

Hitcham and Taplow Society

Newsletter 108: Autumn 2017
£3.50 to non-members



www.taplowsociety.org.uk

Hitcham and Taplow Society

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

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Cover picture: Skindles Reach, not quite finished. On the right, the new restaurant will be Roux at Skindles (see Page 10) (Nigel Smales)

Editorial

The Society was founded to question decision-makers. For 58 years, its questioning has significantly influenced the outcome of local 'hot topics'. In addition, as reflected in the content of this and all Newsletters, the Society also celebrates our heritage and our community.

Some matters (see Pages 8 & 9) tick all three boxes for everyone. Naturally, others provoke differences of opinion. I believe my questioning on current 'hot topics' reflects the majority view. Maybe not. Either way, did it justify an abusive e-mail? My anonymous critic accused me of being "utterly disinterested in the greater good" and concluded: "Why not let the Council get on with their jobs and stop trying to interfere?"

How off target. Of course, consensus is elusive but, whether independently or (as in this case) on the Society's behalf, I always aspire to 'the greater

good' – to outcomes that best balance the needs and wants of our whole community, not just one dimension of it. We are all entitled to try to influence the decisions of our elected representatives; that's democracy. And surely acting for the Society in concert with TPC and our District and County Councillors (see Pages 14 & 15) is not interference but cooperation in a common cause?

There seems to be a growing trend for some with narrow perspectives to go online and anonymously abuse those who see things differently. Perhaps my unidentified correspondent – or anyone else – will accept this invitation to express their opinions in a future Newsletter. The Society's editorial policy is to be tolerant of and to publish contrary views provided they are well-articulated, accredited and not political, abusive or libellous. Tell us what you think. We will listen.

Acronyms

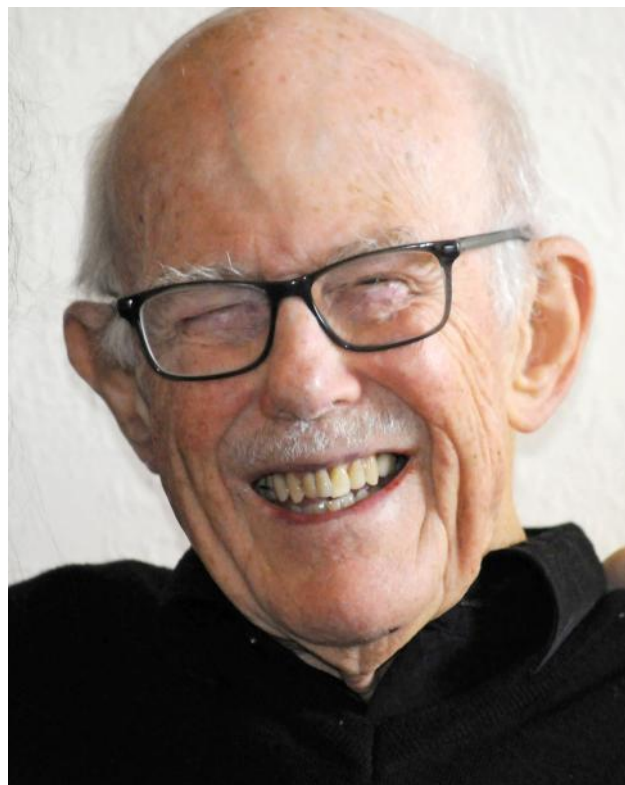
This Newsletter uses acronyms for the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), Buckinghamshire County Council (BCC), Burnham Parish Council (BPC), Department for Transport (DfT), Ellington & District Residents Association (EDRA), Land Securities Group (LSG), Member of Parliament (MP), South Bucks District Council (SBDC), Transport for Buckinghamshire (TfB), Taplow Parish Council (TPC) and Thames Valley Police (TVP).

Karl Lawrence 1928-2017

Karl cared. His passions shaped his being and his image. He thought deeply and sought intellectual understanding. He was an atheist who respected religious ceremony, a republican who hoped to get a royal telegram at 100. He was a socialist, but admired politicians at every level and of every hue for their integrity, clarity and accountability. He was an aficionado of art, music, opera, theatre, crosswords, wine and whisky, devotions all shared with Rosaleen, and of books, although she wasn't so keen on living in a library. Most of all, Karl was an individual who cared that everything should be just so, and he was determined to do everything possible to make it so.

Karl grew up in Ibstock, Leicestershire, surrounded by the power of words. His parish clerk father Harry ran the family printing business. His mother Louise's cousin Bernard Newman wrote over 100 books. Authors DH Lawrence and Mary Anne Evans (George Eliot) were distant relations. His ambition to be a journalist was explored in school vacations on the local newspaper, *The Coalville Times*, and in editing magazines and taking an English degree at Birmingham University only for illness to thwart his becoming a graduate trainee with Lord Kemsley (of Dropmore), owner of *The Sunday Times*. Instead, he made his mark in the book trade, initially at a wholesaler where he recommended the acquisition of *Casino Royale*, Ian Fleming's first James Bond novel; it sold 18,000 hardback copies in a year.

In 1953, Karl went to the Bahamas to run The Island Bookshop. Perfect climate. Idyllic lifestyle. Then it got better. While directing *See How They Run*, he fell in love with the leading lady: Rosaleen Malone, a pioneer Bahamian Airways stewardess who later "looked fabulous" in *Three Sisters*. They married in 1964 and headed home for him to aid André Deutsch doing paperback publishing deals before managing systems, computers and operations as Granada Publishing was acquired by Collins which merged to be HarperCollins. Decisions came easily; he "just knew what was right". If he couldn't get his way with charm and persistent logic, he would ruffle feathers – including those of Robert Maxwell on a Parliamentary committee considering worldwide academic copyright. He drove the development of International Standard Book Numbers (ISBN), led UK implementation



Michele Barker-Field

of machine readable codes, foresaw e-books, was a trustee of HarperCollins pension fund and 'Mr Fixit' for media moguls Sidney Bernstein and Rupert Murdoch.

Rosaleen and Karl brought baby Roisin to Taplow in 1970. Ronan arrived a year later. They immersed themselves in and were supported through crises by the Cedar Chase community. An incurable lung condition didn't stop him running the church fete bookstall for years, helping Alistair Forsyth create *Taplow at the Millennium*, joining the Society's committee in 2003 and being our energetic chairman for five years from 2011. We enjoyed our verbal jousts. Opinions? He had a few. Disagreement? Yes, but never disrespect. Our game was less persuasion than performance of principles, knowledge and indulgent eloquence. His was valuable counsel as I wrote and self-published a biography of my father and *Taplow Moments*, my history of Taplow, and took over as Newsletter editor. However, of all Karl's achievements, perhaps most important are the fond memories of his family and lifelong friends who knew "a lovely man". Rosaleen married him because "He was the kindest man I'd ever met". What better epitaphs could anyone have?

Nigel Smales

Midsummer Magic

On 24th June, almost 400 people had a jolly good time at the Society's 32nd Village Green Party. As usual, there was quaffing and quipping, roasting and reeling, much mingling and munching of beef, burgers and bangers, but with two new twists. Thanks to excellent innovations by Zoe Hatch, 314 tickets were sold online in advance and everyone happily sported wristbands, thus eliminating worries about

breaking even and people not paying. The raffle raised £605 for Taplow United and two seven-year-old girls – Sophia Savory and Emily Meats – took the initiative to make and sell loom bands to friends and family, raising £17 which they kindly decided to donate to the Society.

Grateful thanks are due to Zoe, to event captains Alastair Hill and Miv Wayland-Smith, and to Cliff Alderson, Jacqueline & Roger Andrews, Chris Ashford, Jane Barnard, Frank Barnett, Marianne & Marc Boden, Jane Curry, Andrew Findlay, Charlie & Toby Greeves, Robert Harrap, Anna Hill, David Hindle, Joseph, Tracy & Paul Holt, Tamsin & Toby Hornett, Billy Jawandha, Paul Jeffries, Eva Lipman, Laird Mackay, Dave McNulty, Charles Mulraine, Mike Sanderson's Band, Rupert Sellers, Sally & Mike Sharp, Anne Slinn, Steve Squire, Caroline & Nigel Smales, Adam Smith, Taplow Parish Council,



Oliver Meats

Sophia and Emily

Yannick le Touze, Victoria Wayland-Smith and Pauline & Roger Worthington who combined consummately to make it all happen so smoothly.

Sadly, the evening ended on a sour note. Late night revellers rekindled the fire and cast the carving board and two trestles into the flames. It is a shame these few casual vandals have no respect for the many who make our community so special.

Victoria Wayland-Smith



Amelia, George, Amélie, Ben and Jemma

September Celebration



Nigel Smales

Taplow Cricket Club Under-Elevens enjoyed celebrating their best season ever – seven wins and just one narrow defeat – at the Colts Presentation Evening on 15th September. Back: Charlie, Jake, Fin, James, Joel & Sam; Front: George, Ethan, Ben & Daniel

Pages from A Family Journal 1888/1915

Ethel 'Ettie' Grenfell, Lady Desborough, assembled a 650-page memoir for friends and family in 1916. In this second extract, Adam Smith reveals how her family's social whirl spun with privileged abandon ...

The Journal is thick with sport and hunting, home and abroad. In 1902, Ettie's eldest, Julian (14), was riding one of his father's hunters ('Goliath of Gath', 17 hands 2") and a year later was given 'Robin'. He wrote from Eton: "Tomorrow I am going over to Taplow for Short Leave; the hounds meet at Wooburn Green, 3 miles from us, so I shall get a ripping day's hunting. Hurrah." Her youngest, Ivo, was blooded aged 5 in November 1904, dragging the fox's mask and brush to her sitting room and declaring "Behold!" In January 1910, she jokingly attended the Old Berkeley meet at The Feathers on Toby the donkey "who got so excited that he ran clean away".

"The first very big Eton Friday-to-Monday party at Taplow took place [on] 23rd April 1904". Guests included Maurice Baring, Raymond Asquith and Winston Churchill (29) who upon arrival was thrown into river in all his clothes: great coat, spats and top hat "in which he swam very composedly". In January 1906, 180 children wore fancy dress at another Eton party – Ettie's first 'January cotillon' (formal ball).

The family always rented a London house for February and March. In 1907, Ettie recorded "a small dance" for 150 at 46 Upper Grosvenor Street. On returning to Taplow, her daughter Imogen (2) "rolled in the crocuses, saying 'Baby has not seen flowers for a long time'". A month later, Churchill went into the river again at the April 'Eton Party' (from 1909, 'Eton-and-Ballioli').

In 1911, Ettie's eldest daughter Monica (17) hosted about 250 to her coming-out party and ball. She attended 38 balls that season, and 40 in 1914. Taplow Court's Ascot Sunday party in 1913 featured pilot Grahame White giving "a beautiful exhibition in flights". Monica and her father Willie were enthusiastic joyriders in these dangerous contraptions.



Ethel Grenfell (1909)

His love of greyhounds tells much about Julian: "I do think greyhounds are the most beautiful things on earth; they have affection, and courage unspeakable, and speed like nothing else, and sensitiveness and dash and grace and gentleness, and enthusiasm". After Balliol, Julian joined the army and was posted to India – "lots of pig-sticking" – and then South Africa. During home leave in 1913, Imogen (8) "could not be detached from [him] for a single instant", perhaps in gratitude for the gift of a (presumably Indian) "bear

John Singer Sargent

which he had shot, made into a beautiful rug, the pride of her life; she always had her 'rest' upon it, and the head made a pillow". Back in South Africa, Julian wrote to Willie in July 1914: "I am going for a shoot in Rhodesia, and then coming home in October. I am sending four polo ponies home next month with a man. Do you think you could keep them for me until I get home?"



Willy with Ivo & Monica (c1903)

Taplow Court's last Saturday-to-Monday party began on 25th July 1914. "People were absorbed in the subject of the Dublin riots; but the first murmurs about graver causes of anxiety had begun".

Newsletter 109 will feature a third extract from Ettie's Journal in which she tells of family tragedies in the Great War.

Not Seeing but Believing

Robert Harrap



Taplow's old churchyard is a wonderfully historic site but not a particularly spectacular sight. Even the sighted need to hear its secrets. Perhaps those who can't see, or not well, are better able to feel them. This theory was put to the test on 8th August when the Society hosted 34 members of 'Aktiveyes' social clubs run since 2005 by Berkshire Vision, a charity founded in 1910 which now supports more than 2,000 blind or partially-sighted people. The evening began by Tæppa's Mound where Nigel Smales told tales of 10,000 years before a tactile interlude when Paul Browne and his fellow warriors of the Wulfheodenas living history society arrived for our visitors to touch their Anglo-Saxon garb, helmets, weapons, shields, jewellery and tools of Tæppa's time and to get the feel of his burial mound by walking up, down and around it. Finally, in the comfort of Taplow Court, Robert Harrap summarised the Buddhist philosophy of SGI-UK and its time here since 1988. Aktiveyes secretary Don Reed said it was the club's best-ever outing, which is some accolade. Grateful thanks are due to Robert and to kindly stewards Pauline & Roger Worthington.

A reminder of the site's history never goes amiss. Imagine Mesolithic Man and his mate finding something magic: a high and easily defensible plateau complete with running water. Just the place to make camp, as did their descendants for many-a-moon. As did Neolithic humans, for whom this was a

mystical location blessed by pagan gods, a site of religious and ritual significance. As did Bronze Age Britons whose settlement evolved into a hill fort expanded in the Iron Age and perhaps used later by Romans. Taplow spent the Dark Ages on the frontier, an outpost for Saxons, Angles and Danes taking turns gurning at rivals across the river. It was on the cusp of history between c620, when a pagan lord was buried in splendour, and 635, when St Birinus adopted for Christian baptism the pool known since as Bapsey Pond.

History isn't sure if the first church of St Nicholas was built nearby soon afterwards or not until c1197. There's no doubt its demolition in 1828 left three vaults in which Manfield, Hampson and Orkney lords of the manor are interred. There is no record of a major house here before 1610, when the Stuart steward Sir Henry Guldeforde built the first Taplow Court for rent. It burned down in 1616, was twice rebuilt – by Sir Thomas Hampson in 1638/40 and the 1st Earl of Orkney in 1702/05 – and finally substantially remodelled in 1853/55 by Bank of England director Charles Pascoe Grenfell. It passed in 1867 to his grandson William Grenfell, later 1st Baron Desborough, who permitted James Rutland to excavate the Mound in 1883 and famously brought the Olympics to London in 1908. It was briefly a home for evacuees in 1939, for a girls' school until 1945 and then for boffins with British Telecommunications Research and (from 1963) Plessey Electronics which developed digital telephony, satellite systems, combat radios and fibre optics.



Robert Harrap

A Waddling of Wordsmiths

Slough Writers is a friendly and supportive group for writers of all abilities. Members from far and wide pen novels, short stories, biographies, travelogues, plays, poems, journalism, comedy scripts and more. They meet most Mondays at 7.30pm in the Palmer Arms at Dorney – drop in to say hello – and have occasional evenings out, such as on 26th June when, hosted by the Society, they came to Taplow seeking inspiration. They gathered in Old Priory Garden, meandered hither and thither then finally settled at the Oak & Saw to mull their muses. Six writers kindly offered examples of their craft to this Newsletter, which is delighted to feature two...

In Taplow's Historic Village a stone throw from the Thames

By John Karliciuk (of Herschel Writers)

In Taplow's historic village a stone throw from the Thames,
In a weathered crumbling churchyard stands one of England's gems.

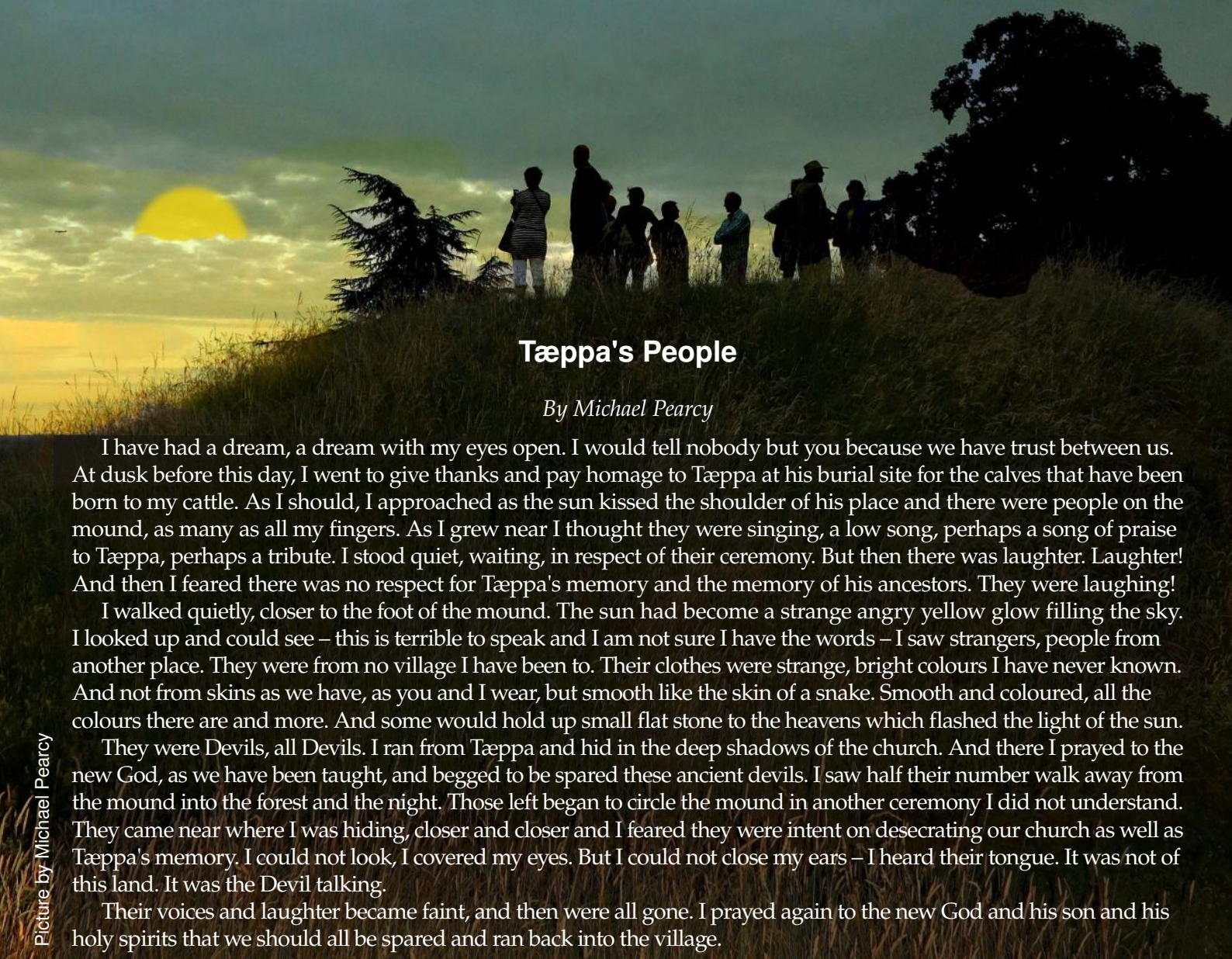
Wildflowers in the hedgerows welcome ramblers on their way
To sacred ground and Tæppa's Mound from an Anglo-Saxon day.

Taplow was named from Tæppa low and the Saxon Prince entombed below.
Twelve centuries chief Tæppa slept. This burial mound his secrets kept.

In the British Museum his royal gravegoods now are stored:
A Golden buckle, drinking horns, rich fabrics and his sword.

I wondered back to the village inn, the charming Oak and Saw,
To take a drink, reflect and think, my mind still filled with awe.

Long have I lived near Taplow yet of its wealth I never knew,
Just a stone throw from the Thames, a gem like Sutton Hoo.



Tæppa's People

By Michael Pearcy

I have had a dream, a dream with my eyes open. I would tell nobody but you because we have trust between us. At dusk before this day, I went to give thanks and pay homage to Tæppa at his burial site for the calves that have been born to my cattle. As I should, I approached as the sun kissed the shoulder of his place and there were people on the mound, as many as all my fingers. As I grew near I thought they were singing, a low song, perhaps a song of praise to Tæppa, perhaps a tribute. I stood quiet, waiting, in respect of their ceremony. But then there was laughter. Laughter! And then I feared there was no respect for Tæppa's memory and the memory of his ancestors. They were laughing!

I walked quietly, closer to the foot of the mound. The sun had become a strange angry yellow glow filling the sky. I looked up and could see – this is terrible to speak and I am not sure I have the words – I saw strangers, people from another place. They were from no village I have been to. Their clothes were strange, bright colours I have never known. And not from skins as we have, as you and I wear, but smooth like the skin of a snake. Smooth and coloured, all the colours there are and more. And some would hold up small flat stone to the heavens which flashed the light of the sun.

They were Devils, all Devils. I ran from Tæppa and hid in the deep shadows of the church. And there I prayed to the new God, as we have been taught, and begged to be spared these ancient devils. I saw half their number walk away from the mound into the forest and the night. Those left began to circle the mound in another ceremony I did not understand. They came near where I was hiding, closer and closer and I feared they were intent on desecrating our church as well as Tæppa's memory. I could not look, I covered my eyes. But I could not close my ears – I heard their tongue. It was not of this land. It was the Devil talking.

Their voices and laughter became faint, and then were all gone. I prayed again to the new God and his son and his holy spirits that we should all be spared and ran back into the village.

A Graceful Echo

Cedar Chase has always been a hotbed of creativity. It was a magnet for Tony Meats and, later, for his fellow architect Martin Knight, who was inspired by Tony's passion for his art and for living life to the full. Tony left Taplow with fond memories. Martin is about to bless it with a graceful legacy – a new footbridge across the Thames.

Martin's early work includes museums in Swansea and Portsmouth as well as developments at King's Cross, Hull and Guangzhou. His first notable venture into bridge design was the prizewinning Gateshead Millennium Bridge in 2001. Thereafter, before founding his own practice in 2006, he was responsible for extraordinary bridges including the Royal Ballet School's Bridge of Aspiration over Floral Street in London and Gatwick Airport's Pier 6 Airbridge.

Knight Architects has won numerous competitions and accolades. Its award-winning bridges across the world include extended links in Helsinki and from Hong Kong to Macau, the Mersey Gateway and crossings in London's Olympic Park, Yorkshire, Cumbria, Wales and Bath, a landmark bridge in New Zealand inspired by a Maori fish hook motif and a footbridge at Merchant's Square, Paddington, which raises in segments like a Japanese fan. With ongoing projects in Bermuda, Budapest and Stockholm, the studio has just been appointed to design bridges for the new A27 Arundel Bypass.

He seems a laid-back kind of guy, but ask Martin about his design philosophy. Light shines. Bridge design is about telling a story that works not only for those who appreciate form and function but also for everyday people who experience the physical and sensual reality of seeing bridges and of crossing and seeing from them. Bridges have a powerful 'sense of place'. Never forget to balance cost and legacy value.

Martin and his wife Cath settled in Taplow in 2003. Their sons Thomas and Jack went to St Nicolas' School where Cath is a teaching assistant.



Knight Architects

Martin Knight

They quickly fell in love with our community and he with our bridges. Taylor's road bridge and Brunel's railway bridge over the Thames are beautiful, iconic glimpses of 1777 and 1839 still functioning admirably in 2017. How's that for legacy? Martin was inspired to set expectations for the rescue of our riverside. The river isn't an edge, he argued, it's an entity, a destination. Both sides should be on the same side, intent on place-making. Any new residential development should be permeable, part of the community, not isolated by the closure of Mill Lane. In his spare time, he sketched a design to prove a footbridge from Glen Island to



Ray Mill Island and Boulter's Lock was both feasible and viable. He found common purpose with Heather Fenn, who had allied with Bob Dulson of Maidenhead Civic Society to further her long-cherished vision of making our riverside "a magical amenity". Events unfolded. Convinced by Martin's perception and logic, SBDC cherry-picked from Heather's dream to require the provision of a footbridge. Who better for Berkeley Homes to ask to design it than Taplow's very own expert?

The shallow and slender span of Martin's 35m bridge echoes that of Brunel's bridge, said to have "the widest and flattest brick arches in the world". He hopes his new creation will be installed shortly and open next year when Taplovians, Maidonians and their visitors will be able during daylight hours to enjoy lovely mile-and-a-quarter round-river walks. Another layer to the legacy!

What will we call the new footbridge? Knight's Bridge would be accurate, catchy and appealing. Taplow Bridge could tell a cracking tale. The late architect and local historian Michael Bayley believed the original river crossing hereabouts, an ancient *briva* (a porous brushwood causeway) where the weir is now, was succeeded by an Iron Age *briva* on the line of the new bridge, and that this crossing – which he called Taplow Bridge to differentiate it from the first Maidenhead Bridge (built 1280) – survived until being destroyed during the Epiphany Rising of 1400 that failed to restore King Richard II to the throne. The skirmish is history, the *briva* Michael's theory, but such a good yarn surely deserves its place in lore. However, why not let public opinion decide the bridge's name?

Let debate begin.

HTS AGM

8pm, Friday
8th December
in the Village Centre

After which Martin Knight
will talk about
bridge design and
Taplow's new landmark



The Footbridge Awaits – Nigel Smales

The Soul of Skindles

Once upon a time, our riverside was a destination to savour, and Skindles was at its heart. Some wanted the old place rescued, but it was beyond repair. Some wanted it replaced by a boutique hotel, but (as the Riviera has since revealed) numbers didn't stack up. Most were happy for a new restaurant to preserve the iconic name (and so many memories). SBDC agreed, Berkeley Homes was willing, but what kind of eatery would it be? Not fast food, please. Let it be somewhere special, reflecting its heritage and idyllic location, but no mortgage to pay the bill. Happily, some dreams do come true...

It is 50 years since the Roux brothers – Albert and Michel – opened La Gavroche in Chelsea. In 1972, they made an old pub in Bray into the Waterside Inn and were well on the way to becoming the UK's "godfathers of modern restaurant cuisine". Albert's son Michel Junior took over La Gavroche on its move to Mayfair in 1993, and nowadays often appears on TV. In 2002, Michel Senior's son Alain became chef-patron at the Waterside Inn. It is excellent news that this father and son are coming to Taplow's riverside which, from autumn 2018, will be graced by Roux at Skindles.

We are local, we love the area, says Alain, a Skindles regular in his youth. We will channel the soul of Skindles into the new brasserie, which will be open for breakfast, lunch and dinner serving 50 on the ground floor and a further 20 on the terrace outside. Upstairs, there'll be a bar serving wines, cocktails and sharing plates. We're not after ratings or a Michelin star. The menu will be French, but nothing sophisticated. Not crazy food. Just good, freshly cooked bistro food you can't find elsewhere. Sounds a treat. Can't wait!



The Waterside Inn

Alain Roux

Paved with Good Intentions

After years of tribulation, in 2015, Taplow settled on 191 new, renovated or replicated Berkeley homes along Mill Lane subject to SBDC's requirement for a 'mixed development', a condition rooted in the centuries-old history of employment on the riverside. Come 2016, when Berkeley secured permission for an additional 12 new homes on the old gasholder site, the aim remained that a new restaurant, new offices on the old gasworks and a chandlery next door would add employment to that already in three old boathouses – a boat repair business by Maidenhead Bridge and two offices in the Old and New Boathouses by Driftwood Cottage. How are these good intentions working out?



The Old and New Boathouses

Berkeley has sold 29 and reserved 13 of the 75 completed and nearly-completed homes, but three matters are pending – an application (submitted, withdrawn, resubmitted) for an additional two-bed boathouse, the demolition of Dunloe Lodge (to be replaced by a single home or more?) and the construction of the new offices (are they viable?). Other news is mixed. The new restaurant? Tick. The chandlery (currently the sales showroom)? Rumours of a gastro-pub. The boat repair business? Given only a short-term lease by SBDC. The boathouse offices? Applications to convert each into two-bed dwellings were refused in 2014 because of the adjacent gasholder. However, the removal of this "hazard" and a 2016 legislation change combined to oblige SBDC to approve as 'permitted development' a recent application to reclassify the site as 'residential' and to convert the boathouses and their outbuildings into 18 one-bed apartments.

Continuing uncertainty has varying degrees of substance but doubt is fertile ground for guesswork and rumours. Clarity would be welcome. And on a general point: how can any local authority make any meaningful commitment to mixed-use anywhere?

Taplow Can but Try

Vibrant Village

Taplow's Village Green is surrounded by the school, the pub, the church and the village hall, all of which were here before almost all locals. Indeed, their congregation probably contributed to the charm and vibrancy that attracted us here, despite not every home having off-street parking. However, they also attract traffic at its worst when commuters and school-runners congest Rectory Road and the High Street. The Society's three morning peak hour surveys suggest the closure of Mill Lane hasn't reduced the number of commuters. The variations between the pre-closure survey on 12th September 2016, which counted 270 traffic movements along Rectory Road (183 westward and 87 eastward), and the post-closure surveys on 6th February and 23rd June, which counted 267 (182 and 85) and 262 (178 and 84) movements are so marginal as to be inconclusive. In each case, some 55% of all movements were school-related. So, while attitudes and behaviours may be worse – some drivers are careless or aggressive, some park inconsiderately – the roads are no more or less busy.

What's the solution? Is it beyond hope that day-to-day niggles can be best resolved in neighbourly chats? Meanwhile, maybe TPC can continue to press BCC for a 20mph speed limit on village roads. And as Nicki Jeffries suggests, perhaps it could instigate a 'stakeholder forum' to consider how the village might work better. Taplow can but try.

Tapping Shoulders

TPC has already begun to address another significant issue – that of drivers going too fast – by joining the TVP Community SpeedWatch initiative, the objective of which is not so much penalise drivers as cause them to see sense. Three Taplovian Police Support Volunteers (PSVs) have been recruited, vetted, trained and equipped with an 'image capture' device that can record a vehicle's speed and registration number in accordance with governing legislation. Both Burnham and Farnham also have three PSVs. They will act for TVP not by 'feeling the collar' of owners but with 'a tap on the shoulder' in the form of letters notifying them of alleged speeding offences. However, any owner who gets three 'taps' in six months may find the Road Safety Constable taking appropriate action. Taplow can but try.

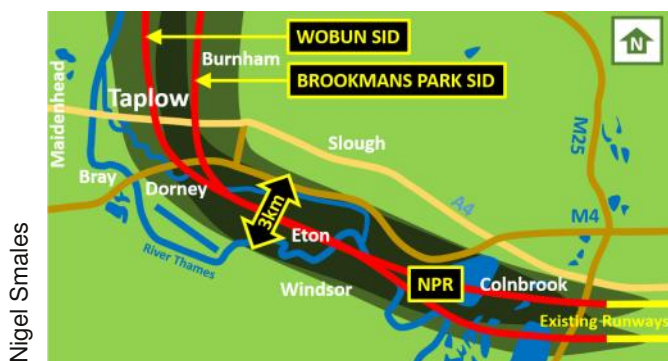
Reaching Out

Nobody needs reminding about Bath Road traffic congestion, nor that all the new developments on either side of the Thames will make matters worse. Key to Taplow's suffering is the narrow Maidenhead Bridge, built for the needs of 240 years ago. Earlier this year at the Society's request, our MP Dominic Grieve asked BCC to suggest to RBWM that the westward flow might be eased a little if the Ray Mead roundabout had a 'straight on' lane (as illustrated). Although this idea was rejected by his officers, RBWM Leader Simon Dudley has asked them to look again. He also intends to ask Slough if the Huntercombe Lane junction would work better as a roundabout, thus reducing tailbacks on the M4 spur. Taplow can but try.



A Plane's Eye View of Taplow

Recent Newsletters have looked with what they thought was justifiable parochialism at how Heathrow impacts Taplow and Hitcham, and what effect its proposed third runway might have. This Newsletter is fortunate to be able to feature a new perspective. As was Lincoln Lee, Spencer Norton is an airline pilot who lives locally...



Nigel Smales

NPRs and SIDs

Newsletter 107 set a perception of the 'Taplow Corridor' when talking about flightpaths over Taplow from Heathrow. It doesn't exist. What does are two Noise Preferential Routes (NPRs) within which are two Standard Instrument Departures (SIDs) that aircraft fly to remain within the NPR before proceeding on their route. Departures on the Wobun SID are generally domestic flights or those heading for Ireland or across the Atlantic. Departures on the Brookmans Park SID are on their way to Northern Europe or the Middle and Far East.

NPRs and SIDs date from the 1960s. They can only be altered by HM Government, with consultation, but no DfT (or its predecessor transport ministries) has felt inclined to do so. NPRs are 3km wide and extend to an altitude of 4,000 feet. Departing aircraft must remain within them unless they are above 4,000 feet or Air Traffic Control directs them to fly a different track or accedes to a pilot request – for example: to avoid inclement weather, such as thunderstorms.

Heathrow currently has two east-west runways. Aircraft must take-off and land into wind. If wind direction changes during the day, Heathrow will change the direction of its operations. Departures overfly Taplow when Heathrow is on Westerly operations, but not usually by arrivals when it is on Easterly

operations. Prevailing wind conditions means we are on Westerly operations about 75% of the time.

Aircraft and engine technology have come on significantly in the last 60 years. Those of you who remember the high pitch crackle of aircraft such as the Boeing 707, VC-10, Tridents or even Concorde will have undoubtedly noticed a difference. Modern aircraft using Heathrow today – such as the Boeing 787 and Airbus A350 – are in some cases over 50% quieter than their predecessors back in the '60s and '70s.

Aircraft noise can be attributed to many things. Departing aircraft use engine thrust to gain altitude and accelerate, so the main source is engine noise. On arrival, engine thrust is usually at idle and the noise can be attributed more to airframe noise including the landing trailing edge flaps and / or extension of the landing gear.

Why do some aircraft sound louder than others? The amount of thrust required for an aircraft to take-off and climb is linked to primarily to the weight of its fuel, not how many passengers it carries. Consequently, even with the same aircraft type and the same number of passengers, long-distance flights will always be noisier because they are heavier and require more thrust on departure. Atmospheric also play a big part; moisture in the air, wind direction, pressure and temperature all make engine noise sound different.



Flight Paths

One thing is assured: modern aircraft really are getting quieter. And Heathrow usually attracts the airlines' latest (and quietest) additions to their fleet. Any third runway at Heathrow will be to the north of the current runways, and will see

progressively more flights. Noise intensity will most certainly be reduced but actual new departure flightpaths have not been determined or even discussed yet in any detail. However, the DfT has made it clear that flightpaths should avoid built up residential areas – which in our area means

Slough and Maidenhead. It is likely therefore that the current flightpaths over Taplow will remain for any third runway. This may seem unfair, but it could have a silver lining by possibly preventing – or at least limiting – any further significant housing development in the area.

Canada Calling

Lesley Wyle of Canada has been in touch to ask: who knew that BBC employees enjoyed Hitcham Place as "a holiday resort" during WW2? While with the BBC Monitoring Service in Caversham, she spent four breaks there – "girls in one wing and boys in another... deckchairs for sunbathing... nightly entertainment... fond memories of The Feathers [and of] strolling through the grounds of nearby Cliveden [and running] into Lady Astor".

In 1932, the house was home to Sir Henry Dixon Kimber, a solicitor who hoped to be Lord Mayor of London but, probably in 1929, settled for being Chief Commoner, responsible for representing the City of London's Court of Common Council and for chairing various Subcommittees and Working Parties which provided City Corporation hospitality. It is possible that he or his father Sir Henry (co-founder of City solicitors Kimber & Ellis and for 28 years MP for

Wandsworth) may have had Hitcham Place built, but that's all there is to tell – unless you know different.

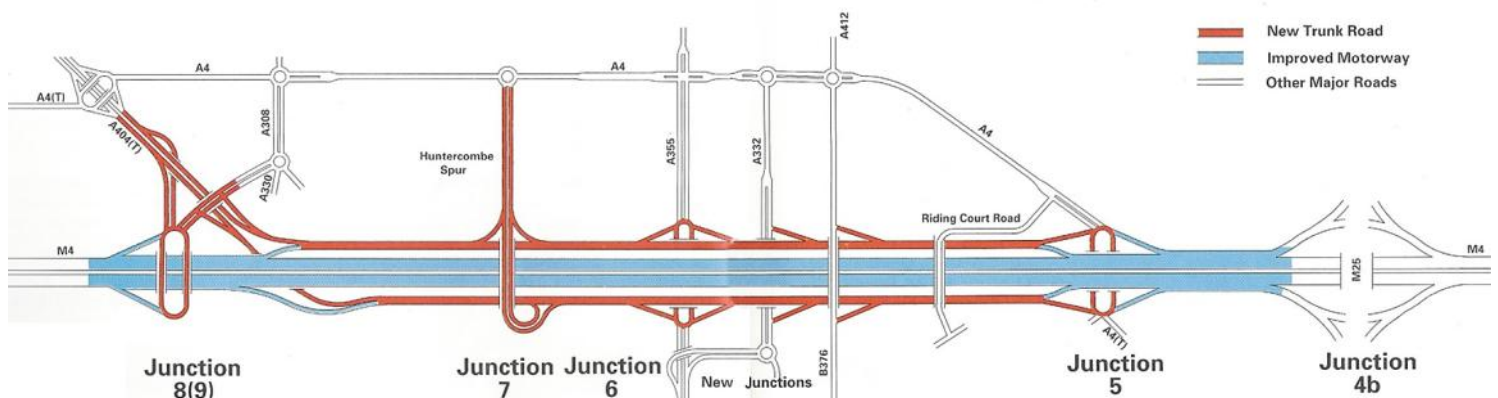


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Blast from the Past

Down in Taplow's deep south, rumour says that works to 'smarten' the M4 will begin shortly and that its bridge over the Thames will be widened in about year. Meanwhile, David Long of Amerden has discovered a gem in his archive. This illustration shows the (ultimately rejected) 1993 scheme which proposed that, instead of connecting to the M4,

Junctions 6 (A355) and 7 (Huntercombe) plus new A332 and A412 junctions would link to new parallel 'trunk roads' from which traffic would join the M4 at Junctions 5 (A4) or 8/9 (A404/A308). The current upgrade has its detractors but would this extremely expensive and complex concept have been better or worse? Isn't perspective interesting?



Under the Banner of Sustainability

The debate about the future of local government was kicked into the long grass by the General Election and hasn't been seen since. One option is that County becomes an over-arching unitary authority. Perhaps the following will inform your thoughts on the matter...

A while ago, a north-side Bath Road resident drove her car cautiously through her gateway. She looked right, towards oncoming traffic, only to hit a cyclist coming from her left. He was riding on the pavement, which has been illegal since 1835 and contravenes Rule 64 of the Highway Code. Luckily, he wasn't badly injured but what might have been haunts the driver. Recently her worries intensified with BCC's declaration that drivers will have all liability and cyclists none on the A4 Cycleway (shared by pedestrians) that it plans to run past her gate.

Newsletters 106 and 107 touched on the proposed Cycleway. This one questions in more detail the overall concept, aspects of design and BCC's handling of the project and its public.

Cycling is good – it promotes personal wellbeing and produces no pollution – but should it have over-riding priority? Available evidence suggests that BCC sees itself on high moral ground – spending £300,000 so far towards the noble cause of encouraging cycle access to Taplow Station – while most constituents (and our County Councillor Dev Dhillon) see a high cost gesture of questionable value. Its official title – the 'A4 Sustainable Travel Scheme' – seems crafted to imply environmental benefit but where is the cost benefit analysis to justify further expenditure of £1.2m by confirming purpose, benefit and detriment in the broader context? And in sharp contrast to RBWM's 221-page Cycling Action Plan, no metrics demonstrate any understanding of current vehicle and cycle journey motivation, origin, destination and timing or convincing projections of how the balance between these modes of transport will change to reduce pollution

and achieve 'sustainability'. Few cyclists currently commute along the A4 between our urban neighbours, few to Taplow Station or the Bishop Centre and fewer for fitness or fun, so isn't it groundlessly hopeful guesswork that a significant increase in cycling is waiting to happen?

Specific aspects of detailed design caused great concern. How would it be 'sustainable' to ban right turns into Berry Hill, thus forcing drivers on long detours spreading greater risk, pollution and inconvenience to hundreds living locally? Wouldn't the passage of the Cycleway under the narrow Dumb Bell Bridge (with its poor sightlines) and across numerous driveways be very dangerous not only for drivers and pedestrians but for cyclists too? Won't narrowing the vehicular carriageway and / or the verge and foliage increase risk of accidents and of noise and pollution to adjacent homes? Why not have the Cycleway on the wider south side where it would have better sightlines, cross fewer junctions and many fewer driveways, and there are fewer underground utilities to relocate? And what suggests cyclists prefer Tesco to Sainsbury's?

If a flawed concept and serious design wrinkles aren't bad enough, BCC's regrettable attitude has resulted in many potholes along the long and winding road from Spring 2014, when it floated the idea, to the recent despairing laments: "Democracy has lost its voice in South Bucks" (Bath Road resident, Sally Bryant) and "Public sentiment towards [BCC] is rooted in suspicion and perceived cowardice" (TPC Chairman Jamie Barnard).

Why did it take at least 29 months to 'design' the scheme with such scant regard for local circumstances, such as narrow and often flooded tunnels or boot sale Sundays? What changed from Summer 2015, when the idea was for a south-side Cycleway from Huntercombe Lane to Taplow Station then north-side to Maidenhead Bridge, to Autumn 2016, when an

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entirely north-side scheme was revealed for 'public consultation' with a questionnaire clearly intended to avoid acquiring critical comment? What made BCC contradict RBWM Leader Simon Dudley (who confirms the Cycleway will not extend into Maidenhead) and Bishop Centre developer LSG (which advises that its S106 financial contribution need not be exclusive to this project)?

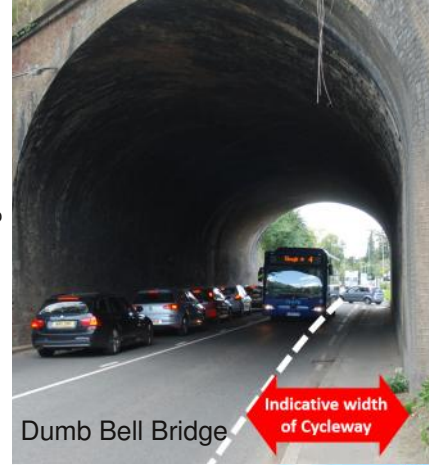
The weight of negative feedback from Dev, our District Councillor George Sandy, TPC, EDRA, the Society and a significant majority of locals caused the scheme to be "put on hold for re-evaluation" only for any relief to turn to dismay on 20th June when it re-emerged with no material change. Incredibly, BCC had spent eight months ignoring the genuine concerns of locals. What is the point in our electing Dev to represent us if BCC won't listen to him? Was the hope that time would soften objections? It didn't. Dismay fuelled determination and then frustration that BCC Cabinet Member for Transport Mark Shaw was unwilling to meet locals at their convenience. Too busy for Sally to drive him round "so he could see the route and [its potholes] through residents' eyes", he invited six to Aylesbury, but most could not attend. His one concession – a brief morning meeting in a totally inappropriate setting outside Costa Coffee at the Bishop Centre – did more harm than good for having poor audibility, no agenda, no chairman, no answers, no accord and no minutes. Astonishingly, BCC Leader Martin Tett assured Dev and George that a public meeting would be arranged locally one evening only to deny this two days later.

On 1st August, Jamie suggested BCC should use "this substantial investment [to] improve the local

area, not to suffocate it under the banner of sustainability" (see Page 16). Perhaps this respectful plea tipped the balance. A week later, apparently without consulting his design team, Mr Shaw rescinded the ban on right turns into Berry Hill, conceded that the Cycleway design under Dumb Bell Bridge was "sub-optimal" (a tacit admission of dangerous design?) and proposed to install 'Cyclists Dismount' signs there (to absolve BCC of liability for consequential damage, injury or fatality?). However, the Cycleway remained north-side and, despite continuing to ignore or decline invitations from Dev, TPC and (later) BPC to meet locals locally, Mr Shaw somehow found time to pose by the A4 for the *Maidenhead Advertiser* which on 10th August published his photograph and quoted him saying BCC "will work towards more sustainable travel whether [locals] like it or not". Charming. Dev, TPC and the Society posed 45 written questions; his answers begged more questions. Sally and Jamie both wrote to him, she to say his carefully crafted verbal report to fellow County Councillors was "disingenuous, inaccurate and extremely misleading", he to add: "Your apparent refusal to [meet us] is inflammatory and counterproductive". Mr Shaw's response was to invite nobody but TPC and BPC Chairmen to his Aylesbury ivory tower.

The road is not yet run. What will come of Sally's neighbour's complaint to the Local Government Ombudsman and of TPC's 'Freedom of Information' Request to reveal what "re-evaluation" took place? Will construction of the Cycleway begin as planned in Spring 2018? Does this experience demonstrate that BCC is too remote to govern local issues effectively and, even if you are consulted, will your view be ignored?

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Lincoln's End

Remembering Lincoln Lee

Semantics

In the 52 articles that he wrote for 26 Newsletters in the 22 years to 2005, Lincoln loved to look askance. One example was in Newsletter 77 (Spring 2002) when – with let's hope no prescience – he joked that the outline stencilled on the A4 under Dumb Bell Bridge might commemorate "some poor cyclist who had been squashed flat at that point". Nowadays, perhaps he might have pondered how the meaning of 'sustainable' has evolved from "capable of being sustained" – which could apply to steam engines provided stokers shovelled coal into them – to include "capable of being maintained at a steady level without exhausting natural resources or causing severe environmental damage". How many drivers must switch to cycling for the A4 to meet this modern meaning?

How George Orwell – the don of doublespeak – must be spinning in his grave for not blessing 'sustainable' with what Pages 14 & 15 suggest is yet another meaning: "incapable of being questioned". Sir Humphrey Appleby might have observed: Evidently, sustainability might present difficulties

of verisimilitude of sufficient magnitude as to lay upon the logical and semantic resources of the English language a heavier burden than they can reasonably be expected to bear.

The new home currently being built at Hitchambury Farm will be 'carbon-neutral' but it seems the builder didn't get the inherent message about treading lightly. SBDC have some culpability for dismissing District Councillor George Sandy's objection and accepting an appeal to use Hitcham Lane for access, but it didn't permit road closures to ignore DfT requirements, a failure brought to light by the Society. Nor did it give licence to damage a brick gatepost, a road sign and roadside foliage while failing in what George described as a "farfical attempt to tow a portacabin" down the lane on 27th July. Less 'carbon-neutral', more neutralising carbon.



Taplow's Catch 22

Anyone who has read Joseph Heller's 1961 novel of the same name will know that Catch 22 applies when a desired outcome or solution is impossible due to inherently contradictory rules or conditions. It seems that Catch 22 is alive and thriving in



Calling Jemima Puddleduck

surface water drains under the Bath Road and its five adjacent railway tunnels.

The Bath Road floods when it rains heavily. So, isn't it good that TfB plans to clear out its drains? Yes, but if they are cleared before the A4

Cycleway is built (see Pages 14 & 15), isn't it likely that they may be blocked by construction detritus? And if they are, won't the road flood? Huh (theatrical shrug), that's 'Catch 22 lite'. Where it gets 'heavy' is under those tunnels – two of which flood occasionally, two often and one (Station Road) with each passing shower. Even when these roads are closed by floods, no work to unblock the blockage causing them can begin until emergency road closures are in place, and they require a minimum notice of five working days. By which time, the waters might well have evaporated. No unblocking gets done. And then it rains again. Doh! Records show these roads have been puddling deeply since 1839 so, clearly, their drains need clearing regularly. Well, wouldn't that be lovely? Meanwhile – hey presto – Catch 22 has matured into Groundhog Day.

Stop Press – The Oak & Saw has been voted 'Maidenhead Pub of the Year 2017'. The Society is pleased to congratulate Karen & Ian for this well-deserved award. The editor presumes there will be liquid reciprocation for his vote.

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