



ST ALBANS & HERTFORDSHIRE
ARCHITECTURAL & ARCHAEOLOGICAL
SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER 202 November 2016



Butcher's shop, Catherine Street,
painted by Ruth Pickles in 1979
(Courtesy of St Albans Museums)

Included in this issue:

President's Message
Group Reports
Annual General Meeting

Visit to Chiswick
Garden History Course
SAHAAS and Twitter

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Front page. *The painting is taken from a series of sketches made by Ruth Pickles, illustrating life in St Albans during the 1960s/1970s. Ruth and her husband, Alan, were members of the Society for more than thirty years and lived in Bank House in Fishpool Street. The picture was donated to the St Albans Museum by her family. There is still a traditional butcher's shop in Catherine Street.*

EDITOR'S NOTE

As always, I welcome contributions of text or photographs for consideration for inclusion in the Newsletter and they should be emailed to me at:

newsed@stalbanhistory.org or post to

Newsletter Editor,

12 Church Crescent, St Albans, AL3 5JD.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

We are saddened to hear of the passing of two of our Honorary Members: J T Smith and Dr Eileen Roberts. Funeral arrangements have been circulated to members via e-news. Our obituary for J T has been included in this issue and Eileen Roberts' obituary will be printed in Newsletter 203 in February.

With the very successful AGM and two book launches, interesting lectures, a visit to Chiswick, and the Grimthorpe exhibition, I feel that the SAHAAS year has got off to a good start. Our partnership with the University of Hertfordshire Press, the work of enthusiastic volunteers and the input of professional historians has resulted in a fascinating book *St Albans: Life on the Home Front, 1914-1918*, which is a credit to us all. Sales have been buoyant – so much so that Hertfordshire University Press has commissioned a reprint of a further 300 copies. Do not miss the opportunity to buy an excellent Christmas present.

It is good to see how many members are enjoying the facilities of the new library at Sandridge Gate where there is much more space for resources and study. I hope the planned series of seminars on garden history there in



spring 2017 will be the first of many such events. Do come and visit the library if you have not already been.

Work on the old Town Hall is progressing and we are told that the new museum and art gallery will open in spring 2018. In the meantime, the Clock Tower will be a very useful small space for displays and the Clockateers have already been helping museum staff and volunteers to open the Tower for an exhibition there this autumn. This is a time of change and great co-operation among all those who are interested in the future of our City and we are beginning to see plans materialise. The Museums and Galleries Trust is creeping closer to its financial target and SAHAAS continues to help. Four 'Big Events' lectures have been arranged over the next few months by Jon Mein and proceeds will go to the Trust. We also hope to have

another Quiz and Supper Night at Kingsbury Barn in early summer 2017.

The SAARRG Archaeology Conference held at the Museum on 1 October and supported by SAHAAS was a great success. Many people would like to see the reference to archaeology in our title to have a higher profile in the Society and we have discussed ways in which this could be achieved. There IS archaeology being done in Hertfordshire, and there is a group of young archaeologists, led by Brian Adams, in St Albans, but it would be good to do more. It depends, however, on those with the know-how, skills and passion for archaeology to be willing to take the lead. Is anyone willing to re-form a group or start a project? To dig? To organise or write up work already

done? It would be wonderful if there is someone out there who can do this.

Lastly, a reminder of our New Year Party. This event is so much enjoyed by guests and members alike. A ticket application form is printed on Page 32 and I hope to see many of you there.

Thanks go to all those people within SAHAAS who contribute to the life of this thriving society. I am always interested to hear from those who would like to contribute something new.

Good wishes,

Helen Bishop

MEMBERSHIP

The Society welcomes the following new members:

Mrs Stefania Estacchini	St Albans
Steven, Carol and Robert Finch	St Albans
Mr Peter Godwin	St Albans
Mrs Katherine Hibbert	St Albans
Mr Ian and Mrs Patricia Martin	St Albans
Dr Ann Loreille Saunders	Shenley
Mrs Valerie Scott	St Albans
Mrs Diane Susan Maitland-March	St Albans
Dr Caroline Carr	St Albans
Mrs Sheldon Sabina Ringrose	St Albans
Mr Ian Tonkin	St Albans

David Smith
Membership Secretary

OBITUARY – J T SMITH FSA MA 1922-2016

John Smith came to St Albans shortly before retiring from a lifelong career with the Royal Commission on Historic Monuments. He was by then Head of Architectural Investigation and a major project had been his 1992 survey of 1000 houses *English Homes, 1200-1800: the Hertfordshire Evidence*.

John's work has been widely acknowledged as thorough and it didn't stop until his death on his 94th birthday. On joining the Society, he sought to make his own contribution to the town's historiography with typical energy and enthusiasm. As part of the Society's 150th anniversary celebrations, he reviewed its activities and publications and established a niche for research into 17th century St Albans. He called for members who would be interested in helping with the work. An initial meeting attracted far more than expected, some with skills and others with only enthusiasm to contribute! John hosted the subsequent monthly meetings in his own home and patiently coordinated the work, encouraging all to play their part. His non-historian wife, Heather, acted as secretary, supporting the project throughout the twelve years of its life, from identification of sources to publication. The book *St Albans 1650-1700: a thoroughfare town and its people*,

edited jointly by John and Mike North and published for the Society by the University of Hertfordshire Press in 2003, has been frequently referenced and very favourably reviewed for its academic rigour and contribution to the understanding of St Albans and 17th century urban life in England.

The work involved led to many other avenues of research and inspired continued investigation into particular buildings, lives and activities of the town and John, or, more familiarly, JT, encouraged by counselling members in their work, but also by example in writing reports and articles on buildings of interest in the town. In 2012 the Society acknowledged John's contribution with honorary membership on the nomination of Gerard McSweeney, who had long worked alongside him researching the history of local buildings.

John was also a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries and founder member of the Vernacular Architecture Group.

Heather Smith died earlier this year; they are survived by three sons, two grandsons and a charming young great-grandson, all of whom attended the humanist funeral at Garston on 6th October.

Kate Morris

(A tribute to the wide ranging and respected work of JT is planned for a future Newsletter)

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2016

The Annual General Meeting was held on 13 September 2016 at Verulamium Museum. 69 members attended.

Apologies for absence were received from Roy and Christine Bain, Peter Burton, Jennifer Cooper, Sheila Cox, Dave and Gill Girdziusz, Jane Gardiner, Beryl Munro, Caroline Howkins, Frank Iddiols, Christine McDermott, Richard Mein, Anthony Oliver, Liz Rolfe and Marian Wright.

President's comments: Helen Bishop read her report in which she commented on the Society's wide range of activities and its links with other organisations. She thanked members of Council for their hard work and said she would welcome the support of a Society member to act as Vice-President to help with attending some events and meetings on her behalf.

Minutes of the meeting held on 15 September 2015 had been circulated. Their adoption was proposed by John Cox and seconded by Mike North and unanimously agreed.

Accounts for the year ended 31st May 2016 had been circulated. Adoption of the accounts was proposed by Pat Howe and seconded by Ann Dean and unanimously carried.

Reports from groups had been published in the Newsletter. Adoption of the reports was proposed by David Lasky and seconded by Anthony Cooper and unanimously agreed.

Revised Constitution: Adoption of the revised Constitution, as circulated with the Newsletter, and with a further amendment to encourage younger members to join the Society, as circulated by email, was proposed by Roderick Douglas and seconded by Ann Hobson and unanimously agreed.

Election of members of Council: The following members were elected en bloc, having been proposed by Sheila Green and seconded by Ann Dean and unanimously agreed:

Helen Bishop	President
Bryan Hanlon	Secretary
David Moore	Treasurer
Roy Bratby*	Chairman, Programme Development Committee
Doreen Bratby*	Lecture Secretary
Patricia Broad	Publications
Mike Carey	Clock Tower (jointly with Caroline Howkins)
John Cox	Publicity Officer
Maggy Douglas	Minutes Secretary
Roderick Douglas	Website
Pat Howe	17 th Century Research Group
Caroline Howkins	Clock Tower (jointly with Mike Carey)
John Humphreys	Newsletter Editor
Frank Iddiols	Technical Assistance
Christine McDermott	Hertfordshire Archaeology and History
Jon Mein	Home Front Research Group
Roger Miles	Archaeology Group
Donald Munro	Library
David Smith	Membership Secretary
David Girdziusz)	To assume responsibility for Programme
Gill Girdziusz)	Development and Lecture Programme from May 2017

* Retiring in May 2017

Election of Independent Examiner: The election of Mr Chris Hall as Independent Examiner of the accounts was unanimously agreed.

The meeting was followed by a wine and cheese buffet to introduce the Society's latest publication, *St Albans: Life on the Home Front, 1914-1918*. The book launch was attended by members of the Society and other guests including members of St Albans Museums, University of Hertfordshire, and the County Archivist.

Maggy Douglas
Minutes Secretary

LIBRARY

The Library continues to be well attended at Sandridge Gate. It has also been an extremely busy period for further logistical planning about space and resources.

Council, at its September meeting, voted funding for us to go ahead with a major upgrade of the *Heritage* software enabling us to access the catalogue and our other library resources more readily on a range of machines. This has been put on hold, however, mainly due to the additional cost implications of our current hardware being inadequate for reliable installation of the online system hoped for.

This has led to a root and branch re-assessment of computer equipment and networking, and consideration of different library management systems in view of the expense of *Heritage*. A group of us will visit the CILIP small library management software showcase in Bloomsbury on 18 November, where we will seek to assess alternative systems at first hand. There will be no further decision on the system upgrade until late November/early December. The downside of this, regretfully, is further delay in putting more of our keen volunteers to work on the several

'library tasks', identified at our meeting in June. We do now have Wi-Fi internet access via an SADC hub, and we are hopeful of establishing, at very low cost, a local network that will help free up machines so that *Heritage* could be on a dedicated one, and others used for more general purposes – including training sessions for library volunteers.

The Library is already being used for meetings by Society research groups. With the prospect of holding seminars and accommodating materials from the commercial Magenta storage unit, we are creating a more private area at the back of the room. The periodicals will be moved into this area to make room for stock expansion and accommodate gifts etc.

Gifts. We are in the process of receiving a number of notable benefactions:

Beardsmore Collection. The Cathedral (wishing to press on with its own refurbishment) is giving us the local studies collection of books, pamphlets and ephemera which it does not wish to retain. We will select from the collection and distribute those wished for by the St Albans Museum, City Library and HALS. As a by-product the Cathedral is also happy for us to have the lockable bookshelves

housing the collection. This resolves at a stroke the bulk of our need for extra shelving in our planned “private” area. This is a very generous offer indeed and we are most grateful.

Gerard McSweeney’s family is giving us a cabinet full of Gerard’s extensive research notes on properties in St Albans, and half a shelf of books.

Arthur Allen slides collection. We are most grateful to Maureen Wiesner, the daughter of a recently deceased nonagenarian bus inspector, for giving us, on 21 October, her father’s remarkable collection of c.500 photographic slides with meticulous catalogue listing, together with a box of local historical books. Many of the slides appear to be copies of old photos and (some unfamiliar) post-cards and Maureen commented “there are many from the 1980s when he seemed to go around photographing houses and buildings being demolished”. A splendid addition to our photographic collections. They will be digitised as soon as it is possible.

Donald Munro

LIBRARY NOTES

Recent acquisitions

St Albans: Life on the Home Front, 1914-1918, edited by Jonathan Mein,

Anne Wares and Sue Mann. Hertfordshire Publications, 2016. 274pp, tables, illus., Bibliography.

This collaborative study, researched by 21 members of SAHAAS, was inspired by the discovery of the records of the local military service tribunals – records mostly destroyed elsewhere. Drawing on these and other archives, the authors describe the social changes that took place in St Albans following the outbreak of war, and the longer-term effects on the City as the war went on.

Articles from recent journals

In *Herts Past and Present* no 28, Autumn 2016. Pp 3-8 ‘The war shrine movement in Hertfordshire 1916-18’, by Jonathan Mein and Gareth Hughes.

The study of war memorials and the part they play in our memory of the First World War has become widespread in the last 40 years. These studies however, have been mainly concerned with the memorials erected after 1919. Very little attention has been paid to what happened during the War: how did relatives, friends and neighbours acknowledge the sacrifices being made by living and dead servicemen? War shrines proved to be a novel and popular solution for these conflicting needs. This article examines the experiences of a sample of communities in south and mid-

Hertfordshire and shows how war shrines linked traditions of commemoration established in the late Victorian period with those of the 1920s. (Author abstract).

Pp 9-16 'The Norton Project: the publication of the Norton manorial court records', by David Croft.

The Norton Community Archaeology Group's historical documents section comprised almost 20 volunteers. Funded by a variety of sources, they set out in 2009 to translate and interpret from Latin and transcribe the English records of the Manor of Norton, held at Hertfordshire Archives. The Court Leet records from 1530 to the 1650s provide vivid insights into the social history of the parish.

Pp 17-20 'When Errol Flynn visited Hatfield House', by Nicholas Connell.

The visit took place during a break in filming "The Dark Avenger" at Elstree in 1954, an admiring account of which was written by Ronald Riggs of the *Herts Advertiser*. The story is set in the context of Flynn's life at that time, late in his career.

Pp 21-26 'Puritan killjoys? Contextualising anti-alehouse protestors in 1588', by Heather Falvey.

The author shows how the issue of anti-social behaviour was dealt with in 16th century Rickmansworth. A petition raised by its citizens protested about the disorder caused by an alehouse in the parish. She concludes that the petition was mainly motivated by secular rather than Puritan concerns.

In *British Archaeology*, Sep/Oct 2016
Pp 48-55 'Plague pits, pot sherds and the shock of the Black Death' by Carenza Lewis.

For nearly a decade, hundreds of archaeological test pits have been excavated in the North Hertfordshire village of Pirton. These have shown a fall of 75% in the volume of pottery found in the centuries after the Black Death, compared with that in earlier centuries. Similar digs have now been made in numerous villages in East Anglia, producing similar results. It is argued that this fall offers evidence of de-population over the centuries following the Black Death, which was not available before, showing how profound and prolonged the effect was. Most of the article is concerned with the work in East Anglia.

In *The Local Historian*, July 2016

Pp 229-40 'Production of charcoal in south-east Hertfordshire', 1550-1850 by Peter Austin.

Records from the Gascoyne-Cecil archives at Hatfield House form the basis for this study, which presents evidence of charcoal production, its sale and transport. It was a valuable local resource, with a high calorific value and, being light, made for easier transport than mineral coal.

Tony Cooper

SAHAAS JOURNALS DATABASE

The Society's Library team first published this database on our website six years ago and have updated it twice a year since. Our aim is to make it easier to locate material in journals, hitherto often underused sources potentially full of useful material.

As you would expect, the database includes the Society's own journals, namely the *Transactions*, *Hertfordshire Archaeology and History* and some research-based articles in our newsletter. But it goes beyond this to cover the county local history journal, *Herts Past & Present* and the journal of the Abbey's Fraternity of Friends, *Alban Link*. Full listings of publications that have long since ceased publication are provided such as the *Hertfordshire Illustrated Review* (1893-94) and *Herts Archaeological Review* (1970-76).

Our most recent addition to the index is a listing for *Herts Countryside* (1946-81 only). This magazine was full of often excellent local history articles and also charted the contemporary development of the county during the period of rapid change following the end of the war. The downside of these articles is that footnotes are rarely included and, as a result, the material may hinder rather than help.

Most of these journals are held by the Society's Library, or otherwise in St Albans Central Library.

You can download a copy of the database from our website – see the 'advert' on the right-hand side of the website's homepage. It is in a spreadsheet format. If you are unfamiliar with how to use the 'filter' function in spreadsheets, perhaps take a moment to get to grips with this. Instructions are provided – you will get better results more quickly.

The next edition, January 2017, containing listings of new articles published since June 2016, will be on the website late in December.

Jonathan Mein

CLOCK TOWER

Although the Clock Tower's season officially closed at the end of September, the Tower was opened up for a one off, temporary exhibition at the beginning of October. Katy Gillam-Hull (pictured), a recent graduate from the University of Hertfordshire, showcased her new artworks, inspired by the Museum's remarkable



Salaman tool collection, on the ground and first floors of the Clock Tower. Just under 500 people visited the Tower for Katy's *Rescued Retained*

Revered exhibition over the five days it was on show. I would like to thank those Clockateers who volunteered to steward the exhibition whilst it was hosted at the Clock Tower.

2016 was again a very busy and successful year for the Clock Tower with a total of 12,817 visitors, including over 1,000 during Heritage Open Days in September, just under 350 for the four hours the Tower was open during *Enjoy St Albans* weekend in January and the 500 visitors for Katy's

exhibition in October.

Both the Mayor, Councillor Frances Leonard, and the Deputy Mayor, Councillor Gill Clark, arrived promptly on



Thursday, 8 September to join in the *Heritage Open Days' Challenge 500* event. At precisely 6pm the Market Bell was rung by both ladies and so formed part of a collective bell ringing moment across the country when 500 sets of church and town bells were rung simultaneously.

Also as part of Heritage Open Days, visitors were allowed access to the usually locked Dial Room on the third floor, and to see the glass and metal, four-foot diameter, Victorian clock face on the ground floor, which was hung on the Clock Tower from 1866 until 1958. Also, the display featuring



the '150th Anniversary of the Restoration of the Clock Tower' on the first floor, and an opportunity to add a comment to the special one-off interactive display for children, entitled, 'What I like about the Clock Tower'.

The donation box has proved very popular with visiting children and has collected just over £450. This will be added to the admission monies and used to fund our annual Clockateers' Party and hopefully buy a new Clock Tower flag. The remainder will then be split as usual between SAHAAS and the Civic Society.

We are always looking for new volunteers to join the roster of Clockateers. Joining with another volunteer to welcome visitors to the Clock Tower for one of the sessions over Saturday or Sunday is a fun and interesting way to help keep our iconic Tower open to the public. If you would like to volunteer, please do contact Mike Carey or Caroline Howkins by email:

clocktower@stalbanhistory.org

As always, Mike and I would like to thank all the Clockateers for giving their time to keep the Clock Tower open for the public to enjoy.

Caroline Howkins & Mike Carey

(Photos courtesy of Andy Lawrence)

HALL PLACE

In Newsletter 201, I commented on the progress of rebuilding the Hall Place wall in St Peter's Street. From the pictures below you will see the finished result. With the newly landscaped garden border and seating the courtyard is now a peaceful retreat.

Bryan Hanlon



Photos: John Humphreys

COACH TRIP

Chiswick House and Hogarth House

The trip on 27 September to these greatly contrasting houses began at Chiswick House where we were shown around by two excellent and knowledgeable guides.

Chiswick House was built in the neo-Palladian style. Andrea Palladio was an Italian architect who revered classical architecture typified by Vitruvius who designed and built for the Emperor Augustus. This style particularly caught the attention of the young Earl of Burlington, Richard Boyle, who ventured on the Grand Tour in the early years of the 18th century, coming back with a massive collection and having met an unknown designer called William Kent. He became Kent's patron and worked with him, and others, to create his greatest desire – a complete neo-Palladian building. The finished work was much admired and formed the origin of the neo-Palladian fashion for great buildings – even into recent times.

The house is entered via a typical raised columned portico – complete with Corinthian capitals, Roman style urn sculptures and classical designs in



Photo: Malcolm Merrick

the mouldings and panels. This leads to an octagonal domed entrance hall inspired by structures such as the Pantheon in Rome with windows reminding of the great Roman bath houses. The room shows paintings on the eight walls which were actually in those places when the house was built. The other rooms in the house are arranged circularly around this entrance hall.

Throughout the house, there are emblems and reminders of the classical age of the Greeks and Romans. Shell motifs remind us of the birth of Venus, Greek key panelling and Vitruvian scrolls are everywhere. There are many fascinating paintings and sculptures, showing the Earl's erudition in the classical style.

The house is carefully proportioned and the windows look out onto the landscaped gardens which were, at

the time, quite revolutionary in design - the theme being the natural landscape which was a favourite style of landscape painters of the time.

Overall, the house itself is minutely decorated, but airy and light with large Venetian style windows and set in a beautiful landscape which must have impressed considerably in its day. Burlington himself designed and owned many buildings in his life-time, including the famous Burlington House in Piccadilly - which we all know as the Royal Academy. William Kent became one of the most prolific and well known designers of the time, though hardly remembered today.

In complete contrast, the next destination was Hogarth's House nearby.



Hogarthof course, was a complex and talented man. He was a painter, engraver, specialist decorator, a social commentator and satirist of the highest order. He regarded Chiswick House, nearby, as a blot on the landscape! However, the eventual inheritor of Chiswick House, Lord Devonshire, became a patron to Hogarth, and presumably did not hold these views against him!

Hogarth bought his house in 1749, some 30 years after it was built. It is best described as a vernacular house built of locally made bricks and originally of three storeys each with two rooms. The price paid is said to have been £7. However the house's value doubled when the Hogarths added a further double storey and finally a single storey extension to the building – not much changes!

The building now occupies four storeys including the loft rooms plus a basement and cellar, all of which can be viewed only during Open House days.

The rooms are small and intimate and the structure is simple but practical and attractive. Within the rooms are many reproductions of Hogarth's works, explanatory plaques and original prints from his most famous engravings.

Though comparatively small, it was worth taking time to read the plaques and peer deeply into the complex and creative engravings which are so detailed and full of stories and comment on social milieux of the time.

Dr Tony Berk

ST ALBANS MUSEUM AND ART GALLERY

Progress Report October 2016

Pre-construction work on the Town Hall has been completed, ready for Willmott Dixon to move in and begin work developing the new museum and art gallery. Once they have installed themselves on site, the first task is to build the basement. There is an archaeological watching brief requirement for this part of the project. Simon West is hoping for an earlier town hall, though surveying and core sampling has only detected clay and clunch.

We continue to work with the architects, Historic England and the SADC Buildings Conservation Officer to ensure that any alterations or attachments are sympathetic to the building and keep damage to a minimum.

Staff have been working with the various authorities and market traders on hoardings which will ensure site safety, due to go up in mid November.

The fundraising team have been successful in gaining sponsorship from local businesses, so look out for their

logos on the hoardings which includes SAHAAS as recognition of its generous support.

Funded by Arts Council England, the Museum team have worked with volunteers to develop 'Talking Buildings'. (*Ed note: see NL 201*)

The Museum, UH Arts and St Albans Arts teams have been working together to devise the early programme for the museum and art gallery. This will comprise, a permanent display of a St Albans Timeline, an interpretation of the building, St Albans themed displays, and, the temporary exhibition programme.

We have just appointed a Heritage Lottery funded 'collections conservator' to work with us for the next three years. The conservator's role will be to devise a collections care policy and carry out preventative and remedial conservation for both the displayed and stored collections. The conservator will be working with volunteers and interns to achieve this. We hope that we can make this post sustainable, so that it can be maintained once HLF funding has ended, by taking in paid for work from other museums and collections in the region.

We have also just appointed Eleanor Payne to the post of 'Learning Officer'. She replaces Fiona Charlesworth and has previously worked at Hertford Museum and more recently the Women's Library at the London School of Economics.

We are in the process of setting up a curatorial consultation group made up of representatives from a range of museum and gallery users, including a local historian (Mark Freeman). This group will be invited to comment on and make suggestions for the public programme.

We have invited caterers to tender for the café and event catering, and are working with the British Museum to extend our retail partnership to the Town Hall.

St Albans Museums and Galleries Trust has been successful in raising funds through a range of private and public events, applications to trusts and a very successful opportunity to have individual subscriber's name on our honours boards. The current target for fundraising is approximately £795,000.

Kate Warren
Museums Manager

FIRST WORLD WAR - MUSIC

Lancashire trio, 'Harp and a Monkey's third album *War Stories*, released in July, 2016, forms part of its ongoing project, part-sponsored by Arts Council England and The Western Front Association, to mark the centenary of the First World War.

The band has been performing new material and re-worked traditional songs, which strive to challenge stereotypes of the conflict. This will form the second half of the concert to be held on Friday 2 December at 8pm at the Maltings Arts Theatre.

The first half of the concert will include some of the trio's other songs plus songs from *New Roots 2016* finalists Rosie and Rowan. It will conclude with a brief introduction by Jon Mein to *St Albans: Life on the Home Front, 1914-1918*, which will be on sale at the concert.

Tickets £10, students £8, Under 16 £6, on the door or in advance, by booking online at www.ticketsource.co.uk/ovo or by phone on 0333 666 3366 The Maltings Arts Theatre is on the first floor of the Maltings Shopping Centre, next to the Library.

Alison Macfarlane

HOME FRONT GROUP

After 1,315 days of hard work the Society's new publication, *St Albans: Life on the Home Front, 1914-1918*, was officially launched at the AGM on Tuesday 13 September. Thank you to everyone who attended, particularly the invited guests. We were particularly grateful to Dr Sarah Lloyd, Reader in History at the University of Hertfordshire, who spoke about the value to the University of working closely with the Society on this research project.

We followed this up with a public launch at Waterstones in St Peter's Street the following Thursday. We were delighted to welcome our guest of honour, the Mayor of St Albans, Cllr Frances Leonard (pictured) who gave an engaging speech about her interest in learning how her predecessors on the Council coped with the effects of the War on the management of the City. A highlight of the Waterstones' launch party were the readings from the book expertly given by Maggy Douglas.

As the time of writing, we are in the middle of a series of promotional events together with the publication of various articles in local newsletters and the *Herts Advertiser*. All this activity is aimed at creating awareness



Photo: © Roderick Douglas

for the book. We also have several bookings to talk about our research to other local societies and groups over the next ten months. Thanks to the Launch Group for organising the extensive campaign – Pat Broad, Maggy Douglas, Anne Petrie, and the undersigned Sue and Anne. This is helping to drive sales which, in these first five weeks, are proving to be more than satisfactory. With Christmas on the horizon we are hoping for even more activity.

We welcome feedback from members about the book – as long as it is on the line between constructive criticism and effusive praise! Email homefront@stalbanhistory.org.

**Jonathan Mein, Anne Wares
and Sue Mann**

PUBLICATIONS

We are on Twitter!

On 25 September, SAHAAS joined the strange world of Twitter. Over the following three weeks we sent some 90 tweets and somewhat to our surprise found that we had gained 55 'followers'. This is small fry by Twitter standards, but we were thrilled and hope that as we get smarter at using Twitter, our tweets will become more engaging and relevant and attract more followers.

We are using Twitter primarily to help raise awareness of our new and upcoming publications, especially our book *St Albans, Life on the Home Front, 1914-1918* and the related short articles on our website. We also want to publicise events, both our own and those organised by other local bodies in the local history and heritage sectors.

The first few weeks have been fascinating and encouraging – and hard work. Contrary to expectations Twitter is a friendly community (at least that's been our experience so far). We've also learned that you don't have to be a techie whizz kid to handle day-to-day tweeting. Rather, it requires a combination of editing and curating skills and some knowledge of the subjects you're tweeting about. So if anyone reading this newsletter

thinks they might fit the bill and would be interested in joining our small Twitter team (we are all beginners), I would love to hear from you.

Several of our tweets have attracted interest. The four most frequently viewed tweets were on WW1 war savings (publicising our Herts Advertiser article, 23 September), the shooting down of Zeppelin L31 near Potters Bar on the night of 1 October 1916, the number of inns and ale-houses in St Albans in 1663 (there were at least 70), and publicity for Peter Burley's Big Event talk on 6 October.

For anyone who is curious to know more, you can read our tweets without having to become a follower. All you have to do is search on [SAHAAS@stalbanspast](#). (SAHAAS is our account name and @stalbanspast is our unique username.)

If you want to be a follower, you will need your own Twitter account and profile. The minimum information for the profile is a name, a username and a password.

You can find and follow Twitter from your laptop computer – a mobile phone is not essential!

Patricia Broad

READING THE LANDSCAPE:

A Course in Garden History

In September Kate Harwood gave an inspirational talk to the Society about the impact of 'Capability' Brown on Hertfordshire's landscape. Members will be pleased to know that the proposed course on Garden History mentioned by Society President, Helen Bishop, has now been scheduled. It will run in the spring of the New Year and all members are invited to sign up – no previous knowledge of gardens or gardening is required!

The course will consist of six classes, with talks and workshops in which people can practice navigating the sources and interpreting the clues. Maps will be the most important resource and the Society has a collection of fascinating maps to study.

The six classes will address six major episodes of garden and landscape history, how they have evolved one into another and how a garden reflects the social, economic and political changes of its time, from the delicacy of medieval flowery meads to the sweeping and politically charged acres of the 18th century earth movers, the Blenheims and Stowes! Britain began with some 1,500 plants. When and why did we acquire the other 250,000? How did they manage



Photo courtesy Kate Harwood

Hands On – Garden History Class

to make the Crystal Palace so very large? Did Henry VIII want a mound just to look over the wall?

And the core historical sequence includes public as well as private spaces. The country's tradition of fine public parks, of evocative cemeteries, even of allotment sites, will all be considered because someone at some time designed them and their elements. Come the summer, moreover, we hope to offer a series of garden visits, led by experts, to see the theory laid out upon the ground.

Teacher for the course, Kate Harwood, is Planning and Conservation Coordinator for the Hertfordshire Gardens Trust, now also a Trustee of the national Garden History Society and in 2015 won their 'Volunteer of the Year' award. She is an experienced, enthusiastic and highly knowledgeable lecturer, who teaches throughout the country. She

represents the interests of landscape conservation across the county and has been instrumental in preserving many Hertfordshire gardens of historic interest. She is now working to save the Repton landscape at Panshanger (near Hertford) and also particularly interested in trying to map the town gardens of Georgian St Albans.

The Course

The Course will begin in March of 2017 and take place from 10.00 to 12.00 on Thursday mornings at the library in Sandridge Gate. Places will be available on a first come/first served basis. The cost of the whole course will be £30, aside from a matter of pence to cover the cost of tea and biscuits. Specific dates and course content are provided below. If you would like to join us then please contact Elizabeth Rolfe at elizabeth.rolfe3@gmail.com or by telephone 01727 867537,

You will be asked to pay for your place by February 2017 at the latest – though of course the sooner the better! Cheques should be made out to ‘SAHAAS’ and can be presented at the library at Sandridge Gate or posted to me in person at 19 Abbey View Road, St Albans, AL3 4QP. Please provide your contact details in the envelope.

Outline of topics to be covered:

March 2nd. Roman gardens. Medieval gardens

March 9th. Tudor and Stuart gardens; comparison of Medieval and Renaissance

March 16th. Interregnum and Restorations gardens; the Dutch influence

March 23rd. 18th century gardens

March 30th. 19th century gardens; plant introductions

April 6th. Arts and crafts; further discussion on sources

The optional garden visits programme would include a selection from places such as Brocket Hall (18th century), Luton Hoo walled garden (Victorian), Bushey Rose Garden (Arts and Crafts), Lyveden New Bield (Tudor), Prebendal Manor (Medieval).

HERTFORDSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORY

Volume 17 of our Journal, *Hertfordshire Archaeology and History* (HA&H) is a record of archaeology in Hertfordshire and is published by SAHAAS in partnership with East Herts Archaeological Society (EHAS).

As well as a group of reports of archaeology in the area and descriptions of some particular finds, there are reports on the recording of a number of local buildings.

Articles include:

'Two Prehistoric Axes from Welwyn Garden City'. Keith J Fitzpatrick Matthews.

'A Late Bronze Age & Medieval site at Stocks Golf Course, Aldbury'. Jonathan Hunn.

'A Coin from Colney Heath and Links to the Byzantine Empire'. Simon West.

'Gardy-loo! A History of Sanitation in St Albans'. Alison Turner-Rugg.

'Balls Park, a Seventeenth Century Mansion Revisited'. Lee Prosser & Tansy Collins.

'Building recording of The Old Rectory, King Edward's Place, Wheathampstead'. Tansy Collins, Lee Prosser & Kate Higgs.

'Building recording of The Swan Public House, Watling Street, Park Street, St Albans'. Amy Williamson & Lee Prosser.

The journal will be on sale at the last three of our Society lectures of the year. Members may purchase one copy at the nominal price of £5; otherwise the price is £20 per copy. A copy of the journal can be seen at our library in Sandridge Gate.

If you wish to purchase a copy please contact me by email:

christine.mcdermott@virgin.net

or by post at: 64, St Peter's Street, St Albans AL1 3HG.

Copies sent by post are subject to an additional charge of approximately £5 for post and packing.

Further details, including the contents of each volume of the journals, can be found on the Society web site.

Christine McDermott

ARCHAEOLOGY IN AND AROUND ST ALBANS, PAST AND PRESENT

A very well-attended day conference at the Verulamium Museum on 1 October celebrated the 50th anniversary of the formation of SAARRG, the St Albans Archaeological Research and Rescue Group. Under the charismatic leadership of the museum's conservator, Vagn Christophers, this group was involved in the excavation or oversight of more than 50 sites during years of exceptional development in the local area between 1966 and 1972.

Former members of the group attended from around the world, and were joined by current members of the Society, not just to remember the activities of a bygone era, but more importantly to discuss the legacy of the group's wide-ranging achievements, and how this might be used to shape the future.

Five past members of the group (all teenagers at the time) described the excavations they had worked on, and the follow-up processing of finds. All paid tribute to the skills and knowledge gained, which had helped them in their future careers, four in professional archaeology and conservation. An extensive archive of photographs and film supported these individual contributions, and vividly brought the world of the 1960s back to life.

Dr Isobel Thompson, Hertfordshire Historic Environment Officer, who spoke in the afternoon about the use which had been made of the group's work since the appointment in 1973 of a full-time Field Archaeologist at the museum, and the 1991 change in planning laws which made professional excavation of development sites compulsory. She highlighted sites where the group's discoveries had made major contributions to our knowledge of local history, as referenced in *Alban's Buried Towns* (2005).

Turning to the future, the conference heard from Simon West, St Albans District Archaeologist, who emphasised that there were still opportunities for volunteers to participate in archaeological activities, both in digging and processing finds. This view was supported by the final speaker, Dr Kris Lockyer, Senior Lecturer at the Institute of Archaeology, and current director of Welwyn Archaeological Society, who highlighted the activities of local groups in Hertfordshire, and stressed the importance of an enthusiastic leader.

A longer version of this report is available on the SAHAAS website.

Sally Pearson

All lectures begin at 7.45pm

All lectures will be held at St Albans School except those marked VM – which will be held at Verulamium Museum.

Those marked PP advise that parking at the school may be limited - Use Gombards Car Park

Late changes of venue will be notified on our web site and via e-news

LECTURE PROGRAMME 15 Nov 16 to 24 Feb 17

Tuesday 15 November 2016

The Iron Curtain – The Cold War and After

Neil Taylor

The downfall of the Iron Curtain came unexpectedly and the border it represented quickly became irrelevant as Germany reunited and the Schengen Agreement allowed freedom of movement across it, from Lübeck to Trieste. Its arrival in the aftermath of World-War II was equally quick and equally unexpected. It would intensify across Germany in the 1960s just as it relaxed between Yugoslavia and Italy. Whilst the talk will concentrate on the main Iron Curtain, it will also consider others that cut off Kaliningrad from

Poland and Albania from Yugoslavia and Greece.

Neil Taylor studied Chinese and modern European history at Cambridge in the late 1960s. From 1975 to 2001 he ran Regent Holidays, which pioneered travel behind the Iron Curtain, in particular to Albania, East Germany and to China. From the mid - 1990s he became particularly interested in the Baltic countries and has written a guidebook to Estonia and to Baltic Cities. He now lectures on Baltic cruises and takes land tours each year to the Baltics and along the route of the former Iron Curtain.

Friday 25 November 2016

Pistols at Dawn – Two Hundred Years of Political Rivalry from Pitt and Fox to Blair and Brown

John Campbell

The theme of this talk will be that political history is driven as much by personal rivalry as by great causes and ideological divides. While parties have come and gone, and the issues between them, the size of the electorate and the technology by which leaders communicate with the voters have evolved out of all recognition, the essential fact of competition by ambitious individuals for power – more often than not within the same party - has not changed at all. The talk will illustrate this historic continuity by reference to eight pairs of rivals from Pitt and Fox in the 18th century and Gladstone and Disraeli in the

19th, through Asquith and Lloyd George, Macmillan and Butler and Heath and Thatcher in the 20th, to Tony Blair and Gordon Brown in the 21st. Some contemporary comments on David Cameron and Boris Johnson may be included!

John Campbell is one of our leading political historians. In addition to Pistols at Dawn (2009), his books have included major biographies of F. E. Smith (1983), Aneurin Bevan (1986), Edward Heath (1993), Margaret Thatcher (The Grocer's Daughter, 2000, and The Iron Lady, 2003, shortlisted for the Whitbread Biography Prize), and Roy Jenkins (2014), shortlisted for the Samuel Johnson Prize, as well as two books about Lloyd George (The Goat in the Wilderness, 1977 and If Love Were All (2005).

Tuesday 6 December 2016

The Girls who went to War

Duncan Barrett and Nuala Calvi

Duncan Barrett and Nuala Calvi share some of the extraordinary stories they heard in the course of researching their Sunday Times bestseller *The Girls Who Went to War*. Over several months in 2014 they interviewed over a hundred former servicewomen from WW2, across all three branches of the women's forces - the ATS, WAAF and WRNS. This illustrated talk offers an

illuminating glimpse into the lives of these extraordinary women and the crucial role they played in helping to win the war.

Duncan Barrett and Nuala Calvi are the co-authors of a trio of best selling narrative non-fiction books. The Sugar Girls (2012) was followed in by GI Brides (2013), Their most recent book, The Girls Who Went to War, was published in 2015.

Friday 6 January 2017

NEW YEAR PARTY –

7 30pm Verulamium Museum

Tuesday 10 January 2017

British Postcards of the First World War – Humour and Reality

Peter Doyle

Postcards were extremely popular in the Edwardian period, and that popularity continued during the Great War, when the medium was a quick and convenient means of communicating. British postcards of the period give a valuable insight into the public's view of the war. During the early war days cards were often sentimental, similar in context to those of France. But very soon, they depicted life as it was in the trenches, such that they were used by soldiers and civilians alike to outline their view of how the war was being fought. This talk will examine all types,

and give an insight to the war as a whole through them.

Peter Doyle specialises in the understanding of military terrain, with special reference to the two world wars. He is also an author specialising in the British experience of war, and the material culture of war. A member of the British Commission of Military History, and secretary of the Parliamentary All Party War Graves and Battlefield Heritage Group, he is the author of many works of military history and the material culture of warfare. A regular speaker at conferences and invited lectures, he has given numerous specialist battlefield talks and battlefield tours. Peter is an occasional visiting lecturer at the US Military Academy, West Point (2007, 2014).

Tuesday 17 January 2017

The Logbooks of St Helen's School, Wheathampstead

Patrick McNeill

St Helen's School opened on 29 December 1862, as recorded in the first entry in the School Logbooks, of which the near-complete run from then to 20 October 1995 exists. The daily entries made by the Masters and Mistresses tell a fascinating story of school and indeed village life, particularly in the period before the First World War. This talk will tell some of the stories from these Logbooks and

show how they constitute a rich resource for local and family historians.

Patrick and Jenny McNeill moved to St Albans when they married in 1967. Patrick taught at the college in Hatfield Road until 1990 when he changed careers to start work at Collins Educational publishers. From 1995 to 2010, he was a freelance consultant in education, training and publishing. Patrick and Jenny moved to Wheathampstead in 2010 where he now has time to pursue his interests in local history and the natural environment. He is active in Wheathampstead History Society, as a volunteer ranger for the Parish Council, and for the Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust.

Friday 27 January 2017

The Man Who Transformed London

Dr. Geoffrey Tyack

Over a period of little more than 15 years, starting in 1813, the architect John Nash transformed the West End of London through the creation of Regent's Park, Regent Street, Buckingham Palace, Trafalgar Square and much else. This illustrated talk will explain the circumstances of this extraordinary and far-reaching programme of urban improvement, and will examine its legacy for the London of today.

Dr. Geoffrey Tyack grew up in London, where he first developed an interest in the history of architecture by exploring the city's buildings, and he went on to read history at Oxford and to gain a PhD from the University of London. He has taught architectural history and the history of urban planning for many years, both in Britain and the United States, and he has led many guided walks in London and elsewhere. He has written several books, including Sir James Pennethorne and the Making of Victorian London (1992) and John Nash: Architect of the Picturesque (2013), and he edits the Georgian Group Journal. Geoffrey was also co-editor of the revised volume on Berkshire in the Pevsner Buildings of England series (2010), and he has contributed articles on architectural topics to Country Life and to many other publications.

Tuesday 7 February 2017

The Cries of London

The Gentle Author

The Gentle Author will show a choice selection of *Cries of London*, telling the stories of the artists and celebrated traders, and revealing the unexpected social realities contained within these cheap colourful prints produced for the mass market.

For centuries, these lively images of familiar hawkers and pedlars have

been treasured by Londoners. In the capital, those who had no other means of income could always sell wares in the street and, by turning their presence into performance through song, they won the hearts of generations and came to embody the spirit of London itself.

The anonymous Gentle Author has written a story about the East End of London every day online at www.spitalfieldslife.com since 2007 and is the author of several best-selling books including Spitalfields Life and The Gentle Author's London Album.

Tuesday 14 February 2017

What Lies Beneath

Mike Neighbour

Today, very little is left to remind us that until recently there was not one, but two, major mental hospitals on the site which we now call Highfield and Highfield Park. Among the nineteenth century farms, Hill End Farm gave its name to the huge late Victorian structures which became Hill End Asylum. The later hospital, Cell Barnes Colony, is the subject of a separate lecture. The lecture will begin with the fractured early 19th century society which gave rise to private, and later, public institutions caring for those requiring protection.

Protection from what, to others, was considered normal life. The lecture will attempt to answer the question *Why did Hill End close?*

Albanian Mike Neighbour has spent nearly half of his life in St Albans – having been born here and brought up on the Beaumonts Estate before the days of made up roads and street lighting. He was educated at Fleetville, Beaumont and Marshalswick schools. Now retired, Mike's career was spent teaching in many of the county's schools, both secondary and primary. Having a close and detailed attachment to the eastern districts of St Albans, he began to explore the history which pre-dated his parents' recollections. He has written two books under the banner St Albans' Own East End, and he continues to research more of the undiscovered story of the eastern districts.

Friday 24 February 2017

War Among the Ruins: Medieval Heritage and the First World War

Professor James G Clark

The First World War is frequently represented as the first truly 'industrial' conflict, which starkly focused the terrifying power of machines. It is often overlooked that this mechanised warfare was wrought in a largely

pre-industrial landscape, indeed in an environment marked above all by monuments to the artistry and piety of a medieval world. The disjunction between tank manoeuvres and the tracery of a rose window was not lost on the fighting men who were moved to save a shard of stained glass as they passed up and down the line. The effect on the public authorities and the wider community on the home front – in Belgium, France, and England especially – was even more powerful. In fact, it might be argued that the experience of the war marked a turning-point in our relationship with our medieval heritage.

James G. Clark is Professor of Medieval History at the University of Exeter. An historian of the medieval church – and of monasteries in particular – he has written and published widely on monastic life, learning, and libraries, on the dissolution of the monasteries and the Reformation. He has made many contributions to TV and Radio including BBC's Tudor Monastery Farm (2013); he is currently historical consultant for the TV adaptation of Philippa Gregory's The White Princess.

Doreen and Roy Bratby

BOOK SALE RESIDUE

One of the current tasks at our new Library is finding buyers for a selection of 'antique, rare and collectible' books left unsold after the Town Hall book fair last autumn. The books have been advertised for sale on Amazon, but finding local homes would of course be preferable!

Some of the most interesting items date from the period 1900–1920. There are, for example, four volumes of *The Illustrated War News*, with many striking photographs of The Great War as it was fought around the world. The periodical includes regular features illustrating the work of women in the war, and highlighting particular regiments. For military buffs there is also technical input on some of the new weaponry being used. My own favourite photograph, from 1917, shows Lenin and Trotsky addressing a Petrograd crowd, headlined 'The Men responsible for the Russian Debacle'.

Harmsworth's Household Encyclopedia, in six volumes, dates from c.1920, and gives a practical guide to all home crafts, with literally thousands of illustrations. Seven volumes of *Peoples of all Nations:*

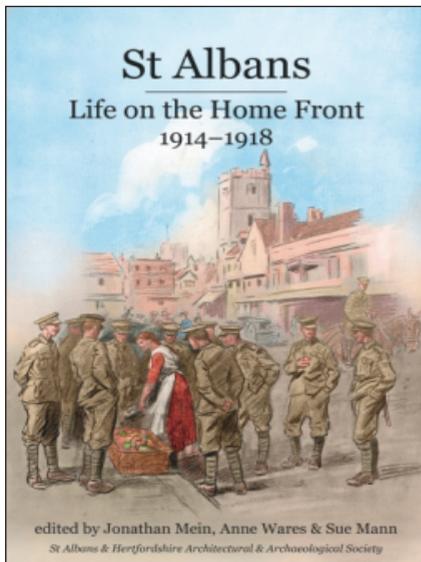
their Life Today and the Story of their Past, from around the same time, describes countries alphabetically from Abyssinia to Wales. The four volume *Hutchinson's History of the Nations* includes Flinders Petrie amongst its expert contributors, whereas *Our Own Country*, which dates from 1880, concentrates on the British Isles, including maps and illustrations, in five volumes.

Not all the offerings are so heavy weight. A first edition of *No Bed for Bacon*, for example, dates from 1941 and is an irreverent fantasy novel featuring Francis Bacon and William Shakespeare. It is said by many to be the inspiration behind the film *Shakespeare in Love*. And a slim 24-page volume, entitled *The Famous Thurstons*, was produced by the Fairground Society in 1968 to celebrate a family which over four generations has brought entertainment to children of all ages.

Any members interested in seeing (and we hope making an offer for) these or the other books available, should contact Sally Pearson on 01727 812194. All proceeds to the New Museum and Galleries Trust for the appeal fund.

Sally Pearson

SOCIETY PUBLICATIONS



St Albans: Life on the Home Front, 1914-1918 NEW

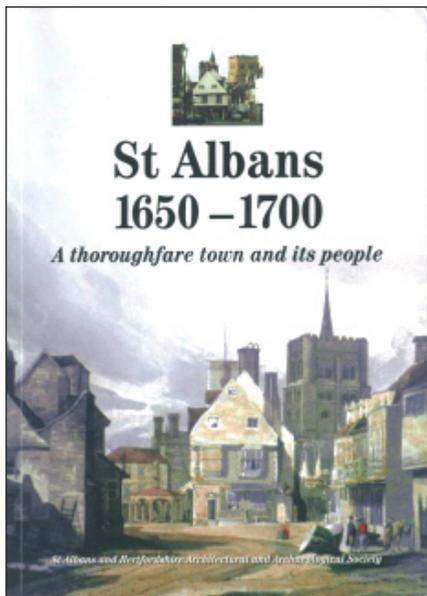
Jonathan Mein, Anne Wares and Sue Mann.

Explores what life was like for the people of St Albans during the First World War. It covers the immediate challenges the townspeople faced as well as the longer term effects on the city. The result of three and a half year's work by the Society's Home Front Research Group with 21 members.

UH Press, September 2016.

£18.99 (£14.00 to members)

Available from Waterstones (at full price) and SAHAAS library.



St Albans 1650-1700, a thoroughfare town and its people

J T Smith & M A North.

Explores what kind of town St Albans was in the late 17th Century. It examines questions such as: What did the town's streets and buildings look like? How big was the population? How did people earn a living? What was the social structure? and, What were their religious and political views? The result of twelve years of work by the Society's Research Group, with ten authors.

UH Press, December 2003.

£16.00 (£12.00 to members)

Available from Waterstones (at full price) and SAHAAS library.

OTHER BOOKS PUBLISHED BY SAHAAS SINCE 1990

The Story of the Abbey School

Alice Goodman.

History of the National School founded by the Abbey Parish in 1848.
1991, £4.00

The Light of Other Days

Brian Moody.

A short history of the Society's first 150 years.
1995, £1.00

A History in All Men's Lives

Brian Moody.

Papers on notable past members of the Society and events from the first 150 years.

Authors F Kilvington, R Busby, J Brodrick, B Moody, D Aubrey and J T Smith.
1999, £2.00

St Albans 1553

David Dean, Pat Howe, Betty Masters and Kate Morris.

Celebrates the granting of a Charter to St Albans by the boy King Edward VI in 1553, and explains its importance in providing the foundations for our local government, establishing the Mayoralty and authorising the town's markets.
2002, £4 .00

The Pemberton Almshouses

Clare Ellis and Pat Howe.

The story of the Pemberton family and, in particular, of Roger, whose will of 1624 details how the almshouses were to be set up and managed. Based on research by the Society's 17th Century Research Group.
2005, £4

Lord Grimthorpe and Other Dragons

Gillian Harvey.

A short study of the career of Walter Lawrance, the first Dean of St Albans, 1900-1914
2011, £3.75

The Street Memorials of St Albans Abbey Parish

Revised edition

John G E Cox & Ann Dean.

Describes St Albans during the 1914-18 War, and the unique street memorials erected to the fallen.
2014, £9.00 (£8.00 to members)

To order any of the above books please phone Patricia Broad on 01727 863340 or email publicationsales@stalbanhistory.org

There will be a charge for p&p for orders that need posting. Copies will also be available for purchase at some of the Tuesday and Friday evening talks. Further information will be included in the next newsletter.

You can also borrow copies from our library at Sandridge Gate, open on Wednesdays and Fridays, 10.00am to 12.00 noon.

OUR MAIN SOCIAL EVENT OF THE YEAR



SAHAAS NEW YEAR PARTY

FRIDAY 6TH JANUARY
VERULAMIUM MUSEUM
7.30 PM

Meet with fellow members and guests for Conversation, Quiz,
Liquid refreshment and Festive food
New members especially welcome

A finger buffet organised by Val Argue and members

*Val would welcome a contribution
of a plate of sweet or savoury -
the Society is very happy to reimburse members financially
Tel: 01727 853083 or
Email: events@stalbanhistory.org*

Tickets are available in advance at all SAHAAS Lectures and the SAHAAS Library.
To purchase tickets by post cut out or copy and complete the following form

To: **Bryan Hanlon, 24 Monks Horton Way, St Albans, AL1 4HA**

Please send me the following tickets for the Society's New Year Party

..... Tickets at £6.00 Total enclosed

Name

Address

Post Code Telephone

Email (in capital letters)

Please make your cheque payable to SAHAAS and send with this form
and a **Stamped Addressed Envelope**