

The Newsletter

SEPTEMBER 2001

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COVER PICTURE

This is the eighteenth 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 Post Office in Darkes Lane now comprises two parts, the brick building (built around the 1930's), and the glass 'box' which was added later. At one time the brick building was actually the sorting-office, with a sub-post office on the opposite side of the road in *The Ritz Stores*. In those days, the main post office was in Barnet Road, in what is now one of the *Paparazzi* restaurants. In recent times a door has been introduced into the brick building, and the two old-style (red) telephone boxes have been updated!

FROM THE CHAIRMAN

To all our members

Welcome back to a new season of our Society. During the summer break, some of our enthusiastic members have assisted the Welwyn Archaeological Society in the dig in Parkfield Park on the Romano British Tile Kiln there, and with the stewarding during the visits by seven schools and the public during the two open days. Thanks to all who helped to make it such a success. The Stratoscan magnetometer and resistivity survey of the site last year showed a number of anomalies, which the Welwyn group investigated, and the kiln was located towards the end of the time available, so further digging will be required, hopefully next year.

The lectures this year cover both local area history and more specialised interest subjects, so mark the dates in your diaries and calendars now, so that you do not miss them. *Terry Goulding.*

MECCANO MODELS EXHIBITION

To celebrate the 100th anniversary of Meccano (the young engineer's teaching-aid!), Colin Davies will present an exhibition of working models on 13th/14th/15th September (Thursday to Saturday) in The Wyllyotts Centre, Potters Bar, from 10am until 5pm. Admission free. Details from Colin Davies on 01707 645 791.

THE LOCATION OF THE KING'S WELL, NORTHAW.

The King's Well has appeared on the Ordnance Survey maps since 1866, being located due west of the top of King James Avenue, on Wells Farm. A chance remark led me to undertake further research into the subject of the location of the King's Well. The key map, included with the 1807 Northaw Enclosure Award, indicated there were two wells, the first was "The King's Well" near the brick kilns on Northaw Common. Secondly, the Warren Allotment contained the medicinal spring called Northaw Wells. The map showed the Northaw Wells to be north-east of the brickfields. However, the Drury and Andrews map of Hertfordshire (1766) and a map of Northaw Parish, by Thomas Baskerfield (c.1700) showed the medicinal waters to be due east of the brickfields

From this evidence one can see that the Ordnance Survey had marked the Northaw Wells as the King's Well. Further evidence to support this conclusion is to be found in Mr. Binyon's Notebook (mid-19th century), where he noted the King's Well "in a bottom" (cf. Carbone Bottom, Home Wood), the Ordnance Survey's position was halfway up a hill. Mr. Millington wrote in, "Cuffley with Northaw" (1975) "*a comparison with the modern Ordnance Survey map places the well in the grounds of the present day pumping station.*" From my research I have concluded that it was in the vicinity of the pumping station. A letter to the Ordnance Survey, with all my evidence, was then forwarded to their source - the National Monuments Record Centre, at Swindon. Their reply stated that for any future maps they would delete any references to the King's Well. *Brian Warren.*

HELP REQUIRED

Stewards to help look after the Museum. If you could help just one day a month it would be of great assistance. You will be on duty with an experienced steward and you will be assured of a pleasant afternoon.

Tuesdays 2.30-4.30pm, contact Ian Cumming on 01707 642 296.

Wednesdays 2.30-4.30pm, contact Don Green on 01707 854 613.

Saturdays 11.00am - 1.00pm, contact Denis Lore on 01707 656 833.

Recorder Group. Volunteers are still needed to help record the everyday changes taking place in Potters Bar; details from John Scivyer 01707 657 586..

HISTORICAL WALKS IN LONDON

A number of you will have enjoyed the recent historical walks in Islington led by Colin Field, but did you know that the Potters Bar branch of the University of the Third Age also hold such walks in London, led by Bob Grosse? These usually hold some historical interest. Anyone interested, who should also be a member of U3A, should contact Bob on 01707 658 474. *John Scivyer*

"COMPARING THE CENTURIES"

Members who enjoyed Dr. Lynch's excellent talk in January will be pleased to learn that he has now produced the text of the lecture in booklet form. Each member of the Society will receive a free copy of the (illustrated) booklet with this Newsletter. Further copies may be obtained from the Museum at 50p each.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Subscriptions for 2000/2001 were due on April 1st 2001, 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.

LAMAS 36th LOCAL HISTORY CONFERENCE

Our Society is a corporate member of The London & Middlesex Archaeological Society, and they are hosting a whole day of talks on such subjects as *Imperial London*, *Edwardian Transport*, *Suffragettes*, *Edwardian Theatre* and *The White City Exhibitions*, at the Museum of London on Saturday November 17th, 2001, 10am - 4.30pm. We (the Society) can have two tickets at £4, and non-members of LAMAS will pay £5. Further details from me on 01707 657 586. *John Scivyer*

MUSEUM NEWS

The next exhibition will be on the great **1951 Festival of Britain**, the 50th anniversary of which is being celebrated this year. The exhibition will start in October. *Arnold Davey*

ARCHIVIST'S REPORT

Dr. Brittain in the opening pages of his book, "South Mymms", which was published in 1931, was only concerned with the spelling of 'Mims' through the centuries and provided eighteen different examples. In my study of the South Mimms Court Rolls (Hatfield C.R. 14/27 ff. 1-12 and C.R. 14/28 ff. 1-12), the former dating from 1345 to 1475 and the latter 1490-1508, though neither is continuous, one can increase Dr. Brittain's total. I have taken in most cases, though not all, the spelling of South Mimms from the initial word on the Court Rolls, as follows:-

1345	Suthmymes	1490	Suth mymys
1452	South mymes	1499	South mymmys
1453	Southmymmes		Suth mymmys
1454	Southmymes	1504	Suthemymmes
	Southmymys	1505	Southemymys
1468	Southemymes	1506	Suthmymmes
1473	Southemymmes	1508	Sowth Mymms
			Suthemymys

As one can see from the above the use of the 'y' for Mymmes was the most common form and Dr. Brittain wrote on page one of his book, "but the form used in the present work is the most persistent throughout the centuries" i.e. 'y'.

The present situation is 'i' for all civil matters and 'y' for ecclesiastical purposes when referring to South Mimms. North Mymms uses 'y' in all circumstances.

I gratefully acknowledge the help and assistance I have been given by Robin Harcourt-Williams, the Archivist at Hatfield House. *BW.*

SUMMER ACTIVITIES

Friday, June 25th. Islington walk, led by Colin Field and Peter Bear.

Eight members met at the station on June 15th and were joined by another three at the Angel, also our guide Peter and Carol who brought up the rear. The weather was fine after early rain.

During the course of a 2½ hour walk at a pace leisurely enough to enable all to complete, we were transported back in time to an Islington full of inns and their associated theatres, known for its dairy products as it was en route to Smithfield. The well-known raised pavement, lined with trees, recalled times when ladies crinolines could be splashed by passing carriages and Islington Green was used as a pleasure garden for strolling. The statue of Hugh Myddelton on the Green led us on to viewing the New River Head where once the terminal reservoir stood, now occupied by the Metropolitan Water Board Building. The wind and steam pumping mechanism to lift the water up to Pentonville is still visible, though the New River is covered now in its latter urban stages. Islington is indeed a watery place. The mile long tunnel on the Regents Canal, was viewed from the tow path. We would like to thank Peter Bear for making our walk so informative and entertaining. *TCF*

Tuesday, July 17th.

A summer evening walk, led by John Scivyer, was somewhat poorly attended, because that was the date on which half of July's rain fell in one evening! John hopes to repeat the walk in due course.

AUTUMN LECTURE PROGRAMME (PREVIEW)

Thursday, September 27th 2001 "The Story of Hampstead Heath", by Margaret Smith.

The history of the Heath and the way it has developed over the past century. Margaret is on the Hampstead Heath Consultative Committee.

Tuesday, October 30th, 2001 "History of Technology", by Denis Smith.

London's Engineering Heritage, including the work of many of Britain's greatest civil engineers, the Rennies, Brunels, Robert Stephenson and Sir J. Bazalgette. Surviving structures include roads, canals, railways, bridges, tunnels, energy supply, public health and flood prevention works.

Thursday, November 29th, 2001 "Mediaeval Arms and Armour", by Michael Dewberry.

Looking at chain mail, the evolution of plate armour, what was worn underneath, the long bow and further evolution of weapons. Examples of plate armour, self-made armour, broad swords and a long bow will be on show.

PUBLICATIONS

Brian Warren's "*History of Oakmere House*" is in the last stages of production and copies should be available shortly, from the usual outlets (Bray's, High Street; Health Food Shop, Broadway; Potters Bar Museum) and at the monthly meetings.

POTTERS BAR SOCIETY. SOCIAL EVENINGS 2001

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. PH

Thursday, September 20th	"The Oscars I Wished I Had Won"	Mr. N. Last.
Thursday, October 25th	"Antiques Roadshow" (Bring one item along for identification)	Mrs. C. Wade.
Thursday, November 22nd	"Working With Disabled People" (John Groom's)	Mr. M. Shore

POTTERS BAR SOCIETY OUTING

Saturday, September 29th, 2001. A coach outing to the American cemetery at Madingley, after a coffee break at the Waresley Park Garden Centre. Well worth a visit. Lunch at the Wood Green Animal Shelter. Afternoon visit to Hemingford Grey to the home of Lucy Boston, authoress of the *Green Knowe* children's books. A very interesting and unusual house. Garden with old fashioned roses and topiary. Admission £4. Riverside walks. Tea/coffee usually obtained in the local pub. Home around 6pm. Usual pick-up points:- 8.45 am at St. John's, Baker Street. 8.50 am Church Rd. (opp Post Office), 8.55 am Oakmere (opp Bus Garage), 9.0am Park Avenue, Southgate Road. Cost £11. Please make cheques payable to *The Potters Bar Society*, and send them to Mrs. P. Hardiment, 34 Parkside, High St. Potters Bar, Herts. EN6 5AU.

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 655 794), who would then put them in touch with the member needing the lift.

The PB&DHS Newsletter is produced in September, January and May of every 'season.'
If you wish to submit an item for inclusion (preferably of a 'local-history' nature),
please phone the Editor, John Donovan (01707 664 447)
at least one month before the publication month (i.e. August, December or April).
Inclusion of such items is at the Editor's discretion.