



# Hitcham and Taplow Society

Newsletter 97: Spring 2012  
£2.50 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.*

President:	Eva Lipman
Vice Presidents:	Tony Hickman, Professor Bernard Trevallion OBE, Fred Russell
Chairman:	Karl Lawrence
Vice Chairman:	Neil Blundell
Treasurer:	Peter Mole
Secretary:	Neil Blundell
Committee:	Jamie Barnard, Euan Felton, Heather Fenn, Alistair Hill, Barrie Peroni, Nigel Smales, Louise Symonds, Jeremy Vanstone, Miv Wayland-Smith, Mike Yeadon
Newsletter:	Fred Russell and Andrew Findlay
Contact Address:	HTS, The Dower House, Rectory Road, Taplow, SL6 0ET
Cover picture:	Bluebell Wood – Andrew Findlay

## Editorial

The combination of the new Localism Act and the all-too-loosely worded National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) spell out new opportunities and threats about which we will have to be super-alert in the coming year. In particular we need to construct a Neighbourhood Plan (see article in this issue) as called for in the Localism Act to protect ourselves from unwanted intrusion into our happy parish. The original version was bitterly contested by many organisations, including the National Trust. The revised version which was released on March 27th this year alleviates some of the problems but the threat remains that local authorities have to make sure they have valid local plans in place within the next 12 months. I take it that this includes the new Neighbourhood Plans discussed in this issue.

But, in addition to this formality, if enough of us care sufficiently we have a better chance of making our voices heard. We need to convince our neighbours and friends to join your Society

so that we may speak with that much more authority on your behalf. A recruitment drive is taking place to establish this firmer foundation. It is a sad foretaste of what might be ahead for us now that the Council has approved the Bishop Centre proposal in spite of the recommendation by the planning staff that it be dismissed. There are many developers who are taking advantage of the interregnum between the government's clarification of the NPPF requirements and the take-up by local parish councils of neighbourhood plans, and one suspects that the Bishop Centre decision could be such a case. We need to get our own Plan in place as soon as possible to enable us to better influence the shape of the looming Mill Lane development, for instance.

This is Diamond Jubilee year and it saddens me to see how relatively little interest appears to be shown locally.

*Fred Russell*

# School Walk

On a couple of cold days in January, groups of six and seven years from St Nicolas' School were seen in Rectory Road and High Street, busy looking at the houses. Their topic for the half term was buildings old and new and they were out spotting what they could find on their own door step.



They found plenty, from the 400-year-old Porches in High Street to the 20th-century houses of Cedar Chase, with every style and era in between. They compared the big house, Maryfield, to the little workers' cottages on the bend of High Street. They looked at the features of the 18th-century Victoria Cottage with its classic Georgian windows and noted the differences to its next door neighbour, The Orchard., which was built in 1937, metal Crittal windows being the order of the day by then.

They found the old shop with little difficulty, as the shop front was a bit of a give-away. With 1805 over its door, some of them worked out that it had been there for over 200 years. They spent a long time looking at the walls, speculating on how the shopkeeper would have used the now-blocked-up doorways and windows. Someone spotted some decoration on the side of Pax Cottage, which they could tick off as Flemish brickwork.

The children recorded all the different types of windows they could find and there were quite a few. They learnt to look skywards to see the detailed eaves window decorations on several of the older houses. One group was very kindly invited into The Mulberries. The children were fascinated to see its 100-year-old servants' quarters and have a go at pushing the bells. Unfortunately no servants responded.

Walking on, they found some very old windows made up of small bits of glass, full of the bubbles and bumps of early glass making. The children worked out that Cedar Chase and their school must be quite modern, as they had large windows with perfectly clear glass by comparison. Also, these buildings do not have chimney pots like the older houses. What fun the children had counting up all the chimney pots they could see from the Village Green. So many of them are magnificent, and beautifully ornate affairs. The children also found that most of the houses are made of tiles and bricks made of clay, for centuries the locally sourced building material of the South East. There are no slate quarries near by and as a result very few slate roofs. The church has one of them. It was also the only stone building the children saw and one group decided this was because it is a very special place so it needed very special building materials. The children were supposed to be out for half an hour but they found so much to see that not one group managed their walk in under an hour. How lucky these children are to have such rich resource within walking distance. So much better than reading about it in books or on the Internet.

*Julia Paskins*

## Olympic Torch

A total of 8,000 torch-bearers will take the torch on its 70-day journey, which begins at Land's End on the 19th May. Current information is that on the 10th July this journey will eventually take the torch through Maidenhead and over the bridge to Taplow at the Mill Lane junction where it will then become a convoy (meaning it will be transported in a vehicle) and will travel to Eton Dorney Lake via an unpublished route. It's estimated that the torch will pass along the A4 at around 11.00 am. Bag your place early.

# Something's Brewing: Serocold Comforts

The coming of the railway brought something new to Taplow: commuters. Among the first was Charles Pearce-Serocold, senior partner in the Clerkenwell brewers, Reid & Co., for whom he acquired interests in many pubs including The White Hart in Theobald's Road, The Man-in-the-Moon in Chelsea and The Hole-in-the-Wall between Gray's Inn and Hatton Garden. Both brewing and Taplow were a big departure from his Cambridgeshire roots. His forebears had long been lords of Uphall Manor in Cherry Hinton or, like his great-grandfather Walter Serocold and his father Edward Pearce-Serocold, rectors of St Andrew's Church. His maternal grandfather William Pearce had come to Cambridge from Cornwall to be Master of Jesus College in 1789, Dean of Ely in 1797 and to hyphenate with Walter's daughter Anne.

Perhaps Charles discovered Taplow through some lingering Cornish connection that brought him into the social circles where he met his wife Marie Grenfell, a distant cousin of the Grenfells of Taplow Court. From 1860 he lived at Taplow Hill, a fine mansion off Church Road (now Rectory Road) which he had either built or acquired soon after it had been. With its privacy preserved like Elibank House opposite behind a long brick wall, it was a very comfortable home for him, Marie, their 10 children and 12 servants for 44 years. In their dotage, Charles and Marie took to spending their winters in Bordighera on the Italian Riviera. They both passed away there in 1904 – he in January, she in April. They are commemorated in the lobby of St Nicolas Church by a pair of stained glassed windows portraying Faith and Fortitude.

In 1891 Charles had acquired from Charles William Grenfell a 'close' across the road from St Nicolas Church where he built The Red Cottage in 1893. It was rather grand to be a cottage but it made a delightful home for three of his daughters, Marie (known as Minna), Lucy and either Margaret, Caroline, Dorothy or Ruth. Three of their brothers were already building military careers which culminated with their distinguished service during the Great War. Lieutenant-Colonel Oswald Pearce-Serocold commanded the 1st/4th Battalion of the Royal Berkshire Regiment in 1914-1916. He dropped his Pearce prefix when he retired in 1924 after

40 years with the Berkshires. Commander Claud Pearce-Serocold was awarded the OBE in 1918 for his service in Royal Navy intelligence and Brigadier-General Eric Pearce-Serocold of the King's Royal Rifle Corps was wounded five times in the course of three commands. His injuries weakened his constitution considerably and probably led to his untimely death from pneumonia in 1926.

His father's brewing background led to Oswald being instrumental in two unions. The first was personal – he married Gwendolyn Combe of rival brewers Combe Delafield & Co. The second was business – Reid and Combe Delafield merged with Watney & Co. in 1898 to become Watney Combe Reid & Co. Oswald and Gwendolyn's youngest son Walter Serocold eventually built an executive career with Watney Combe Reid and went on to write *The History of Watneys* in 1949. Eric returned home in 1902 from the Second Boer War in South Africa to suffer a double tragedy. His wife Beatrice Rice died in 1906 giving birth to their second daughter Anne-Marie, who didn't survive a year. He recovered to marry again, an event that with hindsight completed a royal circle. His second wife Blanche Stanley could claim descent through eight generations from King Charles II and his mistress Barbara Villiers. And in 1923 his fourth cousin Elizabeth Bowes-Lyon married Bertie, the second son of King George V, who succeeded to the throne in 1936 as King George VI. Being a distant cousin to the future Queen Elizabeth II is unlikely to have been much consolation for Blanche and Eric's youngest son Arthur Pearce-Serocold, a captain in the Welsh Guards when he was killed in action in Tunisia in 1942.

Memories of Taplow Hill are vague now. It rather lost its identity after 1940 when Oswald sold it and moved to Maidenhead. The prospect of having a large number of munitions workers from the new Slough Trading Estate billeted in his home was just too much for the old chap. However things turned out rather differently. The Dutch High Command was temporarily stationed at Maryfield, some strings were pulled and Taplow Hill spent the rest of the war as a rest and rehabilitation centre for Dutch merchant seaman. After the war it was reinvented as the All Nations Bible College



Taplow Hill House

which also made The Red Cottage a hostel for its students. We will pick up this thread later to discover how The Red Cottage became St Nicolas House and Cedar Chase replaced Taplow Hill.

### **Tall Tales – Spinsters on Show**

Local legend tells that despite having plenty of land to play with Charles Pearce-Serocold had The Red Cottage built close to the road so prospective suitors would have a splendid opportunity to see his three daughters were each in need of a husband. If this was the plan it worked well for Lucy Pearce-Serocold and the third sister, but Minna Pearce-Serocold was beyond temptation. As ladies of independent means were wont to do, she busied herself in the church, parish business, local history and helping at Cliveden Hospital during both world wars but she remained a happy spinster until she died in 1948.

*Nigel Smales*

*This extract gives a taste of a forthcoming new book by Society member Nigel Smales with the working title Taplow Ancient and Modern. The book will be comprehensively illustrated with photographs,*

*illustrations, maps and family trees and it will cover neighbouring Hitcham. It will focus on the four key periods of Taplow's history – the early Britain, Roman and Saxon beginnings; the shaping into medieval manors; the sweep on to the central stage of national affairs; the recent past and present. Nigel is asking our readers to share with him memories and pictures of local places and people past and present – especially of the last three or four generations. His contact details are [cazanig@aol.com](mailto:cazanig@aol.com), 01628 661636 or The Cottage, Rectory Road. All profits from sales of the book will go to St Nicolas Church.*

## **Website**

Register on the Society website  
and have your say in our Forum:

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

# Diary Dates

## Hitcham and Taplow Society

Jun 23rd Village Green Party  
Nov 30th AGM

## Maidenhead Rowing Club

May 20th The 10th Maidenhead  
Junior Regatta

## St Nicolas Church

We are celebrating the centenary of the laying of the foundation stone of the present church building (1911) through to the consecration (1912).

May 19th An evening of music in the church by Burnham Concert Band  
Jun 23rd Raffle at the Village Green Party – this to raise funds for the north roof of the church, which is in urgent need of renovation  
Jun 30th Church Talk in the Rectory Garden  
July 20th Garden Party at Huntercombe Farmhouse  
Dec 9th The Bishop of Oxford will join us for Parish Communion at the 10:30 Service

## Taplow & Hitcham WI

Jun 6th T.B.A  
Jul 3rd Members Meeting  
Sep 4th The Walled Garden  
Speaker: Kirstie Kerr  
Oct 2nd Birds of the Jubilee River  
Speaker: Brian Clews  
Nov 6th A.G.M  
Dec 4th Christmas Cracker  
(Yorkshire's Pam Ayres)  
Speaker: Joan Dark

## Cricket Club

As well as an extremely busy programme of fixtures from April 22nd to August 27th, the club has a number of upcoming social events.

Jun 24th Family Fun Day, which includes face painting, a bouncy castle, 5-a-side cricket, etc. All welcome.

Jul 6th B-B-Q  
Sep 4th End of season party  
We have a thriving Colts section for youngsters aged 11 to 17, on Friday evenings 6–8 pm. There is even an under-11 section!

# Ladies, Are You New to Taplow?

Taplow & Hitcham Women's Institute recently celebrated its 86th birthday with a delicious lunch which was enjoyed by all the members.

The Institute was founded, with the support of Lady Astor, in 1926. The hall was built on land leased from the Great Western Railway and built from funds raised in 1929-30, when Lady Astor formerly opened it. There were at that time 200 members with a waiting list. Later the land passed to the Institute by Conveyance of Land from G.W.R and Deed of Grant to the land.

Life has changed a great deal since then but we still have a very healthy membership at the hall in Institute Road near Taplow railway station. Most recently a great deal of maintenance work has been carried out at the

premises, including a new heating system and lighting, and any time now a new kitchen will be installed – all aimed at bringing the hall in line with modern times.

There are many activities that members enjoy which include classes for art, badminton, bowls, country dancing, craft, drama, Scrabble, and table tennis. This is apart from the monthly meetings which are held on the first Tuesday in every month. New members of all ages are really made very welcome and if you would like any information or would just like to discuss hiring the hall please telephone 01628 624429.

*Edith Wright*

# Gilbert, Sullivan, D'Oyly Carte ...and the Dibdens!

Photos by Nigel Smales



Taplow has had a St Nicolas Church for over 1,300 years. The current one is a mere whippersnapper of 100. Its centenary year celebrations got off to a memorable start on 14th January when G&S graced us with their presence. The church was packed to the rafters to witness two dimensions of WS Gilbert and Arthur Sullivan – an engaging semi-dramatised presentation of their lives followed by a fabulous performance of *Trial by Jury*, their second collaboration, still going strong after 137 years. In all, the assembled multitude saw 16 actors, a 19-piece orchestra and a chorus of 74 Victoriana-attired locals perform admirably under the accomplished baton of the renowned Gillian Dibden.

Three of the soloists have long been in Gillian's tender loving care – Lucy Morris (the fainting Plaintiff) was formerly of Taplow Youth Choir, Gareth Watkins (the Defendant) a dedicated choirboy at Desborough Boys School, and her son, Mark Griffiths (the Learned

Judge), Musical Director of the prize-winning chamber choir, Coro, and Director of Junior Choirs at Trinity College of Music. Roger Askew took time off from being Founder Chairman of the Stoke Poges Society to evolve from Sullivan in the first half of the evening to Counsel for the Plaintiff in the second. Roger le Clerq's evolution took a parallel path from Richard D'Oyly Carte to the Court Usher. Charles Bates gave us Gilbert, and Jean Porter all the female roles in the sparkling first half, but most hearts were melted by the second-half contributions of Lily Begley, Jasmine Fone, Luisa Kent, Tamsin Ratcliff and Amelia and Florence Snoxell as the Bridesmaids, and by the Pageboys, Daniel and Max O'Brien. Grateful thanks were also due to the offstage team of a dozen or more and especially to the Reverend Alan Dibden resplendent in an open-necked shirt to match his open-toed sandals.

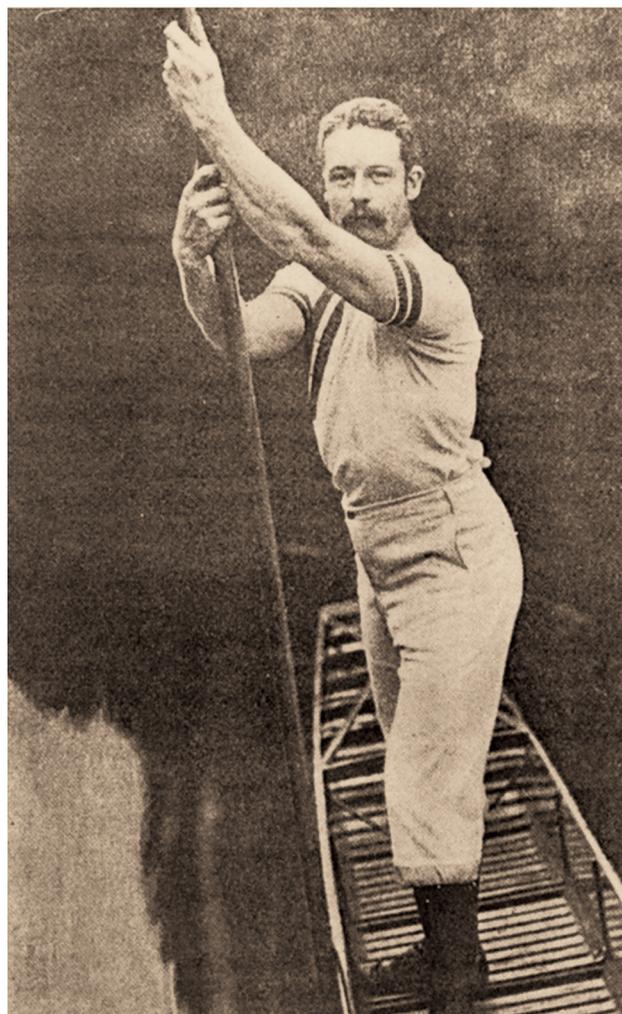
*Nigel Smales*



# A Taplow Olympian

*In this Year of the Olympics, SGI-UK are holding an exhibition of the life and times of Lord Desborough, who was largely responsible for the success of the 1908 Games in London. This exhibition will be staged at Taplow Court from April 15th to September 16th and will feature paintings, sculpture, posters, photographs, sporting equipment, medals and trophies. Robert Samuels, General Director of SGI-UK, said: 'As Buddhists we feel an affinity with Desborough – because he created friendship, harmony and goodwill, and believed sport could be a potent force in fostering peace amongst nations.' The following material was kindly provided by SGI-UK.*

The founding of the Olympic Games, as we recognise them, began at the turn of the 20th century. The modern Games were the vision of a Frenchman, Baron Pierre de Coubertin. He believed a reform of the French education system, incorporating sports and physical training, would revitalize the nation after its defeat by Prussia in 1870. He took his inspiration from the English public school system, Henley Regatta and the excavations at the site of the ancient Greek Games at Olympia and in particular from the Olympian Society started in 1850 by Dr William Penny Brookes, a physician from Much Wenlock, Shropshire. The doctor, who had a keen interest in the values of antiquity and believed that a healthy body was as important as a healthy mind, was campaigning for a revival of the Olympic Games in Athens. Brookes held an annual Wenlock Games at Linden Fields, consisting of traditional English rural sports. At an International Congress on amateur sport held at the Sorbonne in June 1894, it was decided to revive the Games and the International Olympic Committee (IOC) was founded. Both the Prince of Wales (later Edward VII) and Arthur Balfour, a future Prime Minister, close associates of William Henry Grenfell of Taplow Court, approved of Pierre de Coubertin's efforts. The first Games were held in Athens in 1896, followed by Paris in 1900 and St. Louis in 1904. At the IOC session that same year, it was proposed that the 1908 Games be held in Rome. As a result of this meeting, the British Olympic Association was founded at the House of Commons in 1905 with William Henry Grenfell (later Lord Desborough) as Chairman.



SGI-UK

W H Grenfell, Thames Punting Champion

A separate cycle of Athenian Games was also happening at this time with events held in 1906 and 1910. Lord Desborough participated in 1906 as a member of the British Fencing team and His Majesty's representative. Lord Desborough returned with the suggestion that the 1908 Olympic Games be held in London as Rome was proving impractical: the eruption of Mount Vesuvius in 1906 left Italy with calls on its funding for disaster relief and rebuilding. As Chair of the British Olympic Association and with the support of his king Edward VII, the dynamic Lord Desborough officially accepted the IOC's invitation to step in as host country in November 1906. They had only eighteen months to organise this pioneering event. Lord Desborough, being a well-connected landowner, parliamentarian and philanthropist, cut a deal with the organisers of a Franco-British Exhibition, due to take place in the same year at Shepherd's Bush. A stadium was

planned as part of the complex. As managing director of the sports section, Lord Desborough persuaded the organisers to pay for the Olympic standard, 66,000 capacity stadium, plus donating £2,000 towards its running costs. With no government funding available in those days, our Olympic hero made personal appeals in the press right up until a couple of weeks before the Games opened. 'Lord Desborough is the real hero of the Olympiad. He delivered 139 speeches at luncheons and banquets and other social functions held in connection with the games' (*Throne*, August 15, 1908). Donations eventually exceeded the amount required and appeals had to be made to the public to stop sending money. Despite this achievement, the Press seized on any possible negative aspect of the Games – the bad weather (this was the wettest Games in history), the high admission prices and accusations of unfair judging. But there's no doubt these Games were a resounding success, with White City stadium considered by some to be a technological marvel. The stadium track was three laps to the mile, not the current standard of 400 metres, with a pool for swimming and diving and platforms for wrestling and gymnastics at the centre.

Lord Desborough and his team had to standardise the rules for the 22 sports scheduled to take place at the Games and also translate them into the languages of the 23 competing nations. The distance from the start of the Marathon to the finish at the stadium was established at these Games. The original distance of 25 miles was changed to 26 miles so the marathon could start at Windsor Castle and then changed again at the request of Princess Mary so that start would be beneath the windows of the Royal Nursery. The Queen gave the signal and Lord Desborough fired the starting gun. To ensure the race would end in front of the King, the finish line was moved by British officials to become the standard length covering 26 miles 385 yards (42.195 km).

William Henry Grenfell or Willy, as he was known, was the first and last Lord Desborough, born on October 30 1855. At six feet five inches tall, with a well-developed physique, he was a striking figure. He went to Harrow School for Boys, later graduating from Balliol College, Oxford in 1879. His sporting achievements are legend and his passion for sport and excellence

at multiple disciplines quite remarkable: Willy captained the Oxford University Boat Club and Athletic Club. He rowed in the controversial Dead Heat Boat Race of 1877, and was part of the crew for Oxford's win in 1878. He won a silver medal for fencing as part of the Athens Games held in 1906, at the age of fifty. He excelled at mountaineering, cricket, tennis, swimming, fishing and big-game hunting, coach driving and wrestling. He swam across the base of the Niagara rapids twice; the second time in a snowstorm, just to prove to a doubting friend that he'd done it the first time! He climbed the Matterhorn, the Little Matterhorn, Monte Rosa and the Weisshorn mountains in just eight days. He rowed across the English Channel with an Oxford crew of eight in just 4 hours and 22 minutes and was Amateur Punting Champion of the Upper Thames for three successive years.

Grenfell was not only an unparalleled sportsman in his era, but also a dedicated public servant. He entered parliament as a Liberal MP for Salisbury between 1880 and 1886, becoming Private Secretary to the Chancellor of the Exchequer in 1885. He was MP for Hereford in 1892 and 1893. He was High Sheriff of Buckinghamshire in 1889, and Mayor of Maidenhead for two terms in 1896–7. He fell out with Prime Minister William Gladstone over the Irish Home Rule bill, stood down and involved himself strenuously in local government before becoming Conservative MP for Wycombe from 1900–1905. His peerage, awarded for services to sport and local government, made him Baron Desborough of Taplow in 1905.

The Desboroughs had three sons and two daughters. His eldest son, the war poet Julian Grenfell, was killed in action in 1915. His second son, Billy was also killed, about two months after his elder brother. Third son Ivo died in 1926 as a result of a car accident. The Desboroughs' elder daughter, Monica, served as a nurse in the first World War, whilst her sister Imogen, an accomplished horsewoman and connoisseur of art, became Lady Gage of Firlie Place, East Sussex. Following the tragic deaths of his sons, Lord Desborough is said to have become withdrawn. However, he remained willing to converse on sporting topics. He lived to the ripe old age of 90, dying in 1945 – a true testament to living actively.

# A Soldier's Tale

*October 1942 – March 1945*

*Officer Cadet to Lieutenant*

- Oct '42 Joined Royal Engineers, training to be an officer, including 6 months at university.
- Dec '43 Appointed to an Emergency Commission in the Royal Engineers and sent to a 'low establishment' unit.
- Oct '44 Sent to Holland as reinforcement to a company in I Corps (this was about 4 months after D-Day).

## My first action

The Company was part of 'Corps Troops' – we were not part of a particular division but were available to be sent anywhere in the Corps area. I was appointed as a reconnaissance (recce) officer in Company HQ. Our task was to build a Bailey Bridge over a small river for a new American Division – the 104th Timber Wolves – recently arrived from the States. The Americans crossed the river in assault boats and occupied the far bank but, when the Squadron moved up to start the bridge, we were fired on with heavy mortars and had to move out quickly.

You cannot build a bridge while the enemy can observe your movement. Clearly the fire was observed and the Officer Commanding (OC) decided to send someone up to the bridge – you will have guessed that the someone was me. So I told my driver to take our small, lightly armoured scout car up to the bridge to see if we were fired on. After a short interval we were, so we beat a hasty retreat. This happened several times that night. Jerry started getting crafty and from my position sticking out of the top of our scout car, I could see the explosions from the falling mortar bombs chasing us down the road. I called to my driver to get a move on but he had to traverse a roadblock of felled trees, which slowed him up. It was nearly light then, so the OC decided I needn't do another run. We built the bridge that morning and launched it so that the heavy weapons and supplies could go forward to the American Division. Later we heard that there had been a German radio operator in a cellar of one of the houses overlooking the bridge site that the Americans had failed to flush out!

*May 1945 – 1951*

*Lieutenant to Captain*

- May '45 To India and joined Madras Sappers and Miners, Indian Army at the Depot in Bangalore.
- Aug '45 Joined Field Company for Operation Zipper to regain Malaya (no action as Japan surrendered after the Atomic Bomb).
- Oct '46 Promoted Captain and appointed adjutant of HQRE 2 British Division.
- Nov '46 Attended War Officer Selection Board – passed; commission to run from 26th Aug '45 (21st birthday).
- Dec '46 To UK by BOAC flying boat, alighting at Poole harbour.
- Feb '47 Adjutant of newly reformed TA Engineer Regiment, Duke of York's HQ, Chelsea Barracks, London. Later moved hurriedly (!) to a Training Regiment to fill in time until... No. 12 Supplementary Course for a year to bring war-time officers up to peacetime standards and to give experience in special units like Port Squadrons (I dived in a full Siebe Gorman suit in Southampton Water and did some field surveying – later my speciality in 1952).
- 1950 Joined Field Engineer Regiment in Tripoli, Libya and later Benghazi.
- 1951 The Regiment had been told to provide the extra Sapper units required when the British Brigade, which had been fighting in the Korean war, was to be made up to a Division – The Commonwealth Division (which had never been done previously) with units from Canada – a whole Brigade Group; Australia – 2 Battalions of the Royal Australian Rifles (RAR); New Zealand – a gunner regiment of 25 pdr guns.

*Having been second in command of the Field Park Squadron I was then a Troop Commander in one of the Field Squadrons and my usual job was to provide sapper support for the Royal Artillery.*

## How to disable a Centurion tank

In Korea, one day, there was an armoured 'swan' (a venture into enemy territory). The first tank got into deep mud in a paddy field when there was a minor explosion and the tank stopped. As we learnt later the tank was deep in the mud and its flat belly was sliding over the mud and compressing it. Apparently there was a Schu-



Dick Nutt (right) with Sox Hosegood, Chief Helicopter Test Pilot for the Bristol Aeroplane Company, and a Bristol 192 twin-rotor helicopter

mine (a very small anti-personnel mine of German pattern) in the mud and the pressure in the mud had set it off directly under the tank. The explosion had to go somewhere and as the seal between the tank's belly and the mud was so tight it bent the tank's belly (quite a thick piece of armour) and that broke the large casting securing the tank's gearbox. So it stopped!

The Tank Regiment's colonel had tried to get it towed out but that was no good, so he called me over and asked me to go out and booby trap the tank so that the Chinese could not steal it in the night. Now I had to think quickly! The tank was out in the open not far from the Chinese lines and the chances of getting the tank booby trapped before I got shot seemed remote!! I asked him if he wanted the tank back in the morning and, of course, he did. I was then able to point out that the Chinese could watch me preparing the tank with booby traps *and* making sure that the trap could be removed, they would

still be able to steal the tank. The Colonel accepted this. Phew that was a close one! Talking of close ones, there had been desultory mortar fire all morning but we realised that the sides of the hill we were under was protecting us and we were used to it. The Tank Colonel had only just arrived in the forward area and ducked each time a bomb landed.

#### *1952 – 1957 Captain to Major*

- 1952 Returned to UK for Long Survey Course
- 1953 To Australia for 2-year attachment on exchange to Australian army (not the survey branch of the Royal Australian Engineers which I had expected, but to the Royal Australian Survey Corps (the equivalents of our Survey Units and the Ordnance Survey)).
- 1955 returned to UK. These two journeys were by first class in liners and were the only time my family and I travelled together.

- 1955 *Joined a Field Engineer Regiment of BAOR (British Army of the Rhine) in Hameln (of Pied Piper fame), initially 2IC and acting OC of Field Park Squadron, then Adjutant of the Regiment and, later of HQRE 2 Div.*
- 1957 *Promoted Major and posted to UK – see Paras below.*

### **There shouldn't be a problem: it is only a training jump!**

My best job was in an army airborne unit doing development and training in all air matters that affect the Army, the only time I was in one job (and one house) for three years. The way it came about was this. In 1957, I was doing a rather boring job as Adjutant of a divisional RE HQ in Herford, Germany. The phone went and it was the usual chap from BAOR telling me to move some soldiers to new jobs. But this time it was not soldiers but me; I was to be promoted Major and moved to RAF Old Sarum near Salisbury.

Later a terse signal arrived which said that I was to volunteer to do army parachute training or the promotion and posting was cancelled! I don't think the army usually goes to such extreme measures to obtain volunteers! We were on our sixth jump of our Parachute Training Course at RAF Abingdon. I had been put on the Territorial Army course, which was for eight jumps in a fortnight, as I had to be back with my unit as soon as possible. On the first day of the course, after a short address by the Commandant, we were shown, without any explanation, a silent black and white film with endless shots of parachutes, which failed to open. The disastrous results were not shown but could be imagined. At the end of it our instructor said, 'Does anyone want to leave now? There will not be any record on your documents and you can return to your unit.'

I was a bit shocked and considered leaving but pulled myself together in time. Incidentally, at 33, I was the oldest on the course and also the most senior so I couldn't really have left. The instructor then said they were all dummies and the shots were taken as part of the development of the parachutes. That is what I call really good psychology and reflects the rest of the course, which was quite first class and very practical: the very best training I ever received. We started with a lot of ground training: before any movement the order was always 'Green on GO!' which is the order given to exit before every jump.

One of the early frighteners was to climb up on to a platform about 30 ft above the ground in our gym – an RAF hangar. We then put on a harness tied to a wire and had to jump out into space. This wire was connected to a drum on a large fan and, as you jumped, this contraption generated little resistance until you had fallen about half way down to the floor. Then it slowed you to the speed you would probably get on a real jump. You did it twice! You started your real jumps from a tethered balloon. On the first jump I was the first one out of the basket and the Sergeant Instructor said 'Off you go, sir: the second-best thrill in life!'

In retrospect the balloon jumps were easier than jumping out of a plane and easier to control. The parachute was tied to the balloon basket by a strop, which pulled the canopy out of the pack on your back as you jumped. It is just the weight of your falling body, which pulls the canopy out, and you have to fall about 140 ft before it develops. It seemed to take a long time for you to fall that distance. In an aircraft you are jumping into a 100+ mph gale so the canopy comes out very quickly. On that day we were jumping from an aircraft, not only using port and starboard doors but also going out as quickly as we could after each other, which is how you would do it operationally. The jump seemed OK but, as I looked up to check all-round observation, I saw a pair of boots, which had swung onto my canopy and then got round a rigging line so that they were locked to my canopy. This was a bizarre sight and I was concerned lest his boots would collapse my canopy but the instructors immediately noticed it on the ground who, using a megaphone, he told us not to try get out of the tangle. As he said this he saw that, without control, we could crash into a vehicle, which he hurriedly had moved.

In those days (1957) we were still using the wartime chutes; the only control you had was to pull on your lift-webs (which connected you to the canopy) and this moved you in the direction of the pulled web. Ideally you wanted to land with a small but definite horizontal motion as this reduced the shock of landing but, as you could not turn round you couldn't tell which way you were going to land so we had been trained to land with horizontal motion in any direction. In this case we could not control the canopy so we were going to land in the direction of the wind,

which mercifully was light. We picked ourselves up and found that all was well when we had untangled the chutes – saved by good training and a very vigilant instructor! It had been a near-run thing!

### **1960–1965 Major**

- *Dec '60 Appointed OC of 75 Malayan Field Squadron in Singapore, starting with six months on our own in British North Borneo.*

## **Colonial experience**

How lucky I was to find that the Squadron was to do 6 months in British North Borneo and was already there when I got to Singapore. It had been decided that better training facilities than those in Malaya were needed; they chose the Kota Belud area of Borneo where the countryside was more like Salisbury Plain than a jungle. There was to be (a) a tented camp with full electrical and water facilities for a battalion (about 750 men); (b) a route for Centurion tanks without using existing roads, from the sea to the Training Area; (c) an airfield for Blackburn Beverley aircraft, which would be used to transport personnel direct to the Training Area.

Sapper squadrons in the Far East were to do this task in rotation, changing every six months. My Squadron was the fourth and last and our main task was the airfield with some work on making (b) happen.

We were entirely on our own; there were no other army units in Borneo. Everything – petrol, food – had to be bought as arranged by my excellent second-in-command. At least we got our own water (a standard sapper job) and provided our own lighting with a generator. Much had been added to the Squadron – (tipper trucks, workshops, extra plant and equipment plus an extra officer solely for Project Management and a Medical Officer).

The District Officer (Borneo was still a colony!) was a great help and was the only other non-native for many miles around. For example, when we needed to meet the local chiefs to agree location for the tank track – (b) above – he gave me his horse with a European saddle while he used a local horse with wooden saddle. We also worked closely with him when planning a suitable show for the

Queen's Birthday Parade. He arrived in full regalia with ostrich plumes on his helmet. The airfield was mostly a grass runway so we had to prepare a smooth, well-drained surface and hope that the grass would appear (tropics, remember): it did. The main problem was that at the end of the runway we had run into a hill and we had not brought any explosive with us. It took a long time with two heavy rooters (we bent one of them!) I thoroughly enjoyed my time there with great support from the men in the Squadron. The responsibilities were immense and, after the six months were up, I asked for a short leave so that I could return to Singapore in a small cargo ship with about eight passengers, calling at the ports down the Borneo coast.

- *Dec '62 Returned to UK for job in Movements in the War Office/Ministry of Defence.*
- *1965 Resigned my commission and left the army.*

## **Epilogue**

It was customary to 'dine out' officers leaving their jobs. In my case, there were three of us Squadron Commanders to be dined out on the same night in Singapore. The speeches began with the other two OCs, of British Squadrons. When it came to my turn, I thought that I would do my speech in Malay. Obviously my officers all spoke Malay, but I guessed that no one else would (including the Colonel with whom I was not popular). I was surprised that I was able to make an impromptu speech in Malay but the drinks were free for the leavers so perhaps that helped. Anyhow the speech went down very well with my officers but was received very glumly by the others, especially the Colonel!

### *Dick Nutt*

*Early in 1974 Dick Nutt and his wife Jane moved into Lea Rig, the birthplace of the Hitcham and Taplow Society. Within days Dick became a member of the Society. By spring 1975 he had been co-opted on to the Committee. In 1977 he became Secretary and remained in that role until 1991. With no volunteers in sight, he brought out Newsletters numbers 60 to 65. At that point he went into comfortable retirement as an ordinary member. Dick Nutt, you served the Society well. Thank you. Ed.*

# The Big Society Is Here in Taplow

Following the demise of Regional Planning, the over-centralised planning system that had evolved to become an instrument of national social engineering rather than a system for serving the needs of local communities, the local authorities found themselves adrift in a sea of indecision whilst the new government attempted to replace some 1,200 pages of planning procedures and regulations with something more flexible and, above all, simpler.

The 'something' that emerged was labelled the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which was floated upon this sea of indecision as the instrument of national planning to replace the previous instrument of national planning, but with a difference. The key difference was that the NPPF was not a set of detailed prescriptive rules but instead a set of policies that meant that the 1,200 pages were reduced to about 50.

The underlying principle is an attempt to delegate planning decisions back to the local community affected by the decision. However, while the previous over-prescriptive system was a labyrinth of scarcely understood regulations, its replacement with its over-simplified set of policies set off a storm of protest about its key assumption in favour of sustainable development and quickly became known as a developer's charter. The NPPF reads a bit like the European *Code Napoléon* where there is a presumption of guilt and the accused are required to prove their own innocence, as opposed to the British system where there is a presumption of innocence, except in this case the default presumption is approval unless the locals affected by a planning proposal can make a case for its refusal. The scales of justice seem to be weighted in the developer's favour. The major risks in the document are that the Green Belt protection is severely weakened and that there could be a wave of untrammelled development allowed in rural areas generally. Many major amenity organisations have been lobbying the government to change this document to better reflect the needs of the country as a whole rather than just the urban dwellers.

The NPPF is just a set of policies that appeared to be aimed at kick-starting the economy just by building houses, but to provide the legal basis for the realisation of the 'Big Society' the Localisation

Bill was approved in November last year. The purpose of this Act is to introduce new rights and powers to allow local communities to shape new development by coming together to prepare Neighbourhood Plans that would have allowed local input to the location of shops, offices, schools and even in setting standards for the design of new buildings.

You will recall that Taplow did produce such a plan in 2005 called the Taplow Parish Plan which was the outcome of the initiative of your Society and essentially masterminded by Bernard and Mary Trevallion during which significant polling of opinion around the parish was carried out, but it was never granted the privileged status of being accepted as a Supplementary Planning Document. The SPD status would have meant that its contents (the wishes of Taplow residents) would have been a material factor in SBDC's decisions about planning proposal in our area.

Two types of bodies – town, or parish, councils and 'neighbourhood forums' – can prepare a Neighbourhood Plan. Neighbourhood forums are community groups designated to take forward neighbourhood planning in areas without a parish council. It is a new role of the local planning authority to agree who should create a Forum for a given area. It is assumed that since we do have a parish council that it will be the focus for creating our Neighbourhood Plan. Assuming we didn't have a parish council then the criteria for establishing a neighbourhood forum are being kept as simple as possible to encourage new and existing residents' organisations, voluntary and other community groups to put themselves forward to (say) the SBDC as candidates.

In an important change to the planning system communities can use neighbourhood planning to permit the proposed development they want to see – either in full or in outline – without the need for a formal planning application. These are called Neighbourhood Development Orders. The SBDC will continue to produce development plans that will set the strategic context within which neighbourhood plans will sit, for instance the South Bucks Core Strategy. Interestingly, neighbourhood development plans or orders do not take effect unless there is a majority of support in a local

referendum that introduces a completely new element into the community at parish level.

However, these neighbourhood plans have to meet a number of conditions before they can be put to a community referendum and legally come into force. These conditions, we are told, are to ensure plans are legally compliant and take account of wider policy restrictions. These conditions are:

- They must have regard to national planning policies (the NPPF?)
- They must be in general conformity with the SBDC Core Strategy
- They must be compatible with EU obligations and human rights requirements (!)
- An independent qualified person must check that these conditions are met before submission to a referendum.

Assuming that the neighbourhood plan meets these criteria and is approved by a simple majority then the SBDC is under a legal duty to bring it into force.

Clearly we have to examine the Act in some detail to understand how all this and the NPPF will support the implementation of this new bottom-up approach to planning. Some initial comments and questions are:

- Since we have a Parish Council is the assumption that it has the duty and power to create a Neighbourhood Plan for Taplow?
- Does it have the right skills available to it?

- Where does the extra funding come from?
- Does the Act give the PC the power to veto existing applications in the pipeline?
- What does the Localism Bill say or imply about the involvement of amenity societies and residents' associations such as the HTS and EDRA?
- Since the Act came into force in November last year, does this mean that outstanding applications such as Barratts' request for 300 houses in Mill Lane and the Bishop Centre proposals must be put on hold until a Neighbourhood Plan for Taplow is in place – or will we see a frantic rush to get these very major applications approved before we have our say?
- Can we resurrect the previous Taplow Parish Plan as the foundation of our Neighbourhood Plan?

These and many other issues need urgently to be addressed and one needs to ask where the initiative to kick-start the process should come from. Are we to assume the Core Strategy is adequate local protection, wait for the SBDC to raise the matter of a Neighbourhood Plan or should our Parish Council take the initiative and inform the SBDC that they are putting a plan together to take up our bit of the Big Society?

*Fred Russell*

## The Bishop Centre Decision

The Application to build a supermarket and other retail outlets at the Bishop Centre was permitted by the South Bucks Planning Committee *against the recommendation by Officers to refuse*. The vote was carried 6 to 5. Both our District Councillors supported the case for refusal and voted against the motion. A key worry of many objectors is the effect the new traffic control arrangements will have on the general movement of traffic on the A4. We can now only wait and see.

A couple of notable moments in the meeting. One councillor professed support on the grounds that Gerrards Cross residents had suffered so much from the traffic generated by the Tesco store in the town that her view was that supermarkets

should be placed in out-of-town locations! The other was when the Bucks County Council Highways Officer was questioned about a statement raising concerns about the 'independent' report on the traffic assessment he volunteered that he had written the 'independent' report himself. So much for independence! He who sets the examination paper will clearly get 100% in the exam.

After the vote above this application was called in by the Secretary of State for further consideration, so...

...We move on.

*Euan Felton*

# Adventure Playground

*Imagine...* if every family outing meant leaving out a member of your family, because it is just impossible to do it together and, when you do eventually brave the local playground, people stare at you, or ignore you, or keep their children at a 'safe' distance, just in case. Imagine if most of the play equipment is not accessible or suitable, and all your child can do is watch the other children playing on it, wishing... Families of children with special needs can't easily enjoy the opportunities for fun and recreation which most families take for granted. Going to the local park can be a distressing and fraught experience. Going to the leisure centre can be like a military operation. Bowling – difficult! Cinema – forget it! Out for a birthday meal – afraid not!

*Now imagine...* a place where the entire family, whatever their individual needs, can spend a whole day of fun, playing and laughing together – not just a great day out, but an important part of the family coping mechanism – a place where everyone is accepted, everyone is equally valued and everyone has the chance to join in and play, regardless of their abilities; a place where you can relax, meet other parents 'in the same boat', and recharge the batteries; a place where your children are supported, safe and enjoying themselves; a place where they can learn important life skills and make friends... You are imagining the Thames Valley Adventure Playground.

Over 13,600 visits to the Playground are made each year by children and adults with all types of special need. They continue to visit from across the Thames Valley and beyond, as there are few places where they can have the freedom to play and be themselves. That the Playground is such an important part of the lives of so many is extraordinary. That, as we celebrate our 30th birthday, we are still able to provide them with the stimulating and ever-changing environment which is so enjoyed, and of such benefit, is down to the amazing support of the local community.



So that people can experience the Playground for themselves, we now hold Integrated Playdays every Saturday from 10.00–3.30 for accompanied children under 12 with no special need. Among our birthday fundraising events, we will be holding our Sponsored Walk on 19th May – with lovely 5- and 10-mile walks along the Thames and Jubilee Rivers. On 7th July our patron, Sir Terry Wogan, will be sharing his experiences during an Audience at the Playground (and there'll be tea, too!) and our president, Mr Tim Brooke-Taylor, will be cutting the official birthday cake at our Birthday Fun Day on 11th August.

If you want to find out more about these and other events call us on 01628 628051 or visit our website [www.tvap.co.uk](http://www.tvap.co.uk)

*Nicky Hutchinson*

# Ally Sloper's Family Takes the Field

*On a sunny June afternoon in the year 1888, an unusual cricket team made its appearance in the district. The team was called 'Ally Sloper's XI' and was composed of a bunch of Maidenhead cricketers. They played a Taplow XI and the match was a very exciting affair. The Maidenhead Advertiser reported the game as follows:*

The Maidenhead men styled themselves as members of the Sloparian family, each dressed in 'costumes', wigs, noses and all that was necessary for the make-up, having been sent from 'The Sloperies' free of cost and carriage paid. The novel appearance of Ally and his team caused much amusement, and the wickets were pitched at three o'clock.

The Sloparians won the toss and batted first. Ally Sloper (T. Emmett) with his strawberry nose, his bottle of 'unsweetened' half-way out of his coat-tail pocket and his tall white hat covering a bald pate, accompanied by the venerable Mrs Sloper (T. Neighbour) were the first to open the batting. Ally's bat being of sufficient width to cover the wicket. Mrs Sloper's timbers were shattered by Wheeler's third ball and she was succeeded by Aunt Geezer (H. Smith) who broke her wicket before she had scored. McNab (H. Wiggins) followed and having saved his duck's egg was caught out by Lambourne.

The cousin Eveliana (J. Hezeldine) in her attractive costume and with fan on hand gracefully advanced to the wicket and became Ally's partner. Her stay, however, was very brief for Jones made a splendid catch and sent her back to the pavilion, before she had made a run. Alexandry (J. Neighbour) in his college hat next tried his luck but was clean bowled by Fisher for nil, to the vexation of his parent at the opposite wicket. Uncle Boffin (J. Batts) succumbed to Wheeler when he had gained one run, but the same bowler's first ball to Iky Moses (J. Warwick) compelled that player to retract his steps which he good-humouredly did. McGoosley (D. Forrester) who was a funny character and cut some queer capers, hit his wicket and contributed a round of 0. Angelina Kaufdrop (J. White), Mrs Sloper's nurse, now kept Ally company,

and Bill Higgins (H. Evans) took charge of the squalling Jubilee twins which he pushed up and down the ground in a perambulator. Angelina's skirts did not retard her progress when she cut a twoer, but after this she was caught out by Jones. Now Bill Higgins delivered up the twins and handled the willow and when he had contributed half-a-dozen runs, Sloper was caught by Godfrey from a ball by Fisher, having just previously broken the blade of his bat. Sloper received quite an ovation on returning to the pavilion having put together 14 of the 26 scored. This was doubtless due to Ally's occasional attention to his bottle of 'unsweetened'.

The Taplow men, in contrast to this sorry performance, went on to score a handsome 99!



# Taplow Lodge

On the site now occupied by Orkney Court once stood a grand house called Taplow Lodge. Owned by Patrick Craufurd Bruce MP from 1794 until his death in 1820 and recorded in J C Loudon's Gardening Tours series in 1832 when it was owned by a Mrs Tunno, the house was later used as staff accommodation for the Canadian Red Cross Memorial Hospital (CRCMH) on the other side of Cliveden Road. Long-disused and increasingly derelict, the house was discovered in 1993 by a group looking for film locations. Damon Torsten takes up the tale...

We spent a very long time exploring the CRCMH before we discovered Taplow Lodge – and quite accidentally at that. I can't imagine why. Perhaps because it was so well hidden from the road – behind thick bushes and trees, down a gravel track that looked for all the world as if it was somebody's driveway.



Narnia?

Entering via the southern end of the site, the first thing we came across was a collection of outbuildings – stables and the like. We were quite lost for words in finding yet another run-down site so close to the CRCMH. We shot one scene in what appeared to be an old hall (perhaps a coachworks?) next to some stables.

Making our way around the side of these outbuildings, we met with a sight that was not so much awe-inspiring as completely out of this world. We just couldn't believe our eyes. Talk about stumbling into Narnia! A huge white crumbling stately home nestled in an open parkland setting enclosed by thick forest. Don't get me wrong – the CRCMH is very impressive – but this was something else.

Once inside the main building, the decay was instantly visible. Ceilings and walls had collapsed. Much of the interior was a mess, and we truly had to tiptoe around everything. Some areas though still retained an air of grace, and none more so than the grand staircase. This part of the house made me think of *The Poseidon Adventure*. Junk all over the place, yet this majestic staircase still winds its way to the upper balconies with lavish burgundy wallpaper throughout. Sadly, this dark part of the house wasn't treated kindly on film, with only our small torch to pinpoint features – though there were no such issues with the naked eye. We did dare to venture up the stairs – cautiously – but turned back from a room not far from the top when the floor began making very unsavoury noises.



The photos are from video rushes of Damon's film *The Harrowing*



The stairs leading down to the cellar held no such fears. Again too dark to photograph with much success, but perhaps the most fascinating part of the house. The atmosphere of the place changed from regal country manor house to the misty backstreets of Victorian London. Strange bare-brick passageways with cobbled floors that brought back memories of the *Jack The Ripper* exhibit at Madame Tussauds – an incredibly creepy place. In the time we were down there, we failed to exhaust every single alley – possibly because we were frightened to death. If the stories of a secret tunnel between here and Cliveden are true, it wouldn't surprise me in the slightest.

Damon Torsten

More of Damon's adventures are recorded at [www.crcmh.com](http://www.crcmh.com)

## Do You Know?

More queries from visitors to our website. Answers please to the Chairman, Karl Lawrence.

### Lionel Percy Smythe

Sally Hayles writes: Can you help me? I am researching an artist Lionel Percy Smythe, 1838-1918. The only book about him was written by his half-brother and Rosa Whitlaw. I think Rosa was an artist at some point too. Her address was Amerden, Taplow, Bucks. In 1910 she wrote about Lionel in Northern France where the Whitlows owned or rented a house near Boulogne. Does anyone know anything about the family?

### The Cedar Bar

Ian Dunningham writes: Do you know anything of the history of the Cedar Bar, which existed in the old building complex containing the Orkney Arms, and fronted onto the A4 by Skindles? I lived in River Court, Ellington Road, 1958-69, and my wife worked part-time at the

Cedar Bar around 1965-6. At that time Jim Douglas, the landlord, stumbled upon an old closed extension of the bar, which had been shut away since the end of World War Two. There was also an old 'sherry bar' somewhere around Taplow Village / Taplow Station area.

### Bonds Boat Yard

Patrick Smith writes: My father was a partner at Bonds Boat Yard. I shall be interested to hear from anyone who remembers him and also anyone who remembers the man who used to sell coke every Saturday morning at the gas works in Mill Lane.

### Old Taplow Ware

Barry Carte writes: Thank you for the information about Old Taplow Ware. Still trying to find out more about the provenance of my mother's 200mm-high, embossed vase decorated with flowers and 'Old Taplow Ware' on the bottom.

## Heathrow – Additional Runway Use Trials

People living under the Heathrow flight path face increasing noise following the introduction of new runway rules. The airports operator, BAA, is to trial a scheme allowing the use of both runways simultaneously from July to September.

Currently those living under the flight path have a respite from noise in the afternoon, when the runways are restricted to take-off or landing alternating daily. Under the trial, which will also run from November to February, the threshold for triggering emergency dual use of the runways will be lowered.

During the trial, dual use can be deployed when a plane faces a 10-minute wait to land or takeoff and if 30% of all flights are delayed by

more than 15 minutes. The average delay for flights is 12 minutes.

John Stewart of the HACAN ClearSkies environmental campaign group said: 'There is a real danger that people will remember the Olympics simply for the noise of flights.' A spokeswoman for the BAA said: 'The trial will not involve significant long-term breaches of respite periods. These changes do not mean there will always be flight overhead in some communities.'

*Genevieve Roberts*

*These trials will affect Taplow of course so we shall just have to wait and see what happens about noise levels. Ed.*

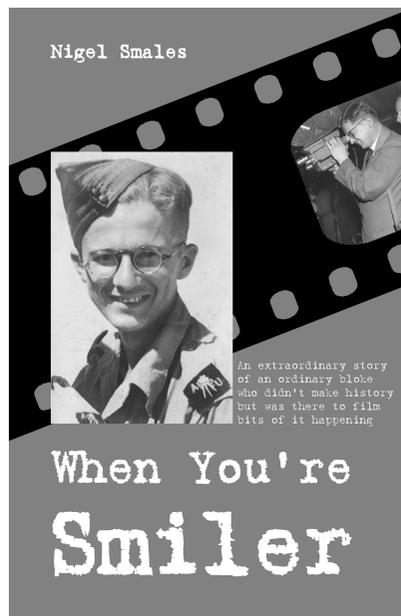
# Debut by Local Author

*When You're Smiler* by Nigel Smales is the story of his father Eddy, Sgt 'Smiler' Smales, one of the original cine-cameramen in the Army Film & Photographic Unit (AFPU) covering the World War Two campaigns in North Africa (1942–1943) and from Normandy to Berlin (1944–1945).

*Desert Victory*, the most famous battle film of all time, was the achievement of 'Smiler' and his colleagues. Filmed at great danger from behind the enemy lines, the world was thrilled by the sight and sound of the bagpipes of the Highland Regiments marching through the El Alamein artillery barrage to lead the Eighth Army against the once-thought-to-be 'invincible' Rommel to the turning point victory of World War Two.

A true commemoration, it combines a selection of their stories together with an extraordinarily well-researched record of the 400-plus men (and two women) who served in the AFPU.

The primary focus is on his career with the Army but Eddy



Smales was one of the founding pioneers in cine-photography, working in feature films (1936–53), Movietone newsreel (1946–55) and BBC TV News (1955–80), and the book provides an entertaining and fascinating perspective on the rapid evolution of factual film and television in the mid-twentieth century.

There are tales of historic films including *Whisky Galore*, *Brighton Rock*, *The Third Man*

and *The Lavender Hill Mob* and newsreels covering royal weddings, funerals and coronations and four famous British 'firsts' – the first jet airliner, Comet 4, the first supersonic passenger jet, Concorde, the first motorway, the M1, and the first cross-Channel hovercraft – illustrated with 83 photographs.

It tells an extraordinary story of an ordinary bloke who didn't make history but was there to film bits of it happening.

A long-time member of the Hitcham and Taplow Society, Nigel Smales lives with his wife Caroline and daughter Keira in Rectory Road. He researched and arranged a lavishly illustrated display '*All Our Yesterdays*' for the Taplow Heritage Exhibition in 2009 and he expanded the histories behind the houses in a talk to the Society AGM in 2010.

*When You're Smiler* can be ordered online at [www.lulu.com](http://www.lulu.com) for £16.99 plus postage and packing.

Karl Lawrence



## Village Green Party

23 June 2012



Editor: Fred Russell

White Heath, Ellington Road, Taplow, Bucks, SL6 0AX. Tel 01628 672457

E-mail: [editor@taplowsociety.org.uk](mailto:editor@taplowsociety.org.uk)

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

The Newsletter is published by the Hitcham and Taplow Society.

Prepared for printing by Andrew Findlay using Scribus, Linux, and The Gimp

Printed by Michael Burbridge Limited