



Atherstone Civic Society

In these unprecedented times, The Civic Society cancelled all our planned meetings and events until further notice.

In order to keep in contact with our members, we have published a newsletter at more frequent intervals with news and information which may be of interest.

Many members in our area belong to other groups based round a church, WI, choirs and many other voluntary activities which keep the fabric of society together and a valuable asset to the community.

Even in the hardship of WW2 the community could keep together and help each other. This is different and we are having to find new ways of adapting. We heard someone say on the radio that the birds will continue to sing, the flowers will bloom again and spring and summer are just around the corner.

It will be difficult, but we are inventive and will get through.

Before the 'lockdown' we bumped into a lady who said *'With all I do, I haven't had my paintbox out for years, now I have the time'*. So there, let us all remain positive! PW.

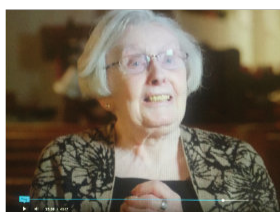
MISSING: ONE CIVIC SOCIETY A.G.M!

Atherstone Civic Society is proud of its formal Constitution, and the Executive Committee does consult it regularly to guide its decisions. However, in its 30-year lifetime (yes, the Society is reaching its thirtieth anniversary), the Committee has never had to consider postponing its AGM.

That venerable Constitution of ours makes no mention of such a thing. What it does say is that "an AGM shall be held in or about April of each year" to receive reports, along with the audited accounts. So are we acting under its authority in postponing the event?

Well, the Constitution also says that the Committee is responsible for the management and administration of the Society, and it is under that clause that the postponement has been made.

However, we must also stop to consider that another function of the AGM is the constitutional annual re-election of that very Committee, which counts in its number the four positions of Chair, Vice-chair, Treasurer and Secretary. We are of course faced with unprecedented circumstances not foreseen by those who drew up our Constitution, and it seems, despite the somewhat Catch-22 nature of the case, that the committee, with its four officers, has no choice but hold over all the purposes of the AGM until better times return. MH



The TV showing on Tuesday 5th May, on the channel My5, of The Battle Of Watling Street (the third in the series: Britain's Lost Battlefields), revealed to a national audience the facts about Margaret Hughes's detailed research into the claim that the site of Boudica's final stand against the Romans was on our doorstep at Mancetter.



MANCETTER'S CLAIM TO BOUDICCA - AIRED ON NATIONAL TELEVISION



BRITAIN'S LOST BATTLEFIELDS WITH ...

The fifty-five minute programme presented by Rob Bell investigates the events leading up to the Iceni queen Boudicca's uprising against the Roman invaders in the year 60-61 AD. However, further south on the A5 at Church Stowe, John Pegg a landscape archeologist, also made a claim that the last battle took place there. The programme is available for viewing on the My5 channel website until 2025.

St Mary's church Atherstone, has been decorated in support for our NHS. The Market square which a couple of food stalls in compliance with 'social distancing'.



As we now ease out of lockdown, it is too difficult to even think of when 'normal service' will resume for the Civic Society. We can assure you that we will open up again, but only when everyone feels it is safe to do so.

THEY SEEK HER HERE, THEY SEEK HER THERE. COULD IT BE HERE?

As we all know, there are many books recounting Boudica's magnificent campaign against the Romans. But the manner of her death remains a mystery. As does the place of her death: where did she fight her last fight? Mancetter's strong case for that claim has been in circulation ever since Dudley and Webster's work in 1962, certainly so once it had been individually refined and polished by Webster in 1978. It has gained considerable recognition amongst historians. Now, an A.C.S. book, *Boudica At Mancetter: the Latin, the Land, the Logistics* offers original insights to the question.

Researched and written by Margaret Hughes, the book's Latin-Land-Logistics sub-title hints from the outset at key factors in the theory.

- For the Latin, there is fresh analysis of the major source for the battle site, opening up vivid new understandings.
- For the land, certain important contours within the Hartshill Ridge are highlighted. The book includes a Lidar image of a significant pattern of defiles. (Lidar could well have been named as a fourth 'L' !)
- The significance of these defiles is that they could have offered the Romans opportunity for clever logistics, played out in a military tactic indicated by a specialised word in the earliest account of the battle....we come back to the Latin.

To confirm the evidence of the three (four?) 'L's, there is: "Manduesdum".

Before discussion of the 'L' factors, in the

book an early chapter takes an in-depth look at the meanings buried in that Romano-British name. This chapter alone is almost case enough for the Mancetter theory,

Boudicca At Mancetter concludes by giving space for ten researchers to summarise their claims to other sites. In doing so alongside the presentation of its Mancetter hypothesis, the book makes

an important contribution to the debate on the finale of the Boudican uprising. Mancetter remains sufficiently confident to invite other theorists into the covers of its own claim

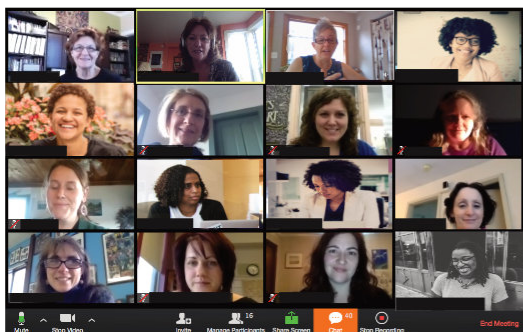
The impact of Boudica's defeat was huge; had she won, four centuries of Roman rule would never have been. Yet nowhere is there any commemoration to the number of lives lost: massive - even allowing for probable exaggeration in our sources. Commemoration of Boudicca we have, yes; of the mass of her fallen, no. Here is Mancetter, close to the geographical centre of England, twenty five miles from the National Memorial Arboretum. Could it be that, regardless of any claims to the battle's site, it is the place for a memorial to the thousands killed in one of England's most significant and iconic battles? M. Hughes

SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT.

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Copies of the book will be able to be purchased from the Heritage Centre or through Atherstone Civic Society at www.atherstonecivicsociety.co.uk treasurer@atherstonecivicsociety.co.uk

ZOOM-SKYPE-FACETIME-WHATS APP



A Zoom meeting in progress between up to 100 participants .



Are you a new-by to social networking? It is not as difficult as it may seem if you have a computer, iPhone or Tablet. It has been used extensively to keep people in contact either in government, home workers or socially.

Many groups and societies have managed to keep in contact by using this medium. Most of the software you can download is FREE!

It has been used also by church groups broadcasting their services live. If your particular church is not broadcasting, with a simple search, you can find a religious service or dedication to suit your preference.



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JUDY VERO REMEMBERS.....

30
YEARS
1990-2020

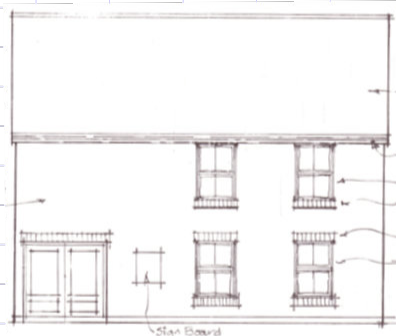
Back in the late eighties, after the new Council Offices and the Leisure Centre were built, a group of young families moved to Atherstone and its environs to work in farming, medicine, and, in my case, to get married. We were mostly in our mid 30s and quickly bonded, adding to the lively social life built up after the War by the previous generation.

I remember how nervous I was when I first met that older generation at Howard's 40th birthday and how worried that I would not meet their expectations!

The other newcomers, Bridget Whitehouse, Cathy Charles-Jones, and Mary Bishop, soon joined forces with Alec Chesterton, whose enthusiasm and energy always belied his age. He also had been drawn to Atherstone by marriage, in his case to Valerie Hiscox, whose family had owned the town's only department store. They lived in Beech House and were great hosts.

Much as we all loved Atherstone for its historic buildings and friendly atmosphere we were appalled by the amount of litter and the apparent lack of civic pride. When 'Tidy Britain Week' came, Alec,

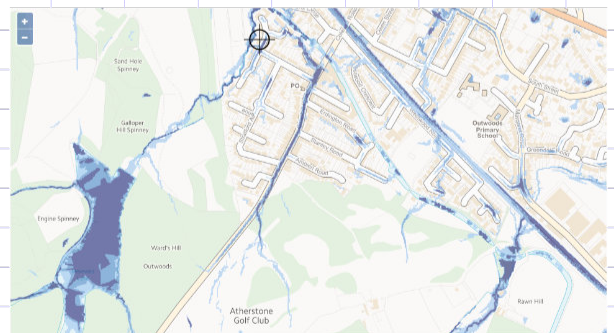
Bridget, Cathy, Mary, and the local Cubs, armed with litter-picking sticks, supplied by the Council, set to work to tidy up. This very soon became established and led to the formation of the Civic Society, an idea which had been mooted, very surprisingly, by an officer at NWBC, who quickly regretted it, because for years we were at loggerheads. The town was beginning to develop and Allen Lloyd was buying up property at a fast rate. Having formed the Society on 9th October 1990 we rapidly became involved with the planning system and began the long battle to try and save the town's heritage. *Judy Vero*



The Civic Society were consulted on an application for the demolition of the Old Mortuary in North Street Atherstone and the building of a new two storey building to serve as council offices for Atherstone Town Council. As the ACS statutory consultee, I sought the views of several other members of the Society towards presenting a fair and objective response. This proposal is in the central conservation area and on a through route from the town passing through the archway from the Market Square. The proposed building is a civic building. Historically, civic buildings made a visual statement in a town with most designs making an impact on the area. Having regard to the design and detailing of this proposal, it was concluded that this proposal fell far short of the standard of design and detailing required and the Society could not support this application.

Planning matters

We were asked to comment on an unusual application recently. A development had been requested by the Environment Agency at Merevale Hall to reinforce an earthwork dam to the lake and a new outflow to control the level of the lake. The existing lake and its abutments are subject to a grade II listing. The lake is on private land with no public access and the safety aspect of the lake is of paramount importance. There were no reasons to make any objection to this scheme. However, in the submission by the Society, it was noted that there is no mention of Innage Brook which appears on the Environment Agency's plans, to flow from the lake. Innage brook makes its way from the Merevale estate, to the rear of the houses in Penny Hapenny Court; it then passes under the canal and through several residents' back gardens and is culverted in several places, until it finally flows into the river Anker.



Several members were concerned about a proposed development off Witherley Road for five dwellings in the grounds of a substantial house known as Peel House.

There is concern that this is a further encroachment on open space and there is a tight and restricted access to the proposed houses from Nursery Road.

The Society made an objection based on these concerns and also highlighted that it would undermine the possibility of the sale of Peel House. Its garden had been divided and may jeopardise the possibility of a future sale of this large house.

Another matter of concern is that there is a historic wall on the site, which should be protected as it is believed to be the boundary of the convent priory of St Scholastica's in Atherstone.

Before the lockdown.....

For the second time, in so many years, Christine and myself went for a day trip on a preserved train to Carlisle. Our Carlisle trip was just before the signs of lockdown on the 14th March. For us, it was lucky that earlier we had taken another train of more modern times from St Pancras International to Lyon in France. This was a family visit, for Christine to visit her mother who is now in a residence.



LYON

The evening when we arrived, was unforgettable, 31st January 2020 the day of UK's exit from the EU. I thought I would escape from it, but it was wall to wall on French television! There were hints in the news about a virus in China so we avoided anyone who had a hint of a cough in the hotel dining room.

Between going to Carlisle on the train we spent five days in a hotel in Paignton. Here, again there was just a hint of hand wash and some instructions of the procedure if you felt unwell. We thought that this was the worst it was going to get. I tend to take my handy pocket sized Panasonic TZ100 camera with me when we go on short breaks. I have taken so many picture in France, I rarely bother now.

Although I do use my iPhone for movie images if the mood takes me.



BRIXHAM

The visit to Paignton was good way to blow away the winter blues, to see some of the sights and refresh our minds. We were staying in Paignton; although we have visited the West County many times, it was the first time we visited the town. It has the sad look of a seaside town which has seen better days. However, a group of enthusiasts were trying to renovate and reopen the town old cinema, a shopkeep told me when I expressed and interest in the building. It was disappointing that the Dartmouth steam train was not running the days we were there. We visited the picturesque market town of Totnes and Dartmouth, where we had visited at the height of last summer. Another day we took the service bus to Brixham, a delightful little fishing village. (There we had encountered the first loo we'd seen which took contactless debit cards - so the convenience was used for novelty value).

The weather was bright and sunny, so there were loads of photo opportunities. So then it was home, a tedious journey up the M5 albeit by coach.

The news about the corona virus was getting more serious.

We wondered whether our trip to Carlisle would be cancelled, but no, they reassured us that all step would be taken to keep us safe. So, the day arrived. We caught the train in Nuneaton at 8-45am. It was, for the technical, a class 86 electric loco hauling maroon BR style 1960s coaching stock. These preserved carriages are far more comfortable and roomy than present day ones and are equally as stable, cutting a dash of up to 80mph!

At Carnforth, the steam loco, a Patriot class 45562 'Alberta' was attached to haul us around the Cumbrian coast route right by the sea. Again, again we were disappointed as the line had been closed the afternoon before. Not because of the virus, but a landslip and Rail Track had closed the line. So instead after a two hour or so break in Carlisle we would be taken on the Carlisle - Settle route over the Ribbleshead viaduct.

PAIGNTON CINEMA



Our steam loco pulled well up the four mile Shap incline and soon we had arrived in the rather splendid town of Carlisle. We spent an hour or so in the town, had a bite to eat and returned to the station giving us half an hour to get some pics of the steam loco which had reversed ends ready for the return journey.

The loco took on water before it ascended into the delightful Yorkshire Dales. - an area I would like to give a longer look around in the car. Then after Settle the class 86 electric was hooked up and raced back down to Preston then Crewe and finally Nuneaton by half-eight. Then the 'lockdown' really came into effect. At least we'd had a few early outings to be going on with. - Patrick Woodcock

