



NEWSLETTER

No. 63

JUNE 2011

www.dacorumheritage.org.uk

OUR DACORUM

Share and enjoy photos and memories and celebrate life in Dacorum – www.ourdacorum.org.uk

A new heritage website went live at Dacorum Horizons in Hemel Hempstead as part of Adult Learners week in mid May.

The website has been developed and is edited mainly by volunteers under the wing of HALS (Hertfordshire Archives and

Local Studies) in conjunction with the Hertfordshire Libraries service and the Dacorum Heritage Trust. A group of ten volunteer web editors have had 3 days training and are now managing the site.

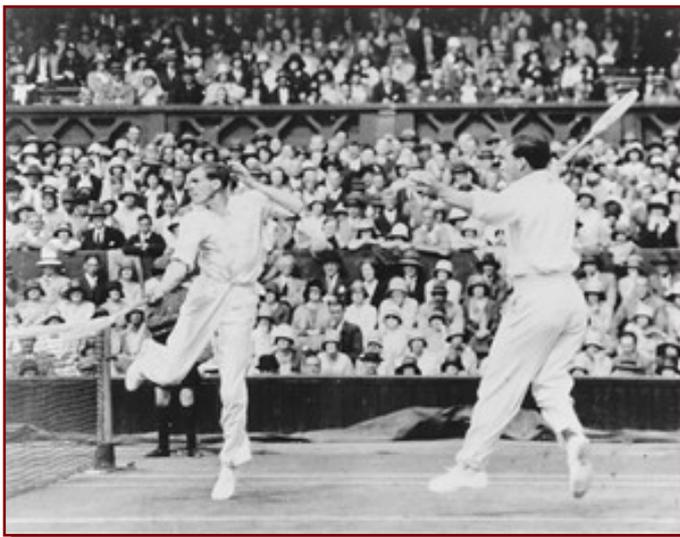


Take a look at the site and share and enjoy photos, memories and historical research about the Borough. To contribute you simply need to so have a go - it's quick and easy! Just follow the on-screen instructions.

It's entirely up to you what you add; your memory can be of an event you attended last week, or, something that happened many years ago. If you are unsure, look round the site to see what other people have added. In order to give a well-rounded picture of this area, we also welcome contributions from historians, archaeologists, local companies, filmmakers, clubs, and local history societies.

It's a great way to share your own stories, memories, pictures and research with the rest of the world. You can also contribute via post or email; please send your material to our Curator (details below), marked to be added to "Our Dacorum".

We are all historians, experts in our own past and custodians of the heritage of our Dacorum. Everyone has something to share and sadly if stories are left untold they will be lost forever.



Photos: from Dacorum Heritage Trust's collection and can be seen on the Our Dacorum website along with many more.

THE DACORUM HERITAGE TRUST LIMITED

Registered Office: **The Museum Store, Clarence Road, Berkhamsted, Hertfordshire HP4 3YL.**

Tel. No. 01442 879525. Or email the Curator – curator@dacorumheritage.org.uk

Company Registered in England No. 2851313. Registered Charity No. 1026161. Accredited Museum No. 1594.

RECORDING FOR POSTERITY

Photography has been one of the major tools of archivists, archaeologists, historians and others ever since the term was first thought of by Herschel in 1849. This photograph [1] was taken by my father in 1956 and marked the occasion when we as a family left the Isle of Wight to come and live on the mainland. In fact it was one of several photos which showed me, my parents (singly and together) and my grandparents. Here I am with my Mum and her parents whom we all called “Nana” & “Pop”. They were taken to mark a special time in our lives, so it is not surprising we still have the original tiny black and white prints. It is past photos like this which have provided so much information for genealogists and historians over the past century or more.

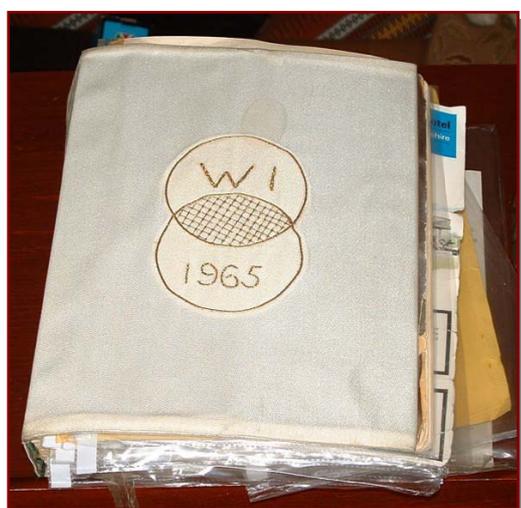
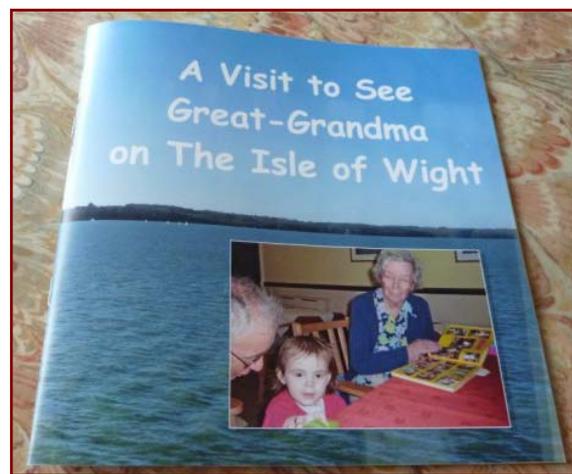


With modern digital technology, we are in danger of denying future generations the bounty of written and photographic material we have enjoyed from previous generations, unless we make a concerted effort to save information “for posterity”. Digital imaging and digital colour photography (not necessarily the same thing), has long since overtaken the old film systems which I grew up with and has in its turn revolutionised the way images are stored and retrieved. It seems amazing, but even though DI has been around for decades in photography (eg, in radio telescopes), it is only within the last few years that it has completely overtaken the old film system, and is now widely used by professionals as well as amateurs.

Within the last 3 years alone the technological advances in digital cameras means that Jo Public (as well as professional photographers, archivists, etc.) have at their finger-tips a means of recording not just “pictures”, but of saving other items “for posterity” as well. But we need a positive approach to this if we are to succeed, as despite the undoubted and many advantages of storing information on computers, a back-up system on paper of critical family photos etc. is needed.

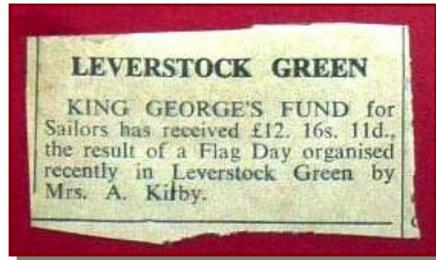
I take full advantage of all that modern technology can offer, but I have also devised a system of easy “hard copy” recording so that my family in future can guarantee the same quality of material to refer back to 50 or 100 years down the line, and not fall foul of changed formats or hardware. Firstly I invested in a Photo quality desktop printer, and made a point of printing off occasional and special photos, which I both pass to family members and also put in an album. I print off sheets of mini labels (Avery J8651), which have in tiny print at the top ‘This photo taken:’ and ‘Showing:’, this makes labelling the photos quick and easy. One of the main problems of old Victorian photos is that few of them were notated in any way.

My second strategy has been to make use of the Photobook software which is now available on-line to create special books and booklets. There are several companies which offer this on-line, and the software is easy to use. Cost will vary, depending on the size of book and type of cover, but compared to the money we spent on developing, printing and putting family photos in albums in the past, it actually works out cheaper! For soft cover books of only a few pages, the cost can be less than £10. We have created several photo books, mostly of special holidays, and one album for the whole of 2010. I was also particularly pleased of a real life story book I made recently [2] for my granddaughter and my mother who suffers from Alzheimer’s. Hannah will hopefully still have this book to show her grandchildren 60 years hence.



In addition to saving the family photos and important documents for posterity, I have also discovered that by making full use of the range of applications available on a modern digital camera we can all now both cheaply and easily record other documents, ephemera and even large objects. This proved particularly useful when as Leverstock Green’s local historian, I was recently lent for a limited time our WI’s scrapbook from 1965. The scrapbook [3] was far too large and delicate to use in a scanner, being about 12cm thick, and its individual pages being larger than old-fashioned quarto. I had initially started photographing the pages using my tripod, but this was somewhat fiddly and very time consuming. Being led by frustration I borrowed my husband’s camera with intelligent auto, meaning it can do everything on automatic and do it well, and this includes taking macro close-up shots of a very high resolution, and having a built in devise for cancelling out hand-shake! And experimenting with and without flash (without is best) I found I could record the scrapbook relatively

easily. It wasn’t long before I had ditched my old digital camera in favour of a new Panasonic TZ7 with its Leica lens and electronic wizardry; it is an incredibly versatile compact digital camera.



Over the next couple of months I took approximately 1,000 basic images, which I then refined on the computer, cropping down to individual elements. Occasionally I got something out of focus, but it was easy and quick enough to retake it. Many pages had numerous items on them, so that I was able to photograph the whole page, but also by one means or another, reduce each individual item to a legible print. This page [4 & 5] of February 1965 press cuttings for example, ended up as 5 separate items plus the whole page. The end result after a few months work was a DVD of images of the whole album, depicting a year in the life of the village. A copy of this DVD is now with DHT, the WI wanting their scrapbook back.

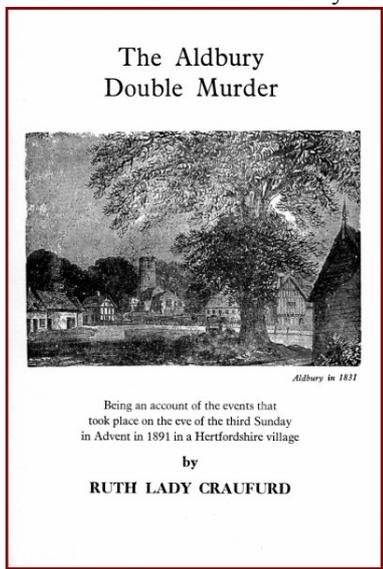
Barbara Chapman

Photos: 1 – Family group taken 1953, Isle of Wight. 2 – A recently produced example of a Photobook of family memories. 3 – Leverstock Green Women's Institute scrapbook for 1965. 4 & 5

– Press cuttings page from scrapbook, dated February 1965, whole page and edited article.

THE ALDBURY DOUBLE MURDER

On the eve of the third Sunday of advent in 1891, the small village of Aldbury was rocked by the horrifying double murder of two local gamekeepers by a group of three poachers. The discovery of the men who had been brutally battered to death sent shockwaves through a village whose residents led quiet relatively uneventful lives who had never seen and would never see again such a horrifying event so close to home.



The short story 'The Aldbury Double Murder' by Ruth, Lady Craufurd give a gripping and detailed account of the events that led to the murders of William Puddephat and Joseph Crawley but also deals with the aftermath of the events which led to the execution of two of the suspected murderers and one being sentenced to 20 years hard labour. However, as this was a time before high-tech forensics such as fingerprints and DNA, mystery surrounds the murders as the true story of what happened in the woods that night is unknown, leading to a question which may never be answered, who was the real murderer?

For any resident of Aldbury and the surrounding villages, or, any fan of murder mysteries, this is a fascinating insight into the lives of past villages and how such a brutal crime changed their lives forever. The most fascinating part of the story is that it plays out like a real murder mystery story straight from the books of Agatha Christie filled with mystery and a crime that may never fully be solved. So next time you are travelling through Aldbury and its woods, remember to look out for the ghosts of the

two victims who, local legend states, still haunt the woods, looking for their murderers.

Sean Redmond

If you would like a copy of this interesting book, we are selling them for only £1.50 (Incl. P&P), cheques made payable to 'The Dacorum Heritage Trust Ltd.'. Please contact the newsletter editor by post at The Museum Store or office@dacorumheritage.org.uk

QUIZ NIGHT – SATURDAY 16TH APRIL

Our fundraising quiz night was held at Hemel Hempstead Community Church, which was the perfect venue with plenty of parking and really excellent facilities. A big 'thank you' to everyone who supported us.

Our Quizmaster for the evening was DHT's very own Company Secretary, Mark Pelopida. He teased our brain cells and entertained with his eloquent wit.

The winning team was Croxley Green Needlecrafters, who beat the other seven teams into first place. The scores for the leading tables were close, with the last round deciding the winners.



We are pleased to say that after expenses and a small donation to Hemel Hempstead Community Church we made a massive £160. We have used some of the money to buy a waterproof gazebo and a strong folding table that we will use to attend events and hopefully raise not only funds but also public awareness about our heritage service.

Photo: Croxley Green Needlecrafters – the winning team.

CURATOR'S CORNER

Heritage Writing Group. We are planning to launch a new writing group based on local history within the Dacorum area. The aim is to research our collections and thus produce a good variety of short articles for The Gazette Heritage pages, articles for Our Dacorum and articles for this newsletter. The first initial meeting will be held on Thursday 14th July at 2.30 pm at The Museum Store. If you are interested but can't make that date please contact us and we can send you more information. We have such a vast archive of material and so many stories that need telling. Even if you haven't done anything like this before you are welcome to come along and talk to us. We also aim to compile a list of subjects and topics that haven't had much coverage over the years.

Every Child a Talker (ECAT). This is a national project that focuses on the communication skills of young children. It supports the development of children's early speech, language and communication skills, by supporting parents and other adults who work in early years settings.



Research has shown that if a child is having difficulties with their speech, language or communication skills, it can significantly impact on their education and long-term future.

We have put together a loan box which includes lots of fun activities for the under 5's with the theme of Travel & Transport. If any local playgroups or pre-school classes would like to hire this handling box with our interesting selection of traditional toys, please contact the curators.

Super 100 Heritage Club Winners. Our lottery continues to be very successful, thank you all for your support.

Congratulations to our springtime winners.

- | | | | |
|--------------|---|--|---|
| <i>March</i> | <i>1st Prize - Ken Wallis</i> | <i>2nd Prize - Brian Evans</i> | <i>3rd Prize - Mike Stanyon.</i> |
| <i>April</i> | <i>1st Prize - Lionel Howard</i> | <i>2nd Prize - C. Talbot-Ponsonby</i> | <i>3rd Prize - O. T. Owen.</i> |
| <i>May</i> | <i>1st Prize - Mike Stanyon</i> | <i>2nd Prize - Angela Cross</i> | <i>3rd Prize - Ken Wallis.</i> |

If you would like to join in the fun and have tickets in our monthly lottery you can now buy them for 6 months or a year at a time. See our website or email the editor for details.

Mini Museum. Come and visit us at the Box Moor Trust's fantastic 'Music on the Moor' event, we will have an interesting Roman themed display on Saturday 9th July. Come along and speak to our archaeologists, if you have anything you have discovered in your garden, bring it along for identification.



Photo: 2005 Music on the Moor Mini Museum Display.

New desks! We would like to thank Pictons solicitors in Hemel Hempstead for donating, via Connect Dacorum, three 'new' desks; and we would also like to thank Dacorum Paradise Furniture Project who delivered them for us. We are putting them to good use, as they are smaller than our current ones, which means we will have more room in the curator's office and extra desk capacity in the search room.



Visit the Local History website to read the latest articles.
The Dacorum History Digest
www.dacorumhistory.bravehost.com



This publication is largely funded by
DACORUM BOROUGH COUNCIL

EDITOR: Pam Gasking, contact me at The Museum Store or gasking166@btinternet.com