

ALTRINCHAM HISTORY SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER No. 37 July 2024

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Hello everyone,

We are looking forward to the start of the new season in September, and glad that we can continue to have our meetings still on Tuesdays at the new venue of Altrincham Conservative Club on Market Street. Note this is NOT the 'Con Club' on Greenwood Street, now a wine bar, that used to be the Conservative Working Men's Club. It's the other side of the market hall, just along from the Town Hall. A short newsletter this time.

The programme for 2024-25 will be sent out in mid-August, along with the subscription renewal forms.

Dates for your diary:

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

As part of the annual Festival of Archaeology, there will be an open day at South Trafford Archaeology Group HQ behind the Old Hall Hotel, Stockport Road, 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. Do come along and see the moated site behind the Old Hall Hotel, and the finds displayed in the HQ. Thanks for offers to help staff the stall, there is always room for more. Please contact Hazel for info.

Advance Notice – save the date

Saturday 19th October 2024 - Cheshire History Day – “The Future of Cheshire’s Past”

9.30am – 4.30pm at The Grange Theatre, Bradburns Lane, Hartford. CW8 1LU. Cost is £15 for the day, including morning refreshments. Talks will be about The Future of Cheshire Archives; Cheshire Archaeology; and the Portable Antiquities Scheme. As usual there will be stalls from local history societies and specialist booksellers. Bring your sandwiches. Plenty of parking and not too far away from Greenbank rail station. It is always a good day and good value. Details & bookings here: www.cheshirehistory.org.uk

Recent enquiry

We've received a request for help to find a photo of a young man killed in June 1944. Warrant Officer Peter Edward **GODSELL** from Timperley, was pilot of a Halifax bomber that crashed near Lamastre (Ardeche). He was employed by a firm of surveyors in Altrincham, and was the son of Alfred Richard and Bessie Gertrude Godsell who lived in Meadow Bank, off Park Road. He was engaged to Margaret Elliott (WRNS) older daughter of Mr & Mrs D P Elliott of Timperley. On his mother's side - she had 3 sisters - one married a man called Turner. They had at least one child. The photo is required to complete the aircrew's photos which will be placed on their Monument in France. [More details about W/O Godsell on Trafford War Dead website <https://traffordwardead.co.uk>]

Can you help with this query?

David Miller is trying to find out about a Blue Plaque in Bowdon to artist Gladys Vasey 1889-1981. He noted it 25 years ago at 4 Laurel Mount, East Downs Road, next door to number 3, the house occupied by Adolph Brodsky. That house has got a Blue Plaque to Russian born violinist Brodsky 1851-1929. David can now find no reference to a Blue Plaque at number 4. Have any of our members got any recollection of a Blue Plaque there?

Some items on YouTube

“Know Your Ally: Britain” This is a 42 minute long film produced by the USA in 1944, to inform American soldiers about Britain. Includes interesting clips taken during the war, although some of the battle scenes in N Africa may have been staged (?) and I spotted a couple of possible errors. Part of a series now put out by the US National Archives, along with other films relating to WW2 and other topics.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2SOvr9fLHUM>

“The Secret History of Manchester’s Town Hall”, a video by Martin Zero. 21 minutes long from 4 years ago. Looking at some of the features uncovered during the current refurbishment of the Town Hall.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nxT4lzO8BWk>

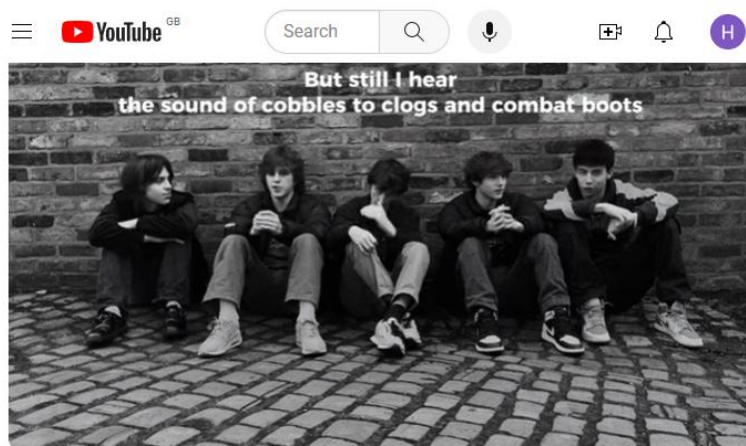
“The Hidden History of Manchester’s Grandest Building” another video by Martin Zero, exploring the Refuge Assurance building, about 20 minutes long. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hOUUJL8EUGg>

“Why did Manchester have so many airfields?” The Lost Airfields of Manchester. A 13 minute programme by Bee Here Now. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CUH9tp4D6L0>

Something different:

Here’s a song by local group ‘The Guest List’ called **161**.

It’s about the men from Chapel Street. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kUH9aY3eD18>



The Guest List - 161

'I wrote this song to pay homage to Chapel Street in our home town, Altrincham, which became famous after the First World War for sending the most men and boys to fight per household of any street in the UK, 161 in total. The song sheds light on the experiences of those left behind and on the memories of life on the street before the boys left.'

“The Great Siege of Chester” a short video by Dr. Sam Chadwick of Univ. of Chester with the historical background and the importance of gunpowder. 8 mins. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nhWIRqcYTfc>

“Unearthing a lost medieval City: Whitefriars Gloucester Priory” - a 33 minute video by History Hits on the archaeological excavations. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OHk9wh0gaf0>

“The Forgotten Roman Wall” a video by Paul Whitewick about the Fosse Way, 14 minutes. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z2un8DFwpD4>

I’ve been reading a super book by Christopher Hadley - The Road: a story of Romans and ways to the past. (William Collins Books ISBN 978-0-00-835672-9). It combines historical research with actual (on foot) exploration, over a number of years, of a section of road in NW Essex, with folk memory and evidence from the landscape including field names, plants and finds along the way. Very entertaining ‘lyrical prose’, with good end notes, easy reading, although I did have to look up a few words he used – he’s very well-read!

Recommended reading for dull, cold, wet days this ‘summer’.

See you around, Hazel