

# PBHS

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POTTERS BAR HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWS LETTER

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## CONTENTS.

EDITORIAL.	Page 1.
THE GREEN MAN INN	Page 2.
CASTLE FARM, THORLEY.	Page 3.
THE BATTLE OF BARNET.	Page 4.
BOOK REVIEW.	Page 5.
FORTHCOMING EVENTS.	Page 5.
NEW MEMBERS.	Page 5.

With the publication of our third issue we feel that our journal is becoming well established. It may be criticised by some for making a somewhat erratic appearance, the intention however, was not that it should be produced at regular intervals, but only when suitable material became available. It could appear however more frequently if more members were to contribute articles of historical interest. Letters to the Editor seeking or giving information will be welcomed as will any snippets of local information.

One of our readers is seeking information on the meaning of the expression "Beyond Potters Bar". He, and we would like to know who coined the phrase, when it first appeared and what, if any, historical it may possess.



The Green Man, Rotters Bar

Most of our members know that the Green Man is our oldest pub, dating from 1672. The Royal Commission's Middlesex Report lists it as a seventeenth century building, so when contractors moved in last winter to modernise and extend it, we feared for the future of this now uncommon example of the vernacular, particularly so seen after losing some of our other landmarks. (see N/L No.2.)

In January 1970, by the kindness of Mr. Jarrett, Benskin's architect, I was shown the inside of the stripped-down building. Despite considerable alterations about 15 years ago its condition was such that a good deal of renewal was necessary, as well as further alterations and external additions at the back.

Inspection showed that although it has been extensively altered over the centuries much of the fabric dates back to the seventeenth century. It originally consisted of a timber-framed structure 24 ft wide and three rooms long on the ground floor. The main, and probably once the only fireplace faced into the middle room, its stack central in the wall between the middle and the north rooms. The lower part its round chimney flue is fully 2 ft. wide and seems to be original. The building follows therefore the 'axial stack' plan which began to come in about 1575 and soon became common, and its details are consistent with a mid-seventeenth century or slightly earlier date. (The wooden fireplace lintel now to be seen, is not in its original position; it once formed part of a partition, one side is slotted, but had been removed and lay in the garden when I spotted it and suggested its re-use for this purpose.)

In a few places on the ground floor the main timber framing could be seen. On the upper floor were more extensive traces, and here at the north end some of the original studding survives immediately below, the lower side of the beam running through the outer wall at head height, are four square diagonally-set mortice holes in which must have engaged the top ends of window mullions of a medieval type.

The original roof structure also survives almost entire, although on the east side new rafters have been laid on the outer side of the older ones, and on both sides the purlins have been renewed.

About a century ago an addition about 10 ft. wide and running the whole length of the building was made at the back, under a separate pitched roof, thus creating a valley roof and a small new gable at each end. The present staircase lies in this extension and it is impossible to be sure where the original stairs were; they could have been placed in an outshot on the west or fitted in beside the fireplace. A second later fireplace was made in the south end wall, and low additions were built on at the north and south ends.



A new building has been erected in the garden, but neither this disturbance nor the laying of drains has revealed any early pottery or rubbish pits.

It is interesting to find that this ancient building (second only to Fylyotts Manor in age and importance in Potters Bar), can still tell us something of its past, and reassuring that although the open 'stable' at the north end has gone the facade still retains its traditional character. The brewers, their architect and the new landlord, Mr. P. L. Goodchild, who was interested enough to ask the Society for details must be commended for the care they have bestowed on it.

K.R.D.

There have been rumours that Sir Robert Peel may have been a sometimes visitor to the Green Man. This seems to be unlikely, but if anyone has any information which will shed some light on this we would like to know.

Castle Farm, Thorley, Bishops Stortford. (Grid Ref. TL 465201)

Director of Excavations: Mr. A. V. B. Gibson. (E.H.A.S.)

A preliminary excavation was conducted in the area to the south of the farm buildings.

Owing to the good luck of Mr. Peter Whalley of Castle Farm, taking out a plough on the land, he found an old rubbish pit which was then reported to E.H.A.S. and the sherds that he found there were Medieval. The area is enclosed with a ditch system and irregularities on the surface did suggest perhaps past occupation.

The rubbish pit or ditch was found to connect with a gully which appears to come from a dwelling area. Spread over the gully and around the pit was a pebble floor, consisting of flint, chalk and glacial erratics, this was surrounded by a dwarf wall, the buildings having flint and chalk foundations supporting whittle and daub walling. Judging from the pottery it appears to date from the 13<sup>th</sup>/14<sup>th</sup> century.

Finds last year (1969) were a Rowel spur, arrowhead (iron) hones and a mortar, the latter possibly used as a base socket of a door swivel.

In addition to the finds; this years excavation has uncovered an extensive cobble platform with the outline of one hut at least, and the possibility of a second hut across a small courtyard. The ditch surrounding the site has been sectioned (No report of this available to date)



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Traces of a hollow track leading to the huts have been discovered.

The finds include a good collection of Medieval ironwork, both domestic and decorative, also pottery. Some bronze has been found but this consists of flat disc-like objects, unworked. This bronze came from the large cobbled platform.

A token coin, of that period was also found.

On the last day of excavation for this year, one of the large post holes for the main roof support was discovered. It was thought that this was only one of a few.

There is a slight probability, that the dwelling place had a raised wooden floor above the pebbled one.

We look forward to a further interesting 'dig' next year, with many sunny week-ends?

K.W.

### The Battle of Barnet.

This took place in April 1471 and plans are now well advanced for celebrations to mark the 500th Anniversary. There is to be an exhibition of weapons, armour, heraldic and other items from the period as well as genuine relics of the battle. There will also be a <sup>several</sup> shop window displays and other events.

It is understood that a member of our Society has a Battle Axe, apparently thrown away after the battle, which the organisers would very much like to borrow for the exhibition. If he is willing to do this, will he please get in touch with the Secretary, or any other officer of the committee. (I did Terry)

Help will be needed to man the exhibition daily from the opening day April 10th. until it closes on the 30th. April 1971.

The Vice-chairman of the society is on the organising committee and any offers of help can be given to him.

The opening will be by T.V. announcer Richard Baker, and the exhibition will be held in the Council Chamber, Wood Street, Barnet.

As the Battle was actually fought in the Potters Bar area it is up to us to show the other societies who are assisting that we are able to lend a good measure of support. Further details will appear in future newsletters.



BOOK REVIEW.

"The Names of Towns and Cities in Britain" by W.F.H. Nicholise, Margaret Cralling, and Melville Richards. B.T. Batsford Ltd., London. Price 30/- (£.50)

This book claims three firsts; it claims to be the first book for 80 years in which the place names of England, Scotland and Wales have been investigated together, the first in which scholars from all three countries have co-operated in a work on place names and the first in which the selection of names has been dictated by linguistic and an extra-linguistic criteria.

In explaining the place names the authors have attempted not only to explain the meaning of the name but have considered many other aspects. These the ground features from which the name was derived, the relationship of a name to others of the same type or containing the same element, the historical implications, distributional context and social significance, and the place of a name within the linguistic stratum to which it belongs.

This a well presented book in which the names are all arranged alphabetically for ease of reference. The information though full is concise and should prove useful to all who are interested in the study of place names.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

- Dec. 7th. (Monday) A Social Evening - Members are requested to bring an antique or artifact for discussion.
- Jan. 11th. (Monday) Medieval Housing as Revealed by Excavations.  
Mr. J. T. Smith.
- Feb. 1st. (Monday) North Myms. - Mrs. D. Colville.

All the above meetings will take place in the Lecture Hall, St. John's Methodist Church, Baker Street, at 8 p.m.

NEW MEMBERS.

We welcome the following new members to the Society :- Mrs. E. D. Bloom, and Mr. K. Ward. Mr. Ward has since joined our committee and has contributed an article to this issue.

Interested people are always welcome as members of the Society, meetings of which are held at the St. John's Methodist Church, Baker Street. Full particulars of membership can be obtained from the Hon. Secretary, Mr. L. Bull, P.O. S. 4., 21, Aberdale Gardens, Potters Bar, Tel. 56469. The annual subscription for adults is 10/- (50p) and for juniors (under 21) 5/- (25p).

Editor, C. T. OUGREND, 30, Deepdene, Potters Bar.