

The Buckingham Society



Issue 2004/1 March

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Inside this issue

- *Women of Buckingham - pages 4-7: Mary MacManus & Florence Nightingale*
- *Buckinghams around the world - pages 8&9*
- *The Source of the River Great Ouse - pages 10, 11 & 12*
- *Plus regular features, notes & queries, planning notes, programme*



Registered with the Civic Trust
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civic
trust



The Buckingham Society

Your local Civic Society

A voluntary group of people who care passionately about our surroundings and campaign to enhance and improve our Town.

Members of the **Buckingham Society** share common aims to

- Promote the distinctive character of our town
- Set high standards of design and sustainability
- Celebrate and safeguard Buckingham's heritage
- Find solutions to environmental problems
- Improve the quality of life in our community
- Inspire sensitive changes within the places we cherish
- Create and consolidate effective partnerships between community, business and local government.

Executive who's who...

Vice Chair & Town Design Statement: Carolyn Cumming 01280 816226

President: Stanley Meadows 01280 813133

Minutes Secretary: Gill Jones 01280 815153

Membership Secretary: Geoff Shaw 01280 823363

Treasurer: Kathy Robins 01280 813967

Events Secretary: David Peevers 01280 817666

University Liaison: Alan Brook 01280 813472

Heartlands: Ted Farmer 01280 812262

Planning SIG: Hélène Hill 01280 813133

The Old Churchyard: Gill Jones 01280 815153

Editorial team: Charlie Macdonald 01280 822688

Editor: John Credland 01280 813641

The Buckingham Society



Planning notes

On Wednesday 11 February, Local Plans Team Leader for AVDC, Martin Dalby, gave members a fascinating insight into how the new Local Plan has been formulated and how it fits into the wider picture.

Society members joined in a lively discussion. Of particular interest, Martin talked about the reasoning which led to adoption of the Moreton Road site, including the role of the government appointed, independent, inspector whose judgements AVDC was

obliged to accept.

"There's more to building great homes than bricks and mortar. We share the Civic Trust's desire to develop living and working environments that meet our customers' needs."

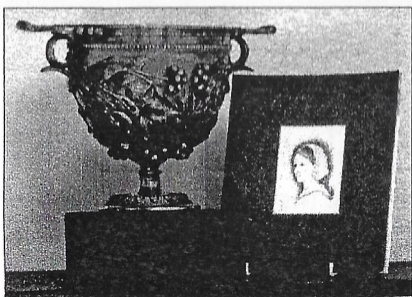
Taylor Woodrow 2004

Everyone crowded round large scale maps of Buckingham and talk ranged from the status of the flood plain to the treatment of footpaths in the Moreton Road development. Martin presented a copy of these maps to the Society together with a copy of the Local Plan.

Work has already started on the next Local Plan for Buckingham and Martin emphasised that AVDC is keen to incorporate local opinion into its thinking and recognises the Buckingham Society is a good conduit. DP

Our cover picture is by Dennis Osborne.
An original watercolour, it depicts Houghton Mill

Florence Nightingale 1820 - 1910



Florence, born in Florence, was the most famous nurse, and possibly the most nursed nurse, of 19th century Britain. The British establishment did not realise what they were doing when they put Florence Nightingale in charge of the base hospital in Scutari during the Crimean War where she cut death rates from 50% to under 3% through basic sanitary improvements. She gained her title "Lady of the Lamp" through her nocturnal perambulations among the wounded — she sent the rest of the female nurses to their own beds at 8pm to inhibit immorality. She was wealthy, opinionated and a brilliant self-publicist. This "Lady of the Lamp" knew St Luke's Gospel:

"No man, when he hath lighted a candle, putteth it in a secret place, neither under a bushel, but on a candlestick, that they which come in may see the light."

It was Florence Nightingale who established nursing as a profession suitable for women when she created her Nightingale School of Nursing at St Thomas's Hospital,

London, in 1860. The school was created with £45,000 collected by the public in tribute to her work in saving the lives of so many British soldiers. Florence went into early arthritic decline in the late 1850's and spent most of the remainder of her life bed-ridden. She remained mentally very acute and became an inveterate letter-writer and agent for change. To have Florence's backing for your campaign was as useful in Victorian England as having Victoria Beckham on board today. She eschewed social life. For fifty years, Florence Nightingale played the role of receiving visitors, dispensing wisdom with gravitas and forcing engagement.

Florence was connected with North Bucks and Buckingham through the marriage of her sister, Parthenope, to Harry Verney of Claydon House. Florence loved to visit North Bucks and we, in turn, gloried in having such a mega-star in our midst. Even in the 20th century the columns of *The Buckingham Advertiser* held tributes to her:

'... one old Buckingham man recounted that the proudest moment of his life had been shaking hands with Florence Nightingale when he, aged 12, had visited Claydon House'. Her advice on health matters was much sought and hence Buckingham became the first town in the world to hold training courses for rural health visitors. Rural health visitors became Buckingham's privy counsellors as they ordered latrines to be moved away from kitchens. Their Miss Nightingale,

Florence Nightingale 1820 - 1910

as Lytton Strachey observed, '*... could hardly distinguish between the Deity and the Drains*'.

Sir Harry Verney was loyal to his siren wife, but he possessed profound respect and love, possibly, for her younger sister, Florence. Victorians claimed that Florence was so sage that her opinion was never wrong. She never married. Although she never visited the sub-continent, she became Britain's leading expert on India, and senior administrators posted to the Indian Civil Service were sent, as a matter of routine, for a prior briefing from Miss Nightingale. Harry, MP for Buckingham, is said to have consulted Florence on all matters that came before Parliament. Harry's reliance on Florence was so transparent that London wits referred to Sir Harry as 'MP for Miss Nightingale'. So, Buckingham, the former rotten borough, gained an MP in the pocket of Nursie. Florence and Harry became almost inseparable and she would spend months at a time at Claydon House completing her correspondence, receiving guests and watching birds at her bird-table from her drawing room. Many of the guests were star-struck youngsters waiting patiently to be powdered with stardust. Victorian children are caricatured as being seen and not heard. When they were seen the order was negative — *Don't do it*. Florence's advice was so much more encouraging — *Yes, yes, do it!* Many of the 4,000 letters from Florence that remain in Claydon House are to

children, visitors who had opened their souls to Florence. She would write to them telling them about the birds on her bird-table and slipping in little bits of encouraging advice.

When Florence Nightingale was very old and blind she was honoured through her appointment to The Order of Merit, the first woman ever to gain such an honour. Her comment when the award was taken to her Hampshire home was: "Too kind, too kind."

Buckingham commemorates Florence Nightingale in its Museum (that has a special Nightingale collection for schoolchildren), its Cottage Hospital and Nightingale Place that looks down with august benevolence from Page Hill. Claydon House contains her drawing room and a collection of her letters. Florence Nightingale made a lasting impact on nursing and some of her ideals were further developed in Buckingham through her enthusiastic support of our most effective Medical Officer of Health : Dr George De'Ath.

*A Lady with a Lamp shall stand
In the great history of the land,
A noble type of good,
Heroic womanhood.*

(Henry Longfellow *Santa Filomena*,
1857) Ed Grimdsdale 2004



Buckingham Pennsylvania, USA.

A GLOBAL BRAND

If you look in the New York telephone directory you will find many entries for Buckingham – hotels, laundries, restaurants, office supplies - because throughout the world the name Buckingham stands for prestige, reliability, honesty and quality. In a world of 'global brands' there is no finer name than Buckingham.

In this occasional series Robert Cumming looks (courtesy of the web) at Buckinghams around the world.

Buckingham Pennsylvania

There are Buckinghams in Virginia, Ohio, Florida and Texas, but the most interesting that I found is in Pennsylvania.

Pennsylvania was founded by William Penn (1644-1718). Born in London he was the son of a distinguished Admiral and descended from an ancient Buckinghamshire family. He became a fervent Quaker in his early 20s, and actively involved in colonising the Eastern seaboard of America. In March 1681 Charles II signed a charter giving land to William Penn in payment of a debt owed by the king to Penn's father, Admiral Sir William Penn. The charter, which was officially proclaimed on April 2, 1681, named the territory after Admiral Penn and included also the term Sylvania ("woodlands"), as the younger Penn requested. William Penn intended

that the colony should provide a haven of religious tolerance for his fellow Quakers. When Penn returned to England in 1684, the new Quaker province had a firmly established government based on religious tolerance and government by popular will. Penn is buried in Jordan's burying ground, Bucks, alongside his first wife and favourite son.

In South East Pennsylvania there is a Bucks County of 622 square miles and some 600,000 inhabitants. The county seat is Doylestown but there is a Buckingham Township. With a population of 17,000 and 5,700 households, it does, it seems, have close similarities to our own Buckingham.

Here is some fascinating history and information from their excellent website www.buckinghampa.org.

Buckingham Township

Bucks County is one of the three "Founder's Counties" defined and named by William Penn in 1682. Land claimants soon filled the townships in the southernmost part of the county, and in or about 1700, Buckingham Township was opened to settlement.

Physically, Buckingham is the biggest township in the county, covering 33 square miles. Its geography is dominated by Buckingham Mountain, which rises to a height of 520 feet, but its landscape is characterized by gently rolling countryside. Blessed by many streams and rich soil, it

Buckingham Pennsylvania, USA.



has yielded bountiful harvests for 300 years.

Prior to European settlement, this area was the home of the Lenni Lenape Indians, and many of the place names reflect the cadence of their language. Coming at Penn's invitation, English and Welsh Quakers were the principal pioneers in the Township. However, many German-speaking dissenters from high-church orthodoxy were also early settlers in the county. As a consequence, the wonderful old stone houses and barns so typical of Bucks County reflect both English and German architectural traditions.

Agriculture has been Buckingham's principal industry since its founding, and the Township still retains a strong farm community. However, since the mid-1970s, there has been a substantial shift in the landscape from rural to suburban. New needs have accompanied the change in character. The Township now provides public parks and recently purchased an additional 40 acres for needed sports fields. The police force has increased threefold to serve a population that grew from almost 9,000 in 1980 to over 16,000 today.

There are Buckingham families who have lived in the Township for generations, but most of them are more recent arrivals. Nonetheless, old and new residents have been united in their desire to preserve the scenic and historic character of the Township. In 1995 and 1999, voters approved a scheme for the purchase of easements on Township farms that prevent their development forever, and for the purchase of park land. There are 3,240

acres of Township farm fields, forests and streams that have now been preserved through the purchase of easements or gifts. Everyone in Buckingham has benefited, they proudly declare.

The preservation of Buckingham's scenic and historic character enhances the value of all Township properties, and land preservation conserves the waters, woodlands and other natural resources of the Township.

Land preservation also supports a healthy farm economy, which contributes to the quality of life in the Township and to a favourable tax flow. In addition it saves the unending, ever-expanding costs of new schools and other services, which the development of the protected farms would have required.

Perhaps we could learn from Buckingham PA's example?

Can you tell us any more? Have you been to Buckingham, Pennsylvania? Do you know anyone who lives there? Have you any photographs?

If you can add anything at all please contact Robert Cumming 01280 816226 (robertcumming@onetel.net.uk)

Robert Cumming 2004

A SOURCE FOR THE RIVER GREAT OUSE

With the Buckingham Society's special project interest in the River Great Ouse it is a bit surprising to find that nobody is quite sure where the source of this river is—the third longest in England.

The River Great Ouse (Ouse for short) clearly comes to Buckingham from the direction of Brackley. Looking on a medium-scale (5 cm = 1 km) Ordnance Survey (OS) map—the current Landranger series no.152—it then branches just south of Brackley at Grid Reference SP 595361. This westward tributary ends just south of Farthinghoe off the A422 Brackley-Banbury road (SP 540389) and was extolled as the source of the Ouse by the Revd C F Farrar in his book *Ouse's Silent Tide* published in 1922. He felt that from the gushing spring at Farthinghoe '...came the infant Ouse, like a baby uttering its first whimper and blinking in the sunlight'. I call this option 1.

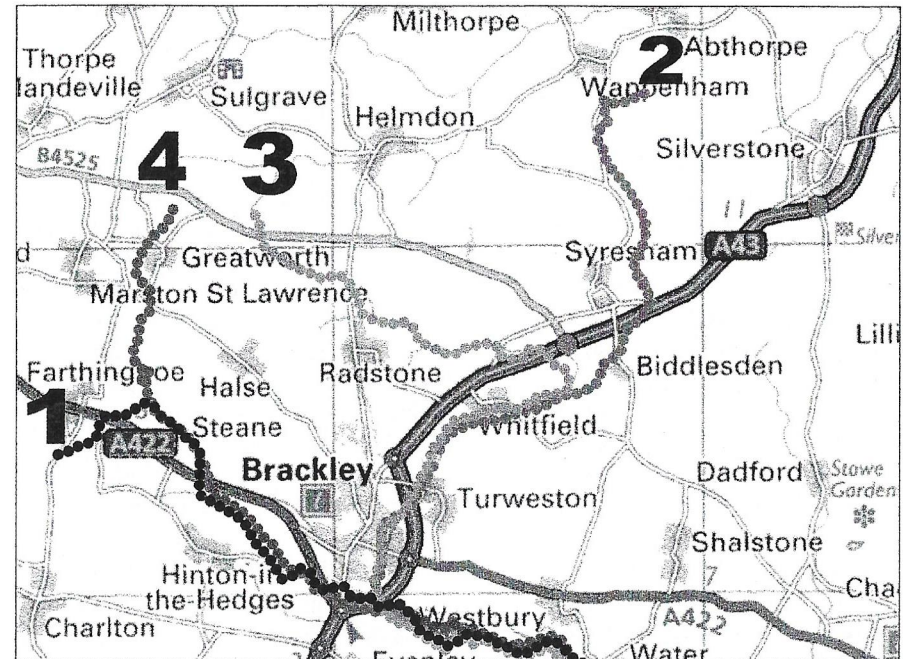
There are, however, alternatives. To the east of Brackley what seems to be the main branch of the Ouse continues to the north and meanders in a north-easterly direction through Biddlesden, under the newly-constructed A43 dual-carriageway just east of Syresham, and then northwards close to Priesthaywood Farm. Just beyond the farm, easily reachable by a path, are three man-made lakes of which the third is the largest. There is one particular rivulet leading north east for ¾ mile, which the OS marks as an ultimate source and which I followed in wet weather in January 2004. This I call option no.2 (SP 638446) and is, I believe, a strong contender to be the prime source of the River Great Ouse.

However, just before Biddlesden there is another Ouse tributary flowing westwards rather than northwards; option no.3. This concludes close to Bungalow Farm between Greatworth and Helmdon, just off the B4525 and was commended by Julian and Frank Blake in their short notice 'A Source for the Ouse' in the August 2003 issue of the Buckingham Magazine. They were not actually able to walk to the source but believed it to be the highest source, close to the 160metre contour at SP 573426. Finally only a short distance away (about a half mile north-east of Greatworth itself) is option no.4 (SP 560427) which is yet another tributary flowing roughly southwards to join the same stream as option 1 about a mile west of Brackley.

The four options are shown on the adjacent map, with the main tributaries emphasised in black.

An investigation of the Ouse's source(s) is thus fraught with uncertainties and different criteria or assumptions. How should a river's source be determined? Is

A SOURCE FOR THE RIVER GREAT OUSE



An A4 colour copy of this diagram, plotted onto the Ordnance Survey (OS) map, is available from the editor for a fee which will include the OS copying charge © Rodney Shirley 2004

it the tributary farthest away from the sea? Is it the highest point from which water starts to flow into the river? Or does one decide the course of a river to its source by measuring or estimating the flow of water, with the greatest flow being regarded as the prime channel? The flow, of course, might alter at different times of the year.

These, and other local considerations, certainly seemed to have bothered earlier explorers of bigger rivers—the Mississippi, the Nile and the Amazon.

Thinking I could obtain a quick and decisive solution I wrote to the Chief Executive of the Ordnance Survey at Southampton. I received a courteous reply but regretfully saying that the Ordnance Survey is, yes, responsible for the topographical features of the country but does not maintain definitive information on the sources of rivers. They suggested I contact the Environment Agency, which I then did. After some delay, as my enquiry was passed from Head Office to a regional centre, they replied saying that "an initial search of our files has not provided a definitive answer... but we are trying to locate a report produced on this topic some years ago." I am glad to say that after not



A SOURCE FOR THE RIVER GREAT OUSE

too long this report emerged and they sent me a summary, with a map.

Four options, numbered 1-4 as above, were considered by a 'long-retired' member of staff - a Mr Sidaway. He came down firmly against the Revd C F Farrar, option 1, and thought options 2 and 3 might equally be the longest from the sea, superior to option 4. Overall he concluded that the largest watercourse (and possibly the longest as well) was the 'Main River' leading to Biddlesden and beyond. This was the course of the Ouse, which, he said, had been previously accepted by the Environment Agency and its predecessors back to the River Great Ouse Catchment Board.

I have to say that I was rather gratified that Sidaway concurred with the conclusion which I had reached through my own explorations and which appeared in the Buckingham Society's publication *Our River: The Great Ouse in Buckingham* in September 2003. Certainly, I think that the Revd C F Farrar (in spite of his poetic effusion) misled himself over option 1. And, my own judgements of the water flows (by actual inspection on the ground) point strongly to the upper Ouse source being option 2 rather than the lesser tributaries leading to options 3 and 4.

Finally, re-examining further OS maps, I am able to confirm that the Landranger sheet 152 prints 'River Great Ouse' rather faintly in blue between Brackley and Biddlesden—but thus leaving open the choice between options 2 and 3. However the larger-scale Pathfinder series (4 cm to 1 km, now discontinued) in its sheet 1023 for Towcester and Silverstone moves this appellation to between Biddlesden and Syresham beyond the junction of the tributary to Bungalow Farm (option 3). Thus the main upper course of the River Great Ouse is firmly designated as leading to its source at option no.2. The Explorer series, sheet 207 for Northampton and Newport Pagnell, which is also 4 cm to 1 km, follows suit.

I am sure that everything I have written is open to alternative interpretations and I would welcome, through the Editor, readers' comments. After a reasonable time I shall be writing to the Environment Agency and to the OS with the Society's overall conclusions.

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Articles are commissioned

by the editorial team:

Carolyn Cumming

Robert Cumming

Charlie Macdonald

Editor, design and production:

John Credland 8 Western Avenue

Buckingham MK18 1LE

01280 813641 email:

john@johncredland.go-plus.net.

Deadline for next issue: mid-June

The Buckingham Society



Activities

Open Meetings and Events, April — July 2004

Please check with local press

(or David Peevers dpeevers@aol.com) for any last minute alterations.

Wed 7th April 2.30 pm

Milton Keynes: the next 50 years

Wed 12th May 7.30 pm

Transport in Buckingham — are we being forgotten?

Wed 9th June 2.30 pm

Guided walk — Stowe Landscape Gardens.

NB National Trust entry charges will apply

Wed 7th July 2.30 pm

Talk and walk — *Buckingham Trivia*

Members' entry fee: afternoon meetings £1 (cup of tea included)
 evening meetings £2 (glass of wine included)

Executive Committee Meetings

All members of the Society are welcome to attend these meetings.

6.15 pm Villiers Hotel Tack Room unless otherwise announced

25th March

27th May

22nd July

Future dates

11th to 12th September: Heritage Open Days

25th November: Buckingham Society AGM

Special Interest Groups (SIGs)

Current SIGs include: *Events, Heartlands, Magazine, Planning, Transport, The River, The Old Churchyard.*

The groups meet as and when required to discuss a particular issue(s), or promote a course of action.

Do contact any committee member if you have a particular interest or expertise.

Buckingham Sandpit - Family Fun Day

Sunday 23rd May 10.00 a.m. — 1.00 p.m.

Contact Andrew Stimson at BTCV (01296 330033) for details



The Buckingham Society

News

Readers will be saddened to learn of the death of one of the Society's longest-serving members **Peter Conroy** who was featured along with some of his cartoons in a recent magazine. The Society sends its condolences to Peter's close but extended family.

Buckingham's Conservation Area IS to be reviewed. Having thought that Freya Burden, AVDC's Conservation Officer, was to resign, we now learn that she is to continue in the rôle. Furthermore, the imminent review of Buckingham's Conservation Area is back on the agenda. Please contact the **Planning Group** for information or relay your comments.

Changes at The Civic Trust

Nigel Burton, Director of Development & Services from Waitrose, has been appointed Deputy Chairman of the Civic Trust. His role will be to provide strategic guidance and help develop and strengthen relationships with Local Authorities, Government and the private sector. A personal comment from Nigel Burton, *"I have been involved with the Trust's work for several years and I am keen to harness the skills and knowledge of the Civic Societies to create more liveable, more sustainable town centres throughout the country"*. Following the departure of the Chief Executive, day to day management will be the responsibility of a Senior Staff Board. Saskia Hallam continues in her role as manager of the Civic Societies.

The Trust also has a new address:

Winchester House, 259-269 Old Marylebone Road, London NW1 5RA.

Bollards. You will have noticed that Buckingham's most infamous bollard – the one that fails to protect in Bridge St. – suffered, probably as a result of excessive seasonal celebration before Christmas and still leans like a drunk leering at passers by. It must concern all that when such damage occurs, necessary repairs (and/or maintenance) is not done for long periods. The Buckingham Partnership is to look at this issue in 2004.



The Buckingham Society

The Capels - Model Farmers

Margaret and George Capel have written a long letter that corrects one of the articles in the last magazine about *Educating Buckingham in 1938* and provides much interesting detail on the Capel family.

Margaret Capel points out that the Capel family did not farm pre-WWII, as they do today, in Thornborough. "The original Capel Farm, Middle Shelspit, was a County Council smallholding, taken by George's grandfather and his two ex-service sons after the 1914-18 War. The younger son, Richard, later farmed on his own and George's father became a Milk Recorder."

Margaret (who came from Derbyshire) and George started their farm in Thornborough after George's WWII Service. At much personal expense (partly funded through Margaret's teaching career) they have assembled 30 acres at "High Green". Sadly, Margaret Capel, surrounded by farmers who struggle to make ends meet in the world of 2004, wonders whether it was worthwhile. George Capel recalls that the Young Farmers' Club at RLS started as a Calf Club in 1924 and he and Margaret remember a 50th anniversary celebration at Tom Lines' Farm in Hillesden in 1974 that they both attended, together with at least 8 of the club's original members! George Capel feels that the magazine piece exaggerated the role of agriculture within RLS in 1938. Perhaps, the school was stratified: the top layer went forward to Teacher-Training Colleges, the next tier moved into local government, with fee-payers' children returning to their roots, to family businesses: shop-keeping or farming. How different were the expectations of youngsters from yesteryear from the "world is my oyster" aspirations of today's teenagers! No doubt, in 2070 it will seem quaint that one Earth circumscribes our children's ambitions.

The Capels have sharply-etched memories of RLS and North Bucks in the post WWII days and they have offered to share their recollections with us. We wish them well and hope the ability to look forward with buoyant anticipation will return to them and all farmers in our area.

EG



The Buckingham Society
Registered as a charity No. 268503

We are pleased to receive support from these corporate members:

CASTLE COURT PROPERTIES LTD (John Tearle)

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.

AERODEX-FLOYD (M.D. Les Floyd)

A factory unit on our Tingewick Industrial Park, it has submitted plans for a new factory and extension to the riverside walk on land between that Industrial Park and the river Great Ouse. Those plans have been rejected
Another corporate member wishes to remain anonymous.

Open Meetings and Events

A new programme for 2004. Meetings to discuss and look at specific topics will be held on the first, or second, Wednesdays of the month.

At Buckingham Community Centre unless otherwise announced.

Please check local press for details and any changes to published programme.

