

LEATHERHEAD & DISTRICT
LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

The Bookhams Bulletin

Quarterly Journal of the Bookham Community Association

No. 80

SEPTEMBER, 1953.

21st year



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The BOOKHAMS BULLETIN

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ABOUT OURSELVES

A curious title, perhaps, for an Editorial; though if "ourselves" implies on the one hand the readers and advertisers, and on the other the publishers, of the *Bulletin* the subject may after all be not inappropriate.

Since the Community Association, just four years ago, undertook responsibility for the *Bulletin* its circulation has more than doubled, and advertising revenue has risen very considerably. For this success the Association cannot, of course, claim the whole of the credit. Many factors, including the lifting of paper restrictions and the influx into the district of fresh families including those who have settled on the Council housing estates, with benefit to local shopkeepers and other

potential advertisers, have combined to help us along. But success would not have been possible without the help of those who so kindly contributed articles for publication. We have to thank also our Editorial Committee, and the volunteers who have taken care of the distribution in fair weather and foul. Finally, and most of all, thanks are due to our Business Manager, Mr. R. H. J. Kepple, whose enterprise and initiative have secured the financial backing without which the *Bulletin* could not have survived.

In the past four years many hundreds of independent journals and newspapers have either ceased publication altogether or been absorbed by larger publishing houses. Day by day and week by week it is becoming more difficult for the small publication to survive. That we have done so, and provided free of charge to every household in Bookham a medium for the expression of local news and views, is something of an achievement.

So much for the past: now for the future. At the last meeting of the Editorial Committee, the resignations of the present Editor and of the Business Manager, both owing to pressure of other work, were regretfully accepted.

Miss M. R. Glover was appointed as the new Editor and Mr. John Perry as Business Manager, to take over from the December issue. Both bring years of professional training and experience to the task, and in thanking them most warmly for coming forward we would wish them success in the work they have undertaken to do for their fellow residents.

These changes in personnel are all to the good, for it is of the essence of a news service that it should be constantly fed with fresh ideas, new methods and the contributions of those whose experience has been acquired in diverse fields.

Here the *Bulletin* stands in need of the support of its readers no less than of its Editorial Committee. Have YOU any contribution—some scrap of local history, for example, which would make interesting reading? If so, please help the Editor by sending it in. Suggestions, criticisms and short news items are always welcome, and will help to maintain interest in Bookham's own local news-sheet.

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CARE OF THE AGED

In our March issue we urged upon the Leatherhead U.D.C. the desirability of making some provision for visiting and caring for the aged and infirm occupants of the old people's bungalows on their housing estates at Bookham. We are glad to note that our plea did not go unheeded, and that the Council has taken the initiative to form an Old People's Welfare Committee for the Urban District.

Mr. T. F. Devitt, Chairman of the Council, presided at a meeting of representatives of local organizations concerned with the well-being of old people on Friday, 14th August. He referred to recent legislation and the provision by County Councils of homes and other facilities for the elderly, adding that the Leatherhead Council had since the war erected numbers of 1- and 2-room flats and bungalows for old folk living alone. He said that the purpose of the meeting was to open an Old People's Welfare Committee for the Leatherhead area which would assist in the work done under the National Council for Social Service on an area basis throughout the country, and it would come under the auspices of the Surrey Council of Social Service. The new Committee would co-ordinate the work of the statutory and local authorities

with those voluntary organizations working in their area, so that the coverage for old people might be more complete.

The Chairman then introduced Mrs. Newman, Hon. Organizing Secretary of the Surrey Old People's Welfare Committee, who spoke briefly on the scope of the work of the official and voluntary organizations; and Mr. Berry, of the County Health Service, who dealt with provision by the county of "residential accommodation for old people in need of care and attention not otherwise available to them."

Following questions, it was agreed to elect an initial Executive Committee to go into the formation of a Leatherhead Old People's Welfare Committee; to draft a constitution; to make a quick survey of the work going on in the district, and to suggest what are the greatest needs; and to report back to a later meeting of representatives of local organizations.

It was decided to invite Dr. Morgan to be Chairman and the following to appoint one representative each to the Executive Committee: Bookham Community Association, Red Cross, Rotary, W.V.S., Toc H, British Legion, Women's Institute, Mothers' Union, Round Table, Nursing Association, S.S.A.F.A., Leatherhead U.D.C.

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BOOKHAM SCHOOL BADGE

It is possible that the nostalgic thoughts of a now past youth have been for many recalled at the sight of the badge now worn by the children of the village school. Do you remember the coat-of-arms that could be faintly discerned on the overmantel of the fireplace in the hall and in the large classroom? It is from this that the present badge originated, but only in its general pattern, for heraldically such colours as those on the children's badge do not exist. Discussion on this point resulted in a research being carried out by a great friend of the school into the explanation of this badge.

Here is, I believe, an interest that lies far beyond the present generation of children, back to grandparents and, yes, even great-grandparents, for 1962 will see the centenary of the present buildings. The commemoration stone, which I believe has been moved from its original position, is now to be found in the present infant classroom.

The shield bears the coat of arms of William Henry Dawnay, Seventh Viscount Down, and his wife, Mary Isabel (*née* Bagot). Above it is the heraldic symbol representing the Viscount's coronet. This is in fact two coats of arms, for Mary Isabel was the daughter of the Lord Bishop of Bath, and, as was usual on the marriage of two arms-bearing families, the arms of the Viscount are impaled with those of his wife.

The Dawnay arms on the dexter

or right side (left as we look at it) comprise a field or background of Argent (silver) with a Sable bend (black band) running from top right to bottom left. The bend is cotised—that is, edged on either side with narrow bands. On the bend are three Annulets or rings “of the field”—that is, of the same colour as the background.

The Bagot arms have a field of Ermine fur charged with two Azure (blue) chevronels or small chevrons. The small markings on the field are the representation of ermine tails.

This interesting explanation, together with an illustration, now hangs at the opposite end of the hall.

A.E.B.

(For School Games Record see page 11.)

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BOOKHAM CHORAL SOCIETY

With the approach of another autumn, the Bookham Choral Society wish to remind readers that we have vacancies for new members in all sections (particularly tenors). Our Society competes each year (usually in April) in the choral competitions of the Leith Hill Music Festival, held in the Dorking Halls, and most of our practices during the winter months (commencing this year on the 29th September) are devoted to learning the test pieces set for those competitions. The climax to the season is the concert given by the massed choirs and a full orchestra in the evening, after the morning's competitions and the afternoon rehearsal.

There are no auditions for new members and we are not expected to sing solos. We hasten to add that many of us have only a rudimentary knowledge of the theory of music (as our conductor would readily agree!). The minimum subscription is 5s. and the cost of music about 6s. each season.

If, therefore, any readers would like to join us, they will be very welcome to come along to any of our practices. We feel sure that they will, as we do, thoroughly enjoy singing together and taking part in the friendly rivalry of the competitions and the often inspiring concerts of the Leith Hill Music Festival.

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A SHORT HISTORY OF BOOKHAM, SURREY PART II

By JOHN HARVEY, F.S.A.
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The earliest surviving written description of Bookham is that made by the surveyors of William the Conqueror, who about 1086 compiled what has ever since been known as the Domesday Book. The survey was an assessment for purposes of taxation, and omits much that we should like to know. But its precise particulars can be interpreted in the light of later history, and of the topography of the parish, or rather parishes, for it is in Domesday that the distinction between the two Bookhams first appears.

Among the properties of Chertsey Abbey is numbered "Bocheham", undoubtedly the later Manor of Great Bookham. In the time of Edward the Confessor (i.e. in 1065) this had been valued at 26 hides; but 20 years later it was reckoned at only 13 hides. In theory the township had been reckoned to consist of 26 free families and their dependants, each family supported on the produce of a hide of land, usually about 120 acres. On this assumption the area of the township would have been 3,120 acres; and in actual fact the area of the later Manor was very little more than this, about 3,170 acres. This remarkably close correspondence between theory and fact may be coincidence, or it may indicate (as is indeed suggested by the layout of parishes and of the village

streets and plots) that a serious land-survey had already taken place in Saxon times.

The arable land of Great Bookham was sufficient for 19 ploughs, of which one was in demesne (i.e. worked directly for the Abbey), while 32 villeins and 4 bordars employed 18 ploughs. The villeins were not slaves, but tenants by local custom "bound to the soil"; each villein and his family would usually have arable land amounting to about 30 acres (a virgate or yardland, one-quarter of a hide), together with rights of common; the bordars were cottagers with small quantities of land, perhaps from 3 to 5 acres. There were also three serfs, who were actually bondmen of the Abbot. The only inhabitant mentioned by name is one Gunfrey, who held one hide in which he had a plough; he was a freeholder, unlike the villeins. The survey also mentions the existence of a church, of a mill (no doubt Slyfield Mill) worth 10s., and 6 acres of meadow, the valuable water-meadow alongside the Mole. The woodlands were worth 80 hogs, and another 30 hogs would be yielded from the herbage; these numbers of swine were those paid to the Abbot by the villeins for the right to run their pigs in the woodlands and over the fields after harvest. The usual rate of payment was one in seven, which would imply that the wastes of Bookham fed nearly 800 pigs. The survey concludes with the valuation of the manor: £16 in the time of King Edward, and, in 1086, £15.

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laymen, another "Bocheham", Little Bookham, formed part of the fee of William de Braiose, who had sublet the manor to one Halsard; in the time of Earl Harold it had been held by Godtovi, and it was then assessed at 5 hides; at Domesday for only 2 hides. The land was sufficient for 3 ploughs, of which one was in demesne, working the "home farm" for Halsard. Three villeins and 4 bordars had one plough between them; this total of only two ploughs implies that the available land was not fully under cultivation. There were 4 acres of meadow, evidently at the lower end of the parish, and the lord received 11 hogs from the pannage of the woods and the herbage. In King Edward's time the manor had been worth 50s., but this had increased to 60s. by the time of the survey. The discrepancy between a lowered assessment and increased valuation is noteworthy; the former, according to J. H. Round, indicated a temporary reduction in liability conceded by the Conqueror to his companions; the latter seems to imply that Halsard's administration of the manor was progressive.

Domesday Book was not a census, and it is impossible to use its figures to provide a close estimate of the population, but, allowing some five or six members to each household, one may suggest a total population for Great Bookham of some 200 to 250, and of Little Bookham about 40 or 50 souls. Gunfrey's free land in Bookham may have been the

nucleus of the later subordinate manor of Eastwick; Halsard was almost certainly the ancestor of the Hansard family, who continued as immediate lords of Little Bookham until the end of the thirteenth century.

REVIVAL OF THE BOOKHAM BRASS BAND

Mr. James Powell, of 49 Oveton Way, Great Bookham, informs us that the Brass Band, which was in existence up to about 1919, has been revived. There are already 18 to 20 bandmen and a number of learners enrolled, but the Band urgently needs instrumentalists and more members.

The Manager of the Bookham branch of Lloyds Bank Ltd. has kindly undertaken the Honorary Treasurership and will welcome donations for the purchase of instruments for the Band. Instrumentalists who would like to join should get into touch with Mr. Powell (Honorary Secretary) at the above address.

BOOKHAM SCHOOL GAMES RECORD

Schools Football, Junior Section.—Matches played, 10; won, 4; drawn, 1; lost, 5.

The following boys have played for the School during the 1952-53 season: W. Klewe, J. Coomber, M. Lodge, J. Thrush, D. Hill, N. Bennett, D. Thresh, M. Lindsay, C. Booth, M. Donnelly, P. Bennett, J. Wharram, T. Waterer, P. Stevens, J. Goody, A. Brown (captain), and B. Edwards.

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SLEEPING IN A TREE*

By DAVID SEABROOK

I had had the idea of sleeping in a tree for some months, but I did not put it into operation until the night of Saturday, 4th July, 1953.

The platform upon which I managed to sleep for some 10 hours is neither very large nor very safe. It consists of a large number of semi-dead branches about 5ft. long and 1in. diameter woven together, and locked by their own springiness to three large boughs of a tree. This forms a rather shaky platform about 8ft. by 9ft., and the whole thing is roughly 25ft. from the ground. Looking down from the tree one can see a tangle of leaf-covered branches, up through which it is necessary to climb in order to get to the platform. Between the branches the ground is just visible, looking considerably farther down than the platform looks up if one looks at it from the ground. In fact, from ground-level the platform has the appearance of just a lot of boughs loosely thrown together. At least, that is the first impression, and it is not modified a great deal on closer inspection.

I arrived home at 9 o'clock on the evening in question, and, as I had previously arranged to carry out this daring operation then, I decided to carry it through. I

* Reprinted, by kind permission, from *Wood Smoke*, the Guildford Royal Grammar School Scout Group Magazine. The author, aged 13, is a native of Bookham.

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managed to haul a sleeping bag and groundsheet up on to the platform, working in semi-darkness. After arranging them, with the groundsheet under the sleeping bag to keep out draughts from below, I decided, in a state of last-minute panic, to lash myself to the main trunk of the tree. Then, when all was ready, I took off my plimsolls and crawled into the sleeping bag and tried to sleep. I was kept awake by various noises of unknown origin and the fact that a rather sharp branch was sticking into my back.

However, I remedied the latter discomfort, and went to sleep. I awoke some time early in the morning and saw the moon shining on me. I then went back to sleep. I half awoke some hours later and heard what I think was the dawn chorus. After a few hours' more sleep, the sun woke me at about 7.30 a.m. After this hour various people visited me and made various comments. I got up (or rather down!) at about 8 a.m. with a feeling of satisfaction that I had carried out my plan and survived.

Comfort is adjustable by the simple expedient of moving the branches. They are quite loose (I'm afraid) and if one feels a branch making life uncomfortable, it is an easy matter to give it a shove, and move it. My first impression was that it was jolly uncomfortable, but I should think that with care it could be made even more comfortable than sleeping on the ground, since there is a certain amount of springiness in

(Continued on page 20.)

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BOOKHAM JOTTINGS

"As You Like It", the third production staged at the Open Air Theatre at Polesden Lacey by Bookham Community Association with the co-operation of the National Trust, proved a great artistic success. Miss Elsie Green, who directed and produced it, is to be congratulated, as are her admirable cast, and Kathleen Riddick with her Surrey Philharmonic Orchestra who played incidental music by Morley, Handel, Byrd and Arne. The box office, ably managed by Mr. E. E. Oldershaw, reports that all expenses of the production were covered, so that the courage shown by the Association in putting on the play has proved well justified from all points of view.

Close on 3,000 people saw the performance, some of them coming many miles to enjoy a Shakespeare play in the lovely setting of this National Trust beauty spot.

The weather was again kind. The clouds that gathered during the evening performance fortunately held their rain. The general arrangements worked perfectly and visitors commented favourably on the friendly atmosphere which made the occasion a social as well as an artistic success. The production itself was of the high standard we have come to expect at Polesden Lacey. It was not surprising that the question was often heard—surely, some of the players must be professionals?

The slow rate of progress in the erection of the additional classrooms for Bookham Primary School has given rise to some concern in the village, and the matter was the subject of comment at a recent meeting of the General Purposes Committee of the Leatherhead U.D.C. The Central Divisional Executive (Education) is understood to have urged upon the County Council the need to ensure that the classrooms are completed in time for the opening of the autumn term. As regards the purchase of additional land needed for playing fields for the School, the Chief Education Officer has stated that the land to be purchased forms part of a larger area required for the erection of a Vicarage at Great Bookham. Negotiations with the vendor are being held up until the exact area required for the Vicarage has been determined. Even so, there is little chance that the Minister of Education will approve the purchase of the land required, because of the present embargo on capital expenditure on playing fields for existing schools.

At the speech day of the Howard of Effingham School it was announced that all eight candidates put forward for art awards had been successful. Margaret Williams would go to Guildford School of Art; Christine Clark, Marianne Milner, Jean Morgan and Marie Thompson to Epsom School of Art; and Sheila Cooper,

Sylvia Day and Janice Dodd to Epsom in December. Common Entrance awards were gained by Walter Norris, Janet Reynolds and Michael Brooks. Two scholars, Roger Cox and Tony Smith, secured places at Guildford Junior Technical School, while Ann Bowdler gained a Junior Commercial award and Robert Dummer a transfer to a grammar school (age 13+).

Congratulations to Mrs. Saunders, Hon. Secretary, Ladies' Section, Bookham Bowling Club, who has again won the Surrey County Women's Bowling Association's singles competition and qualified to play in the National championship at Wimbledon.

Congratulations also to Dr. N. E. Waterfield, President of the Bookham Community Association, on being gazetted as a Deputy Lieutenant of Surrey. Dr. Waterfield is County Director of the Surrey Red Cross and a member of the Management Committee of the Epsom Group of Hospitals. He was made an O.B.E. in 1949.

We understand that it is intended during the coming winter to overhaul the Red Cross organization locally, and in particular to start a class in home nursing for housewives, to be held weekly in the afternoons, provided that sufficient volunteers are forthcoming. Those interested are invited to write to Dr. N. E. Waterfield, O.B.E., "Birchwood", Guildford Road, Great Bookham.

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WASPS: WHAT IS THE ANSWER?

(Specially contributed)

Some people appear to be born with an actual liking for wasps; others achieve a much-to-be-envied indifference to wasps, while many have an active dislike of wasps thrust upon them by the behaviour of the little pests.

I am among the last-named. But my dislike of wasps is only equalled by the apparently irresistible fascination which I exercise on them. If I take a meal out of doors, they surround me with their attentions, and endeavour to accompany every morsel of food to my mouth. If there is only *one* wasp in the dining room when I sit down to a meal, it makes a bee line (or, should I say, a wasp line!) for my head, and insists on buzzing round me throughout the meal. If I try to rest in a deck chair in the shade, every wasp in the district drops in to pay me a friendly afternoon call. Nothing I can do seems to discourage them.

Last year they built a nest in the foundations of our house, right underneath *my* bedroom floor, with access through a small hole they had bored in the outside wall. As soon as we discovered this, a strong dose of cyanide was inserted through the hole, which was then stopped up. Did the wasps mind? Not a bit! They seemed to thrive on cyanide! Finding their usual entrance and exit blocked up, they used my open bedroom window instead,

gaining access to the nest through a tiny gap between the floor and the wainscoting, where the skirting boards had shrunk slightly during the years.

While I could pretend to ignore the attentions of a few wasps, a constant stream passing through my bedroom proved just too much. I hastily vacated the room, closed the window, and watched events. There was soon an army of wasps furiously trying to get out, and an equally furious army trying to get in.

In the end, a builder was called in and the floorboards were taken up, when it was discovered that there were two nests, not one—and right underneath the head of my bed, as might be supposed.

After considerable trouble, and much dislocation of our lives, eventually both nests and their occupants were destroyed. One might have thought that this drastic treatment would have deterred any other wasps from nesting so near to me. But no. This year we have a nest in the roof (just above *my* bedroom window, of course). The nest is in a most inaccessible position, but a kindly neighbour has done his best to exterminate the occupants. Three strong doses of cyanide have already been inserted, but our wasps appear to be immune from its effects. Even after the third dose they are still to be seen gaily entering and leaving the nest, and no doubt busy feeding the thousands of baby wasps who will eventually emerge to pester me

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when the fruit ripens.

I am in despair. There are three alternatives open to me. I can either call in a builder and have the roof stripped, to gain more effective access to the nest or nests (a rather expensive course); I can train myself to ignore the thousands of little pests which will surround me with their unwelcome attentions in August and September; or—happy thought—I can leave the district until the end of the wasp season.

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Gramophone Club. Mrs. Everett, Brandreth, Sole Farm Road. Tel.; 2404.

Drama. Miss S. Kennard, Branchley, The Glade, Fetcham. Tel.: 2689.

*Sleeping in a Tree, Continued from
page 12.*

the branches. The only trouble is that many of them have odd bits sticking out, but if you build a platform of smooth branches this difficulty should be eliminated.

Why don't you try it some time? I should be interested to hear from other readers of any similar stunts.

B.C.A. NEWS

The Community Association entertained to tea at the Old Barn Hall on Thursday, 27th August, some 30 elderly citizens of St. Pancras, who had travelled by coach to Bookham under the auspices of the St. Pancras Association for the Care of the Aged and paid a visit to Polesden Lacey.

A Jumble Sale in aid of the Association and its Table Tennis Club is to be held on Saturday, 5th September, from 2.30 p.m., at the Old Barn Hall. Arrangements have been made for jumble to be collected by car from houses in the neighbourhood, and those who would like to offer articles for the sale should telephone Bookham 241 (E. E. Oldershaw) or Leatherhead 3706 (Miss E. Benn).

A Sale of Work will be held at the Old Barn Hall on Saturday, 31st October, at 3 p.m. There will be wide choice of fancy, knitted, crocheted and embroidered articles, also a garden stall, white elephant, produce, cake and sweet stalls. Refreshments will be available, and there will be a number of sideshows. The Sale is being organized by the Over Sixties Club, who are generously donating the proceeds to the Barn Hall Floor Fund. Offers of articles for sale will be welcomed by: Mrs. Perry, "Abinger", Dorking Road; Mrs. Cox, "Theldor", Keswick Road (Tel. 2706); Mrs. Kleboe, The Croft, Church Road.

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