

The Buckingham Society



Issue 2004/2 July

Price 60p



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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...

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President: Stanley Meadows 01280 813133

Minutes Secretary: Gill Jones 01280 815153

Membership Secretary: Geoff Shaw 01280 823363

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The Buckingham Society

Charter Fair Exhibition



Denis Tunks, Buckingham's fairground historian, assisted by John Credland, photographer, are currently assembling material for an exhibition for the Old Gaol Museum (OGM) which will be open from September to December 2004 to celebrate the 450th anniversary of the Charter of 1554 (illustrated above), which legitimised what have become our annual fun fairs.

The Charter given to the Town of Buckingham by Mary Tudor in 1554, legally established the town as a borough with a mayor and twelve burgesses. It also set out the dates of the fairs and markets.

Julian Hunt in his *Buckingham, a Pictorial History* has it thus:

In 1554, the newly-crowned Mary Tudor granted a charter of incorporation to Buckingham... The Corporation was to receive the tolls of a Tuesday market and two annual fairs...

Bell's Gazetteer of 1831:

... The market and fairs are well-attended. Saturday is market day; fairs for cattle and sheep are held the 12th, and last Monday in January, March 7th, second Monday in April, May 6th, Whit-Thursdays, July 10th, September 1st, October 2nd, Old Michaelmas-day, November 8th, and December 13th.

The Charter Fairs now come to Buckingham on the first and second Saturdays after October the 11th, never on the 11th.

The Charter itself is held securely elsewhere but there is a facsimile in the

Our cover picture is *The Tudor* by John Credland, LBIPP In our imagination, it depicts the Charter Fair in earlier times

This building opened as an ale house called *The Dog* in 1672. Sometime later it moved up-market by changing from the rather ordinary *Dog* to the much grander *Talbot*, a large white hunting dog, now extinct, which featured on the coat-of-arms of Earl Temple of Stowe.

The *Talbot* closed in 1751, and nothing is known of it until comparatively recently when it re-opened as a restaurant called *The Old Market House*. Since then it has once again become a public house known as *The Tudor* and now *The Tudor*.

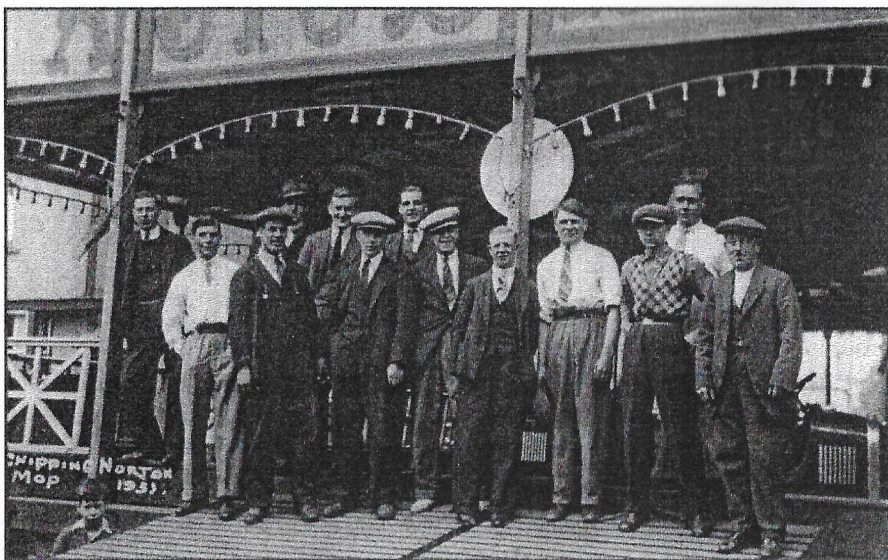
Until 1929 it was part of a terrace, flanked to the south by *The Kings Head*. This was demolished in that year to enable *Pod's Lane* to be widened into what is now *The Moreton Road*, so the owners of the *King's Head* simply moved across the road into their present location, leaving *The Tudor* in a much better and more prominent position.

In the cellar of this building is a preserved, but thankfully no longer used cock-fighting pit.

Angus Davidson



Charter Fair Exhibition



The Nichols family *Dodgems* at the Chipping Norton Mop Fair 1933, part of the Back End Run that includes two visits to Buckingham in October

Old Gaol Museum and a transcript of the charter is in a book in the display cabinet although not available to public scrutiny. Arrangements are being made to photograph the eleven pages of the book so that the transcript will be available to study within the Charter Fair Exhibition in the Old Gaol Museum from September 11th to December 4th 2004.

The reason for holding hiring and runaway fairs presumably diminished during the industrial revolution as workers moved from the land to work in factories in towns. The effect was less in towns like Buckingham than in cities but over time the use has changed to that of a fun fair. Which is where we come in.

The exhibition will focus on the fun fairs of recent years whilst referring back to some of the old traditions.

We 21st century townfolk see the Charter Fairs from our own viewpoint. The exhibition will open windows to other viewpoints – that of the travelling showmen, their lives and families: the faces we see behind the stalls and on the rides. Names like Buckland, Nichols, Rawlins, Forest and Farr.

We will illustrate the development of the *Back End Run* which links Buckingham with a complex series of moves for the travelling showmen from Thame and Stow-on-the-Wold through Chipping Norton, Brackley and Banbury and on to Northampton before parking up for the winter: a route as full of tradition and



Old Gaol Museum

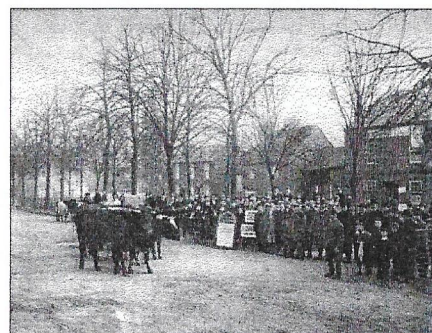
meaning for the modern hydraulic ride operator as it was for horse traders and pedlars in the 16th century.

As we trawl for information we find that there appears to be very little early photography of what has surely always been a picturesque and dramatic event. We have put out a local appeal through the OGM Newsletter and posters and have drawn a blank. The Bucks County Museum has only one picture from 1906 and that of a sheep fair. The books on Buckingham yield very little, so if you have a family snap from the fifties or earlier, taken during the Charter Fair, then, please, can we borrow it, copy it and, perhaps, use it in the exhibition?

John & Denis



Mrs Leonard Buckland in the late 1940s in the Bath Lane Yard with swing boats



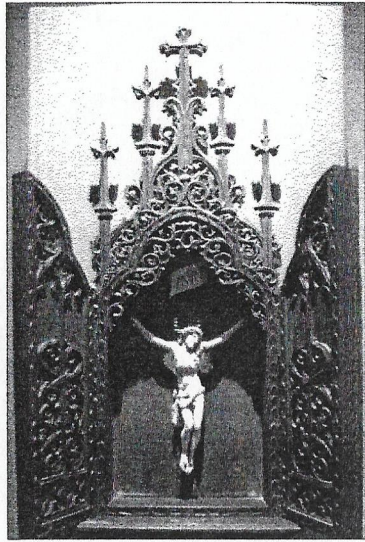
Osbourne's Cattle Auction of 1906 held in the Cattle Pens area within the High Street, Buckingham, now the site of *The Beach* and the Saturday Flea Market. The Charter Fair showmen have to cope with today's recently installed traffic bollards and uplighters and work the erection of their *hooplas* and *side-joints* around these new conditions.

Friday 10th September will see the preview evening to start off the exhibition, which will be open to the public during normal Old Gaol Museum opening times within the period: Saturday 11th September 2004 to Saturday 4th December 2004 and promises to be an interesting eye-opener.

The Friday evening event (7pm to 9pm by invitation only because of the space limitations) will include a dramatic presentation by Ed Grimsdale and his team and will be linked to the Heritage Open Days (HODS) workshops over the weekend.



Katharine of Aragon 1485 – 1536



Catherine's Cross in the Old Gaol

Katharine (the spelling is variable as it is an ancient English custom to play fast and loose with foreign names) was undoubtedly a heroine to the people of Buckingham. Katharine married into our royal family twice. In 1501, she wedded the 15 year old Prince Arthur who would have succeeded his father (King Henry VII) to England's throne, but for his own premature death of TB, 'flu, or testicular cancer a few months later; an event that opened the way for his younger brother to

become King Henry VIII and Katharine's second husband in 1509. Henry's marriage to her was an alliance made in papal heaven: the Pope's "Defender of the Faith" marrying a daughter of the progenitors of the Holy Inquisition! However, whether Katharine did or did not consummate the marriage with young Arthur was to be critical to her second marriage.

Katharine's greatest moment is associated with Buckingham. While Henry was playing away, fighting in France, King James IV of Scotland nipped over the border to usurp him. Fortunately, Queen Katharine was equal to the task and organized the English force that defeated James at Flodden Field. Queen Katharine was in Buckingham on the day of the English victory with her reserve army of up to 40 000 troops camped nearby. She was staying with Edward Fowler at one of his family's homes: Castle House or the ancient dwelling on Market Hill razed in the 1960's to make way for the NatWest Bank. The Queen's household of about 100 combined with the great force in our fields must have made a considerable impact on the 1000

Humble et Loyale



citizens of Buckingham town. It was whilst at Buckingham in September 1513 that Katharine, the Spanish Regent tending the English throne, rode out and addressed her troops in accented English - her fourth language after Spanish, Latin and French. The Flodden Field disaster left Scottish bodies piled high across the killing fields. It took 48 hours to find King James's remains amongst the former cream of Scotland; then a messenger brought his torn tunic to Buckingham. Queen Katharine immediately left Buckingham leaving her ivory and wood crucifix in town as a thank you gift- it is still here in the Old Gaol Museum. She traveled east to the shrine at Walsingham via Woburn Abbey on victorious pilgrimage to thank God for England's salvation. Locals here in Buckingham would have known of and reveled in the critical part that Katharine played in the rout, although with typical generosity, she publicly ascribed the success to her husband's perspicacity, but not before telling him by letter that she had achieved more at home than he could hope to equal in France.

Buckingham's first female playwright, Mary Pix, wrote a Tragedy "Queen Catharine, or the Ruins of Love" that was performed and published in London during 1698. Pix's Queen Catharine was Katherine of Valois who, again, married two of our Royals: King Henry V and, as his dowager Queen, Owain Tudor. Since at much the same time John of Gaunt (King of Castile) had a wife called Katherine Swynford and their daughter Katharine of Lancaster married Henry III of Castile (incidentally, Katharine of Aragon was christened Catalina as a tribute to this earlier Queen Katharine), there was a plenitude of Catherines to conflate with Katharine of Aragon, mother of Queen Mary in Buckingham. St Catherine, she of Catherine-Wheel fame, was a popular figure of dedication in mediaeval North Bucks. The first Chapel in Gawcott village was named after her, as was a Chapel in the north transept of Buckingham's Old Church that stood in the old churchyard. It is possible that Chapel was dedicated twenty years after its creation as a tribute to Queen Katharine's



Katharine of Aragon 1485 – 1536

victorious visit to Buckingham. Who knows - she may have prayed for that victory in our church, or used it to address her army's commanders?

Whilst Katharine was busy with childbearing for her husband that had a singular semi-successful outcome she was very influential on Henry whom she could outwit in argument. As the hands of her biological clock ground to a halt without prior interruption by the birth of a sound male heir, Henry's hands and mind started to wander towards other women to turn his seeds into sons. Eventually, he grasped Anne Boleyn, but she proved hard to get, as she demanded proper status through a marriage certificate. Henry looked for a "quickie" annulment, but proving his "incestuous" grounds to the reluctant Pope - that Katharine had not been a virgin when Henry had married her some 20 years earlier was fraught as Katharine keenly insisted that her earlier marriage had not been consummated and that Courtiers had made a better job of preparing the royal marriage bed than they had of

their subsequent consummation checks. The end of that story is well known and still haunts the Church of England, today. What it did was to make Katharine a peripatetic figure around our part of the midlands (for a time she was forced to live at Ampthill, SSW of Bedford) for the final six years of her life. Eventually, she died of natural causes at Kimbolton on the far side of Bedford on the 7th January 1536. Henry VIII ordered that her body be interned at Peterborough Abbey (now Cathedral) where it rests to this day, an object of veneration and pilgrimage. It makes a day-trip to Peterborough Cathedral particularly worthwhile for Buckingham people. You will find the tomb behind an iron grille in the north presbytery aisle bedecked with the Royal Arms of Henry VIII, plus those of Aragon, Castile and Leon, and adorned with Katharine's personal emblem: the pomegranate. The tomb, once the stark, bare resting place of a rejected, former wife, now glories in a beautifully wrought golden inscription that was carved by Alec Peever in 1986:

KATHARINE QUEEN OF
ENGLAND

Humble et Loyale



Katharine was humble and she befriended the poor, treating them with respect and personal generosity. She interceded on behalf of convicted villains after the Evil Day Riots of 1517 to win them her King's clemency. She was progressive: helping to found the Royal College of Physicians, Christ Church College at the University of Oxford and some of England's first girls' schools. Katharine improved the English diet by introducing Dutch apple trees and Mediterranean salad crops. The stories that Katharine brought lace-makers from her native Spain to establish the copycat Midlands lace-making industry that flourished from Buckingham north-westwards until 1900 and that her daughter, Queen Mary, created our local straw-plaited hat industry are ill-founded since both activities are now thought to have started when the two great ladies were long dead.

Buckingham remembers Katharine in the women's quarter of Page Hill that is etched by Catherine Court and Nightingale Place. Compare the forms Buckingham Town Council

allotted to those it memorialized in the 1970's: KING Charles Close, Catherine (no Queen) Court (nice conceit), Nightingale (no forename) Place. Later, things became friendlier: Mary McManus Drive, and Chris Nicholls (no apostrophe) Walk. It is right to celebrate the popular Queen Katharine in the loyal borough of Buckingham just as Queen Mary, her daughter, thanked Buckingham by awarding the town's first Royal Charter exactly forty years after her mother's memorable visit. Katharine's case is strengthened further by testimony from her final distinguished visitor, Chapuys, Ambassador from King Charles V of Spain, who wrote that she was:

‘The most virtuous
woman I have ever
known and the
highest hearted.’

Ed Grimsdale

informed by DGO and BE 2004



Other Buckinghamams

Continuing this occasional series, Robert Cumming looks at Buckingham Virginia, introduces a personal hero Thomas Jefferson, and praises the Buckingham Hotel in New York.

Virginia is the twelfth most populous state in the USA with a population of just over 7 million (Scotland and Denmark are 5 million each). Situated on the eastern seaboard, just south of Washington DC, it was named after Queen Elizabeth I (the Virgin Queen) and Sir Walter Raleigh may have suggested the name around 1584. The state flag depicts the Goddess Virtue, who holds a sword and spear, standing on a prostrate figure whose crown has fallen off. Virtue symbolises Virginia, and the prostrate figure symbolises a tyrant, namely Britain. Eight presidents were born in Virginia notably George Washington, Thomas Jefferson and Woodrow Wilson.

Buckingham County lies at the heart of central Virginia.

Historically, as the number of early colonists grew, they continued to spread out their settlements, creating shires (later called counties) through which they governed the colony and held court. Their purpose was to make the administration of justice easily accessible to the colonists and to bring the courts close to the people. Between 1750 and 1770, 26 new counties were formed in Virginia. Buckingham County was formed in 1761 from Albemarle County. They say it was named either after the English County or the Duke of Buckingham, but the only known Duke in 1761 was the long dead friend of the Catholic and beheaded Charles I (the second Dukedom of Buckingham was not created until 1824). It seems unlikely that the colonists would have wanted to honour the first Duke of Buckingham, so we can presume, I think, that Buckingham Virginia is named after our County and Town. Today the whole county has a population of approx 15,000 and covers 500 square miles, mostly woodland. The "county seat" is a small town or village called Buckingham.

Monticello and Thomas Jefferson

There do not seem to be too many similarities between present day Buckingham Virginia, USA, and present day Buckingham, UK. Yet there is an intriguing parallel. Both Buckinghamams are in close proximity to two of the great country houses and gardens of the 18th century, Monticello and Stowe. One might well say that Monticello is to Virginia and the USA what Stowe is to Bucks and the UK.

Buckingham, Va



Monticello is some 50 miles north of Buckingham, Virginia, (a short distance by American standards). This is the house and estate that was created by Thomas Jefferson (1743-1826). Jefferson is one of the great American heroes, second only to George Washington. He was a true son of the Enlightenment, a handsome gangling giant of a man (6'2" tall), energetic, well organised, and with a range of knowledge and curiosity unknown in today's world of specialisations. He spoke and read several languages. His learning embraced ancient and modern literature, the arts, science, mathematics, music, and agriculture, but he is first and foremost remembered for his political achievements. It was Jefferson who wrote the Declaration of Independence and voiced the aspirations of the colonists with more persuasion than anyone else. In due course he became the third President of the United States, from 1800 to 1809. Jefferson never sought enmity with Great Britain, but he subscribed to certain fundamental principles of liberty, which he believed should be fought for and protected, and which are enshrined in the opening words of the Declaration of Independence: "We hold these truths to be self evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights – that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness...."

Jefferson was born in Albemarle County, not far from Buckingham Virginia, and several of his relations lived in Buckingham county. In the next issue I shall look at the similarities between Stowe and Monticello,

The Buckingham Hotel, New York

Recently Carolyn and I visited New York and discovered the Buckingham Hotel. It is an old established hotel, 2 minutes walk from Central Park, opposite Carnegie Hall which is New York's equivalent to the Albert Hall. Many of the performers stay at the Buckingham Hotel. Paderewski (1860-1941) the great Polish patriot who was a celebrated pianist and composer, and became Poland's first Prime Minister, spent his last years there. The hotel consists of studios and apartments equipped with kitchenettes – there is no restaurant. It is a real hotel run by real people, and a nostalgic slice of New York. When the friendly young receptionist discovered that we were from Buckingham, UK, he wanted to know all about our Town, and was so pleased with what we told him that he gave us an upgrade. So we got a complete apartment with a kitchen, sitting room and bedroom (it could have slept 4), in the heart of New York, for less than the price of a single room in central London. Not bad. A bargain.

And we promised to pass on the word to all our friends in Buckingham.



Feedback

Florence

I have just read your article and I would like to bring to fill you in concerning the reason why the sanitation at Scutari hospital improved so much.

Florence arrived at Scutari on 5th November 1854 to find a hospital full of wounded and dying. She set to with disinfectant and brushes; however the death rate in December was 576 per 1000 patients. The vast majority died from intestinal ulceration and dysentery for which there was no known cure. She ensured all doors and windows were kept closed and so ensured all bugs and diseases were kept inside. This, of course, allowed disease to spread easily. It was Lord Palmerston who saved the day by sending 2 doctors (Sutherland and Gavin) and a sanitary engineer Rawlinson to sort things out. They were protégés of Edwin Chadwick who had solved the problem of cholera in London and the appalling stench in the Thames (and in the House). These men arranged for the drains to be cleaned, windows and doors to be opened and encouraged those who could to go into the fresh air. The outcome of all this work was that deaths fell to 17 per 1000. At first Florence did not accept that it was the sanitation and the cleaning of the drains, which was the prime source of the improvement; but she did eventually. After she had returned to England on 6th August 1856 she collapsed on 20th August she really took it all in. Mortified by her ignorance of basic hygiene she promptly retired to Malvern for the next 10 years (There are very few letters from that period).

In 1859 she wrote "Notes on Nursing" where she advocated fresh air, light, warmth, cleanliness, quiet and proper selection of diet. Florence had a private income of £500 per year; quite a handy sum in those days and from this money she bought the disinfectant, soap and fresh food (one of her oranges can be seen in the cabinet at Claydon). I suggest you read "Avenging Angel" by Hugh Small - it is quite an eye-opener. This book can be obtained from our library.

Michael Swinhoe-Phelan

Mary MacManus

I was very interested to read the article by Ed Grimsdale in the last edition of The Buckingham Society's magazine. However, I would have to say that it is not actually completely accurate.

Mary MacManus was not a nurse in Buckingham; she was the District Nurse in Tingewick, fondly known as the 'Terror of Tingewick'. She got promotion to the position of Health Visitor and it is then that she covered the Buckingham area.

During her time as a Health Visitor she was instrumental in the foundation of the Buckingham Play Group and the Buckingham Baby Sitting Circle. She, herself, did not get involved in the organisation but put like-minded mothers in touch and sowed the seeds of ideas. A group of then young mums from those early years of the Playgroup, which I think started in 1968, are still in touch. It was from the playgroup that the Baby Sitting Circle emerged.

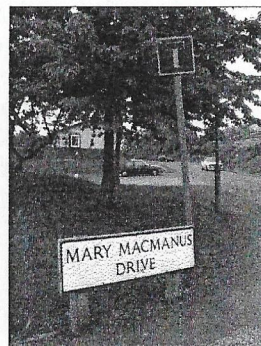
On her retirement Mary stood for the Town Council and was successful at the first attempt. Her connections with so many young mums did, indeed, help her to band them together to protest about the lack of a by-pass for Buckingham. Again, she was clever enough to sow seeds, which others then developed, always with her expert support in the background. Thus came the foundation of the Buckingham Action Group. Indeed, I would suggest that it was Mary's influence and the influence of those young mums who were the forerunners of the Buckingham Society. The Buckingham Action Group seemed to turn into the Buckingham Society, obviously with a much wider remit. I am sometimes amused about things that the Society tries to do, thinking, 'been there - done that!'

Mary MacManus was, indeed, a remarkable and very much undervalued woman to whom Buckingham owes a debt of gratitude.

How do I know all this? Well, as you will have guessed, I was one of those young mums and Mary MacManus lived with us when she first retired. She was still living with us when she became a councillor. I remember that night clearly; it was the only time I ever remember Mary drinking champagne!

With very best wishes.

Kay M Bradley



Feedback

Ouse source

For much of its course from Cosgrove to a point between Billesden and Syresham the river is the boundary between Buckinghamshire and Northamptonshire.

After leaving the river near Billesden the county boundary proceeds in an easterly direction around a large area of woodland. Just south of the FF in Luffield Abbey CP. [Pathfinder sheet 1023] the boundary joins a stream which now seem to begin at the side of the Stowe-Silverstone road. Where did it go before the aerodrome was built?

The county boundary follows the stream for about 1Km in a westerly direction and then changes to an easterly direction, forming an arrowhead into the woodland. From the arrowhead the stream passes through the wood and crosses the Brackley to Towcester road close to Green Man Farm, after a further 1.5 Km it joins the river, just north of Kings Hill Bridge.

I believe this stream led to the source of the river Great Ouse, now lost due to the construction of the aerodrome. Is not the Great Ouse the second longest river in England—or even the longest?

John 21B Bourton Road MK18 1BG 815 043

Editor's note:
Rodney Shirley's article on the Source of the River Great Ouse in the March issue provoked this feedback and another, longer article for which there is no room. Those students of the subject who wish to do so may request a copy of Rodney's original, unabridged version, an A4 colour copy of Rodney's map and the text of the above response with a bonus track of the 4-page research from Frank Blake. Ring 01280 813641 and it's yours.

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Deadline for next issue: MID-NOV

SIG reports



Transport and Traffic

At an open meeting in May the Transport SIG gave members a unique opportunity to debate key transport issues with a panel of transport decision makers. Town mayor, Robin Stuchbury joined representatives from AVDC, Bucks CC, Milton Keynes & North Bucks Chamber of Commerce and Oxon & Bucks Rail Action. Subjects covered included the need to improve bus services and provide better direct connections to rail stations. The possible re-siting of the ill-placed pedestrian crossing at the 'Tesco' roundabout was discussed at length as were the pros and cons of one way streets in the town.

David Peeters

Tape recorder?

The minutes of a Buck Soc meeting June 1986 have recently turned up and record the decision to purchase a tape recorder for interviewing 'older Buckingham residents'. Does anyone know if this recorder is still about? Was it used? Do we have the fund of stories that it was intended to record?

RSVP

01280 813641



SIG reports

Planning

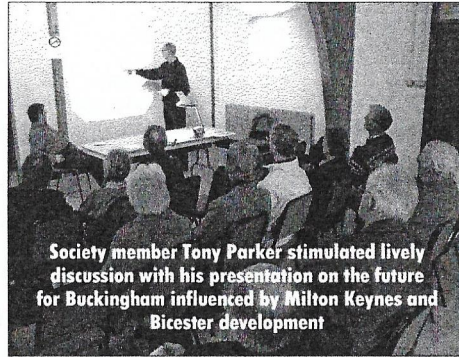
The Planning Group of the Buckingham Society monitors all planning applications made to Aylesbury Vale District Council within the parish of Buckingham, commenting where appropriate. Our comments are based on planning criteria, with copies to Buckingham Town Council.

We have a particular interest in the conservation area, its listed buildings, history and individuality of our town, so we are pleased to help AVDC's Conservation Area Officer in her review of Buckingham. We already felt the boundaries needed changing, parts of Chandos Rd., Mitre St. and Bath Lane are worth including. Inclusion offers some protection for our built historical environment and its setting within the townscape.

Hélène Hill



Bath Lane 2004



Society member Tony Parker stimulated lively discussion with his presentation on the future for Buckingham influenced by Milton Keynes and Bicester development

New events are great success

By David Peevers, Events Secretary

The Society has held five events so far this year. Subjects have included planning, transport and the river with distinguished guest speakers drawn from AVDC, The Environment Agency, Bucks CC and the Buckingham Town Council as well as rail action and local business groups.

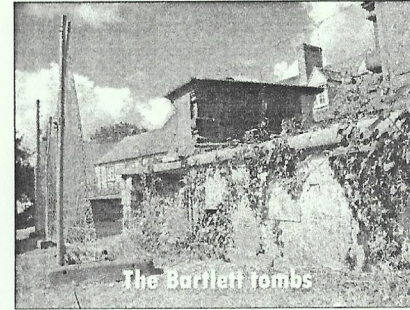
The event programme was initiated to give members the opportunity to get more involved and derive greater benefit from the Society. It is therefore very encouraging that attendance has been good and meetings have stimulated lively discussion between members and speakers. These events are proving a great way for members' views to be heard by those agencies and groups whose decisions influence our town. Further events are planned for September and October.

David Peevers



SIG reports

The Old Churchyard



The Bartlett tombs

Last year Tom Ridgway, myself and neighbours decided to take the Churchyard in hand as it was becoming overgrown. AVDC agreed to clear debris and we had workdays in May, June and October.

This year we aim to keep the ivy and elder at bay and try to obtain funding to repair the Bartlett tombs allowing the fencing to be removed. Tom has moved but I have taken up the reins and obtained contributions from the Bartlett family. We have applied to the Buckingham & Gawcott Trust for help and await their decision.

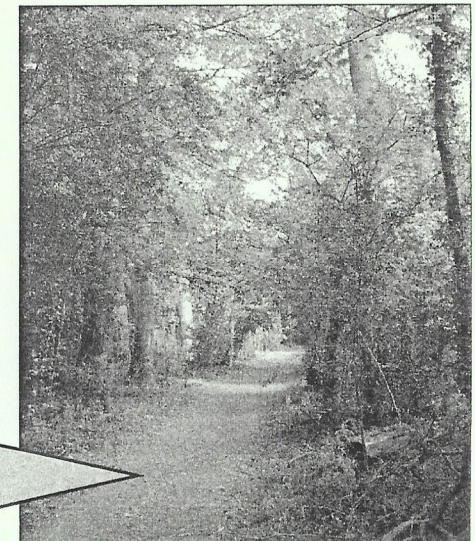
Gill Jones

Green Spaces

The two main areas of concern are the Heartlands and Maids Moreton Avenue.

AVDC lawyers are ready to transfer ownership of the Heartlands from David Wilson Homes but some problems must first be remedied. Over-compacted and rutted ground will not support grass growth. Provision will be made for replacement of trees at appropriate time. The bridge from the car park is for adoption by the County Council but first needs major and lasting refurbishment.

Contractors have caused damage in Maids Moreton Avenue which needs urgent repair. There are indications of possible steps to curtail extensive abuse of the attractive woodland area.



Maids Moreton Avenue



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 continuing 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.