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ST ALBANS & HERTFORDSHIRE  
ARCHITECTURAL & ARCHAEOLOGICAL  
SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER 219  
February 2021



St Albans Abbey from the west, c.1835, by Sara Sophia Hennell (1812-99);  
watercolour reproduced courtesy of the Herbert Art Gallery & Museum, Coventry;  
see pp. 20-21 for further details about the artist

Included in this issue:

**AGM Minutes**  
**Conscientious Objectors**  
**Museum Oral History Project**  
**Railway Engine Sheds**

**New Volume of our Journal**  
**The White Hart Fire**  
**Modified Milk**  
**Cardinal Wolsey's Visits**

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### THE NEWSLETTER

Due to current exigencies, this *Newsletter* is being distributed electronically. We hope lockdown restrictions will be lifted over the next three months to the extent that May's edition can be distributed in the normal way. If so, we will invite members to let us know if they would like to receive a printed copy of the February edition. Once numbers are known, we will order a short print run to cover their requirements as well as members for whom we don't have email addresses, libraries for archival purposes and other societies with whom we swap newsletters.

Copy deadline for the May edition is 15 April 2021. If you have any comments about the *Newsletter* or wish to submit content, please email me, Jon Mein, via [newsed@stalbanshistory.org](mailto:newsed@stalbanshistory.org).

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Well, I did not think that I would be writing this during another lockdown in the middle of January! Fortunately, the hard work members undertook in the autumn of last year has put us in a good position so that our Tuesday lectures, which now involve external speakers, can be run with confidence. Our ability to handle 'Zoom' also allows the Seminar programme to run and project group meetings to take place. We owe a great debt to Peter Bourton, Peter Burley, Jeremy Wright and Mark Percival, soon to be joined by Jon Mein, for allowing this to happen. Please may I ask for more volunteers to get involved so we can spread the load. We do provide training and if I can do it, anyone can!

Besides technological innovations, and in spite of lockdown, there is still much to report. We hope this year to release the first two in our monograph series of St Albans Concise Histories - Kate Morris' St Michael's village and Deborah Spring's Lady Anne Bacon. The Society has been invited to join the Curatorial Consultation Group of St Albans Museum + Gallery and we have begun working with our friends



at the M+G to establish a Local History Hub there which will hopefully open in the Summer. Although it is extremely likely that our 175 exhibition will not reopen, we are again working with our friends to ensure there is a legacy. Also, working with the Civic Society on the Alley-ways Project will enable us to have a real visual impact on the centre of St Albans. More on these initiatives in another newsletter.

And now to archaeology where we now have some opportunities to reinvigorate our activities, in addition to those provided by our friend and member Kris Lockyear. Thanks to the support of both David Thorold, Curator at Verulamium Museum and Simon West, the St Albans District Archaeologist we will establish a new archaeology group. So, if you are interested in both the 'hands dirty' and 'hands clean' aspects of archaeology can you drop me an email and I will provide details. This initiative will hopefully allow us to establish foundations for future activities. It should also lead to new members joining us.

In 2020 we had more new members join us than in any year since 2014. In some cases we know this is due to the impact of the pandemic which Pray God will not continue throughout 2021. To encourage people to join us this year we have decided as a Council to offer one or two lectures where non-members will not have to pay the £5 lecture fee they normally do. We will closely monitor the results and see if this works.

In addition, of course project work continues involving our 17th century group

and the Library team. I should also mention Kate Morris' project team working on the St Julian's estate and its many changes in role: leper hospital, country estate and farm as well as reviewing the account books of Mrs Elizabeth Ashurst (c.1704-86). Thanks to all for keeping going.

All for now. All best wishes

**John Morewood**  
**chair@stalbanshistory.org**

## MEMBERSHIP

Welcome to our new members:

Dave Barnes	London	Hedley Jenkins	St Albans
Miranda Bayliss	St Albans	Liddy Lawrence	St Albans
Victoria Brown and		Lauren Long	St Albans
Gerry Woof	St Albans	Pauline and Stephen	
Rita Cobb	St Albans	Mills	Harpenden
Isobel and Peter		Helen Norman	St Albans
Cutforth	St Albans	Alison Steer	Harpenden
Barbara Downes	Australia	Raymond Sweetman	Swansea
Rosalind and John		Sonia Taha	St Albans
Edwards	St Albans	Gillian Welsman	Harpenden
Georgina Graham	St Albans	Richard Wyborn	Berkhamsted

## A GOOD WALK SPOILED

"On Wednesday last Mr Taylor set out from his house in Chiswell Street [London], in order to walk to St Alban's, upon a considerable wager, with 150lb weight at his back; but by that time he reached Whetstone, finding himself incapable to proceed, he gave out, and was immediately blooded and put to bed." (*Derby Mercury*, 18 January 1733, p. 3)

**ST ALBANS AND HERTFORDSHIRE  
ARCHITECTURAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY  
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2020**

The Annual General Meeting was held on Friday, 8 January 2021. 73 members joined the meeting, online via Zoom. The Secretary welcomed all, especially Maggy Douglas, joining from Edinburgh.

- 1. Apologies were received from** Roy and Christine Bain, Pat Broad, Jean Gourvenec, Frank Iddiols, Roger Miles, Francesca Weal.
- 2. Election of John Morewood as President for the next three years.** This was proposed by Sandy Walkington, seconded by Helen Bishop, and supported by all 88 members who voted. With the approval of Council, John has been acting President since September 2020.
- 3. President's comments.** The President praised the efforts of all in keeping the Society functioning through the very difficult times we are living in. He highlighted in particular the online lectures and seminars (Gill Girdziusz, Kate Morris), website development (Peter Bourton), excellent newsletters (Jon Mein), library tidy up (Heather Jardine), and preparation for a new series of monographs (Pat Broad). The 175 exhibition had been delivered successfully both online and at St Albans Museum + Gallery (Andie Hill and Peter Bourton). Much had depended on the newly formed technical support team (Mark Percival, Jeremy Wright, Peter Bourton, Peter Burley, John Morewood), and if any member wished to join this, they would be very welcome.

He then went on to outline his vision of developing the Society into one of the best in the UK, as viewed both by our members and the wider community. This would involve continuing work with members to develop knowledge and skills, via lectures, seminars, conferences, the library, publications; also a range of other activities such as trips/walks, archaeology, campaigning, staffing the Clock Tower, and involvement in the Alleyways project.

**Cont'd overleaf**

Raising the Society's profile in the wider community would require being more proactive, embracing initiatives such as the Local History 'trolley' at St Albans Museum, consolidating links with local and national bodies (the museums, The Civic Society, SADC, City Guides [Local], University College London [National]), and in particular targeting local ethnic groups. The result would be that the Society was perceived as 'The Must-Go-To-People', which would result in more members (grateful thanks to the membership team: David Smith, Christine McDermott), donations and legacies (grateful thanks to David Moore for controlling expenditure so more can be delivered to members without increasing membership subscriptions). People would see that what we are doing is so exciting and worthwhile that they would want to find out more and join as members.

- 4. Minutes of the meeting held on 10 September 2019.** These had been circulated with the November 2019 newsletter. Their adoption was proposed by Caroline Howkins, seconded by Jon Mein, and agreed by all 88 members who voted, except two who abstained because they were not members at the time of the meeting.
- 5. Accounts for the year ended 31 May 2020.** These had been circulated with the November 2020 newsletter. Their acceptance was proposed by Sally Pearson, seconded by Jeremy Wright, and agreed by all 88 members who voted.

David Moore updated members on what had been happening to the Society's finances during the Covid crisis. Although some income, e.g. from the Clock Tower, had been halted, less had been spent by transferring lectures online, and membership had increased. The 175 project and exhibition had been well supported by sponsors. This had left the finances in good order for the year ahead.

- 6. Reports from Groups.** These had been circulated with the August and November 2020 newsletters. Their acceptance was proposed by Donald Munro, seconded by Pat Howe, and agreed by all 88 members who voted. A report on the St Julian's project was not included, as that had not been formally adopted by the Society until after the end of the 2019/2020 financial year.

- 7. Election of members of Council.** The election of the following members *en bloc*, to serve until the next AGM, was proposed by Sheila Burton, seconded by Anne Petrie and agreed unanimously by all 88 members who voted:

Peter Burley	Vice-president
Bryan Hanlon	Secretary
David Moore	Treasurer
Tony Berk	Chairman, Programme Development Committee
Peter Bourton	Website
Gill Girdzisz	Lecture Secretary
Andie Hill	Publicity
Pat Howe	17th Century Research Group
Caroline Howkins	Clock Tower
Frank Iddiols	Technical
Heather Jardine	Librarian
Christine McDermott	Herts Archaeology and History
Jon Mein	Newsletter Editor
Roger Miles	Archaeology Group
Sally Pearson	Minutes Secretary
David Smith	Membership Secretary

Pat Broad was thanked for all the work she had done as leader on Publications over the past years. As she now wishes to stand down, a new leader is urgently needed, and members were asked to consider whether they, or anyone they know, could take on the job.

- 8. Election of an Independent Examiner of Accounts.** The election of Chris Hall was proposed by Gill Girdzisz, seconded by Christine McDermott, and agreed by all 88 members who voted.

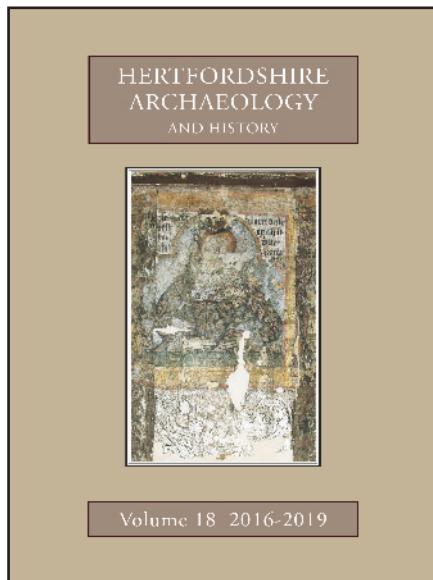
The AGM was followed by a quiz, designed by Bryan Hanlon, and delivered with the invaluable technical help of Mark Percival. The Chairman thanked both for making it possible.

## HOT OFF THE PRESS: VOLUME 18 OF *HERTFORDSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORY*

There is good news about our journal, *Hertfordshire Archaeology and History* (*HAH*), which we publish jointly with the East Herts Archaeology Society. The latest volume, number 18, is due to be published by the end of February. For the contents listing, please see p. 9 (facing).

For those of you who don't know, *HAH* consists of articles on local archaeology and history, more of the former than the latter. Both this and the previous volume have full colour illustrations where appropriate. The new volume includes a review of the new edition of Pevsner's *Hertfordshire* and a short update to an article in a previous edition, both by SAHAAS members, and an article by Prof. Clark of Exeter University, which we commissioned. It is based on his excellent and well-received talk 'The people of St Alban and their Abbey', which he gave to the Society in January 2018.

*HAH* retails to our subscribers and others at £20, although SAHAAS members may buy one copy each at the bargain price of £5. The perhaps less good news is that, because of the current situation, I am not yet sure when I will have the copies of vol. 18 to sell nor how this will be achieved. Usually, we sell to local



members at our lectures, but of course that is not possible at the moment. Some members have their copy mailed, paying approx £3. As soon as things become clearer as to when I will have them to hand, I will let you know via enews what our plans are for sale and distribution. If any member knows already that they will want their copy of vol. 18 posted, it would be helpful if they can let me know as soon as possible, in order that I can prepare the list in good time.

We do still have some copies of vol. 17 available for any new members who may wish to avail themselves of the bargain members' rate.

**Christine McDermott**  
**[hertsarch@stalbanshistory.org](mailto:hertsarch@stalbanshistory.org)**

## **CONTENTS OF *HERTFORDSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORY*, VOLUME 18**

Clive Partridge obituary – Gil Burleigh

Excavations along the M25 – Cynthia Poole et al

Watching brief and strip, map & sample investigation at Roundwood Park School, Harpenden – Anna Wolf

Late Iron Age/early Roman ditches and a late Saxon chalk pit/mine at Marriott Lonsdale School, Stevenage – Jonathan Hunn

A Saxo-Norman burial at St John the Baptist's church, Widford – Ben Barker et al

The medieval cemetery of St James's church and the hospital of St John the Baptist: 300 High Street, Berkhamsted – Shane Maher et al

Watching brief at the former Berkhamsted police station and library – Stuart Joyce

Hospital, farmstead, New Lodge: the archaeology at Towns End, Bank Mill Lane, Berkhamsted – Les Capon

A 15th-century domestic residence and late medieval coaching inn with 16th century wall paintings at 105 High Street, Hoddesdon – Amir Bassir

St Alban's Abbey and the people of St Albans: from the conquest to the dissolution – James Clark

Archaeological investigations on the site of the former county gaol, Baker Street, Hertford – Peter Boyer

Addendum to article in *HAH* 14, 'Town houses designed for entertainment?'.... – Kate Morris

Review of archaeological projects in Hertfordshire 2013-14 – Simon Wood

Review of the new edition of Pevsner's *Hertfordshire* – Francesca Weal

## LIBRARY REPORT

It is disappointing, though unsurprising, that the Library remains closed and, during this current lockdown, closed not just to researchers but also to the library team. We continue to do what we can from afar, and to plan and prepare for re-opening, whenever that may be.

## New Acquisitions

Like everything else, the pace of acquisitions has slowed, but we have acquired a copy of *Oculus episcopi: administration in the Archdeaconry of St Albans, 1580-1625*, by Robert Peters. This is not a new book – it was published in 1963 – but is highly relevant and will fill a gap in our collection.

Although not a new acquisition, we have also recently catalogued a very brief pamphlet, *Arthur Melbourne-Cooper, 1874-1961*. Members may be interested to see it as he was the subject of a recent exhibition at the Museum; it will be available as soon as we re-open.

**Heather Jardine**

## Recent Journal Articles

*Abbots Langley Local History Society Journal*, no 53, Autumn/Winter 2020.  
pp.12-15 “Our Village Pound”, by Trevor Baker. The pound where stray livestock were impounded has had many locations

in the village over the years. The present structure on Kitters Green was probably never used and is a replacement or replica.

*British Archaeology*, no. 176, January/February 2021.  
pp.19-21 “The discovered hillfort: The Chiltern Hills”, by Wendy Morrison and Edward Peveler. The ‘Beacons of the Past’ project uses a high-resolution LiDAR survey interpreted with input from online citizen scientists. Discoveries include a previously unknown Iron Age hillfort. (See pp. 36-7 for details of Dr Morrison’s talk to the Society.)

*Harpden & District Local History Society Newsletter*, no. 142, December 2020.

pp.13-26 “The two breweries of Harpenden: Part 2 – the Southern Brewery, 1836-1893”, by John Wassell. The brewery went under many names and was owned or run successively by William Kingston, John Isaac House, James Mardell and his widow Martha. It grew to own 13 tied houses by 1870.

*Hendon and District Archaeological Society Newsletter*, no. 596, November 2020.

pp.3-5 “Air raid shelters and Medieval Farms”, by Roger Chapman. A request from a resident prompted research using old maps and a visit to suggest evidence

of Dole Street Farm and a WWII air raid shelter.

*The Local Historian*, vol. 50, no. 4, October 2020.

pp.291-306 "Oak tan-bark sales from the Cecil Estates in Hertfordshire and Rutland 1550-1914", by Peter Austin. Oak bark stripping was a profitable by-product of the timber industry and used in the tanning leather. Evidence from the Cecil Estates including Theobalds and Hatfield House in Hertfordshire is used to explore the trade.

*The Park Street and Frogmore Society Journal*. We have recently acquired six years of back numbers and will continue to receive current copies of this journal as part of a journal exchange arrangement. The journal has many interesting articles of local interest including archaeology and local history.

Autumn/Winter 2020. pp.8-13. "Park Street pest house". Pest houses were established to act as an isolation place for people with communicable diseases. The house in Park Street is thought to have been built during the Black Death and then fell into disuse in the late 19th century.

*Rickmansworth Historical Review*, no. 22, October 2020.

pp.9-14 "Shepherds Farm at Rickmansworth", by Godfrey Cornwall. The farm-

house was at Mill End. The earliest reference to it was in 1294 and for nearly 300 years it was farmed by the Lane family.

pp.10-14 "West Hertfordshire: in the steps of Herbert Tomkins, Part 9: Coleshill, 15 February 2019" by Brian Thomson. This walk takes the author to Coleshill, now in Buckinghamshire, but until 1832 an exclave of Hertfordshire.

**Lin Watson**

## A NEW COLLECTION OF PROBATE DOCUMENTS IN THE SOCIETY'S LIBRARY

Probate documents are an excellent source for local historians. The transcriptions of wills, inventories and accounts of the 17th Century Group have recently been deposited in the Society's Library. Some of these were published by the Herts Record Society in 2019 and a further volume should follow in due course.

One of the few benefits of lockdowns associated with the current pandemic has been access to digital documents at the National Archives without charge. A small team has taken the opportunity of downloading all Wills and other probate documents identifiable with St Albans from the Prerogative Court of Canterbury at no cost to the Society (normally £3.50 for each will). They have been added to

Kate Morris' existing collection, most of which she has generously donated to the Library. The following groups, which comprise 590 documents, can be accessed only once the library reopens, but a complete listing can be found by following the link in 'Wills relating to St Albans' classified at P32O11 in the Library's online catalogue.

- PCC wills from 1405 to 1599
- PCC wills from 1701 to 1811, and
- Death duty accounts (including estimates of the value of the deceaseds' estates) from 1801 to 1811.

**Jon Mein and Kate Morris**

## WEBSITE REPORT

Many people have enjoyed the lectures series over the past few months, now zoomed to your living rooms rather than presented in the Marlborough Road church. But other commitments mean that not everyone is able to see every lecture. We have been considering a solution for this, namely a secure members' area where you can view past talks at your leisure. However, due to technical limitations and copyright restrictions, we have to report that this is not going to be possible. More positive news about the development of the members' area will hopefully follow in due course.

If you weren't able to see the physical exhibition to mark the Society's 175th anniversary in the Old Town Hall, why not visit the website to see the online version? We've had many visitors to the website, and not just from far-flung parts of St Albans. Around 15 per cent of users are from overseas. The website is popular in the United States, but also has many visitors from Canada and Australia, as well as users from many European Union countries, and from Asia, including Vietnam, Korea and Thailand.

**Peter Bourton**

## PUBLICATIONS COMMITTEE REPORT

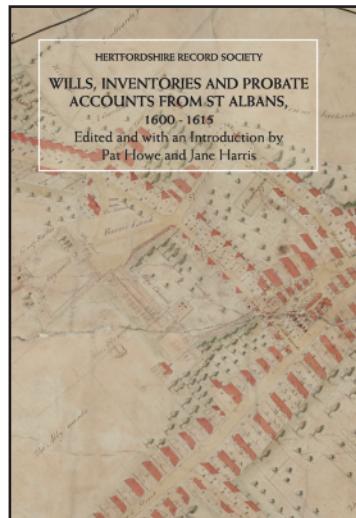
Progress on the new St Albans Concise Histories series continues to be thwarted by the coronavirus epidemic. Sadly, archives and libraries are once again off limits to researchers, causing more delays in writing final drafts. We are now looking to launch the series in the summer and will keep you up-to-date on our progress.

We have yet to find someone for my role (see advert, p. 13, facing). On the other hand, we have good news about the committee membership. Two new members have expressed interest in joining us. We will give more details in the May newsletter.

**Pat Broad**

## "AN ENJOYABLE AND WELL RESEARCHED PUBLICATION"

Our members Pat Howe and Jane Harris have received an excellent review in the British Association of Local History's journal, *The Local Historian* (April 2020), for their book *Wills, Inventories and Probate Accounts from St Albans 1600-1615*. The reviewer, Honor Lewington, said: 'the transcribed documents lay bare the private life of 179 individuals and are a welcome source of information about early seventeenth century urban living'. She commended the editors for their comprehensive introduction and congratulated Pat and Jane and their colleagues for 'providing a well researched and thoroughly enjoyable read'.



It's super to see the team's hard work being recognised in this way. If you'd like a copy of the review, email Pat Howe via [century17@stalbanshistory.org](mailto:century17@stalbanshistory.org). Copies of the book are available for sale (£17.60 for members); email me at [publications@stalbanshistory.org](mailto:publications@stalbanshistory.org). Alternatively you can buy it in our online 'Bookshop' though you will need to pay the full price (£22).

**Pat Broad**

## PUBLICATIONS OFFICER VACANCY STILL OPEN

The role of the Publications Officer includes publishing, editing and production, as well as managing book sales. These activities could be split between two, or even three people. If you'd like to discuss the role or the idea of job sharing, please get in touch with John Morewood ([chair@stalbanshistory.org](mailto:chair@stalbanshistory.org)) or Bryan Hanlon ([admin@stalbanshistory.org](mailto:admin@stalbanshistory.org)).

## CLOCK TOWER REPORT

As I write this report, we are still in Lockdown 3 with the potential of easing the restrictions in some weeks' time. Optimistically, we can hope for the best (open up the Clock Tower to the public with Covid safe measures in place) but prepare for the worst (either opening up to pre-booked visitors only, or, closing the Clock Tower for another season).

Apart from the new planters around the base of the Clock Tower, there is another change you will see when visiting the area. To support social distancing, Market Place, George Street and the High Street were temporarily closed to traffic in May 2020. Metal gates have been added to the orange, plastic barriers at both the junction of High Street and George Street, and at the Peahen junction. These gates could become permanent if the e-petition presented to Herts County Council in November by Sean Hughes (owner of The Boot and Dylans public houses) is successful. The petition requested a 'public consultation for a permanent city centre pedestrianisation of St Albans to include George Street and Market Place'. This online petition suggests that this permanent closure to



Corner of High Street and Holywell Hill  
(© Caroline Howkins)

traffic could reduce air and noise pollution, and lessen the damage to historic buildings. By creating a better visitor experience this could lead to greater footfall around the Clock Tower and more people appreciating and visiting the Tower. The e-petition can be followed on <https://democracy.hertfordshire.gov.uk>.

As it appears unlikely that we can hold a party this year, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the volunteers who helped out with the September's Heritage Open Days, and to all the other Clockateers for staying with us. I sincerely hope that the Clock Tower can open her doors again soon and welcome both Clockateers and visitors alike.

**Caroline Howkins**

## THE AGUTTER GRAVESTONE

I recently found the main part of an Agutter family gravestone on my property at 36 Hill Street. Ian Bower, with the help of Jon Mein and Sheila Green, has helped me trace its origins. We are not sure why it ended up as part of our front door step, nor who some of the names refer to. We believe it was probably replaced by a new gravestone at the Abbey, needed when more members of the Agutter family died. The late Dr Kelsall, Abbey Archivist, recorded such a probable replacement stone existing in front of the Abbey. As you will see from the attached photo, the dates on the Hill Street stone are hard to read.

Benjamin Agutter (1809-98), a tailor in Verulam Street, and who spent his last years in Church Crescent, bought the Hill Street house in 1874. He was elected to the Borough Council in 1873 and 1876. One of his ancestors, James Agutter, had been chosen as Mayor in 1714 and in 1726. One of Benjamin's sons, Dr Benjamin Agutter (1844-1913), was a distinguished organist, music teacher and composer.

I am wondering if any member of the Society can throw further light on it, and whether perhaps someone

would like to have the stone. As we have replaced the front door step with a new flagstone, the Agutter stone is rather in the way in our front garden. I would prefer not to scrap it, but I may have to. Please contact me if you wish to know more.

The stone measures 30 ins x 21.5 ins x 2.5 ins thick. It is missing some parts.

**Julia Cagwin**

Contact via [newsed@stalbanshistory.org](mailto:newsed@stalbanshistory.org)



The Agutter gravestone (© Julia Cagwin)

## LOCAL HISTORY SEMINARS

The seminar series continue to be well attended over Zoom. Prompt registration via Eventbrite is recommended on receiving enews announcements. Numbers are restricted to 25 as they were when they were held in the Library, since although Zoom can accommodate many more, it is important that discussion following the presentations can be as informal and intimate as possible. This is so valuable for both presenters and participants.

For those who have no direct interest in the topic, but still want to learn and enjoy

local history more generally, all will not necessarily be lost if a place at any of the seminars is not secured. Topics aired in the seminars can lead to publications or even later lectures. Those unable to attend but having a special interest are recommended to contact the presenter directly to share their interest.

All seminars commence at 2.30pm and are usually on the third Thursday of each month in the season. The programme for February and March is as follows.

**Kate Morris**

### **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 the *Sopwell Memories* website. Sandy will share some of the colourful and fascinating facts which have been uncovered.

### **Thursday 18 March**

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

#### **Kate Morris**

Sometimes, when writing their wills, people requested certain rituals and preferred locations for their interments. This reflected their social status and religious beliefs. The 17th century saw a rapid growth in the middle classes and also in greater independence of thought on religious matters which can often be detected from wills. This seminar will draw on the work of the 17th Century Group and Kate Morris's research on the 18th century.

## INTERESTED IN ARCHAEOLOGY? YOUR SOCIETY NEEDS YOU!

The title of our society includes the magical word 'Archaeology'. As mentioned in my President's remarks (pp. 3-4) we will be setting up a new archaeological group to assist our friends David Thorold, Kris Lockyear and Simon West. This may involve cleaning and recording discovered items and hopefully, in the future, actual fieldwork. So, if you are interested in both the 'hands dirty' and 'hands clean' aspects of archaeology, please drop me an email ([chair@stalbanshistory.org](mailto:chair@stalbanshistory.org)) by the end of February and I will be in touch.

John Morewood

## HELP NEEDED ...



This postcard comes from the Beardsmore postcard collection currently being scanned by Malcolm Merrick. It is intriguing. Is it a local scene? The only obvious evidence, the caption on the reverse, suggests otherwise. This states: 'Calvert. Photo. Abbots Langley'. But the scene could still be in the St Albans area. Do you recognise the buildings perhaps? Or, if you have an interest in early aeroplanes, can you identify the make and model and perhaps explain what we are seeing? Please email [newsed@stalbanshistory.org](mailto:newsed@stalbanshistory.org) if you can add anything.

## THE LEGACY OF THE 175 EXHIBITION – POSTSCRIPT 1

While choosing the items for the exhibition I discovered how little I knew about their background. As I write this in January, there is every likelihood that our exhibition may never re-open and I wanted to share some of what I had discovered with you.

Let's start with the Wheeler excavations. In the 'Discover' section in the exhibition we had recordings taken from Tessa Wheeler's lectures (ably voiced by Helen Bishop), pictures from the Wheeler's Verulamium excavations as part of the 'Wheeler Wall', and quotations from the diary of a schoolgirl who worked on the excavations. While scripting the text for Helen's recording, I looked at the Society's *Transactions*, so ably digitised a few years ago, and accessible on our website. There we have the lectures Tessa delivered in the third week of February for a number of years. They tell us when specific items were found (e.g. the 'Sea God' mosaic in 1931; the pine kernels in the Triangular Temple in 1933). But they also include photographs of structures I had never seen (the 'Chester' and 'Silchester gates', the skull of the ox in situ close to the base of the altar in the Triangular Temple). Then there are the accounts of the other excavations which continued in the period between the

WHEELERS and Shepherd Frere, specifically 1934-8 and 1949. Two spring to mind. In 1934, with the deceptively boring title of 'Verulamium Insula XVI', A. G. Lowther documented, reconstructed, and photographed the temple in the field behind the Roman Theatre (City guides, please note).

And then in 1949 Mortimer Wheeler returned and oversaw general direction (the bulk of the work seems to have been undertaken by teams led by Mrs Aylwin Cotton OBE FSA and Miss K Richardson FSA) of part of the Forum. The 1953 *Transactions* contain photographs, speculate on the existence of a large Triumphal monument, and cover a main find from that excavation – the Basilica inscription now prominently displayed and reconstructed in our Roman Museum.

Talking of the museum, David Thorold, Curator of Pre-historic to Medieval at Verulamium Museum, very kindly gave us access to the photographic scrapbooks of a member of the excavation team that showed the social aspects of the Wheelers digs. My favourite was the one entitled 'Whoopie' with one of the female archaeologists discovering an exciting find. There was the one entitled 'The murderous kick' (see facing page) with one of the male archaeologists aiming a kick at a tea-chest on which,



*The murderous kick*

'The Murderous Kick'  
(© St Albans Museums)

balanced precariously, is a photographer trying to take a picture of the excavations. One hopes he never fell in.

But he did, and this brings me finally to the wonderful unpublished diary of Helen Carlton Smith which Sarah Keeling so kindly put at our disposal. Helen's mother was an artist who the Wheelers asked to draw parts of the dig. Helen,

aged 13, was determined to get involved and helped out at the excavations whenever she could between 1930 and 1933. There are wonderful cameos that only a teenager could write – the wasps getting in the team's raspberry jam, the Wheelers flying over the excavations in a Tiger Moth. But the diary covers other points. As early as 1931 the Wheelers thought the sea god mosaic featured a Celtic hunting god. What happened to the Indian archae-

ologist the Wheelers brought to the dig, and why did Mortimer Wheeler send some of the team to Redbourn? Helen tells us that one day the photographer plus camera fell into one of the excavation trenches. She is silent on how this happened. It is a wonderful diary that deserves publication. More anon.

John Morewood

## THE SOCIETY'S 'ENEWS' EMAILING LIST

Particularly during current lockdown conditions, we are reliant on the accuracy of our email list to keep in regular contact with many of our members. This importance is likely to continue even when restrictions start to be lifted.

If you know of a member who is not receiving email from the Society, please ask them to contact [www@stalbanshistory.org](mailto:www@stalbanshistory.org).

## HENNELL'S VIEW OF THE ABBEY

Sara Sophia Hennell (1812-99), the seventh of eight children, came from a Unitarian family based in Hackney. In 1851 she and her mother moved to Coventry to live closer to her married sister Caroline (Cara) Bray. At Rosehill, the Brays' home in Coventry, she met and became close friends with Mary Ann Evans (George Eliot), and it is believed the Meyrick family in George Eliot's 1876 novel *Daniel Deronda* is based on three of the Hennell sisters. Sara never married; she worked as a governess and translator, as well as publishing several books on theological topics.

Sara's link with St Albans was her uncle William Marshall (1776-1849), who served as minister at the Unitarian

Chapel in Lower Dagnall Street between 1813 and 1835. (See Fig. 1.) He lived in a property on the south side of Fishpool Street, before retiring to St John's Wood in London. (See Fig. 2.) Sara first visited him with her sister Caroline and brother Charles in 1831, travelling 'on the top of the stage coach'. While staying in St Albans on this occasion, she completed a detailed pencil drawing of the east end of the Abbey, which is today held with other examples of her work in the collection of the Herbert Art Gallery & Museum in Coventry.

The watercolour on the cover of this *Newsletter* was painted by Sara on a later visit, before her uncle moved away from St Albans. It shows the west end of the Abbey, without its tower spike, which was removed as part of the Cottingham repair work 1833-5. Although it is no doubt a romanticised view, the picture does emphasise the rural nature of the land to the south of the Abbey at this time, in private ownership and given over to pastoral meadow. The Abbey Gateway was still in use as a jail; its chimneys are visible to the left of the picture. There is no sign of Abbey Gate House, today the bishop's residence, which was built later in the decade by the



Fig. 1: Former Unitarian chapel in Lower Dagnall Street  
(© Robert Pankhurst)

notorious John Story, owner of the St Albans Bank. Instead there are cottage buildings towards the centre of the painting, possibly the remains of part of the monastic stables. A range of buildings in

a similar position feature in the Van Overbeek (previously Lievens) drawing of the Abbey precinct in the 1630s.

Sally Pearson



Fig. 2: watercolour by Hennell titled 'St Albans', possibly a view looking south from her uncle's house in Fishpool Street; reproduced courtesy of the Herbert Art Gallery & Museum, Coventry

## ARCHAEOLOGY BEFORE THE ARC & ARC

"Last week, as some workmen were filling in the gravel pits on Kingsbury farm, the property of Lord Verulam in the occupation of the Mayor of St Albans (Stephen Smith, Esq), a considerable sensation was created in the town by the discovery of several human skulls, and also the bones of some gigantic creature, supposed by those who have seen the remains and are judges of such antiquarian curiosities to be part of the head and vertebrae of the ichneumon. As soon as this singular discovery became known, the whole town and neighbourhood seemed seized with a perfect fever of curiosity ... in consequence of the violent pressure [of the crowds] many of the visitors were forced into the chasm, and one man sustained a fracture of the thigh and also several contusions ..." (*Bucks Gazette*, 15 April 1837, p. 1)

## ORAL HISTORY IN ST ALBANS MUSEUMS

As well as the physical objects and photographs we care for, St Albans Museums hold a large oral history collection. We have been collecting recordings for about 30 years covering a wide range of topics including food, markets, industry, entertainment and even a set of interviews about people's living rooms.

So what do I mean by oral history?

The most basic definition is "the collection and study of historical information using recordings of interviews with people having personal knowledge of past events." That definition originally said tape recordings but of course today the recordings are all digital and one of my lockdown tasks has been slowly digitising all of the cassettes in our collection

and working with our volunteers to create transcriptions of them.

One of the major benefits of oral history is that it is a democratic alternative to official records allowing ordinary people to articulate their experiences and be part of creating historical records. It can also allow us to show how things actually were, a spirit of tell it like it is - or was! Oral history can help us connect to the emotions of a soldier in the trenches, a protestor in an industrial dispute or a teenager remembering their first dance at the Town Hall.

There are of course limitations to oral history. The success or otherwise of a recording can depend upon the relationship an interviewer is able to make with the subject or with the memory of the interviewee. Whilst oral histories are wonderful for setting the scene, people's memories aren't always fully accurate but used alongside other sources they can help us connect with the past.

One of my favourite recordings in the collections is an interview with Alice Gilchrist in the 1980s. She was born in 1901 and she describes growing up on Fishpool Street (**Fig. 1**) but one story she tells takes us even further back.

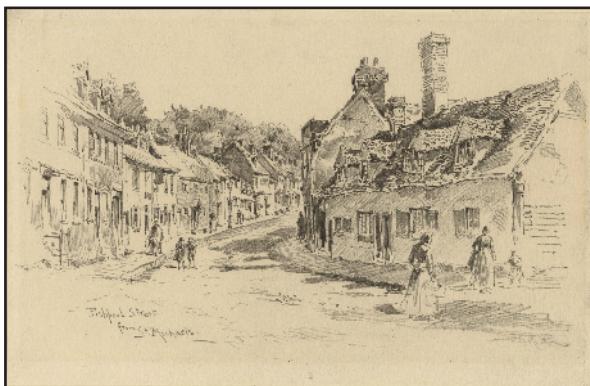


Fig. 1: Fishpool Street, F.G. Kitton (c.1900)  
(Reproduced courtesy of St Albans Museums)

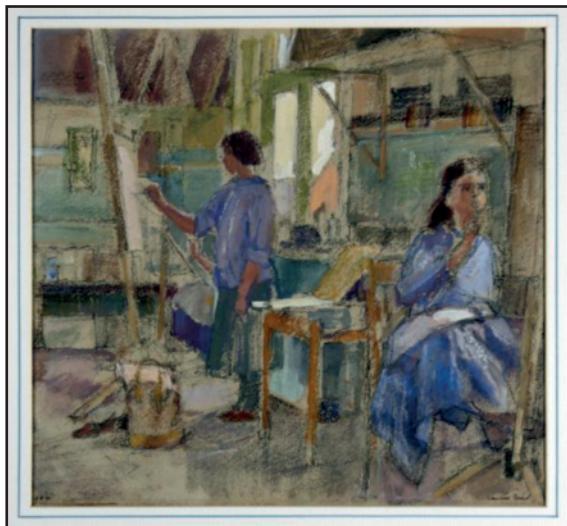


Fig. 2: St Albans School of Art, Maurice Field, 1957 (© St Albans Museums)

### ***Can you remember the tunes ... what did the barrel organ play?***

*That's a long while ago now! There were different [ones] 'Goodbye Dolly I must leave you', that one, that was from the Crimean War that they used to sing that. I remember my Grandfather said when they used to come round the houses calling up all the ... older boys to go and fight in the war and he said his mother hid him in the cupboard so that they couldn't find him.*

Alice is wrong about the song – it was popular during the Boer War not the Crimean – but the music has reminded her of a story from her childhood 70 years before she is speaking when she was told a family story from another 50

years before. The details need checking but that small story of a mother hiding her son to avoid him being called up would be lost without the oral history.

### **The St Albans School of Art Project**

In 2019 St Albans Museums acquired a painting by Maurice Field of a studio in the St Albans School of Art in 1957. The painting gives a glimpse inside the school, into the lives of two students painting in the sunshine. Other than the painting we have very few objects associated with the school in our collections and so our Memories of St Albans School of Art is both a chance to add to our collection and to engage with any and all former students.

You may have seen our call out for memories of the School of Art on social media or in the local press and if you have any connection to the School please do take a look at our website and get in touch. The recordings will have to wait until we can safely record in person but during lockdown a number of our volunteers were trained as oral historians so we will be ready to go as soon as possible.

<https://www.stalbansmuseums.org.uk/st-albans-school-art>

**Sarah Keeling**  
Curator, St Albans Museum + Gallery

## ALBERT GEORGE HAMMOND: A LOCAL CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTOR

In June last year, we spotted a photograph on eBay of a young St Albans man, Albert George Hammond, taken during the First World War. Any photo of a St Albans resident from that time is exciting, but this photograph was particularly interesting as Albert was pictured wearing the uniform of a Private in the Non-Combatant Corps. This unit was set up in March 1916 to accommodate those men who applied for exemption from conscription on grounds of conscience, so here we had only our second contemporary photograph of a St Albans conscientious objector.

Albert George Hammond was born on 2 January 1896, the elder child and only son of John and Alice Hammond. Albert was born into a family of builders. His grandfather, also John, ran his own building company, working out of 63-65 St Peter's Street.

In 1911, Albert, aged 15, was living with his parents and sister, Martha, at 13 Cannon Street. His father was working as a carpenter – perhaps in the family business – and Albert himself was working as a clerk for a boot manufacturer.

At some point, before the outbreak of war in 1914, Albert started working as a



Albert Hammond – photo probably taken in 1916 (Reproduced courtesy of Ian Tonkin)

shipping clerk for Charles Clay & Sons, a straw-hat manufacturer, in Luton, and along with his family had moved to 2 Ladysmith Road, St Albans.

In March 1916, following the introduction of conscription, Albert made his first appearance before the St Albans Military Tribunal. His application on grounds of conscience failed, and he appealed to the County Tribunal. Like so many applicants his request for absolute exemption was denied, and he was required to join the Non-Combatant Corps (NCC).

Those sent to join the NCC were subject to military discipline, the only concession being they were not required to take up a weapon. This did not sit well with many COs who refused to even put on the uniform and the story of their harsh treatment by the military was given great prominence after the war. Less well-known are the experiences of men such as Albert Hammond prepared to accept their place in the NCC.

Albert joined the 3rd Battalion, 1st Eastern Company in May 1916. The work would have been largely manual labour; unloading and loading supplies, building and repairing roads, latrines etc. Many NCC units remained in Britain, but a letter sent by Albert whilst on leave in January 1919 shows that he had been serving in France. His wartime experiences are lost to us, but as a member of the NCC he would have been given the dirtiest of jobs, plus always being at risk of insults and on occasion violence from those unsympathetic to his beliefs.

Although officially part of the military, members of the NCC were not treated equally with combatant soldiers when it came to leave, pay or demobilisation. Albert was fortunate as many had to wait until 1920 to return home but supported

by that offer of employment from Charles Clay & Sons, Albert was demobilised in early 1919.

He returned to Ladysmith Road and in 1922 married Violet Searle. The couple continued to live in St Albans, first in Upper Culver Road and then just a few doors down from his parents in Ladysmith Road. They do not appear to have had any children. By 1939 they were living in Luton where Albert was Departmental Under Manager for a Hat Materials company, possibly Charles Clay & Sons who had shown faith in him, but that is speculation. Violet died in 1966 and Albert in 1973 by which stage he was living in Portsmouth.

Men such as Albert prepared to accept the NCC compromise were largely ignored when the war came to an end. That we now have this picture is a real bonus and hopefully it may prompt other stories and photographs in its turn.

Many thanks to Ian Tonkin for allowing us to share his newly-acquired postcard. A fully-referenced version of this note is available from the Society's Library.

**Dr Julie Moore**

## CARDINAL WOLSEY AND ST ALBANS ABBEY

Cardinal Wolsey was appointed abbot of St Albans monastery by Henry VIII in February 1522 in return for his services in France. He remained abbot until his downfall eight years later.

His was an ‘in commendam’ appointment which meant he could draw the abbot’s income without having to carry out the duties. Given the many duties, both spiritual and secular, of the abbot of a powerful monastery this must have been disastrous for the Abbey. Presumably the prior had to take these over but he would not have had an abbot’s

authority. The prior’s only compensation appears to have been the cardinal’s gift of silver gilt vessels. (See box below left.)

Not only did the cardinal get the abbot’s income but also obtained papal bulls allowing him to dissolve Wallingford Priory and St Mary de Pré Nunnery, both daughter houses of the Abbey. He then had the sites transferred to him by Henry VIII to use the proceeds for Cardinal College (later Christ Church), Oxford.

When I trained as an Abbey Guide it was assumed that Cardinal Wolsey never visited. Now however a thesis (Samman, 1988) which includes detailed itineraries of Wolsey and Henry VIII extracted from

state papers shows that Wolsey paid at least three short visits to the Abbey. His first recorded dates for coming were October 1 and 3, 1524. He could have arrived any time after September 28 but, if he did, he would probably have been preparing for Henry VIII’s arrival on September 30. The king must then have left by October 7 but Wolsey could have stayed until October 12 and had time for abbey business. Wolsey’s next recorded visit was October 3, 1526 when the king was elsewhere. As Wolsey was known to be at Hampton Court on 1 and 5 October he must have

### Transcription of the note about Wolsey’s gift to the Abbey

“The wayte of such p[ar]celles of plate  
as my lord Cardinalles grace hath geven  
and delivered to the monastery of saynt  
Albans to be always in the custody of  
the prio[r] and to serve for the use of the  
same

First a bason with an ewer parcel gilt  
Item two standyng pottes of sylver parcel gilt  
Item ij saltes with oon covar gilt  
Item a standing cuppe with a covar gilt”

Source: British Library, Cotton MS Titus B. I.  
f85r

had a specific, although unknown, reason for coming. Wolsey's final recorded visit was on 20 September, 1529 but then he didn't stay the night.

However William Cavendish, Wolsey's gentleman usher, who wrote a book about the cardinal's life only mentioned St Albans twice. The first time was when Wolsey asked the king for the abbacy and the second when courtiers asked for a share of the abbot's income on Wolsey's downfall so St Albans clearly didn't play an important part in Wolsey's life.

Wolsey certainly didn't leave a favourable impression in St Albans. When Shrimpton wrote his manuscript *The Antiquities of Verulam and St Albans* in the 1630s or 40s, he was scathing. He started by saying "This Wolsey being a wilye priest and prelate, would ever be sure to have his flock well fleest, & to step into the fattest benefices in the Kingdom, yet he did so mediate with Henry 8 that he granted him this Abbey in commendam". He then went on to describe the pomp with which Wolsey lived. "He was made Lord Chancellor, so that besides the purse & mace of that honourable Office he had two Crosses & two pillars ever borne before him by the tallest priests that were to be found in the realm." and he was "served by Dukes and Earles". This part is confirmed by Cavendish who described the 800

staff in Wolsey's London house which included lords with their own servants.

What is not confirmed is Shrimpton's description of Wolsey's death where he says "It is reported yt he was no sooner dead but his body was as black as pitch", that the smell was so great he had to be buried the same night and a storm put out the lights suggesting he was a devil. Cavendish describes a reverent burial by the abbot of Leicester Priory but does mention that Wolsey had the flux which could have caused black and smelly stools.

With thanks to Ailsa Herbert for her transcription of the 'gift' document.

**Sheila Green**

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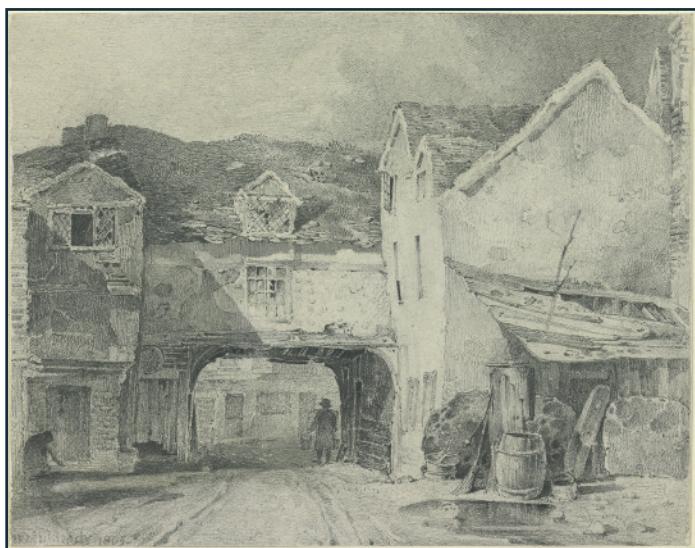
## THE WHITE HART IN DECLINE

Thanks to two keen-eyed Society members, this (graphite on paper) drawing has come to our attention. Sally Pearson and Tony Cooper spotted it some months ago during a U3A trip to the Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge. It shows a fair likeness of a familiar St Albans view: the White Hart on Holywell Hill seen from its yard. The artist, William Mulready, signed the drawing and usefully inscribed the date of 1805. He was just 21 years of age at the time.

The drawing is interesting for two reasons in particular. Firstly, it is yet another illustration from a group of painters who seem to have often worked in the neighbourhood in the early 1800s. Mulready was brother-in-law to Cornelius and John Varley, both of whom have left us views of St Albans. So too has John's apprentice, William Henry Hunt (see his watercolour on the front cover of *Newsletter* 201, August 2016) and John Sell Cotman. There is a project here for anyone with an interest in the history of art to collate details of

works of local scenes by these artists.

Secondly, while the artist was more interested in the buildings themselves, we can infer decline from what Mulready shows us. There is none of the expected bustle of a large St Albans inn at this time. Not surprising perhaps as the White Hart had lost most of its passing trade when the 'New' London Road opened to traffic in 1796. A serious fire late in 1803, probably just a few months before Mulready's visit, must also have exacerbated problems. It destroyed some stabling and the laundry and apparently was threatening the buildings we see in the drawing before it was brought under control.



'Old houses at St Albans' by William Mulready, 1805. Reproduced courtesy of the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge (ref. PD.144-2015)

This fire was a well-recorded incident. The Dowager Countess Spencer told her son that she spent nearly three hours as part of a human chain passing buckets of water up the hill from the River Ver. Her fire engine had to be hauled to the site from Holywell House as the Borough Corporation's appliance was 'not ready'.

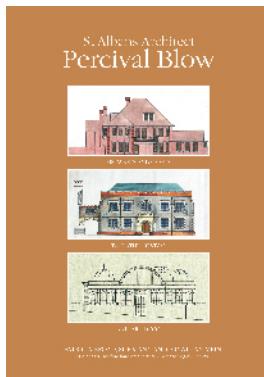
To the chagrin of the innkeeper, John Rudman Hayward, the first newspaper reports of the fire were wildly inaccurate. A report in *The Times*, widely copied in other papers, claimed that the inn and its outbuildings had been completely destroyed. (Mulready's drawing clearly shows this was wrong as the 17th century street-front range is intact.) Hayward

quickly placed adverts in regional newspapers advising his customers he was open for business. More accurate reports followed, this time recording the loss of the laundry and stabling. Local diarist, John Carrington, confirmed this when he visited the scene a few days later. Unless the decrepit lean-to on the right was lingering evidence, the drawing shows no visible sign of the fire. The view over the artist's right shoulder would probably tell a different story.

With thanks to Alan Smith for his comments on an early draft of this note and to the Fitzwilliam for permission to reproduce the drawing.

**Jon Mein**

## RECENT SOCIETY PUBLICATION



### St Albans Architect Percival Blow: From Arts and Crafts to Gothic Revival and Art Deco

Patricia Broad, Sue Mann and Jonathan Mein

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## THE ENGINE SHED AT ST ALBANS CITY STATION

The Midland Railway Way and Works minute 758 of 31 March 1868 records that 'St Albans engine house to be built to house 4 engines with turntable'. The engine house was built south of the (City) station on the east side of the line – now the site of the multi-storey car park and the block of flats. (See Fig. 1.)

By the late 1950s the Motive Power Depot (as the engine houses had become) had an allocation of 20 locomotives. There were three 0-6-0 Tank locomotives for shunting the sidings at St Albans North (Clarence Park), Napsbury Hospital, Sandridge,

Harpden, Luton, and Limbury Road (Luton); six 2-6-2 Passenger Tank locomotives fitted with exhaust condensing gear, brake trip cock, and feed-water pump for working the local passenger trains from Harpenden through the tunnels under St Pancras and on to the London Transport tracks to Moorgate; nine larger 2-6-4 Passenger Tank locomotives for working the suburban passenger trains from Luton into St Pancras (two of which were fitted with early Automatic Train Control for working excursions round to Southend); one 2-6-0 Tender locomotive for working the Harpenden Junction to Hemel Hempstead goods branch; and one 0-6-0 Tender locomotive for working the



Fig. 1: The engine shed (right) looking from the north (Reproduced courtesy of Howard Green)

pick-up goods between Wellingborough and West End sidings, West Hampstead.

The 'engine house' with its 12 funnels is to the right of the picture. At the far end (not visible) was a store room and sand drier - the roof of which was a large water tank. In the centre-background is the tower of the water softening plant which removed impurities from the boiler feed-water and fed the water columns in the yard and at the north end of platforms 1 and 3 (now platforms 2 and 4). Hidden in front of the tower is the small turntable. Just visible in front of the turntable can be seen the roof of the coaling plant which consisted of a small conveyor belt which lifted the coal from ground-level to the top of the locomotive bunkers – the 2-6-0 Tender locomotive is at the coaling plant. Two of the 2-6-4 Passenger Tank locomotives stand on the ash pit where the remains of the fire were raked out at the end of the day and eventually loaded into the wagon. The platform on the extreme left is the depot of the Signal and Telegraph Department.

The 'engine house' had two roads with inspection pits. (See Fig. 2.)

Above the locomotives is a smoke trough which dispersed the acrid smoke, produced when lighting up, through the 12 funnels. Between the tracks are hydrants and hoses for high-pressure water used to wash the scale out of the boilers every two or three weeks.

Standing forlorn at the back of the depot is Fowler-designed 2-6-4 Tank locomotive 42302 which was built in 1927 and spent its entire life working the suburban passenger trains between Luton and St Pancras. It was condemned in October 1961 and is awaiting its final run to the scrap merchant. This basic 2-6-4 Tank design was modified over the years and adopted as a British Railways standard design in 1951. All told approximately 800 were eventually built.

Howard Green



Fig. 2: inside the engine shed (Reproduced courtesy of Howard Green)

## 1875 - WILL SCIENCE ELIMINATE FRAUD?

Improved scientific understanding and its application was playing an increasingly important role in the quality of everyday life of the people of 19th century St Albans – whether they knew or wanted it.

Efforts to regularise drugs and eliminate ‘witches’ brews’ had been published in the *British Pharmacopoeia*. It had set the official standards for medicines since 1864. At about that time the first annual pharmaceutical conference was held. Two chemists and druggists of note in nineteenth century St Albans were John Lewis and Henry Gilham Martin: both had served on the Borough Council and had been elected mayors of St Albans. Their premises in the town centre would have been stacked with a variety of goods in addition to medicines. Henry, son of John Lewis, and Martin both attended the twelfth British Pharmaceutical Conference held in Bristol in 1875. Papers on chemistry were given on 24 August and the next day on a variety of topics. One pertinent to the events that follow below, was a method of estimating fat in milk. There was some controversy about how this should be done. The meeting wound up with an outing to the Cheddar cliffs and caves and Wells cathedral.

Vigorous efforts were being made to reduce the adulteration of foods. The Adulteration of Foods Act was revised and provided for the appointment of public analysts. The county did have two analysts, Dr Letheby and Dr Tidy in 1875. The same year the Sale of Food and Drugs Act was passed describing the responsibilities of the shop keeper. Without doubt 1875 should have been an important year for future trading in St Albans. Scientists however did not yet play a significant part in the control of what the local population had to eat and drink. In 1873 the Council offered the post of Public Analyst, first to Dr Letheby, who turned it down and then to a Dr Parry. Did he accept? At the same meeting the Council resolved that the appointment of a medical officer should be deferred. Perhaps little happened until 1881. By this time Dr C.E. Saunders, MD, MRCP had been appointed the city’s Medical Officer of Health and Public Analyst. He reported finding five samples of skimmed milk.

In 1882 the Town Clerk received a letter from the Local Food and Drugs Board. They wanted to know why there were no analyses. The only reason he had given was that nothing wanted doing. The Council were extremely averse to letting the public know that there was anything wrong with their food or drink.

In 1894 A.E. Ekins 'of St Albans' was the County Analyst. (See photo below.) He reported (*Herts Ad.*, 21 July 1894) that, "during the quarter ended June 30th, 1894, forty samples of food etc. were submitted to me for analysis by your inspectors for carrying out the Sale of Food and Drugs Act 1875 for this county. Twenty samples were obtained by Mr. Johnson and twenty by Mr Rushworth. They consisted of eighteen samples of butter, fifteen of milk, three of coffee, two olive oil, and one each of cheese and lard. Of these samples four of butter and one of coffee were adulterated, and proceedings have either been taken, or are being taken, against the vendors. Of the samples of milk, although I have not reported against them as adulterated, three were of very poor quality, the rest however being very good. On the whole the samples show great improvement over the corresponding quarter of last year, the percentage of adulterated articles being a fraction over 12 per cent which is about the average percentage of adulteration according to Government returns over England."

There is a St Albans case reported for August that year. Milk was on sale at St Julian's farm, St Stephen's. A notice on the farm gate read 'Pure Milk, 1d a glass' and invited welcome refreshment to passers-by on the journey to Bricket Wood. On 28 August William Rushworth,

Inspector of Weights and Measures, instructed his assistant to buy two glasses. He told the farmer's wife, Mrs E Varcoe, that they would be tested by the Public Analyst. Unfortunately, the milk was found to be 35 per cent deficient in fat. Edwin Varcoe was charged and the case came to court a month later and was reported in the *Herts Advertiser*. Witnesses were called and questioned on such details as 'had the milk been scalded?' to remove the cream; 'had water been added?' The magistrates conferred and convicted Mr Varcoe but the Chairman of the Bench stated that they were of the unanimous opinion that there was no intention to defraud. The defence had to pay costs.

**Julia Merrick**



Ekins' pharmacy next to the Corn Exchange, c.1900 (Reproduced courtesy of St Albans Museums)

## TWO ST ALBANS MEN AT WATERLOO

In St Albans, as in the rest of the country, it was thought that in July 1814 the war with Napoleon was over. Local man William Domville, by then Lord Mayor of London, entertained the Prince Regent, the King of Prussia and the Emperor of Russia at a splendid banquet at the Guildhall, and was made a baronet for his trouble. The Mayor of St Albans presented the Duke of Wellington with the Freedom of the Borough in a gold casket to mark his great victory at Toulouse.

However, even greater things were to come as Napoleon returned from Elba to fight another day.

For two young men from St Albans this heralded excitement beyond their wildest dreams. The Gape family of St Michael's (now St Michael's Manor hotel) and the Howards of St Julian's (on Watling Street) would receive letters describing experiences on the fateful day in June the following year when they were called to battle at Waterloo in Belgium and Napoleon was finally defeated.

Cornet James Gape of the 2nd Royal North British Dragoons (the Greys) was



Fig. 1: the saddle of Cornet Gape (Courtesy of the Royal Scots Dragoon Guards Museum)

finally mobilised on 6 April 1815 and marched seven days from Bristol to Gravesend before a three day voyage to Ostend to see action at the retreat from Quatre Bras on 16 June. He was wounded then, but survived the final battle two days later despite bullets piercing his horse's ear and his saddle in two places. He wrote to his mother describing the horror of his journey to Paris after the battle in torrential rain with fleeing troops plundering goods on all sides, and his great distress that his saddle was 'completely spoiled'. (See Fig. 1.) His father, Revd James Carpenter Gape, was elected Mayor in 1823 and acknowledged his son's service at Waterloo granting him the Freedom of the Borough.

Ensign James Arnott Howard, born at St Julian's farm in 1793, joined the 33rd Regiment and served at the abortive



Fig. 2: the shako of Ensign Howard with the bullet hole made by a French musket.  
(Courtesy of the Duke of Wellington's Regimental Museum)

assault of Bergen-op-Zoom on 8 March 1814, where he was wounded. He suffered another injury to his thigh the next year at Quatre Bras, but, his wound dressed, he rejoined his company and, to his satisfaction, was able to fight in the general engagement at Waterloo two days later. This was his 21st birthday. In a letter written to brother,

Charles Henry, on 8 July from his bivouac close to the gates of Paris, he described the desperate conditions there and was clearly moved by the devastation and loss of the battle. He too commented on the loss of their baggage and lack of clean clothing or even blankets during the ten days of very wet weather following the battle. His pride is evident as he described his narrow escape as a bullet passed through his cap within an eighth of an inch of his head and his intention of bringing the shako back to England with him to show. (See Fig. 2.) Howard did not return to St Albans as his immediate family had moved to his mother's original home in Chalfont St Giles, though the wider family remained in both St Michael's and St Stephen's, intermarrying with the Smiths of Kingsbury.

**Kate Morris**

## 1 HOLYWELL HILL IN 1797

TO LET:- A large, genteel and commodious brick- and sash-fronted dwelling house containing a neat breakfast parlour, 4 good bedrooms, servants room, physic room, kitchen, wash-house, brew-house, excellent cellaring ... in the occupation of Mr Lucas, surgeon, tenant at will.

[Source: sales particulars, April 1797,  
HALS, D/EV F28/14]



(© Malcolm Merrick, 2020)

**LECTURE PROGRAMME**

2 March to 18 May, 2021

All lectures commence at 7.45pm

All lectures will be held on Zoom

Any changes to the programme will be notified on our web site and via e-news.

Non-members will be charged £5 for attendance at a lecture (unless stated otherwise).

Tuesday 2 March

**Quaker Service in Russia: draining the marshes of St Petersburg, 1817-40**

Clare B. Dimyon

Clare will consider an unlikely collaboration between English Quakers and two Russian emperors, Alexander I and Nicholas I. This resulted in draining 100,000 acres of marshland, activity which allowed for the expansion of the Imperial capital of St Petersburg.

*Clare is a member of the Society of Friends, engineer and amateur historian.*

Tuesday 9 March

**The Red Lion: the 500-year story of a St Albans Inn**

Jon Mein

In its prominent location in the High Street now occupied by Zizzi's restaurant, the Red Lion was one of the prin-

cipal inns in the town catering for pilgrims to the Abbey in the early days and motorists in its final years. In charting the history of the Red Lion from medieval inn to turnpike 'service station' to 20th century hotel, this talk questions our understanding of the development of St Albans.

*A SAHAAS member for 13 years, Jon has been closely involved with several Society projects and publications and is the current editor of the Newsletter. His general interest in pubs arises from work on the Victorian Temperance movement. His research should appear in book form in due course.*

Tuesday 16 March

**Beacons of the Past – investigating a prehistoric Chilterns Landscape**

Dr Wendy Morrison

'Beacons of the Past' is a 3.5-year project part funded by National Lottery Heritage Fund, the Chiltern Society, and the National Trust, amongst others. Its purpose is to engage and inspire communities to discover, conserve, and enjoy the Chiltern's Iron Age hillforts and their prehistoric chalk landscapes. Now at the project's midpoint, Project Manager Wendy Morrison will present on some of the results of the UK's largest bespoke archaeological LiDAR survey, the projects outreach pro-

grammes and what shape the final 12 months will take.

*Wendy currently works for the Chilterns Conservation Board as a Project Manager of the NLHF funded Beacons of the Past Hillforts Project. She also is Senior Associate Tutor for Archaeology at the Oxford University Dept for Continuing Education. Wendy's research areas are Prehistoric European Archaeology and Landscape Archaeology. She has over a decade's excavation experience in southern Britain, the Channel Islands, and India and is a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries.*

Tuesday 6 April

### **The Spanish Flu of 1918 and how it changed the world**

Laura Spinney

Laura will recount the story of an overlooked pandemic and demonstrate that the Spanish Flu was as significant – if not more so – as two world wars in shaping the modern world; in disrupting, and often permanently altering, global politics, race relations, family structures, and thinking across medicine, religion and the arts.

*Laura Spinney is a writer and science journalist. Her writing on science has appeared in The Guardian, the Economist, Nature and National Geographic, among others. She is the author of two*

*novels, The Doctor (2001) and The Quick (2007), and a collection of oral history, Rue Centrale (2013). Her best-selling non-fiction account of the 1918 Influenza pandemic, Pale Rider: The Spanish Flu of 1918 and How it Changed the World (2017) was published in the UK by Jonathan Cape and has been translated into 16 languages. She lives in Paris.*

Tuesday 13 April

### **The Prittlewell Prince – an Anglo-Saxon burial chamber 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 the 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 20 April

### **The Future of History: the next 176 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.*

*Sarah Lloyd has worked at universities in Australia and the UK. Her interests span 18th century British social history, community heritage, and the politics of history today. Between 2014 and 2019,*

*she was Director of the 'Everyday Lives in War' Engagement Centre funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council to link academic and community research into the First World War.*

*Rebecca Sullivan has been Chief Executive of the Historical Association (HA) since 2007. The association is '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 4 May

### **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 when he directed 'The Cappuccino Conquests' research project that traced the spread of Italian style coffee beverages around the world.*

Tuesday 11 May

**Apsley Cherry-Garrard: Hertfordshire's antarctic explorer**

Chris Bennett

A look at the writings of Apsley Cherry-Garrard of Lamer, Wheathampstead, who accompanied Captain Scott on his ill-fated expedition to the South Pole, 1910 – 1913.

*Chris Bennett has been County Archivist at Hertfordshire Archives and Local Studies (HALS) since 2013 and was previously Borough Archivist for the London Borough of Croydon. He was born in Nottingham and now lives in London. Among his many interests are the heroic age of Polar Exploration and this talk is relevant to HALS as the Lamer estate papers are held there.*

Tuesday 18 May

**Regeneration in East London:**

**Toynbee Hall, the London Dock and the Royal London Hospital**

Richard Griffiths

Richard will talk about some of his recent projects namely Toynbee Hall; the London Dock; and the conversion of the Royal London Hospital into the Tower Hamlets Town Hall. He will expound his belief that adding a new layer of architecture and use to old buildings is as interesting and rewarding as designing a new building.

*Richard Griffiths Architects, founded in 1993, has established itself as one of the leading historic building practices, noted for the quality of its work in adapting historic buildings to new uses. Richard was Cathedral Architect at both Southwark and St Albans cathedrals for 18 years, winning two RIBA Awards. In July 2019 he published a book documenting projects completed over 25 years including buildings for the National Trust, English Heritage, and major churches as well as for the St Pancras Hotel as joint architect. In 2019 Simon Jenkins reviewed this book, Old Buildings, New Architecture, stating "I can only describe you as a saint of the built environment."*

# Clock Tower Competition Winning Entry



For more about the competition, please see the November 2020 Newsletter.



Alex Matchett (above right), 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!"