

WYCHWOODS LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

The first of the monthly meetings was the 'History of Bells and Bell-ringing' when Barry Davis spoke on the development of bells from the time when their use was mainly secular, for the telling of time and the warning of local disasters. There then came a change to larger towers and spires in which peals of bells could be hung. The bells were sometimes cast in nearby fields or in local bell-foundries. Even though fairly near, the transportation and hanging of them was a slow, laborious and often dangerous business. Early in this century most towers had their team of bell-ringers, but they have declined in numbers as have the local bell-foundries like Burford. However, surviving foundries are kept busy combating the ravages of time on bells and their frames, many of which are still rung by keen campanologists like Barry, and those of Shipton and other local churches.

The Annual General Meeting formed the first part of our second meeting when favourable reports were given by Chairman and Treasurer. The committee remains the same apart from the welcome new addition of Peter Bursnell. David Perceval is now Treasurer and John Rawlins is Vice-Chairman. Sue Jourdan, Chairman, conducted the meeting and some may have assumed that this was her only input to the society, but a vote of thanks was proposed by the Secretary, Wendy Pearse, to Sue. Wendy explained that, apart from opening and closing meetings Sue's efforts behind the scenes ensured that the meetings actually took place, and that the same applied to most of the other activities of the society. The proposition was carried.

The AGM was followed by David Eddershaw's talk on 'Flora Thompson's Oxfordshire' which was that part of the county north of Bicester which Flora Thompson used as the background for her trilogy 'Lark Rise to Candleford' first published in 1945. In it she used her memories of the small villages and hamlets of that very rural area as it was in the last decades of the last century. A life style that had almost vanished by the time she wrote about it evocatively.

Pleasant autumn weather graced the days when members of the society, aided and instructed by James Bond, surveyed the humps and bumps in the fields around Manor Farm, Ascott. The object of the exercise was to map out the area and show all unnatural land formations which may have been the sites of earlier human occupation. The results will be presented by James Bond and will appear in the next issue of our journal. Thanks to him, and to Mr and Mrs Gripper for allowing the society to wander their land for four days.

(continued over)

The National Trust has a very unusual property at Lodge Park, near Sherborne, just over the border in Gloucestershire. It was built in 1634 as a lodge for the watching of deer coursing. During the last two centuries the interior underwent several changes and during the last eight years the Sherborne Estate NT has been gradually transforming the property back to its appearance when first built. This society has been lucky to be able to make three visits to the lodge, two of them while restoration was in progress, and recently now that it is open. Even now work is not complete. The correct furnishings and hangings will not be displayed until the spring when the new plaster will have had more time to dry out.

Future meetings.

16 Dec 1999	Shipton	Old Coaching Roads by Martin Way
20 Jan 2000	Milton	What's in a Name by John Rawlins
17 Feb 2000	Shipton	Packer and Simms, Chipping Norton Photographers by Alan Watkins

John Rawlins

Independent Parental Supporters in Education

Did you know that one in five school children are identified as having special educational needs at some time in their educational career? This can be a worrying time for parents and often a little support from someone who understands the system, or can help, e.g. take notes in official meetings, enables parents and their children to manage.

Marian Roiser is setting up the Independent Parent Supporters Scheme and is looking for volunteers who may be able to offer a few hours occasionally. Training in the following areas will be offered:

- How the system for assessing children for a statement of special educational needs operates in Oxfordshire.
- What the jargon means.
- What the law says and relevant legislation.
- Practising negotiating and mediating skills.
- How to provide practical support before and during meetings.
- The parameters of the independent Parent Supporter's role.

Support, consultation and expenses will be provided for volunteers.

If you think you may be interested in becoming a parent supporter, please ring Marian on 01865 810541.