



ALTRINCHAM HISTORY SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER No. 36

June 2024

Hazel Pryor
11 Thorley Lane,
Timperley
Altrincham
WA15 7BJ

Hello everyone,

Hurrah, we have booked an alternative venue for AHS meetings in September. It is Altrincham Conservative Club, just a few yards away from the Town Hall on Market Street.

We made contact with the art group Oyez Arts which has been granted the lease for the Town Hall. There is doubt about whether we can actually book the Town Hall for our first meeting in September, so Eleanor and I have been checking other venues. The survey of members to see – if we have to change evenings – which one is the more preferred has produced almost a draw between Mondays and Wednesdays. Thank you to everyone who responded, it was a useful exercise in case we ever have to change in the future.



Whatever your political persuasions, this venue looks quite suitable.

The ground floor space can be separated off from the bar/lounge area with floor to ceiling room divider.

The steward can set out the room as we wish, with chairs and tables for books etc.

There is a PA system, and Wifi.

Refreshments will be available to buy from the bar - tea/coffee - pay per person per drink.

There are steps up to the front door, but level access from the car park at the rear. Car park has about 30 spaces and will be available for our use.

Access to the car park will be from the Regent Road end of Market Street.

We hope that this will be a good venue. Depending on what we hear about the Town Hall, we may have our October and November meetings here.

Thank you to one of our members for suggesting the venue.

We have had news that one of our early members Jill Champness has died. Jill taught at Wythenshawe College when I worked there. Her husband Bernard has been interested in industrial archaeology and surveyed and reported on several buildings in Broadheath. They moved to Cheltenham a few years ago.

Dates for your diary:

Festival of Archaeology STAG Open Day Saturday 27th July 2024 11.00am to 3.00pm

There will be an open day at STAG HQ behind the Old Hall Hotel, with displays showing "5000 years of Altrincham (and district) history", and STAG's role in exploring it. Altrincham History Society will be having a stall there. We could do with someone to help staff the display. Please contact Hazel for info.

Intriguing find from STAG dig at Timperley Hall moat

This is a water dish – for wetting stamps, I remember the local Post Office had a similar with a sponge in it. ‘Veteran Series’ was from a stationery supplier, there are filing cabinets etc for sale on Ebay. Does anyone have any memories of ‘Veteran’ supplies, or know where the firm was based?
[Photo by Michael Waite]



Baguley Hall for sale

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c800kejrrd4o>

‘A "stunning" 900-year-old medieval manor house featuring a great timber hall has been put up for sale to help preserve it for the future. Baguley Hall in Wythenshawe, Manchester, has been placed on the market by real estate firm Colliers on behalf of Historic England. The 14th century country house, which recently underwent a series of repairs, could be transformed into a food-based pub, hotel, or events centre under plans drawn up by the body.’



Located on Hall Lane, off Altrincham Rd.

It has a central timber-framed hall with a two storey porch, also in timber, with brick wings on either side.



The photo on the left is of the screens passage which runs front to back from the porch entrance.

When I first looked for the hall in the 1960s it was shrouded in scaffolding and corrugated iron. I've never been inside. There's a brief timeline here:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Baguley_Hall

There's an article about trial excavations at Baguley Hall in the *Journal of the Chester Archaeological Society*, Volume 59, 1976, and another article in *Archaeological Journal* vol. 146, 1989.

Some websites and items on YouTube

Altrincham & Bowdon Civic Society produce a newsletter – Community Voice News Online. You can find it on their website look under 'News'. <https://altrinchamandbowdoncs.com/> There's a 'Gallery' of current local photos of buildings in the town, and more information.

Tarvin – a blog giving a walk round Tarvin and its history.

<http://www.cheshirenow.co.uk/tarvin.html>

What is the history of **Arley Hall** – an article from *Cheshire Life*

<https://www.greatbritishlife.co.uk/magazines/cheshire/24047491.history-arley-hall-near-northwich-cheshire/>

“**Deva Victrix: Chester's in situ Roman remains**” By ‘Pastfinder’ this is in 4 separate parts – Part 1 c22 mins; Part 2 c19 mins etc. As well as the obvious remains of the amphitheatre and city walls, he explores the basements of cafes including Pret-a-Manger and Bridge Cafe & Bistro on Bridge St., and the old quay wall by the racecourse. Part One here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d5-gfL496TU>

More on “**Chester**” – an old Gaumont film from 1931 that has been colourised, about 10 mins long.

Uploaded by ‘The Wirral Channel’ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oDibEHU-SHw>

Recent enquiry

I had a phone call about a **Key** – ‘Presented to **J. Shaw esq**, on the opening of **Downs Bowling Club** on July 5, 1905.’ Did I have any information about this bowling green behind The Downs Hotel. Had a quick look in the Slater's Directory for 1905 under the name Shaw – several in the list but there was one that might fit - John Shaw, F.R.H.S. One of the 3 generations of John Shaw variously, seedsmen, landscape gardeners etc. One John Shaw was responsible for the design and lay-out of Stamford Park, and this could be the right J. Shaw. [24.5.2024.]

Puzzle Plaque

This was an email query, from a person who bought this in Australia. I checked for any possible places that it may have come from.

Miss Frances Cartwright ran the 'Institute of Trained Nurses', based at no. 21, Stockport Road, Altrincham [1905] - unfortunately demolished for the Woodlands Rd flyover;

Mrs Mary Instone ran a Nurses' Home at The Laurels, 72 The Downs [1905].

And there was a Nursing Home at Langham Lea, Langham Rd, Bowdon run by Miss Moffat ARCC [1923].



At some point there was also a Sick Nursing Association around 1900? No more details on that.

The best bet would be the Altrincham General Hospital and I found a mention in a street directory for 1913 – “Nurses home for 21 nurses. . . there are also trained and certificated nurses available for attendance on private cases.”

But there are no phone numbers listed for any of these, and I can't find any early numbers for the Hospital. So there it remains a puzzle.

More on YouTube

“HMS Victory: returning Nelson’s flagship to her former glory” a 7 minute video by Forces News.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=630iLa5cD9I>

‘HMS Victory in her true colours’- a 10 minute video including the technical research on her repainting.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KmNXRWtQ-P0> by The National Museum of the Royal Navy.

“Admiral Horatio Nelson: Battle of Trafalgar” 17 minutes by Chris Green ‘The History Chap’

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0zJUdLaw_s8

“The Mysterious Stonehenge House that defied all maps” Paul Whitewick c 8 mins.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eSP3SoSdHXQ>

“This road just vanished! Why?” Paul Whitewick c 16 mins. Exploring an old turnpike road from Salisbury to Bath. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7Fdwo16ke8k>

“The Day Silbury Hill collapsed” another by Paul Whitewick c.12 mins.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sIKPsjBVx6s>

For **light relief**, I’ve been watching a YouTube Channel called ‘[The Scottish Detectorist](#)’. John has permissions in Perthshire that include fields near a medieval church, two Roman forts and Iron Age cropmarks. He’s very good at describing the history/background of finds, which have included a Bronze Age axehead, Roman and mediaeval coins and an Iron Age[?] ox head bowl-mount- very fine, according to experts at the Museum of Scotland.- shown on this: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A81LyO8Pf1M>

Here’s his channel with the various videos: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCbBl-rjbhUtLKNF8thtrikQ/videos> Try this one <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XtO0VplRwg>

Or this one with lots of finds: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dQfXv7Ig1dk>

The **Real Letters** from Roman Soldiers

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XFcJDZSX63g> 5 minutes of some of the Roman tablet letters from Vindolanda - the fort and town on Hadrian’s Wall.

“Mediaeval African Mystery; History Cold Case” An hour-long episode of the TV programme about a burial from Ipswich. In case you missed it this is S01 EP01 from about 5 years ago,

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DOUgpU8R2cc>

“England’s forgotten Tudor armoury at Mendelsham in Suffolk” a video by Allan Barton ‘The Antiquary’ about 10 minutes long, and very good. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TRIW9pLeaG0>

‘Indicators of Ancient Woodland’ with Nigel Douglas. (N. Wales Wildlife Trust)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2m2kK3a_eg 54 minutes, quite detailed talk with maps & photos, and a transcript of the talk to follow along.

Now for a bit of Nostalgia – British Council films

“Development of the English Town” (1942-43) a film by the British Council c.16 mins.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GMq-IRWbYIY>

“Lowland Village” another British Council film from 1942, set in East Anglia showing the farming year and crafts. 10 minutes <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H8NMzOBrRA>

“Market Town” another from 1942 - 10 minutes long. This one by GB Instructional covering market day – from the farms to market at Newark. <https://film.britishcouncil.org/resources/film-archive/market-town>
This link takes you to the British Council archive page, just click on the film picture.

“English Harvest (1938)” a short film c 8 mins, from British Film Inst, with a commentary by A.G.Street.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rcyzAIkMwrg>

The film focuses on an August harvest in Sawston, Cambridgeshire. ‘The old makes way for the new as the trusty old scythe bows down to the horse-drawn binder and plough.’ Originally made in colour.

WW2 Motor Torpedo Boats

“The Little Ships of England” another British Council film from 1943. c 12 mins. It covers timber for boat building, saw mills; some of the scenes feel a bit ‘staged’ but still very interesting.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UPUQnJ1Eoic> “From the woods of Britain comes timber - oak, ash and elm - for the little ships. The scene shifts to skilled shipwrights at work in a West-country shipyard, and shifts again to the exciting rescue of a fighter pilot by a launch on patrol. At Dunkirk the little ships sailed into the pages of English history.”

More small flimsy boats: “Night Hunters – The Royal Navy’s Coastal Forces at War” – 14 minutes video about a new museum at Bridport. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5gqKd0Mst40>

Following on from this – “Coastal Forces: Motor Torpedo Boats MTB ‘Spitfires of the Sea’ from WW2: a short film by Southampton on Video, just 3 minutes long. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mF1Ea3f2iI0>

A prophecy from 50 years ago?

I’ve been reading a novel by Ellis Peters (this one not Brother Cadfael but a George Felse detective story). Police are digging for a body in an ancient cellar and get down to a hard surface:

“Dull, clay-coloured leather or imitation leather – the sound suggested the latter, and after all, today’s plastics are practically indestructible. Barnes scraped away the earth from round it and heaved it out of the ground. A large, rigid-framed suitcase substantial but lightweight, probably fibre-glass. If there is anything proof against dissolution, terrifyingly enough, it must be plastic matter. Some day we will bury ourselves under a mountain of our own ingenious refuse, imperishable and dead, a cosmic paradox in pastel colours, obscenely mute, naked, textureless and perpetual. And only our computers will survive to record our submersion. In a mediaeval cellar haunted by centuries of living and dying, the survival qualities of this synthetic creation seemed particularly out of place.” ‘The Knocker on Death’s Door’, published in 1970.

Keep exploring this summer, in print, online or on foot (keep your willies handy).

See you around, Hazel