



ST ALBANS & HERTFORDSHIRE
ARCHITECTURAL & ARCHAEOLOGICAL
SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER 195 FEBRUARY 2015



*St Peter's Green c 1860 - Unknown Artist
Reproduced courtesy of Kate Morris
(See Page 11)*

INCLUDED IN THIS ISSUE

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Planning for 175th Anniversary
Group Reports

The House Where I Live
New Museum Update
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Lecture Programme

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CHANGE OF E-MAIL

Would all members please inform our Membership Secretary David Smith via membership@stalbanhistory.org when they change e-mail address.

When you do so, please can you also remind us of your old e-mail address as it makes it easier to find you on the e-news system and then delete the old address.

This will enable us to keep you up to date with e-news and save the Society postage costs when we need to get in touch with individual members.

Many thanks

Roderick Douglas, Webmaster

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

2015 will be a crucial year for the heritage scene in St Albans and we await the outcome of both the Abbey and the SADC (Museum and Gallery) applications to the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) lottery fund for their development plans. SAHAAS (aka Arc and Arc) has a long record of safeguarding our history – in saving the Clock Tower from demolition in 1859 and in campaigning for a museum for St Albans in the 1880s. It is therefore fitting that we support the current plans to develop the Museum of St Albans in a more central location.

I am pleased to inform members that when the SAHAAS Council discussed this in January they agreed unanimously to support the Museum project and also voted to pledge a donation of £5,000 from the Society's funds. In addition, I am exploring the possibility of arranging one or two events, which we can enjoy as social occasions, and which can also contribute to the cause.

One suggestion from a member has been to hold a Regency ball at the Old Town Hall Assembly Room, in partnership with other interested organisations. This was raised before by the Museum Trust itself, but it requires

a team leader with the enthusiasm and know-how to organise such an event. If you could be that



person or know someone else who might, please let me know. Another suggestion is that we should host a Quiz and supper night in May or June, possibly at Kingsbury Barn.

The Museums and Galleries Trust (SAM and GT), and the volunteers who work for it, has already done an enormous amount of work involving various organisations in the City, many of whom have donated the proceeds of events to the Trust. The HLF has pledged £2.8 million to the project, St Albans and District Council has also pledged £ 2.25 million, leaving St Albans to find £1.7 million.

Perhaps members of our Society will consider how they can help in other ways, by giving a personal pledge or donation, or holding a coffee morning or wine and cheese party to involve friends and neighbours? It is a challenge but St Albans has done it before for the Odyssey. Let's do it for the Museum!

Helen Bishop
President

NEW YEAR PARTY

On Friday, 9th January, the Society welcomed almost a hundred of its members and guests to its annual Party. The Mayor of St Albans City and District, Councillor Geoff Harrison, accompanied by the Mayoress, Mrs Moira Seton, were met by our President. After meeting some of those present, the Mayor joined Helen on the rostrum when both gave a short address.

For the first time the evening was enhanced by music beautifully played by Jessica Cox and Rachel Steadman, both of whom had taken time off from a busy international concert programme to be with us.

Our Secretary, Bryan Hanlon, organised the event as well as the “drinks table” where mulled wine and other beverages were available. A sumptuous buffet was organised by Doreen Bratby and included the many contributions of “a plate of savoury or sweet” brought by members. .

Museums Manager, Kate Warren, very kindly, provided some interesting and intriguing articles from the Museums’ archives for the mystery objects quiz and, as always, Bryan set his teasing questions for members to test their general knowledge.

Many members contributed to the organisation of the event and a big “thank you” to them from us all.

Bryan stayed until the end, notwithstanding that he had arranged to leave at 4 a.m. the following morning to fly to South East Asia for a tour lasting several months, with the first stop at Ankor Wat in Cambodia (which we expect him to tell members about on his return!) and we wish him a safe journey.

A Happy New Year to everyone.

John Humphreys



Thank you most sincerely to those members who graced the table with party food. It looked delightful. You did us proud.

Doreen Bratby

PLANNING FOR THE SOCIETY'S 175TH ANNIVERSARY IN 2020

Founded in 1845, SAHAAS is one of the oldest antiquarian societies in the country. Our 175th anniversary is appearing on the horizon and we are starting to think how we should recognise this notable achievement.

The Society's 150th anniversary was celebrated in fine fashion with a dinner for members at St Michael's Manor, a series of three lectures about the country's antiquarian tradition and two publications describing the Society's history and key members.



Guests at 150th Anniversary dinner included (left to right) Jane Kilvington, Jennifer Cooper, Prof. Martin Biddle and Mike Cooper

We are seeking your ideas about what form our 175th celebrations could take. Our initial thinking is to initiate a project to culminate in 2020 that improves our understanding of the history of the City and District. By starting the process now, we have enough time to approach funding organisations if needs be. As guidance the following are two outline

ideas that have already been submitted, namely a tree-ring dating project for local timber-framed buildings and another to improve interpretative boards in the City.

Any project must fit within the Society's objectives which are as follows:

- to secure the protection of monuments and other features of architectural or archaeological interest in the area;
- to encourage the preservation of documents and graphic records of historical interest;
- to promote and participate in archaeological work, and research into local history;
- to arrange meetings, lectures, exhibitions and Clock Tower visits;
- to promote the publication of papers, reports and other literature.

If you would like to discuss this further, you can contact me via 01727 730825, email chair@stalbanshistory.org or have a chat with me after a lecture. Please submit a brief outline of your idea(s) to me by 31 March 2015. Our plan is to discuss the ideas with those submitting them over the summer months and then decide in Council which fits best.

Helen Bishop
President

CLOCK TOWER

The Clock Tower will be opening for the summer season on Good Friday, 3rd April 2015, and every weekend until the end of September.

I would just like to thank our esteemed president, Helen Bishop, for entrusting the Clock Tower co-ordinating role to Mike and me, and to all the Clockateers who have donated their time and energies to running our Clock Tower.

A total of 57 packs of "Wonky Clock Tower" Christmas cards were sold over

Wonky Clock Tower © designed and painted for the Clock Tower Christmas card by a local artist, Mandy Reekie

the run up to Christmas, adding to the Clock Tower funds.

2014 was an excellent year for the Clock Tower and hopefully Mike and I can make 2015 just as good.

**Caroline Howkins
Mike Carey**



NEW MEMBERS

The Society welcomes the following new members:

Mr Montague Cross, St Albans
 Ms Amanda Handley, St Albans
 Mr John Harrington, St Albans
 Mr Paul Tony Izzard, St Albans
 Mr John & Mrs Hazel Johnson, St Albans
 Mr Edmund King, St Albans
 Revd. Kenneth Padley, St Albans
 Mr Keith Robertson, St Albans
 Mr Brian Rudd, St Albans
 Mrs Susan Smith, Wheathampstead
 Mr John Thomas & Mrs Margaret Trounce, St Albans

David Smith, Membership Secretary

LIBRARY NOTES

The Library team held another planning meeting in November, though vigorous progress since has been somewhat hampered by a combination of staff illness, computer instability, and the uncertainty over our location.

Future location of SAHAAS Library.

Assuming that the SADC Heritage Lottery Fund application for the Town Hall Museum and Gallery is successful, we will have to vacate the Robing Room by the end of 2015, and at present there appears little likelihood that we will retain a presence in the refurbished Old Town Hall. The SADC is obliged to find us alternative accommodation, and there is a firm offer of space at Sandridge Gate contiguous to where the MoSTA Library will be moving at least temporarily. There are pros and cons. Other alternatives are being looked at. Whatever the outcome, we will have to plan well ahead.

SAHAAS Library Computer. After continually "crashing" in October and early November, the problem has been resolved, thanks to the input and advice of Keith Robertson, a computer engineer, who fortuitously visited the Library to inquire about Cambridge Road area maps when we were at the height of scratching our heads. Not only did he start the systematic checking procedure

and gave us successful advice, he also joined the Society! Many thanks again Keith.

Residents First Weekend Exhibition. Tony Cooper and Frank Iddiols, with Jon Mein, put together a successful exhibition of maps, *The Development of St Albans, 1600-1914*, in the Cathedral's North Transept 24-25 January 2015. See page 10.

Beardsmore Collection, Hudson Library, St Albans Cathedral. SAHAAS librarians had a very interesting familiarisation session on 27 November, shown round by Dr Clare Coombe. The Beardsmore book stock has been listed, and a second trawl is in process to ensure that the Cathedral has identified everything they wish to keep. The list of proposed disposals will be circulated to SAHAAS, MoSTA and the St Albans Library for comment and advice on such historical source materials that should be kept locally. The Beardsmore ephemera collection (trade adverts, estate agents property publicity, etc.), an important source of fugitive local information, is still only catalogued on cards, but Clare is investigating grant funding for a detailed listing.

Local Studies Libraries in St Albans meeting 11th December at MoSTA. Tony Cooper and Donald Munro met With representatives of the Cathedral, MoSTA, and Hertfordshire Libraries to

Continued from Page 6

discuss the prospects for closer links and co-operation in what is currently a complex situation. This constructive meeting had several positive outcomes. Besides circulation of the Beardsmore disposals list mentioned above, SAHAAS and MoSTA will review their current collecting policies for library materials and share the revised policies with the Cathedral and Herts Libraries before the group meets again on 21 April.

On the less positive side, at the Libraries meeting it seemed there was little prospect of there being **any** library presence in the refurbished Town Hall. Troubled by this, SAHAAS has written to Councillor. Annie Brewster urging the need for at least a museum reference sources presence in the Town Hall Museum if it has any serious pretensions as a quality museum.

Donald Munro, Librarian

RECENT REQUISITIONS

Born not for ourselves: the story of St Albans School, by Nigel Watson. St Albans: Jeremy Mills Publishing, 2014. 273pp, illus, bibliog. A history recounted by the late headmaster. St Albans School is one of the oldest in England, believed to have been founded by Abbot Wulsin 948.

Alpha to Odyssey: a short history of a St Albans cinema, by Penny Dade. St Albans: Penny Dade, 2014. 60pp, illus, bibliog. A cinema has occupied the Odyssey site since 1908, firstly named the Alpha, and owned by the pioneering cine photographer Arthur Melbourne-Cooper. The changing fortunes of the Alpha and its successors are traced in the context of the commercial cinema business culminating in the triumphant re-opening as the Odyssey in its restored Art Deco glory.

Tony Cooper

CONTRIBUTIONS FOR PUBLICATION

Articles, photographs, comments, letters to editor, etc. from members are most welcome. The final date for receiving copy for Newsletter 196 (May 2015) is Friday 24th April 2015.

Please forward to me at newsletter@stalbanhistory.org or post to:
12 Church Crescent, St Albans, AL3 5JD

John Humphreys, Editor

RECENT ACQUISITIONS AT HALS OF LOCAL INTEREST

July – December 2014

The Library team receives a monthly notification from Hertfordshire Archives & Local Studies (HALS) listing their recent acquisitions. This is the first of a series of six-monthly reports we will produce showing details of material of St Albans area interest. If you would like further information about any of these collections please contact HALS on 0300 123 4049 or via email to:

hals.enquiries@hertfordshire.gov.uk

2014 accessions	HALS Ref	Date(s) covered	Description
July	Acc 5583	5/12/1902	Concerning a meeting to discuss the enlargement and improvement of St Albans High School
July	Acc 5587	1920	Copy of a photograph of the unveiling of Shenley War Memorial on 14 July 1920
August	Acc 5593	1913-2014	St Albans & Welwyn Methodist Circuit: mostly late 20 th century records for Hatfield Road and Marlborough Road churches, but also including some early material from the Primitive Methodist Church in Boundary Road
October	Acc 5612	19 th & 20 th century	Church of England publications including St Albans Diocesan Gazette Feb 1925 – Dec 1927; Harpenden Parish Magazine 1906-15
November	Off Acc 1844	c.1950s – 1980s	Herts County Council – Local Studies Library: photographs etc of various libraries including amongst others St Albans, Marshalswick, Harpenden, Redbourn, Wheathampstead, London Colney & Leverstock Green
December	Acc 5631	1901	Drawing of the Clock Tower in St Albans by Philip Stride

HOME FRONT PROJECT

We are delighted to report that the proposal for our book *St Albans: Life on the Home Front, 1914-18*, has been accepted by Hertfordshire Publications, an imprint of the University of Hertfordshire Press, and will be published in June/July 2016. We are very grateful to the SAHAAS Council, which has given its full support to the project from the beginning and have agreed to support the additional costs involved in producing the book. We are now busy researching the last two chapters and drafting and finishing research on first six.

In spite of Christmas, colds and the pressure of this work, members of the group have also been writing articles and giving talks. An article by Maggy Douglas, "The Home Front Guardians", appeared in the *Herts Ad* on 4 December and one by Dr Julie Moore, "Feeding the City during Wartime", appeared there on 18 December. Maggy Douglas and Patricia Broad presented the Project's second annual lecture, 'Doing Your Bit' to the Society on 20 January. We will deliver one more lecture to the Wheathampstead Local History Society in March, but will otherwise be concentrating on the book from now on.

We have been greatly helped in our research by the Imperial War Museum and are very concerned to hear that they could well close their library due to recent financial cuts. SAHAAS has already submitted a strong objection to the Director of the IWM. There is also a petition against this online at http://bit.ly/save_IWM. Please lend your support to this appeal to keep the IWM library open by signing the petition. Many thanks.

Anne Wares

PARK STREET

Interested in the history of the Park Street area during the First World War? If so, find out more about the St Stephens War Memorial Project at the Park Street Village Community Open Day on Saturday 14th March 2015, 10.30am to 5.00pm. For more information contact Chris Brown on 01727 768977 or: christopher.brown11@ntlworld.com

RESIDENTS FIRST WEEKEND EXHIBITION

THE DEVELOPMENT OF ST ALBANS, 1600-1914, AS INTERPRETED THROUGH MAPS.

The Society's Library team mounted an extensive cartographical display in the North Transept of the Abbey over the Residents First Weekend, 24-25 January. The exhibition illustrated the urban development of the town over c.300 years.

This very interesting show was attractively mounted on a long series of display boards, with several larger items on a very large table. Quite apart from the intrinsic interest of the individual maps, this gave a nice "feel" of comparing and researching with these outside objects.

An introductory rolling slide show explored some key themes of the town's development illustrated by map excerpts, along with some account of the maps' contexts and the surveyors. Slow growth in the 17th and 18th centuries was succeeded by increasingly rapid change in the 19th. Based on SAHAAS' extensive local map collection, exhibits included Benjamin Hare's large scale colour print plan of St Albans (1634), an interesting manorial map of the Sopwell area (mid-1600s), detailed parish maps from c.1800, the Society's award-winning map of St Albans c.1820, and large-scale Ordnance Survey (OS)



Photo: Pat Howe



Photo: Frank Iddiols

maps from the late 1800s. Also shown were the earliest OS drafts from 1805.

This was a an interesting, enlightening and very well received exhibition which over the two days had upwards of 300 visitors. Congratulations and thanks are due to Tony Cooper, Frank Iddiols and Jon Mein who put the exhibition together. Our thanks also go to all **twenty four** SAHAAS members who, one way or another, were involved in preparing, setting up and minding the exhibition. A splendid team effort.

Donald Munro

THE HOUSE WHERE I LIVE***74 – 76 ST PETER'S STREET***

Most of St Peter's Street was laid out by the Abbey as speculative plots of broadly similar size and shape, but on the eastern side, especially the northern section, development was less uniform. St Peter's church and churchyard took up a large plot, as did the manor houses of Hall Place and Newland Squillers on Cock Lane, with Dovehouse Field taking up space between that house and the churchyard behind the street, thus reducing the available land for development there. So, some houses built still in the time of the monastery, were on just small plots fronting St Peter's Street. Timber framed and probably jettied, hard up against each other, they were most likely occupied by tradesmen of some kind. Two of these remain today though very much altered. Three more, up against the churchyard, bought by the parish with money left by Sir Richard Coxe to bring income to support the poor, have gone, but another, wedged between the first two and the latter three, maybe as an annexe to one, (now 74 & 76 St Peter's Street) also remains. It was built a little later, after the Dissolution. The frame was built up to the adjacent external walls, thus requiring only front and back walls.

First to come down, in the late 18th century, as repairs were needed, were

the three charity cottages. The materials were used to rebuild one, still up against 74/76. Having cleared the space, about the same time, the parish improved access to the church from the south with a new gate and a proper path. To meet welfare needs, a workhouse was proposed, and to accommodate it, some small cottages owned by the parish further along were pulled down and replaced with a brick workhouse set back so the new path could run straight to the church gate.

The old houses were not of sufficiently high status or interest for anyone to refront them in brick like many bigger timber framed houses in the town. But neither was then a candidate for demolition. A William Christmas, probably the victualler of that name, bought the row of three in private hands and converted them into small cottages suitable for renting out. His daughter, Ann, inherited them and later they fell into the hands of Richard Mason, brazier, who lived and ran his business in High Street. Probably it was he who built along the back of the houses a brick range to extend them all eastwards making what was common in those days, six two up two downs. They had no sanitation, nor water supply, but had good sized rooms and fireplaces in both downstairs rooms and the larger room upstairs. Lighting was by rush or tallow lamp hung on a hook from a beam in the downstairs rooms, still visible today.

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Water was drawn from the well, and later a pump, on the Green outside the houses.

For a long period the remaining charity house owned by the church was let to a coal merchant, Thomas Ruffett, until he retired and was housed in The Buildings round the corner in Cock Lane (now Hatfield Road). But by 1930 that too needed repair and the church pulled it down and replaced it with a modern house.

In the 1830s the workhouse became redundant as the Union workhouse facility at Oster Hills took over. The St Peter's workhouse was sold to surveyor John Horner Rumball, sometime mayor of the borough and churchwarden of the parish, who lived just across the road in a house now partly occupied by Anastasia's restaurant. At what are now 74 and 76 St Peter's Street, by then, lived tenants John Payne and family, St Peter's sexton, and Philip Coe, a gardener, and his wife Sarah, nee Selby, the church's pew opener. We know a little of John Payne and his family. His parents were Thomas and Jemima Payne. Thomas was sexton for many years before John took over. John's brother James was a cordwainer, also on St Peter's Street, and he was parish clerk. John gave evidence to the Bribery Commission following the elections campaigns of 1847 and 1851.

The artist John Buckingham sketched the many witnesses at the court hearings including John Payne whom he describes as 'The St Albans Ringer 3 Gs a day'. John clearly supported Jacob Bell in the 1851 election and was also a bell ringer at St Peter's.



*Sketch of
John Payne*

The houses passed to Mason's son Frederick, then changed hands again by the 1900s. First sculleries with mains water and outside toilets adjacent were added at the back. Then the front elevations were pebble-dashed, and, in the 1950s, bathrooms came with hot water. The houses were listed, Grade II, in the 1960s and once further repair and refurbishment became inevitable, the constraints of Conservation legislation proved too much for the current landlords and one cottage, 74, was put up for sale. I undertook a major programme of refurbishment on that house, and to accommodate my two children, I also purchased 76. To my surprise on investigating the roof structures, with the help of local architectural historian and SAHAAS Honorary Member J T Smith, I discovered that I was reuniting the two cottages as the one structure that it had been in the first place, some 400 years before.

Kate Morris

NEW MUSEUM AND GALLERY

The Town Hall Museum and Gallery project – now publicly “**renaissance: St Albans your new museum and gallery at the heart of the city**” – is making progress. An “update January 2015” has been issued which some of you may have picked up in the Town Hall over Residents First Weekend.

Helen Bishop and I attended a good, and interesting Advisory Group meeting on 28 January for current briefing and the opportunity for “stakeholders” including SAHAAS, to comment.

Architects, John McAslan & Partners, and exhibition designers, Urban Salon, are hard at work on plans to develop the building and flexible exhibition space. Both companies have impressive records and have extensive experience of sensitively adapting historic buildings, museum design and interpretative projects. English Heritage will be keeping a weather eye open.

The plans are still being thoroughly discussed. There are many ideas prompted by the prospective opportunities that might be offered by a new museum; perhaps rather too many, and some may have to await a second stage development. One interesting proposal is the addition of glass passages flanking the courthouse at first floor level, affording views of the historic city and enabling a higher level walk-round linking the front to the back of the building.

Whilst certainly supportive of the project, SAHAAS is principally concerned that there should be no diminution of museum presence. Rather we would expect in the new an enhancement of the scholarly and professional status of the Museum element. A timeline is definitely in the mix, but it is essential that it and other museum exhibitions have *artefacts* on display. There are distinct limits to the lasting experience that visitors take away from two dimensional slide shows of objects. Helen and I have also recently written to the project team about the need for museum and historical reference sources for the use of staff in the new museum if it is to have serious pretensions as a quality museum.

The expected timetable for the application is:

- 11 March 2015 - HLF Stage C Review
- mid-March to July 2015 - Community engagement
- mid-June 2015 - Town Hall Planning Application
- late July- mid August 2015 - HLF Round 2 Submission
- September 2015 - Closure of MoSTA
- November 2015 - HLF Decision expected

For further details see:

<http://www.stalbansmuseumsandgalleries.trust.org.uk/>

Donald Munro

ST ALBANS ABSENT VOTERS LIST, 1918

Even though it is only one hundred years since the First World War, those of you researching the contemporary history of your street or family history know how much of a challenge it can be to find useful material. Over the last two years the Home Front Research Group has published on the Society's website two sets of data to help meet this challenge: firstly, a [list](#) with addresses of the 1,050 men who applied to the city's Military Service Tribunal for exemption from conscription; secondly, a 'matrix' of those 630 or so men whose names appear on the civic war memorial on St Peter's Green complete with some details about how and where they died and remarks about the other local memorials on which these men's names appear.

As some of you know, we have recently published our third (and final) set of data on the Society's website (www.stalbanshistory.org/stalbans1918avl). This is a transcription of the Absent Voters List (AVL) for the city for 1918 listing the names and details of 2,905 men and three women who had registered to vote in the first general election after the war even though they were absent from St Albans at the time, probably on military service. The file on the website

includes a fuller introduction to the historical context.

The AVL's key benefit for family historians is that the list generally includes the men's military identification number, important information for tracking men's details in other sources. The benefit for local historians can be seen in the following short case study about those who, when at home, lived in Longmire Road, now renamed as part of Riverside Road and where Barry, one of the authors, lives. He writes:

"The houses in Longmire Road were built in 1899, originally designed as workers cottages and all rented. The lives of the occupants, from the records we have, appear to have been hard, especially in the early years. By the 1911 census, they had a variety of occupations from brush makers and labourers to a hound-hand and a kennel man. The numbers living in these houses shock us today. In my own house in 1911, there was a family of ten, plus a husband and wife. Twelve people in all. My wife and I find the space limiting and there's only two of us!

From the AVL we find that there were 36 men from Longmire Road still serving during the spring and summer of 1918. If we add a further five men that died during the war and three that applied to the 'Tribunal' but failed to gain

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exemption from conscription, we have a grand total of at least 44 Longmire Road men who served King and Country and this from a road of only 42 houses. We are keen to understand how exceptional this ratio is, so if you have studied your own road, or want to, then please let us know by emailing homefront@stalbanhistory.org

On a final and sombre note, Longmire Road suffered more than one tragedy during the war and these are reflected in the AVL. For example, the Catlin family lost three of its four sons, one of whom is listed in the AVL. Frederick Dorling is also listed: he survived the war only to lose his father, a volunteer in the Royal Army Medical Corps, and stepsister in October 1918 in the 'flu epidemic. They were buried together in an unmarked pauper's grave in Hatfield Road Cemetery, something we hardly expect for a man who had so recently served his country.

We are grateful to Rosemary Knight, Barbara Croom, and Romaine & David Byers for transcribing large chunks of the AVL. Thanks go in particular to Mike North, another of the transcribers who also took on the burdensome task of checking the transcription for accuracy in preparation for publication.

**Jon Mein
Barry Bateman**

THE DIARY OF PRIVATE A A BRIDGES, by Phyllis Dawson Nicholls

(Mereo Books, 2014. ISBN: 978-1-86151
-256-7 £12.99)

The First World War diary of a St Albans man, Alfred Bridges. Alf, who was after the war the owner of a popular billiard hall in St Albans and a notable local athlete, may still be remembered by some residents. The son of a groomsman at Childwickbury, he and his family later moved to St Albans. His older brother, Herbert, volunteered in 1914 and was killed at Ypres in 1915. Alf tried hard to join up, but was refused, because of poor eyesight until he was accepted under the Derby Scheme in 1916, and joined the 25th Battalion, Middlesex Regiment.

After their initial training, the Battalion set sail for South Africa. From South Africa, the Regiment went on to Singapore and eventually to Siberia. His very readable diary of his experiences is augmented by relevant articles and poems from the regimental magazine, references from a book by his Commanding Officer, Col. John Ward, *With the Die-Hards in Siberia*, and by his and others' letters home to the *Herts Ad*. Mrs Nicholls finishes with a brief summary of her own reminiscences of his later life in St Albans and those of her late husband (Alf's nephew). This is an interesting account by a local man of a less well-known aspect of the war.

Anne Wares

THE DUKE OF MARLBOROUGH PUBLIC HOUSE

It is always a shame to see a pub close for the last time. Another one has recently gone: the landmark *Duke of Marlborough* is being converted for residential use but, as this note describes, it did well to survive a problematic Victorian history.



Duke of Marlborough Public House, c.1873
Reproduced courtesy of Hertfordshire Libraries:
St Albans Central Library.

The pub was probably opened in 1841 as an alehouse on a plot in the former gardens and yards of the recently-demolished Holywell House. The origins of the pub's name are easy to ascertain as John Churchill, the Duke of Marlborough, and Sarah his wife lived here from 1684 well into the 1700s. The demolition of the House in the late 1830s opened the direct line up Holywell Hill for the first time in over 150 years, a move that explains why the pub and neighbouring housing are located on the island between Holywell Hill and Grove Road. (See *plan Page 17*).

The period around 1840 was not one of prosperity for the local pub trade. Bankruptcy or insolvency had affected at least fourteen publicans in the previous ten years, a trend that was to continue through the 1840s as the opening of the London – Birmingham railway in 1838 substantially reduced the number of people using the main road through St Albans and therefore the local inns and alehouses for rest and recuperation.

In light of these problems it seems strange that a developer risked building a new pub at this time and also at this spot. After all there was very little residential property in the area so perhaps the owners wished to entice the workers at the gas works across the road. More likely the motivation was its position as the first pub within the town's boundary on the road in from Watford, increasingly busy with traffic when that town's railway station opened in 1837. Maybe the early talk of the development of the branch line from Watford to what is now the Abbey Station and beyond was another cause – but that line was eventually operational only in 1858.

Judging by the rapid turnover in licensees in the mid to late Victorian period, the *Duke of Marlborough* doesn't appear to have been a particular success. Competition from the *Railway Tavern*, opened across the road in 1857 and also the *Engineers Arms* around 1870, hobbled aspirations.

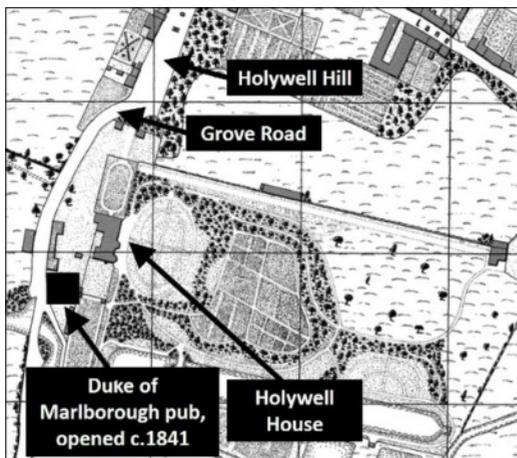
Continued from Page 16

Local residential development was very slow: the first few houses in Prospect Road appeared in the late 1850s but their middle class occupiers were unlikely to be attracted to the local pubs as their peers rapidly turned against public consumption of beer in the late Victorian period.

Newspaper adverts seeking new tenants for the pub at this time promoted the stables and carriage hire to travellers alighting at the Abbey station rather

than 'wet' sales. The accompanying early photo (*Page 16*) of the pub provides a glimpse of this alternative line of business when William Parker was the tenant in the early 1870s, the banner under the right-hand window advertising "flies & carriages". The photo also explains why the pub's location was described as "desolate" around this time with the residential development of the old Holywell House gardens and park still some years away.

Jon Mein



Holywell Hill c.1820 showing position of Holywell House and pub opened 1841.

Map based on that in St Albans c1820 (SAHAAS 1982)

HIDDEN GEMS - LOCAL HISTORY DAY

SAHAAS will take part in a local heritage day which is planned for St Albans library on Wednesday 18th March 2015 from 10.00 am - 4 pm. It provides an opportunity for local groups and organisations to engage with library visitors by displaying information and materials to promote their group/organisation and the study of local history. Anyone who missed the slide show accompanying the Residents First Weekend will be able to catch it there

LECTURE VENUE

Due to St Albans School commitments, it is sometimes necessary for lectures to be given at the Verulamium Museum. Please, therefore, check with the Society web site to confirm the venue before setting off.

LECTURE PROGRAMME

FEBRUARY – MAY 2015

Tuesday 17 February 2015

A Touch of Glass

Tony Brown and Gordon Casbeard

The show consists of a variety of sets of slides, photographic black and white slides, and sets of coloured slides, many of them hand-painted, slip slides, chromatropes etc. These are the slides that were around in Victorian times. It is a fast moving show featuring humour and pathos, plus photographic slides we have researched, so we can explain all you can see in the picture. We use a Victorian Magic Lantern, (updated to run on electricity).

Tony trained as an engineering toolmaker, and finished up in the craft industry, making Bobbins and pillows for use in hand made lace. Gordon worked in the postage stamp and banknote printing industry. They have known each other most of their lives, and have been presenting Magic Lantern shows for 10 years.

Friday 27 February 2015

Thomas Hollis V 18c Republican, Eccentric, Benefactor of Harvard University – His family, activities and St Albans connections

Kate Morris

Thomas Hollis V is the most well-known member of a remarkable dynasty, which hailed from industrial Yorkshire, but settled in the South, trading in London and St Albans. Their philanthropy was legendary especially in the interests of non-denominational education in a world where the Establishment restricted the lives of non-conformists.

Kate Morris continues to research early modern social history, especially in relation to St Albans. Dissent, Enterprise and Enlightenment inspired the Industrial Revolution in England and this was an outlet for the energy of many radical thinkers who in other places led more militant revolutions. Kate has uncovered many original sources which illustrate the themes she has researched which include trade, transport, nonconformity and education.

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Tuesday 10 March 2015

Sensing the Iron Age and Roman Past: Geophysics and the Archaeology of Hertfordshire.

Dr Kris Lockyear

The *Sensing the Iron Age and Roman Past* project was a joint-research project between UCL and about ten local archaeological societies supported by the SADC, St Albans Museum Service, and others. It was funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council. The aim of the project was to equip and train local amateur archaeologists to be able to undertake magnetometry surveys of archaeological sites. This talk will concentrate on the results of the surveys undertaken so far, including Verulamium Park where the survey has revealed new details of the plan of the Roman city.

Kris first became interested in archaeology when he visited Verulamium Park and Museum at the age of ten. Later that year he joined the Welwyn Archaeological Society, eventually becoming its director 34 years later. Kris undertook degrees in archaeology at the Universities of Durham and Southampton and then he completed his doctorate at the Institute of Archaeology, UCL where he has worked for the last 18 years. Kris ran a major project at Noviodunum in Romania for ten years but now concentrates his fieldwork on the archaeology of Hertfordshire, returning to work at Verulamium some 38 years after that fateful first visit.

Tuesday 17 March 2015

The History of the Nickey Line

David Abernethy

The Nickey Line footpath and cycle way is a former railway line (the Harpenden to Hemel Hempstead Railway). It was opened as a footpath /cycleway in 1985 and still links Harpenden, Redbourn and Hemel Hempstead with up to over 5000 users per week in the summer. Friends of the Nickey Line work to help maintain the Line, including its historical features, and to encourage use by local users and visitors.

Dave Abernethy has lived in Harpenden since 2003 and has been Chairman of the Friends of the Nickey Line since its foundation in 2006. His home has its own private access to the Nickey Line and he is seen on it frequently with dog or hawk, or occasionally with bow saw in hand for emergency tree clearance.... He has a strong interest in the Nickey Line and its history, recently successfully defending part of the Nickey Line against infilling proposals, calling it 'historical and architectural vandalism'.

Friday 27 March 2015

Discovering an Archive of Local History – The Papers of the Nichols Family of printers and Antiquaries 1745 -1873, with special reference to St Albans and Hertfordshire

Julian Pooley

The Nichols papers are a major source for the study of antiquarianism, the book

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trade and biography in Britain in the long eighteenth century. As proprietors of a leading London printing house and editors of the *Gentleman's Magazine*, they were at the heart of a national network of information exchange between members of the book trade, antiquaries, bibliographers, collectors, artists, engravers and writers. Their personal research interests ranged from literary biography to local history and from genealogy to autograph hunting. This talk will trace the history of their archive and explore its potential for uncovering Hertfordshire's local history.

Julian Pooley is a professional archivist, responsible for public service and community engagement at Surrey History Centre. In 1982 he discovered an anonymous manuscript diary in a bookshop which he later found had been written by a granddaughter of John Nichols. Subsequent research led him to the important collections of Nichols papers now scattered between over eighty repositories on both sides of the Atlantic. Further research led him to discover many thousands of Nichols' papers that have remained, untouched and unknown in private hands. He is now preparing an analytical guide to this important archive of literary and antiquarian history.

Tuesday 14 April 2015

Secret London

Mike Beech

Due to its strategic location on the River Thames London has been at the centre

of British life from Roman times right through to the present day. Given its importance and that it has been in existence for over 2,000 years, there are bound to be numerous stories of intrigue and many secrets.

This talk will look at some of these secrets, including: - A statue older than Cleopatra's Needle', A little bit of Texas in the centre of London, The site of the first General Assembly meeting of the United Nations, Mrs Coade's secret, A 17th century walled garden in the centre of London, The 'body railway', The world's largest library devoted to women, The site where the cause of cholera was discovered, How to defeat the body snatchers of London etc. With each 'secret' we shall explore and learn a little bit more about the hidden world of our greatest and most famous city.

Mike Beech worked for Kodak for over thirty years as an internal Management Consultant, and as a result worked for short periods in most European countries as well as Kodak's UK sites. In his spare time he sold antiques at antique fairs, developed an interest in glass, particularly Whitefriars who were located just the other side of the railway tracks to Kodak at Wealdstone in Harrow. Upon leaving Kodak Mike took a teaching qualification and taught management subjects. After teaching he developed a series of talks including Whitefriars, Russia, China, Secret London and the Lost occupations of Victorian Britain.

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Friday 24 April 2015

Pompeii and Herculanium – Their Life and death

Dr Paul Roberts

In AD 79, in southern Italy at the very heart of the Roman Empire, a catastrophic eruption of Mount Vesuvius destroyed and buried Pompeii and Herculaneum. But this disaster created an archaeologist's dream, a time capsule of artefacts, buildings and even people, suspended in time. We look at public buildings, theatres, temples and baths then, in the footsteps of the British Museum's blockbuster exhibition, we enter a Roman house. Beautiful sculptures, mosaics and wall paintings, jewellery, glass, wooden furniture and even food were miraculously preserved. Finally we see the sad remains of the people who lived in this house, ordinary people just like us.

Having studied Classics at Cambridge and Classical Archaeology at the universities of Sheffield and Oxford, Paul lived and studied for several years in Italy. He took part in excavations in Libya, Turkey Greece and

Italy, where he is co-director of an excavation at Forum Novum in the Sabine Hills above Rome. In 1994 Paul joined the Greek and Roman Department of the British Museum, becoming Senior Curator of Roman art and archaeology in 2008. He has been involved in several exhibitions and in 2013 was curator of the exhibition 'Life and Death in Pompeii and Herculaneum'.

Outline programme May 2015

Full details to be given in May Newsletter and on our website.

Tuesday 12 May 2015

To be announced

Tuesday 19 May 2015

Palladianism – Four Centuries of Style

Charles Hind

Friday 29 May

The Road to the New Towns: From Utopian Visionaries to the 'Men from the Ministry'

Matthew Bristow

Roy Bratby

Chairman Programme Development

CLARE ELLIS AND GEORGE ATKINSON

I am sad to report that two distinguished members of the Society, Clare Ellis and George Atkinson, passed away in late January 2015. Funeral details will be sent to members via e-news mailer. Appreciations will be published in the May Newsletter.

Helen Bishop

THE MAYOR'S PRIZE

AN INVITATION TO ENTER

This annual prize, currently £100, is offered for an outstanding piece of work which makes an important contribution to the history of St Albans or Hertfordshire. Applicants must be either in full-time education or working as amateur historians. The prize is administered by the Society on behalf of St Albans City and District Council.

Applicants are expected to demonstrate the originality of their work and critical usage of primary sources. Submissions can be in the form of an essay of between about 5,000-10,000 words, including any illustrations. The Society recognises the growing use of IT as an aid to research and will accept submissions with fewer words and various digital images and other data when appropriate.

Full details of procedures, instructions and guidelines, and application forms are available on the Society's website at http://www.stalbanshistory.org/page_id__309_path__0p30p113p.aspx

The deadline for submissions is 30 April 2015

Any questions about the prize should be sent to the President:
Helen Bishop,
7 Taylor Close
St Albans AL4 9YB
Tel: 01727 730825
Email: chair@stalbanhistory.org

SAHAAS NEW YEAR PARTY - 9TH JANUARY 2015



President welcomes the Mayor of St Albans City and District, Cllr. Geoff Harrison, and Mayoress, Mrs Moira Seton.



Music by Jessica Cox and Rachel Steadman



Bryan Hanlon announces the results of his Quiz