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website: www.salhs.org.uk

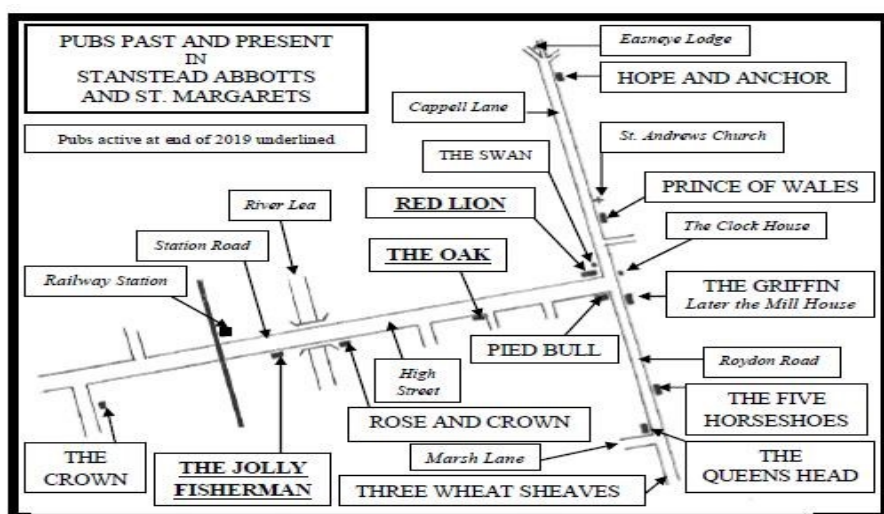
Stanstead Abbotts Local History Society

Issue 35

Editor—Terry Collins

Historic Inns of Stanstead Abbotts & St Margarets

July 2020



The names of early public houses in Stanstead Abbotts begin to appear in the historic records during the 15th and 16th centuries. Some early pubs were the Griffin, the Swan and the Three Wheat Sheaves all of which had closed by 1840. The Griffin, the Red Lion and the Pied Bull [formerly the Red Bull] had grown to become the hotels in the village by the late 1700s, while the Ale Houses continued to serve the villagers at a more humble level. However the larger establishments not being situated on a major road never grew to the size or importance of those in the neighbouring town of Ware. The limited stage coach services passing through the village to London between about 1760 and 1843 picked up and set down at the Pied Bull. Two public houses were opened near the river to serve the needs of those working on the river and in the riverside maltings. The Rose and Crown was in fact built fronting the High Street as an adjunct to the riverside malting behind it, which was

owned for many years by the Hankin family. Conveniently access to Stanstead Wharf and the riverside maltings was through an archway next to the public house. Just across the river in St Margarets was the George and Dragon better known today as the Jolly Fisherman and served the same type of clientele. The real heyday for the more substantial establishments was from the 1850s to 1914 when very large numbers of visitors from the East End of London descended on the village. These day trippers came to the area attracted by the special events put on for them at the Rye House Pleasure Gardens. The Red lion was to create its own small pleasure gardens to the rear of the premises even offering boating on the Mill-stream. Although the Red Lion, Pied Bull, Rose and Crown, along with the Jolly Fisherman and the Crown in St Margarets benefitted most from these crowded festive occasions others like the Oak, Five Horseshoes and the Queens Head also attracted extra custom. Some of the East Enders showed particular loyalty to one establishment or another over the years. The Pied

Editors Notes

As there have not been any meetings since March to write about, this issue contains articles almost all written specifically for the Newsletter. I hope that those of you with email received the last newsletter (No. 34) sent digitally. If not please advise us.

Bull extended its trade in another way by catering specifically for the cyclists who visited the area during the height of bicycle use for touring the countryside. This was particularly important in the late Victorian Period and then into the Edwardian Age. The two world wars and social changes saw the public houses adapt to the new circumstances of the C20th, while trying to retain a semblance of past glories. By becoming more locally focussed with some still retaining their hotel or bed and breakfast offering there were still seven licensed premises in Stanstead Abbotts and two in Stanstead St Margarets in 1937. All of these public houses were still in operation in 1962. At the start of 2020 only The Red Lion and The Oak remained in Stanstead Abbotts along with the Jolly Fisherman just over the river bridge in St. Margarets. These three surviving public houses now rely heavily on their ability to provide restaurant facilities to supplement the decreasing income from drink sales.

Stuart Moye

A longer article on the Historic Pubs of the village which includes details about individual licenced premises and pictures of some can be found within the media section of the Societies website. [www.salhs.org.uk]

Anne Boleyn and Stanstead Abbots

An eye-witness account of the day Anne Boleyn was made Marchioness of Pembroke and owner and overlord of the manor of Stanstead Abbots - at least for a while...

1 Sept. 1532 Sunday. ‘The lady was conveyed by noblemen and the Officers of Arms at Windsor Castle to the King who was accompanied by the Dukes of Norfolk and Suffolk and other noblemen and the ambassador of France. Mr.Garter bore her patent of creation, and Lady Mary, daughter of the Duke of Norfolk, her mantle of crimson velvet, furred with ermines, and a coronet. The Lady Marquess who was “in her hair,”was led by Elizabeth, Countess of Rutland and Dorothy, Countess of Sussex. While she kneeled before the King, Garter declared her patent which was read by the Bishop of Winchester and the King invested her with the mantle and coronet and gave her two patents – one of her creation and one of £1,000 a year. She thanked the King and retired to her chamber.’

The sum of her lands given with this creation – Corry Mallett (Somerset), Hunesdon, Eastwyk in Hertfordshire, lands which were late of Philip Paris, Hunesdon, the manors of Stansted (sic), Roydon, Fylollyshal (?Don’t ask!) and Cockeshal and Weston-next-Baldoke, total value £1,023.

(See: Institute of Historical Records, Letters, Papers, Henry VIII, vol.5, 1531/2, no. 1274, pp 552-571, ed. James Gaidner, 1885).

Approaching the Dissolution, on being handed back these manors from the abbot of Waltham in 1531 Henry VIII donated them to Philip Paris, one of his favourites, at a peppercorn rent.

After such a day, a pre-wedding present from Henry, Anne must have been thrilled, and with the prospect of a



Anne Boleyn at her wedding 1533

forthcoming marriage, her own income, and the crown of the Queen of England, she must have been glowing with anticipation and joy and on 25th January 1533 she actually donned this crown. Just over three years later Anne was once more at a public ceremony, once again kneeling, the central figure on a newly erected scaffold in the Tower precincts, just north of the White Tower. This day of her execution was 19th May, 1536 and she was granted two merciful acts before her death in deference to her position as Queen. Her death sentence of burning alive had been commuted to that of beheading. Secondly she was spared the axe as a merciful act and was executed by a skilled imported French swordsman.* Anne knelt upright for her death in the French style of the day. Her ladies-in-waiting and several of the lords in attendance were weeping. In her final speech Anne swore on oath several times that she had never been unfaithful to the king, but still managed to praise Henry as a “gentle and sovereign lord” and asked that God show compassion to her accusers. This shows what an exceptional woman she was, for who could forgive anyone an act of execution. Her sole ally throughout her trial had been Thomas Cranmer and at Lambeth Palace on the fatal day, he wept uncontrollably, finally commenting that, “She who has been Queen of England on Earth, today became Queen in Heaven.” Her exact date of birth has never been confirmed, but she is believed to have been no older than 35.

A sad end for anyone, but this was a brutal time in which to live and to die, especially near this monarch. *Sometimes several blows were required with the axe before severance.



Execution of Anne Boleyn 19th May 1536

Ron Dale

Archie Miller—a village character

In 1868 a baby was born to the well-known Miller family in Stanstead Abbots who was in later life to become an eccentric village character. He was to live his entire life in the village of his birth spending much of his working life employed in maintaining the local stretch of The New River. He was to become best known beyond the village for his extra job as the local Otter Catcher.

Archie Miller lived in one of the Riverside Cottages and he kept an immaculate garden and as was common at the time not only grew a mass of flowers each year but also a range of vegetables for his table. To be found in his garden was also a long lived shed constructed from scavenged wood and recycled corrugated iron. Within Archie created a museum of sorts made up of a mass of curios he picked up as the years went by. In 1950 a visitor recorded a sign outside the hut/museum which said “Live and let live” and just inside the door an empty clock case labelled “No Tick”. This gives us a little glimpse of the rather unusual contents of Archie’s Museum. His visitors were on occasion given the privilege of a guided tour of his “Aladdin’s Cave” creation with Archie regaling the visitor with many an elaborate story about individual “exhibits”. Another example of Archie Miller’s unusual character was when at the age of 59 he purchased for himself a rather grand Oak coffin with fine rosewood inlay and silk lining. He kept this rather persona acquisition on two white painted barrels in his home awaiting its eventual use. In 1937 he told a Daily Mirror reporter that he kept it in the house so that he could sleep in it. If the reporter noticed the glint in the eye of an accomplished story teller it is unrecorded but he was undoubtedly pleased to have been given such wonderful material for his readers. Many years later in 1951 Archie explained to another of a long line of reporters that he had paid £23 and thought it a very good bargain. Best known of Archie Miller’s activities was his side line as an otter catcher for the Amwell Magna Fishery. By 1951 he was able to claim he had killed 87 otters and when he later featured in a radio programme he added that they were vicious things and he advised everybody to keep well away from them. Amwell Magna Fisheries were no doubt pleased with his work in reducing the loss to otters of their expensive stock of fish and rewarded him well for his services. This rather eccentric village character was to pass away in 1959 decades after he purchased his oak coffin.



Archie Miller in his garden with one of the Otters he trapped

Stuart Moye

A more extensive article with more pictures about Archie Miller can be found within the media section of the Societies website. [www.salhs.org.uk]

Cambridge Goes Zoom

As you are all aware, due to the continuing pandemic there have been no live meetings for a number of months, so to give our members something to see we used the latest technology to overcome the problem by holding a meeting using Zoom and 45–47 people logged on and joined in. Our speaker was Murray Jacobs, a qualified Cambridge guide and his topic was a short tour along just one street in the city, Kings Parade. This city centre street has college and university buildings along one side specifically Kings College famed for its chapel, a magnificent example of English Gothic architecture with the worlds largest fan vaulted ceiling and some of the oldest stained glass. At the north end of the parade stands Great St Marys Church which is the university church for the University of Cambridge. This building was constructed between 478 and 1519 but there has been a church on the site since 1205. across the road stands the Senate house, an 18th century Neo Classical building which the University owns. Previously used for meetings of the University senate it is now mainly used for graduation ceremonies.. The house gained fame in 1958 when people woke up to see an Austin seven car of the roof on the Senate house, which had been winched up there by students from Gonville and Caius college and which took the college a week to get it down.

The other side of the parade is a mix of shops, restaurants and businesses with buildings spanning the centuries, but the most interesting is at the corner of Kings Parade and Trumpington and Benet Streets, where you will find the Corpus Clock. More than 200 people were involved in the funding and manufacture of this piece which has 24 carat plating and is more than 4 ft. in diameter and is topped by a metal insect similar to a grasshopper. It has no numerals or hands but displays the time through 3 rings displaying hours, minutes and seconds through slits and is backlit with blue LEDs. It was opened to the public in 2008 and is well worth seeing if you are in the area. *Terry Collins*

Ragged School Outing to Stanstead Abbotts 1915

At the start of the C20th the teachers of St. Andrews Church Sunday School used to arrange an annual visit to the village for the poor children of Hoxton in London. They worked closely with The Hoxton Market Christian Mission who ran a so Called "Ragged School" for the poorest of children. The outing was funded by means of donations made by villagers into a special fund created for the purpose. Even the start of WWI did not prevent this yearly event, with the first outing of the war years occurring on June 17th 1915.

108 children disembarked from a train from Liverpool Street just after 10.30 am in the care of Mr John Burt the Superintendent of the Mission. The party made its way to "The Rye House" at the time a well-known leisure destination for Londoners. From 11.00 until 12.30 the children after firstly enjoying cake and lemonade provided on their arrival were then free to roam the grounds and take pleasure in the amusements made available for them. At 12.30 Mr Frank Hurford conveyed the party by horse and carts to the village hall in Stanstead Abbotts. It is believed this journey was made via the toll road to the old church and then down Cats Hill into the village. Here a feast of beef and ham sandwiches, tarts, custards and lemonade awaited the children who enthusiastically tucked into their lunch. The afternoon was spent in a nearby field with many games and sports providing great enjoyment for the young visitors and the grown-ups too it was said. After the best part of four hours of excitement and exercise the party retreated back to the village hall for tea at 5.15 pm. After the meal was over the visiting children provided entertainment in the form of recitals and songs. This was seen as a way in which these children could say thank you to those who had provided them with a days escape from the drab city to the wonders of the countryside. This was followed by short formal thanks from the Vicar of the village with a response from Mr John Burt. Before they departed each child was given a mug, a bun, a bag of sweets and a small bunch of flowers. Everyone said their goodbyes and the visitors then made their way to the station to catch a train back to Liverpool Street. It was no doubt a wonderful day out for the children of Hoxton who could enjoy, albeit for just a day, the fresh air, green grass and trees so lacking in their day to day lives.



View of the leisure grounds at Rye House 1904

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Stuart Moye

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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.

Forthcoming events

August	16th	2020	Barbecue Cancelled
September	11th	2020	Reconstructing Queen Victoria's Childhood Home by Dr. Lee Prosser (TBC)
October	9th	2020	Odd Pots & Foreigners by Keith Fitzpatrick Matthews
November	13th	2020	An Historic Pub crawl from Turnford to Hoddesdon by David Dent
December	11th	2020	Christmas Party (Members Only)
January	8th	2021	Pulham Stone by Val Christman

Unless stated otherwise all meetings are at the Parish Hall at 7.30pm
Members Free. Non Members £2 Tea, Coffee and biscuits included