

# Hitcham and Taplow Society

Newsletter 113: Spring 2020  
£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  
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Committee: Andrew Findlay, Charlie Greeves, Robert Harrap, Rupert Sellers, Nigel Smales, Jonathan Specktor, Jacqueline Turner.  
Massive thanks to Louise Symons who has stepped down after 15 years.  
Newsletter Editor (and photos and maps unless noted): Nigel Smales  
Newsletter Production: Andrew Findlay

Contact Address: HTS, Littlemere, River Road, Taplow, SL6 0BB  
secretary@taplowsociety.org.uk  
07787 556309

Cover picture: The west face of the renovated Glen Island House. See Page 7.

## Editorial

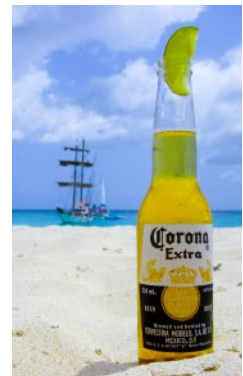
Pinterest



What is normal? For those of a certain age, it was normal for yellow lorries to ply the streets selling Corona, a range of carbonated soft

drinks, originally from Wales. For some of more recent vintage, it is normal to drink Corona, a Mexican beer so flavour-free it is sipped through a slice of lime. Now there's a new normal, and it's scary. Who knew coronavirus had been giving us colds for ages until a new and deadly strain called Covid-19 evolved to redefine anti-socialism? Not Going Out is the New In-Thing. Wash your hands. Keep your distance. If for you Corona came on lorries, self-isolate. Not because of all that sugar. Nor because you didn't boost your immunity with the lime's Vitamin C. Just that your 'certain age' means you're more at risk. Take care. Wash your hands. Again.

In these troubled times, it's important for this Newsletter to do normal stuff on heritage and community. But hot topics? Dominated by the worldwide descent into lockdown and limbo which impacts even our little patch in Buckinghamshire's green tail (see Page 12). Local elections? Postponed for a year. The Local Plan? Postponed indefinitely. Schools, churches, pubs, restaurants and rubbish dumps? All closed. Ditto most shops. The Society's Easter Egg Hunt? Cancelled. But see a silver lining on Page 3. Another 'Tidy-Up Taplow', our midsummer Village Green Party? Both postponed until the Autumn in the hope that things will be getting back to normal by then. Something to look forward to. If we're lucky. Watch our website and e-mails. In the meantime, although this Newsletter went to press on 16th April, please accept our apologies if its delivery has been delayed.



goodfreephotos.com

# Snapshots

## Community in Action

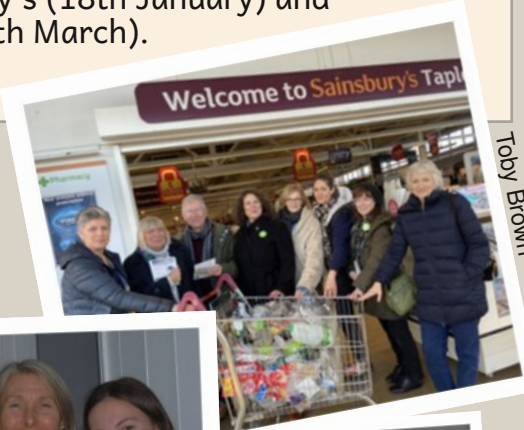


Lauren & Sally

On 23rd December, for the very last time, Sasha Boden and Scarlett Wayland-Smith once again organised Carols on the Green. Thanks to them, and to Lauren & Sally Sharp who kept the festive choristers on time and in tune until some slipped away to the pub.



There was positive public reaction to 'Plastic Attacks' – the "most polite protests ever" – led by evergreen Zoe Hatch which took a stand against single-use plastic packaging by removing it from purchases and handing it back to Sainsbury's (18th January) and Tesco (7th March).



Toby Brown



Webb Women



Ashleigh

At 8pm on 26th March and Thursdays since, Taplovians joined in the nationwide 'Clap for the Carers' in appreciation of the National Health Service and all who are helping us so selflessly during the pandemic.



Marianne

How lucky are we to have Marianne Boden? She has gathered and launched a WhatsApp support network of people willing to be called on to help anyone in our community who might be lonely or at a loss in these troubled times. How thoughtful. How kind. Truly a light in the darkness. The Society's Secretary (see Page 2) can put you in touch.



Fox Family

That silver lining mentioned on Page 2? Mark Bradshaw, National Trust General Manager at Cliveden, generously donated 13,000 Easter Eggs to 20 'good causes' including Alexander Devine Children's Hospice, the Chalfont Centre for Epilepsy, four foodbanks, three SOS centres, key workers' children at four schools and, yes, Taplow where local Easter Bunnies distributed 1,200 eggs.



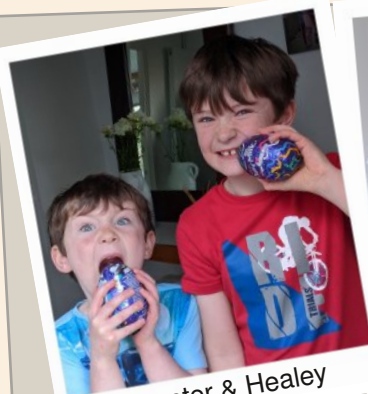
Mark & Roger

It was a shock when Neal Baderman discovered somebody purloined the Society's riverside bench from Taplow Quay and a delight to discover that Brian Smith, Astrid Maddocks and Orlando Fricker had rescued and restored it.



Brian & Bench

Orlando Fricker



Chester & Healey

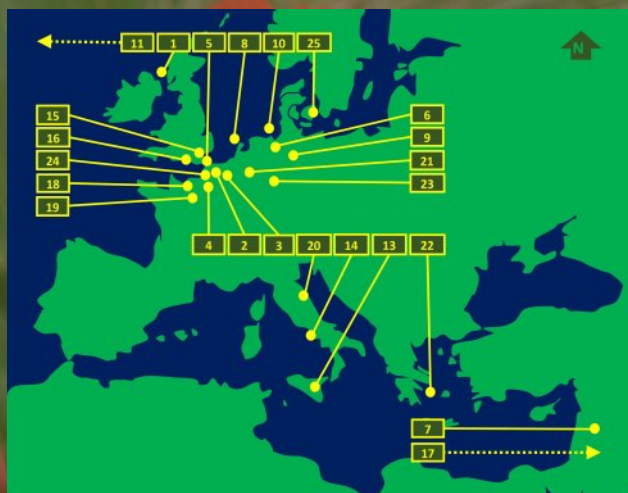


Sally & Ted

Andrew Findlay

# Our Fallen Fellows

This Newsletter marks the 75th anniversary of the end of World War Two (WW2) by commemorating the 25 men of Taplow and Hitcham who fell during that conflict. Their stories derive from various sources including Royal Navy (RN), Army and Royal Air Force (RAF) archives, the Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC), Maidenhead Advertiser cuttings and the recollections of elder residents. Unfortunately, the 1921 and 1931 Censuses are not yet accessible to the public and the hasty preparation of and heavy redactions from the 1939 Register – taken four weeks after war was declared – renders residency a flawed test so the map illustrates where they died.



Hitcham had space on its World War One (WW1) memorial at St Mary's Church to inscribe the surnames and full initials of four who fell in WW2 (Numbers 1, 14, 16 & 22 below). Officialdom can be excused being unaware of another fatality (Number 5) but, for reasons unknown, the names of other Taplovians who cuttings indicate fell in WW2 were not added to the memorial at St Nicolas' Church.

The Society determined to remedy this oversight. Diligent research revealed the CWGC archive as the most reliable and consistent source, valuable in confirming the widows and parents of all except Numbers 1, 12, 14 & 16 as being "of Taplow" (taken as a reliable expression of wish for husbands and sons to be remembered here), that its policy is for war memorials to commemorate only WW1 and WW2 fatalities, and no other locals are recorded as having fallen in subsequent conflicts. Massive

thanks to Diane Cope, Gillian & Robert Hanbury, MJ Heckel, Brenda Hickman, Jo & Duncan Lettley, JE & Philip May, E Mitchell, Sheila Peroni, George Rutter, Margaret & John Sizer, Caroline & Nigel Smales, Pauline & Roger Worthington, Burnham Historians and Taplow Parish Council who all responded generously to our appeal for funds, and to St Nicolas' Church for agreeing that WW2 names should be added to our Memorial. Unfortunately, permission wasn't secured from the Diocese of Oxford in time for stonemason Adrian Powell of Triangle Cottages to inscribe before the VE-Day holiday on 8th May the surnames and full initials which space permits. We hope he will complete this work very soon.

1 – 12th December 1939 – **Albert E Chapman**. Chief Petty Officer (Electrical Artificer 1st Class); RN. One of 124 men sailing from Malta to Scapa Flow, Orkney Islands, who were lost at sea when their destroyer *HMS Duchess* was accidentally rammed by battleship *HMS Barham* in thick fog off Mull of Kintyre, Scotland.

2 – 25th May 1940 – **Samuel HG Allen** (33). Widow Beatrice. Possibly brother-in-law of Stanley Bond (see 7). Private; 7th Battalion, Worcestershire Regiment. Killed in action during British Expeditionary Force retreat to Dunkirk. Buried: Violaines, France.



Samuel Allen

Worcestershire Regiment

3 – 27th May 1940 – **Desmond S Chapman** (27). Son of Grace & Vivian Chapman of 5 Huntercombe Lane North. Second Lieutenant; 2nd Battalion, North Staffordshire Regiment. Killed in action during British Expeditionary Force retreat to Dunkirk. Buried: Oosttaverne, Belgium.

4 – 13th June 1940 – **Frank R Edwards** (21). Son of Ada & Edward Edwards. Sergeant Pilot; 9 Squadron, RAFVR. Flew on the day Paris surrendered from RAF Honington, Suffolk, in Vickers Wellington Mk IA to bomb Pont de l'Arche, near Rouen, France, to hamper German advance across River Seine. Killed with five others in crash (cause unknown) 25 miles short of target. Buried: Drosay, France.

Background photo: Dinah Haynes

5 – 15th October 1940 – **Eric E Williams** (28). Son of Amelia & William Williams, headmaster of Taplow Grammar School. Widow Joan of Sleaford, Lincs. Flight Sergeant; 46 Squadron, 11 Fighter Command, RAF. One of 'The Few' during Battle of Britain. Shot down by a Messerschmitt 109 when returning to RAF Stapleford, Essex. Remained officially 'Missing in Action' (and therefore omitted from fatality records) until 1987 confirmation that his Hurricane crashed into a wharf at Gravesend, Kent. Revised declaration revealed in 2014 by boyhood friend Arthur Grout of Bayley Crescent.



Ian Dunster

6 – 2nd May 1941 – **John B Seden** (23). Son of Ada & Arthur Seden of Lonicera, Bath Road. Sergeant; 77 Squadron, RAFVR. Killed in flight from RAF Topcliffe, Yorkshire, in Armstrong Whitworth Whitley Mk V to bomb either Hamburg or Bremen, Germany.

7 – 7th July 1941 – **Stanley W Bond** (24). Son of Charlotte & Roland Bond. Widow Brenda (née Allen). Possibly brother-in-law of Samuel Allen (see 2). Lance Corporal; 138 Mechanical Equipment Company, Royal Engineers. Buried: Damascus, Syria.

8 – 21st August 1941 – **William R Bloyce** (20). Son of Lilian (née Joel) & Joseph A Bloyce of Chalk Pit Lodge, Mill Lane. Pilot Officer; 130 Squadron, RAFVR. Based at RAF Portreath, Cornwall, but flew from Kent in Supermarine Spitfire Mk IIA P8370 PJ to crash – probably shot down – into the North Sea 15 miles west of Ijmuiden, Netherlands.

9 – 8th November 1941 – **Peter A Ingram** (19). Son of Linda & John Ingram, adopted by Aunt Irene & John Inman of Elm House, Dorney Reach (then in Taplow). Sergeant Pilot; 106 Squadron, RAFVR. Killed when his Handley Page Hampden was one of 20 aircraft lost in bombing raid on Berlin from RAF Coningsby, Lincolnshire.

10 – 4th May 1942 – **Gilbert M Edwards** (30). Son of GH Edwards of The Knowle, Ray Park Avenue, Maidenhead (formerly of Taplow). Sergeant (Air Gunner); 78 Squadron, RAFVR. One of seven crew killed when Handley Page Halifax Mk II flying from RAF Croft, Yorkshire, to bomb Bremen or Hamburg was shot down in North Sea 15 miles north of Juist, Germany.

11 – 7th December 1942 – **John H Tripp** (38). Widow Elsie of Lylmere (probably Littlemere?), River Road, Taplow. Chief Steward; *SS Ceramic*, a Merchant Navy

Handley Page Halifax

troop ship sailing from Liverpool to Australia sunk in mid-Atlantic by torpedoes fired from U-515 which rescued only one of 656 passengers and crew, many of whom transferred to lifeboats only to drown in a Force 10 storm.

12 – 5th March 1943 – **Donald Hilton**. Bombardier. Noted only in newspaper cuttings without regimental connection. Not proposed for addition to Taplow Memorial due to lack of corroboration by more reliable sources such as military archives or the CWGC (which lists 125 Hilton fatalities).

13 – 17th August 1943 – **Roy Matthews** (22). Son of Maude & Archibald Matthews. Sergeant; 250 Squadron, RAF. Killed in action flying a Curtiss p-40D Kittyhawk III fighter-bomber from Malta on the day Operation Husky completed the liberation of Sicily.

14 – 10th February 1944 – **Stephen C Gardiner** (25). Acting Sergeant; 2/6th Battalion, Royal West Surrey (Queen's) Regiment. Killed in action attempting to cross River Garigliano and break Gustav Line during First Battle of Monte Cassino. Buried: Minturno, Italy.

15 – 15th February 1944 – **Lewis A Piercy** (43). CGWC misspells as Piercey. Son of Annie & Lewis R Piercy. Widow Kathleen. Private; General Service Corps. Formerly Merchant Navy Wireless Operator 1916/18 and Home Guard. Died of heart failure. Buried: West Wickham, Kent.

16 – 16th February 1944 – **Maurice W Norman** (33). Private; Pioneer Corps. Son of Georgina & Charles Norman. Widow Gladys. Died of wounds or injuries sustained during engineering preparations for D-Day. Buried: St Mary's Church, Hitcham.

17 – 11th May 1944 – **Mervyn LA Johnson** (26). Son of Hilda & Leslie Johnson. Widow Mary of Lansdowne House, Bath Road. Major; South Wales Borderers, attached 4th Battalion, 15th Punjab Regiment. Killed in action during Battle of Kohima which prevented Japan's invasion of India. Reburied: Kohima, India.

18 – 21st July 1944 – **Gerald ('Bunny') GC Sim** (29). Son of Flora & Alexander C Sim of Georgian House, Lower Cookham Road, Maidenhead. Brother Alexander FC Sim of Amerden Ponds. Widow Yvonne, formerly and latterly of Knotty Green. Corporal; Intelligence Corps. Killed in action during Battle for Caen. Buried: Brouay, France.

19 – 7th August 1944 – **Frank P Hammond** (19). Son of Gertrude & Alfred Hammond. Private; 11th Battalion, Durham Light Infantry. Killed in action during Operation Totalise, first in a series of offensives that finally won the Battle of Normandy. Reburied: Banneville-la-Campagne, France.

20 – 17th September 1944 – **Thomas WO Wright** (34). Son of Daisy & Thomas Wright. Widow Dorothy. Possibly brother-in-law of Eric Harding (see 22). Acting Sergeant; 2nd Battalion, The

King's Regiment (Liverpool) killed in action during advance on Rimini. Reburied: Coriano Ridge, Italy.

21 – 24th September 1944 – **Benjamin W Rolfe** (26). Son of 'Mammie' & James Rolfe. Widow Margaret. Gunner; 112th (Wessex) Field Regiment, Royal Artillery, attached to the 43rd (Wessex) Infantry Division for Operation Market Garden (remembered as 'A Bridge Too Far'). Died of wounds. Reburied: Arnhem OostabEEK, Netherlands.

22 – 6th December 1944 – **Eric W Harding** (26). Son of Florence (née Wright) & William Harding. Possibly brother-in-law of Thomas Wright (see 20) but no relation to today's Anthony Harding of Buffins. Leading Seaman; *HMS Copra*, RN. *Copra* was a shore base – Combined Operations Pay Records & Accounts (by 1944, at Largs, Scotland) – but Harding was no payroll clerk or accountant. Killed in action during an amphibious landing to liberate Melos, an Aegean island 80 miles from Athens (origin of Venus di Milo statue). Posthumously awarded Distinguished Service Medal.

23 – 4th March 1945 – **William G Poole** (21). Son of Margaret & Arthur Poole. Private; 1st Battalion, Oxfordshire & Buckinghamshire Light Infantry. Killed in action during Operation Veritable which secured west bank of the Rhine. Buried: Reichswald Forest, Germany.

24 – 15th April 1945 – **Elvir E Richardson** (25). Son of Winifred & Edward Richardson of 3 The Parade, Bridge Road, Maidenhead. Widow Iris. Lieutenant; 600th Regiment, Royal Artillery (5th Battalion, Duke of Wellington's). Posthumously Mentioned in Despatches after being killed in action during an infantry attack on a Pas-de-Calais mill occupied by 40 enemy troops. Buried: Étaples, France.

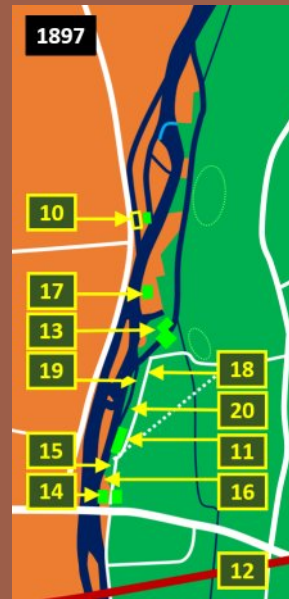
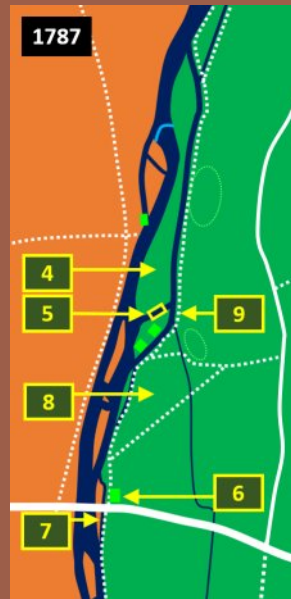
25 – 30th June 1945 – **Arthur M Akehurst** (25). Son of Alice & Arthur G Akehurst. Lieutenant; *HMS Royal Albert*, RN. Like *Copra*, *Royal Albert* – RN Accounting Base NP 1749 in London – wasn't what it seemed. And like Harding (see 22), Akehurst had a secret. Drowned while setting underwater microphones to detect Soviet submarines in the Øresund (channel between Sweden and Denmark) during 30 Assault Unit's covert action to discourage the USSR from invading Denmark. Posthumously Mentioned in Despatches. Reburied: Kiel, Germany.



IWM (Charles Hewitt, 5AFPU)

Background photo: Evelyn Barnard

# Rolling Along



Old Father Thames laps Taplow's western edge for almost four miles. Cliveden Reach remains the glorious wooded stream it has been for centuries. Bray Reach is much as it was a century ago. But the middle mile-and-a-bit has seen incessant change for hundreds of years. This page outlines the chronology aided by four snapshots and, on Pages 8 & 9, having survived at the sharp end, former Society Chairman Heather Fenn reflects on the saga since the 1960s.

1 – 1194 – Two corn mills noted, another in 1304. One converted to handmade paper 1736/80, then cotton, then paper again 1810/40. See 13.

2 – c1346/1828 – Ray Mill.

3 – 1515/40 – Lime burnt in ancient (Roman?) chalk pits made mortar for Hampton Court Palace.

4 – c1668 – Sir Charles Doe, Lord of Hitcham and Sheriff of London, used debris from Great Fire of London to improve mill stream by linking islands to form The Warborough & Glen Island.

5 – c1726 – Islands of 1660s united as Glen Island. Original Boulter's Lock, until 1829.

6 – c1736/1970 – The Orkney Arms. Part of Skindles from 1904. See 14.

7 – 1770s – County boundary realigned so new stone Maidenhead Bridge entirely in Berkshire.

8 – 1787 – Taplow Inclosure Act confirmed ancient pasture as Laychequers.

9 – 1829 – Closure of east bank towpath.

10 – 1829 – Ray Mill Pound. Renamed Boulter's Lock 1842. Rebuilt 1912.

11 – 1838/1954 – Gasworks. See 18 & 21. Thames Cottages to the north 1880/1962.

12 – 1839 – Great Western Railway across the Thames.

13 – 1840 – Charles Venables & Co converted two mills to mechanised papermaking then last corn mill 1881; see 1. Pulped wastepaper and rags to make brown paper. Folded 1930. New Taplow Paper Mills 1933/2006 made corrugated packaging. Diversified into recycling under Reed & Smith 1957, St Regis 1977, Champion 1984, St Regis UK 1985 and DS Smith 1986.

14 – 1865 – Skindles. Originally Orkney Arms annex until 1904. Closed 1995. Demolished 2016.

15 – 1865 – The Causeway (Taplow's ancient landing stage) replaced by Causeway Cottages (later renamed Riverside Cottages), Mallard's Reach and Island View. Tower House (1925) and Sea Cadets (1942). See 22.

16 – 1865 – Brigade of Guards Boat Club (BGBC). Rebuilt 1883. Incorporated into Skindles 1904.

17 – 1869 – Glen Island House built for Charge of the Light Brigade hero Sir Roger Palmer. Extended 1884. County boundary realigned 1886. Papermill headquarters 1933/2006. Renovated as four apartments 2018/20.

18 – 1893 – Mill Lane realigned to enable Gasworks expansion. See 11.

19 – 1896 – Millstream. Renamed Dunlo Lodge 1913, Dunloe Lodge c1935. Destroyed by fire 2007. Gatehouse and stables sold 1930s as Driftwood Cottage, later home to John Fenn.

20 – c1898 – BGBC Boathouse, now The Old Boathouse. Converted c1948 by Fenn & Wood for boatbuilding. New Boathouse added 1960. Briefly retail units, both renovated as offices 1980s. See Page 13.

21 – 1959/2016 – Gasholder. See 11 & 18.

22 – 1987 – The Wharf replaced Riverside Cottages. See 15. Some since borrow the name Page's Wharf from Cliveden's riverbank tradesmen's entrance (opposite Cookham Lock).

23 – 1993 – County boundary realigned to centre of east channel of Thames.

24 – 1998/2004 – Maidenhead Rowing Club and Taplow Quay replaced Bond's Boatyard 1857/1955 and Springfield Boatyard 1956/1980s.

25 – 2002 – Jubilee River.

26 – 2018 – Taplow Bridge.

# Once an Ugly Duckling

Watching cygnets grow into swans is one of the great joys of living on Mill Lane. Some years the display is particularly enchanting, as a proud mother grandly swans onto her nest at the tip of Grass Eyot.

Like proverbial the ugly duckling, the Lane has emerged transformed. Its gentrification is almost complete, the change so total that the grimy industrial past rapidly sinks from memory and this story has a happy ending.

For centuries, the towpath that became Mill Road then Mill Lane bustled with work, rest and play. Plenty was good. Livestock watering. Plodding horses pulling barges. Ferries plying. Folk fishing, building boats and messing about in them. Humble homes. Grand houses. An exclusive club. A notorious luxury hotel and nightclub. Plenty wasn't so good. Toxic lime burning. Mills grinding corn, pulping paper, spinning yarn or fulling it. Heaps of coal turned by liquefaction to dusty coke and smelly gas. A gathering of gasholders. Late-night noise and vandalism. The Lane had the lot.

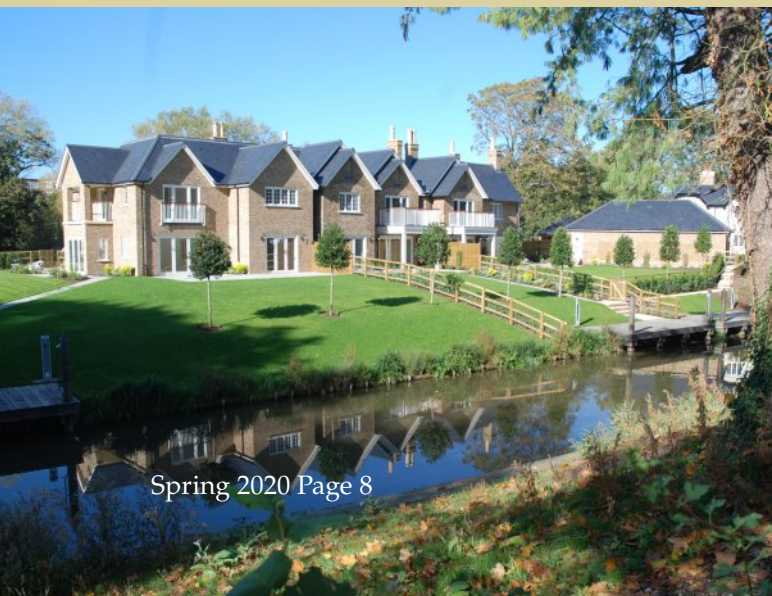
As with much in life, the problem was self-centred people. Successive owners of the papermill diversified into recycling stuff much more unpleasant than wastepaper. And successive owners of Skindles weren't content to keep it *the* place to be and be seen. Their eyes were on another prize: redevelopment. In 1966, a gamble on a casino failed but its new nightclub was soon bouncing to the beat of the Swinging Sixties. The Orkney Arms was demolished in 1970 only for dreams of a new pub, restaurant and residences to evaporate. Louis Brown took over in 1978 but it was the same story – fun, frolics and failed planning applications – and by 1985 Skindles well and truly lost its way. Developers lost the plot.



Entertainment went down market until the once iconic venue closed in 1995.

The mill's acquisitions began with Laychequers, by 1970 laden with massive bales of wastepaper, and extended to Dunloe then (what is now) Jubilee Meadow. In 1991, it toyed with a schematic residential and commercial development before resuming focus on its primary goal – to ensure nothing impaired the daily trundling of more and more enormous trucks. The darkest hours were in the mid-1990s when the mill acquired Skindles and left it to rot. Maidenhead fretted at the sight. Taplow fought to rescue the sites but malign forces seemed unstoppable, beyond the power or even the aspiration of local politicians to control. The message to residents was "It's an industrial area, stupid. Get used to it". Time was only called on the trauma by a full-scale Taplovian revolt with the pugilistic support of a top-flight planning consultant. Anyone who lived locally during those grim years will remember with a shudder the heavy traffic, vibration, vermin, filth and air pollution we had to endure.

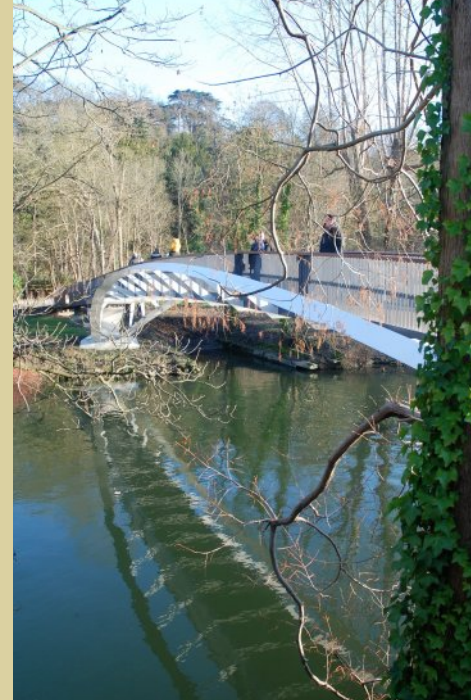
With its operations finally subject to strict control, the mill abruptly announced a 'strategic review' and, within six months, in August 2006, sold its patchwork of sites totalling 23 hectares. Sighs of relief were premature. Having paid the ridiculous sum of £30.25m, the purchaser was ready to play rough. A mysterious fire destroyed dilapidated Dunloe. Two planning applications for ultra-high-density schemes both failed, and the owner's tenuous finances fell apart in the 2008 crash leaving the blighted land owned by the Irish government's bad debt fund. Yes, really.





The Lane was in limbo. Rescue would require a developer to profit so, aiming to achieve the best balance of lowest numbers and highest quality, we lobbied for years to persuade South Bucks District Council to prepare a Supplementary Planning Document – essentially a brief for the receiver to offer the market – only to find the chosen prospective developer angling to bulldoze a lucrative, high-density scheme for 300, 400 or (on the quiet) almost 600 homes past a "provincial" planning authority. Perhaps desperate to break the stalemate, SBDC seemed remarkably willing to play along. Was it then decided covertly to serve the developer's whim by severing the historic link between Taplow's village and its waterfront by closing Mill Lane to traffic? And who delegated leadership of drafting the SPD to a consultant funded by this developer? Quiet but insistent pressure ensured his removal and, once more, a concerted grass-roots insurrection prevented low-grade, high-rise urban development on this rural riverside.

Lodge (now to be nine flats instead of the originally approved family home) – which will increase the number of dwellings to 221. While much credit should go to Berkeley, of course, it must never be forgotten how awful it could (would?) have been had Taplovians not fought so hard and so well for almost three decades.



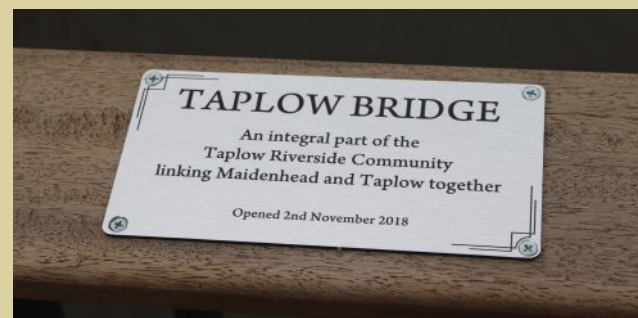
Andrew Findlay

Jacqueline Turner, Jamie Barnard & George Sandy at the naming ceremony

This battle had two supplementary aims: for Skindles to be remembered in a new riverside restaurant (hooray for the also iconic Roux) and for a footbridge across the Thames, a 'sweetener' stirred into discussions with the mill in the mid-1990s. Maidenhead Civic Society was enthusiastic. The Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead wasn't, nor potential developers. George Sandy finally changed RBWM minds in 2008 and, eventually, Taplow succeeded in ensuring that the 2013 SPD identified the footbridge as an "opportunity" not to be missed. There was dismay at the distinctly unattractive "prospective footbridge" in Berkeley's original scheme – apparently, the issue was 'buildability' – but Taplow found a way yet again. George introduced Martin Knight, a Taplovian bridge architect of international renown who already had a graceful vision for the footbridge and the know-how to make it happen. After over 20 years of dreaming and digging in of heels, it was indeed sweet when the footbridge was opened on 2nd November 2018 and – even better, as advocated by both Martin and the Society – its first anniversary was celebrated by naming it Taplow Bridge. Cream on the cake!

Heather Fenn

After that, Berkeley Homes came, quite literally, as a Christmas gift. A phone call followed by a visit on Christmas Eve 2014 confirmed that it had acquired the patchwork (for £23.5m, we later learned). An application for 257 homes was refused. Another for 211 homes was approved. The transformation since has been remarkable. Construction began in 2015 and is now complete except for three subsequent approvals – the relocated offices, a riverside pub (with two flats) and the replacement Dunloe

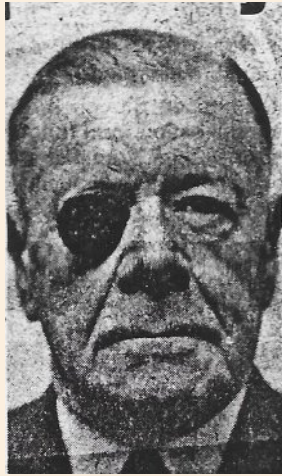


Andrew Findlay

# Come on, Eileen (Part Two)

Taplow Horse Show Club

Newsletter 112 began the story of Eileen Matthews, the heartbeat of Taplow Horse Show (THS). This final chapter begins in 1963. She was 56 and had been undisputed queen of the Show for five years when she married 63-year-old Dudley-born widower Major FR (Rex) Law, a dashing figure with a black monocle or patch covering the right eye he lost in 1940 escaping Dunkirk with the 6th South Staffs. He had lived at The Wodehouse in Burnham since before 1929 when he became a Justice of the Peace and the youngest-ever magistrate on the Burnham bench. A District and County Councillor, President of the Taplow & Hitcham Branch of the Royal British Legion and later Chairman of the Bucks Police Committee (1965/68) and of Thames Valley Police Authority (1968/74), he was awarded an MBE in 1968 and rewarded himself with a distinctive car number plate – 1 GBH – which, according to local lore, ensured that traffic police would suddenly mislay their recently-introduced breathalysers.



Rex 1970

THS had long been the biggest one-day horse show in the UK. Its increasing popularity was reflected in its number of show rings. Four were squeezed into Buffins in 1970/72 but the sale of this home of 22 years made the Show rather nomadic. With space for only three rings, Hedgerley Park Farm (1973/75) just wasn't big



Eileen 1970

Taplow Horse Show Club

enough. Eileen pulled strings and for five years THS enjoyed the luxury of five rings at Hitchambury Farm (1976/80).

After his death in 1979, Rex was commemorated with a bust (complete with monocle) given pride of place outside Aylesbury Police Station. Naturally, Eileen carried on carrying on and, of course, THS continued to thrive. Four rings at Manor Farm in Dorney (1981/83) were much too tight. Barge Farm came to the rescue (1984/97). Its five rings – usually designed by the renowned Alan Oliver – saw the number of competing horses in 51 classes peak at over 1,000 in 1988/91.

Unfortunately, a perfect storm of internal upset and external pressures raged in the winter of 1990/91. There was dissatisfaction with Eileen's domineering attitude and fears that new Health & Safety regulations could put THS's financial viability at risk by significantly increasing costs while destroying its treasured friendly informality. Worries about the personal financial liability of committee members were addressed by the incorporation of THS Club as a limited company but the subsidiary Riding Club wanted to break

Taplow Horse Show Club



Barge Farm

away so that "Mrs Law will have no power over us". With her leadership in question, Eileen resigned as Chairman only to be reinstated three months later. Her attempted reconciliation didn't succeed; the Riding Club was disbanded. Great efforts succeeded in reassuring the public, the equestrian community and, most importantly, the sponsors that both the 1991 THS (at Barge Farm) and Summer Show (as usual at Eileen's home: Marsh Mead in Marsh Lane) would go ahead as planned.

Tim London, The Observer



Marion Mould on Charles Fox 1977

Sponsorship and donations were always vital, typically making up one-third of THS income compared to a quarter from competitor entry fees and one-fifth from spectator ticket sales. Longstanding corporate sponsors included Slough Estates (for 36 years) and the Bishop Group (for 25) but, by the mid-1990s, despite contributions from individuals such as Brenda Burns, John Midlane and George Sandy, THS turnovers of more than £30,000 were not breaking even. If Eileen was worried, nobody knew but, sadly, the 1996 Show was her last. She died at 90-years-old of lung cancer five months later, just ten days after she had insisted in getting up to entertain over thirty Poppy Day collectors at Marsh Mead. It wasn't long before Club Secretary Judith Nash discovered that, as the only shareholder of THSC Ltd, Eileen had subsidised THS for years yet left no legacy to secure its future.

Taplow Horse Show Club



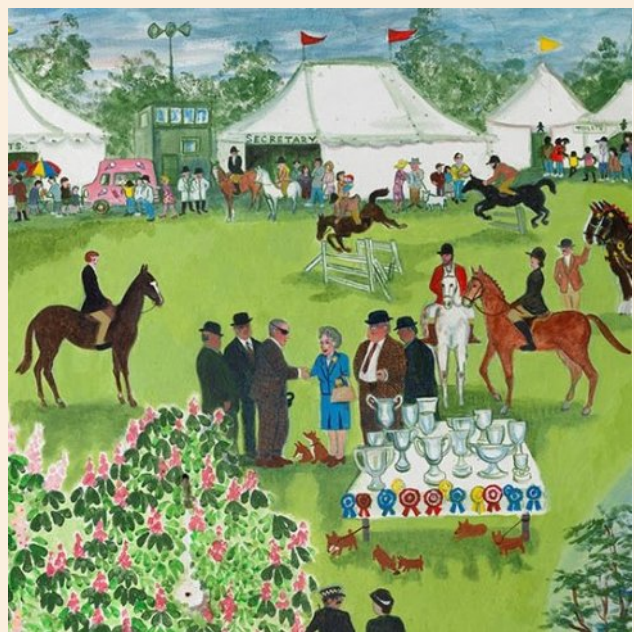
The Eileen Law Memorial Show in 1997 was successful but sad without the whirlwind with bright red hair and vivid make-up. There was talk of another Show. It didn't happen. The feeling that things seemingly ever-present – THS and the



Taplow Horse Show Club

Eileen 1996

colourful character who personified it – had been locked in the past was reinforced in 2002 when Marsh Mead was demolished and replaced by a house and garages built in contravention of planning permission. Best not to think how Eileen might have felt about her beloved horses' paddocks becoming a commercial chicken run. Best to glance up at Sheila Horton's mural of Taplow Horse Show to see the rouge-cheeked Eileen on My Fair Lady watching Rex welcome Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II to Buffins in 1969. What an image to cherish!



Sheila Horton / Todd-White

# Big Bucks



On 1st April, Buckinghamshire County Council (BCC) and four District Councils (DCs) were replaced by a single unitary Buckinghamshire Council (BC). BCC's difficulties in making sense of and in our Deep South haven't impressed. The Society remains to be convinced BC will do better. Its leadership replicates BCC, and its plan for 'localism' has a distinct whiff of rebranding.

There will be 17 Council Access Points (CAPs). As before, service delivery, local planning applications and "more complex enquiries" will be managed at five former BCC and DC headquarters. So, how will designating these locations as 'CAP Plus' achieve any improvement?

## Limbo Descending, Plans Pending

The Editorial (Page 2) hinted of hiccups in this local government evolution. BC elections scheduled for 7th May have been postponed for a year so the proof of this pudding will be a long time coming. Meanwhile, since DCs ceased to be on 31st March, all 202 former County and District Councillors will serve on the BC throughout the unprecedented hiatus (and will preside over planning decisions in their former Districts) despite not yet being elected and, in some cases, not even selected as candidates. Democracy? Wait for it! If you are at a loose end during self-isolation, check out BC's Facebook page or @BucksCouncil on Twitter. Or get a life.

What of the Chiltern & South Bucks Local Plan? Wait for that too. Government inspection hearings scheduled for March and April have been postponed indefinitely. No prospect of multiple

The few unable to access online BC services from home computers or their phones will find help to do so at the other 12 CAPs in local libraries (including Burnham), but what about face-to-face consultation with those in-the-know about how things work? Parish Clerks already provide valuable advice and guidance. How come we're left out of the loop? Pressure by Local Area Forums (LAFs) ensured these experienced individuals will have a role, and that the longstanding Beeches LAF – comprising Taplow, Dorney, Burnham, the Farnhams and Stoke Poges – will become a new Community Board (CB) with no expansion to include Wexham and the Ivers. But questions remain. Will the mooted Parish Conference be an opportunity for constructive discussion or top-down direction? How will CBs be better? Like LAFs, they are cast as informal forums at which the public, the police, primary care networks and local businesses can discuss concerns and suggestions with local BC and Parish Councillors, and seek to influence investment in local priorities including infrastructure and (for the first year only) health and wellbeing. But will having no legal, funding or decision-making authority leave CBs little more than talking shops?

objections from Town and Parish Councils or Neighbourhood Plan groups being addressed anytime soon. And it is hard to assess the impact locally of the new Housing Minister Robert Jenrick's new broom, especially as recovery from the pandemic may consume the billions he aspired to spend. But his mooted tweaks to the National Planning Policy Framework include a welcome twist: encouragement for 'brownfield first'.

The Society's concern about the draft Local Plan focuses on Green Belt protection, infilling and the number of new homes required in Taplow by 2036. Three areas are proposed for removal from the Green Belt – the Guides' and Scouts' plot on Institute Road and two triangles, one between Bath Road, Station Road and the railway, the other bounded by the Thames, the Jubilee and the railway. The first is no big issue.

Concern about the second relates to its use, not zoning. But the third is very worrying. Martin Maund survived diving deep into a maelstrom of evolving legislative expectations to prepare evidence to protect this triangle. Roger Worthington constructed the cases that the total number of new dwellings should be a definitive not indicative target of 12 or 15 (depending on how sums are juggled, but not including homes recently built or approved) and that any infilling should be in strict accordance with the (yet to be prepared) Neighbourhood Plan. Now without windmills to charge, these valiant knights errant can only rest assured that, for the present, our Green Belt remains intact and, for reasons of flood risk not Green Belt protection, an application to convert The Hermitage to ten flats has been refused.

With the Neighbourhood Plan in mind, Nigel Smales, Martin Knight and Ever-Ready Roger explored ideas including a Design Plan and a

Charter. Martin cautioned wisely that a Design Plan only has value if it focuses on a small, specific area. Which is just how Datchet has used the concept. Maybe its experience could be relevant to the Village and to Ellingtonia? Maidenhead is developing a 'placemaking vision' for its future. Might have been better done before its massive and already well-advanced development began. And if it was clear if and how this initiative will impact the Maidenhead Local Plan because, if it doesn't, what's the point? But it is an interesting idea to articulate the vision in the form of a Charter to which all stakeholders 'sign up' to show commitment. BC is thinking similarly about a Town and Parish Charter. Maybe these ideas are just 'flavour of the month' – here today, all style, no substance, gone tomorrow. Maybe they'd have value. Taplow Neighbourhood Plan Working Group will keep both in mind.

## Quite Contrary

Various sites are in degrees of non-pandemic limbo because ambitions are contrary to planning regulations...

On Marsh Lane, the demolition of Kingsdown and its replacement by a new house has been refused and Challen's Chicks reacted to the rejection of its application for a permanent building for being contrary to Green Belt provisions by applying to erect a new permanent four-bedroom dwelling "for a farm worker". The company has various temporary buildings which do not require planning consent and another for which it has a three-year temporary consent. The Society objected to the latest proposal not only on Green Belt 'encroachment' grounds but also because it would be inappropriate for a permanent building to support temporary activities.

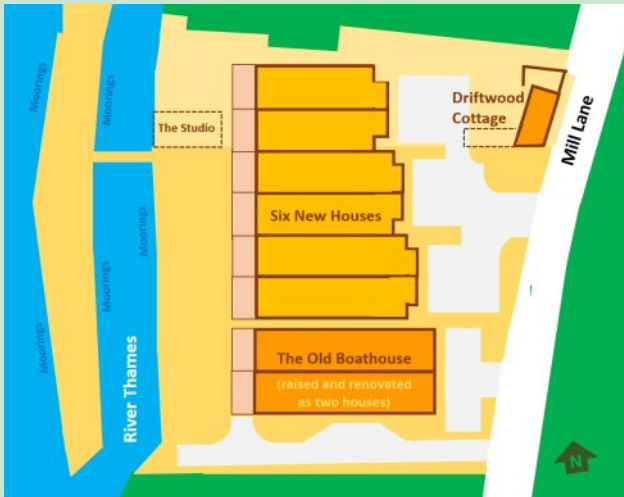
South Bucks District Council has been galvanised to enforce its own planning requirements at Little Karoo Farm (historically Great Coldgrove), where a barn and shelters have been built without permission, and at Cliveden Stud, where covenants restrict occupation of various dwellings to those engaged in equestrian or agricultural activities. Presumably to free the site for commercial development, the owner has sought unsuccessfully to have these restrictions removed because current tenants do not comply. The latest attempt related to the main house, which has been unlawfully occupied for four years. The relevant period being

ten years, this was just the evidence SBDC needed to serve an eviction order. Talk about an own goal!

A covey of contradictions could combine to blight the residual site in Mill Lane. The latest proposal is for nine dwellings, six new plus Driftwood Cottage and two in the Old Boathouse. The renovation of these externally charming 19th Century buildings would be welcome, but can their utilitarian nature – one a nine-inch brick shell, the other a timber shed – be upgraded to modern residential standards?

Like the river, Environment Agency (EA) flood risk assessments go up and down. A reduction in 2008 benefitted all Taplow Riverside applications submitted between May 2015 and December 2018, including those for the adjacent pub and (revised) enlarged Dunloe Lodge. A rise of 470mm in January 2019 came just in time to impact proposals for this site. The Thames was flowing fast on 21st March but





still some two metres below the current floor level of the Old Boathouse beneath which is a flood well of around 750mm where no water spilled during any

flood for years, not even the recent highest in early 2014. Yet the EA requires its 122-year-old timber frame to be hydraulically lifted by 760mm, raising the floor level well above Dunloe's which, as approved, will be just 20mm above the revised 'worst case' assessment. Will it survive intact? Even if it does, despite its yet-to-be-built neighbours being higher, the SBDC Conservation Officer wants its roof lowered. A classic Catch 22!

The Society awaits substance to the promise that the moorings will be enhanced to ensure their viable operation, but the strangest contradiction emerges from Natural England which anticipates a detrimental effect on the sanctity of Burnham Beeches, over two-and-a-half miles away. This hard-to-comprehend objection is invalid for being based on the not-yet-adopted Local Plan. You couldn't make it up!



Andrew Findlay

## Going Nowhere

Aren't our skies quiet? It's tough for airlines, with so many staying put. Tougher still as a different limbo frustrates Heathrow's expansion. The Court of Appeal ruled that the Climate Change Act (2008) rendered unlawful the Government's 2016 decision that the airport could add a third runway and all the rest. While this overturning could be overturned by Heathrow's appeal to the Supreme Court, its plans are thought to be either in years of delay or dead as the flightless dodo. Will silence remain golden?

In contrast, 'smartening' of the M4 continues, concerns identified by the Government's safety audit apparently overcome by increasing the frequency of refuge areas (or lay-bys, to those of a 'certain age'). This means yet more disruption to travel during the remainder of 2020 because the M4 will closed on 18 weekends between Junctions 5 and 11 (12 of these between Junctions 6 and 8/9).

See <https://m4j3to12smartmotorway.commonplace.is/> or [www.highwaysengland.co.uk/m4j3to12](http://www.highwaysengland.co.uk/m4j3to12).

Meanwhile, there is evidence that the Highways Agency was mistaken or misleading in claiming that our stretch of the A4 is never a relief road for the M4.



Hitcham and Taplow Society

# Fond Memories

## Daphne Walker 1930 - 2019

Malcolm Walker



Daphne was an Essex Girl who never returned to school after suffering teenage tuberculosis. When she met Derek, she was just seventeen (you know what I mean). Their courtship continued for four years as the RAF posted him to the Middle East and she

ventured to Sweden. Was it there she became The Girl in the Turquoise Trews? They married in 1951 and lived in Dorset and Bray before settling in 1968 at Fieldon House on Berry Hill with their children Malcolm and Alison. Derek's aeronautical expertise made him the Society's valued expert on all things Heathrow. Daphne joined the Women's Royal Voluntary Society and was soon in charge of 'Meals on Wheels' for five Royal Borough districts. After he died in 2008, she returned to Bray but retained her membership of the Society. It was a joy to deliver her Newsletter and swap gossip over tea and cake.

## Maud Johnson 1933 - 2019



Ken Johnson

Maud married fellow Lancastrian Ken in 1955. His career as a Shell executive took them and their children Karen and Suzanne via the Netherlands and Brazil to Lancashire and London. They acquired the newly built Elibank Court in 1981 and settled there once Ken's globe-trotting permitted. Maud was soon a popular

member of the community, always so kind, hospitable and incredibly chatty, so proud when Suzanne became a teacher at St Nicolas' School, later its deputy head and eventually headteacher at Holyport. Let's remember Maud not for her distress when her garden wall fell into the road soon after Ken passed away in 2016 but for her sparkle and the sunshine of her mile-wide smile.

## Adam Smith 1961 - 2019

Group M



Adam was a valued contributor to the Society's Newsletters, always ready to celebrate local heritage in articles as brilliantly crafted as they were well-researched. How did he find the time? Friends and colleagues knew him as incredibly

intelligent, intellectual, erudite, sardonic, witty, articulate, determined and conscientious. An original thinker. Eclectic, precise, analytical, brutally incisive, illuminating and oh-so-funny. A tall, bendy collector of ephemera and 'things people say' who enjoyed a pint and was mad about fast cars, motorbikes, pantomime, Beatlemania and the Swinging Sixties. He became a Maidonian (and a Royal Borough Councillor) but retained the deep affection for Taplow that began during his childhood in Stockwells and at St Nicolas' School, which he later served

as a governor (and wrote its history). He studied law at Oxford and was a successful steel trader before becoming futures director at the world's largest advertising media company, "a guru of media forecasting" so admired that the annual Grand Prix for original thinking in marketing services is now The Adam Smith Award. And yet the most remarkable aspects of this polymath were his affability, enduring friendships and love of and devotion to his wife Maria, their children Sam and Poppy, his mum Barbara and sister Diana.

# Lincoln's End

Remembering Lincoln Lee

Firstly, more tales of Taplow's cameo roles in our national history...

Charles Robinson



Francis 1900

Grenfell Tower's nominal link to Taplow can be traced back to copper merchant Pascoe Grenfell the Younger who lived at Taplow House from 1794 until 1838. His great-grandson by his first wife Charlotte – William Grenfell, 1st Baron Desborough (1855/1945) – inherited Taplow Court in 1867. His grandson by his second wife Georgiana – William's half-uncle

Francis Grenfell, 1st Baron Grenfell (1841/1925) – had a distinguished military career in South Africa, Egypt, Sudan, Russia, Malta and Ireland before being honoured in 1912 when St Clement's Road, North Kensington, was renamed Grenfell Road. The tragic tower took this name in 1974.

Taplow Moments joy Morrissey.uk



Nancy 1919



Joy 2019

In 1919, Nancy Astor of Cliveden was the first American-born woman to be elected to the House of Commons. In 2019, our new Member of Parliament Joy Morrissey became the second. She made her maiden speech on 24th February, 100 years to the day after Nancy made hers.

Artist Charles Haigh-Wood owned The Porch in Pikle Lane (now the High Street) from before 1888 until at least 1915, possibly 1927, and united it before 1911 with two neighbouring cottages to create The Porches. His daughter Vivienne lived there from soon after her birth in 1888 until the family moved to Hampstead in 1891. Local lore says it was briefly her 1920s refuge from a troubled marriage to poet and playwright TS Eliot, author of verses in 1939 which became the lyrics for the 1981 musical *Cats*. This photograph from the biography *Painted Shadow: A Life of Vivienne Eliot* by Carole Seymour-Jones (Constable & Robinson, 2001) shows baby Vivienne in the arms of her mother Rose but mistakenly identifies The Porches as her father's birthplace.



Fleet Street, the birthplace of Charles Haigh-Wood in Bury, Lancashire. Vivienne was born in nearby Knowsley Street.

Charles Haigh-Wood

Finally, thanks to Morag Scarlett, Terry Stevens and especially David Wigmore for answering the question posed in Newsletter 112. The fatal air crash on 20th April 1945 was in the north-east corner of the Old Paludians sportsground, home of Taplow United. The chimney peeking over the trees was probably at Berry Hill Farm.

Editor: Nigel Smales

The Cottage, Rectory Road, Taplow. Tel 01628 661636

E-mail: editor@taplowsociety.org.uk

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