

B.

HAWSTEAD

HISTORY RECORDER'S REPORT TO THE PARISH COUNCIL MAY 2004

On 20th July 2003 while taking a holiday with his daughter Sarah in Felixstowe John Holdway, Chairman of the Parish Council died. He had been unwell for sometime but had refused to give in to ill health and continued to lead the parish council and to act as treasurer of the Metcalfe Almshouses Trust. A week later on Monday 28th All Saints Church was packed as the village paid tribute to a man who had served his community well. To create a lasting memorial to John Holdway the Parish Council on 21st February 04 planted an oak tree in the Millennium field. John had worked hard to secure the field for the parish, formerly part of the glebe land, and it is fitting that the sapling was grown from an acorn from one of the Manor oaks harvested and set in the year 2000 A.D.

A new opening has been made between the Churchyard and the Millennium field making possible a circular walk. Further work to develop the wild flowers in the field is ongoing.

Last year I recorded that the Church Commissioners had at last undertaken their responsibility to repair the ablution block at the old school known as Cullum House. It proved impossible to save the lean-to that housed the WCs but the flint walls and slate roof of the main part of the block have been expertly restored. The long term conservation of the school house, ablution block, decorative iron water pump and surrounding land must remain a concern as it is understood that the Commissioners policy is to favour commercial development.

The price of property in the village has followed national trends and continues to rise in value putting it beyond the means of young people with families. Smaller properties that have recently been acquired are being enlarged by the addition of bedrooms or garages. The Parish Council anxious to retain the character of the village is vigilant and gives careful consideration to each planning application. Currently to the writer's knowledge there are five houses up for sale in the village.

The Metcalfe Arms P H, having gained a new land-lord, Wendy Haysom, has begun to re-establish its business after the nose dive in trade following the departure of Roy and Bernice Tooke. Major alterations to the interior have just been completed with the dividing wall between the lounge and public bars being removed. Between 6 and 7 pm on a Friday night a good proportion of the village can be found there relaxing after the weeks work.

With the coming of a new priest the Rev. Martin Thrower and at the same time the Benefice being increased by two Parishes to six there has been a rationalisation of services: matins and evensong those great traditional services of the Anglican church have all but disappeared instead Hawstead now has two services a month a said Eucharist at 8.30am and a sung Eucharist at 11am, though it should be recorded that the psalms are said not sung!

Music however has not deserted the Church as it has been used for two concerts during the past year. Four Gentlemen of St. John's College Cambridge in June 03

gave a delightful evening of choral music while Cadenza, a quartet from Yorkshire sang opera pops in May 04 raising money for the church and the new village hall respectively.

Visually the most significant occurrence in the village is the demolition of the old village hall. With planning consent from St. Edmundsbury District Council for the new hall granted Barry Colson, contractor, moved in with heavy machinery during the week commencing 19th April 04 and quickly removed the rotting wooden superstructure. By the first week in May the concrete plate and footings had been broken up and carted away and the site left flat and rolled ready for seeding. To maintain the integrity of the Green's flora the seeding will be achieved by spreading bales of hay cut from the Green last year over the bare earth.

Grants towards the cost of building the new village hall have been received from St. Edmundsbury District Council and Suffolk County Council. Applications to the major funders i.e the Lottery Commission and WREN Landfill Agency are complete but cannot be submitted until the lawyers have completed the leasing arrangements between the Parish Council and Hawstead Community Council. The Parish Clerk is optimistic that this legal matter will be completed by the end of this month. Consent from DEFRA to build on the village Green is also being sought.

The need to raise funds for the new hall has given impetus to the work of the Community Council. During the past year it has held a very successful Plant Sale; held the annual produce show and fete in tents, some kindly lent by the RAF; held the Christmas lunch in the Lawshall village hall and through the loan of the old schoolroom by Miss Elsa Kirkpatrick and the family games room by Bill and Sue Diaper of The Cottage, Bury Road has kept the Bingo Club going. An Easter egg hunt was again run on Easter Sunday afternoon and enjoyed by the village children. Additionally a coffee morning to say farewell to the old hall was organised though lightly attended!

Without the village hall the community, and particularly the younger and older people who do not drive, lacks a centre for clubs or a drop-in centre, or meetings. The building of the new hall is the greatest project ever undertaken by the villagers only eclipsed by the rebuilding of the Church by the Drury family in the sixteenth century.

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