

Newsletter

TIMBER TRADES'
BENEVOLENT SOCIETY

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National President's spring message



*John Taylor is the new
TTBS National President*

was born in 1949 in Solihull, Warwickshire, writes *H John Taylor, FCA, who has been appointed as TTBS National President for 2021 and 2022.*

I have an older sister, Anne, and my parents owned a paint and dry saltery business in Aston, Birmingham. Not surprisingly I built up an allegiance to Aston Villa!

I had a happy childhood living in Hampton in Arden and attending local schools, finishing up at Solihull School for five years. I had a good all round education and introduction to sport, especially cricket and hockey, playing for three years in

the school 1st XI at both sports.

Weekends also involved sport – both playing for local village sides and enjoying the social element! During my last year at school I sat the Oxbridge exams and gained a place at Jesus College, Cambridge to read natural sciences. However, before going up to Cambridge I decided my career path should be in accountancy and changed my course to economics, although I had never studied this before.

Three years at Cambridge was a wonderful experience academically, socially, sporting-wise and for generally widening my experiences and views. I feel in retrospect that sport pre-occupied my time rather more than studying as I was lucky enough to play top class sport in both cricket and hockey for the university sides, but I did manage to come away with a good degree. Alumni relations at Jesus College are very good and I still enjoy going back to College for reunions.

Upon leaving university at 21 I joined Coopers & Lybrand – now merged with Price Waterhouse and known as PWC – as an articled clerk in Birmingham.

This involved plenty of studying to become a qualified ACA but I still found time for plenty of sport, playing many games for Warwickshire 2nd XI and for socialising, where I met Anabel and we married in 1972.

This was the start of my association with the timber industry because Anabel's father was Denis Butler who was chairman of the Wyckham Blackwell group of companies, being involved in timber engineering, fencing, wholesale and DIY retail. Denis, as his father before him, had been involved with the TTBS in the Midlands and went on to become National President in 1982 and a trustee for 14 years.

Still working for Coopers & Lybrand as a senior manager, I gradually became involved with Denis, helping him on financial matters, planning and reviewing new ventures and was appointed a non-

executive director in 1975. Anabel and I also started a family in 1975 with the arrival of our daughter Charlotte, followed by a son, Alexander in 1978.

We moved home in 1975 to our current home and family life became the main focus of our lives with sport now taking a back seat. In 1979 I decided that working in a large international company with high pressure work requiring total commitment was not my ambition for the next 30 years or so. I resigned my position with Coopers & Lybrand and set up a small practise of my own, with one day per week allocated to Wyckham Blackwell and the timber industry. This worked extremely well from all aspects. I quickly became involved with five other family companies acting in the role of financial director across various industries

At Wyckham Blackwell I quickly became involved with the TTBS and helped to start a Midlands tennis competition in conjunction with my father-in-law, Denis, John Goodman and Ross Bellamy. I also played in many of the Midlands golf competitions run by John Vincent and in the National Golf on two occasions.

In 1982 Denis came up with the idea of a Midlands clay pigeon competition and this was started with the help of Richard Bouverat and myself and has gone from strength to strength. Christella Golby is now the main organiser and before Covid we ran two shoots each year and raised in the region of €4,000 to €5,000 per year.

As time progressed I spent more time with Wyckham Blackwell, becoming involved in more aspects of the group and following the resignation of our managing director, I became chief executive in 2007. Not an ideal time to take this role with the looming financial crisis of 2008 / 09 but a real challenge with much restructuring required. The group consisted of the timber engineering division as the main product line with a wholesale division specialising in pine and a decking division.

National President's spring message

Restructuring resulted in closing the wholesale and decking divisions while expanding trussed rafters and metal web floor beams.

To find new markets we worked hard to develop our Smartroof project with our partner, Wolf Systems. Smartroof enables the roof area of certain sizes of houses to be open plan usable space as well as being factory produced and watertight within the day of assembly on site.

As chairman of Smartroof I was pleased to see this product widely in use in the housing industry and to gain a national market, a 50% interest was sold to the Keystone Group in 2012. During this time Wyckham Blackwell also re-entered the timber frame house market.

My family life had progressed over the years with Charlotte and Alexander attending university and gaining degrees in economics and medicine respectively. Charlotte is now married with two boys and runs a legal recruitment company in London and her husband Matt is a photographer. Alexander is married with three girls and he is a consultant in obstetrics and gynaecology and his wife, Katherine is a GP. Five lovely grandchildren ranging from three-years-old to 11 provide Anabel and myself with lots of fun and entertainment.

Although Denis had not been involved for a number of years it was after his death in 2014 that a number of enquiries were made by prospective purchasers to acquire the Wyckham Blackwell group. With no obvious family succession a sale was negotiated, with completion in June, 2015. Apart from six months consultancy helping the purchasers, this concluded my involvement in the timber industry.

However, in 2011 I had joined the Midlands TTBS committee as treasurer and Christella Golby my co-director at Wyckham Blackwell also joined the committee. Apart from running the two clay pigeon shoots we have assisted with numerous other events.

In 2013 I was invited to become one of the two TTBS investment managers looking after the investment funds of the charity together with Pippa Latham. We work closely with our investment brokers, Smith & Williamson. I have greatly enjoyed this role and have become more involved nationally, attending management meetings and getting to know more people involved around the country.

It was a great honour to be asked to be National President in 2021 and I very much look forward to attending more functions and meeting people from the timber industry.

TTBS continues to support all beneficiaries throughout the Covid 19 pandemic



Above: A typical family-size Hay hamper sent by the TTBS, which also sends singles, couples, diabetic and vegan hampers

Despite the extreme difficulties experienced by all charities during 2020 and for the early months of 2021, the TTBS has maintained support for the timber industry retired and sick and continues to provide a package of grants and allowances.

During 2020 the TTBS provided benefits totalling over £164,000 made up of numerous regular allowances and one-off grants.

These are just a few comments from the beneficiaries we received during December and the New Year:

"We wish to thank the TTBS once more for the financial support this year, which must have been a very difficult year for the Society"

"Thank you for all your support through the year, it is very much appreciated"
"Once again, the TTBS quarterly allowance has arrived in my bank account and I am writing to express my gratitude to you and all your supporters for their continued support through these uncertain times"

"This morning, the beautiful Hay hamper was delivered. Everything about it is lovely including the box which I can use for my living room storage and the contents are all lovely treats which I wouldn't buy normally and are so special at Christmas"

Of course, the whole of 2020 and now into 2021 has been a hugely difficult time for everyone, especially the timber industry businesses working hard to overcome all the difficulties and the Society is very grateful to all industry associations, companies and individuals who have supported us throughout.

We have not been able to stage our normal calendar of TTBS events and until the Covid vaccine is rolled out to all age groups, we will not be able to resume our events fund-raising, but hopefully things will improve from mid-summer onwards.

We are planning to hold our National Golf event

at the Marriott Breadsall Priory, Morley near Derby in July sponsored by Taylor Maxwell and all of our regional committees have plans to start their individual golf, shooting, lunch and dinner events later this year. Details will be publicised on the www.ttbs.org.uk Events page, so please keep a check on updates and contact details.

Finally, we would like to remind all TTBS Newsletter readers, that we are always looking for new timber industry beneficiaries to assist when they retire or suffer from health problems that prevent them from continuing their employment. Our Society criteria requires them to have had at least 10 years employment in the timber trade and any applications will require a financial assessment before being passed to the trustees for consideration. Please contact the Society on: email info@ttbs.org.uk or telephone 08448 922205



**Ivan Savage
TTBS General Manager**

TTBS National Golf 2021

Thursday July 8th at Marriott Breadsall Priory, Moor Road, Morley, Derby DE7 6DL Sponsored by Taylor Maxwell Ltd



Above left: Trophy winners from the 2019 event Above right: The 2019 event was held at the Marriott Forest of Arden

Breakfast rolls

Morning: Nine holes Greensomes on Moorland course

Sandwich lunch

Afternoon: Eighteen holes Individual Stableford on Priory course

Dinner & Trophy Presentation in the Pavilion Room

Overnight accommodation available at special TTBS rates

Preference to be given to 2019 trophy winners but hurry as there are still places available – contact Ivan Savage info@ttbs.org.uk

A fantastic day's golfing on two exceptional courses – come and join your colleagues from the trade and help the TTBS at the same time!

Regional events planned for May 2021 onwards

All details on www.ttbs.org.uk Events page which will be updated throughout the year as the lockdown is eased and we can hopefully get back to some normality

May 11th

Yorkshire & Humberside TTBS Golf

July 8th

TTBS National Golf sponsored by Taylor Maxwell
Marriott Breadsall Priory

September 9th

London, Home Counties & East Anglia TTBS Bowls Competition

September 9th

Midlands TTBS Autumn Golf

September 23rd

London, Home Counties & East Anglia TTBS Golf

September 23rd

Bristol & Western Counties TTBS Golf

September or October

Midlands TTBS Full Day Clay Shoot

(date & venue to be confirmed)

October 7th

TTBS ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING & LUNCH,
Royal Air Force Club, Piccadilly, London

December 3rd

Bristol & Western Counties TTBS Christmas Lunch

December 3rd

Midlands TTBS Christmas Lunch & optional 9 holes golf

December

Yorkshire & Humberside TTBS/NETTA Christmas Lunch

(date & venue to be confirmed)

North West

TTBS Dinner & Dance

(date & venue to be confirmed)

December 8th

North West Christmas Lunch

(venue to be confirmed)

South Wales

TTBS Woodchoppers Ball

(date & venue to be confirmed)

Yorkshire & Humberside

TTBS 2021 Curry Night

(date & venue to be confirmed)

Southern TTBS Christmas Lunch

(date & venue to be confirmed)

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The following companies have generously sponsored production of the president's newsletter and the support of all sponsors is gratefully acknowledged. Why not join our list of newsletter sponsors? For a contribution of only £50 you can help the TTBS to keep in touch with both supporters and beneficiaries and help us to raise money at the same time.

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Don't miss out on the latest news and fund-raising events from the Timber Trades' Benevolent Society

Contact the TTBS at: **Masons Croft, 19 Church Lane, Oulton, Stone ST15 8UL** Tel: **08448 92 22 05** Email: **info@ttbs.org.uk**