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LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

May 1973  
No 152  
40th Year

# The Bookhams Bulletin

Quarterly Journal of the Bookham Community Association



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Quarterly Journal of the Bookham Community Association

May 1973

No 152

40th Year

*Editor:* Mrs E Harrison. Telephone Bookham 58702

*Distribution:* G Everett. Telephone Bookham 52404

*Advertisements:*

Mrs M Emery. Telephone Bookham 58730

## EDITORIAL

Bookham is competing for the title of Best Kept Surrey Village and the day of judgement is at hand. At any time during May or June the assessors will arrive. Since the decision to enter was made we have not let the grass grow under our feet. We hope that by the end of June many hands as well as feet will keep it trim and green and free from coca cola tins and toffee papers.

We are grateful to all those individuals and groups who have been 'mucking in', to use a colloquial expression; but there are still a lot of holes and corners to be tidied up. It is not too late! We appeal to all residents to look at their own verges and frontages and ask themselves if they will stand up to the Judges' scrutiny. If not, we hope that they will take action now, and not let the side down.

Everybody is justly proud of our new Old Barn Hall. It, too, is in the competition and is considered by many to be a firm favourite for the winning post. There is no reason why the village itself should not be equally placed if we all pull together. Equipment is available from the LUDC presuming we can find the strong men to do the work. Week-ends would be a good time for group action. Why spend money on obesity clinics when there is a more rewarding way of losing unwanted inches?

Offers of help, either on a group or individual basis may be made to the Warden of the Community Association at the Barn Hall (telephone Bookham 56901). Meanwhile make a special note in your diary of Sunday May 6th, from 10.00 am which is Spring

Cleaning Sunday. We hope that many people, especially the young ones, will turn up at the Barn Hall on that day. Age however, is no bar because the older ones can man the headquarters while the younger ones join the outside teams.

Bookham is known as the village which achieves the impossible. Here is another chance to show that this is true. There are some who say that there are many more picturesque villages in our vicinity but this is not a valid excuse for inaction. We quote from the conditions of entry sent out by the Surrey Council of Social Services, which sponsors the competition, and we do so at length, so that all shall know what we have undertaken. 'The main emphasis of the judges will be on tidiness and neatness throughout and not on the beauty of a village. Special credit will be given for a co-operative effort on behalf of the village. In awarding marks judges will pay particular attention to: Absence of litter. Hedges, fences and walls, churchyards, cemeteries, war memorials, bus shelters, telephone kiosks, centres and greens, recreation grounds and playing fields, verges, paths, ponds, streams and ditches, flower and vegetable gardens, the exterior and surround of all halls, inns, public houses, garages, filling stations, shops and workshops. The paucity and orderliness of advertisements.'

## COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION NEWS

**Official opening.** 'A noteworthy achievement' was Alderman Mrs C Gates description of the Barn Hall when she brought good wishes from Surrey County Council at the official opening of the Barn Hall on March 2nd. She added that the Bookham Association was an outstanding one in Surrey. A further tribute was given by Councillor S J Taylor who, as Chairman of the LUDC, conveyed the good wishes of the



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Leatherhead Council; he was proud, he said, to be a Bookham man and to have been associated with a project which had been carried through with imagination and courage to a successful conclusion.

Behind every Association occasion there must always be a small organising committee, often nameless, but always working on a shoestring. Like so many other village events it is where the women often do a 'mansize' job but do not look for any limelight. It is good, therefore, to be able to praise the little band of ladies, reinforced, it is true, by one or two men, who prepared and served the excellent Wine Buffet on this notable evening. Within a brief two hours delicious confections, stored away in freezers and fridges, appeared and were glamorously arranged on tables decorated in the BCA colours of orange and white. The many floral arrangements contained the first delicate spring blooms, an appropriate testimony to a rejuvenated Barn Hall where the old has been combined with the new to provide wider and more exciting facilities for all who care to participate and use them.

In thanking the 150 guests for their help in reaching the £30,000 building target, the President said she was speaking, in the first place, directly to them—Officers and Executive Committee who had never given up the struggle—Vice Presidents whose title indicated their outstanding and continuous service—representatives of organisations who had organised fund-raising events—individuals who had launched money making enterprises for the cause—men and women who had given weeks of voluntary service to furnish and decorate the new extensions. The Association offered them their warmest thanks.

To all the people of Bookham who could not be asked to the official opening but who had patronized events, donated monies and encouraged others to do so, the same deep appreciation should be extended. 'It is your Hall,' the President said, 'to be looked after and cared for as your home. It is for 'you', not for them. There must always be the ever-open door and an opportunity for all interests, whether small or large, to be accommodated

within the walls'.

The President invited the Chairman of the Council of the Association, Mr Roland Catt, to perform the Opening Ceremony. It was his generosity which had made available the Warden's Flat and it was his constant supervision, the President said, which had, despite every difficulty, given us this fine building, which was an act of faith and a place of beauty and gaiety.

Having declared the Extensions open, Mr Catt paid tribute to the ladies who had chosen and made the curtains, the amateur carpenters who had designed and constructed excellent shelves and cupboards, the technicians who had provided us with a first rate public address system, the painters and decorators who had struggled for weeks on end with no more substantial reward than the odd cup of coffee, the odd-job man who could not even be sure of his cup of coffee, and our honorary groundsman who had to be nameless but was known to everyone as the man who could not stop working.

A small Plaque beneath the original 1906 one was unveiled.

The happiest of conclusions was when Canon L A Bird, grandson of the original donor of the Hall, mounted the platform and presented to the Community Association photographs of the original building works, programmes of the 1906 official opening ceremony, press reports of the foundation speeches and a portrait of Sir Arthur Bird himself. In a felicitous little speech Canon Bird said he was sure his grandfather would be delighted by the improvements which had been built on the original foundation.

**To so many Friends and Neighbours.** President of the Bookham Community Association, Mrs E Harrison, says it is worth being ill to receive so many tokens of goodwill and affection. You have showered me with flowers, fruits, cards and gifts of all kinds. With so many of you pushing so hard I cannot but get well again. Thank you to you all. Looking forward to being 'back again' soon with so many good friends.

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## A WORD OF WARNING

Please remember the Community Association is not yet out of the wood. We have a building, but we still have possible debts of £10,000 to be met. Has your name yet appeared in the Donor's Book (amounts not published, only name)? Have you given a donation in memory of old friends of the Association now no longer with us?

Treasurer: Mr A G Medway  
35 The Garstons, Great Bookham  
Telephone Bookham 54967

## OBITUARIES

### Elsie Micholls

On the evening of March 2nd, 1973, at the age of 94, Miss Micholls, the grand old lady of Bookham, breathed her last at the moment when the Community Association was officially opening its final extensions. We had known she was disappointed that failing physical powers would prevent her from being with us at the proudest moment in our history, to which she had made a significant contribution. Many people would say it was just chance that the times should coincide but those of us who knew how bravely she spoke up for the ideal of the community association and how generous she was in support of it were not surprised that her fiery spirit should at such a moment break through its bonds.

Miss Micholls was a woman of distinction, determination and high principles. She was born in Manchester at a time when wealthy industrialists were recognising their responsibility for the welfare of their work people and she absorbed some of the new philosophy.

50 years ago Mrs Micholls with her two daughters moved from Lancashire and eventually settled at Manor House, Little Bookham (now Manor House School) later transferring to Manor Farm, with its magnificent tithe barn. Mother and elder daughter gave much time to local good works, but Elsie was destined for wider fields. She went to Girton College, Cambridge, where she passed her degree in history but was unable to take up the award as Oxbridge did not recognise their women students.

She naturally became very interested in

the National Council of Women, serving on the Executive Committee, and working through it to improve the status of women in public work.

From her twenties to her nineties she worked predominantly for youth and never faltered in its defence. During the war years she spent night after night in her Soho Club for boys and girls. They were a wild crowd but they respected her firmness, her fairness, her support and her fearlessness of personal dangers.

After the war, she was able to give more time to Bookham affairs gradually withdrawing from some of her London interests.

Some 10 years ago she was made President of the Bookham & District Girl Guides Association in recognition of the support she had given to their efforts to find their own Headquarters.

About the same time she also became President of the Bookham, Fetcham & Effingham Garden Society.

Fundamentally Miss Micholls was interested in people, not in things. She preferred to give rather than receive. Nobody turned to her and went away empty. Right to the end she retained a clarity of mind and a felicity of expression which never failed her in private discussion or public debate.

All this, however, would have been but dust and ashes without the sympathy and understanding of her friend, Mrs M Downing, whose gentle hand guided her through the valley of shadows.

### Edith Probert

The Bookham Afternoon WI and Edith Probert cannot be separated in our thoughts. She joined the Institute in 1940 shortly after moving with her husband to Bookham, and remained a faithful attender till her death in March.

She had a rich, full toned contralto voice which enthused the WI Choir which she founded and conducted for many years. It was the same pleasant enunciation which made her such an effective President. Her three years of office were characterised by the friendliness and harmony which radiated from her own natural courtesy.

Those of us in the village who thought we knew her well will probably be amazed by the width of her interests. Way back in the early 1920's she was occasional pianist to the

Special Branch, Scotland Yard Athletic & Social Club. She was an accomplished badminton and tennis player.

She was always an ardent supporter of the British Red Cross. From 1959–70 she was President & Social Secretary of the Leatherhead British Red Cross over 60's Club, deputising at the same time as pianist for the Fetcham Old Folks Minstrel Group.

During the war she worked energetically in Civil Defence and also served as a member of the WVS in the childrens school canteen stationed at the Barn Hall.

Bookham does not forget those who have served as diligently and cheerfully as did Edith Probert. She will be remembered for her dignity and charm.

### **Robin Longhurst**

How sad that shortly after a year in Meikle Ferry, near the little town of Tain in Ross & Cromarty, Robin Longhurst should have died. We had heard how he, and his wife, Beth, were enjoying the beauty of their new home and the opportunity to cater for friends in their small guest house.

We in Bookham were sorry when they left Merrylands Road. It was inevitable that Sole Cot had to go, and with it also had to go the care and attention which Beth and Robin Longhurst had given so willingly as caretakers of the Barn Hall.

We offer our sympathies to Mrs Beth Longhurst and tell her that when we see in spring the snowdrops growing in memory of her father-in-law, we shall at the same time remember her husband, Robin, with the same affection and appreciation.

### **Andrew Carson**

The youth movement in Leatherhead owes much to Andrew Carson. When we heard of his sudden death on April 30th we were shocked and found it almost impossible to realise that we should no longer have the stimulus of his reassuring and confident personality nor the support of his unflinching optimism.

His adult colleagues and the many young people he assisted will miss him as a friend. One could rely on him for advice and, perhaps even more important, practical help in a field of work which only too often is a target for criticism rather than an area for approval.

His industry was enormous. He was appointed the first County Youth Officer for Leatherhead in 1962 and, since that time, he had the responsibility for developing three new youth centres, servicing a growing number of non-statutory junior organisations and building up facilities at the County Camp site at High Ashurst. This last enterprise entailed much week-end supervision and it was here, on Easter Saturday, that he suffered the heart attack which resulted in his death.

He had a special interest in the National Association of Boys' Clubs in which he had worked before his appointment to Leatherhead. His cheerful approach made him welcome in all circles and enabled him to build bridges between the generations, a feat which is rare and, at the same time, so important at the present time. We in the Community Association knew him well. He attended most of our meetings and gave us valuable service.

Aged 59, he seemed full of the zest of life and we all presumed he had many years of active life before him. Looking back, we now realize that he carried too heavy a load and, from a sense of duty and a spirit of dedication, gave too much to his work. He himself would never have queried this commitment and was prepared to give his all for youth.

### **ROUND AND ABOUT**

Husband and wife, who together are **not** far from a half century in education and are now retired, are Mr and Mrs F Watkins who moved into Eastwick Park Avenue in 1965. They originally occupied the House at St. Lawrence Primary School where Mr Frank Watkins has given 25 uninterrupted and distinguished years service as headmaster and father figure to the boys and girls under his care, acted as friend and philosopher to generations of parents in their problems, encouraged every local event from baby show to sports days and village fetes, helped to build up the fund to develop King George V Playing Feilds and given great assistance to the Church. Born and bred a farmer he chose education as his first love but retained the countryside as his second interest: it is not surprising that Frank Watkins has the best allotment in Effingham.

There was a colossal turnout of village representatives at the farewell party given

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in his honour on April 14th. Many presentations were made to him including a cheque subscribed by the villagers as a whole and presented by Sir Barnes Wallis, a specially engraved steel spade from the Parish Councillors and a set of pipes from the School Governors.

Meanwhile his wife, Mrs Freda Watkins, who has been deputy head at Great Bookham Infants School for 9 years, had at her own request chosen a ceremonious but equally enjoyable party mainly restricted to the scholars and the Staff and Managers.

The lovely and appropriate gifts she received showed how much thought had been given to her special interests and what would bring her real pleasure when time to relax came her way.

We hope they will stay in Bookham with us for a long time. Mr Watkin's quizzical smile, which hides such a depth of human wisdom, always cheers us up; while Mrs Watkin's kind sympathy can always be relied upon to bring a gleam of sunshine to the rainiest day.

#### **'Of other things'**

Remember the tale about the old pub which was modernised, but the oldest customer was not impressed? He said 'I miss the Spittoons', and the landlord replied 'You always did'!

Well, we've been given a handsome china Victorian Cuspidor, as our American friends call them, and this will be sold at our Antiques Fair in September. Don't miss it!

We have had quite a lot of saleable gifts already, and a few nice pieces to sell on a

50/50 basis.

Over 30 dealers have booked spaces and we expect to have at least 40 stands this year, not including our own.

Last year our target was £300, and we raised £400 for the Barn Hall restoration fund. This year we aim at £500, and the sky's the limit. Don't forget, every little helps, from Pencils to Pole Screens and Perroquets. Phone Ray Wear, Bookham 52250.

#### **Apologies to Flower Arrangement Group if this notice arrives late**

Mrs Adele Gotobed, a world name in flower arranging, will be demonstrating on 'Inspiration and Creation' on May 10th at the Barn Hall, 7.45 pm. Tickets 60p including refreshments (from Mrs Soundy

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The Day Schools scheme for newer members to learn the basic mechanics of arrangements have proved most popular and will continue.

The Group has taken on its piece of social work and arranged a rota of helpers to decorate Leatherhead Hospital Foyer all the year round.

It is always gratifying to hear that our clubs use their special skills for the enjoyment of others. We are glad to acknowledge that the Flower Arrangers provided 40 table arrangements for the League of Friends end of the Year Hospital Dance.

**Bookham Garden Society makes Take-over bid** for Epsom Hospital's Rosebery Ward. It was an odd coincidence that Mrs Freda Poulter was in the bed in Rosebery Ward directly opposite Mrs Harrison. Your Editor, consequently, had the joy of looking over to pots of lovely white Primulas, baby Azaleas, Leucojums, and blue as well as pink African Violets.

Exotic bouquets of Interflora are lovely but within a day or two their beauty is fading. Well done Bookham Garden Society for the emphasis on pot plants. We were cheered to hear that Mrs Poulter and her husband Tom are keen members of the Garden Society, road stewards, and exhibitors. Their's is the right spirit. They put in entries, not to win prizes but in order to encourage their friends and neighbours to show things themselves.

What a show we could have if some of us could lose our diffidence and show our little specimens. Who knows but that we might be hiding treasures without knowing it.

**The Grange Training Centre** is the new name for what was formerly known as the School of Stitchery & Lace for Handicapped Women. Even yet there are a lot of local people who are still not aware of the new title. The Principal Miss J Cram, is pleased with what, she considers, a more modern title. Young people moving on to the Grange from School want to feel that they are progressing into an adult world where the emphasis will be on higher craft levels, enabling the students with special ability to become artists in the field of design and execution.

### **Gramophone Club**

At the AGM of Bookham Gramophone Club on April 5th, Mr Ray Wear was elected Chairman, Mr John Marriage, Secretary and Mr Cyril Whalley, Treasurer. The Treasurer reported a healthy balance in hand, all of which (and more) would be absorbed by repayment of outstanding interest-free loans and expenditure on necessary new Loud Speakers.

### **Bookham Bowling Club**

The Club celebrates its 40th anniversary this year and one of the many outstanding events will be a week's tour of the Isle of Wight.

A party of 48 members and wives will be travelling to Sandown and matches, consisting of 4 rinks men and 2 rinks ladies, have been arranged for each day against different clubs.

If the weather is kind it should be a memorable celebration.

### **Door Keys & Dana**

Whilst residing in Leatherhead during his appearance at the Thorndike Theatre in 'Our Town', Mr Dana Andrews had the misfortune to lose his one and only door key. The writer happened to hear of this and recommended Mr Andrews to a Bookham Ironmonger and Locksmith, who was able to cut a new key for him. He then came along to see 'Our Village' including of course our star attraction, the Old Barn Hall. He was delighted with it, and also most impressed by the stage, and said that the dressing facilities were far better than many he had used. We provided him with a copy of the Bulletin amongst other items of local interest and he has left us an autograph for our records.

Mr Andrews is off on a European tour of the US Forces after leaving us, and will certainly not forget his brief visit to Bookham. RW

### **Bookham Choral Society**

As foreshadowed in the previous Bulletin, the Choral Society (with the help of friends from Capel) performed Haydn's Mass in Time of War in St. Nicolas' Church on 6th April. The four young soloists included one local singer, Mark Elliott. The Choir was accompanied at the organ by Robin Gritton, who opened the performance with a short recital of works by Stanley and



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**Bach.** The event, which was well attended, contributed some £50 to the St. Nicolas Spire and Wire Appeal. The next evening the Choral Society visited Capel to join Capel Choral Society in a performance of the whole of their Leith Hill Festival music, including the Haydn Mass.  
LSH

## A SHORT HISTORY OF BOOKHAM

*continued*

### Part XII by John Harvey

*(copyright)*

Rents and dues paid under the manorial system varied greatly and it is difficult, on the evidence, to arrive at any clear picture of the value of houses and lands. Normally each villein paid an annual rent and was also mulcted heavily upon inheriting, having to pay a heriot or death-duty of the best beast on his land, and then a fine for admission to the tenement for his own lifetime. In addition to the heriot paid to the lord of the manor, the second-best beast had to be handed over as a mortuary due to the Rector of the parish. It has here to be remembered that after 1292 the abbot of Chertsey was both Lord and Rector of Great Bookham.

In the early 14th century the rents paid for cottages with a small plot of garden and up to one acre in the fields varied from 1s to 4s 6d, while the combined cash value of heriot and fine at each inheritance averaged about 4s 6d. Heriot and fine on a half-virgate farm (15) acres averaged about 10s, and upon a virgate (about 30 acres) 20s, while the yearly rents might be about the same. Since heriot and fine would only be paid on average at fairly long intervals, such as 20 years, this meant a real total rent of about 2s 6d for a cottage, 10s 6d for a half-virgate, and 21s for a virgate. These sums must be multiplied by a factor of about 120 to reach an idea of 1954 values, giving rentals of some £15, £65 and £130 respectively. (It should be noted that this history was written in 1954 and that today's comparable figures would have to be written up by the considerable inflation since that time).

Moderate as these rents appear in the urban Bookham of today, they are substantial for a rural community, and a great deal of ready money might have to be found to pay the fine on a large farm, as when John Leuayne

succeeded his father Gilbert in 1340. On his father's two messuages, one with a virgate and the other with two acres of land, he had to pay £3 6s 8d, the equivalent of £400 now.

The generation of Bookham's inhabitants born within about 20 years on either side of AD 1300 is the first known to us by name. Earlier records yield a few isolated individuals, but of the householders in the second quarter of the fourteenth century it is possible to compile almost a complete directory, this is due in part to the survival of the very detailed registers of Abbot John de Rutherwyk of Chertsey, and especially to the abstract of Court Rolls of the Abbey Manors from 1327 to 1347, now forming Lansdowne Manuscript No 434 in the British Museum.

Rutherwyk, who had been a monk of Chertsey, became abbot in 1307 and ruled for 40 years; the period of his abbacy was one of great activity, and he not only reorganised the finances and administration of the monastic estates, but was also a great builder. From his cartulary, companion to the registers of his courts, we know of many of his works, yet one of the most important is omitted, his rebuilding of the chancel of Great Bookham Church. The style of the windows would almost certainly have placed this within his long reign, but the exact year, 1341, is recorded by the Latin inscription in Lombardic capitals which still survives. The chancel and its dedicatory inscription together form Bookham's most impressive monument of the past, but we have bitterly to regret the loss of the whole of the original glazing, probably the finest and most costly part of the work. Of stained glass of Rutherwyk's time in the Surrey churches which belonged to Chertsey Abbey, nothing now remains except small fragments in tracery at Horley and Thorpe.

Several Vicars of Great Bookham of the time are known to us: William of Sutton in 1314; five years later William of Geddyng, at whose resignation in 1320 Geoffrey of Sutton was instituted; and in 1324 Thomas le Blount may have been related to Stephen le Blount, the contemporary Rector of Leatherhead, who died in April 1340; but most of these early clergy are shadowy figures. Of Little Bookham we know only that Walter de Geddyng was Rector in 1308,

while William de Northstock and Henry atte Uotho succeeded in 1349; it would seem that no fewer than four priests died in Bookham during the plague year.

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### September 8th Bookham Village Day

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### September 21st and 22nd Antiques Fair

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### 29th September 'Celebrations'

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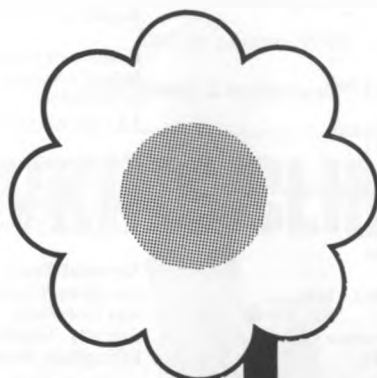
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