

## THE BELLS, THE BELLS! Trapped in the vestry so committee ring out SOS in Morse

Do you remember this article featuring Tony Jerram, amongst others, which appeared on the front page of the Birmingham Evening Mail in 1999?

*When ten Church committee members found themselves accidentally locked inside a Midland vestry they managed to send out an SOS for help - using the church bells. The group mounted a "Dad's Army" style campaign to free themselves from St James's Church at Badsey, near Evesham. Retired Army Colonel, Tony Jerram, proved that old soldiers never die and took charge using his knowledge of the Morse Code to help Chris Smith ring out the Save Our Souls signal with the Church bells. Eventually, a Good Samaritan, who realised the significance of the message, alerted the vicar who unlocked the Church.*

*Before hitting on the idea of using the Morse Code, the committee had considered pushing Wendy Such, the smallest member of the group, through a skylight and flicking the Church lights on and off and shouting loudly. The skylight idea was abandoned as there was a long drop the other side and no one saw the lights or heard the shouting. Yvonne Haynes, a 52-year-old company secretary, said that initially they had thought that being locked in was some kind of practical joke as they had been discussing how to attract more people to the Church. "After a while, some of the group started to panic a little bit. Mr Jerram immediately took charge of the situation," she said.*

*Mr Smith, aged 39, who used his childhood knowledge of bell-ringing, said: "Ringing the bells seemed our only chance. I had not done it for years and it must have sounded terrible. Tony shouted instructions while I rang the bells." Rev Dr Adrian Hough, vicar of Badsey, Aldington, Offenham and Bretforton, said: "It was bell-ringing practice that night anyway so nobody paid any attention." Eventually a passer-by heard the signal and realised its importance and went to the Church where the ten committee members slipped a note bearing the vicar's address under the door. Rev Dr Hough said that the last time somebody was accidentally locked in the Church was thought to be 120 years ago and they had also escaped by chiming the bells. The door had been accidentally locked this time by David Cole, aged 15, who had left the Church after bell-ringing.*

### Committee Members

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THE  
BADSEY  
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This Newsletter begins with sadness as we report the untimely death of Tony Jerram on 3<sup>rd</sup> April. In the last Newsletter we featured the strange coincidence which led Tony to buy a house in Badsey which had associations with his kinswoman, Hannah Appelbee (née Jerram). How could we know then that Tony would be in this Newsletter for a much sadder reason. A full appreciation of Tony may be read inside.

### Round-Up of Events January to March 2008

- Friday 15<sup>th</sup> February – An excellent turn-out of 50 members attended the AGM. The same Officers and Committee were returned. The formal part of the meeting was followed by a selection of photos of the village taken in 1968. There was much interest in the 1968 survey, which whetted the appetite for the 2008 survey which is to take place in May.

### Future Events

- Weekend of 17<sup>th</sup>/18<sup>th</sup> May – The 2008 “Badsey Expedition” photographic survey (see below for details).
- Friday 6<sup>th</sup> June – Whit Walk. Meet at 7 pm at Monks’ Bridge (Grid Ref 067434). The walk will go along Badsey Undergrounds to Wickhamford and back via Francis’ Grave. It is not a particularly dog-friendly route as there are several stiles. The walk will end with drinks at The Willows, 8A High Street, courtesy of the Spinks family. Come and have some of the famous Wit’s End Ale and drink a toast to Tony Jerram.
- Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> June – Society Stand at Aldington Fete.
- Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> July – Society Stand at Badsey Flower Show.
- Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> October – Bob Brown of Cotswold Garden Flowers will talk on “Clues in the Landscape”.

### Worcestershire Photographic Survey – 2008



The façade of this house has changed in 40 years. Guess where it is?

Following an appeal for volunteers in the last Newsletter, we now have a team of 24 photographers in place to take photos of every building in the parish. Over the weekend of 17<sup>th</sup>/18<sup>th</sup> May, and during the week either side, you may expect to see our photographers working their way methodically along every road in the parish. The photographs will be retained as a part of a photographic archive and may be used in future publications or on the website. There will be an opportunity to view the pictures at this year’s Flower Show. If you have any concerns at all about having a photo taken of your house, please get in contact with Maureen Spinks (831154).

## ENCLOSURE MAP PROJECT THROUGH TO FINALS OF NATIONAL AWARD



We're off to Olympia! Thanks to the contribution made by a large number of people within the Society, our Enclosure Map Project is through to the finals of a national award: the Marsh Award for Community Archaeology. We wondered if our project was stretching the limits of archaeology, but the criteria said: "Archaeology is here defined as any investigation of the material remains of the past, from any period, and potentially above and/or below ground." They were also looking for "a lively and open social grouping that gives back to the wider community the results of their work". We felt we ticked the boxes and thus we sent in our application.

Victoria Bryant of Worcestershire Historic Environment & Archaeological Service wrote us a glowing testimonial, saying: "The members of The Badsey Society undertook an impressive amount of work to a very high standard but also managed to convey their enthusiasm to the local community. This ability to convey the value of their research was reflected in the high attendance at their very sociable public events and the fact that these events were attended by a very wide range of local people of different ages and situations."

Imagine our delight when we received an email from Dr Mike Heyworth, the Director of the Council for British Archaeology (CBA), to say that the Society was one of just four organisations in the country to go through to the finals. We are up against two teams from the Manchester area and one from northern Scotland.

We now have to wait until May to find out who is the overall winner. The presentations will be made on the morning of Friday 2nd May at the "Discover Archaeology LIVE" show which is part of the "Who do You think You Are? LIVE" event being held at Olympia in London over the weekend of 2<sup>nd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> May. Maureen Spinks and Richard Phillips will be representing the Society and will give a 20-minute presentation about our project.

Wish us well on our trip to London. Thank you to everyone who has helped with the project. But perhaps the last thank you should be reserved for Edward Phillips, map-maker of Coventry, whose map of 1812 of Badsey has really helped to put Badsey and Worcestershire on the archaeological map of England. The digitisation of the maps, with the facility to view the historical maps through a GIS system and compare with Ordnance Survey maps, brings a very 21<sup>st</sup> century perspective to the project, something that the Enclosure Commissioners and map-makers of 200 years ago could not have begun to dream about.

### **Margaret Castle (1937-2008)**

Margaret Castle was a member of the Society from its earliest days. Margaret was born at Sedgeberrow, but moved to Wickhamford on her marriage to Phillip. They moved to Badsey in 1983. Margaret worked for the Prison Service for 43 years and was a keen member of Badsey Flower Guild and Offenham Floral Arts. We offer our sincerest sympathy to Margaret's family.



**TONY JERRAM  
(1937-2008)**



Twenty years is but nothing in the history of a village. Generations of families have come and gone, their names recorded in the parish registers to confirm their existence. In nearly 500 years of Badsey parish registers, there is but one Jerram: the burial entry on 12<sup>th</sup> April 2008 for Anthony Lionel Oldershaw Jerram, retired Army Officer, aged 70, of Harrington House, Badsey.

But for the 297 people who crammed into St James' Church for the funeral, they were paying their respects to a man who contributed greatly to the village. Following a distinguished career in the army, Tony moved with Barbara to Harrington House in 1988, shortly before he took up a civilian post at GCHQ in Cheltenham. Harrington House, as reported in last month's Newsletter, had been in danger of being pulled down, but it had been lovingly restored, and Tony and Barbara continued the task of keeping it in excellent condition. Always a stickler for detail, he used a photograph of Harrington House taken in the 1930s to restore the railings and front garden to their pre-war appearance.

For us, the Badsey Society Committee, we mourn our fellow Committee Member who was the first Chairman. When a group of 28 people met at a public meeting in the church one evening in 2002, who would have thought that we would have grown into the successful Society, nearly 200-strong, that we see today. Characteristically, showing leadership skills attained in the army, Tony quickly stepped forward to be the first Chairman. We were an eclectic mix of people and could so easily have floundered without direction, but Tony set us on the right course. As the infant Society matured, Tony felt relaxed enough to pass on the reins to someone else, but remained a Committee member. Indeed, Committee meetings of the future will not be the same. What shall we do without Tony's famous cider in the homely surroundings of the Harrington House kitchen to aid the decision-making process?

Tony's considerable involvement with life in the Vale has been listed elsewhere, but let's just remind ourselves of what Tony did in the Badsey Society. He was very involved with the two DVDs produced by the Society, acting as narrator and featuring in the opening sequences; he led us on various walks, including the orchard walk at Knowle Hill and the Whit Walk. Living in a listed building himself, he was particularly interested in other buildings of architectural note and was responsible for the listing of 9 Orchard Way, recognising that it would be a great loss to the village if allowed to fall down.

Tony's watchword was, "Whatever we do, we must do well," so we must ensure that we live up to Tony's high ideals. As the Army Chaplain at Tony's funeral said, it is good to have a physical reminder of someone. With the blossom on the trees, let us remember Tony for all that he has done for Badsey.