particular. The western end of Kent Road has a lovely example and two highly individual houses were built in Oakdale itself, which remained largely undeveloped until after the Second War.

Another treasure from the period is St Wilfrid's, which was conceived to be 'exceeding magnificent' and was greatly enhanced in 1935 with the Lady Chapel. This is an elongated octagon, demarcated by slender shafts, by the architect Temple Moore's son-in-law Leslie Moore

About the same time Frances Darlington created the Twelve Stations of the Cross plaques, which reflect the artistry of the period.

The recession affected many people in various ways. The practice of early morning water drinking at the Pump Room ceased to be 'fashionable' and the chains erected to keep road traffic away from the drinking area were removed. Wesley Chapel in Oxford Street, who had 20 applicants for the post of Chapel Caretaker in 1929, had 439 applicants when they required a replacement in 1936.

The Council sought to keep abreast with the then current developments for spa treatments and they purchased land at the rear of the Royal Baths with plans to construct a massive new treatment centre with a replacement for the Winter Gardens, known as the Lounge Hall. This was opened in 1938 only to be blighted by the outbreak of War in the following year.

The Valley Gardens were enhanced by the Sun Pavilion and Colonnade in 1933, opened by the distinguished medical man, Lord Horder.

Land purchases also included the Harlow Moor estate from the Earl of Harewood, which produced Harlow Moor Road and opened the Duchy Area. Hitherto the Duchy was virtually an island bounded by open land on the West, Oak Beck on the North and the Water Company/Royal Baths on the South. There had been no through road to the Otley Road area.

The Harewood Estate have gradually diminished their land ownership as they sold Oakdale Farm in 1926 and, perhaps about the same time, the Cornwall Road fields to the Duchy of Lancaster. This area is now under threat of development by that Duchy. The boundary between the Duchy and the Harewood estate had been Cornwall Road itself as determined by the 1770 Enclosure of the Forest.

The Duchy Residents' Association have applied for those Cornwall Road fields to be designated 'Green Space'. If this is not accepted then its previous description as a Special Landscape Area needs to be stoutly defended. To be able to view Beamsley Beacon and the distant moorland is a wonderful advantage to the area.

Amongst the Spa towns which were visited by the Council representatives to gather ideas to improve our Spa industry was Vichy in central France. Both Harrogate and Vichy were utilised for rather similar purposes during the Second War, which commenced with such devastating effect in 1939.

Practically all the great hotels and many other properties were requisitioned, to startling effect. I recall the large house at the junction of Rutland Drive/Duchy Road being in Army occupation with an old tank in its then adjacent field. Harrogate Ladies' College was vacated and the school moved to Swinton Castle for the duration of the war. The school building became the Ministry of Munitions. The Old Swan was part of the Air Ministry, the Grand the Empire Pilots' Receiving School. The Cairn Hotel was taken by the Post Office, along with the St George and Southlands, also on Ripon Road.

The iron railings with which Harrogate and the Duchy abounded were all removed to provide scrap metal for the War effort and large parts of the Civil Service were evacuated to Harrogate, which was code-named Zeta-Alpha for the purpose of this operation.

In 1940 three bombs were dropped on the Hotel Majestic and nearby houses in Swan Road.

The Spa world had vanished indeed and Vichy itself received a French Government of 'Unoccupied France' - who found their Spa hotels equally useful!