



ST ALBANS & HERTFORDSHIRE  
ARCHITECTURAL & ARCHAEOLOGICAL  
SOCIETY

## NEWSLETTER 224 May 2022



'St Michael's Church St Albans', 10 June 1872. Published in Rock & Co's *Royal Cabinet Album of St Albans*. (Scan by Malcolm Merrick from copy in the Society's Library). For a further print from the album, see p. 9. The Society's new book, *St Michael's Village; from rural settlement to residential suburb*, will be published in June. See the back cover for more details.

### Included in this issue:

**Blue Plaques Progress  
Society's New Publication  
Rollers at New Barnes Mill  
News from St Albans Museum**

**New Barnes and Repton  
Christopher Webb  
Cathedral Tudor Summer  
Sir Richard Lee**

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## **BILLETED IN ST ALBANS**

"Aug 18 1914 Dear Ernest Just a few lines to you hoping you are all right. St Albans is all right for trees and fine scenery but the people are very scelect. All of my battalions are in schools and Institutes but some other of different battalions are billiting in houses with house holders I done nine miles march on tuesday with the others of my company I was caught up a apple tree today and a seargent told me of Hoping you are all at home quite well with best wishes from Jack. Addressee: Ernest Hall, 6 Lower John St, Bacchus Walk, Hoxton, London, England"  
(from a postcard in the Library's collection - with thanks to Malcolm Merrick)

## PRESIDENT'S REMARKS

It is interesting to reflect that by the time you read this we will be very close to the end of another exciting lecture series.

Our first ten lectures of 2022 saw over 1,200 attendees and we have enjoyed a range of speakers on subjects as diverse as the Moche of Peru, Slavery, James Bond, and murder in Radlett! The first two plaques of the new Blue Plaque St Albans scheme have been unveiled and we are

on track to launch the second in our Concise Histories series (on St Michael's – see the back cover).

Behind the scenes work continues on the second volume of seventeenth century St Albans probate documents; the design of a major exhibition in 2023 on the Second Battle of St Albans during the Wars of the Roses, around which other events are planned; and project groups continue their work on the British Civil Wars, St Julian's, and Transition. Our membership continues to grow, and we now have 664 members – which may be a record. You will, I hope, have seen the new interpretative boards in the assembly room of the Museum + Gallery which give more details of St Albans history.



This helps address the comments I have heard 'Where is the history?' More details appear in this *Newsletter* (see p.34). In addition, I hope many of you will have noticed the improve-

ments made to the Roman wall in Verulamium Park. The removal of vegetation has exposed more of the bastion closest to King Harry Lane and of saplings from the top of the wall is helping to preserve the remains. More work is planned, and we will hopefully be

able to publish a more detailed review of this work soon. It is a good example of how we, the Civic Society, the District Council, English Heritage and Historic England can work well together to bring about a good result. Our half term report might read: 'Good progress made this term'.

But just like Pinkerton's Detective Agency, 'we never sleep' and we need to constantly work to secure the future. Your Council has already debated long and hard on the issues of the format for lecture delivery for the autumn term. The numbers of members physically turning up to hear the lectures in Marlborough Road Methodist Church have been, quite

frankly, disappointing and, if cost was the only consideration, would be unsustainable. The highest physical attendance was the face to face only talk on the Radlett murder which, excluding the Delivery team and Council members, was 41. The lowest number physically attending a talk this term was 13; the average 18. 85 per cent of attendees chose to attend via Zoom. Clearly attendance patterns are changing.

Thankfully however, due to prudent cost management, we can afford to still deliver a balanced approach. So, for the autumn term we will aim for a third of the lectures being face to face at Marlborough Road Methodist Church, a third being via Zoom, and a third hybrid (delivered simultaneously in the church and via Zoom). We also must consider speaker preferences. Zoom undeniably allows us to reach out to a wider speaker pool and for many, like those attending, it is easier to do so from the comfort of

their own homes. We will review the situation again at the end of the year.

I am excited about our plans to hold a Local History Fair. This looks likely to take place during one of the Heritage Open weekends in September and will allow us to strengthen links with other local societies which we will invite to attend. Many thanks to Peter Bourton for coming up with this idea and volunteering to lead on this initiative.

Ah yes, the word 'volunteer'. As I have mentioned before, a Society only exists thanks to the strength of its volunteers, those unsung heroes and heroines who work to support its aims but gain great pleasure and comradeship from doing so. As we expand, the opportunity to volunteer grows, so if you would like to help in any way, please email me.

**Dr John Morewood**  
**chair@stalbanhistory.org**

## **ARCHAEOLOGY IN HERTFORDSHIRE: RECENT RESEARCH**

Postponed from 2020, the fourth conference in this series will be held on 22 October 2022 at Dagnall Street Baptist Church, St Albans. Jointly organised by SAHAAS and the Welwyn Archaeological Society, the event will be both in-person and live-streamed.

Offers of papers on any aspect of the archaeology of the county should be sent to Kris Lockyear (noviodunum@hotmail.com). Tickets for the event are available at £15.00 via Eventbrite: <https://bit.ly/37bw9kT>

## ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS NOW DUE

**Subscriptions for the coming year, June 2022 to May 2023,  
are due on 1 June 2022.**

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, please contact the Treasurer by email for the appropriate form at [money@stalbanhistory.org](mailto:money@stalbanhistory.org) or one is available on the web site. This is the Society's preferred option.

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

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## LIBRARY REPORT

### Vivat Regina!

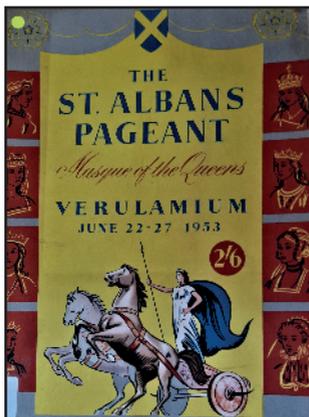
The last issue of our *Newsletter* carried on its back cover a photograph of W.S. Green (the department store) decked out in celebration – and an eagle-eyed reader was able to see a shield which established that the cause for celebration was the Queen’s coronation in 1953. Following on from that, and with the Platinum Jubilee of her accession fast approaching, it seems appropriate to look at some of the other materials in the Library from that same time.

The principal Coronation celebration in St Albans was a pageant, entitled ‘Masque of the Queens’, which ran at Verulamium from 22 to 27 June 1953. The Pageant Master, and author of the text, was Cyril Swinson. It consisted of ten scenes featuring queens with connections to St Albans, from Queen Boadicea fighting the

Romans, through Anne Boleyn’s meeting with Henry VIII at Sopwell Priory to Queen Victoria’s approval for a ball to raise funds for the restoration of the Abbey (this last was perhaps rather a stretch of the imagination to bring things closer to the present day). It concluded with the ten queens offering homage and pledging loyalty to the present Queen.

Meanwhile, Redbourn had had its day of celebration on Saturday 30 May, beginning with a (perhaps rather ominous) sounding of a siren at 2.30 and a fancy dress parade led by the Boxmoor Silver Band, and including a model railway layout (by the St Albans Model Engineering Society), model aircraft races (by the St Albans Model Aero Club), pony rides, and a comic dog show.

Things didn’t go so well for Amwell, where a pageant was written – “The



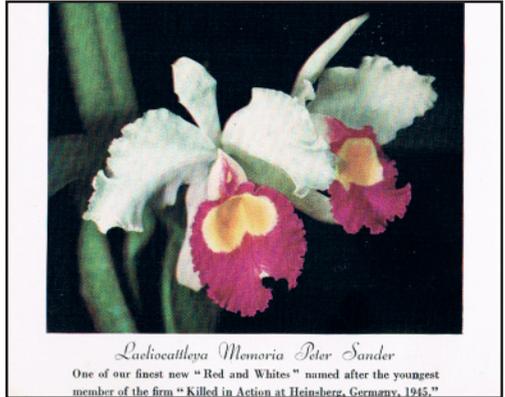
new accession to the Throne, coupled with our attempt to get going on the restoration and augmentation of the Church Bells, as a village memorial to the late King George VI, urged me to make a start on it... Unfortunately I was held up in obtaining the historical data I required to complete one of the most important episodes...". Although the pageant was completed by April 1953, we have no evidence that it was ever performed.

For any enquiries at all, or to make an appointment, please email us at [library@stalbanhistory.org](mailto:library@stalbanhistory.org). We are looking forward to seeing you soon.

### New acquisitions

As in the last issue of the *Newsletter*, I will concentrate upon just a couple of our recent acquisitions, the first of these being the latest volume from the Hertfordshire Record Society, volume 37 in their Publications series. *Ashwell Overseers' Accounts, 1676-1722* is edited by David Short and gives an insight into the lives of the poorer members of the community as well as the care and support offered to them.

The second item is a copy of *Popular orchid growing*, by Sanders, described as, "Royal orchid growers, St. Albans, Herts., Eng." on the cover of what is the American edition of the work. That an



American edition was demanded is an indication of the importance and reputation of the company, as is the invitation to visit their nurseries in Bruges – "We shall be delighted to show you round". I am not sure how many English visitors would have made it to Bruges in 1950. The section on selecting a variety rather forlornly describes the purchase of an orchid as, "a perfect excuse for spending one's surplus cash – little though that can be these days – on a grand hobby"; and the illustration that I have picked to accompany this section has its own reminder that the war was still in people's minds. And of course, this was only three years before the Coronation.

**Heather Jardine**

### Recent Journal Articles

*Harpenden and District Local History Society Newsletter*, no. 145, December 2021.

pp.17-22 “Marianne Sherman’s music and dance manuscripts (1806)”, by Frank Stageman and Rosemary Ross. Two manuscript books, in the archives of the society, were owned by Marianne Sherman who married John Bennet Lawes of Rothamsted Manor. The manuscripts contain songs and dances popular in fashionable society at the time; some may appear only in these documents. The English Folk Dance and Song Society plan to scan them for their on-line collection.

*London Archaeologist*, vol. 16, no. 7, Winter 2022.

pp.192-195. “Looking for the site of the Battle of Barnet”, by Bruce Watson. The author considers recent and past attempts to locate the site of the battle. Research has been hampered by difficulties of access to some sites and uncertain provenance of earlier finds. Current thinking puts the location in an area centred on Kitt’s End, north of Barnet.

*The Local Historian*, vol. 52 no. 1, January 2022.

pp.8-26 “The probate process in medieval England and Wales and the documents which it generated”, by Heather Falvey. This helpful overview of the creation, deposit and uses of wills and testaments uses examples from Hertfordshire, including St Albans.

## THE MYSTERY OF THE RED ROSE SOLVED

In the February edition of the *Newsletter* we asked if anyone could help to find the anonymous author of *The Red Rose: a legend of St Albans Abbey*. This generated several responses that taken together led us to the author’s name. From our copy of the book we had a hint that the author was a Miss Phillimore and the *Hertford Mercury* reports that the Misses Phillimore attended a Society meeting in 1848.

A published genealogy of the Phillimore family has an item on Matilda Phillimore. She is identified as the author of *The Red Rose*. Her father was William Phillimore of Deacons Hill, near Elstree, chairman of St Albans Quarter Sessions. Finally, to confirm our findings one of our members has a copy of the *Red Rose* that appears to be signed with the name Matilda Phillimore.

Armed with this information we approached the British Library who have amended their records for *The Red Rose* and another title also written by Matilda. For this and much else besides I must thank everyone who contributed to successfully solving this conundrum.

**Lin Watson**

## ROCK & CO'S ST ALBANS ALBUM

In the Society's Library we have a copy of Rock's *Royal Cabinet Album of St Albans* including prints of various buildings in the town. Rock produced some 7,000 prints of which thirteen of St Albans are in the album. These are all

dated to the early 1870s although at least one must have been drawn as much as ten years earlier. They present a reasonably accurate view of the town albeit, in stylistic terms, perhaps too gentrified for modern tastes. Contemporary photographs of Christ Church (e.g. Fig. 2) tell a different story.

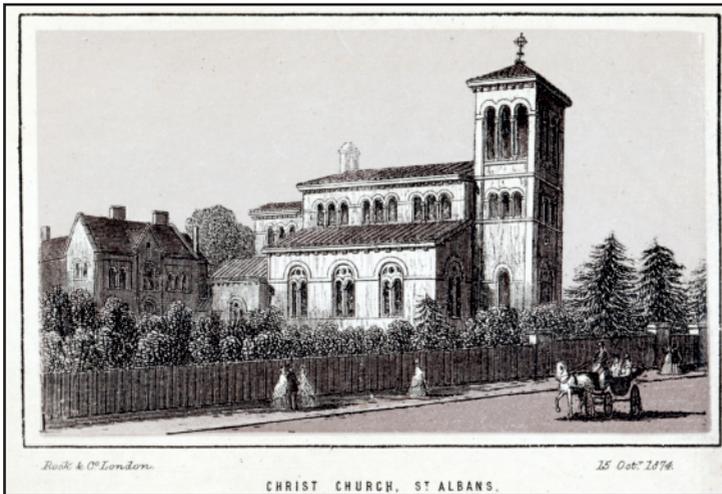


Fig. 1: View of Christ Church, dated 15 October 1874 although perhaps drawn in the early 1860s. Reproduced from Rock & Co's *Royal Cabinet Album of St Albans* (copy in SAHAAS Library)

Fig. 2: Photograph of Christ Church taken from Verulam Road, 1860s. (Reproduced courtesy of Andy Lawrence.)

The church, in part designed by George Gilbert Scott, opened in 1859. To the left is the vicarage. The building on the right is the former Verulam Arms Hotel, now the Verulam House Nursing Home.

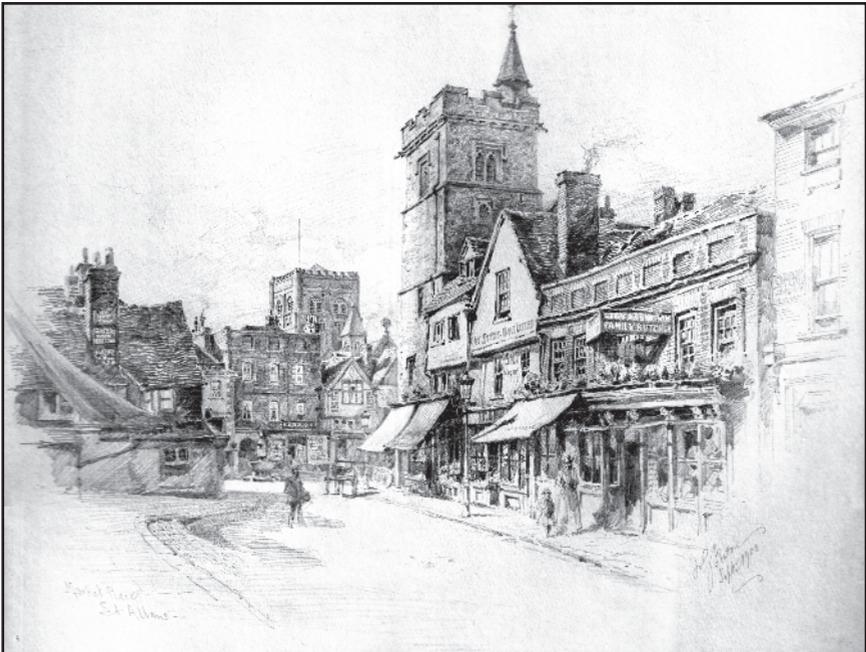


## THE GIFT OF A KITTON

The Society's Library has recently received the generous donation of a drawing by Frederic George Kitton showing the familiar Clock Tower scene (see below). This important local artist lived in St Albans from the late 1880s until his death in 1904. His energetic and diverse contribution to the city went well beyond his drawings, and we are delighted that his life here and elsewhere will be celebrated in an exhibition at St Albans Museum. Opening in September, it will draw largely on the research of our Honorary Member, John Cox.

According to a talk Kitton gave to the Society in 1899 entitled 'St Albans from an artist's point of view' (*Herts Advertiser*, 4 March 1899, p.6), he thought this view showing both the Clock Tower and the Abbey 'perhaps the best' in the city centre. Apart from the addition of some street furniture and changes to shop fronts, little has changed since.

We will be donating the picture to the museum at the end of June as they have better facilities for care and storage. If you would like to see it in the meantime, do make an appointment with the Library team.



'Market Place, St Albans' by F.G. Kitton, September 1900 (SAHAAS)

## MORE TITLES TO TEMPT YOU

A further batch of surplus Library books and pamphlets will be offered for sale to members during June, at a moderate price. As before, the full list will be posted on the Society's website, and an enews message sent out early in the month, pointing members to the relevant page. Please look out for this.

The books available are the usual interesting mix of local and wider historical titles. They range from the correspondence of the Duke of Hamilton, Scottish adviser to Charles I, to an 1894 walking guide to Hertfordshire which includes advice to anglers on the best places to fish. Items will be sold on a first-come first-served basis up to a closing date at the end of June 2022. The money raised will help to develop the Society's Library.

**Sally Pearson**

## CAN YOU SPARE A COUPLE OF HOURS OVER THE SUMMER?

If so, please consider becoming a 'Clockateer'. As members of the Society we have the pleasure and responsibility for keeping the Clock Tower open for the many visitors who climb it each summer – just as our predecessors did in 1915.

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

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

If you can spare some time, please contact Caroline Howkins and Mike Carey via [clocktower@stalbanhistory.org](mailto:clocktower@stalbanhistory.org).

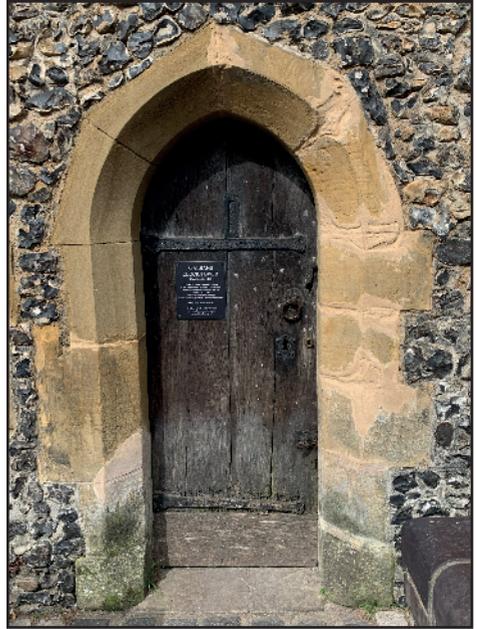


Promoting the Clock Tower in 1915, from *The Popular Guide to St Albans* (SAHAAS Library)

## CLOCK TOWER REPORT

2022 started so well for us with the return of the Clockateers' Party in March. After not being able to meet up with fellow volunteers since 2019 because of the pandemic, it was lovely to be able to socialise again, catch up on the Clock Tower news and enjoy drinks and a buffet, all in the atmospheric surroundings of Verulamium Museum.

But only two weeks later, the results of a building survey revealed that the wooden decking on the roof at the top of the tower was rotten in places and needed replacing. Being not only a listed building but a scheduled monument, an application needed to be made to Historic England and approval secured from Nadine Dorries, the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, before the work could even commence. As time was also needed for architects' plans to be drawn up and contractors commissioned, sadly these roof repairs could not be completed before Good Friday; our official opening had to be delayed. The closure news was reported not only by the *Herts Advertiser* but also on the BBC News website which carried an article under the heading 'St Albans Clock Tower opening halted due to flooring issue'.



Front door with new sign (© Caroline Howkins)

At the time of writing, the repair work has not yet started and the opening date is still provisionally sometime in May/June. We will email our Clockateers as soon as we have any more news.

Our more eagle-eyed volunteers may have noticed that the sign on the front door has been updated to reflect the more accurate completion date of 1405 and to correct our opening times.

**Caroline Howkins**  
**[clocktower@stalbanhistory.org](mailto:clocktower@stalbanhistory.org)**

## ST JULIAN'S GROUP REPORT

The researchers in the St Julian's Group have submitted two proposals for publications, one on the chronology of the estate from medieval to modern times, and the other on the workings and people of the tenanted farm which the estate became with its purchase by William Wilshere in 1819. Both proposals are being revised in the light of publishers' comments. The Group's editorial panel still aim for publication of a book, perhaps on a more focused period of the estate's history and with more emphasis on how St Julian's can be seen in the context of developments in that area of South West Hertfordshire and comparison with the history of neighbouring estates. Topics for several articles and other outcomes have been identified and will progress as time allows. Thought is also being given as to how the many valuable datasets created in the course of the research can be made available more widely.

**Kate Morris**

## WEBSITE REPORT

Verulamium's growth as a Roman city was fostered in different ways by both a pro-Roman collaborator and an anti-Roman rebel. David Thorold tells the story of the city's turbulent journey in

the Archaeology section of the website. Meanwhile, Kris Lockyear cautions that Roman roads are not always as straight(forward) as they might appear. Fortunately, the modern road network makes it relatively easy for members to benefit from the Society's visit programme, led by Tony Berk. As Sue Mann explains in the Society section, Society excursions were popular even in the nineteenth century. Visits to the Clock Tower have long been popular, and while you wait to plan your own excursion there, you can prepare by finding out more about its interesting history by looking in the Buildings section.

**Peter Bourton**

## TRANSITION PROJECT REPORT

Announced in the November 2021 *Newsletter*, our project to investigate how the town of St Albans responded to the dissolution of the monastery in 1539 is up and running. With training under our belts, members of the group are making good progress looking at probate documents from the period.

Work has also started to take stock of what has been published about the period. Some conclusions will inevitably need challenging and there are certainly plenty of gaps we wish to fill. Our initial focus is on the wills of

members of the influential Charnel Brotherhood, a group of wealthy townsmen. While we are not expecting startling discoveries, we are finding important snippets of information such as the presence of a schoolmaster residing in the town in 1553 that add to what we already know. Similarly, as described in useful detail in his 1543 will, Ralph Rowlatt, one of the leading citizens in the town and beneficiary of dissolution land deals, had altars laden with silverware at his houses at Gorhambury and Holywell Hill.

We have room in the group for two more members. If you are interested in Tudor history and would like to get involved, please do email us to arrange a chat.

**Jon Mein and Ailsa Herbert  
transition@stalbanhistory.org**

## **PUBLICATIONS COMMITTEE REPORT**

Publication of our second Concise Histories book is all of a sudden rapidly approaching. On Tuesday 7 June we will be launching *St Michael's village; from rural settlement to residential suburb, 1700-1930*. Researched and written by Kate Morris, the book presents a social history of St Michael's village. It draws heavily on Kate's meticulous research of original sources.

We are holding the book launch at Kingsbury barn. This is a most appropriate venue since Kingsbury manor house and the families that lived there in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries are central to Kate's history of the village. The barn is a marvellous example of medieval craftsmanship, renovated with great care by Jill and Adam Singer, the current owners. We are delighted to be holding the launch there.

More details will follow. We particularly welcome newer members to the launch and hope you will join us for a glass of wine and celebrate the book.

The book will be priced £7.00 plus p&p. It will be on sale at the launch and on our online bookshop on the website. See back cover for more details. It will be available in selected local bookshops, from around the end of July.

We are pleased to report that Ailsa Herbert has joined the committee. Ailsa manages the Friends of St Albans Cathedral publications and we look forward to sharing our publishing experiences and plans.

**Pat Broad**

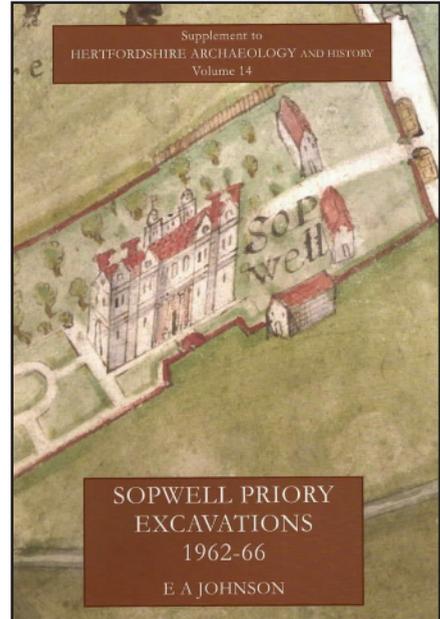
## THE EXCAVATION AT SOPWELL

The report of the extensive 1960s excavation at Sopwell Priory was published in 2006. This was as a supplement to vol. 14 of *Hertfordshire Archaeology and History*, the Society's journal published jointly with East Herts Archaeological Society. As you will see below, we have invited Peter Bourton to provide brief context for the work.

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

Richard Lee, who made St Albans his home, was no slouch. With a leg up from Thomas Cromwell, this son of a local mason became Henry VIII's top military engineer, overseeing fortifications from Calais to Berwick-upon-Tweed. At the dissolution of the monasteries, Richard picked up Sopwell Priory, a nunnery that had been subordinate to St Albans Abbey. Between 1962-66, the site was excavated to discover the location and layout of the original priory, and to identify the different building phases of Sir Richard's house (he was knighted in the 1540s). The report explores this important and interesting site, as well as Sir Richard's involvement with the priory both before and after the dissolution. (For more about Lee's career, see pp.28-29.)

**Peter Bourton**



A few copies of the report are still available at the members' price of £5.00. Please let Christine know if you wish to place an order. Payment can be:

- By BACS to: account St Albans & Hertfordshire Arch. Society, sort code 30 97 25 account no 00811696 ref. HAH,
- By post, with cheque payable to St Albans & Hertfordshire Arch Society, to Anthony Dolphin, 79 The Park, St Albans AL1 4RX. Please write HAH on the reverse.
- Postage is £3.25 or, for free collection from central St Albans, contact Christine (07941 927551) to arrange.

## THE WAR MEMORIAL IN THE CIVIC CENTRE: WELL DONE, SADC

Did you have your Covid booster jab in the civic centre? If so, did you notice the First World War memorial at the top of the stairs? Judging from several emails I have received over the last few months, other people noticed it as well. What's the memorial's history?

Commissioned by the city council and unveiled in November 1920, the memorial pre-dates the main city memorial on St Peter's Green by six months. According to the report of the dedication ceremony in the *Herts Advertiser* (13 November 1920, p. 8), it is made from 'moulded oak and handsomely carved' with the names of 'the fallen and missing' listed in alphabetical order on three vellum panels. Collating these details was an onerous task. At the ceremony, the mayor, W.S. Green, complemented



The memorial in the civic centre  
(© Christine McDermott)

the staff for their hard work ensuring the list was as complete as possible. There were likely to be omissions though. With carving soon to start on the city memorial, he implored people to make contact if they spotted any.

The memorial was placed in a prepared spot in the town hall, now St Albans Museum. This was opposite the grand staircase leading to the first-floor assembly room and adjacent to the main door onto Chequer Street. As Green noted approvingly, it was the 'most public' location in the town hall. There the memorial stayed or, more precisely, languished as the building became increasingly dilapidated.

This changed in 2016 when, with the museum conversion on the horizon, the memorial was moved to the council chamber in the civic centre. There were suggestions at the time that it should be returned to the museum once the work had been completed. To me, that did not make sense: placing a memorial in a museum suggests it has lost its original context. Now moved to its prominent position at the top of the stairs, as those emails prove, the memorial clearly has the power to make people stop and think.

**Jon Mein**

## **SOCIETY VISIT TO A COUNTRY HOUSE WITH A DIFFERENCE!**

Save the date: Thursday 8 September.

We're all familiar with the experience of visiting country house estates preserved by organisations such as the National Trust or English Heritage. But what about one steeped in history which has been saved, and is now run by the local community?

The Copped Hall Trust is a charity which was set up in the 1990s to purchase a much-loved estate, after local community protest over plans to convert the remains of the Georgian/Victorian house into offices or a hotel, and its gardens into a car park or golf course. Since then an army of volunteers has been working to preserve and restore the house and gardens, while at the same time using them for an exciting range of community, fundraising and educational activities.

Copped Hall is not far away, situated just off the M25 in Epping Forest. Its history goes back to medieval times when it was owned by Waltham Abbey. After the Dissolution it came into the hands of Henry VIII, who used it as a hunting lodge. His daughter Mary Tudor lived there for a time. Elizabeth I granted it to Sir Thomas Heneage, who enlarged the medieval house considerably. The medieval and Tudor buildings are now gone, but recent archaeological work has explored some surviving cellars. The present house was built by John Conyers in the eighteenth century, extended by Ernest Wythes in the late nineteenth century, before a catastrophic fire led to abandonment in 1917.

It's a hugely ambitious project, very much a work in progress, but all the more interesting for that. Further details will be sent to members via enews, and booking will be via Eventbrite. Family and friends are welcome to join us.

**Sally Pearson**



Courtesy of The Copped Hall Trust (2014)

## RED LETTER DAYS FOR BLUE PLAQUES ST ALBANS

### Some history

In 1898 the Arc & Arc discussed setting up plaques to inform visitors to our city about historical events and people. The first two plaques no longer exist but subsequent ones on the Clock Tower and Victoria Street do. Then the money ran out and nothing further was done.

Jumping forward to those halcyon BC days (Before Covid), our Society joined with several other interested organisations to 'right the wrong' – or at least to fill a long standing 'vacancy' on the buildings of St Albans. Walking around many other cities and towns, one is struck by how they bring their history to life by means of 'blue plaques' or similar on major, and indeed sometimes minor, buildings – but here in St Albans? We think you will agree that such plaques, of whatever colour, are rather thinly scattered within our city.

It was not long before the 'Blue Plaques St Albans' (BPSA) group had identified several people who would indeed merit being brought into the public eye. Initial funding was provided by the Society and the Civic Society, together with a generous donation from St Albans BID. There followed the business of designing a template for the plaques, deciding



The 'John Ball' plaque on the Museum building

on a material that the District Council would approve, and finding a suitable manufacturer. We then had to obtain approval from both the owners of the relevant buildings and, even more importantly in the case of Listed Buildings, permission from the Council. All this took longer than we had hoped, but we now seem to have cracked the nut.

### Progress

As hopefully you are all now aware, we finally installed our first plaque in February – for John Ball, a leader of the 1381 Peasants' Revolt, on the Museum + Gallery building. Our second, for eighteenth century mental health pioneer Nathaniel Cotton, was installed in late March in College Street. We now have six more on order to be manufactured, including one for Sarah Duchess of Marlborough to go on 'her' almshouses



The Mayor, Cllr Edgar Hill (right), and Prof. Tim Boatswain unveiling the 'John Ball' plaque

in Hatfield Road. We hope to keep a good balance between men and women, and between the more famous and the lesser-known who have contributed to the history of the city.

### **Calls for help – please donate!**

We want this to be an ongoing project to brighten the city's appearance and to entertain and inform both citizens and visitors. However, each plaque costs about £550 to purchase and install. Funds have been augmented by the generosity of the Society and the cathedral in putting on relevant educational talks and sharing the proceeds. John Morewood, our President, and Tim Boatswain, President of the Civic Society and Chair of Blue Plaques St Albans, have been particularly active in this. But to ensure the scheme continues, we need more money. All donations gratefully received!

Cheques payable to:  
Blue Plaques St Albans  
c/o Bryan Hanlon  
24 Monks Horton Way  
St Albans, AL1 4HA

### **Calls for help – speakers**

We wish to repeat the success of the two talks David Grocott (founder of the John Ball Society) and John Morewood gave about the Peasants' Revolt: these raised a significant sum for the fund. BPSA have asked us to consider doing a further series of talks via Zoom to see if we can raise further sums for them. John has volunteered to give another talk, this time on Sarah Churchill, Duchess of Marlborough. Does anyone feel able to give a 40 minute talk on any of the following people who are destined to have a plaque erected in their name?

- Arthur Melbourne Cooper
- Stephen Hawking
- Elsie Toms
- Edward (Ted) Warner VC

If you or anyone you know would like to offer a talk, please let John know via [chair@stalbanhistory.org](mailto:chair@stalbanhistory.org).

**Bryan Hanlon and John Morewood**

## A NEW MAP OF NEW BARNES

Humphry Repton (1752-1818) is sometimes referred to as successor to the much better-known eighteenth-century landscape designer Lancelot 'Capability' Brown. But, although both men were employed by ambitious land owners keen to modernise the appearance of their estates, each worked in a very different way. Brown was a contractor who agreed with his client how the estate could be improved, and then provided the manpower and expertise to carry out the work. Repton was more of, in modern parlance, a consultant. He offered his advice to clients, presenting them with a trademark Red Book which contained beautiful watercolour paintings of what the estate would look like after the work was done, but it was then usually left to the client to decide whether and how to take the project forward.

In 2018, to mark the centenary of Repton's death, the Hertfordshire Gardens Trust (HGT) produced a lavishly illustrated book *Humphry Repton in Hertfordshire*, which tells the stories of Repton's work at a wide range of landed estates in the county, and includes the text and paintings from the surviving Red Books. One of these estates is New Barnes on the south-eastern edge of St Albans, better

known today as Sopwell House Hotel and Verulam Golf Club. Repton worked here in 1802 for an ambitious and newly-rich client called Matthew Towgood, and the Red Book which Repton wrote and illustrated has survived in the Gorhambury archives. One of the queries which the research carried out for the HGT book attempted to answer was how much of Repton's advice was taken up by Towgood before he sold New Barnes to the Timperon family around 1810. The maps available at the time to help establish this were draft OS drawings of 1805, Andrew Bryant's county map of 1822, and a much larger-scale estate map of New Barnes when it was sold again in 1886. The recent discovery amongst the Gorhambury papers at HALS of an earlier estate map dated 1813 helps shed further light on this question (see facing page).

The discovery makes more certain that, as the other maps suggested, Towgood followed Repton's advice and adapted a formal fishpond to the south of the house to make a curving stream, with the aim of creating 'a great feature of beauty in the home scenery'; and also that he merged four fields to the north and east of the house into a park, planting it with clumps and belts of trees, although not quite as Repton recommended.

**Image removed from the digital edition for  
copyright issues.**

'A plan of the New Barnes and the Lodge Farm in the Parish of St Peter's and St Stephen's ... the Property of Joseph Timperon Esq, 1813' (extract reproduced courtesy of HALS, ref. DE/V E551)

One issue on which Repton and Towgood clearly did not agree concerned the approach to the house, and here the 1813 map does help clarify what little was done to address the problem. Traditionally, the main approach to the house had been (and still is) along a narrow lane leading to Cottonmill from the Mile House on London Road (marked 'A' on the map). Repton described this 'lane in the hollow way' as the 'opprobrium of the place', and recommended firstly that the view of it be hidden from the house by the planting of trees, and secondly that a new approach drive be constructed across the parkland to an entrance on what is now Napsbury Lane, continuing beyond that to meet the road to London. He included in his Red Book an illustration showing how beautiful the approach to the house could thus be made, referring to it as 'a subject which I rejoice to find so capable of improvement, with so little expense or difficulty'. Towgood clearly disagreed; the 1813 map indicates that he planted trees to obscure the view of the lane (replaced later in the century by the archway entrance visible today), but there is no sign of a new approach driveway across the park (B).

One further detail of interest which the recently discovered 1813 map emphasises is the low-lying nature of the New Barnes estate land bordering on the

River Ver. Although the main waterways are shown on other maps, this one also indicates a network of irrigation channels running through an area labelled in the index as 'Water Meadow' (C). This suggests the traditional farming technique of artificially irrigating grassland at certain times of the year in order to stimulate the early growth of grass in the spring and improve the quality and quantity of the summer hay crop.

**Sally Pearson**

### **Bibliography**

HALS, DE/V E551, Declaration concerning the inheritance of the New Barnes estate (inc. map), (1886).

S. Flood & T. Williamson (eds), *Humphry Repton in Hertfordshire* (Hatfield, 2018); copy available in our Library.

H. Cook & T. Williamson (eds), *Water Meadows – History, Ecology and Conservation* (London, 2007).

### **SEMINAR PROGRAMME, 2022/3**

Our 2021/2 seminar series was well attended and the variety of local history topics wide and interesting. More than one topic has inspired further research and this is very welcome. Do contact Kate Morris via [kate@englishinfo.biz](mailto:kate@englishinfo.biz) if you have a topic you can share, or a topic you would welcome a presentation on, as she prepares the 2022/3 programme.

## THE 'FIGHTING COCK' MONEY BOX

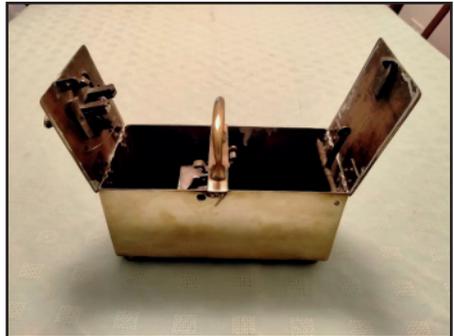
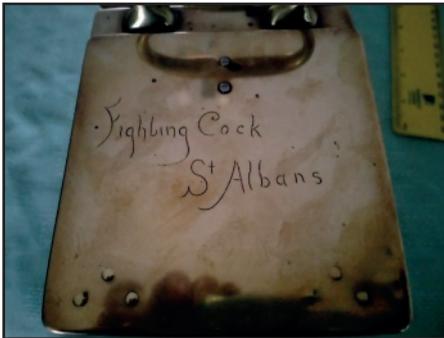
I have received the following photos from the owner of what appears to be a money box. The item has been in his family for around 100 years or so. He is keen to know more of its purpose and provenance. The link to St Albans is the inscription, clearly visible (see the photo top left) of 'Fighting Cock, St Albans'.

He reports: 'I know, from when I played with the box, that a 1d [coin]

fitted into the slot on the top and when you push the knob down the penny fell through. If the knob is down when the penny is inserted it falls straight through. The knob doesn't reset but maybe it did once.'

Was it used by a club that met at the pub, perhaps a slate club? Maybe it has no connection to the pub at all as the rather singular 'Cock' implies. Any thoughts most welcome via the editor's email address.

**Brian Lawrence**  
[newsed@stalbanhistory.org](mailto:newsed@stalbanhistory.org)



## A THOROUGHLY MODERN MILL

Following on from Anne Wares' note in the last *Newsletter*, here's another photo from the Mountbatten album (Fig. 1 below). This one shows New Barnes Mill. When it was taken in 1903, the familiar mill building was just over four years old. Made from brick with the chimney to the rear indicative of steam power, we see a modern industrial mill. Contrast the photo with the 1895 sketch of its predecessor (Fig. 2 facing page). This older mill appears to be a low-rise and timber-framed construction reliant on the river for power. Who had invested what must have been substantial sums of money converting the traditional to the modern and for what purpose?

In light of Anne's article about their purchase of the New Barnes estate in

1886, it is no surprise that the Grimston family were the prime movers. The third Earl of Verulam had inherited the loss-making mill when his father died in 1895. Running an annual deficit averaging £151 in the five years up to 1896/97, prospects for the business did not augur well. [Note 1] The Earl's accountants noted that losses would continue as long as sales remained flat and the mill's ineffectual manager in control. They recommended closing the business.

Grimston was far from the only mill-owner having to wrestle with this dilemma. In his book about the county's mills, Hugh Howes describes the competition faced by small country flour mills in the late Victorian period like the seven on the river Ver.[2] From the 1840s, railways providing access to coal and transport for the finished article had

been to the benefit of some millers. But it was access to cheaper imported corn, particularly from the 1870s, that had really changed market dynamics. Large dock-side mills now had significant competitive advantage over their country cousins. And then, from c.1880 onwards, expensive new technol-

**Image removed from the digital edition for copyright reasons**

Fig. 1: New Barnes Mill from the south-west, 1903  
(Reproduced courtesy of the University of Southampton)

ogy in the form of rollers disrupted the market still further. Replacing millstones, rollers produced better quality flour more efficiently. Seeing the future, local millers installed rollers at Batford on the Lea in 1886 for instance.

How could the Ver's small watermills compete when they used obsolescent technology and were located on the non-navigable river, far from the main railway line? In spite of this gloomy picture, there were tempting opportunities for those willing to risk their capital constructing a modern mill. As the district's population was growing fast from the 1880s onwards, plenty of new consumers needed bread, especially the fashionable and more costly white loaf.

It was against this background that the earl decided in 1898 to spend over £4,000 modernising the business rather than shutting up shop. The buildings we see in the photo were the replacements required to house and power the rollers. (This equipment was installed by market-leading manufacturer Henry Simon of Manchester.) Further investments followed including a house on Cottonmill Lane for the replacement manager and two cottages for workers. Electric power was supplied from 1915.



Fig. 2: 'The Old New Barns Mill, St Albans. Sketched May 1895', by E.C. Holmes Winter (St Albans Museums)

Along with new straw hat and boot factories in the city and print works in Fleetville, Grimston's investment was part of an industrial boom in late-Victorian St Albans. Arguably a new site adjacent to the railway could have improved efficiencies. Nonetheless, profit and loss accounts for the 1906-20 period suggest he established a successful business.[3]

Why the Grimston family sold up in the early 1920s is not clear. Perhaps they saw the writing on the wall for independent country millers, however modern their operation.

**Jon Mein**

### Notes

[1] HALS, Gorhambury DE/V E553

[2] H. Howes, *Wind, water and steam: the story of Hertfordshire's mills* (Hatfield, 2016), pp. 8-17

[3] HALS, Gorhambury DE/V F1411

## FINDING CHRISTOPHER WEBB

A couple of months ago I had time in London to occupy before visiting an exhibition at the Tate Modern. After a good mooch round Borough Market (including a coffee at Monmouth's and the purchase of a lovely bottle of rum) I found myself in Southwark Cathedral. I fell in love with the window above the Shakespeare memorial. (See Fig. 1.)

When I got home, I looked up the window on Wikipedia and found to my surprise that it had been made in St Albans by Christopher R. Webb (1886-1966), a prolific stained glass window producer. Below are brief details of his association with the city.

Webb was a major stained glass artist active from the 1920s into the early '60s. In his small Orchard House Studio, with only one or two assistants, he created hundreds of windows (e.g. see Fig. 2), many replacing ones destroyed by war. He personally mastered every stage of the craft scrutinising closely each phase of window production, but concentrated particularly on design.

In 1926, at the age of 40, Webb married an artist fifteen years his junior, Mary Curtis Marsh. Webb moved to St Albans where his sister Marjorie (Mrs Humphrey H. King) had already settled. The



Fig. 1: detail of the 'Shakespeare window' at Southwark Cathedral (© Jane Ridge)

couple's first home was at 112 London Road, where the front room, large enough to accommodate cartoons, became his studio.

In 1930, Webb moved to 27 Clarence Road, a quieter location, and purchased land south of St Albans Cathedral, which was part of the garden of Orchard House, the home of his sister Marjorie. In the loft of the former stables he set up his new studio, with a kiln in the tack room.

Local architect, Percival Blow, designed a purpose-built, brick studio close by with a large, north-facing window, ideal for painting glass.

These details have been extracted from an illustrated article about Webb by the late Eileen Roberts, Honorary Member of SAHAAS. You can download a copy from <https://bit.ly/3qE38EQ>.

**Jane Ridge**

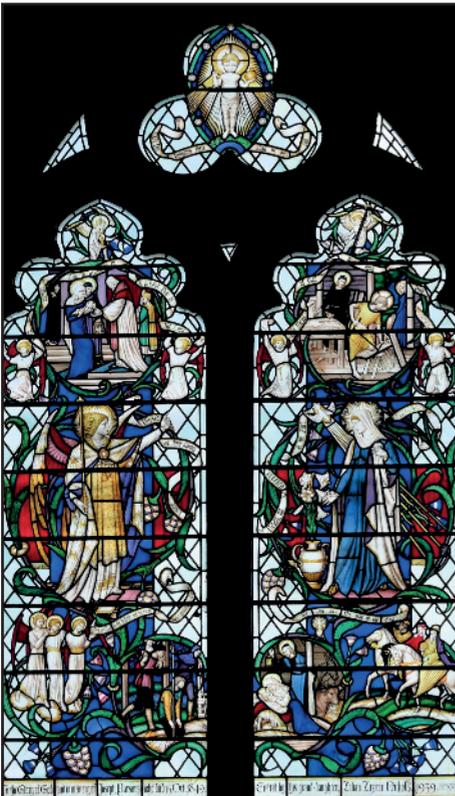


Fig. 2: detail from the 'Life of Jesus' window in St Albans Cathedral (© H. Hinchcliffe)

### Further Reading

H. Hinchcliffe, *The Stained Glass Windows of Christopher Webb* (2020). This 'coffee table book' contains photos of nearly all his windows accompanied by useful commentary. It costs around £110 for the printed edition, but a pdf copy can be purchased for less than £5.00 from [www.blurb.co.uk](http://www.blurb.co.uk).

M. Wilson, 'Christopher Webb windows'; and S. Adams, 'Christopher Webb by great niece', *Alban Link*, March 2005, pp. 26-29 and pp. 30-32 (copy in SAHAAS Library).

'Proposed studio at rear of No 112 London Road for C. Webb', architect's plans by H.R. Finn (1929) in SAHAAS Library Shepherd Plans Collection (no. 103).

### Local examples of Webb's work

St Albans Cathedral: The Martyrdom of St Alban, The life of Jesus.

Aldenham, St John the Baptist: Christ in Majesty.

Flamstead, St Leonard: Annunciation with Christ Child.

Hertford, St Andrew: Annunciation.

Lemsford, St John: The Risen Christ.

Little Heath, Christ Church: Jesus in the house of Martha and Mary.

Redbourn, St Mary: Jesus the healer.

Sandridge, St Leonard: St Christopher.

Welwyn, St Mary: St Cecilia and St Nicholas, Benedicite.

## SIR RICHARD LEE'S CAREER

Here is another St Albans personality where the name is known but few details reside in the public consciousness. And yet, Richard Lee's impact on our city was great and visible reminders of him still survive: his funeral helm, the replica of the lectern he looted from Holyrood Abbey, the remains of his second house at Sopwell. We know Lee (1501/2 – 1575) rose from relatively humble beginnings to gain, through royal patronage, sufficient wealth to accumulate five manors and more than 14,000 acres in Hertfordshire, mainly around St Albans, including most of the abbey buildings (excepting the church and the Great Court) and Sopwell Priory. In both cases he demolished the structures he acquired. By 1564 he was so highly regarded that Queen Elizabeth I stayed at his home '*at Sopwell, near unto our town of St Albans*'. And yet, apart from loosely referring to him being a military engineer, writers struggle to explain his importance.

Lee became '*the acknowledged English expert on military engineering*' with '*a status and a reputation such as no man of his calling had enjoyed in the past*'. [Note 1] Little is known of his background. However, by 1535 he was a building surveyor to Thomas Cromwell, Henry VIII's chief minister, who became

his patron. From 1536-42 he was surveyor of England's French possession of Calais. At this time Henry VIII, fearing Spanish and French invasion, commissioned a series of coastline defences from Berwick upon Tweed to South Wales via Kent and the south coast. The most impressive surviving examples are at Deal and Pendennis.

The cost was immense, partly met, in both financial and masonry terms, from the dissolution of the monasteries. Henry's plan also included Calais. Between September 1538 and January 1547, £120,675 was spent on the town and surrounding area. Lee directed extensive repairs and constructed new, formidable defences which drew much praise. The Duke of Norfolk told the French ambassador that Calais was the strongest town in Christendom. In 1540 Lee corresponded directly with Henry VIII about fortifications. He acquired influential patrons after Cromwell's fall including the Earl of Hertford. In 1544 on accompanying Hertford's army to advise on capturing Edinburgh he was knighted. He also plundered Holyrood Abbey, taking an eagle lectern and a huge font. He gave the lectern to St Stephen's and the font to St Albans abbey.

In 1544 Lee was appointed Surveyor of the King's Works with responsibility for



Richard Lee's funerary armour at St Albans Museum (© John Morewood)

royal palaces and fortifications. He made changes of great importance. Henry VIII's earlier English coastal forts were revolutionary compared with the towering keeps of medieval times rendered obsolete by the advent of artillery. The coastal defences were low lying, squat gun platforms with round towers and bastions. What Henry and his advisers did not realise was they had design flaws. The curved bastions with numerous gunports were structurally weak and their rounded nature meant that there was unflanked dead ground which assisted attackers in tunnelling to bring down the walls. These flaws could be overcome with the adoption of angular bastions. [2] Henry did not know this, but Lee did, having constructed angular bastions at Calais.

Lee ensured the fortifications along the Solent were given these new features. From 1547 he was involved with what has been referred to as England's northern Calais – Berwick upon Tweed. This was his greatest work. It was complex, costly and difficulties arose with rival engineers. Most of Lee's plans were ultimately adopted although at huge expense - £128,648 making his Berwick fortifications the costliest building project of Elizabeth I's reign. [3]

By the 1560s Lee was suffering from ill health — Elizabeth I referred to 'his age and travail'. By now recognised as England's leading military engineer, he was sent to survey fortifications in Scotland, Antwerp, and Le Havre. He died in 1575 and was buried in St Peter's church. As the foremost military engineer of his day, and the first English military engineer to be knighted, is he not worthy of a Blue Plaque?

**John Morewood**

#### Notes

[1] H.M. Colvin (ed.), *History of the King's Works*, 1485-1660, Vol. 3 (1975), p.356

[2] P. Harrington, *The Castles of Henry VIII*, (2007), p.52

[3] Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, Sir Richard Lee

## WHO BUILT LONDON ROAD?

In 1794, the St Albans Turnpike Trust obtained an Act of Parliament to build a new stretch of road into the town by-passing the route via what is now Old London Road, Sopwell Lane and Holywell Hill. According to wording in the Act, the new route was needed to ‘avoid certain steep hills and sharp turnings, which have occasioned many fatal accidents to passengers’. That much is clear. What is less clear is who oversaw the construction. Several local history sources state that engineer Thomas Telford came to St Albans in 1794 to survey and oversee construction. What’s the evidence for this?

We have found none so far. Instead, a quick scan of the Trust’s minutes for this period (HALS, TP5/2) shows that the actual constructor of the road was a local surveyor – George James Rose of Hertford. They record that in 1794 the Trust obtained legislative sanction to build a stretch half a mile in length to bring the new road into St. Albans opposite High Street, thus avoiding

the right-angled turn of the Sopwell Lane and Holywell Hill route. This new road, planned and constructed by Rose, was opened in 1796 and completed a year later.

This does not, of course, prove that Telford was not here in 1794 to survey, etc, the new section. Examination of the life of Telford, however, is fairly conclusive. A good source of information is Julian Glover’s *Man of Iron*, (2017). At the end of the eighteenth century, Telford, mainly an architect, had ambitions to move into civil engineering, particularly to join the scramble to construct canals. His first real civil engineering appointment, 1793, was to construct the Ellesmere Canal. This work consumed Telford – he would have had little time to visit St Albans on a com-

**Image removed from the digital edition for copyright reasons**

View of the junction of ‘new’ and Old London roads with tollhouse, by H.G. Oldfield, c.1800, showing Rose’s development to the right. (Reproduced courtesy of HALS, ref. DE/Of/8/450.) On the reverse of his drawing Oldfield wrote: ‘In the angle between the two arms made by the old and new roads is erected a neat Lodge or Turnpike House with Gates to each road, and from there is a pretty view of the town.’

pletely different project. He did not even consider himself a civil engineer until this appointment.

Telford was in charge of the development of the London to Holyhead road from 1817 including overseeing the construction of Verulam Road here in St Albans. It may be that historians have

erroneously conflated both commissions as his. If any members can point us towards firm evidence that Telford was indeed involved in the building of London Road then we would be delighted to hear.

**Dr Tony Berk and Jon Mein**  
**newsed@stalbanhistory.org**

## HALH EVENTS IN 2022

The Herts Association for Local History (HALH) has three events lined up this year:

- Saturday 21 May – the Spring meeting and AGM will be held at Bramfield village hall and includes the annual Lionel Munby Lecture. This year's speaker is Brendan King discussing 'The Wool Merchants of Medieval Hertfordshire 1270–1370'. Admission is free to HALH members; £2 for visitors;
- Saturday 11 June – the summer visit is to Panshanger Park, Hertford, with a walk around the park, much of it designed by Humphry Repton. The walk will be led by the Friends of the park. Booking is essential using the form on the HALH website;
- Saturday 19 November – the theme for this year's HALH symposium is 'Wining and dining in Hertfordshire', the venue being Katherine Warington School, Harpenden. Further details will appear in the August newsletter.

Information about all three events is available on the association's website: [www.halh.org.uk](http://www.halh.org.uk).

## THE NEWSLETTER

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

## ST ALBANS ON DEMAND

Before St Albans Museum + Gallery opened, the museum team ran a weekend event called *Objects on Demand*. This pop-up museum featured 70 objects from the collection chosen by volunteers and staff. Preparing for it eighteen enthusiastic volunteers put in nearly 500 hours of time researching, photographing, and preparing. Members of the public could browse a catalogue of all these objects and request to see whichever they were particularly interested in. The objects ranged from Roman artefacts to memorabilia from the Ballito factory and included choices from every part of our collection. It was a huge success.

When opening the Museum + Gallery we wanted to keep some of the same feeling and opportunity for people to connect with individual objects and stories. This led to the creation of 'St Albans on Demand', the permanent but ever-changing exhibition in our Landing Gallery.

Objects in 'St Albans on Demand' can be nominated by staff, volunteers, and members of the public and each item in this display is rooted in the local community, revealing hidden histories, and opening up the museums' collections. In the past four years we've displayed

everything from Arthur, the taxidermy lion who used to live under the stairs in the old Museum of St Albans (Fig.1), to finds recorded locally through the Portable Antiquities Scheme. The display has developed to allow us to include sound and video and, at the start of this year, even our window blind became part of the display as the St Albans United Synagogue chose their stained-glass windows as objects to share.

This space allows us to commemorate anniversaries and special occasions. We displayed the St Albans Normandy Veterans flag on the 75th anniversary of D-Day (Fig.2) and will have some objects from our archive on display for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee this year. We've also had requests to celebrate particular local people, such as Jim Rodford, and organisations such as CAMRA and their 50th anniversary last year.

Sometimes though the requests are simply for objects that people remem-



Fig. 1: Arthur the stuffed lion  
(© St Albans Museums)

ber seeing in the past or have a particular personal connection to. At the moment we have George Clausen's Stone Pickers on display which was chosen by our Visitor Services Assistant George Chyla who remembers it hanging in the Museum of St Albans (and reminding him of the need to take a break!). Later this year we will be showing a collection linked to the Rose's Lime Juice Factory, donated by the family of someone who worked there.

We are always interested to receive requests and ideas from visitors and friends – our collections are available on our website so you can choose something there you'd like to see displayed, something you loved from a previous exhibition or let us know there is a particular story you would like to tell in the space. To request an object, you simply need to email us with the objects details and why you would like it.

We can't always fit in every request – sometimes objects are on display elsewhere, too fragile for the light levels in the Landing Gallery or too big for the cases – but we have usually found a way to make most requests work.

And you never know where a 'St Albans on Demand' request will lead. In 2020 as the pandemic started, we installed objects celebrating the 100th anniversary



Fig. 2: The Normandy Veterans flag  
(© St Albans Museums)

sary of the St Albans branch of the RNLI and two years on we have an entire ocean themed exhibition opening in May in the Weston Gallery. It was inspired by that 'St Albans on Demand' display, two other requests and several enquiries which we eventually pulled together into the exhibition.

I look forward to discovering which objects and stories are requested next!

**Sarah Keeling**  
**St Albans Museums**  
**museum@stalbans.gov.uk**

## MEDIEVAL EXHIBITION AT ST ALBANS MUSEUM

For some time, the museum team have been faced with a challenge on how to showcase museum content in the Assembly Room at St Albans Museum + Gallery whilst also juggling the varied needs of the room for regular venue hire. But we hope we now have a solution! When you walk into the Assembly Room now, you'll see recently installed display boards that can be packed away quickly and without taking up much space when we have events taking place.

The first exhibition to feature on these display boards is 'Medieval Lives and Liberties', giving visitors the chance to discover what it was like to live in St Albans during medieval times.

Medieval St Albans flourished on trade and pilgrims, with market stalls and shops, inns, taverns and cheaper accommodation for every class of visitor, close to the abbey entrance. The exhibition focuses on the lives of people who lived



New panels in the Assembly Room (© Bryan Hanlon)

in medieval St Albans as the town gained greater freedom and independence. By examining the contents of medieval wills, the displays reveal some of the items local people left when they died.

It also features the stories of extraordinary characters like Dame Juliana Berners of Sopwell, a devotee of outdoor sports and prioress of Sopwell Nunnery; travel writer Sir John Mandeville; and Thomas Walsingham, who gave a detailed account of the Peasants' Revolt.

**Farhana Begum and Cat Newley**  
St Albans Museums

### HAVE YOU HEARD A GOOD LECTURE RECENTLY?

For our lecture programme, I am always on the look-out for good speakers to give talks to the Society on history, archaeology and architectural topics. If you can recommend someone, please do let me know by emailing: [lectures@stalbanhistory.org](mailto:lectures@stalbanhistory.org).

**Gill Girdziusz**

## THIS TUDOR SUMMER

To coincide with the 'Tudor Summer' the cathedral has planned over the next few months, we are pleased to offer some talks which examine both St Albans and the Abbey during the Tudor period. On Thursday 30 June, we will welcome James Clark, Professor of History at the University of Exeter, who will be discussing the role Cardinal Wolsey played in the transformation of Tudor St Albans.

This will be followed in August by a talk from Hertfordshire Archives and Local Studies which, relying on their extensive archive collection, will examine what life was like in the county during the period. In addition to our talks, the cathedral will also be offering Tudor-themed 'More to

Explore' cathedral tours and a range of related family activities. To find out more or to book tickets for our events, please visit:

[www.stalbanscathedral.org/Pages/Cate-gory/adult-learning](http://www.stalbanscathedral.org/Pages/Cate-gory/adult-learning).

In addition, we also have a variety of talks coming up which explore subjects such as the development of Byzantine art and female power at the court of King Edward III. More information can be found on our website or through our monthly Adult Learning mailing list. To join the list, please email [studycentre@stalbanscathedral.org](mailto:studycentre@stalbanscathedral.org).

**Marie de Rooy**  
**Learning and Events Assistant**  
**St Albans Cathedral**

## A MEMORY OF THE RED LION HOTEL

There have been several Red Lion pubs over the years in St Albans. This window in the Lower Red Lion in Fishpool Street recalls another which bore the name. The attractive shield was salvaged from a skip by the pub's then manager when the former Red Lion Hotel building in High Street was being modernised in the mid-1980s. As there had been an inn on the spot since the 1400s, could the glass have an ancient history? Probably not. The 1890s at the earliest is likely — unless you know differently of course. (With thanks to Stuart Macer for the story and photo.)



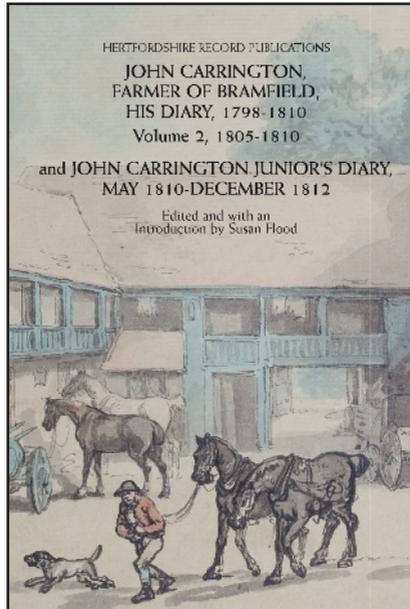
## NEW BOOK FROM THE HERTFORDSHIRE RECORD SOCIETY

Those of us with an interest in doings in the county in the Napoleonic period will be delighted to see that part 2 of *John Carrington's Diary* will be available shortly. The first part (HRS vol. XXVI) was published in 2015 and contained the diary's text from 1798 to 1804. This new volume (vol. XXXIII) continues the diary from 1805 until John's death in 1810. His son, also called John (Jack), continued the family tradition and began to keep a diary of his own which survives until 1812. With an historical introduction and appendices, including biographies of local persons, a glossary, and indexes of names, places and subjects, this publication makes the text of the Carrington diaries fully accessible.

Although father and son both lived much nearer to Hertford than St Albans, there's still plenty of local interest because John (senior) was one of the chief constables of the Liberty of St

Albans. As a result, he records his regular visits to the town.

For various reasons, publication had been delayed: vol. XXXIII is for the HRS membership year 2017/18. Members for that year will receive it free of charge. The cost for non-members will be £22.00, while new members pay £17.50 (post and packing extra). See the society's website for further details and ordering information. (Vol. XXVI is still available.)



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. Please consider joining the society to help further this important work.

Copies of all the society's publications are available in the SAHAAS Library.

**Dr Heather Falvey**  
Secretary, HRS  
[www.hrsociety.org.uk](http://www.hrsociety.org.uk)

## PARK STREET AND FROGMORE SOCIETY

Park Street and Frogmore lie in the valley of the River Ver and have a long, rich history with evidence of hunter-gatherers from around 50,000 years ago, Roman habitation alongside Watling Street and mills and inns from the medieval period. For some 30 years up until the 1970s Handley Page, pioneers in the aircraft industry and the employer of many locals, was situated in Colney Street.

The River Ver and the lakes at Frogmore, now restored from gravel pits, offer walkers and nature lovers much to enjoy.

The Park Street and Frogmore Society which also includes Colney Street was formed in 1995 to promote interest in local history and nature conservation. Its programme of at least four lectures a year is held at the village hall and non-members are very welcome. Members also receive regular newsletters and journals.

The society archive includes documents and items including archaeology and geology, books, art, images, postcards, maps, ephemera and records together with cine films, slides and recorded



Park Street c.1910, view facing north before the road was straightened (© Jacqui Banfield-Taylor)

memories of residents past and present. Help can be given to those researching local and family history and we encourage the sharing of memories, images and items of local interest, in fact anything that helps to uncover the long and interesting history of our area; even the smallest snippet of information or worn photo can help us discover our past.

It is so important to record memories and experiences for the future; everyone's memories are an individual and unique library of information which once that person has gone the memories are lost forever.

For further information, please do contact us.

**Jacqui Banfield-Taylor**  
Archivist and Journal Editor, PSFS  
[psfsarchive@btinternet.com](mailto:psfsarchive@btinternet.com)

## **ARCHAEOLOGY GROUP – WALK ON SUNDAY 19 JUNE**

In March 2021, archaeologist and prehistorian Wendy Morrison gave an excellent talk to the Society about her work as project manager for the impressive hillforts project: 'Beacons of the Past: investigating a prehistoric Chilterns landscape'.

Now Wendy has kindly agreed to lead a walk for our Archaeology Group across landscape a bit closer to home. This will include the Iron Age enclosure at the Aubreys near Redbourn, the chalk stream valley of the rivers Red and Ver, before entering the Roman city of Verulamium via the Gorhambury estate. We are opening this up to non-Archaeology Group members; please note members of the group have preference.

The walk will be on Sunday 19 June, starting at 10am, and covers about five miles on footpaths across farmland, the occasional country lane and a short stretch on Watling Street. Further details of our meeting point, transport arrangements, refreshments etc will then be sent out to you nearer the time. Please note that, with stops, we expect this walk to last until 2pm.

If you are interested in joining us, please let Sally Pearson know promptly via [sallypearson183@btinternet.com](mailto:sallypearson183@btinternet.com).

## **A BENEFIT OF BALH MEMBERSHIP**

The Society is a member of the British Association for Local History (BALH), a charity that 'promotes local history and serves local historians' (per its website). The provision of useful online research workshops and webinars for its members is one of several important offerings, details of which you can find on the association's website: [www.balh.org.uk](http://www.balh.org.uk).

While there is generally a charge to attend the events, SAHAAS members can obtain a discount for some of them by quoting a code when they register. This reduces the cost of a webinar from £5.00 to £3.00 for example. To obtain the code, please email [newsed@stalbanhistory.org](mailto:newsed@stalbanhistory.org). (Note: the code changes annually.)

**LECTURE PROGRAMME**

10 May to 17 May 2022

All lectures commence at 7.45pm.

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

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

Tuesday 10 May

**Ted Heath: A Reputation Revised?**

Dr Martin Holmes

**Church only**

Ted Heath was never a popular politician losing three of the four elections he fought as Conservative leader between 1965 and 1975. Since then professional historians have been divided as to whether he was unlucky or unsuccessful as Prime Minister. To some, Heath was a gallant figure fighting against powerful opponents in the Labour Party and the trade unions; to others he hopelessly mishandled his mandate for reform. Dr Holmes assesses the evidence in this evaluation of Ted Heath.

*Dr Holmes was a Lecturer in Politics at St Hugh's College Oxford, 1987-2009 where he has since been a member of the Senior Common Room. A graduate of University College Oxford he is the*

*author of six books including The Failure of the Heath Government. His next book, From the Treaty of Versailles to the Treaty of Maastricht: Conflict, Carnage and Co-operation in Europe 1918-93, will be published later this year.*

Tuesday 17 May

**Designing Modern Architecture in an Historic City: An Architect's View**

Prof. Geraint John

**Church and Zoom**

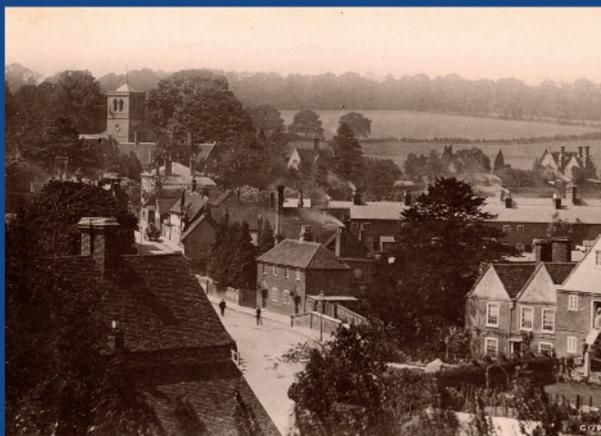
Formerly as President of the St Albans Civic Society and in his continuing role as President Emeritus, Geraint has always been interested in the subject of designing and building modern architecture in historic cities. His talk will draw upon his experience both in St Albans and other historic cities.

*Prof. John is a visiting Professor at the University of Hertfordshire and previously at Madrid University for Sports Building Design. He is co-author and editor of a series of textbooks, the latest being Olympic Stadia: Theatres of Dreams. He is the Honorary Life President of the International Union of Architects, Sports Group and was awarded the Pierre de Coubertin Medal for outstanding services to the Olympic Movement. He was a Council Member of the RIBA.*

# NEW SOCIETY PUBLICATION

## St Michael's Village from rural settlement to residential suburb, 1700–1930

Kate Morris



St Albans & Hertfordshire Architectural  
& Archaeological Society  
Concise Histories No. 2

After meticulous research, Kate Morris's book *St Michael's Village, from rural settlement to residential suburb, 1700-1930* will be published in June in our new Concise Histories series, price £7.00. It provides a new social history of the village.

The Society is holding a launch event for members at Kingsbury Barn, St Michael's, on Tuesday 7 June, 6.30pm. This full colour, fully illustrated, 56-page book will be available at the launch and in our online shop from that date. More information about the launch will follow via enews.