

BATCHWORTH JUMBLE SALE and The Role of the “Assistant Treasurer”

(This is not a formal role but as the wife of the Treasurer, Roger Chambers, this is what it's become.)

Four Weeks before the Jumble Sale

Deirdre (The Jumble Sale Chief) delivers about half of the leaflets to Roger. I can't use the computer for the weekend - Roger's sorting out distribution to parents. I'm asked to speed things up by counting the leaflets for him – nimbler fingers he says! Hopefully Deirdre's printed the correct dates – correcting 2000 leaflets by hand adds another 3 or more hours to the job!

Three Weeks before

I become Roger's chauffeur for delivering leaflets to parents. He used to do it on his own but he said it would be much quicker if I drove him around. Does it now take more of my time than it saves of his? Once, it only took one and a half hours – the fastest ever – only because we managed to catch everyone in first time round.

Two Weeks before

We deliver our allocation of leaflets. Our son's no longer a member of the group so why are we delivering???

Friday Evening before jumble collection

Tables have to be set up at the hall. When we first did this we had no idea what tables went where so it took absolutely ages. Then we had a brilliant idea – what about a table layout plan. That certainly made life easier. One time it was easier still – we managed to get some other parents to do it.

One Week before

We do our jumble collection. But we've got some more to do - some parents leafleted but can't collect. Why did I choose to have a hatch-back? Roger says the boot of his car's too small!

Monday, Wednesday and Friday sorting evenings

Try to go on one or two evenings. Why do Tesco seem to run out of empty fruit boxes (to store books) when we want them? Time to have a chat with other parents and helpers.

Jumble Sale Day

No Saturday lie in! Be at Batchworth by 9 a.m. Watch the prospective buyers queuing as they watch us setting up. I wonder which stall Deirdre will put me on. 10.30, and they rush in. 1.00 p.m. – it's over. Oh, no it's not!!! We've got to clear up. And we've got to gather in all the takings and see how well we've done. Our kitchen becomes the counting house. Coin sorter on the worktop, piles of coins on the table, bagged up coins on the floor (carefully laid out by denomination) after being weight checked on the kitchen balance scales. Three hours or so later (if we're lucky) we have the total takings. It's been speeded up by Roger being given the coin sorter for a Christmas present. Perhaps I could make something to eat if the kitchen is cleared! But Roger's double checking the takings for each stall and working out the total profit. The phone calls asking how we've done have begun already.

The Day After

Roger's still sorting out the accounts and making out the banking slips and dealing with phone calls about the sale. When can we have Sunday lunch?

Two Days After

I have two bank trips to do – too heavy for one trip. The clerks wonder at how I've carried the takings – I just say "it's weight training". The empty bank has a queue to the door by the time I leave.

One Week After

I must clean my car and get rid of the spiders. Roger's complaining that we've not done the gardening! What have we been doing for the last four weeks?!! Only another 7 weeks and it's May Fair (or Autumn Market at Watersmeet).