



November 2018 newsletter

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Newsletter Editor

February 2019

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ST ALBANS & HERTFORDSHIRE
ARCHITECTURAL & ARCHAEOLOGICAL
SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER 210 NOVEMBER 2018



St Albans Remembers: 'Poppy Fields' in the Abbey

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Included in this issue:

Tonman Ditch Found
Andrew McIlwraith, Philanthropist
Planning for the 175th Anniversary
Roman Horses' Hooves

James Flint, War-time Leader
Marketing the Museum
Blenheim Palace Excursion
Sir John Evans' House

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VALE!

Farewell to Maggy and Roderick Douglas who are moving from St Albans to pastures new. When a society like our own loses such committed volunteers, we notice the large gaps they leave. They both served on the Society's Council, for example: Maggy as Minutes Secretary, Roderick as Webmaster. They also gave talks on our Home Front project and Falklands War respectively. That's just for starters. Those of you who attend lectures will be familiar with Roderick as he regularly did a stint managing the IT/AV facilities; Maggy was a weekend Clock Tower coordinator. Our list of their valuable contributions goes on and on but we will stop there simply with a 'Thank you and good luck in your new home'.

Sandy Walkington

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Your President has been living, breathing and dreaming history, but not just because of the important work of our Society. I have commenced a part-time MA in history at the University of Hertfordshire.

I never got beyond A-level and a small amount of economic history at university – very unlike most other members of your Council who glitter with academic distinction! Wearing my other hat as a county councillor, I represent one of the most ethnically diverse divisions in the city. I am conscious that our own Society is very pale and we have not spent much time looking at our diverse communities.

Our Hertfordshire University has always been brilliant at outreach and I have attended some really excellent seminars over the years. Cue a recent one on oral history led by Andrew Green, the University's senior research fellow in that discipline, with a keynote speech by Peter Snow, a former BBC colleague of his.

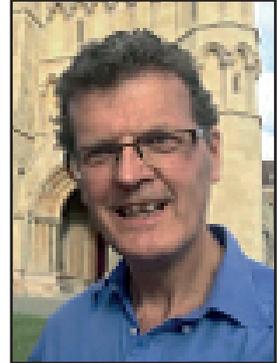
It was a fascinating day and stimulated in me the thought that oral history might unlock some of the stories from our local immigrant communities and

help develop a picture of why they came, what they found and how they coped. But I also realised that it would be helpful to

have some mentoring and objective rigour, which is why I opted for a taught MA with a dissertation focusing on the St Albans immigration experience.

It is 40 years since I was last at university and it has been an intense experience getting back into the academic groove. My fellow MA students are vastly younger than me and alarmingly intelligent. They also are totally at ease online (I still prefer books and paper). Our teachers (who all seem to be Professors) look almost as young as policemen.

We don't do essays but assignments. No lectures but really thought-provoking two-hour long seminars. It is social history – and the history of things as well (think of that extraordinarily good lecture given to the Society this last March by Professor James Walvin on 'Slavery in Small Things').



My initial two modules are 'Local and Global: Consumer Societies between the 18th and 21st Centuries' and 'Research Methods: Approaches to History'. We choose our own assignment subjects within the parameters of the course. So I am currently tackling the concept of different ideas of 'The Ideal Home' – not least because of our garden city neighbours – and 'The Pros and Cons of Oral History' – in the light of my proposed project on St Albans immigration.

The University is a tremendous resource on our doorstep. We had a very fruitful interchange in the First World War Home Front project. We are planning to work with them on the 175th anniversary. But I am sure there are further ways that we can increase our interworking, not least in terms of our lecture programme.

But enough of the minutiae of my academic revival. There is the day job of overseeing the Society's affairs! Firstly I must thank those members who have stepped up to volunteer their help with the annual New Year's Party. This is a wonderful event and the burden will now fall on more shoulders. We had a brilliant and sociable visit to Blenheim Palace. The library collection has been hugely

enhanced by some astute purchases including John Carter's account of the Abbey published by the Society of Antiquaries in 1813, superbly typeset and with the most beautiful detailed illustrations. Our book on the Old Town Hall continues to sell. The work on our next major publication on the life and work of architect Percival Blow goes apace.

We can lay claim to being Hertfordshire's premier learned society and we are making a pretty good fist of being both learned and an agreeable society. Long may it continue.

Sandy Walkington

MEMBERSHIP

Welcome to the following new members:

Margaret Dalziel	St Albans
Howard Green	St Albans
Alan Johns	Winchester
Patricia Maziane	St Albans
Annika McQueen	London
Shaun & Lynda Rigg	Chiswell Green
Jean Tant	St Albans
Stuart & Thu Twaddell	St Albans

RESEARCH SEMINARS ON TOPICS OF LOCAL HISTORY INTEREST

Three seminars will be held in the Spring of 2019 in the Society's Library at Sandridge Gate.

Following a short presentation on a topic currently being researched, discussion and debate will be invited, which could lead to further individual or group research.

Kate Morris is coordinating the series, which, if successful, will continue in the autumn of 2019.

It is proposed to hold them on a Thursday afternoon 2.30 – 3.30; these will be free of charge for members of the Society to attend but £5 per seminar will be payable by non-members. The topics of these first sessions may include themes relating to the history of town gardens, the rise and fall of the coaching trade and naval connections of St Albans in the 18th and 19th centuries.

Please send expressions of interest to seminars@stalbanhistory.org. These could include intention to attend, topics of interest to be covered, willingness to lead a future seminar on a topic you are researching, or any questions you may have about the form and nature of the sessions. Firm dates of each seminar and its theme and the opportunity to book will appear as e-news at the beginning of December.

Kate Morris

TRANSCRIBING THE SOCIETY'S EARLY MINUTES

The project to digitise and transcribe the Society's early minute books is progressing well. The aim is to produce a finding aid for locating material about the early activities of the Society. The first phase of the project was to digitally capture images of each page from our minute books covering the 1845-1915 period. Malcolm Merrick slaved over a hot scanner last winter to do just that. We are now in the second phase which entails transcribing these pages into word-processed documents. Many thanks to the following transcribers for their contribution to date: Chris Argue, David Brine, Marion Delaney, Dee Drinkwater, Helen George, Alison Metcalfe, Kate Morris, Diana Penton and Susan Stokes.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2018

The Annual General Meeting was held on 11 September 2018 at Marlborough Road Methodist Church. Seventy members attended.

1. **Apologies were received from** Jenny Burley, Irene Cowan, Sheila Cox, Dave Girdziusz, Philippa Hurst, Geraint John, Peter Lawrence, Joyce Lusby, David Moore, Liz Rolfe, Liz Rose, David Smith.
2. **President's comments:** The President, Sandy Walkington, welcomed members to the AGM and reported that the Society was in good health with many diverse activities, new members joining and donations gratefully received. He thanked the Minutes Secretary (Maggy Douglas) and Webmaster (Roderick Douglas) who were standing down from Council and called for volunteers to help on the technical side at meetings. He reminded members of the events to mark the Society's 175th anniversary in 2020.
3. **Minutes of the meeting held on 12 September 2017.** These had been circulated with the November 2017 newsletter. In the absence of any questions, their adoption was proposed by Roderick Douglas, seconded by Michael Jameson and agreed unanimously.
4. **Accounts for the year ended 31 May 2018.** These had been circulated with the August 2018 newsletter. In the absence of any questions, their adoption was proposed by John Cox, seconded by Ann Dean and agreed unanimously.
5. **Reports from Groups:** These had been circulated with the August 2018 newsletter. In the absence of any questions, their adoption was proposed by Anne Wares, seconded by David Lasky and agreed unanimously.

Cont'd on next page

FEBRUARY 2019 NEWSLETTER

Copy deadline for the next edition is 14 January 2019. If you have any comments about the newsletter or wish to submit content, please email me, Jon Mein, via newsed@stalbanhistory.org.

6. **Election of members of Council:** The following members were elected *en bloc*, having been proposed by Helen Bishop, seconded by Kate Morris and agreed unanimously:

Bryan Hanlon	Secretary
David Moore	Treasurer
Peter Bourton	Website Project*
Pat Broad	Publications Officer
John Cox	Publicity Officer
David Girdziusz	Chairman, Programme Development Committee
Gill Girdziusz	Lecture Secretary
Pat Howe	17th Century Research Group
Caroline Howkins	Clock Tower
Jon Mein	Newsletter Editor and Webmaster
Frank Iddiols	Technical
Christine McDermott	Hertfordshire Archaeology and History
Roger Miles	Archaeology Group
Donald Munro	Librarian
Sally Pearson	Minutes Secretary
David Smith	Membership Secretary

7. **Election of an Independent Examiner of the Accounts.** The election of Chris Hall as independent examiner was proposed by Christine McDermott, seconded by Kate Bretherton and agreed unanimously.

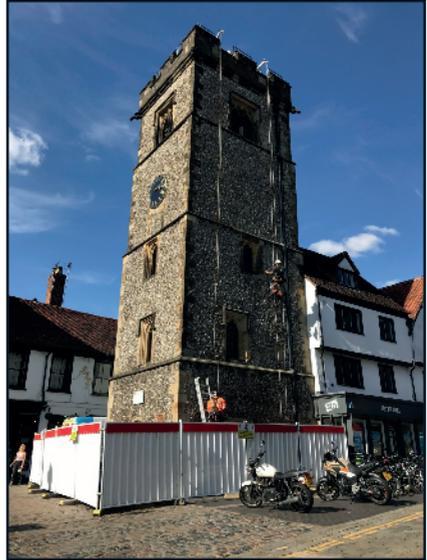
Kate Harwood then gave a lecture on 'Repton and the Regency Park and Garden in Hertfordshire'.

* The sharp eyed amongst you will note one addition to those who were voted into office at our AGM in September. As Peter Bourton has kindly agreed to take on the responsibility of updating our website (assisted by Pat Broad, Roderick Douglas, Sue Mann, Jon Mein and Donald Munro), we thought it only right that he should have the opportunity to be part of our decision / policy discussions, and he was therefore co-opted on to Council at our meeting on 22 October.

CLOCK TOWER REPORT

The Clock Tower has undergone numerous repairs over its 600-year life but we wonder how many involved workmen abseiling their way down the wall as this year's repairs did? Work began on 12 September and included repointing the external flint walls, repairing the corner quoins and stone work around the windows, repainting the window grilles plus the installation of a French drain on the west side in French Row. The tower certainly looks better for the facelift and all the work was completed within the scheduled three weeks.

It was sad to see the Robinia tree, that used to provide a little colour and shade in front of the Clock Tower, being reduced to a stump recently. It was becoming a hazard, as there was a fear that the branches may fall in high winds, so the County Council took the decision to fell it at the end of August. The tree, which had been planted in the mid-1970s, has featured in numerous post cards, photos and paintings over the decades and will be a sadly missed feature of the Clock Tower landscape. It would be lovely to see the return of Mrs Worley's Fountain: this had been installed in 1872 in front of the tower but



Abseiling workmen re-pointing the external walls of the Clock Tower (Roderick Douglas)

removed in 1928. The fountain currently resides in Fountain Court, Victoria Square near the City Station. This is purely a business park so the fountain is rarely seen by visitors.

Due to the repairs, the Clock Tower was closed just after the Heritage Open Days in September giving a shortened season with the resulting reduction in visitor numbers this year (10,677 compared to 13,410 in 2017). However, the Heritage Open Days were well attended with the paying public having access to the Dial Room and a display on the first floor about the Suffragette heroine, Constance

Lytton of Knebworth House. The Clock Tower also formed part of the Three Tower Challenge again this year. Participants had to climb the 187 steps of the Cathedral, followed by the 122 steps to the roof of St Peter's Church, concluding with 93 steps to the top of the Clock Tower. It proved to be great fun and good exercise. The successful climbers were all presented with a medal by our president, Sandy Walkington.



View from the roof of the Clock Tower with only the stump of the Robinia tree visible.

(Caroline Howkins)

The Clock Tower will open for a final visit on Sunday, 18 November, from 2pm to 6pm, for the turning on of the St Albans Christmas lights. In keeping with one of the Museum's exhibitions over Christmas, entitled *Board Games Rediscovered*, the Clock Tower will have a selection of children's giant board games laid out on the first floor to play with. Children will also have the opportunity to win a chocolate Santa by taking part in 'Hunt the Parachuting Santas' in the Clock Tower.

As ever, we are always looking for new volunteers to join the roster of Clockateers. Manning the Tower for one of the sessions over Saturday or Sunday with another Clockateer is a fun and interesting way to meet new people and talk to the diverse range of tourists who visit our city. If you would like to volunteer, email us via clocktower@stalbanhistory.org.

We 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

CLOCK TOWER CURIO No. 2 - GRAFFITI

The oldest dated example of graffiti visible in the Clock Tower is carved on the left-hand side reveal of the High Street-facing window, in the Clock Room, and



reads 'ZM 1709'. It was probably carved by Zachariah Mountford, who was 21 years old in 1709, and later went on to become the tenant from 1724-27, taking over the lease from other Mountfords, likely to be of the same family.

Near the 'ZM 1709' graffiti the letters 'VV' can also be seen. Strange symbols carved into stone or woodwork near entrances like doorways, windows and fireplaces, known as 'apotropaic marks' (see Newsletter 209 for more about these) have been found in medieval houses, churches and other buildings, most commonly from around 1550 to 1750. They're thought to have been used as a protection symbol, keeping people inside the house safe by warding off witches and

'ZM 1709' graffiti (Caroline Howkins)

evil spirits. They often take the form of letters such as, 'M' for Mary or 'VV' for Virgin of Virgins, scratched into medieval walls to evoke the protective power of the Virgin Mary.

Caroline Howkins

VISITORS ATTENDING SOCIETY LECTURES

We all know the excellent value that our Society gives us – 24 lectures per year for only £20, so your Council has decided that it is only fair to members that all visitors should pay a small fee rather than attending our talks 'free of charge'. From 1 January 2019, therefore, we shall be instituting a charge of £5 for all non-members, including guests.

A CHANCE TO TAKE STOCK

We have invited members of the museum team to provide regular updates about developments. Here Farhana Begum explores the importance of her marketing role.

I hope by now most SAHAAS members have had a chance to visit the new St Albans Museum + Gallery. It's been an incredible summer for us – incredibly exciting and incredibly busy! In our opening three months we had over 100,000 visitors (our best year in the old museum was around 17,000 so it's a big change).

As many of you will know the new museum comes with a new style of programming. We have our wonderful building and a permanent display telling the story of 'The city that went uphill' but everything else is designed to change so that there is something new to see every time you visit.

By the start of November we will already have opened ten exhibitions, and that doesn't include the individual objects changing in 'St Albans on Demand'. We will be slowing down a bit but our ever changing displays have allowed us to display fifteenth century books, photographs of squatters, contemporary art inspired by an

inquest in the Courtroom and one of Samuel Ryder's golf clubs.

Marketing this changing programme can be a challenge, our regular visitors are already coming back to see what the latest change is but it does mean visitors need to keep an eye on our website and What's On to see when exhibitions open and close.

To let people know what's happening at the museum we use our website (www.stalbansmuseums.org.uk), printed what's on guides, local media and social media to share information. We are very lucky to have newsletters like this one, local radio stations such as Radio Verulam and the *Herts Advertiser* supporting us and keeping everyone informed about what's happening.

We also know that there is nothing quite like a personal recommendation so if you've liked a particular exhibition, event or activity, please do tell your friends, and us too, as we're always planning what comes next - you can connect with us over social media on @StAlbansMuseums.

Farhana Begum
Marketing Manager
St Albans Museums

ARC & ARC EXHIBITION CELEBRATING 175 EFFECTIVE YEARS: CAN YOU HELP?

As many of you know the first meeting of our Society was held at the Rectory in Sumpter Yard in June 1845. That means that in 2020 we will be 175 years old.

One thing we will be doing is holding an exhibition in the new museum for a six-week period. I have been asked to project lead this and the purpose of this article is to update you on our progress and to ask for your help.

The working group of Helen Bishop, Pat Broad, Peter Burley, Bryan Hanlon, David Moore and our President, Sandy Walkington, and myself (ably assisted by Sarah Lloyd and Julie Moore from University of Hertfordshire) have decided our approach should be celebrating the past and present and looking forward to the future. What we did not want was a simple display in date order. Instead we are aiming for an exhibition centred around 'Arc and Arc in 30ish objects' all connected with Society members. We want a range of TVPs (Top Visual Priorities) - objects, documents, pictures etc that have not been on display before. Also,

to engage visitors we want to have elements involving interaction particularly for our present and future elements. After all, the aim should be for people to enjoy the exhibition and, given the footfall going through the new museum, be encouraged to join us as members.

So, what have we come up with so far? We are grouping the exhibits under four themes that we believe resonate throughout our long life: Discover, Protect, Innovate and Inform. Having trawled my way through the Society's *Transactions* I have sent a list of our members who may have donated an item to the cathedral and the museums and have asked whether they have any objects and can we borrow them. Of course, they still have to say yes but here is our current 'Starter for 10'.

Discover

Items from excavations at the Cathedral, Verulamium and Wheathampstead to commemorate our members Page, Toulmin, Mortimer and Tessa Wheeler, e.g. Ivory book cover, Papal lead bull (see the August 2018 newsletter), Roman artefacts. We will definitely have a feature on Tessa Wheeler.

Protect

It is easy to forget how much of what survives in St Albans is due in whole or part to the work of the Society. Examples under this section could include:

- A collage of items where we have donated funds to restore or applied pressure to preserve (Pemberton brass, Bacon monument, St Michael's and St Stephen's churches, Nathaniel Cotton tomb, Abbey gateway, 'Tudor Tavern', The Crow, Jack Wills's shop, St Germain's Block)
- The Cathedral. Represented by letters between Lords Aldenham and Grimthorpe and Dean Lawrance. Wonderfully controversial!
- The Clock Tower

Innovate

- Sir John Evans and his recording of pottery
- Early aerial photographs of Verulamium (Page and Crawford)
- Lifting Roman wall plaster (Dr Norman Davey)

Inform

- Fowler's plan of the abbey
- Pictures of the memorial plaques (we financed those to

the Marlboroughs, Duke of Somerset, Eleanor of Castile)

- Boutell's book on brasses supplemented by a rubbing of the de la Mare brass
- The pageants (C H and Emily Ashdown for example)
- A collage of photos of famous people who have given lectures (e.g. the Wheelers, Basil Spence, W G Hoskins)
- Our publications (e.g. Home Front and Thoroughfare Town books)
- A collage of our current members

In addition, our friends at the university are helping us set up an oral history recording facility - more on this next time.

Where I need your help...

Firstly, please let me know if you think we have missed out anything. My view is due to our not producing transactions every year we need to reflect more our current and more recent achievements. Secondly, next year we will need people to write descriptions of the items both for the exhibition and the accompanying catalogue. Do let me know if you would like to help. Full training will be given. My contact details are tjpp199@yahoo.co.uk.

John Morewood

THE TRIP TO BLENHEIM PALACE

On Thursday 4 October, our party of 49 arrived on schedule, mid-morning, at the magnificent Blenheim Palace with its honey-coloured stone walls set against a bright blue sky.

It would seem that the current Duke of Marlborough, that is the 12th Duke, Charles James Spencer-Churchill, has a very active commercial department as visitor numbers were plentiful both in groups and individuals with other activities also taking place bringing in revenues; these included a shooting party.

Upon our arrival we were taken to a room where we were given a brief introduction followed by a more in depth talk about St Albans woman,

Sarah Churchill (nee Jennings), over coffee and biscuits. We learned that Sarah's father Richard was a Tory MP for St Albans and that the family lived at Holywell House (cue much amusement over the competing pronunciation of 'Holywell') where Sarah was the youngest of five children. Sarah met John Churchill when she was 15 at the household of the Duke and Duchess of York where she had already become a close friend of Princess Anne, the future Queen, a friendship that would last some 35 years but a friendship that would ultimately fail. John and Sarah married in 1677 and Sarah is described as being intelligent, with a vibrant personality but possessing a foul temper!

As a reward for his victory at the Battle of Blenheim (really Blindheim in Bavaria), Queen Anne bestowed the land and a reported £240,000 for the building. John Vanburgh was commissioned to design the house and work commenced in 1705. John and Sarah moved there in 1719 however, the house was not completed until 1722 which was also the year of John Churchill's death.



Sarah herself held a number of appointments including Ranger of Windsor Great Park, Keeper of the Privy Purse and Mistress of the Robes generating an annual income in excess of £7,000, an enormous amount for the day.

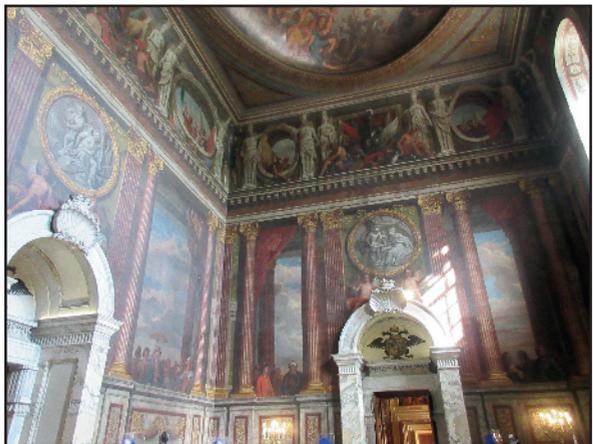
As a sign of the influence that the Marlboroughs had, an Act of Parliament was passed that enabled the Dukedom to pass down the female side where there is no male heir. When this situation was realised, upon the death of the first Duke, his eldest daughter, Henrietta, inherited the title. Subsequently, upon Henrietta's death, the title went to Charles Spencer, the second son of Henrietta's sister, Anne. As a result, the family name of Churchill was lost but not for good as the 5th Duke sought, and was granted, a King's licence enabling the family name to become 'Spencer-Churchill'.

One final interesting fact is that the Marlboroughs are only tenants of Blenheim as each year they have to pay rent to the Crown in the form of a French Royal Standard.

Our group went their various separate ways after our talk and guided tour, some to view the fascinating Churchill exhibition others to explore the splendid grounds which were not to be missed on such a perfect day. We re-convened in the afternoon outside the house for a brief description of the exterior and were amused to discover that amongst the symbols that French visitors take particular exception to are those of a lion eating a cockerel – *c'est la vie!*

Many thanks to Pat Howe for organising everything, including the weather, in exemplary fashion. And thanks to Frank Iddiols and John Humphreys for the photographs.

David Harrold



LIBRARY REPORT

It has been a busy three months with progress continuing on a number of fronts and numerous visitors, most of whom we have been able to help in their enquiries. These have included James Bettley, editor of the new edition of Pevsner's *Hertfordshire* (due March 2019) and a delegation from St Stephen's Church seeking materials for their planned First World War exhibition.

Eileen Roberts materials. We are delighted to have acquired in October from Mrs Roberts' estate a very good copy of John Carter: *Some Account of the Abbey Church of St Alban. Illustrative of the plans, elevations, and sections of that building* (Soc. Antiquaries of London, 1813). This is the earliest fully detailed description of the abbey fabric and, perhaps remarkably, a long-time lacuna in the Society's collection. See "Library Acquisitions" below for a fuller description. We have also acquired a number of other significant books from Mrs Roberts' collection.

Cataloguing of the Beardsmore books is now well advanced and we will shortly be tackling the pamphlets. Supplies have been acquired for

better care, minor repairs and storage of these often fragile materials; and new shelf label holders will assist finding location of books.

Lists and Indexes. Terry Price continues to improve the list of the papers of the late Gerard McSweeney. Ros Trent has made a good start on listing the very interesting late acquisition of estate particulars from the Beardsmore Collection.

New Library Computers. The recent dedicated donation has enabled our replacing **both** of the main Library computers with machines built by Malcolm Merrick. MS Office has been acquired for both. Some monies remain from this generous Gift Aided donation to help a possible future purchase of image collection management software. We really are most grateful to our benefactors for helping us in this way. The slow network connection problems have been largely resolved with the acquisition of these new, faster machines.

Book Disposals. Many thanks are due to Sally Pearson for all her work on this. The disposals sale exercise is now concluded. Latterly a further £420+ has been raised.

The **Library Team** including most of our new volunteers met over lunch at the King William on 27 September to discuss tasks and plan progress on several fronts. Our enthusiastic new hands are settling in very well and are really valuable additions to the team. Even so, if there are any others amongst the wider membership willing to help in the Library – particularly if you have cataloguing or digital image management experience, I would be very happy to hear from you at library@stalbanhistory.org.

Donald Munro

LIBRARY NOTES

Recent acquisitions

As noted in the Library Report, our most notable acquisition for some time is:-

Some Account of the Abbey Church of St. Alban. Illustrative of the plans, elevations, and sections of that building, [by John Carter]. London: Printed by Nichols, Son, and Bentley,... for the Society of Antiquaries of London, 1813. [2], 20, 7, [1] p., xix pl. (incl. add. engr. t.pl. and 3 dble. pl.) ; 649 mm. Contents: [T.p.] - Advertisement - Observations On The Abbey Church Of St. Alban - Plans, Elevations, Sections, And Specimens, Of The Architecture

And Ornaments, Of Abbey Church Of St. Alban. By J. Carter, Architect. - [Pl. I. (add. engr. t.pl.)] - [Pl. II-XIX].

Summary: The added engraved title-plate (plate I) reads, 'Plans, Elevations, Sections and Specimens of the Architecture and Ornaments of the Abbey Church at St. Albans', dated 1810. The plates show Romanesque and Gothic features of the building.

COPAC catalogue entry also has Note: "According to the Advertisement the plates were engraved after Carter's drawings at Richard Gough's expense, and are accompanied by accounts by both men. The work was supervised by Sir Henry Englefield, and Gough's notes were completed by James Brown and John Nichols. All plates are signed as drawn by John Carter and engraved by James Basire. Each carries the publisher's imprint of the Society of Antiquaries of London".

Walter Morrell's "manufacture of the newe draperie" (1616), edited by Michael Zell and Heather Falvey. Hatfield: Hertfordshire Record Society, 2018. 181 p, illus, map.

Walter Morrell of Hatfield set out to train unemployed youths to make "newe draperies", a range of woollen textiles, so they could support themselves, helping to reduce the cost of poor relief. This volume contains the

complete text of his 100-page explanation of his project, with copies of letters and petitions to the King's advisors, seeking support.

Further tidbits from the Beardsmore donation

Hertfordshire: some ancestral estates and interesting careers. Illustrated by F.G. Kitton. St Albans: Published by subscription at the Offices of the "Hertfordshire Standard"..., 1894. [v]. 109p, illus, ports. This scarce folio volume covers estates county-wide, and includes biographical details of many contemporary members of later 19th century Hertfordshire landed society, male and female.

The building of satellite towns: a contribution to the study of town development and regional planning, by C. B. Purdom. London: Dent, 1925. xv, 368p, illus, plates, plans. The garden city and new towns movement, by one closely involved. His work on Letchworth was noted in the August issue.

English church history exhibition – at the Town Hall, St Albans, 27 June – 15 July, 1905. Westminster: J. B. Nichols & Sons, 1905. 212 p, illus, plates. A national exhibition. Topics include church decoration and ornament.

The hunting of the hare: song, reminiscences and sketch: "Days with the beagles, by the Hare". Tring: G. J. Woodbridge, 1929. 30p, plates. A light-hearted account of hare hunting with the Berkhamsted Foot Beagles.

Radlett past and present, by J. E. Saul. London: Post Magazine, 1927. 64p, map, plan.

Recent journal articles

In *Herts Past and Present*, no 32, Autumn 2018

pp 2-7 "The mystery of the Welwyn Spa", by Tony Rook. The discovery of a previously unknown 19th century manuscript map and subsequent research provide evidence of the existence of a mineral spring, and the possibility of locating it.

pp 9-14 "Managing the poor in Hertfordshire, 1635-1795: Part 1, Bastardy – perpetrators and victims", by Carla Hermann. This article examines the issue of women bearing children out of wedlock, and the circumstances in which they became "bastard bearers". Church reports are noted, and attitudes and practices described in the parishes of Standon and Great Munden.

pp 15-19 "Hidden in the home: the Concealed and Revealed Project", by Ceri Houlbrook. A detailed, referenced

and illustrated version of the article on page 21 of the August issue of *SAHAAS Newsletter*, citing examples of articles found in Hertfordshire.

pp 22-28 “Thomas Slingsby Duncombe: the man behind the politician”, by Jean Purkis. Duncombe (1796-1861) was a significant figure in the political history of Hertford. A radical MP, he represented the Borough of Hertford in the years before the Great Reform Act of 1832. He lost the seat in the following election, but succeeded in a by-election in Finsbury. He instigated a Parliamentary enquiry into corrupt practices in Hertford’s election, resulting in the unseating of the two “victors”. He was described as a fop and a dandy, and his personal life was unconventional. His son was born about 1841, but he did not marry the boy’s mother until the year he died.

Tony Cooper

PUBLICATIONS COMMITTEE REPORT

We are currently busy working on a final round of research for the forthcoming publication about the local architect, Percival Blow. He practised in the St Albans area from around

1900 to the late 1930s and lived through an extraordinary period of history. It was also a very distinctive moment in architectural history. Production of the book is scheduled to start in the New Year.

We are pleased to say that Chris Green’s *The Old Town Hall, St Albans*, continues to sell steadily; we have now sold 500 copies. The new museum’s bookshop is doing an excellent job with their display of this publication along with our other recent books.

Help wanted!

Those of you who attend the Tuesday lectures will know that we usually have a small bookstall at the lectures. We are in need of an occasional volunteer to help man the bookstall. It’s not an onerous chore – we have a store cupboard at the church and so there’s no requirement to transport heavy books to and from the church! It’s a role that might suit a new member who wants to get know other members and learn more about the Arc and Arc and its publications. If you think you might be interested, do please get in touch with me: email publications@stalbanhistory.org or call St Albans 863340.

Patricia Broad

THE TONMAN DITCH FOUND

In February 2014 I undertook a 'watching brief' on the site of two new build houses at the corner of Sandpit Lane and Stonecross (TL 1523 0795). Apart from structures which are visible on the First Edition OS map, underlying the site was a large ditch (Figure 1). This ran approximately north south through the foundation trenches of the northernmost of the new builds (Figure 2). Due to the ground conditions it was not possible to undertake work on this ditch *in situ* for safety reasons. However, it measured minimally 4m across, and had a depth of at least 1m. The bottom was not reached and the top had been truncated in the

historic past, so it could have been wider. The size of the ditch suggests a significant feature, and not a modest field boundary. The ditch cut through a light orangey brown gravelly clay natural. It was filled with a grey clay silt and was well-defined visually as it cut through the natural.

Apart from a medium mammal bone, there was no dating material from the ditch. This is significant. The grey silt was not suggestive of bank material but a longer gradual filling, at least at the top. There was no direct evidence for a bank. However, later attacking armies appear to have largely targeted the bars and gates rather than the long intervening

Figure 1. The approximate alignment of the ditch observed during the watching brief

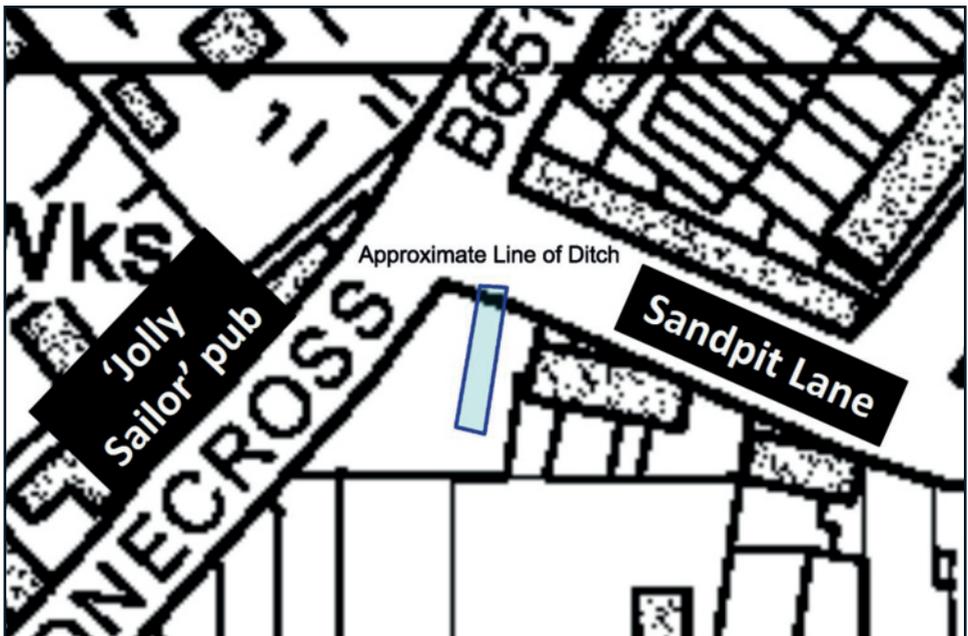




Figure 2. The western side of the ditch, looking north, cutting through the light orangey brown clay. (A). The eastern side of the ditch, looking north, cutting from above the third rung of the ladder, diagonally down to the left, cutting through the natural clay (B). The two sections are not conjoining, but were offset with a similar east-west alignment

ditched areas. It is therefore probable that there was an additional defensible rampart and paling. The medieval Abbey Precinct had a wall and a ditch and rampart in a later phase (Saunders and Havercroft, 16-18).

There was no specific dating of this feature but it must minimally pre-date the OS mapped structures observed above. Also, because of a lack of finds the ditch probably predates significant large-scale industrial activity; and probably post-dates the Roman period for the same reason. An earlier prehistoric date cannot be ruled out, but there was no leaching out of the fill, which happens over time. This effectively leaves a date prior to the mass production of ceramic and other material, so a medieval date is postulated, probably prior to the mass production of greyware, or later glazed pottery, sometime after c.1150. How-

ever, both the Hare (1634) and Andrews and Wren maps (1766) suggest the area was open so any date cannot be ruled out as there appears to have been a lack of nearby occupation as an artefacts source.

Defining the east side of the medieval town is the Tonman Ditch. This, at least in part, marks the later line of the Borough boundary from Sopwell Bars to Bernards Heath. The Hare map shows the line of the Borough boundary, originally drawn up in 1327. The map includes the term 'Tonman Ditch' directly relating to two sections; on the east side minimally between Sopwell Lane and Cock Lane (Hatfield Road). However, there is no reason to presume these labels were not representative of the whole circuit, or at least that to the north of the River Ver. If this was the case, on the east side, the ditch runs from Cock Lane to Sandpit

Lane through the area of the watching brief.

By the middle of the twelfth century the town was well-defended (Niblett and Thompson, 268) with attackers concentrating on the entrance points, presumably because forced access was difficult elsewhere. By 1327 the town apparently had no defined boundary and a 'new' borough boundary was drawn up. However, where there was no pressure on the previous boundary to extend outwards, and where it may still have existed, there is no reason to presume it was not re-used. Niblett and Thompson say that no ditch has been seen from Cock Lane to Stonecross but "...there has not been any specific search for it." (ibid. 269). This then is the first indication that it continued along the eastern side of the town from Sopwell Lane, to at least Stonecross.

Bibliography

R. Niblett and I. Thompson, *Alban's Buried Towns: An Assessment of St Albans' Archaeology up to AD 1600* (Oxford, 2005).

C. Saunders and A.B. Havercroft, 'Excavations in the City and District of St Albans 1974-76' *Hertfordshire Archaeology*, Volume 6, (1979), 1-77.

Simon West
District Archaeologist

LEE'S WAR MEMORIAL SUCCESSFULLY RE-SITED

We are pleased to report that following the redevelopment of the Ziggurat building in Grosvenor Road, St Albans, one of the city's First World War memorials has been restored and given a prominent new position facing the entrance to a new apartment block. The memorial is dedicated to the men who worked at Edwin Lee & Sons boot and shoe factory which once stood on the site. The site's developers are the Quinata Property Group.

On a related matter, the Society's War Memorials Walk Leaflet has been revised. Copies are available at the new museum and on our website.

Sue Mann



The re-sited memorial (Sue Mann)

NASH MILLS HOUSE, THE HOME OF SIR JOHN EVANS

The Society's November 2017 newsletter contained an article about Sir John Evans who was an outstanding member of the Society in the 19th century contributing much to its early life while also successfully running the mills of John Dickinson. He lived in Nash Mills House next to the paper mill in Kings Langley for 50 years having moved there in 1856.

In recent years the grounds surrounding the house have been developed for housing and the house itself has fallen into a bad state of repair with

the roof removed and most of the interior fittings lost. It was thought that the house might also be lost but a campaign to save it supported by many prestigious societies including SAHAAS has been successful.

Nash Mills House will now be restored and sympathetically extended as apartments and will contain displays recognising the importance of Sir John and his many achievements.

**Pat Nellist
(Apsley Paper Trail)**

Nash Mills House in 1999 (bottom, left) and 2017 (right) (Courtesy of Mike Stanyon)



THE LIBRARY IN THE CLOUD

Due to limitations with our IT infrastructure at Sandridge Gate, the Library team is considering whether to use the 'cloud' to resolve some problems we have encountered. If you have general experience of the risks and rewards of cloud computing then we'd be delighted to hear from you. Please contact library@stalbanhistory.org.

Donald Munro

RECENT PLANNING REPORTS

This is the third in our series of abstracts from reports considering recent archaeological work or architectural assessments. The reports were produced to satisfy planning conditions. If you would like further information about any of these, please contact Simon West, the District Archaeologist via: simon.west@stalbans.gov.uk.

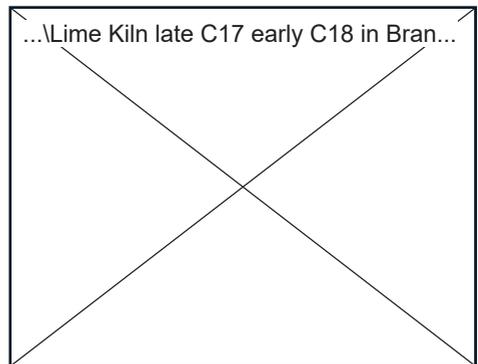
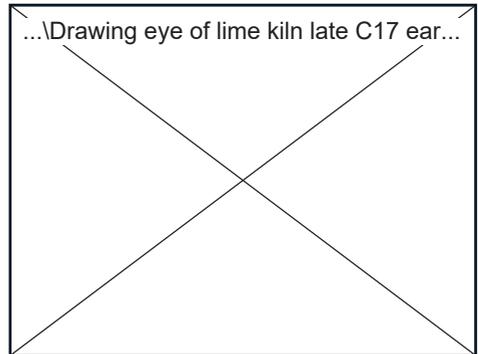
Kingsbury House, Branch Road

Archaeological Solutions Ltd (AS Ltd)
(Report no. 4993; 2012)

Numerous Romano-British remains are recorded in the area. The site revealed a sequence of Roman occupation layers, a possible hearth and a compacted gravel floor or yard surface. Fairly large quantities of Romano-British pottery were recovered along with other small finds. The remains of a late 17th to early 18th century structure, possibly a cellar, were also revealed. The excavation showed multi-period occupation with the Romano-British and post-medieval periods most prominent.

The majority of the remains were associated with the earliest (Phase 1) dated to between 120 and 150 AD. This comprised numerous occupation layers, possibly remains of a building, a ditch and two pits. Large quantities of pottery sherds and numerous small finds were

recovered from deposits of this phase. A pit represented Phase 2 and it was attributed to the 4th century AD. Phase 3 consisted of a late 17th - early 18th century lime kiln with an associated pit. (see Figs 1 and 2 below).



Figs 1 and 2 showing late 17th / early 18th century kiln (Copyright AS Ltd)

Land near Bedmond Lane

Archaeological Services, Durham University (Report no. 2140; 2010)

Geophysical surveys were conducted on fields near Bedmond Lane. The Roman road from Verulamium to Silchester is believed to cross the area and aerial

photographs show a possible dyke or ditch across one of the fields surveyed. The work comprised 20 geomagnetic surveys totalling approximately 18ha across eight land parcels. Possible soil-filled features such as pits and ditches were detected in the majority of all survey areas. A rectangular enclosure and 11 traces of a series of rectangular enclosures were identified. Some of these may be aligned along roads. Traces of former ridge and furrow cultivation were also identified.

King Harry Lane Development (King's Park)

Foundations Archaeology
(Report No. 1033; 2015)

The site was located within the extent of the *Verlamion* Late Iron Age – early Roman *oppidum* and contained part of the dyke earthwork known as the Wheeler Ditch (see page 26). The work revealed evidence for pre-*oppidum* activity in the form of two clusters of Middle Bronze Age pits, which were associated with burnt flints; a possible small pit, which was provisionally dated to the Bronze Age; and a moderately sized assemblage of flints, which ranged in date from the Mesolithic to the Late Neolithic / Early Bronze Age periods.

The excavation has demonstrated that the previously suggested layout of the Late Iron Age – early Roman entrance through the Wheeler Ditch was probably

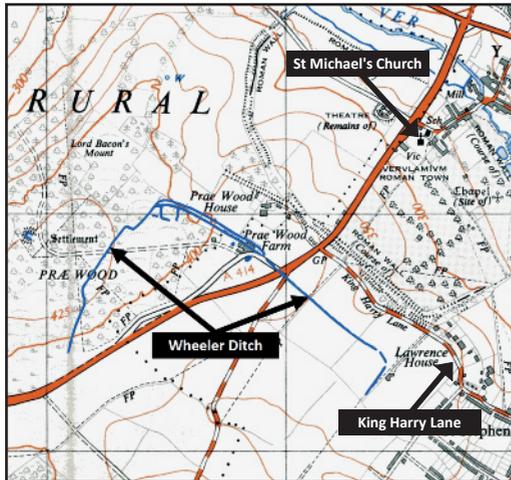
incorrect or incomplete and has provided data to allow a new entrance layout to be postulated. The project also identified the presence of a small Late Iron Age or early Roman cremation cemetery at the location of the postulated entrance, along with a hollow, which contained a cobbled surface, immediately to the east of the postulated entrance. Comparative analysis has indicated that the King's Park cremations share ritual characteristics with both the Iron Age Cemeteries of King Harry Lane and Verulam Hills and also with the Roman St Stephen's Cemetery. The evidence, which included a substantial pottery assemblage as well as a coin hoard, indicated that the Wheeler Ditch, near to the postulated entrance, was likely to have been in-filled in the earlier Roman period and was subsequently re-cut in the later Roman or, possibly sub-Roman or early Saxon periods.

Part of a probable rectangular enclosure was investigated and this most likely represented the remains of a Late Iron Age – early Roman enclosure. Analysis of wood charcoal from two Middle Bronze Age pits and the Saxon fill within the Wheeler Ditch indicated a prevalence of oak, but also included ash, hazel and *Pomoideae* (apple family).

Edited by John Ridge and Jon Mein

Note: with thanks to AS Ltd and Foundations Archaeology for permission to use their reports.

A BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO THE WHEELER DITCH



The ditch was first investigated by Mortimer Wheeler in 1933. It was a ditch rather than a dyke as it was only 1.5m deep and 4m wide. The 'arms' on either side consisted of palisade trenches. There was also another palisade trench running roughly along the line of Bedmond Lane. The only identified entrance was at the St Stephen's end, although there may also have been an entrance near Bedmond Lane. The purpose of the ditch is unclear. For further information see R. Niblett and I. Thompson, *Alban's Buried Towns*, p. 27.

John Ridge

'ANGLO-SAXON KINGDOMS: ART, WORD, WAR' EXHIBITION

My wife, Jenny, and I took up an invitation to the Society to attend the 'breakfast opening' of this exhibition at the British Library.

The exhibition is laid out chronologically with interpretation as to what is going on in each period or reign or at each important event. It is well presented, approachable and intelligible. It is an exquisite display concentrating on illuminated manuscripts. Some of the books are of astonishing antiquity, such as Bede's original *History of the English Church*, the first version of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* and volumes that St Augustine brought with him to Canterbury in 595. That said, the star of the show is the 'King Alfred Jewel'.

Justice is done to King Offa of Mercia and his programme to impose his authority on the other Anglo-Saxon kingdoms and gain control of the Church in the British Isles. This is where the founding of our Abbey here in St Albans fits into the larger picture.

Our only disappointment is that not as much is made of Anglo-Saxon architecture as might be. A few photos of surviving buildings of the period would have added a lot.

The exhibition is a celebration of the richness of Anglo-Saxon culture and there is no hint of the revisionist view that the Anglo-Saxon 'conquest' never really happened. Open until 19 February 2019, a visit is highly recommended.

Dr Peter Burley

MY COUNTRY NEEDS ME ... BUT?

In March 1916, faced with the attrition of fighting troops and declining volunteer rates, the Government conscripted single men and widowers, without dependent children, aged between 18 and 41. Those seeking exemption could apply to local tribunals. Records were supposed to be destroyed after the war, but those in St Albans survived by accident. On 24 October they were the basis of fascinating re-enactments of some typical five-minute hearings performed in the refurbished courtroom, now part of the new museum.

Tribunals of local 'worthies', including a military representative, heard applications from over 1,000 men. The received truth is that panels were unsympathetic, but ours tried hard to steer the right course between the conflicting demands of war, businesses and individuals.

Cyril Corley of Albert Street, the sole support of his ageing mother and young brother, was exempted because two of his brothers had already been killed, and one wounded. (See photo)

The requirements of local businesses were harder to resolve. Lee's boot and shoe factory had already lost 52 workers and applied for exemption for 20 skilled hands. Their product was essential and 17 were granted exemption, though the

chairman criticised their unwillingness to recruit women to fill the vacancies.

Only 23 applications were on grounds of conscience, with just three rejected out of hand; others were exempted provided they took 'work of national importance', such as joining the non-combatant corps or working in the Friends Ambulance Unit.

Congratulations to the Society's Home Front Group* whose diligent research brought to life this hidden corner of First World War history.

Dee Drinkwater

* The 'actors' were Barry Bateman, Ann Dean, Maggy Douglas, Jon Mein and Julie Moore with AV support from Roderick Douglas.



Mrs Corley (left) putting flowers on the Albert Street memorial in memory of her two sons, November 1926 (*Herts Advertiser* / Mike Neighbour)

A CURIOUS OBJECT FOUND AT VERULAMIUM

In support of my AMA award in Museum Studies, I have recently been researching iron finds recovered during the excavation at Verulamium in 1996/97. During my project I came across some curious devices called *hipposandals*. Often found in museum collections, these devices seem to be made to protect horses' hooves.

Hooves do not naturally require protection but, with the growing domestic use of horses, methods had to be found to stop lameness. In the Victorian period, the aphorism 'No foot, no horse' stressed the importance of hoof care. Much earlier the Greeks had realised this too: the philosopher, Xenophon, noted in his work, *On Horsemanship*, that the hoof may be damaged when it takes weight; in *Anabasis*, he tells us of horses wearing protection, referring to 'socks', a sort of leather boot. Others suggest that the *hipposandal* was supported underneath by a *turminem* (a conical object). This was placed on the opposite healthy foot to the lame one.

The benefit was that it raised the hind-quarter for healing.

The Romans began to use horses at an early period. Although their army was mainly composed of infantry, in the later empire they were reliant on the horse; for example, one of Emperor Vespasian's generals, Antonius, used his cavalry to charge the enemy as a form of 'shock and awe.' We know the Romans practised hoof pairing (trimming) to protect the important frog (on the underside of the hoof).

So who 'invented' the horseshoe? Various types of ancient horseshoe have been recovered in England and elsewhere. Two were found in 1723 at Silbury Hill in Wiltshire, close to where



Fig. 1: Type 3 *hipposandal*; late Roman, A.D.364/378. Photography by author (Courtesy of St Albans Museums)

the Roman road crosses through a large barrow. At the time it was suggested they might be from a Royal Celtic sepulchre because of their shape. These horseshoes are nailed and go back before the Roman conquest.

Hipposandals (otherwise *solea ferrea*) have also been found at Verulamium (See Fig. 1) and other Roman sites in Britain and France as well as a Frankish grave. Their forms vary, but chiefly consist of three types: the first has an oval plate of metal with a pyriform or circular opening in the middle; the second has a much narrower oval plate and a longer heel in front, occasionally flanked by clips; the third has a posterior hook, two lateral appendages, which extend towards the front of the plate, until they meet and meld together, forming a strong hook. (See Fig. 2)

The use of *hipposandals* has been the subject of much debate from the 19th century onwards. A veterinary surgeon identified them as *hippopodes pathologiques*, that is sandals intended to protect and cure diseased or worn hooves, so that it would help to keep correct pressure on the frog; others have come to the conclusion that they are ox-sandals, only to be worn during livestock movements. A farming chariot in a *bas relief* at Langre (France) suggests a skid. A reconstruction for TV's *Time Team* shows a very unhappy horse wobbling about on a set of *hipposandals* looking uncomfortable.

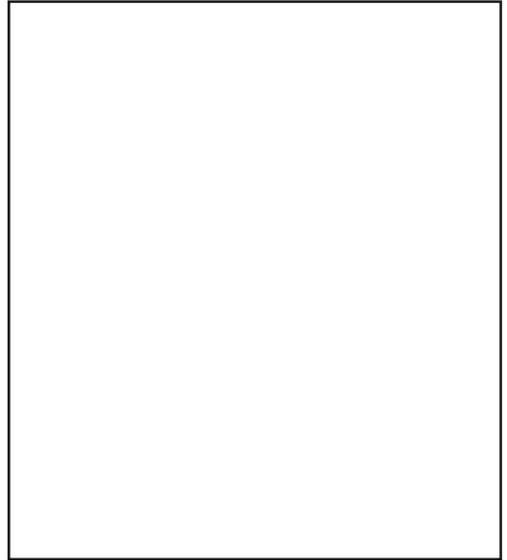


Fig.2 Reconstruction of fastening of the third type of *hipposandal* (Flavio Russo, www.archaeo.it)

I think that in ancient times shoeing horses very much depended on the diversity of the country's climate, on the hoof's strength, and on the construction of the roads. Anatomists and farriers in defining the best way of protecting horses' hooves came across the *hipposandal* as a temporary shoe to prevent wear on impervious roads. To conclude, the *hipposandal* could not be a permanent solution, as a horse shod in this way could not walk for long and even less likely keep a fast gait.

A fully referenced version of this note is available in the Society's Library. My thanks to Simon West for his comments on an early draft of this article.

ANDREW MCLLWRAITH: LOCAL PHILANTHROPIST, SHIPOWNER AND FROZEN MEAT PIONEER

In the May newsletter, John Humphreys told us that, in 1897, a Mr McIlwraith who was letting the area of the Verulam Estate bounded by the Roman wall had undertaken to put a fence to protect the wall. Who was he?

Andrew McIlwraith came to St Albans from Kentish Town sometime between 1881 and 1891 and took up residence with his wife and five children at Campbellfield in King Harry Lane. This large house, described as a mansion in the 1891 census, stood beside what is now the entrance into the park from King Harry Lane. It was demolished in the 1980s but the lodge survives (22 King Harry Lane). The particulars of its sale in 1928, describe a property (see photo overleaf) comprising five reception rooms, seven principal bedrooms, ten secondary and servants' bedrooms, six bathrooms and a billiard room, 'fitted throughout in a most sumptuous manner, regardless of cost'. It had a number of ancillary buildings including stables, garage and chauffeur's quarters; 'charming pleasure grounds' and rich pasture land of 15 acres.

He was a prominent and generous member of the community. A strong supporter of the St Albans and Mid



Andrew McIlwraith
(Courtesy of the Salcombe History Society)

Herts Hospital and Dispensary, he gifted a much-needed new steriliser; obtained consignments of food stuffs during the First World War from the Queensland government and was one of a number of donors who in 1918 helped clear the then private hospital's overdraft. His name appears on one of the six foundation stones that adorn the Salvation Army HQ in Victoria Street and in 1917, he helped to buy Pageant House in Victoria Street for St Albans District Scouts. He was clearly a man of substance but what was his background?

Andrew McIlwraith was a shipowner and frozen meat trade pioneer. His father was a plumber and later a shipowner and the son joined his father's business in 1868. The family maintained

Campbellfield, King Harry Lane, c.1928
(SAHAAS Deeds Collection)

close commercial relationships with his two brothers in Australia (one of whom was premier of Queensland three times between 1879 and 1893). In 1875, with (Sir) Malcolm McEacharn, he established the London-based shipping and mercantile firm McIlwraith, McEacharn & Co. It became very successful, earning profitable contracts to carry immigrants and cargo to Queensland (and later trading elsewhere) and establishing a mercantile import and export department in London. In 1879, capitalizing on his own business acumen and his father-in-law's mechanical aptitude, he organised the chartering and fitting out with a freezing plant of the steamer *Strathleven*, the first ship to successfully land a cargo of frozen meat from Australia in London (in 1880). By 1895, the firm was returning handsome profits but in 1896, following a bitter family struggle, Andrew had to purchase

his brother John's interest in it. He also owned shares in the Australasian United Steam Navigation Co. and associated British lines.

An article in the *Australian Dictionary of Biography* in 1986 describes him as 'large, handsome and red bearded, with an outwardly affectionate nature. Friendly with Brunel and Paxton, he was made an associate of the Institute of Naval Architects in 1887. Abstemious, but never refusing large draughts of medicinal brandy and scrumpy, he retired to Salcombe, Devon, where he died on 19 October 1932'.

Sadly, his first wife died in 1891 leaving him a widower with five children aged 9 to 17 years. His second marriage to an American lady in 1895, was not a success. Perhaps because the groom was 51 and the bride 24 at the time! Two of his sons died in the Boer War and the third, Charles, the builder of neighbouring Glenalmond, also predeceased him. He was survived by two daughters from his first marriage and another from his second.

Susan Bellamy
SAHAAS Biographies Group

Note: A version of this article with references is available in the Society's Library.

BANK HOLIDAY PROBLEMS IN LATE VICTORIAN ST ALBANS

The many publicans of St Albans had cause to be upset when the town's three charter fairs were suppressed in 1873. Although in decline for some years, the fairs still brought custom into the town. Publicans did not have to fret for too long though as relief came from the changing rhythm of industrial life. With the Saturday half-day already a weekly fixture, full-day holidays to meet the needs of factory workers replaced the agricultural fairs. The Bank Holidays Act in 1871 closed the banks on an additional four days a year. Over the next few years employers in other sectors opted to follow suit. Looking to get out of town, their liberated workers could take advantage of specially scheduled trains laid on by the competing railway companies. More than 2,000 people left St Albans on Whit Monday 1886 for trips to Bedford and Birmingham. Exotic seaside destinations such as Brighton and Skegness were also on offer.

St Albans was a draw as well. A short ride from London by train, the city had Roman remains in the fields below the Abbey, the Abbey itself and, from August 1892, the newly-proclaimed

MIDLAND RAILWAY
Bank Holiday.

Promenade Garden Bazaar,
GROUNDS OF VER HOUSE.

Fete, Gala, & Balloon Ascent
AT ST. ALBANS.

On Monday, Aug. 3rd, 1891,
CHEAP EXCURSION TICKETS WILL BE ISSUED TO

ST. ALBANS
AS UNDER—

Times of Starting and Fares There and Back.			THIRD CLASS.	
	8.30 a.m.	12.30 p.m.		
BEDFORD	12.25		2s.	6d.
Ampthill	12.38		2s.	0d.
Harlington	12.50		1s.	6d.
Leagrave	12.59		1s.	0d.
Luton	10.43	1. 5	1s.	0d.
Harpenden	10.59	1.20	0d.	8d.

Children under 3 years of age, Free; above 3 and under 12, Half-Fares.
The Tickets are not Transferable. The Company will not be responsible for Luggage.
Return Trains will leave ST. ALBANS at 9.5 p.m. for all Stations, and at 11.10 p.m. for Harpenden and Luton only, and the Tickets will be available to return by these Trains, and on the day of issue only.

Derby, July, 1891. JOHN NOBLE, General Manager.
Benson & Sons, Printers, Derby; and W. Old Bailey, London.

August 1891 Bank Holiday handbill (Courtesy of the Midland Railway Study Centre)

‘oldest inhabited house in the country’, the Fighting Cocks pub. Visitors came in their thousands mostly by the railways but some by road in wagnettes and on bicycles. An estimated 7,000 people descended on the city of around 11,000 people over the August Bank Holiday weekend in 1887. Various fund-raising attractions, put on to entice visitors, were heavily promoted by the railway companies. In 1891 for example, a Midland Railway handbill listed a bazaar, fete, gala and a balloon ascent. Missing

from the list was a spontaneous event, a mass brawl in Hatfield Road.

The city was not ready to cope with this large influx. There were just two public toilets for example, both of them urinals, and none of today's innumerable sandwich and coffee shops. Meeting visitors' needs were the 87 pubs providing some food, a lot of beer – and toilets. Busy days for the publicans!

It was not just the scarcity of public toilets that showed that St Albans was unsuited to these large crowds. The small scale of the city's constabulary was another problem. With pubs playing a central role in many visitors' recreation, drunkenness was inevitable. Locals particularly associated this with working class visitors arriving in groups they pejoratively labelled as 'beanfeasters'. This newspaper report from July 1890 was typical:

“Some hundreds of beanfeasters visited St Albans on Saturday and their conduct was on the whole most disgraceful. Many of them consumed more beer than was evidently good for either mind or body, and one party went so far as to parade the Market-place drinking beer out of a bedroom utensil. Strictly speaking the offenders did not bring themselves within the law

which deals with indecent behaviour within the streets and the police were unable to arrest the offenders on this charge”.

The response of the Head Constable was to blame the city's publicans. He sent a letter to all of them warning that he would set his officers to watch houses where excursionists were meeting. They were to expect full punishment should the licensing laws be broken. With limited manpower, this was something of an idle threat as his men were mostly deployed to control the large raucous crowds who often arrived in St Albans already the worse for wear.

By 1900, drunken bank holiday behaviour had largely subsided. Changing attitudes to beer in both the demand and supply sides were the cause.

Jon Mein

A GOOD DEED

If you no longer need the deeds to your house and don't know what to do with them, perhaps consider donating them to the Society's Library. We are keen to add to our growing collection. Please contact us via library@stalbanshistory.org.

JAMES FLINT (c.1853 - 1937): A PRACTICAL MAN

At the centenary of the Armistice let us take a moment to appreciate James Flint, who served as Mayor for the greater part of the war. Considered by his fellow councillors as an active, efficient, practical man and the best man to lead the City as the war was escalating, he was prevailed upon to accept the Mayoralty in November 1915, a position he was to find himself holding until November 1918. From the start his programme was clearly pragmatic: '[It] must be remembered that I am not a wealthy man. For a man to impoverish himself for a year's popularity is a stupid policy'.

Born in Holmbury St Mary, Surrey, in the mid-1850s, Flint was apprenticed at 12 to the building trade, becoming Clerk of Works for brewers J W Green of Luton in 1885. In 1889 he became the publican at the Pineapple public house in Catherine Street whilst engaging in known property developments in Etna Road (and later Russell Avenue) on his own account. President of the St Albans Licensed Victuallers' Protection Association, he was elected to the City Council in 1898 as



Portrait of Flint from the 1907 Pageant Programme (SAHAAS Library)

'the working man's candidate' representing their interests against the temperance movement. Flint was appointed Alderman in 1908.

His invalid wife Caroline having died in 1915, her niece Mary Thompson acted as Mayoress and proved a great helpmeet to James. They undertook numerous fund-raising activities for the likes of the local hospitals and the Red Cross depot. All in addition to his duties as Chief Magistrate and chairing countless official and charitable committees, which proliferated as the war went on. An amusing example of his efficiency is a report in the *Herts*

Advertiser, 'The Mayor turns hustler' that he chaired five relief fund meetings in an hour and a quarter!

Flint's appointment as chairman of the reconstituted St Albans City Military Service Tribunal in 1916 added many hours to his full calendar. A fellow Tribunal member interviewed after the war described the heavy sense of responsibility they all felt, adding, however 'One of the few pleasant recollections in connection with my work on the Tribunal was the manly and urbane manner in which the Chairman (Alderman J Flint) carried out his duties'.

By November 1917, the council minutes noted that the 'Mayor's firmness in keeping the town dark at night had saved St Albans from air raids...' Although St Albans never suffered a direct hit, during an air raid in April 1917 he personally accompanied the Police Sergeant in an attempt to disperse the 300-400 people gathered in front of the Town Hall to watch a Zeppelin flying over the city.

He became Chairman of the St Albans Food Control Committee which had its first meeting 13 August 1917. No area was too small for the Committee's attention: from physically redistributing margarine so that all shops had a

fair share to issuing an order that no schoolchildren were to be served during school hours.

Flint attended every City Council meeting in 1917 and missed only one sitting of the City Bench, due to his escorting the mother of Private Edward Warner to Buckingham Palace to accept his posthumous VC.

Among many accolades bestowed upon him when reappointed in 1916 is the comment 'he displayed one characteristic very strongly and that was his habit of calling a spade a spade and not an agricultural implement'. An article in the *NTF* ('Nine Thirty Five'), founded in 1916 by passengers on the 9.35pm train from Luton to Harpenden to raise funds for British POWs, commented on his 'shrewdness and a cautious impartial judgement.' Perhaps the best reason for his success however, it goes on 'We who know him best know that behind the gravity lurks a hearty geniality which can enjoy the lighter side of life. We have seen him in moments of levity, heard his spontaneous mirth find vent in a way that made the railway compartment shake'.

Val Argue
SAHAAS Biographies Group

HELP NEEDED AT LECTURES

We are still looking for members who are prepared to offer occasional assistance setting up our audio/visual system prior to lectures.

Please contact Gill Girdziusz via lectures@stalbanhistory.org if you can help.

LECTURE PROGRAMME

20 November 2018 - 19 February 2019

All lectures commence at 7.45pm.

All lectures are held at Marlborough Road Methodist Church.

Late changes will be notified on our website and via e-news.

Tuesday 20 November

Sir Thomas Gresham's Exchange

Professor Stephen Alford

"Go to the Exchange, crave gold as you intend." (William Haughton, *Englishmen for My Money*, 1598) Sir Thomas Gresham's first great contribution to the life of Elizabethan London was the Royal Exchange, the purpose-built merchants' bourse which opened in 1567. Why did Gresham finance and build it? What did Londoners (and others) do there? What does the Exchange tell us about Gresham's ambitions both for himself and for London? And what does it suggest about how trade and culture were

changing and developing in the later sixteenth century?

Stephen Alford was educated at the University of St Andrews and taught for fifteen years at the University of Cambridge before moving in 2012 to Leeds as Professor of Early Modern British History. He is the author of six books, including a biography of William Cecil, Lord Burghley (2008), The Watchers: A Secret History of the Reign of Elizabeth I (2012), a short study of King Edward VI for the Penguin Monarchs series (2014) and most recently London's Triumph: Merchant Adventurers and the Tudor City (2017).

Tuesday 4 December

St Albans School in World War Two

Robin Ollington

The outbreak of war in September 1939 brought many dramatic changes to lives of the citizens of St Albans, amongst them the masters and boys of the school bearing its name. Although over its long history the school had lived through

many wars from the Hundred Years War, the Wars of the Roses to the horrendous conflict of 1914-18 none would affect it as much as the Second World War when for the first time, both City and School became the Home Front with the threat not only of air attack but invasion itself. This talk covers this extraordinary period as seen through the eyes of a schoolboy of the period based on his recollections and those of his contemporaries.

Robin's first career was in teaching at art college. He later moved into the commercial world with responsibility for promoting Guernsey, Gibraltar, Italy, and Egypt and in the case of Guernsey and Gibraltar also involved the design of their postage stamps. He has been involved in exhibitions at Tate Britain on Beatrix Potter and several heritage-related exhibitions at the V&A. He is currently involved with the Royal Hospital Chelsea, where since 2002 he has been collecting and publishing Pensioners' memoirs. His published work includes Inspiring Old Albanians (2017), a record of 75 former pupils of the school, some as early as the 12th century including the only English Pope, Adrian IV.

Tuesday 15 January 2019

London Mithraeum: a new home for the Temple of Mithras

Louise Fowler

In 1954, the discovery of a well-preserved Roman temple dedicated to the god

Mithras on a London building site provoked a national debate about whether it was right for archaeological remains to be sacrificed for development. Following a public outcry, the beleaguered site owners agreed to dismantle the remains of the temple and reconstruct them on a site nearby. Recently, redevelopment by new owners Bloomberg provided an opportunity to return the temple to the site of its discovery, as part of an innovative new public display embracing the site's rich history. Louise will talk about MOLA's (Museum of London Archaeology) work with Bloomberg and the team of exhibition designers, architects, engineers, stonemasons and artists who have brought the site's fascinating past to life.

A visit to Verulamium Museum when she was eight years old inspired Louise with a lifelong interest in archaeology, and after pursuing the subject at university she now works for MOLA as a Post-Excavation Manager. She is part of the MOLA team that has been working with Bloomberg on the London Mithraeum.

Tuesday 22 January

Hugh Myddelton and the New River

Helen Gibson

The New River is a source of fresh water for London built in the early 17th century from Hertfordshire to Islington. Its organisation was accomplished by Hugh Myddelton and it is still in use today. Its route

has left many historic traces from Ware to London including, the New River Path delineated recently by Thames Water.

Helen is a retired teacher and council member of the East Herts Archaeological Society, a position she took up on the sudden death of her husband Adrian Gibson in 2006. He had spoken several times to SAHAAS and had been active in editing Hertfordshire Archaeology. Helen was happy to undertake some of his engagements as she had assisted him since 1956 when he was the excavator discovering Swanscombe Man (now thought to be a woman).

Tuesday 5 February

Hitler's British Isles

Duncan Barrett

In the summer of 1940, Britain stood perilously close to invasion, and the prospect of German occupation was very much on the horizon. Thanks to the success of the Battle of Britain, it never happened – but ever since, the idea of German jackboots on British soil has continued to fascinate us, played out in counterfactual fictions such as ‘SSGB’ and ‘Dominion’. But there is no need for fiction – in the Channel Islands, more than 50,000 British subjects lived side by side with the Germans for five years. In 2017, Duncan Barrett spent three months in the islands, interviewing

more than a hundred local people about their memories of the Occupation. In this talk he shares some of their incredible stories.

Duncan Barrett is a writer and editor, specialising in biography and memoir. He grew up in London and studied English at Jesus College, Cambridge. In 2010 he edited the First World War memoirs of pacifist saboteur Ronald Skirth, published as The Reluctant Tommy. He is co-author, with Nuala Calvi, of a trio of Sunday Times Top 10 bestsellers: The Sugar Girls, which was ranked second in the history bestsellers of 2012, GI Brides, which was also a New York Times bestseller in America, and The Girls Who Went to War. His first solo title, Men of Letters: The Post Office Heroes Who Fought the Great War, was nominated for the People's Book Prize. His second, Hitler's British Isles, was published in 2018.

Tuesday 12 February

The Rise and Fall of the Pubs of Wheathampstead 1830-1914

Patrick McNeill and Peter Jeffreys

The Beerhouse Act of 1830 enabled individuals to obtain a licence to sell beer by paying two guineas a year to the Excise rather than obtaining a licence from the magistrates. As a result, the number of licensed premises in Wheat-

hampstead rose from seven to twenty by 1841, with a total of 26 licensed premises being open between then and 1914. Growing concern about this increase and the management and conduct of beerhouses led to control being returned to the magistrates in 1872. The temperance movement, plus the development of other leisure activities, led to the 1904 Licensing Act which introduced more regulation and reduced the number of outlets. We will outline this context and present case studies of some licensed houses of varying size, respectability and lifespan.

A history graduate, Peter Jeffreys taught in two grammar schools before serving as an education officer in three different local authorities. He has also worked at the Open University, in both full-time and part-time capacities and, before retirement, was Secretary and Registrar of the University of Hertfordshire for twenty-one years.

Patrick McNeill spent 20 years as a lecturer in sociology at St Albans College. After writing and editing a number of books, he became an educational publisher at Collins Educational and, from 1995, worked freelance as an education, training and publishing consultant. On retiring in 2010, he and his wife moved to

Wheathampstead where he is active in the local history society and in protecting the natural environment.

Tuesday 19 February

**Something Old, Something New:
Conservation Architecture in Practice**

Francesca Weal

This talk discusses the process of decision-making, design, the use of materials and 'informed conservation' when working with historic buildings and environments. It is illustrated with case studies including repair projects, conversions, extensions and even a new house in the St Albans conservation area.

Francesca Weal is accredited as a specialist conservation architect, has her practice in Wheathampstead, is a former chair of the Hertfordshire Association of Architects, and represented the East of England on RIBA Council for many years. She is a member of the Hertfordshire Building Preservation Trust, the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings, and the Ecclesiastical Architects' & Surveyors' Association.

OUR MAIN SOCIAL EVENT OF THE YEAR



NEW YEAR PARTY

FRIDAY 11 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@stalbanshistory.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.

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

..... Tickets at £8.00 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 to:**

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