



August 2019 newsletter

Due to the increasing costs of buying permissions to include images in internet publications, this digital edition of the newsletter does not include all the images present in the printed edition.

Moreover, we occasionally add watermarks to images as a counter to internet 'scraping'.

Newsletter Editor
August 2019



ST ALBANS & HERTFORDSHIRE
ARCHITECTURAL & ARCHAEOLOGICAL
SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER 213 August 2019



Where in St Albans is this Percival Blow-designed building?

(See the back cover for the answer; with thanks to Malcolm Merrick for digitising this original plan held in the Society's Library)

Included in this issue:

Annual Reports
Verulamium Conference
Percival Blow Book
Honorary Memberships

An Abbey Scholar
Typhoid in St Albans
New Website
Learning at the Museums

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OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE LOCAL YOUNG ARCHAEOLOGISTS' CLUB

Welwyn Hatfield Museum Service, in collaboration with the Welwyn Archaeological Society, the Community Archaeology Geophysics Group and the St Albans branch of the Young Archaeologists' Club (YAC) have obtained a £9,600 grant from the National Lottery Heritage Fund for a project based at the Roman Baths in Welwyn. The project focuses on teaching YAC members about geophysics, test-pitting and finds work and will lead to an exhibition in 2020.

For further information see one.welhat.gov.uk/RomanBathslotteryfund.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Like 'The Windmill' we never close. Sally Pearson and Jon Mein did a brilliant job of organising our conference on the Life and Death of Roman Verulamium, working in tandem with Kris Lockyear of Welwyn Archaeological Society and Simon West of the St Albans Museum Service. Frank Iddiols worked his magic with the technology. When I sat down to write to thank those who had helped, I had a list of 21 other people – they know who they are. We succeed as a learned society because of the quality of events like these, but they succeed only because so many members are willing to pitch in.

The conference lectures themselves were consistently thought-provoking. Two things struck me: Kris Lockyear's discovery of 'the sinuous ditch' and his realisation that this had to be the contour-following aqueduct serving the town; and David Thorold's throwaway line that when opened in 1939 the Verulamium Museum had the widest span flat concrete roof in Europe. (See pp. 23-5)

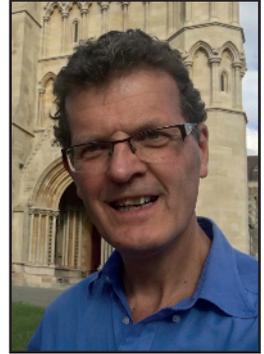
Mounting a conference of this calibre is simply one string to our bow.

The upcoming season of lectures is going to be a knock-out.

In the last edition, we reported that the SAHAAS Newsletter had been judged to

be the best newsletter published by any member society of the British Association for Local History in 2018. We have now received the award (see p. 7) and this current edition gives yet

more evidence as to why it was deserved. And news of another award: in May Jon Mein received the Hertfordshire Association for Local History's award for Personal Achievement. Our warmest congratulations to him.



I have just signed off the final proof of our life of Percival Blow, who made such a significant contribution to the St Albans and Harpenden streetscapes. It is going to be a beautiful production illuminating a key part of our local story. (See p. 5)

And our crisp new website, thanks to the efforts of Peter Bourton and his team, is a magnificent new portal into our Society – if you haven't done so already, do visit www.stalbanshistory.org. (See p. 15)

Not everything is on the up. We were disappointed to learn of possible cuts to the History Department at the University of Hertfordshire. In the last national Research Excellence Framework review in 2014, History was ranked 1st for research

impact and 5th for overall research quality, above either Oxford or Cambridge. History has been judged the top unit for research excellence at the University for the last twenty years.

We mostly interact with the University via the Heritage Hub. There is no current suggestion that this is going to be impacted but all cuts have ripples.

I wrote to the Vice Chancellor to express our concern. Many other local history societies did likewise. The Dean of the School of Humanities wrote back, admitting that jobs are at risk but also observing that it was 'good to know that UH and the work of the Heritage Hub has the support of our local community ... There are absolutely no plans to lose this aspect of our work.'

I have met subsequently with her. There were plenty of references to 'the business' of the university. She says that History is better staffed than other departments within the School of Humanities, there are no headcount cuts overall, they are recruiting in other areas to achieve a 'rebalancing' so that no staff in the School have to teach more than 20 hours per week and all

students have a similarly good experience. There are demographic issues, perhaps some nervousness about a somewhat uncertain future for the country, while the removal of student number caps for Russell group universities has also had a negative effect on the number of students applying to the University of Hertfordshire in the more traditional academic courses.

We will see how it turns out. My experience is that once cuts begin, things can unravel. It would be very sad if the season that embraces our 175th anniversary also marks a diminution in the history offering of our own University.

Finally, because our 175th anniversary is approaching, your Council has debated whether this is an opportunity for us to change our name. We concluded that we keep our formal name of St Albans & Hertfordshire Architectural & Archaeological Society and keep our logo, but 'St Albans History' as a brand may be useful on banners and in display type in other material. This requires no constitutional change. Our website is already stalbanhistory.org. *Plus ça change.*

Sandy Walkington

CAR PARKING AT LECTURES

Could we please ask that the car park spaces outside Marlborough Road Methodist Church, and also alongside in New Kent Road, should be left for those who are, shall we say, less mobile than others?

NEW BOOK: PERCIVAL BLOW, ST ALBANS ARCHITECT

This September the Society is publishing a new, fully illustrated, full-colour book about the life and work of local architect Percival Blow (1873-1939). The book, entitled *St Albans Architect Percival Blow – from Arts and Crafts to Gothic Revival and Art Deco*, has been researched and written by Patricia Broad, Sue Mann and Jon Mein and builds on earlier research by Brian Adams. Our project had the full support and encouragement of architect Christopher Blow, grandson of Percival.

Blow's buildings are better known than the man himself even though research now reveals that he designed over 100 buildings in St Albans, including five that are Grade II listed, 19 properties in Harpenden, and 21 further afield in a career spanning 40 years. In addition he carried out many alterations and extensions, doing all the design work himself with just the aid of draughtsmen and pupils. His output ranged from workers' cottages in Culver Road to the substantial Gothic Revival style St Albans School buildings adjoining the Abbey Gateway.

Copies of the book will be available at the forthcoming Society AGM on Tuesday 10 September. In addition, Waterstones is kindly hosting a launch event for the book on Thursday 5 September with guest speaker Christopher Blow who will be available to sign copies of the book purchased at



Percival Blow, 1937 (Courtesy of C. Blow)

the event. More information about the launch will follow via enews. The full retail price is £8.99, available to members for just £6.99.

It includes a full List of Works by Blow together with maps showing the location of his buildings in St Albans and Harpenden. There are probably many more of Blow's buildings to be identified and the authors would be delighted to hear from anyone who has information on possible additions to the List, which will also be available online and will be added to as new information comes to light.

For further information about *St Albans Architect Percival Blow – from Arts and Crafts to Gothic Revival and Art Deco*, email publications@stalbanhistory.org.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Notice is hereby given that
The Annual General Meeting of the
St Albans and Hertfordshire Architectural and Archaeological Society
will be held at Marlborough Road Methodist Church on
Tuesday 10 September 2019 at **7.30pm**
for the following purposes

Agenda

- 1) Apologies for absence
- 2) President's comments
- 3) To adopt the minutes of the AGM held on 11 September 2018
(enclosed with the November 2018 Newsletter)
- 4) To receive the accounts for the year ended 31 May 2019
(enclosed with this Newsletter)
- 5) To receive reports from our various Groups
(enclosed with this Newsletter)
- 6) To elect the following members to serve on Council (with their responsibilities) until the next AGM:

Peter Burley	Vice-president
Bryan Hanlon	Secretary
David Moore	Treasurer
Tony Berk	Chairman, Programme Development Committee
Peter Bourton	Website
Pat Broad	Publications Officer
Gill Girdziusz	Lecture Secretary
Pat Howe	17th Century Research Group

Caroline Howkins	Clock Tower
Frank Iddiols	Technical Officer
Christine McDermott	<i>Hertfordshire Archaeology and History</i>
Jon Mein	Newsletter Editor
Roger Miles	Archaeology Group
Sally Pearson	Minutes Secretary
David Smith	Membership Secretary

Plus two members to fill the vacant roles in charge of our Library and Publicity

- 7) To appoint John Cox, Roger Miles and Donald Munro as Honorary Members of the Society (see pp. 8-9)
- 8) To confirm the election of Chris Hall as Independent Examiner of the accounts

The AGM will be followed by a lecture given by Ann Dean, Rob Weston and Tony Berk:

‘A Fiver for your Vote, Sir?: Bribery and Corruption in St Albans, 1850’

BALH NEWSLETTER AWARD

As you may recall from the May edition, the British Association for Local History (BALH) has given its 2019 'Local History Award for a Society Newsletter' to the Arc and Arc. This is pleasing recognition for our Newsletter, a publication to which over 50 members have contributed in the last year in one way or another. Early in June, John Humphreys, Christine McDermott and Sandy Walkington met at the Conway Hall in central London to receive the award, the occasion being the association's AGM. The accompanying photo shows John, the former editor, receiving the certificate from the association's president, Professor Caroline Barron.



HONORARY MEMBERSHIP

According to the Society's Constitution, 'An Honorary Member is a person who, by reason of having undertaken distinguished work in relevant fields or valuable work for the Society, shall have been elected to Honorary Membership by a General Meeting of the Society, on the recommendation of the Council ...'

Council is pleased to recommend the following three candidates for election as Honorary Members at the AGM.

Bryan Hanlon

John Cox

A member for nearly 30 years, John has contributed extensively to the work and profile of the Society. Most prominently he has researched and curated numerous exhibitions on matters of local interest on the Society's behalf, and has served terms as Publicity Officer and Publications Officer. His long-time role as the Society's representative with the Hertfordshire Association for Local History (HALH) is perhaps most indicative of his enthusiasm, knowledge and contribution not just to the Society but to the study and promotion of local history across the county.

John led the organisation when we hosted HALH's annual symposium in 2013. He has also used to the Society's benefit his experience as honorary archivist both for St Albans District Council and the Gorhambury Estate, as well as editorship of the *Alban Link* and a volume of *Hertfordshire Archaeology*.

His recent generous gift of eleven box files of his papers to the Society's Library typifies John's enthusiasm and generosity. Without his zeal for collecting, many of these disparate documents and photographs would not have survived. This is another valuable resource for the city's local historians of the future.

Donald Munro

The Society rarely awards Honorary Membership to someone who has already served a term as President as that office is deemed to be sufficient recognition in its own right. But in Donald's case, his election is well merited as



Donald Munro (left) and John Cox (© Frank Iddiols)

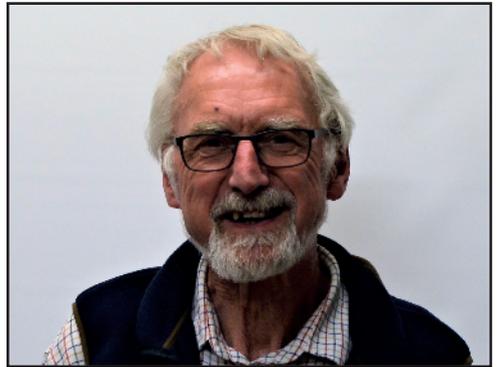
he has also served with distinction as our Librarian for nearly six years. Due in large part to his diligence and leadership, the Society's Library is now one of the leading local historical research facilities in Hertfordshire.

Donald was a splendid catch for the Library team when he joined it in 2006 as he had spent most of his career working in the library of the Institute of Historical Research, University of London, arguably the country's foremost historical research facility. He was still our hard-working President when he took over as Librarian in 2014 following Gill Harvey's untimely death. Since then he has supervised the removal of the stock from the Town Hall to our larger premises at Sandridge Gate; researched and introduced the new online library management system; and managed the expansion of the collection through the acquisition, *inter alia*, of much of the Beardsmore Collection, some of Eileen Roberts's books and the nationally important Smith/McSweeney papers.

Roger Miles

Roger joined the Society in 1982 just missing out on the opportunity to work on the Chequer Street excavations. Within three years he had taken on leadership of the Archaeology Group when Chris Saunders, part of the Museums' team, stepped down.

Over the next thirty years, he led the group on many excavations around the district, often in support of the Museums' archaeologists. While some of this was in and around Verulamium – such as the King Harry Lane cemetery and the Museum extension – much was beyond the immediate St Albans neighbourhood. Cross Farm, Harpenden is probably the most important location the group



Roger Miles (© Frank Iddiols)

worked on. Over some 20 years the group uncovered a rare rural Roman burial site of 40 cremations, a Roman villa, a Bronze Age burnt mound and a medieval moated site. While much of this work involved traditional techniques of field walking – when winters were cold and wet – and digging, Roger also led the introduction of new technology. As befits an engineer, and in tandem with physicist Bill Martin, he constructed geophysics equipment for use by the Society and others.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Enclosed with this Newsletter are the accounts for the financial year ended 31 May 2019 which were signed by the independent examiner on 19 July 2019 and were approved by Council on 25 July 2019. As in previous years the accounts are presented in the format required by the Charity Commission's Accounting and Reporting by Charities - Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP2005). They also contain a report from an independent examiner even though the Charity Commission does not require such a report for Charities with income below £25,000. I am more comfortable, however, to present to you accounts which have been subject to independent examination.

The results for the year are split between the restricted and unrestricted funds.

Restricted Funds:

There was no activity and the Mayor's Prize was not awarded this year.

Unrestricted Funds:

Income:

- Membership Subscriptions received amounted to £8,668 reflecting the recent increase and remain the main source of income to the Society.
- Income from the Clock Tower opening was £4,000, down by £500 on the previous year but good considering the Clock Tower season ended early.
- Gift Aid for the financial year 2017–2018 amounting to £1,867 was received, an increase of £428 on the previous year. A claim for 2018–2019 has been submitted and this will be shown in next year's, 2019–2020, accounts.
- A generous donation of £3,000 was received to help finance the Blow publication, currently in production; £6,000 of the Society's funds had been set aside but will not now be utilised in full. A further donation of £1,000 was received and used to update/upgrade the Library hardware.

Expenditure:

Running/Admin costs were generally in line with expectations.

Cont'd

The key areas of expenditure are: the Lecture programme, Newsletter, Library and Publications:

- Lecture costs have been well controlled, high-quality speakers continue to be attracted but haven't increased the costs. A decision to ask non-members to pay a fee to £5 to attend lectures from January 2019 produced an income of £155 and will be continued for the future.
- The Newsletter costs were down by £344 reflecting tight control by the editor and the distribution team.
- Whilst Library expenses are down on last year by £268, we have continued to spend money, particularly on the IT side, to develop this valuable resource.
- Publications: there were no publications in this financial year with the Group concentrating on producing the Percival Blow book due out in September 2019. Sales of *The Old Town Hall* book brought in income of £878 in this financial year which together with sales of other titles produced an income of £1,136.
- Website; the new website has cost £5,541, budget £6,000, to date and is now in the final stages of development and should come in within budget.

Balance Sheet:

The activities of the Society generated a surplus of £3,131 including donations totalling £4,700 some of which have already been spent with the remainder earmarked.

Funds available to the Society now stand at some £23,368, an increase on 2017–2018 of £3,528. However, this figure includes the Reserve, £12,000, also committed funding for ongoing projects which will come to fruition in 2019–2020 financial year, namely: £6,000 for the 175th Anniversary Project and £4,000+/- for the completion of the Percival Blow publication. Total £22,000.

To sum up this financial year has been satisfactory due in no small part to good housekeeping and the management of costs coupled with the generosity of donors. With known income streams expected to, at least, remain at current levels overall the Society is on a sound financial footing.

David Moore
Hon. Treasurer

LIBRARY REPORT

It has been another busy and productive year for the Library with volunteer staff making very good progress in improving access to our growing collections. A notable recent development has been the updating and successful migration of the Library information pages to the new SAHAAS website, live early July. The most notable other developments, largely covered in previous Newsletters, have been :

The progress in **cataloguing** as a result of the bedding in and tweaking of the Soutron Catalogue. Beardsmore books are all catalogued and headway is now being made with the pamphlets in the collection.

Progress has also been very good in **listing** other parts of the collections: Property particulars, Collected Papers and wider analysis and linking of materials in the Smith and McSweeney papers. Thanks here to Ros Trent, Di Dunn, Susan Smith and Terry Price.

Major **acquisitions** have included books purchased from the late Dr Eileen Roberts library. Thanks to member sponsorship we have recently acquired James G Clark: *The Deeds of the Abbots of St Albans* (2019). The major **donation** of the year has been the continuing stream of papers from John Cox.

The Library Team have recently held a meeting to assess progress and map out future activity in tackling the various tasks we have identified. Looking ahead I hope we will in the next year begin a program of gathering together the society's Archives. We have also been revising and updating the SAHAAS Library Policy for approval by Council.

Our progress over the past years is down to the enthusiasm and hard work of our splendid and happily augmented band of Library volunteers. I am stepping down from the Librarianship and wish to thank them all most sincerely for their companionship and support. Space does not permit this year my citing them individually (see last year's Report). But it is thanks to their efforts that we have settled very successfully at Sandridge Gate, where we have been building a much stronger Library than was possible in the Town Hall.

Donald Munro

Library Notes

Recent Acquisitions

The most notable work recently added to the Library is the much anticipated *The Deeds of the Abbots of St Albans: Gesta Abbatum Monasterii Sancti Albani*, Translated by David Preest, edited by James G. Clark. Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2019. 1008p., ill. "It is the longest

continuous chronicle of a medieval monastery in England. The Deeds records the history of one of the most important abbeys, closely linked to the royal family and home to a school of distinguished chroniclers, including Matthew Paris and Thomas Walsingham. It offers many insights into the life of the monastery, its buildings and its role as a maker of books and covers the period from the Conquest to the mid-fifteenth century". (Adapted from Boydell publicity). We are most grateful to three Society members who have sponsored the acquisition of this volume.

Recent journal articles

In *London Colney Local History Society; The Record*, no. 36, Spring/Summer 2019 pp 9-13 "The London Colney murders, Part 1; the Thrussell murder", by Ken Barker. George Hill was convicted of the murder of his infant son and hanged. This account is based on contemporary newspaper reports.

In *Hendon and District Archaeological Society Newsletter*, no. 579, June 2019 pp 6-7 "Arkley greyware medieval pottery production, South Hertfordshire", by Melvyn Dresner. Pottery at Arkley marks the transition from domestic production for household use to larger scale production for the market. This report is part of

continuing work by the society's finds group.

In *Abbots Langley Local History Society Journal*, no. 49, Autumn/Winter 2018 pp 12-13 "Coal markers, part 2", by Kate and Mike Quinton. An illustrated piece describing a variety of coal markers, posts erected in the mid-19th century around London where duty was charged for bringing coal into the city.

pp 18-19 "The rake's progress", by Sheila Willson. The making of rakes for use in haymaking is described. More than 15 families of rakemakers have been identified in 19th century censuses of Watford and Bushey.

In *Abbots Langley and District Local History Society Journal*, no. 50, Spring / Summer 2019

pp 14-17 "If only walls could talk", by Trevor Baker. The walls of this illustrated article are those of Langley House, built of brick around 1750, and those of other old houses in the area. Other brick-related topics are discussed.

pp 18-19 "What's in a name?", by Wanda Foulkes. Considers the occurrence of the word 'Redding', suggesting 'cleared land', in field names around Abbots Langley.

Tony Cooper

PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE REPORT

This committee now consists of Tony Berk, Gill Girdziusz, Pat Howe and David Harrold.

For the 2018/19 season, Gill, our Lecture Secretary, arranged 24 lectures all of which were held on Tuesdays at Marlborough Road Methodist Church, around one third of which were given by our members, confirming the level of knowledge and enthusiasm in the Society. The programme was completed well within budget, thanks to Gill's tireless hard work, and provides an important backbone to the working and the community spirit of the Society.

Attendance has been excellent, averaging 70 people – up from 66 last year. We now charge for non-members to attend and this does not seem to have put anyone off.

There were difficulties in the past with the IT/AV in the church, but the technical team have worked wonders with the system. Special thanks should go to Frank

Iddiols, and also to Jon Mein and Jeremy Wright for stepping forward. Thankfully, we also now have John Ridge back, but this crucial effort relies on the very few and if there are any technical people out there who can help, you will be very welcome indeed. For the future, it has been suggested that we might purchase a backup projector as the current one has given some trouble just recently.

Outings have been successful as always - Pat Howe and I arranged visits to Blenheim Palace and Wrest Park respectively, and Bryan Hanlon to Faversham. Pat also organised the Panshanger walk led by Kate Harwood.

Another successful set of events has been the popular and well-attended series of seminars which was proposed and arranged by Kate Morris, taking place in the Society's Library. These have ranged over a number of topics and more such events are being planned for the coming year (see p. 26).

We look forward to a very successful and interesting 2020.

Dr Tony Berk

THE NEWSLETTER

Copy deadline for the November edition is 15 October 2019. If you have any comments about the newsletter or wish to submit content, please email me, Jon Mein, via newsed@stalbanhistory.org.

WEBSITE REPORT

If you've checked the Society's website since 1 July, you'll have seen that it has taken on a very different appearance.

The previous website has served us well, with much new content being added over the years. This very success has meant that the website needed reorganisation so that users could easily find the information they want. But it used a legacy platform that limited the functionality of the website. For example, it did not display properly on mobile phones, now used by many people to access the internet.

With this in mind, the Council asked a small group of members to revamp the website - Donald Munro, Pat Broad, Roderick Douglas and latterly Jon Mein and Sue Mann convened by myself.

After much discussion, we concluded that St Alban's rich heritage and the Society's many activities could be grouped in six main categories - buildings, archaeology,

social history, library, research and publications.

Following a tender exercise, the existing provider (CommunitySites) was given a brief to redesign the website based on the widely used Wordpress platform.

Meanwhile, the website group organised the migration of content from the old website, the preparation of new content, and the republication of some excellent articles from past newsletters, and commissioned some new content.

Both St Albans Museums and the Cathedral were very helpful in allowing us to use some excellent images, including a map of Verulamium, a painting of the old passageway through the Cathedral, and a representation of the Abbey monastic buildings.

But there is more to be done, and we would welcome both help and suggestions over the coming months. My email address is website@stalbahistory.org.

Peter Bourton

KEEPING RAILWAY TIME

"Mr Cllr Barford complained of the irregularity of the time in [St Albans]. He knew of many cases in which persons had missed the trains, through the difference of time. The Mayor said the Abbey and St Peter's clocks were under the management of the parochial authorities, and the town clock was under the control of the Corporation. He considered that they should all be under one person's care. The Town Clerk was then directed to confer with the proper parties, with a view to the better management of the clock." (*Herts Mercury*, 12 February 1859, p. 3)

CLOCK TOWER REPORT

The Clock Tower was officially opened for the summer season on Good Friday, 19 April by the Mayor, Councillor Rosemary Farmer, and will remain open for bank holidays and weekends until 29 September.

The Mayor was the first visitor to view Sue Mann's exhibition of 'Poverty and Want in Past Times' which is on display on the first floor until 15 September (see photo). The display highlights the treatment of the poor and destitute in St Albans over the centuries and was first shown as part of the 'Squatlife' Exhibition held at the Museum. The tenement housing in the alleyways off French Row, near the Clock Tower, were crammed with families living in dreadful slum conditions well into the 20th century.

Our Clock Tower has appeared in various forms over the last couple of months. A 3ft high, clay model went on display on the ground floor of the Clock Tower over Easter. It had previously been at the Museum as part of a clay modelling event. The Museum also included representations of the Tower in Lego as part of a Lego building event in the Assembly Room. A new podcast, started in March by Danny Smith, uses the symbol of the Clock Tower as its logo and ends all its



Sue Mann with one of the 'Squatlife' posters

broadcasts with "Commit No Nuisance" (For the origin of this command see p. 28).

As always. Mike Carey and I would like to thank all the Clockateers for giving their time to keep the Clock Tower open for the public to enjoy.

Caroline Howkins

NEWSLETTER REPORT

The BALH award (see p. 7) is of course a highlight but this has also been a good year in other respects. More than 50 members of the Society have contributed to the newsletter in one way or another; add to that 12 non-members who have written material for us. Many thanks, one and all.

In particular, however, I should highlight the support of the proofreaders, Pat Broad, Bryan Hanlon, Julia Merrick and Donald Munro, who have saved me from many errors; and the labour of Paula Dilger, Christine McDermott and Julia Merrick (again) who see to the distribution of the newsletter. Thanks to them we have increased the number we deliver by hand, thereby largely offsetting the sharp increase in printing costs reported last year.

As to this new year, expect more of the same. This publication will remain a newsletter rather than a journal but one that includes plenty of material about what happened yesterday as well as today.

Jon Mein

PUBLICATIONS COMMITTEE REPORT

It has been another busy year for publications. One particular achievement has been the production of our forthcoming publication, *St Albans Architect, Percival Blow - From Arts and Crafts to Gothic Revival and Art Deco* (see p. 5). This is the fourth book to be published by the Society in as many years and we hope it will stimulate fresh public interest in the history of St Albans.

Income from publication sales in 2018/19 totalled £1,136, of which £878 came from

sales of *The Old Town Hall, St Albans*. We have now sold just over 500 copies of this book. Sales of the Home Front book have reached 549. We have run a bookstall at most Tuesday night lectures and have enjoyed the benefits of the new museum's bookshop, which provides an extra outlet for our publications.

We have continued to play a significant part in the website project (see p. 15), completing a redesign of the publication section. Notably each SAHAAS publication now has its own product page complete with publishing details.

Work on publishing standards continues along with exploring ideas for new publications. Several members have put forward interesting proposals for contributions to the new pamphlet series, which we are looking forward to launching sometime next year.

We have increased the Society's Twitter followers to 308. (@stalbanpast)

The above achievements could not have happened without the support and involvement of committee members: John Cox, Ann Dean, Sue Mann, Christine McDermott and Jon Mein. The committee met three times.

Patricia Broad

'HERTFORDSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORY' JOURNAL

We have a large number of articles being finalised for the next edition of *Hertfordshire Archaeology and History*. There are so many that we almost have enough for the next volume, 18, and the following edition. I hope soon to be able to report our proposed publication date for volume 18. Watch this space!

Christine McDermott

17TH CENTURY RESEARCH GROUP

It has been a long year for the team as we await the publication of the first volume of local probate documents (1600—1615) by the Herts Record Society (HRS). The editors assure us the book will be on the shelves by the end of the year.

In the meantime we have been working on the next period: 1616–1629. The transcriptions include the wills of Francis Bacon and Roger Pemberton (of the almshouses). The plague hit St Albans significantly in 1625/26 and so far we have ascertained that at least 27 tradesmen were likely victims. The HRS have not committed to publishing this next volume but I hope we can persuade the Committee to do so. Our findings are every bit as interesting as the earlier period.

Pat Howe

EAST KENT EXCURSION

On a lovely bright May Day morn 40+ members and guest excursionists departed Westminster Lodge for the furthest shores of Kent on an ambitious but thoroughly interesting three stop trip. First to Walmer Castle, a ceremonial rather than conflict focused fortress, the residence of the Warden of the Cinque Ports since the 16th century (Fig. 1). It is doubtful that the batteries of cannon were ever fired in anger. A remarkable house/castle with odd-shaped rooms, it houses very interesting furniture and objects relating to one-time Wardens, especially the Duke of Wellington and Pitt the Younger. The collections of later 18th and 19th century political prints are particularly rich. It also has very nice gardens and a café with cheese scones to die for.

All too soon we were off north across saltmarshes to Richborough Roman Fort,



Fig. 1: Walmer Castle (© Graham Thomas)

the major early entry point for Roman forces, and the original starting point of Watling Street. It has substantial ruins on a large deceptively commanding site, and a small very good museum. Clearly it was an important settlement. Sadly, the information boards around the site have suffered very badly from weather-induced entropy. Those who concentrated on the museum gained more in the limited time available. There is a good scene-setting English Heritage guide to Richborough and Reculver, another impressive Roman ruin on Herne Bay to the north.

Then to Faversham, an attractive market town close to a major hop-growing area. Historically favoured by King Stephen and an important port, from the 17th century the town became a centre of the explosive industry until a major accident in 1916. In the 19th century it also developed as a brewing centre. Shepherd Neame is the main survivor. A fine one-time brewery building is now sympathetically preserved as a Tesco supermarket. After lunch, our two groups were walked around the town by well-informed enthusiastic guides. There are many historic buildings with very interesting stories. The highlight however was the Grade I listed parish church of St Mary of Charity. Reputedly housing the remains of King Stephen, it also has excellent misericords, and many brasses. Most remarkable is the early 14th century painted octagonal column in the north transept depicting events from the life of Christ; a very rare



Fig. 2: Faversham's Guildhall
(© Graham Thomas)

survivor. An elegant corona spire (Beazley after Wren's St Dunstan-in-the-East) was added 1794-97, and the interior remodelled by George Gilbert Scott in the mid-19th century. The walks took us through former abbey areas, briefly to Faversham Creek to glimpse the former port area, before returning through the market-place with its striking Guildhall (Fig. 2).

Both guides were members of the Faversham Society, a very active civic and heritage group which has frequently stayed the hand of threatening developments and has the resources to run The Fleur de Lis Heritage Centre in three adjoining historic properties in the heart of town.

No time to visit that, but as with all three sites our appetites were whetted for future personal trips to furthest Kent. Many thanks to Bryan Hanlon for organising an excellent trip.

Donald Munro

WREST PARK OUTING

On Tuesday 11 June, a rather dull and damp day, we took a coach trip and guided tours to the beautiful and historic house and gardens of Wrest Park near Bedford - the seat of the de Grey family, Earls and Dukes of Kent, from the late 13th to the 19th centuries. The current French chateau-style house dates from the last period.



Fig. 1: The Orangery (© Judith Massey)

Our first tour visited three rooms of historic wallpaper – two of later 18th century hand-painted Chinese and one of mid-19th century French block-printed paper. Our knowledgeable guide took us through the deep and complex symbolism of the beautifully drafted, highly coloured images. Who would have guessed, for instance, in the Chinese images, that the low, stylised and unimposing rock formations were actually meant to signify the holding up of the heavens! The remarkable French Zuber papers, still produced today, are from their scenic Eldorado range – finely drafted and highly coloured, the images symbolise the world's continents.

Our second morning tour visited one of the largest of the seven regional English Heritage architectural and archaeological stores, holding around 170,000 items. The architectural store, with around 7,000 items, holds material saved by various London authorities during demolitions in the 19th and 20th centuries. There are

fire-places, columns, stone and timber carvings, etc. One fine example is a collection of eight striking male figures, larger than life, carved in teak, coloured black. These were saved from the tower of the spectacular (now lost) Columbia Market, built by Angela Burdett Coutts. Interestingly, their arms were articulated and moved in time to the ringing of the tower's bells as if they were performing the music. Our guide also described, with examples, the familiar English Heritage (EH) historic Blue Plaque scheme. They are now made by a small company in Cornwall.

The archaeological store, much bigger, ranges through Neolithic, Roman, Saxon and later times. Our guide showed us examples of animal bones excavated from the Saxon layers within the central area of the Roman town at Wroxeter, part of the EH project exploring the post-Roman era in that region. They had collected 7 tons of bones from the digs, each fragment exam-



Fig. 2: The Chinese Bridge (© Judith Massey)

ined separately and samples sent abroad for carbon dating.

After lunch, we explored the gardens - the house looks down a long wide avenue of gardens, lawns and, beyond the Long Water lake, to the distant early 18th century Thomas Archer Pavilion. Some of us walked to the pavilion through wooded

areas to the side of this long vista. We viewed various buildings in the gardens and several fascinating hidden features placed in the grounds by the family with their own historical and personal meanings.

The domed Archer Pavilion, built to entertain hunting parties, had its own kitchen, and boasts an interior painted with architectural *trompe l'oeil* images reminiscent of the Pantheon in Rome. We climbed up the narrow spiral staircases to two servants' rooms in the roof, and down to the basement kitchen.

Despite the weather, the day was successful and very well guided by the staff.

Tony Berk and Donald Munro

HOT OFF THE PRESS

The Pubs of Wheathampstead, 1830 to 1914

By Ruth Jeavons, Peter Jeffreys, Patrick McNeill and Jon Mein

ISBN: 978-1-9160848-0-3

The number of pubs in the parish of Wheathampstead rose from just four in 1830 to 26 in 1870 before declining to 19 in 1914. Researched and written by four members of the Wheathampstead History Society, three of whom are also SAHAAS members, the book explores the reasons for this dramatic rise and fall. It also records stories about the local people who used the pubs and those who made their living from serving them.

Price: £5.00. Copies are available at the Post Office and The Reading Rooms, both in Wheathampstead. To order by post or to find further details, please go to the society's website: www.wheathampsteadheritage.org.uk.

ST ALBANS CHORAL SOCIETY'S 75TH ANNIVERSARY

The days of Autumn 1944 were dark. Despite the spectacular success of the D-Day landings, it was clear, as the Allied advance faltered at Arnhem, Italy, the Pacific and other theatres, that peace would only be bought with further bloodshed.

Surprisingly, however, amateur music began to stir again in St Albans. Both the Bach Choir and the local Philharmonic Society had closed on the outbreak of hostilities and would not revive until after VE Day. However, as V2 rockets began to rain down on London, the organist of Spicer Street Church wanted a good choir for its Christmas concert.

Reluctantly Kenneth Faulkner, a member of St Peter's Church choir with no experience of conducting, agreed to take it on. He found, to his consternation, a choir "composed mainly of middle-aged ladies – no men!" Men from other church choirs agreed to help and the first concert of the 'Augmented

Choir' was held on 17 December 1944, performing *The Story of Bethlehem* by John E. West. This was followed by the *Messiah*, performed on Palm Sunday 1945 at Spicer Street and again on Maundy Thursday at Dagnall Street Baptist Church, to critical acclaim, notwithstanding that the tenor soloist arrived late so the conductor had to sing the challenging opening arias at short notice.

St Albans Choral Society (renamed 1950) celebrates the work of these pioneers at an anniversary concert on Saturday 23 November 2019 in St Albans Cathedral. As well as John Rutter's *Gloria*, the programme includes two works commissioned by the choir with local history themes - the world premiere of *The Martyrs' Call* by Richard James Harvey (the choir's longstanding accompanist) inspired by the Seven Martyrs statues in the Cathedral and the first performance in the Cathedral of Liz Lane's *The Story of St Alban*. See www.choralsociety.com.

Rod Cowper

ST JULIAN'S ESTATE INTEREST GROUP

The group met again in July, this time for a site visit. One side of the walled garden still exists as private garden walls, and a 'fir' tree marks the entrance to the farmhouse on Watling Street. With the benefit of maps over time by use of GIS, it is possible to pinpoint the location of the 17th century mansion, demolished c.1800. Its gates and stables survived as part of the farm and there are photographic memories of these. Anyone interested in joining the group will be welcome, whether the interest is medieval for the leper hospital, the 17th/18th century estate mansion and its account books, or 400 acre farm which survived until the 1950s. We still need researchers and transcribers for all this fascinating material which we hope to distil into a Society publication. Contact Kate Morris via kate@englishinfo.biz.

THE VERULAMIUM CONFERENCE, 29 JUNE 2019

Judging by the ‘house full’ notices and subsequent feedback, the conference was a success. All the tickets had been snapped up several weeks beforehand. Such was the demand we could have sold a further 50 tickets but, concerned with the size and shape of the venue, we opted to restrict sales to 120. Overall the right decision.

The principal attraction was the excellent programme put together by Kris Lockyear. It drew not only the expected members of local archaeological societies but also several with a professional interest in the subject. For more about the programme itself, please see Isobel Thompson’s review overleaf.

Our biggest challenge was on the day itself. When planning an event, you hope the climate will treat you favourably. Clearly it didn’t as we chose, at over 30°C, the hottest day of the year to date. To mitigate the worst effects of the heat, we considered bringing in air-conditioning units, industrial fans and lashings of

ice cream but the forces of value for money and health and safety prevailed against us. Traditional cooling methods involving doors and curtains sufficed.

We are most grateful for the support of the 21 members of the Society who helped with the organisation on the day. While we can’t list everyone, we should thank those early risers and late finishers who arrived at 8.15am and left nine hot hours later after the clearing up: Sue Bellamy, Gill Girdziusz and Maria Musto who, with Sally, provided the refreshments together with Tony Berk, Peter Bourton and John Morewood. Thanks as well to Peter Bourton and Sandy Walkington for hosting the event; to Frank Iddiols and John Ridge for managing the sound and projection equipment; to Peter Burley for guiding the medieval fortifications walk at lunchtime; and to our fellow organisers, Kris Lockyear and Simon West, who also led the seminar the week before the conference.

Plans are in hand to publish the conference proceedings. More anon.

Jon Mein and Sally Pearson

GOOGLE EARTH AND VERULAMIUM

In a recent post on his blog, Kris Lockyear discusses the recent aerial images of Verulamium updated on Google Earth. Taken on 22 May 2018, these show ‘a fantastic set of parch marks’. The address is hertsgeosurvey.wordpress.com - look for the 1 July post.

'VERULAMIUM: THE LIFE AND DEATH OF A ROMAN CITY': A REVIEW

Congratulations to everyone for the conference on late Roman Verulamium, for putting together such an interesting and informative day. The trend was to look both backwards and forwards. 'Backwards' was to the excavation campaigns of Wheeler and Frere, and the central role played by the town in Richard Reece's seminal 1980 work using Roman coinage. The park and the museum have also long been the place where many people have been introduced to 'Roman Britain', and the best example of a Roman town against which others are judged. David Thorold showed images from a photo album illustrating 80 years of the museum, from wooden hut to plans for the future.

But Verulamium is also a Scheduled Monument, a designation which provides protection but can often mean a barrier to the acquisition of new data, and the testing of new ideas. Commercial archaeology has transformed our knowledge base, with the result that what we know about Scheduled sites has not kept up. So Kris Lockyear began the day with the Community Archaeology Geophysics Group's sustained and ongoing campaign



Fig. 1: The packed conference floor © C. Howkins

of high-tech geophysics which now covers the entire area within the walls, as well as the Fosse and parts of the Gorhambury estate. The view that late Verulamium was comparatively empty, with gardens and open spaces, has been superseded as many parts are now seen to be much more crowded. But other parts within the city walls really were emptier, especially at the western end, and around the newly identified aqueduct.

Dating these buildings, of course, is not possible from geophysics, and argument over the 'death' of the Roman city tends to polarise archaeologists. There are those who try to explain away Frere's early 5th century date for structures in one of his trenches, but they fail to take account of many other pointers to continuation of life here, which, as Ros Niblett showed, contracted to the original centre around

the forum-basilica and along Watling Street and the Colchester road. Large 5th century cemeteries also imply continuation of a central role. Clues to this period are scattered and small-scale, but persistent. Recent excavations at St Michael's School (James Fairbairn, Oxford Archaeology East) revealed, as well as the portico of the forum-basilica, possibly post-Roman repairs to the road outside. Even our old standby, the date AD 410 for the official 'end' of Roman Britain, may be irrelevant; it is becoming mainstream to think that the Latin source for this date (the 'Honorius Rescript') refers to a town in southern Italy. And archaeological detail is shedding more light on what was happening here. Simon West pointed out that 6th century Byzantine coins in the area belong to national evidence of trade with the Mediterranean, and Saxon references to *Verlamchester* show that even the town's name was remembered.

Andrew Gardner and Andrew Reynolds, from UCL, both argued that 'Roman Britain' was never a single entity, with Verulamium as the prime example of a 'Roman town'; and those who lived in Roman towns were only a small percentage of the population. So although late Verulamium's population seems to have declined, this is only part of a long process of change which

began in the 3rd century and went on at least until the appearance of the first 'Saxon' burials in the mid 7th century. The reasons are likely to be very complex, involving a changing relationship between town and countryside, and the function of local assemblies throughout this period.

Roman towns each had their own complex identities and histories. Will Bowden contrasted Verulamium with Caistor-by-Norwich (*Venta Icenorum*), where recent work has transformed understanding but has a very different history. Both places reflect local responses to Roman urbanism, based on underlying late Iron Age mindsets. How much more interesting than the old view that 'the Romans' left and Britain was plunged into the 'Dark Ages'.

Dr Isobel Thompson



The Roundtable Q&A Session, (l-r): Dr James Gerrard, Simon West, Ros Niblett, Dr Kris Lockyear, Prof. Andrew Reynolds, Dr Andrew Gardner and Dr Will Bowden

© Caroline Howkins

THE SOCIETY'S SEMINAR PROGRAMME, 2019/20

The new programme will commence in September. There is a wealth of topics to learn about and discuss. Kate Morris will lead the sessions on, usually, the third Thursday each month until Easter. As before, the venue will be the Society's Library at Sandridge Gate and there will be no charge to members. There will be an 'enews' message each month giving further details of the forthcoming topic and the opportunity to sign up for it.

If you are embarking on some research and want to sound it out on colleagues, let Kate know for a future session (via kate@englishinfo.biz), or if you just want to find out what others are doing, join us at the Library on those Thursdays at 2.30pm for an hour.

Here are brief details of the first three seminars:

19 September

The Poor Law in St Albans, 1895 to 1914

Tony Dolphin

How did the Poor Law treat different groups of paupers in St Albans in the two decades prior to the First World War? The part played by the Board of Guardians, who were responsible for implementing the Poor Law during this period, has recently been investigated.

24 October

Freight traffic on the St Albans turnpike

Fabian Hiscock

Waggons used the 18th century St Albans turnpike as frequently as coaches but this traffic has not been as well researched. Its significance for St Albans on this strategic route connecting London with the industrial Midlands and the North and how the coming of canals and railways affected that will be explored.

21 November

Maps

Frank Iddiols

Maps are a snapshot in time of an area. Maps of Hertfordshire and St Albans drawn for a variety of purposes will each illustrate their time. Examples will be from the SAHAAS map collection.

Programme - December 2019 to March 2020

Short abstracts for the following will appear in the November newsletter:-

12 December: Water pumps – *Brian Adams*

23 January: Origins of the Press – *Ruth Herman*

20 February: Straw hats – *Anne Wares and Jon Mein*

19 March: TBC

Kate Morris

LEARNING AT ST ALBANS MUSEUMS

The relationship between families and museums is a long-term one, with museums regularly welcoming even the very youngest of children through their doors. Until relatively recently, however, activities and resources for families were largely directed towards the over-5s. Yet, in the last twenty years, a drive for museums to have a greater sense of social responsibility and to embed themselves more meaningfully in the wider community has resulted in a greater awareness of the needs of all museum audiences including their younger visitors.

St Albans Museums now present a dynamic family offer with both Verulamium Museum and St Albans Museum + Gallery delivering monthly groups specifically for the under 5s and their parents/carers, alongside self-guided family-friendly resources. Each session focuses on a different part of the collection and encourages young children and their parents/carers to engage both with each other and the collections through play, craft and story-telling. Activities are carefully planned to build contexts for specific parts of the collection. For example: by both crafting a lion and hearing a lion story before actively exploring the



Young children take part in a Museum Minis session at St Albans Museum + Gallery © Elyse Marks

museum galleries to find one, a sense of familiarity with the object is developed for the child. This personal connection with specific objects allows families, over time, to develop a sense of belonging in our museums and to create ongoing relationships with our collections. Indeed, for the very young simply being in the museums, climbing wide marble stairs, peeking through railings, hearing the echo of their voices in open spaces, is an opportunity to learn and to understand the world around them. If families seek out these experiences elsewhere, why not provide welcoming facilities and targeted learning and social opportunities within the walls of our museums?

Sally Beniston
Assistant Learning and
Interpretation Officer
St Albans Museums

CLOCK TOWER CURIO NO. 5 - COMMIT NO NUISANCE

The back door to the Clock Tower, leading on to French Row, has the words, "Commit No Nuisance" stencilled on to it; a wonderfully polite, yet



forceful, way to demand a higher standard of behaviour by passers-by.

Thanks to Val Argue's chance find while working on the Society's Home Front project, we know the notice resulted from a report of the Council's Highways and Plans and Nuisances Sub-Committee (HALS, SBR/3533, 19 July 1915). Point 3 stated:

"Attention has been called to the fact that nuisances are frequently committed by persons near the door on the west side of the Clock Tower, and urine finds its way under the doorway, and your Sub-Committee have given instructions for the step down to the door to be filled in with concrete and flounced off to stop any liquid getting into the building and have directed that a warning notice should be put up on the door against committing nuisances."

Caroline Howkins

SHEEP POSE GRAVE PROBLEMS

Re. "the disgraceful way the sheep in St Peter's churchyard are allowed to make havoc on the graves of departed friends ... It was only a fortnight back I had occasion to follow one of my departed friends to their last resting place in this churchyard, and a friend gave a beautiful wreath to be laid on the grave. But it did not remain there long, for the next morning nothing was left but the ring it was made upon; all destroyed by those sheep."

William Westell (*Herts Advertiser*, 27 May 1882, p. 5)

THE FORMER MISSION ROOM, OLD LONDON ROAD

The serious traffic delays on Old London Road at the junction with Cottonmill Lane have brought a rare unanimity to locals and rat-runners alike. The parlous state of the unassuming building shown in the photo (below) is the cause.

Dating to 1881, this building has an interesting history. It owes its origins to the prospect of the many men constructing the city's new sewage system spending too much time in the local pubs. Give them somewhere else to go was the idea,

somewhere without the temptation of alcohol but with plenty of self-improving literature to read. The idea originated with Hon. Robert Grimston, brother of the third Earl of Verulam, who later became national secretary of the Navy Mission Society and later still, vicar of St Michael's. The building has had various purposes since, a tramps' rest and light industrial use among them.

But is the current construction original? The report of its opening in the *Herts Advertiser* (3 November 1881 p. 5) describes the building as being of wooden construction with sawdust packed in the

wall cavities 'to secure warmth and prevent draught'. This perilous form of insulation probably explains why bricks have replaced timber in the lower portion. SADC's *Character Statement* no. 5a (2003, p. 172) reflects this: the old mission room is "timber clad but altered and in poor repair". From our cursory study, we remain unsure whether there is anything original about the building.



'Mission Room', Old London Road (© Freya Burley)

Jon Mein and Roger Miles

KEEP THE DATE: HALH SYMPOSIUM, 2019

This year's Hertfordshire Association for Local History symposium will be held on Saturday 9 November at Woolmer Green Village Hall (SG3 6XA) between Welwyn and Stevenage. The theme is 'Local history, landscape and archaeology'.

More information will follow via the website and enews.

OUR VICTORIAN PREDECESSORS

NO. 2: DR RIDGWAY LLOYD — A SCHOLAR OF THE ABBEY

Ridgway Robert Syers Christian Codnor Lloyd was born in Devonport to a west country doctor Francis Lloyd and his wife, Margaret. Francis Lloyd later took holy orders. His son studied medicine at Guy's Hospital where he became MRCS and LSA which entitled him to become a surgeon and to dispense medicines. He bought a practice in St Albans, joining Dr John Lipscombe, sometime mayor of St Albans. At the time there was a small private dispensary on Holywell Hill and Dr Lloyd's presence enabled a long-cherished dream to open a small hospital in 1870 with two in-patient wards, with himself as house surgeon. He wrote several papers over the years for the *Lancet* on diphtheria, hernia operations and dislocations.

It seems that in his childhood Lloyd had formed a great interest in church history, for within six months of his arrival in St Albans he joined our Society (then the St Albans Architectural and Archaeological Society). He soon contributed scholarly papers, starting with a study of old church bells and their inscriptions. Appointed secretary to the Society, he often hosted committee meetings at his

house (see Fig. 1) where he advised the purchase of several books which still form the foundation to the present library. He transformed the running of the Society and talent-spotted Revd Henry Fowler, whose close study of the boundary wall of the Abbey produced the precious Fowler Map now hanging on the east wall of the north transept. (See the forthcoming November 2019 newsletter for an article about Fowler.)

In his research Lloyd studied the matchless Abbey chronicles and then compared the facts with the building itself. His scholarship was widely applauded for thoroughness, accuracy and reliability. This cannot have been easy as the Medieval Latin of the chronicles is not the same as Latin taught in schools, or indeed, medical Latin. But it was not only the scholarship that is impressive. His



Fig. 1: Lloyd's house in Bricket Road, 1989; photo taken shortly before demolition (SAHAAS Arthur Allen Collection)

writing style is lucid and easy to read. In his 1871 paper on 'Some Account of the Hermits Roger and Sigar, and of the Prioress Christina', his knowledge of Christina (of Markyate) is accurate, though one hundred years before C.H. Talbot's significant discovery and restoration in 1968 of her contemporary biography.

He became such an expert on the Abbey's history that Sir George Gilbert Scott consulted him on historical matters, especially on the discovery of the shrine fragments of St Alban and St Amphibalus in 1872. (see Fig. 2) Lord Aldenham, who paid for the restoration of the High Altar Screen, referred to him on the choice of the saints to be replaced there. When Scott uncovered the painted wooden ceiling in the choir, Lloyd's exhaustive study of the heraldry was published by the Society in 1876.

His paper in the journal, *Antiquary*, in December 1880, 'A medieval Pilgrimage to the shrine of St Alban', is an engrossing tour of the Abbey with the author bringing to the reader's attention what they would have seen in 1521. Not only do we see the architecture, the altars and the fittings, he explains the rituals of the Benedictine monks. And his book, *An Account of The*

Altars, Monuments and Tombs existing in 1428, a translation from the chronicles, will make the reader sad to understand what has been lost since the Dissolution.

Lloyd died of typhoid at the early age of 41 in 1884. William Budd, an English country doctor, had identified in 1838 the fact that the infection of some diseases was by contagion, and typhoid and cholera were thus caused by drinking water infected with contaminated sewage. Alas it was impossible in 1884 for the provision of safe clean water in every home. Ridgway Lloyd, the doctor and scholar who so loved St Albans Abbey, left a wife, Catherine and a nine-year-old son. He lies in the north churchyard of the Abbey.

Jane Kelsall



Fig. 2: Rebuilding Alban's shrine, c.1872 (Reproduced courtesy of the Cathedral and Abbey Church of St Alban)

EPIDEMIC!

As Jane Kelsall discussed in the previous article, Dr Ridgway Lloyd died from typhoid during the 1884 outbreak in the city. Here Tony Cooper explores its causes and effects.

In the early summer of 1884 St Albans was in the grip of an epidemic of enteric fever, now known as typhoid, a water-borne disease, and not uncommon. It was not the first time it appeared in the city; there had been three cases in the autumn of 1883, and nine more in early 1884. Investigation of the 1883 outbreak suggested the infection was caused by contamination of milk from Marshalswick Farm (see Fig. 1); it was thought that milk pans might have been washed with contaminated water, but

boiled water had been used. By agreement with the City Medical Officer, Dr C.E. Saunders, the farmer temporarily suspended supplying milk.

It is not clear how long the suspension lasted, but it had resumed by October, by which time it was being supplied to dealers in London, and presumably in St Albans. After this outbreak, attention was given to a deep well on the farm and its proximity to a cesspit about 20 feet away. It was found that the roots of a sycamore tree had penetrated the wall of the well. As a result, the cesspit was cleared out and by September had been filled with clay.

In May 1884 typhoid appeared in St Pancras and Islington, and an inquiry there showed evidence of a link to milk

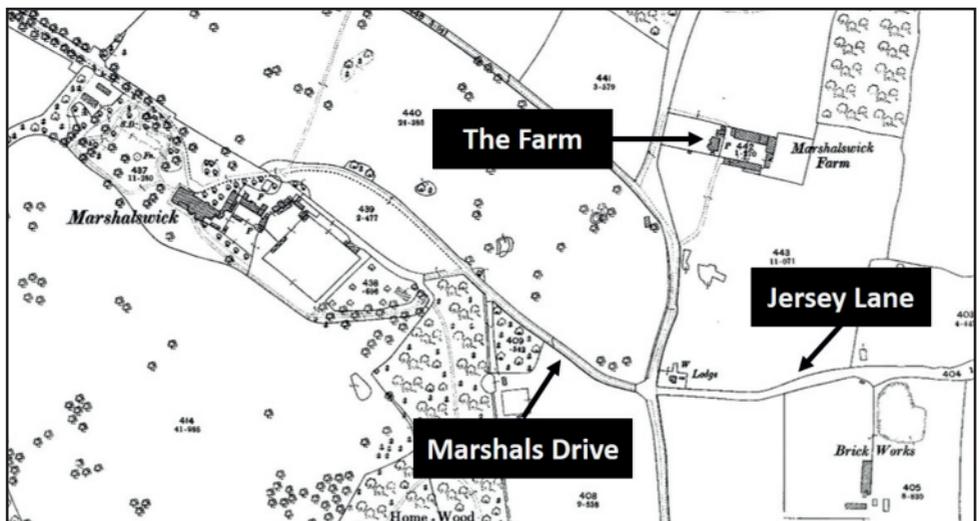


Fig. 1: extract from 1897 OS map showing the location of Marshalswick Farm buildings; these are now covered by the Quadrant shops and carpark

from the St Albans farm. When in 1884 the fever returned to St Albans it was in a more virulent form; between May and early July more than 120 cases were recorded, including 23 deaths, causing great concern to the Council, and to the public. There was much speculation about the cause of infection. The new sewerage system, then being installed, was suspected - there had been complaints about unpleasant smells from ventilation pipes and ill-fitting manhole covers. When reporting to the Council Dr Saunders went to great pains to show that this theory was untenable; fever had occurred in houses not yet connected to sewers, and "in houses where sanitary arrangements were beyond reproach". (*Herts Advertiser*, 7 June 1884, p. 6) The only common factor among the widespread cases was the supply of milk.

Advice was sought from the Local Government Board's Medical Department, and Mr Shirley Murphy, Medical Officer of Health for St Pancras, was asked to investigate and report. He and Dr Saunders, with the co-operation of the farmer, James Slimmon, made a detailed study of the distribution of milk from the farm to a number of milk-sellers, and considered the possibility of pollution occurring at the farm, but found no such evidence. By 28 June Dr Saunders was able to tell the Council that the fever was abating; in June there were 38 cases, compared with 93 in May.

Mr Shirley Murphy's report to the Local Government Board was published on 17 October 1884. Despite the exhaustive efforts he had undertaken with Saunders and Slimmon, he could find no evidence of the cause of any infective quality of the Marshalswick Farm milk, but suggested that Slimmon's milk had somehow retained from the outbreak of the previous year some power of infecting its consumers, and then for some unknown cause increased its severity in May and June. His advice was that all milk should be boiled as soon as it was received in the house. An editorial comment in *The Lancet* of 14 November, 1884 concurred with this conclusion and recommendation.

Tony Cooper

MEMBERSHIP

Welcome to our new members:

Sara Baker	St Albans
Brenda Cope	St Albans
Laura Diffey-Hughes	St Albans
Paul Dottridge	Berkhamsted
Dr Clorinda Goodman	Redbourn
Barbara Harvey	St Albans
Robert May	St Albans
John and Lindy Mead	St Albans
Otto Meyer	St Albans
Fergus Muir	Norwich
Judith Anne O'Byrne	St Albans
Chloe Sykes	St Albans
Graham Williams	St Albans

FEEDBACK: MALVINA CHEEK AND MAC FISHERIES

My eye was caught by Jon Mein's cover article (Newsletter 212, p. 36) on Malvina Cheek, the 'Artist in War-time', who c.1943 captured the rather unlikely view of 'An old shop in Market Place, St Albans'. With a modern photograph for comparison, Jon suggests they illustrate the trend towards replacing plate glass with red brick. However, it seems clear from Ms Cheek's picture that the shop, which may be identified by the Mac Fisheries trade mark (or logo, as we would call it today), does not possess plate glass windows but has a form of roller shutters which, when raised, would have revealed an open shopfront with marble slabs on which the fish was displayed for sale.

Fish became popular in the wartime diet because it was not rationed and Mac Fisheries, founded by Lord Leverhulme in 1918, enjoyed great success on Britain's high streets during World War 2 and at least until the mid 50s when food rationing ended. My own wartime recollections (not in St Albans) are of a similar Mac Fisheries shop, having similar shutters, with a queue of potential customers



'An old shop in Market Place, St Albans'
(© Victoria and Albert Museum, London)

anxious to be served before the delivery ran out, and with the fish, packed with ice, lying on the fishmonger's slabs. Of greater interest to a young boy were the live chicks that sometimes appeared for sale. These were, of course, aimed at the back garden poultry-keeper hoping for a regular supply of fresh eggs and the occasional luxury of a bird for the table.

A study of high street retail and service trends in St Albans throughout the 20th century would make interesting reading and the basic materials for this, an almost complete run of local trade directories, are available in St Albans Public Library.

John Pile

THE SOCIETY'S ALL-CONQUERING QUIZ TEAM

At the invitation of the-then Mayor, the Society entered a team into the Mayor's Charity Quiz Night held in May. And we won. Congratulations to the team which included Pat Broad, Gill Brown, Tony Cooper, Gill Girdziusz and Christine McDermott.

FEEDBACK: THE ST ALBANS MOTORCYCLE FOUND IN AUSTRALIA

You may recall from the February 2019 newsletter that a St Albans-built motorcycle has been found in Australia. This was made in the early 1900s in the London Road by the New Century Company. We asked readers to get in touch who could throw light on its origins. This call-out worked: a few weeks after the newsletter's publication we were delighted to spend a pleasant afternoon chatting with Gill and Tony Clarke (grandson of the founder Dudley Clarke) about the history of the business and looking at some of their ephemera.

For us, the two most interesting items were the photos reproduced here. They are not 'best' quality as they have not aged well and our copies are from prints of scans of the originals. Nonetheless, they illustrate part of the city's Edwardian sporting heritage that is now recorded only in the pages of local newspapers – unless you know otherwise of course. According to Tony, both photos were taken at a race meeting held in Clarence Park on Whit Monday, 1907. The long *Herts Advertiser* report (25 May 1907, p. 6) tells the story. This 10-mile race formed a small part of an extensive programme of foot and bicycle competitions organised by the St Albans Athletic Association. The race was 'limited to machines with engines having a cylinder

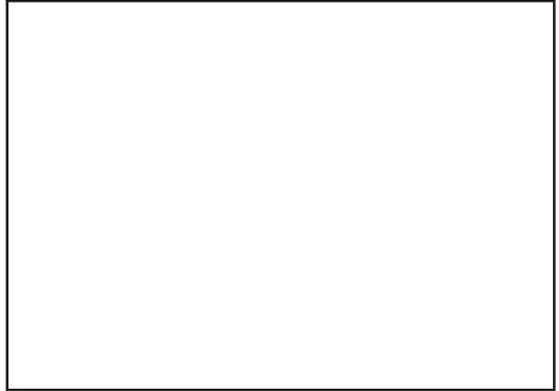


Fig. 1: Dudley Clarke (right) with his New Century motorcycle in Clarence Park, 1907

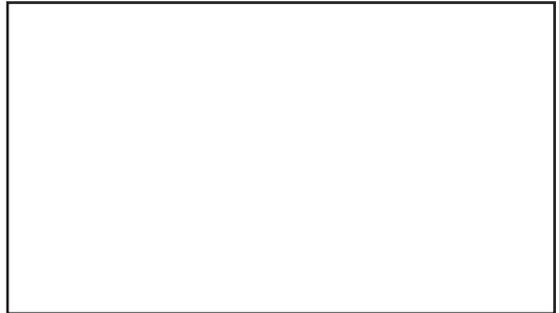


Fig. 2: Clarke leading the race with crowds watching

capacity not exceeding 76 bore and 76 stroke' with Clarke's winning time being just over 13 minutes. It would be interesting to know what the occupants of the large new houses in Clarence Road visible in the background made of their disturbed Bank Holiday afternoon.

Many thanks to Gill and Tony for their permission to reproduce the photos here. By the way, we remain none-the-wiser as to how that bike ended up in Australia.

Jon Mein and Anne Wares

LECTURE PROGRAMME

10 September to 19 November 2019

All lectures commence at 7.45pm.

All lectures are held at Marlborough Road Methodist Church.

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

Non-members will be charged £5 to attend a lecture.

Tuesday 10 September

AGM followed by

“A fiver for your vote, Sir?” Bribery and corruption in St Albans, 1850

Ann Dean, Dr Tony Berk and Rob Weston

In 1850/51 an immense scandal rocked St Albans which had both local and national implications. The town was caught bribing voters in the by-election of Christmas 1850. At the time, election bribery was, quietly, a normal part of the process in the country at large, but a complaint was made and we were caught! In 1851 a Commission was set up in Parliament, and ultimately in the town, to examine the evidence. Witnesses were called, proceedings were initiated, the verdict given and punishment meted out. This talk tells the surprising story of the events from the beginning. It introduces the colourful central characters, describes the events as they occurred and tells of the aftermath and the fate of those involved and indeed of St Albans itself.

Ann Dean has been a member of the Society since the 1970s. She qualified as a St Albans City Blue Badge Guide in 1996. She is Hon. Archivist to St Michael's Church and an HALH Committee member.

Tony Berk is a St Albans Green Badge Guide and has been a lecturer and professional technical writer for most of his life. He currently serves as Chairperson of the Society's Programme Development Committee.

Rob Weston has resided in St Albans since 1964. Always interested in history he became a St Albans Tour Guide in 1982 and obtained his Blue Badge in 1996. He retired from guiding in 2006, since which time he has remained an Honorary Member. He was Chairman of the Society's Architectural and Local History Group for 3 years in the early 2000s.

Tuesday 17 September

Hugh Myddelton and the New River

Helen Gibson

The New River is a source of fresh water for London built in the early 17th century from Hertfordshire to Islington. Its organisation was accomplished by Hugh Myddelton and it is still in use today. Its route has left many historic traces from Ware to London including, the New River Path delineated recently by Thames Water.

Helen is a retired teacher and council member of the East Herts Archaeological

Society, a position she took up in 2006 following the sudden death of her husband Adrian Gibson. She had previously assisted him since 1956 when he was the excavator responsible for discovering Swanscombe Man (now thought to be a woman).

Tuesday 24 September

1666: Plague, War and Hellfire

Rebecca Rideal

1666 was a watershed year for England. The outbreak of the Great Plague, the eruption of the second Dutch War and the Great Fire of London all struck the country in rapid succession and with devastating repercussions. Shedding light on these dramatic events, Rebecca Rideal reveals an unprecedented period of terror and triumph. Based on original archival research and drawing on little-known sources, she will take the audience on a thrilling journey through a crucial turning point in English history.

Rebecca Rideal is an historian, writer and TV producer, whose credits include: 'Adventurers' Guide to Britain', 'Bloody Tales of the Tower' and the triple Emmy award winning series David Attenborough's 'First Life'. She is the author of the best-selling 1666: Plague, War and Hellfire and has written extensively for the press including the Guardian, New Statesman and BBC History Magazine. Rebecca is also the founder of HistFest, a brand-new history festival that aims to entertain and educate.

Tuesday 8 October

A landscape through time: excavations along the A14

Emma Jeffery

Over the past three years archaeologists from MOLA-Headland Infrastructure have been working on the A14 Cambridge to Huntingdon Road Scheme, excavating a range of sites along the route. This is one of the largest archaeological projects ever undertaken and has uncovered a range of archaeology including mammoths and woolly rhinos, Neolithic henges and Bronze Age barrows, Roman pottery kilns, Saxon settlements and a deserted medieval village!

Emma is a project manager at MOLA-Headland Infrastructure, a joint venture between Museum of London Archaeology and Headland Archaeology. She was the 'Section Lead' for the western half of the scheme and is now working on the post-excavation for the project.

Tuesday 15 October

The Peterloo Massacre of 1819 and its significance in the history of democracy in Britain

Dr Katrina Navickas

This lecture will explain the history and the legacy of the Peterloo Massacre of 16 August 1819, when yeomanry cavalry attacked a peaceful democratic rally in Manchester. 2019 is the bicentenary of the

Peterloo Massacre, which has been marked with a series of commemorations, the building of the first permanent memorial and a major feature film by Mike Leigh. This talk will examine the significance of the events in the longer history of democratic movements in Britain and its contested legacy.

Dr Navickas is Reader in History at the University of Hertfordshire. Her most recent book is Protest and the Politics of Space and Place 1789-1848 (Manchester University Press). She is currently British Academy Mid-Career Fellow for a project on the history of public space in England.

Tuesday 22 October

The decline of the many inns of St Albans, 1660-1850

Jon Mein

In 1663 St Albans had at least 30 inns; by 1830 there were fewer than a handful left. This story of local decline is contrary to the national picture. Looking at innovations in technology, business process and institutions, this talk explores the reasons for this paradox.

Jon has been a member of the Society for 14 years, is editor of its newsletter and closely involved with several of its projects and publications. His general interest in pubs arises from his work on the Victorian Temperance movement. This research should appear in book form in due course.

Tuesday 5 November

The history of the garden and grounds of Wimpole Hall

Alison Moller

The lecture will cover the history of the garden and grounds at Wimpole Hall from the Iron Age to the present but with particular emphasis on the long 18th century when a host of famous architects and garden designers were employed and left their mark; James Gibbs, Henry Flitcroft, Charles Bridgeman, Sir John Soane, Humphry Repton and H.E. Kendall to name a few.

Please note that the timing of this lecture will extend to 9.00pm in order to incorporate new information concerning the archaeological excavations (September 2018) that discovered an Iron Age site.

Alison has been teaching something to somebody for over 45 years. Having read Archaeology at Leicester she completed a Post Graduate Certificate of Education and taught for two years. Moving to the Isle of Man meant teaching in schools was not allowed so she studied for the British Horse Society exams and taught riding as well as competing at dressage. On returning to the mainland she then also studied for the Wine and Spirit Education exams and had been a Wine Educator since 1982. This led to an interest in Geology and she completed a BSc in Geology in 2014. Alison's interest in Garden History started in 2007 by studying for the Certificate and then the Diploma at

Capel Manor. An MA in Garden and Landscape History at the Institute of Historical Research followed in 2017.

Tuesday 12 November

Disraeli and the historians

Dr Ian St John

Disraeli once began a pamphlet with the question: Who is He? After pondering whether he was a Whig or a Tory, no clear resolution emerged. No wonder contemporaries were perplexed by Disraeli, and historians have continued to disagree over his ideas and significance ever since. Even among the gallery of nineteenth century politicians, Disraeli - novelist, wit, dandy, friend of Queen Victoria, imperialist and Jew – stands out as a remarkable personality. In this illustrated lecture, Dr St John surveys the leading historical interpretations of Disraeli's long political career, giving particular attention to the role of ideas in Disraeli's politics and his motives for passing the Second Reform Act of 1867.

Ian St John studied for a BA at the University of York and a D.Phil at Nuffield College, Oxford, where he worked with Sir David Butler on the Nuffield Election Studies. Since 2000 he has taught History and Economics at Haberdashers' Aske's School, Elstree, where he is director of the School's Outreach Programme. He has published several books,

including (with Martin Westlake) Neil Kinnock: The Biography; Disraeli and the Art of Victorian Politics; Gladstone and the Logic of Victorian Politics; The Historiography of Gladstone and Disraeli; The Making of the Raj; and The Makers of Modern Economic Thought. He is currently writing a book on nineteenth century Oxford.

Tuesday 19 November

Discovering a monumental Mycenaean tomb in central Greece

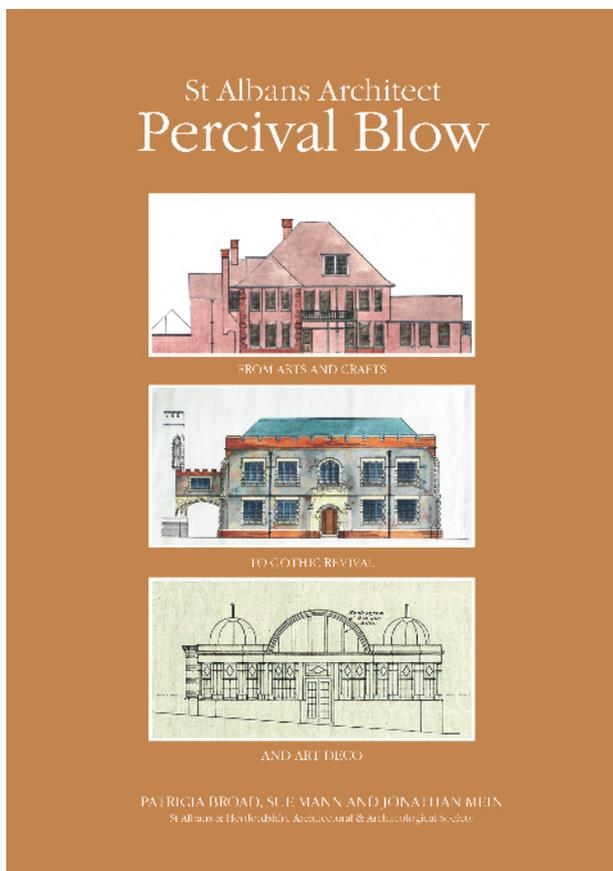
Dr Yannis Galanakis

In 2017, the University of Cambridge in collaboration with the Greek Ministry of Culture excavated one of the largest Mycenaean rock-cut chamber tombs ever to have been discovered in central Greece. With most of the tombs of the period looted in antiquity and modern times, it was therefore extraordinary to come across an intact burial dating to around 1350BC. This talk will retell the story of discovery, assess its importance and present the excavation's preliminary findings.

Dr Yannis Galanakis was the Project Co-Director for this excavation. He is Senior Lecturer in Classics, specialising in Mycenaean archaeology, at the University of Cambridge, where he is also the Director of Archives and of the Museum of Classical Archaeology.

If you have an interest in late-Victorian traction engines and would be willing to help interpret a couple of photographs, please get in touch: newsed@stalbanhistory.org.

Brand New Society Publication



Recent research by the Society has resulted in the publication in September of a new book: *St Albans Architect Percival Blow – from Arts and Crafts to Gothic Revival and Art Deco* by Patricia Broad, Sue Mann and Jonathan Mein, price £8.99 (£6.99 members), ISBN 978-0-901194-22-0.

To order a copy of this new full colour, fully illustrated, 64-page publication, see p. 5 inside or email publications@stalbanshistory.org.

The front cover conundrum: those Percival Blow-designed premises are on the corner of St Peter's and Victoria streets. Commissioned by W.S. Green, they are occupied by the Skipton Building Society. For more about Blow, see our new book.