

S.A.L.H.S

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Stanstead Abbotts Local History Society

Issue 38

Editor—Terry Collins

Hertfordshire Through Time

April 2021

March saw the welcome return of Stephen Poulter with a talk which covered most of the County, beginning with Stephen telling us how he ran the Hoddesdon bookshop for six years. While there he was contacted by Amberley Publishers who wanted to produce a series of books on the history of a number of Hertfordshire towns, calling the series 'Through Time' and over the next few years they produced three books. Stephen wrote the one for Hoddesdon and Broxbourne, which came out in 2010 with Lowewood museum providing the black and white photographs and Stephen himself took the colour pictures. This was followed by one on Hertford in 2011 and then Ware in 2012. After the success of these books, the publishers decided to produce another series this time about counties and he was asked to do one looking at the whole county of Hertfordshire which was the first in the 'County Through Time' series.

To do this required lots of research by Stephen, using books such as the Victoria History of the County of Hertford published between 1902 and 1914 in three volumes with a separate index in 1923 this book is organised into the hundreds based on the manors dating back to the Norman Conquest. Stephen also used British History Online and the Kings England Hertfordshire by Arthur Mee one of 42 volumes written by Mee and first published in 1936 and sometimes called the second Domesday Book. It was published until the 1960's, with a new edition in the 1970's with a third updated edition in 1990. It is said that in order to

complete the series Mee and his associates travelled over half a million miles. One other book used in research was 'The Buildings of England Hertfordshire' by Nikolaus Pevsner. This is one of 42 volumes of architectural histories

Stephen followed this with a quiz, 'How Well Do You Know Your County' with such questions as how many Hertfordshire Members of parliament are there or what is the population of Hertfordshire (Answers are 11MP's and 1.19 million). There were also pictures of famous people relating to Hertfordshire to be recognised. We were then taken on a tour of the county starting with pictures of old county maps, the first by John Speed from the late 17th Century showing the various 'Hundreds'. The next was from 1884 but this had railways and roads many still in use.

We then were shown quotations about the county or London's Country Neighbour as it was called. By Charles Lamb.

The first village we saw was Aldbury near Tring, said by many visitors to be the best looking village in Hertfordshire with its village stocks and pond. It is a village often used for filming and TV location, such as Inspector Morse and Midsomer Murders. B was for Baldock and Bishop Stortford which has the Boars Head inn in the High Street dating from the late 16th Century. At one time the town contained a brickworks, a kiln works and an iron foundry. Its main roads are in the shape of a cross.

The letter D took us to the Digswell Viaduct opened by Queen Victoria on 6th August 1850 but she was so afraid of the height, 30 me-

tres, that she refused to travel across it, she had to leave the train and travel in a horse drawn carriage. Moving through the alphabet we arrived closer to home, Hertford and its castle. There has been a castle on the site of today's building since 1066 when one was built to control the river and town. The castle was taken by the French in 1216 after a 25 day siege and was held by them for nearly 2 years. In 1463 the present gatehouse was built and extended in 1800 according to Pevsner. During the 18th century the grounds were used to fatten cattle for the local meat market. From here we moved on to the letter L and Letchworth (the first Garden City) one of the oldest parishes in the county and in 1900 had a



Spirella Building Letchworth

population of just 96. It now has a population over 33,000. Its development was the first in the country to adopt a zoning policy separating industry, business and residential areas.

The towns and villages mentioned are just some of those that Stephen mentioned in his latest talk. Others included Hitchin, Cuffley, Park Street and Royston.

Once again Stephen was warmly thanked for another interesting talk.

Terry Collins

A Pub Crawl from Turnford to Hoddesdon

A return visit from David Dent with the above talk was our April Zoom meeting. He spoke about a number of the pubs between Turnford and the clock tower in Hoddesdon dating from the 16th to 20th century.

We started with the Bulls Head in Turnford which is a timber framed building possibly dating from the 15th century when it was a private house. In 1603 Robert Trimmer was refused a licence for the premises and it was one of a number of pubs taken over by McMullens in 1912. Opposite the Bull stands the building that was the Old Bulls Head which itself replaced an earlier building on the site and was built in the 19th century. When it opened it was known as the Turnford Massey until 1980 and is now an Indian restaurant.

Moving further along Turnford High Road we come to the site of the New River Arms which was constructed in 1936 and opened the following year, the picture accompanying this information showed a sign post pointing left to Cheshunt and right to London along the main arterial road. The building itself was demolished in 2018, plans for the building of some shops was submitted but nothing has happened. Further along the High Road we come to the Queens Head another timber framed building dating from the 17th century or earlier. In 1851 it had stabling for 30 horses but the mode of transport had changed by the 20th century when it advertised that it catered for cyclists. In the photo shown with this pub from 1910 there is a young boy named Horace Wigg the son of the local postmaster. A later picture shows that an off licence had been added to the side of the building.

The White Horse was mentioned next, a 17th Century building in Wormley which ceased trading in 1889 and was demolished a year later. The cause for this was that nearby, Christies had commissioned the building of the Globe Hotel, to replace the Globe Pub, and this took the trade away. This was another pub which catered for cyclists until it closed in 1969, after this it was used as accommodation for nursery workers until 1978. Across the road from the Globe stood the Plough which was run by the Osborne family who were blacksmiths, many of the publicans had other jobs, and which closed in 1958 and was converted into two houses.

Next along the High Road were the Old Star first mentioned in 1707 and the New Star which opened in 1889. These two pubs ran alongside each other for some time until the New Star was converted into flats in 1937, and then demolished in the 1950's.

The Old Star was rebuilt in 1935 and demolished in 2019. From 1852 until 1868 there were 6 pubs in the space of 1/2 mile.

Next along the road is The White Bear which was first recorded in 1523 run by a John Slater. In the 1980's its name was changed to the Anne Of Cleves a few years later it changed back to the White Bear. Next in the High Road is the Bull first mentioned as an inn in 1571 and its earliest known licence was granted in 1618. The original building was knocked down and a modern building stands in the space occupied by the original stables and garden and built in 1972. Standing in the High Street is the George III originally a small cottage dating from 1806 whose first licence was granted in 1866, today it is still a popular venue



The Golden Lion Hoddesdon

for live music.

Continuing into Hoddesdon we come to the Golden Lion one of the oldest buildings in the town dating from 1535, and like many of the pubs and inns it is a Grade 2 listed building, originally known as the White Hinde. In 1912 a motor car garage was added to the rear of the building. Before the advent of the motor vehicle in 1835, the inns of Hoddesdon had stabling for 1000 horses. At number 89 High Street was the Bull whose pub sign stretched right across the road. Originally built in the 16th century and called the Bell, the columns at the front came from a nunnery in Cheshunt. It closed in 1959 and there followed a proposal to demolish the building but it was turned down. A public enquiry ensued and the government sided with the developer and it was demolished in 1964. Moving along to number 95 to the White Swan which dates from the 16th century and is one of the few pubs to retain its original name. A small part of the building was once used as a

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Richard Hunt - A Victorian Businessman

Richard Hunt is first recorded in Stanstead Abbots in 1851 as the miller and living in the Mill House located across the road from the watermill. He had already inherited a reasonable sum of money which he began to invest in a series of commercial investments employing some 30 workers in 1851. By the mid-1850s he was already regarded as a businessman of some substance and status. This led him to become the Deputy Chairman of the fledgling Ware Hadham and Buntingford Railway Company which held its first meeting in Buntingford in October 1857. He was to continue to play a major role during the construction, opening and operation of the railway as a Director of the company until it was sold in 1866. Meanwhile he was developing and expanding a range of business interests including the malting trade, coal merchant and barges on the river. He also became a director of several insurance companies as well as managing a considerable property portfolio.

Within the village he began in 1857 to improve the watermill by replacing the old wooden machinery with metal gears and shafts. Six years later, working closely with the New River Company from whom he leased the mill, he built a new mill to be powered in by steam. The new steam mill unfortunately caught fire in August 1864 not long after it started operating, completely burning down the ancient wooden mill and doing extensive damage to the new one. Undaunted Richard set about reconstruction and was to be involved in the redesigning of the road junction where Roydon Road meets Cappell Lane and the High Street. The sharp turning from Roydon Road into the High Street that Richard Hunt created, although not a problem for horse drawn traffic, was to cause considerable difficulties in the motorised age and still does today, particularly where large lorries are concerned.

While he was busy with the reconstruction of the mill, Richard was also involved with the difficult first years of the operation of the Buntingford Line as well as building a large malting in 1866-67, located between the river and the railway close to Stanstead Lock. This impressive if unusual malting suggests an owner who had plenty of money to create a statement of his wealth as well as being an efficient place of business. Richard Hunt provided a dinner on the 16th November 1867 to commemorate the completion of the malting. It was held in one of the large storerooms on the upper floor lit by gas and festooned with flowers and greenery. Some 180 guests attended, 140 of whom were workers, with ample wine and ale provided after the meal. Rather than run the new malting himself Richard Hunt leased it to Mary Hankin a member of the well-known local malting and barge owning family. Known as The Abbey Malting and later St Margaret's Malting it is today in resi-

dential use as River Meads a rebuilt near look alike of the original buildings.

Richard Hunt received a further boost to his wealth in 1866 when his brother died leaving to him further properties and land, mostly in Much Hadham. Not surprisingly this saw him further expanding his business interests and he seems to have accumulated a considerably expanded portfolio of land properties and businesses in the ensuing years. He was not always successful as in 1866 when he attempted to persuade fellow shareholders in the Buntingford Railway not to sell out to the Great Eastern Railway Company [GER]. It appears a majority of shareholders had expected much quicker returns for their investment and Richard was unable to convince them that railway investments required more time and patience to see a profit. The Buntingford Company was taken over by the GER and Richard Hunt was soon to purchase a siding for his Abbey Malting with rail transport much used by the malting for nearly 100 years.

In 1875 Richard Hunt gave up the lease at the mill and moved into Stanstead Hall around the corner in the High Street. He was now 60 years old and was in a position of having considerable income from his business interests plus rental income from numerous properties. He therefore no longer needed to be heavily involved in the day to day running of his businesses. He built for himself a very

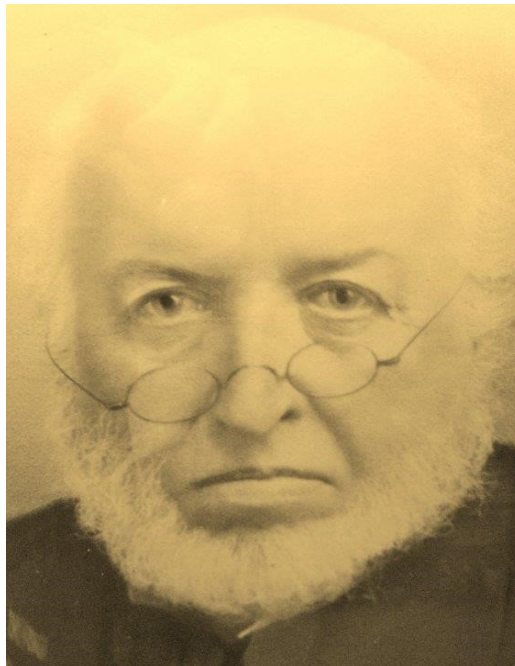
large windmill on land in Glenmire next to the tail steam of the watermill. He did this as part

of his wider interests in milling and windmills, his family having operated a windmill in Much Hadham when he was young. The new tall windmill towered over the houses in Stanstead and was a notable local landmark for about 12 to 15 years before its demolition by 1894.

Richard Hunt continued to be successful until in 1890, at the age of 75, he decided to sell many of his business interests and fully retire. Many of his local assets were sold at an auction held in June 1891 at the Pied Bull in the village and included five maltings and twenty houses variously located in Stanstead Abbots, Roydon and a few in Nazeing. He did retain considerable family land and properties in Much Hadham. In the same year as the auction Richard Hunt moved to a Culver Lodge in Much Hadham, the village of his formative years. He was to live just five years more passing away in December 1896 at the age of 81 years, but not before he had built a second even larger windmill in sight of his retirement home.

Stuart Moye

(There is much more to be discovered about this successful local C19th businessman as he features in several articles to be found within the media section of the SALHS website)



The characterful face of Richard Hunt in his later years.

Pub Crawl Continued from page 4

butchers shop and then it was incorporated into the main pub. The pub once had a slaughterhouse and a cattle pen in the yard with a smithy next door. In 1756 it had stabling for sixty horses more than any other inn in the county. The pub has been refurbished twice in 1963/4 and 1999 when it cost £325,000.

Next we looked at The Star which changed its name from The Salisbury Arms when it was taken over by Weatherspoon's. It was known as The Star in the 16th century and then the Black Lion.. It contained a court-house believed to be built by Lord Salisbury in 1610 adjoining the inn. The Salisbury Arms was the last of the three inns that had signs that spanned the road to have it pulled down. In the 1920's there was a whippet dog tack at the rear of the inn. Travellers staying there could also watch cock fighting or play bowls. During restoration Tudor wall paintings were discovered and are now on show to customers.

The Bell stands at number 1 Burford Street and is a listed 16th century building (1546) once used as a private dwelling house that belonged to the Rector of Amwell. In 1615 it was an inn called The Hollibush but changed its name in 1625 to the Blue Bell. It is believed that the name bell originated from its location to the towns alarm and curfew bell that was in the old St Katherine's chapel. By 1756 the inn was noted as having stabling for 20 horses and six men. Also in Burford Street stood the Maidenhead another old pub established in the 15th century on the site of an old manor house, it was pulled down in 1964 when the Tower Centre was built.

Terry Collins

NOTICES

February Meeting

Timber Framed Buildings of Essex and Herts.

The above topic given by Helen Gibson looked at a number of old buildings in great depth using many plans, drawings and photographs explaining the different types of joints etc. A very detailed talk that was found to be very interesting but without seeing them and using some of them it is not possible to write a report for you to appreciate the topic. So I am very sorry but there will not be one in this issue of the SALHS newsletter.

From the Treasurer

From 1st April subscriptions became due for those of you who pay by standing order you have nothing to do your membership will continue automatically. If you pay by bank transfer/direct credit please would you be kind enough to arrange that payment for this month, this would be most appreciated. If you pay by cheque or cash I enclose a renewal form with this newsletter to enable you to carry that out. If you wish to change to standing order our bank details are as follows:

Sort code: 20 20 37

Account number: 33863670

We do hope that you all wish to continue with your membership even though for some of you it has not been possible to partake in our monthly meetings due to the pandemic and those meetings having to take place via Zoom. Hopefully we will be able to return to face to face meetings, before too long.

Glenis Collins

The SALHS Committee

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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

May	14th	2021	Waterford Church by Malcolm Wandrag and the A.G.M
June	11th	2021	St Albans Signal Box A Brief History by Tony Furse
July	9th	2021	The History of Welwyn Garden City by Marion Hill
August	No meeting but a possible trip out.		
September	10th	2021	Down the New River by Rob Gifford
October	8th	2021	Queen Victoria's rooms at Kensington Palace by Dr Lee Prosser

For Zoom meetings you will be given in details nearer the date.