

Chislehurst REPORT

A publication of the Chislehurst Society

Winter 2013 Issue 50



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Chislehurst REPORT

Issue 1
JANUARY
1994
a publication of the Chislehurst Society *

The first edition of *The Cockpit* was published in September 1966 and was named, of course, after the pit on the Common in front of St Nicholas Church. It was subtitled 'Newsletter of the Chislehurst Residents' Association' and covered issues as varied (and as familiar) as the preservation of the Commons, nuisance from rock concerts in the Caves, and the state of our pavements. It has continued to be published at least twice a year since then.

Over the years it included articles about Chislehurst's past. Many were prepared by Tom Bushell, and later by Roy Hopper, then Head Librarian at Chislehurst Library. These proved so popular that it was decided that the Society should have a new publication focused on current affairs, leaving *The Cockpit* as a local history magazine. The first edition of *Chislehurst Report*, was issued in January 1994, and had reports on improving the High Street, parking and traffic calming. *Cockpit* contains an article which goes into more detail surrounding the history of our Chislehurst publications.

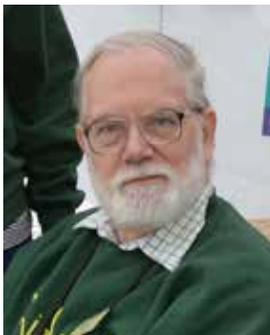
Having now reached the grand joint total of 150 editions, it seemed appropriate to reconsider the separate publications. For this special edition we have decided to merge them. On one side you will find the 'Report' and on the flipside you will find 'Cockpit'. We will review whether we should continue in this way and your feedback will be an important part of that decision.

Communications technology has changed since 1966 and, looking forward, we will reflect this with references to our website, Facebook page and our new email newsletter, which has been very well received. Most of our members still prefer a paper publication and this will remain the flagship communication for our members, who, are fast approaching the 4,000 mark for the first time in ten years!

We hope members, new and old, enjoy our magazine. We value your opinion and would appreciate your feedback on the new publication. Our contact details can be found at the bottom of every page.



Tom Bushell



Roy Hopper

Noticeboard

Tony McClarty, the Society's Membership Secretary, laid a wreath on behalf of all members at this year's Remembrance Service at the War Memorial. At 11am on a fine sunny morning, there were more people present than ever before, young and old. Centre Common Road was closed to all traffic during the Service, and the SNT were present throughout to keep traffic flowing around the crowds at this busy junction.

Follow the Chislehurst Society on Twitter "@ChisSoc" and on our new Facebook page "Chislehurst Society" to keep up-to-date with all our news!

facebook

twitter

Chislehurst Society Environmental Awards 2014

The competition will run in the spring of 2014 with entries invited from all local schools in Chislehurst.

The theme for 2014 is '*Remembering Chislehurst*'

The Society would like to commemorate the WWI centenary anniversary and also to encourage a broader reflection upon Chislehurst's history. The Society hopes this theme will give ample opportunity for projects on local history, buildings/memorials, people/costumes, oral projects etc.

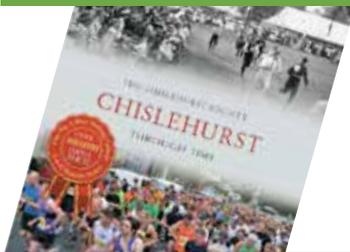
For further information and an entry form please refer to the Chislehurst Society website.

Gasworks

We are advised that there will be some disruption to the High Street due to some gas works, on the western side only, which are anticipated to commence around 20th January. The works are estimated to take between 8 to 12 weeks.

Chislehurst Through Time

Get your hands on *Chislehurst Through Time* in time for Christmas - hot off the press! Turn to the centrefold for more information and how to order the book.



Children's Stories of Chislehurst for Christmas

Calling all 5-8 year olds - come along for some festive fun with the Chislehurst Society on the 21st December 2013 at Chislehurst Library between 11am and 12.30pm. Please call or email to reserve your place!!!

Update from the Town Team

The Chislehurst Town Team continues with proposals for improvement to the High Street (HS) and Belmont Parade (BP). The VisitChislehurst website, funded by the Chislehurst Society is getting lots of visits, as is Facebook and Twitter. Also, our applications to LBB for funding for improvements to the HS and BP have been successful and we have started spending the money.

We have successfully negotiated with the London Borough of Bromley (LBB) for the parking charges in the HS & Red Cross car parks to be reduced from £3.50 to £2 for stays over 4 hours. On-street car parking will increase from 60p to 70p per hour. We hope these new charges will be in by the end of November. Season Tickets are available at even cheaper rates. News to follow on season ticket prices and terms.

We will see a standard design of litter bin with the Chislehurst logo installed in the HS & BP. The lamppost bins will be removed.

We are seeing certain street furniture, which is providing no useful purpose being removed or more appropriately located (as is the case with the pay & display machines). Cycle stands were replaced with a more modern design in October.

We have undertaken a walk of the HS with an LBB officer to review the sorry state of some of the pavements, kerbs and areas around the trees. Lots of improvements are to be made over the next few months.

At the end of October a small working party planted up the sad patch of earth next to the Library. Thanks go to Thompsons Garden Centre, Coolings Nursery and The Chislehurst Society for their generous donations.

We have drafted a Design Guide for Shop fronts in the High Street. This is currently with LBB for review. We are also looking at the cleaning regime for the HS.

New rigging has been installed for community banners across the HS. The initial teething problems are being addressed.

The contract for the Farmers' Market has been renewed for a further 12 months. Sainsbury's car park is due to be re-surfaced and the planted areas to the left of the car park entrance and within the car park are receiving attention. The troughs to the front of the store, which tend to be used as ashtrays, will be concreted in.

Any suggestions - please email us at townteam@chislehurst-society.org.uk or attend our next CTT meeting at 6pm on 26th November at the Chislehurst Society office.

Monthly updates are posted to www.visitchislehurst.org.uk/about/town-team and we also post regularly to the VisitChis Facebook site.



Policing Update

Gary Schofield is the SNT sergeant for Chislehurst. The Chislehurst Society sends representatives to the bi-monthly SNT community meetings. Recent crime figures suggest there has been a large rise in burglary. The majority of burglaries have been around the Beaconsfield Road area. The police have been/are targeting this area with extra resource and plain clothes officers. Motor vehicle crime is also up, especially car theft. The number of reported crimes is up and more police resource is being applied to try and reduce this. Drive-off crime is still a problem at the BP garage in Perry Street.

The SNT has provided us with a security guide for householders. Extracts are produced below; the full document can be found on our website.

Burglary, on the whole, is an opportunist crime. A building that presents itself as unoccupied and insecure is more likely to be targeted than one which is properly secured. i.e. open side gates, open accessible windows, ladders left out, garden tools available to force entry and untrimmed hedges or high fences preventing natural surveillance.

Residents of multi occupancy dwellings or flats should be mindful not to grant entry to people via an entry phone system if they do not know them and to be cautious of people seeking to 'tailgate' them into buildings.

Are the occupants in? Avoid:

- milk bottles/parcels on the doorstep
- newspapers/mail in the letter box
- unlit houses after dark
- all windows shut in very hot weather

Key safety

- never leave a spare key concealed anywhere near the front door

- store keys away from the front door
- do not label your house keys

Make your house look occupied:

- install timers for lights and radios
- have a neighbour or friend pop round to clear your letter box or doorstep
- ask a neighbour to park on your drive.
- if going out after dark, draw the curtains, leave lights on and a radio playing.

If you are away for extended periods:

- cancel the delivery of milk/newspapers
- disconnect the telephone answering machine
- ask a neighbour to keep a regular eye on your property
- if you are prepared to leave a key with a willing neighbour ask for curtains to be drawn and lights to be put on at night.
- check your insurance policy. Some insurance policies for contents don't cover you if you are away for more than 30 days.
- set your burglar alarm.
- if you do not have an alarm, consider investing a few pounds in a dummy alarm box. It may well deter the opportunist thief.

Chislehurst Ward Promises

- 1. to cut Burglary**
- 2. to cut Motor Vehicle crime**
- 3. to tackle Anti Social Behaviour**

Summer Events Round-up



Adil Ghani and Guy Wilkins at the talk in July

During the Summer, four afternoon talks were held in The Methodist Church. Admission to the talks is free and refreshments are served afterwards allowing our Road Stewards, their guests and other members, to mingle. This has proved popular and attendance and membership figures have increased. We endeavour to provide a wide variety of subjects mostly with a definite Chislehurst slant or focus.

The March talk featured the curator of Bromley Museum, Marie Louise Kerr, speaking on a 'Novel Look at Bromley & Chislehurst' which explored the incredible variety of famous and infamous literary figures resident in the area over the years.

The May talk was presented by Eddie & Pat Williams who run Willow Wildlife, a charity based in Chislehurst. This charity cares for injured wild creatures of all kinds, treats their problems and injuries and releases them back into their natural habitat if at all possible.

In July, we hosted Chislehurst's Special Ambassador, Adil Ghani, a pupil at Marjorie McClure Specialist School who raises awareness of disabilities in young people and their need for sporting facilities. He was

ably assisted by Rev. June Hurn and Guy Wilkins, Advanced Skills teacher for PE at Marjorie McClure Specialist School.

The final talk in September was given by our Kent Countryside National Trust Ranger, Sam Pettman, who gave a fascinating overview of the management of The Pettswood & Hawkwood Estate - past and present.

The Chislehurst Society sponsors and supports many of the events which take place annually on The Commons. This year we had a full presence at The Chislehurst Fair with an interesting stand combining the sale of historical books and maps with children's activities, puzzles and competitions.

The Big Draw in September celebrated its 10th Anniversary in Chislehurst. The focus was on children's literary characters and books. The Society has been a sponsor of this event for many years and also runs an activity for children. This year 'Mister Men' badges proved very popular and resources ran out quite early.



The Big Draw

Chillers!

Forty one Chislehurst children enjoyed some spooky stories over half term at Halloween. 'Chislehurst Chillers'. It was funded by a successful application by the Chislehurst Society History Group to the Allen Grove Trust, part of the Kent Archaeological Society. We had a very enthusiastic response both from the children and their parents and have received requests to run similar events at Christmas and Easter. We'd like to add our gratitude to Doreen Westwood at Chislehurst Library for her stalwart support.



The Line-up for 2014

In 2014 we have a new line-up of talks starting with Rob Carling, Vice Principal of Coopers School who will cover the history and restoration of Coopers' 18th century Mansion House which has been meticulously restored this year. Joanna Friel will join him with anecdotes about the former residents and their comings and goings.

The May talk will be presented by Norman Abbott, Community Resuscitation Officer at The London Ambulance Service NHS Trust. An experienced and popular speaker he will talk of his work experience and outline coping mechanisms which might be useful in the home when dealing with medical emergencies.

In July, Peter Osborne will give an historical resumé of Biggin Hill Airport and the RAF at Biggin Hill - followed by an outline of future plans for the Airport - and an update on The Heritage Centre.

Hook, Rain and the Cinema

The Chislehurst Society proudly sponsors the Open Air Cinema on the Common. Organiser Donna Bompas provides a short account of this year's event.

There was blue sky and sunshine. The Trustees of Chislehurst Commons and the Jubilee Committee spent the afternoon on the 27th July building an outdoor movie screen and decorating 'The Pit' with bunting, flags, lanterns and giant size tissue paper flowers. All was set for an evening of community fun. At 6pm everyone returned in fancy dress. The barbecue was fired up, craft projects made ready, drinks mixed and the Jazz band started to play just as the first drops of rain fell. And fall they did for the next three hours.

By the time the film started to roll only the hardiest of families were left. It was the magic of Peter Pan, plus extra marques and a few warm blankets that kept us there until the final credits. Notwithstanding the rain and thanks to the most generous support of local organisations we were able to raise over £1000 for the Trustees of Chislehurst Commons.

Not to be daunted by one wet summer's evening, the Jubilee Committee will bring you The Chislehurst Open Air Cinema once again in July 2014.

Planning News

The Society has been closely following a planning application relating to access to Kings Quarter, which may involve closing footpaths because of anti-social use.

The Society made the following observation to LBB

The removal of the two pedestrian access ways from King's Quarter housing estate to the Green Chain Walk is a matter of regret. This closure will result in the loss to residents of King's Quarter of easy pedestrian access to the Chislehurst and Walden Road Recreation Ground, to the facilities of Chislehurst High Street and the Redhill and Mead Road primary schools.

As a consequence one might expect an increase in the use of private cars, related demand for car parking (particularly the residential roads adjoining the High Street) and added congestion around the school gates.

However, we note the support for the proposal among

residents of King's Quarter and among residents in the more established residential roads bordering the Green Chain Walk: and we appreciate the reasons stated in justification of their view.

The proposed removal of the woodland path and access to the 'old woodlands' on the eastern boundary is the result of extensive discussion among interested parties. While this decision may be the most appropriate, it is hoped that the Borough Council will ensure that a strategy for the future conservation and management of these old woodlands is published shortly.

We will of course keep you informed of any updates regarding the planning application both in our bi-monthly newsletter and on Facebook and Twitter.



Keep an eye on the Graham Chiesman house, pictured left. It looks as though work is finally set to begin there by McCarthy & Stone who are renovating the existing building and extending the current building to provide a retirement village for the area.

Grants Update

The Society has agreed to provide grants for the following projects:

Improvements to the footpath along the Kyd Brook, comprising path levelling, membrane installation and the restoration of the surface which is being undertaken by the National Trust. The footpath is well used by residents, and is frequently water-logged and impassable. There will be a plaque at the site crediting the Chislehurst Society for our donation.

A grant to St Nicholas' Church for the restoration of the Sydney family funerary hatchments (a coat of arms erected over the door of a deceased person's house after their death, then moved to the parish church where it was usually hung on a wall). Church members have also offered their labour free of charge.

Planting behind Chislehurst Library, undertaken by the Friends of the Rec.

Elmstead Woods station has begun the second phase of their garden (below). The Society funded the costs of the first phase, and will be funding this second phase.



The Camden Estate Map



The Heritage Lottery map of the Camden Park Estate was unveiled in Chislehurst Library in September by Carole Souter, CEO of the Heritage Lottery Fund.

The event was extremely successful with representatives from many other Chislehurst organisations including all three of our local councillors.

The map has been the subject of a talk about its conservation by Francoise Richard of Museum Conservation Services. Francoise said how much she enjoyed this project especially as she is a native of France. She especially loved noting the location of the death of Emperor Napoleon III on the map.

The map has been on view in the Methodist Church and is on its way to Christ Church in Lubbock Road where, on December 4th at 7.30pm, Joanna Friel will be giving a talk about the influence of landowner Nathaniel Strode and the development of the Camden Park Estate.

Tel : 0208 402 5081 to book your place.

Dates for the Diary

Please note on your calendar these events for December 2013. For an updated version please check the Chislehurst Society Website

Activity	Date	Location
Friends of Scabury Burn Up	7 December 2013	Tree Centre
Camden Map Talk	12 December 2013	Christ Church
Friends of Scadbury Meeting	19 December 2013	Sydney Arms
Childrens' Stories of Chislehurst for Christmas	21st December 2013	Chislehurst Library
Friends of Scadbury Champagne Walk	25 December 2013	Scadbury Car Park

Road Stewards' News

Nine Road Stewards have resigned since our last update. We welcome **ten** new Stewards, and thank one Steward for taking on an additional road.

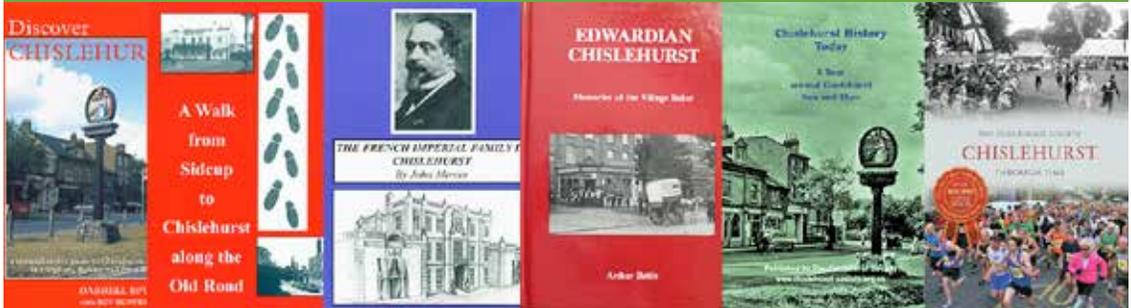
Resignations/retirements

Mr John Allen
Coniscliffe Close
 Miss Margaret Pearce
Willow Grove (Woodhayes) , Nursery Gardens
 Mr Jeff Gibbons
Hatton Court RA
 Mr Brian Weston
Old Manor Way
 Mrs Catherine Fyfield
Elmstead Avenue
 Mr Ken Potter
Homewood Crescent and Radnor Close
 Mrs Judith Thompson
Ingleby Way
 Mrs Elizabeth Greenwood –
Leesons Hill, Bridgewater Close, Kenley Close, St. Paul's Wood Hill, Orpington Road
 Mrs Jill Bradley –
Walden Road (West Lodge to number 60)

New Road Stewards

Mr Chris Shawyer
Hatton Court RA
 Mr Nigel Kent
Croft Close
 Mrs Carol Wheeler
Church Lane (Cedamore Court)
 Mrs Maria Ault
Willow Grove (Woodhayes)
 Miss Joanna Hargreaves
Nursery Gardens
 Mr James Nedham
Roundwood (added to his existing roads)
 Mr Cymon Dew
Homewood Crescent and Radnor Close
 Mrs Shirley Shead
Ingleby Way
 Mr Keri Michael
Bridgewater Cl, Kenley Cl, St Paul's Wood Hill
 Mrs Gill Ward
Leesons Hill and Orpington Road
 Mrs Christine Bull
Walden Road (West Lodge to number 60)

Books for Sale



The Society maintains a stock of relevant books available for purchase by members and non-members. Those shown over the page can be purchased from us by using the order form on page 14, or by going to our website. Prices quoted exclude P&P.

Two new books are available for immediate purchase:

We hold a number of these of print books. Please email or telephone the Society for availability:

Chislehurst Through Time (Local History Group 2013)

A fascinating new book of photographs showing how Chislehurst has changed and developed over time. Published by Amberley Publishing, this book was produced and written by our own History Group. All the images, new and old, are from our own library of images of Chislehurst.

Available to members at a special price of £12 (while stocks last - publisher's price £14.99).

History of Chislehurst (A. E. Webb and others 1899) The famous history of the village. Please note that these are modern reprints. £25

Patchwork of the History of Chislehurst (Dorothy McCall 1963) A personal look at Chislehurst's history by a former resident. £15

Imperial Chislehurst (Tom Bushell 1974) A history of Chislehurst with a focus on the family of Napoleon III. £12

Chislehurst History Today (Local History Group 2013)

A new guided walk around Chislehurst calling at 36 locations. With many old images, and originally published on our web-site, this booklet has been produced by popular demand.

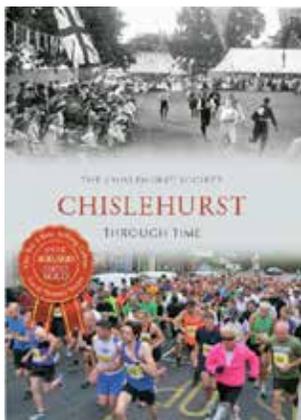
Now available, £4

In Trust for Chislehurst (Clifford Platt 1995) A history of Chislehurst and St Paul's Cray Commons and National Trust lands. £3

A copy of Alice Sennett's, **Historical Walks around Chislehurst** (1995) is complimentary with each purchase of *Chislehurst History Today*.

The following book may be available from Paper Lane and Bromley Local Studies Library:

For King and Country - The Men of Chislehurst who fell in the Great War. (Yvonne Auld 2010) A first rate study of the impact of the Great War on the village of Chislehurst, with photographs and biographies.



Chislehurst Through Time

A fascinating journey through time as Chislehurst changed and developed

(History Group 2013)

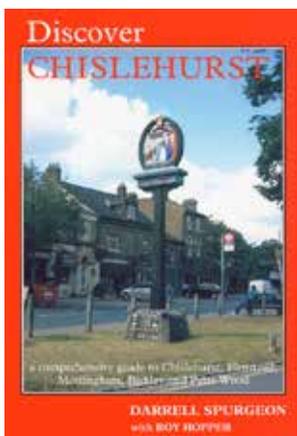
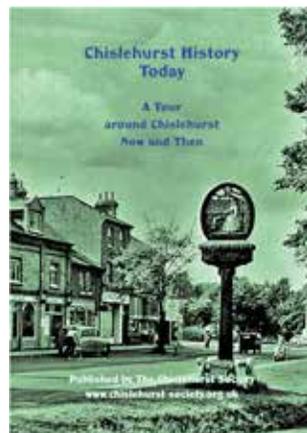
Ref CTT £12 (while stocks last, then £14.99)

Chislehurst History Today

A circular self-guided tour with old images around 36 locations in Chislehurst

(History Group 2013)

Ref CHT £4



Discover Chislehurst

Details of buildings past and present in and around Chislehurst

(Darrel Spurgeon and Roy Hopper 2007)

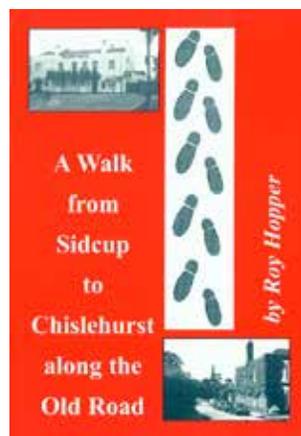
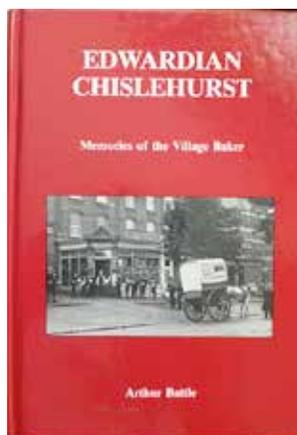
Ref DCH £10

Edwardian Chislehurst

Evocative memories and anecdotes of the Village Baker. Many riddles still to be solved!

(Arthur Battle, 1988)

Ref EC



A Walk from Sidcup to Chislehurst

From the Black Horse Sidcup to the Bulls Head

(Roy Hopper 2003)

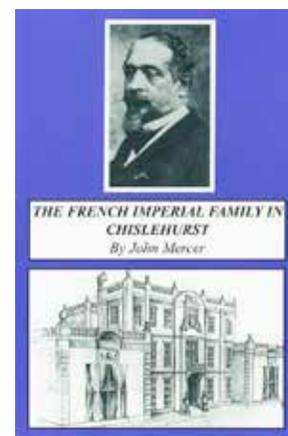
RefWSC £3

French Imperial Family in Chislehurst

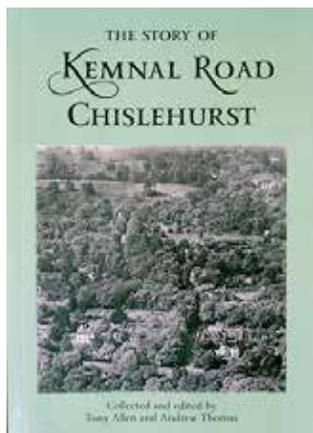
Napoleon III, Eugenie and Prince Imperial at Camden Place, 1870 - 1880

(John Mercer 2002)

Ref FIF £2.50



Note: Prices shown here do not include postage. For orders received by 18 December 2013, members with a BR7 postcode can receive copies free of postage. See over.



The Story of Kemnal Road

Detailed account of the origin and growth of this interesting road

(Tony Allen/Andrew Thomas 2011)

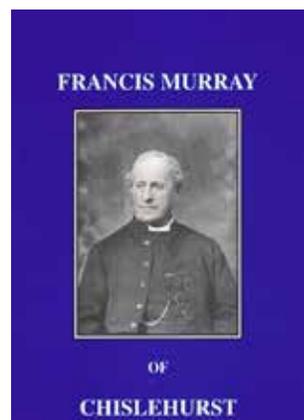
Ref KR £7.50

Francis Murray of Chislehurst

Rector from 1846 to 1902. His life illuminates Victorian Chislehurst

(Jean Palling 2002)

Ref FMC £10



Scadbury Manor

A short account of its history and archaeology

(ODAS 2009)

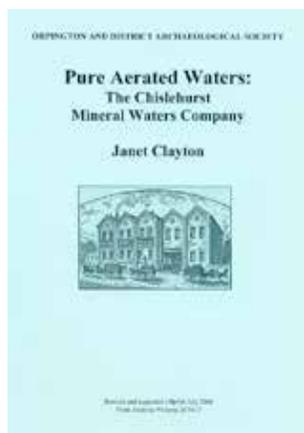
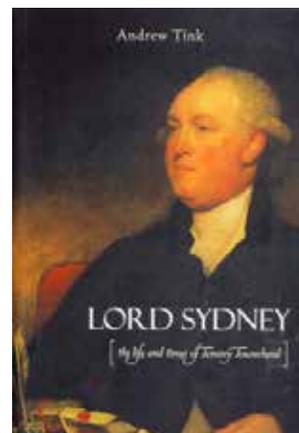
Ref SM £1

Lord Sydney

A biography of Thomas Townshend, Lord of the Manor, after whom Sydney Australia was named

(Andrew Tink 2011)

Ref LS £13



Pure Aerated Waters

The Story of the Chislehurst Mineral Waters Company

(Janet Clayton 2006)

Ref PAW £2



Heritage Map of Chislehurst 2000

Sold unframed, 30 x 42 cm. Ref HM £3

Order Form

Ref	Title	Price	p&p	Qty	Cost
CHT	Chislehurst History Today (plus free Hist.Walks)	£4.00	£1.00		
CTT	Chislehurst Through Time (while stocks last)	12.00	2.00		
DCH	Discover Chislehurst	10.00	2.00		
FMC	Francis Murray of Chislehurst	10.00	2.00		
FIF	French Imperial Family	2.50	1.00		
EC	Edwardian Chislehurst	2.00	2.00		
HM	Heritage Map (unframed)	3.00	2.00		
KM	The Story of Kemnal Road	7.50	2.00		
LS	Lord Sydney	13.00	2.00		
PAW	Pure Aerated Waters	2.00	1.00		
SM	Scadbury Manor	1.00	1.00		
WSC	A Walk from Sidcup to Chislehurst	3.00	1.00		
	Total				

Your details

Name	
Address	
Postcode	
Phone	

Payment and delivery

If you are a member, resident in the BR7 postcode area, and wish to receive your order free of postage, then complete this form with your full details, and send it with a cheque (payable to 'The Chislehurst Society') for the appropriate amount to:

The Old Chapel, Queens Passage, Chislehurst, BR7 5AP

Non-members, or those resident outside BR7, must include P&P, unless you wish to collect from our offices at an arranged time.

Purchases can be made via our website, and payment can also be made via PayPal to our account 'techislehurstsociety@btconnect.com'

Cockpit

Winter 2013

Issue 100

November this year not only marks the 100th edition of Cockpit, but also the 50th edition of Chislehurst Report. Earlier this year was also the 50th anniversary of the demolition of the Water Tower, in May 1963.

The Water Tower stood for just over 100 years at the top of Summer Hill before its demolition. At the same time the lengthy process of finalising arrangements for the proposed new London Boroughs was taking place. Many people in Chislehurst saw this as the final indignity, a decision made in the UDC's offices at Sidcup Place. It may be that this act led to the final dissolution of Chislehurst & Sidcup UDC that had tried for thirty years to find its identity as a new local authority. It was with something like a sigh of relief that the parting was effected, and Sidcup and Chislehurst once again went their separate ways. These townships, united in 1934 were re-absorbed in 1965 by the new London Boroughs of Bexley and Bromley. We are pleased to publish an article by Sir Roger Sims, entitled 'Chis & Sid', in which he looks at that turbulent time in our history, and the part he played as one of Chislehurst's local councillors.

With the new London Boroughs in process of formation, the Chislehurst Residents' Association (CRA) decided that a regular newsletter was desirable to keep people informed of the profound changes that were on the way. The regular local paper was the *Chislehurst Times*, published by the Kentish Times group in their works at the top of

Sidcup Hill. The CRA feared that Chislehurst might lose its identity in the big new Borough of Bromley, and it was with that in mind, and with the obvious need to keep local people informed of council decisions, that prompted the idea of a newsletter, to be produced by the CRA for local residents and thus be more personal in tone than the Kentish Times. It was started in 1961 and took the form



The above photo and one over the page show the remnants of the water tank. (Water tower photos courtesy of John Porter)



of a duplicated publication entitled *The Chislehurst Resident*.

The first edition, 'Number One,' was dated December 1961. Number Two appeared in the Autumn of 1962, and Number Three was dated December 1964. *The Chislehurst Times* continued to be the principle method of keeping residents informed.

The *Kentish Times* dated 20th August 1965, reported, 'After a lapse of time the Residents' Association has decided to publish another edition of their magazine *The Chislehurst Resident*, which will come out in September.' Alas, this was not to be and there was a further delay. Not until September 1966 did the first edition entitled '*The Cockpit: Newsletter of the Chislehurst Residents' Association*' appear and so *The Cockpit* was born. The first edition was a folded three-page newsheet dated September 1966. Readers interested in the history and development of *The Cockpit* are now able to pursue it through our website.

Remembering the Water Tower

Next year the History Group wants to focus on memorialising the Water Tower. Fifty years on from the demolition we are sad to see the Wythes' coat of arms in a sorry state due mainly to frost damage. This is all that remains of the once iconic Water Tower, the gateway to Chislehurst.

We hope to work with the Trustees of the Commons to erect an interpretation plaque on the site of the memorial of Water Tower. This will tell the story of the Water Tower, perhaps with a bench also. Watch this space!!!



Chis & Sid

by Sir Roger Sims who was Member of Parliament for Chislehurst from 1974 until he retired in 1997

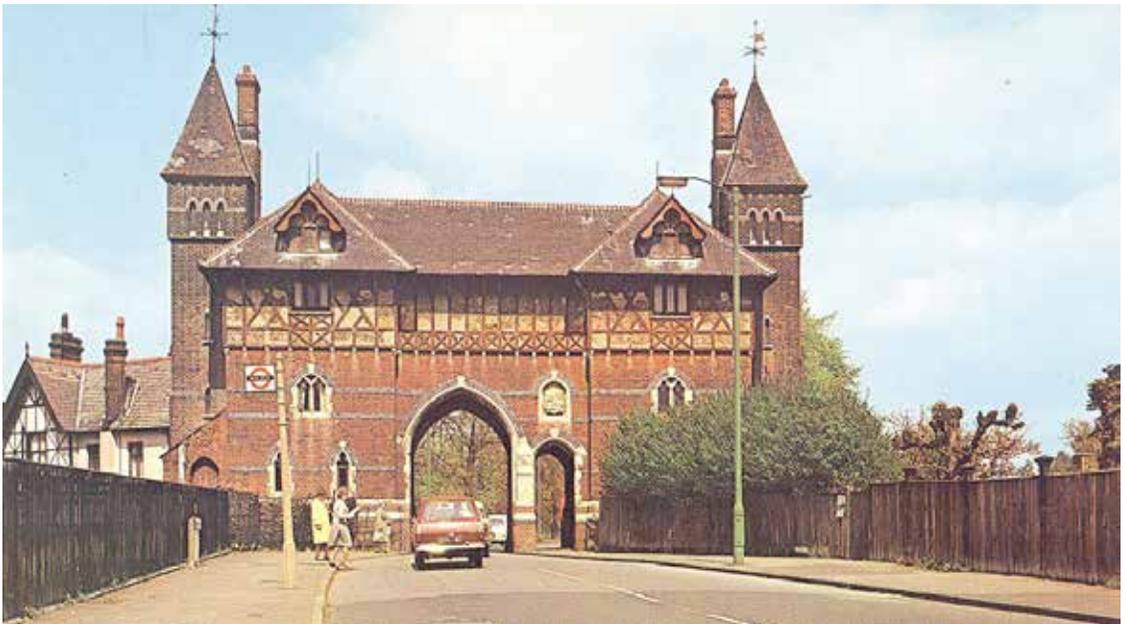
Most of us are accustomed to the fact that Chislehurst is part of the London Borough of Bromley - indeed, some have never known it otherwise. But it was not always so, and but for my relatively youthful involvement in local politics, Chislehurst might be in a different borough!

Prior to 1965, responsibility for local government in Chislehurst lay partly with Kent County Council and partly with Chislehurst & Sidcup Urban District Council. From 1956 to 1962 I was one of three councillors representing Chislehurst on what was popularly known as 'Chis & Sid', with offices at Sidcup Place - now a public house and restaurant.

Most of the matters with which we dealt were routine, but a few gave rise to local controversy.

One such was the Water Tower. This was a substantial brick and stone building, sitting astride the road at the top of Summer Hill, adjacent to the Cricket Ground. Built in 1860 with the intention that it should form a gateway to the Bickley Park estate, it included living accommodation as well as a large water storage tank in the roof. The dimensions of the archway beneath allowed only for one vehicle to pass through at a time, and the many indentations and scratch marks on walls and ceiling bore witness to the difficulties which the drivers of larger vehicles experienced in negotiating their passage. It was a prominent landmark - though not always a popular one with drivers.

By the mid-1950s the trend toward larger commercial vehicles and the rapid increase in the



The Water Tower in its glory days before the demolition

volume of traffic, the flow of which was much impeded by the Water Tower, led to proposals for its removal. Needless to say, the people of Chislehurst took strong exception, and my colleagues and I voiced our objections in the Council Chamber. Eventually an agreement was made with the Commons Conservators to allow for the construction of a carriageway beside the Tower, so that traffic could pass in one direction through it, and in the other, round it. But the reprieve was short lived, and a few years later the pressure for road improvement at the site became such that, sadly, the Water Tower had to go.

It was during my time on the Council too, that a Royal Commission on Local Government reported on recommendations in respect of London and the South East. These were that the London County Council should be replaced by a Greater London Council whose boundaries would be extended roughly to the M25, thus taking in part of the counties around London, including Kent. Within the new GLC area, the various Borough, Urban District and Rural District Councils were to be amalgamated to form a number of Greater London Boroughs. Chislehurst and Sidcup, under these plans, would form part of the London Borough of Bexley. [At that time, the proposed Boroughs were just referred to by a number: Borough 18 became Bexley, and 19 became Bromley]

There was virtually no support locally for these proposals, and a good deal of hostility towards them, with a strong preference for the status quo. Whilst it could not be denied that Chislehurst people generally looked to London rather than Maidstone for employment, shopping and entertainment, most of them much preferred to be considered part of Kent rather than part of an impersonal Greater London. As to being merged into a new borough centred on Bexley, this was quite unacceptable. We were quite content to be equal partners with Sidcup in the UDC, but if we had to be incorporated into

one of the proposed larger boroughs, Chislehurst's links were much closer with Bromley than with Bexley. My fellow councillors and I made our views clear to our colleagues from Sidcup but they, understandably, were prepared to acquiesce in becoming part of Bexley. We were told that, as a general principle, existing authorities were to be transferred in toto and not divided.

I was not willing to give up, and raised the matter again at a special meeting of the Council in January 1962. It was called to approve the unanimous recommendation of the Finance, Rating and General Purposes Committee that the relevant Minister be advised 'that the Council accept the general basis of the Government's proposals for merger of the Urban District into a new Borough with Bexley, Crayford and Erith'. Had no objection been voiced, the recommendation would have been agreed, and that would have been the end of the matter. However, as the minutes of the meeting record, 'An amendment was moved by Mr Sims and seconded by Mrs Beecher Bryant'. Its effect was to say that the Council accepted the general principle of the proposals 'as a basis for discussion, but defer any conclusion in order to give residents of the Urban District full opportunity to express their views, and to discuss the position with neighbouring authorities.' The amendment was carried, 18 voting in favour and 9 against.

There followed a period of lively public meetings, discussions with other authorities and lobbying of Ministers, culminating in the decision that an exception would be made, and that whilst Sidcup would be part of Bexley, Chislehurst would merge with other authorities to form the London Borough of Bromley: a decision for which I suppose I could claim some small credit - or blame, according to your point of view!

Wartime Memories

Memories of Chislehurst 1941-1955 by Audrey Yolland

We first came to Chislehurst in 1941. My husband was a Major in the Royal Signals and had been posted to work at Farringtons School. We rented a house in The Meadow, called Spring Cottage. My husband's cousin, Dr Horace Yolland, soon called on us in his big, black, chauffeur-driven limousine with a flag on the front; he was head of the Red Cross in the area.

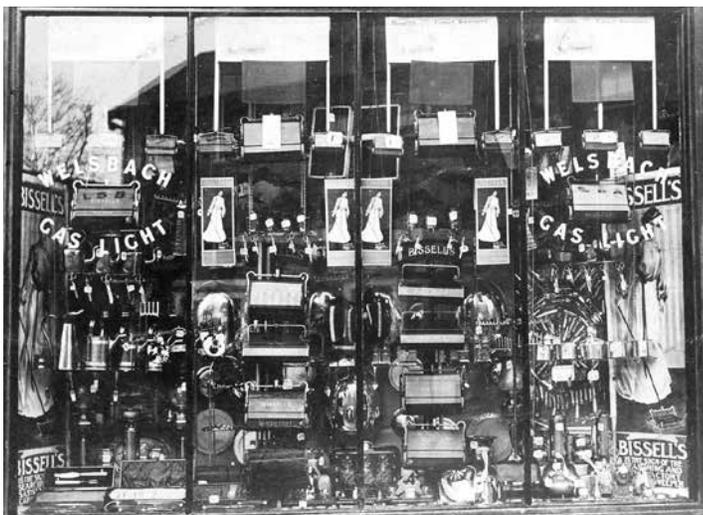
I did our shopping in the High Street. At Cullen's the grocers an assistant weighed out our rations of sugar, bacon and tea, etcetera. Fish was not rationed, but we never knew when it would be coming in. When it did, a queue formed quickly. At Keith's, the butchers, you sometimes got some liver as well as your meat ration, as offal was not on the ration. Every man's favourite shop was White and Bushell's which was run by three brothers and their sister. One Mr White wore a hat, another a cap, and the third had a fine head of white hair. Their sister was stately and gracious. You would see Mr White-with-the-Hat picking out a few screws for a boy for his rabbit hutch, and Mr White-with-the-Cap selected hinges for a man's cucumber frame. and Mr White-with-the-Hair helped somebody to choose a screwdriver. It was delightfully personal, friendly and leisurely.

I did fire watching with a neighbour two nights a week, from midnight to 2am. We patrolled the area round Mead Road and The Meadow, but there were never any incidents. At one point there was an invasion scare, and when I was paying the milkman he

said: 'I'd 'ave an extra pint, if I was you - you might 'ave 'itler for breakfast!'

In 1946 we bought a house near the woods in Leasons Hill. Our near neighbours were Mr and Mrs Clifford Platt, and later on Miss Richmal Crompton Lamburn and we all became great friends. Fuel was rationed and it was almost impossible to keep warm in the worst of the bitter winter of 1947. As eggs were in short supply, we kept chickens. On one occasion my husband went to America on duty. He returned with many wonderful presents of things which were still unobtainable, or in short supply, in this country - including a splendid electric train set for our boys.

In 1955 my husband was posted to Cyprus, and then Yorkshire, and we did not return to Chislehurst until 1961 and we have lived here ever since.



The shop window of White and Bushell in the High Street

Reminiscing

by Olive Scott Winter

Mrs Scott Winter has for many years organised the Wednesday Circle at St Nicholas' Church. The full version of these memoirs is available on our website.

My father bought a house in 1933 when Grove Park was beginning to be developed.

My mother made tea throughout the night and served biscuits. These were hard to get.

During the war a gun site was installed behind the Chinbrook pub. This became a target and many bombs and landmines were aimed at us. Often incendiaries were dropped, preceding the bombs. One night this happened and the fields behind the house were alight. The local warden had the stirrup pump housed in his garden and would not allow it to be removed in case a bomb dropped on his house! Several



houses were demolished or damaged. My mother saw a plane fly overhead at low level to avoid the gun range, and it went on to bomb the school in Brownhill Road, Catford where many children and teachers were killed or injured. My brother attended this school and was thrown down by the blast, which perforated his eardrums, leaving him deaf.

When my husband and I married we moved to Sidcup and lived there for five years. A doodlebug dropped in Priestlands Park Road the very first night they flew over. We thought it was a plane on fire. We suffered blast damage to the house.

At the beginning of the war I joined the Civil Service and worked in the Ministry of Labour offices, first at Camberwell and later at Bromley. I remember the shelterers in the Caves where many took refuge, not only from the bombs but also from the ministry of Labour! I had to make many domiciliary visits there to find reluctant citizens.

We had very large windows in our lounge and my father had wooden shutters fitted to the inside of the windows. He refused any type of shelter. He was extremely cool and reassuring; one had great confidence in his company.

Not so long ago my brother persuaded me to go to a reunion of wartime cave dwellers. I went and was greatly amused to see decorated areas with Union flags over a platform where seven fellows played music. One of the men had won a talent competition in the Caves during the war. A baby had been born there and named Cavina. People were embracing and exchanging memories. On leaving, I was presented with a commemoration mug, which I was told was a limited edition and would be valuable in fifty years time. I don't think I can wait for that!

When the war started some of our neighbours joined us in the house, as they felt secure with us.

Letters to Alison

Alison Wood was on a Commonwealth student exchange visit to Canada when the Second World War broke out in September 1939. Returning to England at that time was difficult, and Alison remained there. Her mother started to correspond with her on a daily basis, and the letters very nicely encapsulate a fraught period in Chislehurst and the reactions of one family in Canada and their friends to the war, the Battle of Britain and the Blitz. This is just a snippet of the full article, which can be found on the Chislehurst Society website.

Alison had worried about the possibility of damage to the family home, to which her mother had responded in her letter of 30th September: 'Don't talk about a demolished Charnwood please. You have no idea how horrid a house looks which has had a bomb either through it, or in front of it.'

In her letter dated 15th October she relates a fairly close encounter at home, which demonstrated the need to take air raid warnings rather more seriously: 'In the afternoon it was rather nice and sunny, so I sat on the verandah knitting, Mary was machining, Kathleen changing to go out. The siren went but we took no notice as usual, but suddenly we heard a roar, a whistle and a whoosh. Kathleen dived under her bed, and Mary and I bolted under the stairs! It only took a few seconds. Mrs Montagnon jumped over the wall, she had been gardening, and flung herself on her face. We went out to see what had happened; the road was already full of wardens locating the five bombs. One crater was just the other side of Camden Way. All it did was to break two windows and send great clods of earth into our and other gardens. Another was at the bend of the road near the path to the golf links, an unexploded one in the garden next to Greatwood, a crater in waste ground near Oakwood Park, and an unexploded one in the golf links. Gas and water were off for a few hours. Windows were broken in a new house up the road, but near the bomb there

was no damage except tiles broken. We think the plane was being chased, which made him unload in a hurry.'

Bombs were not the only hazard. The letter of 20th October relates that 'On Friday afternoon I heard a new kind of swishing and swooshing, so I retired under the stairs. It was a Nazi plane swooping down very low, which went along Lower Camden, machine gunning. No one was damaged. It was a lone raider doing a little personal hate on his own. It was a dull wet afternoon, with very low clouds, ideal for a stunt like that. The back of Battles' had a bomb a few days ago, but the shop and bakery are functioning. An enormous one fell in some ground a bit farther off; it must have been a land mine, because it made a crater 60 feet across and 30 feet deep.'



We would really appreciate your feedback on the new version of the Chislehurst Report and Cockpit as we do value your opinion. Our contact details can be found at the bottom of every page.

Did Abbott and Costello save our lives?

by **Brian Dempsey**

I don't remember the month or even the year, but I do remember thinking that a movie may have saved our lives. My two brothers, my cousin and I were at 'The Bughutch' to see an Abbott and Costello flick. In those days if the movie had started when you were seated, you simply stayed through the intermission until the show started again, and when the scene that was on when you came in, came round again, you left.



St Patrick's Church, once the cinema, still retains the original tip-up seats.

We were enjoying the movie so much we stayed a while longer. Some time after there was a huge explosion that shook the whole cinema. We lived in Cranmore Road, and when we got into Walden Avenue we saw all kinds of emergency vehicles, Red Cross canteen vans, lots of Air Raid Wardens, wounded and medical people milling around, and our poor mother standing in the street, frantic in the confusion.

A land-mine had landed in the back garden of the property opposite ours; it had blown out all the windows of our house and the doors off their hinges. We were what we then called 'bombed out', and were put up in temporary quarters until our house was made habitable.

At that time I was about eight years old. For the past thirty-five years I have been living in Southern California, and about three years ago I was looking at a house I was thinking of buying, and when the next-door neighbour introduced himself to me, he turned out to be Lou Costello's grandson!

Chislehurst Wives Club

by **Eileen Parish**

In 1946 some women formed an afternoon club for women of all denominations in the area. Starting as a Young Wives Club with just nine members, the meetings were very successful. Membership grew and in 1967 there were sixty members. There was always a short service, a hymn and a prayer, followed by a speaker, demonstration or slides. As members grew older, 'Young' was dropped from the title. For some years food parcels were distributed to needy folk in Chislehurst. Later, cheques were sent to various charities. Many members helped with the trolley service at Selwood Old People's Home.

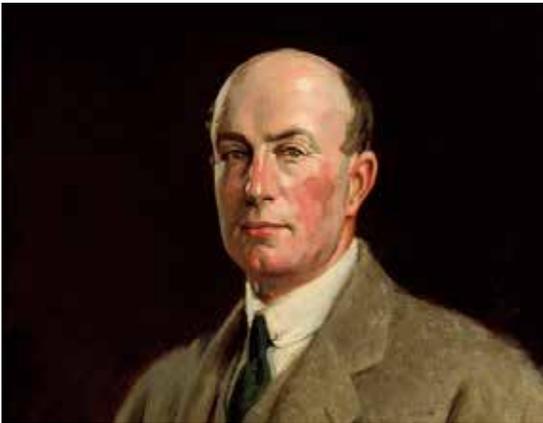
It became increasingly difficult to find new and interesting speakers for a now smaller number of regular members, so with sadness and regret it was decided that the CWC would have to close. On 11th December 1991 the CWC ended with a Christmas luncheon and a carol afternoon, after forty-five very happy years.

Frederick Richard Simms

by Lesley Reed

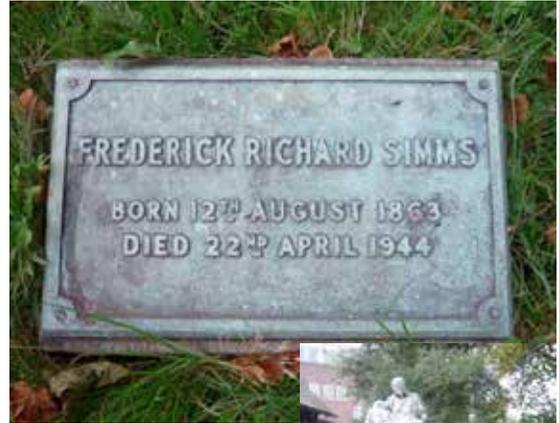
We have discovered that Chislehurst was the home of yet another notable person.....

Frederick Richard Simms was an engineer, inventor, and, as a pioneer for motor cars, he became a leading figure in the early British motor industry. Simms and his second wife lived in Chislehurst from 1915 until his death in 1944, at a house called Storth Oaks next to Waratah in Walden Road. The house is no longer there.



Simms was born in Germany and as a young man did an engineering apprenticeship. He became a friend of Gottlieb Daimler and in 1893 he purchased the rights to manufacture petrol engines for boats from Daimler and formed the Daimler Motor Syndicate Ltd. This is believed to be the UK's first petrol motor company. In 1900 Simms established his own vehicle manufacturing company, Simms Manufacturing Co. at Kilburn, where a wide range of vehicles was produced.

As well as his engineering skills, Simms was a leading advocate for the newly invented motor cars. The car industry that developed in Britain can be said to have begun through his efforts. In 1895, with his friend the Honourable Evelyn Ellis, Simms took



the first petrol driven horseless carriage ride on English roads – illegal at the time. He took part in the Emancipation

run between London and Brighton in 1896 which was to celebrate the emancipation of horseless vehicles from the severe restrictions previously placed on their use. This is now the annual London to Brighton Run.

Simms founded the Motor Car Club in 1896; the Automobile Club in 1897 (which became the Royal Automobile Club (RAC) 10 years later); and the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders in 1902.

Simms' ashes are placed at a memorial just inside the Lychgate of the Annunciation Church below a large white memorial which is a copy of Michaelangelo's Pieta in St Peter's, Rome. We would be pleased to hear from anyone who can add any information about the Simms' family's Chislehurst life.

History's Treasure Hunt

Getting two birds with one stone couldn't be more apt with this adventure into the past. The Society was contacted with a query about a mystery stone in Gosshill Wood. We received a photograph of the stone and deciphered the initials E J W and a possible date of 1907 on the stone. We involved Local Studies, who helped with maps, ODAS and the National Trust Ranger. We came to the conclusion that it is a boundary marker of some sort but the relevance of the initials eluded us.



On an entirely separate escapade, our History Group were following up a communication in connection with the Salvation Army house,

Avalon, high above Summer Hill. In 1905 Richard Harding Butler, a wealthy accountant, purchased Avalon (which was built by Scotsman James Bruce in 1872). Richard, a grandson of Joseph Harding the inventor of the Cheddar Cheese making process, had married into the Austin family, who also hailed from Somerset.

We have written the full account of the Butler/Austin heritage on our website, but for present purposes, suffice it to know that the family became fabulously wealthy and emigrated to Australia.

A book written by Josephine Marjorie Butler, '*Time Isn't Long Enough*' details memories of growing up in Avalon. She describes croquet lawns and tennis courts, tobogganing down the drive and hiding in the cave/mine entrances on the site.



We recently visited Avalon and our intrepid photographer, Don Drage, even got up onto the roof to get up close to the stone eagles that 'perch' aloft. These eagles are perplexing; substantial and something of a mystery. We have compared them to the stone eagles on the chapel at St Mary's. These are very different. Ignoring any reference to Third Reich similarities, we currently conclude that the eagles may be the heraldic emblem of the original Scottish owner. From the title deeds of Avalon we learned that the original parcel of land had been within the Bickley Park Estate owned by George Wythes (he of the water tower fame). The neighbouring property formed part of the estate of Wythe's grandson Ernest James – lo and behold, E J W, the initials on our mystery stone!!

Our research is by no means concluded and we welcome any input from members, but for now we are happy to be closer to solving the mystery of the Gosshill stone.