

THE
BUCKINGHAM
SOCIETY



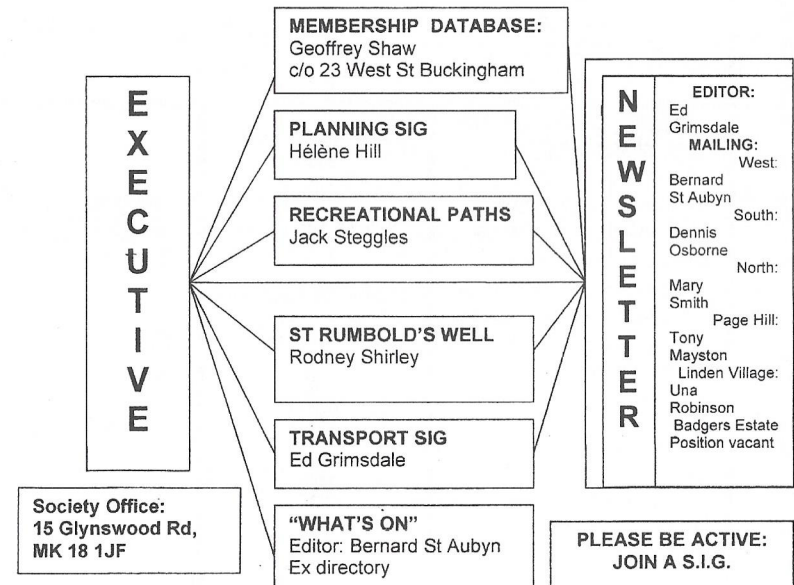
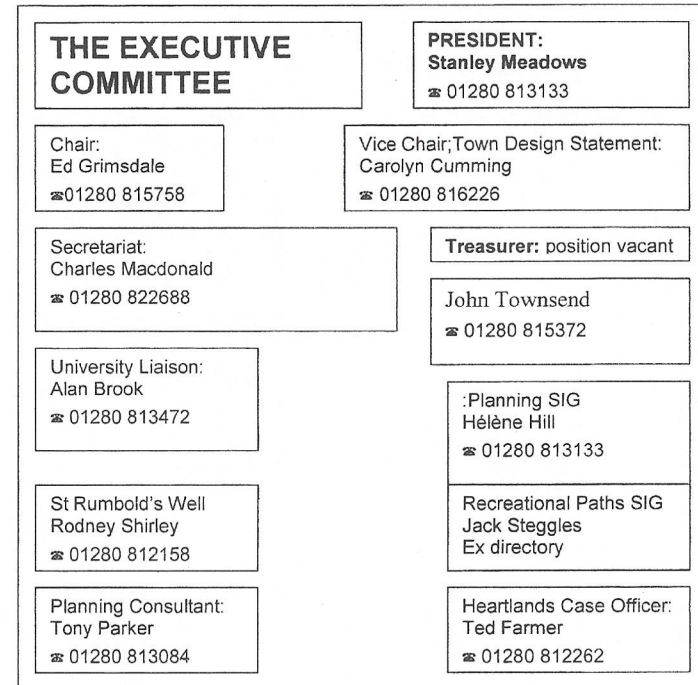
Registered as a Charity No. 268503

NEWSLETTER



Number 2001/2

STRUCTURES OF BUCKINGHAM SOCIETY



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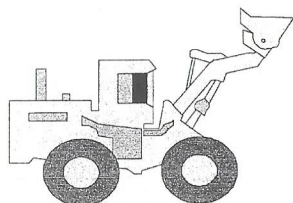
THE BUCKINGHAM SOCIETY

INTO OUR FUTURE

THE CONCRETE BRIDGE CELEBRATION



ED GRIMSDALE INVITES THE EXECUTIVE FOR A DRINK IN THE SWAN AND CASTLE



THURSDAY 26th APRIL AT 7.30pm

THE GUEST OF HONOUR WILL BE

TED FARMER

DO JOIN US AND RAISE YOUR GLASS TO A FUTURE SANS

- CONCRETE BRIDGE
- RISING SEWER MAIN



THURSDAY
12th APRIL

BUCKINGHAM SOCIETY
LITTER PICK



Sponsor : Mr Chow
(Buckingham Fish Bar)
Meet at 10 am
Budgens Car-Park
Phone Ed on 815758

SATURDAY 21st APRIL

THE TOWN MILL,
UNIVERSITY OF
BUCKINGHAM 10am
MEETING OF **ANTAS**

(Association of North Thames Amenity Societies)
The Buckingham Society is affiliated to Antas. We hope to see a large number of our members at this Meeting

GUEST SPEAKER:
Carolyn Cumming
on Design Statements

Thursday 24th
May
at 5.30pm in the
Villiers Tap Room

Open Executive
Meeting



HERITAGE OPEN DAYS
SEPTEMBER 7th - 9th

TREEFIELDS HOUSING AN UPDATE



AVDC have placed no restriction on traffic access to the Treefields development. As a consequence, site vehicles are using the unsuitable emergency entrance / cycle path from Bourton Rd. David Wilson Homes, the developer, has not constructed an access over land they hold for that purpose in Mallard Drive .



The Society is not opposed to the development of Newman's Field, but suggests that the houses should be high density with low car ownership

SOLD



Mallard Drive for:
Morehen Way
Eider Close
Treefields
Allotment Villas
Newman's Field Terrace

Mallard Rd residents are annoyed by a possible DWH site office at their Bourton Rd entrance. They are angry that their road may become the sole access to Treefields, AND extensions into Newman's Field AND the Bourton Rd Allotments, if the latter were developed.

A NEW ROAD FROM BRIDGE ST ?
The Society is implacably opposed to a new access road alongside Ganderton's Garage for many reasons including concern for pedestrian safety in Bridge St and a desire to maintain the amenity of Bourton Rd allotments, a very long established site that has, we believe, been surveyed

It is possible that this new access road, proposed by AVDC in their Draft Deposit Plan, may be opposed by Buckinghamshire Highways Authority.



This page has been written with help from The Buckingham Society's Planning Group, who held a special on-site meeting to discuss these urgent issues.



Inspector Andy Taylor has replied to the Open Letter in Newsletter 2001/1

Andy Taylor
Inspector

Police Station
Moreton Road
Buckingham
MK18 1LA
Tel. 01280 826110
Fax. 01280 826121
Eml. Andy.Taylor@thamesvalley.police.uk

Date 7th February 2001

Mr Ed Grimsdale
The Buckingham Society
23 West Street
Buckingham
MK18 1HS

Dear Mr Grimsdale

Thank you for your letter expressing the concerns of the Society and the residents of Buckingham in respect of free and unobstructed passage along the footpaths. You raise a number of issues which you feel the police are failing to deal with in an appropriate manner.

If I may initially address your comment in respect of the 'no waiting' signs in the Market Square, they were advisory and never enforceable. Motorists who did park there injudiciously were liable to receive a ticket for unnecessary obstruction if they were causing one but they were not prosecuted under parking regulations.

In respect of your concerns about rubbish bags and 'A' boards which advertise shops and services I have checked our records and this is the first time that these concerns have been raised with us.

I would suggest that the issue in respect of the rubbish bags should be referred to the District Council this is not a matter that I feel we should become involved in. I would be grateful if you could contact me with the specific complaints in respect of the 'A' boards and we will consider each case on its merits, the existence of the board does not necessarily mean that an offence is being committed.

I concur with your comments in respect of the illegal parking of vehicles in the Town. The irresponsible actions of these motorists do cause problems for those of us that live and work in Buckingham but it is incorrect to say that my officers do not address these issues when they can. We have one Town Beat officer who works full shifts including nights and a part time Traffic Warden, demands on our resources are such at this time that utilising other officers to address these concerns does by necessity become a low priority and attention to them ad-hoc. That said, this week my officers have issued eleven fixed penalty notices in the Town.

I am grateful to you for raising these issues and I will discuss them with my staff. I intend holding a public meeting in March to allow the people of the Town the opportunity to let me know where they feel our policing priorities should be as we cannot hope to fully satisfy the competing demands that are placed upon us.

Yours sincerely

Do tell Ed if you think that an A-board is parked on a public pavement

THE MENACE WHEELIE BINS AN EXCHANGE OF LETTERS AND OFFICIAL ADVICE

Andy Joss
AVDC Refuse Manager,
Vale Contracts Services Dept
Unit 18
Pembroke Rd.,
Aylesbury HP 20 1DG

Sunday, 18 March 2001

Letter written by Ed to Mr Joss after Andy Taylor had declared that rubbish bags on pavements was not a matter he should be involved in.

Dear Mr. Joss

I wish to ask you three questions:

1. What are your instructions to householders about the positioning of their wheelie bins on rubbish collection days?
2. What are your standing orders for your refuse collectors re the return of bins after emptying?
3. What are your instructions to your refuse operatives re the presence in Wheelie Bins of objects that should be recycled?

Background to my questions:

B.C.C. is investing in safer routes to school. One initiative that has been backed is "walking buses", crocodiles of junior students walking to school escorted by volunteer, trained adults. Marvellous, sustainable stuff reducing the impact of "school runs" in cars. But, have you ever led a human crocodile across town on rubbish collection day? Parked wheelie bins, rubbish bags joined by occasional commercial A-boards turn the journey into a nightmare of chicanes. Frequently, the crocodile is forced from the pavement onto the roadway. To chicane is defined as to deny justice. Justice for pedestrians is summed up by the slogan "Pavements for Pedestrians".

Questions 1 and 2 regard the practice common amongst householders and refuse collectors of leaving wheelie bins both before and after collection on pavements rather than within the curtilage of the householder's property. I have written to Inspector Andy Taylor about my concern that pavements are obstructed causing danger to all pedestrians and particular problems for the physically handicapped and partially sighted. He felt it was a matter for you.

The final question concerns observations that I have made on a number of occasions, most recently on Wednesday 21st February (outside no 14 Glynswood Rd) that your operatives open wheelie bins throwing out what they regard as recyclable. The process is done in great haste and objects both recyclable and non-recyclable are tossed to the four winds becoming unsightly detritus, marring the environment for all. What good are refuse collectors who refuse refuse, who make matters worse by trashing garbage?

Yours sincerely,

VALE CONTRACT SERVICES

Department of Planning, Property & Construction Services

Please ask for: Andy Joss
Direct Line: (01296) 585515
Switchboard: (01296) 585858
Minicom Line: (01296) 585055
Email: ajoss@aylesburyvaledc.gov.uk

Our Ref:
Your Ref:

21st March 2001

Mr E Grimsdale
15 Glynswood Road,
Buckingham.
MK18 1JF

Dear Mr. Grimsdale.

Thank you for your letter dated 18th March 2001.

In reply to the points you made.

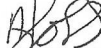
- 1) The Councils instruction is that customers should leave their bins and recycling baskets at the edge of their property by 6.30 a.m. on the day of collection.
- 2) The instruction to the crews is the bin and baskets are to be returned to the point they were collected from.
- 3) There is no instruction to crew to take out recycling items from the wheel bins.

I have spoken to the crew regarding item 3 and have told them this should not happen. If they see recycling items in the bins, the council and I have no problem in them transferring the items to the baskets so long as they go in the baskets. It is unacceptable for any crewmember to cause any littering of any area. Thank you for bringing this to my attention.

As to your questions regarding about leading a human chain? No I have never been involved in anything like that.

I hope the above answers your questions. If I can be of any further help please contact me.

Yours truly,



Andy Joss
Refuse & Recycling Manager
Vale Contract Services



Ed's Points:

1. Does Andy Joss not read his Official brochure re time that customers should leave their refuse for collection?
2. If the customer places the bin, in error, on the pavement, then the bin men are instructed to return it to the same point.
3. Recent behaviour of bin men has improved. Thank you, Mr Joss

Collection Points

To get your bin emptied, simply wheel it to the Collection Point by 7am on Collection Day. Your recycling baskets will be collected once a fortnight from the Collection Point, usually on the same day of the week - see the calendar on the back cover to find out on which dates you should put your baskets out.

Your Collection Point is usually right at the edge of the front of your property, where it meets the road or pavement. This replaces the previous "backdoor" black bag collections.

If the refuse vehicle currently collects refuse from the rear of your property, then your Collection Point will be at the edge of your property at the rear.

We know that not all homes in the Vale will have an obvious Collection Point - for example, homes with no service road and some rural properties. We have contacted these householders to advise them of their Collection Point.

If you are in any doubt as to where your Collection Point is, phone the Helpline.

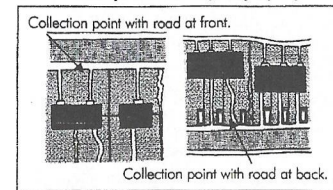
It's essential all your refuse is kept in the bin with the lid shut. We will only collect refuse which is in your bin.

Larger items which cannot fit in your wheeled bin should be taken to your local household waste and recycling site - there is one at Rabans Close in Aylesbury and the other is at Buckingham Industrial Estate. They are both open from 8am to 6pm (April to October) and 8am to 5pm (November to March).

This is the official advice sheet from AVDC re refuse collection. Note the differences between the two arrows in the Collection point diagrams. The one for properties with front access points to an area which is partially on the road. Both suggest that wheelie bins should be placed off path - presumably on flowers or grassed areas!

Buckingham Society makes the point that returned wheelie bins are frequently left on pavements and paths, thus causing obstructions that put partially sighted, blind and young people at risk. There have been stories from other areas of attacks on vulnerable people by muggers crouched between parked wheelie bins.

The collection points are on your property:



Assisted Collections

Most residents should have little difficulty wheeling their bin or carrying their recycling baskets to and from their Collection Point. But we appreciate that there are residents who will be unable to do this through infirmity or disability and who cannot regularly get help. In such circumstances we may provide an assisted collection.

Where we agree to provide an assisted collection either for a wheeled bin and baskets or black bag and baskets it will be from a convenient point where you can leave them. This can be from the front, side or rear of your property. It will greatly help our collectors if you are able to leave your bin or bag and baskets at the front of your property, such as by your front door.

Please make sure your refuse can be easily seen by the collectors. We must have access to that point from 7am on collection day, so you must ensure that any gates, etc, are unlocked. Your bin and baskets will be returned to the same point.

If you are disabled or infirm, and you want to apply for an Assisted Collection, please telephone the Helpline.

AVDC MODERNISATION

Two lots of 20 names were drawn from an Aylesbury hat containing 357 names in February; all had voted in the public consultation on which of three models should be adopted for the future structure of AVDC. Most voters had voted for a cabinet with a leader elected by Councillors.

Only 17 were able to attend the first northern panel meeting at Villiers Hotel. We did not mirror the electorate; only one woman, for a start, but everyone made important contributions to the discussions. We were each asked to describe our background and explain why we had chosen to join in.

I was the Society's only representative but there were two fellow members of U3A; neither lives in Buckingham; one is a politico. The sole lady described herself as a retired local government officer. An impressive young man said he was an officer of Bucks CC. The meeting was led by the new Chief Executive, Richard Carr, supported by two officials. No councillors were invited. It was my second meeting with Mr Carr. Two weeks earlier he had heard my frustration at AVDC's failure

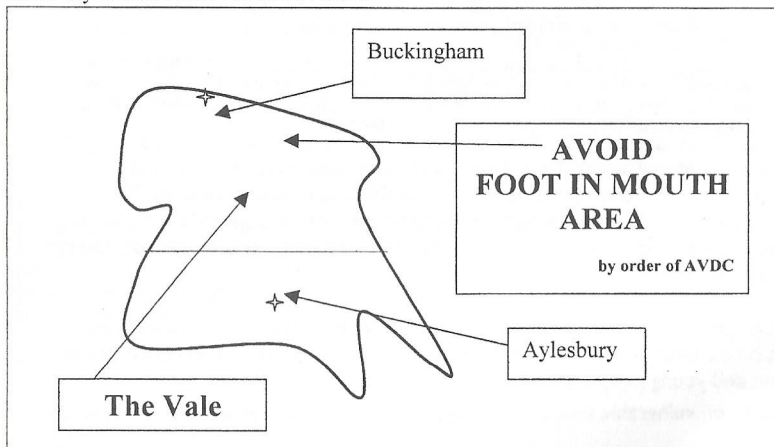
Jack Steggles

to develop recreational paths over a period of four and a half years.

Advice sought from Ed Grimsdale and Carolyn Cumming helped me to formulate a dozen points that I wanted to see aired. They all came up, though I needed to raise less than half myself.

The two-hour long discussions were well structured. We had all come prepared with comments on our experience of using services and contacting the Council, whether through Councillors or officers. We were also asked what we should like our future experience to be.

It seems that our 58 Councillors will choose one leader and nine cabinet members. These ten will receive extra pay. **I asked whether Buckingham could be left without a Councillor in Cabinet?** "Yes," was the answer, but Mr Carr hoped that other Councillors would be sensitive to such an outcome. **At this one of us gave his view that AVDC thinks that life stops north of Whitchurch;** there was a murmur of agreement.



This process is happening everywhere. HM Government's wish to see greater transparency and accountability in local government linked to more involvement with, and response to, the public. In our second hour we were split in twain. Half considered two Governmental intentions while the others dealt with the rest. The two officers listed our points as they were raised. The outcome of each group's deliberations were summarised in a plenary session. The points will be absorbed and analysed by Richard Carr's team for examination at a Council Sub-Committee on 21st March. Mr Carr wondered whether the southern area panel would produce similar guidance to ours; in the event, it did.

HM Government is worried also by the poor turnout in local elections. They fear such apathy is a symptom of worrying distrust. Several panellists showed distaste at the grip exerted by political parties on local government. When policies are decided in party cabals rather than through debate in committee, it is small wonder that voters lack interest.

The new system may be more effective. It could easily become more autocratic. Let's hope that we get some continuity with a leader whom we can recognize and respect. *Buggins' Turn* is seldom a successful formula. Perhaps we should be thankful that these changes are planned by a Council in which Independents hold the balance of power.

Many people are doubtful about the value of the process. After hearing the panel's discussions I regret voting the way I did (for the system chosen by the Council). I wish now that the full electorate could choose a leader or mayor for the whole term. The structure envisaged looks suitable for a discrete metropolitan borough, but not for an artificial and scattered 'District' like ours.

Those of us with experience of industrial management are used to boards of directors having chairmen and managing directors. Shareholders think they get what they pay for.

What worries me is that we shall pay more for what we've got!

Walter Bagehot

It has been said that England invented the phrase, *Her Majesty's Opposition*; that it was the first government which made a criticism of administration as much a part of the polity as administration itself. This critical opposition is the consequence of cabinet government. **The English Constitution (1867) - The Cabinet**

Robert Graves

"What did the mayor do?"
"I was coming to that."
Collected Poems (1938)
Welsh Incident

Grant unto her whole Council, and to all that are put in authority under her, that they may truly and indifferently minister justice.

Holy Communion Prayer

HAPPY DAYS ARE HERE AGAIN

Nothing dulls the spirit more than grey skies without texture or relief. That's been the nature of Buckingham and Britain's winter. We have been depressed by a continuous expanse of slate as numbing as life in a former quarrying district such as Blenau Ffestiniog surrounded by undifferentiated mounds of dark-hued spoil.

That's the reason those harbingers of spring – snowdrops – have been so cheering this year. Snowdrops seem to thrive on neglect. They spring alive early, they flower when all around are too chilly to thrive; like us, their heads dip in middle age, and their wisdom accumulated from living is concentrated in great, green seed pods. When the arch of their stems flattens outwards as the sap of life dries away, those pregnant pods meet a welcome from the warming earth. The few bulbs that the gardener sowed become many, glorious clumps, real hope for those suffering from S.A.D.

Talking of sad places, make a note to walk from Verney Close to Budgens car-park **next February**. The woodland to your right is not an object of beauty most of the year, spoiled as it is through the tramp of vandalising feet and detritus left behind by life on the hoof. Yet, in early spring when General Winter has successfully kept vandals barricaded in their barracks for several months, there is a wonderful display of snowdrops. Almost, but not quite, the best in Buckingham.

For the best of Buckingham's snowdrops you must adjourn a walk along Stowe Avenue to wander in Stowe Rise. There our chairman, Stanley Meadows, and his family, have achieved a minor miracle with their snowdrops. Their display deserves more than a detour, it demands a dedicated visit.

On the way back home walk to the crest of the hill on Western Avenue. You will gain two sights:

- A marvellous display of deep blue crocuses in the garden of 124 Western Avenue. It is unusual to see whole beds of one species. On a sunny day, this early spring garden is special.
- A superb view of our Parish Church as you turn around to descend to West St.

Ed

HERITAGE OPEN DAYS

A Committee has been formed under the Chairmanship of Carolyn Cumming representing interested local bodies. Their aim : to ensure that Heritage Open Days make a big impact on Buckingham in early September 2001

The Dates are: **Friday – Sunday ; September 7th – 9th**

Events:

1. Heritage Quiz leaflet
2. Reception/ Heritage Entertainment (Friday night, Radcliffe Centre, Phoenix Singers)
3. Guided walk to Stowe (Sunday @11)
4. Guided tours around Stowe Estate
5. Guided tours of Buckingham
6. Inns and Outs – Heritage Pub Trail leading to Heritage Beer Sunday @ noon
7. Canal Tow Path Walks
8. St Rumbold's Ramble (Sunday @ 11)
9. Trafalgar Graffiti in U.B. Library
10. Boer War in Old Gaol
11. Chantry Chapel Buckingham Societies Fair
12. WI stall on Market – HOD specials
13. Pig Roast Saturday Lunch
14. Refreshments/Teas (Chantry Chapel (WI))
15. Buckingham Heritage Brew Bitter in local Pubs including **THE NEW INN**
16. Silver Band Sunday @ noon)
17. Town Cryer – Andrew Prodanovic

SUNDAY EVENTS WILL BE FREE

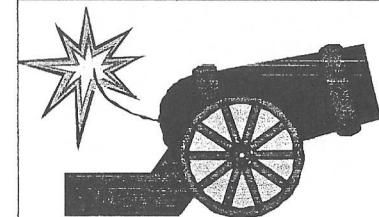
Unusual Openings:

1. Stowe House*
2. Chantry Chapel
3. Yeomanry Buildings (UB)*
4. Castle House*
5. Old Gaol (Sun)
6. Buckingham Sandpit (Sunday)

*- by appointment

ONE THEME:

**MILITARY
BUCKINGHAM**



THE BARRACKS OF WEST STREET ARE 200 YEARS OLD

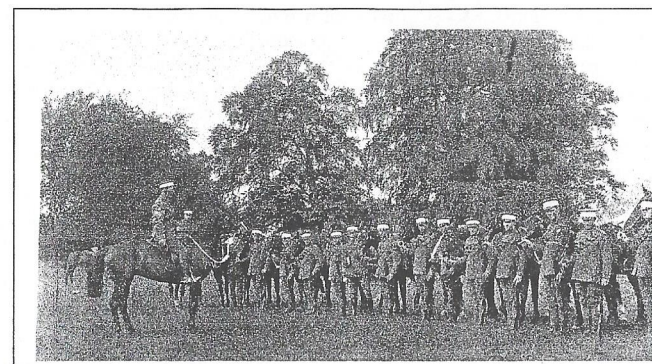
Ed

The Buckingham Society's Planning SIG has taken a close interest in one of James Smith's largest projects – rescuing The Barracks in West St. He has been working with his associate, Nick Shipp. Both of them are "Old Latins". The project, that will split the Barracks into two dwellings, has impressed our Society by James' interest in maintaining and recreating the original period style of the building.

The building known as "The Barracks" was built by the Marquess of Stowe at the bottom of Stowe Avenue in 1801 when there were real fears abroad of Napoleonic invasion. One wonders whether the plan was to let Buckingham fall, but to preserve Stowe at all costs. The Marquis had his own private army, The Royal Bucks Militia. The building housed troops, their Officers (the Adjutant's House), their armaments (including two field six pounders) and their horses which were stabled in the substantial brick

out-houses to the rear of the property. In later years, the property was used by the Royal Bucks Yeomanry. That was quite a force with 540 men commanded by the Duke of Buckingham and Chandos. Once a year they would parade up Stowe Avenue for the celebrated Stowe Park Review, a gathering that attracted not only the great and good of Bucks but Royalty as well.

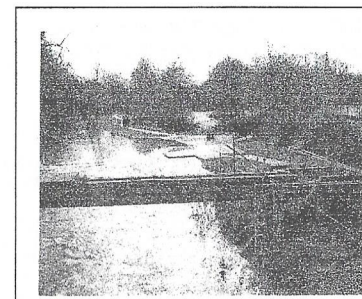
The Barracks connects idiosyncratic architect Sir Clough Williams Ellis with military matters. It was Sir Clough who persuaded Eton College to invest in Stowe in 1923 saving the Lime Tree Grand Avenue for posterity. Tom Merrick, Estates Manager of the University of Buckingham, has just read a biography of the creator of Portmeirion. Tom tells me that Sir Clough was visiting The Barracks when WWI was declared. Seven years later The Barracks was sold for £660 and became a private residence.



The Royal Bucks Hussars being reviewed at Stowe Park in 1912

Returning to the restoration of The Barracks look at the real lime mortar (specially imported from France). It's good to see the care for the small details – even the old West Street road sign has been freshly picked out in black on white. The stone boundary wall capped with the restored original iron fencing is a lovely touch at the Stowe Avenue end of the site. Recent work has been the restoration of the window frames. To see them fully restored lifts the spirits since so much of the character of the façade depends on the contrast between severely rectilinear Georgian windows and the more ornate, rounded character of the "wing" windows in extensions that date from later than 1801. The building is best seen standing opposite the centre of its façade.

Tony Parker has shot the last days of the Concrete Bridge:



Tomlinsons have hit trouble in the Ouse. The site flooded, then their bore hole filled with sludge as the riverbed, composed of old bottles and mud, collapsed, their augur hit impenetrable Buckingham rock (marble?), and then special plastic mesh failed to prevent another implosion.
When will it all end ?

TRANSPORT BEFORE THE RAILWAYS

Joan Wilson (U3A / BS , writing when she dwelt in Devon)

Reading Peter Orlando Hutchinson's description of his trip to London on the first excursion train from Exeter in 1851, I found myself reflecting on transport before the railways came: canal, sea – but also, carriers with packhorses from quite early times, few and far between though they may have been. Then coaches, but also waggons to transport goods from the late 18th century onwards. They were large, slow and cumbersome, but essential to carry goods from one part of the country to another.

J.S.Ewens, a London butter trader, said in 1847: "Before the railways were made in the west and south-west of England we had highly respectable firms of common carriers who went through our district; in fact they arrived in London almost as regularly as the Mail". As time went on and the roads improved, wheels improved, and carriers worked out the best horses to use and the best stopping places.

A lot has been written about coaches and their routes but little about the wagons. What exactly was their work? First of all there were passengers. If travellers could afford it they went by coach because it was more comfortable and faster. Waggons were much bumpier and you shared your space with trunks and boxes, or paupers being returned to their parishes. We know that in 1781 waggons might carry three or four passengers and sometimes more – a pauper family of 12 is recorded. Progress was often so slow that passengers could walk beside them.

Goods were very varied. It is surprising to learn that bullion went by wagon, usually in the form of gold bars, silver and coin. It was imported on packet boats from, for instance, Brazil,

Portugal or Jamaica and was stashed away on the wagons to be trundled along from Exeter to the London Bullion office. Theft was rare, and highwaymen would be hard pressed to get at the heavy gold and would need several accomplices to stop the wagon, get rid of the driver and guard (if there was one), find the precious stuff plus unload before some other traffic came along: and traffic did increase.

Quantities varied, as did the merchandise. Butter was a major item. When the grass in the West was good in spring, then the surplus was available for the London market. Slow journeys meant that salt had to be added to much of it or it would be bad on arrival. Well salted, it would keep for 10 to 14 days, but lightly salted consignments had to be sold very quickly on arrival in London. It is strange for us to realise that even in the capital city goods ran short when transport struggled to reach the unloading depots.

Seeds and nursery goods, especially bundles of trees, would go from October to April, from Scotland or places closer to home; there is a record of 38 bundles collected from Bagshot and Egham for the west, about 3 tons. Thousands of tons were transported. Many other goods from gloves to hops, jostled with wool and yarn and sailcloth.

Of course, coasters took some goods in coastal areas, but were slow and unreliable. Adverse winds in the Straits of Dover often held up cargoes, sometimes for weeks. In the winter of 1795 no ship reached Bridport from London for four months. A vessel would tend to await a full cargo than set sail with an uneconomic load. Bad weather may have delayed coaches and

wagons, but ships suffered more and coach proprietors were pleased when horrendous bad weather in winter slowed vessels down

Going back to bullion, a major cargo on wagons, the slowness of travel meant the goods at the rear could be got at while they went along. It was difficult to keep it secret when bullion was on board. Great efforts were made to hide the major carriage of the new coinage in 1817 when sent to country banks. Watching the ports of entry, eg Falmouth, would help prospective thieves but there were more successful raids in the 18th century when there was little traffic on the roads to intervene.

Goods were sometimes damaged as they were stacked on top of each other. Cabbage plants stained bed linen, trees deteriorated with long delays. Jolting for days, one thing against another, helped to exacerbate damage, rain penetrated wraps and tarpaulins, and sometimes goods just fell off.

Steep hills were a problem, and bad roads made longer teams of horses or smaller loads essential. But snow was the greatest hazard and was the only thing to stop a waggon completely. Waggons were totally halted in Dorset in January 1819, but on the 2nd one wagon got through using 13 horses, though a reporter wrote "not even 20 horses can work a wagon from Blandford to Dorchester until the road is cleared going up the hill 2 miles north of Blandford". In spite of this, wagons still left Exeter and London with very heavy loads; the up wagon on 27th December 1819 took until 7th January to reach Andover! "I would not for £50 pass through the cold as I did from Dartmouth and coming up here," said one driver.

What about carriage before the waggons? Robret Beecroft ran a series of packhorses from Exeter to London in 1663. In the 16th century London handled the bulk of the country's cloth exports, and transport was noted as early as the 15th century. In 1690 there was a weekly packhorse from Exeter to London via Dorchester and Salisbury, plus one from Oxford via Salisbury once a fortnight.

After the wagons came the railways. At first they worked in tandem, waggons even transporting some of their goods by rail. As time went by, though, the railways assumed responsibility for goods they carried and accepted direct payments. Coaches and waggons ran short trips to and from railway stations (see Gail Duff's article), or between small towns and villages, filling gaps in the railway system until 1860, by which time the days of the long distance waggons were over.

We return to Peter Orlando Hutchinson and his day excursion from Exeter to London by train in 1851. The journey took hours longer than advertised, and arrival in London was after dark. People lost their luggage or found it in mud, the contents dirty, and the friends due to meet them gone away. Some women on their own were in panic and POH says he tried to help them "but I was in trouble myself". Such a trip was an adventure to many of the passengers to be talked about for years!

In spite of our grumbles we are better off today!

Lancelot Andrewes:

A cold coming they had of it, at this time of the year; just, the worst time of the year, to take a journey, and specially a long journey, in.
(Did these lines resonate for TS Eliot when writing "The Journey of the Magi?")

The writer of this article was Gail Duff. She was a member of the Aylesbury Society after she retired to the coast. She left the Society the transcripts of a number of radio broadcasts about local Buckinghamshire history including this one. The Aylesbury Society have kindly send us a disk of this piece

BUCKINGHAM HOLIDAYS

My mother came from a family of four children, three girls, and one boy. When they were small, the whole family used to have holidays together. One was somewhere by the sea, but the other, the one that they always loved best, was in Buckingham, where all their relations lived. Buckingham, once the county town but later superseded by Aylesbury, was, in the nineteen twenties, small and sleepy. It was surrounded by countryside where the long summers always seemed to be dry and hot interrupted only occasionally by thunderstorms or heavy showers.

For weeks before the holiday all the children hoarded up their pennies and pocket money, so they would have something to spend when away from home. This, by the end, usually amounted to two shillings (10p) each, which doesn't seem a lot now but which to a child then seemed like a small fortune. During the week before they went away, they all had to wear their oldest clothes while my grandmother spent her time washing and ironing all the rest of their wardrobe and packing it away in a large tin trunk.

At last the great day arrived and all the family got up early to catch the train. Buckingham is only seventeen miles from Aylesbury, but to the children it seemed like an expedition as the trains were slow and they had to change at Verney Junction and wait for a connection.

From Buckingham station there was only a short walk to Grandmother's house, my great grandmother, and all that could be heard in the still streets was the clip-clop of a horse's feet. It was the wagon of old Bussy, the carter, bringing the family's trunk over the river bridge behind them.

The children clicked the latch of the garden gate and ran up the cobbled path. On either side was a mass of large yellow daisies with soft brown centres, and bushes of red and purple fuchsias. In the porch way of the house was dear little Gran in her black dress, high at the neck with white lace. Her white hair was drawn back in a bun and she was always smiling. She threw her arms around each of the children in turn, remarking on how they had grown.

Standing behind Gran and also waiting to greet them was Annie who was some vague relation, a little

simple in her ways but a treasure helping in the house and running errands. The children were all fond of her and she loved to have them there, shedding tears when the time came for them to go. The children's maiden Aunt Lucy also lived with Gran but she was a cook in a big house and they didn't see much of her.

The family always arrived at Gran's just in time for mid-day dinner that was set for them in the large, airy room, which they would use as a dinning-come-sitting room throughout their holiday. It seems strange to my mother now, but Gran and Annie never ate with the family in this room, leaving them to their selves for dinner and tea. My grandparents would buy all the food for the holiday and it was cooked for them while they took the children into the country.

Breakfast was different. They all had this together in Gran's living room. Fresh eggs were collected from the henhouse and boiled, and the milk came from a local farm. Annie fetched it twice a day in a large white jug. My mother can still picture her walking up the cobbled path in a long dark coat, a felt hat pulled onto her head and the milk jug in her hand.

As soon as dinner was over on that first day, the children would race out to play in the garden. It was

large and criss-crossed with paths and confusing enough for a small child to get happily lost in. There were apple trees and pear trees, and bushes loaded with gooseberries and black and red currants. The children were allowed to eat as much of any of the fruits as they liked. My mother remembers particularly the large soft, golden yellow gooseberries. Down one side of the garden there was a bank that led to a tree-lined stream, a good place for playing hide-and-peek. And here there was that strong, familiar smell of wild horseradish, a scent which to this day takes my mother back all those years to the nineteen twenties and Gran's garden.

The next few weeks were idyllic ones for the children. They walked in the country, played in the hay, watched the harvest, visited other Buckingham relations, and went on picnics. They were holidays to remember for a lifetime.



KINGS HEAD, AYLESBURY

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 Forty 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.

After our publication
of Tony's Webster's
poem Buckingham
Society member Tom
Hudson who has eyes
like a lighthouse sent
a signal to Ed (the
Ed.)

"He (Charles I)
evidently walked and
talked 15 years after
his head was cut off!"

We are pleased to publish
this revised edition of Mr
Webster's poem for the
first time. Tony has
apologised for his
transcription error We all
hope that this version will
stand the tests of time and
Tom.

AC Webster
February 2001

NO
BEND
OF
TIME,
THIS
TIME

1664 in both
our last edition and
Tony Webster's
published collection
'States of Mind'.

BUCKINGHAM CARS ARE TURNING GREEN

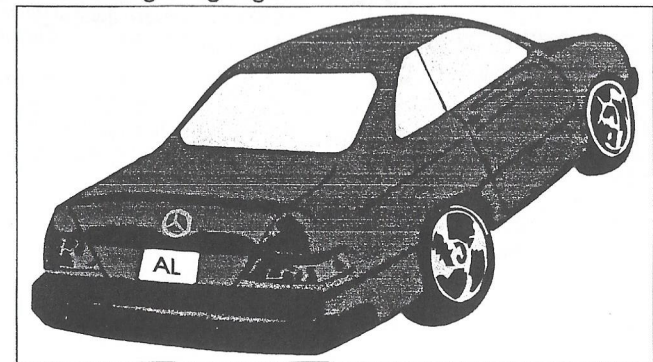
I was putting my suitcase into the finest Mercedes Benz in Buckingham Cars' fleet when I was surprised to see a large tank in the boot. Being a rather green cyclist I asked Martin Aslett, the firm's proprietor, " Why do you need a spare petrol tank?" The chemist inside me shuddered with embarrassment when Martin replied, "That's not a petrol tank, Ed, it's a lpg tank, I've gone dual fuel."

Lpg – liquefied petroleum gas.

A clean mixture of gases such as ethane, propane, butane and propene derived from crude petroleum through distillation. Stored as a liquid under low pressure (rather like the butane in gas-filled cigarette lighters) it is a popular fuel for gas central heating in the USA where great inter city distances make a national methane grid impractical.

Martin had done his research on the Internet, studied the Queen and her ministers' cars and decided what was right for them was right for him. The equipment was installed by *Ivan's Four by Four* on the Buckingham Trading Estate. The firm majors on Rovers; their conversion costs from £1400 upwards. Martin admits to a trifling loss of performance and slightly fewer miles to the gallon, but he's certain that the saving in the cost of his fuel has paid for the conversion in six months. Not a bad return on outlay and, of course, the rest of us are enjoying less atmospheric pollution from exhaust particles and, in the future, less environmental degradation through frequent replacement of catalytic convertors in exhaust systems.

There is a downside: the only lpg filling station within 10 km of Buckingham is at Fimere Fuels just outside of Tingewick. Perhaps, if a few Buckingham Society members convert to lpg fuel, we'll be able to persuade a Buckingham garage to hold some stocks.



INNS AND OUTS IN BUCKINGHAM

Elsewhere in this Newsletter reference is made to the rapid growth in licensed premises in Victorian England. Kelly's Directory for Buckinghamshire of 1869 lists 23 Inns and Hotels in our Town. The population was 3849. That's a pub for every 167 of the population. Over the last 130 years Buckingham's population has more than doubled but its pub count has halved.

"From the towns all Inns have been driven: from the villages most.....Change your hearts or you will lose your Inns and you will deserve to have lost them. But when you have lost your Inns down your empty selves, for you will have lost the last of England."

By the time that Hilaire Belloc had written those words in 1912, attitudes to drink had stiffened, fortified by the Temperance movement that started its century of vigorous work in 1862. Licensing laws became stricter, hours of opening narrowed, a way of life, recreation and death was changed. Certainly, Buckingham was

transformed. Just imagine Buckingham's townscape today if we had the same ratio of pubs to inhabitants as in 1869. We would be surrounded with more than 50 Inns of happiness and despair. What we have is very different. In the 19th century our town was defined by its pubs. Many of our older houses owe their shape to their former glory as Inns. In losing them have we "lost the last of England"? What we have is a townscape shaped by Inn architecture.

To establish that, it is important to record "Inns and Outs". There is a useful trail to be laid out across Buckingham celebrating our P.H. heritage. Perhaps that task should be completed for Heritage Open Days in September. What follows is an attempt to provoke memories, arguments and debates. It draws heavily on Douglas Elliott's book "Buckingham – The Loyal and Ancient Borough". I have used Kelly's 1869 Directory as a historical baseline.

Ref. No.	1869 INN	LOCATION	BUILDING EXISTS IN 2001?	NOTES
1.	Bell aka The Colliflower	Bridge St	✗ ?	1669-1873
2.	Bull	58 Well St	✓ (H)	Closed 1938 largely rebuilt in 1980's as a private dwelling
3.	Butcher's Arms	Red Lion Row (35 Nelson St)	✓ (H)	1824-1934
4.	Cross Keys	Lenborough Rd	✓ (H)	An Old Inn dating from medieval times; the house retains the name.
5.	Crown Inn	Bristle Hill/ 4 Nelson St	✓ (H)	1776-1895
6.	George Inn	Butchers' Market / 21 Market Hill	✗	Ceased trading in 1907

7.	Grand Junction	13 High St	✓ (PH)	Aka The Ship (1675) renamed (Canal Inn) with the arrival of the Canal in 1802
8.	Horse and Groom	High St	✓ (CP)	1790-1963 on the east side near "Wards Hardware" shop
(24)	King of Prussia	Gawcott Hill	✓ (PH)	Renamed in 1914 The Britannia not mentioned in Kelly
9.	King's Head	38 High St, later (1929) 7 Market Hill	✗	The KH site was used for the present road to Maids Moreton. The KH moved across the new road.
(23)	Mitre	2 Mitre St	✓ (PH)	Not mentioned in Kelly but active back to 1740
10.	(Lord or Admiral) Nelson	Bristle Hill / 2 Nelson St	✓ (H)	1808-1938. The dwelling is now called "The Old Admiral Nelson"
11.	New Inn	Bridge St	✓ (PH)	See references under Chemistry
12.	(Old) Angel	Cow Fair/ High St	✗ ?	1507-1938
13.	(Old) Fleece	18 Market Hill	✓ (H)	1691-1908
14.	(Old) Fox and Hounds	22 High St	✗ ?	1790-1929
15.	Red Lion	Red Lion St on corner of St Rumbold's Lane	✗	Red Lion St was renamed Nelson St site redeveloped
16.	Swan and Castle	Castle St	✓ (PH)	Originally called the White Swan, this had belonged to Stowe Estate in earlier, Victorian times. It possessed a cockpit capable of housing royalist regiments in the Civil War.
17.	Three Cups	Bridge St	✓ (PH)	Its yard was bought later than 1869 to create a rear coaching entrance for the White Hart
18.	Trooper	Cow Fair or High St	?	Where was it? 1790-1907
19.	Two Swans	Bridge St	?	1790-1907 Details?
20.	Whale	Market Hill	✓ (PH)	Aka Anderson's Hotel
21.	White Hart	Market Square	✓ (PH)	Once part of Stowe Estate, the original open coaching entrance was at the front.
22.	Woolpack	Well St	✓ (PH)	Very long established, alongside the main route into Buckingham before the new London Rd Bridge was built.
-	Dolphin	6 Nelson St	✗	Not mentioned in Kelly; 1759-1907, site contains Emma's Cottage (1990's)

Key: CP Commercial Premises; H Private House; PH Public House;
Bold – extant !

HUMBLE CHEMISTRY IN NORTH BUCKS

Ed Grimsdale inspired by Charlie Macdonald

Our Society is replete with Chemists:

- **Teachers** **Charlie Macdonald** formerly of Stowe School
 Ed Grimsdale Royal Latin School
- **Industrialists** **Michael Coombs** formerly of Richardson's Paint
 Jack Steggle from Ink Technology at the Bank of
 England, to Polythenes in Australia
- **Polymath** **Geoff Shaw** **Research chemist, then technical
 sales, expert in Oil markets, before
 crossing the Rubicon to economics,
 Careers Education, and life as an
 entrepreneur**

1813 Westminster Bridge
 and the streets of
 Westminster lit by coal
 gas

Our Society has shown its interest in Buckingham's Industrial Heritage (eg Wharf House and The Station Master's House). Last year, correspondence in The Buckingham Advertiser claimed that the Bridge St terrace was built for gas workers who laboured at the Buckingham gasworks. Coopers' car-sales lot is sited on the riverside site of that gas works. Charlie and Ed expressed doubts: surely, on stylistic grounds, the terrace pre-dates the general availability of coal-gas? They reached for their archives. Here are extracts from a piece written by Charlie at Stowe School in 1973:

Coal gas was manufactured by heating coal in the absence of air. This produced coke, coal gas and coal tar together with a number of impurities such as ammonia, carbon disulphide and hydrogen sulphide (bad eggs!). Purification was essential and several methods were used including treatment by slaked lime. The spent slaked lime was used as a garden dressing."

Today, Charlie worries about the use of that spent powder on the land for he fears that reaction with rain would have produced the highly poisonous hydrogen sulphide – and a real pong! Curiously, when hydrogen sulphide's concentration in air is enough to be lethal, its smell vanishes.

When the Swimming Pool was being built at Stowe in the 1970's, an ancient Stowe gasworks was

"About the time of the beginning of the 19th century, coal gas seems to have been introduced for lighting on a sizeable scale

- 1797 Lord Dundonald used coal gas to light the hall of Culross Abbey, Fife
- 1802 Coal gas lighting demonstrated at the Lyceum Theatre, London

discovered. Charlie reported at the time:

"This looks in every way like a coal-gas plant. There are retorts for heating the coal, a tar-ump and a purifying house with lime-store adjacent. I should guess it predates the commercial production of acetylene though there is no evidence of a date on the plan. Mr Whitehead, the head painter, tells me that he remembers the plant in action and the spreading of the spent lime on the land. He says that none of the main rooms at Stowe were lit, only the passages and halls; the lens

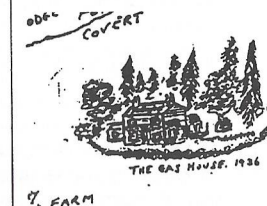
in the Egyptian Entry was part of a gas-lamp."

Manor Houses were equipped with their own gas plants. Our President, Stanley Meadows, remembers one at the entrance to the grounds of Tile House. Tom Pallett, who wrote the recently published "I Still have Pictures in my Head", was born in "The Gas House" attached to Tile House. He notes that it was "isolated". What Charlie has written explains why such operations were on the fringe of middle class society.

The Gasholder, commonly known as a Gasometer, at Tile House in 1937. Gasholders were like upside down jam jars with their opening under water. As gas collected, the gasholder was lifted. The holder was made from heavy iron. The downward force of the holder on the trapped gas caused gas pressure. That pressure forced the coal gas along pipes to the distant house where it was burnt for heat and light



Tom and Doreen Pallett on their bikes.



To truck is to pay in kind (eg beer) rather than in cash

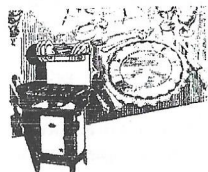
The Buckingham gasworks was erected on Bridge St in 1834. The New Bridge (London Rd Bridge) had been erected in 1805. The "New Inn" must have been built after that realignment of the roads. Research suggests that the first-known publican was pulling pints from 1839-1842. All that evidence does suggest that the New Inn and its terrace could have been built for gas-workers in the 1830's despite the visual stylistic evidence that points to earlier Georgian times. The Pub and

the adjoining houses were built by the gas company in the 1840's; to build a Pub was a way of recycling wages from workers, a pernicious practice stopped eventually, by the Truck Acts. The Manager of the Gasworks lived in the cottage in Ford St that possesses a rounded edge. In later years the Gasworks was the centre for further scams – the selling of worthless shares, for instance. Unfortunately official records have been lost by Southern Gas

1831,
1887
& 1896

Styles were slow to move from London to rural England reports Tom Hudson. This terrace is vernacular, debased Georgian

Mike Hall, Landlord of The New Inn is researching the history of the gasworks. He asks if readers have stories to tell, or any pictures of the site as no "official" photographs survive?



This is the Gas Cooker which does all the work by itself. By means of the "Regulo" controlled oven, no watching is necessary. Put in the food -The "Regulo" will not let you down-Install one of these cookers and say
THANK GOODNESS FOR GAS

Low Cash, Hire Purchase or Simple Hire Terms

The United District Gas Co
Buckingham Works

The British government had acted in the 1830's to increase drunkenness; tax was removed from beer and householders could open their parlour as a beer-house outside licensing law for a fee of two guineas. Nationwide 31,000 beer-sellers came into existence. Buckingham was awash with alehouses but we all know of houses that were formerly pubs¹. All that led to an upsurge in a local cottage chemical industry: brewing. The chemical process is simple: make a weak sugar solution by breaking down molecules of starch (mashing)), add yeast, keep out air

¹ See the later article on Inns of Buckingham

and you get an alcoholic beverage, containing, what chemists know as, "ethanol".

Turning to a different chemical topic: part of Buckingham, now under the Chandos Rd buildings of our University, possesses a seam of marble or calcium carbonate. It was mined. Stanley Meadows, President of The Buckingham Society, reckons that he has a Buckingham marble fireplace in store. A local historian claimed in the 19th century that Captain Hooper's house was built of Buckingham marble. Do any of our readers know to which house he was referring? Buckingham marble was not a pure, white form of marble, impurities gave it a dove grey colour with black streaks. It was extremely hard to shape. Once famous and prized throughout England, changes in import duties meant that foreign marble eventually flooded the market and the Buckingham mine was closed.

Limestone – another form of calcium carbonate was mined in several parts of the town. It would have been used both for building purposes and in the production of garden lime by heating in lime kilns followed by "slaking" with water. In rural areas lime-kilns would be built "in situ", a hole was dug into the face of the limestone, a fire created and, in time, carbon dioxide was driven out leaving quicklime (Calcium Oxide). Another use for quicklime would have been to light the Town Theatre that stood where the Garage stands at the junction of London Rd and Chandos Rd. Heat the product, quicklime, intensely and it converts

some of the heat energy into light - LIMELIGHT (that's where the well known phrase originated). Incidentally, former Buckingham Society member, Ralph Manchester, told me days before he died that he reckoned the stone block on Bridge St housing H& M Shoes and The Three Cups was built from the dismantled stones of our former Town Theatre. He noted that this block is built of dressed stone (unusual in Buckingham- most finishes are rough rubble stone).

We must not forget humble sand known to chemists as silicon dioxide. The name "Singleborough" tells of the shingle extracted over many centuries from the Shelspit quarry. One of Buckingham's sandpits has been turned into a geological site for wildlife. Clearly visible are the strata containing extraneous material deposited within the sand after transport to Buckingham by river water. Sand is not only a great building material, essential in mortar, it is a raw material of glass.

North Bucks is richly endowed with clay. Thus, the area is full of brick-built houses. Brick making was known to the Romans, but the technology was lost. It was only in the 17th Century that Britons started making their own bricks, usually on the building site itself, for bricks were heavy and cumbersome to transport². At that time most houses were still constructed of wood. The prevalence of that combustible material led to the appalling Buckingham fire in 1725. Later brick-making became an industry.

² See Joan Wilson's article on transport

Many types of brick were manufactured in North Bucks. As Tom Hudson has pointed out, that industry was possible only with the advent of transportation on canals. Michael Coombs has identified "rubber" bricks in Buckingham. No, they are not bendy, but they are soft and easy to file or rub into shape. There are a number of houses in Buckingham with rounded comers. Some of these were built with "rubber" bricks. See if you can spot them on the corner of Bristle Hill and School Lane, for instance.

Medium to heavy soil, moist but rich, suits the growth of Walnut trees. A time there was when walnut was a common tree in England. Now one remains at Grenville Cottage, RLS. Do readers know of others in Buckingham? The town once had a field of walnuts. It stretched behind the Old Vicarage (now renamed Walnut Yard by its owners, Buckingham Society members, Bill and Kathy Robins) in Church St down to the river Ouse. Walnut was a valuable source of chemicals. Locals suffered badly from intestinal worms. No purge was better than walnut oil and pumpkin seeds. Walnuts are full of tannins (the dark colour in tea) and phenols (the first antiseptic, carbolic acid, discovered by Lister in 1865 was the simplest phenol). Extract of walnut was a great germ killer in the days before germs were given any recognition for their dastardly work. The hulls of the nuts were used as a dark dye, and walnut wood made lovely furniture and was marvellously hard, excellent for the wooden parts of muskets carried around Buckingham

by soldiers loyal to the King in our Civil Wars. Curiously, there is a link between Walnut Oil and Buckingham's Paint Factory. Walnut Oil is a drying oil. Drying oils are unsaturated oils, they contain double bonds between carbon atoms. Drying starts through reaction with oxygen in air. Walnut oil takes in an astonishing 150 times its own volume of oxygen over a year. So what? Well, as Robert Cumming, distinguished Art historian and Buckingham Society member will tell you, some 600 years ago artists discovered the joys of drying oils as an medium for attaching colour to canvas. Previously, they had mixed pigments with egg yolk (temperamental "tempura"). Robert wrote in his marvellous book "Annotated Art": **"The advantages of oil paint, which became the most widely used paint medium, are its strength and flexibility. It creates a strong, long-lasting surface and can be used in glazes, or thickly as impasto. I can be built up in thin transparent layers like varnish to produce large areas of glowing colour, or it can be worked in the finest detail. Van Eyck perfected the technique of oil painting."** Walnut oil preceded linseed oil as the choice of leading artists.

Eventually, Buckingham acquired its paint works (Richardsons). It is omitted from this survey because the paint industry does not, in the main, make chemicals, rather it buys them and mixes them; furthermore to call that development "humble" would be insulting. Increasingly, the world of paint is synonymous with

international chemical conglomerates. Small fry like our factory (the 4th largest Manufacturer of paint in G.B. as The Advertiser recently revealed) are likely to be battered and cooked in their own oil. Our factory's continued existence to the 21st century far from its supplying giants is miraculous. At least Buckingham didn't suffer from the environmental consequences of pigment works such as the "Red-Lead" plant at Deanshanger.

The Buckingham link to the canals was finished in 1801 allowing a wider range of chemicals and related products into Buckingham such as Welsh slate for roofs. Near the terminus, Mr Henry Thorpe had a steam mill for the production of "superphosphate of lime", a valuable fertiliser. Mr Thorpe's advertised his product as "artificial manure". He would have used a great amount of animal bones including some from the Shambles (ie meat market) then sited near the present position of Barclays Bank.

The Castle Iron Works in Chandos Rd sounds chemical but it was really an Iron Foundry. It was famed for producing a number of steam-driven engines. There was room for three passengers in front and a stoker to the rear. Trips were organised between Buckingham and Wolverton at an average speed of 12 miles an hour. One Buckingham steam car was exported to Belgium. Tom Hudson, informed by an RAF colleague, wonders whether the demise of the successful energetically efficient steam car came about through its patent being

bought by rivals backing petrol driven vehicles?

Buckingham is thought of as an ancient market town; its feet firmly in the soil. Traditional Industry was cottage-based such as lace-making. But... peer beneath the surface and our area can claim not to be a chemical giant but an infant chemist whose nappies were full of those most useful medieval chemical mixtures, urine and faeces. For what would you use piddle? Let it ferment for 10 days and it becomes ammoniacal - have you ever smelt a horse-box? Ammonia solution is a wonderful cleaning fluid. Nothing quite like it to lift lanolin from sheep's wool. Yes Bronnleys make soap in Brackley, but for much of history soap was expensive, a product for gentry; piddle was from the folk, for the folk. For a use for the other contents of soiled nappies - the answer lies in the soil! There's a whole book waiting to be written about the cunning ways man has used human and animal body wastes.....

Buckingham has never been a hive of industry though its bees have long been busy making honey from nectar. This essay has combed through our past; it has been an attempt to reveal that humble folk, lacemakers, shoemakers, and sons of our soil have used the common knowledge of chemistry. Chemical change transmutes the worthless into the worthwhile. The modern chemist is full of knowledge of myriads of atoms as they jostle for

mutual attraction in studied reaction mechanisms.

Ordinary folk do not know the whys and the wherefores, but their stomachs tell them that walnut oil kills worms and their fathers, with hands mired full of Bucks clay, show them how fire creates house bricks.

Ed (with lots of help from Society friends mentioned within).

REGIONAL CONCERNS:

North Hertfordshire have WITHDRAWN their draft Local Plan! All thanks to revised PPG3 and the local campaign to save the greenbelt west of Stevenage.

Hertfordshire CC have launched an Urban Renaissance Campaign via a roadshow and public consultation exercise..

Chesham Society have been successful in gaining planning approval (after an inquiry) for their plan to improve the 1992 Town Clock Tower.

The Editor of the ANTAS NEWSLETTER warns all Societies to be on their guard over tinkering at the edge of green belts.

BUCKINGHAM TOWN COUNCIL

ANNUAL TOWN MEETING

27th March 2001



A LIVELY EVENT!

A good turn out of electors bristling with questions to put to our Council ensured that this Meeting was the liveliest on record. As usual, the greatest support came from members of our Buckingham Society.

The reports of the Mayor and the 4 Chairman of the Committees need not concern us overmuch, they were factual, low key accounts of the year's activities. Our Council (or "Parish Council" as the Mayor kept reminding us to ensure we did not expect Heaven in North Bucks) had done its job in its usual manner.

The Council did announce a "History of

Buckingham Competition" aimed at local schoolchildren with a £50 first prize—to get a potted history of our Town suitable for publication on The Internet.

We heard that we might not have to mind our pees and queues so much in the future. To supplement the ghastly toilet provision near the Old Gaol, the Community Centre's toilets will open during the daytime, when supervision is available. Your Chairman was caught out by the parenthesis on Maundy Thursday. A morning litterpicking had left him with an urgent need. The Community Centre was locked, worse was to follow for the Gents on the Moreton Road facility was out of bounds, secured by a great steel door.

The Council still expects to take over the wooded land behind Verney Close from BCC. Unfortunately, negotiations have yet to be successfully concluded.

Transfer of responsibility for Open Parks from AVDC to the Town Council has not been completed, but a "Green Spaces" Group has been established to improve dialogue. The Buckingham Society has been welcomed on that body, so we shall be able to influence policy and practice.

Then, for the **fire-works!**

Questions and comments.

Mr D. Fitch, Landlord of "The Whale", fired his broadside: under age drinking was **out of control** in Buckingham. He had experienced 40-

50 drunken youngsters some aged under 11 years old outside his Pub the previous Friday.

The story he told was an horrific one, full of defecation, barfing and personal verbal abuse. Many of the offensive youngsters claimed to be members of Project Street Life, an alcohol free bar for youngsters about 100m from Mr Fitch's Inn. Buckingham was under-policed, said Mr Fitch, who was prepared to put **£1000** on the table to support more officers on patrol—what was BTC going to do?

BTC looked as discomfited as any Parish Council would be when ordered to control the uncontrollable. They promised a Friday night BTC no-pub crawl to be organised by Cllr Granville—a fact-finding mission. I found Mr Fitch's style to be hectoring and very much "in yer face". Your Chairman admitted that he was Acting Chairman of PSL. By chance the Project's AGM was two nights later—so he issued an open invitation to attend so that issues surrounding underage drink-

ing could be discussed at greater length. By the time Mr Fitch had roared into silence as once more The Whale took him into its belly, the Town Council looked ready for a drink.

Unfortunately, The Whale vomiting Jonah after 3 days' trial by tummy, was just the hors-d'oeuvres in the evening's test by questions.

Amongst other issues that were raised were:

The appalling state of Maids Moreton Avenue—far from being a tourist attraction it has become an unkempt dump. Ted Farmer asked the question, and he later reported action—AVDC Countryside Agency visited the Avenue on Maundy Thursday.

Your Chairman asked the Council to join him in pressurising David Wilson Homes into repairing the vandalised lamp standard on the Heartlands. BTC agreed and mentioned a Meeting with DWH scheduled for later in the week. *(The lamp standard remains in a sorry state, but*

AVDC's Dave Marshall has ensured that a fine litter pick and mowing have occurred across the Heartlands.)

John Rooney reminded Councillors that he'd asked for improved bus services in the previous Town Meeting especially for the old and not so mobile at weekends, nothing had been done. BTC promised renewed action via the Buckingham Partnership.

There was a plea to keep pavements for pedestrians.

Stuart Mackey was concerned about speeding past his house in Gawcott Fields and he suggested an extension of the 30 mph restricted area.

Eventually, question time was closed, but there was still time for "a quick one" in "The Whale" or another snug.

The People vs Parish Council will return to a Community Centre near you in a year's time.

Ed

REVIEWS

Rob Tucker—The Beast of Buckingham (Clarinet and piano)
Milka Marinova—Barmilka (Piano, dedicated to Bela Bartok)

TEACHER (RLS)

Programme Note:

The Beast of Buckingham lived in the long lost well of St Rumbold. He was a mirthful creature, full of chortle and even the occasional dance, faster than his legs would carry him. However, rumour has it that the well has been rediscovered; reports of unusually large footprints and even a mysterious sighting near the old railway line



Roll over Rodney Shirley! Here is a virtuoso piece written by Rob Tucker with his friend Paul Harris, distinguished local clarinetist, in mind. The piece seems to start with a gurgle at the bottom of the well. The clarinet intones a G in its most mysterious chalumeau register, and unwinds just over an octave to the accompaniment of a more promising chord on the piano. So, the introduction is saying, "Beware, the Beast of Buckingham is awakening." The pace quickens as he warms to his task, and we're in a galumphing scherzando. Rhythmic figures remind one of Prokofief. The Beast is frightening not only the populus of Buckingham, but even himself. His mood swings violently from frivolous dance, through the hush of peeping Tom, to the menace of brazen violence. If the clarinet represents the mind of the Beast, his pumping legs are simulated by myriads of massive parallel chords on the piano, rushing hither and thither seemingly beyond control. The end is brutal. I think Rodney Shirley has cornered the Beast by the Well and has shot him.
Thank God!

STUDENT (at RLS)

Milka is a star RLS student in Year 11. Her family roots are in Bulgaria. Her mother works at the University of Buckingham and Dad is connected with Buckingham Cars (qv). Coming from Bulgaria, it is hardly surprising that Milka is fascinated by the music of Bela Bartok whose Hungarian origins were developed by contact with supra-national Balkan gypsy music.

Barmilka is an energetic, two-part invention for piano. The idiom reminds me of Matyas Seiber as well as Bartok. The piece is unified by a pseudo folk dance figure:



Meanwhile, the piano's left hand maintains the pulse, energised by typically Bartokian violent thrusts:



Milka is unafraid of flattening her melodic figure so that little more than its rhythmic imprint is left. The piece displays abilities to nag at, and to develop ideas—splendid! Grace notes provide further injections of momentum and the unexpected.

True to the spirit of Bartok there's not a note too many. Textures are spare, and the end comes with the audience wanting more. I look forward with great expectation to further works by Milka.

Ed hopes that these two pieces will join other works "made in Buckingham" at the Heritage Open Days Concert Reception on Friday 7th September 2001

REVIEWS

THE ROYAL LATIN SCHOOL

Paul Poornan

Privately published by Dusty Old Books (www.dustyoldbooks.com)

7 Pear Tree Farm, Marsh Gibbon £17.99 + £1.95 P + P

Paul Poornan's book on the history of the Latin School is a triumph of scholarship. RLS has long celebrated its chequered longevity, but separating fact from fiction in a town whose records were decimated by the 1725 fire has never been easy. Paul is fascinated both by the distant past and recondite puzzles. The most impressive sections of this book concern the splendid primary source research work that Paul has essayed into the school's earliest days. Paul has been like a gold prospector; he has sieved mountains of evidence and found his glittering prizes—nuggets beyond price; truths to replace fiction. **But....** as NF Simpson has written: "And suppose we solve all the problems it presents? What happens? We end up with more problems than we started with. Because that's the way problems propagate their species"

It is vital for historical prospectors to down their shovels and pick

up their pens to communicate their findings. Many antiquarians collect, some colate, but few circulate their considered conclusions. Paul has published his lists, translated the eponymous language of the Latin into the vernacular, and by stripping layers of varnish from cherished old masters he has exposed the school's true colours. **Make no mistake, this is an important volume.** Incidentally, in style and shape, it can be read as a tribute to that distinguished early historian of Buckingham, Browne Willis. Paul's book will be treasure trove to present and future historians of Buckingham.

There's forging to be done to meld his gold dust into finished narrative. Paul has furnished the skeleton, others must flesh these bones. They may not be historians, for the records may not

be extant, but historical novelists may invigorate bones of history with sinews of conjecture tensed by muscles of deduction; the whole body powered by burning the fat of inference.

Paul's work on the 20th century is deliberately skeletal; more pointers for future reference than finished history; inevitably these sections show less research and more lacunae.

Should you buy the book? If you are interested in very old Buckingham, resoundingly **"YES"**. If you have only a passing interest in RLS or want to know about former fellow students at your alma mater, this may not be the book for you. This is a book that provokes—another challenge to us all—to complete the story of Buckingham. **But... isn't that an impossible problem?** Ed

MAUNDY THURSDAY LITTERPICK

Sponsor : Mr Chow , Buckingham Fish Bar
Dennis Osborne's picture shows the seat area between the Riverside walk and the new Skateboard Park before AVDC cleaned it up. AVDC did a marvellous job across Buckingham this Spring and they persuaded David Wilson Homes to do likewise across the Heartlands. By the time our Society had collected a further 37 bags of litter, Buckingham was open for business and looking great.



The Society thanks Jutta Bethell (Organiser), guests Janet and Fiona Pitt, Carolyn Cumming, Anne Wilson, Ted Farmer, Dennis Osborne , Jack Steggles, Rodney Shirley, John Townsend who, led by Ed, showed Buckingham how to "JUST BIN IT"

BUCKINGHAM



OFFICIAL STREET PLAN

It was Charles Macdonald who first brought the Society's attention to a rival Buckingham Street Guide.

He pointed out that an earlier edition was more accurate than a later revised one!

He does smile his face into more lines than are in the new map with the augmentation of the Indies. (Shakespeare in "Twelfth Night")

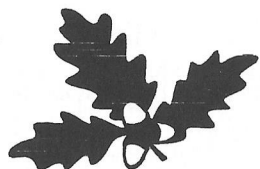
Map me no maps, sir,
my head is a map, a map
of the whole world.
(Henry Fielding in
"Rape upon Rape")

The Buckingham Society has been invited to contribute to the revision of the STREET PLAN produced by the LOCAL AUTHORITY PUBLISHING CO LTD

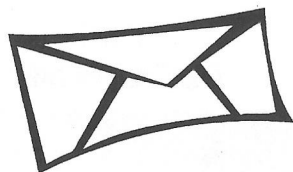
We believe that their present map is the best street plan of Buckingham that is currently available

Copies are available from the Town Council Office in The Community Centre

PLEASE SEND ANY NOTES REGARDING HOW THE PRESENT EDITION MAY BE IMPROVED EITHER TO ED , OR DIRECT TO PAULA HEATH, OUR TOWN CLERK



The Society's Recreational Paths Group under the leadership of Jack Steggles is pushing local bodies to complete our town's riverside walk. Jack and the Society's Deputy Chairman, Carolyn Cumming received a sympathetic hearing at a recent meeting of the Buckingham Partnership – the Town's strategic forum. Subsequently, a meeting was held with AVDC's Parks and Recreation Manager, Ian Brearley, that resulted in a proposal to form a multi-pronged action plan to realise those "missing links". One forum that will aid the completion of the Riverside Walk will be the new Green Spaces Strategic Forum. Fortunately, our Society has a seat on that body, so that we can give the community the benefit of the wealth of local knowledge that our members possess. To make a difference and to complete such expensive links as the West St footbridge, we shall need the help of major funding from sources such as the landfill tax, if that has a life post-Budget, Trusts or the Heritage Lottery Fund. That's The Buckingham's Society's forte, getting their hands dirty in the engine room where energy is turned into useful work.



The Society has heard from Desmond Bonner that there has been success in another campaign. Tudor Meadows aka the Heartlands has been a letter-box free area. The motto seems to have been "Let your feet do the posting". The Society under the leadership of Charles Macdonald has repeatedly asked the Post Office for a posting box. The answer was always, "We'll look into it." Such brush offs don't wash with Tudor Meadows resident, Des Bonner. His "coup de grace" may have been to threaten to contact Buckingham's hyperactive M.P., John Bercow. The Post Office has contacted Des and promised studies for NOT ONE but TWO pillar boxes in "Upper" and "Lower" Tudor Meadows. Apparently, red pillar boxes are like red buses in never travelling alone. Anyway, as a Buckingham Society wag observed, "It will soon be a red letter day in the Heartlands." The Society hopes the residents will use the facilities, when they arrive, to drop a note of thanks to Desmond Bonner.

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THE DEBATE ON THE FUTURE OF "THE NEW LOCK-UP"

On the reverse of this page, Michael Coombs reveals that the condemnation of the **Old Gaol** for police purposes led to the building of our Moreton Road Police Station. That might have been the end of our Old Gaol but it was built to last. Today, our 1892 Station faces an uncertain future. Once a fine lock-up, it now locks away a valuable pocket of land that could be liberated for housing, or other purposes. As a "Lock-Up" it is behind the times: vehicle access and parking are poor; inside the rooms are cell-like. Nor is it central to the hub of Buckingham activity. As a Police Station it is past its sell-by date, and by selling it, the force could finance a leap forward in operational practice in North Bucks (a by-pass HQ is suggested and an active counter in a centre of town position.). Michael Coombs writes:

Buckingham has the characteristics of a pre-Victorian town. It has building examples of the 12th Century (The Old Latin School though rebuilt in 1748), the 15th (The former Buckingham Vicarage, 1445), the 16th (parts of Castle House, 1500), the 17th (the Town Hall, 1685), the 18th (the Old Gaol, 1748), the 19th (London Rd Bridge, 1801), to name a few."

There are many examples of Victorian buildings (1837 to 1901); for instance the Salvation Army Citadel (1842), the houses on the west side of Chandos Rd (1853), the Police Station (1892) and the Radcliffe Centre (1897).

Michael Coombs is right in asserting that we have a useful number of buildings from all parts of Victoria's reign. If we lose our "New Lock-Up", shall we lose a significant part of our heritage?

The **Buckingham Society** Executive has debated the issue. Frankly, they split on the merits of the case, but the outcome was a decision **NOT** to press for our Police Station to be listed (and, therefore, protected).

It is a matter for public debate. It is a good example of police architecture at the end of the 19th century. The side that faces towards the town has a pleasant symmetrical aspect and it is a pity that it is obscured by the thicket of growth in the untended plot next to it. It was built to make a statement on the brow of the Moreton Hill.

Do you value it? Will you mourn its passing? Do tell us!

THE POLICE STATION

Researched by Michael Coombs

In 1892, Buckingham's independent "Borough" Police force amalgamated with the County Police. Our local force had operated from the Old Gaol but the new Authority condemned that building for police work. They agreed to build a new Police Station for Buckingham. The "Buckingham Advertiser and North Bucks Free Press" for 31 December 1892 published the following article:-

"The New Lock-Up"

" This building has been erected on the top of the Maids Moreton Road hill on the south east side of the road. It is of red brick and stone facings and containing a small residence, four cells – three for male and one for female – and yard. It is to be regretted that a petty sessions room has not been added for the convenience of all parties attending the sessions, whilst at the same time it will be against the spirit of the times to convey prisoners, untried, through the public streets to the Town Hall

The architect was the County Surveyor, Mr R.J. Thomas and the builder was Mr J.K. Tibbetts."

In 1877, a Mr. James Kirby Tibbetts, a builder, resided in West St., Buckingham.

The County Surveyor's pencil plans were submitted to the Secretary of State in February 1891. The estimated cost of the building was £1375. A Clerk of Works was to be employed at 40 shillings per week for 40 weeks.

Finished plans were approved in June 1891. The cost of a loan (£78) and a Local Government Inquiry (£236) made the total estimated cost £1689.

The lowest tender for building was made by Mr Tibbetts at £1750. An Additional £25 and 10 shillings was spent on hating apparatus, and a Mr F.A. Parkes agreed to act as Clerk of works for £15 15s.. The building was handed over on the 3rd January 1893

The front cover picture of the Police Station today comes from an original colour photograph taken by John Credland.