

DOVETALES

14th Edition – Spring 2010

NEWSLETTER of the

NAUNTON DOVECOTE

CONSERVATION SOCIETY



The Village says goodbye to Ralph Boulton at the Dovecote



David Hanks' photograph of the villagers and friends gathered at the Dovecote waving goodbye to the funeral cortege travelling from the service at the Dovecote to the burial at the Church on 23rd June 2009

On 9th June 2009, Ralph Boulton, husband of Pat, passed away after a long and spirited battle against leukaemia. Pat is, of course, a member of the Hanks family and was brought up in Naunton, but she and Ralph returned to live here in 1997 to care for Pat's Father, Harold.

They both threw themselves wholeheartedly into village life and Ralph's loss was not only as a friend, but as an absolutely invaluable member of the Community. As a co-opted member of the N.D.C.S. Committee, he was irreplaceable – and from the onset of his illness, the loss of his input dealt a huge blow to our progress. To quote from the tribute which Bob Steiner kindly delivered on our behalf on the day of his funeral:

“Pat was officially Secretary of the Society, but she had not been in that role for very long before Ralph was ‘co-opted’ by her side. The reasons were obvious. Ralph was the man who was prepared to do anything, and the wonderful thing about him was that he **could** do anything: - he could do it, and he **did** do it and, what is more, he never, **ever** moaned about doing it!

‘Patandralph’ volunteered for every job of which they were capable, and their combined skill range was all-embracing; Ralph took Minutes of meetings, he did scaled drawings, made planning applications, made, mended, mowed, trimmed, cleared out the river, built duck-racing courses, and removed deceased pigeons. He was a master not only of the practical skills needed to maintain such a place, but he could also ‘do the paper-work’ – a rare skill-combination. Everything which was promised, was done, quietly and efficiently, and without complaint. They were a complete team.”

It was Ralph's wish to have a ‘service’ in celebration of his life conducted at the Dovecote. The Trust and the Society were touched and very pleased that Ralph made this choice. He was borne there by a tractor and placed on the village bier, beautifully decorated with locally gathered flowers. He will always be remembered there for all the work he contributed, but in particular the Stable Block which was totally his project. Although his illness meant he was unable to take it to completion, his friends rallied round and finished the plans he laid.

DOVECOTE NEWS

AT LAST!



Josh Harrison of Four Shires Construction during the removal of the Tractor Shed in October 2009

Yes, at long last and, in the event, very suddenly, the Tractor Shed came down aided and abetted, as the photograph shows, by Josh Harrison of Four Shires Construction. The demolition was not without its problems – on reaching ground level, it became apparent that there were some pretty substantial foundations under the building, and to obtain a level site inside the new boundary walls, it would be necessary to remove them. The size of these concrete blocks came as quite a shock to all concerned – there was some speculation that, as there had been a Nissan Hut on the site before the Shed, that these foundations had been laid to stabilize such a Hut.

Fortunately, Josh was able to remove them with his trusty digger. Our eternal

thanks are also due to **Huntsmans Quarries Limited** who not only removed all the eight loads of spoil (previously estimated at 2/3 loads) which constituted the building's blocks, but also came down and removed the great lumps of concrete which formed the foundations. All of this was free of charge and we are truly grateful to them.



David Glenn, M.D. of Huntsmans, also kindly referred us to 'Friends of the Cotswolds' - a small charity which aims to promote, enhance and conserve the Cotswolds AONB - which then gave us a grant of £500. They have also recently funded a survey of all Dovecotes in the Cotswolds AONB through the 'British Dovecote Society', an organization which the NVT has recently joined.

Recent visitors to the Dovecote will see that Mal Barrett has made great progress in his erection of the new boundary wall along the public footpath. He has built integral 'seats' where people can rest, and will build another longer seat and a barbeque 'park' in the wall between the 'yard' and the river side.

It has been suggested by more than one villager that the existing diagonal wall between the south east corner of the Dovecote and the eastern boundary (which at present completes the 'farmyard' effect) should be demolished so that the river can be easily seen.

There are three good reasons not to do this: (1) it might require planning/SPAB consent as the wall has been there for at least 100 years. (2) it would mean that the 'mowing' would become much more difficult. At present sheep-grazing and rough mowing keeps the grass on the river bank and to the west of the Dovecote under control, whereas inside the 'yard', the grass is mown short. Removal of this wall would require

mowing of about ½ acre of ground which is not feasible, or erection of ugly electric fence. (3) the existing wall does provide a natural barrier to stop unaccompanied children running down to the river. The river is a natural attraction for children and the wall and gate are a solid deterrent. Children under adult supervision are very welcome, but we do not wish to do anything which would encourage unsupervised children at the river's edge.

However, as a result of these comments we have asked Mal to lower the height of the wall where the proposed new seat and barbeque areas will be built so that the river can be seen when one is sitting in the farmyard area.

Obviously the Trust and NDCS would like feedback from you on the new set-up and are always open to suggestions for further improvements.

We really do hope that more use will be made of the site by the general public as a result of the changes we have made.

The Huntsmans' digger in action



‘DOVECOTE DAY’

5th July 2009

10 -Year Anniversary Celebrations

Considering that this event was in direct competition with one of the finest tennis matches ever played at Wimbledon (Men’s Final: Federer versus Roddick) and closely followed the Donkey Derby in timing, it was a rip-roaring success, raising £892.98 net profit. Duck Racing was keen – raising much of the money. Pat Boulton kindly sponsored a race in memory of Ralph and the winners of both prizes in that race (Michael and Licia Crystal) donated their winnings. A children’s race was won by Pat’s granddaughter (a most impressive giant yellow duck).

Pimms was the favoured drink of the day and many thanks to the ladies who brought a fantastic variety of lovely canapés.

The Great Dovecote Book (1st draft) was on display and proved of interest to quite a few people. Work continues on this, and it is proving to be an interesting social history of the village and the people who have lived here.

A lively speech reminding us of the struggle the village experienced to secure the Dovecote site was given with much gusto by Neville Barton, one of the original Trustees.

Thanks to Jeff Dyer, a television set was connected in the Tractor Shed, proving again (for the last time) what a ‘useful building’ it is!!!!!!

Welcome to new ‘Friends’ ...

The 13th issue of ‘Dovetales’ stimulated a strong new flush of ‘Friends’, namely Mike and Jane Smith, Ian Adcock and Vanessa Gatford, James Arkell of Donnington Brewery, Millie Baker, Peter and Maggie Chambers, Robert Crichton (son of Brita – formerly of Cromwell House), Angela and Michael Cronk, Sara Goldman, Roland and Mary Greenhill of Guiting Power, Jolyon Grey – son of Lord and Lady Grey, Oliver Newton, Joan and Jonathan Noble, Siri and Becks Siriwardene, and Francis Witts of Upper Slaughter. The combined ‘might’ of these newcomers adds some £735 + tax of £183 = £918 annually to our coffers.

I know there are more potential ‘Friends’ lurking in the bushes – come on out with your Standing Orders and Gift Aid Declarations – we need you.

.. and goodbye to others

Sadly, as new ‘Friends’ appear, so old ones pass on – apart from Ralph, we have also lost Evelyn May Gleed (Auntie to Joan and Beryl Mitchell) who had a nesthole dedicated to her husband, Reg, next to his brother, Bill Gleed. Another supporter to pass away in June was Peter Harvey. Peter had been a good friend of Geoffrey Hanks and worked hard behind the scenes trying to persuade Geoffrey not to sell the Dovecote for development. He also painted our first (2000) Dovecote Christmas card, and the 2008 version – including sheep and doves by request.

N.V.T. and N.D.C.S. COMMITTEE NEWS

The N.D.C.S. Committee did manage to convene in January 2010 after a very long interval and were pleased to welcome their new member, Keith Russell. Keith is a very enthusiastic addition to the team and has the sort of practical skills which we really need.

By way of a sort of hideous Induction Ritual, he was allotted the task of removing all the pigeon droppings (politely called 'guano')

from the Dovecote!! This, to his credit, he set about with his usual enthusiasm; the Guano Cull took place on 10th April when - masked and gloved - a band of volunteers removed the offending stuff. The Dovecote floor now looks splendidly clean and the droppings were spread tidily over the farmyard area. The workers also took the opportunity to carry out a general river clear-up.



The 'new' view of the Dovecote



DOG DUMPING DETERS DONATIONS

As one who appreciates how difficult it is to control the defecating habits of a dog, I am reluctant to complain, except that a dog/some dogs – very large – or fed on porridge – are 'dumping' just round the Dovecote Donation Box.

I cannot think that this improves our chances of passing visitors placing money in the box as they are bound, at present, to accumulate a pretty unpleasant addition to their footwear. Please could you eagle-eyed Dovecote lovers keep your eyes open and try to identify the hound(s) in question. If they can be identified, we can 'have a word' with the owners. The compost heap will shortly be re-instated and will be available to bio-degrade these items.

Finances

Thanks to the various income-producing schemes in operation, both the NVT and the NDCS are in good heart financially. NDCS has donated £1,500 to the Trust recently, and still has funds in hand and stocks to the value of £2,500 – so get buying!

The Trust has an increasing fund base, despite having paid out £7,500 for its last project. However, there are always things to be done. Imminent expenses include the render of the Bradstone areas of the stable block, mending of the interior stone walls at the site and re-instatement of the ‘ball’ on the louver in some form or another. Ten years down the line from the original restoration, routine repairs to the roof will no doubt soon be needed.

Thanks also to local Minister Fiona Milton who has unleashed her much-admired artistic talents to our advantage. She has painted a beautiful view of the Dovecote from outside Yew Tree Cottages (eastern elevation) which emerged as a result of the recent changes at The Manor. We have permission to use this image as a blank greetings card and a Post Card – both of which are proving very popular. She also painted a commission for us for the 2009 Christmas Card of doves alighting on the louver. These cards have sold very well and a donation to the Chapel has been made out of the proceeds.

BUSTED BALL CAUSES CLOSE-DOWN CRISIS

Apologies for the sudden close-down of the Dovecote site over the Christmas period. This was considered necessary after eagle-eyed artist, Fiona Milton, pointed out that about half our stone ball at the top of the louver was no longer in situ.

Inspection proved her right and the offending section was found tucked under the pew in the lean-to. The remaining part still being aloft, it was deemed prudent to close the site to visitors until it could be retrieved. This was achieved by former Naunton resident, daredevil Kenneth Burn, who relished the challenge of retrieving the other section, thus allowing us to re-open the site for business. Many thanks to Kenny for this.

The resulting two halves are interesting in that it appears that the ball is constructed of two completely different sections of stone stuck together with glue. Further investigations as to the origins of the ball are being made. In the meantime, we are a ball-free Dovecote.

I WOULD LIKE TO BECOME A ‘FRIEND OF NAUNTON VILLAGE TRUST’ (Charity Number 1070477)

£10 per individual or £25 for a Family/Household

Taxpayer’s Full Name(s):

.....

Address:

.....**Post Code**.....

GIFT AID DECLARATION

**Naunton Village Trust
Charity Number 1070477**

I would like Naunton Village Trust to treat as Gift Aid all donations I make from the date of this declaration until I notify you otherwise. I understand that for this declaration to be effective, I must already be paying income or capital gains tax of an amount equal to or greater than the tax reclaimable by Naunton Village Trust.

Signed: *(if applicable)*.....**Dated**.....

I have completed the Standing Order Form enclosed herewith in the sum of £..... per annum/quarter/month and return it herewith.

I would/would not like a Nest Hole – please send me details
(please delete as applicable)

**Please return this form to P.A. Hanks, Spring Barn, Naunton,
Cheltenham Glos. GL54 3AS**

OR:

**I WOULD LIKE TO RENEW/COMMENCE MEMBERSHIP OF
THE NAUNTON DOVECOTE CONSERVATION SOCIETY**

Your Name(s):.....

.....

.....

.....

Address:

.....

I enclose a cheque/cash for £ *(payable to N.D.C.S.)*

**Adult/Associate Membership £5 / Children £1 / O.A.Ps £1 per annum
Renewal Date: 1st October annually**

I would like to order Dovecote Merchandise

- Tea Towels @ £3.50 each 6/£18
- Notelet Packs @ £2.50 per pack of 10 A4 folded to A5.....
- Packs of 5 ‘B & W Dovecote Logo Cards (£2.50).....
- Dovecote Post Cards @ .30p each **NEW**.....
- Dovecote Post Cards – Pack of 5 for £1 **NEW**.....
- Packs of 5 Blank Cards @ £2 per pack

Postage much appreciated (if applicable) **Total: £**.....

NOW AVAILABLE – LONG HANDLED CALICO BAGS @ £4.00

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT

WHAT ARE WE DOING NEXT?

SLUICE/TURBINE RESTORATION

At last our eager Engineers are being let loose on the dilapidated sluice/turbine shed which was originally built in approx 1925 to provide the Manor House and a few select properties in the village with electricity.

Rob Johnson has taken up the challenge to co-ordinate the restoration of the building and then, if possible, to put the turbine back into working order – thus making the Dovecote into a power-generating force.

If anyone would like to assist or has specialist knowledge which will help us, please contact Rob on 01451 850630.

This project could, besides fulfilling an architectural, historic and eco-friendly role, be of great educational interest in demonstrating directly how water power can be transformed into electricity.

* * *

Ralph's family bringing him to the Dovecote for the service, which was attended by his many relatives and friends from Naunton and beyond.

