

RHC's Chairman's report for the year ending August 2011

I am pleased to report that the club has had another successful 12 months and that we have had an ever increasing membership during that time.

Probably the highlight of the year was the very impressive farming and families exhibition in July. Many compliments were received both during and after it and I think it brought a lot of pleasure to a lot of people. It would never have been the success it was without the fact that Rita and Brian Ford were prepared to share with us their wonderful collection of farming memorabilia. They both spent a lot of time preparing for the exhibition and we really can't thank them enough. Thanks must also go to the project sub-committee and other members of the club who contributed on the day and beforehand. It was a real team effort. Unfortunately Rita feels that she would like to take a break from the committee and although this really disappointed me I was relieved that she has agreed to stay on the project sub-committee and will hopefully continue to provide the tea and coffee at meetings, which is very much appreciated.

Les Hemsworth has also decided to stand down from the committee. He will continue to be our official photographer and we do thank him for his help in the past and look forward to seeing more photographs in the future.

During the year we have had some very interesting speakers and for this we must thank Jenny Lee, assisted by John Homewood initially, for the excellent variety and quality of speaker she has been able to book. Next year seems to be equally interesting. One of the most popular meetings was the one in April when some of our own members shared their interests with us. We hope that members are beginning to think of what they can share next year.

The club had stalls at the Radley Bazaar and Fete and also had displays at Abingdon and Kennington libraries during the year. Some members visited the archaeological dig at Marcham, which was very interesting. The Christmas meal at the Bowyer Arms was very popular and was a chance for members to meet each other more informally.

The club had published two books during the year. The 150 copies of the farming and families book have sold well and we will probably need to order some more as there are only two left. Paddy Dockar-Drysdale wrote a book about the stained glass of Radley Church, with photographs by Les Hemsworth and that is now for sale. We also encouraged one of our

members, David Buckle, to write about his time at Cowley following a talk he gave to the club and his book was published this last year.

Dr John Wilson, who has talked to various groups in the village in the past, recently moved house and gave me a collection of books, some of which I sold on ebay to help with expenses at the exhibition. The total raised was just over £300 and I would like to record my appreciation of his help. The money was spent on hiring the village hall and also in buying copies of tithe maps for Radley from the national archives.

As you will see from the treasurer's report we have a sound financial situation and at this point I would like to thank Joyce for all she does as treasurer and as membership secretary. She is so efficient and reliable and is a great asset to the club. She and John, her husband, have produced an excellent website for the club, which puts people from all over the world in contact with us. John also looks after the sound system and projector, which I am very grateful for.

As a profit was made at the exhibition the committee decided to donate £200 towards the cost of refurbishment of the village hall.

If you look at the website you will be able to see what an excellent archive collection the club possesses. Although I now look after the books, Stan Baker looks after the rest. When writing the farming book I realised how much was available to me and once again I realised how much Stan contributes to the club. We have an excellent collection of copies of manuscripts, which Stan had transcribed, often from Latin and old English, and these together with so much else he has collected has given us an archive collection of which we can be proud.

During the last year we haven't had an official secretary so Ann Blake, Jenny Lee and Sally Hemsworth have shared it between them and we thank them for that. All of them are busy people and it has lightened the load a little by their sharing the work. John Homewood and Tony Rogerson have been loyal and supportive members of the committee and we appreciate all they have done during the past year. All the committee have been excellent to work with and they have made my job easier by their willing support.

The club would not be what it is without its members and on behalf of the committee I would like to thank everyone for their continued support and friendship. I think we have a club to be proud of as several people who visited the exhibition from other villages around Oxfordshire said they wished they had a history club like the one in Radley.