

Sarratt Local History Society

Ken Griffin, compiler of the Database of Hertfordshire Convicts, entertained the Society with 'Transported Beyond the Seas – Hertfordshire Convicts 1597-1867'. The history of transportation started with an Act of Parliament in 1597 and the first Hertfordshire man so sentenced was in 1617 to Australia. Initial attempts to colonise America and Canada occurred in 1763, but the first organised transportation was not until the 1780's when convicts were first sent to the eight hulks (each housing up to five hundred convicts) on the Thames. The first fleet of ships destined for Botany Bay with seven hundred convicts left in 1787, and a second in 1790.

The Database was largely gleaned from the Quarter Sessions at Hertford, St Albans and the Liberty of St Albans, which includes Sarratt, Kings Langley, Rickmansworth and Watford; and the twice yearly Assizes. Ken reviewed the list of 1857 showing convicts from 1784-1830 - four from Bovington, four from Flaunden, three from Kings Langley and the majority from Rickmansworth - giving details of the crime, the victim and the convict's destination. For example, James Holt, aged fifty, convicted of larceny from Israel Waring and sentenced to seven years transportation. Fifteen executions were listed in Kings Langley, the criminals mainly from Rickmansworth and Flaunden, but no mention of 'serious' crimes in Sarratt, nor of transportation. The only titbit offered by Ken was in 1462 – the execution of the vicar for murder!

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