



News and events

- **SAHAAS Public Lecture.** Professor Michael Wood '**Why the Anglo-Saxons matter**'. Friday 2 June, 7.30 to 9.00 pm, New Hall, St Albans School. Tickets: £10.00 per head. For further information, go to www.stalbanshistory.org
- **Our next meeting** is on **21 June** when Stephen de Silva will talk about **Discovering Abbot John of Wheathampstead**. Following the discovery of Abbot John's tomb in 2017, Stephen was involved in creating the interpretive material for exhibitions etc, in securing funding for the facial reconstruction, and in planning the reburial.

10th Earl of Cavan

Frederick Rudolph Lambart, 10th Earl of Cavan, was one of the most distinguished past residents of Wheathampstead with a remarkable military career from 2nd Lieutenant in 1885 to Chief of the Imperial General Staff in 1922 and Field Marshal in 1932, but he certainly divided opinion. "Bone from the neck up", "Ignorant, pompous, vain and narrow", "Undoubtedly one of the great successes of the war", "Tremendously popular with all the staff here (HQ 50th Division)". A recent biography* focuses on his career as a soldier but says relatively little about his private life.



A copy of his unpublished reminiscences, '*Recollections Hazy But Happy*' has recently been donated to the Society's archive together with some personal letters. These give us more insight into the private man.

He was born in 1865 at the Rectory in Ayot St Lawrence where his grandfather, Reverend John Olive, was rector. His mother Mary was wife of Viscount Kilcourseie, heir to the 8th Earl of Cavan. John Olive bought Wheathampstead House in 1867 and the young family moved there in 1871. Rudolph ('Ru') was schooled by his mother until sent to boarding school in Somerset aged 10 and then to Eton (which he describes as 'bliss') and Sandhurst, where he acquired the nickname

'Fatty' because of an ill-fitting uniform on his stocky 5 feet 4 inches frame.

His life as a boy in Wheathampstead and then as a man when not on active service is a near-caricature of the life of the aristocracy in the late Victorian era. As well as being a keen tennis and squash player on the courts his father (the 9th Earl) built at Wheathampstead House which he had inherited in 1888, Ru was an enthusiastic huntsman from the age of 13 (later becoming Master of the Hertfordshire Hounds) and spent many days stalking deer in the Scottish Highlands. He rented two miles of the River Lea and stocked it for fishing, and shot pheasant and partridge, including at Bocket Park where George V and Queen Mary were among the guests and were personal friends. He was an enthusiastic golfer throughout his life, playing on many famous courses in England and Scotland as well as at the Mid Herts Golf Club in Gustard Wood. He played regularly with the Duke of York, later George VI, who we know visited Wheathampstead House so probably played at Gustard Wood. He also played billiards, football and polo. He was a committed Christian.

In 1893 (as Viscount Kilcourseie) he married Inez Crawley, sister of a school friend, (hence Inez Cottage in the Lower Luton Road). He became 10th Earl of Cavan and owner of Wheathampstead House in 1900 when his father died. Inez died in June 1920 and in November 1922 he married Lady Joan Mulholland whose husband had been killed at Ypres in 1914. She had a daughter and they had two daughters together.

Lord Cavan sold Wheathampstead House in 1924 and moved to London where he died in 1946.

*Senior, M. (2023) *Field Marshal the Earl of Cavan, Soldier and Fox Hunter*, Pen & Sword Books