

PEACE

Iain Wakeford 2016

In Byfleet on the 21st November 1918 the village celebrated the end of the First World War with a torchlight procession accompanied by the local band and a band of airmen from Brooklands. They marched from Byfleet to West Byfleet, where a crowd of over 400 witnessed fireworks and a bonfire upon which were burned effigies of the Kaiser and his son 'Little Willie'.

The sense of relief at the end of the war is wonderfully summed up in the Brookwood School diary which notes on the 11th November 1918 'During the dinner hour we received news of the signing of the armistice and the cessation of hostilities – we had a general assembly in the hall, when prayers and the singing of the national anthem and hymns took place, and then the rest of the afternoon was devoted to joy-making'.

'Joy making' - I bet there was a lot of that going on throughout the land, although at Brookwood School it seems their idea of joy was to sing patriotic songs and listen to 'talks on the war!' Flags and bunting were brought out to decorate the school, which was no doubt re-used the following year when the village, like almost everywhere else in the country, held peace celebrations. A 'captured German rifle' was on display in the school hall and the school closed on the 21st July for the pupils to attend the celebrations in Woking Park.

In Knaphill, the festivities took place a couple of days earlier. They were held on the piece of undeveloped common land that was later to become the recreation ground between Sussex Road and Chobham Road. Sports for adults and children took place, beginning with a race for the two to four year olds of the village and finishing with a 'veterans' race for the over 65's. The main event for the ladies (although whether any true ladies would have taken part) was the capturing of the pig – the poor animal being covered in black grease before being let loose amongst the crowd to be claimed by the first female that managed to keep hold of it! It is not known who (if anybody) won the prize!

Later there was a 'comic cricket match' with the players in the best fancy dress winning



The names of past scholars who had lost their lives during the war added a sombre air to the celebrations..



prizes with the day being rounded off with an open-air concert given by the 'Dandies' Concert Party', and dancing on the green.

At St Johns the celebrations too place on the 4th August, the programme of events included not

just the usual 'egg and spoon', 'sack' and 'obstacle' races etc., but also the poignant '80Yards' race 'for wounded Soldiers'.

There was a 'Ladies v Gents' Cricket Match and a Tug-of-War between the tradesmen and the

'rest of the village'. The whole celebrations started at 1.45 p.m. with an '80 yard flat race for the 5-7 year olds', and finished (after a tea interval at about 4.30 p.m.) at 8.00 p.m. with a 'three-legged race for girls'.



In Woking floral arches were erected across the streets as the townsfolk marched through the town and gave thanks in the park for the end of the war.



Unfortunately I have not been able to trace any photographs of either the Knaphill or St Johns events, but the celebrations in Woking are well recorded. Here a procession took place, with 'peace arches' being erected at the top of Chertsey Road and across Guildford Road at its junction with Hillview Road.

There are views of the Woking procession as it made its way through the streets of the town, past the site in Commercial Road where the War Memorial would later be erected, before going under the Victoria Arch and along Guildford Road to Woking Park.

Sadly just over twenty years later the country would be at war again (and another six before they could celebrate again with street parties) – but in 1919 that was all in the future. 1918-19 was a time to celebrate peace and think about those that hadn't survived to see it.





In November 1918 Byfleet celebrated with a bonfire and fireworks, with sports and games taking place the following July as part of their formal peace celebrations.



ALL CHANGE AT SUTTON PLACE

Since Tudor times the Manor of Sutton had been owned by the Weston Family and their descendants, although from the mid 19th century the house – Sutton Place – had been let to a succession of tenants, the last of whom was the newspaper tycoon, Alfred Harmsworth.

Harmsworth first moved into the house in 1900 (five years before he was ennobled as Lord Northcliffe), four years after he had taken over a little newspaper called the *Daily Mail* and three years before he established the *Daily Mirror*.

When he gave up the lease in 1918 the owner of the estate (Philip Witham) decided to sell Sutton Place to the Duke of Sutherland. The asking price was then £115,000 – which doesn't sound a lot of money now, but must have been quite a sum then - although it was evidently a mere drop in the ocean for the Duke, whose family had made a fortune out of the Highland Clearances!

Some of that fortune was spent on repairs to the house itself, but more appears to have gone onto the estate where the Duke's interest in agricultural led to the building in 1919 of his new model dairy at Ladygrove Farm.



The sale to the Duke did not include the land around the Catholic Church and Vine Cottage, which was granted a right of access from

Blanchards Hill and Sutton Green 'at all times with or without horses, carts, carriages and other vehicles' – a right it holds to this day!

RIPLEY GOES INTERNATIONAL



For almost 180 years what is now the One Stop Shop in Ripley High Street has served the village with groceries and before that was probably a drapers shop run by Thomas Greenfield. Piggott's Directory of 1826 lists him as such in the village, but by 1832 he is shown as a shopkeeper and draper and by 1838 as a grocer and cheesemonger.

Thomas Greenfield came originally from Pulborough in Sussex, but his wife came from Woking and it is thought that all but the eldest of their ten children were born in the village. His wife, Hannah, died in 1859, with Thomas following her the next year, but the business was continued by their son, John, for a few years until it was bought by William Henry Tedder, whose name first appears in the Kelly's Directory for 1867. Tedder (who also came from Sussex, from Easebourne near Midhurst) ran the shop for thirty years handing it over to his sons, James & Owen Hugh who in 1918 sold the business to the International Tea Stores (bringing shopping in the village very much into the 20th century)!

The Richardson family took over the shop in 1975, before giving it up in September 1994 to concentrate on their hardware and florist business up the road. In effect the shop had been in the hands of just five businesses in all that time – surely a local record.