

S.A.L.H.S

website: www.salhs.org.uk

Stanstead Abbotts Local History Society

Issue 21

Editor—Terry Collins

January 2017

The Buxtons of Easneye

Dr Paul Davies was our November speaker and his topic was Stanstead Abbotts most famous family and still the Lords of the Manor..

The Buxton family arrived in this country with William 1st and the land now occupied by Stanstead Abbotts was given to the monks of Waltham who held it until the dissolution of the monasteries by Henry VIII. He, in turn, gave it to Anne Boleyn, and then Edward Baesh whose family held it until 1678. It then passed through a number of hands until it came into the hands of the Buxton family.

Thomas Fowell Buxton(1786-1845) became the first Baron Buxton of Bellfield. He had joined his uncle Samson Truman in the brewing company, Truman, Hanbury and Buxton. He later became MP for Weymouth and then found fame as one of the leaders in the movement for the abolition of slavery together with his sister in law Elizabeth Fry and can be seen on the back of a £5 note, not the plastic one, standing on the left of a group of people and wearing glasses.

He was a very compassionate man and also campaigned for the abolition of the death penalty and prison reform, succeeding in getting the number of capital crimes reduced from 238 to 8. In 1824 following a meeting in St Martins Lane, London he was one of the

founders of the Society for the Protection of Animals, which was later given royal assent to become the RSPCA.

He did not always lead a happy life however, as 5 of his 8 children died in infancy, with four of them within the space of a month, the eldest only four years old. His widow Hannah died in 1872 like her husband she was buried in Overstrand, Norfolk.

On his death, his son, also Thomas (1821-1908) took over the running of the company, following his time at Trinity College Cambridge. He initially lived in the house attached to the Black Eagle brewery in Brick Lane, Spitalfields but in 1866 he purchased the 3000 acre estate of Easneye and had the mansion house built by Alfred Waterhouse.

The family have been deeply involved in the affairs of the village, they endowed St Andrews church, provided the finance for St Andrews school and the parish hall, in addition they provided employment on



Thomas Fowell Buxton 1786-1845

the estate for a number of local workers.



On his death in 1908 his son John Henry took over the running of the estate. He only lived at Easneye from 1908 until his death in 1934 having previously lived in Cheshunt, London and Hunsdon at Bury House.

His eldest son Henry followed him taking over the lordship of the manor and living at Easneye from 1934 throughout the second world war when it housed a number of British troops in the grounds and one of the cottages. In 1940 it took in its first refugee children from London and by 1943 there were 53 babies and 12 nurses living there. The Easneye nursery continued after the war and finally closed in 1963.

From 1949 the ownership of the manor was in the hands of John Fowell Buxton although he did not live there, on his death it passed to the current owner Henry Alexander Fowell Buxton, who sold the mansion house to the All Nations Christian College in 1971. Mr Buxton currently lives at Mardock Mill and manages the estate with the aid of his son Nicholas.

Terry Collins

Hertfordshire Literary Lives

Our first meeting of 2017 welcomed Julie Gregson from HALS who spoke to us on the topic of the numerous literary connections that Hertfordshire has, from Geoffrey Chaucer to Frederick Forsyth.

Chaucer lived at Berkhamsted whilst he held the position of Clerk of The Kings Work to Edward III. He was possibly the first great figure in English Literature. The most important building he looked after was Berkhamsted castle which, at the time was quite luxurious. He died around 1400 but the cause of his demise and the circumstances surrounding it are unknown.

Another medieval author, less well known than Geoffrey Chaucer, is Lady Julian Berners who was the Prioress at St Mary of Sopwell priory near St Albans. For a 14th Century woman and a wealthy nun who was brought up at court she was very interested in field sports, including hawking and hunting, but she is best known for her book on fishing entitled 'The Treaty of Fishing with an Angle' which pre dates 'The Complete Angler' by 150 years. She is also thought to be the authoress of 'The Book of St Albans'

Known as a true renaissance man the next famed author was Francis Bacon, 1st Viscount Saint Alban, he was an author, statesman, scientist and lawyer. He lived at Old Gorhambury house on the outskirts of St Albans which he inherited from his father. At the age of 48 he married Alice Barnham aged 14 and he died of pneumonia at the age of 65, and was buried at St Michaels church in St Albans.

Moving forward to the 18th century we have William Cowper who was born in 1731 at Berkhamsted. He became one of England's most popular poets of his time, writing

poems about the English countryside and everyday life. He was involved in the anti slavery movement and wrote a number of poems on the subject. He died in the year 1800 and is buried at St Nicholas church, East Dereham, Norfolk.

Moving to Brocket Hall at Welwyn in the early 19th Century, which was the home of Lady Caroline Lamb, the wife of the future Prime Minister Lord Melbourne. She met Lord Byron in 1812 and their romance and ensuing relationship was the scandal of the age. They split up in 1813 and on Byron's death she was said to have fallen from her horse on seeing his funeral cortege pass. She died aged 43 in 1828.

The next author Edward Bulwer Lytton was born in Knebworth and became the most successful English writer prior to Dickens. He married Rosina Wheeler a friend of Caroline Lamb, and as a result he was cut from his mothers will. His most famous novel was 'The Fall of Pompeii' and he is also remembered as the author of the line, 'it was a dark and stormy night' taken from his 1830 novel, 'Paul Clifford' as well as the phrase, 'the pen is mightier than the sword' He died just short of his 70th birthday in 1873.

We then heard about George Bernard Shaw who lived in Ayott St Lawrence from 1854. Where he had a garden shed that he called London so that his servants could honestly tell callers, who he didn't want to see, that he was in London. He was a pacifist and in 1917 wrote to major newspapers on behalf of conscientious objectors. Shaw lived in London before moving to Welwyn and from 1906 rented the house until he finally bought it in 1920, while living there he wrote many of the sixty plays for which he is famous. He died in the dining room of his cottage on 2nd November 1960.

Then of course we came to Bar-

bara Cartland (below) who was born in Birmingham in 1901 and became one of the country's most popular and prolific authors writing 723 books in her lifetime and is the world's third most read author. She lived at Campfield Place, Essendon, which was once also the home of Beatrix Potter who used it as the setting of some of her children's books. Barbara Cartland became a Hertfordshire County Councillor in 1955 and served for nine years, and was particularly interested in promoting health and education for travelers and their children, and as a result they



nicknamed their local site Barbaraville. She died in her house just before her 99th birthday on 28th May 2000.

There are other literary figures with Hertfordshire connections including, thriller writer Frederick Forsyth, who lives just outside Hertford, Graham Greene who was born and educated in Berkhamsted, George Orwell who lived at Willington near Baldock between 1936 and 1940, in a cottage called 'The Stores' which had been the village shop. Also First World War poet Julian Grenfell who lived part of his early life at Panshanger, which was owned by his parents.

Vice Chairman Bob Hunt thanked Julie for her talk, and she answered a number of questions from the audience.

Terry Collins

Frozen River 1895



a large union flag flying above, a sheep was roasted on the ice. Villagers were invited along to enjoy ice skating and slices of warm sliced meat.

Mystery Portrait



The society has received a request for help concerning the portrait illustrated. This was found some years ago in the loft of number 99 Cappell Lane. This is the top floor flat at the left hand end of the block in that side road extension to Cappell lane between Warrax House and the old Police House [no. 101]. The picture has been dated by an expert on historic costumes to around 1914/15. It may be of course that the picture is not of a village person. However if any member knows who lived at number 99 Cappell Lane previous to 2002 or any other useful information then the society would be grateful if they could let us know. Those who found the portrait are hoping that they will in the future be able to return the picture to a surviving family member.

A request for information concerning a sheep roast on the river in Stanstead Abbots appeared along with a photograph in the Herts. Mercury of the 24th November 2016. Perhaps the newspaper did not receive any replies as it was not mentioned again in subsequent editions. Given this it was thought members of the society might like to learn a little more about this unusual occurrence. This village event took place on the thickly frozen river on the 11th February 1895 during the coldest period of a very cold winter. This was held close to the river bridge with the fire raised above the ice and protected from the bitterly cold breeze by a large tarpaulin. With

Among those from the village who attended was the author's then 11 year old grandfather. He along with many of the young boys in the village seems to have thoroughly enjoyed the event especially the free hot food. The sheep roast took place following two ice skating events when the more energetic and capable skaters from the village made their way along the river to Ware. These events took place on the evenings of two consecutive full moons which gives some idea of the long period of extreme cold experienced in the winter of 1894/5. For those who would like to learn more a full article can be found in the media section of the society's website.

Stuart Moye

SALHS Christmas Party 2016

Friday December 9th saw this years Christmas party take place in the Parish Hall with more than forty members attending and enjoying the evening.

Three tables laden with seasonal food from sandwiches to mince pies via sausage rolls and cheeses. Enough to feed all of us who were there nearly twice over. This did not include the wines, beers and soft drinks supplied to all.

The evening began with a short address from Chairman, Ian White, who explained to us some details of his illness and treatment. He then thanked the membership for all the best wishes that had been sent to him and Imogen. It was really good to see him back although he will be taking more of a back seat for a while.

There were two quizzes to complete: a photographic one which consisted of baby or toddler photos of the committee to be identified, some of the answers to this were hilarious and twenty questions involving Christ-

mas.

Brenda Lawrence gave a short presentation on the history of Roydon Road, and some of its residents across the years. This was both interesting and amusing.

Music during the evening was provided by Beth Gifford on violin and her father Rob on guitar, playing traditional English tunes, this was interspersed by a lovely set from Lynne Heraud and her singing partner Pat Turner with one or two traditional songs together with some of their own material which you really should hear, provided that you are fairly broad minded.

The evening ended with our Christmas raffle which had nineteen prizes from Champagne to Chocolates and from a Food Mixer to biscuits. Thanks to all those who purchased tickets as it managed to raise £76 for SALHS funds.

Terry Collins

Can you Help

We have recently lost two members of the SALHS committee and we would like to replace them as soon as possible.

All we need is enthusiasm and the willingness to help. It may be that you will be able to help out on one of the long term projects we are hoping to begin shortly.

We have started to archive all the photographs and documents that we have collected and help with this would be greatly appreciated.

In the long term we are hoping to open a small village museum and this will require lots of work so the more help we can get the better it will be

To get more details or to just find out what we need contact any of the Committee members listed below and they will be able to help you.

Data Protection Act

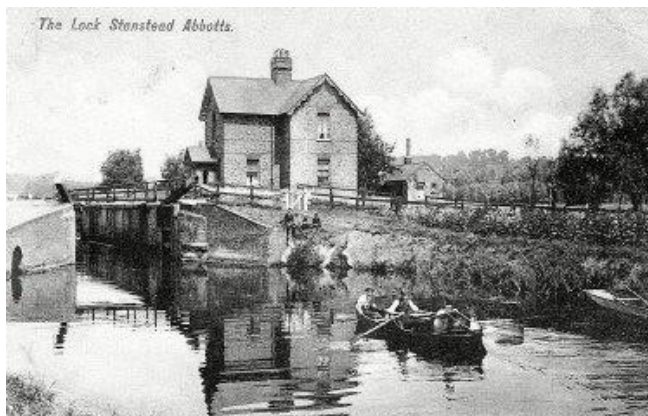
In accordance with the above act we have to advise that the Society holds information on computer in respect of each member. This information is used for routine membership purposes only and remains confidential.

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

A Tale of the River Bank



hire out their dad's rowing boat "Toffs in hats up from London wanting to row their ladies on the river".

The scene is set in this post Victorian world where coats and tails were probably still an accepted fashion and certainly stiff collars

The photograph depicts a time long gone and some youngsters having fun on the River Lea at Stanstead Lock circa 1910. To me one of those youngsters may have been 'Old Mr Thatcher', a nice chap who kept neat and tidy and dressed of course, with a flat cap and a waistcoat which hid braces for his trousers. Always off to his allotment and was happy with the world.

In the 1980's he was in his eighties and used to tell me of the times of his youth when the High Street was white with sheep going to the market. It was certainly a rural village except at holiday times and sometimes how he and his friends would

were worn without question or complaint. The "Toffs" he tells me would give them their hire fee (he may have told me it was "Thrupunce" I think) and off they would go. "We knew they would be a bit puffed soon enough" he said "And have to take their jackets orf, so when thee wur back fust thing we did was to take the duck-boards out in the hope of finding a sixpence or even a haffcrown rolled out of a pocket!".

Lovely chats we had and I wish I had the time then to have asked more...

Ray Dixon

Forthcoming events

February	10th 2017	The Gunpowder Plot by Richard Thomas
March	10th 2017	Antiques Roadshow
April	7th 2017	Stanstead Abbots Convicts 1770-1870 by Ken Griffin
May	12th 2017	AGM/Talk TBA
June	9th 2017	The RAF at Hunsdon by David Gibbs
July	14th 2017	TBA

Unless stated otherwise all meetings are at the Parish Hall at 7.30pm

Members Free. Non Members £2 Tea, Coffee and biscuits included