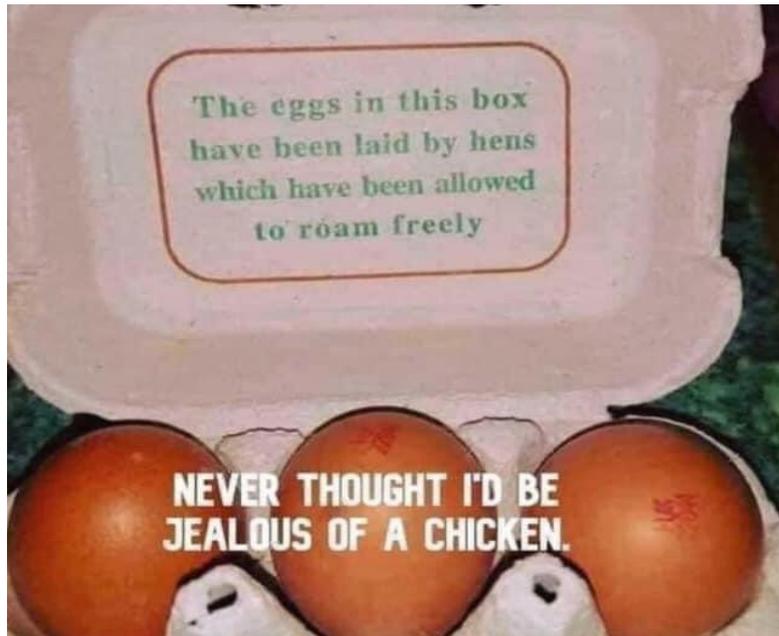


Hawstead 2021: Local History Recorder's Review

We started 2021 with another 'lockdown' period due to the COVID-19 pandemic which the world had suffered during most of 2020: and the virus continued to influence lives and activities throughout the year.



It was, however, a changing experience. During January we learned that although several Hawstead residents had contracted C-19, most had recovered by the end of the month and nobody had died as a result of the virus. Nevertheless, a report in the BFP (Bury Free Press) on 30/07/21 said that between 10/04/20 and 31/03/21 there had been 6 deaths at Pinford End Nursing Home "... involving C-19 of care home residents."

There was a general easing of restrictions during the year which also saw several Covid variants appearing and (so to speak) moving on. There was the 'Kent' variant and a 'Delta' variant, but by the time we were visited by the 'Omicron' variant it appeared that whilst very virulent, it was found to be less harmful: anyway, during the year more and more people became vaccinated against the virus. Your author received jabs on Feb. 5th, April 30th and then a recommended 'booster on November 4th.



The number of C-19 cases in our area fluctuated considerably during 2021. As measured by Zoe (an online statistical service with several million contributors reporting daily), in January (on an example day) there were 556 cases in St Edmundsbury; in May there were 3; in August, 1042, in October, 2218 and in December 659. The various liftings of restrictions by the government appeared to be related more to a) the number of deaths – which declined considerably, particularly as Omicron became the dominant strain, and b) the ability of NHS hospitals to cope, rather than the overall numbers of people suffering from C-19.

At the start of the year food deliveries were restarted (bread/milk, meat, fruit/vegetables); Rupert Brown made his farm walks available again and Geraldine West ran virtual coffee mornings. A fish and chip van called in at the Village Hall car park to supply pre-ordered meals during January and February.



The Volunteer Group weekly online meetings via 'Zoom' continued, but the Parish Council Minutes of May commented that this group had by then been 'stood down'.

In mid-March, John West, Parish Council Chairman received a letter and Award document from the Lord Lieutenant and High Sheriff of Suffolk on behalf of the Volunteer Group and others in Hawstead, in recognition of 'Outstanding Service to the Community' during the Covid-19 Pandemic.



From April 12th shops could open again and pubs could open – initially for outdoor service. Further relaxations took place in the Summer and later in the year: so for example from December 10th face coverings, whilst still mandatory on public transport, were no longer essential for entry to shops or pubs.

Parish Council (PC)

A full programme of PC meetings was held during 2021, but prior to July these were remote sessions via ‘Zoom’. In January it was agreed to purchase 500 sticker signs for residents to use (eg on wheelie bins) to remind vehicle drivers of the 30mph speed limit through Hawstead. This purchase was enabled by our Borough Councillor’s ‘Locality Budget’.

In March, a severe clearance of vegetation bordering the ‘Cranks’ footpath (from the Church to Pinford End) was discussed. Over a distance of 250 yards trees and hedging had been removed in an operation last carried out in 1992. The meeting was assured that the vegetation will regenerate over time. Also at this time a way-marker had been supplied for Brook Path ; and a free elm sapling for the Green had been received.



In May there was a virtual Annual Parish Meeting as well as the regular PC Meeting. End of Year finances were by then available, showing that at 31/03/21 the 'book balance of the PC amounted to £18,449 with Parish physical assets valued at £23,739. Since then the annual Precept had been received (£7400) and total funds at 06/05/21 stood at £25,250.

In September a medium term management plan for Brook Green (a wooded area either side of Bells Lane) prepared by Suffolk Wildlife Trust was approved. There was also discussion about the possibility of the PC commissioning warning signs to be positioned – with permission – on private land adjacent to the corner at the bottom of Bull Hill (Larkfield/The Wash). Suffolk Highways have declined the PC's request for signage as there hasn't been an accident there(!)

In the wake of difficult (and unsuccessful) appeals to the Borough Planning Committee over a planning application earlier in the year, the possibility of developing a 'Neighbourhood Plan' for Hawstead was discussed, but rejected a) because of the time, effort and expertise required to produce such a plan and b) because opportunities for development within the village are in any case restricted due to the 'open countryside' designation which currently exists over much of Hawstead. It was, however, agreed that a Management Plan for the open areas of the village was a good idea and one which would be shared with residents in due course.

At a Planning Meeting in October it was noted that our Borough Councillor, Terry Clements, has retired from office and grateful thanks for his work on behalf of the village were expressed. At this meeting and at the subsequent normal November meeting plans for the development of Brook Green were taken forward with the intention of informing villagers of the details in the New Year.

There were two elections held during 2021 and on neither occasion were events hindered by Covid-19. On May 6th we elected Karen Soons (Con) as our County Councillor on a 43.4 % turnout. All other candidates (Lab/Green/LibDem) together polled barely half of the number of votes given to Karen. On November 25th the election to replace Terry Clements as our Borough Councillor was a much closer-run thing. Nicholas Wiseman (Con) was the winner with 257 votes but close behind came the Labour candidate, Aaron McIntyre on 204 votes. His high score was probably due to the fact that he was the only candidate in a traditionally Conservative-voting area to produce a leaflet telling the electorate who he is and what he stands for and which was delivered to homes in the voting area.

Community Council (CC)

The year started with the Village Hall unusable as a venue due to C-19 restrictions, but as these were relaxed from mid-May the Hall became a 'covid secure' building. Meanwhile in March, Social Secretary Caroline Miller had organised a 'cocktails and Conversation' evening via Zoom, the conversation involving Robert Gibbs, Leader of the Royal Ballet Sinfonia and Yijing Zhang, dancer with Birmingham Royal Ballet (Caroline is Chief Executive of Birmingham Royal Ballet).

At Easter there was a distribution of Crème Eggs to children of the village.



On Saturday 29th May a 'Coffee, Cake and Plant Fair' was held at the Village Hall (outside). The weather was good, luckily, and a profit of £684 for CC funds was raised. At the conclusion of this event a presentation was made to CC Chairman, Susanne White, acknowledging the huge contribution she had made during the pandemic, notably in getting the food deliveries arranged and in setting up Village Voice. Talking of the newsletter, there were five issues during the year, sent out as before by email: they ranged from 17 to 28 pages long!

In the evening of 12th June, James and Christabel Carr led a 'nature walk' around the village. The evening included talks by Alice Wickman of Suffolk Wildlife Trust and Mark Prina from 'A Rocha', an organisation that owns Foxearth Meadows reserve near Long Melford and was followed by a social in the newly opened Village Hall.

The Annual Village Fete on Sunday September 5th was a splendid event which attracted big numbers as it had been well advertised in the local area. There were more activities on offer than in previous years – including a 'just for fun' dog show and a silent auction.



It was a fine sunny day and a profit of £1984 was realised. This income was very welcome to the CC as it has decided that the playground equipment should be replaced at an estimated cost of £40,000. So there's some way to go.

The Christmas period began at the village hall on Saturday 4 December with an Advent service to celebrate the start of the festive period. About 30 villagers and parishioners met for a short celebration of festive readings and carols led by Canon Max to recognise the importance of Advent, and to turn on the Christmas tree lights both inside and outside. The CC provided mulled wine for a post-event socially distanced get together, with mince pies being supplied by parishioners.

Because of increased C-19 case numbers it was decided to cancel the usual pre-Christmas drinks evening, but the Triple-20's Christmas Lunch was retained as it's a sit-down event. More than 40 residents enjoyed the three-course festive meal provided provided by Andrea Davey of 'Elite Cakes and Buffets', with several villagers ordering 'meals on wheels' delivered by village volunteers.

Hawstead's Christmas Elves were also out and about between Christmas and New Year, delivering chocolate coins to all residents aged 16 and under.

All Saints Church

During lockdown there was live streaming of Benefice Services. Normal church services recommenced in May but shortly afterwards (in July) the Benefice Rector, Rev. Jeremy Parsons left his post (as was foretold last year). The Diocese used this event to propose a restructuring of Benefices which led to the churches of Hawstead and Nowton being moved into Horringer Benefice. There was a service in August to welcome our new Rector, Canon Max Osborne, though he was not due to become our incumbent priest till next January.

During the year there was one each of baptism and marriage: also two burials of ashes. One was Tony Hillman, who had been Churchwarden for 15 years until 2007 and who died on 8th April. There was a memorial service on October 16th for local farmer Andrew Brown who had been a very successful breeder of Aberdeen Angus cattle.

In mid-April nesting boxes for swifts were constructed and installed in the church tower (on the level where the bells sit) by Bruce Monk. Electrics for broadcasting swift calls to attract birds were put in by Bob Brough and the system went live in May, awaiting their arrival from Africa. Unfortunately, although swifts were seen in the area during early summer they didn't avail themselves of the nesting facilities – maybe next year.



The church has not had the services of the Community Payback people for Churchyard maintenance since the start of the pandemic: this year there were several Saturday mornings when, on appeal, a number of villagers turned up

to help tidy the Churchyard. These, together with some individual help on other occasions, meant that the grass and brambles were kept down to an acceptable level.



Other events included a Remembrance Day Service, a visit by a number of vintage classic cars during the annual ‘Ride and Stride day in September which raises money for the Suffolk Historic Churches Trust; and two Saturdays before Christmas when wreath-making sessions were led by Lesley Carey.

At the beginning of November the long-awaited Conservation Report concerning the Chancel monument to Sir Thomas Cullum was received, together with an estimate of costs. Both of these are substantial and will need to be worked on during 2022.

Other Items of Note

Suffolk Barn. This wedding and reception venue at Hawstead Place Farm was featured in the BFP at the beginning of April with a photo and quotations from an interview with Rupert Brown who was looking forward to opening doors to clients at the end of May and being fully operational in July. The proof of this was seen in the shape of a large piece in the national Times newspaper (actually dated 08/01/22) reporting with a splendid photo on a wedding at Suffolk Barn in September.

The nearby fishing lakes also belonging to Place Farm featured in the BFP as well – on three occasions – in the Angling News section of the BFP in March it was commented that the milder weather has produced better results for carp anglers with one being landed at 24lb and 4oz. A fuller report in April referred to Hawstead Lakes as ‘primarily a specimen angler’s day ticket water’ with ‘up to 20 easily accessible swims to fish from’. As well as carp there are silver fish, perch and tench to be caught. Then in September an article appeared with similar information for anglers together with a picture of a happy fisherman with his catch.

Maglia Rosso. In July a cycle event saw 195 riders take on distances ranging from 15 to 100 miles in length, starting and finishing at the cycle shop. The event was called ‘The Edge’ and raised nearly £11,000 for St Nicholas Hospice in Bury St Edmunds.

The ‘Wigwam’ holiday cabins installed by Maglia Rosso on the adjacent field and described in last year’s History Recorder Report were popular again in 2021 (when Covid-19 precautions were relaxed) with many visitors commenting that they enjoyed the rural experience and that they would be returning for future holiday breaks.

This same field has been used in the past. There's a regular 'Nostalgia' section in the BFP and in August there was a photo taken in the grounds of Maglia Rosso back in 1994 when of course it was our village pub, the Metcalfe Arms. It featured a band, one of nine local bands which played at what was labelled the first Hawstead Music Festival. About 300 people attended this event which was held 'despite some opposition'



In October Barry Denny (seen above guiding riders out onto the road at Maglia Rosso) received the award for 'Rural Enterprise' on behalf of Maglia Rosso at the 2021 BFP Business Awards.



A major landscaping job was done in the grounds of Maglia Rosso, re-instating the pond which filled up quickly and later became home to a number of friendly ducks.

Great War Huts. 2021 saw the start of school visits, aimed particularly at schools which can't visit the battlefields of France and Flanders. These were very popular and bookings for 2022 are already coming in. Several other activities took place during the year of which only one – the Suffolk Concert Band in December – had to be cancelled. There

was a return of R M Lloyd Parry reciting more ghost stories by local author M R James in November, and then shortly afterwards a talk about the WW! Princess Mary Gift Boxes – brass tins which were to be distributed to all armed forces of the British Empire on Christmas Day 1914. Leading up to Christmas they presented their HutVent Calendar (a follow-on from the one last year) featuring 25 interesting and unusual objects in their collection over the 25 days leading up to Christmas.

Before all of that, Great War Huts was open as in the past for the national ‘Heritage Days’ in September and included an exhibition called ‘Drawers for Wars’ made up of military underwear from 1900 to the present!

In the Bury Free Press and other publications. Villagers had success in getting their photos published in the ‘Pictures and Poetry’ section. These were Angela Parrett (January 8th), Laura Eastwood (May 28th) and Andy Parrett (March 5th and August 6th – winner that week)

Also mentioned in the BFP: Ashtons Legal (a firm of Solicitors) donated £5,000 to seven charities, including two in Bury St Edmunds, The Gatehouse and St Nicholas Hospice, in a scheme whereby a charitable donation is made for every new will completed. Their spokesman speaking to the BFP was Hawstead resident Alan Brown.

The Boxing Day Hunt set off from Hawstead Lodge Farm as usual and was reported in the BFP with a photo on the front page and a double page spread inside. This incurred the wrath of at least one reader, whose letter was published the following week, abhorring fox-less hunting and hoping that there will be no similar reporting next year!

Away from the weekly local newspaper the magazine ‘Suffolk and Norfolk Life’ proposed a 17-mile cycle ride starting and finishing at Hawstead Village Hall carpark and taking in Hartest, Shimpling, Lawshall and Stanningfield. Happily, they suggested going round in a clockwise direction, thereby coming down the hill from Giffords to Hartest rather than up!. Among the comments about Hawstead, the writer says “All Saints Church has been described as the Westminster Abbey of Suffolk because of the quantity (around 40) and quality of its monuments”.

The weather is reported monthly in the BFP by Alan Messem, a retired meteorologist. It is worth commenting about unusual conditions at the beginning and end of 2021. In January there was flooding due to extremely heavy downpours. At times like this Bells Lane usually floods because of the swollen Hawstead Brook: the underside of the bridge over the brook is partially blocked up with silt: but Suffolk Highways have promised to fix it – next year. At the other end of the year, December 31st was the warmest New Year’s Eve since records began.



Snow fell once during the year – a modest amount at the end of the first week of February.

Cropping is of course closely related to the weather: the Village Green was cut for hay on July 15th and the vast Cooks Field adjacent to Lawshall Road was harvested of wheat on August 27th.



Hawstead Appreciation and Tasting Society (HATS). The village wine-tasting club met via Zoom once a month during January – May (with conversations about what wines members were drinking that evening) and then in June there was an annual dinner with a difference in the Village Hall. The difference was that it comprised dishes brought in by those attending (who numbered 19). Following that there were monthly meetings in person in the Hall in July (bring a bottle), August (wines that had been served at the June dinner), October (‘Supermarket Burgundies’) and November (a selection of wines from the Wine Society).

Book Club. The club continued throughout 2021 in a series of meetings, either via Zoom or in person at different members’ homes. The following books were read and discussed:

- The Hating Party by Lucy Foley
- The Color Purple by Alice Walker
- Where the Crawdads Sing by Delia Owens
- The Bell Jar by Sylvia Plath
- The Salt Path by Raynor Winn
- Arthur and George by Julian Barnes
- And the Mountains Echoed by Khaled Hosseini
- The Child in Time by Ian McEwan
- Becoming by Michele Obama
- The Shock of the Fall by Nathan Filer
- The Volunteer by Jack Fairweather
- The Librarian by Sally Vickers

“Where the Crawdads Sing” was the most popular read.

Crime. As recorded by Suffolk Police there was one burglary in Hawstead and three cases categorised as ‘violent/sexual’ in 2021. With regard to the burglary, this was of an Audi TT car and jewellery in April from a house in The Pound. On September 27th Matthew Greenaway aged 50 from Luton was jailed for 5 years for 4 burglaries committed in Bedfordshire. He admitted to a further 9 offences including this one in Hawstead.

Some Extra Snippets.

1. On Sunday 21st March a national Census was held (conforming to the pattern of conducting a census every 10 years). What was special this time was that there were no 'enumerators' calling at our door with forms to be filled in. For the first time it was to be completed 'on-line'.
2. The regular 'G7' conference of the leaders of seven leading nations took place in Cornwall. The American President, Joe Biden arrived in his presidential plane, 'Air Force One' on June 9th. He landed at nearby RAF Mildenhall passing over Hawstead in clear blue skies on the way.



3. The annual Macmillan Coffee Morning took place in the Village Hall in October and raised £1950 for the cancer charity. After many years of organising this, Joyce Dainty will now retire from this task and is looking for a successor.



4. In the afternoon of 2nd May the gardens at Hawstead Place were opened via the National Gardens Scheme. Entry was at £5 per person and the emphasis was on the display of late blooming bulbs.
5. At the end of June the Suffolk Air Ambulance attended to assist a person trapped under a 4-Wheel-Drive vehicle in the field adjacent to the property 'Woodlands' at the North end of the village.

6. During the Summer here was an archaeological dig in the field opposite 'Larkfield' at 'The Wash', just above the River Lark. Aerial photos and a magnetometer survey had indicated the presence of previous settlements deemed to have been in the Bronze Age. This was organised by a company 'Past to Present' and individuals could pay £600 each for a two-week experience of archaeological digging.



7. The August issue of Village Voice promised many opportunities for villagers to keep fit. An Autumn programme promised yoga, pilates and tai-chi on Tuesday, saffron yoga on Thursday and ren yoga on Friday. Thursday evenings would provide 'pump and tone' workout sessions.
8. Towards the end of the year long-term road closures in Sicklesmere for essential drainage works (flooding had caused much damage to the Post Office and General Store – our nearest shop) meant that drivers were using Bells Lane as a way around the problem. This is not a good road to choose:

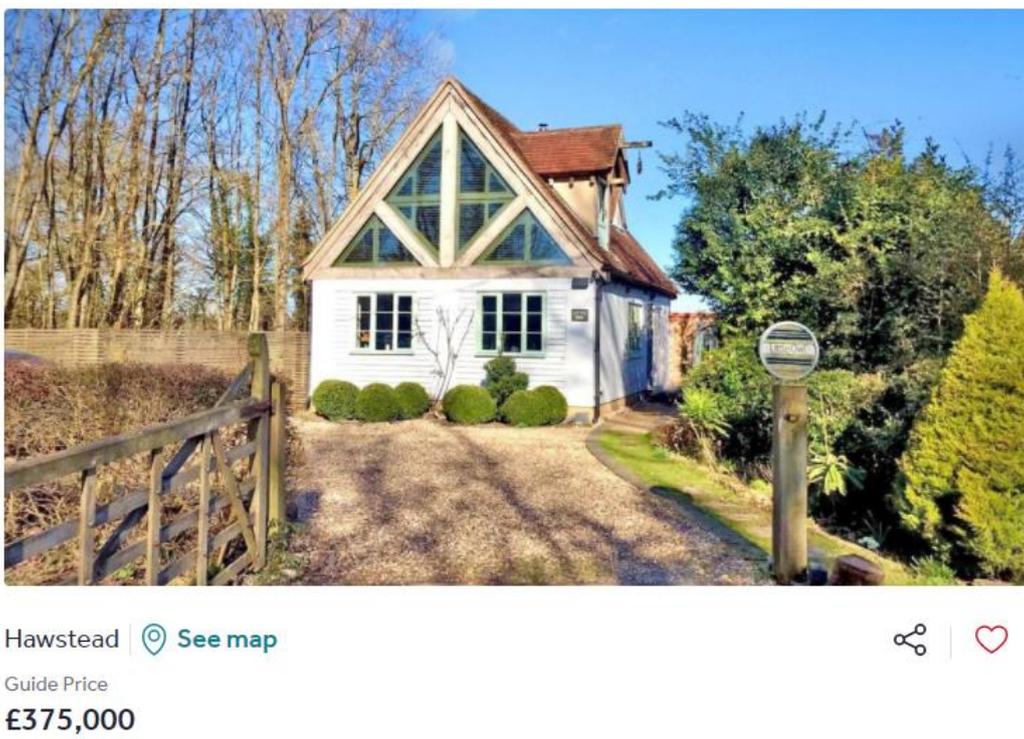


Property and Planning. 10 Planning Applications were submitted to the Borough Council during 2021. All were approved (one in early 2022) although one which had been opposed by the Parish Council was over-ruled by the Borough's Planning Committee. Another , involving the conversion of a barn to a dwelling was subject to a number of conditions; and a third involved an appeal to higher authorities in government.

Church House, advertised for sale last year was sold in mid-February. Rose Cottage in Pinford End sold in September for £805,000. Records show that it had changed hands previously in February 2001 for £235,000 which is an increase in excess of 240% over 20 years.



Having had its status changed from 'holiday cottage' to that of 'dwelling' via the planning system, 'Little Owl' on The Pound was marketed in March for £375,000 and was quickly sold.



In August the house at “Church Farm” was offered for sale at £675,000 but had not been sold at the end of the year.



Postscript

T W Gaze, Auctioneers in Diss, Norfolk had a copy of Rev. Sir John Cullum’s book *“The History and Antiquities of Hawsted and Hardwick in the County of Suffolk”* listed in February 2021 with a sale price of £140. This was probably the second edition, published in 1813. (Note the spelling of ‘Hawsted’ rather than ‘Hawstead’)

