

Quarterly Journal of the Bookham Community Association



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# THE BOOKHAMS BULLETIN .

Quarterly Journal of the Bookham Community Association

No. 112

#### Spring, 1962

30th year

#### EDITORIAL

As we go to press with this issue of The Bulletin, which is the last one of the year, we also start on the task of collecting and checking the advertisements for the 1962-63 series, on which we depend to pay the printer. The job, as in most voluntary undertakings, is complicated by labour difficulties. The Advertisement Manager of last year resigned; the newly-appointed Manager ran into unforeseen difficulties and could not take the full responsiblity; committee members of the Community Association rallied round him to share out the burden: and the work will be completed in time.

We do, however, hope that some public-spirited person will again come forward to take on the position of Advertisement Manager which is so vital for the continuance of The Bulletin. Experience in this line is not important because the big rush comes at the beginning of the year and is now over. There will be ample time to pick up the "know-how". What is essential is the time to call on local tradesmen with proofs, etc.

If you have had the patience

to read so far perhaps you would turn back to the front cover and see that this is edition No. 112 and that in June The Bulletin will go into its 30th year. But will there be a thirtieth year? The answer depends on you! If you think it is worth continuing you will join the Community Association, so indicating your support. Besides the Bulletin, the Association administers the Barn Hall. helps with the Polesden Lacev Open Air Theatre and organises Village Day. All these are big jobs-they are among the things which make Bookham different from other places-but they will not last unless the enthusiastic volunteers who run them year after year have the encouragement of village backing

It is not generally known that, despite the wonderful support of local tradesmen, The Bulletin does not pay for itself. It is subsidized by the Association and, unless the advertisement revenue is increased, the subsidy will have to be doubled. The Community Association has no secret funds. It depends on members' subscriptions—only 2/6d a year. A lot more half-crowns would be the shot-in-the-arm the Association needs. Please read the message below from the Membership Secretary and then take action.

#### Dear Reader,

The Community Association is losing money because the subscriptions of members are not being collected. Many people forget to send half-crowns by post but would be very happy to pay if asked personally. It is quite impossible for me to get all round the village and I would be grateful for assistance from you. If you feel that you would have time to collect subscriptions from members living in your own road please write to me or ring and I would let you have a collecting card.

Yours sincerely,

R. S. Woodrow-Clark

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#### The Membership Secretary,

R. S. Woodrow-Clark, Esq.,21 Barn Meadow Lane,Bookham 4070.

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#### **COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION** NEWS

ulate the Club on reaching its be a warm welcome for all. tenth birthday in February last. Please come along and hear all As might be expected, there has about the Day. been quite a turnover in membership since the early days but the Club still meets a local demand and attracts a reasonable attendance at all its meetings. It closes down in April but will re-open in September with another attractive programme.

Camera Club. This Club attracts members from a wide area outside the village and has had, owing to the strain on accommodation, to transfer its meeting to the Bookham Primary School. We congratulate it on reaching the Semi-Finals of the Surrey Federation Knock-out Competition which wil be held at the Barn Hall on Saturday, March 31st.

Old Tyme Dance Club. For a long time a plea has been going out from this Club for 'teenage members. At long last the freeze up has broken and the young people are coming along-in small numbers at the moment, but it is hoped that the idea will catch on with young people. It seems commonsense that once the simple basic steps of jive and twist have been acquired new dancers will wish to progress to the slightly more complicated and certainly more graceful intricacies of the old-time ballroom.

Village Day Meeting. There will be a Helpers' Meeting at the Barn Hall on Thursday, April Gramophone Club. We congrat- 5th, at 8.15 p.m., when there will

### **"TRAVEL" 67 HIGH STREET. LEATHERHEAD** (Leatherhead 5252/3

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#### THE WAY OF AN OTTER

By Mabel E. Byrt

Author of "Call of the River"

A statement by The Mammal Society of the British Isles to the effect that "our native mammals have received less attention from naturalists than is their due", is perhaps particularly true of the otter. This fascinating animal is widely distributed throughout the British Isles, yet its life and habits are so elusive that it is difficult to study it at close quarters and to assess it at its true worth since it is mainly, though not wholly, nocturnal.

Although a member of the Mustelidae, which include the stoat, badger, the rare, alas, pine martin and the weasel, an otter can be thought of as a water dog. Indeed, to my mind my black Labrador strongly resembles an otter in many respects. Playful, sensitive, affectionate, gentle towards loved ones and with a high degree of intelligence and a mentality which is capable of learn--ing are all traits of the otter, skilled fisher in sea and river, with an unerring instinct to retrieve; supremely adept in water, Lutra lutra is also known to travel overland, passing from one tributary to another, using the otter paths that have been trodden by countless generations of otters. His main diet consists of fish of every knd, though it appears to have escaped the attention of many anglers that ecls are



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much sought after and in this re- to his mate. spect he is more friend than foe and, until myxomatosis occurred, a meal of rabbit was was not to be sniffed at, the otter causing instantaneous death by a nip on the back of the neck with sharp incisors, the rabbit being skinned before eating. Other items in the menu include frogs, water-voles, mice, rats, ducks, moorhens, slugs and earthworms — but not the toad-the last by learning and not instinct. When traversing an estuary to the sea the diet is further enlivened by crustacea.

obliged by persecution to become cubs are completely helpless at nocturnal is a matter for conjec- bitrh and remain blind for a conture, but when conditions are siderable time. They remain in considered "safe" he will venture the holt-a burrow often to be out in the daytime, and I recall, found in the river bank or beone warm sunny afternoon at Up- neath commodious tree roots and ottery in Devon, seeing an otter couched with soft materials cruising in midstream. His back gathered by the female - until was partly submerged but I had they are active enough to be given a clear picture of the broad, a first airing. Otters have a rather flat head, small neat ears natural fear of the water and are lving flat; of coarse bushy whis- taught to swim in a series of kers and a gleam of small round lessons aided by both parents. dark eves, the powerful tapering Two coats of fur are grown; a rudder moving lazily to and fro velvety under-pile which preas the otter swept silently through serves a high temperature even in the water. He passed under the the severest conditions, and a little bridge, investigating everything that came to notice until he had disappeared.

Many hold the belief that otters are monogamous, though this is not known for certain, but shire I had followed a water-

The cubs, two or three in number, are most generally born in March and remain with their parents for the best part of a (There is sufficient eviyear. dence to suggest that sometimes a litter is produced at other times, though this is the exception rather than normal procedure.) So far as is known the period of gestation has been reckoned at 61 days, the female segregating herself towards the end of her time and it is she that appears to shoulder most of the responsi-How far the otter has been bility of rearing her young. The waterproof overcoat.

Nomadic by habit, the otter is here today and gone tomorrow. Searching after otters in Berkit is true to say that they are course fruitlessly for some miles and catching it again; kissing capable of long and deep attach- when the steady rain turned to a noses, or calling to one another ment and the dog-otter is devoted downpour and I gave up the up-river, the way of an otter is

search. Returning the following day I came across the five webbed-toe and pad marks of an otter clearly imprinted in the mud and which were certainly not there the day before. Following them to a disused water-mill the tracks suddenly ended. Either my otter had re-visited an old haunt or had discovered a new one and was "passing" through to the higher reaches of the main river.

At the age of one year the otter becomes adult, though he continues to grow in size and weight until the end of the second year when he may weigh anything from 17 lbs. to as much as 32 lbs. and a female from 12 lbs, to 18 or 19 lbs. The average life span is assessed at about ten years, and on evidence, two female otters kept as pets lived for over seventeen years, though the hazards of otters in the wild make it hard to believe that they attain to anything approaching that age.

An otter is never too old to play, and here surely, lies the secret of its charm, for it ranks amongst the highest animals in intelligence and inventiveness. Whether it be tobogganing in the snow (and great fun is made of it) or sporting in the water, executing little rolls and turns and diving feats, or playing catchme - if - you - can; whether it be absorbed in the twig game or tossing the tail of an eaten fish

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one which, to know a little, on Moscow and Leningrad was Ground in the Lower Road, the

**ROUND THE VILLAGE** cal Festival competition and per- M. Boardman and seconded, also formance of works by Orlando in Russian, by Mrs. R. Lambert. Youth Club at Little Bookham. Gibbons, Thomas Morley, Vaug- We are sure that the B.B.C. We have been asked to

Any new members of all voices two pupils. would be very welcome at one of Local Political Parties. There is Hall on Tuesdays, at 7.30 p.m. to all that is necessary is to be able March 2nd, marks the election of to have a try.

The Bookham Youth meeting at the Barn Hall at 7.30 a full one. on Mondays, has a growing mem- The Liberals are gathering up ham in the course of his work as bership of boys and girls. The their energies for a complete can- south-eastern Organiser for the New Year Party was a great suc- vass of the district during the Royal National Mission to Deep cess, and the young people are to Spring and Summer months, and, Sea Fishermen and was told that be congratulated on their willing to this end, members are study- if he wanted to know about help with its planning and pre- ing the books and pamphlets Bookham then he should read the paration. The Club, like many which are available for loan Bulletin. This he did, and then he other newly-formed groups, has through the Association. had its teething troubles, and is The Labour Party is looking the good work done by the Misstill feeling its way. It is, how- forward to the Local Elections to sion which was founded 80 years ever, slowly working towards an spur its members to fresh activity. ago and is under the patronage organised programme, one of its Mr. Frank Finch, County Coun- of H.M. The Queen. Its object more successful items being a cillor for this area, will be addres- is to care for the physical, social course of talks for the girls on sing a meeting in Bookham, some and spiritual well-being of fisherdress sense and grooming. Sun- time in March, on his work at men, men who spend over 300 day afternoon walks have been Kingston and will deal specific- days each year at sea, away from enjoyed.

Bookham Afternoon W.I. This Plan. Institute is to be congratulated on Eastwick Park Cricket Club. Fol- than workers at home and the its first programme of the New lowing the drive made by 40 Missions exist to help them in Year when local talent was spot- members of the Club to clear their special difficulties. So far

kindles the desire to know more given by Mrs. Sprigg, of Little Urban District Council has carand to protect the life of one of Bookham, and was illustrated ried out its part of the bargain our most fascinating mammals. with slides taken when she accom- in putting the ground in order panied her husband to Russia for for play and it is hoped that prac-Bookham Choral Society. Re- an International Conference of tice will start there in April, hearsals are now in full swing for Orientalists. The vote of thanks weather conditions being favourthe forthcoming Leith Hill Musi- was moved, in Russian, by Mrs. able.

han Williams and Gerald Finzsey. would have been proud of these announce that a new Youth Club

the evening rehearsals in the Con- not much political activity at the 10 p.m., and that members will gregational Hall on Thursdays at moment, but the A.G.M. of the be welcomed from Fetcham and 8 p.m. There is no voice test- Conservative Association, on Effingham as well as Bookham. to sing in tune and to be willing a new committee who will plan Toilers of the Deep. We were the programme for the forthcom- pleased to receive a visit the other Club, ing months, which might well be day from Mr. R. D. Harris, of

ally with the Greater London their family and friends. It is

lighted. The afternoon's lecture the stones from the Recreation as funds will allow Mission

has started at the Little Bookham

Sevenoaks. He came to Bookcame to see us. He told us about obvious that they need more help

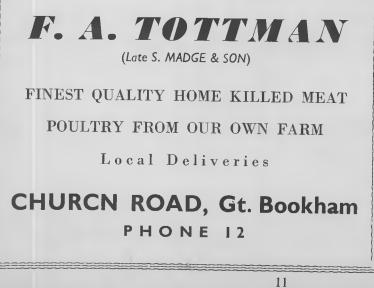


Centres have been provided in the fishing ports where a homely welcome and accommodation is al- Saturday, March 10th ways available. The Superintendent is there to listen to troubles and worries, many of them domestic, and is trained to assist in righting them. During the last ten years major projects have been completed at a cost of over £150,000.

If any individual or organisation would like to hear more about this worthwhile cause please let us know and we will tell Mr. Harris who will arrange for a Speaker or give information on ways of helping.

#### CALENDAR

- Camera Club Exhibition, Barn Saturday, July 7th Hall.
- Saturday, March 24th Carnival Oueen Dance. Old Peoples' Welfare, Barn Hall.
- Saturday, June 16th VILLAGE DAY
- Saturday, June 23rd Ronson's Field.
- Saturday, June 30th Eastwick Park Cricket Club Dance, Barn Hall.
- 19th, 20th, 21st July Theatre, Polesden Lacey.



Saturday, July 21st Garden Society Show, Barn Hall.

Eastwick School Fete

#### A SHORT HISTORY OF **BOOKHAM, SURREY**

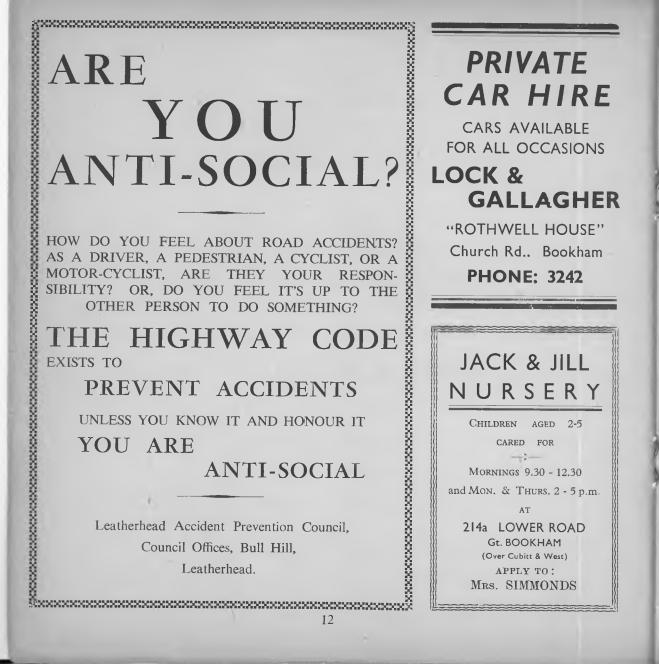
(Part III)

By John Harvey, F.S.A.

(Copyright reserved to the author) Little remains of the Bookham Fete. Old Peoples Welfare, 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 The Winter's Tale. Open Air 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.

Please turn to page 18



#### \*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*

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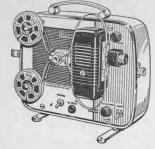
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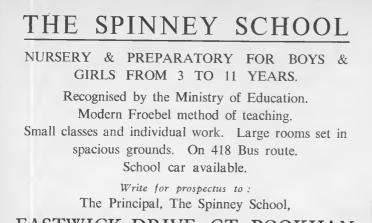
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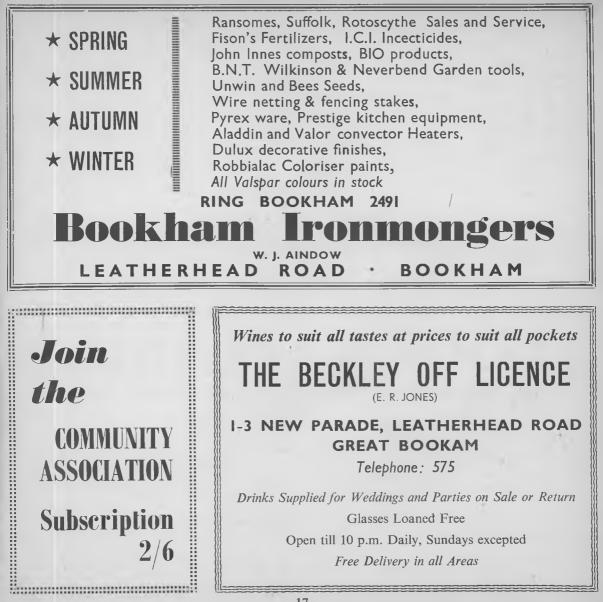
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Thus from the 13th century and from its position in relation to the good drainage, so that the soil very possibly from the 7th, the village. parsonage house of Bookham stood on the same ground that the "Old Rectory" does to-day. This house itself dates 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 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 country side 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 lage stretched the Common have been an inviting forest beconstant from the time of Domes- Arable Field, more than a square side which to dwell, and the day, and indeed earlier, until the mile in extent, running up to the enterprising Saxons Poll and close of the 18th century. The Polesden boundaries on the south, Bacga left us their names ancient parish fell into certain and filling the whole width of the attached to the sections of the natural divisions, which provided parish between Fetcham on the valley, Poles-dene and Bag-dene, the skeleton of its history. Start- east and Effingham on the west. in which they made their homes. ing at the north there was the The open fields of these parishes river with the mill and water carried on in one unbroken sweep meadows, behind which rose along the slope of the Downs. No wooded slopes of heavy clay land fences or hedges broke the rolling continuing for over a mile. Part sea of crops except where the of the northern slopes became groups of village plots stood out enclosed as time went on, trees like islands, or peninsulas of unwere cleared, and a little settle- cleared woodland stretched out ment of independent farms grew from the waste. This ploughland † See Surrey Archaeological Collec-

stretched, and still stretches. the traced of the old individual strips. wild expanse of Bookham Com- which in the Midland Counties mon, in part thickly wooded, may still be distinguished by their Across it ran a valley whose small humped contours, showing as a stream was dammed to form a series of tall and narrow reversed fish-pond. Further on the en- S-curves across the pastures. closures began again, alongside These ridge-and-furrow strips the lanes which led to the village were produced by constant turnand 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 plan.\* were also hatches where hedged lanes led off the common land. Although the- gates across the field began the great beech-wood roads have disappeared, several from which Boc-ham, the village still stand on the smaller lanes by the beeches, took its name. leading from Bookham and Ran- Bocwode or Southwode, stretchmore Commons.

up. later known as "Northend" was on the chalk, which provided

never became waterlogged, For Beyond these farms southwards this reason no vestiges can be ing 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

At the summit of the sloping ing across the valley to the further Around the houses of the vil- heights of Ranmore, must always Polesden, indeed seems to have been a name applied to the valley as a whole, †

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

tions vol. L (1949) 161-164.

<b>R. P. BULLA</b>		×××××××××××××××××××××××××××××××××××××××				
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#### PERSONAL COLUMN

Obituary. We extend our sympathies to the family of the late Mr. Herbert Henry Brackenbury who has died at the age of 73. He came to Bookham at the age of 19 in the household of Lady Greville at Polesden Lacey. He "going places". She is nursing lighted to find old Bookhamites served with distinction in the for two-and-a-half to three years living at the end of the road-no First World War, being awarded in the National Women's Hos- other than Mr. and Mrs. Oliver the Military Medal, and, on his return to Bookham, he started She has gone with a friend, also their many friends in the village, his own building and decorating a nurse in the same Hospital, and business in the High Street. On they have been able to buy a little his retirement in 1948 this was car so that they can get about carried on by his son.

years of the Bookham Football they found fascinating. Pamela Club and he himself was a keen is working in the midwifery deplayer, only retiring from the partment where she has demongame when he was close on 50, strated the high standards of He was also very interested in the British nursing training by de-Bookham Cricket Club. older residents of Bookham knew a stitch needed. him well and will miss his kindly interest in village affairs which he Record for Barn Meadow?

B.A.O.C. Trainee. Mr. Christopher Gant, of Barn Meadow ing Mathematics and Engineer-Lane, is in New York, and will go afterwards for two weeks to Calcutta as part of his three years' training with B.O.A.C. for Air Station Officer. He is now nearing the end of his second Finals Ahead. Our special good year and has already had the wishes go to Miss Jennifer Tib- annum can be sent to :-good fortune to visit many of the betts, a member of our Barn leading capital cities of South Hall Club, and, in her school-America. He is a graduate in days a member of our short-lived Geography of Durham University Drama Group, who is at Hull

the work he is undertaking. One Finals in English at the end of of his hobbies is Music and, when this academic year. he is at home, he sings in the Choir of St. Nicolas Church.

Nursing in Auckland. Miss ham to join her husband in Nor-Pamela Grainger is another folk, has taken a flat in Wrox-Bookham young person who is ham. She was surprised and depital, Auckland, New Zealand. Higby, who send good wishes to and see the country. They have He was secretary for many already visited Rotarua which The livering a  $12\frac{1}{2}$  lbs. baby, and not

maintained right up to his death. Stuart Ashton, also of Barn Meadow Lane, is in his first year at Manchester University, studying. We are wondering whether Barn Meadow holds the record for young people at universities and colleges?

which is a fine qualification for University. She will be doing her

Long Arm of Coincidence. Mrs. Maud West, who has left Book-

Otters. We are happy to include an article, in this issue, on Otters, by Mrs. M. E. Byrt, the wife of our local Baptist Minister. Mrs. Byrt is a keen amateur naturalist and has had books published on both otters and birds. She ran the successful bird exhibit at the Countryside Exhibition at the Barn Hall last June. The article is especially topical as Mr. Kingham of Effingham, who lent us those delightful young badgers on Village Day, has just acquired an otter for his private Zoo.

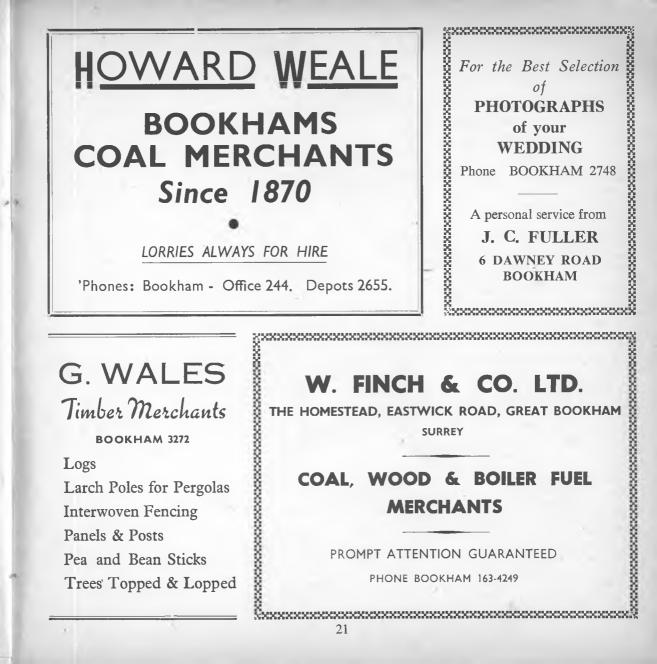
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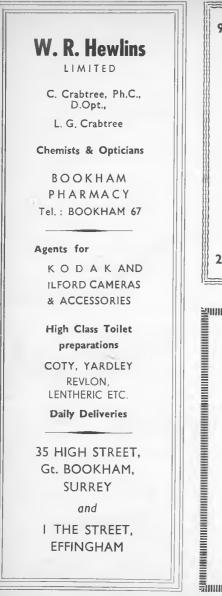
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