

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	Dr John Kennedy
Vice Presidents	Mrs Eileen Law, Mrs Anne Milne, Mrs Sheila Horton, Mr Louis Freedman CBE and Mrs Helen Lee
Chairman	Mr Bill Ball
Vice-Chairman	Vacant
Treasurer	Mr Hugh Nixon
Secretary	Mr Bob Hanbury
Committee Members	Miss Maureen Dennis, Mr Michael Goss, Mrs Eva Lipman, Mr Humphrey Lloyd, Mr Andy McKenzie, Mr Dick Nutt, Mr Barrie Peroni, Miss Gwen Pollock and Mr David Stanning.

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The front cover shows a broad gauge locomotive standing on mixed-gauge track in about 1890 - see article on page 10.

Editorial

"All that is needed for evil to triumph is for good men to do nothing."

I regret to say that I cannot tell you who originated this saying. I think it is correctly quoted as I heard it on the Newsnight programme on BBC2 and wrote it down at once. I had known it previously, though not quite accurately, and had asked a number of people in Taplow, much more learned than I, if they knew the origin. Many of those I asked knew of it and suggested authors but, despite searching in various reference books, the originator was not located. Contributions from you to the search, quoting authority, would be much appreciated!

The reason why I have headed this Editorial with the saying needs explaining. In the Editorial to the last newsletter (No 63), I asked for comments on the newsletters, whether for or against and I have received precisely nothing. While the quotation above is a little strong, especially the word evil, I feel that, not only does it apply to this case but also to the whole country. The only way you can get anyone to do anything is if their "own back yard" is threatened (we have had people join the Committee for this reason and, once the threat is resolved, leave, often without even saying goodbye); very few people appear to want to work for the common good.

If this does not apply to you, fine; how about proving it?

Write or ring to say what you think about the newsletters.

Write or ring offering to contribute to it.

Volunteer to be nominated for one of the Society's posts which are vacant or one where the incumbent would like to be relieved.

Do something positive to help the environment, in the widest sense of the word.

If you think that I am overstating the case, cast your mind back to the the Public Enquiry into the NRA's Flood Relief Channel last Autumn.

The Society put out a notice with the last newsletter telling you all about the day they were to give evidence and asking you to attend to support us. A small number of people attended but when you looked at the names, all but two were speaking (or their relations) or were members of the Parish Council. It really wasn't worth going to the trouble of telling you about it. The Parish Council didn't fare any better on their day to give evidence; again they spent a lot of time and money, on a notice and got no support except for members of the Council and members of the Society already involved.

Perhaps, someone could tell me why nobody seems to care and what can be done about it!

Tel:661588
6th May 1993

Dick Nutt
(Not the Editor)

Unless otherwise stated, the views expressed in the Newsletter are not necessarily those of the Society or it's Executive Committee.

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The Green Belt

These details and the Maps have been extracted by Dick Nutt from The Local Plan for South Bucks, published in July 1987 ; newer Members or residents may be interested in these details.

Function

"The Green Belt in South Bucks performs a vital function in separating major urban areas such as Greater London, Slough and Maidenhead. It is therefore important that it remains intact. In places it is narrow (*none narrower than at Taplow!* - Ed) and its importance in forming a buffer separating developed areas is emphasised. Areas where the Green Belt is severely fragmented or its landscape threatened or damaged have a particularly important part to play in fulfilling the functions of the Green Belt in South Bucks and every effort should be made to improve their ability to do so." [§5.5.1.].

The only part of Taplow parish that is not in the Green belt is a piece of land about 250m square just east of the station. It is shown on the map overleaf.

Threatened Areas

These have been defined as:-

"**Threatened:** general zones of deteriorating agricultural and woodland management, characterised by neglected hedgerows, pony paddocks, piggeries, scrap yards and public utility installations."

The Threatened Areas (and Damaged Areas) are shown opposite on the Map marked Fig 3. The Local Plan specifically draws attention to Taplow - "The stretches between Slough and Maidenhead at Taplow are particularly vulnerable areas that are vital to fulfilling the functions of the Green Belt by preventing the coalescence of these large urban areas."

Areas of Special Character

The highest classification is that of Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and the only area in South Bucks District is to the north of Beaconsfield which forms part of the Chiltern AONB.

The next level is that of Area of Attractive Landscape (AAL) and the criteria for these is that:-

"the area has to have a special quality
and

"it has to be large enough to warrant identification at the county-wide scale."

The area from Taplow Court to Cliveden, extending from the Thames to Cliveden Road and to the northern boundary of the Parish of Taplow is included as an Area of Attractive Landscape.

The criteria used to define the Local Landscape Areas (LLAs) - the lowest level - include that they should be "undisturbed and free from major intrusions".




Figure 3

SOUTH BUCKS DISTRICT

Damaged & Threatened Landscape



KEY

-  District Boundary
-  Damaged Landscape
-  Threatened Landscape

SOURCE

Standing Conference on
London and South East
Regional Planning



On this basis, Taplow Village is included, joining up to the South of the AAL.

The AALs and LLAs are shown on the map opposite. The areas have been plotted on a 1/2500 OS map from the master map included with the South Bucks Local Plan; It had to be slightly reduced to fit the page so the scale is no longer exactly 1/2500; the scale bar shown in the Legend should, however, still be accurate.

Control of Development

This is covered in a number of policies and is too complicated to go into in detail here. Generally speaking, however, development is not normally permitted for the following (references below are to Policy Numbers):-

New buildings for agriculture or forestry (GB5).

Rebuilding existing dwellings with a larger floor area (GB7).

Extensions to existing dwellings unless a number of provisos are complied with (GB8).

In addition redundant, non-residential, buildings may only be converted to a Green Belt use; otherwise they should be demolished (GB6).

In addition development is controlled, but less rigidly, in areas called "settlements" which, while not in the Green Belt, are enclosed by it; the main area which might affect us is "Burnham/Lent Rise".

Other Classifications

These include Scheduled Ancient Monuments; Taplow has what we call the Saxon Mound but is referred to as "Barrow, Taplow Court".


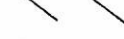

The only Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSI) in Taplow is something called "South Lodge Pit."

Historic Landscapes in Taplow include those at Cliveden, Taplow Court, Taplow House (Hotel), Dropmore and Nashdom.

NOTE: Anyone considering any work in the Green Belt should take specific advice and not place any reliance on this short article which is for general interest only.

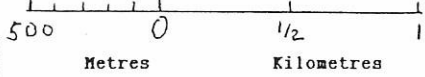
The Green Belt

Legend

-  Taplow Parish Boundary
-  Area of Attractive Landscapes
-  Local Landscape Area

N.B. The small area of Taplow Parish NOT in the Green Belt (just east of the Railway Station) is shown blocked.

SCALE



The Public Enquiry into the NRA's Flood Relief Channel Proposal

The paragraphs below were written, by Lincoln Lee, immediately after he attended the hearing on the day the Society presented its evidence. On the same day a number of other speakers gave their objections to the NRA's proposals. On other days, when the Enquiry was sitting at Reading, more speakers from Taplow gave their objections to the Scheme. As this Newsletter is being written, there is no news of the outcome of the Enquiry.
Editor:

Those members of the Society who, like me, are not on the Executive Committee, may like to hear something about the way in which the Society's objections to the Flood Relief Channel were presented on 8th December 1992.

Mr Nutt must have worked long and hard in developing the presentation. He himself gave evidence as did Messrs Hickman and Hanbury. Remarkably enough, Mr Nutt had anticipated the questions that would be put to him and had available the answers - in writing; these included the names and numbers of the Membership, the geographical area of interest etc. Even more remarkably, he had managed to get no fewer than four non-members, who lived on the flood-plain in Maidenhead, to attend and explain why they objected to the NRA Scheme. These four made some interesting points, including:

in some of the areas near Boulters, floodwater wells up through the ground before it spills from the river.

the number of houses which are actually flooded is quite small.

the beauty of the Cliveden Reach, just above Boulters Weir, is likely to be spoiled if the Scheme is carried out.

Mr Hanbury voiced criticism of the NRA's record on maintenance and he made some valuable remarks about the use of funds. Mr Hickman attacked the NRA for failing to do the dredging in the main channel which they had said would be carried out and he recalled that the Ministry, despite objections voiced in Maidenhead and Taplow, had approved the construction of offices close to the river bank in the flood-plain. He suggested that this approval implied, perhaps, that the Ministry did not consider that the flood risk was particularly serious.

In his evidence, Mr Nutt said that the NRA had alleged that many houses, on both sides of the Thames, would be flooded similar to that in 1947. However, a survey, carried out by the Society in the Taplow area, showed that only one of the houses had been flooded in 1947 and that was not damaged. If, as seemed likely, the NRA was also wrong about the houses in Maidenhead, the cost/benefit ratio of the Scheme, which was to cost perhaps as much as £100M, was very much open to question.

In an emotional closing address, Mr Nutt summed up the witnesses' opinions and accused the NRA of falsifying their own evidence.

I feel that in some ways it is unfair of me to summarize, in two dozen lines, a lengthy and well conducted presentation. I would, however, like to say that, having attended both of the Pre-Enquiry Meetings and one on the days of the Enquiry itself, I was very impressed by the effectiveness of this presentation

Lincoln Lee

Planning Newspieces

The Minutes of the various Committees of the District Council from 20th October 1992 to 14th April 1993 have been studied and extracts (shown within quotation marks) or precis are given below. Dates in brackets indicate when the Committee met.

Planning and Transportation Committee (21 October 1992)

Enforcement Notice Appeals

Site between White Gables and Redwood, Berry Hill, Taplow (S/91/0911/TP).

Temporary use of greenhouse buildings for construction of a boat.

Appeal Dismissed at Meeting on 16 December

Hill Farm, Hill Farm Road, Taplow. Use of buildings for repair and spraying of vehicles.

Appeal Withdrawn

Planning and Transportation Committee (13 January 1993)

Dial-A-Ride Scheme

This scheme had failed previously as the only contractor had withdrawn (*see Newsletter No 63, page 8 - Ed*). The matter had been re-introduced and Martins Coaches Limited had been awarded the contract.

Tree Preservation Orders

White Place, River Road, Taplow. (SBDC (No 15) TPO 1992).

Unopposed Order re Lime Trees to be confirmed.

Planning and Transportation Committee (10 February 1993)

County Engineers Works Programme

The Committee expressed concern about the "large number of proposed kerbing works instead of giving priority to the continuing deterioration of road surfaces. The County Engineer was to be invited to the next meeting of the Committee when these should be addressed." (See under Meeting on 7 April below).

Enforcement Notice Appeals

Land at Barge Farm, South of A4 Bath Road, Taplow.. Use of land for holding of car boot sales/markets, car parking etc.

Appeal Dismissed - Both Enforcement Notices Upheld

Tree Preservation Orders

Adjoining Footpath No 8, High Street, Taplow. (SBDC No 11) TPO 1992).

Unopposed Order re Hornbeam Trees to be confirmed.

Leisure and Environment Committee (9 March 1993)

Proposed River Thames Punting Club Championship Regatta

The Committee approved a request to use the Council's land at River Road to be made available to the Club on Saturday 4 September 1993.

Planning and Transportation Committee (10 March 1993)

Crossrail - Maidenhead Viaduct (*i.e. Brunel's Sounding Arch - Ed*).

The Committee expressed concern that a provision of the Bill, currently going through Parliament, "removed the need for Listed Building Consent to be obtained for works to listed railway buildings and structures on the Crossrail route." Thus, *overhead* (Ed's italics) electrification on the Bridge would not need application. The Committee noted that RBW&M had already objected and objected themselves.

Planning and Transportation Committee (7 April 1993)

Transport Policies and Programme (TPP) 1994/5

The representative from the County Engineer's office attended this Meeting and matters reported on included:-

- (b). **The A355 (Slough - Beaconsfield - Amersham) Road.** The Department of Transport had not supported the proposition to make this road a Primary Route, but it would remain an important route, though it was not signed as a route between the M40 and M4.
- "(c). There appeared to be no current prospect of the A4 between Maidenhead and Burnham being included in the five year programme of the TPP." (*This presumably refers to the widening programme - Ed*).
- (j) The County Council preferred concrete kerbstones except in Conservation Areas where granite setts were used. (*This doesn't seem to answer the point raised about kerbing at the meeting on 10 February - see above - Ed*).

Meca Liveries, Wooburn Common Road, Taplow

The planning permission, granted in 1986 for six loose boxes and ancillary buildings, included an agreement to limit the number of horses to 20; the owner now requested the legal agreement to be varied to allow 25 horses. The Committee decided to call for a comprehensive report to be submitted to the next Meeting.

oooOoooo

Planning Applications

*Planning decisions given by the SBDC
Planning & Transportation Committee*

The Minutes of this Committee from 20th October 1992 to 14th April 1993 have been studied and extracts are given below.

Taplow Lodge, Cliveden Road, Taplow (S/92/0026/FF). Demolition of existing Lodge and erection of 20 dwellings.	Conditional Permission
Land at Mill Lane, Taplow for Taplow Paper Mills Ltd (S/92/0701/FF). Erection of 6 metre high paper control/security fence to extended storage area.	Deferred
Shell Maidenhead Autos, Bath Road, Taplow (S/92/0354/AD). Erection of signs.	Deferred
Hazeldene, Marsh Lane, Taplow (S/92/0514/FF). Demolition of existing dwelling and erection of one three-bedroom house with attached double garage.	Deferred for Negotiation

Taplow Court, Cliveden Road, Taplow (S/92/0598/TP). Temporary
Erection of visitors' information centre for Nichiren Shoshu UK. Permission

Land at junction of Lake End Road & Bath Road (S/92/0576 & 7/00). Deferred
Construction of retail store for J Sainsbury PLC and Retention for
of Listed Building (Horse and Groom Public House) for use as Planning
coffee shop (ground floor) and offices (1st floor); relocation Obligation
of BT repeater station.

RESOLVED that Committee is concerned about road safety etc.

Horse and Groom Public House, Bath Road, Taplow (S/92/0832/TP). Deferred
Retention of 2.4m high security fence.

Land at junction of Lake End Road & Bath Road (S/92/0901/FF). Deferred
Erection of BT Repeater Station.

Editor's Note.

(a) At the same Meeting, it was RESOLVED that the Committee was prepared to grant planning permission for Application S/92/0576 & 7/00 for Sainsbury's HomeBase (shown above), subject to obligations (which were not stated) being carried out and that the decision was delegated to the Director of Planning Services.

(b) It is not clear to me why there are two applications - 0576 & 0577 - identical in every respect except for that one digit.

(c) Nor is it clear why the Resolution (too long to quote above) about allowing time for the Civil Aviation Authority to take action, while clearly appropriate to 0901 (the repeater station) is repeated, with identical wording, for 0832 (the fence) - both shown above.

Land between Huntswood Lane and Hitcham Lane, Taplow (S/90/0971/FF). Refused
Change of use to equestrian centre etc.

Days Gone Bye, Unit 14, The Bishop Centre, Bath Road, Taplow (S/90/0856/FF)
Single storey extension to antique shop. Deferred for Site Visit

The Bishop Centre, Bath Road, Taplow.

There are 10 applications by the Company starting with S/92/1006/FF; they are summarised below quoting last digit(s) of Number. All were:-

Deferred for Site Visit

No 6. Rebuilding garden centre.

No 7. Redevelop industrial area to provide new small businesses.

No 8. Remove existing retail display areas and replace with shop etc.

No 9. Convert shop to motor display unit etc.

No 10. Remove timber display building etc and replace with 2 shops.

No 11. Provide new independent access to car park at Bishop House.

No 12. Continue to use building as veterinary surgery.

No 13. Continue to use building for sale of musical instruments.

No 14. Continue to use building as a wine merchant.

No 15. Continue to use buildings for retail purposes.

Hill Farm, Hill Farm Road, Taplow (S/92/1003/FF). Deferred for
Demolition of farmhouse and conversion of barn to Site Visit
dwelling house.

Miscellany

Forthcoming Events

Village Green Party. This year the Party will be held on Saturday 19th June from 6pm to 10 pm as usual. The format and layout will be similar to previous years; you will receive details, with a booking form, but please note the date.

Annual General Meeting. This will be on Friday 15th October.

Low Energy Bulbs

This subject seems to run and run; the latest is that Which? has just done a report on the subject, called "Energy-Saving Light Bulbs". In the last Newsletter (page 7), I suggested using mechanical light-sensitive switches for these bulbs. My switch failed - twice - and, when I tried to get the second one replaced, I was told that the manufacturer had ceased production on account of the unit's lack of reliability. There now appears to be no way of using light-sensitive switches with low energy bulbs.

Another G.W.R. Anniversary

1985 was the 150th Anniversary of the birth of the Great Western Railway which runs through Taplow; now there is another anniversary. I am indebted to a magazine called "Steam Classic" for the details.

When Isambard Kingdom Brunel conceived the idea of a railway line from London to the West Country, he decided to build it to a Gauge of 7ft 0 $\frac{1}{2}$ in. This was defying convention for most of the other railway pioneers were using 4ft 8 $\frac{1}{2}$ in, which had originally sprung from the old colliery tramways in the North. These railways were mostly freight-based but Brunel intended to concentrate on passenger traffic, so he calculated that the wider gauge would result in a lower centre of gravity and gentler curves and gradients, making the GWR smoother and faster running. It is interesting to note that the same trackbed today has needed a minimum of modification to allow HSTs to use it.

Brunel had hoped that the advantages of the broad gauge, when proved in practice, would persuade other railway companies to follow suit. Unfortunately, not for the last time, vested interests were paramount and Brunel's railway became isolated from the rest of the country. Long distance journeys to or from broad gauge territory required changes of train purely to change gauge. This even caused the equivalent of modern traffic jams, especially at Gloucester, where passengers and freight changing gauge, caused immense problems.

The Government stepped in and, in 1846, established a Gauge Commission. After many trials, it was decided that, in future, all railways built would be to a standard gauge of 4ft 8 $\frac{1}{2}$ in. Brunel was allowed to complete construction of those lines already approved but, clearly, the writing was on the wall.

An attempt to stay execution was made by laying mixed gauge (see cover illustration) so that both standard and broad gauge trains could use the same route. This was clearly an expensive and impracticable solution, although the whole of the route from Paddington to Bristol, including Taplow, was converted. So, gradually the broad gauge rail was removed, finally converting the track to standard gauge; the conversion was finally completed on Monday 23rd May 1992, so this is its 100 year anniversary which is no cause for celebration.

The Editor apologises for this piece being a whole year late!