

EAST CLANDON 1966 TO 1977

By Peter Davies

In 1966 I moved to West Horsley as one of 3 Police Constables and a Sergeant stationed there. Pc JOCK HOSKINS was the officer living at West Clandon with responsibility for both West and East Clandon. On his days off I covered the two villages for him.

In 1970 JOCK retired and I moved into W. Clandon Police House covering both villages on my bike. In 1975 I was posted to Guildford as Acting Sergeant but continued to cover the villages, albeit only in response to telephone call from villagers, a large number of who had the number of the Police House, (Clandon 453).

I moved out in 1977 and was the last village policeman the house then being occupied by a dog handler from Guildford.

FARMS AND ESTATES.

North of the Epsom Road MAJOR BOURNE farmed at New Manor Farm. He held the land north to the railway line and west almost to the edge of West Clandon, the exception being land at the rear of Clandon Regis which was owned by MR CHANDRIS the millionaire Greek shipping magnet, and the fields at the rear of Cuckoo Farm West Clandon, which MR. JOHN HEARD from Alfold rented. MAJOR BOURNE rented the house and land from the Rendel estate and sometime after his death in 1970 FREDDIE LAKER bought the house and rented the land from the Rendel estate. He was seldom seen in the village.

WILLIAM and JEAN WHITE farmed Fullers Farm inside Hatchlands. I believe his father had the farm before him.

East of Ripley Road the woodland and fields stretching from the back of Fullers Farm to the railway line, and being into Ripley Parish, was Ryde Farm Estates owned by SIR, (later LORD), CHARLES FORTE the hotelier.

He also had the shooting rights over all the other land south to Epsom Road and West to West Clandon including Norcote Wood and Hatchlands. His estate was run from Jury Farm, West Horsley, where TONY RICHARDSON was the Manager. The shooting lodge was at Ryde Farm, Ripley.

The head keeper was VIC BROWN who lived at Pond Cottage. He had previously been keeper to the 5th Marquess of Salisbury at Hatfield House. I used to take my Labrador picking up pheasants at the weekly shoot held every Saturday during the shooting season.

In Gason Wood behind Home Farm were a number of large pieces of a WW2 German bomber which had been shot down whilst on the run in to bomb the Vickers factory at Weybridge. They still held the dark green camouflage paint and some painted numbers. There was also a very large part of a V1 "doodlebug" at the side of a track which had been pulled out during tree planting.

The shoots at FORTE'S were attended by many famous people. As well as city financiers there were the MP's WILLIAM WHITELAW, DUNCAN SANDS, REGINALD MAUDLIN, and PETER THORNEYCROFT as well as the journalist CHAPMAN PINCHER, Admiral BONHAM CARTER, JACKIE STEWART the racing driver and LORD CARNARVON of Highclere Castle. CHARLES HUGHESDON, the husband of the actress FLORENCE DESMOND, of Dunsborough Park, Ripley, often attended, once flying in by helicopter.

South of the Epsom Road PETER NAPPIN farmed the land between the main road and Blakes Lane. His wife MARY was a teacher at West Clandon School and taught my two sons.

High Clandon Farm was owned by DR ALEKSANDER ZUKOWSKI a charming Polish Jew whom I became great friends with. He was born in Warsaw and during the war was involved in the Polish Jewish underground in the Warsaw Ghetto. His real name was LEON HANDELSMAN. Late in the war he and his wife were deported to Auschwitz. He showed me the concentration camp number tattooed on his arm and told me of the horrors of the Ghetto, but didn't speak of the camp. They both survived and returned to live in Warsaw. However like a lot of Jews he was imprisoned by the new Polish communist government as a dissident and stripped of his Polish citizenship.

On release from prison he decided to emigrate and changed his name to ZUKOWSKI, (I think in order to get out of Poland). He came to England and became a naturalised British subject in 1960. He purchased High Clandon, I think in the late 1950's, and built a chicken farm with about 20 large wooden buildings in a clearing in the woods. He bred poultry and did research into fowl pest and its prevention.

ALEKSANDER kept a flat in Willesden, North London. His wife had died in 1956. His son was a naval architect and lived in America. I met him when he visited England with his family.

I used to shoot in the woods at High Clandon and check on the house and also supervise the delivery of heating oil. ALEKSANDER used to call in at the Police House for tea and about 1972 he asked me if I wanted to buy the empty cottage behind the house at High Clandon for £9000. At the time policemen with less than 15 years service were not allowed to purchase a house and had to live in tied accommodation so I had to decline. I think my wife would have found it too lonely there.

During the war the Canadian Army were stationed in the house. The large Beech trees behind the house had many names carved into the bark by the soldiers. There were also many love hearts with two sets of initials which gave credence to the tales of the local East Clandon female population having romances with the soldiers!!

After the war the house was turned into flats until ALEKSANDER bought it. When I knew it only half the house was inhabited and that sparsely furnished. He had retired and lived at Willesden only visiting the house at weekends. The chicken sheds were empty and everything had a very melancholy air about it.

About 1973 MICHAEL NEWBURY bought the cottage and part of the land. I stopped going there to shoot so as not to disturb his family. In 1977 I bought a house in Milford and we moved from West Clandon, I only saw ALEKSANDER once after that. ALEKSANDER died in 1982, he and his wife are buried at Golders Green Jewish cemetery.

The rest of the land around High Clandon was owned by SIR FREDDY LAKER the owner of Laker Airways. TIM HAINES was the farm manager at Woolgars Farm and the land stretched from West Horsley to West Clandon and up Staple Lane to the top of Clandon Downs. On several occasions Tim asked me to stop the traffic on the Epsom Road so he could drive several hundred sheep across the road from one pasture to the other. The road was a single carriageway and not the fast racetrack it is now, I would not like to do this now. I think they used to bring the sheep up from Romney Marsh to over winter on fresh pasture. FREDDIE LAKER lost his land when his airline went bust.

MR GODDARD had a racing stable in Butlers Hill, West Horsley. Up Staple Lane on the right extending towards Merrow was a long strip of land called The Gallops. It was kept mown short. Every day the stable lads used to ride the horses up Wix Hill, across the back of High Clandon, and then race them along The Gallops.

EAST CLANDON VILLAGE.

Hatchlands was owned by the National Trust but not open to the public. They rented it to MAJOR HARGREAVES who was a Queens Messenger. His wife ran a private girls school in the house. The girls were mostly foreign and rarely visited the village.

Along the verge in New Road on the Hatchlands boundary were a row of Walnut trees said to have been planted to commemorate the Battle of Waterloo.

The RENDEL ESTATE still owned a lot of houses and land in the village, although in my time I saw them gradually sell off the houses at intervals. FRANK CARPENTER from Send was the estate carpenter and handyman. He had a large workshop shed opposite The Paragon and I used to pop in there to see him and have a cup of tea. The walls were covered in an amazing collection of old tools. He was a mine of information on the village and the people. He had done work in all the estate owned houses. An Agent from London used to come down occasionally, I think the estate was renamed and had been passed to descendants, possibly one being MR HEBELER who lived at Dene Place, West Horsley?? People in the village still called in the Rendel estate.

On one occasion I found FRANK with a bonfire in the garden of Lucerne Cottage, one of the estate owned cottages, where the occupant MR GROVER had just died. He was clearing out the house and burning stuff. There was a pile of framed photographs showing the visits to the village of MR GLADSTONE the Victorian Prime Minister. He was a friend of the then occupier of Hatchlands. One photograph was of GLADSTONE standing in the road outside the church with a large bell resting on the ground, presumably waiting to be rehung. Another photograph was of a visit to the school on one of Queen Victoria's jubilees.

The school closed in 1968 and the children went to West Clandon, among them several from Langford Cross. My son was friendly with GRAHAM SHUELL who lived opposite the church and WALDO GRIFFITHS from Back Lane. The school house remained empty for some years until sold to a property developer.

Langford Cross Children's Home still had "Alexandra Hospital" written on the wall facing Epsom Road. Miss Booth was still running the home at that time, a strong minded lady but not strong on discipline. There were probably about 10 children mostly orphans from London. Some of the children were adopted or fostered out to families. I think one in East and a couple in West.

In The Paragon Cottages lived LAURA VILLASANTE and ALF NORMAN. ALF was around 88 when I knew him. He was born in West Clandon in 1885 then moved to East where his Dad was a farm labourer. ALF got his first job at 12 on a local farm. He was paid sixpence a day and the farmer told him "walk all the fields and pick up every stick that has two ends"! I gather this was to prevent them being ploughed in. ALF died in 1978 aged 93.

LAURA'S father was a Spaniard from Madrid who was senior Spanish lecturer at King's College, London. They lived in West Horsley and LAURA was a Land Girl in WW2. When she retired she moved to The Paragon and died in 1983. She was a spinster and a rather eccentric lady but made a good cup of tea.

DICK CLAYDON lived in Tunmore Farm. He owned Connaught Cars at Burnt Common, builders of racing cars in the 1950/60's. He also owned a civil engineering firm laying cables under roads. His

cream coloured lorries were a familiar site on Surrey roads usually parked by the side of holes in the road.

BILL HILL lived in Victoria cottage. He had served in the Guards in WW1 and he told me he went to France having only fired 5 rounds from his rifle in practice. A shortage of ammunition was the reason. Fortunately he was a gamekeeper so knew how to shoot. He was the former landlord with his wife AUGUSTA of The Queens Head, after him his son took over the tenancy. It was a quiet pub with no passing trade and his son ran a business, (gardening I think), to supplement his income. The pub had a hitching rail outside the front and on several occasions I saw horses tied to it whilst the riders popped in for a drink. The front door opened straight out onto the tarmac abutting the road. The pub only seemed to be patronised by the working class villagers. It was owned by the Guildford brewery Friary Meux.

PETER TAYLOR was the rector of both villages, he was an ex officer in the Merchant Navy. As well as Sunday services he used to visit the village on Wednesday and call on as many churchgoers as possible. He also used to cut the grass in the churchyard. He always wore his long black cloak. He moved to Arundel, Sussex after leaving the parish and died a few years ago. The REVEREND THURSFIELD took over from him but was not comfortable as a village priest. He had been an overseas chaplain and a school teacher and told me he felt being a country parson was not for him.

DOUG MAY and his wife lived opposite the church and rang the bells on Sundays and weddings.

In 1969/70 the TV series "Catweazle" was filmed in the village. The BBC took over Home Farm as their base and had a mobile canteen in the yard with constant food and drink. They were only too happy to supply tea to any local passing. Opposite the farm and down towards the railway bridge was a large oak tree in which they constructed the tree house used in the series. It remained there for several years after the crew had left and slowly fell down gradually.

The footpath from Back Lane to West Clandon was well used especially after the LINDSAY'S closed the Post Office. The fitter locals walked the path to West Clandon Post Office and in the summer some children used it to walk to school. Some people at West Clandon church agreed to transport elderly East villagers to the West Post Office if required. I always rode my cycle to East along the main road then returned along the footpath.

In 1967 there was a nationwide outbreak of foot and mouth disease. My Sergeant and colleagues from Horsley had to go round posting prohibition notices on all the entrances to footpaths and farms. The Ministry put down disinfectant baths for those requiring access to wash their footwear in.

The villages hasn't changed much except for alterations to some of the barns, extensions to the backs of houses and the alterations to the front area of the pub and provision of parking. In my time there was very little interaction between the moneyed people and those who were working class, apart from some of the latter doing gardening or working as daily's for the former. There was little if any crime. One villager who worked as a gardener at one of the large village houses was a poacher. He was caught by one of FORTE'S under keepers and I summonsed him to Court at the keeper's insistence where he was fined. It didn't stop him though!!

PETER DAVIES,
2019