

THE  
BUCKINGHAM  
SOCIETY



Registered as a Charity No. 268503

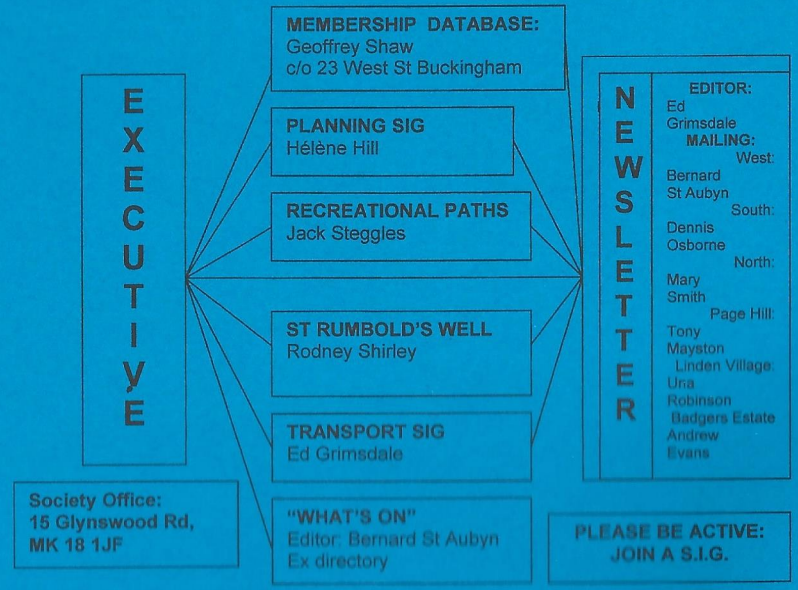
# NEWSLETTER



Number 2001/1

# STRUCTURES OF BUCKINGHAM SOCIETY

<b>THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE</b>		<b>PRESIDENT:</b> Stanley Meadows ☎ 01280 813133
Chair: Ed Grimsdale ☎ 01280 815758	Vice Chair, Town Design Statement: Carolyn Cumming ☎ 01280 816226	
Secretariat: Charles Macdonald James Tebboth ☎ 01280 822688 ☎ 01280 817098	Acting Treasurer: John Townsend ☎ 01280 815372	
University Liaison: Alan Brook ☎ 01280 813472	Planning SIG Hélène Hill ☎ 01280 813133	
St Rumbold's Well Rodney Shirley ☎ 01280 812158	Recreational Paths SIG Jack Steggles Ex directory	
Planning Consultant: Tony Parker ☎ 01280 813084	Heartlands Case Officer: Ted Farmer ☎ 01280 812262	



## EDITORIAL

2001 no 1

John Townsend who created our Newsletter in its present form has reluctantly retired from its editorial chair. As you will all know, John has served our Society with distinction in a great number of ways over the past few years. No task has ever been too menial, neither has any challenge daunted him. He has edited our journal with flair and created a style that has been uniquely "John's". His magazines have elicited frequent praise for their high standard of English. John has mapped the Society's growth as our reach has extended to areas previously unexplored. Thank you, John!

I have volunteered to edit this year's magazines, but if any member wishes to coordinate the effort do please tell me. This magazine lacks the stylistic unity of John's products. It is essentially experimental with the twin aims of seeing what works for the editor and Society members. Don't hesitate to respond with your criticisms and suggestions, but, above all, don't be afraid to pen a piece or to submit the germ of an idea.  
Ed

## HERITAGE OPEN DAYS

- A national event with a local context
  - Aims to open buildings that are inaccessible normally
  - A time to celebrate our inheritance
  - A co-ordinated programme:
    - Guided Visits
    - Talks
    - Town Walks
    - Refreshments
    - Leaflets
- HISTORY
  - CULTURE
  - ARCHITECTURE
- September is the appointed month
  - Our fellow Society in Aylesbury have blazed a trail that we can emulate
  - ANTAS (our regional body) have also established helpful guidelines and exchanged advice
  - A working party will be set up at our next Executive Meeting
  - To join: phone Ed (01280 815758)

## The Local Plan - Democracy or a Fix?

I have been asked to pen a few thoughts following my appearances at the public Inquiry to hear objections to the draft for the AVDC local plan. **The fundamental question to ask is whether it gives people a real democratic opportunity to change its provisions or whether it is a fix?**

Every ten years or so the UK planning process goes through a procedure where local councils are required to publish a plan showing their policy on the principles of planning in their area. Any planning application is subsequently considered in the light of policy expressed in this Plan. It is therefore (or should be) an important document which will effect the lives of citizens living within the area for which the Council has responsibility.

In the case of the AVDC we last went through this process between 1990-92. The Inquiry took place over 3 months in the summer of 1993 but the plan was not finally adopted until 1995! One significant difference from the procedure taken then and the one this time round was that the representations and responses were published in one document which was issued to interested parties free of charge.

This time round we received a pre-deposit issues paper from the AVDC in April 1996 inviting comments by August of that year. Silence reigned until the actual deposit draft of the local plan was published in October 1998 stating that its provisions will cover the period 1996 (two years earlier!) to 2011. The people of Aylesbury Vale were given six weeks to study this document and to give their written objections by 25th November 1998. It is a weighty document some 210 pages long and is accompanied by detailed maps. To study it a citizen has to sit in an AVDC office or has to buy it for quite a few pennies. It was accompanied by a summary leaflet which unfortunately carried a map of Buckingham showing some important errors.

A group from The Buckingham Society met four times to discuss the Draft Deposit proposals and a reasoned response was sent as one complete document. At the time I was worried about this, because the procedural rubric clearly stated that comments had to be on a separate piece of paper for each comment for each paragraph in the report. I sat down one weekend to write all these out (59 separate statements of which 15 were classified as "in support" and 44 as "objections") and as a private citizen I sent them off to the AVDC before the deadline.

It was not until September 1999 (a full 10 months later) that we received a report from the Council on its response to comments received and I was depressed to find that very little had been changed. In my case out of my total of 59 comments only 1½ had been taken up. Many of my comments had also mirrored the Society response. At the time we were told that it was not the job of the staff of the Council to respond to suggestions that they might consider valid but to only identify real weaknesses of the plan. We gained the impression that the officers had felt that they had already taken account of two years research (their own?) into the subject and that they considered it was the job of the Inquiry to hear argued points of view. In other words they did not see the necessity to change much (except minor technical errors), as a result of the very consultation process which they themselves had set up. It is extraordinary that such a limited operation took 10 months!

All official objectors (not those who expressed support) - i.e. those who had taken the trouble to fill in the forms - were invited to attend a series of hearings where this deposit draft would be examined line by line, paragraph by paragraph. All the hearings would be scheduled in Aylesbury during working hours.

I found my name scattered through the schedule of these meetings. Carolyn Cummings and Tony Parker decided to concentrate on the specific area of Buckingham itself but I agreed to attend in person for issues which I felt were important in general issues as well. Most of the representations came from professional persons representing certain groups or developers. The individual citizen like myself was largely absent - not surprising in view of the system and timing.

The Inquiry is being held in the Council Chamber and it started in January 2000 with the intention of finishing by April 2000. I believe it is still going on! Each session takes the form of the objector speaking of his/her concerns to ONE appointed Planning Inspector in the presence of officers from the Council. When I was present, there were usually three. The Council is represented by a professional barrister who questions both the objector and the Council representative on each issue. The Inspector questions both sides and then the barrister and the objector make their final statements.

It is very formal and to someone of a nervous disposition could be quite forbidding. I found the Inspector, Peter Beasley, an impressive person who acted throughout in a friendly and positive manner. However good he is I cannot see that it is right and proper for one person only to come to conclusions on such a wide range of issues over such a long period. Already the Inquiry has been running for a year and no human being can remain consistently accurate and discerning whilst being subject to opposing views and pressures over such a length of time.

What is depressing about the whole procedure is that opportunities for constructive discussion are minimal. The Council takes a defensive attitude throughout and is resistant to any change. This attitude is reinforced by the use of the professional barrister who is there to use his considerable expertise to defend that point of view against people who may not have the eloquent qualities to cope with the situation. I did see one objector have a very hard time before I was due to appear. The procedure does not allow for the presence of two or more objectors who may have similar or slightly different views on the same subject. For instance Carolyn and I appeared on different occasions concerning the Wharfside. Only two "round-table" discussions have taken place - one to talk about initial issues in January 2000 and one to discuss housing need in September 2000. In my view much more extensive use should have been made of this concept.

What makes the whole process even more complicated is that every few weeks the Council publishes quite long documents detailing changes which they make to the plan and one does not know about these automatically unless you are a professional within the system. I found that on quite a few occasions I was told about these actually at the Inquiry making it difficult to make sensible reasoned comments on the issues being considered. i.e. I had to think on my feet (literally!). What makes this unfair is that an objector is not at the same time allowed to bring up new points different to their objections (made way back in November 1998). However in the summer of 2000 we were allowed to submit further evidence in respect of the local Buckingham section for consideration in the autumn of 2000. This was done by both the Society Planning Committee and myself. Again, each statement had to be on separate pieces of paper and we had to submit 7 copies of each - a lot of copies (84 in my case) at personal expense.

All this started in 1996 and we are still at it. The whole process takes too long: time and thinking move on. The Society published the impressive Vision and Design Statement for Buckingham. The Government published various documents on housing need and policy for the SE England of which we are a part. The Council published a Housing Needs Survey. A new PPG3 was issued by the Government. Transport Strategy, for the region is the subject of earnest discussion at both local and national levels. The expansion of Milton Keynes is also being formally considered and this will certainly affect this area by 2011. Many of these documents and minutes of discussions contain fundamental useful changes which should be incorporated in the plan and in some cases radically alter the arguments of whole sections.

Yes, my arguments have resulted in small mainly insignificant changes but the very real concerns about provisions in the Plan are still there (or I think they are). It must also be said that there is much in the Plan which is good and acceptable and would be desirable if adopted immediately. Is it a fix? No. The hearings that I attended were cordial, polite and open and the Council is publishing its proposals and changes. However it is also far from democratic. In practice real access to this information for consultation and discussion is available only to professionals. The structure of the whole process makes it very difficult for the individual citizen so he/she has no real chance of influencing change.

Geoff Shaw

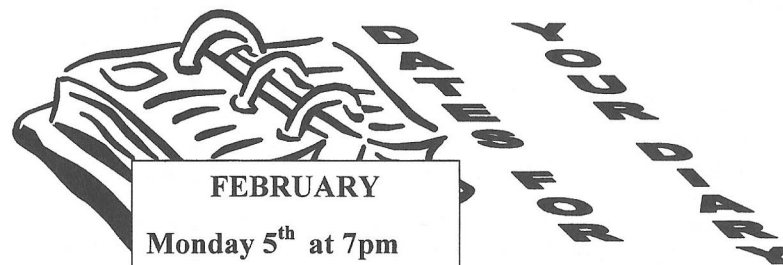


## BUCKINGHAM

### BUCKINGHAM PARTNERSHIP POINTS THE WAY TO BUCKINGHAM

- Do pop into Tesco
- Look at the display boards that separate shop from café
- Aren't they attractive!
- They are the result of a Buckingham Partnership Initiative
- Buckingham Society's Robert Cumming and Richard Knowles of Buckingham Colour Press were the mainstays
- The idea has been beautifully realised by Buckingham Colour Press staff
- The idea - visitors to Tesco will see what Buckingham offers and drive that extra mile to Town
- Funding has come from:
  - AVDC
  - Thames Valley Police
  - The Buckingham Traders Association
  - Individual donors within Buckingham Society.

**"WELL DONE EVERYBODY."**



#### FEBRUARY

Monday 5<sup>th</sup> at 7pm

#### TOWN COUNCIL CHAMBER

Public questions  
session open to all  
(15 minutes duration)

#### FEBRUARY

#### No Buckingham Society Executive Meeting

#### MARCH

Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> 5.30pm  
EXECUTIVE @  
Villiers Tap Room



#### FUTURES:

Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> April  
10am

ANTAS MEETING  
(The University of  
Buckingham)  
guest speaker:  
**Carolyn Cumming!**

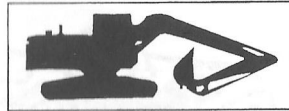
This Association of  
North Thames Amenity  
Societies elected **Peter  
Diplock** ( Marlow  
Society) as its new  
Chairman in November  
**and we wish Peter  
every success.**

Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> April  
SOCIETY MEETING  
ON A THEME (tba)

PLEASE REMEMBER

ALL BUCKINGHAM  
SOCIETY  
EXECUTIVE  
MEETINGS ARE  
PUBLIC - YOU WILL  
BE MOST  
WELCOME .

## GOODBYE CONCRETE BRIDGE?



One of Buckingham's worst eyesores, the concrete bridge, may soon be but a blot on our memory banks. It has straddled the banks of green willow between Budgens and the Heartlands for many years. Part of the deal with David Wilson Homes (the developers of Tudor Meadows) was its removal- deadline November 1997. Tardily, they started to do so. Our man Ted Farmer, was there, and then, far more quickly, work ceased. The rising main carrying Buckingham's sewerage was suspended under the concrete mantle. The pipe had ruptured. The Ouse was about to ooze with brown stuff. Tankers came and went and the crisis subsided. Then came the protracted battle (ie money was at stake) – whose responsibility was it? We understand that most outstanding issues have been resolved. Work might have started before Christmas but there was fear that revellers might fall from broken concrete ramparts and perish in the cold waters below. The latest news reaching Ted is for a start on demolition early in February. With luck the bridge will be gone by Easter. Is it blasphemous to hope that it won't rise again three days later? Once it is removed the Chairman will toast the demise of this bridge of sighs and the guest of honour at the concretefest will be Ted Farmer.

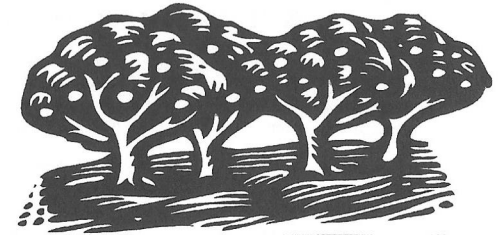
Readers will be sorry to hear that Ted Farmer's wife, Janet, had a heart attack at Christmas. She was taken to Milton Keynes Hospital. Diagnosis was quick and efficient. Janet has been making satisfactory progress and returned home to Ted in late January. We wish Janet a speedy and complete recovery.

## GOOD NEWS FROM THE AYLESBURY LOCAL PLAN INQUIRY?



Our Society led by the indomitable Carolyn Cumming spent time and money (professional advice) in preparing to defend Buckingham's interests. Our Town Council endorsed our stance. Carolyn took a copy of the impressive Town design Statement with her. The Chairman of the Inquiry was charmed by the Vision Statement. To Buckingham he came, he saw, but was he conquered? He paused to consider, bought cups of coffee for our warriors and..... ?

The Ides of October looked propitious. In the wings the revised ppg3 guidance from the DETR was, like the floods all around us, lapping at the previously firm foundations of the AVDC case. AVDC rushed out a considered response, CD 174- a set of statements designed like sandbags to stop the encroaching water leaking in. Carolyn (by now sojourning in the USA), ably assisted by John Townsend and Tony Parker and supported by the marvels of modern data communications, responded emphasising our beliefs – the supremacy of sequential development, the need to use previously developed sites first before giving developers the easy, cheap option of virgin fields as level as flood plains. There will probably be another round of jousting in this New Year. Let's wish our "Knights of the Round Table" all the best in the "Battle of the Round Table Mark II".



Why a picture of Flora Thompson ? The area between the back of Verney Close and the White Hart car park is Flora Thompson country. What is called Markham's Court was formerly the shoe factory of her Uncle Recab. We need to celebrate our town's intimate connection with "From Lark Rise to Candleford". If you pop into the Tourist Office you can buy a splendid little sepia coloured booklet from Banbury Museum about Flora Thompson. It contains a map of Flora Thompson country. It is well worth the 50p cover price. It is not aimed to do justice to our Town's deep connection with the author. Two things that we should consider:

- Establishing the land by the river as a Flora Thompson Wood
- Creating our own Flora Thompson local mini-guide.



The Society has taken an interest in the wooded area behind Verney Close. It is in a poor way. BCC own it and are prepared to sell it. Local opinion is split between a greater Budgens Car Park and a restored wood. Carolyn has checked out the trees. Fortunately for the Society they are protected because they grow in a Conservation Area; there is no need for tree preservation order (tpo's).



Carolyn Cumming has suggested that the Society should publicise our trees. We have published a Town Trail, a new, updated Riverside Walk leaflet and Jack Steggle and his group are working on a publication about Buckingham paths. How about a Tree Trail leaflet? It could tell tales (The Hangman's Tree), point out trees that are connected with our history (eg the great Copper Beeches by the Parish Church) or just locate great trees for visitors and locals ( eg the magnificent specimens in The Old Churchyard). In these days of interactive media, perhaps we could capture the interest of youngsters with a CD-ROM containing clips, images, sounds and competitions based on local arboreal delights

Ed has agreed to edit the publication. If you have a tree tale to tell, drop him a line (on disk?), or give him a ring on 815758. We shall want illustrations, so if you have a fine drawn specimen – please give us a copy!

Dear John,

### BUCKINGHAM SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

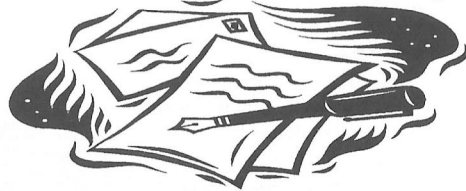
It was with interest that I read on page 5 of your newsletter 2000/4 about the Mitre Cottage in Mitre Street. This building is indeed the oldest dwelling not only in Buckingham but also in the area. This was verified four or five years ago by English Heritage who came from London to investigate the reconstruction of 27, High Street (formerly Paynes Coaches Office & flats.)

When the roofing timbers were exposed at 27, High Street at the commencement of Paynes Court Development severe scorch marks were found and it was thought that there had been a fire at some point in time. English Heritage determined that the scorch marks were from fires lit in the centre of the building for cooking purposes, with the smoke going out through a hole in the roof since the building was once a medieval hall. If one looks at the front of the building it is seen that the adjacent cottages' exterior are of the same design and together they formed the medieval hall. They went on to tell us that this property is the oldest in the area with one exception - that being Mitre Cottage shown in your photograph. This information was found at great cost to us since the development was put on hold for three months pending their investigation.

Yours sincerely,

Steve and Rosemary Heywood

Have readers got tales to tell about other old properties in Buckingham? **Do drop us a line.**



#### NEW MEMBERS

Steve Heywood was one of the organisers of the highly successful Buckingham Christmas Fair and Parade. At that event we netted a number of new members and two who have returned to our fold.. We wish them and all our members **A PROSPEROUS NEW YEAR.**

Adam Bannister	McKenzie Close
Paddy and Geraldine Collins	Castle St
Hannah Cooke	Manor Park
Mr and Mrs Dunn	Woodlands Crescent
Councilor Pam Desorgher	Bourton Rd
Councillor Robin Stutchbury	Hare Close
Sarah and Christopher Willis	Water Stratford

Peter Hampton	Villiers Close
Councillor Hugh Carey	Turweston



#### PROJECT STREET LIFE

##### SOME OF PSL'S AIMS:

- A FUN, SAFE MEETING PLACE
- For youngsters aged 12-17
- To treat young people with respect as individuals
- To keep young people free from the risks of drugs, drink and street crime
- Encouragement to become part of a Community
- To be source of quality advice and support

##### DELIVERY VEHICLE:

An Alcohol-Free Bar in West St, Buckingham Opening (at present) on Friday Evenings

##### A SHORT HISTORY OF THE PROJECT:

- A Well St Church Youth worker undertook outreach work way back in August 1999
- He was worried about young people on our streets
- Church representatives met
- February 2000 Project Development Committee was founded
- Summer 2000: the premises were transformed
- September 2000: Trustees met - the Project became a Charity
- October 2000 - Doors opened for business

##### WHO ARE THE SUPPORTERS?

- Too numerous to list them all!
- Local Churches
- Buckingham Town Councils and other Councils
- Local Schools and Colleges
- The North Bucks Show
- Local Charities
- Individuals such as our M.P., John Bercow

##### HOW'S IT ALL GOING?

- Membership is exceptionally buoyant- 200+!
- Much appreciation has been shown by Buckingham's youngsters
- The "Bar" has an amazing ambience
- The "Front-Line" team are doing wonderful things

##### And ..... THE FUTURE ?

- Open more hours
- Larger premises to meet demand?
- More Training for our Youth Workers
- The Targeting of other age groups
- A wider range of activities.

##### HOW CAN I HELP?

- By supporting fund-raising
- By telling others out the project

(The Trustees are considering the creation of "Friends of PSL" so individuals may show their commitment to the cause, receive regular updates and be invited to events. Do phone Ed (Communications, 815758), or Rosemary Nelson (Fundraiser, 824246) for more details.



On the left is a short report on progress being made by Buckingham's alcohol-free youth bar which our Society helped through a small donation in the early days.

Of the 7 Trustees who coordinate the effort, 3 are members of The Buckingham Society ( the one not mentioned being Ruth Newell, former Mayor of Buckingham).

#### REVIEW

##### I STILL HAVE PICTURES IN MY HEAD



T.J. Pallett

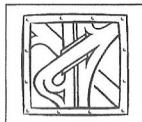
#### PRIVATE PUBLICATION

Printed by The Buckingham Society's Printers:Phillips Print and Stationers Available from The Buckingham Bookshop £10.50

Thomas Pallett was born at the Gas House Lillingstone Dayrell in 1930. This 250 page illustrated autobiography covers his first 20 years in loving detail. It is good to see life in rural North Bucks remembered with such affection. Tom's schooldays were in Buckingham. His career was centred on Phillips Garage. One day our President, Stanley Meadows, arrived. "Water On", he shouted. To find out why consult page 171 of this marvellous book full of local colour and interest.

## ROAD TRAFFIC IN BUCKINGHAM

- == Too much?
- === Is the road system in the town centre prioritised more to favour the vehicle than the pedestrian?
- ==== Are motorists flaunting speed limits in many of our streets?
- ===== Should there be safer routes for pedestrians and cyclists into the town centre?
- ===== Should there be more car parking?
- ===== Is it possible to extend the by-pass ( aka ring-road) ?



If the answer to any of these sample questions is "YES" why not help to start and then be active in the new Special Interest Group:  
**"TRANSPORT"**

### ACTION:

Name: Address:	→	Buckingham Society 23 West St Buckingham
Or ring <b>ED</b> 01280 815758		Ring <b>TONY</b> 01280 813084 for more information

### AN OPEN LETTER TO INSPECTOR ANDY TAYLOR, BUCKINGHAM POLICE STATION

Dear Inspector Taylor,

Our members led by Sydney Callis are asking for action to keep Buckingham's pavements free for pedestrians. You will recall Councillor Christine Strain Clark's "Cri de Coeur" about access in the Buckingham Advertiser a few weeks ago. Our concerns extend that call but are capable of amelioration through crisp action by officers under your direction. The perception is that the police response to:

- Cars parked illegally on pavements
- "A" boards advertising shops and services
- Bags of rubbish scattered willy-nilly awaiting collection

is passive - a word to the wise is given, maybe, but nothing firmer that will cause habits to change.

It was our President, Stanley Meadows, quoted in the Advertiser in 1996, who pointed out the NO WAITING signs clearly visible in Market Square since WW II. Only in the last few years, reported Stanley, had motorists been brave enough to risk the wrath of the police through illegal parking. The issue of poor parking in Market Square has been addressed through roadway reduction via the introduction of Buckingham's beach. We accept that parking is at a premium in Buckingham. Do motorists think of the blind and the infirm when leaving their massive people wagons so that none shall pass? They do not. They do not act so irresponsibly on purpose, they know no better - they have not reviewed the situation. Nobody is reforming them. On your bikes, police constables of Buckingham, send camper van owners to the re-education camps.

Please, Inspector Taylor, clarify your instructions to your officers on dealing with pavement obstructions and do let US know what is your policy stance.

Yours sincerely,

Ed Grimsdale

## REVIEWS

### Buckinghamshire in the 1760s and 1820s

The County Maps of Jeffreys and Bryant published by the Buckinghamshire Archaeological Society £15, available from The Old Gaol Shop

This handsome volume contains two very large full colour maps of Bucks that pre-date the first Ordinance Survey maps of our region (1801). Each map is cut into A3 sections. There is a helpful background guide by Paul Laxton of the University of Liverpool. Whilst the maps are not as detailed nor as easy to read as O.S. productions, they offer fascinating insights into Buckingham's past. I was amazed at the idiosyncrasies displayed by County borders. From Jeffreys' map we learn that Bucks had a detached outpost around Caversfield, north of Bicester. In return a portion of Bucks north of Bufflers Halt was labelled as "Oxfordshire". Elsewhere in this Newsletter there is reference to The New Inn. Here it is - marked clear as clear as could be, near an entrance to Stowe so that travellers could not miss their chance to sojourn a while before they explored Stowe's earthly delights and Elysian vistas. The 1760 map serves researchers into Buckingham's past particularly well for it includes a larger scale map of our town giving a clear plan of the former Parish Church in Prebend End. The private enterprise origins of the map are clearly demonstrated by the proliferation of the names of gentry by their country houses. Is this the origin of our phrase "to put on the map"?

By the time of the later map Buckingham was connected to the canal system and The Wharf is marked. The (Stowe) New Inn remains a destination of choice, but for those coming from the West, The Red Lion at Finmere was an alternative. These reproduction maps preserve the originals from the wear and tear of researchers and give us all the chance to take a view of Old Bucks. Do have a look at this volume printed on beautiful stout paper. It has joined my library of books on Bucks and I rate it as highly as Browne Willis in importance.

### AYLESBURY VALE VISUAL ARCHIVE past, present, future

Published by AVDC (supported by Heritage Lottery Fund)  
 £6, CD-ROM available at The Old Gaol Tourist Office

**It is difficult to review fairly this disk - a novel format for information in North Bucks. Technically it works with an easy to navigate main menu. There are 4 main sections: OUR PLACE, OUR MEMORIES, OUR VALE and OUR HISTORY. It is possible to print screens and it does take much effort to copy a picture slide to another destination (absolutely illegal as the copyright-obsessed insert makes crystal clear). To criticise the exceptionally variable content from Tony Webster's fine Buckingham poem to repetitive, uninformative vox pop comments is really to criticise oneself and others for not having contributed to the project. There are some lovely pictures by Kevin Quick - indeed where villagers have failed to provide copy the archive prays for their sins of omission by reducing their place to the church. There is a huge sense of England 2000 in the "Song of the Vale". A quartet of operatic soloists do battle with an ignorant crowd in Friars Square, Aylesbury and words that could be lifted from a Song in praise of a Soviet Collective Farm ("As children grow they'll learn to care for Aylesbury Vale with all their heart and soul"). The music, a ballad plus beat, suits the soloists as well as Mozart does The Spice Girls.**

**The idea is of the disk is good, there will be better examples of this practice in the future. Well Done, AVDC for having a stab at a living archive. Is it worth your money? Why not borrow my copy and find out?**

Ed

## REVIEW

### Tony Webster "States of Mind"

privately published by the Author, £3.99  
available from Buckingham Bookshops Ltd.

Tony Webster is a Buckingham author and computer consultant. He kindly sent the Society a complimentary copy of his latest book of poems "States of Mind". Tony has resided in Buckingham for a long time and founded the Camera Club in 1979. He has a deep interest in Buckingham and North Bucks so it is no surprise to find the spirit of our town is evoked in his writing. At the heart of this volume is "The Bend of Time" that distils 1000 years of Buckingham history into 10 short verses. The title sets up resonance between time, the convoluted Great Ouse and the warp imposed by memory on history. The poem typifies Tony's world by ending not in Buckingham, England but in Buckingham, Mars! Tony is an author who writes about the eternal verities in a style that possesses an underworld of dry humour that breaks as unexpectedly as a volcano through the mantle of surface meaning. His world has deep roots in the past but everywhere it is evident that Tony is a passionate cosmic dreamer, a searcher after the meaning of the celestial spheres after science has destroyed for many the concept of a personal God. Those who find satisfaction in finding meaning shining through the opacity of the abstruse may be disappointed by the straightforward clarity of Tony's use of English.

John Townsend has noted possible influences on Tony from Robert Graves to "The Sonnets". Tony has responded, as most authors would, that he is not aware of any particular influences. He has admitted to favouring certain styles, which owed more to the traditional than to the modern (or post-modern!). In the introduction to the present book Tony nailed his colours clearly to the mast by announcing that poetry has to have..... RHYME (his capitals).

Who will enjoy this volume?

People who live in or who love Buckingham;

see **The Bend of Time**

Those who enjoy new wine in old bottles;

see **Constantly**

Science Fiction addicts;

Worriers about the meaning of it all

see **Y2K - The First Day**

Those seeking  
interpretations of contemporary events.

Tony has honoured our Society by permitting us to reproduce his work. So, here's a sample, but do pop into a local bookshop to examine the whole collection. For those who wish to study more of Tony's work should visit his website at <http://www.webstert.freemove.co.uk>

### The Bend Of Time

One thousand years ago, and more,  
In Anglo-Saxon Bucca's land,  
From Celtic roots, via Roman law,  
The town of Buckingham began.

Fortified against the Dane,  
The Celt and Saxon both did stand;  
Protected by the river's bend,  
They called their fortress, 'BUCCINGAHAMME'

Past Domesday's book, by Norman rule,  
High status soon was earned;  
By Middle Ages, prospered much,  
But then...the whole town burned.

Mary Tudor, Alfred, Charles,  
Elizabeths, both One and Two,  
Have visited our market town;  
The charter fair STILL comes 'on cue'.

Charles overstayed his welcome, too,  
In Sixteen Sixty Four;  
Employed poor tactics, dismissed advice,  
And lost the Civil War.

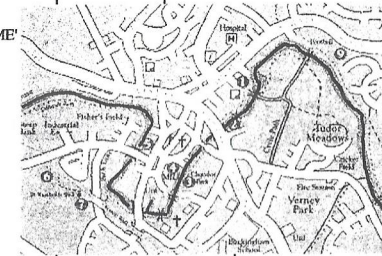
The founding of the 'Latin School',  
The Georgian charm of Stowe,  
The 'Old Gaol', built in '48,  
The town has seen it all.

From coaching times to recent past -  
A crossroads and a hub;  
Then 'Beeching' closed the railway line,  
But no one closed the pubs!

Now academia also treads where merchants oft times  
stood,  
Where many threaded cultures mix and twirl;  
And royalty and 'Iron Ladies' come again,  
And church bells ring out to herald 'all is well'.

Great men and times and deeds aside,  
The timeless, peaceful presence still prevails;  
A quiet place under the stars, where everything is calm;  
The river's bend encircles Buckingham still.

A thousand years from NOW, who knows?  
When man has travelled to the stars,  
MAY see our spiritual descendants go  
And found 'NEW Buckingham' ...on MARS



### Constantly

When we were first together  
And when we had just parted,  
I saw your face before I went to sleep and in my sleep  
And when I woke:  
I thought about you every single minute of every single  
day,  
Constantly.

Now sometimes a day passes  
Or another,  
When I don't think of you at all;  
And then I do again, for a while  
And think about you ever single minute of every single  
day,  
Constantly..

### Y2K -First Day

After all, it's just another day,  
Just like any other:  
I really can't see why  
There should be all this bother:  
Do you?

Stars still twinkle and planets pass,  
In the midnight sky, and down below,  
The butterfly still flutters over the grass;  
The rose continues to grow:  
Sans change!

Flowers die, their seeds perpetuate the line:  
Man also dies, his bones and blood and sinews,  
urn to individual dust, forgotten over time,  
But daily life continues;  
Status quo!

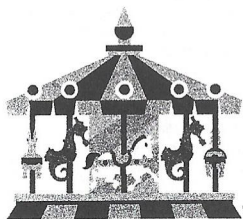
Things will get better, though,  
In Y2K, won't they?  
Expectations, hope, regeneration,  
All come into play, in people's minds, Don't they?

So, can a hundred million people  
All be wrong, in what they think and say,  
In hoping for a bright new dawn and age:  
After all, it's just another day,  
Isn't it?



## ALL THE FUN OF THE FAIR

Denis Tunks gave a talk on Buckingham's Charter Fairs after the AGM of The Friends of the Old Gaol. Denis can trace his local ancestry back very many generations and two of his great grandfathers were drovers who knew well Welsh Lane and other routes that intersected at Buckingham. Denis was born in his grandmother's house in Bath Lane Terrace. He wasn't born with a silver spoon in his mouth, but he did seem to have sprung into being suckling on teething iron from one of the Buckland family's scrap yards. The Bucklands owned 5 yards full of horses, when all that came to market in Buckingham either walked there (cattle, sheep and waddling "Aylesbury" ducks) or arrived on horse-drawn carts. The Bucklands were travellers who came to Buckingham well over a hundred years ago. They have maintained a strong interest in Buckingham's Charter Fairs. It was the Buckland family who protected the Fairs' Charters (dating back to 1554 and 1684) during the 2nd WW by ensuring the erection of one stall in the Market Square on each occasion so that continuity and thus the licences were safeguarded.



100 years ago there would have been 20 fairs in Buckingham each year. Denis remembers:  
Wool Fair  
Horse Fair  
Fatstock Show  
Sheep Fair

The audience were told about the importance to Buckingham of families of travellers such as the Shepherds (one of them, Buckingham Billy, was born in North End Square) and the Nichols. How fairground travellers supported the war effort was illustrated. Denis gave a fascinating insight on how employment was maintained after WWII in boat yards such as Vospers in Hants - they were commissioned to build beautiful living vans for touring fair people. Charter Fairs were the employment agencies of yore. Buckingham's two fairs originated in a Hiring Fair and a Runaway Fair for those

who could not any longer stand their masters. The impact of The Black Death in medieval times caused a dearth of strong hands. All and sundry had to present themselves annually for hire. No love, or life, on the dole in those days. Denis pointed out the parallels between Buckingham's Fairs and the larger St Giles Fair in Oxford and the famous "Goose Fair" in Nottingham. He was pleased to relate that ancient Fairs were returning to their original sites; noting that Northampton's St Crispin's Fair has been revived in the Market Square so savaged by development in the 1960's.

Denis has taken an active part in our Fair. He told of the myriad difficulties posed by Buckingham's uneven terrain. The audience heard how flash floods had inundated the living vans of the fair folk one October in the 1970's. Times have changed, he revealed, these days many fair people commute each day to Buckingham, their quarters being static many miles away.

Denis has made it his life's work to document the Charter Fairs in the 20th century. He has amassed a veritable archive of cuttings and photos. He keeps in touch with the Friends of the Old Gaol, so that his memorabilia will become Buckingham's heritage in the future. Denis is keen that Buckingham's Fair survives and enhances its town.

The Buckingham Advertiser has revealed the possibility of an extension into the two Friday nights before the Saturday main events (stalled, we hear, by the extra costs for the necessary police presence). It was Denis helped by the Mayor of the time, Pauline Stevens, who prised the money that the Stallholders contributed for their pitches away from AVDC and back to our Town Council - fulfilling the wish of Billy Nichols who died in 1994.

**Long may the Tunks family continue to dwell in and improve Buckingham.**

Denis has records of the Bioscope coming with Fairs to Buckingham. It was erected outside our Town Hall.  
**QUESTION - WHAT WAS A BIOSCOPE ?**



## THE NEW INN (in 1801) =>

We're going to THE PLEASURE GARDENS. We're liberal minded people from London off to an improving visit to the country. We're not travelling by car for the internal combustion engine hasn't been invented. No train either for that is in the future. We're in the family coach pulled by a team of four fine horses. It's a hot, sunny day in August. The horses, like us, are sweating. Fifty miles in a day is a long way to go. That used to be a problem, as our friend Alexander Pope remarked:

"Yes sir, 'tis very fine,  
But where do you sleep  
And where do you dine."

We think that the owner of the Pleasure Gardens, a world first for England, must have heard him for he commissioned his architect, Sir John Vanbrugh, to erect a fine "New Inn" in 1717. We shall tarry there awhile this evening. We have written to him asking for a hearty Bucks repast - Bucks clanger washed down with a tankard of best porter. Tomorrow we shall not lie abed, but rise at first light. The sights, Alexander tells us, are best wreathed in mists swirling above the Great Lakes with ethereal swans, a local emblem, flying off in search of food. Our plan is to return to The New Inn for a light lunch before we travel back to the great smoke.

Before we get to our destination the horses flag in Buckingham. They see **The Great Ouze** and will not move another step before they have attempted to drink the lazy river dry. We dismount on a grassy bank. But for our reservation we might have decided to stay the night in this town. In truth, Buckingham looks dusty and dowdy. A bemused local tells us that's because of The Great Fire. Just what events in London 80 years ago have to do with this loyal and ancient County Market Town, God alone must know. Still, there's no accounting for folk! As the horses gambol around the paddock by the river's edge one of our company remarks, "If these yokels had more sense, they would erect their own New Inn, right here by the river". A new bridge across would avoid travellers passing that old-fashioned Woolpack Inn. I reckon that a hostelry on this spot would attract plenty of passing trade from Londoners on their way to the wonder of our age."

Almost enough teasing of you, reader. Let's forward millennium. And it came to pass that the dream on the became a reality. The new London Bridge was built and built providing a warm welcome to Buckingham. It's still warmer than ever from "mine hosts" Deidre and Mike the original *New Inn* two miles away? **Well it's still survives, almost untouched externally by the march of time.** An 18th century Inn in pristine condition. Maybe it is North Bucks best kept secret. It cries out "List Me". Few travellers pass that way. Its days of glory are long gone. It is a working farmhouse.



wind to the banks of the Ouse  
The New Inn was there, the welcome Hall. What became of

Let's reveal a bit more of its history. Our chief source is "From hammer to Handkerchief", a family history by Robert Bennett privately published in 1996. One of Robert's ancestors was the publican of The New Inn. I'll not reveal the exact location of The New Inn, well, not in this article, anyway. If you plough on through this Newsletter you will find a clue. I encourage you to find this jewel. The illustrations show the place then and now. The back is now the front. Do go and examine it, but, remember, tread softly, as you tread on private land.

## SAINT RUMBOLD'S FIRST FIELD DAY

Rodney Shirley introduces a piece written by Jack Steggles:

*The Society has established a Special Interest Group concerned with St Rumbold's Well. This is a tumbledown site of a well and conduit house in a field close to Buckingham. The site has long-standing associations with the ancient Saint Rumbold who was once buried in Buckingham Church. The site was formally scheduled recently and in early December 2000 an archaeological survey was arranged by the Society. Jack Steggles was one of the volunteer assistants.*

Imagine a square, dilapidated, stone-lined pit large enough to take three coffins side by side – that was the state of St Rumbold's Well on the afternoon of Monday 4<sup>th</sup> December 2000. Three grey figures were to work with Mike Farley, formerly the archaeologist with Buckinghamshire County Council. Their tasks: to conduct a topographic survey, and to delineate the head of the remaining structure.

It wasn't the best of days. From the start of the morning a force five wind with squally showers had howled across the exposed slope. The outlook was just as bleak. Mike had trained at the University of Wales and so horizontal rain was his speciality. Even Mike was tempted to pack up before real work had commenced. Strangely, when Jack arrived in the field at 09.30, it was deserted, yet yellow tape festooned several stakes. A couple of surveying rods lay about; two boxes of mysterious kit and a plastic covered drawing board littered the site. It dawned on Jack that two other éminences grises had come earlier in the half-light, and then they had beaten a temporary retreat.

"Know anything about archaeology?" This from Mike after the two had shaken hands.

Jack shook his head; it was useless to cite a fascination with programmes on the box introduced by the irritating Tony Robinson.

"But my son is a building surveyor so I can see what you've been up to." Mike grunted, but his faced showed he was reconciled to dealing with rookies. Charlie Macdonald arrived and Rodney followed. And thus four grey wrinklies began work.

We had to clear vegetation from the wellhead, and remove earth and loose stones to one side. Meanwhile, one assistant would be required to help Mike to survey the wider scene. The ground about the well undulates noticeably, which is just the sort of thing that excites archaeologists.

Three helpers weren't really enough. Mike suggested that we should form a human chain to pass the stones onto a plastic sheet spread on the ground. Jack pleaded that his partially lame ankle should keep him out of the well so he passed the first few rocks until he was needed to hold measuring rods upright with one hand while holding the end of the surveyor's tape to a point low on the rod.

Charlie began to clear vegetation, muttering that he had not done this sort of thing since leaving the Army. Some of the growth was tough to shift; one shrub with a trunk two inches thick grew out of a wall. Charlie seemed to regard this as an insult to him, and the shrub suffered accordingly.

Photographs were taken and drawings made, some to be forwarded to English Heritage. The good St Rumbold smiled on us later on, clearing the rain and piercing the gloom with welcome rays of sunshine. That was cheering but the wind had strengthened to force six by eleven o'clock, not good for keeping paper attached to a drawing board. Soon after noon we stood back to admire our work. Charlie, the evergreen chemist, said, "We should spray this lot to keep the vegetation down."

The three of us trudged off looking like something out of Gray's Elegy; wet, muddy, tired and ready for lunch, but also rather pleased with ourselves.

As Barbara Shirley said over her well-stocked table, "It sounds more like a job for three twenty-year-olds." She was right, of course, but we didn't admit our agreement to her.

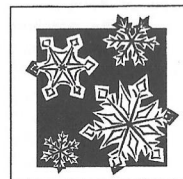
Rodney returned in the afternoon to work with the next shift of helpers: Shelagh Lewis and Peter Hampton. Two days later he was at it again, shovelling the stones back and recovering his sheet. Par for the course for the leader of a SIG.

## LIGHT MATTERS

Many centuries ago St Rumbold was a shooting star. Born one day; dead three days later. Yet he preached a long sermon and recited the long Athanasian Creed. At Christmas we traditionally lighten dark days with a festival of lights. Travelling from Buckingham, through Bletchley to London (Regent's St) and Bournemouth this Christmas, it was possible to award stars for the success of the Christmas lights:

BUCKINGHAM            ☼☼☼☼☼☼  
BLETCHLEY            ☼☼☼☼  
REGENT'S ST (LONDON) ☼☼  
BOURNEMOUTH        ☼

**WELL DONE, TO THE TOWN COUNCIL AND EVERYONE WHO CONTRIBUTED TO OUR WONDERFUL LIGHTS. AS THEY SAID:**



MERRY CHRISTMAS  
2001

## GROWING HOUSES Ed Grimsdale

The title with sting. Are you horrified like me by the growing misuse of the transitive form of the verb to grow? I shudder when I hear business people talking of growing the business. Growing plants is one thing growing the inanimate is quite another matter. So what is growing houses?

My thesis is that houses are not fixed assets but are external expressions of life-style that are clothed and re-ordered according to whim of their owners under guidance from style gurus and fashion. I believe that the tendency for houses to be given face-lifts and body surgery accelerates in economically vibrant times.

I propose a natural law of growth: that small is not seen as beautiful by house owners. The object of desire is the Castle. The three-bedroom semi is a platform from which to assault the bastions of real power and influence. I believe the historian Edward Gibbon who paralleled the major work of his life "The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire" by savaging his home Lenborough Manor until only one wing stood is atypical. The current house owner seeks to enclose and own what was open space. I propose that houses grow to fill the space available to them.

Take the open porch. Frequently this is built as an open structure or, if filled in, it is made from wood. In Britain's current warm and wet weather the life expectancy of the soft-wood porch is, perhaps, ten to fifteen years. Owners don't wait for its demise. Take a trip around Badgers Estate see how many open porches have been filled in. Helped by ubiquitous merchants of double glazing, the public open area, covered with a roof to provide some protection to the casual caller, has become firmly embraced in the bosom of the private, the family, domain. Visitors are held outside in the rain whilst the family gains one or two square metres of floor space and a second door to keep out draughts.

It is only 70 years since most houses in Buckingham were connected to mains electricity. That utility has caused the mushrooming of utility rooms. (Even the Grimsdales, those backwoods people without video, car or freezer are the proud possessors of a utility room). With electricity came the white goods market. The electrical wash tub was succeeded by the twin-tub. Twins need space. Automation means less space needed for human activity, but automatic washing machines are not dinky toys they are space-craving monsters, they are large and yearn to be permanently plumbed in. They cannot be hidden behind skirts under a suitable work surface to be wheeled out on washdays (was it Mondays?) and then wheeled back again. Everyday is washday, and the machine must be

accessible to the whole family at all times. Inconvenience cannot be tolerated, and as we can't rely on the weather, the space-craving automatic washing machine has been joined by baby sister - the automatic drier. That is best placed not in the kitchen for it emits much steam - the modern householder fears mould more than moth and rust. All the more reason to bolt onto the house a utility room.

The British tried to outlaw the weather in the 19th century. A middle class villa frequently included a conservatory - a glasshouse modelled on the pleasure palaces known as Winter Gardens. Iron and glass were the great new building materials of Victorian Britain. But most homes used iron merely for ornamentation. The conservatory's structural members were wooden. As I've commented about porches, external exposed softwood does not last in Britain. Our parents' generation were saddled with the collapsing conservatories of their parents. Times were hard in the depression so conservatories, now passé, were pulled down. That they became the "must-have" of the 1990's was due to changing technology. UPVC had replaced wood and iron. UPVC could be extruded and shaped at will, it came with a life-time guarantee. With growing prosperity, we saw conservatories in their hundreds invading back gardens across Buckingham. They were comparatively easy on the pocket and being to the rear of the properties, planning permission was either facile or easily ignored. Being essentially bolt-on modules they came without the need for lengthy thought or consultation with architects. The consumer could walk into the glass pavilions of the local shopping mall and just add a conservatory to the weekly "SHOP".

The Conservatory - gloriously illuminated and shining into the night sky - is an object like a four-wheel drive vehicle of conspicuous consumption, of ability to pay. The car caused growth in the modern home. Older homes had no garage, the car was an object for the gentry. Once the model T Ford had become ubiquitous, the family car, like a new baby, needed a room of its own. Like the baby it leaked & it needed protection from the elements. At first it had a tendency to be smelly so its room was detached from the home or, at best, semi-detached. Over the years its polecat nature became tamed, so the garage became integral to the house. But the car's use changed. From the vehicle of choice for the weekend outing, it became the sole person mover, always on the go, never at rest. Better manufacturing methods led to greater weather tolerance. Why keep the family car, an object that defined the social status, hidden in a garage? Let's create an outdoor space, oh yes, it can replace the roses on its fine, new hard standing area where our front garden used to define our values. Oh that's great, we've liberated the garage for that huge, necessary chest freezer. The children can use it as a romper room - that

will keep them away from the gaze of paedophiles and the risks of playing in the street. Have you noticed how many front gardens have been lost in Buckingham in the last ten years gobbled up by private parking lots for the family's three cars?

A time there was when there were few public large buildings in Buckingham. Eventually, the Parish Church was joined by the Town Hall. The 19th century and early 20th century saw the rise in public assets. People belonged to a Community and pleasures were largely shared pleasures. The 20th century saw the rise of private entertainment. At first the family clustered around the one and only wireless tuned to the Light Programme or the Home Service. When Television became the chosen mode of mass entertainment the family crowded close to see this dim port-hole on the world. But they needed more room as the TV grew up into a whole window on the world. Until the 1980's entertainment was shared by the family. But England quickly absorbed the video culture. Each member of the family developed their own tastes. The bedroom, once a room to sleep in, became the individual's home entertainment suite. Box rooms would not do, every member of the family needed a bed-sitting room. Still more pressure on the growing house.

Not that the box room became redundant. Britain was one of the first countries to embrace the Home Computer. It was marketed to parents as a support tool for children's learning. The children loved its interactivity, and its brilliant games and graphics. The family needed an Office for the computer. Thus, the 2 parent, 2 child family needed a minimum of 4 bedrooms. As prices tumbled everyone in the family demanded their own computer. Is it surprising that new estates being built on the periphery of Buckingham are crammed to the gunnels with 4/5 bedroomed properties?

What of the effect of family break-up? At first sight that would make for an economy dominated by the needs of smaller family units. But reality is that for many families, certainly in North Bucks, disposable incomes remain high after family break-ups. The parents divide, find new partners and thereby acquire step-children. Come the weekend those children living during the school week with the other partner come for the weekend. They can hardly be asked to share the bedrooms of the step-children. Thus there is pressure on the house to "grow" again. These weekenders don't want to camp out. The receiving parent is torn by remorse, he or she must make them welcome, feel at home. Hey presto, these week ending children have "grown the house" once more as they acquire weekend bedrooms complete with the duplicate gadgets to ensure a self-supporting life of private entertainment.

The front of a house its façade, its window on the world within. For centuries it has been important for houses to look their best from the front. Perhaps the saddest loss to Buckingham's heritage was the mid 1960's destruction of the Lys Courthouse with its fine medieval wood-carving that stood on the site of the present NWest Bank. When it was reduced to rubble, three frontages were revealed, each stuck on front on the other almost like layers of wallpaper. The English want their castles to be individual. If they have bought an estate house with an anonymous façade, they will go to enormous lengths to personalise their own piece of real estate. A first attempt may be prettification. Look at the butterflies along Bourton Rd. Then comes the complete makeover - the delights of stone-cladding. Out go those awkward draughty window frames. In come sealed units from Everest designed, maybe, to keep the elements on Everest at bay.

My basic message is upbeat. Amenity Societies such as ours rail against the loss of identity the amorphous growth of anywhere-nowhere tudorbethan villas. I believe that these houses which have more room to expand to transmogrify than the terraces of earlier times will be differentiated by their owners need to make their home a unique castle.

One final house that epitomises the essence of Growing Houses. Do look on Linden Village at the self-styled LINDENHOUSE opposite the Linden village stores on the main spine road. . It started as a modest detached property on a corner. That original house is buried in extensions including curious corbels supporting narrow vertically divided windows. It sports a one storey wing that wraps around the corner, and that long extension has a taller, grander extension on its end. The boundary wall and railings complete with roundels, lions' heads and large stone spheres would not look out of place in the grandest country house. That wall is pierced by two massive openings. One is a gatehouse complete with lead roof. It is the most extended bejewelled suburban estate house that I know. It is the contemporary version of a folly. It is pure kitsch. I believe it should be on our visitor's trail of Buckingham. Love it or hate it; it sums up for me the spirit of the age.

In conclusion, my message has both hope and a sense of hopelessness for a Society such as ours. In times of plenty I believe that houses grow. Nothing can stop the determination of the Briton to amplify and extend his assets. That has one benefit and one vice. The benefit is to humanise to differentiate the estates that blight our country in their lack of variety. The vice is to turn smaller affordable homes into larger unaffordable ones. What of the progeny of rural folk - farmers whose incomes are said to have been decimated in the last decade? Where will they live and raise their families?

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## THE BUCKINGHAM SOCIETY

### FINANCIAL ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 SEPTEMBER 2000

	2000 £	1999 £
<b>INCOME</b>		
Subscriptions	806.00	813.00
Advertisement Revenue (net)	75.00	-
Town Trail Sales	106.70	193.10
Riverside Guide Sales	80.00	-
Concert	153.00	-
Raffle	56.00	-
Subsidies and Donations	1,242.00	-
Sundry Income	11.80	144.00
Standard Bank Interest	99.13	106.48
	2,629.63	1,256.58
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>		
Administration (General)	198.42	231.30
Photocopying, Stationery	322.98	-
Printing Newsletter	334.08	333.31
Drawings for Newsletter	87.50	-
Printing "What's On"	396.00	-
Consultancy - Planning Inquiry	259.64	-
Photocopying - Planning Inquiry	66.00	-
Advertisement	93.06	-
Subscriptions and Donations	159.40	82.00
Riverside Guide	1,100.00	-
Briggs Memorial	221.00	-
Social and Sundry	-	229.29
AVDC	-	80.00
	3,238.08	955.90
<b>(DEFICIT)/SURPLUS FOR THE YEAR</b>	<b>£(608.45)</b>	<b>£300.68</b>
<b>BALANCES AT BANK</b>		
On 1 October 1999		
Lloyds Current Account	258.43	
Standard Bank	2,147.38	
	2,405.81	
<b>DEDUCT DEFICIT FOR THE YEAR</b>	<b>(608.45)</b>	
On 30 September 2000		
Lloyds Current Account	50.85	
Standard Bank	1,746.51	
	1,797.36	

Signed  Chairman

Signed  Treasurer

#### ACCOUNTANTS' REPORT

I have, without conducting an audit, compared the above financial accounts with the records and bank statements and find them in accordance therewith.

on the front cover

## BUCKINGHAM HOSPITAL

specially drawn by our Society's resident artist

Dennis G. Osborne

Our hospital was built in 1886 to a design by the most famous local architect, Sir George Gilbert Scott, who was born at Gawcott vicarage. The building with its decorated brickwork is one of the most distinguished late Victorian buildings in Buckingham. As we enter 2001 we remember that Queen Victoria, some of whose sewing is displayed in our hospital, died one hundred years ago. Victorian architects have been reviled for cloning every style and owning none. They did more than that with their fine stations and Crystal Palaces. Their claim to fame may lie in industrial buildings and institutions such as our hospital with its mass-produced moulded bricks. Our hospital is not amorphous; it is not an undigested amalgam of past styles. It has an integrity of its own. We should cherish it, as is clearly the case with its present gardener who has wrought miracles in its sloping grounds.

**Don't wait to be poorly before entering its gates and ascending the path to the original front entrance.**

Our hospital is an NHS small cottage hospital. As such, it is supported by local people through donations to its charity "The League of Friends of Buckingham Hospital."

**It is a splendid example of how local initiative and spirit of place can preserve, protect and expand local assets.**

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*for Better Places*