

Chairman's Yearly Report

The Society has had a busy and successful year. The year started with a slight 'hangover' from 2023 in respect of the move from the old Charity to the new one. There have been a few very minor 'hiccups' along the way, but with expert advice from Dave Conatty these have been covered off.

COMMITTEE - Although the Society is still without a Chairman, your committee continues to do an excellent job running the Society any my personal thanks go to all the committee members:

- Les Chesson – Treasurer
- Jenny Wooding - Secretary and soon to be taking on the added responsibility of the role of Programme Secretary
- Richard Lee - The Newsletter & Society Publications
- Mike Allen - IT Guru, and his continuing work to digitize our vast collection of Historical images
- Nick Alexander - Education Officer
- Mabel Hamnett - Organising our Programme (and booking some excellent speakers)
- Chris Ruge-Cope - Our Librarian and Membership Officer
- Chris Daneski – stands down as Membership Secretary

Whilst on the subject of changes in personnel, I would like to welcome Sheldon Kosky, the new Museum Curator and Dave Wilson the new Museum Co-Ordinator. There will be more on this later.

The Society has had some excellent lectures over the past year, including A walk through South Mimms by the Society's Mike Allen; The Old Palace of Hatfield by Dermot Burke, 'A Schoolgirls' War by retired headteacher Mary Smith and Nick Higham's excellent history of the trials and tribulations of the River Thames.

I would like to thank Mabel Hamnett for all her hard work in sourcing the speakers and lecturers for us to enjoy.

We are expanding the Society's presence within the local community and are involved in a 'local History' month in conjunction with the Potters Bar Library, driven by their manger Liz Webb. The Society organised local history walks and Illustrated talks within the library last year and, due to the success, it is being repeated this year.

Both regular and visitor memberships were up on last year:

2024 - 366 members/82 visitors

2025 - 422 Members/92 visitors

There has been a year on year increase since we returned from the Covid pandemic and, with so many local groups and organisations struggling to attract new members, it is an excellent advert for the Society.

Before concluding, I would like to thank the unsung heroes whose help is invaluable in the day to day running of the Society and the evening meetings and who make my job a little easier:

- Alastair Maclean - The man at the 'Mixing' desk!
- The Tea Ladies
- The Museum Volunteers

Dave Jones

POTTERS BAR MUSEUM

ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR 1st APRIL 2024 TO 31st MARCH 2025

INTRODUCTION

At the beginning of the 2024/25 period, Arnold Davey announced that he was intending to step down as Museum Curator after a period of 25 years. Unfortunately, no new Curator was in place when Arnold stepped down but work was shared out and the Museum volunteers successfully carried on the work normally covered by a Curator and the Museum continued to function.

A Curator is now in place and assisted by a Museum Co-Ordinator.

It is pleasing to note that visitor numbers have greatly improved over the previous year, as well as increased visits to our web site.

EXHIBITIONS

In February an "Art Deco" exhibition was put up in the Museum and ran from February to June 2024. In the absence of a Curator, no time had been given to prepare a replacement exhibition; therefore, a prior one, "They Lived Here" was put up to cover the period June 2024 to January 2025.

In view of the forthcoming 80th Anniversary of VE Day in 2025, it was decided to create an exhibition covering Potters Bar in World War 2. A small team was assembled and, with the assistance of HBC, new boards were created. In addition, the Museum collection was reviewed and items relating to the War were made available for exhibition display. The exhibition went "live" in January 2025 and will continue until October 2025. A publication covering the exhibition was also created.

MANAGEMENT

As noted in the Introduction, Arnold Davey stepped down as Curator in May 2024 following completion of the Museum Report. The Museum Management Committee continued to oversee and monitor the Museum activity and, as stated, was aided by a number of volunteers who managed the "Front of House". Special thanks should be given to Mabel Hammett, Jenny Wooding, Nick Alexander and Mike Allen for the effort they put in. The support given by Ruth Stratton (HBC) during this period is greatly appreciated.

Advertisements for the position of Curator were placed in a number of publications and web sites. The response was disappointing but in February 2025 we were able to appoint Sheldon Kosky as Curator, assisted by Dave Wilson as Museum Co-Ordinator. Ruth Stratton (HBC) has been liaising with both in order to provide support and training.

ACQUISITIONS AND DISPOSALS

No major acquisitions were made during the period, although minor donations of objects were accepted.

In August 2024 we had an offer from Mr. Alan Cox to give the Museum some Roman coins that he had found in the Potters Bar area in the 1990s. Mr. Cox was the man who discovered and declared the Roman coins which we currently hold; however, it appears he did not declare the coins he was

now offering and was reticent to provide location details. Via Ruth Stratton, advice was sought from the Hertfordshire Finds Officer. As well as some location details, we requested that some form of written agreement of passing of ownership be provided (instead of his proposed "putting in an envelope for a friend to deliver to the Museum" Mr. Cox lives in France). In the end Mr Cox refused to provide any location data or paper work and rescinded his offer. In the meantime, the Governing Body of the Museum formally agreed to decline the offer on the grounds of his refusal to provide the requested information and the fact these items had never been formally declared to the relevant authorities.

The new Curator is currently reviewing items held in the Museum collection with regard to their relevance to the history of Potters Bar and, if necessary, their potential disposal. This activity will continue into 2025.

PUBLICITY

The Museum web site remains a good source for publicising the Museum and events. In addition, we have a mobile phone which has an answering ability and this is frequently checked and any queries passed to the relevant person. There are also email addresses given on the website for people to contact the Museum if necessary.

It is planned to improve our presence in the local free newsletters that are distributed around Potters Bar as well as approaching the local newspaper to see if we can obtain coverage by them.

We continue to support the local library and provide lectures and tours for their History Month, which usually happens in May.

IN-HOUSE ACTIVITY

In April, it was decided that our telephone collection required review and rationalisation. As a result of this review, from over 120 telephones a selection was chosen to be displayed with the remaining phones being put into storage. The activity required new display cards and a review of the index cards to identify new locations. Many thanks to Mabel Hammett, Jenny Wooding and Martin Dodds for undertaking this activity.

As part of the Accreditation activity being undertaken, a review of the status of our documentation was done by Dave Connatty and a serious backlog was discovered in respect of data entry of accessioned items onto the index cards and the offsite register. Following training given by Ruth Stratton, David Ramsey volunteered to undertake the task of updating the documentation and it is currently in a reasonable and up to date condition.

The Map Collection has been reviewed and now reflects a collection more relevant to Potters Bar.

During the latter part of 2024 a number of cabinets and displays were rearranged in the Museum to try and provide some refresh. The new Curator has started a programme of redesign of certain displays and revising others, together with providing new display cabinets. This should lead to a revitalised Museum by the end of 2025.

Digitising of images has continued with Mike Allen placing over 2000 prints onto the Museum computer.

The Museum alarm system was serviced in October 2024.

Mike Allen has completed an updated comprehensive Stewards Manual and this is now available on the Stewards desk in the Museum.

EDUCATION AND GROUP VISITS

Nick Alexander, as Education Officer, continued during the period to contact schools in the area to offer our services in providing information and guided visits of the Museum. Although the response from the schools has been somewhat disappointing, we did have a number of visits during the period by various groups.

May 2024 – 17 Trefoil Guide leaders visited the Museum and were given a tour with talks from various volunteers.

May 2024 – HALH held their annual gathering at the Wyllyotts Centre. Museum members gave a number of short talks and the Museum was specially opened and we had 50 visitors.

June 2024 – 26 Beavers and 5 Leaders visited the Museum in the evening and were given a talk about our telephone collection.

July 2024 – Visit by 30 pupils and 5 teachers from Little Heath School.

The transferable boards continue to be distributed around certain locations in Potters Bar (such as King Charles the Martyr Church) and, as well as giving historical information, provide publicity for the Museum. The boards are rotated on a regular basis.

ACCREDITATION

Early in 2024 we were notified by Art Council England that we must re-apply for our Museum Accreditation. Our last Accreditation was gained in 2014 and although this is normally undertaken every 5 years, due to Covid, this activity had been delayed. Over 22 documents were required to be revised, updated or re-written and this activity was undertaken by Dave Connatty with, once again, support from Ruth Stratton (HBC). The documents were finalised and submitted in July 2024. We subsequently received queries regarding a number of issues, the major ones being the process regarding the sale of the Hadley Station sign and the leasing arrangements between HBC and the Museum. We understood that we had successfully answered these points and were informed our application was to be submitted to the Committee stage in October/ November 2024. Nothing was heard until February 2025, when we were informed that we have been granted a 12-month Provisional Accreditation dependent on resolving the status of outstanding accession documentation and marking of items together with resolving security of tenure. We are currently working with HBC on the latter issue.

VISITOR FIGURES

These are included within Attachment A

FINANCIAL STATEMENT

Financial details are given in Attachment B

Prepared by:

Dave Connatty

May 2025

POTTERS BAR & DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY
Registered Charity number 1200797

SOCIETY & MUSEUM MERGED ACCOUNTS FINANCIAL YEAR 2024-2025

Statement of Financial Activities to 31st March 2025

INCOME	SOCIETY £	MUSEUM £	TOTAL £
Subscriptions	820		820
Publications	296		296
Donations	38	92	130
Sundry Income		0	0
Hertsmere Core Funding		1150	1150
Door Receipts	460		460
	1614	1242	2856
EXPENDITURE			
Room Hire	540		540
Subscriptions to other societies	75		75
Publication & copier costs	25		25
General Expenses	84	277	361
Speakers Expenses	208		208
Museum Expenses		185	185
Computer Costs			0
Displays			0
Domain Name Reg		206	206
Rates		12	12
			0
			0
			0
	932	680	1612
SURPLUS (LOSS) OF INCOME FOR YEAR	682	562	1244
FUNDS			
Funds held on 1st April 2024	5542	8804	
Surplus (loss) for year	682	562	
Less uncleared cheques		-56	
Funds held on 31st March 2025	6224	9310	15534
ASSETS			
Cash in hand	202		
Barclays Bank Account	6383	9310	
Subscriptions in Advance	-361		
Net Assets on 31st March 2025	6224	9310	15534
Membership at 31st March 2025	60		

L G Chesson Treasurer of the Society and Trustee

D Jones Chairman and Trustee

R Lee Independent Examiner