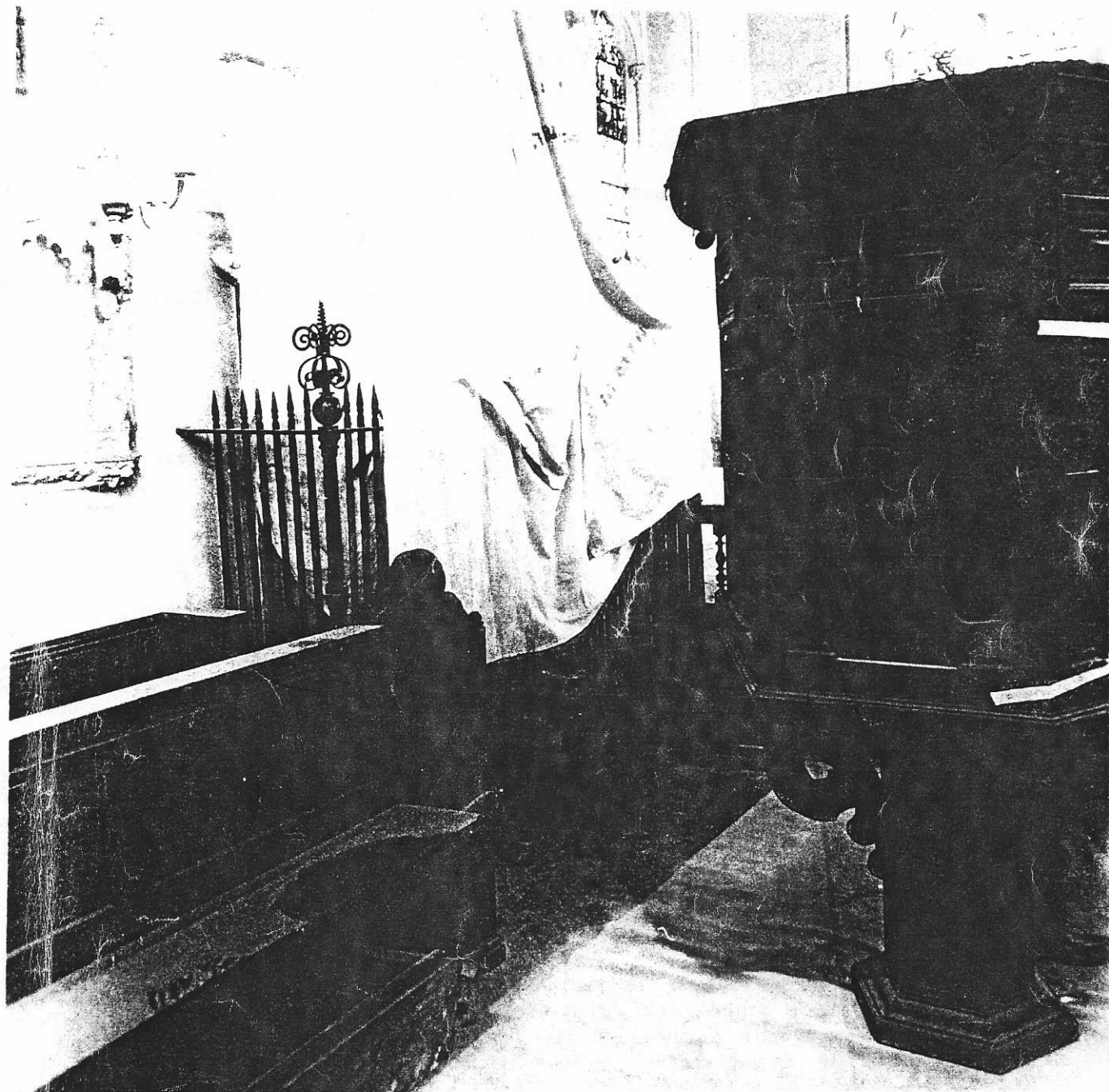


HITCHAM and TAPLOW PRESERVATION SOCIETY



HITCHAM CHURCH UNDER RESTORATION

No 51 **NEWSLETTER**

SPRING 1986

HITCHAM and TAPLOW PRESERVATION SOCIETY

Objects of the Society

The Society was formed in 1959 and one of it's most important objects is:-

".....securing the protection from disfigurement or injury of the countryside and rural surroundings and amenities of the Parishes of Hitcham and Taplow....."

The Society therefore scrutinises many Planning Applications and Appeals and makes constructive comments when appropriate; it also gives evidence at Local Planning Enquiries.

Officers and Executive Committee Members

President	Mr Leonard Miall OBE.
Vice Presidents	Mrs E Law, Mrs GL Milne, Mr AJC Paines, Mrs AB Horton.
Chairman	Mr RJ Hanbury.
Vice Chairman	Mr NBRC Peroni.
Treasurer	Miss E Ricketts.
Secretary	Mr RGR Nutt.
Planning Watchman	Mr A Hickman.
Committee Members	Mr W Ball, Mrs CJL Cumberlege, Lt Col SJ Dagg, Mr AGS Grellier, Mrs H Lee, Mr HC Nixon, Miss GG Pollock and Mr E Schmitz-Peiffer.

EDITORIAL

Preservation societies operate through motivation and dedication. Some individuals may be over-involved in trivia, others may be more devoted to causes than results; we pray we are not.

In Hitcham this summer we have a special cause; the St. Mary's Church Appeal. This issue of the Newsletter tells our readers about the history of St Mary's and about the immense self-help which the ancient church has inspired in recent times. But like other worthy causes, to get results it depends on a four letter word - CASH. Whilst applauding the congregation's own efforts, we hope you will spare thought and gift for the Appeal. There's an opportunity at the Society's Pic-nic on Midsummer Day.

S.J.D.

RESTORATION OF HITCHAM CHURCH

*The following was kindly contributed by
The Rev^d Peter Judd, Team Rector of Hitcham and Dropmore.*

The last few years have been busy at Hitcham Church.

When the Rectory was sold in 1981 the church lost its social centre and venue for the Sunday School and other meetings.

This problem was solved by building a parish hall onto the back of the church. It was designed by Tony Hickman of Taplow. The new building sits between the Norman/Medieval part of the Church and the 1928 Vestry, designed by Sir Bannister Fletcher. The cloister that connected the vestry to the church was demolished and replaced by the new building which blends happily with the old. From the outside it looks discreet and modest in size, yet inside it is spacious and very adaptable and has proved invaluable. Whether it is being used for a Committee, the Sunday School or a party it always feels right.

The building cost £35,000, most of which was raised by the congregation together with funds saved up in a Parish Hall Account.

When we had opened the new parish hall, we decided we should re-decorate the inside of the church which was looking very shabby and had black marks above the radiators. We thought we might be able to do this ourselves, but closer inspection showed that the stone and plaster was rotten and crumbling. The Quinquennial Architects reported that the walls needed re-pointing on the outside and replastering up to window level on the inside and a lot of the stonework needed restoring; the Bell Tower needed re-pointing too.

Nor was this all! The whole bell frame appeared to be moving when the bells were rung and the experts decreed that it was unsafe to ring them and that repair work was urgently needed; (Incidentally this is why you have not heard the Hitcham Bells for the last few years).

£16,000 has been raised with which the inside of the Church has been beautifully restored and decorated.

However, we have been forced to postpone the work on the Bells and the Tower until we have raised a further £16,000; we are applying to various bodies, like English Heritage, for grants; so we have not given up hope yet.

Our congregation and friends of Hitcham can be proud of the amount of work they have had carried out to keep this fine old church in good order and vibrant life.

Having the Church closed and in chaos during Lent and then re-opened, redecorated and restored for Easter Day is an Easter Message in itself.

ST MARY'S CHURCH, HITCHAM

*The following has been extracted from the Church Leaflet
by kind permission of the Author, Mr John Tetley.*

History

The first Rector of Hitcham was John the Clerk, who came to the Parish in 1167. It was the age of great church building; Canterbury Cathedral was begun in 1072, Gloucester in 1080 and Durham in 1093; all over England the wooden churches of Saxon times, like the original Taplow Church, were being rebuilt in stone. The builders, whose living came almost entirely from crops, flocks and herds, had only the simplest of mechanisms for lifting heavy weights. Their only means of transport was a cart drawn by oxen. These tremendous tasks, in a country whose population was only a fraction of what it is today, can only have been accomplished by men who believed that they were building to the glory of God. This was no less true of the little church at Hitcham than of the mighty cathedrals.

The Nave

The Nave was built in the twelfth century. At that time most people could not read and, therefore had no need of a good light to enable them to follow the service. This was just as well, since the only daylight came through the small glassless windows high up in the walls. One reason for the smallness of the windows was that the churches were sometimes used as refuges from attack, so the less window space the better.

The diamond-shaped frames containing armorial bearings are called hatchments - the word is a corruption of "achievement". A hatchment used to be hung outside the house of someone who had died. It remained there for some months and was then removed to the parish church. The use of hatchments persisted until quite modern times; one was shown in a London street in 1928.

The Chancel

A fine Norman arch divides the chancel, built in the fourteenth century, from the nave. Above the arch, on the chancel side, is a small pillar, possibly placed there to support the west end of the roof of an earlier chancel. The pillar is a very rare feature, of great interest to antiquaries.

The painted glass in the chancel windows dates back to the reign of Edward III (1327-1377), whose son, the Black Prince, was lord of the manor of Hitcham.

The Tower

This was built in the sixteenth century. It contains a peal of six bells, presented by Colonel LH Hanbury and his wife in thanksgiving for the safe return from France of himself and his son and daughter at the end of the first World War.

Colonel Hanbury, a local resident, was a great benefactor of Hitcham Church. He made possible the restoration of the chancel windows and he also had the vestry built.

Below the tower and just outside the massive oak South door is a tomb with an Icon, or sacred picture, recently restored. This tomb is the burial place of Prince Alexis Dolgorouki of Russia and his English wife; they lived at Nashdom, near Hitcham - now a monastery.

MISCELLANY

MIDSUMMER REVELRY - Society's Pic-Nic

On Saturday 21st June the Society is organising a Pic-Nic on the Taplow Village Green in aid of the Hitcham Church Appeal. We gather together from 6.30pm and the revels end at 10pm. We expect you to buy a ticket for £1 a head. You will be regaled by the Hitcham Players and there's also Barn Dancing to a caller. @There will be a bar and we hope to roast part of an ox and you can buy a slice or two.

You are asked, as a Member of the Society, to deliver to Eckart Schmitz-Peiffer a bottle(s) of something to go on our Tombola stand; please do this well in advance and ring Eckart on Maidenhead 30361 to arrange a convenient time to hand it (them?) over.

Tickets will be on sale at the Green and we hope that the event will benefit the Appeal substantially and that you will all have a good time.

CLIVEDEN

The transformation of Cliveden into a mansion style hotel is now a reality. Considerable external repairs have been made, noticeably improving the frontal appearance. On account of cost some restoration, in particular to the flat slate roof, has been left to a future generation.

The Hall and Dining Rooms will be open each Thursday and Sunday afternoons between 3pm and 6pm until the end of October - admission by ticket from the National Trust in the usual way; there is a small surcharge to visit the Hotel as well as the grounds which continue to be open from 11am to 6pm daily.

PLANNING

Extracts from South Bucks District Council Minutes

Readers may wonder why we publish these historical extracts. We believe that, for many, they are the only indication of the work that County, District and Parish Councils and the Society are doing to preserve the green and pleasant countryside and to regulate urban sprawl.

The list follows:-

SBD 297/85. Rhone Villa & Elm Cottage. Conversion to 4 flats - *Conditionally Permitted.*

SBD 339/85. Wickenden, Cliveden Rd. Extension - *Deferred.*

SBD 403 & 779/85. Meca Liveries, Wooburn Common Road. New loose boxes, dutch barn and extension - *Deferred for Legal Agreement.*

SBD 545/85. Cliveden, Cliveden Road. Alterations to chimney stack and external staircase - *Conditional Consent.*

SBD 578/85. Half Acre, Ellington Road. Side extension - *Refused.*

SBD 602/85. Bridge Cottage, Bath Road. Change of use to guest house - *Granted.*

SBD 629/85. The Bishop Centre, Bath Road. Alterations to shopfronts - *Conditional Permission.*

SBD 630/85. Maidenhead Autos, Bath Road. Partial redevelopment on North side of Bath Road - *Refused.*

SBD 713/85. Sheepcote Woods, Wooburn Common Road. Booster potable water reservoir for Thames Water - *Deferred for Legal Agreement.*

SBD 719/85. Jenkinson's Caravans, Bath Road. Application by Maidenhead Autos for display and sale of motor vehicles - *Conditional Permission.*

SBD 720/85. Waterville, River Road. Extension - *Conditional Permission.*

SBD 820/85(R) Skindles Hotel, Mill Lane. 70 bedroom hotel in car park - *Deferred for Negotiations*

SBD 825/85. Taplow Service Station, Bath Road. Illuminated Signs - *Refused.*

SBD 834/85. Old Station Inn, Bath Road. External porch and alterations - *Conditionally Permitted.*

SBD 844/85. Maidenhead Autos, Bath Road. One double-sided sign - *Conditional Consent.*

SBD 912/85. Bryony, Marsh Lane. Erection of detached house - *Refused.*

SBD 955/85. Bishops Centre, Bath Road. Use of existing vehicle wash to wash customers cars - *Granted.*

SBD 959/85. National Trust Shop, The Old Grape House, Cliveden. Change of use - *Conditional Permission.*

SBD 967/85. Hitcham Lodge, Hitcham Lane. 3m. high wall; wall now to be behind existing hedge - *Conditionally Permitted.*

SBD 969 & 1041/85. Hales Cottage, Wooburn Cottage. Alterations involving listed building - *Conditional Permission and Consent.*

SBD 978/85. Scout Hut, Institute Road. Garage for storage - *Conditionally Permitted.*

SBD 1001/85 Rhone Villa, Bath Road. Conversion of Coach House from one flat and 2 garages into 3 separate flats - *Refused; appeal lodged.*

SBD 1026/85 Huntercombe Manor, Huntercombe Lane. Building consequent on change of use to Nursing Home - *Cautionary Observations to County Council.*

SBD 1102/8 Land at rear of Maidenhead Autos. Appeal to use land for car storage, then to become Tennis Courts - *Dismissed.*

SBD 1110/85 Holly Cottage, Hill Farm Road. Extension and alteration - *Conditional Permission*

Traffic Management - Taplow

South Bucks District Council supports schemes put forward by Taplow Parish Council to ameliorate traffic problems, especially those at the junction of Berry Hill and Rectory Road.

Heathrow Airport

The Council reaffirmed its opposition to night flights.

County Boundary

The Council proposed that, inter alia, the centre of the main channel of the River Thames should be the County Boundary in respect of the parish of Taplow.

Appeals re Airport Environmental Factors

In the period 1981-1985 a higher proportion of appeals had been allowed. Local residents would be notified by the District Secretary of appeals and they should then repeat their representations. Town and Parish Councils should also make detailed representations on appeals and send a spokesman to public enquiries.

Channel Tunnel

The Society has not formulated an opinion, but South Bucks District Council support the construction of a tunnel provided rail is used to bring the benefits to the Midlands and the North.

The Council would deplore industrialisation in the M25 neighbourhood as a result of increased road haulage flows.

CORRESPONDENCE

Vanishing Byways

Following our last Newsletter, featuring Footpaths and Bridleways, the Secretary received the following letter from Michael Bayley, the well known Maidenhead architect.

As a rather distant member of the Society, I was fascinated by the map at the back of the 50th Newsletter. I hadn't realised how many roads and footpaths we have lost in the last fifty years, let alone since the Society was formed.

The most recent is the footpath and road to Old Taplow Churchyard; the road was in public use until the last War. I still use the footpath and the one past Bapsey Pond that comes out on Footpath No 12. This route is part of the 15th Century diversion of the London-Bath road from the crossing of the Thames by Boulter's Lock (Hitcham - North Town) to the then new bridge just north of the present Maidenhead Bridge.

The next most recent loss was of the section of the Bath Road that ran in front of the Orkney Arms. The section running into the river as a public slipway was encroached upon with a boat shed just before the First World War and, between the wars, was treated as private property, but with public access. The remainder of the road was closed temporarily during the demolition of the Orkney Arms and never restored to public use. I still use the route from time to time when driving out of Mill Lane as it is so much safer to join or cross the Bath Road east of Skindles Garage rather than directly by the Bridge. I cannot understand why the local authorities allowed this encroachment. I believe that a former owner of Skindles bought the verge between the old and new sections of the Bath Road, to use for parking, but ownership of land does not give the right stop a public road passing over that land.

The continuation of Berry Hill down to Dorney Reach by Footpath Nos 15, 17 & 18 was a public road down which I drove a car to Dorney as recently as the late 1940's or early 50's. The M4 cut it, but I see no reason why it should not continue as a road and bridleway via the Bridleway No 19.

The other useful link that has disappeared but could, perhaps, be resurrected is the continuation of Footpath No 18, more or less along the Parish Boundary, which used to come out at Manor Farm, Dorney. It was lost when the M4 was built, but, if continued alongside the M4, it could cross it by the bridge near the Pineapple Inn. This Footpath No 18 is interesting as it is an old towpath of a navigable branch of the Thames used by barges in my great grandfather's time (late 18th Century). Last time I walked along it, the dry bed of the channel to the west of the path could still be seen in the belt of woodland there.
