

Michael Hewlett, 1927-2010

It is with sadness that we report the death of Mike Hewlett who joined the Badsey Society in its first year and has always been one of our keenest members. Badsey born and bred, Mike attended Badsey Council School and St Mary's Catholic School, Evesham, then did his National Service with the Army Medical Corps in Germany. On his return to civvy street, Mike worked for market gardener, Jim Agg, all his life. Mike married Joyce in 1950 (they were due to celebrate their Diamond Wedding this year), had two daughters, and was one of the first occupants of Green Leys, which was to remain his home for the rest of his life. Even after retirement, Mike continued to work on the piece of land which Jim allowed him to use, his main aim being to keep all his family in vegetables. Mike has featured in several of the Badsey Society publications and DVDs. He was a familiar figure cycling each day to Pear Tree Corner, and he will be truly missed. It was people like Mike that Tony Jerram had in mind when he dreamt up the title, "The Last Market Gardener", for the DVD which we hope will come to fruition next year. Our sincere condolences to Mike's family.

Homage to Harry, by Maureen M Smith

You may be interested to know of a book published recently about Harry Hancock, one of the men named on the Badsey War Memorial. Harry's family moved to Bowers Hill in 1914, at about the time that Harry joined The King's Shropshire Light Infantry, aged just 16. The book charts his life from birth through to his untimely death at The Battle of Passchendaele in 1917. Copies of the book, price £5, are available from Broadway Tourist Information Centre or from Peggy Hancock (the widow of Harry's nephew, Geoffrey), tel: 41190.

Committee Members

Mike Lovatt Chairman	Elm Cottage, Main Street, Aldington	01386 830755
Maureen Spinks Secretary	The Willows, 8A High Street, Badsey	01386 831154 history@badsey.net
Terry Sparrow Treasurer	36 Brewers Lane, Badsey	01386 833368
Steve Bucknall Committee Member	35 Seward Road, Badsey	01386 832724
Will Dallimore Committee Member	30 Horsebridge Avenue, Badsey	01386 831012 editor@badsey.org.uk
Ian Gibson Committee Member	83 Bretforton Road, Badsey	01386 834468
Valerie Magan Committee Member	21 Sands Lane, Badsey	01386 832100
Jane Neill Committee Member	Fircroft, Main Street, Aldington	01386 830301
Richard Phillips Committee Member	4 High Street, Badsey	01386 831112 editor@badsey.net
Neil Thould Committee Member	1 High Street, Badsey	01386 830160



THE BADSEY SOCIETY

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It's almost Easter and we have one or two events lined up for you in the forthcoming months. We hope as many people as possible will be able to join us on 16th April for the talk on the new Geopark Way and for the Whit Walk in June (see inside for details).

Round-Up of Events January to March 2010

Regal Cinema Visit - On a bright but cold Saturday afternoon at the end of January, just over 40 members turned up for a tour of Evesham's Regal Cinema. This was a wonderful opportunity to see the cinema in its original state and to meet the enthusiastic Restoration Manager, Laurence Wiper. Many thanks to Clive Stewart for tipping us off about the possibility of arranging a visit, and thanks also to Clive for writing in fuller detail about the plans for the Regal (see inside).



John
Dallimore
and Paul
Green
inspect!

Photos by
Wendy
Gwynn.

The AGM - This took place on Friday 12th February with a record-breaking number of 64 people present (representing nearly a third of the membership). The same Officers and Committee were re-elected, and we are pleased to welcome two new members to the Committee: Steve Bucknall and Valerie Magan. At the end of the business section of the meeting, the annual Tony Jerram Award was presented to Elizabeth Bolland. Nominations were invited from the membership and three names were put forward. It was the Committee's decision to make the award to Elizabeth. After the break, Valerie Magan gave an entertaining talk about the coming of the water supply to Badsey.



Left: Barbara Jerram presenting the Tony Jerram Award to Elizabeth Bolland. Elizabeth started the 1st Badsey Guides in 1976, three years after moving to the area; she is still the leader of a very successful unit. Elizabeth was the Evesham Central District Commissioner for almost seven years and for the past three years has been the Evesham Division Commissioner, a position she must relinquish in August because of reaching retirement age.

Events in 2010

- Friday 16th April 2010, The Wheatsheaf, 7.30 pm – Eve Miles from Earth Heritage Trust will give a talk about the new Geopark Way, a 117-mile trail which runs from Staffordshire down to Gloucestershire. The most diverse part of it runs through our own county of Worcestershire running north-south through the Malverns.
- Thursday 10th June 2010 – Whit Walk, starting at Evesham Abbey bell-tower, followed by supper at Raphael's Restaurant (see enclosed booking form).
- Saturday 24th July 2010 – Badsey Flower Show.
- Autumn 2010 – The Badsey Archive. A chance to see the wealth of material which has been donated to the Society since 2002.

Open Street Map

Nowadays many people use maps on the internet. Open Street Map is rather different because it is created entirely by volunteers. Richard Phillips has been working on Aldington, Badsey and Wickhamford and you can see the results at www.openstreetmap.org. Why bother? For a start it is more accurate than other online maps. If you look on Google Maps you will find the Wheatsheaf Inn on the wrong side of the road and that Littleton and Badsey Station is still open! Unlike its rivals, Open Street Map is completely free of copyright restrictions. But perhaps its greatest advantage is that it can be tailored to local needs. Names like Badsey Pike, Three Ways and Packs Lane are still frequently heard in the village but don't appear on ordinary maps. If you would like to know more, or have any suggestions, please contact Richard (Phillips@badsey.net).

EGM

An Extraordinary General Meeting of the Badsey Society was held at the end of February in order to amend the constitution. This was necessary to satisfy the requirements of the Heritage Lottery Fund to whom we are applying for a further grant. The main changes were concerning what would happen to our assets if the Society were to fold. If you wish to see a copy of the constitution, please contact the Secretary.

Eliza Stanley, Midwife

Last month, we printed an article about the redoubtable Eliza Stanley who practised as a midwife in Badsey and Bretforton from about 1880 to 1917. Thanks to Richard Phillips, a transcript of the register, fully indexed, is now on the Badsey website. We had an excited email from one of our "out-of-town" members, Karen Evans (née Woodcock) who realised some of her relatives may have been delivered by Eliza. We have now confirmed that Karen's grandmother, Elsie Margaret Sollis, was delivered by Eliza in 1913, as was her great-aunt, Kathleen May Sollis, in 1916. Elsie and Kathleen's father, Reginald, was Eliza Stanley's great-nephew. It is likely that Reginald himself, who was born in 1891, was also delivered by Eliza, but his birth pre-dates the register. However, his mother, Kate, is listed in the register when she gave birth to her final child, a stillborn girl, in 1906.

Another Society member who had a family member featured in the midwife's register, is Graham Allen, whose father, Edwin Frederick, was delivered by Eliza in 1915.

The Regal Cinema

*by
Clive Stewart*



I first met Laurence Wiper last November. I'd heard about the restoration of the Regal Cinema, checked the website (<http://www.theregal.ac>) and decided to wander down and ask if I could help. He was busy with building work, but welcomed me warmly and showed me around. As soon as he started talking, his knowledge and enthusiasm impressed me. Laurence must be one of the world's foremost experts on art deco cinemas. His eyes were shining as he explained the intricacies and history of art deco cinema, the original colours (green/turquoise and cream), the beautiful features of the building, from the decorative mouldings and lights, to the original projectors and the sturdy innovative nature of the original building construction. Despite the scale of the project, consisting of a huge collection of daunting pieces of work, Laurence's phrases always start with the word "when ..." rather than "if..."

The cinema was one of the last Art Deco cinemas built in 1932. It is in amazingly good condition considering the years that the building has stood empty, although the roof needs attention and there are years of grime to remove. The Badsey Society website (<http://www.badsey.org.uk/>) has a good collection of pictures from the recent visit. Mike Green, an organist and highly knowledgeable enthusiast and volunteer, has found a Wurlitzer organ to be installed. The cinema did not originally have an organ but the ornate grilles either side of the screen are organ pipe covers and the option was obviously there to install one. A digital projector will enable the cinema to show a wide range of live events including classical music, plays, pop music, sport, etc.

The restored cinema will be spectacular: a blend of original and modern with 150 swivel seats on the ground level, arranged around candle-lit tables where drinks and snacks will be served from the bar. There will be 150 luxury seats on the circle level, with a dedicated reception room and bar. On the 3rd floor there will be a roof-top restaurant, two art galleries, and a new function room. The experience of watching a film or one of a wide range of special events, at a table with a glass of wine in a beautiful art deco cinema sounds wonderful. Friends and relatives are already keen to visit, so I suspect people may come some distance to see the restored Regal. When the work is finished, Evesham will gain a unique tourist attraction and valuable local venue for our growing young (and older) population.

Many people have already generously contributed time and money but it does depend on local people 'joining in' if the project is going to succeed. Any help would be gratefully accepted including general administration, database entry, bricklaying, electrics, and plumbing. If you or your friends or family can spare some time the project can certainly use your skills. If you feel able to help you can call in at the Regal on Port Street on weekdays and Saturdays or contact Laurence Wiper on 01386 421007 or via laurence@theregal.ac.