



Mickleham & Westhumble Local History Group NEWSLETTER

Volume 8 – March 2021 Editor: Sue Tatham

The Chairman writes ...

All our planned events had to be cancelled after the AGM in late February 2020 due to restrictions imposed during the Covid-19 pandemic. However, some work including, data recording, archiving and research have continued in a limited way. The 2021 AGM in February was held via Zoom with 27 members

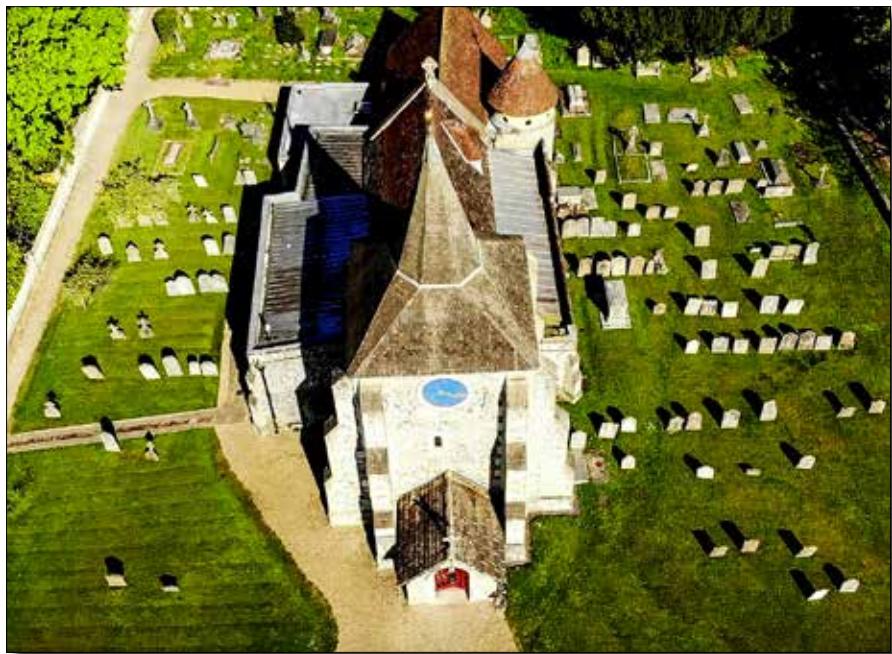
joining, including our overseas member, David Flint from California and two new members, Robert Reid and Simon Batchelor who had spent parts of their childhood in Mickleham. So that the meeting was legitimate we were required to amend our Rules to read: *Meetings may be held online or by telephone.*

Our subscription covers a household with an approximate membership of 43, including four new members. At this year's AGM it was agreed to waive fees for 2021 as last year's events were cancelled and so far, we have been unable to plan anything for the coming year. We hope that we can arrange an event in the autumn. Ben Tatham

Task Group Report: The Churchyard

We were hoping to have finished transferring the churchyard inscriptions onto an Excel spreadsheet by the end of 2020, but this project has proved to be more time-consuming than anticipated and is not expected to be completed until later this year. Covid restrictions have also made it more difficult to go back to the churchyard to check the original inscriptions where there are discrepancies between our transcriptions and the burial records. However, we have been able to identify a significant number of the unmarked graves from the numbering systems used in previous burial records.

Inspired by the Matt Clark's drone photograph (right), later in the summer Roger Davis used his drone to take more detailed shots of the various sections of the churchyard to assist with the drawing up of a plan of the graves. This will be used with the spreadsheet to locate the



Drone photograph of the churchyard taken in May 2020 by Matt Clark

exact position of a particular burial. It is planned that this will be made

available on St Michael's and the local history groups' websites. Judith Long

The History of Mickleham Village Hall

Ben Tatham's historical record of the village hall building and surrounding area their many changes over the last

118 years has been completed and will be published soon. Angela Ireland is now compiling an account of all the

various activities that have been held in the hall, using old parish magazines and other records.

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The Group's website

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Manager: Roger Davis

M&WLHG Programme for 2021

Due to restrictions associated with the corona virus pandemic the following events were cancelled:

- Visit to Holloway Sanatorium, Virginia Water
- Guided tour of Newdigate.
- Beating the Parish Bounds.

and to date we have been unable to plan any events for 2021.

Members will be notified if we are able to resume activities later in the year.

Editor's note: As the reports of group activities are quite short, we have included a few additional articles and photographs from the 2020 parish magazines which readers might find interesting.

Worms, ashes and bones: excavations at Cocks Farm Abinger 1877-2019

Following the AGM of the M&WLHG on 21st February, members were treated to a fascinating talk by Emma Corke about the archaeological excavations at Cocks Farm in Abinger. The site lies hidden from view just north of the A25 Guildford Road. In 1875 Emma's great-great-grandfather, Thomas Henry Farrer, bought Cocks Farm where he planned to have a large kitchen garden made for his new house Abinger Hall. While the gardeners were digging up the ground for the garden, they unearthed part of a Roman villa. Unfortunately, the Farrers were away and by the time they returned most of the remains had been broken up. In 1877 Thomas Farrer continued the excavations and some of the walls in the villa were found. The Builder magazine published a plan of these findings in 1878. Farrer also invited Charles Darwin to the site because he knew of Darwin's interest in the effect of earthworms on ancient buildings. The Farrer and Darwin families were closely connected as Thomas Farrer had recently married Charles Darwin's niece. A few years later Farrer's daughter Ida married Darwin's son Horace. Darwin asked for two trenches to be dug on the site and conducted a number of experiments on worm casts. He also drew a section through the site which caused confusion during more recent excavations because it did not conform to modern archaeological practices.

The next significant event at the site occurred more than a century later when a tree blew over in 1990 and revealed a tessellated floor beneath the roots. After some of the tree was removed the stump and roots fell back into place and covered up the floor! Later in the 1990s the Surrey Archaeological Society began further excavations, hoping to learn more about the extent of the villa and to assist English Heritage in designating the site as a Scheduled Ancient Monument. The team was also hoping to pinpoint the location of Darwin's original section but this was found by Emma more

than a decade later. A hypocaust system was discovered, thought to have heated rooms used as a bathhouse. As excavations continued a variety of Roman artefacts and building materials were found, including pieces of tile, tesserae and pottery.

During the last decade investigations have extended to the area surrounding the villa, aided by modern scientific techniques. A rare Roman lime kiln for burning chalk was found to the east of the villa. Radiocarbon dating of charcoal at the bottom of the pit confirmed it dates from the Roman period. Magnetometry, which is particularly useful for identifying buried features containing burnt material, has located numerous ditches (most likely built as a defence against animals) and pits. These have provided evidence that the land was occupied centuries before the Roman era. Many of the pits date back to the Iron Age and the larger ones are thought to have been used for grain storage. Some contained ritual offerings or were cremation pits. Quern stones, used for grinding grain, potin (metal alloy) coins and pottery were found in several of them. One unusual pit was closed with a slab of Horsham stone and contained pig and cattle jawbones.

Pieces of Bronze Age and Neolithic pottery were also found.

There are a large number of post holes on the site and we learned how information can be obtained from their size and spacing. Several sets of post holes about 2m apart show the position of fencelines whereas closely spaced holes in rectangular patterns indicate where buildings once stood, in this case probably for agricultural use. Emma also believes there was a Roman vineyard. There are a series of shallow trenches with post holes where the soil is of better quality than in the surrounding area. The dimensions match those in descriptions of Roman vineyards.

One final curious discovery caught our attention. Several bovid skeletons were found buried in individual graves, each with its head bent backwards and legs crossed. They were all aged between three and nine months. This was not part of some strange Iron Age ritual as radiocarbon dating of the bones indicated they could not be more than about 350 years old. It is now thought they died from rinderpest (cattle plague), a viral disease which has only recently been eradicated.

Judith Long



Above left: Work in progress on site. Right top: Pig and cattle jaw bones deposited in an Iron Age grain storage pit. Right bottom: Quern deposited in an Iron Age pit.

Memories of VE Day

Reprinted from the May 1995 Mickleham Parish Magazine

During the celebration of the 50th anniversary of VE Day we asked local residents to recall their memories of that day.

VICTORY in EUROPE (VE) Day was the long awaited day that marked the end of six shattering years of World War II and the beginning of peace and a gradual return to normal living, with reunited families re-building their lives and getting back on their feet. There were great celebrations on 8th May 1945 in London where thousands of people thronged to rejoice in the hard-fought victory. The King and Queen acknowledged the cheering crowds from the balcony of Buckingham Palace and the two princesses were allowed to go down into the Mall and join in the festivities. Up and down the British Isles, in all cities, towns and villages people joined together to celebrate this momentous historical event - and Mickleham was no exception!

We have been asking people in Westhumble and Mickleham what they were doing on VE Day. Many were at school and can remember having an extra holiday and everyone recalled the 'street parties' that took place in the localities in which they were living at the time. Here is an account of what people had to say about this historic occasion:

Ken Kilburn recounts that 'Chinese clocks were 7 hours ahead of Double British Summer Time, so in our little Himalayan village VE Day came early. We had followed the last days of the European war through BBC overseas transmissions, and were slightly bemused that something so dramatic and destructive was finally over. Our HQ in nearby Kunming arranged a party for the following Saturday. Americans, Chinese and other British came and there was dancing and drinking till the early hours. But the radio links had to be manned and teleprinters kept going. The Jap war had several months to run. Then we could celebrate properly.'

David Moffat heard the news via the radio in Secunderabad, Central Province where he was recovering from typhoid in a base hospital after serving in Burma at the time when Japan had begun to retreat towards Rangoon. (We hope publish his full story in August when we remember VJ Day.)

Brian Whinney was 'somewhere on the Rangoon River' on board *HMS Waveney* when they received a General Fleet Signal announcing the end of the War and issuing that most popular command: SPLICE THE MAINBRACE!

Peggy Lindsay was a WRAF Radar Operator stationed on the Norfolk coast and recalls a colleague coming into the Operations Room and saying 'it's all over'. Immediately she heard a *Shaky do* (wild mess party) being planned. However, her thoughts were more on getting to Birmingham as soon as possible to be de-mobbed and re-join her husband, Alan, who by that time had returned from naval service in India and was stationed on Hayling Island.

Edward Thomas remembers VE Day not so much for any external happening but for two acutely felt inner reactions. 'I was on board the Home Fleet flagship, the battleship *H.M.S. Duke of York* in Scapa Flow, that splendid inland sea surrounded by the Orkney Islands which is one of the finest sights in the United Kingdom. The Flow was filled with northern sunlight in which the great ships of the Home Fleet, resting after operations in the Arctic, shone with an even greater beauty than they did ordinarily. This was the scene when signals arrived from the Admiralty announcing the end of the war with Germany.'

Ruth Dyson Thomas: On the morning of the 8th May 1945 I was rehearsing in London with my colleagues of the New English Trio and at noon we dived underground into the *Mainly Musicians Club* for a hasty lunch. The MMC was a cosy little refuge adjoining the Oxford Street tube station. Run by the 'cellist May Mukle it was always full of familiar faces and on that occasion Vaughan Williams was there.

For two years, as the Home Fleet's intelligence officer, my life had been bound up, to the exclusion of all else, with the Fleet's operations in northern waters, off the Norwegian coast, and on the Arctic convoy route to North Russia. I had been intensely proud at having been in the thick of many of these operations, at my close association with the ships of the Home Fleet and its officers and men. I loved the ships for their beauty and their embodiment of Britain's genius for engineering and the seamanship which had shaped Britain's history. But they were essentially things for war: and with Admiralty's sudden announcement the feeling equally suddenly came over me that all this glorious assemblage was now futile and without point. It was a very long

time before I could comfort myself with the reflection that there was a place for it in peacetime. But that reflection was poor recompense for the sudden evaporation of that spiritual élan which had kept us all going through almost six years of war.

My second reaction was of panic. The war had filled my life and not for a moment had I thought of what might follow it. I had joined the Navy scarcely out of college and my lack of other than general qualifications for peacetime had not mattered during the war when insecurity and competition were in abeyance. But I was now suddenly confronted with the collapse of this artificial stability. Ian Fleming at the Admiralty had promised to put my name forward for a job in Whitehall intelligence. But I hardly thought I had an earthly when pitted against the big, self-confident personalities I had met in wartime intelligence. Nor was I sure that that is what I wanted to do in life. A glory had gone out of things.'

Ruth Dyson Thomas: On the morning of the 8th May 1945 I was rehearsing in London with my colleagues of the New English Trio and at noon we dived underground into the *Mainly Musicians Club* for a hasty lunch. The MMC was a cosy little refuge adjoining the Oxford Street tube station. Run by the 'cellist May Mukle it was always full of familiar faces and on that occasion Vaughan Williams was there.

In the middle of lunch the receptionist, a modest lady whom most of us had only ever seen behind her desk, walked into the restaurant and made a brief and unemotional announcement, 'Ladies and Gentlemen, the War is over ...'

The place exploded. Vaughan Williams began it by embracing every woman in sight – including me and my companion, the violinist Gwyneth Trotter. A few minutes later he murmured to me: 'Who was that nice lady I've just kissed?'

Later we all emerged up the dark little staircase into Argyll Street where it appeared to be snowing. Miles of ticker tape were showering down

from office windows, whistles blew, sirens wailed the ALL CLEAR, people danced ... Indeed, the war was over.

Pat Wade recalls 'one of my few claims to fame happened to me whilst celebrating VE Day. Due to my mother's artistic ideas and skill with her sewing machine I was the little blond-haired girl who won first prize at the fancy dress party held in the street, dressed in my realistic gollywog costume. I could hardly breathe under a complete golly head mask topped by a piece of curly rag rug Mother had dyed black in a bucket on the coke boiler. Of course, this costume would be considered somewhat racist nowadays, but I remember feeling very proud in my colourful waistcoat, spotted bow tie and smart trousers, all made from bits and pieces from the sewing box. My younger sister was equally eye-catching in her jockey outfit also made by Mother, complete with racing colours of pink, gold and brown and she won 3rd prize. I bet the rest of the kids in the street hated us - at least for the rest of the day!'

Peter Curran was one of the thousands cheering outside Buckingham Palace. As a Boy Scout of 14, he recalls having manned a stirrup pump and helped in the installation of air-raid shelters at people's homes during the war.

Janet Curran has vivid memories of her father uncharacteristically dancing to *Knees up Mother Brown* at their street party in Banstead.

Doug Wade claims 'my memories about VE Day are a little hazy being but a babe in arms at the time (well OK a bit older than that) but I can recollect the impending sense of euphoria climaxing with a huge street party, with the children in fancy dress and home-made bunting stretched across the road. The evening was enlivened by dancing in the street and a huge bonfire. All the children were allowed to stay up and much drink was consumed by the adults and by about 10 pm when the bonfire was dying down, my mother, in a fit of patriotism, decided to donate our huge settee to the flames. This settee was something of a family relic, being stuffed with horsehair and weighing a ton. My mother always hated it and was only looking for such an excuse to get rid of it and so she inveigled four strong and somewhat inebriated men



The fancy dress wedding at the King Willy.

to consign it to the flames. Upon being turned upside down the settee produced a cornucopia of coins and other long-forsaken treasures which I, with much competition from my brother, gathered up. Such was the heat from the bonfire it melted the road and a fairly substantial crater was in evidence the next morning and many of the adjacent houses had sustained cracked windows. In celebration, we had caused rather more damage than Hitler had inflicted upon us the whole of the war!'

Ian Fraser lived in Cheam in May 1945 and says that 'VE Day was expected any day. Much to my delight, the boarding school holidays were extended to enable me to join in the celebrations with my parents. We were invited to an impromptu street party where the guest of honour was the late Sir Sydney Marshall, the prospective Conservative MP for Sutton and Cheam and also head of Marshall Foods who 'catered for those with a less discerning palate'. The party must have gone with a swing and perhaps I had a drink or two because Mr Marshall referred to me throughout the evening as 'that Frightful Fellow Fraser'!'

Joyce Cross was in her thirties when peace was proclaimed, living at *The King William IV* public house in Bytton Hill where her father was publican. She has fond memories of the party which was held shortly after VE Day at the pub. Many of the villagers went in fancy dress – her father was dressed as a lady and her brother as a nurse holding a baby, whilst she dressed up as a little old lady. Harold and Stan Miles went as a bride and groom with the 'bride' carrying a bouquet of cow

parsley and buttercups (and causing a bit of a stir when 'she' went to the Ladies!). Joyce remembers that the evening was full of fun and laughter and they all dressed up again a few days afterwards to have a formal photograph taken (this time with 'proper' flowers for the bride!). This photograph still hangs in *The King William IV* in memory of how Mickleham marked the end of World War II.

Noeline Arvold tells us 'I fear my recollections will disappoint all who read them, for readers will surely expect to learn of celebrations and festivities. I saw none that day as my commitments kept me in Dorking with Civil Defence colleagues at Pippbrook and at home with the evacuees.'

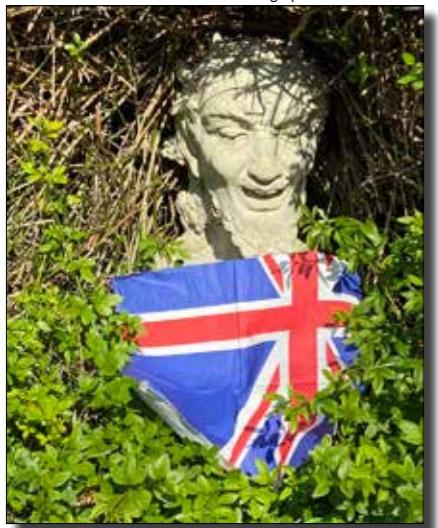
The day for me was one joyous RUSH, and there was untold rejoicing at *Foxbury*. With my help five jubilant children removed the black-out, they sang, danced about and made a tremendous noise. Parents 'phoned to say they were on their way to take them home and somehow their possessions were collected and packed. What a party! Something to eat (*Woolton pie**, I fear), hugs and kisses all round, and then they all went home. There were five small cardboard boxes left behind which I put in the dustbin now and I regret it. They held their gas masks. I would have liked to have kept them.

'That night was clear and still. No droning of enemy 'planes – I could hardly believe it. I stood outside for a while and I remember saying – Thank You, God.'

* *Woolton pie* (named after the Minister for Food) is a pastry dish of vegetables, widely served in Britain in WW2 due to shortages of other ingredients.

Celebrating the 75th Anniversary of VE Day in Lockdown Service of Commemoration

Photograph: Susie Gowenlock



Canon John and Sue Harkin presided over a 'virtual service' at 10 am. on Friday 8th May, to commemorate the 75th Anniversary of VE Day. A congregation of at least 66 people (and one dog) – logged in via Zoom with desktops, laptops, iPads, and smartphones, to share in a very uplifting service of thanksgiving, and of encouragement in these very worrying times. How lovely it was to see so many of our regular congregation, and also some less familiar faces, and to feel everyone joining in fellowship, with song and prayer – even though the slight time lag in Zoom transmission

meant that our voices had to be muted so that we did not all appear to be singing at different tempos! With newly-acquired technical wizardry John logged on to recordings of 'Songs of Praise' and even an Albert Hall Remembrance Concert to accompany our three hymns and the National Anthem. Our 40 minutes of free Zoom time ran out just as we completed the first verse of 'Guide me O Thou Great Redeemer ... Feed me till I want no more. We were left wanting more ... and hoping that some more virtual services can be arranged.

Richard Siberry

Other Festivities

This year the date of the Spring Bank Holiday was changed from the usual first Monday in May to VE Day, Friday 8th May in order to celebrate its 75th Anniversary. Due to the present corona virus pandemic, these celebrations were rather low key. There were, of course, commemorative programmes on television including a broadcast by HM The Queen. Locally there were several socially-distanced 'street parties' held in back gardens and on the verges of our very quiet roads.

In Dell Close a party was organised by the Flints, which Mary describes here: We decided that we had to do something to commemorate this important date as we have three neighbours who were there on the actual VE Day; Mary Tobitt, Jim Robinson and Derek Bailey. Social distancing was observed but time was



Mary Tobitt (inset: her father Ben Hatter)

short. There were plenty of things on the internet that could be downloaded and printed eg. banners, invitations, bunting etc, so we rolled up our sleeves, printed off the invitations and gave them to everyone in Dell Close Cottages to meet at 3.30 and raise a glass or two. As our back gardens have access onto the recreation ground we could all sit just outside our own gardens and still be two metres away.

On the day we pinned paper Union Jacks onto our existing bunting and draped it around the hedges. Jim Robinson provided a Union Jack flag he still had from his boy scout days and at the appointed time we all came outside with our own chairs and our own drinks. Unfortunately, no-one had enough flour or butter to make any cakes or scones as we only had two days to plan it, but everyone had plenty of wine, prosecco, beer, tea or coffee. We had downloaded suitable music from the era and everyone had a great time. Just that simple act of being together and sharing memories really uplifted our spirits while in lockdown.

Mary Tobitt writes...

My father CPO Ben Hatter was a Ship's Carpenter on HMS Vanguard (Battleship). At the end of the war he was stationed at Hayling Island to be near Portsmouth. My mother and I went to be with him and stayed with another family in a house overlooking the sea. I missed the VE Day celebrations in Dorking but what excited me more was the view of the



Mary and Eric Flint



Derek Bailey

sea from our sitting room. I was nine years old and very proud of my father. I was also pleased that after my mother died, he was able to live with me here in Mickleham for the last 14 years of his life.



1945 VE Day Street Party in Lincoln Road, Dorking. Jim Robinson is first on the left in the front row.

Derek Bailey writes...

I was 17 years when a few weeks before the end of the war I volunteered to join the RAF. On VE day I was living in Brighton and had a great time. There

were street parties everywhere. Lots to drink and a girl on each arm. Not long after that I was posted to South East Asia and spent three and a half years in Malaya.



Rosemary and Jim Robinson

Jim Robinson writes...

I can't remember very much about VE day except that we had a street party. I was only five years old and my father didn't return until 1946

From May 2020 Mickleham Parish Magazine

Reprinted from the May 1995 Mickleham Parish Magazine The WI – in wartime crisis!

It is an amazing fact that anyone arriving from another planet, or not being otherwise in the know, would be unable to tell from reading the minutes of the monthly meetings of Mickleham and Westhumble Women's Institute - which continued throughout World War II – that a war of world scale proportions was in progress! There is not a mention, hint or even the slightest reference to the tremendous influence and disruption the war was having on local life – events, food rationing, accommodation of evacuees, etc. It seems that even bombs landing did not interfere with the noble institution of the WI. However, it must in fairness be added that WI members did contribute a great deal to ease difficulties in many practical ways ... it's just that they never thought it was worth recording. Bearing in mind all that was going on at the time, you might, therefore, be interested to read the minutes of the WI meetings, both at the beginning and at the end of the War:-

10th May 1945

The meeting opened with the National Anthem. A suggestion has been made regarding the condition of lamp posts, etc – a letter to be sent to Mr Gordon Clark as Council representative. Regarding a letter from the Secretary of the Welcome Home Fund, it was agreed to hold a Whist Drive to raise money for this fund.

Report of the Sub-Committee for the Produce Show. The schedule was presented to members and was well discussed, various items being added.

A party from the Dorking Townswomen's Guild entertained members with recitations and songs. It was much appreciated.



Harold and Stan Miles – the bridal couple in the King Willy's VE Day celebrations (see p5)

A Spelling Bee was also arranged by them and seven members competed against seven visitors. The visitors proved the winners.

Tea was served by Mrs Fairs and her helpers and the competition for a book on wild flowers brought several entrants, the winner being Mrs Knight.

See what I mean! Mo Chisman

More memories of wartime: After VE Day

Reprinted from the 1995 Mickleham Parish Magazine

Life in China as VJ Day Approaches

Many readers will remember Ken Kilburn who lived in Pilgrims Way for many years

Three weeks on a troop ship, a three-day rail journey to the southern tip of India and a boat across to Ceylon had left me travel-weary. Then my boss in Kandy told me I was to go to China. So, up to Calcutta, a three-week wait for a 'plane, then over the 'Hump', (the Eastern Himalayas) to Kunming, the capital of the province of Yunnan. Our radio station was thirteen miles out of town in the home of Miss Tindall, an Anglican missionary who had kindly moved out into an outbuilding to let us use the main house. We were at a height of 6,000 feet in the foothills of the Himalayas. The northern end of the Burma Road was a few hundred yards away, and Tibet was up and over the mountains.

Unlike the Germans in Europe, the Japs had occupied only a limited area of China - Peking, Nanking and coastal cities such as Shanghai, and Hong Kong and the communication routes between. Large areas were unoccupied and agents with wireless sets were stationed there to keep an eye on what the Japs were doing. We also provided wireless links for the so-called British Army Aid group, whose real purpose was to get prisoners out of POW camps in Hong Kong.

A radio link that affected me more personally was the one operating to agents in French Indochina (modern Vietnam). We had equipped the

Frenchmen with portable sets and pedal-operated battery-chargers for their journey south by horse and mule and then passed on their messages to the Free French. My particular interest was that the radio set for this link was on a table in my bedroom and I was regularly awakened early by a wireless operator coming in to open up the first transmission of the day. It was in my bedroom because it was strictly illegal.

The majority of the transmitters and receiving sets were in a special radio hut, all duly licensed by the Chinese authorities. But Indochina, like Tibet, was one of those border regions over which China had had a long-standing territorial claim against the French. If we had applied for a permit to transmit to French guerrillas in Indochina it would never have been granted. I think the authorities knew but looked away in the interests of solidarity against the Japanese.

The official free Chinese government at this time was that of Chiang Kai-shek in Chungking, but away to the north-west, were the rebel communist forces of Mao Tse-Tung, anathema to Chiang, who, however, took no action against them for the duration of the anti-Jap war. As in Europe, Churchill maintained his policy of supporting virtually anyone who would fight the enemy. In the Far East we gave support to Mao and had links with him - radio links too, another unlicensed set. One of our British signals

officers was actually with Mao in Sian. Life in our compound was pretty uneventful - our diet was a mixture of Chinese and western food, the weather was mild, there were some good walks in the hills and some superb Buddhist carvings in hillside shrines; we had a party once a month when the RAF brought in the rations; there was a splendid lake with sampans and egrets. Our cable linking the station with the office in town was regularly stolen by the local thieves.

VJ Day brought local celebrations and a garden party in the local state governor's compound. There were dragons and plenty of fireworks, though I remember thinking that skyrockets in the daytime were rather a waste. Then trouble between the local governor and Chiang's central government led to fighting and the arrival of the 3rd Route Army from Burma, one of the toughest bunches of men I have ever seen. We kept within our compound walls for three days until it was all over, and the governor's side was duly suppressed. I remember the first day after the fighting stopped, I drove the jeep into the town and had to take care to steer round bodies of dead soldiers in the road. Meanwhile released prisoners from POW and internment camps in Hong Kong began to arrive - a pitiful group of very thin people, delighted to be on their way home at last.

The end of the war saw changes in our transmissions - messages no longer had to be encoded and we could use plain English. The Far Eastern airwaves became full of intelligible Morse messages and voices, mostly American. Radio amateurs of pre-war days, 'hams' now in the services, took up their old hobby, using service equipment, of course, and all unlicensed. We did a bit of it, contacting hams in Hanoi, and even in Germany before we were told to stop.

So our job was at an end. Some were drafted to Hong Kong. I was drafted to India and a more routine army life.

Ken Kilburn



Recently acquired for the archive: Dell Close circa 1913 with Eastfield Cottage at the end and the village hall on the right.

Mickleham and Westhumble Local History Group

The History of Mickleham Church

Part IV Graffiti in St Michael's

Over the ages graffiti has appeared in all sorts of public places and our church is no exception. The first recorded example is the date 1018 which was found marked in red on the plaster coating by the tower during the rebuilding of the church in 1823. Antiquarians are doubtful if the tower was actually built at that date but suggest that it recorded the rebuilding of the nave. Churchwarden and historian Archibald Gordon Pollock (1850-1936) pointed out that there was a major Viking invasion at the end of the 10th century and the nave may have been damaged then. The Vikings often targeted church buildings during their raids.

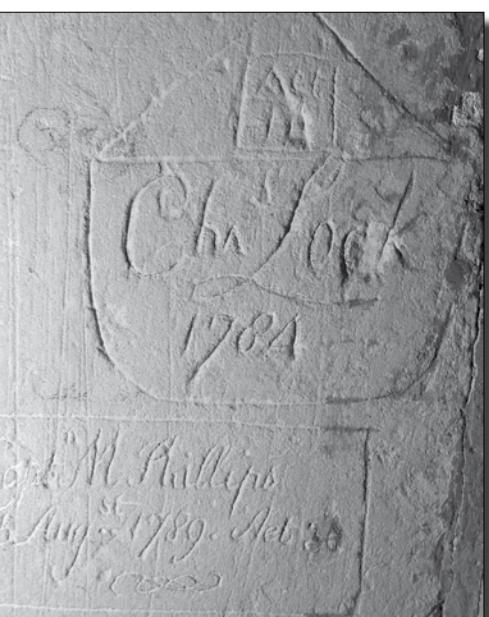
Although there are numerous examples of names or initials with ancient or more recent dates to be found scratched into the plaster or wood in the church, there are two in the Norbury Chapel that are particularly noteworthy. Readers may remember that in my last article about the Norbury Chapel I explained how, after the dissolution of the monasteries (late 1530s) the residents of Norbury Park started worshipping in William Wyddowson's mortuary chapel then known as the Norbury Pew. The graffiti shown here has been carved into the eastern end of Wyddowson's tomb. Charles Lock 1770 – 1804 would have been 14-years-old at the time. One can imagine a bored teenager seeking something to pass the time during a seemingly endless sermon. He was the second son of William Lock, who had purchased the Norbury Park estate in 1774. Charles became the British consul-general in Naples during the Neapolitan Revolution of 1799.

It is doubtful that Captain M Phillips, aged 34, would have defaced the tomb. As he was a friend of the Locks one suspects that it was one of the Lock boys who did the carving to mark Phillips' birthday. Molesworth Phillips was born in Ireland. His father was the natural son of the 3rd Viscount Molesworth, thus explaining Phillips' Christian name. He first entered the royal navy, but on the advice of his friend Sir Joseph

Banks who had joined Captain Cook's first voyage to the South Pacific as a botanist, Molesworth accepted a commission as second lieutenant in the royal marines in January 1776. In this capacity he was selected to accompany Captain Cook on his last voyage, extending over four years. On 14th January 1779 he was one of the party accompanying Captain Cook on his fateful trip ashore, and according to accounts of the day Phillips was the last man to leave Cook's side when, besieged by angry natives, he ordered 'to the boats'. Cook was attacked and killed as he waded out from shore. Phillips was a strong swimmer and although wounded, turned back to rescue a wounded colleague. When the ship arrived back in England in 1780, Phillips was given a hero's welcome.

So, what is Molesworth's connection with Mickleham? It happens that Phillips' shipmate on the voyage was his close friend, James Burney, brother of Fanny. Soon after returning to England James introduced his much-lauded friend to the Burney family. According to Fanny's biographer, Claire Harman, Molesworth, made a 'bee-line' for Fanny's sister Susan and within two months they were engaged. They married two years later. They moved to Mickleham and immediately became part of the Lock/D'Arblay social circle. Their house (long gone) was in the grounds of what is now Box Hill School, opposite the Old House and their gate can still be seen in Old London Road. They had two sons, Norbury and William, and a daughter, Frances. But all was not well in the household.

Following their return from the Pacific both James and Molesworth's naval careers foundered. Phillips never returned to active service. Harman suggests that after the adventures and challenges of years at sea both relatively young men found a more settled life difficult. She writes 'from the 1780s onward, James Burney showed signs of disturbance, restlessness in his home



life and an inability to further his career; Phillips metamorphosed into a gambler, drinker and philanderer.'

In 1795 Phillips inherited the Irish estate Beleotton and insisted on the family moving there. Susan had tried to keep her failing marriage from her family, but by this time her unhappiness was so great, she was planning a separation from Molesworth with the backing of her father. But as her eldest son, Norbury was at school in Dublin she knew if she refused to go to Ireland she would never see him again. She and the two younger children moved to Beleotton in 1796.

Susan's life in Ireland was difficult. The house was cold, damp and isolated and her tyrannical, controlling husband often left them alone while he was out with his friends. He had no qualms about getting to debt, never repaid a huge loan from Dr Burney, and often asked James for handouts. Susan, who had always been frail, became very ill, but Phillips put off her return to England until the end of December 1799. When they arrived in Parkgate Cheshire on 1st January 1799, after a long, cold and rough crossing, Susan was emaciated and suffering from dysentery. She died on 6th January 1800, the day after her 45th birthday.

Phillips remarried later that year and was later detained in France for two years. On his return to England he re-entered James' whist-playing circle. He lived in Lambeth and died of cholera there in 1832. He was buried in St Margaret's Church Westminster; James Burney was buried next to him.

Sue Tatham

More memories of wartime from the June 1995 Mickleham Parish Magazine

From VE Day to VJ Day—15th August 1945

Some readers may remember Leslie John who lived at the Old Stables, Juniper Hill for many years. He wrote of his experiences:

VE Day found me at Meiktila in the Central Burma plain where I was sharing a small tent with a lot of mosquitoes and an elusive black scorpion spider. Meiktila had just been the centre of a major tank battle and not much of it was left apart from a large lake into which it was rumoured a Japanese commander had led his defeated troops to drown rather than surrender.

Against this background our victory celebrations were somewhat restrained, the more so because all our supplies had to be flown in from Calcutta and the Army was on half rations. Nevertheless we sat down to our customary chicken curry and ate a great many mangoes, the only fruit available. Unfortunately the mangoes had been grown close to the aforesaid polluted water and shortly afterwards I was in the field hospital suffering from dysentery. The cure for this was to take 12 sulphaguanidine tablets (each about the size of a £1 piece and with a similar constituency) crushed in water three times a day, thus lining one's insides with a liquid cement.

I flew down to Rangoon in a Dakota to rejoin the Advanced HQ of the 14th Army where I was the Chief Cipher Officer. In the absence of any telephone or cable lines all communications - however mundane - between us and the outside world were enciphered and sent by high speed wireless. This had two main drawbacks: atmospheric conditions were bad for transmission and many of the place names were unpronounceable e.g. Ngakyedauk, so that you were never sure whether a message had been corrupted in transmission.

After the fall of Rangoon our troops were regrouped for the seaborne invasion of Malaya and things quietened down. We had a wonderful Forces paper run by Frank Owen, formerly a Fleet Street editor, and thus we were kept in touch with the adventures of 'Jane', the most popular pin up girl of

all time. We also learned that a general Election had been called at home. My opposite number at Mountbatten's HQ in Ceylon, Willy Ross, astonished us all by announcing his candidature for Kilmarnock. His unsympathetic colleagues congratulated him on finding a crafty way to secure an early passage home but he won the seat and went on to become Secretary of State for Scotland.

Alas another colleague, an amusing Irish character, came to a less happy end. His four interests in life were gin, gambling, gee-gees and girls. Our mess supplies of gin were getting dangerously low and as Tony was due for leave in Calcutta we entrusted him with a large sum in rupees to buy as much as he could. Unfortunately on his first day in Calcutta the races were on and Tony lost all our money. He overstayed his leave in the hope of redeeming his fortunes but was eventually brought back by the Military Police. Undaunted he fell back on his fourth interest whilst under open arrest and got engaged to a charming Irish nurse.

News of the atom bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki filtered through without our being able to assess their real significance. Thus it came as a total surprise when early in August I was working quietly in my office when the sergeant major on duty came in to tell me that a MOST IMMEDIATE TOP SECRET message had been received from the War Cabinet Office in London which began 'officer decipher' and required my attention. It was to advise the army commander that the Japanese surrender was shortly to be signed and that an aircraft would be arriving in Rangoon with their representatives to arrange the cease fire on our front!

The Japs duly flew in and we installed their signal officers in our General's own personal communications caravan so that they could transmit instructions back to Saigon. This they did very promptly whilst complaining bitterly of our radio equipment. We laughed at this at the time but post war events have proved them right.

Rangoon, once a beautiful city of lakes and temples dominated by the great

Shwedagon pagoda, with its golden spire rising over 300 feet (about 90 metres), was not in a fit state for a big victory parade but we did our best with Gracie Fields and a football match. Dressed in a very tight pair of bright green trousers which made the Shwedagon look rather dowdy she sang *Sally Pride of our Alley*.

Nothing prepared us for the shock of meeting our prisoners of war who had been working on the River Kwai railway. Physically they were walking skeletons, ridden with malaria, dysentery and beri-beri - badly swollen joints due to living entirely on rice - and covered in jungle sores that would never heal. Most distressing of all was the mental lethargy that came from being completely cut off from the world for 3 or 4 years and which left them unable to comprehend what had happened in their absence.

Our re-conquest of Burma met with a very different response from the local population from that which our troops in Europe had experienced. The Burmese were glad to see the Japs go but not pleased to see the British back. Some had fought against us with the Burma National Army under the leadership of Aung San, who prudently changed sides in the later stages of the war.

There were also the remnants of the Indian National Army formed by Subhas Chandra Bose, an astute Bengali politician, with substantial support in gold bullion from the Japs. There were no 'exit polls' in those days but Bose was well able to detect that his days were numbered. Accordingly he loaded the gold on to his own plane and flew off eastwards - neither he, nor the plane, nor the bullion were ever seen again. Another of the fortunes of war?

Shortly after VJ Day my repatriation orders came through. I flew back to Bombay to sail home on a P & O liner and was lucky to be allocated a banquette in the ship's cinema to sleep on during the long voyage. I recalled how, as a young subaltern outward bound in May 1943 to join a defeated Indian Army, I had shared

continued >>>

>>> a 1st class cabin with another officer and we had a batman to bring us tea in the morning and to make up our beds. Now, 2½ years later, homeward

bound and victorious, having served with Indian, Gurkha, West African and East African troops from the Khyber Pass in the north to Ceylon in the south,

and from Bangalore to Burma, how happy I was in my banquette. Such are the fortunes of war!

Leslie John

Geoff Suckling, late of Camilla Drive, joined the Royal Navy in 1939 at the age of 15 through its 'Y' Entry Scheme and, after extensive exams and tough navigational training, was duly commissioned at the tender age of 16 to HMS 'Chanticleer', used to decoy German submarines. Following the eventual sinking of his ship and his miraculous rescue, he was then assigned to a Landing Ship Tank (LST 5) for the D-Day landings. Unfortunately, the bow doors were damaged on the first landing and the ship had to proceed without them during the whole operation until September 1944. Continuing in LST 5, still minus bow doors!, his vessel was then sent to assist in the Far East. He wrote:

In Burma, we spent several weeks travelling up and down the Irrawaddy River which was extremely fast-flowing and full of mud. In fact, the mud went out for some miles into the sea. Our mission was to try and cut off the Japanese from their supplies as they were struggling through the jungle to get through to conquer India, their next objective. This was easier said than done. We were able to get up the Irrawaddy, simply because we had a flat-bottomed ship which was able to cope with the shallow, fast-flowing water of the river.

After the Irrawaddy, we came down to an area close to Port Swettenham, near Kuala Lumpur in Malaya because we had been specially selected to land tanks and heavy vehicles on to the soft sand. The only problem was that the people who had organised it had made an awful mistake because it was quicksand on which it is totally impossible for anything to land! They started unloading but the vehicles immediately disappeared – it was appalling and very fortunate that nobody died. So, we tied ropes round the rear axles of jeeps and lorries which we could use and pulled them out after they had disappeared in the quagmire. And later...

It should be appreciated that we were in the Malacca Straits which was strewn with land mines, and we had to keep strictly to the swept channels, which was difficult. We were instructed to go and try to rescue some of the Dutch people because they had been thrown out by the Japanese. The local population were only too pleased to get rid of them and they were in great trouble. The locals were blocking the roads, making travelling very difficult. Fortunately, we had the vehicles we had rescued and so we used these to take

members of the crew and form a small armed force, thus carrying the Dutch people to safety. We eventually took them to Singapore.

Then we went on down the Singapore Strait. The swept channel was only just wide enough for our ship, when along behind us came the 'Richelieu', France's biggest battleship. They told us to get out of their way because they wanted to be the first ship into Singapore. This was supposed to have been our prerogative, but they forced us to go into the minefield in order to let them past. There was no alternative but to cross our fingers, go off the swept channel and keep the ship going any further because obviously every inch we advanced we were more likely to hit a landmine. When the 'Richelieu' had passed, we inched out into the swept channel again and continued right behind her as she was proceeding carefully and therefore not very fast. Unfortunately for her, however, there was a mine which had been missed by the sweepers and so the 'Richelieu' went into it, going out of control when it exploded. She was forced to beach on the far bank which was the only place she could get into. So we went straight ahead and left them to their problems. Consequently, our ship was the first British ship to enter Singapore, which was quite welcome – to us, anyway.

On arrival in Singapore, we were first required to go to Borneo where they needed some help to clear out the Japanese, in which we were successful. We were then ordered back to Singapore for further instructions. We relieved the Changi Camp,

captured the Japanese and put them to work. I couldn't speak Japanese but we managed with hand signals. They could run faster than I could! They were very tough and I had difficulty keeping up with them.

Compiled by Liz Weller

Geoff often mentioned that he had had some extraordinary experiences in his lifetime: he was not exaggerating!



Watercolour of Mickleham Church dated 1803 recently acquired for the archives

Photograph: Judith Long



Worrell family vault in Mickleham churchyard

When we recorded the inscription on the Worrell family vault in St Michael's churchyard, we knew little about Jonathan Worrell except that he bought Juniper Hall, the Manor of Fridley and 50 acres of land from the Jenkinson family in 1800. The inscription informed us he died in January 1814 and was buried with his wife Catherine and daughter Bridgetta. He was obviously a man of wealth and status, confirmed by the size of the tomb and its proximity to the church.

It was not difficult to find the source of the family's money. A newspaper announcement of Jonathan's death reported that he had lived at Lyon Castle in Barbados and his birth record told us he was born in St Thomas's parish, Barbados in 1734, the son of Dr Jonathan Worrell and his wife Mary. Clearly the family was in some way connected to the sugar cane plantations on the island and almost certainly had owned slaves. Fortunately for us, two Canadian academics have written a lengthy article about the Worrell family* which has recently become available online and helped considerably with our research.

The first English settlers came to Barbados in 1627 and by 1650 the name Worrell can already be found in the church registers. Jonathan's grandfather, John Worrell, had acquired land and slaves in Barbados in the early 1700s and, in the decades that followed, the family increased their wealth through marriages with other English families nearby. Jonathan married Jane Harrison in Barbados in 1760. Their first child Mary, born in 1761, must have died when young as she disappears from the records after her baptism. By this time, Jonathan had inherited Sedge Pond Plantation from his maternal grandfather and Sturges, where Worrell

Slave Owners of Mickleham: The Worrell Family

family members were buried, from his father. He also became the owner of Neils Plantation, possibly from his grandfather or through his marriage to Jane. The slave registers of 1817, the first available for these plantations, give the details for each slave working on them. There were 176 slaves in total, almost all of whom were born in Barbados. The abolition of the Slave Trade a decade earlier meant slaves could no longer be brought from Africa, although slavery itself was still legal.

By 1764 Jonathan and Jane had left Barbados and moved to London where their son, William Bryant, was baptised. Jane died soon after his birth although there seems to be no record of her death. What prompted the move from Barbados is not known, but Jonathan remained in England for the rest of his life. In 1766 he married Catherine Weston in Norwich. Over the next twenty-one years they had eleven children, eight born in Ipswich and three in Hainford, Norfolk. Jonathan and Catherine moved to Juniper Hall with their younger children in 1800, where they lived until Jonathan's death in 1814. Jonathan bequeathed his estates in Barbados to his two eldest sons, William Bryant and Jonathan. Both visited the island but neither of them chose to make it their home, although Jonathan Jr bought a plantation called Highland and married the daughter of another plantation owner while he was there. William Bryant married a Frenchwoman and spent the rest of his life in Rouen. To make up for the loss of any inheritance from Barbados, Jonathan Sr bought more than 45,000 acres of land on Prince Edward Island for his younger sons Charles and Edward.

In 1833 the Slavery Abolition Act, which abolished slavery in some parts of the British Empire including the Caribbean, was given Royal Assent and came into force the following year. Under the terms of the Act, former slaves became 'apprentices' who had to work without pay for a further six years. The Government also agreed to give £20 million in compensation to the slave owners for the loss of their

slaves, which was roughly 40% of the Government's annual expenditure and 4% of GDP at the time. Unsurprisingly, the former slaves received nothing. A team of academics at UCL's Centre for the Study of the Legacies of British Slave-ownership has put together an online database which includes details of 46,000 slave compensation records and includes information on the slave owners and their estates. These entries show that in 1836 the Worrell family had six claims upheld and received £5,120 17s 7d in compensation for the loss of 244 slaves.

The discovery that a wealthy Mickleham family owned slaves leaves us wondering how the rest of the community viewed their slave-owning neighbours and if there were others nearby. We do know that the Worrell family is the only one from Mickleham or Westhumble listed on the UCL database. However, on 1st March 1809 there is an entry in the Mickleham baptism records for Eliza, the daughter of Abraham Parry Cumberbatch and his wife Charlotte. Abraham, an ancestor of the actor Benedict, was born in Barbados where his family owned two plantations. One of these, Cleland, was close to the Worrells' Sedge Pond Plantation so we can assume the two families knew each other. The Cumberbatch family's stay in Mickleham must have been brief as their other children were born in London or Kent.

Two earlier, intriguing baptism records have also been found. The first, from 8th August 1677, records how 'James (a Blackmoor Boy of about ten years of age)' was baptised and 'took for his surname Quinney, which was given him by JB BD.' JB refers to John Bonwicke, Rector of Mickleham. The second, dated 25th July 1773, merely states it is the baptism of 'John, a black Boy'. How these two boys came to Mickleham and whether they were slaves, or the sons of slaves, is still a mystery. Judith Long

*BITTERMANN, Rusty; MCCALLUM, Margaret. The Pursuit of Gentility in an Age of Revolution: The Family of Jonathan Worrell. <https://journals.lib.unb.ca/index.php/Acadensis/article/view/22685/26326>

Lest we forget... William Kirby

By now, the name of former Westhumble resident William Kirby has largely been forgotten. However, in October 1940 his name must have become well-known here. William was the first (and, thankfully, only) person killed in an air raid on Mickleham or Westhumble during WW2. Local historian Ronnie Shepperd recalled how a bomb landed in one of the gardens of Moleford Cottages, just round the corner from the Railway Arms pub (now the Stepping Stones) and next to the new Mickleham bypass. Unfortunately, the bomb hit an Anderson shelter, killing William Kirby who was asleep inside. A report in the *Surrey Advertiser* suggests that William's 18-year-old son was also in the shelter but escaped uninjured.

Aided by information from the Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC) it is possible to piece together the details of William's life. He was born in September 1886 at Colley Manor Farm in Reigate, the son of farmer William Arthur Kirby and his wife Sarah. By 1901 the family had moved to the Moor Hall Estate in Ninfield, near Battle, where his father was the farm agent. A few years later William Arthur left England to start a new life in New Zealand, a country keen to attract

more farmers in the early 1900s. We can assume he took advantage of the New Zealand Government's offer of an assisted passage. In 1909 he was already judging cattle at agricultural shows on the North Island, where he remained for the rest of his life. His wife Sarah, however, was living with her sister's family in Kent in 1911 and died there in 1920. There are no records to tell us whether she went to New Zealand and came back or if her husband left England without her.

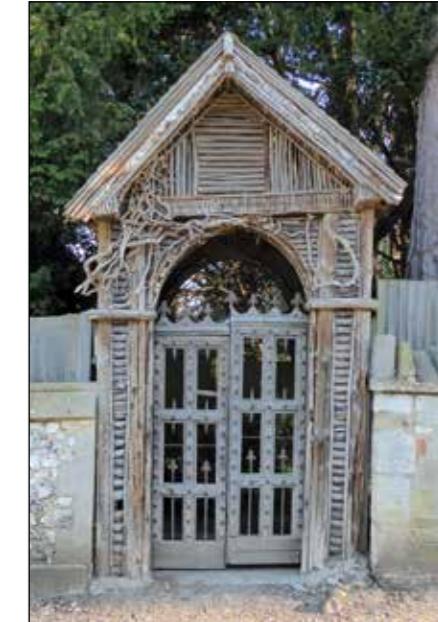
Meanwhile, William Jr had abandoned the agricultural life of his childhood and enlisted in the Grenadier Guards in 1908. Although his service record has been lost, we know he was assigned to the 2nd Battalion which fought in numerous actions on the Western Front, including the First Battle of Ypres and the Battle of Passchendaele. At some point during the war William was wounded and transferred to the 5th Reserve Battalion, based at the Chelsea Barracks. He was given the Silver War Badge to show he was no longer fit for military service and his medal cards record his rank as Acting Sergeant. The CWGC tells us he was also awarded the French Legion of Honour but as yet no details of this have been found.

In 1917 William married Anna Margaret Tharle (known as Margaret), whose father was also a farmer, in Streatham. Their daughter Joy was born in 1920 and son William Barton the following year. Although the births were both registered in the district of Dorking we do not know where the family was living. William first appears on the Electoral Register at 1 Mole Ford Cottages in 1923. It seems likely that all four Mole Ford Cottages (which later became Moleford) had only recently been built as none of them are listed on the Register before 1922.

During the 1930s William was the proprietor of the garage on the approach to Dorking Station. After war broke out, he joined the Home Guard and at the time of his death was a Company Sergeant Major. He was buried at St Mary's, Reigate, on 7th October 1940, the same church where he and his father had been baptised. Both his children served in the military during WW2, Joy in the WAAF and William Barton as a Captain in the Royal Tank Regiment. Margaret stayed on at Moleford Cottages for more than 40 years, until her death in December 1981 at the age of 89. Judith Long



Photograph: Ben Tatham



Grade II listed Burmester Gate

Sir Hugh Guy Cubitt, CBE, JP, DL 1928 – 2020



With great sadness, we have to record the passing of Hugh Cubitt, a man whom so many of us were proud to value as a good friend. Sir Hugh Guy Cubitt, CBE, JP, DL, was born on the 2nd July 1928, the son of Lt-Col Hon Charles Guy Cubitt, who was the youngest of the six sons of the 2nd Baron Ashcombe.

One of Hugh's early recollections was when on a family visit to Denbies to see his grandparents 'Mr Dobinson the Estate Carpenter whose workshop was off the stable yard made us boys superb wooden rifles'. Hugh made a decision early in life to pursue a career in the Royal Navy rather than the Army as his father and uncles had done or the RAF where his cousin Harry was serving. He used to say that the reason for his decision was because 'you don't need Latin for Dartmouth' but there was probably more to it. After Dartmouth he completed his training at the Royal Naval College, Greenwich and then he was commissioned Midshipman in the last few months of the Second World War and posted to the Far East where he'dashed about in destroyers' and saw action as a Lieutenant in the Korean War 1949-51.

Hugh was appointed Flag Lieutenant to Admiral Sir Cyril Douglas-Pennant, Head of the Naval Element, British Joint Services Mission at the Pentagon Washington in 1952 and then to the Commander-In-Chief Nore (Thames Estuary) in 1953 before he retired from

the Navy in 1954. He qualified first as a Chartered Auctioneer and Estate Agent and then as a Chartered Surveyor (FRICS) working with Rogers Chapman and Thomas in London before he joined his father's firm Cubitt and West as a partner. In 1958 Hugh married Linda Ishbel Campbell, daughter of the Hon Angus Campbell, and they settled in Westhumble in 1960. They have a son Jonathan and two daughters Joanna and Victoria.

Hugh served on many notable boards and committees, including the National Westminster Bank, English Heritage, Anchor Housing and the Peabody Trust. He was elected to Westminster City Council in 1963, later becoming its Leader, and was Lord Mayor of Westminster from 1977 to '78, Silver Jubilee year.

The Deputy High Steward of Westminster Abbey is an *ex officio* role of the Lord Mayor of Westminster and Hugh served the Abbey for some years becoming Head of the Honorary Stewards and prolonged his tenure while a new Dean settled in. The stewards have a useful parking space in Central London.

From 1964 he held the office of Justice of the Peace for Surrey. Fellow Magistrate Prof Richard Selley recalls 'Hugh ran the court like one of Nelson's captains at Trafalgar. I guess that was his naval training. Hugh often forgot to consult the two "wingers" in his rush to justice. But as he was always right in fact, law and sentence one could not complain'.

'Who's Who' lists Hugh's recreations as: country sports, travel, photography but he also painted in oils and had a great interest in and knowledge of music. He was, for many years, a trustee of the Royal Academy of Music.

He will be greatly missed by us all. Please note the Service of Thanksgiving and Interment of Ashes planned for April 20th has now been postponed.

Dick Gover, former churchwarden,
with additional research
by Margaret Maynard

Extracts reprinted with permission from
the March St Barnabas Newsletter.

public body that funded new affordable housing and regulated housing associations in England, established by the Housing Act 1964. Hugh was also High Sheriff of Surrey in 1983.

Hugh and Linda took a great interest in St Barnabas Church even though it should be pointed out that the Cubitt family had passed the church over to the Church Commissioners in the 1960s. A copy of the St Martin's Church Magazine in 1970 lists 'Mr H Cubitt' as Churchwarden at St Barnabas Ranmore. Hugh said that he had inherited the post of PCC Treasurer from his father and when Miss Fisher, the Schoolmistress, retired he also took on the duties of the PCC Secretary. He deftly steered the PCC and the church through what might be described as some 'interesting years' until he decided to retire from the PCC in 2012.

At PCC meetings Hugh was often apt to remark 'I don't think so' after some proposals from members but he could be persuaded by a well reasoned argument, eventually.

In 1997 Hugh and Linda visited the battlefields and cemeteries of the First World War to find out and understand more about 'the uncles he never knew' (Harry, Alick and William Hugh who are commemorated in the Cubitt Chapel). Hugh wrote a very moving article for the St Barnabas newsletter which is now included in the history leaflets in the church.

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May Hardwicke 1920 – 2020

The sun shone and the birds were singing lustily as May Hardwicke was lowered into the ground in the woodland section of Dorking Cemetery on 16th April. The view of Box Hill was very pleasant and the camellia flowers, from her garden, scattered over her coffin, were a riot of colour. That only David and I and our two daughters were allowed to be there was a shame but all in all I think she would have been pleased with the occasion.

May along with her husband Alan, her step-son, Peter and I (and not forgetting Woozle the cat) moved into Fairfield, Chapel Lane in the autumn of 1948. And, as she latterly so hoped, she was able to end her days there. 1948 was not her first arrival in Westhumble or Dorking. For a while in 1939 the family had lived at Tudor Lodge opposite Dorking station and after year or two living in various flats in the Highgate area of London they returned in 1942 to live at Five Trees (now Cottars) in Pilgrims Way.

May was born on 5th May 1920 in central London and brought up there. Her German mother and French-speaking Swiss father met and married in London, having arrived in England before WWI. Both worked in hotels. May's childhood was not the happiest, as her mother died when May was only six and she was acutely embarrassed to have had a German mother especially as her best friend's father had lost an arm in that conflict.

May did however have happy memories of her dog Mimi who roamed the streets chasing the few vehicles that passed by and of trips to Regents Park with Mimi on the open topped buses. She also had happy memories of seaside holidays in Tenby staying in a beach chalet with a friend's granny.

After leaving school May's became a 'junior' with the fashion designer Isobel. Her job was to receive the grand ladies arriving for fittings and make them cups of tea. Isobel was apparently quite a name in her time. A recent V&A exhibition included a wedding dress designed by her. This early job probably explains May's keen interest in clothes and fashion that lasted all her life.

May met my father, Alan, a solicitor, shortly before WW2. When asked

how they met all she would say was 'At a party.' Strangely enough early in the '30s my father lived in B&B accommodation belonging to L'Etoile restaurant on Charlotte Street. At the time May's father was working there.

I arrived on the scene in October 1943 and soon after that they moved to Nottingham. As was so common in those days, May dedicated herself to being a devoted wife, mother and housewife. Once they moved back to Westhumble, more leisure-time activities became possible and where my father led so May followed.

They spent many happy holidays hill walking in North Wales and the Lake District. My father bought a sailing dinghy and May bravely embraced that too. I well remember my father insisting on sailing in quite rough seas with one or other of my little friends on board. I can hear May imploring him to return to calmer waters saying, 'What will the coroner say?' Later he bought a small cruiser and May gamely sailed with him to the Scilly Isles and over to France.

When my father retired they started going horse racing but Alan decided it was feeble to watch other people flying over the jumps. He took himself off to a riding school explaining that he wanted to learn to ride so he could take part in the Grand National! They were certainly willing to help with the first bit but were not so sure about the Grand National.

And learn to ride he did and so did May. Many a time out on hacks her horse would bolt off with her and I guess she must have had a good few falls. Eventually they bought a horse and Alan went hunting while May adopted a supporting role helping to keep the tack clean and Alan looking smart in his hunting outfit.

In between times they had

granddaughters to stay especially in the summer holidays and gave them riding lessons and took them on day trips to the seaside.

At some time May did strike out on her own. She joined the local flower club and also transformed the rather bare garden. She was never one for sowing seeds, transplanting seedlings and awaiting results. She wanted instant results so trips to the garden centre always resulted in plants and shrubs



May with her great-great grandson

coming home in flower. And it was no good planting anything at the back of the borders 'They won't be seen there.' They had to go in front.

After Woozle the cat there was a steady stream of six others including Tabitha who May inherited along with a television (Alan didn't believe in them) from Margaret Probyn who lived in Pilgrims Way. May was a long-term member of Cats Protection and for many years sold plants and cuttings from the garden, from a couple of cardboard boxes, at the garden gate. Over the years she made about £500 for the charity.

Sadly Alan became confined to the house and then bedridden. May spent many years devotedly looking after him without complaint and resisting all suggestions, until near the very end, to accept outside help for him.

He died in 1993. They had been together for about 50 years and May missed him dreadfully. Her last thirty plus years were spent in increasing pain from arthritis and in much loneliness. No amount of visits from family and friends; holidays with family or trips away with NADFAS; tea parties with Norah Hallet; pub lunches and garden visits with the Wellers or trips to the races with Janet Curran could really console her from being parted from her beloved Alan.

May was just a few weeks short of her 100th birthday when she died. It is sad that she missed that milestone when hopefully she would have enjoyed seeing two of her five granddaughters, four great-grandsons and two great-great-grandsons. May she rest in peace and maybe find herself reunited with Alan.

Barbara Jones

M&WLHG Website

I don't think that I am alone in being fascinated by old photographs, especially if they are of a place or person that I know. We have several hundred in the archives and we are slowly adding to the photographs that you can view on our website. Pride of place must go to the album of photographs given to Mickleham Church in 1893 by T H Bryant of Juniper Hill. This album was found recently stored in a shed in the church grounds. We suspect it was moved there during some building work and never returned to its safe place of keeping inside the church. Fortunately, it was still in reasonable condition and it has now been digitised and the original album is now in safe storage in the Surrey History Centre, Woking.

It is well worth browsing through as it provides a good view of a cross section of village life in the final years of the 19th century ranging from the high life at Juniper Hill to some of the more humble residents of the parish. More recent photographs are to be found in the three Millennium Albums on the website covering Mickleham, Westhumble and the countryside. To celebrate the new millennium the parish magazine sponsored a project to make a photographic record of the parish. Between 2019 and 2021 several local residents took photographs to record the life of the villages of Mickleham and Westhumble. Photographs were also taken of many of the houses and other buildings and land in the parish.

If you have any photographs of local historical interest, we would be very pleased to see them, and with your permission would like to copy them to keep in the archives and possibly publish on the website. One such recent contributor was Simon Batchelor who contacted us to offer some fascinating photographs of his family together with details of his research into family history. The Batchelor family were part of village life from the late nineteenth century through to nearly the end of the twentieth century and their legacy lives on in Batchelor's Yard, off School Lane. Simon is the grandson of Ted and Lilian Batchelor and we now have a web page dedicated to the Batchelor family of Mickleham.

Roger Davis



Ted and Lily on their wedding day with her parents. Ted's father is on the right

Lily and Ted

Simon recently found this photograph of the composer Ralph Vaughan Williams outside Mickleham Church in a family album. At VW's instigation his sister Margaret and Lady Farrer founded the Leith Hill Musical Festival in 1905. Vaughan Williams was the festival conductor from 1905 to 1953. Both Lilian and Ted were long-standing members of the Mickleham Choral Society, which joined the festival around 1908.

