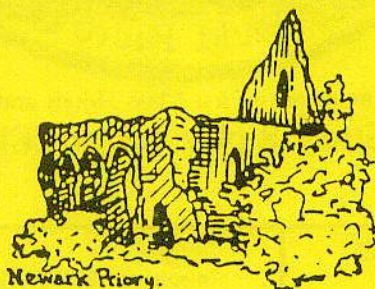
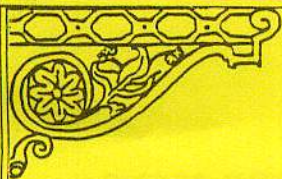
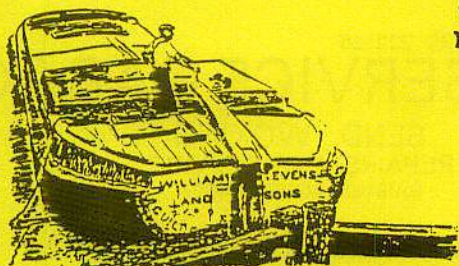


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Newsletter No.88 September/October 1989

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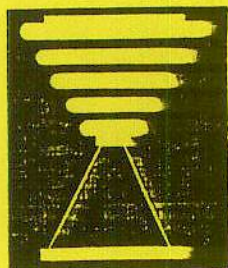
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1 Victoria Cottages, Gole Road, Pirbright (Brookwood 6532)

Secretary: Mr L G Bowerman

The Manor House, Send Marsh Green, Ripley (Guildford 224876)

Treasurer: Mrs P Medlen

Muir House, Brooklyn Road, Woking (Woking 60021)

Newsletter Editor: Dr R L Gale

44 Newark Lane, Ripley (Guildford 211536)

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Newsletter No 88

September/October 1989

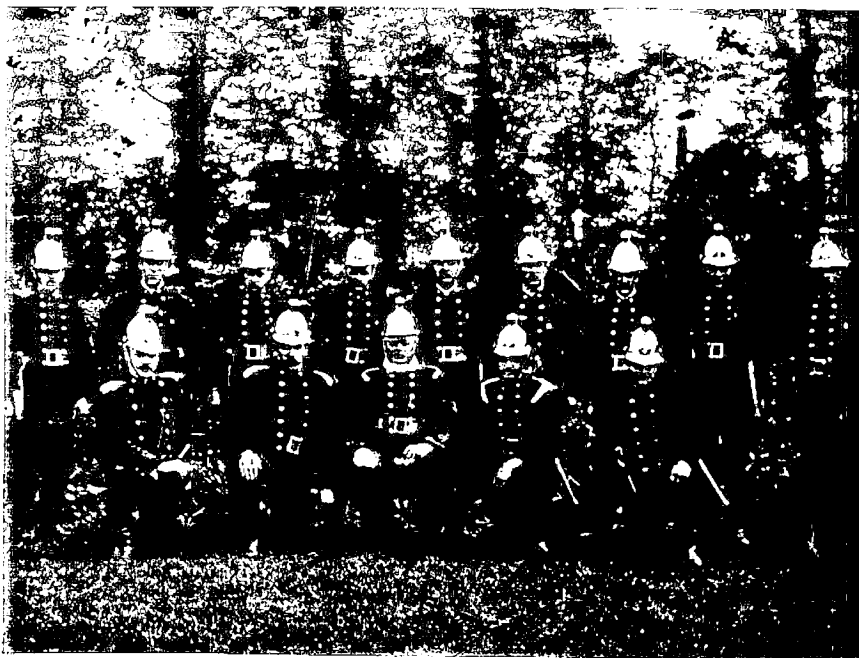
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Cover Illustration: This sketch of the church and ford at Pyrford, by the famous cycling artist, Frank Patterson, is taken from "Cycling" magazine of March 21 1918.

THE RIPLEY FIRE BRIGADE

By Jane Bartlett

The Ripley Volunteer Fire Brigade, newly formed in 1891, must have been proud of the four man hand pump that Mr Lucas and Mr Geale bought from the Hantchlands estate for £80. Not having been designed for travelling fast or far, it was modified for using a "lead" horse ridden by a fireman, in addition to the horse between the shafts, to increase the speed. This was used until 1903, but can never have been reliable or adequate. We are told "... and the wheels sometimes came off." Small wonder that when the Brigade was reformed in that year, Lord Lovelace gave them a new Merryweather manual costing £159 6s, and allowing a crew of 12 to man it. He also provided canvas hose and equipment for them.



Firebrigade at the turn of the Century with Captain John Pullen

The two horses required to pull the Merryweather were usually borrowed from Doug White, the carrier and coal merchant. The Brigade was renamed the Ripley and District Volunteer Fire Brigade. The Earl of Lovelace was its President, and the Committee consisted of two trustees, ten of the subscribers and two firemen. John Pullen, the landlord the White Hart, was its first Captain.

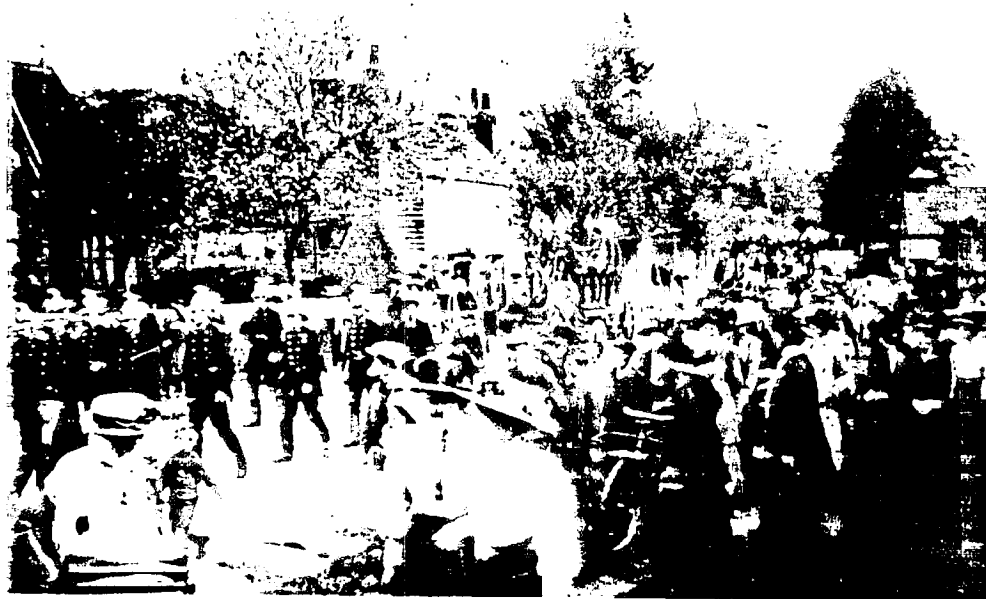
A scale of charges was set out. In 1903 there was a basic 3 guinea call out charge, 10s 6d an hour for standing by and 5s 0d a mile for the journey. Firemen were paid 4s 0d for the first hour and 2s 0d for subsequent hours. There was also a young boy whose job it was to go round the village ringing a handbell and "knocking up" the firemen.

Brass helmets and uniforms were supplied, but as the men were scattered at work, there was seldom time to change. On one dark night at Church Farm, Wisley, one of the firemen, Bill Milton, fell into the slurry pit in the middle of the farmyard, and the same man was called out from his daughter's Christening - and that was in his best suit! It was after a New Year's Eve fire at the Hautboy when the men's clothes had been covered with icicles, that Captain Pullen asked the Parish Council to provide boots, "as so many men had been taken ill with the cold", but the Council said that this was not their responsibility as the Brigade was run by voluntary subscription.

Funds were always short. It was the same people who seemed to be on every subscription list for fund raising in the village. For example, in 1907 there were only forty-two subscribers to the Brigade, some giving 5/- and others 2/6d a year. The balance sheet for that year showed a deficit of £2 0s 11d. Mr Lucas, one of the founders, provided the flat caps for the reserve firemen.

One of the problems for early fire brigades was the shortage of available water, and Ripley was no exception. They used a basket filter when taking water from the village pond on the green, and they drained all the water from a neighbouring farm pond to fight a rick fire at Ryde Farm, to the neighbouring farmer's annoyance. It is said that "Pencil" Brown gained his nickname because he was the slim one who had to crawl through a drain under the Portsmouth Road dragging a hose, to get water from Boldermere. Throughout this period the Parish Council put in several requests for more hydrants.

In 1909 Captain John Pullen submitted plans and estimates for an engine house, a 22 man engine and equipment for 12 men, costing £400. The Committee approached Lord Onslow, the Lord of the Manor, for permission to build on the site of the village cattle pound, but those with Farren Rights objected to the plan. It was not until 1910 that Lady Lovelace granted a site for a new fire station to replace the small building in Newark



Procession of Fire Brigade in Rose Lane c 1910. New fire station is extreme right and Infants' School extreme left.

Lane that had served until then. (The original building still stands, having seen use as a mortuary and as a works depot.) She leased the site for 99 years at a peppercorn rent of one shilling a year. It was located in Rose Lane, a suitable place, she considered, as it was opposite Mr White's stables. Mr Cleverly of Dunsborough House lent the money to be repaid in twelve years, and so the fire station came about.

Doug White's horses did not need the pan of corn kept at the new Rose Lane station to entice them. As soon as they heard the call bell, they galloped to the gate as eager as the firemen to dash to the fire.

War shortages of leather in 1915 found the Brigade unable to get new boots from the merchants and the Committee discussed with Mr W B Green the possibilities of making waterproof socks. Luckily W B Greens managed to acquire some boots - so the problem of making waterproof socks was shelved. The accounts for 1924 show a surprising comparative cost between boots at 42s and an elaborate brass helmet at 37/6d.

It was evident that the men often did more than the bare essentials. After rescuing a mother and new-born baby from a cottage bedroom at Elm Corner, they set to and felled some fir trees to shore up the damaged beams until the Estate carpenters could do a permanent job. On one occasion they hurled out sacks of what seemed to be dog biscuits for the anxious owner, when to their amazement out poured coins, including sovereigns.

The firemen had to attend twelve fire drills a year, a genuine fire counting as two drills. One drill was always held at Ockham Park with Lady Lovelace's own estate brigade. Canvas chutes were fitted to the top windows and everyone, Lady Lovelace, maids and all, had to slide down with one fireman acting as end stop. Competition drills were a regular part of fetes and rivalry was particularly keen between the Ripley and the Send Brigades. The latter had been formed in 1913 under the control of the Parish Council.

It is surprising how late it was before motor powered transport or powered pumping was available. A breakdown truck from a garage at the corner of Newark Lane was borrowed in the late twenties as a faster alternative to two horses. However, at that time, whilst many of the men could drive horses, few could drive a lorry. Ripley's first motorised fire tender to pull the pump was a military surplus Crossley, bought from RAF Henlow in 1929. Dick Lillywhite of Blands Garage was given the job of vetting it. It needed modifications, and so did the Rose Lane Fire Station to accommodate it. It wasn't until 1936 that they acquired the small, but very efficient, petrol driven Dennis pump.

The first outing of the Crossley motorised tender proved embarrassing. In the hurry to set off, the engine was overchoked, flooded, and refused to start. The tender had to be pushed up the High Street to the fire at Bridgefoot Farm. Economy was always to the fore, so when a car caught fire in Potters Lane, rather than call out the whole Brigade, two firemen were told to take fire extinguishers and catch the next Guildford bus.

The Subscription Volunteer Brigade was disbanded in 1938. Ripley men continued to fight local fires as part of the Auxiliary Fire Service; later the station became a sub-station of the Surrey Fire Service, until closed down in the 1950s when modern engines, based in Guildford, could provide full time cover economically.

The old fire station is now used by the 1st Ripley Scout Group, and they are hoping to raise funds to restore it.

I am indebted to many of the firemen who have given me information, particularly Peter Giles and Bill Milton, who were both call boys and then firemen. Accounts and subscription lists are held by the Record Office, Kingston, and details of the Dennis pump are in the Muniment Room, Guildford.

(An abridged version of the above account of the history of Ripley Fire Brigade appeared in the Surrey Advertiser issued on Friday, 11 August 1989 - Ed.)

SCENDEBRIGGE AND PYRFORDA

by Les Bowerman

In Newsletter 51/2, it was noted that Elizabeth I (1558-1603) appointed agents to "vewe" the Wey and punish anyone causing floods or obstructions, and the agents retorted that, though the Pyrford end of a long wooden bridge over the water meadows was indeed "ruynous", it was for the Queen to provide timber and have it repaired. It was presumed in that Newsletter that this was the bridge which, in 1279 (Assize Rolls) was called Scendebrigge, and not Cartbridge, as stated in "The Place Names of Surrey", because the latter would not have been built before the River Wey Navigation was dug. It seems to this writer now that it is at least possible that Scendebrigge could have been what was until relatively recently known as Harts Bridge, ie that over the Wey at Old Woking which carries the main road to Send. Be that as it may, let us go back to the long wooden bridge. That must surely have been what is still today virtually a causeway running from just below Pyrford Church beside the road to Newark. At the Pyrford end it would have been Pyrefordbrug, or Pyrford Bridge, and have crossed that part of the Bourne which formed the parish boundary at that point. How far into the ancient parish of Send (now Ripley parish in that area) it would have extended is speculative, but a stream or ditch runs beside the road as far as the last bridge (barely noticeable as such) before Abbey Stream bridge going towards Newark, and the Wey itself runs very close to the road from Abbey Stream (which may have been the original course of the Wey) to Newark Mill. We suspect the long bridge would have been just the section alongside the above-mentioned stream or ditch.

Pyrford, as most will know, means the ford marked by a pear tree, and that ford would have been over the Bourne, as noted above, ie at Pyrford Bridge. It is not inconsistent to say that the ford was at the bridge because many bridges were only footbridges with fords beside them for wheeled traffic. The footbridge was indeed marked as such as recently as the 6" Ordnance Survey map of 1871, the inference being that the ford still existed at that time. This writer does not have the 25" OS map 1914 covering that precise point, so has not so far checked the position as of that date, but the flood prevention works carried out from 1912 to 1928, and completed in 1935 (resulting from the floods which damaged the mediaeval Guildford town bridge in 1900), included the digging of a new ditch which is crossed by a bridge with concrete sides. This has since carried the bulk of the water which the Bourne used to take. The old course of the Bourne, close to the foot of the Church mound, can still be easily seen.

On the OS 6" sheet of 1871, adjacent to the words "Foot Bridge" are the words "The Prae". The significance of Prae or Prai is discussed in "The Place Names of Surrey" under "Pray Heath" (where the writer lived his first four years) in Mayford. The original meaning was a meadow, but in Surrey it can also denote "a long narrow foot-bridge, consisting of a plank and a rail, generally across a ford, etc".

So when did the ford disappear? Presumably it must have been there in 1871 when the OS recorded the footbridge at that point, but a postcard postmarked 1906 shows the untarmac'd road, slightly hollow there, as though water would cross it from time to time. No water is shown, even though it was winter or early spring, judging by the absence of leaves on the trees. Another card is boldly entitled "Pyrford Church and the Ford" and shows an expanse of water where the road should be, with a plank footbridge and rail and posts (still there to this day) and leaves on the trees. There is a post beside the road with an indecipherable notice which we can only surmise says "Road liable to Flooding", which it still is in exceptional conditions

to this day. Our cover illustration seems to have been copied (with a bicyclist superimposed on the causeway) from the 1909 card. The photographs on the postcards may well have been taken a number of years before the cards were used.

The exact position is obviously still very far from clear. Does anyone else have any relevant documents or other information?

ONE HUNDRED YEARS AGO - EXTRACT FROM "BICYCLING NEWS"

Contributed by Les Bowerman

Sep. 28th 1889

The young free lances in billy-cock hats and trousers who flit down the Ripley road each week are getting to be a scandalous nuisance. Mostly mounted on crocks of ordinaries (ie the old high bicycle - L G B), these gentry plunge and flounder about in a promiscuous and uncertain fashion that is intensely irritating to the ordinary road user. "Arry on the river is almost a god compared with the road Jugginses and budding cyclists who swarm down the highway leading Ripleywards."

Nov. 23rd 1889

The Misses Dibble, of Ripley, have had to increase their accommodation, and have taken the ancient manor house which faces the Anchor. The house is a quaint old building, containing large bed chambers of an antique type - indeed, the Virgin Queen Bess is said to have laid therein one night at Ripley during one of her royal progresses to Portsmouth or Southampton, perhaps in the stirring times of the Spanish Armada and the attack on the "Wight". If our good friends of the Anchor will only arrange with Barnum or Whiteley, or some other provider of curiosities and necessities, for a respectable, elderly, blue-mouldy family ghost of at least 20-girl cold shivers power, we think the manor house will be complete. A spectre which could curdle and freeze into silence Teddy Mayes at 2.30 a.m. would indeed be a boon.

VISIT TO ROYAL HOLLOWAY COLLEGE 20 AUGUST 1989

Notes by Tony Medlen

It is now almost a year ago that Ron Davis and his wife opened the 1988 autumn programme with a fascinating illustrated talk on Thomas Holloway, "Entrepreneur and Philanthropist". At the time several members asked if it might be possible to visit Royal Holloway College, now part of London University and built by Thomas Holloway in memory of his beloved wife, Jane. Mr Davis said that it might be possible during the summer, and I remember how disappointed I felt that we should have to wait so long. Eleven months later, on a hot Sunday afternoon in August, several members were privileged to have a conducted tour of the College and its surroundings. The tour, arranged by the Egham-by-Runnymede Historical Society, was led by Richard and Jill Williams. Jill had conducted our tour of Thorpe Village and Thorpe Green on 14 June. This memorable afternoon at Royal Holloway was made all the more enjoyable by other members of the party who were mostly from other history societies. Our total party was divided into two; one half went round the outside of the building, whilst the other half toured the inside.

The story of Thomas Holloway is well documented in Surrey History Vol 111 No 2, and notes on the talk by Ron Davis appear in N/L 84, so I shall not repeat them here. For anyone who has glimpsed the "Fairytale" like palace seen from the M25 above Egham and near Heathrow, I can only confirm that the architect, W H Crossland, has fulfilled every promise. Originally built as a college of education for middle class ladies, it is based on a French chateau, Chateau de Chambord. As one turns into the entrance gates from Englefield Green, one is immediately transported from Surrey to the Loire Valley in France, thoroughly breathtaken by a riot of French Renaissance architecture. The soft pink of the brickwork blends with the creamy coloured masonry to present a dramatic imposing exterior which is at the same time restful and harmonious.

We gathered at the main entrance near a magnificent pair of wrought iron gates, presented to the College by a past member of staff. The visit began with a tour of the picture gallery. Several fine pictures were

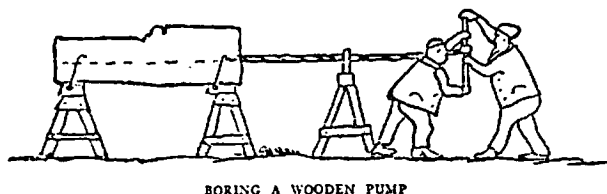
acquired by Thomas Holloway for the College and these are now valued at many millions of pounds. The gallery was specially opened for our benefit and one could have spent much longer admiring the pictures, which included works by Gainsborough, Constable and Landseer. It is a wonderful investment which has already been of great benefit to the College. We were then given a comprehensive tour of the outside of the College and its grounds, and saw many of the new buildings built in recent years. These are carefully screened from the main college, which is now largely residential. The College, which is part of London University, is a Royal college and has always had strong links with the Royal Family. They are very proud of this link and the present University Chancellor is the Princess Royal. After a refreshing cup of tea taken in the attractive refectory, our respective parties continued the tour. Apart from the amazing architecture and the picture gallery, perhaps the most fascinating aspect of the visit for me was the photographic gallery. Here is depicted in photography and print the history of the College since its opening by Queen Victoria in 1886. The history of Bedford College in London is also portrayed. This was the first college established for the education of ladies, and together with the Royal Holloway College, had a special role in the emancipation of women. In 1985 Bedford College amalgamated with Royal Holloway College to become Royal Holloway and Bedford New College. Our visit concluded in the College chapel, which is close to the main gate where we assembled.

Everyone thanked Ron Davis, Jill and Richard Williams, and all those members of the Egham-by-Runnymede Historical Society who had made our visit so enjoyable. What a remarkable afternoon it had been! At last I had seen at close quarters the castle in the sky above Egham, viewed so strikingly from the M25 as one contemplates the congestion ahead.

WOODEN WATER PUMPS

By John Slatford

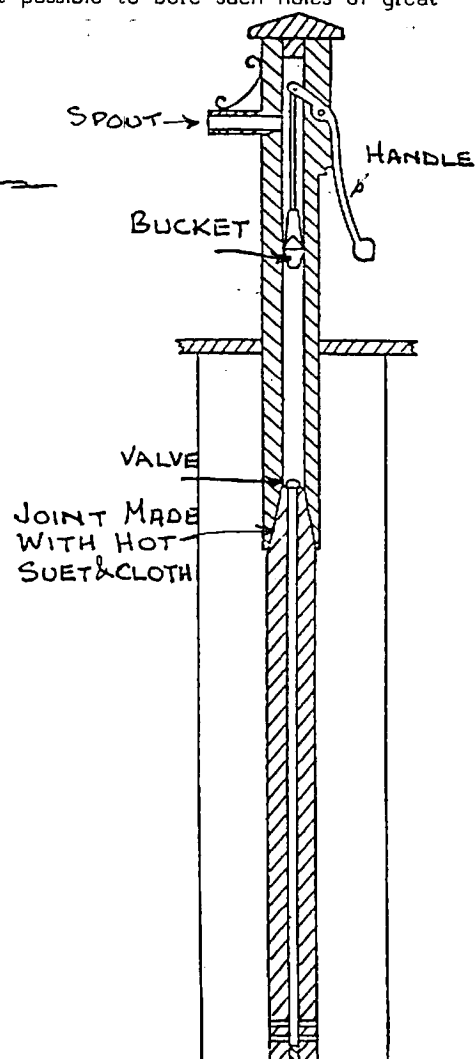
Those of our members who have visited Sendgrove will recall looking at the cowshed behind the coach house. There, an old wooden pump shaft has been used as a tie beam in the roof structure. The bored centre hole can be clearly seen and one is drawn to thinking - how on earth was it possible to bore such holes of great length? Indeed, how and why was it possible to use wood for such a purpose? One very good reason was that wooden pumps would not suffer damage in freezing conditions in the way that pumps of lead would fail.



The making of wooden pumps is graphically described in a book entitled "The Village Carpenter", by Walter Rose (Cambridge University Press, 1937). Walter Rose was the last of several generations of master carpenters in the village of Haddenham in Buckinghamshire, and he wrote of the various skills and crafts practised by his family. A whole chapter is devoted to wooden pumps and the problems of choosing the right timber, making the pump, placing it in the well and, finally, putting it to the test.

No doubt, the craft of boring large trees to make large wooden pipes and pumps has been handed down from time immemorial. Like so many others, it died when cheaper and more durable methods became available.

Wooden pumps were made from elm, and whenever a new pump was required, growing trees were always cut down for the purpose. Good clean straight trunks, free from side branches and dead knots, were needed. There would be two trees wanted for each pump. They would be cut square and then bored in such a way that they could be joined together in the well.



It was vital to use green timber and to bore it straight after felling to prevent cracking. Green timber would also last much longer standing under water. Having squared the logs at the sawpit, they would be fixed up on trestles and marked with centre sight lines for boring. The boring augers were up to 15 feet long and required two men to turn them. How it was possible to bore such holes accurately right through the centre of the log is difficult to imagine, but they did. Sometimes boring from each end to meet in the middle was necessary. The work was extremely slow and arduous and could take up to a week to complete.

When the making of the pump was finished, with its bucket, valves, spout and handle, placing it in the well brought further problems. This could only be done when the water was low in the well (usually at Michaelmas), since the two halves had to be joined in situ. They would be lowered into position using a tripod mounted over the well. A man would go down the well to make the joint, for which hot melted suet was used. Once this unpleasant and hazardous task had been completed, the pump would be ready for testing. Obviously, this would be an anxious time for all concerned, but one of great satisfaction when the pump was proved sound.

A good supply of water is an essential of life, and nowhere more so than on the farm. The sinking of wells to reach the water was one thing; the use of pumps to avoid the labour of hauling the water by bucket and chain became equally important. The craft of pump making in wood is long dead, superseded by the same principle in iron and lead, and now by motorised automatic systems. We do not, and probably never will, know if wooden pumps were ever made by Send or Ripley craftsmen. At least we have a relic of one in an alternative use.

LIGHTNING STRIKE AT SEND MARSH

By Les Bowerman

The title of this report does not refer to industrial action or the lack of it (I write this on a day off due to a rail strike), but to a natural phenomenon which was terrifying to the family involved. Freak weather conditions have been reported in these pages on at least two other occasions. The first was the exceptionally mild winter of 1975/6, soon after we were formed, succeeded by the heatwave and drought of 1976. The second was the great storm of October 1987, recorded appropriately enough by our Editor, Bob Gale, in Newsletter 77/8.

This time it was lightning. It struck the 18th century Send Marsh Cottage (formerly Pullen's Cottages), facing the Green, with frightening force at lunchtime on Tuesday, 6 June. It hit the chimney at the South end, demolishing a good part of the roof, the chimney stack and part of the wall. Debris cascaded into the bedroom where 18 months old Nicola Smith was sleeping. Fortunately she was uninjured, but she and her mother, Mrs Ann Smith, were taken to the Royal Surrey County Hospital at Guildford for treatment for shock. It must have been totally unnerving to have a thunder clap centred on one's own house, followed immediately by the roar of falling rubble.

Two tradesmen in their vehicles in the vicinity, one an employee of Methold Engineering and the other a British Telecom engineer, spoke of blinding light everywhere, and the latter felt that his van was lifted from the ground. The lightning also had an erratic effect on some neighbouring properties. One or two burglar alarm control panels were "blown out", video equipment was spoilt, a telephone cable on the South side of the Green was damaged, and a number of residents, including this writer, on the North side of the Green, had to have telephone receivers replaced. Our members, Doris and Norman Bradley at Corvara Cottage, returned from holiday a week or so later to find they had no electricity and a freezer of decomposing food.

It was surprising that the lightning did not strike the high chimneys of the Manor House or nearby tall trees, but we are given to understand that it often does not do what might appear to be the rational thing, and that even in this technological age its effects defy scientific explanation. Do any of our older members recall previous occasions when lightning struck locally with such ferocity? There were reports on "County Sound" Radio and in the "Surrey Advertiser", "Woking Informer" and "Surrey Mail".

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Membership

We welcome the following new members:

Mr & Mrs A Arnold, 104 High Street, Ripley.

Mrs N E Morris, Flat 3, Portland Court, Portland Road, Babbacombe, Torquay.

Norman and Jean Carpenter have moved to "Ufford", 106 Potters Lane, Send.

Total membership stands at 269, made up of 98 double subscriptions and 73 singles.

Museum Material

Bette and John Slatford have recently donated, for the hoped-for museum, a glass marble-seal mineral water bottle dug up in their garden in Ripley. The top and the marble are missing, but it is a Stansfield Bros bottle, marked Ripley and Guildford. The others we have are just Ripley. It is understood from Matthew Alexander, Curator of Guildford Museum, that Stansfield manufactured in Guildford from 1910-20.

Mr & Mrs Wisdon of Send have given a number of items, including another marble-seal bottle, a pre-screwtop 16 oz Bovril jar, three countrymen's leather gaiters, three gin-traps and a large elaborate cross-cut saw. The bottle was made for Junior Army & Navy Store Ltd of Aldershot, and is an interesting partner for the Stansfield one, as it is complete with top, marble and even rubber seal.

Further donations of archaic items are always welcome, especially if they have some connection with Send or Ripley.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Tuesday, 17 October . . . Members' Museum Evening, commencing at 8 pm, at Ripley Village Hall. Many of the artefacts given to the Society (plus a few others) over the course of 15 years will be on display and words of explanation will be given. Members are encouraged to bring any other items of interest connected with Send and Ripley for discussion.

Saturday, 4 November . . . Surrey Local History Symposium at Surrey University. Theme: "Leisure and Pleasure". Tickets available through our Secretary.

Wednesday, 15 November . . . Open meeting at the Red Cross Centre, Sandy Lane, Send, at 8 pm, when Dr Peter Brandon will give an illustrated talk on Georgian Surrey, with particular reference to our area. Not one to be missed. Please note correct date.

Tuesday, 12 December . . . Open meeting at 8 pm at Ripley Village Hall. Dr Ron Cox will give a talk entitled "Spoons for the Workhouse", describing treatment of the poor during the period from Queen Elizabeth I to Queen Victoria, with our own history of Poor Houses in Ripley and at Burnt Common before the time of the Guildford Union Workhouse. This should be a most interesting talk.

Saturday, 27 January 1990 . . . The Society's 15th anniversary social at Lancaster Hall, Send.

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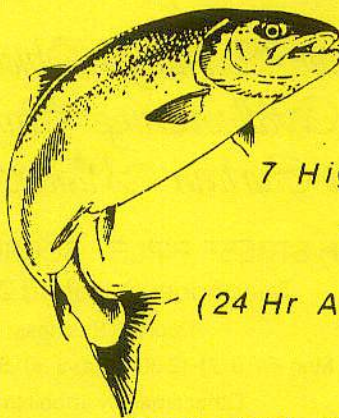
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Ripley, Surrey, GU23 6AY

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Fax: 0483 222878

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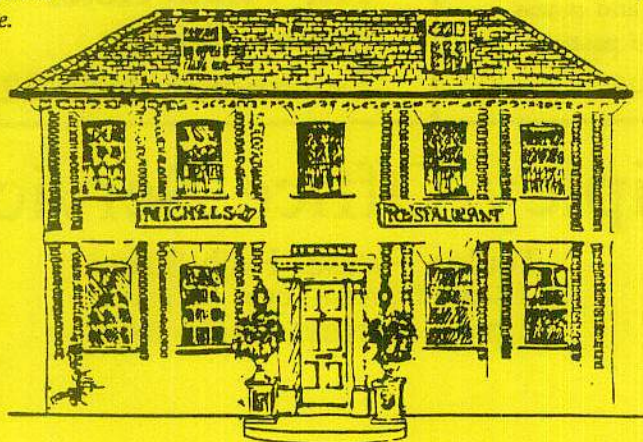


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