

PBHS

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POTTERS BAR HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWS LETTER

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Editorial.

Readers of the local press will be well aware of the Council's proposal to demolish Salisbury House and of this Society's attempts to persuade it to change its mind. However Potters Bar Council has shown little interest in preserving the few buildings of historical interest which remain in the district. According to a recent issue of the Potters Bar Press, Councillor Mrs. Simons has said that the Council has three antiquated buildings in its possession, Oakmere House, Salisbury House and Willjets Manor and hinting that the Council can hardly be expected to spend the ratepayers money on their preservation. May we remind Mrs. Simons that the Council bought Willjets Manor in 1937 so that it could be preserved!

Far from carrying out this intention the Council appears to have consistently neglected this building in the hope that it will eventually reach the state where it is impossible to restore it and demolition becomes the only course of action left. We hear of Ivy growing through the window frames and floors, this is nothing short of neglect.

C.T.O.

SALISBURY HOUSE, POTTERS BAR.

These notes on Salisbury House in Potters Bar High Street are not the result of a special study of this site but just those facts that have come to light during my research into the history of the district. There are undoubtedly many other records of the original enclosure of this site and the building that was erected on it among the court rolls of Enfield Manor. Later records of owners and occupiers and of alterations to the property may still be found in old deeds, advertisements of sale, census returns and local directories.

The earliest reference appears in a copy of a court roll of the Manor of Enfield of June 9th, 1756, which tells that John Fennell had held by copy of the court roll, a piece of land, formerly a gravel pit, lying at Potters Bar with a tenement or dwelling house upon it. This he had, on the 28th, May 1740 surrendered, as was the custom of the Manor, to the use of his will, a means by which a copyholder could pass his copyhold to his heirs or executors in his will. In this case his executors were, Richard Bourk and Walter Butler, who claimed the copyhold and produced a copy of the will, dated March 4th, 1754, which instructed them to sell the property for the best price obtainable. After being admitted, they must have set about finding a purchaser, for the next record, which I found among Mr. Butcher's notes, is of a similar court held on November 5th, 1756, when Richard Jones now in possession of the same piece of land which had formerly belonged to John Fennell surrendered it to the use of his will and bequeathed it to his sister Ann Jones. At the Court held on 25th, May 1774, Ann Jones had produced the will and claimed the land and house.

Other evidence appears in various surveys of the encroachments made along the Enfield Chase Boundary at Potters Bar just before the enclosure and division of the Chase in 1777. A fine plan of a survey of these encroachments made by Richard Norris Junior in 1769 is at the Public Record Office (MPC.143). It shows the whole length of the High Street with the property both within the boundary of the Chase and that claimed to be in the Manor of Willyets. An agreed boundary between the two manors had been marked by a series of numbered posts whose positions are set out in a schedule signed as correct by both the Duchy of Lancaster surveyor, Francis Kussell and the Brewer's surveyor, James Ellis. The odd balloon shaped site of Salisbury House is shown as belonging to Richard Jones, and the outline of the house and the long narrow building at the side on this plan correspond to the outline of the house and buildings as shown on the first 6" Ordnance Survey map made in 1866 and in a more recent edition of 1935. The same survey of 1769 shows a large pond on the Chase on the site of the two lakes in Oakmere Park which suggests that these were probably result of the gravel pits around the site of Salisbury House.

At the enclosure of the Chase in 1777, copyholders of land within the Chase, were allowed to retain their copyhold or obtain enfranchisement or a leasehold by payment of so many years rent.

I have not studied the Enfield Manor records so I do not know what Ann Jones decided to do. She appears as possessor in the South Mimms enclosure award of 1782. As the enclosed land was awarded free of tithes there are no details of the property on the tithe map of 1842. Land Tax assessments for 1780 and 1786 both show property belonging to a Mrs. Jones with a rent value of £20 tenanted in 1786 by a George Grasswood, but one cannot be certain that this refers to Salisbury House. A ratebook of 1827 shows that James Haynes was in possession of the property, valued at £20, and of a schoolroom valued at £5 and a piece of land valued at £1. The 1858 ratebook lists a Mr. Layton as the late owner of the same property.

Pigot's Directory for 1823 shows it as a Gentlemen's Academy whose proprietor was a Mr. Haigh. The same directory in 1832 names Hanscombe Layton as proprietor of a boarding Academy, and in 1839 gives J.W. Hawkes for the same establishment. In 1876 a Post Office directory lists the Rev. George Henry Waldron in possession of Salisbury House and finally, in a valuation list of 1902, Salisbury House and garden are given as the property of the Kemble Trustees who also owned Oakmore and a great deal of other High Street property, and the occupant was William Burge. The rateable value in 1902 is given as £64 with an additional £1 for the adjoining piece of land.

Mr. Butcher in his notes says that when he was collecting information on the history of the High Street houses it was occupied by Frank Partridge, a well known art dealer, and before the local Council took it over it was a doctors consulting rooms.

The outline of the house shown on the 25" Ordnance Survey map of 1955 is much the same as that shown on the survey of the encroachments of the Chase in 1769 except for the addition of a small piece in front in the 1955 map.

H.M. Baker, 1971.

Book Review:-

Hertfordshire- W.Branch Johnson, published by Batsford, London 1970.

Most of the books on Hertfordshire take the county parish by parish or alphabetically but Mr. Johnson uses a different approach. He takes a theme and makes a chapter on this and then moves on to another theme. The eight chapters deal with roads, towns and villages, early Herts, Castles and stately homes, trades and work and the inns of the county. This approach makes an interesting variation and the author puts in many little snippets of information which would be lost under a list of places. The book is nicely printed and the illustrations are what one expects of a firm of publishers like Batsford. As is always the case in a first edition there are errors and mistakes that one hopes will be rectified in subsequent editions. Mr. Johnson mentions the six farms being at Salisbury Hall, etc.

THE BATTLE OF BARNET APRIL 14th. 1471.

The Battle of Barnet was fought on Easter Sunday, April 14th. 1471, on and around Hadley Common. This battle was a turning point in English history as government was taken into the king's hands instead of the greater Barons. The country wanted a strong government led by a king who was able to stand up to the powerful families who virtually ruled the country instead of the king.

Just before dawn on that Sunday Edward soon to be acclaimed as Edward IV, climbed up out of the thick mist with his two brothers and a host of followers to oust Richard Neville, Earl of Salisbury, Earl of Warwick, Lord of Glamorgan, known as Warwick the Kingmaker, from his position of the ruler of England.

None of the chroniclers agree about the events of this day except that Edward won and Warwick was killed and that the thick mist helped the Yorkists to get within close range before being seen.

Many stories are told of where and how many were involved, and it may be that we shall never know the true story of all that passed that day. Sufficient to say that at the start of the battle, one of Edward's commanders, Lord Hastings broke under pressure from the front and his left flank, and fled the battle pursued by the Earl of Oxford and his men towards Barnet. Whilst he was away Edward's right put pressure on Warwick causing him to fall back with his left wing and the battle turned through an arc of 90 degrees to the original positions. On Oxford returning to take up his original position and thinking to attack Edward in the rear, he came upon the rear and right wing of Warwick's forces. Owing to the mist he was upon the fighters before he could tell which was which and attacked his own side by mistake. Lord Montague, brother of Warwick thought that Oxford had gone over to the enemy and cried 'Treason'. Montague's men gave way and began to withdraw from the fight, the others seeing this also ceased and the battle was nearly over and Edward was successful. After the fighting had ceased it was discovered that the Earl of Warwick was dead as was also his brother Montague.

Some say the battle finished at 10 o'clock others say 11 and others say it raged all the day. Usually battles were over in three to four hours as fatigue engendered by wearing heavy armour and weapons and also fighting on foot, most of the contestants were too tired to carry on.

This war was fought between powerful groups of men who were all or nearly all related to each other and so as was the case in all these civil strifes the warriors perished but the local populace took little or no part in these affairs and just laid low whilst the battle raged and then continued their every day affairs when it was all over.

There are many books on the Wars of the Roses and those who are interested can read for themselves the story of this fight which was after all on what was until recently part of Potters Bar. One or two things have been dug up from time to time and three are to be on view at the Quincentennial Exhibition at Barnet during April.

An Exhibition to Celebrate the Quincentenary of the Battle of Barnet.

This will be held in the Council Chamber, Wood Street, Barnet, from Saturday April 10th. to Friday April 30th. The Exhibition will be open from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday to Saturday and on Sundays from 2 p.m. until 6 p.m. Admission is free and refreshments will be available. Cars may be parked in the free car park in Salisbury Road, signposted on the High Street. A souvenir Brochure has been produced for the exhibition and is now on sale at the Barnet Museum, from members of the committee (the vice-chairman, who is a member has copies.) and they will be on sale at the exhibition. The brochure contains a diary of events, a history of medieval warfare, a history of the battle, a history of Barnet, a map of the battle and a bibliography. The booklet contains several illustrations and is a souvenir worthy of this historic event.

A brief summary of events planned to take place is as follows :-

- Sat. 10th. Opening by Lady Lenanton at 3 p.m.
- Sun. & daily for the duration of the Exhibition Salisbury Hall near London Colney will be open to the public.
- Mon. 12th. Procession through Barnet, Joustabout, Archery Contest, Side shows, Pony rides, Ox Roast, Fair, & Fireworks.
- Wed. 14th. 500th. Anniversary. Lighting the beacon on Monken Hadley Church Tower and display of Folk Dancing in costume.
- Sat. 17th. Middlesex Philatelic Exhibition and first day covers.
- Sun. 18th. & 25th. Tour of the Battle Field.
- Mon. 19th. Talk on The War of the Roses by Mr. Lawrence James.
- Thur. 22nd. Service at Barnet Parish Church, Speaker The Bishop of Edmonton.
- Thur. 29th. Sounds of Battle. A programme by the Friern Barnet Taperecording Society.
- Fri. 30th. Exhibition Closes.

There will be an Art Exhibition in the precincts of the Barnet College of schoolchildren's work on this event. In the Exhibition will be displayed Banners of the various people who fought at Barnet and made by the W.I.'s and Townswomen's Guilds. Armour from the Tower of London, Warwick's War Mace from Warwick Castle, a Diorama of the Battle by the Society of Ancients, articles lent by various bodies and people to make a show that may never be assembled together again in one place.

The Potters Bar Historical Society is represented on the organising committee by A.W. Longden, the Vice-chairman who will be willing to answer any queries on the exhibition.

To be or not to be - an Excavation Group.

Although the PBHS includes archaeology in its range of History to enjoy and learn, apart from infrequent lectures in this direction we as a society have done only one practical thing about it - our 'rescue' dig in 1963 on Tilbury's site in High Street (the finds are being published by John Ashewin in Hertfordshire Archaeology 11 now in the press). A few of us also helped at Dr. Kent's South Myms Castle excavations and elsewhere.

A pity, this, for a historical society that isn't really interested in archaeology is like a man in blinkers. Today most local societies go in for it in a big way, and not to dig means being looked down on. But why try to keep up with the Jones's? After all, why bother to dig? A hundred years ago the reason was "to find things". Now the right answer is "to find out", and digging is only part of that - fieldwork, using only boots and eyes can reveal much without all the mess and toil of opening up the ground. Archaeology gives an extra dimension to our understanding of the past, by supplementing historic records and on prehistoric periods telling us all we know.

Naturally it demands effort. "Digging" is hard work and demanding because it must be done carefully and be fully recorded and be published afterwards. ("Excavation is destruction"). But it is interesting, rewarding, quite fascinating to fit things together. And if a threat arises to a local site the county will rightly expect us to do our own duty, even if neighbours help too.

Archaeology has another useful by-product the PBHS would welcome - it attracts plenty of young members, some of whom stay. Of course others are just keen to dig, but most take an intelligent interest in what it means. However there is room for active people of all ages, and less active ones who like pot-washing and scraping.

The Committee think the PBHS should do something about this and start an Excavation Group. We have a very experienced member in our ranks (not myself) who is willing to take charge and arrange for practical training.

It is up to you. Volunteers please let the Secretary know. (The Secretary is Mr. Bartlett, 33, Elmfield Road, Potters Bar.)

Speakers at the Annual General Meeting.

The Annual General Meeting will take place on Monday 19th. April in the Lecture Hall St. John's Methodist Church at 8 P.M. At the close of the business part of the meeting there will be a short talk on Catnach by Mr. M. Tomkins, and another by Mrs. H.M. Baker on Dancers Hill.

Book Reviews.

"The Industrial Archaeology of Hertfordshire" by W. Branch Johnson, F.S.A., F.R.Hist.S., published by David & Charles, Newton Abbot. (£2.50)

To most of us Hertfordshire has always appeared to be a County with very little industrial history. The large industrial complexes of Welwyn Garden City and Stevenage are the product of more recent times, yet, as the author of this book points out, the county has a Malting industry going back to the Middle Ages, a paper making industry which is nearly as old and has had (in Watford) an important centre of the printing trade for over 100 yrs.

This well written and informative book covers all these and more, brewing, milling, gas and water undertakings to mention but a few. Extinct industries are also well covered. The maps and illustrations are clear and well produced. At the price it represents excellent value and should find a place on the shelves who are interested in the subject. There is a comprehensive gazette and three appendices covering (1) London Coal Duty Boundary Markers (2) Milestones, and (3) Victorian (and Edward VIII) Posting Boxes.

While it is inevitable that some mistakes should occur it is nevertheless a pity that so many should mar an otherwise excellent publication. For instance residents of Potters Bar (and Messrs Ind Coope Ltd.) will be surprised to learn that the Green Man was pulled down in 1969!! On page 19 we read that limeburning is now extinct in the area, in fact it is still carried on at South Mimms by The Barnet Lime Co. A less obvious error appears on page 97 where we read about an 1890 diesel pump by Kirrlees, Bickerton and Day of Stockport, but this company did not come into existence until 1908. Incidentally the world's first Diesel engine was built by M.A.N. in Germany in 1896. It is hoped that these and other errors will be corrected when a second edition is produced.

C.T.O.

Appeals for Help

The Society is anxious to obtain old picture postcards and ~~phot~~ photographs of Potters Bar and the surrounding district to complement the modern being taken by Mr. Bartlett. If readers have any such photographs, will they please send them to the Secretary either as a gift or as a loan for copying. In the latter case we promise to return them in the condition in which they were received

Help is required for the Battle of Barnet Exhibition which will be held between the 10th. and the 30th. of April. Hours of opening will be 10 A.M. to 7 P.M. Monday to Saturday and 2 P.M. to 5 P.M. on Sundays. The Potters Bar Society is involved in this and people are required to help steward the exhibition at the Council Chamber during these hours and during the whole period of 20 days. Anyone who can give a little time during the day or any

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evening will be welcomed. The more people we can get to help the easier it will be for all who have offered. The work is not onerous and involves attending to the sale of the brochures and keeping an eye on the exhibits in the hall. Any offers of help can be made direct to Mr. Longden, the Vice Chairman either in person at the A.G.M. or before if possible. (His address is Tolmers Scout Camp, Tolmers Road, Cuffley, Herts. Phone. Cuffley 2900)

Society Membership

Membership of the Society is open to all interested people, the subscription is 50p per annum (under 21 years old 25p). Particulars may be obtained from the Secretary, Mr. E. Bartlett, 35, Elmfield Road, Potters Bar.

All people are welcome to attend our meetings, details will be found on the Public Library notice boards.

Hon. Editor.

C. T. Overend,
30, Deepdene,
Potters Bar,
Hertfordshire.