



ST ALBANS & HERTFORDSHIRE ARCHITECTURAL & ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER 192 - MAY 2014



Photo John Humphreys

Andrew Carnegie was an American industrialist, born in Dunfermline, Scotland, in 1835 the son of very poor parents who emigrated to America in 1848. Carnegie built up a vast fortune from steel and other interests and devoted his later life to philanthropy. His 1889 article proclaiming "*The Gospel of Wealth*" called on the rich to use their wealth to improve society, and stimulated a wave of philanthropy. He endowed many towns and cities around the world with libraries and other academic institutions.

The photograph is of the stained glass window on the first floor of the old Library building (now O'Neill's) in Victoria Street and depicts Andrew Carnegie presenting the library building to St Albans in 1910.

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NEW TREASURER NEEDED

After several years of service, John Thomson has decided to cut down on his commitments and a replacement is required. The task is, by definition, vital to the running of the Society, but the duties are not onerous. John will provide a full job description and a comprehensive handover. With this position there will, of course, come a seat on the Society Council and the person will become a Trustee of the Society.

Interested? Then please contact Donald Munro (01727 760808) or Bryan Hanlon (01727 851734) for an initial chat.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

After the wet wet winter the breaking greenery reminds us of the vigour of the natural cycle. This is happily reflected in a range of new and on-going activities in the Society. We are moving forward towards producing a number of publications; the First World War Research Group is an invigorating focus of activity; the Library has upgraded hardware to accommodate new digitised illustrative materials; this season's lecture programme has been the best that I can remember - our thanks to Doreen and Roy Bratby for assembling such a star-studded cast; and underlining the current appeal of the Society, our membership continues to rise.



New initiatives in co-operation with the Civic Society and the SADC are raising the Clock Tower profile, and we have helped sponsor *Edward Robert Hughes - The Last Pre-Raphaelite?* St Albans Centenary Celebration Display, on show in the Museum of St Albans, Hatfield Road until 1st June inclusive.

SAHAAS First World War Conference, 1914/15

Let me draw your attention to our all day Conference "*St Albans at War, 1914/15*" on Saturday 20th September at Dagnall Street Baptist Church. Jon Mein, Anne Wares and the First World War Group are to be congratulated on putting together such an interesting ambitious programme, which has the unusual feature of a contribution on the contemporary experience in Worms, St Albans' twinned town in Germany. I do urge members to add this date to your diary, our first SAHAAS conference for some years. (Details on page 7).

Reality check

All this vigour is very heartening, but it occurs only because we are fortunate to have people able and willing to make things happen. The Society has experienced losses in personnel through retirement and natural causes that point to our seeking the involvement of more members in its operations. Most immediately we are still urgently seeking a Treasurer to replace John Thomson who is standing down (See opposite and Page 5).

Looking ahead

The imminent *Membership Survey* contains questions about your interests and skills that could potentially help our Society. It also asks if you can help with specific tasks

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which are part and parcel of operating an ancient but modern “heritage” society such as ours (e.g. Clock Tower opening). We are particularly interested to learn about your use of the Society’s Library catalogue, Website, etc. as a guide to how we might develop SAHAAS facilities.

The Questionnaire will be distributed (at last!) to all members shortly, posted in hard copy. However, it will also be available via our website and it will greatly help the Society if those of you with Internet access could indeed please complete the survey on-line. Administration and analysis will be much easier.

Looking to the future, the Survey seeks to affirm what the membership expects from the Society, and to show us whom amongst you may have the skills, abilities and interest that will ensure the vitality of St Albans & Hertfordshire Architectural & Archaeological Society in a changing world. Whichever form of response you prefer, please let me encourage you all to take the time to complete our survey.

Topical Titbits

The AGM this year will be on Tuesday 16th September and you may be minded to consider nominations for Council, or matters for debate (See Bryan Hanlon’s piece opposite).

Two good submissions have been made for the Mayor’s Prize 2014, and an award will be made this year. It may just be possible to have the presentation by Mayor Annie Brewster whose term of office has been extended into June on account of the European elections.

Throughout her term of office as Mayor, and amongst other things, Cllr Brewster has pursued an energetic and effective brief for putting St Albans and its historic heritage on the map. It is good know that she will be taking up the SADC Heritage portfolio after her mayoral term ends.

May I wish you all an enjoyable and healthy summer.

**Donald Munro,
President**

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Our AGM this year will take place on Tuesday 16th September.

One major item will be voting in a new president, as Donald's three year term (doesn't time pass quickly!) is coming to a close. Your Council already has one suggested nominee but if you wish to propose anyone for this essential position, please do let me know. Should you wish, all other current members of Council (with the exception of John Thomson as treasurer –see note below) are prepared to stand again for office in the forthcoming year. However – by the recommendation of at least ten members – two additional members may be elected to serve on Council for a period of two years.

If you have any items that you wish to be raised, could I please ask you to let me know well in advance, preferably by the end of July?

Bryan Hanlon - Secretary
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TREASURER – LAST CALL

As said in our previous newsletters since November, our treasurer John Thomson has decided to relinquish office, and we therefore need a replacement to fulfil this vital role – your Society cannot operate without a treasurer!

Sadly, out of a membership of over 450, we have received no volunteers to take on this position. Unless, therefore, we can recruit a suitable replacement in the very near future, we shall have no alternative other than to employ an external professional – at a cost to the Society.

Please do contact me if you have any constructive suggestions.

Bryan Hanlon

SAHAAS MILESTONE - 500TH COUNCIL MEETING

When is a Committee not a Committee? When it's a Council.

On Wednesday 26th February 2014, the Society's Council met for the 500th time, an achievement marked with a glass of wine and a photograph (*see Page 22*). The venue was the Verulamium Museum.

For the first 65 or so years of its existence, the Society was run by a Committee and it met for the first time on 21st October 1845 at the Rectory in Sumpter Yard. This venue was no surprise: of the eleven men in attendance, seven were members of the clergy with the rector of the Abbey parish, Rev Dr Henry Nicholson, in the chair. The promoters hoped, amongst other things, that the new society would draw attention to the parlous state of the Abbey's buildings.

When the pre-prepared constitution was accepted and the first deposits received for the new library, including what was supposed to be a 15th century seal found near St Peter's Church, the *St Albans Architectural Society* was up and running.

Then in 1912 it was realised that the Rules were in poor shape, and it was decided to copy the rules of the younger East Herts Archaeological Society. As Brian Moody, a former Secretary of the Society has noted: "When work on the new constitution was completed, the Officers found, almost to their surprise, that they had turned the Committee into a Council, the first meeting of which was held on 16th May 1912 at the Museum of St Albans. Charles Ashdown, the Secretary, duly headed the next meeting 'First Council Meeting.'" Ever since that time, thirteen succeeding Secretaries have continued the numbering.

If you want to know more about the history of what is one of the first antiquarian societies, I recommend Brian's book, *The Light of Other Days*, copies of which are available in our library both for sale and for borrowing.

Jon Mein

SAHAAS HOME FRONT CONFERENCE

St Albans at War 1914/15

We are delighted to announce details of the September conference we trailed in the last newsletter. As you will see from the programme enclosed with this Newsletter, the conference will be held at Dagnall Street Baptist Church on Saturday 20th September 2014. Speakers will cover a variety of topics ranging from life on the Home Front both in St Albans in the 1914-15 period and also in Worms, Germany, one of the city's twin towns. Our keynote speaker will be Dr John Bourne, a nationally-renowned expert on all matters First World War. The Society's Patron, Lady Verulam, will be the guest of honour at the event.

Tickets go on general sale on Sunday 1st June at £18 each. However, during May, we are offering tickets to Society members at the 'early-bird' price of £15 each. You can buy these at our lectures during May or by sending your cheque to the address shown on the form together with a stamped self-addressed envelope for your ticket(s).

We are grateful to Bryan Hanlon, the Society's Secretary, for taking on the co-ordination of the conference. We also wish to thank Sue Mann and Barry Bateman for their work in preparing the conference documents and also Kate Morris in liaising with our German speaker.

If you have any questions about the event please contact Bryan on 01727 851734 or email him via admin@stalbanhistory.org.

Please note that the booking form may also be downloaded from our website www.stalbanshistory.org.

**Anne Wares
Jon Mein**

OTHER FIRST WORLD WAR EVENTS

While the 1914/15 conference forms the centrepiece of our commemorative activities this summer, many members of the Society are involved in other events. The following show those events of which we are aware. If we have missed your events, do let us know and we will publish the details in the *What's On* section on our website.

St Saviour's Church

Rev. Peter Wadsworth is giving two talks about life in the parish during the war. The first on Tuesday 22nd July is an updated version of the talk you may have previously heard, *The Day Before Their World Ended*. The second is a new lecture, using material from the parish magazines, local press and the Wilton Hall diaries entitled *A Parish at War* and that will be given on Tuesday 5th August. Admission to both talks is free.

<http://www.ssaviours.org/>

St Albans Abbey

The Abbey is hosting a commemorative exhibition between 1st and 18th August entitled *For Remembrance – St Albans Abbey Parish in 1914*. This will reflect on the lives of those at the heart of the Abbey during the war and the unique way they chose to remember those they had lost. This will be located in the North Transept and admission will be free.

www.stalbanscathedral.org

St Michael's Church

Over the weekend of the 13th and 14th September ("Heritage Weekend"), members of the church are mounting an exhibition of material about the names on the war memorial as well as life in the parish in the first few months of the war.

Museum of St Albans

There are two strands to the museum's commemorative activities this year and fuller details will shortly be published on its website

<http://www.stalbansmuseums.org.uk/>

Exhibition: *Keeping the Home Fires Burning: Life in St Albans and Worms during the First World War.*

13th June to 16th November 2014 at the Museum of St Albans.

Talks: *Life in St Albans and Worms during the First World War.*

Friday 13th June, 7pm to 9pm at the Verulamium Museum. The evening will consist of two talks on life during the First World War to coincide with the opening of the new temporary exhibition. The first talk will focus on the perspective of St Albans from local researcher Richard Howard. This will be followed by a talk given by Daniel Nagel on the experience of St Albans' twin town of Worms in Germany

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Redbourn Museum

There will be a commemorative exhibition in October and November. Keep an eye on the following website for further information.

<http://www.redbourn.org.uk/Redbourn/RedbournMuseum>

Hatfield Local History Society

The Society has recently published a book about the names on the town's war memorial, *The Hatfield Parish in Memoriam* and has plans for a second publication later in the summer considering life in the area during the war. Amongst other topics, this will consider the tank trials, held in secret in Hatfield Park, the VAD hospital as well as the lives of the soldiers stationed in the town. There are also plans to hold an exhibition but the location and timing are not yet fixed

And something for 2015...

Park Street & Frogmore Society

The society is currently considering plans to combine a First World War exhibition with its 20th anniversary events next year. In the meantime, if you have any material relating to the area or the names on the St Stephen's War Memorial, please contact the society's archivist, Jacqui Banfield-Taylor via psfsarchive@btinternet.com

NEW MUSEUM PROJECT.

The SADC, the Museums and Galleries Trust, and the University of Hertfordshire are all busily teasing out and progressing the complex development phase requirements for the full project. These cover variously: tendering for design, finding sources of matching and top-up funding, establishing the timeline "story" and much else. A Project Manager with duties covering both the Museum and the Cotlandswick projects is soon to be appointed. Arrangements are being made for a team including some of the new appointees to deliver a presentation of the project to SAHAAS membership after our AGM on 16th September

The Museums staff have been very active with several project associated initiatives, and a replacement Audience Development Manager has been appointed.

Particularly pleasing, mitigating one of SAHAAS' principal concerns of the last three years, is the news of a successful funding application to the Arts Council Strategic Fund for the establishment of a Conservation Unit. As ever in today's minefield of cultural funding, this is a complex part business/part educational initiative. But Kate Warren is to be congratulated for pursuing this interesting and ambitious way of restoring a vital element to the Museums' departmental activities.

Donald Munro

LIBRARY NOTES

The Library is busy on open mornings. A stock weeding process has started, its necessity confirmed by the inflow of new materials. The Heritage Library system will be moved to the “new” computer very soon. We would be happy to accommodate experienced volunteer help in cataloguing. Please respond to the queries in the Membership Survey, or earlier if really keen!

We are grateful to Robert and Pamela Merrick for kindly donating an indenture relating to a property in Fishpool Street. This will be digitised before passing to HALS. Likewise we thank Mike Neighbour who has presented the Society with a second tranche of digital copies of photographs from the *Herts Advertiser*, this time for the years 1920-1929. These are all available to members in the Library.

Donald Munro

Recently added to stock

Anne Rowe and Tom Williamson. *Hertfordshire landscape and history*. Hatfield: Hertfordshire Publications, 2013. 335 Pp. illus, maps, plans, index, bibliog.

Drawing on their extensive fieldwork and documentary investigations, and recent

research by others, the authors examine the historical processes that created the county’s modern physical environment. A notable contribution to Hertfordshire’s historical geography.

Recent journal articles

Herts Past & Present, Spring 2014

“John and William Hollingworth; eighteenth-century Hertfordshire land surveyors,” by Kathryn Shreeve. Pp. 3-9. Father and son surveyors based in Puckeridge, between them mapped much of east Hertfordshire and west Essex. Illus. with details from plans.

“Care of the poor in early eighteenth-century Ashwell”, by Kate Docking. Pp. 10-13. Examines the case of a single individual, Anne Stone, in Overseers’ account books. Her case exemplifies the level of care the parish provided.

“Welwyn and Willian”, by Graham Pinton. Pp. 14-16. The author argues that some of the references to Welwyn in the translations of Domesday are mis-attributions, and they actually refer to Willian.

“‘Missing in action’: the Toms family of Croxley Green and the First World War”, by Bryan Thomson. Pp. 17-23. Account of Edgar Toms, 18 when conscripted in 1916 and served in Flanders. PoW in March

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1918 and died in appalling conditions in July. Based on family letters and papers.

“The Manor of Mawedlyne in Hertfordshire”, by Dorothea Pries. Pp. 25-28. Discusses the evidence in fifteenth century documents of the location of this manor – in Welwyn or Berkhamsted.

“Public health in Hitchin and Hertford in the mid-nineteenth century”, by Jennifer Ferguson. Pp. 29-31. Describes the difficulties found by the townspeople and the responsible authorities in trying to make improvements in their areas.

British Archaeology, March/April 2014.

“The remains of Romano Britons”, by Laura Mountford. Pp. 22-25. The author, an osteoarchaeologist, asserts the value of excavated burials, which can provide information on the diet and health of the native population in Roman Britain.

Tony Cooper

ST ALBANS CATHEDRAL DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

On 19th February members of Council, supported by Ann Dean and Kate Morris, were given an in depth view of the Cathedral’s bid for Heritage Lottery funding for their programme to bring the Abbey into the 21st century with increased educational facilities, and improved visitor access. Heather Smith

and Helen Gray gave us a PowerPoint presentation, followed by a walk around the building, including the library areas that are usually “off limits” to most visitors.

It is planned to have a considerable reorganisation of the areas above the “Abbot’s Kitchen” in the Chapter House, as well as changes also in the cathedral building itself, such as the restoration (and probable move) of the shrine of Amphibalus and a “scriptorium” incorporated in the historical museum area in the north aisle. A new, and much improved, main visitor entrance in front of the Slype door is also envisaged.

Our concerns about the future of the Beardsmore (local history) Library (there were four one-time librarians in our party!) was met with assurances that, although a slimming down process was being applied to the Hudson (theological) Library, the Beardsmore had not been touched as yet, and there were no immediate plans to rationalise it.

Members came away impressed with what is envisaged although – of course – a great deal of money is needed. The total sum is currently expected to be in the region of £7 million, of which it is hoped to obtain well over half from the Heritage Lottery Fund.

Bryan Hanlon

CLOCK TOWER REPORT

After the success of the Christmas lights and extra winter openings, the Clock Tower Joint Committee met in February to plan for the 2014 season, the first event being the annual Clockateers' party on March 28th. This was, as usual, a very enjoyable evening with the added interest this year of an excellent display of the photographs taken for the recent Photographic Competition. This was organised on-line in January by Herts University student Jing Foo who aimed to interest younger people in the Clock Tower. Jing attended the party and The Mayor of St.Albans presented the prize to winner Petra Koblova from Prague. Her very fresh and original take on the Clock Tower attracted very positive comments and the pictures were displayed, with the help of Adam Singer and Frank Iddiols, in the Clock Tower for the opening on Good Friday.

Our tireless Mayor, Annie Brewster, also offered to come to the Tower on our first morning open, which she duly did, and our thanks go to her for all the encouragement she gives the volunteers.

On Palm Sunday, there is usually a procession of people who meet at the Clock Tower, complete with donkey, to walk down to the Abbey for 9.30 service. This year, for the first time, some of the gathered children rang the small market bell in celebration and were quite delighted to be allowed the privilege. I hope this can be continued in future years.

All this means that the Clock Tower has a much higher profile and an increasing number of visitors, contributing to St Albans' drive to attract more tourists

Jill Singer (Volunteer coordinator for the Civic Society) and I continue to attend meetings of the St Albans Attractions group. The last of these was held on March 11th at Sandridge Village hall. There is a big programme of events throughout the summer to celebrate the 900 years of the church, though the settlement is much older. These meetings are a valued opportunity for all the area attractions to exchange ideas and publicity. We are supporting the new Tourist map for St Albans from which we would all benefit and both SAHAAS and the Civic Society have contributed to the fund for this.

More money still needs to be raised, however. At the Clock Tower itself, we have bought some new novelty gifts at a price that children and parents can afford and we are considering whether we can make one of the excellent recent pictures into a very beautiful jigsaw. We are hoping the interior of the Tower will be able to be painted before too long, as budgets permit.

As usual, I want to thank all those who volunteer to help run the Clock Tower – Simon West, archaeologist responsible for the fabric and representative of the Museums service on the Clock Tower

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Committee, the weekend organisers who help me so much, Russell and David Linton who clean, and all the volunteers who turn in regularly and enjoy the Clock Tower and all its interesting facets. Last year was an excellent season. We hope this year will be even better.

Helen Bishop
SAHAAS Clock Tower
Volunteer Coordinator



Photo: Adam Singer

*Mayor Cllr Annie Brewster
 signs the visitor's book*

DISCOVER SANDRIDGE

An exhibition called "Discover Sandridge" is on at the Museum of St Albans, Hatfield Road, until 1 June. It forms part of the 900th anniversary celebrations of the parish of St Leonard's Sandridge – a parish which included not only the village but also Marshalswick, Bernards Heath and Jersey Farm and stretched northwards almost to Ayot St Lawrence

The exhibition is free and open daily 10am – 5pm (2pm – 5pm on Sundays). For more information about the exhibition and other events celebrating Sandridge 900+, see www.sandridge900.com.

Elizabeth and Andrew Gardner



*St Leonard's from the South West
 about 1880*

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Please also note that SAHAAS has organised one of the lectures in the programme. This is "William White and the restoration of St Leonard's" to be held at the church on Saturday 19 July and concerns its renovation in the 1880s led by Rev. Dr Griffiths, a member of our Society. Full details will be published on the Society's website shortly. (Ed)

EDWARD WARNER, VC

Later in the summer, a stone will be unveiled next to the war memorial on St Peters Green to commemorate the gallantry of local man, Edward Warner, VC. This short note, originally prepared for my research into the old Hatfield Road Boys' School, recounts his life and death and also the way the city fathers felt it their duty to support his widowed mother.

Edward (Ted) Warner was born in St Albans, on 18th November 1883, to a family living in Old London Road. He joined the army in 1903, following the patriotic fervour engendered by the Boer war. The outbreak of the First World War saw him re-enlist in the Bedfordshire regiment. The action in which Edward saved a number of wounded comrades despite his suffering greatly from a gas attack, and which resulted in his death as well as the Victoria Cross and a citation for gallantry, took place at Hill 60, in Northern France on 1st May 1916. For more detailed information, please see: <http://bedfordregiment.org.uk/1stbn/edwardwarnercv.html>

Two St Albans men were awarded the Victoria Cross during the First World War; one, Warner, born and bred in the city and the second, Alfred Smith, who lived here for only a few years. Both had been pupils at the Hatfield Road Boys' School, and the names of both are on the St Albans war memorial on St Peters Green.

There would have been pride in the city that two of its sons had been awarded this most prestigious medal for their gallantry. On 7 March 1916, the headmaster wrote in his log: "Today I referred to these two cases of splendid heroism and self-sacrifice and exhorted the boys always to maintain and uphold the honour and reputation of the old School"

The 1911 census shows the Warner family living at 38 Cannon Street. Edward's death in 1915 left behind a widowed mother for whom he had been the sole support, his father having died aged 78 in 1912. Following Edward's death, we find that his fiancée was living in Cannon Street with his mother, but apart from whatever support she was able to provide, Mrs Warner's only source of income was "certain Funds" which "had been provided from private sources out of which arrears of rent etc. had been paid", and which would be exhausted by Christmas 1915. It is unclear what these funds were, although a benefit performance had been given at the St Albans Picture Palace immediately following his death, where a plea was made for financial support for his mother.

Mrs Warner's case was considered at a meeting of the St Albans Relief Committee on 30th November, 1915: "Councillor Lee reported that the present income of Mrs Warner was Old Age Pension 5/-, Soldiers and Sailors Families Association

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8/-, Total 13/- per week and that the rent of the house was 7/- per week. It was resolved that the rent be paid out of the Mayor's Relief Fund until further notice." It has not been possible to find further information as to how long this assistance was given to Mrs Warner, but it shows the concern the city of St Albans felt for the mother of one of its heroes.

As a footnote, a national scheme to honour such gallantry as that displayed by Edward Warner would have brought a captured German gun to St Albans. The plan was that it should be placed in St Peter's Green, close to the city war memorial. In fact, the green was, for a time, known as Gun Green. It is perhaps fortunate that this scheme was never implemented.

Christine McDermott

KING HENRY'S BAND RETURNS TO KINGSBURY MANOR BARN

King Henry's Band really is unique – a fascinating blend of modern technology and 16th century (and earlier....) music and instruments in a novel and entertaining performance by Robert FitzGerald from Norfolk. On **Saturday 24th May at 7.30 pm**

The emphasis is very much on tuneful and light-hearted music to be enjoyed by all. Nothing too serious – just pure fun! The atmosphere is all helped along by an appropriate setting and props.

This will be the Band's second visit to the wonderful surroundings of Jill and Adam Singer's barn which adds so much to the atmosphere of the amazing sounds you will hear. The previous concert was packed out and highly praised.

The evening is just not to be missed. Sponsored by The St Albans Civic Society, programmes are £10 at the door (incl. wine) but advance booking is strongly advised - contact Jill Singer joxhey@gmail.com (01727-838965) Proceeds to the New Museum and Gallery fund.

ABBAY PARISH NEWSLETTERS 1914-22

For our First World War research we are trying to locate copies of these newsletters. None has so far come to light in the usual places such as HALS or the Abbey Muni-ment Room. If you have copies or know of someone who does, please let us know by emailing: homefront@stalbanhistory.org or by calling Jon Mein on: 07913 490470.

THE HOUSE WHERE I LIVE

My family moved into the house in 1972 and at Christmas went to Alban Warwick's fish and game shop in Catherine Street, to order a turkey. The lady cashier asked my wife "Shall we deliver it?", "Yes please", "Address?", "13 Fishpool Street". The lady glowed with pleasure – "I was born in Number 13". So we had a friend. My wife invited Mrs. Fairey, for it was she, with her husband to tea and explored the house with her. Her family name was Tarbox and during the Great War the family lived there – mother, father, six children, two aunts and two grand-parents. The three storey house with most rooms facing the street consisted of five rooms, utility rooms and a cellar. It must have been pretty cramped. The father, one of two ploughmen on St Germain's farm (where the Verulamium Museum now stands) was conscripted in April 1917 and returned from the war minus a leg and took up the occupation of a cobbler. Tragically the family broke up when he, as many men who came back from the hell-hole of the experience of the trenches, broken in body and spirit, could not get back to a normal life. Fortunately the mother had a strong character. She managed to get a job, perhaps in the straw factory next door, and got all the children back together from various temporary homes and settled down in Number 13.



Photo courtesy St Albans Museums

John Smith, a SAHAAS member and a leading specialist on historic timber buildings, looked over the house and put the date as shortly after 1500 but it originally looked quite different to how it looks today. It is likely that the front would have had a plain rendered finish, there would have been plain window openings with small side-sliding solid wooden shutters with small openings closed with thin horn or vellum. Pretty draughty and gloomy.

By the 18th century the whole building was visibly leaning forwards towards the street due to settlement. The builder decided to build a new wall to enclose the ground floor storey and flush with the first storey front wall. Being a purely practical man he did not attempt to copy the architecture of the 17th century front walls of the first and second floors above. Hence the 18th century windows in the wall built to enclose the ground floor and incidentally including two feet extra floor space in the ground floor space. Inside the house all this is clearly visible.

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When you stand in Fishpool Street all you can see of Number 13 is the façade of three storeys. At some time in the past Numbers 11 and 15 to left and right were linked with my house to form a large inn, the “Crow”. As evidence, traces of blocked doorways linking the three houses are still visible. Number 11 is the earliest part of the block of three houses. Number 15 is the latest part and large, black gates gave access for the stage-coaches to get to the inn-yard at the rear where there was stabling and a blacksmith/farrier. From a list of landlords we see that the Wright family, which ran the Crow for over 45 years, often described themselves as “Publican and Blacksmith” and Kelly’s Directory shows Mrs Wright (Farrier) residing at Numbers 11, 13 and 15 at different times.

Number 13 is sometimes referred to as “Godmersham House”. I understand that for a period of time before 1890 the tenant of Number 11 was Swinford Francis, a City Councillor, Solicitor and leader of the Blue Ribbon Army Gospel Temperance Movement. Francis named the house after his wife’s home village of Godmersham in Kent. In 1900, Number 11 became the home of Thomas Martin, the owner of the straw hat company, Dunham and Martin (which had previously been Munt Brown and Co that Thomas had joined as a clerk) and with its factory behind Number 9 on land to the rear of the house. Mr Martin’s son told me the manager of the Company was housed in Number 13 and the linking of 11 and 13 may have led to the confusion. But in any event, the name Godmersham house appears to have been dropped when Francis departed and Thomas moved in.

Many people notice Number 13’s pargetted plasterwork and the name of “Bankhart House” painted on the front door. It is not known when the original pargetting was done but around 1900 the celebrated plasterer and pargetter, Gordon Bankart almost certainly added to the pargetting and plasterwork and painted coloured panels. I came across an old print of the house and the pargetting work alongside an article by Bankart in an architectural magazine and thought it proper that the house be called after the celebrated craftsman and whose book *“The Art of the Plasterer”* was published in 1906 and is still today a standard work of the craft. Unfortunately the sign writer added an extra “H” – hence “Bankhart” house.

I am afraid that this overview is all too brief to give any more than a mere impression of the house, its history and occupants. Artists, such as Frederick Kitton have made several sketches and paintings of the house and the photograph, taken around 1900, shows the house with its distinctive plasterwork.

Dennis Owen

THE BAT & BALL PUBLIC HOUSE

Many of you walking down Chequer Street will have been intrigued by the sign of the *Bat & Ball* on the building shown in this photograph. Members of the Society whose memories of St Albans stretch back to 1980 and beyond will remember that there was a (very small) pub by this name operating as part of the Whitbread brewery estate. But what of its history?

The key secondary source is wrong: Branch Johnson in his useful book about the pubs of West Hertfordshire states that it was open in 1808. He was about 50 years out. It might have been open in 1854 but certainly not earlier. We do know however that it was trading by 1857, part of a small number of beer-houses run by the Kent family. They had opened a new brewery behind 5 Holywell Hill around the same time probably

to take advantage of the growing per capita consumption of beer at the time. With stiff competition from the three existing St Albans breweries and many others in neighbouring



Photo: John Humphreys

towns and villages, the Kents needed to build their own tied estate from scratch through which to sell their beer. The *Bat & Ball* was part of this; their other local interests opened at the roughly same time being the *Blue Anchor* in Fishpool Street and the *Beehive* in Keyfield Terrace. From 1872 and perhaps earlier, the family also leased the now-closed *Blue Lion* in Portland Street.

Jon Mein

EDITOR'S NOTE

This edition of the Newsletter, as always, relies on articles submitted by members. Some members are fortunate to live in properties of architectural, social or historical interest and I would welcome any similar article to follow on "The House Where I Live" (see page 16) or, of course, on any other subject.

NEWSLETTER 193

The closing date for contributions to Newsletter 193 is Friday 18th July 2014. Please forward copy to: Newsed@stalbanhistory.org or post to : 12 Church Crescent, St Albans, AL3 5JD

LECTURE PROGRAMME 20TH & 30TH MAY 2014

Synopsis and Personal Profiles

Tuesday 20 May 2014*The Secret Diary of a Churchgoer***Rev Peter Wadsworth**

For a century Herbert Wilton Hall was known as the author of the first history of St. Saviour's St. Albans but then a remarkable personal diary surfaced, having been lost for 80 years. Like all the best diaries it is an opinionated and often waspish account of church life between 1909 and 1922. His views on the clergy, the issues of the day and especially the women of the parish are trenchant. However he also gives us poignant glimpses of the impact of the First World War on those who went away to fight and on the church itself as it sought to meet the needs of soldiers billeted in the parish.

Peter Wadsworth has been ordained for 36 years and is Vicar of St. Saviour's St. Albans. He read history at Oxford and this has remained his first love. He has wide-ranging interests including medieval monastic history and Lord Nelson and lectures widely. He has always had a strong interest in the local history of his parishes. With the parish archivist at St. Saviour's, Mr David Laphorn, he has helped make known much of the early history of St. Saviour's and Bernards Heath.

Friday 30 May 2014*An early commercial architect in Hertfordshire***Christopher Blow**

Percival Blow practised in St Albans between 1897 and 1939 and left behind many houses and commercial buildings in the Arts & Crafts tradition, previously the province of the wealthy property owner. Highlights of his portfolio are houses in the Hall Place and Rothamsted estates, his several buildings for his old school 1908-1928, shops for Sainsbury's, banks for Barclays and pubs for Adey and White and notably the two buildings in Holywell Hill for his friend Sam Ryder. The quantity of his work is notable because he never had any partners. The quality of his work is marked by the listing of the St Albans School and Ryder buildings.

Chris Blow never knew his grandfather but, with Hertfordshire ancestry going back to at least 1388, he was brought up in the area and knew his buildings from an early age. Although his father rejected a career in architecture, Chris certainly did not and, after training in London and working with a London firm on hospitals overseas, he moved to Guildford. A big competition win started a specialist career designing airport buildings all over the world and writing technical books about them. On retirement the offer of a visiting professorship in engineering design interrupted one of his retirement projects, an architectural biography of his grandfather.

SOME OF OUR RECENT TALKS

Photographs: Frank Iddiols



*11 February
Pat Howe
Widows' Reads*



*25 April
Prof Chris Dyer
Medieval Peasant Houses
Did the Black Death cause
a building boom?*



*8 April
Sam Mullins
Underground. How the
Tube shaped London*



*18 February
Nicholas Halsey
The Halseys of Gaddesden*



*28 March
Prof Mike Parker Pearson
Stonehenge
New Discoveries*



*18 March
Kate Morris and
Julia Merrick
St Albans - Gentry Town?*

Your Choice

Do you have a specific topic, which is relevant to the Friday Society lectures which you would like to see covered in a future programme?

If so, please contact Doreen Bratby
Tel: 01727 858 050. E:mail:
lectures@stalbanhistory.org

Doreen Bratby
Lecture Secretary

Early 19th Century St Albans - Gentry Town

An illustrated transcript of the 18th March lecture, which portrays the town through the letters of James Brown, FSA between 1799 and 1839, has been published and is available at local bookshops (price £5.00) or direct from:

Kate Morris, 74 St Peter's Street,
St Albans, AL1 3HG (price £4.00 +
P & P). Tel: 01727 868434 or
kate@englishinfo.biz.

Continued from page 24

COUNTY SOCIETIES SYMPOSIUM

The Symposium is to be held on Saturday 13th September at Senate House, University of London, by kind invitation of the Institute of Historical Research. Details are available on line from:

<http://www.victoriacountyhistory.ac.uk/events/county-societies-symposium> .

Two representative of SAHAAS are planning to attend and a note on the Symposium will be included in the November Newsletter.

John Cox

ALAN LONGSTAFF

The Society was very sorry to hear of the death of Alan Longstaff on 25 March.

“Alan was born 7th May 1927 and went to school in North London. After National service in the RAF in Singapore, he took a job in London with the Metropolitan Water Board, now Thames Water, remaining with them with increasing responsibility all his working life.

Alan and his wife Beryl arrived in St Albans to settle in a newly built house overlooking the site of Verulamium, and soon became actively involved in local voluntary groups and organisations. They joined the Arc & Arc in June 1984, becoming valuable and popular members, always ready to participate and help whenever and whatever was needed.

Sadly, Beryl died suddenly and unexpectedly. Alan continued to play an active part in the Society's affairs. An excellent organiser, he will long be remembered for leading a series of visits and excursions he arranged for members. One of his legacies is teaching us to vacate a bus rapidly – all passengers on the right side file out, seat by seat, from the front, followed by the left side.

The service to celebrate Alan's life, held at Garston Crematorium on 11th April was so well attended by relatives, friends and colleagues from the Arc & Arc, City Guides, National Trust and other associates that extra chairs had to be carried in. At the conclusion the assembled company instinctively exited efficiently, right side first from the front”.

Kathleen Moody

COUNCIL MEMBERS - FEBRUARY 2014*Photo: Frank Iddiols*

Inset: Christine McDermott, Frank Iddiols

Back Row: Roy Bratby, Roger Miles, Donald Munro, John Humphreys
Roderick Douglas, David Smith

Front Row: John Cox, Helen Bishop, Pat Howe, Doreen Bratby, Bryan Hanlon,
John Mein

NEW MEMBERS

We are delighted to welcome the following new members to the Society

Mrs Sue Boggis	Harpenden
Mrs. Alison & Mr. Christopher Debenham	St Albans
Mr. Christopher & Mrs. Diana Dunn	St Albans
Mrs Philippa Hurst	St Albans
Dr Christopher Finch Reynolds	Tring
Mrs Julie & Mr Charles Stephens	St Albans
Dr Brian W. Benson	St Albans
Mrs Miranda Clare Elliott	St Albans
Professor Geraint John	St Albans
Ms. Laura Luckhurst	St Albans
Miss Megan Thompson	St Albans
Mrs Janet Batsford	Hemel Hempstead
Mrs Karin Kaye	Leighton Buzzard



ST ALBANS & HERTFORDSHIRE
Architectural & Archaeological Society

CONTACTS 2013 - 2014

Appointment	Name	Contact
President	Donald Munro 01727 760808	chair@stalbanhistory.org
Secretary	Bryan Hanlon, 01727 851734	admin@stalbanhistory.org
Treasurer	To be notified	money@stalbanhistory.org
17th Century Group Rep.	Pat Howe	century17@stalbanhistory.org
Archaeology Group Rep.	Roger Miles	archaeology@stalbanhistory.org
Clock Tower Rep.	Helen Bishop	clocktower@stalbanhistory.org
First World War Rep.	Jon Mein	homefront@stalbanhistory.org
Lecture Secretary	Doreen Bratby	lectures@stalbanhistory.org
Library Rep.	Donald Munro	library@stalbanhistory.org
Membership Secretary	David Smith	membership@stalbanhistory.org
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Webmaster	Roderick Douglas	www@stalbanhistory.org
Co-opted	Frank Iddiols	techman@stalbanhistory.org
Herts Archaeology and History Rep	Christine McDermott	Hertsarch@stalbanhistory.org
HALH Rep.	John Cox	halh@stalbanhistory.org
Postal address for written correspondence	Bryan Hanlon	24 Monks Horton Way St Albans, AL1 4HA

St Albans Mayor, Cllr Annie Brewster, with members of the
St Albans and Hertfordshire Architectural and Archaeological Society
and the
St Albans Civic Society
at the opening of the Clock Tower on Good Friday, 18th April



Volunteers from both Societies join together to open the Clock Tower to visitors from around the world. The volunteers are known as “Clockateers”.

If you are interested in being a Clockateer please contact Helen Bishop by email: clocktower@stalbanhistory.org or telephone: 01727 730825

REMINDER

SUBSCRIPTIONS ARE DUE TO THE SOCIETY FOR THE SESSION 2014-2015.

Please pay your subscription now. If you pay by cheque send cheques (payable to SAHAAS) to:

David Smith,
Membership Secretary, SAHAAS,
Kestrel Lodge,
32 Sutton Mill Road,
Sandy,
SG19 2BQ.