

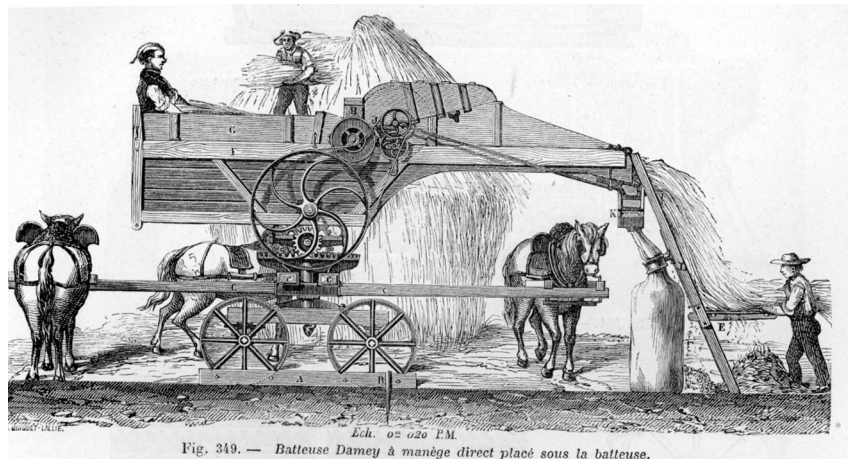
# Alresford Historical & Literary Society

## Newsletter 1<sup>st</sup> January 2025

### Next Meeting *The Swing Riots*, a talk by Edward Fennel 7.30pm Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> January in The Methodist Hall

For those (including me) who knew very little about the background to these events I thought a brief introduction might be useful. So, to set the scene, I did some research. I gleaned that the term "Swing" was probably a reference to the flails that agricultural workers used to thresh corn. The flails were swung with force and such force symbolised the anger of the poor in England who wanted a return to the pre-machine days when their employment for this work was guaranteed. In 1830 rioters smashed newly-invented threshing machines and mobs targeted the better-off as the focus of their frustration. A fictional figurehead "Captain Swing" wrote, signed and sent threatening letters to farmers and landowners during the protests.

In response to the riots Judge Baron Sir John Vaughan presided over a special assize held in Winchester's the Great Hall. Over 100 men received death sentences while others were transported to Australia. The riots and trials became the 'story of the year' for 1830s local journalists.



Apropos local journalists our speaker Edward Fennel is one such. A former editor of The Times Law Diary, he lives in Winchester and is a historian. He is the founder and editor of 'The Legal Diary', a weekly online publication advising lawyers on PR matters and also publishes articles on county history.

### Comments on our last meeting: *The Austen Sisters* a performance by Rowen Suart

At our last meeting of the year on 20<sup>th</sup> November we were greatly entertained by Rowen whose performance of "Austen Sisters" added a new dimension to our knowledge of Jane Austen. The relationship between Jane and her sister Cassandra, as recorded in their letters, was clearly very special and Rowen's dramatisation explored how this became mirrored in the interaction between sisters as portrayed in Austen's novels.



### A Happy New Year to you all from the Hist & Lit Committee

Mike Dickens, Hon Secretary, [secretary@alresfordhistandlit.co.uk](mailto:secretary@alresfordhistandlit.co.uk)