

In 1873, the northernmost strip of the land that is now known as Meads Dell but was then called 'Painter's Field' was owned by Lord Cowper of Panshanger and leased to Charles Higby Lattimore of Place Farm.

On 5th September 1873, the St Albans Rural Sanitary Authority (which had been created in that year to take over the responsibilities of the Guardians of the Poor), served notice on Lord Cowper that they wished to compulsorily purchase this plot of land, described as being approximately one acre, one rood and 32 perches in size, in order to build a sewage works.

The land was independently valued at £307, which was paid to Lord Cowper, and Mr Lattimore was paid £155 compensation for the loss of the last 13 years of his lease.

The new sewage works were built and maintained by the St Albans Rural Sanitary Authority until the 1884 Local Government Act transferred their responsibilities to the newly-created St Albans Rural District Council.

The works were increased in size several times in the next hundred years, involving the purchase of more land. They were closed in 1976 when the Thames Water Authority, which now owned and managed the works, replaced them with the pumping station that can now be seen in Meads Lane, from which sewage is pumped to the works at Harpenden.

Following some years of negotiation, the site was bought by Wheathampstead Parish Council in August 1983. Following its restoration and landscaping in the late 1980s, the site was awarded First Prize in the Rural Section of the Hertfordshire Conservation Awards in 1991.