



## News and events

- As some members will know, **Brian Joyce** passed away two weeks ago. Brian's website [Wheathampstead.net](http://Wheathampstead.net) was a pioneering example of a community website which Brian filled with news, events and historical information about Wheathampstead. We hope to ensure that the historical material continues to be available online.
- **Next meeting: Wednesday 15 June.** Next month's talk, ***The jottings of two Buntingford vicars: the Layston parish memorandum book***, will be given by Heather Falvey. She will show what may be discovered about parish life from one small book begun in 1607 by Rev. Alexander Strange and continued by Rev. Thomas Heton.

## Bury Farm

The names 'Bury Green' and 'Bury Farm Cottages' are the last traces of what was once the major farm in Wheathampstead.

King Edward the Confessor gifted the manor of Wheathampstead to the Abbey of Westminster in 1060. It is likely that the original manor house was built in the 13th or 14th century. The Yeoman map of 1758 shows the layout of the manor house complex, its moat and the farm buildings to the west of what we now know as Rectory Meadow. The manor house stood behind what are now Bury Farm Cottages, which were built later as 'hall, chambers and gatehouse' for the manor house. The farm buildings stretched southward up the hill opposite.



The first tenant of the manor of whom we have records is Richard Lawdy, gentleman of Wheathampstead, whose leasehold agreement with the Abbey is dated 1498. Most of the subsequent tenants, some of whom also leased the mill, were 'gentlemen' but included John Brockett, Sir John Garrard, James Wittewrong, and Viscount Grimston.

By the mid-eighteenth century, the 'hall, chambers and gatehouse' had become the manor

house and the original manor house was probably put to agricultural use until it was demolished.

Ownership of the Westminster estate was transferred to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners in 1869 and, when John Ransome's lease from the Abbey expired in 1875, it was felt 'desirable that the farm should be put into suitable condition for the endowment of a church corporation'. A new farmhouse was built further up the hill in the late 1870s, new farm buildings were constructed, and the manor house was converted into farm labourers' cottages.



The farmhouse had a large formal garden and driveways from Church Street. These survived mostly intact until 1971.

John Ransome struggled to make the largely arable farm pay, as did subsequent tenants including J.W. Wilkinson, George Peck, and Dick Throssell who, with his brother-in-law Ralph Parkins, ran it as a dairy farm that supplied milk to the local area in the 1920s and 1930s.

In 1945, the Ecclesiastical Commissioners sold farmhouse and land to Hubert Hill of Lamer who sold on the farmhouse with five acres of land in 1946. House and land were thereafter sold separately. G.J.W. Titmuss bought the land in 1953/4 and, in stages in the late 1960s, both land and farmhouse were sold to Jarvis of Harpenden. The farmhouse was demolished and the new houses were built.