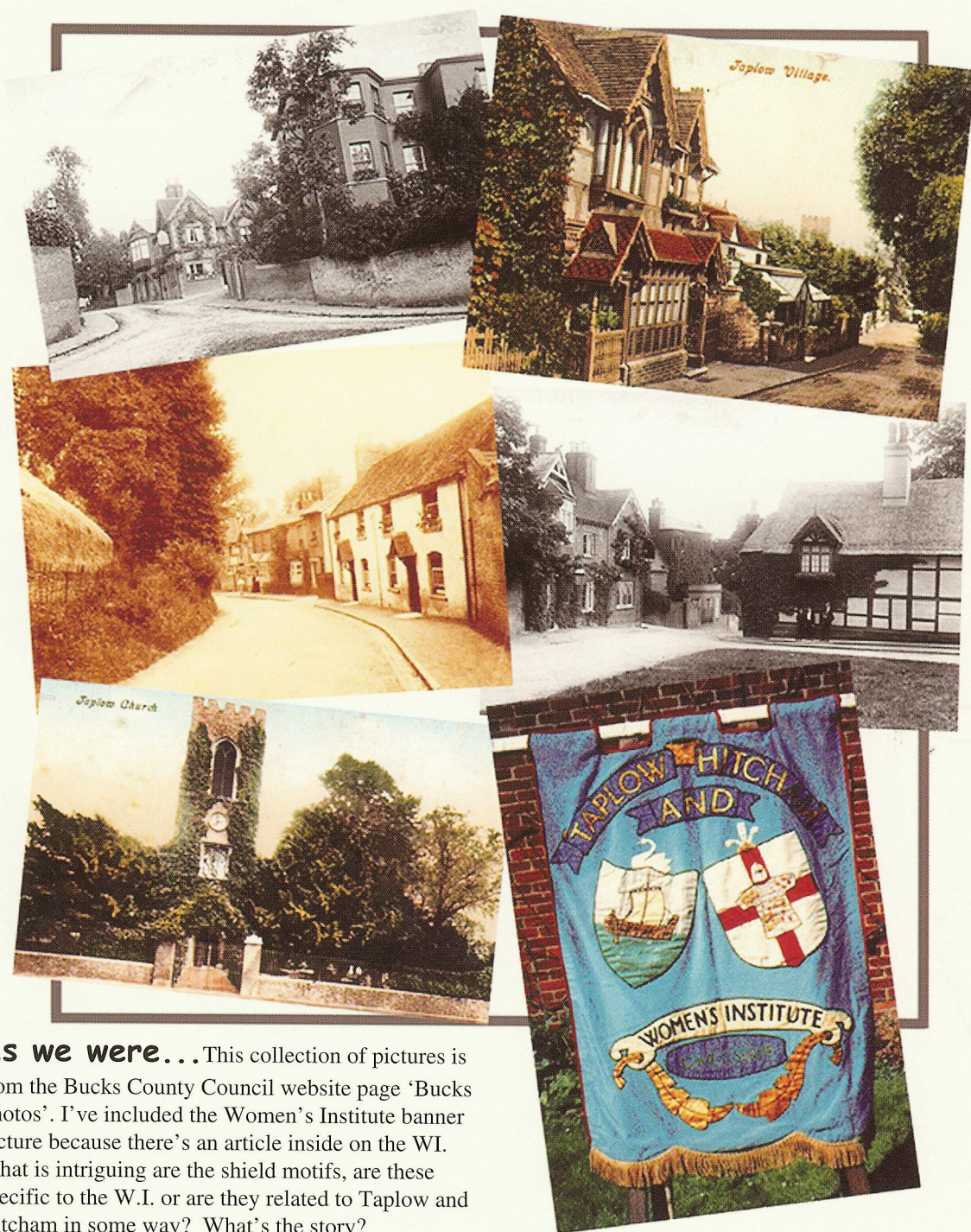


Hitcham & Taplow Preservation Society

Newsletter - No.81 Spring 2004

£2 for non-members

A Society, formed in 1959, to protect Hitcham, Taplow and the surrounding countryside from being spoilt by bad development or neglect



As we were... This collection of pictures is from the Bucks County Council website page 'Bucks Photos'. I've included the Women's Institute banner picture because there's an article inside on the WI. What is intriguing are the shield motifs, are these specific to the W.I. or are they related to Taplow and Hitcham in some way? What's the story?

HITCHAM AND TAPLOW PRESERVATION SOCIETY

OFFICERS AND EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS

<i>President</i>	Lincoln Lee
<i>Vice Presidents</i>	John Kennedy, Leonard Miall, Tony Hickman, Derek Walker
<i>Chairman</i>	Anne Hanford, 1 Saxon Gardens, Taplow, Bucks, SL6 0DD
<i>Treasurer</i>	Alan Senior, The Old Rectory, Hitcham Lane, Burnham, SL1 7DU
<i>Secretary</i>	Jeremy Vanstone, 8 Stockwells, Taplow, Bucks. SL6 0DB
<i>Newsletter</i>	Fred Russell
<i>Historian</i>	Leonard Miall
<i>Advisory</i>	Malcolm Crick, Tony Meats, Andrew Findley
<i>Committee</i>	Jean Beaves, Euan Felton, Heather Fenn, Karl Lawrence, Eva Lipman, Martin Maund, Andy McKenzie, Barrie Peroni, Helen Wogan, .

EDITORIAL

To misquote an old saw, the cost of freedom is often an unhappy neighbour. People who knowingly sell their homes to developers have bought their own freedom at enormous cost to the neighbours they leave behind. It seems that the biggest disaster to befall Ellington Road and upper River Road was to be publically labelled as a 'Riverside settlement' and declared a Conservation Area. The attendant publicity seemed to attract developers like flies to the honeypot - helped along by having a poster about us alongside the counter in the Planning Office which is constantly frequented by developers.

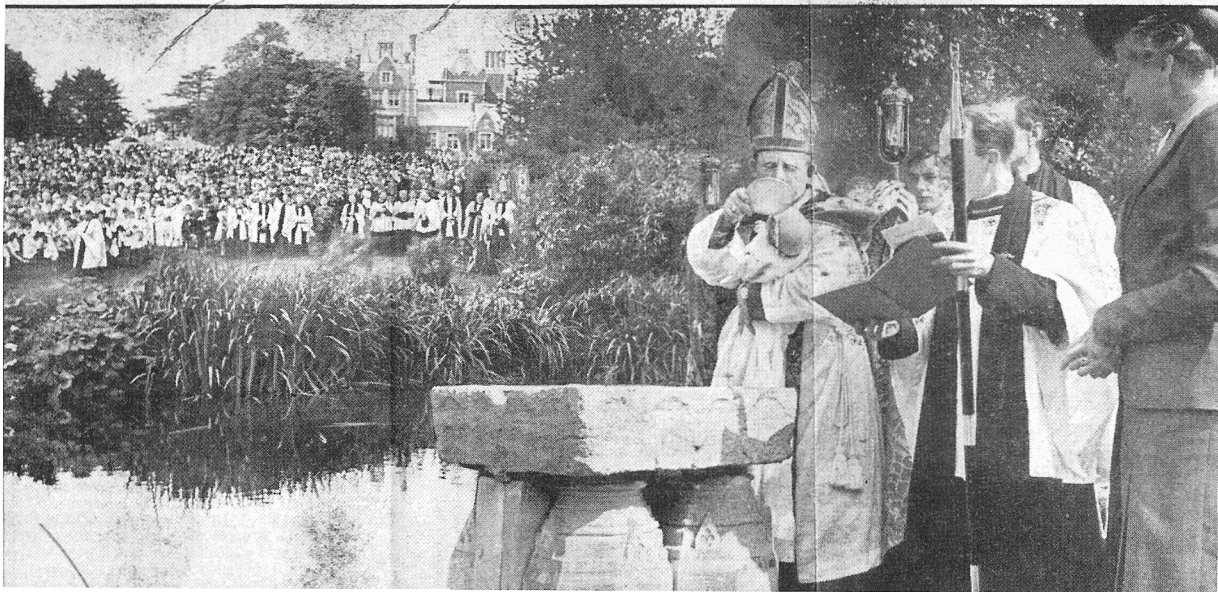
Of the six houses for sale in the area recently, five have gone to developers. One house changed hands three times, all to developers. There are at least another two houses on the near horizon. It is we who are left with the constant noise, dust, lorries, loss of privacy and value of our homes who suffer the consequences of such thoughtless or antisocial behaviour.

Cliveden is very much on our minds at the moment and we have to wait on the District Council for the next move. Our indefatigable roving journalist and historian Joy Marshall unearthed some things about Cliveden you might find interesting. For instance, did you know that when the Duke of Hamilton, who fought in the Battle of Blenheim under the Duke of Marlborough acquired the Cliveden Estate he "caused the Estate to be planted with trees as to represent the position of the contending armies engaged in that battle". One has to wonder whether the development at the hospital site will change the order of battle! Joy also discovered that Cliveden is a grade I Historic Park and the whole area - *including the hospital site*

- is classified as a Biological Notification Site (BNS) containing over 192 species of plants, trees, wildlife including 9 very rare species of plants. In the developer's Ecological Survey Report of Dec. 2003 they explicitly state that the hospital site is EXCLUDED from the BNS. The map Joy provided, dated 2004, specifically INCLUDES the hospital site. In section 4.2.1 of the report they say "*With the development being restricted to the hospital grounds, which lie outside the BNS, there are unlikely to be any direct impacts on the BNS*". Is somebody bending the truth a little here? The BNS notification requires the Planning Office carefully to consider the impact of development on a BNS site. Clearly, from the evidence in the documentation provided to them, the planners may not be aware that the hospital grounds are a BNS site. This documentation also states that about 300 trees will be felled and a further 2-300 will have 'major surgery' carried out to make room for these 191 houses. There is little doubt that the noise and physical equipment movements involved in felling and lopping 500 or 600 trees will seriously disturb wildlife and flora for a large distance around the site. Equally, there seems to be nothing in the planning documentation about the traffic generated by lorries moving hundreds of trees from the site. Where is it all going?

At a special Parish meeting the idea of a Parish Plan was floated. Although the turnout was disappointing there were enough suitably qualified volunteers to make up a Steering Committee, under the chairmanship of John Kennedy, to get the ball rolling and we can expect an update on progress at our next AGM and a fuller report next Spring.

THE DAILY MIRROR, JULY 20, 1942



Were you there?

The scene at Bapsey pond on the 19th. June 1942 as the Bishop of Dorchester baptised one of the little children. It was the first time since the seventh century that water from from the pool had been used for baptism. A Norman font, relic from the old Taplow church, no longer in existence was set up beside the pool in the shade of an ivy-bound May tree. Five children were baptised; **Anne Morrison** and her baby brother **John** together with **John and Eileen Miller**. The fifth baby was not named in the article from the Daily Mirror. *Would the kind lady who passed me this interesting snippet please get in touch so that I can return the clipping. I regret that my filing system broke down and I've lost your name! Ed.*

Exemplary Behaviour?

Heather Fenn

A community as much in the maelstrom of planning storms can tend to forget its own bright spots in its preoccupation with fighting developers. And yet, credit where credit is due: we should not forget to celebrate the beauty in our built and natural environment, the sensitive restorations, the protected natural spaces, the ancient trees kept in trim over the centuries. There are fine contributions made by our friends and neighbours we can and should be proud of, and should celebrate.

There are stunning examples of good practice, with people spending time and money to research and restore their own properties, not just meddling in other people's planning matters. There are properties in our community whose foundations date back centuries, many of which have been kept at great sacrifice as they were all those centuries ago.

A walk along the top of the High Street is a walk through a Tudor hamlet, and a drive past the sugar-bowl topped delights of Ellington Gardens inspires images of Edwardian tea parties on the lawn. Many examples of fine guardianship and restoration deserve to be celebrated.

The chimneys of Taplow Court are one good example of people sparing no expense to retain the character of a stunning building.

Orkney Court, whether or not we wanted it built, was constructed in beautiful materials in a style which cannot be said to be out of keeping with the local area. The interior design of Taplow House Hotel is an exquisite return to its Regency origins. These and other examples of voluntary good practice take considerable time and expense.

It would be nice to be able to say "well done." Just how to go about this will require some thought, but it would be interesting to have comments back to this Newsletter on this subject. Do you know of someone who has done research in order to rediscover the original feel of their property? Are you aware of an example of a property brought back to its former glory? Has an effort been made to rediscover the traditional local colours for a barn, or to restore the finish to old beams?

It might be possible to find a way to celebrate the good around us, possibly selecting a property each year to name as "best example of keeping Taplow, Taplow." Our neighbours either contribute or detract from our daily lives, so let's say "bravo" to those who bring joy and beauty to Taplow.

Notes from the 44th. AGM - Oct. 2003

The meeting was attended by around 40 people, including 30 member households.

Anne Hanford reported on a very busy year for the Society, particularly in the area of Planning.

The Society had objected to the various stages in the Sunnyside/Bridge Villa applications which were eventually approved, despite strong local opposition; similarly with the nearby development in River Close. The Society had also objected to the two applications for redeveloping the Nutshell site and to a recent application for a car showroom on the Bishop Centre site. A decision is awaited on both issues. The Society welcomed and supported the refusal of the application to remove restrictions on the Boundary Road stables site. The Society has also played an active role in the Cliveden "No" Campaign which is opposing the National Trust's proposal for a development of nearly 200 dwellings on the Canadian Red Cross Hospital site.

Anne Hanford also reported on the very successful Village Green Party, held in June which was attended by over 500 people, raising over £200 for the Society's funds and over £1,000 in the raffle for the Thames Valley Adventure Playground. She thanked the many willing helpers and looked forward to an equally successful event next year on 19 June.

Special thanks were made to Fred Russell for another two excellent issues of the Newsletter, assisted by Andrew Findlay. She emphasised the need for more contributions and encouraged people to contact Fred. She mentioned the intention to concentrate on the development of a website for the Society in the forthcoming year, also with the major participation of Fred and Andrew.

She concluded with heartfelt thanks to all the Officers and Committee Members and a plea for ideas for the future development of the Society.

Summary of Treasurer's Report

Membership currently stands at 155 subscriptions broken down into 148 individual households, 3 block memberships and 4 corporations. Receipts over the year totalled £2,841. Money held at the bank amounted to £2,695 with an outstanding bill for the Newsletter. The Accounts were audited by Jerry Burley who was re-appointed as auditor for the next year.

It was agreed that the subscription levels should remain at £5 per household or £4.50 per block and £50 per corporation

George Lawrence from South Bucks District Council gave a brief talk on environmental noise and mentioned the availability of an information pack on the subject. The evening concluded with a presentation by John Kennedy on Parish Plans and how Taplow might be involved. (Anne Hanford)

A flexible Green Belt...

The Government seems to have decided that the whole principle of the protection of the Green Belt is a flexible concept, which may be rejected or manipulated at will. The latest edict from the Deputy Prime Minister's office, issued at the beginning of February has demanded that the new Eastern Region (now pretentiously entitled "The East of England") build 465,000 new houses by the year 2021. This is astounding! It means the construction of about 27,350 houses every year for 16 years! There are not enough bricks or building workers in the UK to achieve this. (The RIBA reported in September 2003 that housing applications **all across the North East of England** have been rejected, even on brown field sites, presumably as an incentive to bring the workers South.) This plan was forced through the East of England Regional Assembly although most of the councils in Hertfordshire and Essex voted against it. There is NO proposal in this plan for a new water supply for the relatively arid South East, nor any proposal for an increased power supply or transport

system extension. The problems of transport to work, despite the fact that existing commuter trains are grossly overcrowded and the main motorways to London are running slow due to pressure of traffic, have been completely ignored. The plan for the proposed 'Corridor' from London via Stansted and Cambridge to Milton Keynes, includes a huge addition to the housing area of Milton Keynes and a huge new development of houses on the post war "New Town" of Stevenage. This will be in the Green Belt across the A1 M road from the town, thus joining up Stevenage to Luton and Hitchin. This plan shows a proposed new bypass road around Luton, which will run, not only through the Green Belt but also through Areas Of Natural Beauty (AONB). The remark that another area may be substituted for this makes nonsense of the meaning of the AONB. Beauty, which nature created through many centuries on a very special terrain, cannot be moved! Our part of the country, soon to be run by the largely unelected South East Regional Assembly, may soon feel the belt tightening.

...However

Tony McNulty, the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, Office of the Deputy Prime Minister,

“It is important to put the matter in context, because that leads me to what I want to say about speculative developments. Despite our clear plan to build sustainable communities for the future, there will almost inevitably be some who wish to misinterpret our intentions. I have to say strongly, however, let them be warned. It is a mistake for developers and property companies to think that the need for housing in the South East can be used to undermine longstanding policies for the protection of the countryside and the green belt. To put it quite simply and starkly, it cannot.”

“The fact that the land is located in the South East... does not mean that it should be developed. We have made it clear that, in deciding which sites to allocate for housing, local planning authorities should assess their potential and suitability for development against a range of criteria which includes: the availability of previously developed sites; the location and accessibility of sites to jobs, shops and services by modes other than the car; the capacity of existing infrastructure, including public transport, water and sewerage, to take the additional development; other utilities and social infrastructure; the ability to build communities; and the physical and environmental constraints on the development of land.”

What about Cliveden, then?

Lincoln's Corner

Taplow - A strip Village ?

Calling Taplow a strip village may invite hilarity -it suggests the Women's Institute or summat . But as I mentioned in a much earlier edition of this newsletter Taplow does seem to have been a strip village at one time. When I was at school I was told that a strip village had four basic needs : Water, Pasture, Arable land and woodland. Many centuries ago, before the Bath Road, railway, and motorway cut through this area Water here was the River Thames. Water didn't just mean drainage and drinking , and food like fish and eels. It really meant transportation and trade

In the Pasture land, away from the water, cattle could graze. Even further away from the water, there would be arable land,. suitable not just for growing crops but for the villagers to have their cottages , church, and inn. Finally of course the woodland provided timber and firewood, and a place where swine could snout around.

Now look at the parishes of Taplow, Hitcham, Burnham , Farnham etc on the map. Each of them, long and narrow, seems to meet the requirement.

Taplow Graffiti

Lessons should be learned from those words painted on the railway bridge over the Bath Road"Lizzie I love you. Still, one year on."

The first lesson is to be careful -Lizzie, or for that matter her sort-of-secret admirer, may be a member of this Society. . You can't be too careful.

The second lesson to be learnt is that the inscription reveals a degree of steadfastness . Love for a whole year? Maybe in time to come we will have celebrations of ten, or even twenty-five years. Maybe. Thirdly, to be honest it's not genuine graffiti.. To achieve those strange lumpy figures which constitute genuine graffiti you have to attend a College which specialises in such work. But don't think any the less of our Taplow words because of that. Alongside the railway tracks outside Paddington Station about 35 years ago somebody painted the words " Far away is close at hand in images of elsewhere " I didn't know at the time what this message meant, and for that matter I still don't but the mere fact that the words can be recalled after such a long time suggests that the painted word can be just as effective as graffiti. Especially when the spelling's correct.

But some awkward questions :Why didn't those enthusiastic Line Whiteners touch up those wonderful words ? And why, in the weeks since the above was written, has somebody painted the letters NDT on the bridge above ? Could NDT be the initials of our love-lorn swain, or even of Lizzie herself ? More likely NDT has some cryptic meaning, like

Nerita Doesn't Talk.

Or maybe it has nothing to do with Lizzie, but is just an abbreviation

No Damn Trains

No prizes

Village Green Party

*The annual village green party
with its Ox spit roast and
barbecue will be held as usual on
the green on*

Saturday June 19th.

6.00pm to 10.30pm

*Picnic and dance
to the sound of music with
Mike Sanderson and his
musicians*

The W.I Hall through the years

Muriel King

Early in 1926 Nancy, Lady Astor who was President of Cliveden and Dropmore W.I. at the time wrote to her friend Mrs. Audrey Skimming of Taplow House recommending "that the women of Taplow would benefit from a Women's Institute." Mrs. Skimming duly accepted this advice and so, in March of that year, an inaugural meeting was held in the Parish Room and 85 members were enrolled. Two months later a discussion took place as to whether or not Hitcham should have its own Institute, but the ladies of Hitcham decided to remain with Taplow, as did Lent Rise Ladies' Club members who later also joined the W.I.

With this increased membership a larger hall had to be found and monthly meetings were held at the Dumb Bell Hotel on the Bath Road. By November 1927 the Drill Hall (now occupied by Thames Valley Police Transport Division) became the venue, but space there was limited so, with great energy and determination it was decided to build a hall of our own. Land was leased from the old Great Western Railway for a fee of £7. 10s per year, and this arrangement continued until 1951 when the land was finally purchased. Plans were drawn up by Mr. Salter, an architect whose wife was a W.I. member, and permission to build was granted by Eton Rural District Council in 1929. The total cost of construction was £1,340. 16s. 3d. and the money was raised by the members in a variety of ways. These included Subscriptions, Jumble Sales, Dances, Sale of bricks at 1/- each, plus donations from many local people.

In 1930 the Hall was officially opened by Lady Astor, accompanied by the Minister for Agriculture and several other Members of Parliament. Three Trustees were appointed -Mrs. Martineau, Mrs. Madeley, and Mrs. Hyman. The President was Mrs. Skimming and the Secretary the Hon. Mrs. Irby. Registration of the Institute with the Charity Commissioners also took place at this time. Records show that William Wood of Taplow donated and planted the shrubs along the boundaries of our land and water came to the Hall from the Railway Station via the Garage which was then a small concern. In 1932 the Committee Room was added and the

decision was made to limit membership to 200 !

During World War 11 the Hall was used as a Reception Centre for evacuees with families sleeping on the floor until homes could be found for them. Ration Books were issued from there and members ran a Mobile Canteen which served local Army Camps and also the Prisoner of War Camp situated on the adjacent Sports Ground. Prisoners were even allowed to come to Dances at the hall. Both during and after the war members staffed a Lending Library and a Child Clinic.

The late Lord Desborough of Taplow Court was very interested in the work of the W.I. and on his death his daughter, Lady Gage, gave the Institute an additional piece of land to the north of the hall. Built to seat 300 the W.I. Hall is the largest in the locality, and over the years it has been used by many different organisations and for many different purposes such as: -Play Groups, Political Parties, Public Inquiries, Dog Shows, Summer Camps for Scouts and Brownies, not forgetting the Preservation Society itself

The maintenance and safety of the hall has been a continuing concern of the members over the years, and so in 1953 , following several acts of vandalism, an approach was made to Eton Rural District Council for permission to site a mobile home at the rear of the hall for a resident caretaker. Temporary permission was granted which continued until recently when the Trustees with support from local individuals and organisations, including the Preservation Society, were granted Permanent permission , which ensures the continuation of this most successful arrangement.

Present members of Taplow and Hitcham W.I. have much to thank those early members for when they took the decision to build their own hall. It enables both them and the local community to participate in many different activities , including Art and Craft, Badminton, Short-mat Bowls, Table Tennis and Keep-Fit. At the present time the members are raising money to update the facilities in order that future generations may benefit from having the opportunity to use a Hall with so much to offer.

In memoriam

It is with great regret that we have to announce the death of Dr. Maurice Rogers, at the age of 92. Maurice had a strong love for the countryside, and the preservation of the rural environment was of extreme importance to him. While living in Hitcham, Bucks, he was the founder and for many years remained the Chairman of the Hitcham and Taplow Preservation Society. This Society continues to be actively dedicated to preserving the rural environment in the Hitcham and Taplow area against encroaching development from surrounding towns. In retirement Maurice was a tireless fundraiser for his local branch of the CPRE.

Planning Applications

Remember, readers, whilst your Society is responding to these applications on your behalf, it helps if you also write to the District Council stating your views, for or against.

South Bucks District Council
 Director of Planning Services
 Council Offices
 Windsor Road
 Slough. SL1 2HN

03/00649/FUL. The Nutshell, River Road.

The demolition of existing house and replacement with terraces of four two and a half storey dwellings with integral garages. These are simply townhouses which in style and context are totally at odds with the line of Edwardian cottages alongside them. An Antler's homes initiative, not being content with the Sunnyside site.

Refused

03/00607/ADV. Altwood, Bath Road.

Externally illuminated Mini advertising box. What next? The appalling proliferation of jazzy signs and advertising gimmicks on this section of the Bath Road continues apace. I'm expecting a giant Jurassic Park Dinosaur to appear soon! That'll stop the traffic...**Permitted**

04/00353/FUL. Old Court Hotel, Bath Road

Demolition of Old Court Hotel and building of block of 14 flats. We have been expecting this for some time but most of the residents down by the Bath Road have been hoping that the developer would convert the hotel to an apartment block similar to the wonderful conversion of Landsdown House next door. We really have to try for this solution. **Pending**

04/00135/FUL, Silchester House School.

Resurfacing and layout of car park at front of school. Really there should be considerable replanting at the front as well. **Pending**

04/000744/REM, Cliveden.

Application for reserved matters under conditions in 00/00282/OUT for demolition of redundant hospital and erect 135 dwellings. **Pending**

04/00132/FUL, Marconi, Berry Hill Farm.

Erection of phone mast 21.65 metres high with 8 polar antennae plus equipment and 4 cabins. This will be an abomination in our sight, a monstrous phone mast looming over the whole of Taplow and ruining the outlook in a Green belt area. **Pending**

04/00141/RC, Altwood, Bath Road.

Application for removal of flood plain conditions and restrictions. These people again. Its difficult to see what the purpose of this strange application is, but we can be sure it bodes no good for us if approved. **Pending**

03/01115/FUL and 04/00179/FUL, Bishops Centre, Bath Road.

Erection of car showroom, roundabout and traffic lights on the Bath Road with a new access to the Bishops centre. I am speechless...**Pending**

03/01259/EUC, Leisuretrack, Bath Road.

Certification of lawfulness to display cars for sale. They should not be offering cars for sale on that site, there was never permission to do so. No question of it, Taplow is set to become the car sales centre for the South East. Talk about Silicon Valley, how about Thames Motown Valley? **In Appeal**

03.09095/TPO, Antler's Homes, River Road.

This developer is determined to get rid of the remaining trees on the Sunnyside site. We had to stop them cutting back yet another tree because it was getting in the way of their block of flats. District tree man told them that the idea was that they should build the flats round the trees, not dock the trees to pathetic stumps to accommodate their horrible flats. There used to be 38 trees on that site...they are supposed to plant a replacement mature specimen somewhere, will they? and who defines 'mature'? **Permitted**

Looking forward to 2020 -What do we want Taplow Parish to be like?

This article is based on a talk by John Kennedy, former member for Taplow on South Bucks District Council, to Hitcham and Taplow Preservation Society's 2003 AGM and a public meeting called by Taplow Parish Council on Friday 26 March 2004 to discuss a proposed Taplow Parish Plan.

The Local Government Act of 2000 introduced a modernised structure, resulting in SBDC now being run by a Leader with a Cabinet of Portfolio Holders in place of the old system of Chairmen and Committees. The Act also required the production of a Community Plan for the District to ensure its future **social, economic and environmental sustainability** and a Community Strategy to explain how the Community Plan would be delivered.

The South Bucks Community Plan was produced in 2001 and focused on three themes: **creating a better environment, improving safety, health and well being and developing and supporting a thriving community**. A Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) consisting of the main local organisations operating in South Bucks was then formed, including representatives of Bucks County Council, SBDC, the Parishes, the Primary Care Trust, the Voluntary Sector, the Police, the Youth Council and the Chamber of Commerce. Its objective was **to improve everyone's quality of life**.

The LSP Community Plan for South Bucks has now been published. It confirmed that **feeling safe, improving health, a better community spirit and protection of the environment** are what matters to most local people. There are six priorities: **making South Bucks a better place; reducing crime and the fear of crime; improving health for all; increasing community spirit and involvement; making it a prosperous place to live and work and a pleasant and healthy environment**.

This overarching Community Plan for the District includes the broad views of Taplow residents who were consulted on the Taplow Parish Appraisal and subsequent Taplow Community Plan which was published by the Parish Council in 2002. Some specific suggestions identified in the Taplow Community Plan for the environment were: **respect the residential/rural diversity of Taplow and maintain the primacy of the green belt; protect the Parish from large scale encroachments and plan accordingly. e.g. Cliveden and Dropmore;**

create a master plan for the redevelopment of Taplow Riverside between Maidenhead bridge and Taplow paper mill, to include public open spaces and sympathetic residential development, including affordable housing; restrict further commercial development along the A4; improve sites of damaged land; encourage businesses and public utilities, e.g. Railtrack, to improve the appearance of their properties, e.g. verges, fences and hedges and residents to keep their frontages and gardens tidy. There were also many recommendations on highways and traffic, public transport, housing, public protection, employment, sports and leisure, youth strategy, the River Thames and its flood plain, footpaths and verges.

Introducing Parish Plans. Local planning since the Second World War changed radically with the introduction of the green belt in 1948 and the county map in 1954. The latter was really only a broad zoning outline however in 1958 Town Maps for Beaconsfield and District, Slough and District and Gerrards Cross and Chalfont were published. These formed the basis for determining planning applications until 1974, when Beaconsfield (subsequently South Bucks) District Council was formed. In 1982 work began on the first Local Plan, which was finally adopted in 1989. The second Local Plan was adopted in 1999 after much public consultation and this forms the basis of all SBDC planning decisions to this date.

The Government has now issued draft proposals to replace the Local Plan with a Local Development Document (LDD), which is expected to become law shortly. This will form part of a Local Development Framework (LDF), which should adopt the common objectives of the Community Plan of economic, social and environmental sustainability provided they reflect community aspirations concerning the use and development of land. The LSP is required to develop a consultation strategy and timetable for community involvement, which will be monitored annually. The LSP must have their LDF adopted within three years, i.e. by 2007.

It is therefore vitally important that Taplow gets as many as possible of its aspirations for the future of the Parish included in this new LDD **which will be referred to in determining all future planning applications** once the LDF is adopted. To put this another way, the government wants local communities to take more control of their own lives, to say what they want doing in their neighbourhoods

and to work with other people, agencies and organisations in partnership to get it done. People should feel that they can participate in a planning system that is really interested in hearing their views in order to change the culture of planning from one of objecting to one of constructive participation.

This leads to the concept of **Parish Plans**, whose purpose is “**to set out a vision of what is important, how new developments can best be fitted in, the design and quality standards they should meet, how to preserve valued local features and to map out the facilities which the community needs to safeguard the future**”. A Parish Plan is not restricted to those issues within the powers of a Parish Council but can include everything that is relevant to the people who live and work in the local community. It can seek to influence policy formation and service delivery by other organisations, but it must be in line with existing policies in community plans, structure plans, etc. and the government’s wider planning

policies and proposals, for example, better use of land to obtain more affordable housing.

Taplow Parish Council has now held a Public Meeting to start the Parish Plan process and a **Steering Group** has been formed initially consisting of John Kennedy (Chairman), Pamela Bentley, John Bidgood, Heaather Fenn, Phillip Langton, Tony Meats, George Milne, Suzanne Thornley, Bernard Trevallion and John Willmore, together with two Parish Councillors and District Councillor George Sandy who are *ex officio*. Many more of those present also volunteered to assist with the distribution and collecting of questionnaires, etc.

The Steering Group hopes to complete its work and present the results by next spring. If anyone else either living or working in Taplow would like to offer their help or make representations to the Steering Group on their views for Taplow’s future would they please contact John Kennedy on 01628 624248.

Will The Society Wither?

Alan Senior

Do you agree with the article in the last issue that most of the actions of the Hitcham & Taplow Preservation Society are essentially negative in its aim to protect our immediate environment from disfigurement and injury? Are we really against any development or change in our area?

My own view is that our Society is extremely positive in actively seeking to influence the nature and scope of any proposed development or change that appears capable of significantly impacting our local environment. We object to those proposals that we feel disfigure or injure that which already exists! But we are equally prepared to constructively participate in supporting the best available alternative when change is necessary.

The Cliveden site is a good example. We agree that something positive must be done to improve the site and accept that it is necessary for the National Trust to generate some revenue from the site. We strongly object to the most recent proposal for 192 unrestricted open-market flats and houses to be built on the site, for a number of well-founded reasons. We prefer a previous proposal for the site to be used for retirement homes, sheltered accommodation and a close-care facility, which would significantly reduce the impact of the development on our local infrastructure.

Preservation and conservation mean much the same thing to most of us. Neither is a purely negative

process and both can be an integral part of progress. It is not necessary to totally destroy the existing to make progress! A good blend of the best of the old and the benefits of the new may well be the most satisfying outcome to the majority of us. Compromise is inevitable and so is change, but we should not shirk from fighting to achieve the best compromise when change is necessary.

The article said “why should the Society attempt to preserve the current status quo in aspic?” Is this what our Society is trying to do? If so, I don’t think it really reflects our aims and certainly demeans our efforts! It also asks whether we should be the arbiters of taste for future generations? I suggest that unless we make great efforts to preserve (or conserve) the best of what we have now, future generations can rightly blame us for allowing the needless destruction of their heritage. I believe that most of us are grateful for the efforts of past generations to preserve in their time what they considered worth preserving. We are also critical of them where they have allowed our cultural heritage to fall into disrepair, often to the extent that we now no longer have the choice to preserve what is beyond repair! Our future generations deserve the same opportunity that we have now - to preserve what we believed worth handing on to them.

Marks & Spencer learned a hard lesson when they abandoned their traditional mature customers and tried to broaden their appeal to the younger, trendier

market. Our Preservation Society must not make the same mistake. The success of our Society depends on a minority of mature residents who care enough about the local environment to spend the time and effort to do something about it. I am not saying that the younger generation do not care, rather that they already have enough to do in starting careers, making homes and raising families. Doing something about “preservation” is a luxury at their time of life that many of them cannot afford. In due course, those who feel strongly enough about preservation issues will then become active members of our Society and carry on our work. That is, of course, if our Society is still seen to be an effective tool for the purpose! So, to answer the questions that the article poses:

* We do not seek to represent all the inhabitants of Taplow (and Hitcham, please remember). We do seek to represent those inhabitants who either already actively seek to achieve aims similar to those of our Society or who will directly support the Society’s activities by their efforts and financial support.

* The average age of our members reflects the stage in life at which people can afford the luxury of allocating time and effort outside the family. We have a predominance of middle-aged and retired members, which is to be expected and encouraged! There are, however, a few younger people who already feel strongly about the relevant issues and we welcome them into our Society.

* Can we continue without an influx of new blood and ideas? No – but we do not have that problem. The young do not have a monopoly on “new blood and ideas”. We gain new members each year from those moving into the area and those realising that they have an interest in our aims. However, we could certainly do more to promote our Society and increase our membership.

* Will our Society go the same way as the Burnham Society (that, according to the article, is in significant decline and wondering about its future)? Unless our Society maintains its focus and unless we continue to be an active force in achieving our aims, then it could well happen! We do not seek to be a ‘general’ Society that falls between all the stools. We want to be recognised!

Contrary to what the article stated, I believe the aims of the Society are properly restricted. This enables us to concentrate our efforts in areas that reflect the primary interests of our members. At the AGM last October, the Rules of the Society were sensibly modified to broaden the scope of what we seek to preserve but the main thrust of our objectives remain the same. Promoting (and even organising) activities to promote the aims of the Society seems a sensible suggestion but, as the article agrees, it is difficult to find enough members who will actively participate in doing so. Organising the Village Green Party stretches our resources but this event has, in its own way, become something that we now feel is worth preserving! Despite restricting our aims, however, there is only so much we can do. Where we are made aware of other preservation issues (like opportunities to demolish or improve unattractive or nondescript buildings), we will add them to our list of action items. It is up to you, our members, to bring such matters to our attention.

Last, but not least, should we change the name of our Society? Will a name change alone expand our membership? I doubt it! Do you think that changing the order of Taplow and Hitcham in the name is important? I don’t! Should we be proud of the existing name of our Society? Yes, definitely! So why try to mend what isn’t broken?

Whither the Society? The Hitcham & Taplow Preservation Society goes forward and will not wither!

Below are some extracts from the SBDC documentation forming the Riverside Conservation Area. Since then the local development we have seen is anything but an adherence to these fine statements. Who cares? The Planning officers clearly don’t

*“The Ellington Road development was clearly designed with **open spaces an integral part of the design**. On the whole these open spaces have remained and represent a fine contribution to the character and appearance of the area. Built at the turn of the twentieth century, the strong late Victorian/Edwardian character and appearance of the buildings is an overwhelmingly residential one. **Spaces within the area defined are very important and contain fine trees and other greenery.***

*Although the A4 road, which passes along the boundary of the Area and along Maidenhead Bridge, is an ancient thoroughfare, increased modern traffic flow is undoubtedly a negative influence. **Increased modern traffic flow along this main road must not be allowed to further erode the character and appearance of the Area.** On the riverbank the Area includes the locally important Victorian villas, Bridge Villa and Sunnyside, at the time of writing sadly derelict, although under close scrutiny to ensure an **acceptable solution**.*

*Along this riverbank there are many fine trees and **some good open space with views across to Maidenhead**. This area, including the substantial new boathouse is surrounded by mature trees.”*

Rubbish !

Jeremy Vanstone

It is with increasing despair and anger that wherever you travel in the country, particularly the south east, are the quantities of litter, rubbish and other debris found on roads and accumulated on verges and in hedgerows. It leads you to question the mindless stupidity of those who casually discard litter but also the effectiveness of the measures taken by the authorities in removing it.

Litter clearance is most commonly the responsibility of the District Council and outside of town centres, the majority of Councils employ contractors to undertake the work. The frequency of clearances is rarely more than once a fortnight and sometimes as long as six months. This means by the time the next clearance is due the problem has grown and litter that was previously on the highway has blown into adjoining hedgerows and undergrowth and therefore outside the Council's responsibility. If litter is more than an arm's reach from the edge of the highway then contractors are entitled to leave it. Apparently this is a health and safety requirement so contractors are not exposed to the risks of getting scratched by a thorn or poked in the eye by a twig! The method used to pick up litter is with a stick which has a pincer at the end of it. If litter is too big or heavy that it cannot be picked up using this stick and the operative does not have a colleague who can assist in executing a controlled lift in the approved health and safety way then that litter has to be left for a specialist contractor to deal with. Surprisingly, few contractors are equipped with brooms so that litter that is too small to be picked up with the stick (such as glass fragments) gets left. Whilst on the subject of glass and other sharp objects, unless the operative is accompanied by a trained first aider who can slap a plaster on any

resultant wound then, glass has to be left for a mechanical sweeper to deal with. Further because of the fear of legal action contractors are instructed not to collect litter in the vicinity of parked cars.

With regulations and practices as daft as these it is little wonder that there is so much litter around the place. Further although laws exist to combat the problem – rarely are they exercised. But it is unfair to blame the Councils. The real culprits are the thoughtless, uncaring and stupid individuals who drop litter in the first place. What can anyone possibly gain by throwing litter out of a speeding car or worse transporting rubbish from your home (where no doubt it could be collected free of charge by the Council) to dump at some remote beauty spot? Are people blind to the ugly blight and disfigurement to the countryside and harm to wildlife that it causes? Do not people today have any pride in the environment and their surroundings? The answers seem to be, No. The practice is indulged in by old and young and at all levels of society. No one seems to care anymore. Is it because people see so much litter and rubbish around them that they think one more bit cannot do any harm? More likely it is a consequence of the selfish, throw away, get rich quick lifestyles and the ever decreasing standards in respect, behaviour and discipline that are now so prevalent. It is difficult to comprehend the sense of such people but this seems to be how increasing numbers choose to live their lives, so that we all now have to accept litter as a natural part of the landscape. Uniquely it seems to be a problem only in this country! Europe is pristine by comparison and in countries such as Germany and Switzerland the problem is non-existent. Even in third world countries the problem is nowhere as bad as here, as no matter how poor you are, everything there has a use. No wonder so many people are leaving this country for abroad!

At the Village Green Party this year, the Society will be running a raffle to help fund the maintenance of the mural that was painted by Sheila Horton in the Village Hall. This mural is a fascinating collection of scenes from Taplow's past and is well worth an extended visit to view - every time you see it, you seem to spot details that you didn't see before! Please contact Heather Fenn (01628-637111) if you can obtain any prizes for the raffle or if you would like to help in some other way.

Next year, the Village Green Party will offer another chance to generate funds for a worthy cause. Do you know of any local charitable organisations or worthy causes that would like to use our Party for that purpose? Run a raffle? Stage an exhibition or art show? Have a sponsored challenge?

**Please send your recommendations to:
The Secretary of HTPS, Jeremy Vanstone,
8 Stockwells, Taplow, SL6 0DB**



Believe it or not the above montage is a composite of all the road signs the driver has to cope with between Maidenhead Bridge and the railway bridge with the now famous 'Lizzie' graffiti on it. There are about 75 of these direction signs, announcements and advertisements in a stretch of road only about half a mile long all contending for the driver's attention, in *rural* Taplow.

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