



## Local History Society - Chenies Manor

Everyone loves a mystery! Most Sarratt people know Chenies Manor House and Local History members tend to watch, at least occasionally, the Time Team series on TV, so there was a good turnout to hear Valerie Edwards, a guide at Chenies manor, speak about the Time Team's visit to the manor to try to solve the mystery of where the original part of the 'Great House' was when Henry VIII visited it.

Ms Edwards was clearly an avid fan of the TV show. We were shown numerous shots of the various Time Team celebrities, with pretty Chenies views behind them, film of groups of 'stars' and their helpers starting tentative trenches and some takes of the roof and chimneys of the present house, from a very expensive cherry-picker mounted camera crew.

Disappointingly, however, the artificial 3-day-only dig rule by the Time Team and the sad absence of Alisdair McCleod Matthews, whose deep knowledge of the history of the House would have given a focus to the whole enquiry, meant that a series of dispersed, hurried digs yielded mainly negative results. Indeed, the only positive result, as far as we could gather, was the probability that, as Alisdair had suspected, a much grander wing, with five bays and some stained glass, may have stood facing the Chess Valley in the area of the present farm barns.

Ms Edwards was asked whether the Time Tem had provided a summary of their findings but surprisingly she seemed to suggest that, were a summary to be produced, it would be kept privately and not be available for view at Chenies. This seems to be at odds with both the spirit of the TV programme and certainly with the enthusiasm for sharing his love and knowledge of Chenies and its history always shown by Alisdair McCleod Matthews.

So, no dramatic solution to a mystery: just a few more clues in the right direction, the actual details of which we hope we will be allowed to share!

**Angela Colman**

*The next meeting of the Society will be at 7.30 for 8pm on Tuesday 12 May in Sarratt School. John Morris from the Childtern Woodlands Project will speak about The History and Archaeology of Chiltern Woodlands with some ideas about Marginia Wick, Rosehall.*