

# Hitcham and Taplow Society

Newsletter 107: Spring 2017  
£3.50 to non-members



[www.taplowsociety.org.uk](http://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: Sheila Peroni with Charlie and Toby Greeves (see Page 3) (Nigel Smales).

## Editorial

For the Society, times change. And yet, there is continuity. As we pay tribute to Barrie Peroni (a wise counsellor since 1980) and thanks to Peter Mole for nine years' service (seven as Treasurer), it is a pleasure to welcome to the Committee Charlie Greeves, Zoe Hatch and Rupert Sellers. New faces, the same ends: to protect our patch, to promote our sense of community, to celebrate our heritage. Thanks to Zoe, Roger Worthington and Andrew Findlay, we are achieving our aim of improved communications with a renewed website – same place on the net, a new look with planning, diary and news pages and local information including weblinks of interest – and even a Facebook page. And Zoe has linked us into Taplow Nextdoor, a social media network set up by Id Williams of Marsh Lane. How very 21st Century.

For Hitcham and Taplow, times change. People come and go. The two decades from 1965 saw dramatic physical and social renewal. Now, as we say more fond farewells to those once newcomers, a new renewal evolves. In recent years, new arrivals have settled in old houses and yet, somehow, there is continuity – different people but the same feeling of community. Is it something in the water? The latest threads of renewal are celebrated herein.

Now we are on the threshold of another step-change. New newcomers have begun to arrive in the 306 new homes along Mill Lane, in Institute Road and at the new Old Court on the Bath Road. As Taplow's population increases by over 38%, let's welcome them with the challenge of enhancing our community while keeping the continuity that makes our patch special.

*Nigel Smales*

## Acronyms

This Newsletter uses acronyms for Buckinghamshire County Council (BCC), Chiltern District Council (CDC), Eton Rural District Council (ERDC), Her Majesty's Government (HMG), Member of Parliament (MP), Ministry of Transport (MoT), Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead (RBWM), South Bucks District Council (SBDC), Taplow Parish Council (TPC) and Taplow & Hitcham Recreation Grounds Association (THRGA).

# The Thrill of the Hunt



Amelia

The gaggle of children bubbled with excitement, each fit to burst. But bursting had to wait. There were rules to be explained. A daunting prospect, but somebody had to do it. Toby was that man. He summoned up his courage, cleared his throat and called for attention. Forty bright faces focused intently. He held up a plastic egg. "There are 200 like this hidden in our garden. For every five you find, you will win a chocolate egg, a cracker and another chocolate treat. There are also seven glitter eggs. For each of these, your prize is a craft kit or an Easter snap card game." They could stand no more standing around. Streams of little ones screamed off in all directions. Older children kindly policed 'no-go' areas as 60 adults sipped coffee and nibbled home-made lemon drizzle and ginger cakes or crispy chocolate-covered cornflake clusters. Delicious. What a delightful Easter Monday morning.

Once again, our Easter Egg Hunt was a great success. Once again, grateful thanks are due to our consummate and generous hosts Sheila, Charlie and Toby. But this time (thanks to Zoe Hatch), there was something new: everyone bought tickets in advance online. Village Green Party tickets will also be available online (see insert or the Society's website).

## Pages from A Family Journal 1888/1915

*Ethel 'Ettie' Grenfell, Lady Desborough, assembled a 650-page memoir in 1916, printed privately and distributed to friends and family. The dates signify the birth of her first son, Julian, and his death, and that of his brother Billy, in the trenches in 1915. It is a remarkable chronicle of wealth, leisure, power and sacrifice at the pinnacle of society. In this first extract, Adam Smith focuses on Family and Friends...*

There were five children in all. "Nannie" did not like them playing with village children. "There was one family she especially disapproved of, and always spoke of as 'that scum'. Our children, when they were very little, thought this was their real designation, and used to say cheerfully that they were going off to play with the scum."

Billy's real name was Gerald but, when he was born, two-year-old Julian said, 'call him Billy', and that was it. The third boy was Ivo. All three were taught at home until they started prep school, then Eton, then Oxford. Billy won Eton's greatest academic distinction, the Newcastle Scholarship. "The whole family went to tell Lizzie Grenfell at Elibank." The two girls Monica and Imogen were taught mainly at home. "In the schoolroom, we can see the front door." In the 1899 summer holidays "Julian got to know Kitchener well. They played a great deal of cricket and had an eleven of Taplow boys". Three years later, Julian was Kitchener's page



Julian with Lord Kitchener (1902)

for the coronation of King Edward VII on Saturday 9th August 1902. The papermill was ablaze when he returned that evening: it "burnt till Monday".

Three weeks earlier, on Sunday 13th July 1902, Arthur Balfour had been at Taplow the day he was made Prime Minister, succeeding Lord Salisbury. The Salisburys were Taplow regulars, as were the Asquiths (Herbert Henry, PM 1908/16) and Austen Chamberlain and his wife Margot née Tennant. The *Journal* records three royal visits: King Edward and Queen Alexandria (1904); King Edward (1907); and King George V and Queen Mary (1911) soon after Ettie was made lady-in-waiting to Her Majesty.

# Reflections

Although I will continue as a District and Parish Councillor, I am stepping down as TPC Chairman at the Annual Parish Meeting on 23rd May. When I was invited to reflect on my five years 'in the chair', my first thought was: what to say? There is no great excitement in TPC's brief to comment on planning applications, watch over footpaths and look after streetlights, the Village Centre and the Village Green. But perhaps a few achievements are worthy of note...

My wearing two hats as TPC Chairman and Taplow's District Councillor put me in a strong position.

A substantial donation from Land Securities, developer of the new Bishop Centre, injected a great deal of excitement as Taplovians proposed ideas they thought deserving of grant support. It might never have happened. Initially, despite the site being within our Parish, the developer offered £260,000 in 'compensation' to Burnham but nothing to Taplow. TPC was concerned that requesting equitable contribution would suggest it was seeking a bribe to desist from or dilute its intended objection to the scheme. Nonetheless, I approached Land Securities and secured a donation of £100,000 then, much to the developer's chagrin, voted for refusal when the SBDC Planning Committee considered its planning application. My stance was unsuccessful but at least TPC has been able to give financial support to many of the good suggestions for community and environment projects.

The developments on Taplow riverside are much less dense and much more thoughtfully designed than might have been. Barratt Homes was variously quoted as aiming to build some 400 to 600 houses along Mill Lane. Its scheme ("architecturally illiterate", according to my old sparring partner Tony Meats) would have had a huge detrimental impact upon the whole of Taplow and surrounding area. In the context of Mill Lane closure, just think what difficulties (say) 1,000 cars would have caused as they (mostly) exited onto Berry Hill to rat-run



George with John Kennedy

through the village. Knowing of its long interest, I called Berkeley Homes as soon as Barratt backed out; the rest is history. I savour the prospect of our very own Martin Knight's footbridge linking Taplow to Ray Mill Island. Some 12 years ago, I suggested to a reluctant RBWM that a footbridge would enhance its trade and lease value. Next day, the bridge was a condition of development!

I am delighted that Taplow is the very first South Bucks parish to boast shared-equity affordable housing (along Institute Road) and that TPC does as much in less time by meeting quarterly instead of monthly and aiming to keep meetings to two hours. An extra meeting has recently been added to the schedule but – although I am not convinced of its necessity – please don't think I'm departing the chair in a fit of pique. My main drive has always been to keep Taplow as true to my earliest memories of it from 1971 when the Sandy family first settled here. Hopefully, those who follow will do likewise. TPC looks to recruit two new Parish Councillors to succeed long-serving retirees – the Johns Kennedy and Bamberg – to whom I would like to express my thanks and appreciation. Both TPC's and the Society's websites carry more details but it is appropriate in this *Newsletter* to wish these elder statesmen a well-earned rest.

*George Sandy*  
*Retiring Chairman of Taplow Parish Council*

# Planning: The Way Things Were

Despite some new homes hiding behind 'go-away' gates – a sad contrast to open, welcoming older properties – TPC has hand-delivered 931 copies of a questionnaire to gather insights and opinions to inform the Neighbourhood Plan which will affect all proposed developments within Taplow once it is accepted as supplementary to the SBDC / CDC Local Plan. The questionnaire is also available for completion on the TPC website. So far, Roger Worthington has received exactly 100 replies, already an impressive 11% response. He will report progress at the Annual Parish Meeting.

Time will tell of its value but the Neighbourhood Plan is being prepared by neighbours as an instrument of local planning. It wasn't always thus. The Society's Newsletter archive reaches back beyond the Taplow Parish Plan (2006), the establishment of Conservation Areas for the Village (1999) and Riverside (1975), and the designation of northern Taplow as an Area of Attractive Landscape (1978) – all of which were to a degree driven by locals – to the 1960s when Planning was a dark art in the exclusive domain of People Who Knew Best to whom those who didn't did well to be grateful.

Locally, strategic control was vested in BCC, which every five years issued maps indicating overall policy, while ERDC covertly considered planning applications. As the decade unfolded, false dawns at County contrasted with darkness in the District. Although it permitted the Society to see its register of applications for the first time in 1960, EDRC refused to give public notice of applications or to permit anyone but the initiated to view proposed schemes, let alone to comment on them.

That same year saw the first false dawn when BCC's Planning Officer, Mr Pooley, confided to the Society's AGM that, since Taplow was "very attractive and worth preserving as far as possible in its current form", he had chosen it for a new experiment: the preparation of a Village Plan. Almost two years later, his deputy Mr Gimmingham verbally outlined the Plan as "a charter, or a statement of policy". It had no official status and would never be made public but hope that it would "protect the village from undesirable development" seemed well-founded when the Society observed in 1966 that "The Village Plan may prevent, indeed probably has prevented,

*some building, preserved some land and some trees*" and congratulated TPC on its "delicate negotiations" to correct some "stupid planning decisions". However, there was dismay that EDRC prevented public inspection of plans for Buffins and Cedar Chase because it "could cause interminable difficulties [since] Parish Councils are not afforded [such] privilege". As the Cedar Chase "abominations" rose, the outraged Society resolved "to press very hard" for plans to be published for public perusal in order "to prevent repetition of this dreadful blunder".

Two more false dawns came and went. In 1967, Minister of Housing Richard Crossman deemed that Parish Councils "should be consulted on major developments" and Maidenhead took "the public into its confidence" regarding its plan for Riverside. Brightness lasted into 1968, when BCC asked its villages for lists of "Treasures and Eyesores", only for Crossman to descend darkness by delegating certain decisions to planning officers without any right of appeal. Light shone again in 1969: the Society's lobbying finally persuaded EDRC to permit the public "to inspect plans supporting planning applications" and the Redcliffe-Maud Report proposed local authority restructuring that the Society hoped might lead to it having "a major part to play because decisions will be taken much further away than a present, and by people with less local knowledge" (see Page 6). That worked well, didn't it?

**Village Green  
Party  
24th June 2017**

Tickets available online  
at the Society's website:

**[www.taplowsociety.org.uk](http://www.taplowsociety.org.uk)**

# Not Adding Up

The consistent theme in ongoing 'hot topics' is that rather a lot doesn't add up.

Take local government. Buckinghamshire has a perceived shortfall of 15,652 homes. Will cooperation result in Aylesbury Vale meeting not only its own need but also those of SBDC, CDC and Wycombe? This might be more likely if Districts are done away with and BCC becomes a unitary authority – an idea our MP Dominic Grieve thinks most economic – but what about 'the grass roots'? The Commission on the Future of Localism is examining the impact of the Localism Act 2010, which encourages the devolution of power to neighbourhoods, and the civil society and community infrastructure (institutions, organisations and governance) necessary for the success of Localism. Recent evidence suggests BCC is too remote to grasp local issues (see below), a failing that some hope might be allayed by delegating greater responsibility and power to Parish Councils – but could they cope? With one part-time officer and the capacity of some councillors (possibly even the new chairman) limited by 'proper jobs', might TPC be so overwhelmed that it amalgamates with (say) Burnham and Dorney? How would that add up?

Take planning. Are SBDC and CDC wasting time and money developing a joint Local Plan? The 'ever closer union' between these Districts might be negated if BCC is ascendant, and they must ignore HS2 and Heathrow's expansion (see below) because these are merely "preferred" not yet 'policy'. Does that add up?

Take the Green Belt. That adds up for many, but can it survive? Slough's aspiration to expand into SBDC's adjacent Green Belt to remedy its 'unmet need' of over 6,000 homes drew eloquent admonition for failing in its legal 'Duty to Cooperate'. The Society challenged County Councillor candidates to pledge that they will propose a motion that BCC opposes the release of Green Belt land for housing and oppose all proposals for inappropriate Green Belt development in Buckinghamshire. Will they stand firm? When Eva Lipman acted for the Society in signing the online petition 'Give communities back the right to decide where houses are built', the reassuring HMG response that "Green Belt must be protected", the use of brownfield land and density on urban sites must be maximised and a £2.3bn fund will "deliver [the necessary] infrastructure" was tempered by

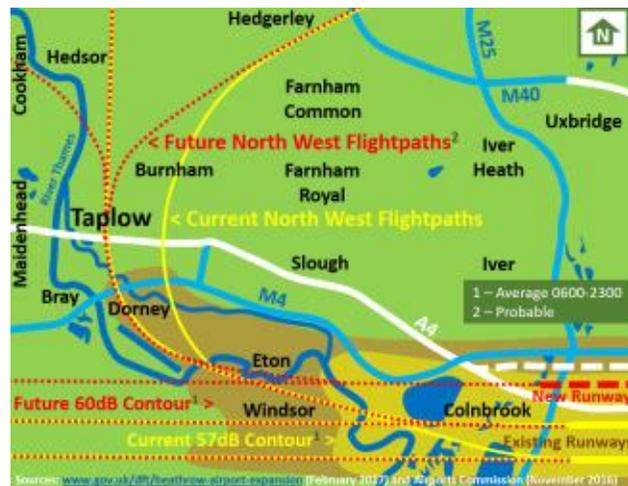
shades of '68 (see Page 5) with the reaffirmation that developers but not the public have right of appeal against planning decisions. How does that add up?

Take traffic. Despite objections from over 500 locals, Mill Lane closed on 28th November 2016. Rumour suggests this was decided many years back, possibly because a new housing estate is allowed only one vehicular access. That denies the reality that the development spreads over a collection of sites along a centuries-old thoroughfare. And does it add up that a policy perhaps appropriate for a development of 600 homes should apply to one of 211? Or that we still await the new 'smart' traffic lights required by planning condition? The initial chaos of morning peak queues stretching up Berry Hill beyond Taplow Court has been moderated to an unpredictable inconvenience by commuters and school-runners leaving home earlier and by a covert resequencing of the existing lights to double the rate of egress from Berry Hill at the cost of slowing westward progress on the A4. Does this suck-it-and-see guesswork add up?

Take bikes. BCC has put the brakes on its proposed A4 Cycleway. That adds up. Its questionnaire – a box-ticking exercise which (thanks to Jonny Williams' persistent Freedom of Information requests) revealed little more than that 49 of 119 respondents ride bikes – was so clearly intended to avoid acquiring critical information that many ignored it and instead wrote to say the scheme was flawed from need and concept to such details as the ban on right turns into Berry Hill and the steer to five alternative routes which would be less practical, more dangerous and more polluting to more people. However, don't hold your breath. Having so far spent an incredible £300,000 developing its vision, might BCC's "pause for re-evaluation" indicate alchemy is at work? Would that add up?

Take Heathrow. Its new north-west runway is HMG's "preferred scheme". The MoT has embarked on a 'consultation' aiming for a National Policy Strategy by early 2018, planning applications in 2019 and approvals by 2022. The project will also add a new terminal and integrate others, divert the A4, submerge the M25 and provide new rail links, all phased into operation from 2025 to 2030. Newsletter 106 cautioned against taking Heathrow numbers at face value. Here's an example: while annual passenger numbers rise by 80% from 75m to 135m, associated road journeys will "drop" from

58% to 45%. So, why increase the capacity of the M4 by making it 'all-lane-running', with all the risk and inconvenience that entails? The "drop" is doublespeak; road journeys will in fact rise from 43m to 61m. In fact, so many 'forecasts' are more selectively spun possibility than fact, but the sheer weight of numbers is worrying. The expansion may create some 50,000 new jobs with 80% being "filled by inward migration" to over 17,000 new homes (in addition to those already planned), most to the west of Heathrow. While the MoT offers no certainty on flightpaths and only average forecast noise at ground level, the Airports Commission anticipates take-offs turning through 'the Taplow Corridor' before dispersing. This means we may be subjected to an 80% increase in overflights with peak noise of 60-to-70dB without recourse to financial compensation, which is payable only to those suffering an average of more than 57dB. But of course, this 'Corridor' is a prime location for



many of those new homes so, as our patch is consumed by the mega-town of Maidenslough, it would cease to be a corridor, except as an ear-muffs market. Does anything add up? Many think not. RBWM's Aviation Forum offers well-informed scepticism to pro-Heathrow claims.

## Renewal at the Playgroup

Anna-Lisa Parker



Florence at Play

Ever since it opened in 1976, St Nicolas' Playgroup has offered a friendly, safe, secure and stimulating environment for local children to learn through play and, most importantly, to have fun in our lovely Village Centre or in our outdoor play area next to the Village Green. This rural setting is very special for the children who can often enjoy summer picnics on the Green after Playgroup and nature walks throughout the year. Here is where community begins, a great springboard for school and for life.

The Playgroup is a charity. Government funding is simply not enough to cover our costs so we rely heavily on fundraising activities to keep going. These efforts are organised by the committee – at least 60% of which must be parents of children attending the Playgroup – which fosters a community feeling by working very closely with parents and, especially, with our wonderful staff, a fabulous team of dedicated and qualified childcare practitioners. Our Supervisor Caz Ainsley has been central to the success of the Playgroup these past 22 years but, sadly for us, she has made the difficult decision to step down to focus on her family. She will be greatly missed by staff and parents who wish her well as she passes the baton to Maria Hirst. We are very excited to see Maria promoted and look forward to working with her in the years to come.

If you or anyone you know can suggest new fundraising ideas and avenues of support or can help with fundraising, please get in touch with me or Maria.

*Anna-Lisa Parker, Chairperson*

# Rocque of Ages

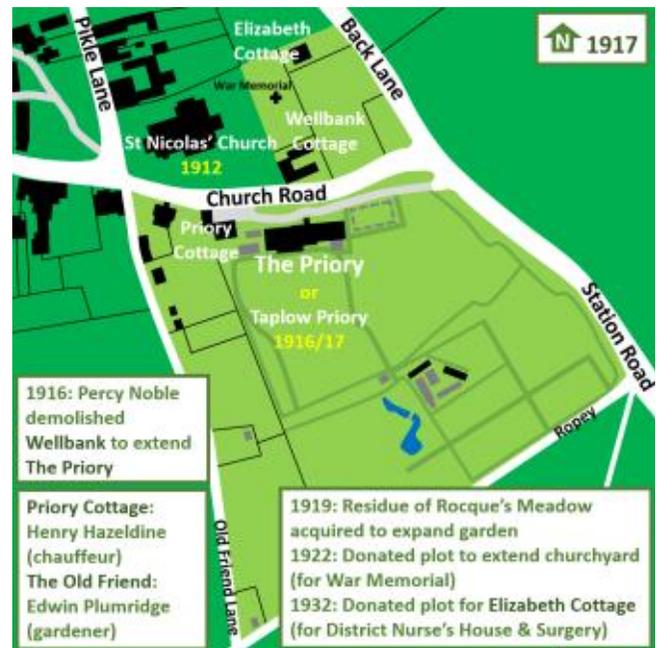
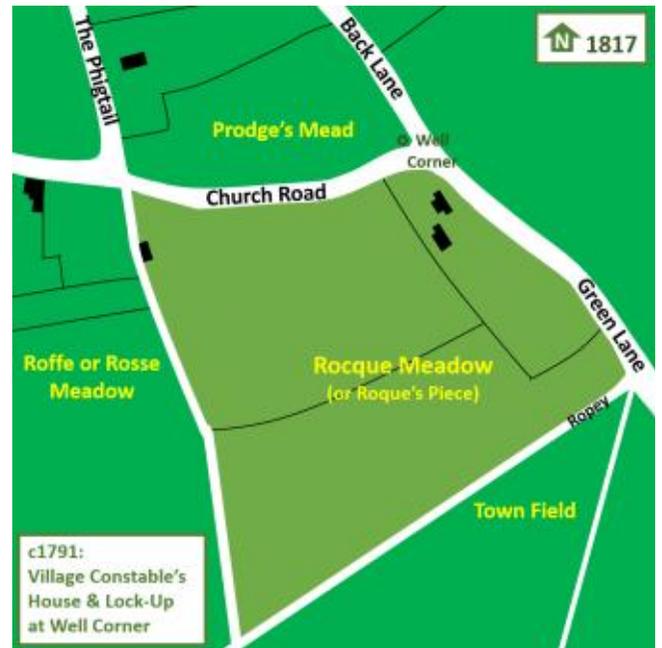
These four maps each mark the start of 50 years in the evolution of Rocque Meadow to Wellbank and its neighbours.

Two hundred years ago, all was quiet on the eastern front. Nobody was held in the village lock-up. Nobody could say if the Meadow was rocky or named after John Rocque, cartographer to Frederick, Prince of Wales (of Cliefden 1737/51), famous for his 1747 map of London.

Things were busier in 1867. The Oak had been a beer shop opposite the new church for over 30 years when the arrival of The Oak & Saw prompted its becoming a proper pub with a new name: The Old Friend. Two new villas stood further east. John Noble (once of Berry Hill) would soon let Well Bank to Harry Woolfryes, a Marylebone dental surgeon, and The Walnuts to Henry Buckmaster, a gentleman "of independent means". By 1911, The Walnuts was The Priory despite the site having no monastic past.

Great changes began a century ago. Percy Noble demolished Wellbank, extended The Priory and acquired both the last of the Meadow and The Old Friend where he installed Edwin Plumridge to create a lovingly landscaped garden. Four years after Percy died in 1937, his home passed to Fairey Aviation which caused consternation in 1962 by proposing its demolition. Eventually, "amicable agreement" was reached to replace the old building with 12 houses and garages for Fairey employees (including a gardener), to save most trees and cede to ERDC "about two acres" as a public open space.

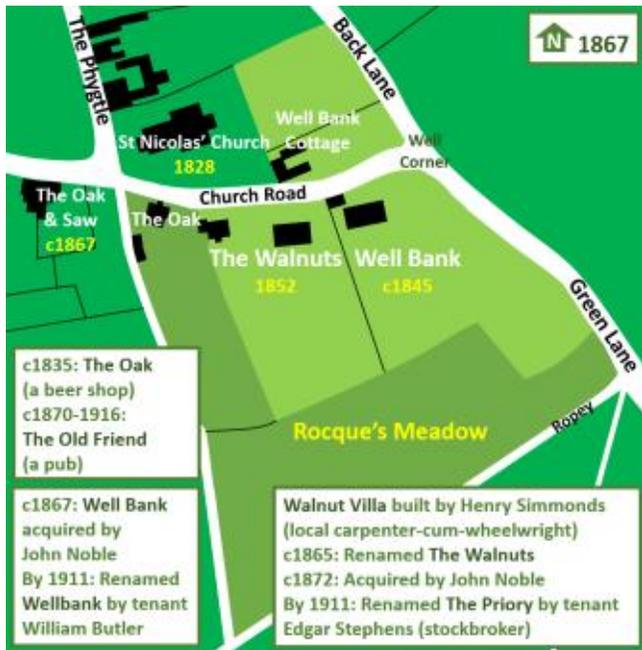
Fifty years ago, the walnuts were gone from the roadside. The new Priory Cottage was home to car dealer Jack Hewens. The new Wellbank boasted built-in wardrobes and underfloor heating but neither Fairey folk nor a gardener. Only Pat Mills has been there (at Number 1) since the beginning – first with her late husband Charles Lamb and their sons Charles and Perry, now with her second husband Barry. There were few other Wellbank children to share Percy's garden but young Charles's pal Adam Smith (of Stockwells) came to play and be even more impressed by Mr Lamb's SGT petrol account for his Jaguar XJ6 than by his Scalextric track in the (very shallow) cellar.



The Priory, 1936



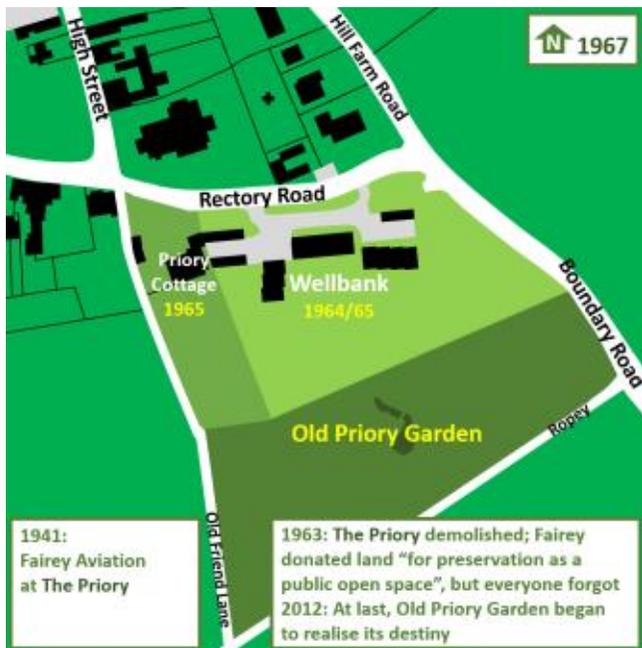
# Renewing our Woodland Gem



For half-a-century, the "public open space" ceded by Fairey was nothing of the sort. EDRC fenced it and forgot it. SBDC inherited the plot in 1974 but remained oblivious. Nobody noticed as time did something wonderful. It didn't stand still; it went backwards. Gradually, natural woodland crept in to this hidden part of Percy's garden and made it a secret wildlife world a few steps from the heart of Taplow Village.

Finally, that Fairey vision began to take shape in 2012 when the land passed to TPC which entrusted THRGA to make it Old Priory Garden, a very special kind of "public open space". After four years of hard graft and selective cutting back, OPG is now an oasis of calm and beauty ideal for a walk to enjoy the glorious flora and fauna we have uncovered. Its upkeep requires the regular efforts of volunteers who join our weekend work parties or, if they have some spare time in the week, meet up in smaller groups to tackle the lighter tasks. If you are on the lookout for opportunities to volunteer in the great outdoors, OPG could well be for you. We welcome children who want to learn some gardening skills or to explore the creatures and woodland environment, so bring along the kiddies or grandchildren. Search Facebook for 'Friends of Old Priory Garden, Taplow'.

*Claire Ashton Tait*



Jane, Miv, Janette, Roger, Marianne, Mike, Suzanne and others

Claire Ashton Tait

Julia



Robert



Miv Wayland-Smith & Nigel Smales

# A Proposal for Peace



SGI-UK

Robert Harrap

Taplow Court is the national headquarters of Soka Gakkai International UK, an organisation which supports the practice of Nichiren Buddhism in the UK. We have been based in the village since 1988 when we took over this beautiful estate from Plessey, the previous owners, and were warmly welcomed by the community. After a significant refurbishment, Taplow Court was officially opened as our national headquarters by Daisaku Ikeda, the president of SGI worldwide, in May 1989. As well as having our offices here, we use the centre for residential courses and day events. And of course, we are delighted to make our facilities available for fundraising events for local community activities and even to briefly revive Taplow Court's time as a school over 80 years ago (see Page 11).

Every year since 1983, President Ikeda has sent a proposal to the United Nations and in April last year I shared the key points of the 2016 proposal at a public talk in our main hall. In the proposal, *Universal Respect for Human Dignity: the Great Path to Peace*, Ikeda reviews the state of the world before making suggestions of practical

initiatives as viable responses grounded in Buddhist philosophy. He begins: "All people have the right to live in happiness. The prime objective of our movement is to forge an expanding solidarity of ordinary citizens committed to protecting that right and, in this way, to rid the world of needless suffering". He then explains that the foundation of Buddhism is a belief in the inherent dignity of all people. He says: "The Buddhist spirit of treasuring each individual can be supplemented by an additional perspective: the conviction that each person, whatever their path of life or their current condition, has the capacity to illuminate the place where they find themselves right now. We strive to avoid judging a person's worth or potential on the basis of present appearance and instead focus on the inherent dignity of each individual. In this way, we seek to inspire in each other the confidence to live with hope from this day forward, bathed in the light of that dignity".

The proposal explores how dialogue is a powerful tool to raise awareness of the dignity of life, and that the impact of this can have a dramatic effect on serious challenges facing the world. Ikeda spells out how this applies to three key areas: humanitarian aid and human rights protection; ecological integrity and disaster risk reduction; and disarmament and the prohibition of nuclear weapons (especially in the light of the current moves in the UN to see a treaty banning such armaments).

The full text of Ikeda's 2016 and 2017 proposals can be found at [www.sgi-uk.org](http://www.sgi-uk.org) along with more information about SGI and activities at Taplow Court including on the afternoons of Sundays 21st May, 4th June, 2nd July, 6th August and 10th September, National Heritage Day, when our home and its beautiful gardens are open to the public. Please come and join us!

Robert Harrap  
SGI-UK General Director



# Renewal at the School

On 15th September 2016, there was a frightening storm. Next day at St Nicolas' School, I heard that I wasn't the only one to be scared – it had scared quite a lot of people – and the hall, two classrooms, the toilets and corridor were flooded. There just wasn't enough room for everybody. We had to share our classroom. One week later, we heard we were going to Taplow Court. I felt flabbergasted. I couldn't believe that we were actually going. Next day, I skipped up to Taplow Court feeling as light as a feather with joy. Taplow Court was very large and we had our assessment tests there. Classes 4 and 5 had their own area to play in and at the end of the week we had a tour of the gardens and the house. Everybody ate packed lunch in the canteen, which is like the school hall but bigger, and we learnt in classrooms with beautiful views of the gardens. We were very sad when we had to leave. When we got back to school, we saw all of the pictures of the portakabins arriving. These will be our classrooms until the summer holidays.

*George Price, Year 5*



St Nicolas' School

George Price



Rebecca Holmes

The Taplow community responded swiftly to our crisis. St Nicolas' Church opened its doors to become a temporary learning space, and Taplow Court offered its conference centre for use as classrooms while the school dried out and made longer term plans. SGI-UK gave 64 children from Years 4 and 5 the warmest of welcomes as they made themselves at home in beautiful surroundings. They could continue their own curriculum and also learn about the history of Taplow Court from the Anglo-Saxon burial mound through to the Grenfell family. They were also able to deepen their knowledge of Buddhism and other religions and of how other people live. Everyone agreed that it was a wonderful place to work and play. We are so grateful to everyone at Taplow Court. I don't know what we would have done without them. It meant a great deal to us that we were able to keep the school open to all our pupils during this difficult time. It is a wonderful example of how a community can pull together to help each other out.

*Claire Wagstaff, Headteacher*

# That Whiff of Wet Leather

It was thought that Taplow had two claims to fame in football history. Edgar Lubbock of Springfield played for England in 1870 (before international matches were 'official') and twice won the FA Cup (the first ever in 1872, with Wanderers, and with Old Etonians in 1879). And Frank Adams of Orkney Cottage played for and became such a doyen of Wycombe Wanderers that their ground bears his name.

Now a third claim has emerged. Maidenhead United was formed as Maidenhead Football Club and first played (in red-and-black) on 17th December 1870 when "some 300 or 400 looked on with great interest [as] a very spirited and pleasing game [against Windsor Home Park] came off in a meadow, kindly lent for the occasion by Mr Bond, opposite Skindle's Hotel". The pitch was 200 by 100 yards, orientated east-west (across an ancient footpath). There were 15 on each side but "when time was up no goal could be called by either side". The *Maidenhead Advertiser* reported that, despite "the ground [being] slippery and bolding, there were no accident, beyond a case or two of claret tapping" and anticipated "that when [they have] got their wind in better order, the Maidenhead Club will be able to hold its own". They did just that in their next game on 16th February 1871 when they played Marlow at the cricket ground in York Road. The cricketers obliged the footballers to relocate at least once more to Bond's Meadow (to play Henley on 14th March 1872) but their home is recognised by the Football Association as the oldest senior football ground in continuous use by the same club.



Footballers in the 1870s

Two who played in that first game had Taplow connections. H Hebbes was the father or uncle of George and Henry Hebbes, brothers at Taplow Grammar School in 1891, and captain William Goulden was the father of Percy Goulden, the gasworks officer and popular St Nicolas' Church organist and choirmaster who lived at 1 Elm View (1919/63). Perhaps these pioneers also played in the inaugural FA Cup competition of 1871/72 when Maidenhead defeated Marlow before falling to Crystal Palace, the only one of the 15 entrants still to be playing top-flight football in England (the other survivor being Queen's Park of Glasgow). After the Great War, the club merged with Maidenhead Norfolks to become Maidenhead Town (and wear black-and-white stripes) before adopting its present name in 1920.

Mr Bond was the Jonathan who invented pleasure boating hereabouts. Bond's Meadow had been Bridge Field (and let to local farmer George Norrington) in 1852 when it was acquired at auction by John Noble (soon to be of Berry Hill). Some 25 years after it made football history, Bond's boatyard expanded onto part of it (that now occupied by River Court) and the rest was developed for housing by Wilson Noble (son of John), Henry Hoare (once of Skindles), William Grenfell (of Taplow Court) and others. If Ellingtonians ever think they can catch the whiff of wet leather, now they know why.

*Based on research by Maidenhead United's historian Mark Smith*



Nigel Smales

# Renewal at the Church

*Taplow has had 47 rectors and three vicars in 737 years. Five were in office for less than a year. Edward Vansittart Neale (from 1796) and his successor Charles Whately (from 1850) spanned over 96 years. John Kemp was the last rector (1978/83) before spending a year as the first vicar. The third, Alan Dibden, served for 25 years until 2015. A new era began on 6th February: Jane Cresswell made history by becoming Taplow's first female priest...*

I am pleased to have this opportunity to introduce myself as the recently arrived new vicar of St Nicolas' Church, Taplow, and St Anne's Church, Dropmore.

I haven't always been a vicar! I was born in Gidea Park in Essex, the elder of two girls, and educated at the City of London School for Girls and then at Bristol University where I read modern languages (French and German).

Following university, I worked briefly for an insurance company and a small manufacturing company before starting 20 years as a Home Office civil servant inhabiting a variety of roles. I spent time in public order, prison building, immigration policy and casework, market testing and efficiency review, training new staff when the National Asylum Support Service was created, and finally managing the diversity and equality team. I was also involved in recruitment interviewing, and trained to investigate complaints of discrimination and harassment.

Many of my years in the Home Office were part-time as I brought up four children and contributed to church life, having been licensed as a reader in 1992 to preach and lead worship. Whilst the combination of those roles didn't leave me much free time, I did join a choral society in 2000 and very much enjoyed being part of a choir again, having sung regularly throughout my time at school.

Serving the church as a reader and being part of a vibrant ministry team across four churches was fulfilling, but the ongoing sense of God nudging me towards ordained ministry did not go away. In 2004, I was accepted to train for ordination and subsequently served my title as curate in the Sutton Team Ministry in the



St Nicolas' Church

Reverend Jane Cresswell

Diocese of Southwark before taking on my first incumbency as parish priest at St Paul's Nork in the Diocese of Guildford.

Clive and I married in 2015 – between us, we have six adult children – and we are looking forward to being part of the Taplow and Dropmore communities. I am here as a resource not only for the church congregations but for anyone who lives in the two parishes. So please get in touch if you would like any pastoral support or come along and introduce yourself to me at St Anne's (Sundays at 9.15am) or St Nicolas' (Sundays at 10.45am or 'Open Wednesdays' from noon to 4pm).

*Rev Jane Cresswell*

## Ken Johnson 1932 – 2016



As I write, the magnolia tree in my parents' garden is in glorious spring bloom. In his retirement years, my father enjoyed sitting in his chair by the window, engrossed in reading the day's news, and appreciating the magnolia blossoms. He and my mother planted the tree when they moved to Taplow in 1982 and this is its first flowering since he passed away in November. Over the years, as my father looked out at his magnolia, he would comment to us that the pleasure of its early flowering was accompanied by the risk of the delicate white blooms being exposed to a late seasonal frost – unlike the darker purple magnolias in the neighbourhood, which begin their annual display a couple of weeks later. For me, this image of my father typifies the analytical skills he applied to everything he did, large or small, his attention to the detail of his surroundings, and his always enquiring mind.

Ken was born and grew up near St Helens, Lancashire. He seized the opportunities created by the 1944 Education Act to win a rare county scholarship at his historic local grammar school, and was the pride of his family when he gained his place to study mathematics at Durham University. He threw himself wholeheartedly into everything university life

had to offer – not only his honours degree studies, but also his sports, especially excelling in rowing and rugby. During these years, Ken also courted his future wife, Maud, and they married in 1955 – the beginning of a long and happy partnership that saw them celebrate their diamond jubilee in 2015.

By the mid-1960s, with a young family and a successful managerial career already underway in the petrochemicals industry, my father took up an exciting move to Shell's Dutch headquarters. His career managing complex industrial plants making polypropylene, polyethylene and polystyrene – the materials of everyday modern life – took him from The Netherlands to Brazil and back as well as to north-west England and London. His aptitude for leading teams, for believing people could always do more than others might expect and for rigorous risk management achieved production and safety records. In his later senior career, he enjoyed travelling extensively in Latin America and Asia where he developed a fascination for China.

From the moment they moved to Taplow, my parents quickly felt deeply embedded in its warm and welcoming community – perhaps even more so when their two granddaughters moved to the village. All his life, Ken's family was central to everything he did. As a loving son, brother and brother-in-law, uncle, husband, father and grandfather he was cherished by us all.

Throughout his retirement, Ken continued to value his longstanding Taplow friendships, spanning many decades. Even as his health faltered in his later years, he continued his annual charity collection rounds locally. In the kind condolences messages my mother received in November, we were deeply touched by the many neighbours and friends mentioning their recollections of Ken's unassuming acts of kindness. Our lives changed forever with his passing, but we take comfort in knowing that my mother is surrounded by friends with a shared sense of Taplow's special history and closeness.

*Karen Johnson*

# Barrie Peroni 1933-2016



Taplow can count itself lucky that, 52 years ago, a young man got lost on his way to Monkey Island and saw White Gables was for sale. He had no idea his wife knew the area. Theirs had been something of a whirlwind romance. It began in January 1963 at the University College Hospital Matron's Ball. Sheila was a senior nurse. Barrie had been invited by a mutual friend. She saw his smiling face among the greying heads. He swept her off her feet. They were engaged in June and married the following February. They brought baby Charlotte from their Hampton Court maisonette to Taplow in 1965. Justine was born two years later at Cliveden's Canadian Red Cross Memorial Hospital, where Sheila had been a pupil midwife in 1959/60.

His childhood roots were in Wimbledon but – having been born at the London Hospital within the sound of Bow Bells – Barrie loved being a true cockney. At Westminster School, he made a host of lifelong friends while excelling at tennis and football. He qualified as a solicitor in 1950 before joining NAP, the family paper and packaging business. After a year in Germany and Switzerland (where he learned German), his meticulous attention to detail, thorough

objectivity and determination to "just get things right" guided NAP to pre-eminence in the UK.

Sport was Barrie's passion but, at 70, the risk of damage to his new and expensive knees obliged him to forsake Real Tennis and skiing with his grandchildren Megan and Tom to concentrate on golf. Naturally, he didn't take things easy. As its Secretary, he ensured the Old Westminster Golfing Society always teed-off on time no matter their unconscionable condition the previous evening. And he played weekly in the LAGS (Lay About Golfing Society) at Burnham Beeches Golf Club, where he had been a member since 1965.

Barrie hid his shyness well. We saw a convivial, generous, honourable and incredibly kind fellow, naturally inquisitive, interested in and concerned for everyone's wellbeing, always wanting things neat and tidy, ever ready for conversation. If you needed anything done, he was there for you – the man you wanted in your corner. His word was his bond. He was totally committed to his family and friends and a pillar of our community. One of his many valuable contributions during 36 years on the Society's Committee was as co-founder of the Village Green Party. He spent 25 years on St Nicolas' School's Board of Governors (many as a Chairman) and still found time to serve the Royal British Legion, the Conservative Party and the Parochial Church Council with dedication and diligence. On retirement, his voracious appetite for rewarding challenges embraced Thames Valley Adventure Playground. He volunteered to help "steer the ship for a couple of years". He served as Chairman for ten. It was a mutual love affair. TVAP benefited enormously from his financial and practical skills which built the secure base on which it continues to thrive. He adored making a difference.

Barrie would tie a knot in his handkerchief to remind him of something to be done only to stare at it later saying "Now, what did I need to remember?" Nobody will need a knot to remember him as a true gentleman and a respected, much loved and cherished friend.

*Adapted from a eulogy by Toby Greeves*

# Lincoln's End

## Remembering Lincoln Lee

Recent correspondence has revealed five stories searching for substance. Can anyone offer further enlightenment?

Richard Holmstrom of the USA asked what the inscription 'At Taplowem Buck' might mean on his silver hawking vervel (a falcon's leg ring identifying its owner). The evolving spelling could be crucial. If it is Taplowe-m, it might mean the Manfields, lords of Taplow from 1433 to 1674, or – if it is Taplow-em – possibly Edward Manfield (died 1640) or his son of the same name (born 1636).

Shane Brownie asked where is Wittage? When his ancestor Robert Swannell Brownie of Uxbridge retired as a successful 'Rick, Sack and Cloth' manufacturer and merchant in 1879, he fancied a spot of hunting, decided Wittage Close was the place and acquired its copyhold from William and John Briginshaw (of Rectory Farm). The four acres of East and West Wittage are too tight to ride to hounds. Perhaps the tenure entitled Robert to join a local hunt if (at 72) he was still able. It didn't last long or leave any legacy. There are stables at Wittage but no record of any residence and no mention of it in Robert's will of 1889. Its appearance in the *Cedar Chase Handbook* suggests it might have passed to the Pearce-Serocolds of Taplow Hill before becoming the southern extent of Cliveden Stud.



Jane Eagles asked where was The Brambles? In 1911, her grandmother Ada Haydon was a cook there for George Audsley, manager of Pianola piano works. Research suggesting that by 1924 The Brambles had become Guildersfield to suit City solicitor Cecil Dowson was confirmed when Jane dropped by and met three residents (probably Julie, Andy and Chris?).

Ben Orme asked about Joseph Hinks, the inventor of the duplex oil lamp and mayor of Leamington Spa (1890/93) who retired to Orkney Cottage in the 1920s. The house was built in 1856 by Charles Whitlaw, a "surgeon" (more likely a 'quack') who had acquired Amerden and Springfield in 1852. It passed to Charles Whitlaw the Younger and his wife Selina who in 1876 let it copyhold to Sir Edward Levy-Lawson, editor and (later) owner of *The Daily Telegraph* (in 1903, Baron Burnham), and then to his son Harry Lawson from 1892 until 1916 or beyond. Ben reckons Hinks lived there for perhaps a decade until his death in 1931.

Richard Hall asked how his Uncle Harry Hurn came to feature in *Taplow Moments*, which he saw for sale in The Oak & Saw. Thank Helen Grellier, who shared a long letter (written in 2001) in which Harry told of the life and times of Taplow from 1926 to 1949. His local line goes back to before 1748. Great-grandfather Henry was born on Taplow Common in 1824 and worked at Cliveden with his son Frederick who was so well thought of that, after he was killed at the Somme in 1916, Lord Astor paid his widow Clara's rent for 2 Elm View until her death in 1933. Hurn's Turn seemed to end with Harry's departure for Somerset, but maybe not. Perhaps this photo of Richard's mother – Harry's sister Kathleen (at Ivy Cottage in Boundary Road) – will ring a bell or two.



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