



News and events

- Welwyn Archaeological Society's AGM is on 29 March. There will be a demonstration of flint knapping – to be confirmed.
- **Next meeting:** Our next meeting is on 17 April when Anne Rowe will give a talk about '*Humphrey Repton in Hertfordshire*'. The talk will be preceded by our AGM, which will be brief. We would welcome volunteers and/or nominations to join the committee, which meets every two months.

Notes and queries

John Bunyan's Chimney

The St Albans and Hertfordshire Architectural and Archaeological Society (the Arc and Arc) was founded in 1845. Its general meeting in 1882 was reported in the Herts Ad of 7 October, which described in detail a tour of local historical sites made by 70 members. They started at Coleman Green, then went to Upper Beech Hyde Farm, the Slad and Devil's Dyke, Marford Bridge, the old church at Ayot St Lawrence, Lamer House, Delaport, Wheathampstead House, St Helen's Church and 'No-Man's-Land' with a short talk at each site. This is an extract from the talk given by Dr Griffith, vicar of Sandridge, at Coleman Green.

'... Passing to the connection of Bunyan with the cottages hard by, Dr Griffith (vicar) said Mr William George, who was still living, formerly possessed some land near Coleman Green and he it was that first told him that the Elstowe tinker* used to go to these cottages. On closer investigation he found that there was a Jonathan Bunyan and his good wife Mary who once lived at St Albans and he suspected that the people who told his friend, Mr George, the story, were alluding to him. That gentleman however said it was nothing of the kind: this John Bunyan was the famous John Bunyan. The man who gave Mr George the information was named Coleman. There was no entry at Sandridge in the register of this man's death but he could find his marriage and the births of his children who were all daughters. He afterwards ascertained that Robert

Coleman was buried in 1844 in the Congregational Churchyard at Wheathampstead, at the age of 93 and that would make the date of his birth 1751. He thought there was no doubt that



Coleman lived in this cottage. Bunyan died in 1688. The young companions of John Bunyan and the old companions of Robert Coleman could have talked with both. So the tradition was established, there being only one unknown person.

He therefore gave in his strong adhesion – although at first he had been very sceptical – that the cottage had really been visited by the author of the "Pilgrim's Progress".'

For a full discussion of the cottage, see '*Who Lived in John Bunyan's Cottage?*' by Reg Auckland, which is in the 'Sources' section of the History Society website.

* Can anyone explain "the Elstowe tinker"? Obviously not a reference to the HE Bates book published in 1946!