

HITCHAM and TAPLOW
PRESERVATION SOCIETY

NEWS LETTER NO. 22

SPRING 1971.

PRESIDENT

VICE-PRESIDENTS

Mr. G. P. Ashwell, C.C.
Mr. D. Blee, C.B.E.
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Mr. B. Durham,
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Miss M. D. Corlett
Mr. J. M. R. Stewart Fry
Mrs. P. Hammond
Mr. H. Hancock
Dr. N. W. Hanson (Committee Secretary)
Mr. L. Lee
Mr. R. J. Lewis
Mr. C. I. Snow

OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE

As will be seen from the enclosed Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on the 23rd October, 1970, we have accepted with great regret the resignation of Dr. Rogers, who for so long was both Chairman and Secretary.

We have been most fortunate in persuading Mr. B. Durham to become our Chairman and Mr. R. H. Sneyd, our Secretary. Miss M. D. Corlett and Mr. C. I. Snow have joined our Committee.

THE PAST ELEVEN YEARS

These changes mark an epoch in the life of the Society which provides an appropriate occasion to look back at the past to see what we have achieved.

The need for a society to protect their neighbourhood was brought home to the people of Hitcham and Taplow by the extraction of gravel at Poplar Farm in 1959. Dr. Rogers was our Chairman then and had a grandstand view, and the Society was determined to expose all infringements of the conditions laid down by the County Council as part of the planning permission.

The Society managed to ensure that the Council insisted on various conditions being met as far as was practicable. The public outcry ensured that any further applications for planning permission to extract gravel would go to Public Enquiry and that much more attention would be given to the routing of the vehicles involved.

The recreation field on the other side of Boundary Road to Poplar Farm provides another example of the achievement of a few far-sighted people. A squalid and overgrown site was transformed into a much needed recreational area with huts for the local youth organisations; in this case the proceeds from gravel extraction were put to good use.

Other applications for extracting gravel in the Hitcham and Taplow area included a 70 acre site, just north of Taplow (Spring 1961), Hunts Wood (1962), Barge and Amerden Farms (1967), Cookham (1969). None of these applications were granted and in each case the Society lodged official objections. Mr. Blee's evidence, on the Society's behalf, at the Barge Farm Enquiry was acknowledged to have had a great effect. It is believed that the hoggin now being used for the widening of the M4 and for extending the M40 has been brought into the area by rail; this must indicate that the enormous amenity value of the area has been recognised and that the constant refusals of planning permission for gravel extraction are proving a deterrent to the gravel companies who own land and mineral rights locally.

However, some gravel companies acquired mineral rights at the auction of the outlying portions of the Dropmore Estate; it is to be hoped that the United States International University in England stays at Dropmore so that the house and the remaining parts of the estate do not again come on the open market.

The open country between Maidenhead and Slough is partly designated as 'Metropolitan Green Belt' and is therefore under very strict planning control. The parishes of Hitcham and Taplow are in the narrowest part of this belt of countryside dividing the two towns and so our Society is vitally concerned to prevent any encroachment.

One way that this can happen is by the piecemeal build up of industry. A good example was the proposal to develop the Hedsor Saw Mills, now the subject of a planning enforcement notice by the Eton Rural District Council. Your Committee is now watching with concern several other apparent changes of use of premises towards some form of industrial activity; and we would be pleased to hear from anybody concerned about developments in their own area so that we can alert the local planning authorities and, if need be, oppose any planning application that may arise.

The evidence given to the Boundaries Commission in 1965 revealed the threat to the 'Green Belt' if Slough and Maidenhead were allowed to expand their boundaries as they proposed. The extent of these 1965 proposals can be seen from the sketch map attached. Our Society encouraged members to write to the Local Government Commission objecting to these 'take-over bids' and the Society itself wrote strongly opposing the proposals on the grounds of a great need for a rural wedge between Slough and Maidenhead and our wish to remain a rural area under the jurisdiction of Eton Rural District Council.

The pressures on this narrow wedge of land are bound to increase and it is certain that we have not heard the last of the proposals by Maidenhead and Slough to extend their boundaries.

In the early 1960's the County Planning Authority produced a charter of planning intent for the village of Taplow. This plan had no legal force but was intended to lay down general guide lines for those dealing with planning applications in Taplow. Our Society welcomed the plan in 1962 as it seemed a sensible approach to a difficult problem and it is worth quoting an extract from this 'village plan':

"The plan recognised the unique character of Taplow as a village of many large houses wholly within the 'Green Belt'. It aims to retain this character. It proposes, therefore, that the large wooded gardens should be preserved as far as possible and not be split up into building plots. To achieve this the larger buildings may need to be turned eventually into flats and when they are unsuitable for conversion they may be allowed to be rebuilt, but in the form of a single building or group of buildings and not scattered over the grounds. These grounds, it is hoped, will be kept in reasonable order as a communal responsibility of the owners or tenants".

This plan has been adhered to particularly in the case of the houses at Cedar Chase in the grounds of the old Bible College and in the buildings at Wellbank in the "Priory" grounds.

The Government has recently asked that all planning applications related to graded buildings, which would, if granted, mean the destruction of the building, should be referred to certain amenity societies (of which ours is one) for comment. A survey of buildings in Burnham village and parish has just been completed and a similar survey in Taplow village is being carried out by our members.

The Society is very active in trying to upgrade certain footpaths to bridle path status and in ensuring correct signposting of paths. One of our Committee members has drawn up a detailed map of footpaths in the area and is pleased to help with any queries there may be about rights of way and footpaths.

A team of our members produced in 1967 (after considerable research) a comprehensive list of the otherwise unregistered Common Lands in Hitcham and Taplow and on the legal advice of one of our members some of these Common Lands have been entered, with the co-operation of Taplow Parish Council, for registration under the 1965 Commons Registration Act.

The Society has also been concerned with litter, tree preservation orders, planning applications, the Maidenhead 'River Thames Plan' and many other matters. We have not attempted to describe every project that the Society has tackled during the last eleven years, but hope we have shown the extent of the problems the Society has faced and the ways in which these matters have been tackled with a fair measure of success.

CURRENT ITEMS REPORTED PREVIOUSLY

The Old Saw Mills Hedsor

The appeal anticipated by Messrs. T. W. Murphy against the enforcement notices against the construction of buildings for use as a factory, on land north of Heathfield Road, Taplow, was due to be heard on the 10th November 1970. However, the appeal was withdrawn before this on the understanding that three years would be allowed for demolition of buildings for which planning permission was not granted and for the cessation of the use of the premises as an engineering factory.

It has been reported that a footpath through this site has been blocked. Enquiries are being made to see if this path has been registered.

Dropmore

The Annual General Meeting received with pleasure the news that the Eton Rural District Council are now prepared to consider a new application by the United States International University for a two-storey block in the kitchen garden to increase the capacity of the University to 350 students. Dr. Graddon Rowlands, the Director of the University, in his talk to the Annual General Meeting, said that this would meet the requirements of the University. However, we have not yet heard that the application has been made, and it has recently been reported that the University has now bought a large property in Sussex.

Blue Star Garage

The reconstruction of the Taxaco filling station on the Bath Road south of British Rail Taplow station is now well advanced. The house previously on the site has been demolished and the steelwork for the new canopy has been erected well back from the road. The old filling station, however, was still in use at the time of going to print.

Taplow Paper Mills

As a result of the decision of the Minister, the Taplow Paper Mills in Mill Lane were given permission to erect a warehouse alongside the gas holder to the south of the site. Building work is now proceeding and a new fence is partly completed. The site is very congested and improvement is unlikely to occur until this work is completed.

Plaque to Mr. Morrison

The plaque has now been installed by the Mountain Ash in the north west corner of the Taplow and Hitcham recreation ground.

NEW ITEMS

Footpaths

- (a) Hitcham Lane to Hunts Wood

This track is labelled "footpath" when it should be now a bridlepath. The matter is being raised with Taplow Parish Council.

- (b) Dorneywood Road to Burnham Beeches

The Eton Rural District Council have agreed that this footpath should be upgraded to a bridlepath, but several landowners concerned have not agreed. The matter will be pursued, but it is complicated and progress may be slow.

- (c) A footpath (No. 23) leading off Abbey Park Lane at Littleworth Common, which crosses Lord Portman's estate and the Beaconsfield Road, has been a bridlepath for years but recently has been closed. This is also a complex matter which is being raised with Eton Rural District Council.

Warren Warehouse, Mill Lane

This shop is the subject of a closure notice against which an appeal is being organised.

Common Land

One of the pieces of common land for which we have applied for registration lies along the boundary of the estate of Burwood House. We have been asked by a firm of solicitors whether we would be prepared to withdraw at least part of this claim. They requested details which we have sent them.

Gravel Pit at Beaconsfield

A protest meeting has been held at Beaconsfield concerning a proposal for extraction in the area near Holtspur. We recognise that this is outside our area but have offered our help if needed.

Burnham High Street

In his address to the Annual General Meeting, Mr. Page described how a threat to Pinner High Street has been overcome by local watchfulness and asked whether something could be done to preserve some of the amenity of Burnham High Street.

As a result, our Committee has been looking into the situation. Burnham has in the past been regarded as outside our area, though only just, and plans for development are advanced. Nevertheless, our experience over the last eleven years might enable us to help and enquiries are currently being made.

DOCUMENTS RECEIVED

The Secretary has received a copy of the memorandum by the Civic Trust to the Ministry of Transport on Proposals to Increase the Minimum Permitted Size and Weight of Roads Goods Vehicles. These proposals have been rejected by the Minister.

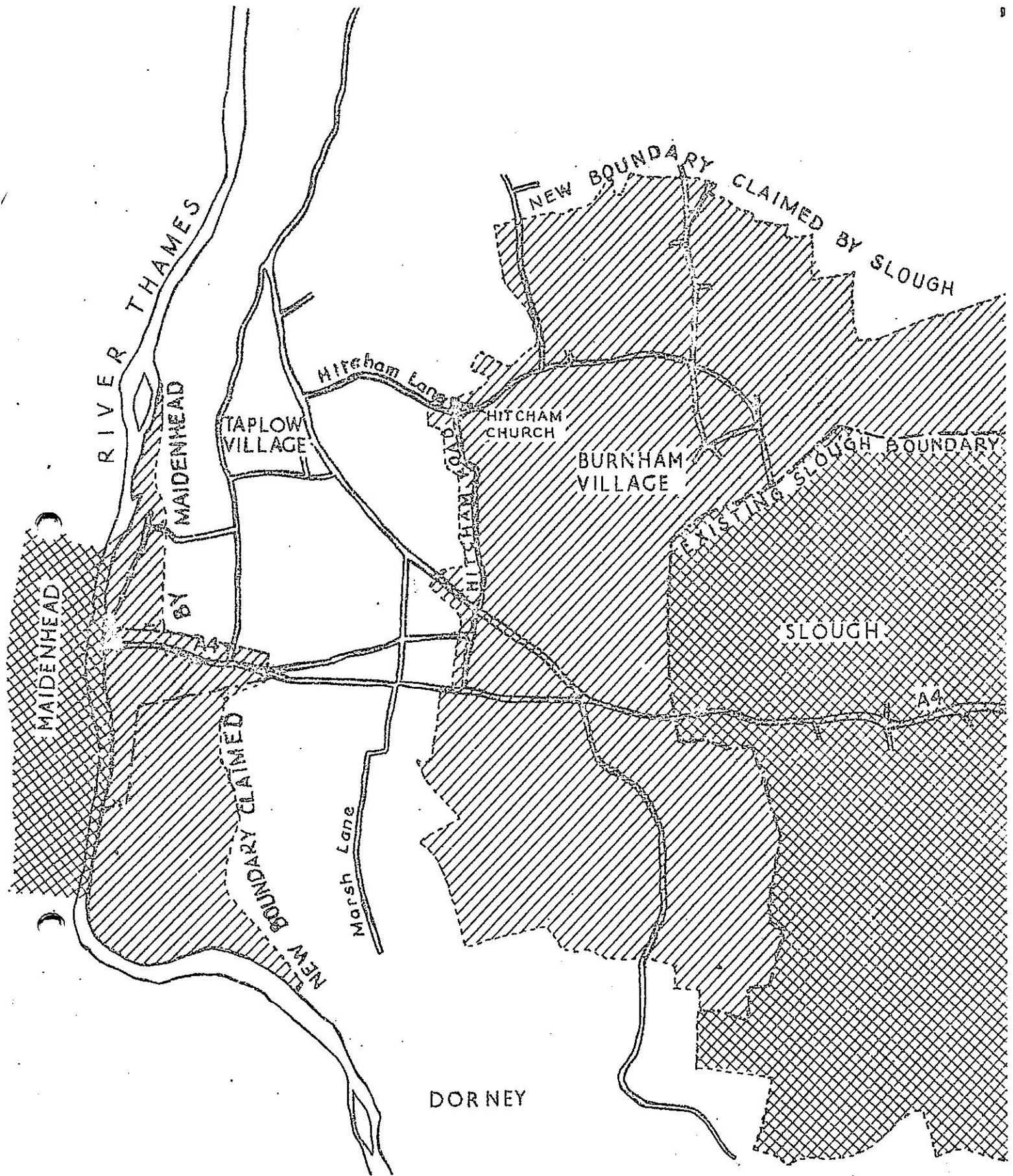
COMMUNICATION WITH MEMBERS

This is the first Newsletter prepared by the new Committee. In it we have attempted to give members an up-to-date account of a number of items of current interest. We would very much welcome any comments from our members as to whether we have succeeded. Communication can only be effective if it goes both ways, and this means that we are in great need of comments from members whether favourable or unfavourable.

A particular item of current importance is whether or not we should extend our activities into Burnham, by request, or by recruiting members there.

We are also concerned about the adequacy or otherwise of dumps for the disposal of litter, and believe that there is a need for better information to be supplied to all local residents about them.

We would welcome comments on this or any other matter, addressed to any of the Officers or Members of the Committee.



SKETCH MAP OF SLOUGH'S CLAIM
 TO THE PARISH OF BURNHAM
 AND MAIDENHEAD'S CLAIM IN TAPLOW

(NOTE:- M4 NOT SHOWN)

Scale:- 1/25,000