



February 2019 newsletter

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We also occasionally add watermarks to prevent internet 'scraping'.

Newsletter Editor

May 2019

Newsed@stalbanhistory.org



ST ALBANS & HERTFORDSHIRE
ARCHITECTURAL & ARCHAEOLOGICAL
SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER 211

February 2019



St Albans Pageant Poster, 1907
(SAHAAS Library; digitised by Malcolm Merrick)

Included in this issue:

The Finds Liaison Officer
Black Lion Excavation
Second World War Defences
City's First Woman Mayor

News From Australia
The Ancient Briton
Memories of Barclays
A Replacement Bridge

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SPONSORSHIP?

Your Council believes that we could perhaps raise extra funding by having one or more of our activities sponsored by local organisations etc – this could be anything from an individual lecture to our complete '175th anniversary' celebrations in 2020. If you have any suggestions of appropriate companies etc that you think could be amenable to having discussions with us, could I please ask you to let me know via admin@stalbanhistory.org.

Bryan Hanlon

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

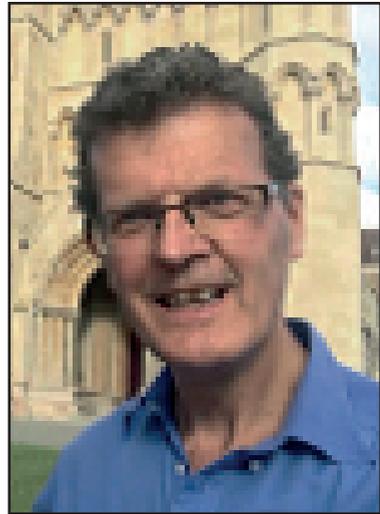
When Francesca and I were first married, we lived in Pageant Road in St Albans, so the front cover of this newsletter has some resonance!

As ever this edition is full of good things.

Our first event of the year was the New Year Party at Verulamium Museum, and it was great to see so many of you there. My thanks to Bryan Hanlon, the master of ceremonies and fiendish quizmaster, Val Argue for co-ordinating the food, Jessica Cox and Jenny Miles for the beautiful music, and to so many people who helped make it happen.

The lecture programme continues. It is a sign of the intellectual strength of the Society that seven of this year's talks are being given by members. As of this January, we are now charging for non-members attending lectures – it will help defray the costs of the programme (including hall hire, non-member speaker' fees and travel costs) and we think it important that members see the value in their annual subscription payment.

Also free to members is the exciting new programme of research seminars, taking place in the Library. At each seminar, a short presentation (around



15 minutes) will be followed by discussion. For those with little research experience, it is an opportunity to learn more about sources available for their own fields of interest as well as sparking interest in topics they may not yet have considered. It is also a good opportunity to meet fellow members who are doing, or would like to do research into local history in its multitude of aspects.

I counted 24 people at the first seminar led by Kate Morris on 'St Albans During the Napoleonic Wars'. The discussion ran well over the allotted hour and the varied contributions and questions from different members made it really interesting. I never knew that many potential recruits could not serve in the army since they had lost their teeth

and could not bite off the twisted paper end of gunpowder cartridges to replenish their muskets.

Another initiative still in the planning is our proposed conference in June to coincide with the opening of the new visitor centre at the Abbey and Verulamium Museum's 80th birthday. The topic will be urban development in the later Roman period.

One of the key movers in this conference will be Kris Lockyear, familiar to all of us as a member and regular contributor to the lecture programme. Together with

other local societies in Hertfordshire, we are members of the Community Archaeology Geophysics Group, of which Kris is the prime mover. Their project to survey and map Verulamium was highly commended by the Council for British Archaeology as one of the top three Community Archaeology Projects of the year. Trebles all round.

None of this would be possible without you, our members. Best wishes for 2019.

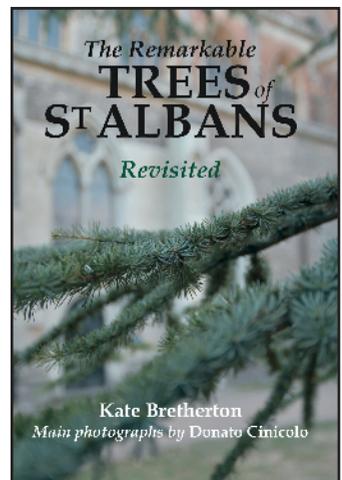
Sandy Walkington

HOT OFF THE PRESS

Kate Bretherton's long-awaited *The Remarkable Trees of St Albans Revisited* has arrived. All Donato Cinicolo's beautiful photographs are there as in the sold-out 2010 edition, plus additional informative text and photographs to bring us up to date - and an index.

Copies are available as follows:

- at SAHAAS meetings @ £12 cash, cheque or paid into Kate's account;
- directly from Kate (01582 791912, 07901 945920, or kate@hellotrees.co.uk) @ £12, free postage or delivery;
- at St Albans Museum + Gallery, Verulamium Museum, Waterstones and Harpenden Books @ £14.95;
- online from Amazon at £14.95 + postage or www.hellotrees.co.uk for £14.95 (free postage or delivery).



DAVID GIRDZIUSZ

We are sorry to record that David died in November 2018. Dave, as he liked to be known, and his wife Gill had been members only since 2013. They had moved down to St Albans from Sunderland after retirement to be closer to their family. As soon as they arrived, they joined a number of groups and societies. SAHAAS was a priority as Dave was a teacher of history.

Shortly after Roy and Doreen Bratby announced in 2016 their decisions to resign from the chair of the Programme Development Committee and as Lecture Secretary, respectively, Dave and Gill volunteered to take up these busy roles. That they did this, despite their relative lack of experience of Society matters, is an example of their positivity and 'can do' attitude. They both filled the 'big shoes' admirably, making the roles their own. Dave, with his intellect, thoughtfulness and real sense of humour, contributed much to SAHAAS and will really be missed. Something that exemplifies these virtues of Dave's and his love of life is illustrated by two of the songs he chose for his funeral service: *You are my Sunshine* and *The Ballad of Davy Crockett*.



Christine McDermott

HERTFORDSHIRE ASSOCIATION FOR LOCAL HISTORY

HALH exists to promote the study and enjoyment of local history in Hertfordshire by assisting and encouraging local history societies; coordinating a network of local history recorders; organising events during the year; providing 'priming' loans to societies for special projects.

KEEP THE DATE - SPRING MEETING AND AGM

Venue: Pirton, 18 May 2019

The programme will include talks by local societies and the annual Lionel Munby Lecture. Full details to follow.

SOCIETY OUTINGS

We are planning two outings later in the year.

1 May - Walmer Castle, Richborough and Faversham

The Society is organising a day's coach trip to Kent for both members and guests. We shall be visiting:

Walmer Castle

Originally built by Henry VIII as a moated keep with four bastions, it became the private residence of the Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports in the 18th century. The interior of the castle displays a range of historical objects and pictures associated with the property and its Lord Wardens, and the grounds include the Queen Mother's Garden from 1997. Upon our arrival, the Lord Warden's Tea Rooms will be available for coffee, tea, snacks etc.

Entrance fee £9.80 (free to members of English Heritage)

Richborough

Rutupiae (or *Portus Ritupis*) was founded by the Romans after their invasion of Britain in AD 43. Because of its position near the mouth of the river Stour, *Rutupiae* was a (the?) major British port under the Romans and the starting point for their equivalent of Watling Street. A major triumphal arch was erected here,

passing through it denoted formal entry into Britannia.

Entrance fee £5.90 (free to members of English Heritage)

Faversham

A settlement since pre-Roman times, Faversham has a number of landmarks, with several historic churches including St Mary of Charity, Faversham Parish Church, and the Maison Dieu amongst its 450 listed buildings. We should arrive in time for lunch, after which we shall be offered a guided tour of the town (cost £5), including the original Queen Elizabeth Grammar School (1578) and hopefully the Guildhall (1574).

Cost is likely to be £40 to £50 dependent upon numbers. This includes the entrance fees where payable. If you are interested, please contact Bryan Hanlon (hanlonbryan@gmail.com or 01727 851734).

11 June - Wrest Park, Bedfordshire

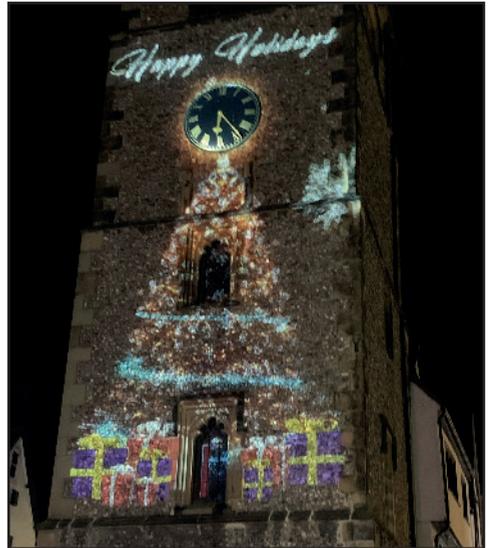
Following the interesting talk given to the Society last September about the property, we are planning a visit here in June. Full details will follow shortly. If you have any questions about this in the meantime, please email me via: programme@stalbanhistory.org

Tony Berk

CLOCK TOWER REPORT

Our final opening of 2018 was for the turning on of the Christmas Lights in November. Although we only opened for four hours, we had a very busy 378 visitors (compared to a normal, average opening day of 200.) 'Hunt the Parachuting Santas' proved very popular with the children and all the prize chocolate Santas were given out. The new projected Christmas lights provided by Rewind, the media company located near the Clock Tower, really were quite stunning. The 'Happy Holidays' greeting they initially projected on to the building caused some controversy online. Social media commentators complained that we don't have a 'Holiday Tree' or a 'Holiday Cake', that we live in a Cathedral town where Christmas is celebrated and wasn't this "political correctness gone mad"? It was duly replaced with – 'Merry Christmas'.

The Big Weekend (6th/7th April) is again being run by Visit Herts and we will be participating by offering ballot ticket winners exclusive access to the Clock Tower and a Clock Tower Memorabilia Goody Bag. The Big Weekend is all about giving Hertfordshire residents the chance to discover – or rediscover – the array of fantastic things to see and do on their doorstep – be a tourist in your own home town. Please visit www.hertsbigweekend.co.uk for more



'Happy Holidays'

information and to enter the ballot for a variety of attractions .

Preparations are in progress for the Clockateers' Party to be held in the Verulamium Museum on Friday, 22 March 2019 at 7.30pm. Invitations will be posted in February to all our Clockateers but anyone thinking of becoming a Clockateer is welcome to come along too and find out more about helping to keep this iconic building open to the public.

We will open for the summer season on Good Friday, 19 April and close on Sunday, 29 September 2019.

Caroline Howkins

LIBRARY REPORT

Another busy period with visitors on most mornings in encouraging numbers.

Cataloguing is now building a nice head of steam, particularly since asking Soutron to tweak our Catalogue Record Import interface with their main source COPAC. We have now passed the 2000 items on-line mark. The cataloguing of Beardsmore books is close to complete. Re Pamphlets, we are completing the cataloguing of existing stock and ironing out historic inconsistencies in shelf marks and classification prior to tackling the Beardsmore pamphlets. Preliminary sorting of the latter, and removal of duplicates is well under way. Our thanks to Di Dunn, Ros Trent, Lin Watson, Caroline Howkins, and recent volunteer, David Harrold, who are all making valuable and enthusiastic contributions here.

Lists and Indexes. Di Dunn and Susan Smith continue developing the Subject Files of Newscuttings, etc. Ros Trent's listing of the remarkable late ex-Beardsmore acquisition of estate particulars provided weekly diversion. Terry Price has completed arranging the Gerard McSweeney materials, and is now deep into the J T Smith Papers. All excellent work.

1907 Pageant postcards. We were delighted recently to discover in the Beardsmore Gift what we believe to be a full set of Tuck's colour postcards of the 1907 Pageant in a copy of Ash-down's libretto for the event.

Library Computing. Re. Image Collection Management Software, we will be meeting with Sarah Keeling at a date to be set to discuss the St Albans Museums' experience and systems used.

Eileen Roberts materials. The second tranche of materials from Dr Roberts' collections is now in the SAHAAS Library.

Parking at Sandridge Gate. As a result of a prolonged period of difficult parking, with the approval of SADC, we are intending having signs made and attached to the walls facing parking bays near door 26 reserving them for SAHAAS visitors on Wednesday and Friday mornings. Lyn Henny of SADC is also looking into allocating a disabled bay close to door 26.

Digitisation of Early SAHAAS Publications - Addenda. From the early 1850s, the Associated Architectural Societies published annual volumes of papers presented to county antiquarian societies. For the first, 1850/51 volume the St Albans Architectural and Archaeological Society contributed two papers

together with its current membership list. Thanks to Malcolm Merrick we have digitised these items and published them on the website on the 'Transactions and Early Publications' pages. The titles are: *Some Account of Relics preserved in a Church at Cologne, considered to be part of the body of St Alban, Protomartyr of Britain ...* by Revd H J B Nicholson and *Notice of a Seal formed of Bone, discovered in the Abbey Church ...* by Albert Way. A copy of the original volume is in SAHAAS Library.

The Library Team held a seasonally relaxed but productive meeting on 14 December at Sandridge Gate. As usual I commend the work of an enthusiastic, well informed and dedicated team. Tony Cooper and Terry Price have produced a clear plan of the library indicating the locations of the various sections.

Donald Munro

Recent Acquisitions

The remarkable trees of St Albans revisited, by Kate Bretherton; main photographs by Donato Cinicolo. Redbourn: the author, 2018. 320 pp, illus. A revised and enlarged version of the book first published in 2010. The history and background of each tree is narrated.

The toll roads of Buckinghamshire, 1705-1881, with their connections into neighbouring counties; the making of the modern road network, by Peter Gulland. Aylesbury: Buckinghamshire Archaeological Society, 2017. 318pp, illus, maps, index. Part 1 treats the work of turnpike trusts. Part 2 records the individual histories of the 24 Buckinghamshire turnpikes, including that between Hatfield and Reading via St Albans. Appendices provide statistics for each trust in 1836.

Hertfordshire within living memory, compiled by the Hertfordshire Federation of Women's Institutes. St Albans: Countryside Books, 1992. 253 pp, illus. A collection of memories of everyday life from 1900 to 1960 sent by Institutes in the county; arranged by broad topics.

Family group. Luton: Home Counties Newspapers, 1952. 44pp, illus, photos. An account of the Gibbs family, publishers of the *Hertfordshire Advertiser*. The company was founded by John Gibbs in 1836. Includes a coloured drawing by James Burton Jr. of the Clock House [sic], St Albans in 1826. Newscuttings from the 1960s relating to the Gibbs family firm are pasted onto the endpapers.

Recent journal articles

In *The Alban Link*, Autumn 2018

pp 7-10 "The pulpit in the Crossing", by Anthony Oliver. The Victorian pulpit was largely funded by Hertfordshire freemasons, and installed in 1883. Its history is briefly described, and two plans show the location of the surrounding figures in 1883, and their present positions.

In *Rickmansworth Historical Review* no.16, October 2018

pp 9-13 "Primitive Methodism in Croxley", by Neil Rees. Methodism was brought to Hertfordshire by missionaries from the Reading circuit in 1840, but the first meeting place in Croxley Green was in James Pierce's house in 1866; the first chapel opened in 1868. The congregation grew, and by 1892 needed a larger chapel which is still in use.

pp 14-16 "Suffragettes in action in the old parish (2), April 1913". The *West Herts and Watford Observer* reported that suffragettes had caused the burning of Roughwood House, Chorleywood. The report is reproduced, with

additional notes on ownership of the house.

pp 17-22 "West Hertfordshire in the steps of Herbert Tompkins, part 4, Casciobridge to Batchworth and Rickmansworth, 17 June 2017", by Brian Thomson. A continuation of the walk following Tompkins' account in his book of 1902. (Part 3 was noted in "Library Notes" of October 2017).

In *The London Colney Local History Society: The Record*, no.35, Autumn/Winter 2018

pp 4-6 "Who lived at Cotlands and when? Part 2", by Colin Chapman. In the First World War, Cotlands was requisitioned for use as a prisoner of war work camp; the administration and inspection of such camps is related. The inmates worked as labourers on local farms. Post-war the house was occupied by a series of six families, briefly detailed, before it was demolished in 1965. A photograph of Cotlands in 1960 is included.

Tony Cooper

MUCH YEARNING IN ST ALBANS, 14 FEBRUARY 1876

"Monday was St Valentine's day. There appears to be no falling off in the number of valentines which continue to be transmitted from year to year through the post-office. At St Albans ... it is estimated that upwards of 5000 extra communications went through the post-office on Sunday and Monday last, the assortment of which necessitated the employment of extra staff." (*Herts Advertiser*, 19 February 1876, p. 5)

PUBLICATION COMMITTEE REPORT

This February *Newsletter* is an opportunity to update readers on our work with Twitter. When we started two years ago, our aim was to use Twitter to promote *St Albans: Life on the Home Front, 1914-1918*, and at the same time raise awareness of SAHAAS. We later included *The Old Town Hall, St Albans*.

We concluded early on that the tweets were playing a useful role – some tweets got views of up to 2000 – and so we continued to tweet. Our lecture programme is the latest area of interest. We are using Twitter to draw the public's attention to our talks (in the hope that they will join SAHAAS after attending a couple of talks). The tweets are attracting interest, particularly when they include the abstract of the talk. Recent tweets containing the abstract have averaged 1000 views.

We now have 284 followers, of whom around 55 per cent are based in Hertfordshire. Many of our followers are individuals but history societies, heritage organisations, and local charities and businesses also feature strongly.

We ourselves follow history and archaeology societies (local, county

and national), including the Royal Historical Society and the Society of Antiquaries. We also cover First World War projects, archives, and individual historians and researchers. This provides a bird's-eye view of the enormous breadth of activity in the wider history community. It also enables me to step outside the 'St Albans bubble' and see how our society fits in.

Twitter has also been a tool for learning. Through it I have come across some excellent blogs and First World War projects. A recent discovery is the Survey of Lincoln, a group of people who research the built history of their city and publish their findings in 'affordable booklets'. This might be a project we can learn from.

This brings me back to the *The Old Town Hall, St Albans*, which got a very positive review from the British Association for Local History in October. The reviewer said the author had done an 'excellent job of bringing to life the history of [this] very important building.' You can find the full review at: www.balh.org.uk/publications/reviews/october-2018-reviews.

Pat Broad

THE NEW YEAR PARTY

This year's party attracted both newer as well as established members, over 90 in total. The President was in 'sparkling form' welcoming everyone to the Party and taking the opportunity to compliment Jenny Miles (keyboard) and Jessica Cox (cello) for their musical entertainment.

We were delighted to welcome both the Mayor, Cllr Rosemary Farmer and her consort and to learn that she intends joining the Society once her Mayoral year is over. (At least three recent Mayors have become members, after leaving office). We were also delighted to welcome professors Tim Boatswain and Geraint John of the Civic Society, Cllr Annie Brewster, and Andy Instone, Senior Historic Environment Advisor at Hertfordshire County Council.

The Hon. Secretary's annual current-affairs quiz was up to its usual fiendish standard, won on this occasion by Francesca Weal – our president's wife! I am afraid that I have never entered because

I always remember where I would look for the answer, having been a Librarian for 46 years!

Holding the annual event at Verulamium Museum has its challenges, limitations on the numbers who can be comfortably accommodated for example. Moreover, times at which we can get access to set up in advance of the party are restricted. So, we are always grateful to have the support of the Museum's staff and particularly to have had such a positive response from the membership to volunteer to help with the organisation. This certainly made it easier this year.

Our thanks to everyone who contributed food and so elegantly prepared the buffet table, and to the servers of drinks. and preparers of food. This really is a team effort. Last and certainly not least the party would not happen without Val Argue and Bryan Hanlon.

John G E Cox

Note: see the back cover for photographs of the event.

THE NEWSLETTER

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

LISTING BRICKET WOOD'S RAILWAY CONTROL CENTRE

The Society had a role in the recent listing of the former Air-Raid Precaution Railway Control Centre in Bricket Wood adjacent to the Abbey Line station. We were contacted by a local resident, concerned that the current owners of the shelter proposed to demolish it. Having met him and visited the site, we put him in touch with a member of the parish council familiar with the building's history. The parish council supported the application, and Historic England has now added the building to The National Heritage List for England.

Bricket Wood may seem a peculiar place for such a facility. But signal boxes in urban locations had been shown to be vulnerable to air raids, those at Birmingham and Manchester both being destroyed in the Second World War.

Post-war policy proposed decentralising air-raid precaution railway control centres at least 10 miles from likely targets so that the railway could continue to function even in the event of a megaton-size explosion. The staff would man the shelters before the start of hostilities and remain in them for the duration of the threat of war.

There were thirty-five such centres, some housed in bunkers while others were probably mobile, connected to auxiliary cabling. Five Type 'L' centres were constructed, including Bricket Wood (for Euston), and Knebworth (for Kings Cross).

Only the Bricket Wood and Burntisland centres survive. Bricket Wood was constructed in 1954 out of reinforced concrete with 2-foot thick walls. It cost £8,500, with an annual projected operating cost of £150. Flat-roofed with a tall cylindrical ventilation shaft, its entrances are protected by standalone blast walls. There is a staggered double entrance cell, perhaps designed to act as a decontamination area. Curiously, no provision was made for sleeping accommodation.

The Historic England listing documents state that 'it is not known whether the Bricket Wood centre was ever furnished or used for its intended purpose'. However local residents confirm that the centre was certainly equipped with desks, telephone and cable racking. An application to build dwellings in replacement of the shelter has now been withdrawn, and local groups are considering various community uses.

Sandy Walkington

ALBERT MOODY'S SCRAPBOOK

In 2008, Albert Moody's contribution to the positive development of post-war St Albans was acknowledged with the placing of a bench in the Municipal Gardens. My comment as Mayor at the time, was "As Borough surveyor in the critical post-war period Albert Moody made a huge contribution to conservation of the medieval streetscape in St Albans when replacement with modern blocks was fashionable. That has given us a special identity as a historic market town, which we cherish, and we must strive to maintain and enhance that asset against a legitimate need for continuing development. I am very pleased that we have taken this opportunity to honour a professional who understood the balance that was needed".

The city was indeed fortunate to have advice from such a visionary on the very necessary development at that time. Never a new town as such, St Albans had targets to meet for London's re-housing need, as well as its own housing list. For the latter, the plan drawn up in 1939 for the Cottonmill estate had had to wait

until the war ended. Government targets were met by the designation of such as the Marshalswick and Jersey farms as building land for private estates.

Moody, trained in his native Luton, had come to St Albans as an assistant just before the war broke out. Promoted to Borough Engineer and Surveyor in 1946, he remained in post until the 1974 local government reorganization. As such he oversaw not only the growth of the town from a population of 43,000 to 60,000, but the refurbishment rather than rebuilding of much council owned property, including houses in Fishpool Street and the Christopher Inn in French Row. This led to the designation of much of the old town as one of the country's first Conservation Areas and the statutory listing of many of its more significant old buildings.

The scrapbook he kept relating to significant council matters has been deposited by his family along with some of his development reports and will be housed in the Society's Library.

Kate Morris

ROMAN URBAN HISTORY CONFERENCE: SATURDAY, 29 JUNE 2019

To mark this year's Alban Festival and Verulamium Museum's 80th anniversary, the Society is organising an all-day conference covering urban development in the later Roman period. This is in partnership with the Museum. More information will follow shortly via enews and the Society's website.

A REMINDER OF THE FOLLY LANE EXCAVATION

Several months ago, Ian Tonkin, one of our members, brought a copy of this photo into the Library querying what it showed. He had taken the picture in the early 1990s during the Folly Lane excavation. While we usually associate Folly Lane with the internationally important chieftain's burial, the photo clearly shows a feature far more recent than that.



Spigot mortar base in Folly Lane, 1992 (Copyright Ian Tonkin)

Equally at a loss we asked Simon West, the District Archaeologist, for his opinion; he had worked on the dig after all. Simon immediately identified it as the spigot mortar base which he had excavated. This type of mortar was a piece of anti-tank equipment provided to what became the Home

Guard in the early years of the last war. Ian's photo shows the emplacement from which the mortar would have been fired. As Simon noted in his excavation report*, the site's defensive position on the south-facing slope gave it good views up the Redbourn road.

So, why publish a good but hardly newsworthy photo now? This note is really a call-out to members with an interest in military archaeology to ask

if there are specialist websites where details of the site should be logged. Two other questions come to mind as well: are there other spigot mortar bases lurking in and around the district? (None is noted in the Herts Historic Environment Record.) Have original plans recording their locations survived at the

National Archives for example? If you have any thoughts about this, please email us: library@stalbanhistory.org.

* S. West, 'A Spigot Mortar Base discovered at Folly Lane, St Albans', *Hertfordshire's Past*, 40 (Spring 1996), pp. 18-19; copy in our library.

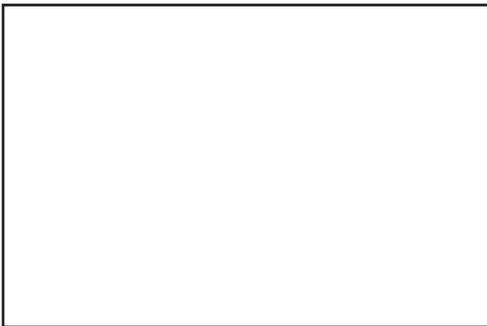
A ST ALBANS MOTORCYCLE IN AUSTRALIA

Glen Ross recently contacted the Society looking for a photo of the premises of the New Century Company trading in St Albans during the Edwardian period. We were able to send him this photo from the Society's collection.

The reason for the enquiry is that he had found the tank and frame for a motorcycle built by the company around this time amongst a pile of junk near his home in

Australia. Many hours of tender loving care later and the bike looks as good as new. Well, almost: several replacement parts including the engine have had to be found from other manufacturers.

Glen is keen to learn more about the company and its products. The supposed proprietor, Dudley R Clarke, is of particular interest due to his time spent racing bikes at Canning Town. So, if you have any further information, please let me know (newsed@stalbanhistory.org) and I'll put you in touch with Glen.



New Century Motors, 96 London Road, c.1910
(SAHAAS Arthur Allen collection)



New Century badge on the tank

The "NEW CENTURY" Motor and Cycle Co.,
 96, LONDON ROAD,
 ST. ALBANS.

PETROL, OILS, GREASE, PLUGS, LAMPS, &c.
 FULL STOCK OF MOTOR TYRES, CONTINENTAL AND CLINCHERS.
 RECHARGING NIGHT or DAY. REPAIRS GUARANTEED.

CYCLES—Rudges, Swifts, Sparkbrooks, &c. Cash or Gradual Payments.
 Full Stock of CYCLE TYRES. All sizes.

CYCLES and MOTOR CYCLES BUILT. All Repairs Guaranteed.

ONLY ADDRESS IN... ST. ALBANS,
 96, LONDON ROAD,
The "NEW CENTURY" Motor and Cycle Co.

New Century Motors advertisement in the 1907
Pageant Souvenir Programme (SAHAAS)



Glen on his New Century bike

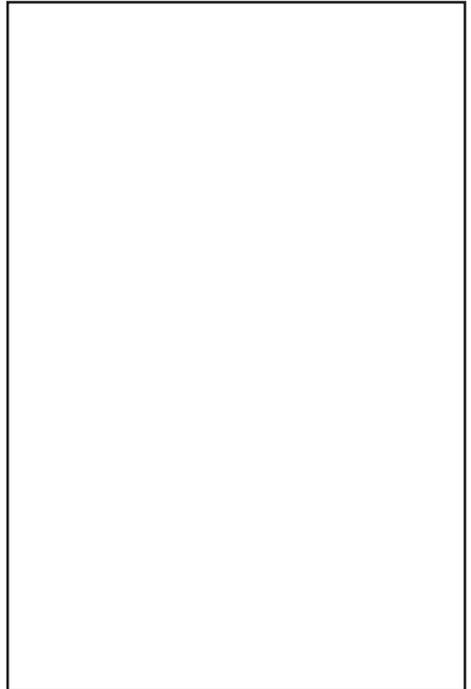
CLOCK TOWER CURIO NO. 3 - THE MARKET BELL

The Market Bell is so named because it previously hung in the old Market House in Market Place until the building was demolished in 1855. It was then transferred to the new Corn Exchange in 1857 but, by 1869, it lay 'useless at the Borough Police Station' (*Herts Advertiser*, 10 April 1869). The following year it found its final resting place in the Clock Tower next to the medieval great bell 'Gabriel'. It wasn't until 1980 when a new rope was attached and the supports were repaired that it was actually capable of being rung (*Herts Advertiser*, 3 June 1980). The rope system extends down into the entrance room where it is now rung by the first and last child who enters the Clock Tower on open days during the summer season.

The bell was cast by Richard Phelps of Whitechapel in 1729, who in the same year produced the eight larger bells of

the peal in St Peter's Church. It has the name of the incumbent Mayor, Thomas Robins, and the year inscribed around the outside.

Caroline Howkins



ARCHAEOLOGY IN THE 17TH CENTURY

The following extract is from the *Calendar of State Papers Domestic* and dates to 1625. What happened, we wonder?

"42. Petition of Thos. Eliot, Matt. Cawthrop, and Abram Campion to the [King], for permission to dig in the churchyard and lands belonging to the ancient monastery of St Albans, for treasure, one third to be for the King, one third for repairing the church, and the remainder for the petitioners."

THE OLD STRONG ROOM AT BARCLAYS BANK

On 9 October last, Dr Peter Burley gave the Society an excellent talk on St Albans Country House Heritage. He spoke of Mr Marten of Marshalswick mansion, whose family had made their fortune in India which he then invested by founding a bank at 3 High Street in 1875.

At once my memory bounced me back to 1960, when Rosalie and I were juniors at Barclays, who had bought Marten's Bank. Barclays had installed mobile tills which were lowered by lift at night into a modern underground strong room. Along a narrow corridor was another old strong room which had sufficed for Marten's. One day we were asked if we would like to earn extra money by cleaning it out. Rosalie and I were delighted to accept the challenge. The old strong room door was chained open. We peered into the small room, which reeked of damp, and at the three shelves with boxes which contained what? That was the problem. The names of the owners of the boxes were unknown.

The ancient registers upstairs had names which were barely legible. We were charged with finding labels on the boxes, and with generally cleaning the place up. Health and Safety had not been invented.

We climbed up on two rickety chairs and girl-handled a box which was the size of a child's coffin. It was heavy, and our arms were above our heads. We eased it slowly towards us, hoping to lift it down carefully to the ground. But the glue and much of the wood was rotten and with a frightful crash the box and its contents fell to the ground, leaving Rosalie and I frozen with shock, holding only the handles. We looked down at the mess on the floor and were astonished to see through the dust that



Barclays Bank's extensive High Street frontage, 1964
(Photo reproduced courtesy of Barclays Group Archives)

whatever had been inside was made of gold. We gingerly picked out a huge two-handled gold tea pot. Every piece needed two hands to lift it. Plates and serving dishes, a spirit lamp for heating the water beneath a gold samovar - it all shone in the gloom. It was Indian in style.

We were more cautious with the other boxes, but nevertheless most came apart in our hands. There were a pair of ebony maces with silver leopards' heads, and a parure of diamond jewellery: a tiara, a necklace and earrings, and a bracelet. It was all a marvellous sight for two war babies. Gold *and* jewels! We loved it and never forgot that day.

Alas the labels were illegible with damp but at least we were able to call the manager, Mr Barrett, to see the loot. He was astonished to silence, like us. I wonder where it all is now.

Jane Kelsall

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH REPORTS NOW ONLINE

These reports were produced annually by district medical officers of health (MOH) outlining their recent activity. In the late Victorian period, the reports tended to be short and included basic statistics and discussion relating to matters such as birth and date rates and

infant mortality in the district. As the 1900s progressed and each MOH took on more responsibility, their reports expanded accordingly. These are excellent resources for social historians.

For much of this time there were two local MOHs: one for St Albans 'city', the other for the 'rural' areas such as London Colney, Redbourn and Wheathampstead.

The Wellcome Library, an important centre for the study of medical history, has recently made digitised copies of some of these reports freely available on its website. You will find complete runs for both the city and rural districts from 1942 to 1972 inclusive. There are a few reports from the early 1890s until 1941. Search for 'albans medical officer' at wellcomelibrary.org/search-the-catalogues to see what's available.

Elsewhere HALS has an extensive collection of the reports for the city. St Albans Library also has a good but incomplete run for 1923 onwards together with reports for 1913-15. Working out what is where can be difficult so we have produced a simple listing outlining our understanding. If you would like a copy, email library@stalbahshistory.org.

Our thanks to Scott Chalmers at St Albans Library for his help with this.

MARGARET WIX: OUR FIRST WOMAN MAYOR

Although women throughout the country were gradually beginning to play political roles by the early 20th century, St Albans was very slow to act in this. However, in February 1919, Margaret Wix became the first woman to sit on the St Albans City Council, an enormous step forward for the women of the city. She remained a Councillor for thirty years. A City Magistrate as well from 1923 until 1952, she was also the first woman to become Mayor of the city (1924), the first female Alderman (1936), and the first woman to be given the Freedom of the City (1943).

Born in Bath in 1877, she moved to St Albans in 1883 when her father, Ernest Wix, was appointed HM Inspector of Schools for Hertfordshire and parts of Bedfordshire. He clearly believed in the education of women and she and her sisters were early pupils of the St Albans High School for Girls.

In those days of vociferous suffragettes, Margaret was no political firebrand, and did not go in for making speeches. We have no

evidence that she attended even the less militant suffragist meetings. However she was a stalwart worker at the Abbey and active in various civic groups. Appointed to the St Albans Education Committee she regularly inspected local schools and in 1898 was involved in the foundation of the first girls' club in the City, the Victoria Club. However her first major public role was as Organising Secretary for the St Albans Church History Exhibition in 1905. This exhibition at the Town Hall, designed by W J Hardy,



Margaret Wix in her Mayoral robes
(Courtesy of St Albans Museums)

displayed the history of the English church through artefacts and documents from national collections, and was acclaimed nationally. The *Herts Advertiser* reported "Miss Wix has gained for herself encomiums which will tend to place her in the forefront of lady organisers in the county ... she has displayed the most astounding power of organisation, coupled with tact ... and the whole thing has been carried out without ... the slightest suggestion of friction." Clearly she already displayed characteristics which enabled her to win a place on the Council.

Shortly afterward she served as Hon Sec of the Costumes Committee for the 1907 St Albans Pageant. She was also associated with the formation of the St Albans YWCA in 1916 and a Governor of the St Albans High School and of St Albans Girls Grammar School, which she helped to found.

Her particular interests were in education and nursing and when the First World War began, Margaret volunteered with the Voluntary Aid Detachment at Bricket House Military Hospital and worked 6000 hours there, throughout the war, as cook and general service first and then from July 1916 as Quartermaster. In

addition to this arduous work, she took part in, and was frequently the organiser of, the constant fund-raising events throughout the war, selling flags, collecting for numerous causes and manning stalls at fetes, while continuing to take part in concerts and entertainments. She was clearly a good organiser, tactful, reliable, persistent, and not afraid to work. Perhaps not least, she was also reported to have had "a very great sense of humour"!

In 1921 one of the first four roads of Council houses built in the Townsend Estate was named Margaret View in her honour, and a year after her death the new school opened on the New Greens Estate was named after her.

After her death in 1953, Roland Richardson, Chairman of the St Albans Divisional Sessions, said "Now we can only treasure the many memories we hold of her gracious personality and of her tireless devotion to duty."

The next woman to become Mayor of St Albans was Mrs S E Dunham in 1959.

Anne Wares
SAHAAS Biographies Group

THE ANCIENT BRITON: AN 'IMPROVED PUBLIC HOUSE'

In the 20 or so years between the wars, regional and national brewers invested millions of pounds reinvigorating their pubs. Many were redeveloped whilst others were built from scratch. With *per capita* beer sales in long-term decline, the business driver was to create facilities that appealed to all social classes and both sexes rather than just the predominantly working class male clientele of the pre-1914 years. Key features such as tea and dining rooms were essential as they opened up new revenue streams; better and more seating in bar areas discouraged drunkenness; and, where space permitted, off-road parking attracted affluent motorists.

In St Albans we can still see the results of what was then known as the 'improved public house movement'. The rebuilt Blacksmith's Arms in St Peter's Street and the Rats Castle on Hatfield Road are useful examples. Locally, the epitome of improvement is the Ancient Briton on Harpenden Road. (Fig. 1)

In licensing terms, this was not a new pub when it opened in the

summer of 1934. The licence was transferred from the Cross Keys situated across London Road from the Peahen in the city centre then still full of pubs. Both the magistrates, who controlled licensing in the city at the time, and Watford brewer Benskin's had been keen to close this pub as whatever lustre it had when it opened in the 1820s had long since been lost. Approving the Ancient Briton as its replacement a mile to the north-west suited both parties. For Benskin's there was no competition in the growing residential area adjacent to the busy Harpenden Road; for the JPs, the closure of another city centre pub was welcome.

The architect for the new building was H P G Maule, a Hertfordshire resident, who received at least two other commissions from Benskin's. The saloon bar in the centre with the public bar and light and airy tea room (Fig. 2) in the opposing wings were typical of improved pubs.



Fig. 1 - Ancient Briton c.1938

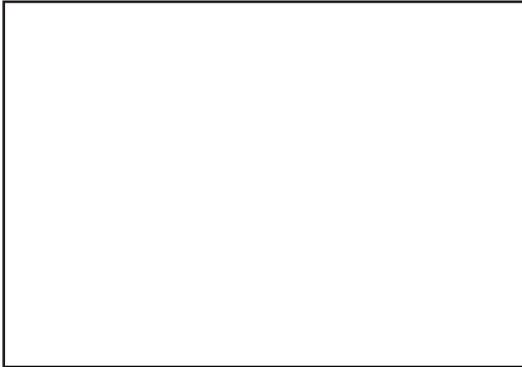


Fig. 2 - Dining Room, c.1938

There was plenty of parking out front as well. The most interesting element of the plans and what set the Ancient Briton apart from the pubs mentioned above were the gardens. The brewer promised there would be “a tea garden with loggia, a bowling green, [and] a paved garden with pergola ...” (Fig. 3) These features, alien to the traditional pub goers of inner-city St Albans, illustrate the intentions of the brewer to attract a mixed clientele. Whether these new customers ever got that bowling green or pergola remains unclear.

Even the name was different from the city’s many historic establishments. Benskin’s originally planned to carry over the Cross Keys name. But, when it opened in the middle of 1934, it was as the Ancient Briton, a title inspired by Mortimer Wheeler’s recent excavations at the Beech Bottom earthworks across the road and a (Roman) coin hoard found just off what became Batchwood Drive.

Now a ‘Harvester’ restaurant, the building remains an attractive landmark even though some of the integrity of Maule’s design has been lost. The removal of the front entrance, for instance, from the centre to the right-hand side of the two-storey frontage impairs his original pleasing symmetry. The less said the better about the large pedimented porch that overwhelms this entrance, the weatherboard cladding and the intrusive modern signage.

The gardens have gone as well, subsumed under the tarmac of additional car-parking. At least the building is still open as a place where people can meet and not redeveloped as housing.

My thanks to Roger Miles for his help with this article.

Jon Mein

Note: photos courtesy of HALS (Acc 3883, *Pennant* journal, volume 3, issue 6 [1938], pp. 216-7).



Fig. 3 - The Tea Garden, c.1938

REPLACING BRIDGE 99

In the August 2018 *Newsletter* (no. 209, pg. 24), Jon Mein and Roderick Douglas mused that the attractive lattice work bridge pictured on the front cover of that edition had been replaced in the 1890s.

In fact, they were about 20 years out: a Midland Railway Company minute of 5 December 1913 records that the quotation of £5809-18s-9d by John Butler & Co. Ltd for the part reconstruction of this bridge (Bridge 99) be accepted. Preliminary preparations included installing crossings at Napsbury signal box to allow trains to cross and pass the works on the slow lines; and blocking up the up-slow line between St Albans North signal box



Fig. 1 (St Albans Museums)

and Sandridge signal box to allow the new 180-foot girders to be stabled.

A presentation album held by St Albans Museums has 28 dated and timed photographs recording the replacement of the original girders. Figure One shows the new down-fast girder with the overhanging walkway, assembled in the works where the rehearsals took place with the four hand-pumped hydraulic jacks.



Fig. 2 (St Albans Museums)

The second photo (Figure Two), dated 26 April 1914, shows the old down-fast girder which has been jacked up on wooden baulks ready to be inched sideways using block and tackle on 2" diameter rollers and on to trolleys on the adjacent up-fast girder.



Fig. 3 (St Albans Museums)

The old girders would then have to be jacked up on to wagons to be taken away for recycling. This picture also shows the scaffolding constructed of wooden posts lashed together with ropes.

It is interesting to note that the original lattice-girders of 1867 were delivered new to the newly-opened Hatfield and St Albans Railway and winched up the steep embankment next to the huge masonry Bridge 100 and on to the Midland line.

Figure Three shows, again working from the old up-fast girder, the new 90-ton down fast girder ready to be lowered into position on the new bed-stones on the abutment. The same process was used for the new up-fast girder working from the new down-fast girder.

Figure Four shows the bridge as it is today. It was completed on 5 May 1914, the workers spending day and night on the project.

With thanks to Sarah Keeling of St Albans Museums for her help with the photos in this article.

Howard Green



Fig. 4 (Roderick Douglas)

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF THE FINDS LIAISON OFFICER

As the Finds Liaison Officer (FLO) for Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire, it is my job to record the thousands of archaeological objects that are found in these counties by members of the public. Most finds are discovered and reported by metal-detectorists, but people also often find things while walking or digging in their gardens and allotments. I, as well as all of my fellow FLOs across the country, are generally interested in anything you come across that was made before about AD 1550 as they all can potentially tell us about where and how people lived in the past, from the Prehistoric right through to the Post-Medieval period, and are potentially recordable by your local Finds Liaison Officer on the Portable Antiquities Scheme database (www.finds.org.uk). The Scheme is entirely voluntary with regards to reporting most types of object, though you must legally report any that may be treasure (i.e. gold and silver objects, and groups of coins from the same find spot, over 300 years old).

As an FLO most of my day is therefore spent identifying and recording objects on the PAS database; a task that usually

involves writing descriptions, taking and editing photographs and weighing and measuring all finds, as well as recording where, when and how they were found (e.g. in pasture / ploughed field / garden etc.). The range of objects I record on a daily and weekly basis varies considerably. Due to the large active metal detecting community in the region most of the objects I receive are made of metal. Roman and Medieval coins are particularly common, but I also record all sorts of other things too, from Prehistoric flint tools and spearheads to Roman, Medieval and Post-Medieval brooches, cosmetic instruments, buckles, pins and thimbles, as well as non-metal objects, like pottery.

One of the most important parts of an FLO's job is to help finders report treas-



Fig. 1. Copper-alloy Late Iron Age to Early Roman rosette variant lion (leontomorphe) derivative bow brooch, Redbourn (BH-8DE379)

ure to the British Museum and the local coroner. This will usually involve filling out a receipt detailing the circumstances of the discovery and then writing a short report on the object(s) that is then checked by curators at the British Museum. If an object is declared as treasure I will then ask local museums whether they are interested in acquiring the find before any subsequent inquests and valuations are then handled by the Treasure Team at the British Museum. Further details about the Treasure Act 1996 and what objects should be reported as treasure are available on finds.org.uk/treasure/advice/summary.

In addition, I (and other FLOs) can also offer advice on several other aspects, including best metal-detecting practice, conservation and storage of your finds, and the potential significance of your objects locally and nationally. I can likewise be found hosting regular finds drop-off and handling sessions at the recently opened St Albans Museum on the first Wednesday (11am-1pm), and The Higgins Bedford Museum on the last Wednesday (1pm-3pm), of every month if you are unable to make an appointment at Verulamium Museum.

The Portable Antiquities Scheme covers the whole of England and Wales, and your contact is the local FLO for your area. A full list of contact names and addresses is available on the website. If



Fig. 2. Silver Early Medieval penny of King Coenwulf of Mercia, Wheathampstead (BH-0F64D9)

the post of FLO in your area is vacant, please contact the Portable Antiquities Office (by telephone 020 7323 8611 or email info@finds.org.uk) for an alternative contact. The address is: Portable Antiquities Scheme, c/o British Museum, London WC1B 3DG. You can contact me via matthew.fittock@stalbans.gov.uk or 01727 751826.

Matt Fittock
Finds Liaison Officer
Verulamium Museum

Note: the photos are copyright The Portable Antiquities Scheme.



Fig. 3. Treasure: Gold Post-Medieval mourning finger-ring, Harpenden (BH-CD9A5E)

BLACK LION, FISHPOOL STREET, RESCUE EXCAVATION

In 1994 through the August Bank Holiday Weekend, St Albans Museums Service was alerted to development work to extend the pub and its car park at the-then Black Lion public house, Fishpool Street, St Albans (TL 138 075: c.80m OD). A possible Roman corn dryer or malting oven, a first century AD well as well as later twelfth to fourteenth and sixteenth century features were recorded by supervised volunteers.

Possible Roman Corn Dryer / Malting Oven

Against the northern end of the site a chamber running north-west to south-east was uncovered formed of two parallel walls 0.84m wide, surviving to a length of 6.5m, with an internal width between them of 2.24m and a maximum height of 0.6m. They were linked at the north-west end by a similar cross wall. At the south-east end, central and leading south-east from this walled rectangle was a tile-lined flue extending 1.84m beyond the ends of the flint wall and 0.94m across internally, terminating in a stoke hole 0.84m across. The flue was composed of large tiles used to bridge the gaps over the columns of pilae from a Roman hypocaust. Visible from the end adjacent to the flue, for a distance



Fig. 1: Possible Roman Corn Dryer showing flue to right and upstanding north wall against the section. The majority of the structure had previously been removed with evidence for digger bucket teeth on the base of the surviving structure.

of 2.36m beginning at a height of 0.05m above the base of the chamber, there was a ledge standing proud of the wall, composed of mortar. This may be evidence for a suspended floor or shuttering, the ledge acting as a stable base on which to rest it. Environmental samples were taken from the flue included two specimens of a type of weevil (*Tarratostichus stussineri*) origi-



Fig. 2: Main body of the corn dryer showing the mortar lip for a possible suspended floor above the photographic scale.

nating from the Eastern Alps and Carpathians, possibly indicating long distance trade.

The pottery was identified by Alison Turner-Rugg. There was no pot from the Roman oven itself, but the demolition layer over the top contained 27 sherds of locally produced Roman sandy wares surviving in the destruction level above the structure. But these were abraded and very fragmentary making dating closer than between c. AD 80 to AD 200, or perhaps later, impossible to ascertain. No later artefacts came from the building. However, it has been suggested that the structure was Medieval, and that it utilised the freely available local building material, Verulamium. The Roman finds would then

be all residual, a not impossible proposition given its location.

Other Features

Additionally a first century well, six medieval pits and three probable wells were uncovered over the southern area of the site nearest to the frontage of Fishpool Street. In the post-medieval period the only features discovered were two short lengths of gully. Finds from one of these included the partial remains of a red ware vessel dating from the sixteenth century. On the basis of the medieval pottery it would therefore seem likely that the pits may all date from the late 13th/early 14th century. In the absence of any glazed ware the other three medieval pits may be slightly earlier, late 12th/13th century. Seven sherds of pottery came from one of the later gullies. They are identified as Early Red Border Ware, dating to the 16th century.

Discussion

The construction at the Black Lion, possibly used as a corn dryer or malting oven, or for other similar processes, is one of a category of multi-functional utilitarian structures utilised within the Roman economy. From its size there is a good argument for its interpretation for use in other than a domestic context, probably part of an undefined small-scale industrial site situated closer to the street frontage. It is possible that all along the street leading out of the town there were similar small-scale sites, and possibly associated shops.



Fig. 3: Excavating the tile flue

A similar, but smaller structure was uncovered at Sacrewell (Morris, 16 and fig. 26a, 183). This consisted of a chamber approximately 2.25m long by 2.25m wide internally. At one end there was a central stoke hole. Its similarity to a medieval malting oven led to its identification as a Roman version. In the malting drying process a large area for drying is needed as the damp grain is spread out in a thin layer. This is then heated from below to help uniform germination. If the floor to this structure had been raised to the level of the mortar plinth, possibly with internal support, then the large floor area would have been ideal for this process.

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Acknowledgements

It was due to the quick response of Museum staff, members of SAHAAS and an appeal at the Museum for volunteers that enough labour was found at short notice that enabled as much work to take place as did. Particular thanks must go to Roger Miles who gave up the whole weekend to help out. In the post-excavation analysis my thanks go to all the volunteers who helped with general finds cleaning, and for their environmental assessment Mrs M Murphy (St Albans Museums Service) and Mrs P E Wagner (Sheffield University). I would also like to thank the devel-

opers who allowed work to continue with their full co-operation and assistance.

Simon West
District Archaeologist

Addendum

The difficulty of dating the oven opens up some other ideas. The houses most of us recognise still as the Black Lion were built c.1715 for the Duke of Marlborough. Somewhat surprisingly bearing in mind their high status brick construction, they formed part of a maltings. The oven was most likely in the yard, the site of the excavation. Early property records from the 16th and 17th centuries - identified by the late Elsie Toms as relating to this site – also suggest the presence of ovens in the yard. In light of this any conclusion that the feature is Roman in origin must remain rather vague.

Jon Mein



Fig. 4: Volunteers at work excavating and recording the structure.

RECENT PLANNING REPORTS

This is the fourth in our series of abstracts from reports considering recent archaeological work or architectural assessments. The reports were produced to satisfy planning conditions. If you would like further information about any of these, please contact Simon West, the District Archaeologist via: simon.west@stalbans.gov.uk.

'Saracen's Head', 15 Holywell Hill

KDK Archaeology Ltd

(Report no. 005/SHH/1; 2016)

A programme of observation and recording of alterations to the historic fabric of 15 Holywell Hill was undertaken between February 2013 and March 2014 as a condition of planning permission for the development of the site. The timber mullioned window that was revealed in the in the rear wing suggests that this was built in the late 16th / early 17th century, and was rebuilt in the late 17th or early 18th century. The smaller addition to the rear wing appears to have been rebuilt in the early 19th century and further 19th century work is evident on the fireplaces and staircase. Archaeological features revealed during the excavation of two pads in the cellar include a post-medieval pit and two undated features that may predate the construction of the rear wing.

8 Fishpool Street

Archaeological Solutions Ltd

(Report no. 5538; 2018)

Technical analysis revealed 8 Fishpool Street to be a mid-18th century house, brick fronted and timber-framed to the rear, as per the [National Heritage] list description. Internally much 18th century fabric survives, particularly in its open-string staircase, with a later phase of 18th century refurbishment represented in decorative cornices, paint schemes, doors and windows. The rear cross-wing is also of 18th century date and its introduction necessitated the cutting of the rear parallel range, which is most noticeable at roof level.

Our thanks to KDK Archaeology Ltd and Archaeological Solutions Ltd for their permission to reproduce these abstracts.

Edited by John Ridge and Jon Mein

MEMBERSHIP

Welcome to the following new members:

Paul Footman	St Albans
Laurie Gibson & Margaret Harris	St Albans
Hazel Gowland	St Albans
Heather Rowe	St Albans

LECTURE PROGRAMME

19 February - 14 May 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 for attendance at a lecture.

Tuesday 19 February

Something Old, Something New: Conservation Architecture in Practice

Francesca Weal

This talk discusses the process of decision-making, design, the use of materials and 'informed conservation' when working with historic buildings and environments. It is illustrated with case studies including repair projects, conversions, extensions and even a new house in the St Albans conservation area.

Francesca Weal is accredited as a specialist conservation architect, has her practice in Wheathampstead, is a former chair of the Hertfordshire Association of Architects, and represented the East of England on RIBA Council for many years. She is a member of the Hertfordshire Building Preservation Trust, the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings, and the Ecclesiastical Architects' & Surveyors' Association.

Tuesday 5 March

The City of Memphis: Egypt Herself

Dr Jaromir Malek

The city of Memphis (*Mennufer*) was exceptionally important throughout the whole of Egyptian history as an administrative and religious centre. The name of one of its temples was probably at the origin of the designation of the whole country Egypt. It was the most populous city in ancient Egypt but few remains of the habitation have survived or as yet been discovered. Reflections of its importance are the remains of temples and extensive cemeteries in the desert to the West which include some of the largest pyramids such as Khufu, Khephren and Menkaure at Giza. Dr Malek will draw on his own participation in excavations in the area and his role in charge of the study of ancient inscriptions to examine this phenomenon.

Dr Malek took part in epigraphic surveys and excavations in Nubia, Abusir, Saqqara and Memphis. In addition to working for many years at the Griffith Institute in Oxford he served as President of the International Association of Egyptologists and Honorary President of the Association for the Study of Travel in Egypt and the Near East. He acted as editor of the Topographical Bibliography of Ancient Egyptian Hieroglyphic Texts and has written several books, the most recent being The Graffiti from the Memphite Serapeum (2017) with John D Ray.

Tuesday 12 March

An Eligible Project: The Economic Impact of the Grand Junction Union Canal on West Hertfordshire 1791-1841

Fabian Hiscock

The planning of the Grand Junction Canal from late 1791 resulted in the waterway we know today as the Grand Union, running in Hertfordshire from Tring to Rickmansworth. It connected London and the industrial Midlands and North. But what was it intended or expected to do in the county and what impact did it have here in the first fifty years of its operation – and why?

After a career in the Royal Navy Fabian completed his MA at the University of Hertfordshire in 2016, having researched 'The Social and Economic Impact of the Grand Junction Canal on West Hertfordshire 1791-1841' on which he continues to work. He is a long-standing canal boater with particular interest in historic boats and looks after the wooden working boater 'Roger' for Rickmansworth Waterways Trust. He recently joined SAHAAS and is also a committee member of Rickmansworth Historical Society.

Tuesday 19 March

"Five Days of Tumult"- the 1810 mutiny of the Local Militia in St Albans and its unforeseen consequences

John Morewood

In May 1810 the Local Militia, equivalent to the Territorial Army, mutinied in St Albans. The government controlled newspapers

stated that order was speedily restored. Other newspapers however told a very different story — the St Albans magistrates had had to call in additional troops, men were flogged and disturbances continued for five days. This talk will look at who the local militia were, the reasons for the mutiny and what happened, as well as the incident's impact in the national debate to reform the punishment culture in the armed services. It is also a tale of local rivalries, bad communications and leadership and damage to The Abbey Gateway!

John read Modern History at Oxford University. He specialises in the late 18th/early 19th century specifically the period of the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars. He is Secretary of the Waterloo Association dedicated to increasing knowledge of the period and helping preserve the Waterloo battlefield. He is currently studying at the Institute of Historical Research for his PhD on 'The Abolition of the Slave Trade and Slavery Emancipation and the pivotal role of Lord Brougham', He is also a qualified St Albans Guide and is responsible for co-ordinating the exhibition to commemorate the Arc and Arc's 175th anniversary.

Tuesday 2 April

Jim Forrester (later 5th Earl of Verulam) and the unemployed in South Wales, 1931-1947

John Cox

Jim Forrester was the eldest son of the 4th Earl of Verulam. Whilst at Oxford University

[1929-1932] he discovered that in South Wales in the summer of 1931, there was an international work-camp to get rid of a coal spoil-heap and to replace it with an open-air swimming pool. He volunteered and took part for a fortnight and every year until 1939. In 1936 he interviewed 900 unemployed men to take part in a Subsistence Production Company that provided many services for the men and their families, without having to pay out money!

John is a Chartered Librarian and worked in various libraries from 1958 to 2004. From 1989-2009 he was part-time archivist at Gorhambury, sorting papers etc including the papers of the 5th Earl of Verulam. He has published eight books under the imprint of 'Eddington Press' and compiled a draft memoir for the daughters of the 10th Earl of Cavan [1865-1946], a Hertfordshire man.

Tuesday 9 April

The East India Company at Home: in and beyond Hertfordshire

Professor Margot Finn

This lecture locates Hertfordshire, its country houses and the families that inhabited them at the heart of the British Empire in the era of the East India Company, c.1757-1857. Focusing on specific sites and families, it asks us to think about the role of the English country house as an icon of national identity in England, arguing that instead – behind their neo-classical facades – stately homes are products of global and colonial

regimes. Hertfordshire's history is especially rich in links to India – it rivals in many respects the history of Berkshire, known in the Georgian era as “the English Hindoostan” due to the conspicuous presence of retired East India Company men and their families.

Margot Finn is Professor of Modern History at UCL and President of the Royal Historical Society. She has published books on topics that include 19th century radical politics, imprisonment for debt and public history. Following a three-year Leverhulme Trust funded project exploring the connected histories of the British country house and the East India Company, c. 1750-1850, she published (with Dr Kate Smith) The East India Company at Home, 1757-1857 with UCL Press. The book is available to download open access without charge from www.ucl.ac.uk/ucl-press/browse-books/the-east-india-company-at-home.

Tuesday 16 April

Lawrence of Arabia: Excavating a Legend in the deserts of Southern Jordan

Dr Neil Faulkner

Dr Faulkner will present an overview of nine seasons of survey and excavation work investigating First World War remains in the deserts of Southern Jordan. He will use this evidence to build a picture of the conflict represented, to evaluate the role of T E Lawrence, and to reflect upon the history of the Middle East over the last century.

Dr Neil Faulkner FSA is an archaeologist, historian, writer, lecturer and broadcaster. He has directed archaeological projects at home and abroad, including the Sedgeford Historical and Archaeological Research Project in Norfolk, and the Great Arab Revolt in Jordan. His dozen books include The Decline and Fall of Roman Britain and Lawrence of Arabia's War.

Tuesday 7 May

25 years of Highlights in Archaeology in St Albans

Simon West

Simon will look at what he considers the more significant archaeological discoveries over the last 25 years. Let us see what they can tell about the archaeology and therefore our understanding of the development of St Albans District and in the wider context, perhaps the archaeology of the country!

Simon has worked in St Albans since 1989 when he was promised an 'elephant' on the site of Old Parkbury. Incidentally the only site he was blown off! He first came as a 'digger' under Ros Niblett, but basically took any job and refused to go away, except for a short stint with another archaeological organisation from which he still has the scars. In 1991 he was appointed supervisor on the Folly Lane Excavation, then in 1994 he became the Field Archaeologist and in 2006 the District Archaeologist. Today he suggests half his time is taken up with backlog and enquiry work and half by Planning.

Tuesday 14 May

Trials, Tribulations and Triumphs of being Cathedral Architect at St Albans for 18 years

Richard Griffiths

Richard will talk about his experience of guiding the repairs, alterations and the new building project over his 18-year term as Cathedral Architect. He will talk about the challenges of keeping a long-term vision for the development of the Cathedral in the face of the pressures of mission and funding, and about the achievement in transforming the Abbey with a whole series of interventions along the processional axis leading from the west doors to the shrine chapel to the east. He will also talk about his work in restoring Scott's Grand Midland Hotel at St Pancras as a grand hotel at the international terminus for London.

Richard founded Richard Griffiths Architects in 1993. The practice has established itself as one of the leading historic buildings practices, noted for the quality of its design work as well as for its work in adapting historic buildings to new uses. Richard was Cathedral Architect at Southwark Cathedral for 18 years from 2000. He has worked on buildings for the National Trust, English Heritage and major churches and was joint architect for the St Pancras Hotel. He is currently consultant for the conversion of the Royal London Hospital building into the Tower Hamlets Town Hall.

Pictures from the New Year Party

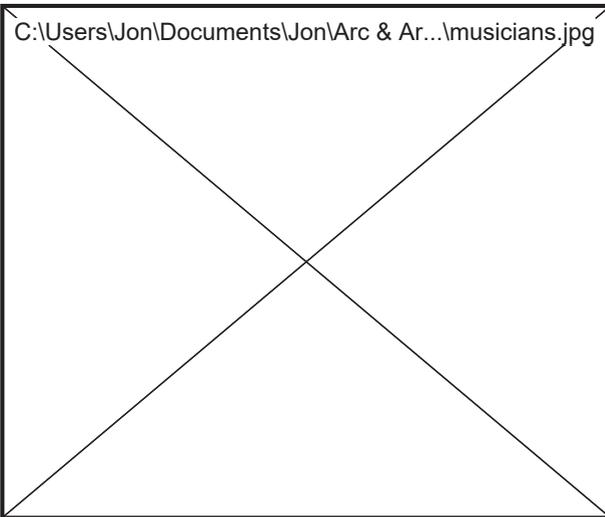
(See page 12 for the report)



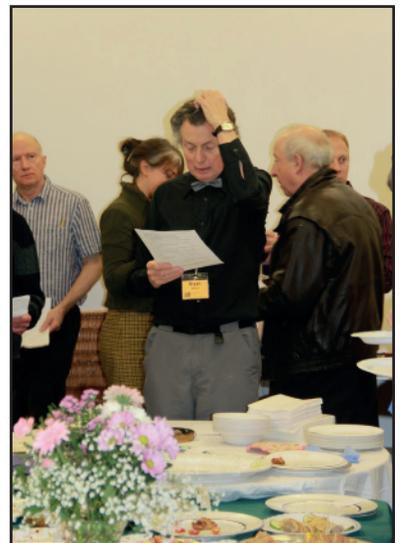
The 'Food Controllers': l-r - Caroline Howkins, Sally Pearson, Val Argue and Jenny Burley



The Speakers: Mayor of St Albans, Cllr Rosemary Farmer, with Sandy Walkington, the Society's President



The Entertainers: Jessica Cox (cello) and Jenny Miles



And last but not least: The Quizmaster - Bryan Hanlon demonstrating how he can speak, hold a piece of paper and pat his head - all at the same time.

With thanks to Caroline Howkins for the photos