

only by the presence of Her Worship the Mayor (Councillor Ann Bonner) to attend Jeremy's 'mayoral' talk, but also by a generous donation from the developers McCarthy & Stone in recognition of our help (in particular from Brian Little) in choosing road names for a new estate. Subsequent talks have been given by Sir Paul Hayter (former Clerk of the Parliaments) on past history and present developments in the House of Lords; the interaction of landscape and sport, by Dr Trevor Rowley; and a late 19th century bizarre murder at Long Compton, showing just how much can be found out about those marginally connected with such an affair, by Richard Ratcliffe, a descendant of the victim.

For our Spring and Summer season, organised mainly by Beryl Hudson, we were lucky throughout with beautiful sunny weather. We opened with another village walk-about, this time at Kings Sutton, and made visits to two traditional country houses at Nether Winchendon (Bucks.) and Cottesbrooke (Northants.). By kind invitation of Mr and Mrs John Ewart we were able to hold our A.G.M. at Astrop House (near Kings Sutton). This was our first visit (after fifty years) to this striking house, and there was an appropriately large turn-out, both for the meeting and the walk across fields to St Rumbold's Well.

The normal three issues of *Cake & Cockhorse* had contributions from Nicholas Allen, Alan Crosby, Alan Donaldson, Helen Forde, Bob Mason, Geoffrey Smedley-Stevenson, Philip Spinks, Philip Tennant, Barrie Trinder and from regulars Brian Little and the editor himself.

After the triumphant publication of two notable volumes in 2007, none were completed this year, though work continued on the index to the second part of Risley's diary, to 1869. At long last work is also very well advanced on *Turnpike Roads to Banbury*, which it is hoped to produce by mid-2009.

In June Jeremy Gibson was presented with an 'Award for Personal Achievement' (in large part with regard to our Society) by the British Association for Local History, as reported in the journal.

The Society's return to its normal activities after the celebrations of 2007 is reflected in the 2008 Accounts. The healthy income from the sale of publications was largely due to the great popularity of *Banbury Past*, but all of our recent publications have continued to sell well. The generous donation of £250 from McCarthy & Stone mentioned above is included in the 'Other' income of £403.

A change in the timing of our claims for tax refunds under the Gift Aid scheme has meant that there was no refund in 2008; the change in timing has no financial implications for the Society. The Treasurer is always pleased to hear from members wishing to sign Gift Aid declarations.

The General Fund's closing balance of £9,574, together with promised grants from the Greening Lamborn Fund, should be sufficient to meet the cost of the two records volumes in the pipeline, and the increase in subscriptions from 2009 will enable us to build up reserves to meet the cost of further volumes.