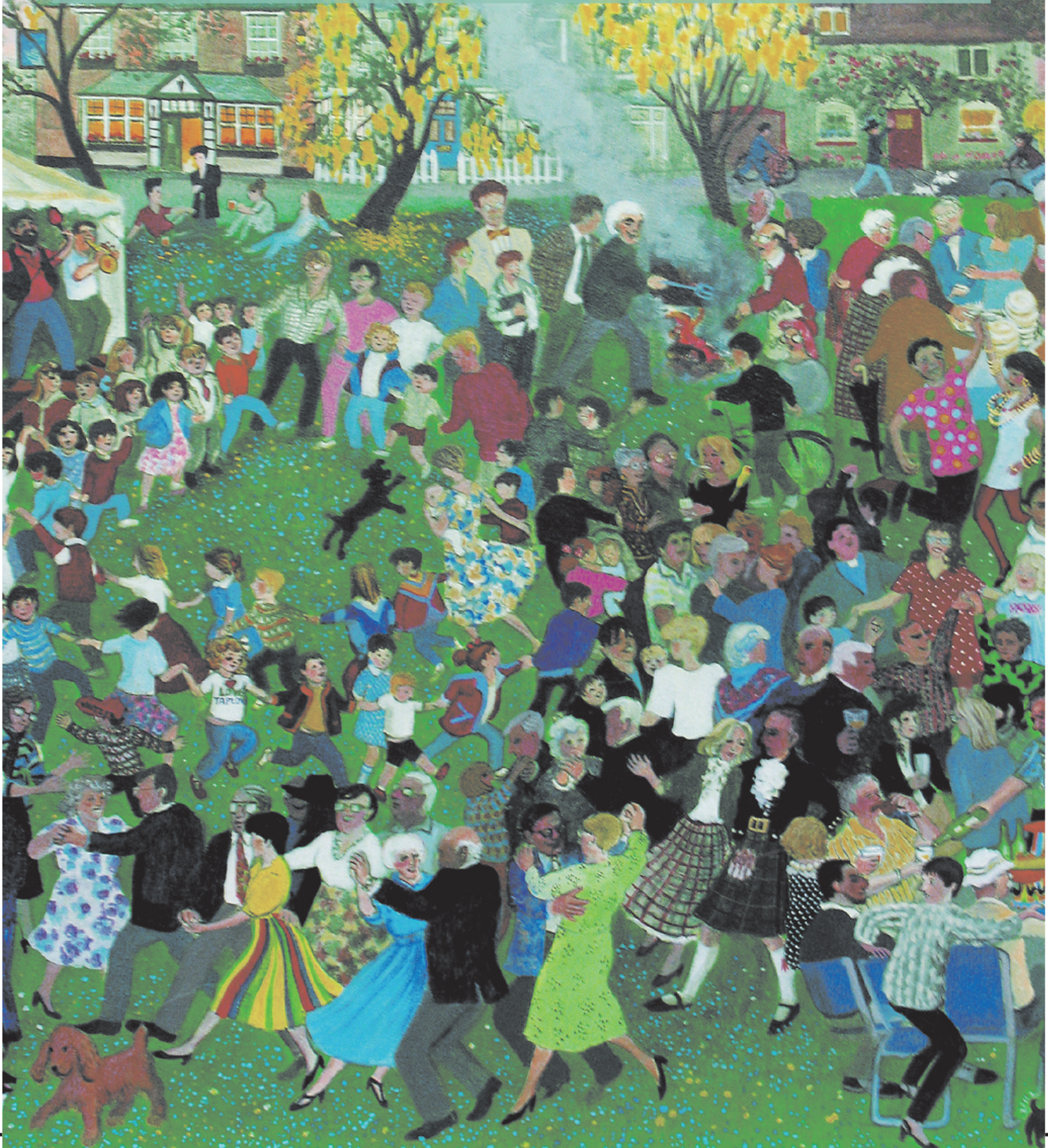


# Hitcham and Taplow Preservation Society

Newsletter 82 - Autumn 2004



# Hitcham and Taplow Preservation Society

*Formed in 1959 to protect Hitcham, Taplow, and the surrounding countryside from being spoilt by bad development and neglect.*

President :	Lincoln Lee
Vice Presidents:	Tony Hickman, Dr J Kennedy, Leonard Miall, Derek Walker
Chairman:	Anne Hanford
Vice Chairman:	Eva Lipman
Treasurer:	John Hanford (co-opted)
Secretary:	Jeremy Vanstone
Committee:	Jeannie Beaves, Euan Felton, Heather Fenn, Karl Lawrence, Andy McKenzie, Martin Maund, Barrie Peroni, Fred Russell, Helen Wogan

*Cover picture: part of the Sheila Horton Mural in the Village Centre*

It would appear from recent articles in the local papers that the Environment Agency (EA) are having some trouble explaining away the apparent failure of the Jubilee River in doing its job. The Advertiser claimed that the EA are in the process of redrafting the flood plain maps but without inclusion of the flood defence systems. The EA spokesman, Ian Tomes, said "It is not intended that flood defences will be shown on these maps as they aim to show an undefended flood plain" It is apparent that the Jubilee River river was never intended to stop flooding, merely to reduce the likelihood of it. This new flood plain policy of the EA may well result in difficulties in home insurance for those of us in Taplow living in this newly defined flood plain. That said, where is the logic in defining a flood plain that doesn't include the means to protect it? Perhaps the EA feel guilty and hope the Jubilee will dry up like the York Stream in Maidenhead which the EA admit was their fault due to lowering of the water table.

In this issue we are signaling the need for public input to the emerging Village Plan which, we are hoping, will be incorporated into the District Council's Local Development Document as a 'Special Planning Guidance' to assist remote planning officials make informed decisions about development in Taplow. This is vital to us all because of the way Regionalisation is creeping up on us with no justification offered as to why it is deemed

necessary. A short time ago I attended the AGM of the Chiltern Society at which the Strategic Planning Manager of Bucks County Council outlined the future of planning in this new regionalised England. There is already a staff of about 20 people in the Regional Planning Office in Guildford, and one wonders who is actually paying for this. If what we are hearing about regionalisation is true both District and County Councils will disappear and be replaced with a two-tier system of regional government with, below them, a few Unitaries administering a much larger area than those covered by the present District Councils. Someone recently pointed out, that we are all sleepwalking our way into a Bureaucratic dictatorship, so little do most people know or seem to care about regionalisation. Meanwhile, our own planning Office is relocating from Slough to a new office in Copswood Office Park in Denham. I suppose it is logical enough that our planning office should be in its own district but for a number of us with developer problems the ability to drive a few miles into Slough to look at documentation was a useful asset.

Its nice to be able to report that the wonderful murals in our village hall are to be protected by an additional coat of varnish. the murals were in some danger of deterioration so your Society decided that it was worth funding the repair and protection of what is now a village treasure.

**The 45th Annual General Meeting will be held in the Village Centre  
on Friday 29th October 2004 at 8 p.m.**

## The Taplow Parish Plan

### Dr. John Kennedy

Since the formation of the Steering Group for The Taplow Parish Plan at the Public meeting in March 2004, we have met four times. We have chosen a slogan "A Chance to Shape our Future" and formed into three Groups to consider what issues to regard as priorities in:

- The Southern Area: Thames and Jubilee Riverside, Institute Road, Bath Road and south
- Taplow Village and outlying Areas
- The Rural North: Cliveden and Dropmore Estates and surrounding woodlands and farmland

We then reformed into four topic groups and agreed the following main issues, which we consider will affect Taplow over the next several years:

- Housing and the Environment
- Community and Leisure facilities
- Business and Commercial activities
- Public Transport and Traffic Management

The topic groups are now considering various possible options to put before the Public on the above issues so that we can include their views when we come to make final recommendations to the Parish Council.

A sub-committee has met to consider how we should consult the Public in order to obtain the widest representative response. It was decided to consult separately with both Interest Groups (e.g. sporting, educational, leisure) and Taplow Residents. The Interest Groups are being asked either to respond in writing or by having meetings with us. A flyer describing the Parish Plan process and requesting views has been produced and will be delivered to all concerned. Some residents will be asked if they wish to be interviewed and we will try to see others in all parts of the parish. HTPS will discuss this at the AGM on 29th October.

We hope to complete our initial consultations by the end of November and produce our draft recommended Parish Plan by the year end. We will then consult the public formally on this in January and then discuss our recommendations with South Bucks District Council in order to ensure that these are acceptable. We will then revise the Plan if necessary.

Our proposed version of the Taplow Parish Plan will then go to the Parish Council for approval at their

February 2005 meeting. They will then present it to SBDC, who will note the contents and incorporate Taplow's preferences into their Local Development Document, which will start to be written next spring. SBDC will themselves be consulting the public across the whole district, starting in May/June next before completing their LDD and depositing it by spring 2006.

## Environmental Protection?

It would seem that the natural environment is not the only sort that needs protecting. The human environment is being got at as well. Vandalism at the Canadian Red Cross Hospital is causing serious concern for the safety of both residents of the nearby Orkney Court and the vandals themselves. Apparently the Covered tennis court was broken into and damaged, with some upper windows smashed. The side gates of Orkney Court have also been damaged and some unpleasant types congregate round the entrance to Orkney Court, to the natural discomfort of the residents.

George Sandy, our District Councillor, wrote formally to the council in the following terms:

*You are no doubt aware of the continuous nuisance caused by youngsters partying, raving, drug-taking etc. within the grounds of the Royal Canadian Hospital site at Cliveden. This has been going on for a good number of years and still the National Trust does little, if anything, to either secure the site with proper fencing or taking steps to remove trespassers from its property. The whole thing is a running sore to local residents, and I believe that Dr. Robinson may be absolutely correct in suggesting that the whole site should be condemned and thereafter razed to the ground. It will need to be done anyway when the site is developed and I can see no reason why the National Trust should not be required to make the site safe.*

*We saw for ourselves during the Planning site visit just how very dangerous the complex is, and it must be only a question of time before someone is seriously injured.*

*No doubt an enforcement order could be issued fairly quickly.*

Lets see what happens...

# A Celebration of Taplow

## The Murals in our Village Hall - Ten Years On

### Sheila Horton

Not many people seem to know that when I finished the murals in about 1993 I made a key, which is in a book I presented to the Parish Council, and which is kept in the office in the village Hall. So, hopefully, people can identify themselves and their families, events and friends for as long as our Village Hall still stands.

A mural is painted directly onto the wall, a fresco is painted onto wet plaster. Mine are therefore murals - painted in today's excellent quality acrylic paint and treated with exterior varnish for durability.

They have recently been cleaned and re-varnished. After 10 years the paint showed no sign of fading or wear at all, despite many activities, parties and classes in the Hall.

I have painted several large murals in very different locations, and have enjoyed creating them all, however, I think the most enjoyment I had was in doing these large paintings of Taplow, which took about 800 hours over a period of 2-3 years.

Brian and I have lived here for nearly 50 years, our 3 daughters were all born here, and now we have grandchildren living here too, so we all know and love the place.

What a wonderfully challenging project it was, especially as Alistair Forsyth, who was Chairman of the Parish Council at the time, bravely gave me a completely free rein, which really allowed the creative spirit to flow. I decided to paint it rather like a tapestry, spreading the High Street and Rectory Road on either side of the church and including as much as I could of the action that goes on around the Village Green, and carrying the scenes and events and characters right round the room on every wall. All this needed much careful planning, going up and down the scaffolding, drawing and re-drawing the composition before even thinking of putting on the colours. Meanwhile, at social events, church occasions and every kind of happening that I could track down over this period, I would be there, trying to be invisible, lurking in the background with my sketchbook, making notes and observing and recording as much as I could.

It was a pleasure to discover as I progressed with the work, and people dropped in to see how I was getting on, that they asked for their scout group, ballet class or choir to be included. Some people who are very active in Village life appear several times - notably the Grelliers' beloved cat is featured 3 times. I even went to draw her as she slept in the airing cupboard. We have a psychic Australian friend who saw an alarming apparition arising and rushing from the Burial Mound, whom she took to be the Saxon Chieftain who was buried there. So, on an impulse and in trepidation, I walked up there in the dark on All saints Day at MIDNIGHT, wondering if I would have a similarly dramatic experience....no such luck! The security lights must have put him off, and sadly there was no ghostly manifestation for me. I included him nevertheless, as I did also the Profumo Affair, St. Berinus, St. Nicolas and the Canadian Memorial Hospital - all History now.

I hope my murals continue to give pleasure for many years to come, because they are indeed a "Celebration of Taplow"

### Acid Test

There is a developing situation in Ellington gardens, part of the Riverside Conservation Area, that is going to provide an acid test as to whether a Conservation Area really does mean anything in terms of protection from overdevelopment. The area in question is the last stand of trees remaining in the Conservation Area and it seems a grouping of developers has decided they will destroy them all and replace them with houses. There appear to be no less than seven developers or people keen on developing that area, namely, MaST, Church, Persimmon, Butcher, Alea, Beni and Hussein.

This small piece of land has apparently just changed hands for about £1.5M

So there is now serious money at stake.

# Lincoln's Corner

## People

This Society is as much about people as scenery, and although many of those who live in the area have retired from responsible positions there are some who are still working. One of these was mentioned recently in the Press - Anthony Husher. Anthony is well known as a land-mine specialist - not laying mines, but removing them. He may not have the glamour which Lady Diana had, but he has worked in many parts of the world lifting mines, and we wish him well.

## Are you a slave to your post-code?

Because our mail is handled in Maidenhead, it seems hardly surprising that the post-code in Taplow is SL6, as it is in Maidenhead. Our more complete post-code is said to be Taplow, Maidenhead, Berks., SL6 0.. But that doesn't mean that Taplow residents live in Berkshire - despite the worst that the Post Office (and for that matter the BBC) can do. What it does mean is that because of those magic letters SL, which stand for Slough, our car insurance costs more. Perhaps other amenities also charge more? Of course Berks has made several attempts to take over this part of Buckinghamshire, and that county's successful take-over of Slough - which in turn has been said to be trying to grab part of Burnham - illustrates this. If only Berkshire, or for that matter the Royal Mail, was more efficient!

## Taplow Walls

If there is one thing which makes the village part of Taplow look unique it is the wall. (I nearly said walls, which would be more than one thing) The story goes that some of these walls were built during times of depression just in order to help keep people employed. Whether that is true or not I do not know, but the walls certainly deserve a second look. Many of them are remarkably high, some being ten or twelve feet from the ground, and some of them are suffering from erosion, or from attack by ivy. But although they are all made of brick, they are worth a closer look not just because of their construction but because some of them are associated with entrance pillars which have to be seen to be believed. Next time you go up Berry Hill, or along to see the burial

mound, or even down Rectory Road and into Boundary Road, see for yourself.

## Thatching

Don't ask me why, but a thatched roof invariably looks much better than any other kind. Before about 1900 probably more roofs were thatched in Taplow than were protected by tiles, shingles, or slates. Nowadays there's only one - the thatched cottage on Berry Hill. So we were all delighted when Brenda Burns, whose house it is, had the house re-thatched during the recent summer. It looks splendid, and helps to remind us of the more beautiful Taplow, as described by Heather Fenn in the previous issue of this Newsletter.

That said, perhaps Mrs. Burns will forgive me if I recount the anecdote about the man who walked into a Health Centre only to be met by a fearsome nurse who demanded: "What have you got?" "Shingles", said the man. "Right" said the nurse, "go into that cubicle and strip to your underpants." Of course he did as he was told, and when the nurse eventually followed him into the cubicle and demanded "Where have you got the shingles?" he replied in a timid voice "On the truck outside" Perhaps it's a mistake to recount a joke about shingles, which in some circumstances can be very painful.

## Windmill Field?

The Victoria History of the County of Buckingham was published about a century ago had umpteen sections about different aspects of life in our County. The section on early man says a reasonable amount about this area, mentioning the circular hut floors at Hitcham, and the flints and of course the exotic spear-head discovered in Taplow. It is the section on Anglo-Saxon remains which is of more interest to us - that era being nearer to our own. Not surprisingly the volume has coloured illustrations and several written pages about the burial mound in the old graveyard at Taplow.

However on page 204 the History goes on to say: "In the British Museum are a sword and shield boss from a warrior's grave in Windmill Field, Hitcham". I have no idea where Windmill Field was, or is. Does any other reader?

## Winter Sports at Taplow

### Jeremy Vanstone

Now that winters are no longer as cold as once they were, when it snows in Taplow now the falls are not as heavy nor as long lasting as previously. These days if we get a fall of snow it will amount only to a covering and be gone within the day.

Time was that a good fall of snow could be expected most winters and when that happened all hardy, fun loving folk would make a beeline for Taplow Hill at Mill Lane to enjoy their own interpretation of winter sports. On a fine weekend the Hill could be as busy as any alpine resort. The only difference being the variety of objects that people would use to slide down to the bottom. Everything from bin bags and tea trays to toboggans and skis could be seen and the range of clothing was as equally varied and improvised. When the temperature was especially cold, so that the snow froze, then you could slide almost as far as the Bath Road. Also the various undulations and dips of the Hill and buried hedgerows provided a ride as exhilarating as going over any mogul in the Alps. In those days people were intent on having fun and did not mind the bumps and sprains or collisions that invariably happened.

The last time that we experienced these conditions that I can recall was in the winter of 1982. I had just bought my first cross country skis and the heavy and lasting snow on Taplow Hill of that winter provided the perfect opportunity for trying them out and practising in advance of a real test in Norway. Being cross country skis then I could go back up the Hill - making up for the only thing that the Hill did not share with its alpine cousins - a drag lift!

Not only has the weather changed but sadly so have peoples' attitudes. It is unlikely these days that such carefree abandonment would be allowed for fear of the lawsuits that would inevitably follow if anyone got hurt. More drastically with the building of the drainage channel, the whole side of the Hill has been reconfigured so that not only has the area that was previously used for tobogganing and skiing been severely reduced but you would now risk a cold bath if you got too good a slide! Perhaps if we ever get a severe winter again the sluggish waters of the channel will freeze over and there will be skating instead! On the occasions that I go down the black Furgg /

Furi run at Zermatt I often think back to that Hill in Taplow where it all started...

*Note: the ten warmest years on record have all been since 1990. If this trend continues then, by the middle of this century, the Greenland ice will start to melt! Would that mean that sea water comes up the Thames instead of fresh water going down? What about the weirs?*

### Village Green Party 2004 Barrie Peroni

It was shortly after dawn on Saturday June 19 that the final run down commenced towards the start of the party that evening. Already weeks before and on the previous Friday evening all the multitude of details so essential for the smooth running of such an event had been completed. By 6.30am on the Saturday morning the logs for the roast were in place. The fire was soon alight and the roasting of the beef was under way. At 6.30pm the roast was ready for carving. Prior to that the meat had been turned every half hour. Likewise the Bar B Q was ready having been lit at 5.00pm. It was now time for the carvers, cooks and servers to begin their shift. Throughout the day a careful watch on the weather had been maintained. Fortunately there was no serious rain until after the event started, but even this did not dissuade the band from playing throughout and soon the dancing was in full swing. Raffle ticket sellers moved round the green selling tickets to raise money to cover the refurbishment costs of the Sheila Horton mural in the village centre. To ensure its success Heather Fenn had gathered a splendid collection of prizes. It would seem that all enjoyed themselves if only because virtually all the food was sold, and most stayed to the end at 10.15pm. We are indebted to all who worked so hard to put on a good show and to the band and their excellent caller who made sure that no one was left out.

The 2005 Party takes place on Saturday June 18. We hope to see you all then at the 20th Village Green Party.

## Save Our Ducks!

Earlier this year Heather Fenn wrote to the Conservation Officer of DEFRA (Department of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs) about the overseas visitors and immigrants and the effect they were having on the local wildlife populations of the Thames. There must obviously be mixed feelings about this since immigration adds to the biodiversity everybody seems to want yet if the newcomers are too vigorous and demand the feeding and breeding grounds of our own species then we must be the losers in the long run. Mrs. Fenn wrote:

The problem seems to be that our friends from the West, East, North and the South seem to be replacing the indigenous population. We now have parrots and parakeets, mink and Norway rats, and are overrun with Canadian geese and visits from Egyptian geese and even see some of the more exotic birds like curlews. What we do not have are mallards and kingfishers, and great-crested grebes seem to be declining as fast as the silly old coots.

"It is very difficult" Heather wrote "to watch the cruel water dance of the Canadian geese drowning ducklings every Spring. The only consolation this Spring was that there were too few ducklings to watch". Clearly Heather was hoping for an upbeat response from DEFRA but the answer she got was full of paragraphs like this:

*"...Recognising this threat (invasive non-native species threatening native species) the Government convened a working group comprising a wide range of stakeholders to undertake a fundamental review of policy and practice on non-native species. The Government welcomed the report and recommendations on tackling this important matter. This is a complex and wide-ranging issue and the Government (including Scotland and Wales again) will be considering the review report carefully in developing the Governments strategy to take forward. The Government will need to give careful consideration to the complex and important issues raised in the report (no, I'm not repeating myself, they are) working up a framework in order to prioritise later work".*

Anyway, Heather was assured by the Conservation Officer that countrywide, Mallards, Kingfishers, great-crested grebes etc. were all doing well and had

actually increased in numbers. So our problem here is a local microcosm of some greater and healthier ecosystem. That being so why was the Government and, presumably, the working group, so concerned by the results of the survey? They have recognised a threat that doesn't exist and taken appropriate action. We can wait with bated breath for a Green Paper or two in a few years. Meanwhile, whither our ducks?

## Waste transfer station Heather Fenn

An application has come in to Bucks County Council whose consequences will be sweeping if it succeeds. The application is for a waste transfer facility on 'land East of Mill Lane'. The applicant is a rich and powerful company so the fact that the site is eminently unsuitable might easily be overlooked in Westminster and our own Council Offices. Bucks County Council have put in writing that *The proposed development does not accord with the provisions of the development plan in force in the area in which the land to which the application relates is situated*. Submissions should be addressed to Planning Development Control, County Hall, Walton Street, Aylesbury HP20 1UY or email [planning@buckscc.gov.uk](mailto:planning@buckscc.gov.uk) quoting reference number SBD/8217/04. The applicant is St. Regis Paper Company, part of DS Smith Plc, whose annual turnover is approaching £200 million. The site is not the established Taplow Paper Mill, but located across the Lane, running along the Jubilee River. The activities are described as *sorting and baling recovered plastics and metal tins for recycling and limited use as a transfer station for waste paper*. Quite how the increased activity can be accommodated on this site along with increased lorry movements is a mystery since it is required to cope with 56,000 cubic metres of plastics and metal cans, in addition to the paper already flooding onto the site each year? It is recommended that if any reader wishes to comment then they should be limited to the material planning considerations. Please write as a matter of urgency. You owe it to yourself.

## Your Part in Planning Taplow's Future

As the article by John Kennedy points out, a Steering Committee was set up in March of this year tasked with the problem of identifying and defining the future development of the Parish with the theme *A Chance to Shape our Future*.

The Steering Committee is asking local interest groups involved in sport, amenity, leisure, education as well as local businesses for their views and proposals. The consultation period of this first phase will be until 15th October. It is seen as a means of augmenting the matters already identified by the Working Groups and will form the basis of a draft document outlining issues and proposals. This draft will then be shown to the Parish and as many parishioners as possible will be approached individually for their views and further input. The District Council is at present equivocal as to the date when the Parish Plan is required in order for it to be considered as part of Special Planning Guidance for the Local Development Document. The Steering Group, however, is working to a completion date of the end of March. The acceptance of the Parish Plan by the District Council is by no means a foregone conclusion so a period for serious consultation must be built in to the calendar.

You may be unsure about what opinions you are expected to have about the future of our Parish, so in view of this, I decided to contact a man named Jim Watson who master-minded the Village Plan for Wheatley (near Oxford). I thought you might be interested in the results of that meeting as a basis for your own input to our Parish Plan.

The Wheatley team identified the following areas for attention:

1. A Farmer's Market in the Village (our Green?)
2. More activities and information access for the elderly.
3. Improved footpaths and cycle paths.
4. More street cleaning.
5. More car parking facilities.
6. Improvements to paving.
7. More activities for youth, places for youths to "hang out" and more access to sports fields.
8. Improve recreation grounds for young children.
9. Buses from London and airports to stop occasionally at Wheatley.

What do you think a comparable list for our Parish would look like?

The Wheatley Plan was based on a complete appraisal of their current "assets" and how they spent their money and time. Some instances are:

1. Age analysis of inhabitants. Useful to predict schooling and elderly people's needs.
2. Why people chose to live there.
3. Housing issues - e.g. for young people and not in Green Belt.
4. Caring for each other in need.
5. Re-cycling and energy efficiency of homes.
6. Adult education and how many attend.
7. Use of Internet and a village site.
8. Public Transport utilisation.
9. Traffic problems.
10. Church.

There were fascinating statistics on all these issues and many more, and it is safe to say that Wheatley really does know itself. Does Taplow? Hopefully our existing Community Plan will provide an adequate baseline to work from.

Wheatley, which is much larger than us, issued three types of questionnaires, targeted at different groups. Individual, household and youth views. A team of about 100 volunteers distributed these questionnaires, and, where necessary, provided help in completing them. About 5,600 were issued, and a return rate of 60% was achieved, which was high enough to be statistically significant.

Wheatley was supported in all this work by the Parish and District Councils, the Countryside Agency (who gave them a grant of £4,000), and another group called Oxford Rural Community Council (our equivalent is called Buckinghamshire Community Action). The whole operation is also supported by an outfit called The South East Economic Development Agency - but since there are less than 3,000 of us no support can be expected from that quarter. Also the money supply has dried up from the Countryside Agency, so other sources are being looked at. The draft plan for Wheatley is illuminating. Although we should not assume a one-to-one mapping onto Taplow's future needs (if only because of the difference in scale) there are many parallels for you to consider. For instance:



PLANS AND NEEDS FOR: Under 11s Youth activities, the Elderly, Village Services, Environment, Litter, garbage, housing (design, position etc.), Green belt, Security (lighting, police presence, neighbourhood Watch etc.) Car parking, pavements, public transport Footpath and Cycle ways Sports activities and facilities

Under each of these headings there is considerable detail relevant only to Wheatley of course but one can easily see these apply to Taplow; some obvious candidates are:

Special problems of the Bath Road commercial divide The riverside and Jubilee river maintenance and safety Riverside users needs What might be done with the Skindles site Tree and wildlife conservation The impact of Cliveden and dropmore developments etc.

Wheatley may seem far away up in Oxfordshire but, in fact, once the Regionalisation programme is in place then Wheatley becomes a neighbour and subject to the same planning constraints, opportunities and abuses as Taplow since we'll all be part of the same South East Region. Planning for the

whole of this Region, which extends from Kent to Oxfordshire, will be managed by people from Guildford with no local knowledge. The only chance we have of making sure that Taplow's special needs are addressed with some understanding by this remote bureaucracy is to ensure that our needs are embedded in the new version of the Local Plan which will become their Bible. Taplow will then become a place with a defined identity rather than just a name on a map. The South East Region will be one vast planning zone and we must not get ourselves lost in this place.

Anyway, why wait to be contacted? Why not get in touch with the Steering Group directly? If you have something to say about Taplow's future write to:

**The Taplow Parish Plan Steering Group  
c/o The Clerk, Taplow Parish Council  
The Village Centre  
High Street  
Taplow, SL6 0EX**

## **The Canadian Red Cross Memorial Hospital 1959/1960 Sheila Peroni SRN SCM**

Having completed 4 years of general nursing training at University College Hospital I decided to leave London to complete my midwifery training in the country. Looking down the list of available Midwifery Schools my eye caught sight of the name of The Canadian Red Cross Memorial Hospital in Taplow. Thus started a life long association with Taplow which continues today. I applied to the School and was accepted.

My 6 months of training from August 1959 to April 1960 was a most happy and enjoyable time in an hospital with the most wonderful atmosphere despite the up market nissen huts which comprised both the actual hospital and our accommodation wonderfully known as Northwood. Its location was behind the tennis court but still attached to the main hospital. The area around the hospital was very countrified with the hospital actually in the grounds of Cliveden where the Astors still lived. They entertained quite a lot but we were never invited! However, some of us when off duty would scramble under the hedges to

watch the mannequins parade on the terrace of Cliveden organised by Lady Astor, she herself having once been a mannequin.

The bus service into Maidenhead ran every 2 hours from outside the hospital, but I rarely used it preferring to go with my friend who had a motorcycle with me on the pillion. Even in those days I was regularly up and down Berry Hill with not a crash helmet in sight. If you had a lecture on your day off - bad luck - there were no concessions. With my home in Tring I quickly learnt the journey back and forth and even today the countryside itself has remained relatively unchanged - long may it remain so.

Christmas at the hospital was as magical as it can be especially in the midwifery department. If one was free we managed to get to the midnight service at St. Nicolas where the rector was the Rev. Christopher Hare. It saddens me when driving past the hospital to see such a wreck of a place but fortunately memories cannot be erased.

## 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

### **04/01003/FUL. Odds Farm,**

Erection of block of four stables, construction of new access at land at Wooburn Common Road, adjacent to Homer Wood. Pending

### **04/01070/OUT. Ellington Gardens**

Demolition of garages and erection of three detached houses. A bad one this since it is in a Conservation Area and means destroying the only stand of trees now left in the area. There appears to be about seven different developers colluding here in an attempt to do what Hermitage and Church Bros failed to do some years ago. Pending

### **04/08215/CM Berry Hill Farm**

Section 73 application for the variation of condition 1 attached to consent no. SBD/8203/01, to extend the commencement date for a further 2 years to 16th Jan. 2007, for the construction of a new access to the consented mineral extraction site. (Bucks CC !?) Pending

### **04/00119/LBC. Wellbank Cottage Rectory Road Taplow**

Listed building application for alterations, demolition of single storey side extension and access. Replacement two storey side extension. Pending

### **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. Granted on appeal

### **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. Developer busy converting for Immigrants, we are told. Refused

### **04/000744/REM, Cliveden.**

Application for reserved matters under conditions in 00/00282/OUT for demolition of redundant hospital and erect 135 dwellings. Gone to Office of Deputy Prime Minister, may be called in.

### **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

### **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 (still) speechless... Pending

### **SBD/8217/04 Paper Mills, Mill Lane**

This is an application to Bucks County Council (Aylesbury) for widening of the use of land to the East of Mill Lane to include recycling of cans and plastics. I understand that this extension of use has already occurred and one consequence appears to be an increase in vermin in the area. Another risk is that there may be an increased risk of pollution to both the Thames and the Jubilee River from industrial waste run-off. Both these risks should be carefully assessed before any permission for such a significant change of use is granted. Pending

## W.I. Banner

*On the front of the last issue I printed the WI banner and raised the question of where those shield motifs came from. Muriel responds:*

The W.I. banner was designed by the architect of the Hall, Mr. Salter (husband of a member). It was made by the members who chose the motto "Love and Serve" at the WI's inception in 1926/7. The design on the left represents Taplow. The swan being typical of the River Thames and the war galley suggesting far off days when battles were fought in this area.

The design on the right represents Hitcham. The shield with the red cross can be seen in Hitcham Church as part of the coat of arms of the Clark family. The coat of mail and the Prince of Wales feathers refer to the Black Prince who is reputed to have visited Hitcham Manor.



## Re-thatching the 'Thatched Cottage' Brenda Burns

*Many of you will have noticed the work being carried out at the Thatched Cottage in Berry Hill owned by Brenda and wondered that the skills to do such work are still around, even to still having apprentices, in this case David, a college undergraduate. What follows is the essence of a talk Brenda gave to the Women's Institute. The cottage seems to go back to the 1700s and I have a lot of material about its history and its intertwined relationships with the great houses over the years that will have to wait for the next Newsletter owing to lack of space in this issue. Ed.*

The two master thatchers and an apprentice, Glen, Barney and David, arrived at dawn early in June complete with bales and bales of beautifully combed golden wheat-reed and many of their interesting tools - metal cradles, which hook onto the thatch to hold the bales, metal and wooden square bats called leggats to tap in and smooth the ends of the reed, spars of hazel wands pointed at both ends which are soaked in water then twisted and bent to hold the bales in place. they also had rakes, a belt of small tools and masses and masses of pink binder twine for every use under the sun!

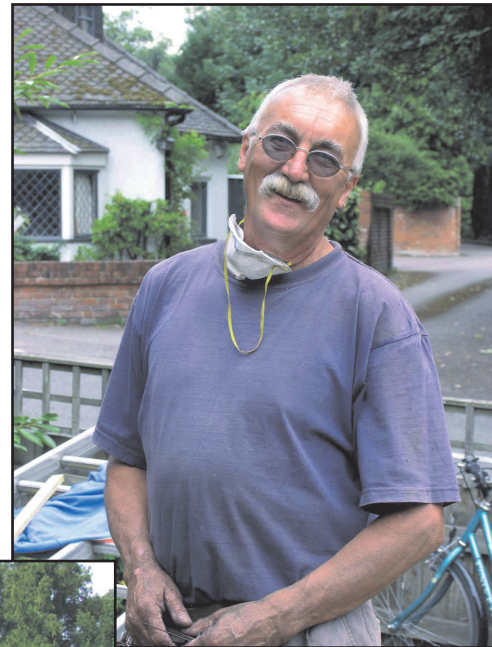
The first job was to remove the old wire netting covering the thatch then came the filthiest job imaginable - donning their protective face masks and knee pads they raked off the old thatch (dust and straw everywhere) I have raspberries 25 yards away and they became a very strange colour. The squirrels had left empty holes where they had stolen straw, birds and mice had nibbled themselves more holes. Seven dead wasps nests emerged plus one new nest, which had to be dealt with pronto of course.

The real skill of the craft came next, the large golden bales were banged and banged on a hard surface to make the cut ends of the wheat level and even. the bales were then divided into smaller ones and tied in the middle with twine. The first layer called 'bottles' form the overhang of the thatch is laid on an under-roof (flatcoat) on battens about a foot wide. This is the bit that drips on one after rain (no gutters!) The thatcher places about four bales side by side - the width of his stretched arm - and each one of the first layer is tied and secured to the fascia board, then the ones above are tied by plaited reed and secured individually by the spars of bent and twisted hazel. The thatching is done upwards to the ridge, always



starting at the bottom overhang layer. The plaiting at the ridge is much more ornate and is Barney's special skill. There were four separate thatches to be done, the smaller one at the front was very worn and had developed into a real mess. the thatchers had to do quite a bit of carpentry to renew the wooden battens and now it looks splendid.

The garden was covered in straw for weeks but the thatchers did a wonderful job of clearing up. Once the thatch is finished the edges have to be cut straight - a tricky job. The thatch is then brushed and patted all over and the final job was covering the four separate thatches with wire netting and fastening it all securely to the wooden fascia.



**Barney**



**The finished product - a tribute to British craftsmanship**