

## West Hagbourne Village History Group

### Annual Report May 2008 - April 2009

This has been a quiet twelve months as our numbers have been reduced through the sad loss of two founder members in the previous year and another member on maternity leave this past year. However, we have been able to support the Parish Council (PC) with local projects and also given the Council advice on historical matters as required.

**Moor Lane:** The History Group has worked with the Chairman of the PC to ensure that the clearing of Moor Lane is done with due regard for wildlife and the limitation of possible environmental damage. An environmental strategy has now been formalised. The Group also provided historical background and local folklore concerning the "growing stone" which was uncovered in Moor Lane last year. An article was written for the village newsletter.

**Village planter:** The Group was asked by the PC to suggest suitable replacements for the planter by the pond, which was destroyed during the winter of 2007/2008. We worked with Mary Ann le May who has taken responsibility for the planter to find something of a suitable size and in keeping with the rural setting of the pond. A cattle trough was chosen and agreed by the PC. The History Group contributed £50 towards the trough.

**Upkeep of memorial garden:** The History Group raised concerns about the upkeep of the garden beside the bus shelter with the PC. As a result, new volunteers have come forward to take responsibility for its upkeep.

**Communications:** The Group continues to provide copy for the village website and the West Hagbourne news (newsletter). We worked with the webmaster on a revamp of the History Group's pages. A new book order form was created to reflect changes in postage and also to cater for the increasing number of orders from overseas. The Group continues to receive and answer enquiries via the website, particularly from abroad and other parts of Britain. These enquiries have increased alongside the development of the website.

**Map board:** Water damage to the map was reported to the board suppliers but without satisfaction. It was decided that damage was caused by condensation. A new map was commissioned from Mary Ann le May (ex member of the History Group) who produced the original map. The new map has been encapsulated in the hope that it will not be so prone to damage. The new map has been produced electronically, which will make it easier to replace or update in the future. The History Group paid for the new map and wrote the historical text.

**St. George's Day:** The History Group assisted the Village Association with events for the celebration of St. George's Day. A quiz was devised based on local village history. The hope was that this would encourage people to become more interested in local history and perhaps join the History Group. The quiz was circulated with the newsletter but unfortunately the response was disappointing - perhaps the dragon-making fervour left no time for the quiz. A member of the Group did considerable research into the myths and legends of St George and produced a wide-ranging presentation for the supper. Illustrated answers to the quiz were also displayed. Articles about St George were published in the Parish Magazine and also in the village newsletter.

**Archives:** The Group continues to collect press cuttings, news reports and photos of village events. The archives, in the form of folders, are made available for viewing at village events.

**Future:** the Group is concerned that without some new members to provide vigour, enthusiasm and perhaps a new approach to village history, the Group may not be able to continue in its present form. Various ideas have been mooted, including involvement with neighbouring villages and some shared meetings with guest speakers. These ideas will be discussed further at the AGM - date to be announced.