

Send & Ripley History Society



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BERT WOOD

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History Society

Cover image: Volunteers
digging at Woking Palace
during visit of His Royal
Highness The Duke of
Gloucester in the final year of
excavations.

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EDITORIAL

I'm going to keep this month's editorial very short as we have a great deal of news this month. I am very excited that we have the first of Alan Cooper's living memories interviews with Bert Wood. I hope that this will encourage many of you to get in touch with me with a view to arranging an interview. Another year has gone by in the life of our little society and I hope that you'll all agree that it's been a very interesting one. We come to the end of Anne Bowerman's long period of service as our events coordinator, and I would like to thank her very much for all she has contributed to the society over the years and the care and thought that she's put in to arranging our talks and outings.

It just remains for me to wish you all a very happy Christmas from your committee, and to look forward to a safe, content and healthy 2016 for us all.

I look forward to seeing as many of you as possible at the December party.

Catherine Davey
editorsrhsjournal@gmail.com

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CONTRIBUTIONS FOR THE NEXT JOURNAL

Contributions for the next journal should be sent to the editor by 15 December for the January 2016 edition and by 20 February 2016 for the March 2016 edition.

Authors of illustrated articles should submit high resolution (300 DPI or higher) jpegs to the editor by email to ensure best reproduction in the journal.



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LIVING HISTORY

THE LIFE OF BERT WOOD

BORN 1922

INTERVIEWED BY ALAN COOPER

Recently, I had the pleasure of taking Audrey Smithers to visit her cousin Bert in Woking. Bert is a World War 2 veteran, however his story is quite unlike the 'normal' service stories we hear about, as you, the reader, will soon find out.

Herbert C J Wood (Bert's father) was born in 1897 and in 1921 married Maude J A Mandeville, the youngest of 15 children of James and Elizabeth Mandeville, who lived at 'Pigeon House' adjacent to 'Pigeon House Bridge', Pyrford. [1]

CHILDHOOD

Herbert L J Wood was born in Ripley in 1922, to parents Herbert C J and Maude J A and all three lived with Uncle Enough Smithers also known as Nuffy (Audrey's Grandfather) and his wife, Edith E (nee Mandeville), sister of Maude J A at No. 2 Greenside Cottages. [2] Family legend has it that when Nuffy was born, the ninth child, his mother said 'that's enough' and that's how he got his name. His father was clearly unimpressed and produced a further two children making 11 in total.



Top: Bert Wood - aged 92, proudly displays his Bevin Boy Badge.
Bottom: Pigeon House, photographed 20th April 1908 - note the snow in April. To the left of the picture is the pigsty and to the right, the gallows arrangement upon which the slaughtered animals were hung to be prepared for the table. The woman in the doorway is believed to be Bert's Aunt Edith.

Top: Bert's wedding - December 25th 1943. Bert & Jean at centre and Bert's parents to the left.
Bottom left: Bert's parents, with young Bert on the ground.
Bottom right: Bert & Jean - the wedding took place in Byfleet.

Bert lived in the village until he was four years old. His parents, Bert CJ and Maude, had been allocated a new council house in Byfleet. One day, eagerly anticipating taking possession of their new home, they decided to visit and view the property. Bert recalls "In those days the easiest way to get about was by bicycle, but how could they take me?" Undeterred, his father rigged up a makeshift seat on the back of his bike complete with straps to put the feet in. "We left Ripley, went up the hill [3] and down the other side, but then, somehow, my right foot came out of the strap and became trapped in the wheel. The tyre valve ripped into my ankle and off we came".

Fortunately for Bert, a passing lorry stopped and took him back to Ripley to the doctor's surgery. "The doctor took one look at me and immediately called for an ambulance to take me to the hospital in Guildford, the one up the hill (Farnham Road) behind the railway station by the A31. They were very concerned about the possibility of gangrene setting in so they operated straight away. My father and two nurses had to hold me down whilst they performed the operation - without anaesthetic".

"I remember when we finally moved, my father, who worked at Howards Garage in West Byfleet had to borrow a car in order to take me and my mother to the house and he carried me from the car into it".

The end result was that the severely gashed ankle took nearly three years to fully heal and this prevented him from walking properly and starting school in Byfleet when they moved there. Once fully fit again, Bert would frequently visit relatives in Ripley. "Most Sundays I would cycle to Ripley to Visit Aunt Ede and Uncle Nuffy and I would go shopping in Guildford with Uncle Nuffy on a Saturday - they had a large market there then". Now fully recovered, the young Bert would indulge himself in his favourite sports - football and cricket, both of which were played with a passion until he left school at the age of 14.

WORK - PRE-WAR

"I left school and put my name down for both Hawkers and Vickers. [4] The day after the interview at Hawkers the girl who lived next door to us and worked in the canteen there came to see me in the evening and told me to come in the following morning to start work; that was 1936 and I worked there continuously and then the war started".

WORK - THE WAR YEARS

The outbreak of war saw Bert continuing to work on the production of the Hurricane, England's then mainstream fighter. As the Battle of Britain took its toll on the number of usable aircraft at the disposal of the R.A.F. production had to be increased. "Pretty soon we had to move to larger premises, at Langley, so we could build more Hurricanes



Top left: Bert on the Green circa 1926. To the right is the pond. On the right receding, the row of Elm trees shielding the driveway to Dunsborough House. On the left can be seen properties backing onto the green.

Top right: Bert in pedal car circa 1926. The car was a gift from Uncle Nuffy and Aunt Ede. Pictured between the Cricket Club to the left and Greenview Cottages to the right.

Middle: The Green 2015. Little has changed today, apart from the row of trees, wiped out by Dutch Elm Disease in the late 60's / early 70's being replaced by other species.

Bottom: 2015 and little has changed except for two large trees which prevent the same angle of picture being shown.

than ever. All the coaches from the surrounding area were requisitioned to take us there and there were quite a few of them. They picked us up in the morning at 7:00 and brought us back in the evening. We built a continuous flow of Hurricanes, 10 a day, 70 a week. We worked a seven-day week with every eighth day off".

The war progressed and Bert then found himself working on the Typhoon. This continued for about a year, till he was called up for military service. "Hawkers tried to hold on to me for the vital war work I was on. They called me to a tribunal in Surbiton where Hawkers represented me but it was no good, they couldn't hold on to me. It was then that I was called up - as a Bevin Boy [5] instead of the forces". It was now 1943.

Bert then spent time in a training pit, but before this a shock awaited him. "I had to go to a training pit, up on the North East coast of Yorkshire, called Easington. When I got to the railway station in London to take us up there, I was surrounded by all these blokes in their fancy R.A.F. uniforms, and they were all going to the same place as me. They came from all over the empire where they had been sent to train for flying, some from Canada, even some from South Africa, and for what? To go to the same place as me. I was there training for a month". Judging from the way he explained this to me he was clearly unimpressed.

Training over, Bert was then sent further North to an open pit near Newcastle run by Lambton, Hetton and Joicey Collieries Ltd. Here, he soon discovered that the living conditions were primitive to say the least. "Conditions were terrible. We were billeted up high, on the coast, looking down on the pit. The billets were Nissen huts, with bare concrete floors and no heating. Our beds were palliasses (thin pad-like mattresses stuffed with straw). Food came from a canteen and that was awful too. Breakfast was always porridge and you needed a shovel to get it out of the plate! You were not allowed to take food or drink down the mine and the shifts were eight hours long. All those R.A.F. blokes went down once but most pretty soon disappeared after that".

With such Dickensian living conditions, personal hygiene was a constant problem. "When you finished a shift you had to run back to the billets, to be first to the showers. You ended up black from the coal dust and the hot water ran out very quickly. You try getting all that off with only cold water!"

Being taken from an interesting job in aircraft manufacturing to working in a coal mine would have broken the spirit of many people but Bert remained focused and stoical to the end. "When you first went down the mine it was a funny experience going down in the dark, with only a light on your helmet. there were a

few lights on the walls of the vertical shafts but none at all in the horizontal working seams. If you heard a noise it was trolleys of coal coming along to go to the surface and you had to very quickly press yourself against the seam wall to allow them to pass. It always felt so cold down there and we also had the ponies to look after".

Ponies were useful in unusual circumstances and also had to be treated with respect. "If your helmet light went out or you broke it you couldn't see a thing, so what you did was grab a pony. Although they couldn't see in the dark they would always lead you back to the stables. When you took a pony to a seam you never put them in face first, always back first. If they saw a trolley coming they would kick out and that could hurt. The ponies were treated worse than we were and would only come to the surface every three to four years!"

Bert worked at the mine for several months until an accident ended his days as a Bevin Boy. "There was an accident. We had a pitfall and my foot was trapped. My shoulder was injured as well. They managed to get me out and I ended up in the sick bay for several weeks. I was discharged from pit work but had to wait several months before I was sent home. That was just before Christmas 1944 and the end of me in the coal mines".

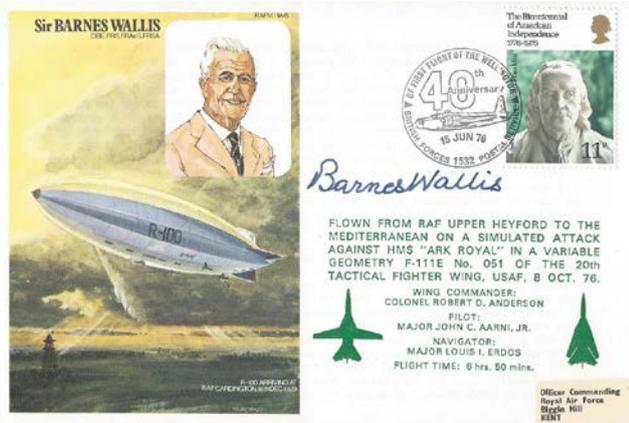
Bert returned home but the war was still far from over. "I went to the hospital in Weybridge and they told me I would not be sent back to work in the mines again, but would need an open air job to fully recover. I was given several work options, building work, agricultural work, so I took agricultural work and was sent to Woodham Park Nurseries, near to Byfleet. I worked here until the war ended and wanted to go back to my old job with Hawkens but the nursery owner was unwilling to let me go and would not release me". Whilst working at the nursery, Bert encountered 'conchies' [6]. "We had a few conchies working at the nursery, oh dear, oh dear, they couldn't work, they didn't want to work. They didn't want to do anything, oh dear, oh dear". After what he had been through, Bert was clearly disgusted by these people, especially as Bevin Boys had no uniforms and were often stopped by police and the general public alike and accused of being conchies or shirkers. He was eventually released from the nursery around Christmas 1945. He did not return to Hawkens, instead opting for Vickers, where he worked continuously until his retirement.

During this time, Bert somehow found time to get married, just prior to being sent to the training pit and even managed to get a special licence to be married on Christmas Day. "The vicar said "I don't know about that, Christmas day" (1943) but he relented what with the war being on and so we were married. With the war being on it was just another ordinary day to us".

WORK - THE POST-WAR YEARS

Following on from the war, Vickers was at the cutting edge of aircraft technology, producing amongst many other planes the Valiant V-bomber (cold war era), the VC10 airliner and, in later years, Concorde. Bert even got to work with legendary designer Barnes Wallis. "My supervisor, Les Hazeldene, who I went to school and played football and cricket with, was approached by Barnes Wallis and asked if he could spare any men. He said no but when Wallis said he only wanted somebody for a few days he finally agreed. That's OK then he said and that's how I came to work for Barnes Wallis. I had to sign my life away for it though, so to speak".

Bert had to sign the Official Secrets Act, even though it was only three days work and to this day he has told nobody, not even relatives, what that work was. A secret that he will take to his grave.



Top left: Barnes Wallis.

Bottom left: Autograph of Barnes Wallis.

Top right: Vickers merged with three other companies in 1960 to become the British Aircraft Corporation. Pictured are Ford mini-buses of the type that Bert's father would have driven to and from the Farnborough Air Show in the early 1960's.



Bert's father at this time also worked at Vickers and B.A.C. "My father was a driver. He drove lorries and also when Farnborough Air Show was on would take the foremen there in the small buses they used. He was also the driver who went to the bank to collect the wages". This was a risky job, for which extra pay was given. (Look at the picture of Bert's father, a huge burly man just right to deter villains.)

Over the years, he was to work on many household names, remembering well the testing of the VC10 from Wisley. "When in Ripley, you really knew when they were taking off!" Working on Concorde he was to meet the highly regarded test pilot Brian Trubshaw [7]. However, his most memorable event was in 1969, when a fully airworthy replica of the Vimy [8] was constructed. "We made it but it couldn't take off from the runway because we put skids on it instead of wheels. We made a trolley with castors on it to carry it across the runway to the grass. When it came to the first flight, in the middle of the afternoon, the whole works turned out to watch. There were hundreds of them but they all got sent back as the flying insurance would have been compromised if it had crashed into them all". The formative days of Health and Safety! "We had to go away and come back in the evening".



Above: The Valiant V-Bomber - Wisley.

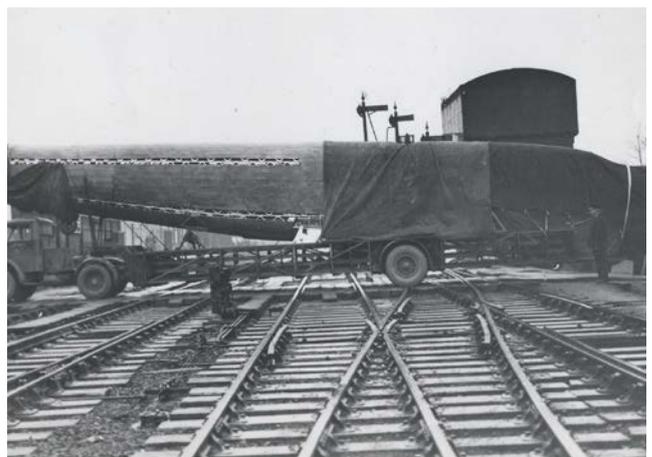


Top: The VC-10 - Wisley.
Bottom: The 1-11 - Wisley.

Some parts were hard to come by. "My late father was working at Vickers at the time and told me the story of the plane's radiator. It was made of brass and none of the specialist manufacturers in the country had workers with the necessary skills to make one using this material. A frantic search found an old, long retired chap who made the original. He was given the run of the company with the brief - use what and who you want, regardless of cost, just get it done - and he did!" Engines were a problem as well. "We managed to get hold of two original spec' engines. One came from Canada, the other from Holland, where it had been used to power a dyke pump. Engineers from Rolls Royce were called in and they stripped and totally rebuilt them both. We finally got it finished and it took off and landed at Wisley prior to being flown to the Paris Air Show. Next day we worked on it. It was inspected but we had missed a few things and so it didn't take off until the following day. Off it went but there was a problem and the next we knew was a phone call had come in to say it had landed at an R.A.F. helicopter base near Aldershot.

Three or four carloads of us went down there and found that something had gone wrong with one of the engines. There was nothing we could do so the Rolls Royce engineers had to come the next day. All the R.A.F. chaps wanted us to drink in the mess with them but we had to get back - good job really! The next day it was fixed, declared airworthy, flown around for a couple of hours and put into a hangar. The next day it was off to Paris and it came back afterwards. [9] A few days later it was due to fly to an air show at Manchester - did it heck!"

Bert and others had always maintained that the plane was an accident waiting to happen. "We told them that on a bright, hot sunny day that plane would go up - but did they listen? We always wanted the engine cowling to be painted but they wanted it all shiny and polished. All these factors combined to create too much heat and the body caught fire. [10] We wanted to build another but the insurers were having none of it." [11]



Top: The Gunbus - Another airworthy World War 1 replica plane built at Weybridge by Bert and his team.
Bottom: A Wellington fuselage being conveyed on a 'Queen Mary' for repair (the driver is R.Foster). This was the standard 'trailer' used to transport aircraft / parts from factory to airfield and with which Bert was very familiar.

POST-RETIREMENT

Bert is no stranger to being interviewed. "One of my neighbours has something to do with the museum at Brooklands and got me to talk to them about my life working in aviation. I was sat at a desk, miked up and on the other side of the table there was four of them, all firing questions at me – and it took four hours!"

POSTSCRIPT

So, there we have it, a remarkable life and career which was topped off perfectly in 2013 when, after much hard work by relatives, Bert finally received his badge, which he quite rightly treasures.

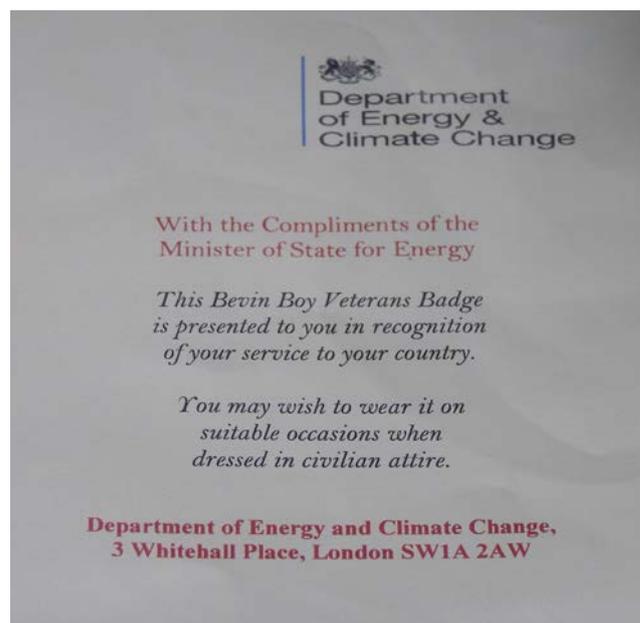
[1] Many residents of both Ripley and Send will be familiar with the bridge but few, if any, will remember the house, demolished, we think, just after the war.

[2] These cottages are to the rear of 'The Half Moon' public house and face the cricket pitch.

[3] Lamberts Hill.

[4] Hawker Siddeley Aircraft and Vickers-Armstrongs (Aircraft) Ltd.

[5] 'Bevin Boys' were young British men conscripted to work in the coal mines of the United Kingdom, from December 1943 until 1948. Chosen at random from conscripts but also including volunteers, nearly 48,000 Bevin Boys performed vital but largely unrecognised service in the mines, many of them not released from service until years after the second world war ended. Ten percent of those conscripted aged 18–25 were selected for this service. They were named after Ernest Bevin, former trade union official, Labour Party politician and Minister of Labour and National Service in the wartime coalition government. At the beginning of the war the Government, underestimating the value of experienced coal-miners, conscripted them into the armed forces. By mid-1943 the coal mines had lost 36,000 workers, and they were generally not replaced due to the availability of cleaner work. It became obvious the miners needed to be replaced. The government made a plea to men liable to conscription, asking them to volunteer to work in the mines instead, but few accepted and the shortage continued. By December, Britain was becoming desperate for a continued supply of coal both for the war effort and winter at home. It was decided that some conscripts would be directed to the mines. The colloquial name "Bevin Boys" came from the speech Bevin made announcing the scheme:



Top: The Bevin Boy Veteran Badge.

Bottom: Paperwork accompanying the badge.

"We need 720,000 men continuously employed in this industry. This is where you boys come in. Our fighting men will not be able to achieve their purpose unless we get an adequate supply of coal."

From 1943 to the end of the war one in ten of the young men called up was sent to work in the mines. This caused a great deal of upset as many of them really wanted to join the fighting forces and many felt that they were not valued. Many suffered taunts as they wore no uniform and were wrongly assumed to be avoiding conscription which was mandatory for young men in Britain. To make the selection process random, one of Bevin's secretaries

would each week pull a digit from a hat containing all ten digits, 0–9, and all men liable for call-up that week whose National Service number ended in that digit were directed to work in the mines, with the exception of any selected for highly skilled war work such as flying planes and in submarines, and men found physically unfit for mining. Conscripts came from different professions, from desk work to heavy labour and included those who might otherwise have become commissioned officers. The Bevin Boys were first given six weeks of training (four off-site, two on) before working in the mines. The work was typical coal mining, largely a mile or more down dark, dank tunnels, and conscripts were supplied with helmets and steel-capped safety boots. Bevin Boys did not wear uniforms or badges, but the oldest clothes they could find. Since a number of conscientious objectors were sent to work down the mines as an alternative to military service, there was sometimes an assumption that all Bevin Boys were 'conchies'.

The right to conscientiously object to military service for philosophical or religious reasons was recognised in conscription legislation, as it had been in the First World War. However, old attitudes still prevailed amongst some members of the general public, with resentment by association towards Bevin Boys. In 1943 UK Government minister Ernest Bevin said in Parliament: "There are thousands of cases in which conscientious objectors, although they may have refused to take up arms, have shown as much courage as anyone else in Civil Defence." The programme was wound up in 1948. At that time the Bevin Boys received no medals, nor the right to return to the jobs they had held previously, unlike armed forces personnel. Bevin Boys were not fully recognised as contributors to the war effort until 1995, 50 years after VE day, in a speech by the Queen. On 20th June 2007 Tony Blair informed the House of Commons during Prime Minister's Questions that thousands of conscripts who worked down mines during the Second World War would receive an honour. The Prime Minister told the Commons

the Bevin Boys would be rewarded with a Veterans Badge – similar to the HM Armed Forces Badge awarded by the Ministry of Defence. The first badges were awarded on 25th March 2008 by the then Prime Minister, Gordon Brown, at a reception in 10 Downing Street, marking the 60th anniversary of discharge of the last Bevin Boys.

[6] Conscientious objectors: for an alternative view see <http://www.ppu.org.uk/coproject/coww2.html>

[7] Brian Trubshaw was a Bomber Command veteran of World War 2. He left the R.A.F. in 1950 and worked at Weybridge for 30 years where he test-flew the Valiant V-bomber, Vanguard, VC10 and 1-11. He was, famously, the first person to fly Concorde.

[8] The Vickers Vimy was originally built during World War 1 as a heavy bomber, after which it was converted for commercial use. It achieved fame by setting several long-distance flight records, the most famous being the first non-stop crossing of the Atlantic by the pioneering aviators Alcock and Brown in June 1919.

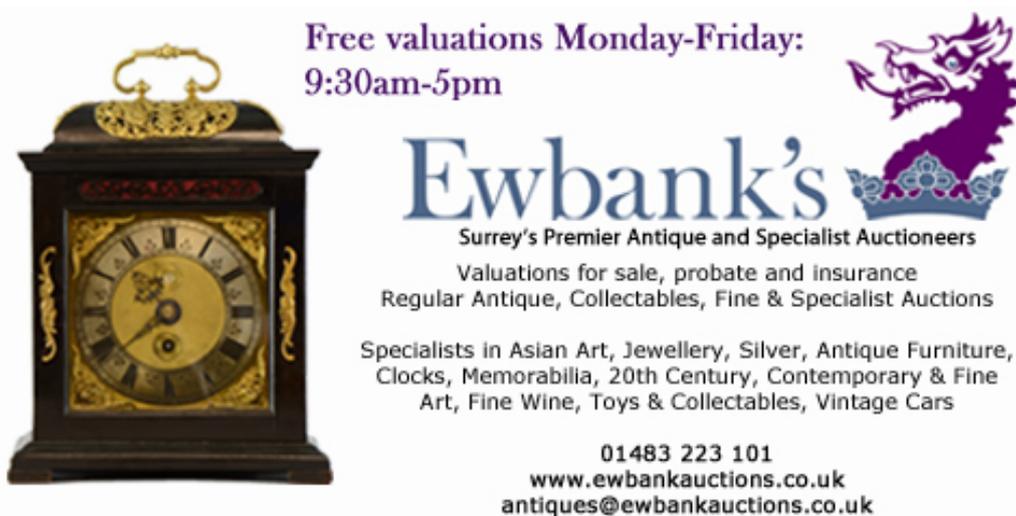
[9] The plane was flown by D G 'Dizzy' Addicott and Peter Hoare.

[10] Plane bodies of this vintage were constructed using a wooden frame with canvas stretched over it. This was then painted (doped) with cellulose nitrate, a highly flammable compound which rendered the canvas taut and hence improved the aerodynamics.

[11] The plane was displayed at the R.A.F. museum at Hendon until February 2014. It was then dismantled and is stored in Stafford.

Photo credits:

Family photos from the Audrey Smithers collection.
Aircraft, Barnes Wallis and Vickers photos from the Alan Cooper collection.
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LOCAL NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANS

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Thanks to the Localism Act of 2011, villages and towns all over the country are now able to take more control over how their areas develop in the future. The mechanism to do this is called a Neighbourhood Plan. This comprises a collection of specific policies which can help define future development of an area, covering housing, transport, education, leisure facilities, the environment, and so on. Our Society's demographic covers two discrete Neighbourhood Plan areas – Send and Lovelace (Ripley, Ockham and Wisley). Even before the introduction of the 2011 Act many village communities had developed a Village Plan or Parish Plan intended to help guide the provision of services and facilities within the village, as well as influencing planning applications for developments in their area. Usually these were based on a village-wide questionnaire for all residents, seeking their views on aspects of village life from housing to recreation, from traffic to the environment.

In Send the Parish Council developed a Village Plan in 2006/7, and has subsequently updated it several times. However, these early Village Plans differed from the new neighbourhood planning initiative in that they could set out a vision for an area but did not constitute formal input into local planning policy. Within the Localism Act of 2011 there is provision for local communities to have a stronger, more formal input into the future planning of their area.

The neighbourhood planning process provides villages like ours with the opportunity, perhaps for the first time, to have a major influence over planning decisions well into the future. However, before these Neighbourhood Plans are accepted as part of the planning framework it is necessary for each plan development group to demonstrate that they have consulted widely within the village and taken note of what anyone with a real interest in the area has to say. This will include residents, shops and businesses but also non-resident land and business owners and even visitors. So the process for each area will take many months. There will be two or three opportunities for each stakeholder to have their say, and anyone can contribute to the process. This is non-political local democracy in action. However, once a plan is finally drafted, there will be a referendum for the local residents only to decide whether to adopt the finished plan.

The Plan must be in “general conformity” with local authority planning policies (i.e. the Guildford Borough Council Local Plan) but it will provide the opportunity

for the community to have a formal influence on the sort of development that is acceptable in their area. Neighbourhood Plans will be adopted and become part of local planning policy if they receive a majority ‘yes’ vote in a public referendum. “General conformity” means that local opinion cannot overturn something considered to be fundamental to the Local Plan so that, should Guildford Borough Council decide that a particular housing development is a fundamental part of the Local Plan the Neighbourhood Plan will not be in a position to reject this development. This means that we local residents must all continue to keep a careful eye on the evolving Local Plan and make our views known directly to GBC, should we see anything of concern...

Once a Neighbourhood Plan has been agreed and filed with Guildford Borough Council, every planning application or other development initiative in the neighbourhood will be measured against this, for the next fifteen years.

Send and Lovelace Neighbourhood Plan Groups are at fairly similar stages in the process. Lovelace formed its NPG and elected a committee a few months ago and Send NPG, which covers Send, Send Marsh and Burnt Common, is still in the process of forming its steering committee. Lovelace have carried out an initial survey to determine the key issues for their stakeholders and are currently analysing the responses. From this analysis the committee will determine which issues should be addressed in a comprehensive questionnaire to residents, planned for Spring 2016. Send had informal conversations with people attending the May Fair earlier this year, to determine whether there was local interest. The conclusion was that there was certainly local concern about housing, new development, traffic, the environment, village shops and parking. Progress will be reported on their website (see below) and through Send & Ripley matters. It will take between one and two years from the start of the work to complete the process of preparing the Plans, which are funded by grants.

If you want to understand the Neighbourhood Plan process better, go to www.locality.org.uk and click on Neighbourhood Plans.

For further general information about Neighbourhood Planning see:

<http://www.guildford.gov.uk/neighbourhoodplanninginformation>

<http://locality.org.uk/projects/building-community/>

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2012/637/contents/made>

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2012/637/contents/made>

For specific information on Send, go to:

<http://www.sendneighbourhoodplan.org/>

and for Ripley, Ockham or Wisley, to:

<http://lovelaceplan.co.uk/>

Editors note- The Localism Act 2011 predated the National Planning Policy Framework introduced March 2013 and the more recent Planning Policy Guidance, both issued by DCLG and regularly updated. These together with the many changes to planning legislation introduced by government since 2011 have, contrary to the ideals of localism, substantially restricted the ability of both local planning authorities and local residents to resist certain forms of development including changes of use. Additional proposed changes recently announced, together with those contained in the Housing & Planning Bill 2015, will further constrain councils.

OBITUARIES

SIDNEY ERNEST STANLEY

1927 – 2015



Left: Sid at the launch of the Memories of War book

Right: Sid & Audrey

While Sid was not a member of the Society, we felt his passing should not go unmarked. All the stewards will, I'm sure, remember him fondly for the Saturday morning chats in the museum when he came to buy a journal and the positive delight he took, not only in adding memories to various exhibitions, but, even more, to correcting errors!

His nephew, Les Stanley, has written the following appreciation:

'Sid Stanley grew up and attended school in Send. At the outbreak of the Second World War he was still at school and living at Mays Corner. In January 1942 Sid started work at May and Hardy's factory, which was situated behind Fishers Garage. It was here that Sid met his future wife, Audrey Townsend.

Sid left to join the RAF and was stationed at RAF Watton between 1945 and 1948. Sid and Audrey were married in Ripley in December 1947 and lived in the village for most of their married life. Sid was widowed in 1996 after many years of happy marriage. After leaving the RAF, Sid was employed at Dunsborough Park and went on to work for several local builders. His final employment was at RHS Wisley where he stayed until his retirement.

Sid's family and friends will remember him for his wicked sense of humour and his love of aeroplanes in particular. He was also a keen fisherman and enjoyed photography and steam trains, visiting many of the heritage railways.

Sid suffered a heart attack in January 2015 and was admitted to St Peter's Hospital, Chertsey. Apart from a brief spell when he returned home, he was to remain in hospital until he died at the Royal Surrey County Hospital on 21st April.

Sid will be sadly missed by his family and friends.'

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The following response from **Celia Mappes** (nee Baker) re. the article on the figure found in Oxford Cottages garden (Vol.7/No.243) has turned into an interesting correspondence on her family's relationship with Ripley.

Dear Cate,

You were right in the assumption that the lead figure once had a wheelbarrow. I have just the same figure, but no longer his barrow, dating from the late 1940s. He has a cap, a red scarf round his neck, a blue waistcoat and brown trousers tied at the knees. I also have a similar figure, more lightly dressed in a beige shirt, waistcoat and trousers and wearing a brimmed hat. I think he originally pushed a hand cart, but that is also lost. I still have several farmyard animals from that time, together with a farmer's wife and a rather robust-looking, blue-clad milkmaid with similar hands carrying two buckets, and another sat on a stool to milk the cow. I'm afraid I'm not into sending photos via computer, but I will ask my son if he can send one from his i-Phone, then you can publish it with my note.



Above: Celia's lead figures collection © Celia Mappes

In response to my query as to whether she still lived in the villages Celia replied:

No, I don't live in Send, but in Germany! I was born and grew up in Ripley - Vine Cottages, maiden name Baker, hence my interest in the village history. My grandparents moved to Vine Cottages when they got married in Ripley in 1894. My grandmother was housekeeper to the first vicar of Ripley, Revd Henry Hooper, who gave them a family bible and regulator wall clock as wedding gifts, both of which we still have. She was of Irish origin, born in Newport, Mon., her parents having emigrated from Cork at the time

of the Potato Famine. They had five children in that little two-up-two-down cottage! My mother was the youngest, and stayed in the house when she married. Both my sister and myself grew up there.

I do wish I lived nearer 'home' and could attend your meetings and events, but only too seldom do my visits coincide with an open-day at the museum.

I really enjoy reading the Journal to keep me in touch, and find that the new format and quality of the photos are a great step forward. I sometimes wish there were more articles from 'original Ripleyites', though, - have my contemporaries all moved away?

However, I'm aware of the problems: the locals are not particularly interested in our History Society here, it's the new inhabitants that keep it going.

Celia Mappes

LETTER ON THE JULY 2015 LUNCH PARTY IN THEIR HONOUR FROM ANNE AND LES BOWERMAN

Dear Editor,

We write, somewhat belatedly, we are afraid, to thank the Committee and the members for the wonderful lunch party laid on for us back in July at Crickets Hill House. This letter does, to some degree, repeat what was said at the time and what Cameron wrote in his report in Journal 243, but we do wish to record our response on paper.

Firstly, it was great to be able to share a special meal in our honour with some sixty of you. We did enjoy and appreciate the food prepared entirely by yourselves. We also appreciated the official kind words from our President, John Slatford, and all the other generous sentiments and gifts from so many of you. It was brilliant to think of presenting us with an album of snapshots mostly taken at the meal by Ditz but combined with other photos to remind us of earlier members and events. We shall treasure this for as long as we live. The gift of a voucher for a meal for two at the Anchor in Ripley was also very appropriate especially in view of their long local history and not least their connection with cycling in late Victorian times. At the time of writing the Anchor meal is still something we are enjoying savouring in advance.

So, thanks to all who were involved in preparing, helping at and attending the party and, not least of course, to Clare and Des who very kindly opened their lovely house for us all to enjoy. It is a shame that Jupiter Pluvius (as Victorian cycling journalists sometimes called the rain king) did not co-operate so that we could enjoy the beautiful garden.

Les and Anne Bowerman

HERITAGE OPEN DAYS, FLORISTS IN HISTORY AND BUTTONHOLES

CLAIRE BROWN

I own and run the East Clandon based Plant Passion. We provide top quality seasonal, scented and sustainable cut flowers to local florists, companies and private customers. Earlier in the year, I had a request (via Flowers from the Farm) to be open for the Guildford and surrounds Heritage Open Days. It was very conveniently on a weekend I'd been planning to have an open day anyway, so I said "yes please", and we set to finding out all about the heritage of cut flower growing in this area.

The field I currently use has only been pasture, according to parish records and maps, almost certainly because we're on the North slope of the downs, and the water flows away. However, down in the valley in Ripley and Send and the surrounding areas, we found information about crops that had been grown in the late 19th and 20th Century.

Cornflowers were a main crop grown to be shipped up to London for gentlemen's buttonholes. Clare McCann at the Send and Ripley History Society kindly found us accounts from local residents who remembered which fields the cornflowers were grown on. We learnt that the flowers went up to town from Clandon Station, on a passenger train, so they had to be loaded very quickly.

We heard from several older residents that they thought that dianthus and carnations had been grown locally as well. Certainly there are glasshouse remains around that could have been used for those purposes, but the nursery that we were told about in Bookham grew auriculas.

It was while I was researching this that I found out about the historical meaning of the word 'florist': noun 1620s, formed from the French *fleuriste*, Latin *floris*, genitive of *flos* 'flower' or noun: a person who grows or deals in flowers.

Originally, florists were plantsmen, specialising in five species only for the beauty of their flowers: carnations, tulips, anemones, ranunculus and auriculae; then from 1750, hyacinths and polyanthus and, later, pinks. But from the early 19th century, the list of florists' flowers expanded.

I feel a lot happier calling myself a florist now, as I grow all of them apart from the auriculae.

Anyway, on Sunday afternoon the Heritage guests started arriving while we were still eating lunch, and kept coming all afternoon. Lots of them were doing a tour of local buildings, churches and events, and included us in their

visits. Very few of them had heard of us before. They were all interested and friendly, and I spent most of the afternoon doing tours of the field, and explaining how we intend to take flower farming in the area forward.

I had planned to make buttonholes for everyone, but in the end it was just team Plantpassion that got them, so I'll leave you with some I made earlier.

For more information see <http://blog.plantpassion.co.uk/2015/09/heritage-open-day-in-east-clandon-surrey-florists-in-history-and-buttonholes.html>



Top: Photo of the Open Day information board
Bottom: Buttonholes from the event
©Claire Brown

RIPLEY COMFORT QUILT

CLARE MCCANN

The History Society had hoped to borrow the Ripley Comfort Quilt from Guildford Museum for the art exhibition at Lancaster Hall in October but due to its fragility they were not able to lend it to us but supplied us with photographs. The museum has now agreed that the photographs of the quilt can be reproduced in the journal.

The quilt was made in the 19th century by The Girls' Friendly Society for Ripley parish church. It was lent to villagers in Ripley when they were sick. This was at a time when doctors could do little to cure people, and patients might have to spend weeks in bed.

Made from printed cotton dress fabrics hand-stitched together, the cover is thin: just two layers of cloth. It doesn't have the padding which turns many quilts into warm covers. It is a very pretty cover, and so although it may not have kept the patient warm it may have cheered them up.

Quilts of this type were usually made for use in hospitals and would contain phrases relating to physical health and getting better. This quilt, on the other hand, was made for use by the church, to give out to people who could not afford to go to hospital and who were recovering at home. Instead of medical and health related messages, it, therefore, includes religious and spiritual phrases.



Above: Ripley lending quilt
©Andrew Longworth, Guildford Museum



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CONSERVATION

CLARE MCCANN

Members might be interested to learn that we are trying to 'up our game' re. conservation of the artefacts and photographs in our care. Hazel Neill came from the Surrey History Centre and produced a report outlining some simple things we could do to improve storage etc. Following on from this we asked Hazel to come and share her expertise in picture conservation. Janet Tice, Jan Davie, Audrey Smithers and Gitta Hampton joined Clare McCann at her home for a 'hands on' session in September. Hopefully we all learnt a lot and can now continue working on our own, improving the condition of some of the framed photos that we did not finish. If anyone else would like to be a part of our informal group, please let us know.



Top: Hazel Neill, conservator
Bottom: Audrey Smithers left, Gitta Hampton right

Jo Downs

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IMAGES OF SEND AND RIPLEY AT THE LANCASTER HALL

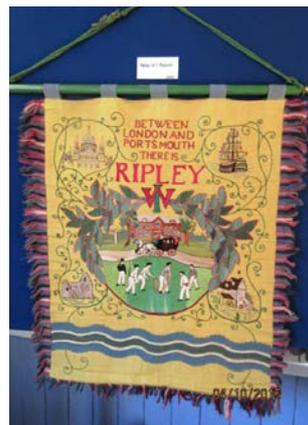
CLARE MCCANN

Send and Ripley History Society, in conjunction with Send Parish Council, held an art exhibition over the weekend of the 3rd and 4th of October. In part it was an opportunity to showcase some of the framed photographs, paintings and textiles usually held in store by the Society but also an opportunity for local artists to show off their creative side. In all about one hundred items were on show, including an impressive model of Send Church rooms.

The exhibition attracted about 140 visitors who enjoyed not only the artwork but tea and cakes made by volunteers. The comments in the visitors' book included, 'Good to have an exhibition in the village reflecting its past', 'Great exhibition, very interesting and talented people in Send' and best of all 'A treat for the eyes, brilliant effort'.

The exhibition also enabled the Society to do a little fundraising via a raffle which will go towards new acquisitions. A charming painting of Newark Priory was purchased at the exhibition and it is also hoped to buy a pretty Victorian watercolour of Newark Mill, which is currently on loan and can be seen in the museum.

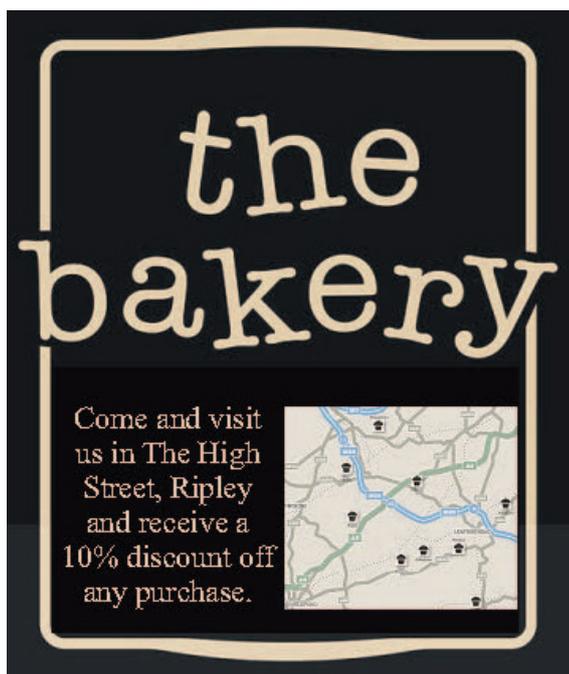
One contributor, who perhaps deserves a special mention, was history society member Pat Clack, who decided to 'yarn bomb' the statue of the village blacksmith in the colours of Send United football club –perhaps unfortunate that they are also the colours of the Australian Rugby team!



Top: The Reverend Tony Shutt with one of his eye catching canvasses

Bottom left: Splendid Ripley WI banner from SRHS collection

Bottom right: Yarnbomber Pat Clack with the Blacksmith statue in Send FC colours



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ROYAL VISIT MARKS MAJOR MILESTONE AT WOKING PALACE

The Friends of Woking Palace were delighted to welcome HRH The Duke of Gloucester to view what had been achieved during the course of the past seven seasons of excavations on this Scheduled Ancient Monument. Funded in the early years by grants from Woking Borough Council, Surrey County Council and Surrey Archaeological Society, the large community element of the work led to the Friends being awarded a substantial grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) for an expanded project including not just the eight acre site but also the large park that surrounded the moated complex.

The visiting guests were all welcomed to a site humming with activity as volunteers, from the experienced to those completely new to archaeology, carried out their tasks. The Duke met school children from Hoe Bridge School learning the basics of excavation, finds processing and history of the site. He saw many community participants, including those on the 'Dig for a Day' course enjoying their first taste of life in a trench, working alongside experienced volunteers and supervised by Rob Poulton, Director of Excavations, and his team of professional archaeologists from the Surrey County Archaeological Unit. In addition there were people, inspired to take their interest further, engaged on a basic skills course. The Duke paid a visit to the finds area, where more volunteers were assisting. Here he viewed and discussed some of the wide variety of finds made during the course of the excavations at this Tudor Palace and medieval manor.

Work stopped briefly while everyone gathered to watch the unveiling of a plaque by His Royal Highness to mark the end of the seven seasons of community excavations. They learnt that this was not the end of the project. In addition to the dig there have been volunteers researching the history of the site and the next stage of the project includes bringing together all the work on the history and archaeology into a full report on the excavations, an illustrated booklet on Woking Palace and its park and a major new permanent exhibition at The Lightbox.

Paul Hudson observed that "Thanks to money raised by National Lottery players, we were able to fund the wonderful 'Woking Palace and its Park' project that gave local people, especially large numbers of schoolchildren, an invaluable opportunity to get hands-on experience in archaeology over the past three years and help bring the Palace's most intriguing stories to life. It was great to see what a success the project has been and we're proud at HLF to have been involved."

Amongst those who were introduced to the Duke were Jean Follett, Hon. Treasurer of the Friends of Woking Palace and Richard Savage, Chair of the Steering Committee of the Woking Palace and its park project.



Top: Rob Poulton, Director of Excavations, explains some of the features in the trench to HRH The Duke of Gloucester. Lady Louise O'Connor, Deputy Lieutenant of Surrey is on the left of the picture and Richard Savage, Chair of the Steering Committee of the 'Woking Palace and its Park' Project, on the right.

Bottom: Andy Lobban, Friend of Woking Palace and volunteer digger, explains some of the features in the trench to visitors Jonathan Lord, MP for Woking, Cllr Derek McCrum, Mayor of Woking, Ian Tomes, Mrs Elizabeth Kennedy, High Sheriff of Surrey, John Kingsbury, Leader of Woking Borough Council and Paul Hudson, Chair of the SE Committee - HLF.

©Giles Pattison

SEND & RIPLEY LOCAL HISTORY MUSEUM NEWS AND FORTHCOMING EVENTS

The Museum is open on Saturday mornings from 10am to 12.30pm and on the third Sunday of each month to coincide with the Antiques Fair.

MUSEUM EXHIBITION

'Newark Mill - The Tragic End of a Ripley Landmark' will be on until mid - January 2016.

DATES

EVENTS

| | |
|--------------------|--|
| Tues 15th December | The Christmas Social. Members only. |
| Tues 19th January | A talk by Gillian Lachelin on the History of Ockham. |
| Tues 16th February | History Society Annual General Meeting. |

Evening meetings commence at 7.30 pm for tea/coffee and socialising with the formal business at 8pm.

Please telephone Anne Bowerman on 01483 224876 if you have any queries about the programme for the rest of 2015. For 2016 contact the new Programme Secretary, Margaret Field, on 01483 223387.



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Other times for school groups and small parties by arrangement

Contact Clare McCann on 01483 728546 if you require further information or wish to help in the museum

HISTORY SOCIETY PUBLICATIONS

| | | |
|---|---------------------|--------|
| 'Ripley & Send Then and Now; The Changing Scene of Surrey Village Life' | Reprinted 1998/2006 | £10.00 |
| 'Guide to The Parish Church of St Mary The Virgin, Send' | | £1.25 |
| 'Then and Now, A Victorian Walk Around Ripley' | Reprinted 2004/07 | £4.00 |
| 'The Straight Furrow', by Fred Dixon | | £1.50 |
| 'Ripley and Send – Looking Back' | Reprinted 2007 | £9.00 |
| 'A Walk About Ripley Village in Surrey' | Reprinted 2005 | £2.00 |
| 'Newark Mill Ripley, Surrey' | Reprinted 2012 | £4.00 |
| 'The Hamlet of Grove Heath Ripley, Surrey' | Reprinted 2005 | £4.00 |
| 'Ripley and Send – An Historical Pub Crawl in Words and Pictures' | | £6.00 |
| 'Two Surrey Village Schools – The story of Send and Ripley Village Schools' | | £10.00 |
| 'The Parish Church of St Mary Magdalen Ripley, Surrey' | | £5.00 |
| 'Memories of War' | | £8.00 |
| 'Map of WW2 Bomb Sites in Send, Ripley and Pyrford' | | £2.50 |
| 'Memories of War' and Map of Bomb Sites' | | £10.00 |
| 'Send and Ripley Walks' | | £5.00 |
| 'Newark Priory: Ripley's Romantic Ruin' | | £8.00 |
| Special Offer: Purchase 'Newark Priory' and 'St Mary's Ripley' | | £10.00 |

All the publications are available from the Museum on Saturday mornings, from Pinnocks Coffee House, Ripley, or via the Society's website www.sendandripleyhistorysociety.co.uk



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