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# Brief History

The site of the original village of Albury lies a mile to the East of the present village. The process of the move occurred sporadically from about 1780 onwards. It appears to have started with Captain (later Admiral) Finch who had bought the Mansion from his brother, the 4th Earl of Aylesford. He wanted to develop a park around his house and so harassed the villagers that many of them moved to the neighbouring hamlet of Weston Street. In 1785 the old road between Albury and Shere was closed, and the following year the road that used to run past the George Inn was diverted. That building fortunately still stands having been converted into a cottage. Successive owners of Albury continued the harassment until the mid-19th Century when the banker Henry Drummond had a new parish church built for the villagers to replace the Saxon Church which was closed in 1841. In Albury today the name Weston recurs, in for example, Weston House, Weston Lodge, Weston Lea, Weston Fields and Weston Farm.

Henry Drummond figures significantly in the story of Albury in Victorian times and the results of his actions and beliefs have left their mark on the village to this day. Twice a Member of Parliament, he reconstructed the Mansion in the Park where he lived and, as a zealous adherent of Edward Irving, a celebrated Scottish preacher, was active in supporting the Catholic Apostolic faith. He built the neo-gothic church in Sherbourne which is often mistaken for the Parish Church. Drummond's daughter, Louisa, married Lord Lovaine who became the 6th Duke of Northumberland and on her death in 1890, the land passed into the hands of the Northumberland family.

The family has always maintained a close and benevolent interest in Albury. Much of the land belongs to the Northumberlands, and today it is managed by their Albury Estate office. Although many houses are still owned by the Estate, some have been sold and are occupied by freeholders.

The old hamlet of Weston Street, the present Albury, like the original village near the Saxon Church, was dependent on the clear, swift-

*illustration of* the Parish church of

flowing Tillingbourne. The name Albury may have derived from "Alderbury", an allusion to the prevalence of alders by the banks of the Tillingbourne. Along its 11 mile length, rainfall permeates the greensand to the South and the chalk to the North and emerges as springs. Even during the driest summer the flow remains strong; equally, in the wettest winter there is little flooding. Consequently, despite its short length the Tillingbourne at one time was able to power no fewer than 28 mills and leats.

Click here for the route of the village historical walk...

# Albury Park, the Mansion and the Saxon Church

Albury Park extends to more than 150 acres and within it is all that is left of the old village of Albury: three or four houses and a church. The Park and Gardens of the Mansion contain rare trees and shrubs well known to arboriculturalists and to the authorities at Kew Gardens. Many of these trees were planted by Henry Drummond in the 19th Century and have attained a remarkable size. The ancient oaks in neighbouring Shere Park are attributed to the reign of King John. The severe storms of 1987 and 1990 caused devastation in parts of the Park, and the Albury Estate has been engaged since then in large scale replanting.

John Evelyn, the 17th Century diarist and landscape gardener who lived at Wotton, a few miles East of Albury Park, laid out the Albury pleasure grounds for Henry Howard, later 6th Duke of Norfolk. His work included a Yew Walk and fine terraces a quarter of a mile long, with a tunnel through the hill under Silver Wood.

One of the earliest mentions of the Mansion is in the Domesday Book. Over the centuries it changed hands many times until it was purchased by Henry Drummond in 1819. He was responsible for major alterations to the house and the gardens. To him are due the remarkable brick chimneys, originally 63 in number, the design of each being different. Augustus Pugin, one of the architects for the present Houses of Parliament, was a strong influence in the reconstruction in Albury at this time.

In 1969 the Mansion was sold for conversion into private apartments with about three acres of land, mostly lawns, now owned by the Country Houses Association Ltd. The Park and the John Evelyn Gardens are private, remaining in the ownership of the Albury Estate.

St Peters and St Pauls



*Neo-Gothic Church built by Edward Irving*



*illustration of the Mansion*



A view through the trees toward the Saxon Church

Albury people regard the Saxon Church (usually called the "Old Church") with affection and pride. It dates back to pre-1066 and is recorded in the Domesday Book. It was the parish church until Henry Drummond built the present church in 1841. The old church was closed and left to decay until 1921 when the place was packed for the first service held there for 80 years. Nowadays there is a midsummer service each year and a candlelit Carol Service at Christmas. The church and surrounding area create an atmosphere of peace and permanence which visitors always feel.

The building was rescued by The Churches Conservation Trust which rebuilt the chancel at the east end. Inside the church are many features of interest including a striking wall painting of St. Christopher and a fine brass effigy of a knight in full armour. The South Transept is a lavishly decorated mortuary chapel commissioned by Drummond for his family and designed by Pugin. The whole building is lovingly tended by an Old Church Committee.

The Old Church is open to the public from 10.00 a.m. to 4.00 p.m. or dusk. Albury Park is private property, with public access limited to the Old Church and the Mansion. The latter is open for public viewing from the beginning of May until the end of September on Wednesday and Thursday afternoons between 2.00 and 5.00 p.m.

For more information please visit the Albury Estates website...

The Saxon Church
in Albury Park

illustration of the Saxon Church