



NEWSLETTER

No. 81

WINTER 2015

www.dacorumheritage.org.uk

'TALKING NEW TOWNS' EXHIBITION

Another very successful exhibition at the Marlowes Shopping Centre in Hemel Hempstead. During four days in

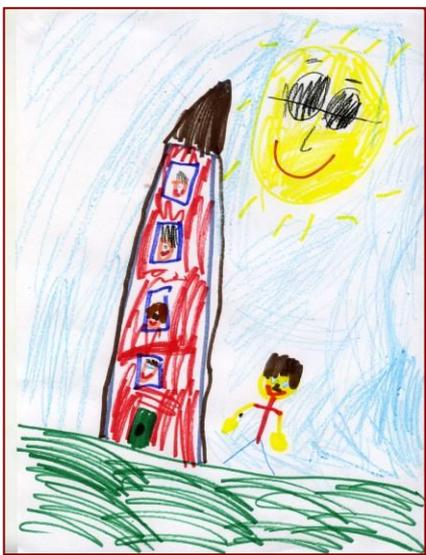


October we engaged with over 235 people about the 'Talking New Towns' project. Our exhibition included excerpts from interviews recorded over the past year. These ranged from factual accounts to amusing anecdotes, which give an insight into this era. Children contributed a drawing to our 'New Town' mural. The colourful and imaginative drawings included their homes, fire stations, parks, swimming pools and even a museum!



In partnership with Welwyn Hatfield Museum Service and Stevenage Museum, DHT have helped to deliver the 'Talking New Towns' (Heritage Lottery Funded) project. The aim is to share the stories about planning, building and living in the post-war Hertfordshire New Towns built to absorb the London overspill.

Local stories and images were used as a basis for exhibitions and the art competition. We are working to produce an



animation, which will create a visual interpretation of the Hemel Hempstead New Town memories we gathered. Take a look at the website www.talkingnewtowns.org.uk where you can listen to extracts of the interviews.

We would like to thank The Marlowes Shopping Centre, Grete and Jo (Stevenage Museum), Keith Boon (Stevenage Borough Council, who designed the display panels), John and Paul (DHT volunteers).

Photos: Top - exhibition in The Marlowes Shopping Centre. **Artwork:** Left – Jeremiah's high-rise living; Centre – the Police Station complete with a car park; Right – Casper's country cottage.

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BLEAK HOUSE - PART II

Is Abbot's Hill the true location of Charles Dickens 'Bleak House'?



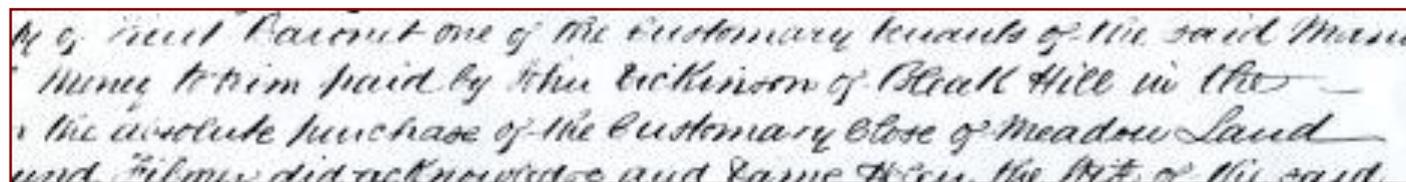
You may recall in the Winter 2014 issue of the DHT newsletter I was able to put forward some of the facts that help support the long-held view that Abbot's Hill School is in fact the location of 'Bleak House' from the novel by Charles Dickens.

In 1836-7, the house was designed and built by John Dickinson, paper manufacturer and entrepreneur, in order

that he had a larger family home, and in which to entertain business and his vast array of famous friends, which may have included Charles Dickens.

It is inconceivable that Dickens and Dickinson did not meet, or know each other. We can certainly prove they moved in the same social circles and shared numerous mutual acquaintances both literary and otherwise.

Perhaps the most compelling argument, which space prevented me from mentioning in the first article, is the fact that when Dickinson acquired the land on which Abbot's Hill stands, it was in fact known as "Bleak Hill". The image of part of the document referring to a sale of land dated 1836; the second line reads **'money to him paid by John Dickinson of Bleak Hill in the...'**



This is a link to the BBC radio interview (<http://www.bbc.co.uk/schoolreport/17366936>) with Professor John Drew. In it he mentions that Charles Dickens also tried to set his eldest son Charlie in the paper business. The radio interview was part of the BBC School Report, which was broadcast in March 2012.

We would be very pleased to hear from anyone who may be able to help prove they did know each other and indeed met and proof that Dickens visited Bleak Hill.

Mark Stephens

Photos: Top – Abbot's Hill in snow (contemporary image) clearly showing the distinctive three gables referred to in the novel, image from author's own collection. Both images are the authors own.

ELIZABETH BUTEUX MA AISTD 1929 - 2015



Elizabeth Buteux who sadly passed away on 25th October originally intended to be a ballerina. She successfully auditioned for the International Ballet School during the war, and later graduated to the Company where she started to perform solo roles. Sadly she had to retire due to injury just as her career was beginning. She gained her teaching qualifications in Ballet and Ballroom and Latin American Dancing and started her own Dancing School when she and her husband John lived in Enfield.

In 1955 they moved to Hemel and took up the tenancy at The Bell in the High Street, Hemel Hempstead, staying for 37 years – which is probably how they are best remembered. Somehow during the years at The Bell, Elizabeth found the time to gain a degree with the Open University.

Once they had retired, and after John's year as Mayor of Dacorum 1992-1993, Elizabeth went back to University, gaining an MA in Local History from Hertfordshire. The High Street featured in her dissertation. She had five local history books published and also many articles. John would drive her around Hertfordshire to give talks on local history. She was Chairman of Hemel Hempstead Local History & Museum Society for many years, and was a Director of The Dacorum Heritage Trust.

She will be greatly missed, but remembered with love. Her funeral was at the church she loved – St. Mary's in the High Street where she used to conduct tours for the Friends of St. Mary's.

Sally Przeslak

Elizabeth will be greatly missed and fondly remembered by everyone at Dacorum Heritage Trust as an elegant and extremely knowledgeable lady, who worked passionately for many years to promote local heritage.

Photo: Courtesy of the Buteux family.

WWI – 100 YEARS ON

The Great War has now lasted over a year, with no signs of an end to the conflict. The following extracts appeared in the Gazette dated 4th March 1916.

Berkhamsted Appeals Tribunal - Some Hard Cases

The members of the Tribunal present were: Major James Parsons (in the chair), Admiral A. Carter, Mr. J. North, Mr. J. King, and Mr. W. Gilbert, with the Military Representatives (Colonel Blest), and the Clerk (Mr. T. Penny).

Victoria Schools' Headmaster

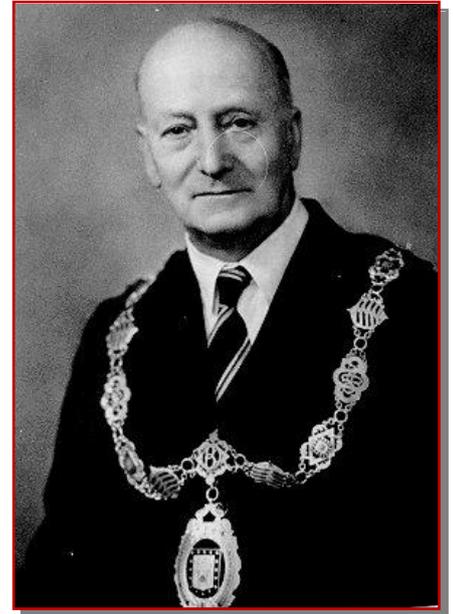
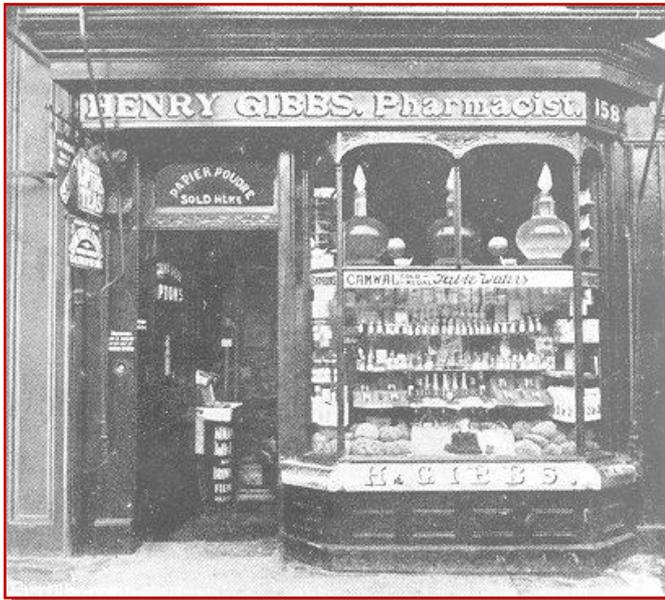
The Managers of the Victoria (Church of England) Schools appealed for the total exemption of Edward Popple, the headmaster. Mr. R.A. Norris, one of the managers, stated that the school contained 200 boys, and they claimed the headmaster was already engaged in work of national importance. Mr. Spencer L. Holland also supported the application, and stated he had no doubt a man holding such a position in France or Germany would be considered doing work of the greatest importance. Mr. Norris said the headmaster had been engaged at the same school for 17 years, and for five years had held the chief position. The interests of the school would suffer badly if he had to go.

Mr. C.H. Greene (headmaster of Berkhamsted School) supported the appeal. He stated the Victoria School was one of the largest in the neighbourhood, the next he believed was at St. Albans, and it was a matter of extreme national importance that the boys of the future should receive good training. The Managers would never be able to find anybody to carry on the school with the proper attention it required. The Chairman said the Tribunal had decided to grant a six months' exemption with power to appeal at the end of that time.

A Gardener

George Ernest Dean, 37 years of age, and a gardener to Mrs. Pearson, of Millfield, for 16 years, appealed for exemption on the ground that he had to support his father and mother by his wages. They received old age pensions as well. The Chairman: Do you realise you would be doing splendid work for your country by fighting for it? Yes, sir. Don't you think you would be happy doing that and having the knowledge whilst you were away that your father and mother were being cared for? Yes, but one is 77 and the other 73 years of age.

By joining you would be helping to shorten the war. I should like to be put back until the married men of the same age are called up. Colonel Blest: Undoubtedly his parents will be as well off when he is away as they are now. He allows them eleven shillings now, and when he is in the Army they will be getting twelve or thirteen shillings. The Chairman: Yes, we think you ought to go, and must refuse the application.



The Chemist

Colonel Blest told the Tribunal that he could not oppose the application of the resident proprietor of Gibb's Pharmacy. Herbert Mills, the applicant, was largely occupied in dispensing under the Insurance Act, and that alone would keep him here. He was granted absolute exemption.

A Conscientious Objector and the Word of God

One conscientious objector to military service appeared before the Berkhamsted Tribunal under the Military Service Act at the first sitting, held on Wednesday. A.W.N. Tomlinson, the last single man to make an appeal. The reason he gave for not going to fight for his country was that the 'Word of God' would not allow him to do so. The Chairman of the Tribunal quickly told this objector that if any man was doing God's work at the present time it was the men in the Army killing the Germans. Colonel Blest: I shall ask for an adjournment of this case; I have not seen into it at all.

Solicitor's Clerk

Arthur Edward James Baker, Clarence-road, clerk to Mr. T. Penny, solicitor, was appealed for on the ground that his services were of a national character, and that he was indispensable. Mr. Penny stated that his son had already joined the Army, and the public appointments he held had to be done by him in addition to his own work and the many duties that fell upon him, as clerk to

the Urban District Council, the Education Authority, and other public appointments that they knew of. Baker was engaged in public work of that character. He was the only experienced clerk he had, and he submitted that he was indispensable to the Local Government Board work that had to be done. The Herts Law Society supported Mr. Penny's application.

The Chairman said the work Mr. Penny had to do was national work, and he had to have experienced assistance to carry it on. The question was, he thought, whether they should give him total exemption, six months' postponement, or something like that. National needs in six months time might be very different to what they were now. The Tribunal decided to postpone the case for six months with the right to appeal at the end of that time.

Photos: Previous Page - Edward Popple (Headmaster and Chairman of Berkhamsted UDC). **Above** – Henry Gibbs Pharmacist 158 High Street, Berkhamsted. Both images courtesy from Berkhamsted Local History & Museum Society cared for by DHT.

PICCOTTS END MEDIEVAL WALL PAINTINGS - CHRISTMAS CARDS



Photo: Courtesy of Karen Murphy.

Following the great success of the Heritage Open Days, the owners recently arranged two more sessions in late October, which coincided with the airing of Simon Schama's new BBC 2 new series 'The Face of Britain', featuring the beautiful medieval wall paintings in the first episode.

The Christmas cards have been produced to raise funds for the maintenance of these unique wall paintings, and the purchase of a new glass partition for the balcony, which will enable more school access and provide a safer upstairs viewing facility for all visitors.

The Christmas cards, packs of 6 (2 of each design) £3 per pack; £5 for 2 packs; additional packs at £2.50. P&P £1.00 per pack; larger quantities please enquire.

To order your Christmas cards please contact us via the new website www.piccottsendpaintings.uk or contact Karen info@piccottsendpaintings.uk 0783 017 6431.

Thanks to GIR for kindly sponsoring the production of these cards.

CURATOR'S CORNER

NEW Pre-History Loan Box. We have just introduced a new loan box, which comply with the National Curriculum requirements. Contents include local and general information on the Neolithic, Bronze Age and Iron Age periods; items tailored specifically for our West Hertfordshire area, photocopyable worksheets and custom made replicas of flint tools and arrow heads. We hope that it will be a useful and inspiring classroom resource.

A charge of £10 per loan (max. 1 month), plus a £50 returnable deposit is required. We are currently trialling a delivery option for schools within the Dacorum area; this is an additional cost of £5 per loan. If you would like to use one of our loan boxes contact Nina or Sophie 01442 879 525 or email info@dacorumheritage.org.uk

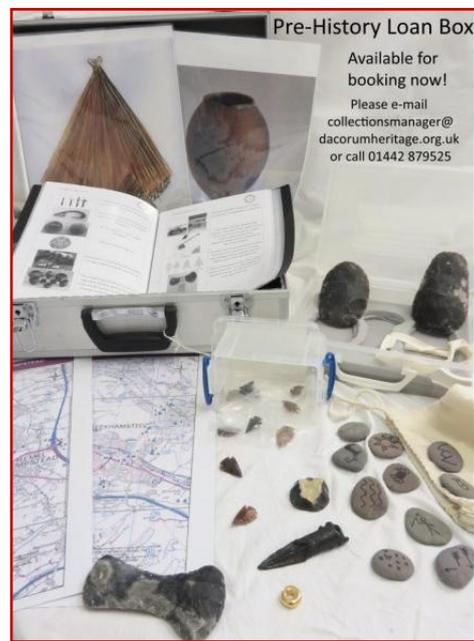
We have other Loan Boxes for community and education resources.

Legacy Giving. Help us to safeguard our collections for future generations by remembering Dacorum Heritage Trust in your will. For more information please see our website <http://www.dacorumheritage.org.uk/support-us/legacies/>

Everybody should have a will. Please remember to include a bequest to DHT when you make yours.

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Authors are responsible for content accuracy.
Deadline: for next issue is 8th February 2016.



Funded by
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