

# Hitcham and Taplow Society

Newsletter 105: Spring 2016  
£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.*

President: Eva Lipman  
Vice Presidents: Tony Hickman, Fred Russell, Professor Bernard Trevallion OBE  
Chairman: Karl Lawrence  
Treasurer: Myra Drinkwater  
Secretary: Roger Worthington  
Committee: Heather Fenn, Charlie Greeves, Robert Harrap, Zoe Hatch, Alastair Hill, Barrie Peroni, Nigel Smales, Louise Symons, Miv Wayland-Smith  
Website Adviser & Newsletter Production: Andrew Findlay  
Contact Address: HTS, Littlemere, River Road, Taplow, SL6 0BB  
secretary@taplowsociety.org.uk  
07787 556309

Cover picture: Sarah & Tony Meats' grandson Herbie during the Race to the Church (Nigel Smales)

## Editorial

Change: the only constant? There's certainly a lot of it about. Down by the Thames, the change is physical (see Page 7). Up in the Village, it is personal (see Pages 17, 18 & 19). Some changes stand the tests of time (see Pages 10-13 & 16). Will the same be said for potential changes in the pipeline (see Pages 4, 5 & 6) which claim roots in evidence-led policy-making while whiffing of policy-led evidence-making?

The Society faces three changes. Grateful thanks are due to Myra Drinkwater, who wishes to step down as our Treasurer. We hope to appoint her successor shortly. But we also need an Internal Auditor to check our annual financial statement each November and, because a commercial healthcare presence has become so expensive, we are seeking an experienced First Aider for the Village Green Party each June. Please contact our Secretary if you or someone you know might be interested in volunteering for one of these roles.

This Newsletter is a bumper edition to feature a few milestones: two cherished memories of not-so-long ago were revived recently to mark the Queen's 90th birthday (see Pages 9, 14 & 15) and Cedar Chase celebrates its Golden Jubilee (see Pages 10-13). Buffins and Wellbank are of similar vintage; perhaps they can be persuaded to pen pieces for future editions. We are delighted to welcome Amber, our youngest-ever correspondent, and so sad to pay tribute to Terry and two Tonys whose time in Taplow totalled over 130 years. More memories will be cherished on 4th June at a reunion of staff who worked at Cliveden's Canadian Red Cross Memorial Hospital – contact Jean Blumfield (e-address below) if you'd like to attend – and at Maidenhead Heritage Centre in its exhibition *'Skindles: End of an Era'* from 29th June until the end of September.

*Nigel Smales*

## Acronyms and e-Addresses:

This Newsletter uses acronyms for Berkeley Homes (BH), Buckinghamshire County Council (BCC), Chiltern District Council (CDC), Highways England (HE), Her Majesty's Government (HMG), National Grid (NG), Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead (RBWM), South Bucks District Council (SBDC), Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), Taplow Parish Council (TPC) and Transport for Buckinghamshire (TfB).

Reference is also made to various addresses and weblinks:

CRCMH Reunion (Page 2): [j.blumfield@talk21.com](mailto:j.blumfield@talk21.com)

Neighbourhood Plan Details (Page 5): [www.southbucks.gov.uk/planning/taplow](http://www.southbucks.gov.uk/planning/taplow)

Neighbourhood Plan Representations (Page 5): [ldf@SouthBucks.gov.uk](mailto:ldf@SouthBucks.gov.uk)

Mill Lane Petition (Page 6): <http://www.petitionbuzz.com/petitions/stop-the-closure-of-mill-lane-taplow>

Footpath Hotline (Page 8): <http://www.taplowsociety.org.uk/twiki/bin/view/Main/TaplowInfo>

# The Celebration of Taplow

The vision came to Sheila Horton in a dream: the life, times, people and places of Taplow resplendent on a wall of the old Victorian Reading Room in the Village Centre. Her colourful brush-strokes eventually spread over all four walls as *The Celebration of Taplow* – not only an absolutely fabulous work of art but also a unique and vibrant historical snapshot of Taplow in 1991/93 featuring over 300 recognisable faces, some now departed.

Such treasure brings responsibility: how to keep it for future generations to enjoy? The number one priority of residents at the 2014 Parish Meeting was to invest some of TPC's

legacy fund in making a digital record so that Sheila's magnificent murals could be recreated if ever the Reading Room was to be no more. A long and difficult deliberation led to the engagement of art photographers and Royal Warrant holders Todd-White of Mayfair. Their task is complete but, as time passes, the historical value of the images may well diminish as fewer can say who was who. So mulling has begun on the practicality of producing an easily accessible key, perhaps both in print and online.

*Nigel Smales*



Sheila Horton / Todd-White

Detail indicating pages on which particular folk feature

## A Real Football Star

Taplow United Football Club runs 14 teams for over 150 men, women, girls and boys. Paul Holt is the club's heartbeat: its chairman since 2007, Under-18s coach and managing director of the company which runs the club and its ground at the bottom of Berry Hill.

Paul loves to see the place full of smiles. The first team is doing well but his proudest achievement is the youth section, which he started with previous chairman John Head-Rapson. His biggest challenges are recruiting enough volunteers, especially qualified coaches for every team, and keeping the pitches playable despite the rise in the water table caused by the Jubilee River. Although it needs to raise funds to update the clubhouse and install a synthetic playing surface, the club's future is in safe hands. Paul's dedication has been recognised by his being awarded Taplow Sports Person of the Year, a worthy successor to Juliet Lecchini, Roger Andrews, Simon & Toby Fox, Janette Mackay, Caroline Sellers and Chris Ashford.

*Marc Boden*



Nigel Smales

# Heathrow: Bigger and Better?

Taplovians assembled in the Village Centre on 23rd October to hear Programme Director Tony Caccavone and Rick Norman, Head of Noise Policy, outline proposals to expand Heathrow Airport. They expected HMG go-ahead last December, but a political fog descended. While we wait for it to clear, here is a summary of the evidence and assertions offered...

The UK needs more airport capacity because its immediate European neighbours have already expanded or are expanding theirs. In July 2015, the Airports Commission recommended that Heathrow is "best-placed to provide the type of capacity which is most urgently required" and it should add a third runway to the north-west (by 2025) and another new terminal and satellite buildings (by 2026), further aggregate Terminals 1, 2 and 3 and improve transport infrastructure in order to increase its annual passenger numbers from 74 to 135 million by 2035.

Mayor of London Boris Johnson's vision of a new airport in the Thames estuary wouldn't be cost-effective, not least because the consequent closure of Heathrow would mean the loss of 76,000 jobs. The Civil Aviation Authority says that, despite being in a densely-populated area, Heathrow is one of the safest airports in the world. This would not be compromised by its expansion, which would enable airlines, especially UK ones, to centralise operations and manage flight transfers (currently one-third of all passengers) most effectively. However, larger aircraft will not mean fewer flights, in part because a mix of aircraft is necessary to handle passenger flow efficiently.

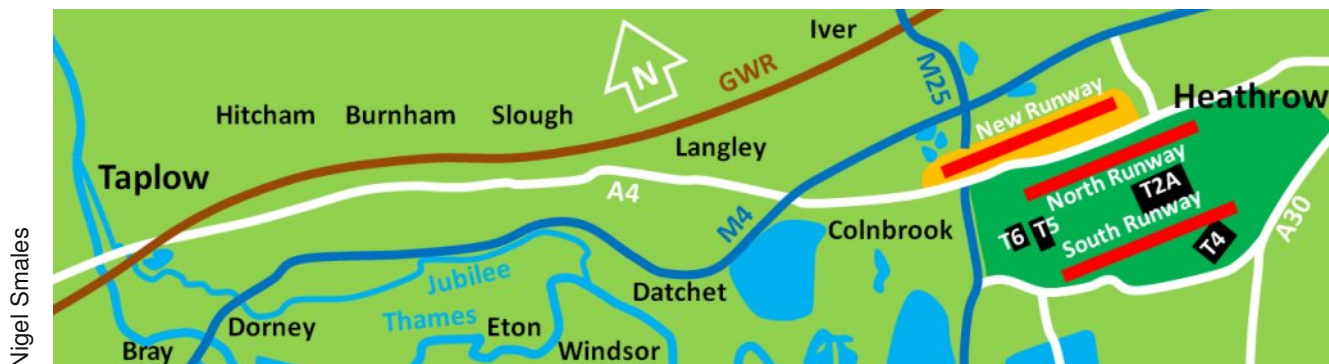
Passengers favour Heathrow for its convenience: 225 of the top 300 companies in the UK are headquartered within 25 miles, passenger

satisfaction has risen from 48% to 75% in ten years and T5 has been voted the best terminal in the world for four consecutive years. Meanwhile, the less well-connected Stansted runs at 50% capacity.

Air pollution is caused less by aircraft than vehicular traffic on and around the airport. Nevertheless, Heathrow has cut emissions by 16% in the past five years and is confident that vehicular movement in 2030 will be no higher than now due to increased public transport efficiency. Noise pollution will reduce because new planes will be at least 30% quieter, and it is hoped that new electronic guidance will enable better flight-path management and steeper approaches and ascents. There will be no flights at night, no more in the 90 minutes before 6.30am and a yet-to-be-established legally binding cap on noise levels.

Taplovians were unconvinced. They were concerned that commercial benefits seem to be given priority over environmental impacts, sceptical about the independence and reliability of assertions generally and of current and future noise level and air pollution measurements and promises in particular, and surprised at how much was made that having the new runway further west would mean higher eastern flight paths without any recognition that the opposite would be true for Taplow. It was hard to believe there are no similar calculations for the western approaches. However, if the go-ahead is ever given, there will be two public consultations at which we might be able to influence new flight paths, dispersion and altitude to limit noise levels locally. Is this just pie in the sky?

*Rupert Sellers*



# The Emerging Local Plan

Planning is changing: Local Plans will determine overall development strategy and supplementary Neighbourhood Plans can now add specific local constraints. SBDC and CDC will produce a new joint Local Plan to run until 2036. The process is highly formalised and makes great play of being "evidence-led". However, since significant elements of the evidence and the evaluation processes are supplied as 'givens' by HMG, it is in fact policy-led. And policy requires the reassessment of Green Belt land – even that which serves the primary and extremely valuable function of separating urban conurbations – in order to identify sites for new housing and employment. Consequently, although it has for many years valiantly benefited not only Taplow, Hitcham and Dorney, by preserving their rural feel, but also both Slough and Maidenhead, by preventing their merger, Buckinghamshire's green tail is once more under severe threat.

The Society is concerned that the methodologies used in the evaluation seem to be tailored to allow distinctions that suit the

planners. Worryingly, despite providing precisely the same stalwart service as an urban separator as land north of the A4, which scores a maximum of five, an adjacent parcel to the south is rated at only three and has been identified as an "opportunity area" for employment. However, it seems the 289 new homes currently under construction – 211 at Mill Lane and 78 of the 83 at Institute Road – will count towards any housing contribution required in Taplow. We must now await the next round of consultation in the autumn to see if our challenges have registered. Full information can be found on the SBDC website and relevant details are extracted on the Society's website.

TPC has applied to SBDC for authority to develop a Neighbourhood Plan to give better protection against unwanted developments in Taplow over the next decade or so. Your input will be important in shaping the plan. See Page 2 for a link to application details and an e-address to submit your representations.

*Roger Worthington*



## One Direction

Newsletter 104 floated an idea for a one-way system near Taplow Station. Thoughts have developed. TPC has submitted to TfB its outline proposal for Station Road to be one-way south with parking along the east side and Institute Road one-way east with parking along

the north side; both with a 30mph speed limit. Two-way Boundary Road would have a 40mph limit with double-yellow lines to create parking and passing places. All parking would be by online payment. Hitcham Road will remain two-way with a 30mph limit.

## Evidence and Assertion

We elect people to make decisions on our behalf. Often they seek advice from 'experts' who may sometimes confuse evidence and assertion.

The Planning Inspectorate held hearings in February to further consider the HE application to make the M4 a 'Smart' motorway. HE dismissed challenges to traffic projections as "assertions" rather than "evidence" while asserting without any independent corroboration that its "evidence" was definitive. Hillingdon and Slough were persistent in their questioning yet appeared oblivious to this fundamental flaw. Friends of the Earth challenged air quality projections with resonance and sought to squash the scheme rather than merely beg for sound barriers. Although barriers are proposed along Taplow's southern boundary, none will be installed on the bridge over the Thames or in Bray so prevailing winds will ensure Amerden is disturbed. SBDC attended but, to David Long's dismay, failed to challenge, probe or negotiate. Much to the annoyance of a resident of Monkey Island Lane who regularly records 75 decibels in her garden, RBWM was conspicuous by its absence.

BCC asserts it is "policy" to close Mill Lane. Where is the evidence which informed this decision? SBDC asserts closure has popular

support yet – while some favour stopping the 'rat-run' – an overwhelming majority at the Society's 2015 AGM wanted this ancient thoroughfare to remain open to avoid potential community fragmentation, detriment to existing businesses and traffic nightmares as every vehicle going to and from the site negotiates the already congested A4. The only evidence in the public domain is that morning peak hour southbound traffic splits roughly equally between Mill Lane and Berry Hill, so volumes on Berry Hill will double (to around 450 vehicles) when Mill Lane is closed. BCC asserts that upgrading the A4 / Berry Hill traffic lights (at BH's expense) would mitigate consequent congestion there. Max Lipman isn't alone in thinking that no electronic wizardry can be 'smart' enough to work the massive magic necessary.

Is closure good "policy"? Register your opinion with TfB, BCC, SBDC and TPC. If you're against closure, consider signing an e-petition raised by concerned residents (see Page 2). Alternatively, wait five years to see if the evidence of BCC's promised post-development traffic surveys proves "policy" right. If not, will we ever know?

*Nigel Smales*

## What Price Democracy?

Nigel Smales



George and Yannick

Taplow had some excitement in January: its very own election – actually, a by-election for a vacant TPC seat. Chairman George Sandy says it was only the second TPC election of any kind in over 45 years, the other being in 2007. Elections should happen every four years but no vote is necessary if

there are 11 or fewer candidates. Interim vacancies are normally filled by co-option but Councillor Janette Mackay's resignation meant Taplow had a choice to make. There were no tub-thumping oratories – electioneering was all e-mails, leaflets and who-you-know – but a credible 23% turned out to cast 118 votes for Rob Thompson (Approach Road) and 204 for Yannick le Touze (Berry Hill).

Congratulations to Yannick, probably our first French councillor. At his first meeting, TPC reduced its precept – its element of Council Tax – by 11.9% to £16,000 (an average of £20.23 per household). This includes no allowance for maintaining footpaths (see Page 8) or for by-election costs. Co-option is cost-free but what price a dose of democracy? And now, with Councillor Zoe Hatch stepping down, will we have another? Only if more than one Taplovian is willing to be nominated.

*Nigel Smales*

# What Price History?

Cliveden has been Cliveden for 350 years. And apart from brief interludes when the first and second houses lay in ashes, neither they nor the third has ever been a 'House'. Yet now, 30 years after it began, the hotel has styled itself 'Cliveden House' – presumably for differentiation from its National Trust grounds. But why has another restyling occurred outside its gate? In a nod to the heraldic badge of King George III's eldest son Frederick, Prince of Wales (who lived at Cliveden 1739/51), the inn has been The Three Feathers (c1780), The Prince of Wales Feathers (1847) and The Feathers (1851) which was said to be frequented by another Prince of Wales – thirsty Bertie, later King Edward VII. Sadly, its new sign – erected in contravention of planning permission – suggests this royal connection has been forgotten or foregone.



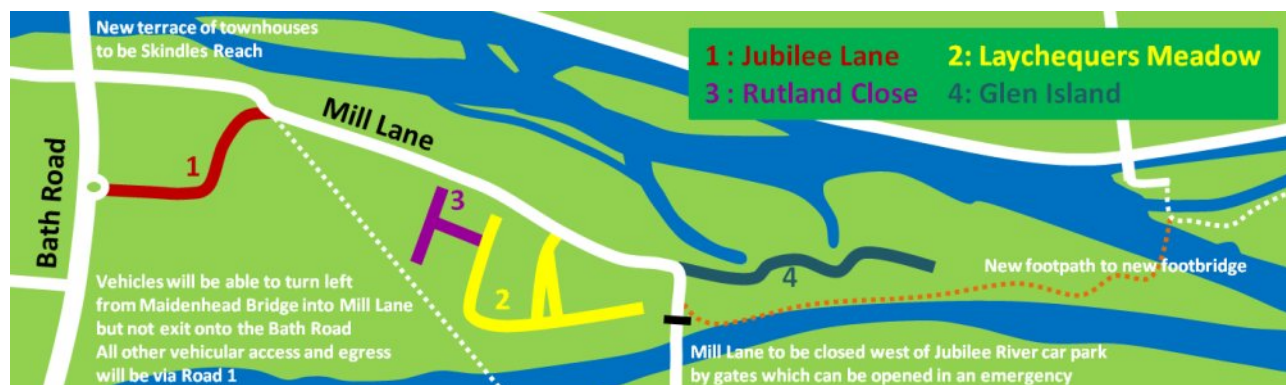
One will preserve the unique name Laychequers, for hundreds of years the meadow 'in the elbow' of Mill Lane until being lost in the 1970s to the ugly side of recycling; houses there are already being snapped up by eager buyers. Another will recall mill carpenter's son James Rutland, the local builder and

Further south, the mill is no more, Skindles is gone and the gasholder is going: sadness as all this fades into history and concern about what seems rather too relaxed SBDC oversight. History says the Mill Lane sites might conceal remnants dating back to the Stone Age. What a shame if this rare opportunity to search for them was missed due to BH's haste and SBDC's failure to enforce Condition 34 of its planning approval, which calls for archaeological investigations. Joy Marshall has counted the loss of 111 trees, more than was approved, and the Jubilee's west bank is bare. How could SBDC have no tree officer in post to confirm the need to remove additional trees due to neglect, disease or "unexpected ground problems"? However, history has a victory: after much heated debate, the names of the new roads have been agreed.

antiquarian who excavated Tæppa's Mound in 1883. And the new terrace of riverside townhouses will be called Skindles Reach but, instead of sloping lawns (as approved), they might have a stepped bank.

Finally: history in the making. Despite a furore in February, when rumours suggested NG might sell to somebody else, BH has exchanged contracts to buy the gasholder site once clearance is completed in September. It has submitted a planning application to build there the 12 houses 'pencilled in' on earlier plans with the hope of starting construction in the autumn. This will bring the total number of homes to 211. But will that be that? Will housing replace the car sales showroom? Will the new Information Centre (which opens in June) become a boathouse that never houses boats? All will out in the wash.

*Nigel Smales*



Nigel Smales

# A Walk in the Woods

On Saturday 10th October last year, St Nicolas' School PTA organised a family sponsored walk to raise money for the school and the church roof fund. There were around 50 people walking. It was great fun and we raised over £300!



Andy Landamore

Our family did lots of things to prepare for the big day. Weeks before, we had to decide the route. We looked at a map and worked out a lovely three mile walk from Taplow village and along the footpaths and bridleways of Taplow and Hitcham to finish at our house (Guildersfield, on Hunt's Lane) with a well-deserved barbeque. Next, we cycled the route to make sure there were no obstacles, and that it was suitable for both children and elderly walkers. We also added a winding trek through Old Priory Garden. Finally, the day before, Dad (Andy), Mum (Julie) and I cut up some old St Nic's School dresses to make ribbons. Then Dad and I went around the route again to tie the ribbons around the branches and posts, so no-one would get lost. I climbed several trees to put the ribbons up. It was great fun! We also put mile and kilometre signs up to show how far you had walked, and had remaining.

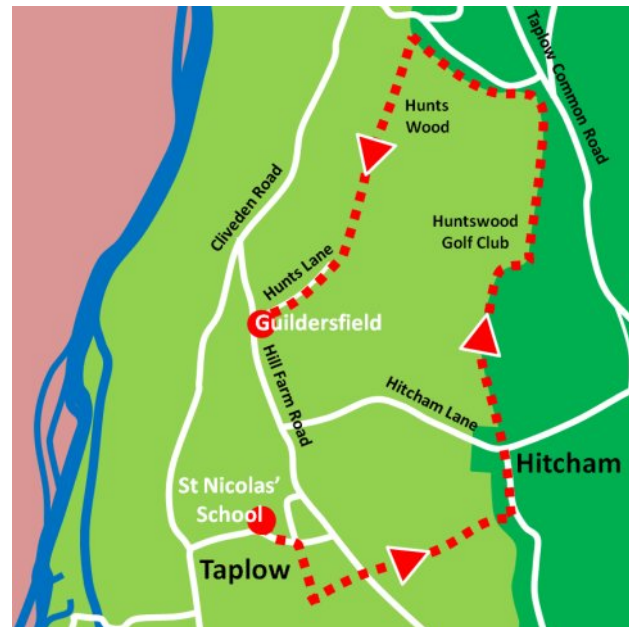
On the morning of the walk, we all woke up early hoping it wasn't a rainy day. It was a bit cloudy, but quite a nice day. Phew! Mum got the food, barbeque, chairs and tables ready for afterwards. Dad helped set up the registration table for Kate Withey and Lou Rust, who had already bought lots of water. And I helped too, selling reflective bibs Hazel Sharpe had acquired. Gail Head handed everyone a list of things to spot, a map, and questions to find answers for.

I set off with two of my friends – Lucy and Rosie. We were very excited. We'd never done this anything like this before. We looked out for ribbons to find the way. Some boys ran off like it was a race, and got tired very quickly, so we caught them up. Lucy saw a massive mushroom in Hunt's Wood and I heard the birds singing. Three red kites soared above the trees. Dad whizzed past on his bike wearing a marshal's jacket. We heard a rustle in the bushes and Rosie saw a Muntjac deer running away.

We were all tired and hungry when we finished, but mum had a lovely barbeque ready for us, with scrummy sausages and beefy burgers. There was squash, hot chocolate, tea and coffee for everyone too. The grown-ups chatted as the kids filled up with lots of food then ran around the garden, played on swings in the trees and climbed my climbing frame for the rest of the afternoon. Later, our neighbour Chris Priest removed all the ribbons from the route. We'd left only footprints, and taken only photos – it was as if the walk had never happened...

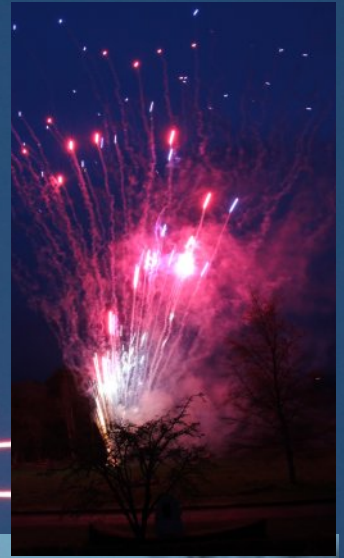
*Amber Tamarind Landamore (age 8)*

*BCC wants to delegate responsibility for maintaining local footpaths to TPC without providing the necessary funding. The Society's website now has a footpath hotlink (see Page 2). Report any problem you might find and we will try to start balls rolling – Ed.*





## HMQ 90 : Parts One and Two



Three events were held locally to celebrate Queen Elizabeth II's 90th birthday, each typically Taplow. The third is featured on Pages 14 & 15. Zoe Hatch organised the first: on 17th April, 25 volunteers ventured valiantly to 'Clean for the Queen'. They collected over 40 bin-bags of rubbish from our streets. The second was on 21st April: Her Majesty's Big Day. Roger Worthington led the reprise of the Queen's Diamond Jubilee in 2012. About 200 people gathered on the Green, bought 150 torches from Charlie Greeves and Zoe then headed in procession to the Old Churchyard where SGI-UK Director-General Robert Harrap lit a beacon atop Tæppa's Mound. Children played roly-poly in the firelight. Fireworks supremo Malcolm Smith arrived hot-foot from Windsor, where he had supervised Her Majesty's beacon – the first in a chain of over 1,000 – and our whizz-bangs could begin. Thanks are due to Robert, to beacon-builders Phil Rollinson and Cliff Anderson (also our first-aider), to Malcolm's pyrotechnic pal Mike Clarke, and to Alastair Hill, Nigel Smales, Miv Wayland-Smith, and Pauline Worthington for the procession's safe passage across Berry Hill.

Photos by Andrew Findlay and Nigel Smales



# Design for Living

*By planning each project on its own merits, by creating a coherent architectural and natural pattern that retains fine old trees and acknowledges the need for stretches of grass, that provides the requirements of modern living – the garages and parking areas – without allowing them to intrude, we ensure that estates look mature from the outset and retain an informal dignity that will be pleasant still in fifty years from now – Span Developments Ltd Investor Prospectus (c1960)*

The *Sunday Times* launched its colour section in February 1962. It called its lifestyle strand 'Design For Living' after a caption in this Span prospectus. On 22nd August 1962, the colour section was a special 'Design for Living' edition about modern housebuilding. Span featured: its influence and reputation already out of all proportion to its market share.

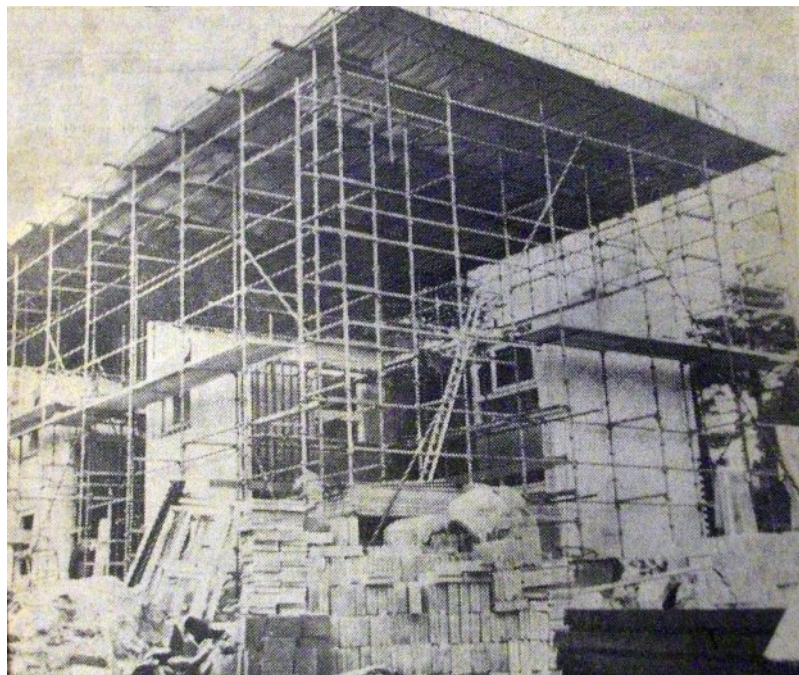
Span was represented in the article by its two best-known protagonists, who had by then been working together 10 years: Leslie Bilsby, joint MD, son of a Lincolnshire builder, and Eric Lyons, consulting architect, an OBE since 1959 who preferred to be known by his original calling of 'designer'. They challenged conservatism everywhere: restrictive building practices; risk-averse building societies ("the centre of the problem") and developers who assumed all buyers were as conservative as they; outdated

planning rules; amateurish Local Authorities ("men with large black spectacles and small brains"); general ignorance of 'good design' ("regarded as airy-fairy, added on if you can afford it"); and the absence of a "positive national planning and land policy". Bilsby and Lyons especially disliked the new 'preservationism' of which the Hitcham & Taplow Preservation Society (established 1959) was the very archetype. "It is harder to create than to preserve."

Span made a virtue of the necessity of higher-density housing but avoided building upwards, which isolates, or in pocket plots which waste land, look untidy, cost more to maintain, and also isolate. Lyons explored "the potential in suburban life", nudging neighbours into consenting community. Span always intended this only for those with a "cultivated background". Some ideas jar today: its preference for 99-year leases over atomised freeholds to allow "future renewal on a comprehensive level". Or that "the same house for all one's life is out of date". Others proved more durable. On bossy residents' associations, Lyons noted "I'm not afraid of discipline: people seem to like it and accept it". From his train window, he noticed 25% of gardens were tended reasonably. "We enjoy gardens more than gardening. Give people bigger gardens than they get with a house, tend those gardens and remove the drudgery and

you provide pride of ownership." On privacy: "I wanted to give people the option of privacy, instead of enforced privacy."

In February 1964, Span submitted its application for "24 terrace houses in six blocks" on Taplow's "Bible College site". This fell outside the County Development Plan, so Eton Rural District Council referred it to Bucks County Council to make a recommendation to the Ministry of Housing. County remarked the proposal "would lead to pleasant development of the site" and in May recommended approval subject to improving highway sightlines and adding a 200-foot layby along Rectory Road. Span took particular exception to interference with its roads and paths, Lyons preferring where



Maidenhead Advertiser

Number 3 under construction

Adam Smith



Marsham Lodge (1969)  
Cedar Chase in half the space.

This Bucks-mandated car park and regulation-width path was green space in Span plans.

possible to keep roads private to avoid bye-laws of dimensions and materials.

While the Ministry cogitated, the remaining 30 students of the Bible College departed for Ware, and the Diocese applied to build 10 houses on the site of the (old) Rectory, for which County's stipulations ran to over a page instead of the two paragraphs for the favoured Span. In August, the Ministry approved Span's Gerrards Cross project on appeal and, in September, it approved Taplow subject to Span agreeing highways with ERDC.

This took 11 months, Span finding ERDC "obstructionist, unenlightened and unreasonable". Taplow Parish Council meanwhile proposed naming the new estate 'Serocold' after the family which had owned it. Span countered with a shortlist of Cedar Hill, Cedar Chase or Cedar Grove.

Local objection started on sight of the first elevations in early 1966. Planning law required applicants to publish basic plans, but not details. Span would anyway take its time over these, Eric Lyons determining everything from trees to television aerials. "I'm all for control of where new buildings should be built, but I'm absolutely against anyone except the architect deciding what the houses should look like."

Cedar Chase was the first time Span used its own building subsidiary Building Span Ltd. This paid its labour 'guaranteed weeks' whether it worked or not, giving rise to Span's innovation of temporary roofing to allow work in all weathers. *Maidenhead Advertiser* published a photograph of

this on 11th March 1966, reporting the show house (Number 9) open, its décor including a pub mirror, a Malay railway coat of arms and a brass bedstead with a red phone on one side and an old oil lamp the other.

Anger at the "eggboxes" culminated at HTPS AGM at the WI on the 21st October 1966, by when the insults included "futuristic crematoria" (Victor Williams) and "public lavatories" (Eileen Law). Mark Pick of Berry Hill predicted "Taplow will develop into a slum". Bilsby declined an invitation: "We have no wish to persuade your members to like our work and we see little point in attending a meeting where minds are closed. Until our whole development is complete and the landscape work begins to mature, the unpractised eye, and uninformed mind, will not comprehend the integrity of our work. It is better to have a clearly expressed design of architecture quality than the dreary neo-Georgian and Builders' Contemporary which has been foisted on the village during the past decade."



Andrew Findlay

Cedar Chase today

In September 1967, Cedar Chase was among 14 winners from 358 entrants in the annual competition for Good Design In Housing inaugurated in 1961 by the Ministry of Housing and the RIBA. The criteria comprised design, appearance and grouping, building standards, and satisfaction of occupants. Cedar Chase was never going to be Eric Lyons' last word. After the planning frustrations here and at Gerrards Cross, Span gave up on small estates. In my opinion, it is however an outstanding expression of Eric Lyons' will and Span's ingenious means.

Adam Smith

## Cedar Chase at 50

50 years old and still modern: few capital goods can make that claim! Span houses are an exception. Good design has a timeless quality that shows in subtle ways: clever use of internal space, fitting the houses into the landscape, and not sharing party walls with neighbouring living-rooms. Span avoided carving up the land, always providing lots of open communal space which allows children to play safely and adults to exercise, party, or just sit.

Span designed communities to complement their houses: by giving residents a shared responsibility for maintaining the estate and by laying out the paths so that neighbours often meet in passing. It does not suit everyone, but at Cedar Chase the community thrives and everyone benefits. One such benefit is the help you get from other residents: Need to replace the heating? Numbers 2 and 10 did that recently, come and see. How about the roof? Number 25 did that - see how well it matches. Want a new bathroom? We know several proud owners...

Some renewal is always needed. In this 50th anniversary year we are in the middle of a project to refresh the landscape planting and many houses are about to get new windows built to match the original appearance but with modern standards of insulation.

Our annual Ox Roasts are always popular, and this year over 100 ex-residents will return to celebrate Cedar Chase's 50th birthday with a party in the grounds.

Cedar Chase is child-friendly: in the 1970s there were about 60 children living here. They had their own football team and often played matches against Wellbank. Today there are eight children, most of whom have lived here since they were very little – half of them since birth. We asked each of them what it is like to be brought up in a community of 24 houses within communal grounds.

*Andrew Findlay and Sally Jacobs*

Emily (11) – Cedar Chase is full of amazing wonders like...

**WORKING PARTIES:** I especially love working parties because apart from helping Cedar Chase thrive you get to eat biscuits and drink juice.


**OX ROASTS:** I love ox roasts I especially love the folk dancing, and before you know it you've danced the night away.

**PLAYING WITH MY FRIENDS:** The friendship here at Cedar Chase is incredibly strong. I like to play spies with my BFFs.

My favourite memory was when it was Christmas and my friends and I were helping out with a working party and we were putting up lights to the big Cedar but we got bored so we went to the end of our communal garden and we had a snowball fight and sledged and built a snowman. Living at Cedar Chase is like living in a book. Every page you turn is full of new wonders and adventures full of friendship, hope and a whole new day at Cedar Chase!!!!

Ginny (10) – I like making dens in the summer, having leaf fights in the autumn and snowball fights in the winter. I love helping put the lights on the Cedar tree at Christmas because I get to climb up to the top with the lights. I like the Ox Roast because we get to run around the gardens in the dark, I made a friend with a friend of our neighbours at one of my first Ox Roasts, I only see her once a year, we once hid in a fox hole and ate Doritos really late at night.

One of my favourite memories is when Dad and I camped out in the lower gardens, we were kept awake all night by various animals sniffing around our tent and making funny noises!



Zoe (9) – I like living in Cedar Chase because almost every time something exciting happens, you get an email saying something even more exciting is going to happen. I LOVE bonfire night; once someone got a big pack of jellybeans and some tiny sweet dispensers and we all got one sweet dispenser each and some jellybeans. I especially love Cedar Chase in the summer when it's nice and hot and there are flowers everywhere.

Amabel (7) – I love playing in the green space below our garden with my brother and sister and building dens in the woods. I like the metal climbing frame as I can climb to the top and see across the gardens. I love the Ox Roast as we get to play in the gardens with our friends until it is really late and dark. I like looking for insects in the gardens and woods, I once found a snake under the bottom of the slide!

Emily (6) – I love living at Cedar Chase because it's a great place where I can play with all my friends, I can walk down to the gardens 'whenever I want', and I love the Ox Roast in the Summer when we all get to stay up late, playing on the climbing frame and roasting marshmallows on the fire.

Ted (4) – I like to zoom around the paths on my scooter and in the summer I like it when my friends come over and we play on the climbing frame. One of my favourite things was building dinosaurs with my cousins in the woods out of the fallen branches.

Thomas (13) – I like the sense of community and having a shared garden. My favourite part of the grounds is the red swing as it gives me memories of every summer spent in the gardens. One of my favourite memories was making an igloo in the gardens. In the summer the gardens feel like a forest and in the winter I like looking at the bare trees and everyone coming out of their houses and playing in the snow.

Jack (10) – I like the neighbours they are all super kind. I like the look of the houses because they look very different. I love going down the garden, especially the swings and the climbing frame I feel like I've gone far away. My favourite memory of Cedar Chase is when we had a teddy bears picnic down the garden. In the summer I like playing football down the garden with my friends. In the winter I liked it when my friend came over when it snowed, my brother built an igloo and we had hot chocolate down the garden.



## HMQ90 Part Three

Spring clean: tick. Beacon: tick. How to crown the Queen's milestone? Revive a Taplow tradition. We celebrated the 2011 Royal Wedding with a Race to the Church: high time for another. Bank Holiday Monday was a memorable day of hay bales, bunting and barbecues, bravado, fears, cheers and beer, thrills, spills and goodwill, grazes, laughter and a tear or two.

Crashford set the tone. His first run came to a sticky end. He retired briefly to repair his carefully crafted kart and change his shorts. Many of the other 23 karts suffered too as they rumbled helter-skelter down the High Street on practice runs. Most entered the afternoon time trials held together with little more than hope and happiness. The forecast rain sprinkled only briefly. The Oak & Saw came close to being drunk dry. And a fabulous £1,924.72 was raised for Thames Valley Adventure Playground.

The day demonstrated once again that, when Taplow decides to have fun, nobody does it better. Grateful thanks to all in our amazing community who helped make it happen, especially to our supporters and sponsors – Gpex (posters), Castleman's Farm (bales), Caring Homes (food), Prime Quarters (prizes) and DM Cager (Insurance Brokers) Ltd (insurance) – and to the fantastic, resourceful organisers: Jamie Barnard, Marc Boden, Juliet Lecchini, Duncan Leftley, Claire Price and Rupert Sellers.





Photos by Nigel Smales and Victoria Wayland-Smith

Prizes were awarded as follows:

Fastest Youngster (6 and under):

1 – Tommy Browning, 2 – Sandy & Rosie Reeve, 3 – Juno Browning

Fastest Child (7 to 11): 1 – Fin Mackay, 2 – Lexie Barnard, 3 – James Weston-Kaye

Fastest Youth (12 to 17): 1 – Sasha Boden, 2 – Joel Boden, 3 – Felix Hindle

Fastest Female (18+): 1 – Chris Ormond, 2 – Juliet Lecchini, 3 – Kirsty Weston

Fastest Male (18+): 1 – Marc Boden, 2 – Laird Mackay, 3 – Dave McNulty

The Organisers' Award: Louise Ashford

The Pininfarina Prize for the Most Beautiful Kart: Dave McNulty

The Captain Oates Prize for Bravery and Optimism: Tim Browning

The Penelope Pitstop Prize for the Best Outfit: Juliet Lecchini and Ben Barnard

The Great Uncle Bulgaria Prize for Recycled Material: George Price on Cricket Crusher

The Dick Dastardly Golden Spanner for the Worst Driver: Chris Cherry



# Our House: The Orchard



When I was helping Nigel Smales with his research for *Taplow Moments*, he suggested I write an article for the Newsletter about our house: The Orchard at the top of the High Street. It took ages to pen a piece six times too long. Never mind. The full version will appear on the Society's website. Here is a taster...

Keith and I have been our home's fourth owners since 1979. Evelyn Irby lived here from 1937 until 1961, Denis & Margaret Wood until 1975 and then Tim & Mary Brighthouse.

If Evelyn had been male, she would have succeeded her Uncle George as Baron Boston. Instead, the peerage passed to her younger brothers Greville and Cecil but a title doesn't pay the bills. Her uncle sold Hedsor House in 1927 and, when her father Cecil died in 1935, her childhood home – Hitcham Grange – was bought by Lord Desborough who sold Phipp's Orchard back to Evelyn for £200. Greville paid to build her house: originally Greenham, eventually The Orchard.

Evelyn was expected to 'marry well' and to give up her dream of being a sculptress. She did neither. Being a Ministry of Labour librarian left time for her to sculpt as a hobby, often on the balcony overlooking the garden, part of which was sold for £525 in 1954 to Arthur Kitchiner, formerly the Hitcham Grange gardener whose home, Grange Lodge, was to be demolished. By then, she was a frail recluse watching village goings-on through a brass telescope on her balcony while Arthur kept an eye on her from his bungalow, Elsafrá. Her home was sold for £7,250 to Denis Wood who was twice refused

permission to build a house in the garden because that right had been exercised for Elsafrá (since replaced by Allington Cottage).

Denis wasn't a great one for gardening, but why need he be? As the great-grandson of William Wood and head of the family firm William Wood & Son – 'Royal Horticulturists and Garden Designers and Contractors' with some very aristocratic and affluent clients – he had staff to turn his ideas into reality. After he retired, his nursery evolved to be the Bishop Centre and he sold The Orchard for £29,700. Tim Brighthouse was then busy at BCC and, from 1978, as Oxfordshire's Chief Education Officer and well on the way to becoming an education visionary and a knighthood in 2009.



Nigel Smales

Julia with her elegant lady

We were happy in Somerset but Keith's work called him to London. Our impossible dream was to find a village with a school near a station. Nine months of searching and being 'gazumped' made us very depressed until we stumbled on Taplow and The Orchard. The garden was overgrown and the house needed refurbishment but we bought it there and then for £69,500. We hacked back brambles and had some wonderful bonfires. We made space for the boys to play cricket and discovered a circular brick Victorian soakaway that once drained Hitcham Grange and three garden wall niches with two busts – one an elegant Edwardian lady and a youth of about nine – and a beautiful statue of a monk reading a book. We like to think these are Evelyn's work. And we extended her house, always taking care to incorporate original features. I hope nobody can spot the joins.

*Julia Paskins*



# Sir Terry Wogan KBE DL 1938-2016

Various national figures have made their homes hereabouts down the years. A few were Irish, including a viscount who took Taplow as a title and an earl instrumental in the creation of the UK. Only one was a 'national treasure'.

Once togs told how warm a duvet was. Nowadays, the talk is of TOGs – Terry's Old Geezers and Gals – and their warm affection for that treasure, also known as Sir Terry Wogan. Sadly, he too is gone, and so quickly. All seemed well in September when he completed his televised epic epicurean adventure, and he chatted happily when I delivered Newsletter 104 on 31st October. So it was a surprise that he missed *Children in Need* with "a bad back" and a shock to hear of his passing on 31st January.

It is almost 50 years since his lilting Limerick tones first wafted on BBC airwaves. Radio 1 called, then Radio 2. Soon he was all over radio and TV, hosting chat shows and game shows galore, covering Olympics and making Eurovision Song Contests enduring. He fought the flab, waltzed through *Come Dancing*, lifted *Auntie's Bloomers*, chequed out *Blankety Blank* and wrote 14 books. He and Pudsey were forever faces (and he a trustee) as *Children in Need* raised more than £700m, but the Radio 2 *Breakfast Show* was his natural home for stints of 13 and 17 years. During the second, TOGs escaped earlier acronyms to be bewitched by his mellifluous magic: a potent mix of geniality, joviality and spontaneity, a confident reliance on innate intelligence, mischievous wit and whimsical eloquence, and the conspiratorial intimacy of a conversation with a valued friend.

His magic worked just as well away from the microphone. Always with a charming twinkle in his eye, he enjoyed a circle of loyal friends and carried his fame modestly but with great effect in support of Taplow Cricket Club, the Canadian Red Cross Hospital (where his mother was treated for chronic arthritis) and especially as a



patron of Burnham Library and of Thames Valley Adventure Playground (which he said is staffed by "patient saints").

While at ease in the public eye and with accolades and awards,



www.catholicchurch.org.uk / CC BY-NC-SA 2.0

Terry was really a very private person. Helen, Alan, Mark and Katherine gave him his greatest joys, Taplow his sanctuary. He loved their house on the hill, "its large rooms, its gardens so lovingly tended by Helen", its distant view of "the neighbours" at Windsor Castle. "It is a wonderful house, full of happy memories of our children growing up. And best of all, it is where they want to come home to, a place of warmth, comfort and love. And their mother's cooking". If some were 40 years out of date in thinking he still lived in "a riverside mansion" at Bray, he'd smile: "it throws them off the scent".

He agreed instantly to write the foreword for *Taplow Moments* and regaled me with the Wogan history from its origins in Wales, where *gwgan* meant frown or scowl, to Ireland and Jacobite uprisings. But in 1787, which Wogan held a sliver of land across the road from Cliveden Gages? That stumped him. I didn't know Terry well but it was a privilege to have known at all this lovely Irishman who brought out the best in the British.

*Nigel Smales*

# Anthony Read 1935-2015

At a memorial service at St Nicolas' Church on 11th December, Bernie Corbett, General Secretary of the Writers' Guild of Great Britain, paid a moving tribute to his friend and mentor Tony Read as "one of the greatest television writers of his generation": a fine accolade, but not the whole story.

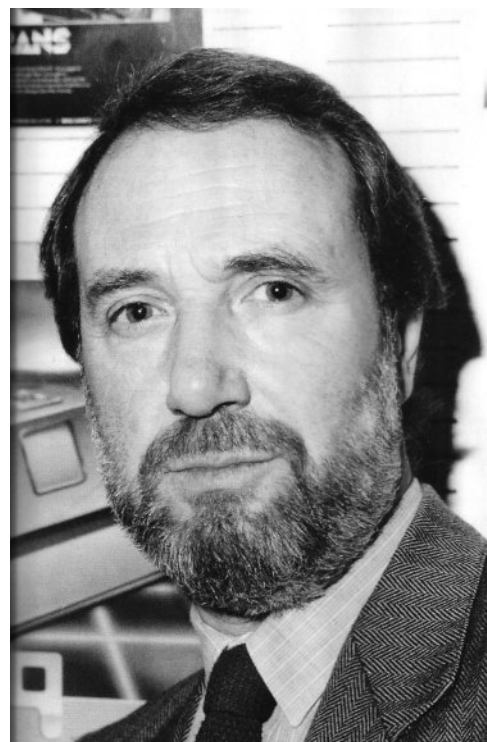
Tony was just six when he decided to be a writer and seven when his father, a Staffordshire coal miner, died in a pit accident. Despite family hardship, he won a grammar school scholarship and trained as an actor at the Central London School of Speech and Drama "to learn about theatre". This diversion led to his forming *Theatre Unlimited* with his friend Ian Hendry. They toured the UK and crossed the Iron Curtain before he joined the BBC in 1963 to adapt stories, write original scripts and script-edit TV series such as *Detective*, *Kipling* and *Sherlock Holmes*. He script-edited *Mogul* (1965), a series about the oil industry, and, as producer, reinvented it as *The Troubleshooters* (1966/72). It is easy now to forget this was ground-breaking television which enthralled millions by bridging the gap between 'quality drama' and populist entertainment.

In all, Tony had over 200 TV credits including *The Lotus Eaters* (starring Hendry, 1972/73), *Z-Cars* (1976/77), *Doctor Who* (Tom Baker, 1978/79), *The Professionals* (1977/80), *Sapphire & Steel* (1981) and the series of which he was most proud: *The Baker Street Boys* (1983), about a group of urchins assisting Sherlock Holmes, and *Chocky* (1984), which author John Wyndham thought the best TV adaption of any of his works. As chairman of the Writers' Guild (1980/81), Tony strove with quiet persistence to gain writers due recognition. He had a major part developing the blueprint for Channel 4 (1982) as his own focus began to shift to historical non-fiction. One of five outstanding works – *Kristallnacht: Unleashing the Holocaust* – won the Wingate literary prize in 1989 before he returned to fiction and wrote six immensely popular novels about *The Baker Street Boys* (2005/09). His reading was prodigious, his



research meticulous and his writing was near to perfection. His e-address – readwrites – said it all.

In 1966, Tony and his wife Rosemary brought their children Emma and Amelia to Cedar Chase.



Doctor Who Magazine / Rosemary Read

They were the third family to move in and he has since made an immeasurable contribution to maintaining the Span concept of affordable living for young families by preserving the architectural integrity of our community and keeping our communal grounds a coherent whole for our continuing pleasure.

Rosaleen and I have been close friends with Tony and Rosemary for over 45 years. We shall remember forever how he supported her being such a pillar of strength for us at a particularly difficult time when Rosaleen was in hospital for many weeks, our children Roisin and Ronan were at primary school and I was away at work 12 hours a day. In happier times, we have enjoyed innumerable gatherings together: most especially Roisin's wedding, milestone birthdays and anniversaries, and visits from our American grandchildren. Tony made unique contributions to each occasion. His was not a strident voice. He was always quiet and unassuming with a gentle but sharp wit, wise reflection and innate common sense.

Tony – Your absence is a sad loss to us, to Cedar Chase and to Taplow. You were a man of many parts, a pioneer, a beacon of light and sanity in our world. We shall not know your like again.

# Anthony Meats 1933-2016

Tony Meats was another multi-dimensional man: an architect and planner of grand vision, an artist of great skill capable of consuming copious quantities of wine and food often as spicy as his witty, mischievous humour. He was naturally and by design a colourful character, offering his knees for public delectation and always ready to be seen and heard as the life and soul of every social gathering, every conversation, every perambulation around Taplow. He was fond of Nottingham (his birthplace and boyhood home), Primrose Hill (his student lair) and Highgate (where he and Sarah set up home and twins Rupert and Oliver were born) but Taplow was his everlasting love. The boys recall him winding down the car window when they were almost home, sniffing deeply and sighing ecstatically: "Ah, the Village".

Many architects are content with designing buildings. Not Tony. He began his career at the drawing board working on the nurses' home at High Wycombe hospital but his creativity needed a bigger canvas and, in 1963, he made the move that would define his future. His urban design work in the Balkans, the Gulf, the Caribbean and Liverpool enabled him to develop considerable expertise and an enviable reputation in evolving architectural and metropolitan planning concepts, in preparing detailed local plans and development briefs, and as a visiting lecturer at Tallahassee University in the USA.

Cedar Chase's modern architecture was the magnet that brought Tony to Taplow in 1975. Four years later, Sarah fell for the older charms of the former village shop in the High Street. Of course, Tony tried against type to give it a number not a name. He settled for naming it Number Three. His own consultancy – The Office of Urban Design – was just getting off the ground. Eventually, his track record of over 500 projects stretched from Berlin to Bangladesh via Malta and Malaysia and from London to Lancashire via Walsall and Wales.



His work in Dunkerque and Birkenhead won prestigious awards. He was a consultant to the Civic Trust, an external examiner at two universities and an advisor to UNESCO on the protection of Isfahan,



Nigel Smales

Istanbul, Lahore, Luxor and high Andean villages in Argentina. And all the while, he sketched and painted, often in the convivial company of his close friend Nigel Woolner. He was rightly proud of being a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts, of exhibiting at the Royal Academy and in aid of St Nicolas' Church and, not least, of his painting of Uzès in France which adorns its main bar, Chez Titti.

Tony – You weren't the only socialist in the Village, although you made it seem so, but you were indeed a unique personality. Your e-address – creativehigh – summed you up neatly: a confident and creative man with high ideals. Rosaleen and I looked forward to being one of your 'pit stops' for coffee and a contretemps. These lively discussions always enhanced our mutual understanding and appreciation of our shared interests – art, theatre, opera and politics. Taplow will be the poorer without your presence. Your Village will miss you, neighbours young and old.

It is a privilege for me to have this opportunity to pay tribute to two such good friends as Tony and Tony.

*Karl Lawrence*

My parents, Helen and Lincoln Lee, moved in 1947 to Lower Lodge on Berry Hill. I was born the following year, but can still remember walking to the village with my mother via the footpath through the fields. Post-war rationing meant we went first to the Post Office then to Budgen's, up the hill from the church, and to Saunder's butcher's shop, near the pub. We moved to Maidenhead in 1951. It was 13 years before we returned.

Our large Victorian house was in Ray Park Road. Despite the extensive floods in 1947, I doubt if my parents quite realised the risks of living on the flood plain. We were

marooned for a week in 1954, only able to leave home by boat. Lincoln surveyed the Maidenhead flood channels, found them to be in an appalling state and campaigned to get them cleaned and maintained. The *Maidenhead Advertiser* featured his efforts but their success was limited.

Floods returned in 1959. I took the bus from school in Windsor to the Parade and I walked along boardwalks and raised pavements to the end of Ray Park Road where waters lapped River Stores. As I puzzled how to get home, I saw a familiar face: the unmistakable Fyfe Robertson, a well-known reporter for Cliff Michelmore's 'Tonight' BBC TV programme. He wanted to interview someone about the flooding. Having persuaded him that Lincoln Lee was exactly who he needed to talk to, I managed to borrow a dinghy and rowed him to our house. Lincoln was elsewhere so, with Fyfe still captive, I kept rowing until we found him. With his usual avuncular good humour, he explained the cause of the



flooding but – to my great chagrin – refused point blank to be interviewed on television. I never forgave him!

These floods, frustration that a permanent solution seemed unlikely and horror at plans for new

## Lincoln's End

### Remembering Lincoln Lee



developments on the Cookham flood plain all encouraged our move uphill. Lincoln's first book – about life as an airline pilot – had been a worldwide success. He invested the proceeds in one of Taplow House's walled kitchen-garden plots and engaged local architect Michael Bayley to design what would become 'Berinus' (7 Saxon Gardens). Two incidents caused delays. During a visit to Michael's home, Lincoln's exuberance got the better of him. Much to Helen's embarrassment, he threw Michael's baby into the air, bringing down a large section of the ceiling. Luckily,

the baby kept on giggling but my parents felt unable to protest about the next lengthy delay, caused when Michael fell down the stairs in his house, hitting a plate glass window and severing tendons in his forearm.

Past experience made Lincoln sceptical when the flood relief scheme was mooted. He was convinced that the real motive was for the profit to be made from gravel. When floods came again – this time at Chertsey rather than Maidenhead – he said "I told you so" and would have said the same when Datchet and Wraybury suffered in 2014.

Of three brothers, only Nick has remained in the Thames Valley, now in Ealing. Dougal lives in Scotland and I enjoyed floods so much that I've been living below sea level in the Netherlands for nearly 40 years.

*Neil Lee*

Eva Lipman

**Save the date!**

**Village Green Party**

**25th June 2016**

Editor: Nigel Smales

The Cottage, Rectory Road, Taplow. Tel 01628 661636

E-mail: 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 Gpex