



NEWSLETTER

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PRESIDENT'S REPORT

My first task, in this my penultimate President's Report, is to introduce Council's nominee as my replacement, Professor Michael Cooper, whom you can meet on page 2. I was extremely pleased when he accepted our proposal that he should stand for election as President at our AGM in September. Michael is an acknowledged expert on the life and times of Robert Hooke, a topic on which he has published and lectured previously to the Society. His contributions at our two previous Council meetings have already shown his quiet ability to listen to the debate and then suggest

the way forward. I hope you will give him your support at the AGM.

I would also like you to welcome Jon Mein as our new Publicity Officer (see page 2), to replace Ann Dean who does not wish to serve again. Jon has been co-opted to Council for the time being and will be nominated for election at the AGM, along with other officers.

We are also pleased to announce outline details of the Mayor's prize (page 9), which Kate Morris is creating as her farewell gift to the City when her mayoralty comes to an end this month. Her mayoral activities during the past year have kept the theme, the importance of our history, much in the public eye.

I have enjoyed my three years enormously and believe the changes in our constitution have strengthened the Society. While the reduction in the number of ALH lectures next season (see page 12) will sadden some of the regular Tuesday audience, I know that the new activities now being developed will more than take their place. The Society owes a huge debt of gratitude to Roy Bratby, who has spent endless hours analysing the responses to the questionnaire, both on what members want from our Society and on what they can contribute. The Programme Development Committee has been working hard behind the scenes during recent months, enhancing the programme for 2008/2009, and you will find more information in the report from its Chairman, Roy Bratby, on page 4.

Although I continue as President until the AGM, my task through the summer is to pave the way a smooth transfer into capable hands. Since I have resigned both as the Society's President and from the District Council, I thank you all for your support and look forward to finding time for a wide range of other activities.

Clare Ellis

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INTRODUCING

EMERITUS PROFESSOR **MICHAEL COOPER** COUNCIL'S NOMINEE FOR ELECTION AS PRESIDENT 2008-11



After graduating from the University of Bristol in 1957 with a degree in Physics he was recruited by the Colonial Office and sent to the School of Military Survey (RE) for 18 months to be trained as a land surveyor. He was appointed as Land Surveyor to the Federal Nigeria Survey Department, returning to the UK in 1964 to take up an appointment with the Ministry of Defence. He

then decided on an academic career which lasted until he retired in 2000 as Emeritus Professor of Engineering Surveying at City University. He is also Visiting Professor at University College London, where he is engaged on his current research. It is not unusual for retired academics in science or engineering to turn to the history of their subjects, a move he prepared for by obtaining a PhD in

the History of Science. He is now researching the origins and practice of land surveying from the earliest times to 500 BC.

He said: "Jennifer and I have been members of the Society for about 15 years, but I am no specialist in local architecture and archaeology. I was therefore honoured, but surprised, to be invited to stand for election as President. I then realised that my own shortcomings were outweighed by the knowledge, enthusiasm and expertise of members of Council and of the Society as a whole, so I agreed to stand.

"Brian Moody, in *The Light of Other Days*, describes the Society's first three half-centuries as the 'Verulam Years', the 'Wheeler Years' and the 'Post-War Years'. If elected, I shall encourage and support the Society in its use of information technology when it benefits members, or contributes to the Society's Objects set out in the Constitution. I shall also do all I can to maintain the Society's high standard of scholarship in its 'IT Years'.

JON MEIN PUBLICITY OFFICER

Over the last few years, as my sporting days have waned, I have indulged my enjoyment for history working on the 18th and 19th century history of the Saundersfoot area in Pembrokeshire. Getting my hands dirty (sometimes literally) in records offices from London to Haverfordwest has been fun, although somewhat daunting in the early days. But with the growing availability of on-line of primary source material (from family history information at Ancestry.co.uk, the 18th and 19th century newspaper collection via the British Library), starting to research a

topic can be much less daunting than it used to be. With this and other developments the importance of the Society increases as a centre for education and research. So, whether you are researching the history of Saundersfoot or St Albans or simply enjoy listening to good lectures, membership of the Arch and Arch and, importantly, participation in its activities are indispensable. Raising awareness both inside and outside the Society of what we offer is at the heart of my role as Publicity Officer.



NEW MEMBERS

The following have joined since the last newsletter. We hope they enjoy their membership and join in many Society activities

Mrs S Betteridge and Mr P Vaughan	Grange Street, St Albans
Anthony Druce	Culver Road, St Albans
Christine Dunn	Chime Square, St Albans
Dr I St John and Dr C Kau	Ridgeway, St Albans
Miss T Maurer	St Raphael's Court, St Albans
Richard Mein	Welwyn Garden City
Janet Ouston	Spencer Street, St Albans
H Petri	College Place, St Albans
Janet Richards	Hart Road, St Albans
David Robathan	Yeabridge, Somerset
John Robins	Westfields, St Albans
Alan J Smith	Lemsford Road, St Albans
Alan W Smith	Belmont Hill, St Albans

ARCHAEOLOGY GROUP

Given better luck with the weather than last year we will be excavating at Amwell in the summer. This will be for the last two weeks of August, i.e. the weeks around the Bank Holiday. Anyone wishing to take part should please contact me nearer the scheduled start – say a week or ten days before – to confirm that it is going ahead.

Paid-up members of the Society are free to join in; anyone from outside the Society will be welcome as well, but required to join the Society in order that they (a) are covered by our insurance and (b) are contributing to the cost of running the dig.

Looking further on, we should be undertaking either or both of fieldwalking and geophysical surveying in the autumn. Anyone beyond the Archaeology Group 'regulars' interested in taking part, please contact me when the excavation is over.

Roger Miles

SUBSCRIPTION REMINDER

By the time you receive this newsletter it will be nearly the end of the Society's financial year. I would remind members that at the EGM of the Society held in October 2006 it was agreed to change the financial year to run from 1 June to 31 May. As a consequence subscriptions are due and payable for the forthcoming financial year on 1st June.

As a reminder the level of subscriptions currently in force are as follows;

Individual member	£12
Spouse or partner of a member, living at the member's address	£6
Children of a member under the age of 18 living at the member's address	£6
Students who provide evidence that they are in full time further or higher education	£6
Family membership	£21

For those of you who signed up to the direct debit system you do not need to do anything; your subscription will automatically be paid on 2nd June (the next banking day following 1st June). For those not signed up to the direct debit system, please reconsider whether you wish to do this. It is highly recommended to do so and you should complete the form sent out last year, sign it and forward it to me. If you have mislaid your form I do have some spare which I can send to you if you call me on 07711 696 417.

For those of you who do not pay by direct debit, please send a cheque for your subscription to our membership secretary, Peter Jeffreys, using the separate form enclosed. If you still pay by standing order, please ensure that you amend this with your bank to give the correct level of subscription with payment at the correct date. Please also cancel all old standing orders as they will make payments of the wrong amount and at the wrong date; this will lead to administrative problems for us both.

If you have any concerns you wish to discuss with me, please call me on the above number.

John Thomson

MEMBERSHIP CARDS 2008/9

At the beginning of the new membership year on 1st June full details of the programme for 2008/9 will not have been finalised. It will not, therefore, be possible for membership cards, which normally provide these details, to be issued in June immediately following receipt of payment. To all those who have paid their subscriptions the cards will be sent out in August with the papers relating to the Annual General Meeting. By this stage it is confidently anticipated that they will contain the full programme for next year.

VISIT TO APSLEY PAPER MILL

On 5th March 31 members went to Frogmore Mill to see the very interesting work that is continuing there. This followed the lecture that their Chief Executive, Jacky Bennett, gave SAHAAS in February.

We were guided around the project after a video presentation showing the development of the Mill and Visitor centre. The Heritage Lottery Fund has given £1 million and work is still in progress to improve the visitor facilities.

This was the site where paper's industrial revolution began. Frogmore Mill has been making paper for over 200 years.

It gave us access to the heart of a real working environment, an insight into the history of paper making as well as their plans for an active future in recycling and sustainability.

We were made very welcome and enjoyed our morning.

Gill Charles



Above, some of the old mill buildings which still remain.

Below, members in high visibility jackets explore this industrial archaeology site

REPORT FROM THE PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Following the decision of the Architecture and Local History Group to reduce the number of Tuesday lectures, Council appointed a subcommittee to investigate a fresh approach to the future programme and widen the scope of the Society's activities. It was agreed that the full membership be consulted and to do this a questionnaire was circulated to all members. The subcommittee of Council formed to evaluate the results of the questionnaire is now known as the Programme Development Committee.

The Programme Development Committee has met regularly since November to discuss ways in which it could carry the programme forward. Meetings have been held with some of those members who offered their services to give presentations, serve on Committees and arrange visits. These meetings have been extremely encouraging and have revealed a depth of hidden talent amongst the membership. Are you a member still hiding your light under a bushel? If so please make yourself known.

Arising from these meetings, the Programme Development Committee, on behalf of the Society, in addition to providing the traditional monthly Friday lectures, is using members' ideas and suggestions and planning to arrange additional lectures which will be held on the third Tuesday of each month, making in total three lectures per month. These will be supplemented with a programme including walks and visits during the year 2008-9.

The Programme Development Committee has already planned, for this year, additional activities (*see right*) to include walks around the Tonman Ditch and St Albans' Medieval Defences; around Redbourn; around the old historical hospital sites of Hill End and Cell Barns which surround St Albans. There will also be a visit to Ashwell and a day trip to Flag Fen and Peterborough Cathedral and Museum. Plans are also under way for the formation of a new 19th Century Research Group (*see right*).

I hope that the new activities listed here will appeal to all members and I shall look forward to your joining us.

Roy Bratby

Chairman

NEW RESEARCH GROUP

The Society is planning to form a 19th century St Albans Research Group. It is proposed to start with a seminar on **How to do research**, followed by a visit to the Hertfordshire Archives and Local Studies (HALS) where members would be introduced to the sources and how to use them. From this beginning it is proposed that members investigate different aspects of 19th century St Albans, with plenary sessions at regular intervals.

Interested members should contact Judy Faraday:
telephone 01727 841480 or 07976 568664
or email: judyfaraday@hotmail.com.

OUTINGS 2008

Tuesday 24 June
Evening walk around the Tonman Ditch and St Albans' Medieval Defences

This walk which will last two hours will be led by Dr Peter Burley.

To book your place and for meeting details please telephone Roy and Doreen Bratby (01727 858050). Numbers are limited to 25.

Tuesday 16th September
Morning walk around Redbourn

This walk which will last 1½ hours will be led by Roy Craske who will have spoken to the Society on Tuesday 9 September.

To book your place and for meeting details please telephone Roger Miles (01727 865735).
Numbers are limited to 25.

Tuesday 23rd September
Day trip to Flag Fen and Peterborough Cathedral and Museum

This outing will cost £20 and will be led by Gill Charles.

To book your place and for meeting details please telephone Gill Charles (01727 840860) or write to her at 9 Tilsworth Walk, St Albans AL4 9JT. Cheques should be made payable to SAHAAS.

Saturday 11th October
Morning walk around Cell Barnes and Hill End Hospital Sites

This walk will be led by Maggie Davison. There will be an optional lunch at the Plough at Tyttenhanger

This walk will be led by Maggie Davison

To book your place and for meeting details please telephone Maggie Davison (01727 840564).

November (Date to be finalised)
Visit to Jeffrey Museum and the Museum of Childhood

This visit will be led by Gillian Harvey.

Details will appear in the August newsletter.

LIBRARY NOTES AND QUERIES

This is the first appearance of what we hope will be a regular column, trailed at the Library's talk to the Society in March. It is intended to (1) provide news of what the library can offer to Society members; and (2) help pick the brains of Society members.

Objective 1 will be met by providing news of new library developments, activities, and acquisitions.

Objective 2 needs more introduction. We would like to help share the knowledge of Hertfordshire and St Albans history in the possession of the Society's membership. The library team sometimes finds that the printed record, or those parts of it to which we have access, is not able to answer enquiries which we receive. We are also aware that A&A members know much more than we do, and might be able to throw light on questions to which we have been unable to find answers. Members' knowledge might be represented in publications, photographs, drawings or other documents, but also in personal knowledge and recollection. It is this informal corporate resource that we hope to tap into. In return, members might like to use this column to ask questions themselves, for answer by other members, or by the library team, in the next or subsequent issues of the Newsletter. It is also planned to put the queries and replies on the Society's website.

Replies will enrich the library's resources, on which we can draw when dealing with future enquiries, and we hope will be of interest to the membership in general. The success or otherwise of this initiative will depend on your responses.

So, to address first, and anomalously, our second objective, **QUERIES:**

- a) Information is sought on the Watson's Walk and Keyfield area of St Albans, especially in the 18th and 19th centuries.
- b) Similarly, information on the history of the site in Sandpit Lane on which St Saviour's church is built.
- c) Does anyone know of a photograph of the old police station which stood in Chequer Street behind the old Town Hall?

Please send replies via the A&A website, www.stalbanshistory.org (go to the "How to contact us" link on the left of the screen, and then click on "Enquiries"). Or by snail mail to Gill Harvey at 18A Gainsborough Avenue, St Albans AL1 4NL.

And to return to our first objective, **NOTES.**

The chief pre-occupation of the library team at present is to continue with the lengthy task of cataloguing books and pamphlets. We have yet to tackle maps, drawings, and miscellaneous papers and journal articles...

We receive several journals, and recent articles which might be of interest to members include:

Herts Past and Present no 10 Autumn 2007, pp3-13: Mathew Lamb of Brocket Hall, 1705-1768: his career as moneylender and agent to the aristocracy. By Paul Barton.

Herts Past and Present no 10 Autumn 2007, pp 14-21: Is there a Hertfordshire architecture?. By Mervyn Miller. (The answer is not straightforward.)

British Archaeology Jan-Feb 2008 pp 44-47. Putting the iron into Iron Age, by Rachel Hall. An excavation has revealed the first substantial remains of Britain's prehistoric smelting furnaces.

British Archaeology Jan-Feb 2008, Pp14-17. Drapers Gardens, by Nigel Hawkins, Gary Brown and Jon Butler. Early insights into discoveries from Roman London.

British Archaeology Jan-Feb 2008, Pp26-27. From a field near Sleaford. Illustrations of newly discovered well-preserved artefacts from a hitherto unknown Anglo-Saxon cemetery.

British Archaeology March-April 2008, pp28-33. Stanway: an elite cemetery at Camulodunum. By Philip Crummy and colleagues. An account of an

excavation of burials from around the time of the Roman conquest, with some mention of finds at Verulamium.

Recently acquired books include:

Wills at Hertford 1415-1858. Edited by Beryl Crawley, with an introduction by Susan Flood. British Record Society, 2007.

The Roman theatre at Verulamium (St Albans): a reconstruction. Anthony W.G.Lowther. Marchand Press, no date.

Street and placenames in Watford. Alan W. Ball. Watford Borough Council, 1973.

An Edwardian village and its people. Cyril H Martin. Privately published, no date. The village described and illustrated is Park Street and Frogmore.

History of Watford, by W.R. Saunders. Peacock, 1931. Articles reprinted from the West Herts and Watford Observer.

Abbots Langley. S.G.Thicknesse. Staples Press, 1946.

History of Watford and trade directory. Henry Williams. Pardon and Sons, 1884.

Most of the books and journals in the library may be borrowed by A&A members.

THE LIBRARY TEAM

Gill Harvey, 01727 853415

Anne Wares, 01727 860705

Donald Munro 01727 760808

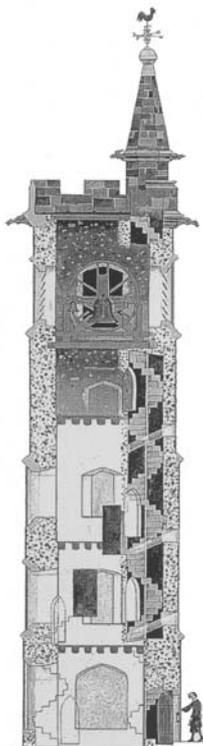
Scott Chalmers 01727 844336

Tony Cooper 01727 865032

They can also be contacted by email via the Society's website.

The library is open on Wednesday and Friday mornings from 10 a.m. to 12 noon in the former Judge's Robing Room at the Old Town Hall. Access is currently through the Tourist Information Office.

CLOCK TOWER REPORT



The Clock Tower now boasts new, specially-designed admission tickets, designed by the Museum and illustrating the clock tower. These are like cheque books, with ticket-stubs to keep account of daily visitor numbers. On the reverse, the tickets include a '2 for 1' offer on admission for non-residents to Verulamium Museum (it is free to those living in St Albans). So encourage visitors to keep their tickets instead of throwing them away.

Less welcome visitors are deathwatch beetles! Not on the ground floor - but higher up in the tower, I understand, so there's no likelihood of your seeing them. Rather than using chemicals, Museum staff are leaving traps, which have to be checked regularly to count the corpses! Because of this, we cannot have our usual weekly clean, so it would help if clockateers could empty the wastebin when necessary each weekend.

SAHAAS and the Civic Society enjoy a considerable income from the efforts of clockateers, which helps keep our subscription costs down. Each year, a large proportion of the income from ticket sales is divided between our two societies, in return for keeping it open to the public. As Clock Tower Treasurer, I was able to send cheques for £1,500 to both societies in March. This is raised by just a small proportion of the membership: approx. 60 Arc&Arc members help in the Clock Tower, out of a membership of over 500 ... Should that inspire you to join our exclusive 'clockateers club' - do contact me, details below. Existing clockateers - why not encourage your friends to join?

Those who did the most sessions during the

past season are given a little 'thank you', in the form of a voucher from Marks & Spencers, and this spring I had the pleasure of giving them to Mrs Frances Massey and Dr David & Mrs Jane Kelsall.

Our remaining weekends this season are as follows:

Sat/Sun/Mon 24th/25th/26th May

Sat/Sun 7th/8th June

Sat/Sun 21st/22nd June

*Sat/Sun 5th/6th July

Sat/Sun 19th/20th July

Sat/Sun 2nd/3rd August

*Sat/Sun 30th/31st August

Sat 13th September Heritage Open Day
Sunday will be covered by the Civic Society

I still need to find Weekend Organisers for two of these weekends: 5th-6th July and 30th-31st August, marked * above, and would be delighted to hear from someone able to cover these dates. With just seven of us (Weekend Organisers) covering a 14-weekend season - well I'll leave you to do the maths . . .

Jill Bennett

Clock Tower Co-ordinator

Tel/Fax: 01727 867685

29 Cornwall Rd, St Albans

E-mail: jill.bennett@waitrose.com

E-MAIL NEWS BROADCASTS

FROM WWW.STALBANSISTORY.ORG

Council would like to make more use of e-mail to communicate with members rapidly - especially to publicise news when the next printed Newsletter would be too late - but has not sent unsolicited messages because some members might regard them as spam. e-Mail News Broadcasts were started in March 2007 to a list of people who have chosen to subscribe and Council would now like to encourage as many members as possible to join this list. There have been 24 messages since March and I do not expect there to be a great increase in traffic.

- The notes are ordinary emails with a serial number, and a Subject: field of the form 'Arc & Arc eNews No.xx: Title.'
- There are no attachments; larger material will be put onto the website and a brief advice note broadcast.

- There is no fixed schedule; notes are sent when there is something to say.
- eMail addresses are not stored on any website and are not vulnerable to spam generators.
- The recipient's address is in the 'blind copy' or Bcc: field of the email and cannot be seen by anyone else.
- The distribution list includes only those who wish to be on it.

If you would like to receive these broadcasts please go to our website www.stalbanshistory.org, click on the link eMail News Broadcasts, and follow the instructions.

Brian Bending

VERULAMIUM HERITAGE PARK PROJECT

This is an ambitious project by St Albans Council. It arose initially after concerns expressed by the St Albans Environment Forum over the water quality in the lakes and river in Verulamium. In 2004 a report was produced detailing a number of options for their improvement and management. This was subsequently expanded and the Heritage Lottery Fund awarded a Project Planning Grant enabling the appointment of consultants charged with producing a conservation management plan for the whole park. A steering group to act as an advisory body to the council was set up including representatives from all the local interest groups and providing liaison with the wider community. I am the Society's representative.

In addition to improving the water quality in the lakes and river and enhancing their appearance and ecological value, the Project aims to improve the play and sports facilities. Equally important are the historic and archaeological considerations and the Project aims to improve and conserve these vital elements. Specific 'heritage' features of the plans are:

- o Enhancement of the London Gate to help recreate the experience of entering the Roman town along Roman Watling Street with views across the Park to the site of the Forum around St Michael's Church.

- o Conservation of the extant portions of the Roman town wall.
- o Creation of a 'woodland walk' along the Roman town ditch between the London Gate and the Silchester Gate, a part of a new circular walk around the Park.
- o Creation of a raised viewpoint and interpretation area next to the site of the Silchester Gate with a new entrance into the Park from the northwest end of King Harry Lane.
- o Creation of a new path along the line of the Roman street leading from the Silchester Gate to the Verulamium Museum.
- o Provision of an open area in the centre of the Park as a 'stage' for future public events and art installations interpreting the Roman town.
- o Provision of interpretative panels next to the site of St Germain's chapel, the Roman town wall, the Forum and Basilica and at the Park entrances.
- o The appointment of an education officer.

On behalf of the society I have accompanied the council's consultants and the English Heritage Inspector of Ancient Monuments on a tour around the Park, to discuss the archaeological and historic aspects

and their relationship with the river, the lakes and the Abbey. I also sent detailed comments on the consultants' draft report on the heritage aspects of the Park and emphasising the importance of all the Park's historic and archaeological features. These comments were accepted by the consultants and their final report amended.

It is not envisaged that the proposed works will have a substantial impact on archaeological remains themselves. Nevertheless, any work carried out will be subject to archaeological watching briefs and if necessary limited evaluation excavation. Hopefully a comprehensive geophysical and topographical survey will be undertaken which should provide important new information on the town.

An application for £2,000,000 was submitted to the Heritage Lottery Fund in March and the result is expected to be announced in September; meanwhile I will continue to attend the meetings of the steering group on behalf of the Society.

Ros Niblett

The park masterplan is too detailed to reproduce here but you can view it and keep up to date with developments at www.verpark.stalbans.gov.uk

HERTFORDSHIRE ASSOCIATION FOR LOCAL HISTORY

On Saturday 10th May, Dr. Hugh Prince's book on ***Parks of Hertfordshire since 1500*** will be launched at the Spring meeting of the Hertfordshire Association of Local History [HALH] priced at £18.99. What I didn't know until I asked the University of Hertfordshire Press this week was that members of HALH can purchase this and any books in the Hertfordshire Publications series with a 25% discount. Individual members pay a modest £10 subscription to belong to HALH and receive four newsletters a year, together with two copies of Herts Past and Present. A new publicity leaflet has now been

produced and copies should be available at society meetings, in any Hertfordshire library or at the Society's Library.

Next Autumn, on Saturday 1st November, the 29th Symposium will be in Barnet with the theme Care in the Community, to which I shall be contribute a short paper on Jim Forrester and the unemployed of Brynmawr, South Wales. Further details will be published about July.

Did you know that Mr Williams of Tewinbury Farm, Tewin, became a tenant in 1931. He uprooted himself,

his family and their farm stock and came from west Wales to Hertfordshire in the course of a single day by train. They drove the animals to a Welsh train and from North Welwyn Railway Station later the same day. This I gleaned from last year's Symposium at Tewin! Consider becoming a member of HALH as well as the Arch&Arch: you won't regret it.

John Cox

A&A representative on the HALH Executive Committee

WESTMINSTER LODGE

Everyone in St Albans knows something about Westminster Lodge – it is a very good leisure centre at the bottom of Holywell Hill, with facilities for drama, swimming, athletics, and sometimes skating. It has a good carpark (used to be free) for visitors to the modern Lake and ancient Verulamium, and at Carnival time half the population seems to be there, enjoying the fun of the fair. But what about its history?

After the Romans had left the area, the land on the west side of St Stephens Hill did not get developed at all until the latter part of the 19th century, and the first people to take an interest were the Edwards family. Henry Edwards was born in St Albans in 1803, presumably of farming stock, because he became tenant of the fine Great Hansteads farm at Bricket Wood, with a 16th century farmhouse which is still there and 287 acres of land. He employed nine labourers, and had an increasing family of sons to help with the farm. He also seems to have had significant financial resources, and was evidently keen to make his money, as well as his sons, work profitably.



Westminster Lodge. Photo by courtesy of David Dean

In 1837 Holywell House had been demolished, in order to allow the turnpike down Holywell Hill to be straightened, and Henry Edwards purchased the remainder of the Holywell estate. Perhaps he was thinking of building himself a house there, but it did not happen, and within a few years he sold the land on to Daniel Foster, who owned the George Inn and much other local property. In 1844 Edwards was declared bankrupt, but he was not

deterred. (He may even have planned it.)

Presumably the farm at Bricket Wood was still profitable, but he found an additional way of trying to make money. Together with his friend the solicitor Thomas Blagg, who had been St Albans Town Clerk since 1835, they got into the electoral bribery business, taking large fees from parliamentary candidates or their sponsors, and handing out hundreds of sovereigns to electors who agreed to vote for them. All this has been well reported elsewhere, particularly in David Dean's recent lecture to the Society. The practice was eventually stopped by the Bribery

Commission's investigation and the disenfranchisement of St Albans.

During all this furore, Henry Edwards had apparently decided that the fourth of his six sons, born in 1839, whom he had curiously christened Isaac Newton, would be more use as a solicitor than as a farmer. So he was sent away to school at Christ's Hospital, and became an articled clerk working for Thomas Blagg at his office in Chequer Street.

During the 1860s Henry Edwards married a second wife, as his first had died, and the family moved to a smaller farm at Beech Hyde, Redbourn, but one still requiring seven paid hands. In 1863 Isaac Newton qualified as an attorney and solicitor, and was operating as a partner in the firm of Blagg and Edwards. By 1865 he was married and living in a big house in Hatfield Road, one of the very few houses then in the whole of that road. They soon acquired four children and four servants. He was doing very well, and in 1867 Mr I N Edwards, as he was known officially, became Borough Treasurer, at a salary (part-time?) of £20.

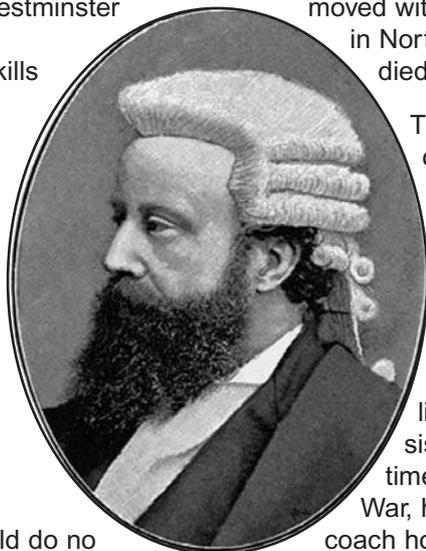
It was time for Isaac Newton to make another move, and it appears that he decided to build a new house on St Stephens Hill. About 8 acres of land were leased from the Gape family, and a large mansion appeared, in what might be called Victorian Tudor style. It had four reception rooms, a billiard room, a large hall, 13 bedrooms and two bathrooms. There was also an entrance lodge, with stables and a coach house, all of which still exist today. It was named Westminster Lodge, perhaps remembering the family's parliamentary exploits. Henry Edwards died in 1874, and it is not certain how far he was involved with the new house, but his son lived there for the rest of his time in St Albans.

When Blagg died in 1875, Edwards moved up to become Town Clerk in his place. The salary was £100, plus £30 for legal expenses. He was not averse to a bit of wheeler-dealing himself. For example, he just happened to be the owner of some property at the top of Sweetbriar Lane which obstructed the junction with Chequer Street. So when road widening became essential in 1876, as solicitor he had to transfer the property from himself to the Town Clerk, for £700.

Apart from his professional work, Isaac had a great interest in dairy farming, and in improving the output

Continued on the next page

of his large herd of pedigree Shorthorns, which won him awards and commendations from all over the country. The cattle were kept in various St Albans farms, and some no doubt grazed at Westminster Lodge. Also he demonstrated great skills in organising election campaigns for parliamentary candidates, having evidently learned from his father how not to do it. From 1868 he was election agent for no less than 27 candidates in London, Hertfordshire and elsewhere, all of whom won!



Isaac Newton Edwards

It seemed that he could do no wrong, but in 1888 he ran into a cashflow problem, as did farming generally. He had sold some client's property for £3,500, but was taken to the High Court of Justice for failing to hand the money over when demanded. In March 1888 he was struck off the Roll of Solicitors, so he immediately resigned all his civic offices, and filed for bankruptcy. He thus lost his home at Westminster Lodge, his cattle and his livelihood -

was it possibly one of his parliamentary enemies who was behind this? By July he was discharged from bankruptcy, with a surplus of about £10,000, and he moved with his family to a farm in North Mymms, where he died in 1900.

The next recorded occupant of the Lodge was Walter Edward Martin, a London fur merchant who was there by 1896, maybe earlier. He was a widower, born in 1852, and he lived there with his sister-in-law. Some time before the Great War, he disposed of his coach house, which was turned into a veterinary hospital, much as it is today. He became a JP, and died about 1939.

In 1940 the London printing firm of J Evershed & Co had been bombed out of their works at Bow, and moved to St Albans to join up with the local firm of Dangerfields. They acquired Westminster Lodge for their head office, and stayed there until new offices were built in 1955 on their works site off Inkerman Road (where

Tesco have plans for a supermarket).

Next, Westminster Lodge became the headquarters of the Youth Hostel Association, who renamed it Trevelyan House in memory of their founder President, Dr George Trevelyan, who was uncle of our member Sir Geoffrey Trevelyan. In 1963 62 new homes were built in the Lodge grounds, named Westminster Court. Finally, since the YHA moved to Matlock, there has been further development of private housing around the Lodge, in the area now known as Trevelyan Place. The Lodge itself has been divided into five units.

After the 1939-45 war, the area north of the Lodge remained unoccupied, apart from the prefabs of the Army Cadets, the Sea Scouts and later the Air Training Corps. They usually gave their address as the 'Abbey Camp'. Then in 1967, the City Council started to refer to this area as the 'Westminster Lodge Estate', even though it did not include any part of the Lodge as we have described it. The Abbey Theatre opened in 1968, and the Leisure Complex with its swimming pool in 1970, now all known as 'Westminster Lodge'.

Brian Moody

MAYOR'S PRIZE FOR CONTRIBUTION TO HISTORY IN ST ALBANS AND HERTFORDSHIRE

In keeping with the theme of her mayoralty and to encourage continuing interest in local history, this year's Mayor, former President of SAHAAS, Councillor Kate Morris, has established a fund dedicated to an annual prize for an outstanding contribution to the history of St Albans and Hertfordshire. This initiative, and her contribution to the fund, form her valedictory gift as Mayor to the city and corporation.

The fund is to be administered by SAHAAS, and Council is delighted to be able to encourage researchers in this way. Prize-winners will receive a certificate, to be presented by the Mayor, a sum of money and assistance from the Society with publication of their submission.

Council will establish an assessment panel which will draw on the membership and other academic contacts.

Speaking of the prize, Kate said: "We have such a rich history, but much is still to be researched. The Society's Library is now much more accessible, in the Judges' Robing Room at the old Town Hall, and it has much to offer researchers. There is such public interest in heritage and I should like to encourage good research so more can be published."

Any member wishing to contribute to the fund to ensure that the prize money is adequate to encourage researchers is invited to send cheques payable to St Albans District Council to the Mayor's Office,



St Albans District Council, Civic Centre, St Peter's Street, St Albans, AL1 3JE. Enquiries about the prize will be welcomed by the Secretary to SAHAAS on: admin@stalbanshistory.org. Further information is also available on the Society's website www.stalbanshistory.org.

TUESDAY LECTURES

The first lecture after the Christmas break was given by Bob Redman of the Elstree Screen Heritage Group, who spoke about **Elstree: Britain's Hollywood**. His excellent lecture traced the history of film-making, which started with Neptune Studios in 1914 and the ebb and flow over the years of the various companies such as Rock, Gate and MGM studios.

Four of the biggest grossing films were made at Elstree. The UK's first 'talkie' (Hitchcock's *Blackmail* in 1929) was also made here and Bob listed some of the stars of film and, later, TV who worked at the studio. By the mid-1990s many original buildings and much of the site had been sold off, but the remainder was saved by Hertsmere Borough Council and new investment meant that, by 2000, film production had recommenced.

Bob is secretary of the Heritage Group, which has education, publication and festival projects and runs public tours which keep alive the recognition of the studio's continuing contribution to the industrial history of Hertfordshire and the valuable historic record which the films have provided over some 80 years.

The following lecturer was Professor Richard Simons (secretary of Abbots Langley History Society) who talked about **An Abbots Langley Butcher's Day Book of 1828**. His family was in the butchery business in the village for many generations and this rare daybook was discovered by chance on a wall behind a fixture. The earliest known Simons ancestor was a horse collar maker c.1700.

The butchery business started in 1820 when Robert Simons bought the shop which continued until 1978. Butchers did their own slaughtering in the 19th century, cattle being driven to the shop and killed in the street or in the yard behind. Meat was quite expensive but the Simons' business flourished, patronised by the large houses and estates which surrounded the village.

Richard's excellent illustrations showed Abbots Langley village in deep countryside, and his maps traced the relentless march to a

closely built suburb, though Simons' shop building is still there under a new guise. The development of the timber-framed shop through the years was explained, along with the ingenious layout of the cellar for storage and salting. The property had five wells available for its needs.

Richard's topic opened a unique window on 19th century life in a small Hertfordshire village, and the story of his tightly knit family and their role in that life provided a most interesting and informative evening.

SAHAAS Council member Professor Bill Martin addressed a large audience in February on the **Geophysical Surveys around Hertfordshire**, being carried out by the Society's Archaeology Group. After an enlightening description of non-destructive survey methods, he concentrated on resistivity, using the apparatus he had constructed and developed with the Group. The value of the technique, before any digging takes place, was illustrated by an excellent compilation of photos overlaid with the physical data. The results show how much work remains to be done, time, manpower and money permitting.

The following week Jacky Bennett of the Apsley Mill Heritage Trust outlined the **History of Apsley Paper Manufacturing**, right up to the present day. Apsley Mill will always be remembered as the home of the large Dickinson Company, at its height employing some 5000 people, the village growing up around the works which stretched almost to Watford. Started in 1809, Dickinsons developed the first envelopes and produced paper for printing the first postage stamps. It closed in 1996. The site was ideal because of its easy access to water, both for manufacturing and for transport purposes. Small pockets of the original works remain, and paper is still produced from recycled shredded paper. There are other projects such as a research centre, education and business training. The Trust aims to reinstate a working water mill and the site will be open to the public by the end of May 2008.

Jacky gave an excellent lecture which traced the long history of local paper-making as well as telling us about the important activities relating to 20th century needs.

Our next lecturer was Caroline Rawle, Curator with Welwyn Hatfield Museum Service, who talked about the **History of Welwyn Garden City**, now some 80 years old.

WGC was the second garden city project in Hertfordshire of Ebenezer Howard, just under 20 years after Letchworth. The garden movement aimed to provide a pleasant environment for Londoners, with good country air, although the cost of housing and moving did not enable the very poor to participate. Howard had to work hard to raise capital, mainly from industrialists, and during the funding campaign he frugally entertained the Prime Minister, Ramsey Macdonald, to lunch in an ABC teashop! Louis de Soissons was appointed as the main architect, and his elegant Georgian style now graces the town. The project had its own brickworks, with a light railway to carry heavy materials. Industry came in, including Murphy Radio, Shredded Wheat, Norton Grinding, Cresta Silks and Barclays Bank, followed by the pharmaceutical firms.

Caroline's lecture clearly covered a most interesting background to the rise of Welwyn Garden City, a town so well known to most of us, and provided members with an informative and entertaining evening.

In March our first lecturer was Dr Ralph Jackson, Curator of the Romano-British Collection of the British Museum, who described the knowledge, methods and instruments of **Roman Medicine**.

The art of medicine was inherited from the Greeks and developed by the Romans. Treatments ranged from the suspension upside down of patients suffering from a dislocated hip to various operations, for example on eye cataracts, kidney stones and cranio-trepanning. The importance and function of the pulse

Continued on the next page

was understood and there were a wide variety of drops, salves and medicines used as cures before surgery was attempted. The range of needles, catheters, forceps and other instruments was illustrated and showed a high standard of design and craftsmanship. Petitions for the adoption of new instruments were constantly presented.

This excellent lecture, given by one of the leading authorities on Roman medicine, has added to our understanding of Roman life.

In March, following the ALH Group AGM, our speaker was Brian Adams from the Museum of St Albans on **Ways to Annoy the Enemy during the Napoleonic Wars**. He described the role of St Albans' clock tower which, from 1805 to 1815, had a shutter-type telegraph on its roof as part of the signal chain between the Admiralty in London and Yarmouth. There were some 11 signal points in this chain. The clock tower roof also housed a cabin into which were crammed three men, two manning the telescopes and one working the shutters conveying messages to the next signal point on Dunstable Downs. Similar signal chains linked the Admiralty to Dover, Portsmouth and Plymouth.

The St Albans clock tower is the oldest remaining, and once had a house and lean-to built on its front, occupied by a shoemaker. In the tower's later years it was allowed to deteriorate and was only saved from demolition by one vote; it was later restored and is now rightly recognised as an important civic treasure.

Brian's talk painted an interesting picture of early 19th century life in St Albans during the Napoleonic Wars, which stretched over 20 years of intermittent conflict, and his account provided a very entertaining evening.

On 18th March our Society Library Team – Scott Chalmers, Tony Cooper, Gill Harvey, Donald Munro, and Ann Wares – gave a presentation on **The Library**, which has now opened to members in its new home in the Old Judges' Robing Room in the Old

Town Hall. They outlined the history of this facility, which appears to have started in 1845 with various donations, which were then kept in the Courthouse. After World War 2 the library moved to the Hatfield Road Museum, and then to the Brett Centre in Victoria Street, where it remained until the 1970s, when the building was demolished. Its next home was the store in Inkerman Road. For many years it was under the care and supervision of Joyce Wells, former Society Librarian, so well known to us all. Joyce remains an ever-ready source of advice and knowledge on local history as well as library matters.

The Society is fortunate to have the support of volunteer members (all skilled librarians) who have done a first-class job in setting up this very smart library in such an accessible location. Work is, of course, ongoing on various projects, including cataloguing our holdings on computer and sorting out books of no direct relevance to the Society. These can then be offered for sale and valuable funds have already been received, and will be particularly useful in the repair work necessary for some of our very old books,

The evening provided members with the opportunity to learn about this valuable facility for researching local history and the speakers were congratulated for their support and hard work.

On 1st April our speaker was Victor Ludlow of the Signals Museum, RAF Henlow, whose talk was entitled **Flags, Feathers and Further Communications**. The history of signalling goes back a long way and Victor showed an illustration of the Roman telegraph, with five staves mounted on a wooden stand. Pigeons were a well-used method until modern times, and flags and semaphore systems were used by the railways and the navy. In the early 19th century, during the Napoleonic Wars, the telegraph with shutter system was mounted on high points (including St Albans' clock tower as described in a previous lecture) and

special towers were built to provide a point in the chain if there was no natural high ground in the area. The lecturer also referred to other systems such as Morse code, and the heliograph, right up to the airport control towers of modern times, which ended a very comprehensive coverage of the many ways communications have been made over the years.

The following week Rev Peter Wadsworth of St Saviour's presented a lecture on **The Peasants' Revolt**. He described the tensions between the Crown, Parliament and the people, which kept flaring up during most of the 14th century. Crises caused by bad harvests, the Hundred Years War, the Black Death (which halved the population) and the struggle against the feudal system caused deep resentment. To restore depleted Crown coffers, three successive poll taxes were imposed: the first was at 4d a head and the second in 1339 too complicated to administer. The third, in 1380, imposed a crushing 12d a head on those up to 80 years of age - on a population of some 6,000. Much fraud resulted as people 'disappeared' to avoid paying.

Issues in St Albans were local and concerned with control by the Abbey. The people wanted release from the iron control of the abbot, particularly control over mills: even family hand mills were forbidden. In 1381 revolt broke out and Hertfordshire men joined those of Essex and other home counties, later those of Kent too, and marched on London. The failure of this uprising, with economic problems still unresolved, possibly delayed the end of serfdom in the short term, but highlighted the great need for change for the civil population.

Rev Wadsworth presented this huge subject splendidly, and with great clarity, providing an outstanding evening.

Berry Ewens

FRIDAY LECTURES

On Friday 28th March George Ireland presented to the Society a description of the early years of the Rothschild family in Britain under the enigmatic title **From Family Gold to Family Gout; Plutocrats, a Rothschild Inheritance**. The rise of the family in the early nineteenth century was spectacular. Coming to England in 1798 with little English and only a small set of business contacts in the textile trade must have been daunting but within 25 years Nathan Meyer Rothschild had secured a leading position in the growing bullion trade. By this time, his reputation was such that the Bank of England came to rely on his abilities to shore up the country's finances particularly during the banking crisis of the 1820s.

The continued strength of the business was supported by the family network across Europe, a feature that was maintained throughout the nineteenth century through intermarriage between the branches. The family's success continued with the next generation to run the business in the shape of his sons Nathaniel and Meyer.

By now their wealth was on display in the purchase of estates at Aston Clinton near Tring and the development of the Mentmore estate in Buckinghamshire which allowed

them to indulge in their passion for hunting. A luxurious lifestyle, however, was not without its disadvantages, as both brothers suffered from gout. A further manifestation of their success was their political power, with Mayer elected to Parliament, part of the first wave of Jewish MPs.

For those wanting to research further into the family, George gave a brief overview of the holdings at the substantial Rothschild Archive in London (<http://www.rothschildarchive.org/ta/>). This well-presented and illustrated talk provided an excellent overview of the importance of this family in the growth of London as a financial centre in the nineteenth century.

On Friday 25th April, Hertfordshire-born Dr Tom Williamson lectured on the subject of **How Old is the Landscape?** In a jam-packed session lasting 60 minutes he covered four main topics. Firstly, he defined the two main landscape types: 'Champion' (i.e. landscape containing mostly nucleated settlements and open fields, resistant to the enclosure process until the advent of Parliamentary enclosure movement of the 18th and 19th centuries) and 'Ancient' (i.e. generally enclosed field systems with dispersed settlements). The Hertfordshire

landscape consisted mostly of this Ancient type.

This discussion led into his second topic, the contentious issue of why these different landscapes predominated in select parts of the country. The answer, he maintained, lies in the soil! The type of farming in a particular area is dictated by the soil type. For example, the large 'commons' of Hertfordshire are in river valleys with little alluvium, a soil type that does not produce good hay meadows. These commons met the communal need for meadowland.

In his third topic, while discussing the process for dating the landscape, he debunked the theory that the age of a hedge could be gauged by the variety of tree species that formed its core.

Lastly, Dr Williamson addressed some recent research into the landscape of Wormley near Hertford that may indicate that the 'co-axial' landscape (i.e. a field system that runs at right-angles to the topography) there (and at other several other places in the county) may be Iron Age in origin. This was a lively and fast-paced presentation, enhanced by many excellent slides.

Jon Mein

ALH AGM

At the AGM held on 11th March the Chairman reported that the group's lectures attracted an average attendance of 60 people; we were delighted to see many new members, which bodes well for the future.

Tuesday lectures again provided a wide variety of subjects within the constraints of the Group's terms of reference. The early beginnings of the garden city movement were explored. A talk on the slave trade was included and again industrial history was added to the range. Several speakers have expressed pleasure at our large, attentive and well informed audience and the friendly atmosphere.

Thanks go to Gerard McSweeney, our Group secretary, for his hard work in identifying and booking speakers and liaising with the school and lecturers; to the Committee for their valuable support; and to Norman Oldknow for his unfailing work quietly carried out each evening; and, of course to Society members for their steadfast support, whatever the weather.

An announcement was made concerning the next season of Tuesday lectures, 2008-9. Successive secretaries and committees have found it quite a struggle to compile some 22-24 lectures a season, year after year. The ALH Group has therefore decided that their coming lecture season will consist of one

lecture, on the second Tuesday of the month, averaging nine per season. This decision was made with reluctance, but will make the task much less worrying and less onerous for all concerned.

Jean Taylor, who is standing down from the Committee, was thanked for her support over the years. Robin Green kindly offered his services and was proposed by Bob Gordon and seconded by Jean Gourvenac. The remaining members of the existing committee agreed to stand again, proposed by Mike North and seconded by Margaret Taylor.

Betty Ewens

SOCIETY LECTURES 2008

Tuesday 20th May 2008
Beneath City Streets:
London's Unseen History

Peter Lawrence

Friday 30th May 2008
The First Battle of St Albans 1455

Harvey Watson

On 22nd May 1455 the streets of St Albans became the site of a violent and bloody conflict. The First Battle of St Albans marked the start of that confused and turbulent period known as The Wars of the Roses (1455-1487), the longest period of civil strife in English history. The talk will cover the dramatic events of the

battle, look at the political background that led to the outbreak of hostilities, briefly cover the layout of 15th Century St Albans and investigate what landmarks associated with the battle can still be seen today.

Harvey Watson is a senior Project Manager with the Ministry of Defence where he has worked for over thirty years. Although usually based in Whitehall, his job often involves extensive travelling abroad. He has had a lifetime interest in military history and in his spare time is a keen supporter of the Battlefields Trust. The Battlefields Trust is a charity dedicated to the preservation, interpretation and presentation of Battlefield sites as an educational and heritage resource. The Trust has also been closely involved in the development of Battlefield archaeology.

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.

WHAT'S ON?

Hertfordshire Association for Local History

The HALH annual garden party will this year be held in Bushey on 13th July. The afternoon will begin at 2.00pm at Bushey Museum where members will have an opportunity to see the collection. Members will move on to Reveley Lodge at 3.00pm. (Built in 1842, the house was left to the safe keeping of the Bushey Museum trust by its owner, Eila Chewett, widow of Albert Ranney Chewett.) Tea will be served in the garden at 4.15pm.

Applications for tickets should be sent to Friends of Bushey Museum, Bushey Museum, Rudolph Road, Bushey, WD23 3HW with a cheque for £5 person, enclosing a stamped addressed envelope for your ticket and a location map.

Archaeological Field School

The Copped Hall Trust Archaeological Project (near Epping in Essex) is running a Field School for two weeks (11-15th Aug. and 18-22nd Aug) for anyone who has already learned the basic techniques of archaeological excavation, and wishes to continue under the guidance of professional archaeologists. The CHTAP is continuing its investigation of the Tudor/ re-Tudor building on this site that was demolished in the mid 18th century. Lunch and tea/coffee will be served - but take your own digging

trowel!

If you are interested in learning more, please contact Bryan Hanlon (01727-851734) or visit www.coppedhalltrust.org.uk.

Birkbeck College summer programme

If you would like details of their part-time courses, five day practical courses and study days or archaeological walks around London, then please contact Bryan Hanlon (01727-851734) or visit www.bbk.ac.uk/ce/archaeology/

Time Team / World Monuments Fund

Tony Robinson will be giving a lecture on the subject of Fifteen Years of Time Team in St. George's Church, Bloomsbury, on 6th June at 7.00 pm. The meeting will also include an annual review of the World Monuments Fund's global projects. Refreshments and wine will be served on the portico and this gives all attending an opportunity to see the restored interior of this Hawksmoor masterpiece.

Tickets are £20, £25 and £30 - please call 0207 7305344, or visit www.wmf.org.uk.

RIVER VER: CAN YOU HELP?

Jacqui Banfield-Taylor's father, local author Ted Banfield, was writing a book on the River Ver, when he died suddenly in 2004 aged just 68. Before he died, he made her promise that she would finish the book he was working on as it was a subject very close to his heart. Jacqui is now able to start to dedicate the time and attention to completing his work.

Although he had written a rough copy of the book and had many of his own photos, postcards, cuttings etc, there are still many gaps that need to be filled and updated. She would be interested in personal photos and memories of the Ver and its surroundings, mills and watercress beds etc.

If anyone has photos, information or memories that they would like to share for use in the book please contact her at jacqui.banfieldtaylor@btinternet.com or via Bryan Hanlon.

CURRENT SOCIETY PUBLICATIONS

Please contact me if you would like copies from our list at special prices for members of SAHAAS. Copies of books are usually available at Society events. If you are out of town I can quote you the cost of delivering copies.

Clare Ellis

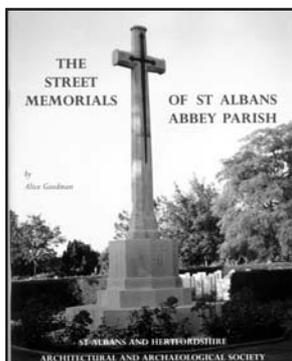
91 Sandpit Lane, St Albans AL1 4BJ. Tel 01727 856250 clare.a.ellis@btinternet.com

The Street Memorials of St Albans Abbey Parish

Alice Goodman, 1987

Describes St Albans during the 1914-18 War, and the unique street memorials erected to the fallen.

£4

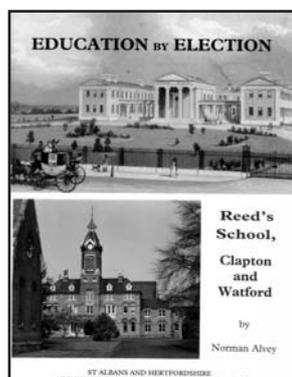
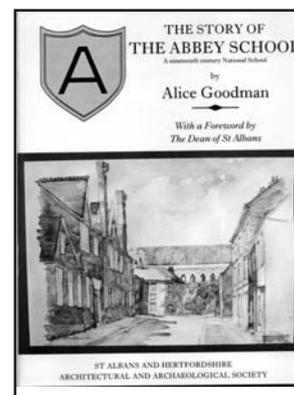


The Story of the Abbey School

Alice Goodman, 1991

History of the National School founded by the Abbey Parish in 1848.

£4



Education by Election, Reed's School, Clapton and Watford

Norman Alvey, 1990

Orphans were selected for admission by votes from subscribers to a charity between 1813 and 1940.

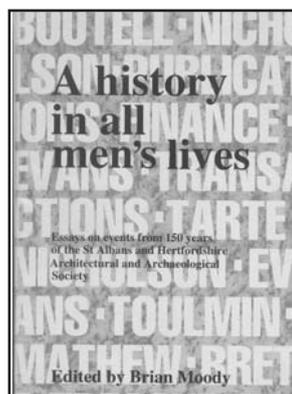
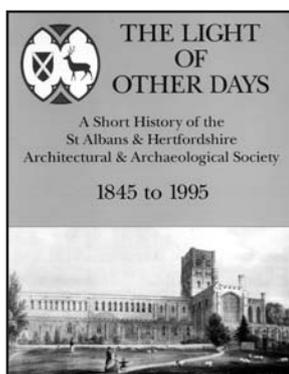
£4

The Light of Other Days

Brian Moody, 1995

A short history of the Society's first 150 years.

£1

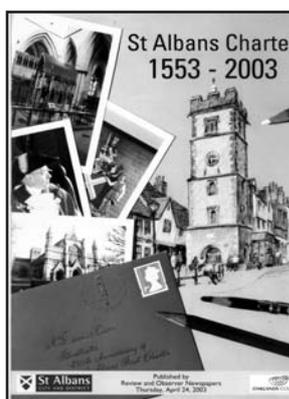


A History in All Men's Lives

Ed. Brian Moody, 1999

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.

£2



St Albans 1553

by David Dean, Pat Howe, Betty Masters & Kate Morris, 2003

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.

£4

AVAILABLE AT WATERSTONE'S, ST ALBANS

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

Ed. J T Smith & M A North, 2003

The result of twelve years of work by the Society's Research Group, with ten authors.

Those who contributed to the book may be interested and encouraged to know that a visit to Google Book Search reveals that 49 libraries in the USA, including the most prestigious, have acquired copies (as well as one in Australia). Complete figures for the UK are not available.

Gerard McSweeney