

ON THE STREET WHERE YOU LIVE

THE cricket store, the adjoining cricket pitch and pavilion are owned and maintained by the Parish Council. Re-thatching was carried in July out by Norman Oldfield of Horton and his colleague Paul. The work agreed by the Parish Council in March this year, was paid for using accumulated monies set aside each year out of the annual parish precept in a "thatching fund".

Norman Oldfield last re-thatched the cricket store in 1985 following a fire which destroyed the roof and many of the existing old timbers.

Paul explained to *News & Views* that the wire netting cover is removed and a thin under bed of reeds is attached through the existing thatch to give strength using wires screwed into the rafters. A deep layer of new specially grown long wheat straw is then laid like overlapping tiles over the roof and is pinned to the existing thatching using hazel hoops.

Some three tons of Devon grown straw was used in addition to the Turkish grown reeds. The traditional source of reed was Norfolk but the quantity available to the flourishing thatching trade has been reduced due to the management strategy of the reed beds and conflicting conservation policies required for nesting birds. The long stem wheat straw is cut with a traditional windmill reaper and binder whilst green not when mature and dried out, it would be too brittle. It is then stooked and left to dry slowly in the field which gives it the strength required for thatching.

The cricket store is described and illustrated in Paul Woodfield's book "A Guide to the Historic Buildings of Milton Keynes" published by the Development Corporation in 1986.

Paul described the building thus: -

"Originally a stable and store for Windmill Farm. Un-dateable but probably C18. Timber weatherboarding and a thatched roof. A very rare survival of and ephemeral building such as is encountered in almost all medieval village excavations. It has no regular framing, the posts miscellaneous and set in the ground and propped with other timbers on the south side when it took up a rhomboid shape. The roof was of round poles as cut from the hedgerow, with a variety of props and stays. The thatch was roped on and patched over many a year. It is the sort of building that is an essential element of the true village and distinguishes it from the commuter village. Very sadly, the building was partly destroyed by fire in 1985 and now has a new roof, removing much of its interest."

So 20 years on, the cricket store thatched roof has been transformed and the building with its historic links will continue to provide an intangible link to the historic old village of Great Linford.