



S.A.L.H.S

website: www.salhs.org.uk

Stanstead Abbots Local History Society

Issue 3

Editor—Terry Collins

October 2012

Stanstead Bury

On September 14th about 25 SALHS members gathered at Stanstead Bury for a guided tour of the house, courtesy of Jonathan and Gini Trower. We began by looking at some Roman coins and other artifacts found in fields next to St James church. It is known that there was a Roman settlement in the area and Saxon objects have also been found around the house.

Through much of the Middle Ages the parish of Stanstead Abbots was in the ownership of the Abbey of Waltham. However little is known of the "Bury" as a manor house is called in this part of Hertfordshire. Henry VIII acquired the manor from the Abbey of Waltham in 1531 and gave it to Anne Boleyn. He already owned the neighbouring manors of Hunsdon and Eastwick where he established three deer parks and the whole was administered along with Roydon to the East as the "Honour of Hunsdon",

Anne Boleyn and her daughter, the future Queen Elizabeth I were imprisoned in Hunsdon House and it is this perhaps that has given rise to the long standing rumour that there is a tunnel from Hunsdon House to Stanstead Bury. It has never been found as it would need to be at least a mile long.. Although Mr. Trower's grandfather thought he had found it many years ago when he fell through a floor in the stables into a large, rather beautiful, brick lined drain.

In the 1556 survey of manors owned by Queen Mary the house was described as "one faire capital house

with an orchard, garden, dove house and diverse ponds". In 1559 Queen Elizabeth granted the Manor of Stanstead Bury to Edward Baesh the "General Surveyor of Victuals to the Royal Navy and marine affairs in England and Ireland". He was an MP and a JP and High Sheriff of Hertfordshire in 1571 and 1584.

The Queen stayed at Stanstead Bury from 17th—22nd September in 1571 and again from 14-20 August 1576. There is a stained glass crest of Edward Baesh upstairs in the house which dates

from 1563 and is presumed to be contemporary with the alterations he is thought to have made, extending the house to the North and East of the original. By the time of his death in 1587 the house was recorded as having 9 principal bedchambers. Baesh's grandson Sir Edward Baesh was one of the Chamberlains of the Exchequer to Charles I. He was knighted and was a great benefactor of the village founding a charitable trust which built the almshouses, the vicarage and a free grammar school (These buildings are still in the village).

Continued overleaf



Stanstead Bury—continued

The next owner, Sir Ralph Baesh, became impoverished by his support for the Royalist cause, although maybe he thought of the Knighthood of the Bath, given to him on Charles II's coronation as some compensation for the fact he had to sell part of his estate to settle his debts. It must also have helped to settle his tax bill, assessed in 1664 on 39 hearths (the second largest in the county).

12 years later in 1678 the final Sir Edward Baesh sold the house and estate to Sir Thomas Fielde. The Fielde family owned them until 1783 when Paul Fielde (Sir Thomas grandson) MP for Hertford, died without heir and intestate. The consequence of this was the sale of the house and 109 acres of surrounding land and the break up of the substantial Fielde estates in Stanstead Abbots. Sir Thomas Fielde's son Edmund substantially remodelled the house in 1701 creating the East front that is largely the one seen today.

The period from the sale of the house by the Fieldes to the arrival of the Trowers in 1855 saw a number of changes of ownership. However the major change in the period took place around 1802 when the Jocelyn family acquired the house. This being the remodelling of the single hall structure at the south end of the house into a Regency style creating upstairs bedrooms.

Edward Spencer Trower arrived as a tenant in 1855. A retired Captain of the 9th Lancers he was the son of a wealthy stockbroker, John Trower, and the family have been there on and off ever since. The main contribution to the architecture of the house that the Trowers have made has been remodelling to bring the drive to the West side of the house in 1929 along with the building of the North wing, a servants quarter, at the same time. In 1962 a kitchen was added by the present owners' parents who moved to the centre of the house with the farm manager on one side and the previous generation on the other.

There is a stained glass window in the house which shows the coats of arms of the 3 families that have lived here for long periods of time—the Baeshes (119 years) from 1559 until 1678. The Fieldes (105 years) 1678 until 1783, and the Trowers (156 years so far from 1855).

Everybody that came thoroughly enjoyed the evening and came away with a great deal more knowledge than before they had arrived. Our thanks go to Gini and Jonathan Trower for letting us enjoy the history and architecture of their house and taking the time to show us all around. We hope to make a return visit next year for those who could not attend this time and also pay a visit to the adjacent farm.



The Yoke of an Egg is White...

Nearly 80 people attended the Society's first ever Quiz Nite on 19th October in the Parish Hall. The event was organized by Glenis and Terry Collins and the food was prepared by Jane and Ray Dixon and their helpers. A big thank you goes to all the organizers who made it such an enjoyable evening.

Terry had put together ten rounds of questions plus additional challenges which got us all thinking! Tongue twisters, words beginning with Q and much more. (Where do quiz nite organizers get these questions from...!) Hard work for a wet Friday night in Stanstead Abbots. Added excitement was a raffle and the sale of the first ever Stanstead Abbots Calendar for 2013 full of photographs of the village's history. (We hope to have more of them available before Xmas so watch the website for details of how to get them.)

Everybody seemed to enjoy themselves and were enthusiastic for a repeat which will no doubt happen next year. The ploughman's supper and accompanying liquid that everyone had bought added to the evening, if the level of humour and banter was anything to go by. So thank you to everyone who came along and brought their friends, it was a real success and raised much needed funds for the society.

Chairman: Ian White CBE

Forthcoming Events

Fri November 9th "In Memoriam". Talk by Terry Collins, in the Parish Hall. 7.30pm Looking in detail at some of the names on the 1914-1918 War Memorial. Members free Non members £2. Tea and Coffee available.

Fri November 23rd "Malting in Hertfordshire". Talk by Guy Horlock. 7.30pm at the Maltings, including guided tour and visit to Maltings museum.

Fri December 14th Members Only Xmas Social evening with a short talk on the Village Pubs. 8.00pm Parish Hall.

25th January 2013. "The Railways at Stanstead Abbots" 7.30pm Parish Hall

28th March 2013, "The River Lea" 7.30pm Parish Hall