

LEATHERHEAD & DISTRICT  
LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

# The Bookhams Bulletin

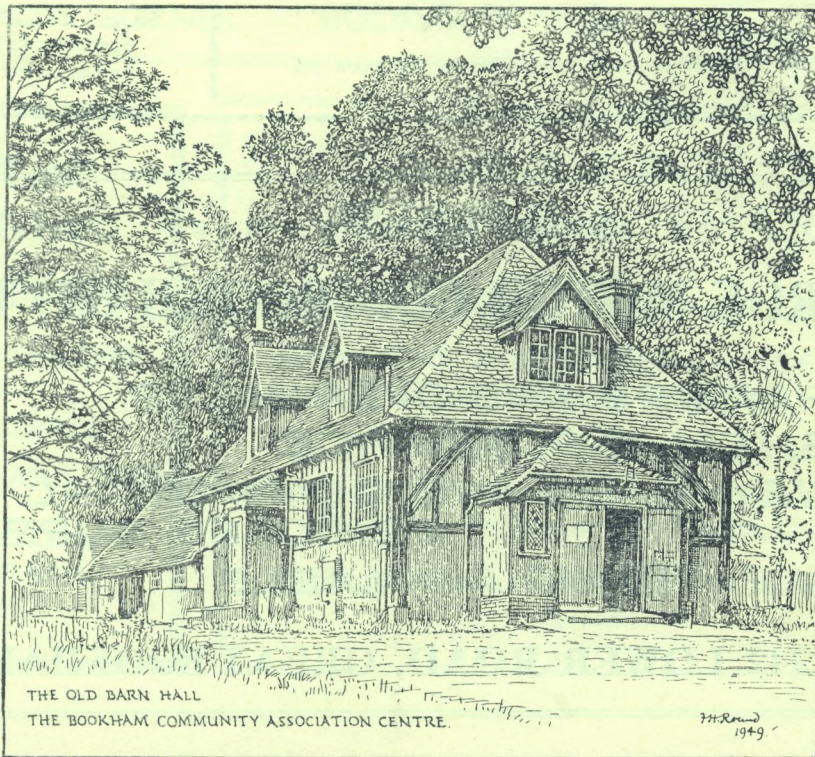


Quarterly Journal of the Bookham Community Association

No. 99

SEPTEMBER 1958.

26th year



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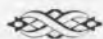
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# THE BOOKHAMS BULLETIN

Quarterly Journal of the Bookham Community Association

No. 99.

SEPTEMBER, 1958.

26th year

## EDITORIAL

It is sometimes said that the best things in life are free. Among these we number green fields and trees, birdsong and the infinite variability of sky and clouds. There are, however, many other things we take for granted until we are threatened with their loss, whereupon we make an outcry, we write letters to the Press, we pest<sup>r</sup> our councillors and sometimes we sign petitions. If public disapproval is sufficiently vocal the danger is averted, our amenity is retained, and we sink back into apathy.

Such, it would appear, is the case of Gilmais Swimming Pool. The Community Association, along with other local organisations, was proud to play its part in retaining this centre for the neighbourhood. The proprietors, loyally accepting the decision of the Council to preserve the Pool, have maintained the high standards we have come to expect. It was anticipated that local people would give their full support to the Pool. The figures we have been given do not, however, indicate this. Eighteen family and seven adult season tickets have been taken out for the summer.

Remembering the representations that were made to us last year by Bookham residents; remembering, too, the suggestions that were put forward for continuing the Pool, if necessary, on a voluntary basis, we cannot but conclude that this is a very poor showing. It is even more disturbing to hear that a fair proportion of the casual users of the Pool come from outside the district.

Is this one more example of the irresponsibility of the 1950's? Can we no longer rely on public support in cash or service to preserve the amenities of the neighbourhood? Bookham has a long tradition of village participation in voluntary local enterprises. We cannot believe that to-day's residents will let this die.

A Community Association

## DANCE

to open the season

at the

**Barn Hall**

**Saturday, September 13th**

Music by the John West Band

## A SHORT HISTORY OF BOOKHAM, SURREY (PART 19)

By JOHN HARVEY

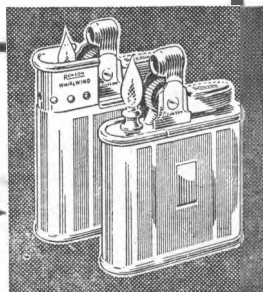
*(Copyright reserved to the author)*

Our knowledge of the detailed history of Bookham at certain dates is due to the survival of particular documents: Domesday Book, the abstract of Court Rolls of 1327-47, the Surveys of 1548 and 1614. Most fortunately, another such survival permits the reconstruction of the whole layout of Great Bookham as it was in 1797-98. This is a large map drawn on the scale of 20 inches to a mile, showing every parcel of land numbered, and with a corresponding reference book giving the owner, occupier, use and area of each parcel.\* Neither map nor book bears a date, but on the book is the statement by a former owner that both had belonged to Mr. Seawell, descendant of the Thomas Seawell who appears as one of the proprietors of 1798. Another plan, to the same scale and identical in treatment,† shows Seawell's estate only; this is dated 1797 and signed by Spurrier & Phipps of London. The date of the parish map can be independently proved to lie in the season 1797-98 by



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comparison with other documents: Richard Brinsley Sheridan, shown as the owner of Polesden, did not acquire it until 31st August, 1797;† the land occupied by Mr. Cressy on the plan was rated in the assessment taken in autumn, 1798‡ to "William Taylor late Cressy"; the Rev. G. A. Pollen, shown as occupier of Hill House, was so assessed in the autumn of 1798, but not in the spring of 1799; on the other hand, Thomas Skinner was not admitted to certain copyholds until 30th October, 1798.¶ The survey of so large an area, its plotting, and the detailed description of all the lands shown, might well last over a year.

Unlike the smaller map of 1614-15, that of 1797-98 marks every strip in the common arable fields as well as the enclosures, houses, and outbuildings. It thus provides an invaluable record, in the last generation before enclosure, of the agricultural arrangements which had lasted since Saxon times. Comparison with the map of 1614-15 shows that some changes had taken place. A few small plots had been taken out of the common wastes, and several marginal areas of open field had been enclosed, but the essential divisions survived. The total area of the parish appears as 3,222 acres (54 acres short of the real amount, due largely to the omission of roads), of which 785 acres were common waste, 690 acres open arable in 463 separate parcels,

and 1,747 acres enclosed land.

Ten big proprietors owned between them 2148 of the 2437 acres of land (excluding the common waste): the Earl of Effingham (609 acres), Richard Brinsley Sheridan (580 a.), James Wood of Bagden (271 a.), Samuel Castle (167 a.), the Slyfield Trustees (122 a.), Edward Waterer (98 a.), Lady Downe (86 a.), Thomas Seawell (81 a.), Robert Wood of Yewtrees (73 a.), and Thomas Skinner (61 a.). Some of these estates extended also into neighbouring parishes. Of the 45 other landowners, 34 owned less than 5 acres each, in many cases only small plots of an acre or so.

Very large areas of the big estates were leased off as farms to several major occupiers, the largest being Sole Farm of 390 acres, let to John Bennett by the Earl of Effingham. In some cases farms were made up of leases from more than one owner, and within the next twenty years, if not by 1798, a system was to grow up whereby whole blocks of open-field land were brought together so that agriculture could be carried on by methods approximating to those used on enclosed land. This was but an intensification of the slow process of exchange and consolidation of strips that had continued since the Middle Ages. By 1804 the movement for enclosure was far advanced, and Sheridan alone, a warm-hearted Irishman, stood between the last of the com-

moners and destitution. He wrote: "Nothing can be more for our interest than the enclosure if I have my due; but I will see real justice done to the cottagers and the poorest claimants. Timber-Tow Wood is the village Hampden." Of a meeting called for the purpose he added: "I was called to the chair to resist Sumner's unpopularity, the poorer claimants putting their cases entirely into my hands."§ Sumner was apparently George Holme Sumner of Hatchlands, later M.P. and Lord of the Manor of Great Bookham: which of the numerous Wood family led the party of commoners is unknown, but it may have been that James Wood of Bagden who, making his will three years later, declared that his estates in Bookham should never be sold or mortgaged but "continue as long as ever there shall be in the Wood family a male heir" (*sic*).|| His son John broke the entail and sold Bagden in 1813, after at least eleven generations had held the farm from father to son for three hundred years.

\* Surrey Record Office, S.C.15.12; a full-size facsimile of the map is in the Guildford Muniment Room.

† National Trust: Polesden documents in Surrey Record Office.

‡ Church Book, 1798-1817, Great Bookham Rectory.

¶ Little Bookham Court Book, 1753-1808, Surrey Record Office.

§ W. F. Rae: *Sheridan, A Biography* (1896), vol. II, p. 203 ff.

|| Will of 3 Jan., 1807, proved 12 Jan., 1808, among Polesden documents, Surrey Record Office.

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## COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION ACTIVITIES

### **Bookham Old Tyme Dance Club.**

The Bookham Old Tyme Dance Club meets every Wednesday evening at the Barn Hall at 7.45 p.m., commencing on the 3rd September. In addition to the weekly club nights, dances are held at the Church House every second Saturday in the month from October to May. New members are always welcome, and further information will gladly be given by the Hon. Secretary, Mr. J. W. Hilder, 247 Lower Road.

### **The Over Sixties Club.**

The Over Sixties have had a happy year. Various outings to Hastings, Eastbourne and Wisley Gardens have been well patronised, and although the weather was not always kind, they (as usual) thoroughly enjoyed themselves. All persons over sixty are welcome to the Barn Hall 2.30 every Tuesday.

**Over Twenty Club** commences again on Tuesday, September 30th, at 7.30. New members and visitors welcome.

**The Gramophone Club** are commencing their winter session on September 4th with a Club Night. Everybody is invited to bring their own favourite record and a prize will be awarded to the one voted the best. New members welcome on this and alternate Thursdays 8 p.m. at the Barn Hall.

### **The Camera Club.**

As the season once again draws to a close we can take stock. The Club has had a successful year on the whole. Competitions and meetings have been well supported and although the average standard of photography has not been of the highest, there has been steady improvement throughout the year.

The Annual Exhibition held in March attracted a good entry and was well attended, although the thrilling lantern lecture, "Himalayan Adventure", given by Mrs. Ray Sprigg, did not receive quite the support it deserved owing to the very severe weather.

The Club has to record with regret the loss of three stalwart members who have left or are about to leave the district. Mrs. V. E. Major, one of the few remaining founder members, who is well known for her photographs of cats, has gone to live at Bexhill; Mr. A. S. Leyva, our energetic competition secretary, is leaving to take up a post in the Bahamas; and Mr. C. Tulley, a very promising member, has moved to Maidstone. To all of these we send our very best wishes, and we sincerely hope they will find the time and opportunity to pursue their hobby in their new surroundings.

Fortunately the influx of new members has enabled us to close the gaps in our ranks and we look forward to another successful

season when we commence to meet again every alternate Thursday from 11th September.

To all beginners in photography we would say, "You will make more rapid progress if you join the Camera Club", and to more advanced workers we extend a hearty welcome to come along and exchange views with other enthusiasts. Particulars of membership may be had from the Hon. Secretary, Mr. J. W. Selby, 23 Nutcroft Grove, Fetcham. Tel. No.: Leatherhead 3622.

## BOOKHAM BREVITIES

### **Village Day.**

The Village Day was well patronized this year and the profits of over £80 will help to keep the Barn Hall going. It was a most enjoyable and sociable occasion. We wish to thank all those whose help made it possible: the Guides, the Afternoon W.I., the W.I. Drama Group, the Grove Association, the St. Nicolas Youth Club, the Red Cross, the Kenilworth Riding Stables, Mr. Hagger of Leatherhead with his sideshows, and the Association's Clubs and members.

We shall soon be planning next year's event and we would welcome *now* offers of assistance. If you have a pair of hands, a little time to spare, ideas or interest, please get in touch with the Secretary, Mrs. E. Harrison.

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## **Bookham School Centenary Pageant.**

The continuity of village life was dramatically portrayed in the Pageant so vividly presented by the Bookham Junior School to mark the centenary of the school. Pupils, staff and parents are to be congratulated on the ingenuity of the costumes, the meticulous make-up and the verve of the production. It was a triumph of organisation to include so many of the children within the limited space and time.

The same high standard of presentation and interest in local history and topography was shown in the exhibition of the work and hobbies of the pupils. The good attendance of parents and friends was most gratifying.

## **Weddings.**

Our good wishes to Mr. and Mrs. Michael White (née Gillian Horsey) who were married at Blantyre, Nyasaland, on May 29th.

Mr. John Mattison and Mrs. Mattison (née Pat West) who were married at the Church of Our Lady of Sorrows, Effingham, and are now living at Epsom.

Mr. Tony Stimpson and Mrs. Stimpson (née Josie Cornish) who were married at St. Nicolas Church and who will make their home on the new Southey Hall Estate.

## **Congratulations.**

To Miss Valerie Wheatley on gaining an Upper Second Class Honours Degree in History at Nottingham University.

To Mr. Alan Smith on gaining an Upper Second Class Honours Degree in Civil Engineering at Bristol University and on his appointment in the firm of Sir William Halcrow.

To Miss Patricia Hurley, who lives on The Lorne, on gaining an Upper Second Class Honours Degree in History at Bristol University.

To Miss Elizabeth Harrison on gaining an Upper Second Class Honours Degree in History at London University, from Bedford College.

To Miss Jill Juniper who has successfully completed the Teachers' Training Course at the Mary Fawcett College and who will join the staff of the Howard of Effingham School in September.

To Miss Averil Stacey who has studied for a year at the Guildhall School of Music after completing her Teachers' Training Course and will join the staff of the Goodwyns School, Dorking, in September.

To Miss Pamela Barfield who has successfully completed the Teachers' Training Course at Salisbury Diocesan College and who will join the staff at St. Brandon's, an Independent Girls' Boarding School, at Clevedon, Somerset.

## **BOOKHAM CHORAL SOCIETY**

Bookham Choral Society continues to flourish and gained third place this year, among the six advanced choirs, in the competitions at Dorking during the Leith Hill Musical Festival. Again we were so ably conducted by Mr. Ralph Nicholson.

The music which was set by the L.H.M.F. Committee comprised works by Bach, Kodaly, and Vaughan Williams among others and was not entirely suitable for our local annual concert as soloists and orchestral accompaniments were needed to give a full impression of the lovely work by Kodaly. So the Bookham Choral Society is giving a concert in October and a large number of the members have joined in the summer rehearsals and shown great enthusiasm and interest. Announcements of time, place and date will be made in the autumn and we do hope to see all our old friends and supporters and to make many new friends at the concert.

There are a few vacancies for voices in the choir and newcomers will be very welcome, particularly tenors. New season begins September in the Congregational Hall, Eastwick Road, Gt. Bookham, at 8 p.m.

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## BOOKHAM MUSIC CLUB

President: Yvonne Arnaud.

The third season of the Club was much enjoyed by members and visitors and was honoured by such distinguished artists as Ruth Dyson (harpsichord), Joan Davies (pianoforte) and Antonia Butler (cello), who are well known to the public through the B.B.C. All concerts were held at the charming Old Barn Hall, which proved to be excellent for sound; and "coffee and biscuits" became an institution which gave the audience an opportunity of talking to each other and of meeting the performers personally.

The fourth season will begin in October and a varied and interesting programme is planned. Unfortunately the hire of a grand piano is a very great expense, so it has been decided to hold concerts in private drawing-rooms when a piano is required. This inevitably limits the number of people that can be accommodated, so those who wish to become members should apply early. *Only members* can be admitted.

Full particulars may be had from the Hon. Secretary, 2 Hale-pit Road, Gt. Bookham; tel.: Bookham 3321. Please send subscriptions to the Hon. Treasurer, Vine Cottage, 51 High Street, Gt. Bookham.

## SHAKESPEARE AT POLESDEN LACEY

Shakespeare's "Merchant of Venice" at the National Trust's Open-Air Theatre in July drew the largest over-all audience that has ever come to Polesden. An average of over 1,500 people at each performance for four performances is a great achievement and a tribute to the players, to their producer, Miss Elsie Green, to the organisation and to the attraction of the stage in its wonderful setting.

Radio, T.V., and the national and local newspapers carried descriptions of the play. Special comment was made on the revolving stage, thought to be the only one of its kind in an open-air theatre in Britain. This ingenious construction is one more step in the growth of a most successful enterprise which started in 1951 when the Community Association made the stage by voluntary labour, gave it to the National Trust and presented on it "Midsummer Night's Dream" with local actors, ballet and the Surrey Philharmonic Orchestra. We were reminded of this by the presence in the audience of Mrs. Phyllis Newman, the original producer, who had come from Somerset to see the show. She was impressed by the great changes in the past seven years.

It is noteworthy, however, that with all the improvements, the annual event at Polesden remains

in spirit very much the same. Bookham can be justly proud of this worth while venture which was conceived and started by Bookham people and is still organised by Bookham people through the National Trust's Advisory Committee. Year after year many volunteers go up to Polesden to look after the comfort and convenience of large audiences. What was a one-day show is now a three-day one, but the same smooth organisation goes on and the same team spirit makes all this possible.

---

**SOS.** Urgently required, a volunteer to take charge of the advertisements in *The Bulletin*. Please apply to Mrs. E. Harrison. Tel.: Bookham 2702.

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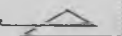
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