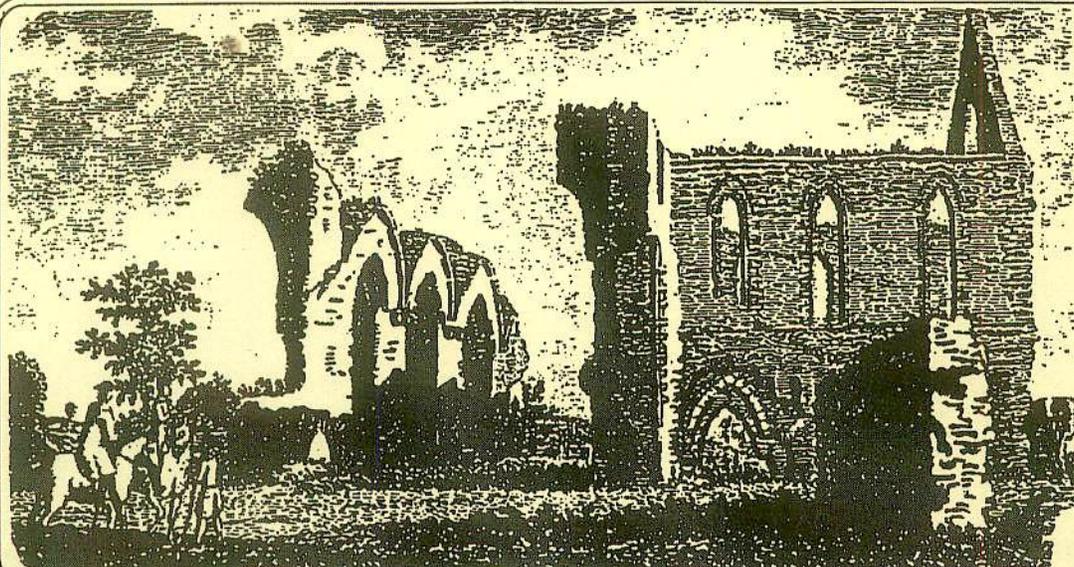


Send & Ripley History Society

FOUNDED 1975 AS SEND HISTORY SOCIETY

Registered Charity No. 296324



NEWARK PRIORY

Journal Volume 5 No. 159

July/Aug 2001



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July/August 2001

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Cover illustration Hikers taking refreshment at Ripley drinking fountain, Sunday, August 7 1932 - see article by Irene Bleach on page 8.

EDITOR'S COMMENTS

As this Journal is being prepared at the end of the first week of June, it can now be said that during the last three or four weeks, the weather has been sunny, and apart from the occasional cloudy day, there has been little rain. What a contrast to the wettest spring on record! Surely this time of the year must be the best: everywhere there is blossom, and all the trees and hedgerows are now fully cloaked in green.

In the Ripley Parish Magazine for March 1910, the Reverend C H Martin, vicar of Ripley (1902-12), extolled the glories of spring, especially in the countryside around Send and Ripley. He also commented on the numerous elm trees in the hedgerows along the lanes and highways. Alas, since the outbreak of Dutch Elm Disease, first reported in 1967, all these wonderful trees have virtually disappeared from our landscape. There are other varieties of elm which are resistant, but not immune, and these are at least now obtainable from good Garden Centres. Perhaps, therefore, in time, the trees will reappear, so that they can be appreciated by our children and grandchildren, if not those of us who could remember them in our youth.

1st RIPLEY SCOUTS - PHOTO c1911

What an absolutely splendid photo on the cover of the last issue of the Journal (see opposite page)! It comes from the collection of the late Group Scout Leader, Stuart Paice, and must surely have been taken professionally. Artistry has gone into posing the picture with the Union flag, unfurled, on the left, nicely balanced, but not too symmetrical, with the tall Scout on the right, holding a furled flag, possibly a Patrol emblem. Then there is the Scout flag, centre back, neatly framing the head of the Scout Leader, a kindly and intelligent-looking man, who gives the impression of having just the right blend of authority and informality. The tall Scout with the Patrol emblem, looking so well-organised, with his cheese-cutter, starched hat brim not a degree out of horizontal, and a special cuff laden with proficiency badges, is surely a Patrol Leader.

There are other points of detail worth noting. The much mocked woggle is nowhere to be seen, all their neckerchiefs being knotted. Likewise, there is not a scout belt to be seen. Presumably these two items were still something for the future. Lanyards seem to be optional, as does the jack-knife being fingered proudly by the flag-holder on the left.

If this photo is really 1911, as it could well be, it is likely that some of these Scouts would have been caught up with, and even lost their lives in, the Great War of 1914-18. A quick check with the names tentatively given on page 12 of the last issue against the Ripley Roll of Honour shows that the only name that possibly corresponds is Scout Jack Tappin and Rifleman H J Tappin, but they may, of course, be relatives, or indeed totally unconnected.

Ninety years on, it is all naturally so different - and yet, curiously, in some ways it all looks so familiar.

By the way, can the building be identified, and is it still there?

Les Bowerman

APPOINTMENT OF SECRETARY

As was indicated at the AGM, Marilyn Scrace, who was Treasurer of this Society between March 1995 and February 1999, has agreed to take over from Audrey Sykes as Secretary from June of this year. Marilyn was welcomed by the Committee when she attended its meeting on June 4, prior to taking over from Audrey. All Society correspondence should now be addressed to Marilyn, whose address and telephone number appear on the front of the Journal.



Ripley Scouts c1911

SEND SCOUT FÊTE, MONDAY, MAY 7

The Society had the opportunity to try out its new frame tent, which proved satisfactory, although strong winds during the day kept our members alert to ensure it was safely pegged down. An exhibition had been set up from photographs and articles already on display in the Museum, on the subject of the Scouts and Guides of Send. This proved to be of considerable interest and the day was very successful with sales of the Society's publications and second hand books. Our thanks go to Claire and Desmond McCann and Les and Anne Bowerman for setting up and running another successful Society stall.

RIPLEY MATTERS

Copies of *Ripley Matters* Nos 17-33 inclusive for the years 1996-2000 have now been bound and are available for reference in the Museum.

SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP

George Bleach advises us that the total membership stands at 194, which includes two new members who have recently joined.

LOCAL MEMORIES - SEND CLOSE AND PARADE, LOCAL TRANSPORT AND MAY'S STORES

I begin this article with a sincere apology to all our readers concerning an error which appeared in my reply in Journal No 158, page 5, to the letter submitted to our Society from my old school friend, Stuart Mathis. I have included in the list of some of his former classmates Dawn Amos. In fact, Dawn was in the class ahead of Stuart. I am grateful to Dawn for this information, who was pleased to think of herself a year younger!

I am equally grateful to our member, Jackie Strange, who kindly gave me further information regarding Mr Hester, the local butcher (Newsletter No 131, *Local Deliveries*). In my article, I clearly record Mr Hester driving his Jowett Bradford van down Send Road in order to feed his pigs, which were kept on land near to the footpath beside the Police House. Jackie reminded me of the small trailer which Mr Hester towed behind his car in order to carry out this task. I had remembered the car (which was beyond the scope of my article at the time); however, I had forgotten the trailer. The car was a black Morris, a four-door saloon, a pre-War Morris 12, I believe, c1937/8. It was quite capable of towing a small trailer.

The Morris used to stand outside the greengrocer's shop, which was added during the early 1950s, almost coinciding with the construction of Send Close and Send Parade. The premises have been converted to a lock-up garage by Mr Clayton, the current proprietor.

I do not recall when I last saw the Jowett Bradford van in use, which suggests Mr Hester may have replaced it with the Morris.

In Newsletter No 125, there appears an excellent article by Pat Clack on the subject of *May's Stores*. However, Pat has forgotten the Murphy family, who bought the shop (from Mr Webb?) during the mid 1960s. Under the Murphys' ownership, the shop began trading on Sunday mornings; however, only certain items could be sold on this day. Tobacco and confectionery were not affected, but if groceries or items such as soap powder were purchased, they were heavily wrapped in several layers of newspaper! The Murphys had two daughters, who were about 20 years of age, give or take a year, and both could be seen serving behind the counter on Sundays.

I believe Mr and Mrs Murphy bought the shop in 1965 or 1966 and sold it to George and Bridie Hodgkin in 1969/70.

I had frequented May's Stores all my life, and early memories included Mrs Lee and Mrs Webb. Mr Webb owned a black Austin A40 Somerset saloon car, bearing the unusual registration 7997 H; single suffix letters were popular during the early '50s. My father worked as a mechanic for an Austin agent in Guildford at the time, and Dad carried out several jobs on this car. Some of these were carried out nearby in Tice's builder's yard, thanks to the kind permission of Mr Desmond and Mr Lionel Tice, which allowed Mr Webb to drive his car to the shop and home again at night. This usually occurred on Saturdays. I have very fond memories of going with Dad and Mr Webb to Cavendish Road in the Austin. A car ride was a treat in itself, let alone the scene which I witnessed at the bottom of Mr Webb's garden! Upon our arrival, I was escorted to the end of the long garden and this included passing through the chicken run. I was shown in detail how to open and close the wire mesh "gates", securing them with sliding bolts. Beyond the chickens was a small triangular piece of land not cultivated, and over the wire fence was the main railway line! Whilst Dad repaired Mr Webb's car, back down the garden in the garage, I spent an hour or two watching steam trains pass me just a few yards away along the line!

From this location, I had a superb view of Waterloo bound expresses coming round the right hand curve from Brookwood. At the head of these trains were the Bullied locomotives, in both original and rebuilt form, resplendent in Brunswick green livery and bearing the British Railways lion and wheel emblem on the side of the coal tender.

With a white feather of steam just visible from the boiler safety valves, and just a wisp

of smoke from the chimney, the train came past me on the fast up line at a speed of around 90 mph. This section of railway line was known as the Race Track of the Southern by many in railway circles. Within seconds, an ear-piercing scream of a distant whistle indicated it had passed through Woking Station behind me!

In contrast, and between the passing of a few electric trains bound for Aldershot and Alton, came the sound of the steady exhaust beats of a steam locomotive from Woking direction. Getting closer and louder, a south-bound train would pass me, literally yards away over the fence, on the slow line. These trains were usually semi-fast to Salisbury, and consisted of only about eight coaches. In charge were the ageing King Arthur or Schools classes, both dating from the 1920s.

The latter were a rare sight in Woking; however, 30903 Wellington, 30910 Merchant Taylors and 30927 Clifton have been witnessed by me on these lines. The more familiar King Arthur locomotives had large eight-wheel bogie tenders and open-back cabs. In Mr Webb's garden, the railway track was at eye level, and I could see the hot embers of coal falling into the firebox ashpan beneath as the fireman continued to add more coal to the white hot fire above.

All the locomotives were left hand driven and I was often spotted by a driver. Many would look back and give me a smile and a friendly wave - I waved back as the train gathered speed over Triggs Lane bridge and the nearby colour light signal returned to red.

I have many cherished memories of childhood over 40 years ago, and to me May's Stores was more than just a corner shop.

David Porter

FLOSSIE OLIVER

We record with great sadness the death, on 10 May, of former member, Flossie Oliver, at the age of 84. Flossie was a very early member of the Society and she served on the Committee from 1977 to 1983. The wife of our first President, Jim Oliver, Flossie was full of common sense and invariably good-natured. She will be remembered perhaps above all for the splendour and extent of the refreshments she provided for some early Society visits to, and Committee Meetings held, at their home at Send Court Farm. Before coming to Send on marriage, she had lived, if I remember correctly, at Knaphill.

Flossie had not been well for some time, and had recently been a resident at Cranmore Nursing Home.

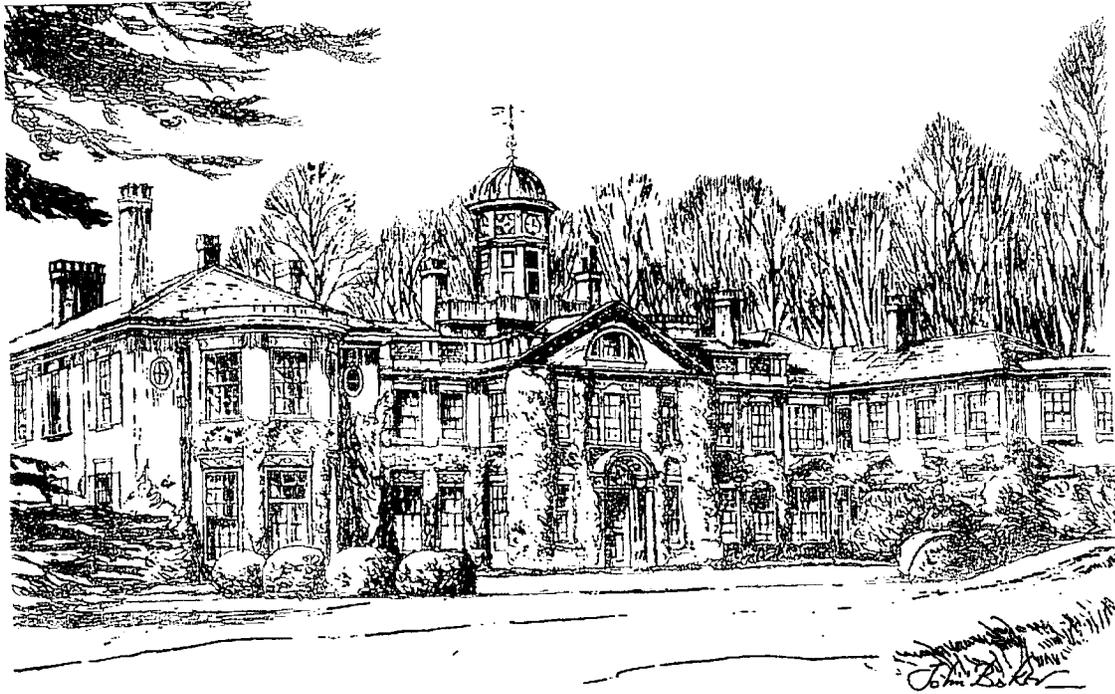
Our sympathy goes to Jim and other members of their family.

Les Bowerman

POLESDEN LACEY - TALK BY DENIS WALKER 26 APRIL, RIPLEY ANNEX

Records show that there has been a dwelling on the site of Polesden Lacey for almost 1000 years. The earliest mention is in 1198, when it was owned by Herbert de Pollesdene, from whom it gets its name. There is mention of a house in 1336, owned by Nicholas de Bergh. There follows a succession of gentleman farmers, the most memorable of whom is Robert Castleton, in 1492, whose family remained there for 150 years.

The name Lacey appears in 1562. The first substantial Carolean house was built in 1705-1710, and again enjoyed a succession of owners, including Admiral Francis Geary, RN (1748). The most notable occupant was the playwright, Sheridan, who arrived in 1797 and remained there until his death in 1816. Towards the end of his life, Sheridan fell into financial difficulties and failed to maintain the property. Following the visitation of the bailiffs, this ruined house was



*Polesden Lacey - Drawn by John Baker
(See Picture of Surrey - Robert Hale Ltd - 1980)*

demolished and the site was sold by Sheridan's son in 1818 for redevelopment.

Thomas Cubitt, a celebrated architect, was engaged by James Bonsor to build an Italianate Regency villa, beginning in 1821. A later owner was Sir Clinton Dawkins, who commissioned Sir Ambrose Poynter to make substantial alterations and improvements to the property in 1902.

All the current interest in the house centres around the activities of its last owner, Mrs Margaret Greville. She became a celebrated hostess and entertainer to the rich and famous, pursuing this activity with ruthless determination and attention to detail, from 1891 to 1939.

Margaret was the illegitimate daughter of William McEwan. He was the founder of McEwan's Brewery in Edinburgh and became a very wealthy man. He later married Margaret's mother when she became widowed. Margaret had been christened and brought up in the name of her nominal father, William Anderson. Much of Mrs Greville's early life was previously shrouded in mystery, largely due to her attempts to conceal her past, and searches in Edinburgh for her Birth and Marriage certificates failed. Both were later discovered by a Polesden volunteer steward in 1995.

McEwan and his daughter enjoyed a close relationship, and not only was he very generous to her during his lifetime, but he also left her his fortune when he died in 1913, identifying Margaret as his true daughter. The fortune amounted to £1½ million - equivalent to about £100 million today. Mrs Greville paid £¼ million in duty on the estate, which was a record for a woman, thus making her the richest woman in England at the time.

To develop her position as a notable hostess, Margaret needed both money and royal patronage: the former she had and the latter she achieved by marrying Ronald Greville in 1891.

Ronald Greville was a minor member of the House of Warwick. He was the elder son of Baron Greville. He had many contacts as a captain in the Lifeguards, and Mrs Greville hoped to inherit a title. Ronald Greville was also a Conservative MP.

William McEwan bought Polesden Lacey for his daughter in 1906, and she made extensive alterations and decorations to the house. William McEwan was a Liberal MP and later a Privy Councillor. He also generously paid for the Graduation Hall at Edinburgh University.

Sadly, Ronald Greville died two years later in 1908, at the age of 43, before he could inherit the title, so Mrs Greville spent a large part of her life as a widow. She never remarried

and had no children.

Mrs Greville entertained lavishly royalty, foreign dignitaries, politicians and members of the theatre. Notably she entertained Edward VII and his mistress, Mrs Keppel (great-grandmother of Camilla Parker-Bowles! The high point of Mrs Greville's life came in 1923 when she made the property available to the Duke and Duchess of York (the then future George VI and the Queen Mother) for part of their honeymoon.

The house contains many works of art by the famous artists. The art collection started by William McEwan was continued by his daughter. There is also a large collection of Oriental and early European porcelain, together with some very fine early furniture.

Mrs Greville also occupied a town house at 11 Charles Street, where she entertained. Her father also lived in Charles Street at No 16. When he died, Mrs Greville moved into her father's house.

During the '30s, Mrs Greville, in common with many others of her circle, became associated with the Nazis. At the run-up too the war, she realised in the nick of time that she had made a political mistake and distanced herself. She atoned for her misjudgement by buying a Spitfire for the War Effort!

In 1939, at the outbreak of war, Mrs Greville closed her houses and took up residence in a suite at the Dorchester Hotel, where she died in 1942, leaving Polesden Lacey, its contents and the contents of her London home to the National Trust, in memory of her father.

Denis Walker

Editor's Note The above notes were provided by Denis Walker, summarising the talk given by Denis and his wife, Hazel, to approximately 20 members of the Society in April. Subsequently, on Saturday, 9 June, some 11 members of the Society visited Polesden Lacey and were conducted round the building in two groups by Denis and Hazel respectively. The following notes were made by me during my tour of part of the ground floor of the building. The north wing and upper floors are not open to the public.

As will be seen from the drawing accompanying this article, the building is imposing, but as you stand before the front entrance, it is by no means overwhelming. On the contrary, it appears to exude a friendliness and presents a welcoming façade to its visitors. The building is on a human scale, as indeed are the rooms, and although sumptuously and tastefully furnished, each room is comfortable to be in, and no doubt fulfilled the original intentions of Mrs Greville, to provide a pleasant and impressive place for her to entertain her guests. Many of the original furnishings were dispersed on the death of Mrs Greville, but over the years, the National Trust has carefully and painstakingly embarked upon the restoration and rearrangement of the principal rooms, with the aim of making their original style and luxury more evident.

Our group passed through the entrance hall, which contains portraits of William McEwan, Mrs Greville's father, into the **Central Hall**. This hall remains as designed by Poynter in 1903-5. The fireplace-wall carvings were installed by Mrs Greville's decorators, White, Allom & Co. There is a magnificent reredos from St Matthew's, Friday Street, one of Sir Christopher Wren's City churches, built in 1682-5. It has since been thought that the carving may have been done by Grinlin Gibbons. The hall contains provincial French walnut seat furniture and Mrs Greville's important collection of 16th century Italian and French majolica.

Leading on into the **Dining Room**, this is half panelled, and the upper parts of the walls are hung in exquisite rose pink silk. There are more portraits, one of which is of a nude reclining, by Sir Joshua Reynolds. The artist here experimented with bitumen to paint his dark background, but this has had disastrous results, as it proved not to be a stable medium. The dining table is not original and is rather smaller than would have been used in Mrs Greville's time. It is also not laid out with silver, as the original silver was bequeathed to her butler on her death.

Entering the **Corridor** en route for the **Library**, the former is lined with oak panelling

and hung with Mrs Greville's collection of Dutch paintings by Pieter de Hooch, Jan van Goyen and many others. The furthest western arm of the corridor is now dominated by a youthful portrait of Mrs Greville, painted in Paris in 1891 (the year of her marriage) by Charles-Auguste-Émile Carolus-Duran.

The library, reputed to have been Mrs Greville's favourite room, is furnished with sofas and easy chairs, two desks, upon which are personal effects and photographs of family and friends. The impression given by the furnishings is that the room could so easily have just been vacated by the owners, so that their visitors could enjoy the ambience of this room for themselves. The walls are fitted with numerous bookshelves, and a rough estimate indicates there are between two and a half to three thousand books, all beautifully bound and clearly well looked after.

Adjoining one end of the library is the one-time **Study**, obviously for Mrs Greville, which was her sanctum. This contains her desk, and although its décor was renewed after a fire in 1960, it contains, as she herself had furnished the room, 18th and early 19th century English mezzotints. The glazed cabinets contain 18th century Meissen and Fürstenberg porcelain. An interesting feature of this room is that the fireplace has immediately above it a window, so that the flue of the fireplace is diverted behind one of the bookcases. This allows a view from this room across the lawns, and at night shutters are drawn, on the face of which are mounted mirrors, so that in the evening the room is reflected upon itself and creates a completely different atmosphere to that during the day.

Adjoining the library is the **Main Saloon**, which is really quite splendid, and was furnished "fit to entertain Maharajahs in". In this room, Mrs Greville entertained several Indian princes (as well as Queen Mary, King George VI and Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother). The room is furnished with gilded panelling and a ceiling which came from a Southern Italian palazzo of c1700. The ceiling has inset ceiling paintings depicting the life of the Biblical King David, and is attributed to Paolo de Matteis. The furniture is mainly French, including some very high quality 18th century pieces, stamped by famous makers such as Jacques-Phillippe Carel.

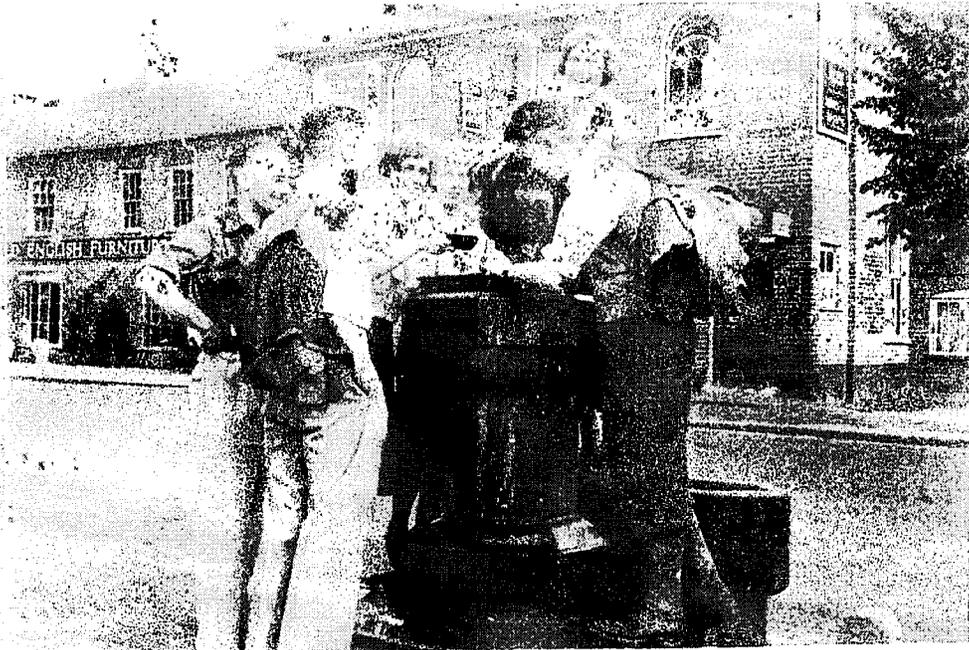
This room, containing showcases with 17th and 18th century Chinese porcelain and wonderful chandeliers, is clearly sumptuous, but not at all overdone. Among many items on display is a silver rule, graduated in French inches, which were similar to English inches in the 18th century, but the inch was one-sixteenth of an inch longer than the English counterpart. The **Tea Room**, **Billiard Room** and **Smoking Room** are equally interesting, but simply furnished for their purposes, although the Smoking Room has now been converted into an Archive Room, which contains all of the photographs and press cuttings, etc, relating to Mrs Greville's family, friends and visitors.

The tour of the house took approximately one and a half hours and proved absolutely fascinating, but, needless to say, the Refreshment Room, just off the courtyard, was greatly appreciated at the end of the tour. Both Denis and Hazel were duly thanked, and clearly their enthusiasm had made our visit that much more enjoyable. Our thanks must also go to our Chairman, Les Bowerman, who made the original arrangements for the talk and also the follow-up visit.

Ken Bourne

RIPLEY FOUNTAIN UPDATE

Some years ago (see Newsletter 107/12, November/December 1992), Jane Bartlett wrote an article querying the whereabouts of Ripley's drinking water fountain. The article contained quite a lot of information, including the date of its erection, October 1901, as a memorial to Queen Victoria. Its subsequent chequered history resulted in the fountain's removal, some time during the 1940s, by the County Council. At the time the article was written, it was not known



Ripley Fountain and Hikers - August 7 1932

where the fountain was situated in the village, or what it looked like. Subsequently, a photograph was provided by Irene Bleach and this appeared in Newsletter 110/8, May/June 1993, and although the photograph was estimated to have been taken in the 1930s, quite correctly, as it turns out, the people drinking from the fountain were not identified.

Subsequently, in Journal 157/5, March/April 2001, the photograph appeared again in relation to Jane Bartlett's article on the Ripley Library, and shows, in the background, Ellards' Old English Furniture Shop and also the White Hart. Here the photograph is incorrectly dated to the late 1940s. It was used in a different context with this article, and there was still no information on the identity of the people around the fountain. Incidentally, the clothing style of the males had changed little between the 1930s and '40s.

Since obtaining the photograph from my friend, Phyllis, her husband, Alf, has died, and I sent her a copy of Journal 157, thinking it might revive happy memories of days gone by. She sent the Journal to her nephew, John, son of one of the happy hikers in the photo, and the result was the accompanying letter, which at least puts the date of the picture into its correct time slot in history and also identifies some of the walkers. It does not, I'm afraid, answer the ultimate question of the actual date the fountain was removed and where it ended up.

All this evoked an interesting little insight into life for youngsters in the 1930s. Phyllis tells me that she and all these young people lived within easy reach of Clapham Junction. It was customary for school leavers to go to Night School to learn shorthand and typing, or book-keeping and general business studies, to enable them to advance in their jobs. A friend persuaded Phyllis to join the Rambling Association attached to the Night School, and this is how she met and eventually married Alf. They would all come down on the train - very cheap fares in those days - to Cobham, Effingham or West Clandon, and then walk all day in the Surrey countryside. They got to know which were the best tea shops for purchasing a good hearty tea for a shilling a head! Phyllis took me under her wing when I set out in the working world as a 16-year-old, and I well remember being invited to join them all on a Sunday walk. I met them at West Clandon station and we set off up to Newlands Corner, then down into Shere and on to Friday Street. I can't remember the actual route, but I believe it covered Abinger Hammer and Albury Heath as well. What does remain very vividly in my memory is the pain in my legs on Monday morning, after abusing those poor flabby leg muscles so drastically the previous day! But it was all worth it - I had enjoyed my ramble immensely.

Irene Bleach

email:- john.fox@bosinternet.com



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30th March 2001

Dear Phyl,

Thank you for letting me see the Send & Ripley History Society Journal for Mar/Apr 2001 with its photo on page 5 of the group of "our" walkers around the Ripley drinking fountain. I think the caption implies that the photo dates from the late 1940s, but I have just found the same photo in my father's Diary for 1932 alongside an entry for Sunday August 7th 1932.

He describes "a ramble with Eric, Fred and Alf and Triss, Dot and Guerda(?)." It involved a day's circular walk from Cobham, with a stop at Ripley for tea; hence the photo, presumably taken by Fred Moran. So one lady is Dorothy Moran but I'm not sure which one; the other couple, Eric & Guerda, I cannot identify.

Therefore it is late 1930s, not late 1940s. Perhaps the Editor of the journal might like to know the precise date to help with the history of the "Old English Furniture" Shop!

Incidentally, one month later Alf and Frank were on a walking tour of the Cotswolds and actually stayed in Winchcombe 13th/14th September 1932. You may remember that Alf supplied me with copies of all the photos he took on that trip.

love

 John Fox

RIPLEY ROVERS AND VENTURE SCOUTS

In addition to Scouts and Cubs in Ripley, there were Rovers, which had reformed in 1949, after a gap due to the War. Before the War, Stuart Paice had been Rover Leader, but the group was disbanded in 1939; however, in 1949 he was Group Scout Leader, and Doug "Yobbo" Pullen became leader of the "crew". A log exists which gives the original members as D Pullen,

A Collyer, B Dyer, D Lucas, D Holt, J Hutson and S H Paice. They planned to get under way with a New Year Social, which was held in the Church Hall on 25 January, and showed a profit of £4 5s 6d, less expenses! They were obviously a social crew, as they were off to a dance in Clandon on the following Saturday, and there was another social in February, "enjoyed by all present, approximately 140 persons", at which John Hutson was MC. Thursday meetings were sometimes adjourned to the Old Forge for chips and tea, and March saw a Surrey Rover Social in Croydon, which was "made extra special by the presence of Rangers". They helped at a Senior Scout Camp at Hatchford Park, Cobham, over Easter 1950, at which Lord Baden-Powell edited a Camp newspaper, *The Hatchford Echo*, (an excerpt is shown with this article), and some of the Rovers helped, but they still found time for a dance at Clandon on the Saturday night. Entries in the log are a bit more sporadic during the summer, but there were regular Thursday meetings, occasional speakers, an investiture in June, the first ever Rover/Ranger Camp at Cobham and more dances. In 1951 there were more social events, help with a Cub play, but sadly the log stops in April that year. We do not have a date for the closure of the group, but John Hutson thinks Rovers made way for Senior Scouts, of which he says there were only three.

What is certain is that Rovers later became Venture Scouts, and Lord Baden-Powell (grandson of the founder of the Scout Movement) was Leader for a while. Lord Baden-Powell has been kind enough to give his memories to the Society and they are reproduced here. If someone would like to help fill in the gap between 1951 and the advent of Venture Scouts, or add the names of the group, then I hope they will write to the Editor.

Claire McCann

"Rovers did sort of blend into Venture Scouts. In 1966 there was a review of the entire Scout Movement called The Advanced Party Report. It looked at absolutely every aspect of Scouting and made a significant number of suggestions, including the disbanding of both Senior Scouts and Rovers, to be replaced by a new 'senior' division called Venture Scouts. The programme for this new division was to be revolutionary (it was). It came into physical being in 1967/8.

"My 'Surrey' Scout involvement was solely with, first, the Ripley Venture Scout Unit and then later with them when they first joined up with the 1st Ripley Scout Group. Sadly I cannot remember dates but, at a guess it would have been from about 1969-74 to perhaps 1985-6.

"Four 16 year old Scouts and four 15 year old Guides from the two Ripley troops wished to continue in their respective movements, but each on their own was too small a number to become a viable unit. None of them seemed at all keen to join any of the Guildford Town units. Someone (I suspect it would have been Jackie Strange) suggested that they come to see my wife and me to see if we could think of how to solve their problem. At the time the Scouts had just started experimenting with mixed units and one could only start such a unit with special permission from Scout Headquarters - with the blessing of the DCs (District Commissioners) and the CCs (County Commissioner) from both Associations of course. The girls really wanted to stay as Guides, but the boys could not have cared less, so we set up a "Group" of the eight of them, instructed them how to form themselves into a working unit and how best they could achieve their goals.

"They voted in a committee and the Chairman and Treasurer made an appointment with



Lord Baden-Powell, Jackie Strange and ?

the Guide DC, who refused to sanction any sort of joint venture. They suggested that they became enrolled as Guides, but that certainly did not wash. They went to the DC, who likewise refused, as did the CC, so they eventually went to see the Regional Commissioner. She also threw up her hands, so they again went to the Scout DC to ask if the girls could be enrolled as Scouts. No. County Commissioner, after asking HQ, Yes. So that is how the unit started. They were the first non-experimental mixed unit in the country (there had been six experimental joint units since 1969).

"From day 1 my wife and I impressed upon them that they ran themselves and made up unit rules of conduct as well as their unit programme. We were only there as facilitators to turn to when they were stuck. In consequence they were a very lively unit and constantly kept all the other Guildford District units on the hop. Within two years my wife had to leave, as she became (I cannot remember which) either International Girl Guide Commissioner or Chief Commissioner, so I continued on my own. Not a great problem as the unit ran itself. So given their heads, they were a very lively and inventive unit - not at all what one would expect from a Venture Scout unit. They went bowling, cinema, bingo, dancing, theatre, London theatres, art galleries, ballet, museums, antiques shows, visited various religious establishments, had talks on/from comparative religions, an organist, sex, how to get on without university, Careers Advisers, Marriage Guidance Counsellors, learned to play chess, work in glass fibre, enamelling, tent-making, lay a correct dinner table, table manners, bridge, craps, roulette, had raves, discos, fundraising auctions - usually for someone else, cleared ponds, built walls and dry stone walls. They did camp, but preferred to live it up by wangling invitations to private houses, châteaux, etc. They were superb at outdoor pursuits, when in the mood, but they, and most of the traditional Scouting activities, were very much a sideline. They took the view that they were country children (most could tickle trout and snare rabbits, make fires with no smoke and bake hedgehogs in mud already). They must learn and experience 'city' things and manners.

"They went to France twice and both times stayed in a château. They also went to Devon twice to rebuild dry stone walls for the National Trust. In short they 'had fun', with a strong element of social work interwoven into their lives, but as part of their lives rather than having to do things. Five of them sort of ended up having attained queen's Scout Distinction, although only two of them actually put in for the award - they just were not all that interested. They took a lively and contributive interest in the district and District Venture Scouts activities - but again, and to my shame, only on their terms. Once they threw away winning the District Overnight Hike because one of their number wished to see the dawn. So they found a high spot, lit a fire,

cooked their breakfast and watched the dawn. On another occasion, the organisers had included something specifically for them and they decided not to do it as it was too juvenile! They were a constant embarrassment to me, and a puzzle to the rest of the District. However, they were good friends with all the other units and organised joint evenings together with them - usually to the horror of the other VS Leaders, as the activities were usually not 'Scouting'. One year they had become so fed up with the leaders in the district organising all their District activities, they told the leaders that they (the Ripley VSU) would organise a cooking competition. Only they would hire Walton Firs for the middle of February (it was cheap then and they were always cost conscious). It blew a sleeting blizzard on the day of the competition and it was all but wiped out. However, everyone seemed to have a great time and it was adjudged a success! I could go on, but I'm sure you don't want to hear other exploits.

"I was forced to give up for two reasons. First I had matured too far for the new young and was losing touch with their aspirations. Second I had decided that after 25 years in local, national and international Scouting, the time had come to move on and continue my development along different lines.

"Not much for you to use, I fear, but they had fun, learned how to be responsible adults, and my wife (for a while) and I had a great time being involved with the young of Ripley, and to a far lesser degree, the young of Guildford, for I did, sort of, help with District activities from time to time. Sorry to say we don't have any photographs from our time in the Ripley Unit, and certainly not the one to which you allude - sadly. I would suggest you try *Scouting Magazine* (if it still exists).

"I can remember some of the names of the first eight, but because I cannot remember them all, think it wiser not to mention any as it may offend those forgotten!

"Lord Baden-Powell" (*grandson of the founder, and former Ripley resident*)

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Thursday, 6 September - 8 pm, Send Church Room

"Traveller and Traffic during the Coaching Era" - a talk by Judith Hunter.

Wednesday, 17 October - 8 pm, Ripley Village Hall Annex

An illustrated talk by Carol Brown on the history of Bellfields and the development of its estate.

Saturday, 27 October - all day from 10 am at Chertsey Hall

The Surrey Local History Symposium, which this year is on the theme of "Rural Surrey". The Society will be setting up a stand, which will be based on a theme of local interest relative to Send and/or Ripley. Please contact Claire McCann on 01483 728546 for further details. Please contact Clare McCann on 01483 728546.

Thursday, 8 November - 8 pm, Ripley Annex

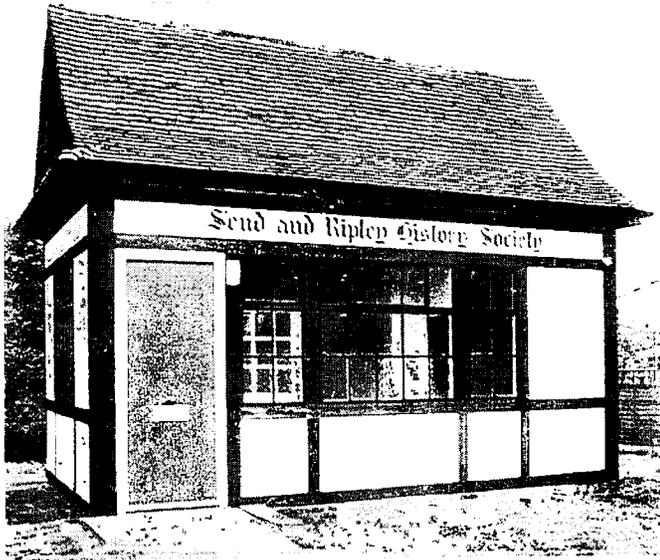
A talk on Kew Gardens by Dr Peter Brandon.

Monday, 10 December - 8 pm, Send Church Room

A Christmas Social, similar to last year's arrangements - details to follow later.

Journal contributions

The closing date for contributions for the next edition of the Journal is Friday, 10 August.



SEND & RIPLEY LOCAL HISTORY MUSEUM

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*Please contact George or Irene Bleach on 01483 222233 if
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HISTORY SOCIETY PUBLICATIONS

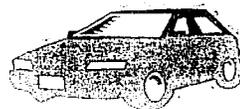
"Ripley & Send Then and Now, the Changing Scene of Surrey Village Life"	£10 Reprint 1998
"Guide to Parish Church of St Mary the Virgin, Send"	£1.25
"Then and Now, A Victorian Walk around Ripley"	Reference copy only
"The Straight Furrow", by Fred Dixon	£1.50
"Ripley and Send - Looking Back"	£4.95
"A Walk about Ripley Village in Surrey"	£2.00
"Newark Mill, Ripley, Surrey"	£2.95
"The Hamlet of Grove Heath, Ripley, Surrey"	£4.00
"Ripley and Send - an Historical Pub Crawl in Words and Pictures"	£6.00

The reference copy is available at the Museum. All the others are available from the Museum on Saturday mornings, or from Ripley Post Office. The reprinted copy of "Ripley & Send Then and Now" is additionally available at Send Post Office.

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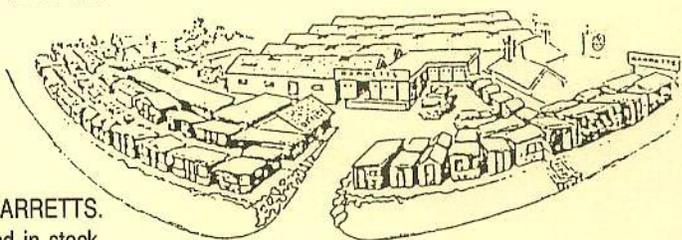
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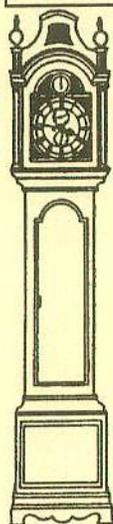


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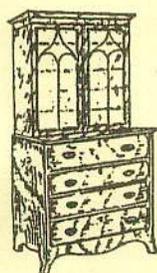
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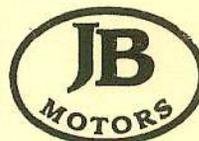
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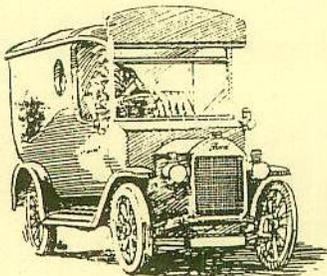
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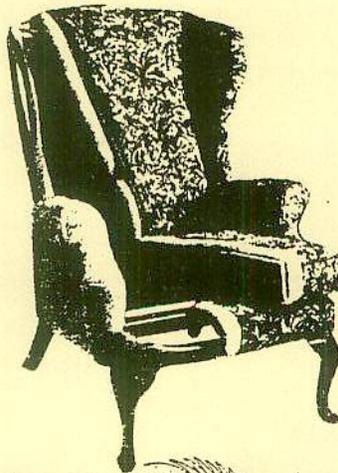
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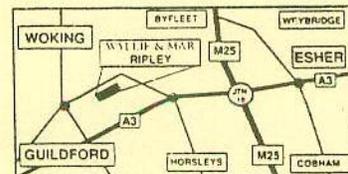
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