

## **Sarratt Local History Society**

### **Report on talk by Colin Oakes on the part played by Latimer House in WWII.**

“Be Like Dad: Keep Mum” was a wartime slogan that sums up the ability of the war time generation to keep both secrets and their sense of humour. Colin Oakes brilliantly used his sense of humour to give us a fascinating talk, about the pivotal part played by the ‘Listeners’ at Latimer who recorded the ‘careless talk’ of the German officers incarcerated there. Lulled into a false sense of ease by the relaxed atmosphere, including, believe it or not, visits to the nude shows at the Windmill Theatre and goodies from Simpsons in the Strand, they believed their English guards were naïve gentleman who played cricket and they therefore didn’t suspect the whole building and even the garden seats and trees were , in modern parlance ‘bugged’.

The ‘secrets’ of Latimer weren’t officially released till 2006 and some still aren’t but our speaker’s tales of his ‘undercover’ discoveries, when as a schoolboy he acted as a plumber’s mate working at Latimer added unlikely colour to what was already an intriguing story of an exciting but grim period in our recent history

**Angela Colman**