

## Sarratt Local History Society

Following the AGM on 20 January we were given a highly entertaining and well illustrated talk by Ken Caine entitled 'Ghosts, Ghouls and Graves in Hertfordshire'. Ken has over many years gathered and put together a fascinating collection of anecdotes, historical curiosities and local stories covering a wide range of subjects. The illustrations, his own photographs, were of a very high standard.

The stories included the murder of an inmate at St. Albans Gaol, carvings of the cross believed to have been cut by Knights Templars on horseback in St. Ippollitts Church and a stone beside a road commemorating Thomas Clarkson, one of the original and to some extent less recognised founders of the campaign in 1785 to abolish slavery. While ghosts did not feature significantly we were amused by the tale of the last woman accused of witchcraft in 1944, she was considered a security risk. Surprisingly witchcraft laws were only abolished in 1951.

Several graveyard tales were added including the background to a grave in Latimer of a horse who helped save the life of Lord Chesham in the Boer War, another memorial to a lady who died of shock during a Zeppelin raid, the memorial to a double VC, and finally the grave of a woman who did not believe in the afterlife. She prophesised that her grave would be split asunder by trees if there was life after death, and we were shown an ash and a sycamore tree growing out of it.

*The next talk by Valerie Edwards 'Unearthing a Tudor Mystery, the Time Team at Chenies Manor' will be at 8pm on Tuesday 24 March in the Village Hall.*

