



News and events

- **Next meeting Wednesday 15 December.** Mike Smith will give a talk 'Christmas Day in the Workhouse' drawing on his research into the Wheathampstead workhouse. To ensure the proper Christmas spirit, wine and mince pies will be served.
- The Arc and Arc has a programme of talks on Zoom. On **Tuesday 23 November** the talk will be *The Future of Archaeology: the next 176 years* and will be free to all. A panel of eminent archaeologists will provide short presentations followed by discussion and audience questions. To register, click [here](#).

John Nash

The Congregational Church on Brewhouse Hill, currently being converted into the Chapel Gym, has a number of stained glass windows. Most are in good condition but one is broken. This photograph shows some of the fragments.



The name 'John Nash' and the partial date '.... ay 18th 192...' can be deciphered.

Research has shown that John Nash was born at The Folly in 1876, fourth of the eight children of Jabez and Hannah Nash. The Nashes were a long-standing Wheathampstead family; John's great-grandfather, George Nash, was licensee at the Red Lion pub in the 1850s. His parents were Congregationalists and John was baptised on 24 March 1877, probably in the Congregational Chapel on Brewhouse Hill, the Church not being completed and dedicated until 22 May in that year. Aged four in 1881, he was living at The Folly, his father working as a labourer and his mother as a straw plaiter. John was attending school, almost certainly the National School in the village.

In 1891 John, aged 14, was living with his family at Castle Farm and working as a ploughman. His father Jabez had come to the attention of Dolphin Smith, owner of Castle Farm and also of several cottages at The Folly, who appointed him as his farm bailiff, hence the move to Castle Farm.

In 1901, aged 24, John was living in Hendon and working as a railway engine fireman; his landlord

and most of the neighbours also worked on the railway.

On Saturday 22 June 1901, his sister Ellen married Albert Titmuss, a carpenter, at the Congregational Church. It was quite a grand affair with the bride wearing a silk dress and the four bridesmaids in 'cream delaine', with the reception at Castle Farm. One of the bridesmaids, Sarah Smith, also a resident of Wheathampstead, became John's wife two years later.

Ten years later, in 1911, John and Sarah were living in Hendon. John was employed as a stoker at the local Poor Law asylum and Sarah was working as a dressmaker.

They returned to Wheathampstead in 1922, moving into a house in Necton Road. It seems likely that John was in poor health by now; he died aged 47 on 18 May 1924 and is buried in the churchyard at St Helen's. His estate was valued for probate at £1,632 9s. 1d, roughly equivalent to £100,000 today; research is needed to explain



John Nash in about 1901

how John came to leave such a large sum. Sarah was still at 43 Necton Road in 1939 and died aged 68 in Oster House, a hospital in St Albans, on 31 January 1942, leaving an estate valued at £2,952 6s. 1d. Again, research should be done to find how she became so well off. She is buried with her husband at St Helen's.

Later research has shown that the full text on the window reads:

'In loving memory of my father Robert Smith who passed away March 7th 1924 aged 75 years. Also of John Nash son-in-law of the above who passed away May 18th 1924 aged 47 years. Erected by the daughter and widow.'