

# *The Newsletter*

May 2010

VOL. 26 No. 3

## **COVER PICTURE**

This is a photo taken from the collection held by Terry Goulding.



A Romany Gypsy caravan and family photographed in Wash Lane in c.1937. The youngest daughter is having her face washed using water from the white enamel pail. The water probably came from the stream nearby, and perhaps gives their morning tea that 'special' flavour.

## **FROM THE CHAIRMAN**

To all our members.

Our lecture year has nearly gone and hopefully the never-ending election issues will soon be settled and we can start normal life again. The mention of normal life reminded me of the days when the tank traps were dug during the War and almost immediately nature started sprouting new growth of yarrow, burdock and dog daisies etc. on top of the exposed ground. The same thing is happening at the end of Baker Street just beyond the M25 flyover where an area of ground has been cleared. This has now become covered with either cow parsley or hemlock.

*Terry Goulding*

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## **NEW MEMBERS**

We should like to welcome Andrew Christie, Janet Reid, and Rodney Williams on joining the Society. We hope they will enjoy the lectures and occasional outings that are part of our yearly programme, and take an active part in our Society.

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## **MEMBERS' NEWS**

It is with pleasure to hear that Joan Cullen is recovering following a recent period of ill-health.

Many congratulations to Doreen Scivyer for getting the Hertsmere Mayor, Rosemary Gilligan's, award for 'Potters Bar in Focus'. The group had previously helped to get a Green Flag award for Oakmere Park.

*Brian Warren*

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## **OBITUARY**

### **Mrs Margaret Smith (1919-2010)**

It was with great regret that one read in the latest Potters Bar Society Newsletter (no. 262) of the passing of Margaret on the 19<sup>th</sup> March, aged 91. She and Ronald, her husband, were stalwarts of that Society dating back to its beginnings. Margaret gave loyal service to Potters Bar and was a strong supporter of the Open Spaces Society.

Potters Bar Society was the main source of her activities but she joined the local Historical Society in 1990 and held joint membership, with her husband, from 2005.

She addressed the Society at the 1997 AGM on 'Estovers, Turbery and all that' and in September 2001 on 'The Story of Hampstead Heath'.

Potters Bar is the poorer for her passing and may she rest in peace.

The Society expresses its very sincere sympathy to Ronald.

*Brian Warren*

## ***MUSEUM STEWARDS REQUIRED***

Members are needed to help look after the Museum. Perhaps you could help for just one day a month? It would be of great assistance and you would be on duty with an experienced steward.

<b>Tuesdays</b>	2.30 - 4.30pm, contact Ian Cumming on	01707 642296
<b>Wednesdays</b>	2.30 - 4.30pm, contact Arnold Davey on	01707 654179
<b>Saturdays</b>	11.00am – 1.00pm, contact Mabel Hammett on	01707 657120

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### **SUBSCRIPTIONS FOR 2010/11**

The subscription year runs from April 1<sup>st</sup> to March 31<sup>st</sup> at a cost of £3 for adults, and £5 for a family/group. If you have not yet paid, please would you send your remittance on the separate sheet attached.

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### **RECORDER GROUP**

The Recorder Group monitors changes to Potters Bar on a daily/monthly basis and generally meets twice a year to collate the findings. This work has been going on since 1984. Reports are sent in from all over the County and stored in the Hertfordshire Archives, County Hall, where they form a valuable record for the use of future historians and researchers. The next meeting is at 7.00 p.m. on Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> June.

If you would be interested in helping, please contact the Group's Chairman, John Scivyer, on 01707 657586.

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### **SPRING LECTURE**

**Thursday May 27<sup>th</sup>, 2010**

*De Havilland Aircraft you've never heard of – lesser known products of Stag Lane and Hatfield* by Mr Robin Webb.

THE MEETING WILL START **PROMPTLY** AT 8PM IN THE 60 PLUS CENTRE, WYLLYOTTS CENTRE. EVERYONE WELCOME.

**AUTUMN LECTURES** will start again on Tuesday September 28<sup>th</sup>, 2010. A new Programme Card will be issued with the next Newsletter in September.

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### **VISIT TO ST LEONARD'S CHURCH, BENGEO, AND A WALK AROUND HERTFORD**

This will take place on Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> June leaving the Wyllyotts Centre at 5 p.m. Gillian Cordingley will meet us at 5.30 p.m. in Hertford, and take us on a walk around Hertford for an hour. There will then be time for refreshment and a drive up to St Leonard's at Bengoe to see the interior of the church.

So far, I have twelve people who have shown interest and we have sufficient cars. Please let me know or leave a message on 01707 857297 if you wish to join us.

*Colin Field*

## **POTTERS BAR    FUN DAY 10<sup>th</sup> JULY 1pm - 5pm**

We will again this year have a stall in Oakmere Park to promote the **MUSEUM**. Please come and support us by spending an hour on the stand helping or just come and visit.

We will take old photo's of Potters Bar, sell our very popular local history booklets, plus other items and hope to tell the many people who visit all about our wonderful **MUSEUM**

If you would like to help for an hour please phone Terry 655794 or Mabel 567120

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### **DELIVERERS REQUIRED**

In each issue we pay tribute to Michael Cawrey and his band of helpers, who save the Society pounds in postage by delivering your copy by hand. Naturally, our volunteers do come and go, however at the moment we do have a full complement. If you would like to help in the future, three times per year you would be required to push a Newsletter through the letterbox of half-a-dozen or so of your neighbours' front doors. If you can help, please ring me on 01707 652975.

*Richard Lee*

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### **RAILWAY CENTENARY EXHIBITION**

April 4<sup>th</sup> 2010 was the centenary of the Great Northern Railway extension from Grange Park to Cuffley. To commemorate the event T.E.S. (The Enfield Society) members Dave Cockle, Roger Elkin and John Rowe, and Cuffley resident Peter Dace, have put together an exhibition of photographs and artefacts plotting the line's history and its effect on the local communities.

The line had been authorised by an Act of Parliament of 1898 with powers to construct through to Stevenage (Langley Junction), but the construction work did not start until 1906 due to financial constraints. Further financial difficulties and the First World War resulted in Cuffley becoming the temporary terminus of the line. It was not until 1924 that passenger trains began to run regularly beyond Cuffley to Hertford North.



**Great Northern Railway Gresley N2 Class 1744 on the North Norfolk Railway. This class ran suburban trains through Cuffley.**

The exhibition dates are at Forty Hall until 20<sup>th</sup> June, 10.00 a.m. to 4.00 p.m. Forty Hall is not open Monday and Tuesday.

*Dave Cockle, edited Richard Lee*

# POTTERS BAR MUSEUM

## LADIES, DO YOU REMEMBER WHEN.....

.....we have so many ladies in our Society that I am sure many of you were Brownies and Guides years ago – do you remember the giant toadstool that we used to dance around, the pride in our uniforms, the anxious polishing of our buckles and badges and shoes to a bright shine, working hard for our badges and taking them proudly home to be sewn on our sleeves -- and camping, sitting under the stars round a roaring bonfire each night singing our hearts out, gathering sticks in the woods, cooking meals which seemed to consist mainly of sausages and beans, the sunburn and the insect bites, and of course the dreaded latrines!!! Those were the days – what fun we had!

This year is the Centenary year of the Girl Guides Association. In 1907, Baden-Powell held the very first Scout camp on Brownsea Island. In 1908, he published “*Scouting for Boys*”, and small groups of girls were allowed to join, but in 1909 a crowd of girls gatecrashed the first Scout Rally at Crystal Palace and pleaded for Baden-Powell to offer something for girls as well.

So in 1910 the Girl Guide Association was formed. In 1914 a junior section was added for girls under 11, initially called Rosebuds but renamed Brownies in 1915. Seniors, i.e. Rangers or Cadets (Guiders in training) were added in 1916.

Lord and Lady Baden-Powell were firm believers that young people could contribute to World Peace. The first Guide World camp was held in 1924. In 1937, Princess Elizabeth and Princess Margaret were enrolled as Guide and Brownie respectively. Since then the movement has gone from strength to strength, and spread all over the world.

To mark this Centenary Year, our very own Potters Bar Museum has set up an exhibition on the Brownie and Guide movement in general, and particularly around this area. Janet Reid, who is a Guider with 1<sup>st</sup>. Little Heath Company, has set up in the museum a wonderfully detailed model of a Guide Camp, complete with tents, washstand, kitchen tent, campfire and latrine. How that brings back memories! There is also lots of interesting information about uniforms down through the years, a Brownie toadstool, and a mannequin wearing a uniform of the style worn between 1947-1952. There is a selection of Brownie and Guide Annuals, and lots of photographs, including one of Morven being opened as the new District HQ by Mrs Parker-Bowles in 1973. On one wall is a map of Potters Bar with pointers to all sorts of Brownie and Guide activities in the district in past years, and on another wall, quite a collection of photographs.



Mary Willatt and Janet Reid  
organised the current guides' exhibition



Geoff Peterson and Heather Rae, members of the PBHS, attended the Museum with Geoff's grand-daughters Hannah Watson (14) and Elizabeth Watson (11).

Both Hannah and Elizabeth came to see the Guide exhibition and for this special occasion they wore their new Millennium Guide uniforms. They are both in the 4th Gravesend Guides company, Thames division. They all said that it was a super exhibition.

The exhibition will last until the end of June, and the Museum is open every Tuesday and Wednesday from 2.30-4.30pm and every Saturday from 11am -1pm. Why don't you visit the Museum, bring your daughters and grandchildren, and enjoy the happy memories that this exhibition will evoke.

*Marion Cant*

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### **MR. SIMS**

Many residents of Potters Bar will remember Sydney Sims, the Head Master of Cranborne School from 1937 for about 20 years. We recently heard from Joan Carriett, his daughter, who told us more about this very interesting man. Joan herself attended the school.

We are currently writing an article on Sydney. Please would you let us know of any stories or memories of Sydney or the school. Let Mabel Hammett know at 4 Heath Cottages, Heath Road, Potters Bar, Herts EN6 1LS, telephone. 01707-657120 or e-mail [roymabel@hotmail.com](mailto:roymabel@hotmail.com).

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### **THE SOCIETY'S 51st ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

The 51<sup>st</sup> Annual General Meeting was held on April 27<sup>th</sup>. Terry Goulding welcomed everyone there and any new Members. He told us we were the cheapest society in the district supported by our publication sales. The booklets have all been written by our members, and this year there were two new ones by Brian Warren. Terry then thanked the large number of volunteers who worked for our Society in many jobs from manning the museum, printing off the Newsletter and delivering them, the Recorders Group and the members producing the booklets for sale. Terry read Richard Lee's secretary's report as he was unable to attend, and he also presented the PBHS Accounts. This was followed by Arnold Davey with the Museum report. The officers were approved with no changes.

The rest of the evening was then enjoyed by a brilliant lecture by our member John Lucas giving us a walk through his life as a journalist

*Mabel Hammett*

## ARCHIVIST'S REPORT

As far back as September 2007 *'The Newsletter'* has contained information on two subjects, which continue to run: The Polish Prisoner of War, and Radio Communication, the latter commenced with the brick structure behind the Potters Bar Police Station.

Since the last Newsletter I have received a letter from Mrs. Ewa Grzankowska, the School's principal in Dobięgniew, in which she stated, *"Our school was built for the money, which was donated by the prisoners of Oflag IIC Woldenberg and their families. .... Inside the school there was a dentist's office, which was founded by one of the prisoners. It is possible that there was a thought to put the plaque commemorating the donation at school, but previous political system made that idea impossible to realise."* The Principal had asked the curator of the Museum of Oflag IIC to look for a soldier from Barnet. She sent me the following two photographs of the School built in 1963.



Through a casual comment to David Almond as to whether any member knew Polish, he mentioned Dr, Richard Ciezak, recently retired from the Highview practice. I made contact with him and he using the latest technology e-mailed to Poland, in addition he loaned me his copy of, *'Station 43 Audley End House and SOE's Polish Section'* by Ian Valentine. I mentioned to him that Abdale House, North Mymms, was a Polish Air Force Radio Station during the War and now this is another line of enquiry.

Following the tragic death of the Polish President and members of the delegation to the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Katyn massacre he e-mailed Mrs. Ewa Grzankowska to convey the Society's condolences to her, the staff and pupils.

In the last *Newsletter* (Jan. 2010) I mentioned the RAF Civilian Wireless Reserve and that locally they sent their information to 'BOX 25 BARNET'. David Sullivan sent me a card stating that all Wartime "Y" Stations sent all their German intercepted wireless messages to Arkley View and wondered if it was BOX 25 BARNET. It acted as a clearing house for Bletchley Park.

On a cold Saturday, 20<sup>th</sup> February, I was wandering up and down Arkley Lane and Wood Street. Arkley View was demolished soon after the War and now it is just a cul-de-sac.



ARKLEY VIEW ROAD TODAY

Also, I photographed Oaklands, the Administration and Orderly Room, though now renamed; Scotswood, the Sergeants' Mess and Rowley Lodge, Rowley Lane (a billet).

When at a recent conference at The Museum of London I went to the bookshop during the lunch interval and took down a book, "*Barnet and Hadley Past*" by Pam Taylor (Historical Publications 2002). On reading p.139 I read, "*Arkley hosted a subsidiary section of the secret code breaking organisation based at Bletchley Park ....*" There was other interesting information including, "*A staff of 21 officers and 34 men were employed to pick up the messages, transcribe them and send them four times a day by motor-cycle despatch rider to Bletchley Park for code-breaking. Shortly before D-Day the Arkley unit was ordered to go proactive by transmitting misleading information, allegedly from General Patton's Fifth Army placing the site of allied landings near Calais rather than in Normandy.*"

If one wants to know more put 'BOX 25 BARNET' on the internet. Under 'The RSS from 1939 to 1946' there is a lot more.

Our member, Don Baker, sent me a letter in which he wrote,

*"PO Box numbers were used to conceal an addressee's actual location and all mail was collected from the public counter, similar to 'Post Restante'.*

*However, I remember Post Office Box 25 was collected directly from the sorting office in the High Street. I didn't think too much about it at that time as there were many large organisations which had evacuated to the suburbs of Barnet and Hadley Wood at the outset of the war.*

*Of houses which had rather secretive operations, the foremost was Oaklands, Oaklands Lane, Arkley. When I was a boy messenger during the war, I and my colleagues were regularly going there with telegrams and it was always a hive of activity for such a quiet backwater. I think on reflection that this may well have been the destination of Box 25 mail. At the time it was known certainly in Post Office circles that its operations were secretive and involved wireless aerials."*

I have since read "*SOE the scientific secrets*" by Frederic Boyce and Douglas Everett from Sutton Publishing.

Lastly, I am grateful to Alan Johnson who gave me the obituary of Captain Bernie Mapstone, which was in *The Daily Telegraph*. She had a very interesting life and died at the age of 95. She came from Galway and qualified in Medicine and Surgery in 1940. In 1945 she was the only woman at the Aldershot training depot. When she moved to the 1<sup>st</sup> Guards Brigade in Tripolitania the posting order omitted 'Miss'. On arriving at the Brigade Field Artillery Regiment there was no accommodation for a woman. The C.O. had to give up his quarters to her!

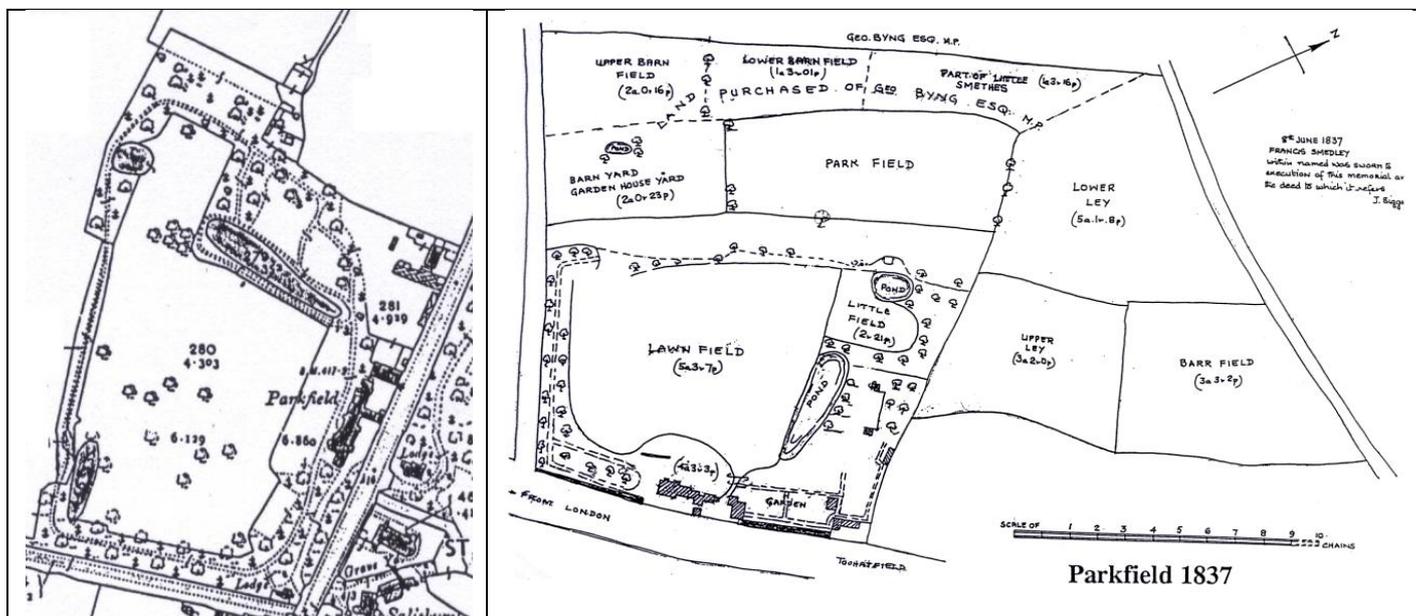
Of interest to us is that she spent three years as an assistant G.P. at Potters Bar, possibly at the end of the War. Does anyone remember her or where she worked in Potters Bar? Her maiden name was Noone.

When recently looking at the Northaw Court Roll for 1650 (HALS 46160) I noted there were 4 Noones on the Jury – Richard, Samuel, John and Joseph. I wonder if they originated in Ireland.

*Brian Warren*

## PARKFIELD LAKE - ROMAN, GEORGIAN, VICTORIAN OR WHAT?

The origin of Parkfield lake is a mystery. When was it actually excavated and by whom? I have found no writings that say it was dug as a new garden feature for either the 18<sup>th</sup> or 19<sup>th</sup> century houses that were built close by, in spite of one of them recording some landscaping work. If it was created then, why is it at right angles to the previously known properties on the site? The many planned examples I have seen on maps or on site visits, have the lake running parallel across the front of the residence, certainly not end on to it, and to one side!



If the lake's origin was as a new garden feature there is no apparent reason why it could not have been positioned in front of either of the two houses referred to above, for the best visual advantage. There is however, one explanation for the lake's inception that I like better than any other possibilities, whatever they might be.

Sometime in the second half of the first century A.D. some Romano-British people built a furnace and a kiln near the top of the field behind Parkfield copse and garden. There is a park information panel describing this a few feet from the buried remains of the furnace. They used clay to make building materials such as floor and roof tiles and square section central heating ducts. This was at a time when London (Londinium), and St Albans (Verulamium), were developing towns and Roman type villas were being built in the countryside. The building materials production sites were established at locations of shallow clay deposits - like Potters Bar. So, from where did the Parkfield tilers get their clay? Today there is no visible hole or area of general depression in the park area, except the lake and the undulations within the area of the copse immediately to the west of the lake i.e. the landscaped area.

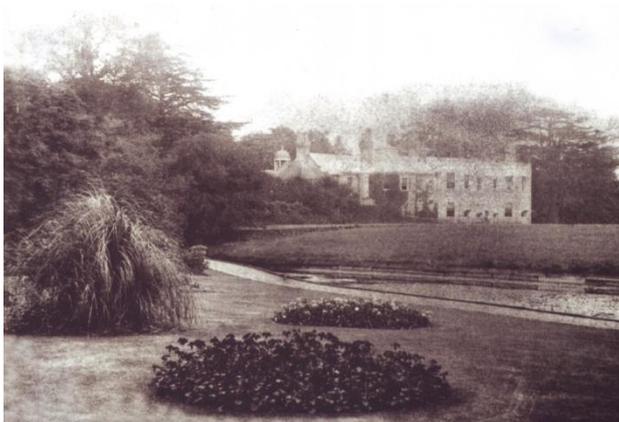
Therefore, on current evidence, or rather lack of it, there are two questions that are relevant at this time. Firstly, *'is the Parkfield lake of 2008 the transformed remains of what was in say, the Middle Ages, a shallow water-hole that had over hundreds of years reduced in depth due to the accumulation of annual sediment?'* and secondly, *'does today's lake owe its origin to the excavation of clay in the first century A.D. and from subsequent disuse became a lake, and therefore represents an important present day historic feature in the story of Potters Bar's ancient past?'*

When excavating by hand any sort of material from the earth's near surface deposits, it is surely an easier manual task - given similar substances - to dig horizontally into the side of sloping ground when following a seam, than having to dig downwards in flat terrain.

It is worth noting that the lake in question has an 18 inch high bank at the west or downhill end, and a 7-8 feet high bank at the east or High Street end, which gives some idea of the ground slope. It could be that according to the flow of the clay seam, the further they dug into the ground slope the thicker the seam was found to be, in spite of digging horizontally. This would be the case if the band of clay lay parallel to the surface.

So the bulk availability of the clay steadily increased disproportionately (but at advantage), to the work effort they put into the digging. Lastly, if the extraction did take place at the lake, the movement of heavy work would have been conveniently downhill to the kiln site.

After considering the logical pros and cons of the matter, I think that it is most likely that the original Parkfield lake excavation was carried out by Britons during the latter part of the first century A.D. There is no more apparent and acceptable explanation for a perplexing orientation and irregular shape to be dug as it was and is, for any other possibility that has so far come to light.



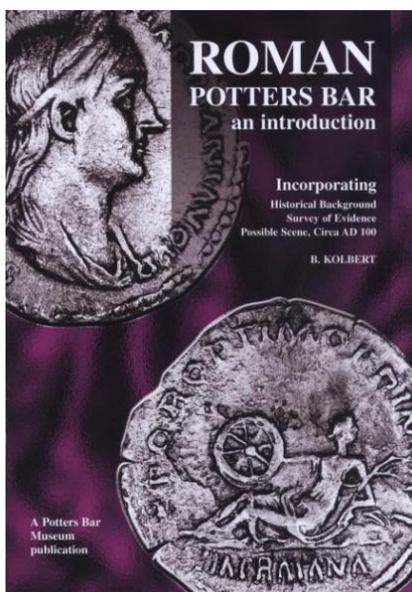
Parkside House across the lake. The architecture style was half-Georgian and half-Victorian.



A view from mid-way along the North side of Parkfield Lake looking towards the south block of Parkside flats, just visible through the trees.

*Brian Kolbert*

## REVISED MUSEUM PUBLICATION



Brian Kolbert first published this booklet in 1999.

Various changes have been made to this 52-page booklet, and it has now been reissued.

The booklet costs £2, and is available from the Health Food Shop in Darkes Lane or the Potters Bar Museum in the Wyllyotts Centre, and is also available from Brays in the High Street.

It can be obtained by post from Mabel Hammett, 4 Heath Cottages, Heath Road, Potters Bar, Herts. EN6 4LS. With post and packing, the cost is £3. Please make cheques payable to *Potters Bar and District Historical Society*.

## LOCAL TIMBER-FRAMED BUILDINGS (Part 2)

MIMMS HALL FARM NGR TL233020 SMR 2036

### Introduction

When the Herring brothers were tenants I was allowed to take detailed recordings of the property in 1984. Nine years later I undertook further investigations while they were tenants. In 1999 the tenant of Castleback Ltd. granted me permission to complete my observations.

The drawings, photographs and information were all submitted to the late Adrian Gibson for his comments and observations.

### WEST FRONT OF MIMMS HALL (September 1999)



### ADRIAN GIBSON'S OBSERVATIONS ON CERTAIN FEATURES



The timber-framed end of the North wing and beyond the end of the brick extension. (See p.13 for a plan of the building.)



The opposite end with the North wing showing the roof of the wing of a trapped side purlin form, not so old as a Crown Post. Is there the shadow of a wind brace on the near roof pitch? (see the arrow)



WALL  
PLATE

TIE  
BEAM

JOWL POST

The above is at point A in the diagram on page 13.

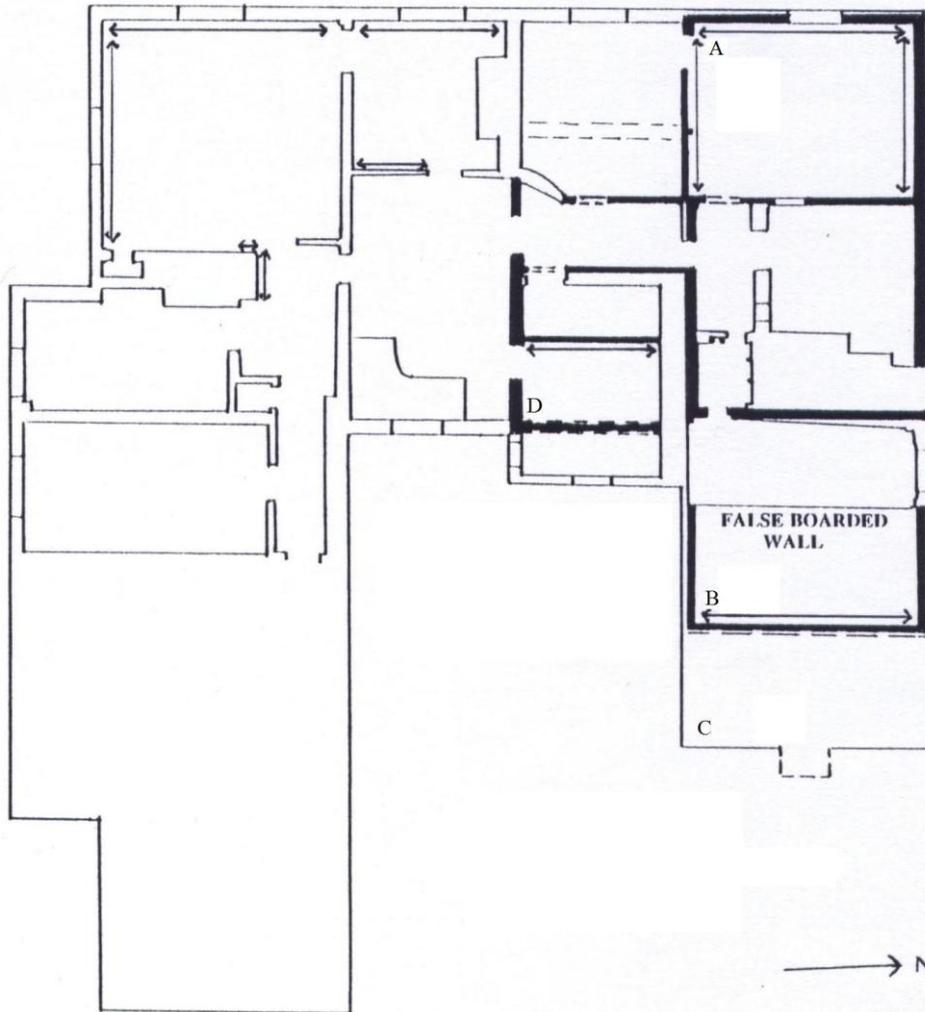


SCARF JOINT - ?mid. Sixteenth Century



This heavily boxed post is on the first floor and suitable for a Hall Central Truss (D below).

FIRST FLOOR OF MIMMS HALL



KEY

- TIMBER FRAMING
- LATH AND PLASTER

SCALE FEET

© B WARREN JULY 1993

Originally a typical H-Hall type house, of which the North wing (3 bays) survives (A-B above). (B-C) represents a later brick addition to the wing. The timber-framing to the South as far as (D) indicates the surviving part of the original central truss of either c.22ft. or 17-18ft, in width. In the 17th century a two-storey wing was added as the cross-wing on the South, to form a complete unit. It was possibly occupied by two branches of one family, with a common front door and hallway.

Upstairs on the first floor, in the North wing there is a stretch of English Bond brickwork (17th century). At sometime in the history of the building it was encased in brick using Flemish Bond (18th century). However, much of the South wall of the 17th century addition is formed of Rat-trap Bond (c.1850), as with a small section on the South side of the extended North wing.

## CONCLUSION

In the opinion of the Royal Commission (1937) and repeated in the Victoria County History (1976) Mimms Hall was built in the early 16th century. Adrian Gibson was of the opinion that it dated from the mid to late 16th century.

As it was a moated site there seems little doubt there was an earlier South Mimms Manor house on the site. From 1086 the South Mimms Manor was held by the de Mandeville family until the 13th century. In 1253 Sir Roger Leukenore held a Knight's Fee in South Mimms (Cal. Inquisition relating to Feudal Aids, Vol.3, London). The Leukenor family held other property in Sussex and Oxfordshire and were absentee Lords. In 1520 Roger Leukenore granted the Manor to Andrew, Lord Windsor. The Windsors held it until 1606 when the ancestors of the present Marquess of Salisbury acquired it. The Salisbury family have been Lord of the Manor for over four hundred years.

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MIMMS HALL FARM (1973) R.H.Harcourt Williams M.A. (unpublished)

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to thank Robin Harcourt Williams, the Librarian and Archivist at Hatfield House, for his assistance at all times. I am indebted to the Marquis of Salisbury for granting permission to reproduce Terry Goulding's excellent photographs, taken in 1993.

*Brian Warren*

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**The PB&DHS Newsletter is produced in September, January & May of every 'season'. Mabel Hammett looks after photocopying and collation, and Michael Cawrey organises, with volunteers, the distribution of The Newsletter**

**If you wish to submit an item for inclusion (preferably of a 'local-history' nature), please phone the Editor, Richard Lee (01707 652975) at least one month before the publication month (i.e. August, December or April).**

**Note: inclusion of such items is at the Editor's discretion.**