

# *The Newsletter*

MAY 2000

VOL. 16 NO. 3

## COVER PICTURE

This is the fourteenth 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.



The present Wylyotts building represents the surviving portion of the Manor House of the Manor of Wylyotts, a sub-manor of South Mimms, the former corresponding approximately to the modern town of Potters Bar.

The rear part of Wylyotts on the right contains features dating to the 14th century; whereas the bulk of the ivy-covered building dates to the 15th century. From 1268, the Manor of Wylyotts and the messuage called Wylyotts were held by Roger de Leukenore. His father, Sir Nicholas, Keeper of the Wardrobe to Edward I, held the Manor of South Mimms *before* 1268.



## FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Hello to you all

Well I hope you have had great Easter and Whitsun holidays in spite of dreadful weather with small glimpses of sun. We had, as you are probably aware, a 3 day Meccano event in the Gallery at Wyllyotts. I understand from 'sources' that the Grandads and Dads enjoyed it as much as the small boys!

The Museum has just acquired a beautiful ink drawing of the Mutton Lane Lych Gate, donated by Imago Portrait Studio of the High Road. It was drawn by the owner's wife, June Edwards - do come and see it at the Museum when you have time.

May I please ask again for Museum stewards on Tuesdays or Wednesdays, 2.30-4.30pm, once a month. We need more stewards to keep the Museum open for you and others to browse around and enjoy. You do not need any special knowledge, just an interest.

## REPORT OF THE 41st AGM

- Ms. J. Foster, the Chairman, welcomed members to the meeting and informed those present that the year 1999/2000 had been quite a good year for the Society. Despite the various changes in personnel, the Society had continued to function smoothly.

- Mr. J. Scivyer, presenting the Secretary's report on the past year, said that during the year we had held seven monthly meetings, the subjects ranging in time, from pre-historic finds through Alfred the Great to the present; in space, from *our* area to the Silk Road, and in altitude from underground archaeology to a lady parachutist. We had also held an extraordinary meeting to make minor changes to our Constitution, and a fortieth anniversary social. The committee agreed to charge visitors to the monthly lectures £1, as from September 2000.

He expressed his thanks to all speakers and helpers, with special mention to Joan Charlton who has stepped down after organising the programmes for many years. She has been replaced by Colin Field; we wish him well.

The committee met ten times and, during the year, John Donovan retired from being the Hon. Secretary. John Scivyer was co-opted to replace him. Other changes in personnel were Barbara Lewis, who took on the Treasurer's job from the Acting-Treasurer, John Donovan. Joan Cullen also resigned from the committee due to the pressure of other activities. Turning to outside activities, Brian Warren led a walk around Northaw in June and John Donovan led another, to Bentley Heath, in July. During the year we published three newsletters.

The Society continued to run the Museum and, during the year, we put on two special exhibitions; one on Teddy Bears, and one of local historical pictures. The current exhibition is called "Lunardi to the L31" (lighter-than-air flight). Brian Kolbert handed over the organisation of the Tuesday stewarding to Ian Cumming. Thanks to *all* stewards and special thanks to the three organisers. During the year, John Scivyer took over the organisation of the Recorder Scheme from Brian Warren. Finally, the Society's membership stood at 198.

- The Treasurer, Mrs. B. Lewis, presented the accounts, copies of which were available to members at the meeting. There being no questions for the treasurer, the accounts were approved.

## OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE FOR 2000/2001

President	Mr. B. Warren
Vice-Presidents	Dr. J.P.C.Kent F.B.A, Mr. T.G .Goulding, Dr. A Lynch. C.Eng
Chairman	Ms. J.Foster
Vice-Chairman	Mr. A.Davey
Hon. Sec.	Mr. J.Scivyer
Hon. Treasurer	Mrs. B.Lewis
Hon. Archivist	Mr. B. Warren
Committee	Mr. I.Cumming, Mr. B.Kolbert, Mr. T.C.Field.

- Following the AGM, Mrs. E. Buteux M.A. gave an interesting and well-received talk on "Straw Plaiting in 19th century Hertfordshire."

## NEW MEMBERS

We should like to welcome Mr. D. Morse and Mr. C. Davies to the Society. We trust they will enjoy the many lectures, walks and outings which are part of our yearly programme, and we hope that they will take an active part in the life of the Society.

## **HELP REQUIRED**

There is a desperate need for volunteers at the Museum. If you wish to be a steward, please contact Ian Cumming 01707 642 296 (Tuesday), Don Green 01707 854 613 (Wednesday) and Denis Lore 01707 656 833 (Saturday).

Volunteers are also required for the Recorder Group, details from John Scivyer 01707 657 586.

## **SUBSCRIPTIONS**

Subscriptions for 2000/2001 are now due, so if you **haven't** already paid, you can send your cheque, payable to "Potters Bar & District Historical Society", to our Membership Secretary, Eileen Field, 51 High View Gardens, Herts. EN6 5PN. Tel. 653801 (Adults £3, Family/Group £5).

Prompt payment would be appreciated and, if you do not intend to renew your subscription, kindly inform the Membership Secretary.

## **A SPRING MORNING**

The spring comes in with all her hues and smells,  
In freshness breathing over hills and dells,  
O'er woods where May her gorgeous drapery flings,  
And meads washed fragrant by their laughing springs.  
Fresh are new opened flowers, untouched and free  
From the bold rifling of the amorous bee.  
The happy time of singing birds is come  
And love's lone pilgrimage now finds a home,  
Among the mossy oaks now coos the dove,  
And the hoarse crow finds softer mates for love.  
The foxes play around their dens, and lark  
In joy's excess, 'mid woodland shadows dark.  
The flowers join lips below, the leaves above,  
And every sound that meets the ear is love.

*John Clare (1793-1864)*

Chosen by JF

## **ARCHIVIST'S REPORT**

Following the article in our last issue, on 'Boundary Stones (1757) and Vincenzo Lunardi (1784)', readers who would like to know more about Lunardi are referred to; '*Hertfordshire Yesterdays*' by Frank Ballin and Malcolm Tomkins, 1982, or an article in 'The Hertfordshire Countryside' (June 1971), by Malcolm Tomkins entitled, '*First Man to Fly in England*'.

One recent request from Bath has been of great interest, the writer's cousin was the wireless operator of a Lancaster Bomber which crashed at Colney Heath on Friday, 22nd October 1943. Ted Stebbing, in his book, '*Diary of a Decade*', refers to the incident on page 225. He wrote, as part of his report, 'The burning question is; was our own plane shot down by our guns?' Though the official Accident Investigation Bureau report did not say it *was*, subsequent research indicates that it was shot down by an anti-aircraft battery near Harpenden. If any of our members can remember anything of the incident would they contact the Hon. Archivist.

Following a request from the Revd. Peter Bevan, Vicar of St. Mary's and All Saints in The Walk, it is proposed to make a survey of the Mutton Lane cemetery, opened in 1896. This will note the graves, names and dates of burial, but not the inscriptions unless of particular interest. If one would like to help, please contact Brian Warren.

The following, free, Fact-Sheets are available at the Potters Bar Museum:-

- No.1 The Origin of the name 'Potters Bar'.
- No.2 The City of London Coal Tax Boundary Markers.
- No.3 St. Sepulchre's Stones, Park Avenue, Potters Bar.
- No.4 Milestones along the Great North Road (Barnet to Hatfield).



If you have a photograph of the now-missing Coal Tax Marker that once stood in Warrengate Lane opposite the foot of Hawkshead Lane, then John Donovan would be pleased to hear from you (01707 642 886). Photographs of most of the local stones can be seen on a display-board in the Museum. BW

### SUMMER ACTIVITIES

- Monday, June 5th.** Walk through South Mimms, led by Brian Warren. Meet near The Black Horse Pub, Black Horse Lane, at 6.30 for 6.45pm.
- Sunday, June 25th.** Spitalfields Walk, led by Colin Field. See back page for details.
- Friday, 30th June.** JLA Coach Trip to Southampton. See page 6.
- Wednesday, 19th July.** Fir and Pond Woods. A walk led by John Scivyer. Meet at 7.30pm at the entrance in Coopers Lane Road (opposite the gates of the Oshwal Centre). Details from John on 01707 657 586
- Monday, 25th September** JLA coach trip to Hastings. See page 6.

### AUTUMN LECTURE PROGRAMME (PREVIEW)

- Thursday, September 28th 2000** "Spritsail Ahoy! A History of the Thames Sailing Barges", by Ken Cain.
- Tuesday, October 31st, 2000** "The Cuffley Airship", by John Higgs
- Thursday, November 23rd, 2000** "Chipping Barnet and its Ancient Market", by Graham Javes.
- \*\*\*\*\*
- Friday, December 8th, 2000** Christmas Social.

### 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 (on 01707 647 015), who would then put them in touch with the member needing the lift.

### POTTERS BAR SOCIETY. SOCIAL EVENINGS 2000

The following illustrated lectures have been arranged for the autumn season. These will be held at the Tilbury Hall, Darkes Lane, commencing at 8pm, admission £1.50 (incl. refreshments), payable at the door. All are welcome.

Thursday, September 28th	"Jubilee Sailing Trust"	Mr. M. Lavender-Jones.
Thursday, October 26th	"A Taste of Suffolk"	Mr. R. Curran.
Thursday, November 23rd	"Barn Owls"	Mr. R. Lindy-Jones

### THE STRAW-PLAIT INDUSTRY

The subject of the lecture for the AGM, concerned, 'Straw-plaiting in 19th century Hertfordshire'. Yet, by 1851, nearly 22,000 plait-workers or 80% of the total employed, lived in the South Midlands, and the industry dominated home-life within a 25 miles radius of Luton. In other words, most of southern Bedfordshire and north-west Hertfordshire were the most important areas for the straw-plaiting industry.

The further one moved towards south-east Hertfordshire the straw-plaiting industry was less important. This can be shown by examining the 1851 census for North Mymms and South Mimms. In North Mymms there were 74 people involved as straw-plaiters, aged from 8 to 70. The labourers'

wives and daughters sat in their cottages, plaiting the straw in complicated patterns, often earning more than the men of the family.<sup>1</sup>

Therefore, it is not surprising that most people involved in straw-plaiting were in South Mimms village, it being the nearest settlement to North Mymms. There were thirteen women aged from 13 to 58, of whom five were next-door neighbours, they were all described 'Straw Hat Makers'. There were two other households with five straw-plaiters, leaving one straw-plaiter, one hat maker and a straw-bonnet sewer. However, of the thirteen, six were born in South Mimms but the rest came from North Mymms, Welham Green, Colney heath, Ridge, Sandon and Little Ayot, all nearer the main straw-plaiting area.

Three women were in New Road (the Barnet end of the St. Albans Road) aged 22 to 40 and referred to as 'straw-plaiter', 'Brazilian-hat-maker' and 'straw-bonnet maker'. They were born in Harpenden, North Mymms and Totteridge respectively.

Two, referred to as 'bonnet-sewers' lived in Potters Bar, both aged 24, Caroline Smith, born in South Mimms, had a mother who was a dressmaker. Martha Samuel was born in North Mymms, and *her* mother came from Colney Heath.

Therefore, one can view the spread of straw-plaiting as 74 people in North Mymms, 13 in South Mimms. 2 in Potters Bar and 3 in New Road. It is not the purpose of this article to deduce the reasons why, but I trust that I have proved my point.

<sup>1</sup> 'North Mymms People in Victorian Times' by Peter Kingsford, 1986, pp7-8.  
Brian Warren.

### **INFORMATION REQUIRED**

Barnard Barr (Hon. Sec. of Braughing Hundred Archaeological Group), writes with the following enquiries:-

1. V2 rocket, Southgate Road. The writer remembers hearing it explode, and his father, a member of the local Home Guard unit, helped to clear the debris. Bernard would welcome the chance to see and copy any photographs of the damage after the explosion or of the area immediately after the war.
2. The pill-box erected at Bignell's Corner, S. Mimms, and disguised as a kiosk. Does anyone have knowledge of this?
3. The site and location of any remaining, unrecorded "dragons teeth", concrete blocks built during the 1940's as anti-tank devices. These devices took the form of a block of reinforced concrete set in the ground; some of these still exist on the railway embankment at the end of Cranborne Road. Does anyone have information please.
4. Possible ant-tank trench. At the bottom of Warrengate Lane, between Potters Bar and S. Mimms, a bridge crosses a small stream (NGR TL 232 022). Some two hundred metres southwards and upstream from the bridge is a wide, over-grown ditch with a small trickle of water at the bottom and running at right angles to the stream, and between the stream and adjacent A1M trunk road. During the Second World War this ditch was dry, flat-bottomed with straight, cleanly-cut sides. The side walls were securely revetted with woven hurdles which were beginning to rot and crumble circa August 1944. It has all the hallmarks of being an anti-tank barrier, possibly to provide a defence against armoured vehicles approaching from the north along the line of what was then known as the Barnet By-Pass. No other anti-tank defences in the vicinity are known to the writer nor has it yet been possible to investigate the possibility of the ditch being extended to the west of the By-pass. There is a chance that any similar features were destroyed by the construction of the more-recent second-carriageway of the A1M. Any knowledge or photographs of these features would be welcomed by the writer.

⇒ Write to Bernard Barr, Redgates Nursery, Great Cambridge Road, Waltham Cross, Herts., or phone on 01992 761 515.

Amusingly enough, when Bernard Barr's family moved to Mimms Hall Rd. in 1938, their next-door neighbours were called Potter. Bernard reckons that the chances of forecasting such a coincidence equal those of winning the National Lottery! (Please note, that is *not* how Potters Bar got its name!).  
JD



### TIMES PAST

While on Museum duty, John Scivyer was browsing through a copy of *Hertfordshire Countryside* for September 1974 when he came across the following notice; "Thursday, September 19th. Potters Bar Historical Society. Illustrated Lecture, 'North and South Mymms - Past and Present', by Mr. and Mrs. R. Baker. South Mymms Village Hall. 8pm."

"Sadly", says John, "Mr. and Mrs. Baker are now part of Potters Bar's history."

### COACH OUTINGS WITH J.L.A.

The following two outings may be of interest to members.

#### **Friday 30th June 2000 Southampton. Flower and Hot Air Balloon Festival**

If you've ever imagined boarding one of the great luxury liners for the cruise of a lifetime, why not join us as we visit the "Gateway to the Oceans." A brief stroll from the city centre and you are in the glamorous world of Ocean Village, where you can wander round the shops or enjoy a break in one of the many cafes and admire the beautiful yachts berthed along the quayside. You may be lucky enough to see one of the famous liners either departing or returning from her latest voyage - and imagine yourself waving from the decks as she sails. Sorry we can't provide Kate Winslet or Leonardo di Caprio - but at least you won't hit any icebergs either! There is plenty to see in Southampton itself and today the city plays host to the award-winning Flower and Balloon Festival in its 12th year. There is so much to see, from the magnificent flower displays organised by the Royal Southampton Horticultural Society, the large catering and trade village, special music and entertainment, to the numerous hot-air balloons of all shapes and sizes. So why not come along for a day out with a difference? JLA

**Fare £10.50**

#### **Departures**

Enfield (Wesley Owen Bookshop, Cecil Rd)	08.00am
Barnet (Odeon Cinema)	08.15am
Potters Bar (Junc. Elmroyd Ave/Baker St.)	08.25am
Potters Bar (Bus stop outside Oakmere)	08.30am
Potters Bar (Southgate Rd., Senate House.)	08.35am

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#### **Monday 25th September 2000 Hastings. 1066 and all that - plus much more.**

The Normans visited the town in 1066 - and liked it so much they stayed! After a few hours you will find yourself agreeing with them. Hastings combines the charm of the old town with its quaint streets dominated by the ruins of the Conqueror's fortress high on Castle Hill, with a thoroughly modern resort. Walk or take the Cliff Railway to the castle and you will be rewarded with wonderful views over the town and surrounding countryside. Watch history come alive in the exciting audio-visual presentation. We all know of the Bayeux Tapestry, but have you seen the Hastings Embroidery? This famous embroidery is a beautiful visual record of British history. Or why not visit the Flower and Leaf Manufacturer/Museum in the Old Town and learn how artificial flowers are made, a craft which has changed little from the 19th century to the present day when it is still used for TV and theatrical productions. Whatever your choice you will find something to interest and entertain you in the capital of '1066 country.' JLA

**Fare £10.50**

#### **Departures**

Enfield (Wesley Owen Bookshop, Cecil Rd)	09.00am
Barnet (Odeon Cinema)	09.15am
Potters Bar (Junc. Elmroyd Ave/Baker St.)	09.25am
Potters Bar (Bus stop outside Oakmere)	09.30am
Potters Bar (Southgate Rd., Senate House.)	09.35am

**To book your places, ring JLA on freephone 0800 783 7938**

# **A WALK ROUND SPITALFIELDS**

**SUNDAY 25TH JUNE 2000**

Led by Colin Field.

Meet at 12.15 at Potters Bar station to catch the 12.26 to Kings Cross for Liverpool Street. We shall lunch in the Market with its wide choice of restaurants and ethnic foods. Our guide is Gareth Harris from the Spitalfields Trust whom we meet at 18 Lamb Street, Tower Hamlets Information Office at 2.30pm.

He will walk with us round Spitalfields Market - at its most interesting on a Sunday - Artillery Lane - the old soup kitchen in Brushfield Street - Christ Church, Spitalfields designed by Hawksmoor in 1729, and Fournier Street with its 18th century Huguenot silk weavers houses and New French church, latterly a synagogue and now a mosque!

The walk, which is not long, will take 1 to 1½ hours. It costs nothing apart from your fare and cost of lunch.

If you want to join the party, please phone Colin on 01707 857297, or send the slip to 6 Inglefield, Potters Bar, Herts. EN6 1HD.

✂ **When and where to meet-** 12.15 in the Booking Hall  
Potters Bar station.



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To: Colin Field. 6 Inglefield, Potters Bar, EN6 1HD.

I/We intend going on the Spitalfields Walk on Sunday, 25th June 2000

Name(s).....Signed.....