



ST ALBANS & HERTFORDSHIRE  
ARCHITECTURAL & ARCHAEOLOGICAL  
SOCIETY

## NEWSLETTER 229

August 2023



Sandpit at Tyttenhanger, 13 September 1913.

Digitised from the Geologists' Association Carreck Archive ref. P804621;  
reproduced with permission of the British Geological Survey. See p.5. for further information.

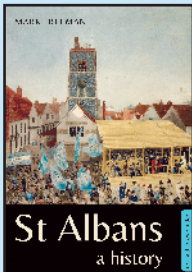
### Included in this issue:

**Michael Wood Lecture Report**  
**Kings's Road Memorial**  
**Queen Anne in St Albans**  
**AGM agenda and reports**

**Honorary Membership**  
**The Great Fire of 1882**  
**Sander's Blue Plaque**  
**17th Century Music**

# Table of Contents

Our President	4
The Sandpit at Tyttenhanger	5
Annual General Meeting	6
Election of Pat Howe as an Honorary Member	7
AGM Reports	
Treasurer's Report	8
Outings Group	10
St Julian's Research Group	10
Transition Group	11
Clock Tower	11
Local History Seminars	11
Publications Committee	12
Newsletter	12
17th Century Group	13
Lectures	13
Library	15
Recent Journal Articles	15
John Brodrick	17
Commemorating Frederick Sander: Installation of a Blue Plaque	19
The King's Road Street Memorial Unveiled	20
"Why the Anglo-Saxons Matter" by Prof. Michael Wood	22
Playing Music in 17th Century St Albans	25
Walking the 1461 Battlefield	26
News from the Welwyn Archaeological Society	27
The HALH Spring Meeting	28
Queen Anne Architecture in St Albans	30
The Great Fire of 1882 and what came next	32
News from the Museums	34
Lecture Programme	35



## BOOK LAUNCH – SAVE THE DATE

University of Hertfordshire Press is publishing a new, enlarged and substantially revised edition of Mark Freeman's book *St Albans: A History*. There will be a launch event in the St Albans Museum + Gallery on the evening of Tuesday 14 November.

Full details will be circulated, but for now please hold the date!

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

It is a very strange feeling to realise that I have come to the end of my three years as the Society's President. Three years ago, in the midst of the pandemic, I talked about my desire for this Society to be recognised as one of Britain's best local history societies. This can be measured in several ways. Firstly, there are our membership figures which indicate whether people want to belong to our Society. We now have 25 per cent more members than in September 2020. Having achieved the 'milestone' 700 number we are one of Britain's largest local history societies.

People tell me they join us because of our range of activities and by the genuinely interesting things we do – whether those are lectures, publications, staffing the Clock Tower, the opportunity to do research in our Library and to contribute to our understanding of this amazing area in which we live. But there is something more and this is our being externally recognised as 'the history people' for St Albans. Our running of exhibitions, the History Fair and our hosting of the archaeology conference have all helped.



As a result, we are increasingly approached by external bodies to play a part in preserving the city's heritage. The Roman theatre is a case in point. Our new 'St Albans Heritage at Risk' list (featuring some well-known items e.g. Richard Lee's house at Sopwell, and some less well known e.g. the Allan Williams gun turret near Hedges Farm) shows we are proactive in carrying out our responsibilities of making people aware that some of our heritage is at risk. I suspect, sadly, that given local government budgetary constraints the next few years will show the list grow dramatically. Our strong links with the press, local government, the Cathedral, Civic Society, Museums Service, and other local history societies will be more important than ever.

To be successful a society of course also needs good governance and we do have this. But perhaps the most important aspect is to have a great esprit de corps. Will people help when the going gets tough? In this newsletter Donald Munro covers Prof. Michael Wood's lecture which I know was enjoyed by so many, members and non-members alike. (See pp. 22-3.) But my emails and

project plans remind me of how close we came to this event firstly not happening, and secondly not happening as well as it did. Many people stepped up to get the event over the line. I am very grateful to St Albans School and in particular Sue Gregory and her team, to Mark Percival and his team of stewards, to Gill Girdziusz and her reception team, to Sally Pearson and Chris and Val Argue for distributing the drinks, to Pat Broad on book sales, to Penguin Books who supplied copies of Michael's books at very

short notice when Waterstones were unable to do so, to Professor Anne Curry of The Battlefields Trust, and as always thanks to Jon Mein and Tim Boatswain for their willingness to get involved. Teamwork indicates a great society.

It has been a privilege. Thank you.

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

## OUR PRESIDENT

September this year is when the three-year term of office of our president, John Morewood, comes to an end. However, your Council has unanimously asked him to extend this for a further three-year period, and we are delighted to say that he has agreed. Proposed by Bryan Hanlon, secretary, and seconded by Tony Dolphin, treasurer, we hope that the membership will endorse this proposal at our AGM. (See p.6.)

## MEMBERSHIP

Welcome to our new members:

Stuart Barry  
Helen Byrne  
John and Gillian Chalkley  
Richard Church  
Alison and Mark Clegg  
Annette Cotter  
Colin and Lynne Guthrie  
Lee Johnston

Brian and Julie Nicholas  
Max Nicholas  
Diana Powell  
Jennifer Soames  
Reuel Thompson  
Brooke Wheeler  
Sam Williams  
Ray Wilson



## THE SANDPIT AT TYTTENHANGER

I stumbled upon the photo on the front cover in an idle hour trying to find illustrations of the temperance hotels in Edwardian St Albans. If only serendipity was a research tool! This photo shows the visit in September 1913 of a group from the Geologists' Association to local sandpits. The excursion programme, posted with other photos on the web (<https://bit.ly/3CuLOrI>), states that the group was due to arrive at Hill End station at 2.40pm. The first visit was to Tyttenhanger to examine the 'fine section of Chalky Boulder clay with associated sands and gravels.' The second was to a pit at Hill End. This was followed by a long walk – no cabs had been booked – into St Albans with departure from the London Road station at 8.20pm.

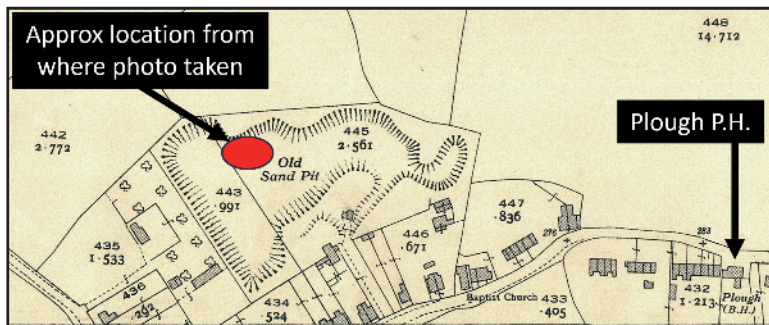
Roger Miles and I have identified the location of the sandpit being to the north of the hamlet and to the west of the Plough public house. (See map below.)

The layout of buildings to the rear of the photo matches contemporary maps.

Together with other photos from the visit, this striking image is of more than just local interest. For one thing, the precarious working environment reminds us that a few coroners' inquests into deaths in sandpits were reported in the *Herts Advertiser*. For another, the presence of female members of the association should come as no surprise; in the Edwardian Arc & Arc, women were starting to take official roles.

And the relevance of the image to local temperance hotels? Simply that at the end of their time yomping around the outskirts of St Albans, the association's visitors made for Dear's Temperance Hotel, close to the Peahen on London Road. With no photos in the collection of the group taking tea, here's hoping for more serendipity.

Jon Mein



1934 Provisional O.S. map showing location of the sandpit at Tyttenhanger (SAHAAS Library)

## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Notice is hereby given that  
The Annual General Meeting of the  
St Albans and Hertfordshire Architectural and Archaeological Society  
will be held at Marlborough Road Methodist Church on  
Tuesday 26 September 2022 at **7.30pm**  
for the following purposes

### Agenda

- 1) Apologies for absence
- 2) President's comments
- 3) To adopt the minutes of the AGM held on 13 September 2022  
(included in the November 2022 *Newsletter*)
- 4) To receive the accounts for the year ended 31 May 2023  
(enclosed with this *Newsletter*)
- 5) To receive reports from our various Groups  
(included in this *Newsletter*)
- 6) To elect Dr John Morewood as President for a further, and final, term of three years
- 7) To elect the following members to serve on Council (with their responsibilities) until the next AGM:

Peter Burley	Vice-president
Bryan Hanlon	Secretary
Tony Dolphin	Finance
Tony Berk	Outings
Tim Boatswain	Publicity
Peter Bourton	Website
Pat Broad	Publications

Gill Girdziusz	Lectures
Pat Howe	17th Century Research Group
Caroline Howkins	Clock Tower
Frank Iddiols	Technical
Heather Jardine	Library
Christine McDermott	<i>Hertfordshire Archaeology and History</i>
Jon Mein	Newsletter
Sally Pearson	Council Minutes
David Smith	Membership

*In addition to the above:*

- John Morewood is currently holding the role of Archaeology

8) To appoint Pat Howe as an Honorary Member of the Society (see below)

9) To elect Cathy Phillips as Independent Examiner of the accounts

The AGM will be followed by a lecture given by Roger Yapp, 'Poles Apart'.

### **ELECTION OF PAT HOWE AS AN HONORARY MEMBER**

The Society's Council proposes that Pat Howe should be elected an Honorary Member at the forthcoming AGM. According to our Constitution, an Honorary Member is a person who has undertaken distinguished work in relevant fields or valuable work for the Society.

Pat's valuable contributions to the Society are legion. In particular she has been a member and then leader of the 17th Century Research Group which she joined soon after its inception in 1992. The chapter on nonconformists in our 'Thoroughfare Town' book is based on her thesis, the key finding of which was the surprisingly high number of nonconformists in St Albans. For some 20 years, Pat has led the group producing two important books of transcriptions of early 17th century probate documents (one forthcoming) and articles in learned journals such as *Local Population Studies*.

Add to this her organisation of many Society excursions and events, a stint as Minutes Secretary on Council and a regular Clockateer. Without her valuable contributions across almost the complete range of our activities, the Society would not be in such a healthy state as it is today.

## **TREASURER'S REPORT**

Enclosed with this *Newsletter* are the accounts for the financial year that ended on 31 May 2023. The accounts are presented in the format required by the Charity Commission. They have been approved by an independent examiner and her report, which she will sign after the accounts have been accepted by the Annual General Meeting, is also included.

The accounts are split between restricted, designated and undesignated funds.

### **Restricted Funds**

The Society is responsible for the Mayor's History Fund, which can only be used to assist researchers with the costs of research into the history of the St Albans District. One award was made from the Fund this year and £52.20 was paid out in respect of that award. On 31 May 2023, the Society held £3,124 for future awards.

### **Designated Funds**

The Society holds certain funds that are designated for particular purposes. During this year, designated funds were received towards the purchase of a replica of the Wheathampstead Ewer and for the mounting of an exhibition on the Second Battle of St Albans; and funds were spent on mounting the exhibition. On 31 May 2023, the Society held £5,041 in designated funds, of which £3,403 was set aside for special projects or unusual items of expenditure, £436 was for the Wheathampstead Ewer and £1,202 represented the surplus generated by the Verulamium conference held in June 2019.

### **Undesignated Funds**

The remainder of the Society's funds are undesignated and can be used in any way that is in accordance with its charitable objectives.

Income:

- The Society's main source of income is membership subscriptions. The number of paying members continues to rise and income from this source increased

to £12,228 in 2022/23, despite no change in fees. Subscriptions paid early for 2023/24 are treated as payments received in advance on the balance sheet.

- Gift Aid of £2,595 was received this year. This is considerably less than in 2021/22 when the figure was boosted by the Gift Aid on a large one-off donation to the Society.
- The Society plays a role in the management of the Clock Tower and receives a share of the income it generates, which in 2022/23 amounted to £3,500.
- Other income included £2,077 from publications, £2,032 for excursions, which was partly offset by £1,630 spending, and £1,194 from lectures.

#### Expenditure:

- The Society arranged an extensive programme of lectures from September through to May: some available in Marlborough Road Methodist Church only, some on Zoom only and some hybrid. Total costs, including lecturers' fees and expenses and hall hire were £2,842.
- The Society's colour newsletter was published quarterly. An increase in printing costs has lifted the cost of publication to £3,609.
- The Society's Library is available for the use of all members. The costs, including specialist software, book purchases and equipment were £2,742.
- The Society mounted a major exhibition on the Second Battle of St Albans in the city's Museum + Gallery, at a cost of £7,535. Although the costs of mounting the exhibition were incurred in the year ending 31 May 2023, a large amount was only paid after this date. This amount, £6,576, has been recorded as a liability on 31 May 2023.
- The Society held a number of events for members during the year, including a History Fair, a New Year Party, an archaeology conference (in conjunction with Welwyn Archaeological Society) and a book launch. Expenditure on these events was £2,257, offset by income of £1,632.

#### Balance Sheet:

- The balance sheet shows a small increase in undesignated funds to £40,901.
- The trustees believe undesignated funds should not fall below expected annual expenditure, which is £20,000 for the year ending 31 May 2024. This means that the Society is well-placed to undertake new projects in the next few years and the Council is considering a number of options.

**Tony Dolphin**  
**Hon. Treasurer**

## OUTINGS GROUP REPORT

This year we have organised three outings for members. The first was to the Barbican Estate, guided by Peter Burley. A fascinating and revealing walk around this complex which is sometimes described as 'neo-brutalist'. Peter, however, revealed the beauty and the care of construction of this important development.

Second, we had a repeat visit to the Piccotts End medieval paintings, with the excellent talk by one of the owners who has researched the history and iconography of the murals in great detail. It is not known how long this site will be available to the public for various practical reasons and is only open for a very few days each year.

Third, on 20 September, Sally Pearson is hosting a trip to Cirencester, second largest town in Roman Britain. A great comparison with the third largest – our own Verulamium.

All of our outings are fully, and indeed over-subscribed, which is most satisfying. We will be meeting to discuss next year's programme after the summer. We already have one outing in planning, David Harrold's visit to Bury St Edmunds.

**Dr Tony Berk**

## ST JULIAN'S RESEARCH GROUP

Research continues into this central part of the ecclesiastical parish of St Stephens. Beyond the ancient borough boundaries, it is underrepresented in the historiography of St Albans. The Group has however already brought much of local interest into the public domain. Sandy Norman's article on the intriguingly named Woad Mead has been accepted for *Herts Past and Present*; the history of Glebe House has appeared in the Society's *Newsletter*. One of the logbooks of St Stephen's National School, predecessor to Killigrew School in Chiswell Green, has been transcribed and the Group's research has contributed to several of the Society's local history seminars.

A history of the estate at St Julian's is proposed, but currently on hold. Analysis of the account book of Mrs Elizabeth Ashurst (nee Hollis), for whom St Julian's was a summer residence from 1746-85, will now however contribute to a history of the dissenting community in the eighteenth century. The Ashurst and Hollis families played a significant role in that community, both nationally and in the St Albans area

**Kate Morris**



## TRANSITION GROUP REPORT

Our project to study how the town of St Albans moved from the control of the abbot to self-government at the hands of local inhabitants is now over 18 months old. We continue to make good progress in answering our key research questions. For example, we can throw new light on the religious environment of the 1530s, and about how the town acquired the 1553 charter. We can also add important new information to the published story of the establishment of St Albans School. We have also found fascinating documents such as Thomas Vaughan's probate inventory with its description of the exquisite contents of his wife's wardrobe.

At the time of writing we are just starting the third and final phase of our research. We'll be considering the effects on the Abbey's dissolution on the town's economy and property market as well as changing attitudes to religious adherence and the poor. With a fair wind our findings should be published as early as 2025.

**Jon Mein and Ailsa Herbert**

## CLOCK TOWER REPORT

It's been a busy few months since we opened at Easter but we're not quite

back to pre-Covid visitor numbers yet. From April to June our daily visitor figures varied from 103 to 273, with an average of 178. This compares poorly with 2019, our last fully open season, where the numbers varied from 93 to 411, with an average of 193.

The 'Big Help Out' day in May, part of the King's Coronation Celebrations, proved to be quite successful, in that we attracted eight new volunteers.

Progress has been slow regarding the replacing of the plaque on the outside of the Clock Tower with a newly worded sign, a replacement toposcope on the roof due it being so faded by the sun it is now barely readable, and four new information boards on the roof top which will identify the buildings that visitors can see in each direction. Hopefully, all these new signs will be ready for our opening next Easter.

Thank you to all those Clockateers who have helped to keep the Clock Tower open to the public this year!

**Caroline Howkins**

## LOCAL HISTORY SEMINARS

The Society's local history seminar programme again ran with a wide variety of subjects including: the history of

Bowgate and Snatchup Alley, church bell-ringing at St Stephen's, our collection of historic cedar trees, Sopwell Lane, the transition from monastery to charter borough in St Albans, and the city of Verulam in South Africa.

The Society owes Kate Morris a great debt for running the programme for some years and recognises that her family situation sadly prevents her from continuing in that role. A project group is now establishing how best to take this initiative forward and provide members with a forum to allow sharing of ideas. We will keep members informed.

**John Morewood**

## **PUBLICATIONS COMMITTEE REPORT**

Our year began with the launch of *St Michael's village* at a most enjoyable party at Kingsbury Barn. This was the second issue in our Concise History series; its sales generated £1,193 revenue during 2022/23.

Total revenue for SAHAAS book sales in 2022/23 was £2,077 – an increase of £501 over the previous year. Direct sales accounted for 60 per cent of total revenue, bookshops 28 per cent, and online 12 per cent. We were pleased to

have sold 34 books at the Society's History Fair last autumn.

The committee met three times.

Looking forward, we have several publications planned for 2023-24, including one on the St Albans straw hat industry and a second volume of St Albans Wills, for the period 1616-1629. Other plans include strengthening our marketing activities, improving our online sales' performance and helping to progress a digitisation strategy for the Society.

**Pat Broad**

## **NEWSLETTER REPORT**

Normally I have little new to cover in this AGM report. However, as you may have noted from the Treasurer's Report (pp. 8-9), printing costs have risen steeply in the 2022/23 period. Remedial action is being considered.

As ever I must take this opportunity to thank members who contribute so much to this quarterly production. Forty members of the Society have provided content for the previous four newsletters, alongside a further five non-members including St Albans Museums' staff. From these have come ideas as well as the material you have read over the last year. Moreover, four

members, namely, Bryan Hanlon, Julia Merrick, Roger Miles and Donald Munro, review each edition before it goes to press.

As to the distribution of the finished article, Christine McDermott organises dispatch of over 550 copies four times a year. In particular, Christine sorts copies into groups which she and six other members then deliver to many of you who live in St Albans and Harpenden. Due to this magnificent seven – Christine, Tony Cooper, Paula Dilger, Jenny Faldon, Julia Merrick, Graham Norman and Lin Watson – we save several hundred pounds a year on postage, a significant sum.

Many thanks, one and all.

**Jon Mein**

## **17TH CENTURY GROUP REPORT**

The database has been transferred to the Society's Library and also the family trees for the inhabitants of St Albans during the whole of the 17th century. Parish registers, wills, inventories and probate accounts plus any other stray references found by our team have been used to construct the diagrammatic pedigrees. Photocopies of some wills and transcriptions are also now in the Library.

Work on the second book (1616-29) of probate documents has been ongoing throughout the year. The introduction, transcriptions and appendices were submitted to the Publications Committee in October 2022. Since then, editing and checking has been ongoing. It is hoped that it will be published in 2024. There is material for a third book, taking the Society's work up to 1649 at which date the earlier publication *St Albans 1650-1700* takes over the history of the people of 17th century St Albans. Despite our appeals in previous newsletters, no-one has stepped forward to help bring this third book to fruition. When the book in preparation is published, I shall be retiring from the role and am grateful to the Library team for taking on the custody of the research documents and computer files.

I should also like to take the opportunity of thanking my co-author, Jane Harris, and other members of the 17th century group team: Susan Bellamy, Irene Cowan, Ailsa Herbert, David Lasky and Carol Parker for their help and support over the past 20 years.

**Pat Howe**

## **LECTURES REPORT**

Firstly, I wish to thank eight SAHAAS members who gave lectures this year and the small technical team, notably

Frank Iddiols and Mark Percival, joined recently by Clare Wilsdon, who ensured members had access to our 25 lectures. Twelve lectures were of local and twelve of national/international interest. One lecture covered a traditional endangered craft, namely glassmaking.

During 2022-2023 there has been a mixture of delivery methods. Six lectures were Church only, ten Zoom only and nine hybrid. Low in-person attendance during the Autumn gradually increased to an average of 71; compared to Zoom-only 105; and hybrid 117. Zoom-only lectures allow access to those with mobility issues and provide a greater

range of speakers. This balanced delivery methodology will continue.

Recently a simplified method of delivery has been successfully implemented which it is hoped will encourage others to volunteer. Thanks to our President, Trevor Baker of Abbots Langley History Society has agreed to provide technical support if required. I believe we can approach next season with greater confidence in our ability to consistently deliver to members near and far.

**Gill Girdzius**  
**lectures@stalbanhistory.org**

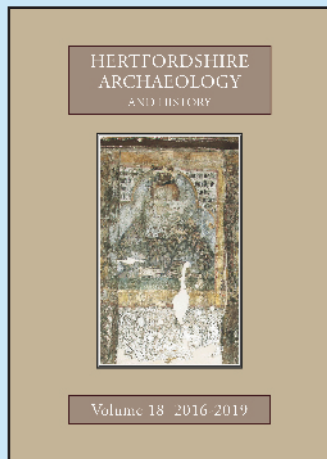
## **HERTFORDSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORY VOL. 18**

The Society's journal, published in partnership with the East Herts Archaeological Society, is the journal of record for archaeological activity in the county. It also contains some lengthy history articles and is printed in colour throughout.

The current volume, no. 18, includes an article by Prof. James Clark titled 'St Albans Abbey and the People of St Albans: from the Conquest to Dissolution'. Full details of the contents of both the current and earlier volumes are available in the Publications section on the Society's website.

Vol. 19 should be published later this year.

Each member of the Society is entitled to buy one copy for £5.00, the price otherwise being £20.00. If you cannot collect from the centre of St Albans, the cost of post and packing is £3.50 per copy. For further details, please email Christine McDermott via [hertsarch@stalbanhistory.org](mailto:hertsarch@stalbanhistory.org).



## LIBRARY REPORT

Our objectives are to grow the library and to increase its use. The History Fair last September was an excellent opportunity to demonstrate the depth and breadth of the Library's collections; more recently we held a very successful 'open afternoon' at Sandridge Gate where we welcomed many of you and looked at Fishpool Street through photographs old and new. We hope to make this an annual event.

We have been blessed with donations this past year, amongst them a collection of glass lantern slides and many photographs, as well as very many books, pamphlets and other sorts of printed material. Although everything needs cataloguing, occasionally repair and, most difficult of all, a safe place finding for it in a full-to-bursting library, it all contributes to the understanding of our local history. We thank all our donors for their generosity. We will continue to add to our collections in the coming year and encourage you to come and explore them.

Last, but definitely not least, our thanks go to our volunteers on the Library team. Without them there wouldn't be a library for you to use.

**Heather Jardine**

## Recent Journal Articles

*Newsletter – Harpenden & District Local History Society*, no. 149, April 2023 pp.15-26. "A history of Avenue St Nicholas, Harpenden: part 1", by Derek French. This is a study of the development of the road with notes on individual houses on the west side and their occupants.

*Rickmansworth Historical Review*, Issue no. 30, June 2023.

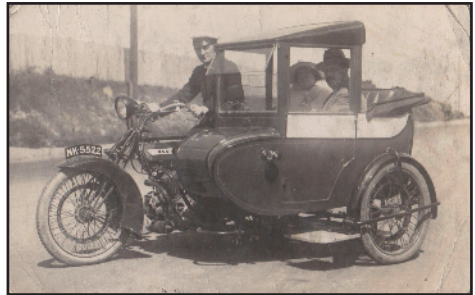
pp.3-5 "Griffin, a Rickmansworth ale-housekeeper in 1608", by Heather Falvey. Griffin is described as blind with a wife noted for a "badd life" and was suspected of harbouring a criminal. It was claimed his licence was granted in return for bribes.

pp.15-18 "Watford in the 1920s: three ladies of Trewins Department Store", by Helen George. The life and careers of Rose Garman, dress maker; Florence Nobbs, a draper's buyer; and Edith Partington, a milliner are explored. This essay was a winner in the 1920s Streets competition run by The National Archives and the British Association for Local History.

**Lin Watson**

## FRED HOLLAND: THE VERY FIRST TAXI DRIVER IN ST ALBANS?

Family tradition suggests that Fred Holland from the Fleetville area started the first motorised taxi service in St Albans shortly after being demobbed from the army around 1918. True or not, Fred was certainly in the business by 1924 when this photo was taken showing him driving Jerry White, owner of the Grand Palace cinema in Stanhope Road, with unknown other.



Fred Holland and his motor-cycle with 2-seater side car (Copy from the Society's Library)

With many thanks to (Fred) John Holland, the grandson of the above Fred, for his permission to publish this photo and for donating to the Society's Library copies of various newspaper clippings relating to the family.

**Di Dunn**

## MISSING LINKS

The Society's Library has some gaps in its collection of the *Alban Link*, the newsletter of the Fraternity of the Friends of Saint Albans Abbey. If you can help fill these gaps by donating copies of any of the following, please do let us know.

No. 21 (Summer 1985), no. 26 (Spring 1987), nos. 34-36 (Spring 1991-Spring 1992), no. 38 (Spring 1993), no. 40 (Spring 1994), no. 63 (Autumn 2005), nos. 75-76 (Autumn 2011- Spring 2012), no. 80 (Spring 2014).

**Lin Watson**  
**library@stalbanhistory.org**

## CONGRATULATIONS...

We are pleased to see that Mark Freeman, a member of the Society, has been promoted to the position of Professor of Social History and Education at University College London.



## JOHN BRODRICK

It is with regret that we record the death of John in May of this year at the age of 96. He held the presidency of the Society from 2002-05. He came to St Albans during his career with Marconi. Both at school and university his favourite subject was history. St Albans provided a wealth of historical material to foster this interest – from the Romans, through the years of the Benedictine monastery to the seventeenth century on which he wrote: “there the filaments of British history gather to a focus, from whence they spread out again in very different hues .... Much of modern Britain has its origins in that century.”



John Brodrick

An enthusiastic member of SAHAAS, he enjoyed 11 years as Lecture Secretary (1991-2002). Members remember his dinner parties for the Friday evening speakers with pleasure and for which he did all the cooking. During that period he gave a series of lectures to

the Society in order to raise funds for the beautiful extension to the Verulamium Museum completed in 1999.

John was keen to promote archaeological practice in the Society especially by helping the Museum group complete writing up digs they had worked on.

Kate Morris, President from 1999 to 2002, impressed by John's enthusiasm and accomplishments in relation to St Albans heritage, invited John to follow her in the presidency. In his spell in that role he made valiant efforts to introduce business methods into the running of the Society but members of Council at the time were entrenched in their own ways and he faced an uphill struggle.

John retired to Devon in 2006 but retained his membership of SAHAAS and made several generous donations to our funds.

**Pat Howe**

## 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 November edition is 15 October.

## CONGRATULATIONS TO...

Philippa Parker for her recent 'Personal Achievement Award' from the Hertfordshire Association for Local History. Although a long-term member of SAHAAS, her citation records her involvement in a number of initiatives in Letchworth where she moved in 2014. It notes inter alia her role as secretary of the Letchworth Garden City Society, a cross between a civic society and a local history society. Also, with Janet Capstick, she edited an important history of industry in the town, *Industrial Letchworth: the first garden city 1903-1920*, published by Hertfordshire Publications. Moreover, Philippa has been instrumental in ensuring an extensive collection of early photographs of the town is now in the public domain.



David Short, HALH President, presenting the award to Philippa (© Philip Sheail)

## THE VIDEO HISTORY OF ST MICHAEL'S CHURCH ON THE WEB

You may recall Revd Kenneth Padley's article in the August 2020 *Newsletter* about four short videos that tell the story of St Michael's. A further ten films have subsequently been made by residents of the parish, produced by Adam Singer, filmed by Donato Cinicolo, music by Colin Hamling, and presented by Kenneth Padley.

The aim is to keep the congregation connected with their place of worship, and to include the educational needs of tourists and visitors. The videos take advantage of St Michael's 1000 years of history to tell 'The Story of English Christianity in Ten Objects'. They cover topics such as Francis Bacon, the church's bells, and the fascinating medieval Doom painting. You can find the videos on the church's YouTube channel by searching in the YouTube search bar for 'stmichaelswithstmarysinsta6158'.

## COMMEMORATING FREDERICK SANDER: INSTALLATION OF A BLUE PLAQUE

Blue Plaques St Albans (BPSA) installed a plaque in honour of Frederick Sander, on 10 June at 21 George Street.

Frederick Sander (1847-1920) was a renowned orchidologist and horticulturist. Born in Germany, Sander said that he came to England with a half crown in his pocket. However, already an accomplished nurseryman, he and his wife were able to purchase a seed shop at 21 George Street.

Sander was to play a crucial role in the orchid trade, collecting numerous orchid species from around the world. Expanding his business, with nurseries at the Camp and then abroad in Bruges and New Jersey, USA, he stoked the fashion for orchids, introducing exotic species to Europe and contributing significantly to the diversity of orchids available to horticulturists and enthusiasts. He also collaborated with leading botanists and orchid experts of his time, adding to scientific knowledge and taxonomy. Sander received numerous awards and honours, including the Victoria Medal of Honour, for his contributions to horticulture and was highly respected within the orchid community.



The blue plaque at 21 George Street  
(© Tim Boatswain)

The guests of honour at the installation ceremony were the Mayor, Cllr Anthony Rowlands, the Mayoress, Annie Stevenson and, most appropriately, sixteen of Frederick Sander's descendants, from great-grandchildren to great-great-great grandchildren. The ceremony began with an introduction by Prof. Tim Boatswain, the Chair of BPSA, explaining about that organisation and providing background information on Sander. The Mayor then followed, welcoming the many attendees. He congratulated BPSA on its blue plaques scheme and emphasised the importance of heritage and history for society.

Frederick Sander's blue plaque serves as a testament to his legacy and ensures that his name and accomplishments will be remembered by future generations of St Albans.

**Prof. Tim Boatswain**

## THE KING'S ROAD STREET MEMORIAL UNVEILED

Saturday, 13 May 2023 was a very big day for King's Road St Albans residents. It was the long-awaited unveiling of our Great War street memorial.

Five years ago, at the centenary of the armistice, the seed of our memorial was planted in my head. I had attended an exhibition about the St Michael's Church memorial held by local historian Ann Dean and was struck by how many men from our small street had been lost. Out of 60 homes, 15 men had died in the war. The youngest was 16 years old, the oldest 38. Three were brothers. It is hard to imagine the collective bereavement suffered in communities just like ours all over Britain at that

time. In line with our city's street memorial tradition, we wanted to honour these King's Road men. This project has been a real community effort. We first came together four and a half years ago to set the ball rolling. Naively, we never imagined it would take this long. COVID did not help.

We have been very lucky that time has been donated freely and generously by so many individuals. Most importantly we secured the support from artist Renato Niemis. His name came up at our first meeting by a neighbour who had the vision to suggest creating something new for the twenty-first century. Renato had designed the beautiful glass wall at the Imperial War Museum at Duxford commemorating American airmen based in Britain, lost in the



Joan Stanley, niece of Fred Henry, unveils the memorial (© Katy Lewis / BBC)

Second World War. I emailed him and amazingly he agreed to help. He designed a modern, subtle, elegant piece of sculpture made of a rusty metal called corten. It comprises a framework of fifteen 'bricks', each with details of the men who died. In contrast to other memorials, they contain their personal details; their age, occupation, regiment, rank, date of death and house number. The bricks are symbolic in many ways. They are the colour of khaki, of the mud of the trenches and they represent the ordinary nature of the men.

After a long search, JFK Signs of London were identified as having the skills to manufacture and install our memorial. It became apparent very early on that we would not be able to proceed further without 'future proofing' the project. Cllr Edgar Hill was instrumental in getting the District Council to adopt our memorial and add it to their existing street memorial portfolio. Legalities were complicated but contracts were finally drawn up between the Committee, householders of the memorial wall and the Council. This would have been impossible without the pro bono help of solicitor Michael Labrum.

Funds were raised by a 'gardens in bloom' event, quiz night, mega raffles, profits from the publication of *King's Road: for King and Country\**, a

gofundme page, a large grant from the Civic Society and other donations. In total we raised more than £12,000.

An appeal in the *Herts Advertiser*, on the St Albans Facebook page, the SAHAAS *Newsletter* and word of mouth brought forward many of these men's families. Meeting them and learning more of their stories has been one of the most rewarding parts of the project.

Many of these families were present on 13 May. The actual unveiling was carried out by Joan Stanley, age 93, niece of Fred Henry who died of wounds in 1916 when he was 19 years old. She was assisted by Major Rhys Little from the Anglian Regiment. Also present were two standard bearers from the Anglian Regimental Association, the vicar of St Michael's, who dedicated and blessed our memorial and over 200 members of our local community. The last post was played by a trumpeter while standards were lowered.

A letter home from Fred Henry to his Aunt Annie was read where he ends 'I hope to see you all after the war'.

I am glad we have been able to bring these men home to King's Road again.

**Judy Sutton**

\* <https://bit.ly/3pOtaYU>



## **“WHY THE ANGLO-SAXONS MATTER”**

**By Professor Michael Wood**

### **The Society’s 175th Anniversary Lecture**

On Friday 2 June a packed house at St Albans School was treated to a splendid address with Q&A session by one of Britain’s leading historians. The event was a long time in the making, and we must thank Helen Bishop for the idea and the initial approach, and her successors as President, Sandy Walkington and Dr John Morewood, for persevering in making it happen through the vagaries of pinning an elusive speaker amidst the added complications of COVID. Though two years late, the effort was well worth it.

Michael Wood first came to prominence with his television series and book *In Search of the Dark Ages* (1981)



An expectant packed house  
(© Andy Lawrence)

and his work has been hugely influential in the presentation of history on screen. He is highly regarded and an inspiration for several younger historians who now hold early medieval chairs themselves.

The lecture was broadly a run through of the more significant changes in his substantially expanded, updated and re-written edition of *In Search of the Dark Ages* (Penguin, 2022) which incorporates archaeological finds of the past 40 years, and which now includes chapters on influential women and largely unrecognised scholars.

If the presentation had little of the rhetorical flourish of some recent speakers, it did have in abundance the exemplary characteristics of Wood’s approach – fidelity to and the capacity to bring alive his sources, and the ability to tell a story whilst conveying genuine wonder and appreciation of the remarkable achievements and lasting influence of people from times long ago.

The talk focused mainly on people who were active in England or originated there. But this was no Anglo-centric paean. Rather Professor Wood was at pains to place and see Anglo-Saxon England in and part of a virtually borderless Christendom to which people



with English connections made lasting cultural contributions.

The prime example of this was his pulling from obscurity Theodore of Tarsus, Archbishop of Canterbury, and his companion the learned and diplomatically experienced Hadrian the African. Taking his cue from Bede and in almost reverential tones, Wood described how this didactic duo, arriving 75 or so years after Augustine, established a school in Canterbury (famed Europe-wide), devised and rolled out a programme of education that established systematic rules for grammar etc., and secured transmission of classical and early Christian texts, so firming the foundations and ensuring the survival of education and learning in England. Manuscript studies have revealed fragmentary copies of Hadrian's teaching notes in later medieval libraries in Europe. Truly a major cultural contribution to our civilisation.

The European context was also touched on in his account of Eadgyth Princess of Wessex, daughter of King Edward the Elder, Queen of Holy Roman Emperor Otto I. Her remains were uncovered in a tomb in Magdeburg as recently as 2010.

Amongst other women, Wood pointed to the significance in the reconquest of

the Danelaw of Aethelflaed, ruler of Mercia and a daughter of Alfred of Wessex ("Without [her] England might not have happened"). He also gave us an account of Wynflaed, a well-to-do tenth century widow from southern England, thought to have been the first British woman to have left a will. Some time was spent on the importance of Athelstan, the first recognised King of England who continued and consolidated his grandfather Alfred's legal and governmental initiatives, laying the foundations of parliament. The significance of major archaeological finds in further excavations at Sutton Hoo and for example the Staffordshire hoard were also touched on.

The paper was followed by an interesting Q&A session. His gentle dismissal of widely-held Wirral claims for the battle site of Brunanburh was characteristically diplomatic (a possible Cheshire location simply does not appear in the sources). His alternative suggestion of a site close to the Roman fort at Burghwallis by the A1 north of Doncaster was persuasive.

Do the Anglo-Saxons matter? Of course they do! Our thanks to Michael Wood. His search for the Dark Ages gave us a thoroughly illuminating evening.

**Donald Munro**

## KEEP THE DATE – HALH SYMPOSIUM

This year's Herts Association for Local History Symposium will be held on Saturday 14 October, 10am to 4pm. The venue is the Katherine Warington School in Harpenden (AL5 5FH). Full details will be posted on the association's website ([halh.org.uk](http://halh.org.uk)) in due course; we'll send you the link via 'enews' as and when they are available. If you have any questions, please email [contact@halh.org.uk](mailto:contact@halh.org.uk).

With this year's theme being 'Rebels, Traitors and Eccentrics in Hertfordshire', the programme will include the following talks:

*George Edward Dering of Lockleys, Welwyn* (Jennifer Ayto)

*Gabriel Barbor – an unlikely rebel* (Alan Thomson)

*Oddballs of Ashwell* (David Short)

*Scandals, Slander and Gossip* (Elizabeth Eastwood)

*Highwaymen and Footpads* (Nicholas Blatchley)

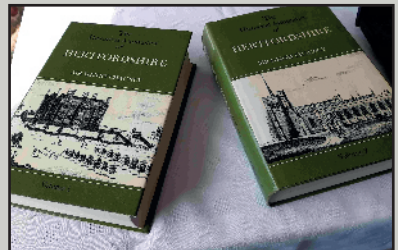
*Murder, Bigamy and Domestic Abuse in 17th-century Herts* (Clare Gittings)

*Riot, Rumpus and Revolution – songs from the time of the Chartists* (The Chiltern West Gallery Quire)

Tickets £15 for HALH members; £18 for non-members. Buffet lunch £9.

## FOR SALE: CHAUNCY'S *HERTFORDSHIRE*

Long-term members of the Society may recall the late Bill Dodds. On behalf of his family, one of our members is offering this book from his collection for sale: *The Historic Antiquities of Hertfordshire* by Sir Henry Chauncy. It is the 1975 2-volume reprint of the 1826 reprint, not the original 1700 publication.



If you are interested in acquiring this book, please contact the editor via [newsed@stalbanshistory.org](mailto:newsed@stalbanshistory.org) and he'll put you in touch with the seller.

## PLAYING MUSIC IN 17TH CENTURY ST ALBANS

It is always satisfying to be able to augment the work of another researcher. Most of the 17th Century Research Group's enquiries relate to family history and it has been exciting to correspond with or may be even meet face-to-face with a descendent of some of the seventeenth century inhabitants of St Albans. Recently we received an enquiry from Professor Stephen Rose who had read of our work on the Society's website. Prof. Rose's enquiry is different: he is investigating the spread and volume of ownership of musical instruments.

We have some evidence in local probate inventories, but it is not extensive. Most common are virginals, a keyboard instrument always described as a 'pair' of virginals. The documents of Ralph Gladman, baker, Gyles Marston, yeoman, William Wiggins who ran the White Hart in the 1620s, William Forrest, a shoemaker and John Street, a musician, all list a pair. Citterns, a popular instrument like today's guitars, feature in the inventories of draper, John Clarke and Robert Kentish, a landowner who styled himself 'gentleman'. Thomas Comporte and William Marston also owned citterns but their occupations are unknown to us. Anne Lomax,

wife of a well-to-do lawyer, owned a bass viol.

Thanks to Heather Jardine, our Librarian, Prof. Rose spent several hours working his way through our files of transcribed inventories. Here is his feedback:

'I located several interesting references to musical instruments in the probate inventories, some of which were already mentioned in the book *St Albans: A thoroughfare town*,\* and some of which were new to me. It was very instructive to see these references within the context of each household's inventory (showing, for instance, the rooms in which instruments were housed or used), and also in the broader context of inventories for poorer or more agricultural households.'

We hope to hear more about Prof. Rose's research at a future lecture.

With thanks to Jane Harris for her input.

**Pat Howe**  
**century17@stalbanshistory.org**

\* J. Smith and M. North (eds.), *St Albans 1650-1700: a thoroughfare town and its people* (Hatfield, 2003), p.226. Copy in the Society's Library.

## WALKING THE 1461 BATTLEFIELD

The BBC's dramatization of the 'The White Queen' opened with a knight sitting down, taking off his helmet and being killed. This was Sir John Grey and the incident may have taken place near the King William IV pub and Majestic Wine Warehouse. His death – unnoticed at the time – was the most important event in the Second Battle of St Albans (17 February 1461) because his widow then married Edward IV.

This was one of many stories told by Peter Burley and Mike Elliott on the recent walk around the battlefield. Despite hearing Peter's talks about the battle on several occasions, I must admit to being somewhat negligent in never having joined one of his walks before. What I learned complemented those talks as our perambulation brought home how crucial the topography of the Bernards Heath area was to the strategies of the respective leaders.



The group at Beech Bottom Dyke where the Earl of Warwick set his defences (© Chris May)

Motoring along at 30mph we easily ignore even brief hills like those in Beech and Sandridge roads. And for the same reason most of us fail to notice the subtle ridges in the area that provided defensible positions for medieval armies. As a result, only by walking the battlefield can you get a true feel for what happened.

The walk was also a reminder that the study of history doesn't stand still. Peter referred to a new-ish source for the battle which provides fresh perspectives of the actions of several leading combatants. Found in Dublin some ten years ago, this was a previously missing page from one of the key chronicles describing the battle (See *Newsletter*, May 2015, pp. 25-26). Moreover, as Mike explained, in the last couple of years downward revisions in the estimates of those who fought at the Battle of Towton (29 March 1461) suggest that 'our' second battle has leapfrogged to the top of the list in terms of the numbers of soldiers engaged.

This was a good walk further enhanced by the subsequent delicious tea of sandwiches and fresh fruit prepared for us in St Saviour's Church Hall. If you get the chance to go on one of these walks, please do take it.

**Jon Mein**

## NEWS FROM THE WELWYN ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

The main activity for most members of the Society remains its annual lecture season. We host ten lectures each Autumn-Winter season in the United Reformed Church hall in Welwyn Garden City opposite Sainsbury's. Lectures are on a Friday evening starting at 7.45pm. Last season started with our Prehistoric Society-sponsored talk by Neil Wilkin on 'Staging the World of Stonehenge' and included lectures on Peru, the Roman glass industry, Iron Age sites in Romania and the Enderby Shield. Next season begins on the 13 October with Matt Pope (UCL) talking about his research into the palaeolithic.

WAS remains a member of the *Combined Hertfordshire Archaeological Societies* which hosts six on-line lectures per year on the first Monday of the month from October to March. Of interest to SAHAAS members was the lecture on the Roman lead slingshot from Windridge Farm by John Reid. Recent research published in the journal *Britannia* suggests these slingshot are early, possibly Roman Republican. Was Windridge Farm the site of a battle during the Caesarian invasion of 54 BC?

The Society, jointly with SAHAAS, organised the fourth *Archaeology in Hertford-*

*shire* Conference in October which was reported in the February 2023 SAHAAS *Newsletter*. We are planning the fifth conference in 2024.

Progress on post-excavation has been very slow due to a lack of somewhere to work. We are hopeful that Welwyn Hatfield Museums may progress the plan to build the *Community Archaeology Research Centre* in Welwyn but the departure of the curator to the Charles Dickens Museum earlier this year means progress has yet-again stalled. Students at UCL continue to use material from our excavations for dissertation research.

WAS is part of the *Community Archaeology Geophysics Group* which has been running for ten years. The group has surveyed approximately 55 sites including Verulamium. This year has seen CAGG assist our sponsor, the Institute of Archaeology, UCL, surveying sites in Greenwich Park and Suffolk prior to training excavations and helping teach masters students on the field course at Sopwell. We have also teamed up with Oxford University Continuing Education to survey a neolithic long barrow, and Herts HER on sites in the north of the county.

**Dr Kris Lockyear**  
**noviodunum@hotmail.com**

## THE HALH SPRING MEETING

Our Society was well represented at the spring meeting of the Hertfordshire Association for Local History (HALH) on 13 May 2023. This was held at Barley Town House, in the small village of Barley, south-east of Royston (See photo). A sixteenth-century Grade II\* listed building that claims to be one of the oldest village halls in the country, the Town House was an attractive and appropriate location for HALH's annual showcase of research on Hertfordshire history, and for the Lionel Munby Memorial Lecture.

The morning was given over to a series of short talks on current research in local history, including our own John Morewood, who described three current projects – on the history of St Julian's, St Albans in the Civil Wars, and

the post-dissolution 'Transition' research.

Other speakers reported on work in locations across the county, ranging from the village of Barkway to the garden city of Letchworth and on periods from the late Iron Age to the twentieth century. The Barkway Local History Group is an intriguing and apparently very successful venture, hosting village walks, excursions and even archaeological digs, and with a well-presented website.\* Once a bustling small town on the main road between London and Cambridge, Barkway had some 35 inns during the eighteenth century, and also boasts a Second World War RAF mast.

Mike Smith from Wheathampstead explained recent research on the supposed oppidum of which 'Devil's Dyke' forms the western boundary. Mortimer Wheeler identified these earthworks as the 'probable' site of the great battle between Cassivelaunus and Julius Caesar, an association that Mike described as 'Wheathampstead's albatross'. It has become increasingly doubtful that Wheathampstead ever had an oppidum, and recent Lidar images, used to create a contour map of the site, strongly suggest



Barley Town Hall (© Elaine Saunders)



that many elements of the supposed prehistoric site, especially the so-called 'Slad', are in fact natural features of the landscape.

An interesting contribution from Dr Louise Morgan reported on some ongoing research into transportees to Australia – and some other locations – from the village of Codicote. Using local, national and Australian sources, Louise and others had managed to unearth a range of interesting stories about those sent abroad by the state, often for relatively minor offences, in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. There are fascinating and sometimes harrowing stories of life aboard convict ships, and often the subsequent careers of transportees can also be traced. Space does not permit mention of all the morning's talks, but these and the others show that local history in Hertfordshire is flourishing, albeit sometimes down to a handful of enthusiasts in a particular place.

After an enjoyable lunch spent browsing the book stalls, the annual general meeting and award of HALH prizes took place after lunch. Philippa Parker, a member of SAHAAS who has conducted a range of research in Letchworth and also spoke in the morning, received one of the awards (see p.18); the other was given to Des Turner of Aston, near

Stevenage, who has been working on the local history of the village since he moved there in 1966. Des runs a website that contains a wealth of information about Aston.\*\* He is also, with his wife Mavis, a well-known Punch & Judy performer, and is currently President of the Punch & Judy Fellowship.

The final session of the day was the Lionel Munby Memorial Lecture, appropriately presented by Sue Oosthuizen, Emeritus Professor of Medieval Archaeology at the University of Cambridge and a former member of staff at the Cambridge Board of Extra-Mural Studies where Munby worked for so many years. This was an engaging discussion of 'commons' and 'common rights' in historical perspective. Sue was right to tell us that, when we next walk across a common, we will think about it in new ways.

I am very grateful to HALH for the opportunity to attend this enjoyable and interesting event, and I hope to go to more in the future, and to see more fellow SAHAAS members there.

**Mark Freeman**

\* [www.barkwayhistory.com](http://www.barkwayhistory.com)

\*\* [astonvillage.tripod.com/astonvillage](http://astonvillage.tripod.com/astonvillage)

## QUEEN ANNE ARCHITECTURE IN ST ALBANS

Recently, Jon Mein pointed out a building in St Albans, nos. 6-10 Market Place, which he found particularly lovely as an example of an attractive style of the late nineteenth century architecture. This article looks at this unique design style and compares it with others in the city.

In the early 1860s, a new decorative style of building began to appear in Britain – so-called (Victorian) Queen Anne (QA) architecture. In some ways, this was a refutation of the Victorian Gothic, whose proponents described their style as ‘muscular’. Indeed, QA was more concerned with ‘sweetness and light’ and it became very fashionable with the public and architects, particularly around the 1870s, but into the early 1900s. ‘Sweetness’ referred to a sweeter and less muscular tone and ‘light’ to the enlightenment of its proponents, including, for instance, associates of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood.

The style, often in red brick, was exemplified by such extravagances as Dutch gables, swags, balconies, decorative white painted windows, even cherubs and curlicues. Mark Girouard in his book on the movement, *Sweetness and Light* (1984, p. 1), describes the style in the following terms:



Fig.1: Pike's new shop opened 1889  
(© Tony Berk)

“a kind of architectural cocktail, with little genuine Queen Anne in it, a little Dutch, a little Flemish, a squeeze of Robert Adam, a generous dash of Wren ... a strong character of its own ... mixed with skill and gaiety.”

We still have two examples in the centre of the city. Firstly, the narrow building at 28 Market Place, with its Dutch gable containing the words ‘Pike and Sons’. (See Fig.1) Pike and Sons were well-to-do local grocers and butchers and originally occupied a building at the back of 6-10 Market Place. In 1882, this whole block burnt down (see pp. 32-33) and,



Fig.2: Fisk's premises in the High Street; the QA frontage to the left dates to 1885; middle / right 1895

in due course, they built a new shop at no. 28. This opened as the butcher's department in 1889 (*Herts Advertiser*, 2 November 1889, p.5), along with the adjoining building to its right.

The second example is nos. 6-10 Market Place to the north of the Boot pub. (See p. 32, Fig.1) This was commissioned by the Fisk family, prominent drapers in the city, and soon mirrored the redevelopment of their shops in High Street. As you will see from Fig.2, these were also developed in QA style and, in Morton Glover, probably shared the same architect. These are now lost and replaced by the buildings fronting Heritage Close.

The identification of a definitive Queen Anne style is not always easy. The period of the last half of the nineteenth century is strongly identified with the Arts and Craft movement and Girouard

in his book, giving examples of the style, shows many buildings which may be better described as Arts and Craft, but clearly still ornate and with QA characteristics.

Not all QA buildings had Dutch gables as shown here, though Dutch gables of around 1860 to 1900, are good contenders. There is a third building in this category – the Beaumont works of Sutton Road, Fleetville (See Fig.3). Late in the period, opened February 1900, they were built by E.H. Hansell for the coat manufacturer, A. J. Nicholson, who came from an area of Manchester partly of the QA era and design. Perhaps he simply continued this tradition in St Albans. Nicholson also established a number of workers houses around the Beaumont works, with some QA characteristics, though late in the era and, perhaps, more Arts and Crafts.

**Tony Berk**



Fig.3: The former Beaumont Works  
(© Tony Berk)

## THE GREAT FIRE OF 1882 AND WHAT CAME NEXT

Many of us will have a favourite building in St Albans. A church perhaps, or one of the jettied buildings in the city's medieval core or it might be the place you call home. Mine are the shops you see on the right of the photo, nos. 6-10 Market Place (Fig.1). What grabs me are the embellishments, those swags so typical of Queen Anne designs that brighten otherwise drab brick buildings, together with the Flemish gables and the prominent balcony (Fig. 2). So, when Tony Berk offered to write the overview of Queen Anne architecture on pp. 30-31, I thought it was time for me to come out and declare my enduring love for this overlooked building.

I am not just enticed by the design though; there's an interesting history to

explore as well. Unusually we can be precise as to the date of the building's completion as the *Herts Advertiser* describes the opening of the new shops in an article in the 5 April 1884 edition (p.5), right at the height of the Queen Anne movement. It notes: "They are in red brick, with moulded brick cornices and terra cotta ornaments, and are carried out in the now fashionable 'Queen Anne' style." Intriguingly, it also records that they are "on part of the site of the great fire of 1882".

This was indeed a 'great' fire destroying the whole block between the Boot public house and the Corn Exchange. The painting from the museum's collection (Fig.3) appears to have captured the event, albeit its provenance is uncertain. The catalogue dates it to c.1900 but the fire itself started in the same location on Sunday 27 August

1882. The lengthy report and editorial in the *Herts Advertiser* (2 September 1882, pp. 5 & 6) published in a special 'fire' supplement the following day corroborate the picture's details.

The newspaper report marks a significant change in its reportage. This is no simple descrip-



Fig. 1: nos. 6-10 Market Place, middle and centre; no. 12 to left, 2018 (Jon Mein)





Fig. 2: nos. 6-10 Market Place showing people on the balcony viewing the fire brigade procession, 1906 (Reproduced courtesy of HALS)

tion of 200 words or so, typical of its style over the first 25 years of publication. Instead it mixes eye-witness statements with the journalist's critical views and runs with breathless verve to over 5,000 words. Complementing the report is the highly-critical editorial, itself over 1,000 words, focusing on matters such as planning regulations and the readiness of infrastructure needed to support the fire brigades. What raised the editor's ire especially was the City Council's decision to discuss the event's repercussions in camera.

Perhaps because of the fire, the *Herts Advertiser* took an interest in the buildings that replaced the burned-out husks. The first to be

completed was Mr Ekins' replacement chemist shop, no. 12 Market Place. This was in March 1883, just six months after the fire. He commissioned local architect and Arc & Arc member, Morton M. Glover to design what we see today. The freehold to nos. 6-10 was purchased after the fire by Fisk's the drapers and they employed the same architect. From the chronology and a brisk study of the buildings, Fisk appears to have invested more time and money into his development. Ekins was understandably in haste: compare the two buildings today to see what might have been.

**Jon Mein**

Note: my thanks to Caroline Howkins for bringing Fig.3 to my attention.



Fig. 3: supposed painting of the 1882 fire (St Albans Museums ref. PH2873)

## NEWS FROM THE MUSEUMS

In October 2022, we launched a new initiative to improve our adult engagement offer – a series of monthly history talks, delivered in the historic court-house and offered in a hybrid format to allow participants to engage via Zoom.

These talks covered a range of subjects, from local history, to deep-dives linked to current exhibitions and seasonal topics. So far, we have enjoyed talks as wide ranging as the origins of Christmas traditions, the history of St Albans pubs, updates about local archaeological discoveries, and a history of scandalous women. ‘Battlefield Queens: the Women of the Wars of the Roses’, which was put on to accompany and enhance the SAHAAS exhibition earlier this year, has been one of our most popular to date. It was such a good example of how this type of offer can expand upon the level of detail possible within an exhibition.

Far from a formal lecture series, these talks are entertainment as much as education. Speakers are encouraged not to take their own subject too seriously, and audiences have loved the combination of learning and laughing.

Helping St Albans Museum + Gallery reach new audiences has been one of

the key drivers and motivations behind the series. Right from our first ever talk – ‘Spooky St Albans’ – the visitor profile has been really varied: from teenage goths looking for local ghost stories to adults with specific historical interests, history students taking deeper dives into subjects covered at school, and groups of friends looking for a fun, novel experience.

To date, over 400 people have joined us and this is a figure we are hoping to improve and grow as we approach the series’ second year. If you have yet to join us, or know someone who this would appeal to, please spread the word. We hope to welcome you to an upcoming talk soon.

In August, Dr Amy Tooth-Murphy will be speaking about LGBTQ History. September sees the City Tour Guides presenting about the life of Samuel Ryder and, in October, Danielle Cavender-Handley will be giving her talk “‘I didn’t know that!’: The truth behind common phrases and sayings we’ve all been using wrong.’

For dates, times and tickets, visit: [stalban museums.org.uk/whats-on](http://stalban museums.org.uk/whats-on)

**Sarah Keeling**  
**Post-medieval curator**  
**St Albans Museum + Gallery**

## LECTURE PROGRAMME

12 September – 21 November 2023

All lectures commence at 7.45pm unless otherwise stated.

Please note the delivery of lectures will vary between Church only, Church plus live-streaming via Zoom and Zoom only. The aim is to build some predictability into the programme such that the first lecture each month will be held in the Church plus being live-streamed via Zoom; the second lecture each month will be Zoom only; whilst the third will be Church only. Every effort will be made to follow this pattern but there are many variables that may affect the order of lecture provision.

We will continue to offer occasional lectures that non-members can attend without charge.

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 12 September

### **The Wheathampstead Albatross**

Mike Smith

#### **Church and Zoom**

Not a talk about South Atlantic birdlife but rather the Ancient Mariner type of albatross that hangs around your neck like a curse. For the Wheathampstead History Society it is the idea that the Devil's Dyke was part of a large hillfort where Julius Caesar defeated the Catuvellauni in 54BC. Where did this popular theory come from and why has it hung around for so long? Mike Smith will explore the arguments for and against the hill fort while explaining why recent landscape archaeology may provide a surprising answer. The talk will also focus on the many resources for

would-be landscape archaeologists that are now available on the Internet.

*Mike Smith is a local historian and the chair of the Wheathampstead History Society. He is also an active member of the Community Archaeology Geophysics Group (CAGG).*

Tuesday 19 September

### **Black Crown: Henry Christophe, the Haitian Revolution and the Caribbean's Forgotten Kingdom**

Paul Clammer

#### **Zoom only**

How did a man born enslaved on a plantation triumph over Napoleon's invading troops and become king of the first free



black nation in the Americas? This is the remarkable story of Henry Christophe. Christophe was a child soldier in the American War of Independence, before becoming a leading general in the Haitian Revolution. Following Haitian independence, Christophe crowned himself King Henry I. His kingdom won the support of leading British abolitionists and produced great literary works, epic fortresses and opulent palaces – monuments to a revolutionary black monarchy in the world of Empire and slavery.

*Paul Clammer is the author of Black Crown: Henry Christophe, the Haitian revolution and the Caribbean's Forgotten Kingdom. He has been travelling to Haiti regularly since 2007 and also wrote the only English-language guidebook to the country published by Bradt Travel Guides as well as more than 40 guidebooks for Lonely Planet.*

Tuesday 26 September

### **AGM followed by 'Poles Apart'**

Roger Yapp

**Church and Zoom. The meeting starts at 7.30pm. Members only**

This is the almost unknown story of three country houses where Polish wireless operatives, technicians and codebreakers played a significant part in the effort to ultimately win the Second World War. The story traces the journey of the main characters from Poland, through Kazakhstan,

to Persia, Egypt, Scotland and eventually to villages near Hemel Hempstead, where they secretly worked to monitor enemy communications. Largely based upon the archives of Franek Rymaszewski, a young Polish radio operator, the story uncovers Hemel Hempstead's association with the cracking of the German Enigma codes, and dispels many local myths about what happened at three Hertfordshire country houses in the war.

*Roger Yapp is a local historian and chairman of the Abbots Langley Local History Society. He is recently retired and worked as an IT Programme and Project Manager in the financial services industry.*

Tuesday 10 October

### **The Stained Glass of Christopher Webb of St Albans**

Canon John Edwards

#### **Church and Zoom**

Christopher Webb (1886-1966) was a popular and prolific stained-glass artist of the mid-twentieth century. For the last 40 years of his life, he lived and had his studio and workshop at St Albans. This talk will give an overview of his life and work with a particular focus on commissions for St Albans and the surrounding area.

*John Edwards is a retired Anglican priest in the Diocese of Oxford and an Honorary Canon emeritus of Christ Church Oxford. He has been researching Webb's work*

*since 2015 and has compiled a comprehensive database of his stained glass and other ecclesiastical art; he has a collection of some 200 original design sketches and over 100 full-size cartoons and will bring a small selection to the talk.*

Tuesday 17 October

**Mountains, Mules & Malaria – the British Salonika Force Experience, 1915-1918**

Alan Wakefield

**Zoom only**

This talk examines the experiences of British soldiers fighting in the Salonika Campaign during the Great War. Letters, diaries and memoirs of soldiers are used to illustrate the nature of warfare in Macedonia and the problems of climate and disease.

*Alan is currently head of the First World War and Early 20th Century Conflict curatorial team at the Imperial War Museum. He is a member of the British Commission for Military History and chairman of the Salonika Campaign Society. Alan writes and lectures on various aspects of military history with particular emphasis on the First World War and over the past decade has led many tour groups to the battlefields of the Salonika Campaign. A former resident of St Albans, Alan was a member of the Arc and Arc's Homefront Project Group during the First World War Centenary.*

Tuesday 24 October

**'The Last of Old St Albans': Holmes Winter, the City's Preservation Pioneer**

Malcolm Holliday and David Thorold

**Church only**

Late-Victorian artist, Holmes Winter, moved to St Albans in 1879 where he established a business selling his paintings, in particular of Norfolk and St Albans. His boyhood friend, Frederic Kitton, joined him in St Albans in 1883. Both contributed to the preservation of historic buildings in St Albans. Come along and help identify which buildings from Winter's paintings remain intact.

*Malcolm Holliday has lived in St Albans for 30 years and, like Holmes Winter, has a long-term interest in the preservation of the city's architecture. He has researched many of Winter's paintings and sketches as has David Thorold. Besides being Curator of St Albans Museum + Gallery with responsibility for the Roman and Medieval periods, in 2022 David curated the exhibition of Frederic Kitton's life and times.*

Tuesday 7 November

**The History of Wembley Park: more than an iconic sports venue**

Dave Parker

**Church and Zoom**

Discover the little-known history of Wembley Park and its two famous stadia. It should have been the home of the

world's tallest tower, but the project became a fiasco. Instead, the British Empire Exhibition Stadium was opened as the centrepiece of the British Empire Exhibition, 1923. When this 'flopped', the stadium was saved from demolition and renamed the Wembley Stadium, complete with its iconic 'Twin Towers'. By the end of the twentieth century, however, it was showing its age. A new national stadium was needed: and so, a new and much improved stadium with its dramatic Wembley Arch, was built on the same site.

*Dave Parker is a former Visiting Professor of Civil Engineering at Queen's University Belfast, a technical editor, and the author of several non-fiction books.*

Tuesday 14 November

### **The Formation of Turkey, 1923**

Professor Reşat Kasaba

#### **Zoom only**

In 2023 Turkey celebrates its centenary as a key player in world politics. Discover the fascinating history surrounding its formation in 1923 following the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire at the end of the First World War. It is a powerful story combining economic history, state-society relations, migration, ethnicity and nationalism; and the vision of specific men such as Mustafa Kemal Atatürk.

*An expert in the history and politics of the Middle East, Professor Reşat Kasaba has*

*lectured at the Henry M. Jackson School of International Studies at the University of Washington for over 30 years and was its director from 2010 to 2020. Regularly approached by US local and regional media for insights into some of the world's most pressing issues, Kasaba has written and edited seven books and over 40 articles and opinion pieces.*

Tuesday 21 November

### **Victorian shop or Medieval Inn? A**

### **major new discovery in Chipping Barnet**

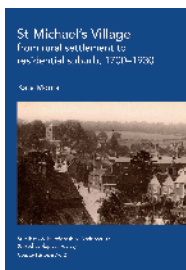
Lee Prosser

#### **Church only**

Building work in a little derelict shop in Barnet has revealed a row of fourteenth century buildings; an amazing chance survival in a town which was largely rebuilt by the Victorians. This talk will look at how the discovery was made, and the process of identifying and revealing the true significance of the building.

*Lee Prosser is Curator – Historic Buildings at Historic Royal Palaces, with responsibility for Kensington Palace and Kew Palace. He is a specialist in the historic buildings of Hertfordshire and retains an active interest in the built heritage of the county.*

# RECENT SOCIETY PUBLICATIONS

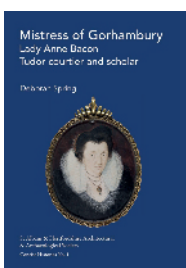


## **St Michael's village, from rural settlement to residential suburb, 1700-1930**

Kate Morris

The story of how St Michael's village was transformed from a thriving artisan community to an attractive residential suburb of St Albans.

**£7 + £1.80 p&p**

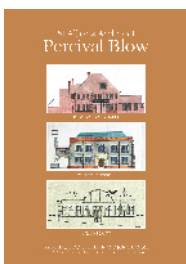


## **Mistress of Gorhambury, Lady Anne Bacon, Tudor courtier and scholar**

Deborah Spring

The life of a remarkable woman who had a considerable impact on the Tudor era.

**£6.50 + £1.80 p&p**

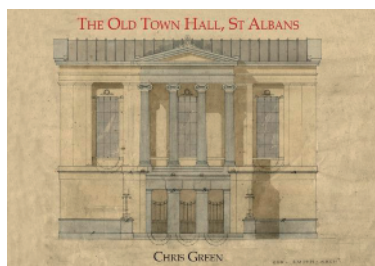


## **St Albans Architect Percival Blow: From Arts and Crafts to Gothic Revival and Art Deco**

Patricia Broad, Sue Mann & Jonathan Mein

The story of a very gifted man with a passion for good design, whose work has left a lasting legacy in St Albans.

**£6.99\*/£8.99 + £2.00 p&p**



## **The Old Town Hall, St Albans**

Chris Green

This book charts the history of the city's iconic old town hall over almost 200 years.

**£6\*/£6.99 + £2.00 p&p**

\* Members price. Note that it is not available in the online shop.

Available from our online bookshop, by email: [publications@stalbanshistory.org](mailto:publications@stalbanshistory.org), by phone: 01727 863340, and at most in-person lectures on Tuesday nights. Some books are also available in local bookshops

# PHOTOS FROM THE MICHAEL WOOD TALK

Photos © Andy Lawrence



The welcoming party: (l-r) Lady Verulam, Patron of SAHAAS, the Mayoress, Annie Stevenson, the Mayor, Cllr Anthony Rowlands, Prof. Michael Wood, and the three Society Presidents who did so much to make the event happen: Past Presidents Helen Bishop and Sandy Walkington together with Dr John Morewood, our current President



Prof. Wood taking questions



Prof. Wood accepting the gift of a Folio Edition copy of 'Beowulf' from John Morewood



Signing books