

## VILLAGE ECHOES

### Goudhurst & Kilndown Local History Society - 60 YEARS OLD

This year the Goudhurst & Kilndown Local History Society celebrates its 60<sup>th</sup> Birthday. This is a snapshot of life in that year in our two Villages and beyond.

Just to jog your memory, if you are of a certain age, in 1964 the Labour Party were elected in October, the Daily Herald newspaper was replaced by The Sun in September which was also when the Forth Road Bridge opened. 'Beatle Mania' went into overdrive and the Tokyo Olympics took place in October with Richard Meade and Ann Packer being amongst the British gold medallists.

Flared trousers and bell bottoms appeared in 1964 as an alternative to capri pants, and led the way to the hippie period introduced in the 1960s. Bell bottoms were usually worn with chiffon blouses, polo-necked ribbed sweaters or tops that bared the midriff.



Back in Goudhurst and Kilndown the Vicar, Rev. Wyndham Johnson recounted that the Kilndown members were in the Top Ten of the Women's' Institute Community Singing Competition for the whole of West Kent. The Horticultural Society was organising an outing to Peter Scott's Wild Fowl Trust at Slimbridge and that the Vicar had attended a lunch in Maidstone to mark the end of Mr. Hussey's reign as High Sheriff of Kent. He fraternised with guests such as the Bishop of Dover, the Goudhurst author Richard Church and Dame Edith Evans, also one of our local residents.

A busy three months followed with a meeting of Goudhurst All Arts Club showing a film of Imperial Russia made in 1890, followed by girls from the Legat Ballet School (at Finchcocks) performing. Southern Television was in attendance to record Kilndown Church congregation and choir processing through sheep to sing at the isolated Church of Fairfield on Romney Marsh. Forty members of the Victorian Society visited Christ Church, which is considered of national importance. It is apparently known as the Mecca of Ecclesiologists.

The death was announced of Frederick John Nelmes the first Head Forester of Bedgebury Forest, formed in 1919. He retired after 50 years' service, when he was given the British Empire Medal. Also that year brought news of the usual Harvest Festival celebrations and reported that Tunbridge Wells Male Voice Choir gave a concert in Christ Church in aid of the Organ Fund. Afterwards choir and audience went to the Globe and Rainbow for free-for-all-singing. No doubt helped by a few drinks. Talking of which, the Vicar was in the habit of inviting new residents to the parish for a Harvest Sherry Party in the vicarage. On this occasion eighty newcomers attended.

In other news that year, the death was announced of Hubert Joseph Benians who was born in Curtisden Green and became a noted architect and a leading figure in the community.

Among his many works in Goudhurst was the restoration of the Church Tower and the erection of the War Memorial.

The Vicar acknowledged with thanks the gift of new gates to the Churchyard from Mr & Mrs Groves and family of Lambkin Farm, Horsmonden. They were made and fitted by Mr Hatch who was also thanked for the trouble he took to obtain the right furnishings and fittings.

At the Parish Meeting in Goudhurst on March 23<sup>rd</sup> Mr Large outlined an attempt to cure the leak in the pond. Also on the agenda, Mr Len Pierce raised the question of various items of historic interest, which should be preserved, mentioning especially a milestone and the Monk's Causeway, a pathway believed to run from the Church to Combwell Priory \*. It was suggested that a Goudhurst Historical Society might be formed to carry this out. Several people present promised to become members and Mr Pierce said he would be pleased to act as Secretary. The Vicar agreed to publicise this in the Parish Magazine and suggest that anyone interested should let Mr Pierce know and if there is enough support an initial meeting could be convened.

At the next Parish meeting Mr Pierce reported on another item of historical interest that should be preserved safely, a document entitled 'Paid for Mending Ye Beaconpot 3d'. This was a bill for rebuilding the Church Tower in 1638. It was agreed to convene a meeting to form an official History Society, which subsequently took place on July 6<sup>th</sup> when the officials were appointed by thirty-six attendees. Mr Hedley Vickers of Jetwells became the Chairman, Miss Barnard of Glebe House Vice-Chairman and Mr L Pierce of 1 Hunts Lane the Secretary. In addition, there was a treasurer, an archivist and a Kilndown representative. It was further decided that the first meeting would be on Tuesday November 3<sup>rd</sup> with Dr Felix Hull, the County Archivist, as the speaker. All comers were welcomed in the Church Rooms at 7.45pm. Fifty-five people were recorded.



The Animals topped the charts in July 1964. Yes, this is all history now!

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[www.goudhurstlocalhistorysociety.org](http://www.goudhurstlocalhistorysociety.org)