

S.H.S. Newsletter.

Dear Members,

Wishing you all a Happy New Year. I am starting the year on a serious note for the future. There will be no clipart pictures, but it is serious subject that I feel I ought to bring before you all just to get your views

The Long Term Future of Sherington Historical Society -11th January 2006.

We have recently been given, on permanent loan all the available documents on Sherington Place by Jackie Gadsby, to whom we are very grateful. This issue raised all sorts of thoughts in various peoples minds.

The documents, consisting of bills of sale, wills, certificates, vellum indentures, contracts and all sorts of documents relative to the environment around the house. The first thought that entered into our minds was that these documents should be kept, like a log book, with the house in question and offered to the present owners.

But secondly, that they on no account must leave the village, and that they must stay as village property. But if they became the property of the present owners of Sherington Place, then the documents could indeed leave the village when that present owner leaves. So the issue raised was that SHS should take charge of these documents. This was by a unanimous decision, yes we should. Then access could and would be granted to all who had an interest in these documents and the village surrounding, this would also include the present, temporary owners of the property. We also came to the conclusion that it was not morally wrong for us not to inform the present owners, how and when these documents came into our possession.

At the meeting on the 10th Jan 2006, Philip Smith was duly given the task of negotiating with Jackie for these documents and this he did to our great advantage. That she agreed to give us permanent possession at no cost to the society Jackie has also agreed to sign a document giving us this permanent possession, just to regularise the agreement between us.

This also raises further issues. Now SHS has acquired the said documents where and how do we safely store them. It was the remit of SHS in 2000, when it was formed not to accept original documents, but just to copy and return to the owners. This way all original documents etc. were dispersed amongst many people and the responsibility for their delicate storage was not with SHS. But after 5 years of gathering data we have collected other original documents and photos etc. and all of these documents as social history were too important to allow the chance of straying. So SHS's remit has changed and we are now responsible for storing tapes, video and audio, discs with movies and data and still photos, we still have only a couple of artefacts, but again there are more out there if we would wish to have them. We have had no choice in the way technology has overtaken us, in the way digital images are stored. So these have to be stored somewhere, and although we can disperse these around the current committee's houses it is not the answer to our storage problem. This data is not sensitive in a personal way, but it is historically important, and must be protected.

The one way is in fireproof containers, this works out to be VERY expensive, the second way

possibly is to send these documents etc to Aylesbury Record Office on permanent loan after we have made good copies for our own use. Copies of the vellum documents cannot be done on the normal machines and will again prove to be expensive and difficult. This could be a possibly long term solution. The documents in Aylesbury would be available for ALL to use and see and would be stored in ideal conditions. *(Including the school Log Books and Punishment Book)*

We now have ordered our new computer and it should be available some time during this week 10th -20th January 2006, this will solve all of our general storage problems and filing difficulties. And it will be available for all members to use should they need to access data from our archives. Also a printer and scanner will be there for printouts and documents on the spot, rather than having to order and wait for them to be printed at someone's convenience. We have overspent our £612 budget by approx £150, but that will not be any sort of problem, *(we made that on Christmas cards thanks to Sheila Line's efforts and Alan and Pam in the shop)*. The storage on our PC will be vast with three back-up facilities, one stored off the village hall site at the current chairman's home.

The next main issue is that we are in danger of outgrowing our present village hall premises, we now have two of the large cupboards, a large bookcase, two large filing cabinets, three small filing cabinets, a computer desk and numerous boxes and computers scattered in the office space. Plus a desk and four chairs. In other words we are hogging a village facility and although no one is complaining yet, we are still growing very fast. This facility was designed for all the village hall user groups to share!

Ideally we could do with our own premises, and this is the thought that has surfaced just recently. Should we in fact put together a 10 to 15 year project/plan to build or have built our own premises some where in the village. There are all sorts of ways to do this, with lottery grants, funding from various places, taxes on property development, conditions to developments, volunteer labour etc. etc. Thoughts are that we should think very carefully about this, lots of us who are involved with SHS at this time will obviously not see this come to fruition, but do we need to start the ball rolling now for the future of this Society of ours ? When I started this SHS in March 2000, I could not possibly anticipate that it would have grown to the extent that it has. But I can now foresee that there are all sorts of new projects that could be incorporated into our programme. Just look at our three neighbours Newport Pagnell, Stoke Goldington and Emberton. Derek George has been running Stokes H S for about 20 years and he is still uncovering data for their archives and the society is still flourishing. They have their own premises, Newport have been going for longer and they have their own premises with a museum. Emberton NOW store their data at their own store in the Pavilion both Caroline and her husband Edward are leading lights in that society.

There are all sorts of ongoing needs to overcome with own premises, heating, lighting and water to be laid on and paid for. Rates, rent, insurance and maintenance. Some of these could be dispensed with maybe. But they do need to be considered. But maybe the Parish Council could be involved in this project. It really would be a village amenity. The PC are already involved in as much as they are ultimately responsible for ALL of our archives in the event that they go out of our possession for any reason. They would probably be shunted off to the Local Studies Centre or again Aylesbury. The site also needs to be somewhere central and not at all remote from the village envelope.

The small meeting of nine members on Tuesday the 10th were unanimous in their decision that the SHS should have a long term plan/strategy and I would like to have the rest of your input and thoughts about this, maybe you would put it in writing to me or to any members of the committee, or just phone to say you agree or disagree. Obviously one of us would have to take this under their wing and gently pursue this onwards, there is nothing urgent at this time. But if we do go ahead with this long term project we do need to make everyone in the village aware of our needs at this time because all sorts of projects, both public and private are lurking in the wings. If John (Two Jags) Prescott gets his way we will be inundated with housing estates in the area and probably within the village and if we cannot hold these back maybe we get something useful out of them How brilliant would that be ?

N.A.

PS We have booked the Village Hall for our 'Open Day' which will be on September 30th Noon til 5pm.

And the year's programmes will be available shortly. (Definitely before the next meeting).