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OBITUARY

PATRICIA MARY WINZAR
(1920-2012)

Pat, as she was always known, will be remembered as one of Kent's most respected local historians, in particular for her work on Charing, where she lived for over fifty years. In fact, however, she did a great deal more than that. She started life as an apprentice milliner, was good enough at amateur dramatics to join the Rudolf Steiner Theatre Group and to be asked to join a repertory company (a move she didn't make, although not without some regrets), and was later involved in amateur dramatics in Kent. During the Second World War she worked in a reserved occupation for Sidcup Council, and later followed her husband, Gerald, when he decided to move to Charing and run a general store. She played a full part in that enterprise, but both Pat and Gerald also needed intellectual stimulation, and as a result she became involved in archaeology and later in local history.

Her introduction to archaeology and the KAS came through helping Alec Detsicas on his dig of the Romano-British villa at Eccles. Later she directed her own excavations, the most important of which was another Romano-British site near Pett in Charing, which may have formed part of a villa complex. The following year, the local history group was joined by a KAS team and directed by Detsicas. She was a council member of KAS between 1981 and 1996 and served for several years on the Publicity and Membership, and Library committees.

Charing and District Local History Society, which had been moribund during the 1960s, was reformed in 1970, and she and Gerald became early and active members of the new society. Between 1979 and 1982 she studied for a diploma in local history at the University of Kent under Andrew Butcher and wrote a thesis on trade in Charing during the seventeenth century. She and Gerald later set up a Palaeography Group to transcribe and study early documents related to the parish. These were indexed and computerised so that Charing has a wonderful resource making available virtually all the wills, probate inventories, parish registers and churchwardens' accounts, stretching from the sixteenth to the early eighteenth centuries, with a smattering of earlier and later documents as well.

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She was also interested in historic buildings and kept a sharp watch on the frequent house restorations of the 1970s and 1980s, leading to the discovery of a seventeenth-century inscription, and to a number of bottles, shoes and other items associated with protection against witches or other superstitions. The finds were all examined with professional help which she brought in, and were restored and preserved. The discovery of so many finds from a single village is possibly unique in Kent.

Her interest in local history also led to her becoming a founder member, then secretary, editor, chairman and finally president, of the Kent History Federation, in which she played a seminal role. She stood down from the presidency only in 2009. In honour of her service to local history in Kent, the British Association for Local History, in 2005 awarded her one of two personal local history awards which they grant each year.

SARAH PEARSON