

Potters Bar & District Historical Society

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January 1987

THE NEWSLETTER

Vol.3 No.2

As there were no adverse comments the Committee presumed the new format for the last Newsletter has the full approval of everyone, even if there were no contributions for this one!

The Society continues to prosper with new members, good attendances at monthly meetings, excellent sales of Potters Bar Historical Series No.1 and No.2 and a healthy bank balance.

The sale of our publications has been helped by the support of the 'Potters Bar Press' and 'Potters Bar Times' and our thanks are due to Mr.W.H.Gelder and Ruth Hayes, respectively. The work of dealing with these postal enquiries has been handled by Dan.Ruge-Cope and resulted in about £100 being credited to the Society. Many thanks for your good work, Dan.

MEMBERS' NEWS

It is with great pleasure that Mount Grace School is welcomed as the Society's first group member.

The following have joined since September and it is hoped they will benefit from their membership:- Mr. & Mrs.G.Maycock, Mr.& Mrs.R.Green Mrs.D.Fossett, Miss M.Mcguire, Mr.L.Devonish, Mr.P.White and Mr.S.R.Fenn from East Barnet.

Mrs.Taylor and Mrs.Clare continue to improve, but unfortunately Ken Rutherford-Davis and Doris Etheridge have both had to receive treatment at Mount Vernon Hospital.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

About twenty members have not yet renewed their subscription and will find a reminder form enclosed. Prompt payment to Terry Goulding would be appreciated.

SPRING LECTURE PROGRAMME - Monthly Meetings

It is hoped that members will pause at the Society's notice board, scrapbook and publication's table and chat with other members.

THURSDAY 22 JANUARY

'The Sassoons of Trent Park' by Dr.S.G.Doree.

'His hospitality was on an oriental scale. The summer week-end house parties at Trent were unique rather than intimate'. So wrote Lord Bob Boothby (who died recently) in 1947 recalling the Trent Park he had known before the war and its colourful owner Sir Philip Sassoon.

Sassoon was the bachelor son of millionaire parents, a Sassoon and a Rothschild. He carved out for himself a career as a politician, statesman, aesthete and host. Though on first name terms with royalty, he never felt fully accepted in the upper reaches of English society, despite his education at Eton and Oxford. He accordingly set out, in a highly original way, to make himself indispensable to that society, to persuade them to visit him at one of his three mansions.

For this purpose, he bought the freehold of Trent Park from the Crown (he had previously only held it on lease) and then, in the 1920s, set about completely re-vamping the exterior of the mansion, turning it in the process from a Victorian to a neo-Georgian house. In this way, he created the characteristic image of Trent Park that has survived to this day: it survived the regime of sumptuous house parties for which Philip Sassoon designed it; it survived five years as a prisoner-of-war camp and interrogation centre; and it has survived the last forty years as an educational institution. Even now, a remarkable amount survives evocative of the Sassoon era when he entertained, as one uninvited guest put it, 'the great, the bright and the fashionable', when the upwardly mobile of that generation measured

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their social esteem by the frequency with which they received an invitation to Trent Park.

The talk will be illustrated with slides and will attempt to recapture something of the ethos of Philip Sassoon's Trent Park.

MONDAY 16 FEBRUARY - MEMBERS' EVENING

Two of our members have agreed to speak at this evening and the North Myms Historical Society has consented to show its excellent video of life in their village. The video was recommended by our vice-chairman, Reg.Crook, who saw it at North Myms, in November. So it must be good!

Mrs.Vivienne Bell will speak on, 'Perils and pitfalls', a short account of a beginner's venture into discovering the history of an ordinary Hertfordshire family.

Cyril Overend will provide an account of his researches into the history of the TOC H movement in Potters Bar.

THURSDAY 12 MARCH

'Portraits of Power' by Dr.J.P.C.Kent.

Slides of coins, sculpture and paintings will show how rulers have portrayed themselves from Roman to modern times. It is easy to forget that once a subject probably only saw their monarch on a coin, so it was important for the ruler to create the correct image.

This is a fascinating lecture to be given by our vice-President.

THURSDAY 9 APRIL ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING followed

by "More Local History" - Mrs.H.M.Baker.

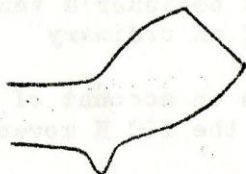
ALL MEETINGS IN OAKMERE HOUSE, at 8 p.m.

KEEPING YOUR EYES OPEN

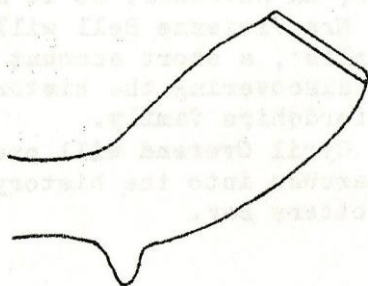
Since the previous article several 17th century clay pipes have been brought to the Society's attention. In particular, three separate finds in The Walk, so it has been decided to plot all finds on a map.

If one finds a pipe bowl with part or all of its stem, as indicated below, then the more upright the bowl is in relation to the stem the more recent is its date.

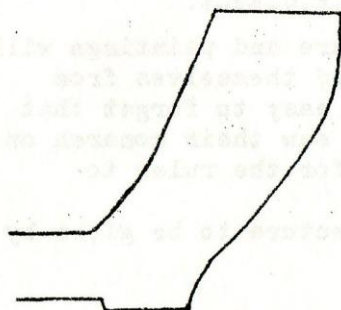
SAMPLE TYPES



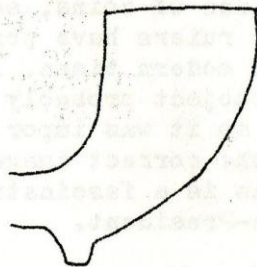
I620 - 40



I670 - 90



I690 - 1740



I780 - 1840

Any finds or queries relating to clay pipes, please contact the chairman.

Consult:- Shire Album No.37

'Clay Tobacco Pipes' by Eric G. Ayto.

THE BARNET PRESS

Though any copies of the above newspaper could be of use to the Society, most of them have been micro-filmed. However, correspondence with the present editor has shown that no known copies or microfilm record exists for the Barnet Press since its inception in 1859 to 21 December 1861; 28 June 1862 to 31 January 1869 and all of 1877.

If anyone should chance upon any of the above or other pre-1900 copies, please inform the chairman.

PROGRAMME 1987 - 88

Reg. Crook (Hatfield 66545) would be pleased to receive any ideas or thoughts you may have about speakers, or the content of next year's programme, as soon as possible.

If you could speak for fifteen minutes on your hobby, some other subject, then let Reg know, as he wishes to fill the next Members' evening with all willing volunteers.

RESEARCH - MOATED SITES

The Herts. Local History Council, with the guidance and inspiration of Arthur Jones, is trying to establish a Moated Sites Research Group, to record all the moated sites in the county.

The first field walking meeting was held on Sunday, 7th December, when preliminary visits were made to five sites, in the north of the county at Sandon, by twelve people including a representative from our Society.

If you are interested in recording the half-dozen sites in our area, contact Brian Warren, who will be attending the next meeting on the 28th February, at Letchworth Museum, at 10.00 a.m.

Potters Bar Historical Series
No.2



THE TOLL HOUSE AT POTTERS BAR

*The Turnpike Road
to Hatfield*

by A. C. Lynch

A5 size

Price of the Potters Bar Historical Series

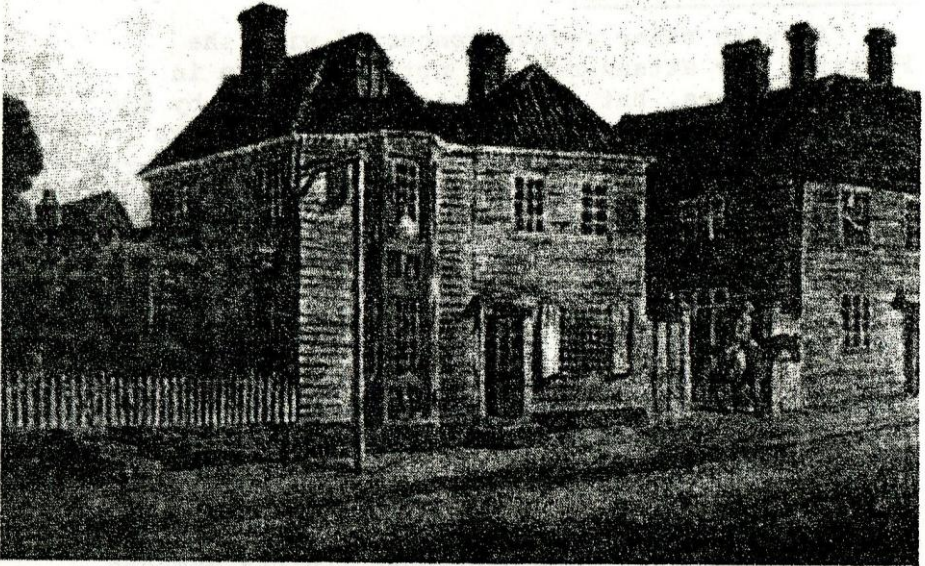
70p for members

80p for non-members

£1.00 postal enquiries to
Mr. D. Ruge-Cope,
21, Chace Ave.
Potters Bar.

On sale at the Society's monthly meetings.

Potters Bar Historical Series
No.3



THE WHITE HART AND CROSS KEYS INNS
AT SOUTH MIMMS

Malcolm Tomkins 1930-1981
- A Collection of his Writings

AVAILABLE BY THE END OF JANUARY.

FAMILY HISTORY

One tip from experience, always record a date thus:- 26-10-1714, never 26/10/1714, as oblique lines can be mistaken for a one when written in a hurry or carelessly.

REPORTS

POTTERS BAR FESTIVAL

As with other events connected with the Festival our attendance was not as good as in previous years, but the Society benefitted by £36 from the lectures, for which thanks are due to Dr. Lynch, Gordon Eve and David Ruddom. Also, Terry Goulding for projecting the slides and those other Committee members who assisted on the evening.

Thanks are due to Doris Etheridge for her assistance in writing out the exhibition items, and to Dan Ruge-Cope, Gordon Eve, Cyril Overend, Joan Groves, Joan Andrews, Barbara Clinton and Mr. & Mrs. Horsefield for stewarding the exhibition 'Oakmere House -its People and History', which resulted in a further £26 from the sale of publications.

KNIGHTSLAND

On Wednesday, 10th September, thirty members visited Knightsland Farm, at the invitation of Mr. and Mrs. C. Naylor.

Though Knightsland Farm is a picturesque building situated near Trotters Bottom, the visit was to see the wall painting of the story of the Prodigal Son from around 1600.

The party was also shown the linen-fold panelling and another wall painting from about 1650. A collection raised £23 for the Red Cross.

THE SOCIAL, 13th September

This event was held at the Vicarage, South Mimms, by permission of Rev. Robert Gage.

Unfortunately, heavy rain prevented the use of the garden, but a friendly convivial evening was enjoyed by everyone.

The evening began with the Rev. Gage explaining the history of the vicarage.

Terry Goulding displayed many of his "finds" from local sites, throughout the evening.

After refreshments there was a reading on "The Poor" followed by two short stories by Dr. Lynch.

The rector showed some old photographs, which created much interest.

HERTS. LOCAL HISTORY and LAMAS Conferences.

Both conferences were held in November and took as their theme, 'Domesday'. The lectures were interesting and one had the opportunity to examine the exhibitions and publications of other societies.

Helen Baker is thanked for providing the Society's exhibition and Joan Groves and Joan Andrews for their assistance at the conferences.

WINTER PROGRAMME REPORTS

OCTOBER "Survivals: history all around us"
by Mr. G. Gillam.

The illustrated talk revealed the abundance of relics that are still visible for those who are observant or set out to find them.

Date tablets, commemorative stones, drain covers, etc. all provide valuable information about the past. The history of pillar boxes was fascinating. Whilst the application of heraldry to everyday life was well illustrated in the London Borough of Enfield. Slides were shown of Edmonton and Enfield marshes, which are still being used as they were many centuries ago for rough grazing.

A vote of thanks was given by Reg. Crook.

NOVEMBER "Follies" by Mr.K.Ruge

Mr.Ruge spoke to a completely filled room of members and visitors.

Briefly defining a folly as a bizarre structure or a building with no obvious purpose, he went on to describe some quite remarkable oddities erected in various places around the country.

Some of these had subsequently been put to good use, including one or two of those erected by the masters of Stowe estates in the 18th century.

Using a fine selection of slides to illustrate his descriptions, he concluded his talk with a closer look at one in particular - a very ornate building now converted to an attractive dwelling house.

A vote of thanks was given by Joan Groves.

DECEMBER "The Secret Code Breaking Computers of 1944" by Dr.A.C.Lynch.

From a boyhood interest in ciphers, Dr.Lynch described the classic methods of concealing information in the written word, and the weaknesses of some codes which could lead to relatively easy decipherment.

By the time the Second World War had begun, many ingenious and quite secure codes were in use, both by the civil and military communications.

The intelligence services required that codes being used by the enemy should be broken, with the result that some very complex machines were designed by Dr.Tom Flowers, by means of which many of the enemy's signals were ultimately deciphered.

Dr.Lynch pointed out that, having been decoded the enemy's messages had, even then, to be carefully acted upon to avoid a loss of confidence and causing the enemy to change the code again.

Then followed a description of his own involvement with the design of these "code-breakers" at the early stages and the intense secrecy with

which it was necessary to surround such work in time of war. He judged that many lives must have been saved as a result of the successful code breaking, making the project well worth while in spite of the enormous effort involved.

A vote of thanks was given by Brian Warren.

ANY VOLUNTEERS TO GIVE A VOTE OF THANKS IN FUTURE!

HERTS.ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONFERENCE IIth APRIL, 1987

Place:- St.Albans School

Title:- "After the Romans: Light in the Dark Ages"

Already the services of three speakers of very high calibre have been obtained, namely:

Professor Martin Biddle,

Dr.Kate Pretty and

Mr.Philip Barker.

Further information will be announced at the monthly meetings, as it becomes available.

April/May 1987 NEWSLETTER

Any items for inclusion in the next Newsletter to be handed in by the monthly meeting, on the 9th April.

THANKS

The Society is indebted to Dan Ruge-Cope for duplicating The Newsletter.

BARNET MUSEUM
Wood Street.

OPEN TUESDAY, WEDNESDAY & THURSDAY 2.30 - 4.30
p.m.

SATURDAY 10.00 - 12 noon
2.30 - 4.30 p.m.

ADMISSION FREE

The recently restored museum is well worth a visit, as it contains a great variety of interesting historical items.

In the ground floor cabinets are some of the archaeological finds from the 1st century Roman tile kiln at Potters Bar, excavated by G.Gillam 1953-4; the Roman cremation burials at Welwyn (1908) and Ashwell (1968). Two other displays concern the Barnet Fire Brigade and Medieval Barnet, whilst there is a copy of the Charter granted by King John, in 1199, to the Abbey of St. Albans to hold a Thursday market at Barnet.

Upstairs there is a mineral collection alongside one on prehistoric antiquities. There is a delightful display of Clay Smoking Pipes, c1600-1900 and a small cabinet on the Potters Bar LZ1 Zeppelin. The 13th century finds from Arkley, found 1959-60, are worth examining.

A small side room houses the Victorian Room, which was arranged by Ron.Bayman. There has been a special exhibition, which lasts until the end of January, called, 'The Cowing collection', which consists of various objects illustrating the Cowing family's connection with the 'Barnet Press' and Barnet.

Of interest for those with a technical inclination is the display of scientific instruments made at the Barnet factory of Watsons. The company was founded in 1837.

There are many photographs and paintings depicting scenes around Barnet, besides numerous other small exhibits.

The museum is certainly worth a visit if one has not been since its re-opening.