



Spring 2024 SIGNPOSTS

News and views from Haddenham Safe Walking and Cycling group
Issue 11

HADDENHAM-THAME GREENWAY: WE NEED YOUR HELP!



From an old album, the 2004 'trailblazer' cycle ride – by kind permission, Cathy Gaulter-Carter

This is the critical year and we need your help to raise the profile of this much needed project and make our voices impossible to ignore. So please, if you haven't already, send us an email to haddswac@gmail.com to add your name to our Greenway-specific mailing list.

So when the time comes to mobilise, we will be able to quickly summon up large numbers of local people to demand the right to travel safely between our two communities. It is now 20 years since the first 'trailblazer' ride showed the pent up demand for our greenway, with around 160 taking to the road on their bikes between Haddenham and Thame, with a police escort for safety.

Repeating the experience is just one of a number of ideas we're pursuing to raise the profile of our

campaign. Let us know if you think it's a good idea and if you and your family would take part. We're also open to other suggestions, as well as offers of help! Clearly the road has grown much busier since 2004, so safety precautions would have to be stepped up.

In the meantime we will continue to work on local politicians – at the recent meeting of Bucks Council's Transport, Environment and Climate Change select committee (as reported by [The Bucks Herald](https://www.bucks-herald.co.uk)), we had a good show of public support, which was acknowledged by both the chair of the committee and the cabinet member for transport, Steve Broadbent.

We were also able to talk to Steve after the meeting and were very pleased he expressed a strong personal desire to see the route built. He comes across as a genuine advocate for walking and cycling, and we will support him in any way we can provided Bucks Council remains committed to the project.

Alan Thawley, Chair
Haddenham Safe Walking and Cycling group



HADDENHAM'S BLACK SPOT



There have been many suggestions for the crossroads, including better signage, changed priorities, a mini roundabout, road widening ...

Haddenham is fortunate in that it doesn't have a main road through its centre. Consider Waddesdon, which has no choice but to tolerate the major traffic of the A41. At the same time drivers, mostly from and to points far away, are themselves condemned to tolerate the elongated obstruction that is Waddesdon. But it is the villagers who have to live with the permanent noise, vibration and polluted air.

Traffic between Aylesbury and Thame is of a lesser order and mostly prefers the A418 to negotiating the pinch-points of Haddenham. But a scratch survey in 2020 found that 8 per cent of peak time traffic coming from Aylesbury passed through Haddenham without stopping. That was only 2 cars per minute, so not a big deal, but it is interesting that there are drivers who make that choice. The Streetscape proposals will remove the pinch-points and calm the traffic in other ways on the increasingly residential Thame Road, including a 20mph speed limit, which ought to nudge drivers with no business in Haddenham back to the A418.

But our village does have one Black Spot. Each day's peak time brings queues at the Woodways-Stanbridge Road intersection, with hesitant right-turners drawing impatient toots from those behind and clouds of noxious gas from stopping and starting vehicles: not good for those living nearby. And there have been accidents.

Where is all the traffic going? With a bit of thoughtful design it should be possible to make the crossing safer for people and more convenient for vehicles. Streetscape proposed four raised pedestrian crossings, which may have a calming effect but will not alter fluidity. There have been many suggestions for the crossroads, including better signage, changed priorities, a mini roundabout, road widening etc. But the first step must be an informed analysis of the traffic.

The scratch survey found that just over 60 per cent of the morning traffic from Aylesbury went along Woodways and (surprisingly) nearly 40 percent turned left, probably for the Kingsey route into Thame. There is also a suspicion that some north-south traffic comes from the M40 and is avoiding the Thame bypass. It is time for a serious study.

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A petition in 2016 gained 516 supporters.

This called for a review of the junction following a number of accidents and near misses – in particular, a motor cyclist missing the junction and breaking a leg in two places.

Do we feel the situation has been resolved?

AH, THE OPEN ROAD!

Roads. Don't we just love them! Many of us probably wouldn't be here – in Haddenham – without them. They're integral to modern life. Ad-men feed off that and send us in our dreams winding round corniches or roaring across desert sands. And who among us can say, hand on heart, we haven't sometime succumbed to the thrill of a chicane? But spare a thought for the hedgehog. Or imagine water-birds swooping low to investigate a dark, black ribbon. Instinct tells them it's an enticing 'river', then delicate webbed feet meet cruel tarmac. Imagine. At speed.

Recently, Transport Secretary Mark Harper came to TiggYWinkles Wildlife Hospital to launch a new national hedgehog sign. (It has new white quills to make it stand out.)¹



“ Hedgehogs have learned over centuries to curl up in a ball if threatened. That’s fatal in the path of a speeding car.... ”

Roads are killing fields. In both senses.

A new book by environmentalist Ben Goldfarb — *Crossings – How Road Ecology Is Shaping the Future of Our Planet* — foregrounds some grisly issues. Road-kill is high on the list. Okay, roads near Haddenham are hardly comparable with US highways, but it's still jaw-dropping to learn that 12% of deaths of land-dwelling mammals were caused by vehicles in 2017, that in New York State a car collides with a deer every eight minutes.

Hedgehogs have learned over centuries to curl up in a ball if threatened. That's fatal in the path of a speeding car. Birds, too, just aren't attuned to judging

high speeds. No wonder their numbers drop within half a mile of a road. And mammal numbers within two and a half miles. They've learnt a thing or two: stay away! Only 2.5 per cent of England is more than 1,000 metres from a road. Noise alone is a great disturber of natural instinct. Owls can't hear rodents. Animal calls near roads go up in pitch (as does the human voice). The world is squeakier as well as more dangerous. And that isn't sexy. Roads divide shrinking animal populations. In the US Rockies, DNA can show which side of a road a bear lives.

And ever thought where all that salt goes? It may ensure we drive faster in winter, but it's a killer too.

We thought you'd be interested to know.

Oh, and by 2050 it's estimated that there'll be 25 million miles of new road worldwide.

BA

DEAR HADDSWAC ...

A plea from one who likes walking round our village and, more importantly, from my wife who, after a stroke, needs to use a walker or mobility scooter to get around.

Many pavements in Haddenham are reduced in width or made unusable by hedges that have, over the years, encroached on the pavement. Often it is difficult for an able bodied person to walk on the pavement without having to barge past the hedge, one risks being jabbed in the eye by twigs or being scratched in the face by a bramble. The alternatives for a person with a walker or mobility scooter is to go in the road (there may not be a dropped curb nearby) or not go!

A gentle reminder to house-owners that they have a responsibility to maintain the 'other' side of their hedges would be a start ...

[Name provided]

¹ See <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/simpler-road-signs-to-protect-small-animals-and-boost-safety>

NO IDLING PLEASE



Image from Oxfordshire Liveable Streets; for calculation of balloon equivalent see <http://tinyurl.com/muk366nj>

Like a taxi throbbing, waiting ...

Thus TS Eliot builds expectation in his famous bedroom scene³. But that was 1922 and it certainly won't do in 2024. It certainly won't do outside schools at either end of the day. You would think that to switch off the engine among a swarm of children would be a no brainer, but a morning walk in Woodways or outside St Mary's can still mean a serious assault on the nostrils and the lungs.

Parents outside schools are not the only offenders in the village. Delivery drivers seeking signatures or trying neighbours; drivers engrossed in mobile phones, oblivious of the surrounding cloud of gas; people meeting trains at the station ... One man, recently accosted in his purring diesel, was 'drying his trousers'!

Heating a standing car is not an excuse for running the engine. A warmed-up engine has quite enough retained heat for normal purposes. (A night marooned in snow would be another matter.)

“ Air pollution, essentially from road traffic, is now seen as the largest environmental risk to health in the UK, accounting for 28-36,000 premature deaths per year, mainly from heart disease

The Highway Code is clear that you must never leave a car with the engine running unless there is another driver in attendance (Rule 123). Nor, when stopped, should you leave the engine running unnecessarily, and generally for no longer than 2 minutes. Recently, in response to rising concern about air quality, police have been empowered to order stationary motorists to switch off on pain of a £20 fine, rising to £80 in case of delayed payment.

Air pollution, essentially from road traffic, is now seen as the largest environmental risk to health in the UK, accounting for 28-36,000 premature deaths per year, mainly from heart disease⁴. There are weightier matters than idling cars that call for clean air action, such as encouraging the move to electric and smoothing traffic flow, but we can all do our bit: switch off when we can, especially outside schools, and cut the gas.

For anyone prepared to take really positive action, Bucks Council is offering, through Community Boards, an anti-idling toolkit (leaflets, training, high-viz tabards etc) in preparation for a national anti-idling day on 20 June⁵.

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³ *The Waste Land*: line 217

⁴ <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/public-health-england-publishes-air-pollution-evidence-review>

⁵ <https://www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/community-and-safety/clean-up-our-air-campaign/>

IS IT TIME FOR THE BUS?



All dressed up and nowhere to go – a bus shelter on The Grove. The associated bus service is “anticipated in April 2024.” To be covered in a future issue of SIGNPOSTS.

For many reasons more people are choosing the bus. Driving can be stressful; parking can be a hassle and costly; while walking, wheeling or cycling to catch a bus, is healthy and friendly to the environment – possibly, more sociable.

But there are challenges. The timetable can be complex. Haddenham is served by Arriva ([code X7](#)⁶), Red Line ([code 120](#)⁷) and Z&S Transport ([codes 111 and 112](#)⁸). Some buses run on limited days. Regular bus travellers tell us about buses not turning up and routes being diverted without publicity.

Luckily, help is at hand. Here are some bus travel tips.

Firstly, kit. Smart-phones are really helpful to the bus traveller. Incidentally, if you don’t have one yet, pre-loved and refurbished phones may be cheaper than you think. And Mary, our digital champion at Haddenham Community Library – available on Thursdays, from 10am to 12:30pm – is offering help on how to use them.

With a smart-phone, all the complexity of the bus timetables, across the different bus companies, is



Follow the progress of your bus before you leave home. This will confirm a particular service is operating ...

worked out for you. Enter your destination in Google Maps, press “Directions”, and select the bus tab! Just remember to adjust the resulting directions to the date and time you plan to travel (adjusted by tapping “Leave” above the map).

Most likely you will travel by Arriva’s 280 bus, renamed X7 in January 2024, with its roughly half-hourly service and 68 trips per weekday. But Google Maps might also find you direct routes – albeit infrequent – to thirteen local villages, or Stoke Mandeville Hospital.

Another tip: to reduce the chances of waiting for a bus that has been cancelled (due to driver shortages, say) you can download the [Arriva](#)⁹ and [Red Line Apps](#)¹⁰ and follow the progress of your bus before you leave home. This will confirm a particular service is operating (or not).

One caveat: buses can get well ahead of schedule between a small number of “time-regulated” bus stops. And the information on your phone might lag behind the real world. So best to reach your bus stop ten minutes early!

Regarding route diversions and bus stop closures, consult this helpful [website](#)¹¹!

So, why not give the bus a try? Choosing trips best suited to it and following the above tips, you might get fitter, reduce your carbon footprint, *and* enjoy the view. And no better time, from now until the end of 2024, with a £2 cap on X7 and X20 single fares.

DS/JCC

⁶ See <http://tinyurl.com/ycrcjbsmy> (Arriva offers a PDF download option, at <http://tinyurl.com/53wau9yb>)

⁷ See <http://tinyurl.com/2p9bcad4>

⁸ See <http://tinyurl.com/7a6c4y76>

⁹ See <http://tinyurl.com/53u68hbb>

¹⁰ The App giving Red Line information is called “myTrip”: see <https://mytrip.today>

¹¹ See <http://tinyurl.com/4xzt72sx>

KEEP WALKING! DRY WALKS FOR WET WEATHER

Two, if not three (or four!), walks in Haddenham are walkable throughout the year even in trainers. They are all circular and you can start anywhere along them. The following directions are from The King's Head.

In recent times there were eight pubs in the village. Now there are two: The King's Head and The Rising Sun. Haddenham was a long thin village - a mile and a quarter from north to south. Much of it lined the High Street to the west of a stream - now largely unseen. Nowadays the village is as broad as it is long. Two hundred years ago (before its Enclosure, 1830) the village itself was within Dollicott Field, one of its three open-fields, stretching north-south to the parish's boundaries. To the east was Downhill Field. To the west Cotts-Hill Field. These Fields were worked by the medieval practice of strip-farming. Strips were contained within Furlongs. The village Court Leet determined the use of each Furlong as to crop or fallow management.

If you're able to get to the Museum on the High Street (open Sunday pm or Tuesday a.m.) there's a wonderful map recalling Haddenham as it was in 1825 (simplified below).

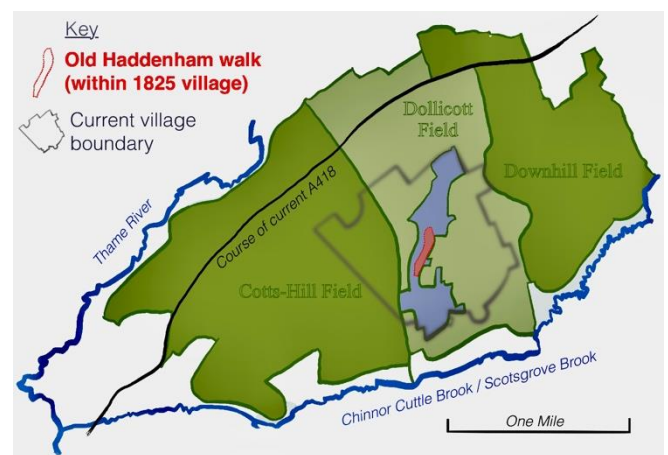
OLD HADDENHAM WALK (¾ mile) – RED route

Simple: from The King's Head go up the High Street, (pass the tallest wychert building in the world, the Methodist Chapel - saved by English Heritage) to Fort End Green (Norsk Cafe). There turn right by Hewitt's the Barbers down Stockwell. Pass the widest wychert building in the world (Baptist Chapel - now fund raising for essential repairs) with its evocative graveyard opposite. Carry on past Catholic Church of the Good Shepherd on your right, down The Croft until you come to wychert-lined passageway back to The King's Head. Wychert - 'white earth' dug out locally - was used for many of the village's buildings and walls.

WEST HADDENHAM WALK (2½ miles) – GREEN route
Leave the King's Head towards Townside, turn left and almost immediately right onto the path alongside the allotments. (Along here once lay the boundary between Dollicott and Cotts-Hill Fields.) Follow this path to Sheerstock.

Turn right along Sheerstock (built late 1970s) for 300+yds. Turn left at Number 26 along unnamed road to No. 16. Straight after No. 16, turn right along a tarmac path to Thame Road. Cross directly over. (Station on far side of bridge, with cafe, toilets and buses, etc..)

You are on Spitfire Path. Go straight. Cross Pegasus Way by traffic lights and follow tarmac path to Tibbs Road. (Picnic tables.) *These names tell you of Haddenham's Airfield used extensively in World War*



Haddenham's Open Fields, around 1825

2, for glider training and by Air Transport Auxiliary. Later it might have become a premier motorcycle racing circuit, but for the village's jealousy of its Sundays.

Turn right, with playing field on left (with award-winning Pavilion). Cross road into Co-op car park (coffee machine and snacks). Turn left out of carpark onto Pegasus Way. Keep straight through industrial estate. This is not a Public Right of Way, so take extra care and keep to footways. Go as far as iPRO (3E), where road bears right. Go through narrow galvanised gate (The Cabin for weekday take-outs). Dollicott Cottage is opposite you, turn right and follow road to Thame Road. At The Rising Sun turn left to Fort End. (Cottage Bakery). At Fort End ... take either way of **Old Haddenham Walk** to get back to King's Head.

SIGNPOSTS

Spring 2024

EAST HADDENHAM WALK (2½ miles) – BLUE route

Leave The King’s Head by High Street entrance but turn immediate right into a small alley. At end turn right into The Croft. This becomes Gibsons Lane, taking you to Church End.

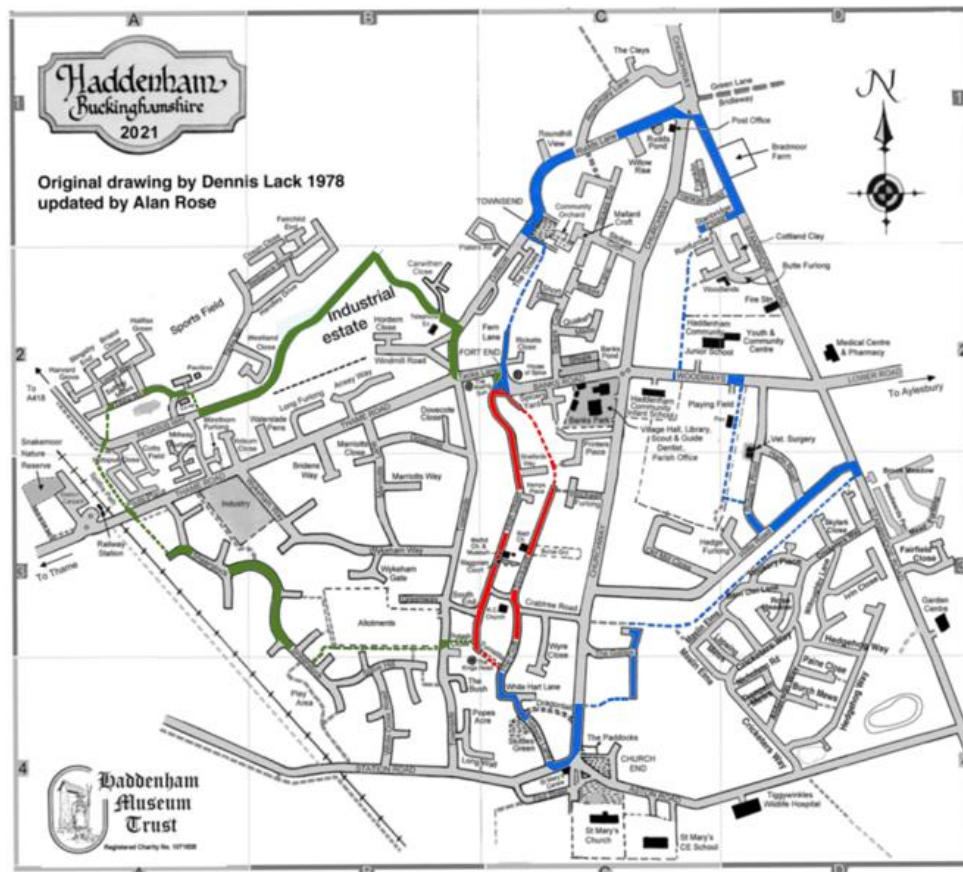
At Church End turn left and then immediately left up Churchway, away from the Church. After what was The Green Dragon PH (and opposite Dragon Barn Studio) turn right down a tarmac path into The Gables. The Green Dragon was the emblem of the Herbert family, landlords of the village in the late 17th Century. The PH was much used for official business including display of the 19th Century Enclosure Notices – which were torn down in protest. The Gables was built in the more peaceful 1970s, in historic Dollicott Field. Go to the far end. Bear left and immediately up steps onto a tarmac path and right – all the way to Stanbridge Road (back gardens on the left all the way).

Turn left at Stanbridge Road and then quick left into Willis Road. Turn right into Roberts Road and just after the road bears right, turn left between houses into playing field. Follow tarmac path with playing area on left. (Drinks etc. at The Whistler on left).

At the end turn left along Woodways and after the school go right down a tarmac path all the way to Stanbridge Close. Turn right to the end and left onto Stanbridge Road.

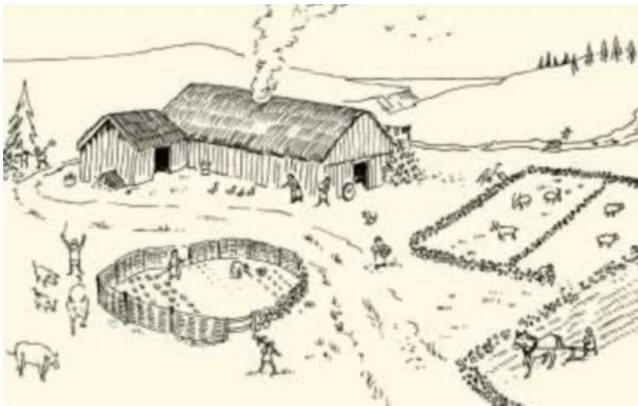
Go past Bradmoor Farm (including cafe). At Post Office go down Rudds Lane, past pond on left. Wind round to Townsend Green. If dry enough, take a walk across the Green to visit the Community Orchard. At end of Green turn left down track and quick right down footpath to Fern Lane and Fort End ... take either way of Old Haddenham Walk to get back to King’s Head.

Map showing Old, West and East routes



THE FULL MONTY – combine West and East and Old Haddenham Walks.
REFRESHMENTS are available as mentioned on the routes, and at Tickety Brew and shops on Banks Parade.
TOILETS at station (always open), Village Hall (not always).
BA/BB

A FARMING NATION



Ever since we gave up hunting and gathering, some 6,000 years ago, and took to planting crops and taming livestock, we have all been dependent on farmers. Their success has led to a huge rise in population and myriad other activities, some essential (defence, research, justice), some desirable (medical, cultural) and some optional (entertainment, tourism). But ultimately we are all dependent on the output of farmers.

This may not always be so. Industry may yet produce staples from other sources. But for the time being, all of us have an existential stake in the successful working of the land.

Those who work it necessarily accept that some land has to be conceded to housing and servicing our growing numbers and to make space for transport links. But how do we decide what land should be conceded for these purposes?

In a community dependent on the land it should not, in theory, be difficult to determine where communal advantage lies. In practice it is an unseemly tussle between innovators and incumbents, each side exploiting whatever leverage is to hand, including public opinion, ancient laws and the arbitration of authorities; authorities which may have coercive power but are subject to influence and ever mindful of re-election.

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The current farming deal explicitly requires farmers to contribute positively to public enjoyment of the countryside ...

There has long been a deal whereby farmers are financially supported by the rest of us in exchange for the public goods they render. Chief among these is security of food supply – it is a vital public interest that farming remains a profitable business. At the same time farmers must accept substantial regulation, especially to protect the environment and reduce carbon emissions.

The current farming deal explicitly requires farmers to contribute positively to public enjoyment of the countryside, through conservation of plant and wildlife as well as through enhanced public access to the land they occupy. And, in support of public health and exercise, additional funds have recently been made available for farmers who open new or improved routes for walking or cycling across their land¹².

Now, about that greenway to Thame ...

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HaddSWAC is very grateful for support from Haddenham Village Fête, The Haddenham Beer Festivals Trust and Thame Cycles so that we can print some extra copies of this newsletter, SIGNPOSTS: so that those without Internet access can obtain a copy, and to encourage new subscribers.

We remain committed to minimising our environmental impact and encourage digital subscription, if this is an option for you.

To subscribe, FREE, simply email your request to HaddSWAC@gmail.com.

¹² See <http://tinyurl.com/2d2eisdg>