



Hitchin Historical Society

Registered Charity No. 280746

Newsletter

Issue number 36 - January 2012

Happy New Year!

2011 ended on a high for the Society as two very successful launches in the last three months of the year kept our publications team very busy. Not all the news last year was good, however, as in February we lost Pat Gadd Thurstance, one of our founder members, at the age of 86, and in March, long-standing member Ken Payne also died.

Better news came later from our film archive team with more old films coming to light, enabling us to save and copy them to DVD format for future generations. And in April, initiated by the Society, the BBC Symphony Orchestra came to St Mary's Church to give a concert commemorating the funeral here of Sir Henry Wood in 1944. Parts of the performance were broadcast on Radio 3 in September.

Julius Caesar crossed the Rubicon in January 49BC, and perhaps we have crossed ours with publication of our first DVD. At the AGM, members will be telling us about other projects in hand, so watch out for more successes and 'firsts' in 2012 - our first Kindle publication, perhaps?

Best wishes for success and good health in this new and challenging year!

Zena Grant, Editor



The DVD of *Old Hitchin on Film* by Richard Whitmore, Sam Hallas and Tim Ray

Dr Mike Clarke's book on the history of mental health in the Hitchin area

Launches: Who Needs NASA?

Richard Whitmore has long been collecting old films of Hitchin on behalf of the Society to have them restored, transferred to modern media and preserved for posterity. This DVD, a first for the Society, contains the latest amateur films he and his expert Film Archive team, Sam Hallas and Tim Ray, have rescued, and runs for nearly two hours.

The launch at the Queen Mother Theatre on 5th November was a great success, with speeches, presents, refreshments and toasts. Copies of the DVD sold fast as they are available only from the Society.



The audience gathers at the Queen Mother Theatre for a first glimpse of the DVD



Founder-member Terry Knight (left) talks to Mike Clarke as he signs books

Dr Mike Clarke's book launch took place at Centenary House in Hitchin on 29th October and was well-attended by the medical community as well as Society members and the public. Sales were brisk - over 80 copies on the day - and Mike was kept busy signing books. *Cold Baths Don't Work* is a history of mental health care in the Hitchin area. As a retired psychiatrist who worked at Fairfield and the Lister Hospitals, Mike was ideally placed to write such a history, and gave a brief talk about it at the launch.

Speeches and refreshments rounded off the afternoon. The book is available at several outlets in Hitchin and Letchworth, and from the Society.



The launch of *Cold Baths Don't Work* at Centenary House

New Year Hitchin Quiz

A cryptic quiz to animate those little grey cells, set by Leslie Mustoe, our Secretary. All answers relate to Hitchin and the surrounding area and will appear on the HHS website on the March News page at www.hitchinhistorical.org.uk. They will also be available at the February members meeting.

1	Expel a tomb raider.	(8)	26	Prepare to fire after golf.	(4, 5)
2	A king of note	(4)	27	Settle with Geordie Muriel.	(6, 4)
3	Did he have a leaning towards medicine?	(6)	28	Ah, bless them – what a mess!	(3, 8)
4	Did Gabriel stay here?	(3,5,3)	29	Audibly steals item of underwear.	(8, 4)
5	We have the large drink.	(3, 6)	30	Shields purchase – that’s about right.	(12)
6	Andy, Una and Rob make it.	(6,4)	31	Could be in St Petersburg.	(9)
7	Article round Algeria?	(3, 7)	32	Poor Clare is near.	(4, 5)
8	Fred and Judy couldn’t sail up here.	(3, 6)	33	Fasten Sir Thomas – a negative approach!	(9)
9	Bill was faster.	(7)	34	He needed sangfroid.	(9)
10	Her Majesty’s pleasure for the listener.	(5, 6)	35	Mr Goose collapses.	(7)
11	The measure of the man for Bertie.	(6, 4)	36	Insects fly back and meet resistance.	(7)
12	Gospeller meets alien: sounds fishy.	(6, 5)	37	Sean’s Ursula falls for a carriage maker.	(7)
13	Turn to a London suburb.	(8, 4)	38	Threw away ITV news.	(3, 7)
14	He doesn’t borrow the good book inside.	(8)	39	A contented cat may make this sound.	(7)
15	Running water not for her?	(5, 3)	40	Did Bobby or Jackie live here? No, Henry.	(8)
16	Totes clubs around.	(5, 5)	41	Madonna is not cool.	(2, 5, 6)
17	Pay pirates to recover shipwreck, we hear – it’s not cool.	(7, 3)	42	Switzerland twice tangles with Tuareg.	(10)
18	Did he go to school with Wilshere (not Jack)?	(5)	43	Do you make your mark here?	(5, 6)
19	Limpet roll an unlikely possibility.	(8, 4)	44	Frolicked about.	(9)
20	Dance round a satellite.	(6)	45	Unusually large cinema.	(5)
21	No branch of mathematics? Just the reverse at college!	(6)	46	We have a booth the old come back to.	(4, 6)
22	Rook yard – a different place.	(4, 4)	47	Leading fish is game.	(9, 6)
23	Stirling’s round the bend!	(5, 6)	48	Two fellows return the wagons.	(8, 4)
24	Tiger prowls around a light without a break.	(9)	49	Royston newspaper not with another newspaper.	(3, 5)
25	Love grim learner – grim.	(5,4)	50	Jenny Lind was on a horse for her audience.	(11, 4)

Thank you!

Our thanks as ever go to Messrs **John Shilcock** in Bancroft for providing us with commodious accommodation for our ‘overflow’ publications stock. Thanks again also to **Heather Tisdale and Thomas Pitchford**, who provide us so ably and good-naturedly with refreshments at member meetings and, behind the scenes, wash up everything afterwards too. We are very grateful to them for keeping things running so smoothly and ‘refreshingly’.

Books Added to Our Library since January 2011

The following are not necessarily new publications but are new acquisitions to the Society’s library. Many of these are donations from the author or members, or even non-members, for which we are very grateful.

PLEASE NOTE: at future meetings a selection of library books will be displayed instead of the whole collection, as many are never consulted. In this way it will be easier for members to browse. For those who may be looking for particular titles or subjects the catalogue will be available, and I am happy to get out other titles if asked. All of the journal boxes will be on display. *Audrey Stewart*

Hertfordshire

	History of Place House, Ware, Hertfordshire. Herts Building Preservation Trust, 2008
Hofton, Helen, Ed.	Portrait of Pirton: a century of change. Pirton Local History Group, 2005
Perman, David.	A New Guide to Scott’s Grotto. The Ware Society, 1991 & 1995
Short, David, Ed.	An Historical Atlas of Hertfordshire. Hertfordshire Publ., 2011
Whitmore, Richard	Hertfordshire Privies: a nostalgic trip down the garden path. Countryside Books, 1998

Hitchin

Farris, Noel	The Wymondleys. Hertfordshire Publications, 1989
Jarrett, Derek	Pirton—A Village in Anguish: the story of the 30 men from a Hertfordshire village who died in WWI. Pirton Local History Group, 2009
Shaw, David H.	The History of St Michael’s and the Catholic Parish of Hitchin. Old Michaelian Association, 1973 (ref. only) Stotfold Water Mill. Stotfold Preservation Trust, 2010?

General Local History

Dyer, Christopher et al.	New Directions in Local History Since Hoskins. University of Hertfordshire Pr., 2011
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2012 Membership Renewal

Dear Member,

Subscription renewal time is here again. The rates remain unchanged – such excellent value!

£7.00 for joint membership

£5.00 for single membership

50p for juniors (under 18)

Please return the enclosed (*) membership **renewal form** to the address below, together with your **payment**. Cheques should be made payable to “Hitchin Historical Society”. Finally, and most importantly, please enclose a **STAMPED, SELF-ADDRESSED ENVELOPE, at least 6" x 4½"** for the return of your membership/programme card.

On behalf of the committee, thank you for your support in the past, and we look forward to your continued membership of Hitchin Historical Society.

Renewal form with payment to:

HHS Secretary

(*) If you joined late in 2011
you will not receive a
membership renewal form.

News in brief

London Transport Bus Garage, Bridge Street

This disused bus garage was LT's most northerly outpost and cannot be demolished until a replacement - keeping the current façade - is agreed.

Zion Chapel in Standhill Road

This 1840s brick built building is to become a private house.

HHS Committee

Members Peter Moss and Caroline Frith have been co-opted. Peter will take over as Membership Secretary at the AGM and Caroline has replaced Stephen Bradford-Best as Programme Secretary and organised this year's programme—see back page. A very warm welcome to both!

Events and Visits

2011's Christmas 'do' took the form of a Hitchin quiz, *What Do You Think You Know?*, with quizmaster Ron Piper moonlighting from his main job as landlord of the Sir John Barleycorn pub to pose tricky questions.



The Winners: Patience Humphries, Bridget Howlett, and Geraldine and Alan Couchman

In July we
were in
Wisbech ...



.....and Scott's
Grotto in Ware



HHS Committee & Contacts

President	Priscilla Douglas
Chairman	David Howlett
Secretary	Leslie Mustoe
Treasurer	John Skeeles
Programme	Caroline Frith**
Journal	Simon Walker**
Membership	Phil Rowe Peter Moss**

Distribution	Vicki Lockyer & David Howlett
Film Archivist	Richard Whitmore
Librarian	Audrey Stewart
Newsletter & website	Zena Grant
Pharmaceutical Trust Liaison & website	Phil Rowe
Publications	Priscilla Douglas**
Publications (sales)	Vicki Lockyer

(** co-opted members)



The Newsletter is published twice yearly by **Hitchin Historical Society**, a registered charity dedicated to informing the public of the history of Hitchin and district, and undertaking research into the origins and development of buildings, organisations, crafts, trades and other aspects of historical interest, and to publish the results of such research.

PROGRAMME OF MEETINGS AUTUMN 2012

At Church House, Churchyard, Hitchin at 8 pm on Thursdays, followed by light refreshments

JANUARY 26 th	HITCHIN'S HATTING HERITAGE A talk by <i>Veronica Main</i> , Curator of Specialist Collections, Museums Luton, Luton Cultural Services Trust.
FEBRUARY 23 rd	NORTON HENGE – A LANDSCAPE TO RIVAL STONEHENGE A talk by <i>Keith Fitzpatrick-Matthews</i> , archaeologist for North Hertfordshire Museums Service.
MARCH 22 nd	MEMBERS EVENING AND ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING After the official business and presentation of the Reginald Hine award, members tell of their current projects.
APRIL 26 th	THE BRITISH TRANSPORT FILM STORY An evening of film and reminiscence from the British Transport film archive presented by filmmaker <i>Alan Willmott</i> .
MAY 24 th	CAMDEN TOWN TO GARDEN CITY – THE ART OF WILLIAM RADCLIFFE A talk by <i>Ros Allwood</i> , Museums Manager for North Hertfordshire Museums Service.
SEPTEMBER 27 th	THE HISTORY OF PERKINS ENGINES A talk about the history and links to the Hitchin family by <i>Stephen Perry</i> .
OCTOBER 25 th	A TOUCH OF GLASS – A VICTORIAN MAGIC LANTERN SHOW An evening of entertainment using original Victorian magic lantern slides, featuring those from the North Herts Museums collection, presented by <i>Tony Brown and Tony Casbeard</i> .
NOVEMBER 22 nd	HITCHIN'S INNS AND ALEHOUSES — An intoxicating talk by <i>Mark Pardoe</i> .

SPECIAL EVENTS

JULY Sunday 8th from 2.30 p.m.	GARDEN PARTY Held in the garden of Holy Saviour Church. Come and look at the stalls, have a guided tour of the church, enjoy a cream tea and meet fellow members.
DECEMBER Friday 7 th from 7.30 p.m	CHRISTMAS PARTY Held at Church House. Be entertained, enjoy some light seasonal refreshments and socialise with fellow members

VISITS 2012

*Once you have renewed your membership you will receive a booking form which **MUST** be completed and returned to the Programme Secretary in advance of the visit. **Numbers are strictly limited** so you will receive a ticket if your application is successful. Starting times and venues vary, and for some visits [indicated *] there is a charge.*

Wednesday 28th MARCH At 11.00 a.m.	* THE POLAR MUSEUM – Scott Polar Research Institute, Cambridge - by arrangement with the Education Officer. A tour and special viewing of an exhibition marking the centenary of Captain Scott's fated attempt to reach the South Pole. [Limited to: 25 members]
Tuesday 17th APRIL at 11.00 a.m.	* WALTER WRIGHT HAT FACTORY TOUR , Luton - by kind permission of the family proprietor, Phillip Wright. Guided tour of the Victorian Hat Factory, heritage centre and hat showroom still trading – in time to purchase your hat for Ascot! NB there will be a large quantity of steps to climb during the tour. [Limited to: 22 members]
MAY Tuesday 9 th at 1.30 p.m.	* THE HUNTERIAN MUSEUM – The Royal College of Surgeons, London - by arrangement with the Learning Officer. A guided tour, with time to explore a special exhibition to mark the centenary of Joseph Lister's death & a talk by Professor Ellis of Guys Hospital, a self confessed Lister enthusiast. [Limited to: 30 members]
MAY Tuesday 22 nd at 7.30 p.m.	* MAYDENCROFT MANOR , Gosmore - by kind permission of Robert and Frances Williams. A beautiful historic home, connected with King Henry VIII, and a chance to see the 'Bunyan's Barn'. [Limited to: 20 members]
JUNE Tuesday 12 th at 11 a.m.	* CHILTERN OPEN AIR MUSEUM , Chalfont St. Giles - by arrangement with the Curator. A tour and time to explore the 45 acre site home to 30 historic buildings reflecting life in the Chilterns of the past. [Limited to: 30 members] BY COACH
JUNE Tuesday 28 th at 11 a.m.	* THE VAUXHALL HERITAGE CENTRE , Vauxhall Motors, Luton – by kind permission of the Community Officer. Get up close to vehicles from the past 110 years of motoring at a site usually open just once a year to the public. [Limited to: 20 members]
AUGUST Thursday 16 th at 10.30 a.m.	* A WALKING TOUR OF ROYSTON, THE ROYSTON CAVE AND TOWN MUSEUM Discover this Hertfordshire town's treasures from 450 years of history from the foundation the priory and the establishment of the town. [Limited to: 18 members]
SEPTEMBER Sunday 2 nd at 2.00 p.m.	ARCHAEOLOGICAL WALK AROUND HITCHIN - with Keith Fitzpatrick-Matthews, Archaeology Officer. Keith shares his wealth of knowledge about the town's archaeology in a stimulating walking tour. [Limited to: 20 members]
SEPTEMBER Wednesday 5 ^h at 7.30 p.m.	HITCHIN MUSEUM - by arrangement with the Curator, David Hodges. The last chance to see behind the scenes at the Paynes Park site prior to the Museum's relocation to the new Town Hall venue. See the extensive collection before its redisplay and get a sneak peak of the new designs. [Limited to: 15 members]
OCTOBER Monday 1 st at 10 a.m	* PERKINS FACTORY TOUR and PETERBOROUGH MUSEUM A tour of the Perkins Heritage centre and all aspects of the manufacture of Perkins engines with a behind the scenes tour of the newly refurbished museum. [Limited to: 30 members] BY COACH