

# SEND & RIPLEY HISTORY SOCIETY JOURNAL



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# Send & Ripley History Society

Established 1975 as Send History Society

Registered Charity No 296324

## **President: John Slatford**

St George's Farmhouse, High Street, Ripley, Woking GU23 6AF. Tel: 01483 222107

Email: [jmslatford@gmail.com](mailto:jmslatford@gmail.com)

## **Chairman: Les Bowerman**

The Manor House, Send Marsh Green, Ripley, Woking GU23 6JS. Tel: 01483 224876 Email: [les@sendmanor.com](mailto:les@sendmanor.com)

## **Hon. Secretary: Cameron Brown**

Church Farm House, Wisley, Surrey GU23 6QL. Tel: 01932 341206 / 07811 276386 Email: [cmb@aappl.com](mailto:cmb@aappl.com)

## **Treasurer and Membership Secretary: Christina Sheard**

Old Manor Cottage, Send Marsh Green, Ripley, Woking GU23 6JP. Tel: 01483 224600

Email: [christina.sheard@btinternet.com](mailto:christina.sheard@btinternet.com)

## **Journal Editor: Cate Davey**

Waters Edge, Potters Lane, GU23 7AJ. Tel: 01483 773452. Email: [editorsrhsjournal@gmail.com](mailto:editorsrhsjournal@gmail.com)

## **Journal Distribution: Hilary Percy**

30 Wentworth Close, Ripley, Surrey GU23 6DB. Tel: 01483 212950 Email: [spezet@btinternet.com](mailto:spezet@btinternet.com)

## **Archaeology Specialist: Andrew Jones**

106 Georgelands, Ripley, Woking GU23 6DQ. Tel: 01483 479647 Email: [ajones681@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:ajones681@tiscali.co.uk)

## **Web site management: Chris Brown**

Web site: [www.sendandripleyhistorysociety.co.uk](http://www.sendandripleyhistorysociety.co.uk)

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**Cover image:** Michael and Pat Clack with World Cup Willie, which Pat knitted for Michael in 1966  
Photo © Matt Clack

## EDITORIAL

It's been raining, England is out of the World Cup, the sales are nearly over and autumn clothing is beginning to appear in the shops and its July already. At the time of writing this, Andy Murray is through to the quarter finals but we don't know whether he'll make it through to the final – let alone win it!

There seems to be a lot of change going on in Potters Lane in Send at the moment, where residents are moving; downsizing or finding more appropriate accommodation for their needs. It's great to know that the community spirit in the area is such that people want to stay in the village rather than moving away.

Many of you will know my cousin Betty Goddard. By the time this issue reaches you, 1 Sedgeley's Cottages in Potters Lane will probably be up for sale as she has moved to Worplesdon. It's been a strange experience for the family as we help her choose what mementoes to retain from a lifetime of memories. Amongst the items that Betty had collected over the years is the door handle of Gladding's/Lemon's Stores which she had persuaded the demolition team to give to her! She has very kindly donated it to the Society. We also discovered a large collection of medals that her late husband Robert won in the 1950s and 60s in motor cycling competitions with Aldershot MCC and Witley MCC (amongst others) along with quite a collection of photographs from the Isle of Man TTs that they attended. I'm wondering if any other members have records from their motor cycling days - both pre- and post-war. I know that my father, Reg Giles, and many other lads in the village, rode motorbikes in the 1930s. I have a few photos and would like to pull together an article on the subject.

As usual contributors have been very busy over the last couple of months since the last edition and I hope you find lots to interest you in this month's edition.

*Catherine Davey*  
[editorsrhsjournal@gmail.com](mailto:editorsrhsjournal@gmail.com)

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## OUTING TO DUNSFOLD & HASCOMBE

*Notes by Les Bowerman*

Fifteen members made their way to Dunsfold. We met for elevenses at the 17th Century Sun Inn. Dunsfold is a somewhat unusual village in that most of it lies back across the village green on one side of the road only and, like Send, the church is about a mile away, but in an even more remote and beautiful spot than Send's in a verdant and wooded valley at the bottom of which is a sacred well. We met our guide for the day, Alan Bott, at the church.

The great yew tree in the churchyard with a girth of 7.64 metres has been dated by dendrochronology to AD 1200. Hollow, it was at one time used for the storage



*The Holy Well*

of tools. The age of the yew suggests that it may have been planted on a holy site before the church was built in the 13th century. The church has been relatively little altered since then apart from drastic mainly restoration work in 1881-2 but this is not the place to go into great detail. Alan's book on the two churches provides more information for those who would like to read it. Some features are however, worth mentioning here. With an originally royal connection, Dunsfold church is of remarkably high quality. The piscina (basin for washing sacred vessels) and triple, stepped sedilia (priests' seats) set into the chancel wall date from the late 13th century.



© Les Bowerman

*The wood-lined sluice hole with wooden plug and chain*

The pews, from wood felled in 1503, are probably the oldest dated church oak seating in England. The ceiling of the porch has traces of 13th century decorative painting and there are similar traces inside the church. The font is of similar date as is some stained glass. An extremely rare survival near the base of the wall is the wood-lined sluice-hole with its wooden plug and chains which mark the original floor level. This was used to remove waste water after the floor had been washed.

© Ditz



*Hascombe church*

A two mile largely wooded drive took the party to an enjoyable lunch in the splendid 16th century White Horse coaching inn at Hascombe.

Dunsfold and Hascombe are similar in that neither has a mention in the Domesday survey of 1086 and their churches occupy beautiful sites (Hascombe's is beside the picturesque village pond and below an iron-age hill fort). They differ in that Hascombe church is central to the village. The original building was probably Anglo-Saxon and was a 2-cell church with the chancel having an apsidal (rounded) end. It had free, unappropriated seating

for only 28. By the 19th century that was greatly insufficient. The remedy was not to enlarge it, but to demolish it in its entirety, which was done in 1863 after 800 years of service. The replacement was built ready for re-consecration within a year with free seating for 72. The average attendance was 129. The outline was vaguely reminiscent of the old church only bigger, but there was a staggering difference. It took 35 years to decorate the interior which is now breathtakingly beautiful and artistic. It is hoped the photographs give an idea of what was done. The party was privileged to be able to view the church plate, a few pieces of which were from the old church. It was as impressive as the decorations. To those more familiar with non-conformist churches and chapels, this may appear all rather 'over-the-top' but there is no denying the artistic beauty.

The day ended for some with tea back in the plainer surroundings of the White Horse, more typical of old west Surrey.



*Hascombe Church - view towards the altar*



*Hascombe Church - ceiling above the altar*

## OUTING TO BIGNOR ROMAN VILLA & PARHAM HOUSE

*Notes by Les Bowerman*

Attendance for this outing to West Sussex on another fine day, Thursday 5 June, was for various reasons down to eight members. It was nonetheless a very interesting and enjoyable day. The drive down to Petworth is always a pleasure. From there to Bignor, one really is in deepest countryside. Amazingly, all three cars starting from Send Marsh and Ripley separately arrived at Bignor within three minutes of the planned meeting time of 10.15. The Society last visited Bignor when it was at the end of a walk along Stane Street from Halnaker windmill thirty-one years ago. The Villa is in a most tranquil and beautiful spot just below the northern side of the South Downs. The site was clearly carefully chosen, being just off Stane Street, the Roman road linking Winchester with London.

There are no above-ground remains of the Villa but the thatched Georgian buildings covering the exposed Roman flooring are themselves listed. There is no documentary

evidence for the Villa, and its existence was totally unknown before farmer George Tupper's plough struck what was probably a water basin in 1811. The Tupper family still owns and farms the land and indeed the remains of the Roman Villa are also still in their hands. After a welcome elevenses, the party was given an introductory talk. What follows are the notes I made.



*The group plus guide at Bignor and part of one of the thatched Georgian buildings covering the exposed mosaics.*

*L toR: Guide, Joan Chandler, Anne Bowerman, Pat, Tony Manton, Roma Manton, John Slatford, Sam Sheppard*

The earliest evidence is of a small timber-framed house built circa AD190. The first stone-built house, of about five to six rooms came around AD 250. The Villa grew by about that number of rooms at a time to form a quadrangle until there were about eighty rooms occupied by some seventy people who would have been related family groups, apart from 200/300 slaves who lived on the edge of the settlement. The identity of the family is unknown. They lived by farming, roughly a third of the land being used for crops, a third for animals and the rest was woodland. The soil was, and is, very fertile. Stane Street, visible from the Villa, was essential for selling produce. By the end they were very wealthy and the Roman villa is the largest known in Britain (Fishborne is, of course, a palace).



*A fine looking piece of mosaic from the Venus room at Bignor. It was explained that the two motifs show a deliberate fault because the Romans didn't want to displease the gods by making anything perfect.*



*A fine piece of mosaic in the Ganymede room at Bignor*

Bignor is best known for its artistic and largely complete mosaics. They must have been laid by specialists, maybe from a choice of templates. The tessellae from which they are made are small pieces of natural stone of various colours and are barely an inch square. The corridor floors and the unpatterned edges around the artistic mosaics are themselves mosaic made of reddish pieces. You walk (carefully) around the villa on these 2000-year-old mosaics – the Norman invasion seems a very long time ago, but the mosaics were laid almost as long before the Normans invaded as we have come since!

The following are random notes in response to questions:-

- Taxes were paid to feed the Roman Army.
- The walls of the villa had been plastered and painted.
- Some window glass has been found.
- The occupants left in an organised way in the mid AD 400s. They were probably Romano-British.
- With nobody there, the buildings collapsed and the stone blocks were stolen.
- In the 1920s the bath-house was uncovered. It would have had a curved roof. There were three rooms – for cold, tepid and hot water. The main north corridor of the Villa was 70 metres long.

Having left Bignor we moved on, along narrow, hilly and winding lanes to Amberley and thence to Cootham on the edge of Storrington for an admirable lunch at the Crown Inn.

From Cootham, it was a mile or so through the magnificent Parham Park to the House & Gardens. Like Bignor, this is still in private hands. The estate was originally owned by Westminster Monastery until it was granted by Henry VIII to Robert Palmer in 1540. The foundation stone of the house was laid in 1577 and it has been a family home ever since. Sir

Thomas Bishopp bought it in 1597 and his family and their descendants were there for 325 years until 1922. The Pearson family have been there ever since. It was first opened to the public in 1948. The head gardener of the magnificent grounds is Tom Brown, a Ripley man who was trained at the RHS at Wisley. The party did not see him there, but those who knew her were pleased to speak to his mother, who was also visiting.



© Les Bowerman

*Parham House*

The 300-acre park is home to fallow deer. The

ancestors of the present herd (some of which were spotted by the party) were first recorded in 1628. The House is a traditional E-shaped Elizabethan mansion with towering mullioned and transomed windows in the Great Hall. There are many portraits of Tudor and Stuart monarchs and their courts. We opted against an expensive conducted tour but by keeping in a group were able to have the helpful attention of the knowledgeable and friendly guides in each of the rooms.

© Les Bowerman



*Stopham Bridge with Anne Bowerman*

The outing basically finished with refreshment in the tea-room. On the return journey some paused to look at the medieval stone-built Stopham Bridge of AD 1423 just this side of Pulborough. Until the 1980s the A285 crossed it but a new bridge now by-passes it.

Originally it had been planned to lunch at the White Hart Inn close to the bridge but, being just upstream of the conjunction of the Rivers Rother and Arun, it was badly flooded at Christmas and had still not re-opened.

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## SURREY AT WAR 1914

### Sunday 27 July 2014

Surrey At War 1914 is being held at the Royal Logistics Corps Army Base, Deepcut GU16 6SQ. Gates open at 12 noon with the event starting at 2pm. Armed Forces personnel are admitted Free with a ticket and are encouraged to wear uniform.

The leading Surrey WW1 event commemorating the start of WW1 organised by ABF The Soldiers' Charity Surrey.

A Family picnic at the Front and concert for all ages with Cavalry Horses, fast and furious demonstrations of tent pegging, Massed Marching Bands from the Royal Logistic Corps and the Royal Artillery. Living history with WW1 Re-enactors, guns, WW1 songs and poems recited by Dame Penelope Keith, a youth choir, pipes and drums band, ending with a Beating Retreat at Dusk. Tickets £15 and concessions.

If you have any questions regarding this event please contact Guildford Tourist Information Centre on 01483 444334

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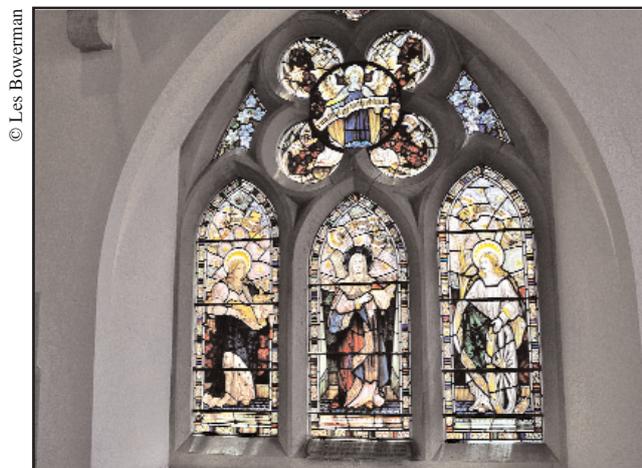
## RIPLEY'S FAMOUS ANCHOR & CYCLISTS' CHURCH SERVICE

*Les Bowerman*

*Whene'er I take my trips abroad  
For this I'll always hanker,  
That I'll be guided by the Lord  
To Ripley's famous Anchor.*

Thus wrote E S Ward of the Zephyr Bicycle Club when signing the 1881 Anchor Cyclists Visitors Book. As older members will know, landlady Annie Dibble kept these visitors' books from that year until her death in 1895. Six of the books remained at the famous local inn for 100 years and another six turned up in the brewery's archives. Two years are missing altogether. Six of the books were sold at Bonhams in 2002 and the other six together with photo-copies of the first six, are held in the Surrey History Centre at Woking. Throughout the 1880s the Anchor became ever more popular, with more than 7,000 signatures in 1886. Many would stay for the Sunday lunch.

The Rev. Henry Hooper, vicar of Ripley church two doors along from the Anchor was not too happy about the cyclists spending the Sabbath on leisure and pleasure but, being a practical man, he decided that, if they were going to be in Ripley anyway, he would organise a church service for them. The arrangement apparently was that at 2 o'clock Annie would ring a bell, whereupon they would all troop into the church. On the whole it worked very well with congregations numbering up to seventy-two, although it was reported that there were some



*The Dibble window in Ripley Church*



*The plaque beneath the Dibble window reads:  
To the glory of God and as a token of respect to the  
memory of Annie Dibble who died July 24th 1895 and  
Harriet Dibble who died Oct 20th 1896. This window is  
erected by their cycling friends.*

backsliders who preferred their post-prandial pipe in the Anchor. Hooper became very popular as the ‘Cyclists Vicar’ and in 1889 his cycling friends made a presentation to him – but that has been detailed in these pages before.

Knowing the lasting fame of Ripley as the “Mecca of all good Cyclists” as Lord Bury dubbed it in 1884, the founder members of the then Southern Veteran-Cycle Club (now Veteran-Cycle Club) in 1955 held their inaugural meeting in this Surrey Village on the Portsmouth Road, known to early riders as the “Ripley Road”, and the following year the first ever national veteran-cycle run was organised by the club with the start at Ripley and the finish at Hyde Park.

The club’s coming of age was celebrated in 1976 with a camping weekend on Ripley Green. At that camp the local members got together and decided to form the Ripley Section, the club’s second such Section to be formed, the first being the Midlands Section. Ripley Section later became the Ripley Road Section in acknowledgment of the fact that the Ripley Road was the most famous cycling highway in the world and that a Ripley Road Club had been formed in 1886.

On 25 May this year, the Ripley Section with the keen co-operation of the new ownership and management of the Anchor and the vicar, churchwardens and church members of St Mary

Magdalen Church, Ripley, staged a re-enactment of the Cyclists’ Sunday Lunch and the Cyclists’ Service. Fifteen members met at Send Marsh Green, several of whom were in costume and on 1880s and 1890s machines. A short morning ride, led by Bill and Margaret Squirrell on the Cyclists Touring Club’s 1884 Humber tandem tricycle, was held to inspect the progress of the re-building of three bridges in Newark Lane, near the ruins of Newark Priory. Newark Lane was part of the Olympic Road Race course. The morning ride finished at Ripley Church with a welcome elevenses kindly provided by the church people, followed by a very



*Ripley Section of the Veteran-Cycle Club at the Anchor on 25 May 2014  
l to r: Pam Jones of Egham; Tom Vardy of Camberley; Bob Berry of Norbury, SW16; Iggy Pont-Lezica of Guildford; Margaret and Bill Squirrell of Byfleet; John Lattimore of Walton-on-Thames; Margaret and Richard Polly of Sutton; Vic White of New Haw; Helen Shelley and John White of Worcester Park.*

appropriate cyclists’ service by the Vicar, the Rev. Chris Elson. After the service the cyclists’ rose window in memory of Herbert Liddell Cortis, who in 1882 became the first to ride twenty miles in one hour, and the window in memory of Harriet and Annie Dibble who had catered so well for Victorian cyclists at the Anchor were pointed out. Both of these windows had been subscribed for by cyclists. Chris Elson in his sermon had earlier observed that the cyclists had also subscribed to the church organ. The Humber tandem trike and an old high bicycle adorned the church for the occasion.

A delightful ride of about five miles south of the main road over mostly minor roads, a concrete farm track and another part of the Olympic route brought the peloton back into Ripley for lunch at the Anchor at the agreed time of 3 o’clock which meant that, as in the old days, cyclists had the

© Les Bowerman

whole of the Anchor virtually to themselves. Some had the very tasty Sunday roast at a specially negotiated price, others had the standard light lunch menu whilst yet others felt that the club sandwiches offered the best value of all.

All agreed that the ride, the service and the meal were great fun and very enjoyable and even the weather was co-operative. This was an unadvertised experimental event limited to Ripley Section members of the VCC. As it was held to be successful, the Section may, if the Vicar and the management of the Anchor agree, open it to the Club generally next year as one of the special events celebrating the Veteran-Cycle Club's 60th anniversary.

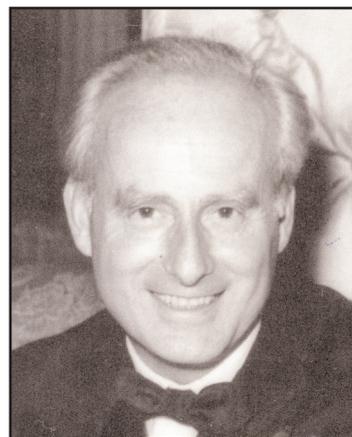
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## OBITUARY

### Charles Hughesdon, 1909 – 2014

*John Slatford*

Charles Hughesdon, who lived at Dunsborough Park in Ripley from 1948 until 1994, died recently at the age of 104. He had a remarkable life and has been variously described as a daredevil amorous aviator, champion ballroom dancer, insurance broker and airline executive who married the film star Florence Desmond and boasted of long affairs with Shirley Bassey and Margot Fonteyn among others.



In the mid-1930s he was an aspiring young insurance salesman and it was in insurance, particularly in the airline industry, that his lifetime career continued. At the same time he learned to fly and soon became a flying instructor and gained a commercial pilot's licence. From then on, flying and airline insurance became the major parts of his life. Before the last war he took part in various flying races including the 1936 Schlesinger South Africa Air race where he and his partner crash-landed by Lake Tanganyika and were lucky to survive. During the war he served in the RAF working mainly as a test pilot but also in long distance transport. He was awarded the Air Force Cross.

After WW II, his insurance career resumed and he became a leading figure in the airline insurance industry. Such was his involvement with airlines that in the 1970s he became owner of a cargo airline, Tradewinds Airways, for a few years. He continued flying himself and eventually converted to fly his own helicopter. All through the 1960s and early 70s, his helicopter parties at Dunsborough were a well-known annual event.

He married Florence Desmond in 1937 and they had various homes before coming to Dunsborough in 1948. After losing a child through miscarriage, their only child Michael was adopted. They became renowned for their hospitality and the lists of celebrities from show business, film, politics and business who visited seems endless.

On arrival at Dunsborough, Charles was the owner of 90 acres of land. At one time, before he finally sold his property in 1994, this had grown to some 1,250 acres. After the death of Florence or Dessie as she was known, Charles married their long-time friend Carol Havers, the widow of Lord Francis Havers, sometime Attorney General and Lord Chancellor in the Thatcher government, and mother of the actor Nigel Havers. After his marriage, Charles sold Dunsborough and moved to Berkshire thus severing his connections with Ripley after some forty-six years.

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## A COUNTY REMEMBERS - SURREY IN THE GREAT WAR - NEWSPAPERS

Surrey Heritage has received initial support from the Heritage Lottery Fund for our "A County Remembers - Surrey in the Great War" project. The project is at the heart of the county's commemoration of the First World War and the quest to understand how the war changed the face of Surrey and the lives of its residents. The lasting legacy will be a website which will not only be a comprehensive 21st century digital memorial but also a resource to enable people to explore, discover and understand the impact of the war on their local area and community.

You can find out more about the "A County Remembers" project here:

<http://www.exploringsurreypast.org.uk/themes/subjects/military/surreys-first-world-war/remembers/>

Amongst the resources which will be invaluable to local researchers contributing to "A County Remembers" project are local newspapers, and Surrey Heritage is considering seeking funding and permission to digitise the microfilms of the 1914-1922 Surrey newspapers held at Surrey History Centre and perhaps generate indexes (using Optical Character Recognition). The copies of the newspapers, on DVDs, could then be made available locally free of charge in some museums and libraries around the county.

Surrey currently has the following titles on microfilm at Surrey History Centre for 1914-1922:

Middlesex Chronicle Staines Edition

Surrey Advertiser

Surrey Herald (Chertsey, Addlestone and Byfleet edition)

Surrey Mirror

Surrey and Hants News

Woking News and Mail

(Epsom and Ewell Advertiser master negatives, of which the viewing copies are at Epsom and Ewell Local and Family History Centre)

*Surrey Heritage*

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### MORE ON FOGWILLS

*John Slatford*

Following my article in Journal 236, I was very pleased to receive the following letter from our member Margery Bonard who lives in Brixham:

*Dear Mr Slatford,*

*I was interested to read your article in the History Society Journal about Fogwills. My brother Robert (Bob) Whapshott worked there when it first started. The person in charge then was Mr Freddie Streeter who later became a well known broadcaster on radio about gardening. He was only there for a few years before returning to private gardening, I think, as head gardener at Petworth House.*

*Bob worked there until, I think, the late fifties. Fogwills exhibited vegetables at Chelsea in the thirties.*

*I lived in Ripley until 1976 when we moved to Shalford and then after retiring to Brixham. When the Journal comes everything stops until I have read it from cover to cover.*

*All best wishes*

*Margery Bonard*

As many of our oldest members will recall, Bob Whapshott was one of our earlier members and well known as the nurseryman in Lime Grove, West Clandon. From Bob's own memoirs recorded by our local memories group back in the 1980s, I have been able to extract the following: Born in 1915 at Sussex Farm, Hungry Hill, he went to work at RHS Wisley after leaving Ripley C of E School and worked through every department. It was after Wisley that he went to work for Fogwills and he eventually became the foreman there before leaving in 1946 to set up his own plant nursery. Margery has also told me that Bob helped to build the famous rock garden at Wisley and that after leaving Fogwills he went to Clandon Regis as head gardener but only for a short time. Before setting up full time on his own, he already had use of the land which became his nursery.

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### **GROWING UP IN SEND 1950-1960 PART 3**

*Tony Milton*

Occasionally on a warm summer evening I would walk with my parents along the lane to the Seven Stars. In the pub garden I drank cherryade and ate Smith's crisps. Salt for the crisps came in blue twisted paper which was untwisted and the salt sprinkled on the crisps. Despite how vigorously I shook the bag I still ended up with the top crisps laden with salt and beneath them saltless crisps. The excitement (well not a lot happened in the Seven Stars garden) of finding an extra blue sachet of salt was rather spoiled by making the top crisps almost inedible with salt.

Where I lived near May's Corner there was a lot of standing around waiting for something to happen. People waited for buses to Woking or Guildford or Ripley; I think there was an hourly service to Ripley and two an hour to Woking and Guildford. At certain times the telephone on the corner could be busy with people queuing outside; a girl on the telephone to her boyfriend was often the cause. Less patient members of the queue would open the door and ask how much longer she intended to be. Our local village policeman, who lived on Send Barnes Lane, would cycle up, lean his bike against the telephone box and stand for a while making sure nothing illegal was going on at Mays Corner. AA patrolmen parked their motorcycle and sidecar and stood, dressed in their military style uniforms and caps, prepared to salute any motorist displaying an AA badge on the front of his car. There was no danger of him suffering repetitive strain injury as cars were few and far between in the 1950s. One or two children even stood on the corner collecting car registration numbers; unsurprisingly it was an activity that never developed a mass following. There was little in the way of organised activities or entertainment for us children. Mr Bartlett who lived on Sandfields set up a Nature Club that ran for a while. It started off in the Red Cross hut but as numbers dwindled it was held in Mr Bartlett's house. I enjoyed it and with Jimmy Synes we stayed to become the last two members. Once or twice a year a fair came to Send and for a few days transformed the Recreation Ground with noisy and colourful entertainment. It was gaudy, it was vibrant, the atmosphere was sickly sweet with the smell of candy floss, tinny sounding pop music blared out and the diesel generators constantly hummed. Stallholders called out to persuade people to spend money on their stalls. Despite every so often it being demonstrated that the hoop would actually fit over the prizes I never saw anyone win on the hoopla stall. Coconuts were suspiciously difficult to dislodge from their cups and lightweight darts seldom hit the playing cards that would win some cheap ornament. As it got dark the garish lights of the fairground and the noise made the staid old 'rec' an exciting place to be. Then one

day it had packed up and gone leaving only worn patches on the grass and leaving us to make our own entertainment in the 'rec' and elsewhere.

As I got older part of my time was taken up with having a part-time job. The first one was at Cox's greengrocers in Woking where I worked on Saturdays. There was a permanent queue often stretching out into the street, while behind the piles of fruit and vegetables four or five assistants rushed around serving the mainly female customers. Having been given their fruit and vegetables customers then queued up to pay the flaming red-haired 'Cash' sitting in her small cubicle. As the stocks of fruit and vegetables diminished calls came to the back room to replenish them. That's where I and the other workers came in, breaking open wooden cases of fruit and sacks of vegetables and filling trays to take into the shop. I also boiled beetroot in a small metal domestic boiler outside under an awning, gingerly putting my hand in the boiling steaming water to test if the skins were loose and the beetroots done. Despite some unpleasant aspects I enjoyed the job, especially sampling lychees before I allowed them into the shop. I liked the atmosphere of a busy town on a Saturday as people bustled about to the sound of an accordion played by a disabled ex-soldier.

Another job that had unpleasant features but I enjoyed was a paper round. It was a long round; I had to cycle down Sandy Lane, along the footpath past the ponds to Potters Lane where the round started. Then along Potters Lane to: Vicarage Lane, Wood Hill, Send Barnes Lane and home. At first the delivery rounds were operated by a newsagent in Old Woking who brought the papers to the paper boys waiting on Challens Garage forecourt. When he retired the rounds were taken over by two brothers who ran a small shop next to Wharf Lane.<sup>1</sup> In the dark winter mornings it was scary to ride along the path past the ponds as the wind rustled the trees and inquisitive cows from Baigent's farm suddenly appeared out of the gloom.

On the days when the local paper and magazines came out the bag cut deeply into my shoulder and with a long round it was some time before the bag got any lighter. When I reached the farm at the bottom of Wood Hill my deliveries were almost finished and the farm workers were stopping for breakfast. They had their sandwiches and drank their tea sitting on piles of coke in a room adjacent to the dairy where I would join them for a while. One of the farm workers lived with his wife and family in a cottage close by; the other one was single but had taken a fancy to a young woman who worked at a children's home further up Wood Hill. He had seen her walk past but was too shy to ask her out. I acted as go-between delivering a love letter to the home along with their newspapers: sadly I don't think he ever got a response.

Collecting the weekly money from the farm foreman gave me an insight into his marital relations; my request for payment was greeted with: "I'm not paying for her magazine". I always had to go and collect the money separately from 'her' at their house. Tragically several years later the paper boy doing my round was killed by a car.

The tragedy that made a great impression on me took place when I must have been ten or eleven. A 26-year-old mother committed suicide; her three young children dying with her in the gas-filled room. Most of us children were shielded from the psychological stresses of life and didn't understand why it had happened. Though younger than me I knew the eldest boy and couldn't comprehend how a mother could kill him and the rest of the young family.

There was another death that upset me, though now so many years later I can't remember the boy's name. He briefly played a minor but at the time important role in my life. When I started at Send

Primary school as an apprehensive six-year-old, knowing no one or nothing about the school he was given the responsibility of helping me settle in. I suppose he was about ten or eleven years old but his kindness and friendliness over those first days is something I have never forgotten. After that I only saw him intermittently as he suffered with asthma and had long periods away from school. Eventually he left and I never saw him again; later on I learned that he had died. I was beginning to learn that very sad things in life can happen to people who don't deserve it.

Mostly though life in Send during the 1950s was uneventful and impacted little on the sub-culture in which we spent a childhood, largely free outside school of adult supervision. I don't remember too many restrictions on boys then, we wandered where we liked, somehow got home in time for meals and organised our own games and activities. That's not to say that at times we didn't get bored. An early 1950s Sunday could be leaden and tedious when many of us were expected to stay indoors or in the garden, not to go out to play. Few of us went to Church but the stern and cheerless grip of a Victorian Sabbath was only just beginning to loosen. Girls seldom, if at all, joined in with our activities; if they did with any enthusiasm they risked being called "a bit of a tomboy".

It was a time before adults ferried children around in cars, set up organised football and rugby clubs, bought children gadgets that kept them indoors and took them out to adventure playgrounds and theme parks. It was a time when children were responsible for their own childhood; when children largely made their own entertainment without adult organisation or supervision. It was not necessarily better or worse than today but it was very different.

Predictably news came that my efforts in the 11+ examination had been rewarded with selection for a secondary modern school education. A selection the authorities claimed would undoubtedly benefit me as it most suited my aptitude and ability. Nobody was fooled by this positive gloss, I hadn't been selected for anything; I had failed the 11 plus exam.

## **St Bedes**

The long summer holiday of 1956 finally ended. When it did I stood dressed in dark blue blazer and long trousers in the boys playground of 'the big school'- with around 320 pupils it was small in today's terms. Anyway there I stood with the forty or so new boys waiting to hear whether I had been selected for the A or B classes; there was no attempt in those days to disguise the process of separating the wheat from the chaff. I knew that in failing the 11+ and not gaining a place at the Grammar School I was at the foot of the educational ladder but I was anxious to avoid being on the very bottom rung, the B stream. It seemed that my performance had not been quite as ignominious as my teachers had suggested on their reports and I started St Bede's in Mr Frapwell's 1A class.

The school day started with registration in our form room, 1A's was the Domestic Science Room were the smells of yesterday's cooking lingered on. After registration we walked single file around the corridor to the hall for a brief religious service and for any school news, warnings about behaviour or other information. Then the day's lessons began. For some lessons the class was segregated; girls had biology, needlework and domestic science, boys had science, gardening and woodwork. Girls learned about flowers, how to cook a meal, make a skirt and perhaps how their bodies worked. Boys were kept in the dark about such things but instead did more manly things with chisels, garden spades and Bunsen burners! On one or two occasions in my last year when sport was cancelled because of bad weather, the combined A and B classes were given a tentative

sex education lesson. It was delivered by Mr Short, the Headmaster; maybe he didn't trust the sports teacher to be sufficiently obscure about details. I don't remember learning much about sex from Mr Short, probably his explanation relied too heavily on euphemisms and innuendo for my understanding. Eager though I was to learn I also paid close attention to any signs of his embarrassment. I left the classroom no wiser than when I went in.

One thing I did learn soon after starting at St Bede's was that teachers had two names; one their formal name and the other their nickname: Mrs Packer was Percy, Mr Steele for some reason was Worzel, the sports teacher, Mr Harris was Reg -after the famous cyclist, Miss Ayre was Jane though I don't think any of us had ever read the book or in many cases heard of it. If we couldn't think of a nickname then 'old' usually prefaced their name, hence Mr Swan became old Swanny. Of course these alternative names were not used within the hearing of the teachers . . . except on one memorable occasion by 'Sludge' Pullen. Not only did Sludge call out things about "Old Swanny", he did it in front of all the boys in the school. On this particular day Sludge had decided he deserved a day's holiday from school but he couldn't resist seeing what he was missing. He hid behind a bank that overlooked the boys' playground and waited until we lined up in our classes ready to be dismissed line by line back into the school. Mr Swann stood in front of us all but before he could start dismissing us Sludge's voice rang out from behind the bank with his views on "Old Swanny". Andy Warhol famously said that everyone will be famous for fifteen minutes; this was Sludge's glorious fifteen minutes' worth.

Going into school was not the casual affair it is today. Before we lined up in the playground there were two whistles, on the first we had to stand still wherever we were; on the second we had to walk to the asphalt playground. Once inside the school prefects were stationed around the corridor to ensure we walked in single file. I suppose with one narrow corridor linking all the classrooms this prevented any accidents.

None of our teachers were ineffective . Mr Harris, the sports teacher stands out for, well just for being the sports teacher; I liked all sports except for gymnastics. In this sporting activity I found common cause with the shivering, non-sporting individuals forlornly hoping that Mr Harris wouldn't notice their failure to progress from the back of the queues waiting to use the different equipment. They wore a ragbag collection of sporting attire that might have fitted someone at sometime in the past but now hung limply and shabbily from their unexercised bodies. It was the year Mr Harris spent teaching us maths that most impressed me. We had a maths textbook with pictures in it and pictures of cricket and football matches at that. With sums involving batting and goal averages I was hooked and for one glorious year I came close to the top of the class in maths. Needless to say it was never achieved again and faced with algebra and geometry I sank without trace.

When I think about it now the teacher who deserved the most respect and appreciation was Mr Steele but our reward for his efforts was to call him Worzel. So to make amends I'm giving him his own paragraph. Mr Steele taught a number of subjects, had wide ranging interests and organised out of school activities; he was the closest St Bede's came to a polymath. He taught me science, English, geography and gardening - or rather I remember idly standing around trying to eat gooseberries as inconspicuously as possible while he was explaining how to cultivate the soil. Mr Steele was the only teacher that used the environment to teach subjects normally taught in the classroom. For several lessons we walked around the village while he interpreted features of the landscape, its history, its flora and fauna. He gave up his time on Saturdays to take those interested

to local museums. He ran a hockey club after school and organised matches against the few other schools in the area that played it. One year together with Miss Ayre he organised a school trip to Germany where he amused us greatly with his baggy shorts and scrawny legs. When we returned he developed and printed any photographs we had taken. Sadly it is only now so many years later that I can appreciate Mr Steele's considerable efforts to make learning interesting and his wide-ranging knowledge, interests and ability.

While some of the lessons must have been interesting I seem only to have remembered the amusing incidents that happened during them. Scripture lessons were dull until a new boy who clearly hadn't much religious experience before sat next to me. His lack of knowledge prompted him to indulge in some revisionist spelling of biblical names. The Old Testament prophet Amos became after his whimsical re-working A.Moss; it amused me to speculate what he thought the A stood for: Albert? Alan? Arthur?

On the other side of the educational divide from the teachers were the three hundred or so motley pupils from Send, East Clandon, West Clandon, Ockham and Ripley. The gender divide continued from primary school with separate entrances and playgrounds; even on the playing field where though there was no barrier we maintained an invisible dividing line. We were divided in other ways too. There was a house system, the names reflecting a more rural past and perhaps our plebeian future: Weavers were green, Potters blue, Thatchers yellow and Farriers red. Trusted pupils in their last year were slightly elevated to the position of prefect or even higher to Head Boy or Head Girl. Yes we may have only been a lowly Secondary Modern but we could emulate the great public schools with our uniforms, houses, prefects and in later years a tuck shop.

The tuck shop was set up in the woodwork room and customers were served through an open window. The sweets were bought by those with a taste for sweetness not satisfied by school desserts. Some of those desserts I hadn't seen before or eaten since: semolina, or as we knew it frogspawn, was served with a dollop of strawberry jam in the middle that we swirled around until the semolina was pink. Another local authority dessert novelty was chocolate sponge with a pink sort of custard. Those pupils less dexterous with their use of cutlery or whose hunger overwhelmed any decorum they might have had were warned not to accumulate "dinner medals" on their blazer lapels. We warned each other about the dangers of sprinkling vinegar on your food because it "dried the blood". All this took place on tables of eight; the head of the table served the meat and his two assistants the potatoes and vegetables. Looking down on us as we sat there with our gravy splattered lapels were the teachers who were having their lunch served to them on the stage

Lunch time football and cricket matches between house teams took place every year. Cricket matches were played on a concrete strip covered with coconut matting. Thatchers had a lethal fast bowler called Brian Powell who soon realised that bowling at my legs was a sure way to get me out. As he began his run up I desperately tried to appear casually unconcerned and as the ball thundered towards my legs I skipped out of the way with immense nonchalance hoping it would appear a brilliantly conceived strategy. As I often didn't see exactly where the ball was going until it smashed into my wicket I fear a certain indecision, bred of fear, might well have been spotted in my insouciant reaction to Brian's bowling.

Given that each house only had about thirty boys to pick from and sporting talent wasn't evenly spread, some houses fielded weak teams; no more so than Farriers football team. Their team consisted of the almost totally unskilled and uncommitted boys who hadn't been brave enough to

refuse to play. Except that is for two players. Pat and Brian Finn were the best and most competitive footballers in the school, determined to win despite the footballing buffoons that made up the rest of Farriers team. The most inept of them stood aimlessly where they were told, unaware and unconcerned about what was going on around them. The only possibility of them getting involved was if a stray ball from the opposition struck them before they had time to get out of the way. Those more imaginative, or those frightened of the Finns, pretended to attempt tackles while making sure no physical contact was involved. Others suspecting a ball might be heading their way sprinted off in an attempt to show enthusiasm, meanwhile the ball passed harmlessly in their wake. The Finns ignored the more inert of their colleagues and furiously ran around trying to beat the opposition on their own. The inadequacies of the Farriers team were cruelly exposed when they played Thatchers, a team of boys who could all actually play football. Sporting competitions weren't the only way we could demonstrate our incompetence. Each year a verse speaking competition was held where pupils could talk about a hobby or subject that interested them. Needless to say I have forgotten all of them, except the knowledge of Stanley Matthews' life that I shared with the school one year ... and the cacti presentation. The curtain was drawn back to reveal on stage a small boy engulfed by what seemed hundreds of cacti of various shapes and sizes arranged on desks and tables. There was no doubt of his enthusiasm for his cacti collection as each cactus was lifted up and exhaustive detail about it and its care was given to a somewhat bemused and baffled group of kids. Delightfully it began to dawn on us that at the rate he was getting through them he could use up the rest of the school term. Knowing smiles and sniggers began to circulate while the pint-sized cacti expert went relentlessly on. We saw teachers begin to fidget and look at their watches until finally the Mr Short intervened, thanked the pupil and regretted the lack of time to complete his presentation. The requested applause helped to stifle the giggling as the curtain fell in front of a small boy surrounded by cacti, many of whose watering regimes we were destined never to find out.

Then there was the house point competition. Good work and good behaviour was rewarded by good house points. However much more attractive to many 13 year old boys (me included) was the awarding of bad house points. Bad house points were machismo: good house points were for wimps and girls. On one of our daily assemblies, once a month I think, those pupils with the highest number of house points, good or bad, had their names read out, told to stand up and their house point totals given to the whole school. This was obviously meant to shape behaviour through shame and honour; unfortunately many of those with impressive bad house point totals thought it more of an honour. Try as I might I never achieved the highest total of bad house points; Roy Chapman from Ockham usually beat me. This was a mystery to me. He was in my class and never seemed to misbehave or distinguish himself in any other way; perhaps I was too busy misbehaving to notice or teachers deliberately manipulated the figures to deny me top spot. Roy, who was the son of a Canadian serviceman, told us that his proper name was Leroy, meaning as he told us proudly, the king. Well he certainly was as far as bad house points were concerned.

One year we had a talent show which I only remember because of the skiffle group that took part. The name of the bass player has gone from my memory, the wash board was played by John Constantine and the guitar player was Eric Clapton. Eric went on to gain world wide acclaim as a blues guitarist: I went on to gain pub and bar acclaim as his school friend!! To be honest Eric wasn't really a friend, he wasn't in my class, being younger he was in the form below me but in such a small school we all knew each other.

## FORTHCOMING EVENTS

The opening times of our museum are on the next page. Following on from our recent exhibition featuring Ripley and Send just before the first World War, the latest theme is “Lest We Forget” which can be viewed until mid-September and features life during the war.

**Sat 19 July** – Ripley Summer Event on Ripley Green. Help urgently required for erecting the Society’s tent and stand in the morning and for staffing it during the afternoon. Offers, please, to Clare McCann, or just turn up and help.

**Fri. 25 July** – BBQ for members, spouses/partners and invitees of members. Details as in Journal 236 or contact Clare McCann to see if there are any spaces left.

**NB.** No meeting in August

### THE AUTUMN PROGRAMME

**Tues. 16 Sept** – An illustrated talk by Judie English on ‘Iron Age Hill Forts in Surrey’ to be held in Ripley Village Hall starting at 8pm.

**Tues. 21 Oct** – An illustrated talk on “Roman Guildford” by Rebecca Lambert.

**Tues. 18 Nov** – “The Gaiety Girl” – The story of Marjorie Goddard of Ripley told by her daughter, Gaye Burt.

Please ring me, Anne Bowerman, on 01483 224876, if you have any queries about the programme.

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**Journal Contributions:** Closing date for the next issue is **Tuesday 26 August 2014.**

Will authors of illustrated articles please submit **original photographic prints** if at all possible to ensure reasonably good reproduction in the Journal.

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**Contact Les Bowerman on 01483-224876  
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to help in the museum.**

**HISTORY SOCIETY PUBLICATIONS**

‘Ripley & Send Then and Now; The Changing Scene of Surrey Village Life’ (Reprinted 1998 and 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&7) £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
<b>Special Offer - Purchase ‘Newark Priory’ and ‘St Mary’s Ripley’</b>	<b>£10.00</b>

**All the publications are available from the Museum on Saturday mornings, or from Ripley Post Office. The reprinted copy of ‘Ripley & Send Then & Now’, ‘Two Surrey Village Schools’ and ‘Memories of War’ can also be obtained from Send Post Office. All publications are available via the Society’s website [www.sendandripleyhistorysociety.co.uk](http://www.sendandripleyhistorysociety.co.uk)**



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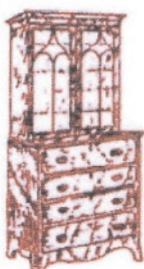
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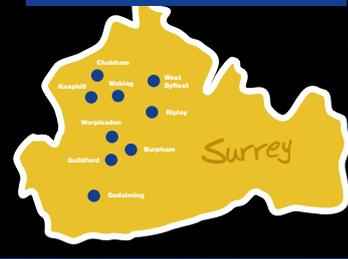
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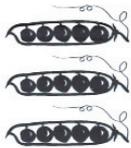


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