



# Wheathampstead History Society

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## News and events

- The recently available **Historic Environment Record Viewer** is an endless source of fascinating information (and can be dangerously time-wasting!). It provides online information about the thousands of archaeological sites, finds and historic buildings and monuments in Hertfordshire. <http://tinyurl.com/mw34mv4f>
- Our **next meeting** will be on **Wednesday 16 July** when Elizabeth Eastwood will give a talk **"Jack of Herts: Jacobean Hertfordshire"** about King James I's visits to the county when he stayed in his palace at Royston.

## World War Two exhibition

Our exhibition in the Memorial Hall on 10 and 11 May was attended by upwards of 800 people and was a great success.



Among the visitors were Vida Field (now Hebb) and Jim Hensman, two of the evacuees who were billeted in the village during the war years. Vida was six years old when the Second World War broke out. She was evacuated with her older sister June, first to Potten End and then to Wheathampstead. By 1940 her family had also come to live in Wheathampstead. She is photographed here with Colin Spurr, whose father (Dick) was licensee of The Bull during the war years. Colin is now 93 years of age and came along to the exhibition on both days.

Jim Hensman, also six years old at the start of the war, was evacuated from London to the village in 1939. His father became licensee of The Swan pub in the autumn of 1941. Jim is aged 92 and came to the exhibition with his wife Beryl.



Other visitors included (left to right) Robert and Michael Gregory and Robert and Quentin Leiper, the four grandsons of Professor Robert Leiper, who was Chair of the Parish Council throughout the war years. Robert Gregory, the eldest of the four cousins, still lives in the village.



One of the uniforms lent to us was the Home Guard blouson belonging to Arthur Wren, manager of the sewage works. He was the second villager to volunteer for the Local Defence Force which became the Home Guard. On his death, his daughter Amy Coburn passed his uniform and medal ribbon to St Albans Museum for safekeeping.



The photo shows Lizzie Holland dressed as a Land Girl and Mike Smith in the uniform of a volunteer in the Home Guard. Arthur Wren's Home Guard blouson can be seen in the background of the photo.

Many people asked if there would be another opportunity to see the information in the Exhibition. We are planning to display the large posters and some of the information at Village Day on 12 July. We are also discussing with the Library the possibility of displaying some of the information in the Library in the coming months.

Sandra Wood