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HAWSTEAD
**HISTORY RECORDER'S REPORT
TO THE PARISH COUNCIL**

MAY 2003

Writing the Recorder's report each year is a little like writing further episodes in a soap opera with several themes recurring. Last year after strenuous efforts by the Parish Council it seemed that the Church Commissioners were about to repair the old school ablution block, (now a listed building) but progress is slow and in late winter when the plans were made public it was apparent that the lean-to in which the lavatories were located was to be demolished. Objections have been lodged and another year will elapse before I can report the outcome. A further planning application for a large house on the block of land to the north of the Metcalfe Almshouses was made and again turned down by St Edmundsbury DC. However that end of the village has been busy with builders throughout the year with extensions and conservatories being added to houses but generally at the back of properties and not visible from the road. Thus keeping the character of the area intact. A newly built garage which has become a dwelling house without permission is currently causing concern. In other parts of the village planning permission was turned down for a development on the corner of Bull Lane and Church Road at Pinford End and the conversion of a small barn to a house in Bell's lane has similarly been refused.

Hawstead Journal un-named a year ago has completed a successful first volume. Under the fatherly eye of Brian Kew and with sponsorship from Cecil & Larter a different editor has recorded each month the events, thoughts and humour current in the village. As Recorder I am carefully hoarding my copies and plan to lodge them in the Record Office since with the Quartet (the Benefice magazine) they provide a good insight into village life.

On 1st April 03 the Rev. Martin Thrower was officially licensed as the new Rector of an enlarged Benefice comprising the parishes of Bradfield Combust, Hawstead, Lawshall, Nowton, Stanningfield and Gt. Welnetham. Martin and his family have chosen to live in Lawshall and so Hawstead joins many other rural parishes and for the first time in many centuries is without a resident priest.

The gales on the night of 27th October 02 removed the greatest part of the village hall roof. Public meetings followed by a poll determined that the village wanted a new hall and commissioned the Community Council to seek funding from the Lottery Board. A project group led by Joan Cook has been established and with the support of Suffolk Acre the groundwork in preparing an application is well in hand. The appointment of an architect will be announced shortly. The project group is very conscious of the special nature of the site, the need to build in an environmentally friendly manner while making sure that the new hall will serve the identified needs of the community for many years to come.

The village green was inspected by DEFRA and the Suffolk Wild Life Trust in March and it was subsequently harrowed to give help to the species competing with the many grasses.

The landlords of the Metcalfe Arms PH raised the rent to such an extent that Roy and Bernice Tooke gave up their very happy and successful tenancy in January removing to the White Swan at Lawshall. At the insistence of several Hawstead residents the pub remained open - just – and is now in the good hands of Maggie.

It is a modern day paradox that while the local council tax levied and the overall wealth of the village is probably at an all time high the facilities located in the village are at a very low point.

Joan Cook
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