



# NEWSLETTER

No. 169 August 2008

Founded 1845

Registered Charity No. 226912



## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Back in 2005 when I agreed to accept Council's suggestion that I should stand for election to succeed David Dean as president, I had absolutely no idea how much would have changed by the time my term of office ended three years later! I take no credit for this - I was simply fortunate to have a Council full of new ideas and a willingness to experiment, and thank all those involved very warmly.

We started with a very successful symposium on Transport before the Railway Age. Then the New Members' Evening started the ball rolling by suggesting we might consider a more active role in local conservation issues. Our library moved to the Old Town Hall and, with a new team of librarians and a more accessible location, will play an increasingly important part in our activities, as was shown by their first column of Notes and Queries in the Newsletter. Kate Morris, in her year as Mayor of St Albans, has ensured that the importance of history was kept in the public eye.

Following the expected reduction in the number of Tuesday evening meetings in the coming year, the last year has focussed on the work of the new programme development committee, set up and chaired by Roy Bratby, following our questionnaire to establish what new activities members would like to see introduced. It is difficult to express our gratitude for the enormous contribution Roy, Doreen and their team are making to the future development of the Arc & Arc. This newsletter already shows the increased number and variety of outings planned, many of them suggested and led by members.

Many of you will already have met Michael Cooper, who we hope will become my successor following the Annual General Meeting next month. I hope that you will attend the AGM to give him your support (details on page 2) and I wish him as much enjoyment of his term of office as I have had over the last three years.

*Clare Ellis*

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### St Albans and Hertfordshire Architectural and Archaeological Society

## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Tuesday 16 September 2008 at 7.30pm at Verulamium Museum

followed by a lecture on

Pottage & Porpoises: Medieval Food and Cooking in St Albans by Alison Turner-Rugg

Refreshments will be served

Please see the full agenda on the next page.

We look forward to seeing you there

# NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Notice is hereby given that the  
**Annual General Meeting**

of

**St Albans and Hertfordshire Architectural and Archaeological Society**

**will be held at Verulamium Museum  
on Tuesday 16 September 2008 at 7.30pm  
for the following purposes:**

1. Apologies for absence.
2. To elect Professor Michael Cooper as President (if elected he will assume the chair).
3. President's comments.
4. To adopt the minutes of the previous AGM held on 25 September 2007.
5. To receive the accounts for the year ended 31 May 2008 (enclosed).
6. To receive reports from our various groups circulated in the latest newsletter.
7. To elect the following members to serve on Council (with their responsibilities) until the next AGM:

Clare Ellis	Past President
Bryan Hanlon	Secretary
John Thomson	Treasurer
Brian Bending	Website Manager
Jill Bennett	Clock Tower
Doreen Bratby	Lecture Secretary
Roy Bratby	Representative, Programme Committee
Dee Drinkwater	Newsletter Editor
Chris Green	Director, Verulamium Museum
Gill Harvey	Library
Pat Howe	Minutes Secretary/17th Century Population Research
Peter Jeffreys	Membership Secretary
Gerard McSweeney	Representative, Architecture & Local History Group
Bill Martin	Representative, Herts Archaeology & History
Jon Mein	Publicity Officer
Roger Miles	Representative, Archaeology Group
Kate Morris	Representative, Property Research Group

8. To confirm the re-election of Mr J R West as Independent Examiner of the accounts.

*Bryan Hanlon*

Secretary

## ACCOUNTS FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR ENDED 31 MAY 2008

Enclosed with this newsletter are the accounts for the financial year ended 30 May 2008 which were approved by Council on 4 August 2008 and signed by the independent examiner on that date. You will notice that the accounts are presented in a format different from previous years. They are now presented in the format required by the Charity Commission's Accounting and Reporting by Charities - Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP 2005). They also include an expanded report from the Independent Examiner, again a Charity Commission requirement as the income of the Society is in excess of £10,000.

The surplus of income over expenditure for the year was £623, a decrease of £204 from the period to May 2007.

Income increased in the period by nearly £2,800, mainly due to the increase in subscriptions and the related gift aid repayment (over £1,900).

Other contributory factors were:

- o a £500 increase in the donation from the Clock Tower, for which many thanks are due to Jill Bennett and her hard working team of volunteers
- o more interest
- o less income from excursions
- o the disposal of redundant items from the library

Expenses also increased by £3,000. The main increases were in the library costs, the costs of the new Programme Committee and depreciation (for a full year on the new library equipment). Additionally lectures in total cost more this year, mainly due to higher room charges. The increases were offset by lower costs on excursions.

There is an increase in fixed assets due to the purchase of furniture and computer equipment for the library. The result is that the cash resources have decreased in the year by around £300. The reserves of the Society now stand at a healthy £24,300.

*John Thomson*

Treasurer

## 17TH CENTURY POPULATION RESEARCH GROUP

Continuing the theme of my last report on new sources (Newsletter No.167), there has been an expansion -- could almost be described as an explosion -- of records indexed on the Internet. The Access to Archives (A2A) which has been going for a few years now includes hundreds of document repositories. I searched for St. Albans (note the dot after St) 1600 to 1700 and 1100 descriptions of records were revealed. Some had already been found by the old-fashioned method of attending record offices and searching through indexes, catalogues and books. Others were new, often from unexpected sources.

For example, the Cheshire Record Office has a letter from Robert Robotham, Lord of the Manor of Newland Squillers, St Peter's 1651-1700 to his sister Elizabeth Aldersey in which he discusses letting some land and then thanks her for the cheese!

Another repository which revealed the accounts and papers of John Cole of St Albans dated 1693 is the Museum of English Rural Life - an organisation I had not heard of before. A member of our group will pursue this when time permits.

The London Gazette is now online, with editions dating from 1665. Once again I searched for St Albans and the few notices which appeared give an insight into every day life. In 1717 Joseph Carter of St Michael's Street advertised a 'substantial convenient house, and an ancient well-accustomed draper's shop with good cellars, and a pleasant garden thereto belonging, fronting the market house, well situated for the aforesaid trade or any other tradesman.' Another image is illustrated here

*S*Tolen or strayed away, August the 20th. out of the Grounds of Mrs. Mary Loft, near St. Albans in the County of Hertford, one Gray Gelding near fifteen hand high, about six years of Age, marked with a Wen above the near Noftril, Trots and Gallops well, with a bob Tail. Who-soever finds the same Gelding, or brings notice of him to the Wheat-Sheaf in St. Martins Legrand, or to Mrs. Mary Loft at the Mare Maid in St. Albans, shall have one Guinea reward.

Printed by *Tho. Newcomb* in the *Savoy*, 1683.

Irene Cowan and I attended a conference jointly organised by the British Library and University College London on the Thomason Tracts. George Thomason was a London bookseller and printer in the mid-seventeenth century and collecting tracts and pamphlets was his obsession. He would rise early to pick up those which had been pinned up around the City during the night. He ended up with about 11,000 papers some of which he annotated. Historians say that the annotations are as enlightening as the tracts themselves. The 2,000 volumes which make up the collection have been digitised and are available online. We intend to make a search in due course.

The British Library's newspaper collection has also been digitised and is available online. We have not attempted to search this vast source yet; we may find some more surprises when we do.

*Pat Howe*

## HALS CONSERVATION STUDIO

Our Presidential nominee, Mike Cooper, and Gerard McSweeney attended the official opening of the newly refurbished Conservation Studio at HALS on July 4th 2008.

The HCC Executive Officer for Culture, Cllr. Keith Emsall, welcomed the Rt. Rev. Christopher Herbert, Bishop of St Albans, and other guests, thanking the Bishop for affording the time from his busy schedule to attend the opening.

Sue Flood, County Archivist, then described the refurbishment of the Department under the direction of Jeff Cargill, who carried out his work during the difficult time of transition, helped by Hailey McHaffie, a student who is to attend the Camberwell School of Arts course on paper conservation in the autumn. The result is a modern facility, capable of dealing with the various tasks it is called upon to carry out. These involve preservation of the often fragile and deteriorating documents deposited at Record Offices, including title deeds and other items, both parchment and paper, maps, seals etc. It was hoped that the Department would become a centre for students to learn the techniques involved. In fact Jeff had recently been accredited as a specialist conservator for the repair of seals by the Society of Archivists and the office is expecting its first student for a two week course in October.

The Bishop expressed his thanks for the invitation, the importance of which he underlined by postponing, for a few hours, attendance at the General Synod in York! He emphasised the close relationship between the Church and modern archivists. The large bulk of ancient documents, especially parish records, were kept, sometimes in unsuitable conditions, in the parish chest. The emergence of conservation departments ensured that these would be accessible to future historians. Local history needs to be taken seriously, archives playing a role in Society's understanding of its past, rather than through the distorting lens of ill-informed modern commentators.

On a personal note, he complimented Sue on her work at HALS in caring for the Diocesan records, and on her contribution to scholarship, including her important publications.

He was then invited to 'cut the tape' and the Department was officially opened. An exhibition of the materials, tools and techniques, together with examples of the work being carried out, was on view.

*Gerard McSweeney*



## ABOUT THE STUDIO

This is the only studio of its kind in Hertfordshire dedicated to the conservation of paper and parchment books and documents. The design and layout of the room and new equipment installed will revolutionise the procedures able to be carried out at HALS.

The studio has been completely redecorated, rewired and plumbed to modern standards with the addition of an air conditioning unit. The new equipment installed includes: a two metre by two metre wallboard, a water jacketed heated sink, two mobile benches with fitted light boxes, a 'Crossweld' polyester welding machine and a 'PEL' Conservation Cleaning Bench.

The custom-made heated sink is designed to accommodate items up to A0 in size. The sink can be heated up to 50 degrees Celsius via a pump which circulates tempered water through the water jacket. This maintains a constant temperature in the sink so that its contents can be evenly warmed. Washing paper in warm water removes more free acidity and soluble contaminants from a document than cold water can do. Cleaning a document in this way is the first step in the conservation process.

The wallboard has a huge backlit toughened glass surface with a dimmer switch to enable accurate infilling of holes and other damaged areas on maps. Its large size will enable maps up to 2 metres square to be conserved, four times larger than able to do before the refurbishment.

Mobile benches make rearrangement of the Studio very easy. The two units can be oriented to optimise work space depending on the material being conserved, either together or separately. The light boxes with their dimmable fluorescent tubes, will allow for greater accuracy when repairing paper or parchment documents.

The 'Crossweld' polyester welder bonds polyester film by using heat and pressure. It will be used to make protective coverings for heavily used material and for large items such as maps. It can also be used to make packaging from other thermoplastic materials such as bags to protect seals attached to the bottom of documents.

Already proving its worth is the 'PEL' Conservation Cleaning Bench. This piece of equipment incorporates a powerful vacuum cleaner with high quality filters which can trap almost 100% of dust and dirt particles as small as 0.3 microns.

The studio is now a modern, light and air-conditioned space with flexible furniture and equipment which will facilitate the conservation and preservation of the wonderful archive collections at HALS.

## CLOCK TOWER REPORT



Having death watch beetle in the Clock Tower has not disrupted the usual flow of visitors, and the new admission tickets are a great improvement on previous arrangements. Visitor numbers are not readily available, unfortunately, since tickets were not always used in sequence, but the '2 for 1' offer on admission for non-residents to Verulamium Museum (printed on the back) has been well received by visitors.

St Albans was host to the Children's Society event 'Walk and Explore' on 5th July, a walk which began at the Roman Theatre, on to Verulamium Museum, and to the Museum of St Albans by way of the Clock Tower. A number of those participating certainly went up the tower, or asked us answers to questions on the quiz!

Thank you to the new volunteers who responded to the appeal for more helpers in the last Newsletter, and signed-up for sessions on the

rota. More helpers are very welcome: if you can spare an hour or two during the odd weekend – between Easter and early September – you would be helping SAHAAS (which benefits from the income) as well as keeping the Clock Tower open to the public. It's a pleasant way of meeting people ...

If you can help, please contact me. Our final weekends this season are:

- Saturday 30th and Sunday 31st August
- Saturday 13th September, Heritage Open Day

*Jill Bennett*

Clock Tower Co-ordinator  
Tel/Fax: 01727 867685  
29 Cornwall Rd, St Albans  
E-mail: [jill.bennett@waitrose.com](mailto:jill.bennett@waitrose.com)

## REPORT FROM THE PROGRAMME COMMITTEE

It is almost a year since the questionnaire was issued to members with a view to widening our programme of activities and exploiting members' talents.

Through the year the Programme Committee met groups of members who had offered their services and together we discussed the best way of carrying their interests forward. By adopting this personal approach, members have got to know each other and are already independently interacting with each other.

Following one of our meetings, Jon Mein volunteered to act as Publicity Officer, to succeed Ann Dean who had previously carried out these responsibilities.

Some members offered to give lectures on those topics which interest them. A number of these have been incorporated into the lecture programme for the coming year and others will appear in future programmes. Additionally, a number of members have offered to join the team already providing the IT/AV support which is such an important part of the lectures.

Others have volunteered to lead outings and organise day visits

and a new research group under the leadership of Judy Faraday is set to get off the ground in September. As a result of the lecture on The First Battle of St Albans 1455, Dr Peter Burley offered to lead a walk around the Tonman Ditch and the Medieval Defences of St Albans. This was so popular that it had to be repeated.

The Committee will continue to meet to develop and expand the programme of activities further and would welcome additional suggestions and offers of help from members. Since the questionnaire was issued last year around 50 new members have joined and we are particularly keen to hear from them and have their views.

This would seem the right time and place to thank the members of the Committee who have so willingly given of their time and energy over the last year to achieve the goals which were set. They are, Doreen Bratby, Clare Ellis, Pat Howe and Roger Miles.

*Roy Bratby*

Chairman  
[roy.bratby@bratbyonline.com](mailto:roy.bratby@bratbyonline.com)

## BATTLEFIELDS LOSING THE BATTLE?

English Heritage reported in July that eight of the country's most important battlefield sites are in danger of falling prey to developers. Chief Executive Simon Thurley says that battlefields are at risk because they are open spaces and often considered a "loss making burden" by local authorities. "The problem is they often do not have an economically beneficial use – you can't live in them, you can't do anything with them".

Readers may recall the furore when the new A14 road was planned to cut across part of the site of the Battle of Naseby, and parts of the site of the 1643 First Battle of Newbury have already been built on. The battlefields on the Heritage at Risk register are:

1066	Stamford Bridge
1322	Boroughbridge - Yorks
1460	Northampton
1461	Towton, Yorks
1640	Langport, Somerset
1643	Adwalton Moor, Yorks
1643	Newbury
1651	Worcester

No mention of the sites of the two Battles of St Albans – no comment!

*Bryan Hanlon*

## LIBRARY NOTES AND QUERIES

The response from readers to the introduction of this column in the May issue of the Newsletter cannot be described as overwhelming, but it has been mildly encouraging, and these are early days. We have had some interest from members in journal articles and new acquisitions, and some helpful information was received on the topic of the Keyfield area in the 18th and 19th centuries.

### Query: Sopwell Lane

We continue to seek help from members with an enquiry that originated in the public library. A resident of 61 Sopwell Lane was interested in the history of her own house, and of others in that road. Library staff there did a fine job in searching the printed sources they hold, but asked us if we had anything in the Arc & Arc library specifically on Sopwell Lane. It seems we do not, but we wonder if our learned members might have any information on the street, or no.61 in particular, in whatever form, be it print, photograph, drawing, or personal knowledge. Any contributions will be appreciated.

Please send replies via the Arc and Arc website, [www.stalbanshistory.org](http://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.

### Notes

Some of the library team are sorting through boxes of uncatalogued papers, finding some interesting items, one of which enabled us to answer an enquiry we thought unanswerable. A visitor to the library wanted to see a paper delivered to the Society in December 1878, by C.E. Keyser, on the decorative paintings of the Norman period in St Albans Cathedral. The enquirer assumed the paper had been published in the Society's Transactions, but unfortunately this series did not begin until 1884. Nor was the paper published separately, as some had been in the Society's early years. A list of the Society's papers produced in the years 1846-1903 referred to a newspaper report of the talk, and a search of the Herts Advertiser microfilm found only a mention that a talk on this topic had been given, but with no detail of its content. At this point we thought we had drawn a blank. However, a couple of weeks later, when sorting a box of miscellaneous papers, we came upon a manuscript (and

legible!) account of the talk, made by William Page, a prominent member of the Society. This might be the only surviving account of the talk. A photocopy of this manuscript, three and a half foolscap pages, has been passed to the enquirer.

Sorting through papers is a time-consuming task, and if anyone is willing to help with this work, we would be glad to hear from them. As the story above illustrates, it does have its rewards.

*The Library Team*

### 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.

## HALS MUST RAISE £150,000 TO SAVE VALUED ARCHIVE

At the June meeting of the Hertfordshire Association for Local History, Sue Flood, county archivist, gave a presentation about the Delme Radcliffe archive which has been on deposit at the Record Office since 1949 with further deposits in the 1970s. This collection relates to the Radcliffe and Delme Radcliffe families of Hitchin Priory and includes documents linked to the family's estates in Hertfordshire and other counties as well as their trading enterprise in the Levant. I noticed that in a valuation book of 1627/8 Christ College, Cambridge was paying rent to the family for a piece of land. There are deeds from the 13th century, court rolls, maps and surveys, an extensive collection of bills and receipts of significant local

interest, many relating to the building of the 'new Hitchin Priory building', travel journals, personal family correspondence of the 18th century etc. HALH made a donation of £1,000 from its reserves and Sue has been writing to charities and funding bodies to attempt to secure larger donations. Time is short as the owner (who now lives overseas) may well opt for an auction sale if the £150,000 cannot be reached in the foreseeable future. Any donations, however small, are welcome. Please do what you can to (a) make donations and (b) bring this matter to the attention of others, who might be able to help in any way.

*John G.E. Cox*

### NEW MEMBERS

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

Mrs Audrey Batchelor, Hemel Hempstead

Mr Bruce Champion, Pegasus Place, St Albans

Mr VB Fox, Churchill Road, St Albans

Mr JRH Kitching, Harpenden

Miss Julia Reeves, Canberra Close, St Albans

Mr & Mrs M Wadham, Stanley Avenue, St Albans

Mr Sandy Walkington, Welwyn

Mr & Mrs I Wartenberg, Westfields, St Albans

*Peter Jeffreys*

## MORE ON WESTMINSTER

### LODGE

We have had a fascinating visit from Tom Edwards, a postgraduate musicologist from Edinburgh University, who is a great grandson of the Isaac Newton Edwards referred to in a recent Newsletter. He has been researching his family history in great detail, and had found the SAHAAS Newsletter on the internet. He was able to tell us much that we did not know about the family's 19th century escapades in St Albans.

Henry Edward's parents moved to St Albans soon after marrying in London, and he was the youngest of their five children. His first career was as manager of the St Albans bank which failed in 1843, after which he moved to Bricket Wood. His wife Hariot, daughter of the White Hart publican, was a direct descendant of Richard Newton, uncle of Sir Isaac Newton (1642-1727), hence the name given to her son.

One interesting item which we had overlooked was that there is in the south transept of the Abbey a large stained glass window dedicated to the memory of Henry and Hariot Edwards, which their son Isaac paid for in 1876 (no. 16 in Margaret Wilson's list). It survived in spite of Grimthorpe's disapproval of stained glass.

We are encouraging Tom to complete his family history as soon as possible, so that it can be published for us all. Incidentally, there is a picture of 'Harry' Edwards in the interesting Faces exhibition at the Museum of St Albans.

Brian Moody

## WHY THE REGENCY ROOM?

*Our Secretary Bryan Hanlon recently wrote to Mr Brown of St Albans ARTS (STARTS) to query the change of name from the Mayor's Parlour and assembly Room to the Ryder Room and the Regency Room, respectively, in the Old Town Hall. Here is part of his reply ...*

Firstly we felt that we had to change the name of the Mayor's Parlour because there is a modern version in the civic offices. 'Former Mayor's Parlour' seemed just too convoluted so we thought we'd use 'Ryder Room' in memory of the illustrious former mayor.

This led us to thinking about changing the name of the big room. Some felt that 'Assembly' is redolent of school. OK there's Bath but (alas) St. Albans is not exactly Bath-like and in any case 'Assembly Rooms' sounds better than the singular version.

We did some research and discovered that both 'Regency' and 'Georgian' could be thought of as reasonably accurate, the date of origin being 'on the cusp' so to speak. We chose the former because it seems grander. It also provided us with a double alliteration (i.e. Ryder Room and Regency Room).

If we are to succeed in creating a significant arts centre then we have to make money (nobody is paying us!). This means interspersing the arts events with weddings, business meetings, community use and so forth to generate an income. We decided that 'Regency Room' has a better commercial edge. It's sad that this has to be a consideration but these are the modern facts of life! (Incidentally, English Heritage is watching this venture with interest in the hope that it can save other such buildings from being put to purely commercial use). Perhaps our successors (should we fail) will revert to 'Assembly' and then the 'Regency' episode will just be a brief footnote in the history of the building.

## WHAT'S ON?

### HALH

On 1st November 2008, HALH's Symposium will take place in Barnet at the Ewen Hall, Wood Street; the topic under discussion is 'Care in the Community', with contributions from the 19th century up to the 20th century. Our representative at HALS, John Cox, will be giving a 15-minute talk on Lord Forrester's involvement with the unemployed of South Wales, from 1931 to 1954.

Looking ahead, plans are already in place for 2009's Spring Meeting on 9th May which will be at St. Stephen's Parish Centre, St. Albans, where the lecturer will be Tom Williamson.

The Summer Garden Party will be in Wheathamsted and it is hoped that the autumn symposium will be at the British Schools, Hitchin.

### Letchworth

The First Garden City Heritage Museum is currently (until 4th October) staging a special exhibition showing the garden city's 'historic passion for the big screen'. There will be classic Letchworth GC film footage, programmes, posters and other cinematic treasures.

Residents 50p; non-residents £1  
296 Norton Way South, Letchworth  
Garden City, SG6 1SU

Tel: 01462-482710

[www.letchworthgc.com](http://www.letchworthgc.com)

During Heritage Weekend, real cinema buffs are invited to take a trip behind the scenes of the Broadway cinema and

- find out what happens in the projection room
- visit the brand new screen 4
- explore the history of this local cinema – Hollywood on your doorstep!

These guided tours are free, and run every 30 minutes from 10.00 until 13.00 on Saturday 13th and Sunday 14th September.

Book to reserve your place:

Tel: 01462-476057

[response@lgchf.com](mailto:response@lgchf.com)

## TUESDAY LECTURE REPORTS

In April our first speaker was Dr Alan Mcwhirr, who talked to us about the **St Albans Fire Service** and the several generations of families such as the Arnolds, Thorpes and Youngers who served the brigade, as did Alan's father.

Medieval period equipment consisted of leather buckets, fire hooks and ladders, which were followed by the Keeling engines of the 17th century, pumped by long handles at each end. In the 18th century manual pumps such as the Newsham were introduced. In 1738 St Albans had two engines, housed in the stables next to the then Town Hall (currently the WH Smith building). The Fire Brigade came into existence in 1856 and was later divided into City and Insurance Brigades. During World War I units were based at the Campfield Press and the Fleetville Works of Smiths Printers. Alan produced many group photos of proud firemen with trophies and shields, some won in competitions and others for general excellence. In World War II the City Brigade came under the Hertfordshire organisation and remained a permanent part of the county service afterwards.

Alan's lecture was of great interest and revived memories of the splendid engines housed in the Victoria Street station. Alan would appreciate any stories which members may be added to his history.

He was followed by Josh Tidy, Curator of Exhibitions at Letchworth Garden City Heritage Museum, who spoke on the **£150 Cottage and the Exhibition of 1905** which publicised the new Garden City. Some 40 houses were on view, designed by leading architects of the day. There was a temporary railway station on the Northern Line and large crowds visited the exhibition, braving the sea of mud surrounding the houses. The houses were of various cottage designs, some with inglenooks and all the features thought necessary for the working classes for whom

they were intended. A worker's average wage was about 25 shillings a week (£1.25) and the houses - cheaply built as they were - were out of the reach of many, and mostly taken up by the middle classes (who wanted country homes), many of whom were commuters.

It was interesting to see the innovations in the choice of materials: timber framing, concrete with half-timbered effects, brickwork reinforced with ironwork and moulded concrete in place of wood. 119 of the original houses still exist, now updated and extended but still making attractive homes, a tribute to the quality and good design of these early 20th century architects and builders.

Josh's lecture covered an unusual architectural subject and provided a most entertaining evening.

In May our first lecturer was Elaine Beckett, whose subject was **Heart of Empire: The Story of a London Street Corner**. Elaine, a City of London Guide who specialises in the history of the City, Westminster, Clerkenwell and Islington, traced the long story of the area bounded by Mansion House, Bank and Poultry, from the Roman era to the present day. During the excavation of the Mappin & Webb site, before its successor was erected in 1997, red bands of burned material caused by Boudicca's attacks were found, together with little Roman statuettes, shoes, a lamp and stylae. In medieval times the area housed various guilds, such as the lorrymen and grocers. In the Great Fire, the churches of St Bennet and St Pancras were destroyed and never replaced. In the 17th and 18th centuries the markets were replaced by financial centres, the Bank of England in 1694 and Mansion House in 1752.

Elaine's lecture outlined the rich history of this small part of London, the developments clarified by her comprehensive illustrations, set up and presented by Paul Beckett.

At the last lecture of the season, Peter Lawrence gave a talk on **Beneath City Streets: London's Unseen History**. He spoke of the hundreds of tunnels beneath London, housing telephone systems, providing access to Government buildings and, of course, the network used by Underground trains. Many of London's rivers have disappeared into tunnels, too, re-emerging to feed park lakes. Tunnels managing London's sewage were put in place in the 1850s and completed within just seven years. The Thames was narrowed by one-third by the construction of the Embankment which covered parts of this system. The Thames river tunnel built by Marc Brunel and his son Isambard Kingdom, opening in 1843 after many problems, and was the first of its kind. London's water supply was drawn from both artesian wells and its rivers, supplemented by the construction of the New River some 19 miles long.

Peter's very interesting lecture drew our attention to the vital services beneath Londoners' feet, and to the skill and ingenuity of the 19th century engineers who designed and built the conduits which form the basis of today's systems.

*Betty Ewens*

## FRIDAY LECTURE REPORTS

The 2007-8 programme of lectures began with a minor hiccup but Dr Anne Stott kindly stood in at short notice and gave us a flavour of the **Life of William Wilberforce**, perhaps better remembered for the part he played in the abolition of slavery.

Dorian Gerhold through his research transported us back in time and gave us an insight into what **transport and travel used to be like before turnpiking** had a major impact on road services around 1750/60.

In November Dr Rosmund Bartlett took us at speed through the countries of **the Balkans** historically, culturally and musically from the early years to the present. It surely gave us a far greater understanding of the workings of these Slav countries in South-East Europe - Bulgaria, Romania, Serbia and Croatia.

At the beginning of the year our own long time member, David Dean, spoke on **'Votes for Sovereigns'**. He

shared some of his research with us in respect of the Parliamentary elections. The talk highlighted that St Albans was no exception in respect of strong arm tactics, bribery and corruption.

Head Gardener to the 6th Duke of Devonshire at Chatsworth, designer of the greatest glasshouse the world had ever seen for the Great Exhibition of 1851, Newspaper owner, MP, Horticultural genius, Railway entrepreneur, Parks Designer and Architect. Who was this busy nineteenth century Victorian individual? Kate Colquhoun told us he was **Joseph Paxton**, a practical man with a mathematical mind.

The history of the fascinating **Rothschild Family** was told by author George Ireland. Bankers in the City, Nathan and his four sons lived a flamboyant lifestyle. With their expertise in business affairs and the legacy they left behind for us to enjoy, they were truly a family set apart.

Dr Tom Williamson kept us all on the edge of our seats as he took us on a whirlwind tour through the **landscape of Hertfordshire** and the surrounds. He made us realise that things now are not as they used to be in Medieval Hertfordshire!

To bring us up to date, the final lecture of the session was given by co author Harvey Watson who spoke on the **First Battle of St Albans 1455**, the start of the period of the Wars of the Roses, a long period of civil strife, hostilities and fighting. He kept us captivated as we heard of such activity on our streets so many years ago.

Following on from this lecture co-author and member Dr Peter Burley organised to take members a walk round Tonman Ditch and Medieval Defences of St Albans. This proved so popular that the walk has been repeated.

Doreen Bratby

## HERTFORDSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORY

Volume 15 of *Hertfordshire Archaeology and History* will be distributed to subscribers beginning in August. This edition features a number of articles from St Albans, Harpenden, Hitchin, and surrounding Hertfordshire, including the long-awaited report on *Insula XIX of Roman Verulamium* by Dr Ros Niblett. The previous edition of the journal, Volume 14, was accompanied by the Sopwell Priory supplement and this year's edition also will be accompanied by a supplement.

The monograph *The Post-Roman Pottery from Excavations in Ware and Hertford 1973-2004* by Hugh Borrill will be issued with Volume 15. The supplement analyses and describes collections of Saxon, Saxo-Norman, medieval and post-medieval pottery from excavations in Hertford and Ware over a thirty-year period into the 21st century. The report will serve as a framework for future interpretation of pottery in the region.

As many members know, the costs of publication of the journal have risen remarkably over the past few years and it is no longer possible to include the

journal 'free' as part of the SAHAAS subscriptions. *Hertfordshire Archaeology and History* will be made available to SAHAAS members at a reduced rate of £5 if collected at Society functions. The full details are given below.

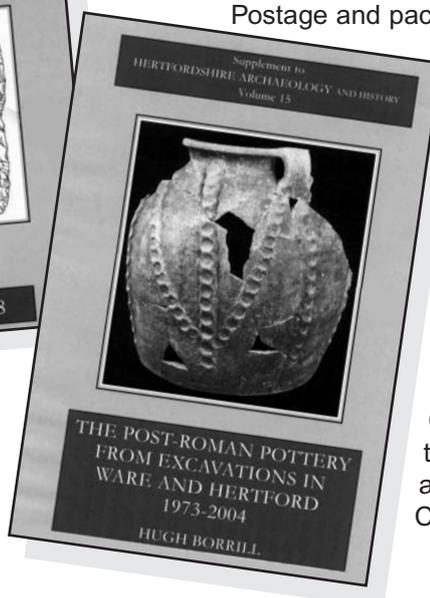
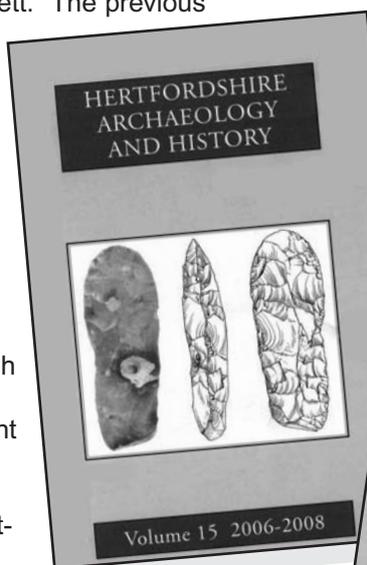
*Hertfordshire Archaeology and History* Volume 15 costs:

- SAHAAS Members at Society functions      £5
- Non-members at Society functions            £15
- Non-member subscriptions and retail        £20
- Post-Roman Pottery Supplement             £10

Postage and packing must be added to these costs if not collected at functions.

The Journal and Supplement will be available at Society functions or by contacting Clare Ellis or Bill Martin. The Supplement is available directly from the author at 17 Greenhill, Wootton Bassett, Swindon SN4 8EH.

Copies of Volume 13, 14, and the Sopwell Supplement are also available by contacting Clare Ellis or Bill Martin.



# SOCIETY LECTURES 2008/9

*Tuesday 9th September 2008*

## **Redbourn: a Hertfordshire Village through the Ages**

R S Craske

*Tuesday 16th September 2008*

## **Society AGM at Verulamium Museum**

### **Pottage & Porpoises: Medieval Food and Cooking in St Albans**

Alison Turner-Rugg

From 1066 to 1485, St Albans was a town of national importance. The abbey was a place of pilgrimage and a royal conference centre. The townspeople had their share in events such as the Peasant's Revolt and the Wars of the Roses.

Against the backdrop of these important events, monks, merchants and mercenaries all had to eat. Excavations over the years in the town centre by the Arc & Arc and the Museum have revealed much evidence of the food and cooking methods of our medieval ancestors, which is complemented by the evidence from documents such as wills or household accounts. This talk will bring together some of that evidence.

Alison is Special Projects Officer & Museum Teacher at Verulamium Museum. She began her career in archaeology while at school in St Albans, excavating with the Arc & Arc. She obtained her degree at London University, and after some years spent working on excavations and finds in England and elsewhere in Europe and the Middle East, returned to work for St Albans Museums Service. She has specialised in medieval and Tudor ceramics of this area, and published in both Hertfordshire Archaeology and Medieval Ceramics. Her interest in medieval and Tudor kitchens stems from the uses of those pots.

*Friday 26th September 2008*

## **Five millennia of measuring and mapping the land**

Professor Michael Cooper

Evidence of land surveying emerged around 3,000 BC when writing was invented in what is now Iraq. Land surveying was in evidence again in Iraq during the first Gulf War when on our TV screens we saw cruise missiles threading their way through the streets of Baghdad, guided by inertial navigation and satellite positioning systems. Prof Cooper will present three incidents from the long history of land surveying: a mathematical mistake in Mesopotamia around 2,000 BC; a matrimonial mistake in 16th-century England; and some architectural agility in 1960s Australia. The talk will include remarks on writing history.

After retiring in 2000 as Emeritus Professor of Engineering Surveying, Professor Michael Cooper intended to write a history of land surveying, but he was diverted by the life and work of the 17th-century scientist, surveyor and architect Robert Hooke and published (as author, co-author or editor) four books on Hooke. He has therefore shortened his proposed history of 5,000 years of land surveying by taking it as far as 500 BC.

*Tuesday 7th October 2008*

## **Housing the Deserving Poor in Hertfordshire: Almshouses and their Inmates**

Dr Kate Thompson

*Tuesday 21st October 2008*

## **St Albans' Tree Heritage**

Kate Bretherton

This talk will look at the historical connections behind some of St Albans' trees. It is hoped that members will not only find in the talk some information that is new and of interest, but also will

participate and help to get the record of St Albans tree heritage correct and as complete as possible.

Kate Bretherton admits she is neither a botanist nor an historian, and the scrub of her native Matabeleland was no introduction to the magnificent trees found in Hertfordshire. She has lived in St Albans for 30 years during which time her research and being an active member of a local Trust has stimulated the interest in trees she has today.

*Friday 31st October 2008*

## **Childhood in the Roman Empire**

Dr Mary Harlow

This talk will look at the dangers facing children from the time of birth to around age 10 (when survival rates increased dramatically). Children from wealthy families were likely to fare better in terms of diet and general care than those from poorer or slave backgrounds. On the other hand, they were more likely to face the often somewhat dubious attentions of the medical profession if they fell ill and some ancient medical practices were best avoided. The talk will also look at how far and for what reasons children were valued in antiquity - whether as a beloved first born, a potential economic asset, or a burden to be abandoned or sold as soon as possible.

Dr Mary Harlow is Senior Lecturer in Roman History, Institute of Archaeology and Antiquity, University of Birmingham. She teaches all areas of Roman history including research led sessions on Roman life course, family history of late antiquity and early middle ages and dress in the Roman and late antique periods.

*Tuesday 11th November 2008*

## **History of Ashwell**

David Short

*Tuesday 18th November 2008*

## **Sir John Evans KCB, FRS: An Extraordinary Local Gentleman**

Michael Stanyon

This talk outlines a few of the significant milestones of Sir John's Evans' life and shows how the wealth generated by his management of the John Dickinson Stationery factory created an opportunity for his remarkable antiquarian pursuits and led to the opportunity for his son, Sir Arthur Evans to reconstruct the remarkable Minoan Palace of Knossos on Crete.

Michael Stanyon was able to pursue his interest in local history full time after an early retirement from the manufacture of telecommunications equipment. He achieved this through the establishment of the Dacorum Museum Store leading to a second career as Community Heritage Officer for Dacorum Borough Council. Following his final retirement he assists the Apsley Paper Trail as one of four voluntary part-time archivists.

He was honoured to be invited by the Ashmolean Museum to be a contributor to the book about John Evans' life and work published in May and commemorating the centenary of Sir John's death.

*Friday 28th November 2008*

## **Contrary Mary: Mary Tudor**

Dr Linda Porter

Mary Tudor (Mary I) was the first queen regnant of England, and one of the most maligned and misunderstood of all our monarchs. The popular conception of a cruel and inept ruler

**Friday Lectures start at 7.45pm at the College of Law, University of Hertfordshire, Hatfield Road Campus St Albans**

**Tuesday Lectures start at 8.00pm at St Albans Boys' School, Romeland, St Albans**

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

whose short reign was an aberration best forgotten has survived largely unchallenged for more than four hundred years.

Mary's premature death at the age of 42 meant that much of what she had tried to achieve died with her, but her fiscal and municipal reforms endured and she bequeathed her sister, Elizabeth, a revived navy which was crucial to English survival in the latter part of the sixteenth century. But her most important legacy to her sister was that she had shown that a woman could rule in her own right. Her troubled relationship with her sister and her touching and unrequited love for her husband will also be explored in the talk.

In a varied career, Dr Linda Porter has been a university lecturer, worked as a journalist and fund-raiser and been a senior adviser on international public and government relations to British Telecommunications plc (BT). *Mary Tudor* is her first book. She is currently working on her second, a new life of Katherine Parr, to be published by Macmillan in 2010. Linda has made a number of radio broadcasts and undertakes regular speaking engagements. A member of The Biographers Club and winner of its 2004 prize, awarded in association with the Daily Mail, Linda hails from Devon. She has lived in New York and Paris and now resides in Kent.

*Tuesday 9th December 2008*

**Listed Buildings of London Colney**  
Ken Peak

*Friday 9th January 2009*

**Society New Year Party at Verulamium Museum**

*Tuesday 13th January 2009*

**The Black Death revisited: New Problems and Old Solutions**

Professor Vivian Nutton

*Tuesday 20th January 2009*

**The Gorhambury Landscape**

Dr Jonathan Hunn

*Friday 30th January 2009*

**The Work of the Historic Environment Record/  
Archaeology of St Albans**

Dr Isobel Thompson

*Tuesday 10th February 2009*

**The Church of St Michael; a Hidden Treasure**

Ann Dean

*Tuesday 17th February 2009*

**Women of the Pre: From Leper Hospital to Convent**

Tudy Hill

*Friday 27th February 2009*

**Partnership in the Past: John Lewis**

Judy Faraday

*Tuesday 10th March 2009*

**Childwickbury: A Short Story**

Christine Aitken

*Tuesday 17th March 2009*

**Serve and Obey: a History of  
Haberdashers' Aske's School**

Keith Cheyney and Margaret Taylor

*Friday 27th March 2009*

**Inigo Jones and the Hatfield Connection**

Michael Leapman

*Tuesday 7th April 2009*

**Hertfordshire You May Have Missed**

David Pearce

*Friday 24th April 2009*

**Researching History Using the Old Bailey Online,  
1674-1913**

Professor Tim Hitchcock

*Tuesday 12th May 2009*

**The Palace at Kings Langley: History and Archaeology**

Richard Boustred

*Tuesday 19th May 2009*

**Totterhoe Stone: the Quarries, the Masons  
and the Buildings**

Joan Curran

*Friday 29th May 2009*

**The Restoration of Kew Palace and  
Queen Charlotte's Cottage**

Lee Prosser

## OUTINGS PROGRAMME 2008

*Tuesday 16th September 2008*

**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 2008*

**Day trip by coach 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 payable to SAHAAS).

*Saturday 11th October 2008*

**Morning walk around Cell Barnes and Hill End  
Hospital Sites**

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).

*Wednesday 29th October 2008*

**Visit to the Geffrye Museum and the  
Museum of Childhood**

The outing will cost £17 and will be led by Gillian Harvey.

To book your place and for meeting details please telephone Gill Harvey (01727 853415) or write to her at 18a Gainsborough Avenue, St Albans AL1 4NL (Cheques payable to SAHAAS).

Details of outings for 2009 will appear in a later newsletter.

## 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

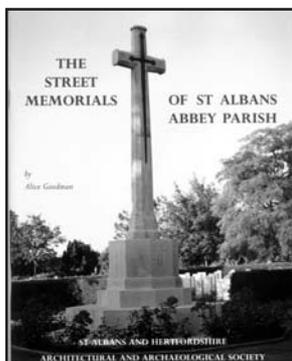
91 Sandpit Lane, St Albans AL1 4BJ. Tel 01727 856250 clare.a.ellis@btinternet.com

### **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

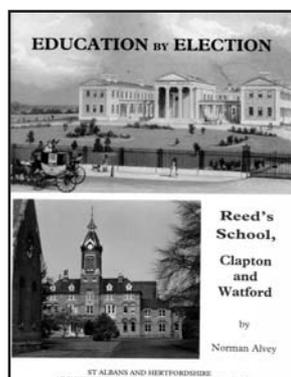
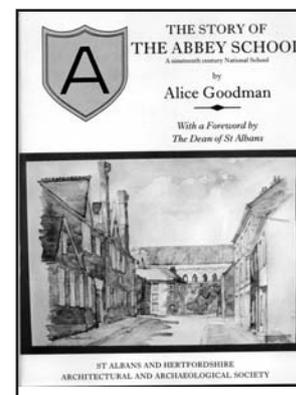


### **The Story of the Abbey School**

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.

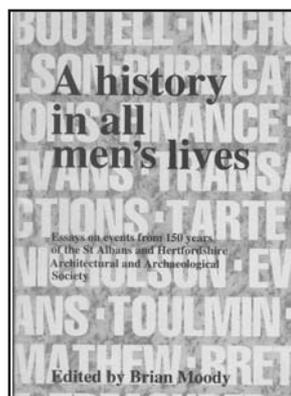
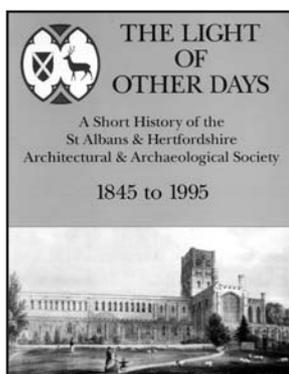
£4

### **The Light of Other Days**

Brian Moody, 1995

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

£1

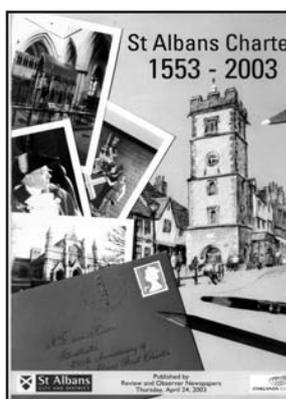


### **A History in All Men's Lives**

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