

S.A.L.H.S

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Stanstead Abbotts Local History Society

Issue 30

Editor—Terry Collins

April 2019

Tea and Tea Drinking

Once again we welcomed Tim Turner from Sworders, for our February meeting. As well as looking at and commenting on items members had brought along he briefly told us of the history of tea and the tea ceremony.

Tea first appeared in England in the 17th Century in the reign of Charles 1st but it became more popular with Charles II on the throne as his wife Catherine of Braganza had tea brought over from Portugal where it had been imported from China by Portuguese explorers.

In London teas begun to be sold in coffee houses and that is where Samuel Pepys first tried it and commented ‘ I did send for a cup of tee a China drink I had not tried before’ The British East India Company made its first import from Bantam in 1669. Its use by Catherine at court helped to increase its popularity amongst the aristocracy and the landed gentry. The rise of the middle class however wanting to increase their status in society also became users of this new ‘medicinal’ drink. Ladies drank tea in the afternoons with their friends as they gossiped together and they could do this at home not in coffee house which were virtually for men only. It was ladies taking tea in the afternoons who began to add both milk and sugar (also a very expensive item) to the tea, to take away some of the bitterness from the tea itself. Sugar at the time was not sold as we know it today, it was sold in the form of a loaf which was cut into smaller pieces for the cus-

tomers. By the end of the 17th century and into the 18th afternoon tea had become a marker of middle class upward mobility.

When tea was first used in Britain the drinkers copied the Chinese way of drinking it, namely from small porcelain bowls. When English pottery companies tried to emulate these bowls they found that they were unable to do so as they were unable to make them as thin as the Chinese did, nor were they as translucent because they lacked one ingredient, china clay or Kaolin. But they did manage to hand paint oriental pictures on them. Tea pots and sugar basins made in the oriental style became fashionable. Tea



18th Century Chinese Teapot

pots were made from silver if you could afford it made by European silversmiths who had come to England. If you could not afford solid silver alternatives were available. In the 19th Century Sheffield plate became fashionable, this being two thin strips of silver with a very thin layer of copper between them. This was followed later by electro plating which as well as being used for many types of tea pots was also be-



18th Century Wooden Tea Caddy

ing used for other items of kitchen ware.

During the late 17th and 18th Centuries it also became fashionable for ladies when hosting afternoon tea to have it served on an ornate tea table. Until now most tables were made from oak or walnut until the introduction of mahogany in about 1720/30 with the result that oak went out of fashion. Large amounts of mahogany were imported but this was very expensive so in order to make the furniture available to more people basic woods like pine were used but with a mahogany veneer.

Following his talk on teas, Tim went to look at the tables loaded with items that members had brought along, including tea pots of course, with cups and saucers, WW1 medals including a DCM, tea caddies and paintings. He had brought other items with him including a small mahogany tea table, a wooden tea caddy silver spoons, porcelain bowls and a sugar cutter.

In the break we had some cheese and wine etc. All in all another enjoyable evening.

Terry Collins

Harlow New Town - How and Why

David Devine from Harlow Museum was our March speaker, telling us about the development of Harlow new town. Despite Harlow having been in existence as a new town since 1947 part of it sits on the site of a Roman Villa and on a Roman road.

Harlow's development began shortly after WW2 when the government decided that London was getting too crowded and homes were needed to replace those lost during the blitz. Many people moved from London to the new Garden Cities at Welwyn and Letchworth,, but the decision was made to include Harlow New Town in another group of New Towns including Stevenage, Basildon and Hemel Hempstead. They were to be funded by the Government, who also purchased the land required. To oversee this building and development in 1947 the Harlow Development Corporation was founded.

The architect Frederick Gibberd was chosen to provide the initial plans for the new town, which was originally chosen to be built around the town of Ongar, but Hibberd, who knew the area, persuaded the Corporation that Harlow would be a better choice and the government produced the first plans for the town in 1946. Following the publication of these plans the Corporation then had to tour the area explaining them to residents of the local villages and hamlets within Epping District Councils remit, which would be overwhelmed by the New Town. Once the go ahead for the plans had been agreed work on the town started in 1948.

The initial plans showed that the town would be divided into a number of landscape wedges which were designed to complement the existing landscapes and separate the various neighbourhoods. Among the villages which became part of the new town were Great Parndon, Little Parndon, Tye Green and Netteswell. Each of them was to have its own shopping centre, pubs and community centres, in addition a network of



The Lawn -first tower block now a listed building

cycle tracks, based on the old town roads linked the housing developments to the town centre and the industrial areas. Among the buildings dating from that time is the Lawn, Britain's first modern style residential block, now a Grade 2 Listed Building. At the time that it was planned the population was scheduled to be 60000 but in 1952 this was increased to 80000. (Currently around 82000)

In the original plans the M11 was due to run along the western side of the town but in 1971 the plans were changed to make it the motorway link to Stansted Airport when it became London's Third Airport and the road ran along the Eastern boundary. One of the older buildings in the town is the Moot Hall built in 1852 as the vicarage for the Rev. Arkwright, one hundred years later HRH the Duke of Edinburgh reopened it as a community centre designed to foster community spirit for the new residents of the town. In 1949 plans were put forward for a comprehensive health centre where all health services would be available under one roof, this was one of the first in the country. The town centre plans were not put forward until after the construction of the Stow shopping centre had been completed. The Market Square was one of the earliest areas to be finished and the neighbouring Broad Walk was the first pedestrianised road in a town centre. By 1969 there were so many young married couples in the town, just starting families that Harlow became known as 'Pram Town' Harlow residents are very fond of the sculptures around the town some of them by Henry Moore who lived nearby.

After answering a number of questions from the audience David was thanked for an interesting talk.

Terry Collins



Harlow Market—The High

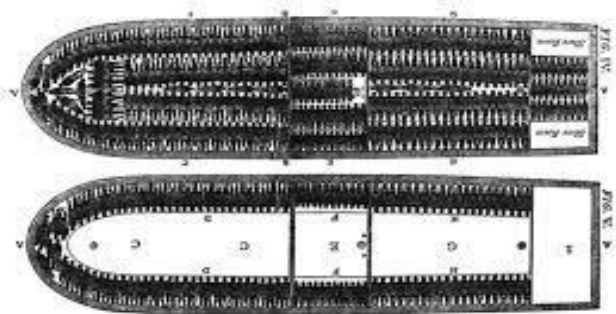
Hertfordshire and the Slave Trade

September's meeting saw the return of Marion Hill, the Learning and Access officer at HALS with a two part presentation looking at the Slave trade and its effects on Hertfordshire. Part one looked at the trade through the ages mainly from the 18th Century and she followed this with a look at the anti slave movement and some of the people involved in it.

The slave trade had its roots in the 15th Century and ended in the 19th after the passing of a number of Acts of Parliament which outlawed the slave trade. The slave trade that we know most of was known as the slave triangle when ships set sail from ports like Bristol and Liverpool, sailed along the West coast of Africa collecting slaves along the way. They were helped in this business by some other African tribes who assisted in return for trade goods such as cloth, weapons and trinkets. When they had sufficient slaves on board they would sail to the Caribbean and unload the slaves to work in the sugar or coffee plantations. It was not just England that carried off native Africans to their colonies, France, Spain, Portugal, Holland and Denmark were also, slave trading countries.

On board the ships, once they had been subjected to a so called medical examination by the captain the slaves were forced to lie down and wear leg irons, they had so little room they could not even sit up, the air they had to breath was foul, their was little in the way of sanitation and they were subject to harsh punishment by the captain and crew. If they refused to eat they were subjected to forced feeding.

Over 12.5 million slaves were transported across the Atlantic between 1525 and 1866 and of those over 1.8 million died on the crossing. Only 90,000 went to America and the vast majority to the Caribbean islands. During the crossing a male slave was given a space 6 feet long, and 1 foot 4 inches wide and a woman or child was given less.



18th Century Slave Ship

One slave, captured in the Igbo region of what is now Nigeria, was brought to England and became a leading abolitionist, his English name was Gustavus Vassa, his real name being Olaudah Equiano, wrote his memoirs and married an English girl from Cambridgeshire where he

raised two daughters. In his book he used very detailed descriptions of conditions on a slave ship crossing the Atlantic. His memoir sold out in 9 editions and helped pave the way for the abolitionist movement to gain support.

In Hertfordshire there were a number of members of the landed gentry who were slave owners including the Giles-Puller family from Youngbury Manor in Standon who owned plantations in the West Indies. There are documents in HALS showing that they held over 130 slaves together with their value. Another wealthy owner was David Barclay from the banking family who was left a property with 32 slaves but being a Quaker he freed them all. In 1878 the Giles Puller family totally changed their attitudes towards slavery joining the abolition movement.

Some slaves did in fact try to rebel against their masters but these revolts were quickly and harshly put down. Over a 20 year period more than 90,000 British troops were sent to the West Indies to keep order. The only freed slave who succeeded in his revolt was Toussaint Louverture on the island of St Dominique (now Haiti) who effectively became ruler of the island and was known for his military prowess and was nicknamed the Black Napoleon.

One of the leading abolitionists was Thomas Clarkson, born in Wisbech in 1760, as a young man he wrote an essay on slavery which won him first prize in a competition. On his way back to Wisbech after winning the essay competition he stopped at Wadesmill where he had what he called a spiritual revelation. This changed his life and he devoted the rest of it towards the abolition of slavery and in his travels he visited over 300 ships speaking to the crews on the horrors of their doing. He went on a tour of the country with a box containing items he found on a slave ship including leg irons and whips plus African made items. He suffered with exhaustion from the hard work he put in and he died in 1846. After his death a monument was erected near to the spot he had his revelation in Wadesmill.

In 1807 during the reign of George III the Slave Trade Act was passed in Parliament which abolished the trade in slaves but did not ban slavery itself, that did not happen until the Slave Trade Act of 1833 was passed which made slavery itself illegal in the British Empire. When the 1833 Act was passed there were still very many unhappy slave owners who demanded some form of compensation for their losses, the Government agreed and the equivalent of two hundred million pounds was paid out before the trade and slavery itself was finally halted.

Terry Collins

When the Railway Opened 1843

St. Margarets railway station was opened as part of the Hertford Branch on October 31st 1843 by the Northern and Eastern Railway Company. The railway was built as a single line in about three months to the unusual gauge of five feet with stations at St. Margarets, Ware and Hertford. St. Margarets station was erected on a site to the south of the level crossing, entirely within the parish of St. Margarets. It was provided with an attractive station building, a short low narrow platform and a small goods yard which included a goods loading platform. The station was the only one on the branch to have a two storey building incorporating Stationmaster's accommodation on the first floor. This was provided due to the lack of suitable housing in the village for the Station Master. The level crossing was only about 12 feet wide each side, with trains restricted to 4 mph when passing over the level crossing. The rather rough wooden road between the gates would have been at the time a relatively good surface compared to the rutted and muddy main road through the village.



The picture was taken in the mid 60's from the footbridge looking towards London

Being a single line at this time there was only one platform, but as there were only seven trains each way daily, facilities were more than adequate. The first train for London left Hertford at 7.30 am and the last at 6.30pm with the journey from St. Margarets to London via Stratford taking just over the hour. The ride was reasonably smooth but only first class passengers had padded seats and glass in the window openings. Third class passengers were iron rods fixed across the middle and down the centre of the "carriages". The railway fares were beyond the reach of most people who lived in the village and many ordinary folk would not have been regular travellers on the line. However everybody did benefit from the immediate 40% reduction in the price of coal delivered to the village by the railway. A reduction which was to lead in time to a dramatic change in the way cooking was done in the home as people moved away from wood to coal fires.

with hand operated large single gates ed to 4 mph when passing over the en roadway between the gates would tively good surface compared to the road through the village.

time there was only one platform, but each way daily, facilities were more for London left Hertford at 7.30 am journey from St. Margarets to Lon- over the hour. The ride it is said was first class passengers had padded openings. Third class carriages were gers stood gripping the sides and the dle and down the centre of the to London were beyond the reach of

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

May	10th	2019	AGM + Talk on the High Street by Ray Dixon and Gerald Coppen
June	14th	2019	History of the Lee Valley Park by Amy Lewis
July	12th	2019	Royston Cave and the Knights Templars by Keith Fitzpatrick Matthews
August	11th	2019	Annual BBQ (Members Only)
September	8th	2019	Conservation of the Pagoda at Kew by Dr. Lee Prosser
October	11th	2019	Saints at St Albans by Rory Young

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