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(Organ of The Bookhams Social Service Bureau).

No. 20.

SEPTEMBER, 1938.

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## EDITORIAL

As the "Bookhams Bulletin" has come to take its place as an institution in the life of the community, so it was called upon five years ago to assist in the problem of unemployment through the Social Service Bureau.

Since those days of depression, various agencies have done much to procure employment, and to-day it is gratifying to record that there is a negligible quantity of unemployment in the Bookhams Ward, but this does not relieve the situation of those whose income is dependent upon the Old Age Pension, sickness, and poor children.

It may be suggested in many quarters, "There is always Public Assistance to supplement such cases." This would help a great deal, but on the other hand, all such cases of Public Assistance become chargeable upon the Rates, and as we are well aware, these are far too costly already.

Once again we would like to remind readers of this Journal, that with the exception of printing, all concerned with the "Bulletin" give voluntary service, and if you derive any pleasure, interest or information from these columns, is it not worth 1d., or better still why not send something to the Social Service Bureau? Give anything you like upon the occasion of the Fifth Anniversary of the publication of the "Bookhams Bulletin."

During the passed six months, it has been the policy of the "Bulletin" to touch upon subjects of National importance, and to all alike the question of the cost of living is always uppermost. In July, the average level of retail prices of the commodities taken into account in the statistics compiled by the Ministry of Labour (including food, rent, clothing, fuel and lighting, and miscellaneous items) was approximately 59 per cent. above the level of July, 1914. Comparative figures show that in June, 1938, it was 55 per cent. For food only there was an increase of 6.38 per cent. The rise in the index number was due mainly to the displacement of the old potatoes by the new crop, at exceptionally high prices, owing to the effect of late frosts and

drought, and to increases in the prices of milk also attributed to drought.

On the 1st July, 1938, the new Factories Act, 1937, came into force, and to those interested in the safety, health and welfare in all forms of industry, a comprehensive Guide to this Act can be obtained from H.M. Stationery Office, price 6d.

A resumé of the Hire Purchase Bill, which comes into force on 1st January, 1939, it is hoped will be included in the December issue.

The Increase of Rent and Mortgage Interest (Restrictions) Act, 1938, received the Royal Assent on 26th May last. This Act contains the Rent and Mortgage Interest Restrictions Acts until 24th June, 1942.

By the Act of 1933, houses with a rateable value in 1931 not exceeding £20 in Greater London, £13 elsewhere in England and Wales, ceased to be subject to de-control when the landlord obtained vacant possession. By the Act of 1938, this provision is extended to houses with rateable values in 1931, not exceeding £35 in London, £20 elsewhere in England and Wales, and houses within these limits of rateable values are claimed to be de-controlled and must be registered with the Local Authority. Controlled houses with higher rateable values will be de-controlled as from 29th September, 1938, except in certain cases where there is a sub-tenant as well as a tenant, in which case there will be no de-control until the landlord obtains vacant possession. The permitted increase in gross rents of controlled houses remain, generally, as hitherto, but the new Act provides that the permitted increases are to be so calculated as to give the landlord the benefit of any allowance in respect of the compounding of rates.

Other matters dealt with in the new Act include the method of ascertainment of standard rent of parts of controlled houses, over payment of rent, the provision of rent books, certificate of disrepair, proof of whether a house is de-controlled, alternative accommodation and the service of documents.

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## REMEMBRANCE DAY

Just over two months from the issue of this Journal, the Twentieth Anniversary of the Armistice will be observed, and although twenty years have passed, and each year has paid its tribute in silent homage to those who passed on in our Country's hours of stress the long trail of Ex-service men and Women broken in health, and numerous unemployed still call for your help.

In buying your Flanders Poppy on the 11th November you will be achieving a threefold purpose; an act of remembrance for over 1,000,000 men "who died that England might live," to provide assistance for the necessitous Ex-service community, and to employ about 400 badly disabled Ex-service men in the Poppy Factory at Richmond.

Although the Local Benevolent Committee keeps records of the number of cases assisted, these records show a definite increase in the number of sick cases, particularly during the past year, and a corresponding increase in the number of convalescent cases. This naturally entails greater calls upon existing funds, and in view of this rapid increase in sickness and the premature ageing of the Ex-service man coupled with his struggle for existence in the labour market, your practical sympathy can be shown by giving freely to the Earl Haig Poppy Day Appeal.

The Effingham & The Bookhams Branch of the British Legion take this opportunity once again, to extend to the Poppy Day Organisers, the Lady Helpers and the General Public, their most grateful thanks on behalf of the Ex-service men.

An examination of the records of the Local Benevolent Committee shows that during the year 1937-1938, £88 has been expended in kind and cash to meet sickness. This is an approximate increase of £50 upon the year 1936-1937. The total value of vouchers expended regarding unemployed Ex-service men was £23 7s., which showed a decrease due to the efforts of the Employment Committee, and it is gratifying to note that six permanent situations have been found by the Committee. Apart from these cases quoted, convalescent treatment, and various other schemes are provided to meet the needs of the Ex-service community, and as in past years a generous-hearted public have assisted most readily. May we be assured of greater support? — W.A.M.

## AIR RAID PRECAUTIONS

Mustard gas was responsible for most of the gas casualties during the Great War. It can remain on the ground as a liquid, and for a long time give off vapour with a slight smell producing no immediate effects to indicate its dangerous nature; while contact with the liquid itself produces painful and slow-healing burns. Experience proved that a persistent gas of this nature, in sufficient concentrations, could compel troops to evacuate an area which they occupied.

In spite of International Conventions, it is a matter of common knowledge that the leading nations are conducting experiments both in chemical substances for use in war and in protective measures. Brig.-General Sir H. Hartley once told us that it was difficult to compare the effect upon the morals of gas with that of other weapons, but that it is unquestionably the least understood danger; the constant strain of watchfulness, the fear of new gases with more painful properties, and the feeling of confusion when wearing a gas respirator, must tend to weaken the spirit of anyone, especially of those with little or no experience of gas warfare.

Like all weapons, gas has its limitations and these are often not sufficiently realised. For every gas there is a minimum effective concentration. Lachrymatory, or "tear gas" vapours blind the eyes in a few seconds where present in the proportion of one part to from two to five million parts of air. Phosgene causes a gas casualty after exposure of from one to two minutes to a concentration of one part to fifty thousand. Mustard gas causes eye or lung casualties after exposure for twenty minutes to a concentration of one part to a million of air. Although this seems very deadly, an immense quantity of gas is needed to produce these concentrations over a large area, even temporarily. It was calculated some years ago, that with a non-persistent gas like phosgene, 800 tons would have to be dropped on Paris to produce a lethal atmosphere, and even then, if a wind were blowing, the gas would be quickly dispersed. Another estimation, with persistent gas, puts the amount to contaminate per square mile effectively at 25 tons weight of mustard gas.

As one who has experienced gas warfare during the Great War in its various forms, the potentialities of ariel warfare would be far greater than such experiences of the past. This important work cannot be too strongly emphasised, and your services for A.R.P. can still be enlisted through the Local Authorities.

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## THE SUMMONS

That bugbear to a number of people, a Summons to serve on a Jury, reached me a short time back and I attended the Court in due time.

This general "call up" I consider should certainly be altered, as apart from the inconvenience caused to those engaged in business who have assistants, there are many one-man businesses the owners of which are faced with the prospect of having to close their premises during the time they are serving as jurors. Surely there must be people with spare time, who would be willing to serve, not only for the interest the various types of cases afford, but for obtaining an insight into the many ways there must be of telling the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth.

I should imagine, there were between 60 and 70 men and women called up on this particular day and four juries were apparently required. One man tried to be released but found it impossible, and another who did not turn up was fined £2 for being absent.

From previous experience I was always under the impression that not until the accused had been found "guilty" was a record of any previous convictions given to the Court, but on this occasion I did learn that there was one Act of Parliament, and I believe it to be the only one, which permits otherwise. This particular case was not one for trial by jury but was dealt with by the magistrates themselves.

One thing that did strike me particularly was that the men on the jury in attempting to arrive at a verdict were logical in their arguments, whereas the women (there were three on our panel) took a more or less sentimental view and were afraid of the consequences of the men's reasoning. The cases tried by us were men, and I wondered if a women had been in the dock whether the feminine sentimental views might have been less strong.

We had only two cases to try, but one was somewhat lengthy inasmuch as it occupied just upon two days.

Regarding the presentation of the evidence, in both instances that for the prosecution was given by the police whose chief support was the small notebooks in which the police officers enter up details.

One of the cases tried was that of a man using

licensed premises for the purposes of betting. One police officer admitted having had more than one half pint of beer during his twenty minutes of "observation" when he was disguised as a working-man. Compare that with an unfortunate motorist, who has been pulled up by the police who accuse him of strongly smelling of alcohol, whereas just previously he has only had one half-pint? This method of obtaining evidence, especially when the disguised police officer admits having tried to gain the confidence of the inmates of the licensed premises, I consider savours of the methods of the "agent-provocateur."

On the other side the evidence given seemed to be somewhat too emphatic, for instance one of the witnesses for the defence denied having heard of any talk of horse-racing in the house, and another frequenter of the place, whilst admitting that he had a betting account with a bookmaker, denied knowledge of a certain horse having won a very big race this season. Furthermore a third frequenter admitted betting by slips but hastened to add before being asked "but not on the premises." Such flashes as these caused many smiles in Court.

As regards the addresses to the Jury by the Counsel on both sides, various interpretations of words used by the accused and witnesses were stressed in favour of the party each represented, and went to prove that saying what one means is very often entirely different to that which one means to say.

The summing up by his Lordship in the respective cases was done most impartially, and whilst listening I could find no trace of leaning towards one side or the other in the slightest degree. Whilst we have such guidance, I do feel that justice is being done.

On the subject of the betting-laws in this country, I consider that they are in a most anomalous condition, but whilst they remain on the Statue Book they have to be administered. If the majority of people desire to have them altered they should press their Parliamentary representatives for such a reform.

In conclusion I would like to say to those people who are on the retired list and have some time to conveniently spare, should you receive a jury summons, answer it with a good heart and you will probably see a new phase in the lives of your neighbours, with which you will feel pleased.—R.A.

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## RATING & TOWN PLANNING IN THE BOOKHAMS

A few months ago our anxieties were aroused by the prospect of a quinquennial re-valuation of assessments for rating which threaten to throw a still heavier share of the burden of the rates upon the shoulders of the small householder. More recently, with the consideration of the draft plan of the Bookhams by the Leatherhead Urban District Council, our attention has been called to town planning. Not many of us perhaps realize how closely connected are these two questions of rating and town planning.

One of the objects of the Town Planning Act of 1932, as stated in its preamble, is "to provide for the protection of rural amenities." Your four representatives on the Council have been working together with the objects of preserving some of the rural amenities of the Bookhams. Under existing conditions this is an almost hopeless task. Without heavy expenditure a Local Authority can do little or nothing to preserve rural amenities, and heavy expenditure means increased rates. Your representatives are between the devil and the deep sea.

This heavy expenditure is necessitated by the high speculative value of land. Of the undeveloped land in the Bookhams only a small part can possibly be developed within any measurable period. The remainder cannot be utilized except for agriculture of some kind. Its value for this use is probably not above £50 an acre. Yet if you or I want a small piece of this agricultural land to build upon we have to pay as much as ten times this price. If the U.D.C. prevents development it has to pay compensation to the owners on the basis of a similar high price. We shall want more playing fields for the Bookhams in the near future and we shall have to pay for them too at this excessive price. Why is it that land the greater part of which can only be used for agriculture and is only worth £50 an acre for that purpose can yet command up to ten times that price when it is required for any other purpose?

The reason is that this undeveloped land pays little or nothing in rates and taxes. The owner loses nothing by holding out for his price. Development must be served, and land can be squeezed up to a high price; people must have houses, and this high price of land can be added to the capital cost and so to rents. I am not

shooting at individuals. A landowner would be more than human if he took less for his land than a purchaser was willing to give or if he refused easy money which the law permitted him to make. It is the system which is bad and requires amendment.

It is clear that the present system works most disadvantageously for most of us. We are prevented from preserving the amenities of our countryside by town planning. Our houses are more expensive and our rents are higher than they need be. Lastly, the main burden of the rates falls upon the householder. What should be done about it?

Ever since 1885 the remedy has been pointed out by Royal Commissions, by numberless bills in Parliament, and by the resolutions and agitation of the London County Council and hundreds of other Municipalities and Councils throughout Great Britain. This remedy is the assessment of land for the purpose of rates and taxes on the basis of its selling value and irrespective of the use which is made of it. A vacant site of the same size and quality would pay the same rates as one fully developed with a house and garden.

This is no new and untried system. The whole of the rates in Queensland are assessed upon land values alone. The system is practically universal in New South Wales. In New Zealand, Wellington, the capital, and 85 other local authorities raise the whole of their rates on land values. Other parts of the Empire also follow the same system wholly or partially. In Denmark all local bodies are bound by law to raise a substantial part of their rates upon land values. Many other examples could be quoted.

How would such a change affect us in the Bookhams? It would quickly take the speculative value out of land and reduce it to its true value, which in the rural parts of the district would be little above its value for agriculture. It would enable us to town plan effectively, and give us cheaper houses by removing an inflated land value from their cost. Last but not least, as rates were transferred more and more from their present basis to land values, it would reduce the assessments of the vast majority of us. If you are a householder owning a small house and garden and you have any doubt about this, just value up your house and garden, then value up the bare land without any of the improvements, and tell me upon which of these valuations you would prefer to be rated.—C. V. BRAYNE.

## AN APPRECIATION

It is fitting that the Social Service Bureau should place upon record their profound regret at the loss of an outstanding personality in Bookham, George Henry Cook, who passed away on Saturday, 30th July.

In him, humanity, deep piety with charm, and the welfare of others was inter-woven. To the general public, his name is connected with the Baptist Church and the Magisterial Bench, and it was generally known in The Bookhams, that his charitable bestowals were the true application of the spirit of Christian fellowship.

The scope of his more serious work, the influence he exercised on the public for whom he worked, need no further comment here. It will be enough to say that the Baptist Church was not sufficiently large to hold all those who wished to pay their tribute of affection.

A personality that was rooted in religion, sent forth live roots that met and embraced ordinary humanity at a hundred points.

## Local History—Stoke D'Abernon

The River Mole wanders away west from Leatherhead by Randall's Farm and Randall's Park, and perhaps Jane Austen used to imagine Emma and Mrs. Weston walking along the rather dull road that leads up to the valley by the side of the stream. North of the road, about a mile from the town, stood an old Roman camp, doubtless buried in a small wood. Another mile to the west is one of the most charming of old Surrey manor houses, now a farm-house but still known as Slyfield.

The Slyfields were essentially a Surrey family; they lived and worked as gentlemen and yeomen and parsons among the small Surrey villages of Send, Great Bookham, Byfleet, Pyrford, Ripley and Clandon; one of them, Edmond, was Sheriff of Surrey and Sussex in the time of Elizabeth. He was the greatest of the Slyfields, and left behind him sixteen sons and daughters, four Surrey names, and a will as careful and studious as himself. Some of the items are quaint reading.

To his son Waller, "my black velvett dublet and paire of hose of wrought velvett, my best night gowne, my best hatt, fower of my best shirtes and my best riding cloake." To his son William "my coate of taffetta and a short cloke of cashe laide with parchment lace." To his grandson, Edmond, one of his great bowls of silver.

The last item is one of the most interesting. It ought to be read in conjunction with an early item in the same will, in which special directions

are left to the executors not to pull down or to deface any matter of wainscot or glass in or about the house of Slyfield. For the end of the Slyfield family as a power in Surrey came with a bitter suddenness. Henry the Sheriff's elder son, succeeded his father in 1590, and died in 1598. He was succeeded by his son Edmond, who had been left one of "the great bowls of silver." Within sixteen years Edmond Slyfield had sold every stick and stone of the Slyfield manor, the Slyfield house was razed to the ground to make room for a new building and in the new building and on the old tombstones the name only remains.

The new manor-house is about three hundred years old, and was built for the possessor of another great Surrey name, George Shiers. He was the grandfather of Sir George Shiers, Bart., who was one of the most generous of testators to Surrey villages. Among other bequests, he left a sum of money to the parish of Great Bookham, which was to be thus devoted:—In preferring in marriage such maids born in this Parish as have lived and behaved themselves well for seven years in any one service and whose friends are not able to do it. To dispose of the surplus to such poor as by sickness, age, a great family of children, or otherwise shall be in danger of coming under the common relief of the Parish.—E.P.

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