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Programme 10p



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WELCOME TO ST JOHN'S FETE

This year we are trying to recapture the atmosphere of the Edwardian Era - those allegedly golden years of the first decade of the twentieth century. The shackles of the Victorian age were beginning to loosen, the country was prospering and "the sun never set on the British Empire".

According to our fathers and mothers (or grandparents!) summers were always sunny and warm - it never rained on a Bank Holiday! So let us hope that the weather today will live up to the tradition and be fine and sunny.

So to our Fete. We welcome you all. There is plenty to entertain you from young to old. So we wish you a very happy and enjoyable afternoon.

TURN TO CENTRE PAGES FOR TODAY'S PROGRAMME

ST JOHNS VILLAGE

It is always of interest to know why a community has grown up where it has and what factors have influenced it.

It would seem that the construction of the Basingstoke Canal in the late eighteenth century resulted in a community here. It is believed that a part of the Rowbarge is the oldest building in the village and was certainly used as a hostelry by the early bargees.

There was a brickfield in the village until about 1887, thus presumably the name "Kiln Bridge" arose.

Jackman's Nursery was started in St. Johns in 1810 and the offices were in Jackman's Lane.

Another factor with considerable impact was the building of a civil prison in 1859. This, in due course, was taken over by the Military in 1895 to become Inkerman Barracks until it was demolished a few years ago.

The village seems to have been an extension of the Goldsworth area of Woking until the Church of St. John the Baptist was built in 1842 (although the Parish was not formed until 1884) and one assumes that from then on the name "St. Johns" came into use.

ST JOHNS RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

The St. Johns Residents Association was formed in September 1965. One of the reasons for its formation was the state of the Basingstoke Canal near Kiln Bridge, St. Johns. Other reasons being the objects of the Association:-

- (a) To promote the general interests of Residents.
- (b) To uphold the principles of sound economy in local expenditure.
- (c) To bring to the notice of the various bodies any matters affecting the interests of the Residents, and when necessary to keep them informed of the proceedings of such bodies.
- (d) The Association shall be non-political.

Over the years, the Committee has inevitably changed but there are two members still on the Committee who attended the very first Public Meeting. Month by month the Association has dealt with the many problems brought to its notice and has taken appropriate action. At first a membership subscription was raised, but this proved difficult, so it was decided that ALL St. Johns residents are automatically members. It regularly sponsors disco dances and jumble sales as well as the annual Village Fete, partly to raise funds but mainly to provide entertainment and enjoyment.

Every Christmas the Association provides and erects a Christmas Tree on the Lye and on one evening before Christmas The Salvation Army Band and St. Johns Church Choir join the village in singing carols around it. This has proved a very popular annual event.

The Annual Village Fete was previously organised by the St. Johns Memorial Hall Association in conjunction with St. Johns Horticultural Association. As they were unable to continue to do so the Residents Association took over the task. The aim of the Fete is mainly to provide a good afternoon out for both parents and children and the attractions are chosen to give as wide an appeal as possible. The weather has generally been kind so that the Fete Committee has been able to give £100 each year from the surplus profit to the S.J.R.A. to provide a facility or amenity that the Council or other Organisations could not normally provide.

Here is a list of what we have been able to do as a result. 1969 Fete

Purchase of a seat erected near St. Johns Post Office along with two concrete flower tubs.

A set of Adjustable folding parallel bars for use by the frail elderly in St. Johns Health Centre.

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1970 Fete

Donation to Girl Guides for additional camping gear.
Donation to Scouts towards their new Headquarters fund.
Donation to St. Johns Memorial Hall Association for new
tables and chairs.
Donation to Toc H to provide Warning light sets for
installation in houses of elderly or infirm people in
St. Johns.

1971 Fete

20 Meat vouchers distributed to local old people in
time for Christmas.
A further donation to Toc H for additional Warning
light sets.
Purchase of a Overhead Projector for the Keyhole Club.
Purchase of a Double Swing for the Aigberth Childrens
Home.

1972 Fete

Purchase of a Toilet Aid for the elderly in St. Johns
Memorial Hall.
Purchase of a Hair Dryer for the Wednesday Day Centre.
20 Meat vouchers distributed to local old people in
time for Christmas.
Money to purchase five trees to be sited in St. Johns
to commemorate "Plant a Tree Year".

The St. Johns Residents Association exists for the benefit
of St. Johns and invites local people to contact the Chairman
Mr. Philip Owen, 86 Hermitage Woods Crescent, or the
Honorary Secretary Mr. George Potter, 32 Martin Way (Woking
66104) with any suggestions, problems or information they
may have.

Please - we want you to attend our Annual General Meeting
on Tuesday, 30th October, 1973 in the Memorial Hall, and
we invite nominations from interested local people to join
the Committee 1973-74 to be elected at the A.G.M.

For any further information please contact the two people
mentioned above.



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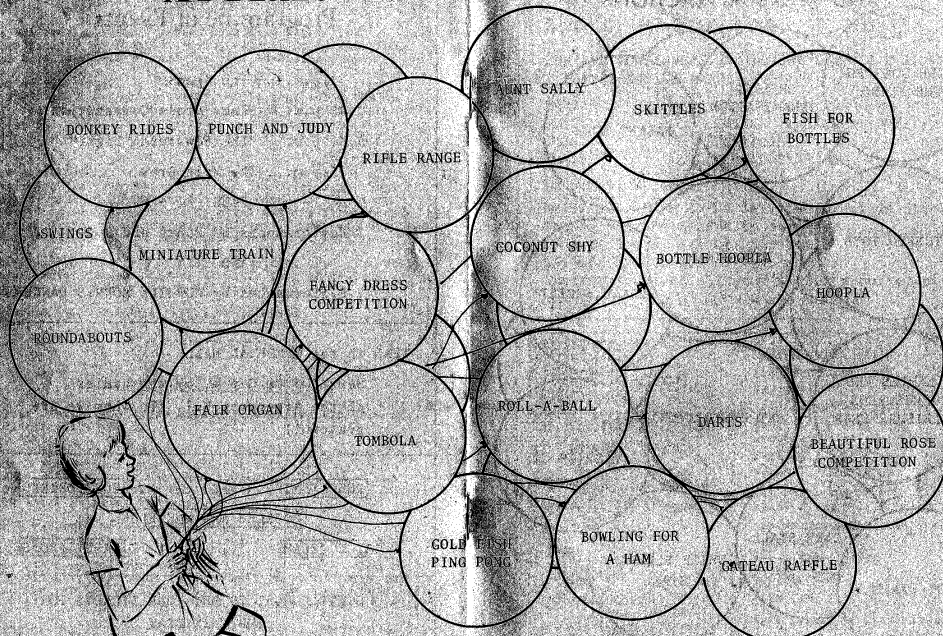
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MEMORIES OF ST. JOHNS

by Miss R. B. Pole, Lye End Nursery, St. Johns.

When I first knew St. Johns at the end of 1918 it was a small village. There were no buses until one was built by the local blacksmith. This carried 6 people and a driver once or twice a day to Woking - otherwise one walked or cycled to the station or to do shopping.

I rented the bungalow still known as the Chalet at the beginning of the Lye. The whole plot of land where the bungalow, the two neighbouring cottages and the Memorial Hall now stand was owned by the then Schoolmaster, Mr. Herbert. He told me he had bought it from a man who lived in an old cottage on this site and who worked at the Crematorium. The schoolmaster was horrified to find the walls in this cottage panelled with oak coffin wood - he had them all burnt.

I remember that before I came to St. Johns on December 23rd 1918, if I told anyone that I was going to live near Woking, the response was always "Oh, that's where the Crematorium and the Mosque are".

St. Johns had the usual shops typical of villages of that period. Of these that I remember, next to Warwick Lane was Hizzey the Cobbler and next door was brother Hizzey the Greengrocer - nearby was Renshaws Dairy and a small grocer's shop. Between the Chalet and the Canal was the local Blacksmith. On the other side of the Canal bridge was another grocer, Hodders Stores, an offshoot of a Woking firm.

On the other side of the road the fishmongers still remains though under different management. There was also Mr. Kingham the Tailor and Geoff Small, the cycle shop, beloved by everyone, and the Post Office and Newsagent ruled by Mrs. Jolliffe for many years. Some years later a Chemist's shop was opened and to the surprise of everyone was at one time owned by a woman. Nearby was a draper's shop owned by Mr. Trump and still flourishing under different management. I find I have missed out Mr. Moore the Butcher who succeeded Mr. and Mrs. Hampton who owned it for many years. Across the Kiln Bridge again on the right hand side was the local Baker, Mr. Veness. The bread was delivered by a little old man who brought it in a little closed hand barrow.

Horses and cows grazed on the Lye and mushrooms were plentiful. Larks rose up from the ground with their wonderful song and many other birds not often seen on the Lye now were common - occasionally snipe.

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APPOINTMENTS NOT ALWAYS NECESSARY

There was no road down the Lye, only a rough ash path and a cart track to the seven cottages, one of which, Lye End Cottage, is now my home. There was a water tap in one of the gardens and if this became frozen, water was fetched from Nos. 1 and 2 Bides Cottages further down where there is a well. About 1923 I bought these two cottages and had them converted into one house. There was still no road and in winter coal (still delivered by horse and cart) often had to be carried by hand when the cart got bogged down in the mud. Later on Mr. Herbert, the Schoolmaster at St. Johns became a councillor representing St. Johns and through his efforts a road was made.

In July, 1934 there came to St. Johns what the Daily Mail described as "The tragedy of an Indian Princess". Brought to St. Johns when her countrymen knew that her death was imminent, they rented the Chalet at what was then a fantastically high rent of £20 a week. Just before her death she was carried out to a wooden shed which they had erected in the garden - local people were told that according to her countrymen's religion, the dying must be removed from their dwelling before their final passing and that the bearers of the body must cross water and must not be leather shod. In this case the passing over the Kiln bridge satisfied the first condition, but the ground was so rough the bearers were in danger of falling over. However, a local character who dealt in jumble of all kinds was "able to accommodate them with rubber plimsolls", and after putting the body down they put these on and continued their journey to where a funeral pyre had been in preparation for some days. As the cortege travelled to the funeral pyre, money was scattered on the ground by the mourners. I believe the ground on which the pyre was built was owned for this purpose, but I haven't been able to find any reference to this ownership but I can verify that it was on the Hermitage side of the canal near where the footbridge now is. People came from far and wide to see this unusual ceremony - they climbed into trees and some even went to the other side, pushed the canvas fencing down to see, in spite of the fact that a terrific thunderstorm broke out during the cremation, and the men in charge of it were paddling up to their knees in water the whole evening.

I cannot end these memories of St. Johns without reference to two notable persons - Dame Ethel Smythe, the composer, who lived at Hook Heath but was frequently seen coming across the railway bridge and down to St. Johns with a refractory bobtail sheepdog which required a great deal of shouting at by Dame Ethel to get it under control before she went into the shop.

I believe the village had been very much under the control of Miss Percival of the Hermitage, but this was before my time. I think she gave the St. Johns Village Club.

The other notable person was Countess Balfour (who much preferred to be known as "Lady Betty"). She lived at Fishers Hill. She frequently gave a party in summer to which the school children were invited and "anyone else who would like to come". On one occasion I had taught some of the boys the Flamborough Sword Dance and they did it at the party and other children did Country Dances. Apart from these functions there was nothing done to interest children. As I had a Girl Guide Company at a school in Byfleet, I became involved with the local ones and this led on to my starting a Cub Pack and as older boys kept wanting to join, eventually a Scout Troop, but things were very different from the present conditions. There was much poverty and the boys could only pay a few pence at a time towards getting their uniform and most of them would get a piece at a time. Of course there was no hall so when the weather was not fit for outdoor activities, we met in my sitting room.

Eventually I had to hand all over to others owing to pressure of work and to illness, and it was not long before both were disbanded owing to not getting leaders to carry on. They were however, the first St. Johns Cubs and Scouts and I am happy to know that both are now revived and flourishing.

THE WOMENS INSTITUTES IN ST. JOHNS

There are three W.I.'s in St. Johns village. The oldest, St. Johns, celebrated its 25th anniversary in March this year. By 1963 the village had grown tremendously and there was obviously a need for another Institute, for women who could not meet in the afternoon, so St. Johns (Evening) W.I. was formed.

Both W.I.'s continued to increase in numbers, and two years ago it was decided to start yet another W.I. in the village, this time to meet in the morning. Hook Heath W.I. has the distinction of being the first morning W.I. ever formed.

St. Johns Woking W.I. have provided the teas for the village Fete for many years and the Evening W.I. run one of the stalls.

All three Institutes offer a warm welcome to all women in the district, at any of the monthly meetings held in the Village Hall on St. Johns Lye.

St. Johns Woking W.I.	3rd Wednesday in the month	2.15 p.m.
St. Johns Evening W.I.	1st Tuesday in the month	8.0 p.m.
Hook Heath W.I.	2nd Thursday in the month	10.15 a.m.

ST. JOHNS C.P. SCHOOL SWIMMING POOL

Due to the generosity of the Fete organisers, we are, once again able to have a stall to raise further money for the swimming pool. This will be built early in 1974 in the grounds of the Victoria Road School. We are most grateful to a local trust for their very considerable financial help. This has enabled us to start building the pool so soon as they have agreed to advance us the remaining £800 as a loan. Therefore we shall be glad of your continued support to enable us to repay this as soon as possible.

CHURCH PARADE by A. Brandon

In 1929 I was stationed at Inkerman Barracks as a boy soldier in the Royal Warwickshire Regiment. For Church Parade we used to march down through the village to St. Johns Church. In those days cows were pastured on the Lyre, and Charlie Renshaw's cowshed was where the Medilec Factory now is, but with an entrance from the main street. Regularly, as we approached, the cowman, Jack Laye, used to drive the cows out in front of the parade, bringing it to a halt and often a considerable wait. Whether he did this by design or accident we never knew, but the event was always greatly appreciated by the troops.

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Many of you will remember seeing the gaily painted narrow or long boats with their bright colours and decoration of roses and castles which is their folk art.

On the Basingstoke Canal two 72 feet long narrow boats or one wide barge would fill a lock, sometimes towed by a horse and carrying timber or coal to Woking or Aldershot.

This year, the Canal Society has on display a "shortened narrow boat" which has been in the local carnivals. It will be at St. Johns Fete with a crew dressed as they were in the Edwardian period.

Pay a visit to our stand and see the pictures of the Basingstoke Canal in times past, when narrow boats could come from the Midlands and the North down through St. Johns to Basingstoke. It may not be many years before we shall again see narrow boats and pleasure boats chugging up to St. Johns to stop for provisions in the village or take you on an afternoon trip.

The Surrey and Hampshire Canal Society is planning to help the County Council restore the canal to its former state. We have already built two new pairs of lock gates and have acquired a collection of vehicles and equipment. The most recent acquisition is a canal dredger.

If you would like to support us

Adult Membership is £1.20 Junior (under 18) is £0.50
Family Membership is £1.50 Group Affiliation is £2.00

You will get a bi-monthly Newsletter telling you of all our activities. We look forward to meeting you and we thank the Fete Committee for inviting us to come.

Our Membership Secretary is Mr. Alan Babister,
31 Elmsleigh Road, Farnborough, Hants. Tel: Farnborough 46147

Acknowledgements

The Committee is most grateful for all the help received from so many people. Thanks is given to the advertisers in this programme and to the local shopkeepers who have donated prizes for the main Draw and for other purposes. In addition we would like to record our gratitude to the following:

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