

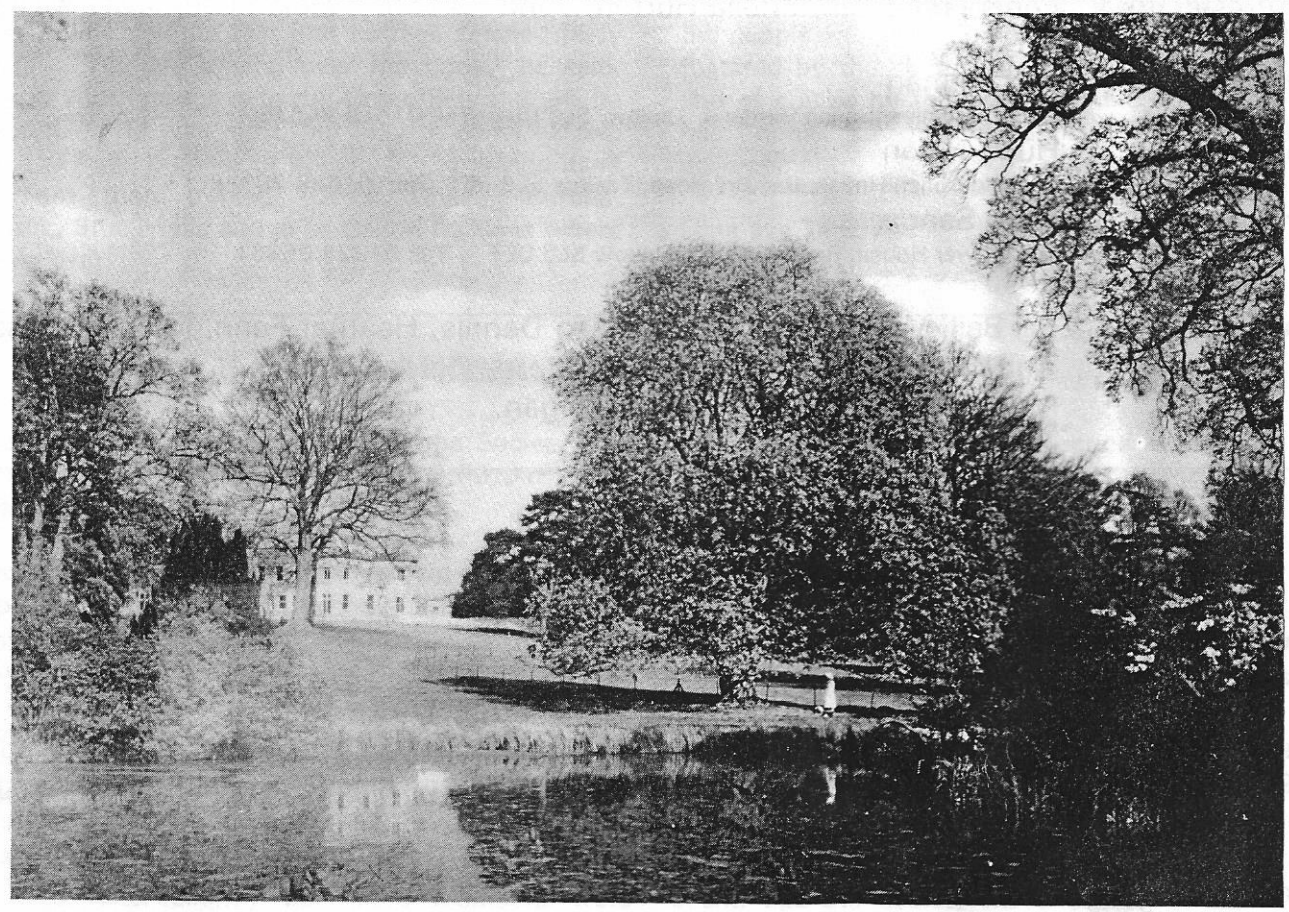
HAMBURY



# HITCHAM & TAPLOW PRESERVATION SOCIETY



A Society, formed in 1959, to protect Hitcham, Taplow and the surrounding countryside from being spoilt by bad development or neglect.



*1947 - BERRY HILL from behind its lake. See article page 5.  
At that time this handsome Georgian house was being converted into a country club.  
About twenty-five years later it burnt down and the present flats were built on the site.  
Work on the Flood Relief Channel is now causing a massive loss of trees in this beautiful park.*

# NEWSLETTER

No 68 - Spring 1997

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## HITCHAM AND TAPLOW PRESERVATION SOCIETY OFFICERS AND EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS

<b>President</b>	Anthony Hickman
<b>Vice Presidents</b>	Louis Freedman, Sheila Horton, John Kennedy, Helen Lee, Anne Milne
<b>Chairman</b>	Eva Lipman Upper Bumbles, Saxon Gardens, Taplow, SL6 0DD Tel: 01628 24626
<b>Treasurer</b>	Hugh Nixon The Old Coach House, Rectory Road, Taplow SL6 0ET Tel: 01628 70388
<b>Secretary</b>	Sally Sandy The Dower House, Rectory Road, Taplow SL6 0ET Tel: 01628 36351
<b>Committee</b>	Bill Ball, Valerie Boakes, Maureen Dennis, Heather Fenn, Michael Goss, Andy McKenzie, Leonard Miall, Barrie Peroni, Sheila Robson, Fred Russell, Derek Walker, Helen Wogan.

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## EDITORIAL

The Society has a new President. Dr John Kennedy, who was first elected President in 1991, retired at the last AGM. The Society is most grateful for his past leadership and is delighted to welcome him as a Vice-President.

His successor, Tony Hickman FRIBA, is a Justice of the Peace. He was Chairman of the Society 1979-83 and has served for many years as the Planning Watchman, carefully scrutinising the planning applications and suggesting points on which the Executive Committee should inquire further. He penned that challenging open letter to the Arab owner of Dropmore, to which he has had no response so far.

Tony Hickman was trained at the Kingston School of Architecture. He designed the additions to the St George's Choir School at Windsor. He has two commendations from the Civic Trust and one from the Financial Times Industrial Architecture Award. He is the Secretary-General of the Franco-British Union of Architects and a Chevalier of the Order of Palmes Academiques.

Tony's wife, Brenda, is a skilled dress designer. She and her parents, returned from India in 1954 to live in River Road, Taplow. The Hickmans were married in 1962, moved from London to Cedar Chase in 1971 and then to Hill Farm Road in 1982. They are both active at St Nicolas Church where he planned the recent alterations to the entry hall. He also designed the enlarged parish room at the back of St Mary's Church, Hitcham.

**Leonard Miall**

Maryfield Cottage, High Street, Taplow SL6 0EX Tel: 01628 604195 Fax: 01628 663621

## A TAPLOW HALF-CENTURY

Lincoln Lee

In 1947, when we paid more than £3,000 for our first house in Taplow at the foot of Berry Hill, older relatives were shocked. 'Don't pay that sort of price for a three-bedroomed cottage,' they exclaimed, 'by next year you'll only be asked the pre-war price of about £600.' They were wrong.

What else has changed in 50 years? For a start, Taplow is no longer the barbed-wire capital of the world. In 1947 countless mountains of the stuff stood around the railway station. And it really was a railway station at that time - the service offered today bears no comparison. And few of us were disturbed by aircraft noise: northbound aircraft climbed out over the Slough Trading Estate.

The man who sold us that first cottage seemed fairly realistic. 'You are paying over the odds,' he said, 'because your cottage is in the Green Belt and will be protected.' He was right, but only to some extent. Since 1947 the number of houses in the village itself has more than trebled (Cedar Chase, Buffins, Wellbank, Stockwells and even Saxon Gardens where we now live).

Sadly, the few shops in the village itself have vanished, but that has been more of a national than a local change. The school is far bigger (and better) than it was, but perhaps the biggest single change has been the motor-car. In 1947 there was no talk about traffic calming, and only a score of cars daily seemed to use Berry Hill, despite the Canadian Red Cross hospital at Cliveden. Today, especially since a weight limit was imposed on Cookham bridge, the local roads are given enormous use, while the Bath Road and Institute Road seem to have thousands of cars for sale. Slowly, but slowly, the Green Belt is eroding away. Perhaps people need the money.

Never mind, Taplow is still a nice place to live. When we go out for a walk we can recognize most of the people we meet. There is a sense of community, fostered by the church, the Parish Council, SGI-UK, and of course by this society, which over the years has done so much to help control absurd development.

Long live Taplow!

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## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The 37th Annual General Meeting of the Society was held on Friday 4th October 1996 at 8.00 pm in the Village Centre Taplow.

Anthony Hickman was elected President in succession to John Kennedy. Dr Kennedy was elected as Vice-President, together with Louis Freedman, Sheila Horton, Helen Lee and Anne Milne. The meeting noted with regret the recent death of Eileen Law, one of the longest serving Vice-Presidents, at the age of 90. The Chairman, Treasurer, Secretary and Executive Committee members were re-elected (see page 2).

The Treasurer, Hugh Nixon, reported that subscriptions had risen slightly but more members were needed. There had been an improved surplus from the Village Green Party. £500 had been given to the Church Spire Fund and £160 had been spent on cleaning up the Old Churchyard.

Eva Lipman, Chairman, reported on some of the main activities of the Society, which she likened to a fire brigade. It might not have too much to do, but it kept watch and was ready for action if needed.

Planning applications had been carefully scrutinised and comments had been sent to the planning authorities. The Society had supported the work of the Parish Council in connection with local traffic calming and had written letters to the County on the subject. As a result of pressure from the Society the New Tap-

low Paper Mill had put into practice a voluntary code for the better behaviour of their lorries.

Derek Walker had been active on the Society's behalf making representations concerning Terminal 5 at London Airport, aircraft noise, and related subjects. The Newsletter had been successfully restarted after an interval of two years.

The Village Green Party, run by Fred Russell, Hugh Nixon and Mike Goss, with help on the ticket front from Catherine Lloyd, had been very successful. The weather had been kind and all had enjoyed it. Over £400 was raised for the Thames Valley Hospice at the event, and the Society made a profit of £300 after giving donations of £40 each to the St John's Ambulance Brigade and to the Police, and £50 to the Boy Scouts.

The Society had for some years been clearing grass from the gravestones in the Old Churchyard, now established as National Heritage Site Number 19050, and had authorised the destruction of saplings which were dislodging some of the stones. The Celtic Cross in the Old Churchyard was in urgent need of repair. She outlined the work that she was doing to raise the necessary funding.

Tony Hickman thanked Eva Lipman, saying that she was too modest to mention all the things that she had personally done.

# Village Green Party - Saturday 21st June 1997

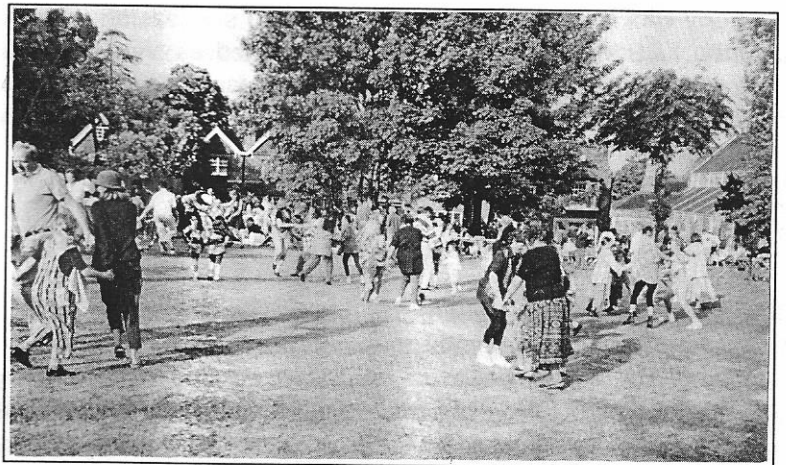
6.00 pm - 10.00 pm

*Bring the family and friends,  
your own drinks and picnic -*



*and enjoy the  
Ox & Pork Roast and  
barbecue.*

*Music and country  
dancing with  
Mike Sanderson  
and his Musicians*



Tickets are available from Mrs Humphrey Lloyd, St Nicolas House, Rectory Road, Taplow.

Entrance Fee	Members £1.00	Non-members £2.50
Roast Ox/Pork	Early purchase £2.50	On the day £3.00
Barbecue	Early purchase £1.50	On the day £2.00

Please use the booking form on the accompanying flier.

# VILLAGE GREEN PARTY

Saturday 21st June 1997

## HITCHAM & TAPLOW PRESERVATION SOCIETY

The Society's Village Green Party for members and friends will be held on Saturday 21st June 1997 from 6.00 p.m. until 10.00 p.m.. Music and Country Dancing will be provided as usual by Mike Sanderson and his Musicians. This year the raffle will be held in aid of the restoration of the Celtic Cross Memorial near the Saxon barrow in the Old Churchyard.

There will be an **ox and pork spit roast** and a **barbecue**. Please bring your own drinks, but **do not bring glasses onto the village green**. Free plastic beakers will be available.

*Parents are responsible for their children*, and we would particularly point out the danger of the *road* and the *fire*. No cars, bikes, or ball games on the village green, please.

**TICKETS** There is an early purchase discount for each spit-roast/barbecue ticket bought before Monday 16th June. Please pre-purchase early to avoid disappointment, as food tickets are limited.

	Early	On day
Roast ox/pork (including roll and relishes)	£2.50	£3.00
Barbecue (2 pork sausages or one lambburger including roll & relishes)	£1.50	£2.00

The entrance fee, to cover the cost of the band is: Members £1, Non-Members £2.50  
Children 12 or under free

To obtain your tickets, please complete the lower portion of this leaflet, and send it, enclosing *payment and stamped addressed envelope to: Mrs H. A. Lloyd*. (If you do not enclose a SAE, you may collect your tickets at the party)

✂

To: Mrs H. A. Lloyd, St Nicolas' House, Rectory Road, Taplow, SL6 0ET  
**Village Green Party, Saturday 21st June 1997**

Please send me:

<input type="checkbox"/> Roast Beef tickets @ £2.50 each	£.....
<input type="checkbox"/> Roast pork tickets @ £2.50 each	£.....
<input type="checkbox"/> Barbecue tickets @ £1.50 each	£.....
<input type="checkbox"/> Entrance tickets per Member @ £1	£.....
<input type="checkbox"/> Entrance tickets per Non-member @ £2.50	£.....
<input type="checkbox"/> Membership subscription (min £3.00 per household if not already paid)	£.....

**TOTAL ENCLOSED** £.....

I enclose my cheque payable to **Hitcham and Taplow Preservation Society** and SAE.

I wish to become/ am already\* a member of the Society. \* Please delete as appropriate

I am/am not\* prepared to help on the day.

Name .....Address .....

.....

# DIARY DATES FOR 1997

**Village Green Party** Saturday 21 June 6.00 pm - 10.00 pm

**Cliveden Open Air Theatre Festival** *Much Ado About Nothing* - Wed. 25 June - Sunday 29 June  
*Love's Labours Lost* - Wed. 2 July - Sunday 6 July

All performances begin at 7.30 pm. Booking forms: Tel 01628 605069

**AGM** Friday 17 October 8.00 pm at Taplow Village Centre followed by a talk on the Thames Salmon Rehabilitation Scheme by Lindsay Richardson, Fisheries Officer.

## TAPLOW'S ANGLO-SAXON CHURCH

The remains of an early Anglo-Saxon Church near the mound in Taplow were identified by two English Heritage archaeologists, David Stocker and David Went, in the summer of 1995. David Went described their work in an illustrated talk to the Hitcham and Taplow Preservation Society following the 1996 Annual General Meeting.

He recalled that in the Bronze and Iron Ages, two thousand years or more before Christ, the important trends, here in the Chilterns, were the clearance of forests, the spread of farming and the formation of strong agricultural communities. The burial mounds or barrows, and the development of hillforts across the region, pointed to social organisation, not as villages but as small farms and hamlets. They were tribal centres, places to meet, store surplus food, conduct social activities and to trade.

After the Roman invasion of Britain in the 1st century AD the religion they brought with them was not imposed on the native population, although the Druid orders were suppressed as they provided the rallying point for pockets of resistance. Many cults came and went during the Roman Empire, but one of the most sweeping changes was Christianity. It was first regarded by society as a belief fit only for slaves, who could comfort themselves with the thought that everyone would be equal in the afterlife. It was also regarded as a dangerous cult.

However under the Emperor Constantine in the 320-330s Christianity became the official religion of the Roman Empire. In Britain it was primarily an urban religion and it is in towns such as Canterbury, St

Albans and Lincoln that the remains of our earliest churches have been found. Typical church features of the period are a long undivided nave with the altar end, to the east, marked by an apse.

The original parish church at Taplow stood within the grounds of Taplow Court adjacent to the burial mound, and it had been noted that this proximity

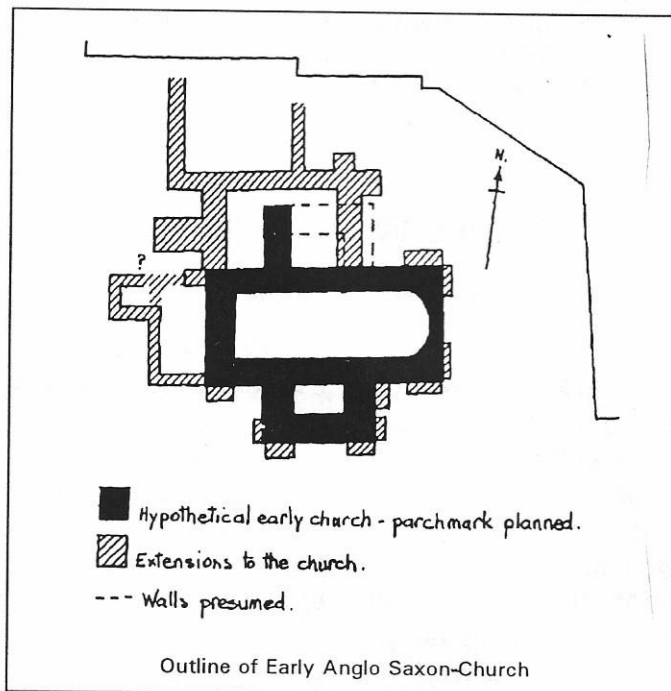
might imply an Anglo-Saxon origin. In the past, parchmarks had noted the location of an early church, but it had been generally assumed to be a thirteenth century structure.

David Went recalled that in June 1995 he had been asked to update the English Heritage Ancient Monument records for the Taplow mound. He came with his colleague David Stocker an expert in the Anglo-Saxon period. May and June that year had been dry; then recent showers provided ideal conditions for the parchmarks to appear. He

showed photographs of the parchmarks in the Old Graveyard which indicated clearly that the underlying foundations of the walls bore very little resemblance to the 1815 illustration of the medieval church now on display in the present Church of St Nicolas' (which was reproduced on the cover of Newsletter 67).

The most obvious difference was the size of the structure, only half the length depicted in the 1815 drawing. (*See illustration above.*)

There were buttresses at the angles, which did not appear in the illustration of the medieval church. There was an apse at the east end, and the walls, nearly 2 metres thick in places, were much wider than normal for a 13th century parish church.



David Went and David Stocker were in no doubt that the main part of the pattern was characteristic of an early Anglo-Saxon church, similar to ones at Thetford, Bradford on Avon and Winchester, and particularly to Reculver in Kent. There a 7th century church plan within the later monastic church, with porticos, nave and apse, was much like the Taplow parchmark. So, although they had not yet excavated the Old Graveyard, there were clues to the existence of remains of a Saxon Church certainly predating the Viking invasions of the 9th century, and probably constructed some-time in the 7th or 8th century.

He ended his talk by recalling that Pope Gregory sent letters of instruction to St Augustine telling him not to destroy the temples of the pagan English but to convert them into churches. Perhaps Birinus on his mission to the west Saxons in the 630s might have followed a similar tactic, and, having established his see in Dorchester in 635, turned his attention to the most significant pagan centre in the area - Taplow.

It might be, David Went speculated, that there were still vague memories of some ritual significance at Taplow, dating back to the Iron Age, when it might have formed part of that string of earthwork enclosures alongside the Thames. This importance would have been lost with the establishment of Roman towns and villas, but it gained a similar

importance in the early Saxon period, with the return to a scattered settlement pattern. It was here that one of the great Saxon nobles had left his mark on the landscape, proclaiming the authority of his family, with Kentish connections, over a principal trade route. The construction of the barrow did not signal the end of ritual activity, and almost certainly spawned a cemetery wherein others were buried in pagan fashion.

Into this arena stepped possibly Birinus himself, as tradition held that he baptised converts at the nearby Bapsey pond. The site was crying out for a church in order to draw the Saxon souls away from their pagan practices. Taplow still fell under the authority of the family whose ancestor occupied the barrow. Those buried there may well be his descendants, but nothing was left of his physical remains, and modern genetics was not going to solve this mystery.

The conclusion, David Went declared, is that the chambers are part of an early church tradition emanating from the Kentish region. The shape of the church itself is a reflection of Roman architecture borrowed in the 4th century, exiled from Britain in the 5th, and returned by Augustine, Birinus and their contemporaries in the 7th century, set on a hill in Buckinghamshire in the shadow of a recent pagan burial ground.

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## TAPLOW JOTTINGS

Lincoln Lee

### ICE-HOUSES

Perhaps it was a mistake to write in Newsletter 67 about the long-since destroyed Mill Lane ice-house. It led to many people mentioning others. One ice-house still exists close to the centre of Taplow Village. Its exact location is not being revealed here because it also looks dangerous. Given a little encouragement the upper part might collapse. There is another nearby ice-house at Castle Hill in Maidenhead. But where was the associated stately home? The wiseacres have an answer for that: the ice-house was built for a fishmonger.

### BERRY HILL

Where did its name come from? The theories I have heard are:

Strawberry Hill (as shown on an old postcard)

Berry Hill (because of the blackberries and hawthorn berries etc.)

Bury Hill (from the old graveyard where villagers were buried)

Burgh Hill (because of the old fortification, as in Canterbury)

Barrow's Hill (because it went towards the Saxon mound or barrow).

### GRAVESTONES

I recently counted about 85 gravestones in the Old Graveyard adjoining the mound. The inscription on many of them was unreadable, but about 18 carried a skull and cross-bones.

I have long held the theory that the skull and crossbones was not put on gravestones until the Great Plague. It was then thought advisable to carve the somewhat gruesome sign on the stone of anybody considered to have died of the plague to deter grave-robbers and so reduce the risk of infection.

The Great Plague began in London in 1665. The oldest Taplow stone with the skull and crossbones appears to be 1671. The latest is dated 1738. The Plague itself did not last until then, but fashion is fashion. You can almost hear an old stone-mason saying: 'I can do you a nice skull and crossbones to discourage grave-robbers for an extra guinea'.

That is only my theory. The Reverend Alan Dibden does not agree. Any other views?

## LEA RIG

*Lea Rig, the house adjoining Poplar Farm on Hitcham Road, was the birthplace in 1959 of the Hitcham and Taplow Preservation Society. It then belonged to Dr M.A.T. Rogers. As often in Taplow, it all had to do with gravel. Residents of Hitcham and Taplow had received with dismay the news that Poplar Farm was to be the scene of a huge extraction of gravel for building the M4. There had been no previous warning. Dr Rogers suggested the formation of a Preservation Society, so that we should never again be caught unprepared. A special meeting was called in the Women's Institute Hall. The support was most encouraging. The Society was organised, Maurice Rogers became the Chairman and Lorna Miall the first Secretary. Viscount Astor, the owner of Cliveden, was invited to be President. An immediate task was to monitor the activities of the contractors on the Poplar Farm site. They were treating the conditions that had been imposed, such as the replacement of topsoil, in a cavalier fashion. There ensued a long fight to see that the conditions were strictly enforced, and that the land surrounding Poplar Farm was restored as a pasture and not left as an abandoned gravel pit.*

*Dick Nutt, later Secretary of the Society, who bought Lea Rig from Dr Rogers in 1973, traces the history of the house.*

I have recently been through all the conveyances - some original, some old, faded and largely illegible copies - from the first one showing this whole area as a Glebe field in 1920 to our own purchase in 1973.

On 13 September 1920 a Glebe field, including what is now the whole of John Shepherd's farms down to Poplar Cottages, was sold by Hitcham Church to a Mrs Jane Murdock Dykes. The actual Vendors were the Rector of Hitcham, the Ecclesiastical Commissioners and two Patrons (Lord Boston and Lord Desborough). The price was £1,800 and the area was given as 27 acres, 1 rood and 23 poles. Mrs Dykes died on 4 February 1950. It is apparent that Mrs Dykes built not only Lea Rig plus the outhouses (except perhaps the coal/oil store) as now, but also the farm bungalow (which the current owner, John Shepherd, replaced with his current chalet style home), the old farm buildings and Lea Rig Cottages (later called Poplar Cottages). She must have added the conservatory, as an after-thought.

The executors of Mrs Dykes ordered a sale by auction on 17 May 1950 which appears to have been unsuccessful and the house was subsequently sold on 1 Dec that year to Mr Ballard, a garage proprietor, for £9000. He only kept the property for 10 months and made a profit of £2,850 - 31%! The purchasers, John Shepherd's parents, only stayed for 7 years. On 9 July 1958, they then sold the house and garden for £6,500 to Dr M.A.T. Rogers, keeping all the land and the farm buildings as we know it today. In the agreement the details about the drive and the cesspool are mentioned for the first time.

Soon after Maurice Rogers bought the property, the contractors started digging gravel for the new M4 from the fields to the South and West causing considerable disturbance and instigating the Society as mentioned above. In July 1967, Dr. Rogers had "UFoam" inserted into the cavity of the ground floor walls - he was a director of ICI Paints in Slough - so perhaps this was a test (or a perk).

### Last Sale

The conveyance to us is dated 12 Jan 1973; the price was £31,500. Dr. Rogers took with him the greenhouse which was just behind the garage; it was wired and had piped water. Apart from disconnecting the Agamatic (hot water and partial central heating) and putting in the present central heating, which later was modified to provide the hot water as well, the only other alteration (done with the help of my son and son-in-law one Easter) was the removal and making good of the conservatory. Minor alterations include quite a lot of wiring, under-stairs cupboard and sockets in bedroom, hall and (with proper lighting) in the oil/coal store. All outside electrical circuits are now protected by Residual Current-operated Circuit Breakers (RCCB). A lot of the glass in external doors has been replaced with laminated glass to improve security and as a safety precaution for grand-children.

### The House Name

One of the plans is confusingly headed "Poplars Farm House", whereas in the body of the conveyance, the house is referred to as "Lea-Rig". In the final conveyance the house is "Learig". In all previous conveyances, it is "Lea Rig" which I adopted some time ago.



## PLANNING

The Minutes of the SBCD Planning & Transportation Committee from 22 October 1996 to 19 February 1997 have been studied and extracts are given below.

**The Feathers Public House, Cliveden Road, Taplow.** Conditional permission was given for the retention of postmounted floodlights, decorative lamp-posts and bollard lights.

**Land north of New Taplow Paper Mills, Mill Lane.** Effluent treatment plant and formation of vehicular access. The application by the St Regis Paper Co Ltd was deferred and the decision to grant conditional permission was delegated to the Director of Planning Services, subject to the further views of Thames Water Utilities Ltd. Later, conditional permission was given for the construction of a pumping station chamber, erection of pumping station control desk and laying of above ground pipework and ducting.

**2 Taplow Road, Burnham.** The proposal to provide parking facilities for the existing two shops and one flat over, a variation of conditions of the planning permission, was deferred for negotiations.

**1 Orkney Court, Cliveden Road, Taplow.** Permission for Mr & Mrs Haste to add a rear conservatory was refused.

**Boundary Road Farm and Riding School, Taplow.** Mr F. Morris's application to erect an office/reception building was given conditional permission after a site visit.

**Plot 44, Boundary Road, Taplow.** Mr G.S.Loyal's appeal against the decision refusing him permission to erect a fence around this plot and to make access to it from Boundary Road was given conditional consent. The Society has written to SBCD drawing its attention to the policy on fences spoiling the Green Belt, and opposing further access to a narrow and dangerous part of Boundary Road.

**Taplow Service Station, Bath Road, Taplow.** Texaco has been granted conditional consent to erect illuminated and non-illuminated signs.

**Shell Maidenhead, Bath Road, Taplow.** Shell has also been granted conditional consent to erect illuminated and non-illuminated signs.

**The Dumb Bell, Bath Road, Taplow.** The application for an internally illuminated sign was dismissed but the application for two non-illuminated logo and amenity signs was allowed.

**The Old Malt House, Rectory Road, Taplow.** A preservation order on the Cedar Tree has been confirmed.

**Taplow Lodge, Cliveden Road, Taplow.** Berkeley Homes were refused permission to relax conditions of their planning permission to allow the erection of fencing and hedging.

**Pax Cottage, High Street, Taplow.** Mr P Jeffries was refused permission to erect a conservatory on the south elevation adjoining the village green.

**Bishop Centre, Bath Road, Taplow.** Construction of parking areas and an access road onto Station Road was deferred for planning obligation.

**Huntswood Golf Course, Taplow Common Road, Taplow.** Applications for the retention of entrance walls and externally illuminated entrance wall signs were deferred for a site visit.

## SUBSCRIPTIONS

Annual subscriptions (now £3.00 per member) are due by 1st October. Cheques payable to Hitcham & Taplow Preservation Society should be sent to: Hugh Nixon, Treasurer, HTPS, (address on page 2) who will gladly provide trouble saving Bankers Order Forms.

Unless otherwise stated, the views expressed in the Newsletter are not necessarily those of the Society or its Committee. The Newsletter is published by the Hitcham and Taplow Preservation Society. It is edited by Leonard Miall who welcomes contributions and is printed for duplication by Ginny Felton, 21 Byways, Burnham, SL1 7EB Tel: 602972