



Founded 1845

STALBANS AND HERTFORDSHIRE
ARCHITECTURAL AND
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
SOCIETY



NEWSLETTER

No. 154

August 2004

Registered Charity No. 226912

Hon. Sec: B.E. Moody, 24 Rose Walk, St Albans, Herts AL4 9AF

LECTURE PROGRAMME

Tuesday 7th September	Landscape and ritual: the late iron Age of Hertfordshire	Dr Stuart Bryant
Tuesday 14th September	Development pressures in Herts	John Wood
Friday 24th September	Kingsbury Barn*	Adrian Gibson
Tuesday 28th September	The Iron Age chariot: recent discoveries and interpretations	Anthony Spence
Tuesday 5th October	St Albans: water, rail and Victorian Gothic	Gene Mitchell
Tuesday 12th October	Mr Telford's bypass: the making of Verulam Road	Ann Dean
Tuesday 19th October	The Mary Rose	John Fisher
Friday 29th October	Cromwell warts and all*	Prof John Morrill
Tuesday 2nd November	Tiles in the Abbey	Stephen Potter
Tuesday 9th November	Crystal Palace and the Great Exhibition	Peter Street
Tuesday 16th November	History of London, Part 1	Derek Peters
Friday 26th November	History of popular photography*	John Credland
Tuesday 30th November	Archaeological finds in Colchester	Rob Masefield
Tuesday 7th December	St Albans historic landscape	David Dean
and in 2004		
Friday 14th January	The Society's New Year Party <i>at Verulamium Museum</i>	
Tuesday 18th January	Thomas Fowler: A St Albans worthy Grimthorpe: A St Albans giant	Tony Billings Rob Weston
Friday 28th January	Child employment in 19th century Herts in perspective: varieties of childhood	Prof Nigel Goose
Tuesday 1st February	Cremation burials at Turners Hall Farm, Wheathampstead	Simon West
Tuesday 8th February	Lord Rothschild and the Tring Museum	Teresa Wild
Tuesday 15th February	Investigation of historic lime-based materials	Jeremy Ingham
Friday 25th February	Ancient technology	John Brodrick
Tuesday 1st March	The lost inns of the High Street	Elizabeth Buteux
Tuesday 8th March	Labelled heads: portraits on coins and medals	Richard Abdey
Tuesday 22nd March	How St Albans has changed and developed: who did what and where	Kate Morris (Property History Group)
Tuesday 5th April	History of Redbourn	Alan Featherstone
Tuesday 19th April	Archaeology and Local History Group AGM Our evolving view of the Romans	John Brodrick
Friday 29th April	The strange story of the Metropolitan Railway	Dr Clive Foxall
Tuesday 10th May	SAHAAS Annual General Meeting <i>at Verulamium Museum</i> Verlamio-Verlamium	Simon West
Tuesday 17th May	Our past: treasure finds from England and Wales	Richard Hobbs (British Museum)
Friday 27th May	Indian influences on 18th century English gardens	Kate Harwood

*** FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THESE LECTURES SEE PAGE 6**

Please note that Tuesday meetings are held at St Albans School and start at 8.00 p.m.

Friday meetings are at the College of Law, Hatfield Road, and start at 7.45 p.m.

They are open to all members of the Society. Non-members may attend two meetings as guests.

COMMENTS FROM THE PRESIDENT

It is hardly surprising that one should feel pride in the largest and probably most active society of its type in the county. Founded as far back as 1845, it has filled my spare, as well as my not so spare, time, for more than 35 years. It is daunting to be part of a chain of otherwise illustrious Presidents. However, the President has no particular powers other than as a member of the Society's Council. I cannot stress that too strongly. Council takes the decisions and Council carries the can. An important role of the President is to oversee the conduct and recording of Council meetings. I am particularly intolerant of the casual approach adopted to meetings by a large number of organisations over the past 20 years. Formal votes are rarely taken and discussion takes place in a fashion which makes it almost impossible to accurately record proceedings or to later remember what has occurred. We have had an important period of innovative thinking and I will be more than happy with a period of consolidation, a period in which we can review and formalise procedures for the future. If it does not get in the Council's minutes, it simply did not happen.

Probably the most urgent challenge we face is to fill a number of vacant posts. We will not fail to recruit and must not fail. Brian Moody will be stepping down as Secretary at the next AGM and Megan Atton from the post of Membership Secretary. I will be standing down

as President. It is important that we co-opt to Council as soon as possible, so step forward. The work is not arduous or necessarily time-consuming. We are looking for that rare commodity, common sense. I am particularly heartened by the youngsters (most people seem young to me) who have joined Council in the past year or so and have brought new skills, interests and viewpoints. They are the future of our Society.

Last but not least, a big thank you. I can hardly remember a time when David Aubrey was not Treasurer of the Society. In addition he co-ordinated manning the Clock Tower for many years and was also Treasurer for *Hertfordshire Archaeology*. A man who went far beyond merely pulling his weight. Dr Lyle Perrins advised us on conservation matters. This was not an official post, but reflected his interest and our reliance upon his expertise on Victorian buildings and the like. Thank you to Dr Norman Kent. Amongst other things he advised us on publication matters. Geoff Dunk's book on St Albans was certainly very popular, but it is quite clear that Norman's nurturing of sales gave our publications an extended life. These are just a few of the people whose companionship and help has made my membership so enjoyable

David Dean

SAHAAS AT THE FESTIVAL OF LIFE

The Festival of Life is a biennial event at which local Societies and various voluntary organisations make their activities known to the public. It has been running for several years and is organised by St Albans District Council, or whoever passes for their organisers these days. It is fun for participants and public alike.

This year some fine breezy weather, along with the fun run taking place in Verulamium Park the same morning, ensured a good turnout of visitors.

On our stall we displayed various aspects of past and ongoing research, as well as showing copies of our publications. It all generated considerable interest. One purchaser of our 1820 map invited us round to examine the footings of the monastery boundary wall which survive in his garden



THE SAHAAS WEBSITE REBORN

www.stalbanshistory.org

PAST

Early in 2003 the Council of the Society decided to have a website and engaged a commercial company to provide one. For a fixed fee we got a simple site and two updates a year, without depending upon the computer skills of members. That site went live in May 2003.

By early 2004 we knew that we needed to update the site more often, sometimes at short notice. I therefore showed a demonstration to the Council, which accepted my offer to take over the direct management of the site.

It was important to keep our Domain Name – **www.stalbanshistory.org** – to point to the new computer where the information would actually be held (like taking a phone number with you when you move house) but this took a while to negotiate because criminals sometimes hijack other people's domains as a cover for fraud. The site was reborn on 10 June 2004.

The Council decided that to prevent unwelcome phone calls or junk e-mail (spam) the site will not, at first, contain personal addresses, phone numbers, or e-mail addresses. The site can forward e-mails to the Officers without revealing their personal addresses. Experience will show whether this is sufficient, but it is easier to reveal more information than to recapture what has already escaped.

PRESENT

The site is not finished – it never will be. The whole point of taking control was to develop and expand our scope. Some ideas are mentioned on the right (some are already covered) but please make suggestions and supply material (please discuss your file formats with me). The structure of the site is not set in stone; please suggest improvements.

UPDATE POLICY

Nothing is worse than a website which has not been updated for ages; no one trusts any of it. This site includes Site updates – a link to a log that shows how fresh the information is. I will keep future information up to date, remove special advertisements once an event has happened (but retain a record of it), and invite you to supply reports of past events.

Brian Bending

FUTURE – OUR OBJECTIVES

To advertise ourselves to others

- Welcome page
- Outline of activities

These entries were in the first website and need revision

- Invitation to become a member, subscription rates, etc. (*NEW*)

To keep our members informed

- Programme of lectures
- Advertisements of special events
- Advertisements of outings – including application form, time, place, etc. (*NEW*)
- Reports on outings, special events, etc. (*NEW*)

More ideas invited

To be a reference source and archive

- List of publications
- Links to other interesting websites
- Contents pages of *Hertfordshire Archaeology*
- The Protestation Returns for St Albans 1641/42
- Bibliography (a long-term project) (*NEW*)

More material invited – research results, photos, etc.

NATIONAL ARCHAEOLOGY DAYS

The weekend of 17th and 18th July this year in St Albans was extraordinarily busy. The officers and crew of HMS St Albans received the Freedom of the City (see page 5); The Round Table's Carnival Parade took place; World Fuze Day produced music from all quarters; and our Museum Service staged a Medieval Melée at Verulamium to celebrate National Archaeology Days. No one could possibly have said there was nothing to do!

Historically speaking, the Melée was of prime importance and all the events, including our own, supported it.

Prof. John Gillingham gave us a real treat at our Free Public Lecture on the World of Richard the Lionheart. How many of us realised that this crusading king had such direct connections with St Albans? Sent to a wet nurse in the town and returning to it to gather support in later life. His mother, Eleanor of Aquitaine, came here too and the Abbey supported the call for ransom funds, responding with sufficient cash to ward off compulsory contributions of plate. Our thanks to Doreen Bratby whose meticulous organisation was so important to the success of this event.

The Exhibition *The Lions Tamed*, contributed primarily by the state of Rheinland Pfalz, was opened with great pomp by Lady Shelagh Nichols, High Sheriff of Hertfordshire, in the presence of the German Ambassador; Prof Gillingham; Philip Madoc, President of the St Albans Worms Partnership; Kerry Pollard MP; and many other dignitaries. The exhibition clearly sets out the parallels of the history of the period between the English and German perspectives. It remains at the Museum until the end of August, but don't put a visit off until the last minute. There is much to see – it may take more time and capture more of your interest than you suspect.

The events were enhanced by the presence of 41 visitors from the twin town Worms area who all demonstrated their medieval talents of spinning, bobbin lace making, herbal knowledge, beer making and, of course, music and dancing. Gabriela Glaser's beautiful voice graced many of the events over the weekend. She sang at the shrine in the Abbey and also at St Peter's, and entertained us wonderfully at the Medieval Banquet which the St Albans Worms Partnership held in honour of their visitors (with her songs about naughty monks!).

Our heritage in St Albans offers such wonderful opportunities for celebration and this joint effort with partners even from across the Channel was a most fulfilling example of how both academic and popular contributions can bring history to whole cross sections of the community. Children were thrilled with the hands-on offers the Museum staff and the German visitors put on in the Park. More serious historians will still be considering the implications of Prof Gillingham's ideas on the Plantagenets and the crusades and revisiting that most comprehensive exhibition. And how does the saga of the Nibelung fit in with our new knowledge of our own king's presence at the Bishop's Palace in Worms at the time it was being written? Each question begs another – that is what history is about!

Kate Morris



Top, an attentive audience at the SAHAAS Public Lecture

Above, dancing at the Medieval Melée

Right, Gabriela Glaser

LOCAL HISTORY GROUP REPORT

Over two months have now passed since the end of the last season. The last talk in April concerned the British Schools Museum in Hitchin, which maintains the 1856 infants classroom for visitors to experience life in a nineteenth century school. Other buildings date back to 1810 and the museum keeps alive the memory of Joseph Lancaster who introduced the 'monitor' system to British education so that he could, at any one time, teach classes of up to 100 pupils. Then on to the final lecture in May when Peter Adams described the history and present activities of scientific interest at the Royal Gunpowder Mills at Waltham Abbey. Obviously the lecture season ended with a bang!!

In the meantime Gene Peyton-Jones and Barry Walkington organised two excellent coach outings to the RAF museum at Hendon and a visit to Much Hadham. Quite apart from the amazing array of exhibits at Hendon the bonus for us was that we had unknowingly booked our visit to coincide with Veterans' Day. It was a pleasure to see so many of these gallant airmen still sprightly and willing to share their war experiences while in the background we were serenaded by the Royal Airforce Band. A truly memorable day!

The curator of the Forge Museum at Much Hadham welcomed our party of 30 and we were shown the working forge and the amazing Tudor wall paintings in

the attached cottage. The painting of Queen Elizabeth I, disguised as Solomon and holding court over the disputed ownership of a baby, is simply a unique treasure. The visit was worth making to see this picture alone and must be one of Hertfordshire's best-kept secrets. After lunch we had a fascinating guided tour of the village culminating in a visit to the parish church. This building is now shared equally by the Anglican and Roman Catholic congregations, which must put Much Hadham in the forefront of ecumenical relationships. The pity was that so few of our members availed themselves of either of the outings and the coach was half empty on both occasions. This is very disheartening to the organisers and to your committee and makes one wonder whether these outings are really wanted.

Life begins again on 7th September with a lecture by Dr Stuart Bryant on 'Landscape and ritual in the late iron age of Hertfordshire'. Same place, same time as usual and that is the lecture room at St Albans school at 8.00 p.m. Your committee look forward to seeing you there. I shall then start my third and final year as your Chairman and I trust that my successor is waiting in the wings ready to take over next April.

Rob Weston

Chairman, Architectural & Local History Group

HMS ST ALBANS RECEIVES THE FREEDOM OF THE CITY

The name of our proto-martyr appears in many parts of the world, usually given to a church, school or community, and since 1687 it has also been on the high seas, given to a warship of the Royal Navy. The most recent *HMS St Albans* is a frigate, laid down in 2000, and she has recently returned to London from active service in the Persian Gulf. St Albans District Council had already decided to award the Freedom of the City of Albans to the men and women who sail 'our' ship, and Sunday 18th July provided the opportunity for a colourful Freedom Ceremony in St Peter's Street.

Practically the whole ship's complement of 180 paraded there, supported by the Royal Naval Association and St Albans Sea Cadets, and led by the band of the Royal Yeomanry (Inns of Court and City Yeomanry). After the Mayor had inspected the parade, the Freedom Scroll was read out and presented to the Commanding Officer, Commander Knibbs. This authorised HMS St Albans to march through our streets with colours flying and bayonets fixed, which they then did with great dignity and precision, leading the rather less orderly Carnival



Procession towards Westminster Lodge.

The first four St Albans were wooden-walled ships of the line with 50 to 64 guns; the first helped William of Orange and his men to land at Ramsgate in 1688, and the successor ships fought Spain, France and in the American War of Independence. Then there was a gap, until one of the American destroyers provided to Britain by Roosevelt in 1940 was renamed St Albans. She also served at different times in the war with the Royal Norwegian and Russian Navies. We trust that the sixth HMS St Albans continues to serve with distinction, and survives both political and enemy attack.

THE SAHAAS LIBRARY

Several additions to our stock have been made recently.

We are grateful to Anne Wares for donating a copy of her book, *A History of Priory Park, St Albans*. This covers the area of Approach Road, Cornwall Road, Ramsbury Road and Riverside Road, i.e. the section outside the medieval boundary to the south-east of the city. Various Celtic and Roman artefacts have been found, even though no archaeological digs have been carried out in this area. Sopwell Nunnery was the major land owner from its foundation in 1140 to the dissolution, when it was granted to Sir Richard Lee.

The book covers briefly the early history, economy and growth, transport and notable residents. The development of the estate was planned as early as 1891 and details are included of some of the individual houses and early inhabitants. As time goes on, the author has been able to rely on reminiscences of the locals, and also some newsworthy items which appeared in the *Herts Advertiser*. We are brought up to the present in this 'highly desirable neighbourhood'.

There are some interesting illustrations, ranging from the Old London Road Station in 1867 to street parties in 2000 celebrating the Millennium.

Copies are available price £10. Please send an A4 envelope to the author, Anne Wares, 35 Ramsbury Road, St Albans.

The *Hertfordshire Record Society* produced its first volume in 1986. The latest, *Volume 18*, has recently

been produced. This consists of two nineteenth century diaries edited by Judith Knight and Frank Kilvington. The first is that of Henry Lomas of Watford, 1822 and 1825-28. He is described as a literate and opinionated man, recording what he considers to be significant local events. The second is that of Thomas Newcome, Rector of Shenley 1822-1849. He described it as 'the family register', which includes his ecclesiastical duties and the life of a nineteenth century parson. Most of the entries are very brief and deal with local happenings. He also mentions international events, for instance battles in the Sikh wars. It is interesting to see that several generations of the Newcome family were Rectors of Shenley, including his uncle Peter, best known as the author of the *History of the Abbey of St Albans*, published in 1795.

A complete stock of HRS publications is in the stock of our library.

Several members of our Society have contributed to *St Albans Today – Personal Views*. This is a somewhat unusual look at the city: among the articles are City of Mystery, City of Humour, City of Pubs and City of Quaint Streets. As the book states, 'Twelve familiar figures in our community introduce different view on various aspects of the city as it is today. It is very well illustrated.'

Joyce Wells

FORTHCOMING LECTURE PROGRAMME

Once again I have welcomed your suggestions of speakers for our 2004-5 programme of Friday lectures. To commence, we shall be learning more about medieval barns and in particular our very own Kingsbury Barn. Mr Adrian Gibson is a lead in this field, and we look forward to what he has to say on 24 September.

You need to come along on 29 October to find out what's in a title: Cromwell Warts and All. Professor John Morrill from Cambridge is President of the Cromwell Association. He will enlighten us on his beliefs.

On 27 November, Mr John Credland from Buckingham will be speaking on The History of Popular Photography. He will say something about the history of photographic techniques from the camera obscura of the seventeenth century onwards but mainly about the social revolution when ordinary people could afford photography from the early twentieth century onwards.

May I remind you that these lectures will be held at the Law College, University of Hertfordshire, Hatfield Road St Albans and will commence at 7.45 pm.

Doreen Bratby

CURRENT SOCIETY PUBLICATIONS

The following Society publications may be purchased by members, at the prices quoted, by prior arrangement with the Hon Secretary or Hon Librarian.

- | | | |
|------|---|----|
| SA4 | <i>Around St Albans with Geoff Dunk</i> , Ed George Wilde & Norman Kent. | £4 |
| | Forty articles on local history selected from over 300 which Geoff Dunk wrote for the <i>St Albans Review</i> between 1974 and 1982, dealing with Roman and Saxon relics, the Abbey, churches, priories and nunneries, streets, buildings, trades and markets, and personalities. | |
| SA5 | <i>The Street Memorials of St Albans Abbey Parish</i> , 1987, by Alice Goodman. | £4 |
| | Describes St Albans during the 1914-1918 War, and the unique street memorials erected in the Parish to the fallen. | |
| SA8 | <i>Education by Election, Reed's School, Clapton and Watford</i> , 1990, by Norman Alvey. | £4 |
| | History of Reed's Schools. Orphans were selected for admission by votes from subscribers to a charity between 1813 and 1940. | |
| SA9 | <i>The Story of the Abbey School</i> , 1991, by Alice Goodman. | £4 |
| | History of the National School founded by the Abbey Parish in 1848. | |
| SA10 | <i>The Light of Other Days</i> , 1995, by Brian Moody. | £2 |
| | A short history of the Society's first 150 years. | |
| SA11 | <i>A History in All Men's Lives</i> , 1999, Ed. Brian Moody. | £4 |
| | 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. | |
| SA12 | <i>St Albans 1553</i> , 2003, by David Dean, Pat Howe, Betty Masters & Kate Morris. | £3 |
| | 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. | |
| | <i>St Albans 1650 -1700, a thoroughfare town and its people</i> , 2003, Ed. J T Smith & M A North. | |
| | The result of twelve years of work by the Society's Research Group, with ten authors. | |
| | Copies may be obtained by Society members from Hertfordshire Publications, an imprint of the University of Hertfordshire Press, for £13 including post and packing. They should apply to University of Hertfordshire Press, Learning & Information Services, College Lane, Hatfield AL10 9AD. | |

AT LAST!

Volume 13 of *Hertfordshire Archaeology* has now been published by ourselves and East Herts Archaeological Society, and we congratulate the members of the joint committee for their long efforts. It is a handsome volume of 132 pages, and contains twelve papers about archaeological and historical research in the County. Three of them refer wholly or in part to work on St Albans, and one by our member Gerard McSweeney establishes that the medieval Moot Hall of St Albans, which featured in the 1381 Peasants' Revolt, was on the site of the present Town Hall, not as previously thought on the corner of Dagnall Street.

Society members who have paid a full subscription are entitled to one free copy, and may collect them at Society meetings, or by prior arrangement with the Hon Secretary at 24 Rose Walk, St Albans AL4 9AF, phone 01727 853204. Alternatively they may ask to have a copy posted, sending him a cheque for £2 (payable to SAHAAS) for UK post and packing. Extra copies, which may be obtained by members similarly, cost £11 each plus post and packing.

ARCHAEOLOGY GROUP REPORT

Our fieldwork has been a mix of prospecting and excavating so far this year. At Easter a very small team followed up some work that we did in the back garden of Cross Farm house last year. Garden landscaping exposed a small section of non-modern wall which we had recorded (Newsletter No.151). Our further work was to determine if this was in fact a solitary structure or whether there were more, suggesting the remains of a building. Despite ground resistivity measurements indicating that this might be so, nothing was found, within the limitations imposed by digging in a fully planted flowerbed! Thanks to the Head Gardener, Jan Dickinson, for allowing the intrusion.

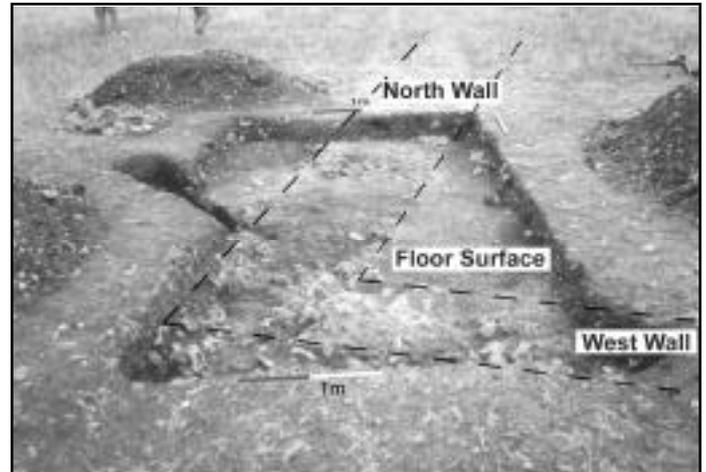
The writer of this report now being on the staff at St.George's School, Harpenden, an opportunity arose to carry out an investigation into the supposed line of a Roman road across the school site. This is that which allegedly predates part of the present Wheathampstead-Harpenden road and which runs adjacent to our Amwell villa site (of which more below). Several blocks of resistivity measurements were made along what was the most likely or obvious line. While there was significant variation in the readings the pattern did not conform with what might be expected of a road or track.

Subsequent research by the school archivist found that an excavation had been carried out in the late 60s in the same general area and nothing of significance had been found. However, conversation with a member of the groundstaff directed us to another part of the grounds which did give the sort of result we might expect. This work is ongoing and we may undertake some limited excavation. Thanks in this case go not to the Head Gardener, but to the Headmaster.

Finally, the Amwell Villa. The field in which this lies has been in set-aside, 2003/4, so it was possible for us to return there this summer. I will admit that this was as a result of nagging by some Group members. Over the May bank holiday two small trenches were opened up in the predicted (by geophysics) position of the north west corner. The forecast proved right, more clearly so when the two trenches were enlarged and combined in subsequent weeks into an area 5 by 2 metres, the largest trench on the site so far. Much easier digging conditions this year made it nothing like as arduous as last August. As before, the aim was to establish the truth

or otherwise of the geophysics results and to determine the nature of the archaeological features and deposits, without excavation to any depth.

Notable were the thickness of the north wall, just over a metre, and a laid, sandy mortar floor in the room in the



angle of the two walls (pictured below). It is possible that the north wall continues on westward, but this could only have been ascertained by extending the trench. A third century coin was found immediately on the north wall, or more correctly the flint base courses of the wall, which are what remains. In this connection the shallow depth of the features was remarked on. Although the ploughsoil contained dislodged, large flints, many of those still firmly in situ had their tops less than 25 cm (10 in) below the surface. Will Dickinson and his ploughman were surprised that ploughing had not caused more destruction.

It is a tradition that interesting discoveries are made on excavations at the end of the last day. At Newsletter copy deadline we can say that there are first indications that the site could well have seen activity in more than just the Roman period. There should be more to report in the next Newsletter.

Roger Miles

Chairman, Archaeology Group

FROM THE HERTFORDSHIRE ASSOCIATION FOR LOCAL HISTORY

The Hertfordshire Association for Local History has already organised a number of successful events this year. The combined AGM and Spring Meeting was enhanced by the appalling acoustics of the Council Chamber at County Hall. Whilst much of the business was rendered mercifully unintelligible, the guest speaker, Dr Margaret Gelling, stood a little to one side and was clearly heard and much enjoyed by all.

The following weekend, Dr Terry Slater from Birmingham University gave us a one-day course on the analysis of urban property boundaries. Dr Slater spoke to our Society a few years ago, but I found the course at Hitchin, with its practical exercises, more convincing and interesting. An unlucky few found themselves looking for features long submerged beneath a sea of asphalt, but this did nothing to dampen a fascinating day.

In June the annual garden party was held at Berkhamsted, organised by the Berkhamsted LHS. It was again a fine day and after a guided visit to the castle we retired to The Bothy, now the historically interesting home of Giles Clark, where we enjoyed copious refreshments in delightful company and surroundings. It was here that we were shown some interesting stone from the castle. One piece was endorsed with well carved graffiti and dated 1662. Since it bore a shield with a St Andrews cross, it seems likely that it was produced by a visitor from St Albans. Does anybody know of a 'T.P.' (Terry Pratchett perhaps) ?

In November the Symposium on Hertfordshire History will be held at Baldock on the theme of Society and Religion in Hertfordshire. The last time our society hosted the event was in 1996 on the theme Urban Development in Early Modern Hertfordshire (1550-1750).

Our activities were strongly represented by the 17th Century Group and the event marked a distinct turning point in a series which had begun to lose its sparkle and support. In accordance with our Council's wishes I have secured the November 2005 slot for our society. We start organising this September. Any suggestions for a theme?

In February 2005 we will be holding a second weekend residential course on urban landscape history at Madingly Hall near Cambridge. Terry Slater has agreed to oversee the course for which there are a few places left.

Any queries, application forms needed etc? Please let me know.

David Dean

Vice Chairman HALH

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

We welcome the following new members and hope they will take an active part in the Society:

Mr & Mrs A Banham	Sauncey Wood, Harpenden
Mr & Mrs A Cartmell	Longcroft Avenue, Harpenden
K Duthie	Leyland Avenue, St Albans
P Eland	Cambridge Road, St Albans
Miss C Hieatt	Stanhope Road, St Alban
P Jeffries	Bury Green, Wheathampstead
J Thomson	Upper Lattimore Road, St Albans
P Upjohn	Orchard Close, St Albans
Rev P W Wadsworth	Sandpit Lane, St Albans
R Welling	Old London Road, St Albans
Mrs M W Wolvey	Beresford Road, St Albans

Please note that subscriptions for 2004/5 are due on 1st October 2004. Cards for those members who pay by standing order are enclosed. For others a renewal form is enclosed.

A PRELUDE TO ART NOUVEAU

St Albans U3A History Group 2 decided that this year they would like to list all the aesthetically styled houses in St Albans from circa 1870-1900 as a practical help to conservation. This strange architecture is a mixture of European medieval and Mikado Japanese. It often includes a decorative terracotta sunflower, which is the symbol of the Aesthetic Movement whose leaders were Oscar Wilde and Professor John Ruskin.

The movement, beginning with the work of a few architects and designers in the 1860s, gathered force until, in the 1880s, it embraced every art form from the greetings card to domestic architecture. It introduced Japanese art to children's storybooks and red brick Queen Anne architecture to the streets of London and St Albans; it led to changes in fashionable dress, to the first garden suburb and to the vogue for railings and front doors painted dark green or Venetian red which lasted for half a century in England. People described themselves as 'going in' for 'High Art', for Art Decoration. In terms of architecture and the applied arts the movement was confined to the English-speaking countries. 'Aesthetic' – a word virtually unknown in the early part of the nineteenth century – had become by the 1880s the adjective for almost anything that was currently fashionable.

Aesthetic laid down standards of colour, of ornament and of form for all aspects of art and domestic decoration, which, reduced to the bare essentials, were simple, sensible and a considerable improvement on the elaboration of the design of the High Victorian period. The public, however, naturally tended to associate aesthetic ideas with the more extreme elements of the movement, and this led to a great deal of simple fun and even ridicule in the press which obscured the overall serious and significant effects which influenced so many aspects of everyday life.

In order to gain an appreciation of the Aesthetic style we visited the Bedford Museum's Cecil Higgins Art Gallery, where the Curator kindly gave us a lecture on the Aesthetic Movement and showed up the significance of the Gallery's impressive collections of paintings, ceramics and glass of the period.. We were invited to gaze at the opulent bedroom settings designed by architect William Burgess, 1827-81, relocated to Bedford from his London home: not a room conducive to peace and tranquillity!

The 1880 Victorian Houses Computer Information site of the Victoria and Albert Museum shows pictures of aesthetically styled Japanese fret window panes and roofs pitched like pagodas. Good examples in St Albans can be seen in Sandpit Lane at Nos. 13 and 15. Around the corner, Nos. 12 and 14 Culver Road are well worth a look. Unfortunately, one of these houses has changed the original Japanese-style window panes, probably not realising what they had destroyed.

The prime example in St Albans is No. 23 Hatfield Road. This was built for local entrepreneur and Mayor of St Albans Horace Slade, the owner of a hatbox factory. The hatboxes were for fashionable society ladies and Horace must have had a keen financial interest in being regarded as up-on-date. His house has a marvellous front door, fit for a Japanese Emperor. A mosaic entrance floor leads to the solid wooden corbel of the stairs, with a sunflower carved into it. The row of terracotta sunflowers on the exterior wall above the dining room's french door also makes a bold statement, as do the Japanese fret window panes and the medieval battlements which clearly define this important house.

Anne Kaloczi

OBITUARIES

GEORGE WILDE (1914 - 2004)

The Society has lost a good friend and an outstanding member by the death on 8th June of George Wilde at the age of 90.

George and his wife Beryl came to St Albans in 1951 with their two children Jane and Christopher, from Norwich, where he was born and brought up, winning an Exhibition to Corpus Christi College, Cambridge and subsequently gaining a Double First in History. His early career was with the firm of Reckitt and Colman, interrupted by war service of six years and more with the Army, in which he held every rank from Private to Major. In 1947 he started a new career with the Civil Service, and it was this which caused his move to St Albans.

When our Society was revived in 1951, George immediately joined, and after several years on the Council he became Hon Secretary from 1975 to 1982 and President from 1983 to 1987. In the course of this time he did much valuable service, culminating in the rewriting of our Constitution, and making an important contribution to the work of the 17th century study group by tracing the admissions to Cambridge colleges in that period of boys from local schools. He was elected an Honorary Member in 1995.

In spite of a busy and successful career in the Civil Service, from which he retired in 1974 with the rank of Assistant Secretary in the Ministry of Agriculture, George was a tireless worker for good causes, becoming at various times chairman of the Arts Council, 41 Club and Probus Club and of the Herts and Beds Association for the Deaf and Dumb. But he was above all a staunch friend and someone whom it was always a pleasure to meet, and with whom discussion almost always brought enlightenment. It was sad that increasing deafness limited the scope of his involvement, but he maintained his interests well into his eighties until he and Beryl moved to Cambridge in 2001.

We mourn his passing, and extend our sincere sympathy to his widow Beryl and to the other members of his family.

Frank Kilvington

TONY RAWLINS (1909 - 2004)

It is sad to report that Mr B Rawlins, always known as Tony, died in Watford on 11th June, at the age of 95.

A member of this Society since 1956, he was a very long-standing Chairman of the Watford (later SW Herts) Archaeological Society, and over a period of more than 48 years he managed to organise five summer coach outings annually to historic buildings and archaeological sites. He was responsible for many major digs in the Watford area, and he and his group also helped at many important sites in St Albans. Starting in the 1950s, they included the Gorhambury Roman site, the Bluehouse Hill dig next to the Roman Theatre, the Westminster Lodge athletics area, the Sopwell 'Nunnery' and the early Christian Chapel at Verulamium.

Tony's important connections with St Albans also include the introduction of notable archaeologists to their future careers. Professor Martin Biddle and Dr Ros Niblett both began their digging at the Moor Park Roman Villa with Tony during their school days. His service will long be remembered.

Norman Oldknow

HRS

The Hertfordshire Record Society publishes transcripts of historically important documents. It normally produces one volume each year, but for the last three or four years has fallen woefully behind schedule. However late books may be, members can be assured of receiving volumes owed to them. By way of apology, HRS has sponsored the reprinting of Bryant's 1820 map of Hertfordshire and given a copy to each of its members. Copies are also available on sale. So popular has the map proved that a further 500 copies have been printed. With the prospect of receiving a map now and a regular volume free in the near future, many customers have decided to join the Society rather than make a straight purchase. This has resulted in the largest increase in membership since we were founded on the initiative of Lionel Munby some 20 years ago. We are currently reprinting the 1766 map of Andrews and Wren together with a place index. Look out for later technical assessment.

David Dean

THE BRITISH ASSOCIATION FOR LOCAL HISTORY

This year the Phillimore Lecture was given by Professor Marilyn Palmer of the University of Leicester, a pioneer in the study of industrial archaeology. She gave a fascinating account of domestic textile workers who continued to work at home long after the introduction of powered machinery into the vast mills of the nineteenth century. The loom – which was often on a reinforced first floor which gave better light – dominated the home and the fluff got everywhere. Despite the drawbacks, many workers preferred to work at home and were able to occupy a useful niche in the textile industry of the time.

On 15th September, Mr Bob Aspinall, the Librarian, will give an introductory talk about the books and archives of the Museum in Docklands. These cover the history and development of the enclosed dock systems in the Port of London from 1799 onwards, their decline from the 1960s and the regeneration of Docklands from the 1970s. The collection includes some 50,000 photographs of the docks, shipping and cargoes, mainly from 1909.

On 20th January 2005 there will be guided visits to the archives of the Institution of Electrical Engineers and to the House of Lords' Record Office (HLRO). As befits the largest professional engineering society in Europe, the IEE occupies a splendid site behind the Embankment Gardens next to the Savoy Hotel. The archives hold papers recounting the activities and achievements of the IEE from its foundation in 1871 to the present day, and those of several electrical engineering firms. They also include early notebooks of Michael Faraday and the papers of Dame Caroline Haslett, a pioneer for women in the electrical and professional world. There are over 4000 photographs, prints and drawings, including portraits of eminent scientists and engineers, illustrations of the laying of submarine cables and of the 1881 Paris Electrical Exhibition. Sir Francis Ronalds (1788-1873),

inventor of the electric telegraph, had collected rare editions of books on electrical engineering and these came to the IEE in 1876, forming the basis of the library. Later the large library of Sylvanus P. Thompson was acquired. This contains books and pamphlets covering all aspects of science and engineering dating from the fifteenth century to 1916, including two rare fourteenth century manuscripts: the *Epistola de Magnete* by Peter Peregrinus and *De Spera* by Sacrobasco.

The HLRO holds several million historical records relating to Parliament, dating from 1797. These include the Petition of Rights 1628, the death warrant of Charles I from 1649, the articles of the Union with Scotland in 1707 and the Great Reform Act of 1832. Collections of private political papers include those of Lloyd George, Bonar Law and Lord Beaverbrook. Records about the Palace of Westminster include the papers of Charles Barry and A.W.N. Pugin. The Architectural Archive has references to plans, engravings and drawings as well as photographs, and there are many views of the interior and exterior of the Palace, past and present. There are photographs of peers, MPs and members of staff as well as of Parliamentary ceremonies. For those tracing family history, sources of help at the HLRO are listed. There is a growing gallery of online exhibitions and learning resources.

If you are interested in any of these events contact the BALH Business Manager, Mrs Annemarie Jones, BALH, PO Box 6549, Somersal Herbert, Ashbourne, DE6 5WH, tel 01283 585 947 or e-mail amjones-balh@supanet.com

Website www.balh.co.uk

Norman Alvey

The SAHAAS Newsletter welcomes your comments, ideas or contributions, which may be edited; please send to deedrinkwater@beeb.net or to 35 Portland Street, St Albans, AL3 4RA,

Our next issue will be in December 2004 and the closing date for contributions is Friday 12th November