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## **From the Chairman**

Welcome to our autumn 2019 newsletter. This is the fourth newsletter that we have produced in our new format, and I hope you enjoy its content. We have continued to receive good feedback about the content of our newsletters, but please do keep your comments coming.

We know that some of you would prefer a hard copy of the newsletter but the cost and effort involved would be prohibitive. However, if you prefer to read a hard copy, please do follow this link and download a copy for printing.

As in the past, the newsletter is organised around the key areas of focus for the Society: planning, heritage, environment and events. We also share insights into some of the other societies that make our town such a rich environment in which to live, and in this edition we feature the Haslemere Art Society.

In our planning section, and in his last report before stepping down as Chairman of the Planning Committee and Deputy Chairman of The Society, John Greer outlines some of the major planning applications on which the Society has commented and is continuing to comment.

He particularly draws attention to proposals for Red Court, which, if pursued, will be the most significant planning development in Haslemere for many years. The Society is reserving its position with regard to this proposal, until a formal application is submitted.

The Society's Environment group, led by Howard Brown, reports on how members can help protect local trees by seeking information from our website on Tree Preservation Orders and the comments of a local expert 's on a project aimed at protecting and enhancing bio-diversity in our countryside.

Turning to heritage, we have unveiled two blue plaques since our last newsletter. In my own article, I give an overview of the career of Ron Reynolds, professional footballer and goalkeeper whose residence in Haslemere led to Tottenham Hotspur playing a charity match against Shottersmill in 1953. We would love to hear from anyone who remembers this game.

Our second new blue plaque commemorates the 160th anniversary of the arrival of the railway in Haslemere, which did so much to transform our town. This plaque was erected in a joint initiative with the Community Rail Partnership, and Nikki Barton provides an update on the exciting plans for the partnership.

My wife Shirley continues her series on the Lost Sons of Haslemere, those who fell in the First World War, telling the story of Lieutenant James Stables, who fell in Mesopotamia.

Finally, Editor Gareth David explores the plans for our new look post office and bar, and our regular cartoonist Simon Mackie reflects on drinking postmen. This article sits very comfortably alongside the theme of our forthcoming AGM, in which a panel will discuss the future of our high streets, and in particular Haslemere and Wey Hill.

Many thanks to Di Keeley for compiling a list of forthcoming events in the town which we think may be of interest to members. This list is inevitably not exhaustive and if there are future events which you think may be of interest and which we may overlook please do let us know.

Enjoy the newsletter!  
**Chris Harrison**

## **Planning Report**

Haslemere Society publishes on its web site all its correspondence with Waverley Borough Council (WBC) on planning applications, which you are recommended to read. This report is a summary of planning matters over the past year. Whilst there have been some significant applications the number of applications is currently low possibly as a result of Brexit uncertainty.

There has been little, if any, progress by WBC in developing the draft Local Plan Part 2 because the decision of the Court of Appeal is still awaited on the issue of part of Woking's new housing allocation being transferred to adjacent local authorities, including Waverley. This is considered as a national test case and is thus taking a considerable time to determine. Consequently the new housing allocation for Waverley (including Haslemere) cannot yet be confirmed.

Your Society submitted objections to WBC's application to remove the Common Land status of the Wey Hill Car Park in order to facilitate its development of a Pay and Display car park. The Society and others wanted an attractive multi use development of the site to benefit local people instead of providing commuter parking and a cash cow for WBC.

The Government appointed Inspector granted the removal of the Common Land registration (which it is realised would be necessary for any development of the site). The relatively recent change in planning law referred to as Permitted Development has enabled two shops in Wey Hill to be changed into residential use. Unfortunately WBC Planners did not adequately assess the application with the powers allocated to Local Authorities by the law resulting in a sub-standard and unattractive conversion in this prominent retail location.

We and others were alerted to this application only after conversion work was underway. It was too late for the loss of these retail establishments to be challenged and The Society was only able to achieve a minor improvement to the appearance of the conversion.

**The Georgian Hotel** – A very significant planning application by new owners of the hotel to reduce its size and carry out residential development on this site in the town centre conservation area was made in December 2018. Considering the application to be detrimental to this important town asset, the Society assessed the information provided over several months and made strong objections to the application, which most members will be aware was refused by the WBC Planning Committee by an 8:1 majority.

**Longdene House** – The Society objected to an application to demolish this period property which was refused by WBC. We supported a further application to convert the property into flats as this would refurbish and keep this heritage building in use. Another application to construct up to 45 residences in the grounds of Longdene House has been refused and is the subject of a planning appeal yet to be determined which is delaying a decision on the main house conversion.

**48 Petworth Road** – An application to build two large detached houses was refused by WBC but permission granted following a Planning Appeal.

**The Heights School** – Given considerable adverse reaction an application to build 27 housing units on the site was withdrawn. Subsequently two separate planning applications to build a total of 25 residential units have been submitted.

The Society is supportive of the principle of residential development of the site but strongly objects to the excessive proposals which are totally out of character with this area within the Half Moon Estate and adjacent the Conservation Area. The old school building (once a character house of the area) is a heritage asset and The Society objected to the proposal to demolish it.

**Loneside House, Petworth Road** – The Society is supportive in principle to proposals to extend/improve parking facilities to avoid obtrusive car parking on the footpath but objected to a poorly conceived scheme utilising old railway sleepers to try to form an embankment retaining structure.

**28 Petworth Road** – We have objected to a planning application to construct two semi-detached houses at the rear of this property adjacent Collards Lane. We considered it to be an overdevelopment within the conservation area and the design and materials totally out of character with the area and objected to the application which also proposed the demolition of a heritage stone wall fronting on to Collards Lane.

**Red Court, Scotlands Lane** – The new owners of the Red Court estate conducted a public consultation in June regarding their proposals to build up to 180 residential units and other facilities within the estate. A planning application will have profound implications for Haslemere, raising many wide ranging questions. The estate is protected land – AONB and AGLV - and special circumstances need to be proved to build on such land.

It will contribute significantly to Haslemere's current housing target of 940 new houses but would require considerable improvements to and expansion of local facilities and infrastructure. The Society considers that the construction of 940 houses within the town boundaries would have an unacceptably detrimental effect on the character and amenity of Haslemere and thus development outside the current boundaries needs to be considered – but where?

Given such wide ranging planning issues the Society met the Acting Head of Planning at WBC to discuss these in preparation for us to examine the expected planning application in due course. Unfortunately there is now a new temporary Head of Planning pending the appointment of a permanent WBC Chief Planning Officer.

The Haslemere Society Planning Group appreciates that the town has to develop and we have to embrace change. As a local Civic Society and in common with civic societies throughout the country our role is to try to ensure that changes and developments enhance and are not detrimental to the character and amenities of the town.

A large proportion of planning applications are generated by the objective of making and maximising profit and are thus not always well designed with these wider objectives in mind. Also the Borough Council have other pressures and objectives to consider (e.g. to meet Government determined housing and other targets) – hence the role of a civic society.

In our comments on planning applications we always try to be constructive by giving reasons for objections and where appropriate suggestions for improvements to meet these objectives. We also have an important role in commenting on the draft Local Plan which sets

guide lines for future development and the Society members need also to be active in this exercise.

**John Greer**

## **Environment Group update**

This year has seen several new mini-ventures to preserve the environment and rural surroundings of Haslemere. One significant initiative in September was launch of the long-awaited Glover Report, which aims to drive the protection of our "Natural Landscape" the proposed new name for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

Many people will have seen the BBC comment that 'all children should spend one night under the stars'. Providing the Dark Sky is maintained in Haslemere this would be more than a simple night out, and would show the fantastic astrological view, as there are not many places where the *Orion Nebula* can easily be viewed without light pollution.

Alongside this initiative is the requirement to upgrade the historical local allocation of Areas of Great Land Value (AGLV) to full AONB status. Natural England, the Government's advisory body for the natural environment, states that this will happen in the Surrey Hills, but will be many years later than expected.

In line with these moves, Haslemere Society has added a new web-page with information on Tree Preservation Orders in relation to planning. If this is used correctly it will prevent the needless felling of the valuable trees in the area. Members should refer to the Haslemere Society website and follow the associated Twitter. #Haslemeresoc

Giving Society Trustees an expert view of our valuable local natural environment, Dr Philippa Guest of the Campaign for the Rural Environment (CPRE) and Haslemere Vision, made the following comments to us:

### ***Protecting and enhancing Haslemere's bio-diversity assets***

*Protecting and enhancing biodiversity is recognised as one of the greatest challenges of the 21st century, with over 40% of Priority Habitats and 30% of Priority Species reported to be declining nationally.*

*Haslemere's significant biodiversity assets include the network of heathland sites that comprise the internationally designated Wealden Heaths Phase II Special Protection Area (SPA), two nationally designated Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and a further 20 locally designated Sites of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCIs).*

*These designated sites are connected by an 'ecological network' of open spaces, ancient woodlands, trees, woodlands, water bodies, hedgerows, roadside verges, footpaths and bridleways that act as 'wildlife corridors' and 'stepping stones' and provide a vital conduit for wildlife dispersal and colonisation of new sites.*

*A local project led by Haslemere Vision aims to identify and map the most important wildlife corridors and stepping stones and to protect their function and purpose through appropriate policy in the emerging Neighbourhood Plan.*

*Policy would essentially seek to (1) prevent development that would cause their reduction or outright severance, and, (2) support every opportunity to widen, strengthen or otherwise consolidate these corridors via appropriate management.*

*The project seeks to partner with other local organisations interested in protecting/enhancing Haslemere's unique bio-diversity assets. These currently include the Haslemere Society, the National Trust, Surrey Wildlife Trust, the CPRE, the Haslemere Natural History Society, RSPB and the Woodlands Trust.*

**Howard Brown**

## **Lost sons of Haslemere: stories from Haslemere War Memorial**

### **Lieutenant James Howard Stables (27 Jun 1895 – 17 Feb 1917)**

Howard, as he was known, was born in Derby on 27<sup>th</sup> June 1895. He was the first child of Reverend Walter Howard Stables, curate of St. John's Church, and Emily Morse, daughter of the Canon Francis Morse, vicar of St Mary's, Nottingham. His grandfather, James Stables, was a very wealthy Leeds tea merchant, who left the modern equivalent of over £37 million in his will, resulting in Howard's father having a comfortable private income.

When Howard was a year old his father became vicar of St Chad's in Headingley near Leeds, where he was popular with the parishioners, taking a great interest in the public life of Leeds. He was a talented musician, giving organ recitals as well as composing Church music. The family moved into the large Vicarage, where three more children were born: Audrey, Francis and Paul. Howard inherited his father's musical ability, as well as a love of poetry and literature.

In 1906 tragedy struck the family. His father died suddenly, at the age of 44, from acute pneumonia, leaving his widow with three children aged eleven, eight, seven and a baby of four months. Fortunately, money was not going to be a worry for them, as Emily had been left the modern equivalent of about £10 million in trust. She moved to Haslemere in Surrey, to a substantial house in Weydown Road, then called "Inverugie". Confusingly the house is now "Cleeves", and the house next door, once "Inverugie Cottage", is now "Inverugie".

Howard's aunt Winifred Morse, who had worked rescuing homeless and vulnerable girls from the risk of prostitution in the East End of London, came to live in Inverugie Cottage and it is possible that it was built for her.

Howard was sent to board at St David's School in Reigate, before entering Winchester College in 1908. It a sobering thought that of the 2,488 members of the Winchester College community who served in World War I, mostly as junior officers in the army, 514 died. In 1913 he went up to Oxford, to Christ Church College, but his time there was cut short by the outbreak of the war. Howard abandoned his studies like so many patriotic, idealistic students, and enthusiastically joined the 1/6<sup>th</sup> Hampshire Regiment as a Private on 29<sup>th</sup> September 1914.

He may have been partly influenced by his cousin, Harold Rolleston Stables who had been commissioned into the Royal Fusiliers in August, having already had experience with the Inns of Court Officer Training Corps. Harold was killed at Ypres on November 15<sup>th</sup>, only three weeks after arriving in France. Whatever his reasons, and in his photograph he certainly doesn't look like a warrior, Howard was clearly in a hurry to get involved in the

war, and wasn't going to hang about trying to get a commission. On closer inspection, the studious young man behind the pince-nez glasses has rather a steely gaze.

The 6<sup>th</sup> Hampshire Regiment had been a Territorial battalion before the war, so was manned mostly by part-time soldiers and new recruits. Probably much to Howard's disappointment, but to his mother's relief, they were not sent to France as part of the British Expeditionary Force to face the German guns, but were instead deployed to India to release a regular battalion for active service. Private Stables and his comrades sailed on 9<sup>th</sup> October from Southampton and arrived in Karachi on 11<sup>th</sup> November 1914.

Once in India they would have mainly been occupied with garrison duties, occasionally acting as a police force, but it is not known exactly where he was deployed as there are no war diaries available for this period. If he had remained with the 1/6<sup>th</sup> Hampshire Howard would have stayed safely in India throughout the war, but instead he was commissioned 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant in the Indian Army Reserve of Officers on 20<sup>th</sup> July 1915, and attached to the 1/5<sup>th</sup> Gurkha Rifles on 1<sup>st</sup> August.

He spent a year on the NW frontier at Abbottabad, where there was an important, military cantonment and medical centre. Howard filled much of his spare time writing poetry, had some of his work appear in the *New Statesman*, and in June 1916 published a small volume of poems "The Sorrow that Whistled". His poem "High Barbary" contains allusions to past conflicts and the fleeting impermanence of this life:

*The distant mountains' jagged, cruel line  
Cuts the imagination as a blade  
Of dove-grey Damascene. In many a raid  
Here Barbary pirates drave the ships of wine  
Back to Sicilian harbours, harried kine,  
Pillaged Calabrian villages and made  
The land a desolation...  
Saracens, Moors, Phoenicians – all the East,  
Franks, Huns, Walloons, the pilgrims of the Pope,  
All, all are gone. The clouds are trailing hence:  
So goes to Benediction some proud priest  
Sweeping the ground with embroidered golden cope.  
- Go, gather up the fumes of frankincense.*

In August 1916 he was attached to the 2/4<sup>th</sup> Gurkha Rifles, some sources stating that he was promoted to Lieutenant, but all references to him in the war diaries refer to him as 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant. Howard was now to be thrown into the maelstrom of the war against the Ottoman Turks in Mesopotamia. In January 1916 two Indian Divisions, known as the Tigris Corps, had been sent to relieve General Townshend's besieged forces at Kut. They were unsuccessful, the Kut garrison surrendered on 29<sup>th</sup> April, and the Tigris Corps retreated to Basra. .

In July 1916 the British Government took control of the campaign away from the Indian General Staff, putting Lt. General Sir Frederick Maude in charge. He energetically started to rebuild the British forces, hence the arrival of Howard on 23<sup>rd</sup> September to supplement the officers of the 2/4<sup>th</sup> Gurkha Rifles at Magasis Canal. The battalion had lost 170 men to scurvy in August, and another 125 in September, which says something about the appalling living conditions. The area was being bombed every day by Turkish aircraft.

He didn't stay with the 2/4<sup>th</sup> Gurkhas for long, and by the beginning of December 1916 was attached to the 1/8<sup>th</sup> Gurkha Rifles in the trenches with the Meerut Division at Sanna-I-Yat, a settlement on the Tigris between Shaik Saad and Kut.

General Maude had begun a second advance up both sides of the river with an Anglo-Indian force of 150,000 men, the objective being to regain Kut and eventually enter Baghdad. The campaign in Mesopotamia is popularly imagined as a hell of blinding sun, heatstroke and flies, but the winter at Sanna-I-Yat that year was quite the reverse, with strong freezing winds, heavy rain, hail and fog.

The River Tigris flooded, roads became clogged with mud, and conditions were similar to winter on the Western Front. Progress was slow but by early February 1917 the British and Indian Armies were closing in on Kut. The river bank to the south of Kut was secured, but the advance was delayed at Sanna-I-Yat on the north bank.

Maude decided to cross the Tigris upstream of Kut to cut off Turkish communications with Baghdad. Meanwhile, a diversionary attack on the Turkish lines at Sanna-I-Yat was planned for 17<sup>th</sup> February, and Howard's fate was sealed.

The assault was to be carried out by two battalions, the 20<sup>th</sup> Punjabs on the right, and the 1/8<sup>th</sup> Gurkhas on the left. The writer of the 1/8<sup>th</sup> Gurkhas' war diary on the day before the attack, Captain Nelson, was gloomy about the prospects of success. The men had practiced on model trenches, but the plan of battle was altered slightly at the last minute by the Brigade commander, giving little time to assimilate the new orders. Heavy overnight rain made the four hour march, in darkness on appalling roads, from their camp to the Reserve trenches extremely difficult, and they finally settled in at 1am.

There was little time for sleep as sandbags had to be prepared as well as pegs to be driven into the fire trench walls to enable them to climb out. Captain Nelson's phrase "men very tired" must have been a colossal understatement.

On the morning of the attack there was a considerable delay arranging enough small arms ammunition and grenades for the men. There was much "mud and crush" in the crowded communication trenches on the way to the fire trench, so zero hour had to be postponed by two hours to 2pm. After only one minute's intense bombardment, the first wave climbed out of the trench, pushed aside their barbed wire and advanced "followed by the four succeeding waves at a good pace and distance". Howard appears to have been in the first wave with Captain Bernard (the only British officer in the battalion taking part to remain unscathed) and "A" Company.

The first line of Turkish trenches was taken easily "at a bound", but things came unstuck when they reached the second line. This turned out to be full of barbed wire and brushwood, with the Turks occupying small spaces between. Despite the "heavy and accurate" shell fire, they managed to occupy and consolidate part of it. Meanwhile the 20<sup>th</sup> Punjabs were having a bad time, which exposed the 1/8<sup>th</sup> Gurkhas to fire from their right. At 3pm, reinforcements were requested, but not forthcoming. Howard had already fallen, wounded.

The rest of the afternoon descended into an increasingly desperate struggle. A Turkish counter attack was organised, and the 1/8<sup>th</sup> Gurkhas had no reinforcements or reserves to resist it, resulting in some men returning to their own trench. At about 4pm the Gurkhas were ordered to attack again, but they "had no men left" for such an enterprise. Captain Abbott led a small party out, but had to return. Captain Bernard, the wounded 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant Poingdestre and about 20 men were "still most gallantly holding" a small part of



the Turkish frontline, but at 5.20pm they were ordered to return. The surviving members of the battalion retreated back to the Reserve trenches, arriving at 9pm.

It is not clear from the diary how Howard came to be left behind. He was reported as "wounded and prisoner of war". This was later crossed out and amended to "wounded and missing". His body was never found. The Turks had a very bad reputation for their cruelty to POWs, and the prospect of him ending his life, wounded, in the hands of the Turks is too terrible to contemplate. His name is engraved on the Basra Memorial.

Sanna-I-Yat was eventually taken on 22<sup>nd</sup> February, and the Turks abandoned Kut the next day. The British entered Baghdad on 11<sup>th</sup> March.

### ***Epilogue***

Howard's mother Emily remained at Inverugie in Haslemere for the rest of her life. She died there in 1940 aged 76. For the rest of the First World War she worked as a Voluntary Aid Detachment nurse, and was Commandant of the Church Hill Military Hospital (now Peperham House) in Haslemere until it closed in 1919. Howard's sister, Audrey, also nursed there, caring for wounded and sick officers. Emily appears in the centre of the hospital's Christmas card for 1918, wearing a crown:

### ***Shirley Harrison***

### **References**

War Diaries, 1<sup>st</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> Gurkha Rifles, National Archives

When God Made Hell, Charles Townshend (2010), Faber and Faber

The Times History of the War (1917), Chapter CXCI, Printing House Square

The Army Museum website: [www.nam.ac.uk/explore/mesopotamia-campaign](http://www.nam.ac.uk/explore/mesopotamia-campaign)

## **Haslemere's greatest footballer: a blue plaque for Ron Reynolds**

The Society unveiled its 13<sup>th</sup> blue plaque in July this year, commemorating footballer and goalkeeper Ron Reynolds. The plaque is located at 125 Lion Lane, the home of Stuart Wilson and Kate Croucher, where Ron grew up.

Ron had a successful professional career from the mid-40s until the early 1960s, playing for Aldershot, Tottenham Hotspur and Southampton. The pinnacle of his career came in 1958 when he narrowly missed selection for the team that represented England in the World Cup.

Ron was very much a Haslemere man, living in the town throughout his life, apart from the time when he played for Southampton, when he moved his wife Betty and three children, David, Peter and Amanda. His paternal grandfather and great uncle came to Haslemere in the 1890s a few years after changing their first and second names for reasons unknown.

His mother's family, the Riddles, had arrived in Haslemere at a similar time, and despite modest circumstances as painters and decorators, by the time of Ron's birth the extended family owned 3 adjacent houses in Lion Lane.

Football was very much in the family DNA. Ron's paternal grandfather, Alfie Riddle, played for Small Heath FC before they turned professional and became Birmingham city, and was one of the founders of Shottermill FC, whose ground is now the site of the Tesco supermarket. A team photo from 1920 shows several members of both the Reynolds and the Riddle family in the team.

Aside from being good at football, Ron also excelled academically, and was awarded a scholarship to Godalming Grammar School from Shottermill infant school. He quickly made the first team at the grammar school, and a photograph taken when he was 13 shows him already playing in goal. However, in common with many goalkeepers, this was not his preferred position and it is interesting that a picture taken three years later of Ron in the Hindhead ATC team, does not have Ron playing in goal.

On leaving school, and after a brief spell with the Admiralty Signals Establishment in Lythe Hill, Ron joined Dennis Bros in Guildford, and began training as a draughtsman, but he continued to play for Shottermill at weekends. This was the very end of the Second World War, and professional football had fallen into abeyance during the war such that all teams needed to rebuild as the war came to an end.

Local team Aldershot of course it had the advantage of many returning members of the army to draw upon, but nonetheless they scouted locally, and Ron was spotted as a talented young goalkeeper. He signed for the club in early 1945, and on 8<sup>th</sup> December, turned professional on the princely wage of £6.14 shillings per week, although he continued to retain his day job at Dennis and study for his professional exams.

His career did not start well. In his 1<sup>st</sup> game, away at Bournemouth, with Matt Busby guesting for the team, he was badly injured and conceded four goals in the first half and three in the second, with no respite from the other end of the pitch.

Despite this unpromising start, he retained his position and quickly began to build a reputation, ironically enhanced by the somewhat lacklustre performance of the team. Local press cuttings suggest that he quickly gained celebrity status.

Buoyed by this positive press coverage, Ron began to contemplate a career in football for the first time and by the end of 1949 began to look for a transfer to a higher division club. Aldershot at this time were in the Third Division. Relationships between players and clubs at this time were in many ways quite appalling, with little respect shown to the players and wages kept extremely low. Contracts also gave few rights to the players, and Aldershot was not willing to sell Ron, who by this time had become their star player.

Throughout its history, Aldershot, in common with many clubs has lurched from financial crisis to financial crisis and it was this that was to give Ron his escape route. The 1949/50 season went extremely badly, and poor results and weakening finance led to a need for action. Having contributed to the final game of the season which through a 5-0 win against Ipswich saved the club from relegation, Ron was the most saleable asset of the club, and was dispatched by the directors to Waterloo station for a meeting to secure his future. Such was his treatment that he thought he was meeting representatives of Arsenal, but in fact it was Tottenham Hotspur and he was swapped with a forward with £3000 moving to shore up Aldershot's flagging finances.

Ron was to spend all of the 1950s at Tottenham Hotspur but, as pointed out by Peter Crouch in a recent amusing pod cast, the life of a goalkeeper is a strange one. As today, First Division clubs retained three goalkeepers and of course only one can play in the team at any one time. Even when on the substitute bench, there is only one player that the goalkeeper will replace.

Although the number one goalkeeper at the time, Ted Ditchburn, was eight years older than Ron, he obstinately refused to fade. It was not until the second half of the 53/54 season

that Ron moved into the top slot, following a period of poor team performance and injury to Ditchburn.

Nevertheless, the high regard with which Ron was held by the then manager is illustrated by the fact that he allowed a Tottenham Hotspur team to travel to play a benefit match for Ray Kingshott against Shottonmill in 1953: something unlikely to be repeated today!

Football in the 1950s was a brutal game: the ball, especially when wet, heavier than today and goalkeepers had neither gloves nor rules to protect them from often intentional injury. Ron's career began with injury although it was a self-inflicted injury in 1958 when he sliced off the end of his finger by catching it in his garage door that ended his career as the natural first choice for the team. Having played only one game in the 1959/60 season, he leapt at the opportunity to transfer to Southampton, then in the Third Division for a fee of £10,000.

Ron described his First season at the Dell as the happiest of his career. Over the next few years the team performed moderately well, reaching the semi-final of the FA Cup in 1963. However, his career ended as it began, in the tenth game of the 1963/64 season against Portsmouth when, witnessed by his son, he dislocated his shoulder and broke his collar bone following a vicious tackle. He would never play again.

Off the pitch, Ron comes across as very much a man who was different. Particularly at the time, he was unusual in having a grammar school education, which would have set him apart from his team. Goalkeepers are often quite different: they train apart, so have less opportunity to engage in team bonding sessions. They are also either heroes or villains: seldom anything in between. A ship's manifest in 1957 as the team returned from touring Canada revealed that aside from Ron and one other team member who lived in Reading, the rest of the Spurs team lived close to White Hart Ln.

Ron was not a drinker, and it is easy to imagine him driving back from a home match to Haslemere on his team commiserated or celebrated in the bar. In the book co-authored by his son David, he comes across as a principled and difficult man, with a keen sense of fairness. He was a formidable Professional Footballers Association representative and was behind many of the perceived insurrections of his more famous soul mate Danny Blanchflower who, together with the likes of Jimmy Hill led the campaign that ultimately lifted the maximum wage of £10 per week just as Ron's career came to an end.

Although Ron did not benefit from the rapid growth in wages, on retiring from the game, together with his son David, he established and built up a highly successful financial advisory business, whose core clientele in the early days were people from the footballing world. He also managed to supplement his wages during his professional career by acting as a coach for a number of private schools, including Charterhouse and Eton. He died in 1999 at the age of 71

***Chris Harrison***

## **Haslemere's new-look Post Office and bar**

**Any day now the transformation of Haslemere Post Office in West Street will be complete, when its ground and first floor bars open for business. Newsletter Editor GARETH DAVID met the man behind the project, to hear about his plans**

*After a successful 28-year career at Tesco, Douglas Howard had lost faith in the ability of large corporates to care for local communities. Inspired by his father Brian, who has owned and run Marley Flowers for the past 48 years, he too wanted to get back to the heart of the community so, with support from an old school friend, set up a business called the Real English Drinks House (red.h) that aims to have the community at its heart:*

“About 20 years ago Brian was part of a group of local businessmen who were disappointed with the state of the Post Office, its general disarray, and petitioned the Post Office to be allowed to go in and decorate the building using their own money and labour, just to bring a new lease of life to the building. They were refused, and then some years later once ASK had taken over the old sorting office, it was apparent that the Post Office was under threat of closure.

“Three years ago, Jeremy Hunt went on a “Save our Post Office” campaign and petitioned the then-CEO of the Post Office to save Haslemere Post Office. That helped move Haslemere to the bottom of its closure list, but didn’t solve the ultimate problem that the building was too big, and not economical to run in its current state. The landlord had no desire to spend any money or let the Post Office off the hook, and the Post Office operating model was to remove its responsibility for operations and to franchise out.

### ***Becoming a postmaster***

“All new Post Offices are franchise-led, and franchisees run the service within the rules set out by the Post Office. Haslemere Post Office had been run by a franchisee for a number of years, but retained its status as a Main Post Office, so continued to offer a full range of services, including currency exchange and passport checking.

“So we took an interest in the building and in opening our red.h business as a collaborative one with the Post Office services. To do so, we had to enter into a contract with the Post Office, and at that stage the Post Office was only advertising a local Post Office. That would have meant a significant reduction in products and services for customers, so almost all the currency that is available would not have been, financial services and passport check-and-send would not have been available.

“We felt that this was wrong for Haslemere, but you can only apply for what’s on offer. So I applied to become a postmaster and went through a long and challenging process, and was then accepted as a reputable person, with enough experience to run a Post Office. At that stage we then petitioned the Post Office about its status, and after six months of meeting and conversations we managed to turn around its view on status and it was accepted in principle that we could be a Main Post Office.

“I then had to go back through the re-applying process because rules and eligibility are different for a Main Post Office and during that time we had a number of months when we couldn’t progress with our plans because we were waiting on the Post Office.

### ***The inspiration for a combined Post Office and bar***

“A Post Office business in almost any location cannot survive on its own, there is simply not enough income from the operation, and all successful Post Offices are ones where there is a secondary business – or a primary business – where the footfall drives retail sales. The Post Office itself encourages would-be postmaster to have a secondary revenue stream.

“Some eight months before the Post Office idea came up we had started Real English Drinks, and were looking at an on and off-licence business where you could come in and taste local produce and then either drink in for an evening out, or take home for

consumption there. We decided that the ethics of our business, the importance of community and the tie-up of retail and footfall, meant the Post Office could be a good combination.

"In the UK there are only a couple of other examples of Post Offices in bars or pubs, but in Ireland almost every Post Office is in a bar, because in smaller population areas the bar is the general store, Post Office and bookmakers, so a one-stop shop for the community and has been for a great many years.

### ***Scale of investment?***

"I have a business partner, Richard Edwards, who was a school-friend, is a Chartered Accountant in Godalming and lives in Henley near the Duke of Cumberland pub. He and I started this business together; we bought the freehold of the Post Office building in April 2018 and have made significant further investments since then.

### ***Target market***

"We want to appeal to a broad spectrum of people. We accept that our product range and type of produce is more likely to be appreciated by the 35+ age group, however we have been very careful to think about all age groups and want to be an inclusive place to shop, whether that be by competitive pricing, or in our range of coffee, cake and food, and we want to create a space where everyone is welcome.

"At different times of the day we will naturally attract different groups of people. We will have the largest selection of English sparkling wines available by the glass of anywhere in the country [about 75]. We will also have 150 different gins and 350 different beers. The business will be dog-friendly – we appreciate that dogs are a part of people's families and don't want an environment where you have to leave them outside the door.

"In terms of food, we will offer will be a very simple menu that is going to be sharing boards, meat selection, cheese sharing boards and some simple British fayre – carefully using produce from the local area, so a local baker, local dairy, local meat producer, and ice cream from Dillon's, so really trying to be a show-case for products from the local area.

"We have to be proud of what's local and in the discovery phase of setting up red.h I went on the road and met local producers to listen to their stories and understand their purpose in life – I met a whole range of different people, but the one thing that knitted them together was passion and a belief in their products.

"But almost all of those people struggle in parts of what I call 'everyday business'. They don't have a website, or don't have marketing, or don't know how to get to market. The effort to produce something that is lovely exists, but the ability for people to discover that it is lovely doesn't.

### ***Competition for customers***

"My parents have been retailers in the town for 48 years. High streets are dying because retailers are giving customers less reason to come to the high street. If we have more exciting businesses, and we give customers more reason to come, every business benefits and Oliver [in Charter Walk] is a good example of this. We talk every day and share ideas, so if he sells coffee and I sell coffee then are we competing for the same business? No, we are both driving to attract new business into the town and make it more of an experience.

"The only way that the high street will survive is if retailers and service providers can differentiate the customer offer. Online businesses are functional – every online business

offers a bigger range to customers, and gets it to them faster and cheaper, that is their goal. The high street will never ever compete with that, so what it must do is make the retail environment more comfortable or welcoming, and make sure they are buying something that they can't buy elsewhere.

"There are three or four buildings in the town centre that have planning consent to become restaurants – if Haslemere could get just one or two restaurants in to town, that would be brilliant for everybody, because people could say that this is a place we go to in the evening. That's what it is like in Godalming and in Farnham, but come to Haslemere and it is just pizza! Even Midhurst has a number of different options.

### **Opening hours**

"The Post Office has had its hours extended, and we are now open from 9.00am until 5.30pm on Monday to Saturday. We see the extension of hours as being the provision of a service. It's not economical to open a Post Office on Saturday afternoon, but I think it is right for other services that people come to the Post Office for, such as currency or passport check-and-send that weekday commuters are not being forced to get here before midday on a Saturday.

"Once the bar opens, I would expect to open the Post Office counters on a Sunday as well, which is quite exciting, because there is not a main Post Office in the UK which opens on a Sunday. Again, as a differentiating service, it will give people in neighbouring towns a reason to come to Haslemere, which I think is exciting.

"The bar will open at 9.00am when the Post Office opens, and will stay open until 8.00pm on Sundays-Wednesdays and until 11.00pm on Thursday-Saturday. There will be a downstairs bar and coffee shop and an upstairs bar with seating area and a separate bar that will be available for community events and parties and will accommodate up to 30 people.

### **Looking to the future**

"This is my baby, I am the Managing Director and I am driving the brand and the online business ([www.redh.co.uk](http://www.redh.co.uk)). We have to prove that the concept works, but we are in talks with the Post Office about expanding their network and being a transformation partner for them. The nice thing about our local business model is that if you move it to Oxford, for example, the ethos, look and feel, the service and offer, remains the same, but the product range would be totally different, because it would be a completely different set of suppliers."

*Douglas Howard has kindly agreed to be a panellist in our debate over the future of retailing at the Society's AGM on Friday, 1 November*

## **Major developments at the Community Rail Partnership**

An eventful year for the Surrey Hills to South Downs Community Rail Partnership (CRP) culminated in a ceremony at Haslemere station on 2 October, when its newly-refurbished Hub (information centre) was formally opened and a blue plaque – donated by your Society – was unveiled to mark 160 years since the railway came to Haslemere.

This unveiling followed a major event earlier in the year (July) to mark the day 160 years ago when the railway first came to Haslemere. That historic day was marked with a special steam train calling at the station, station staff and the rail partnership team dressing for the

occasion in Victorian costume, and refreshments kindly being provided by the Station House.

Anyone passing through the station will see how the Hub has been transformed over recent months. Red Rock, a local contractor, replaced the old cracked glass of the main window and door and installed a new additional window, with double glazed panes. On the station itself, CRP volunteers led by Ken Griffiths have done great work in improving the flower beds on platforms 2&3

At the same time as the Hub's re-glazing, coffee bar operator Puccinos is converting the former newsagent shop behind the Hub into a new a coffee shop, and the CRP has been able to take advantage of this work to expand the Hub space.

External walls of the Hub have been repaired and strengthened, while its electric cabling and fuse box was upgraded from and floor levels addressed. In addition, South Western Railway was persuaded to pay to extend lighting into the new space, helping create an attractive and more secure environment in which to welcome visitors to the town.

Surrey Hills to South Downs CRP now encompasses the stations at Farncombe, Godalming, Milford and Witley, as well as Haslemere. Members at each station are able to address local issues, apply for grants from SWR and from the Association of Community Rail Partnerships (ACoRP).

During the celebratory event on 2 October, the blue plaque was formally unveiled by Vic Mitchell, a renowned local author, publisher of railway books, and leading light in the early years of railway preservation. He was joined by ACoRP representative Dan Wright, who described the Hub as "one of the best facilities of its kind in the country".

Besides renovation of the Hub, a major initiative by the CRP this year has been the preparation of a new *Rail to Ramble* leaflet featuring walks that link Haslemere with Godalming. The marketing team at SWR has supported this initiative, by offering to print several thousand copies and to distribute them across the SWR network.

Another notable CRP success this year has been its first *Try the Train* event with St Bart's Primary School, in partnership with SWR Travel Ambassadors. This was held at the end of the summer term, to educate children transitioning to secondary school about safe rail travel and to promote more sustainable travel choices. It was a great success, involving a train trip for 60 year six children, and the CRP now plans to roll this out to all local primary schools in the coming year.

To continue and expand its activities, the CRP is currently bidding for finance from the SWR Customer and Communities Improvement Fund for three further initiatives. These are for station environment improvements; for the launch of a pilot *Hoppa* bus line to provide access from Haslemere station to Blackdown, Devils Punch Bowl and Frensham Ponds; and a major highways improvement scheme to move current 'cage' bus stop on Lower Street to better location and traffic calming on station approaches.

Among a range of other developments, a new Surrey Hills to South Downs CRP website is currently being developed and new Facebook, Twitter and Instagram accounts all @HillstoDowns have been set up. SWR is introducing Wi-fi to Haslemere and all the other CRP stations in 2020, which will be excellent news for the Hub.

Society members who use Haslemere station will be pleased to hear that SWR has agreed to install additional seating and heaters in the waiting room on platforms 2&3 and also to install additional seating on the station concourse. The CRP has also secured agreement from the rail operator for an art installation on the footbridge featuring the Surrey Hills and South Downs logos.

**Nikki Barton**

## **Introducing Haslemere Art Society**

Haslemere Art Society proudly celebrated its 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary this year with an anniversary exhibition opened by prestigious sculptor Philip Jackson CVO DL. There were two galleries of work, with approximately 200 entries, and it proved a great success.

What was known as the Haslemere Society of Artists from 1894 until 1930 changed adopted its current title in 1931.

The society held its first exhibition in 1894, when some of the society's original members included Charles Whymper, Walter Tyndale Helen Allingam and the remarkable Alice Hogarth Nicholson, (1865-1950), a talented artist who attended the Académie Colarossi in Paris with Paul Gauguin.

Nicholson was famous for the beautiful painting *Idleness* which is now part of the Sir William Gray House Collection at Hartlepool Borough Art Gallery. She exhibited widely at the Royal Academy, throughout England and in New York, and came to live in Beacon Hill during the 1920's.

There have been two Royal Academicians as Presidents of the society. First of these was **W.C.T. Dobson RA RWS** (1817-1898), the society's first president, who lived Lodsworth and worked in Oil and watercolour. The second was **L Campbell Taylor RA** (1874-1969), who became president in 1932 and served in the role until 1943.

Today, Haslemere Art Society maintains its heritage with pride, with painters, sculptors and potters, both amateur and professional, producing a high standard of work. The society's excellent painting tradition continues, with multi-award winning Hindhead artist Roger Dellar ROI PS RI being its current President.

The society continues to flourish, with over 120 members and a varied programme of activities, including Tuesday afternoon watercolour classes continue at Haslemere Educational Museum., as well as talks, demonstrations and workshops, to which non-members are very welcome.

Haslemere Art Society is all-inclusive, friendly and active, which hopes to continue playing an active role in sustaining the town's Arts and Crafts tradition for the next 125 years. For more about the society, go to: [www.haslemere.com/artsoc](http://www.haslemere.com/artsoc) or Facebook.com Haslemere Art Society

**Jane Stopford-Russell**



## Forthcoming events in Haslemere

We are fortunate in Haslemere to have an extremely wide and varied range of clubs, societies and other activities. We have briefly listed forthcoming events of just some of these. Further information and current details should be obtained from the respective websites.

### Haslemere Museum [www.haslemeremuseum.co.uk/whatson/whatson.html](http://www.haslemeremuseum.co.uk/whatson/whatson.html)

- **Exhibitions:**
  - Pilgrim & Russell: Recent Abstract Paintings. 9-21 Oct.
  - Surrey Contemporaries – Autumn Art Exhibition. 26 Oct. – 9 Nov.
- **Family Events and Workshops:**
  - Early Years** (stories; craft activities) for under 5s.
    - Fancy Footwork. 18<sup>th</sup> Oct. 1.30 – 2.30
    - Elmer & Wilbur. 8 Nov. 10.30 – 11.30
    - Snail Trail. 22 Nov. 1.30 – 2.30
  - Museum Explorers** (5-11 years) - monthly Saturday activities based on the collections and exhibitions of the museum, or on seasonal and national events.
    - Optical Illusions 29 Oct. 10.30 – 12.00
    - Fireworks. 2 Nov. 10.30 – 12.00
  - Haunted Halloween:** Halloween – related crafts; procession through Haslemere. pm 31<sup>st</sup> Oct. 1.30 – 4.00 pm
  - Night in the Museum.** 31<sup>st</sup> Oct. 6 pm
- **Cards for Good Causes:** Charity Christmas cards on sale. 14 Oct. – 14 Dec.
- **Fireworks and Bonfire Evening:** 2 Nov. Doors open 6.30, fireworks at 7.30

### Haslemere Natural History Society [www.haslemerenaturalhistorysociety.org.uk](http://www.haslemerenaturalhistorysociety.org.uk)

- **Introduction to Bush Craft.** 19 Oct. 10.30
- **Wildlife of a Working Forest.** 9 Nov. 14.15 (indoors at Haslemere Museum)
- **Solar Boat Trip (West) Itchenor: Birdwatching.** 16 Nov. 9.45
- **Birds at Farlington Marshes.** 23 Nov. 10.30
- **Birds at Pulborough.** 7 Dec. 10.30

### Haslemere Town Council [www.haslemeretc.org](http://www.haslemeretc.org)

Meetings are held on Thursdays at 7pm. Dates are those published

- **Full Council:** 28 Nov
- **Grants:** 18 Nov
- **Planning:** 10, 17 Oct; 7 Nov; 5, 12 Dec
- **Amenities.** 12 Dec.

### Haslemere Hall [www.haslemerehall.co.uk](http://www.haslemerehall.co.uk)

- **Cinema screenings:** Regular screenings of current films.
- **Events via satellite:** Live screenings from the Royal Opera; Royal Ballet; National Theatre; Arena di Verona; Royal Shakespeare Company; Sadler's Wells; Theatre Royal; Branagh Theatre.
- **Live Music:** Haslemere Music Society; Tribute to Dire Straits
- **Haslemere Players:** Evita 22 – 26 Oct.
- **Haslemere Thespians:** Tom Stoppard's 'After Magritte & Other Delights'. 3-5 Oct
- **Surrey Theatre Academy:** Footloose the Musical. 14 – 12 Dec.
- **Kids Symphonic Sundays:** 8 Dec. 10 & 11 a.m; 27 Oct. 10 & 11 am
- **Other Events:** Wrestling Spectacular. 9 Nov.

## The Arts Society Haslemere [www.theartsocietyhaslemere.org](http://www.theartsocietyhaslemere.org)

- **Lectures:**  
Pearls & Pomegranites, Peacocks & Pipes: the Hidden Language of Renaissance Art. 15 Oct  
Imperial Calcutta: Arts and Architecture. 19 Nov.  
The Inventors of Christmas. 3 Dec.
- **Study Day:**  
Treasures of the Royal Art Collection. 30 Oct. (morning; two lectures)
- **Visits:**  
Foreign visit: Art & History of Hidden Umbria. 17 Oct.  
Landsdowne Club, London 6 Nov.

## Haslemere Musical Society [www.hmsoc.org.uk](http://www.hmsoc.org.uk)

- **Orchestra and Choral Concert:** Dvorak; J S Bach; Handel. 7 Dec.

## Haslemere Art Society [www.haslemere.com/artsoc](http://www.haslemere.com/artsoc)

- **Workshops:** Steve Carroll: Talk, 'Abstract'. 14 Nov. 2-4 pm
- **Talks and Demonstrations:** Roger Dellar: 'A Rainy Day with Reflections & Umbrellas'. 16 Nov. 10-4 pm
- **Life Group**
- **Art at the Museum**

## Haslemere Gardening Society [www.haslemere-gardening-society.co.uk/events](http://www.haslemere-gardening-society.co.uk/events)

- **Making the Most of Bulbs** . 16 Oct. 7.45 pm
- **Beautiful Borders** . 20 Nov. 7.45 pm

## Haslemere Society

- **AGM:** 1<sup>st</sup> November. This will be followed by a debate on the future of retailing in Haslemere

## Farmers Market

- Held in Haslemere High Street on the first Sunday of the month, 10 am – 1.30 pm
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Nov / 1<sup>st</sup> Dec.

## National Trust Haslemere [www.nationaltrust.org.uk/events](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/events)

- **Hindhead Common & the Devils Punch Bowl**  
**Half Term Trail:** 26 Oct.+ 8 other dates. 10.00 - 15.00  
**Halloween Spooky Trail & Campfire:** 30 Oct 18.00 – 20.00  
**Harvest Your Own Christmas Tree:** 7 Dec. + 2 other dates 10 – 14.00

## Haslemere Library

- **Pebble Rhymetime:** Introduction to songs, rhymes and books with Pebble the penguin. Every Wednesday 10-10.30
- **Crafty storytime:** Themed storytime and related craft activity. Every Friday morning during term time 10.30- 11
- **Chatterbooks:** Reading Group. One Saturday each month: 11.15-11.45
- **Book Group:** New. 2-3 pm on the last Thursday of the month
- **Digital Buddy:** Help using computers and the internet. Free one to one support

*Compiled by Di Keeley*