

The Newsletter

May 2011

VOL. 27 No. 3

COVER PICTURE

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



The spring arrivals under the shelter of a barn at Morgan's Farm (John Morgan, Fold Farm) in Galley Lane. Compare the babies on the left that are 'still wet between the ears' with the alert one on the right who is looking at the photographer Frederick Cole.

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

NEW MEMBERS

We should like to welcome David & Susan Connatty, Ann Doggett, Andrew Hardy, and Dr. John Stredwick on joining the Society. We hope they will enjoy the lectures and occasional outings that are part of our yearly programme, and will take an active part in our Society.

Richard Lee

MEMBERS' NEWS

In case some members have not heard about the passing of Dr. David Almond on January 25th, aged 80. He was a much respected General Practitioner, in Potters Bar, for 38 years and even though ill himself still had time for members of the Society with their problems. As he said to me, "Once a doctor always a doctor".

There will be a memorial concert on Saturday 19th November, in All Saints Church, Hertford, in aid of Macmillan Cancer Support. (Further details in the September Newsletter.) As a mark of respect to David over £6,200 has been donated so far to that charity.

The Society offers its very sincere condolences to Judy and her family.

George Case has been in Barnet Hospital for some time.

Hywel Morris is now resident in St. Christopher's, off Travellers Lane, Hatfield.

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.

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

SUBSCRIPTIONS FOR 2011/12

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

FROM THE RECORDERS

It looks like big changes are about to start. The working depot for the widening of the M25 is being set up at South Mimms although I have not yet seen it. The similar set up in the field by Baker Street has all been cleared away so it would appear this was nothing to do with the M25 widening.

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

SPRING LECTURE

Thursday May 26th, 2011

The last lecture for this year will be the *Development of Public Transport in London* by Mr. David Ruddom.

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

AUTUMN LECTURES will start again in September, and a new Programme Card will be issued with the following Newsletter the same month.

Richard Thomas will be coming on Tuesday September 27th to talk about the River Stort. The 13½ miles of the Stort Navigation are generally acknowledged to be among the prettiest in England. This talk looks at the history of the river and follows its story from 1766 to the present day. We travel the whole waterway from the head of navigation at Bishops Stortford to the Lee Navigation at Hoddesdon.

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

THE SOCIETY'S 52nd ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

This year we had a high attendance of fifty two at the 2010 Annual General Meeting. Our chairman **Terry Goulding** opened the business meeting which was concluded in just under twenty minutes. All the officials were pleased to stay in the same positions.

Richard Lee read the secretary's report. Membership is up to 205 from 189 He thanked Colin Field for arranging the interesting evening lectures and the outing to Hertford and St. Michael's, Bengo. He also thanked the members who helped deliver the Newsletters which saved the Society spending money on postage, and thanked all the members who helped the society throughout the year.

The Treasurer **Terry Goulding** reported on the funds, the annual accounts were distributed. The end-of-year balance was £3999.04 against £3603.30 in 2010. Arnold Davey's new book on the Byng's made good sales and also Brian Warren's book continued to sell well. There was no need to increase our membership fee. Our accountant Mike Keevil has advised us that the Charity commission requires our trustees to have at least one meeting a year to look at the way the Society is run. He then asked for volunteers to become Trustee's as John Lucas had sadly died and Geoff Irons has decided to retire. (We thank Geoff for his help in the last nine years.)

Vice-chairman and Museum curator **Arnold Davey** reported the Accreditation was at last complete and the certificate is on the wall in the museum. We had purchased five display cases from Donaldson's Optician's which was being refurbished and the museum now has new displays. A large display case is now used for Merit toys and another case has items from local light industries which we hope will be added too.

The meeting finished with our President **Brian Warren** asking the meeting to approve making Arnold Davey a Vice President for his service to the PBHS and the Museum over the past twenty years.

Local Light Industry

The tea break was followed by a very interesting lecture by Brian Warren on 'Local Light Industries'.

He talked about the companies in the Cranborne Road, Station Road, The Hollies and The Pirelli glass factory who were in part of Oakmere house grounds.

Brian requested members to contribute their memories to be added to this lecture as he felt the Society had neglected the whole business area of Potters Bar that had employed so many local people over the years and had supplied goods to many countries throughout the world.

Terry Goulding provided slides to compliment the lecture. He had taken photos in the Museum of the items we do have from the local companies and then showed some of the wonderful photos from Fredrick Cole's collection (that he holds in trust for the PBHS) of the factory areas. There were also photos of many local people working in the factories and at factory Christmas parties.

A vote of thanks was given by Arnold Davey.

Mabel Hammett committee member

POTTERS BAR MUSEUM

Last year, the Museum was contacted by the British Museum to say that a post-medieval silver seal had been found in Potters Bar by a metal detectorist. The British Museum put a value on the item and then local museums can buy at that price for their collection. All we know is that the item was found somewhere in Potters Bar. The Museum will be showing the item shortly.

Actual seal



Imprint of seal, against 5p piece



Richard Lee

POTTERS BAR MUSEUM

In the first half of 2011 in the Potters Bar Museum are two displays containing anniversaries.

The first is the one hundredth anniversary of St Andrew's Church being built in Cuffley which was documented in the September 2010 *Newsletter*. This display was originally shown in Cuffley Library at the end of last year.

The second is the 50th Anniversary of the Potters Bar Society. The displays show why it was formed and how it has (mostly!) affected Potters Bar since then.



Richard Lee

ARCHIVIST'S REPORT

1945 Potters Bar A.T.C.'s aircraft

Since the last Newsletter I have received information from Denis Lore and Hugh Wiggins who were both at the rear of The Elms, opposite the Green Man P.H. in the Potters Bar High Street, where refreshments were being served. The aeroplane was thought to be a Tiger Moth. Hugh said that he was walking across the lawn when someone put a match to the canvas and only the framework remained. Denis Lore wrote that he was behind the house, "when suddenly the whole area lit up and we could see flames above the house from the front area – it was quite alarming!"

Denis also wrote, "I remember it being said that some A.T.C. members had sunk the boat on Oakmere Lake belonging to the Sea Cadets and that the burning of the Tiger Moth was vengeance!! True or false we do not know.

The final paragraph is the story I have heard from more than one person.

Cecil Cottages, Blackhorse Lane, South Mimms

I have not received an answer to my request as to when the cottages were renumbered. However, I did discover that Blanche Lane was renumbered between 1930 and 1931.

Potters Bar Society's 50th Anniversary Walk

As part of the Society's 50th Anniversary celebrations and in conjunction with this Society, I have agreed to lead an historical walk to view the superb Georgian architecture in Monken Hadley. The exact route will depend on the weather conditions at the time.

DATE:	Monday 6th June	TIME:	6.30 for 6.45 p.m.
MEET:	at the west end of St. Mary's Church, Monken Hadley.		

Parking note: As there is only limited parking at the Church, it would be better to team up with friends, if possible. There is space on the nearby A1000 but parking controls apply until 6.30 p.m.

Missing Issues of the Potters Bar Society's Newsletters

Issues Nos. 1 to 78 (pre-1969).

Pages 3 to 4 (June 1971).

Issue No. 109 (Autumn 1972).

Issues Nos. 113 and 114 (May and June 1973)

Issue Nos. 121 to 181 (1974 to 1986) except 169 (April 1983).

If you possess any of the above, it would be appreciated if they could be given or loaned for copying to Margaret Ohren, 51 Wroxham Gardens, Potters Bar, Herts EN6 3DJ. Telephone 01707 655013.

Brian Warren

WHAT THE DICKENS

At the lecture on *Charles Dickens* by Dr Graham Handley, someone raised the question of "Where the *Dickens*" came from?

Graham Handley checked his documents later and it was used by Mrs Page in Shakespeare's *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, so preceding Charles Dickens by a number of years! The "*dickens*" is a lighter slang for the devil.

Richard Lee

A SHORT HISTORY OF RAF MILL GREEN

RAF Mill Green was formed during 1942 as a special training school to meet the demands of rapid airfield repair and associated civil engineering construction equipment training. The camp lay midway between the outskirts of Hatfield and Welwyn Garden City (Hatfield Hyde).

When completed in 1943 RAF Mill Green contained comprehensive facilities for the training of personnel in the use, and repair, of heavy civil engineering equipment, such as bulldozer earth moving machines and road graders. Practical training was undertaken both within the Mill Green site and also at a twenty acre disused gravel pit, destined to become Welwyn Garden's Gosling Stadium, next to the Twenty-Mile Bridge on the southern edge of Welwyn Garden City.

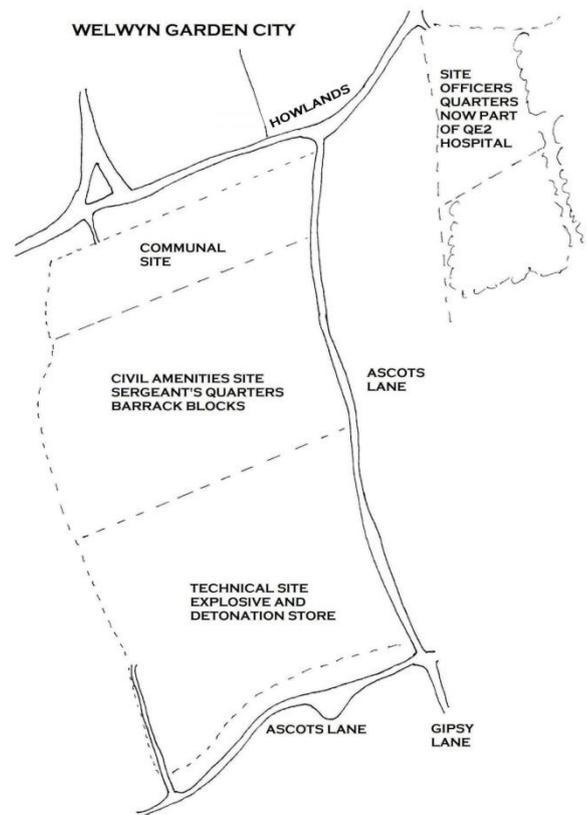
The technical site at Mill Green eventually included: Motor Transport, Woodworking workshops, Lecture rooms, Gas defence centre, Armoury, Explosive magazine, Fuel store and a Destructor house. There were officers and sergeants Messes, Dining rooms and a Ration stores, an Institute and a Grocery and Local produce store, shower and bath houses and a Medical facility. However, in its early stages, the camp was known as a sea of mud offering very spartan facilities. Personnel living under canvas, the sharing of a single cold water tap by several dozen men and a trip to de Havilland in Hatfield for a bath! One interesting point was that of the original site plans covering the actual construction of the camp comment is made that, "Paths to be arranged and provided for in the most economical manner with local materials where possible. To be inconspicuous in colour and to follow closely the lines of natural features, otherwise long straight paths should be avoided." Also, "Proper measures to conceal the work at all stages shall be taken as may be specified or directed."

Prior to the opening of the site at Mill Green, RAF personnel were trained in the use of heavy earth moving machinery at Jack Olding & Co, Caterpillar Island, Hatfield. Olding's were at the time, and for a number of years following WWII, the main UK Dealer for American built Caterpillar and John Deere earth-moving machinery. The plant operators course lasted twelve weeks with an intake of 90 men every six weeks.

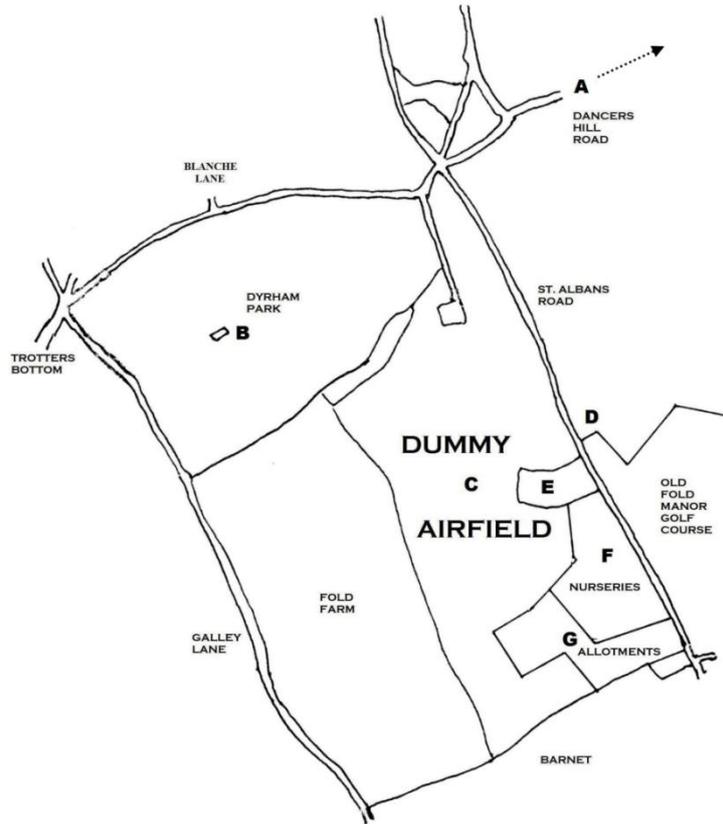
RAF Mill Green closed in 1948, the depot moving to RAF Church Lawford, near Rugby, in Warwickshire. There was also a similar facility to Mill Green's at Quy, near Cambridge, where machinery was held. Buildings on the former Mill Green site were subsequently rented out to various people and businesses by Welwyn Garden City council. These included; vehicle re-spray shops, storage warehouses, a printer, repair garages, a carpenter and, even at one stage, a company who built racing cars to the *Monoposto* formula. The site was the last resting place of many pre-war motor cars that had been abandoned and stripped in one degree or other. Names include: Singer Bantam, Riley, a coach built *Merlin* no less, the ubiquitous Austin Seven, Opal *Kaddette* along with many Morris and Ford Eights. Where they all came from I do not know. As a young lad, in the early fifties, the writer spent many happy hours at Mill Green where he first learnt to drive a motor car (and take them to bits!). This was an American-built Hudson 88 straight-eight saloon of unimaginable size and engine capacity, when compared to British vehicles of the time. It eventually died, I still have one of its inlet valves, stripped from its dead engine, somewhere. Great times and very fond memories remain of RAF Mill Green, now alas, nought but a golf course.

(The main body of this article has been taken from a pamphlet originally written by an Anthony Betts as supplied by the library at Hatfield some ten or more years ago. The Campus library at Welwyn Garden also holds material relating to RAF Mill Green.)

David H Sullivan



THE SECOND WORLD WAR UPDATE



- A** Viscount Trenchard, Marshall of the R.A.F., resided at Dancers Hill House from at least 1926, until he went to London at the commencement of WW2. The house belonged to the Byngs of Wrotham Park.
- B** It has been confirmed that the Grenadier Guards requisitioned Dyrham Park during WW2. Don Baker, our member, stated it was a Home Guard training ground.
- C** Dummy Airfield. In a letter dated 24th January 2011 David Sullivan provided the following information:

Barnet was allocated the number 41, of the 231 decoy airfields located throughout Great Britain and Ireland. Barnet's Ordnance Survey reference was TQ234980 and was controlled from its parent RAF Northolt.

Barnet was assigned three separate Code Letter suffixes:

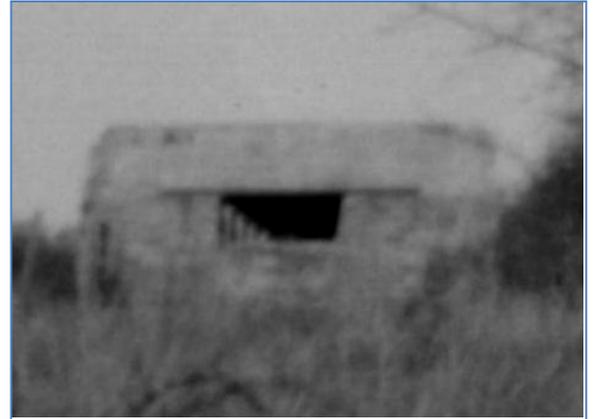
“Q” An official site having decoy lighting. (Incidentally, the term “Q” came from the Royal Navy who gave a warship which was disguised as a merchant ship, the title, “Q” ship.)

“QF” An official site for the burning of small decoy fires.

“K” An official Daytime decoy airfield.

The above information is taken from ISBN 0 413 74570 8. *The Fields of Deception* by Colin Dobson and published by English Heritage. The book makes a fascinating read and I would recommend it to all, even to those who are generally not interested in WWII. For example, the dummy aircraft were built from timber, canvas and string by Shepperton and Pinewood studios and numerous other manufacturers throughout the land. Dummy factories were also built on the same lines. There was one at Holywell Hyde, (RAF Panshanger, just north of Hatfield) which acted as decoy to de Havilland's.

D Our member, David Christie, took the photograph on the left, of the Pill Box, in the 1960s.



E This was part of the Dummy Airfield and not separated, as indicated on the map in the last Newsletter, January 2011. Pre-war it was part of Cutbush's nursery. In September 1951 the Garden Community Association was established to provide an opportunity to town dwellers to work on the garden plots, as they will do at weekends.

F Cutbush nurseries:

**AN INVITATION
TO
GARDEN LOVERS**

To those interested, we extend a cordial invitation to inspect the following in our Nurseries,

ST. ALBANS ROAD:
150,000 Roses in all the best varieties.
Flowering Shrub Border:
Samples as sent out of every shrub catalogued.

NEW ROAD:
Herbaceous, Annual, and Shrub Border, showing every plant catalogued, planted this Spring from our ordinary stock.
90 Best Roses, graded in colour sequence.
Uncommon Annuals, as catalogued.
Lawn Grass trials.

Rock, water, and herbaceous garden designed on modern lines, similar to those which have gained for us the highest awards at the Royal Horticultural Society's Chelsea Shows.

CUTBUSH,
Barnet, Herts.
Tele. : BARnet 2222 and 2223.

Open
Sundays
for
Inspection

Open
till
5.30 p.m.
daily.

G Allotment gardens in and following WW2 but no longer.

Brian Warren

ST. MICHAEL'S and ALL ANGELS CHURCH
ST. MICHAEL'S and ALL ANGELS MISSION HALL (Conclusion - Part 2)

By 1913 St. Michael's Church had been entirely renovated and refurbished. The altar had been replaced by the old oak one from St. John's, and refitted, while the plate, vases and altar candlesticks were made like new. They had been dedicated at a recent celebration of Holy Communion. In the columns of '*The Barnet Press*' dated 11th April 1914, there is a report of the consecration of the new East end of St. Michael's, by the Bishop of Willesden, The Vicar of the Parish and his assistant priest, with the combined choirs of St. Michael's and St. John's assisted in the service. The Scout Boys, with their Scoutmaster, formed a guard of honour outside the Church and St. John's Band played hymns before the service. All present were welcomed to a most sumptuous tea in the new Parish Room after the service. By the 30th May 1914 the Parish Room was ready for use and expected to be a boon to the parishioners in this part of the parish.

In 1916 Mr. John Hart presented a beautiful picture to be hung on the north wall of St. Michael's Church. On Shrove Tuesday there was an entertainment in St. Michael's Parish Room. However, it was announced that the Rev. Charles Farr of St. Michael's had been appointed to the parish of Minster Lovell, in Oxfordshire. He had been a hard-working and devoted clergyman, who had endeared himself to all classes. Mrs. Drummond presented a copy of '*Perngium! Crucifixion*' to St. Michael's Church, to be placed in the south transept and dedicated on Christmas Eve 1916.

Further evidence of the history of St. Michael's continues in the '*P.C.C. Minutes of St. Mary's*'. In the 1922 Budget it was proposed:-

<i>Church Maintenance S. Michael's</i>	£52
<i>Organist S. Michael's</i>	£12
Over £6 per week to maintain the Parish Church and St. Michael's.	

It is only possible to obtain a glimpse of the activities at St. Michael's from the surviving evidence. From 1924-1926 Miss Warner leased the Hall but in September of that year Miss Gamage was refused her application to organise dancing classes. On the 30th September St. Michael's Allotment holders were given notice and it was proposed that in future an annual fixed charge of 6d per pole would be made and the tenancy, if possible, continued on those lines. Peter Osborne remembered that the small area to the east of the Mission Hall did not produce as well as that to the west, this was because it laid cold between the Mission Hall and a tall fence and trees around Park House. From July 1927 Mrs. Stevens held a Women's Handicraft class.

It would appear that all was not well at St. Michael's following the death of Father A. C. Crowther, as from then there was no curate and from December 1930 to 28th January 1934 the Vicar of St. Mary's, Father A. B. C. Robinson covered for the services. In July 1929 Captain Clarke, a resident Lay Reader, agreed to assist with the services so as to relieve the Vicar of the Sunday strain - say one Sunday a month. There is no evidence that he did take a service. In October 1930 the roof of the Hall had been made safe. Though the Rev. A. C. Canner was curate from 1934-35, the Rev. A. B. C. Robinson took Mass on Advent Sunday, 2nd December 1934, at 7.15 for eleven Communicants and a collection of 4s 1d. Next in the '*Register of Services*' it was recorded, '*Closed for the Winter*'.

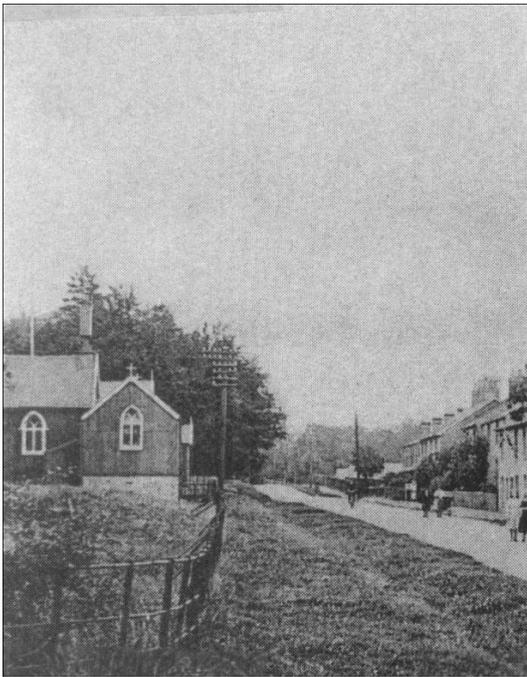
On the 29th March 1938 the Rev. A. B. C. Robinson remarked that two things stood out and they were the coming of Father Etherington to commence the new district of King Charles the Martyr and the mission. He welcomed Father Etherington and offered him a harmonium and various other furnishings and seats from St. Michael's which should save the new church about £100.

In a letter dated 1st June 1954, it was written, “*during the war, both Iron buildings were destroyed by fire*” and a formal application was made to build three houses on the site. There is no doubt that the destruction occurred in two separate incidents but when and which was first is not easily established. On the 9th December 1940 the Vicar was given authority to obtain consent from the donors of the site of St. Michael’s Church and Hall for exchange of land for a cemetery extension. Peter Osborne thinks the Mission Hall was first and if that is so then that was on the 8th May 1943. He recalls that the ARP workers were giving or perhaps being given instruction on putting out incendiary bombs on the grass between the two buildings, It was great fun to watch sparks flying everywhere that night the Mission Hall was alight. Another reference to the incident noted, “*The St. Michael’s Church Hall, in Church Road, Potters Bar, which is used as headquarters of a local Troop of Boy Scouts, was badly damaged on Monday night by an outbreak of fire, the cause of which is unknown. The building, which is of corrugated iron construction was gutted and a considerable quantity of equipment was destroyed.*” The loss of the equipment was confirmed by Mrs. Joan Slow, who was associated with local scouting for many years. There is a small plan which shows St. Michael’s Church and next to it a dotted Mission Hall, confirming that the Hall was destroyed first in 1943. However, it is not clear when or how St. Michael’s Church was destroyed.

The entries in St. Mary’s Parochial Church Council Minutes relate the demise of the site. On the 14th July 1954 it was agreed that the Vicar and Churchwardens should accept the best terms offered for the site by the District Valuer subject to the agreement of the Commissioners. It was recorded, on the 30th March 1955 the Church Commissioners would accept the valuation of the land by the Urban District Council as an open site. The Vicar and District Valuer had agreed some months ago on £350. The site was re-conveyed to original donors who had disposed of it for £350 and handed the sum to the Church (St. Mary’s) thus overcoming the legal difficulties which had arisen. The money went to the Churchyard Fund, which had used it to repay its debt of £350 to the Wills Bequest Fund, it was thus available, together with the balance of £47 already in hand, for the reduction of debt on No.11 View Road.



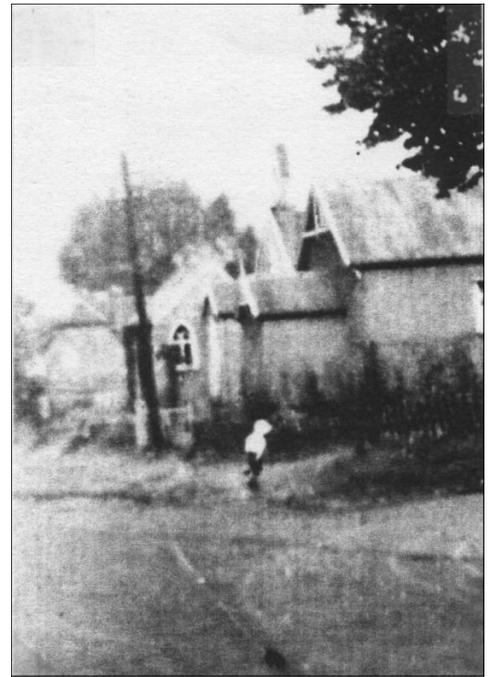
The interior of the enlarged and refurbished St. Michael’s Church c. Easter 1914.



After 1914,
St. Michael's

← West side

East side →



The May Queen outside St. Michael's, c. 1937.

Brian Warren

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.