



# Mickleham & Westhumble Local History Group NEWSLETTER

Volume 7 – February 2020 Editor: Sue Tatham

## The Chairman writes ...

The Group continues to work away at its researches and making the results available to everybody. The group's website has grown into an important repository for the history of our area so please have a look at it if you have not seen it recently.

Many thanks to Roger Davis for his work in producing such a professional showcase for all that our Group has accomplished.

If you are not involved already, please have a look at what our Local History Group does and get in touch if you

would like to join us in any aspect of our activities. We still lack a suitable place for our archives – please get in touch if you know of anywhere that might be available.

I hope to see you at our AGM and at the other events in our programme.

Ben Tatham

## M&WLHG Website

So, what's the point of our website? Hopefully it is a source of information about the history of our two villages and the people associated with them. We have recently added over twenty-five articles on local history that were previously published in the Mickleham Parish Magazine and we are slowly building a collection of old photographs illustrating the life and buildings of the area in the past. It is on the website that you will find advanced notice of our events as well as details of the work we are currently undertaking.

There is however another use of the website that you may not be aware of. Throughout the year we receive many enquiries from people who, although they may not live in the area themselves, have links with it. Perhaps the most common question we receive is whether we can shed any light on an ancestor who lived locally or is buried in the churchyard. This is where our committee members, Judy Kinloch and Judith Long, leap into action, not only searching our archives and racking their brains, but also often carrying out research on the genealogical websites for scraps of information that we can

pass on. Not all enquiries are family related as we have also been able to use our local knowledge to assist authors of books, both factual and fictional, with information as varied as the occurrence of swallow holes of the River Mole to the lives and loves of the French émigrés at Juniper Hall.

Here is an example of a recent enquiry... *During WW2 my grandfather was a driver for Southern Railway electric trains. On one occasion he was driving between Leatherhead and Dorking when he was attacked by a*

*German aircraft. He lay on the floor of the cab with his hand on the dead man's handle and managed to reach Mickleham tunnel where he stopped for about half an hour. Could you let me know if you have any records of such an incident?*

Unfortunately, so far, we have been unable to help in this case. Do let us know if you can shed any light on what happened in the Mickleham Tunnel, and please do visit our website! [www.micklehamwesthumblehistory.co.uk](http://www.micklehamwesthumblehistory.co.uk)

Roger Davis



Early 19<sup>th</sup> century photograph of The Running Horses from our website

# M&WLHG Contact Information

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## The Group's website

[www.hugofox.com/community/mickleham-westhumble-local-history-group-13483/](http://www.hugofox.com/community/mickleham-westhumble-local-history-group-13483/)

Manager: Roger Davis

## M&WLHG Programme for 2020

- **Friday 21<sup>st</sup> February**  
AGM at Mickleham Village Hall followed by a talk by Emma Corke 'Worms, ashes and bones: excavations at Cocks Farm Abinger 1877-2019' 7:30 for 8 pm in Mickleham Village Hall
- **Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> April**  
Visit to Holloway Sanatorium, Virginia Water 10.30 am Booking essential.  
This former mental asylum for the middle classes was founded by wealthy Victorian philanthropist Thomas Holloway. Grade I listed and meticulously restored in the 1990s it is rarely open to the public. As the building is now part of a residential complex it does not have a website, but the following link gives a flavour of the architecture and decoration. Lunch to follow the visit, venue to be arranged.  
<https://lightwater.wordpress.com/2014/09/16/victorian-splendour-at-the-holloway-sanatorium/>
- **Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> July**  
Guided tour of Guided tour of Newdigate. Meet for coffee at the Six Bells in Newdigate at 10:30 am before a guided tour of the village. Lunch at the pub after the tour. Booking essential.
- **Saturdays 24<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> October**  
Beating the Parish Bounds. Further details to follow.

For further information about any of these events please contact Judith Long

## Our Sixth Annual General Meeting

On 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2019 following the AGM of the M&WLHG in Mickleham Village Hall we were treated to a fascinating presentation on 'The Story of Broadmoor - the Village' by Robin Daly. The following report appeared in the April 2019 edition of the Mickleham Parish Magazine.

## The Story of Broadmoor in Surrey



Following the AGM of the M&WLHG on 22<sup>nd</sup> February, we heard a fascinating talk by Robin Daly about the history of Broadmoor, a hamlet close to Friday Street and Abinger. Fortunately for historians, there are numerous old postcards and photographs of Broadmoor still available and Robin began by showing us some of these, together with a map of the area, giving us a good sense of how Broadmoor fits into its surroundings and the views seen from different directions.

Robin then gave us a photographic tour of Broadmoor, pointing out interesting features of the houses and some of the many changes they have undergone, plus introducing us to some of their former occupants. Most of the houses shown on a 1762 map of Broadmoor are still standing, the oldest being Tillingbourne Cottage. Pond Cottage, now a National Trust property, was once owned by a colonel who collected war memorabilia and frequently extended his house, incorporating the date into each of the additions: 1926, 1932 and 1933. Whiteberry Cottage had been the workhouse for 130 years whereas Home Farm became a hotel to cater for the growing tourist trade after the arrival of the railway and other new forms of transport. I particularly liked the story of Mad Alice, who left mountains of wax in her cottage from all the candles she had used.

In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, a notable local resident was Theodore Jacobsen, a German merchant and 'gentlemen architect', who bought a large area of land which he transformed into a grand landscaped estate, including a

fountain and picturesque waterfall. Constructing the waterfall was extremely complicated. To begin with, Jacobsen had to make a deal with the Evelyn family before the feeder pond could be built and then a lengthy artificial watercourse, known as a leat, had to be dug along the hillside. To complete his country estate, Jacobsen designed and built his house, Lonesome Lodge, in 1740. (Jacobsen also designed the original Foundling Hospital and some of our group will have seen his portrait in the Foundling Museum, which we visited a few years ago).

The final owner of Lonesome Lodge was a Mr Harding who, Robin believes, built the Broadmoor Tower folly in 1834 as a burial place for his son, who had died aged two. Harding sold the estate to the Duke of Norfolk, Lonesome Lodge was demolished and a new residence, Tillingbourne House, constructed. This was pulled down about fifty years ago and a replacement built, which has also been demolished! We all enjoyed the rather bizarre story of the Tillingbourne sphinx, a decorative lead ornament located in the woods on the estate. In 1905 a photograph of the sphinx won a prize in a competition in the Tatler but a few years later three men dismantled the sphinx (even small pieces would have been remarkably heavy) and stole it. The theft must have been well publicised as the sphinx was the property of the Duke of Norfolk and, unsurprisingly, the culprits were soon caught.

Another interesting Broadmoor resident was Arthur Brooke, of Brooke Bond Tea fame, who had started his career in Manchester. He bought Leylands in the late 1880s and had it remodelled in the Dutch style of his previous home in Bedford Park, London. Numerous photos of Leylands were taken by Walter Rose, a well-known Westcott photographer, whose wife worked for the Brooke family. The Brookes were involved in a variety of philanthropic endeavours and took up the cause of women cyclists. The



Left: The Brooke Leyland family; top: the Sphinx; above: Broadmoor Tower

increasing popularity of cycling in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century had given women the freedom to travel away from home on their own but not everyone was pleased with this new independence, believing it would lead to all manner of evils and questioning the propriety of the clothing being worn. After some innkeepers in Surrey banned women cyclists from staying in their inns, the Brooke family offered these women accommodation in a caravan on their property. Arthur Brooke also built Broadmoor Cottages, which resemble almshouses and had no running water until the 1970s!

For anyone who would like to find out more about Lonesome Lodge, Robin is one of the authors of the book 'Lonesome Lodge: The creation, evolution and decline of a merchant's country estate in Wotton, Surrey', now published by the Cockerel Press.

Judith Long

# Task Group Report: The Village Archives

The group has spent some time this year exploring aspects of our 'village school', now St Michael's Infant School. Ben Tatham has written a history of the buildings (now available on our website) and this year we hosted an exhibition of the works that have been carried out over the years for Heritage Weekend. A number of old pupils and parents as well as many younger ones enjoyed the opportunity to learn of the many improvements that have come about since the Foundation Stone was laid in 1907. To complement this, we have been reading the log books which date back to 1863 and researching the history of the various headmasters. The log books were meticulously kept several times a week and cover topics from the weather to disease to misbehaviour and punishment thus giving a fascinating insight into 19<sup>th</sup>

and early 20<sup>th</sup> century local life. So far, we have looked at five headmasters and covered the 100 years from 1845 to 1948. Together with the oral interviews of ex-pupils which are being conducted we are gradually building up a comprehensive picture of the school's history.

With the help of Mark Day who keeps a watching brief on ebay we have acquired some interesting photographs and postcards. One is a view of Byttom Hill photographed from the bottom of the hill looking north; another shows Flint and Hillside Cottages both immediately fronting the old London road (before the A24) whereas now we can hardly see the former due to the vegetation that has grown up. A postcard of the old chapel ruins and a barn at Chapel Farm (1906) just shows the turning



Photograph: Village Archives

Mark Day has found one of the oldest photographs of the church we have seen, taken in the 1880s, before the major changes in 1891 as it shows the north door. Note the unsurfaced road and the fact that over time the road level has been built up thus the wall now appears significantly lower than at that time.

that now leads up the hill to Ashleigh Grange and a very old photograph of the church shown above. A family photograph of the Old Post Office and the Running Horses was sent to us by a correspondent whose grandmother was born in Mickleham (see below - research into the Perry and Grafham families). Recently, a sampler came up for auction that had been sewn by a pupil of what was then called Mickleham National School by Rhoda Child in 1880. We acquired this and have now completed the research we had been working on concerning the Child family who first appeared on the 1851 census in Mickleham and became successful builders in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. (This is also printed in the newsletter.)

One request for information concerned the Grafham and Perry families, which was complicated by the fact that George Perry married two women, both named Hannah. The first died in 1872 and he remarried in 1873. His brother Joseph also lived and married in Mickleham and his wife was George's first wife's sister! The families lived in a number of houses over the years, including what is now

Yew Tree Cottage and many are buried in the churchyard.

We were approached by Peter Brown for information on the swallow holes in the River Mole and were able to show him the material we hold which includes some local photographs and plans for the capping of the swallows at the Burford Bridge when the A24 was being constructed. He introduced us to some new photographs (dated 1949) and will send us a copy of his research file. His book, 'The Vanishing River of Box Hill' has now been published and can be bought at Dorking Museum.

Somehow research always gets way ahead of writing it up. There are lots of things in the pipeline, including a number of interesting people and a history of the management of the Village Hall which Ben Tatham has written and which Angela Ireland is fleshing out with all the different community activities that have taken place there over the last century. Following the research that Roger Davies did for his village walk this year we have also been collating information concerning the acquisition of the Fredley Estate by the Surrey County Council in the 1930s and the subsequent housing development. A recent request from Oregon concerning Louis Gueriot is currently being researched. He was the carpenter for

Sir Trevor Lawrence at Burford Lodge at the end of the 19th century.

We had a visit from Pam Palmer who was looking for information about the Tapner family of Mickleham. She is a direct descendant of John Tilt, a Capel farmer and successful smuggler, whose daughter married into the Tapner family in 1793. We helped unravel the genealogy of the family and showed Pam the two known Tapner graves in the churchyard (12 Tapner burials are recorded), where Thomas and his brother Charles, who both died in the 1790s, are buried with their wives.

The most recent addition to our Archives is a book about the history of the Rogers family, who owned the Old House from 1785 to 1897. Written by a descendant of the family who lives in Australia, it focuses in particular on the Rev. William Rogers Prebendary and Rector of St. Botolph, Bishopsgate, and a 'leader in all good work for the people of London, more especially in the cause of education'. He died in Mickleham and is buried in the churchyard. Another relatively local family member visited us in 2018 for help with the Mickleham part of the Rogers' history and much of the information we provided is included in the book.

In July Caroline Carmichael, the daughter of Raymond and Sheila Jennings, returned to Mickleham



Bookplate from the book on the history of the Rogers family

Cottage, the house where she was born, now owned by Judith Long and her husband. The Jennings bought the house in 1931 and lived there until the early 1970s. Caroline showed us an album containing photographs of the house and gardens taken in the 1930s and it was fascinating to see the changes that have taken place over the last eighty years.

Thank you to all those who have contributed to the Archive, especially Judith Long, whose research skills we could not do without. Judy Kinloch



## Extract from the Mickleham School Log Book

### September 1939

- Sept 11<sup>th</sup> School reopened under emergency conditions. Session 9am - 12.  
Dulwich Central School 1 - 4 pm  
Grove Vale School & Dog Kennel Hill School [both from East Dulwich] using Village Hall on double shift. About 200 official and unofficial evacuees being accommodated.  
Temporary Time Tables in use.  
One case Scarlet Fever among evacuees. Two contacts excluded.
- 13<sup>th</sup> Dr Laken visited & inspected children.
- 25<sup>th</sup> Miss Carless, Grove Vale LCC Infant Mistress temporarily loaned to school.
- Oct 11<sup>th</sup> Number on Roll this week 111.  
Rhuhay Dale Smith Oct

What must the headmaster have been feeling when he wrote this?  
Where were all these children being accommodated?  
Further research needed here. Ed.



## Early Parish Magazines

We have recently bought four bound volumes of Mickleham Parish Magazines which eagle-eyed Judith Long found on ebay. The oldest is dated 1879-1891 the other three include some, but not all of the editions to 1906.

We were surprised to find that the earliest volume includes the first ever MPM.

### From the very first Mickleham Parish Magazine - January 1879

Our new Parish Magazine presents itself to each with all the good wishes and resolves which mark the beginning of any fresh event in our lives. It brings a hearty New Year's greeting from your Pastor, who earnestly prays that God's blessing may be richly poured out during the year upon all the hearts and homes of Mickleham.

Month by month the Magazine will reach you. Let us hope that we may welcome it as a true friend. It purposes to convey matters of local interest to the parishioners, along with subjects of a wider scope and general information. The next issue will contain a list of those who have subscribed towards it. Due notice will also be given from time to time of any Baptisms, Marriages, and Burials which may have taken place during the bygone month. In fact, whatever bears upon Mickleham will, as far as space affords, be inserted. At the end of the year all the monthly numbers can be easily stitched together, and will thus form a very nice volume, as a handsome case for binding may be obtained at a cheap price from the Publishers.

Once more let me wish you a very Happy New Year, W H HARKE

## Rhoda Child's Sampler

A short time ago, a sampler came up for auction on ebay which immediately took our interest, not only because it mentioned Mickleham National School and the date 1880, but because it had been sewn by Rhoda Child, a surname we had previously come across as one long associated with Mickleham.

Rhoda's father, William Child, was born in Shere in 1827 but the first mention of him in Mickleham is in the 1851 census, where he is listed as lodging with a family on the Leatherhead Road (now the A24). Kelly's Directories for 1867 to 1872 list him as a lodging-housekeeper but there are no further details. He obviously did well for himself working as a carpenter/builder and was a talented wood carver who exhibited a basic musical instrument in the form of a wooden serpent, twisted into a curved form, at the Great Exhibition of 1851. It was awarded a diploma of merit and is still prized by the family. He married a local girl, Harriet Mundy, in 1871 and they had three children besides Rhoda: Alice, Walter and James. They lived for a time in School Lane and later in 1 Laurel Cottage as tenants.

We learn a little more about the family from the school logbook written by Robert Mortimore, the master of the National School. Rhoda was admitted on 24<sup>th</sup> May 1875 having previously attended Mrs Reynolds' Dame School. Needlework was then an important element of the curriculum for girls and much interest was taken in the girls' prowess by the local gentry who would frequently visit. Five such ladies were called upon to judge the needlework prize and it was only after long consideration that Rhoda and Lily Gray were awarded equal first prize. High praise was given to all competitors. Rhoda married Walter Housden in Mickleham in 1897. He was from Hertfordshire but by 1915 the couple were living in Laurel Cottage. He was a keen member of the Rifle Club and was appointed a sidesman at the Easter

Vestry meeting in 1918. After his death in 1943, Rhoda stayed on until her death in 1960. She had the reputation for being mildly eccentric (or so I am told).

The log also records Walter leaving school to be a carpenter. The master says of him that 'it affords me great pleasure to speak highly of the boy'. Other mentions include James spending a week's holiday in Edinburgh and leaving to go to work in Leatherhead. When scarlet fever was spreading through the village and both houses either side of the Childs were infected, Rhoda was sent away to avoid her catching what was then a potentially fatal disease.

Alice was a lady's maid at the Cavendish Hotel in Eastbourne before her marriage in 1891 to William Baxter. There is a photograph of the wedding guests including the bride and groom on the history website.

William and Walter established their partnership on the site that had been run by Henry Haynes at the Timber Yard on the Leatherhead Road. William had been Henry's foreman and eventually succeeded to the business, buying the stock in 1892. It was a highly successful partnership which did not end until William's death in 1918 aged 91. During this time, they built Queen Anne's Terrace and Upper Park Rise in Leatherhead.

Walter married Edith Kendall in 1893 and they had three children, Marion, Edith Marjorie and William. The archive has a postcard sent by Marion to Billy on his birthday in 1909, but sadly he

died in a diphtheria epidemic in 1910 aged 7. The family lived in Timber Yard House but now also owned 1 and 2 Laurel Cottages, a family connection that remains. Marion joined the staff at the school during WW1 and Edith taught at the school in the 1920s for the princely sum of £98 pa. Both she and her sister died in Dorking in 1978 and are buried in Mickleham as are many members of the family. Walter Child died in September 1939. He was a member of the first parish council and a founder member of the Mickleham Rifle Club. The business was sold to Charles Bravery in 1938.

William Child was a remarkable man, not simply on account of his business acumen. His obituary stresses his cleverness and the extreme simplicity of his habits. He was well read, interested in astronomy, and had 'a tenacious memory'. Moreover, up to the age of 90 he is said to think nothing of walking twenty miles a day. In short, 'a man of heart as well as head'. Judy Kinloch



Photograph: Ben Tatham



Mildred Angerstein 1914



## Task Group Report: The Churchyard

Judy Kinloch and I finished recording the inscriptions in the churchyard this year, including those on the most recent graves and the plaques in the Garden of Remembrance. We are very grateful to Angela Ireland, Stephanie Randall and David Grahame for all their help with this. Some of the inscriptions have already been entered onto an Excel spreadsheet, a process begun by Ian Wright and Brian Wilcox. This is a time-consuming operation and there

are some discrepancies between the inscriptions and the burial records. We hope to have it finished by the end of 2020.

An interesting grave we came across is that of Mildred Nina Improta, née Angerstein, which had a quotation from Browning on the headstone: "Open my heart and you will see graved inside of it 'Italy'". The only Mickleham connection found so far is a very distant one through her great-great-grandfather John Julius Angerstein, who was born in St Petersburg and later became chairman of Lloyds of London. His son married the daughter of William Lock of Norbury Park in 1799! Mildred was born in Norfolk in 1894 but also lived in the family's mansion, Holbrook House, in Somerset. There are photographs of Mildred as a debutante in 1914 and she was a VAD (Voluntary Aid Detachment) nurse in France in WW1. She then lived in Italy and became an Italian citizen, possibly after marrying a Captain Mario Improta. She returned to England at the start of WW2 (classed as an alien because of her Italian citizenship) and died in London in 1984. If anyone has more information about Mildred please let us know.

In December we had a visit from Peter Odhams' daughter, Jacqueline. Peter Odhams is one of the WW2 casualties named on our War Memorial. He was in the Royal Navy and died in 1940



Photograph: Judith Long

Peter Odhams' daughter, Jacqueline, standing by his grave

during land navigation exercises with the Fleet Air Arm in Scotland. Although his funeral was held in Scotland, he is buried in Mickleham where his family lived, initially at The Glen (now Ilex Trees), then Rectory Cottage and April Cottage. Peter sadly died before Jacqueline was born. We were able to give Jacqueline more information about her father's death and also a copy of our War Memorial Booklet.

Finally, we would like to thank Eric Flint and his team for their continuing maintenance of the churchyard.

Judith Long

## New uses for Old

This year the Vi Bullen Cup for the most outstanding entry in the Arts and Crafts class at the Summer Show was awarded to Janice Steele for a restored shepherd's hut in the 'New uses for old' section.

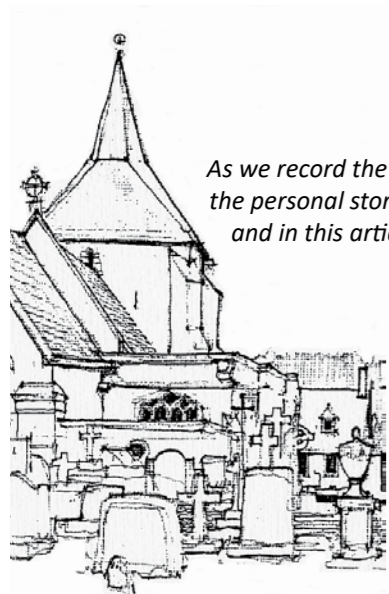
The shepherd's hut was once owned by Alf Bullen, who lived and farmed at Swanworth Farm and nearby for many years. The hut was used during lambing, raising lambs and sheep when moving them from field to field for fresh pasture. It was a mobile shelter for Alf, his sheep and dog and was used as somewhere to sleep, rest and eat with a small stove for warmth and cooking.

The iron bed had space underneath for orphaned or poorly lambs. The hut has a stable door to enable the shepherd to hear his flock, it also has strong axles and cast iron wheels for constant movement over rough ground.

Alf Bullen died in 1999, but the hut remained in the yard at Swanworth Farm until the Steeles (Fiona Taylor's parents) took on the task of restoring it. They used locally sourced timbers from the sawmill at Norbury Park including timbers felled during the 1987 storm.

The hut, now 'Shepherd's Rest' is now in the garden of Mole Cottage is going to provide Airbnb accommodation.

Please help us add to our Archives by watching out for items of local historic interest, however recent – tomorrow's history  
Also please tell us about anyone you find has information about this area.



# Hidden Histories

*As we record the grave inscriptions in St Michael's churchyard, it is impossible not to be intrigued by the personal stories behind these gravestones. We have researched some of these 'hidden histories' and in this article, the second of an occasional series, we introduce the Milner and Cust families*

## The Milners

When we began recording the churchyard inscriptions the Milner family was something of a mystery. The tithe map and apportionments of the 1830s show that a Charles Milner owned a large house in Mickleham, close to where Dalewood House now stands, plus 24 acres of land stretching down to the River Mole. He was also renting Mole Cottage. In 1840 he was allocated a pew in the church, a reward for his financial contribution to the enlargement of the church in 1839. Census returns between 1851 and 1881 indicate that Mary Jane Milner, a widow born about 1800, was living in an unnamed house in Mickleham, most likely the one owned by Charles Milner. A Eureka moment occurred when we removed a thick tangle of ivy from a large brick tomb close to the east side of the church. The marble slab on top revealed this to be the grave of 'Charles William Mordaunt Milner Esqre son of the late Sir William Mordaunt Milner, Bart of Nun Appleton in the county of York and brother to the present baronet'. The inscription also told us he was a Colonel in the 18<sup>th</sup> Hussars who died in May 1847 aged 58 and that his wife Mary Jane, the daughter of Richard Moore of Hampton Court Palace, died in May 1881 aged 82 and was buried with her husband.

Further research revealed that Charles Milner and Mary Jane Moore were married in Hampton in 1843 by Henry Hobart, the Dean of Windsor and husband of Mary Jane's sister Charlotte. How the Moore family came to be living at Hampton Court

Palace is not known. Richard Moore owned land in Chelsea, believed to be the location of present-day Moore, Milner and Halsey Streets which were named after members of his family. He also wrote a series of lengthy pamphlets and treatises giving his opinions about the return to the gold standard following the end of the Napoleonic Wars. Nun Appleton Hall, where the Milner Baronets lived, was once the home of Thomas Fairfax, the Parliamentary in the Civil War who commanded the New Model Army. The poet Andrew Marvell tutored Fairfax's daughter and wrote 'Upon Appleton House', a lengthy poem of the country-house genre praising the estate and its owner.

Charles Milner's name first appears in Mickleham on the Electoral Register of 1838 but in January 1824 the *Morning Chronicle* had reported the theft of a horse from a paddock owned by General Milner in Mickleham. This seemed very unlikely to be Charles's uncle George Milner, a general in the Scots Fusilier Guards, who was paying tax on a house and land he owned and occupied in Mickleham by 1800. Before George Milner, according to Archibald Gordon Pollock (who owned the Old House for many years and had researched the parish records) the house was owned by the Wall family and then the Bonwicks. John Bonwicke and Moses Wall were both Rectors of Mickleham in the 1600s and several members of their families are buried here.

When George Milner died in 1835, he left his London house to his wife and his Mickleham property to his nephew. The house in Mickleham remained in the family until 1882. When Mrs Milner died in 1881 the house was inherited by Sir Francis Hastings Doyle, the son of Charles Milner's sister Diana. Francis was a lawyer, government official and former Oxford University Professor of Poetry. According to the *Sporting Times* he was also 'one of the most enthusiastic and appreciative lovers of the Turf that



Detail from 1869 Ordnance Survey map showing Milner property



Detail from 1895 Ordnance Survey map showing the same area.

these islands contain'. The same article mentions a tradition that Eclipse\*, the famous racehorse, was born under a gnarled old thorn tree still standing in the Milner property, now belonging to Francis. However, Francis obviously felt that the estate was surplus to his requirements because by June 1882 he had sold it to Charles J Fox who demolished the house and built Dalewood House nearby.

\* Editor's note: Eclipse was born at the Duke of Cumberland's stables at Cranbourne Lodge, Berkshire.

## The Custs

Next to the Milner grave is a simpler one with inscriptions in memory of three members of the Cust family carved on the base of a cross. Cust was not a name we recognised. We read that Peregrine Bertie Cust, the elder son of Robert Needham Cust and Maria Adelaide his wife, had died in May 1871 aged 11. The 1871 census, recorded only a month before his death, revealed

the Mickleham connection. Peregrine, born in India, was at the house of his aunt (actually his great-aunt), Mary Jane Milner. His grandmother was Mrs Milner's sister Charlotte whose husband, Henry Hobart, had officiated at the Milners' wedding.

Peregrine's father, Robert Needham Cust, was born in 1821 and educated at the East India Company college, Haileybury. By the time he left England in 1842 to begin a career in the Indian Civil Service, he already had a good knowledge of Latin, Greek, Sanskrit, Hebrew, Urdu, Persian, Arabic and several European languages. He returned to England on furlough in 1855 and married Maria Adelaide Hobart, Mary Jane Milner's niece, the following year. Their first child, Albinia, was born in 1857. Robert returned to India alone a few months later and was appointed Governor of Lahore. The situation in India after the Munity was deemed too dangerous for his family. A year later Robert moved to Amritsar where Maria and Albinia were able to join him. Peregrine was born there in October 1859. Maria kept a diary which reveals the many difficulties of life in India. The children were frequently ill and Albinia almost died in July 1860. Another trip back to England followed and a second son, Robert Henry Hobart, was born at his grandmother's house in Dibden. Maria returned to India with the baby, leaving the older children with her mother. She gave birth to two more daughters: Maria in 1862 and Sophia in 1864. Already unwell before Sophia was born, Maria died ten days after the birth. Robert was devastated and



R N Cust 1896



Milner and Cust Graves

returned to England with the children where Sophia died in 1865.

In November 1865, Robert accepted the position of Member of the Board of Revenue in the North-West Provinces in India and in December married Emma Carlyon, the daughter of the Vicar of Dibden. In his memoirs Robert describes how, in January 1866, he rented a cottage in Mickleham for his children and their nurses and governess. They were already familiar with the village having stayed there before, presumably with their great-aunt. Robert and Emma settled in India where Emma suffered terribly from the heat. Pregnant with their first child, she became seriously ill in the summer of 1867 and died giving birth to their daughter Emma, who was born two months early. As soon as the baby was strong enough to travel Robert resigned his position and left India for good, thereby forgoing a large percentage of his pension. Back in England, Robert left the baby, who sadly died a few months later, with her aunt and hurried to Mickleham to see his children. He stayed at the 'village-inn' (almost certainly The Running Horses) where he was able to see the front door of the children's cottage from the window of his room, suggesting they were living close to the Milner house.

Robert married for a third time and moved to London with his wife Elizabeth, where their daughter Anna was born in 1870. More bad news soon

arrived. Peregrine contracted typhoid at his school in Laleham and was moved back to Mickleham, where he died in May 1871 with his father at his bedside. Even by Victorian standards, the family had suffered terribly. Life gradually began to improve for Robert. He pursued his passion for languages and religion, travelled extensively and published hundreds of books, articles and reviews. His marriage to Elizabeth lasted forty years until Robert's death in 1909. Elizabeth died a few months later and they are buried together in Putney Vale.

The Mickleham connection had not quite ended. In June 1906 a notice in the parish magazine announced that the Rector had received a gift for the church: 'May 10<sup>th</sup> 1906. To the Glory of God Almighty and in Pious Memory of his Parents and Elder Brother this Additional Linen for the Service of the Altar is dedicated by Robert Henry Hobart Cust'. The date was the fiftieth anniversary of his parents' marriage and thirty-fifth anniversary of Peregrine's death. Robert Henry was an art historian specialising in the Italian Renaissance who married his American wife, Cornelia, in Florence in October 1906. I like to think he had fond memories of his childhood in Mickleham, which may have been the only place he remembered the family being together, because when Cornelia died in 1928 and Robert in 1940 they were both buried in the churchyard with his brother.

Judith Long

## Guided Tour of Charlwood 6<sup>th</sup> June

We began our visit with lunch at the Half Moon pub where we met our guide, Brendon Sewill. The Sewill family moved to Charlwood from Reigate in the early 1930s when Brendon was three years old and he has lived there ever since. He has been involved in a number of local conservation and restoration projects and for many years was Chairman of the Gatwick Area Conservation Campaign, which seeks to protect the environment around Gatwick and has led successful campaigns against the building of a second airport runway.

After lunch we assembled in front of the War Memorial, commemorating 62 local men who died in WW1 and 19 in WW2. Walking through the churchyard we were surprised to hear that the Charlwood stone path is Grade II listed. St Nicholas's Church itself is Grade I listed and dates back to 1080. An enormous yew tree in the churchyard is even older; it is believed to predate the church by at least a century. A Norman window and arch survive from the original church. In the late 13<sup>th</sup> century, the Gatwyck family built a new aisle on the south side of the church to create more space and installed an impressive oak door which is still in use. The medieval wall paintings, for which the church is famous, were created at this time. Their subject matter is not for the faint-hearted: one set depicts St Margaret being swallowed by a dragon and later decapitated, a second painting shows three scholars who had been chopped up for meat before being brought back to life by St Nicholas and a third shows three young men confronted by three skeletal images as a reminder of their own mortality. In 1480, the Saunders family built a chantry chapel at the end of the south aisle, separated from it by a remarkable carved wood screen. The church originally had a thatched roof and Brendon pointed out the outline of this steeper roof, still visible on the outside of the tower.

We set off through the village and learned that Charlwood has 28 medieval hall houses, more than any other parish in Surrey. These were originally open hall houses where the fire was in the centre of the main room,

known as the hall, and the smoke went up and out through the roof. In later years many of these houses had a brick chimney added, either inside the existing structure if there was room or built outside the end wall. Following the Enclosure Act and the coming of the railway in the 1840s, many new houses were built close to what had been the village commons and the old medieval houses became hidden away behind the Victorian ones. The oldest house in Charlwood is one of The Cottages, built in 1402 and located opposite the Half Moon. Previously a single dwelling, it is now two cottages and one of several houses in the village whose age has been determined using dendrochronology.

Continuing through the village we inspected the village lock-up, known as The Cage, where prisoners were kept before being sent to trial. Although now used as a storeroom, the bars on the ceiling which prevented prisoners from escaping are still intact. As we walked down Rosemary Lane, where there is no vehicular access, and passed Tudor Cottage (built 1450) and Rosemary Cottage (built 1640) it felt as though we had left the 21<sup>st</sup> century behind. At the end of the lane (and now definitely back to reality) we spotted the bright blue metal railings of Charlwood Primary School, which Ben Tatham told us shares a bursar with St Michael's School in Mickleham. This 'new' school was built in 1913 but almost three centuries earlier in 1620 the Rector, John Bristow, had started a school for a few poor boys in a small cottage. Brendon told us

that at the start of WW2 his mother, who had the position of Billeting Officer, was tasked with sorting out accommodation for several hundred children who had been evacuated from London.

We then had a quick look at Mores with its Horsham stone roof and further down Swan Lane admired the picturesque Swan Cottage. Our final stop was the Providence Chapel, completely different from anything else we had seen. This building began life in Horsham as the guardroom of barracks erected during the Napoleonic Wars. In July 1815, a month after the Battle of Waterloo, the building was bought by Joseph Flint of Charlwood and transported there on horse-drawn carts. It was rebuilt for use as a Nonconformist chapel and had a large congregation during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. However, by the time the last member of the congregation died in 2013 the building, which is Grade II\* listed, needed substantial repairs and was put up for sale. Brendon, together with five others, formed the Providence Chapel Charlwood Trust to restore the building and bought it for £1. They obtained funding from several organisations but most of the restoration costs came from the Heritage Lottery Fund. It must have been an exciting day for everyone concerned when the building reopened in April this year. After a very welcome cup of tea, all that remained was to thank Brendon for a thoroughly enjoyable afternoon and to hope we can come back to Charlwood for a second tour. There is certainly much more to see.

Judith Long

Photographs: Judith Long & Ben Tatham



Above: The Cage 18<sup>th</sup> century.  
Left: Swan Cottage, a half-hipped open hall cottage – chimney built later – originally thatched.

## Researching the History of your House

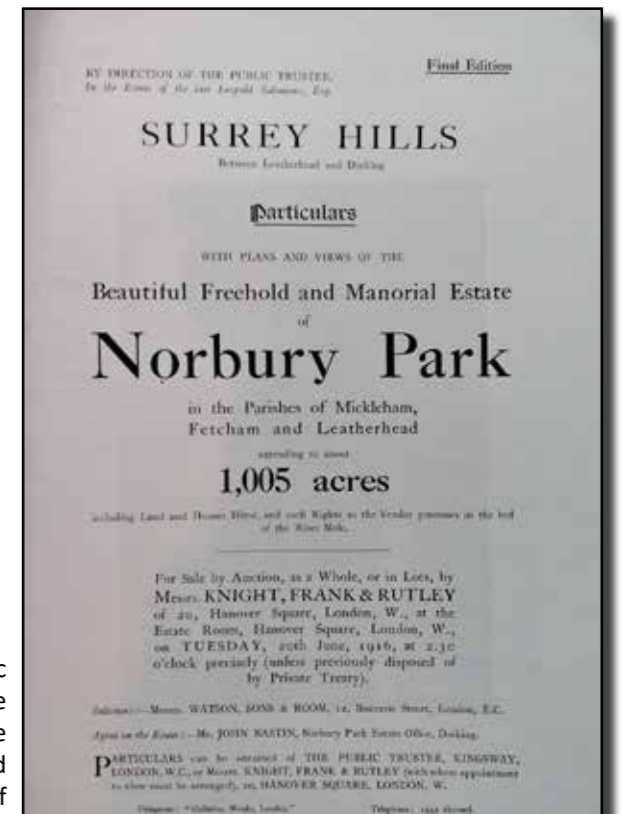


Have you ever wondered how to research the history of your house? Would you like to know when it was built or who the former occupants were? Finding the answers to these questions can seem a challenging prospect but on 5<sup>th</sup> November our group of sixteen house history enthusiasts arrived at the Stepping Stones pub, ready to learn from local historian and genealogist, Lorraine Spindler, how to become successful 'house detectives'. Lorraine began by telling us that establishing the age of a property can be difficult because many houses now look totally different from when they were built, having been added to over the years or almost completely rebuilt. I immediately thought of our house, Mickleham Cottage, which had three separate additions in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, hiding the original cottage in the middle.

Dendrochronology (tree-ring dating) can be used to date timber-framed buildings. Analysis of timber from Fyfield Hall in Essex established that it was constructed in the second half of the 12<sup>th</sup> century. Architectural experts have dated stone buildings such as Saltford Manor in Somerset and the Jew's House in Lincoln to the mid-12<sup>th</sup> century from a study of the windows and doorways. Old photos and sketches of Saltford Manor show some of the changes it has undergone in more recent times. Although it is probably unlikely that any of our group will live in such an ancient building, Lorraine stressed the importance of putting

together a photographic record of both the inside and outside of our house (including the garden) and a written description of the architectural features. These can be useful not only together a photographic record of both the inside and outside of our house (including the garden) and a written description of the architectural features. These can be useful not only

Left: a post card of Bytton Hill in the early 1900s; above: sale details of Norbury Park in 1916



Lorraine then gave us an introduction to some of the many resources available. Detailed historical information about Mickleham and Westhumble can be found free of charge online and ebay is a useful source of old postcards and photographs (and, luckily for us, old Mickleham Parish magazines). Manorial court rolls, held at the Surrey History Centre, can help pinpoint owners of the land on which a house was built as they contain names of tenants and descriptions of properties although they were written in Latin until 1733. Maps are also a vital resource, the tithe maps and apportionments of the 1830s listing landowners and occupiers, property details and the rent charged. The original Mickleham tithe map is at the Surrey History Centre and we have a copy in the History Group Archives. Ordnance Survey maps show how an area changed over time and, depending on when a house first appears, can give an indication of when it was built. The Valuation Office Survey, also known as the Lloyd George Domesday Survey and begun in 1910, combines maps and field books to give detailed information about individual properties. Sales particulars are invaluable as they normally contain photographs and

often describe individual rooms in a house. A variety of tax records are now becoming available. Although most of us are familiar with the poll tax (levied for centuries, not just by Margaret Thatcher!) and possibly taxes on land and windows, there were also taxes on hearths, bricks and even wallpaper.

Many people will not have the title deeds to their house but information on previous owners and dates when the property was sold can often be found in old newspapers. Those of us particularly interested in researching the former occupants will need to look at documents such as census returns, birth, marriage and death records and electoral registers. Although available by paid subscription from genealogy websites Find My Past (which includes a newspaper archive) and Ancestry these can be searched free of charge in Surrey Libraries.

Finally, Lorraine pointed out that it is also possible to employ professional house historians. This, however, is the expensive option. It is surely much more fun (and cheaper) to use the information Lorraine gave us to begin our own detective work.

Judith Long

# Mickleham Lives – Part 1

## Memories of my Father, Jesse Fuller 1901 – 1972

*Bill Fuller, legendary waiter at The Running Horses was born and grew up in Mickleham. At the time of his death in January 2000 he had been writing a series of memoirs for the parish magazine. This edited version of Bill's articles gives us an opportunity to put some photographs from the village archives into context, which we hope readers will find interesting.*

My father, Jesse Fuller, was born on the 25<sup>th</sup> July 1901 at 3 Hillside Cottages, London Road, Mickleham. Hillside Cottages were situated above Flint Cottages, halfway between the site of the old Forge Café and what is now Frascati's. (In the early 1900s these two buildings were working forges.) Both sets of Hillside Cottages were pulled down some 35 years ago, as was The Old Forge Café. For many years the source of water for Hillside Cottages was a deep well situated between number 4 and the second block of cottages, numbers 5 to 8. Dad went to school at the top of Byttom Hill, not surprisingly now called Old School House. In 1908 the school was transferred to the present building in School Lane. Dad must have been a diligent pupil as on two occasions he was awarded the Samuel Woods Prize. When I was in infants, Miss Strudwick had great pleasure in pointing out his name on the Roll of Honour board on occasions when I apparently was not paying attention to the subject in hand. It would of course be an impossible task to recall my father's earlier years but for the fact that he had put in writing

some 20,000 words from which I am able to draw. In 1915 he left school and took a gardening job at Juniper Hall, but with pot washing, weeding and pulling the lawn mower with the head gardener sitting on it, Dad quickly became disillusioned. The next year my grandfather told Dad that Mr Hunt, the manager of the Burford Bridge Hotel, wanted a page boy, at ten shillings a week (50p), uniform provided and to live in. As Dad was only getting eight shillings a week at Juniper Hall he jumped at the chance and started work at the hotel on 28<sup>th</sup> March 1916. Little did he know he would still be there 50 years later. One of Dad's jobs was to fill the match containers all over the hotel with Bryant\* & May 'Runaways'. One morning Mr Hunt said to him 'These matches have got a good name; the blighters do run away'. (\*The Bryant family lived at Juniper Hill in the late 1800s.)

My father soon moved from page boy to bar work, taught by Louis, a Swiss



Hillside Cottages

barman whose fiancée was a waitress in the billiard room. (In WW2 this room was heavily sandbagged, the billiard table was set upon the bags and the cellar created beneath was a very secure and safe air raid shelter! The room is now the cocktail bar and lounge). Dad then went into the dining room to assist the head waiter, Jimmy Blaney, serving the vegetables and later coffee, also re-laying his tables for him. This was apparently a good financial move as he was given an additional shilling (5p) and a packet of cigarettes. 'So that's where I got the habit!'

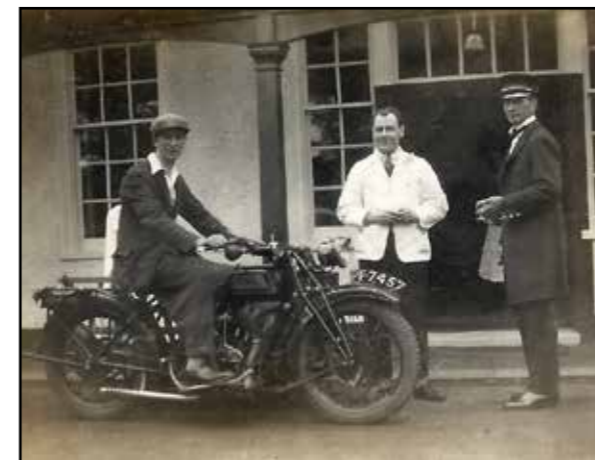
At 9 o'clock each morning Albert Bull, the chef would bring a large jug of hot milk to the bar, and with two waiters would toss a coin to see who would pay for the rum which was to go into it. All three were due to be called up for the army, and not very enamoured with the idea. I could have taken to Mrs Hunt, the manageress at the Burford Bridge, who refused to call my father Jesse as she said this was a girl's name and always referred to him as 'Tommy'. Each morning she would ring the dining room bell at 11 o'clock and tell one of the staff to tell Tommy to bring two Worthingtons up to her sitting room, on

doing so she then told him to close the door because one was always for him.

Many famous people used the hotel and became great friends of the Hunts, among them Marie Lloyd, Lily Langtry who stayed with her husband, Sir Hugo De Both, and José Collins at the height of her fame in 'Maid of the Mountains'. It was cocktails, champagne and Beehive 1848 brandy. Then there was Vesta Tilly, Douglas Fairbanks and the Crazy Gang (which reminds me that Mr Owen Stewart, who held the licence of *The Running Horses* from 1938 until 1983 purchased Bud Flanagan's Rolls Royce).

On Saturday nights the Burford often hosted the racing fraternity. Sunday lunch was attended by notables from the stage, including Harry Preston, The Hon Mrs Greville of Polesden Lacey, and Count Ziborski, whose famous car, Chitty Chitty Bang Bang, was parked proudly outside the hotel. It had four large brass pipes coming out of the bonnet and a tremendous exhaust pipe. If you were behind it when he started the engine, it would bowl you over.

When peace came in 1918 Mrs Hunt, wife of the owner of the Burford Bridge Hotel, bought more champagne glasses for the occasion. The dining room was packed. Fireworks were supplied by *Nicols* of Redhill and one of their employees was sent to oversee the display. Unfortunately, he got drunk, was carried to the stables and bedded down on some hay, after making sure that he had no means of starting a fire. Bonfires were burning all around the hills, then it started to rain, which did not detract from the celebration inside the hotel, though it did ruin a piano which had been left out on the lawn; nobody worried, the war was over.



Jesse on his motor bike with other members of hotel staff



The stage coach at the Burford Bridge Hotel

My father recalls that Mr Hunt founded the first Masonic Lodge in Leatherhead, the Ledrede Lodge; their gatherings were held at the Old Swan Hotel, Leatherhead. The Old Berkeley coach ran each weekday during that summer, it was owned by a Mr Goddard and Mr Mills of circus fame. It started from the Berkeley Hotel in London, changed horses at Sheen, then on to the Burford. It was an attempt to re-establish the tradition of Mr Vanderbilt, the American, who ran his coach from London to the Metropole in Brighton, the Burford Bridge being halfway was the lunchtime stop. Mr Vanderbilt would get off the box, go into the smoking room and have a pint of Bass in a special silver tankard with a big 'V' on it. He went down in the Titanic in 1912. His tankard was much admired by visitors to the hotel, but eventually it was 'lost'.

To appreciate the value of money in 1918, here are examples of prices in the hotel: a mild ale 4d (pence) a pint, that is where the public bar got its name 'Four Ale Bar'; Bass 7d a pint; Worthington, Bass and Guinness 7d a bottle; light ale and brown ale 4½d a bottle; whisky, gin and rum 5½d a nip, proprietary brands 7d a nip. A four-course lunch 4/6d; a five-course dinner 6/6d. Mr Douglas Bing, the famous cabaret artist, paid 50 shillings (£2.50) in all for one week's stay! How times have changed.

In my father's early years what we know as the Old London Road was

the main road and there were big fields opposite the Burford Bridge Hotel. Surrey Trust, who owned the Burford, wanted to purchase some land facing the hotel for a car park, but the owner, Miss Drummond of Fredley (suffragette and great friend of Mrs Pankhurst), would not sell. Later, when she realised the potential of the site, Miss Drummond sold it to a friend who turned the field into a car park and petrol station with four pumps. Not to be outdone Surrey Trust then had two pumps installed in front of the hotel. Eventually the owner of the garage and four pumps sold out to the Surrey Trust.

One of the hotel staff, Harry Orbell, had a brother who worked in Sam Darling's stable at Newmarket. He used to send Harry tips, which seldom won. One day Harry was told that Mr Macomber would win the Cesarewitch and Cambridger with Forseth and Masked Marvel. Dad had a pound each way double, but Harry didn't trust the information – both horses won completing a 500-1 double! Dad's luck was certainly in.

Another day a young man came into the hotel and was raffling his motor bike at 1/6d a ticket as he was going to Australia. He had just two tickets left in his book; Harry purchased one, Dad the other. You guessed it, Dad won! MacFisheries in Dorking used to raffle the turkeys which were left after Christmas, and for four years running Dad won, the last one weighed 28lb. Not bad for a shilling! His best win though was meeting my mother, but that is another story.

*Continued overleaf...*



Teas being served in the Burford Bridge Hotel Garden - early 1900s

## Mickleham Lives – Part 2

### Memories of Jesse William Henry (Bill) Fuller 1931 – 2000

*At the time of Bill's sudden death in January 2000 he had been writing a series of memoirs for the parish magazine. This article includes an edited version of his memories from 1930 onwards and concludes with excerpts from his and his wife, Olga's obituaries.*

My mother, Ida Mary Fuller 1904-1985 was born in Lucknow, India. I am sure she could hardly have imagined living in England, let alone spending most of her life in the village of Mickleham. She was the eldest daughter of Regimental Sergeant Major Newson, who was eventually seconded to an Indian regiment where he rose to the rank of Major. Upon his retirement the family moved to Rangoon, Burma, where he eventually died of sunstroke. Mother enjoyed her life and was an ardent student, winning at one stage a prize for religious studies. This achievement was mentioned in the magazine of her Mandalay School whose headmaster was a Reverend Ince. His brother, Dr Ince, was a family friend. A photograph showing the doctor and his family with their Indian servants, together with the magazine were among Mother's treasured possessions. Years later when Peter Ince became Rector of Mickleham we discovered that the 'Inces' of her childhood had been Peter's great uncles. After the demise of grandfather, the family had no alternative but to leave Burma, as all women there were considered inferior and required to forfeit all but personal belongings. So on the 9<sup>th</sup> May 1923 mother's journey to Mickleham began. On arrival in England Mother worked as a nanny for a family in Dorking. I am not quite sure how she met my father, though he records many outings together on the motorbike which he had won earlier. Apparently, Mr Hunt, the manager of the Burford, felt they were ideally suited but sadly he died in 1929, before my parents' wedding. They were married in St Michael's Church on the 16<sup>th</sup> November 1930 and held their wedding breakfast for 56 people at The Running Horses, Mickleham. I have the receipt which came to £16.18.10d. I understand that would represent a figure in excess of £2,000 today, but with Dad's betting winnings this represented a small

investment and accordingly a well-worthwhile outlay.

There was quite a rivalry between the WI and the Mothers' Union. The last time the Mothers' Union banner, which used to rest in St Michael's Church, [now in Village Archives] was used my mother was the standard bearer at the inauguration of Guildford Cathedral.

The thirties must have been a very exciting time at the Burford. The new lounge was built in 1931, followed by the swimming pool, and in 1934 the Tithe Barn was moved from Abinger, every beam numbered and re-erected exactly. In 1935 the first meeting of the local branch of the BMA was held in the Tithe Barn and after dinner when all the guests had departed there was a considerable amount of Cockburn 1914 port left which was enjoyed by the staff. Apparently, the following morning Dad had to call out Doctor Everett as his foot had swollen like a balloon. The diagnosis was gout which reappeared at least once a year for the rest of his life, though he never drank port again. One year, Mr Kempton, a regular customer, who owned the famous greyhound 'Mick the Miller', winner of the Greyhound Derby on more than one occasion, invited 120 soldiers from the Star and Garter Hospital, Richmond, with their nurses for a day out. There was an open bar and the band from the Kingston Empire played. Jimmy Walker, mayor of New York, and his wife stayed in the hotel for a long time. He was in England because of the troubles in New York with the gangster Al Capone and company during the prohibition era. He actually had a thatched house built at Fredley which unfortunately burnt down. The meet of the foxhounds on Boxing Day had stopped because of the electrification of the railway, although Major Howard of Downside, Leatherhead, introduced it again with drag hounds trained to follow a certain scent. The Mickleham by-pass, built with the same machinery used to construct the German autobahns, was officially opened in 1938 by Hoare Belisha MP.

It was not to be in operation for long as on 3<sup>rd</sup> September 1939 war was declared on Germany and the by-pass was closed and taken over by the army. I well remember Dad telling me that a fortnight before hostilities began there was a meeting on Box Hill of German and Italian catering workers, and very shortly afterwards they had left their various employments, obviously returning to their respective countries. On a personal note my parents were blessed, if that is the right word, with three children. I put in an appearance on 23<sup>rd</sup> November 1931, my sister Pat on 14<sup>th</sup> May 1935 and my younger brother Brian on 17<sup>th</sup> May 1939.

I was thirteen when my father asked me if I would like to work at the Burford Bridge Hotel as a commis waiter. It was not long before I was allocated four tables to run on my own on Saturday night and Sunday lunch which I found not only interesting, but also rewarding. The coal-fired kitchen in those days was situated where the lounge is now, with the restaurant up steep stairs leading to the dining room that has now been turned into two bedrooms and the front part with the bay windows a small room for private functions. The hard part was having to carry the plates and food salvers on large wooden trays up the stairs and along the full length of the dining room to my station. One memorable Sunday lunchtime I heard the ominous sound of a doodle bug approaching. Suddenly its engine cut out which meant it was about to plummet to earth. As I stood with my heavily laden tray halfway down the dining room, I watched with not a little misgiving as diners and staff all disappeared beneath the tables. Rooted to the spot I was greatly relieved when I heard it explode in the far distance. Early in the war I recall my father arriving home on Saturday night, very worried. One of the German bombers had unloaded a basket of incendiary bombs and Box Hill was alight; it could have meant that the following bombers would unleash their bombs on the

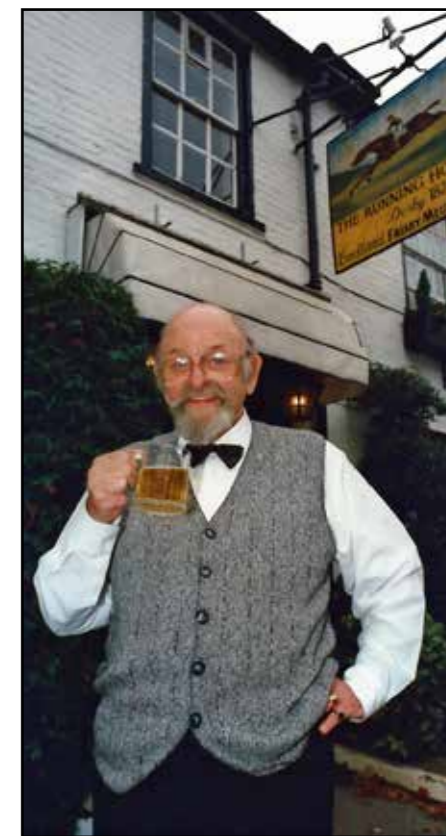
area. As luck would have it, the droning planes overhead ignored the lights of Box Hill and continued on their way to poor old London. A Mr Platt, who was staying at the Burford, owned a furnishing business in Hammersmith which he visited each day. On arrival one morning he found a huge crater, not far from his establishment, surrounded by experts from the War Office. It was eventually established that this damage was the result of the first German rocket. Mr Johnson, Headmaster of Mickleham School, was very proud of the bank of yellow flowers in School Lane. He was devastated when these were dug out, with most of the bank, so that air raid shelters could be built, but accepted the inevitability of this action. The Sun Insurance office from 40 Chancery Lane, London, were evacuated to Mickleham Downs House and further shelters were built into the hillside to accommodate their staff. I well remember the winter of 1946/7 as I had then left school and was working as a junior clerk for the Sun office, trudging up Byttom Hill with snow falling into the top of my wellies – that really was a hard winter! It has to be pointed out that the Mickleham Downs House occupied by Lady Aitken is not the same building. The original house was pulled down. In 1948 the Catering Wages Act came into force and Dad as head waiter, earning 35/- a week, and the head chef, £8 a week, were pleasantly surprised to be paid £10 and £20 respectively. Great changes were in store for the Burford - its owners, Surrey Trust had sold out to Trust Houses [later Trusthouse Forte].

This is where Bill's memories end as at the end of January 2000 Bill tragically died following emergency abdominal surgery. And so Mickleham lost one of its best-known characters. Through his job as a waiter for many years at The Running Horses, Bill became well known to many people – far and wide, as well as locally. Bill was educated at St Michael's School, rising to Head Boy. On leaving school at the age of 14, he went to work in London for the Sun Life Insurance Company, travelling daily on the Green Line bus. To earn extra money, he helped his Dad at the Burford Bridge Hotel, working part-time as a waiter at weekends and for dinner-dances. On reaching 18, Bill went to do his National Service and was stationed with the army in Devizes. He was a Corporal in the Pay Corps and it was that uniform which he wore on

his marriage to Olga Popperova on 10<sup>th</sup> February 1951 in St Michael's Church. Mr Douglass conducted the ceremony and the reception was held in the Village Hall.

Olga had come to England in 1939 from Prague, Czechoslovakia on the Kindertransport. Her mother (who died when Olga was very young, and she never knew) was Jewish. She came, knowing no English, with her mother's jewellery sewn into her vest. When she arrived in England she found herself in a village hall, waiting for someone to claim her – she was the last one there, and she recalled that she looked out of the window into the dark thinking 'This must be what it's like to be dead' – it is almost impossible to understand how this nine-year-old must have felt. She eventually arrived in Dorking and was billeted with three Plymouth Brethren sisters. Later she trained as a nurse. She was very pretty and had numerous admirers – but Bill was the one she fell in love with and they were happily married for just short of 50 years.

Olga and Bill spent their first year of married life in digs in Sidcup, moving to Dell Close in 1953. Bill was soon asked by Mr Stewart, then owner of The Running Horses, to help out at a function. This was followed by an offer of full-time employment and Bill spent the rest of his working life there. Their son, Howard, was born in 1957, just before Bill and Olga moved to Holmwood where they lived for 30 years, returning to Mickleham in 1990. Bill grew his wonderful moustache and beard on a visit to Prague in the '60s. He became well known and respected by the patrons of The Running Horses and served some very famous people in his time – he was particularly proud of a framed caricature of himself, drawn by Sir Harry Secombe in 1972 and a signed photo of Telly Savalas bearing a message of gratitude. Bill especially enjoyed cooking flambés etc at the table, which he did with great panache – the copper pans in The Running Horses are all his. He must have had some wonderful tales to tell, which magazine readers would perhaps have been able to enjoy, had he lived. For example, he used a give a hand at parties given by Lord Beaverbrook at Cherkley Court. After he died, Olga received many tributes which she treasured – among which were compliments on his kindness, on his prodigious memory which enabled him



to greet people by name even after long intervals, on his impressive appearance and professionalism, and his knowledge of the village and surrounding large estates – he knew four generations of the Aitken family. Many people liked going to The Running Horses because of Bill and he was a great asset to the pub. He was interested in stamp-collecting, wines and writing. He belonged to a writing club and took a course by post. We have all enjoyed his contributions to this magazine, which we greatly appreciated. He also enjoyed singing, was a member of the church choir and took part in our summer concerts. (He recalled that when he was a choirboy at St Michael's years ago every Christmas Lord Bennett would invite the choir to sing carols for his guests at Juniper Hill, for which they each received a shilling.) In recent years he was a parish councillor. Over 140 people attended Bill's funeral to pay their respects.

Olga continued to live in Swanworth Lane until late 2012 when she moved to a home near her brother-in-law and his wife, Brian and Barbara Fuller. According to Brian she was very happy there and believed she was in a hotel – 'Please will you bring my brother-in-law some tea?' she would demand of the staff. A Jewish princess to the end. She died in June 2015, aged 86.

Sue Tatham

# Village Walk 2019

We met our guides Roger Davis and Ben Tatham outside the Burford Bridge Hotel on a Saturday morning in October, ready to explore the area between the hotel and Juniper Hall. Just hidden from view behind Burford Meadow is Burford Lodge, built in 1777 by a Mr Eckersell. Roger explained that an area known as the Weypole, between the River Mole and the Whites of Box Hill, once belonged to the Burford Lodge estate and derives its name from a notched pole in the river used to measure its height. The well-known Stepping Stones across the river were first recorded in 1841.

The first important resident of Burford Lodge was George Barclay, a London merchant and MP for Bridport who was a thoroughly unpleasant character by all accounts. The next owner was John Matthew whose daughter married Sir Trevor Lawrence. After John Matthew's death, his daughter inherited Burford Lodge which remained in possession of the Lawrence family until the 1930s. Sir Trevor and his son Sir William Lawrence were both renowned horticulturists, Sir Trevor (and his wife) having a great love for orchids. After Sir William's death in 1934 most of the estate was purchased by the National Trust after a public appeal for donations and the house was bought by the Electricity Board. Ben told us that one of the main uses for the property was to test electricity

meters! The buildings have since been converted into private houses and flats. The Burford Bridge Hotel has undergone several name changes since a licensed house was first mentioned on the site in 1790. Originally the Fox and Hounds, it became the Hare and Hounds, the Burford Bridge Inn and was also known as the Honeymoon Inn before acquiring its current name. To add to the confusion, newspaper records show that some of these names were used interchangeably in the same year. The hotel also has many literary associations: Robert Louis Stevenson, Jane Austen and William Wordsworth are believed to have stayed there and John Keats completed 'Endymion' at the inn. Unfortunately, the story that Lord Nelson spent his last night in England there with Emma Hamilton, before departing for Portsmouth and Trafalgar, appears to have no truth to it.

The walk to our next stop Flint Cottage, located close to the bottom of the Zig-Zag, involved dodging a large number of cyclists taking part in the 'Sigma Sports Box Hill Original Sportive', an event with more than a thousand entrants (fortunately not all attempting the full route through Mickleham). Arriving unscathed, we were greeted by Tracey Evans who, with her husband Jim, kindly allowed us to visit their property. Flint Cottage was home to George Meredith, the novelist and poet, for about forty years until his death in 1909. Tracey

took us up the steep path to the two-room chalet where Meredith wrote much of his work, frequently eating and sleeping there. He was the author of 'The Lark Ascending', the poem which inspired Vaughan Williams' music of the same name. Towards the end of his life, when he was unable to climb the hill, Meredith was pulled in a bath chair by a donkey called 'Picnic'.

Back on Old London Road we took the turn up to Fredley, part of the old Manor of Fredley which once covered a much larger area and has a rather complicated history. Of significance to us is the sale of Fredley to Sir Cecil Bishopp in 1762. He had originally planned to build a grand new house but instead developed an ale house called the Royal Oak which became Juniper Hall. When the Fredley estate was split up in the early 1800s Richard 'Conversation' Sharp bought Fredley Cottage, part of a small farmstead known as Fredley Farm. His family had a successful hatter's business in London which Sharp took over before becoming a merchant and politician. However, it was for his exceptional powers of conversation and good nature that he was renowned. He entertained many of the most influential and well-known people of the day at Fredley Cottage, including Walter Scott, Michael Faraday and William Wordsworth. His adopted daughter Maria, who became Mrs Drummond, built a new house on the Fredley estate, called simply 'Fredley', in future years St Faith's Children's Home. After the death of Maria's daughter, Surrey County Council purchased the whole estate in 1931, needing the land on the lower section near the River Mole for construction of the Mickleham bypass. Fredley house and Fredley Cottage were sold again soon afterwards, being surplus to the Council's requirements. Fredley Cottage was bought by the High Court Judge, Sir George Lloyd-Jacob, who renamed it Fredley Manor.

Our final stop was Juniper Hall where our guide, Kayleigh, greeted us and showed us the old coach house and its cottage, the only remaining buildings of the Royal Oak ale house. The cottage was originally the brewery and the wooden louvres in the roof allowed the



Juniper Hall today. On the right are the old coach house and brewery – original buildings from the Royal Oak ale house.

fumes to escape. Tucked away amongst the trees beyond the main building is the old icehouse. The structure is about 3m deep, constructed mostly below ground level to keep the ice cold. We were surprised to hear that ice would sometimes come from frozen lakes in the USA. After a quick look at the ha-ha in front of the house, where the flint wall has only recently become

visible after the ivy and nettles were removed, we went inside to admire the Templeton Room, designed by Lady Templeton and a rare example of the style of Robert Adam in Surrey. Outside the window a wooden signpost in the garden can be seen, with signs pointing to all the other Field Studies Council Centres in the UK. One of these signs points to Orielton, a Georgian house in

Pembrokeshire. In the early 1900s this was the home of R H Mackworth-Praed, owner of Mickleham Downs House and Lord of the Manor of Mickleham until his death in 1913. This seemed an appropriate place to finish our walk and end an enjoyable morning visiting parts of Mickleham that we might otherwise have missed. Judith Long



## St Michael's CE Infant School

The aim of Heritage Open Days is to enable people to visit historic places which are not usually open to the public. This year St Michael's School was one such place and featured an exhibition of maps and photographs charting the history of the school buildings and the surrounding area, from 1907. This had been prepared by Ben Tatham who researched and compiled the history as a project for the local history group.

It is difficult to imagine how, when the school was an all-through primary until

1971, up to 120 pupils aged from 5 to 14 plus the staff managed to operate in the small space available.

School governors were on hand to show visitors around the site including the area of woods behind, which is used as a forest school. Those familiar with the school in earlier times remarked on the many changes and improvement which had been made in recent years. Everyone agreed that the school now offered an amazing setting for learning.

In the hall there was a display of photograph albums dating back to

the 1980s which Jenny Hudlass had lovingly assembled during her time as headteacher. These were greatly appreciated, especially by former pupils who were reminded of their happy days at the school.

We discovered that one of the visitors, a life-long resident of Box Hill, started at the school in 1946. Fortunately he has agreed to contribute to the local history group's current oral history project recording the memories of former pupils and staff. Watch this space! Sue Tatham

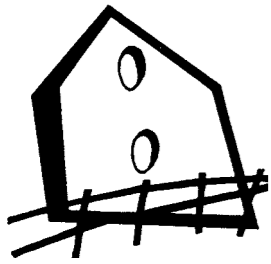


The Chalet at Flint Cottage



Left: The school in 1907. Note the fence behind the children. This divided the playground with the right half for the boys and the left for the girls and infants. Above: A drone photograph of the school in 2017.

A copy of Ben's History of Mickleham School Buildings is available on our website [www.hugofox.com/community/mickleham-westhumble-local-history-group-13483/](http://www.hugofox.com/community/mickleham-westhumble-local-history-group-13483/)



# A History of the Westhumble Residents Association 1945 – 2017

*Concluding highlights from Mick Hallett's research*

For the Westhumble Residents Association committee the immediate post-war years were dominated by problems resulting from the rapid development of the remaining plots. Pilgrims Way & Close and Burney Road were in a bad condition. They had been constructed in 1936/7 and no repair work had been done since. During the war military traffic had caused considerable damage which was made worse by contractors connecting services to the new houses. The military took no responsibility and Dorking Urban District Council (UDC) would only do so by making them public roads once they were repaired and constructed to their specification. It was agreed that the only way forward was for the residents of each road to take responsibility, leading to a road fund for Pilgrims Way & Close, and later for Burney Road and Camilla Drive.

Adlers Lane was also in a poor state but in this case, as it was found to be a pre-1836 highway; Dorking UDC agreed it was a public highway and took responsibility. Chapel Lane was becoming much busier and Dorking UDC suggested it be widened. This was strongly opposed, but a strip of land up to Pilgrims Way was reserved for future widening. The footpath was constructed in 1964.

The village hall debate continued. A site was found in the Dell (I presume this refers to the dip in Pilgrims Close) which could be acquired for £400 with the idea of moving the NAAFI huts (from the field opposite Burford Corner) there. Nothing came of this for financial reasons.

An Entertainments Committee was formed, chaired by Ronnie Shepperd. Children's parties were organized. The first dinner dance was held at the Watermill in December 1947, but the following year was transferred to the Burford Bridge Tithe Barn. There is correspondence in 1951 complaining that the cost per head had increased to 17s 6d from 12s 6d per ticket! The dinner dance continued as the main

event of the year until 1976 by which time the cost had risen to £2.50. It was eventually cancelled because of lack of support and it was too noisy!

By 1948 another consequence of more houses being built was felt – low gas and water pressure. There was a serious fire in Mr Herbert's house in Burney Road and the Fire Brigade had difficulty in tackling it due to lack of water. Both water and gas mains were replaced and upgraded.

In 1951 there was concern about the flooding of Chapel Lane – a pool of water making it impassable outside Fiveways. As a temporary measure, a raised footpath was constructed and in 1964 a flood drain was constructed along Adlers Lane which also took water from the other end of Burney Road and Pilgrims Close. Later it was extended along Chapel Lane as far as Chapel Farm.

1951 saw the Festival of Britain and the Association decided that it ought to be celebrated. Accordingly, the Entertainments Committee laid on a Sports Day at Foxbury, a Musical Concert at Cleveland Lodge and an 'Old People's Entertainment'.

Queen Elizabeth's Coronation in 1953 was celebrated by a Buffet Dance at The Watermill and the construction of a Memorial Garden with a commemorative plaque at The Chapel of Ease – this cost just less £160 which was raised by public subscription.

The Guy Fawkes bonfire and fireworks has long been the main entertainment event of the Association. It all began around 1947 when Messrs Shepperd and Virgo, who ran the very successful Children's Service at the Chapel of Ease, decided to hold a firework party for the children who attended the service, in the garden of Moonstone in Pilgrims Way. It was later moved to Mr and Mrs Baker's garden in the dip of Pilgrims Close. Mr Baker made torches out of paraffin-soaked rags in cans tied to canes for the children to carry on a parade, including a guy make by Mrs Gore, around Burney

Road and Pilgrims Way. These are now banned for insurance reasons – health and safety reforms.

This arrangement continued until around 1962 when Jim Gordon joined the team. He had contacts at Brocks Fireworks and Schermuly's of Brockham and obtained fireworks at reduced prices, and the venue was moved to the slip field behind Pilgrims Close. Messrs Shepperd and Virgo handed over to Jim and the bonfire building was organised by a group of enthusiastic teenagers – it gradually got larger and larger with John and David Gore organizing it.

Around 1971 Jim moved away and the Gore brothers continued the event until I became the ringleader for about seven years ably assisted by my son David. Mike Weller became involved and eventually assumed the role of Master Bonfire Builder. In 1984 Neil Mason became the Hon. Entertainment Secretary and, with the able help of Gerry Weaver, has successfully run the event ever since, producing bigger and better displays every year. Last year it attracted more than 500 spectators.

In 1961 the old NAAFI buildings in the field on the corner of Westhumble Street and the A24 were demolished leaving a very untidy site. Dorking UDC had purchased the site from the Ministry of Defence. At one time, the Young Farmers were offered the use of the field, but this was found to be unsatisfactory as the foundations of the huts prevented cultivation. Later it was offered to the Association as a cricket playground. In 1962 an Extraordinary General Meeting agreed to lease the site and maintain it. This continued for about ten years when the adjoining house owners purchased the land from Dorking UDC.

Box Hill and Westhumble Station was built to Mr Grissell of Norbury Park's design and opened in 1867. Barry Moughton organised a celebration to mark its centenary in 1967 by getting the British Rail Area Manager to cut a tape across the line and for a glass of fizz to be presented to each commuter.

Very well received! The station at that time was in a very poor state of repair. Judging from photographs taken on its opening, there had been few, if any changes. Several years later a major refurbishment was undertaken – the rusting and leaking roof to the footbridge was removed, the gas lighting replaced with electric, the leaking canopies renovated. Sadly the waiting rooms on the 'up' side closed, as were the toilets. The WA approved but bemoaned the closures.

Further improvements took place around 1975: welded tracks replaced the individual rails and the last of the lever signals replaced by modern electric lights. Both of these had consequences for me. The trains were now much quieter – no clickety clack which used to wake me up with a different tone as the train passed through Norbury Tunnel resulting in my sleeping on until Dorking where some of the trains terminated. The station was manned by two delightful men – Ken and Bill. A few of us were Ken's favoured customers and he would ring in the morning to inform us if our train had been cancelled so we had no need to run to catch it: he received half-a-bottle of whisky at Christmas for that service. Unfortunately, new signalling did not give warning of cancellations and this wonderful service stopped.

1985 was a busy year. At the AGM, the WA added 'Residents' to its title as it was felt that it more accurately reflected the actual aims of the association and the old name left many people wondering what it really did.

Until 1987 Dorking was served by corridor trains that ran from Victoria to Bognor, only stopping at Sutton and Dorking, taking just 37 minutes. However, the 5.02 pm from Victoria the 'Bognor Boozer', stopped at Westhumble as well, thanks to a high-ranking railway personage living nearby. Gatwick Airport was developing fast and the service was diverted to a more profitable route via Three Bridges and Horsham. At that time the ordinary commuter trains took about 47 minutes to get to London – 10 minutes quicker than now. Ken and Bill retired in 1988 and the WRA organized a presentation to record their long and much-appreciated

service. They were replaced by Sue Armstrong who stayed for only two years as in 1990 British rail decided to make our station a 'halt', with no staff at all. The WRA organised a petition signed by many residents against this proposal, which was seen as a precursor to totally closing the station, but to no avail and the booking hall was let to a cycle shop.

In 2000 Network Rail became concerned about the road bridge over the railway as a bridge of similar construction had collapsed suddenly. This resulted in a 7.5 tonne limit placed on lorries using it. Also in 2000, the station was refurbished providing television screens so the driver could see the whole platform and much-needed information screens showing when the next train was due. In 2011 the platforms were extended to allow ten carriages instead of the previous eight.

In 2014 the weak railway bridge caused problems again as heavy lorries were ignoring the 7.5 tonne limit and Surrey County Council (SCC) proposed narrowing the access by placing bollards two meters apart, but this was impractical. Prosecution of offenders has proved impossible as the police demand a photograph showing the lorry, the weight restriction and the bridge at the same time as evidence. CCTV cameras are now being considered. A large delegation of residents attended a meeting at County Hall to try to persuade the Council to release funds to repair the bridge – so far to no avail.

The M25 was proposed in 1967, and Leatherhead suggested an alternative route avoiding their town – down 'Little Switzerland' from Headley, crossing the Mole on a viaduct, cutting through Foxbury Shaw and continuing above Chapel Farm and on to Effingham. Happily, this got nowhere although it caused great consternation at the time.

In 1971 there was a row over the design of Griffins in Chapel Lane which Dorking UDC had passed without any consultation. It turned out that nobody on the Planning Committee realised it would be an ultra-modern building! Consequently, the WA now purchase the lists of planning proposals and have a chance to comment. Thus, in 1974 when the building of Ashleigh Grange

was proposed the WRA suggested minor alterations; it was eventually built in 1977/8.

In 1977/8 Westhumble joined with Mickleham for the Queen's Silver Jubilee Celebrations. Two years later there was a long debate and vote as to whether to become a parish council. Mickleham said 'yes', Westhumble 'no'! In 1982 drafts of Ronnie Shepperd's book *The Manor of Wistomble* were scrutinized and the book was eventually published by the Westhumble Association the following year.

From 1984 to 1994 the minute books are missing, and the only source of information has been rather sparse notices in the parish magazine and some papers left by Helena Scarlett. In 1984 Lord Ashcombe of Denbies decided to sell the estate and move to Sudeley Castle which his wife Elizabeth Brocklehurst had inherited from her first husband who died intestate. Denbies was purchased by Adrian White, who lived in Camilla Drive and owned Biwater. He decided to turn the fields at Bradley's Farm into a vineyard and immediately started planting. He proposed diverting footpath 32 (Bradley Farm to Dorking) and replace it with a wider straight track. The WA objected furiously but in the end, he received planning consent.

The next confrontation came over the siting of the winery. It was first proposed that it be built on the site of old Denbies' House behind Ranmore Church but was refused planning consent on traffic grounds. Then Bradley's Farm was proposed – uproar from the WRA – 'it would destroy the peaceful environment' and 'residents would smell the fermenting wine' (despite the previous smells emanating from the Bradley's Farm piggery). Mr White was refused planning consent. He went to appeal and the WA obtained a section 52 Agreement restricting the type of wine and food sold in the restaurant – no leisure facilities, machinery only for vineyard use, tours only on foot, events restricted to three a year, etc, but these restrictions have since been relaxed. The eventual planning consent ran to eight pages of closely typewritten paper. In retrospect, it is extraordinary that the siting of the winery caused so much opposition as it is now regarded as a very valuable amenity.

In 1993 Ronnie Shepperd suggested that Fanny Burney be commemorated as it was 200 years since she had married in Mickleham Church and moved to Camilla Cottage in Westhumble. As a result, the following year a blue plaque was fitted to the Leladene Archway leading into Camila Drive. It was unveiled by Sir Carl Aarvold.

In October 1987, the Great Storm occurred and Westhumble was cut off with no electricity for 30 hours and with trees down everywhere, closing the railway and all the roads. Initially nobody could get to work with the result that chainsaws were roaring and Chapel Lane was soon open to traffic. It took a further six months for Denbies Drive to reopen – the woods around it were devastated.

In 1991 Ronnie Shepperd completed his second book *Micklam – The Story of a Parish*. As the WRA decided not to become involved, it was published by Ben Tatham with costs underwritten by him and a few other local residents. The book met with great acclaim and sales revenue had more than covered costs by the time the printer's invoice arrived. Unfortunately, Ronnie died in 1997.

In 1993 the saga of Cleveland Lodge began. Lady Jeans, a noted organist and musician died and in her will expressed the wish that Cleveland Lodge be given to the Royal School of Church Music (RSCM), at that time based at Addington Palace in Croydon. As they were no longer offering residential courses these premises were too large, so they decided to move to Westhumble upon obtaining personal planning consent to change the use to offices and studios. The WRA cautiously backed their proposal, not wanting the site to become a housing development, and work began with the RSCM moving in in 1996. By then they realised it was too small and obtained a Lottery Grant of £1.2 million for further refurbishment and extension which was completed two years later. However, for financial reasons they decided to move to shared premises in Salisbury near the cathedral. In 2006 Cleveland Lodge was sold to a developer for housing to great consternation but little could be done as the office use was personal to RSCM. The developer had hoped to retain the façade, but to everyone's horror during the demolition this was found to be unstable, so the entire building was demolished. However



Cleveland Lodge

new proposals resulted in a near replica, now called Cleveland Court, being built. In the meantime, the housing market had deteriorated resulting in most of the units being let rather than sold; it took a further 10 years for the sales to be completed.

It is time to turn to the roads. The Mickleham Bypass and the A24 have caused the WRA to spend hours discussing many separate disturbances. It all started around 1975 when SCC granted a lease of the car park at Burford Bridge to Rykas who immediately constructed the café. It soon became apparent that the true name was Bykers, when at weekends hundreds of motorbikes gathered there and started racing to the Givons Grove roundabout and back via the Mickleham Bends. Meetings with the police and Rykas made little impact until a secretly-made film showed many dangerous and illicit activities (including the racing of unlicensed hot-rods) was given to the police. Additional surveillance followed and when the police found a by-law which allowed them to confiscate an offending vehicle, a very expensive bike was impounded, crushed and placed on a plinth in the car park. This, increased police presence and the installation of cameras at the Burford roundabout ended the race fever. Today the motorbikes cause little nuisance and it is the cyclists that cause complaints. More later!

In 1992 improvements to the Burford Bridge roundabout were proposed, making it larger, importantly for us, giving priority to cars from Mickleham rather than the existing priority from the south and altering the 'safe' lane from Westhumble. After many meetings, the scheme was abandoned. Instead changes such as no right turn out of Westhumble Street, with a filter lane for turning right when approaching the roundabout from the south and the addition of filter lanes for turning off the A24 into Westhumble

Street, has improved this dangerous junction somewhat.

In 1994 the SCC proposed solving the problem of the dangerous Mickleham Bends by diverting the A24 through Norbury Park by a tunnel adjoining the railway tunnel costing an estimated £15 million. Three other alternatives were suggested, none of which were really practical or met the objectives. The WRA supported the tunnel, but in the end, like most proposals it was too expensive and abandoned.

In 1995 Beryl Icke of Rose's Stores and Post Office, Mickleham announced she wished to retire but could not find a purchaser due to the cost of financing the freehold. John Batt, of Mickleham, and Ian Fraser proposed that the community should buy a half share and they set about raising £100,000. With fund-raising in both Mickleham and Westhumble they managed to raise that amount and a year later Mickleham Shop Ltd was formed.

In 1996 Robin and Ann Vaughan became the new tenants succeeded by Serena Florides and Gary Reed in 2006. However, in 2012 the Post Office Counter closed which eventually made the shop unprofitable. Efforts to sell the half-share proved fruitless and following recent change to residential use approval the building is in the process of being sold.

Chapel Farm, part of the Denbies estate had traditionally been a mixed farm, both arable and livestock. In 1959 Colin Compton succeeded his father, Jack, who had held the tenancy since 1937. Following the break-up of the Denbies estate, Colin bought Chapel Farm. A Young Farmer since her teens, Sheila Compton became Surrey Young Farmers' County Organiser and for a time held their annual Cow Pie Rally at the farm. In 1983, they opened the farm to the public; their Children's Farm with tractor and trailer rides and interaction with

all the animals became very popular. This lasted until around 1988 when Health and Safety demanded a vast sum being spent to upgrade facilities and the Salmonella scare stopping visits by primary school children.

In 1996 Colin Compton put the Slip and Bonfire Field, totalling just over 14 acres, up for sale. The WRA held an emergency meeting over concerns that they might be developed, or Denbies Winery be extended there. Over £70,000 was raised to put in a bid. It was successful but the WRA constitution did not permit it to become a property company so a purpose-built company, Westhumble Fields Ltd, was incorporated and has managed the fields ever since.

The remaining part of Chapel Farm was offered for sale in late 1997 again causing consternation over possible development despite the land being in the Green Belt and in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). Members were concerned about it being split up field by field to become 'horse culture'. Again, an Extraordinary General Meeting was called and attended by over 150 members. The meeting agreed to support the National Trust who had expressed interest and amazingly more than £105,000 net of tax reclaim was raised in two weeks to help the Trust to make a successful bid. The subsequent redevelopment of Chapel Farm barns caused less controversy once the proposed new driveway near Postern House was abandoned.

In 2000 the WRA decided to erect two village signposts to mark the Millennium. The design was copied from the association's logo, designed by Janice Rawlinson and the ironwork created by Headley Forge. One was placed at the corner of the A24 and Westhumble Street and the A24 and the other in Chapel Lane near Chapel House 2002 – The Queen's Golden Jubilee. It was decided to plant a row of trees to hide and mitigate the noise of the railway along the edge of the Bonfire Field. This was done but unfortunately many of the trees have since died and the project has not achieved its intention.

About this time concerns over various developments in Camilla Drive arose and although the Association's stance is that

disputes between neighbours should not be its concern, it was dragged into the more contentious disputes.

The first concerned Leladene at the beginning of the Drive – a very large plot which the owner wished to subdivide and build another house. Planning permission was granted, but no access to the site via Chapel Lane was permitted. The proposal with access onto the Drive was opposed by Camilla Drive Ltd as it involved breaking a restrictive covenant which only permitted one house per plot on the original developer's map. This was very contentious and went all the way to a judicial review before it was defeated.

Then there was Mayfield with its double plot – the problem here was primarily over the proposed design of the houses and ran on for many years with different schemes. At long last a compromise was agreed, and two acceptable houses were built.

Lastly Quinneys, where the owner wished to build a very modern-looking house at the rear of the garden with access to Chapel Lane. The Association did not approve, primarily because of the access issue. Vitriolic statements from some residents of Camilla Drive led to the owner giving up and moving away.

2012 was Olympics Year and Westhumble was in the thick of it with the cycling road race events taking a route starting from London and out into Surrey, with nine circuits of Box Hill before returning to London. The authorities overreacted and all roads around us were closed all that day and again the following day for the Ladies' Race, with five circuits of Box Hill. Subsequently many amateur cyclists are using the same route resulting in local roads being clogged by cyclists most weekends. Then the Prudential Ride London – Surrey (attracting around 25,000 participants and following much the same route except that the afternoon professionals' race passes through Westhumble and up to Ranmore three times) became an annual event. The WRA have had many meetings to try to mitigate the disruption. Now roads are closed entirely for only about six hours.

In recent years problems with The Westhumble Playing Fields have resulted in many meetings. Originally Ashcombe

School's Sports Field it became the property of the Surrey County Playing Fields Association (later Fields in Trust). The fields were let to the Dorking Cricket Club, Old Dorkinians FC and Dorking Wanderers F.C. Problems arose with the successes of the Wanderers, as, with each advance in the league the FA insisted on the provision of additional facilities, including changing rooms, stands, car parking and floodlighting. Most concerns have been addressed: the floodlights have been realigned and parking controlled. But now, as even more elaborate facilities are required, Mole Valley DC has agreed that the Wanderers can move their First Team to Meadowbank in Dorking when its redevelopment is completed. The Wanderers will continue to use the Westhumble field for training and their youth teams.

This concludes what was meant to be a brief history of the WRA and paints the picture of Westhumble growing from a rapidly developing community to a fully mature neighbourhood. In my view, it is unlikely that the scale of the activities of the past years will continue and we can only hope that the residents of Westhumble will lead a very contented life!

Michael Hallett 2017

### WRA Chairmen

1945 Judge Lloyd-Jacobs  
1946 Mr Burrell  
1948 Mr Edmonds  
1951 Sir Carl Aarvold  
1970 Sir Edward Norman  
1980 Geoffrey Scarlett  
1982 Geoffrey Suckling  
1985 Jenny Rudge  
1989 Geoffrey Suckling  
1994 Ian Fraser  
1997 Michael Hallett  
2000 Jim Poole  
2003 Frank Warren  
2007 Peter Bunn  
2013 Mike Giles

### WRA Presidents

1945 Sir James Jeans  
1946 Judge Lloyd-Jacobs  
1970 Sir Carl Aarvold  
1985 Ronnie Shepperd  
1997 Helena Scarlett  
2014 Ben Tatham

# Local Memories of D-Day

*The June 1994 parish magazine commemorated the 50th Anniversary of D-Day with a feature including local residents' memories of that momentous event compiled by Liz Weller. Now, 25 years further on we are including this edited version for readers who missed it the first time.*

Planning for the long-awaited Second Front in western Europe began in earnest in the Spring of 1943. Normandy was chosen as the target for the invasion and elaborate deception plans were devised to convince the Germans that the Pas de Calais and other parts of the European coastline were the real allied targets. Valuable lessons had been learned from the failure of the Dieppe raid in August 1942 in which the Canadian army played a major role and suffered heavy losses. New landing craft were developed, together with a 'siege train' of armoured vehicles, nicknamed 'Funnies', including amphibious tanks and others adapted for mine-clearing, bridge-laying and flame-throwing, Fundamental to the preparation for 'Operation Overlord' was the build-up of American forces in Britain, code-named 'Bolero'. From 1942 to 1944, more than 1.5 million American service personnel arrived in Britain. In addition, 5 million tons of invasion supplies, and equipment were brought across the Atlantic.

By Spring of 1944, hundreds of square miles of Britain were crowded with air bases, army camps, ammunition dumps, tank parks, supply depots and

repair shops. From April 1944, special trains and long lines of vehicles brought troops and equipment to the muster areas in the South, where woodland sites provided natural cover. There were many Americans and Canadians in our area. Mickleham Hall, then the home of the Gordon Clarks, was taken over by Canadians, Juniper Hall was used by the Tank Corps, the Pay Corps were accommodated at Dalewood (now Box Hill School) and Mickleham Downs (the home of Cullens, the well-known grocer family) was taken over by Sun Alliance. In Westhumble, British soldiers were occupying Burford Corner and Canadians were in The Little House. The field opposite the Stepping Stones PH was filled with NAAFI huts. Lord Beaverbrook from Cherkley Court was Churchill's Minister of Aircraft Production and along with his compatriot Lord Bennett of Juniper Hill (ex-Canadian Prime Minister) did an incredible amount to raise funds for the war effort and naturally were very much involved with the many Canadians stationed in our area. The western side of the A24 was closed to the public and was full of camouflaged vehicles and pontoon sections for the Mulberry Harbour, as was Young Street

which was specially constructed by the Canadians in 1943.

At home, here in Westhumble and Mickleham, people were living as best they could, despite the threat of invasion or air attacks, struggling to survive on meager food supplies and improvising in all sorts of ways to manage.

COLIN COMPTON was living with his parents at Chapel Farm. 'I was 15 years old and cycled daily to Ashcombe School, so I saw the build-up of the parked amphibious vehicles on the west side of the dual carriageway, and its disappearance overnight a few days before D-Day. Life on the farm went on as usual. It was mixed farming then, with about 40 cows, 4 or 5 sows, 60 to 70 ducks and about 50 chickens. Mum and Dad did the daily milk round in a Ford 8 van around Westhumble, Norbury and Mickleham. We had one cowman and his two sons who were hand-milking. The sons were of military age but were exempt from service because they were needed on the farm.'

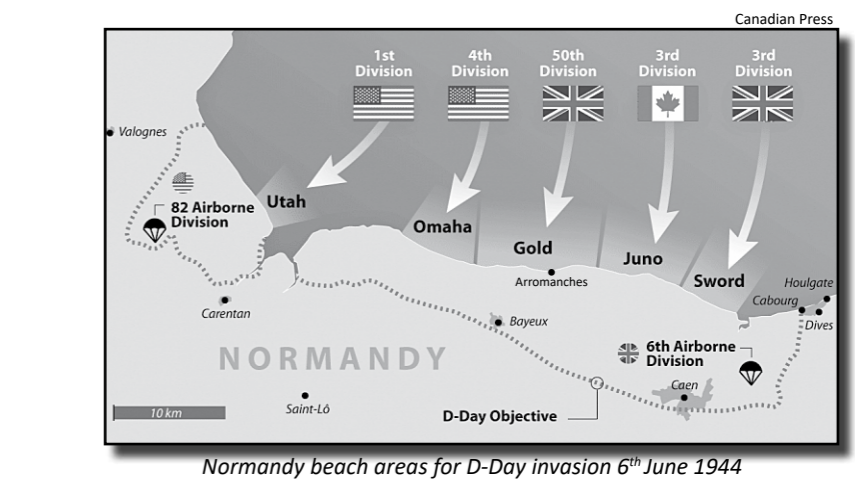
Anne Weaver's mother BILLIE FITTER, who came to Westhumble in June 1943, recalled: 'I was a nurse at Dorking General Hospital. I can remember

having to nurse prisoners of war from the camp near Holmwood. The German patients were upstairs in St Mary's Ward with a military policeman on guard and the British were on the ground floor.'

JOYCE CROSS, who was living at The King William IV pub where her father was publican, recalled: 'We were only licensed to sell beer in those days. We had one delivery per week, on a Friday, which was all gone by the weekend! On pay day, the soldiers would go off to Leatherhead in the evening returning when the pubs closed to the William IV, standing outside on the steps shouting 'We want beer' until my Dad threatened to ring their CO, which was always very effective in making them disappear!' BRIAN WHINNEY, a resident of Pilgrims Way in 1994, had been a Principal Beach Master on Gold Beach. He related his story: 'My introduction to the job was both sudden and unexpected. I was serving as a first lieutenant on HMS Montrose based at Harwich with patrol duties along the east coast. On return from patrol early one Saturday, I was simply told to go home for the night and report the following morning to Southampton.

'I dined on arrival that Sunday night with Admiral Douglas-Pennant and Captain Farquhar, with whom I had served earlier in the war, and they told me I was to be a Principal Beach Master in 'Operation Overlord'. I was told where I was to land and the date. Disbelief and consternation overwhelmed me, especially on being entrusted with such secret information. There were only five weeks to D-Day, and I knew nothing about the job. What a prospect!

'We had been aware while on the east coast that certain operations were afoot, but could never piece together the assorted and unusual objects under tow which we escorted to the south coast. However, the nature of the job soon became apparent on being introduced to my fellow counterpart who was to have charge of the beaches to the east of mine. He was wearing a DSC and bar, having done the same job twice before in the Mediterranean. From then on, for about three months, I wore khaki but retained my naval cap. The weeks of training in Southampton passed rapidly, with beaching exercises and briefing the army camp as to the nature of the whole operation.



Normandy beach areas for D-Day invasion 6<sup>th</sup> June 1944

'On D-Day minus one, I embarked in SS Empire Arquebus. Rather unexpectedly, we were waited on at dinner that evening by uniformed stewards who offered menus (as if on a cruise!). The convoy of warships escorting landing craft sailed during the night and dropped anchor in the early hours some 4 to 5 miles off the beaches. The scene on arrival was a most amazing sight – the whole anchorage was completely full.'

All were waiting for the signal to move, when General Eisenhower decided to take a chance with the adverse weather conditions and the Allied Invasion of Normandy began soon after midnight on 6<sup>th</sup> June, D-Day was to have been 5<sup>th</sup> June, but severe weather conditions forced a delay to 6<sup>th</sup> June when there was thought to be a slight 'window' in the weather to attempt 'Operation Overlord' and retain the element of surprise to the Germans. Obviously the organisation of the 24-hour delay was in itself a huge feat: to hold up the arrival of thousands of vessels along with their defence by sea and also the crucial air attack of German land artilleries, all requiring unprecedented synchronisation in utmost secrecy. By the end of D-Day itself, 73,000 American and 83,000 British and Canadian had been landed by sea .

LADY AARVOLD recalled: 'In the early hours of 6<sup>th</sup> June there was a thunderous, continuous noise over Foxbury. I looked out and saw huge planes flying very low, towing gliders – it went on for three quarters of an hour. It was an amazing sight. We did not know then of course, what the objective was.'

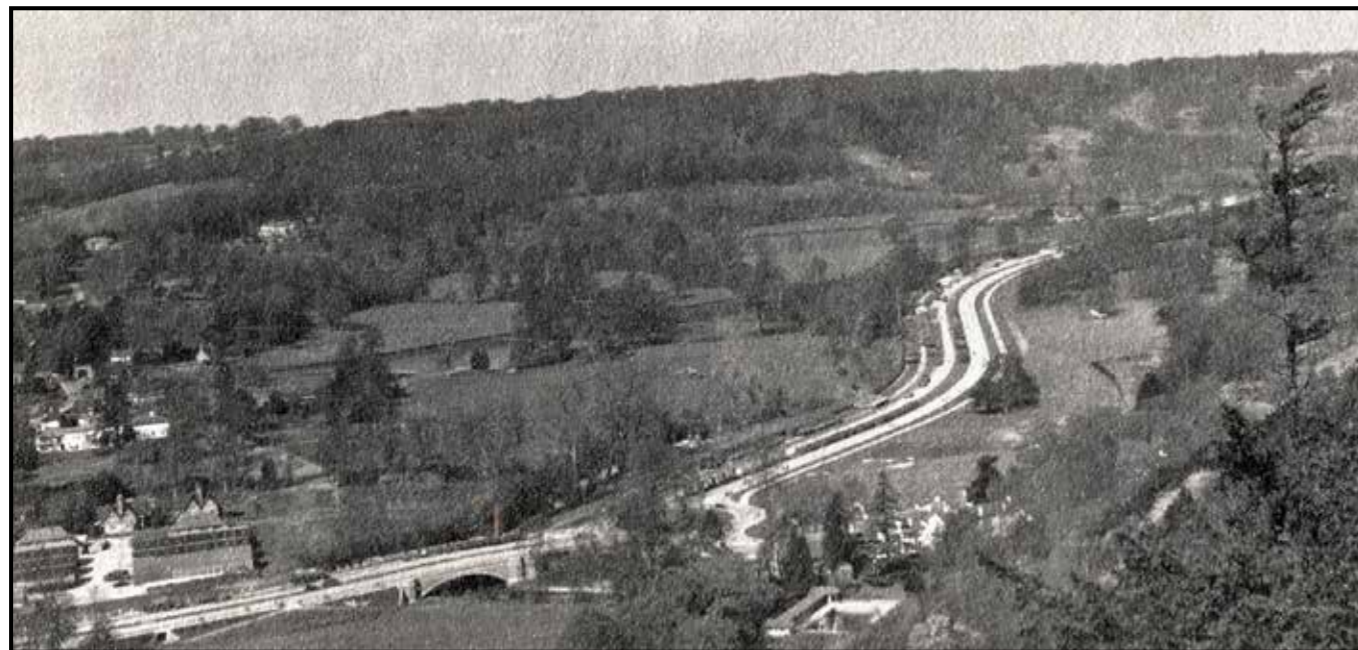
BRIAN WHINNEY (continued): 'D-Day, 6<sup>th</sup> June, dawned in appalling sea

conditions – fierce north-westerly onshore winds with an unusual cross swell combined to present challenging conditions for the task of landing so many men, vehicles, equipment and supplies. We left the ship's side in our landing craft at 0600. The passage ashore was not lonely; flotillas of all kinds of landing craft designed to transport men, tanks, rockets and supplies were all under way, hell-bent on achieving their ETAs on the correct beaches. It was a most spectacular sight, but my most vivid memories are of the appalling noise. The landing craft guns were the chief culprits, coming through our lines, barking away, followed by landing craft rockets which let fly its banks of hundreds of lethal missiles. The background noise of the bombarding salvos was akin to the symphony of a very large orchestra.

'As we approached, it became obvious that the beach defences were not as numerous as I had been led to believe. Considerable enemy fire developed on the beaches and behind them from small arms and mortar batteries. After many near misses, we finally beached in heavy surf at 07.50, leaving us about 150 yards to run to the top of the beach, where I became aware of a group of a dozen men sitting quietly, apparently gazing out to sea – it took a few moments to realise that they were Germans who had been flushed out of their beach defence post!

'Our beach sector, Item and Jig – Gold Area, was being enfiladed from a strategic pill box which the RAF had unfortunately missed. We were consequently confined to the narrow beachhead between the high-water mark and the sand dunes, behind which in the marshes the Germans were accurately targeting us with

Photograph courtesy of John Woodcock



The A24 in 1944 showing camouflaged vehicles parked along the west carriageway of the newly-built Mickleham Bypass. Note the NAAFI huts, bottom left.

mortar fire. It is a bit unnerving to see someone drop a bomb down a spout, knowing it is to be aimed in your direction! They departed shortly afterwards, but the fire from the pill box persisted. I drove along the top of the beach to a disabled tank which was providing welcome shelter for a number of our wounded. The tank was a great boon to us because it gave a narrow cone of cover from the pill box fire; without it, we would have been in much worse trouble.

'I was forced to stop clearance of beach obstacles. No landing craft could get ashore and only one tank got off our beach successfully on that first day, which succeeded in deafening the lot of us by blowing its waterproofing just before going inland to support the marine commandos.

'During the afternoon, accompanied by Colonel Cooper, I went on a recce along the beach and into Arromanches and Le Hamel. The inhabitants had been forewarned the previous day by the Resistance and every single person had departed during the night Arromanches was completely deserted and very eerie. On our way back to the beach, we heard a noise in a cottage. The colonel rapped on the door and, to our astonishment, an old lady appeared and seemed quite unconcerned. She had apparently been there all day, carrying out her household chores as usual, although the cottage backed on to the pill box which had caused us so much trouble.

'From D-Day on, for several weeks, priorities changed from hour to hour. The weather got worse again and life became fairly chaotic but was full of variety and interest. A time of light relief was 'le quatorze juillet' when the French did even more justice than usual to their annual celebration – at last they could anticipate freedom. Our colonel gave a marvellous speech in honour of the occasion, which nobody understood but everyone appreciated the general gist! 'I was in France for this momentous occasion and will never forget or regret the experience. The very size of 'Overlord' and all it stood for was unbelievable and it was a privilege to take part.'

GEOFFREY SUCKLING recalled the part he played on D-Day: 'As a sub-lieutenant in the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve, I was appointed to LST 413 for the Normandy landings. This was one of the earlier

breed of Landing Ship Tanks, being of approximately 3,000 tons with a large tank deck capable of carrying up to 40 tanks, and an upper deck taking about 40 other sorts of vehicles. Each such upper deck vehicle was raised individually by internal lift. There were also the accompanying personnel. We were to act as a ferry between Portsmouth and the various code-named beaches. We carried just about as many sick bay attendants as crew (about 18), plus 2 doctors and a surgeon, for as soon as we had unloaded on the beach the drill was that we converted the tank deck into a giant sick bay with a surgery, able to carry back to hospital in England up to 1,000 stretcher cases from the beach-head, the medical team performing wonders on the way,

'Our landings were timed to be soon after high water (on a falling tide). We were armed only with Bofor machine guns and hand-held weapons. Each ship carried its own barrage balloon to discourage low-level enemy aircraft attacks. Our instructions were to charge our landing ship (when commanded to do so) onto the beach at full speed which was about 12 knots (15 mph), Before getting into position to do so, the ship had to be trimmed to suit the slope of the beach by using the ballast tanks. All vehicles were chained to the deck and personnel had to brace themselves hard for the actual landing. A series of sharp bumps were normally experienced before coming to an abrupt halt. Nothing could be left unsecured.

We were loaded the previous day and our flotilla waited at anchor at Spithead for further instructions. The ships responsible for the bombardment of the Normandy coast had gone ahead and an enormous fleet had assembled to follow. A channel was being swept and buoyed all the way across the English Channel to the French beaches. The weather was stormy and as unkind as our weather can be. The way across was just a mass of ships and vessels with diverse specialities and amphibians moving towards the beaches. When called for the run-in on to the beach, our flotilla had to approach in line ahead. The flotilla leader first, with the next ship moving gracefully to port before dropping the stern anchor and landing next to him, and so on. There was one important thing to get right and that was to drop the stern anchor



Geoff Suckling

when we were two cable-lengths off the beach. Too soon and you lose your anchor – too late and you have insufficient purchase to help you get off the beach again. At the same time, it was important not to foul the next ship's anchor. The noise of battle all around was very off-putting to the concentration needed for this hazardous manoeuvre. As mentioned, the weather was not good, with a cross wind.

'When our turn came for our first 'landing' instead of gracefully moving to port, the strong wind blew us back in line ahead and BANG, we rammed the ship ahead, fouling its anchor at the same time. The ship ahead went further up the beach than planned and our plans were disorientated. To say that we were not popular would be an understatement! Unfortunately, our bow doors were so badly damaged that they could not be opened so we had to return to Portsmouth with our load of eager but frustrated warriors. There, the doors had to be forcibly removed entirely and thereafter we plied to and fro across the Channel without them! We were in no danger of sinking as inside the doors (that were) there was a ramp which could still be closed fairly watertight. It just meant that we did not cut through the water as elegantly as others. We were well recognised as the only landing ship without bow doors!

In the weeks that followed, we were involved in other unusual episodes which led to the promotion of our captain and the recovery of the ship's pride. We made numerous crossings to the Normandy beaches until 21<sup>st</sup> August when the German line of retreat was finally cut off and the Battle of Normandy was over.'

## Some of Geoff's unpublished photographs



For technical reasons we were unable to include photographs in the 1994 article, but fortunately his widow, Jean has kept many of Geoff's pictures. Top left: Vehicles on top decks of LSTs; Top right: An LST landing its cargo onto the beach. Below left: Stretchers of wounded filling the tank deck for the return journey. Bottom right: An LST with its bow doors open showing how the ramp closes off the bottom deck.

From November 2019 Mickleham Parish Magazine

## LEST WE FORGET

Taken from the record of the men whose names appear on the Mickleham War Memorial published by the Mickleham & Westhumble Local History Group

### SERGEANT DENNIS BARBER

1354869 No. 9 Squadron Bomber Command RAF Volunteer Reserve  
Died 1<sup>st</sup> May 1943, aged 22 over Germany



Dennis Barber was born on 10<sup>th</sup> July 1920 at Kilverstone, Thetford, Norfolk. His father, Herbert John Barber (1886-1970) was a blacksmith who married three times. Dennis' mother, Dorothy May Grant, was Herbert's second wife. Dennis had six siblings/half-siblings, several of his children were known by nicknames instead of their actual given names (very confusing for our researchers). In 1922 the entire family moved to Cowslip Cottages in Norbury Park which must have been

very cramped as there were only two bedrooms. By the time Herbert opened an independent smithy at Norbury Farm in 1927 the family had moved to Lovedon Cottage, Westhumble. Herbert made the cross on the Westhumble Chapel of Ease and is said to have made candlesticks for Canterbury Cathedral. By all accounts he was quite a character and a great storyteller.

Dennis attended Mickleham School from 1925 to 1933 when he was awarded a Junior Technical Scholarship. Dennis' sister was told he joined the RAF Volunteer Reserve after his brother, Bill, became a prisoner of war. By 1943 Dennis was a rear gunner in No. 9 Squadron Bomber Command.

During WW2 the squadron was based initially at Honington, between Bury St Edmunds and Thetford, before moving to Waddington, near Lincoln, in August 1942. In April 1943 the squadron moved again to a nearby RAF base at Bardney. Dennis and six other crew members died when their Lancaster bomber was lost on a bombing raid to Essen on 1<sup>st</sup> May 1943. His plane was the first to be lost from Bardney and the crew members are all commemorated on the Runnymede Memorial.

Dennis' brother Bill (christened Herbert George) an auto mechanic lived in Lovedon Cottage after his father died, and is still remembered in Mickleham and Westhumble today.

# Mulberry Harbour

The D-Day article in the July magazine mentioned that pontoon sections for Mulberry Harbour were stored on the A24 between Mickleham and Westhumble in 1944 but the article did not say anything further about what the Harbour was or how it came to be constructed. It so happens that the senior partner of the first firm I worked for in 1958 was Sir Bruce White who was the Director of Ports and Inland Water Transport at the War Office in WW2 and was in overall charge of the Mulberry Harbour project. He was knighted for his work on the project. I will not pretend that he gave me a blow by blow account of how it all happened – I have had to look it up!

The importance of the Mulberry Harbour can be judged from the fact it was used to land 2,500,000 men, 500,000 vehicles and 4 million tons of supplies in the ten months of its existence. It had to be built because on D-Day the existing French ports were either held by the enemy or had been sabotaged.

Why was it called 'Mulberry'? Sir Bruce said it was just the next codeword on the list and that he would have objected if he had been offered 'Raspberry'!

The origin of the project was the memo on 30 May 1942 from Winston Churchill to Lord Mountbatten, the Chief of Combined Operations:

*Piers for use on Beaches: They must float up and down with the tide. The anchor problem must be mastered. Let me have the best solution worked out. Don't argue the matter. The difficulties will argue for themselves*

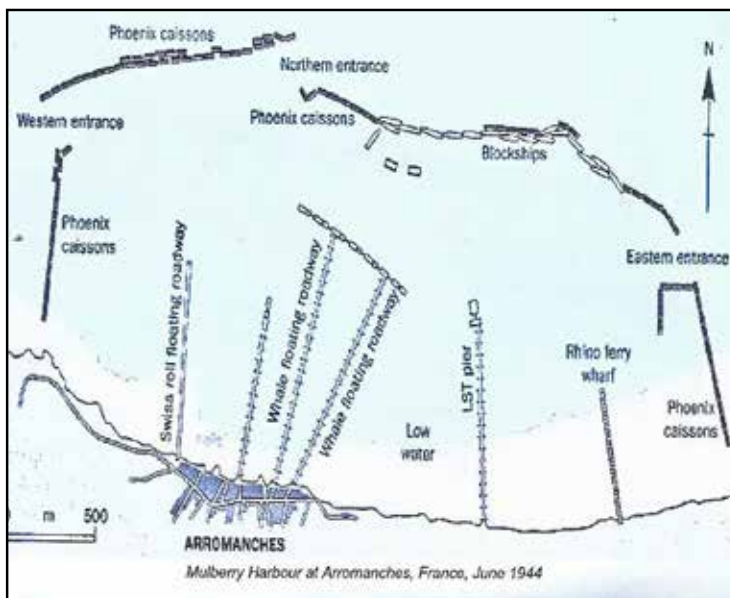
The plan to invade Normandy was only agreed by the Allied Command in the summer of 1943 and it was not until late August 1943 that the construction of artificial harbours was agreed. In September 1943 Bruce White was summoned to attend the conference at Quebec. He demonstrated models of the harbours to Winston Churchill in his bedroom in Quebec and then to President Roosevelt in his study at The White House in Washington. It was then agreed that two Mulberry Harbours would be constructed: Mulberry A for the Americans and Mulberry B for the British. Detailed design only started in October 1943 – yet by June 1944 construction of two ports the size

of Dover port had to start on site in Normandy.

The layout of the British Mulberry port is shown below. The breakwaters consisted of sunken block ships and 'Phoenix' concrete caissons. Each Phoenix consisted of 7,000 tons of reinforced concrete. Between 9 and 15 June 1944, 115 caissons were towed across the channel and sunk in position. The whole breakwater was 5 miles long. The piers for receiving ships had to be designed for a tidal range of over 7 metres and consisted of pier heads raised on spuds connected to the shore by floating roadways. The floating roadways and their anchors were designed by Allan Beckett who was another of the partners of the firm I joined in 1958. The Arromanches community dedicated a memorial to Allan Beckett to honour his great contribution to the success of Mulberry Harbour.

The scale of what was achieved in a very short time is astonishing and I am fortunate to have known two of the men responsible.

Ben Tatham



One of Geoff Suckling's photographs showing the floating roadway. The verticals in the background are the spuds of the pier head.



## Recent publications by the Cockerel Press

- *The Vanishing River of Box Hill* by Peter Brown
- *Dorking : A Town Underground* by Sam Dawson
- *The Weaver, the Shoemaker and the Mother of a Nation. The Story of Dorking's Mayflower Pilgrims* by Kathy Atherton and Susannah Horne

All available from Dorking Museum