

# Hitcham & Taplow Preservation Society

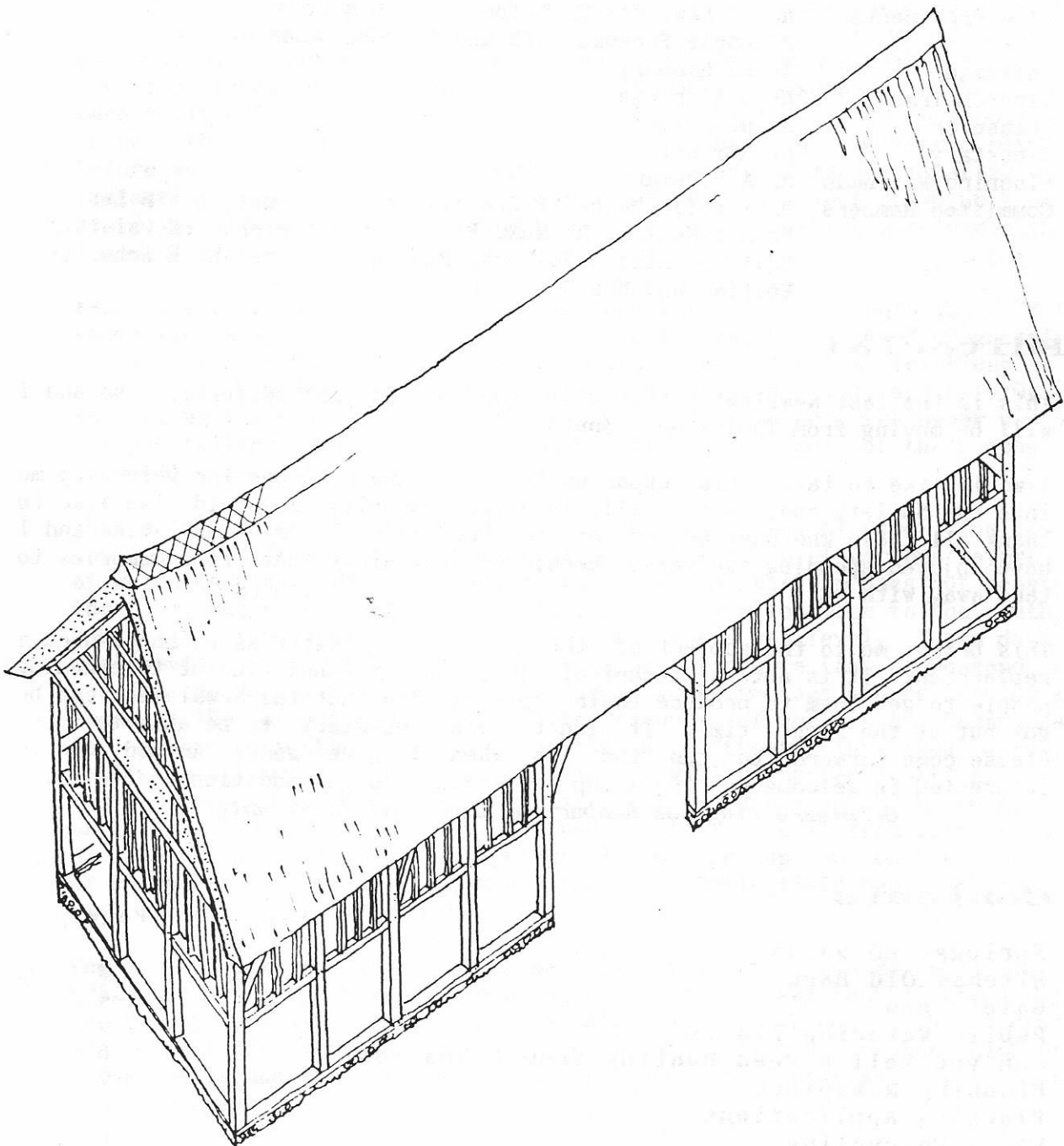
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## NEWSLETTER

Summer 1991

No. 60

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# Hitcham and Taplow Preservation Society

## Objectives of the Society

The Society was formed in 1959; one of its 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, Mrs AB Horton, Mr Louis Freedman CBE and Dr John Kennedy
Chairman	Mr RJ Hanbury
Vice-Chairman	Mr D Aldridge
Treasurer	Mr HC Nixon
Secretary	Mr RGR Nutt
Planning Watchman	Mr A Hickman
Committee Members	Mr W Ball, Major KB Francis, Mr KIR Grant, Mrs H Lee, Mr A McKenzie, Mr NBRC Peroni, Mrs D Pierce (Newsletter Editor), Miss G Pollock, Miss E Ricketts, Mr E Schmitz- Peiffer and Mrs S Senior.

## Editorial

This is the last Newsletter that will have me as your Editor as Mike and I will be moving from Taplow next month.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone for welcoming me into the Society and, most of all, into the community; I should also like to thank all those who have helped me to produce the Newsletter. Mike and I have enjoyed spending two years here; we certainly have fond memories to take away with us.

This brings me to the subject of the Newsletter Editor as we shall need a replacement. It is not a technical job, mostly consisting of telephoning people to get them to produce their "pieces" so that the Newsletter can be got out at the right time. It isn't even necessary to be able to type. Please come forward to run the job when I have gone! Anybody who is interested is welcome to ring me up to discuss and get additional details.

*Or please ring Bob Hanbury or Dick Nutt to volunteer!*

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*The drawing on the front cover shows Hitcham Old Barn in what was probably its original state with a thatched roof; see Article on page 2.*

## **Springs and Wells**

*Some thoughts on where all the water used to come from by Lincoln Lee.*

You turn on the tap, and out comes the water; nowadays it's easy. But it is fairly obvious that before the days of pumps and iron pipes, a major problem for any householder was the supply of water. Even if it wasn't wanted for drinking or washing, it was needed for cooking! That is one of the reasons why, until recent centuries, virtually all towns were built on rivers. Of course a village did not need a river; if there were few enough houses, a stream, or some good springs, could provide an adequate water supply.

Taplow was doubly blessed. There were houses near enough to the river to get water either direct, or by means of a well. Interjecting a personal note, in 1948 we lived in one such house in Taplow. After a few months we discovered, to our surprise, that there was a well underneath our bed, with its water level only ten feet below our pillows. Presumably the bedroom had been built out over an old yard, but it was this well which supplied the house. The water was brought up into the building by an electric pump, and before we found the well (complete with a dead mouse floating on the surface), we had assumed that the water supply was just drawn up from the gravel bed through a special form of pipe - a method which was common in the Thames Valley before World War 2.

Near Mill Lane, the level of the river and water table is only about 73 feet above sea level. Further up the hill in Taplow, houses need progressively deeper wells if they were to draw from the water table. At least one of the houses near St. Nicolas' church had a very deep well and, about 1970, when renovating the house into which he had just moved, the owner narrowly escaped falling down the shaft. That illustrates one of the reasons why deep wells were not popular.

That brings us to the other way in which Taplow was blessed. The spur of the Chilterns on which the village stands is made up of various layers, one of which is clay. The rain, which falls on the hilltop does not penetrate the clay, but stays above it, following its gentle slope to the south and south-east, flowing out at about 180 feet above sea level. These days the most obvious such "spring" is the one which for more than a thousand years has fed the Bapsey Pond, but there used to be various others feeding such ponds as the one which existed in the grounds of what is now Cedar Chase, and another near the upper part of the High Street. This ready supply of water was essential to survival, and in the village proper doubtless all the older houses depended on nearby wells. Taplow House which, by repute, has an Elizabethan foundation, may have had water fed to it from further up the hill, perhaps originally from Springfield, higher up and on the other side of Berry Hill. It's unlikely that the name Springfield had anything to do with the season of the year.

The names Stockwells and Wellbank may also tell stories. But when did they originate? The house which stood adjacent to the Wellbank site was called The Priory, and older maps show the site as being Rocque or Rosse Meadow. And between the wars the house on the site of what we now think of as Stockwells had the somewhat suburban name of "The Elms." Does anybody know the answers?

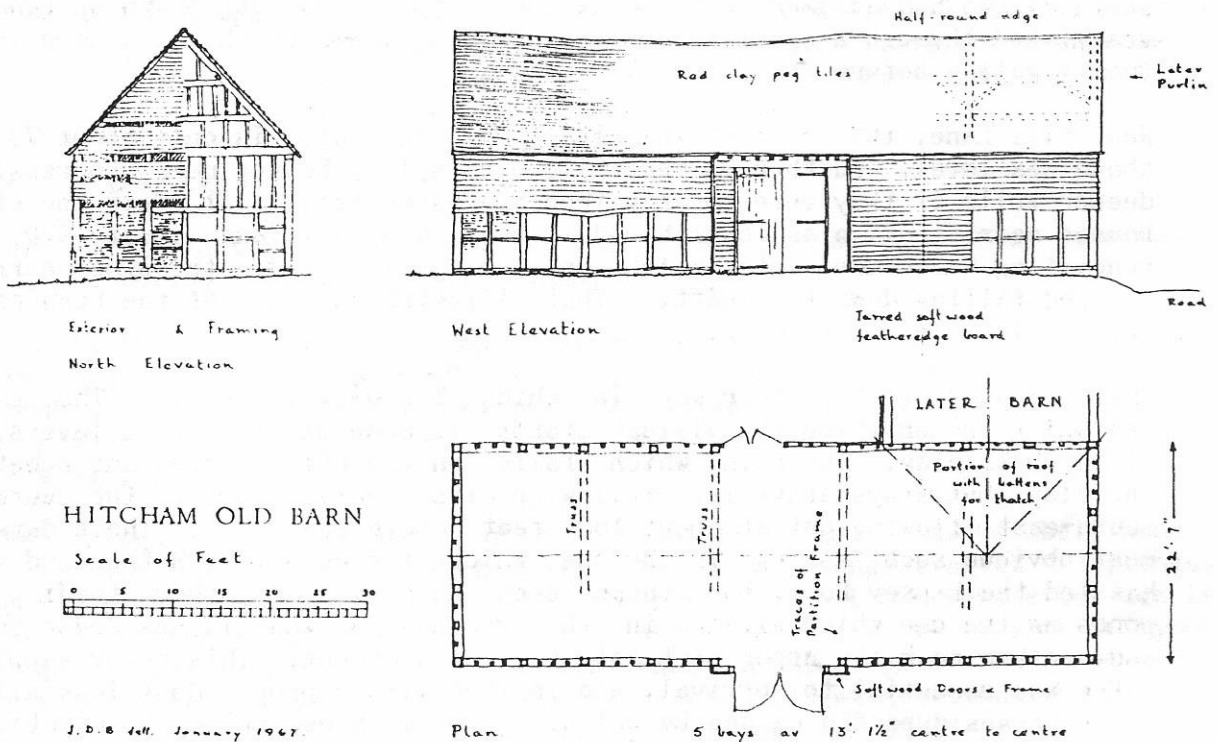
# Hitcham Old Barn

*The description below is of Bob Hanbury's house before its conversion.*

The Barn is shown in plan on a map attached to the Enclosure Award. From this it is clear that there had been no major alteration or addition to the Barn from that date until the collapse of the western portion in 1966. The drawing below shows the Barn as it was before it collapsed. Incidental to this is mention in the Enclosure Award of some of the new enclosures being bounded by part of the open fields of Taplow and Burnham, which suggests that these adjoining parishes had not yet been enclosed in 1779.

The Great Barn at Hitcham stood just east of the Churchyard of St. Mary and consisted of a timber framed building on a North and South axis with its south gable on the road and a later barn and implement shed abutting on to it at right angle and running parallel to the north side of the road leading from Burnham to Hitcham.

Appearance in 1966



The Parish Register, which begins in 1677, contains various notes and memoranda, among them being the following:--

'The Barn on the south-west side of the Parsonage Farm yard together with the stables was built about the year 1671.'

'The Barn on the south-east of the above said farm was built in the year 1679.'

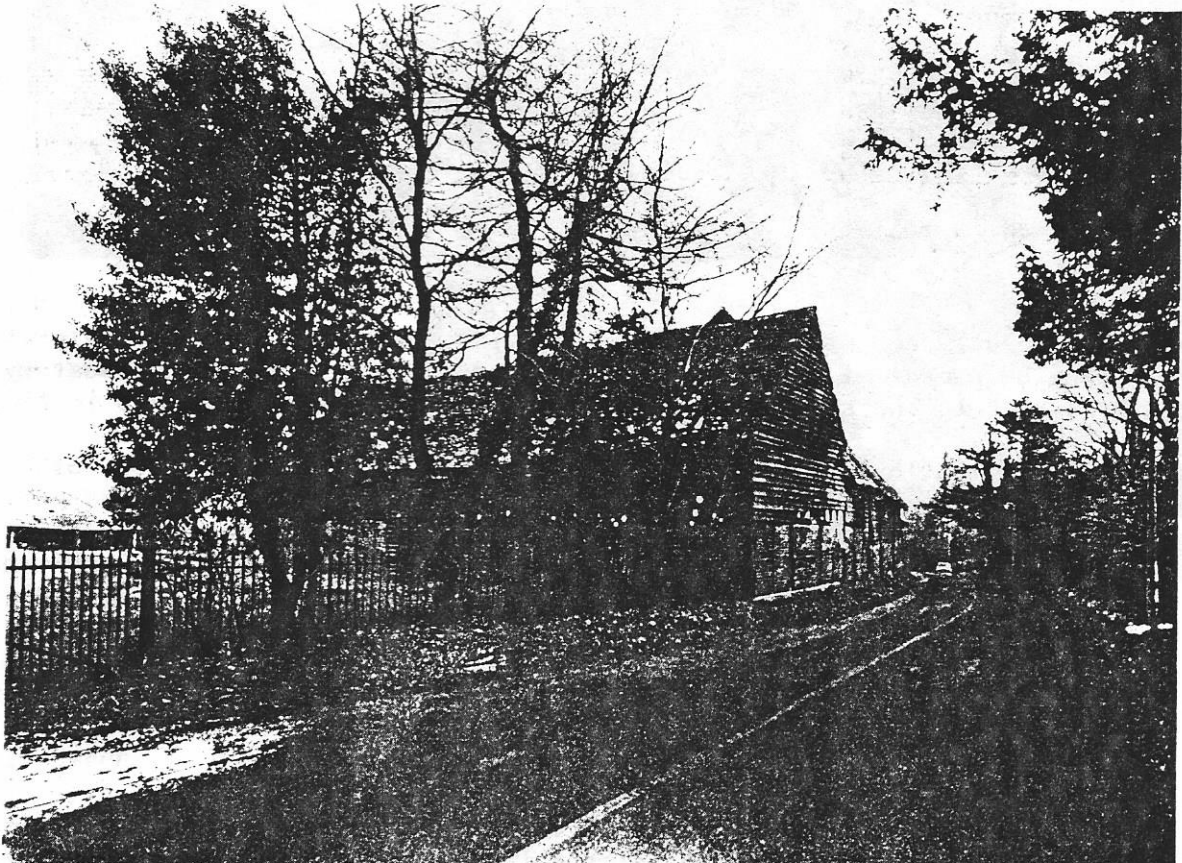
'Look in Ye Old Register and ye first page how ye Parsonage of Hitcham came first to ye Lord of ye Mannour and how it came to be disjoined again.'

At the present time (1969) a small house of 16th-17th century date stands a short distance north-east of the church and is substantial enough to have been the Farm house of the Parsonage Farm referred to above. The Barn, in relation to it, is a little West of South, giving, near enough the position recorded in the Parish Register. From the third memorandum, quoted above, the Barn seems to have formed part of the Manor Farm.

The Barn was placed on the Minister's List of Buildings of Architectural and Historic Interest following the 1947 Town and Country Planning Act.

Unfortunately, the adjoining land was no longer farmed from this centre and various proposals for alternative uses were rejected by the Authorities. With no use for the buildings, the owners did not maintain them, and throughout 1966 there were falls of tiling due to rusting through of batten nails. During the morning of Thursday, November 17th, 1966, a heavy slip of tiling on the west slope of the old barn must have struck the main wall plate and overturned the west wall, causing 3 bays of the roof to collapse into the body of the barn. Two bays of the east wall, left unsupported, fell outwards without breaking a single joint and still lay there at the time of writing (January 1967).

With the timber framing heaped in confusion on the ground, it was possible to examine the jointing and determine the order of erection and the probable original form of the Barn.



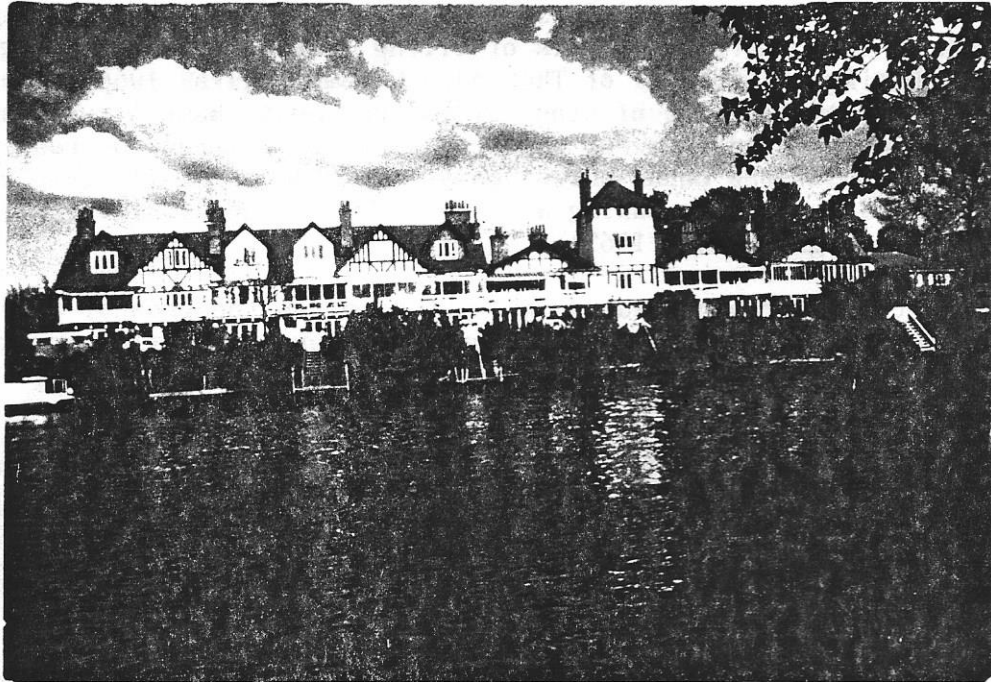
Fortunately, the Barn had been photographed by the National Monuments Record and these records have been used to illustrate this study. The photo shows the Old Barn with the later additions further along the road beyond it. It is taken from a point on the south side of the road, roughly in line with the east boundary wall of the churchyard.

*Extracted from an article in Records of Bucks Vol XVIII Part 4, 1969 by A H Packe & J D Broadbent, ARIBA with the kind permission of Mr Packe.*

## Gaiety Row

*Budge Francis tells us about "Summercroft" using information received from Sidney M. Gold and Michael H.H. Bayley and gratefully acknowledged.)*

The terrace of houses in River Road between Ellington Road and the Sounding Arch (Brunel's Railway Bridge) are known popularly as Gaiety Row. Exactly why doesn't seem to be recorded but, dating from the Edwardian era and sited near Skindles Hotel, with "fast" associations and with the Guards Boat Club immediately opposite, its not hard to imagine how some of the tenants may have been considered. Especially as the aristocracy had a penchant for girls from the Gaiety Theatre.



Summercroft, one of the terrace, began its existence with the sale of "that piece or parcel of land situated... bounded on or towards the west by River Road etc" to the said Francis Edward Morris for the sum of £225 in 1901.

The next mention is an agreement by Thomas Clifton Brewer Hooke of Dinan in the Republic of France and the Reverend Charles Lawson Whatley of HMS Terrible, Chaplain in the Royal Navy, to lend Francis Edward Morris £1100 at 5% reducible on punctual payment, against the two ???????????? or tenements erected or standing on the piece of land known as Summercroft and Rippledene.

Despite this evidence the buildings are not listed in the 1907 Buckinghamshire County Directory, but are in the 1911 issue.

The estate of Francis Edward Morris, who died in 1908, must have paid off the mortgage because his sister, Violet Shewell Morris, had the property reconveyed to her. Her name is specially mentioned here because she was a very early lady architect - possibly the second or third - and it is tempting to consider whether or not she designed the Row. Records show that she and her sisters owned the whole terrace.

The two sums of money involved in 1901 and 1902 contrast strangely with the figure for 1947, immediately post World War II, of £1600.

Needless to say, the Row does not now warrant its nickname. Its inhabitants are happy, friendly people and particularly pleased that their river bank is now in Buckinghamshire since the county's boundary change.

## The Public Watering Place

*Budge Francis reports on a response to a request in the last Newsletter*

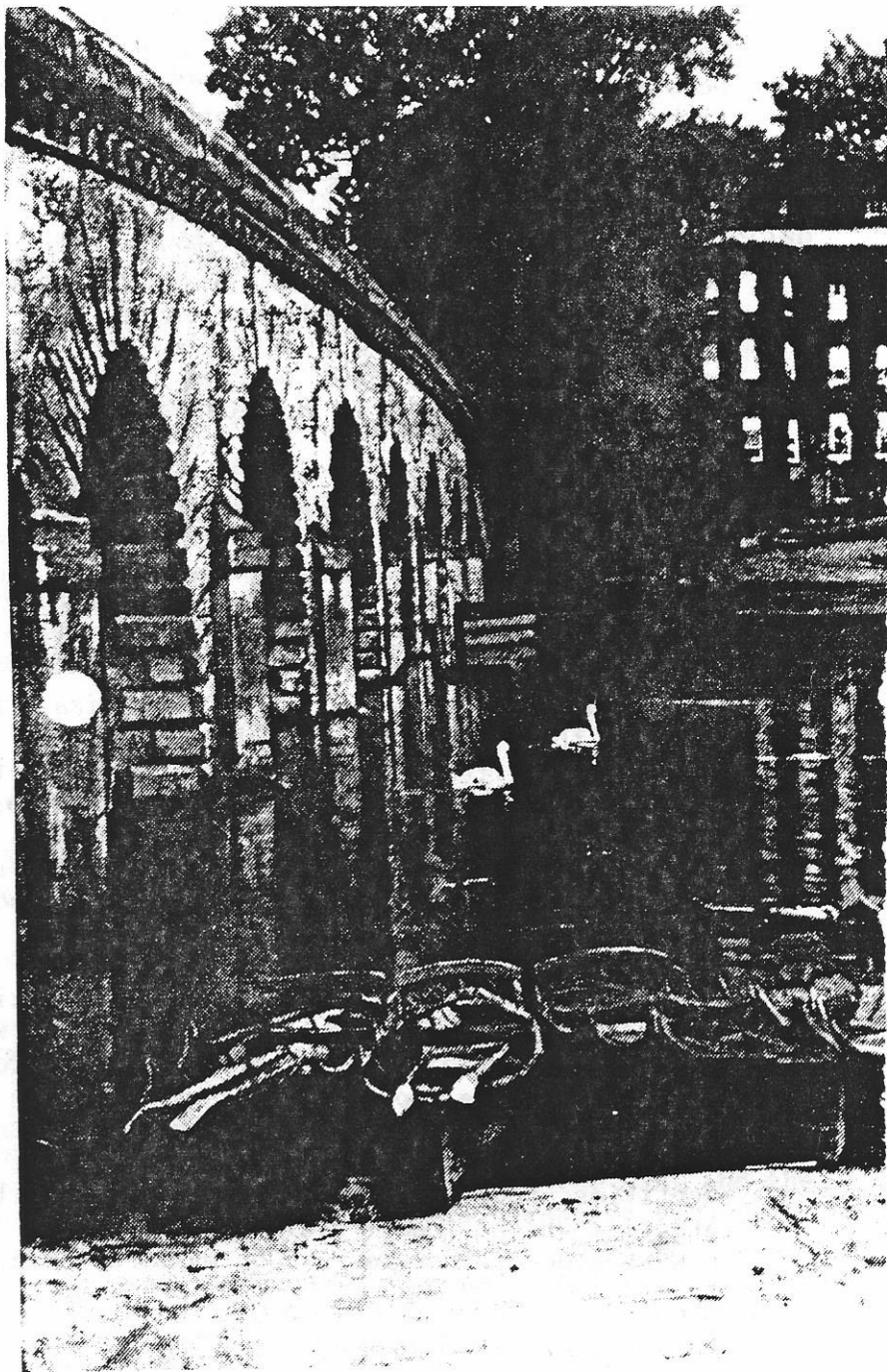
My request for information on the Public Watering Place has produced a very interesting response from Michael Bayley, with an extract from the Maidenhead Advertiser of a painting by Tissot who died in 1902. It clearly shows the slipway which was on the line of the pre-1777 bridge.

At the time of the painting the road bridge was still a toll bridge and it was cheaper for a party crossing to pay a waterman to ferry between the slipway and the Bridge Garden's steps.

In this connection this extract from a letter from the NRA to Berkshire's County Solicitor's Office is very pertinent:-

"... we regret the reference in your Modification Order (reference the Bridge Boatyard footpath) to a boatyard and its gated private enclosure of the public water place between Skindles Hotel and Maidenhead Bridge. We believe this enclosure to be unlawful..."

Now that the boundary change has brought the area into Buckinghamshire we hope that the county will ensure the area is re-opened.



*This unusual painting of Maidenhead Bridge is the work of the French artist, James Jaques Tissot (1836-1902).*

*fronting Skindles Hotel and the handsome building in the background is Bridge House which became the Hungaria Club. The front of the house was adjacent to the old toll gates on the bridge.*

## Can You Tell a Reed Bunting from a Sparrow ?

It was that half-page article in the Telegraph in April which did it. The article was intended to 'sell' the Maidenhead Flood Ditch as being essentially a wonderful environmental development which would bring to the Thames Valley new wild-life (not acid-house parties, but the birds and the bees and all those good things). The article suggested a future with kingfishers and herons and great crested grebes, all of which already live in Taplow (whether they would still be here after three or four years of tearing up the countryside is another matter.)

It also mentioned bearded tits, reed warblers, and reed buntings. Crikey, I said, where's my bird book? I'm far from being an ornithologist, but like many people in Taplow I put out nuts for the birds and, in recent weeks, we've had several kinds of tits, but none with beards. Not surprising, for, according to my bird book, bearded tits have never been known to nest west of London, while even in Norfolk they are difficult to spot in the reed beds.

Well how about reed warblers? Crikey again! My book lists no fewer than forty different kinds of warblers. No wonder bird watchers, or twitchers if that's what the press calls them, get excited, for my book seems to say that unless you are a warbler yourself, it's very difficult to tell some of the different varieties apart.

So, on to the reed bunting, the *emberiza schoeniclus*. How can we identify identify this? It's a brown bird, just under six inches in length, the male having an indifferent song and the female being drab in colouring. Surely, couldn't that be the house sparrow, the *passer domesticus* which is being described? Its description fits the house sparrow, (which is not to be confused with the hedge sparrow, which isn't a sparrow at all). And looking at the illustration of the reed warbler and the house sparrow, I simply cannot tell the difference.

Surely we don't have too many different species of birds? Going back to my bird book I see that it lists about 340 kinds which have been seen in Britain; about 150 of those are moorland or coastal birds, or rare visitors, so that there are about 190 varieties which we might perhaps see locally. I've seen 45 varieties in or over my garden in Taplow, and another 15 within half a mile of the village. The NSUK booklet on the History of Taplow Court identifies about the same number. That still leaves well over a hundred varieties which I can't claim to have seen. Perhaps I should have a closer look at some of the sparrows on my bird-table, they may be reed buntings....

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### The Tow Path

With the Thames Path National Trail naturally using as much of the old tow-path as possible, it is interesting to hear that its crossing the river between Maidenhead and Taplow is understood to have taken place over a ford. The line of the ford took in the island which is between the Thames Hotel and the Gas Works.

A map dated 1875 shows a line of buildings along Mill Lane north of Skindles called Crossway Cottages.

Budge Francis



## **Planning Newspieces**

*The Minutes of the various Committees of the District Council have been studied and extracts (shown within quotation marks) or precis are given below. Dates in brackets indicate when the Committee met.*

### **Recreation and Amenities Committee (12 March 1991)**

#### Play Equipment in Parishes.

"The Committee considered a report by the Chief Technical Officer stating that following the last meeting, he had been informed that Taplow Parish Council had declined the Council's offer of provision of play equipment in the Parish."

#### Sponsorship of the Arts - Future Events.

"The Committee received a programme of future events organised or sponsored by the Council consisting of rural arts projects such as an Evening of Poetry and Prose to be held at St. Nicolas Church, Taplow.

"In addition, the Committee noted the imminent introduction of a tourism leaflet which would enhance the visitors awareness to the District, but at the same time display a sympathetic approach to the environmental needs of the community."

### **Environmental Control Committee (13 March 1991)**

#### Bishop Centre, Bath Road, Taplow.

"The Committee considered a report by the Chief Health and Housing Officer stating that the drive-through car wash unit at the Bishop Centre was subject to enforcement for the purposes of occupational health and safety by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE). The majority of the site comprised retail units which were the enforcement responsibility of this Council.

"Under the Health and Safety (Enforcing Authority) Regulations 1989 it was possible for the HSE to transfer their responsibility for the premises to the local authority. Correspondence had taken place with the HSE, and the owner of the site had also been informed of the proposed transfer.

"RESOLVED that this Council accept enforcement responsibility for the premises of the drive-through car wash unit at the Bishop Centre, Bath Road, Taplow, for the purposes of the Health and Safety at Work, Etc. Act 1974."

### **Personnel and Performance Review Sub-Committee (19 March 1991)**

#### Mercury Telecommunication System.

"The use of eight lines for outgoing calls only would mean that incoming callers might hear the engaged tone more frequently instead of hearing an unanswered ringing tone over a period of time whilst call-stacking occurred and this new situation was considered the more acceptable."

## **Planning and Transportation Committee (21 May 1991)**

Among those present was Dr. Kennedy.

### Appointment of Gravel Sub-Committee.

"Terms of Reference - To consider policy proposals of the County Council in respect of the extraction of minerals, including related matters (e.g. restoration of workings, railheads, etc.); to discuss policy proposals with the County Council and other relevant parties on behalf of the Planning and Transportation Committee; and to make representations to the County Planning Authority in respect of planning applications for mineral extraction and backfilling made, to meet consultation deadlines.

"RESOLVED that the Chairman of the Committee, Chairman of the Policy Board, Mrs. Burry, Mr. Jones, Mrs. Richmond and Mr. Worrall constitute this Sub-Committee for 1991/93, with power to co-opt Members from affected Parishes as necessary."

## **Resources Committee (21 May 1991)**

### Appointment of Chairman and Vice-Chairman.

"RESOLVED that Dr. Kennedy and Sir Duncan Lock be appointed Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Committee respectively for 1991/93."

## **Health and Housing Committee (11 June 1991)**

### NHS Trust Status.

"RESOLVED that:-

"(1) The Council support the setting up of the South Buckinghamshire NHS Trust, but express concern about combining the acute and community services within one Trust;

"(2) Whilst not necessarily being opposed to the Heatherwood and Wexham Park Hospital Trust, concern be expressed about the apparent incomplete range of services, and that if services were discontinued at either hospital, patients would experience difficulties due to the considerable distance between the two sites and the appalling public transport which existed. It was also considered that the proposals for independent service monitoring were inadequate.

"(3) With regard to the East Berkshire Mental Handicap Trust, whilst acknowledging the advantages for services to the mentally handicapped which would accrue from setting up an NHS Trust, attention be drawn to the flaw that the proposal did not separate the purchaser and provider of services.

"(4) The Council support the proposal to set up a NHS Trust for the Mental Health and Handicap Services for West Berkshire subject to there being adequate provision for independent service monitoring.

"(5) No observations be made in relation to the other Trust applications since they related to services not received by residents of this District."

**Planning and Development Committee (27 March 1991)**

**Tree Preservation Orders.**

- (1) "RESOLVED that SBDC (No 26) Tree Preservation Order 1990 - Robinia on land adjoining River Court, Ellington Road, Taplow be confirmed as an unopposed order."

**Planning Applications**

*Planning Decisions given by the Planning & Development Committee of the South Bucks District Council (SBDC):*

<b>Fir Cottage, Wooburn Common Road, Taplow (SBD/587/90).</b> Two-storey side extension and detached garage.	Appeal Lodged
<b>Land west of Hitcham Park, between Huntswood Lane and Hitcham Lane, Taplow (S/90/0971/FF).</b> Change of use to equestrian cross country centre, temporary buildings and ancillary works	Conditional Permission
<b>Rossonny, Marsh Lane, Taplow (S/90/1170/FF).</b> Single storey rear extension and alterations to lounge roof.	Conditional Permission
<b>Dorney Meadow, Old Marsh Lane, Taplow (S/90/1077/FF).</b> Stationing of one residential caravan for use by employee in connection with existing breeding, stabling and horse training use.	Appeal Lodged
<b>Silchester House School, Bath Road, Taplow (SBD/999/89).</b> Redevelopment of site to provide 14 flats. Outline Application.	REFUSED
<b>Silchester House School, Bath Road, Taplow (SBD/313/90).</b> Demolition of existing building and redevelopment of site to provide 28 flats.	Appeal Lodged
<b>Boundary Road Farm and Livery Stables, Boundary Road, Taplow (SBD/0472/90).</b> Change of use of part of stable block to dwellinghouse.	Deferred for Further Info
<b>Boundary Road Farm and Livery Stables, Boundary Road, Taplow (SBD/0471/90).</b> Extension to existing stable block to provide 5 stables and extension to existing barn.	Deferred for Further Info
<b>Old Lodge West/Old Lodge, High Street, Taplow (SBD/748/90).</b> Erection of one detached house with integral garage, together with detached double garage and alterations to vehicular access.	Appeal Lodged
<b>1 Mink Farm, Wooburn Common Road, Taplow (SBD/54/90).</b> Change of use from agriculture and retention of mobile home for residential use.	DISMISSED

## **Waste Re-cycling**

A year ago, in Newsletter No 58. we told you about a scheme to have your own bottle bank; unfortunately this scheme seems to have gone bust.

Now we see from the local paper that South Bucks District Council is arranging to place a skip for waste paper in the Summers Road Car Park, Burnham from 8 am to about noon on the fourth Saturday of every month.

All types of paper and cardboard can be deposited, saving the trip to Taplow Paper Mills where you have to hazard your car against the might of their large shovel loaders; understandable really - they have work to do!

The District Council's waste paper skip is fine but what do we do with 4 or 5 week's worth of waste paper until the skip makes its re-appearance? We spoke to Environmental Services Department at SBDC who, at the moment, can only get a skip each month. Perhaps if we all use this one a lot, they will provide it more often.

The dates for the Waste Paper skip, to the end of the year, are:-

Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> August  
Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> September  
Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> October  
Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> November  
Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> December.

While on the subject, there is also a Save-a-Can-Bank and a Bottle Bank permanently at the Summers Road Car Park and there is a Humana Clothes Bank at the Jennery Lane Car Park.

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## **Annual General Meeting**

This year the Annual General Meeting is on Friday 18<sup>th</sup> October at 8 pm in the Village Centre.

A number of the Officers of the Society do not wish to stand for re-election. The Committee is going to propose changes; you will be sent details of these well before the Meeting but, if you are interested, please make a note in your diary NOW.

The talk will be by Leonard Miall who is retiring as President and will be giving his swansong.