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NEWS LETTER OF POTTERS BAR AND DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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POTTERS BAR AND DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

PRESIDENT: Mrs. Muriel Brittain Chairman; K.Rutherford Davis, B.A.

HON. SECRETARY: A.Harding, M.A., 83 Byng Drive, Potters Bar. Tel.52973

Formed in 1959 to encourage the preservation of things of local interest and to study both local and general historical matters. Meetings are held throughout the winter months at intervals of approximately three to four weeks, details are exhibited on the Public Library notice boards or may be obtained from the Secretary. Subscriptions are 50p. p.a. for those over twenty-one years of age and 25p. for those under twenty-one.

In 1973 an archaeological group was formed under the leadership of Mr. G. Pulzer.

All members of the public are welcome to attend our meetings whether members of the Society or not.

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EDITORIAL

It was announced at the end of last year that Salisbury House had been sold by the Council for £231,500 to the Scottish Mutual Assurance Society. The new owners have stated that providing the building is safe they will not demolish the property. Their intention is to carry out restoration work and to build an extension which will harmonise with it and approximately double its size. This is welcome news indeed and this Society will watch the development with interest.

When Potters Bar Urban District Council were proposing to demolish this house in order to build an old people's home this Society in conjunction with the Potters Bar Society tried to persuade them to restore it for use as a warden's residence and storage space for the home. Non-committal as ever, the Council said nothing and did nothing, but eventually decided to build the home at Oakmere. Then, last summer, they announced their intention to sell Salisbury House. We learn from the Potters Bar Press that the Council is to urge the Hertsmere Council to use the proceeds of the sale for the provision of a sports hall in Potters Bar. If this is carried out it will at least mean that the citizens of the town will have benefit of the sale, but many will regret that some of the money will not be spent on cultural activities. A tenth part of the proceeds would have restored and converted Wyllotts Manor into an Arts Centre for the people of Potters Bar.

An outline history of Salisbury House, by Mrs. H.M.Baker, appeared in PBHS4 and a summary of the proposals of the joint committee was published in PBHS5.

All opinions expressed in this journal are those of the contributors and are not necessarily the views of the members of Potters Bar and District Historical Society either as a body or as individuals.

Hon. Editor:
C.T.Overend, /30 Deepdene, Potters Bar.

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THE DUKE OF YORK OR WHITE HORSE AND OTHER INNS AND BEER HOUSES
AT GANNICK CORNER POTTERS BAR

The name of Gannick Corner has changed over the centuries. Originally the name came from the corner of the Gannok land with which Thomas Frwyke endowed his chantry at South Mimms in 1448. It was called Galley Corner in 1720 when the Whetstone Turnpike was extended to this corner. Chase surveys of 1769 onwards name it Gannick; but in the early 19th. century when the first Ordinance Survey was made it was shown as Ganwick and has remained so ever since.

The first mention of an inn or tavern at this corner appears in the act for the extension of the turnpike, which was to be from the Windmill at Hadley to the sign of The Angel in Enfield Chase. With no other information to go on it is difficult to place the site of the Angel with any certainty. The boundary of the chase at this time was not clearly marked as by 1656 the great boundary bank, known as the Gannick Bank, was down and in some parts a new line of road had been made along the edge of the Chase. The Turnpike Act states that the length of road had never been repaired as it was part of Enfield Chase and it was not known to which parish it belonged. It is therefore possible that the Angel was within the South Mimms boundary and in fact there was a possible cottage in existence before 1713 which is recorded in the records of the Manor of South Mimms.

At the Manor Court of 1713 William Sherwood was admitted as the new copyholder of a cottage at Gannick Corner which had belonged to his father. It passed in 1726 to his widow and in 1729, when it was sold to William Eden, it was occupied by Thomas Rickford. Returns of licensed victualers for South Mimms show that Thomas Rickford held a license for The Angel from 1722 to 1732. This cottage lay just to the west of the line of the Gannick Bank on the north side of the road we call Wagon Road, which was made at the time of the enclosure of Bentley Heath. It is shown on the enclosure map of 1780 as the property of John Bellis a descendant of William Eden.

In 1743 there appears in the Manor Court records the first mention of the other cottage at Gannick which was to become the White Horse and later the Duke of York. It was reported at that court that Richard Godfrey had built a cottage on the waste at Bentley Heath near Galley Corner without permission of the Lord of the Manor. He was later admitted as copyholder with a rent of 3d. There is a gap in the returns of victualers licenses from 1732 to 1752 but in that year Richard Godfrey appears as licensee of the White Horse. A War-office billeting return for 1756 confirms that Richard Godfrey was landlord of the White Horse at Gannick and also lists a second inn called the Bull with landlord Edward Barden at Gannick, each with beds for two men and stabling for one horse. I have not been able to find out anything else about the Bull, but Richard Godfrey was landlord of the White Horse until 1767.

In 1761 the copyhold had been transferred to a joint ownership of Richard Godfrey and Mary Stanbridge but Godfrey continued as licensee until 1767. By 1770 Mary Stanbridge had married Henry Newland who is listed as licensee of the White Hart for that year, perhaps a slip of the recorder. Richard Pitham had the license for the White Horse in 1773 and he is mentioned as the landlord in a record of Wyllyotts Manor.

In 1775 Henry Newland sold the copyhold to John Griffith, who in 1776 was allowed by the Manor Court to enclose another half acre of land to the north and west of his house. For this he had to pay an additional rent of 1/- a year and an annual rent charge of 16/- to the Trustees of the poor of South Mimms as compensation for the loss of common land. John Pickles is listed as licensee from 1776 to 1783.

In 1780 when the division and enclosure of Bentley Heath and the South Mimms' portion of Enfield Chase took place, John Griffith was awarded another 22 perches of land between his house and the road and another two acres across the road out of the Chase land. It was probably about this time that the new inn was built. In a statement made in 1836 to the surveyor of the Manor of Wyllyotts the new inn was said to have been built about fifty years before.

In 1791 John Griffith leased the premises to Christopher Ibberson, an innkeeper of Holborn, for 54 years at a rent of £21 a year. Two years later the license is for the Duke of York and the licensee is James Lawrence. Christopher Ibberson held the license in 1800 and John Stevens in 1805. William Pallett, who appears as licensee in 1810, bought the Duke of York from the heirs of John Griffith and continued as landlord until the early 1830's.

The same statement made in 1836 to the surveyor of Wyllyotts Manor says that it was sold to Mr Byng in 1836 and that Mr. Bonus was the new landlord, but I have not been able so far to check this. Piggot's Directory for 1839 gives Richard Teakettle as the then landlord and other directories show William Wallis between 1859 and 1872 and Daniel Newson in 1876.

Helen M. Baker.

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THE END OF AN ERA

"The old order changeth giving place to the new"

This year sees the end of Potters Bar Urban District Council just forty years after the Middlesex Review Order of 1934 brought it into being. This new authority replaced the South Mimms Rural District Council and the name of the mother parish ceased to be a part of the district's title. Now there is to be another change of name as Potters Bar joins with Bushey, Elstree and Borehamwood in the newly created district of Hertsmere. This will bring together under one authority widely scattered communities who have no historical, social or cultural links.

During these years many changes have taken place in the town. The most notable, and the one responsible for most of the others, has been the rise in the population which in 1934 was only 7,500 and which today must be about 20,000 more. More people has meant more houses and almost all of the available building land has now been used, bringing threats to the green belt. More shops have built to cater for the additional numbers and the last fifteen years or so have seen the arrival of the supermarket and the near extinction of the grocers shop as older generations knew it.

In spite of the population increase however the town lost its only place of entertainment in 1967 when the Ritz Cinema was demolished.

In the early days the Urban District was divided into two wards, Potters Bar Ward and South Mimms and Bentley Heath Ward, which

between them returned nine members. In 1953 the number of wards was increased to three by creating the Central Ward. Carved out of the other two it was centred on Baker Street, bounded by Dugdale Hill Lane, the railway (to the Bridge House), Mutton Lane and Barnet Road and included Bentley Heath. These three wards returned a total of fifteen members. Six years later the district was again re-warded and the number of wards increased to five: North, South, East, West and Central, the total number of councillors remaining the same.

It seems incredible now that until as recently as 1958 the town's dustbins were emptied only once per fortnight. The change was not brought about without several years of almost bitter argument, the subject being a recurring theme at each Council election. Those against the change maintained that it was unnecessary and would cause an increase in the rates. The proposers of the reform however claimed that in the interests of health and hygiene a once weekly collection was essential.

A new railway station was built in 1959 when the number of tracks was increased from two to four, thus removing a bottle neck which had seriously restricted railway working for many years. A new signal box, highly sophisticated and (at that time) the last word in electro-mechanical technology, was incorporated. It is an indication of to-days rapid technical changes that it is soon to be replaced by large modern box at Kings Cross.

The period has seen the building of several new schools, Parkfield (now Mountgrace Lower School) in 1938 being the first. Amidst much local argument Mountgrace School, one of the first co-educational comprehensive schools in Middlesex, was opened in 1954 and in spite of its detractors quickly established itself as a centre of learning under the able leadership of its headmaster; Mr. I. A. McBeath. South Mimms School was rebuilt in 1957 followed by new schools Oakmere and Sunnybank in 1960. Since then the Roman Catholics have built Pope Paul School off Baker Street and in Sawyers Lane the as yet unfinished Dame Alice Owen School has been opened to pupils.

The Council has started (and almost completed) alterations and additions to Oakmere House which will give the town a badly needed concert hall. The war memorial has been removed from the site of the old toll-bar at the junction of the Causeway and the Great North Road to its present position on the site of St. John's Church. This removal took place last summer amidst the usual local controversy, but one cannot please everybody all of the time. The site has been tastefully laid out but it could be improved by the replacement of the crumbling wall of concrete blocks which at present mars its boundary.

Forty years produces a long list of changes and it is not possible to mention more than a few here. The Council no matter what its political complexion has served the district well over the years. Nevertheless it cannot be denied that it has consistently set its face against the preservation of what few items of historical interest were left in the district. While we salute the passing of the old we eagerly await the new in the hope of a change of heart, in matters nearest to our own hearts, if it is not already too late.

C. T. Overend

A WROTHAM PARK ANECDOTE

Two hundred years ago - on October 4th. 1774 - one Peter Cliver set off from the Bull Inn in St. Albans for London. He must have taken the Holyhead road through South Mimms and Kitts End, where he saw 'on the left the Seat of the late Admiral Byng, which appeared with some Grandeur.'

This was, of course, Wrotham Park - completed in 1754 for the unfortunate admiral, who was shot three years later 'pour encourager les autres'. Popular indignation had been kindled against him for his alleged cowardice, General Blakeny being the hero of the hour; and according to an anecdote related by Peter Oliver 'the ungovernable Temper of the Mob could not be restrained: a large number of them had assembled, in order to demolish this Seat of the Admiral' And so they might have done had it not been for the lucky chance that 'A Gentleman who lived on the Road where the Mob were passing....stept to his Door & enquired where they were going.' He was told 'they were going to pull down that Dog Byng's House.'

The gentleman, who was evidently friendly disposed towards his neighbour, did some quick thinking and told them they were 'Quite right. He would have joined them but that he had just received a Letter from London that his Majesty had taken the House from Byng & had given it to General Blakeny; upon which the Mob threw up their Caps, with a Huzza! General Blakeny for ever! & dispersed, leaving the House where we saw it standing.'

Thus Peter Oliver in his journal, which may be seen in the British Museum (Eg. Mss. 2672-3). The anecdote does not seem to have been noticed or recorded elsewhere; it would be interesting to know who the gentleman was to whom, perhaps, we owe the existance today of Wrotham Park.

M. Tomkins.

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RECENT BOOKS

"The Waggon and Horses, Ridge Hill, South Mimms." by Frederick C. Hart. Printed and published by F.C.Hart, 16 Cranborne Road, Potters Bar. 16 pages, 9"x5 3/4". Price 25p.

It must be a relatively rare thing for an author to be his own publisher and printer, but Mr. Hart has been engaged in the latter business in Potters Bar for a very long time. In this book he has given us a warm and human story of a well known local hostelry and its surroundings. Those who know him well will enjoy the glimpses of his own peculiar brand of puckish humour.

The story of an inn is inseperable from the story of the road it exists to serve and Mr. Hart has interwoven the two so well that we witness the changing scenes on the road as though we were sitting in the bar of the "Waggon" watching them all go by. The coaches, chaises, steam carriages, cycling clubs, motor buses and finally the all conquering moter car. As one would expect we meet in these pages, highwaymen and coachmen, pugilists and even a ghost! We also learn that the "Waggon" was the original Trust House although no longer owned by this large hotel combine. In his entertaining narrative Mr. Hart has provide us with many interesting snippets of information, but one is left with the feeling that much more remains to be told.

"Town and Country - Verulamium and the Roman Chilterns" by Dr. Keith Branigan, B.A., Ph.D., F.G.A. Published by Spurbooks, I Station Road, Bourne End, Bucks. 160 pages 8 3/4" X 6 3/4"; 90 illustrations, cloth bound. Price £2.95.

"The Age of Arthur - A History of the British Isles from 350 to 650." by John Morris. Published by Wiedenfeld and Nicholson, 11 St. John's Hill, London, S.W.1. 688 pages, 37 maps, 234mm X 156mm. Price £5.35.

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H.A.C. CONFERENCE

The Annual Conference of the Hertfordshire Archaeological Council will be held at the Mid Herts College, Welwyn Garden City on Saturday 23rd. March, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Admission is 50p. (students and senior citizens 25p.)

During the day there will be an exhibition of finds by the various Societies and Museums which constitute the Council.

PROGRAMME

- 11 a.m. - Introduction by the H.A.C. Chairman, Dr. Ian Stead.
- 11.10 - Problems for the Field Officer, Chris Saunders.
- 11.30 - Recent Late Bronze Age Finds, Robert Kiln.
- 11.50 - Belgae and Romans at Puckeridge, Clive Partridge.
- 12.20 p.m. - A Saxo-Norman Ditch in Hertford, Martin Petchley.
- 12.35 - Further Thoughts on Old Barn Timbers, Adrian Gibson.
- 12.50 - Lunch.
- 2.00 - The Wymondley Coin Hoard - Dr. John Kent.
- 2.30 - Northchurch, Gorhambury and Other Hertfordshire Villas, David Neal.
- 3.30 - Tea.
- 4.00 - Regional Study of Roman Villas, Dr. Keith Branigan.

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ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Members are reminded that the Annual General Meeting of the Society will be held on Thursday 25th. April. This announcement was inadvertently omitted from the programme.

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HERTFORDSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL REVIEW

Copies of this periodical may be purchased from the Chairman at 15p. each. The Society makes a small but useful profit from the sales.