

LEATHERHEAD & DISTRICT  
LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

# The Bookhams Bulletin

Quarterly Journal of the Bookham Community Association

No. 79

JUNE, 1953.

21st year



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# The BOOKHAMS BULLETIN

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## EDITORIAL

Bookham was proud to receive a visit recently from Mr. J. R. Bevins, Parliamentary Private Secretary to the Ministry of Health and Local Government, who on Wednesday, 15th April, opened at The Grove estate the 1,000th house to be built by Leatherhead U.D.C. since the war. Mr. Bevins was welcomed by Mr. H. S. Machin (Chairman, Leatherhead U.D. Council), who was supported by the Vice-Chairman (Mr. T. F. Devitt) and other Councillors. After the formal ceremony of declaring the house open and handing the key to the tenant, Mrs. K. I. Otway, Mr. Bevins congratulated the Council on their achievement in housing between 5,000 and 6,000 people during the past 7 years. He mentioned that the cost to the district

was equivalent to a sevenpenny rate, which had been levied to meet the subsidy on Council houses.

This is no mean burden on the local residents, and it behoves those responsible for the management of Council property to ensure that the available new houses are wisely allocated. A points system has been applied in which among other factors the needs of those with young families have been given high priority. This is as it should be, and by keeping the welfare of young children to the fore the Council has made wise provision for the men and women of the future.

This brings to mind the need to ensure that sufficient school accommodation and playing fields are made available for the children on the Bookham Grove estate. It is satisfactory to record that, after a most undignified display of official obstructiveness, the County Education Committee have decided at the eleventh hour to accept the terms offered by the trustees of the Bookham Baptist Church for the hire of temporary classrooms to take some 35 children newly admitted to Bookham Primary School.

But for that decision the children would have been out of

school until the autumn, by which time it is anticipated that the two additional classrooms needed at the village school will be ready for occupation. That provision has been made for the children, who would otherwise not only have lost a term's schooling but perhaps have added to the problems of road safety, is due to the pressure which was brought to bear on the County Council, both by the Central Divisional Executive (Education), on which Bookham and Effingham are well represented, and by the Educational Facilities Committee of the Leatherhead U.D.C.

Their next task is to persuade the County authorities to purchase sufficient of the glebe land flanking the Lower Road to provide an adequate playing field for the Primary School. The Paddocks recreation ground, at present used by the School, involves a walk of some 10 minutes and more than one dangerous road crossing. It is, moreover, too small for present-day needs: the turf will not stand the combined attack of school children on weekdays and adults at week-ends. We hope the educational powers-that-be will not delay the purchase of much-needed playing fields for Bookham's children.

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## BOOKHAM CORONATION FESTIVITIES

I am very grateful to the Community Association for inviting me to address these few words to my friends and neighbours in Bookham concerning the programme which the Celebrations Committee has arranged in honour of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II on Tuesday 2nd June, 1953.

It will be a great day for the village, as for our country and Commonwealth, when we shall put aside workaday cares and unite in doing honour to our beloved Queen. The festivities will be a way of expressing our thankfulness for the many privileges which we in this country enjoy under her rule as head of our democratic Government.

My Committee has been at work for many months on the arrangements for the events to take place in Bookham on the afternoon and evening of Coronation Day, and of which full details are given below. All that we need now are fine weather and YOUR co-operation.

I appeal to you all to turn out and support the Coronation Celebrations.

**God Save the Queen !**

T. KILLE, Chairman,  
Great and Little Bookham Coronation Celebrations Committee.

### BOOKHAM CORONATION FESTIVITIES, 2nd JUNE, 1953

#### The Fancy Dress Parade

##### Classes of Entry

1. Fancy Dress. Pedestrian.  
Adults.
2. Fancy Dress. Pedestrian.  
Children.
3. Decorated Bicycles.
4. Decorated Prams.
5. Decorated Cars and Trade  
Vehicles.
6. Tableaux on Vehicles.

#### 7. Best Humorous Entry.

##### *The Parade Route and Times*

- 2.30 p.m. Procession assembles at Middlemead.  
3.00 p.m. Proceed via Little Bookham and the Station to the Barn Hall.  
3.15 p.m. Children assemble at Barn Hall.  
3.45 p.m. Procession leaves Barn Hall.  
4.00 p.m. Arrive at Recreation Ground.

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### The Sports Programme

1. Boys, over 5 but under 7 years. 50 yards.
2. Girls, over 5 but under 7 years. 50 yards.
3. Toddlers' Race. Boys under 5 years.
4. Toddlers' Race. Girls under 5 years.
5. Boys, over 7 but under 9 years. 80 yards.
6. Girls, over 7 but under 9 years. 80 yards.
7. Boys, over 9 but under 11 years. 100 yards.
8. Girls, over 9 but under 11 years. 100 yards.
9. Boys, over 11 but under 13 years. 100 yards.
10. Girls, over 11 but under 13 years. 100 yards.
11. Boys, over 13 but under 15 years. 100 yards.
12. Girls, over 13 but under 15 years. 100 yards.
13. Catching - the - Train Race. Junior Boys.
14. Catching - the - Train Race. Senior Boys.
15. Boat Race. Teams of 5 Boys. Open.
16. Egg and Spoon. Junior Girls.
17. Egg and Spoon. Senior Girls.

There will be many other events for young and old if time permits.

### Programme of Events at The Paddocks Recreation Ground

- 4 p.m. Arrival of Procession from Little Bookham.
- 4 to 4.15 p.m. Service of dedication and blessing.
- 4.15 to 5.15 p.m. Children's Tea.
- 5.15 to 6.45 p.m. Sports (see programme on this page).

6.45 to 7 p.m. Distribution of prizes by T. Kille, Esq.,

7 p.m. Country Fair Tableaux, depicting a village fair of 100 years ago; with the pedlars, fortune tellers and apothecary, maypole dances, roundabout, Squire and his lady, dandy and pickpocket, and beadle.

7.30 p.m. Comic football, cricket and stoolball matches.

8.30 p.m. Tug-of-war (if it can be arranged).

9.10 p.m. Dancing on Green.

10.15 p.m. Torchlight procession, bonfire and firework display. The route for the torchlight procession will be: Dorking Road, High Street, Lower Road, Eastwick Road, and return via Leatherhead Road.

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## OBITUARY

### Florence Lily Jenkinson

The passing of Miss Florence Jenkinson on the 10th February, following injuries received in a road accident near Guildford, was deeply felt by her wide circle of friends.

She came to Bookham about 10 years ago and quickly settled down to the many jobs of voluntary service to which she had decided to devote her retirement after many years as a teacher at a girls' school in Leek, Staffordshire.

Miss Jenkinson's sympathy and kindness endeared her to the old people of Bookham, many of whom she visited regularly on behalf of the local Red Cross. The Chelsea Pensioners too knew and valued her services at their hospital locally, and she devoted one day each week to voluntary duties at the Leatherhead Hospital.

These, however, were but the outward manifestations of an inward life deeply rooted in the spirit of our Lord Jesus Christ. In the closing years of her life Florence Jenkinson, though nominally an Anglican, turned more and more for spiritual fellowship to the Society of Friends, whose small meeting at Bookham she attended regularly.

Her great joy was in her solitary walks through the Surrey countryside; walking, indeed, like George Fox, "cheerfully through the world seeking that of God in everyman."

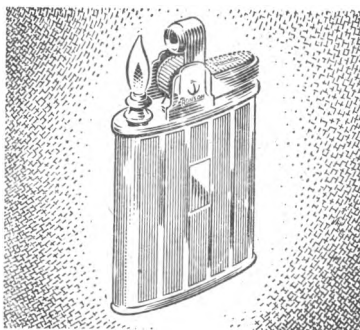
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**2.30 and 6.45 p.m.**

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Seats: 10/6, 7/6, 4/6 Reserved. 2/6 Unreserved. Promenade 1/6.

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**“AS YOU LIKE IT”**

**Notes on the Performance at the  
Open-Air Theatre, Polesden Lacey**

The Bookham Community Association have established ticket agencies for the “As You Like It” performances at Polesden Lacey in most of the Surrey towns, in London and in the provinces, and they report good bookings for both performances at 2.30 p.m.

and 6.45 p.m. on Saturday, 27th June.

The producer, Miss Elsie Green, is well known in the district for the originality and verve of her direction. Rosalind will be played by Barbara Stead, who will be remembered for her charming performance as Puck in “Midsummer Night’s Dream”, while George Longhurst, who so

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effectively played Oberon, will take the part of Duke Senior. Members of the Bookham Choral Society will sing the lovely songs, including classics like "Blow, blow, thou winter wind" and "It was a Lover and his Lass", set to Arne's music.

Dances will again be incorporated in the production. An important feature of the performance will be the music played by the Surrey Philharmonic Orchestra under its conductor, Kathleen Riddick. Handel's compositions have been chosen on this occasion. A number of his overtures will be played and also his Water Music.

The story of the play is a simple one. Rosalind, daughter of Duke Senior, is banished from the palace by her uncle, Frederick, who has usurped the dominions and title of her father. Her cousin, Celia, whose companion she has been from babyhood, insists on fleeing with her. Rosalind disguises herself as a boy, and accompanied only by the Court fool, Touchstone, they escape together to the forest of Arden where the outlawed Duke has found a refuge. Here they meet Orlando, who has also been driven from his home by the jealousy of a brother. They find that he is in love with Rosalind following his brief encounter with her at the Court when participating in a wrestling competition. He does not recognise his "Rosalind of many parts" in her male attire and she, pretending to make sport of his infatuation, draws him on to

further protestations of devotion which please her well as she, in turn, has fallen in love at sight with the gallant young man.

In this case the course of true love runs smoothly. Rosalind is reunited with her father and marries Orlando. Duke Frederick, in pursuing his outlawed niece and his daughter, meets with a hermit, repents and returns his possessions to Duke Senior. Orlando's brother, also, bound on a similar mission of revenge, encounters Celia in the Forest, loves her, woos her and renounces his evil schemes. The double marriage of the cousins with the two brothers and the restoration of the dukedom to the rightful owner concludes the play.

The appeal of "As You Like It" is in the idyllic picture of the English countryside as portrayed in the Forest of Arden. A speech from the play describing Duke Senior's retreat sets the atmosphere—"there they live like the old Robin Hood of England; they say many young gentlemen flock to him every day, and fleet the time carelessly as they did in the golden world."

Shepherds and shepherdesses, foresters and courtiers, philosophers and young lovers people the scene. For the space of a summer afternoon we can relax with the good duke and watch with him while he "finds tongues in trees, books in the running brooks, Sermons in stones, and good in everything."

E.H.

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### BOOKHAM JOTTINGS

The Congregational Church Hall was the scene of a memorable family gathering on Saturday, 11th April, to celebrate the diamond wedding anniversary of Mr. and Mrs. E. C. Twigg, who were married at St. Stephen's Church, Battersea, on the 2nd April, 1893. They came to Great Bookham in 1924 and have been members of the Bookham Congregational Church ever since. Mr. and Mrs. Twigg were honoured by receiving the following telegram of congratulation from Her Majesty: "The Queen sends you warm congratulations and good wishes on your Diamond Wedding Day."

Mr. E. E. Oldershaw, the genial secretary of the Bookham Community Association, was in excellent form for his address on

"The Northumberland Country-side" to the Naturalists' Group on Wednesday, 15th April. Having lived in Northumberland for many years, the speaker was able to illustrate his talk by many personal reminiscences, as well as by a collection of photographs taken by himself. He also used gramophone records to illustrate the bird song of the district, and showed some 50 lantern slides, and a specimen of the plant *Erinus* which is reputed to grow only on Hadrian's Wall. Mrs. N. E. Waterfield presided.

Mr. Charles Beddous, whose recent resignation from the Chairmanship of the Executive of the Community Association was received with regret and an expression of appreciation of his great services in that capacity, is continuing for the coming year as Hon. Secretary of the Mid-Surrey Film Society. At the annual meeting of the Society recently it was stated that 270 members had enrolled for the autumn session of 1952 and 229 for the present spring session. Mr. Alec Guinness, the well-known actor, was re-elected as the Society's President.

Readers of the *Bulletin* will learn with regret of the resignation of Mr. J. B. Harris from the Editorial Committee. Mr. Harris has for the past 3 years been Honorary Sports Editor, and his reports of the activities of the Football and Cricket Clubs have been a valued feature. He is about to remove from the district and the warm thanks of his friends in the village for all Mr. Harris has done for sport locally go with him into his new sphere.

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## RECENT CHANGES IN THE LOCAL BIRD POPULATION\*

BY GORDON DOUGLAS

The last twelve years have seen more changes in the density of our local birds, than any similar period of the century. These changes can be attributed to two major events. I refer to the second World War, and the hard winters of 1930/40, and more especially 1947.

The war itself probably made very little direct difference; but indirectly brought about most far reaching circumstances. This may never be adjusted to a pre-war balance, as far as the bird life of the area, and indeed the country generally, is concerned. These conditions have had a most adverse effect, and the majority of observers are of the opinion that, between the years 1939-1948, diminution of both resident and migrant species can be estimated at not less than 50 per cent. Many resident species have increased since then, in a few cases to the pre-war status; but migratory birds have not fared so well, except in a very few instances.

Protracted frost and deep snow are the worst enemies of most birds, at any rate during the winter months. The finding of food becomes practically impossible for insectivorous species, which died in scores in early 1947. Fruit and seed eaters fared slightly better, as their numbers showed in the subsequent months. Marsh and water birds forsook the ponds

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and marshes for rivers and sea-shores, which saved them to a large extent. Only the predatory and scavenging birds did well, at this time: with dead and dying animals and birds in abundance, they fattened at the expense of their more fastidious neighbours, and greatly increased subsequently. I have often noticed that after a winter of deep snow, the Ravens in Devon or Wales have much larger broods than normal. The reason is that, as the snow melts, the carcasses of many sheep are exposed; mutton is their principal diet, and a well nourished bird produces more eggs than usual. Kestrels and Owls lay much larger clutches of eggs during or after a plague of voles, their favourite food.

The war has been over nearly eight years, but we are still feeling its effect; and will no doubt continue to do so for many years: the effect on the county's natural life will also remain; it has certainly left its mark. Firstly the gamekeeper practically ceased to exist as a preserver of game, but gave his energies to more important work. Moreover, there is little likelihood of game preservation being carried on extensively, as in pre-war days.

The results of this were more drastic than might have been anticipated. Not only did game birds naturally dwindle, due to the cessation of rearing operations; but rapacious animals and birds, especially Corvidii, increased to an alarming extent. Of the Corvidii, Carrion Crows, Magpies, and Jays have multi-

plied the most. The handsome but evil Magpie, which in 1939 was scarce in the district, and absent, I believe, from the parishes of Effingham, Bookham and Fetcham, is now a familiar sight. In some considerable measure, vermin are no doubt responsible for the decline of Pheasants and Partridges; but to a more marked degree have they contributed to the present scarcity of our more familiar songsters and larger harmless passerines. Nests are being consistently plundered of eggs or young by the crow tribe and grey squirrels; fledglings and even old birds are killed by hawks, foxes, and stoats. Rats oddly enough have decreased on the whole, and in my opinion are much less common than before the war. During spring 1951, in a certain orchard under my observation, practically every nest located by me was robbed of its eggs by, I believe, Magpies. The victims included Song-Thrush, Blackbird, Linnet, Greenfinch, Goldfinch, Spotted Flycatcher, Wren, and Robin. Hardly a nest hatched out, and after four or five attempts, at—usually—ten day intervals, the wretched parents were forced to give up for the season. The same depredations were noted in a Great Bookham garden, and once again Magpies or perhaps Jays were probably the culprits, although definite proof was not forthcoming. It is curious that Blackbirds suffered least in both places; perhaps the birds are bolder in the defence of their nests.

Another wartime necessity was the cutting down of many woods and belts of trees; also the ploughing up of rough, uncultivated areas such as Effingham Common, which has left its mark. In many places where the living timber has been spared, dead trees and dead limbs have been taken for firewood. A serious matter this for hole-nesting species such as Wryneck, Titmice, Nuthatch, Owls, and Woodpeckers; these have in many cases been forced to move on, or been driven to gardens, or other more unusual places for their nesting.

Recent years have witnessed many changes in farming and gardening methods, throughout the country. The increased use of sprays on fruit trees, and against insect pests generally, must reduce the food of insectivorous birds. Furthermore, it is believed that birds that eat the victims of certain insecticides are frequently poisoned. The ever-increasing use of artificial manures, has been found to have a detrimental effect. However, our district has probably been affected less than others by these influences.

The results of these changing conditions have had a most unfortunate effect on the county's fauna. The fluctuations of Bookham Common and its surroundings, have been specially under my notice, also the woods and hills to the South. For the most part, only birds that are likely to deplete our fast diminishing species of songsters seem to have increased.

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The following species which formerly bred here have entirely disappeared since 1939:— Stonechat, Yellow Wagtail, Tree Sparrow, Winchat, French Partridge, Corncrake and Redshank. It must be admitted that some of these were extremely rare in the district, a pair or two at the most; and some may still breed unknown to me.

Many species have suffered serious diminution, but still do breed with us in reduced numbers. Most noticeable of these are:— Bullfinch, Hawfinch, Treecreeper, Missel-Thrush, Goldcrest, Lesser Whitethroat, Blackcap, Willow-Warbler, Wood-Warbler, Chiff-Chaff, Grasshopper - Warbler, Wren, Longtailed-Tit, Redbacked-Shrike (now very rare), Swallow, House-Martin, Swift, Great

Spotted-Woodpecker, Kingfisher, Turtle-Dove, Snipe, Lapwing, Ducks, and Game Birds. Some of these, and others not mentioned, have largely recovered.

Lastly, I am pleased to be able to add that since the war I have been able to prove cases of breeding of the following:— Woodlark, Garganey, Redstart, and Lesser Spotted-Woodpecker (which has probably bred sparingly for many years). These were unknown to me in the district formerly. Two species strike me as being on the increase, viz., Wryneck, and Spotted-Flycatcher. Finally, it is of interest to note that several interesting visitors have been seen locally, such as:— Curlew, Scaup, Wheatear, Waxwing, Peregrine, Pochard, Woodchat and Hoopoe.

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Official, address, telephone, meeting place, time, all refer to Bookham unless otherwise stated. Asterisk denotes affiliation to the Bookham Community Association.

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