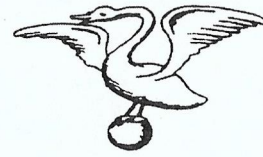


THE
BUCKINGHAM
SOCIETY

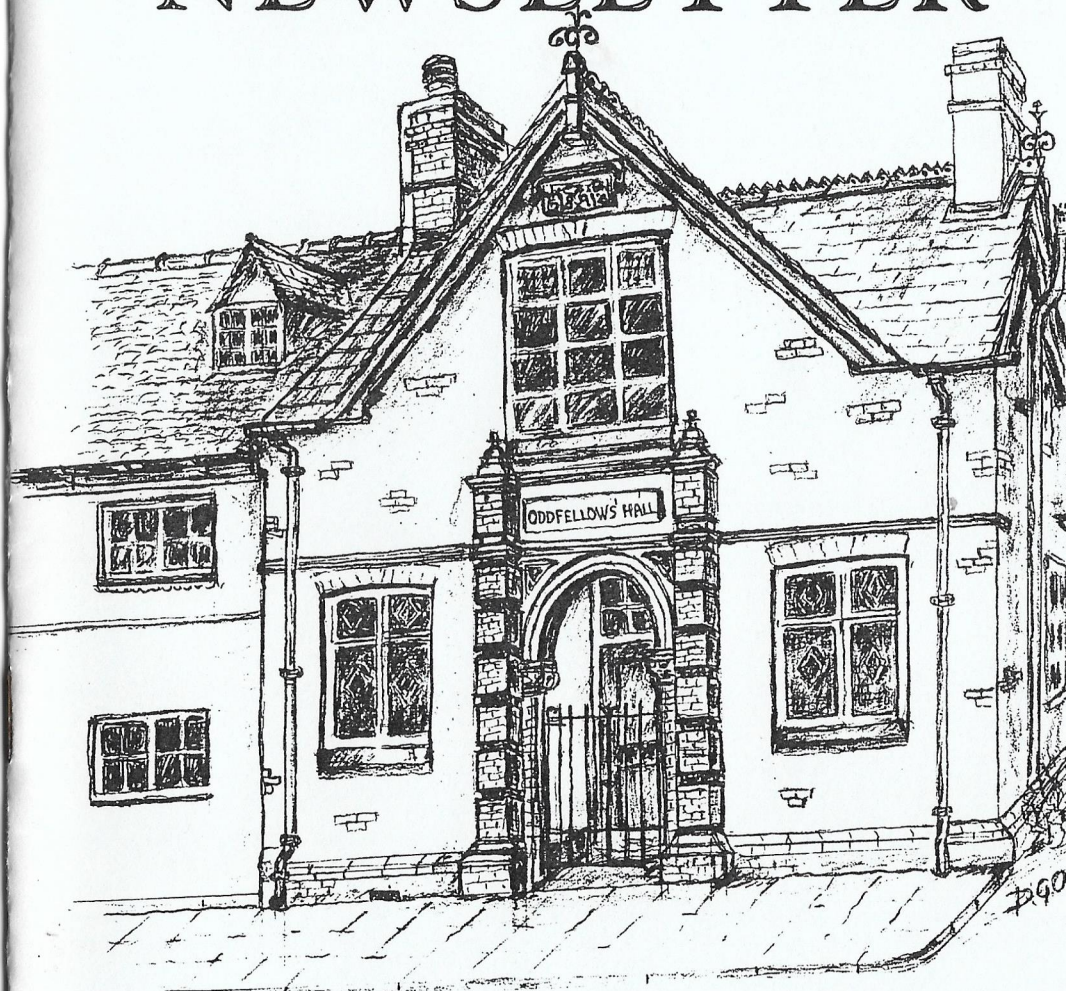


Registered as a Charity No. 268503

50p

No. 2002/4

NEWSLETTER



BUCKINGHAM'S ODDFELLOWS' HALL 1891

Line drawing: Dennis Osborne

Researcher: Michael Coombs

(for more detail consult Advertiser 10.10.1891)

More Victoriana

Mutual aid and friendly Societies flourished in Victorian times. In the absence of a welfare state, eleemosynary or charitable activities, were led by churches, and groups of individuals. Some were friendly or "mutual" societies whose main aim was to help each other. Others were modelled on the long-established "Freemasons": fraternal organisations based, on brotherly love, charitable relief for those outside the organisation and the eternal search for truth.

In Buckingham, Tom Ridgway's ancestor, Alderman Thomas Ridgway, invited 150 locals to the inception of a Buckingham Mutual Loans Society in 1880. It all went famously with each man underwriting all the others. Sadly, the Society had folded by 1909. Some societies such as *The Oddfellows* were national movements. Each had its individual style, and a band of their male members may remind us today of a parade of Ulster Orange-Men. The wider concerns of *The Manchester Unity of Oddfellows* may be seen in the carved stone around and above the entrance to their Hall of in Well St. The stone spandrels between rustic brick

piers and entrance arch have a very "Unite the British Isles" theme — shamrocks, thistles and roses, whilst the date plaque on high holds the emblem of *The Oddfellows*: two clasped hands and a heart.

The entrance to our Oddfellows' Hall is protected by a pair of iron gates; the whole ensemble of this front is neat, uncluttered and effective. The architect was one F.A. Parkes and the Hall was built by Cllr. T. Holton. Was he related to Fred Holton, a fellow builder, who worked from Well St? Fred Holton dabbled in cabinet making and, unusually, in cricket bat manufacture. There was also a T. Holton (Junior) who dealt in corn from 59 Well St.

The window frames are made of deal and glazed with "cathedral" coloured glass. Note the roundrels that seem to have been made by breaking the stems of green wine glasses to leave swirled glass bases.

The main hall (65.5 ft by 21.5ft) is approached through a vestibule from which to right and left open committee

rooms. Above the entrance is a further committee room. The site slopes away to the river Great Ouse allowing a subway running the length of the building to a kitchen at the back. When the building was opened the kitchen sported the latest in ranges with a copper and sink to either side of it. Two deal dressers were provided for storage. Food was conveyed to the members in the hall above by a hand lift.

The main hall and its balcony were supplied with 200 chairs made in Buckinghamshire's premier furniture town of High Wycombe. Apart from the work of the regular "Collector", who ensured that regular pennies turned into pounds, socials, tea-dances and meetings raised extra funds to support members' needs, incidentally providing entertainment in the era before radio and television. Buckingham Society's Bill Howkins remembers the social scene: his parents and friends sitting around tables

This article concludes on the back cover

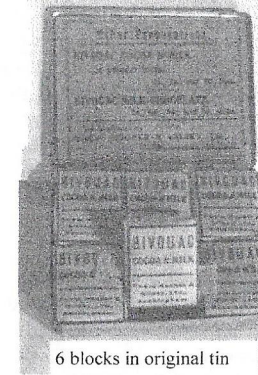
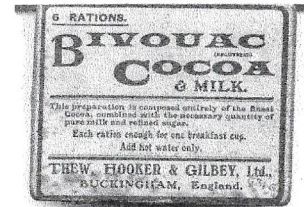
YOUR CHANCE TO ACQUIRE SOME OF BUCKINGHAM'S HISTORY

JUST 20 TINS LEFT OF THIS SUPERIOR PRODUCT

(MADE IN THE MILK FACTORY IN CHANDOS RD.)

CHECK-OUT WHAT KEPT BRITISH TROOPS GOING IN WORLD WAR I

Government Health Warning: No longer suitable for human consumption



6 blocks in original tin

Other Preparations.

BIVOUCAC COCOA & MILK
in powder form.

2s., 1s., and 6d. tins.

BIVOUCAC MILK-CHOCOLATE.

1s., 6d., 3d., and 1d. slabs.

Manufactured by
THEW, HOOKER & GILBEY, LTD.
Buckingham, England.

1. See Ed at AGM
2. Give the Society a minimum donation of £5
3. One tin of Bivouac Cocoa will be yours to keep



Troops from Bucks enjoying a warming cuppa in France in the First World War (The arrow points to Ed Grimdsdale's Grandfather!) (FACT)

This offer has been made possible through the generosity of Buckingham Society member, Bill Howkins, who rescued a box of the Cocoa cubes when the Paint Factory took over the Chandos Rd works of Thew, Hooker & Gilbey Ltd

THE FUTURE FOR THE BUCKINGHAM SOCIETY

AFTER GAINING OUR AWARD OF "PATHFINDER CIVIC SOCIETY STATUS" FROM THE CIVIC TRUST

the
civic
trust

The Civic Trust has selected just 40 of the thousands of Civic Societies in England to become examples of how Civic Societies should be in the 21st Century:

- INFLUENTIAL
- ACTIVE
- INCUSIVE
- EXCITING.

The Buckingham Society applied to join this prestigious venture and has been judged ready to meet its stern challenges.

WHAT WILL IT MEAN?

Our delegates are attending three separate three-day training events over the next few months, followed by a review and celebration

They will become "Champions of Change" and will create an action plan for the future of the Society and its impact on our town.

The three courses are dedicated to:

1. **Leadership** (attended by Ed Grimsdale in September)
2. **Civic Design** (attended by Carolyn Cumming)
3. **Project Development** (Ed or A.N.Other)

The professional programme will be run by The Civic Trust and will involve leading experts in project management, urban design and community engagement. A modest outlay by The Buckingham

Society ensures a place on the scheme with sponsorship support estimated at £3000.

THE OUTCOMES

The Buckingham Society will possess re-invigorated leadership who will become leading voices in the community of North Bucks.

The Society will develop a clear vision of the future for Buckingham. The Society's profile in shaping necessary change will be enlarged and strengthened through increased membership and more active participation that will add greater authority to the Society's voice.

Our skills in commenting on developments, already honed through applying principles enunciated in Buckingham's "Vision and Design Statement, will be given new teeth, and complemented by a greater ability to suggest alternative proposals.

We shall prepare an action plan for a **thrilling Project** that the Society will develop, fund-raise and manage. **That project will benefit Buckingham leaving it a better place in which to live and work.** It won't stand in isolation—a memorial to the time **The Buckingham Society** became a Pathfinder—it will be a shape of things to come, the

engine for creating more ventures, to protect Buckingham's heritage, or enhance the design and appeal of its future built and green environments

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

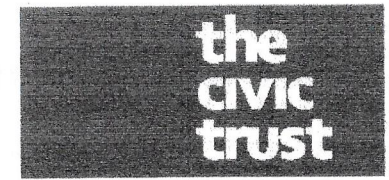
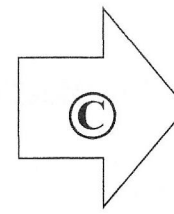
- ♦ **By persuading your friends to join the Society; there's never been a more exciting time to do so.**
- ♦ **By suggesting Projects that the Society might adopt**

To whet your appetite here are some few project ideas:

- ♣ To restore the Well Street 18th century Chapel and give it a community use
- ♣ To revitalise the park that Buckingham owns behind Castle House (and to give it a memorable name!)
- ♣ To complete the missing Riverside Walk links
- ♣ To restore Buckingham to former pre-eminence as a tourist centre: in mediaeval times St Rumbold's shrine put us on the pilgrims' map
- ♣ To create a Community Net to improve Buckingham's dialogue with itself
- ♣ To create a festival of fun for all.
- ♣ To further develop Buckingham's Jurassic Jewel **The Buckingham Sandpit.**

Do ring Ed Grimsdale on 815758 and share your thoughts about our way ahead

What's new at:



CORPORATE VISUAL POLLUTION

Ed attended a good meeting that was addressed by a leading American expert in this field: **Robert Lee Fleming** who has been working closely with **Martin Bacon** of **The Civic Trust.**

Global corporations have become more aggressive in stamping their image, their logo, and their style over their assets. Planning authorities are fearful of taking them on for global money can buy lawyers capable of destroying the planners' position and shedding the authority's bank balance.

Let's ask ourselves questions about what is happening in Buckingham. What is writ small today will be written larger tomorrow unless we have given our planners the policies that will guide them and then shield them if a corporate firm takes them to appeal. We must replicate the example of our Vision and Design Statement and help The Civic Trust to create model national policies.

THE UGLY CASE OF THE PETROL STATION

Why do there appear to be different planning norms for Petrol Stations from ordinary commercial premises? If Joe Bloggs builds a new florist's shop near to the centre of Buckingham would she be allowed to ignore the building line of the street and allowed a brightly coloured plastic strip around the building, illuminated 24/7 by day-glo fluorescent lighting in her company's colour—sky-blue pink? Would the florist be allowed to display her wonderful flowers under a vast canopy that seems to have flown in from a space station? Could it be drive-in with no hedges to stop the light from headlights flashing across the windows of the houses opposite? Would the florist get away with a 20 foot high advertising display at the entrance embossed with a huge flower in her company's colours and to conceal inside it a mobile phone antenna?

THE SHELTER FROM HELL

At a bus-stop near you in Northampton. You may wait, but you will not be picked up—no buses stop there! Local authorities are keen to be seen to provide extra facilities. They are encouraged by firms who will offer to erect a bus shelter with profit-sharing on the advertising it will contain. We have a bus shelter at London Rd, Tesco, supplied by one of the greatest exponents of "Deals on Shelters" but, mercifully, it contains no advertising AND buses stop there.



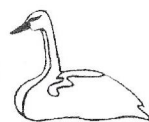
Watch for the free offer to erect rotating, illuminated advertising hoardings in town. No doubt there be space for "What's On in Buckingham",

IT'S TEMPORARY, GUV

You've seen these in the centre of Buckingham. If you erect a permanent advertising sign you will need planning permission. In your heart of hearts you fear you will not receive it for your requirements are outrageous, loud and out of keeping with the context. Right, go for a "temporary" hoarding. For three months of the year you can display your Christmas offer, then there's Spring, and the Great Summer Sizzler will follow. It won't cost as much, you may be asked to remove it, but there are not many enforcement officers around. **HEY PRESTO** — you can shout louder than the rest.



THE EXCITING FUTURE OF BUCKINGHAM



1. HOUSING

Buckingham awaits the Inspector's report on AVDC's Draft Development Plan. The Report will be published in February. The Buckingham Society anticipates that the Inspector may increase the number of homes to be built in Buckingham. Our Society has pushed for a sequential approach: for mopping up brownfield sites in town before sacrificing the fields that define North Bucks. We believe in greater densities near to the centre of town. Not all people need access to cars at all times. Road-charging has started in Durham to protect the ancient streets around its Cathedral. What Durham does in October 2002, other cities and towns will adopt in the future. There are signs that our planners are becoming more flexible over the number of parking places that must be provided alongside new housing developments. Higher density housing with fewer parking places should not be the preserve of the elderly, or our town centre will become a ghetto for pensioners. The effects of the "Evening Economy" are mitigated through mixed developments. An alley containing only shops can easily become a "no-go" area after dark. In Buckingham the survival of Mr Rothe's

"Shoebbox" Cottage in the middle of Meadow Row is exemplary.

How many houses in Buckingham face or relate to the river that defines our Town? Even this year a housing development has been proposed not a stone's throw from the Ouse that ignores a wonderful waterside site. Water frontages are prized, they add value to properties., they are a source of delight Yet in Buckingham the draft development plan imagines an expansion of DIY Warehousing in the Wharf Yard area. This should be resisted. As Buildbase has developed the number of articulated delivery lorries doing the splits around historic Wharf House has increased tremendously. Buckingham's narrow streets resound to their thunderous roar as they rock backwards and forwards in their efforts to access the almost inaccessible. How much better to divert that delivery traffic and the stream of cars that home deliver the piles of goodies in the builders' merchants to the periphery of town, restoring a prime area close to our shops to mixed

development including homes with gardens graced by riverside birds?

Given the pressure on the South East, providing that there is no serious economic downturn, we may expect the numbers of people living in Buckingham to grow by 50% in the next 50 years. In 2050 there may be 20 000 people living here. Given the increasing proportion of single occupiers that is a lot of extra homes to fit in. At the same time, there seems no end in sight for the decline in farming. Nature abhors a vacuum. More of the farming land around our town will be turned inevitably into light industry and housing estates. Will Buckingham be woven seamlessly into the weft of Greater Milton Keynes? The 2001 census reveals that Milton Keynes has enjoyed the fastest growth of any area in the past 10 years. Housing and Shopping are the two breasts that feed Milton Keynes. The mewling infant of the 70's has become a gawky, sprawling teenager whose ambition is to become a city gent.

2. COMMUNICATIONS

We await the coming of the East-West rail route. Possibly arriving in Winslow in 2006, it should put North Bucks back on the public transport map. Will it cause Winslow to expand in the way that Wolverton expanded in the 19th century following the arrival of the Euston to Birmingham line? Is Buckingham close enough to Winslow for warehousing and industry to grow here, with an attendant increase in HGV traffic?

The East-West X5 Stagecoach Bus Route has been a great boon to Buckingham. Thirty years ago there were about 4 East -West coach services a day connecting Buckingham, Bedford and Oxford, now we have an hourly frequency from dawn to after dusk. Whilst the stopping point near Tesco is a disadvantage to passengers, such a route does help congestion and pollution in our town.

Our by-pass is a great success. Do you remember the great traffic jams in Town before it was built? We must watch the effect of building new factory units and homes on land adjacent to our ring-road. With estates mapped to use the by-pass as their main access and inhibited from easy entry to town by natural hazards such as Gawcott Hill with it's narrow road choked by parked ve-

hicles, we face a future in which the ring road will lapse into suburbia and the cry will go up for an outer ring-road.

It is a shame that Buckingham's infra-structure is neither pedestrian nor cycle friendly. Just as the East-West rail route will come no nearer than Winslow, the national cycle routes head from Bicester to Winslow without even a spur to Buckingham. In town we have evidence of what our Mayor calls "creeping pedestrianisation" through the ac-

A time there was in 1672 when Buckingham was one of the best connected towns in England. In those days there were only 6 Stagecoach services out of London and Robinson's came to Buckingham! It took 2 days in each direction.

tivities of AVDC set in York stone. Pedestrians have gained a valuable path along the All-Weather pitch side of London Rd to Tesco and we hear that route will be further improved by a "Tesco" pedestrian crossing.

Given the nature of rural North Bucks it is unlikely that residents will end their love affair with the private car, placing further strain on our low-grade road network. As increasing affluence turns 1-car families into 2-car and so on, pressure on our road system will inevita-

bly grow and will be exacerbated by the increase in local housing. The area's road network contains few prestige routes but many minor routes through small towns and villages. The issue of "rat-running" is one that we shall hear more of from rural communities in the 21st century. In a recent survey, 20% of rural villages wanted to explore local traffic calming measures with Bucks County Council. The County has evolved a scheme called "forbearance" to spread design and creation costs over a three year period.

Anyone travelling regularly into Aylesbury during the "rush-hour" will have experienced the difference between term and school holiday travel. In some ways we are lucky that most secondary pupils in Buckingham arrive by coach because they live an average of more than 10 miles from our town (one bus can equate to 40 carloads). As our town grows the issue will change from Chandos Rd blocked by school buses to London Rd blocked by "school-run" cars. This area of Buckingham does need a separate transport strategy if residents and commuters and schoolchildren are to have a fair deal.

3. HERITAGE

TENT TO CHERISH:

1. BUCKINGHAM SANDPIT

How should it be developed? Do we want to bring it alive for youngsters as a Jurassic Time Park with interactive videos and dinosaur models that you can climb over and explore? Alternatively, should it be mainly a nature reserve a dedicated home for sand martins?

2. THE OLD GAOL

Greatly enhanced by its Lottery-funded glass roof, our Old Gaol has a key part to play in telling, retelling and retailing our town's history. It reminds us of the glory that was, of the time when Buckingham fought tooth and nail to remain the County Town.

3. ST RUMBOLD'S WELL & TRAIL

Developed by Rodney Shirley's excellent group under the aegis of The Buckingham Society, the romance off St. Rumbold should put Buckingham back on pilgrims' routes. The next steps are explanatory boards in The Old Churchyard (the former site of our Parish Church with its Shrine to St Rumbold), finger-post provided by AVDC on the railway walk and a stile put up by BTCV to enable better access to the site.

4. CASTLE HOUSE

Castle House was once the twin of Stowe House. It has been lucky to be rescued by the private enterprise of the Edmondson family. Its walls have seen great people make decisions that have altered our nation's history. Castle House will grace the western approach to Buckingham for

years to come.

5. BUCKINGHAM HOSPITAL

Our hospital is a fine specimen of late Victorian architecture and was designed by John Oldrid Scott. It is important through its connections with Florence Nightingale and our go-ahead Medical Officer of Health, George De'Ath. It was the site for the world's first Conference of Rural Health Visitors in 1892 and contains a charming early 20th century tiled portrait of "Gentle Jesus" in the former Children's Ward.

6. THE TOWN HALL

Our Town Hall encapsulates Buckingham, the rotten borough. We nearly lost it 25 years ago, but Henry Scrase and his family have ensured its future. Some of its charm lies in its idiosyncrasy and asymmetry. Its roof can claim to be one of this country's first pre-fabricated structures. The wood was cut and measured in the great workshops of Stowe. It was a gift from the Duke to his pocket borough, but Stowe's feet were not the equal of twelve Buckingham inches. Thus, it sits with memorable lack of fit on the Georgian walls below.

7. THE MANOR HOUSE AND THE TWISTED CHIMNEY

There are fewer than 10 twisted, brick chimneys in England. Queen Elizabeth the First would have seen this unusual feature when she dined in great style at the Manor House.

8. COBBOLD INN'S SUMMER HOUSE

It reminds us of the times when the Inn in West St was the stop-

ping place for gentry bound for one of the wonders of their world—the landscape gardens at Stowe. Today it languishes in an awkward spot that, to some extent, inhibits redevelopment of the waste land behind West St. The Buckingham Society is exploring a possible move and restoration for the remains.

9. THE OLD LATIN HOUSE

It dates from 1684 after the previous Master's house was burnt down. That event was probably caused when Mary Griffiths, daughter of a former headmaster, spent the night canoodling with the new Headmaster. Neither party noticed the Latin House igniting around them. (Mary went on to marry a London china salesman, Mr. Pix. She became one of the very first female English playwright producing 12 plays; one of them "*The Beau Defeated*" was revived by RADA in early 2002.)

10. THE CHANTRY CHAPEL

Buckingham's connection to the period when Sutton-cum-Buckingham was the 4th richest parish in England and its priest could well afford to create a building to house a priest to celebrate Mass in order to accelerate his soul's heaven bound journey. Since then many hands including greater and lesser Scotts have left their mark on Buckingham's oldest public building. Presently, despite being in the hands of **The National Trust**, it has a faintly sad, desolate air. What may be done to make its soul come alive again?

4. EDUCATION, EDUCATION, EDUCATION

Buckingham was the only part of Buckinghamshire to have voted to turn comprehensive at the time of the first flush of comprehension (well, you know what we mean) thirty years ago. Local sentiment still leans towards the comprehensive ideal. Spaces are allocated at The Royal Latin School for local children as a priority over those from further away, but not all local feeder schools are enabling 30+% of 11+ candidates to achieve the necessary standard. Some primary schools teachers do not believe in the selective education system in which they work. As a result, parents are left suspicious that RLS is a grammar school for Milton Keynes with a few places for very able students from the Buckingham area.

Today, we still have a grammar school, probably the oldest in Bucks, and next door a Secondary Modern or Upper School. The latter is bursting at the seams, but the Latin School has room for all. Buckingham would have to double in size before places presently occupied by "out of reserved area" students were to be filled by the school's first priority—locals. Buckingham School is in a difficult position. Each year, as Buckingham's population enlarges, it grows, but the total number to be taught in the new entry is not known until the Autumn Term starts. The system of reviews and appeals over 11+ allocations is exploited by many well-educated parents who leave no stones unturned during the long summer holiday in their attempts to avoid what they fear is school blight descending on their off-spring. Buckingham School has developed facilities, such as The Swan Pool Com-

plex and the All-Weather Pitch in association with other bodies in the Community that deny the school the land it needs to expand much beyond its present size (1200+). Hence its idea (rejected by BCC) to move lock, stock and barrel to a new site on the periphery of town. At what point will the school become unmanageably large? Shall we see a revival of Winslow as a site for a secondary school?

Buckingham's two secondary schools have very different cultural mixes. Buckingham School is a rural school for the market town of Buckingham and rural North Bucks; it contains few children from the "city" of Milton Keynes. The Latin School, on the other hand, benefits from the polyglot nature of its large "inner city" core. Its students speak over 30 different languages in their homes, they exchange a wide set of cultural values that becomes part and parcel of the school's "offer". Father, the farmer who doffed his hat in awe of teachers and who hung a brace of pheasants in the Headmaster's garage on his way to Parents' Evening disappeared twenty five years ago.

Funding for schools in Buckinghamshire is affected by the deliberate social policy to retain small, village first schools that often contain surplus or unused places. Size matters in schools; pure economics dictates large units. Extra school places in Bucks are provided in line with housing planning permissions

granted. Longer-term views based on 10 or 15 year plans are rarely taken, because the financial risks involved in creating a new unit are formidable. Existing schools are stretched, often by the addition of temporary classrooms until in a paroxysm of birth a new independent baby is born. If Buckingham grows to the West in the direction of Tingewick, there will be need for a new combined school to that side of town. Placing a school in that area will avoid adding to the congestion to the south of our town centre. At present, the majority of the youngsters in Buckingham pass through "5-Ways" at the bottom of Bridge St twice each school day. Roads built for the slow swirl of sheep on their way from the West to London are choked by Cherokee people wagons from the wild west and lumbering "double-decs" from the populous east.

Buckingham's schools are not be the ideal of locals' dreams, but they deliver a product so respected that many outsiders will pay a premium of thousands of pounds, so Estate Agents tell us, to acquire a home in our district.

Independent schools thrive in North Bucks and our private University survives, although it would benefit from more students and funding.

5. THE ECONOMY OF BUCKINGHAM

Buckingham thrives. Unemployment is virtually 0%. Local employment is dominated by small businesses. There are more than 150 of them in the Buckingham area. They colonise niches and find new uses for old buildings. From the road many are virtually invisible. How many locals knew before the recent planning debate that 4 Rycote trained furniture makers were working in converted out-buildings at Manor Farm on Moreton Rd for instance? Our Membership Secretary runs his ICF organisation from a listed building in Fleece Yard. Its facade is plain, but inside are period features to die for.

Buckingham supports two supermarkets. Tesco has hammered Budgens, but that organisation still managed a respectable £57,000 of sales in a recent summer week (figures gleaned from a staff training board left in public view near to their entrance!). We imagine, but we do not know, that Tesco's turnover may be ten times as high. To some extent their markets are distinct: Budgens the convenience local grocery store for those without access to a car and those with limited mobility, Tesco the suppliers of varied fare to the upwardly mobile who perform a weekly "shop".

Buckingham is unusual as a small market town in having few empty shop units. Perhaps, the situation has worsened in the last year. AVDC planners would like to see more shops available as part of the regeneration of the land behind Woolworth, but The Buckingham's Society's view is that there should be a greater mix in the development including more housing, restaurants, and a greater variety of small businesses. We are keen to avoid

some of the issues presented by "the evening economy"; issues that are rampant in other towns. We are not keen to see dead areas that close at 5.30pm inhabited until dawn only by the figures of the night armed with their statutory bottles and takeaway curries. Shall we see the type of licensed watering hole that is being common in larger towns—entry £20, drink as much as you like, ALL DRINKS ARE FREE? Surely, the road to perdition is lined with such invitations to become "bladdered"?

Our economy is bolstered by the influx of money earned outside Buckingham. Many inhabitants use Buckingham as a dormitory whilst their work is in Aylesbury or Milton Keynes. The challenge to Buckingham is to see ensure that the money is spent in our town. Small variety shops offering exclusive service unavailable in the great shopping malls dominated by global brands are one way forward as are restaurants with the latest in piquant cuisine. Such facilities need a different ambience from the "anywhere-nowhere" centres of bigger towns. That is why Buckingham must fight to preserve and extend its heritage, open up its river and canal basin to offer greater recreational possibilities, and maintain a litter-free, inviting environment that is a "cut above" the temptations that lie 15 miles away in all directions.

To complain of the age we live in, to murmur at the present possessors of power, to lament the past, to conceive extravagant hopes of the future, are the common dispositions of the greatest part of mankind.

Edmund Burke

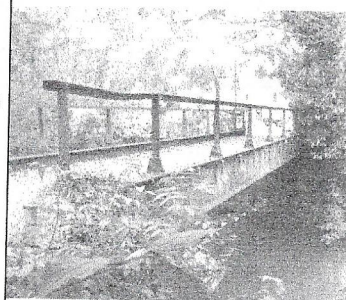
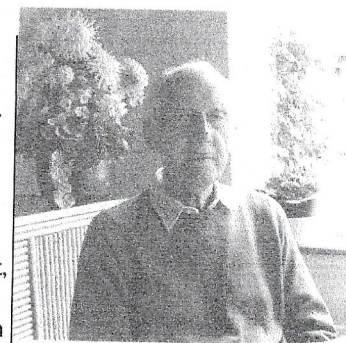
BILL HOWKINS AND HIS BRIDGE

William (Bill) Howkins was born in Church St, Buckingham in 1918 and has lived in Buckingham most of his life. Around 1925 his parents moved to a bigger home, no 5 Manor (Church) St, next to what was named the "Swiss Cottage". The two houses had been connected in the past by an internal doorway and rumour suggested that at some time "Swiss Cottage" may have been the home of a local Doctor with the cottage next door acting as his consulting rooms.

Once Bill left "Mr Dolman's Academy" in School Lane, he did a number of jobs across North Bucks in the years before World War II. Bill's war service was as an Engineer and he learned much about building Bailey bridges in the campaign to conquer Italy. After demobilisation Bill returned to his roots in Buckingham & joined E.F. Richardson's Paint Factory as a "Maintenance Engineer". Such people were called to mend almost anything mechanical whether it was a factory machine or the domestic heating in either the top floor flat of Barham Lodge (home of Michael Richardson), or at Maids Moreton Manor (the spacious home of his father, Frank Richardson, and now the site of Manor Park Housing Estate).

By the end of WWII Richardson's had filled in the mill stream behind cottages in Nelson St. They owned land the other side of the river Great Ouse, if they built on it, materials would have to travel to and fro using Nelson St and the Tingewick Road. So, a bridge was needed over the Ouse. Bill was in charge of the job and his reclamation experience and bridge-building in Italy was put to the test as Richardson's built the bridge we now call "The bridge to Fishers Field".

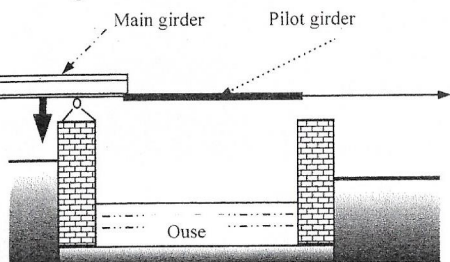
The two main girders of unequal length came from a bombed out building in Birmingham, possibly a Cinema. Fortunately, they possessed a regular series of bolt-holes that were to be used to attach the handrails, for Richardson's didn't have the technology available to drill through such massive pieces of steel. Before these stout fellows could be used they had to be straightened and brackets attached to take the cross members. Some of the smaller ironwork came from a war-time aerial mast. They were heavily coated with zinc and when the welders got to work heavy clouds of fumes rose into the air (no HSE, in those days!) Everything in the



bridge down to nuts and bolts, came from scrapyards. It was real D.I.Y., pure improvisation. Bill was not a college-educated Engineer, but, he and the men under him, had a feel for the potential of the materials that they had scavenged.

The floods of 1947 had persuaded the authorities that any new bridge must soar higher above the mean level of the Ouse than the near-by Castle road-bridge. That made the supports on each bank quite a challenge to build. Each is formed by a curtain wall of bricks ("seconds"

from Calvert) to make a vast container into which concrete was shovelled. Bill had seen bridges on Italian flood plains and had learned how to help the water to channel through them.



Putting the massive main girders over the river was a real challenge in post-war days with no mechanised lifting devices. If the beams were inched out over the river, once the point of balance had been exceeded they would crash down into the murky waters below under their own weight. So a smaller (ie lightweight) girder was bolted to the front of one beam. One granite roller was placed in a pair of bearings and a winch on the other shore anchored, Bill thinks, to a telegraph pole, was used to haul the light section across.

All went splendidly and once the first girder was firmly mounted on its supports, the second great girder was pulled across on top of it. Gentle inclines were needed on the approaches to the bridge, or vehicles might shed their loads of paint tins

Once the bridge had been erected the land where the new factory units were to be built had to be raised, for the bridge was much higher than the ground to either side of it. Part of the fill was good top-soil from Castle Hill. Further across lined with clay, the building pit was a great place to bury

all the cans of faulty paint waste wrapping material and all the other rubbish from a busy factory. Part of the area between the river and Fishers Field became a contaminated zone, for oil-paint in those days meant lead paint. Years later, long after Bill Howkins had stopped working for our Paint Factory, he was called back to identify what land needed decontamination before Crest Nicholson could start to build their new housing estate.

Once the land had been raised, building could commence. In came a fleet of ex-Army vehicles, up went Nissen huts followed by their big brother Romney—it became Richardson's Canteen—a popular venue for evening events in Post-War Buckingham. Richardson's Paint Factory was housed in a shanty town; for ten years or more its structures were the detritus from the Second World War. These days we're proud to recycle a couple of baskets of paper, tins and plastic a fortnight. Bill and his men painted our town red through their ingenuity in finding new uses for the tea-leaves of war.

In 1949 a second bridge was built to "The Island". By now Bill had a new reclaimed materials to provide some of the ballast for the bridge's piers. Richardson's hired a metal-baler. In went cans full of dried-out or faulty paint, out came mucky cubes of steel, their surfaces made into a motley mess by the paint within. Just the job to pad out the concrete in the bridge's supports. Sadly, that bridge was destroyed when the new flats were built in Nelson St. Those contractors were no doubt surprised to find concrete weighed down and reinforced by Richardson's colourful cubes.

The Buckingham Society wants to see "Bill's no 1 Bridge" preserved for its amenity value. Like so many objects built from scrap it has great utility but lacks beauty. But what a tale it has to

Brum watching Clark Gable in "Gone With the Wind" before being parted by the steel of War? What messages were broadcast from its aerial mast? Today it forms a tribute to the years of austerity and rationing; times when if you couldn't make do and mend, you went without.

These days were told that a new pedestrian bridge over our river will be prohibitively expensive, that we won't get much change from £100 000. Where are our "can-do" types who will spot a girder here and a strut there and who will "strut their stuff" adding value to what others feel is a pile of old rubbish? We live at a time when the of scrap steel is very low. Plastics and other man-made materials have cut demand for it.

Could The Buckingham Society set to and build a bridge over the Ouse? What would the Health and Safety Executive say about that prospect?

Over the years as Richardson's prospered, their ex W.D. buildings were progressively replaced by brick constructions and the view across its roofs from Stowe Avenue improved. However, the firm didn't forget its ability to make something out of next to nothing. On the western fringes of the site lay a derelict set of former pig sties. These were remodelled to form a unit for "Amos Electrics". Along came the Lord Lieutenant of Buckingham ready to cut the tape. Did he realise what was the building's original use?

OUR NEXT NEWSLETTER will be published early in 2003

"EDWARDIAN BUCKINGHAM"

It will feature those parts of Buckingham from Horse Troughs to Salisbury House created after the death of Queen Victoria in 1901 during the reign of King Edward VII (1901-1910)

Articles, pictures, family memories and ideas are always welcomed by the Editor, Ed Grimdsdale, 15 Glynswood Rd, phone 815758.

Deadline: Christmas Day 2002

NEWS FROM ANTAS

ANTAS is an acronym standing for Association of North Thames Amenity Societies. The Buckingham Society is one of 16 member societies in a progressive group that integrates and informs societies across two of the vast regions created by our government.

Since its formation almost 10 years ago, Anthony Wethered has been at the heart of its operations as its Hon. Sec. The association has been so symbiotic that many think that the **A** stands for "Anthony's".

Anthony has decided to take a well-earned rest from his position. Our Society has contributed to his farewell that will take place at the ANTAS AGM on October 19 in Marlow. We shall miss Anthony's wisdom and commitment

BRIDGE STREET BARRIER BACK UP SOON

Our society's worries about this new barrier can be summed up:

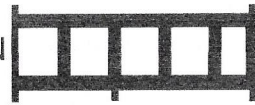
- ✦ **How visible is it to traffic?**
- ✦ **Isn't it an eyesore in a Conservation Area?**
- ✦ **Does it do its job of protecting pedestrians?**

As we anticipated in August, its lack of visibility has resulted in its destruction following the second of two accidents within 8 weeks. It was hit by a small pick-up truck, the barrier collapsed, and within minutes a possibly embarrassed Bucks County Council, had shipped the heap away.

Following Ed Grimsdale's letter to *The Advertiser*, Claudette Jackson contacted us, to say that she was driving up Bridge St at the time of the accident. The barrier didn't crumple as we were told it would; it sheared and the pick-up truck carried on down Bridge St, armed with a multi-pronged people piercing machine. Fortunately,

Claudette reports, although there were many pedestrians around at the time, none was in the way of this lethal device that could have gone straight through somebody's chest or into their eye. (Claudette, herself, had a narrow escape when a large vehicle behind the pick-up swerved around the accident and into the path of Claudette's car; she mounted the up-pavement, missing all the walkers and a second-phase incident was just avoided.)

The Society was pleased to receive the support of Cllr Pauline Stevens from Buckingham Town Council when we originally raised queries about the barrier. We are dismayed that the Town Council has subsequently decided that the barrier should be re-erected, although we concede that the combination of paint, a more reflective leading edge and emphasis on the importance of adherence to weight restrictions in Bridge St will bring some



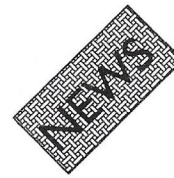
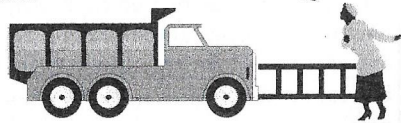
amelioration.

We believe that the answers to our questions will look like this once the barrier from hell returns:

VISIBILITY? **POOR**
EYESORE? **YES**
PROTECTION? **LITTLE**

It will offer us no joy and considerable sadness if an accident results in barrier damage to a pedestrian. Clearly, such barriers are designed to best withstand broad-side attacks, not end-on collisions. It is not too late for our Council to listen to our advice and to commission a study with the aim of protecting property, vehicles and pedestrians. Lives are worth a lot of pennies.

"Ouch. That's exceeded my pain barrier."



PLANNING

- The Buckingham Society's bid to have Grenville Cottage at RLS listed has been turned down. We wait to see what plans the developer will have for the building and its site. We do hope that the planned access road parallel to Chandos Rd and lying between the rear gardens of Chandos Close and Rotherfield House will not be created.
- We have contacted the same developers over the critical Cooper's Yard site at the bottom of Bridge St. Buckingham needs another Riverside Walk link in that area
- A factory unit has been proposed on waste ground behind the existing Tingewick Rd Industry Park. The Society likes much of the design that would be pervasive to floodwater. The design incorporates a **new link** for the Riverside Walk.
- The Society is pleased that Richard Carr, Chief Executive of AVDC has requested from Norman Skedgely a report into the handling by AVDC planners of the "Gateway to Buckingham" Sandpit Farm development. We joined Buckingham Town Council in airing local grievances. Our feeling was that too many major design changes were decided at Officer level without local democratic input.

HODS

Put your hands together please to applaud Carolyn's great efforts to make our 2nd HODS a *succès d'estime*. Numbers were down for some events, but the Town Hall Roof was thoroughly raised and events drew plaudits from locals, HODS-freaks, Americans, and Australians.

Thanks again to all who helped.

SOCIETY TRIP

Many Societies organise trips to places of interest. It is time that our members got out of Buckingham to see and hear what is good and worthy of replication in other parts of our country. Two suggestions have been mooted:

Poundbury (Dorset—inspired by the views of Prince Charles)
Manchester (brilliant regeneration plus three exciting new museums)
Unfortunately, both are so far away that to get the best out of a visit would require an overnight stop.

Do tell an Executive Member where you think we should visit and whether you will be interested in taking part.

We have contacted "Green Spaces" about dumping and detritus at Bone Hill path.

NEWMAN'S FIELD

We're keeping an eye on this site for possible development by David Wilson Homes. We are dismayed that their plans do not envisage the homes acknowledging the Ouse below. We understand that DWH know that Newman's Field contains made-up ground in a former clay-pit. There are bottle and bone dumps to be cleared before firm foundations can be set.

CORPORATE POLLUTION

- The Society has requested that Ladbroke's Betting Shop in the former Austrian Coffee House in West St should have a painted sign above the entrance appropriate to its context. We do not want to see replication of the loud plastic sign that adorns a nearby shop.
- The Society, prompted by Tom Hudson, has been in touch with Paragon Tools pointing out that the fence to the rear of Wharf House and the tools strewn behind it were an eyesore in a gateway site. The first response has encouraged us and we await a formal reply.

IF YOU SPOT AN EYESORE THAT THE SOCIETY NEEDS TO ADDRESS - CONTACT US,

NOTES AND QUERIES

Denise Tunks has responded on Bone Hill Chapel. It was still in use in the 1960's Denis played snooker there! The structure was mainly stone. Does anyone have a picture of it? It does not appear in any of the books about Buckingham.

Apologies are due to Frank Blake who was made out to be as old as Methuselah in our last issue. Frank met and worked with computer guru Alan Turing after War War II.

Jack Steggles queries the date for the introduction of aspirin. He declares that there was no synthetic Pharmaceutical Industry in GB before WWI. Initially, Jack felt that the use of aspirin pre-dated the 1890 year quoted in the last Newsletter. When he consulted his references he found that it was one of a series of related drugs manufactured in Germany from the 1880's with aspirin being produced in 1898.

Mary Smith lives in Overn Hill House. She believes that the oldest part of this house (on Moreton Rd) probably dates from 1857 and was built as the first Manse for the Congregational Church.

The Buckingham Advertiser is 150 years old in the coming year. There will be a celebratory Exhibition in The Old Gaol. Rob Gibbard, the Advertiser's Editor, has asked us to help research the very early days. Apparently, there were

unlicensed editions of the Advertiser printed before its official birth. Once the authorities got to hear, printing ceased. The questions are: can the pre-history of The Advertiser be traced, & do copies of the samizdat editions still exist? (Jack Steggles suggests that we visit the Newspaper Museum in Hendon.)

SHEEP MAY SAFELY GRAZE

Stanley Meadows remembers Mr Walford, of The Advertiser, driving to work each day in the 1930's down Stowe Avenue in a pony and trap. In those days it was a gated route, and at the entrance to Buckingham you must stop, open the gate, drive through, and then close the gate behind you to keep back the stock that grazed the Avenue. What a marvellous, cost-effective form of traffic calming.

Stanley Meadows lives in Stowe Rise and his property has solid connections with Well St. Apparently, when Well St Chapel's floor was lowered to street level in the early 1930's, the spoil was used to fill a sandpit at Stowe Rise. That made-up ground is Stanley's back garden!

The Meadows family are working on the Well St Pet Shop and an adjoining property. Under floorboards they found a kitchen floor made of ancient flags. Those flags

have been moved to Stanley's house. When you walk across his new path to his front door you will be walking on 1 Well St flags.

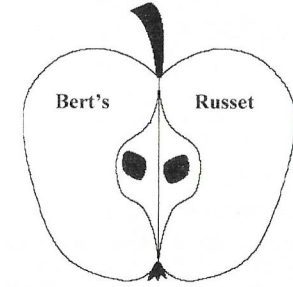
The issue of the railings in The Old Churchyard has been clarified by Bill Howkins who lived pre-WWII in Manor St. He relates that when he was young there were no railings on the external walls, but the path across the Churchyard had railings on each side. After World War II these railings were dismantled and transferred to their present place on the boundary walls.

The debate rages onwards: where does Nelson St end and Hunter St begin? Bill Howkins has provided the Society with evidence from Hillier's Almanac of Buckingham (1940) showing T Holland living at **The Royal Oak, 32 NELSON ST!** Bill confirms the existence of a road plate announcing "**Hunter St**" on the churchyard wall opposite Norton House. The frosts of 1947 caused that wall to collapse and the plate as lost. When the wall was rebuilt the corner was rounded to provide a vision splay.

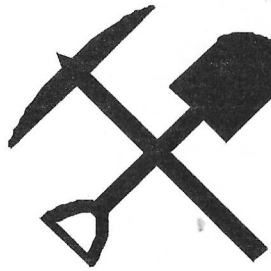
A typing error in the last Newsletter recorded Joyce Stearn as having been born in Hunter St. She was born, Joyce Wil-

liams, in **Nelson St** moving a little later along that road to the capacious no. 26 with its large, rear garden.

Joyce Stearn has given us the reason for the plethora of fruit trees on the slope above the riverside walk link between Hunter St and Bath Lane. Her father used the area as his allotment. The family tradition



was to plant fruit trees as birthday presents. That's the origin of the fruit that freely falls in Autumn.



Making ends meet was important around WWII, and Bert Williams planted white narcissi on his allotment. He would sell the blooms each Spring. Watch out for the descendants of Bert's bulbs in the early months of 2003.

Part of the land was sub-let to another Bert: Bert Jones. In memory of her loving father and his friend Bert Jones,

NOTES AND QUERIES

Joyce has suggested to Buckingham Town Council that the link between Hunter St and Bath Lane be called "**Bert's Way**".

The Buckingham Society believes that giving names to local features enhances their status and preserves local heritage.

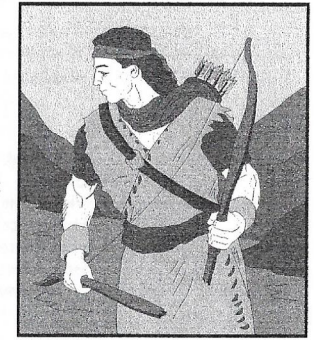
Don't wait for an official dedication. There is nothing like the force of popular usage. Let us call this important link in our Riverside Walk "Bert's Way".

Bill Howkins has given the Society a Castle Mills development map drawn in 1964 that confirms the positions of public houses in the Nelson St area. He has pointed to a house near to *The Dolphin Public House* & told us it was once the site of *The Robin Hood P.H.*

Bill reminds us, also, that a mill stream originally lay behind shallow cottages on Nelson St. There were two points between the rows of homes that steam-driven vehicles could use to access water to replenish their tanks. One was next to *The Dolphin P.H.* and the other became the main entrance to E.F. Richardson's paint factory complex.

The Society has written to The Green Spaces Committee / Buckingham Town Council, suggesting that the

seat by the wooden bridge near the Skateboard Park causes graffiti, litter and anti-social behaviour by some local youths. Dennis and Margaret Osborne have suggested that the seat and the viewing area over the river should be removed. Apparently, BTC had the same idea over a year ago, but no action was taken. We anticipate that this time around the seat will be removed and that this important route into Town from London Rd and Bridge St. will become safer and more pleasant for pedestrians.



The braves of AVDC are at it again. The site of their latest "scalping" has been Una Robinson's wild-flower meadow between Wharfside Place and the Ouse.

The Buckingham Society says to the mowers:

"BE BRAVE; BE A CUT ABOVE THE REST, PLEASE RAISE YOUR BLADES"

THE BUCKINGHAM SOCIETY

Members of the Society are invited to the Annual General Meeting to be held at 8pm Thursday 7th November 2002 in the Sunley Lecture Theatre Chandos Road Building of the University of Buckingham. The meeting will be preceded by refreshments from 7pm.

AGENDA

1. Welcome and register of attendance
2. Apologies for absence
3. Adoption of minutes of last AGM (08.11.01)
4. Chairman's report
5. Treasurer's report and adoption of accounts (note 1)
6. Election of officers and Executive Committee for year 2002-03 (note 2)
7. Any resolutions (note 3)
8. Subscriptions for 2003
10. Any other business

Notes:

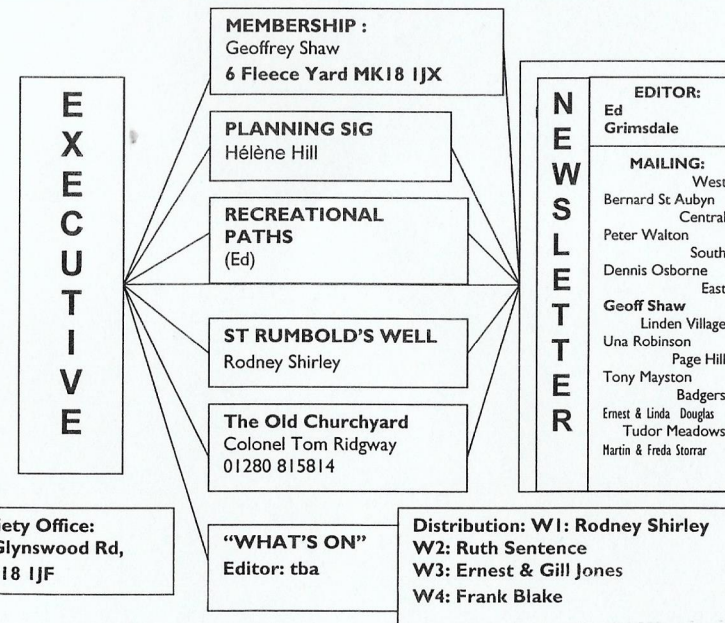
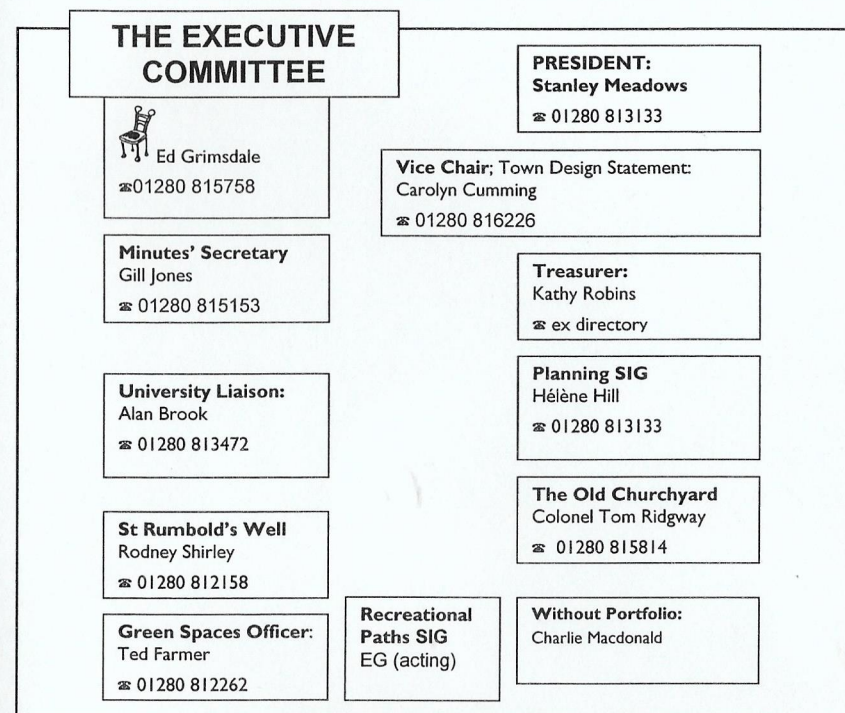
1. Copies of the accounts for the financial year 2001-2002 will be available at the meeting.
2. Election of Officers and of the Executive Committee: The present list of officers and those responsible for various aspects of the work of the Society is shown below. Members are invited to submit any nominations in writing to the meetings secretary (Gill Jones, 11 Church Street, Buckingham) not later than Monday 4th November 2002. Any nomination must be proposed and seconded and have the written consent of the nominee.
3. Any resolutions must be duly proposed and seconded and supported by a minimum of 10 members of the Society. Such resolutions must reach the meetings secretary (Gill Jones, 11 Church Street Buckingham) in writing not later than Wednesday 6th November 2002.

Honorary Officers

President:	Stanley Meadows
Chair:	Ed Grimsdale
Vice-Chair:	Carolyn Cumming
Hon. Secretary:	<i>vacancy</i>
Hon Secretary (meetings):	Gill Jones
Hon. Treasurer:	Kathy Robins
Newsletter Editor:	Ed Grimsdale
Planning SIG:	Hélène Hill
Recreational Paths:	<i>vacancy</i>
Heartlands Case Officer:	Ted Farmer
St. Rumbolds Well:	Rodney Shirley
Old Graveyard:	Tom Ridgway
University Liaison:	Alan Brook
Membership Secretary:	Geoffrey Shaw
Whats On Editor:	<i>vacancy</i>

Following the AGM Mike Farley, former Buckinghamshire County Council Archaeologist, will give a talk on the Tribulations and Delights of being an Archaeologist. Mike gave invaluable advice on the excavation and restoration of St. Rumbolds Well and on Buckingham sites in general.

STRUCTURES OF THE BUCKINGHAM SOCIETY



in the main Hall whilst the youngsters romped in the balcony, flicking occasional paper pellets, providing a counterpoint to the aspiring gentility of the scene below.

Tabling was provided which could be converted into an impromptu stage, so useful for annual tableaux featuring an uncool Britannia on Empire Day. Gas-lighting streamed from 6 pendants that held 8 mantles, each. The room was well heated by open fires as the plethora of chimneys evident on the side elevation still testify. The interior walls were typically Victorian—sage green with a brown coloured dado rail.

Today, the Oddfellows' Hall acts as the local *Kingdom Hall* for the Jehovah's Witnesses.

This month's cover drawing of the Oddfellows' Hall in Well Street has been drawn for the Society by one of its resident artists: Dennis Osborne.

The Society's printers PHILLIPS of Ford St have produced a high quality, coloured notelet version that may be ordered from them at £1.25 for two small ones, or the same price for 1 large one (8" x 4.5"), prices include envelopes.

In each case the Society will benefit from a donation. Please state that you are a BUCKINGHAM SOCIETY MEMBER when you order your copies.

The original Advertiser article on the building of the Oddfellows' Hall advised that a ladies' toilet had been provided, but Michael Coombs can find no mention of a corresponding Gents loo.

Perhaps, eternal continence was a secret oddity of *The Oddfellows!*

SPACE RESERVED FOR ADDRESS LABEL