



EAST HERTS. ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Founded 1898

Registered Charity No. 257254

President: C. L. Lee

Hon. Sec: Mrs. G. R. Pollard: 11 St. Leonard's Close, Bengoe,
Hertford, Herts. SG14 3LL Tel: 01992-423433

NEWSLETTER 27

September 2006

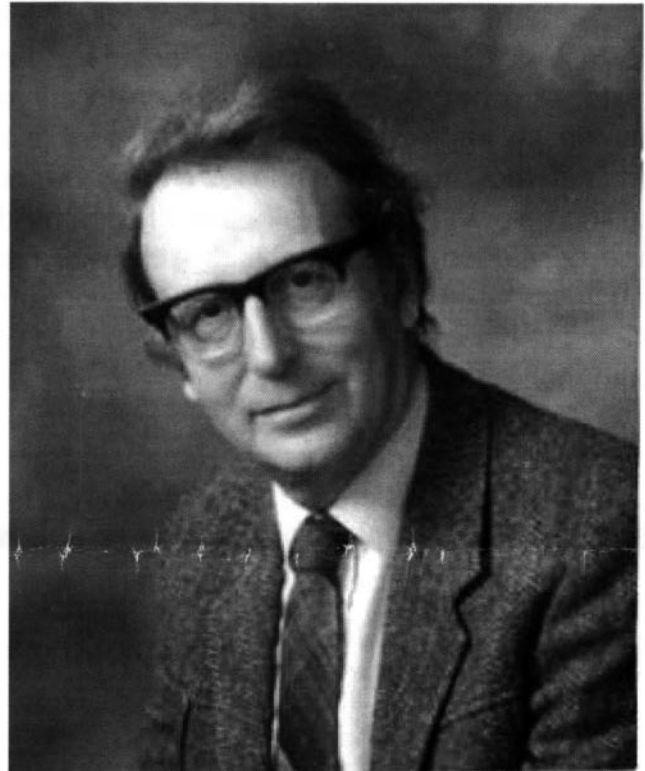
Adrian Gibson MBE 1931 - 2006

Adrian Gibson, who died on 8th March, was for over 40 years one of the most active members of this Society in excavation, recording and restoring timber-framed structures, lecturing and organising and leading excursions. His cheerful enthusiasm and clear exposition made him a very popular speaker and lecturer.

Adrian was born and brought up in the East End of London where he went to school. After becoming a teacher of wood and metalwork Adrian took the Diploma course in archaeology of London University in the early 1960s. A chance meeting, in 1965, with Cecil Hewitt at Olives Farm where Adrian was taking part in excavating a Roman site was, in retrospect, a major turning point. Both being schoolmasters they travelled the country in the school holidays surveying the roof spaces of a wide range of buildings including cathedrals. The pooling of their expertise deepened Adrian's understanding of joints and timber construction leading to a greater concentration of his efforts on such buildings. His early retirement in 1988 allowed him to devote more time to this work.

Adrian and Helen married in 1959 and moved to Hertfordshire in 1961. He joined the East Herts Archaeological Society in 1964, quickly established himself and was elected to Council the following year. On completing his diploma Adrian had been persuaded by Professor F. E. Zeuner to undertake teaching WEA classes which he did for the rest of his life as well as lecturing to other organisations. He enjoyed teaching and was particularly keen to pass on his knowledge and expertise to the next generation. In 1967 he agreed to become EHAS' Director of Excavations; Robert Kiln and Clive Partridge joined him as co-directors shortly afterwards. In 1987 he became Chairman of Council. More recently he taught members of the Hertfordshire Archaeological Trust (now Archaeological Solutions) how to record historic buildings and analyse their findings. In doing so he extended the scope of HAT's operations from its original concentration on excavation.

Adrian ranged widely in the field of archaeology and it is only possible to mention some of the more outstanding projects. His article in Volume 1 of Hertfordshire Archaeology (1968) on *Some evidence of Mesolithic sites at Bishops Stortford* was the first



of many contributions to that journal. In 1974 he gave an illustrated talk on the difficulties of dating a cruck house in Offley which had been discovered by Graham Bailey; later he became an advocate of dendrochronology as the best method of dating timber structures. A recurring theme was aisled halls and barns; Adrian delighted in discovering them and showing that they were older than previously thought such as a C13 house in Clavering which was visited by members in 1976. The dating and his suggestions on the restoration of the aisled barns at Cressing Temple is one of the best known examples of his work. In 1980 he worked with Clive Partridge on a C13 building at No. 2 West Street, Ware; it was probably the first instance of an archaeological excavation *within* a standing timber framed building.

When, early in 2003, Dr. Lee Prosser left HAT to become Curator of Historic Buildings at Historic Royal Palaces he invited Adrian to survey the roof of Kew Palace where restoration had begun. He went on to survey all five palaces under HRP's care; he was immensely impressed with Sir John Soane's elegant solution to the problem of replacing the original roof trusses of the Whitehall Banqueting House without disturbing the Rubens ceiling below. Three days before his death Adrian was working at the Tower of London. He had concluded that surprisingly little was known about the roofs of the palaces and that much work needed to be done. This work of national importance would have been a fitting climax to his career. Dr. Prosser intends to continue the work and publish the results under both their names.

In a busy life Adrian devoted time to other organisations becoming President of the Herts and Essex Architectural Research Society in 1992 and also Chairman of the Editorial Committee of Hertfordshire Archaeology. He was made an MBE in 1993 for services to conservation.

PERSONAL REMINISCENCES

Brian Taylor, Co-Chairman of EHAS:

Adrian was born in East London, as was I, and he became a teacher of technical subjects, like myself, so I like to think that we had had some experiences in common. He was teaching at Richard Hale School whilst I was a governor there and on one occasion I went to his room at break-time to ask if he would give a talk to the Thundridge & High Cross Society. He thought for a moment and then proposed a deal; I arrange a visit to Fabdens, the wealden hall house at Thundridge and he would be our guide.

Adrian always led a very busy life so that the personal approach proved to be more satisfactory than correspondence. We went on to make other visits to Sutes, the aisled hall house at High Cross, and Fishers Farm, a late hall house in Colliers End. Although he had many interests, his love of timber-framed buildings became obvious whenever he spoke or led visits on this subject. His enthusiasm was infectious and householders were persuaded to open their homes both to him and the party he was leading.

Adrian was a leading light in the East Herts. Archaeological Society where I most frequently met him. His involvement with Hertfordshire Archaeology and History, charring meetings, giving talks and leading excursions has meant that his presence is now sorely missed. We will all remember him for the enthusiastic, coherent and knowledgeable manner in which he passed on his expertise to those who were with him.

Catherine and Richard Henderson:

We joined EHAS in the first instance because of our young son's great interest in archaeology; when he met Adrian he was even more fired up! Adrian's enthusiasm, lovely sense of humour and warm friendly approach were just right for Gavin and as a result, even though he went on to take a degree in architecture and not archaeology, he has retained his passion for archaeology, and in particular timber structures and all ancient buildings. Adrian made a huge and lasting impression all those years ago on a 14 year old boy.

Sue King, U3A architecture groups leader:

When I joined the U3A in July 1999 the first speaker I heard at Castle Hall was Adrian. I had not known what to expect and here was this enthusiastic man interesting everyone in the hall with Church architecture. I still have pictures in my head of Northamptonshire churches. Of course, he ran out of time and was invited back a year or so later; this time we were amazed by his slides taken inside the spire of Salisbury Cathedral. Ready to learn more we finally got the architecture groups off the ground, Adrian was our first choice of speaker. Over the years he has enthused and entertained us with talks about 'Buildings on your Doorstep', Saffron Walden, Much Hadham, and as recently as March 2006 - 'Keeping up with the Joneses'. Thank goodness someone took notes at the last two lectures.

Adrian was such a knowledgeable man, seemingly about anything that was built and the older the better. He was always busy and his lectures always commanded a full house. I felt very honoured when he actually knew who I was, when I phoned him.

He is sadly missed by us all. On a recent visit to Stoke-by-Nayland someone was overheard saying "I wonder what Adrian would have been able to tell us about this place". I for one will never look at a timber framed building without trying to remember what he tried to teach us. His memory will stay with us for a very long time to come.

M. E. Millett, U3A:

Adrian was a born raconteur. My special memory is a lunch at The Millstream following his superb U3A lecture, 'Keeping up with the Joneses' (Hertfordshire Architecture)/ Adrian kept a small group of us enthralled chatting about his life and career and responding generously to our many questions. It was a few days later that we heard of his untimely death.

Anonymous comment at U3A:

His presentation was such that every word was charged with excitement. He made archaeology come alive for me.

Anne Pegrum, EHAS Council Member:

I first met Adrian Gibson when I joined the WEA Archaeology classes he conducted in Harlow sometime in the late 1960s. I noticed that some of the other people who attended those classes were at his funeral, which is evidence of the impression he made. His lectures covered a broad sweep of periods and places, beginning with the geological background and progressing through the various phases and civilisations more or less chronologically, but lingering particularly, I seem to recollect, in the Palaeolithic period.

I remember Adrian, full of enthusiasm, demonstrating flint-knapping, striking away at a core of flint, with a cheery warning to us to look out for flying flakes and chippings. I can't

see Health and Safety regulations allowing that now! It was notable that the attendance at Adrian's lectures did not drop away at all as the year progressed. We went on some memorable outings during the course. On one occasion we went to Suffolk, to the flint mines at Brandon. Where we climbed down those long vertical ladders into the depths – a frightening experience – and on the way home walked over some poor farmer's newly-drilled field, looking for, and finding, worked flints, and leaving a trail of footprints. We also visited the excavation he was involved in at Olives Farm, and looked over the farmhouse, under the benign eye of the late Gladys Palmer, who then lived there. It was also around this time that Adrian, with Helen and the two small children, called on my mother and me to look at our farmhouse, which I think he found slightly disappointing as there were no interesting joints or building techniques to suggest anything earlier than the Elizabethan period and no particularly exciting features.

For some years after this my only encounters with Adrian were at various, always stimulating, lectures which he gave and on E.H.A.S outings, until I was fortunate enough to serve with him on the E.H.A.S. Council and the Hertfordshire Archaeology Editorial Committee. I feel privileged to have known him.

Clive Partridge, Co-Chairman of EHAS:

I remember Adrian Gibson as a member of the East Herts. Archaeological Society Council in the 1960s. He was always keen to join in any field walking and survey exercises. In the later 1960s he agreed to co-direct a trial excavation at Olives Farm where Roman artefacts had been discovered by the local farmer when ploughing a field. He complained that his plough kept hitting some sub-surface obstruction - which turned out to be a Roman *opus signinum* floor. It was during this time that Adrian – who was a wood-working school master – and myself first met Cecil Hewitt. Cecil was carrying out a survey of the timber framing and roof structures of the moated farm house at Olives. Cecil was an expert on joints and timberwork of Medieval buildings. Adrian, with his background of woodworking, found an instant rapport with Cecil. An association that was to prove long lasting and fruitful.

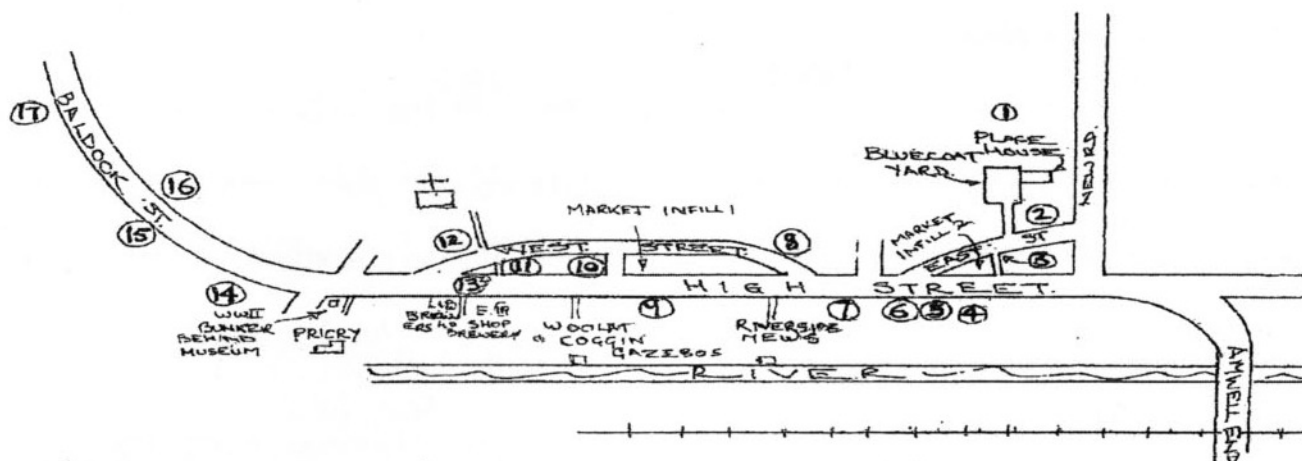
In 1980 Adrian visited a site of a 13th century Medieval building at 2 West Street, Ware. The East Herts. Archaeological Society Excavation Group were carrying out investigations before refurbishment. With his expertise we explored the interior of the building within which we were working, one of the first instances of an extensive archaeological excavation within a standing building. Together we revealed both the archaeological evidence and the structural evidence of a mid-13th century building which proved to be a unique experience. The results were published in *Herts. Archaeology* Vol.8 1982.

I also remember Adrian's excursions on behalf of EHAS. Most vividly memorable to me were the visits to the Crossing Temple Wheat and Barley Barns, constructed at the time of the Knights Hospitallers. His expertise and enthusiasm brought everything to life for his listeners.

In more recent times his enthusiasm and common sense were displayed as Chairman of the Herts. Archaeology Editorial Committee as well as the Chairman of EHAS Council.

We shall miss him!

An example of Adrian's painstaking examination of vernacular buildings in Ware



- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>1. Place House: Bluecoat Yard</p> <p>2. East Street, north side 1-2B</p> <p>3. 36 High Street, back</p> <p>4. Lloyds Bank High Street</p> <p>5. Cheltenham & Gloucester E 37 High Street</p> <p>6. Cheltenham & Gloucester W Malting conversion 35 H St</p> <p>7. 39 High Street Clintons</p> <p>8. No. 2 West Street Hair & Beauty
No. 3 West Street</p> <p>9. 61-63 High Street</p> <p>10 84-88 High Street Gilpin House</p> <p>11 94 old infilling of street</p> <p>12 Churchgate House West Street</p> <p>13 94 & 96 High Street</p> <p>14 3-5 Baldock Street</p> <p>15 23-25 Baldock Street Baldock House</p> <p>16 10, 12, 14 Baldock Street</p> <p>17 45 Baldock Street York House</p> | <p>c. 1290 Hall & Houses 1685 for Bluecoat Children. Refined, shaped window heads.</p> <p>1702 Brick frontage, fitting timber framing and 'blocked' windows - stairs behind.</p> <p>Gables of infilling shops in old wide main street. Also note Bunter Quartzite cobbled yard</p> <p>Timber framed early 18C plastered front to look like stone</p> <p>Double jettied large gable end. Upper Bressumer moulded Lower, now cased.</p> <p>Alley cut through crosswing of Hall House. One ogee service door head - seating for other, also mortice for Buttery, pantry division.</p> <p>Block parallel to street - part of original moulded Bressumer remains</p> <p>At rear timber framed kitchen with archaic framing - passing braces and notched lap joints c. 1260</p> <p>Not visible from street: Open framing</p> <p>Alley cut through Hall side of service doors of Hall House. 2 chamfered ogee door heads - opposite to rear Principle Hall truss. Moved? On front, each side of later bay window 17C ovolo moulded framing (blocked) of frieze window.</p> <p>Cross gabled house of late 16C/17C type. Richly moulded plaster ceilings on ground and first floor.</p> <p>Heavily restored shop unit, jettied to street. Note narrow plot width about 11 feet.</p> <p>Jetty to two right angled sides - hence angle post and dragon beam - note fanning of joists to provide strength. Med. shop in interior, courtyard N. side.</p> <p>Rear - projecting gable- reworked but ok.</p> <p>House with typical early 17C conjoined diagonal shafts - brick ovolo base moulding.</p> <p>Late medieval carriageway arch. 4 centred arch with leaf decorated spandrels.</p> <p>Several houses jettied to street - parallel to street and not at right angles as in Market infill. More room.</p> <p>Long jetty - original end brackets remain.</p> |
|--|--|

Adrian Gibson: A select Bibliography of his many publications

- 1958 Huguenot Weavers' Houses in Spitalfields, *East London Papers*, Vol. 1 No. 1, 3.
- 1963 *Instructions in Archaeology*, London, Museum Press
- 1969 Chapter 1 of *History of Harlow*, Ed. Linley Bateman, Harlow Development Corporation
- 1969 Some Evidence of Two Mesolithic Sites at Bishop's Stortford, *Herts. Arch.* Vol. 1, p.98
- 1969 Chapter 1 of *Bishop's Stortford, a short history*. Bishop's Stortford & District Local History Society
- 1970 A timber framed smoke hood at Barkway, *Herts. Arch.* Vol. 2 pp.112-113
- 1970 A Roman Steelyard from Bishop's Stortford, *Herts. Arch.* Vol. 2 p.109
- 1973 A Half-Wealden House in Bishop's Stortford, *Herts. Arch.* Vol. 3, p.127
- 1973 The Nave roof of the Parish church of St. Mary, Little Hornead, *Herts. Arch.* Vol. 3 p.127 (with Cecil Hewett)
- 1974 Some Small Un-jettied Medieval Houses in Essex, *Essex Journal*, Vol. 9 pp.22-31
- 1974-6 The Medieval Aisled Barn at Parkbury Farm, Radlett: Thirteenth Century Rafters re-used. *Herts. Arch.* Vol. 4, p. 158
- 1982 A Mesolithic Site at Stanstead Abbots, Herts. *Herts. Arch.* Vol. 4 p. 153
- 1982 Investigation of a 13th century Building at No. 2 West Street, Ware. *Herts. Arch.* Vol 8 p.1 (with Clive Partridge and Ivan Day)
- 1982 Harlow, Harlowbury, *Medieval Archaeology*, Vol. 26 p. 182 (with Cecil Hewett and J. McCann).
- 1987 St. Mary's Church, Little Hornead; its 12th century carpentry, *Herts. Arch.* Vol. 9, p. 185 (with Cecil Hewett)
- 1989 Flint artefacts in *Foxholes Farm: a Multi-Period Gravel Site* (Partridge) Herts. Arch. Trust Monograph pp.147-152
- 1993 The Carpentry of Seven Cambridge College Doors, *Trans. Ancient Monuments Society*, Vol. 37 pp.95-116 (with Cecil Hewett)
- 1994 The Constructive Geometry in the design of the thirteenth century barns at Cressing Temple, *Essex Archaeology & History* 25, pp. 107-112.
- 1994 Revised List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest, Borough of Brentwood, Part 2, Parishes of Doddinghurst, Ingatestone and Fyerning, Kelvedon Hatch, Mountnessing, Navestock, Stondon Massey. *Dept. of National Heritage*
- 1994 Revised List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest, District of Uttlesford, (Area of former Borough of Saffron Walden). *Dept. of National Heritage*
- 1994-6 The Anchor, Wadesmill: a Double Wealden House, *Herts. Arch.* Vol. 12, p.77
- 1994-6 Snow End Cottage, Asntey, *Herts. Arch.* Vol. 12, p. 81
- 1996 Further light on the design of the Great Barns at Cressing Temple, *Essex Archaeology & History*, Vol. 27, p. 182
- 1998 Timber Framed Building in Hertfordshire, in D. F. Stenning & D. D. Andrews eds. Regional variations in timber-framed building in England & Wales down to 1550, Chelmsford; Essex County Council, 22-301. Also published in 'A Century of *Archaeology in East Herts*'. p. 64 Ed. David Perman, Rockingham Press
- 2004 Two Wealden Houses of Urban Type in Hertfordshire, *Herts. Arch.* Vol. 13, p.93
- 2004 Tree Ring Dating of Early Timber Buildings in Hertfordshire, A Beginning. *Herts. Arch.* Vol. 13, p.111.
- 2005 Historic Building Analysis in *Kew Palace Flats, a Royal Kitchen Rediscovered*, ed. Lee Prosser, Historic Royal Palaces.

Notes from the Hon. Secretary

The Council is delighted to be joined by Helen Gibson who has agreed to take on the long vacant position of Excursions Secretary. Very many thanks Helen.

However, we are sad that we have to say farewell to Andrew Holley, Heritage Officer for East Herts. District Council. Andrew has been a staunch supporter of the Society for a long time but due to changes in his work is unable to continue to attend Council meetings. Thank you Andrew and good luck.

The Annual General Meeting will take place on 14th April 2007 at 2.30pm in Great Amwell Parish Hall. Please make a note of this date as it is a little earlier than usual. If any member wishes to serve on Council their nomination, duly proposed and seconded, will be most gratefully received. With all the changes taking place in recent times we really do need new blood to join the Council.

The Winter Lectures 2005/06 were well attended and we are hoping for an increase in numbers for the coming season. Do encourage others to join us for the interesting programme of talks that Brian has organised for us. Non-members are most welcome.

I would like to remind members that we are affiliated to various national and local archaeological and historical bodies and relevant literature about courses and publications are on display at our lectures and at the AGM. These include recent issues of the journal *British Archaeology* published bi-monthly by the Council for British Archaeology, which may be borrowed. They do contain many articles of interest. The Sept/Oct issue includes a long article about the "Mary Rose", some work on monasteries in Somerset by Mick Aston (of Time Team) and Blackpool's claim to become a World Heritage Site!

My postbag contains leaflets about a wide variety of courses both day and residential including information from the following:

- University of Wales at Newport, courses on Historical Landscape.
- Oxford University Department of Continuing Education - many courses, some covering two years part time, leading to a recognised qualification in Archaeology. They entail a weekly evening lecture with an occasional weekend.
- Cambridge University Department for Continuing Education - weekend courses on a variety of subjects at Maddingley Hall. Evening classes are run by this department in many local venues including Letchworth, St. Albans and Ware.
- Many other Universities have similar schemes.
- Assington Mill, situated between Sudbury and Colchester, has a variety of day courses, mostly craft based.

If members have information about lectures, courses or exhibitions that they feel would be relevant to others, please send me details and I will put them on display at the lectures.

Gillian Pollard (Hon. Sec.) 11 St. Leonard's Close, Hertford SG14 3LL: 01992-423433

New Members:

We are pleased to welcome the following new members: Mr. P. Mrs. S and Miss R. Melrose; Ms. M. Barron; Dr. & Mrs. Hadley; Mrs. L. Collins; Mr. & Mrs. Barnes; Ms. Lucy Sercombe; Mr. John Wing; Mrs. E. Smith; Mr. Daniel Secker; Miss N. Hunnam and Mr. T. Crafter. A warm welcome to you all.

Librarian's Postscript

Adrian was a major part of the driving force on the Herts. Archaeology Editorial Committee that allowed Herts. Archaeology Vol. 13 and Herts. Archaeology & History Vol. 14 to be published in successive years after such a long hiatus. We were fortunate that we were able to use Ware Museum as our base and distribution point for the publications. If any of you have yet to receive your copy of the above publications please let me know whether you want them and, if so, how you would like to obtain them.

There is now available the supplement to HA&H Vol. 14 which is a full report on the excavations at **Sopwell Priory** in 1962 - 1966. If anyone is interested in purchasing a copy please let me know and I will arrange it. Due to cost of publication we cannot distribute free copies so they will cost £7 each to members.

Lis Barratt: *Hon. Librarian* 01920-467942

Lecture Programme 2006/2007

2006

Saturday 7 October	A Silk Purse from a Pig's Nose 450 years of history of the lecturer's house	Robin Webb Hertfordshire Building Preservation Trust
Saturday 4 November	History of the River Stort	Richard Thomas

2007

Saturday 3 February	Caleb Hitch the Younger, 19 th century brickmaker of Ware	Richard Lavender
Saturday 3 March	2000 years of coinage	David Thorold Verulamium Museum

All of the above lectures will take place in Bengeo Parish Church Hall, Duncombe Road at 2.20pm

Annual General Meeting

14 April 2007: 2.30pm at Great Amwell Village Hall
The Gordon Moody Memorial Lecture will be given by
Madeline Edmead MA