

# S.A.L.H.S

website: [www.salhs.org.uk](http://www.salhs.org.uk)

*Stanstead Abbotts Local History Society*

**Issue 20**

Editor—Terry Collins

**October 2016**

## Malting in Hertfordshire

Tony Crosby, our September speaker, spoke to us on the subject of Malting in Hertfordshire, something that most of us know something about as it still plays a role in the village today.

Malting first began in ancient Egypt, nearer home over 4000 years ago in Scotland, traces have been found of malting. Numerous archaeological digs in England have discovered traces of grain in pre Roman sites. And in the 3rd and 4th centuries Rome adopted a method of using underground heating to provide a means of drying the barley. At the Roman settlement in Stebbing, Essex a villa with a Malthouse was found. Nearer home at Foxholes Farm in 1975 a corn drying oven was found together with grain and barley residue.

Moving forward, the Domesday Book shows 43 brewers in the county but only one in Cambridge, and in 1339 there was a bread and ale market in Ware. Many of the maltings in Hertford and Ware



A Maltings Drying Floor

date from the 16th century

Local roads that led to London had tolls put in them to pay for their upkeep as they were continually in need of repair due to the heavy traffic constantly using carts to transport malt to the capital's breweries. Transport via the river Lea was used prior to the 15th century and a parliamentary act was passed in 1671 to improve the river, followed by another in 1739 which put all of the river under one group of Trustees. The coming of the railways led to more and larger maltings as the trains ran straight to London

Locally Stansteadbury was owned

by monks and they brewed ale there, an 1876 census shows maltings, a brewery and numerous pubs in Stanstead Abbotts High Street.

Why maltings in the Lea Valley? The answer lies in the soil, not too wet and quite light., plus Herts and Essex are one of the best areas in the country for barley and there is east access to London by road, rail or river.

Many of the monasteries and religious houses had their own breweries and more than half of all ale was brewed privately. Bernden Priory farm in Essex still has its 17th century malting remaining as does the Eight Bells pub in Saffron Walden and the Sun Inn in Hitchin had its own brew house until early in the Twentieth century.

Tony ended his presentation with a number of slides showing a number of malting related buildings from round the local area.

He answered questions from the audience and was warmly thanked by the chairman.

*Terry Collins*

### Important Message

Ian White, our Chairman, and one of the Society founders was confined to hospital for three weeks and has been given a serious diagnosis. He is now back at home but will be taking a back seat for the time being whilst he has treatment. Ian and Imogen would like to thank everyone for their kind messages and support they have re-

ceived and he hopes to see people out and about in the village. Obviously his talk in November has been cancelled, but we have found a replacement as you can see on Page 4, but Ian hopes to be able to attend the Xmas party.

Unfortunately another of our committee, Janet Dance, has been in hos-

pital for 20 days undergoing major heart surgery. The surgery went well and she is now safely back home but there are some issues still to be overcome and will need some time to recover fully. So Janet will also be taking a back seat.

I am sure you will join with us in hoping that they will both be back with us soon. *Glenis & Terry*

## A Case of Witchcraft and Other Crimes

Hertfordshire Assize Records show several 16th century accusations of witchcraft in East Hertfordshire, but only one in Stanstead Abbots. Most were for bewitching animals and in the days when superstition was rife, if domestic animals became ill or died, often a warring neighbour was blamed and charged with witchcraft. Fortunately most such cases were dismissed due to lack of evidence. *JOHN SELY, yeoman, of Stanstead Abbots, was indicted for witchcraft on 31st May, 1592, at Stanstead Abbots, accused of bewitching 40 pigs belonging to John Spencer. Found Not Guilty. (Hertford Assizes Records)* It is interesting to note that the last witchcraft conviction in England also took place in Hertford Court. In March, 1712, Jane Wenham of Walkern was accused of conversing with the devil in the shape of a cat. A witness at Hertford Lent Assizes testified that Jane could fly, whereas Judge Sir John Powell (obviously a wise man) replied that there was no law against flying! In spite of this she was found guilty. However, Sir John set aside the conviction and sought a pardon from Queen Anne which was successful. Jane Wenham was cared for by William Cowper, 1st Earl Cowper until her death in 1730. This case was the end of an era as far as witch prosecution was concerned in England, but many people throughout the 18th century still believed in witchcraft. And, of course, a few still do today.

### OTHER PETTY CRIMES IN VICTORIAN STANSTEAD

The following reports are from Hertford Quarter Sessions with one exception:

**A FOWL DEED:** 21 February, 1857. Thomas Hawkins (29), labourer of Stanstead Abbots was charged with stealing 29 fowls (age not supplied), the property of Thomas Dean. How a man could kill and carry away 29 chickens was not explained).



### There's no law against flying

**A VICAR-BASHER:** 28 October, 1854. William Edmonds of Stanstead Abbots, was charged with assaulting the vicar, Rev. J. W. Thomas. No details given unfortunately.

**EMBEZZLEMENT CASE:** William Rose, a clerk and salesman for Mr. Hunt, the Miller at St. Margarets, was charged with embezzling various sums of money, the property of his employer. (Mr. Hunt lived at Stanstead Hall, High Street).

**WHAT LARKS AT THE FAIRGROUND!** 1 June, 1850. Watkins, a young bargeman, was charged with assaulting Anne Wheatley. The complainant stated she was walking home from the fairground in Stanstead Abbots, when he indecently assaulted her at two o' the clock in the morning! Good little girls should have been at home in bed. (In those days the fairs were held in Town Mead, today the car park,

children's play area and Meadow.)

**TOLLGATE ROBBERY:** 8 June, 1857. George Cass, toll-collector, of Stanstead Abbots, was brought before the court by police constable Williams and charged with stealing the toll-house ladder-wagon, property of Mr. Knight.

**A SPRINGHAM IN COURT:** 23 December 1855. John Springham of Stanstead Abbots, was brought before the court by police constable John Brewer, on remand, charged with larceny. The Springhams are a well-respected and long-established village family.

**FOLLY HILL, ST. MARGARETS:** Many of the cases brought before the Hertford Quarter Sessions in the 1850s concerned damaged walls, bridges, blocked streams and damaged roads. The following report concerns the road we now call Folly Hill:

*Presentation that the highway leading out of the common road from London to Ware, commonly called FOUR-WANT WAY, to St. Margarets is out of repair for half-a-mile, one side of which is within the care of St. Margarets and the other side within the care of Great Amwell. (This road has always been the boundary between Thele/St. Margarets and Great Amwell). It is presented that the inhabitants of St. Margarets ought to repair their side of the road and the inhabitants of Great Amwell to repair their side. Later the court issued a certificate confirming the necessary repairs had been done.*

The modern Great Amwell roundabout has six exits, but in the Victorian era, the crossroads offered only four ways, hence the strange name of Four-Want Way.

*Ron Dale*

## THE BUILDINGS OF ALFRED WATERHOUSE

Hidden from view in the woods of Easneye in Cappell Lane at the end of its mile-long drive is one of the most impressive buildings in the village, if you enjoy Gothic, the All-Nations Christian College, now probably the country's largest college of its kind. Originally built for Mr. Thomas Fowell Buxton as his new home and manor house in 1867/8, Mr. Buxton, member of a famous Quaker family, chose a Quaker architect to design his mansion in the woods, Alfred Waterhouse. This architect became famous for his buildings which were mainly of the Victorian Gothic style and his work included the Natural History Museum, South Kensington and Manchester Town Hall and many other accomplishments. He was the most widely employed architect of the mid-19th century.

In Stanstead Abbots, he also built a dairy farm on the Easneye estate, in addition to the

two lodges in Hollycross Road, plus a group of three staff houses in Cappell Lane. These can easily be recognised by the unusual shape of the



Alfred Waterhouse 1830-1905

roofs, typical of Waterhouse, and the right-hand side wall of this group bears a large terracotta shield bearing the Buxton arms. Alfred Waterhouse has certainly left his mark on our village. Contrary to popular belief and the records of

English Heritage, Mr. Waterhouse was not the architect used for St. Andrews Church. The architect used by Mr. Buxton on this occasion was Zephaniah King of London. Easneye Mansion, now the All-Nations Christian College, is hidden up on the hillside amidst the woods of Easneye Park, but it occasionally has open days for village residents to view. The mansion was once used as the school in a St. Trinian's film, but could easily have fitted into a Hammer House of Horrors film with its Gothic splendour.

### LIST OF HIS WORK IN STANSTEAD

**EASNEYE MANSION.** 1867/8 Built as a family country house in red brick with black diapering in 3 blocks, asymmetrical.

**SOUTH GATE LODGE.** 1867/9. Contains two houses, believed to be Waterhouse designed according to English Heritage.

*Continued on Page 4*

## SALHS Barbecue 2017

Sunday 14th August saw the 5th SALHS summer Barbecue, this time held in the spacious garden of Marsh Cottage, the home of members Christine and Andrew Day. Fortunately the weather was fine, not too hot but lots of sunshine.

Once everybody had found a comfortable seat and had a drink the smell of the food cooking began to permeate the air. Ray Dixon, as usual had donned his chef's apron and was working hard to feed 27 people, occasionally helped by me! Even though the butchers in Braughing has closed we were still able to get some of their excellent sausages which all went down well, with some fresh bread and salad, together with tasty burgers. When they had been eaten it was time for dessert, this year we had a choice of three, all of which looked very appetising, although I only tried one of them. (I thought that was very good of me) There seemed to be cheerful conversations going on all

around the garden.

Many thanks to Andrew and Christine for hosting yet another successful SALHS afternoon at their home.

*Terry Collins*



**THE BUILDINGS OF ALFRED WATERHOUSE Continued**



Easneye Mansion in its Gothic splendour

DAIRY FARMHOUSE AND DAIRY. Circa 1868. A T-plan two-storey house in brick with tiled roof

EASNEYE STABLES. 1868. An L-shaped building in red brick with a tiled roof.

IN WARESIDE: COTTAGES & EASNEYE ESTATE OFFICES. T-shaped in brick, two-storeys. **Ron Dale**

NORTH GATE LODGE. 1867/9. Built as one house, believed to be Waterhouse designed according to English Heritage.

HALVING COTTAGES, 112, 114, 116 CAPPELL LANE. Exact date

not known, but probably 1868/9. Believed to be Waterhouse designed according to English Heritage. A block of three staff houses with attractively styled roofs. The right hand house bears a terracotta shield with the Buxton arms on its side wall. The houses are now privately owned. The land on which they were built was once part of Halving farm.

**Quiz 2016**

As most of you will be aware, the quiz night scheduled for 14th October was cancelled. I am sorry but this was because we had sold only 18 tickets one week before it was due to take place, and it would not have been feasible to run the quiz with so few people attending. It's a real shame as this was our last Quiz Night. **Terry Collins**

**Data Protection Act**

In accordance with the above act we have to advise that the Society holds information on computer in respect of each member. This information is used for routine membership purposes only and remains confidential.

**The SALHS Committee  
May 2015**

- Hon. President Ron Dale
- Chairman Ian White
- Secretary Lynne Heraud
- Treasurer Glenis Collins
- Archivist/Historian Ray Dixon
- Archivist/Facebook Andrea Coppen
- Public Relations/ Vice Chair Bob Hunt
- Newsletter Terry Collins
- Parish Council Rep Julia Davies
- Committee Members Linda Gifford  
Gerald Coppen  
Rob Gifford
- Website Manager Brian Johnson
- General enquiries email  
Admin@salhs.org.uk

**Forthcoming events**

- November 11th 2016 The Buxtons and Easneye by Paul Davies
  - December 9th 2016 Christmas Party Members Only
  - January 13th 2017 Hertfordshire Literary Lives by Marion Hill
  - February 10th 2017 Antiques Roadshow
  - March 10th 2017 Mills, Thatching and Windmills by Robin Webb
  - April 10th 2017 Stanstead Abbots Convicts 1770-1870 by Ken Griffin
- Unless stated otherwise all meetings are at the Parish Hall at 7.30pm
- Members Free. Non Members £2 Tea, Coffee and biscuits included