

Hawstead 2013: Local History Recorder's Review

The Bury Free Press newspaper (BFP) reported (5 July 2013) that June had been the driest since 2000: by the end of August it went further. Despite a wet August (145% above the regional average) the June-August summer months were stated (6 Sept 2013) as having been the driest since 1994. Summer is the time for harvesting of course and it was noticed that the Village Green was cut and turned for hay on 7th and 9th July respectively. Fields already harvested of winter barley were being ploughed on 8th August and a few days later, on Aug. 13th wheat harvesting was progressing alongside Whepstead Road.

Later in the year – 28th October to be precise, a severe storm hit the East of England and brought down several trees in the village, notably at Pinford End where a tree fell over Horsecroft Road at the bridge, bringing down the power line. Most of Hawstead (possibly all?) suffered a lengthy power cut, but it was worst in Pinford End. Anne Ng (The Grange, Church Rd.) wrote a letter to the BFP thanking neighbours for their help and pointing out that although UK Power was offering twice the normal amount in compensation, it had been a very miserable five days and four nights without power. There was further stormy weather in December, but the winter was generally mild with few frosts and no snow.

Hawstead experienced quite a number of other disruptions to services during 2013. Curiously, Pinford End Bridge had been closed back in February for road repairs; then at the end of September the full length of Horsecroft Road along to Gypsy Lane was closed for general road repairs. This took several weeks and the road was reopened on November 1st. The work was carried out by a private contractor rather than Suffolk County Council Highways Dept. Also in September, Lawshall Road was closed for three days in order to repair a burst water main just south of the village. "Road Closed" signs were set up all the way back to the Victory Sports Ground in town – which travellers found confusing (unsurprisingly!)

Villagers were notified by UK Power of a series of planned power cuts, firstly for an upgrade to the supply to Bryers Farm in July, then "for essential maintenance work" one day in each of August, September and October. These cuts may not have affected all of Hawstead at the same time.

Whepstead Road was closed 16-18th December in order to make a new water connection at the end of the main group of houses.

People

Nigel Gossett (Copperfields Barn, Lawshall Rd.) had two letters published in the BFP, firstly in February, concerning the imposition of parking charges in Nowton Park and secondly in May when very large "restricted parking" signs were erected beside the road leading to the park. Also in February Lucy Brewis (Pinford End Farmhouse) had an aerial photo which she had taken of the sugar beet factory published, also in the BFP. Much later, in December, Nik Lowe (Oaksmead, The Green) was the feature in a music item in the paper which reported that 'the 22-year old' was about to release his 'self-titled debut EP'. As reported in the 3rd. Jan. 2014 issue of the BFP, Hawstead Lodge Farm at Pinford End was the starting point of the annual Boxing Day Hunt. The full-page article said that 50 riders followed hounds over an artificial trail of 25 miles, and 400 people turned out to watch. Apparently, if the hounds 'put up' a fox, a golden eagle is flown to kill it! (was the reporter being taken for a ride?!)

Back in May, Andrew Brown of Hawstead Lodge Farm was successful at the Suffolk Show: on day 1, Aberdeen Angus 'Eric' won first prize in his breed class.

At the very beginning of 2013 Joanne Abbot (The Mill House, The Green) was buried in All Saints Churchyard on 4th January. She was followed by Michael Bulmer (High Trees, Lawshall Road) who died on 10th February. Edward Tooke (18, Whepstead Road) was buried on 18th. February. Stanley Bailey, formerly living in the Metcalfe Almshouses, died in West Suffolk Hospital (21st May) aged 84 and was cremated after a funeral service in All Saints Church. A funeral service was also held in the church for Michael Boreham on 29th May. Major Rex Carr (Beech Cottage, The Green) died on 22nd August and was buried in the Churchyard after a funeral service on 29th August. His death was reported in the BFP, noting his military career which included being awarded the Military Cross after action in Malaya in 1953. Then at the end of the year we learned of the death of village character David Baker (No. 1, The Pound). His funeral was on December 12th.

All Saints Church

In the Spring of the year an open letter from the Rector, Rev. Jayne Buckles and the Churchwardens and Treasurer of the Parochial Church Council (PCC) was sent to all households in the village appealing for gifts of money from parishioners: in 2012 it cost £12,400 to manage the church and income was much less at £6,800. A cream tea at Church Farm House on 10th August raised £428 and the annual Harvest Supper in the Village Hall brought in a further £802. Highlights of this evening were a performance by a group led by Rosemary Harrison of 'Cinderella' and an impromptu rendition of "To Be A Farmer's Boy". As in previous years Churchyard maintenance was partly achieved via the services of the local Probation Service. They now charge for their visits (£75 per occasion) so we now ask them to come just monthly and not until the wild flowers have set seed in July.

Hawstead Community Council

A subsidised visit to the Theatre Royal's performance of the pantomime "Rapunzel and the Rascal Prince" took place on 4th January. The Council held its Annual General Meeting on 23rd May and the published Financial Report showed a surplus of income over expenditure for the previous 12 months of £4,167. On 22nd June there was a Village Barbecue held at the Village Hall; then on Sunday 1st September there was the annual Fete, Flower and Produce Show which raised £1,100 for Community funds. Nik Lowe gave a live performance, there was a Punch & Judy show, and the cake competition recipe was "chocolate courgette"(!) At about this time Sonja Monk retired from the Committee after many years of active service.

Other cultural events in the Village Hall during the year included "Mark's Quiz Night", back 'by popular demand' TWICE, once in April and then again in October. "Fizz on Friday", organized by the Bury St Edmunds Rotary Club in aid of St. Nicholas Hospice and Papworth Hospital included music by Piper Quartet, two of whose members are Hawstead residents – Fran Evershed (flute) and Ros Alexander (cello). This was on September 5th and was followed a month later by the regular Macmillan Cancer Support "world's biggest coffee morning" on October 5th. In December the 'crafty folk of Hawstead' arranged a day of coffee, tea and cakes (and a BBQ) plus Christmas stalls with wreaths, decorations etc. for sale; and the Community Council invited all in the village to a Christmas drinks party on the evening of 21st December.

Village Groups

The 'Breathe Easy' yoga group and the carpet bowls club both met in the Hall regularly during the year on Tuesdays, morning and evening respectively. Monthly on Thursdays it was the turn of HATS : Hawstead Appreciation and Tasting Society – a wine-tasting club. Members of HATS take it in turn to lead a tasting evening. During 2013, themes included "4 continents", "MacQuitty's Choice" (The Times newspaper wine

critic) "Reds and Rosé" (same varieties for each); and "Wines from ALDI" (supermarket). There's also Hawstead Reading Group which meets in members' houses once a month. Having decided that their favourite book of 2012 had been "The Island" by Victoria Hislop they set forth during 2013 reading and discussing:

- The Kashmir Shawl *by* Rosie Thomas
- The Soldier's Wife *by* Joanna Trollope
- The Help *by* Kathryn Stockett
- To Kill a Mockingbird *by* Harper Lee
- The Unlikely Pilgrimage of Harold Fry *by* Rachel Joyce
- Dear Lupin; Letters to a Wayward Son *by* Charlie & Roger Mortimer
- Change of Heart *by* Jodi Picoult
- The Piano Teacher *by* J.K.Lee
- One Day *by* David Nichols
- Animal Dreams *by* Barbara Kingsolver

Khaki Devil Ltd

At the beginning of the year a company based in Ipswich which specialises in military history (supplying uniforms and equipment for TV and theatrical performances and a location for filming of World War One events) purchased buildings and land at Brook Farm, Bells Lane, the land (c. 4 acres) stretching for some distance away from the road alongside the stream. Their purpose - as explained in a presentation to the Parish Council in March - is to provide an educational facility about the First World War. At the beginning of July they invited villagers to attend an informational evening on the site. They explained that they planned to construct a number of huts and mock WW1 trenches; and to provide a visitor centre and café. They assured attendees that there would be no 'battles' or gunfire on the site. In November a Planning Application was made to St.Edmundsbury Borough Council and in the normal way the public was invited to comment. Hawstead Parish Council supported the scheme in a submission dated 26 November, subject to a number of conditions relating to access, opening hours, lighting, parking and legacy. The consultation period ended in mid December but the Borough Council's decision would have to wait until the New Year. In December news of this potential development reached the local press and there were reports in the BFP (6th Dec.) and East Anglian Daily Times (18th Dec.)

Metcalf Arms

In January it was understood that the pub was under new management: there was, however, no sign of a reopening during the Spring and eventually in July a For Sale notice went up. Offers 'in the region' of £250,000 + VAT were invited by Norfolk estate agent T.W.Gaze for the building and 'approximately 6 acres of land'. A sale was completed by the Autumn and the purchaser, Lark Valley Restorations, began work on converting the pub into a cycle shop and licensed cafe to be named "Maglia Rosso" (Italian = "Red Jersey"; in Italian cycle races the leader wears a red jersey). This work was continuing as the year drew to an end.

Other Property in Hawstead

Seven residential properties in Hawstead changed hands in 2013:

- Hawstead Hall, Bury Road (offered for sale @ £895,000)
- Hammond's Barn, Bull Lane (£895,000)
- Fylett's Barn, The Green (£490,000)
- Jasmin, Whepstead Road (£244,000)
- High Trees, Lawshall Road (£240,000)
- Karenbie, Whepstead Road (£175,000)
- No.2 Whepstead Road (£150,000)

Also during the year work progressed on a barn conversion at Bryer's Farm, Whepstead Road: a bungalow on the Pound (No.11) was demolished and a new house-build was commenced: and also on the Pound, "The Cottage" was substantially renovated. Overall in 2013 there were 15 applications to St.Edmundsbury Borough Council Planning Dept. One was refused, one concerned a Tree Preservation Order and all others were granted.

Parish Council

The new Clerk, Catherine Hibbert, joined the Parish Council (PC) in January, at which meeting information was provided concerning an expansion of Internet Broadband services within rural Suffolk. Hawstead is expected to benefit from the promised faster speed of broadband connection sometime during the first half of 2014. The Precept for the coming year will be the same as last year at £8000.

In May John West and Clive Robinson were unanimously approved as Chairman and Vice-Chairman for the 2013-14 year. In July and at other meetings thereafter, ways of making the road between the Village Green and Cullum Cottage safer for pedestrians were discussed. It was agreed to pay up to £450 p.a. for the next two years towards All Saints Churchyard maintenance. In September an earlier proposal to erect CCTV cameras at the roadside where the roads enter the village was abandoned. More information was forthcoming about the "Better Broadband for Suffolk" project. A 'node' is expected to be set up on the corner of the Green by Bells Lane: those properties located within 1.8km. should expect a significant improvement to their Internet access.

At the November meeting it was agreed to investigate the viability of acquiring 'speedwatch' equipment: it was revealed that monitoring by the police had resulted in finding that 28% of vehicles travelling through the village (ie Bury Road / Lawshall Road) had been moving at in excess of 36mph. At the same meeting several PC expenditures for the village were approved:

- New noticeboard for the Green @ £80
- New Christmas tree lights @ £235
- Two new benches (locations to be decided) @ £933
- Goal posts for the Green @ £244

Motions to spend money on rabbit and mole control on the Green were also agreed.

Final Note

On October 31st the 500th UK branch of ALDI was opened in Bury St Edmunds.