

# DEVELOPMENT IN THE VILLAGE: 2



## BEST KEPT VILLAGE

Steeple Aston confidently entered this competition in 1973 and was surprised to be told that the War Memorial was in a state, and that a pile of bottles were found behind the Village Hall, along with weeds. It was another five years before confidence returned, when villagers pitted their wits against other villages to become the Village Brains of Oxfordshire when they beat Shilton (near Burford) in 1978.

Two years later, we tried again for Best Kept Village but again received a somewhat critical report. We tried harder and at last won First Prize in August 1981. In 1982 it was Second Prize (Deddington won, since you ask). In 1983 – First Prize again, and once again in 1986.

There was then a big gap until we won Second Prize in October 1996. A decade later, we were runners-up in Oxfordshire Village of the Year, and a year later in 2007 we were voted Oxon Village of the Year! With such elevated status, in April 2008 there was an entry for National Village of the Year, but we were not placed.

The 1981 winner: the Marlborough Trophy was presented by Lady Bullock.



*The village before the 1970s. Note the smoking chimneys, the disputed village Pound in the centre of the photo, and the absence of the houses on Heyford Road leading to Nizewell Head.*

## HOPCROFTS HOLT

Applications recorded in SAL include a 30 bedroom extension in April 1984; a 9 hole golf course in 1988; a 120 bed and leisure centre extension in 1989, and then 50 bedrooms also in 1989; In February 2001 another 68 bedrooms.



*"The Pound House" in 2012*

## Row over land left by Lord

A PIECE of land in Steeple Aston, which the parish council says was left to the village by a former Lord of the Manor is being claimed by a development company.

Mr R. Mason, representing the parish at an inquiry by the Chief Commons Commissioner, Mr G. D. Squibbs QC in Oxford yesterday said that the land, The Pound at Paines Hill, is a common pound used by the parish.

He said that the parish had registered too large a piece of the land under the Commons Registration Act. But he added: "The parish council relies on the continued use of the land. The Pound at some time was granted by the Lord of the Manor and became villagers' property."

Mr Henry Brooke, representing Ede Holdings Ltd, said the Pound was not subject to rights of common land and was not properly registered as waste land of the manor.

The Chief Commissioner's decision will be announced in several weeks.

## THE POUND

In January 1974 there was a hearing regarding the status of the common land at the Pound in Paines Hill. Roger Mason represented the village against Ede Development Ltd. who had proposals for building on the Co-op's orchard, with access through the Pound. In April it was reported that the case had been lost, but that an appeal was to be lodged by the Parish Council. In December 1974 Ede withdrew their application but replaced it with a new proposal to build a cottage on the site of the Pound, which there was no proof that they owned. Planning permission was granted in May 1975. The Parish Council decided to serve an injunction on Ede, but was advised in August that there were insufficient grounds to do so.

## HOPCROFTS HOLT GARAGE

The Garage pictured below is now gone, replaced by the time you read this with a larger new petrol station with a bigger shop.

