

Newdigate Local History Society Magazine

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FREDERICK ERNEST GREEN – FARMER, AUTHOR & ACTIVIST

Visit our website at www.nlhs.org.uk

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NEWS FROM THE SOCIETY

From the comments we have received we know that many people enjoyed reading about Eileen Funnell in the last magazine. It is therefore with much sadness that we must tell you that Eileen passed away peacefully on the 31st March 2021 aged 91.

On a similarly melancholy note we have to report that our past chairman Donald Thwaites passed away on the 4th May.

Caroline Clark contacted the Society about a stone which she found on her land at Baringsfield. On it is carved 'TO THE SACRED MEMORY OF WILLIAM RALPH HODGES. ASSISTANT PRIEST 1910 – 1941'. There is some writing beneath which is indiscernible. We have been able to find some information but have no idea as to how the stone ended up there.



William Ralph Hodges was baptised at St. Pancras Old Church in 1863 and was one of eight children. His father was from Cork in Ireland and described as a Scripture Reader. The 1891 census describes him as an

undergraduate at Wadham College, Oxford living with his parents in Paddington. I can't find him in the 1901 census but he turns up again in 1911 living alone in Fulham and is described as a curate in the Established Church. He turns up in various electoral registers throughout the 1930s living alone in the Paddington area. He died on the 27th March 1943 when he was living at 1 Kinnaird Street, Paddington. He left £1847. 9s. 8d. to his spinster sister Florence Claire Hodges.

We couldn't find him in Crockfords (the directory of clergy) and the Oxford Alumni section in Ancestry stops in 1883. However, a search in the National Newspaper Archives revealed our man.

Fulham Chronicle - Friday 02 April 1943

Rev. W. R. Hodges FORMER CURATE AT ST. CLEMENT'S Many Fulham friends have learned with regret of the death, which occurred on Saturday, of the Rev. W. R. Hodges, the former curate at St. Clement's Church, Fulham Palace-road. He passed away in his sleep at Paddington, where he had been living since he retired at the end of 1941. The vicar of St. Clement's (Rev. A. W. Young) was with Mr. Hodges shortly before he died. Almost his last words were, " Give my love to all at St. Clement's." He was 86 and a bachelor. The Rev. William Ralph Hodges was curate at St. Clement's for 31 years. He was born in Bloomsbury in 1865 and was educated at Oxford. He was the youngest of three brothers, all of whom took Holy Orders. One died at the age of 83 and the other was 81. Mr. Hodge's first curacy was at Blackheath. Subsequently he went to Hampshire and to Yorkshire. He was offered the living of a parish near Sheffield, but he had to decline because the northern winters were too bleak for him. On returning South he was at St. John's Wood four years before coming to Fulham in 1910. During his many years in the borough Mr. Hodges was a schools manager. He always took a keen interest in the drama and for many years he was chaplain of the Actors' Church Union. Some years ago, when the West Fulham Conservative and Unionist Association Dramatic Society's productions at Cobb's Hall, Fulham Palace-road, were a feature of amateur talent in the borough, Mr. Hodges played the part of the bookmaker in the comedy, "The Sport of Kings." The funeral takes place to-day (Friday), a service being held at St. Clement's Church at 11 am. Interment is at Fulham Cemetery, Sheen.

St. Clement's Diamond Jubilee DEDICATION OF HODGES MEMORIAL "THE CHURCH IS NOT A PLACE WHERE PEOPLE CAN COME TO IN ORDER TO ESCAPE FROM FASCISM AND AUSTERITY; ITS SOLE PURPOSE IS FOR THE GLORY OF GOD." SAID THE BISHOP OF KENSINGTON. THE RT. REV. MONTGOMERY CAMPBELL. PREACHING AT ST. CLEMENT'S CHURCH. FULHAM PALACE ROAD. ON SUNDAY AFTERNOON AT A SPECIAL SERVICE TO COMMEMORATE THE DIAMOND JUBILEE OF THE CHURCH. The bishop dedicated a silver lamp subscribed for by members of the congregation to mark the jubilee. It is to be kept burning before the High Altar, There was a full congregation. the service being conducted by the vicar. Rev. A. D. Young. "A Man Greatly Beloved" During the service the bishop, accompanied by the vicar, the assistant-priests and the Crossbearer, left the church for the dedication of the memorial to the late Rev. W. R Hodges, curate at St. Clement's for more than 30 years. The memorial takes the form of a figure of the Patron Saint. When the church was built a niche was carved for the figure of the Patron Saint over the door facing Fulham Palace Road, but funds were never sufficient to provide it. The memorial fund was open to public subscription and it was decided that the money should be used to provide the figure of the Patron Saint. Carved in stone, it is four feet high and the inscription reads: "To the sacred memory of William Ralph Hodges, assistant-priest, 1910-1941. A man greatly beloved."

St.Clement's church was demolished in 1974 and it is our guess that someone rescued the inscribed stone. How it ended up in Baringsfield is a mystery.

Eagle-eyed committee member Richard Tyson-Davies spotted an error in the Eileen Funnell article in magazine 108. The picture of Charles Funnell is dated 1951. Richard noted that he is driving a Massey Ferguson 35 which was not launched until October 1956 and also number plates with numbers before letters did not start until 1954 or early 1955. As the tractor looks

pretty new he guessed that the photo was taken in the summer of 1957. Eileen concurred with this date shortly before she died.

Back in September 2020 we received a request from Shae Trewin, the Collections Leader at The Nelson Provincial Museum in New Zealand, to reproduce some pictures. They had recently been donated a Schermuly pistol apparatus that was used both by the Harbour Board and the Electric Power Board for launching lines to erect power cables. They wished to use one or two of the photographs on our website showing the evolution of this technology.

They have now produced a blog post that can be found at:

http://www.nelsonmuseum.co.nz/learn/2021/1/22spra?fbclid=IwAR2PewoTX9linXmgPMQDhSpS8Cw7P1r7E2f7naAES3cX1SBnChkC5_J1c0Ks

We have had a message from member Alan Wheeler:

‘I was reading the latest of your magazines and saw that someone was asking about The Fowler-Monks from Orchard Cottage. Of course, as a child I lived next door to them and my mum was very friendly with Mrs. Monk (who was an excellent pianist). I believe Mrs. Monk had a female cousin who lived in Charlwood. I remember after a Point-to-Point meeting at what is now Gatwick Airport, a load of horsie people came to a meal at Orchard Cottage, I presume because of this cousin. The hunt members were in attendance plus blowing the horn at dinner. The daughter (only child) next door was Priscilla Monk who became a nurse in a London Hospital. At her 21st birthday, a load of medical students and trainee doctors came to a party at Orchard Cottage. I remember them getting very drunk on Mr Monk's home-made wine for which he was locally well known. She married one of the doctors from the hospital. They eventually moved to the Lake District (no issue from them). After Mr Monk's death, Mrs. moved to Cartmel to be near her daughter. Mrs. Monk had a strange sense of humour. She once put a wrapped-up stink horn in my mum's bed (Phallus imperfecticus). I think Mr. Monk ran a farm on the left just past the Village Hall (Kingsland), I think with his brother. He used to drive round in an old van and deliver milk which he measured out from an

old jug. Am I correct in thinking that his brother was killed in a road accident whilst walking from the farm to the Village Club? I don't know if there were any more relations. In the garden of Orchard Cottage was a summer house which was sometimes rented out. I had a Great Aunt and Uncle who would come down from London and stay there during weekends to get away to a bit more peace. Some chance, as when the doodle bug landed at the end of Hogspudding Lane the roof fell in and the windows all blew out. Mum and I and my Grandma were sheltering under the bed'.

Jane Lilley has found a tiny snippet about Colonel French's cider that she'd totally forgotten. See magazine 107.

It came from Mary Day, who as a child lived first at Shellwood Cross and then at Gadbrook. During the war her father would go down to Cudworth to buy cider from Col. French, and she says that this came in a glass carboy with a straw cover, which they stored in the cupboard under the stairs. On one occasion they returned from holiday and were met by a very dubious smell as they approached the front door; this proved to be very 'off' cider. The carboy had burst, sending splinters of glass through the straw cover and into the sides of the cupboard under the stairs, and the cider had soaked through the suspended floor with the smell emerging from the air bricks.

THIS MAGAZINE

- During lockdown member Jim Elliott has been researching his relatives who have been buried in the Newdigate churchyard. Remarkably there are nearly fifty names. You can locate the graves by looking at the monumental inscriptions under Archive on our website.
- Society member David Fisher has discovered a letter written by Henry Eggleton to his great niece in Canada. Henry was David's great uncle and he wrote an article about Henry in magazine 104. The letter was written in December 1976 and many will remember the hot summer of that year.
- Over the years we have published a number of articles about F.E. Green and I became fascinated about this remarkable man and wanted to learn more about his life and work. The article in this magazine is the result of my research.

The earliest record of the Elliott family in Newdigate was the marriage of James Elliott and Ann Tyler 26 Apr 1777. The family lived in the village for about 200 years.

I'm related to the following Newdigate families by blood: Butcher, Burrows, Horley, Lucas, Gadd and Sopp.

Also connected to the following families through marriages: Worsfold, Kempshall, Tugwell, Burberry, Taylor, Weller, Pescud and Wyatt.

I've now looked through the Monumental Inscriptions and found the following relatives.

A1 My 2x great grandparents James and Charlotte Elliott née Jenkins.

A54 William and Spencer Lucas, my 1st cousins 3x removed also Spencer's wife Harriet née Rowland, son Harry James and daughter Minnie.

A81 John Butcher, my 3rd great uncle. and his wife Sarah née Davis.

E4 William Thomas Shore and his wife Harriet née Horley my 2nd cousin 2x removed.

E8 Henry Horley, my 1st cousin 3x removed and his wife Alice née Johnson.

E9 William Horley my 3rd great uncle and his wife Hannah née Burrows my 3rd great aunt.

E10 Henry Horley my 3rd great uncle and his wife Susannah née Batchellor.

E11 Ellen Beatrice Horley my 2nd cousin 2x removed

E17 George Richard Horley my 2nd cousin 2x removed, his wife Louisa née Hills and their son Desmond George, my 3rd cousin 1x removed.

E19 Alfred Horley my 1st cousin 3x removed and his wife Sarah née Pescud.

G10 Henry Sopp and his wife Caroline née Butcher my 2nd great aunt.

H19 Ivy Augusta Sopp Rapley née Butcher my 2nd cousin 1x removed.

J1 William Taylor and his wife Ellen née Butcher my great aunt.

J2 William Thomas Butcher my great uncle.

J5 Spencer William Lucas my 2nd cousin 2x removed, his wife Alice Amelia Ainsworth née Gentry and their son Peta my 3rd cousin 1x removed.

J25 Alice Lucas my 3rd cousin 1x removed.

K21 Evangeline Sopp my 1st cousin 2x removed.

K25 Elsie Annie Horley and her brother George Albert Horley my 2nd cousins 2x removed.

K26 Arthur Horley my 2nd cousin 2x removed and his wife Mary née Massey.

K26a Christopher A Lucas my 3rd cousin 1x removed.

K27 Henry Horace Sopp my 1st cousin 2x removed and his wife Alice Mary née Horley my 2nd cousin 2x removed.

M8 Luke Gadd my 3rd cousin 1x removed and his wife Emma née Johns.

N1 Arthur James Baker and his wife Ellen Constance née Burrows my 2nd cousin
1x removed.

O5 Horace John Horley and his sister Rhoda Ellen Horley my 2nd cousins 2x
removed.

Those are all I've found, so far, there are probably more memorials but I know
most of my relatives didn't have them.

They certainly didn't move far in those days.

A letter from Henry Eggleton

Provided by David Fisher

*(Ed: This is exactly as written by Henry. Ruckmans Farm and Pinkhurst Farm are
in Oakwood Hill and Bridgham Farm is in Forest Green.*

*Decimal currency was introduced in 1971 so Henry would still most probably be
thinking in the familiar old system. Note: 1 shilling = 5 pence, 25 shillings =
£1.25p, 34 shillings = £1.70p)*

Hound House Farm

Newdigate

Surrey

December 14th 1976

Dear Cousin Judy

At last I have started to write to you.

We have had a dry winter last year and it seemed to suit everything. I have never
seen so much blossom before, it was a dry summer up to September but we have
had a very wet time since. I have had to have my cattle Brucellosis tested as this
part of Surrey come in the Eradication area, they are doing the country part at a
time. The animals did not like it but we have managed to do them twice and have
to be done the third time, there have been no reactors so far I have 25 and 1 calf
born last night. I sold some at Haywards Heath Market about 2 months ago prices
were fairly good but feeding stuffs is dear so I don't make much profit. I am very
well but cant do so much work as I used to. I had 195 acres up to 1955 and grew
Wheat Oats Barley Beans Linseed Leys of all kinds and Clover seed. Now I will
tell you a bit of History about our Family and some of the changes I have seen and
been told about. My Great Grandfather farmed 5 farms at Oakwood Hill and paid
his employees 12 shillings a week and 1 mans wife brought up a family of 11 on
that and saved money in the bargain.

Great Grandfather died in 1888 He was a Mr John Charman. Then Grandfather and
Granny moved from Ruckmans Farm to Pinkhurst Farm where he was till he died
he was there over forty years. Pinkhurst was 199 acres. My father moved to

Bridgham Farm in 1900 and by 1912 workmans wages were up to 25 shillings a week. We moved to Newdigate in 1923 soon after wages were up to 34 shillings a week. The minimum wage is now £36-50 and is going up to £39 on January 20th 1977.

I should have put Great Grandfather Eggleton was a Gamekeeper according to my Mother. I have been promised a Christmas Dinner from over the road. I was pleased to see Father e Mother back in May I think it was, I said I would write to you sorry I left it so long. I have never done much writing, and I left school when I was 13 and that was a good many years ago

James Henry Eggleton

Frederick Ernest Green

by John Callcut

During the lock down I have taken the opportunity to buy some of F.E. Green's books on e-bay. They vary greatly in price, sometimes costing over £100, but when they are reasonably priced I make a bid and as a result I have purchased The Surrey Hills, The Cottage Farm Month by Month, The Awakening of England, The Tyranny of the Countryside, The History of the Agricultural Labourer, 1870-1950 and A New Agricultural Policy. We already have a photocopy of A Few Acres and a Cottage in the Society archives.

So who was F.E. Green and why was I interested in him? In 1904 he purchased land, created a small holding and later built Baringsfield in Cudworth. He was a prolific author from 1907 right up to his death in 1922. Today he would be described as an activist but his early life was far removed from the countryside.

He was born on the 10th October 1867 in Hong Kong. His father, Thomas Green, was a Superintendent Engineer for the P & O Shipping Line and his mother Jane was from Aberdeen. They had a large family consisting of six girls and four boys. The first two girls were born in Southampton and Aberdeen and the rest were born in Hong Kong. Thomas died in 1876 whilst his wife was pregnant with twins.

She returned to England and by the time of the 1881 census Jane, with seven children, was living at South Stoneham in Southampton.

Frederick moved to London and took lodgings at Woolwich and worked as a clerk in the City. His thoughts concerning inequality must have been growing in his mind because in 1890 he joined the Fabian Society. The Fabian Society was founded in 1884 and became, and still is, the foremost left wing think tank. It was founded by Beatrice and Sidney Webb against the backdrop of the Match Girls Strike and the London Dock Strike and amongst its supporters were George Bernard Shaw and Annie Besant.

On the 24th April 1891 when he was just 24 years of age he wrote to the Woolwich Gazette. His rage was directed at landlords. He started off by writing: ‘We Englishmen are in the habit of boasting of our glorious freedom. It is true we have no despot-king, no despot demagogue, but in their stead we have made despot-capitalists and despot-landlords, and one has not to live in Woolwich or Plumstead or anywhere else to find this out. Here we are making it possible by very foolishly allowing the “Earth and the fullness thereof” to be monopolised by a few persons, making it possible for landlords to terrorise the many helpless and propertyless.’ He cited a number of local examples of cruelty and concluded by saying ‘I wonder we don’t prefer to live free, happy lives by simply taking over the land and houses ourselves – one determined mind, and the thing is done – perfectly, peaceably.’

Thus F.E. Green the activist set himself on the path of championing the oppressed.

In 1892 he married Gertrude Ellen Beane at Greenwich and their son David was born in October 1893. On the 24th May 1894, just seven months later, she died at her home 20 Peak Hill, Sydenham aged just 29. She had been taken ill with puerperal peritonitis and two days later her heart failed. She would have died in great pain. This was before antibiotics and there was little that the doctor could do for her.

By 1901 Frederick and his six year old son were living at 1, Etheldene, Station Road, Limpsfield. His sister-in-law Constance Emma Beane was living there and presumably looking after David. He was working as a shipping clerk.

Disillusioned with life in the City, he bought a smallholding in Essex on the banks of the river Blackwater. He described it as an illuminating failure. ‘My beans were blighted, my potatoes diseased, my apple trees ruined by rabbits’.

Undeterred, in 1904 he bought a 5 acre plot situated on the south side of Cudworth Lane in Newdigate and then a 3 acre plot on the north side for £230. In 1906 he bought a 7 acre plot (lots 13 and 14) for £194. 7s 6d and later in 1909 a further 9 acres (Lot 15) for £292. 10s. 0d. He built a cottage which he called Baringsfield on the 3 acre plot and sold the 5 acre plot on the south of the lane.

For the magazine ‘Country Home’ he described his cottage: ‘My cottage consists of only four rooms; but then I was out to make a living at fruit and dairy farming, and so I aimed at making my sublimated Thoreau hut as small as possible. Four well-lighted and airy rooms, with little or no space partitioned off for passages or stair-case, was my ideal in simplicity when aiming at a design different from that of a packing-case. The sitting room has two bays, and is 22 ft. by 12 ft. The cost of

building the cottage, including that of sinking the well 32ft., making a cess-pool, and fitting a pump over the well (which cost £7.10s) was £250. Added to this was the cost of a small dairy built on the north wall. This had a cemented floor where the milk is separated, and bee appliances, the carpenter's bench, and other things are kept. This cost £10. The bicycle and potato storing shed cost me £5. Besides these sheds there was a cowshed and pigsties'.

He wrote:

'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 thronged 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.'

In 1908 he married Constance his 48 year old sister-in-law.

Why did he choose Cudworth? The Small Holdings Act of 1892 was intended to help agricultural labourers purchase small holdings of land. Many people were not convinced that this was an efficient way to farm. The Conservative, Lord Salisbury confessed he did not believe that small holdings were the most efficient use of land but added that there were "things more important than economy": "I believe a small proprietary is the strongest bulwark against revolutionary change".

Times were indeed changing and the Labour Party was founded in 1900.

The Small Holdings Association Ltd purchased the Cudworth Farm Estate in 1902 for £4,500 which included 367 acres of land with the purpose of dividing it up and creating small farmsteads. A small holding was defined as an area not less than one acre and not more than fifty acres. At the time the farm was mostly laid to grass with some oats and wheat also being sown and one field had been planted with mangolds and swedes for spring cropping. The farm was divided up into a total of 45 lots and stretched from Hatchetts in the north west, the Red House in the north east, Rolls Farm in the south east and land owned by G.O.M. Herron of Newdigate Place in the south west. The 'hard road' called Burnt Oak Lane provided access for horses, carts, carriages or wagons laden or unladen but not traction engines or motor cars exceeding three tons in weight. Presumably the bridge over the Beam Brook at Cudworth Manor would not take the weight and larger vehicles would have had to use Cudworth Lane and not go beyond the bridge.



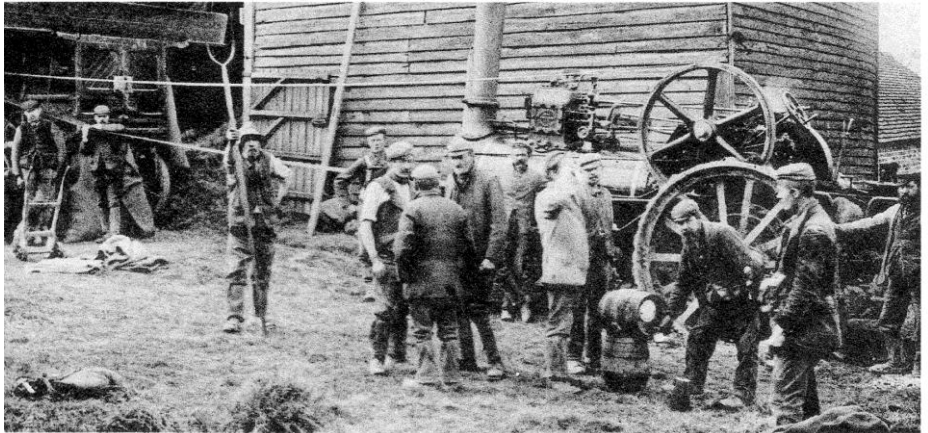
Glade in Cudworth Wood.

THE GARDEN VILLAGE OF "THE SMALL HOLDERS' ASSOCIATION, LIMITED."
 CUDWORTH, NEWDIGATE, SURREY.

TRUSTEES:
 Sir James Blyth, Bart.
 H. Whitley, Esq., M.P.
 Managing Director—
 James Long, Esq.

DIRECTORS:
 James Tomkinson, Esq.,
 M.P. (Chairman),
 James Long, Esq.,
 Jno. Spear, Esq., M.P.
 S. R. Whitley, Esq.

The Cudworth Colony is 8 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.



Threshing at Cudworth.

These are *not* Small Holders! (A glass of beer costs as much as a yard of land.)

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Planting Fruit Trees at Cudworth.

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Managing Director—
 James Long, Esq.

DIRECTORS:
 James Tomkinson, Esq.,
 M.P. (Chairman).
 James Long, Esq.
 Jno. Spear, Esq., M.P.
 S. R. Whitley, Esq.

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.

A difficult domestic situation arose for the family in 1906. Jane Taylor Green appeared at Westminster Court accused of stealing a pair of fur-lined gloves and a silver-plated ink-stand from Harrods. She was described as a lady over seventy years of age, of independent means and lately a resident of an Earl's Court square.

Medical men, clergymen and relatives were present on her behalf and the defence said that she was extremely well connected and the only explanation for her conduct was that she could not have known what she was doing. Her doctor said that he had attended her recently for influenza and the magistrate asked if influenza could affect people mentally. The doctor replied that there were innumerable instances of people having done extraordinary things. Her son, F.E. Green, said he had noticed a great change in his mother lately, and he had made arrangements for his married sister to look after her.

The magistrate Mr. Curtis Bennett said that it was a very sad case, and one in which he might accept the son's bail in £5 to bring defendant up for judgement if called upon.

In 1907 F.E. Green published his first book entitled '**How I Work my Small Farm**'. In the following year, the same year as the Small Holdings and Allotment Act was introduced, he published a book on a similar theme entitled '**The Small Holding**'. The Economic Journal published a review in which it stated that 'the virtue of the book is that it was written by a small holder with the faculty for writing; a faculty certainly not common amongst small holders.'

In 1911 he described his occupation as an author and that year he published '**A Few Acres and a Cottage**'. This tells in detail from month to month how he managed Baringsfield, the small holding and his newly developed apiary. Prior to publication the Daily News published monthly extracts.



The Cottage Homestead

Baringsfield – picking strawberries

He described his holding:

'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. 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 the apiary of thirty hives. To the east, over a high hedge of hazel, ash, and blackthorn, is the ten-acre meadow called Hillfield. Hillfield is closed every year for hay, and after haysel (the season for making hay) the cattle graze on its aftermath.'

Frederick Pethick Lawrence gave F.E. Green a motor car, the same car which bore the brunt of the Suffragette campaign. Fruit picking started at 4.30 am and the car made its first journey taking gooseberries into Dorking at seven o'clock before the London produce arrived from Covent Garden. This was a big event. It was calculated that the journey of seven miles each way cost 1s 2d in petrol. The car was driven by a scholarly young man who was a student at Edinburgh University and hailed from a Scottish manse. When not driving he devoted his time to milking cows, attending to bees and hoeing on the smallholding. He wrote in the book 'what a sensation it would make in our village, and how the old farmers would scratch their heads and ask one another if there was not summat to be made after all out of small holdings'.

He writes with enthusiasm and love for his 'Arcadia', Every natural event whether it be storms, bitter cold or intense heat he looks at positively. The book received favourable reviews and The Globe and Votes for Women advertised the book which was being sold for 3s 6d.

The following year, 1912, he published a small book entitled '**The Cottage Farm from Month to Month**'. A reviewer many years later wrote the following:

'This book provides us with a charming evocation of life on an English smallholding at the beginning of the twentieth century. Describing the farming year month by month, The Cottage Farm offers us a vivid picture of the daily challenges and joys the author, Mr Green, experiences. There are moments of humour and sadness, protests about government policy and the behaviour of the local hunt, as well as reflections on the natural world. The author often faces hardship and this certainly wasn't the Good Life. However, he also enjoys the many compensations of a self-sufficient rural existence.

'The smallholding is actually not that small, nor is it a hobby farm, for Mr Green grows a wide range of crops, orchard fruit, soft fruit and vegetables, and he has cows (his beloved Kerries), chickens (White Orpingtons), pigs and bees. He is ably supported by Tommy the cart horse, Two Bob the dog and the curmudgeonly and picaresque Snowey, whose lurchers 'have a nose for a rabbit'. This charming book

is full of practical advice and words of wisdom. Mr Green tells us about profitable varieties of fruit and vegetables, how to look after chickens in order to get them to lay well, and proffers advice on fertilizer, caring for bees in winter and many other things besides.

‘The Cottage Farm is for all those who enjoy the rural life and those who hanker after moving to the country, having their own smallholding and achieving practical self-sufficiency. It is also perfect for anyone who enjoys reading nostalgic descriptions of days gone by in the English countryside. As the book is short it won't detain you long but it will leave a lasting impression of country lives lived in the golden years just before the First World War.’

‘ARCADIA’



Possibly Constance and Frederick Green



*Haymaking at Baringsfield
'My 10 acre hayfield – my one and only hayfield'*



Gathering Damsons for Market on Mr. F. E. Green's Holding



“I HAVE TO THROW DOWN MY RAKE OR FORK TO TAKE A SWARM.”

Also in 1912 he published **‘The Awakening of England’**. By this time he had become very concerned and agitated about the state of agriculture and in particular the working conditions and the wages of the agricultural labourer. The book was published by Thomas Nelson & Son and sold for two shillings. This was a lot of money when considering a labourer’s wages would be about fifteen shillings a week but this book was aimed at a different class of people.

He begged the question as to whether the current labourer was any better off than his grandfather or indeed his great grandfather. The wages were similar but rents were higher.

The ‘Land Question’ was occupying a lot of Parliamentary time. In his book the author decries the squires, the nouveaux riches, the wealthy tenant farmers who were often on the Parish Council, Rural Council or even the County Council. He criticises the rector who was probably beholden to the local squire and he reserves special ire for the hunting and shooting fraternity. He investigates the working conditions and low wages of the agricultural labourer and criticises the poor conditions of the tied cottages.

His book was favourably reviewed by his friend Harry Lowerison in the Daily Herald of the 13th July 1912. Hodge (a generic name given to all agricultural labourers) was at the bottom of the ladder and variously described as Hodge the simpleton or Hodge the ass and the author was described as ‘quite a peasant’ by a local upper-class woman.

Cardinal Manning painted a grim picture – ‘The land question means hunger, thirst, nakedness, notice to quit, labour spent in vain, the toil of years seized upon, the breaking up of homes; the misery of parents, children and wives; the despair and wildness that springs up in the hearts of the poor when legal force, like a sharp arrow, goes over the most sensitive and vital rights of mankind. All this is contained in the land question.’

F.E. Green would have met and been influenced by the socialists who were encouraged to spend time at the Newdigate Holiday Camp. He would chat to other small holders. He might have bumped into Sylvia Pankhurst as she cycled down Church Lane to meet Frederick Pethick Lawrence’s sister at Hatchetts. Perhaps he was invited to the Pethick Lawrences home nearby at South Holmwood and met Keir Hardie, the Pankhursts and other suffragettes who gathered there regularly. He certainly knew Fred as when he declared himself as a pacifist and non-combatant in the First World War the author offered him a job at Baringsfield. This was considered by the Military Tribunal to be too ‘easy’ and ‘not of sufficient national importance’ so he was sent to Wattlehurst Farm in Capel where he was paid twenty seven shillings a week.

He was not critical of the ‘good’ squires and praised Mr. Lee Steere at Ockley. He admired John Ruskin but was far too practical to have rose coloured spectacles. He travelled widely, following in the footsteps of William Cobbett and Richard Jefferies, studying agricultural conditions in different parts of the country. He visited and enjoyed the company of George Meredith at Box Hill and got to know W.J. Evelyn at Wotton whom he described as ‘an honest’ squire. He chatted about his illustrious ancestor John Evelyn, home rule, vaccinations and the Boer War. He admired Mr. Fels’s cottage building at Blackwater in Essex, Mrs. G.F. Watts’s co-operative making clay pots and garden statues at Compton near Guildford and Godfrey Mount and the Peasant’s Arts Society in Haslemere. He sarcastically mentions that the word peasant had gained a romantic connotation amongst the wealthy. He wrote in the book about Cudworth.

‘It is interesting to note that every one of these families has come out of a town. A few of these back-to-the-land folk, it is true, need not work for their livelihood; but whether or not they are spurred by necessity, every one keeps some livestock and

does some gardening, and the children, instead of being brought up in the Old Kent Road, Brixton, or Stoke Newington, are taught to plant a tree, to handle a hay-rake, or to milk a cow. They will live intimately with the wind, the clouds and Mother Earth.'

But mostly his concern was for the countryside and the people who laboured there.

He really got into his stride with the publication of '**The Tyranny of the Countryside**' in 1913 and wrote a series of articles in the Daily Chronicle. He wasn't afraid to name names. He wrote about callous landowners and their cohorts – the local rector, the land agents and tenant farmers. He wrote about dreadful housing conditions and the total disregard of many landowners. He described how people were scared to complain as they would be described as troublemakers and end up being evicted. 'You ought to know that a still tongue makes a wise head'.

He names a landowner in Dorset who was eventually presented with a petition. The Medical Officer of Health reported that 'the conditions of many cottages was obviously conducive neither to health nor morality.' Six cottages were described and this description was typical:

'Father, mother, two grown-up daughters, two grown-up sons, and a boy of 10 sleep in two tiny rooms'.

F.E Green suggested that a warm-hearted, wealthy landlord would have said to his agent 'Every person on my land should be properly housed'. But this particular landowner, loyally supported by his vicar (who received a stipend for preaching the gospel of Christ) issued notices to quit to six of his tenants. He reasoned that if they didn't work in the parish then they should go to the parish where they worked. That would therefore relieve the local housing problem and there was no need to build any more cottages.

A similar incident in Wiltshire made the national papers and this picture was reproduced in the book.



[Photo]

“After an Inquiry”—the Eviction at Foxham, Wilts. The evicted families are seen here, but the cottages are not visible.

[Porter, Chippenham.]

He reserved scathing criticism for the landowners who encouraged the rearing of game and conservation of foxes and rabbits for shooting and hunting.

In Newdigate, as far back as 1879, the big bellied, bright red farmer John Hogsflesh of Chaffolds Farm complained ‘wonderful deal o’ wood in this country, 173 acres, before Mr. B took part of the woods for his game’.

He cites many instances of small farmers who had fields of crops ruined by pheasants, and hens and turkeys killed by foxes. He quotes losses that he himself had suffered at Baringsfield and how fields and fences had been destroyed by the hunt. It was then incumbent upon the farmer to submit a claim to the hunt and then they would wait for a solicitor’s letter enclosing a cheque for some level of compensation.

He described a soft, muggy day in February when looking over the hedge into his ten-acre hay field. He became suddenly conscious of a deer standing erect with quivering nostrils. Suddenly forty gentlemen redcoats flashed across his vision and the horn was blown as soon as the deer was spotted. The deer leapt a four-bar gate and was off like the wind. He grabbed a ten-foot pole and reached a gate just as two men were smashing it down to let the hounds through. Brandishing his pole he told them that they were performing an act of wanton damage as well as trespass. ‘After a passage of words, the colour of which was more riotously extravagant than

the colour of their coats, the forty riders wheeled round, and I had the pleasure of hearing some of the prettiest oaths that have ever been uttered on a hunting-field. I had, too, the pleasure of listening to the heavy thuds of their horses' feet as they struck the muddy lane which bespattered their crimson coats. It was a long lane without a turning, and the deer had by now vanished into another county.' (Ed. Probably Cudworth and Burnt Oak Lane).

This article from the Sussex Advertiser dated the 28th November 1865 illustrates the antagonism caused by the hunt:

CRAWLEY. THE SURREY STAG HOUNDS. – On Saturday last, the Surrey Stag Hound (W. Heathcote, Esq.), met at Crawley village. There was a large field, and pedestrians mustered in great force. The stag was uncarted in the meadow at the back of the George Inn, in a heavy shower and under circumstances which caused some ebullitions [sic] of temper, as the proprietor of the adjoining land showed great repugnance to the hunt. The fall of rain made the riding exceedingly heavy, and the careless riding of some of the rough-mounted committed great havoc. The run was a very fast one, and as the stag did not, as usual, take off, it was in sporting phrase a ring chase, and a great deal on Mr. Redford's Farm, which, to say the least, caused a row. The chase was finished at Mr. Nightingales, Black Dog Farm, Crawley, after a rapid run of two hours, by the stag taking refuge in the horse pond.

Small wonder that Oscar Wilde wrote about fox hunters as 'the unspeakable after the uneatable'.

F.E. Green was concerned about coercion at election time. He quoted many instances when people were ordered to quit their cottages when it had become known that they had voted for the candidate not supported by the landlord. One said about someone who placarded his door with Liberal posters 'I would not have any tenant who went against me'.

He supported Women's Suffrage but said that if the vote was not for all women then he would prefer the working-class woman to have the vote rather than the woman landowner!

It was often stated that wages in the countryside could be lower as the cost of living was cheaper. He did a survey and found that on average prices in the village shop were 20% higher than those in the town. This explains why Mr. Dean was price conscious and when advertising in the parish magazine said 'Why! Go to Dorking, London or elsewhere'

WHY? Go to Dorking, London, or
elsewhere for
Grocery, Drapery, Clothing (*Ready-made or
to measure*), Hats,
Boots, Ironmongery, Earthenware, Garden
Tools, etc., etc.
When you can obtain them on best terms at
ALFRED DEAN'S
GENERAL • SUPPLY • STORES,
NEW DIGATE.
ANY ARTICLE NOT IN STOCK PROCURED ON SHORT NOTICE.

The Tyranny of the Countryside is full of examples of poverty and injustices throughout the countryside and is full of rage, best summed up in the concluding chapter.

‘I have shown the sinister way in which the tyranny of the countryside differs from that of the town. When the town worker shuts the factory gates behind him he walks the streets a free citizen. In the country it is deplorably different. When the labourer shuts his employer’s farm gate behind him, he leaves but to enter his employer’s cottage as a tenant. His leisure hours are spent almost entirely under his employer’s eye. On the allotments, in the pheasant-haunted lane, in the public-house, in the club-room, or in the Council-room, he is at all times under the eye of his employer or his employer’s friends, and if he is in debt to the village grocer he remains chained to the land like an indentured slave. He has become the most patronised, the most tyrannised over all the peasants of Europe.’

Newspapers throughout the land reviewed the book.

The Clarion, 31st January 1913:

In ‘The Awakening of the Countryside’ the author gave his readers a glimpse behind the scenes of the tragedy of rural depopulation enacted day by day. In this book the curtain is ruthlessly rent asunder, and the skeleton in our national cupboard unsparingly exposed to view. In bold language the reader is shown the root causes of rural decay under the dominating tyranny which, in spite of rural Magna Cartas, hangs like a blight over Arcadia. The book is not a political pamphlet – it is something more. The author, like Cobbett, a tiller of the soil, and

living the life of a yeoman farmer, understands those hardships that eventually drive the labourer from the land. He has attempted the difficult task of making the country labourer vocal. He does not make vague general charges. With a graphic pen he arrests the attention of the reader with specific cases; makes grave indictments against the rulers of rural England; and exposes the canker that lies at the heart of our Empire.

The Westminster Gazette, 16th January 1913 quoted from the Daily Herald:

We knew what to expect from Mr. Green, and we get it in this arresting and important book. Truly it is an amazing revelation of countryside tyranny in its manifold terms.

The Yorkshire Post in their issue of the 7th January 1913 printed information about Mr. Lloyd George's Land Reform. It suggests that 'The Tyranny of the Countryside' should be a most serviceable handbook for Mr. Lloyd George and his friends in the coming campaign.

The book clearly created a stir amongst landowners who had been so criticised and the Duke of Bedford instructed his solicitors to issue a spirited defence. This was printed in the Daily Citizen (Manchester) and The Scotsman in March 1913. He refuted the facts in the book and stated 'as you do not appear to have attempted to verify your second-hand information by a personal visit to the village, or by personal inquiries, you have been led to make statements and draw conclusions which are not warranted by the facts'.

However, the book had hit a nerve and publicity continued as the year wore on.

The Labour Leader reviewed the book extensively and announced in September 1913 that a cheaper edition was going to be printed at a price of two shillings.

The Clarion, 12th September 1913:

The 'Tyranny of the Countryside', suitable illustrated is by F.E. Green, who may be described as a new Cobbett – only with less anger and more sorrow Its thesis is that the English countryside is dead and dying under a grinding social tyranny that has had no match in its perfection of imperfection since the world began.

The Westminster Gazette, 2nd October 1913 quoted from the Daily News:

The Rt. Hon. Walter Runciman, President of the Board of Agriculture, writes to the publisher of 'The Tyranny of the Countryside'. There are innumerable facts in the book which ought to vitalise the conscience of England about its country folk, and their life in unhappy districts.

Such was the impact of the book that the author was in much demand to give lectures. The Northampton League of Young Progressives invited him to talk and the evening was reported in the Northampton Mercury of the 17th October 1913.

The winter session of the Northampton League of Young Progressives had a most auspicious opening on Tuesday night, when a brilliant, if unconventional lecture on 'The colonisation of England' was delivered by Mr. F.E. Green, author of the now famous book 'The Tyranny of the Countryside'. The drama and comedy of the rural England problem was pointedly illustrated by the lecturer, who is probably one of the greatest living authorities on his subject, and who possesses a wit as pretty as his tongue is ready. He said the problem was no laughing matter, but he had to joke or he should cry, and he preferred to joke.

F.E. Green was now an established author and activist. He must have looked with a critical eye close to home. He would have approved of the estate cottages built by William Farnell Watson snr. in Henfold Lane between 1871 and 1881. However, he was possibly unaware that members of the same family in 1895 evicted their tenants and demolished the cottages which were on the site of the Village Hall car park. In 1901 they also demolished the alms houses which made way for the new Village Hall.



Henfold Cottages

He would have noticed that Mrs. Janson of Newdigate Place had divided up the Home Farm for accommodation and built lodges at both ends of her drive. He would have approved of her thriving wood carving class which saw so many young boys and men learning a craft.

But he would also have witnessed great poverty in the parish.

In 1900 a council surveyor inspected Beam Brook on Partridge Lane, the home of Henry Burrows. He reported that there were two bedrooms, one occupied by a man and wife and three children. Its walls and ceilings were foul, and there were foul holes in the floor and through external walls. There was a fireplace but no stove. A smaller bedroom was occupied by four children aged 13, 11, 9 and 3. This also had foul walls with holes in them and just the thatched roof as a ceiling. Downstairs there was just a living room and a wash-house, the former paved with stone slabs, the latter with brick, in both cases defective. Here too, only one window would open, there were no drains and the closet outside was just a seat with a wooden roof on four poles.

At Kingsland Mr. & Mrs. Wyatt lived in a small terraced cottage with their twelve children and one set of parents. It was reported that two children from the same family at Workhouse Green could only attend school on alternate days as they only had one pair of shoes between them.

He would have seen other cottages in a poor state. Little Cherryhurst in Partridge Lane was an example and more of this type of housing around the village had disappeared.



Little Cherryhurst

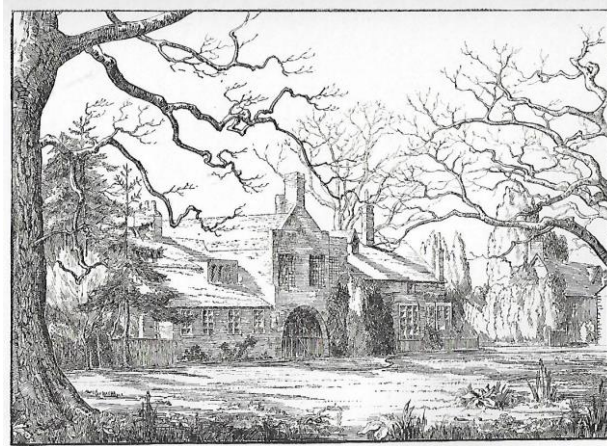
The First World War started in 1914 and when considering the contents of 'The Tyranny of the Countryside' it is no wonder that the young men joined up in their droves. Free clothing, regular meals, a roof over their heads and regular pay. (A private would typically earn a shilling a day and the basic rate for a wife without children was 12/6 a week although Green stated that it was a pitiful 7/6 a week for a soldier's childless widow). An agricultural labourer was used to working long hours, the labour was hard and had to be done in all kinds of weather. So joining the army was seen to be a good option.

On the 21st November 1914 F.E. Green wrote to the Dorking Advertiser. He urged everyone obliged to stay at home to take up drilling and shooting. He wanted people to join the National Volunteer Reserves but not strong married men as they would be expected to enlist.

His son, David Green had been educated at Reigate Grammar School and by 1915 had taken his B.A. degree with honours at Trinity College, Cambridge. One wonders how his father was viewed by other parents and indeed the tutors. David joined the 2/5th Suffolk Regiment and was gazetted 2nd Lieutenant. In 1917 his father received the dreaded telegram regretting that his son had been killed in action. Gloom must have spread throughout Baringsfield only to be relieved shortly afterwards when another telegram arrived stating 'Please cancel my telegram respecting 2nd Lieutenant D. Green. Error has been made in this office.' In 1918 he was awarded the Military Cross.

F.E. Green's book entitled '**The Surrey Hills**' was published in 1915 by Chatto & Windus. Wartime austerity could be seen in the poor quality of paper and bad page trimming. This is not a book protesting about insanitary cottages and low wages, rather it is a book taking the reader back to a time when life was peaceful and predictable. A perfect antidote to war. The author takes us on a ramble throughout the Surrey Hills from Oxted to Hindhead. He describes places and especially the people he met or knew – rich or poor. He skirts around Newdigate but describes the Holmwood in detail. He had an enquiring mind and was always happy to chat to anyone. He discovered the foundations of a house built by a former Duke of Norfolk and describes a romance attached to Henfold House, for the second wife of Mr. Farnell Watson was a beautiful village girl of humble origin from Hampshire. Quite a talking point in the Surrey Oaks and Six Bells pubs.

The book is beautifully illustrated by Elliott Seabrooke.



HENFOLD HOUSE

By now he was a member of a number of committees – The Royal Commission on Agriculture, The Surrey Wages Committee and The Surrey County Council Small Holdings Committee.

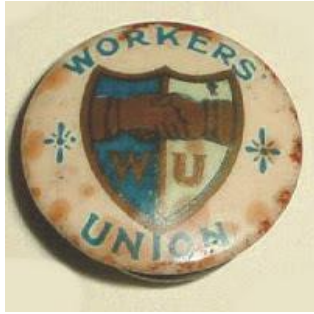
He was seeing wounded and disabled soldiers returning to their communities and published two books '**The Land Settlement of ex- Servicemen** (1915) and '**Home Colonisation by Soldiers and Sailors**' (1916).

In May 1916, ever mindful of the needs of the poor, F.E. Green wrote 'As the high price of the necessities of life are pressing on old age pensioners, so much so that the purchasing power of five shillings has dropped to three shillings, I would like to suggest that either the Trustees of Smith's Charity in our village should make an extra grant of food to old age pensioners or that the local Emergency Committee should make a weekly allowance out of the funds at their disposal for the relief of distress'.

He was clearly a good shot, probably as a result of clearing vermin from his farm. As corporal in the Newdigate and Capel Section of the 10th Batt. Surrey Volunteers Regiment he came top in a competition between the two villages.

Another book came in 1917, '**Everyman's Land and Allotment Book**'. Although the outcome of the war was very much in the balance Green was planning ahead for the time when the men came home.

In November 1917 the first meeting of the Workers' Union was held in the Village Hall. An appeal was made for farm workers to organise themselves so as to get a



fair wage. F.E. Green pointed out some startling facts in relation to boy labour and low wages in the neighbourhood. It was pointed out that in Scotland the average wage was 38 – 40 shillings a week, much higher than in England.

He wrote about a farmer from whom he was purchasing calves. He protested that he was employing a boy of twelve to harrow with a pair of horses. To walk over a ploughed field is more tiring to the feet than to walk in the furrow behind the plough. The answer was ‘what do these little beggars come into the world for but to work for us?’

The National Farmers' Union had no hesitation in advising any farmer who wanted a boy of twelve to employ him. A prominent member of the union contemptuously said ‘A boy's hours were perhaps from half-past five in the morning till eight. That was 14½ hours. 2½ hours were taken up with meals; 4 hours riding on a cart; 4 hours driving; 4 hours waiting till the cart was emptied or filled. In fact a boy did not do more than 4 or 5 hours a day’.

In 1919 F.E. Green stood as the Labour candidate in the General Election in Chichester. He polled 6705 votes (31.6%) against the Unionist candidate Lord Edmund Talbot who polled 14491 votes. Just the sort of person that he had written so vehemently about.

His book ‘**First Advice to Would Be Farmers**’ was published in 1919. He reasoned that many men would wish to return to a pastoral life. This book discusses how to make a start in obtaining, stocking, and working a small holding. It contains chapters on choosing a farm, capital required, marketing your own produce, specializing on new side lines, poultry and duck keeping, bee keeping, fruit farming, cows, pigs, goats and rabbits, useful hints, women's place in agriculture, the plot of earth as a starting point, the rural allotment as a stepping-stone, how to get a smallholding and farm colonies for discharged soldiers and sailors.

All good advice from someone who had personally experienced the pitfalls of farming.

‘**A History of the Agricultural Labourer, 1870 – 1920**’ was published in 1920. In it the author wonders how it was possible that the very workers who provided food for the table for the entire country should be so downtrodden and neglected. He is particularly scathing about farmers, the wages paid and the state of tied cottages. He confronts the class ridden society exemplified by the comments of the President of a Royal Society at the time of the Education Act of 1870 in which rudimentary education became compulsory – ‘an extension of education would teach them to despise their lot in life instead of making them good servants in agriculture and other laborious employment to which their rank in society had destined them.’

In 1920 a procession and mass meeting took place in Horsham and F.E. Green was one of many distinguished speakers.

A DEMONSTRATION OF TRADE UNIONS

HORSHAM AND DISTRICT TRADES' AND LABOUR COUNCIL.

A DEMONSTRATION
OF TRADE UNIONS
AND
MASS MEETING
Will be held in HORSHAM,
On Sunday, September 26th, 1920.

Procession will start from The Carfax at 2.15 p.m., thence to East Street, Queen Street, New Street, Station Road, North Street, Hurst Road, North Parade, London Road, West Street, Bishopric, to the Jew's Meadow, where the Mass Meeting will commence at 3 p.m.

HORSHAM BOROUGH BAND will attend.

CHAIRMAN: MR. H. HUTTON, J.P.,
President Horsham and District Trades' Council.

SPEAKERS: Messrs.
F. E. GREEN, Author of "A History of the Agricultural Labourer, 1870-1920,"
J. CHUTER EDE, Surrey County Council,
C. DUNCAN, J.P., General Secretary, Workers' Union,
G. DALLAS, F. SCOTT, T. HASDALL, Workers' Union,
W. BRADSHAW, R. A. HOLMES, National Federation of Building Trade Operatives,
MRS. GANLEY, Battersea Borough Councillor,
MISS SAWARD, Workers' Union, and others.

A COLLECTION will be taken on the route, the whole proceeds to be equally divided between the HORSHAM COTTAGE & SUSSEX COUNTY HOSPITALS.

If weather is unfavourable, the meeting will be held in CENTRAL PICTURE HALL, North Street, by kind permission of Mr. Anderson.

The Trades' Council extend an invitation to all workers in the District to attend the Meeting.

Horsham Press, Printers, 40 Park Street

A PROFILE OF SOME OF THE SPEAKERS



James Chuter Ede (1882-1965) was a trade unionist and labour politician. He served as Home Secretary under Clement Atlee from 1945 to 1951 becoming the longest serving home secretary in the 20th century. In his book *A New Agricultural Policy* the author acknowledged his indebtedness to Mr. & Mrs. Chuter for the pains they had taken and the interest they showed in reading the manuscript.



Charles Duncan JP (1865-1933) – MP and first president of the Workers' Union.



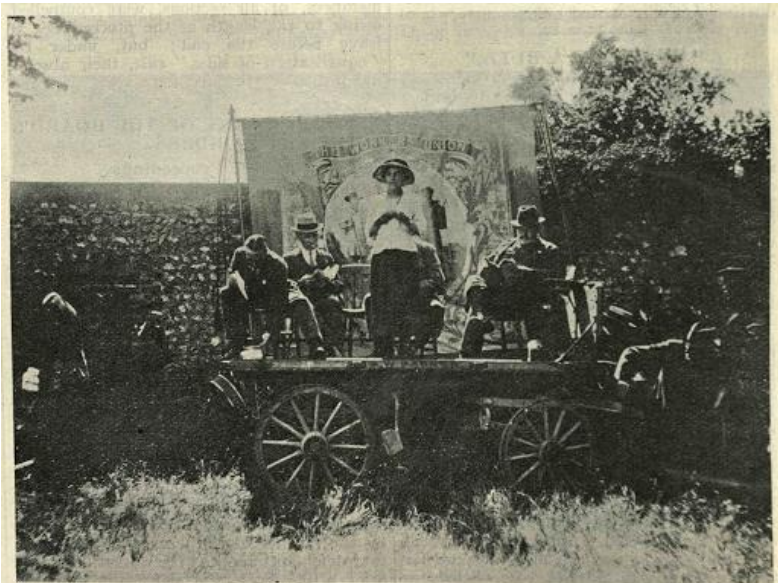
George Dallas (1878-1961) – MP and chairman of the National Executive Committee

William (Bill).Bradshaw – Secretary of the National Association of Building Trades Council.



Mrs. Caroline Ganley CBE, JP (1879-1966) – A pacifist and supporter of women’s suffrage. She became a JP in 1920 and became one of the first female magistrate

Miss Florence Saward (1893 - 1983) – Her father was a horseman on a farm in Bocking in Essex. Florence had seven siblings and as soon as she was old enough she became a silk winder. She led the Braintree silk mill girls’ strike in 1913 and became a Worker’s Union organiser. She travelled up and down the country and into Europe and became a JP. She married Tom Balaam in 1930. Even as late as 1965 she was corresponding with Jack Jones, general secretary of the Transport and General Workers’ Union.



MISS F. SAWARD, SPEAKING AT CHICHESTER, July 24th, 1921.



Demonstration of Branches of The Workers' Union at Sudbury. Organiser Miss F. Seward addressing the Meeting

It was announced that F.E. Green would again contest the Chichester division in 1921 in the Labour interest against the Unionist Sir William Bird. At the time he was president of the Horsham & District Labour Party.

A newspaper (Dundee Evening Telegraph – 12th May 1921) stated ‘Frederick Ernest Green belongs to a family which was once associated with the P & O Co., and himself started his career as an audit clerk in the Leadenhall Street offices. Like many young socialists of his day, the call of the “Simple Life” reached him, and he foreswore commerce in favour of the plough. Unlike most of his contemporaries, he made a practical success of his farm, and also found time to produce a number of interesting works on modern farming and on the history of the agricultural labourer. He is now giving up farming for literature and politics.’

His book ‘**A New Agricultural Policy**’ was published in March 1921 but by this time he was a sick man. The book investigates the effectiveness of the numerous agricultural acts that had been passed since the war. It is full of facts and figures but does not have the fire or passion of his previous books. He was concerned that the agricultural councils and committees set up to administer the various acts were dominated by landowners and farmers and gradually the land would be given over to grass.

His temper rose when he described the hunt. ‘At the sound of the hunter’s horn, at any moment, forty horsemen may come plunging across your fields, churning up the sodden pastures, crushing the tender-leaved clover under their ruthless hoofs, charging into the uprising winter oats, and trampling into rain-holes the seedling

wheat. And the Hunt pays the damage, say you? What if it does: the nation suffers in loss of food production’.

He appears to favour some form of land nationalisation and decries excessive red tape. This of course, is at a time when news was filtering through from Bolshevik Russia about farmers ‘happily’ working on their ‘efficient’ collective farms for the good of their homeland.

He summarises by stating ‘To promote food production, the Agriculture Act, 1920, is the most fatuous Act ever recorded in our statute books.’ As usual he doesn’t beat around the bush.

He sold Baringsfield and all his holdings on the 16th August 1921 to Mr. W.H. Elce for £2,100. He moved to 12 Wilderness Road in Onslow Village on the western outskirts of Guildford.

In 1920 the Onslow Village Association acquired 646 acres of land from Lord Onslow at about one quarter of its market value. The intention was to build a self-contained community with smallholdings, public buildings, open spaces, recreation grounds, woodland and a railway, as well as developing sites for churches, hotels and factories. On May 1st 1921, ten weeks after the formation of the Association, the foundations of the first two houses were laid. The idea was to create a new style ‘garden city’ and this concept must have appealed to the Greens. They moved into one of the very first semi-detached cottages to be built where he could pursue his chief interests of writing and politics despite his failing health. Due to lack of funds the ‘garden city’ was never completed.

In September 1921 he had a gastro enterostomy which is a surgical operation for a duodenal ulcer.

His time at Onslow was very short as he died on the 20th January 1922 aged 54 years. His doctor certified his death as gastric carcinoma – 1 year 9 months. Thus, he died from cancer of the stomach and his doctor Lt. Col. H.P. Gabb M.C., T.D., M.R.C.S., felt that a post-mortem was unnecessary. His nephew, Maurice Tribe, was in attendance. He was buried at Lewisham, next to his first wife, three days later. In his will he left his estate valued at £245. 2s. 5d. to his son David.

His next project was going to be a history about William Cobbett. (Wikipedia states Richard Cobden but that is incorrect) He had already written about ‘Rural Rides’ and made copious other notes but could not carry on. He wrote to the political theorist, economist and historian George D.H. Cole (1889-1959), who also

belonged to the Fabian Society, and forwarded all his papers to him. Cole published 'The Life of William Cobbett' in 1925 leaving the chapter about 'Rural Rides' just as F.E. Green had written it.

The Westminster Gazette dated the 21st January 1922 carried his obituary, written by Trevor Allen, under the title of 'Follower of Tolstoy'.

Over a generation ago F.E.G. burnt his boats, threw up a safe City job, and put his all into the 25-acre Surrey holding at Newdijak (sic) from which he was taken during his fatal illness. (sic) One may read in his delightful 'A Few Acres and a Cottage' (1911), in which, as always with F.E.G., pigs and poetry, the practical and the artistic, are mingled naively. 'It was partly from a love of Thoreau and Tolstoy that I took the step,' he once told me 'but mainly as a reaction from city life. I wanted to write faithfully of the bottom dog – to experience, and not merely describe as an on-looker, the life of the worst paid class in England.'

*To what purpose he followed out that resolve we now know. The hard, constructive work on the holding – a bare upland field when he went there – developed, as nothing else could, a man who would meet the rural worker, with all his aloof reticence, on his own ground. Because of this he was able to give us *The Awakening of England* (1912), *The Tyranny of the Countryside* (1913), *The History of the Agricultural Labourer, 1870-1920* (1920).*

'The 'Surrey Hills' (1915) enshrines for many of us the genial, anecdotal F.E.G. of innumerable country tramps. But for his untimely going (he was but 54 years of age) we should have had another, and perhaps his best book – on Cobbett, his forerunner and inspiration, 20,000 words of which he wrote during his illness.

At the last election F.E.G. wrested over 6,000 votes from a semi-feudal Sussex constituency. His last work, before illness beat down that indomitable spirit in May last, was a long lecture campaign in that constituency, from which he returned broken. He was a member of the Royal Commission on Agriculture. Deep sympathy will go out to his life's comrade and co-worker, Mrs. Constance Green, who has helped to keep the flame flickering through these many months of pain and alternating hope and despair.

The Portsmouth Evening News dated the 24th January 1922 also published an obituary. In it more information was added.

He was the prospective labour candidate for the 1922 general election at Chichester and was considered to be a 'strong' candidate as the agricultural workers were so

strongly organised. His recreations were described as tramping and tennis. The obituary describes the funeral:

The funeral took place at Ladywell Cemetery, Lewisham, by the side of his first wife Gertrude Green., who also in her short 29 years of life, did much for the social under-dog. As a member of the Deptford Board of Guardians, she broke down the system of separating old married people who were in the workhouse. She was the author of the history of the Poor Law, and of a collection of verses revealing a passionate sympathy with the down-trodden. The widow, Mrs. Constance Green is a sister of Mr. Green's first wife.

The scene at the graveside was one of impressive simplicity. Mr. George Lansbury delivered a short address. The red flowers, he said, typified what their friend had stood for in life. 'No one' added Mr. Lansbury, 'worked harder for the poorest of the workers in this country than he, and the work of such men lives over and over again among those who follow.'

Those at the graveside included Mrs. Green (widow), Mr. W.C. Green (brother), H.B. Pointing (representing the National Union of Agricultural Workers), Commander Hope, Maurice O. Tribe (late President of Lewisham Labour Party), A.J. Thorogood, A.E. Edmunds (Secretary local Labour Party), E.R. Pease, J.M.Moggridge (of the Fabian Society), Mrs. Bell (Independent Labour Party), Arthur Mann (Mr. Green's agent), and Mrs. Bulbeck and Mrs. Eastland, both of Chichester.



George Lansbury (1859-1940) was a politician, pacifist and social reformer. He was the editor of the Daily Herald and became leader of the Labour Party. The actress Angela Lansbury is his granddaughter.

Mrs. Green (1860-1947) died on the 28th July 1947 at the St. Pancras Home, Church Street in Edmonton. Probate was granted to her son, David Green, staff executive. Effects £3,383 2s. 8d.

F.E Green's nephew, Maurice Odell Tribe MC (1893-1937) who was present at the time of his death, was the son of Constance's sister Annie. He was severely wounded in the First World War, losing the sight of one eye, and was awarded the Military Cross. His ending was an appalling tragedy. His sister Naomi Tribe was a brilliant doctor and married a surgeon Dr. John Dancy – it was one of the romances

of the medical world. Maurice was living with the couple in 20 Queens Road, Richmond and was having treatment for his failing eyesight. Naomi had been to a lecture and returned home and went to bed. Maurice seemed to be obsessed with his sister's 'beautiful eyes'. Whilst her husband was in his office he went to the bedroom and shot his sister in the eyes using his service revolver. Her husband, on hearing the shots, rushed in and the killer then aimed the gun at him. He just managed to turn off the light, duck and escape. Maurice then killed himself in the bathroom using an open razor. The Dancys had three children. Maurice was described as being insane, another victim of the First World War some twenty years later.

Below are the books that I have found written by F.E. Green. Two others, entitled 'Love and Hunger' and 'The Adventures of Verona' are shown as by the same author at the front of 'A Few Acres and A Cottage' but I have not been able to find any other reference to them. I also found a reference to another book entitled 'A Choice of Hardy Perennials "The Old Fashioned Flower" with their Modern Improved Forms'. This is but a part of his literary output as he also constantly wrote articles for newspapers and magazines.

How I Work my Small Farm (1907)

The Small Holding (1908)

A Few Acres and a Cottage (1911)

The Cottage Farm Month by Month (1912)

The Awakening of England (1912)

The Tyranny of the Countryside (1913)

The Surrey Hills (1915)

The Land Settlement of ex- Servicemen (1915)

Home Colonisation by Soldiers and Sailors (1916)

Everyman's Land and Allotment Book (1917)

First Advice to Would Be Farmers (1919)

A History of the English Agricultural Labourer 1870—1920 (1920)

A New Agricultural Policy (1921)

F.E. Green died aged just 54. For seventeen years he laboured on his smallholding at Baringsfield working manually all year round. He somehow found time to travel around the country researching the plight of the agricultural labourer and then he wrote his observations in his many books and articles. He spoke regularly at different meetings, campaigned as Labour candidate in the 1921 general election and served on many committees. In his book 'A History of the Agricultural Labourer (1870-1920)' he lists over a hundred books and papers he had studied in

order to write the book. Small wonder when he became ill that he died so young – he must have been physically and mentally exhausted.

I wonder what he would have thought if he read this extract from ‘The Land’ written in 2009?

‘Currently, in our "property-owning democracy", nearly half the country is owned by 40,000 land millionaires, or 0.06 per cent of the population, while most of the rest of us spend half our working lives paying off the debt on a patch of land barely large enough to accommodate a dwelling and a washing line’.

Let’s just leave this with these words from William Cobbett:

‘It is the mind that lives; and the length of life ought to be measured by the numbers and importance of our ideas and not by the number of our days.’

THE MAIN PLACES MENTIONED IN THIS MAGAZINE

