



News and events



Our new book *The Pubs of Wheathampstead 1830 to 1914* has sold more than 300 copies. It is still available, price £5.00, at the Post Office, the Reading Rooms, the Swan, the Village Barber and the Elephant & Castle. The individual stories of the 26 pubs are on our website (see below).

- The posters from our Great War exhibition in November 2018 are all on the website, together with the special edition of *The Pump Wheathampstead and the Great War: Remembrance and Hope*.
- **Next meeting:** Our next meeting will be at 7.30 on Wednesday 16 October when Helen George will give a talk on *Spanish 'flu in Watford after the Great War, 1918 to 1922*.

Notes and queries

We have been sorting through the Society's collection of photographs and documents that Ruth Jeavons has been assembling and looking after for many years. They are truly a treasure trove of local history.



This photograph, one of many in the collection, is a portrait of Joseph Rolph, an agricultural labourer who lived all his life in Gustard Wood. It appeared in the *Herts Ad* on 5 March 1898 with the caption *A Wheathampstead*

Worthy, adding that he wore his farmworker's smock as his 'Sunday best' long after it went out of common use.

His story is typical of many residents of the parish in the 19th century. Born the son of an agricultural labourer in Kimpton in about 1808, he married Hannah Wilsher, who was born in St Pauls Walden, in 1839. Listed as Joseph and Hannah Roff, they appear in the 1841 census as living in Gustard Wood. By 1851, they had two children, Edith aged 9 who was already working as a straw plaiter and Amos, 4, who was at school. The children were still at home in 1861 and the household now included Sarah Wilsher, Hannah's widowed mother, who was 80 years old. Joseph

and Hannah made up the household in 1871 and 1881, when Joseph is described in the census as living on a Parish Allowance while Hannah is a straw plaiter. In 1891 they were lodging with William and Edith Fitzjohn in Gustard Wood; both are described as 'Living on own means'. Hannah died in 1895 and Joseph in 1898.

The photograph was taken by Frederick Thurston. An article in *Hertfordshire's Past* dated Autumn 1983 tells us that Thurston was born in Luton in 1854 and founded a photographic business in about 1883. He was soon established as the foremost of Luton's five professional photographers and in December 1891 he took the engagement photograph of Princess Mary of Teck and the Duke of Clarence in the conservatory at Luton Hoo. He won a number of international awards in the 1890s for photos of idyllic rural scenes and was elected a Fellow of the Royal Photographic Society in 1895. In 1896, he advertised that he took 'At home' photographs by appointment and also 'Landscapes, Interior and Exterior Views of Churches, Mansions etc'. After 1900 he began to concentrate on portraiture, including the Earl and Countess of Strathmore at St Pauls Walden Bury and, much later, their grandchildren Princess Elizabeth and Princess Margaret. Our collection includes his photos, some taken on platinum plates, of Lamer House, Mrs Drake Garrard, and at least one local football team.