

The Newsletter

MAY 2002

VOL. 18 No. 3

COVER PICTURE

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



The junction between Darkes Lane and The Walk does not seem to have changed to any great extent over the years, but careful study will show that some of the lampposts have been changed, as have the planters, now taller and more widely spaced along the pavement. Although the fabric of Leighton House appears to be unchanged, the bank now has a blue Barclay's Bank strip across the top of the ground floor, and boasts an automatic teller machine (for getting money with a card) and new front doors. The tiny tree to the right of the bank is now some twelve feet tall, and there is no longer a street sign by the planter.

There does appear to be an Estate Agent's to the left of the bank, but I can't make out the name. The shop behind the oak is unidentifiable in our photo, and Potters Bar Furnishers has become Pizza Town.

FROM THE CHAIRMAN

To all our members

Our Society has had a very busy year in many areas. The Parkfield excavations and public weekend where we showed the finds and some examples of Romano British life, like food, dress, jewellery and armament etc., was a great success and brought our Society to the notice of many schoolchildren and Potters Bar people. Our Stewards were there for a total of four days, so many thanks to all of them. I must acknowledge the enthusiastic assistance we had from the Welwyn Archaeological Society for their help with the displays. Thanks to them, and in particular, Tony Rook and his Pastimers Group for the excavations.

Brian Kolbert (our Education Officer) and myself talked ourselves to a standstill when we visited Sunnybank School to talk about World War Two. The classes (with teachers and helpers) kept coming, and so did their questions. Classes from Cranborne School also visited our Museum during the year, and Brian, Colin Field and myself hopefully sparked their interest in the history of earlier days of our area.

Arnold Davey our Museum Curator arranged for another well attended display of Meccano in the Wyllyotts gallery, and has recently removed the 1951 Exhibition items from the Museum. He has just put up a new display of old maps, some of them are from Arnold's own collection and are rather rare. They are well worth a visit and you can use the large magnifying glass in the Museum!

We are still under pressure from Hertsmere Leisure Services to open the Museum for more hours so as to get more visitors through the door and make our part of the building more cost effective. I have pointed out to them that we are the cheapest Museum in Hertfordshire with regard to cost per head per visit. I also mentioned that some of our older members are still cross over something called the 'Tilbury Bequest' to Potters Bar that seemed to have 'evaporated' when we were swallowed up into Hertsmere. The expression, 'Quid pro quo' is obviously only known on this side of the AIM. Our visitor numbers are about 200 up on last year, but to open the Museum on another day would require our stewards to attend for perhaps 2 or 3 days per month and may cause problems. What day of the week should be chosen, or should we just extend the hours to include the lunch hour? Any suggestion on this problem can be passed to any Committee Member or myself. I feel that since our Museum is already at the top of the tree, are we like the old rhyme, being beaten like a walnut tree – '*...the better you beat them the better they be.*' TG

REPORT OF THE 43rd AGM

This was held on 25th April with the President, Chairman and sixty-two members present. In his opening remarks Terry Goulding mentioned the Parkfield "dig", and the museum lease is now settled. This was followed by John Scivyer's secretary's report. He reviewed the meetings and publishing for the year. Terry's accounts followed. These showed a satisfactory position and were accepted unanimously.

The elections followed. All office holders were re-elected. There were changes among committee members; Ian Cumming stood down and Mabel Hammett was elected. Michael Cawrey who was co-opted during the year remains a member. The independent examiner (no longer auditor) and Trustees remain as before. Under AOB a question was asked if members were satisfied with the present mix of talks. A show of hands suggested they were.

The meeting closed to be followed by an interesting talk by Brian Warren on "*Potters Bar High Street at the turn of the century*" (nineteenth to twentieth). JS.

NEW MEMBERS

We should like to welcome Mrs. A. Griffiths, Mr. A. Fennel and Mrs. C. Wilderspin to the Society. We trust they will enjoy the lectures, walks and outings that are part of our yearly programme, and we hope that they will take an active part in the life of the Society.

OBITUARY

Vic Taylor

A staunch and loyal member of the Society who was a regular attender, with his wife Joyce, at the monthly meetings, where they would always readily assist in the preparation of the room for the meeting.

Victor was also known to numerous members through his active participation in everything at St. Mary's, The Walk. The Society was well represented at his funeral, on the 22nd March, where the Vicar acknowledged Vic's contribution in welcoming new members and visitors to the church.

Sympathy is extended to Joyce, who we hope to see at future meetings.

BOOK REVIEW

"*Community Life in Hertfordshire – 2000*", a unique work, published by the *Hertfordshire Association for Local History (HALH) Recorders' Group* at £10, and edited by Gillian Gear Ph.D. Gillian, who is well known to our Society, is Chairman of HALH, and it is to her that our own Recorder Group sends its biannual reports. As a way of marking the Millennium, Dr. Gear, on behalf of HALHRS, asked all the local history societies in Hertfordshire to send her something representative of their town or village, archives, photographs and oral records. The result was five lever-arch files full of information, which Gillian and her team of volunteers edited and organised into a smaller but more coherent whole. The result is a splendid volume, A4-sized, soft-backed, with a colourful cover illustrated back and front with pictures and embroideries produced by local societies. The book contains short, illustrated articles on no less than sixty-five villages and towns, and you can find particular places in the contents page and on a small map.

The entry for Potters Bar (by John Scivyer) includes reports on *Potters Bar in Focus*, (including its Parks and Open Spaces and Communications sections), Morven meadows, Furze field Local Nature Reserve and *The Potters Bar Theatre Company*. In contrast, Cuffley's entry (by Brian Warren) included its Millennium Gardens, Millennium tapestry, oral recordings and a time capsule.

Naturally, I turned to the articles on our near neighbours first, places such as Radlett and London Colney, but I found it even more interesting to read about such far-flung spots as Ashwell in the north of the county. This '...record of community life in Hertfordshire' (page 206) is required reading by everyone who loves Hertfordshire and local history. *JD*

"THE FINAL JOURNEY"

On the 11th February 1952 the funeral train of the late King George VI left Kings Lynn in Norfolk for its journey to Kings Cross, hauled by a Pacific *Britannia* (especially chosen) British Railways Standard Class 7 locomotive No. 70000. The train was made up of ex-LNER teak coaches with, a first class saloon No. 46, painted black for the occasion, carrying the coffin.

The train would have passed through Potters Bar station around 2.08pm with many residents watching and paying their respects from the platform and along the line side. Who remembers this solemn occasion?

The King's eldest daughter Princess Elizabeth automatically became Queen on 6th February 1952.

The train would have passed New Southgate station around 2.19pm

Ron Kingdon

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 would then put them in touch with the member needing the lift.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

In order to avoid confusion, it would be appreciated if members would pay their subscriptions before, or on, the 31st March of each year. We have some members who leave it until very late on in the year, say January, and then pay every January, and so they are technically always ten months in arrears. We have other members who actually pay every other year! We do need your subscriptions at the *beginning* of the session!

ARCHIVIST'S REPORT

From time to time when I was Hon. Curator of the Museum, one received enquiries about the North Mymms Auxiliary Hospital.

I am grateful to Marian Benton, Hon Archivist of the North Mymms Historical Society for permission to reproduce the following from their publication, "On The Home Front. The People and Parish of North Mymms 1939-1945", cost 70p.

The North Mims Auxiliary Hospital

"North Mims Park the home of Major Burns and Mrs. Burns was taken over by the Joint War Organization of the British Red Cross in October 1940. The accommodation was for 55 patients (subsequently increased to 66 in June 1943) and was for members of the three services and civilian victims of air-raids. A total of 4,497 patients were admitted in its five years and eight months of existence.

Mrs. Burns was Commandant and there were three main matrons, firstly Miss G Swinford, secondly Miss C Kemp and from November 1942 Miss E Cadwell. There was a physiotherapy department and as well as trained nurses, members of the British Red Cross, members of the Order of St. John and quartermasters and kitchen workers were members of the staff.

The secretary of the hospital was H M Alderman. Mrs. M B Crowe of the Women's M.T.C. took care of the hospital ambulance and was its honorary driver for most of the hospital's life.

The social side of hospital life was not forgotten as it was regarded as an important part of the rehabilitation of service patients. ENSA concerts and cinema shows took place at regular intervals.

A large doll's house complete with furniture was made by the patients and put on exhibition at the Men's Institute on June 17th 1944. It was disposed of in aid of the Duke of Gloucester's Red Cross and St. John's Fund.

One of the most treasured signature's in the visitors' book was that of H.R.H. The Princess Royal."

"Sir Nigel Gresley the Engineer and his Family" by Geoffrey Hughes

This book is the culmination of 20 years' research into published and unpublished sources, but more importantly interviews were conducted with people who worked with and knew Sir Nigel. It received an outstanding review in the "*Great Northern Society News*", where reference was made to it being the most comprehensive book on the subject and there being little chance of it being bettered, so full was the story.

The author is a highly qualified person, a Chartered Engineer, Fellow of the Institution of Electrical Engineers and a Member of the Chartered Institute of Transport. He is a Vice-President of the Gresley Society and President of the LNER Study group.

Apart from railway enthusiasts it is of interest to people in this area because of Sir Nigel's many local connections. For example, he was Captain of Hadley Wood Golf Club and later, when living at Salisbury Hall, his family attended the early service at North Mims Parish Church.

The book is highly recommended. Published by the Oakwood Library of Railway History ISBN 0 85361 579 9, cost £14.95. *BW*

The Guildhall Library, London

On the shelves of the Manuscript Dept. there are two small boxes containing the A5 books of, 'London Apprentices' researched almost entirely by Cliff Webb and published by the Society of Genealogists. I express my gratitude to both of them and have abstracted references to South Mimms, which I intend to publish in this and subsequent Newsletters. In the lists the local person on the left has been apprenticed to the London master on the right.

Volume 2 Tylers' and Bricklayers' Co.

25-7-1638 Thomas Henton son of Wm. blacksmith to Robert Nicholls (25 July 1638)
29-7-1703 John Mitten son of Jn. bricklayer to Wm. Stretch
25-7-1612 Thos. Sheffielde son of Richard (MIMMS) yeoman to Francis Wallington

Volume 8 Gunmakers' Co.

2 -6 -1687 Jn Browne son of Wm shoemaker to Jn Daff
7 -7 -1692 Robt. Harvey son of Rbt. yeoman to Jn Daff
6 -10 -1715 Thos Harvey son of Thos. husbandman to Rbt. Harvey
14-12-1693 Richd. Harvey son of Rbt (KIRKS END) yeoman to Jn Daft (sic)
18 -4 1689 Edw Sams son of Edw tilemaker to - Daff

Volume 9 Needle-makers' Co.

1-8-1678 Thos King son of Thos. Husbandman to Jn Turner

Volume 12 Maker of Playing Cards' Co.

1-10-1695 Jn Warner son of Henry labourer to Samuel Fullwood

Volume 17 Innholders' Co.

2-8-1659 Thos. Barnett son of Jn husbandman to James Sadler

BW

MILESTONES

Last May we reported that, following its encounter with a fast car late at night, the 15th milestone (Little Heath) had been repaired by our Chairman. Sadly, person or persons unknown attacked the milestone again, and it became unglued (probably because it had been leaning at an alarming angle). Undeterred, Terry went back with a full milestone-repair outfit comprising a car jack, several sturdy baulks of timber, a plank, some stone-glue, two spades and a spirit level, and with a little help from myself, not only glued the two halves together, but left it standing perfectly upright and firmly embedded in the soil (clay)!

For various reasons, we don't have many of our milestones left in England, and it was to protect those that *do* survive that The Milestone Society was formed a couple of years ago. I joined the Society immediately, and was flattered to be asked, earlier this year, to become their Hertfordshire Co-ordinator. Sadly, I had to decline the offer (Potters Bar and Friern Barnet Local History keeps me too busy!). I hope to attend the Society's AGM up in the Midlands soon. We have copies of our *Museum Fact Sheet* No. 4 available, free, in the Museum, from which you can read about our local milestones.

COAL TAX MARKERS

Another free *Museum Fact Sheet*, No. 2, deals with our local Coal Tax Markers (one at the top of Church Road, one outside the *Builder's Arms*). The owners, The City of London at Guildhall, recently organised the repainting of the well over two hundred markers dotted around London, and I was fortunate to drive past the marker at the top of Church Road as the chap was painting it. I stopped

and had a long conversation with him. Apparently, the markers that need repositioning (the one at the back of Queenswood School for example) will be dealt with in due course. I was impressed with the chap's skill as a painter *and* as an explorer – he'd actually found the marker up in the wilds of Harperbury Hospital, which I've *never* been able to trace!

SPRING LECTURE

Friday May 31st “Forty Hall. Part 2” by Geoffrey Gillam

Those members who attended Part 1, will remember that we had more than a full-house in January 1998. This talk will concentrate on the archaeology of the gardens at Forty Hall and will describe many of the features discovered there as a result of a detailed study of the documents and cartographic evidence, fieldwork and some excavations. As a result of which we know that the lake in front of the house is a later insertion, replacing the earlier terraces and parterres. There is a garden mount, an 18th century belt walk, the remains of 18th (possibly 17th) century summerhouses and, of course, the avenue of trees, amongst other features either discovered or re-examined.

THE MEETING STARTS AT 8PM **PROMPT** IN THE 60 PLUS CENTRE, WYLLYOTTS CENTRE. EVERYONE WELCOME.

SUMMER ACTIVITIES

May 23rd, Thursday. Brian Warren will lead a follow-up walk to his talk on the High Street. Meet 6.30pm for 6.45pm outside *The Lion* pub (corner of Barnet Road and Southgate Road).

June 28th, Friday John Scivyer will lead the walk around South Mimms (including the old Holyhead Road), which was postponed last year due to weather conditions. Meet outside *The Black Horse* at 6.30pm.

Ridge Walk

It had been hoped to repeat Ted Salter's 'Village Tour' of 1986 in July. This has been postponed to late September and further details will be given in the next Newsletter, should present negotiations come to fruition. *BW*

AUTUMN LECTURE PROGRAMME (PREVIEW)

Thursday	26 th	September	2002	Mr. D. Pam. <i>The Enfield Small Arms Factory</i>
Tuesday	29 th	October	2002	Mr. R. Thomas <i>Illustrated talk on</i> <i>Engineering Marvels of the Waterways System</i>
Thursday	28 th	November	2002	Anne Marie Parker <i>Hidden Hertfordshire</i>
Friday	31 st	January	2003	Jim Lewis MA. Ph D. <i>Forgotten Industries of the Lea Valley, including the Gunpowder Factory.</i>

POTTERS BAR MUSEUM

The exhibition marking the 50th anniversary of the Festival of Britain has now finished, and the new exhibition is entitled, “Old Maps”. This will be on display until October 2002. Our museum opening times are Tuesdays and Wednesdays, 2.30-4.30pm, Saturdays, 11am to 1pm, and a few hours on those Sundays on which Wyllyotts hosts one of its Antiques and Collectors Sales.

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

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

POTTERS BAR SOCIETY, SOCIAL EVENINGS

The following illustrated lectures have been arranged for 2002. These will be held at the Tilbury Hall, Darkes Lane, commencing at 8pm, admission £1.50 (incl. Refreshments), payable at the door. Non-members are welcome. Dates as follows:

Thursday, 19 September 2002.

For details watch *The Community News*

Thursday, 24 October 2002.

For details watch *The Community News*

Thursday, 21 November 2002.

For details watch *The Community News*

PROGRAMME CARD

The card for our 2002/2003 session will be distributed with the September Newsletter.

DISTRIBUTORS

Once again, I should like to thank Michael Cawrey, Dianne Rebbetts, and our team of volunteers, one of whom will have put this copy of the Newsletter through your door.

The PB&DHS Newsletter is produced in September, January & 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 642 886) at least one month
before the publication month (i.e. August, December or April).
Note; inclusion of such items is at the Editor's discretion.