

## **Sarratt Local History Society - 'Latimer' by Hew Motion**

On Thursday 6 May, an evening when a different kind of history was literally still in the making in Downing Street, our cosy village school hall was packed with people taking a break from national affairs to see and hear the very local story of our neighbour, Latimer. The much-loved Chenies Manor guide and former history teacher, Hew Motion, made the effort, despite ill health, to delight us with a picture of the still 'feudal' village in the nineteenth and early twentieth century. His talk arose from two unusual 'finds' in Latimer: a box of unknown origin containing a set of 19th century slides of the village and some of its occupants (mostly unidentified) and an early 20th century talk based round the 1887 Latimer Flower Show.

Preceded by a short outline of the complicated origins of Latimer House and the various ancestors of the later Chesham family, Hew Motion used the charming pictures and titbits of personal information to give us a vivid and moving picture of life both 'above and below stairs' in this enclosed rural community so close to our own village yet so different.

Now bereft of its feudal lord, its shop (whose ice cream and jars of pear drops once encouraged so many children to complete the walk from Mill Farm!) and its pub (yes it did once have one, for the Estate workers) Latimer can seem a little 'private' to the visitor today. But those of us lucky enough to see and hear Hew Motion's talk will feel much closer to the lives and homes of those who made Latimer what it was and for whom, rich and poor, it was home.

Flaunden, by the way seems to have been used as a Retirement Village for the Latimer Estate. And we thought places like Cedar Village in Chorleywood were a modern concept!

**Angela Colman**