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The Bookhams Bulletin

Quarterly Journal of the Bookham Community Association

No. 82

MARCH 1954.

22nd year



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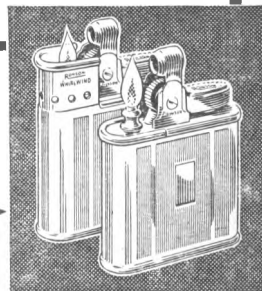
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The BOOKHAMS BULLETIN

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EDITORIAL

During Coronation year the British people were frequently told, in speeches and newspaper articles, that they had reason to be proud of themselves and their achievements. This is undoubtedly true about many things, but thoughtful people will agree that there are certain conditions prevailing throughout the country about which we have little reason to feel any pride or satisfaction. Even in a small country community such as the Bookhams, there are many problems crying out for solution which could be satisfactorily solved if the interest, and then the energy, of the inhabitants could be aroused.

Consider, for instance, the ever present problem of illness in the case of the aged and infirm, of whom there are a great number in Bookham. Almost everyone has had experience of the type of illness in the home which necessitates constant attendance day

and night for a short period. Where the housewife is young and healthy, the loss of two or three nights' sleep may not be a serious matter. But illness or infirmity in the case of the aged may last for several months—sometimes years—and during all that time the relative who is responsible for nursing the invalid is never able to have an unbroken night's rest; sometimes it is essential to sit up all night over a lengthy period. This results in a gradual draining of vitality and strength, followed frequently by a dangerous state of physical and mental exhaustion. In many cases an aged widow or widower is being nursed by a spinster daughter, herself middle-aged. In others, the care of the invalid is undertaken by a married daughter who—in addition to nursing and running the home—has a husband and young children to look after. Then there are the elderly couples living in the old people's bungalows on the two Council estates—the “over seventies” and sometimes “over eighties”: when one falls ill, the other has to undertake the nursing, sometimes with tragic results. The position is even more serious in the case of an aged person living entirely alone, where increasing infirmity calls for a certain amount of home nursing,

but is not sufficient to justify admission to hospital (and they do so hate the idea of giving up their homes and going into hospital!) Kindly neighbours can usually be relied on to look after the invalid during the day, but their own home obligations prevent their giving similar help at night.

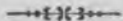
The Guildford Borough Council are tackling this problem in their own area with a simple scheme of “night sitters-in”, run through their Old People's Welfare Committee, somewhat on the lines of the “home help” service, where people pay for the help provided according to their means. This service is available to all infirm people over the age of 60, whether living alone, with relatives, or with friends. The night attendants are intended in the main to be merely “sitters-in”; they are not expected to provide more than simple nursing if required, or to be responsible for other than light and simple domestic duties.

Could not a somewhat similar scheme be started in Bookham? There must be many men and women with a certain amount of home nursing experience (*not* trained nurses), whose home circumstances leave them free to volunteer for night work, and who

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would be glad to augment their incomes by undertaking this service. Except in the case of a sick or infirm aged person living entirely alone, it is not suggested that these paid helpers should *take the place* of family nursing, but merely relieve it by attendance on one or possibly two nights a week, and so enable the responsible relative to go to bed on those nights, and sleep restfully with a clear conscience, knowing that the invalid will be well looked after.

If public opinion in Bookham could be aroused a service of "night sitters-in" could as easily be operated in Bookham as in Guildford, through, say, the recently formed Leatherhead Old People's Welfare Committee. All that is necessary is interest, energy and enthusiasm. Surely it is the duty and responsibility of Bookham people to see that something is done, and promptly, to meet this very pressing need.

A SHORT HISTORY OF BOOKHAM, SURREY PART III

By JOHN HARVEY, F.S.A.
(Copyright reserved to the author)

Little remains of the Bookham seen by the Domesday surveyors of 1086. The landscape has been utterly changed, and only part of one building remains: two windows and a little walling from the early Norman church of Great Bookham. These windows were found in 1913 by the late Philip M. Johnston, above the later north arcade of the nave. This arcade was inserted in an existing wall,

to avoid demolition. The church in its original form was about 50 feet long by 20 feet wide, and covered the nave of the present church from the Tower to the Chancel Arch; there may have been a small square or apsidal chancel to eastward. The coloured patterns on the reveals of the eastern window, even though they may not date from the 11th century, are the earliest work of decorative art so far found in Bookham.

In Norman times the church was served by a rector; Chertsey Abbey did not appropriate the advowson until 1292, when the old rectory became the vicarage. Thus from the 13th century, and very possibly from the 7th, the parsonage house of Bookham stood on the same ground that the "Old Rectory" does to-day. This house itself dates only from the early years of the 19th century; in 1933 it was sold by the church authorities, who bought the present rectory. Little Bookham Manor House (now Manor-house School) probably stands on its Domesday site, but the old Manor House of Great Bookham, on a site close by Park View, has disappeared, and so has Slyfield Mill which lasted into the 19th century. But we may feel sure that most of the plots on either side of the High Street have been inhabited sites for over 1,000 years.

Something of the aspect of the Bookham countryside in the 11th century can be pieced together from later sources, and though we

must not picture a static village where nothing ever happened, the same essential features remained constant from the time of Domesday, and indeed earlier, until the close of the 18th century. The ancient parish fell into certain natural divisions, which provided the skeleton for its history. Starting at the north there was the river with the mill and water meadows, behind which rose wooded slopes of heavy clay land continuing for over a mile. Part of the northern slopes became enclosed as time went on, trees were cleared, and a little settlement of independent farms grew up, later known as "Northend" from its position in relation to the village.

Beyond these farms southwards stretched, and still stretches, the wild expanse of Bookham Common, in part thickly wooded. Across it ran a valley whose small stream was dammed to form a fish-pond. Further on the enclosures began again, alongside the lanes which led to the village and its hamlets, Eastwick and Preston. At the centre of the parish were church, manor-house and High Street. Gates or "hatches" shut off the streets of the village from the wandering cattle on the commons, and there were also hatches where hedged lanes led off the common land. Although the gates across the roads have disappeared, several still stand on the smaller lanes leading from Bookham and Ranmore Commons.

Around the houses of the village stretched the Common Arable Field, more than a square mile in

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extent, running up to the Polesden boundaries on the south, and filling the whole width of the parish between Fetcham on the east and Effingham on the west. The open fields of these parishes carried on in one unbroken sweep along the slope of the Downs. No fences or hedges broke the rolling sea of crops except where the groups of village plots stood out like islands, or peninsulas of uncleared woodland stretched out from the waste. This ploughland was on the chalk, which provided good drainage, so that the soil never became waterlogged. For this reason no vestiges can be traced of the old individual strips, which in the Midland Counties may still be distinguished by their humped contours, showing as a series of tall and narrow reversed S-curves across the pastures. These ridge-and-furrow strips were produced by constant turning with the plough from each side towards the centre of the strip to drain the soil, while turning the plough-team at each furrow's end made the curved plan.*

At the summit of the sloping field began the great beech-wood from which Boc-ham, the village by the beeches, took its name. Bocwode or Southwode, stretching across the valley to the further heights of Ranmore, must always have been an inviting forest beside which to dwell, and the enterprising Saxons Poll and Bacga left us their names attached to the sections of the valley, Poles-dene and Bag-dene, in which they

* See C.S. and C. S. Orwin: *The Open Fields* (1938).

made their homes. Polesden, indeed, seems to have been a name applied to the valley as a whole.†

SCOUTS AND GUIDES

1st Bookham Scout Group

Once again the Boy Scouts' Association will next month be launching its nation-wide Bob-a-Job Appeal. In so doing the Chief Scout, Lord Rowallan, asks every member of the Scout movement to earn during the week commencing 19th April 2/- towards the administrative cost of the movement at their headquarters in London. Amounts earned in excess of this first call of 2/- go, after a small deduction towards county and district expenses, to the funds of the Scout Group to which the Scout or Cub belongs.

Last year, thanks to the co-operation of our many Bookham friends, the Bookham Scouts and Cubs earned a record total of £47 15s. Let us have plenty of jobs again this year, and we will do our best to give satisfaction!

At Whitsun (5th—7th June) the Bookham Scouts will be joining the Surrey County Scout Camp on Ranmore Common. It is estimated that there will be some 3,000 Scouts in camp drawn from all parts of Surrey. During the week-end the Deputy Chief Scout, General Sir Rob Lockhart, K.C.B., will be visiting the camp. Visitors to the camp are welcome at any time.

August is as yet some way off.

† See *Surrey Archaeological Collections*, vol. L (1949), 161-164.

but it is not too soon to plan arrangements for summer camps and already a site on a farm within 3 miles of the sea has been reserved.

If the requisite help is forthcoming it is hoped to arrange for the Cubs first to occupy the site, followed a week later by the Scout camp. Such an arrangement would considerably reduce transport costs. At this early stage it is not possible to give further details.

L.R.H.

1st Bookham Guide Company

Their Christmas activities, including an enjoyable combined party with the Scouts, Seniors and Rangers, being now pleasant memories, the Guides have turned their thoughts to plans for 1954. They will hold their Annual Jumble Sale, in aid of Company funds, on April 30th. It is proposed to send any surplus stock at the end of the sale, as well as a proportion of the proceeds, to the Oxford Committee for Famine Relief. The Guides therefore hope to receive the support of all their friends in the district, and will gladly collect any jumble that can be spared, on request to: Telephone Bookham 2411, on or after April 23rd.

Plans for the summer camp are well in hand. A site at St. Margaret's Bay is being inspected, where the Guides hope to spend an enjoyable nine or ten days from July 31st.

Congratulations to Pat Bellows, who has just gained her First Class Badge.

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THE NATIONAL TRUST Bookham Commons Committee

The National Trust, set up in 1895, has to-day become the largest landowner in the country. Backed by four Acts of Parliament, its powers are such that it can hold property of any kind or when that is not feasible, accept protective covenants which bind the owner not to build or alter without the agreement of the Trust.

At the present time the National Trust controls, either by possession or under covenant, over a quarter of a million acres comprising about 1,000 properties.

Great Bookham is favoured by having two of these properties on or within its parish boundaries—on the south, the Polesden Lacey Estate, 910 acres, acquired in 1946 with an endowment under the Will of the Hon. Mrs. Ronald Greville; on the north, Bookham and Banks Common 447 acres in extent.

It was in 1923 that a great tract of land in the parishes of Great Bookham and Fetcham (which included Great Bookham Common) was sold for development. As soon as this deal became known locally a public meeting was hastily called and a small Committee formed to initiate steps to buy back the Manorial Rights of the Common. This necessitated raising at once £1,250, plus a further £150 for a number of fine old oak trees sold for felling.

Local residents responded magnificently, and the Common was thus saved and handed over to

The National Trust for permanent preservation. In 1924 Mr. H. C. Willock-Pollen, then Lord of the Manor of Little Bookham, presented Little Bookham Common to the Trust, and in the following year the adjoining Banks Common in the parish of Effingham was added under the gift of Mr. R. R. Calburn.

The Commons, lying as they do away from main roads, remain comparatively secluded, and being richly wooded are a favourite resort of birds, many rare varieties having been identified at different times. Only last year that beautiful if shy bird, the woodcock, nested and successfully hatched off four chicks without disturbance.

The Commons are also renowned for their large and varied number of beetles and other insects.

Before the Common became possessed of The National Trust it was much frequented by gypsies, particularly about May in each year when they began to converge on Epsom to attend the Derby and the Oaks.

The grassland in those days was extensive, and in addition to the gypsies' horses, one might see some 80 to 100 head of cattle from neighbouring farms grazing the Common. To-day gypsies are not permitted to pull on to the Common, and because, since the War, cattle grazing has never been resumed, much of the grassland has inevitably become overgrown with blackthorn and bracken.

So far as supervision is con-

cerned, it is the practice of The National Trust to manage its properties with the help of voluntary Committees, and right from the outset in Bookham a Local Committee was formed with Admiral Yelverton as its first Chairman. This Committee, with renewed personnel, has continued to function ever since, and deals with all matters affecting the Commons.

With regard to finance, it is a first principle of the Trust that each property shall be self-supporting. In some places rents derived from the property cover expenses; elsewhere, as in the case of Polesden Lacey, there may be an endowment bringing in the necessary income, but the Bookham Committee, with an average annual expenditure of £320 to meet (which includes the wages of the Common Keeper), is dependent for income on subscriptions, rents from wayleaves, and occasional sales of timber, cordwood, and in the past loam.

In April each year the Committee publish an Annual Report and audited Statement of Accounts, a copy of which is sent to each subscriber. There are always extra copies available for any residents in or visitors to Bookham desiring to become subscribers.

And perhaps the most remarkable fact is that this wonderfully interesting and beautiful tract of open and woodland country, preserved for our enjoyment for all time, is all within 20 miles of the largest city in the world!

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B.C.A. NEWS

Polesden Lacey

Following the success of "Mid-summer Night's Dream" in 1951 and "As You Like It" last year, the Polesden Lacey Open Air Theatre will again provide the scene this summer for another Shakespearian production. This time "The Tempest" is the play selected, and Elsie Green is again the producer.

It would be hard to find a lovelier, more fitting background to Shakespeare's works than that provided by the Open Air Theatre at Polesden Lacey; so remember the date—Saturday, July 4th; the play—"The Tempest"; and book your seat early. Full particulars can be obtained from Mr. Oldershaw, "Upalong", Guildford Rd., Great Bookham (phone 241).

Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting of the Bookham Community Association, held on 4th February under the chairmanship of Miss Micholls, concluded a year of steady progress and solid achievement. In spite of the bad weather, there was a good attendance of members, including many of the Over Sixties and Under Twenties. General satisfaction was expressed that the debt on the new floor had been paid off, thanks mainly to the generosity of the Over Sixties Club, who gave the proceeds of their Sale of Work to this purpose, and to the efforts organised by the Table Tennis and Over Twenties Clubs. A sum of £150 has been put to the Reserve Fund, and the Capital Fund

stands at over £150. The Saturday night dances, besides giving pleasure to young people of the village, have added substantially to the funds.

The meeting heard with regret that the Hon. Secretary (Mr. Oldershaw) and the Treasurer (Mr. Hansford) were unable to carry on in these offices. They have both given long service to the Association and were warmly thanked. Mrs. E. Harrison was then elected Hon. Secretary, and the new Treasurer is Mr. Saunders. Members' representatives to the Council were elected as follows: Messrs. Beddous, Brackenbury, Everett, Hansford, Marson, Perry and Major-General Hughes; Mesdames Cox and Oldershaw, and Miss M. Austin.

Dr. N. E. Waterfield, O.B.E., D.L., was re-elected President, and Mr. Brayne, Miss Micholls and Mrs. Amey re-elected Vice-Presidents. In addition, Messrs. Oldershaw and Kepple were elected Vice-Presidents in recognition of the outstanding work they have done for the Association.

Gramophone Club

The Gramophone Club gave a very successful concert at the Old Barn Hall in January, in aid of the "Save the Abbey" Fund. As a result the Club were able to send a donation of £5 to the Fund.

Coronation Memento

As reported in our last issue, part of the surplus funds from the Coronation celebrations was donated to each of the eight halls in the Bookhams to enable the re-

spective managements to purchase a small permanent memento of the Coronation. The memento at the Old Barn Hall is a garden seat, which has already been placed in position in the grounds of the hall.

CHORAL SOCIETY

Despite some rather disappointing rehearsals, the Service of Nine Lessons and Carols, given on December 18th by the Choral Society in conjunction with the St. Nicolas' Youth Club, was greatly enjoyed, both by the congregation and by those taking a more active part. Personally, I felt the whole service would have been more interesting for all concerned if the choir had been sitting in the choir-stalls, where the lighting was so much better and there was a clearer view of the conductor and of those reading the Lessons.

Since Christmas the Choral Society has been working very hard at the difficult music set for the Leith Hill Festival Competitions, some of which will be incorporated in the programme for the Annual Concert, which will be given at Church House on April 3rd. This year the concert should be outstandingly enjoyable as Mr. Murray Davies, the well-known baritone broadcaster, will be the soloist. Those who have heard him sing before, either at Miss Fuller's house in Leatherhead or at my own house, will jump at the opportunity of hearing again so accomplished and versatile an artist. Those who have not yet had that great

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pleasure should make doubly sure of hearing him on April 3rd.

Tickets for this concert should be obtained at the earliest opportunity so as to avoid disappointment, as the hall holds only a limited number of persons. Among other items the programme will include Songs of the Fleet, and as many solos as Mr. Murray Davies can be persuaded to sing.

V. B. DAVIES
(Mrs. Gordon Davies)

BOOKHAM JOTTINGS

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The Community Association has decided to run a Village Day on June 12th, and a meeting was held at the Old Barn Hall on January 27th to discuss the arrangements and the scope of the event. Unfortunately, owing to the severe weather, the attendance was small, and a further meeting will be held at the earliest possible moment. Those who remember how enjoyable previous Village Days organised by the Association have proved, will look forward with keen interest to this year's function, and it is hoped that all our readers will give this event their support.

The Stoolball Club had a successful season in 1953, winning thirteen out of the twenty-two matches played. They also took part in the Holmwood Tournament, but were eliminated in the first round. Matches are already fixed for the coming season, and the Club also hope to arrange a tournament for Surrey clubs. Any new members would be made very

welcome when practices commence at the Recreation Ground the first week in May, on Wednesday and Friday evenings. The Hon. Secretary is Miss R. L. Dyer, "Euroa", Hale Pit Road.

Mothers of growing families in the Bookhams will be interested to learn that the Leatherhead Branch of the W.V.S. run a children's shoe and clothing exchange at their centre at "Wayside", The Crescent. This exchange is open on three days a month—on the first and third Wednesdays from 10.30 a.m. to 12.30 p.m., and the last Friday from 1.30 p.m. to 3.30 p.m. Mothers are invited to bring in clothing which the children have outgrown; the clothes are valued on a "points" system, and the points can be exchanged for clothes which are already in the Exchange. All clothing brought in must be clean and in good condition, and ready for immediate use again. There is also a clothing depot at the centre, which supplies the requirements of men, women and children in need of help (clothing is only issued from this depot on a recommendation from a recognised authority). In this connection the W.V.S. is always very glad to receive gifts of clothing, which should be clean. The garments need not be mended, as there is a flourishing Work Party at the centre, which meets once a week to put these clothes in order, and cut down and make up where necessary.

The W.V.S. also have a Garden Gift Scheme for the supply of plants to people in the Council

Housing Estates who are starting new gardens from scratch. Details of this scheme can be obtained at the Centre Office at "Wayside".

Mrs. E. Harrison, who is a Leatherhead representative on the Central Divisional Education Executive, has been appointed to the governing body of the Leatherhead Group of Schools. She has also recently been appointed as a Governor of the new Ewell County Technical College.

Helen, Duchess of Northumberland, who has been President of the Surrey Branch of the British Red Cross Society since 1939, has resigned her appointment, and has agreed to act as Patron of the Branch. She is succeeded as President by the Countess of Onslow. The new Deputy President is Dr. N. E. Waterfield, O.B.E., D.L., who has relinquished his appointment as County Director (which he has held for the last five years) in favour of Lt.-Col. E. R. Newcomb. The Branch Committee say of Dr. Waterfield that "despite his many other public and professional commitments, he has given his services (as County Director) generously and unsparingly", and they express their deep appreciation of the devoted, effective, and outstanding service rendered by him.

The Leatherhead Division of the British Red Cross Society are holding a Fête in the grounds of the Red House, Leatherhead, on Saturday afternoon, May 29th.

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