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1845 - 2020

ST ALBANS & HERTFORDSHIRE  
ARCHITECTURAL & ARCHAEOLOGICAL  
SOCIETY

## NEWSLETTER 218

November 2020



'Market Day', St Albans, c.1890 by Frederic George Kitton (1856-1904)  
Pencil drawing. See p. 36 for further information about Kitton  
(Photo © St Albans Museums ref. 1981.3894)

### Included in this issue:

**175th Anniversary Exhibition**  
**Annual General Meeting**  
**Salaman Tool Collection**  
**Canon Owen Davys**

**Portable Antiquities Scheme**  
**Naval Guns in St Albans**  
**The Timperons**  
**Clock Tower Competition**

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## THE NEWSLETTER

As this is the AGM edition of the *Newsletter*, it is an appropriate time to thank Christine McDermott together with Paula Dilger and Julia Merrick for their hard work over the last year dispatching copies to you. Now, with Tony Cooper and Lin Watson joining them, up to half the newsletters are delivered by hand, the resulting savings being a boon to the Society’s finances.

Copy deadline for the February 2021 edition is 15 January. If you have any comments or wish to submit content, please contact me, Jon Mein, via [newsed@stalbanhistory.org](mailto:newsed@stalbanhistory.org).

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

It is a great privilege to pen this to you as President. First, I want to express my grateful thanks to Sandy Walkington who has steered the ship so well over the last three years and has left the Society in such great shape. Also, I want to thank the members of Council who are beavering away to ensure we keep providing you, our members, with the best level of service we can in these times of uncertainty. It is said that the real test of character is how people act when times become difficult and, on that basis, we are in extremely good shape. Many hours have been spent in ensuring we can deliver our lectures and seminars to you via an e-platform and it is pleasing to see so many of you logging in on a Tuesday evening. In particular, I want to express my thanks to Mark Percival who, although not on Council, has tirelessly placed his time, wisdom, and technology at our disposal to ensure this happens.



Looking through an old diary I realised with surprise that it was three years ago in November 2017 that I met with Donald Munro in the café at Aylett Nurseries to

discuss becoming involved in setting up our 175th anniversary exhibition. Much has happened, and this has been achieved. Like all matters of moment it has been a true team effort and I have asked Jon to allocate a page in the *Newsletter* to display our exhibition 'Thank you' board as a thanks to all of you who played a part (see p.6). In addition, I want to single out our new PR guru Andie Hill (see p.9), for her amazing creativity in making this a reality, and to the company Creative Place who executed the design work.

Our exhibition title is 'Looking back, Looking Forward' because, after all, 175 years is a milestone and not a cut-off point. We do need to start looking forward. There are some gaps in what we offer that need filling and improvements required elsewhere. Within three years I want us to be recognised as Britain's best local history society. Council will be considering these matters over the next three months. More in the February newsletter.

All for now. All best wishes

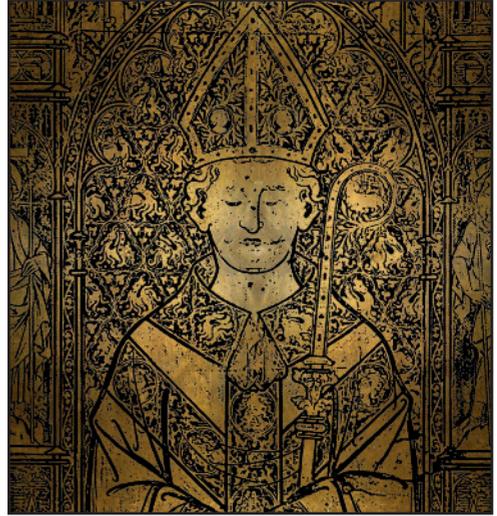
**John Morewood**

## LOOKING BACK, LOOKING FORWARD – DE LA MARE UNCOVERED!

Thomas de la Mare (1309-96), Abbot of St Albans (1349-96), was counsellor and friend of kings and princes and one of the greatest abbots of St Albans. He restored the Abbey's finances, defended its rights and was a great benefactor as well as being a noted theologian and friend of the Black Prince.\* During his rule, the great gatehouse was built and the revolt of the town's people against the Abbey's authority crushed.

For enthusiasts of memorial brasses, he has of course another claim to fame. To commemorate himself, he had laid down what is now the finest surviving Flemish brass to an ecclesiastic in England. It fascinated our first secretary, Revd Charles Boutell, but of course was too large for him to reproduce in the book he dedicated to the Society and its President.

It seemed to be a fitting exhibit to position at the end of our exhibition as a 'wow factor'. But how to achieve a copy, particularly when the offer of a loan of one of the few rubbings of the brass was withdrawn? We were very grateful to the Monumental Brass Society and its members, in particular Martin Stuchfield, for permission to use the digitised image of the brass from the society's book.\*\* Of course, digitisation allows adaptation



A section of the digitised de la Mare brass – this exhibit was created by first 'inverting' the original digital black and white brass rubbing, then blending it over a second image constructed of 40 smaller bronze images.

and, thanks to Andie Hill, we were able to change the colours from the traditional rubbing made by black wax heelball on a white background to what you can see in our exhibition. This has to be the best reproduction of the brass extant. A tantalising thought – was the original brass ever coloured, like that of Alonso de Madrigal, Bishop of Avila (1454-5)?

**John Morewood**

### Notes:

\* See what is becoming the standard work, M. Jones, *The Black Prince* (London, 2017), pp. 377-8.

\*\* W. Lack, P. Whittemore and H. Martin Stuchfield, *The Monumental Brasses of Hertfordshire*, (Stratford St Mary, Suffolk, 2009).

## LOOKING BACK, LOOKING FORWARD – CLOCK TOWER MODEL

Back in July last year, I showed a group of staff members from the University of Hertfordshire's Creative Art Department around the Clock Tower. They were very grateful and queried if there was anything they could do for me in return. And there was. I asked if there might be a



The belfry interior

student who would be interested in designing and constructing a scale model of the Clock Tower that could be put on display as part of our 175th anniversary exhibition in the Museum.

Beth Jones, a design student, turned out to be a perfect fit as she was looking for a final year project to work on and so began a long and winding road to completion in 14 months.

Her first task was to take numerous photos and measurements of the Tower and turn them in to a prototype, card model on to which she could paste all the designs. Then the real construction work began starting with an MDF base,



Beth Jones with her model in the Museum

using lots of Gorilla glue, Polyfilla and a 3D scanner. Due to the studios at the University closing in March because of lock down, work had to come to a halt. Nonetheless Beth was awarded her degree in June based on her half-finished model and then allowed to return in September to finish the work. The final model's intricate detailing includes the parapet gargoyles, readable signs on the front of the Tower, and the two bell frames that can be viewed through a peephole on the belfry floor. The model was finally installed at the Museum on 13 October.

**Caroline Howkins**

## **‘LOOKING BACK, LOOKING FORWARD’ – THANK YOU!**

Our exhibition would not have been possible without the wonderful support of members of the Society, various institutions, museums, and private individuals in addition to the amazing creativity of Andie Hill and Creative Place. Thank you all!

Exhibition Curator, John Morewood

Design, Andie Hill

Construction, Creative Place

Grateful thanks to Sarah Keeling, St Albans Museum + Gallery

The Ashmolean Museum

Chris Bennett

Helen Bishop

Peter Bourton

Peter Burley

Master and Fellows of Corpus Christi

College Cambridge

Brian and Janet Carter

Community Archaeology Geophysics

Group

John Cox

Ann Dean

The Devonshire Association

Di Dunn

Dr Mark Freeman

Gill Girdziusz

Mike Gray

Sheila Green

Sue Gregory

Viscountess Grimston

Bryan Hanlon

Hertfordshire Archives and Local Studies

University of Hertfordshire

Caroline Howkins

Institute of Historical Research

Heather Jardine

Beth Jones

Katie Jones

Jane Kelsall

Andy Lawrence

Dr Kris Lockyear

Jon Mein

Malcolm Merrick

Monumental Brass Society

David Moore

Donald Munro

National Portrait Gallery

Dr Rosalind Niblett

Mark Percival

Royal Collections Trust

Portable Antiquities Scheme

Society for the Promotion of Roman

Studies

Cathedral and Abbey Church of St Alban

St Albans International Organ Festival

St Albans Museums

St Albans School

Adam and Jill Singer

Mike Smith

David Thorold

Ros Trent

Lord and Lady Verulam

Sandy Walkington

Welwyn Archaeological Society

Simon West

## POSTPONED AGM

As you will recall from our August newsletter, Council had decided to postpone the AGM (usually held in September), in view of the restrictions imposed as a consequence of the Covid 19 pandemic. From the lack of comments by the membership it seems that all were in agreement. We intimated then that a possible date would be 8 January. However, this will require an AGM unlike any other that we have ever held, in that it will be conducted virtually, using Zoom. We understand this is in accordance with Charity Commission Guidelines.

Many of you will have been using Zoom over the past few months, including of course for our current lecture programme, but we are conscious that any such 'virtual' meeting would exclude those of you who do not have or make use of this facility. If you cannot / do not wish to use Zoom, and have any points that you wish to raise at the AGM, please write with full details to the Secretary, 24 Monks Horton Way, St Albans, AL1 4HA to arrive by 15 December.

If you propose joining via Zoom, please register via Eventbrite. The link to the Eventbrite page will be emailed to you

via 'enews' on 2 January 2021. Those who register should expect to receive the Zoom link by 4pm on 8 January.

At this AGM, it will be necessary to vote approval (or otherwise!) on certain items, and we are therefore including a voting slip (one per member); please complete and return to The Secretary (address as above) or email a copy to the following address to arrive by 15 December.

NB On this occasion there will no following lecture (nor drinks and nibbles – bring your own!). The meeting will cover Society Business only in accordance with the Agenda. It is hoped as many as possible will attend this important, albeit virtual, meeting. The support, views and comments of Society members are important and an integral part of the management of the Society.

If you require further information or clarification, please contact the secretary using the contact methods already given above.

**Bryan Hanlon**  
**Hon. Secretary**  
**admin@stalbanhistory.org**

Note: the Group Reports follow on pp.10-17.

## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Notice is hereby given that  
The Annual General Meeting of  
St Albans and Hertfordshire Architectural and Archaeological Society  
will be held virtually via *Zoom* on  
Friday 8 January 2021 at **7.30 pm**  
for the following purposes

### Agenda

- 1) Apologies for absence
- 2) Election of John Morewood as President for the next three years
- 3) President's comments – inc. report on our 175 exhibition
- 4) To adopt the minutes of the AGM held on 10 September 2019  
*(enc. with the November 2019 Newsletter)*
- 5) To receive the accounts for the year ended 31 May 2020  
*(enc. with the November 2020 Newsletter)*
- 6) To receive reports from our various Groups  
*(printed in the August and November 2020 Newsletters)*
- 7) To elect the following members to serve on Council (with their responsibilities) until the next AGM:

Peter Burley	<i>Vice-president</i>
Bryan Hanlon	<i>Secretary</i>
David Moore	<i>Treasurer</i>
Tony Berk	<i>Chairman, Programme Development Committee</i>
Peter Bourton	<i>Website</i>
Gill Girdziusz	<i>Lecture Secretary</i>
Andie Hill	<i>Publicity</i>
Pat Howe	<i>17th Century Research Group</i>

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

**NB In addition, the post of Publications Officer is currently vacant – please do let John Morewood or Bryan Hanlon know if you could be interested in conducting this role**

- 8) To confirm the election of Chris Hall as Independent Examiner of the accounts
- 9) A. O. B.

### **THE SOCIETY'S NEW PUBLICITY OFFICER: ANDIE HILL**

Andie is a St Albans-based designer with a background in theatre and a member of the Society since 2010.

She originally had her own costume business but gave that up shortly after her son was born. Over the intervening years she has carried on working, creating costumes, activity packs and other items for many large museums and heritage organisations, as well as her work as a professional artist and designer.

These days she also runs an on-line business creating bespoke silk scarves where she has worked with the collections of organisations such as the National Portrait Gallery and Royal Armouries Leeds, as well as our very own St Albans Museum + Gallery. And speaking of the latter, when you visit (or have of course already visited) our 175 exhibition, you will see her excellent design and layout at first hand!



## TREASURER'S REPORT

Enclosed with this newsletter are the accounts for the financial year ended 31 May 2020 which were signed by the independent examiner on 24 July 2020 and were approved by Council on 16 September 2020. As in previous years the accounts are presented in the format required by the Charity Commission's Accounting and Reporting by Charities - Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP2005). They also contain a report from an independent examiner even though the Charity Commission does not require such a report for Charities with income below £25000. I am more comfortable, however, to present to you accounts which have been subject to independent examination.

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

### **Restricted Funds:**

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

### **Unrestricted Funds:**

Income:

- Membership Subscriptions received amounted to £9384 up £716 on the previous year reflecting a net increase in membership of some 30 people. This is the main source of income to the Society.
- The Society's share of the income from the Clock Tower opening amounted to £3500, down by £500 on the previous year.
- Gift Aid for the financial year 2018-19 amounting to £3226 was received, an increase of £1359 on the previous year. This being the result of the increase in subscriptions in 2017-18, a donation of £1000 and the large donation received that year from the family towards publication of the Percival Blow book. A claim for 2019-20 has been submitted and this will be shown in next year's, 2020-21, accounts.

Expenditure:

Running/Admin costs were generally in line with expectations and within budget. The key areas of expenditure are: the Lecture programme, Newsletter, Library and Publications:

- The Covid-19 lockdown in March impacted on the lectures programme with eight lectures being cancelled. Whilst this saved the Society money in terms of speakers' fees and premises hire, it was very disappointing to have to curtail what is a popular part of the Society's offerings. Overall lecture costs

were well controlled, and high-quality speakers continue to be attracted. The fee of £5 paid by non-members produced an income of £265.

- The *Newsletter* costs were in line with the previous year at £1913 and within budget.
- Library expenses are down on last year by £1359; there was no expenditure on new IT equipment or operating software in the period.
- Publications: the Percival Blow book was successfully published in September 2019 and thanks to the generous donation of £3000 by the family only some £1619 was utilised from the funds, £4000, set aside by the Society. Sales totalling £1669 were made generating a surplus of £50 in the financial year. Sales of other titles produced an income of £215.

### **Balance Sheet:**

Surplus funds of £7541 are in hand at the end of the financial year, part of which ironically resulted from the Covid-19 lockdown curtailing Society activities leading to underspends. Funds available to the Society now stand at some £30915, an increase on 2018-19 of £7547.

However, this figure includes the following: -

Reserve	£12000
175 project	£6000
June 2019 conference surplus*	£1192
Total	£19192
Net available funds	£11723

\*A decision is awaited from the conference organisers as to how these funds are to be utilised and therefore cannot be regarded as available Society funds.

Overall, the Society's finances remain in a good position helped by the reduced spending as a result of the Covid-19 lock down and the decision taken in previous years to increase the annual subscriptions with the knock-on positive effect on Gift Aid receipts. A word of caution: as a consequence of the lock down this summer the Clock Tower was not opened, therefore no income has been generated resulting in a likely short fall in next year's income of £4000+/- . Having said this and whilst the future is somewhat uncertain due to the ongoing pandemic, the Society has funds available to explore new projects and publications in the coming months.

**David Moore**  
**Hon. Treasurer**

## **PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE REPORT**

The year started well with many plans for outings, a full lecture programme in the church and a seminar programme in our library, but, of course, all came to a shuddering halt.

The lecture programme has been completely moved online in order to ensure that the Society continues to provide this crucial service to our members. We are very grateful to local speakers, predominantly members, who have stepped forward to present lectures over the Autumn term whilst maintaining a list of external speakers for the future. The result has been a programme which can morph into a physical programme, or even a hybrid/online one at any suitable time. A sub-committee has been formed ready to undertake a risk assessment once a return to Marlborough Road Methodist Church becomes a realistic possibility. The booking service for lectures and seminars has been administered by Jon Mein using Eventbrite which has worked well.

The number of members registering has been monitored and is at least comparable with those for physical lectures. Initially, due to a restriction in numbers, some members were unable to access the test trial lecture. Arrangements

were subsequently made to increase the upper limit such that in future there should be no problem for any members who would wish to access a lecture in doing so. As a result of this increase in capacity it has been possible from the beginning of October to allow non-members to access a lecture for a small charge as was previously the arrangement for physical lectures. There is ongoing consideration of how best to allow members to access recordings of lectures. Members will be informed when the facility to view recordings of past lectures is available. Due to expenditure being limited by the circumstances, the programme to date has come in well under budget. However, it is inevitable that costs will increase significantly when it is possible to return to physical lectures particularly if they are run in tandem with a Zoom facility.

Gill has also ensured the resilience of the technical side of this effort by establishing a group of members capable of running the Zoom lectures etc if need be at any time.

We as a Society have benefited greatly from the technical knowledge and experience of one of our members, namely Mark Percival. In order to ensure the resilience of the technical side, Mark has assisted in establishing and providing training to a small group of members

who are developing the skills to be capable of running the Zoom lectures/seminars, as and when required. If any members with basic computer skills would be prepared to assist with the technical side of hosting a lecture, training will be made available. If interested in volunteering please contact [lectures@stalbanhistory.org](mailto:lectures@stalbanhistory.org).

Kate Morris has kept up the seminar programme, again via Zoom. The season has started with the usual commendable success.

The PDC has not needed to meet on a regular basis but we will continue to keep this under review.

**Tony Berk  
Chairman**

## **17TH CENTURY GROUP**

Following the successful publication in November 2019 of the volume of St Albans probate documents covering the years 1600-15, the Group turned its attention to the next tranche, 1616-29. Much work had already been done and we were anxious that it should be published. The Hertfordshire Record Society who had published the first volume explained that they were unable to continue with this project as they had so much waiting for publication. Nevertheless, we continued and then there

was lockdown! That didn't stop us and Jane Harris and I worked by telephone, at first twice a week for up to two hours. Then, gradually, as we made progress, this reduced to one hour, then to once a week.

At this stage, I made a request to Council for SAHAAS to finance the publication of the second volume and this was agreed. The closure of record offices hampered our progress for a time, but we decided, as it looked as though lockdown was going to last indefinitely, to spend some money on obtaining copies of the documents we needed to continue. We shared the expenditure between the two of us and the Society. This enabled us to tie up a lot of loose ends. Other members of the Group have helped us from time to time with transcription.

All the documents have been transcribed and entered into a Word file in the style of the first book. We are now working on the Introduction. When that is complete we shall need help from a designer and printer. Indexing and selecting illustrations will be required.

When we began this project, we planned on covering the years 1600-49 so some work on the third period 1630-49 has been done. Jane and I feel it is time we stepped down from leading the

work, but would be happy to help as long as we are able, if a new leader could be found. Any member interested please contact me by email [pathowe777@gmail.com](mailto:pathowe777@gmail.com).

**Pat Howe**

## **ST JULIAN'S RESEARCH GROUP**

Lockdown and continuing restrictions have inhibited research for this project as all others, but the internet does offer many insights and has allowed some work to continue. Background information has been gleaned on St Stephen's parish of which the St Julian's estate was a major part and work has continued on transcribing the account books of Mrs Ashurst who lived in the mansion from 1738-85. These reveal much about life then and research into her family, associates and suppliers provides a wonderful picture of 18th century society.

Participation in the project is most welcome at a variety of levels and further information can be obtained from me.

**Kate Morris**

**[kate@englishinfo.biz](mailto:kate@englishinfo.biz)**

## ***HERTFORDSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORY REPORT***

This year there is good news about our *HAH* Journal – volume 18 is due to hit

the streets before the end of the year. It will be another full colour edition, packed full of interesting reports on local archaeology, plus this time it will have a couple of history articles. One of these is by Professor James Clark, of Exeter University. Many of you will remember attending a talk he gave to us about three years ago, and which was very well received. The article – 'St Albans Abbey and the people of St Albans' – is based on that talk and informed by the discussion with members which followed it. I found it fascinating.

We will let you know when the new volume is available and how it can be purchased, given that we are not yet meeting for lectures. The full price is £20; each SAHAAS member may buy one copy for £5. If you need further information, please email me on: [hertsarch@stalbanhistory.org](mailto:hertsarch@stalbanhistory.org).

**Christine McDermott**

## **CLOCK TOWER**

It certainly has been a strange, dare I say it, unprecedented, year around the world, in St Albans and for the Clock Tower. Not since 1986, when the Tower suffered from death-watch beetle and was closed for an entire season, have the doors been shut to visitors for so

long. Although we had no Clockateers' Party, no official opening by the Mayor, nor could we open for the Big Weekend, we did open for Heritage Open Days in September. The interior walls were painted, the outside had new planters installed, the insides had a thorough clean and even the clock was working again. The Tower was all ready for its socially distanced, pre-booking only, two day opening which was successful in that we had over seventy visitors and around three-quarters of those who booked turned up. This may be how the management of Clock Tower openings will have to be in the future. It will certainly be a topic for discussion at the next Joint Committee meeting. This management group includes representatives of our Society, the Civic Society and the Museum. Sadly, over Easter, the treasurer, John Thomson, died after many years of stalwart service to the committee. We have been very fortunate to have found Freda Chaloner, a St Albans resident and member of the Civic Society, to be our new treasurer.

Although the Clock Tower will still be adorned with Christmas lights this November, it won't be part of the usual Turning-On of the St Albans Christmas Lights ceremony as this has been cancelled, due to social distancing restrictions. Usually at this time of the year we would be setting the date for next year's

Clockateers' Party but, sadly, like many plans, this will have to be put in to abeyance.

**Caroline Howkins**

## **PUBLICATIONS COMMITTEE**

Just a few things to report on. As regards our report for 2019/20, we reported on sales and revenue in the August newsletter (see page 7). Additional achievements included publication of the successful Percival Blow book, development work on the pamphlet series, participation in the 175 anniversary steering group, and discussions about new products.

We manage the Society's Twitter account and achieved 360 followers by 31 May 2020 – a 25 per cent increase. The number has since risen to 405 (mid-October). Will we soon have more followers than members?

The pamphlet series is moving forward slowly. Research for the opening pamphlet is still ongoing – catching up on delays arising from the lengthy closure of archives. The series will now be launched in 2021 and we will bring you further news when our plans are more certain.

**Pat Broad**

## LIBRARY

A peculiar year of two distinct halves. In the first, as more fully reported in the *Newsletters*, the team was productively busy as normal with progress made in cataloguing, listing and digitising, whilst servicing numerous members of SAHAAS engaged in research related to our 175th anniversary.

We welcomed Genevieve Wilson to the team, and regretfully said goodbye to our long-serving stalwart Tony Cooper.

The most notable acquisition of the first half of the year was the generous donation by Chris Reynolds of Nathaniel Salmon's *History of Hertfordshire ...* (1728), filling a notable lacuna in our holdings of antiquarian histories of the county.

The second half of the year began with the very welcome appointment of an experienced librarian, Heather Jardine, filling the vacancy created by Donald Munro's stepping down last summer. A baptism of fire almost, for in little more than a month we were in lockdown – and, at the time of writing, the library remains closed to researchers. However, those of the library team who are able to do so have begun to return, and the work of cataloguing, organising and developing the collections is going on

behind closed doors. We will reopen as soon as it is safe for everyone to do so and look forward to welcoming everybody back.

**Donald Munro and  
Heather Jardine**

## Recent Journal Articles

*Herts Past and Present*, no 36, Autumn 2020.

pp.9-14 “The miracles of King Henry VI. Part 2, Evidence from wills and church records”, by Heather Falvey. The cult of Henry that developed after his death is examined and an insight is gained into the religious beliefs and practices of the time. There is evidence of images of the King in St Peter's and St Michael's churches in St Albans.

p.15 “Guide to sources: Hertfordshire wills at Huntingdon”, by Heather Falvey. A guide to over 2,000 Hertfordshire wills in the Cambridgeshire Archives, Huntingdon Office.

pp.16-21 “Aldenham Reservoir: the first 224 years”, by John Cartledge. The reservoir was constructed between 1795-7 to compensate for water removed from the Rivers Gade and Colne by the Grand Union Canal. It has had a variety of uses over the years since.

pp.24-31 “The history of Hertfordshire's local lock ups”, by Elaine Saunders. As part of the Open University's Prison History project, the author is researching buildings and structures used for

punishment and incarceration in Hertfordshire. Stocks, pillories, bridewells, lock-ups and repurposed structures are considered.

*Abbots Langley Local History Society Journal*, no. 52, Spring/Summer 2020.

pp.4-6 & 8 “The test of time”, by Trevor Baker. Five of the six barns built on manors once owned by St Albans Abbey are still preserved. The article concentrates on Abbots Langley Tithe Barn and Croxley Great Barn.

*Harpenden & District Local History Society Newsletter*, no. 141, August 2020.

pp.10-24 “The two breweries of Harpenden: Part 1 – the Southern Brewery, c.1806-1893”. This brewery, also known as the White House brewery was one of two commercial breweries on Harpenden High Street during this period. It grew to have 18 tied houses by 1893.

*The Alban Link*, no. 93, Autumn 2020.

pp.4-7 “Face-to-face with a medieval abbot”, by Professor James Clark. The grave of Abbot John of Wheathampstead, who died in 1465, was discovered in 2017. The article describes the project by Liverpool John Moores University to create a digital reconstruction of his face. A rotating 3D image of the

Abbot’s head will shortly be on display in the Cathedral.

pp.10-12 “*The Black Death at St Albans Abbey*”, by Jane Kelsall. The Black Death, now known to be bubonic plague, killed a third of England’s population between 1347 and 1350. Pilgrims from London brought the disease to the Abbey and 47 members of the community of 100 died in 1349.

**Lin Watson**

### **New acquisitions**

We have added a number of significant items to the library collections over the last few months. Firstly, we have several new books: *Evacustes Shipson*, by John Hickman and others, which documents the life and opinions of an artist who made many paintings of St Albans, several of which are in the Museum; a copy of the Society’s own publication on Percival Blow; and *Pride in our past*, which is about the first 90 years of Hertfordshire Women’s Institutes.

Also, and very importantly, the library has taken possession of the copies and transcriptions of wills from 1650 onwards which underpinned the work of the 17th Century Research Group. These will now be accessible to members and researchers – as soon as the library re-opens, of course!

**Heather Jardine**

## BRINGING THE SALAMAN COLLECTION TO A NEW AUDIENCE

One of the biggest collections St Albans Museums cares for is the Salaman Collection of tools. When visiting his father and friends in their workshops at Barley in 1946 Raphael Salaman suddenly realized that two wars, the depression, and the internal combustion engine had virtually wiped out their trades, although some of the old men lingered on doing repairs for a few customers. He determined to collect – and save from oblivion – every tool of at least the major trades and to discover how they were used. Forty years later he regretted never having taken a camera or tape recorder on his collecting expeditions.

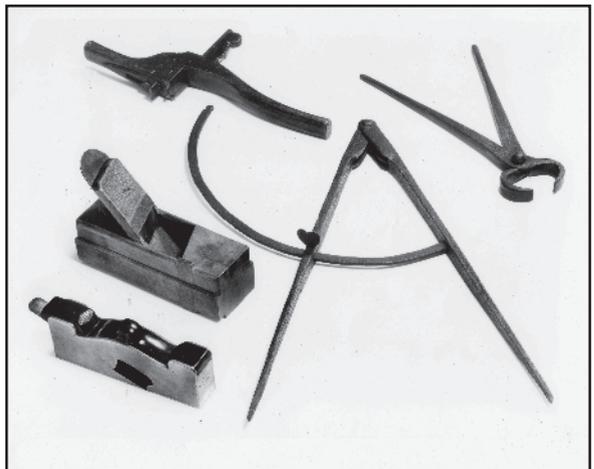
The collection, or part of it, was on display in the Museum of St Albans in Hatfield Road from 1970 to 2010 when it was largely removed to allow space for more flexible exhibitions but it has never been forgotten or left out of sight for long.

Since I started with St Albans Museums in 2016 the Salaman Collection has been brought out, displayed and used in a variety of ways. I have taken a selection of tools to the University of

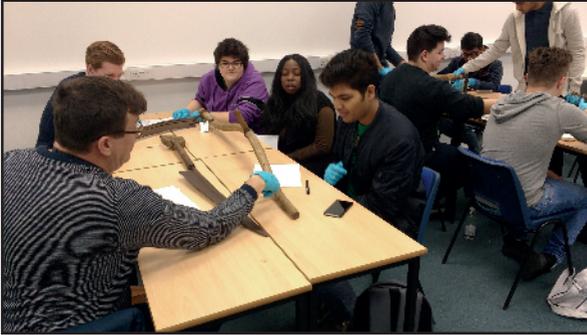
Hertfordshire for their design students to work with, we visited De Havilland Air Museum with a box of tools and discovered that many of the volunteers were still using almost identical tools in their restoration work and we even took some of the collection to Homebase at the bottom of Holywell Hill for shoppers to compare historic tools to the new ones.

Some of the smaller, and more delicate tools, including those of plasterers were displayed in one of our opening exhibitions in St Albans Museum + Gallery as artist Katy Gillam-Hull created artworks inspired by the collection.

Despite all of that we are always looking for new ways to bring the collection to



A small selection of tools from the Salaman Collection including two of the many planes (St Albans Museums)



University of Hertfordshire product design students working with the collection in 2016 (St Albans Museums)

new audiences and to display it in new ways, so when we started to work with Cabaret Mechanical Theatre on an exhibition and they spoke about the skilled craftspeople who make their automata we knew that we had to find a way to bring them together.

Of course the Salaman Collection as a whole is huge so deciding what to choose is a challenge. In a previous job I worked in a museum where, during a collections audit, someone asked whether we really needed to have 12 planes in the collection but here at St Albans Museums we have more than 100 planes: wooden planes and metal planes; moulding planes and fillister planes; jack planes, thumb planes and bull nose planes.

After speaking with the Cabaret Mechanical Theatre team we have

decided to concentrate on woodworking tools – so some of those 100+ planes will be on display – alongside watchmaking tools. We chose watchmaking tools because of the connection to the gears and mechanisms working automata, though of course with watches they are much smaller.

What is exciting is being able to bring the tools out together with handcrafted objects to allow new audiences, and a new generation, to discover the collection and to really think about what handmade means and perhaps be inspired to pick up any tools they have lurking in the shed or attic at home.

‘Cabaret Mechanical Marvels’ opens on Friday 13 November at St Albans Museum + Gallery.

Tickets are £4 for adults, £2 for children and FREE for under 5s or members of the St Albans Museums’ Friends.

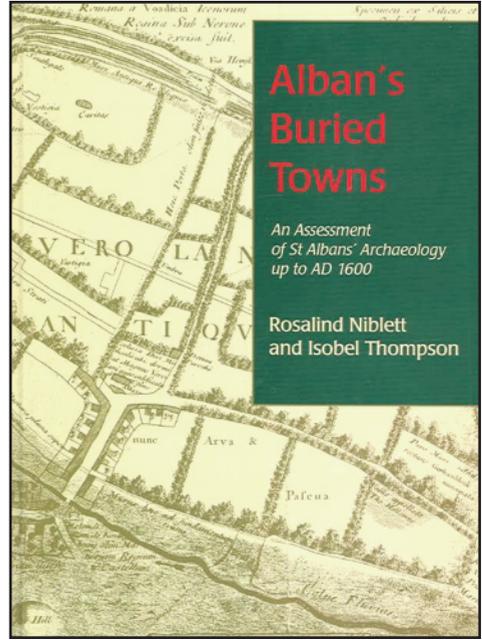
For more information please visit <https://www.stalbansmuseums.org.uk/whats-on/cabaret-mechanical-marvels>

**Sarah Keeling**  
**Post-medieval Curator**  
**St Albans Museums**

## ALBAN'S BURIED TOWNS – 15 YEARS ON

*Alban's Buried Towns: the archaeology of St Albans to AD 1600*, by Rosalind Niblett & Isobel Thompson, was published in 2005. It was the product of a scheme funded by English Heritage in response to national planning guidance (PPG16), which in 1991 placed archaeology within the planning process. This may sound dull, but the consequences have been revolutionary. Underlying it is the principle that if a development would damage archaeological heritage, the developer must pay for professional investigation and recording. At the centre is the need for a sound knowledge base, from which good advice can be used by district planners.

English Heritage's Urban Archaeological Database scheme was aimed at historic towns like St Albans (with its Roman city and medieval abbey), where detailed, accurate, and well-mapped advice is essential. Rosalind Niblett, the District Archaeologist, applied for funding, and work on the database, with integral GIS mapping, ran from 1995 to 1998. I was employed to identify within strict geographical limits all archaeological 'events' (investigations which produced information, and could be mapped), and check the original sources, some of them medieval, for all resulting 'monu-



ments'. The book summarises these and our conclusions on prehistory, the Roman town, the post-Roman transition and late Saxon resurgence, the medieval abbey, and the medieval town.

What has happened since 2005? Few opportunities come up for intrusive investigation within Verulamium, but these have included a small excavation at St Michael's School in 2018, which revealed part of the forum-basilica portico along the Roman street frontage. The street itself was deeply stratified, with many layers of resurfacing and persisting into the post-Roman period. This was a keyhole glimpse; opportuni-

ties for larger excavations which would address fundamental questions about the Roman (and pre-Roman) centre do not occur.

But what can be done on Scheduled sites is large-scale geophysical survey with advanced technology, and this is being carried out at Verulamium by the Community Archaeology Geophysics Group under Kris Lockyear. Interpretation of the mass of detail takes time, but the Roman town aqueduct, cutting across the Roman street grid, was quickly identified. It is also evident that the town was much more densely occupied than previously thought. Last year's conference on late Roman Verulamium reinforced current thinking that although the centre contracted, the city was not abandoned, but gradually changed in function. There is still nothing to contradict the view put forward in 2005 that it survived in some form until the late Saxon abbey gained control and diverted the roads to its newly-founded market.

Pre-Roman Verlamion is undergoing review as part of a project comparing it with other 'oppida' and elsewhere; I now think that its beginnings go further back into the 1st century BC, although on a comparatively small scale. Excavation in 2011-12 before the King's Park development on King Harry Lane re-

examined an entrance through the Wheeler Ditch, finding a late or post-Roman recut and early Saxon pottery, as well as three late Iron Age cremations marking the entrance. To the south outside the entrance was a late Iron Age/early Roman domestic enclosure, one more in the row known to have been present along the plateau.

At the Abbey, the highlight has to be the discovery of abbot John of Wheathampstead's grave, during excavation before construction of the Welcome Centre. This showed how major discoveries can still be made in areas intensively used over many centuries. And I should mention that the 'Lievens' drawing, showing the abbey precinct in the late 17th century, is now known to have been the work of Michiel van Overbeek: [www.bl.uk/collection-items/st-albans-and-deladyinghe-in-her-perck](http://www.bl.uk/collection-items/st-albans-and-deladyinghe-in-her-perck) (thanks to Sheila Green for the link).

Finally, in 2009, tree-ring dating of upper floor joists in the Clock Tower found that the timbers were felled in 1401-4, so the tower may have been complete by 1405. The bellframe timbers date to 1625-57.

So, no major revision of the conclusions set out in 2005 – for now.

**Dr Isobel Thompson**

## LOCAL HISTORY SEMINARS

Our seminars are currently held on Zoom with the booking process the same as for our lectures. (See p. 37 for details of the process.) All seminars commence at 2.30pm. The programme for the next three months is as follows:

Thursday 17 December

### **Slavery, St Albans and its West Indian Connections**

John Morewood

The abolition of slavery and the slave trade was justified on grounds of justice, humanity and sound policy. Sound policy involved looking at issues from the perspective of strategy, and commerce. Many British inhabitants were linked with the West Indies as was much of the British economy. St Albans was no exception. The seminar will examine some known local protagonists and their position using amongst other sources UCL's Legacies of British Slave Ownership Database as well as local records.

Thursday 24 January 2021

### **Burial practices as requested in 17th and 18th centuries St Albans wills.**

Pat Howe

Sometimes, when writing their wills, people requested certain rituals and preferred locations for their interments. This

often reflected their social status and religious beliefs. The 17th century saw a steep rise in the middle classes and also an increase in independent thought on religious matters which can often be detected from wills.

This seminar will introduce the work of the 17th century group and Kate Morris's research on the 18th century.

Thursday 18 February

### **The Sopwell Project**

Sandy Norman

In 2009, the Sopwell Residents Association set out to celebrate and promote the good things about living in Sopwell. Called the Sopwell Project, it focused initially on its wonderful green spaces. This soon led to an interest in its history: researching facts about how Sopwell came to be as it is today. Past and present residents were encouraged to share their memories adding a dash of colour to the facts.

Out of this project came the publication: *Sopwell, a history and collection of memories* and later the website *Sopwell Memories*. In this seminar, Sandy Norman will share some of the more colourful and fascinating facts which have been uncovered.

**Kate Morris**

## **WELCOME TO THE NEWLY RE-FORMED COLNEY HEATH HISTORY SOCIETY**

One of the joys of the past is that it is always with us. We don't always understand it and it can surprise us by the way it shapes current lives. The most ancient and significant places, such as St Albans are well documented but even the little villages of Colney Heath need to be researched and recorded. They are interesting in their own right and they add to the context of the bigger places.

So we are very pleased and proud to tell everybody that the Colney Heath and District History Society is reborn and reinvigorated. Our objectives are simple. We want to make the village's history accessible and inspire people to add to the narrative. And we want to make it interesting to everyone from the youngest children in the local school to the oldest residents whose memories are irreplaceable. We will cover the parish which includes Colney Heath village, Highfield, Hill End, Oaklands, Smallford, Sleafshyde and Tyttenhanger, but we will include anything interesting and relevant outside these boundaries.

Some fascinating things have happened in this tiny unassuming collection of houses and the more we look the better story becomes. An extraordinary range of characters from kings to prize fighters to highwaymen and revolting peasants figure in the village history.

Our first venture is to produce a small accessible book with good stories about the Romans and beyond. These are the people who founded the village we have today. Alongside this we will have a dynamic website and exhibitions in the village hall. Of course, as founding members, we are enthusiastic but we will need as many interested participants as we can encourage to join us. It's your choice whether you dip your toe in or take the plunge into fully active membership. You don't even have to live in the village. You only need to have a desire to find out how we got here and how this affects our future. Interested? For more information please contact John Clemow, via [jackclemow@gmail.com](mailto:jackclemow@gmail.com) or call 07803 313 525.

**Dr Ruth Herman**  
**Committee member**  
**Colney Heath and District History**  
**Society**

### **CHRISTMAS TURKEYS - HOW MUCH?**

"A plentiful supply of turkeys was in St Alban's market on Saturday last, the highest price of which was 10s; many were sold at two or three shillings cheaper."

*Northampton Mercury*, 24 December 1831, p. 3.

## **OUR VICTORIAN PREDECESSORS NO. 7: CANON OWEN DAVYS – CHURCH MAN**

A true Victorian high church clergyman, Revd Canon Owen William Davys M.A. was born 4 January 1829 and died 27 June 1914, living through most of Queen Victoria's lifetime, and beyond. Rector of Wheathampstead Church for 55 years and Canon of St Albans Cathedral for 37 years, he was also, from 1863 to 1900, a key member of this Society.

As a child, Davys grew up in close association with the great and the good. On the day of his birth his father, Revd George Davys, was late to attend to his duties as the infant Victoria's tutor at Kensington Palace, at the time aged four. He taught her the alphabet and heard her first speech as Queen in the House of Lords. It was royal intervention that led to the family moving to Chester Cathedral in 1831, when his father was made Dean and then to Peterborough in 1839 when his father was made bishop. From the age of five Owen was sensitive to the architectural beauty of cathedrals and in later life remembered having to be taken outside to overcome his emotions on hearing the singing at Chester. He was to devote the rest of his life to turning parish churches into cathedrals, figuratively at

Stilton and Wheathampstead and, more formally, at St Albans.

Following education at St John's College, Cambridge, and ordination at Peterborough, his first living was at nearby Stilton. Wherever Davys went, he built. At Stilton, he restored the dilapidated church and replaced the rectory. When he moved to Wheathampstead in 1859, his first project was the new modern school. His second, on an altogether grander scale, was the rebuilding of the church. He raised the nave and chancel roofs to their original pitch and the spire to its ancient proportions, also repairing transept roofs and restoring decayed window tracery.

His first view of St Albans was not favourable. Arriving at the north end of the town on horseback and seeing what was then the red brick tower of the dilapidated church of St Peter's, Davys wondered if it could possibly be the Abbey. The houses on either side of the long, wide main street, struck him chiefly as belonging either to publicans or undertakers.

At this time, the Abbey was a parish church and full of large, high Jacobean pews. When it was instituted as a cathedral, forming the new diocese of St Albans in April 1877, Davys became one



Canon Owen Davys c.1900 with the Abbey as the backdrop (author's collection)

of its first Canons. He organised the singing and music for Bishop Cloughton's enthronement and, as a member of the National Committee seeking to raise funds for the Restoration of the Abbey, was part of the team collecting the £40,000 needed to start important remedial work under Gilbert Scott.

At his election in June 1863 for membership of this Society, Davys gave his first talk, on 'Local Peculiarities in Architectural Design'. Together with Revd Henry

Fowler and Dr Ridgway Lloyd, he kept the candle burning during the 1870s when the Society's fortunes were at a low ebb. By the time he resigned as joint secretary in 1900, the Society was enjoying more prosperous times. He had, as was recorded at the time, done 'much useful work for a generation', serving 36 years as secretary, publishing 16 papers in the *Transactions* and giving 24 lectures as well as leading several excursions including one to his home town of Peterborough. The history and architecture of churches were always his specialist subjects.

Canon Davys made a valuable contribution to the establishment of St Albans as a cathedral city with his commitment to the restoration of the Abbey. He found common cause in the Arc and Arc where many members shared his interest in church buildings. It is to our benefit that his meticulous research published in his many papers continues to inform readers today, demonstrating how well the aims of the Society to 'Discover, Protect, Innovate and Inform' were even then to the fore.

**Ruth Jeavons**

Note: the main source used for this article is Davys's autobiography, *A Long Life's Journey: With Some I Met by the Way* (London, 1913).

## **E.R. AND M.A.O. IN SEARCH OF TWO BIBLE WOMEN**

Like many people, I have taken advantage of lockdown to sort through decades of documents, trying to bring some order to it all. In one box file I came across a note to myself – made in 1998 – to follow up on the lives of two young women who were part of an evangelical revival in 19th century St Albans.

Revd Henry Smith of Christ Church, Verulam Road, had written memorials to both as an example of evangelicalism in action. Both young women were bonnet sewers, and like working-class girls such memorials were unusual, hence the note.

The memorials are short on biographical detail, and mainly contain accounts of their work as Bible women. I wanted to find out more about these young women and their wider network and what drew them to evangelicalism. In a precarious world, faith could provide hope, but what is apparent from their letters is that this faith was set against a backdrop of anxiety which threatened at times to overwhelm them.

Henry Smith, for reasons which seem designed purely to frustrate future researchers, had referred to them only by their initials. In 1998 there was no quick way of searching census informa-

tion, so I thought I was doing well back then when I managed to track down their names in the burial register. I identified them as Emma Rance, and Mary Ann Oakley, both aged 31 at the time of their deaths in 1865 and 1869, respectively.

With the explosion in online source material, I hoped that twenty years later it might be possible to discover a little more. I thought this would take me a couple of days to research, which just shows how some people never learn.

Armed with their names off I went down the rabbit hole of online research. It has been both frustrating and exhilarating, putting together the jigsaw puzzle of their lives, chasing red herrings, and hitting dead ends.

Emma was born in Buckinghamshire, but along with her siblings was drawn to the opportunities in St Albans in the hat, boot and building trades. By 1861 she was living with her sister, Fanny, in Fish-pool Street. They were part of the Hilliard household, their older sister Charlotte having married Henry Hilliard; master of the Bluecoat School, Henry was remembered in 1891 as one 'of the old school who did not believe in sparing the rod and spoiling the child'.

Bereavement was a constant companion in this extended family. Following the

experiences of Emma's siblings, nieces and nephews was a sad journey, although a highlight was finding her niece, Emma Tapping, mentioned in the Local Food Control Committee minutes in 1917. Drawing that link between two seemingly unconnected projects was one of those unlooked-for moments that can make a researcher's heart sing.



The former Vine public house, Spicer Street  
(© Malcolm Merrick, 2020 )

Mary Ann Oakley's story was somewhat different. Her family had stronger roots in the city, and what emerged from looking into her experiences was that she lived on that precarious knife-edge of 19th century respectability. Her father, James, ran The Vine in Spicer Street. At that mention of pubs, I was straight onto Jon Mein and he was able to tell me that the owners were the trustees of Raynshaw's Charity, the income from the pub going towards supporting the almshouses which sat next door.

It looks as if James sailed close to the wind on occasions, and living over the business, cheek by jowl with lodgers, I started to see Mary Ann as somebody striving to hang on to her respectable status at a time when the temperance movement was vocal in St Albans.

Being part of the evangelical network seems to have given both young women the opportunity for companionship and

a sense of doing something important. However, it also seems to have come loaded with the potential for deep spiritual despair. Reading their letters, as edited by Henry Smith, I came away with a strong wish I could have given them both a big hug of reassurance, but sadly it is not just lockdown that makes that impossible. Instead I hope eventually to bring their fuller story to a wider audience and be able to throw that note from 1998 into the recycling bin.

Copies of both memorials are available at <https://books.google.com/> Reverend Henry Smith, *First Fruits Unto the Lord. A Memorial of E.R.* (London, n.d.) and *They Shall Be Mine Saith the Lord. A Memorial of M.A.O.* (London, n.d.)

**Dr Julie Moore**

## PORTABLE ANTIQUITIES SCHEME UPDATE

Although this has been a turbulent and difficult year, the work of the Portable Antiquities Scheme (PAS) has continued throughout. Finds Liaison Officers, Assistants, Finds Advisors, volunteers and the team at the British Museum are now working in new remote ways to record finds from the likes of metal detectorists and the general public to supplement the rich archaeological story of each of the regions we cover with an array of new and interesting discoveries.

Since I last wrote for SAHAAS at the start of 2019, a total of 1,808 records have been published on the PAS database from the authority areas covered by the Beds and Herts FLO: Bedford (124),

Central Bedfordshire (311) and Hertfordshire (1373). This includes 13 treasure cases: 5 from Bedford, 3 from Central Bedfordshire and 5 from Hertfordshire; but not the numerous records and treasure cases still in-progress. Unsurprisingly, most records are Roman (especially fourth century) coins, but others, amongst other things, include axes, buckles, brooches, finger-rings, strap-fittings and studs, which between them cover the Palaeolithic to the Post Medieval periods.

By far the most interesting and intriguing find from the region is a near complete copper-alloy Roman dodecahedron from Much Hadham (Fig. 1) The object comprises 12 equally sized panels and 20 raised spherical knobs where each of the apexes of the panels join. Each panel has

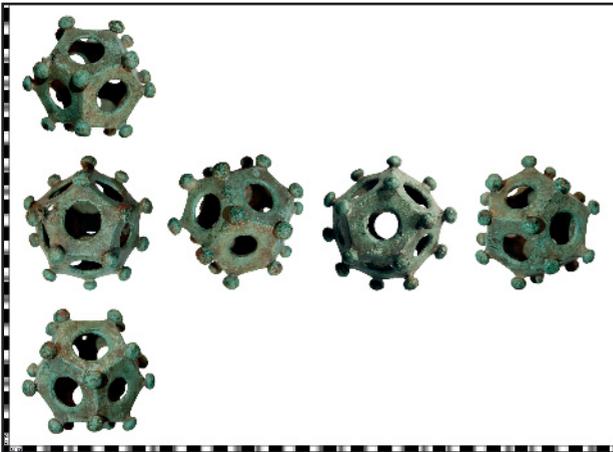


Fig. 1. A slightly damaged cast copper-alloy dodecahedron dating to the Roman period (c.AD 43-410) (BH-692011)

a circular perforation through it, each of which varies in size, surrounded by a faint double-lined border. Such dodecahedra are uncommon finds with a limited distribution in Britain and the northern provinces, but this appears to be the most complete example known from Britain. Their function is unclear and is of some debate, with suggestions including candleholders, textile patterns, polygonal



Fig. 2. A fragment of gold sheet, 'personal ornament', dating from the Late Neolithic to Early Bronze Age (c.2500 BC-c.2200 BC) (BH-956274)

dice, rangefinders, sceptre heads and surveying instruments.

Other interesting discoveries from the local and surrounding areas include two Middle to Late Bronze Age penannular rings from Royston (BH-9326BA), an Iron Age bridle bit from Codicote (BH-D8F116), an Iron Age potin coin from Wallington (BH-854595), an Early Medieval silver penny of King Offa of Mercia (AD 757-796) dating c. AD 787-792 from Offley (BH-77DA44), an Early Medieval halfpenny of Cnut (1016-1035) dating c. 1029-1035/6 from Ashwell (BH-808EDF), and a silver Medieval French maille tierce of Philip IV of France (1285-1314) from Barkway (BH-79CB28).

Slightly further afield, the oldest treasure case to

come through the office recently is a gold Late Neolithic to Early Bronze Age (c. 2500 BC-c. 2200 BC) 'personal ornament', probably a piece of jewellery such as an earring or hair ring, from Marston Moretaine in central Bedfordshire (Fig. 2). Although

bent and damaged in several areas, the surviving plaque is flat with a short tab projecting from the upper edge, decorated with a line of finely punched dots around the edge. Similar objects are recorded on the PAS database (e.g. BERK-F548E6, IOW-62FFD2), the likes of which are often associated with burials and are of the earliest phases of metallurgy in Britain.



Fig. 3. A complete Post-Medieval silver verrel (hawking ring) dating c.AD 1530-1560 (BH-6AF8AB)

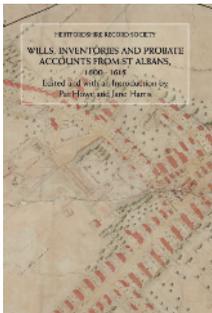
Another significant treasure case is a Post-Medieval (c. AD 1530-60) silver verrel from Bletsoe, Bedford (Fig. 3). With a hawk perched on a branch etched on the bezel and the engraving 'IOHN' LORD;S' IOHN' on the band, it appears to refer to Sir John St John of Bletso (c.1495-1558) – an MP for Bedfordshire in 1529-36 (probably), 1539-40 and 1542-4, and knighted in 1526; his son Oliver (c.1522-82) was made 1st Baron St John of Bletso in 1558/59. The ring joins a similar one (NARC811) with a coat of arms and engraving reading 'SEYNT+ IOHN', also from Bletsoe.

Despite the ongoing pandemic, finders can continue to record their finds with

the PAS. A lot of this is now being done remotely via email if measurements, weights, findspots, discovery dates and scaled photographs of each object are provided. This also includes treasure, which must, as usual, still be reported within the 14-day legal threshold. Due to Covid-19 restrictions, meetings at Verulamium Museum are being strictly kept to a minimum on a pre-arranged appointment only basis. In any event, please contact me should you have anything to discuss.

**Matthew Fittock**  
**Finds Liaison Officer, Beds and Herts**  
**matthew.fittock@stalbans.gov.uk**

## RECENT SOCIETY PUBLICATIONS



### Wills, Inventories and Probate Accounts from St Albans, 1600-1615

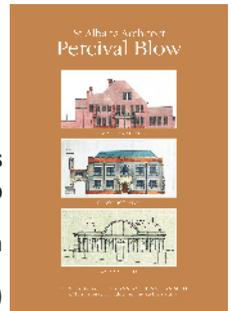
Edited by Pat Howe and Jane Harris, 2019

£17.60 (+ £3.50 UK p&p)

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Patricia Broad, Sue Mann and Jonathan Mein

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You can order by email to [publications@stalbanshistory.org](mailto:publications@stalbanshistory.org) or by post from Patricia Broad, 18 Kimberley Road, St Albans, AL3 5PX.

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## 'TICK! TOCK! GET DOWN FROM THE CLOCK' DESIGN COMPETITION

The main reason that the Clock Tower had to be closed to the public was due to a lack of social distancing – how do you get the visitors down from the roof top without passing the visitors coming up on the very narrow staircase? So, we thought we would ask the children of St Albans to let their imaginations run wild and come up with ideas and designs on how to do just that. In came all sorts of entries – fantastical and practical, high tech and low tech, and funny and sensible but all engaging and enchanting. Due to lock down the judges never met up but had to do their voting by score sheets and email, but they still managed to decide on the following winners:

Hazel Bigmore, aged 7, won the 7 years and under category with her climbing wall and abseiling design which she described as: "Visitors can use the climbing wall to get up to the top of the tower - there is netting, climbing shapes and tyres to climb on. Then they can abseil down another side!"

Alex Matchett, aged 11, won the 8-12 years category with his 'All things St Albans' design which he explained as

being "based on the history of St Albans. From the top of the Clock Tower, visitors are whizzed from a Roman catapult into a capsule made from the googly eyes of St Alban's executioner. Geese from Verulam Lake spin the eyes, to take visitors down to the cheese straw ladder (from Simmons in French Row, the best cheese straws in St Albans). The visitor makes their final jump, for a soft landing on a delicious St Alban's bun!"

Dylan Jackson- Gibbs, aged 13, won the 13 years and over category with his "Bungee Jump" design, saying, "I thought it would be fun for people to bungee jump off the top of the tower onto a trampoline!"

All three winners collected their prizes on Saturday, 10 October, the opening day of the 175th anniversary exhibition at the Museum + Gallery and could see for the first time, their entries displayed on the walls as part of the exhibition.

The winning entries will be published in turn on the back cover of the *Newsletter* starting with Hazel's in this edition.

**Caroline Howkins**

## THE ST ALBANS TWO-GUN NAVY

Passing over the Victoria Street railway bridge and left into Stanhope Road the old prison building on the right (now part of Victoria Square) appears to be defended by a cannon (Fig. 1). An adjacent plate\* describes a '... thirty-two pounder RML Miller siege cannon of 1840 ... converted to a rifled muzzle loader in 1877 ... unearthed in the old prison compound ... in 1985'. There is no explanation for its presence in the prison.

Across the City, in the Society's Library, amongst a collection of ephemera, a cutting from a *Children's Newspaper* of 1920 shows a photograph of a naval cannon (Fig. 2), similar to that at Victoria Square. The caption gives only the location as allotments in Verulam Road, now the Victoria Playing Field. This is verified



Fig. 1: The cannon at the former prison site

by the recognisable houses in the background. There is no text article with the picture.

So, it would appear that the cannon had another stopping place, before 'beaching' in the old prison. But no clue to its journey from the sea.

Visiting the County Archives at Hertford, on another subject, serendipity gave an answer to some of the puzzle. At the meeting of St Albans Council on the 13 September 1910 it was announced that the War Office were offering decommissioned guns for sale for ornamental purposes. It was agreed that a 64-pounder would be purchased, with the intention of placing it 'in the enclosure at the north end of St Peters Street'. This must be referring to what was then called St Peter's Green, now the site of the war memorial and adjacent garden. Further, it was announced that Councillor Slade had purchased a similar gun and was presenting it to the Corporation to place in Victoria Playing Fields. Why there especially is not recorded.

At a subsequent Finance Committee Meeting a list of cheques drawn included one to the War Office for £16.8.0, for the two



Guarding the allotment—A former recreation ground at St. Albans was turned into allotments, and this old naval cannon, which had stood there for years, was left as an amusing warning to trespassers

Fig. 2: clipping from the *Children's Newspaper* (1920) showing the incongruous gun on Verulam Road (SAHAAS Library)

guns with carriages and one for £6.3.3, to the Midland Railway Co., for transport.

Thus there were, in fact, two guns that came to St Albans; one that may have been displayed where suggested and is now at Victoria Square; another that was certainly installed where intended, but went on to an unknown destination, maybe a scrapyard. It is possible that the 'allotment' gun is the one that St Albans still has, but the probabilities are against that.

It remains to be discovered whether the plan to install the gun on St Peter's Green ever came to fruition, or better was thought of the idea and it was never displayed (until recently).

With thanks to Alan Wakefield for his help with this note.

**Roger Miles**

\*Two notes concerning the information on the plate.

The cannon is described as a siege cannon, but the small-wheeled naval carriage it is mounted on would have been impractical for a mobile, land weapon so instead refers to a defensive armament, still on its ship-borne carriage, installed on a shore station – its last, active role.

Why take the trouble to bury the gun at the Council depot that the prison became? More likely that it was put in a corner with other, like objects that had no immediate use. 'Unearthed' must be a figure of speech.

## **RADLETT MUSEUM NOW OPEN**

Situated at the rear of Radlett Village Institute, this volunteer-run museum will now open from 10.00 – 12.00 on Wednesdays and Saturdays.

See [www.radlettmuseum.com](http://www.radlettmuseum.com)

## HEROES OR VILLAINS: THE SLAVE TRADE AND ST ALBANS

In his time an honoured MP and philanthropist but the statue of Edward Colston, slave trader, was pushed into Bristol Harbour on 7 June 2020. Hero or villain? Our perspective though the glass of history has changed radically. Many of the men who built the British Empire and made it, and themselves, wealthy, did so in ways that horrify us now. Current events impel us to take a new look at these men.

With Bristol and Liverpool, London was one of the British bases of the 'Triangle Trade' trading British goods for people in Africa, selling them in the West Indies and the American colonies, and buying sugar and cotton in these places to sell in Britain. In the nineteenth century St Albans was already an attractive town and many businessmen resident in our city may have had financial interests, even slaves, in the West Indies. At least one, Joseph Timperon, lived at New Barnes (now Sopwell House) from 1810 until his death in 1846.

Timperon, a major sugar trader in London, was one of the founders of the West India Dock Company, a director, present at the laying of the first stone in 1800, and still a stockholder at his death. He was also a director of the Imperial

Insurance Co. and while we do not know much about the family's activities in St Albans, in 1821/22 he was chosen High Sheriff of Hertfordshire so he was clearly held in some esteem locally. His two younger sons, John and Arthur, were perhaps more social and were certainly generous (in their own way) as in 1848 "the late Mr Temperon [sic]" (Arthur) put up a prize of £100 for a cricket match at New Barnes, for which he also provided liquid refreshments, to the amount of 35 dozen bottles of wine as well as brandy and ale! When he died in 1846 his estate was valued at £120,000.

Joseph's wealth was eventually inherited by his youngest child, Mrs Isabella Worley, who was noted and much loved for her philanthropy. She gave generously to the poor and needy in St Albans, completed the building of Christ Church in Verulam Road, donated a fountain for thirsty pilgrims and market-goers, contributed to the People's Dispensary, and is remembered in the name of Worley Road.

But how was this money made? Joseph was born in Cumberland in 1762 into a family with many connections with the West Indies. His uncle Arthur Peatt was in the sugar trade by at least 1774 and, unmarried, took several of his many nephews into his firm. Joseph, the son of his sister Sarah and Matthias Tim-

peron, was the eldest and had joined him by 1788. They moved soon to 26 Philpot Lane where Joseph remained in business until his death. After Peatt's death in 1802 Timperon carried on the business, in partnership with cousins, Peatt Litt, Harrison, and Dobinson at various times.

In 1806 he married Anne Kyte whose family were also involved in the slave trade. The Kyte family lived for many years in Berbice (now part of British Guiana) and her brother Charles became a slave auctioneer. Between 1796 and 1807, when the slave trade became illegal, Timperon had shares in fourteen slave voyages, of which he owned several ships.

From at least 1815 until 1833 when owning slaves became illegal under the Abolition of Slavery Act, Joseph owned estates and slaves in Jamaica. The *Jamaican Almanacs* show and he usually owned in the region of 900-1,000 slaves, for whom he probably received a generous sum in compensation after the Slave

Compensation Act was passed in 1837. The *Jamaican Almanacs* show that in 1840 the total acreage of his plantations was 5,200 acres. At the time he was considered one of the better owners, the *Anti-Slavery Examiner*\*\* listing him as one of the owners whose former slaves (slaves transitioned in Jamaica to labourers via the apprenticeship system) earned between 2s 6d and 3s 4d per day, in contrast to many who were paid only 10d per day.

While statues are being toppled and pop groups re-named, perhaps this is the time to look at other connections St Albans may have had with the West Indies?

**Anne Wares**

\* Details of Timperon's holdings in the West Indies and of his partnerships are cited on the Legacies of British Slave Ownership ([ucl.ac.uk/lbs](http://ucl.ac.uk/lbs)) website.

\*\* *The Anti-Slavery Examiner*, Omnibus, Pt 23, as re-published on <http://www.fullbooks.com/The-Anti-Slavery-Examiner-Omnibus.html> (accessed 29 October 2020).

### **THEFT FROM THE GAOL ... BY THE GAOLERS**

'July 1620 – [Letter from] Earl of Salisbury and other Justices of Hertfordshire to the Council. Request allowance for repair of the gaol of St Albans, which, being Crown land, has always been repaired at the expense of the Crown. The decays arise through abuses of former gaolers in cutting away the lead, &c.'

[This was the Liberty gaol in the Abbey gateway; source: *Calendar of State Papers Domestic*, James 1, 1619-23, item 25].

## FRONT COVER IMAGE – FREDERIC GEORGE KITTON

For those of us who have heard of Kitton, we probably associate him with his many drawings of St Albans in the late 1800s. But we should not forget his work extended far beyond the city's boundaries. I have collected copies of around 750 of his sketches covering scenes from all points of the compass, some of which I hope to exhibit in St Albans Museum in time.

He was also prolific in his contribution to the Arc & Arc from 1898 until his death in 1904. That he joined the Society around the time the estimable William Page became (Joint) Secretary was probably no coincidence. Page (see May 2020 *Newsletter*, pp. 8-10) modernized the Society's agenda, promoting ideas and links that took it far beyond the original focus on church architecture. The artist involved himself in several of the Society's new committees and was associated with the early days of the County Museum, another initiative in which Page took an active interest. We can also see Page's influence on Kitton's still-important papers about the history of the Clock Tower and the town's many inns. These were published in the Society's *Transactions*.

What tend to be forgotten are Kitton's campaigns to preserve threatened buildings in the city. The so-called 'Gables', visible in the image on the front cover, was a particular success story. His manifesto titled 'Old St Albans, and how to preserve it', set out in an article in the *Home Counties Magazine* is well worth reading (digital copy available from [newsed@stalbanhistory.org](mailto:newsed@stalbanhistory.org)).

**John Cox**

## MEMBERSHIP

Welcome to our new members:

Alan Barton	St Albans	Clive Parish	St Albans
Julia Cagwin	St Albans	Robin Pellow	Hook, Hants
Olenka Cawdery	St Albans	Jon Penny	St Albans
Shayne Chandler	Watford	Beverley Sabbatella	Biggleswade, Beds
Isabella Gough	St Albans	Jeremy and Juli Scott	
Ruth Halliwell	Welwyn G.C.	& Family	St Albans
Marcus Lambert	St Albans	Mike Smith, Sandra	
Stuart Macer	St Albans	Wood and family	Wheathampstead
Seamus Mulroy	St Albans	Janet Theakston	St Albans
Moragh Ormiston	St Albans	Dr Ruth Williams	Walthamstow

## LECTURE PROGRAMME: 17 NOVEMBER 2020 – 16 FEBRUARY 2021

All lectures commence at 7.45pm.

All of this series of lectures will be transmitted via Zoom – see flyer enclosed in August *Newsletter* for further details (also available on the website). Members can register for attendance at lectures at no charge. Non-members may register for a lecture in return for payment of £5.

Members will receive notification by email of how to register by the Thursday prior to each lecture. The lectures for the month ahead will be included in the initial notification each month such that it will be possible to register for all three lectures if you so wish. It will however still be necessary to register for each lecture as a separate entity; separate links for that month's lectures will be included in the initial email. The protocol for attendance is explained fully in the flyer.

We aim to record all lectures subject to the consent of the speaker. We are working towards lectures being made available to members via a members' only section of the website. Any changes to the programme will be notified on our website and via enews.

Gill Girdziusz  
lectures@stalbanhistory.org

Tuesday 17 November

### **The Origins and History of Harpenden**

Dr Tony Berk

Harpenden is currently well-to-do and important, second only to St Albans in the district. However, this was not always so. Settled later than other towns, it started as just a small part of a nearby village. This talk describes Harpenden's origins and how it changed so dramatically – even before the railways arrived.

*Tony originally studied mathematics and theoretical physics before moving into engineering and working as a lecturer and professional writer, publishing books and technical articles for the electronic press. He*

*now runs a residential property business. An interest in history revived strongly in 2018, training as a local Green Badge tour guide. He currently serves on committees for the Tour Guiding Association and on the Council of the Arc and Arc.*

Tuesday 1 December

### **John Fothergill and St Albans' Interaction with the Industrial Revolution**

Kate Morris

The road from London to the Midlands passed directly through St Albans, so the Matthew Boultons and Josiah Wedgwoods will have passed through often. Boulton's early partner in the 'toy trade' was little-known John Fothergill, grandson of a name-

sake who was master of St Albans School. His contribution to the partnership was the international trade connections that he had, but his untimely death ended the partnership and left eight young orphans, six of whom returned to the St Albans area. This story is pieced together from research in Hertfordshire and Birmingham.

*Kate is a Past President of the Society, and author of several books on our local history and a former Mayor of St Albans.*

Tuesday 12 January, 2021

### **1666: Plague, War and Hellfire**

Rebecca Rideal

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

*Rebecca is an historian, writer and TV producer, whose credits include: 'Adventurer's Guide to Britain', 'Bloody Tales of the Tower' and the triple Emmy award winning series David Attenborough's 'First Life'. She*

*is author of the best-selling book 1666: Plague, War and Hellfire and has written extensively for the press including the Guardian, New Statesman and BBC History Magazine. Rebecca is also founder of Hist-Fest, a brand-new history festival that aims to entertain and educate.*

Tuesday 19 January

### **The Literary Legacy of Humfrey Duke of Gloucester - linking the Bodleian Library and St Albans**

Dr David Rundle

Humfrey Duke of Gloucester (1390-1447) is, in death, associated with two places: the cathedral of St Albans and Oxford's Bodleian Library. His tomb rests in the former abbey; his books were intended to reside in Oxford. This talk will discuss his munificence to Oxford, the sad fate of his library and the significance of St Albans to his bookish activities.

*David is a lecturer in Latin and Palaeography in the Centre for Medieval and Early Modern Studies at the University of Kent. He is an intellectual historian of late Medieval and Renaissance Europe, with particular interest in the cultural connexions between Italy and England. He is author of The Renaissance Reform of the Book and Britain (Cambridge, 2019).*

Tuesday 2 February

**The Light Ages: the monks and machines of Medieval St Albans**

Dr Seb Falk

John of Westwyck was born on an Abbey manor and entered the cloister when St Albans was perhaps the most powerful monastery in England. Sent to Tynemouth, he joined the ill-fated 1383 'Bishops Crusade' and later worked as an astronomer in London. His eventful life gives us a rare insight into the medieval worldview. Based on his bestselling book, *The Light Ages*, Dr Falk will use John Westwyck's story as an accessible introduction to the impressive and creative sciences of the Middle Ages.

*Seb Falk is an historian at Cambridge University, and a BBC New Generation Thinker. His book, The Light Ages, was published by Allen Lane.*

Tuesday 9 February

**St Albans Ordnance Survey Mapping with special reference to the centenary of the National Datum**

Frank Iddiols

This lecture begins with a reference to the National Tidal Observatory of the Ordnance Survey (OS) in establishing the zero point for the National Datum used since 1921. The remainder of the talk will consider OS mapping relating to St Albans through the various scales and development of mapping for a variety of uses over time.

*Frank holds an Honours Degree in Education and has worked in the construction industry gaining various professional qualifications. He has lectured on construction subjects from craft to degree level. He has an interest in maps, particularly of London, Hertfordshire and St Albans especially those showing bench marks. He is a member the Society's Council, the Clock Tower Joint Committee and volunteers at the Library.*

Tuesday 16 February

**Industrial Letchworth: The First Garden City, 1903-20**

Philippa Parker and Janet Capstick

This lecture and a book of the same name grew out of a successful exhibition staged in October 2015 by the Letchworth Local History Group. It will highlight the range of early industries in Letchworth Garden City and emphasize the fact that the principal aim of the Garden City was to attract industry and provide a much better living environment for its workers than the often, miserable conditions in industrial cities.

*Philippa has lived in St Albans (off and on) since 1963 and from 2014 in Letchworth Garden City. She joined SAHAAS as a schoolgirl in 1973 and took part in five seasons of excavations at Gorhambury and, more recently, helped to run the Clock Tower. A former librarian at the National Army Museum, she researches and publishes on Hertfordshire local history and on George Bernard Shaw.*

# Clock Tower Competition Winning Entry



Hazel Bigmore (right), aged 7, won the 7-years and under category with her climbing wall and abseiling design which she described as: "Visitors can use the climbing wall to get up to the top of the tower - there is netting, climbing shapes and tyres to climb on. Then they can abseil down another side!"

