



# St Albans and Hertfordshire ARCHITECTURAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

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## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

### A Happy New Year Everyone

It was my pleasure to welcome to the SAHAAS New Year Party our special guests Councillor Teresa Heritage, Portfolio Holder for Planning and Conservation, SADC, and Matthew Bristow, Historic Environment Research Manager and several new members of our Society. The Party was blessed this year by reasonable weather, a decidedly more-punch, and sumptuous victuals, all of which made it a very pleasant sociable occasion. Many thanks to Bryan Hanlon, our splendid Überdirektor, to Doreen Bratby and her band of helpers for organising the food, to John Cox for the Quiz, and to everyone else who helped set up or down for their contributions to making it such a successful evening. Matt Bristow was very pleased to make contact with so many members, potential participants as a programme of updating the VCH Hertfordshire developments.

### LOOK! ST ALBANS

Those of you present will have gathered from remarks of Cllr. Teresa Heritage and myself that SAHAAS is involved with representatives of many local bodies in a Steering Group putting together, in conjunction with the Prince's Foundation, a major St Albans community planning initiative. This will be called "LOOK! ST ALBANS. Inspired by the past. Picture your future!" It will involve workshops and public forum events which will take place 27-29 February. St Albans groups have come together to organise the event and mobilise and encourage participation, whilst the Prince's Foundation gives advice, provides speakers, and at the end of the process will produce a Design Codes document setting principles and parameters for future development and conservation in the city centre. It is a real opportu-



Donald Munro

nity for St Albanians to influence and ensure design standards for St Albans developments. I encourage all of you with firm ideas and concerns about the future of St Albans city centre to make your views known. See Page 5 for fuller details.

### Pemberton School Building

It is pleasing to see that *The Herts Advertiser* has publicised the Society's opposition to the proposed demolition of the Pemberton School block (picture page 2). A news article appeared in mid-January and a week later they printed our

## NOTICE OF EXTRAORDINARY GENERAL MEETING

[Calling Notice previously circulated by post]

Notice is hereby given that an Extraordinary General Meeting of  
St Albans & Hertfordshire Architectural & Archaeological Society  
will be held at St Albans School, The Abbey Gateway, AL3 4HB on

Tuesday 14th February 2012 at 7.50pm

for the following purposes:

1. Apologies for absence.
2. To appoint David Dean as Honorary Member of the Society

**Donald Munro**, President

Proxy voting will be permitted to allow those who cannot be present to express their view.

To exercise this option please complete the form on the notice of EGM mailed to members and return it to Bryan Hanlon, Secretary SAHAAS, by 7.30 pm on Monday 13th February.

**EGM Business will be followed by a lecture : Sir Christopher Wren, by John and Jo Brewster.**

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT continued

submission to the SADC. Hopefully this marks the beginning of a greater readiness on the part of local newspaper editors to give voice to the heritage concerns of SAHAAS and other societies in the city. Our thanks to Christine McDermott and Kate Morris who substantially prepared our submission.

### Clock Tower

Helen Bishop informs me that the Clock Tower has topped a poll for the most popular of St Albans tourist attractions by some considerable margin. This certainly underlines the success and value of the work of the voluntary Clockateers from SAHAAS and the Civic Society who opened the tower 47 times last year. Helen hopes that she will be able to find enough volunteers to be able to extend opening through September weekends. What with Easter and an extra Bank Holiday, the target this year is 59 openings. She was very pleased with the positive response at the New Year Party, but is always on the lookout for more volunteers with an hour and a half to spare at weekends through the tourist season.

Please contact her if you are able to help.

### Mayor's Prize 2012

Can I remind Members that the time is approaching for submissions for this year's Mayor's Prize Competition? Deadline for submission of entries is 30 April 2012. This annual prize, currently £100, is offered for an outstanding piece of work which makes an important contribution to the history of St Albans or Hertfordshire. Full details about entry and procedure are on the Society's website but also see page 9. If you have work of your own that you wish to submit, please do so, or if you know of a potential candidate from outside SAHAAS, please encourage them to submit an entry.

### EGM and Society Miscellanea

You will see on the front page a notice for the EGM on 14 February where we intend to appoint David Dean an Honorary Member of the Society. Twice President, a frequent editor and lecturer, he has been a stalwart of the Arc & Arc for many years. He has not been at all well recently, but we know this award will give him great pleasure.

SAHAAS Members will be pleased to know that the Vernacular Architecture Group's winter conference, entitled '*Where, When and Why? - Themes and Ideas in Vernacular Architecture Studies inspired by J T Smith*', took place 7-8 January 2012 at University of Leicester. J.T. Smith is of course one of our most scholarly distinguished current Members. I learned about this at the New Year Party from Matt Bristow, enthusiastically almost hot-foot from the conference—see page 8.

The Library was open as part of the St Albans District Residents First weekend at the end of January with an exhibition about Public houses in St Albans, and a constantly running "then and now" slide show - photos taken from the same spot c.100 years apart – put together by Jon Mein and Roger Miles. Very interesting exercise.

Congratulations to Gill Harvey on the publication of Lord *Grimthorpe and Other Dragons*, her study of Dean Walter J Lawrance [see below]. We are looking for other suitable materials for publication in book or pamphlet form. Please let me know if you have any suitable material of your own or suggestions of potential authors.

Let me close with a reminder to take an interest in the LOOK! St Albans event.—see page 5.

Donald Munro  
President

## ST ALBANS' HIDDEN GEM: PEMBERTON SCHOOL BUILDING

This is the remains of the 19th century Hatfield Road Board School for Boys, which became Pemberton Primary School 1956-69. Now screened from Hatfield Road by the former School of Art building/ University of Hertfordshire Faculty of Law, but easily visible from the footpath which runs through St Peter's churchyard.



**STOP PRESS!!** This evening (30 Jan) the SADC planning committee voted to refer the application for demolition of the Pemberton school building to the Government's central planning decision-making body with a recommendation to refuse the application.

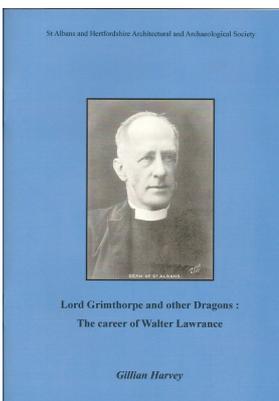
Christine McDermott  
Representative, Herts Archaeology & History

### *Lord Grimthorpe and Other Dragons, the Life and Career of Walter Lawrance*

By Gillian Harvey

£3.75 available from the Abbey Bookshop, Tourist Information Centre, MOSTA and the SAHAAS library.

Walter Lawrance was the first Dean of St Albans, responsible for much of what characterises the Abbey today, and in the front line of opposition in the furious battles with Lord Grimthorpe over Abbey Restoration in the late nineteenth century.



Front Cover: *Lord Grimthorpe and Other Dragons, the Life and Career of Walter Lawrance*

## 2012 NEW YEAR PARTY

In the Society's calendar, the annual New Year Party is a highlight! About 20-25% of our Members gather for a very social evening with a buffet and mulled wine, in the very pleasant surroundings of Verulamium Museum. Much preparation is required to make things go according to plan and Council members all participated in its organisation, so that no-one, and particularly the Hon. Secretary was left picking up the pieces.

This year, with all our equipment in storage, it was a simple matter to collect everything required and load it into Roger's van.

We met George who was made redundant from his job in the Civic Centre and has joined the Museum staff as one of the attendants (40 years ago they were called janitors!). Despite the cuts we were warmly welcomed by Museum staff. I was able to set up the quiz in the foyer during the afternoon, whilst Bryan (Hon. Sec), Doreen (Food Queen) together with everyone else were able to undertake final preparations after the Museum closed and before everyone turned up from about 7.15pm.

This year we invited new members to join us and it was delightful to meet some of them during the evening.



**Donald Munro addresses Members** [J Cox]

Our President (Mr Donald Munro) welcomed everyone and thanked some of the key members of Council including Doreen and Roy Bratby (who are responsible for arranging all lectures, Bryan (our hard-working Secretary), Gill Harvey (Library)

and Brian Bending (web-master) before inviting County Councillor and District Councillor Mrs Teresa Heritage to talk to members. Teresa is the Cabinet member for Planning and Conservation. She gave an indication of the changes that have taken place since last year's local elections and plans to involve the entire community with the future re-planning of the city centre.



**County & District Councillor Teresa Heritage talks to Members** [J Cox]

Once again we were delighted to welcome Joyce Wells and Paul Barton, from Verulam House.

The buffet organised by Doreen Bratby was laid out, in the lecture room and, as you can see in the picture, was a sight to behold. Well done Doreen!

Meanwhile in the Rotunda, some Members were trying their hands to answer questions and identify photographs about St. Albans. All the answers were given out before the end of the party together with some extra information from one or two very knowledgeable members. There were many positive comments about its scope and content.

2013's Party will be decided by the Council this Spring and the date will be included in the Membership information distributed in August 2012.

*John G. E. Cox*  
Publicity Officer



**The Buffet!** [R Bratby]



### NEW YEAR PARTY-Thanks!

*It was an extremely successful and well attended evening. I would like to thank all Members who contributed to the refreshments. The table looked delightful, well laden with a variety of appetising dishes. My thanks also go to the small team of ladies who helped to bring this all together.*

*Doreen Bratby*



**Members listening to Donald Munro's welcome** [J Cox]

## HALH LOCAL HISTORY SYMPOSIUM 2013

The St. Albans & Herts Arc & Arc has been asked to organise the 2013 Local History Symposium which will take place on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday in November. The Hertfordshire Association for Local History says that those events organised by St. Albans are always both well organised and produce a good profit (half of which goes to the organising Society). This will be the 34<sup>th</sup> Annual Event and the topic for speakers will be "Building Materials". I wish to form a small group of volunteers from members to help with the organisation. If you can assist organisation. If you can assist please contact

me: **John Cox 01727 857827** or e-mail [johng.e.cox@btinternet.com](mailto:johng.e.cox@btinternet.com). If you know of anyone who could talk on the history of the use of building materials in Hertfordshire please let me know.

The Lionel Munby lecture 2012 will be given by Dr. Susan Lloyd (University of Hertfordshire) on Saturday, 12 May 2012 at Warners End Community Centre, Hemel Hempstead at 2pm. Further information will be sent to HALH members with the Annual Report in the March mailing.

*John G. E. Cox*

## ARCHAEOLOGY GROUP REPORT

### Cutbacks within SADC are having a Negative Impact on the SAHAAS

The Archaeology Unit, headed by Simon West, is housed in one of the Sandridge Gate industrial units at the end of Ronson Way, St Albans (just beyond the Recycling Centre). In addition to the office/workroom/paper archive upstairs there is an extensive store on the ground floor, housing Museums' exhibits and the excavation finds archive.

Nicky Metcalf, a part-time employee, has managed the running of the Unit, including the utilisation of the volunteers who help there. SAHAAS Archaeology Group members participate both as general volunteers and specifically on Archae Group projects.

Nicky's post has now been cut, effectively closing down the Archaeology Unit to volunteers and ourselves. Simon West, while nominally at the Unit for two days out of five, has an irregular work pattern, meaning it is not practical for him to oversee non-SADC attendees.

The benefit to the SADC budget is the cut of two person-day's wages. However, this is offset by the loss of six, cost-free person-days in the form of volunteers. The Big Society gone awry?

At a personal level, I have spent two months constructing a piece of equipment to enable us to 'dissect' some difficult cremation burials from our Amwell site. A Group member was looking forward to using this, but when the work might continue is anyone's guess.

The foregoing is only part of wider cut-backs at St Albans Museums. There are personnel losses which mean, amongst other things, the closure of the Conservation Lab. This provided a service beyond the needs of the St Albans Museums. Whilst not running at a profit, it was not a dead-weight cost on the balance sheet. Archaeological Conservation Labs are not that thick on the ground. There will be one less in the country now and St Albans Museums will have to purchase conservation services elsewhere.

The gloom will only be relieved by the return of financial sunshine.

*Roger Miles*

Archaeology Group Representative

## COMMEMORATING THE GREAT WAR 1914

The University of Hertfordshire is co-ordinating activities to commemorate the centenary of the starting of one of the most horrific conflicts of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Already Mr. & Mrs Terry Pankhurst have been working for 2 years to produce full information of the 69 names they identified as being the soldiers whose names are on the war memorials in Wheathampstead and Gustard Wood.

The Arc & Arc Council is proposing to produce information for a heritage trail of the war memorials in St. Albans. Mrs Alice Goodman's book *The Street Memorials of St. Albans Abbey Parish*, which the Society published in 1987 and reprinted in 1996, is now out-of-print..

We have been asked by the Imperial War Museum's War Me-

which were re-dedicated in 2002 in Orchard Street (off Abbey Mill Lane) and Lower Dagnall Street – both of these memorials disappeared accidentally or deliberately!

There is a possibility of an anthology being produced of the *News of 1914* as seen through the eyes of St. Albans, Hertfordshire and the wider world, by one volunteer. I am the Society's connection for the UH project. I hope to attend the next event which is planned for June 2012.

Please let me know if you have any further ideas for this commemoration.

*John G.E. Cox*

Publicity Officer

## ST ALBANS AND THE CANAL AGE

The Library has recently acquired from the Parliamentary Archives a copy of the plan of the St Albans canal. Surveyed in 1793 it marks the proposed route of a cut linking St Albans through Park Street to the Grand Junction Canal at Watford.

The history of the project is interesting. By 1790 the town's economy needed a boost. Several of the grand coaching inns arrayed on Holywell Hill and Chequer Street had closed in the previous 25 years, victims of the paradox that the busier the roads became, the less money travellers spent in the town. The new Grand Junction Canal by-passed the town and the threat this posed was recognised by the town's leaders. Writing to the Canal Company in 1793 Lord Verulam stated "perhaps you do not know how materially we imagine this neighbourhood will be injured by that canal unless we can participate in its benefits."

The Company agreed, surveyed the route and applied successfully to Parliament for powers to extend the canal to St Albans. The Act received royal assent on 2 June 1795.

What happened next is not clear. The canal of course was never built although it was still contemplated in June 1799 when the vendors of the freehold of the Bull Inn on Holywell Hill tried to link the beneficial position of the inn to the proposed canal. <sup>1</sup>In his article, "St Albans Canal", HCF Lansberry suggested that the original business case for the canal had not been properly considered.

We have in the library the following material covering the canal's history:

- Manuscript and digitised copies of the plan
- A transcription of the Reference Book listing owners and occupiers of the enclosures shown on the plan
- A copy of Lansberry's article in *Herts Past and Present*, Series 1, Volume 7 pp 3-8.

Lansberry's article, published in 1968, provides a useful summary of the history of the project. It may be that, with subsequent advances in cataloguing and digitisation, someone interested in researching the canal will find fresh material that will throw new light on the topic, particularly what happened after June 1795.

The Library team thanks Aecom in Victoria Street for digitising the map for us.

[<sup>1</sup>County Chronicle, 18 June 1799 page 1]

*Jon Meán*

## LOOK! ST ALBANS

Inspired by the past

Picture your future!

February 2012

### An opportunity for St Albanians to influence design standards for St Albans developments

As reported in the President's column, SAHAAS (through Mike Cooper and Donald Munro) has been involved with a broadly based St Albans City Centre Steering Group putting together in conjunction with the Prince's Foundation for Building Community a major St Albans planning initiative

*"LOOK! ST ALBANS... Inspired by the past. Picture your future!"*

At the time of writing, final programme details are still being finalised.

Leaflets and posters publicising and detailing modes of participation in the initiative will have been distributed during the Residents First Weekend. The climax of the initiative will be the meetings on

27 February 7.30 p.m.	Public Open Session, Dagnall Street Baptist Church
28-29 February	Invitee workshops
29 February 7.30 p.m.	Public Presentation - principles informing the Design Codes document

Before this, SAHAAS members can participate by uploading to a Flickr webpage photographs of buildings and spaces that could serve as good – or bad – examples for future development in the city centre. The publicity leaflet will give you an idea of what is wanted. The output Design document will be substantially a visual guide, so it is important that very good examples (from wherever) are fed into the process as potential models. You can load in up to 7 pictures per person. Link: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/lookstalbens>

As said on page 1 above, St Albans groups are organising and encouraging participation, whilst the Prince's Foundation is advising, providing personnel, and will produce an illustrative Design Codes document setting principles and parameters for future development in the city centre, as informed by participants.

The other groups involved include the Civic Society, the Cathedral, the Chamber of Commerce, St Albans Retail Forum, Hertfordshire Association of Architects, and numerous St Albans Residents Associations, together with councillors and staff from the SADC, who are very positive about the exercise - which should ensure their taking note of the recommendations.

The Design Codes document produced by the Prince's Foundation will be a major reference point for future development in the City Centre and we hope that many SAHAAS members will be able to participate and contribute ideas.

*Donald Munro*

President

### CROMER WINDMILL VISIT

An outing to the Cromer Windmill has been arranged for

Saturday, 5<sup>th</sup> May 2012

10.30 – 12.30pm

**Robin Webb** who gave us a presentation earlier in the year will be our guide.

There will be a charge of £1.50 per person.

Please contact Pat Howe by email:  
[pathowe@talk21.com](mailto:pathowe@talk21.com)

### WORKSHOP

Reading 17<sup>th</sup> Century Handwriting  
on Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> April 10am - 12 noon  
at Fleetville Community Centre

The workshop will provide guidance in reading and transcribing documents written in the Secretary Hand characteristic of that period. The session will provide an introduction for newcomers to Secretary Hand but those with some experience should also find it useful for brushing up their skills.

There are a limited number of spaces so early application is advised.

To reserve a place please contact Jane Harris:  
email at [JaneHarris37@btinternet.com](mailto:JaneHarris37@btinternet.com)  
or by phone 01582 761879

## LIBRARY NOTES AND QUERIES

### Library News

The Stanley Kent photographs have now appeared on the Society's website. Many thanks are due to Brian Bending for making this happen.

A pamphlet on Walter Lawrance, first Dean of St Albans, and his battles with Lord Grimthorpe over the restoration of the Abbey in the nineteenth century, is now available at £3.75. Copies are available from the library, the Abbey bookshop, the Tourist Information Office and MOSTA.

The library opened for the two days of Residents First Weekend with a special exhibition of pictures on "Old St Albans" including a section on inns and alehouses. We also had a continuous slide show of the Stanley Kent pictures with the modern equivalents where it was possible to photograph them. This was much admired by all our visitors, and special thanks are due to Marion Delaney, whose idea it was, Jon Mein who put a lot of time and effort into setting it up, and Peter Swinson who lent us the large scale monitor which made such a difference to the display.

We also had a children's quiz, which was won by Michael and Katherine Robins.

Do call in and have a look – although we are getting busier all the time, it's not so much our members – with a few honourable exceptions – who use us, but the world outside!

Many apologies to Richard Darnell, mistakenly referred to as Roger in the last newsletter – a senior moment I fear!

### Enquiries Recently Received.

Identifying the school in St Albans attended by someone now living in Canada in the 1950's.

The architectural details of the Odeon cinema.

The Abbey Parish War Memorials.

Clarke's Almshouses.

History of Sopwell.

George Edwards (of bribery fame)

Sir Ernest Wigram.

Graffiti in Hertfordshire.

Matthew Small – a 16-17<sup>th</sup> century merchant.

### Books Received.

Carriers and Coachmen – trade and travel before the turn-pikes. Dorian Gerhold. Phillimore, 2005.

Heritage at Risk – stopping the rot, a guide to enforcement action to save historic buildings. English Heritage

Vacant historic buildings – an owners' guide to temporary uses, maintenance and mothballing. English Heritage

St Albans – The Story of the City and its People in the 1960's, written by people of the city.

A Redbourn Commoner – a Country Life. Geoff Webb. Amberley 2008.

W. Branch Johnson's Articles on Hertfordshire history edited by Sharon Allen. Codicote Local History Society. 1993.

The Origins of Hertfordshire. Tom Williamson. University of Hertfordshire Press 2010

Historic Barnet. edited by W.H.Gelder. 3<sup>rd</sup> edn. 1985. Muir's Bookshop. Barnet

Brief History of Hitchin Markets and Fairs. Anthony M. Foster. Hitchin Historical Society.

Hitchin's Straw Plait Industry. N. E. Agar Hitchin Historical Society 1998.

Berkhamsted; A History and Celebration. Berkhamsted Local History and Museum Society. Francis Frith 2005.

Engendering Archaeology: exploring gender roles within a nineteenth century coaching inn (The Crow Fishpool Street) Corey Adam Still. M.A. Historical Archaeology Thesis, University of Leicester 2011.

Hertfordshire Record Publications. Vol. xxvii Humphrey Repton's Red Books of Panshanger, and Tewin Water Hertfordshire, 1799-1800.

Hertfordshire Family History Monumental Inscriptions:

London Colney St Peter. No.10

Harpenden St Nicholas. No.19

Sandridge St Leonard. No.24

Colney Heath St Marks. No.48

Redbourn St Mary. No.50

NB St Albans town centre churches are already in stock.

An Index of Gravestones and Memorial Slabs in the Floor of the Abbey Church of St Alban, from inscriptions transcribed by Wilton Hall (1898) and Kelly Galpin (1995)

And Wilton Hall's transcription of Pridmore's listing (ca.1800) with texts of the inscriptions.

Interesting map of the projected St Albans Canal, which was of course, never built. **[See article by Jon Mein on page 4]**

### Journals Received

Current Archaeology Oct 2011-February 2012.

History Today Nov 2011-February 2012.

Hendon and District Archaeological Society Newsletter. Nov 2011-Jan 2012.

Hertfordshire People no. 119 December 2011

Bricket Wood Society Newsletter no. 127 December 2011.

Herts Past and Present Autumn 2011 – The Abbey Flyer; A history of St Albans Abbey Station pp16-23. A look at the line's history, since its opening in 1858, with a glance ahead to the projected future of the line.

Wheathampstead 1060 A.D. Bounds Entirely South of the River Lea by Victor S. White pp 3-9. A fresh reading of the earliest document held at HALS, the 1060 chirograph of Edward the Confessor concerning his gift of the manor of "Hwaethamstede" to St. Peter Westminster.

## LIBRARY NOTES AND QUERIES continued

London Archaeologist Autumn 2011 with London fieldwork and publication roundup 2010.

The Local Historian Nov 2011 vol.41 no.4 – The Hearth Tax and Empty Properties in London on the Eve of the Great Fire. By Andrew Wareham pp.278-292. This is an interesting article, not just relating to London, but dealing with general problems of hearth tax research.

British Archaeology February 2012 – London a City Made for Shopping or Killing? By Dominic Perring pp 14-19. The Romans founded London as a centre of trade and business it has long been believed. This article offers a more convincing, and chilling, alternative.

*Gill Harvey*

Library Representative

## BOOK REVIEW

***From the Valleys to Verulamium: Memoirs of a Soldier's Life, by George Dunn & Carrie Dunn.***

**History Press, 2011. £9.99**

**ISBN No. 978-0-7524-6508-1**

George Dunn has had a good life: he is now 93 years old, and has, with his grand-daughter Carrie (Caroline) produced his memoirs entitled "*From the Valleys to Verulamium: Memoirs of a Soldier's life*". He feels he "has been lucky in so many ways and made so many friends in St. Albans and the surrounding area".

Born in October 1918, the eldest of five children, in one of the depressed areas of South Wales – Blaina, five miles from Brynmawr at the head of the Eastern Valley of Monmouthshire. His childhood home was a one-up one-down condemned house where he and his two brothers slept in one side of a partitioned room, whilst his parents and his sister slept in the other half. There was no toilet – that was on the opposite side of the road, over a running stream! He was educated in Blaina first at a board type school where he became a fluent reader and then in "big-school" where in 1932 he was one of three 16 year old boys who were selected to take part in a Government "Junior Transference scheme". 100 boys from South Wales came to England and were housed in a YMCA camp in Kent; many were malnourished.

George was doubly lucky: after three weeks in camp he was summoned and because he had previously undertaken some errands for a grocer near home was given the opportunity to become an "errand boy" for a firm of grocers in St. Albans. He came here and was met on St. Albans City Station by Mr. Flowers from the Labour Exchange who had organised his lodging with a Mrs Hart in Oswald Room. In the book it states that the grocer's shop was in Holywell Hill and certainly there was an independent grocer on the west side of the street pre-war. In addition to the manager, Mr Pownall, Mr Else, two part-time assistants Messrs Topham and Clapham, and a young girl who was the cashier – Miss Ruth Wheeler made up the staff, plus of course George.

He describes his life as an errand boy and of how promotion came when the Manager moved on and he became the van

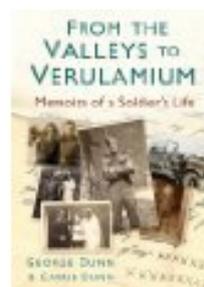
driver. In what little spare time he had, he went to the cinema on St. David's Day (1<sup>st</sup> March) and sat side by side with Miss Wheeler. By the outbreak of war Miss Wheeler had become Mrs George Dunn and they lived together at Ivy Cottage, Ragged Hall Lane with Ruth's father. George was called up and became a private in the Royal Engineers, serving with the Highland Division in the months before Dunkirk.

His description of the Dunkirk evacuation is fantastic as are all his war-time experiences: he served on creating defences on the East Coast in case of German invasion, before seeing service in North Africa, Italy and Palestine and then being demobbed in 1945.

His is a story of success and hard work. With the building of social housing post-war they were lucky to be given a house on St. Julian's Estate, which is part of Cottonmill Lane and he continues to live in Nuns Lane. He and his wife had three children, now grown-up and with families of their own. How fortunate we are that his grand-daughter nagged her grandfather as he reached his 90<sup>th</sup> birthday. His story is worth reading for it gives us so much information about

St. Albans' history and its changes.

The copy I have will be in the Arc & Arc Library shortly, where you can borrow it, or you can buy a copy from Waterstone's bookshop, St. Peter's Street..



*John G.E. Cox*

Publicity Officer

### THE LIBRARY TEAM

**Gill Harvey 01727-853415**

**Anne Wares 01727-860705.**

**Donald Munro 01727-760808**

**Jon Mein 01727-865514**

**We also have a number of volunteers, who are equally part of the team, but would perhaps not yet feel very confident about fielding enquiries.**

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

**You can email us via the Society's website [www.stalbanshistory.org](http://www.stalbanshistory.org)**

## J.T. SMITH AND VERNACULAR ARCHITECTURE

Matthew Bristow, VCH, reports on 'Where, When and Why? - Themes and Ideas in Vernacular Architecture Studies inspired by J T Smith', the Vernacular Architecture Group's winter conference, 7-8 January 2012 at University of Leicester.

Firstly as the conference was in some ways a celebration of J T Smith's pioneering work in Vernacular Architecture studies, it was particularly pleasing for all concerned that J T Smith was in attendance.

Sarah Pearson drew many threads together in her paper on the development of the medieval and early modern English town house, frequently citing Smith's 1993 work 'Hertfordshire Houses: Selective Inventory' and making reference to examples of St Albans buildings.

It was good to see Smith's work on Longhouses recognised in two papers in the Sunday program. The first on a German example of the type, the "Low German Hallenhaus" by Haio Zimmerman and the second by Richard Suggett heavily referencing J T Smith's 'The Houses of Breconshire'.

One thing which came out of Cathy Tyers' paper; 'The Contribution of tree-ring dating revised - 2500+ dated buildings' was quite how poorly represented Hertfordshire was as far as tree-ring dates. Given the wealth of timber-framed buildings in the county, I found this quite surprising, however whether this was down to a lack of dendro-dating being undertaken in the county or to the samples not yielding dates was not stated.

The programme and further details can be seen at <http://www.vag.org.uk/conferences/winter2012/presentations.htm>

*Matthew Bristow*  
Victoria County History

## NO. 79 ST PETER'S STREET

Attractive as Café Roma might seem as a coffee shop and meeting place, neither it, nor its neighbour Subway, give away the secrets of their history. The two, together, were what was, for long years, the Adelaide public house, the name reflecting the cutting of Adelaide Street in the 1830s.

But that is not the real interest of the building. From the side, along Adelaide Street, you see it is a much bigger building than one would at first suppose. A visit there a number of years ago led by our member, John T Smith, revealed on the upper floor (then the Pitman Secretarial School), the roof structure of a hall house dating back to at least the early 17<sup>th</sup> century. He

cross wing, almost certainly previously jettied. The building's history has been understood for a long while – the East Herts Archaeological Society Newsletter contained a description of it back in 1964. But strangely, the surveyors of our heritage in the late Sixties and early Seventies, who, all too swiftly and cursorily, created the list of statutorily protected buildings, noticed little there – just enough to result in what is now a 'local listing'. Clearly they cannot have been inside, or recognised the actual nature and age of the structure.

A more recent and more detailed expert survey found evidence of soot on the upper side of roof beams and a painted 'light and graceful foliated scroll of flowers with petals alternately pointed and lobed' on their side, comparable with decoration found in The Christopher Inn further down the road.



**79 St Peter's Street from Adelaide Street** [G McSweeney]

explained that the steep pitch of the roof indicated the probable dating and that the frontage to St Peter's Street was a



**Painted Beam** [G McSweeney]

In view of interest in further development at the north end of St Peters Street, the Civic Society is investigating the possibility of further protection of this building.

*Kate Morris*

## NOTES AND DEBATES

### KINGSBURY VAULT?

Dr Michael Jameson writes raising questions on which some members may be able to shed light.

"In the 1960s, Nina Gower, a patient of mine, told me that her uncle in the police during the First World War would attend firing practice in a vaulted basement opposite what is now the Petropolis petrol station. The raised 'Romans car sales' area [179 Verulam Road] spans this very spot and the vault beneath could recently be seen clearly when part of the facing brickwork needed repair. ... I am intrigued that no one has [ever] confirmed or denied the existence of this policemen's shooting gallery, although I have been telling the story for years to bodies like the Arc and Arc.

Was this [vault] originally in one of the rare stone buildings of the town of Kingsbury that survived Kingsbury's destruction?"

Dr Jameson refers to the lively relations between Kingsbury and the town of St Albans recounted by William Page in '*The City of St Albans: Introduction*', A History of the County of Hertford: volume 2 (1908), pp.469-477 which can also be found at [www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=43310](http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=43310). He gives the following synopsis : ... "Verulam, however, as a town was not directly succeeded by St Albans, but by Kingsbury ... a Saxon town of considerable size. ... It may have been established by Offa when he superintended the building of St Albans Abbey at the end of the eighth century, ... a royal town governed ... independently of the abbey ... [so] Abbot Wulsin, the sixth abbot of St Albans, about 950 enlarged the present town of St Albans, which had arisen around the abbey, ... he also built the churches of St Peter on the north ... St Stephen on the south ... and St Michael within the ancient town of Verulam. ... there was no provision for the spiritual welfare of the inhabitants of the royal town of Kingsbury ... [because, or therefore] the king's men oppressed the monks. The abbot ... purchased (957-975) from King Edgar the great fishpool ... and drained it ... to impoverish the town. ... therefore Alfric when chancellor of King Ethelred (978-1016) purchased Kingsbury from the king, ... and having become an abbot, levelled the whole town ... ". " ... about 1152, when Stephen [happened] to visit the abbey ... the last remains of the town [Kingsbury] were levelled, and the site ploughed and sown." ... "the site ... was carefully excluded from the borough of St Albans till ... 1879."

The second part of his communication contains several queries and points of debate.

#### Second Battle of St Albans and Town Boundaries

"Why were the invading troops camping on Keyfields before storming the town in the second battle of St Albans (1461)? I believe the line between boundary markers was well understood and visibly the place that separated areas of great difference in consequences. In other words it meant certain death by the State to cross the boundary but not otherwise. "Crosses were at an early date erected at important points in the line of boundary, and at each of the entrances to the town, namely, the Stone Cross or North Gate Cross at the

north on the Sandridge Road, the Red Cross in Sopwell Lane, at the entrance by the old road from London, the Cross with the Hand in Eywood Lane," (was this later called Everlasting Lane?) "the Black Cross, probably at the angle where Tonmans Dike goes from the boundary of the houses in Fishpool Street towards the Claypits," (? the Brickie?) " and St John's Cross at an angle of the boundary in what is now known as Harley Street, but lately as Mud Lane." (? Gombards??). That battle was of course a way to bump off the nasty Earl of Warwick – the Duke of Somerset had died in the first battle by the Castle inn (says Shakespeare) so a precedent had been set, but the book on these battles describes them in full and there is nothing to add here except to highlight the difference between who owned what then, and now, and the way that reconciliation was so hard to achieve. But a suitable service of national importance was eventually held and was commemorated in the rose panels in the great tower at the Abbey – and the design of the Tudor rose in heraldry as a logo".

If any member can shed light on or has comment about any of these queries, please send them to [chair@stalbanhistory.org](mailto:chair@stalbanhistory.org) or [library@stalbanhistory.org](mailto:library@stalbanhistory.org) for passing on to Dr. Jameson.

*Donald Munro*

President

### THE MAYOR'S PRIZE 2012

#### An Invitation to Enter Deadline for applications is 30th April 2012

This annual prize, currently £100, is offered for an outstanding piece of work which makes an important contribution to the history of St Albans or Hertfordshire. Applicants must be either in full-time education or working as amateur historians. The prize is administered by the Society on behalf of St Albans City and District Council.

Applicants are expected to demonstrate the originality of their work and critical usage of primary sources. Submissions can be in the form of an essay of between approx. 5,000-10,000 words, including any illustrations. The Society recognises the growing use of IT as an aid to research and will accept submissions with fewer words and various digital images and other data where appropriate.

Full details of procedures, instructions and guidelines, and application forms are available on the Society's website at [http://www.stalbanshistory.org/page\\_id\\_309\\_path\\_0p30p113p.aspx](http://www.stalbanshistory.org/page_id_309_path_0p30p113p.aspx)

**Any questions about the prize should be sent to the  
President: Donald Munro, MA, FRHistS, 68 Meadowcroft  
St Albans, Hertfordshire, AL1 1UF  
01727 760808 email [chair@stalbanhistory.org](mailto:chair@stalbanhistory.org)**

## LECTURE PROGRAMME 2012

**Tuesday, 7th February 2012**

***An Engineer at War – The Falklands 1982***

**Roderick Douglas**

At the beginning of April 1982 the Argentinians invaded South Georgia. This lecture will describe Roderick's experiences during the period from the beginning of March 1982 until September 1982.

Roderick Douglas joined the RAF as an Air Radar Fitter in 1973 and went on to serve for 22 Years until retiring in 1995. Between 1981 and 1985, he served on No 1 Fighter Squadron, initially as one of two Air Camera Fitters (by that time a part of the Air Radar trade) and subsequently covering the full range of avionics equipment fitted to the Harrier Jump Jet and looking after the squadron ground communications equipment. Roderick moved to St Albans in 1995 when work brought him to Avionics Mobile Services who were in Frogmore and since that time he has worked both within and outside the aircraft industry. Roderick is currently employed as a Technical Author by Continental DataGraphics, a subsidiary of Boeing, in Welwyn Garden City.

**Tuesday, 14th February 2012**

***Sir Christopher Wren***

**John and Jo Brewster**

This lecture covers Christopher Wren's entire life from 1632 to 1723; his schooling, early influences, friendships, Oxford University, Astronomy Professorships in London and Oxford and his interest and subsequent life's work in architecture. The presentation will include appropriate pictures from the village where he was born, to the house where he died beside Hampton Court Palace.

John and Jo Brewster have both been retired for some time – John from British Telecom and Jo from teaching. Their own interest in Sir Christopher Wren arose when they both trained to be Guides at St. Paul's Cathedral and they have spent much enjoyable time visiting and photographing many places associated with Wren's life.

**This lecture will be preceded by an EGM commencing at 7.50pm**

**Friday 24 February**

***St Pancras-Europe's Destination Station***

**Alastair Lansley CBE, former Chief Architect of the Channel Tunnel Rail Link.**

Alastair Lansley will outline the objectives of the Channel Tunnel Rail Link and explain that St Pancras, in one sense represents a collision of ideologies with the shock of the new in engineering genius of William Barlow and Roland Ordish's Great Train Shed and the reprise of the old in all that George Gilbert Scott had garnered from medieval Europe's gothic

inheritance. He will take us back in time and show St Pancras with its many listed buildings that surround it before works began and share with us the new vision for St Pancras with the now executed extension and exquisite transformation of the Barlow Shed with its re-ordering of the internal spaces, at its most explicit in connecting the undercroft with the train shed above including some 62 shops which he says is an essay in restraint.

St Pancras is now Europe's Destination Station and firmly establishes the Kings Cross St Pancras area on the "International Map".

**Tuesday, 6th March 2012**

***Banging the Gong for Britain—J Arthur Rank & Wartime Cinema***

**Stephen Barnard**

By his own admittance, J. Arthur Rank knew far more about his family flour business than making films when he took control of virtually the whole of the British film industry in 1941 onwards. Yet he used his power and his money wisely to produce a host of important propaganda films and encouraged a new generation of film-making talent. This illustrated talk considers the man behind the famous gong and the contribution that this bluff northern industrialist made to the war effort and beyond.

Born in Luton in 1954, Stephen Barnard is a Stevenage-based writer and lecturer who specialises in the histories of broadcasting, film and popular music. His professional background includes 21 years working for the Reader's Digest Association and many years as a freelancer. He has authored five books and lectures regularly for the WEA in Hertfordshire and beyond.

**Tuesday, 13th March 2012**

***The Cartoon Century – Modern Britain through the Eyes of its Cartoonists***

**Dr Tim Benson**

This lecture will look at the history of the political cartoon from the turn of the last century to the present day. It will be illustrated with a selection of cartoons which describe the story of those years, including cartoons which made their own history and a number which were refused publication because they either didn't mirror public sentiment or were against the wishes of the newspaper's proprietor.

Dr Tim Benson is the founder of the Political Cartoon Society and an authority on British political cartoon art. He has written numerous biographies of British cartoonists such as on Low, Illingworth, Strube and Butterworth. He has also organised many exhibitions including one on David Low at the Palace of Westminster in 2002. His present project is a history of the Cold War which will be published in February 2012.

**Tuesday, 20th March 2012**

***Royal Heraldry in St Albans Abbey***

**Stuart Whitefoot**

The Cathedral and Abbey Church of St Albans was a great Abbey church until 1539, a parish church from 1553 to 1877 when it became a cathedral. The regal heraldry on display includes examples from each of these periods but most relates to the time when it was an abbey. Regal coats of arms show changes which went hand in hand with various matrimonial alliances or territorial acquisitions or claims. The lecture will allude to some of the consorts of Kings of England and show how Royal Arms have changed over the years. Heraldic terms will be explained using illustrations from the Abbey displays.

Stuart Whitefoot, one of our members, is a Cathedral Guide and also a Blue Badge Guide in the City. He is a long standing member of the Middlesex Heraldry Society. His interest in local history is enhanced by heraldic aspects.

**Friday 30 March**

***The Restoration of Alexandra Palace after the 1980 Fire***

**Richard Loren**

Richard Loren was appointed to the Alexandra Palace Development Team in December 1979 and was present on the day of the fire.

Richard's particular task was to oversee the rebuilding of the Great Hall, together with responsibility for its detailed design both internally and externally. He was also responsible for compiling much of the detailed specification of the fabric of the rebuilt palace.

The work after the fire fell into the following elements:-

- Consolidation of the remaining structure and clearing the site.
- Exploring alternative proposals for the palace and park.
- Public consultation.
- Final design, planning application and public enquiry.
- Act of Parliament
- Preparation of drawings and tenders.
- Appointment of contractor based on a management fee.
- Detailed design and work on site.
- Completion of phase 1 in 1989.
- 

Since leaving Alexandra Palace, Richard Loren worked in the City on an office development at Barnards Inn, off Holborn, which included an Art Nouveau listed building and Ancient Monument, and later helped with the detailed design of Celtic Manor Golf Club. Other restoration projects include Lewes Railway Station, part of Chatham Dockyard and a number of Georgian houses, including Guyon House in Hampstead. He has been running his own practice since 1999.

**Tuesday, 17th April 2012**

***Kingsbury Barn***

**Roger Miles**

The history and uses of the Kingsbury Barn will be described, together with the important features of its construction. Details exposed by the restoration work on the building threw light on the Barn's later history. The findings from a number of excavation trenches, inside and out, will also be described.

Roger Miles leads the Society's Archaeology Group which was called in to assist with recording the Kingsbury Barn structures during the recent major restoration project of probably the oldest secular building in St Albans.

**Friday, 27th April 2012**

***The Story of Adult Education : Hertfordshire in Context 1918-1939***

**Dr Mark Freeman**

Adult education has played an important role in modern British politics and society. Organised institutions of adult learning emerged in the nineteenth century, and in the first half of the twentieth century the growth of the Workers' Educational Association, university extra-mural departments and a range of other providers was a key aspect of the educational environment.

Two particular features of interwar Britain provided new challenges for adult educators: the persistence of mass unemployment and the creation of large new housing estates. Given the rapid growth of the county's population, it is not surprising that Hertfordshire witnessed a number of significant developments in adult education during the interwar period, and was the site of some pioneering activity in the field. Most notably perhaps, the Letchworth Educational Settlement carried out wide-ranging and important educational work, often promoting classes in the surrounding villages. These ranged from university-level tutorials to practical classes, and included the formation of music and drama groups – itself another notable feature of the interwar adult education landscape across Britain. In the new town of Welwyn Garden City, similar activities were taking place on a smaller scale. Initiatives of this kind were often considered to have influenced the development of adult education institutions in the post-war years, and had an important, though often neglected, place in the social and cultural life of inter-war communities.

Mark Freeman was born in St Albans, educated at St Albans School and the Universities of Oxford and Glasgow, and is now a senior lecturer in the Department of Economic and Social History at the University of Glasgow. He is the author of *St Albans: A History* (2008), *The Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust* (2004) and *Social Investigation and Rural England 1870-1914* (2003), as well as a number of articles on modern British social, cultural and business history. Mark is editor of *The English Rural Poor* (2005) and co-editor of *Vicarious Vagrants* (2008).

**Tuesday, 8th May 2012**

***Eleanor of Castile—She of the Crosses***

**Mollie Kennedy**

The lecture will trace the background of Eleanor, such as where she came from, why she was chosen as Edward I's bride and what she brought to England initially, their married life and their apparent devotion to each other and family. Following Eleanor's death the transporting of her remains from Harby in Leicestershire to Westminster Abbey including the erection of the crosses at each stopping place on that final journey. The theft from St Albans Abbey in 1973, of a painting of the memorial procession. An update on the crosses particularly Charing Cross.

Mollie Kennedy's interest in history was nurtured by her father who took her to many historic houses, churches and cathedrals relating their stories to her. Because of this her special study at college was Eltham Palace. On retirement she was delighted to join the Abbey Education Centre where she hopes she is inspiring the next generation to get the same enjoyment and fascination with the history of their country.

**Tuesday, 15th May 2012**

***Department Stores***

**Claire Masset**

A place to browse, buy or simply relax, the Department Store has undergone many transformations over the course of its 200-year history. Its story illustrates the major changes we have witnessed in our lifetime – from innovations in retailing, advertising and technology to developments in fashion, design and working practices. But how did such 'cathedrals of consumption' come about? Was there a golden age of the Department Store? And what's 'in store' for Department Stores now? Illustrated with evocative adverts, prints and photographs, this enlightening lecture will answer all these questions and many more, offering a unique insight into a fascinating and little-researched subject.

Claire Masset is a freelance editor and writer specialising in social history, architecture and gardens. She has an MA in Art History, an M. Phil in Decorative Arts and a Post-graduate Certificate in Architectural History. As well as writing for *Heritage Magazine* and many other publications, she is Gardens Editor of *The English Garden* magazine. She has written two books, *Department Stores* and *Tea & Tea Drinking*, both published in 2010, and is currently writing a social history of orchards, due to be published in 2012. She lives in West Oxfordshire.

**Friday, 25th May 2012**

***Time in St Albans and St Albans in Time***

**Prof. Michael Cooper**

The importance of St Albans in the history of time is not widely recognised, even among its own citizens today.

A few specific events in St Albans from the last seven centuries that have resonated throughout the world will be illustrated and discussed in relation to the society and the people involved at the time.

After graduating with a degree in Physics from Bristol University in 1957 Michael Cooper was recruited by the Colonial Office and sent to the Royal School of Military Survey to be trained as a land surveyor for work in Nigeria. His career since then has been mainly as an academic, but he is a Chartered Surveyor and a Chartered Engineer.

Now retired he is Emeritus Professor of Engineering Surveying at City University and Visiting Professor at University College London. Mike is currently serving as Past President of the Society.

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**NEWS FROM THE PROGRAMME COMMITTEE**

The Programme Committee is currently making the arrangements for the 2012/2013 Tuesday Lecture Season. If you have suggestions for lecture topics or speakers please let Roy Bratby know. (Tel 01727 858050 or email [roy.bratby@bratbyonline.com](mailto:roy.bratby@bratbyonline.com)).

Due to circumstances which were totally beyond our control, we were sorry to have to cancel the lecture entitled '*The Stones of London*' to be given by Leo Hollis on Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> January. However, we are pleased that Leo has promised to deliver his lecture later this year. Details of other activities arranged by the Programme Committee will be found elsewhere in the Newsletter. Others are in the planning stage.

*Roy Bratby*

Chairman, Programme Development Committee

**Could this be YOU?**

Volunteers are needed to supplement our existing small team of two who look after the IT and AV for our Tuesday and Friday lectures. There must be someone amongst the membership who would be willing to spread the load.

Whilst it would be helpful to have someone with previous experience, our existing volunteers are willing to provide training and we also have an 'Idiot's Guide'.

The lectures are extremely well attended and many are enhanced by the illustrations provided by the PowerPoint presentations.

Please contact Roy Bratby if you can offer any help, however limited. Do come and join the team and you will be making a very worthwhile contribution to the life of the Society.

**Tel: 01727 858050**

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