

S.A.L.H.S

website: www.salhs.org.uk

Stanstead Abbotts Local History Society

Issue 16

Editor—Terry Collins

Julian Grenfell

October 2015

Marion Hill from HALS (Hertfordshire Archives and Local Studies) was our speaker in September and her subject was the poet Julian Grenfell. Unfortunately I was on holiday so unable to be there. But I have done a little research on him which follows.



Julian Henry Francis Grenfell was born on 30th March 1888 in London, the son of William Henry Grenfell, first Baron Desborough and his wife Ethel Anne Priscilla, daughter of Julian Fane.

As a boy he was educated at Summerfields School in Oxford and following that he was at Eton where he reached the sixth form and edited the Eton Chronicle journal. After leaving school in 1906 he went up to Baliol College Oxford where he read literature. Although a keen sportsman competing for his college in rowing and boxing he was a very withdrawn man

and suffered a nervous breakdown before he finished his degree but the resulting pass mark was sufficient to gain him a commission in the army.

He had always wanted a military career and in 1910 he joined the Army in the 1st (Royal) Dragoons and was posted to Muttra in India. The following year he went to South Africa where he stayed until the outbreak of war in Europe in 1914 when his regiment returned to England. He left with his regiment for France on 8th October landing at Ostend.

During the remainder of that year they took part in the defence of Antwerp and the First Battle of Ypres, serving as part of the 3rd Cavalry Division. In November 1914 Julian was awarded the Distinguished Service Order (DSO) for an individual piece of reconnaissance behind enemy lines which gave early warning of an enemy offensive, early in 1915 he was also mentioned in despatches. On the 13th May 1915 near Ypres he was standing with a group of officers studying enemy positions when a shell exploded nearby and he was struck by a shell splinter, he was taken to hospital in Boulogne where he died 13 days later with his parents and sister at his bedside. He is buried in Boulogne Eastern Cemetery. On the day that his obituary was published in the Times his most famous poem, 'Into Battle' was also published.

Julian Grenfell's family home was at Taplow Court in Buckinghamshire but his connection locally is that his family's second home was Panshangier in Hertford where his mother lived

after his death until 1905.

Julian had an older brother Gerald, who was killed in the war two months after Julian's death while serving as a Lieutenant in the Rifle Brigade near Ypres. His younger brother died in a motor accident in 1926.

Julian was a man who in one sense glorified war, once famously writing 'I adore war, it is like a big picnic without the objectivelessness of a picnic. I have never been more well or more happy.' His poem 'Into Battle' is said to be the most anthologised poem of the First World War. It describes the inspiration that a soldier can take from nature in the quiet time before a battle begins.

Part of it reads:

*The woodland trees that stand together,
They stand to him each one a friend;
They gently speak in the windy weather;
They guide to valley and ridge's end.*

*The kestrel hovering by day,
And the little owls that call by night,
Bid him be swift and keen as they—
As keen of sound, as swift as sight.*

*The blackbird sings to him, 'Brother,
brother
If this be the last song you shall sing,
Sing well for you will not sing another,
Brother, sing.*

Terry Collins

The Saxon Origins of St James Church.

This article was provided by Ron Dale and gives additional information about St James Church.

'It is suggested that the Primary Nave at Stanstead Abbots is the work of the pre-conquest thegn, Aelfwine of Godton, and not Ranulf, brother of Ilger. Stanstead was Ranulf's most important manor and was probably his caput (a Latin word meaning literally head.) If he had commissioned this primary nave it would have been much larger' - Daniel Secker, Anglo Saxon archaeologist and investigator 2005.

Whilst it has always been agreed that the church of St James was constructed from the 13th century onwards, like most ancient buildings it has sections constructed in various centuries. However there is now ample evidence that the primary nave was constructed as early as 1050 during the period when Alwine (or Aelfwine) of Godton was our local Saxon lord.

We know that there was a priest at Stanstede in 1086 as he is mentioned in the Domesday book and therefore a church of some description would also exist. The fact that the nave is today considered as 13th century ignores the fact that part of it may have had Saxon origins. It has been suggested that this early part of the nave may have been part of an earlier church onto which the remainder of St James was added throughout the centuries, which poses the question: how old is St James church?

We need to turn to expert advice on such a question and in 2002 the Churches Conservation Trust which is now responsible for this grade 1 listed building, requested a survey of the nave form well-known Anglo-Saxon church archaeologist, Daniel Secker. Mr

Secker was trained in archaeology at UCL and has written many papers on his field investigations into Anglo-Saxon churches and castles, his main area of expertise. In the Spring and Summer of 2002 a survey was done at St James on part of the nave. As there was not time to do a larger survey it was decided to do a comprehensive stone-by-stone survey of the 11th century part of the nave, the eastern section of north wall. In 2005 Mr Secker published his 24 page report, complete with drawings entitled: *St James, Stanstead Abbots, the Early Medieval Church,*

extension to the nave due to the lack of funds under the administration of the lord of the manor Roger de Wanchy, who was deeply in debt to a London moneylender and subsequently lost the manor to Waltham Abbey because of this.

Mr Secker also comments on the large amount of Roman and Romano-British material used in the early part of the nave.

'At Stanstead there was evidence of Romano-British occupation. The most obvious sign is the extensive re-use of Roman brick in the north wall of the nave. There is far more use of Roman brick here than elsewhere'

He also mentions that he believes that the house, Stanstead Bury, judging by its alignment, is built on top of an earlier building and also this, probably on top of a Roman villa. Of course, the Domesday Book records a Roman pavement there and also Roman pottery is occasionally found in Stanstead.

The report of Daniel Secker is a pdf file online for all to read, with many useful drawings. Its

is a fascinating study, exhibiting great knowledge of early church buildings and of our own local history. I suppose the true answer to the question of the age of St James church is that it has an 11th century wall followed by sections added in most of the following centuries. Mr. Secker's case is a sound one, and I for one, would not consider disagreeing with the great knowledge and experience of his specialist subject displayed in this very comprehensive report. Nowhere does Secker suggest the early nave was part of an earlier church. On the contrary, he points out the reason for its small size (the Saxon custom) and for the later extensions up to the 13th century. In his opinion, the church was commenced ca. 1050 and just kept on growing.



Picture by Brian Johnson

ca.1050-1250 a Selective Survey of the Fabric. His selective survey chose the period ca. 1050-1250 to be surveyed, this being the earliest part of the building in his opinion and therefore, the most vulnerable. His report is a strongly argued one, providing ample proof of the age of the primary nave due partly to its dimensions and partly to the method and content of its construction. He proves the nave as it stands today was constructed in three periods: the earliest section ca. 1050, with additions in the late 12th century and early 13th, the two-century period he had decided to concentrate on. He also provides us with a reason for the late

Hertford Corn Exchange

Corn Exchanges were the main source of grain movement in most towns. They varied in size depending on the local agriculture. They were open for business on market days only.

Grain merchants were arranged round the hall and farmers would bring samples of their grain they wished to sell. The merchant would examine the sample in his hands and smell the grain to establish if it was sound.

Merchants would look for thin corn and ergot, which was poisonous, together with wild oats. They would start by cutting the grain in half with a farinator and it was here that they could see if the grain was floury or steely (looking shiny.) If floury the barley grain might be suitable for malting. Lesser quality barley could be used for lesser malting, such as crystal, brown or black malt. In the case of floury wheat, it would be milled for human consumption.

Steely wheat made biscuits, pearling or for provender milling which was animal feed.

In all cases the grain must be sound. This is established using a Chrodrometer which measures the bushel weight. It detects whether the grain has pre-germinated in the field making it lighter, in which case it can only be used in animal feed.

The farmer needed to hire jute sacks (28" x 56") from the railway companies at a cost of 1 penny per sack per week, and these would hold four bushels of grain. Two full sacks made up one 'quarter' and was the smallest amount you could sell.

In the early days, weighing was not involved. Grain was sold by volume in the form of bushels and pecks (4 pecks = 1 bushel). Later on weights were introduced with oats weighing 3 cwt per quarter, barley 4 cwt, wheat 4 1/2 cwt and beans 5 cwt per quarter. All were carried by hand.

The farmer would inform the merchant how much grain he was selling and the merchant would offer the farmer a price per quarter. This was all put on an envelope and buyers would examine the envelopes to see whether the grain was fit for their purpose.

Grain business was often conducted on 'Nails' outside the exchange. Hence the saying 'Pay on the Nail'.



A 'Nail'

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SALHS Annual Barbecue

Sunday August 16th saw us meeting at Ray and Jane Dixon's garden for yet another Summer gathering. This time however the weather was kind to us and thirty one members enjoyed a warm and pleasant afternoon.

We were all made most welcome

in their very well maintained and colourful garden. The many different plants providing topics of conversation.

The chef, see below, did his usual valiant stint on the barbecue. But this time we were unable to enjoy our local Braughing sausages as

they are no longer available, but the replacements were just as good together with burgers, and black pudding. Jane provided the rest of the food, extremely well prepared and served.

At then end of the afternoon Ian thanked them both for their hospitality



Quiz Night 2015

Want to know the group name for Rhinoceroses ?

The Society's annual fundraising Quiz Night was once more supported by over 60 people struggling to answer questions. We probably should rename this Glenis and Terry's annual intellectual torture night! As always, the questions had very little to do with the title of the round, leaving people like me totally confused! Our table played its Joker thinking the questions would be about one thing when they were totally about another! Needless to say we blew our chance of winning!

Everybody seemed to have a lovely time if the noise, laughter and comments were anything to go by. And the night was impeccably organised by Glenis and Terry as always. They and their friends the scorers did a sterling job and our thanks go to them and all the other organisers of the evening. And a big thanks to all those who came to the event. It was a great success and helped boost the coffers, by £345.

Ian White Chairman

The answer to the question is a CRASH!!!

The SALHS Committee May 2014

Hon. President	Ron Dale
Chairman	Ian White
Secretary	Lynne Heraud
Treasurer	Glenis Collins
Archivist/Historian	Ray Dixon
Archivist/Facebook	Andrea Coppen
Public Relations	Bob Hunt
School Liaison/ Programme Organiser	Janet Dance
Newsletter	Terry Collins
Parish Council Rep	Julia Davies
Committee Members	Linda Gifford Gerald Coppen
Website Manager	Brian Johnson

General enquiries email
Admin@salhs.org.uk

Hertford Corn Exchange - continued

The Main Merchants at Hertford

Myhill (Saffron Walden)
Barnard (Newport Essex)
TW & P Franklin (Hitchin)
P Titmuss (Wheathampstead)
Sherriff (Hatfield)
Dixon & Sons (Ware)
Sworder & Marchant (Epping)

The Main Buyers

F Hammond (Harringtons Hertford)
"Halfcorn" Bennett (Gripper & Wightman Hertford)
R Croft (Pages Ware)
Jim Thoms (Wards Ware)
Claude Jupp (French & Jupp Stanstead Abbotts)
Mr Illott (Illotts Mill Hertford)
J Garratt (Garrats Mill Hertford)

Buyers became more sophisticated and employed a chemist from 1950 onwards. This meant germination was accurately checked using staining methods and testing nitrogen content. Lower levels of nitrogen, for example made better malt. Farmers were beginning to produce in greater bulk and were using driers. This meant the grain was less suitable for local exchanges and this was one of the main reasons for their demise. The last exchanges in Bury St Edmunds and Mark Lane in the City of London shut in the 1990's. Grain is still part of the international 'futures' market, but now involves many other commodities.

Guy Horlock (2012)

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

November 13th	2015	The Royal Gunpowder Mills by Andrew Thomas
December 11th	2015	Christmas Party - Members Only
January 8th	2016	Hertfordshire: A Landscape History by Anne Rowe
February 12th	2016	SALHS Antiques Roadshow
March 11th	2016	Archaeology by Kris Lockyer
April 8th	2016	The 18th Century Workhouse by Sheila White

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