

"THE PARISH MAGAZINE FOR ALBURY AND ST. MARTHA" dated December 1897 (price one penny) contains the first instalment (in very small type) of the Notes and Recollections of Newdigate Burne entitled:

ALBURY PAST AND PRESENT

As these memoirs (in the relaxed prose of the time) are likely to be of interest to all parishioners, extracts will be included in this and some future issues of the Parish News.

Newdigate Burne was in charge of the congregation of the Catholic Apostolic Church in Albury.

His first chapter concerns local roads and railways. (He calls the latter rail roads - and spells Farley Heath, Farleigh).

In speaking of our general landscape, we might well have included the roads, especially the railroad, which is a prominent feature in every country view in England, with the long tails of white steam following behind the trains, and their distant rumble drawing attention to the ceaseless activity of our population, and the immensity of our commerce.

To lie on the green sward on the top of St. Martha's Hill on a summer's day is interesting, not only on account of the glorious view of hill and dale, stream and lakelet it affords, but to watch these serpentine trains of loaded vehicles coming from east and west in constant and regular succession.

Good roads are doubtless a distinct evidence of civilisation. They promote neighbourly intercourse; they enable us to see a world beyond our own noses. The savage tribes in the interior of Africa have no roads - the wandering Arabs have no roads, and only the elements of civilisation - the Australian natives, the lowest type of the uncivilised have no roads - the hill tribes on the north-west frontier of India have no roads - they regard as enemies all who live beyond their own borders, and raid murder and rapine seem to be the main objects of their existence. I hope we shall make some roads for them before we say "goodbye"!

Sixty years ago - yes, and less than that - we had no such thing as a railroad through the parish; but then we were a quiet people and our repose had not been thoroughly broken by the many interventions which have since revolutionised our habits. Sometimes one almost longs for the quiet time; but one cannot put back the clock. Growth, increase, progress. Such is God's Eternal Plan, and to disregard it, is to be left behind in the race, and to lose the many advantages and blessings which go far to counter-balance the personal discomfort of all this heat and pressure.

If, as I have said, good roads are an evidence of civilisation, then I think we Albury people may pat one another on the back, and "wash our hands without soap" in self-satisfaction, for we have splendid roads, thanks first to the Roman occupation, then to the waywardens of former days, later on to the crushing and levelling effects of the steam roller, and now to the vigilance of our almost brand-new Parish and County Councils.

Without roads we could not go to Church or to the market, or have easy intercourse with one another.

The roads claim our first attention. Sixty years ago our roads to Guildford were up by Newland's Corner, and over the Downs - a mere cart track, such as it remains to this day. Another entering by the gate opposite Weston House and coming into the track below Newland's Corner, entered Guildford down the steep hill past the old semaphore, (the house still stands from which the semaphore signals coming up from Portsmouth were passed on to London - the great events

of the past century, the French Revolution, the battles of Trafalgar and Waterloo, and so forth, brought over by sailing vessels to the coast, were passed on to London by these great swinging wooden arms, and thence all over the land until the invention of electric telegraph).

The lower road to Guildford was then only in existence in part, and was often inundated to such an extent at Shalford and by the Chilworth ponds (then called Magnays, after Sir William Magnay, a Lord Mayor of London, who lived at Postford, when I first knew Albury) that communication with Guildford by this route was uncertain and dangerous.

The narrow bit of road running round from Vale Cottage by the Paper Mills was a private one, and the Proprietor of the mills had a gate at the Vale Cottage end, which he often closed in order to maintain the right - but necessity and long use, must either have softened his heart, or given a sort of prescriptive right to the public, for the gate was long since removed, and until the new cut was made on the south side of the larger ponds, it was in general use, though often times the scene of accidents and awkward predicaments on dark nights, or two bulky vehicles had the misfortune to meet midway.

This bit of road joining the rise up to Postford, was made in 1874/5, and those who remember the difficulties of the old way, it has proved one of the greatest improvements to our neighbourhood.

The new road referred to in our last number, was made by Mr. Drummond after the consecration of the new Parish Church in October, 1842. The outline of the old road from Brook may still be traced across the Heath, down past the keeper's lodge to the stream, where it joined the "street" from Weston (as the present Albury village was then called) which entered at the present gate of the Lodge garden, and on to the "Little George" Inn. At this Inn (kept by Richard Jarlet in 1800) Mr. Cardale told me he put up his horse and chaise on first coming to Albury in the year 1832.

Thence it turned up, and by a devious course came out into the main road close to where the Model Farm now stands - a branch road came up from the "George," passed through the stable-yard of the Grange, on behind John Frost's Cottage and coming out also by Sherbourne. This road is in the recollection of many now living.

Then about sixty years ago or a little more (I am not absolutely sure if this comes within the range of the Queen's reign, but it is not far off) there were no bridges over the Tillingbourne, either by the Park Lodge or the Rectory; people had to drive through the stream, and walk over a log for a footway, as at the "Chantry Bridge" at Shere, and as it used to be at the Gomshall Mill. There was a bridge built in 1793 by the Hon. William Clement Finch (who then had Albury Park) over the stream at the foot of the old road leading up to the "Little George," and passing by Cook's Place (now the Grange) as mentioned before.

Now we are so awfully refined and luxurious. Our horses mustn't wet their feet poor things, and we have to pay the piper too in big rates.

What changes we have seen! These tracks - for they were little better - superseded by good macadamized roads. What would people say now if they were thumped and bumped over the boulders that were laid down forty, even thirty years ago, and less, for our post horses feet to hammer in and our carriage and cart wheels to level? And yet people grumble, (as is the nature of Britians) and our bicycle friends are become so dainty and exacting in the manner of good roads, that I verily believe they will soon expect the Parish Council to provide footmen in livery with brooms to sweep a path clear for them.

ALBURY PAST AND PRESENT

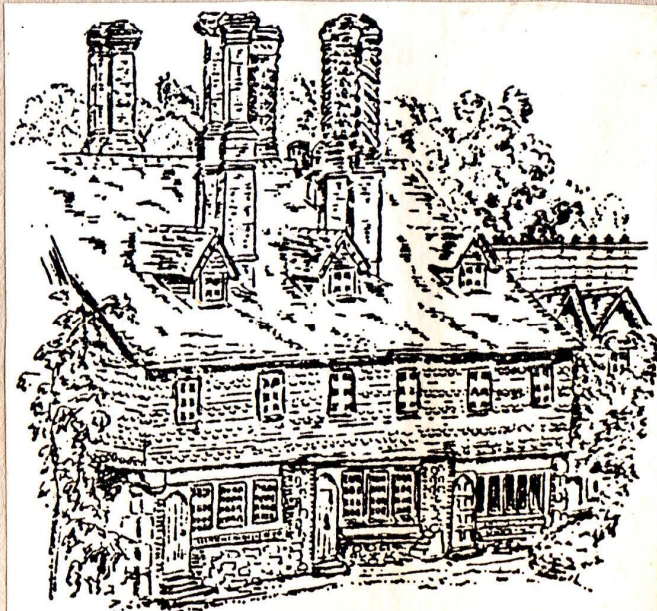
In speaking of our general landscape, we might well have included the roads, especially the railroad, which is a prominent feature in every country view in England, with the long tails of white steam following behind the trains, and their distant rumble drawing attention to the ceaseless activity of our population, and the immensity of our commerce.

To lie on the green sward on the top of St. Martha's Hill on a summer's day is interesting, not only on account of the glorious view of hill and dale, stream and lakelet it affords, but to watch these serpentine trains of loaded vehicles coming from east and west in constant and regular succession.

The oldest road in the place is probably the lane running up from the "Round House" (we used to call it "Windsor Castle" after that pretty rosy-faced Mrs. Windsor who lived there) to Farleigh Heath. Tradition says the Romans made it to get down to the valley for water from their camp at Farleigh. Why shouldn't we call it the "Roman road" or the "Roman way"? Why should it be "Birmingham lane" and "Birmingham farm"? We like Birmingham in its way, and the Brumagen tea-pots and other metal ware we get there so cheap, but we are thankful that it is a good hundred and fifty miles away. Why bring it any nearer?

Now we come to the railroad. First, the railroads and next, the Electric Telegraphs, have been perhaps the greatest factors in the changes brought about in our habits and national life.

Just fifty years ago - in the summer of 1847, the year the line running through this parish was opened - I came to Albury from London for the first time to pay a visit to my



The Street, Albury.

godfather, the Rev. John Hooper, the then Rector. For the fun of the thing, I travelled with a few friends in a third class carriage - we got very little fun out of it however - the third class carriages of those days were mere open trucks with rather deep sides and wooden benches across them, exactly like the coal trucks of the present time; and what with the thumping and bumping every time we stopped, the hard narrow seats, the bad springs, and the horrors of the "middle passage," by which I mean of course the Merstham tunnel, sitting behind a screaming fiery furnace belching out steam and smoke, the noise so deafening that we couldn't hear the sound of one another's shouts, and the meeting an up train midway in the tunnel, which seemed to be coming straight into us - it was an experience one didn't care to have over again!

Look at the third class carriages of to-day, and there you have some idea of the progress in the art of comfortable travelling during the Queen's reign!

Broad Gauge

In 1843, I came from Plymouth to Taunton outside the "Nonpareil" Coach, driven sometimes by Lord Huntingtower. The G.W.R. did not get further from London than Taunton then, and oh, the blissful experience of a first class broad gauge carriage on to Bath, our destination, after crossing Dartmoor, through wind and snow in the month of March.

There were no railways near Albury then; the only way to get to London was to take your chance of a seat in the coaches passing through Guildford, or to post in your own carriage by way of Ripley, Cobham, (where you changed horses) and Esher; if you couldn't afford either, you had to go on Shank's mare, and I know of some old inhabitants of Albury who actually did walk to London more or less frequently, stay a few days, and walk back.

It was some time before railway travelling "took on" with our country folk. Many will remember that fine handsome specimen of an Englishman, Henry Dean, the mole-catcher, who lived at Farley Green. He never went further from the parish than Guildford, or as far as he could follow the hounds (he was at every meet). I recollect his being pressed to go to London by rail; tears came into his eyes, and he said he had "never rode in an engine train, and never could".

By the way, Henry Dean, John Humphreys, the sexton, and Sherlock, the Duke's shepherd, were about the last who continued to wear those picturesque and beautifully stitched white smocks which in the old days were so universal; I think however, Humphreys generally wore a brown one, but it doesn't matter - a smock's a smock for a' that

When the great main lines of rail were opened in the thirties and forties, the companies took on the drivers and guards of the old mail coaches into their service as guard, and fine trusty fellows they were, as indeed their sons and grandsons are to this day. Any Albury mother may with perfect confidence send her baby to Edinburgh or the Land's End in charge of a guard, and he will take as much care of it as if it were his pet kitten..

A journey to London or beyond, when the Queen began to reign, was a business to be thought out and planned days, and even weeks before it came off. Now you get a telegram, say at 8 a.m. and whisk off to London or elsewhere by the 8.40 and think nothing of it.

The Notes and Recollections of Newdigate Burns who was in charge of the congregation of the Catholic Apostolic Church in Albury have proved to be of great interest. (They were originally published in the 1898 Parish Magazines.)

The series continues with Newdigate's consideration (in two parts) of Albury Park.

ALBURY PARK

In the matter of dwelling houses the parish has undergone as great a change (if not greater) than in any other of its outward aspects; almost every house has been built, rebuilt, or considerably altered during the past sixty years.

Look at a view of the Manor House as it appeared some sixty years ago and you will see a perverse mingling of architecture. This was the house that became Mr. Drummond's in 1819. Then recall to your mind's eye, or take a walk and look at the stately dignity of the same house, remodelled and recased in mellow brick work with stone facings as it now stands. This change was carried out first by Mr. Drummond, under Pugin's advice, in the forties, and further improvements both to the elevation (west front) and to the interior, by the Duke of Northumberland, in 1868-9.

Our beautiful Cathedrals and Churches fell into neglect and decay after the great wave of destruction which passed over them under Henry VIII, and our great houses, and still more the Churches, suffered from the strife between King and Parliament in the 17th century; and later on a debased style of architecture was introduced from the continent, under the Orange and Hanoverian dynasties, from which Mr. Pugin may be said to have been the first in England to bring us deliverance.

To Mr. Drummond, therefore, in the first instance, and subsequently to the Duke, we owe the improvement in the architecture of the parish, inaugurated at the Park, and particularly the beautiful chimney stacks of that and other houses, which are quite a feature of the place; notably the circular moulded brick chimneys of various devices at Weston House, the house on this heath now occupied by Mr. Ashford, the Master's house at the new Schools, etc. etc., besides those in another style, though equally fine in their way, at West Dene and Hare Dene.

Brayley and Walford thus, though in other words, sketch the history of the Manor House and its transfer from family to family. In 1327 it appears to have belonged to the family of D'Aubernon and subsequently to have passed to the family of Bray. It is a long jump from 1377 to 1557, when after the death of the second Lord Bray's mother, the estates were divided between her six daughters and co-heiresses. How dreadful! After several transfers it was mortgaged to George Duncumb, Esq., of Weston, who joined in a conveyance of the Manor in trust for

Thomas Earl of Arundel. In 1653 (four years after the execution of King Charles I), it was conveyed to Henry Howard (the grandson of the above Earl Thomas) who became Duke of Norfolk in 1677. This was during the reign of Charles II, who had been restored 17 years earlier. By him the old timber-built Manor House was enlarged, and the park and grounds laid out in a style and character which they yet retain.

Here, I think, we get some clue to the age of the house. If it could be called then the old timber-built house, we may, perhaps, put it back 200 years (you scarcely call 100 years old for a principal House) or about the reign of Edward IV.

The Duke of Norfolk died in the winter of 1683-4, and his son and successor sold the Manor to Heneage Finch, created Earl of Aylesford in 1714. The house was burnt down and rebuilt while in his possession; this was in Queen Anne's reign (1702-14). His descendant Heneage, the fourth Earl, sold it to his brother, Captain, afterwards Admiral, the Hon. Clement Finch.

I suppose we must take the above account of the devolution of the estate as correct, but I really can't say as I wasn't there at the time. The most certain and satisfactory part of its history to us, however, is that which dates from Mr. Samuel Thornton, to whom it was sold after Admiral Finch's death in 1794, to the present time. Mr. Thornton was Governor of the Bank of England and M.P. of Hull.

Then in 1811 it passed by purchase to Mr. Chas. Baring Wall, and from his widow it was purchased by Mr. Henry Drummond.

Manning and Bray tell us that one of the first public-spirited things, Mr. Thornton did was to widen and make the road (previously only a cart track) from Shere to Newland's Corner, in the way to Guildford, at his own expense, a thing long wanted for the public accommodation. It cost him £250 in money, representing a much larger sum in those days than now, besides the labour of his servants, horses, and teams. At the General Election in 1807 he was chosen for the County.

Mr. Thornton made considerable alterations in the house in the beginning of this century, not for the better, I opine, in its outward aspect, judging from the strange medley of classic and domestic something. What there was of beauty further west, he must have spoiled by that north front with those coupled Ionic Pilasters.

West Side Story

Among the many improvements made by Mr. Drummond was the one which places the principal entrance in the west front, surrounding it with a courtyard entered under a handsome archway, and a new gate, equally to be admired for its solidity and handsome design, and the delicate way in which it is hung, so that a child may swing it open.

In connection with this gateway, I must here relate a thrilling incident as told to me by the late Mr. Caird, who was living at the park at the time. He was returning from the village rather late one very dark night, and had just got inside the lodge gates, when he was accosted by an ill-looking footpad with a dark lantern and a "life-preserver", who also seized and pinned his arms and demanded his watch and money. "How can I give you either", said Mr. Caird quietly, "if you hold me like that?" The fellow let him go, expecting this kind, harmless looking gentleman to hand them over to him; whereupon Mr. Caird struck him a tremendous blow in the face with his umbrella, and set off to the house as hard as his legs would carry him. Once inside the courtyard he knew he would be safe if only the gates were open, and he did not think the usual hour had come for closing and fastening them. On and on he went - his feet had never carried him faster - followed by this rascal (a younger man) who appeared to be rapidly gaining upon him. It was too dark to see a yard before him, but on reaching the point where the two roads diverge, one to the house and the other to the stables, he felt the time had come to make one supreme effort for his life. He did so, closely followed by this man, when, in a moment, crash went his head against the ponderous yew gate which had just been closed; stars and fireworks flashed across his eyeballs; he

fell to the ground, stunned, giving himself up for lost. At this moment he awoke, and found it was a D-R-E-A-M!

Altogether the house, though perhaps somewhat sombre and monastic in its character, is a thing of beauty and dignity with its circular and twisted chimneys of moulded brick; its oriel, stone mulioned and dormer windows; the finely broken outline of its north front; its handsome octagonal corner buttresses, and the heightened west front which the Duke added to it in 1867-8. It is a fine exterior.

Some of the books speak of a tower which Mr. Drummond built. I suppose they mean that projection standing upon open arches on the north front, and forming a garden entrance from the library. This was a fine addition, which adds to the picturesque break in the outline of the lengthy north front. Those are fine windows lighting the dining room, but so well proportioned to the whole that they appear much smaller than they really are.

It is an impertinence to go inside any house but one's own without permission, and therefore any description of the interior is beyond the limit I have fixed for myself in these papers, but perhaps I may be permitted to mention that during His Grace's improvements and decoration of the house in the sixties, some encaustic flooring was discovered beneath the dining room, which seemed to point to its early monastic character as the probable refectory for which the fine proportions of the room would seem so well to fit it. But here we should be launching into the dangerous sphere of probability and conjecture which is not history.

John Evelyn

The books are very fond of quoting Cobbet on Albury Park and Gardens, as if it required a Cobbet or anybody else in particular to tell us "the Park and the Gardens were the prettiest he had ever seen". Thus far we are all Cobbets though I don't think the expression "pretty" comes up to the mark in this connection. The Gardens are simply delightful, combining as they do so much of the simplicity of natural growth, with the formality (away from the house) of two grand terrace walks, one under the shade of the famous Sylva Wood and a South wall with its thousands of nail holes more than 200 years old, and another beneath an umbrageous yew hedge, both upwards of quarter of a mile in length. Think of these when planned and planted by Evelyn in 1657. The wood with its small saplings and rows of stiff little pines, the wall brand new, and the hedge formed of a line of Yew sticks two or three feet high, and look at them now!