



ST ALBANS & HERTFORDSHIRE
Architectural & Archaeological Society

May 2021 Newsletter

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

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

Newsletter Editor

May 2021

Discover . Protect . Innovate . Inform



1845 - 2020

ST ALBANS & HERTFORDSHIRE
ARCHITECTURAL & ARCHAEOLOGICAL
SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER 220 May 2021



'Market Place, St. Albans (about 1890)', by Evacustes Phipson, (1854-1931), signed 1902; watercolour reproduced courtesy of St Albans Museums; see pp. 18-19 for more about Phipson; contrast with Malvina Cheek's watercolour of a similar view painted c.1945 and printed on the front cover of the May 2019 *Newsletter*

Included in this issue:

**To Zoom or not to Zoom ...
Defending the Wall
Wheathampstead Church
New Edition of County Journal**

**What is Archaeology?
June Lecture Programme
Matthew Paris on the Web
A Big Crash on Holywell Hill**

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THE NEWSLETTER

Due to Covid-19 restrictions we were unable to distribute a printed copy of the February *Newsletter* in the usual way. Instead, we invited members for whom we have email addresses to download the digital edition from the website. To meet our obligations to provide copies for archival purposes, we will be ordering a short print-run of the February edition. If you would also like a printed copy, please contact Bryan Hanlon by 10 June 2021 via admin@stalbanhistory.org or phone 01727 851734. Orders will be distributed with the August edition.

Copy deadline for the August edition is 15 July 2021. If you have any comments about the *Newsletter* or wish to submit content, please email me, Jon Mein, via newsed@stalbanhistory.org.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Well, thank goodness we are on our way out of lockdown at long last! Of course, we cannot simply flick the switch and go back to doing what we did before as if nothing had happened. Just as society in general is being cautious, so must we be as a leading Society. Members of your Council have been working hard at what we need to do. Although our lecture series usually ends in May, we have decided to extend this to June. We need to book speakers many months in advance and so when we reconvene in September, lectures will be via Zoom until the end of the year. After that, hopefully, we will be able to bring back face-to-face meetings with live streaming via Zoom. Further details can be found elsewhere in this newsletter (see p. 5). Please do let us have your views.

We are very grateful to Gill Girdziusz for all her hard work in making the September-June lecture series such a success. Likewise, to Heather Jardine and the Library team who, by the time you read this, will be immersed in preparing our Library for opening again which, fingers crossed, may be some time in June.

Our increasing links with local organisations goes from strength to strength. The letter Tim Boatswain and I wrote to the *Herts Advertiser* concerning the state of



the Roman Wall in Verulamium Park led to a positive response from English Heritage / Historic England as well as our friends on St Albans District Council. There is an update in this *Newsletter* (see p. 6). You will see that the ruins at Sopwell will be included. Also, our friends at the Museum + Gallery have invited us to be involved in the new St Albans Visitor Guide which again will raise our profile, as will our manning a local history hub, along with other societies, one morning each week during the autumn in the Museum. Please let me know if you would like to be involved in this. Further details are given in this newsletter. It should prove to be great fun.

I am very heartened that our membership for the first time since the 1990s has passed the 600 mark. This is a testament to all the work done by your Council to ensure we have not only maintained, but

enhanced our service to you, our members, at this difficult time.

Finally, I was pleased to receive a good number of applications to join our new archaeology group. Events are being

arranged. With the prospect of some excavation work it promises to be an exciting summer – and don't we all deserve that?

Dr John Morewood
chair@stalbanhistory.org

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS DUE

Subscriptions for the coming year, June 2021 to May 2022, are due on 1 June

Payment can be made by:

- Direct Debit*
- Those already paying by Direct Debit need take no action as payment will be collected automatically.
- Bank transfer to the Society's account: sort code 309725, account number 00811696, Ref. Family name.
- PayPal via the website accessed by the 'Join Us' button.
- Cheque by post to: David Smith, Membership Secretary, Kestrel Lodge, 32 Sutton Mill Road, Potton, Sandy, Beds, SG19 2QB.

* Anyone wanting to switch to paying by Direct Debit, the Society's preferred option, please contact the Treasurer by email for the appropriate form or use the one on the web site.

The rates, which remain unchanged, are:

- a) Individual members: £20
- b) The spouse or partner of a member living at the member's address: £10
- c) Children of a member and under the age of 16 living at the member's address: Free
- d) Students aged 16 or over who provide evidence that they are in full-time further or higher education £10

David Smith
 Membership Secretary
 membership@stalbanhistory.org
 Tel. 01767 260579

David Moore
 Treasurer
 money@stalbanhistory.org

To ZOOM OR NOT TO ZOOM ...

The Society's Council would like your opinion on how our lectures should run in 2022. For the remainder of this year all talks will be on Zoom. This was an easy decision as we need to book speakers now for the autumn programme and Zoom offers certainty.

But when we are able to return to an external venue, currently Marlborough Road Church, should we do so? The answer is not clear-cut.

Face-to-face presentations are more sociable and allow us to meet friends. But only, of course, if we are prepared to travel to the venue. They are not suited to those who do not have the ability to travel there. Zoom allows us to be joined by attendees and speakers from anywhere in the world and we know that part of our increase in membership is due to our Zoom lectures making us more accessible. Of course, if you don't have access to a computer or iPad the Zoom option is of no use.

One of the options your Council is looking at is to give you the best of both worlds – face-to-face lectures with simultaneous Zoom streaming. However, this may not be possible from a technology / cost point of view and this is where we need your help.

If we can't manage face-to-face with live Zoom streaming, which of the following options would you prefer?

1. All lectures taking place at an external venue;
2. All lectures held via Zoom;
3. Split with two a month at a venue and the third on Zoom;
4. Split with two a month on Zoom and the third at a venue.

Acknowledging that meeting socially is so important, we would look to run some social events if Option 2 is the preferred option.

Getting your responses to us:

1. Those on our 'enews' list will shortly receive a link to a simple online questionnaire based on the above. Simply select your preferred option.
2. If you are not on the enews list, please send us your preferred option ideally by email or telephone me on 01727 851734. (The first time you phone, you will be asked to identify yourself by my clever phone system – just say your name, followed by "Arc & Arc"). There is no answerphone facility, so if I am not in, call back at another time.

Please reply by 30 May.

Bryan Hanlon
admin@stalbanhistory.org

DEFEND THE WALL! UPDATE 1

About five years ago SAHAAS and the Civic Society joined forces to campaign to protect the longest length remaining above ground of the Roman walls which once surrounded Verulamium. The site is of course important. It includes the 'London Gate' through which 'Watling Street' passed. The area enclosed by the walls also justifies the claim that Verulamium is the third largest town in Roman Britain. Now the campaign has begun again. It is not only a question of the damage caused by humans (people who walk on the wall and cyclists who use it as a cycling ramp – see the photo of the cyclist in the *Herts Advertiser*, 12 February 2021). Damage by nature is equally serious as tree roots destroy the wall and the ditch fills with falling soil. These are the reasons why we decided



The remains of Lee's house at Sopwell
(© John Morewood, 2021)

to send a joint letter to the *Herts Ad* in the hope that someone would take notice. And they did.

The matter was picked up by English Heritage, Historic England and St Albans District Council. At a virtual meeting we made a presentation and it was unanimously agreed that action must be taken both in the short and long term. A meeting on site will take place at the end of May involving the interested parties and the Council has already committed for the site to feature in the Green Spaces Action Plan for the park. We are grateful to Cllr Anthony Rowlands for pulling the interested parties together.

Another attendee at the meeting was the District Archaeologist, Simon West, who raised the issue that the ruins of Sir Richard Lee's second house at Sopwell also need to be reviewed. So, the visit in May will include this site as well. Currently the site resembles Miss Haversham, neglected and unloved. No interpretative panels explain its importance and the capacity for vandalism is great. Our descendants would rightly condemn us if we allowed major deterioration to continue to their heritage. We will keep you updated on progress.

**Prof. Tim Boatswain and
Dr John Morewood**

CONGRATULATIONS: JOHN MOREWOOD PHD

Hearty congratulations to our President for the recent award of his PhD by the University of London.

His thesis is titled 'Henry Brougham and Anti-Slavery 1802-1843'. It argues that Brougham became the leading slavery abolitionist in this period. By using more effective arguments and implementing a comprehensive media strategy, Brougham ensured anti-slavery became part of the national consciousness and a pillar of the Whig party's reform agenda. This research formed the basis of John's talk to the Society on 3 November last year.

John's examiners state the thesis presents 'significant new research on the histories of abolition and British popular culture'. Discussions are taking place on publication.

MEMBERSHIP

Welcome to our new members:

Anneke Bambery	Welwyn G.C.	Michael Long	Hemel Hemp.
Jean and Gordon Bluck	Berkhamsted	Tony Minnichiello	Hoddesdon
Prof. Tim and Snjezana Boatswain & family	St Albans	Anona Morgan	St Albans
Mary Butcher	South Mimms	Prof. Jonathan and Elizabeth Morris / fam	Berkhamsted
Peter Chester	Saltburn-by-Sea	Annmarie Parker	Hertford
Alexees Diggins	Harpenden	Stephen Roberts	Pirton
Kate Dishman	St Albans	Elizabeth Sach	St Albans
Graham Everett	Watford	Tony Sandidge	WA., USA
Elizabeth Fotheringham	St Albans	Ben Scarborough	St Albans
Sally Griffith	St Albans	Peter Swabey	Hemel Hemp.
Alan Hartwell	St Albans	Jacqui Van Loen	Radlett
Godfrey Hall	Essex	David Warner	St Albans
Carol Heselwood	Kings Langley	Mick and Sue Warnes	St Albans
Judith Jackson	St Albans	Clifford Wicken	Penrith, Cumb.
Maggie Johnston	St Albans	Samantha Wood	Hemel Hemp.
Dr Geoff Lawrence	Cambs.	Sharon Wood	Welwyn G.C.

HERTFORDSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORY – NEW VOLUME

As forecast in the last edition of the *Newsletter*, volume 18 of the county journal was published in late February. It extends to 260 pages and is printed in colour throughout.

The articles are varied in terms of subject and locality. You can see this for yourself from the contents listing on the facing page. If I may suggest ...

1. Prof. James Clark's detailed research of St Albans Abbey and the later medieval townspeople reveals, for example, fascinating material about some who lived in the town, their trades and origins;
2. Kate Morris's update about the purpose of two fine eighteenth century St Albans houses;
3. Our Editor, Dr Isobel Thompson, recommends the longest article, on excavations along the Hertfordshire portion of the M25 widening, which is important for remarkable first century pottery kilns at Bricket Wood; the discovery of an intact portion of the foundations of Hertford gaol; and articles on Berkhamsted shed light on the town's two medieval hospitals, known from historical sources but their sites doubtful – until now;
4. The Hoddesdon inn – an important discussion about the development of an early modern inn, and its 16th century wall-paintings discovered during renovation.

The cost for non-members is £20 per copy whereas SAHAAS members pay just £5 for their first copy. This reduced rate is an important perk of membership of our Society.

For those of you who live in St Albans, delivery can either be by bike, a service kindly offered by one of our members or, by appointment, from my house in the city centre. If by post, p+p is £3.25.

The easiest and our preferred method of payment is by BACS but cheques and cash are also acceptable! Please let me know by email if you are paying by BACS.

BACS: account 'Herts Archaeology', sort code 30 97 25, account no 00978485 ref. HAH18.

By post, with cheque payable to 'Herts Archaeology', to David Moore, 10 Oakwood Drive, St Albans, AL4 0XD. Note 'HAH18' on the reverse.

Do contact me if you have any questions.

Christine McDermott
hertsarch@stalbanhistory.org

CONTENTS OF *HERTFORDSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORY*, VOLUME 18

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

***Herts Archaeology and History* is produced by SAHAAS in partnership
with East Herts Archaeological Society and Herts County Council.**

LIBRARY REPORT

The Library has remained closed for yet another quarter, which is hugely disappointing. However, it does seem that the restrictions are beginning to ease and we are hoping to be able to re-open within the next few months. Progress must be cautious and plans will be subject to change, so do please watch the website for updates or drop us an email for the latest information.

I think we sometimes forget what a significant collection we have in our Library and the range of interests that it will satisfy. In order to bring it to wider attention, last year Donald Munro and I prepared an entry for the standard reference book, Dr Karen Attar's *Directory of Rare Books and Special Collections in the United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland*. The latest edition has recently been published in paperback and we hope it will bring new researchers to our doors.

Heather Jardine
library@stalbanhistory.org

New Acquisitions

We have continued to acquire new material by both purchase and donation during lockdown, but we have not been able yet to catalogue these new items to make them available to you. I hope

there will be a bumper bundle of new titles for you in the next *Newsletter*.

Recent Journal Articles

The Alban Link, no. 94, Spring 2020.

pp.12-14 "The legacy of Cyril and Mary Hudson", by David Skidmore. The bequests of Cyril Hudson and his wife funded the Hudson Memorial Library, the replacement of the tower ceiling and the new Chapter House in St Albans Cathedral.

pp.15-17 "Rediscovering St Albans Abbey's medieval book collection", by Ailsa Herbert. The Abbey library was dispersed by Henry VIII's commissioners in 1539. At least 150 of the manuscripts are now in major archives and libraries. Members of the Cathedral's archive team have created a digital library where images can be viewed at www.stalbanscathedral.org/explore-a-digital-medieval-library.

Hendon and District Archaeological Society Newsletter.

No. 595, October 2020, pp.1-2 and no. 599, February 2021, pp.4-7. "54a Barnet High Street – a timber framed building", by Bill Bass. This building was once part of The Mitre Inn complex. The first article describes the site visit and the second article considers a dendro-chronological analysis of the oak timbers of the building dating it to a period AD 1249-1327.

No. 598, January 2021, pp.4-8 “Stink pipes in Finchley”, by Dudley Miles. Stink pipes were made in the late 19th and early 20th centuries to vent gases from underground sewers. The pipes surviving in Finchley are listed and a location map provided.

Hemel Hempstead Local History Society Notes, no. 66, December 2020.

pp.2-3 “Two Waters Mill”, by Michael Stanyon. A mill, built on the confluence of the rivers Bulbourne and Gade, has been at this site since 1086. From at least 1763 it was used as a paper mill.

The Local Historian, vol. 51, no. 1, January 2021.

pp.16-26 “The SOE training centre at Wall Hall during the Second World War: fact or fiction?” by J.R. Silver and Marie-France Weiner. During World War II Wall Hall in Aldenham was used as a training centre, codenamed STS 39, for the Special Operations Executive. About 200 agents, mostly from Belgium, Poland and Norway, were trained in propaganda and clandestine warfare. Evidence was difficult to find as the centre was secret and many documents were destroyed after the war.

Rickmansworth Historical Review, no. 23, February 2021.

pp.6-9 “Reconstructing the medieval church of St Mary, Rickmansworth

(Herts)”, by Heather Falvey. This is a summary of part of an online talk given in October 2020. Probate records dated 1417-1539 provide an insight into the social life of the parish and the physical structure and objects of the church.

pp.10-17 “Lord Ebury’s Line” by Chris Hillier. The Watford and Rickmansworth Railway Company line between the two towns was opened in 1862 for freight and passenger transport. A proposed extension to Uxbridge was never built, but a Croxley Green branch was added in 1912.

pp.17-24 “West Hertfordshire: in the steps of Herbert Tomkins, Part 10: Tring Station to Great Gaddesden and Water End” by Brian Thomson. The author continues his walk following the account in Tomkins’ book of 1902.

Lin Watson

CALLING ALL AUTHORS!

We would be very grateful if those of you who are publishing your local history research would consider donating a copy of your pamphlet or an offprint of your article to our library. It will ensure that the results of your hard work can be shared and read as widely as possible.

Many thanks in anticipation.

Heather Jardine
Librarian

A MISCELLANY FOR SALE

Recent sorting of booklets and pamphlets in the Society's Library has identified a selection which are either duplicates or unrelated to our work. These are now being offered for sale to members, and you will find a list of them on the Society's website. We will send an enews message in the middle of May pointing members to the relevant page.

Please spare a few minutes to cast an eye over the list – there's some interesting material there, almost all of which relates to the history of St Albans and Hertfordshire. Among the rarer items is a privately produced guide to Gorbambury from 1938, which includes a printed version of a manuscript written by Sir Edward Grimston (1508-99), Comptroller of Calais, giving an account of his adventures. Another self-published booklet contains 50 photographs and drawings of Hitchin gath-

ered by the local historian Reginald L. Hine in 1946, partly to give pleasure and out of pride in what survives, but also 'to trouble the conscience of those in High Places, and make even Philistines and Mammonites pause in their headlong work of destruction'. On a rather lighter note is a celebration of fifty years of The Morris Ring (1934-84), entitled *With a crash and a din comes the Morris Dancer in....*

These booklets and pamphlets are being offered to members at moderate price, and proceeds will help to further develop the resources available at the Society's Library. If you are interested in making a purchase, please email the Library team to arrange viewing / payment / collection. Items will be sold on a first-come first-served basis up to a closing date at the end of July 2021.

Sally Pearson
library@stalbanhistory.org

THE SOCIETY'S SEMINAR PROGRAMME, 2021/22

The Society's local history seminars have run successfully on Zoom despite lockdown. This does slightly inhibit impromptu discussion, though the comforts of one's own sofa as against competition for a parking space at the Library, do provide some compensation. Kate Morris is now on the lookout for topics of interest for the 2021/22 season. Anyone working on, or interested in some particular aspect of St Albans history, which they can share, is encouraged to contact Kate, who is preparing next season's programme, via kate@englishinfo.biz.

CLOCK TOWER REPORT

The Clock Tower is classed as a museum for the purposes of the easing of lockdown restrictions and so can open “no earlier than 17 May”. The Clock Tower Committee will meet in mid-May to discuss the details of how and when we can open.

On Saturday, 17 April, just before the 3pm minute silence, the medieval Great Bell, Gabriel, was tolled slowly and manually to honour the Duke of Edinburgh.

The last time that Gabriel was swung to ring was for the funeral of Queen Victoria in 1901. When Princess Diana died in 1997, the senior bell-ringer from the Abbey



Gabriel, the Great Bell
(© Caroline Howkins, 2021)

striking the skirt with a muffled hammer. And so, for this solemn occasion, to honour the funeral of the Duke of Edinburgh, Gabriel was tolled manually by gently pulling the bell rope from the Dial Room below and striking the

bell with the hammer muffled with leather.

Caroline Howkins

ST JULIAN'S RESEARCH GROUP REPORT

Despite the continuing lockdown, the group has managed to meet frequently over Zoom, sharing members' discoveries about each successive era on that estate. Despite its location just outside the borough's boundaries, we have found much that sheds light on St Albans itself. In becoming a secular residence, we find it from 1590 - 1630 the home of the Archdeacon's 'official' or judge, and where he held many courts on moral matters.

The Parliamentary cavalry made good use of the estate in the Civil War with one Irishman buried at St Stephen's church following a fall in the hall at St Julian's. No doubt in decay following this treatment, the hospital buildings were demolished to allow the erection of John Ellis's 'fair house' and farm complex. The house, when surveyed in the 1790s was again not in good shape, and was demolished by another new owner, leaving the estate as an investment with tenant farmers as it was still known in living memory.

Much detail has yet to be found for each of these periods and we welcome new members interested in our work, some challenging and other parts simple transcription of vital documents.

Kate Morris
kate@englishinfo.biz

We have several outings under consideration including trips to Greenwich and Castle Hedingham in Essex. If you have any ideas for other destinations reachable by coach for a day's trip, please do let us know.

Tony Berk
Chairman, PDC
programme@stalbanhistory.org

PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE UPDATE

As far as the programme of events is concerned, the lecture series and seminar series have been very popular and have morphed seamlessly (but with a lot of hard work) into Zoom presentations. When we will return to physical lectures and seminars is currently not known. It is not a simple matter of waiting for the appropriate nod from Government and restarting as if nothing has happened. We look forward to seeing the results of the survey announced on [p.5](#).

As we come out of restrictions, the Programme Development Committee (PDC) has also discussed the future of the outings we used to arrange. We have taken the decision to leave any outings until 2022. The typically available windows in a year are April to July and September/October. This takes us out of school holidays and attempts to find better weather.

PUBLICATIONS COMMITTEE REPORT

Our new pamphlet series is moving forward, slowly. Production of the opening pamphlet is expected to be under way shortly. We will then bring you news about our launch plans.

As editor of SAHAAS's Twitter account I am delighted that we now have 466 followers. We aim to hit 500 by July, so if you want to venture forth on Twitter and help us reach our target we'd be thrilled. We follow historical, archaeological and architectural societies as well as local organisations. During lockdowns, Twitter's been a rich source of information about online events. It's also provided stories in the form of 'threads' to read. (A thread is a series of connected tweets.) One of my favourite Twitter people is Sue Oosthuizen, who produces illuminating threads on landscape history and archaeology. Friendless Churches, who care for 'redundant

but beautiful places of worship', is another.

Lastly, thanks to members who responded to our latest advert for help

with publishing, we now have a pool of four volunteers – though no new 'publication officer'.

Pat Broad

AMAZON SMILE – SMILE AMAZON

The Society is now enrolled with Amazon Smile, part of the Amazon Group that makes charitable donations to registered charities of which we are one.

Amazon Smile is a simple automatic way for anyone shopping on line to support the Society at no extra cost to you or to us.

When Amazon customers select us as their charity and shop at <https://smile.amazon.co.uk>; you will find the exact same prices and selection but with the added bonus that Amazon Smile will donate 0.5 per cent of the net purchase price of eligible purchases to the Society. Any donations received will be automatically credited to the Society's bank account as a bulk payment quarterly.

From personal experience the trick is to remember to sign into Amazon using the Smile Amazon site or click the link on the Amazon site which should take you through to Smile Amazon.

I appreciate this may not generate a huge amount of additional income for the Society but every little helps. Given the growth of on-line shopping and not withstanding the gradual easing of the pandemic lock down this is likely to continue. I see no reason why the Society should not take advantage of this benefit.

Those of you who already shop with Amazon on-line may be aware of this and are supporting good causes through this medium and I am not asking you to change, however I would ask that we all bear the Society in mind as and when any opportunity arises.

David Moore
Treasurer

NOTES FROM THE MUSEUM STORE

As I write this it's still more than a month to go until the earliest both our museums can open and that seems a long time to wait but also very soon. Behind closed doors I've had a chance to go back to basics and spend more time with the reason for our existence – our collections.

One of the smallest objects I've accessioned this year is a photograph of a garden party in Boroughfield, Bricket Road in 1919 (Fig. 1). It's hard to imagine a garden party anywhere on Bricket Road today, especially with all of the development happening in the area, but at least now we can have garden parties again.

A much larger object we've collected is the original 1884 sign from the entrance to the Hatfield Road Cemetery (Fig. 2).



Fig. 1: 1919 garden party (St Albans Museums)

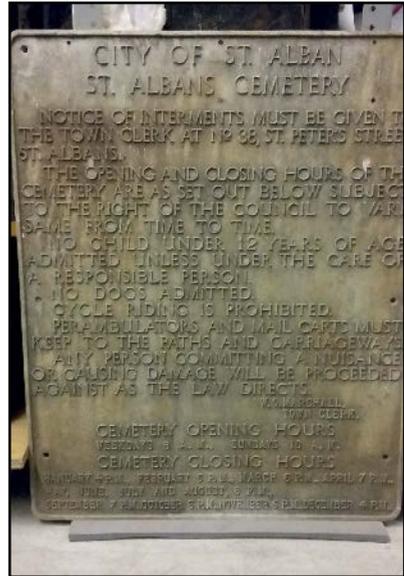


Fig. 2: Hatfield Road cemetery sign
(St Albans Museums)

The sign was found by the cemeteries team whilst clearing an office and it outlines opening hours, how to inform the council of an interment and expected behaviour including “all perambulators and mail carts must keep to the paths and carriageways.”

Most of the objects that come into our collection at the moment are offered by members of the public. We ask people to get in touch before bringing anything in so that we can check offered objects against our collections policy - I think I have been offered well over 20 programmes from the 1948 Pageant since I started 5 years ago, a sign of just how many people in St Albans were involved.



Fig. 3: 'Harley St' sign (St Albans Museums)

The moment when an object is brought out of its box, bag or wrapping is always exciting and one of the most thrilling moments I've had since the museum opened was being offered a battered wooden sign for "Harley Street" (Fig. 3). The object itself might not look immediately beautiful but the story it tells is an important one. Harley Street was the name of a dressing station near "brick stacks", Givenchy where Dr Sydney Clarke was stationed. At the end of the First World War, he brought the sign home with him to St Albans.

Research

Alongside collections care and documentation, research is another vital tool in our work to preserve and share the history of St Albans city and district. As lockdown starts to lift and libraries and archives reopen, we have started a series of research projects with our volunteers. I know there is a large cross-over between our volunteers and SAHAAS members but if anyone is looking for a new subject to explore do

get in touch. Two of the projects we're starting with are outlined below but there are always more ideas!

Black history research

We're looking for volunteers to go through parish records to look for evidence of black and minority ethnic histories in St Albans. We asked local teachers last year what they wanted from the museums and support in teaching black history was one of the most frequent requests. This could also lead into research of other groups within St Albans whose stories have customarily been overlooked.

St Albans On Sea

We might be about as far from the sea as you can get in St Albans but there are hundreds of threads that link us to the ocean including HMS St Albans & HMS Verulam, 'RNLB St Albans', Napoleonic Prisoners of War in the Abbey Gateway, the Vickers Experimental Tank as well as shells and other marine creatures in our Natural History collection. I am pulling together an exhibition celebrating the sea, and looking at how our relationship with it has changed throughout history including questions about climate change and our impact on the sea today.

Sarah Keeling

Curator, St Albans Museum + Gallery

Email museum@stalbans.gov.uk

EVACUSTES PHIPSON IN HERTFORDSHIRE

St Albans and Hertfordshire historians may perhaps be excused if the name Evacustes Phipson means little or nothing to them. Search for it in the 60,000 odd entries in the online *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* and you will score no 'hits'. Yet this prolific artist produced many hundreds of paintings including over 60 scenes from across the county.

Why he chose to be known professionally as 'Evacustes' – Greek for 'the listener' – is not known. He was born rather more plainly as Edward Arthur Phipson (1854 - 1931) into a well-to-do, cultured, Nonconformist family of manufacturers in metal in free-trade, free-thinking Birmingham, home of the work ethic so admired by Samuel Smiles.

However, Edward's socialism proved somewhat to advanced and incompatible with the capitalist principles underpinning the family business and in 1881, at the age of 27, he was given £16,000 presumably on condition that he would play no part in the business or have no subsequent claim on its money. This arrangement obviously suited

Edward for he lost no time in airing his views in newspapers and magazines on a wide range of subjects including politics, women, marriage, art, architecture, taxation and simplified spelling.

Foremost among Edward Phipson's interests was socialism and the possibility of founding a community of like-minded individuals and families based on socialist principles. Such a colony, he believed, would prove so self-evidently superior to the prevailing capitalist system that it would replace it without the need for a revolution. Phipson's search for a suitable location for a colony took him around the world, but after spending a good deal of time and money on his utopian quest and coming, reluctantly, to the conclusion that there was not much public enthusiasm for the kind of communal living he had in mind, he cast his lot with the Land Nationalisation



'St Peter's St, St Albans' by Phipson, July 1902. It shows the Cock and (original) Blacksmiths Arms public houses.
(St Albans Museums)

Society, bringing him into contact with Ebenezer Howard and the Garden City movement. As plans for Howard's garden city at Letchworth developed, Phipson became increasingly disillusioned with them as they did not include the common kitchens, dining rooms, laundries, nurseries or any other of the communal facilities that he believed should be central to any such scheme.

Phipson's interest for the Hertfordshire historian does not, however, begin and end with Letchworth. In fact the failure of Phipson's utopian dreams to materialize and the fact that his money was running out meant that he had to earn a living. Whether he had received any earlier training in architecture and architectural draughtsmanship is uncertain, but he possessed a talent for painting accurate and attractive watercolour views of buildings and topographical subjects for which he could obtain commissions from museums across the country. Luckily for Hertfordshire, three museums in the county, the forerunners of St Albans Museum + Gallery, North Hertfordshire Museum and Watford Museum commissioned between them some 60 pictures. Two-thirds of these are now in St Albans of which 17, painted between 1900 and 1902, are of St Albans subjects. It is likely that Phipson was asked to paint specific scenes as many of the paintings are of views not usually

chosen by the typical picture postcard photographer or artist and they are therefore of greater interest and value to the local historian. The St Albans paintings may be viewed online at: collections.stalbansmuseums.org.uk/objects?query=hipson&limit=40 (accessed 23/10/2020).

Unlike some collections of local views, the Phipson watercolours have been little used to illustrate local publications. One notable exception is Mark Freeman's *St Albans: a history* (2008) in which three pictures are reproduced and accompanied by full and informative captions. It is hoped that this article will bring Hertfordshire's Phipson collections to the notice of a wider public and that greater use of the paintings will be made in future.

John Pile

Note: This article is based on *Evacustes Phipson: his life and utopian views and an introduction to the Croydon paintings*, by John Hickman, Carole Roberts, John W. Brown and Stephen Williams, published by Croydon Natural History and Scientific Society Ltd (2020), price £12. It lists, county by county, all of Phipson's 1,512 known paintings, including dates where known and their present locations. We have a copy of this monograph in the Society's Library.

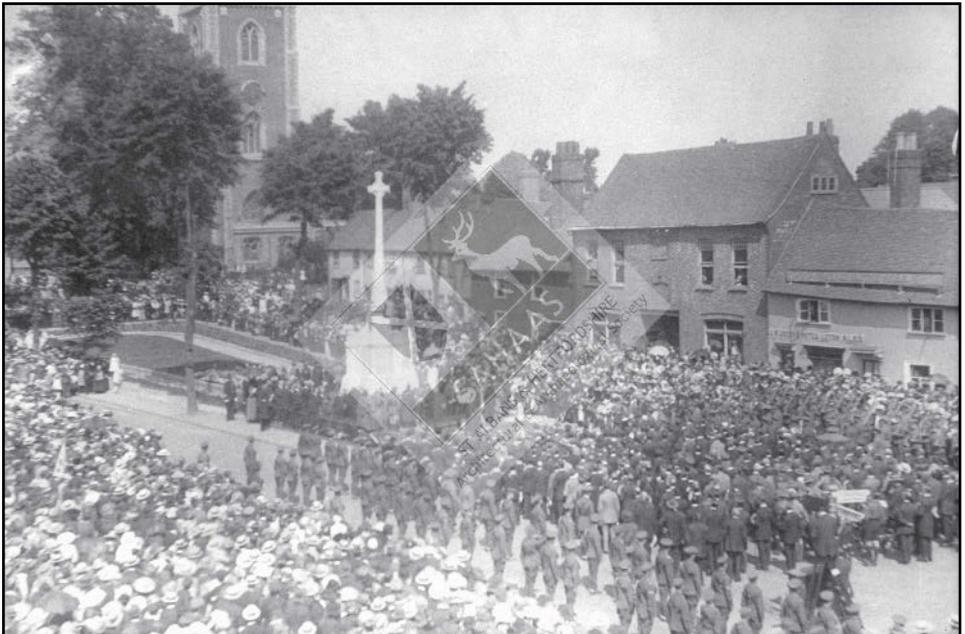
THE CENTENARY OF THE CITY WAR MEMORIAL

One hundred years ago, on 21 May 1921, the city's war memorial was dedicated. The ceremony was an elaborate civic event with the mayor and aldermen, the Bishop of St Albans and military officer Lord Cavan to the fore. The memorial bears the names of some 635 local men.

The process for deciding what forms the civic memorials should take had been occasionally fractious. Rather than opting for a strict top-down decision as happened elsewhere, the mayor

had taken a more open approach calling for the public to submit proposals. What raised emotions was the idea to fund the building of bungalows for demobbed soldiers, a suggestion that echoed Lloyd George's call for 'homes fit for heroes'. To the chagrin of some, the council-led committee instead chose the memorial. With further money allocated to endow educational scholarships for children of dead soldiers and also the purchase of an auxiliary nursing centre.

The decision was probably made on financial grounds as public subscriptions had fallen short of expectations.



The dedication service for the civic war memorial, 21 May 1921
(SAHAAS Arthur Allen Collection)

Why is not clear. Perhaps we can attribute this to exhaustion: inhabitants had already invested huge sums of money in war bonds and had less to give. And what little they had also went to pay for other memorials being erected across the city. By 1925, over 40 Great War memorials had been dedicated. With many made from stone, the costs would have been high.

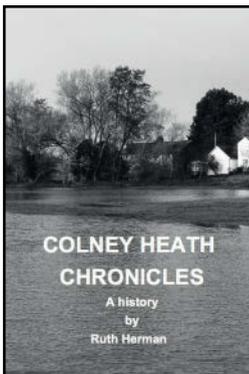
This surge has left us with an important legacy. You can probably place many of these memorials, but some are obscure like the tablet in NatWest Bank in St Peter's Street or the factory memorial in Ridgmont Road. If you can't think where all these memorials are, why not download the Society's 'War Memorials Walk' leaflet from the website – <https://bit.ly/3csWvyp> – and take a

copy with you on your constitutionals around the city?

The tradition of erecting memorials continues. The people of King's Road are funding a memorial to be dedicated, all being well, later this year. It records the names of the 15 men from this short street lost in the war.

For more information about St Albans and the Great War, the Society's two publications are just the ticket: *St Albans: Life on the Home Front, 1914-1918* and *Street Memorials of St Albans Abbey Parish*. You will find more information about these in the 'Publications' section on the Society's website.

Jon Mein



HOT OFF THE PRESS: A COLNEY HEATH HISTORY

The newly re-formed Colney Heath History Society has launched its first project. The *Colney Heath Chronicles* has been thoroughly researched and is an entertaining read featuring highwaymen, kings, border disputes, cattle rustlers and more. Cardinal Wolsey and Captain Beecher are among the cast.

Priced at £7.50 the proceeds go to further projects and a donation to Parkinson's UK. Available from Colney Heath Post Office or jackclemow@gmail.com. (P&P extra.)

ARCHAEOLOGY: MORE THAN JUST DIGGING HOLES

A few times in the last couple of years people have made passing comments to me which I have found a little surprising. Often the comment is along the lines of "I'm surprised you are here, we don't have any archaeology..." by which they mean, I think, that the lecture, conference or whatever does not involve pictures of holes in the ground, or the things that come out of those holes. Archaeology, however, is about much more. In 1954 Mortimer Wheeler wrote:

"What in fact is archaeology? I do not myself really know. These have been written to demonstrate that it is This or That or not the Other Thing ... the archaeological excavator is not digging up things, he is digging up people; however much he may analyse and tabulate and desiccate his discoveries in the laboratory, the ultimate appeal... is from mind to intelligent mind, from man to sentient man. Our graphs and schedules mean nothing if they do not ultimately mean that." (Note 1)

In other words, archaeology is about studying people in the past. How then, is archaeology different from history, or social history? The essential difference is in the types of evidence we employ:

archaeologists use material remains, historians use the recorded word. Both must employ a great deal of source criticism in dealing with their material. Obviously, there are areas of overlap. Inscriptions are a good example: the text can be used for what it says, but the object on which it is carved, where it was displayed and so on are can also provide information about the past. A name scratched on the base of a Roman drinking vessel is a very different thing from a monumental inscription placed over the entrance to the forum. There are times when the two strands of information are complementary. A will, for example, can tell us what the deceased wanted to happen, the physical remains show us what actually happened.

There are some pitfalls, however, that have to be carefully avoided. The temptation to try and write narrative history from archaeology is strong, and nearly always flawed. This is especially so for the Roman period in Britain where we only have snippets of information recorded in the traditional historical accounts, and even those were written by people who had never visited the province. Richard Reece has written extensively on the issues. (2) If we have, for example, a villa which burnt down in the middle of fourth century, the temptation is to try and link that to

a specific known event. Archaeological dating is very rarely precise enough to make that link, and the fire may just have been due to a drunk knocking a lamp over after a night in the bar. Archaeology is much better, therefore, at looking at longer term processes than short term events.

This has echoes in local and social history. Who cares if the White Hart on Holywell Hill was open in 1858? What is more interesting is the type of clientele it then attracted. How did this compare with 100 years earlier when the inn was one of the best in the town? Was the experience of the White Hart different from former inns in other towns up the Chester road? And so on. These questions are answered by the compilation of many data points from many sources and turn one specific example, which is only of interest to a few, to something of greater interest. This is not in anyway to denigrate the work of those making the original detailed observations, for without that we have no data with which to approach the broader issues.

Archaeologists must take some of the blame. I have sat through too many turgid lectures where I have been informed that Pit 36 contained 32 per cent Samian without any explanation as to why I should care. The 'Roman

Rural Settlement Project' showed, however, what can be done.⁽³⁾ They compiled the data from thousands of largely uninteresting excavations and revealed fascinating patterns in the archaeological record of Roman Britain which were hitherto unsuspected. The challenge for us now is to interpret those patterns to say something interesting about the human past. After all, is that not what we are all interested in, whatever the nature of our data?

Dr Kris Lockyear

Notes

1. M. Wheeler, *Archaeology from the Earth* (1954)
2. R. Reece, *My Roman Britain* (Cirencester, 1988); R. Reece, '353, 367, or 357? Splitting the difference or taking a new approach' *Britannia*, 25 (1994), pp.236–8; R. Reece, (n.d.) 'Deluded by dates', available from https://www.academia.edu/45187009/Deluded_by_Dates.
3. A. Smith, et al, *The Rural Settlement of Roman Britain*. London: Britannia Monograph Series 29 (2016); M. Allen, et al. *The Rural Economy of Roman Britain*. London: Britannia Monograph Series 30 (2017); A. Smith, et al. *Life and Death in the Countryside of Roman Britain*. London: Britannia Monograph Series 31 (2018).

ST HELEN'S CHURCH, WHEATHAMPSTEAD, REVEALED

A fascinating new paper entitled 'St Helen, Wheathampstead: the Saxo-Norman cruciform church' by Daniel Secker has thrown new light on the early history of St Helen's church.

Much of the current fabric of the church dates to between 1290 and 1340 and replaced an earlier church about which we know very little. Late Saxon burials were found in the graveyard close to the north wall in the 1970s, suggesting the existence of a church dating from the tenth century or even before, probably constructed of wood. Another clue, clearly visible

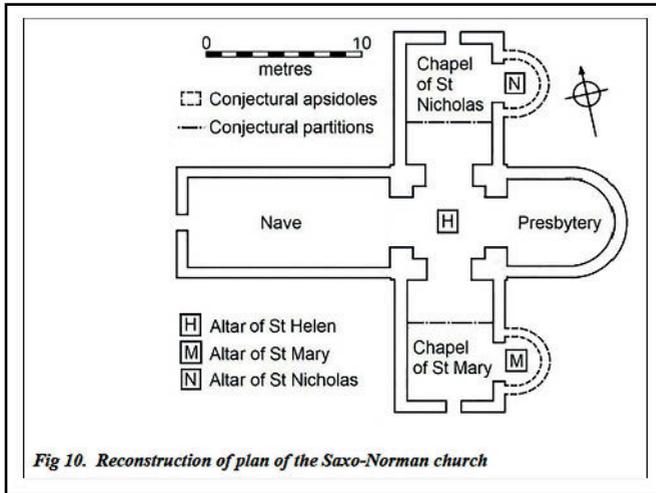
today, is the blocked doorway on the outer wall of the south transept. This doorway is in the Anglo-Saxon Romanesque style and may be part of an earlier stone church. The floor of the chancel was taken up during restoration work in the nineteenth century, revealing the foundations of a half-round apsidal end and suggesting that the chancel of the earlier church was half the length of today's chancel.

Who owned that early church? The transfer document by which Edward the Confessor gave the manor of Wheathampstead to Westminster Abbey in 1060 does not mention it. Secker suggests that this was because it was already in the possession of Abbey and that they were given the manor so that they could build a new church. The church they built seems to confirm this because it was a cruciform church with an apsidal east end, an unusual church design in England at the time and a smaller version of Westminster Abbey.



St Helen's church, shortly before the restoration in 1866
(Courtesy of Wheathampstead History Society)

Secker speculates that the reason for having such a splendid building was because St Helen's was a small minster church, providing outreach for



Secker's reconstruction of the floor plan of the eleventh century church.

century predecessor. He also suggests that the arch of the blocked-off 'Romanesque' doorway is Reigate stone, an unusual material. The earliest use of Reigate stone was at Westminster Abbey in the 1050s and Secker asks the intriguing question 'was this material left over from the building of Westminster Abbey?'

Mike Smith

the other six manors that Westminster held in Hertfordshire. Later, possibly in the twelfth century, the ownership of St Helen's transferred to the Diocese of Lincoln which was responsible for rebuilding the church we have today.

Secker suggests that many of the features in today's church, particularly the massive lower section of the tower, support the idea that the new St Helen's of the late thirteenth century was built around the structure of its eleventh

NB.: this note was first published in the Wheathampstead History Society's *Bulletin* no. 37 in February 2021. Many thanks to the author and society for permission to republish it here. Daniel Secker's paper is available in the 'Sources' section on the society's website:

www.wheathampsteadheritage.org.uk/history-society.asp.

SOON TO BE 'HOT OFF THE PRESS'

Kate Morris's latest book titled *Secret St Albans* will be published on 21 May 2021. The secrets revealed in this social history of early modern St Albans include many practices and events familiar in the history of the wider nation. That they occurred on our home territory brings an actuality to them not always evident when things happened 'elsewhere'. Further details to follow via enews.

A BIG CRASH ON HOLYWELL HILL

These three photos illustrate the aftermath of a serious accident on Holywell Hill which occurred around 11pm on 21 June 1900. The traction engine shown in Fig. 1 was hauling three large waggons (see Figs. 2 and 3) down Holywell Hill when, for some undisclosed reason, the engine started gathering speed. The alarmed driver shut off steam and applied the brakes but to no avail. The *Herts Advertiser* (23 June 1900) reported that the 'impetus ... gained by the descending trucks ... proved too great for such a check, and pressing heavily upon the engine forced it down the hill at a terrific pace'. That

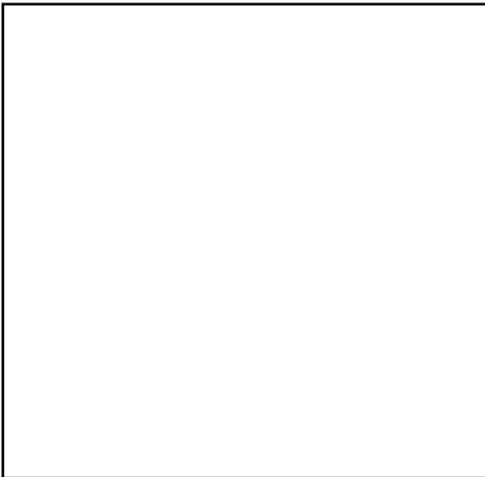


Fig. 1: The locomotive facing the wrong way up Holywell Hill. This was probably Fowler no. 7784, a compound road engine supplied new on 19 March 1897 to R. White & Sons.*
(Photo courtesy of HALS / St Albans Library)

pressure pushed the engine round 180 degrees so it ended facing up the hill with two of the waggons upended behind it, the first of them perilously close to shop fronts. Probably due to the lateness of the hour, no one was seriously hurt.

Why were such heavy vehicles navigating their way through St Albans? The business needs of the vehicles' owner, R. White's mineral water producers, were the cause of it. (Many readers will recall the company's 'secret lemonade drinker' TV adverts from the 1970s.) Attitudes to alcohol consumption changed markedly in the late 1800s, due in part to the influence of the temperance movement. Sales of soft drinks boomed with adverts for lemonade, ginger ale and so on fixtures on the front pages of local newspapers. With seven manufacturing plants by 1894 in and around London, R. White's were one of the beneficiaries of this growth. This success created a headache though. With nearly half of its operating asset value consisting of crates and bottles, what was the most efficient way to deliver bottles to customers and then recover the empties?

With the country in thrall to the railways for the previous 60 years, R. White's decision to use the roads instead shows the type of fresh thinking

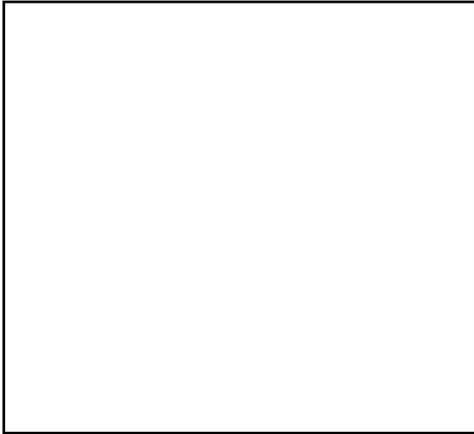


Fig. 2: Boys searching for glass marble stoppers
(Courtesy of HALS / St Albans Library)

being adopted even with the rise of the internal combustion engine. The route on the night of the accident was from Dunstable to the plant in Watford, a straight-forward journey if by rail. What would have added complexity and cost was the number of transhipments needed, particularly moving crates and bottles to and from station yards. R. White's belief that traction engines were more cost-efficient is underscored by the company's investment around 1900 in a fleet of at least 13 of them.*

There was anxiety in the late 1890s about the safety of engines hauling several waggons at a time. While county councils had powers to implement restrictions, concerns were expressed following the accident that any local controls did not

go far enough. Frederic Kitton, artist, SAHAAS member and a man rarely short of an opinion, wrote a letter to the editor of the *Herts Advertiser* calling for the use of a safer but undetermined route. This call fell on deaf ears. Presumably the rapid growth in the 1900s of petrol-fuelled lorries stemmed any large increase in steam-powered vehicle usage.

The estimated 8,100 bottles spilled in the accident attracted local lads to scavenge for glass stoppers in the detritus (see Fig. 2). They didn't have much time for collecting as Holywell Hill was open to traffic within 36 hours of the accident.

Jon Mein

* My thanks to Sandy Ross and Andy Wells of the Road Locomotive Society, David Moore and Dr Rudi Newman for their help with research for this article.



Fig. 3: Two waggons visible, the further propped up against the houses (SAHAAS John Cox Collection)

THE LEGACY OF THE 175 EXHIBITION – POSTSCRIPT 2

By the time you read this we will have dismantled our exhibition and the Museum + Gallery staff will be setting up the first of their planned 2021 exhibitions ready for reopening. In the February *Newsletter*, I wrote about what I learnt in my research for the 'Discover' section. Our actions in protecting and informing are perhaps better known, so what did the exhibition tell us about our role in innovating?

Ignoring the well-known contributions of William Page and Sir John Evans, let us look at our involvement in aerial photography and preserving Roman wall plaster. Our exhibition's creative designer, Andie Hill, and the installers, Creative Place, produced an impactful visual using a contemporary estate map of Verulamium and photographs taken of the site before the Wheelers began excavating. Our Society was one of the first to commission aerial photographs to help plan excavations. 'Aerial photography' in archaeological excavations dates from 1913 when photographs were taken from a box-kite over a site in the Sudan. During the First World War photographs from aircraft were taken over the Western Front. The archaeologist O.G.S Crawford, who

had excavated in the Sudan and been a member of the Royal Flying Corps, advocated using aerial photography to help discover sites. Our President, in his 1929 Report, recorded the Society's gratitude to Page and Crawford for arranging this over Verulamium:

"11 air photographs of the site of Verulamium were taken for the Society. These have been enlarged and show lines of roads and buildings that are now below the surface; they will be of great assistance in planning excavations."

Mortimer Wheeler was a supporter of Crawford's work and used the photographs before beginning his excavations. Of course, the permission of Lord Verulam had to be obtained and the relevant correspondence is preserved at HALS (ref. DE/V/E285). But what of



Our exhibition's aerial photography wall. The original images were greatly enlarged. (© SAHAAS)

the photographs? Well, I found them there as well. Eleven black and white photographs measuring approximately 23.5 cm by 18.5 cm, with a set of copies simply contained in two brown paper envelopes with no further details. Some bore a number, others did not and, even for those that did, the number sometimes had been reversed in the development process. And so, an exhausting day was spent matching them against the numbers marked on the estate map, only for me to realise some of the photos had been incorrectly numbered in 1929. Thankfully, the estate map with its details of woods and buildings allowed the correct attributions to be made. So, perhaps for the first time, visitors to our exhibition were able to see the enlarged photos and the part of the estate to which they related.

What about the innovations preserving Roman wall plaster? Norman Davey's involvement in the Society can be traced through our *Transactions*. From work at Bricket Wood and Watford and then with the Wheelers, in the 1950s he joined Sheppard Frere's team excavating in advance of the road widening at Bluehouse Hill. During these excavations large sheets of fallen Roman wall plaster were found. The process for lifting wall plaster was in its infancy. Davey devised new methods for lifting, preserving, and mounting, using the

facilities of the Government's Building Research Station at Garston, Watford where he worked. He also designed a reinforcing frame of expanded aluminium on which the slabs were mounted to allow transport, re-erection, and interpretation. The results can be seen in the Verulamium Museum and other museums in the UK. Frere wrote:

"The enormous achievement of Norman Davey has hitherto received little notice: but it would be no exaggeration to state that he has provided a whole new dimension to Romano British archaeology by recreating the nature of painted walls and ceilings to complement the conventional plans and pavements." *

Our Society can be justly proud of its forefathers and their contribution. Our own meagre attempts to display innovative skills by using an audio booth to capture today's memories for tomorrow's history was stymied by Covid restrictions. But there is always another day.

John Morewood

Note

* N. Davey and R. Ling, *Wall Painting in Roman Britain* (London, 1982), Introduction.

MATTHEW PARIS: A VOICE FROM MIEVIAL ST ALBANS

Matthew Paris, a thirteenth century monk at St Albans Abbey, would certainly have joined our Society if it had existed then. Indeed, he could have been elected to Council, given the reputation of the saints' lives and chronicles of the history of England and Europe that he wrote. At the very least, he merits a place on our website.

Matthew took his role as a chronicler seriously, and covered a wider range of topics than other contemporary accounts – everything from the foreign women brought to England to marry noble royal wards (to the dismay of Matthew) to the disasters encountered in the Holy Land by the French crusaders led by Louis VIII. It is surprising how much space is devoted to events in

Europe and the Near East – his readers were evidently interested and well-informed about European affairs.

He wasn't daunted by status – Matthew was often critical of popes, kings and other high-ranking individuals. Which makes it puzzling that so many of them were happy to talk to him when they visited the Abbey. At any rate, historians have benefited from a much richer picture of the first half of the thirteenth century than of many other periods.

You can find out more about Matthew's life and works by reading my article on the website: 'Matthew Paris: a voice from thirteenth century St Albans'. You can find this in the 'People of St Albans' in the Social History section.

Peter Bourton

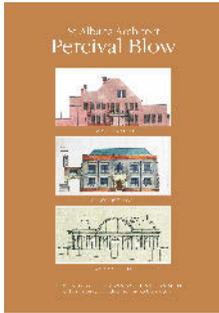
HERTFORDSHIRE RECORD SOCIETY UPDATE

Founded in 1985, the society's purpose is to publish texts relating to Hertfordshire that would not otherwise be easily accessible. It relies on the support and goodwill of those who appreciate the county and its past. Four previous volumes have been based on documents relating to St Albans or the Abbey's estates.

Members receive at least one publication each year. For 2020/1 this was *The Third Earl Cowper and his Florentine Household, 1760–90*; the volume for 2021/2 will be *Ashwell overseers' accounts, 1676-1720* which promises to be full of detailed and fascinating material.

Please consider joining the society to help further its important work. See the Society's website for further information: hrsociety.org.uk.

SOCIETY PUBLICATIONS

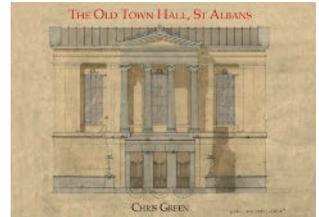


St Albans Architect Percival Blow: From Arts and Crafts to Gothic Revival and Art Deco

Patricia Broad, Sue Mann and Jonathan Mein, 2019
£6.99 (+ £2.00 UK p&p)

The Old Town Hall, St Albans

Chris Green, 2016
£6.00 (+ £2.00 UK p&p)



Buy from our online Bookshop, by post to Patricia Broad, 18 Kimberley Road, St Albans, AL3 5PX, or send orders to publications@stalbanhistory.org.

***** Free p&p for local orders.** Online banking to Society's bank a/c, **sort code 309725 a/c no. 00811696**, reference family name. Cheques payable to **SAHAAS**.

INTERESTED IN HELPING OTHERS? WE NEED YOU!

St Albans Museum have asked us for help in piloting a local history HUB in the museum. We hope that every Wednesday morning during September and October individuals from the museum's own volunteers and SAHAAS will be available to answer queries from visitors on how to find out more about St Albans and district's history.

This should help raise heritage awareness and increase the Museum's focus on local history. It will be great fun and a way of making new friends. A full briefing will be given. If interested, please drop me an email by the end of May.

John Morewood
chair@stalbanhistory.org

THE SECOND BATTLE OF ST ALBANS (WARS OF THE ROSES, 1461) AND ITS BATTLEFIELD

The spring 2021 issue of the Battlefields Trust's magazine was a special 'St Albans' edition with an article re-appraising the Second Battle of St Albans and then an up-date on what had happened on and with the battlefield (in the Bernards Heath area) over the last ten years. This information has been made available to members on the Society's website and a copy will be lodged in the Library in due course. The articles also prompted a dialogue between the two organisations about establishing more formal relations.

Whether this article also prompted a strong reaction in County Hall in Hertford we can only speculate, but within days of its publication Hertfordshire County Council's (HCC) Cabinet on 22 March 2021 approved a report with important recommendations affecting the battlefield and its setting.

HCC owns land which may form part of the actual battlefield and definitely saw the armies manoeuvring over it to reach the fighting. It is known locally as the "Ariston Site" after the Ariston tallow works which owned and occu-

ped the site until 1960. Thereafter it was developed by HCC for youth services, a combined ambulance and fire station (now closed and derelict) and a special school (Heathlands School for the Deaf) and with private – but accessible – open space.

The *Herts Advertiser* reported (correctly) that the HCC Cabinet had approved redeveloping the youth service facilities in situ and adding some new housing (taking up the footprint of current and demolished buildings), but then reported (incorrectly) that the rest of the site would be retained as open space. There was much rejoicing among local amenity and heritage organisations – until the full text of the report was studied. This actually said that the current open space was still earmarked for a new-build 2-form entry primary school. The report added that no final decision could be made until the District Council's Local Plan had been approved. That is another very long story for another day.

The Society's interest is that the battlefield is a heritage asset and on the Historic Environment Record (but is not currently a battlefield registered by Historic England, for technical reasons). As and when the future of the land is

subject to firm proposals the Society must be consulted, so we need to keep a watching brief and await developments (although, hopefully not the development of a new school which would have the effect of excluding the public from the open space).

Peter Burley

‘PRIVATE PALACES: THE MANSIONS OF THE MARLBOROUGHS’

Prof. Simon Thurley is giving a free online talk under the auspices of Gresham College: This is the abstract: ‘Due to the Duke of Marlborough’s military genius and the crush that Queen Anne had on his wife, the duchess, the Marlboroughs were presented with two of the greatest houses of the age. Blenheim and Marlborough House encapsulate the architectural rivalries and ambitions of patrons and architects illuminating the febrile atmosphere of the last days of the Stuart dynasty.’

While there is no explicit reference here to the couple’s house at the bottom of Holywell Hill, the talk may still provide useful context.

Date: 15 June 2021 at 6pm. (A recording will be available on YouTube in due course.)

Book via

<https://www.gresham.ac.uk/lectures-and-events/marlborough-mansions>

PAYING TO VISIT THE ABBEY IN 1846

“Abbey Church: A notice has been issued to the public to the effect that persons who are appointed to conduct visitors over this venerable edifice are prohibited from receiving any gratuity as they have heretofore done. A specific sum will henceforth be charged to all visitors who can procure admission to the Church by means of tickets alone, which may be procured from the Rector. ... We learn that all monies received ... will be applied to the fund for the restoration of certain parts of the Abbey.”

(Source: *Herts Mercury*, 10 January 1846, p.1; the rector reported at a meeting of this Society on 14 October 1846 that 2,915 people had since paid.)

THE LOCAL PHOTOS OF GEORGE WASHINGTON WILSON

According to Chris Green (*The Old Town Hall, St Albans*, p.13), this is the first known photograph of the Town Hall. It was taken sometime in 1881 or perhaps the following year when extensive paving works were underway. Chris's caption for the photo is full of interesting information such as the Town Hall at this stage didn't have front doors but did have outdoor urinals. I won't steal his thunder any further, just recommend you buy a copy of this Society book if you don't have it already (see p. 31). Away from the Town Hall, my interest lies in the horse trough on the far left, the scene for rough music, and naughty behaviour on Saturday nights.

This image is the work of photographer, George Washington Wilson & Co., an extensive business based in Aberdeen. The eponymous owner trained as a portrait miniaturist in London in the 1840s but, on his return to Scotland, soon found better opportunities in the new photographic trade. The company eventually folded in the early 1900s.

Over 37,000 of the company's photos have survived, including 20 or so of St Albans, with most of these at the University of Aberdeen. You can view a selection here: <https://bit.ly/2QVKBFd>

We'll look at two more Wilson photos in future editions of the *Newsletter*.

Jon Mein



'Market Place and Town Hall, St Albans, 7610, GWW', 1881/2, cropped
(Reproduced courtesy of the University of Aberdeen)

LECTURE PROGRAMME

Bonus June 2021 talks

Both lectures commence at 7.45pm.

Both lectures will be held on Zoom.

For copyright reasons recordings will not be available to view after the event; one copy may be held in the Society's Library.

Any changes to the programme will be notified on our web site and via enews.

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

Tuesday 15 June

The Identification of the Miniaturised Garden of King Herod the Great

Prof. Kathryn Gleason

A specialist in the designed landscapes of ancient Rome, Prof. Gleason presents the results of analysis of evidence from Herod's palace in Jericho and Casa della Regina Carolina in Pompeii, including new detection and recording techniques, combined with information from earlier excavations.

Kathryn Gleason is Professor of Landscape Architecture at Cornell University.

Tuesday 22 June

'Poking and Prying with a Purpose' – The joys, triumphs and tribulations of research

Approaching the end of our 175th anniversary year, this is an opportunity to hear from those members who undertook research relating to the Society's exhibition at the museum. Sadly, due to Covid-19, the exhibition was only available to view for a limited period. However, you can now experience a flavour of it through presentations by three members:

- Kris Lockyear: The Wheathampstead Ewer
- Jon Mein: Revd Charles Boutell – 'a life of continuous trouble' revisited
- Jill Singer: Kingsbury Barn

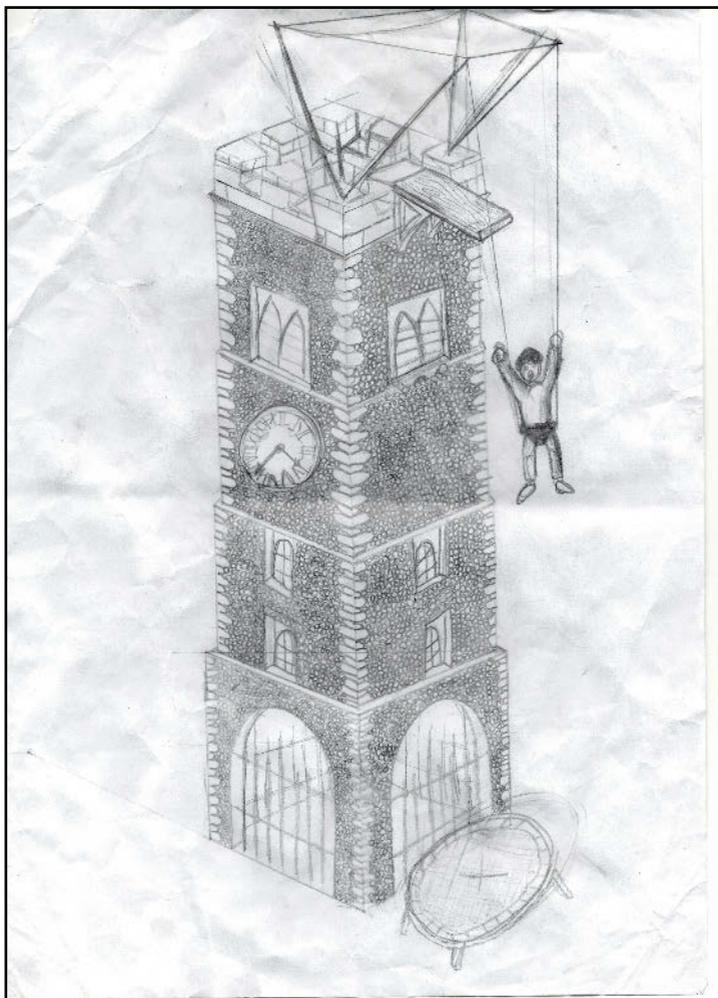
Other researchers will be available on the night to answer questions regarding the focus of their research.

Further details are available on the Society's website.

VERULAMIUM EXCAVATION REPORTS AVAILABLE ON OPEN ACCESS

Both of the important reports covering the Wheeler and Frere excavations at Verulamium (1936 and 1972 respectively) are available on open access. These were originally published by the Society of Antiquaries. You can download them for free by visiting oopen.org and searching for 'Verulamium'.

Clock Tower Competition Winning Entry



Dylan Jackson-Gibbs (right), aged 13, won the 13-year old and over category in the recent Clock Tower competition with his 'Bungee Jump' design. He suggests "it would be fun for people to bungee jump off the top of the tower onto a trampoline!" For more about the competition, please see the November 2020 *Newsletter*.

