

HISTORY RECORDER'S REPORT FOR THE VILLAGE OF

HAWSTEAD, MAY 2009

The History Recorder's report covers the twelve months from 1st May 2008 to 31st April 2009 and is prepared as part of the Parish Council's commitment to the Suffolk Local History Council. Copies of this document will, in due course, be sent to the Resource Centre in Ipswich and to the Bury Recorder's Office. Copies of the Hawstead Journal and the Benefice St. Edmund Way Magazine are also lodged with the Records Office.

PARISH COUNCIL

The Annual Parish Meeting was held on 22nd May 2008 in the newly opened village hall, following the AGM of the Parish Council. The six Parish councilors and the Parish Clerk, Joan Cook, were present. After a review of the work undertaken by the Council over the past year, the chairman outlined areas of concern for the coming year, including the parking problems in Whepstead Road and the positioning of the bottle bank. Representatives from St. Edmundsbury Borough Council spoke of their work in the areas of disaster management, transport and planning. From the floor, several complaints were made on the condition of the roads. Consequently, Joan Cook as parish clerk, wrote to the Borough Council on 18 June 2008 pointing out the poor state of the Bury Road and Bell's Lane in Hawstead.

At the July 2008 meeting, John West was co-opted onto the Parish Council, to bring it up to the full strength of seven members.

In September, the Parish Council, through its affiliation with the Suffolk Preservation Society submitted a paper to the Boundary Committee, arguing against the proposals for a unitary authority for Suffolk.

Joan Cook resigned as Parish Clerk in November 2008, to be replaced by Marilyn Bottomley, who thus attended her first meeting in January 2009.

The main area of the green was cut for hay in July and a working party removed encroaching brambles and trimmed trees around the village green in the week after Christmas and on 1st March, 2009. The problem of moles and rabbits on the green was recognized and trapping commenced in the Spring of 2009.

The Electricity Board was working on overhead cables on poles in Pinford End on the 23rd and 24th September 2008. They had been working in the previous week in Hawstead. Power was cut as part of the refurbishment of the 11 Kilovolt overhead line. There were more power cuts at the beginning of October, in particular, around the village green. The interruption to the electricity supply planned for Tuesday 24th February, to continue the upgrading of the supply, was cancelled. Contractors were thought to have caused damage to the village green by driving across it.

The Hawstead Journal was not published in September/October/November 2008. Over the year in question, the Parish Council website attracted an average of 164 "hits" per month.

ROADWORKS

The temporary road closure of the C684 Bury Road, between Hawstead and Nowton from 16th February to 9th April 2009 was announced on 29th January, and by Wednesday, the 18th February, road works were well underway from Nowton to the junction of Bell's Lane and a little beyond to the junction with Whepstead Road. The road was reduced to single track, in and out of the workings, for access only.

The diversion signposted sent heavy good vehicles and coaches along Bell's Lane, causing huge inconvenience. This was highlighted in an article in the Bury Free Press on 13th February 2009, from Mr. and Mrs. Richardson. There was also a complaint that contractors were using the village hall car park for heavy goods vehicles, causing damage to the surface.

VILLAGE HALL

As in previous years, a Plant Sale was held on 17th May 2008, in advance of the Village Annual Flower and Produce Show, which took place on Sunday 7th September 2008 at 2.00pm, with a dance in the evening. Heavy showers in the afternoon unfortunately restricted outside activities and stalls.

Although only open for less than a year, the village hall is used for a full range of activities. There have been 57 bookings, not counting regular village events, which include bingo on alternate Mondays, regular quiz nights and carpet bowls. A Men's Group has been formed, and from time to time meet for "Breakfast".

Improvements have been made to the kitchen facilities, with purchases of utensils and equipment. Tiling was completed in January 2009.

There was a Christmas wreath making session and the Community Council organized a Christmas Lunch in the village hall on Thursday 18th December 2008, the first for five years. This was followed on New Year's Eve by a village party to see out the old year. A Burn's Night supper was held in the village hall on 24th January 2009, with Scottish country dancing. The Theatre Royal rural touring players returned to the village with their rendition of "Three Men in a Boat" in the hall on Wednesday, 29th April 2009.

In the spring, the play area was re-barked, with further topping envisaged depending on the use and some external protection to the building was planned for the summer. The positioning of the bottle bank and the dog-refuse bin remain concerns. The Community Council gave advice on how to live a more eco-friendly life, with a series of meetings which started in February and ran on the second Wednesday of the month. This year's Plant Sale was held on Saturday 16th May, 2009. A budget forecasting an excess of income over expenditure was proposed for the coming year. The Community Council AGM was held on Thursday, 28th May.

CHURCH/BENEFICE

On Sunday 29th June, 2008, the new assistant curate, The Reverend Annette Shannon was ordained deacon in Bury Cathedral at 10.00am. The service of welcome for her as the new benefice curate was held at 3.30pm that afternoon at Lawshall Church. A choir was formed and practiced at Park House with Graham Shorter and gave a performance of a piece specially composed for the occasion by Graham. Anne Shorter completed her placement with the benefice on 15th June, with her last service at Nowton. Graham Shorter played for his last service at Hawstead on Sunday 29th August.

On Saturday 13 September 2008, the Historic Church cycle ride round Suffolk again included Hawstead.

The Harvest Supper was held on Saturday 1st November in the village hall. Hawstead churchyard is now mowed, strimmed and tidied by offenders supervised by the Suffolk Probation Service.

Christmas carols and readings were given on Sunday 21st December at 6pm. A Lent Lunch was held to raise funds for The Vineyard Church, for its work with the homeless in Bury. The Annual Parochial Church Meeting was convened on Monday 6th April, 2009. Father Geoffrey Smith, who was the Priest in charge of four of the parishes in the Benefice during the last interregnum, was one of the recipients of the Royal Maundy, which was distributed in St. Edmundsbury Cathedral on the Thursday before Easter, the 9th April, 2009.

In the summer of 2008, village beekeepers welcomed a multi-million aid package to protect declining bee populations. Research is to be carried out to combat the varroa mite and also into the effects of radio waves and mobile phone masts on bee orientation. Many colonies throughout the region were hit by bad weather in the past two summers and yields from the village hives were generally low.

Pollution in the River Lark at Sicklesmere caused the death of hundreds of crayfish and some freshwater shrimp. A fungicide called fenpropimorph, used in pesticides, leaked into the River Lark from Church Farm, Hawstead on June 11th, 2008. Rupert Brown pleaded guilty to a charge of causing poisonous, noxious or polluting matter to enter into the river when appearing before Bury St. Edmunds magistrates on 12th March, 2009. He was fined £2,500, ordered to pay costs of £4,609.21 and a £15 victim surcharge.

Several complaints were made about the problem of spreading sewage on fields causing unacceptable smells and odours, from the end September and into early October 2008.

On a happier note, Andrew Brown won two first and two second prizes at the Rutland County Show for his beef cattle.

On Sunday 22nd February 2009, a runners road race from Nowton passed along Park Lane and across the bridge over The Lark in Pinford End and then up Bull Lane to Whepstead.

Firefighters were called to tackle a fire in Hawstead in the early hours of 26th September 2008. A small blaze broke out in the utility room at Pinford End Farm, Bull Lane at about 5am. Crews from Bury St. Edmunds and Wickhambrook attended the scene to find one floor of the two storey building completely smoke logged. The incident was over by 5.30am.

WEATHER

On Monday 26th May 2008, heavy rain and strong winds from the north-east caused a power cut from about 3pm.

Pupils were shaken in a minibus accident on 5th December 2008. A minibus carrying youngsters from Hawstead and surrounding villages to school, crashed into a ditch leaving four children injured. The minibus was on its way to All Saints Primary School in Lawshall when it slid and hit a tree at about 8.50am. The driver was also injured. Ice on the road was a factor. The minibus was taken away by police at 1.05pm.

Overnight on the Monday/Tuesday 9 to 10th February 2009, flooding caused chaos across the region. A 20 hour battering of rain saw nearly a month's worth of rain fall, making it difficult for rivers and drains to cope. The Environmental agency issued a flood warning on Tuesday 10th February for the River Lark between Sicklesmere and Bury St. Edmunds.

The heavy rain overnight, combined with melting snow resulted in flooding at Pinford End (Bull Lane and to the bridge over the Lark). At about 6.10am water rescue fire crews were called to Bull Lane, Hawstead where a car was in trouble. By the time crews arrived the car had been towed out by a member of the public. Also, the brook at Brook Green on Bell's Lane made Bell's Lane impassable and the road at the junction of Bell's Lane with the Bury Road by the pumping station, was under water.

The Metcalfe Arms, which had closed in March 2006, opened again in June 2007, closed again in July 2008. No application was received by St. Edmundsbury council for change of use to private housing. In March 2009 news circulated in the village that new tenants would be moving into the pub and consequently, tenant Richard Reed took over the pub lease on 7th April. By the Thursday the 9th the iron chain was removed from the entrance to the car park and a board announced that hostelry would be open on Good Friday, 10th April in the evening.

Jane Holliday, 54, from Hawstead made a 160ft bungee jump from a crane at Bury Rugby Club to raise funds for St. Nicholas Hospice, on 14th February 2009. So far she has raised £750, but plans to raise more by facing her fear of spiders and going white water rafting. Mrs. Holliday's daughter, Fiona also took part in the jump.

For the third successive year, traditional May Day celebrations were held on Friday, May 1st 2009, at 5.15am on the corner of the village green at the end of Bells Lane, outside Fyletts Manor Cottages, with the Green Dragon Morris men. Breakfast followed, kindly hosted by Andy and Fran Evershed.

During the last year, we said goodbye to Arthur Wright, whose funeral took place at All Saints, Hawstead on 14th October 2008. Derek (Dick) James of Whepstead Road died on Wednesday 7th January 2009 and his funeral was held on Friday 23rd January in the church. Alfred Dawson died on Monday, 9th February 2009 at Addenbrooke's hospital, Cambridge. The funeral was on Friday 27th February, at 2.00pm in the church, followed by a reception in the village hall.

Tilley, a cat owned by Rosemary Carr, was nominated in August 2008 for the Bury Free Press Star Pet of 2008.

The 4000 book Cullum Collection, started by royalist draper Thomas Cullum in the 1600's is being restored and catalogued by the Suffolk Record Office. The Cullum family owned both the Hardwick and Hawstead estates at the time. The last surviving member of the family was the bachelor George Gery Milner-Gibson Cullum, who died in 1921, leaving the family fine and decorative arts and book collection to the borough.

Between 8pm Friday 12th and 2.30am Saturday 13th September 2008 on Whepstead Road, Hawstead a red Peugeot 306 was stolen and later found damaged. In Hawstead, copper cable was stolen from drums belonging to the contractors doing the overhead electrical work in the autumn. In August, graffiti was sprayed on the bus shelter.

St. Edmundsbury Borough Council decided on 10 planning applications for the parish of Hawstead for the year 01 May 2008 to 30 April 2009.

The council tax for Hawstead houses was increased by 2.2% compared to last year. This was made up of an increase of 2.4% to Suffolk County Council, a nil increase to St. Edmundsbury Borough Council and an increase of 4.3% to the Suffolk Police Authority. The Parish Council precept was down by 1.3% compared to last year.

Finally, as recorded by the Land Registry, in the year 1st May 2008 to 30th April 2009, one house was sold in post code IP29 5NL, 1 in 5NX, and 1 in 5NS.

Karen Caldwell
Hawstead History Recorder
May2009