

# *The Newsletter*

JANUARY 1998

VOL. 14 NO. 2

## COVER PICTURE

This is the seventh in the series of black and white photographs of Potters Bar, taken between 1969 and 1972, by Mr. E. Bartlett, a former Secretary of the Society.



On the opposite corner to The Lion (see Newsletter Sept. 1997) and now occupied by Canada Life, one sees the hoardings which surrounded the vacant site in the 1960's until October 1971 (once a blacksmith's and Tilbury's baker's). The central building consisted of three shops, which in 1967 were Manor Farm Meat Depot, Lynn's Nylon shop and Beau Joulet pet shop. The lower shop, to the right, was E.T. Tingey's from when it opened on the 30th September 1938 until 1975, then becoming Carpetland in 1982.

The whole site was empty in 1986 and a year later saw the commencement of Canada Life's re-building Phase 2.



### **FROM THE CHAIRMAN**

Hello everyone.

The Committee and I wish you all a Happy New Year and trust that you all enjoyed a pleasant Christmas with lots of goodies to eat and drink. We start the year with a new exhibition of more 'Photographic Views in and around Potters Bar', and we hope to see you in the Museum in the coming months. This particular exhibition ends in June. Registration of the Mueum is now well under way; we trust that this year it will be finalised. In the next Newsletter you will find information regarding Outings and Walks, including details of a guided tour of a part of London, organised by Colin Field, a Committee member.

We still need Stewards for Tuesdays, 2.30-4.30pm, once a month; if you can help, please ring Brian Kolbert on 653449. We are also *desperate* for a Treasurer; can anyone help in this quest? If you can, please ring me on 647015 (you need not attend all Committee meetings). *Jean Foster.*

### **NEW MEMBERS**

We should like to welcome the following new Members to the Society. We trust they will enjoy the many lectures, walks and outings which are part our our yearly programme, and we hope they will take an active part in the life of the Society.

Mr. S.G. Bailey, Mr. J.A. Burgess, Mr. J. Embolton, Mr. E.C. Green, Mrs D.J. Rebbetts, Mr. S. Shave, Mr. & Mrs. P.J. Sanderson, and Mr. D. Aldridge.

### **SUBSCRIPTIONS**

Those Members whose subscriptions for the year 1997/8 appear to be outstanding will be notified, individually, by post.

### **WINTER LECTURE PROGRAMME**

Friday, 30th January. The Story of Forty Hall (1629-1997) by Geoffrey Gillam.

Mr. Gillam has just published a book giving a comprehensive history of Forty Hall, Enfield, its grounds and pleasure gardens, kitchen garden and park. His lecture will deal in detail with the story of the house, which was built for Nicholas Rainton, a rich London merchant.

Tuesday, 24th February. London's underground Railways by Dr. Arnold Lynch.

London has both shallow and deep railways, mostly in North London. Their history is of rivalries, near-bankruptcies, and rescue by a villain! They still show traces of the problems met with 90 years ago.

Friday, 27th March. A Local View of Everyday Life in the Middle Ages by Mr. Brian Warren.

For many years the speaker has been researching the South Mimms Manor Court Rolls, by the kind permission of Lord Salisbury and the continued support of Robin Harcourt-Williams, the Librarian at Hatfield House. The purpose of the lecture is to convey some of the accumulated mass of information, with the use of other documents where applicable, to show how the people of that time went about their ordinary lives.

THE MEETINGS START AT 8PM *PROMPT* IN THE 60 PLUS CENTRE, WYLLYOTTS CENTRE. ALL ARE WELCOME. ADMISSION IS FREE.

**CAR LIFTS FOR MEMBERS.** Certain of our Members are unable to attend the lecture meetings due to lack of transport. It would be appreciated if any Member who is willing to offer a lift to meetings would contact the Chairman, who could then put them in touch with the Member needing the lift.

**MAY 1998 OUTING.** For details of the next Enfieldian trip see attached form.

### **HERTFORDSHIRE EARTHQUAKES**

A recent enquiry resulted in reference to the above seismic disturbances. The first recorded Hertfordshire earthquake occurred on the 13th December, 1250, which was noted by Matthew Paris in St. Albans. It came with a noisy trembling sound, which caused confusion among the birds, as they flew up in all directions, until the rumbling stopped. Matthew Paris died in 1259.

The next earthquake occurred on the 25th May, 1551, and was recorded by John Stow, in the first edition of his "English Chronicles" (1565). The Gentleman's Magazine noted that an earthquake was felt throughout

London, where there was structural damage, and Westminster, on the 19th February, 1750. It was felt at Finchley, Highgate, Stanmore and Hertford, the latter place had a severe shock. A month later, in the same year, there was more violent and prolonged earthquake confined to London and its neighbourhood. A letter to the Royal Society, by the Dean of Durham noted, "It was felt very sensibly at Northaw, and Gubbins [Gobions], the Seat of Sir Jeremy Sambrooke, in that Neighbourhood, whose House was very much shaken. At a Farm three Quarters of a Mile NE of Hatfield, it was felt by the Farmer and his Family, but not perceived by the Inhabitants of Hatfield itself."

Then came one of the most violent and widely-extended earthquakes on record, on the 1st November, 1755, when it was felt in the counties of Berks., Oxford, Derby, and Cork, being noted by the Vicar of Barley, in Hertfordshire.

In 1863, a shock was felt at Hitchin, Hemel Hempstead, and Berkhamsted, and in 1878, north of St. Albans. In the 1880's there are three records of Hertfordshire earthquakes, in 1884, 1886 and 1887. In 1896, a great 'quake was felt all over the County. Of greater interest to us, was the last one to be recorded, on the 15th March, 1905, when the Revd. Canon H. Trotter of Christ Church Vicarage, Barnet, wrote to The Times: "A sharp shock of earthquake was felt by us today at 1.59pm. We were at lunch and some friends from India and Ceylon, who were used to it were with us, confirming a fact which was plain to me. The windows and house shook, and a loud noise was heard. It lasted 2 or 3 seconds. I have since been visiting in the parish, and two persons had wondered what it was, as it was quite unlike thunder, and shook the windows and floor. My wife tells me that a lady at Hadley spoke to her of it." Further correspondence occurred in The Times as a result of Canon Trotter's letter.

Since the first one in 1250, there have been 12 earthquakes, of which a record has been found; it is quite possible there have been other minor shocks of which *no* records survive. It is interesting that 10 of the earthquakes have occurred since 1750, and it is over 90 years since the last one.

**Reference:** Herts. Natural History Society Trans. Vol.13. p141, pubd. 1908.

*BW*

#### **POTTERS BAR SOCIETY. SOCIAL ACTIVITIES**

Illustrated Lectures have been arranged for the winter season. These will be held at the Tilbury Hall, Darkes Lane, commencing at 8pm, admission £1.50. Dates as follows:

Thursday,	January 15th	JEWISH CUSTOMS Mrs. Royce.
Thursday,	March 19th	BOOKS GRANDMA WOULD HAVE READ. Mrs. Parker.
Thursday,	April 30th	THE RECOLLECTIONS OF A WELSH DAIRYMAN'S SON IN LONDON- Mr. Griffiths.

❖ Tickets from Mrs. P. Hardiment, 34 Parkside, High Street, Potters Bar, EN6 5AU. (***PLEASE ENCLOSE STAMPED, ADDRESSED ENVELOPE***), or at Tilbury Hall for each event.

If you would like to be placed on the Mailing List for PBS events, or should you require a lift to or from an event at Tilbury Hall, please contact Mrs. Hardiment.

#### **OUTINGS REPORTS**

**September 7th, 1997. Visit to Ramsgate - Victorian Fair or Broadstairs.** Great; the weather was good when we started our day out; most of us went to Broadstairs, which turned out to be a very pretty resort, with a good beach and unusually laid out gardens. The weather remained sunny and bright, which made the day all the more enjoyable. We also saw the historic house in which Charles Dickens lived. *JF*

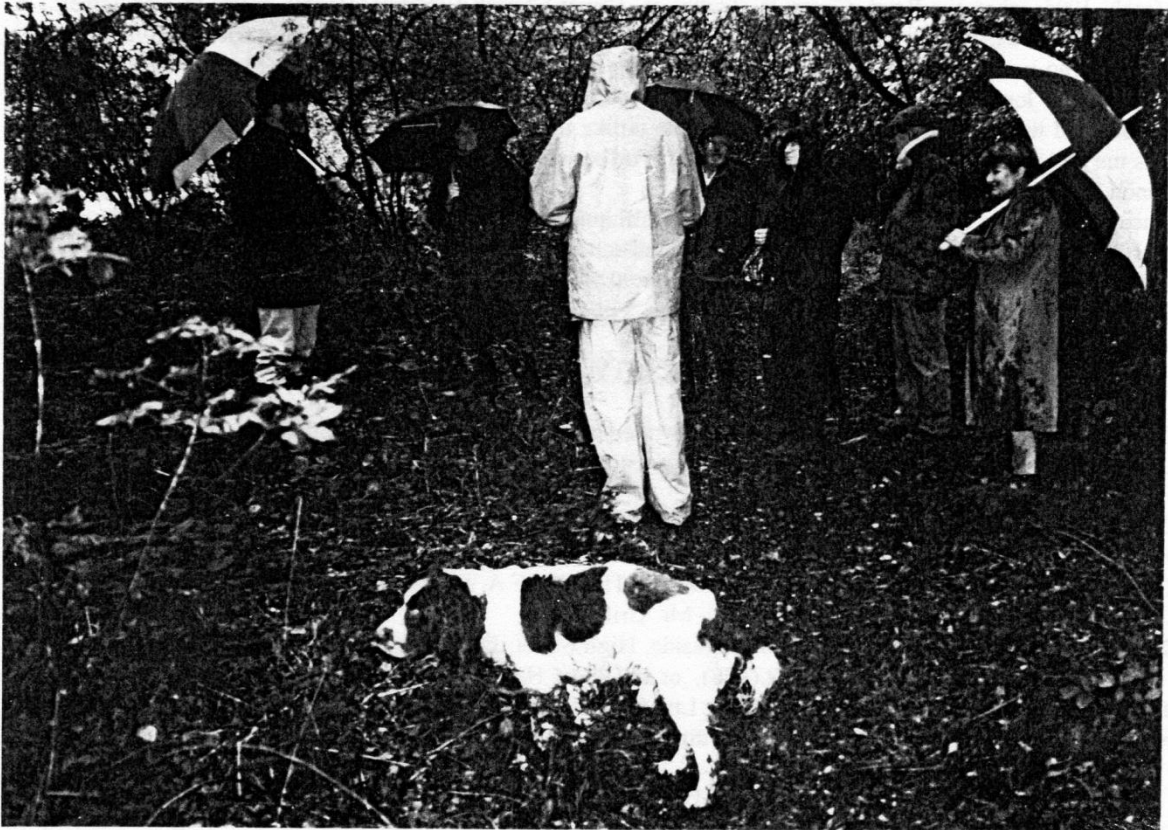
**Sunday, 28th September, 1997. Morven Walk.** On this mild, sunny afternoon, Mr. J. Donovan led a small party of members around the meadows surrounding Morven, explaining points of historical interest. The meadows have retained their present shape for at least 400 years, and contain boundary stones, ponds, Victorian ironwork and the remains, albeit buried, of the 18th and 19th century houses which once flanked the Old North Road in the days when the latter ran along the southern edge of the meadows. *JD*

**Saturday, 6th December, 1997. Lincoln Christmas Market.** On arrival, most of us headed for the market, which was packed to capacity - but with effort there was a lot to see. Gluhwein, mince pies and candyfloss were much in evidence. After sampling the delights of the Christmas Market, we visited the Cathedral, which had much of interest for us. There was also a delightful Xmas Carol choir service which gave an added

atmosphere to the visit. I think we arrived home tired but in festive mood and most had done some Christmas shopping. *JF*

**Saturday, 9th December, 1997. Festive Quiz and Social.** Some sixty members and friends enjoyed a festive evening in the 60+ centre. Ian Cumming greeted each guest with a glass of wine, and a plentiful supply of delicious refreshments had been prepared by Jean Foster assisted by Joan Charlton. Wendy Davey made all the table decorations, and Terry Goulding provided a comprehensive collection of 'mystery objects' for the quiz - ordinary, everyday household items from yesteryear, for those who wanted to stretch their brains. To finish off, Mabel Hammett served tea, coffee and her own home-made mince-pies. It all added up to a happy social evening, and the success of the event was illustrated by the reluctance of the guests to leave at closing-time!  
*JD*

#### **COUNTY RECORDER GROUP MEETING**



Terry Goulding's photo shows Dr Hunn and a well-behaved dog, centre, and Gillian Gear right (with broolly). Keen-eyed members may even spot a couple of PBHS reps!

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The County Recorder Group meeting was held on Saturday, 11th October, 1997 at Nicholls Farm, Lybury Lane, Redbourn. On arrival, we were greeted by Gillian Gear, County Recorder, and her three over-exuberant dogs, one of which couldn't be let out because he devours the neighbour's chickens! Prior to starting the meeting, we were taken on a tour of the historic timber-framed farm-house, which she is in the process of renovating. As usual, the morning session consisted of each local representative reporting the previous year's activity in their area.

After partaking of refreshment, Dr. Jonathan Hunn produced several maps and charts to show how information could be recorded. Unfortunately, it rained all day and only the hardy few ventured forth across the muddy fields on what had been intended to be an illustration of Field Walking. In the event, a short walk was taken to a nearby wood, where internal banks were viewed, and Dr. Hunn conjectured reasons for their existence. *BW, TG and JD.*

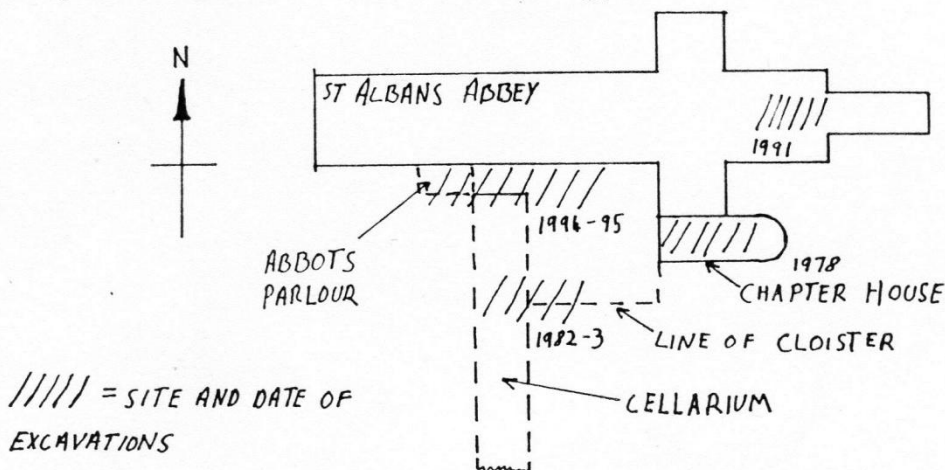


### **PUBLICATIONS - REQUEST FOR INFORMATION**

Brian Warren is preparing for publication a history of Oakmere House. He will be pleased to receive information about the wartime activities when it was the Ambulance Centre and Air Raid Wardens' Post 'C'. After the house was re-opened in 1948, it was used as a social centre, Education Offices, library, Old People's Welfare Centre, Citizen's Advice Bureau and even as the Civic centre. If anyone has recollections of events at Oakmere, since 1948, in particular humorous events which would add colour to the story gleaned from newspapers, would they contact Brian, as soon as possible (6 Church Close, Cuffley, Herts., EN6 4LS. Phone 875617).

### **THE ABBEY HABIT, by Bill Bass**

Martin Biddle has continued his excavations at St. Alban's Abbey this year. A five weeks campaign during August and September saw three or four HADAS members taking part.



Trenches from last year (1994) were left open over the winter so that rain and frost could work on the difficult clay subsoil and more features were observed and planned for the forthcoming dig. These included further graves from the Romano-British and Anglo-Saxon cemeteries, with more work on the cellarium with excavation of the north-west corner. Several more Roman burials were investigated, most contained evidence for coffins (eg nails) and grave goods such as pottery and glass attested to possible graveside ceremonies. There was an example of a 'flexed' burial, another had signs of a healed bone fracture. Of the Saxon burials at least three generations were identified. These graves can be broadly dated to the 10th and 11th centuries by the presence of 'pillow stones' supporting the heads.

Those members who have seen Fountains Abbey will have some impression of what the vaulted cellarium would have looked like. Last year's trench in this area was extended to reveal more of the northern end, again with remains of the ribbed vaulting and decorated floor tiles which had collapsed into the cellar on demolition. Study here of the different mortars, wall facings and floor surfaces will give further understanding of the phasing and relationship of the cellarium to the outer court and Abbot's reception parlour. Usually there were twenty people on site, all volunteers except the Biddles, ranging from local diggers to students, others from America, Germany etc. The work in sweltering conditions was hard but enjoyable. In future, Martin would like to excavate further south of the medieval complex, where he feels St. Alban was originally buried 700 years before Paul of Caen, the first Norman abbot, built his Abbey.

*Acknowledgements to Hendon & Dist. Archaeological Society, Newsletter No. 296, November 1995.*

### **POTTERS BAR - BIRTHPLACE OF AN EDWARDIAN PARACHUTIST**

This was a heading in the May 1997 Newsletter, in which John Lucas, a member, wrote about Dolly Shepherd and her local connection.

In this week's (Jan. 8th) 'Potters Bar Times', under the heading, 'Taking to the Skies', there was a review, by Don Hunter, of John's update of his book, "The Big Umbrella", first published in 1973. The new title is, "The Silken Canopy", about the history of the parachute. It costs £19.99 and can be ordered from your nearest bookshop, or by phoning (01743 232944) Airlife Publishing Ltd.

**POST SCRIPT.** Certain regular items have been omitted from this Newsletter and will appear in future issues.

# **ENFIELDIAN COACH OUTING**

SUNDAY 3RD MAY. 1998.

THE VALE OF SEVERN - BERKELEY CASTLE OR SLIMBRIDGE

FARE £15.95 (*includes admission*)

Today we visit the Vale of Severn, in Gloucestershire, and after lunch in Cirencester we have the opportunity of visiting either the "Slimbridge Wildfowl Trust" or Berkeley Castle. At Slimbridge is found the world's largest collection of swans, geese, ducks and flamingoes in a superb setting. Berkeley Castle, dating from 1153, is in a wonderful state of preservation, and is still lived in by the present owners, Mr. & Mrs. R.J. Berkeley. After tea we arrive home by approximately 8.30pm.

**Pick-up point** is Southgate Road, Potters Bar, at **9.10am**.

**Return** the application form to:-

Ms. J. Foster, 15 Gregory Avenue, Potters Bar, EN6 5PX.

**Cheques** made payable to **Oakfield Tours Ltd**, please.

**Closing date** for applications is 30 March 1998 (cheques will not be banked until after that date).

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I/we wish to reserve .....places for the **MAY 3RD 1998** outing at £15.95 per person, and I enclose cheque for £.....

Name.....

Address.....

.....Phone.....