Newdigate Society Magazine

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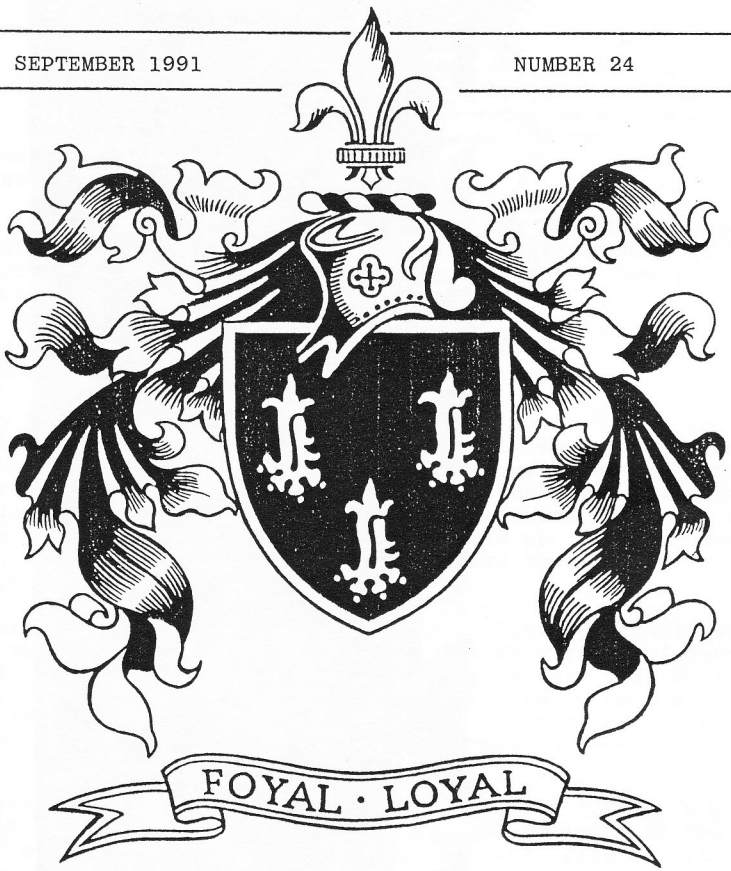

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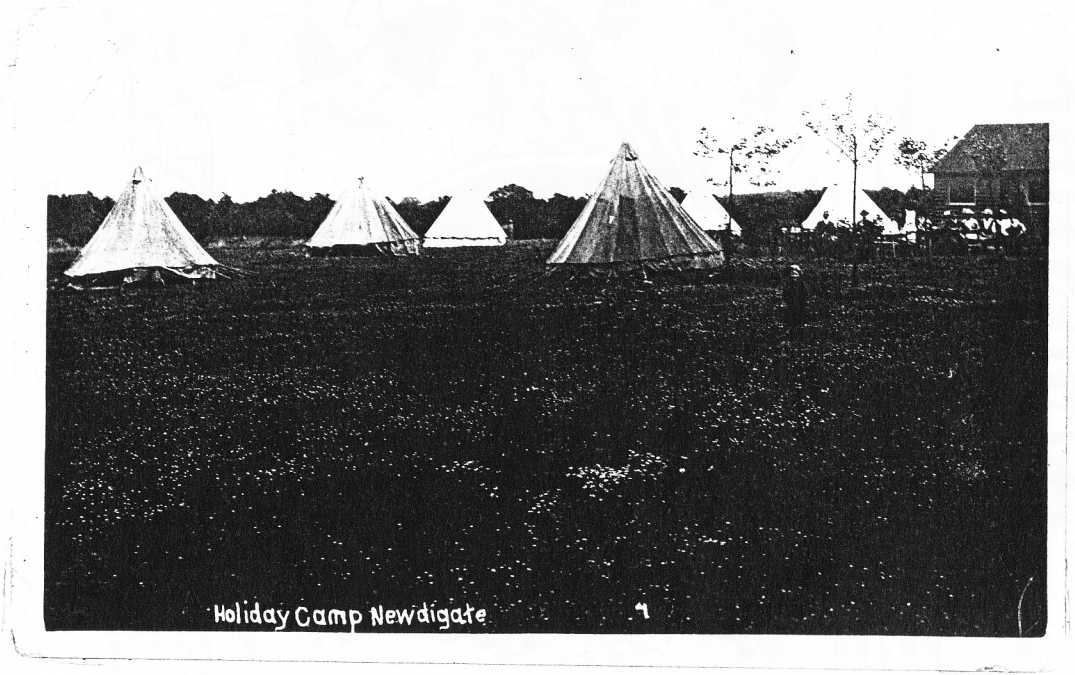

Cudworth Holiday Camp in 1921

NEWS FROM THE SOCIETY

Our book "The Newdigate Guide", written by John Callcut and Charles Thompson, with illustrations by John Callcut, can now be purchased at the village shops or from any member of the committee at £2.50, or if ordered by post from Charles Thompson, Coombers Farm, Newdigate, RH5 5EE, at £3.00, postage paid. The reader is taken on a tour of the parish and is given brief details about the houses and anecdotes about some of their occupiers over the years. We suggest also that the book would make an ideal Christmas present to send to friends outside the parish, who are nevertheless familiar with it. Already over 200 copies have been sold, so make sure that you buy yours in good time.

We have added a new product to the range of items for sale. This is a coaster, price £3.00, made in bone china and with a design similar to that on the coffee cup, which can still be purchased at £3.50. The coaster can be used as a saucer with the cups if desired. May we remind you that the two designs of tea towels as still on sale, as are pens and pencils.

May we also remind you that SUBSCRIPTIONS ARE NOW DUE for the year beginning August 1st. Please make your payments without further notice to our treasurer Bob Howard, Kingsland Cottage, Newdigate, RH5 5DA. Subscriptions remain at £1.00 minimum.

FUTURE EVENTS

Our A.G.M. will take place in the Village Hall at 8 p.m. on Tuesday, September 10th. This is your opportunity to express your views on the way the Society is run, to make suggestions how matters can be improved and vote for the Committee for the forthcoming year. After the formal part of the meeting and coffee there will be a quiz competition to see who is the most knowledgeable about the history of our parish. All the answers to the questions are to be found in the Society's publications.

On Saturday, November 9th the Surrey Local History Council will be holding their usual annual symposium at the University of Surrey. The subject this year is 'Food and Drink'. The Society will be taking a stand there as usual and we encourage all members to come along to enjoy both the displays by other similar local history societies and the lectures by excellent speakers. More information from Charles Thompson.

The Village Hall is booked for Tuesday, November 12th at 8 p.m. when we will have as our speaker Brian Carr, the Chairman of the Dorking and District Preservation Society, who will give an illustrated talk on the history of St.Martin's church in Dorking. He helped with the research that culminated in the publication of the recent book about St,Martin's, so he is very knowledgeable about the subject.

Diana Salisbury is arranging a Parish Wood Day at Hammond's Copse for Sunday, February 23rd when the Reigate Conservation Volunteers, led by Simon Elson, will be demonstrating various woodmen's techniques. Those who attended Dr.Tony Whitbread's talk on the history of woodlands will be particularly interested. For gardeners it will also be an opportunity to purchase bean-poles and pea-sticks at reasonable prices. More news on this in the next magazine. But please book the date in your diaries.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR - RE MRS.JANSON AND THE HERRON FAMILY.

From Doris Tanner.

I was most interested to read about Mrs.Janson and her family in the June magazine. It brought back some wonderful memories, especially of Miss Lilian Herron.

In 1925 I went to live at Home Farm with my family after leaving Marelands Farm. We saw Miss Herron most days as she walked along Dukes Drive. Fir trees alternated with sycamore on each side and it looked very pretty all through the long drive. The grass was always cut short so that Miss Herron could walk along in her lovely long skirts, and she always carried a sunshade in summer.

Miss Herron was a most kind and caring lady. If she heard that someone in the family was ill, she would call to see them, and before she left she would take a purse out and give mother ten shillings to buy a beverage for the patient. If anyone needed hospital treatment she would give you a letter, and this helped to get free treatment at Guys Hospital. My mother and two brothers all had operations there, thanks to Miss Herron. (No waiting lists in those days.)

All through the year she would be making plans to give the local girls and boys a wonderful Christmas. She paid the local dressmaker to make a warm winter dress for the girls,and the boys used to get a lovely hand-knitted jumper and trousers. Each one of us also had a beautiful present. One year she gave me a lovely china doll that I named Lily, dressed in green velvet. Alas, in the end I fell and broke the doll's face and I shed many tears.

There was always great excitement when we heard the carriage and horses coming down the drive. It was all so smart and shining, with Mr.Britten the coachman holding the reins. In later years Mrs. Janson bought a motor car and Joe Sanders became the chauffeur, but I must confess that the lovely horses and carriage were far more beautiful.

It was sad to see that family leave their beautiful home, and Miss Herron ended her days with Mrs.Tullett at Fairholme.

From Anne Green.

I was very interested in the article about Mrs.Janson and the Herron family, and especially in the article on the Newdigate wood-carving classes started in 1902. In the list of names of the students who carved the pew-ends the name of Harry Standing is mentioned. I think this was my mother's brother. His home was in Charlwood. He was born in 1888 and in 1911 he married Edith Harrington, who was a servant at Cider Mill, not far from Mrs Janson's Newdigate Place and part of her estate. He could have been employed by her and so met his wife there. They emigrated to Australia, where he died in 1927, aged 38 years.

I well remember the herd of deer in the park. We used to go through Dukes Drive on our way to Russ Hill, where my grandfather lived. Miss Herron was a very kind person. I remember every Christmas there was a school party, and all the children had gifts from her. I still have the doll's teaset, given me when I was in the infants. We also received woollen jerseys each winter.

From Charles Thompson.

In my article on Mrs.Janson I mentioned that one of her ancestors was Sir Robert Chester. I have since discovered from Burke's Landed Gentry that he was one of the Gentlemen Ushers of the Privy Chamber to Henry VIII, from whom he obtained a grant, by charter,of the monastery of Royston in 1541, including the manor and lands of Royston, Cohenache, West Rede, Newhall and Hoddenhoo, and so became resident there. "The King's beloved servant" as he was termed, became a Particular Receiver of the Court of Augmentations. He was knighted by Edward VI in 1552.

DECORATING THE CHURCH IN 1977

By Roger Sawtell

We decided to 'do it ourselves', the criteria being that the cost would be as little as possible and that the church would be out of commissionn for as short a time as possible.

We were told by the Diocesan architect that we must use traditional lime wash and made extensive research as to its recipe (which is now pasted in the back of the Churchwardens' logbook). Quicklime was donated by Blue Circle Group from a limekiln in Kent, tallow from a meat-processing plant in Wakefield, transported by the Tadworth slaughterhouse. Cat-walks were loaned by Youngman's of Crawley. A lorry load of scaffold was loaned by Croudace of Lambs Green, near Rusper.

We bought enough heavy duty plastic to cover all the pews and laid scaffold planks on top of the plastic to make a working platform. Pamela Day and I did this in one evening! The work started the next day. I can't remember why but there was some midweek event in the church and I think we started work on a Friday and finished on the Saturday of the following week. Six helpers worked in three shifts - morning, afternoon and evening as they were able. Bill Mackay and I supervised the shifts between us.

We bought brushes of all sorts and buckets and so on, so that no-one's effort was wasted. The limewash turned out to be an exciting witches' brew. In a tin bath slaking the lime with water generated heat to create a steaming cauldron in which the tallow was melted. Protective clothing and goggles were very much a necessity for this process.

Bill Mackay, who has a sailor's head for heights, did much of the aerial work, and it is unforgettable to have seen him squatting, hunkers fashion, on a beam twenty feet up and carrying on a chatty conversation with someone standing, head held back, in the nave.

The services on the one Sunday between were held in the Village Hall, but on a 'better the day, better the deed' basis, those not in the Hall were working in the church.

By the following Sunday the church was back in action, properly, with everything in the right place. True, that outside there were piles of scaffold planks and other equipment to be cleared later. Alan Trower, then the local builder, 'bought generously' the quantity of brushes we used, and the total cost of the exercise was a good deal less than £200.

The names of those who helped are written on the underside of the nave roof in the north-east corner; sixty names in all. The Rector has been known to say: "It's the nearest some of them will get to heaven", but I don't think he meant the comment to be taken too seriously.

NEWDIGATE CHILDREN IN CARE

By Robert Pols

A constant problem for the Newdigate authorities in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries was how to provide for the poor, of which the parish had more than its fair share.

Resourcefulness was needed and resourcefulness was forthcoming. Straightforward indoor and outdoor relief were added to by other devices for providing and funding assistance. The production of Newdigate Frizzle and the use of the roundsman system have been dealt with in earlier articles by other writers. Another scheme tried by the authorities involved putting children in care. The parish would place a child with a host family, paying something for food and, perhaps, clothing, leaving the hard-pressed parents with one less mouth to feed.

Evidence of this scheme survives in a faded and damaged notebook covering the years 1796 to 1820. It does not seem to be a formal record of agreements so much as an overseer's pocket book for keeping notes as he went about the business of arranging care. Any formal documents that were needed might be drawn up separately later.There is, therefore, no reason to assume that all such arrangements for the period appear in the notebook. An idea of how the system worked can be gained from looking at its use in relation to one family living in the parish at the time.

Benjamin, the son of James Lucas, labourer, and his wife Mary, was born on January 16th 1818. This brought the couple's total of living children to six. This was a family that would take some supporting, for times were hard. A Board of Agriculture investigation of 1816 had described how much of the burden of the times fell on the labourers, of whom all but the essential hands were finding themselves discharged. Thomas Page, a landowner of Cobham, described the working population as being "in a state of pauperism I never knew before", and another Surrey farmer observed that the distress of the poor was "very great". It is not therefore surprising if James and Mary had difficulty in providing for their growing family.

Two months after the birth of Benjamin the parish stepped in and arranged for the eldest daughter, eleven year old Charlotte, to be taken into care with a Mr.Hayler. The entry in the notebook reads "March 13th 1818. Charlotte Lucas to go to Mr.Hayler's, and he to have 2s.Od. per week with her till Lady Day 1819." Since Lady Day was March 25th, it is clear that arrangements were made on a yearly basis. A sum as great as two shillings per week generally meant (judging from other entries) that the 'keeper' was expected to provide clothes as well as food. If the parish took upon itself the task of clothing a child, the keeper's fee was about half that amount.

Any relief that this putting in care provided for James and Mary was soon offset by the arrival of Ann on October 20th 1818. The date does seem surprisingly soon after the last happy event, and it may have been misremembered or mis-entered, since it was not recorded until her christening on November 7th 1819. It is easy, when considering the large families of labourers, to condemn their improvidence, but it should be remembered that abstinence was the only sure prophylactic, and there were few enough consolations for the poor to enjoy that were free (at point of sale.)

At any rate further relief was provided. On March 17th 1819 arrangements were made for their son, James, to go to Mr.Thomas

Burberry, "and he to have 10d. per week with him until Lady Day 1820". It seems that on this occasion the parish was to provide clothing. James was ten years old at the time. The fact that no mention is made of Charlotte in 1819 does not necessarily mean that she returned to her parents. It may simply mean that no note of any arrangement was made in what was, after all, a working pocket book rather than a systematic and exhaustive official record.

What is known is that on March 15th 1820 arrangements were made for both children to be looked after in the coming year. Charlotte was to go to another member of the Burberry clan, John, for 1s.9d. per week, whilst James went to Thomas Boxshall for the weekly sum of 8d. The decreasing sums allowed for support, both with and without clothing, may reflect the financial problems of the parish as a whole rather than simply meanness. A significant proportion of Newdigate's poor rate-paying classes seem to have been in constant danger of becoming recipients rather than providers themselves, and paying for relief was a genuine burden for such people.

Charlotte has been referred to as the eldest Lucas child. In fact, an Elizabeth Lucas was put into care for the years 1799-1800, 1803-1804 and 1807-1808. It is tempting to wonder whether this could be an earlier child of James and Mary, born in the mysterious early years of their union, when they appear to have been away from the parish.They were certainly the most likely Lucas parents to have children needing to be placed in the first years of the century, but the earliness of the 1799 placing makes it only an outside possibility.

Whether James and Mary received later help of this kind is not known. The notebook ends with 1820. The scheme itself may or may not have continued beyond that year. Certainly they continued to produce children; Louisa in 1821, Thomas in 1823 and George in 1826, As for the system of housing poor children with keepers, that may be seen as one more example of the authorities' efforts to contain a problem which was acute and which refused to go away.

Editor's Note. The Mr. Hayler, who took Charlotte Lucas in care in 1818 was almost certainly Isaac, He was the farmer at Dean House and Northland. Aged 30, he and his wife Elizabeth already had three living children of their own, aged 6,4 and 1 years. (They eventually had twelve, of whom ten survived early childhood.) Was Charlotte taken in to help look after these children?

The Burberry family had been Newdigate farmers for several generations. John, who took Charlotte from the Haylers, farmed a total of 200 acres at Greens Farm and Kingsland, as tenant of the Broadwood family. His cousin, Thomas, married Rebecca Wonham, whose family had held the freehold of Sturtwood Farm for over 200 years and they probably were now living at the farm, although Thomas acted as Steward to the Duke of Norfolk for his Newdigate properties.

Thomas Boxshall was also farming, but on a smaller scale at Curls in Parkgate.

Many Newdigate residents, over five generations, and members of our Society can claim descent from James and Mary Lucas. Amongst the present generation there are:- Jim Elliott, Sheila Hansford, the Whiffens, Frank Lucas and the author of this article, Robert Pols.

HOW CUDWORTH ESTATE BEGAN By Charles Thompson

On December 12th 1902 The Small Holdings Association Limited completed its purchase of a freehold farm in Cudworth from Benjamin Stretton, who had himself bought it from the Lee Steere family of Ockley in 1891. This farm comprised about 345 acres of land, much of it permanent grassland,but with some fields sown to oats, swedes and mangolds to feed the farm animals, and one of 14 acres sown to wheat. Beam Brook flows through the middle of this area and two of the fields on its northern side were described as 'rich pasture land', something of a rarity in Newdigate parish. The only woodland was an area of about fourteen acres known as Cudworth Copse.

Grove Cottage and Hatchetts, both outside the estate, marked the north-west corner, and the eastern boundary was formed by Partridge Lane from just south of Houndhouse Farmhouse to just north of Rolls Farmhouse. The only buildings within the boundary at that time were Cudworth Manor, then described merely as 'farmhouse', the farm buildings, now called Cudworth Farm, and what was described on the map as the 'site of a dilapidated cottage' in Partridge Lane, which today is the Grade 2 listed Old Beam Brook. In 1902 it was probably already roofless, as indeed it still was in 1919. Running west from the farmhouse was a road shown on the map as 'hard road from Newdigate' and to the east, running to Partridge Lane was a green lane called Burnt Oak Lane.

Ten years before, in 1892, Parliament had passed the Small Holdings Act, which empowered county councils to acquire land for the provision of holdings of not more than 50 acres in extent. It seems that the intention was that these holdings should be cultivated only by the occupier or owner and his family, with only occasional help from others.

The Small Holdings Association was formed on Socialist principles to provide working men with 'a few acres and a cow'. There is a photograph of men and women, dressed perhaps inappropriately, planting fruit trees in one of the Cudworth fields. Underneath is the caption 'The Garden Village of The Small Holders Association Limited, Cudworth, Newdigate, Surrey.' Further narrative relates:- 'The Cudworth Colony is 3 miles from Holmwood Station, 28 miles from London Bridge and 7 from Redhill and Dorking. Land is sold at £20 to £30 an acre, on a ten years system of payment to deserving working-men; the object being to promote the repopulation of the land by the provision of small farms in a district in which very little is grown and in which fruit, vegetables, poultry etc, are dear. Inspection at any time by appointment. The co-operation of those interested in the extension of the movement is invited.' If these objects reflected the general state of the Newdigate area, it gives us a good indication how hard life must have been for the ordinary resident in the village at the turn of the century.

Each purchaser of land had to accept certain warranties imposed by the Association. First no dwelling house or other permanent buildings could be erected unless the consent in writing of the Association had been obtained. Secondly, if this was granted, as it normally was,only one house was permitted. There were restrictions too on the use that could be made of the premises. Specifically, without the Association's consent no building could be used 'for the purpose of an hotel, tavern, public house, beer-house or club registered in accordance with the Licensing Acts, nor for the sale of wine, beer, spirits or other intoxicating liquors, nor for any offensive, noisy or dangerous trade, business, pursuit

or occupation, or any purpose which shall or may grow to be in any away a nuisance, grievance or annoyance to the Association or to the owners or tenants of any of the adjoining property or the neighbourhood.'

Each owner was granted a right of way over the private road which ran through the estate and which followed the line of the old 'hard road' and the green lane. Today we know these as Cudworth Lane and Burnt Oak Lane. Again restrictions were placed on the type of vehicle that could be taken along the lane - there were to be no traction engines or motor cars exceeding three tons in weight. But they could drive cattle. sheep and other animals. In later deeds there was a stipulation that any house should be at least forty feet from the lane.

The public seem to have been attracted to this scheme in numbers sufficient to take all the lots within a few years. We have already read in magazine no.15 the account of the purchase and building of Oulton, written by a neighbour, F.E.Green. (See also magazine no.16 for some details of F.E.Green himself.) Oak Lane Farm in Partridge Lane has the date 1904 on the face of the house, and most of the houses on the Cudworth Estate date from the first decade of this century.

Not all the land was bought for the growing of fruit and vegetables. The most notable exception was the development of Cudworth Holiday Camp, of which Cudworth Park is its successor. In the early years of this century there was nowhere in the countryside where Londoners could go to spend their holidays at little cost. So the holiday camp was begun to provide tented accommodation and the benefits and amusements of camp life. It is believed that this was the first of its kind in the country, and it attracted support for many years.

Smallholders normally had none of the advantages of the larger farms. The smallholder was frequently inadequately equipped with implements and machinery. At times of pressure, such as hay-making, because he had insufficient labour and horses, he had in consequence to rely on help from his neighbours. Usually he had limited capital and was at a disadvantage against the larger farmer in selling his produce unless he could sell direct to the consumer. However, he was his own master and therefore was prepared to work for as long as necessary to make himself a living, particularly if he owned the land.

The following article by F.E.Green is taken from the first chapter of his book, published in 1911, called 'A Few Acres and a Cottage', which describes how he established his own house and smallholding at Baringsfield. It also illustrates the truth of much that is written in the previous paragraph.

It would seem that the Small Holdings Association did not survive as an organisation for many years after this. An entry on one document, dated 1912, contains the signature of the liquidator. But they had changed forever the character of the old Cudworth Farm.

Born with the earth hunger and tortured by city life, like many another townsman I sought Arcadia on the magic wheel week after week. This I did for eight years, looking for my few acres and a cottage; but rural England, still feudal at heart, baulked me of my desire. Most of the picturesque cottages were farm-tied, many were insanitary, and all, without exception, had but a strip of earth for a garden, which as often as not was a slice of the roadside waste. Whenever I was lured by an advertisement of a house with a few acres, it was generally a case of finding some land ornamented with shrubs, surrounding a mansion with a paddock for the carriage horses. There were pleasure farms in abundance, places where pupils with guns over their shoulders kill time under the pretence of farming. These were not what I was in search of, though sometimes, in the spirit of pure romance, I would pursue a land agent's direction to the bitter end, and in particular do I remember the search I had for a small fruit farm which boasted of a trout stream. How I laughed over that trout stream, when at last I found the farmstead, four instead of two miles from a station, as advertised. It was merely the roadside ditch which trickled through the corner of a bed of strawberries overgrown with couch-grass!

It seemed impossible to find a few acres unencumbered with a large house and a large rent. I wanted to rent, and not to buy, a few acres with a cottage where I could win a bare living from the soil, giving up my whole time to the work without having to fall back upon any other occupation. At last, after eight years of vain search, I bought four acres of rank Essex clay close to the shores of the Blackwater. Fortunately an innate Scotch shrewdness prevented me at that time from burning all my boats.

From the point of view of immediate material success the experiment was a failure; but I came to regard it as an illuminating failure, for the hundred pounds I spent on it was the premium paid to teach me much that was vital to me afterwards. My beans were blighted, my potatoes diseased, my apple trees ruined by rabbits, and the wheelbarrow I had especially built of oak was so large and heavy that it had to be turned upside-down, and regretfully converted into a duck-house. The duck-pond, which a friend and I spent a fortnight in digging out, was dug in vain, for not a solitary duck would swim in so clean a bath when there was another pond in an adjacent field redolent with green slime, and thick with succulent weeds.

It was not until another seven years had passed that I completely burned my boats. That was when I bought sixteen acres, with four more since added, amid this beautiful scenery of a southern county. Again I had no desire to buy land, only to rent it, but if I wanted a cottage small enough for my modest requirements, surrounded by a few acres, I found that I should have to build it myself. Then, too, the situation charmed me, for, from this hilltop holding, horizoned by trees save where the long line of the Downs stretches across the skies like greyhounds "in full career" as Meredith says, I could gaze at Leith Hill throned amongst them like a queen, sometimes robed in blue, sometimes in purple, and at times shrouded in gossamer mist or of brooding clouds which, when uplifted at the call of the sun on an early spring morning, reveals herself radiant in the vivid emerald of the larch.

There was no going back now. I had thrown up my post and was rapidly sinking my little capital on the great venture in the open country. By some means I should have to wrest a living from the

soil for myself, my wife and my child. There was no nest-egg to fall back upon, no private income to butter my bread. I had gotten down to the bed-rock of existence. Now I should feel something of the exhilaration of contending with Nature, of winning bread from the bare earth, and know the joy of creating something with my own hands and completing that which I had fashioned. It is in the lack of a creative joy that is to be found the insidious germ of that soul-deadening, manhood-destroying effects of city life, where the worker is only an unrecognised cog in a huge industrial machine. Yet I did not forget that even in Arcadia I should still have to take part in the sordid contentions of the market place.

My friends who know the story of the blighted beans, the stranded wheelbarrow, the ruined apple trees, of my first venture, grew alarmed when they heard that I had made my irrevocable choice, and so fearful were they that I should never eat another good meal that they determined to give me such a dinner as should make a red-letter day in my life. And this took place in a historic restaurant in Soho.

The alarm deepened as the report was spread that I had ordered my smock-frock, that my boots had been fitted with digging irons at the blacksmith's. and that I was about to tie string round my trousers under the knees.

I knew that I should have to stock my holding better than Thoreau did his, and that I should have to sow more than "nine bean rows" and keep more than "a hive of wild bees", like Mr.W.B.Yeats in his Isle of Innesfree.

Most small holders have some craft to rely upon besides that of the husband-man, and though I knew I could turn my hand to the pen as well as to the spade, for the first two years I practically wrote nothing, so busy was I creating my homestead and trying to wrest a livelihood from the soil. These were the days when my manual labour lasted from daylight until nightfall,laborious days,during which my wife worked harder than myself.

I did not set out to dig when I shook the dust of the city from off my feet. Digging was not what my hand yearned for. Some are born to dig; others have digging thrust upon them. I am one of the latter. As soon as our four-roomed cottage was built and the walls distempered, I hung in the kitchen, near the sink where I washed my hands after manual labour, a copy of Burne-Jones' picture of Adam digging. I hung it here to urge me to further efforts with the spade when my spirits flagged, although I always think poor Adam looks as if he were about to meet his death, like Saul,with intent, upon the shaft of an implement that could only tickle the surface of the soil. I wanted to rear calves, and pigs, and poultry, rather than to dig; I wanted, above all, to surround my cottage with a gorgeous orchard planted by my own hands. The quicker, rhythmic movements of manual labour appeal to me more than either digging or hoeing, such as sowing seed broadcast, swinging a scythe in the lush grass, reaping with the hook, or pitching hay into a wagon. Hoeing never fascinated me any more than digging, and I had at first to severely discipline myself to the monotonous stroke of the hoe upon the stony ground. I had to give no more than one look at Millet's poignant picture of "The Man with the Hoe" to bring myself into line with the great brotherhood of toilers.

There is, however, one intellctual advantage in digging, that is, the opportunity it gives one to think - to think aloud, if one

is so inclined, under wide skies where life can be free of the trammels of convention. From the freshly turned earth subtle essences arise and enter one's being, and it is then that thought takes wing. Yet overmuch digging is not stimulating; it induces mental drowsiness and as the body flags the mind sinks to the clay.

Handicapped as I was by the lack of experience, I yet had the advantage over those who know no other life than that of the farm, in that my mind was unclogged by traditional prejudices as to tillage and stock keeping. Up till now I had never played the game in earnest. I had only trifled with bees and poultry kept in a garden of Suburbia. I may have possessed a little knowledge gleaned from my rows of books on agriculture. Indeed, from the start my holding was very heavily stocked with this rather weighty capital, yet I think I would have bartered the whole of my agricultural library for a year of experience in the many crafts of farm life, before I ventured on working a mixed small holding.

My holding, as I have said, consisted at first of sixteen acres, and all of it was under grass. Now it is twenty acres, and I will describe it as it stands today.

As I look out of my cottage window, I see immediately around me on the little hilltop sloping away to the north and to the south, three acres, most of which is dug by the fork and planted with over seven hundred half-standard and bush apple trees, and standard plum and apples trees. In between these rows of trees are about two thousand gooseberry and currant bushes,mostly gooseberries; and again between these are rows of strawberry plants,covering in the aggregate, about half an acre of land. There is a three cornered paddock in this three acre field where stands a pigsty and an apiary of thirty hives. To the east, over a high hedge of hazel, ash and blackthorn, is the ten-acre meadow called Hillfield. We get into this meadow over a stile erected in a gap, but a hay wagon or a manure cart enters it by the headland through an eve-gate - a headland, by the way, where thousands of daffodils and narcissi are now breaking into bloom. Hillfield is closed every year for hay, and after haysel the cattle graze on its aftermath. It stands high and slopes away on every side. It is picturesque, with a group of lofty oaks sheltering it to the east, but, like the neighbouring field just described, it is hilly, making many a day's work tiring to both man and beast. In the corner of Hillfield, where it dips to the north and joins a field of permanent pasture, stands the haystack fenced round with poles, but where I find Tommy, the cob, manages to steal a bite of hay as he reaches over with his long neck.

A gateway here leads us into the stockyard, which a Wiltshire farmer would describe as "squishey" at this time of the year, when the mud splashes into your face at every step you take. Inside the yard stands the cowshed, built for four cows, a lean-to for wintering heifers, and two calf-sheds. All these sheds, as well as the pigsty where Sappho III lodges, over the hedge by the apiary, were erected by myself and my assistant, whom I call "John". There is another gate leading into the stockyard from the home field, and it is rather unfortunate that this gateway, so much used by us, should be the one of which the bees have made regular passage between the high hedges, when winging their way home with feverish haste to unload their precious argosies of golden pollen and luscious nectar.

Besides the two poultry houses on wheels in Hillfield, there

are three other sheds which I should mention. One is the dairy built on to the north wall of the cottage, with a tiled roof and a cement floor. Another, opposite the back door, is called the bee-shed, where I keep all my bee-appliances, with the carpenter's bench, and where the milk is separated directly it comes up from the cowshed. This, too, has a cemented floor and a tiled roof. Adjoining it is the red shed where bicycles are stored, and sometimes the potatoes and onions, as well as the tools for the garden. Hard by, I should not overlook the kennel where Two Bob mounts guard and plays the part of Jeames to our little household, for I regret to say that he can detect the slouching step of a tramp within a hundred yards of the filled gate.

From the stockyard where two calves are nibbling hay in the sheds we emerge into the field of permanent pasture called Watermeadow, where the cows are grazing. In the middle of this low-lying field of old pasture stands a group of beautiful oaks under which the cattle shelter themselves on stormy nights. In one corner a pond has been dug out by the side of the stream which ripples through the wood adjoining and runs across the meadow until it joins the Mole. The pond here, fenced round with large poles, has been made because we cannot rely upon the stream continuing to run when it comes round to the sweltering days of July. Under the willows, where the meadow-sweet fills the air with its rich perfume in June, we have made a dam which has held a little glittering pool of water all the year round. Brambles have spread out with wasteful prodigality in this field where it borders the wood, and from amongst them rises a crab apple like an oriflamme in May, and a wild cherry tree. Here rabbits run for shelter when the stream on tempestuous days swells into a flood, and here, too, under a June sky, kingcups and marshmallows raise glistening chalices of gold and mauve from this moorhen-haunted sedgy swamp where willows with drooping heads shatter the shafts of the sun.

Excepting those winged communists, the bees, which have practically solved the problem of living rent-free and of giving largesse for what they take with discrimination from my neighbours' fields, my livestock at the end of last summer consisted of the sow, Sappho, with her litter of twelve pigs, two cows to milk, two down-calving heifers, and the two calves now being weaned. During the summer months I also ran on the aftermath four young heifers, but these were sold in September. Besides these there are Tommy, the cob, and Two Bob, the mongrel terrier. Then, too, there are about thirty white Orpington pullets, for I only keep that number of hens that can do no injury to the pasture when run at liberty. I like my hens to live as the bees, rent-free.

The chief sales of the year have been made by selling heifers to dairy-farmers. We have made little butter this year, but have sold a fat calf as well as twelve pigs. The greatest disappointment has been the fruit garden. Strawberries yielded an abundance of good fruit and sold well, but gooseberries gave about half their usual crop, and there was very little top fruit. The apiary, however, failed me worst of all, owing to the inclement months of June and July.

From the very beginning I determined to earn from my holding at least a labourer's wage, for a livelihood of some kind had to be won for my little household. Amazing as it may seem, I accomplished this after the second year, and yet, when I come to think of it, after the expenditure of so much capital it was only natural that there should be a return for my labour, even when one deducts debit

charges for rent or interest. If I were starting again, I should not purchase land and leave myself crippled for want of capital for the sake of the dubious pleasure of becoming a peasant proprietor.

Now that a new Small Holdings Act is in operation I should endeavour, absurdly difficult as it seems to be, to rent land from a County Council with security of tenure. I should try also to settle where there are other smallholders who are willing to practise co-operation.

What I have tried to do has been to bring into these pages the atmosphere of a small holding. I do not expect anyone to take a certificate for agriculture after reading these pages. All I can hope for is that they may stimulate a few to love the earth and to quicken that movement which is leading many to turn awav from our overgrown cities in order to nourish the heart of England with their labour, and to win there sustenance for themselves. I have never regretted the step I took. Among the multitudinous siren notes of city life there is not one to lure me back again. Fortunately I have found sustenance in tilling the soil and am never in want of a fortifying dinner, for at hand are milk and honey, fruit and vegetables. There is meat too in Arcadia as well as the wind upon the heath.

ELECTRIC LIGHTING IN ST.PETER'S CHURCH

By Alan Banks

In a the report of a meeting of the Parochial Church Council in 1932 Mr.Ward expressed the opinion that the electric lighting of the church would work out a little cheaper than the old oil lamp method of lighting. He said that he knew that the success of the new lighting scheme had induced others to carry out similar methods. They had come to Newdigate to look at the church's and had then introduced similar systems themselves.

The above report led me to ask John Callcut to look up in the Parish Magazines for any reference to the previous method of lighting the church. He discovered the following entry in the magazine for May 1887:-

"The lamps which Mr.Cattley presented to the Church were lighted on Easter Sunday, and produced a very fine effect. They are of polished brass, fitted with Hinck's patent burners, and all the latest improvements for lighting and extinguishing without removing shade or chimney. The parishioners return their grateful thanks to Mr.and Mrs. Cattley for their generous gift to St.Peter's."

Although it may seem strange to the younger generation that there was ever a time when we did not have electricity to do all the things we take for granted - to provide lighting in the home and power in the factories, the installation for domestic purposes was not general much before the 1930s.

In my own home as a child I well remember that lighting was provided by oil lamps. The streets of the town where I lived were lit by gas lamps mounted on iron lamp-posts, which the gas lighter turned on at night in winter with a long pole, and which he turned off again in the mornings when it was coming light.

In rural areas the isolated farms still have generators to provide their own power and light.

WHEN NEWDIGATE WENT FOR GOLD By Alan Banks

During the period since 1955 when I came to live in Newdigate, there never seems to have been a time when the village was not seeking ways of raising money for the maintenance of the Community Centre. There had always been the annual village day when run-of-the mill events were staged, which did not involve much loss if things went wrong or there was inclement weather.

But in the 1960's, when the Community Centre was headed by Dr. Bill Wheeler as Chairman and George Green as Secretary, there was some impatience to organise block-buster events which would hit the jackpot at one go, and thereby solve the financial problems which continued to beset the Community Centre.

The bigger and more ambitious the event, the greater was the initial outlay, and the bigger the bang if things went wrong. Just one small weakness in the organisation could cause disaster,either financially or disappointment for the crowds which had come to participate in the fun.Looking on the bright side, one financially successful occasion took place on May 26th 1966 and raised £900, which at that time was a princely sum.

It was reported in the local newspaper on a full page, with many photographs,under the banner headlines which proclaimed:- CROWDS FLOCK TO HISTORIC ENGINES RALLY. The report continued:- "Newdigate's first traction engine rally brought crowds and traffic problems to the village on Saturday. It is estimated that nearly 5,000 people attended the show, and nearly £900 was collected towards the local village hall improvements fund. No exact attendance figure was recorded, because the 4,000 entrance tickets which were purchased for the event had all been sold by mid-afternoon.

Sightseers from all over the south of England flocked to the show on the Brocus field which this year took the place of the usual gala, which has proved successful in the past. The warm weather brought motorists out for the day, and roads in and out of Newdigate were at times solid with cars. Queues were reported to be half a mile long in places and some sat in their cars for long periods waiting for the traffic to clear.By three o'clock in the afternoon Newdigate was practically at a standstill. A contingent of police tried to keep the cars moving and by 4 p.m. traffic was running smoothly through the village.

The rally was organised by the Newdigate Gala Committee in conjunction with the Worthing Historic Commercial Group. The money raised will go towards improving toilet and changing facilities at the village hall and will possibly pay for the building of a new kitchen, as well as ancillary improvements to the ground.

Main attraction of the show was the display of vehicles put on by the Worthing Historic Group. Most of the vehicles were of the agricultural type having been used on farms in their hey-day. The oldest, exhibited by Mr.C.C.Russell of Bordon, was the focus of considerable interest. It was the Allchin, built in 1890, and believed to be the oldest engine still running. In 1963 its engine was restored to its original livery.

The thirty-nine engines on show, and their drivers, had to tackle competitions ranging from obstacle races to musical chairs. The display warmed up with the obstacle race in which traction engines raced from one end of the ground to the other.There were

several obstacles on the course they had to avoid. Musical chairs brought many laughs from the crowds that ringed the arena. Each veteran vehicle carried one passenger. When the marshal dropped his flag each rushed to his nearest drum. Those who could find no drum left the field.

A further test which provided plenty of hilarity for onlookers was the crate race, in which drivers were called upon to drink a bottle of beer before completing the course in their vehicles. The Tenth Battalion Parachute Regiment of the Territorial Army was also there with a display of three new weapons. Apart from the traction engines on show there was a display of veteran motorcycles, the oldest built in 1903.

Dr.William Wheeler, Chairman of the Newdigate Organising Committee said that he was surprised by the huge success of the rally. Four thousand was about the most we expected. But Dr.Wheeler added that the Committee were rather let down. Of the nine steam engines due to come, only four turned up, he said. We were also expecting a round-about and more sideshows."

This was rather typical of the things which could easily go wrong. I recall that the weather during the week prior to the event had been very wet and it was perhaps understandable that the heavy vehicles had not wished to become permanently bogged down on the Brocus.

Other events which may be the subject of future articles include the balloon ascent, when the balloon did not go up, the famous Countryman's Fair when the committee had to delve into their pockets to meet the financial loss incurred, and the medieval tournament, when the visiting knights in armour who were to joust against three knights from the village spent too long in The Six Bells beforehand and were unable to mount their horses, let alone joust. We medieval villagers who had donned appropriate costume for the occasion felt badly let down.

EASTER IN NEWDIGATE IN 1891

By John Callcut

Adverse weather conditions one hundred years ago meant that flowers were in short supply for decorating the church at Easter time. The parish magazine shows how the problem was solved.

"The usual primroses and spring flowers were entirely absent from the decorations owing to the extreme backwardness of the season, the heavy snow of March 9th not having entirely disappeared in the hedgerows and ditches even on April 13th, quite five weeks after the storm. Thus the church on Easter Monday was not as usual decorated with the children's wild flowers. There was, however, no lack of hot house flowers; they were lavishly supplied from Lyne, Henfold and Stanhill Court.

We had a cheery addition to our Easter joy this year, in the form of a bright and well-rung chime in the early morning from our promising team of young bellringers, and again after evensong they helped to send the parishioners home with the joyful Easter tidings ringing in their ears. We may mention here that the old custom of hot cross buns was kept up, the Sunday School children receiving one each at the Rectory after morning service."