

SOME EARLY LAMAS MEETINGS AND OUTINGS

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SUMMARY

In 2005, LAMAS proclaims its interests as 'Archaeology, Historic Buildings and Local History'. To celebrate the 150th anniversary of LAMAS's inauguration, a programme of three types of walks has been organised. One dealing with archaeological matters, along the river from Westminster; three to look at buildings of historic and architectural interest within the Cities of London and Westminster; and four called 'Exploring Middlesex' to Ruislip, Harmondsworth, Uxbridge, and Twickenham, covering local history. This short paper shows that the 2005 trips were loosely based upon similar ones undertaken in the 1850s, 60s and 70s and points to the social and physical changes that have occurred in the past 150 years within the LAMAS membership and at the sites visited and notes changed attitudes towards archaeological matters.

INAUGURATION

The inaugural meeting of the London and Middlesex Archaeological Society was held at Crosby Hall (on its original site in Bishopsgate) (Fig 1) on 14 December 1855, as the result of the work of a Provisional Committee set up the previous July. George Bish Webb, Honorary Secretary of the recently founded Surrey Archaeological Society and the Rev Thomas Hugo, Vicar of St Botolph's, Bishopsgate (Fig 2), were the leaders in the formation of the new county society and other committee members were mainly drawn from Hugo's friends in the Society of Antiquaries. The Marquis of Salisbury agreed to be Patron and Lord Londesborough, President, and it was at the latter's suggestion that 'London' was inserted into the title. The Lord Mayor and several Aldermen were appointed Vice-Presidents to ensure a close connection with the Corporation.

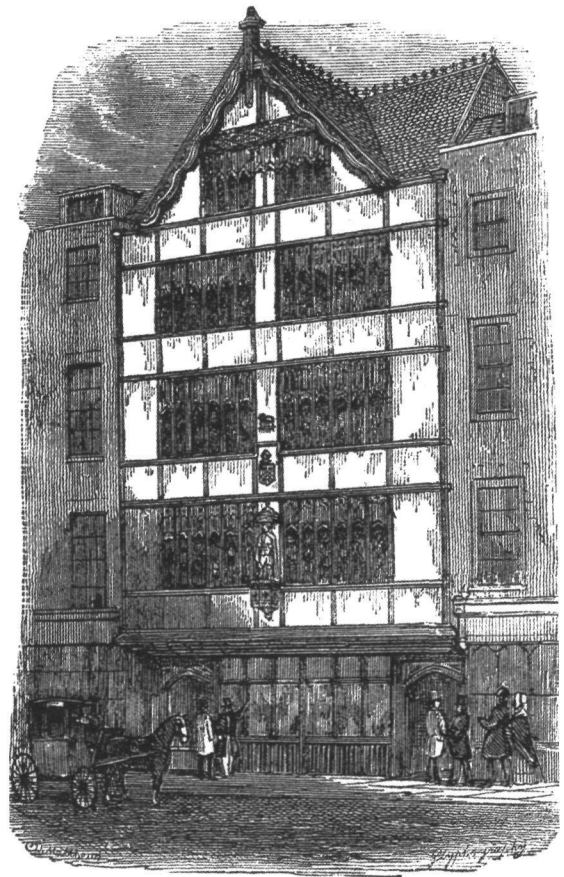


Fig 1. Crosby Hall, Bishopsgate Street, scene of the inaugural meeting of the London and Middlesex Archaeological Society on 14 December 1855 (From Walford's 'Old and New London')

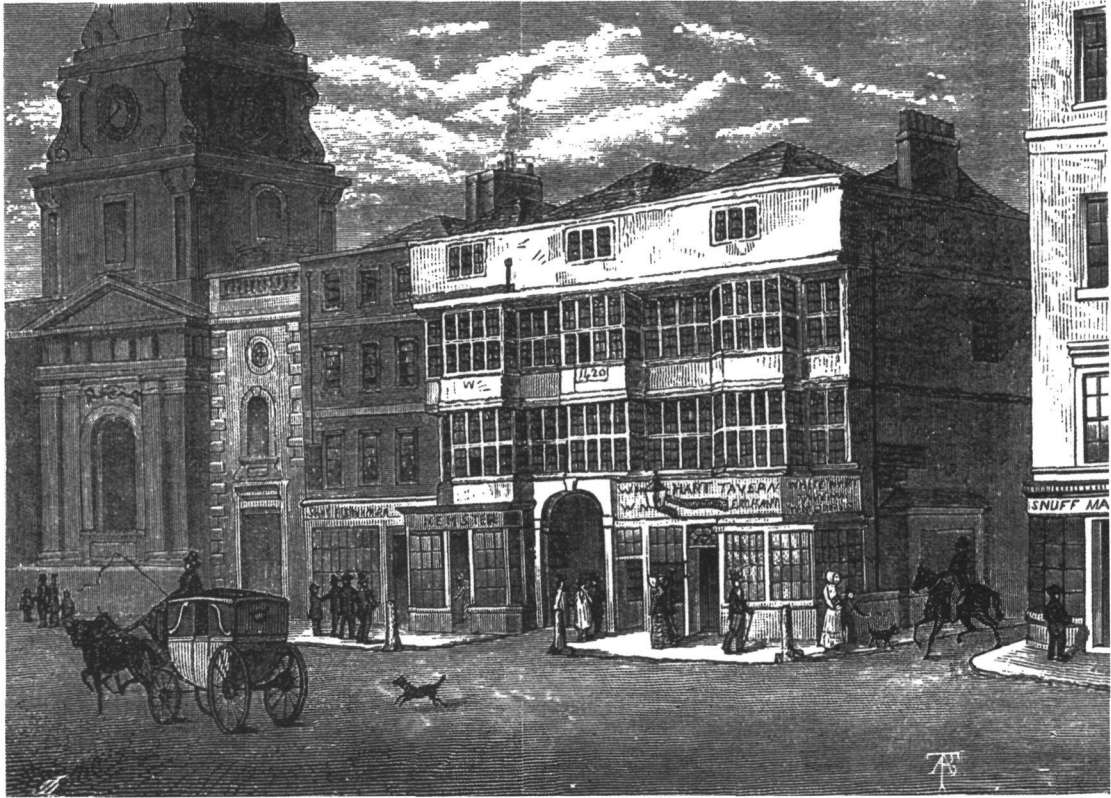


Fig 2. *St Botolph's, Bishopsgate Street where the Rev Thomas Hugo was vicar 1852–8 (From Walford's 'Old and New London')*

The objects of the Society were all embracing, 'to collect, record and publish information on the Topography, Ancient Arts and Monuments of the Cities of London and Westminster and the county of Middlesex'; to preserve 'antiquities discovered in the progress of works, such as Excavations for Railways, Foundations of Buildings etc'; to prevent injury to monuments and ancient buildings and to collect accurate drawings and descriptions of them; and to found a museum for the reception of works and objects of archaeological interest connected with London and Middlesex.¹

To fulfil these designs, periodical meetings were to be held in the Cities of London and Westminster and soon after its foundation the Society started making excursions to various locations in the county. Meetings were also held where communications could be read and antiquities exhibited by members and their friends. The appointment of an Honorary Photographer, Professor Philip H Delamotte,

in March 1856 was a practical step towards recording the changing scene. The last official photographer was H E Chiosso from 1938–62.

At first there was no particular meeting place for the General Meetings (as opposed to Council Meetings). They were held in places where a Society member either worked or had influence. The first two were held in Crosby Hall and the third in the French Gallery, Pall Mall.

MEMBERS AND THEIR COLLECTIONS

Many of the members did indeed have collections from which objects could be brought to meetings for exhibition and discussion. Sally Brooks has shown that the membership (191 in 1855, rising to 395 in 1857) was drawn mainly from the male middle classes, with about 40% having a professional qualification, among whom was a scattering of clergy with antiquarian interests, who played a particularly large part in the life of the Society.² A high proportion were

members of other societies, such as the Society of Antiquaries, as well as LAMAS and many wrote papers on their special subjects, some of which were published in *Transactions*, the first part of which was issued in June 1856.

The Rev Thomas Hugo was the first chairman and an indefatigable writer of papers on a wide range of subjects and places within London and Middlesex, from the buildings of the Ward of Bishopsgate at the eastern end of the City to Moorhall at the western extremity of the county. The Rev Charles Boutell, Rector of Norwood, Surrey, served on the Council and presented a copy of his work on monumental brasses to the Society at the first meeting. He was also an expert on heraldry and his work in that field is still valued by students. In some ways he was a rather strange man. He became Secretary and later left the Society, having apparently misappropriated £56 15s of the Society's funds. He went on to do something similar at the Surrey Archaeological Society. Charles Roach Smith, who had been collecting artefacts ever since finding a Roman coin in his shop till in the 1820s and who is especially famous for his identification of two portions of the Julius Classicianus monument (now in the British Museum), had been on the Provisional Committee and later became an honorary member.

Joint Evening Meetings were established by the councils of LAMAS and the Surrey Archaeological Society in August 1860, to allow members to immediately communicate archaeological discoveries and exhibit artefacts. On Tuesday, 18 September 1860, for instance, Barsett Smith Esq FGS exhibited a deed dated 16 June 1635, relating to the Evelyn family, a lead pipe from Old Broad Street, Roman pottery from Ivy Lane and St Paul's Churchyard, a massive egg-shaped watch c.1600s, and two soapstone Chinese snuff bottles. There was also an account of a subterranean chamber in the grounds of 12 Canonbury Place; a coffin with a female skeleton at The Angel, Pentonville Road; a stone coffin at Ironmongers' Hall, Fenchurch Street; some 16th-century silver seals, a grant of arms to the Hare family and two miniatures of the Hare family.³ Objects of all kinds — 17th-century engravings of London, stone crosses found in Newgate Street, genealogical notes, for example — were donated to LAMAS on a regular basis.⁴ By 1860, the Society had rooms at St Mildred's Court, Poultry, but there were many moves and presumably the donated items went with

them. The library and stock was moved to the Bishopsgate Institute in 1910.⁵

Some members displayed their collections at home. George Harris, LL.D, FSA, of the Middle Temple, built a new house on an ancient site at Islipps, Northolt, which was ready for occupation in 1866. The extract from his diary for 9 June 1869 runs:

Today we had a large out-of-doors party of the Council of the London and Middlesex Archaeological Society, whom I invited to explore the objects of interest in this neighbourhood, and to partake of a cold collation on the lawn afterwards. Everything went off capitally, and the whole thing was a great success. In the dining-room I had out for inspection my Rembrandts, the engravings of London and Middlesex, etchings and foreign sketches; in the study my autographs, manuscripts and rare books; and in the breakfast-room hung up my diagrams ...⁶

The following June almost an exact replica of this event was held, but with the Council of the Anthropological Society, of which he became vice-president, as guests.

George Harris was typical of the LAMAS membership of the period. He was a professional gentleman, with sufficient means to indulge his wide interests. Although mainly tending to the historical, George Harris had a scientific bent as well and was joint founder of the Psychological Society in 1875. He also had influence. The Historical Documents Commission was set up as a result of a deputation to Palmerston, which he headed in 1859. He was a keen collector of antiquities, which he was anxious to display to those likely to appreciate them. He was connected with several learned societies and had the confidence to lay his considered ideas before his peers. He read a paper on 'The Ancient Britons' to The Historical Society in London on 12 February 1876. It was the first of a series on 'Domestic Everyday Life, Manners and Customs in this Country from the Earliest Period to the End of the Last Century'. According to his diary the paper, which was illustrated with diagrams, was well received and 'a good discussion followed'. He laid extracts of some other work before Professor Huxley, who considered that the questions raised were so large that he would have to set them aside until he was at leisure to look at them carefully.⁷ He seems to have treated Harris seriously. He might best be described as a gifted amateur.

It may be difficult for us to assess the quality of his ideas, but his thoughts on the preservation of ancient buildings strike oddly on modern ears. Writing to Matthew Bloxam, author of *Principles of Gothic Architecture*, in 1875, he asks 'is there likely to be anything done about the rebuilding of the parish church, and are you disposed to give a plan for it? What say you to preserving the tower and adding a Norman church to it? I should like to have the design by you, and would in that case do what I could to organise a committee in London to raise subscriptions'.⁸ The church in question can hardly be St Mary's, Northolt, as there was no tower there, only a bell turret added to the medieval chancel in the 16th century.

HISTORIC BUILDINGS

At the first Council meeting there was a report by the Rev Charles Boutell on the mutilated condition of some ancient statues at the western end of Westminster Hall and the loss of others during cleaning.⁹ The chairman agreed to make representations to Sir Charles Barry who was supervising the slow rebuilding of the Palace of Westminster after the 1834 fire. A letter was sent in January 1856. The Society had begun its efforts at the preservation of ancient buildings. (The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings was not founded until 1877.)

The recording of London buildings was becoming essential in the 1850s as much of the late medieval and Tudor built heritage was fast being torn down as sewers, railways, and wide roads were being planned and built. The Rev Thomas Hugo who lived in Bishopsgate Street was aware that many of the timber-framed buildings in that corner of the City would soon disappear. He read a paper to the Society on 18 February 1857 at the Gallery of British Artists, Suffolk Street, called an 'Itinerary of the Ward of Bishopsgate', describing in detail the houses in all the streets and alleys. His purpose was to 'preserve the remembrance of edifices which the crowbar and the shovel are daily annihilating'.¹⁰ It is not clear whether he had also led a group around the ward, but he had obviously worked out an itinerary for himself. When the paper appeared in *Transactions*,¹¹ it was embellished with many engravings of the decorative and architectural details of such buildings as Sir Paul Pindar's house (Fig 3), parts of which are now in the V&A.

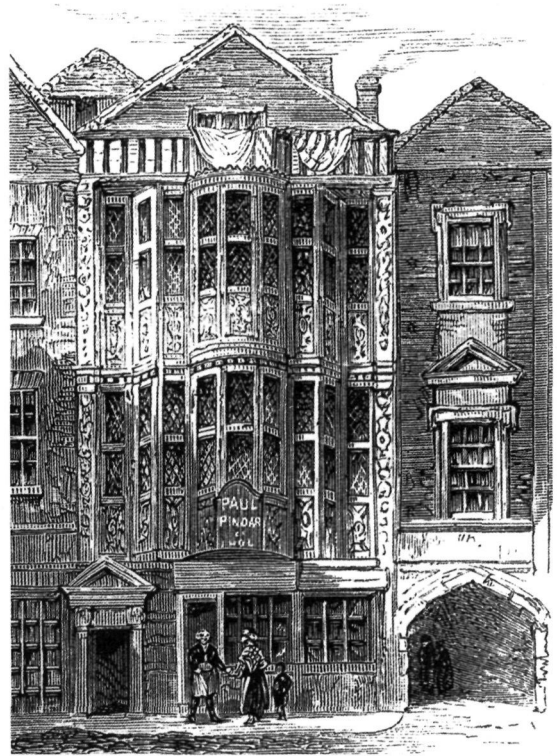


Fig 3. A view of Sir Paul Pindar's house when it was an inn (From Walford's 'Old and New London')

MEETING CUM OUTINGS (LOCAL HISTORY)

The early outings were in fact General Meetings and Annual General Meetings held at various venues of historic interest. They were usually held on weekdays and occupied most of the day, a reflection on the fairly leisured life style of many members. The costs covering transport and either tea or dinner were in the order of 6 shillings, again perhaps reflecting the social and financial standing of the members. Subscriptions had begun at 10 shillings per annum, but had risen to one guinea, plus a 10 shillings entry fee. In January 1856 local Honorary Secretaries were appointed for the principal towns in the county, perhaps with the object of arousing local interest and facilitating such meetings. Mr P Thompson offered to be local secretary for Stoke Newington.

The meetings were not for the faint hearted as they usually involved the reading of several learned papers, followed by a sometimes stren-

uous examination of the site, leavened by a collation of some kind at the end.

The first AGM was held on Thursday, 27 July 1856 at the Architectural Museum, Cannon Row, Westminster¹² where Lord Robert Grosvenor was in the chair. The company then proceeded to the Abbey where George Gilbert Scott Esq (the eminent architect knighted in 1872) addressed the members on the architectural peculiarities of the structure and the Rev Charles Boutell, MA described the most important and interesting of the monuments. 'Every part of the Abbey, from crypt to triforium, was successively visited; and some of the party, including several fair archaeologists, followed their conductors to the very roof of the edifice.'¹³ By a special favour the party had entered the Abbey through the great West doors, which had been opened for the first time since Queen Victoria's coronation! In the evening the party reassembled at the Architectural Museum to hear a paper on 'Regal Heraldic Badges', read by Dr Bell, and one on earlier structures at Westminster by the Rev Thomas Hugo.¹⁴

Four years later on Thursday, 25 October 1860 members went there again and were treated to four papers — on the library, ancient bindings in the library, an ancient organ, and discoveries in the Treasury. An inspection of the Abbey church followed with a paper on 'The Monuments as a Museum of Sculpture' and one on the Order of the Bath at the Henry VII chapel. After afternoon service the architecture and decoration of the Chapter House (Fig 4) was described, followed by a visit to the Jerusalem Chamber, where the Rev Thomas Hugo obliged with another paper. After this marathon a welcome dinner followed at The King's Arms Hotel in New Palace Yard, where George Gilbert Scott took the chair, supported by the Dean of Westminster and 'a numerous party'. The cost on this occasion was 4 shillings for tickets in advance or 7 shillings and 6 pence on the day.¹⁵

On 21 July 1857 between 700 and 800 people attended a meeting at the Tower of London on a Tuesday. There must have been many 'friends' present as the membership stood at only 395 at this time. Perhaps the greater number of them were members' wives. The Society admitted women from the start, but there were rarely more than eight or nine in the early years. Even so newspaper accounts of meetings mention that the ladies were occasionally more numerous than the men.¹⁶ The Rev Thomas Hugo read

his paper on 'The History and Topography of the Tower'. Then the company was divided into ten groups, each in the charge of a warder who conducted them to various parts of the Tower, where a member of Council was waiting to act as guide. Mr F W Fairhurst was stationed at the Horse Armoury, Mr Alfred White at the Chapel of St John, the Rev Thomas Hugo in the Council Chamber, Mr Charles Baily at the Beauchamp Tower, Mr Deputy Lott at the Wakefield Tower, Professor Tennant and Mr Garrard at the Jewel Tower, the Rev Henry Christmas at Traitors' Gate, and the Rev Charles Boutell at St Peter ad Vincula. The write-up in *Transactions* mentioned that 'each had to tell his story ten times over'.¹⁷

When venturing further afield the Society organised trips by special train. In October 1857, again on a weekday, 'members accompanied by several hundred guests', went to Hampton Court, where, once again, the Rev Thomas Hugo began the day's activities by giving a lecture in the Great Hall and 'afterwards conducted the party to every part of the palace where anything was seen worthy of notice'. 'The Society having thus brought its labours to a close the Rev Chairman informed the meeting that the Committee while catering to the best of their ability for the intellectual had not forgotten the physical man, but had entered into an arrangement with the proprietor of the Prince of Wales Hotel to provide dinner at 5 o'clock, an announcement that was most cordially received. The party returned to London by special train'.¹⁸

Another special train started from Paddington on the 9 August 1864, stopping at Hayes, Harlington, Cranford, and Heston. In each place the church was examined and at Harlington the stained glass in the Rectory staircase as well. Mr Alfred White spoke about the monuments at Harlington and Cranford, where the rector also produced the parish registers. Mr W H Black explained the sepulchral monuments at Heston and Hayes. The Rev Thomas Hugo as usual made his mark by reading a memoir on Moorhall, Harefield, which had been visited three years earlier. 'The company then adjourned to the new schoolroom kindly lent for the purpose by the rector, where ample justice was done to a handsome collation which terminated the day's proceedings'.¹⁹

General meetings held in more rural parts of Middlesex were often arranged in conjunction with local clergymen, who lent schoolrooms and sometimes their houses as a venue for



Fig 4. The Chapter House at Westminster Abbey before its restoration: George Gilbert Scott had discovered the floor to be composed of parchment documents trodden into a mass (From Walford's 'Old and New London')

the reading of the necessary papers and were clearly organised by LAMAS members (usually Council members) who had connections with the locality. The vicar of Enfield, Rev John Moore Heath, was away from home in 1858, but graciously permitted members to use the vicarage, where his collection of the works of early Netherlandish and German masters in oil paintings was displayed. John Gough Nichols read a paper on Richard Gough, director of the Society of Antiquaries, who had been a resident of Enfield in the 18th century. The Rev Thomas Hugo and Mr John Tuff also contributed papers

on the principle historic sites and antiquities of the neighbourhood. Visits were made to the church, the grammar school, and the palace.

At Bedfont church, visited in the course of a trip from Staines to Laleham church, Littleton church, Littleton House, and the church and Lord Knyvett's Free School at Stanwell, the party were lucky enough to see wall paintings just discovered during works to enlarge the building.

So far as the places which LAMAS revisited in 2005 are concerned, Ruislip, Uxbridge, and Harmondsworth were included in longer

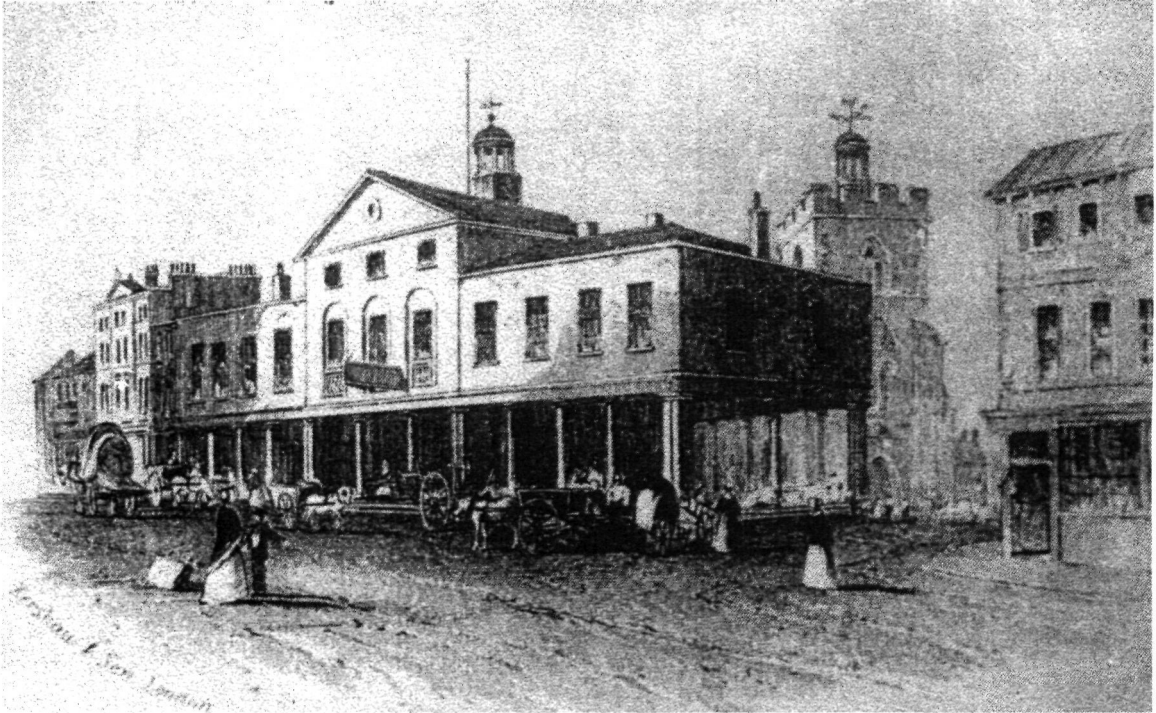


Fig 5. St Margaret's Church and the Market Hall, Uxbridge, visited by LAMAS members on Friday, 23 August 1861

itineraries, sometimes so long that one can scarcely credit that so much was accomplished in one day. Members assembled at noon on Friday, 23 August 1861 at the Market Room in Uxbridge, where the Rev G Parker Price, vicar of St Margaret's, Uxbridge (Fig 5), took the chair and later read a paper on the Uxbridge Treaty of 1844. Mr C J Shoppee, who had been responsible in part for the restoration of St Margaret's, showed some antiquities and curiosities from the neighbourhood, including 17th-century trade tokens. He was an architect and surveyor, living in Doughty Street at this time, but he had been born in Uxbridge where his father was a builder. Other papers were by George Eves on the antiquities of Uxbridge and Mr W Durrant Cooper FSA on some former inhabitants of the town, and Mr Woodbridge exhibited the Uxbridge Panorama dated c.1800. Mr Eves was another architect and surveyor and lived in Uxbridge until his death in 1892. Mr Woodbridge was a member of a family of solicitors (still in existence) who lived in an 18th-century house in Uxbridge High Street. Visits were paid to St Margaret's and to the Treaty House.

The party then went in carriages to Denham Church, and thence to Harefield, inspecting Moorhall *en route* (Fig 6). The Rev C T Weatherly talked about the manor and church of Harefield and there was a paper on the armour in the church by Mr C T Baily. The group then moved on to Ruislip church to hear a paper on the monuments there by Alfred White of West Drayton. A call at Swakeleys in Ickenham was unproductive as there was no one to show them around, so the whole party returned to Uxbridge to have dinner at the Market Hall.

Harmondsworth and West Drayton were visited together on 4 September 1872. The church and Great Barn at Harmondsworth (Fig 7) were viewed and papers read by A White and A Hartshorne.

Twickenham does not seem to have featured among the visits.

THEN AND NOW

This year, 2005, the outings concentrated on one place at a time, rather than a long itinerary. One wonders how cursory some of the visits must have been. This year the Market Hall, St Margaret's



Fig 6. Moorhall, Harefield, photographed in 1911. These buildings were owned by the Knights Hospitallers of St John of Jerusalem until the Reformation. The 13th-century flint hall on the left became a barn and the hall house on the right, dating in part from the early 14th century, became a farmhouse. The house was burnt down in 1922 and the barn was demolished by order of the local authority in 1961.

and the Treaty House featured on the Uxbridge trip. The Panorama and the 17th-century trade tokens were displayed in the library, but there was no time to visit Denham, Moorhall, Harefield, Ruislip, and Swakeleys as well.

One reason for this change is that our predecessors concentrated their studies upon 'important' buildings and 'notable' inhabitants of the various neighbourhoods and had less interest in early economies and ways of life than we have. Although there was a great desire to see artefacts, little attempt was made to place them in context. With recent developments in both archaeology and local history, there is now much more to appreciate about the market town of Uxbridge than was then realised. Much has been lost there in the way of timber-framed

buildings, but much has been discovered by archaeologists. 'Digs' between the River Colne and the Canal and behind the High Street in recent years have revealed important prehistoric sites, including the nationally important Three Ways Wharf Upper Palaeolithic site, and the medieval layout of the burgage holdings. Many of the timber-framed buildings in Cross Street and in the alleys off the High Street were not in good condition in Victorian times, had never been of high status, and were little more than slums in 1861 and therefore did not catch the attention of antiquarians.

Similarly with Ruislip the historically important buildings at Manor Farm, such as the Great Barn (dendrochronological date 1293), and the earthworks now scheduled as an ancient

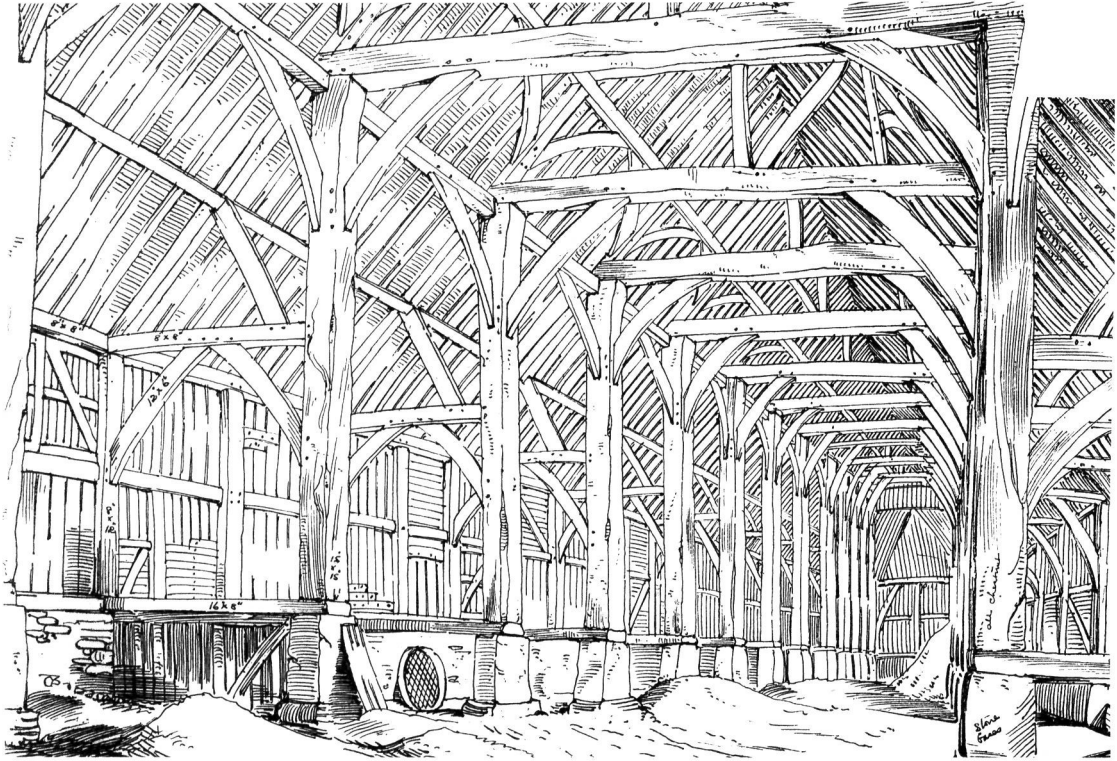


Fig 7. The Great Barn at Harmondsworth (now under threat from the third runway at Heathrow) as it was in the 1880s. It was built for Winchester College in 1424–6. LAMAS has written to the relevant authorities protesting about the likely destruction of this part of our heritage

monument, were part of a working farm until 1932 and simply not considered as worthy of note. Ruislip Woods in 1861 contributed to the income of many poor households, where the women and children were employed in the making of bundles of kindlewood and the men worked at coppicing the hornbeam and making bundles of pea and bean sticks. Gamekeepers controlled the woodlands for the production of game birds for the sporting estates based on Eastcote House and Haydon Hall, so there was no easy public access. The embankment of the 'Park for woodland animals' mentioned in the Domesday Book was therefore ignored at that time. Not so in 2005, when LAMAS members did indeed go to the church, which is still worth a visit, but spent even more time looking at the structure of the Great Barn and other buildings. After a lunch break (the party had to find their own collation) members went through Park Wood to see the Domesday Park embankment.

However, the larger, but younger Great Barn at

Harmondsworth, did get attention even in 1872.

The membership of LAMAS has also changed. The membership is larger now than it ever was in the 19th century — 690 members on the register in April 2005.²⁰ Male and female numbers are more equal, but males are still predominant. The figures for single members are 305 men and 180 women. There are 45 joint members (90 people), but they do not split into half male, half female. There are also 26 'doctors' and one 'rev' of unknown sex, and 133 corporate members (including affiliated local societies).²¹

Members tend to live further out from the centre of London than was the case in the 1850s, a trend that was noticeable in the later 19th century. Sally Brooks found that in 1857 just over 10% of members had an address outside the London postal districts, but the percentage had risen to c.27% in 1906.²²

Although early *Transactions* were filled with a diversity of papers, they were actually written by a fairly small active group, who mostly served on

Council and organised the outings as well. The growth of archaeology as a profession and the close association of LAMAS with the Museum of London have meant that recent *Transactions* contain papers based on scientific method and mostly written by professionals. In that area of LAMAS's interests at least the day of the gifted amateur seems to be over. The proliferation of societies devoted to the study of local history all over the Cities of London and Westminster and the former county of Middlesex has led to those studies mainly being published outside *Transactions*.

Nevertheless LAMAS continues to act as an umbrella organisation and provides a forum for both archaeologists and local historians with its annual conferences. The Rev Thomas Hugo would surely have loved to preside over them and to have contributed a paper or two!

NOTES

¹ *Trans London Middlesex Archaeol Soc* 1.

² S A Brooks 'L.A.M.A.S. - A Victorian establishment' *Trans London Middlesex Archaeol Soc* 36 (1985), 203-22

³ London Metropolitan Archive: Acc 2899: Evening Meetings Book.

⁴ LMA: Acc 2899: Minute Book 1.

⁵ *ibid.*: Minute Books 2 and 3.

⁶ Ealing Central library: George Harris LL.D, FSA 1809-1890, printed for private circulation, London 1888.

⁷ *ibid.*

⁸ *ibid.*

⁹ LMA: Acc 2899: Minute Book 1.

¹⁰ *Trans London Middlesex Archaeol Soc* 1.

¹¹ *ibid.*

¹² The Architectural Museum was formed in 1852, mainly through the efforts of George Gilbert Scott, in the loft of a wharf at Cannon Row. The artefacts were moved to the South Kensington Museum in 1856 and were absorbed into the V & A collection.

¹³ *Trans London Middlesex Archaeol Soc* 1.

¹⁴ *ibid.*

¹⁵ *ibid.*

¹⁶ Brooks *op cit* (note 2).

¹⁷ *Trans London Middlesex Archaeol Soc* 1.

¹⁸ *ibid.*

¹⁹ *Trans London Middlesex Archaeol Soc* 2.

²⁰ Communication from Patricia Clarke, Subscriptions Secretary, 18 April 2005.

²¹ *ut supra*.

²² Brooks *op cit* (note 2).