Newdigate Society Magazine

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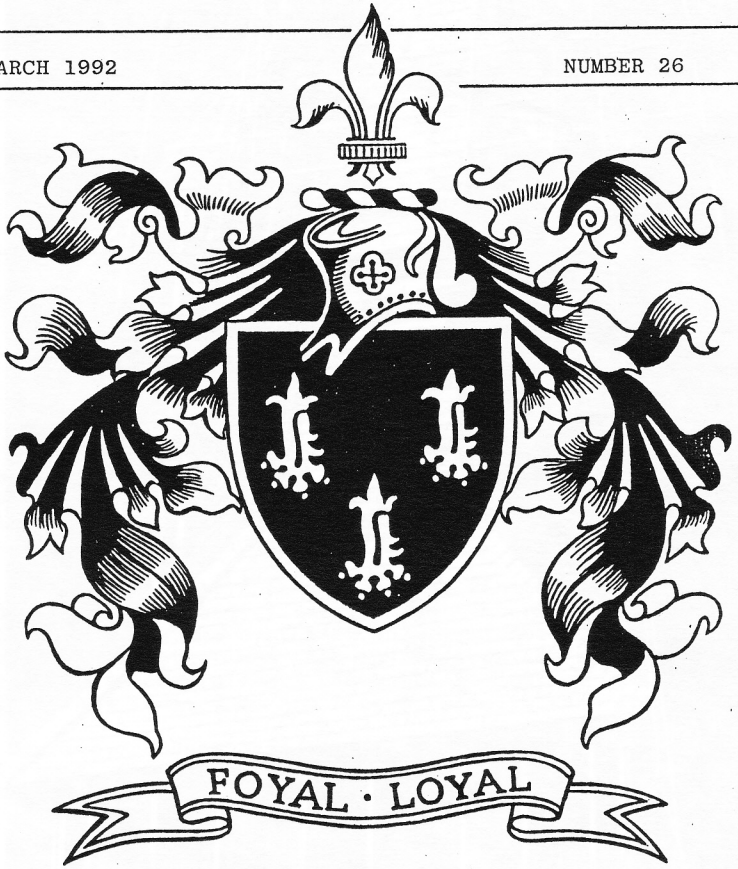

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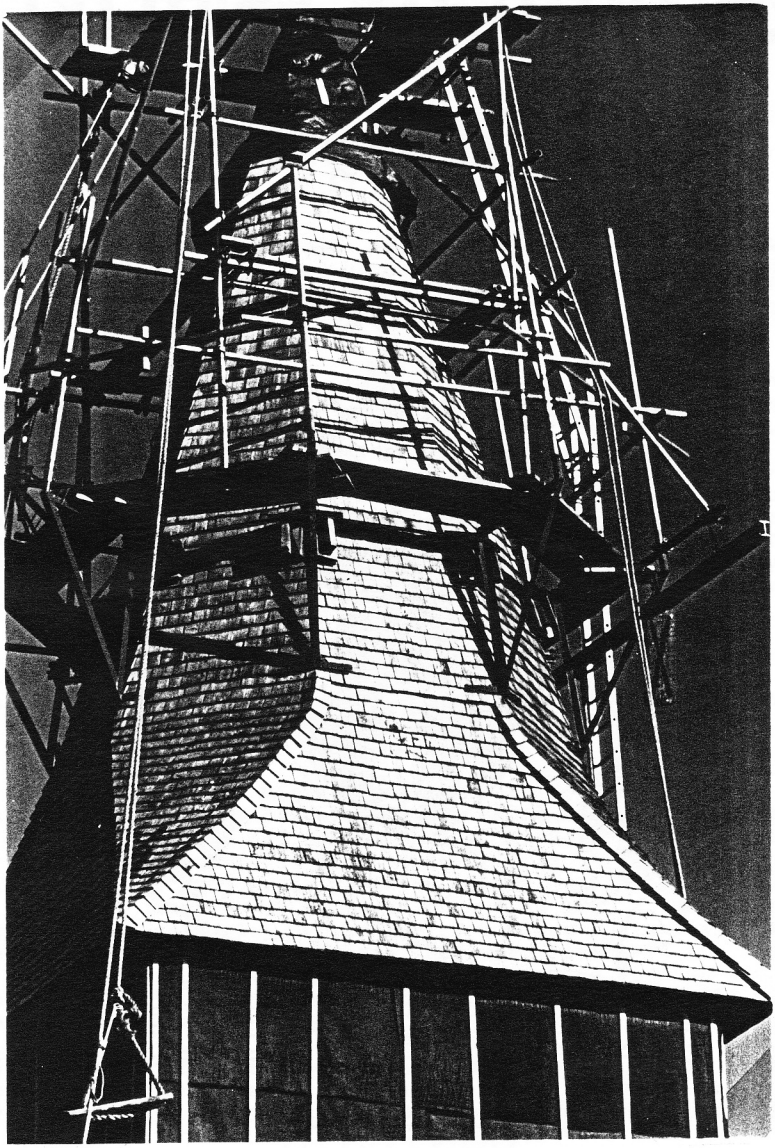


RESHINGLING ST. PETER'S TOWER

1981

NEWS FROM THE SOCIETY

Sales of "The Newdigate Guide" are still going well after the initial rush to buy, over 540 copies having now been sold. Following a review of the booklet in the nationally distributed Family Tree Magazine we have had quite a number of letters from those who not only wished to purchase a copy but also asked for assistance in researching their family connections with Newdigate. This has helped extend our knowledge of these families and in a number of instances has enabled us to put our members in touch with others of the same family.

We are continuing to collect poems for inclusion in our proposed new booklet of verse, but would still ilke to be offered more. Rather than restrict the entries to poems about Newdigate, we have decided to widen the scope to include those by Newdigate residents on any subject. So if you think you have anything suitable for inclusion please let the editor know.

The parish has once again been visited by students from Kingston Technical College, who have been given the task of writing about our local history. This time there were two teams, one for Newdigate village and the other for Parkgate. We have asked for a copy of their writings in due course.

FUTURE EVENTS

Our programme of events for the remainder of this year has been finalised. We hope that these will be well supported by all members. Please make a note in your diary now.

The first is on Tuesday May 12th in the Village Hall at 8 p.m., when Miss Edith Mercer will take us on "A Journey down the River Mole". She gave a similar illustrated talk in October 1986, but there will be many who missed this fascinating tale of our local river. It is well worth a second visit.

On Saturday July 25th we shall be visiting the Lowfield Heath windmill, now located at Gatwick Zoo Members will remember the talk that Jean Shelley gave at a St.Peter's Trust A.G.M. about the work of conservation that was then in progress. We now have an opportunity to see how successful this has been. We meet at 2.30 p.m. After the visit we are invited by Pam Keeble to Rolls Farm for tea.

Maurice and June Sage have kindly agreed to allow us to visit their home, Gaterounds Farm on Sunday August 16th at 2.30 p.m. We will need to know the names of those intending to come, prior to the visit.

The date of our Society A.G.M. is set for Tuesday September 15th in the Village Hall at 8.p.m.. Would members like another quiz to follow the more formal part of the meeting? Or, any other suggestions?

Mole Valley District Council are having another Arts Festival, similar to the one in 1990. We have agreed to hold another Open Day in the Village Hall on Saturday October 31st when doors will be open from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. As an added attraction Mole Valley has arranged for a group from Ewell to give a display of Morris Dancing in the Village Hall car park from 10.30 to midday.

Stop Press. Display of recordings of houses in and around Newdigate in the Village Hall, Saturday March 28th 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. by Domestic Buildings Research Group.

RESTORATION NEWDIGATE By Robert Pols

Between 1934 and 1951 the Surrey County Council sponsored the publication of Quarter Sessions records covering the years 1659 to 1668. When extracted and collected together the references to Newdigate and its people form an interesting collection. They are, of course, only snippets, but even snippets, when over three hundred years old, have their value.

Men from Newdigate were often included in the lists of jury panels. In 1661 Thomas Batchelor, John Woneham and Richard Cottingham were called. The lists for 1662 include Richard Peniall, Nicholas Foster, Thomas Wheeler and Richard Potterton, whilst those of 1665 name John Budgen, Christopher Wood and William Pollesdon. Of these, John Budgen seems to have been a sonewhat prickly character. In 1663 he complained that the rates he was paying were unfairly high and a committee of Justices was set up to look into the matter. Sir Ralph Freeman, Roger James and George Browne were "to examine the parties and consider the quantity of the land in Mr.Budgen's occupation and whether the other inhabitants are proportionably related". Their findings are not recorded.

In 1664 John Budgen, gent. and Thomas Stedman, yeoman, Overseers of the Highways for Newdigate, along with the Mickleham overseers, were summoned by a warrant signed by Edward Dawborne, Chief Constable of the Hundred of Copthorne, to appear before him at Leatherhead to "present all the offences specified in the warrant". All four "wilfully refused to appear". In due course, in the October, their refusal was brought up at the Quarter Sessions; all admitted their offence and all were fined. No sum is given for the Newdigate pair, but the Mickleham overseers were each fined sixpence, and the same sum was probably levied from all.

As seen in the case just mentioned, the holding of offices is sometimes revealed incidentally. One kind of appointment which was formally recorded at Quarter Sessions was that of Constable. In 1665 Francis Terrill retired as Constable for Newdigate and Robert Wheeler was appointed. On two occasions Newdigate men were appointed High Constable for the Copthorne Hundred - Richard Penyall in 1662 and George Booth in 1666.

A major feature of the Quarter Sessions rolls is the lengthy listing of those against whom writs have been issued. Some inhabitants of Newdigate appear in these lists. In July 1662 a writ of 'Venire Facias' was made out for Allen Wallis and Henry Sturges, and this was followed by a writ of 'Capias' for both men in October 1662, and for Wallis alone in July 1663. Writs of 'Capias" were issued for John Dymocke and -- Wonham in October 1662 and July 1663. But the most sought after parishioner in this period was John Tredcroft, who appears in the 'Capias' lists for Easter 1661, Midsummer 1661, October 1661, January 1662 and April 1662. Nothing ever seems to develop from any of these writs subsequently.

This phenomenon of a series of writs which fizzles out is actually very common in the Quarter Sessions records, and the reason for it is not entirely clear. Writs could come in a series, with 'Capias' ('take' or 'capture') following on from an unproductive 'Venire Facias' ('cause to appear'). In theory constant failure to appear could eventually lead to the offender being outlawed. But frequently after a series of 'Capias' writs, nothing more is recorded. Whilst the writs were the machinery used to induce offenders to make an appearance, such appearances seem in fact to have been unusual.

It may be, as has been suggested, that in most cases no actual arrest was ever intended. Genuine felons were, of course, brought into custody, but the writ system may also have been used to provide a kind of checklist of a different kind of real or potential offender, those who interested the authorities for political or religious reasons. It has been speculated that the lists amounted to the taking note of suspected Catholic or Parliamentarian sympathisers. This idea is supported when the Newdigate examples are looked at more closely.

In April 1662 Allen Wallis and Henry Sturges were both named as recusants - they were Quakers. 'Exon' ('discharged') is entered against both names but it may be significant that the first writ against each was issued at the very next Sessions. In July 1662 "John Dymocke of Newdigate yeoman" and " -- Wonham of the same widow" were among ten named men who were charged "with others unknown to the number of twenty" of assembling in Charlwood on June 29th to perform an act of religious worship "other than as it is set out by the law of the Realm, to the great terror of the people and disturbance of the peace, in contempt of the king and his laws, in evil example ... and against the peace". Again the names of those involved make their first appearance in the lists of writs at the following Sessions. Thus four of the five Newdigate names on the lists may be seen to have attracted official interest on the grounds of religious irregularity. This was a time, immediately after the restoration of the king to the throne, when everyone was required by law to attend each Sunday at a Church of England service in his parish.

Of the remaining offender, John Tredcroft, nothing more is known. Only one other parishioner is recorded in the context of religion, and that is George Ashdowne, who in April 1667 was named as one of those who "being of the age of sixteen years or more, did not repair to their several parish churches, nor to any place of common prayer". He had failed to attend church for one month from March 1st. No series of writs followed, perhaps because lack of piety was not seen in as threatening a light as misdirected piety.

A handful of individual cases, with no common theme, also appear in the records. At Easter 1661 Matthew Day, a yeoman of Dorking, was charged with having "forcibly .. erected ... a building called 'a Shoppe' on the common waste leading from Dorking to Newdigate, to the great nuisance and detriment of the inhabitants". Newdigate churchwardens, Robert Peter and Henry Gardiner, were in trouble in October 1664 for having "refused to pay the money in their hands for the relief of the poor in gaols and hospitals in the county". Robert Peter admitted guilt and was fined two shillings, and it may be that this outcome should be read as applying to Henry Gardiner as well. The situation was not unique to Newdigate for the churchwardens of Fetcham, Chessington and West Molesey were similarly called, though those of the last two parishes were discharged. The problem may be a reflection of people's reluctance to take a responsibility for the poor beyond the bounds of their own parish. Certainly the desire to prove that a poor man was settled in another parish, and therefore the responsibility of someone else, was a strong one, of which evidence is seen in the case of Thomas Scriven in 1668.

Scriven, a labourer of Newdigate, had endeavoured to settle himself in Dorking, and the Justices who had examined him had clearly

come to the conclusion that Dorking was indeed his rightful place of settlement. The Dorking authorities however were not keen to accept him and challenged the decision. The magistrates' decision was reviewed at the Quarter Sessions and was upheld, insisting "that the said Order be confirmed and the said Thomas Scriven settled at Dorking accordingly".

In April 1667 Allen Wallis and John Tilt, yeomen, were presented for failing to send "a skilled person, with suitable tools" on any of the six days appointed for the repair of the highways. In 1667 it was recorded that the recognisance of Joseph Seman, husbandman of Newdigate, had been taken to appear to answer to Anne Brian. It seems that he was subsequently discharged, but no indication is given of what Anne Brian had charged him with.

The closest that can be found to any traditional notion of a shady character must be Nathaniel Ward, who receives three separate mentions in the records of 1668. It is noted in the Order Book for the year that having "lately kept a very disorderly house by suffering company to continue drinking and tippling on the Lord's Day". Nathaniel Ward of Newdigate, victualler, was to be "suppressed from keeping his said victualling or Tippling house and from selling beer or ale there". The Constable was to "give him notice thereof to the end that if afterwards the said Ward shall offend herein, he may be proceeded against".

In March he was indeed proceeded against as one of those who had kept "a common tippling house, selling ale and beer, without licence or allocation of the Justices of the Peace". At the same sessions he was charged that, in spite of not holding property to the annual value of £100, he had in his possession a small engine, known in English as a 'hand gunn', which he used to kill hares, pheasants, and the King's Game generally. Ward's luck was in, however, for in both licensing and poaching cases he is recorded as having been discharged under the Act of General Pardon. He may be the least reputable of the Newdigate inhabitants found in these scattered references, but it is tempting to feel that every village should have its Nathaniel Ward.

Editor's note.

Most of those named in this article were the better-off residents in the parish, many of them yeomen or farmers. This is to be expected for those summoned to appear as jurors. We know that John Budgen was living at Newdigate Place (now Home Farm) which he had purchased in 1636 from West Newdegate, the last of that family in the parish. Christopher Wood was at Gaterounds and John Wonham had the freehold of Sturtwood Farm. Allen Wallis owned the freehold of Chaffolds and may have had an interest also in Orltons. In the Hearth Tax return for 1664 others - Robert Wheeler, Thomas Batchelor, Richard Peniall and Robert Peter - were living at the larger houses. William Pollesdon was probably at Hound House. Others like John Dymocke and Thomas Stedman were in small cottages with only one hearth and Dymocke was exempt from the tax because his income was too low. John Tredcroft is identified as 'clerk', meaning that he was, or had been, a clergyman, although not in Newdigate. Was he perhaps a Puritan, associated with the former Rector of Newdigate, George Steere, who died in June 1662. (The last 'capias' for Tredcroft was April 1662.)

NEWDIGATE DELIGHT By Neil Carter and Charles Thompson

In the summer of 1991 a band of touring bell ringers from Cambridge University came to St.Peter's in Newdigate to ring Newdigate's own "tune" (known as a "method" in the terminology of bell ringers), called Poynton, or Newdigate Delight. Traditionally methods are named by the band that first rings them in a full peal, about three hours ringing, consisting of over 5,000 changes. It is also common to give the methods the name of the tower in which they are first rung.

One can only speculate about the date when Newdigate Delight was rung, because although today the names of all methods are registered with the Central Council of Church Bell Ringers, things were not so precise a hundred years ago. There were also other methods named Charlwood Delight, which is similar to Newdigate, Capel Treble Bob and Ockley Treble Bob. It seems probable that all these were first rung in the 1880s or 1890s, when there was great local enthusiasm for bell ringing.

Bell ringing goes back to early times. The Encyclopaedia Britannica tells us that bells once summoned soldiers to arms as well as Christians to church. They had other uses too - for instance to sound the fire alarm or curfew. But many of the old customs have died out, leaving only the use of bells for ecclesiastical purposes. (However, in 1940 church bells were silenced so that they could be used as a warning of invasion.) The "Passing Bell", once rung for the dying, is now generally rung after death. The Parish Magazine for February 1884 tells us that the custom then was that "the smallest bell (is tolled) for an infant or child, the next for a young person, the deepest bell for one that has passed away at a ripe age". "Burial peals", once rung at funerals to scare away evil spirits from the soul of the departed, were finally stopped in Puritan times, but have been revived in the "muffled peals" often rung as a mark of respect.

In "Ballads, Bands and Bell Ringers" by Tony Wales, dealing mainly with Sussex villages is the following:-

"Many Sussex men have made bell ringing a lifelong interest; in fact it is fair to say 'Once a ringer, always a ringer'. There is a brotherhood among bell men which cuts across village or district boundaries. Henry Burstow, who was as well known as a bell ringer as he was a song man, had been with the Horsham ringers for some time but was not satisfied with their standard of performance; he therefore proposed to visit Newdigate, where the change-ringers enjoyed the reputation of champions. Ned Turner, of Warnham, offered to take him one Saturday afternoon and they walked to Newdigate together. After being introduced to Tom Gadd, the Newdigate head ringer, they went to the belfry and pulled the ropes up ready to start. At the last moment a message came from the vicarage to the effect that someone was ill, so the idea had to be abandoned.

"Observing Henry's disappointment, Ned suggested that they should walk to Ockley, four miles away, and try to ring there. This they did, and with three of the Ockley ringers they rang a 720 plain bob right through. This made such a good impression on Ned Turner that afterwards Henry was invited to attend the bell ringing at Newdigate as often as he liked. Every Saturday evening he walked there - eight miles - arriving about 7 o'clock, and ringing until 10.00. Then, after a session of drinking and singing in the Six Bells, he left about midnight to walk the eight miles back to Horsham.

"Henry Burstow's enthusiasm may have been a little exceptional, but he was assuredly not the only bell ringer to walk miles in order to exercise his skill. The welcome that visitors received when they arrived in this way is typical of the fellow-feeling that existed between expert ringers "

In this extract Tony Wales was writing of an earlier period, for we know that Thomas Anscombe Gadd was the conductor of the Newdigate bell ringers in the 1840s and may have continued until he moved with his family to Leatherhead before 1859. In the belfry at St.Peter's are boards commemorating two special events. On December 22nd 1841 Thomas Gadd led his band in ringing 5.040 changes in seven different methods, lasting 2 hours and 52 minutes. Then on January 29th 1845 they rang 12,960 changes in the Oxford Treble and Oxford Single Bob methods in 7 hours and 21 minutes. No wonder Henry Burstow regarded them as champions!

The Encyclopaedia Britannica would have us believe that in the latter half of the eighteenth century and in the first half of the nineteenth change-ringing, which at first seems to have been an aristocratic pastime, "degenerated in social repute. Church bells and their ringers, neglected by Church authorities, became associated with the lower and least reputable phases of parochial life; and the belfry was too often an adjunct to the pothouse." This is clearly not entirely true for the Newdigate band , although after their exertions they obviously did enjoy a pint or two at the Six Bells.But the dedication required to keep ringing for over seven hours without a mistake must have required both skill and endurance and the six bell ringers must have been extremely fit young men. All were used to long and hard physical work. There were four agricultural labourers in the 1845 band - Thomas Gadd, aged 35, his brother George, aged 31, Peter Horley, the oldest at 39,and John Davey, born in Capel, aged 25. The other two were brothers, both bricklayers, Alexander, aged 25, and Herbert, aged 17, sons of the parish clerk, Stephen Tidy. This was only one change from the 1841 band, Herbert having replaced his older brother Austin Frederic Tidy, who was to die in 1846 at the age of only 23.

During the latter half of the nineteenth century, and more particularly the last quarter, there was a great revival in interest in bell ringing and many very strong local bands appeared. The Parish Magazine of January 1891 records that on Tuesday November 23rd 1890 the Ockley ringers paid a visit to Newdigate to have an evening's ringing, and they rang several 120 Grandsire Doubles, each called differently. This was the first outing of the newly arranged Ockley band. But bell ringing in Ockley was not new, for in June of 1891 a muffled peal of Oxford Treble Bob had been rung at Ockley church by ringers from Capel, Crawley and Worth, at the funeral of John Ansell, the principal of the firm of builders, "in token of his having been in former years an Ockley ringer, on account of the interest he always took in the bells".

The new Ockley band included one of the schoolmasters, P. DuSautoy, and the curate, Rev.C.E.Eagles. A month later these two visited Capel church on two successive Tuesdays, undoubtedly to learn their skills from the much more experienced Capel band.

A board in St.Peter's belfry records a visit of the Sussex County Association to Newdigate on Tuesday January 22nd 1890, when a peal of 5,040 changes was rung in seven different Treble Bob methods, the first time this particular combination had been rung on the bells. In fact all the ringers were from Capel. All the local

bands were members of the Winchester Diocesan Guild of Change Ringers. Whether this was the same as the Sussex County Association is not clear.

Unfortunately the Parish Magazines of the 1890s do not give very much information about the Newdigate bell ringers, but Capel and Ockley bands often chronicled their particular achievements. This may have been due to the poor state of the bells in Newdigate tower, which would not allow for extended ringing. In 'A Handbook of Dorking' published in 1872 is the following passage:- "Newdigate church has a remarkable tower, formed entirely of wood resting on blocks of stone, It contains six bells, which when rung cause the whole structure to rock very sensibly, so that nuts may be cracked between the lowest horizontal beams and the stone supports."

The church was renovated and extended in 1876/7 but there is no indication whether work was carried out on the stability of the tower or on the rehanging of the bells. It was only in December 1895 that the Parish Magazine reported that an effort was about to be made to raise the money necessary to repair the bells. The frames, stocks etc. had been examined and found to be very much out of repair. The estimate for the work was £41 and an entertainment had been given to raise the first instalment for the fund. It was not until October 1897, as part of Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee commemoration, that work was completed on the rehanging of the bells with new fittings. The final cost was considerably more than the original estimate. A meeting, presided over by the Rector, was then held, when a new company of ringers was formed, and rules decided upon.

Capel had had similar problems in 1891, when the ringers had given notice that, in consequence of wear in some parts of the bearings of the bells, they thought it advisable to cease ringing until repairs could be made. But it was pointed out that there were several more important objects connected with the church which should be given priority, so repairs would have to be delayed. It was also stated that "some of our parishioners believe that change ringing is not necessary for the purpose of calling them to church, inasmuch as it has been so seldom used for that purpose, but chiefly for ringing practice on week-day evenings; and yet church bells are primarily intended to summon people from far and wide to service." So ringers were not universally popular!

But to come back to Newdigate and the newly formed band of 1897. One of those who joined soon after was George Horley, the village postman. He was still ringing in 1943 when the Daily Herald, on December 23rd, carried an article about Ted Vine, the caretaker of the Village Hall, who was celebrating his fiftieth anniversary as a bell ringer on Christmas Day. They were to go on ringing for many more years, George Horley finally retiring in about 1954. Also in the band at that time were Ray Beadle, the carpenter, Percy Pescud, a gardener and Fred Stace, the postman. These five had a total of 190 years of ringing at St.Peter's between them, confirming what Tony Wales had written - "Once a ringer, always a ringer".

This new band had become very active over the period up to the beginning of the first World War in 1914. During that time eleven full peals were rung in the tower, all being in seven different methods. The first of these was on February 4th 1899, when the Ancient Society of College Youths, in two hours and 39 minutes, rang a peal of Treble Bob minor, a total of 5,040 changes, being 720 each of London Scholars' Pleasure, New London Pleasure, College

Exercise, Violet, Woodbine, College Pleasure and Oxford. One of the ringers was John Akehurst, who was a longstanding member of the Capel band. The last peal was on May 10th 1913. Unfortunately we do not know how many, if any, of the peals were actually rung by the Newdigate ringers, or if they were all by visiting groups, like the first one in 1899.

At the beginning of the war, like other young men in the village, some of the bell ringers enlisted in the Army. The Rector, late in 1914, wrote in the Parish Magazine "We have lost one of our bell ringers, Arthur Monk, who is in training to go to the Front. We should be glad to welcome one or two young men who would be keen to learn the method, which though difficult, gives very much pleasure." Two years later the Rector, in announcing the death of Corporal Monk, wrote that he was "one of our keenest bell ringers and never lost a chance of taking a rope when possible, in France as well as in England."

Others, like George Horley, returned after war service. The band continued to ring the bells, but it was only in 1926 that two full peals were rung. The bells were silenced during the second World War but after 1945 another period of activity began, during which full peals were rung on eleven occasions, culminating in the ringing of Kent Treble Bob minor on December 3rd 1977 by a Newdigate band led by Graham Clark and including Peter Walker, Mike Munro, David Finch, Robin Coles and Lesley Taylor, in celebration of the 50th anniversary of the formation of the Guildford Diocesan Guild of Change Ringers. Earlier that year they had rung a half peal for the Queen's Silver Jubilee.

By way of explanation, we add some notes about the art of bell ringing. In change ringing on church bells a 'method' is a way of producing all the possible ringing orders or 'changes' on a given number of bells, in a particular sequence, but without repetition. Thus at Newdigate with six bells there are 720 possible changes. A block of these 720 changes is called an 'extent'.

The number of bells on which a method is to be rung is identified within the name. On four bells it is 'Minimus', on 5 it is 'Doubles', on 6 'Minor', on 7 'Triples', on 8 'Major', on 9 'Caters', on 10 'Royal', on 11 'Cinques' and on 12 bells 'Maximus'.

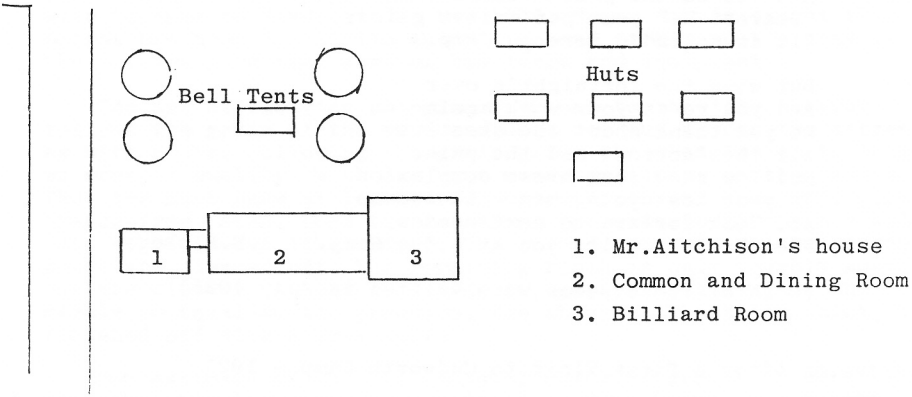
The general principle of all methods is that each bell, after taking its turn striking in first place or 'lead' works gradually 'up' to the last place or 'behind' and then 'down' to the first again, with no bell changing more than one place each time. Sometimes the bell will remain in the same position in the order and sometimes it will 'dodge' i.e. take a step backwards in its course. A change in the order of striking is achieved by the ringer holding the rope up to delay the strike or checking the rope's swing to hasten it. There are literally hundreds of possible variations to the order in which changes can be made. Each is identified by its own name.

The principal groups, indicating the path or 'hunt' of the highest pitch bell - the treble - are Plain, Treble Bob, Little and Alliance. The Treble Bob group is further sub-divided into three, these being Treble Bob, Surprise and Delight. So the name 'Newdigate Delight minor' fully identifies this unique method as being on six bells with the treble taking a Treble Bob hunting course, dodging in each place on its way up and down.

MORE ABOUT CUDWORTH HOLIDAY CAMP

We have had further correspondence about the Cudworth Holiday Camp. Mrs. Shirley Somerville writes to say that her grandfather, Charlie Almond, always kept a cat, each one of which in turn was called Dinky. He also bred numerous rabbits, which he kept in a large shed. Every time a Dinky cat had kittens, these would be removed and replaced by an equal number of baby rabbits. His grandchildren could never understand how a cat had produced rabbits!

Mr.C.Mellard sent us a small plan of the layout of the camp.



Mr.Mellard tells us that Newdigate Camp was opened by John Aitchison and his wife, whom campers called 'Auntie'. The house they lived in was linked to a small shop where various commodities could be bought. The Common Room served also as a dining room. Trestle tables were used and cleared away each evening, after which communal games would be played.

Two girls did the serving of the meals - one was called Rhoda, but he cannot remember the other (he thinks it was Anne). This was in the early 1920s. The house and Common Room were lit by acetylene lamps. Mr.Mellard says that he looked forward to going to the Camp each holiday week-end and for summer holidays. The campers were normally left-wing Socialists, because John Aitchison advertised the Camp only in the Lansbury Gazette, a left-wing periodical. The usual walks from the camp were to Charlwood, with a day's walk once a week to Leith Hill.

Mr.Mellard also sent us the following verses, taken from an autograph book belonging to Miss Florence Lewer, of Peckham.

I am going back to Peckham again
Far from the camp life so free
Where no merry bell at intervals
Rings for dinner and also for tea.

But every year there comes a June
And we shall meet some more
I must close this rather quickly
As I'm feeling low, and sore. 'Auntie'

When your nose is all in pieces
And your forehead seems all bumps
When the horse-flies and the skeeters
Biting hard, give you the jumps;
When your poor feet feel like turnips
After coming from a tramp
Then you write home to your mother
"Dear Mum, it's lovely at the Camp!

When the hungry ants have suppered
On the limbs you call your own
And the breakfast bell rings loudly
As you're sleeping with a moan.
When you need a rest so badly
And sit on the grass that's damp
"Dearest Ma" your pen writes glibly
"It is splendid here in Camp."

But when the fortnight's over
And you're at your work again
Do you think about the skeeters
All the 'sorrow' and the pain.
No! You show your brown complexion
To your best young man - the scamp
And look forward to next season
When he will write you at - The Camp. A.B.Elsbury

(Both of these poems were written in July 1925)

An Effusion After a First Visit to Cudworth Camp - 1921

C ome away from town, my friends.
U nderneath the azure skies
D wells a Surrey paradise.
W oods and glades are calling you.
O range-tinted sunsets too;
R ound about the path you wend
T housands of many-coloured flowers
H ourly fill the perfumed hours.

C ome away! The care-cast frown,
A ll the worries of the town,
M elt beneath good nature's touch
P ure air, and freedom, count for much.

N or's the human touch denied
"E ach for all" must be your guide
W hile at Cudworth Camp you bide.
D o you love the merry birds?
I s your heart too full for words
G azing at the star-strewn sky?
A re you touched by woods and bracken?
T hen, awhile your work you'll slacken
E re to Cudworth you will hie.

ST.PETER'S NEWDIGATE, SHINGLES PROJECT By Roger Sawtell

"I have made some enquiries and am told that oak shingles are virtually unobtainable and, if you could get them, are terribly expensive - in the region of £1.50 each." This, a quote from a letter from the National Trust, dated February 7th 1978, among much other correspondence, was the challenge.

We tracked down a retired shingles-maker in Leicestershire, where he demonstrated his craft and we took photographs early in 1979. Thus prepared, with two local craftsmen, Paul and Andrew Wright, we felled one of Dr.Bill Wheeler's oak trees, cut it into logs and made some shingles. This crude feasibility study gave us confidence to encourage the Leicestershire shingles-maker and his wife to come to Newdigate in May 1979. Ernie Harris taught the Wright brothers his skills and at the end of his week's stay in the village gave them some of his tools and equipment.

The art of cleaving shingles from oak is that the cleaver follows the grain of the wood and does not cut across the fibres as with a saw. Following the grain gives the shingles a stable and waterproof quality. With oak that means splitting on the radius. The tree must have at least a two metre girth and have a straight, branch-free, stem. Logs the length of the shingle (30cm) are split into eight cheese like wedges. The curved sapwood and the centre point are cleaved off. The remaining block is only roughly square but the cleaver is able to divide it, always splitting in the middle to equalise the pressure. The shingle, about 1cm thick, is finished off with a draw-knife.

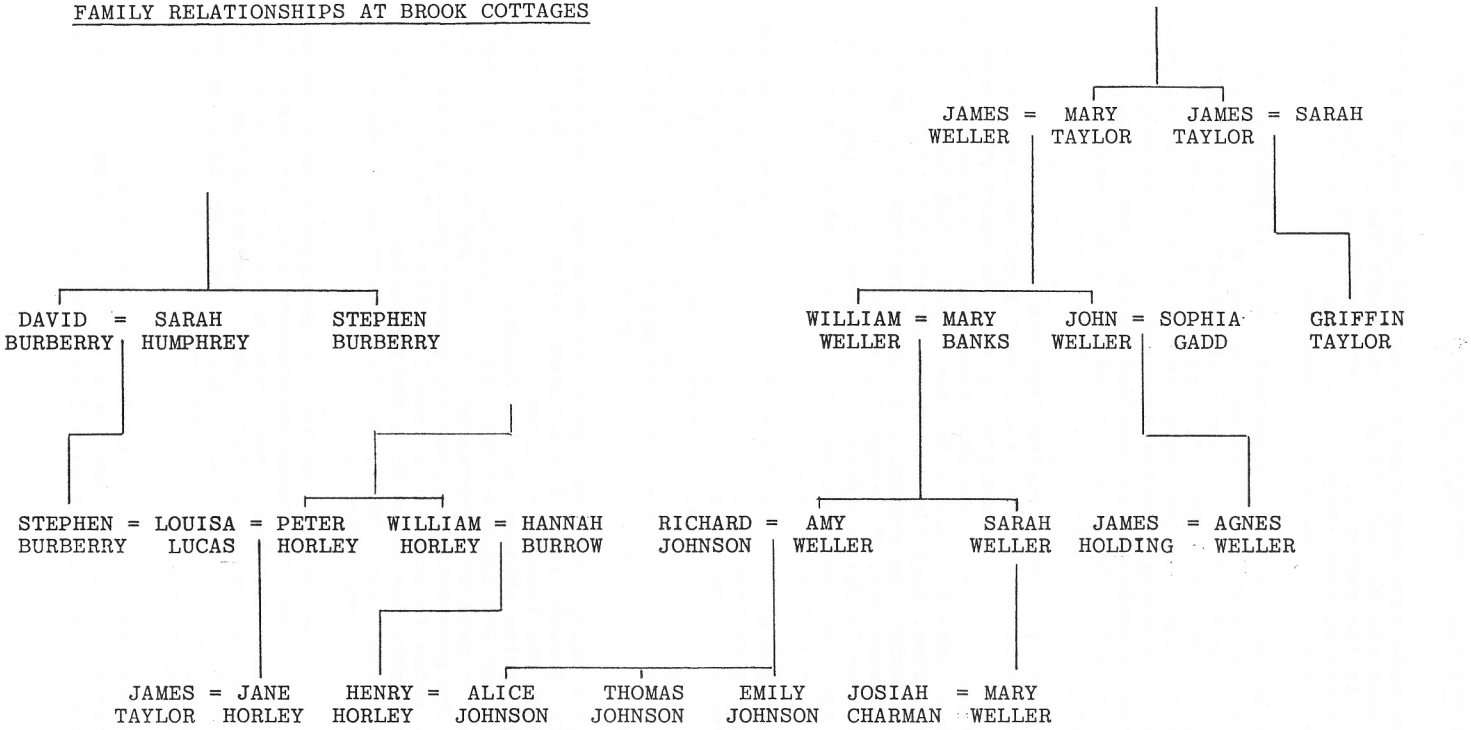
Our estimate of 12 - 15 thousand shingles proved to be spot on, with the shingles varying in width from 6 to 9 cms. The Wright brothers needed to maintain their bread and butter activities, so shingles took second place. Creditably, they maintained their enthusiasm and they completed the task of making all the shingles, but it took six years! In all twelve oak trees were donated or obtained at little cost by Paul and Andrew Wright.

Newdigate Shingles project provoked much sympathetic interest and support, notably from Alec Clifton-Taylor, whose B.B.C. television series was then being shown. He referred to oak shingles as no longer being obtainable. The Sunday Times Supplement featured our project and Bob Danvers-Walker recorded a B.B.C. programme. This publicity gave us encouragement and helped with our fund-raising. The generosity of past and present residents of the parish was added to by at least one City Livery Company, by two charitable trusts concerned with the preservation of buildings of historic interest, and finally by the Department of the Environment who undertook to top up the fund.

Keeping the pot boiling whilst the shingles were being made presented a problem. Our Diocesan-approved architect Bevil Greenfield ARIBA had consistently supported the project. The steeplejack who was introduced by the architect Mrs.Penelope Adamson ARIBA appointed by the D of E to review our project was involved early on and gave valuable advice on the production of shingles, with which he was well pleased.

It was the steeplejack Peter Harknett who pointed out that it must be unique in this century for a church spire to be clad in shigles made in the village by village craftsmen from village oak trees.

FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS AT BROOK COTTAGES



The skill and dexterity of Peter Harknett and his two young assistants as they worked suspended from the top of the spire in their 'bosun's chair' was a compelling attraction for spectators and photographers. The steeplejacks' pride in their work is fully justified and is a guarantee of a job pleasing to the eye for generations to come.

WORKHOUSE GREEN By Charles Thompson

On the corner opposite Workhouse Green on the Parkgate Road is a row of three cottages, now known as No.1 and 2 Brook Cottages and Clairbrook Cottage. The original structure (half of No.1 and all of No.2) was built for the Overseers of the Poor in about 1796. The land on which it was built was part of a farm called Heath Land, to which was added the area nearest the road, enclosed from the waste of the manor. It was in that year that a contract was made for the care of the poor including the provision of "a house to keep the poor in", replacing an earlier one nearer the church, in which Thomas Chart, the schoolmaster, took up residence.

It is thought that this was not always used as a workhouse, as the name of the green would imply, but merely as a place to house the poor, although in December 1800 a formal agreement was made between the parish officers and John Rooles of Witney in Oxfordshire that "he should be paid at the rate of 12/- with board per week ... to undertake the whole care of the poor .... to instruct and teach all them that shall be sent into this house, and others the officers shall think proper to send to him for the purpose of work in the Woollen Manufacturing Line from the space of 12 months from the date thereof." (See magazine no. 11.)

The following paragraph appeared in the Newdigate Overseers book "In the year 1801 ... there was a Woollen Manufactory established in the workhouse of this ... parish. Cloth made for Great-Coats, Waistcoats, Blankets, Horse-Collar Cloth, Yearn for Stockings etc. The first garment a waistcoat that was made for one George Weller, son of Peter Weller. Name of the Cloth; Newdigate Frizzle." (See magazine no.10.)

This venture was shortlived and probably ceased after only one year. By 1836, in a reply to a question from the Board of Poor Law Commissioners, in connection with the new Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834, the Newdigate overseers wrote " there are several houses in which paupers live rent-free, but neither poorhouse nor workhouse in this parish." (See magazine no,14.) So by this time the building was probably being used solely as a place to provide shelter for families of unemployed, and therefore homeless, agricultural labourers. But the new Act changed this and the Overseers had to give up this form of poor relief. Instead Newdigate was required to join with other parishes to form the new Dorking Union, and all paupers had to be housed in the newly built workhouse (the present Dorking Hospital). The Overseers' properties in Newdigate were all sold.

The tithe redemption list for 1840 shows the new owner of the poorhouse - and the orchard to the west of it (where now stand Brookmead and Rosario) - to be Griffin Taylor, a bricklayer. He was also shown as the occupier, but in 1841, at the time of the census return, he was in fact living at Gosscroft, and the former poorhouse was occupied by William Weller, his wife Mary and their daughter, Sarah, who had an illegitimate daughter, also named Mary. William, an agricultural labourer from Charlwood and the son of a Dorking

miller, was Griffin's first cousin, his mother being sister to Griffin's father.

For at least the next forty years nearly all the occupiers of these cottages were related in some way to one another or to the owners. These relationships became somewhat complex as will be seen on the accompanying chart.

In 1841 the whole building was occupied by the Weller family, but by 1851 it had been divided into two cottages. In one still lived William Weller, now aged 70, his wife and his granddaughter. In the other cottage was Arthur Farindon, a master tailor from Capel, with his young family.

William's widow Mary continued in the same cottage at least to 1861, having taken a lodger, but her granddaughter Mary, now aged 24, had moved into the other cottage with her husband Josiah Charman, and their three children. Josiah, born in the West Indies, was an agricultural labourer.

Two years later a carpenter named Richard Johnson, from Upton in Gloucestershire, completed the absolute purchase in fee simple of the property, from the executors of the late Stephen Burberry. (We do not know when Stephen Burberry had bought it from Griffin Taylor.) The cost of the whole property was £65, for which Richard Johnson acquired an absolute interest with freedom of disposition during his lifetime. (He died in 1888.) He then took out a mortgage for £140, with which it would seem he built Clairbrook Cottage, for the 1871 census listed three separate dwellings there. The family relationships were maintained, because Richard was married to Amy, one of William and Mary Weller's daughters.

In 1871 one cottage was occupied by George Weller and his family. In the second was James Holding and his family. James's wife was Agnes, a niece of William Weller. In the third was Thomas Johnson, Richard's son, his sister Emily and grandmother, Mary Weller, now aged 78.

The family connections continued into 1881. Now one cottage was occupied by the family of James Taylor and his wife Jane, who was the daughter of Peter and Louisa Horley. We have not been able to establish whether James was related to Griffin Taylor, but it seems likely that he was. Peter Horley's nephew Henry Horley had married Alice, the daughter of Richard Johnson, in 1865 - they were the parents of George Horley. Peter Horley's widow Louisa was now remarried - to Stephen Burberry - and they were living in the second cottage with the youngest of Stephen's children. And Stephen was the nephew of the Stephen Burberry who until his death in 1856 was the owner of the cottages!

It would appear that in 1882 Richard Johnson gave up his rights to the property, because late that year it had reverted to the executors of the late owner, Stephen Burberry, who now sold it to William Capon of Reffolds. He does not appear to have been a relation - merely a neighbour.