HS2 Committee visits

Shortly after the election, members of the HS2 select committee paid two visits to the AONB - firstly from Wendover Dean and Kings Ash northward, then on the second visit, from the Chalfonts northward to Potter Row. There were large crowds at every stop, supporting forceful presentations on the need for additional mitigation measures in the area.

Several weeks later, a third visit was arranged for three newly appointed members of the committee. This attempted to cover the route from Calvert to Amersham in just over half a day, and inevitably ended up far behind schedule. Several planned stops were abandoned, leaving large groups of petitioners standing aimlessly in the drizzle.

Committee Hearings

The committee initially requested presentations from the main promoters of the various tunnel proposals, presumably so that they could avoid hearing a large number of individual petitions, if the tunnel was approved.

Presentations from Chiltern District Council, The Chilterns Conservation Board, Chiltern Ridges Action Group and others were heard during the two weeks just before the parliamentary recess. The arguments revolved around whether the planned scheme was compatible with the statutory protection given to the AONB, what monetary value could be ascribed to preserving the character of the AONB, together with some detailed technical discussion of the cost and time required to implement various tunnelling options.

Continued on page 8
HELLO and welcome to the Autumn 2015 edition of Focus.

I can’t believe we are into the second half of the year already, where has the time gone?

If you are like me, you will be very sad to see summer go for another year, but do not worry because the Chesham Society has plenty going on this autumn to take your mind off it.

There is more information on our upcoming events in this edition of Focus, including our popular annual Panel Meeting, another tour of the River Chess due to how popular the last one was as well as some great talks by some very interesting people.

The Society is also going to be very busy campaigning against HS2, monitoring planning applications and being actively involved in the next stage of Chiltern District Council’s New Local Plan Consultation, where we will be pushing to achieve our eight Visions, laid out in the last edition of Focus.

I hope you enjoy this edition of Focus and you all have a lovely Autumn in our beautiful town.

Camilla Goodman

It appears that autumn is with us as I look out the window on a bleak Bank Holiday morning. The summer has flashed by and been busy for our Society on four counts: welcoming two members to the committee, finalising the speakers programme for the autumn, HS2 petitioning and preparing for the next stage of the new Local Plan Consultation.

Profiles are included in this issue of John Greaves who has agreed to be Secretary, which is a great relief to your Chairman, and Ruth Juett who is joining Roger Smith and myself in Planning. We still need somebody to manage the membership database since Brian Pratt is retiring after many years – please contact me if you have a computer and a few hours a month to spare.

Jim Conboy said it was HS2 crunch time in the last issue and this is indeed the case in September. Petitioning to the Select Committee is scheduled later in the month so contact Jim if you submitted a petition. Our Society and Chesham Town Council will be appearing before the Committee. It is encouraging that HS2 Ltd has agreed to further extension of the tunnel – but there is still 10km above ground, including the viaducts at Wendover Dean & Smalldean. However the disruption of transport and business during and after construction will still have a profound effect on Chesham residents so please support our efforts.

The New Local Plan Consultation will be our major activity and the Society’s Vision was included in the last issue of Focus. Since then the government has dictated that the process be speeded up and the evidence required reduced. Coupled with this is a possible increase in housing requirements and the assumption that this will require building on the green belt. A “Call for [building] Sites” was issued with the Initial Plan consultation. Developers have submitted a large number of sites for development, most on the Green Belt. Chiltern District Council’s cabinet meets on October 20 to agree a revised planning timetable, which undoubtedly will reduce the time for consultation, the next phase being “Issues and Options” for future development. Chesham will be under great pressure for expansion, especially on its surrounding Green Belt. A Core Strategy Working Party, comprising Town Councillors and the Chesham Society has been set-up and already met with Chiltern District Council’s Planning Policy Officer in August. We are faced with a substantial work load during the autumn.

Finally the Committee is represented on the newly formed Upper Chess Low Flow Investigation Group, which holding a series a series of workshops to address this major issue, which has been highlighted by the Environment Agency. At the same time we are involved with the Drainage Strategy for the town.

Tony Molesworth
Chairman
Henry Wyldbore Rumsey was born in Chesham in 1809 and after a private education at Gawcott, near Buckingham, he was apprenticed to Dr John Attenborough at Nottingham.

After four years there, he moved to London and became a pupil of Ceasar Hawkins at St. George's Hospital, where his father had also been a student. He qualified in 1831 and returned to Chesham to assist in the family practice, which had been formed in 1751 by his grandfather who had come to the area from Crickhowell, in Brecon. He lived at 16 High Street in a house next to The George and Dragon - then The George Hotel. By special arrangement when this house was renovated for Henry, a hole was cut in the wall so that a bedroom of the house was included among those of the hotel. In return for this Henry had use of a stall in the stables at the rear of the hotel and a room to keep his trap.

The entrance hallway to the house still bears an engraved wall plaque which Henry's father had commissioned for his son.

Henry left Chesham again in 1838 to become surgeon to The Infirmary at Gloucester and General Practitioner in Cheltenham.

On leaving he sold his house to Arthur Liberty, father of Sir Arthur Liberty who subsequently turned it into a shop and so initiated the famous business which still operates in Regent Street, London.

Henry's interest in public health began soon after he was qualified, but his first big moment came when, at only 29 years of age, he gave evidence before the Poor Law Committee of the House of Commons. In 1844, he and two of his cousins Dr James Rumsey of Amersham, and Dr Nathaniel Rumsey, of Beaconsfield, were elected to the Fellowship of the Royal College of Surgeons. From 1835, for nearly 40 years, papers and books appeared in a steady flow, the best known of these being “Essays In State Medicine” published in 1856. In 1863 the Queen nominated him a member of the General Medical Council, on which he served for several years. In 1867 he received the degree of M.D. of Dublin (Honoris Causa), and in 1874 was elected Fellow of The Royal Society. In recognition of his 40 years of public work, he was granted a Civil Pension in 1876, but he died within a few months.

Henry Wyldbore Rumsey was said to have been 100 years ahead of his time in his plans and ideals. He realised that public health was a speciality of medicine and he introduced the term “State Medicine.” He firmly believed that a State Medical Service would be the ideal but it would need to evolve and grow gradually and that to hurry change would not work. Politicians – please note!

By Keith Fletcher
Planning Watch

Solar House Amersham Road
(roundabout with junction of Moor Road)

Approval was given in early August for Neptune Furniture to construct a showroom on this site. There are various conditions including use only as a showroom, opening at specific times after peak hour and a slate roof on all the building. It is comforting that the Chesham Society's support was noted in the Case Officer's report. We objected to the KFC application.

This is a satisfactory outcome with an high class business opening a well-designed building on this highly visible site on this entry to Chesham.

Modern two story house on old public convenience site
Berkhampstead Road

Many of you heard Hugo Hardy, the architect, speak to the Chesham Society. Planning permission has been refused twice and it has gone to appeal to the Planning Inspectorate. The Chesham Society supported the planning application and also made a submission to the Inspector. Chiltern District Council opposes the development with issues about design, over-development of the site and lack of parking. It has just been announced that the Inspector will make a site visit at noon on Monday 7 September.

Lord’s Mill
Change of use to residential with refurbishment of two historic cottages and building of four new residences

An Application was submitted in early May to redevelop this important site on a main entry to Chesham. It has been an eyesore for many years and the Chesham Society has frequently been approached to seek improvement. We support the current application which includes sympathetic development of the site and some restoration of the old mill, including the mill wheel adjacent to the river. However the current proposal is opposed by the Environment Agency, Chesham Town Council, and the River Chess Association. Objections include building near the River Chess (chalk stream), flood risk, site access and parking. Whilst there may be a need to modify the planning application, it will be a great pity if development of this non-viable industrial site is not permitted, especially since it has been occupied for many centuries. The Chesham Society is arranging a meeting with the Architect.

By Tony Molesworth
Chiltern Chamber exists primarily to listen, raise and deal with the concerns of our members. It also seeks to support businesses in meeting today's challenges and those of the future. Our membership base and local businesses will be further supported by developing strategic objectives aiming to improve economic development. We also recognise that economic development and business investment cannot progress in isolation and therefore our strategy is holistic and inclusive of a variety of areas such as community and the environment.

**Our mission**
To serve as the Voice of Business committed to the enhancement of economic prosperity and quality of life in Chesham and Surrounds.

**Key objectives**
The Chamber has three key strategic objectives and a number of closely interlinked objectives:

**Supporting our membership base**
The Chamber would not exist without its members and therefore aims to enhance the members' success. We help members navigate and expand their businesses in a challenging marketplace. We do this by providing a suite of useful services and benefits for members.

**Supporting the local business community**
The local business community is supported by identifying and developing strategies which will facilitate the growth of existing and future regional business and trade. We aim to provide a liaison and communication service to businesses, encourage major sustainable development of business and investment, and support business growth. We do this by identifying and undertaking tactical programmes for the benefit of business.

**Economic development**
We aim to promote the standard of living and economic health of Chesham and Amersham by championing positive quantitative and qualitative changes in the local economy. This may include the development of human capital, infrastructure, regional competitiveness, environmental sustainability, social inclusion, health, safety, literacy, and other initiatives. We recognise that economic development is a policy intervention endeavour with aims of economic and social well-being of people and will therefore seek to work closely with local councils and UK authorities towards that end. Economic growth will be objective and a process of economic development. A longer term aspect of the economic development strategy will be to facilitate inward investment both from outside the region as well as overseas.

**Other News**
We are currently working extremely hard on the Small business Saturday which takes place on Saturday 5 December. We would like ALL local businesses to take part and spread the word. Please look at the NEWS section of our website www.chilternchamber.org

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**Change to Constitution of the Chesham Society**

A Special General Meeting (SGM) will be held on Wednesday, November 18 after the Members’ Meeting. This is required to vote on a clause covering the procedure to elect a President of the Society. The Constitution currently does not mention the President and this forced postponement of a vote at this year’s AGM when Jennifer Moss was hoping to stand down.

The committee has discussed the matter and proposes that we adopt the following wording used by other Civic Societies: “A President and Vice Presidents may be elected at a General Meeting of the Society for such periods as may be decided at the meeting.”

The Notice for this SGM will be issued at least 21 days before the meeting and will include the proposed wording of the clause, a job description and selection procedures.

The election of the new President will be held at the next AGM on January 28, 2016.

*By Tony Molesworth*
New Committee Members

John Greaves – Secretary

I moved to Chesham from London four years ago and activities here include membership of the Chiltern Film Society. I have spent twenty-eight years at the National Maritime Museum in Greenwich as their Curator of Ship History. It might sound a grand title but my area of expertise is mainly passenger shipping from the steam age to the present day. Having finally retired in July of this year I am still keeping an interest in everything maritime-related, so may well be joining the pond model group that meets in Lowndes Park every Sunday morning!!

Ruth Juett – Planning team

I have lived in Chesham for seven years. Previously living in France and London. I have worked for the last 15 years as Chief Officer in the voluntary sector and I was a Town Councillor for Townsend Ward for the last three years. I am now retired but I am still active in the community. I am also a member of Chesham4Fairtrade, which is celebrating its 10th anniversary this month.

Database Manager Needed

We need a person to manage the Membership database. Moderate computer skills, especially in Microsoft Excel or Access are required, plus a couple of hours a month to maintain records and print mailing labels quarterly for Focus distribution. Our resident expert, Brian Pratt, is retiring but I’m sure he will help whoever picks up the task.

Please contact Tony Molesworth if you can help.

It was September 2007 when the global ‘credit crunch’ hit the UK and threatened to overwhelm Northern Rock. Savers were faced with the potential loss of their money and so, over time, a raft of financial measures was constructed to protect people in similar circumstances.

There have been changes to the structure of financial compensation claims this year. When people move home, for instance, they can have a large amount of money in their bank account when funds are transferred after a sale, for a short time before the next purchase is completed. To protect people in this situation, from July 2015, the Financial Services Compensation Scheme will provide a £1 million limit for high balances held in the short term.

The current limit for the protection of savings is going to change from next January, so there will be a £75,000 limit for bank accounts. This will bring it into line with the 100,000 Euro limit under the Deposit Guarantee Schemes Directive.

Such schemes cover financial losses arising from the failure of an institution. However, everybody needs to be aware that there is constant activity by criminals who are targeting individuals all the time, hoping to steal from them.

Often these approaches are made by telephone and I myself have had some very plausible-sounding callers, emails and letters that look genuine until read very carefully. So please do not be taken in! For instance, I have had callers asking me to give bank details to pay for a computer upgrade to protect from a new virus going the rounds. I’ve had emails to announce that I have won a competition overseas, asking me to send money so the prize can be transferred to me. I also got a letter saying that a relative had died and I should provide my bank details to enable money to be paid to me. In the case of the letter, they spelled my name wrongly, which gave the game away!

These are very sophisticated and persistent fraudsters who prey on people’s vulnerability. A bank or building society will never ask you to give out your card number, PIN or password over the telephone, in an email or text. Always be very, very cautious about such calls and never ring back on a number they may give you – always check independently for a central switchboard number that you can call back on.

Please do stay vigilant to stay safe, because there is evidence that these despicable criminals will keep on returning to their victims to steal more money if they can get away with it.

By Rt Hon Cheryl Gillan, MP for Chesham and Amersham
Focus Autumn 2015

Dates for your diary!

Members’ Panel Meeting
For the third year running the Chesham Society is delighted to be bringing you Chesham’s very own version of Question Time on Thursday, September 17. We have chosen another panel of interesting and diverse speakers and hope that you have lots you want to grill them about.

We have a selection of politicians, with our present Town Mayor Peter Hudson leading the pack. We are also delighted to welcome Martin Tett who is the Leader of Buckinghamshire County Council. Our trio is completed by Mimi Harker, OBE who represents Chesham Bois and has recently been elected as the Chairman of Chiltern District Council.

Joining these three on the panel will be Ian Slack who is Chairman of Chesham Theatre Company and Chairman of the Friends of Lowndes Park Michael Rowan.

We are also delighted welcome Claire Rooney who recently organised a very damp LeyFest ‘15 in aid of Chesham Toy Bank, which she also set up with her team of elves. Claire has become a latest winner of the Pride of Bucks award for her charity work.

Last but definitely not least we welcome Hilary Wilson who is the Chairman of Churches Together for Chesham.

As ever the format will be that questions should be submitted to me at programme@cheshamsociety.org.uk. There will be questions taken from the floor if we have time. Our Chairman, Tony Molesworth will chair the event in the Council Chamber at the Town Hall. There will be tea and coffee from 7.30pm with the questions starting at 8pm. If you are a member then entry is a £1 or £2 for non-members. It is usually a lively evening of debate so please try to join us.

River Chess Walk
Many of our members were disappointed that they weren’t able to join the guided walk by Paul Jennings, Chairman of the River Chess Association back in June. Therefore, back by popular demand, Paul has agreed to repeat the walk on Saturday, October 10 at 2.30pm.

As before, the group will meet at Latimer Park (postcode HP5 1TU). We will be walking downstream via Neptune Falls, onto Latimer Water Meadows, crossing the river at the ford by Latimer Bridge, walk the south bank of the Chess (private access) to Dodds Mill and then return to Latimer Park via the Chess Valley Walk. This will be a loop of about three miles and should take about two hours with stops and explanations. Please let me know if you’ll be coming and don’t forget your wellies!

October Members’ Meeting
In October we welcome Freddie Gick, the Chairman of CivicVoice, which is the national charity for the civic movement in England, which aims to make places more attractive, enjoyable and distinctive and promote civic pride. The Chesham Society is one of more than 300 societies, which is a member of CivicVoice.

Freddie Gick is a former research scientist and international management consultant who has been involved with civic societies for over 20 years. His visit to Chesham is timely with the Issues and Options Consultation for the New District Plan commencing in October, which the Chesham Society will be responding to. Freddie’s experience in local planning will be valuable. We will be inviting councillors and adjoining local amenity societies to join is for the evening.

For the November meeting we hope the Red Squirrel Brewery can speak to us.

Murder’s on the menu and everyone’s a suspect
I promised you something different for Christmas and I’m delighted to tell you that we will be hosting a Murder Mystery Dinner to be performed by Chesham Theatre Company on Thursday, December 10 at Chesham United Football Club. The theme is ‘Of Grave Importance’

“Following the tragic death of local vicar Father Trevor Allard, All Saints church in Little Duckham has recently been closed and its congregation amalgamated with that of the neighbouring church in Great Duckham. However, the community have recently discovered that not only is the church being sold to be redeveloped but also that the graveyard, in a prime position, is going to be built on. The Community Association has joined forces with the Residents’ Association and both are trying to raise funds to buy the site for the community before the developers can claim it.

The first fundraising evening has been organised and the stakes are high for both sides. It looks like no one will be resting in peace…”

Please put the date in your diary and start putting your table of eight together. Tickets will be on sale shortly and they are bound to sell out fast! Just £20 for a three-course meal and an evening of entertainment.

Please let me know if you want to reserve your space or need further information. Don’t forget to let me know your dietary requirements when booking tickets.

Final Word
Finally, if you’re not on our mailing list, and you’d like to be and/or if you have any ideas of speakers you’d like to hear from or events you’d like us to organise then please contact me, the Programme and Events Manager at programme@cheshamsociety.org.uk.

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<td>September 17</td>
<td>Council Chamber</td>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td>Panel Question Time</td>
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<td>October 21</td>
<td>Lowndes Room</td>
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<td>talk by chairman of CivicVoice Freddie Gick</td>
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<td>November 18</td>
<td>Lowndes Room</td>
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<td>December 10</td>
<td>Lowndes Room</td>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td>Murder mystery dinner</td>
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All meetings are in the Town Hall at 7.30 for 8pm unless stated otherwise

Admission charges: members £1, guests £2; which includes tea/coffee and biscuits.
At the end of the final day, the committee met in private session for almost an hour; then announced that (without prejudice) they were not inclined to agree to any ‘long tunnel’ proposals, but would request HS2 to extend the Wendover cut and cover tunnel further south, and extend the Chilterns (bored) Tunnel north to Frith Hill (the C6 proposal). This was initially a disappointment, both with regard to the long tunnel and because an extension of the Chilterns Tunnel to Leather Lane had been requested.

The tunnel extension

A great deal has been gained, even from this short extension. Mantles Wood and two other ancient woodlands have been saved, construction works on the B485 and in South Heath avoided, and construction traffic in the Hyde Heath to South Heath area substantially reduced.

Interestingly, a tunnel extension to Frith Hill was requested in the Chesham Society response to the first set of plans issued by HS2 in November 2012. If this had been given proper consideration at the time, much hardship might have been avoided, as would the delays to the project due to another round of consultation and petitioning.

More petitioning

A large number of petitions from individuals and groups are scheduled for September – far more than can be heard in the time available. Some of these are generic petitions, which the committee hope to hear in groups – although the petitioners are free to request an individual hearing if they wish. Petitioners who do wish to support other local groups should consult www.hs2amersham.org.uk for advice.

The Chesham Society and Chesham Town Council will appear towards the end of the month, and will continue to press for a tunnel under the whole AONB – to prevent traffic chaos during construction and safeguard the Misbourne Valley for future generations of visitors.

By Jim Conboy