

A POSTCARD COLLECTION
OF BOOKHAM

By

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Album 4
(Pages 78 - 88)

The Bookhams

Polesden Lacey - Tanners Hatch Youth Hostel

Extracts from the **Tanners Hatch 50th Anniversary Booklet** by Julian Ross (1996)

Sometime during the fourteenth century, overshadowed by the Hundred Years War, a man we know nothing about built a cottage on the north slope of the Downs, between Dorking and Polesden. The nearest guess we have for construction stands at the 1330s, a few years after Marco Polo died, contemporary with the Byzantine Empire in its last century, Edward III of England and John Baliol of Scotland, and the founding of Queen's College, Oxford. Whilst that unknown peasant put up Tanners, Giotto began to build the famous campanile at Florence. A few years later the Plague swept Europe, leaving dead in its wake a third of the population of Britain.

Six and a half centuries later parts of that peasant's humble dwelling still stand, incorporated by successive rebuilding into the cottage we know as Tanners Hatch. After six centuries of peaceful existence, partly as a dwelling and partly as a barn, it began the busiest time of its long life. In the guise of a youth hostel it has seen several hundred thousand visitors, from nearby and from the ends of the Earth. This is the account of the history of that cottage.



An unused Valentine's Postcard.

Polesden Lacey - Tanners Hatch Youth Hostel

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The origin of the name is shrouded in mystery too. Notes, possibly 15th century, record the ownership of an acre of land in the name of a John Tanner. Other references dating between 1340 and 1530 record local land ownership by the Tanner or le Tan-nere families.

And then there were the leather tanners at Leatherhead. They needed oak bark for their tanning processes, and the shortest route for pack horses to reach the oak woodlands of Ranmore would have been up through Westhumble, past Bagden Farm, and then through Tanners Hatch. There is a local precedent for naming hatches after their users: Hoggs Hatch, leading via Hogden Lane to Bookham, is likely to have seen the passage of many herds of hogs (yearling sheep or pigs). So it is a case of "case not proven" and the visitor can take his or her pick of what theory to believe.

There have been two periods of vital importance to the history of Tanners Hatch as a youth hostel. The first period was the restoration between 1944 and 1946. The second took place during the first half of the 1990s, for it has been during this period that the modern YHA has come to terms with Tanners Hatch and begun to understand its unique position.

A new 21-year lease for both Tanners Hatch and Prospect Lodge was agreed with the National Trust, securing the future of both for the foreseeable future. Coincidentally the National Trust had celebrated its centenary just a year after the 60th anniversary of the foundation of the YHA and a year before the 50th anniversary of Tanners opening as a hostel.



TANNERS HATCH YOUTH HOSTEL. SURREY.

PHOTO R. GOULDING

A postally used Real Photograph postcard, dated 1957.

Polesden Lacey - Tanners Hatch Youth Hostel

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The youth hostel movement began in Germany, the first ever hostel opening in a small castle at Altena in 1910, the work of Richard Schirman. However increasing leisure time and a growing awareness of the countryside were common factors throughout Europe, particularly in the years following the First World War.

It may come as a surprise that the first youth hostels opened in Britain as late as 1931, although we might be envious of the 2s. 6d annual subscription and the overnight charge of 1s. 0d. On the other hand the YHA would appreciate the chance to obtain new hostels as cheaply again, Maeshafn in Flintshire costing a mere £900 to build. Even that proved a bit steep, and it was resolved to rent existing buildings "providing the cost of renovating does not exceed £50." And the warden's lot could be a hard one on a salary of £50 a year plus profit on the catering. They were tough times, but the first hostellers were tougher: at Winchester "the welcome was warmer in the spiritual than the calorific sense". But by 1939 there were 297 youth hostels open in England and Wales, there being separate associations in Scotland with 64 hostels), Northern Ireland and the Irish Republic, and membership approached 800,000.

Several hostels preceded Tanners in the area. First was the 49 bed National Demonstration Hostel at Holmbury St. Mary, the first example of modern hostel architecture in England, opening in July 1935 and remaining a YHA hostel today. The 32 bed Ewhurst Green hostel opened shortly afterwards in May 1936, a gift of the author Sir Philip Gibbs, but sadly closed during the 1980s.



An unknown used postcard c1940s folded and probably sent in an envelope. On the back the writer states:
Visited this hostel last tour of 1947. Hard job to find as it was pitch black and we did not know the way. Had to sleep on made up beds as there was a working party reunion being held. Very satisfactory otherwise.

The Bookhams

Beyond Polesden Lacey - Phoenix Farm/Ranmore Common

Beyond the road to Polesden Lacey is the only remaining farm along the Dorking Road, Phoenix Farm. The name derives from the days when the Romans grew grapes as an annual crop in Southern England, almost certainly introduced by the Romans. An ideal Southern slope for a vineyard lies between the farmhouse and the bottom of Bagden Hill. Phoenix is probably a corruption of 'Voenace', a vine growing area.



A postally used Frith's Series postcard dated June 1919 and below is another Frith's Series postcard. c1900s.



The Bookhams

Beyond Polesden Lacey - Ranmore Common

At the foot of Bagden Hill is 'Old Dene' built in 1899 and occupied with 18 acres of land (until recently) by the Hylton-Foster family since 1908, when there was only a well water supply; and to the west of the entrance drive, at the bottom of the Hill, a dew pond for watering the cattle. A main water supply came three years later. The house was built by Mr Cuthell of Chapel Lane. At that time there was a gate where Chapel Lane joins the road to Ranmore, enclosing Ranmore Common. Mrs Hylton-Foster's sister Lady Dunphie lived at Flushings House. One of Mrs Hylton-Foster's closest friends was Lady Victoria Downe of Bookham Grove, who was the daughter of Earl Grey, and whose husband was killed when big game shooting. Mrs Hylton-Foster died in July 1974.



Two Frith's Series postcards c1900s, the top card being postally used dated 1909.



The Bookhams

Beyond Polesden Lacey - Ranmore Common

Along Chapel Lane, near where it joins the road to Ranmore, there is a large chalk quarry in the escarpment of the hill. In the quarry face there are adits leading to large caves and galleries. Chalk was made into rectangular blocks and stacked for carrying away to be used for building. The cellar to No 30 High Street has such chalk blocks for the construction of the lower part of the cellar walls.



The top Frith's Series postcard has been postally used and is dated 1950. Below is a J. Salmon card.



The Bookhams

Beyond Polesden Lacey - Ranmore Common

On the top of Ranmore at the end stood a fort, one of a series of fortified bunkers built between 1889 and 1896 along the North Downs, part of a defensive scheme, which was abandoned in 1905. This fort consisted of ramparts containing ammunition stores, partially underground; set round three sides of a Courtyard. Access to the stores was by concrete stairways. There was an excellent field of fire from the ramparts down the escarpment of the Downs. The forth side of the Courtyard was occupied by living quarters with a protective wall in case of accidental explosion, and the entrance which was closed by substantial and heavy gates. The fort was demolished in 1971.



The top postcard is a Frith's, dated 1932. Below is a local X. L. Series card published by The Surrey View Co c1920s.



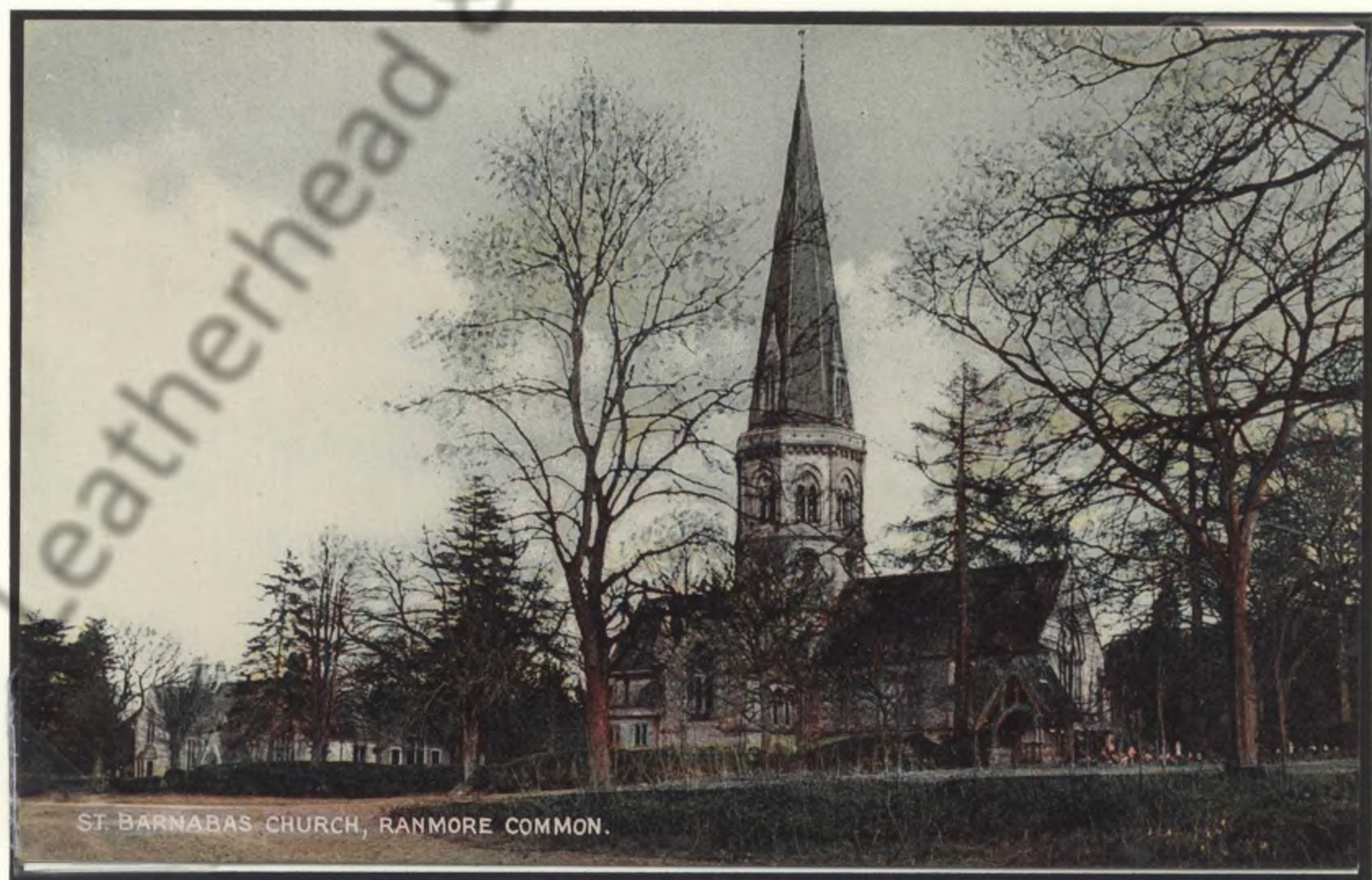
Beyond Polesden Lacey - Ranmore Church

History of the Church:

St. Barnabas, RANMORE, The Church on the North Downs Way, was built at the sole expense of Mr. George Cubitt, MP, who later became the First Baron Ashcombe. An estate church, it was consecrated on All Saints Day 1859 and was intended to serve the people employed on the Cubitt family's recently acquired estate of Denbies on the outskirts of Dorking. The Church was designed by Sir George Gilbert Scott, the Architect who is famous not only for his restoration of many of England's cathedrals, but also for the Albert Memorial and St. Pancras Station in London and St. Mary's Cathedral in Edinburgh. The Church benefits from its site on the ridge of the North Downs and is noted for its octagonal tower and tall slender spire which stands over 700 feet above sea-level. The tower contains a ring of eight bells cast by Mears & Stainbank, the Tenor weighing just under 1 Ton. With the help of the Guildford Diocesan Guild, the Surrey Association of Church Bellringers, Mr. Adrian White, the present owner of Denbies, and other interested parties the bells were restored and rehung in 1990.



A Frith's series postcard postally used dated 1904. Below an unknown coloured postcard.



The Bookhams

Beyond Polesden Lacey - Ranmore Church

History of the Church:

Inside, the Church has survived almost unaltered, with all its original fittings. The East window was a gift, with stained glass by J.G. Crace. The most outstanding feature of the interior of the church is the extensive use of marble, the Font and High Altar being especially notable. The Altar was given in 1905 in memory of Lady Laura Ashcombe by her children. To the south of the Altar is a memorial to the First Baron Ashcombe depicting him in peer's robes, kneeling and offering the Church to God.



Two Frith's Series postcards, the top being postally used dated 1939. The bottom is c1900s.



The Bookhams

Beyond Polesden Lacey - Ranmore Church

History of the Church:

The Organ was built in 1859 by Joseph Walker. Until 1954 it was confined in a small chamber on the North side of the Chancel. In 1954 it was moved to the North Transept and rebuilt with the original pipework, but with a new console and casework and an electric blower. In 1986 an electronic action was installed and the specification of the organ was improved.

In 1920 the South Transept was converted into a chapel by the Second Baron Ashcombe in memory of his three sons killed in the Great War of 1914-18. The Retable, Altar and Footpace are of Greek marble. The Reredos is of carved beerstone. The mural paintings on the East wall are by Reginald Frampton, the last of the pre-Raphaelites. They are painted directly on to the stone and not, as is usual, on to plaster. The parclose screen is of oak.



An unused Frith's series postcard of the interior dated 1906

The Bookhams

Beyond Polesden Lacey - Ranmore Church

History of the Church:

Until the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939 the Church thrived. Over 300 people were employed on the estate and all were expected to attend church regularly. Inevitably the decline of the fortunes of the estate from 1945 also affected those of the Church and the Cubitt family, who had for so long been its benefactor, could no longer give its support. In 1962, following the death of the Third Baron Ashcombe, the patronage of the Church was handed over to the Church Commissioners, after which it was decided to unite St. Barnabas with St. Martin's Dorking, the Vicar of Dorking also becoming the Rector of Ranmore.

The building next to the Church was a school and the schoolmaster's house built by Lucy Cubitt in 1858 and enlarged in 1893 and again in 1909. Gilbert Scott was the original architect. The house opposite the church was the Rectory. All are now private homes.



An unused Frith's Series postcard and below a Milton card.

