

# *The Newsletter*

**MAY 2008**

**VOL. 24 No. 3**

## **COVER PICTURE**

This is a photo taken by professional photographer Frederick Cole of Barnet, from the collection held by Terry Goulding.



A fine pair of huge horses pulling the hay cutter on Ashby's Farm, opposite St. Giles' Church in South Mimms in June 1936. This field is now bisected by the M25 Motorway and alas there are very few horses left to please their masters and repeat this scene.

## **FROM THE CHAIRMAN**

To all our Members.

Hopefully Spring will be here when you read this, but with such a bitterly cold early Easter time this year, I shall be glad at least to move the days on a bit. Have you noticed that you only have to mention Easter and it starts to hail and snow then no matter when it is placed in the calendar. I think that is why I chose a cover picture of a warm early summer day with horses.

Each year seems to take its toll on the health of our members one way or another, but somehow each one manages to carry on, or someone else volunteers to take over a task. The Committee and I would like to thank all those past and present workers that have made our Society so successful for all these years.

Our next meeting is on Thursday May the 29<sup>th</sup>, and is titled *St. Albans Abbey; Past and Present* by Pamela Martin. I hope to see you all then.

*Terry Goulding*

## **NEW MEMBERS**

We should like to welcome David & Hazel King, Marion Cant, Valerie Holmes, and John & Fran Gouriet. We hope you will enjoy the lectures and occasional outings that are part of our yearly programme, and that you will take an active part in our Society.

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## **SPRING LECTURE**

**Thursday May 29<sup>th</sup>, 2008**

***St. Albans Abbey; Past and Present* by Pamela Martin.**

A description of the Abbey and its history, and what goes on in it now.

THE MEETING WILL START **PROMPTLY** AT 8PM IN THE 60 PLUS CENTRE, WYLLYOTTS CENTRE. EVERYONE WELCOME.

## **AUTUMN LECTURE PROGRAMME (PREVIEW)**

Friday	September 19 <sup>th</sup>	<i>The Life and Fiction of Elizabeth Gaskell</i> , by Dr Graham Handley.
Tuesday	October 28 <sup>th</sup>	<i>The History of more local Public Houses</i> , by Brian Warren and Terry Goulding.
Thursday	November 27 <sup>th</sup>	<i>Roman Enfield</i> , by Dr Martin Dearne.
Tuesday	December 9 <sup>th</sup>	Social & quiz evening.

## ***MUSEUM STEWARDS REQUIRED***

Members are needed to help look after the Museum. Perhaps you could help for just one day a month? It would be of great assistance and you would be on duty with an experienced steward.

<b>Tuesdays</b>	2.30 - 4.30pm, contact Ian Cumming on	01707 642296
<b>Wednesdays</b>	2.30 - 4.30pm, contact Arnold Davey on	01707 654179
<b>Saturdays</b>	11.00am – 1.00pm, contact Mabel Hammett on	01707 657120

## **RECORDER GROUP**

We still need volunteers for our Recorder Group, which monitors changes to Potters Bar on a daily/monthly basis (we meet twice a year to collate our findings). The work has been going on since 1984. Reports are sent in from all over the County and stored in the Hertfordshire Archives, County Hall, where they form a valuable record for the use of future historians and researchers.

It is interesting and worthwhile work, and it need not take up much of your time; you would be allocated a small area, in which you would note road works, changes to shops and houses, and anything else that changes the appearance of Potters Bar.

If you would like to help, please contact the Chairman, John Scivyer, on 01707 657586.

## **DELIVERERS REQUIRED**

In each issue we pay tribute to Michael Cawrey and his band of helpers, who save the Society pounds in postage by delivering your copy by hand. Naturally, our volunteers do come and go, however at the moment we do have a full complement. If you would like to help in the future, three times per year you would be required to push a Newsletter through the letterbox of half-a-dozen or so of your neighbours' front doors. If you can help, please ring me on 01707 652975.

*Richard Lee*

## **SUBSCRIPTIONS 2008/09**

The subscription year runs from April 1<sup>st</sup> to March 31<sup>st</sup>. From time to time we have members who forget to pay in April, and then fall behind with their subscriptions. It is important that you keep your receipt in a safe place, to avoid confusion. Should you pay by post, be sure to collect your receipt at the subsequent lecture meeting. If you want us to *post* the receipt to you, please enclose a SAE. You can check your current membership status by phoning the Membership Secretary, Eileen Field on 01707 653801. Her address is 51 Highview Gardens, Potters Bar, Herts EN6 5PN.

**Note**, you should make your cheque payable to Potters Bar & District Historical Society, and *not* Mrs. E. Field.

## OBITUARIES

### GEOFFREY GILLAM (1929-2008)

Geoffrey was a contemporary of the late Dr. John Kent and not long after the Second World War they cycled into the Hertfordshire countryside looking for potential archaeological sites. They excavated at Pancake Hall, Welham Green in 1950, and at Perriors moated site, Cheshunt in 1958. In 1953-54 Geoffrey was the director of the combined excavation by the Barnet and District Record Society and Edmonton Hundred Historical Society, which excavated the Romano-British site at Parkfield, Potters Bar. The finds are now in the Potters Bar Museum.

Geoffrey was the doyen of the archaeology in Enfield having served as chairman of the Enfield Archaeological Society for twenty-nine years of unbroken service.

He lectured to the Society on five occasions, commencing in 1980 with *Death of the Victorian*. His subsequent talks were on *Forty Hall* (twice) and *Enfield at War 1939*; these were later published. Geoffrey was a keen photographer, who had walked the streets of Enfield recording the street furniture, i.e. sign posts, pillar boxes, drain covers etc. On the 29<sup>th</sup> October 1986 he lectured to us on *Survivals: history all around us*. I have heard Geoffrey on many occasions and his lectures were always well-researched and presented; not to be missed.

Geoffrey was a friend of mine for some forty years and I always respected his valued opinion. I attended the funeral on the 17<sup>th</sup> April, as a representative of the Society.

The Society's sympathy has been expressed to his widow, Ena, and their two sons.

### JUNE AXFORD (1941-2008)

June was born and bred in Potters Bar, attending Cranborne and Mount Grace Schools. Then working at Randall's toy factory, before commencing thirty years at Barnet General Hospital as a clerk. June and Michael were married in 1964 and they had two children. June was involved in many activities, including the Red Cross, the National Trust, her church and other clubs.

June and Michael joined the Society in the early 1980s, and apart from the monthly meetings, they attended their first Recorder Group meeting in June 1986. Living in Cranborne Crescent they naturally became the Recorders for the area surrounding their neighbourhood until 2002.

Arnold Davey and I attended the funeral service representing the Society; other members were also present.

The Society extends its condolences to Michael and family on their sudden loss.

*Brian Warren*

## **MEMBERS**

It is hoped that John Gamby, Doris Minchinton, and Val Lonkhurst make a speedy and successful recovery from their recent operations, and best wishes to John Donovan who has been under observation.

*Brian Warren*

## **THE SOCIETY'S 49<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

This was attended by the President, Chairmen and 44 other members. Terry opened the proceedings by welcoming the members. In his opening remarks he noted another successful year. We have continued to offer interesting talks. Our publications continue to sell well thanks to Mabel's work on the copier. The museum continues to function well thanks to the members who steward it. Last year we held the usual special exhibitions. The education team has visited three schools plus cub and scout groups. Many thanks are due to Eileen who keeps the membership records.

John Scivyer read the report from the committee. Much of this had been covered by Terry. John Donovan had ceased to edit the news-letter the job being taken over by Richard Lee. Between them they had produced the usual three excellent editions last year. Now John is giving up the secretary's job, Richard will assume that as well. We continue to sell our publications and derive other income from copying. Friern Barnet have now bought their own copier so we will lose income there. The rest of the committee, trustees and independent examiner were re-elected. We commenced the year with 169 members and finished with 189. Our income was £1388.08 and expenditure £1233.48.

The treasurer reported, and the accounts show, a healthy position with no need to change our subscriptions. Due to illness John Donovan was unable to give his scheduled talk. So after the now traditional free tea and biscuits John Scivyer spoke on "Sir George Cayley: Inventor of the Aeroplane"

*John Scivyer*

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## **ANOTHER UNSUNG HERO OF THE FIRST WORLD WAR** (Mr. George Hill, 54 Bedford Avenue, Barnet)

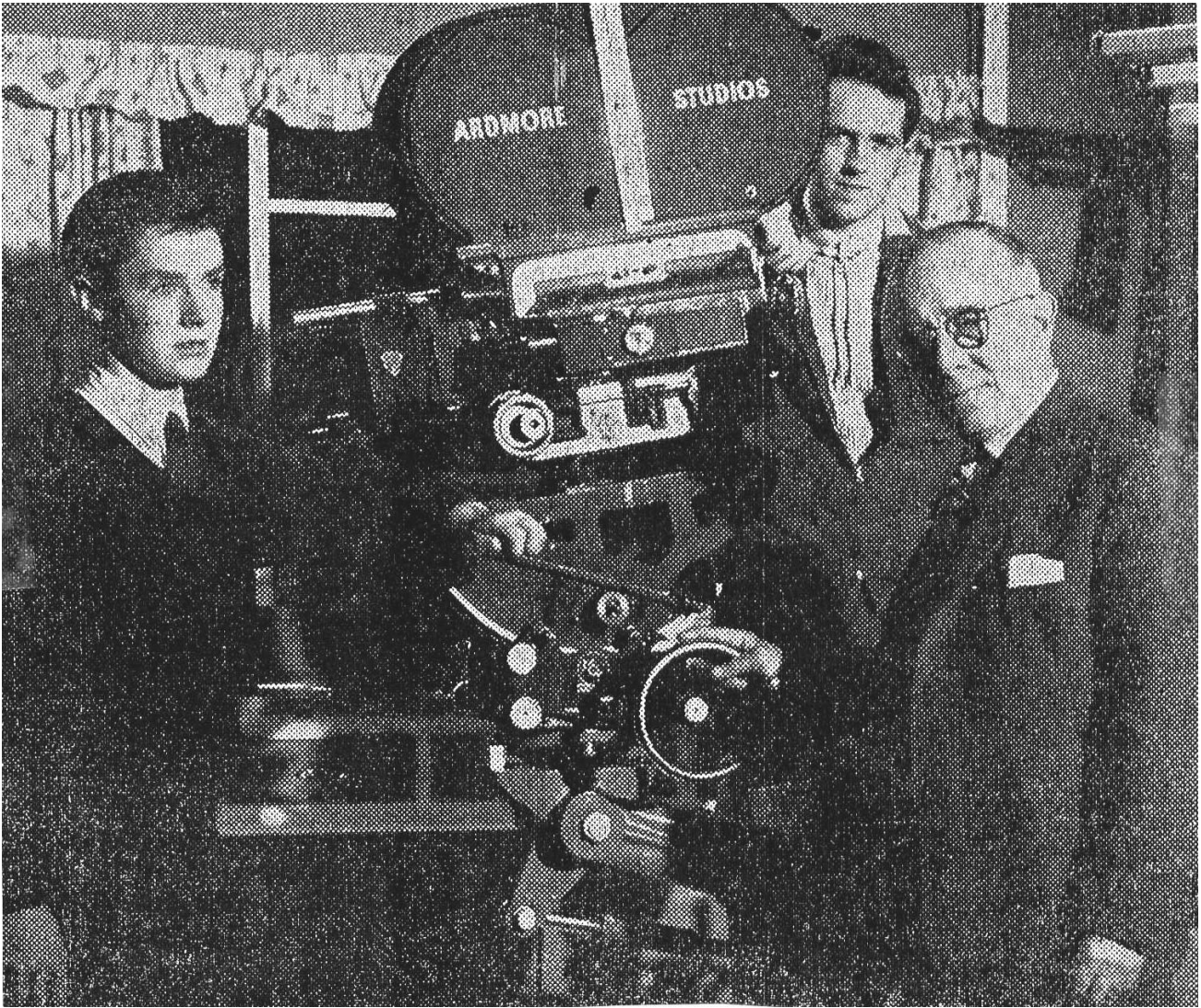
The following article first appeared in 'The Barnet Press' dated the 16th September, 1965.

A well-known Barnet personality, Mr. George Hill, of 54, Bedford Avenue, who celebrated his 70th birthday this week, played an active part in the fight against the German airships which raided this country in World War I. He flew, as air gunner and observer, with 2nd Lieut. (later Air Commodore) Fred Sowrey, who shot down the L.32 Zeppelin near Billericay. Mr. Hill, who was in the R.F.C. from November, 1914, to the end of the war, also flew in France with Lieut. Bill Sowrey, who, like his famous brother Fred, also reached high rank. As Flight-sgt. George Hill, No. 2060, he flew with the famous No. 37 Squadron from Goldhanger aerodrome, and was with Lt. L. P. Watkins when he shot down the Zeppelin which crashed at Saxmundham, Suffolk.

When the interviewer talked to him this week about his World War I experiences and the ceremonies we reported last week to mark the 50th anniversary of the shooting down of the Cuffley and Potters Bar Zeppelins, Mr. Hill challenged the comment of Cr. T. S. E. Figgis, Chairman of Northaw Parish Council, about the "string and glue" aeroplanes of World War I. Mr. Hill said the B.E. 2E aircraft they flew were good machines, they were stringently inspected and as perfectly maintained as the much faster, fighter aircraft used in World War II. After

taking part in the battle against Zeppelins, some of which failed to reach London because their compasses had been “doctored” by spies, Mr. Hill flew with Capt. Cordwell against the 22 Gothas which raided London. He recalls that they flew to their maximum height of 11,000 feet, but the Gothas bombed from 13,000 feet. He recalled that the first incendiary bullets which so startled the Germans, were made by Brocks, the firework firm.

Mr. Hill, who has lived in this area for a great many years, is particularly well known in the film industry as a cameraman and as a maker of cameras. He was a pioneer cameraman in the early days of the movies, who worked with many celebrated film stars. At 70 he is still making and adapting cameras for the film industry where he is a well-known specialist.



Mr. George Hill with one of his studio film cameras, and two of his assistants.

*Brian Warren*

**POPPY FACTORY VISIT**

As some of you know, Colin Field is organising a visit to the Royal British Legion’s Poppy Factory in Richmond, Surrey. This will take place on Thursday November 6<sup>th</sup> (3 days before Remembrance Sunday), and a coach is being laid on for transport.

Details of the trip are as follows:

Cost £15.50, including lunch.

Leave Potters Bar 11.00 a.m. on coach from outside Wyllyotts Theatre.

Cup of tea on arrival.

A talk on the factory.

Lunch (Lite Bite: Homemade Soup of the Day served with Crusty Baguette, and Sweet of the Day)

Tour of the factory at 2.00 p.m.

Return at 3.30 p.m. arriving back at Potters bar around 5.30.

There are only spaces for 25 people so only the first 25 to reply can go. Please complete the tear-off strip below and send with the cheque to Colin Field before the end of June.



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

Poppy Factory visit Thursday November 6<sup>th</sup> 2008

I enclose £ \_\_\_\_\_ for \_\_\_\_\_ ticket(s) (Cheques to be made payable to Potters Bar and District Historical Society.)

Name	.....
Address	.....
Phone	.....

## ARCHIVIST'S REPORT

In my article on, 'Two Local Medieval Pottery Sites' (The Newsletter May 2007) I noted the earliest reference for the present Mutton Lane is 1316 (p.8). The pottery from the two sites dated 1050-1200 and 1170-1350, indicates that the route was older than the earliest written record.

Prior to John Scivyer's letter, in the last Newsletter, concerning 'Wartime Jamming of Radio Signals', he had already informed me that as far as he was aware the roads in Radlett were never guarded in World War Two. In that connection I had already contacted Martin Jeens, through the Radlett Library. He is the Archivist of the local history society, and has lived in Radlett all his life. His mother was 'quite categorical in that the roads in Radlett were not guarded.'

He also informed me that above the library there is on one wall information concerning the role Radlett played in the last war. Beam Benders No. 80 is mentioned and there are photographs of service personnel and also the buildings in which the aircraft tracking and beam bending were carried out. Access to the room is by request of the librarian at the Information Desk in Radlett Library. The library is open at the following hours:- Monday, Wednesday and Friday 9 - 5 and Tuesday/Thursday 9 - 7, also Saturday 9 - 1.

Over the years I have received many different types of requests but on the 13<sup>th</sup> March Alison Tinniswood, Senior Archaeologist, at Hertford, left a message on my answerphone concerning the building of an extension in Blanche Lane, South Mimms. During the deep excavations the workman had come across a wooden coffin containing some bones. Could I help? The police had been called in, as had the police archaeologist. It did not take me long, as the present Victorian property had been built over the Quaker burial ground. I advised the owner to contact the Friends' Meeting House, in Euston Road, as they hold the records and hopefully a plan of the burial ground to show its extent. [See article on p.3 of the Welwyn and Hatfield Times, Potters Bar Edition, for 26/3/08. *Ed.*]

As a result of a further enquiry I would be pleased to receive information concerning the location of any World War II anti-aircraft batteries in the Potters Bar / South Mimms area.

Finally, a reminder that Clark's, the butchers, although not in business for many years, first came to Barnet Road in 1908.

*Brian Warren.*



## STORIES OF MEMBERS OWN FAMILIES

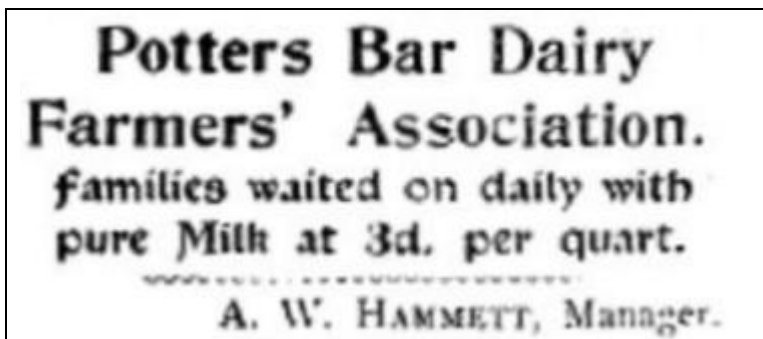
### ROY AND JUNE HAMMETT

This lid, from the top of a milk churn, was found in the attic of Wyllyotts Manor, when in 1973 Goodhews converted the house into a restaurant. It shows our name and Manor Farm. The caretaker knew that Bill Hammett (Roy and June's father) had lived in Wyllyotts when he was a small child and he kindly gave him the lid.



Grandfather, Arthur William Hammett, a tenant farmer had from the late 1800's farmed Wyllyotts Manor Farm through to just before he died in 1918. The cows grazed in the fields which stretched from where the Laurel Estate is now to the other side of Darkes Lane behind Woolworth. Mr Hammett delivered milk to Potters Bar and Little Heath.

Terry Goulding, our chairman, found this advert in the Little Heath Church Magazine dated October 1910.



*Mabel Hammett. (Roy's wife)*

**Do you have a family story that we could include in a future Newsletter?**

# POTTERS BAR MUSEUM

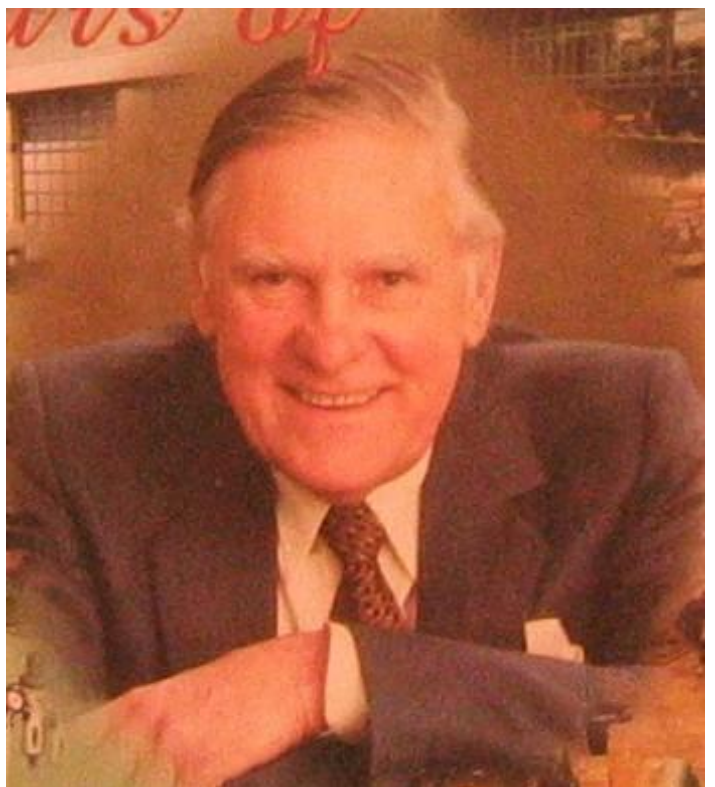
## KNIGHT STRIP METALS (New exhibit in Display Case no. 22)

Knight Strip Metals was founded in 1940 by Edward Knight at 1324 High Road, Whetstone, and at first occupied a first floor workshop behind a greengrocer's shop. Edward Knight was a watchmaker and employed John Spinks to make watch springs and sell steel. A year later they moved to larger premises at 987 High Road, Finchley, and concentrated on watch and clock springs for the war effort. By 1947/8 the firm was turning out over 1 million per annum.

The present Chairman, Brien Knight, joined the company in 1949 and led a process of diversification, since demand for clock springs was dropping. He established a separate company, Sterling Springs, in 1952. The companies moved to Potters Bar in 1958, setting up at 24 Station Close, which had 5000 sq. ft of floor area. By now there were 18 employees. Two more expansions in Station Close enlarged the company to 20,000 sq. ft and 44 employees.

They soon outgrew Station Close and moved to Cranborne Road in 1971, occupying now 36,000 sq. ft and with 60 staff. Sterling Springs remained behind in Station Close. The first computer was purchased.

In 1974 the company expanded into Europe, starting Precision Metals NV in Belgium, at first with partners but later fully owned. Expansion in Potters Bar followed, with a new factory building, Knuway House, opened by Cecil Parkinson, MP, in 1979. This was large enough to incorporate Sterling Springs, who then left Station Close.



The commemorative plate on display was made in 1990 to mark the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the firm.

In 1999 the company bought Charles Harbage Processing Ltd in Birmingham, now renamed Knight Metal Services, and most of the heavier end of the processing was transferred there.

The company now exports to 35 countries and supplies strip and wire products for an enormous range of precision pressings, some of which are exhibited here. It is the largest company in its field in Europe and is involved in the design of products at a very early stage.



#### Other items in Museum Display



Oxygen Mask Valve Holder



Constant Tension Spring

*Arnold Davey*

## DR. F. BRITAIN'S LIBRARY (CONTD.)

### THE FINAL LIST

#### PERSONAL and PRINTED BOOKS (Contd.)

F.B.31	Map of Public Footpaths in the neighbourhood of Barnet, Elstree, Hadley, Hatfield, North & South Mimms, Sandridge & Shenley from 1896 survey.
F.B.32	The Parish Church of St. Giles South Mymms A Little Guide n.d.
F.B.33	PBDHS Occasional Paper No.4 South Mimms by Mr.F.C.Hart 1993
F.B.34	PBDHS The Journal No.7 1992
F.B.35	South Mymms and Potters Bar Through Two World Wars F. C. Hart ( <i>Not reliable -BW</i> )
F.B.36	Barnet & District Local History Society Bulletin - Excavations at the Motte & Bailey Castle of South Mimms,Herts.,1960-1967 by Dr.J.P.C.Kent, F.S.A. Nov.1968
F.B.37	The Story of Potters Bar and South Mimms c.1966 (with references)
F.B.38	The Story of Queen Elizabeth's Girls' School Barnet 1948-1978

#### BOOKS ON HERTFORDSHIRE

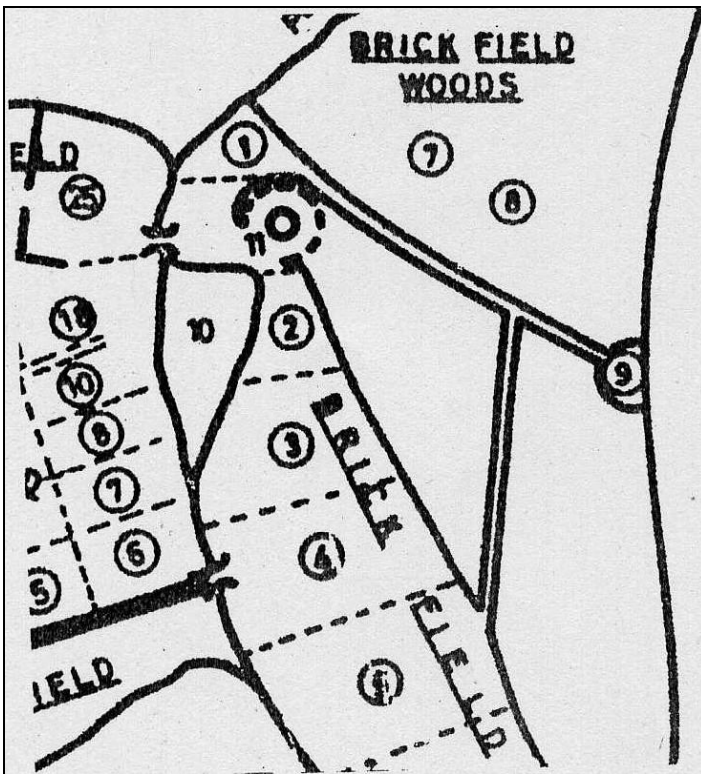
F.B.87	Bound copy of 'Middlesex Quarterly 1953-59'
F.B.88	Royal Commission on Historical Monuments, England Middlesex 1937
F.B.89	The County Books Middlesex Norman G. Brett-James 1951
F.B.90	The Place-Names of Middlesex Allen Mawer & F.M.Stenton 1942
F.B.91	A New Survey of England Middlesex Michael Robbins 1953
F.B.92	Picturesque Middlesex Duncan Moul & R,H.Ernest Hill 1904
F.B.93	Bygone Middlesex William Andrews 1899
F.B.94	Schools of the Edmonton Hundred George W. Sturges 1949
F.B.95	The King's England Middlesex Edit. Arthur Mee 4th Edit. 1949
F.B.96	Middlesex Old and. New Martin S.Briggs 1934
F.B.97	Highways & Byways in Middlesex Hugh Thomson 1909
F.B.98	Cambridge County Geographies Middlesex G. F. Bosworth 1913
F.B.99	The Buildings of England Middlesex Nikolaus Pevsner 1951
F.B.100	Middlesex John B.Firth 1906
F.B.101	Charles Lamb and His Hertfordshire J.M.Dent & Sons Ltd. 1949
F.B.102	Picturesque Hertfordshire Duncan Moul & F.G.Kitton F.E,Robinson & Co. 1904
F.B.103	Scrapbook of The St. Giles' Players 'Aladdin' 8 <sup>th</sup> -10 <sup>th</sup> Jan.1953
F.B.104	The Victoria History of the County of Hertfordshire Edit Wm.Page, F.S.A. Volume Two 1908

The above books are not to be sold and remain forever as, 'Dr. F. Brittain's Library' in the possession of the Potters Bar and District Historical Society. In the event of the Society being dissolved Dr. F. Brittain's Library "shall be given or transferred to such other charitable institution or institutions having objects similar to some or all of the Society as the Society may determine and if and insofar as effect cannot be given to this provision then to some other charitable purpose." as recorded in the Society's Constitution 6th Edition. April 2000.

*Indexed and typed by Brian Warren, Hon. Archivist, 6th May 2007*

## THE HERTFORD LOOP LINE

### PONSBOURNE TUNNEL



On Saturday the 5th July 1913 thirty members of The Geologists' Association travelled from King's Cross to Cuffley, where the line terminated. The purpose of their visit was to examine some sections on the new line of the Great Northern Railway between Cuffley and Hertford. In the Report of the excursion (P.G.A. 25, 1914 pp.77-78) it was recorded:- "Walking northwards, along the route of the new line, the Cuffley Brook was seen on the right flowing southwards to join the Lea. The brook has cut down through the Reading beds into the Chalk, and the latter has been dug on the sides of the valley.

Where the line crosses the brook the position of the pebbly outcrop of the Pudding Stone in the Reading Beds was pointed out, and fragments were found lying on the surface.

The question of where were all the bricks made for the Ponsbourne Tunnel has been a matter of speculation for many years. The local opinion has been on the field named Brick Field, on the Tolmers Activity Centre. This was the level field adjacent to the Cuffley Brook not very far from the tunnel.

At this point the large brickworks, established by the contractors to supply the enormous number of bricks required for lining the tunnel was visited, and Mr. Wells explained the machinery in use. The clay, after proper mixing, is forced under pressure through a rectangular aperture, and is sliced by steelwires, as it emerges, into bricks, which are then passed through the drying sheds to the kiln."

Since identifying the location of the remains of the brickworks, in the Tolmers Activity Centre, I took the adjacent photograph of a few of the remaining bricks, which for one reason or another were not used.



I wish to express my thanks to Murray-Houchin Hughes, Dr. John Catt and Daniel Bate for their assistance in the preparation this article. Also, to the warden of the Tolmers Activity Centre for permission to reproduce the map and take the photograph.

This is reproduced by kind permission of the Northaw and Cuffley Parish Council.

*Brian Warren*

## **THE HOOK KENNELS, COOPERS LANE ROAD.**

The Society's publication, 'The Journal No.8' related the use of the Hook Kennels during World War Two. However, the Greyhound Racing Association's (G.R.A.) biggest training centre in England was established in Coopers Lane Road, at the Hook Kennels, in 1931. The site was in the country and at a convenient distance from the three London race tracks of Harringay, White City and Stamford Bridge. The yellow G.R.A. vans, with 30 cages and the kennel maids, were a common sight in the early evening through the High Street, Potters Bar, taking the dogs to the appropriate race track.

An owner paid for their dog to be kennelled, groomed, trained, insured, taken to and from the track and given any necessary veterinary attention. The veterinary wing contained a surgery, an operating theatre, X-ray room and medicine store. There was always a close liaison between the owner and trainer. In 1957 a residential block was built, with living quarters for kennel maids and lads. This block supplemented the twenty-four houses in Hook Lane and accommodation in Northaw.

Once a dog was housed at the Hook Kennels, unless it was its race day, it would follow this set pattern. At eight o'clock in the morning the dogs were taken for their first exercise in the park or the kennel paddocks. During the rest of the morning they were groomed and fed, which was followed by more exercising in the afternoon. Their day ended at 14.30, after they had received their second feed, except those racing that night; they were fed after their race. A healthy dog usually raced three times in two weeks.

It is interesting to note that the Brothers of the Roman Catholic Hospitaller Order of St. John of God first came to St. Raphael's, Barvin Park, a little further along the road, in the same year, 1931. There they dedicated their lives to looking after boys from seven to men of seventy-five, who aged but never reached mental maturity.

*Brian Warren*

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**The PB&DHS Newsletter is produced in September, January & May of every 'season'. Mabel Hammett looks after photocopying and collation, and Michael Cawrey organises, with volunteers, the distribution of The Newsletter**

**If you wish to submit an item for inclusion (preferably of a 'local-history' nature), please phone the Editor, Richard Lee (01707 652975) 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.**