



Wheathampstead History Society

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Latest news

- Mike Smith's 'Medieval Field Walk', held on a lovely afternoon on 3 June, was a great success. Fourteen members of the Society walked a route round the north side of the village as Mike showed us, with a map, the medieval field boundaries that he had described in his talk in January.
- Next meeting: Wednesday 19 July. Jon Mein will talk about '*The Reverend Henry Small of St Albans and the Missing £20,000*'. For details, please see the website.
- Don't forget Village Day on 9 July, when the Society will have a stall with a display of 'Pubs Then and Now'.



Notes and Queries

DO YOU REMEMBER BURY HOUSE?

Bury House, a 16th century building, was situated on land now occupied by Thomas Sparrow House on Brewhouse Hill. In the late 1960s St Albans Rural District Council bought the empty house for £3,250 plus the adjacent land for £2,000. Other land around it was also purchased and the Council had plans to build a block of old peoples' flats. Originally it was intended to retain Bury House on the site but the Chief Public Health Inspector declared it unfit for human habitation and stated that it should be demolished. This raised a public outcry as the old house was considered a charming piece of Wheathampstead history by locals and archaeologists across Hertfordshire.

In October 1969 the WEA group who produced the original "About Wheathampstead" booklet surveyed the house with a view to including it in a future book on the historic houses of the village. The house was in a very sorry state and architectural historian Antony Baggs, who was

with us, thought that at some point the House might have been divided into two small dwellings.

We all felt it would be a shame to pull it down and backed the campaign to save it. However, on 7 November 1969, just a couple of weeks after our survey, we woke up to find it had been burned down overnight. It was true that there had been some fireworks in the area on Guy Fawkes Night two days before but the timing was so convenient! Rumours abounded and an investigation by police and the fire authorities was set up but could not establish the true cause. So Bury House was demolished and Thomas Sparrow House was built. A piece of Wheathampstead's history was lost.

Margaret Pankhurst

Mavis Soane will retire as the Society's Treasurer in April 2018, though she will continue as Membership Secretary. Please contact us if you could take on this important role. Mavis will 'show you the ropes'.