

Hitcham and Taplow Society

Newsletter 111: Spring 2019
£3.50 to non-members



www.taplowsociety.org.uk

Hitcham and Taplow Society

Formed in 1959 to protect Hitcham, Taplow and the surrounding countryside from being spoilt by bad development and neglect.

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Cover picture: Taplow between the rivers. (James Camplin). See Page 7.

Editorial

Grateful thanks to the many readers who kindly expressed appreciation of last November's Newsletter 110, which paid tribute to our antecedents who fell in the Great War. As promised, the Society continues to explore how Taplovians who fell in World War Two can be better commemorated. Watch this space.

It is remarkable how much our little corner of the world is threatened by ambition, lack of attention or incompetence. Consequently, this Newsletter returns to the primary aim of the Society – to protect our patch from being spoilt – and focuses on Planning (with a capital P) and other plans and aspirations which affect us. Information and observations are current as at 25th April.

The Town & Country Planning Act (1947) required local authorities to comprehensively plan and control development within their domains, a

principle which depends upon councillors and planning officers having the time, expertise and local knowledge to make decisions for the benefit of their communities. Page 3 wonders how well this cunning plan is working locally. Pages 4 & 5 review the degree to which the 2013 vision for Mill Lane has lost its way. Pages 6 to 9 examine risks to Green Belts nationwide, around London and in Taplow's lowlands. Pages 10 & 11 conclude this adventure with glances at looming organisational and infrastructural plans.

Later pages celebrate our community and those past and present who make it special. Our challenge is to follow valiantly in their footsteps.

Finally, thanks to friends in Hedgerley Historical Society and Facebook's *Maidenhead Memories* – indicated (MM) – who have shared various images and cuttings.

Acronyms

Berkeley Homes (BH), Buckinghamshire County Council (BCC), Campaign for the Protection of Rural England (CPRE), County Council (CC), Department for Transport (DfT), District Council (DC), Great Western Railway (GWR), Her Majesty's Government (HMG), London Green Belt Council (LGBC), National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), Office for National Statistics (OfNS), Parish Council (PC), Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead (RBWM), South Bucks DC (SBDC), Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), Taplow Parish Council (TPC), The Buckinghamshire Council (TBC) and Transport for London (TfL).

Plans Local and Neighbourly

The value of Taplow's two Conservation Areas – the Village (1975) and the Riverside (1999), both affirmed by Character Appraisals (2007) – has ebbed away amid legislative turbulence at national and district levels. Some think the combination of the Localism Act (2011), which extended the power of local councils (and their officers), and the NPPF (2012, revised 2018), which deregulated policies and streamlined procedures to encourage development, has reduced effective public oversight. The relevance of the Taplow Parish Plan (2005) has diminished as SBDC's Local Plan (1999, revised 2007) was replaced by its Core Strategy (2011) which will be superseded by a joint SBDC / Chiltern DC Local Plan (first draft 2017).

Hoping to exert greater influence, TPC secured permission to prepare a supplementary Neighbourhood Plan (NP) but paused pending delays to this latest Local Plan which even now has only "an unofficial and indicative timetable". It might soon be released for consultation. Maybe not. It might be approved by HMG and adopted in Summer 2020. Maybe not. It might it be accepted by TBC if this new unitary authority takes command (see Page 10). Maybe not. Such doubts are fuelled by news that Bray abandoned its NP after RBWM struck out just about everything in it, and a Cambridge council refused to adopt its local plan because HMG changes rendered it unrecognisable.

In contrast, an application by Bristol City Council for 1,500 homes was refused by its own councillors for not complying with its NP approved two weeks before. Heartened that NPs can have teeth, Jamie Barnard, Martin Maund, Spencer Norton, George Sandy, Nigel Smales and Roger Worthington recently resumed planning for the Plan. Aspects under consideration include its overall framework, the need for professional expertise, the impact of the revised NPPF on current protections, the possible removal from the Green Belt of the between-the-rivers triangle (see Page 7) and the creation of a supplementary Heritage Asset List to recognise and improve protection of buildings, places, landscapes and anything else we value.

Meanwhile, TPC and the Society agree the theme for the restoration of Berry Hill Farm gravel quarry must be "natural rural charm", with hay meadows preferable to any commercial development. Suggestions to Summerleaze include woodlands and wetlands for wildlife and insects, bird-watching hides, bridle paths, a challenging adventure playground, another for youngsters with den-building, woodcraft and other nature pursuits, two public footpaths – one recreating the ancient way south past Old Priory Garden down to the station, the other from there to lower Berry Hill (avoiding main roads) – and the revival of the Taplow Horse Show. In the spirit that it is up to locals to make the best of our locality, have you any other suggestions?

Proposals Pending

SBDC is still considering planning applications for a riverside pub and new houses on Mill Lane (see Pages 4 & 5). Other outstanding applications include a new spa and conservatory at Taplow House Hotel, replacements for Lamont House (River Road) and Stonecrop (3 Saxon Gardens), a

micro-brewery in Ye Meads, a barn for quail rearing at Challen's Chick Farm (Marsh Lane), a 20m telecommunication pole at Miller & Carter (Bath Road), a 2.4m wire boundary fence around Cedar Cottage (Heathfield Road) and lifting occupancy restrictions on Cliveden Stud House.



Taplow Quarry - almost worked out
Andrew Findlay

Riverside Revival



Taplow's riverside from Bond's Boatyard to the Papermill was once a mix of places to work, rest and play but, with their criticisms of proposals for a new pub and more houses on Mill Lane, Historic England and SBDC's Conservation Officer are guilty of historical revisionism. This was no "idyllic semi-rural waterside location" for artisans. It was the industrial rump of Taplow. The gasworks liquified coal – an extremely dirty, smelly business for 120 years – and later the mill recycled stuff much more hazardous than wastepaper. As



Driftwood Cottage

blight descended, dreamers on both riverbanks yearned for a revival of our greatest shared asset: Old Father Thames. Recent Newsletters have rued how the vague but welcome vision of SBDC's SPD – essentially, a brief for prospective developers to which BH's original 2015 design responded – has ebbed away as Planning acquiesced to fragmentary creep by considering each subsequent application myopically rather than in the context of a publicly agreed plan. The flux still hasn't finally settled but elements are slipping into sharper focus.

The Society is disappointed with the increased number of new and proposed dwellings, up 9% from 211 to 229, and dismayed at the vast area of car parking that could cram the riverbank, up 70% from 86 spaces to 146 to serve Roux at Skindles, the new office block (a local BH

headquarters) and a prospective Hall & Woodhouse gastro-pub. And there will be yet more cars when Dunloe Lodge is rebuilt with nine apartments, not as the originally-approved replica family home. The pub would be welcome – not least because its garden, toilets and defibrillator will be accessible to the public – yet despite the history here of unsightly gasometers, the Conservation Officer exceeds both brief and context to challenge its massing and elevation.

The re-designation of the Boathouses site as 'Residential' resulted in outline approval for a 'permitted development' squeezing 18 tiny dwellings into its existing buildings. This impractical scheme was superseded by another for 13 dwellings and now by a Gage Properties proposal to replace the existing buildings with



practical or visual link to Driftwood Cottage, its former lodge and stables, its illogical selectivity here will effectively blight the site.

The Old Boathouse was built over 120 years ago as a timber shed to house boats, converted in the late 1940s to build speedboats and again as offices in the 1980s. Trigger's broom in *Only Fools and Horses* springs to mind – 17 replacement heads, 14 different handles – except, unlike the broom, the Boathouse isn't as good as new. It probably never was structurally capable of conversion to a high-quality residence and certainly isn't now. Driftwood looks lonely, its nine-inch brick walls the worse for years of heavy lorries thundering past within reach. Sadly, its name rings true; it has been left behind by the turning tide. Its 1930s Studio – imagined incorrectly by Planning to be Dunloe's – is more a holiday snug than a modern home. While the Society's instinct is always to favour preservation if possible, none of these have the architectural or historic merit to justify refusing the Gage application. It must be right to

prioritise a viable and vibrant future for our riverbank over the conservation of outdated elements of its past.

The other uncertainties relate to the future of 'the working river'. SBDC is silent about its site and former Bond's Boathouse by Maidenhead Bridge where Marlow Boat Services plies riparian repair. Gage intends to maintain and enhance the moorings but its scheme may have insufficient parking and could the pub's proposed name – 'Taplow Boatyard' – be slightly ironic since the latest sketch shows BH's boatyard next door half the size it was and without a chandlery, perhaps calling into question its commercial viability? Yet with a little imagination, this boatyard could be the key. Why not run the moorings from here, equip it to repair boats and reawaken the wonderful tradition of 'pleasure boats for hire'? SBDC has planning control and BH moral and financial gravitas but neither shows any inclination to take the initiative. What's stopping them engaging with Gage for their mutual benefit and for Taplow's?

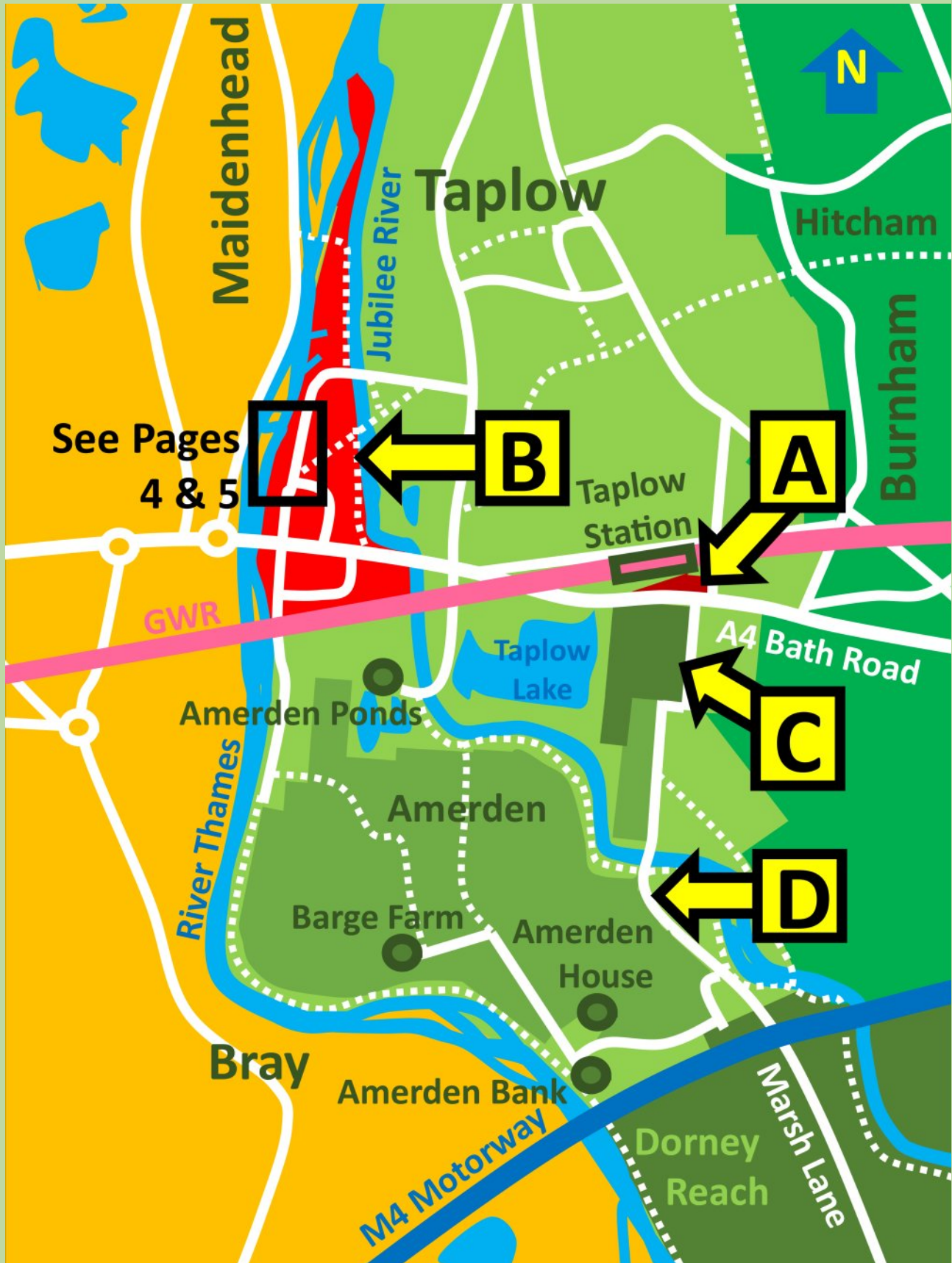
eight houses. The Society prefers this lower density, but Planning seems happy with the pub rising to two storeys and permits Dunloe three yet winces at two-storey homes between. And having ignored historic reference by permitting Dunloe to be rebuilt as an enlarged pastiche with no



Mackenzie Wheeler for Hall & Woodhouse

How Green is our Valley

Winds of change whisper in Taplow's lowlands. Which ones to believe?



Station Triangle

The draft Local Plan proposed that a triangular plot (A) should be removed from the Green Belt to facilitate 'Employment'. An application to build an 82-bed care home there has been shelved. Many would prefer the site to accommodate a station car park (see Page 11).



Planning meeting? (c1920)

Riverside Triangle

The evolution of middle Mill Lane (see Pages 4 & 5) isn't the whole story on the triangle (B) bounded by the River Thames, the Jubilee River and the GWR. Will the next draft of the Local Plan propose that this is also removed from the Green Belt?

This triangle comprises two distinct areas. The idea of removing that north of the A4 from the Green Belt emerged in 1991 when the Papermill proposed replacing Dunloe Lodge with 14 flats and building 81 houses and two office blocks totalling 84,000ft² between Mill Lane and the then proposed flood relief channel (now the Jubilee). Later, its priority was to secure access for its HGVs. Any aspirations to add both Skindles (acquired 1996) and Glen Island into the redevelopment mix were frustrated in part by Green Belt protection and, in 1999, by the creation of the Riverside Conservation Area to preserve its

"special architectural and historic interest". The mill sold all its local landholdings in 2006.

South of the A4, the Conservation Area includes much of Ellingtonia, described in 2007 by SBDC as "a fascinating piece of historic planned design [of] special character". How strange the sharp contrast with SBDC's assessment in 2016 – when redevelopment was reducing the north's once valued 'openness' – that the whole triangle is "a committed development [with] no Areas of Special Character [that] fails to protect the countryside from encroachment [and should be] considered for removal from the Green Belt". Although it is unlikely BH will ruin its marketing by building over its "beautiful meadows and parkland", such a policy switch could make dramatic and traumatic change easier in Ellingtonia and east along the A4.



Tightening the Belt

This local pressure is part of 'the Big Picture' in which Green Belts across England must shrink to allow the construction of 460,000 dwellings. Why is this happening when there are enough brownfield sites in local authorities with Green Belt land for over 720,000 homes and room for 300,000 more on brownfields elsewhere?

The OfNS forecasts that, by 2026, London's population will grow by 8.8% and the South East's by 6.4%. Consequently, despite the LGBC (January 2019) reporting their brownfields can accommodate 260,383, the 66 local authorities in London's Green Belt propose 202,715 greenfield homes – an increase of 43,411 (27%) in the year to July 2018. Locally in 2013/17, permitted new housing on Green Belt land increased by 27% in Chiltern DC, 31% in RBWM and an incredible 41% in SBDC where Cliveden

Gages, Mill Lane and Institute Road add around 430 dwellings to Taplow, an increase of over 54% since the 2011 census.

HMG drives Green Belt incursion – its revised NPPF prevents local authorities from citing the Green Belt as a constraint to housing growth – and claims it is necessary to provide more 'affordable housing' for young people and first-time buyers, yet nationally only around 22% is genuinely 'affordable' and less than 10% in London's Green Belt. The Society supports the CPRE in its efforts to persuade HMG to establish an independent strategic body with a genuine 'brownfield first' brief to prevent further unnecessary Green Belt erosion, and to close a legal loophole which allows developers to overpay for land yet keep unit prices high by forecasting profits of below 'competitive levels' (around 20%) at which they are relieved of obligations to build a proportion of 'affordable housing'.



Field of Dreams

Buried Treasure

Back in Taplow, it is easy for anyone north of the GWR to forget that, while the hill fort where Taplow Court now stands was a place of refuge, the ancient value of the parish was the fertile flood plain we know as Amerden. In *Thames: Sacred River* (Chatto & Windus, 2007), Peter Ackroyd reports "In 1332 Taplow was all but destroyed" by floods. Clearly, these fields of dreams were then the heart of the matter.

Any established settlements were at Amerden Bank, where the Priory of Merton put down roots in 1197, and possibly at Amerden Ponds where the subtenant Piscator family are thought to have lived. From 1433, the Manfield family manor house was probably somewhere in Amerden until 1598, when Taplow House took over, and not at Taplow Court until 1638. As manorial authority moved uphill, Amerden

continued to feed the community. Its agricultural strips and closes for grazing evolved into Barge Farm and Amerden Manor Farm, both acquired in 1852 by Charles Whitlaw. His heirs built Amerden House in 1874 and grand houses by the riverside for rent, but the rural landscape remained as it had been for centuries.

Some 60 years ago, the Whitlaw estate sold most of the land to William Boyer & Sons which coveted not fertile topsoil but buried treasure. Summerleaze acquired a portion of Amerden Manor Farm and eventually extracted its gravel to create Taplow Lake but Boyer failed twice failed to obtain permission to excavate its much larger holding. Its attempts in 1965/67 and 1976/80 dragged on from initial application and refusal at District and County level through appeal, amendment, public inquiry and ultimate Ministerial refusal. Both inquiries considered the demand for gravel, the national interest, the "considerable rural serenity [and] tranquil scene

...serving a valuable Green Belt function by separating built-up areas close to London", the 21-foot high soil bank proposed for its eastern boundary ("an unnatural and unwelcome feature in the otherwise flat landscape"), the degree and duration of nuisance and of traffic noise, congestion and hazards, the impact on the peace and price of properties, the quality of the land for agriculture or other uses and its amenity, landscape value and proposed restoration.

Both Boyer's applications proposed access for 60 lorries every day onto Marsh Lane at its junction with Devil's Lane footpath. The first for the whole 350 acres was amended to 43 acres with the remainder postponed for ten years. The second – amended in 1979 to gain access at the top of Marsh Lane with its A4 junction "strengthened" – related only to 45 acres but there were "thin end of the wedge" fears that work might go on for 50 years.

At the first inquiry, the Society questioned if it was in the public interest for Boyer to field "a formidable array" of expensive legal and technical expertise to counter the alliance of local authorities – Buckinghamshire and Berkshire CCs, Eton Rural DC, Taplow, Burnham, Dorney and Bray PCs – and organisations including the Society, Maidenhead Civic Society, Bray Preservation Society (formed for this fight), the River Thames Society and Taplow Against Gravel (an ad hoc group of locals). Newsletter 14 (April 1967) reported the recruitment to the Society of 28 Marsh Lane residents.

A similar alliance (with Beaconsfield DC replacing Eton RDC, and over 550 individual supporters) formed for the second inquiry which – as before – failed to convince the Inspector on the urgency of gravel need. If the 1967 decision was "finely balanced", that in 1980 was clear cut – thus vindicating the alliance for funding the engagement of a Queen's Counsel who persuaded the Inspector to delay the inquiry pending the BCC decision that Barge Farm was not one of 27 "preferred areas" for mineral extraction in South Bucks. Newsletter 39 (Spring 1980) observed: "It would seem very unlikely that such a firm decision [to refuse gravel extraction] would be questioned in the near future [so] we can reasonably hope that Barge Farm will remain free from threat of gravel extraction in the future".

Or can we? Although now sliced by the Jubilee, the Amerden landscape retains its ancient and serene rural tranquillity, but for how long? Having acquired Barge Farm a few years ago, Summerleaze has revealed hopes to excavate the car boot sales site (C). TPC is not against extending Taplow Lake provided no gravel is carried on the A4. However, might this be another "thin end of the wedge"? Could the whisper of a planned access to Marsh Lane south of its bridge over the Jubilee (D) indicate an intention to excavate the rest of Barge Farm? And if so, will the community have the courage and energy to recreate the alliances that served it so well in the past?



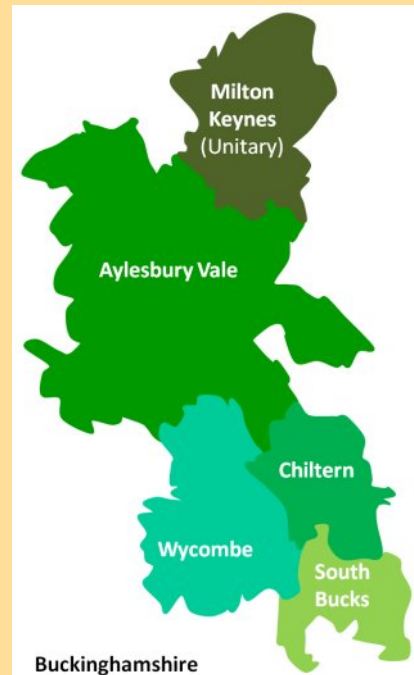
Bucking Bucks

Having agreed that TBC "lacks local consent" and will lack "democratic oversight", SBDC joined forces with Chiltern and Wycombe DCs in January to take legal action to try to prevent the creation of the single, supposedly "simpler" unitary authority which aspires to give "better value" by replacing these allied DCs, Aylesbury Vale DC and BCC. A reduction in total councillor posts from 232 to 147 seems sensible but does one councillor for every 5,375 residents add up? For comparison, TBC would need 172 councillors if the Milton Keynes ratio applied to rest of Buckinghamshire.

In our patch, BCC has been free to make more of its 73% share of our council tax so the primary scope for TBC savings can only be the tiddly

9% that goes to SBDC or the 4% to parishes. With this minimal wriggle-room, how will TBC deliver services more efficiently without unacceptable cuts? As a 'shadow authority' takes charge, will it be a lesson that, having replaced DCs with 'community hubs', Wiltshire is now closing them? What is the timetable for change? Parliamentary process grinds slowly. Meanwhile, guess who'll pay the legal eagles that look like flying nowhere fast.

Our BCC council tax covers only some of the £2.2m cost of A4 Cycleway, which will be funded by "developer contributions" and "largely" by HMG (so, by us). Despite 56% of respondents being against the scheme, construction has begun at last and will run to November. The proposed ban



on right turns into Berry Hill has been dropped but concerns remain that 'Cyclists Dismount' signs at Dumb Bell Bridge might be merely 'passing the buck'.

Woadblock

Newsletter 106 imagined rebellious woad-daubed locals launching UTIP, the United Taplow Independence Party. Now another flight of fancy watches its leader, Sandy Beach...

I've never been a Go-er, she laments. I just wanted the BU (Bucks Unitary) to make me look a leader. Now I'm a going, going, not-quite Gone Girl.

The referendum went Tapgo. No doubt. So, Go with the flow. Tallyho. Set the date for Going. Plan to please everyone.

They say I don't listen but there's so much noise. Go lied, not No, so no Go. Who knew Go meant going? And if it did, not like this. No had no right to spend our money to scare us. Go gets up those noses; No up these. Sovereignty pooled; the people fooled. Go didn't know In from Off or Up from Out. Go for No Deal, the BU will back off. No hard border

with Beaconsfield. Amerden longs for Away. Go soft, in name only. Go slow, No will win. No not Go likes big Bucks (even the Berks).

No? Go? Who knows which way wind is blowing? No clue what to do. Lost my majority. Stonewalled. Made and reneged on contrary promises. Won a confidence vote. Got a deal. Some say good. Bye. Some say hello, it's not No but Go with our hands tied, a blindfold and no voice. Clowns to the left of me. Jokers to the right. Fifty shades of So-and-Sos going for broke. Countless counts, all So-So, none to unite. Going dizzy dancing with devils. Erasing red lines. No Deal gone. Go gone back. Again. Forever tomorrow? Knowing No, knowing Go, it's the best I can bestow. Aha.

Well, here's another fine mess you've gotten us into, Sandy.

Minding the Manor

Mind your own business. Mind your manners. Good advice. Except it is our business that traffic, trains and planes pass through and over our manor. What's the latest?

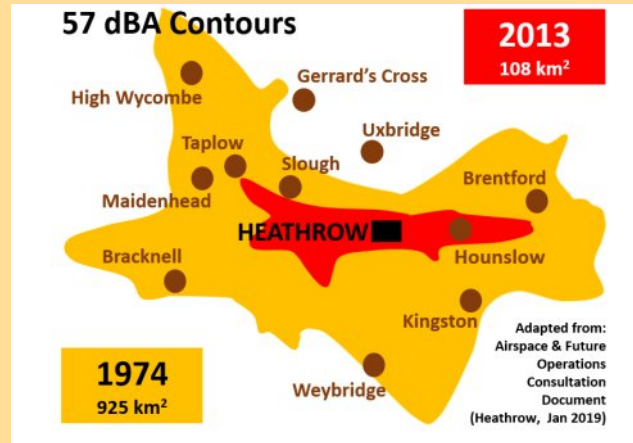
Newsletters 104 & 105 were parochial by design. They focused on the local impact of M4 noise and pollution rather than on 'Smart' motorways being only as clever as the controllers watching TV screens and changing overhead signage to direct drivers. The Highways Agency claims being 'Smart' "improves journey reliability by 22%" yet on an upgraded 16-mile stretch of the M25 peak-time journeys in 2013/17 took 8% longer. Could the real objective be fiscal? In this same period, 210,538 motorists were caught on camera nationwide and fined £21m for breaking reduced limits, many on near-empty motorways. How smart is that?



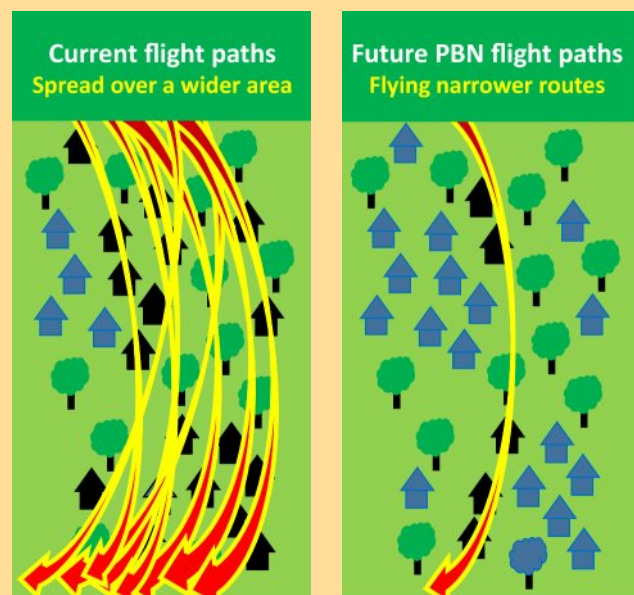
'Smartening' of the M4 proceeds apace. Locally, it will be 'All Lane Running' with no hard shoulder, reliant on controllers displaying a Red X on the overhead gantries to close the inside lane if a vehicle breaks down there. The Police Federation is not in favour and, as feared, fatal accidents occur when either controllers or drivers don't react quickly and correctly. After all, they're only human. Mind how you go.

On 29th March, Crossrail said its regeneration to the Elizabeth Line will all be over by Christmas. But which one? Taplow Station hopes for a renovated ticket hall and new lift-equipped bridge with (eventually) a new entrance to the north platform nearby, but have long-promised Sunday services got lost in transit? The draft Infrastructure Delivery Schedule supporting the Local Plan claims that "BCC and the DCs are currently working with TfL to consider ways of enhancing usage of Taplow Station Car Park". Crossrail says: "No new parking spaces are being planned". Mind the gap.

In February, Roger Worthington and Nigel Smales represented TPC and the Society at a



Heathrow exhibition which revealed airspace design principles that prioritise "minimising the number of people newly overflown" over "maximising sharing through managed dispersal" of flights. This recipe for sending every plane over Taplow rather than widening route corridors could be re-phrased: "Those who are overflown now will get all the increase in air traffic". It flies in the face of three things: Performance-based Navigation (PBN) systems can now achieve respite by precise alternation of flightpaths, quieter aircraft mean many fewer on the ground are exposed to noise capable of stopping conversation, and our feedback to the DfT consultation last year, which advocated dispersal. The diagrams recreated here imply every flight will take the same path – not nice if your house is under it. Spencer Norton says this won't happen, but could next year's Flightpath Options consultation be another Groundhog Day? Mind your language.

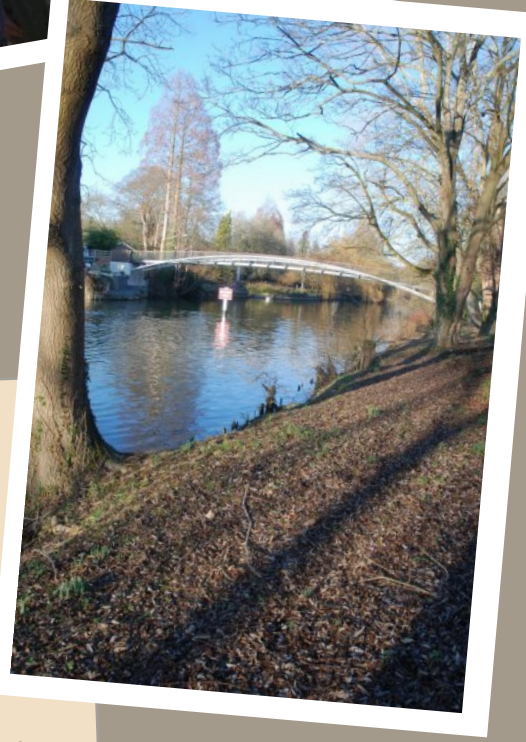


Adapted from Airspace & Future Operations Consultation Document (Heathrow, Jan 2019)

Snapshots

To celebrate International Women's Day, women across the world sang for the trees. The activity was coordinated by TreeSisters, a global women-led reforestation movement, to raise awareness of the crucial role that trees play in the face of climate change.

Zoe Hatch runs 'Songs of Evolution', a community choir that meets in St Nicolas' Church, which gathered in Old Priory Garden to 'Sing for the Trees' on 9th March. They will sing more in nature as the weather warms up. Zoe says, "You don't need to be able to sing to join in, just a love of nature and a willingness to do something a bit different". Find out more via the Songs of Evolution Facebook page, www.songsofevolution.wordpress.com or www.treesisters.org



Still No Name

BH's plan was for "an independent panel" to whittle down over 70 suggested names for our new footbridge to a shortlist for a final public vote prior to a naming ceremony on 11th April. This didn't happen. Watch for new news.



Two-Bags Spencer



Mike & Jacqueline

Tidy-Up Taplow

Did you TUT on 7th April? Well done if you were among the 41 inspired by the GB Spring Clean to help Tidy-Up Taplow by gathering from our streets and footpaths 63 bags of rubbish (more than any parish nearby) and assorted detritus including a dead microwave! And a very big thank-you to Jacqueline & Mike Turner for their brilliant organisation and for refreshing us afterwards with yummy cakes, biscuits, coffee and tea.



Most of the TUT team

Jim Oliver



Caring for a Taplow Treasure

St Nicolas' Church was built in 1911/12 with £9,000 of "generous and spontaneous" contributions by 200 Taplovians. Now it costs £30,000 a year just to maintain. It receives no financial help from the Diocese even for major projects such as the recent replacement of the north roof. In the last year, the church has raised £50,000 to replace the south roof, but another £25,000 is needed to complete essential renovation to the walls.

Please help to sustain St Nicolas for current and future generations by contributing regularly, making a one-off donation or leaving a legacy. For details, go to st-nicolas-taplow.org

or contact the treasurer: snoxelljames@gmail.com
To date, sales of *Taplow Moments* and donations in thanks for illustrated talks by its author Nigel Smales have raised £1,165 for church repairs. This colourful history of Taplow costs £25; every penny now goes to this fund. To buy a copy, contact cazanig@aol.com

Not Caring for a Taplow Treasure?

For 133 years, this keystone adorned the door of the new Brigade of Guards Boat Club, premises incorporated into Skindles Hotel in 1904. Having agreed in 2015 that it would be saved for posterity, Berkeley Homes has not responded to the Society's enquiries of its fate.

Eggsiting

On Easter Monday, Sheila Peroni and Charlie & Toby Greeves once again hosted the Society's annual Easter Egg Hunt in their lovely garden. As over 30 children rushed around looking for eggs, some 45 adults enjoyed wonderful cakes, coffee and conversation.



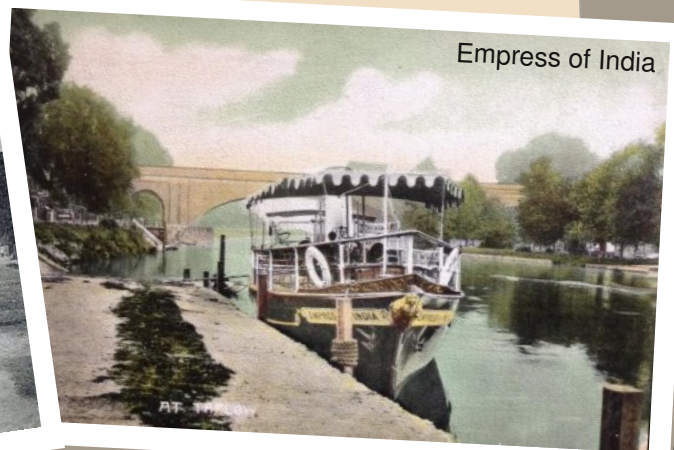
Postcards from the Past

This Newsletter is pleased to share two postcards sent in 1907. The parasols make a fine sight on River Road, but rather more fleeting than *Empress of India* - at 83 feet long, the biggest Bond's boat ever, built in 1897/98 by Jonathan Bond the Younger to celebrate Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee, possibly hoping that she would acquire it. She wasn't amused. The *Empress* (the boat, not Her Majesty) cruised the Thames for Bond's until 1921 then for Arthur Jacobs (1922/30 and 1951/76), Picking & Cleaves (1931/51) and finally for Turk's until she sank in 2003 and was scrapped the following year.

Parasols on Parade



Empress of India

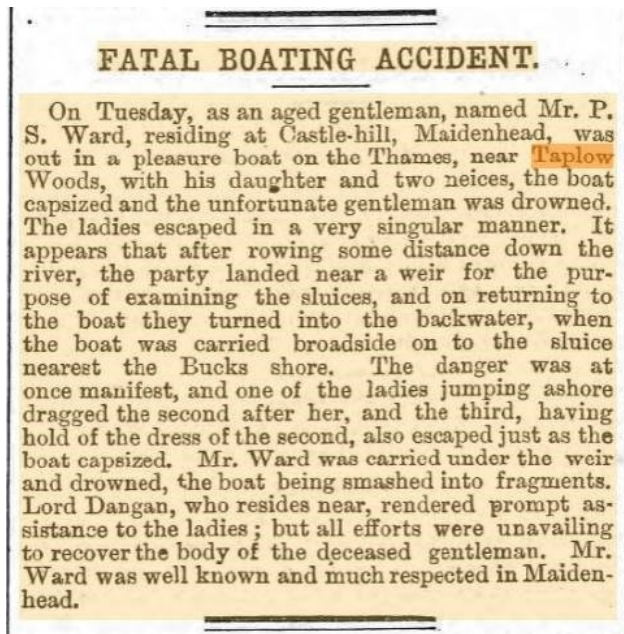


Courtesy: Bridget Hole (MM)

Courtesy: John McKew (MM)

Dreadful Demises and Curious Crimes

Thanks to Steve Hawkes of *Maidenhead Memories* who shared four intriguing newspaper extracts. The first was published in June 1878...



Experts on the peerage will confirm that Lord Dangan was the 1st Duke of Wellington's nephew Henry Wellesley. Does anyone know where he lived?

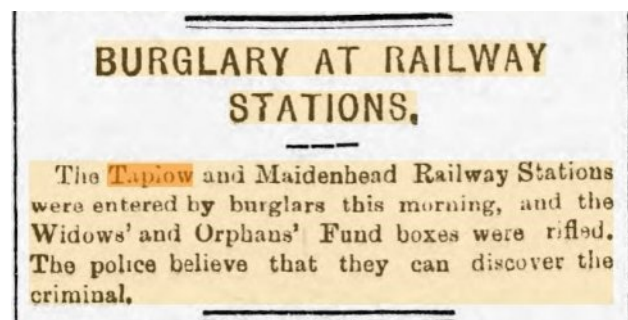
The second extract, from January 1888, is too long to reproduce in full. William and Ethel Grenfell had not reached the first anniversary of their marriage when...

"A daring, carefully-planned burglary was successfully carried out on the night of the 13th inst. at Taplow Court. Early in the evening, probably while the inmates were at dinner, the thieves secured the entrance doors with wire and laid tripwires across the lawn at the west front of the mansion and facing the Thames. On hearing the supper bell, [concluding] all had left that part of the house to which they wished to gain access, [two of] the perpetrators kept watch while two accomplices ascended a ladder" stolen from George Webster at Hill Farm a quarter-mile away. They entered through Mrs Grenfell's dressing-room window which "had not been fastened nor the shutters secured". One searched her dressing-room, the other her bedroom. "The dressing-cases, drawers, bags &c were ransacked, and every article of

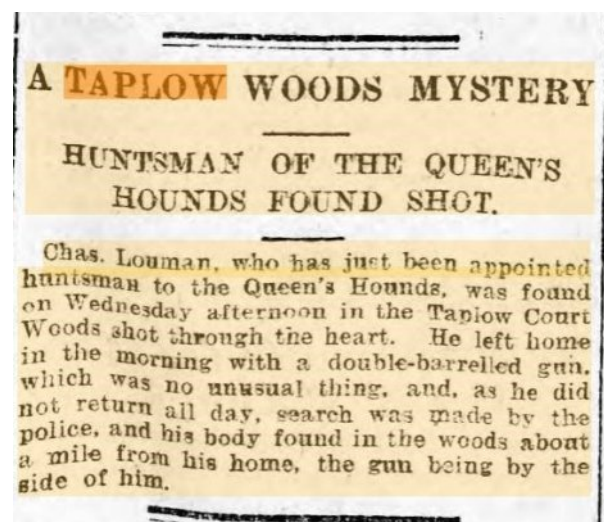
jewellery taken. Nearly all the booty consisted of wedding presents which had a value beyond the ordinary. The robbery was not discovered until after ten o'clock when a housemaid found "the bedroom door locked from the inside, the thieves having thus made themselves secure". They left footprints and a jemmy but no other evidence. Mr Grenfell offered rewards of £50 (current value around £5,100) "for such information as will lead to conviction" and £200 (£20,400) "for the conviction of the thieves and the recovery of the property" which included a pearl necklace valued at £1,500 (£153,000) and some 50 other items worth a total of £2,500 (£255,000).

Were the thieves ever apprehended and the rewards paid?

The third extract is from 1890...



Research didn't reveal if the police were successful but perhaps their task was easier in June 1900...



John Kennedy 1930-2018



Courtesy: Brenda Kennedy

Did you wonder if, being a Kennedy, John had Irish ancestry? Not a bit of it. His German grandparents came from Leipzig in the 1870s. His father was born in London and, during the Great War, must have confused fellow and foe alike while serving in the British Army as Frederick Kretschmar, a surname wisely changed in 1919.

Did you wonder how, as a Doctor of Chemistry, John made his mark in the textile industry? In 1959, he joined ICI in Harrogate to develop and market a new Polyester yarn called Crimplene. The thread took him to "a dream job" in the USA in 1966, to creating Trendtex International in Maidenhead in 1972 and being made a Freeman of the City of London.

Did you wonder why the home he and Brenda had built on Taplow's riverbank in 1972 was called Olympia House? It was named after Olympia Mills, the world's first vertical Polyester texturizing, dyeing and winding plant which John founded in Alabama in 1969.

Did you wonder how John got into politics? The answer is simple: Brenda. Their first date was at the newly-formed Young Conservative Club in Woodford Green, Essex, where her father was branch Chairman in Winston Churchill's constituency. He was doubly smitten, forever after adoring and devoted to Brenda yet also the heartbeat of Conservative Associations at University College London, in the West Riding and, for 48 years, at Beaconsfield.

John wasn't one for wondering. Instead, both in business and for the community, he had ideas, set agendas and made things happen. John Bamberg confirms his "best friend [wasn't] backward in coming forward" with his views. Iris Midlane's aversion to mushrooms, the sustainability of Cliveden Gages, which wine went with what, the Village Green Party, the closure of Mill Lane and much else was found the right room for an argument. Yet he was a smooth operator, always ready with persuasive charm and inexhaustible energy to forge alliances and influence outcomes during two terms on Taplow Parish Council totalling 31 years (the second to create the 2005 Parish Plan), 23 years as a District Councillor (including three as SBDC Chairman), five as the Society's President and ten as Vice-President.

Meanwhile, he combined compassion and dynamic leadership at Padstones Housing Charity (now Connection Support) to assist homeless youngsters, at South Bucks Housing Association (now L&Q Beacon Housing Association) to provide affordable housing and to fund scholarships and apprenticeships, at Groundwork South Trust to promote environmental and social regeneration and at Blue Sky Development & Regeneration to create jobs for ex-offenders. And somehow, he still had time not only to give invaluable support to Burnham Memorial Recreation Ground Trust and to his alma mater, Christ's Hospital School, but also to captain Temple Golf Club and to share with Brenda an enviable reputation as ever-generous hosts. Their bar was always open!

Many will picture John wearing one or more of these hats but, of course, he will be remembered most fondly as loyal and loving by Brenda, their four children, ten grandchildren, two great-grandchildren and his brother Philip.

Adapted from eulogies by Rachel Wright & John Bamberg

Lincoln's End

Remembering Lincoln Lee

In its unapologetic indulgence in whimsy, this page is indebted to John Lovelace of Hedgerley Historical Society for sharing this delightful map of our area which reveals Taplow as Topley, one of the more unusual spellings in its evolution from Thapeslau or Thapelau (1086) through Tapeslawe (1187), Tappelawe (1196), Tappelow (1291), Tappelowe (1379), Tappelow (1517) Topley (1562), Toplar (1675) and Taplowe (1720) to settle at Taplow in 1737.



Amerden, its sixth spelling since Aumberdene (1194), or Manfield Park, the only different name for Cliefden (1213) as it meandered via at least 14 spellings to Cliveden (1880s).

Further afield, Eaton (Eton) and Upton appear but not Slough, a hamlet on the Bath Road first noted as Slo (1195), possibly

derived from the *ysleow* (granaries) where cereals were stored for Windsor Castle. More surprising is the absence of Cookham, a thriving river port noted as Cocheham in the Domesday Book (1086) with 67 households, hereabouts second only to 80 at Brai (Bray). Thapeslau (Taplow) then had 24 households, Hucheham (Hitcham) 11 and Elentone (Maidenhead) only 10. How things change.

Coincidentally, a map on display at Heathrow's recent exhibition in Maidenhead (see Page 11) omitted not only Cookham but Maidenhead and Taplow too. Weird or what? Could Saxton be reincarnated to design airspace? The truth is out there.

The map is a partial extract from one reproduced 80 years after its original engraving. It reflects the way things were not just after Oliver Cromwell died but during the reign of Queen Elizabeth I. Her favoured courtier Thomas Seckford of Suffolk commissioned cartographer Christopher Saxton of Yorkshire to survey England and Wales and publish in 1579 the first atlas of any nation.

Saxton's spellings are fun, his omissions puzzling. Locally, Hedsor features but not

Save These Dates

Watch the Society's website for details

The Rise & Fall of Skindles – History talk by Nigel Smales:

Bourne End 9th May & Eton Wick 22nd May

SGI-UK at Taplow Court – see also <https://sgi-uk.org/>

Open Days: 19th May, 2nd June, 7th July, 4th August & 15th September

Introduction to Buddhism: 29th May, 26th June, 10th July, 7th August & 18th September

The Society's 34th Village Green Party: 22nd June – see inserted leaflet

Village Fete in aid of the Church, the School and the Playgroup: 29th June

There will be no Taplow Dog Show this year

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Unless otherwise stated, the views expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily those of the Society or its Committee.

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