

*Potters Bar & District
Historical Society*

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The Newsletter

April 1989

Vol.5 No.3

The AGM marked the start of the Society's thirtieth year and it makes interesting reading to look back in the first Minute Book.

The first lecture to the Society was by Dr.F.Brittain on, 'South Mymms', on Tuesday, 23rd September 1959, and to commemorate this our President, has agreed to give a talk on the same subject, as the first monthly talk in October.

Perhaps more poignant at the present time is the reference at the 1st Nov.1963 Committee Meeting, that an Inquiry on the 14th Nov. was, 'to settle whether the new civic centre should be built at Oakmere, the question of the future of Wyllyotts still remains.'

In January 1961 Ken.Rutherford Davis suggested a booklet on the history of Potters Bar, this eventually appeared under his editorship, in 1966. Similarly, in Sept.1961 it was suggested that a photographic survey be made of old local buildings. Later in Nov.1967 a photographic record was to be made in 1968. The Society holds the eventual survey made by Mr.Bartlett in 1970-1, only nine years after it was first suggested!!

In 1961 the Society's first outing was led by Mr.F.Gowar to South Mimms Church, a year later a visit was made to St.Margaret's, Ridge. In 1963 the Society visited South Mimms Castle.

A printed programme was first envisaged in May 1962 when it was agreed to expend £4 on purchasing one hundred copies. Sept. 1968 saw a proposed quarterly News Bulletin.

Finally, Mr. Ottley, who recently re-joined the Society, was appointed to audit the accounts in Feb. 1964.

Let us hope that in this 30th year there will be some memorable events for the Society and its members.

THE A.G.M.

A record number of fifty-five members attended the 30th AGM, where the Secretary noted a further increase in membership, attendance at meetings and outings. He added a note of caution about the increasing number of office blocks and mentioned that there appeared to be a further delay on the Wyllyotts' site, where the Society had been negotiating for a Local Studies Centre.

The Treasurer, Peter White, presented his first report, which showed a further increase in the balance carried forward of nearly £3,000. An increase in the revenue from subscriptions and sustained income from publications were largely responsible for the prosperous financial position. As a Registered Charity the Society receives a higher interest rate on its Building Society account.

The Chairman noted that the last five years had seen an average annual increase of twenty-eight, in the membership. The balance had increased from £173 to nearly £3,000. He then said he would like to reach two hundred members in the coming year, and after such a period of rapid growth it would be better to have a pause, in which one could review the progress and prepare for the presumed further expansion when the Society had its own centre at Wyllyotts.

He thanked Barbara Clinton and Gordon Eve,

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As recognition of the efforts of Mrs.C.Wade, in The Broadway, and Mr.G.Case for the number of publications they had sold, it was approved by the members at the AGM, that they should be made honorary members.

The next publication will be the Society's Journal, which is free to all members.

SUMMER PROGRAMME

SATURDAY 10th JUNE Visit to Stratfield Saye.

See enclosed notice.

THURSDAY 20th JULY Village Tour of Bayford.

Meet opposite the Baker Arms, in the centre of the village, at 6.45 pm.

If one intends going please inform Brian Warren, as it is hoped that one of the villagers will be able to provide some refreshment at the end of the tour.

Those who have been on the tours of Ridge and Essendon will know they have been very enjoyable occasions blessed with fine weather.

As the parking in Bayford is not very easy it might be necessary to take fewer cars and ask members to double-up.

MAY LECTURE MONDAY 15th Oakmere House 8pm

'South Mimms Castle' by
Brian Warren.

The talk will provide the historical background to the time and then trace the subsequent discovery this century. The excavations since then will be outlined and the conclusions reported.

If you want to know more then come along.

THANKS

A very special thanks is due to Dan.Ruge-Cope for producing this edition, as he was already involved in St.Mary's Parish Magazine.

23 JANUARY "Some Aspects of 17th Century Hertford"
by Mr.A.Greening.

Seventeenth century Hertford was like most towns of that time, a self-contained unit, with local manufacture of the necessities of life. The records showed that as ever, wealth, education and good family connections were the best way to start on the ladder of fortune for aspiring artisans.

However, it was not unknown for people to be doing more than one job to survive in those times.

Mr.Greening, who is still researching the extensive records of Hertford, was thanked by Mr. T.G.Goulding for his talk.

16 FEBRUARY "Girdles, Belts and Rings: London's Green Belt from 1580-1989"
by Mr.A.J.Cooper.

The earliest legislation to stop building within three miles of the gates of the City of London was passed in 1580 by Elizabeth I. Then, in 1657, no new house was to be built within four miles of the City. However, laws did not stop London's growth, which reached its maximum by 1881.

In the 1890s Ebenezer Howard formed the Garden Cities Association and showed a need for a Green Belt. Letchworth started in 1903 and Hampstead Garden Suburb followed.

Later schemes were proposed for green belts and ring roads, but, in the opinion of the speaker the Green Belt Act, 1938, saved Potters Bar.

During the 2nd World War, Sir Patrick Abercrombie evolved plans which led to his County of London Plan, 1943 and his Greater London Plan a year later.

The M25 placed a greater strain on the Green Belt, especially in places like Potters Bar.

Mr.R.Whiteside proposed a vote of thanks to the speaker.

16 MARCH "The Great Fire of London" by Mr.G.Milne.

Mr.Milne, from the Museum of London, gave an excellent talk, which was well-illustrated with slides.

The unwise storage of fuel for the next day's baking, close to the dying embers of a furnace, caused a midnight inferno in a baker's shop, which ignited the ship chandler's store next door. The strong East wind soon ignited the bands of pitch and coils of rope and the fire was soon out of control of the fire-fighters of that time.

When the King's own property was threatened, as the fire spread towards Westminster, the authorities organised fire breaks. Houses were destroyed with explosives, but by the 5th September the East wind was dying away and the fire was being controlled.

The slides showed how the fire spread day-by-day, until about two-thirds of London had been destroyed, more in area than the bombing of the Second World War.

Mr. Milne explained how London was rebuilt in a very short time. This was done because only three designs of houses were allowed. Some of these houses remain to the present day and the speaker expressed his preference for them.

Dr. Landers expressed the thanks of the Society for a superb talk, especially as Mr. Milne had been working all day in the rain, on the penultimate excavation day of the Watergate site, in London.

EARLY NOTIFICATION

PUBLIC LECTURE:- 'The High Street and
Oakmere House'
DATE:- Tuesday, 10th October.
PLACE:- Oakmere House, 8pm.

Brian Warren and Terry Goulding will give one of their illustrated talks showing slides of the High Street, not previously shown to the public. The history of Oakmere House will be the other part of the talk.

COST:- £1

It was nice to welcome Mr.Ottley to the February meeting after his illness.

Best wishes for a continued recovery are sent to Mrs.Gordon, Mrs.Martin, Miss Andrews, Mrs. Clarke and Mrs.Clare. It was nice to see some of them at the AGM.

As those who attended the last two monthly meetings will know our President sustained a broken wrist, through no fault of her own. Following a second setting of the injury the plaster is now off. Though Mrs.Brittain hopes to drive in the near future, her wrist is still painful. Members wish her a succesful recovery.

A warm welcome is extended to the following new members:- Mr.&Mrs.Flower, Mrs.G.Lamb, Mr.H.G.Little, Mr.D.Lore, Mr.G.Twyman and Mr.S.G.Chapman.

Congratulations to Len Field on his retirement and may he and Eileen have many more happy years together.

WANTED (See Jan.1989 Newsletter)

Thanks are accorded to Mrs.E.Clare, Miss M.H. Schofield, Mrs.V.Harding, Mrs.B.Clinton and Mrs.Robinson, who responded to the request for missing copies of Hertfordshire Countryside, South Mimms & Ridge Parish Magazines and the Society's Annual Programmes.

As a result only the following are not held by the Society, in case anyone should find a copy at sometime in the future:-

A) HERTFORDSHIRE COUNTRYSIDE 1961-1982

November 1969

B) SOUTH MIMMS & RIDGE PARISH PAPER

1984 Feb, March & June

1986 Jan, March & April

C) THE SOCIETY'S ANNUAL PROGRAMMES

1962-3

DISTRIBUTORS

The Committee expresses its thanks to the following for volunteering to deliver notices to members in the coming year:-

Mrs.E.Ovenden, Miss M.H.Schofield, Mr.& Mrs. G.Sillis, Mrs.R.LeBaigue, Mr.C.Overend, Mrs.V. Lonkhurst, Mr.&Mrs.R.A.Weston, Mr.R.Horsefield, Mrs.V.Murphy, Mr.G.Eve, Mr.I.Warwick, Mr.P.White, Mr.G.T.Riddleston, Mr.M.E.Griffith, Mr.J.C.Clarke and Mr.D.B.Green.

Mrs.V.Bell, Mrs.E.Gordon, Mrs.J.Groves and Mrs.M.Myatt are thanked for their help and assistance in recent years and will make the most of their well-deserved rest.

WAR MEMORIALS (See Sept. 1988 Newsletter)

Information has been received that on Armistice Day, 1923, a memorial was unveiled to the masters and pupils of Northaw Place School, who had given their lives in The Great War. The memorial was in the School's Chapel.

Can anyone tell us more about it ?

The St.Albans and Hertfordshire Architectural and Archaeological Society has published a book, "The Street Memorials of St.Albans Abbey Parish", price £4.50. It is on sale in St.Albans bookshops, or from the author at 98, Charmouth Road, St.Albans Herts. AL1 4SQ (plus 50p for postage).

The book comprises iv+64 pages and cover, the pages are $9\frac{1}{2}$ x $7\frac{1}{2}$ inches and there are over 60 black-and-white pictures.

REMINDER HERTS. RECORDER SCHEME

NEXT MEETING:- Thursday 22nd JUNE at 8.00pm.

62,Ladbroke Drive.

Mr. & Mrs.K.Smithson are thanked for taking over Area 2.

There is still no cover for South Mimms, Area 8 and Potters Bar-Barnet, Area 9

THE SOCIETY'S PUBLICATIONS + HOW THEY CAME ABOUT

The question of publications was first raised at the Committee Meeting on the 14th June, 1984 and discussed in subsequent meetings, until a Publications' Sub-committee was appointed consisting of Dr. Lynch, Mr. & Mrs D. Ruge-Cope and Messrs. C. Overend, T. Goulding and B. Warren.

The first meeting was held on the 22nd November at 21 Chace Ave., where all the early meetings were held. Though it was agreed to reprint articles formerly published by C. Overend, in the Society's annual duplicated PBHS Newsletter, first published in 1969, much time was spent on technical matters, where Dr. Lynch and T. Goulding were of great assistance.

The first task was the production of 'The Journal', which was intended to continue the PBHS Newsletter's tradition of enabling members to contribute small items of research. Journals No. 1 and No. 2 (1986) were experimental in attempting to achieve a very readable line, with the correct size of type and numbers of characters per inch. Canada Life, through Mrs Huke, typed the first Journal and it was the start of a new venture for the Society. Ever since then 'The Journal' has been published annually, free to members, and hopefully improved in quality.

Cyril Overend relinquished his membership of the sub-committee, in Feb. 1985, which was unfortunate for everyone.

The articles in the former PBHS Newsletter were photocopied and grouped into suitable titles for possible publication. In June, 1985 Dr. Lynch was asked to look at the articles on roads and Gordon Eve was to be approached about producing a possible publication on railways, with 30-40% for pictures. It was suggested at that meeting that Malcolm Tomkins' articles and Helen Baker's could be used for future publications. Dick Harris attended this meeting.

By October 7th, the next sub-committee, the final text for the Railways was still to be completed by Gordon Eve and Dr.Lynch. It was left to Brian Warren to consult Dr.Lynch, on the possibility of expanding the PBHS articles on roads, as he was not present. Maurice Lynch was starting on the bus services and Brian Warren on the growth of Potters Bar, also there was John Bennett's manuscript on the zeppelins.

At this time the biggest stumbling block was the typing of the manuscripts, several outlets were tried until Terry Goulding's secretary was persuaded, not to say that the box of chocolates at Christmas did not help! Also, a coloured cover was suggested, but as time has shown photographs reproduce better on white.

At the following November meeting the format of the front and back covers was established and has remained almost the same ever since. The initial problems were all concerned with setting standards and producing a worthwhile publication, to assist in this each submitted manuscript and its subsequent revisions were read by at least three members of the sub-committee.

In May 1986, Chris.Ruge-Cope resigned, having greatly assisted in establishing the publications and hosting the meetings.

Finally at the August meeting, 'The Railways Through Potters Bar', by Gordon Eve was completed. The Society received 201 copies, at a cost of £50 for printing and £10 for typing. The price was agreed at 70p for members, 80p for non-members and Dan Ruge-Cope was to supervise the postal enquiries at £1; it was reckoned on about twenty free copies per issue. A special offer was to be made for Nos.1 and 2, at the Potters Bar Festival talk, on October 2nd, of £1.40

A programme was agreed for future publications thus:-

Dec.1986	Malcolm Tomkins
Apr.1987	The Journal No.3
Oct.1987	Buses
Nov./Dec1987	Reminiscences of Mrs.Baillie.

At least six other titles were considered.

As the pattern had been established success followed success. W.H.Gelder's reviews in, 'The Barnet Press', produced plenty of postal replies, and the Society is grateful for his assistance. Also, mention was made at various times in the 'Free Press'.

Thus there was no need for so many committee meetings, a manuscript was submitted and read by several people, it was then revised, and Terry Goulding consulted as to suitable photographs. It was typed and finally Terry arranged for the printing and collating- a production line had been set up. By Feb.1987 it was reported the publications were selling well and other ideas were put forward, which have not yet seen fruition. The sub-committee then consisted of Dr.Lynch and Messrs. T.Goulding, G.Eve and B.Warren. Dan.Ruge-Cope having stood down and in September, 1987, Gordon Eve took over the postal sales. Further outlets were established at the Health Food Shop, Darkes Lane and George Case, who has sold many complete sets. A complete set of six P.B.Historical Series and four Journals now (1989) costs £7-45.

The Society is extremely lucky to have such willing helpers on the sales' side and for this we express our gratitude to them.

At two recent talks to other Societies over £50 was taken on those evenings.

Then Terry Goulding was forced to change jobs, an urgent request for help with photocopying, access to an enlarging/reducing machine and a screen printing machine went out to members in 'The Newsletter', (Jan.1988). At the 1988 A.G.M. permission was granted, by the members present, for the expenditure of upto £500 to purchase any necessary equipment, in particular an Amstrad2640 was being considered. The money has not yet been used as fortune has favoured the brave!

Despite the traumas a Journal and No.6, Georgian Houses by Helen Baker were published in 1988 and a full programme in 1989 is planned, with further titles in hand.

The purpose of this article is to sketch the important phases in the Society's now highly

12 successful publications and to acknowledge the debt owed to those who helped establish it. Some members have had a far greater share in the success story, but there have been disagreements, however, discussion has resulted in a compromise. For example, perhaps it was just as well we did not use the title which was first suggested, 'Reminiscences of a Vicar's daughter, 1913-20', but selected, 'Memories of Potters Bar, 1913-20!!

Finally, the result of four and a half years' work looks impressive when expressed in the following figures:-

<u>POTTERS BAR HISTORICAL SERIES</u>	<u>Copies</u>
No.1 The Railway Through Potters Bar-G.H.Eve	700
No.2 The Turnpike Road to Hatfield-A.C.Lynch	600
No.3 Malcolm Tomkins 1930-1981 - A Collection of his Writings	400
No.4 The Pre-War buses of Potters Bar - M.Lynch	500
No.5 Memories of Potters Bar 1913-20 - Eileen Baillie	500
No.6 Georgian Houses - Helen Baker	200

THE JOURNAL

No.1	200 copies + 45 photocopied
No.2	400 copies
No.3	400 copies
No.4	400 copies

The choice of the title and the picture on the front are very important selling factors, as was soon realised in the choice of railways and roads, for the first two booklets. Both had a national appeal to the avid collectors of those subjects and enabled the series to make an excellent beginning.

Lastly, the Society expresses its thanks to Mr.Keevil, for his help in the past year.

If you can help in anyway in the future, please let us know, because the present team will not last forever.

