



ST ALBANS & HERTFORDSHIRE
Architectural & Archaeological Society

February 2020 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

February 2020

Discover . Protect . Innovate . Inform



1845 - 2020

ST ALBANS & HERTFORDSHIRE
ARCHITECTURAL & ARCHAEOLOGICAL
SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER 215 February 2020



'Winter work', 1883/4, by George Clausen, (1852–1944), Tate Gallery.
Oil on canvas painting depicting a scene at Childwick Green, St Albans.

See pp. 20–1 for further information about Clausen.

(Photo © Tate).

Included in this issue:

175th Celebrations
William Dobson, Painter
Flint Clarkson, Architect
A County Antiquarian

Coroners' Inquests
Rifles at Beech Bottom Dyke
The French King in St Albans
Clunch in Wheathampstead

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MEMBERSHIP

Welcome to our new members:

Lynn Barker	St Albans
Arthur Bishop	St Albans
Nicole Duplain	St Albans
Edmund Jankowski	St Albans
Ellen Shlasko	Wheathampstead
Anthony Usher	Redbourn
David & Vivien Wearing	Welwyn Garden City

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

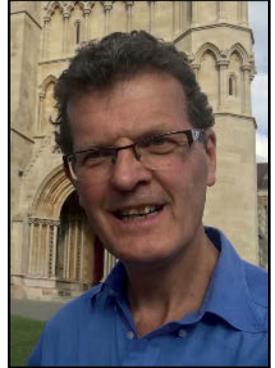
Well, they held the front page. The *Herts Ad* did us proud in their coverage of the launch of our 175th anniversary celebrations — and it was a splendid picture by Andy Lawrence which graced their pages. The Arc & Arc was already 10 years old when the *Herts Advertiser* was founded by Richard Gibbs in 1855, and our histories have been intertwined ever since.

If you have not yet read Peter Bourton's imagination of what the Revd Charles Boutell might have seen when he made the journey from Sandridge Rectory to the first committee meeting of our society at the Abbey Rectory, the home of the formidable Dr Henry Nicholson, I thoroughly commend it. Just go to the 175th anniversary pages of our website — there is a link from the home page.

175 years is something to celebrate by any standards and this edition of the newsletter is full of how we plan to do just that. The last few years have seen an encouraging influx of new members, we hope to use the anniversary to get even more people to join and take part in our varied activities.

But we are lucky in the longevity of our membership as well. Michael Nicol is current 'father of the house' with membership running continuously since 1965. So this is his fifty-fifth year, just shy of a third of the total life of the Society. Michael still

comes to lectures and recalls his first involvement in the Society helping with a dig at Sopwell Nunnery ruins. "It was jolly hard work," he says.



Just in case you thought the Society could not add any more value for its modest membership fee, please note the two additional lectures this year. These don't appear on the printed calendar, so do add them to your diaries. On 9 June you will have the opportunity to hear different members of the Society talk about the 'objects' which they have curated for the 175th anniversary exhibition not just the historical information but their own reactions as they researched the information.

And the distinguished lecture by Michael Wood on 28 July at St Albans School is going to be an absolute corker. It is a token of the esteem in which our Society is held that we have been able to attract such an eminent speaker, I have already had people pitching for front stall seats, watch this space for details of how to apply for tickets.

Happy birthday to the Arc & Arc.

Sandy Walkington

THE NEW YEAR PARTY

Around 100 members of the Society and invited guests attended this year's social event – a record number in recent years. We were particularly delighted to welcome the Mayor of St Albans, Cllr Janet Smith. Cllr Smith is the 476th holder of an office that has its origins in the borough charter of 1553. The Arc & Arc's 175 years pales in comparison with such venerability.

The party was the perfect opportunity to launch the Society's 175th anniversary events. Indeed Sandy was able to point out to the Mayor how many of her predecessors had also been President of the Society, and that when former mayor Richard Lowe was not busy banging his gavel, he was discovering the Roman theatre.

As well as announcing the talk by Professor Michael Wood, the exhibition in the new museum and the extra lecture added to our 2019/20 programme (pp. 6–7 and 39), Sandy also launched the Society's latest accomplishment, our new book *Wills, Inventories and Probate Accounts from St Albans, 1600–1615*. (p. 10). This is pub-

lished by the Hertfordshire Record Society. In particular he thanked Dr Heather Falvey and Sue Flood, both of whom were present as representatives of the publisher, for their extensive support.

Then it was on to the three 'C's: comestibles, conversation and the cuiz (OK, 'quiz'). Bryan Hanlon had clearly spent far too long ensuring this was up to his usual fiendish standard. There were also opportunities to learn more about the new book through a rolling slideshow (edited by Jane Harris, Pat Howe and Jon Mein); sample a range of the Society's publications (thanks to Pat Broad); and buy surplus pamphlets from the Library's collection. According to Ros Trent, this raised a pleasing £30.

As ever, many hours of preparation go into organising the party, both in advance and on the day. Thanks for this should go to Bryan as *maître d'* and Val Argue and also to the many members of the Society who give so freely of their time.

Jon Mein

Note: see the back cover for photographs from the party.

18TH CENTURY ARCHAEOLOGY AT VERULAMIUM

"Last Week a Gentleman discovered on the spot where stood the ancient City of Verulam [a Roman Municipium] some Vestiges of a Roman tessellated Pavement; and also sundry curious incrustations on Plaster, most beautifully variegated, and very fresh. This City was destroyed by the Britons under Queen Boadicea, near 1700 years since." (Source: *Sussex Advertiser*, 3 July 1758, p.3.)

OBITUARIES

It is with sadness that we record the deaths of two prominent members of the Society who died towards the end of last year.

Roderick Douglas

Roderick was an active member of the Arc and Arc for over ten years. As a former RAF engineer, he contributed his skills as the Society's webmaster and member of Council, but he was perhaps best known to members for the technical support and



Roderick

reassurance he gave to visiting speakers at the Society's lectures. He also walked many miles delivering the Society's newsletters in the city

centre area and supported his wife Maggy in her researches for the Home Front Group's publication in 2016.

They were both involved in many other voluntary organisations and so were greatly missed when they moved to Edinburgh at the end of 2018 for family reasons. Sadly, Roderick was only in Edinburgh for a year before he died in November.

Helen Bishop

Joyce Wells

Joyce had been a member since 1978. Giving an appreciation at her funeral at St Michael's, Heather Falvey noted that 'books were Joyce's life'. And it is through books that many of us will remember her: she was our Librarian for 13 years until 2004, bringing to bear her professional skills from St Albans Central Library.

Anne Wares adds: I worked with Joyce for about 10 years at the Central Library, in fact



Joyce

she was on my interview panel and hired me. She was a wonderful person to work for and moved easily into friendship after she retired. We knew each other through the City Guides, although it took me

a few years to manage to say "Joyce" instead of "Miss Wells"!

Heather also recalled Joyce's varied historical interests. For example, she was a 'church watcher' at St Michael's and a guide at the Abbey, and a member of the Society's 17th Century Research Group. Closely involved with the Richard III Society, Joyce was a tad embarrassed to hold local meetings at her house ... in Lancaster Road.

Anne Wares

175!

As has been extensively trailed over the past year, 2020 marks the 175th anniversary of the founding of our Society in 1845. Originally the St Albans Architectural Society, we expanded to include Archaeology in our title and then, in 1897, added the entire county to become today's St Albans & Hertfordshire Architectural & Archaeological Society. We are Hertfordshire's premier learned society and are amongst the oldest such societies in the country.

As you will see in this newsletter, on the website and at lectures, we have a new logo for the year. It has a four word rubric **Discover, Protect, Innovate, Inform**. We believe that these four words summarise the legacy of our first 175 years and will be the heartbeat of the next 175.

Our history of **innovation** is particularly significant and marks us out from the general run of local history societies – examples include Norman Davey devising the technique for lifting painted Roman wall plaster so it could be displayed, Sir John Evans persuading the Treasury to better reward finders of antique precious metal objects so they were preserved rather than melted down, early use of aerial photography to spot areas of key interest for excavation at Verulamium, and of course the latest work of the Community Archaeology Geophysics Group, in which we are partners.

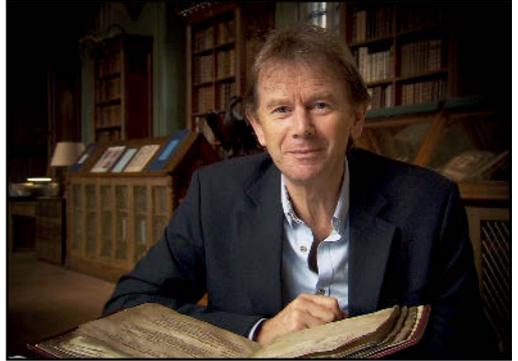
Our history of **discovery** goes back almost to our beginnings with key early finds at Verulamium including the theatre. We were founded with the purpose of **protecting** medieval buildings under threat from Victorian developers. And our busy schedule of lectures, seminars, conferences, visits and publications more than fulfils our remit to **inform**.

The year will see an anniversary edition of the newsletter and some events added to our calendar:

There will be a major exhibition at St Albans Museum + Gallery. This was originally conceived as telling our story in 30 objects but has now grown to nearer seventy. All exhibits will have an association with our Society. We are approaching the British Museum, the Ashmolean and the Fitzwilliam for loans. Many of the objects have not been on public display before and will be grouped under our four themes of **Discover, Protect, Innovate, Inform**.

Our patrons Lord and Lady Verulam will be formally opening the exhibition on 18 June at a private view. It opens to the public on 19 June, running until 6 September. The opening will be ticket-only and we expect considerable demand. Please express your interest by completing and returning the insert slip in this newsletter or email Bryan Hanlon. If necessary we will hold a ballot to allocate tickets.

We have added a round-table discussion to our lecture programme where members of the Society who have worked on individual exhibits will tell their stories and how they came to be chosen. This is set for 9 June. Additionally an illustrated talk based on the exhibition will be taken to different clubs and societies across Hertfordshire to promote our activities and unique offer as a membership society.



Prof. Michael Wood

The second major event of the year will be a distinguished lecture at St Albans School on 28 July to be given by Michael Wood, Professor of Public History at Manchester University and known to many because of his numerous television documentaries. There will be a fee to attend this lecture – exact details yet to be decided but Society members will receive a reduction. We will be offering free places to local history students and sixth formers. Entrance to the exhibition

at the Museum + Gallery will be, of course, free of charge.

The whole aim of the year is to publicise our Society and the benefits of membership, but also to bring history, archaeology and architecture to the fore in the lives of Albanians and all residents of Hertfordshire.

Sandy Walkington

CAN YOU SPARE A COUPLE OF HOURS OVER THE SUMMER?

If so, please consider becoming a 'Clockateer'. As members of the Society we take on the responsibility for keeping the Clock Tower open for the 10,000 or so visitors who climb the Tower each summer.

All we ask is that you do a 90-minute stint every so often. It is not a taxing job: just be welcoming. There is the odd rule to learn which you will pick up working in the first instance alongside experienced members.

The money we raise goes in part to the Society's funds. This means we can, for example, run our extensive lecture programme yet keep the subscription at just £20 a year.

If you can spare the time, please email Caroline Howkins and Mike Carey at clocktower@stalbanhistory.org.

CLOCK TOWER REPORT

As is custom now, our last opening of the year was for the turning on of the Christmas lights in November. The Mayor, Councillor Janet Smith, officially turned on the Market Place and Clock Tower lights to the cheering of a large crowd who had gathered in front of the Tower.

The exhibition at the Museum + Gallery to commemorate the founding of our Society 175 years ago will include a scale model of the Clock Tower. Beth Jones, a third-year model design student at the University of Hertfordshire, started designing the 160cm high model at the beginning of January. It will include a working clock face and a Perspex covered hole in the belfry wall to view the Market Bell and Gabriel, the medieval bell. It should be stunning when completed.

Preparations are in progress for the Clockateers' Party to be held at the Ver-

ulamium Museum on Friday, 20 March at 7.30pm. Invitations will be emailed in February but anyone thinking of becoming a Clockateer is welcome to join us and find out more about helping to keep this important building open to the public. (See the advert on p. 7.)

The admission price for the Clock Tower has remained at £1 for adults and children free for the past nine years so it was decided at the last Joint Clock Tower Committee meeting to increase the price to £2 for adults. Hopefully this will result in an increase in funds that can be used to pay for the painting of the internal walls of the Clock Tower, for some more Christmas lights and for four rooftop information boards.

The Clock Tower will open for the summer season on Good Friday, 10 April and close on Sunday, 27 September.

Caroline Howkins

CONGRATULATIONS TO ...

Dr Maria Musto for being awarded the Associateship of the Museums Association. As part of her coursework, Maria developed an accessible resource for Verulamium Museum's 'Iron Finds' collection from the Museum extension excavation.

Prof. Geraint John for the publication of his new book co-authored with Dave Parker and including an introduction by Lord Coe: *Olympic Stadia: Theatres of Dreams*. According to the blurb, the book provides "a comprehensive account of the history and development of Olympic Stadia including: the evolution of running tracks, the introduction of lighting, and continuing improvements in spectator viewing and comfort standards." Published by Routledge — further details on the web.

PUBLICATIONS REPORT

One piece of good news in a somewhat dreary January is our new online bookshop, which opened for business on 20 January. This marks another step forward in the Society's publishing activities. Jill Singer, the first member to visit the shop, said it was 'a brilliant idea'. Do take a look at the shop on the Society's website. Please note that we can't offer members' discounted prices through the bookshop and the selection is currently limited to ten items.

It's over four months now since we published *Percival Blow*. I'm delighted to say that it continues to sell well, boosted by a pre-Christmas leaflet campaign to some of Blow's residential buildings. We've now raised enough revenue to cover the Society's contribution to this project. But please keep buying the book as we want to build a decent surplus to support future publications.

Pat Howe and Jane Harris's *St Albans Wills* book has been a revelation with its rich detail of everyday life in early 17th century St Albans. We've sold 17 copies to members so far, good for a book that retails at £22. (£17.60 for members.)

We've visited the new independent bookshop on Holywell Hill. 'Books on the Hill' is keen to cover local history and is stocking a few of our books. They have an interesting collection of second-hand and first edition books.

Researching the history of the Society's publications for the 175th exhibition has been fascinating. Reducing the material to two 160-word stories for the show's display posters has, however, been challenging.

If anyone is after a short history of the Society, I'd thoroughly recommend Brian Moody's *The Light of Other Days*. It covers the years 1845 to 1995, is well written, and packs a lot of information into a small booklet. Although it was published 25 years ago, it remains relevant today and at £2 for members is excellent value.

We'll have held two committee meetings by the time the next newsletter comes out and will have more to report after that. If you would like to help us in some way – editing, typesetting or indexing, for example – or would like to be considered for the committee, do let me know. My email is patricia_broad@yahoo.co.uk.

Pat Broad

MISSING HAT

Did anyone attending the Society's 'Harold Wilson' lecture on Tuesday 21 January pick up by mistake a black hat with fake fur trim? If so, contact newsed@stalbanhistory.org.

LIBRARY REPORT

Again a very busy period for the library with frequent visitors, mainly members pursuing research in preparation for the Society's 175th celebrations.

The library team combined a Christmas lunch with a celebration marking the 'retirement' of Tony Cooper, a Library Team stalwart of some 14 years. We are very grateful to Tony for his valuable contributions particularly organisational; he was involved in three library moves. We will miss him though garden permitting he does intend to look in now and then.

We are grateful to Society members for recent donations of material: Michael Nicol for a superior copy of J.W. Comyns Carr's *The Abbey Church of St Albans...*(1877); Patrick McNeill on behalf of the Wheathampstead History Society for a dyeline copy of the Wheathampstead tithe map; John Cox for two sets of c.1850 sales particulars; and David Reidy and John Newton Davies for various books and pamphlets.

We are hopeful of filling the vacant post of Librarian in the course of February. Details in the next newsletter.

The Library Team

Library acquisitions

The major acquisition has been Nathaniel Salmon *The history of Hertfordshire: describing the county, and its antient monuments, particularly the Roman. With the character of those that have been the chief possessors of the lands... /* By N. Salmon, LL.B. London: printed in the year 1728. [8],369p.,fldg. map ; folio; with a list of subscribers. Quarter morocco bound. A handsome volume in very good condition printed on remarkably thin paper. We are most grateful to Chris Reynolds for presenting this scarce work to the Library. For the significance of the work and its author see article on pp. 16-17.

Further cause for celebration is the fruits of the Society's own 17th Century Research Group. *Wills, inventories and probate accounts from St Albans, 1600-1615*, edited with introduction by Pat Howe and Jane Harris. (Hertfordshire record publications, vol. 32). [Rickmansworth]: Hertfordshire Record Society, 2019. 436 p., facsims, maps; 24 cm. This is a mine of information for material about everyday life in early Stuart St Albans. Many congratulations to the Group and we hope further volumes may be published.

Tim Cockin *The parish atlas of England: an atlas of English parish boundaries*. Barlaston: Malthouse Press, 2017. 1 atlas

(898 p.) : maps (black and white) ; 30 cm. This is particularly helpful in tracking boundary changes as it "Shows the ancient parish boundaries in every English county before the Counties (Detached Parts) Act of 1844" Preface.

Donald Munro

Recent journal articles

In *Herts Past and Present*, no. 34, Autumn 2019.

pp. 2–7 "Colonel George Thomson 1607–1691: Civil War soldier, religious radical and MP", by Alan Thomson. George Thomson was a Hertfordshire man who became a merchant in Virginia, fought on the Parliamentary side in the Civil War, became a religious radical and MP, and a respected naval administrator.

pp. 8–14 "The five-acre Chartists: the story of the Chartist settlement at Herons Gate", by Kate Harwood. The settlement, near Chorleywood, known as O'Connorville, was one of several experiments in new ways of living for the labouring class, organised by the National Land Company. They provided the opportunity to escape from urban industrial squalor to life as a smallholder in the countryside.

pp. 15–18 "Managing the poor in Hertfordshire, 1635–1795. Part 3, Bastardy – maintaining the child", by Carla Hermann. There being no general overview of the system of maintaining illegitimate chil-

dren, the author illustrates practices in various locations in the county, as recorded in parochial and judicial records.

In *The Record, London Colney Local History Society*, no. 37 Autumn/Winter 2019, pp. 3–6 "Charles Morris 1855–1926", by Ian Holt. Morris was a successful businessman who acquired Highfield Hall and its estate, and became a benefactor to the communities of London Colney and Colney Heath.

pp. 7–11 "Highfield Hall", by Ken Barker. The history of the house, its estate and its owners from the early 19th century is related. The estate was home to a race-course in the early 20th century; a meeting in 1909 attracted 10,000 spectators.

pp. 14–15 "The London Colney murders, part 2, the Allen murder", by Ken Barker. Gertrude Allen was murdered by Arthur Thrussell in June 1910. He was found to be insane, and was confined to Broadmoor.

In *The Park Street and Frogmore Society Journal*, Spring/Summer 2019, *inter alia*: pp. 9–12 "Revitalising chalk rivers – Affinity Water", by Melissa Ambrose. The programme to restore rivers, including the Ver, to their natural state is described, and the benefits set out.

Tony Cooper

WORKSHOP: THE RISE AND FALL OF THE BREWERIES OF MID-HERTFORDSHIRE, 1800–1925

The Society is organising a workshop to consider the history of brewing in 19th century mid-Hertfordshire. Depending on how you define the middle of the county, there were five common brewers in the area in 1800, fourteen in 1870 and just one in 1925. This pattern generally reflects what happened nationally.

The objective of the workshop is to consider how recent research changes our understanding, if at all, of the history of brewing in our part of the county.

This event will appeal to members with an active interest in either the history of brewing or more generally in industrial history.

It is being held on Tuesday, 17 March 2020 from 2.30pm to 5.00pm at the Society's Library at Sandridge Gate, St Albans, AL4 9XR.

Programme

- 14.30 Welcome, and a brief introduction to brewing in the 19th century
- 14.40 Researching his book: 'Brewers in Hertfordshire' — *Allan Whitaker*
- 14.55 Wheathampstead — *Patrick McNeill*

- 15.10 Harpenden — *John Wassell*
- 15.25 Kimpton — *Peter Hale*
- 15.40 Break
- 15.45 Welwyn — *Paul Jiggins*
- 16.00 St Albans — *Jon Mein*
- 16.15 But how did it get there? — *Fabian Hiscock*
- 16.30 Discussion
- 16.55 Close

Further details

Cost: there is no cost to attend the workshop although we welcome donations on the day of £3 per person. The proceeds will be split equally between the Society and the St Albans Museums and Galleries Trust.

Booking: please use the Eventbrite link in the entry for this event in the 'Forthcoming Events' section on the Society's website where you will also find full details of the programme.

Note: a lift is available for any visitors who are likely to have problems with the two flights of stairs to the Library. Please inform the organisers well in advance of the event if you wish to avail yourself of this facility.

If you have any questions about the event, please email events@stalbanhistory.org.

Jon Mein

ST JULIAN'S RESEARCH GROUP

Work is progressing on the history of the St Julian's estate, with three distinct avenues of research:

- The Abbey's Leper Hospital for men, and the medieval period until the dissolution of the monastery;
- The gentleman's estate developed after the dissolution until demolition of the mansion c.1800;
- The 400 acre farm which flourished until the cutting of the North Orbital Road and (then) M10 reduced its viability, leaving only St Julian's Wood and Greenwood Park as evidence of its rural heritage, alongside the swathes of 20th century housing which make up the city's south-eastern suburbs today.

The household account book of the widowed Elizabeth Ashurst, for whom the estate's mansion was a country residence for 50 years, continues to fascinate. It is being transcribed by a dedicated group of members with a view to informing us on life around St Albans then (between 1738 and 1785), and understanding the lifestyle of a wealthy widow with a non-conformist background and substantial City trading links.

Members interested in joining in this work would be welcome and should contact Kate via kate@englishinfo.biz.

Kate Morris

SOCIETY OUTING TO COPPED HALL – 1 JULY 2020

We are arranging a visit to Copped Hall in Essex to see the progress made in the restoration of this fine 18th century mansion since our last visit in 2012. The building was saved when the specially-formed Copped Hall Trust purchased it in 1995. The Trust's main aim is to permanently protect the site by carefully restoring the Hall and its gardens for educational and community benefit. I visited in 2019 and was very impressed with what the Trust has achieved.

Our visit will appeal to architects, archaeologists, historians and gardeners. The outing will cost about £25 which will include a guided tour of the house and garden, transport and refreshments. This will be a morning visit probably extending to early afternoon.

If you are interested in this please let me know by email to pathowe777@gmail.com. I will circulate more details and request payment nearer the time.

Pat Howe

THE SOCIETY'S SEMINAR PROGRAMME 2019/20

This year's seminars have been well attended and the discussion illuminating.

We have just two further dates on this year's programme (see below – the seminar on the straw hat trade has been deferred till next season). If you can suggest a topic for a future session, let me know. I am currently working on a programme for next September onwards, which will again be usually on the third Thursday in the month, starting 2.30pm, at the Society's Library at Sandridge Gate.

An e-news will announce each seminar and prompt registration. It is advisable to do that straightaway to guarantee a place, since the seminars have proved to be very popular and space in the library is limited.

There is no cost to members, though visitors pay £5.

Brief details of the next two seminars:

20 February

The value of tax records

Jon Mein

Researchers in St Albans are blessed to have a wide range of tax records at their disposal. Jon will explore how useful these have been in tracing the development of the town's pub trade in the 18th and 19th centuries. He will discuss their value for researching other topics such as status and retail expansion.

19 March

The Poor Law in St Albans, 1895–1914

Tony Dolphin

Academic research suggests the way the Poor Law dealt with the poor in the late 19th and early 20th centuries varied widely across England. This seminar explores how outcomes in St Albans fit into the wider picture.

Kate Morris

kate@englishinfo.biz

SOCIETY TRIP TO GREENWICH – 23 APRIL 2020

The trip, setting out on the 9.30am train from St Albans City station on Thursday 23 April and arriving at Greenwich approximately an hour later, is limited to 20 people and will cost £25 per head excluding the cost of train travel.

We will visit firstly the Painted Hall, which is a 15-minute walk from Greenwich station, where we have a private tour followed by free time for lunch, re-convening at the Queen's House where, again, we will have our own private tour before returning to Greenwich station for our journey back.

If you are interested then please contact me, David Harrold, via david.harrold@hotmail.co.uk.

HALH SYMPOSIUM 2019 REPORT: 'LOCAL HISTORY, LANDSCAPE AND ARCHAEOLOGY'

I attended my first Hertfordshire Association for Local History (HALH) Symposium on 9 November last year. It was an eye and mind opener. There was a wide variety of subjects and speakers, all worthwhile, with plenty of hints and tips to add to the armoury.

The relationship between archaeology and landscape history was covered in the talks on Henry VIII's fishponds at Hunsdon and the gardens at Gobions. The use of LIDAR surveying and OS maps played a big part in these discoveries, especially as the fishponds are overgrown somewhat. By analysing the maps and LIDAR results it was easy to see them. But the best way to appreciate them is to physically view them as well.

I picked up a couple of other pieces of advice as well: firstly, be wary of lovely plans and pictures of garden designs because not all these schemes came to fruition. They may have been wishful thinking but never made. Secondly, first edition 25-inch OS maps sometimes have useful drawings of features which are very accurate.

The need for archaeologists and local historians to be aware of the limitations

of each other's data was also a theme. For example, the opening notice in the museum at Sutton Hoo was deconstructed and found wanting. Very few of the claims were verifiable. Both archaeologists and local historians have to be aware that opinions change as research progresses, and there is a need to be up-to-date, most easily achieved by collaboration between specialists.

Local knowledge was put to good use in the excavations of the Swiss Cottage of Cassiobury Park, Watford. This building is long gone but the foundations were excavated and local knowledge and photos were invaluable in identifying features as indeed were people who worked as employees of the estate. Anecdotes about the location of the toilets (across the river) were particularly amusing.

The story of the Kelshall Hoard from its finders was an example of different sectors of heritage working together. Metal detectorists are not always the bad guys. Deep ploughing is a threat to this type of deposit and responsible action means that the all-important context is not lost.

All in all, this was an excellent day. Hearty congratulations to the organisers.

Jim Robertson

NATHANIEL SALMON: HIS *HISTORY ...* AND HERTFORDSHIRE COUNTY HISTORIES

The Society is delighted to have acquired the major lacuna in our Hertfordshire collections. Chris Reynolds has very kindly donated to the Library Nathaniel Salmon, *History of Hertfordshire* (1728). For bibliographical details see *Library Notes* (p. 11) and the title page illustration here.

This handsome folio volume completes SAHAAS's holdings of the major histories of Hertfordshire. Preceded by John Norden's *Description of Hartfordshire* (1598) – barely a history but the pioneering account – and Sir Henry Chauncy's *Historical antiquities* (1700, 2nd ed. 1826), Salmon's *History*

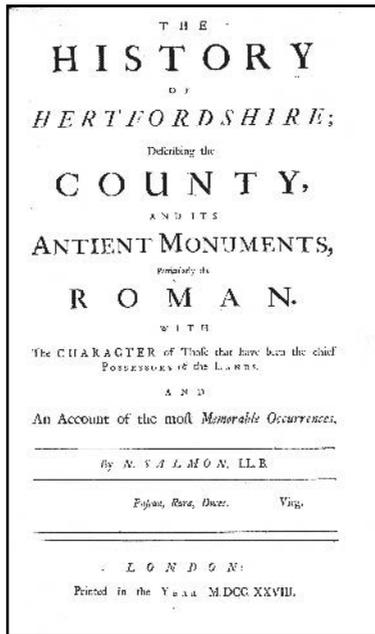
was followed a century later by Robert Clutterbuck's massive three volume *The History and Antiquities of the County...* (1815–27), energetically carried around by J.E. Cussans in his visitations of every parish for his *History of Hertfordshire* (1870–81). The monumental *Victoria County History for Hertfordshire* completed in 1914 builds on all its predecessors in four volumes + index, edited by William Page, a luminary of our Society.

Nathaniel Salmon, born 22 March 1675, the second son of a Bedfordshire vicar, was admitted to Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, obtaining his LL.B in 1695, and ordained in 1699. Curate at Westmill, Herts, on Queen Anne's accession by refusing to swear allegiance he became a Non-juror [clergy and lay officials who scrupled

to take the oaths imposed after the deposition of James II]. Deprived of his principles of clerical living and income, he turned to 'physick' and practised medicine at Bishop's Stortford. A High Anglican he held strong principles and views which he was not fearful of expressing including contempt for the Civil War Parliamentarians, and concern for the plight of the 'lower orders'. A man of great vigour and contradictions, he turned to antiquarian

research and writing.

Although a Nonjuror, Salmon's first publication (1715) was a biography of Henry Compton, Bishop of London, the only ecclesiastical signatory to the invitation to William of Orange in 1688. He developed a deep interest in Roman remains, publishing *A survey of the Roman antiquities of some Midland counties ... and Roman stations in Britain*, both in 1726.



Salmon's *History of Hertfordshire* appeared in 1728, printed for subscribers. It melds his own antiquarian researches into Roman antiquities and his observations on early 18th century Hertfordshire with further work collected by Chauncy, to whose papers Salmon had access.

Much criticised by contemporary and succeeding county historians, it became more kindly regarded in the 20th century. Certainly there are faults – he worked at speed, with consequent errors, and took little time for reflection; he wrote at unnecessary length (though often engagingly); he could be unwilling to change his mind in the face of contradictory evidence (*vide* some of his Roman speculations) leading to some disregard as a tendentious eccentric; the utility of the work was also hampered by its lack of an index.

With the development of modern local historical studies, Salmon is now more highly regarded. Compared to his contemporaries, and for all his ideological conservatism, he looked at his surroundings with more modern eyes. He was an acute observer of economic especially agrarian conditions in early 18th century Hertfordshire. He mentions features of contemporary topography no longer present and changing local circumstances – e.g. migration to linear villages. He has an appreciation of landscape not present in Chauncy. Similarly he comments on the fabric of churches from his own observation, noting

details – often now disappeared. Most unusually, he frequently describes local customs and folklore traditions.

To quote Stephen Doree [p. 213], by “push[ing] through the press the manuscript notes of others [Salmon] deserve[s] the regard of posterity, but he did more His *Hertfordshire* is ... an independent history of the county which whatever its shortcomings and idiosyncrasies, made a genuine attempt to link the topography and landscape of the county he knew with a pre-Roman, Roman and Anglo-Saxon past. This had not been attempted by Chauncy and was not to be seriously attempted by either Clutterbuck or Cussans.”

Besides Hertfordshire, Salmon also wrote *inter alia* histories of Surrey (1736 – essentially Roman antiquities), an unfinished history of Essex (1740), and *The lives of the English bishops from the Restauration to the Revolution* (1733). Having exhausted his financial resources through printing and publishing, he died in poverty in London in 1742.

Donald Munro

Principal sources

Stephen Doree “Nathaniel Salmon: Hertfordshire’s neglected historian” in *Hertfordshire in history*, ed. Doris Jones-Baker (1991) 205–22.

Nicholas Connell “Nathaniel Salmon (1675–1742) the Hertfordshire historian”. *Hertfordshire’s Past*, 50 (Spring 2001) 5–12.

HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT RECORDS: A VALUABLE RESEARCH TOOL

The Hertfordshire Historic Environment Record (HER) is maintained by a historic environment record officer who is part of the County Council's Historic Environment team. The HER is a comprehensive computerised index of all the known archaeology in the county, and it is one of 84 HERs in England that all adhere to a set of national standards that have developed gradually since the 1970s. The early HERs were known as Sites and Monument Records but as their remit widened to include information about the wider Historic Environment the name was updated to reflect this.

The Hertfordshire HER (established in 1977) currently has 31,600+ database records which span the full range of human history from the Palaeolithic to the 20th century and include Neolithic and Bronze Age barrows, Iron Age hill forts, Roman villas, medieval settlements, field systems, buildings (both historic and more recent), industrial sites, railways and canals. Alongside the 'monument' records we maintain 'event' records of the archaeological work that has been carried out across the county, including archaeological evaluations and excavations, geophysical and other surveys, historic building recording and other investigations. Attached to the database is a mapping system which allows us to

present all this data visually in the County Council's geographical information system.

Recording and adding to the database is often referred to as enhancing the historic environment record. This is when we add information to records we already have, or create new ones when things are found. We use many different types of sources to create or enhance a record. Much of our information comes from archaeological reports but we also use old maps, photographs, newspapers and magazine articles as well as books and other documents. All this material forms an archive which is cross-referenced to the HER.

The Purpose of HERs

HERs play a variety of roles but the main two are to record information about the local historic environment and to provide that information to the public, researchers and academics, and to commercial archaeology companies on request. The HER also forms the basis for the archaeological advice provided by the County Council's historic environment team to the local planning authorities in Hertfordshire. The database is fully indexed and a wide variety of enquiries can be answered using its in-built searching facilities.

The database is a good resource for those who want to carry out local research, and most HERs provide a free service (as does

Hertfordshire) for those who are undertaking personal or academic research. Searches can be carried out to provide information on particular areas (such as parishes or towns), or on a set distance around a national grid reference or location (e.g. 1km radius around TL 06087 20217 or 500m radius of Panshanger Park) or on particular topics (such as Bronze Age barrows or World War II pill boxes). Hertfordshire 'monument' data is also available through a national website run by Historic England – the Heritage Gateway (www.heritagegateway.org.uk),

but we hold more detailed information, and copies of the sources our records are based on, here at County Hall. This material is all available to look at in person, but since our space is limited this has to be by prior appointment. Our contact details for general enquiries are: tel. 01992 555021 or email:

historic.environment@hertfordshire.gov.uk

**Rebekah Hart and Alison Tinniswood,
Herts Historic Environment Record**

HOT OFF THE PRESS

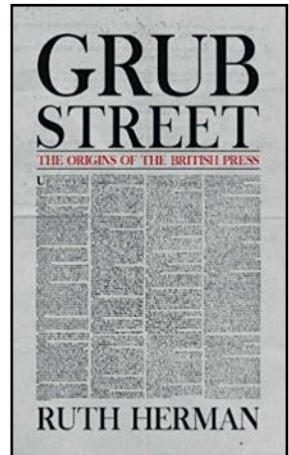
Grub Street: the origins of the British press

Dr Ruth Herman

ISBN 9781445688848, hardback.

Ruth, a member of the Society, takes the reader back to the early days of the British press. The book follows the unsuccessful attempts of the government to strangle the press at birth and looks at how an army of journalists found their feet and honed their craft. It considers the personalities who wrote fearlessly and the role played by some of English literature's most famous names. Printers and booksellers played a big part in the development of the press, and they are given their own share of the limelight.

RRP £20.00. Published by Amberley Publishing.



SUMMER SEMINARS

Complementing the Society's current seminar programme, there will be three sessions in the summer term on: online sources, Powerpoint presentations and GIS mapping. Details to follow via e-news and the website.

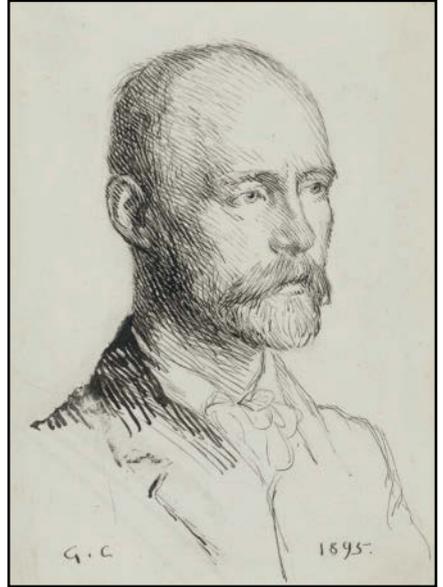
SIR GEORGE CLAUSEN, RA: CHILDWICK'S PAINTER

As a further nod to the Society's 175th anniversary we are dedicating the front covers of this year's newsletters to a member of, or someone with close associations to, the Society who left useful contemporary images of the town and district. The first subject is George Clausen. He moved from St Albans in 1885 shortly after being nominated for membership, so was never formally elected.

Clausen was born in London on 18 April 1852, the second of five children of a Danish artisan decorator and a Scottish mother. He attended St Mark's School, Chelsea. In 1867 he was apprenticed to the interior decorating firm, George Trollop & Sons, for whom his father worked.

Here and at evening classes Clausen developed a deep interest in painting and in 1874 travelled to the Low Countries to advance his ideas and knowledge amongst the Continental artists of the time. His sketchbooks are filled with observations of a rural way of life and he was undoubtedly influenced by French painter Jules Bastien-Lepage stating '...one reads in his works the life-history of the workaday human beings he painted.'

George had been painting commercial pieces to survive but when he married fellow artist Agnes Webster in early 1881, they decided to move away from the London environs and settle in Hertfordshire. They rented a large



George Clausen, self-portrait in pen and ink, 1895 (Licensed under Creative Commons CC BY-NC-ND 3.0 unported. Photo © National Portrait Gallery)

six-bedroomed house at Childwick Green, which later became the estate land agent's house and is now 'Childwick Green House'.

George declared he moved here because 'living was cheaper in the country.' He later recalled that the move was '... a liberation' and 'One saw people doing simple things under good conditions of lighting; and there was always landscape. And nothing was made easy for you: you had to dig out what you wanted.'

There then followed a whole series of works depicting the Hertfordshire peasant and, to help him gather information more quickly, Clausen purchased a 1½ inch square plate camera. He then produced possibly the ear-



'A Straw Plaiter' by Clausen, 1883. (Licensed under Creative Commons Attribution - Non-commercial Licence. Photo © Walker Art Gallery)

liest un-posed photographs of labourers at work in the fields. These photographs, which are archived at the Museum of English Rural Life, University of Reading, supported his on-the-spot sketchbook and gave his later sequence of work a greater naturalism.

His sketchbooks from this time provide a rich record of work in the fields around his new home. The faces and habits of the local labourers became as familiar as their seasonal activities. The first result of these new studies was a picture entitled 'Gleaners', which was exhibited at the Grosvenor Gallery in 1882. The reviewer in the *Magazine of Art* commented 'He shows us a little company of the poor not in picturesque rags but in garments of fact, gleaning modern English fields.'

Clausen appears to have resided at Childwickbury until sometime in 1884 when he and Agnes rented a property in London Road, St Albans for about a year. They then moved to Cookham Dean in Buckinghamshire and stayed there for nearly six years before going to live in the hamlet of Widdington in Essex.

George was a founder member in 1886 of the New English Art Club, Professor of Painting at the Royal Academy from 1904 to 1906 and an official war artist in 1917. His monumental work 'In the Gun Factory at Woolwich Arsenal' (1918) is to be found at the Imperial War Museum, London as is his haunting 'Youth Mourning' painted in 1916. It is understood that this painting is an homage to his daughter whose fiancé was killed in the First World War.

Knighted in 1927 for his contribution to the Arts, Sir George Clausen died in November 1944 at Cold Ash, Newbury, Berkshire, seven months after the death of his beloved Agnes. They are buried together in Newbury.

With grateful thanks to Kenneth McConkey and his book *George Clausen and the Picture of English Rural Life* (2012).

Christine Aitken

Note: Christine's book about the history of Childwickbury is available for purchase via her website: www.christineaitken.com.

THE FLEUR DE LYS PUB AND THE FRENCH KING: FACT OR JUST TRADITION?

In September 2019 the Society received an interesting enquiry from an historian asking about a plaque he remembered, from long ago, fixed to 'a small ... house' in our city telling of the King of France's stay there. We assumed this is the plaque on the 'Snug' (still the Fleur de Lys to most of us) in French Row (see Fig. 1).

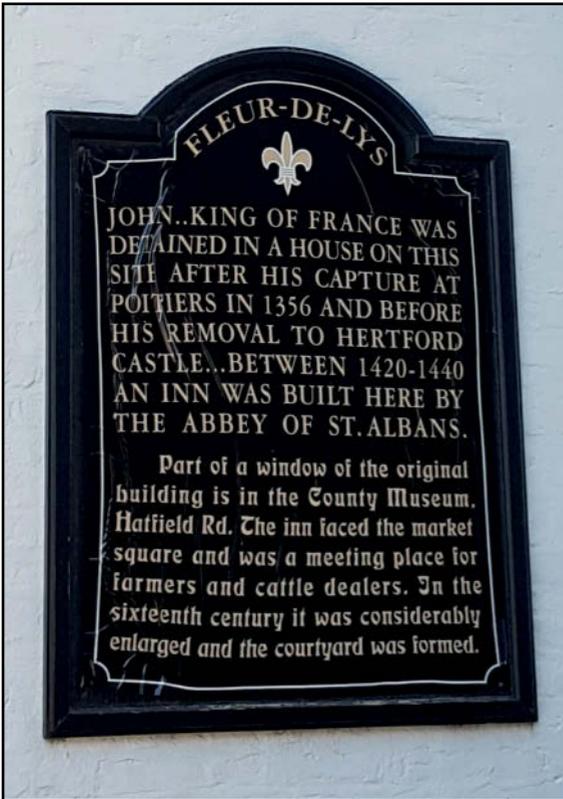


Fig. 1: plaque on the Snug in French Row
(© Tony Berk, 2019)

This tells that, after his capture by the Black Prince at the Battle of Poitiers in 1356, King John of France was accommodated in an inn which existed on the site of the current Fleur de Lys ('Fleur').

This piqued our interest and four of us, Ann Dean, Sheila Green, Jon Mein and I met to review the literature and discuss the validity of this story.

Firstly, we examined 'John, King of France; a prisoner at Hertford Castle', a paper published in the *Transactions of the East Herts Archaeological Society* vol. 6 (1915–22) p. 178, and found the following passage. It refers to King John II of France.

"During his brief halt at St Albans, the king is reputed to have stayed at the Fleur de Lys, and experienced hospitable entertainment at the hands of Abbot Thomas de la Mare. Only a meagre account of the visit has been preserved, and that by Dugdale's later editors, who repeat with slight additions the information given by Newcome."

The two footnotes to this paragraph refer to Dugdale's *Monasticon Anglicanum*, (1846) book ii, p. 198 and to Revd Newcome's *The History of the Abbey of St Albans* (1795) p. 250. Unfortunately, on examination,

neither refers to the Fleur story. Instead each simply repeats the original account in Thomas Walsingham's *Gesta Abbatum Monasterii Sancti Albani* that King John stayed in 1356 in St Albans after capture by the Black Prince at the Battle of Poitiers.

There are two strong indications that, in this age of chivalry, the abbot accommodated the French king in comfort in the Abbey and not in the Fleur.

First, the *Gesta* tells us that Abbot Thomas de la Mare entertained the King at his own table in a chivalric and suitable manner to which a king would be entitled.

Secondly the abbot and the French king were great friends. Indeed the abbot wrote to ask him to intercede with the pope to let him resign the abbacy and become a simple monk again. However, as the Black Prince told him that the abbey would be destroyed without Thomas as abbot, he refused.

So, what is the origin of the Fleur association? We checked our earliest guide books to St Albans, *Gibbs' Illustrated Handbook of St Albans* (1866 and 1884), as well as antiquarian texts by Chauncy (1700) and Clutterbuck (1815-27). None mentions the Fleur in this context.

The earliest text we found that links the Fleur to the French king is C.H. Ashdown's book, *St Albans Historical and Picturesque* (1893) p. 242. This simply states: 'tradition asserts that ... the captive King John was temporarily detained [in the Fleur] when first intrusted to the care of Abbot de la Mare by the chivalric victor of Poitiers'. A useful authority about the city's pubs, F.G. Kitton's 'The Old Inns of St Albans' (*SAHAAS Transactions*, (1899-1900), pp. 252-3), simply cites Ashdown on this point.

So, there is seemingly no firm factual basis to the story. There is much in Ashdown's book of importance but the story of the Fleur de Lys and the French king is perhaps one of its more picturesque elements!

Was the Fleur even in existence in 1356? Kitton presents documentary evidence for the current building (sometimes known as the Fleur-de-Luce or Luse) dating to 1420-40. In architectural terms, the late J.T. Smith could find nothing suggesting pre-1520 construction when he assessed the building in 1988.

In conclusion, we find no primary evidence for the French king's staying in or on the site of the Fleur. We'd be delighted to hear of any sources confirming the story.

Dr Tony Berk

OUR VICTORIAN PREDECESSORS

No. 4: SAMUEL FLINT CLARKSON – PROFESSIONAL ARCHITECT

Samuel Flint Clarkson was elected a member of our Society in 1884, as it gathered momentum with the restoration of the Abbey church and focus on the archaeology of the monastery. He brought architectural expertise and a passion for the antiquarian, which made for a substantial contribution to a group who were culturally equipped and well connected, but perhaps lacked the practical energy required to take the Society forward.

Clarkson was well known in the city, having served articles in London and moved to set up practice in St Albans just as the Midland Railway brought expansion to the town. Throughout the 1870s his work here included redesigning the footpath paving on St Peter's Street west and similarly on Holywell Hill, new wings for the Board of Guardians at the infirmary, and the construction of our Board schools on Hatfield Road, Alma Road and Catherine Street, as well as Watford Road. The practice, which included his brothers John and William, operated from both London Road here and Great Ormond Street in London, where they were also responsible for high profile commissions, such as the parochial school for St George the Martyr in Old Gloucester Street and several churches. Samuel's interest in the antiquarian had emerged early in his career, first on attending at

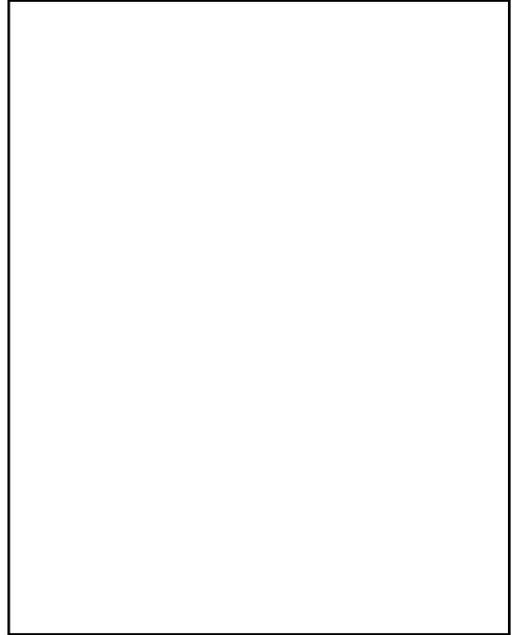


Fig. 1: Samuel Flint Clarkson, c.1897
(Reproduced courtesy of RIBA Collections)

University College the lectures of T.L. Donaldson, brother in law of Abbey church rector Henry Nicholson. (Both Nicholson and Donaldson were early members of our Society.) An active member of the Architectural Association, Clarkson had, when President in 1879, brought a group to visit the Abbey church and in the absence of the usual guides, had ushered participants through the building himself with well-presented notes.

By the time of his marriage in 1881, the rest of the family had moved away and Samuel settled in one of the newly built eleven room houses in Bricket Road. He was apparently already sufficiently well con-

nected in the town to have been commissioned by Corporation Treasurer and later Town Clerk, Isaac Newton Edwards, to build his proposed mansion at the foot of St Stephen's Hill, which he called Westminster House (latterly 'Lodge'). Still to be seen though converted to apartments, it is now Trevelyan Place (see Fig. 2). Other high profile commissions followed and in 1885 he was elected Fellow of the Royal Institute of British Architects.

His energy in support of the antiquarian interest is evident. He organised outings for the Society - in 1887, "after a beautiful afternoon ride over the Flamstead hills, Society members heard a talk by Clarkson on the architectural history of the church and its monuments and also the history of the Saunders almshouses opposite. The

party then moved on to Beechwood Mansion where Clarkson gave notes in front of the house". He was no doubt regarded highly as an asset to the Society, and joined its committee in 1890. It was he who suggested that a catalogue of all archaeological work in Hertfordshire should be drawn up.

On retirement from active practice after the turn of the 20th century, he became district surveyor in Kensington and moved to Holland Road, where he died in 1915. The ten papers he wrote and had published in the *Transactions* are lasting evidence of the substantial contribution Clarkson made to the Society's work. You can see copies of these on our website.

Kate Morris



Fig. 2: 'Westminster House' designed by J. & S.F. Clarkson, drawing published 1877
(Reproduced courtesy of RIBA Collections and Jon Mein)

WHEN STABLE CONDITIONS CAUSED CONCERN

Friday 29 September 1905 was a sombre day at the Midland Railway Hotel. Meeting at this Victoria Street pub were the coroner, inquest jury and members of Cyril Dixon's family. This four-year old boy had died two days earlier, severely burned when his woollen and cotton clothing caught fire. While the cause of death was far from unique, what is worthy of general note is that his inquest was the last of many hundreds held in public houses in St Albans. This was common practice in England which, in local terms, dated to the late 1700s and probably before. Why had it come to an end? The timely coincidence of two factors provides the answer.

Firstly, there was the introduction of new facilities. Pubs played a key role before civic mortuaries were readily available. They were convenient in often having space to store the body until the inquest was held and to host the inquest itself. Moreover, due to their ubiquity in the Victorian period especially, pubs were often the only suitable premises close to the scene of the death.

Convenient certainly, but conditions could be far from perfect. Take, for example, the case in 1898 of a man decapitated by a train close to the main station. His remains were kept at the Midland Station

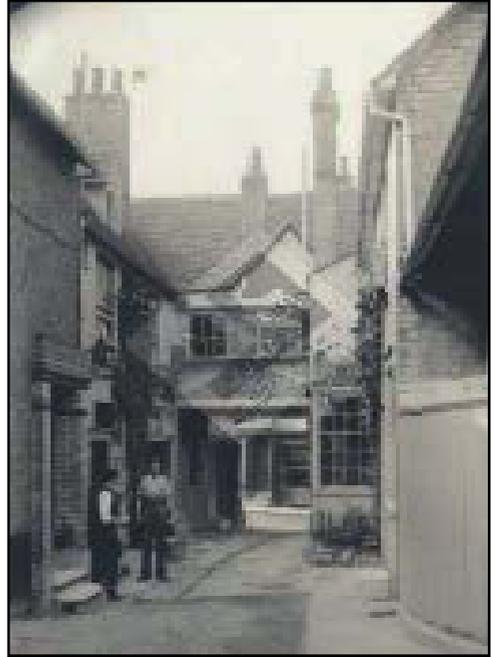


Fig. 1: the George Hotel yard, 1910
(SAHAAS E.S. Kent collection)

Hotel (now the Horn pub) in Victoria Street. Or the assistant schoolmaster from Hatfield Road Board School who in February 1901 accidentally poisoned himself. His body was left at the George Hotel in George Street (Fig. 1). Both corpses were stored in the hotels' stables where, to make matters worse, the schoolmaster's body appears to have been dumped on the floor without recourse to a coffin. The inquest jury noted that the body was laid out like 'a horse or a cow' and risked 'being eaten by rats and mice'.

Cases such as these brought matters to a head. According to Dr Lovell Drage, the

district coroner, a municipal mortuary was needed and he campaigned to force the city council to provide one. Such a facility would, he claimed, be more sensitive for the bereaved and suitable for increasingly sophisticated post-mortem examinations. The council acquiesced in the spring of 1901, funding construction of a mortuary behind the police station in Victoria Street (Fig. 2).

The second factor bringing the end of pubs as venues for inquest meetings was that of changing attitudes to their use in general. This practice was a regular occurrence in St Albans with, in the late Victorian period, an average of three inquests a year held in the city's pubs. But, by 1900, the end was in sight. The Royal Commission sitting in the late 1890s to consider liquor licensing reform heard that witnesses at inquests were known to treat

themselves to their hosts' beer before giving evidence. The commissioners called for this 'scandalous' use of pubs to stop. The Licensing Act of 1902 saw their demand put into effect stipulating that no pub was to be used after 31 March 1907 where other suitable premises were available.

A search of the digitised *Herts Advertiser* newspapers indicates that, poor Cyril Dixon's 1905 inquest apart, the use of pubs in the city for this purpose ended in March 1902. This was still two months before the Licensing Bill was even discussed in Parliament. Who influenced the early change in St Albans is not clear. Even with their tendency to complain to the point of absurdity about public houses, the city's noisy temperance campaigners appear to have kept quiet on the matter. They would have been content with the result though.

Over the next few years, the Town Hall and new semi-public buildings such as parish and mission halls replaced the city's pubs as venues for these sad gatherings.

A fully referenced version of this article is in the Society's Library. My thanks to Richard Mein and Alan Smith for their comments on an earlier draft of this article.

Jon Mein



Fig. 2: View along Victoria Street looking west towards the Town Hall, police station on the right, c.1905 (Reproduced courtesy of Andy Lawrence)

WILLIAM DOBSON – FROM A ST ALBANS CHILDHOOD TO THE KING’S PAINTER (PART 2)

In the first part of her article, published in the November 2019 newsletter, Pat Howe outlined her research into the early life in St Albans of William Dobson, one of the first notable English painters. This second and final part considers his father’s links to what is now the Gorhambury estate and his career in general.

Francis Bacon commissioned the building of Verulam House on his estate in 1617. According to John Aubrey, William Dobson’s father, William senior, was Bacon’s assistant in the design and building of the house and “a very ingenious man”. A variety of suggestions have been made as to Dobson’s actual role in this work. I support that of historian, R. F. Jones, who believes that, as a trained lawyer, he would most likely be an agent or overseer for the project and this is borne out by the extant report that on 17 August 1618 the Gorhambury estate paid Dobson “to discharge arrears of workmen’s bills left unpaid”. This surely implies that Dobson was trusted with Bacon’s money and management of workers.

The connection with Francis Bacon and the design of the new home may have influenced the future of young William.

He was apprenticed to William Peake, a stationer and picture dealer in Holborn Bridge, and it was during this apprenticeship that he began to copy pictures of great artists. He also took advice from Francis Cleyn, a German artist of considerable repute operating at the time as chief designer at the Mortlake tapestry work.

William has been described as “unconnected and ordinary” but Jones has carried out extensive research into his family connections and found many of them to be of high status, wealthy and, in



‘Endymion Porter’ by Dobson, c.1645. Porter was a diplomat and royalist. (Licensed under Creative Commons Attribution - Non-commercial Licence CC-BY-NC-ND 3.0 (Unported). Photo © Tate)

some cases, powerful. Very little documentary evidence has survived which could enlighten us about the artist's life from apprenticeship to the time he lived in Oxford during the Civil War but some 60 paintings have survived and many are on display and available for public viewing. The description by the National Portrait Gallery portrays him as Principal Painter to



'Portrait of an Officer' by Dobson, c.1645.

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(Unported). Photo © Tate)

the King whilst the Royal Court was exiled to Oxford. Jones has found no documentary evidence for this. But circumstantial evidence provides grounds for assuming he may have taken over from Van Dyck who died in 1642/43. Dobson's presence in Oxford at this time, coupled with the fact that the subjects of the majority of the paintings were Royalists with some scenes from the Civil War makes a very strong case for his being the 'King's Painter'.

In Wikipedia's article about him, 13 paintings are illustrated: a self portrait and one which is thought to be of his second wife, Judith. Others were members of the royal household or were civil war patriots of the king, such as Sir Richard Fanshaw, Edward Hyde and Sir Edward Dering. Abraham van de Doort, Surveyor of the King's Pictures, and Nicholas Lanier, Master of the King's Music, were also subjects of his portraits. These can be found in various British galleries and beyond.

Fully referenced versions of both articles will soon be available in the Society's Library.

Pat Howe

DO YOU HAVE A BROTHER PRINTER?

If so, and your printer takes LC223 cartridges, you may be interested in purchasing a set of unopened, original black/colour print cartridges we have for it. The cost is £35 — they currently retail for £70 in Ryman's or around £45 on eBay. If you are interested, please email library@stalbanhistory.org.

EXCAVATION AT 8–10 HIGH STREET, WHEATHAMPSTEAD

In January and February 2019 building work was monitored at 8–10 High Street, Wheathampstead. This location is in the heart of the Saxon, medieval and later village, close to the river and is a Grade II listed building (List entry Number 1103654: House and shop. C17 exposed timber frame; probably an earlier core to No 10.) Proposed works were for rear extensions, a detached rear workshop, landscaping and associated external alterations.

The work on site cut into the rear slope, much of which had built up probably since the nineteenth century and various late features and levels were observed towards the rear of the site (Fig. 1). The foundation trench for the workshop, also at the rear,



Fig. 1. Build-up of Victorian garden soil which continued below the foundation for the new retaining wall (© Simon West, 2019)

produced a large Hertfordshire Greyware base sherd; no features were observed cutting the chalk natural.

An area immediately to the rear of the current structure, on the site of an old extension, was also levelled. This proved to be significant, as the modern light build had sealed stratified deposits in one corner (Fig. 2). Beneath the modern floor, the latest of these appeared to be a rough surface which produced a single sherd of late glazed redware pottery, probably associated with development in the seventeenth century or later. Beneath this surface and its makeup (lime/chalk), were a series of soil deposits down onto a stony layer. At first this was considered to be a cobble surface but this proved to be too rough and intermittent to sustain definitive identification. The overlying soil layers in this small area produced a total of 56

sherds, most were Hertfordshire Greyware (48), but several were of a sandy grog pottery (5), probably of a similar date.

Hertfordshire Greyware dates to the mid-twelfth to mid-



Fig. 2: Area of survival of medieval deposits
(© Simon West, 2019)

fourteenth centuries (1150–1350). This period saw the organisation and development of a new pottery industry which was ubiquitous in this area. It is a hard quartz-based fabric, with some having the addition of flint. The flint fabrics are coarser and considered to be earlier. The ware is largely reduced in the kiln where the oxygen is restricted and varies in colour from grey to black. Although no kilns have yet been found in the immediate vicinity of St Albans, place-name evidence such as Potters Crouch to the west of Chiswell Green, suggests they were located nearby.

What is interesting about this site is the lack of subsequent or earlier pottery. As natural was not reached over most of the area observed, earlier and later could be present in features such as pits which were not uncovered. However, other material such as large fragments of worked clunch

were present. Clunch is a soft limestone (hard chalk) probably from the Totternhoe Quarry near Dunstable, Bedfordshire. When newly quarried it is full of water and easy to cut and carve, hardening as it dehydrates. However, it is vulnerable to weathering. Following the Romanesque period, clunch was a favoured building material and was spread far and wide into lesser buildings after the Reformation, where following the Suppression of

the Monasteries, much of the medieval ecclesiastical building material was sold or robbed, to be used elsewhere.

The significance of this site shows that there was considerable activity from the mid-twelfth century onwards, but that the surviving structures are later in date. Whilst the lack of earlier material is not conclusively proved, it would be significant if this was the case. Similarly in St Albans, much of the medieval town cannot be dated before the mid-twelfth century or soon thereafter; there is a rapid expansion from the Saxon core close to the Abbey. Assuming that this activity also involved structures, these seem to have been replaced from c.1450/1550 onwards leaving us with much of the medieval and early modern core as is seen today.

Simon West
District Archaeologist

ESTABLISHING THE RIFLE RANGE AT BEECH BOTTOM DYKE

While Beech Bottom Dyke is a spectacular gift from the city's past it lacks any record or evidence of its construction, probably early in the first century AD. (Conjecture as to its purpose is not the object of this article.) There was a brief opportunity to shine 1400 years later at the Second Battle of St Albans, in 1461, but the attacking Lancastrians very simply bypassed the barrier it presented by 'coming in round the side way'.

The Dyke slumbered for another 500 years until the mid-19th century, when a perceived threat of invasion by the Old Enemy, France, led to local volunteer forces being raised around the country. St Albans was not to be left out and when

a suitable practice range was required for the rifled weapons by then in use, the Dyke bottom presented itself as ready-made. All that was necessary was a butts cross-bank at some point, which would stop the bullets and against which targets could be set up.

Amongst papers recently coming into the Society library was a digital copy of a 'back-of-an-envelope' sketch of the first proposal for the rifle range. This is dated 1860 and reproduced on the facing page (Fig. 2). Notes point out that just a few large trees would have to be felled and that a six-foot bank already existed at one point. This latter is evident in the 1726 Sandridge manor map, where a field boundary crosses the ditch and significantly there is an abrupt increase in the ditch width, on the south side. This could

arise from the action of quarrying material for the bank, from one side of the boundary line. The plan notes state that material could be readily obtained nearby to raise the bank. In other words the pre-existing quarry pit would be enlarged to what it is now.

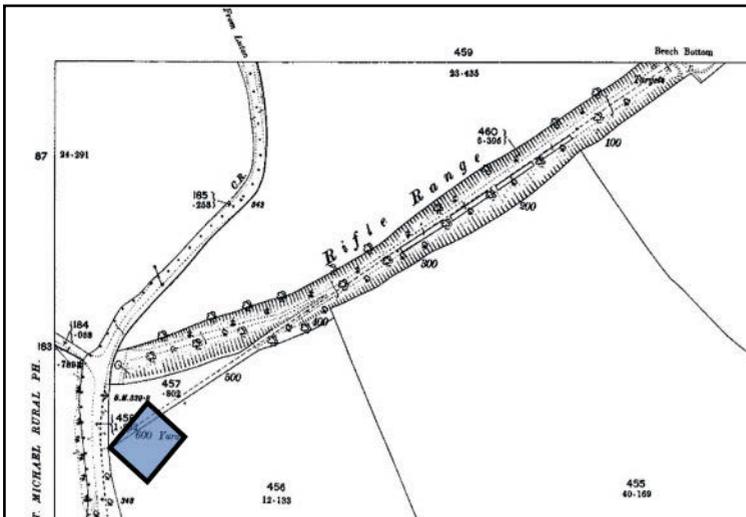


Fig. 1: OS map of Beech Bottom Dyke, 1897 (SAHAAS Library).

The shaded box marks the approximate location of the Ancient Briton.

Text cont'd on p.34

Fig. 2: Plan of the proposed site for the St Albans rifle range, 4 January 1860.
(Reproduced courtesy of HALS, Acc 6137)

The 400-yard range initially proposed would have lain entirely below ground level, in the bottom of the Dyke. At some stage it was realised that it could be significantly extended to 600 yards if that firing point was to be at ground level, with a depressed line of fire down into the Dyke bottom. To permit this, an acute, oblique scollop had to be cut through the south flank of the ditch, and is still to be seen behind Nos 202 and 204 Beech Road. The 600-yard firing point is now covered by the Ancient Briton pub — see Fig. 1. (Beech Road was not constructed until the 1930s.) A contemporary painting by local artist John Henry Buckingham shows a shooting competition in progress on the Dyke range. Late 19th century OS maps clearly identify the range, which continued in use for some 20 years, until improved rifles meant a

longer range was needed and this was constructed north of Sandridge.

The use made of the Dyke in the 1800 years before the range is uncertain. Arable farming was clearly unfeasible, silviculture only marginally better, given the topography. The manor map describes the land parcels in the Dyke as woodland, so presumably the best was made of a difficult job.

All parts of the Dyke are accessible, but it should be noted that at a few points on the footpath (along the top of the south bank) some agility is required, especially when wet. There is not at present a continuous path through, along the bottom of the main section of the Dyke; it is blocked by the butts bank.

Roger Miles

HERTFORDSHIRE ASSOCIATION FOR LOCAL HISTORY (HALH) – SPRING MEETING AND AGM – 9 MAY 2020

Venue: Welwyn Civic Centre, Welwyn, AL6 0ER

The programme will include talks by local societies and the annual Lionel Munby lecture. This year, the lecture will be given by Dr John Baker, Associate Professor in Name-Studies at the University of Nottingham. He will be talking about place-names in Hertfordshire.

Free to HALH members, £2 to visitors. Full programme details to follow via e-news.

The 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; and publishing the *Herts Past and Present* journal.

LECTURE PROGRAMME

18 February to 9 June 2020.

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 18 February

Maritime St Albans

Anthony Oliver

Inspired by 2020 being the centenary of the St Albans Branch of the RNLI this talk investigates the many ways in which a land-locked city has connections with the sea and why it supports lifeboats. The city has funded three lifeboats, been home to several Admirals, had six Royal Navy ships bear its name, supported a sea cadet force and surprisingly been home to several maritime industries. These and other interesting links to the sea will be discussed and some strange stories revealed.

Anthony Oliver has lived in Hertfordshire since 1972 and in St Albans since 2005. In his youth he enjoyed sailing and always admired and supported the work of the RNLI. Since moving to the city he has been a member of the Arc and Arc as well as a volunteer guide at the Cathedral.

Tuesday 3 March

The Origins of The Grand National in St Albans

Stephen Williams and Jean Yates

In February 1820, St Albans hosteller and horseman Thomas Coleman organised a steeplechase with a grand prize open nationally. He laid down some major rules, and the resulting race became the first of a series known ever since as the St Albans Grand Steeplechase, leading on directly to the Aintree Grand National.

After two decades of research, cleric Stephen Williams and author Jean Yates present for the first time an update of their talk illustrating Tommy Coleman, his sporting hotel in Chequer Street, and the nine glorious years the race was based here, before tracing its loss to Aintree.

Tuesday 10 March

Housing for Victorian and Edwardian Working Women

Emily Gee

Emily will speak about her research and publication on purpose-built lodging houses for working women, a distinctive building type that emerged particularly in late Victorian and Edwardian London to serve the new body of women engaged in clerical work. The illustrated talk will address the historical and funding context, the architecture of the buildings and their social impact.

Emily Gee is the Regional Director, London and South East at Historic England, where she has worked since 2001. She has a background in architectural history studying at Smith College, the University of Virginia and the Architectural Association. She is a Governor at Thomas Coram Nursery, serves on the Council of the Camden History Society, looks after the history fundraising lectures at St Pancras Old Church and is a Trustee at the Brunel Museum, Rotherhithe.

Tuesday 17 March

Coffee: A Global History

Professor Jonathan Morris

Prof. Morris's book *Coffee: A Global History*, upon which his presentation will be based, explains how the world acquired a taste for coffee, yet why coffee tastes are so different throughout the world. He will outline five eras of coffee history, tracing the bean's journey from the forests of Ethiopia through the coffee houses of Europe, the plantations of Brazil, the introduction of instant coffee, and the global coffee shop culture of today.

Jonathan Morris is a Professor of Modern History at the University of Hertfordshire, and Vice-President of the Royal Historical Society. He began life as a historian of modern Italy and moved into coffee history when he directed 'The Cappuccino

Conquests' research project that traced the spread of Italian style coffee beverages around the world.

Tuesday 7 April

Making A Mint

Mark Landon

Coining it! – Late Iron Age coin production in the Thames area and further afield. The very latest research into a hitherto poorly understood aspect of Iron Age culture, showing that the cultural context for minting was much richer and more complex than we could have anticipated. One size most certainly does not fit all!

Mark Landon has been involved in archaeology since he was ten years old, but it was nearly 50 years before his book Making A Mint was published in 2016. He lives in Braughing with his long-suffering wife, Sue, and does not see nearly enough of his son, daughter and granddaughter.

Tuesday 14 April

Migration, Food and the St Albans Experience

Sandy Walkington

Our President Sandy Walkington is using his MA at the University of Hertfordshire to look at recent waves of migration into St Albans. He is focusing in particular on food, as a trigger for memory, the chal-

lenges in sourcing familiar and appropriate ingredients, and the interaction with other St Albans residents as restaurants, cafés and shops offered new culinary experiences. We are what we eat.

Tuesday 21 April

The Future of History: The Next 175 Years

And now for something completely different! Instead of a lecture: a discussion; whereby a panel of eminent historians will each share their personal perspective of the history of the past, present and future. There will then follow a chance for debate and audience participation.

Taking part:

Professor Margot Finn is Chair of Modern History at UCL. She is President of the Royal Historical Society (RHS) which represents history as a discipline and historians as a group. The RHS promotes the vitality of historical scholarship through support for research and publication and advocates best practice in history teaching in universities and schools.

Professor Sarah Lloyd is a member of the History Department at the University of Hertfordshire and chair of the University's Heritage Hub. She has worked on community histories of Hertfordshire and currently leads a national public engagement centre funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council.

Rebecca Sullivan has been, since 2007, Chief Executive of the Historical Association (HA): 'the Voice for History' whose overarching priority is to advance the study and learning of history at all levels. The HA plays a vital role in supporting history in schools. Their research investigates the state of history education and allows them to talk to government and policy makers with an authoritative voice.

Tuesday 5 May

The Day Parliament Burned Down

Dr Caroline Shenton

In the early evening of 16 October 1834, to the horror of bystanders, a huge ball of fire exploded through the roof of the Houses of Parliament, creating a blaze so enormous that it could be seen by the King and Queen at Windsor and from stage-coaches on top of the South Downs. In front of hundreds of thousands of witnesses, the great conflagration destroyed Parliament's glorious old buildings and their contents. No one who witnessed the disaster would ever forget it. Based on her acclaimed book, this former Director of the Parliamentary Archives and prize-winning author will take you through the gripping hour-by-hour story of the forgotten fire that changed the face of London.

Prior to her post as Director of the Parliamentary Archives Dr Caroline Shenton worked as a senior archivist at the National

Archives. Her book entitled The Day Parliament Burned Down won the Political Book of the Year Award in 2013 whilst the sequel Mr Barry's War concerning the rebuilding of Parliament was a Book of The Year in 2016.

Tuesday 12 May

The Prittlewell Prince — An Anglo-Saxon chamber burial in its local and wider context

Lyn Blackmore

Discovered in 2003 and published in 2019, the richly furnished princely burial at Prittlewell, Southend, is the earliest post-Roman Christian burial in England and the most important Anglo-Saxon burial found since the discovery of the great ship burial at Sutton Hoo in 1939. This lecture outlines the story of the cemetery, from its inception in the 6th century AD and considers the resources used to construct and furnish the chamber and the possible symbolism of the carefully selected objects placed in it. Although the identity of the deceased is unknown, he clearly belonged to a wealthy community with connections to Kent, Europe and the Mediterranean which played an important part in the early development of the kingdom of Essex.

Lyn Blackmore is one of Museum of London Archaeology's Senior Finds Specialists, specialising in pottery. She has many years'

experience of archaeological finds research and is an internationally recognised expert in Saxon finds.

Tuesday 19 May

The Royal Institute of British Architects

Alan Vallance

The RIBA was founded in 1834 for 'the general advancement of Architecture, and for promoting and facilitating the acquirement of the knowledge of various arts and sciences connected therewith'. To further that purpose the RIBA cares for one of the largest and most diverse architectural collections in the world, known as the British Architectural Library. Over four million items together represent a unique body of knowledge that is rich and global in scope.

Alan Vallance is the Chief Executive of the RIBA. Based in London, he is responsible for running the leading chartered profession body for architects with 45,000 members in 115 countries around the world. Trained as a chartered accountant he has held a wide variety of roles in Europe and Australasia. He is a member of the UK Creative Industries Council which advises the UK government on major policy and initiatives for the creative industries. He is also a member of the UK Creative Industries Trade and Investment Board where he has oversight responsibility for the export of the UK's architecture services.

Tuesday 9 June

The Research Process for "Discover, Protect, Innovate, Inform: How the Arc & Arc Made St Albans History"

Our anniversary exhibition opens at the St Albans Museum + Gallery on 19 June. This 'lecture' is an opportunity to hear in advance from a number of our members who have undertaken research on some of over 150 objects which highlight SAHAAS's contribution to the community

over the past 175 years. Besides giving a short introduction to the 'object', they will talk about the journey the research took them on, physically and emotionally. There will be an introduction, six mini presentations followed by time for questions and discussion. There will be an interval for refreshments and a chance to talk with the researchers on a more informal basis.

Gill Girdziusz

UPDATE ON THE STALINGRAD COMMEMORATIONS

As trailed in the November 2019 newsletter, over February and March this year, there will be a series of events in St Albans commemorating the Battle of Stalingrad (1942-3) and links between the battle and St Albans and Hertfordshire more widely. The outline of the programme is as follows:

1. A travelling exhibition will reach St Albans on 28 February, be open to the public at the Museum + Gallery on 29 February and run until 6 March;
2. At 6pm on 2 March a visiting Russian historian (Dmitry Belov) will deliver a free lecture in the Museum + Gallery (details to follow on the museums' website); and
3. At 6.30pm on 8 March there will be a special showing of the most recent Russian feature film on Stalingrad at the Odyssey Cinema.

It is hoped that the Russian Ambassador will formally open the season of events on 28 February. For further details, please see <https://stalingrad-uk.com>.

Dr Peter Burley and Bryan Hanlon

THE NEWSLETTER

Copy deadline for the May 2020 edition is 15 April. If you have any comments about the newsletter or wish to submit content, please email me, Jon Mein, via newsed@stalbanhistory.org.

Pictures from the New Year Party

(See p. 4 for the report)



Sandy Walkington, the Society's President, talking with the Mayor, Cllr Janet Smith, and Deputy Mayor, Cllr Sandra Wood.

Conversation



The Food



The Gathering

With thanks to Andy Lawrence
for the photographs

