

With great regret we accepted the resignation from the committee of Nick Allen, who since 1995 has provided speakers on a wide variety of subjects for our monthly meetings. Otherwise officers and committee members continued unchanged.

Membership of the Society remains close to three hundred, most as records members. Whilst there is a steady flow of new members, this is counteracted by loss through natural circumstances. In particular we are saddened to record the death of Mr Ken Jakeman, who with his wife was a regular attendant over most of our fifty years. Nevertheless attendance at meetings has been steady and often near capacity. Posters are distributed by Deborah Hayter for display at key places.

The final meetings arranged by Nick Allen maintained their accustomed entertaining variety. Reports on most, generally prepared by Brian Little, have appeared in *Cake & Cockhorse*. Alex May described what went into the making of the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, and Will Hawkes spoke on Sanderson Miller of Radway, gentleman architect. Although a rare day of snow forced postponement of Martin Marix-Evans' description of the Battle of Naseby, fortunately it was possible to rearrange it for April.

Deborah Hayter stepped into the breach to arrange the autumn/winter season. This opened with David Clark's discussion of architectural styles throughout the county, whilst in October Deborah herself related the rise and subsequent total disappearance of Astrop Spa. We saw that perennial favourite "Twenty-Four Square Miles", with commentary by Graham Nottingham, and remained with even more recent years in Brian Goodey's revelation of what might have been in Banbury's town planning since the war.

In the summer, we had a return to our popular village 'walk-about', this time Deddington, led by Chris Day. Country-house visits were arranged by Beryl Hudson to Rousham and Wotton Underwood. In this anniversary year it was only appropriate to return for our A.G.M. to Broughton Castle, where we were as ever welcomed by our President and Lady Saye and Sele.

Wroxton Abbey on 20th October was of course the main event of the year. An account of the day has already appeared, as has an extended version of Nicholas Cooper's analysis of the building of Wroxton Abbey. Professor Black's talk on Lord North and George III was a tour-de-force that will not soon be forgotten.

The normal three issues of *Cake & Cockhorse* had contributions from Ruth Brown, Nicholas Cooper, Brian Goodey, Paul Hayter, Pamela Horn, Catherine Robinson, Barrie Trinder and from regulars Brian Little and the editor himself.

At long last we have published the first part of the *Diary of William Cotton Risley, Vicar of Deddington, 1836-1848*, entitled *Early Victorian Squarson* (a word that puzzled many). Its editor, Geoffrey Smedley-Stevenson, has been working on this for more than twenty years. It is a distillation of just fifteen per cent of the total for that period; the illuminating footnotes show the depth of research involved, all enhanced by Beryl Hudson's meticulous index. It all comes together to make one of our most readable as well as useful volumes.