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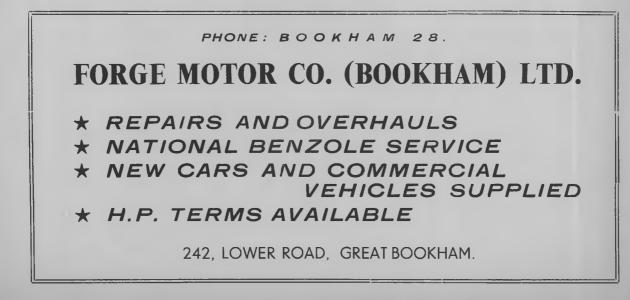
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## THE BOOKHAMS BULLETIN

Quarterly Journal of the Bookham Community Association

No. 102.

#### MAY, 1959.

#### 27th year

#### **EDITORIAL**

The decision of Mr. A. E. Murrells not to seek re-election to the Leatherhead Urban District Council means that the Council has lost an outstanding personality and the Bookham Ward a dauntless fighter. Mr. Murrells has served the community on the Council for 21 years and this is a long time in the life of a man. Outspoken in debate and independent in outlook he has left his mark on the Leatherhead district. We are grateful to him for the energy and talent he has expended on our behalf. We are convinced that he will not cease to champion local causes with all his old fire, for he has too much vigour to be just a passive spectator.

Too few people are willing to give up their leisure to serve on public bodies. It entails many hours of unspectacular, routine work. The kicks are bound to be many and the tributes rare. Apart from the hope that the effort is in a worthwhile cause the rewards are few, and one sometimes wonders if the supply of candidates will run out and the machinery of democracy break down. Uncontested elections, of which there are quite a number, are not a mark of health in the community; but the low polls of recent years are a more disquieting symptom. We all reserve the right to grumble if something goes wrong but so many of us neglect to record our vote for the man of our choice. A councillor will give of his best if he knows he has the support of his fellow citizens. To mark our cross is to participate in democratic government. It is the least return we can make for services rendered or promised.

Mr. Murrells has hammered home this point in season and out of season. In saying thank you to him we take the opportunity to range ourselves with him in his campaign against apathy.

#### **OBITUARY**

Mrs. E. Amey, who died on April 19th at the age of 95, had become a symbol to many of us of the old Bookham which is so quickly passing. Although she was born at Upham, Hampshire, she had lived and worked in Bookham for the greater part of her life and could tell us anecdotes of the bygone days—of the fine parties given by the Hon. Mrs. Greville at Polesden Lacey, and of the annual village gatherings at Southey Hall, which is now demolished.

She was caretaker of the Old

Barn Hall when it was given to the village in 1906 and for 28 years carried on with this work. We know from her descriptions that it was the social centre for all the villagers and we can see again the friendly parties in a candlelit hall with two glowing coal fires for warmth. We also remember that she carried the coals and cleaned and scrubbed for a wage of 4/6 per week. It was as a tribute for her past work that the Community Association elected her one of its Vice-Presidents.

The Over Sixties Club were proud of her as their oldest member. They appreciated her cheerful disposition and her genuine enjoyment of their meetings and outings. The disabilities of age did not trouble her and she was always a ready volunteer if help was required. Her tranquil acceptance of the troubles as well as the joys of a simple village life made her a loved and respected figure in Bookham.

**Congratulations** to Keith Markwick, now Dr. Markwick, on achieving L.R.C.P., M.R.C.S., M.B., B.S.

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### JUNE 20th AT 2-30 p.m.

The 11th Bookham's "Village Day" will take "Bookham's Past" as its theme-not that it means that it is meant for old fogeys for, like "Village Days" one to eight, it aims to entertain everybody, inexpensively, on one day in the year. The continual crisis of funds to maintain the Barn Hall gives it a second aim of raising money for the coming year and for urgent repairs and redecoration. The Association has a double reason. then, for hoping that all Bookham will come along.

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Bookham had a flourishing fair. Though cattle and pigs will not be on sale on June 20th, cakes, sweets, produce, "old curiosities," soap and buttonholes will be. But a fair is not all buying and selling by a long way and this year's sideshows will be traditional in spirit, including such proven amusements as tilting, cock-baiting, bowling, hay-tossing, greasy pole, marbles and roundabout. For inspiration stallholders will be in appropriate seventeenth century costume. The twentieth century has not been completely forgotten and the more modern items include pony rides and housey-housey.

With many new residents coming to Bookham in the past few years, it was thought appropriate to re-

### VILLAGE DAY

Admission 6d. Members Free on production of membership card

stage the Exhibition of Bookham's Past of 1950. It will not be the same Exhibition, however, so those who saw it before would find it worth coming to again. Relics of Bookham's history, pictures and the inherited treasures of some of its

### AT THE BARN HALL

residents will be displayed, together with models, produced by Bookham School, and maps. A Village Day Lucky Number Programme will admit to the Exhibition in the Hall itself.

Demonstrations of traditional and Scottish dancing, a puppet show, and madrigals sung by the Choir should provide further attractions, and the day will be completed by a historical-costume Dance in the Hall in the evening (costume preferred) with band, refreshments and prize for the best costume for five shillings.

Programmes, dance tickets and raffle tickets will be on sale in Bookham in the fortnight before June 20th and on Village Day itself. Buying them will be worthwhile.

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#### A SHORT HISTORY OF BOOKHAM, SURREY

(Part 22)

#### By JOHN HARVEY

The road-book resulting from personal survey had been a feature of the later seventeenth and eighteenth centuries; from the latter part of the eighteenth century its place began to be taken by the directory, annual or periodical, giving statistical information, addresses of residents and tradesmen. etc., arranged not along the main routes, but alphabetically. In some cases, smaller places were grouped with a neighbouring town, and this was the case with Great Bookham in 1826, when Pigot's London and Provincial Directory (p. 680-1) gave a joint entry for "LEATHER-HEAD AND GREAT BOOKHAM."

Bookham is separately described: "Great Bookham is a parish and village, twenty-one miles from London, nine from Guildford, and two from Leatherhead. The church is small and ancient, supposed to have been built as early as the beginning of the fourteenth century, by an abbot of Chertsey. In this parish are several very fine seats, and the country round here is fertile and pleasant. The population of the parish is about 700." The Post Office was at Leatherhead, "John Nash, Post Master. Letters from London arrive every morning (except Monday) at three, and are dispatched at half-past ten in the evening."

The Coaches from Leatherhead to London were "from the Swan Inn, to the Spread Eagle, Gracechurch-st. every morning (except Sunday) at half-past seven; to the Blossoms Inn, Lawrence-lane, at eight in the morning; and to the Old Bell, Holborn, at half-past eight in the morning, half-past nine, and a quarter before ten; and in summer at five and in winter at half-past three in the afternoon. Coaches from Great Bookham pass through to London during the day." Besides the information on coaches, mention is made of two carriers, John Chilman of Leatherhead, who went "from his own house, to the Vine Tavern, Bishopsgate-street, every Tuesday and Friday," and from Great Bookham, "William Poulter from his own house, on Monday and Thursday."

The directory of Bookham begins with GENTRY & CLERGY: Bazelgette, Lewis, esq., Eastwick Park: Bonsor, Joseph, esq., Polsden; Farley, Rev. Wm. (academy) [at The Croft]; Hebbarden, Rev. Wm. [The Vicarage]; Hodges, Wm. R. esq.; Leach, Misses; Leach, Wm. [probably of The Hermitage]; Lowdell, Geo. [of "Fairfield House," now so-called, in the High Street]; Mackey, Spencer, esq., Bookham Grove." By this time many of the country seats were commonly let to tenants, rather than occupied by their owners, as in this last case.

The Bookham tradesmen were Thomas Skinner and Thomas Wood, bakers; Richard Horley, William Horley, and John Wyatt, blacksmiths; Abraham Dallen, John Robinson, John Scott, and James Stedman, boot and shoe makers; John Anscomb, butcher; Mercer & Wood, and William Wood, carpenters; William Willis, grocer and draper; Robert Ragge, saddler; William Bradbury, James Elliott, and William Plaskins, tailors; Arthur Lunn, wheelwright. The "TAVERNS AND PUBLIC HOUSES" were the Crown, kept by John Hall; and the Saracen & Ring (formerly the White Hart), kept by John Brown.

By 1838 Great Bookham had its own entry in Robson's Commercial Directory of the Six Home Counties (Surrey, pp. 8-9). Here the gentry are omitted, and the tradesmen appear in alphabetical order. The description runs: "BOOKHAM, Great is a parish of 3,170 acres; assessed to the Property Tax in 1815 at 2,867 £. The population in 1801 was returned at 587, and in 1831 at 890. The benefice in 1834 was returned as a vicarage, of the annual value of 458 £., endowed with half the great tithes; in the presentation of W. Heberden, M.D., who is the impropriator of the remainder of the great tithes. The village is west of the river Mole, 20 miles S.W. of Leatherhead (sic), on the road to Guildford. It is included in the parochial union of Epsom." There was by now a Post Office, kept by Edmund Prier as a "Receiving

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house," with "Letters from all parts arrive morn, 9; dispatched even. 6." The Sun Fire & Life Assurance Agent was Robert Cook. William Poulter was still the local carrier, going to London on Monday and Thursday, and to Guildford every Saturday.

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The list of local tradesmen, giving "Name, Residence & Pro-fession" runs: "Bradbury, William, Tailor; Chitty, William, Fox [i.e. the public house on Ranmore Common]; Clarke, Thomas, Butcher; Colebrooke, J. D., Butcher; Conisbee, E., Butcher; Cox, Henry, Calenderer; Dallem, Abraham, Cordwainer; Daw, Thomas, Re-tailer of Beer; Denby, Miles, Bricklayer & Plasterer; Elliott, James, Tailor; Hall, Elizabeth, Crown [public house]; Horley, Joanna, Milliner; Horley, Richard, Blacksmith; Jennings, William, Painter; Lunn, Arthur, Wheelwright; Matthews, George, Plumber; Mercer & Wood, Carpenters; Paskins, W., Tailor; Simon, Peter, Retailer of Beer; Prier, Edward, Grocer & Draper; Puddock, Henry, Wheelwright; Skinner, Thomas, Baker; Stemp, J., Rat & Mole Catcher; Stevens, J., Plumber; Sturt, James, Boot & Shoemaker; Tanner, Richard, Bricklayer & Plasterer; Tickner, Robert, Beer Retailer; Willis, William, Grocer & Draper; Wood, George, Saracen & Ring Inn; Wood, Maria, Carpenter; Wood, Thomas, Baker & Flour Dealer; Wood, Thomas, Sawyer; Wyatt, Hannah, Blacksmith; Wyett, William, Blacksmith." The considerable increase in both population and tradesmen in the twelve years since 1826 clearly marks the beginnings of modern Bookham, its transformation to an urban and residential rather than a rural agricultural area.

#### THE NATIONAL TRUST TO PRESENT "MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING"

The National Trust, in its rare capacity of theatrical impresario, will present "Much Ado About Nothing" in four performances at the open-air theatre in the grounds of Polesden Lacey, near Bookham, Surrey, from 16th-18th July.

The producer is Miss Elsie Green, of Epsom, and the cast has been chosen from members of amateur dramatic societies throughout Surrey. Mr. Ronald Kirkwood, television art director of a London advertising agency, is designing the stage set.

The annual Shakespearian production at Polesden Lacey attracts audiences totalling up to 7,000 people, among them large parties from schools, women's organisations, and overseas visitors.

All seats, at prices ranging from 3/- to 10/6, may be reserved on application to the box office at "Upalong," Guildford Road, Great Bookham.

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#### **A COCKNEY IN PARADISE**

In July our seventh party of old people from St. Pancras will visit us.

Their joy and wonder at the beauty of Polesden Lacey is chastening to us who accept it without thinking, but these old folk, some who have never left their borough, gaze with awe. "It's like Paradise," they say. This annual event, culminating with tea and entertainment at the Barn Hall, is eagerly awaited by our visitors and by the Community Association's Women's Committee. To provide these old people with a happy day and send them home with flowers, vegetables and groceries is a most rewarding experience.

Gifts of money, groceries, flowers or garden produce will be well welcomed by Mrs. D. Cuddeford, Southwood, Dawnay Road. Telephone Bookham 3498.

#### THE BOOKHAM BOWLING CLUB

The season has now begun and anyone interested will be welcome at the Bowling Green in the Recreation Ground any evening from 6.30.

Secretary: J. H. Saunders (Bookham 2827). Ladies' Representative: Mrs. Saunders.

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#### JOHN CONSTABLE, R.A. 1776-1837

John Constable is a very well known name in English art. He is recognised as an essentially "Erglish" painter with his passionat, parochial concern in the magic of his native Suffolk landscape: the soft, flat pastures and slow streams, the lushness and verdant growth, the breezy freshness and rolling clouds casting their shadows and moods over his canvases in breathtaking variety.

Like the great painter Rembrandt, Constable too was the son of a fairly wealthy miller. He was born on the 11th June, 1776, six years after Beethoven, and, having dissuaded his father from sending him to the Ministry and from making him a miller, journeyed to London in 1795 to become a painter. He became a student at the Royal Academy in 1799, exhibited his first painting in 1802, was elected an associate in 1819 and became an R.A. ten years later. He died on April 1st, 1837.

As with most great artists, Constable received a measure of ridicule from the small public who saw his works, and misinformed "criticism" from critics for painting in a hitherto undeveloped way and for making a personal contribution to the history of art. Landscape painters had before this time usually painted with the sun at their backs, to the right or left out of the picture, as the sun would look upon it; or with the sun in the picture setting or rising. Most artists such as Claude or **Cuy**p

were content to work within this convention, but Constable was not. He discovered and developed the then staggering innovation of painting his landscapes with the sun high up in the sky but a little in front of him so producing that glitte: and sparkle of white light on his foliage (nicknamed "Constable's Snow" by derisory critics), a quality peculiar to his art and of much significance. These flecks of white pigment — for example in "The Cornfield" in the National Gallery - were looked upon with horror by spectators conditioned by years of dark brown paintings full of "taste" and "truth"; but we have only to look closely at foliage ourselves to discover how right the artist was. Most leaves when not begrimed by dust and diesel smoke are fitted to reflect light, and when seen between the sun and the spectator, shimmerparticularly just after a shower when the water sparkles and glitters like crystals.

One piece of vandalism concerning this white light in Constable's paintings should not go unrecorded. It was brought to light by his friend Leslie who, speaking of his picture "The opening of Waterloo Bridge," says that only a year after Constable's death the painting was covered with a coat of blacking by a picture dealer who wished to give the work "tone." He succeeded only in destroying the picture's light and vitality and reducing it to respectable mediocrity.

Constable has left us a legacy of many magnificent works both full

scale studio productions and sketches-the latter by the dozen upon dozen. Luckily for us Constable married into wealth, so although he never sold many of his works he was enabled to continue painting undisturbed by financial stress. The sketches, full of vitality, freshness and drama, are preferred now by some to his larger studio works. In his own time, however, this was not so, for people who could not accept his more finished works were certainly unable to appreciate the broadly treated, boldly executed smaller sketches.

These small notes were largely painted in oil on paper or board over a reddy brown ground which Constable used to full effect, letting it glow through, around and between his colours and forms giving a unity and almost unbelievable atmospheric luminosity. Such sketches as the ones for "Salisbury Cathedral" and "The Haywain" show this quality to perfection and give us an opportunity to compare the preliminary note and the finished work at our leisure and to decide for ourselves which is superior.

A visit to the National Gallery and other collections would be both rewarding and sufficient to confirm the unique and precious place that John Constable's paintings have in the development of the great English tradition of landscape painting, and to give us new eyes to observe and enjoy our native landscape with the private joy it deserves.

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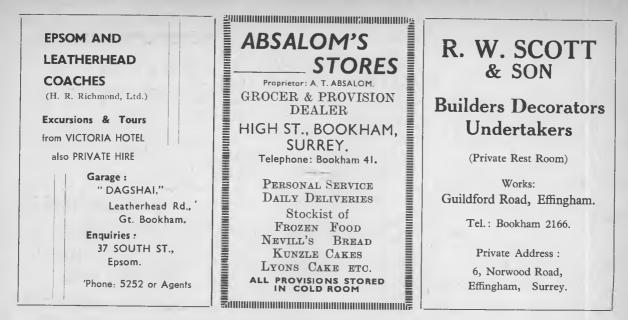
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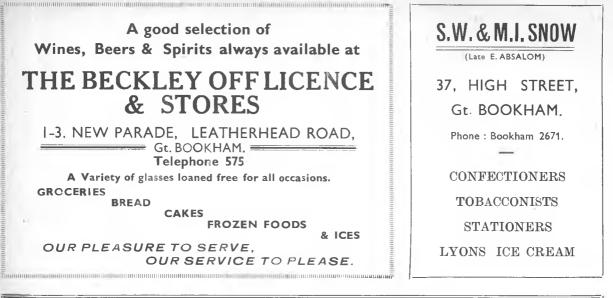
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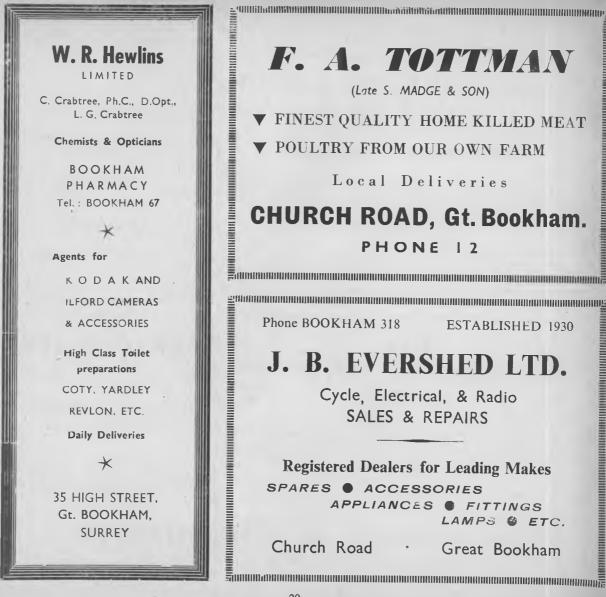


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Published by The Bookham Community Association, and Printed by The Leatherhead Press-3643.