

Meek Bradford

I vehemently object to Phase 2 of the Scotland Park development on the grounds that it would completely harm the beauty and charm that makes the Surrey Hills unique.

The people of Haslemere can be justly proud of their town because of two very special men, who resided ^{in the town} at different times, but who, and this is the important thing, ^{Two local heroes} without any thought of profit or gain, made an extraordinary contribution to the good of our nation and the welfare of its people. I refer to William Beveridge, the author of 'The Beveridge Report', the blueprint for the National Health Service, and another far-seeing man, who I will introduce later.

^{Welfare State}
I have lived in the Haslemere and Hindhead area for 65 years and made it my home, bringing my family up here, and now my grandchildren enjoy the beauty and pleasure of its magnificent surroundings. I am not alone in my love for this piece of heaven. My own father, brought up in scenic Ontario, and who had travelled the entire world, declared it to be the loveliest place on the planet. Long before his time, others had similar thoughts.

To the Victorian writer Anne Gilchrist, Haslemere also seemed like paradise. In 1862, She wrote to a friend: "The scenery round here is of surpassing loveliness."

In Anne Gilchrist's wake, many eminent writers, poets, playwrights, scientists, philosophers and social reformers followed her example and sought solace and inspiration from the wild hills and clean fresh air of deepest Surrey. Among them was her friend, the novelist George Eliot, who wrote in 1871:

"Life here is immensely enjoyable. Our country could hardly be surpassed in its particular kind of beauty – perpetual undulation of heath and copse, and clear views of hurrying water, with here and there a grand pine wood, steep wood-clothed promontories, and gleaming pools."

It is clear to anyone who has intensely walked the area that she is referring to the glorious delights of Bell Vale and the Chase Valley, where the River Wey springs out of Blackdown, hurrying on its way to Sturt Meadow.

^{Waltham Chase}
It is indeed a beautiful and beguiling area to live and work in, and it is deservedly designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Over the past two centuries, planners and developers worked hard together to achieve the balance between essential housing and preserving the visual delights of their surroundings. In 2010, Haslemere residents clearly stated their will regarding any development of Red Court Estate in the 'Haslemere Design Statement'. It was a resounding 'NO' to development and a 'YES' for preservation. The statement, drawn up by local councillors, businesses and residents, concluded:

"Beautiful areas around us must be preserved and maintained, and where possible enhanced. Red Court Estate – privately owned, is a continuation of the beautiful Chase Valley and Valewood Park, owned by the National Trust. This green space needs to be preserved, as an area of transition between the built-up area of Haslemere and the National Park boundary. This should be taken into account when determining any new building development."

The statement was adopted by the town council and Waverley B.C. in 2012. I take that to have meant "in perpetuity", or for at least a generation, not just for a few short years.

Footpath SA7.

If you live there, or have walked, as I have, its myriad of footpaths, stood alone and breathed in the alpine air on Gibbet Hill or Blackdown while taking in their magnificent views, enjoyed the quiet tranquillity of the streams along Bell Vale, or looked down on the magnificence of the Devil's Punchbowl, everything you see around you is due mostly to the herculean efforts of one man, our second hero, co-founder of the National Trust, Sir Robert Hunter. He made his home in Haslemere, and became chairman of the Parish Council.

For his lifetime's achievements, he was destined to be buried in Westminster Abbey, but with characteristic modesty, he chose an unmarked pauper's grave in Haslemere's St ^{in the town} Bartholomew's church. He wanted his last resting place to be among his people. A fine orator, ^{we} there could be no one more qualified to have the last word on this subject. He also knew a thing or two about planners and developers, and in 1907, he delivered this speech:

"If we turn to natural scenery, we find that not even the more striking manifestations of nature are safe from the hand of man. In the exercise of power, in the furtherance of the subjection of nature to his rule, he has often the impatience and thoughtlessness of a child, and will ruthlessly destroy beauty of appearance and association. The beauty of hill and vale, wood and water, excites in us, not merely a delight in colour and form, but a subtle sense of the vastness and permanence of the physical world, of the weakness of man, of the late birth of the human race, and of the fleeting character of human life. Natural beauty, equally with historic association, stimulates the imagination and takes the beholder out of the petty cares and the small details of every-day existence. If the nation is vigilant to save what is interesting and beautiful in its lands and buildings, life will be better worth having for its citizens, not only of to-day, but of centuries to come."

Robert Hunter

He devoted his life to preserving these things, and protecting them from over-development. He died more than 100 years ago, but his legacy lives on in our wonderful surroundings.

Robert Hunter

In considering this appeal, I beg you to please consider the legacy he bestowed upon us.