

HITCHAM & TAPLOW PRESERVATION SOCIETY

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## Footpaths and Bridleways

Under the auspices of the Hitcham & Taplow Preservation Society a meeting was held early this year at Taplow Reading Room to which representatives of the Chiltern Society, Bucks County Council, Thames Valley Police, Burnham Society, Taplow Horse Show Club, Wooburn Saddle Club, Snowball Farm and other Riding Schools, Landowners, riders and pedestrians were invited, Chairman Major J. Lance, T.D. The problems of the motorcyclists using public footpaths and bridleways, the deteriorating condition of many footpaths and bridleways and the need to improve these were discussed. It was decided to form a local association to negotiate with councils, landowners etc. to control and improve existing tracks and possibly upgrade some of them.

At a subsequent meeting a committee was formed and it was decided to adopt the name of "The South Bucks Footpaths and Bridleways Association", the format for working parties was decided upon and a starting date for work to commence was fixed for the end of September 1977. The Association will be self supporting and a fund will be established for this purpose. The Chiltern Society offered organising assistance and to liaise with the Conservation Corps, Forestry Commissions etc. Bucks County Council offered equipment and tools and Mr. Seear of Orchard Poyle the use of a tractor and trailer.

## The Planning of Gravel Extraction

In 1973 it was forecast that the demand for sand and gravel would rise a further 20% by the early 1980's and continuing output to meet this was called for. In fact demand has fallen since then and is now some 20% below the 1973 figure, giving a breathing space in which it may be possible to consider how to plan the siting of gravel pits. However existing pits continue to be worked out and will need replacing. Colliery and power station waste which remain as possible substitutes are hardly used.

It is becoming known that almost all the surface of South Bucks is gravel bearing. The County Council as Local Planning Authority has identified some areas in the south east of Beaconsfield District as suitable for further pits, and in view of natural beauty has refused applications in other areas, decisions which have been upheld on appeal. In November 1975 however, the Minister in rejecting an appeal at George Green, Slough, stated that urgent supplementary provision should be made in addition to those previously put forward by the County Council if a disruption of supplies was to be avoided.

Current practice for Planning Authorities has been to await applications and to consider them as they arise. Gravel operators purchase suitable land as and when it becomes available for instance on the sale of estates, and put in applications when appropriate to their business. There is little overall planning of where gravel pits may be placed and as many applications are rejected and go to Appeal, many decisions therefore rest with the Minister.

In 1974/75 however, the semi-official Standing Conference on London and South East Regional Planning suggested that it might be possible to introduce more effective planning if the counties were prepared to indicate where new pits might be acceptable or where they might not, so that applications for new pits in areas regarded as acceptable and otherwise free from objection might hope for approval without the lengthy and expensive process of Appeal. However, in the absence of a public hearing, local residents who object might have no opportunity of presenting their views.

The local Association of Parish Councils and the local Branch of the C.P.R.E. have both proposed the following criteria for identifying suitable areas. They must be -

- a) well away from houses.
- b) free from amenity objections.
- c) have good road access.
- d) capable of satisfactory restoration.
- e) have deep deposits so that the minimum areas of land are used.
- f) free from drainage which might cause pollution.

It is considered that areas could be found which could meet these conditions and that landowners in such areas might be willing to join with operators in submitting application for planning permission. In this way future gravel extraction might be planned to take place where it would cause least harm. It would however, then no longer be appropriate to maintain outright opposition to proposals for new gravel pits.

#### NATURE IN THE RAW AT BAPSEY POND

The restoration of The Bapsey Pond, in which the Society played a large part, successfully brought new life to this ancient pool.

In August a Kingfisher was seen at the Pond two or three times. A few weeks earlier, mallards nested, and some eight ducklings were hatched. But the mother bird disappeared, and during the ensuing weeks the flock dwindled. Predators abound, foxes, weasels; owls; herons have all been seen nearby. Perhaps badgers, cats, dogs, or squirrels were to blame - or even destructive children. Two of the brood reached fledgling age but whether or not they flew away is uncertain.

#### Planning Applications

Selection of significant applications since last Newsletter.

##### Appeals

Berry Hill: T. Stevens. Erection of single dwelling house between White Gables and Redwood. (Society objected on grounds of infringement of the Green Belt and extension of ribbon development)

##### New Applications

Taplow Paper Mills: Single storey office extension (no objection by Society) Conditional permission.

Barge Farm: E. Perkins. Siting of two residential caravans for agricultural workers. (Society sought and received assurance that the caravans would be used for that purpose) Conditional permission.

Odds Farm: Extra caravan to house agricultural worker (Note from Society as in previous application) Conditional permission.

Skindles Garage: Esso Petroleum Ltd. Canopy and pump island. (Society did not object to this new application as it appears to be an improvement on the previous one) Conditional permission.

Taplow Cricket Club: Demolish existing outbuildings and rebuild (No objection by Society) Conditional permission.

Berryhill Country Club: Application to demolish existing building, replace it (+10% with flats. (Society did not object but wrote setting out several points about basis on which 10% increase should be assessed, vehicular access, design of new building for consideration when detailed planning application made etc.

Maidenhead Autos: Two pole mounted illuminated signs. (Society objected on ground of possible confusion to motorists caused by too many lights. Also sought assurance on a later application for illuminated sign that light would not be too bright and cause dazzle)

Sheepcote Grange: Extensions. (Society objected on grounds of excessive development in the Green Belt) Refused.

Taplow Court: Plessey & Company. Computer building to house computerised telephone exchange to undergo trials for Post Office, (Society did not object as the building involved will be in a courtyard and invisible from outside. However, Society wrote expressing views that the building should be in keeping with the surroundings and be constructed from natural material etc.) Conditional permission. Also application for temporary offices to be used while above development was being constructed. (Society did not object, but sought assurances that these would be removed on completion of the permanent building). Conditional permission.

Berry Hill: House and garage, land South of Bapsey. (Society objected on grounds of infringement of Green Belt, within the Taplow conservation area, would increase density in that vicinity, bad example of ribbon development and that the required vehicular access would increase road hazards near an already dangerous bend and junction).

Rectory Road, Taplow: P.A. Kingston. Two storey side extension to the Old Malt House. Conditional permission.