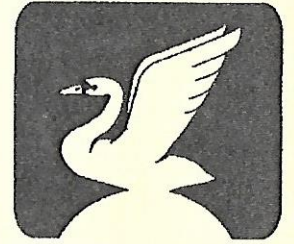
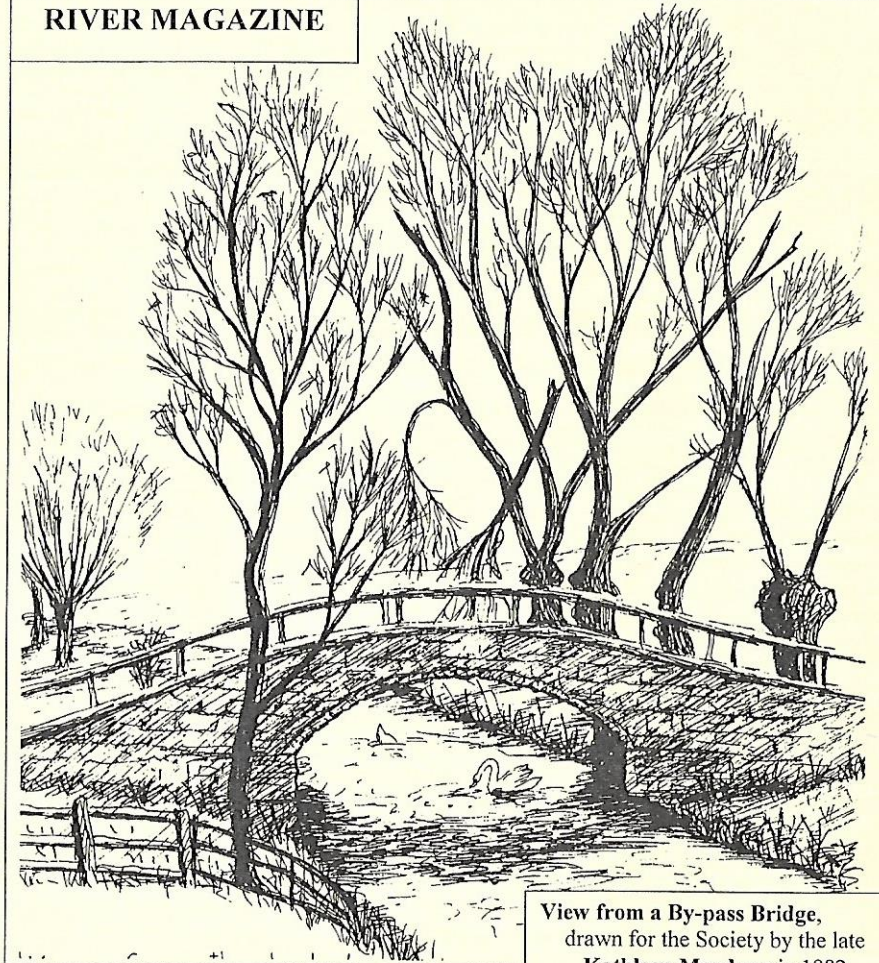


THE BUCKINGHAM SOCIETY

Registered as a Charity No. 268503



RIVER MAGAZINE



View from a By-pass Bridge,
drawn for the Society by the late
Kathleen Meadows in 1982

**the
civic
trust**

has awarded
the buckingham society
pathfinder status

Issue 2003 no. 2
April 2003
price 60p

BUCKINGHAM SOCIETY DIARY FOR 2003

campaigning for a better Buckingham

APRIL	Thursday 24th	10am- noon	Budgens Car Park	Society Litterpick River Hygiene
	Thursday 24th	5.30pm	Villiers' Tack Room	Executive Cancelled
	Friday 25th	12 or 2pm	Grenville/Council Chamber	Planning SIG
	Tuesday 29th	10am	Swan Statue	Una's Tree walk (see panel)
MAY	Monday 12th	DEADLINE		BOOKINGS FOR HALFDAY TRIP
	Thursday 22nd	5.30pm	Villiers' Tack Room	Executive Meeting
JUNE	Thursday 12th	1.30pm-7pm	Buckingham Bus Station	River Great Ouse Half Day Trip
	Thursday 26th	5.30pm	Villiers' Tack Room	Executive Meeting
JULY	Thursday 24th Mid month	5.30pm	Villiers' Tack Room	Executive Meeting BETWEEN THE WARS (1918-1939) NEWSLETTER
AUGUST	SOCIETY	SUMMER BREAK		
SEPTEMBER	Friday 12th, Saturday 13th & Sunday 14th		HERITAGE OPEN DAYS 2003 HODS	MAJOR FESTIVAL including REGATTA; RIVER RINSE , RIVER WALKS, OPENINGS & RIVER PLANNING EXERCISE
	Thursday 25th	5.30pm	Villiers' Tack Room	Executive Meeting
	Thursday 9th	9.30am	Buckingham Bus Station	Whole Day River Ouse Trip
OCTOBER	Thursday 23rd	5.30pm	Villiers' Tack Room	Executive Meeting
	Early in the month			REVIEW OF 2003- THE YEAR OF THE RIVER NEWSLETTER Pre-AGM Executive AGM
NOVEMBER	Thursday 27th	5.30pm	Villiers' Tack Room	
	Thursday 27th	7.00pm	University of Buckingham	

A fresh look at the treescape of buckingham

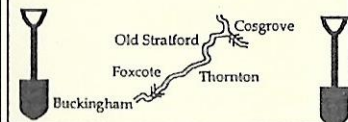
A BUCKINGHAM SOCIETY SPECIAL TREE WALK
LEADER: Una Robinson (Buckingham Tree Warden)
DATE 10am Tuesday 29th April
MEET AT :Swan Statue, by the Ouse, Budgens Car Park
DURATION: 2 hours
TO BOOK; ☎ Una on 823495 cost £1



Do visit Wharfside Place and see the riverside wildflower meadow that a Buckingham Society member is tending with the cooperation of AVDC to inhibit rape by gang-mowers.

Buckingham Canal Society

CONTACT
Aithina Beckett 01908 661217
or www.mkheritage.co.uk/bcs

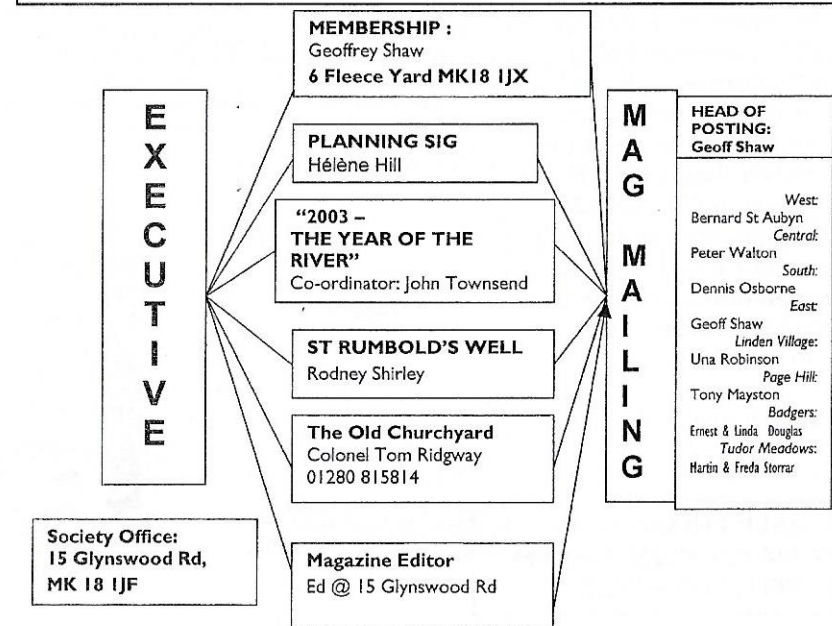
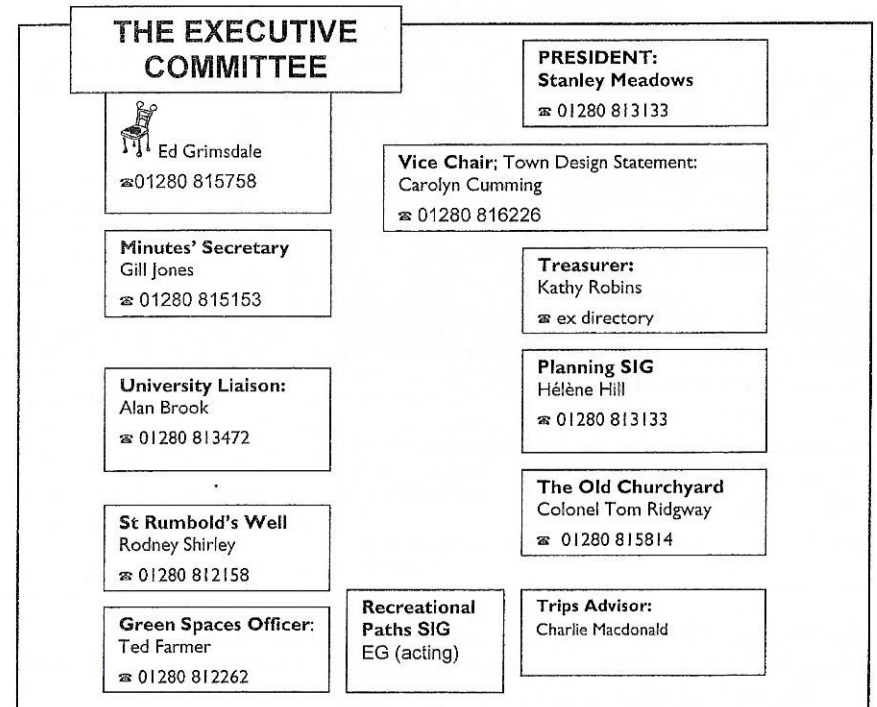


Buckingham Canal Society volunteers are rebuilding the Spillweir which connected the Buckingham Canal to the River Great Ouse. The work is supported by funds from their Society, other interested waterway groups and ATN Farms. Other work includes strimming and tidying the grass verge alongside the Ouse Valley walk. This work occurs on the **second Sunday** in each month and **alternate Wednesdays**. Extra hands are always welcome. Do Give Aithina a bell.

WATCH OUT FOR ANNOUNCEMENTS IN THE MEDIA & VIA OUR NEWSLETTER OF OTHER "2003- THE YEAR OF THE RIVER OUSE" EVENTS THAT WE ASK YOU TO SUPPORT

PLEASE SEND NEWSLETTER CONTRIBUTIONS TO:
ED. THE EDITOR,
15.GLYNSWOOD RD
or RING BUCKINGHAM 815758

STRUCTURES OF THE BUCKINGHAM SOCIETY



CAN YOU HELP?

WORKAID is a national Charity based in Amersham that collects and refurbishes unwanted tools and equipment that are in good condition. The equipment is used to alleviate poverty mainly in Africa. Containers are despatched with the goods and volunteers provide training schemes. More than 750 projects have been completed in the last 16 years and WORKAID has supplied some 4 000 Singer sewing machines, 3 500 typewriters and over 73 500 hand tools. Why not look around to see if you have any items that may be useful? Ring local volunteer **Vic West** on 01280 816069 for more details and advice.

THE DEPARTMENT OF MINTS, NEPAL RASTRA BANK, KATHMANDU

The British Embassy in Nepal has written to BTC asking for help to find whether "Taylor and Challen", makers of minting machines, are still in business. The bank owns two of these machines that were **APPARENTLY** made in **BUCKINGHAM** in 1789. They each output 60 coins a minute but being old they frequently break down and one has been inoperable for 3 months. Paula asked for our help:

Ed's first thoughts are in the next column.

CAN YOU HELP THIS NEPAL BANK OUT OF ITS MISERY WITH THE MINT WITH THE HOLE?

The machine was made not in **BUCKINGHAM**, but in **BIRMINGHAM**.

The firm that produced these **MINTING MACHINES** was named **TAYLOR AND CHALLEN LTD**

The misidentification of **BUCKINGHAM** as the town of manufacture may have occurred because:

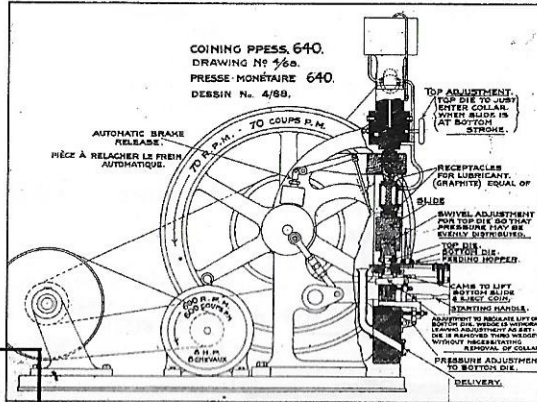
Over two hundred years the lettering has become indistinct, the name of each town is the same length and 7 out of 10 characters are common to both.

BUCKINGHAM was inscribed on the machines as the name of the model. *But why?*

Not because of the "royal" cache and **Buckingham Palace**. At the time of manufacture **Buckingham Palace** had not been so-named. What we know as **Buckingham Palace**, was called "**The Queen's House**". Interestingly, earlier the building was called **Buckingham House** as it was the town house of the **Duke of Buckingham**.

Selling abroad to distant places such as **Nepal** would have required financial backing since there would have been a long period between manufacture and delivery. Country areas such as **BUCKINGHAM** had their own local banks and banks notes in the 18th century. Those banks often invested the surplus from farmers' harvests in Birmingham's thrusting, Industrial Revolution. Perhaps, the firm named the model "**BUCKINGHAM**" in honour of its financial backers.

Historical Note: The great technological advances in Birmingham by Matthew Boulton and firms such as Taylor and Challen often had to "Export or Die", since their mass-production models, such as these Minting Machines, quickly saturated the home market. **Taylor and Challen** supplied their minting machines to all parts of the world: one was installed in the Royal Palace in Thailand others were sent to Australia, Canada, Denmark, India and Russia. Later models were being shipped out well into the 20th century. Surely, those in Nepal must be the longest surviving operational Minting Machines in the world? I contacted TMA Engineering (successors to Taylor and Challen) and they feel that their parent firm started work in about 1850. They sent us a diagram of an early press:



NEWS

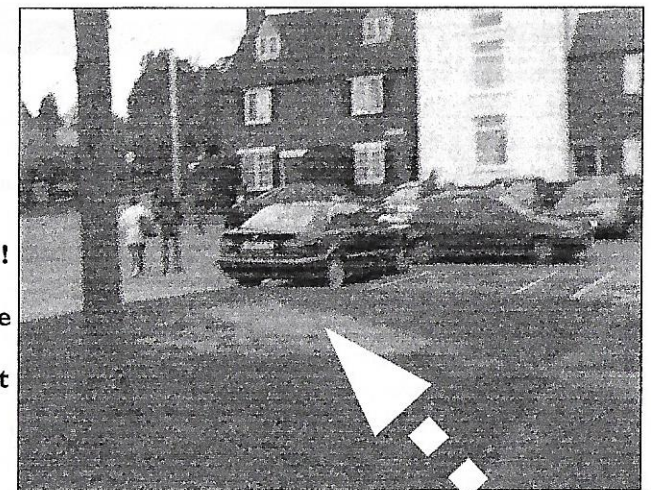
RAMPANT OPEN DOORS AT OUR COMMUNITY CENTRE!

Our Mayor, Cllr Christine Strain-Clark, has approached Ed to point out that the adjustment on the new doors at our Community Centre has been eased, that further work is being done on the unfinished doors, and that a small ramp is available to ease access for those in wheel-chairs.

NO MORE "NOSEY" PARKERS

Ever since the Old Gaol lay-by was re-engineered in York Stone over ten years ago, locals have grumbled that it was too shallow, and that it was difficult to park a car without it jutting out into the High St. At long last the lay-by has been widened. Cynics have identified the reason—last year, a police car was rammed from behind whilst parked in the lay-by, outside our new "Cop Shop".

BUDGENS OLD PEOPLE' CLUB
Well done Budgens—every Market Day their row of seats by the Check-outs is full of old folk waiting in the warm for their next village bus. Furthermore, some of the shelf-stackers help the infirm to select their shopping.



MUD, MUD, GLORIOUS MUD, AGAIN

Mr Buckland has assured us that it is the policy of his car dealership firm **NOT** to park on this grass strip.

The Society is pleased to acknowledge that good example.

We are told that the issue arises from some parked vans of market traders (Tuesdays and Saturdays), coupled with house clearance from a cottage in North End Square. The underlying issue is the reluctance of retailers and shoppers to park away from the heart of our commercial district. There are insufficient spaces to go around.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO BUCKINGHAM'S TESCO?

Ten years ago in 1993 our Tesco Superstore opened near to the by-pass. Many locals hated it for draining so much life-blood from our town centre. Perhaps, now it is time to reappraise the situation—could Buckingham Town Centre still cope with the increase in car traffic if local wishes to see a second town centre supermarket had succeeded?

What do you think?

THAT BRIDGE STREET BARRIER

Is it doing it's job or is it literally an accident black spot? Since the New Year it has received more hits than many websites. Its pillar was biffed and shredded and the top rail of the barrier has been deformed by compression. Is it saving pedestrian lives or just costing motorists money?

ED'S ALL WASHED UP

The article about blue-bags in the last Magazine caused a stentorian response from the Society's sole Chartered Chemist—Jack Steggles. He claimed that Prussian Blue could not have been the chemical in those little blue bags—it was ultramarine. His reasons were based on personal experience of the effects of soap and detergents on bank-notes. Apparently, both dyes are used in the banking industry, but when people have an accident and launder their money (literally!), the ultramarine lines remain but the Prussian Blue ones are leached out. **Reason**—Prussian Blue is unstable in alkaline (soapy) conditions.

Ed was horrified. He'd told the tale of those Prussian Blue bags to countless chemistry students over the past 30 years. Recently, he's had an article about it published in the Bolton Evening News—no Lancashire Chemists had accused him of such a fundamental error. Ed repaired to **The Bodleian Library** to confirm his beliefs. There he found a Canadian source that agreed with him, but a dozen other sources **backed Jack to the hilt**—some giving the same cogent reason why ultramarine had been chosen. **The Society congratulates Jack both on his sagacity and his recent marriage to Monica.**

Life is a question of getting the chemistry right!

If you see the Editor please remind him forcefully that Beer Halls are German and Beer Houses were English, but not spirituous. Beer Palaces were another matter.

ALLE MAY GOD AMENDE

Anthony Barr is a new BS member, now living in Great Missenden. He seems to have been an RLS pupil during WWII. He was interested in our piece about the revival of the post WWII RLS School Song. He has produced copies of RLS Speech Day programmes that show its introduction. In 1947, the School sang "40 Years On" (The Harrow Song), whereas in 1948 the new "All May God Amende" was introduced. Anthony wonders whether there are any Old Latins who remember when the Harrow Song was introduced and, if any other song pre-dated it? He suspects that pre-War II there was little music at RLS and that Tommy Allitt's presence on the piano was a prerequisite of a successful performance. Ed has found a 1937 "Old Latins' Song", but has few details of RLS in WWII, when documentary evidence such as "School Magazines" were not published due to austerity measures.

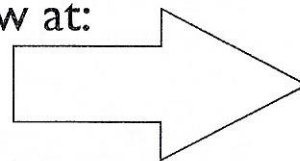
A frequent BS correspondent has taken up the cudgels on behalf of the amateur scientist, Lord Salisbury. He feels that the noble Lord was quite democratic for his day travelling to and from London by **2nd class** railway carriage. **Would Tone?**

The same correspondent questions whether any **Edwardian** Vicar would have shaken hands with his congregation. He feels that this democratic habit entered the church's canon after 1945 and may have been brought to Britain by American Episcopalians (Perhaps, it will disappear now that it is suspected that SARS is mostly transferred on human hands!). Apparently, pastors could afford a servant on £250p.a in pre WWI days.

When did most houses get converted from oil/gas-lighting to electric light? Was it the 20s or 30s?

Does anyone remember the Pump along *The Che-war* that was in place at the end of WWII?

What's new at:



cabe

The Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment

cabe activities

- ★ NATIONAL CHAMPION OF GOOD DESIGN
- ★ LOOKS FOR BETTER PLACES & SPACES
- ★ BACKS THE PMs "BETTER PUBLIC BUILDINGS"
- ★ ACTS AS A FREE ADVICE CENTRE FOR ARCHITECTS, MANAGERS, ETC
- ★ HOLDS A **NEW** RESPONSIBILITY FOR GREEN SPACES
- ★ SHOWS THAT **BEST DESIGN REPRESENTS BEST VALUE**
- ★ SUPPORTS *LOCAL BUILT ENVIRONMENT CENTRES*
- ★ WORKS CLOSELY WITH THE CIVIC TRUST
- ★ CREATES DEFINITIONS OF GOOD DESIGN

cabe has studied how local authorities manage design issues. They found:

- only 48%** employ a qualified designer in their planning dept.
- 38%** have a registered architect in their planning department
- 32%** run award schemes
- 23%** make use of design panels in assessing the design quality of planning applications
- 22%** have refused planning permission **principally on design terms** in more than 20 instances in the past year.
- 20%** have "DESIGN CHAMPIONS" to promote the cause of good design

WHAT IS A WELL DESIGNED BUILDING? cabe says:

DESIGN is more than just beauty; it is an integral part of the success of any project.

The key facets of building design quality are:

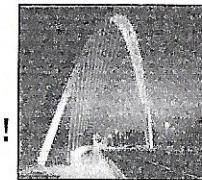
Appearance: the building should be excellent in itself and appropriate to its surroundings, attracting a favourable response from users, customers and the wider public

Context: the project is seen as a place, not an isolated building including the creation of public space, contribution to the neighbourhood and its environment, effect on transport patterns

Buildability: including the ease of construction, materials from sustainable sources, prefabrication, use of standard components

Maintenance: including energy use, cleaning, repair costs, all estimated over the life of the building

Operation: including the use of space, navigation around the building, comfort of users, flexibility, effectiveness of the service, accessibility.



GOOD DESIGN MATTERS AND IT WORKS!

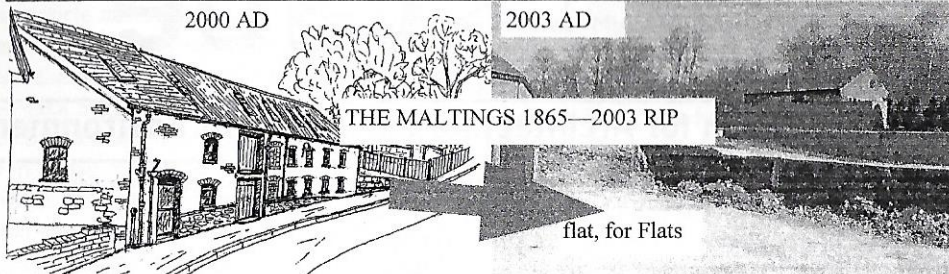
PECKHAM LIBRARY (you'll remember it as the back-drop for the appalling incident involving Damilola Taylor) won the Stirling Prize for the best designed building. In its first year of operation visits increased from 168 000 to 536 000 and loans from 93 000 to 385 000 (How Buckingham yearns for a new **Library** that is well-designed to replace our cramped, airless, emergency portakabin of a building created after the damaging fire)

HULME ARCH BRIDGE in southern Manchester has created a new land-mark defining a community that needed regeneration. Around it land-values have soared.

(Buckingham's "new" **Castle Mill Bridge** is competent, neat and desperately utilitarian but it does not stir the soul, and our "green" bridge is the **ne plus ultra** of..... please fill in the blank space)

ACTIVITIES: Do borrow *Better Civic Buildings and Spaces* (cabe); or *The Good Place Guide* (UDG) from **Ed**

BUILDING PLANS There has been a spate of applications during the past few months. **Our townscape and sky-line are about to change.**



GRENVILLE COTTAGE

A difficult site for 21 well-designed dwellings that stands very proud above the residents of Chandos Close. Many locals felt that it was wrong that this land was ceded from Education (RLS) to a developer whilst Buckingham School was crying out for land. Access is one issue. The land has been sold with a serpentine link from near the RLS bus entrance in upper Chandos Rd. The link snakes along above the rear of many properties in Chandos Close. Another worry is the proximity of a terrace block to 20, Chandos Close. Development density is low. Buckingham Society want to help developer (Eric Gadstone) and residents to find common ground. We're inviting residents to a meeting in early May.

THE SPICE FACTORY, TOP ANGEL

Our work has been efficiently coordinated by Kim Brabant. Our concerns related to smell pollution, effect on the by-pass and the massive looming profile on the Buckingham sky-line. We await the smells, pegs at the ready, We have been told that traffic volumes on the by-pass will not be excessive but we don't accept the basis for the calculations and the profile has been adopted with little reduction in the factory's height. Good for employment, and the biggest building in our locality, We shall not be able to ignore this development, but we may regret its coming.

THE SOCIETY'S RESPONSE TO THE INSPECTOR'S CRITIQUE OF THE AVDC DRAFT DEPOSIT PLAN

We're glad that the Inspector accepted our view that building around Tingewick Rd would spoil historic sight-lines into our Town. Reluctantly, we accept that the area around Manor Park Farm is the least damaging spot for hundreds of new homes. We worry about access and suggest strengthening pedestrian/ cycle routes, not only along Moreton Rd to Buckingham, but also along to Maids Moreton Rd village, where Pubs and (new) shops might benefit. We wish to stand shoulder to shoulder with M.M. residents to protect Scot's Lane. We feel that all newly developed land must be used with economy, ie densities must equal or exceed the government's target of 35 dwellings to the hectare. We want urgent examination of the role and capacity of our by-pass, and an answer whether it is capable of being upgraded through dualling. We cannot conceive of a new "northern" by-pass cutting through the vital Heritage Site of Stowe Avenue. **We can grow our town but not grow our town centre.** How to resolve the pressures for extra housing coming from potential buyers and government with the need to protect the historic heart of town remains a matter of huge moment for the Buckingham Society and many other market town civic amenity groups.

COOPER'S YARD

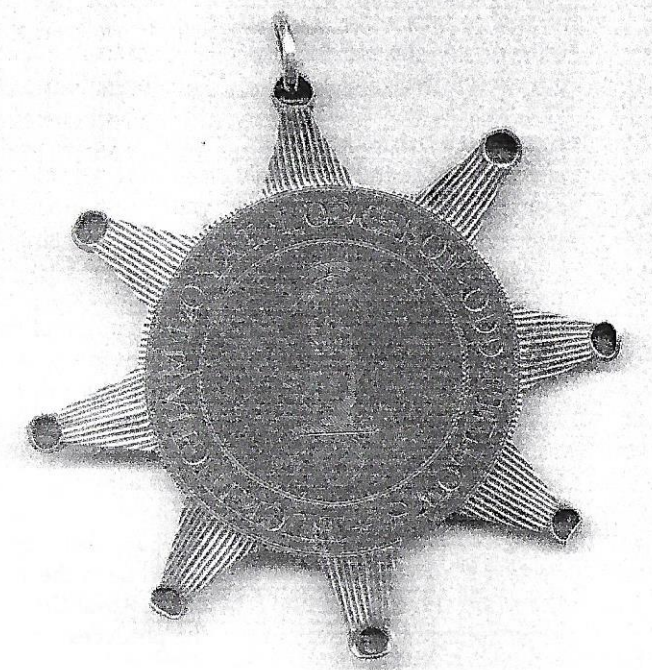
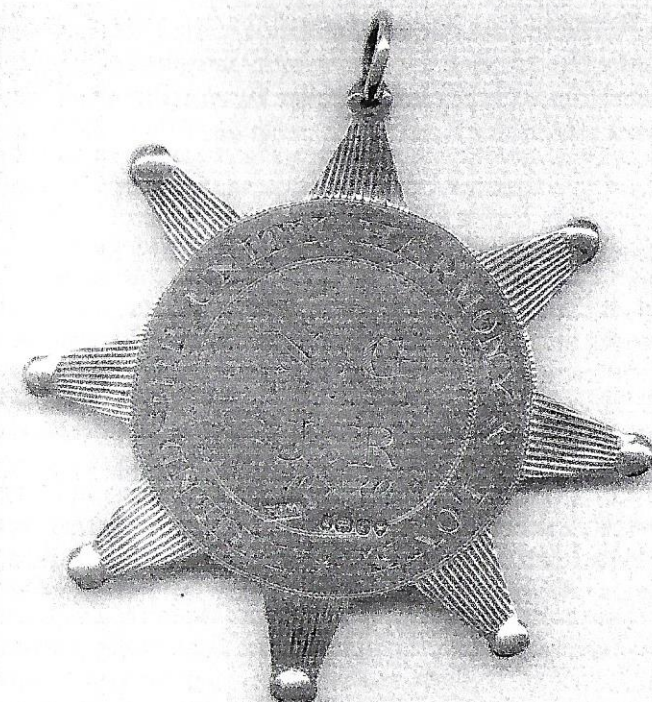
Another W.E. Black (Eric Gadstone) high quality development. Access is our greatest worry. It will be from Ford St not from Bridge St.. We shall communicate our worries to BCC Transportation Section. Ford St is narrow and the exit to Chandos Rd/Bridge St (etc) is steep, busy at "school-times) and fraught with risk. Will there be a link for our Riverside walk along the riverside terrace with its pleasant lighting? We do hope so. Eric has promised us a "Old Ford Board". He is a sensitive developer who listens.

HOLLIS' GARAGE-STRATFORD RD

Access is our worry both during construction and later. Parking spaces are few and egress through a central archway onto the busy highway is poor. We suggest the use of the grass (AVDC-owned?) land at the entrance to Mary MacManus Drive as the vehicle entrance. The design for about 11 units in East of England rural / port weatherboard style is good and the idea of helping the sole pedestrian route from town by jettifying the 1st and subsequent storeys is most helpful.

WEBBERLEY BUILDING YARD

Almost opposite the above. Our roving reporter, Denis, tells us this plot is for sale, again.



ODDFELLOWS MEDAL

Dated 1832
George IV Star
Hall-marked
Sterling Silver
Mass approx 1oz
39mm diameter
Made by W.H
William Hewitt
In London
Secured for Buckingham by
Buckingham Society members
Front Inscriptions:
FRIENDSHIP UNITY HAR-
MONY LOVE

N.G
J.R
10,, 20

REVERSE INSCRIPTIONS:
BUCKINGHAM.LOYAL.
LODGE.OF.ODD.
FELLOWS*
An eye
A hand
A heart

The Oddfellows were officially formed in 1810, although their roots date earlier.

The name Oddfellows has been traced back to the 14th century, where it denoted people from a variety of trades who did not possess their own guild who banded together for common protection and support.

Buckingham Lodge is part of the Independent Order of Odd Fellows Manchester Unity Friendly Society that has its HQ at Odd Fellows House, in Manchester. Today the Odd fellows is a mutual, non-profit-making society with the aim of enjoying the social side of life and helping those in need. Membership is open to all over 16 years of age and currently costs £20 a year.

Buckingham's Lodge has over 300 members who meet monthly in their Oddfellows' Hall in Well St.

The Strange Tale of St. Rumbold of Buckingham

The Buckingham Society has taken a keen interest in safeguarding the ancient well near Buckingham associated with the infant **Saint Rumbold**. The Group Leader, Rodney Shirley, here provides an update on progress:

A few years ago, in 1998, it looked as if the minimal remains of St. Rumbold's Well in High Acre Field, just south-west of the town, would either be ploughed over or swallowed up by planned housing development. So an informal St. Rumbold's Group came in being to see if it was worthwhile trying to mount a rescue. The Group has been a small one of varying membership but usefully representing a cross-section of Buckingham (and Maids Moreton) interests and including the Latin School, the Old Gaol Museum, the Church and the Town Council. A lot has happened over the last 5 years, perhaps even nudged on by the spirit of Rumbold himself!

First, a reminder of the legendary history of St. Rumbold (or Rumwald or Rumwold) as he may be called. He was born of royal Anglo-Saxon parentage in a field near Astrop, King's Sutton, in about 650 AD. On his first day he said in a loud voice 'I am a Christian' and asked for Christian baptism. On day two he preached a sermon on Christian virtues and the Trinity. On the third day he said that he was going to die, and wanted to be buried where he was born for one year, then at Brackley for one year and finally at a place which would **later be known as** Buckingham.

As far as we know, these successive burials took place as predicted and certainly by the Middle Ages there was an important St. Rumbold's shrine and tomb in Buckingham church. Pilgrims came to venerate the saint and to take the curative waters at St. Rumbold's Well located in what is now High Acre field to the south-west of the town. Several of the older inns of the town were reputedly founded and flourished on the pilgrims' trade.

After the Reformation pilgrimages died away, as did the cult of venerating saints. In 1623 a conduit house was built on top of the well to take water to Castle House. When the old Buckingham church finally fell down in 1776, and the new one built on Castle Hill, absolutely nothing connected with St. Rumbold seems to have been recorded or taken into the new church.

The conduit house over his well was clearly described in the Royal Commission on Historic Monuments (Buckingham section, 1913) and its condition was cited as 'fairly good'. However it seems to have fallen into disuse and decay in the 1930s and by 1998 very little was left. The first thing seemed to be to try and get the site officially protected by English Heritage as a

Scheduled Monument. This took longer than expected but the Inspector was fulsome in his enthusiasm, saying that it was incredible that such an important site had never been scheduled before. In his report he wrote:

"St. Rumbold's Well is one of the principal features of the historic town of Buckingham, being the last visible feature of the cult of the saint which was instrumental in the development of the town's economy and position in the mediaeval period."

Originally, the aim of the St. Rumbold Group was to protect the well site and supervise the restoration of the 1623 Conduit House. I myself pressed the English Heritage Inspector to obtain a picture of the conduit house as it was in 1913 and he said, yes, the authorities at that time would certainly have taken a photograph or drawn a picture to accompany their report. It would be in the archives of the Royal Commission, the predecessors of Eng-

lish Heritage. But in spite of searching there nothing could be found. Neither after enquiries locally, nor in archives as far apart as Lincoln Diocese, the House of Lords, or New College, Oxford, has any drawing or picture emerged.

Scheduling brought benefits, but also drawbacks. For instance no excavation, opening up or improvement of the site could be done without formal permissions, and no full restoration without original plans. So, on the advice of Dr Shelagh Lewis the Group decided--a wise move--to commission an archaeological survey to provide the basis for future action. Funding was successfully sought through the Local Heritage Initiative. The consulting archaeologist, who was to hold our hand over the next few years, was Mike Farley; recently retired as chief archaeologist to Buckinghamshire County Council. He produced three valuable reports on the site and the opportunities and problems ahead. At the same time a good deal of historical research was carried out, necessarily sifting through ancient (and unreliable) evidence.

Just when we were about to take plans forward the Foot & Mouth epidemic struck, prohibiting access to the High Acre field for almost a year. In 2002, after having received approval for detailed plans submitted not only to English Heritage but also to others involved--Bucks CC, AVDC, the landowners New College, Oxford, and the local tenant farmer Conrad Lester--work moved ahead in four areas:

- Outer fencing of the well area
- Better definition of the original well site
- Limited restoration ('consolidation') of the remains of the conduit house
- Improved access and interpretation.

These actions were closely supervised by the archaeologist and by representatives from English Heritage. Detailed specifications were required to be followed precisely--eg cement-

lime-sand mortar mix strictly limited to a range between 1:3:12 to 1:2:9. There were, due to absences and changes, three different English Heritage Inspectors involved; fortunately their attitudes varied from nervous-cautious to (almost) cavalier enthusiasm!

The site of St. Rumbold's Well has been partially excavated, exposing the base and lower walls of the old conduit house. Because the water table has fallen, the well usually appears dry but as a result of the winter rains in December 2002 water up to depth of 2 feet appeared--with consequent flooding of the old railway line walk. An outer metal fence now protects the well area from cattle. There is also a fine wrought-iron gate, with three armorial shields facing down the field where in a later stage of development the approach is likely to be. Newly-built steps lead up to the well from the old railway line walk and a stile allows much easier access over the field hedgerow. In early 2003 a three-colour information board was put up to tell visitors about St. Rumbold and to explain the significance of the well site.

The change compared to the dilapidated state of the site in 1998 is striking.

At the time of writing the second part of the AVDC Inspector's Planning Inquiry has just been published. No recommendations are made for house building on the Tingewick Road site adjacent to St. Rumbold's Well. Although this is good news, there is bad news for defenders of the alternative site nearer to Maids Moreton where house building is approved. On the downside, there may now be less justification for commissioning a further archaeologist's report, or for designating the whole of the High Acre field as an amenity area, perhaps renamed St. Rumbold's Field. New College may be less amenable to agreeing that the main approach to the well site should be directly from the old railway line walk, up the ancient line walk, up the leat-

Cont'd on page 13

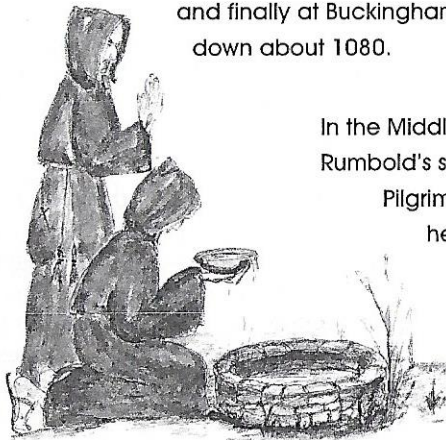
St. Rumbold's Well

There has been a water source close to this spot associated with the Anglo-Saxon Saint Rumbold for many centuries.

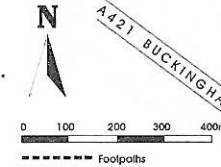
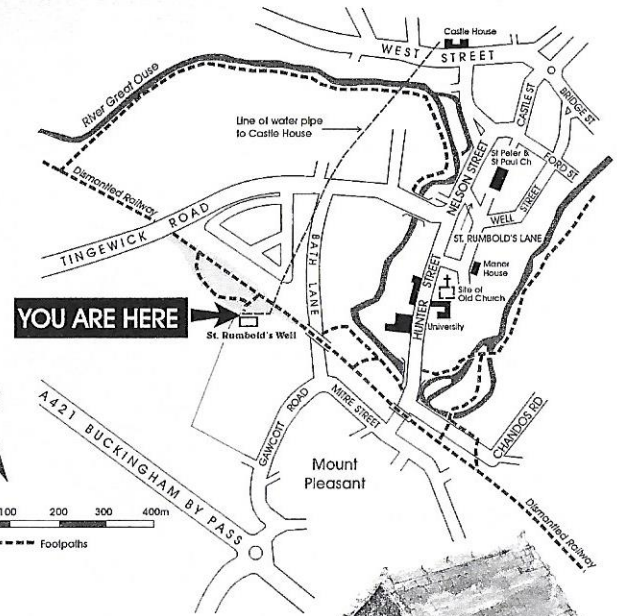
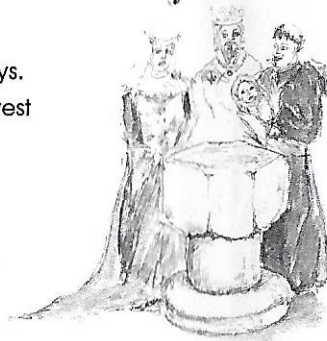
The life of this legendary saint was strange and short, lasting only three days. He was born in about 650 AD in a field near King's Sutton, some 12 miles west of Buckingham. At that time most people in England were not Christians. His mother was on her way to visit her father, King Penda of Mercia.

When he was born the baby Rumbold said three times in a loud voice 'I am a Christian' and asked for Christian baptism. He was then baptised using a stone font found miraculously easily nearby. The supposed original font can still be seen in King's Sutton church.

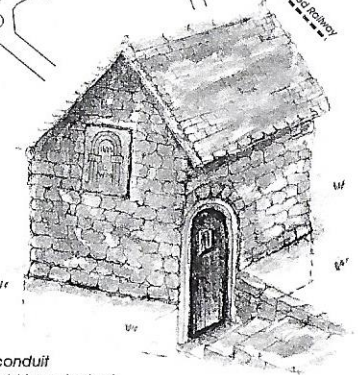
Next day Rumbold further astounded everyone by preaching a sermon on Christian virtues and the Trinity. On the third day he foretold his immediate death, saying that he wanted to be buried first at King's Sutton then at Brackley and finally at Buckingham. This story was probably first written down about 1080.



In the Middle Ages there was an important St. Rumbold's shrine and tomb in Buckingham church. Pilgrims came there to pray and to be healed after drinking the curative water of St Rumbold's Well. The older inns of Buckingham were said to have been established and to have flourished on the pilgrims' trade. Bath Lane may have been where the pilgrims could wash themselves.

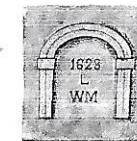


St. Rumbold's well is marked on John Speed's map of Buckingham dated 1610. A few years later, in 1623, a conduit house was built over the well or spring area and lead pipes carried water across the river to Castle House in Buckingham. The stone parts we now see are the remains of this conduit house but below the steps the interior appears dry because the water level has fallen.



How the conduit house might have looked

The plaques on the gate represent (at the top) the heraldic swan of Buckingham, the infant St. Rumbold, and the 1623 inscription on the conduit house with the initials of the owners of Castle House, William and Mary Lambard.



Excavation and protection of this well site was carried out in 2002 by the Buckingham Society with funding support from the Buckingham Town Council, Buckingham and Gawcott Charitable Trust, Aylesbury Vale Countryside Service, the Local Heritage Initiative and New College, Oxford.

Map based on the Ordnance Survey and reproduced by their kind permission; ref. MC/2002/31080.

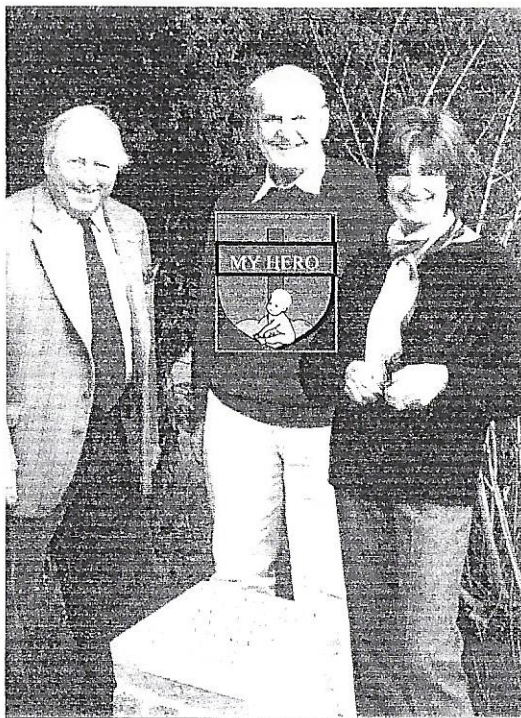
leading to the well, as recommended in the archaeologist's third report. The Inspector's findings are subject to appeals and counter-appeals so the situation may yet change again.

In a parallel project the Society has also commissioned a permanent memorial to St. Rumbold in the old churchyard of Buckingham where the pre-1771 church once stood and St. Rumbold was finally buried. To undertake this work a Diocesan Faculty was required: this called for a very lengthy application form and took 8 months to obtain even with full support from the Rector, Kevin Ashby, and his Churchwardens. In March 2003 a small plinth and plaque was erected close to where his shrine and tomb was most likely to have been. This plaque reads: 'NEAR THIS SPOT WITHIN THE OLD CHURCH OF BUCKINGHAM WAS THE TOMB AND SHRINE OF THE INFANT SAINT RUMBOLD WHO LIVED AND DIED c.650 AD'.

The costs of these two projects have not been a drain on the Society's funds. Apart from the Local Heritage Initiative (the initial survey) funds have been received from The Town Council, AVDC Countryside Service, the Buckingham and Gawcott Charitable Trust, Buckinghamshire Historic Buildings Trust and New College, Oxford. Some bodies have given less than we applied for but in recompense others have been more generous. We are very grateful to all our supporters.

The infant St. Rumbold is a curious figure from long-distant Anglo-Saxon days--over 1350 years ago. But he has apart to play today in Buckingham's archaeological, historical, and touristic scene and The Buckingham Society is keen to see that he is no longer an unknown and forgotten figure from the past.

Rodney Shirley



Tom (Old Churchyard) Ridgway
Rodney (St Rumbold) Shirley &
Gill (Society Pen Down and Pin Up Girl) Jones
unveil the new plinth marking St Rumbold's Shrine

Society Editor and Chairman, Ed, writes:
I'm sure all Society Members will wish to put their hands together to applaud the St Rumbold's Group and especially their Leader, Rodney. Rumbold did not use age or experience as excuses for inaction neither has this group. They have achieved a huge deal at no cost to the rest of our Society.

The least we can do is to visit High Acre field to see the magnificent interpretation board with drawings by resident artist, Dennis Osborne (see the next page), and to pause awhile in the Old Churchyard to muse on the saint behind the plinth.

Tom continues to lead another group restoring the Old Churchyard and its memorials (note the recent improvements to the Bartlett tomb area—the Bartletts were free-thinking tanners and wool-staplers who lived in what became Yeomanry House. Anne Bartlett married Sir George Gilbert Scott's Uncle, and one of the Bartletts when Mayor commissioned him to design the 1830s front extension to The Old Gaol).

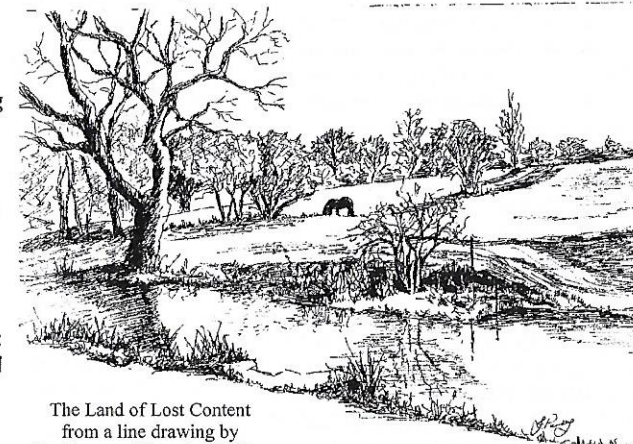
Buckingham Great Ouse Corridor Enhancement Project loosely based on an article by our river group's Coordinator: John Townsend

Concept:

A sensitive observer described the Great Ouse in Buckingham as flowing "from park to pasture", the implication being that, as far as the town is concerned, its river corridor has little significance. A visitor to our town would understand this; he or she would note that most of the river-bank is apparently neglected. In only three places has any attempt been made to marry the river to the town: the small stretch at the end of School Lane ("The Moorings"), the reach from Lord's Bridge to the ford, and the northern bank adjoining the Cornwall's Meadow car-park. For the rest, the river flows, apparently unnoticed, through untidy undergrowth and past nettle beds, unkempt banks and backyards. The stream of the river is often murky, suggesting that it might be polluted. It is all too obviously used by some of the town's citizens for refuse disposal.

The Buckingham Society believes that the potential of the river corridor has been neglected for too long. Herculean efforts by members of the Society to improve and extend the Riverside Walk have not been matched by significant achievement; the Walk remains very much as it was seven years ago. We believe that what is needed is a **major strategic consideration** of the corridor of the Great Ouse in our town with the objective of making the river an integral part of the aesthetic, visual and recreational character of Buckingham.

The Society proposes, therefore, to launch a long-term --say, seven year programme for gradual enhancement throughout the corridor of the Great Ouse in Buckingham. This pro-



The Land of Lost Content
from a line drawing by
Jan Pursey of Steeple Claydon

gramme would define attainable goals and targets to be reached on a stage- by-stage basis leading towards an ultimate objective. The first three stages would be marked, first, through the making of a **video film** which would be an easy-to-use inventory of what exists now with some initial ideas for enhancement; second would be a **Planning Exercise (such as "Planning for Real")** to gain feedback from the whole community; finally we would aim prepare a **Planning Brief** for the river corridor which would be complementary to the **Buckingham Vision & Design Statement**, and like the Statement, ultimately be approved by the Buckingham Town Council and AVDC as **Supplementary Planning Guidance**.

Partnership
The Buckingham Society's experience with the town's **Vision and Design Statement** has given us a experience of attracting and working with partners on communal projects. Buckingham is fortunate in having **The Buckingham Partnership**, a

strategic group, in which the Buckingham Town Council, the Aylesbury Vale District Council and the Buckinghamshire County Council are represented at a senior level. **The Partnership** also includes senior representatives of local businesses, plus the University of Buckingham, local schools and the Thames Valley Police as well as the editor of our local newspaper.

In addition to working closely with the Partnership, it is also our intention to build on existing contacts with each of the members of the Partnership.

We propose also to go out into the community through one or more town workshops, through presentations at town meetings and through a Planning Exercise. We are confident that The Buckingham Society's reputation in our town will ensure that

doors are opened to us and that an effective and productive dialogue will take place at appropriate levels. Our work will be monitored and supported by **THE CIVIC TRUST** through their **PATHFINDER PROGRAMME** and we plan that the outcome will be a model of best practice for other Civic Societies and planning bodies looking to improve their river-scapes.

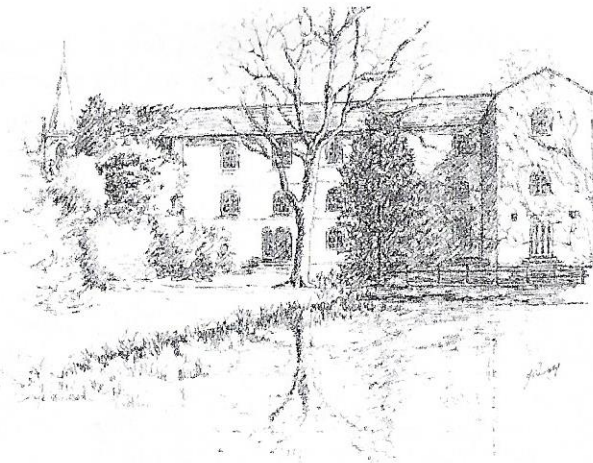
Stage 1

"The Year of the River"

a. Video Film of the Great Ouse corridor

It is our intention to make an inventory of the Great Ouse corridor in Buckingham by means of a video film which would show the major features of the river, including flood plain and flood prevention infrastructure, the attractions and eyesores of corridor, existing industrial, commercial and recreational facilities and structures as well as areas predominantly devoted (often by accident) to wildlife. A tentative structure for the film is suggested as:

- An introduction, setting out the purpose of the film and showing how, in the last century, the town has tended to turn its back on the river;
- A brief journey along the Great Ouse in Buckingham, from west to east, emphasizing the river's environmental importance to the town;
- The river's role in water movement and how management reduces the risks of flooding;
- Relating our town's river heritage: the Old Ford, the Mills, the Canal link, the Orchard mentioned in Flora Thompson's "Lark rise to Candle ford", etc;
- Highlights of areas at risk due to pollution, vandalism, and plain neglect;
- Highlights of beautiful stretches of the river which could be further



A Mirror on which to Dwell
Jan Pursey

enhanced;

- Defining approach corridors for vehicles, cycles and pedestrians links to the river corridor;
- Some ideas on involving schools and schoolchildren in sustaining the life of the river, particularly as a cultural asset;
- Computer-generated graphics focusing on the potential for recreational facilities, tourism, commercial ventures, wildflower and wildlife areas.

Although much of the film would be shot and edited by members of The Buckingham Society led by our resident Film Producer, and former architect, Tony Parker. The script has been written by Tony and edited by our Co-coordinator, John.

The film's impact will be strengthened through a booklet that will celebrate the plants, fish and animals that thrive in our river corridor. It will explain to locals what needs conserving, tending, or extending. When there's time to stand and stare, people who know, care.

b. Attracting Voluntary Commitment

At the same time, The Buckingham Society will engage in voluntary activities to produce immediate enhancement of a central section of the corridor – from the ford (in Ford St) through the London Road bridges to the pedestrian bridge that leads from the Skateboard Park to Cornwall's Meadow car-park. These exercises will come under the heading of "river hygiene": litter removal, graffiti obliteration and shrub maintenance. We have started work, also, on a "storyboard" display to tell the tale of the Ford – Buckingham's old route to Aylesbury, with the nearby original beautiful bridge that was depicted on John Speed's famous 1610 map and mentioned in Samuel Pepys' Diaries. The developer of Cooper's Yard has promised to underwrite the cost of the board and create a permanent site for it in the new brick wall that he proposes to build along Ford St.. The area around Ford St is

key to initial efforts. We are talking to the Environment Agency about the floodwalls and ford removal work they intend to instigate. The risk that the flood walls will be ugly, utilitarian structures disturbs the people of Buckingham, and **your Society will be lobbying to mitigate** such effects.

In September 2003, the Society will support Buckingham Town Council and the Buckingham Sub-Aqua Club in their **River Rinse Project** that will remove objects from the river itself.

The Society is keen to create a sustainable model in which local groups of enthusiasts will adopt sections of the riverbank and, working in partnership with the various AVDC bodies who manage affairs at present, and in liaison with Buckingham's "Green Spaces" Committee, will enhance what it is possible to achieve, at present.

Already, we have taken an interest in the small Island near to the Green Bridge. As you will know, its splendid isolation has made it a wildlife sanctuary—a nesting site for swans and Kingfishers. **That sanctuary has been defiled** this winter through causeway creation by youngsters. The Society called in the Environment Agency and they destroyed the barrier but piled its detritus neatly yards away. The lads returned to rebuild it. A "Summit" was held between BS and barrier-builders that resulted in Anthony Dillow leading a party of youths in removing the barrier, once more. Since that time, the barrier has been re-erected and has been causing a more profound nuisance, since low water levels have encouraged materials and scum to adhere to it. Buckingham Town Council promised to get involved at the Town Annual Meeting. Meanwhile, this year's nesting season

is upon us.

One section of the river's bank's is capable of further development as a "wildflower" meadow, whilst another from Bath Lane to Lord's Bridge aka Berties' Walk will gain from a managed reduction in riverside nettle beds. In both cases the Society has volunteers initiating activities.

Stage 2

Planning Exercises on the Great Ouse Corridor

Having stimulated the interest of our fellow citizens in the current state of the Great Ouse corridor and in its environmental, recreational, commercial and educational potential by means of the video film, it would be our intention to build on this basis of awareness and interest to organize, with professional assistance, a **Planning Exercise** like "Planning for Real" piece of modeling. An aerial view model of the river corridor will be built and the Buckingham community will be encouraged to offer ideas, state preferences and indicate priorities for action. It might be appropriate to make this Planning Exercise a central feature of **HERITAGE OPEN DAYS** which The Buckingham Society co-ordinates locally each September in association with **The Civic Trust** and supported by local Councils.

These Heritage Open Days will leave memorials, guides to interpretation and enjoyment of the river Great Ouse and its corridor. Such as:

What fish are to be seen?
What wild-flowers garland the Ouse?
Buckingham's Birds and Bees
Buckingham's best trees.
The History of the Ouse-
(From Jurassic Park, through pasture, to pleasure park.)

Stage 3

Preparation and

Approval of Planning Brief

An analysis of the result of the Planning exercise will permit the joint creation with officials from our local planning department of a detailed and comprehensive **Planning Brief** for the future development of the Great Ouse corridor. This would be submitted to the Aylesbury Vale District Council for their approval as Supplementary Planning Guidance.

Stage 4 – Implementation and Maintenance of our Sustainable Programme for Riverside Management

Jacob Bronowski wrote "The world can only be grasped by action, not by contemplation. The hand is the cutting edge of the mind."

Once the Society has its plan in place, it will be necessary to create a programme to roll-out activities that will turn dreams into continuing reality and change our river corridor from a dreary back-water to a place of beauty, delight and pleasure.

All will come, and see and say:

"Blissful Buckingham."

**TO THE OUSE
A Sonnet**

Slow Winding Stream! How stilly doth thou glide,
 'Twixt level meadows of a charming green.
 Whereon pied cattle, and white sheep are seen.
 And brilliant flow'rs gleam out from either side,
 Like sparkling jewels on a beauteous bride;
 While silv'ry pollards o'er thy margins lean,
 Like grey-hair'd men of venerable mien,
 Holding low converse o'er thy list'ning tide.
 Beneath whose waves disport the bream and dace,
 And little minstrels pipe within thy bow'rs,
 Where dragon-flies their prey do fiercely chase—
 On, on through flowers, like the gliding hours—
 save when arous'd by floods—at equal pace,
 Fed by earth's ceaseless springs, and heav'n's blest show'rs.
 W.B.Graham (The Sharnbrook Poet), 1861

Yet my great-grandfather was but a water-man, looking one way, and rowing another: and I got most of my estate by the same occupation.
 John Bunyan *The Pilgrim's Progress* (1678)

The last words of Mr Despondency were, Farewell night, welcome day. His daughter went through the river singing, but none could understand what she said.

The Pilgrim's Progress (1684)

The Ouse, dividing well-water'd land,
 Now glitters in the sun and now retires
 As bashful, yet impatient to be seen.

William Cowper (The Olney Poet) from "The Task"

Great men and times and deeds aside,
 The timeless presence still prevails;
 A quiet place under the stars, where everything is calm;
 The river's bend encircles Buckingham still.
 Tony Webster (from *The Bend of Time*)
 Tony Webster lives in Buckingham by the Ouse

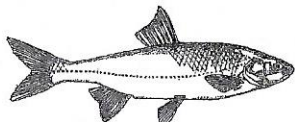
GREAT RIVER GREAT OUSE TRIVIA

Its name is obscure but probably comes from a celtic word for "water"
 The Ouse's source is above Brackley in Northants.
 The river Great Ouse is 156 miles long
 Around 2500BC farmers paddled dugouts from Fens to colonise the upper reaches of the Ouse
 From that time until 1100 AD the Ouse was a invasion highway
 Invading Danish long ships needed 2-3 feet of water in which to operate
 Willington, near Bedford, was the head of the river for Danes who built its 25 x long ship port
 26 "Ouse" Mills are mentioned in the Domesday Book
 Wisbech (originally, the mouth of Ouse) is a corruption of "Ouse Beach"
 The flow of water of the Ouse can change a thousand fold in 24 hours
 Because of that fact, a severe storm may cause flooding in any month of the year
 Suddenly melting snow has been the cause of some of the worst winter floods
 The worst summer flood was in Bedford on August 19th 1672 after a thunderstorm
 Worst Winter Floods: 1254(or 1256) 1570 1607 1823 1947 1998
 Frequent flash floods floundered forming flat fertile Fenlands
 Historically, most villages were set pack from Ouse through fear of flooding
 Most houses didn't face the Ouse since rear flooding was less painful than full frontal inundation
 The "Bailiff of Bedford" refers to the distraining effects of Ouse floods on land and cattle
 John Bunyan's River of the Water of Life is based on the river Great Ouse (in Summer)
 W S Turner sketched the Great Ouse at Bedford Bridge
 Sir Everard Digby schemed the Gunpowder Plot in Digby's Walk near the Ouse in Gayhurst
 A major industry on the lower reaches of the Ouse was the processing of bullrushes
 The Ouse in Buckingham provided water for tanning pits near Hunter Street
 Oliver Cromwell had family farming roots in St Ives and Huntingdon
 The Chantry Chapel in St Ives is on its ancient bridge; St Ives was once called "Slepe".
 Brackley to Buckingham is 8 miles by road but 20 miles by Ouse
 When Castle Bridge (Buckingham) was rebuilt in 1924 traces of an ancient Ford were found
 It is possible that in 914 King Edward (son of Alfred) received Danes' submission in Buckingham
 In 1010 King Cnut ravaged the Ouse valley in Bucks
 The mediaeval Bedford Bridge was equipped with a cell in which John Bunyan was confined.
 Bedford Bridge was renewed in 1814 and doubled in width in 1940
 The river Great Ouse has ten tributaries, the first being Padbury Brook
 "The dreamy, breamy Ouse"
 Bedford is the site of the 1st new canal for 100 years to link Ouse to Grand Union @ MK
 The Ouse's "fall" is steepest between its source and Buckingham
 "Robinson Crusoe" was abandoned mid-performance in Buckingham when the theatre flooded
 Samuel Pepys crossed the Ouse by The Woolpack P H and wrote about Buckingham
 "The Ouse, the drain of five Counties"
 The river Great Ouse is unsigned in Buckingham
 There are no water voles in Buckingham, what we see by the Ouse are river rats
 Huntingdon and Godmanchester are the Buda and Pest of the Ouse
 The river Great Ouse is the 4th longest in England and 80 miles longer than the 5th (the Avon)
 Pleasure Craft can navigate the Ouse between Bedford and Denver Sluice at Downham Market
 Each glass of Ouse water contains more than 70 water molecules from Queen Victoria's urine!

A BAKER'S DOZEN FISH OF THE GREAT OUSE IN BUCKINGHAM

3-SPINED STICKLEBACK
Sticklebacks come in 10 and 3-spined varieties. Male is very red and aggressive during the mating season. They love to eat other species. 2" to 4" long.

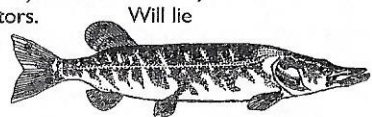
DACE
School fish who likes well-oxygenated water. Green tinge to fins. Up to 1' in length.



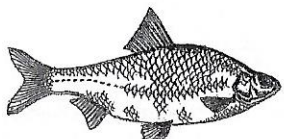
MILLER'S THUMB
Bull-headed, very ugly sculpin, (5" long) and bottom-lover. Dirty green-black. The story goes that Millers' thumbs were big and bruised from dough-kneading. The fish can be caught by hand.



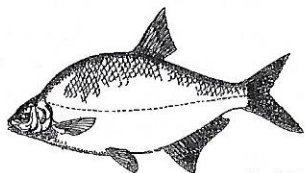
PIKE
Long (up to 4') thin, fierce, toothy, dark predators. Will lie motionless until prey is seen. Will eat wildfowl or fish up to half its own size.



ROACH
Reddish fins, a scaly fish that feeds on the bottom. Found in mixed



BREAM
The dreamy, breamy Ouse, goes a local saying. Bottom feeders. Wander from place to place in large schools. 12-20" long, it is silvery.

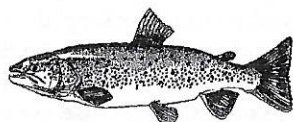


- ← 3-spined stickleback
- ← Bream
- ← Chub
- ← Dace
- ← Gudgeon
- ← Miller's Thumb
- ← Minnow
- ← Perch
- ← Pike
- ← Roach
- ← Stone Loach
- ← Tench
- ← Trout

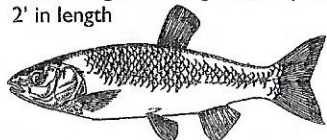
STONE LOACH
Average length 3", like clear, fast, pebbly waters. Bottom pair of "whiskers" are large. Can be caught by hand.



TROUT (BROWN)
Few in Buckingham. Omnivorous, big ones are cannibals. Their colouring depends on the environment, but all are spotted.



CHUB
Chub are silvery with white lips & brown-tinged fins. Big scales, up to 2' in length



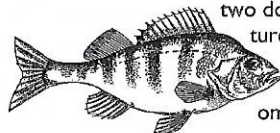
GUDGEON
A tiny (6"), animal-eating, fighter living close banks. Brown in colour with bluish spots.



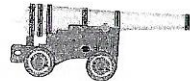
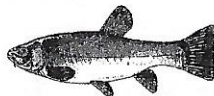
MINNOW
Up to 3" in length, likes the shallows, coloured like a tabby cat. Male has red belly when breeding.



PERCH
Common perch is greenish with two dorsal fins of differing textures. Note the stripes. It is humpy. Swims in shoals. Capacious mouth, omnivorous.



TENCH
Dark green or yellowy-bronze, tail has an almost straight edge. Love slow waters, so most are downstream. Omnivorous, but shy.



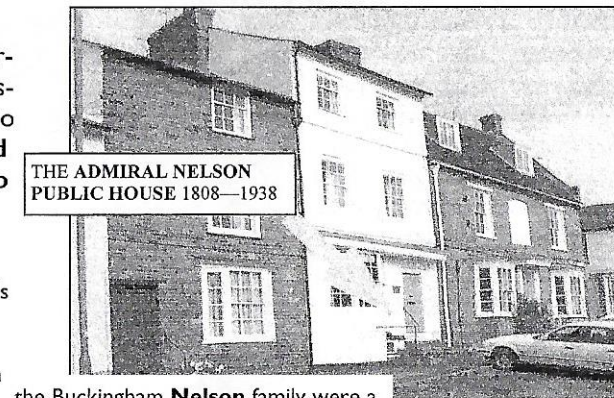
THE DEATH OF NELSON

In a telling aside, or broadside, during his 2003 WEA Lectures on History and Buckingham from 1688 to 1901, Dr. John Clarke announced the death of Admiral Horatio Nelson. For generations, people in Buckingham have identified Nelson Street that formerly led down to the millstream of Castle Mill, with England's most famous Admiral. History, Dr Clarke points out, is not on their side. The name "Nelson St" was in use before Horatio hit the national headlines.

To be fair what Dr Clarke has done is an act of "Half-Nelson". He reckons that Nelson St is named as a tribute to one or more members of the local Nelson family. They were prominent in Buckingham society in the 18th and 19th centuries. Browne Willis mentions Thomas Nelson being sworn in as Mayor in 1735. That was soon after Buckingham's Great Fire. Did Thomas Nelson help in getting the area we know as "Nelson Street" rebuilt?

It was a nice conceit for that most inland town of Buckingham to have a watery connection through a street that led to a back trickle of the Great Ouse with the country's greatest naval commander. The story connected well with "Nelson" graffiti in Bartlett's Wool stapling store in Hunter St; one graffito is definitely contemporaneous with the great victory at the Battle of Trafalgar.

The misidentification of Nelson St has a long and distinguished history from the opening of The Admiral Nelson Public House, established at 2, Bristle Hill in 1808, soon after Nelson's victory in 1805. Was its name a deliberate play on words? By that time,



the Buckingham Nelson family were a well-established family with banking connections. In 1810 George Nelson became Mayor of Buckingham for the first of two stints in the post. By the time that Queen Victoria visited Buckingham and Stowe House in 1845, George Nelson, Clerk of the Peace, proudly took his place in the formal procession just above 2 policemen, and the cushion and mace bearers.

It was members of the same Nelson clan, Ambrose (who owned a Music Shop in Castle St) & R?, who played "Clarionet and Ophicleide" in an unlikely trio with violin at a Concert dedicated to the relief of wives and children of our boys at the front in the Crimea, as recorded in a very early 1854 edition of the Buckingham Advertiser?

The Advertiser reveals that Geo Nelson was still active in 1854. He was one of the founders of a Benefit Society, designed to enable thrifty poor people to set aside a little money to support themselves in old age or illness. When Geo Nelson died in 1876 he was Buckingham's Town Clerk.

Just up the road in Stowe Gardens there are further opportunities to mislead the unwary "Nelson" hunters. There is a walk called, inevitably, Nelson's along the Ha Ha to the Eastern

Boycott Pavilion, created before the more famous Nelson. Nelson's walk is named after William Nelson, an 18th century Stowe gardener who created that area and loved to take his rest at "Nelson's Seat" (unfortunately for us it was destroyed in 1797). Other Stowe features record further names of charge-hands—Roger and Gurnet's Walks and Love's Garden. In doing so, Lord Cobham was extending a tradition started by Pliny!

More recently, the connections between Nelson Street and a leading local family have been totally forgotten. This journal wrongly coupled the Street to Admiral Nelson a year or two ago. The quaint naming of terraced houses under Castle Hill with titles such as "Hamilton's Cottage" is entirely without irony.

LET US NOW PRAISE LOCAL WORTHIES NAMED NELSON; MANY WERE JUST AS ADMIRABLE AS THE MORE FAMOUS ADMIRAL.

This piece was written with help from John Clarke, Angus Davison and Dennis Osborne.

JOHN BUCHAN AND BUCKINGHAM

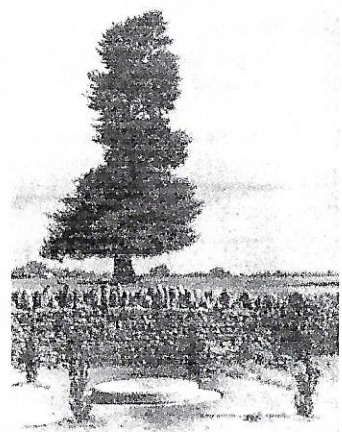
John Buchan has become a one book wonder. "The Thirty-Nine Steps" was written at the outbreak of World War I when the author was, by a nice symmetry, 39 years old. Buchan was a Scot, born in 1875 into a Presbyterian minister's family in Perth, and educated at Glasgow University and Brasenose College in Oxford. The young John Buchan was a voracious reader and an apprentice writer. His style evolved out of the twin peaks of Scottish literature: Sir Walter Scott and Robert Louis Stevenson. Places and their moods affected Buchan deeply and his writings etch landscape with clarity and atmosphere. During his Oxford days he wandered on foot, on a bicycle or on horseback as far across the gentle landscape between Oxford and Aylesbury Vale as his College's midnight curfew would allow. John Buchan served in Intelligence during WWI and when he returned to Civvy St he wrote for "The Spectator" magazine. Earlier, during Edwardian times, these ingredients :

- Greek Philosophy;
- RLS and VVS;
- Tweed dale;
- **Old England, north of Oxford;**
- Fly-fishing & country pursuits;
- Espionage;
- Right-wing politics had been melted & forged into writer's irons.



The Edwardian John Buchan, photographed in 1906

"As a child I must have differed in other things besides sanctity from the good Bernard of Clairvaux, who, we are told, could walk all day by the Lake of Geneva and never see the lake. **My earliest recollections are not of myself, but of my environment.**" (*The opening words of John Buchan's autobiography*)



John Buchan died in Canada in 1940, but was buried in Elsfield overlooking Otmoor that lies between Oxford and Buckingham.

For John Buchan, Oxford was a bridge from simple roots to polite society. John's determination and his ruthless organisation of time (he seems to have been the Andy Marr of his times), allowed him to pursue more than one career at a time. His prolixity turned writing into a steady income stream. He joined "The Ark" Club in London, where all the members were called by the names of animals. John opted for "The Buck". That reminds us how close his surname sounds to the rural glottal-stopped pronunciation of **Buckingham/Buck'num**

MP and diplomat, John Buchan (later Baron Tweedsmuir) needed **soft** countryside. He set up house at Elsfield Manor, about 4 miles north of Oxford on the ridge that links Chilterns to Cotswolds. His fast-moving novels were frequently set against timeless Scottish or **North Oxford** rural locations. Two novels are worth reading for their evocations of our countryside around **Buckingham: Midwinter** (1926) and *The Blanket of the Dark* (1931). This land, our hinterland, was Buchan's touchstone, an English equivalent of "La France profonde". Buchan wanted, he said of "Midwinter", to "**catch the spell of the great midland forests and the Old England which lay everywhere just beyond the highroads and ploughlands.**"

John Buchan took many more than 39 steps around Buckingham. **We should salute him as an environmentalist who cared, as we care, for the gentle remoteness of our middle England.**

BUCKINGHAM SOCIETY— 2003 TRIPS PROGRAMME

HURRY, HURRY

At present, numbers for the 2nd Trip are too few to cover expenses.

Please book before May 12th so that we can make the necessary arrangements.



These happy people are on the site of the Buckingham Union Work House, being force fed on George Gilbert Scott during the GGS Mystery Tour. You could be as learned as they by acquiring the 16-paged Gilbert Scott Mystery Trail booklet from Ed price £1.50 (very few copies are left)

Society trips are convivial affairs designed to inform but also to amuse. Our motto comes from Dickens:

People muht be amuthed. They can't be always a learning, nor yet they can't be always a working, they an't made for it.

Go on, book up, find out who wrote:

"Must cast thee, scarcely cofined, in the ooze."

Most Civic Societies hold regular trips for their members. Such activities bring local people together and provide a splendid opportunity to compare the "home" town with what has been achieved in other places. Usually they make a small surplus that can be used to support the Society's activities. We shall use any income that we make to support our

"Pathfinder Project - 2003 THE YEAR OF THE RIVER GREAT OUSE".

All 3 trips are open to all, but we reserve the right to cancel them (all monies are refundable), if there is insufficient support to cover our costs.

2.

RIVER GREAT OUSE HALF DAY COACH TRIP

From the source of the River Great Ouse between Brackley and Sulgrave (Wellies may be a help) to the broad expanses of boating waters in Bedford, via Newport Pagnell, Sharnbrook and Olney. Three literary figures will mark our progress: **W.B. Grahame**, the Sharnbrook poet, & **William Cowper**, a frequent visitor to Gawcott when he lived at Weston Underwood near Olney and John Bunyan.

Date: Thursday 12th June

Departure at 1.30 pm

From Buckingham Bus Station (Jeffs Coach)

Return to Buckingham: 7.00pm

Cost: £7.00

(£6.00 for Members, pensioners and the unwaged)

Guides: Ed and, possibly, a representative from a local Civic Trust Society.

FOR FURTHER DETAILS, OR TO MAKE A BOOKING, PLEASE RING ED ON 01280 815758, OR CHARLIE ON 01280 822688

3.

RIVER GREAT OUSE WHOLE DAY COACH TRIP

This trip examines our river from where the half-day trip ends. We shall visit the small towns of St Neots, Godmanchester, Huntingdon (Samuel Pepys and Oliver Cromwell) and St Ives. St Ives, also, has deep connections to Oliver Cromwell & possesses a fine 15th century bridge surmounted by one of only 3 "bridge chapels" to survive in England. We shall end at Earith, the start of the Fens, rich agricultural land almost at sea level from where the Great Ouse flows so slowly to the sea that it needs the help of humans.

Date: Thursday 9th Oct.

Departure at 09.30 am

From Buckingham Bus Station (Jeffs Coach)

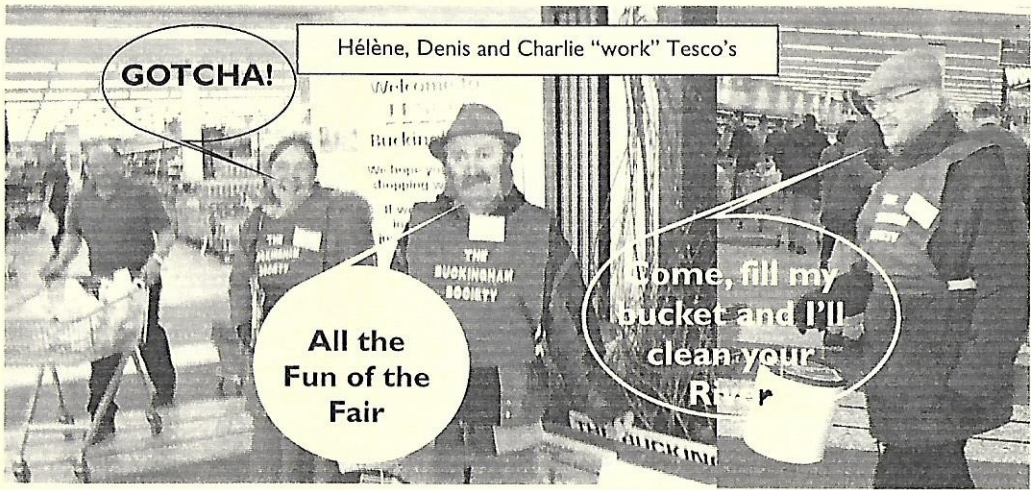
Return: 7.30pm

Cost: £12.00

(£10.00 for Members, pensioners and the unwaged)

Guides: Ed and members of Civic Trusts in one or two of the towns visited. The lunch break will be held in Huntingdon, please bring sandwiches or be prepared to buy a Pub Lunch.

"It's a great life if you don't weaken."
Mr Standfast (1919) ch. 5



There's a smile on the face of Buckingham Society after the magnificent fund-raising efforts at Tesco and Buckingham Garden Centre master-minded in fine military fashion by **Kathy Robins**.

The prizes were won by sister and brother Ellie and Ben (Smith's Token) of Mallard Drive and Christine Prior of Meadway is now building a water feature in her garden for Rattie. The Buckingham Society thanks Pauline Brown of Buckingham Garden Centre for her active support and generosity.

WELL OVER £500 WERE RAISED TOWARDS OUR "2003—THE YEAR OF THE RIVER PROJECT"

THE SOCIETY FOUNDED A NEW CATEGORY OF MEMBERSHIP
AT THE AGM IN NOVEMBER: **CORPORATE MEMBERSHIP**

We are please to announce support from our **FIRST CORPORATE MEMBERS**

1. **CASTLE COURT PROPERTIES LTD (John Tearle)** that is heavily involved in the regeneration of land behind West Street. The Society's Planning Group has been extensively consulted on this possible major development of homes for older people.
2. **AERODEX-FLOYD (M.D. Les Floyd)** who own a factory unit on our Tingewick Industrial Park and have enlightened plans for a new factory and extension to the riverside walk on land between that Industrial Park and the river Great Ouse.
3. Wishes to remain anonymous.