

Hitcham and Taplow Society

Newsletter 118: Autumn 2022
£3.50 to non-members

www.taplowsociety.org.uk



Hitcham and Taplow Society

Formed in 1959 to protect Hitcham, Taplow and the surrounding countryside from being spoilt by bad development and neglect.

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Cover picture: The High Street Jubilee Party by Tim Browning
Other pictures by Roger Worthington if not specifically credited

Editorial

After such a long time of lock-downs, miseries and frustrations, the summer started in fine style with not just one but many party celebrations of the Queens' Platinum Jubilee – the fun can be seen on our front cover and in the following pages. And so quickly followed by the return of the Village Green Party. But all too soon we had the sadness of the passing of our beloved Queen. We are truly grateful for her example of calm continuity and steadfastness. She leaves us at a time of greater uncertainty that most of us have experienced in our lifetime.

At a more mundane level the new government may yet again change the planning system, giving our Council an ever-harder job in producing a new Local Plan while they also struggle to agree new ward boundaries.

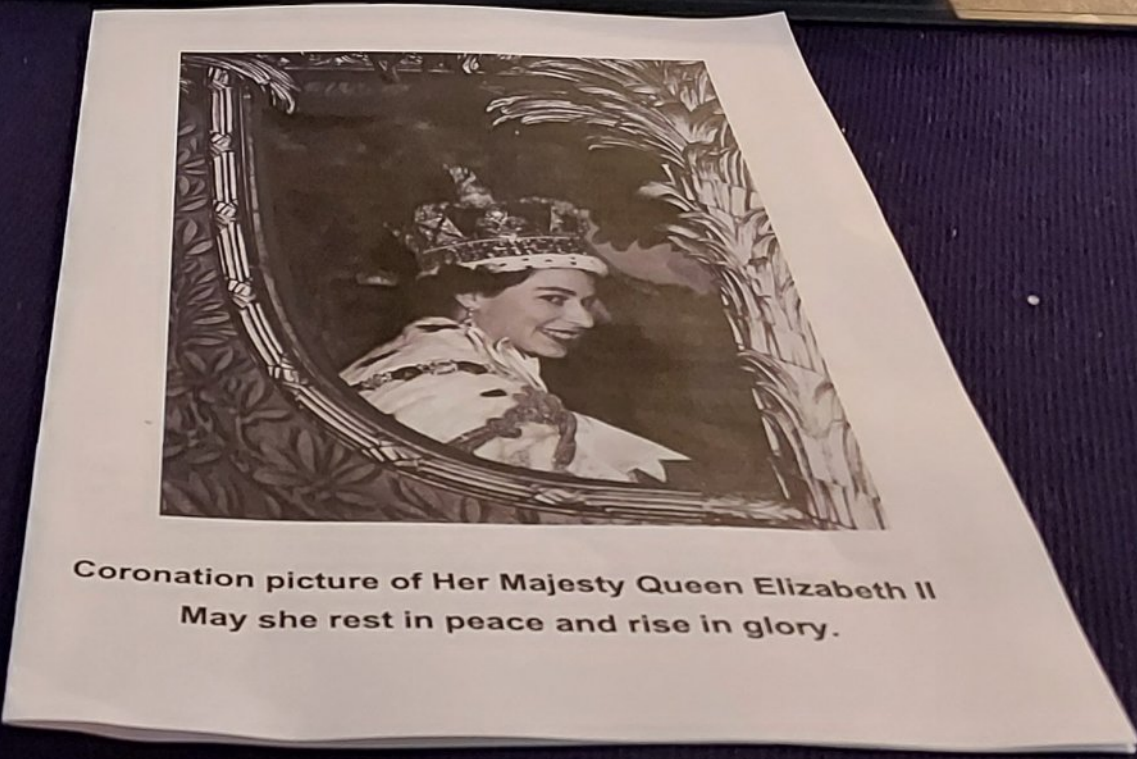
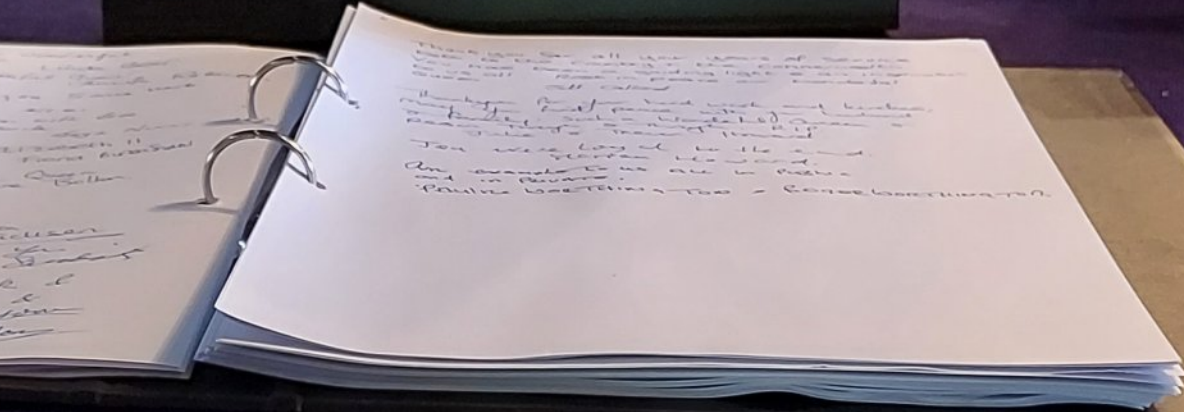
Please note that the AGM is on a Wednesday to make attendance easier as we get towards Christmas.

AGM

**20:00 Wednesday
7th December 2022**

Taplow Village Hall

www.taplowsociety.org.uk



**Coronation picture of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II
May she rest in peace and rise in glory.**

At 8pm on Sunday 18th September many people gathered on the Village Green to hold a minute's silence in memory of the Queen



Platinum Jubilee celebrations for the Queen were held right across Taplow, reflecting a general happiness in her long life. Centre stage was, perhaps, the closure of the High Street for a street party but many other areas were not to be outdone. Cliveden Gages held a Hog Roast and River Road made use of an empty house and large garden for a wide spread feast and games. (Entirely with the permission and presence of the owners of course).

Pictures by Penny Watson, Nigel Smales and Roger Worthington







Village Green Party

After a two year lay-off there were worries as to what we might have forgotten but Rupert Sellers delivered a masterly result. This was in spite of a horrendous downpour and high wind as we opened at 6pm, soaking everything and blowing about paperwork and table coverings. Miraculously it cleared very quickly and Taplovians were undeterred, dancing going on till after dark. Thanks again to the large team of volunteers who make it all possible.



Ukraine Family



Алена Мельник – our Ukrainian guest together with her two children Dasha aged 3 and Misha aged nearly 6.

They arrived in the UK in April and stayed with a family locally. Initially everything was fine, they had one room that they could call their own but as time went by the lack of privacy became a problem. So on September 1st they came to us where, owing to the shape of our house, we could offer them three rooms at one end of the house and share use of the kitchen. This works well because our meal times are usually different; also there are two tables so when we do eat at the same time they have their own table. A friend

kindly loaned us a spare refrigerator for them and one shelf of the freezer was made available to them.

A part of the garden is allocated for their use and we have put up a temporary fence so that the youngsters have a boundary. The swing has been resurrected and they have a garden table and chairs. Our five year old Labrador is very happy with the attention he gets from our guests

Perhaps we have been lucky because our family consists of a well-educated mother and two well behaved children. She is a photographer and has a photo exhibition in Holtspur church hall. The boy, Misha, goes to primary school and Dasha goes to a nursery in Burnham. They are very little trouble and it is a pleasure to have some life in a part of the house that is frequently empty. One hears of Ukrainians with no word of English and of stropy teenagers which would be more difficult. It is a joy to hear our mother improving her English rapidly and she has used the expression "bon appetit" a couple of times when it was entirely appropriate. We can offer some help just by talking and hope that our English is of good quality to help her grasp our peculiar and awkward idiomatic language. We have done "washing up" so still have to cover: wash in, wash out, wash through, wash down, etc.

We get help from various people such as "Homes for Ukraine" and Buckinghamshire Council provide a Sponsor Liaison Area Lead Officer, a Sponsor Liaison Officer and a Business Support Officer. From our location we tend to look towards Maidenhead where the Synagogue organises much support for Ukrainians but as things are organised on a county basis we can't take advantage of the help offered there.

Robert Hanbury

Our Man in Windsor



Nigel Smales being thanked for the work of the Ceremonial Wardens at the Queen's funeral by the Princess of Wales. Full frontal included for doubters.



Planning matters

The autumn sees us still much in the dark as to the exact nature of planning policy as a new prime minister takes over with a significant set of hot potatoes to handle. Will we still be doing our sums based on 2014 data? The recent upheavals and shortages in supply chains, together with high inflation are hitting the building business. A recent article in the Maidenhead Advertiser reported on the dramatic drop in building land value with the price of the Magnet Centre land dropping from an earlier agreed figure of £26.68m to £15.75, apparently all due to surging building costs for energy, labour and materials. This surely points to price rises for housing and reductions in the number built. The September introduction of new energy efficiency standards will drive this further. As we go to press, the new "GROWTH PLAN 2022" promises sweeping changes. As ever there never seems to be a bad time to own a house.



I assumed that the introduction of a Special Planning Document covering the impact on Burnham Beeches of development in the wider area was a neat device for raising some funds from all and any new building in the area and a way of blocking major development. A recent refusal of a planning application in Taplow showed it is taken seriously for quite modest building activity. The application sought to demolish a 19th century Coach House to be replaced by a new residence. The application was rejected on Green Belt grounds primarily but also as follows:

"2. The occupants of the proposal would add to the recreational disturbance of the Burnham Beeches Special Area of Conservation as the proposal would not contribute satisfactorily to mitigate its impacts in this respect."



Old Coach House behind Cranford House on Boundary Road

Another matter touched on in this same application was the consideration of the Local Heritage Asset status of the Coach House. To date no applications for this status have yet been approved, despite the Taplow Neighbourhood Plan Working Party having submitted qualified candidates over six months ago. We are told that decisions will be made later in the year although at the time of writing there is not much of the year left.

Planning applicants can benefit by paying for pre-application advice from the Planning Officers before submitting expensive applications. This can obviously be beneficial but can leave a worry that the officer concerned is then forced to defend his position during the following consultation. A recent case in Taplow raised the opposite concern. Pre-application advice was that the application would be acceptable on three grounds of concern – Green Belt, Overbearing nature, scale of extension. When the application was then made it was then turned down on all three of these grounds. The applicant is less than amused.

The government planning system now allows for local authorities to write Design Codes into the Local Plan, to ensure that developments reflect a harmony with their surroundings and to generally place higher standards on developers. In the Taplow area there are many differing styles of housing but a key characteristic is a generally strong presence of large English hardwood trees. Developers now often plant trees but invariably they are of modest dimensions to avoid taking up space. The otherwise excellent Mill Lane development is a case in point. The Jubilee Lane entrance road is tree lined but nothing in comparison with the horse chestnuts cut down to create this entrance.

Would it not be a good design standard to require a presumption in favour of large hardwood trees in new developments to ensure this harmony?



Current BUA plans for new ward boundaries put Taplow and Dorney into a chunk of Burnham, separating Burnham across two wards. What about asking for Taplow and Dorney to be a single member ward and reuniting all Burnham as a two member ward?

A by-product of Taplows' rural aspect is that every year there are serious overgrowths of hedges and overhangs of trees that block footpaths and pavements, often forcing pedestrians into the road. These overgrowths are the responsibility of the individual property owners but every year the Parish Council is inundated with complaints that "something must be done", the school in particular being concerned about children walking to school. The Parish can write to owners reminding them of their responsibilities but it is a slow process to reach a point where the Unitary Authority can clear the overgrowth and charge the owner for the work. It would be so much better if owners (Network Rail being a persistent offender on Approach Road) maintained their property properly.



When the planning permission for the Jubilee River was granted the approval included public car parks adjacent to the new waterway and specifically one by the weir on Mill Lane. For its own purposes the Environmental Agency has now closed this car park to the public. As a change of use of the site should they not have applied for planning permission to do so? They only applied for permission to build fences around it. Government agencies clearly write their own rules.



Sea Cadets



Maidenhead Sea Cadets, like most of Maidenhead's river activities, is of course in Taplow but happily on becoming a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) they renamed themselves Maidenhead and

Taplow Sea Cadets earlier this year. The AGM in September in the presence of their president Rt Hon Theresa May MP was a good time to update us on their activities.

Life had been rather uncertain back in 2015 when the Mill Lane redevelopment was being planned but generously Berkeley Homes offered them the ownership of their site on Pages Wharf. Initially a lease, it is slowly progressing to freehold through a rather tortuous process involving National Grid (aka Centrica, aka North Thames Gas Board) the original owners of the site. This inspired the Sea Cadets to apply for planning permission for a new building which was duly approved in 2020. The existing buildings are in a parlous state having originally been built by volunteers using mainly reclaimed materials but are now very near end of life. A new

building would allow them to cater for more than the current 45 cadets as they actually cover a wide area across both Buckinghamshire and Berkshire. Even with all efficiencies and attention to costs this will be dauntingly expensive and much effort is now going into the planning of fund-raising.



A glance at their trophy cabinets shows how successful the unit is in its mission to develop young peoples' capabilities, through nautical adventure and fun based on the customs and traditions of the Royal Navy and new facilities are vital to continue this work. We wish them well.



HTS at Taplow House

Our Spring issue covered the changes being made at Taplow House.



The Hotel was considering how best to make their change in focus known across the Taplow area and in later conversation we agreed that one useful approach would be to hold an

open evening for the Society. The event was arranged for August 18th and was well attended by some 60 members. The good weather tempted us all out onto the terrace where we were excellently entertained with canapes and prosecco. Meanwhile small groups were given guided tours of the new facilities. Our thanks to Hannah Foxwell and Taplow House staff for their generous entertainment.



Welcome back to Taplow Court!

After two years of being closed during the lockdown, we have been delighted to welcome back once again visitors to Taplow Court during the summer. We arranged more open days than usual to cope with the numbers of people keen to enjoy the gardens and see round the house, as well as picnic in the grounds or have a cream tea in the canteen. Phil Rollinson, our head gardener, and his team have done a wonderful job developing the gardens, planting trees and ensuring that the most appropriate plants are introduced which will best respond to the warming temperatures.

This summer we welcomed HE Pisanu Suvanajata, the Thai ambassador to the UK, and a delegation from the embassy for tea at Taplow Court to commemorate the 125th anniversary of when the King of Siam, King Chulalongkorn, rented Taplow Court from William Grenfell in 1897. The king spent a few months in Europe while he researched how to modernise his country, and Taplow Court was the perfect place for him to use as a base in the UK. He had a number of sons studying at Eton and was able to host various events here. He presented a brass rice bowl from the royal dining table as a trophy to the local athletics club, which has been kept by St Nicolas' School up to this year, when the school kindly donated the King of Siam's Cup for SGI-UK to keep at Taplow Court as a token of gratitude for when we hosted part of the school when classrooms were out of action following a flood.

This year the estate has been designated as a Local Wildlife Site by Buckinghamshire Council because of the interesting and rare varieties of flora and fauna, including moss and fungi, that can be found around the grounds.

The next public open days will start again in the Spring, so please keep an eye on the What's On pages of our website, which is also a good place to get information about Nichiren Buddhism in the UK. www.sgi-uk.org

Robert Harrap, General Director SGI-UK



Work In Progress

Adrian Powell has started the work of adding the Second World War names to our War Memorial. We have agreed the details of layout and fonts and Adrian is working through the individual names. Work is slow and painstaking, with the carving being at an uncomfortable height, cutting into a hard but good weathering limestone



The restoration cost for the Celtic Cross is below the threshold for support from the Heritage Lottery Fund but they are sending us some other possible sources. English Heritage and Historic England no longer offer funding.

Dismantling of the Old Boathouse itself to be rebuilt as accommodation. The dismantling was done by specialist company McCurdy & Co to ensure both the preservation of the fragile framework and the successful reassembly of the myriad parts.



Nigel Smales



The Taplow Boatyard is rising from the ground. Not to be confused with the "Old Boathouse" next door or the "Boathouse at Boulter's Lock" down the road!

Work not in progress

The replacement of the Jubilee River footbridge has no completion date due to lack of funding (2023? 2024??)

How many electricians does it take to change a water pipe?



The water supply to the Village Hall burst underneath the hall after many weeks of leaking. Bookings had to be cancelled and the Playgroup decamped following a very kind offer of support from SGI-UK at Taplow Court. Solution was to drive a new pipe round three sides of the building and enter directly to the kitchen.

Simple? Well no. Lanes, the contractors, carefully found the location of the electric mains cable and proceeded to tunnel under it. Sadly the cable had previously been repaired with a new piece of cable buried in tar and running below the apparent cable. One very large flash and a very

astonished operator later there was no electricity to the hall either.

Panic set in when the electricians first diagnosis was that the break was too close to the wall of the hall to be safely spliced so they would have to excavate a new cable under the hall to the office! However a senior engineer gave the all clear and everything finally got back to normal in time for the start of the autumn term

Taplow is grateful for the community care exercised by Taplow Court as they again supported and housed parts of our education system in times of need. Thank you.

Hitcham House 2



After starting to build his house in 1866, George Hanbury in 1867 acquired a further piece of waste ground along the side of the road. Whilst there is no indication in any extant documents as to the exact location of this piece of land the matter was brought to the attention of the Churchwarden who advised calling a Vestry. On the 14th. February Mr. Marnock went to Blythwood to 'give directions and explain how to survey and prepare a map for the Vestry.' He wrote that he found it would take 'much time' so he had the line of the fence 'stumped out on the ground' and carefully indicated it by a line cut in the ground. So far I have found no record of when that Vestry took place or indeed its outcome.

Between this newly acquired piece of land and the original land acquired by George Hanbury for the erection of his proposed new Estate is a lane which ends in a field after passing across the footpath. This was probably what was known as Love Lane, left Hitcham Lane opposite the lane leading to the Gore Cottages and proceeded south for a distance of 376 yards and one foot. Mr. Hanbury decided that he would like this lane closed and together with his desire to alter the footpath it was decided that a Vestry would have to be convened for the people of the Parish to put forward their views on these matters. This was so arranged.

Rather like present planning laws, notices had to be put on each end of the footpath and Love

Lane and in the local paper. They were also to be posted on the Church door for four consecutive Sundays in October and November 1867 to tell the parishioners of the proposed plans and to inform them of when the Vestry was to take place. It would appear that this meeting took place on the 31st. October 1867, and its findings with several other reports were put to the General Quarter sessions at Aylesbury on the 30th. December. It is interesting to note that one of the four Justices of the Peace who sat on the panel was the Right Honourable Benjamin Disraeli.

At this session it was agreed that Love Lane could be closed as it only led into a field owned by George Hanbury. At the same time the footpath leading from Hitcham Road to Lent rise road recorded as "a distance of 473 yards and a half towards Lent" was also approved because "by such diversion will be made nearer by 5 yards to the Public" the footpath was altered and put out of sight of the big house by being sunk

So in due course Love Lane disappeared and the footpath was altered and put out of sight of the big house so that the public were not to be seen by the incumbents of the big house and the bridge for the front drive to Hitcham House still covers the footpath..

Abridged from research by Mrs Beryl Montague

Looking Back

25 years ago: NL 69 Autumn 1997

"The Maidenhead, Windsor and Eton Flood Alleviation Scheme, which is so heartily disliked in Taplow, has brought an unexpected benefit in its wake: more clues to the settlement patterns of our prehistoric ancestors..."

Do we still dislike the Jubilee River so much?

50 years ago: NL 25 Autumn 1972

In a long article on revised planning boundaries the conclusion was:

"It is indeed for these reasons that the proposed structure of Counties and Districts was preferred over the Unitary Authorities proposed by Radcliffe Maud"

So it took them 50 years to change their minds!

Tithe Barn Hitcham

"An application has been made for the conversion of the remaining part of the barn into an extension...the present conversion has been well done and that extending it to the remainder would be welcome..."

So all ready for our Ukrainian family! See page 9

River Road Problems

The distressing behaviour that has plagued River Road and persisted since the Covid outbreak is abating as the weather worsens but is expected to recur next year. Residents have struggled with noise, drunken behaviour and violence, stabbings, urinating in gardens (and worse!). A cyclist has been knocked down with broken bones by a car that did not stop. The river bank is a fine welcoming leisure spot used by many walkers and picnickers and local residents are perfectly happy and welcoming to them but this unacceptable behaviour by a few is ruining the area for all.

First meetings with Police and the ASB team from Buckinghamshire Council came away with the feeling that although there was great sympathy there would be severe practical difficulties in taking any really effective action. However, intense persistence is proving positive and beginning to show results.

One thing has been effective is dealing with the illegal parking that causes major disruption. Residents photo the offending vehicles and report them to the police (Angela O'Connell), who then writes to the owner. So far, very few cars reported in this way have ever returned. Buckinghamshire Council own the particular part of the road that is most affected and are looking to see if they can introduce formal parking restrictions. The police also have extended regular patrols along River Road, which generally leads at least to a temporary lull. The police also make it clear that residents

must report every incident that occurs in as much detail as possible to support the case for additional resourcing.

Another step has been with Council litter clearance. During the most intense periods of strain, the waste bins along the river bank are now cleared daily, a great help in keeping the bank welcoming for more regular users.

Equally, for many years the council has not collected the mooring fees that overnight boats are required to pay. This has led to boats mooring for long periods and setting up home to the general detriment of the area. The Council is now planning to restart charging.

Residents experimented this year with paying for a guard to patrol at peak times. The guard has no formal powers but has had some effect in calming some scenes and this is likely to continue next year (at residents expense).

Several houses have CCTV systems installed which can be useful (when widely advertised) but the laws surrounding their use are very restrictive.

There is an option of a Public Space Protection Order but the police will need a very much higher level of detailed reported incidents to justify this and are also reluctant to proceed until all the measures being reviewed are completed.

Above all it illustrates that to get things done, people must persist and take responsibility for actions over time and not just complain and expect someone else to do the heavy lifting. The team led by Matt, Sam and Jackie have done just that.



Lincoln's End

Remembering Lincoln Lee

A reminder that however rare an event may be it will still happen

"A" for optimism?



Ken Blakslee

In Taplow we have happy memories of the visit of the Queen to the Taplow Horse Show in 1969, horses always being a keen interest of the Queen. The moment is commemorated, of course, on the Sheila Horton Mural in the Village Hall.

Swans on the track above the Sounding Arch. One killed, one alive and fighting. Being taken back to Swan Rescue in Eton for hopeful recovery. Access for the rescue involved Network Rail and Thames Valley Police! Hopefully not our resident Swan pair.



The River Road Croquet League is back, courtesy of Leah and Sam Foyle

Brian Smith

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Unless otherwise stated, the views expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily those of the Society or its Committee.

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