



# NEWSLETTER

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[www.dacorumheritage.org.uk](http://www.dacorumheritage.org.uk)

## GAZETTE HELPS SAVE HEMEL'S HERITAGE

**A** Gazette article last December reported that a number of historic Hemel Hempstead bank notes were to be sold at Spink's London auction house on the following Friday. This sale was spotted by a committee member of The Friends of Dacorum Museum who alerted DHT's Vice Chairman, Peter Clayton. Following checks that there were none already in the collection, and that they were extremely rare, it was agreed that Peter should bid for these, even though the minimum estimates for the 13 notes was close to £4,000 before auction costs and VAT. The printed values on the notes were for £20, £10, £5 and £1.



With such short time available, and armed with personal loan pledges, Peter secured nine notes of especial interest. Local historian Michael Stanyon said, "In over 25 years there has been no similar sale and they represent an important phase in the development of the town nearly two hundred years ago. This really is a coup for DHT". We are now

seeking funding for the notes, costing £3,620.80, and major sponsors and donations are being sought.

Between 1809 and 1856 the Hemel Hempstead (sic.) Bank had several owners. Three of the notes purchased are for the Grover and Pollard bank and date from 1812-39. Harry Grover came to Hemel Hempstead in 1792 to form a law practice, which was so successful that he founded the bank in 1809. By this time the canal provided an important new trade route with new industries springing up along it. The town's market also expanded with produce required for London. Grover's wealth was such that he owned a 16-acre estate including much of the present day Gadebridge Park; he lived in The Bury, now the Registry Office.

Grover's daughter, Ann, married the young papermaker John Dickinson who had set up his business at Apsley Mill in 1809 using money borrowed from Grover and others.

Interestingly at that time bank notes were only printed on one side and were not valid until signed on the face by one of the partners.

The bank survived the crash of 1825 whilst many other small country banks went under. After Grover's death new partners were found and five of the notes acquired were issued under their names: William Smith and Edmund Fearnley Whittingstall of Langleybury House, who it seems was a sleeping partner. These notes date from 1839-56, and one note is actually signed by him and two others by William Smith, who was another son-in-law of Grover. The bank was obviously very much a family business. The bank ceased trading in 1856 after being hit by a particularly bad robbery when a 17-year-old clerk stole about £1,300 (a huge sum in those days) after having destroyed the register of the serial numbers.



Peter Clayton

**Photos:** Both images show £5 notes dated 1855, the top one is signed by William Smith, the lower one by E.F. Whittingstall.

## THE DACORUM HERITAGE TRUST LIMITED

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## WICKED WIGGINTON – WE DENY EVERYTHING

Recently a man of Tring sent me this excerpt written by Francis Claud Cockburn (1904 – 1981) a British Journalist. His saying, "**believe nothing until it has been officially denied**" is widely quoted in journalistic studies.



His autobiography 'In Times of Trouble' published in 1957 had the following quoted paragraphs. But first please read a Wigginton Official statement. "Paragraph one and two we deny absolutely. There is not a shred of documentary proof and in any case we appear in the Domesday Book. However paragraphs three and four about the cinema seats etc. are witnessed to be true."

*"Small as it was Tring had a suburb village called Wigginton, or rather it was not called Wigginton but wicked Wigginton. It was described 'wicked' in 1912 because of the way it had been founded in about 1820. The Government of the day had taken drastic but humane measures to clear London and*

*the surrounding counties of highwaymen and other criminals. It had designated a number of areas in the Chiltern Hills in which such characters might go and settle down. If they did so by a certain date they would in effect be under an amnesty. After that date if any of them were found outside these areas they would be severely dealt with.*

*I have lived in at least one other such place in the Chiltern Hills and there too neighbouring villagers regarded the natives as strange, wild, and even dangerous like gypsies. And the fact is that those descendants of the highwaymen really were a little strange and wild.*

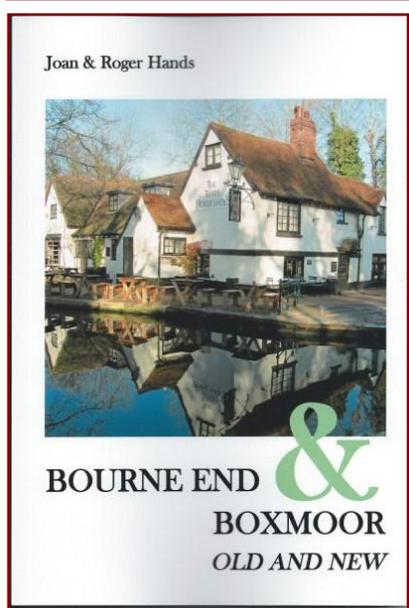
*When the first cinema was opened in Tring a special block of seats was set aside at the back of the hall for the use of the people of Wigginton so they should not contaminate the people of Tring. The idea of a Wigginton Boy going with a Tring girl was generally horrifying. Except in periods of the most acute labour shortage few Tring employers would hire labour from Wigginton, which was less than a mile away. When it was done it was done with apprehension.*

*The people of Wigginton were in the main conservative but when they came marching down the hill arm in arm to the cinema of an evening I remember hearing them singing the Red Flag as a protest I suppose."*

Richard Tregoning, Wigginton History Society

Photo: from Dacorum Heritage Trust's own collection.

## 'BOURNE END & BOXMOOR – OLD AND NEW'



This new local history publication, 'Bourne End & Boxmoor - Old and New' by Joan and Roger Hands is a fascinating collection of photographs, many published for the first time, outlining some of the changes in a small, mainly agricultural area and the local population over the last 200 years.

Whilst not pretending to be a complete history, the book may bring back memories of forgotten childhoods, when to play in the fields, woods, and even streets, was taken for granted.

Its 128 full colour pages show how the valleys of the Bulbourne, Gade and Bourne Gutter have witnessed both settlers and passers-by over time. Notable characters such as Peter the Wild Boy and James Snook the highwayman are included, as well as anecdotes from local residents of today.

The book can be purchased from the authors, on 01442 393381, or David Doyle's Estate agents, Parry's newsagents, Boxmoor Lodge in Boxmoor and The Watermill Hotel in Bourne End. It costs £12.00 or £15.00 inc. p&p.



Joan Hands

Photo: Right, Bourne End Lane by J.T. Newman courtesy J & R Hands.

## CURATOR'S CORNER

Our 8<sup>th</sup> annual Quiz Night was held in April at Hemel Hempstead Community Church. We would like to thank all those who supported us, donated raffle prizes and helped on the night. We couldn't have done it without you. The evening raised a much-needed £147. The overall winning team (pictured right), consisted of members of The Friends of Dacorum Museum. They also won the John Nichols Memorial trophy, which is awarded to the highest scoring constituent society or group affiliated to DHT.

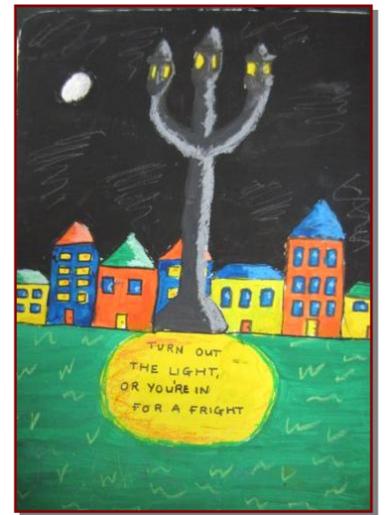


**The Honest Ploughman.** A date for your diaries, 'The Third Stagers' (U3A and DHT members) are putting on an entertaining evening entitled 'The Honest Ploughman' to celebrate the 175<sup>th</sup> anniversary of St. Mary Magdalene Church in Flaunden. The event will take place on Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> June at 8.00 pm. in the church, followed by refreshments, entry is free, but donations would be most welcome.

**Bronze Arts Award.** Last year our Assistant Curator, Nina Glencross became a trained Arts Award advisor, as a pilot to include museums in Hertfordshire. Since November Nina has been working with The Hemel Hempstead School to deliver this unique qualification, which was based on artefacts and story lines from our collections.



Students had to research a hero or heroine and stage an arts performance in any medium, and then write a review. It was encouraging to see such diverse interpretations ranging from Victorian to WWII inspired artwork. Performances included a gripping film and a dance set in the WWII blackout; clay models; vocal and dance performances; and a moving drama about evacuees.



The pupils went through external moderation in May and we are delighted that all 21 passed. We would like to congratulate them and thank both pupils and staff for their commitment to the project; it was a great opportunity for us to work with a local school on this new initiative.

## 'STAYING ALIVE' PROJECT



**W**hat was it like to live in Dacorum in the 1970s? It was a time of strikes, space age planning, shortages, and streakers. Was it the 'grim 1970s', should we have all upped and emigrated as Prime Minister Jim Callaghan suggested?

Anyone who has visited a local museum might be forgiven for thinking that British history ceased to exist after the end of World War II. Some museums nod towards the 1950s but few are collecting artefacts and stories after this period and we are in danger of losing these to history.

DHT has been selected (along with Museum of St. Alban's, Hertford Museum, History of Advertising Trust and other museums in Hertfordshire and Suffolk) as community partners to deliver this project and promote interest in our

recent past. DHT prides itself in being at the cutting edge of museum outreach and with this exciting new innovative project, we aim to record and preserve local stories.

A new project, 'Staying Alive', aims to start to address the need for more contemporary collecting. It has been awarded development funding by the Heritage Lottery Fund. During the first stage, DHT will be working with other museums and history societies (together with a range of freelance professionals and community partners) to research and create a series of community exhibitions supported by a learning, outreach and events programmes.

Subject to a successful second round HLF funding application, the project will run throughout 2014. 1970s material and memories will be collected, recorded and preserved, especially local stories that relate to major changes during that period.

So for all those who remember Abba and Pink Floyd, flares and hot pants, sideburns, decimalisation, Wrangler jeans, Babycham, Watergate, macramé and Black Forest gateaux, this is **your** time!

We are asking for people to donate objects and their memories that will then become part of an exhibition next year. **If you think you can help please write to Nina Glencross [assistantcurator@dacorumheritage.org.uk](mailto:assistantcurator@dacorumheritage.org.uk)**

*Photo: John Dickinsons telephone exchange, taken between 1970-75. Dacorum Heritage Trust Collection.*

## OBITUARY MARGARET STANYON (1938-2013)

**M**argaret's unexpected death on 3<sup>rd</sup> March brought to an end her many years of support for DHT, which had evolved from the Dacorum Museum Advisory Committee (DMAC). When, after several years of reduced activity, The Friends of Dacorum Museum was re-launched by Curator Matt Wheeler in October 1998, Margaret undertook the role of Secretary to Chairman Karen Evans, succeeding as Chairman in 2003. Increased mobility difficulties had led her to decide to retire at the AGM this year thus completing ten years.



Looking back over those ten years there were a great many events in which members were able to visit local places with a historical theme which were seldom open to the general public. Often these were schools like Westbrook Hay, Ashlyns, Beechwood Park and Abbots Hill, the former home of John Dickinson. The visit planned last autumn coincided with the Abbots Hill centenary exhibition. A notable visit was to Lockers Park School where the expected cup of tea and biscuits turned out to be a delicious strawberry cream tea. AGM's were often held at various churches where there would be an expert on hand to describe particular points of interest. Margaret and her committee also arranged visits to nearby museums to see how others were working and organised film shows and talks for the autumn programme.

Behind all of this was the need to raise funds to add to the DHT collection. Items as varied as pictures of Matthew Leno's prize bantams to Gordon Beningfield paintings stand alongside Goss crested ware and 17<sup>th</sup> Century trade tokens. A very different contribution was to provide DHT with a complete set of books and videos for *Call the Midwife*, written by local author Jennifer Worth.

Another highlight was the commemoration of the centenary of the death of Sir John Evans in 2008, when a short service at Evans' graveside at Abbots Langley church was followed by a coach trip to Oxford to the Ashmolean Museum for the launch of a centenary book about Sir John.

Margaret's support for the Dacorum museum scene began long before 1998 with a keen interest in the many activities in and around the annual exhibitions which were a major part of the DMAC year. A Tudor Feast in the Breakspear Park building, which was then the HQ of BP Ltd. who hosted the event, marked the launch of DHT.

At the time of her marriage to Michael in 1968, Margaret was secretary to the manager of a major London insurance company. As the three children grew older Margaret became involved with the Adeyfield youth club, known as Square One. Active too, in the Adeyfield Boy Scouts Committee and Adeyfield School PTA she was the organiser of the monthly school car boot sales and the Annual School Fete. On her return to work she began a new role as secretary to the Chief Engineer at Nash Mill paper mill until her retirement.



In more recent times Margaret joined the Archive team at Paper Trail's Frogmore Mill transcribing documents with a view to eventual publication.

*Michael Stanyon*

Margaret will be fondly missed by everyone at DHT; all our thoughts are with Mike and family at this very sad time.

*Photos: Right Margaret in Tudor costume at the launch of DHT September 1993, courtesy of Michael Stanyon.*

 <p>ACCREDITED MUSEUM</p>		<p><b>EDITOR: Pam Gasking,</b> <a href="mailto:office@dacorumheritage.org.uk">office@dacorumheritage.org.uk</a> <b>Saving Our Heritage</b></p> <p>The accuracy of the content is the responsibility of the author.</p> <p><i>Deadline: articles for next issue is 15<sup>th</sup> Aug.</i></p>	 <p>This publication is funded by <b>DACORUM BOROUGH COUNCIL</b></p>
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