

Potters Bar & District
Historical Society

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Regd. Charity No.299475

The Newsletter

September 1989

Vol.6 No.1

It is with great pleasure that we announce, to those members who do not already know, that Robert Gage, vicar of South Mimms, is to marry Mrs. Ruth McAulay, on Sunday 1st October, at 4.30 pm.

Ruth is a widow, with two teenage children, Gavin and Charlotte, and they are at present living in Blackheath.

Let us all hope that the wedding will be on one of those glorious days like we have had this year. The thoughts of all members are extended to the bride and bridegroom for many years of happiness together.

At certain times in life one has to make a new beginning and cast off the past. Whilst the Society is not doing the latter it is entering its 30th year full of vigour and hope. Yet as was stated at the AGM, this year should be one of consolidation rather than expansion, preparing for the opening of the Wyllyotts' complex and a further chapter in the Society's history.

OLD BOTTLES - Do you want to know more?

Old Bottle Club of Great Britain,
2, Stratford Ave.,
Elsecar
nr. Barnsley,
Yorks.

PUBLIC MEETING:- TUESDAY 10 OCTOBER at 8 p.m.
OAKMERE HOUSE

See the notice opposite.

Please encourage your friends to come and their neighbours. Seating limit 200.

The first half of the evening will be on the history of Oakmere House, followed by the showing of slides never before seen of the High Street.

OBITUARY: Maurice Burn.

We record with regret the death on the 12th April 1989, of Maurice Burn, the youngest child of Sir Joseph Burn of Rydal Mount. Sir Joseph was the General Manager of the Prudential Assurance Company.

Maurice was born in 1908, in Potters Bar. At his prep. school, Wellesley House, Broadstairs he excelled at all sports and academic subjects, as he did at Charter House.

At Cambridge he read law, captained his college (Pembroke) at squash rackets and represented the University at lawn tennis and table tennis.

He started work with Slaughter and May and passed successfully his L.L.B.. After a few years as a country solicitor at Chalfont St. Peter, he returned to London to work in the legal department of U.D.T. In 1936 he married Winifred Thilo, in Lausanne, and Michael was born in 1942.

In 1956 he moved from Potters Bar to Slindon, in Sussex, and became very much part of village life.

The Society's sympathy has been expressed to his widow and family.



POTTERS BAR & DISTRICT
**HISTORICAL
SOCIETY**

IN ASSOCIATION WITH
HERTSMERE LEISURE

AN ILLUSTRATED TALK ON
**THE HIGH STREET AND
OAKMERE HOUSE**

BY MR BRIAN WARREN
& MR TERRY GOULDING

**TUESDAY, OCTOBER 10
AT 8 P. M.**

**AT OAKMERE HOUSE, POTTERS BAR
(OPPOSITE THE BUS GARAGE)**

ADMISSION £1

TICKETS IN ADVANCE OR ON THE NIGHT
FROM THE BOX OFFICE, OAKMERE HOUSE

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MEMBERS' NEWS

We send our thoughts and best wishes to any members who are ill, in particular, to Phyllis Eve. To Gordon, her husband, may he have courage ~~xx~~ and fortitude during the coming months.

Mrs.Harding, Mrs.Eason and Mrs.Plattford are welcomed as new members and we hope to see them at the monthly meetings.

A HISTORY OF HERTFORDSHIRE VIDEO SHOW

The North Mymms Local History Society, under their chairman, Hugh Baddeley, were asked to produce a video of the County's history, as part of the official Centenary celebrations. Many of you will remember the superb video they made of North Mymms, which they showed at a recent AGM.

Premiere showing:- Castle Rooms,
Hertford,
13th December.

Admission FREE but tickets from:-

Centenary Office,
County Hall,
Hertford.
0992 556599

ENQUIRY

Who was Mr.F.G.Edwards of Potters Bar ?

A letter of his, (1905-8), was read before the playing of Elgar's First Symphony at the Proms, the other week. He was greatly annoyed by Elgar, who could only make facetious and silly remarks about the name of Potters Bar.

Does anyone know anymore about him ?

"SOUTH MYMMS CASTLE"

by Mr. E. Warren.

In the reign of King Stephen in the twelfth century there were rival claims to the throne of England, with a large part of Southern England the scene of civil war.

To protect the territory awarded to the local barons by those who were temporarily in power, castles were erected.

They were not the stone buildings which one thinks of as castles today, but earth mounds with wooden palisades and watch towers.

South Mymms castle remained in use for about two years, II4I-3, before destruction.

It was re-discovered just after the First World war, while the course of the Grimm's Dyke was being traced. Dr. Kent carried out extensive excavations on the site in the 1960's.

The speaker, using slides, showed the present state of the castle and described the various features.

Dr. Lynch gave a vote of thanks for an excellent illustrated talk.

SUNDAY 1st OCTOBER VISIT TO SOUTH MYMMS CASTLE,

by kind permission of The Gascoyne Cecil Estates.

Only 25 places, let Brian Warren know if you want to come.

The terrain is uneven, rough and steep, so it is advisable to wear strong shoes and bring a walking stick.

The purpose of the visit is to show members the features outlined in the May talk.

Cars may be parked in Swanland Road, (old Barnet-by-pass), near the end of Warrengate Lane.

6 SUMMER OUTINGS' REPORTS

Saturday, 10 June

The first stop was the ancient church of St. Mary's Hartley Wespall. It contained many interesting features, notably the unique half-timbered construction of the west wall, built about 1320.

Inside were the magnificent beams of the roof supported by four moulded wooden pillars.

Two of the bells were cast between 1439 and 1450.

The outside of the church was covered with flints taken from nearby Roman Silchester.

The party then travelled on to Stratfield Saye House for lunch.

The house has been the home of the Dukes of Wellington since it was presented to the Great Duke by the nation in thanks for his victory at Waterloo.

The grounds included rare trees, a wildfowl sanctuary and the grave of the Great Duke's horse, Copenhagen.

In the Wellington Exhibition was the most impressive funeral carriage.

The day ended with another stroll to view the National Dairy Museum, the 35-acre lake and the herd of fallow deer at the Wellington Country Park.

Grateful thanks were expressed to Bruce Chanter for another successful outing.

Thursday, 20 July Bayford Village Walk

Members assembled on the green, near the Baker Arms, to be informed about the early history of the area.

At the church Mrs. Murray said the present church was built in 1871 at a cost of £2,452 and replaced one erected in 1804, though the first reference to a church was in 1252.

Later, members wandered around the church before going into the churchyard where Mr. Kirk talked about the Yarrell grave. William Yarrell identified the Bewick Swan and was closely involved with the Linnean and Zoological Societies.

After a short stop at the Warren House members were shown around the grounds of the Manor House by Mr. Latham. This included the very ancient John o'Gaunt oak tree.

The centre of the house dated to about 1580, with eastern extensions in 1720, and western additions about 100 years later.

Finally, the evening ended with refreshments at the home of Mr. and Mrs. C. Judge, hosts for the event.

Everyone agreed it had been another superb village tour.

RECORDING THREATENED BUILDINGS by Adrian Gibson

Recording in WORDS: the essential basis.

Identify the building by name and location.

DATE: as nearly as possible. Identify separate periods of building.

ARCHITECT: record if known.

MATERIALS: timber-framed, weather-boarded, brick, rendered, etc.
Roof thatched, tiled, slated, etc.

PLAN: describe main characteristics.

FACADE: record outside appearance, including:
orientation
number of storeys
bays and 'breaks-forward' in Georgian buildings
patterns of windows, chimney stacks, etc.

INTERIOR: describe arrangement of rooms.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: anything worthy of special comment.

HISTORICAL INFORMATION: anything known from oral, written or published sources.

MNEMONIC for this framework: DAMP FISH

More will appear in the Spring edition of Hertfordshire's Past.

ANOTHER GREAT STORM

Does anyone remember Sunday, 20th February, 1910 ?

According to the Barnet Press considerable damage occurred in the area, with trees being blown down and chimney pots carried away. In particular, "At Oakmere, four large fir trees were uprooted, ..."

Fruit and flower gardens were devastated and more than one house was flooded.

If someone does remember this storm perhaps they could inform a committee member.

COLLECTING

There was a very interesting article in, 'The Times', on the 4th April, by Robin Young.

In it the observation was made that everything is collected by someone. Also, Shaw said, "Old newspapers are the nearest thing we have to a time-machine." On reading them one is back in the period they are reading.

One useful address is The Ephemera Society,
12, Fitzroy Square,
London W1.

It produces a newsletter and a list of other shops dealing in old newspapers.

BOOKS

Now available from the author - "Echoes From Shenley's Past by Edward Stebbing.

This book by a local author looks at some of Shenley's social history from 17th to 19th centuries.

40 pages, illustrated with photographs, etc.

Price £2.75 plus 35p p & p.

Mr. E.A. Stebbing,

'Knaresbrooke'

King Edward Road,

Shenley,

Radlett, Herts. WD7 9BY

Have you ever thought of getting its story in print ?

There are many societies and organisations in Potters Bar and South Mimms but very few have a printed history. It usually occurs when an anniversary appears and then the members try to do it in six months, when at least two years is almost a minimum.

If one does start do not think that your organisation is the first of its type in the area. For instance, the very flourishing Little Heath and Potters Bar Operatic and Dramatic Society is of a relative recent date, yet there was a similar society in the 1920s and even before.

Jim Sales has just written, 'Ends' Without End' A history of Potters Bar Bowls Club 1929-1989.' However, there was a flourishing bowls club in 1919 and the early twenties, but how and why it declined has not been unravelled at the moment.

When the Potters Bar Cricket Club celebrated its 125th Anniversary 1862-1987, it was discovered that it had not been a continuous 125 years. In the 1890s Potters Bar Cricket and Football clubs were run by the Working Men's Institute.

Like many things in life it depends on luck. Organisations flourish and fade, dishand and often return many years later. The new enthusiasts thinking their organisation is the first of its type and forgetting what their predecessors might have done. A common fault of mankind!

Cyril Overend wrote the history of the first twenty-five years of the Historical Society; has just completed the history of TOC H in Potters Bar, and is now looking into the history of St. John's Methodist Church, Baker Street.

P.C.Swales, based at Potters Bar Police Station, has made a start on the history of the police in the area, because his station is one hundred years old in 1991. The first police station in Potters Bar, was in the Southgate Road.

I hope this has inspired some retired people to take-up a new hobby! The Society's archivist is willing to help where possible.

By the way could someone help the archivist? Does anyone know anything about Morven Park Football Club 1913-4 ? It had never been heard of until a photograph was loaned to the Society about a month ago. They did play on the Little Heath ground behind Coopers Road, Little Heath.

B.Warren.

WHAT WOULD THEY THINK TODAY

BARNET PRESS 27th September, 1913 -Air Race.

"The Horrid Things" - All Potters Bar was out on Saturday to witness the aerial Derby. It was a clear, bright day, and everyone had a good view of the competing airman, who flew over the village on their return to the aerodrome at Hendon. Hamel, the first man in, flew low, and was seen quite distinctly. Photographers were out "snapping" the competitors. An old lady who has been bedridden for many years, and had never seen or heard of such a thing as an aeroplane before, was drawn to the window to see the "strange sight", as it was described to her. She caught a glimpse of two of the aeroplanes, and exclaimed almost hysterically: "Shut the window quick, the horrid things will come in."

Dr.F.Brittain's Diary- 20th Sept. "to hill to see aeroplanes come over"

WINTER LECTURE PROGRAMME - Monthly meetings.

FRIDAY 27 OCTOBER

30th ANNIVERSARY LECTURE

'South Mymms' by Mrs.Muriel Brittain

Dr.Brittain's original plate glass slides have been copied by Terry Goulding and some enlargements made. Therefore the talk will not be quite the same as Dr.Brittain originally gave in the inaugural lecture to the Society in Sept. 1959.

The talk is based mainly on South Mymms but there are slides of Wylllyotts, Knightsland, Mymms Hall and Wrotham Park.

THURSDAY 23 NOVEMBER

'Ralph Treswell: Surveyor of London and Potters Bar' by Mr.J.Schofield.

John Schofield was a Field Officer at the Dept. of Urban Archaeology of the Museum of London, but owing to recent changes of staff he is now in a senior position.

In 1987 the London Topographical Society published his book entitled, 'The London Surveys of Ralph Treswell', which covered Treswell's work in the City of Westminster, London and Southwark. Treswell worked from 1585 to 1614 and his map of Potters Bar is 1594. This was copied by Helen Baker in 1978 from the original Guildhall Ms 5884/I.

The talk will give a fascinating glimpse of houses in London before the Great Fire.

FRIDAY 15 DECEMBER

'The Hertford Loop Line' by Mr.P.Hodge.

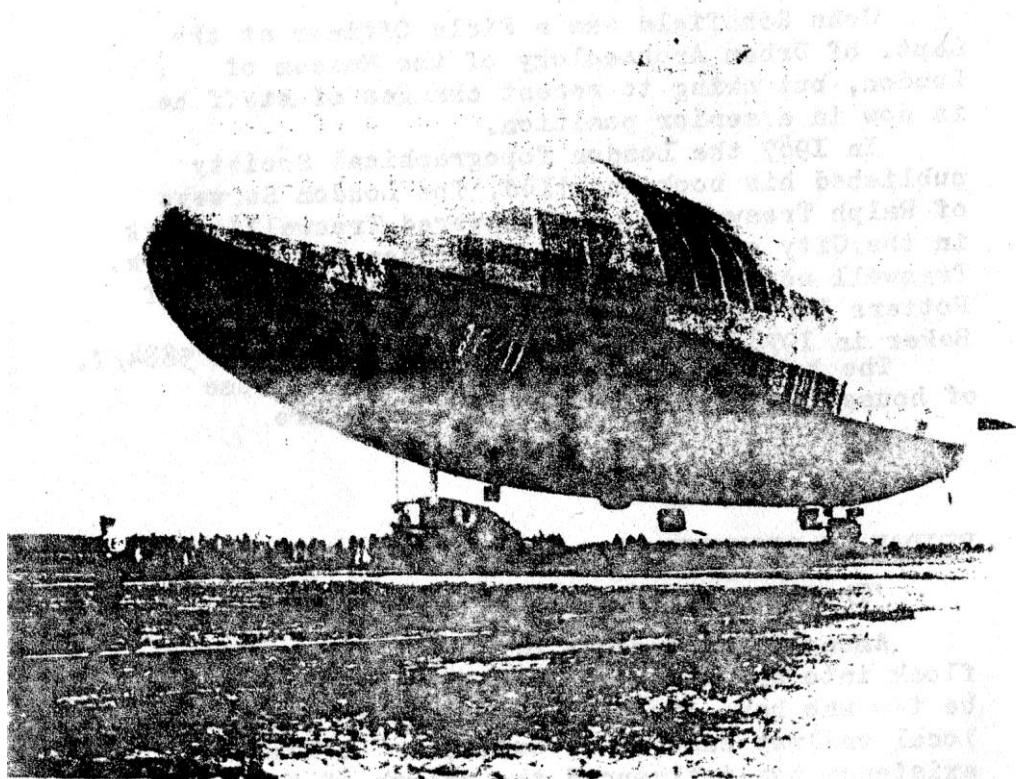
Among the thousands of commuters who daily flock into and out of London by train, there will be few who have given much thought to how their local railway came to be built, or to how its existence has influenced the growth of the residential suburbs in which they live. Yet the spread of suburban London in the 19th century was closely interwoven with the expansion of the railway system. By looking at the case of our own local railway one may observe this process in microcosm.

The Hertford Loop opened to passenger traffic from Wood Green to Enfield 1st April 1871, from Grange Park to Cuffley 4th April 1910 and from Cuffley to Langley Junction where it rejoined the main line 2 June 1924.

Potters Bar & District Historical Society

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OCCASIONAL PAPERS-NO.1



The L31 Zeppelin at Nordholz

THE POTTERS BAR ZEPPELIN 2nd OCTOBER, 1916

by J. E. BENNETT