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POTTERS BAR HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

February, 1969.

This Newsletter is a new and hopeful venture of the Society. It is intended to produce three or four issues yearly, at suitable intervals, with the object of keeping members informed of current or forthcoming events, recent books of interest, etc and providing an outlet for notes and news, and possibly enquiries and letters.

Other Societies publish Journals: why shouldn't we? Perhaps they are larger, but we could increase our strength and influence by roping in more members. We hope all members will act as recruiting agents and spread knowledge of our activities.

Inevitably the first few issues will be experimental in character. To make the Newsletter a success members are asked to let the editor have any suitable information or material, as soon as it is available – old news soon becomes stale – letters and enquiries will also be welcomed.

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(Future numbers may also contain notes, synopses of recent lectures, and correspondence.)

The late Mr. A Gower M.B.E.

By the death of Mr. Gower in September 1968 it was not only the Society that sustained a serious loss. Mr. Gower was a leading and well-loved figure in the District: he was for many years Headmaster of St. Giles School at South Mimms and for several years a member of the Potters Bar Urban District Council, of which he became Chairman, and was active in his Parish Church and the National Savings movement.

In October 1960 he was elected Chairman of our Society at an awkward time early in its history, and held this office until he retired in April 1967, when he became a Vice-President. His death is keenly felt by the Society, and most of all those who served under him on the Committee have a sense of personal loss, for his was no ordinary personality. Above all he was kind, gentle and wise, and in an age when the Christian virtues he embodied are not always found in men of affairs, he lived up to his faith and quietly set an example.

The Society sent a floral tribute and was represented at St. Giles Church by Mrs Frost, our former Secretary, and Mr. Davis, Chairman.

The late Mrs. Jackson.

We also record with regret the recent death of Mrs. Jackson, of Oakmere Lane. She will be missed as a regular attender of our meeting for several years, and one of the small band who persevered at the High Street excavations in 1964.

Report on P.B.H.S. excavations in Potters Bar High Street in 1964.

At last the long promised report is in sight. As the stalwarts who toiled at "Tilbury's" will remember, the most important discovery was a large quantity of mid-seventeenth century pottery, building material and clay pipes thrown into an abandoned brick well. At that time surprisingly little was known about pottery of the period, but John Ashdown (Hon. Treasurer of the Post-Mediaeval Ceramics Research Group) volunteered to undertake this vital part of the Report. Since then so much has been coming to light on the subject that it was thought wise to wait until the study was more advanced before writing this section. Now John Ashdown says that his report is drafted – 3,000 words, plus photographs and drawings. This should be a useful document for Archaeologists far from Potters Bar, and we should produce it worthily. We have accumulated some reserve funds, and someone has offered help so we hope the full Report will appear before long.

Aims of the Society.

Our scope includes not only the history, archaeology and monument of the District, but the wider field of History in all its branches and periods, especially (but not so exclusively) in Britain. History lies behind everything we see and do – houses, churches, public buildings, factories, communications, equipment; our language and place names; our arts, institutions, traditions, occupations, technology; and above all our ideas.

We welcome all who are interested in these things, especially those who are prepared to be really active. With more resources we could attempt more e.g. excavations and publications.

“The Story of Potters Bar and South Mimms”

Over 900 copies of this book have been sold in the two years since its publication but some can still be obtained from the Urban District Council Offices in Darkes Lane, price 15/- each.

Hertfordshire Archaeological Council Conference at Letchworth,
Saturday 8th March, 1969.

Our Society is represented on this Council and takes part in its work. The first H.A.C. Conference, held at Hertford in 1968 and attended by over 160 people from all over the county, was most successful. This year's will be held on similar lines and will last from 10.30 a.m. to 5.00 p.m., with illustrated talks on work done during the last year. There will be a charge of 10/-. Application forms, obtainable from Mr. Davis (22 Osborne Road, Potters Par: P.B. 54640), must reach the organizers by 28th February.

Recent Books.

D.F.Renn:	Norman Castles in Britain (Baker, 6 gns.)
G.Ashe (ed):	The Quest for Arthur's Britain (Pall Mall Press, 70/-)
G.Jones:	A History of the Vikings (Oxford, £3).
E.Clive Rouse:	Discovering Wall Paintings (Shire Publications) 4/6

Coming Events

February 26 (Weds) P.B.H.S. – Mr. A. G. Rook on "Belgic and Roman Mid-Hertfordshire"

March 28 (Fri) P.B.H.S. - Mr. Stuart Friedenson on "Monument Hunting in the Orkneys"

April 25 (Fri) P.B.H.S. A.G.M. and Mrs. H. M. Baker on "Local History from Maps and
Records"

Survey of Potters Bar

The Committee are working on a suggestion that our Society, the Potters Bar Society and the Photographic Society should unite to make a thorough illustrated survey of the district as it is today. Mr. Butcher's remarkable slides of Potters Bar 1900-1930 show how valuable such a survey would be. As development proceeds our scene changes, and some of the valuable features will be threatened and may be lost, so we should ensure that they are permanently recorded while this can still be done.

New Members, since last September.

Mr. M. Tomkins, Mr. J. Edell, Mr. and Mrs. L. Bull, Mr. A. W. Costin, Miss I. Collar, Mrs. E. Calloway, Mr. L. A. Devonish, Mr. W. Jackson.

Social Evening.

The experiment of a social evening at Limerick House on 6th November, 1968, was very well attended, and some most interesting antiques and by-gones were shown. It revealed what may lie forgotten or unrecognised in many a drawer and cupboard. Someone in Potters Bar has got hold of a set of diaries belonging to an ancestor about 1798 and is carefully typing a copy: anything of local interest like this we should like to know about. This event seems to be well worth repeating, and the Committee invite suggestions for themes for future evenings – quizzes, debates, etc. What do members think?

Editor

C. T. Overend
30 Deepdene,
Potters Par.

Membership of Potters Bar Historical Society is open to all who are interested in history, archaeology, architecture and antiquities, records, etc. The annual subscription is 7/6, or 4/-, to those under 21. Applications should be made to the Hon. Secretary, Mr. R. D. S. Leake, 8 Aberdale Gardens, Potters Bar.