

# S.A.L.H.S

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

*Stanstead Abbotts Local History Society*

**Issue 25**

**Ian White 1946 - 2017**

Editor—Terry Collins

**January 2018**



I am sure that most of you are aware that Ian, our Chairman and founder, passed away peacefully from a brain tumour on October 17th 2017.

He was born in Manchester and raised by his Grandmother Florrie Gregory after his mother died when he was just two, his father Arthur was in the RAF and after he remarried he moved to Bradford, where he was joined by Ian.

Ian attended St Bede's Grammar school but left with just three O Levels, and then joined West Riding Council as a Management Trainee in 1964, subsequently working with Manchester Council and then East Sussex Council, where he worked in Social Ser-

VICES, a route which he followed, moving to Hillingdon Council. Initially as Assistant and then Director of Social Services. He became Director of Social Services for Oxfordshire from 1988-1995 and during that time he also served as President of the Association of Directors of Social Services from 1991-1992.

Ian was made CBE in 1995 and in the same year he was asked by the London Borough of Islington to lead an independent enquiry into its handling of allegations of organised abuse in its children's homes. The enquiry report said that it was possible that some of the allegations were true, identified 32 staff members involved and described the running of the council as dangerous.

Ian spent the final years of his working life as Director of Social Services at Hertfordshire County Council from 1995–2000 when he retired. He then spent some time as chair of the NHS Commissioning bodies in the county and worked for the Home Office on drug strategies.

He also managed to find time to study for two degrees, in photography, a BA and an MA in medieval history, in addition being an enthusiastic member of Great Hadham Golf Club where he was a former Senior Captain. Ian married Mary Ward in 1969 and they had a daughter, Justine. They were divorced in 1998 and in 2000 he married Imogen Parry and became a devoted stepfather to her children, Anna, Sarah and Luke.

Ian loved the village he lived in and it was this fondness for Stanstead Abbotts along with his passion for history that led to the formation of SALHS. We will all miss his infectious humour as well as appreciating the hard work he put in from the very beginning to make SALHS the success that it is, especially the work he did with Ron Dale to get his book published.

## **Christmas 2017**

Another SALHS Christmas party took place on 8th December which was well attended and thoroughly enjoyable. The members brought along enough Christmas Fayre to ensure everybody's appetite was catered for and we supplied drinks to accompany it all.

We were entertained by Lynne Heraud and Pat Bishop with a number of songs, both comical and

not, especially the seaside ditty, sung in Edwardian bathing costumes. There were readings about the Christmas season by Julia Davies and Linda Gifford, two light hearted quizzes to tax the brain and one or two comical poems recited by myself.

The annual Christmas raffle was the largest so far with more prizes than we have had on previous occasions, so thank you all very much as events like this do help to fill SALHS coffers. Hopefully Christmas 2018 will see a repeat of this jolly event.

*Terry Collins*

## Amwell Magna Fisheries

Nineteen eighties singing star Feargal Starkey was our November speaker talking to us about his passion for fishing and the history of our local club, the Amwell Magna Fisheries.

This is the oldest fishing club in the country and has been in operation for over 170 years and has been carefully looking after and improving two and a half miles of the River Lea. Its origins go back much further. Isaac Walton, author of the Complete Angler fished the river in the 18th century and spoke of catching otters at the foot of Amwell Hill.

During the nineteenth century one of the clubs founders, Robert Marston took a number of photographs of the river as it ran through the valley in Victorian times. One of the pictures taken in 1888 shows the Stanstead Abbots windmill. The fishery as it is known today began in 1831, but to get the full history we need to go back to the time of Edward 1 when the land where the river flows had been given to the Abbott of Waltham and he therefore held all the fishing rights of the stretch of water down to Fieldes weir.

This was a very productive fish-

ery and very prosperous being on the edge of London. It was also claimed in 1279 that there was a mill along the river, either water or animal powered. One year later the Bishop of Westminster challenged the Bishop of Waltham, claiming that he was building sluices across the river causing flooding. Westminster was successful and Waltham was forced to carry out repairs.

During the next 200 years or so there were a number of complaints about the river not flowing properly and Queen Elizabeth I set up a commission to look into the matter. The old channel was opened up again and the water began to flow properly. Problems arose again in the 18th Century when the local miller Michael Pepper began to charge barges a shilling toll, possible at the behest of the Fieldes family, this continued for a number of years culminating in 1751 when Mr Pepper let out all the water and left the barges high and dry.

In 1836 the property was sold to the New River Company and in the mid 19th Century Richard Chantry and friends bought the stretch of river and held it for five years until

1841 when the lease was taken by William Shackell, a London printer. He and his friends formed the Amwell Fishery. By 1856 The Field magazine described it as the best fishery on the River Lea and very well looked after, and after 1855 they began to breed their own trout on the river. This was the era when the club was in its prime.

During the twentieth century the Amwell Magna has had its ups and downs, during WW2 it was the only fishing club that carried on throughout the war even though it had been told it must stop, its members, including Admiral and two Colonels managed to get the order cancelled. With a steady stream of potential members on its waiting list the club can look forward to a healthy future providing that the current environmental issues can be overcome. In the final part of his excellent talk Feargal spoke about these problems, partially caused by drainage schemes to enable more house building, in the Thamesd water area 64% of the rivers have had some form of drainage, locally there is less water in the Rivers Ash and Beane that in the past, the Ver at St Albans now has grass growing where there should be water and without a lot of work the same would have happened to the Lee.

This was a very entertaining and informative evening well received and enjoyed by all those present.

*Terry Collins*

### WW1 Airfield in Stanstead Abbots - Information wanted.

It has been brought to our attention, by a member of the Airfield Conservation Trust that there was an airfield in the village during the First World War. It stood in what is now a field near the junction of Netherfield Lane and Roydon Road. The Trust would like to place a stone memorial at the scene to commemorate those who flew from there.

The airfield was operational from May 1918, shortly after the Royal Flying Corps had been renamed Royal Air Force, until possibly Mid March to May 1919 when it ceased to be in use and was relinquished by the RAF. The aircraft flew from a unpaved grass strip and it was used by 29 Squadron from 49 Wing RFC, and they would have been flying Bristol 2Fb two seater fighters. It originally replaced another airfield near Hertford, and covered 48 acres.

If any of our members have any information about this airfield please contact any of the SALHS committee.

*Terry Collins*





## Hertfordshire Parks and the Tudors

For our first meeting of 2018 we welcomed back Ann Rowe telling us about the Tudor Deer Parks in Hertfordshire. There have been Deer Parks in the county for almost 1000 years, since the Norman invasion, usually on land taken from its Saxon holders. The land was usually on high ground and wooded and situated away from the main house. Fallow deer were introduced to give the owners animals to hunt. By the time of the Tudors there were over 70 deer parks in Hertfordshire as shown on Christopher Saxtons county map of 1577.

When Henry VIII came to the throne his obsession with hunting and hawking meant that he would spend a lot of time in the deer parks of Hertfordshire. When he came on one of his hunting trips he normally stopped first at The Moor near Rickmansworth where there was a 600 acre park, before moving on to Enfield Chase and Waltham Forest, possibly stopping at the parks at Ware and Hertford. In 1522 he began a seven week progress around East Anglia including The Moor and Barnet, later in the year, due to an outbreak of plague in London, he stayed longer in Hertfordshire. He returned to the county to hunt for the next six years after having spent £3000 to build his palace at Hunsdon. Eventually he held over 6000 acres of land in Hertfordshire which he regularly visited for hunting.

In 1530 Henry and Anne Boleyn visited the county and shortly after that Henry came back and he visited Ashridge for a few days before moving into Bedfordshire and back into Hertfordshire to Hunsdon where he stayed for a while. Records show that at each stop along the way he paid a sum of money to the keepers of the parks. In 1531 he stayed at Knebworth and on this occasion, to ensure good hunting he brought his own stag with him.



Tudor Hunting Scene

He also enjoyed fishing in the ponds at Hunsdon, which had been specially kept for the kings use, by us-



Queen Elizabeth Hunting

ing the water from the Hunsdon brook. In order to create the ponds a vast amount of soil was dug out to create a number of banks to hold in the water, which were 2-3 metres high and 3 metres wide at the top.

By 1540 Henry had 16 parks in Hertfordshire covering 8000 acres. He obtained the Moor in 1541 and expanded both the house and the park. Following a serious riding accident in 1536 he gave up riding to hounds and instead began to watch deer coursing from specially created grandstands. After Henry's death in January 1547, his son Edward took the throne, he was a rather sickly child and died aged just 15. As a child however Edward spent a lot of time with his sister Elizabeth, part of the time at Ashridge, but in 1539 they spent Christmas at Hertford castle, they were also there at the time of their father's death and when they left, they never returned.

Henry's other daughter Princess Mary had been made familiar with hunting from an early age as she was given a falcon when she was just seven years old. She also spent sometime at Hunsdon palace after she had been sent away from court. Elizabeth spent much of her time at Hatfield and by the age of 15 she had her own household there. When she came to the throne Elizabeth had six parks in the county. During her reign Stansteadbury was built and she visited the house. Also locally she granted Thomas Baesh a licence to build a park of 300 acres. There was very little large building projects by Queen Elizabeth instead they were left to the nobility to build. After Elizabeth's reign the parks passed to James I and then to Charles I, but following the Civil War and the death of King Charles I they were almost all sold off by Parliament. Today there is little left of the parks but some, like Ashridge have been opened up for the public

This was another enthralling talk by Ann who answered a number of questions from the audience, rounding off another evening at which we all learnt something new.

*Terry Collins*

## SUNDAY LAWS IN GEORGIAN ENGLAND



The following bye-laws were introduced by the parish committee of Royston, Hertfordshire in 1787, and although they were not the same in every town, they do reflect King George III's strict observance of Sundays practiced in those days.

**NO DROVER**, horse courier, wagoner, butcher, higler, or their servants, shall travel on Sunday. Punishment: 21s. or in default 2 hours in Stocks.

**NO FRUIT**, herbs or goods of any kind shall be cried or exposed for sale on a Sunday. Goods will be forfeited.

**NO SHOEMAKER** shall expose for sale any boots or shoes on Sunday. Fine: 3s.4d. per pair and goods seized.

**ANY PERSON** offending against these Laws are to be prosecuted, except **BUTCHERS** who may sell meat up to 9 o'clock in the morning and at which time all Barbers are to be shut up and no business done after that time.

**NO PERSON** without a reasonable excuse shall be absent from some place of divine worship on a Sunday. Fine: 1s. to the poor.

**NO INN-KEEPER** or alehouse-keeper shall suffer anyone to continue drinking or tipping in their house. Forfeit 10s. and disabled for 3 years. (i.e. closed down)

These laws were enforced and the town Constable would be around on Sundays to enforce them. How different today!

*Ron Dale*

### 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 June 2017

Hon. President     Ron Dale  
 Secretary         Lynne Heraud  
 Treasurer         Glenis Collins  
 Archivist/Historian   Ray Dixon  
 Archivist/Facebook   Andrea Coppen  
 Public Relations/Acting Chair  
                                  Bob Hunt  
 Newsletter /Vice Chair  
                                  Terry Collins  
 Parish Council Rep   Julia Davies  
 Committee Members:  
     Linda Gifford  
     Gerald Coppen  
     Rob Gifford  
     John Lloyd  
     Rosemary James

Website Manager     Brian Johnson  
 General enquiries email  
 Admin@salhs.org.uk

### Forthcoming events

February	9th	2018	River Lea-Luton to Leyton by Richard Thomas
March	9th	2018	Antiques Roadshow plus The Fall and Rise of the English Country House in the 20th Century by Tim Turner
April	14th	2018	Remarkable Women in Hertfordshire's History by Julie Gregson
May	11th	2018	AGM - The Baesh Charity by Jonathon Trower
June	8th	2018	The Maltings by Guy Horlock
July	11th	2018	TBA

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

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