

Olives Farm

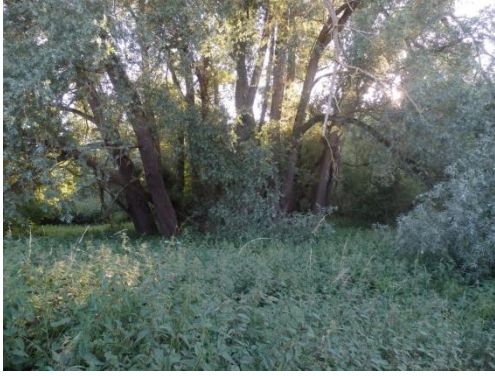
On a glorious evening in early July approximately 30 visitors, largely SALHS members, went to visit the landscape around Olives Farm at Miles Dymoke's invitation. The farmhouse, believed to be a 14th Century hall house is next to an extensive moat, now a very lush garden pond. There's possibly evidence of WW2 remains in a nearby spinney but the most fascinating features of our visit were yet to come.



The farm is set in rolling hills on land which back in Tudor times was part of the estates of Henry VIII's Hunsdon Palace. We were led to a low lying area, now largely overgrown with a massive earth dam separating at least 2 former lakes, possibly used, not just as fish ponds (Henry apparently loved eating pike and almost anything else) but it is believed they may have been used for staging naval exercises for the entertainment of Palace guests..



The dam could have been connected to the magnificent driveway which led the awed visitor to the Palace, but it's all very overgrown and largely lost. There were many magnificent trees on our walk mainly mature Oaks, Ash and Willows. Eventually and unexpectedly we emerged onto the public footpath from St Dunstan's Church, Hunsdon to Briggens and were treated to a glimpse of the church and Hunsdon House (the Victorian replacement) through the trees. This is where, assuming it goes ahead, Village 7 of the proposed Harlow North development will be built.



Eventually our walk took us back to Olives Farm and we were treated to a distant view of Bonningtons across the fields, another fine local building



A fascinating walk and we expressed our gratitude to Miles Dymoke for, not only inviting and guiding us, but he also cleared a path without which the tour would have been impossible.

Rob Gifford. 2018