



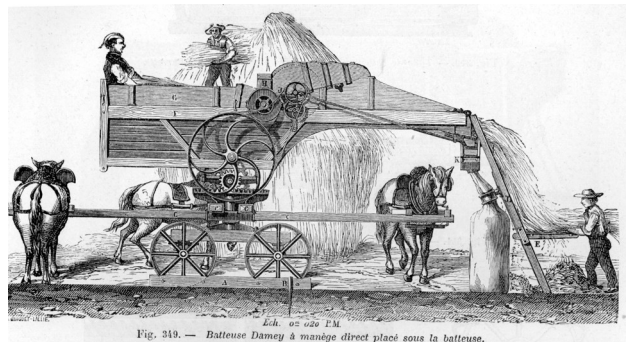
# Alresford Historical & Literary Society

**Newsletter 1<sup>st</sup> May 2025**

**Next Meeting *The Swing Riots*, a talk by Edward Fennel  
7.30pm Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> May in The Methodist Hall**

The term "Swing" is probably a reference to the flails that agricultural workers used to thresh corn. The flails were swung with such force that "Swing" became symbolic of 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" 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. Our speaker Edward Fennel, himself a local journalist, was 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 [MD].

**Comments on the 17<sup>th</sup> April meeting: *The Gift of a Paranoid Queen*  
a talk on The Post Office by author Richard Frankland**

Richard's talk first described how in the 8<sup>th</sup> Century Charlemagne arranged for horsemen to carry his royal communications to and fro. In England the history of the Royal Mail goes back to the 16<sup>th</sup> century when it became fundamental to how Henry VIII and Queen Elizabeth ruled. The latter "Paranoid Queen" of the talk's title, carefully inspected all communications searching for intrigues and foreign threats. Since Tudor times, over the centuries the Royal Mail service developed into service for all to use and in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century Post Offices and Boxes appeared and the Penny Black came and went!



What Richard modestly did not mention is that he is author of a series of a series of thrillers For more information see: [www.amazon.co.uk/stores/author/B0059SOTZA](http://www.amazon.co.uk/stores/author/B0059SOTZA) [MD].

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