

Hitcham and Taplow Society

Newsletter 104: Autumn 2015
£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: Mike Clarke seeding the Village Green (Nigel Smales)

Editorial

Welcome to a very busy Newsletter. Unfortunately, it had to be 'put to bed' just before 23rd October when Rupert Sellers arranged for two Heathrow executives to come to the Village Centre to explain how the third runway (and its flight paths) will affect us; this will be addressed in the next edition. There is no room to report on the Society's successful Easter Egg Hunt and 29th Village Green Party, or Rev Alan Dibden's final Church Fete, except to say that many enjoyed each as usual. Priority is given to 'new news' – about Mill Lane, the M4 and the Station – and to topical perspectives on infrastructure. There is good news about the Green, the Church, the School, SGI, a River Relay and a Frog Bin, a little bit of local history and sad news of an old friend. Thanks are due to all correspondents who help to make each Newsletter as interesting and colourful a reflection of our community as can be.

Nigel Smales



Nigel Smales

The Church Fete: children maypole dancing in the Rectory garden on 4th July 2015

Acronym Key: This Newsletter uses acronyms for the Canadian Red Cross Memorial Hospital (CRCMH), Ellington Road & District Residents' Association (EDRA), Environment Agency (EA), European Commission (EC), Maidenhead Rowing Club (MRC), Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead (RBWM), South Bucks District Council (SBDC), Station Garage Taplow (SGT), Transport for Bucks (TfB), Transport for London (TfL) and Taplow Parish Council (TPC).

Green Fingers

Our delightful Village Green was not quite so lovely when one examined it closely. There were brown patches, pits and pockets of rubble, and some of the green was weeds not grass.

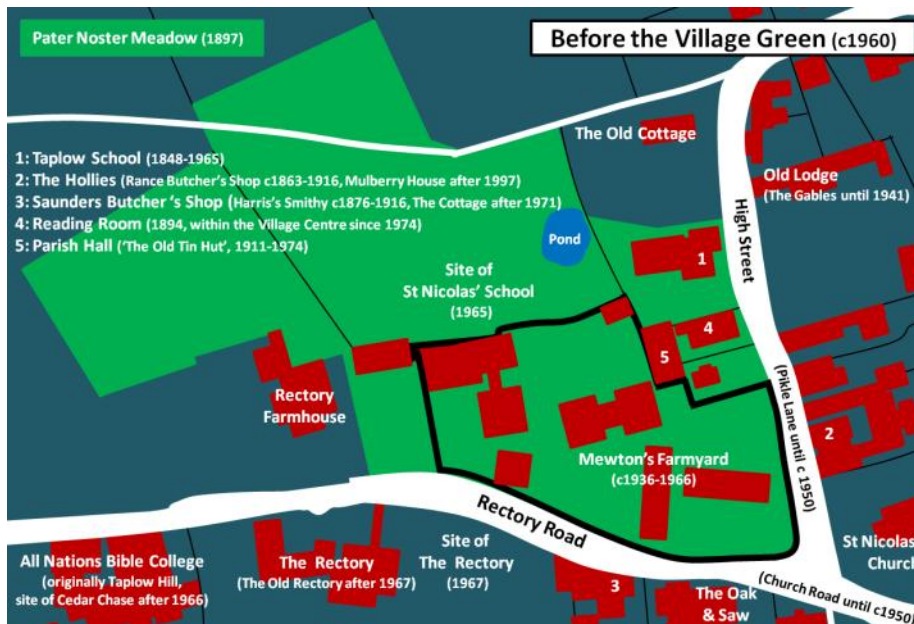
The Green was originally part of Pater Noster, a meadow where almost 190 years ago the Briginshaw family of Rectory Farm began to establish a colony of barns, stables, briars and pigsties. For a time, the butcher William Rance had a blood pit in its south-east corner. Arthur Mewton of Hill Farm used the farmyard for many years until a builder secured planning permission for five houses. Urgent action in 1966 succeeded in acquiring the land for public use but insufficient funds were available to do more than demolish or burn down the buildings, break up the asphalt hard-standing, rake the rubble and scatter grass seed. These remains retain the heat in summer causing the ground to dry out too quickly for grass to survive.

Residents at the 2014 Annual Parish Meeting voted this longstanding problem as the Number Two priority for investment of funds donated by Land Securities. Laying new turf was ruled out because it couldn't be watered on a daily basis and even a short spell of dry weather could see it die off pretty quickly. It was decided instead to dig out over 50 tons of cinders and rubble, back-fill with suitable aggregate, spread about six inches of new topsoil over the whole area, plant two new trees, lay a concrete base for the spit on

which shoulders of beef will be roasted at Village Green Parties and then sow 386lbs of grass seeds, a mix suited to cope with historic wear patterns and shady areas under trees. We waited until September to start the work so that, if the gods are kind, Autumnal rains will help the seeds germinate while there is still enough heat in the ground.

The work is now complete but, during the time the new grass takes to be ready for the everyday bashing it suffers during the school year, the Green will have to be out-of-bounds to everybody until the newly-laid surface has bedded down and the new young grass has had its first few cuts. It will never be a bowling green. It will continue to have its contours but, above all, it will hopefully be an exceedingly healthy, green Village Green for us all to enjoy at its Golden Jubilee next year.

George Sandy
Chairman of Taplow Parish Council



Nigel Smales

Three Applications: No, No Need and Pending

Having withdrawn its first application to expand, Maidenhead Rowing Club submitted another which was refused because of the traffic and parking implications. And an application to change the use of The Hermitage from offices to residential was deemed unnecessary because, despite having long been a training centre, its residential designation remained. Is the idea to restore this lovely Edwardian villa as two or three apartments or to replace it with a high density housing development? Any next steps here or at MRC are awaited with bated breath.



Fred Russell

The Hermitage

Meanwhile, as 66 flats grow by Institute Road where SGT used to be, SBDC placed in its Pending tray an application to build 17 dwellings on the adjoining site to the east which straddles the parish boundary. Taplow was happy to have 12 'affordable' terraced cottages and maisonettes on its end but Burnham objected to the five 'market' cottages proposed for its domain. However, this wasn't why the limbo. Permission was granted subject to conditions relating to surface water drainage and legal issues which are expected to have been resolved before this Newsletter is published.

Nigel Smales

Infrastructure: Who Pays?

A recent newspaper article suggested that the population of this island nation of ours will soon rise to over 80 million and that, by 2080, it could be as high as 100 million. Whatever the causes might be, we shall have to face the prospect that we will probably have the highest population density in Europe. This increase in people numbers will require an awful lot of houses to be built and, just as importantly, a massive expansion and upgrade of the social infrastructure to comfortably support this level of population. But who will pay for it? In practice, it will be split between HM Government, local authorities and developers – actually meaning you and me! In a new Government paper about the need to develop the Green Belt, we find the following:

“Major proposals for new homes, whether they are in the green belt or on brownfield sites, must be preceded by adequate investment in schools, health, transport and other infrastructure, and planned in a strategic and holistic way, with up-to-date local plans being critical.”

In other words, infrastructure should precede houses. The Government talks of creating five new towns, but where are local plans that factor in all the infrastructure load new housing will require? For instance, where will all the children in the new Berkeley homes at Mill Lane go to school? I don't believe the 'bribes' called Section 106 payments made by developers will provide anywhere near enough cash for true infrastructure growth. Essex County Council appears to be one of the few local authorities to bite the bullet. About 10 years ago, it estimated that this infrastructure would cost around £38,000 for every new house built. This would have meant that a scheme such as Mill Lane required an associated investment in infrastructure of something like £6m. I imagine today's figure would be considerably higher.

Fred Russell

Where Thinking Joined-Up is the?

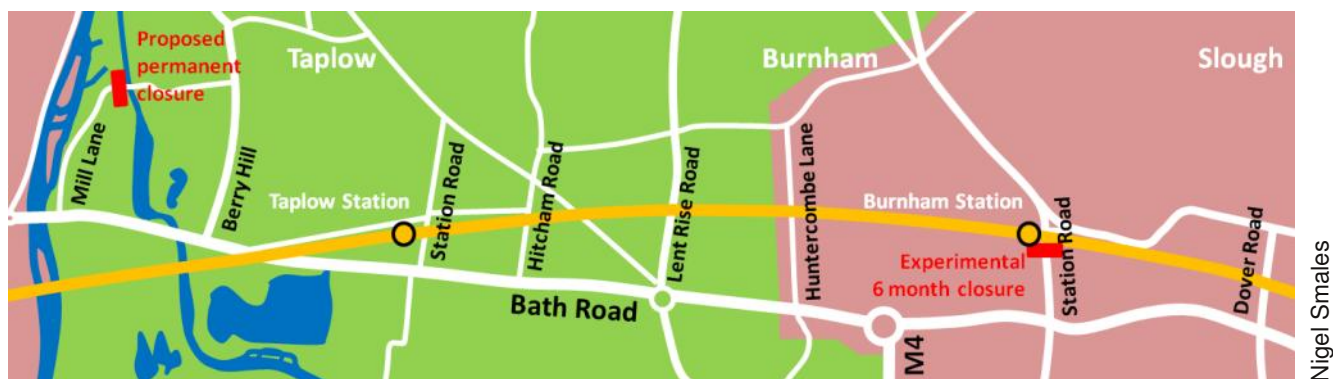
Fred's perspective is as perceptive as ever, but there may be another local authority exception just across the river. RBWM is proposing to add 1,380 school places by 2024 at a cost of £20m funded from three sources: Government grants, its own capital funds and Section 106 "developer contributions". A budget shortfall of £6.6m might be a problem, but at least our neighbours have a vision and a strategy to achieve it. Can the same be said for transport planners?

The already overloaded Bath Road straddling Taplow is forecast to have 16% more traffic by 2026 yet every proposed development along this stretch is considered in isolation. This myopia may be about to make matters worse. Mill Lane will soon be closed permanently and Station Road in Burnham has recently closed for a six month trial. Will the latter ever re-open if (as mooted) Burnham Station is reconstructed with

a multi-storey car park? Won't these closures cause even more congestion on connecting roads, as feared by a neighbour (see below)? Should we trust in dreams that drivers will be so frustrated they go elsewhere, or that the proposed M4 widening and the coming of Crossrail will work magic (see Pages 6 and 7)?

These transport evolutions each fall into different silos. TfL is responsible for Crossrail, Highways England for the M4, Slough Borough Council for Burnham and TfB for Mill Lane. Evidence is sparse that they have come across the concept of 'Joined-Up Thinking'. Can we dare hope the proposed National Infrastructure Commission will manage the 'Big Picture'? Or will its brief be to overcome any and all obstacles to 'Big Ideas'?

Nigel Smales



Prisoners

Huntercombe Lane North is already a nightmare. Every day, traffic in both directions is at a standstill for 600 yards between the roundabout by Burnham Academy and the lights at the Bath Road junction. Even on a good day during the evening peak, it takes at least 15 minutes to get 500 yards from this roundabout to my home in Cardinals Walk. We are regularly held prisoners there by vehicles commuting to and from work or heading for the Bishop Centre, Sainsbury's or the car boot sale. All the vans, lorries, 4x4s and cars add up to no visibility at all, and Slough Borough

Council has ignored my request for a mirror to be put up to give us a fighting chance as we dice with death to begin our daily journeys. So imagine my annoyance to read in *The Burnham Advertiser* on 17th September that it is "just scaremongering" to complain that the ridiculous road closure at Burnham Station will make matters worse. I challenge Slough councillors to meet me at the end of Cardinals Walk in the peak periods and tell me face-to-face that I am scaremongering.

Geraldine Forrest of Burnham

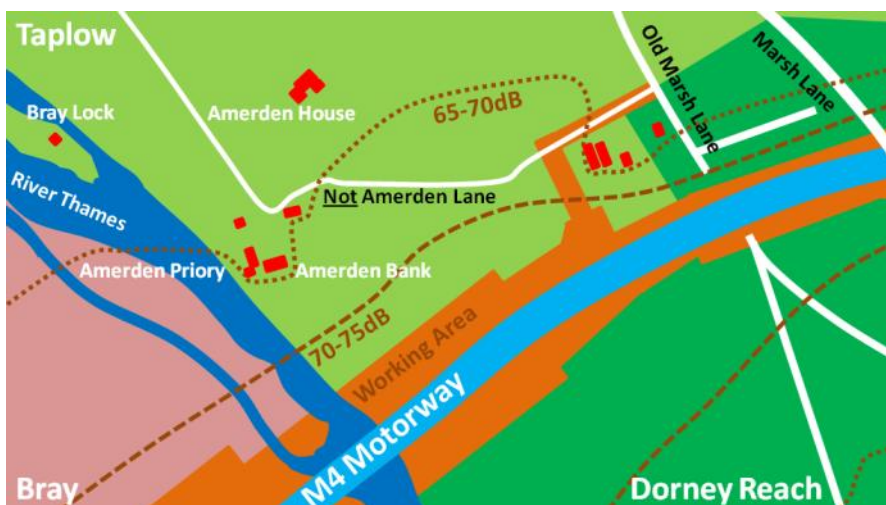
The M4: Airing the Argument

The Volkswagen (VW) emissions scandal encourages disbelief in the claims of manufacturers and the entire Road Lobby concerning the Public's breathable air. A 1993 Harvard study warned of increased mortality yet, in one of its worst policy errors, the European Commission instigated the heedless flight from petrol to diesel. UK road tax changes in 2001 cemented the mistake.

Data manipulation is rife in the field of 'Big Ideas', especially those about 'Big Infrastructure'. Vanity projects for Government, its agencies and quangos are often characterised by a changing of names. The EA provided a local example by rebranding itself four times while ignoring residents' warnings and successfully spinning data to achieve spectacular floods in Wraybury and Datchet.

The last 'Big Idea' for the M4 was defeated 20 years ago. It was proven to be so much bureaucratic hot air when, after a great bonfire of money, the M4 sufficed as it was. Now the Highways Agency reinvents itself as Highways England to blow on the embers. It proposes to make the M4 a 'Smart Motorway', in part by turning the hard shoulder into a fourth lane and adding occasional Emergency Refuge Areas for escapees. This will introduce novel hazards – broken-down vehicles stationary in the new inside lane, stranded passengers suddenly emerging as pedestrians and potential fatalities – that would never be tolerated elsewhere in the present Health & Safety State.

While a part of Government puts annual human deaths from all air particulates, largely of diesel origin, at 29,000 and those from nitrous oxide at 23,000, another part would increase the mortality toll by making the M4 more dangerous. Meanwhile, Road and Airport Lobbies play fast and loose with numbers. Third runway promoters claim Heathrow can conform to air quality laws only if the M4 is made diesel-free. Motorway promoters spin the same data, but quite differently. One might say:



Nigel Smales

Houses will be skirted by M4 noise of 65dB, the level at which voices must be raised to converse

Derived from Highways Agency illustrations

'A plague on both their houses'. In reality, the potential, non-metaphorical plague is on those living or working within 550yds of a motorway.

The Campaign for Better Transport in 2013 identified eight points between M4 Junctions 6 and 8/9 where acceptable nitrous oxide levels were breached. Government inaction on air quality has led to the EC directing the UK Supreme Court to ensure air pollution laws are enforced. It will be essential to have a truly independent authority to end the 'smoke and mirrors' merry-go-round of manipulation, claim and counterclaim by ensuring the collection of accurate, unadulterated data and, crucially, of validating any projected air pollution estimates. The VW case demonstrates that nothing less is of any value.

The new authority would oversee the daily publication of data for both M4 pollutants and existing surveillance information on individual vehicles to enable comparison of the total of manufacturers' emission figures with the actual levels of toxins. This would limit scope for data-bending and further fraud whilst improving the basis for rational decision-making in a matter that has considerable bearing upon Public Health. It might very well demonstrate that neither Heathrow's expansion nor the M4 widening can lawfully proceed because, as George Orwell wrote, "Coming up for air! But there isn't any air".

David Long

The Lane with No Name

In medieval times, the monks of Amerden trudged to church up a lane with no name. In Victorian times, the Whitlaws of Amerden House laid a cinder track with no name from this old lane to Marsh Lane, and another track along the southern slope of the railway embankment – now mostly a footpath – was dubbed Amerden Lane. The Whitlaw way, now metalled, and the southern stretch of the monks’ lane make up a private road owned by Barge Farm. Some 30 years ago, having neither consulted Amerdonians nor sought their

consent, the Post Office called this Amerden Lane. This seed of confusion sown from an ivory tower almost had tragic consequences on 2nd August when a boat exploded near Bray Lock, injuring six. A fire engine and a team of divers went to the real Amerden Lane and searched in vain for a boat burning on Taplow Lake. Fortunately, other emergency services didn’t make the same mistake.

Proximi Ripae

Crossrail: It’s a Knockout

Nigel Smales



No way over the old footbridge

Not content with knocking down trees, Crossrail has also knocked out Taplow Station’s historic footbridge! Just weeks after the late Jon Willmore feared for its future in Newsletter 103 (Spring 2015), a travelling crane severely damaged the 1884 cast iron bridge’s southern span between the island platforms and the south car park. This section of the footbridge was closed and a minibus service shuttled all summer from one car park to the other while a temporary (ugly) footbridge was built at the London end of the platforms. It seems very likely that the damaged section of the old bridge will go permanently and it is unclear whether its span between Platforms 3 and 4 – now also closed – will be renovated and retained.

This would be a very sad loss, but the coming of Crossrail isn’t all bad news. In two

years, TfL will take over responsibility for all its stations. This means funds will be made available to upgrade Taplow’s, which will be manned during all scheduled train times (with four peak-time trains an hour and a “hoped for” Sunday service). Platform 3’s waiting rooms will be restored and re-opened, probably with glass panels between them to cut out wind and noise from expresses. Cycle racks will be provided as needed, co-ordinated with the planned Maidenhead-Slough cycleway. However, TfL has a conundrum: it intends to build a new footbridge (complete with lifts on Platforms 3 and 4) but, alas, this will be where the temporary one now stands. It isn’t clear how passengers will cross between platforms while one replaces the other.

Roger Worthington

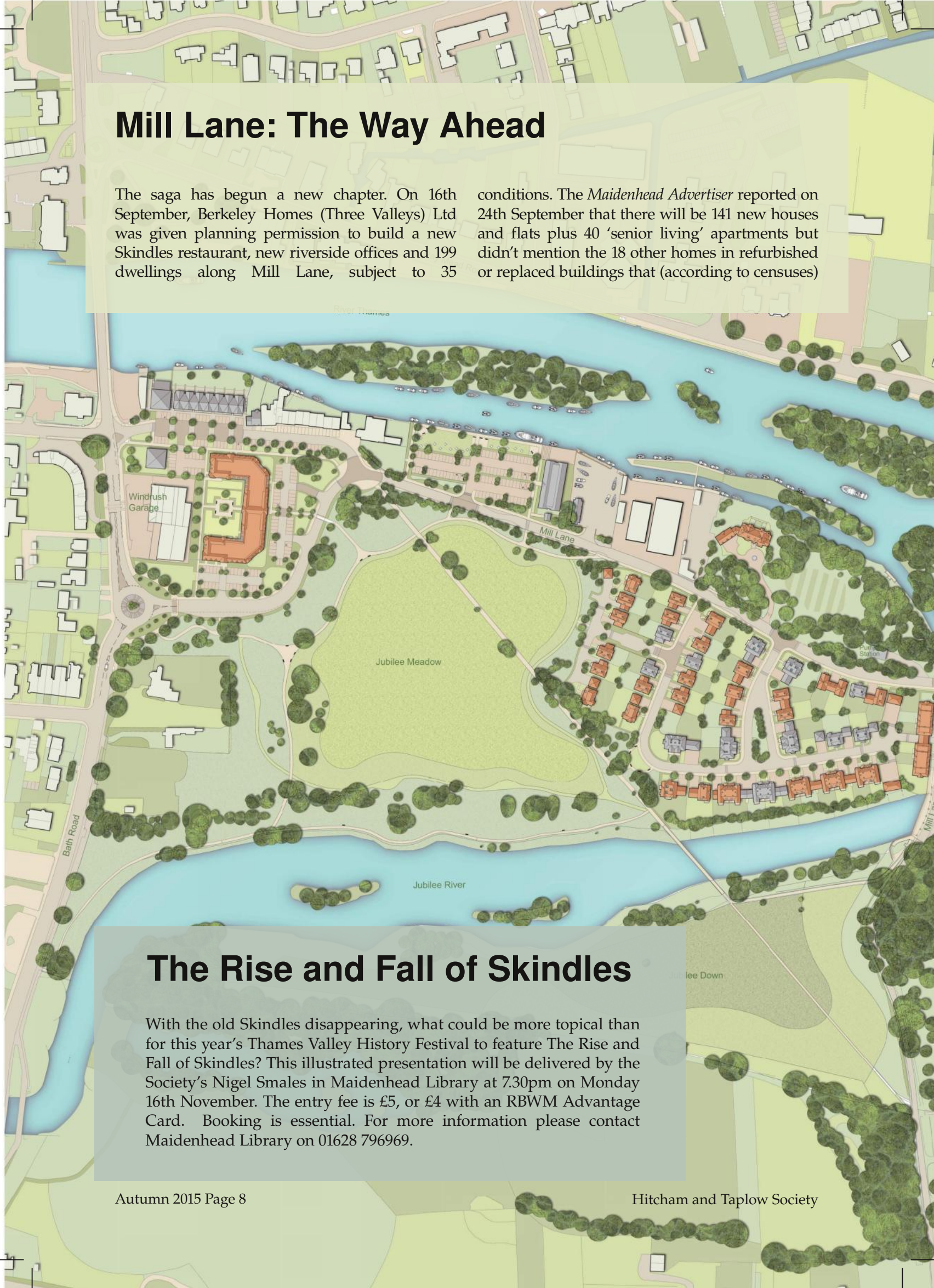


Nigel Smales

Mill Lane: The Way Ahead

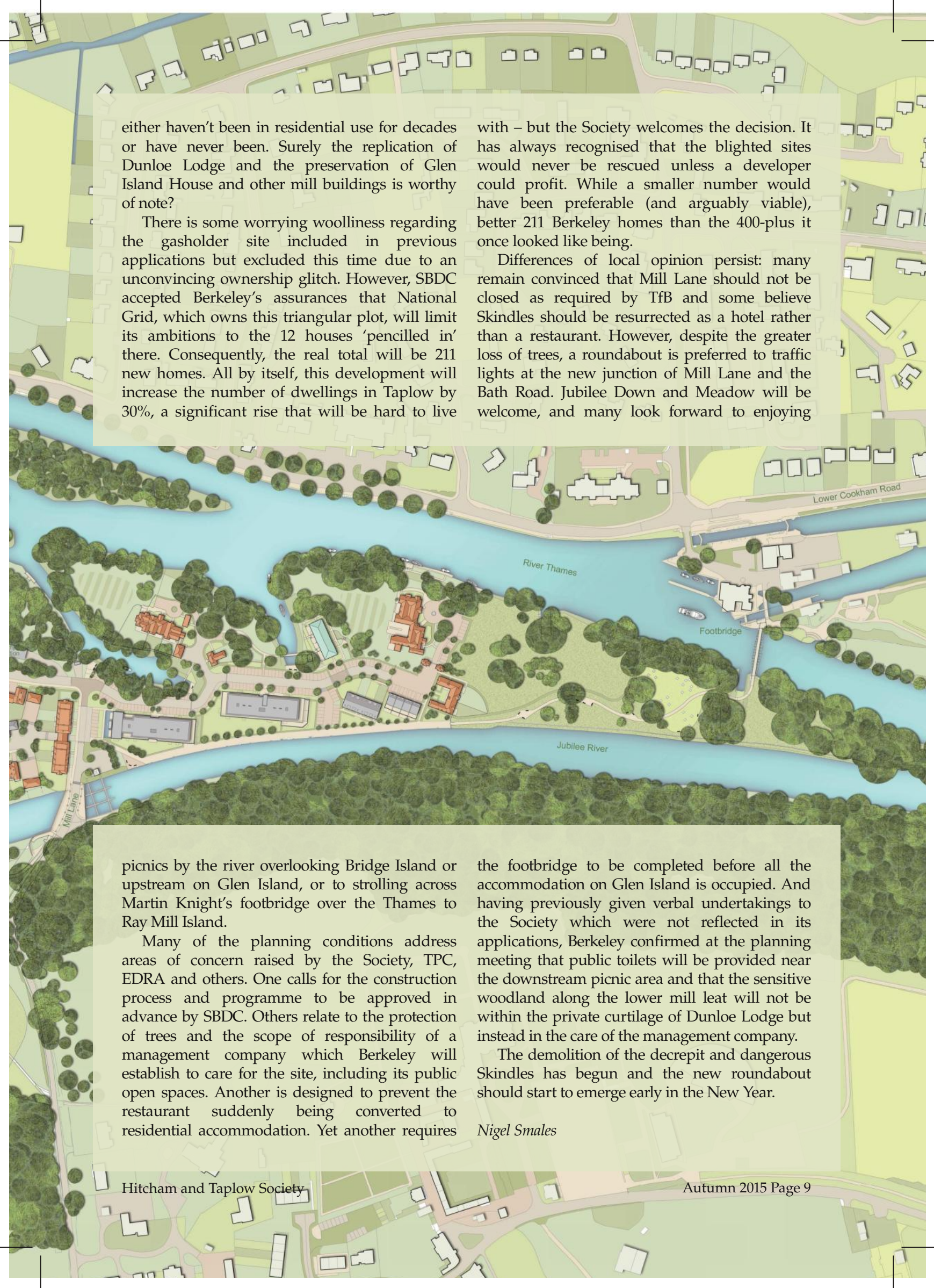
The saga has begun a new chapter. On 16th September, Berkeley Homes (Three Valleys) Ltd was given planning permission to build a new Skindles restaurant, new riverside offices and 199 dwellings along Mill Lane, subject to 35

conditions. The *Maidenhead Advertiser* reported on 24th September that there will be 141 new houses and flats plus 40 'senior living' apartments but didn't mention the 18 other homes in refurbished or replaced buildings that (according to censuses)



The Rise and Fall of Skindles

With the old Skindles disappearing, what could be more topical than for this year's Thames Valley History Festival to feature The Rise and Fall of Skindles? This illustrated presentation will be delivered by the Society's Nigel Smales in Maidenhead Library at 7.30pm on Monday 16th November. The entry fee is £5, or £4 with an RBWM Advantage Card. Booking is essential. For more information please contact Maidenhead Library on 01628 796969.



either haven't been in residential use for decades or have never been. Surely the replication of Dunloe Lodge and the preservation of Glen Island House and other mill buildings is worthy of note?

There is some worrying woolliness regarding the gasholder site included in previous applications but excluded this time due to an unconvincing ownership glitch. However, SBDC accepted Berkeley's assurances that National Grid, which owns this triangular plot, will limit its ambitions to the 12 houses 'pencilled in' there. Consequently, the real total will be 211 new homes. All by itself, this development will increase the number of dwellings in Taplow by 30%, a significant rise that will be hard to live

with – but the Society welcomes the decision. It has always recognised that the blighted sites would never be rescued unless a developer could profit. While a smaller number would have been preferable (and arguably viable), better 211 Berkeley homes than the 400-plus it once looked like being.

Differences of local opinion persist: many remain convinced that Mill Lane should not be closed as required by TfB and some believe Skindles should be resurrected as a hotel rather than a restaurant. However, despite the greater loss of trees, a roundabout is preferred to traffic lights at the new junction of Mill Lane and the Bath Road. Jubilee Down and Meadow will be welcome, and many look forward to enjoying

picnics by the river overlooking Bridge Island or upstream on Glen Island, or to strolling across Martin Knight's footbridge over the Thames to Ray Mill Island.

Many of the planning conditions address areas of concern raised by the Society, TPC, EDRA and others. One calls for the construction process and programme to be approved in advance by SBDC. Others relate to the protection of trees and the scope of responsibility of a management company which Berkeley will establish to care for the site, including its public open spaces. Another is designed to prevent the restaurant suddenly being converted to residential accommodation. Yet another requires

the footbridge to be completed before all the accommodation on Glen Island is occupied. And having previously given verbal undertakings to the Society which were not reflected in its applications, Berkeley confirmed at the planning meeting that public toilets will be provided near the downstream picnic area and that the sensitive woodland along the lower mill leat will not be within the private curtilage of Dunloe Lodge but instead in the care of the management company.

The demolition of the decrepit and dangerous Skindles has begun and the new roundabout should start to emerge early in the New Year.

Nigel Smales

Four Anniversaries: 25, 50, 70 and 800

Soka Gakkai International settled at Taplow Court in 1988. Two years later, its UK Grand Culture Centre was opened there by its president, Dr Daisaku Ikeda. SGI quickly became integral to the life and times of Taplow. Its historic home and grounds have been beautifully restored, and its Open Days and receptions are a feature of the local calendar. SGI also hosts many charity and cultural events such as that on 1st July when the Duke of Gloucester represented HM Queen Elizabeth II at a citizenship ceremony for 19 newly-naturalised Britons.



Kazuo Fujii

Roger Worthington,
Karl Lawrence,
Robert Daniels and
Eva Lipman

The Society took the opportunity of the Centre's 25th anniversary to recognise SGI's contribution. On 14th August, Karl Lawrence and Eva Lipman presented to former General Director Robert Samuels and Vice General Director Kazuo Fujii a letter of appreciation to Dr Ikeda and a copy of *Taplow Moments*. Dr Ikeda subsequently presented

the Society with albums of photographs he has taken around the world.



Nigel Smales

The Guide Hut had only been open for four years when Susan Silver of Boundary Road became a Brownie leader in 1969. On 7th June, she joined past and present Guides, Brownies and Rainbows to celebrate the Hut's 50th birthday. She said "It's great. It's been my life and helped get me through hard times. The girls can just cheer you up if you're feeling a bit down. Hopefully, we'll still be here in another 50 years."

Residents at Applegarth Care Home in Huntercombe Lane North enjoyed a musical show

and wartime quiz to celebrate the 70th anniversary of VE-Day on 8th May. Later that evening, the Queen emerged from Windsor Castle to light the first of a chain of 200 beacons; moments later, 300 yards down The Long Walk, your editor had the privilege of lighting the second.



Andrew Findlay

The playlet at Cliveden

The 800th anniversary of the Magna Carta was commemorated on 13th and 14th June by a River Relay, in which the royal row barge *Gloriana* led a flotilla of over 150 craft from Hurley to Runnymede, and on 15th June by a ceremony at Runnymede in the presence of Her Majesty. The Relay involved a series of 23 charter bearers aboard the shallop *Jubilant* which stopped at eight riverside locations where a company of actors cast as King John, Archbishop of Canterbury Stephen Langton and numerous barons performed playlets depicting the events of 1215. Taplow enjoyed watching the flotilla pass and played three parts in the proceedings. The first was at Cliveden: the riverbank stage for the fourth playlet. The second and third featured MRC, which provided Richard Oliver (of Gaiety Row) and the rest of the crew for *Gloriana* as she progressed from Cookham to Maidenhead Bridge and then safe mooring for her.

Roger Worthington & Nigel Smales



Brian Smith

St Nicolas' School at 50

To celebrate 50 years of our school, we had many ex-students and teachers talking to us about its history. They came to visit us in assembly, and to have a look around the school too. We were very kindly given old registers and log books which were exciting to look at because the writing was so different; we found it very hard to read. We made a very interesting display using all the things we were given to tell people about the old school. Mrs [Jenny] Dobson also organised a wonderful concert for former students who returned to share their musical talents.



St Nicolas' School

Burying the Time Capsule

We were so excited to learn about the 50 years history of our school so we wanted to think about what children in 50 years from now would be excited about. So we decided to bury a time capsule for future children to dig up. We included: our favourite places around school, our favourite songs, books and TV shows, a typical day at St Nicolas', a catalogue of recent technology, a drawing of the school in 50 years, an e-mail to our future selves and a news report from 2015. Then we dug a big hole and buried it deep underground. Bye bye time capsule, see you in 50 years!

The St Nicolas' School Council



Jo Young

The Past Pupils' Concert

Mr [Adam] Smith came in and showed us maps and amazing pictures of the old school. We found out that it used to be in the village car-park. The pictures were all in black and white and it was hard to determine the year group as the classrooms looked all the same. The children wrote on blackboards and used chalk. Mr Smith told us the school was cold because there was no indoor heating and during the winter there were icicles everywhere. He also said that the boys' toilets were outside and the girls' toilets were inside. We found out about some of the punishments including the cane. We are pleased that doesn't happen anymore! We even got to find out about school trips that the children were taken on. At the end of the day, we were kindly given our own copy of the book Mr Smith had written on the history of our school.

HTS AGM

**8pm, Friday 27th November
in the Village Centre**

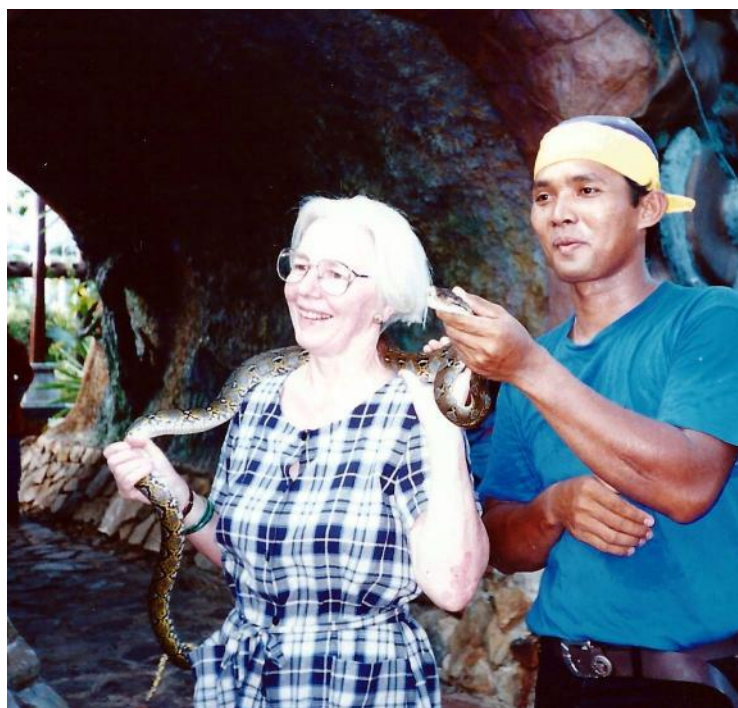
Maureen Dennis 1939-2015

All her life, Maureen was an explorer of new places, ideas and activities – always with a determined sense of purpose, never taking on just one thing at a time.

Our friendship began when we met in Athens in 1970. We visited an island and, even now, I can almost hear her getting the temple custodian to open up “because we had come specially and he shouldn’t close early”. I was impressed by her stories of sailing across the Atlantic to join her sister Sheila and Basil in Canada, of working in Montreal as a physiotherapist so she could improve her French and then going to Vancouver to do a degree in English.

Maureen returned to England in 1971 to teach English and Drama at Marlow and High Wycombe. The Community Plays she organised in Wycombe were an extraordinary feat of script-writing, directing, rehearsing and encouraging teenagers to have confidence to try new approaches. She remained an explorer – striding across Himalayan foothills, New Zealand’s South Island and most of England and Wales, always seeking to understand the marvels of the countryside, the villages, the buildings and especially the people she met. Getting to see and respect their ways of life were essential to her. The 5W friendship organisation – Women Welcome Women World Wide – was a pattern for the way she travelled: accepting and giving hospitality, gathering knowledge and sharing it. I will never forget the weekend she showed me the easy way to follow the Thames – by car, but stopping at many special points: the first bridge over the river, Churchill’s grave and other places you’d find only with a guide.

When teaching took too great a toll on her health in the 1980s, she returned to physiotherapy and hid the TV remote to ensure she wasn’t distracted from studying to qualify to practise Chinese medicine and acupuncture. This outstanding achievement and the two summers she spent in Vietnam practising in a clinic in Ho Chi Minh City (formerly Saigon)



Courtesy of Sheila Seales

Maureen and friends at Langkawi (Malaysia), Christmas 1997

widened her whole approach to health, personality and medicine.

Maureen cared deeply about her friends in Canada, her home, her garden and her life in Wellbank and Taplow with Sheila, Simon and his wife Mandy and children not far away. Somehow she found time to serve on the Society’s Executive Committee for ten years, three as Secretary. Her love of sailing lasted – she always remembered gratefully the friend who taught her – and, in retirement, she passed this teaching on to disabled youngsters. Retirement brought other new avenues as a volunteer in Swaziland, Mexico and Peru with the organisation Helping Hands, as a steward at St George’s Chapel in Windsor Castle and as an Eton-Dorney Ambassador for the London Olympics. This led to her becoming a Royal Borough Ambassador and a Ceremonial Warden for the Changing of the Guard in Windsor.

It is impossible to do justice to all Maureen’s activities, interests and talents. It was natural for her to share her abilities and gifts, and in doing so she enriched our lives and those of many others worldwide.

Adapted from a funeral tribute by Sylvia Usher

Talbott the Taxi

Taplow is my spiritual home. I was so excited to hear about *Taplow Moments* and it has not disappointed. Its author suggested I should tell this story of my family's century-and-a-half here...

My paternal great-grandfather Mark Edwards, a contractor to the Great Western Railway, brought his wife Mary Ann and their six children from Burnham to what was then Station Road in the late-1860s. My maternal grandparents George and Paulina Talbott moved from Maidenhead to Springfield Lodge on Berry Hill in 1902. He was a domestic coachman but succeeded Jonathan Jutton at The Old Friend Inn from 1912 until it closed towards the end of WW1. The *Maidenhead Advertiser* reported in 1919 that he had the first taxi in Taplow. Within a year, he bought the land once owned by Mark and built Eastfield.

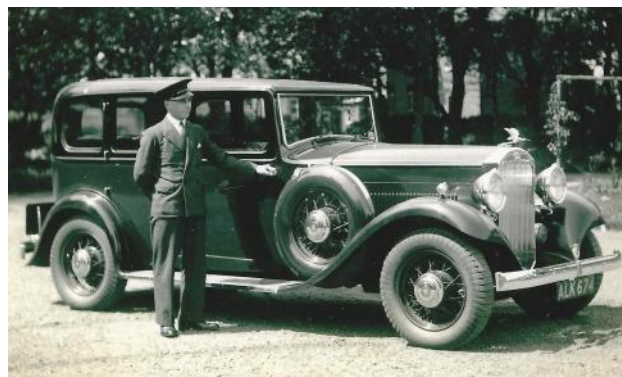
George and Paulina had eleven children including my mother Ida who would answer the telephone (Burnham 96) to take orders for taxis. Sometimes, Lord Astor's butler Mr Lee would ring to ask for Mr Talbott to meet the London train or collect someone from Cliveden. Mother would run down to the station to give Grandfather the message. Getting petrol for his Buick wasn't easy during WW2 but he kept the business going somehow. Uncle Gerald served in the Pioneer Corps as driver and batman to Colonel Reg Hanbury of Hitcham House where he met his wife Frances, who was a nanny there. Uncle Eric was declared 'missing' but in July 1943 news was received that he was a Japanese prisoner. Grandmother received some lovely letters from Reverend Francis Phillips (by then retired to Somerset), Lady Beatrice Pole-Carew and Colonel Oswald Serocold, all delighting in the good news that Eric was alive.



Gordon Edwards

Baby Juliet with her grandparents Paulina & George Talbott (1951)

Uncle Gerald joined the taxi business then took it over when George died in 1953. A St Nicolas'



Eric Talbott

Gerald Talbott with his Humber Snipe (c1947)

Church leaflet said of Grandfather that "with his passing, Taplow has lost a village character, well known and respected for many years. His interests were not only confined to horses and motor cars, though he knew a great deal about both, and he was a judge, not only of a good garden, but of good character".

I was born in the CRCMH in 1950 and spent a great deal of my young life at Eastfield listening to all the village news. Other family living in what had become Boundary Road were Aunt Enid (by then, Mrs Mackett) at Elgin, where she was succeeded by her daughter Judith until 2013, Uncle Rex and his wife Irene at Wingfield and, at The Nook, Aunt Vida and her husband Vere Parker, a teacher at Taplow Grammar School. After WW2, he taught at Silchester House School, often umpired at Taplow Cricket Club while Vida made the teas and always took charge of the darts competition at the Church Fete. That was in the 1950s when the prize was a live piglet. I remember it well!

After Grandmother died in 1963, Eastfield was divided into two flats for Gerald and Eric. Five years later, my parents Ida and Gordon Edwards came back to Taplow. They lived at The Nook and regularly attended St Nicolas' Church where father served as churchwarden until 1985. He died in 1988, my mother in 1991.

Gerald ran a private car hire business from 1977 until the late-1990s. He was a committee member and vice-president of the Taplow & Hitcham British Legion. He and Uncle Rex formed the Remembrance Sunday Colour Party for more years than branch chairman George Milne could recollect. He was awarded Honorary Branch Membership in appreciation of his loyal and devoted service shortly before he died aged 90 in 2002. Eric followed him six weeks later and Eastfield was eventually sold in 2003.

Juliet Shortall (née Edwards) of Naphill

Raising for the Roof

Tim Browning



It is almost 1,400 years since Christianity came to Taplow. A Norman church stood next to Tæppa's Mound until 1828 when a new church was built on the present site, until then Prodge's Mead. In 1865, the chancel was added and in 1911/12 the rest of the church was substantially rebuilt and the copper spire added to the tower. That means St Nicolas' Church roof is 103 years old, and now it is showing its age. Tiles are crumbling and falling off. Guttering and downpipes on the north elevation are leaking badly and the masonry is sodden and failing. The church's most recent architectural survey recommended that all this must be put right urgently before carrying out remedial works of a similar scope on the south elevation and elsewhere.

Phil Taylor



Until we know what lies beneath the tiles, we can't be certain how much will need to be spent on this urgent first phase, but our available funds were far short of the estimated cost of £77,250. However, with grateful thanks to Baylis Trust, Shanly Foundation, Taplow Parish Council and the community of Taplow, we have almost enough to cover the shortfall and the works can begin. Over £15,000 has been raised by The Friends of St Nicolas' Church, a dedicated and imaginative group co-ordinated by Nicki Jeffries, Julia Shanu-Wilson, Caroline Smales and Marion Hawkesworth. They are immensely grateful to all who have sponsored

tiles, made generous financial donations and raised funds in various ways including giving prizes for raffles – that at the Village Green Party raised the record sum of £1,000.

Phase 1 work should take no more than twelve weeks, allowing us to complete in time for Christmas and thus hopefully before the worst of the winter weather. Meanwhile, the churchyard is closed during the week and the northern section off-limits for the duration. Next year, our challenge will be to raise roughly as much again for Phase 2. As Churchwardens, Judy Norbron and I are most grateful for the support of the Taplow community as we tackle this project which will allow us to approach the future with confidence and maintain your village church as a place of welcome to all who come through our 'always open' doors.

Phil Taylor

Happy Ending

Newsletter 102 (Autumn 2014) was premature in anticipating Alan Dibden's Silver Jubilee as vicar of Taplow. On 6th September, he conducted his final Sunday Communion at St Anne's Church on Littleworth Common and at St Nicolas' Church in Taplow before retiring two months short of this milestone in order that he and Gillian could move to their new home in Burnham before winter sets in. Retiring vicars cannot reside or take services in their former parishes but, although she will no longer partner organist Neil Matthews as St Nicolas' choirmaster, Gillian will return to sing in the choir and to lead the Taplow Youth Choirs she co-founded in 2004. Meanwhile, as the congregation awaits the appointment of Alan's successor, everyone will remember fondly and give thanks for the Dibdens' time in Taplow.

Karl Lawrence



Nigel Smales

Three Girls and a Frog

We were mentioned in Newsletter 103 (Spring 2015). Now we can tell the whole story...

We left St Nicolas' School in the summer. Two of us used to walk to school along the footpath over the Jubilee River. It made us sad to see all the rubbish in such a beautiful spot, but there was no bin to put it in. We thought it would be great to have a bin by the footbridge, one that looks like a frog because that would be in keeping with the environment. Our Head Teacher, Mr [Paul] Adams, spoke to PCSO Angela O'Connell of Thames Valley Police. She brought in Tesco staff and the SBDC Community Safety Team who helped us and our Year 6 classmates do a litter pick which collected 21 black bags of rubbish. Then Angela and her colleague PCSO Kat Weir helped us prepare a presentation to Taplow Parish Council. They agreed to pay for our bin and, on 15 September, our ambition was realised at the 'official opening' of our frog bin, which we were pleased to see was already full of rubbish. Sarah Bowbrick of the Environment Agency said "We are very happy to be working with the local community to create a better place for people and wildlife. The Jubilee River is a wonderful recreation area and we are pleased the local community want to look after it". We can all help to keep the riverbank clean and to take the



Nigel Smates

Mia, Ametz and Molly

rubbish out of the frog (it opens at the back) and put it into the Biffa Bin a short walk away in the Jubilee car park.

Molly Edmondson, Ametz Parcell-Arreqi and Mia Webb

Fun in the Sun

The sun came and went, the rain put in more than its fair share of appearances, but youngsters with special needs kept on coming – 1,300 of them making over 2,000 visits to the Thames Valley Adventure Playground during the summer holidays. Rain never stopped play – the children didn't care one iota about getting wet – although their parents and carers were possibly not quite so thrilled! The support of the local community continues to play a crucial role in helping the Playground to support so many children and adults with a disability and their families, and, luckily, the Playground's annual Summer Fun Day at the beginning of August was blessed with plenty of the sunny stuff. It was marvellous to see so many local children join so many regular Playground users to revel in the sunshine and enjoy all the fun



Jacqui Banks

The Paviers' Society BBQ

and freedom that the Playground has to offer – from Facepainting to Football, Cakes to Cars, the Barbecue to Big on Bouncing's Bouncy Castle, and from Pop Goes The Choir to Sanders Street Dance – there was something for everyone, and a fabulous £3,400 raised to keep the Playground going!

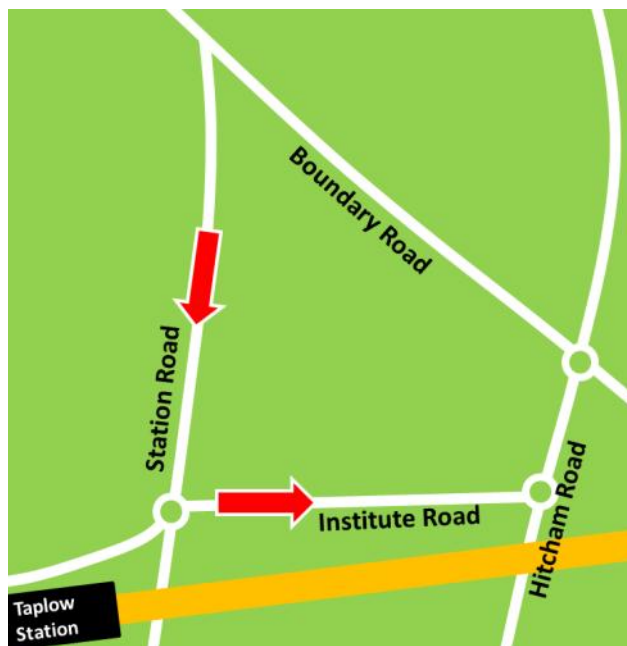
Nicky Hutchinson

Lincoln's End

Remembering Lincoln Lee

One Direction

TfL will not increase parking provision at Taplow Station while its south car park remains half-empty. Clearly commuters prefer to park for free along Station Road, making it effectively single-track. One idea to ease traffic flow is to have one-ways south down Station Road and east along Institute Road with three mini-roundabouts as shown. What do readers think?



Who's Who?

Two people have been identified in the school photos published in Newsletter 103. The 1972 shot featured Myra Drinkwater's partner Dave Clarke playing the xylophone. And Beryl Montague's brother-in-law Ted Montague is on the right of this 1934 Silver Jubilee photo. Sadly, he was killed in a road accident in 1949. His family has lived in Hitcham since 1926 and all the children went to the school, including Beryl's.



Covering Tracks

Bureaucracy and rebranding: two time-honoured means for covering tracks. As expected, Taplow Riverside is suffering increased railway noise now that the embankment has been stripped bare of foliage. Eva Lipman wrote to Network Rail to ask for some form of sound barrier. She was given a reference number. First Great Western is once again the Great Western Railway. Brunel would be pleased but Rugby World Cup fans aren't. Perhaps the reversion to traditional Brunswick green livery will improve the service.

Grapevines

The publication of *Taplow Moments* has resulted in the growth of grapevines. The fruit of the first is another tale of yore (see Page 13). The second is corrections. Sue Gibson of Wellbank is certain that Postmistress Pat Chaplin of Wellbank Cottage was the daughter of Herbert Chaplin at The Lindens, not his daughter-in-law as implied by her appearance in a 1950s telephone directory as "Mrs Chaplin". And Paul Thorne assures that the deep hole in the garden of School House is not a well but "a non-operational soak-away". Paul credits this contradictory definition to the long-defunct Eton Rural District Council.

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