

Sarratt Local History Society

Report from the Chair on 2025

The year just completed has been another busy one for your Society. Our talks, guided walk and “pop up” exhibitions have been well attended and enjoyed by members and visitors alike.

Our 2025 speaker programme began with an excellent talk on “Metroland” with Ralph Hilsdon exploring the impact of the Metropolitan Railway and the development of London’s suburbs, marketed as an idyllic country lifestyle within easy reach of London.

In March we took a metaphorical walk through Sarratt Bottom, learning about the history of the cottages and the many characters that lived there. This was followed in the summer by a real walk – on one of the hottest days of the year – through the valley finishing with tea and cake at Sarratt Mill. Many thanks to all the “Bottomers” who were so generous, helping with the research, providing photographs and pictures and opening their houses and gardens. Particular thanks to Angela Colman for providing a splendid afternoon tea and tours of Sarratt Mill.

In May, we again celebrated the life of our past Chair Pam Turner. We were pleased to welcome back Dr Wendy Morrison, Heritage and Archaeology Manager, Chilterns National Landscape who shared the findings from the Summer 2024 archaeological excavation of the lynchets in Goldingtons Park. Her investigations had revealed a possible Roman road surface and this was to be the focus of the second season of excavations in August 2025.

Wendy, a team of experts and citizen scientists (volunteers!) opened up three new trenches at various sections down the hillside. This work gave new insights on the formation of the agricultural terraces and provided evidence for the long timeline of human history in this field and surrounding valley but concluded that the previously uncovered pebbled

surface was unlikely to be a Roman road. A more detailed report will be out in early 2026.

As part of the National Heritage celebrations, in September Sarratt Local History Society partnered with the Church of Holy Cross in hosting the village's very own version of the Antiques Roadshow.

Courtesy of the Antiques Collective, based in Chorleywood, Eric Knowles from the Antiques Roadshow, ably assisted by Sarratt Local History Society committee member Greg Edmund of Spink spent the day valuing villagers' treasures.

Over the day, more than fifty Sarratt residents brought a range of heirlooms from ceramics to cinnabar, jewellery to old coins. Like the television programme there were some treasures whose value surprised their owners while other people left feeling disappointed that their family heirloom was worth more to them than anyone else!

On a very hot Tuesday in July members enjoyed an excellent talk on the History of the Hertfordshire Constabulary by Andy Wiseman, Chair of the Hertfordshire Police Historical society (and Chief Inspector of Watford). In September Dr Heather Falvey looked at the early history of the owners of the Grove and we finished the year with an amazing "tour de force" from Dr John Morewood on the English Civil War. His talk explained the impact of the conflict and how Sarratt and Sarratt families were affected.

We held two "pop up" exhibitions this year. In April, to commemorate the 80th anniversary of the war-time mid-air collision over Sarratt, Greg Edmund shared his research into this tragic event. On a lighter note, in September we celebrated Sarratt, Star of Film and Screen, remembering the many films and TV programmes that have been made in the village and the surrounding area. Thank you to everyone who contributed.

Sarratt Local History Society Committee Members were active supporting other local groups. Tony Bond provided his research on the Biggerstaff family for a pop up exhibition for the Rickmansworth Museum and Dawn

Pitts and Greg Edmund contributed to an exhibition hosted by Abbots Langley History Society to commemorate and celebrate the 80th anniversaries of VE and VJ Day.

Looking ahead, 2026 will be the 30th anniversary of your society and we have a great programme of speakers lined up. However, we are always looking to strengthen our focus on Sarratt and if you have a story to tell or a topic you would like us to help you research, please do let us know.

In the coming year we are hoping to digitise the third and fourth volumes of the Great Sarratt Scrapbook to ensure that we preserve the history of the village for future generations and make it accessible to everyone.

Finally, I would like to thank each of our hard working and dedicated Committee members for all their contributions during the year. We would welcome any member who would like to join the team.

Please don't forget that you can get lots of historical information about the village and access the two oldest Sarratt scrapbooks online at:

www.sarrattlocalhistorysociety.org

Sue Clark

Chair Sarratt Local History Society

January 2026