

Cholesbury-cum-St Leonards

Local history Group

NEWSLETTER No. 4
2000/2001

Chairman's Introduction

I am honoured to have been elected Chairman of the Group in succession to our President, Mrs Evelyn Money, and to have the privilege of introducing the Group's fourth Newsletter. With the support of your Committee, the objective continues to be that envisaged by the founder - a group not only interested in hearing talks but keen to take some part in building up a picture of what life was like in the villages in past years. Above all, it is hoped to maintain the Group's informal and friendly ambience. On behalf of all members, we thank Mrs Money for her work as past Chairman, wish her a speedy recovery and look forward to her continuing contribution as the Group's archivist.

Those of you who were able to attend the Annual General Meeting will be aware that the Committee has, at least for the time being, lost the services of Caroline Coates, owing to the pressure of her career commitments. We thank her for her incisive contributions to the Committee's deliberations and hope that she will be able to offer herself for re-election before long. We are fortunate that two other members, Sylvia Bailey and Chris Brown, have subsequently offered to serve on the Committee and we welcome them aboard.

We hope that members and visitors alike will enjoy the forthcoming programme and, as ever, look forward to your support of the Group's activities and to your ideas and suggestions for Members' Evening, for the Newsletter and for next year's Summer Outing.

David Ridgwell

Millennium Event at Cholesbury Village Hall

Sunday 24th September 2000 10.30am - 4.30pm

Come and learn more about the history of the Iron Age Camp by taking a guided walk around the Camp and listening to the stories of those times from Cliff Eastabrook, "The Travelling Talesman".

The Village Hall will have displays including artefacts from Buckinghamshire County Museum relating to the parish. The Time Capsule from Hawridge and Cholesbury Church of England School will be there, and from the Black Box there will be John Horn's books of photographs, which he has so generously donated to the Local History Group.

In Cholesbury Church there will be further displays and demonstrations of the local crafts of pillow-lace, spinning and straw-plaiting and, weather permitting, there will also be a bodger at work.

The Cholesbury - cum - St Leonards Millennium Mug is to be distributed to the children of the parish during August, and the mug will be available for sale on 24th September at a price of £5.00. The Parish Map for the Year 2000 will also be on sale.

The day is aided by Millennium Lottery funding and promises to be of interest to all ages. Please give the Event your support.

Shirley Blomfield

Cholesbury-cum-St Leonards Local History Group is an amateur society founded in the early Sixties to stimulate interest in the Hilltop Villages. A regular feature has been the talks by guest speakers, be they acknowledged experts or enthusiastic amateurs, and the emphasis is naturally on subjects local to the Chilterns.

No one who delves into history comes away without regretting a lack of documentation on some aspect or other. The Group has built up a fairly substantial archive of local documents, maps and photographs, but this can never be complete and additions from any source are welcome, however trivial they may seem. Help us to record today what may not exist tomorrow, whether it be a building or a bus-service! But hurry! the bus service has already all but disappeared.

2000 - 2001 PROGRAMME

FRIDAY 6 OCTOBER 2000 8.00 pm for 8.15 pm Cholesbury Village Hall	THE LEE OLD CHURCH Mr & Mrs John Glanfield
FRIDAY 3 NOVEMBER 2000 8.00 pm for 8.15 pm St Leonards Parish Hall	BUCKINGHAMSHIRE COUNTY MUSEUM - THEN AND NOW Mr David Church
FRIDAY 1 DECEMBER 2000 8.00 pm for 8.15 pm St Leonards Parish Hall	HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE POLICE SERVICE, INCLUDING THAMES VALLEY POLICE Mr John Woolley
FRIDAY 5 JANUARY 2001 8.00 pm for 8.15 pm St Leonards Parish Hall	FILM AND TV LOCATIONS IN THE CHILTERN AND THAMES VALLEY Mr Evan Jones
FRIDAY 2 FEBRUARY 2001 8.00 pm for 8.15 pm St Leonards Parish Hall	MEMBERS' EVENING Members and Visitors are all welcome; some of our members will give short talks on subjects of their choosing.
FRIDAY 2 MARCH 2001 8.00 pm for 8.15 pm St Leonards Parish Hall	THE ROTHSCHILDS IN TRING Mrs Wendy Austin
FRIDAY 6 APRIL 2001 8.00 pm for 8.15 pm St Leonards Parish Hall	BUILDING A RAILWAY : THE STORY OF THE NAVVIES WHO BUILT THE LONDON-BIRMINGHAM RAILWAY Dr Trevor May
FRIDAY 4 MAY 2001 8.00 pm SHARP Cholesbury Village Hall	ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING - followed by a PROGRAMME OF ARTEFACTS & SLIDES FROM THE GROUP'S "BLACK BOX"

MEMBERSHIP: £5.00 PER ANNUM VISITORS WELCOME: £2.00 PER MEETING

Coffee and Biscuits are served and a collection is taken

About the Speakers

Mr John Glanfield is a retired senior partner in an architectural practice. He is currently President of The Lee Old Church Trust.

His wife *Margaret*, is a former Treasurer of the Trust, and retired Diocesan Director of Education. She is now a member of the Buckinghamshire Historic Churches Fund-raising Committee.

Mr David Church is a former civil servant and has been Secretary of the Friends of the Buckinghamshire County Museum since the Friends organisation was established in 1996, following the major Museum refurbishment.

Mr John Woolley, ex-village bobby, ex-inspector, having hugely entertained us with his amusing stranger-than-fiction account of the pursuit of the Great Train Robbers, returns with the low-down on the constabulary itself.

Mr Evan Jones has made a special study of this unusual but valuable aspect of the film and television industries. His talk is likely to arouse both nostalgia and a critical appreciation of the craft - or craftiness - of the film makers.

Mrs Wendy Austin has entertained us more than once with her pictorial and loving accounts of Tring and its environs. We look forward to hearing of yet another aspect, one that she says is among her favourite subjects.

Dr Trevor May is a freelance writer and lecturer, with considerable experience in adult education. His talk will no doubt evoke the realities of a very harsh life, but also make us long for the days when public transport was more than a politician's puff of hot air.

George Cobby



Summer Outing

Chenies Manor House opened specially for the Local History Group on Wednesday 28th June. The seventeen members who went did not have the hoped-for balmy summer evening but were suitably relieved to keep dry.

A missing guide caused a slight change to the programme, so we were first despatched to explore the delightful gardens. As well as wonderful borders, there is an extensive physic garden, a kitchen garden and even a maze to get lost in. We later discovered that the sunken garden was the only remaining part of the original garden.

After a pause for coffee and cake, we divided into two groups to tour the house. Chenies Manor was built in 1460 by Sir John Cheyne. Additions were made in 1526 by Sir John Russell (who became Earl of Bedford) and it remained in the Russell family until the present owners, Colonel and Mrs Macleod Matthews, purchased it in 1954. The house is full of interest with a mediaeval well, priest hole and underground tunnels. It can look back to visits from both Henry VIII and Elizabeth I.

It was a most satisfactory visit to a house that is very much a home. This was amply demonstrated by finding Mrs Macleod Matthews dispensing the coffee and then to the group lucky enough to have the Colonel as its guide. His was a knowledgeable but most personal account of the house, particularly of pictures and furniture from his own family background in India or those found on his travels.

Chenies Manor is open to the public on a regular basis and a visit can be thoroughly recommended.

Paddy Thomas

Every Picture Tells A Story

A chance visit in June to the twentieth century room of the Ashmolean in Oxford produced my first encounter with Mark Gertler's 1916 painting, **Gilbert Cannan and his Mill**. The catalogue explained that in 1914 Gertler stayed at Cholesbury Mill with the writer Gilbert Cannan and his wife, Mary, and became a regular visitor over the next two years, joining parties that included Katherine Mansfield and D H and Frieda Lawrence. Curiosity prompted further enquiry. A helpful librarian at Chesham pointed me in the direction of several books, from which the following stories emerged.

Cannan himself, a promising but ultimately unfulfilled novelist and playwright, had unsuccessfully courted Kathleen Bruce but in 1908 lost her to Captain Scott of the Antarctic. Cannan spent Christmas that year with J M Barrie and his wife, Mary. An affair developed between Cannan and Mary Barrie, which resulted in Mary's divorce from Barrie in October 1909. Cannan and Mary were married in April 1910 at Holborn Registry Office, living first in Mary's cottage near Farnham and later in Kensington. However by 1913 Cannan was complaining about London; in a letter to Sir Hugh Walpole he writes "We've taken a windmill to clear out to - in the Chilterns, and I'm to have a round study in it looking towards the four corners of the Heavens and the earth". Cannan and Mary moved into Cholesbury Mill in the early summer of 1913 with their two dogs, Luath and Billy.

Cannan had first met the artist Mark Gertler in London, where Gertler had been born into a family of poor Jewish immigrants from Poland. After apprenticeship to a stained-glass manufacturer, he received help to attend the Slade School from 1908 to 1912, where he won prizes and scholarships. Gertler, who became a frequent visitor to the Mill, was courting his fellow artist Dora Carrington during this period, not without difficulty. Carrington did not respond positively to Gertler's plea that she should learn something about cookery, as he always preferred his girlfriends to be better cooks than artists! The two artists spent an unsuccessful week at the Mill and Carrington subsequently wrote "Yes, it is my work that comes between us...I could not work at all if I lived with you every day". The outcome was that Carrington established a platonic relationship with Lytton Strachey of Eminent Victorians fame, which lasted until his death from cancer and her suicide in 1932, at the age of 38. Gertler himself committed suicide in 1939, suffering from acute depression variously ascribed to an unsuccessful exhibition and to his feelings about Nazi anti-Semitism of that era.

Another visitor to the Mill was Compton Mackenzie, who describes a call that he and Gilbert Cannan paid on D H Lawrence, then a neighbour in Bellingdon Lane, living in "the ugliest cottage I have ever seen". They found Lawrence on his knees, scrubbing the floor. Lawrence's wife Frieda was the daughter of Baron von Richthoven. Mackenzie comments that Lawrence's rage about the onset of the Great War was such that "one might have supposed that we had gone to war solely for the purpose of annoying Lawrence".

Gertler's Expressionist painting shows Cannan and his two dogs in front of the Mill, with which the artist has exercised some degree of licence. The painting took two years to complete and is described in the Ashmolean's catalogue as Gertler's most radical picture. It adds that one of the dogs was the model for 'Nana' in Barrie's *Peter Pan*. While Gertler was painting the Mill, Cannan was busy writing a novel based on Gertler's life, entitled 'Mendel', published in November 1916 and dedicated to Carrington.

Cannan left Cholesbury that same autumn after a brief affair with their housemaid. His behaviour became more eccentric and in 1925 he was certified and placed in an asylum, where he died in 1955 aged 71.

DWR

References:

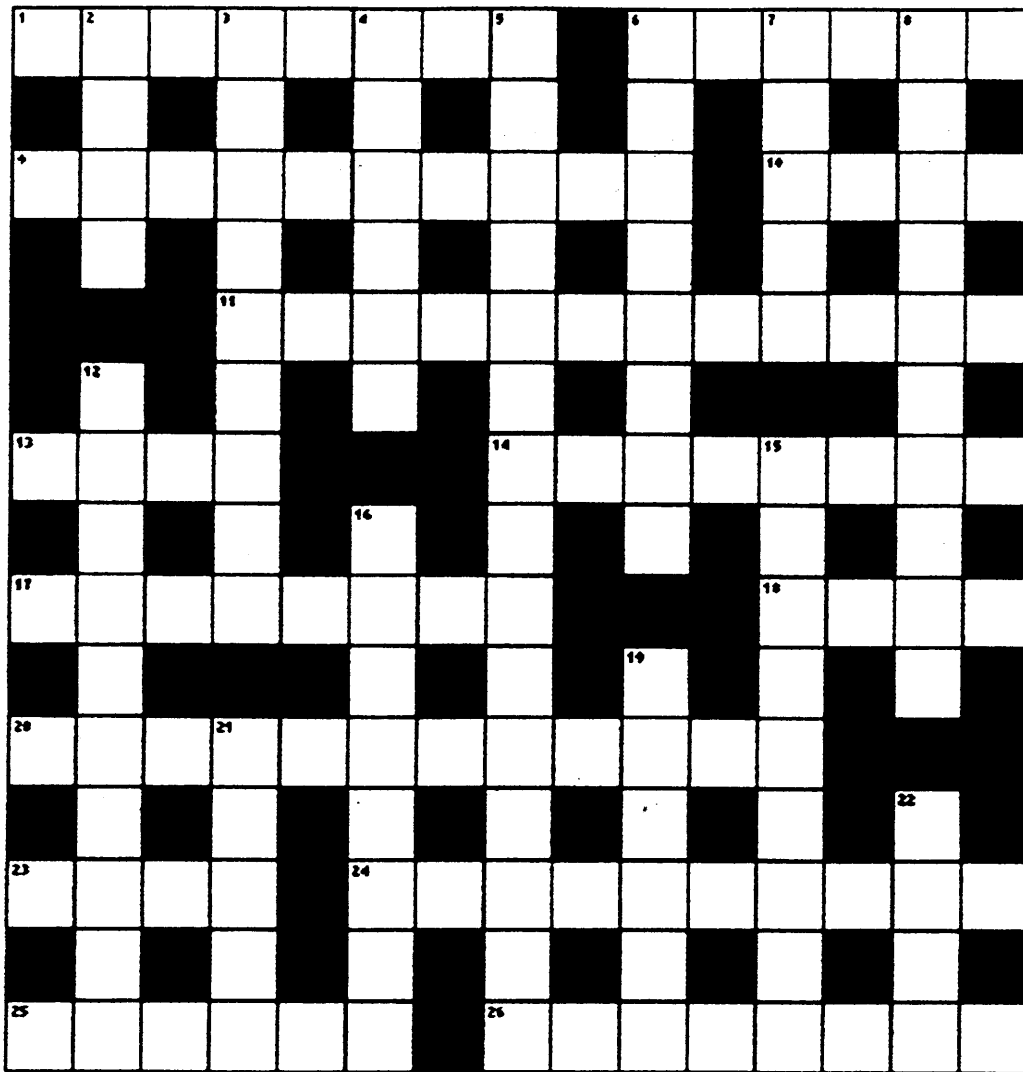
K Eustace *Twentieth century paintings*, Ashmolean Museum, Oxford 1999

D Farr *Gilbert Cannan, a Georgian Prodigy*, Chatto & Windus, London 1978

J Hill *The Art of Dora Carrington*, The Herbert Press, London 1994

C Mackenzie *My Life and Times Octave Four*, Chatto & Windus, London 1965

General Knowledge Crossword



Across

1. 13th century manor rebuilt by Sir William Hawtrey in the 15th century. (8)
6. Nickname for 2nd World War barrage balloons. (6)
9. North Bucks. Parish whose name derives from "Hrafn's Farm". (10)
10. A modern hautboy. (4),
11. Somerset location with a name meaning "Lower Stone Way". (6,6)
13. The lake found in a corrie. (4)
14. Daughter of Lord Clarendon who married King James II. (4,4)
17. Leader of a Revolt against William I in 1070. (8)
18. "Devils----" old pharmaceutical name for Asafoetida. (4)
20. "Murders out of tune and ----/----- grows harsh," from Othello. (5,7)
23. Musical genre originating in New Orleans c1900. (4)
24. Old Chandlers outlets whose signs were figurines. (5,5)
25. Surname of Churchill's successor 1945. (6)
26. Lenore- "nameless here for ----" from Edgar Allan Poe's the Raven. (8)

Down

2. "----" stone, an ancient boundary marker. (4)
3. The last Stuart Monarch. (5,4)
4. Sword shaped. (6)
5. Olympic Training base run by Sir Ludwig Guttmann. (5,10)
6. "Health- a ---- that money cannot buy". Walton's Compleat Angler. (8)
7. Tree of genus Chlorophora. Wood used for panelling. (5)
8. Hanging forward, outward, or downward. (10)
12. Architect whose Abbey restorations earned him the epithet "The Destroyer". (5,5)
15. Ham handed anagram. (9)
16. Village where a Bronze Age "Leaf" sword was discovered in 1851. (8)
19. A complex organic substance causing chemical transformations. (6)
21. German name for Attila as in the "Nibelungenlied". (5)
22. A symbol of Knighthood. (4)

The Story Our Hedgerows Can Tell

The Chiltern landscape is characterised by its hedgerows, which define boundaries and accompany rights-of-way. What story can these hedgerows tell about the history of our locality? How can you interpret these clues the next time you go for a walk?

The word 'hedge' comes from the Old English *haga* or enclosure. Hedges are not natural features. Some are the managed remnants of woodland clearance or 'ascarting' (derived from the Old French meaning 'to grub-up trees'). Others from more recent times were purposefully planted with hawthorn ('haw' also comes from *haga*) to enclose large open fields and commons. Hedges also became established as a result of mounds of earth or lynchets being deposited at the bottom of strip-ploughed common fields or when saplings on ridges and around ditches between fields were allowed to remain and were 'adopted'.

We know that up to early Saxon times this area was so heavily wooded that most of it was impenetrable. The Saxons set about clearing woodland mainly along the dry upland valley slopes for winter pasture. They also replenished woods with economically valuable trees and shrubs. Despite the more recent impact of beech replanting for bodging and charcoal burning, examples of this earlier woodland management are still identifiable, Captain's Wood near Hivings being one such local example. Until very recent times parts of Hawridge and Cholesbury Commons owed their existence to this way of life.

Woodland edges more often were the combination of a ditch and steep bank, the latter planted with trees such as elm, or hawthorn and blackthorn which were periodically coppiced and formed a thorny barrier to both enclose and exclude animals. Mediaeval or later clearances often left this original woodland edge intact and can be seen today as contorted tree stools punctuating the hedge or in the form of field banks such as those at 'White Hawridge'.

The Saxons also maintained hedges aside the lanes and hollow ways connecting communities that sprung up in association with woodland clearance. In some cases the 'ditch' between two banks also served as a lane. There are several examples of these locally, some of which have been subsumed into the modern road network but others such as Hawridge Lane still retain an almost original identity today.

The variety of species provides clues to a hedge's origin. Hazel, hornbeam, spindle and field maple indicate a woodland origin and were used for fuel. Trees and shrubs planted for a purpose include holly (near to farmsteads) for its magical powers! oak for building and ash for wagons, apples and cherries for food. Herbs finding a refuge in the hedge were harvested for medicinal purposes.

A useful tip for spotting a hedge derived from a woodland edge is to see if it has a healthy population of bluebell, wood anemone and yellow archangel. Dog's mercury is indicative of older hedges which may also zigzag and incorporate established trees. Hawthorn hedges from the time of the parliamentary enclosures in the 18th century and later were straighter, often 'plashed' i.e. laid, and contain few if any trees and rarely any herbaceous plants indicative of woodland flora.

Whilst out walking you can, with some surprising accuracy, estimate how old a hedge is by applying 'Hooper's formula'. This involves finding the average number of tree and shrub varieties per 30 yards of hedge, multiplying this by 99 and deducting 16. Surprising numbers of hedges around here can be dated to between 13th and 15th centuries.

I hope this brief insight into the history of Chiltern hedges provides an interesting diversion on your next walk. If anyone is interested in learning more about our hedgerow heritage and flora I will be pleased to pass on what I have learnt from my research.

Chris Brown

“Queen Elizabeth Slept Here”

This caption is often seen in stately homes, no doubt to impress the tourists and underline the importance of the owners' ancestry. Why the Virgin Queen is singled out for such attention is a mystery, for she was neither the first nor the last monarch to sponge upon the hospitality of loyal subjects. Be that as it may, most of us are intrigued by some human historical link with places we visit, probably the most obvious one being the final resting places of the great. If that is your interest, and confining yourself to the Greater Chilterns area, at St George's Chapel, Windsor, you can see the tombs of a dozen monarchs, spanning five centuries from Henry VI to George VI.

As often as not, the connection is not one of funerary monuments, and much entertainment and learning may be had from discovering the link between people and places. It is an all-weather activity: in summer, a good reason for an excursion; in winter, home-based, with a few history or guide books for company.

Among near neighbours, the various Rothschilds, William Penn, Benjamin Disraeli and John Hampden are obvious choices, but do you know exactly where JH and friends declared their opposition to Ship Money?

On our doorstep, the originator of consort music (and what was that?) lived at Chapel Farm, St Leonards, before entering the service of Sir Francis Walsingham, principal secretary and spymaster to Elizabeth I. Her astrologer, John Dee, was a Walsingham agent who used the cipher “007”, unwittingly providing Ian Fleming with a profitable idea!

Here are some suggestions to stimulate a little research:

ASHRIDGE PARK	Henry VIII - Elizabeth I - Christopher Wren
AYLESBURY	Anne Boleyn - John Wilkes
BERKHAMSTED	Thomas Becket - Dauphin Louis (future Louis VIII) - Piers Gaveston - The Black Prince - Jean II (“Le Bon”) - “The Rose of Raby” - and many others!
CLAYDON HOUSE	Florence Nightingale
HARTWELL HOUSE	Louis XVIII
OLNEY	William Cowper
TRING PARK	James I - Charles II - Christopher Wren - Edward VII
WALLINGFORD	Margaret of Anjou (consort of Henry VI)
WINSLOW HALL	William Lowndes - Christopher Wren
WENDOVER	Catherine of Aragon - Anne Boleyn

Having started, you will undoubtedly discover other connections. You will have widened your horizons in an interesting way, and will be able to enlighten the rest of us, either by a short talk at Members' Evening, or by a paragraph in the next Newsletter. Happy hunting!

George Cobby

“Local” History

Amongst the many interesting contents of the Group’s famous Black Box is Mr F K King’s 1968 “**Local**” **History of Cholesbury-cum-St. Leonards**, updated by Bert Gomm around 1986. Mr King undertook a considerable amount of original research amongst the County Record Office’s copies of Innkeepers Registers covering 1753 to 1828 and Kelly’s Directories from 1847 to 1939, as well as examining title deeds at Benskins Watford Brewery and the Group’s own copies of Tithe Schedules of around 1838; his work was incorporated in David and Joan Hay’s **Hilltop Villages of the Chilterns** published in 1971. All of this effort deserves a fresh airing and newer members of the Group will doubtless be interested in the fruits of Mr King’s and Mr Gomm’s research.

It appears that the hilltop villages were very thirsty places in years gone by. While many members will remember Buckland Common’s **Boot and Slipper** and **Horse and Hounds** filling the gap between the **White Lion** in St. Leonards and the **Full Moon** and the **Rose and Crown** in Hawridge, there are records of no fewer than fourteen pubs and alehouses in the area. The clientele was not so well behaved as their year 2000 successors - between 1699 and 1703, Thomas Parker and Edward Ayres were several times charged with keeping unlicensed and disorderly alehouses at St. Leonards and in 1906 George Winkworth, the licensee of the **Full Moon**, was fined £2 with costs or one month’s imprisonment for permitting drunkenness, although the conviction was later quashed on appeal.

The **Full Moon** claims to date from 1693 and thus to be the area’s oldest public house but its first recorded licensee was Jonathan Dell in 1766. On the other hand, the **Boot and Slipper**, formerly the **Boot**, had William Miles as the registered innkeeper in 1698. By 1753 there were also registered innkeepers for the **White Lion** in St. Leonards, the **Castle**, the **Blue Ball** and the **Maidenhead** (later the Bricklayers’ Arms) in Cholesbury and the **Mermaid** and the **Rose and Crown** in Hawridge. Later arrivals were the **Plough** just over the parish boundary in Chivery, the **Britannia** in Bottom Road, Buckland Common, the **Queen’s Head** in Cholesbury and the **Slip Inn** adjacent to the county boundary in Wiggington Road. Amongst the brews to be enjoyed were those of the Chesham Brewery, Wellers of Amersham, the Ivinghoe Brewery and Lock & Smith of Berkhamsted. Quite a prospect for pub crawlers!

It would be a tribute to Mr King and Mr Gomm and useful to the Local History Group to keep their work updated. The Editor would be very pleased to hear from anyone who knows the exact closing date of the **Horse and Hounds** or who has other information to add.

DWR

Latest Addition to the Library

Records of Buckinghamshire - Volume 40 1998-2000

This includes a number of articles on local research such as ‘Buckinghamshire Parish Names’ by K A Bailey MA, PhD and ‘A Prehistoric Ditch and other Features at Princes Risborough Swimming Pool’ by Steve Ford BA, PhD, MIFA. If you want to borrow any of the books from the Local History Group’s small collection, please contact Paddy Thomas on 01494 758460

CHOLESBURY-CUM-ST LEONARDS LOCAL HISTORY GROUP COMMITTEE

- **Hon. President and Archivist:** Mrs E. Money, The Old Manor House, Cholesbury, (01494 758235)
- **Chairman and Editor:** Mr D Ridgwell, Poachers Cottage, Hastoe, (01442 825746).
- **General Secretary:** Mrs P Thomas, Cherry Orchards, Cholesbury Common, (01494 758460)
- **Joint Treasurers:** Mrs P Ridgwell, Poachers Cottage, Hastoe, (01442 825746)
Mrs S Freeman, White Gate Cottage, Hastoe, (01442 823626)
- **Programme Secretary:** Mr G Cobby, 188 Amersham Way, Little Chalfont, (01494 762954)
- **Committee Members:** Mrs S Bailey (01494 758914), Mrs S Blomfield (01494 758314),
Mr C Brown (01494 758890), Mrs B Gomm (01494 785930), and Mrs S Jones (01494 837245).
- **Website:** www.cholesbury.com