



THE VILLAGE VOICE

THE NEWSLETTER OF ONSLOW VILLAGE RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION – ISSUE TWENTY FIVE JULY 2011

ONSLow VILLAGE'S HIDDEN HISTORY

The Story of the Village Farm and Farmhouse

by Angela Joule

During the research of this article so much fascinating information came to light that it is to be published in two sections. The first part deals with the factual history of the farm and farmhouse. The second section will cover the reminiscences of the building's occupants, past and present.

Many people now living in Onslow Village may not be aware of Wilderness Farmhouse, a splendid half-timbered and tile-hung Grade 2 listed building, tucked away as it is behind the parade of shops in The Square.

On your way to Onslow Village Tennis Club you get a good view of its southern side. This elevation is, in fact, the original frontage to the complex of buildings which once formed a single dwelling. As you walk up the path between the shops and Wilderness Court flats you see what was the rear of the original property.

The story of the house goes back a long way – but just how far?

To find some answers on how and why it came to be built, it is necessary to look at how the surrounding area was once used.

Like many parts in this area of the country, vast tracts formed part of the Royal Forest of Windsor.

deer park. The park itself was purchased from Charles I in approximately 1628 by the Earl of Annandale, who belonged to an old Scottish dynasty descended from Robert the Bruce. He gradually turned the park to agricultural use, leasing it out in parcels of land to tenant farmers, many of whom moved down from Scotland.

After the death of the 2nd Earl of Annandale, the land passed through several owners until 1709 when the Onslow family acquired it. By that time it was known as Guildford Park Estate and three farms were already established, one being Wilderness Farm, covering some 600 acres. Stretching right up onto the Hog's Back, the entrance to the farm was known as The Drive, the name surviving to this day. The farm was leased to a tenant farmer named Bicknell who used the "night soil" from the town's latrine pits to fertilise his fields. The Onslow family owned the park until the early 20th century when the land was sold to Onslow Village Ltd for development.

A Bronze Age cremation urn was found in a field on the farm in 1781. It has since been lost but a sketch of it was published in a book of 1801 and is reproduced in Helen Chapman Davies's book *Guildford's Hidden History*. In the 18th century a leaden urn was dug up at the foot of an old yew tree on the farm. It contained a pickled heart, preserved in spirit. This was a Catholic practice and Helen



The lane to Wilderness Farm viewed from The Crossways, just before construction of Onslow Village commenced in 1920. The farmhouse is just visible amongst the trees.

Part of the initial development of the original Onslow Village, which commenced in 1920, included houses in Bannisters Road and an orchard was developed in what became Orchard Road. The estate ended at that point and from there up to Queen Eleanor's Road were fields which were part of Wilderness Farm and farmed by Mr Pinniger.

A Mr Weaver, a farmer from Somerset, came to Guildford with Mr Napper and later took over the farm from Mr Pinniger although the date is uncertain. He transported his entire farm, including livestock and farm equipment from Somerset to Guildford by train! He also farmed Manor Farm on the opposite side of the A3, part of which now forms the new University sports and accommodation complex and takes its name from that farm. Farmer Weaver lived in the farmhouse on Manor Farm.

The farm buildings of Wilderness Farm occupied a large area of land approximately at the junction of present day Wilderness Road and Orchard Road. The farm consisted of several barns and a wooden building forming a pair of

During his reign in the latter part of the 12th century, Henry II increased the size of the forest, which spread south from Windsor Castle and the present Windsor Great Park to what is now the Berkshire/Surrey border, following the Thames south to join the River Wey, to Guildford. The crest of the Hog's Back (Green Lane) formed the southern limit as far as Tongham.

In 1154, at the start of his reign, Henry II created Guildford Park in the south-east corner of the Great Forest as a medieval deer park for royal hunting, and what is now Onslow Village falls within this area.

The deer park also included a rabbit warren, with the earliest written evidence to mention a warren in England made in 1226, but by 1600 no further reference is made, so probably it no longer existed by then. The large-scale farming of rabbits for their skins and meat was widespread from Saxon and Norman times through to the Tudor age.

The building that stood on the site of Wilderness Farmhouse may well have originally been either the Warrener's house or an outlying hunting lodge for the

Chapman Davies suggests that this may have been the heart of Prince Henry, son of Edward I and Eleanor of Castile, who died in Guildford Castle in 1274 at the age of six. His casket was shown around the country in the years after his death and the Dominican Friary in Guildford was probably established in his memory.

Another version, recorded in 1976 by Professor Alan Crocker of the University of Surrey, was that it might have belonged to Sir Anthony Browne, 1st Viscount Montague, a Catholic keeper of Guildford Park from 1553 to 1572. The theory is that it had been moved from the Friary when that building was demolished early in the 17th century. The professor did not rule out the possibility that there had been a house on the site in the 16th century.

The first recorded mention of the farmhouse in its present form is in a document of 1724. A study by the Domestic Buildings Research Group (Surrey) argues that what is now the eastern wing (currently No 1, nearest The Square) was a timber-framed central chimney house, probably constructed in the mid 17th century with Georgian features added later.



A photograph of Wilderness Farmhouse that appears in one of the original prospectuses for Onslow Village issued in the 1920s.

semi-detached cottages, alongside which was a duck pond. Mr Butcher, the farm's cowman, occupied one half with his family and Mr Napper, who was the milkman, and his wife, occupied the other. Both wives worked in the dairy.

When Onslow Village Ltd was formed in the 1920s, Jonathan Reading's grandfather Jack Box and grandmother Florence were able to rent No 1, the old part of the farmhouse, which had been newly divided, whilst his great uncle Charles and his wife bought No 2. Jonathan is still a resident of Onslow Village and has been kind enough to contribute recollections of his time as a child spent living in the farmhouse. These will be published in the next issue of the Village Voice, due out at the end of October.

My thanks to Helen Chapman Davies for her kind permission in allowing me to use information from her book "Guildford's Hidden History." In compiling this article every effort has been made to check the accuracy of information, however, as parts of the research are based on people's recollections, this may not always be historically accurate. No part of the article may be reproduced in any form without prior permission from the author.

OVRA's Tuesday Talks

Our most recent talk was entitled *The History of Guildford House* and covered its 350 years of history, its owners, and also the major exhibitions that have taken place there over the last 30 years. The speaker was Iris Hawkins who used to be the curator.

The building has many fine architectural features and once covered a much larger area, including the site where the library now stands; this used to be the extensive stable area. During the early 1990s the gallery was closed for a number of years, as structural damage was discovered. As a result, the insides were filled with scaffold and among other works carried out, ornate ceilings were reattached.

Recently the Tourist Office has relocated from Tunsgate and is now in the front of Guildford House and the shop has moved into the Brew House. The café is still in the kitchen area and is an excellent place to meet and have a snack!

Although it's not clear from the current signage, the gallery is still in place and it is well worth a visit.

The next talk

We take a break during August, so our next talk will be on 13th September when Julian Pooley from Surrey History Centre will give an illustrated talk entitled *Owen Manning, William Bray and the Writing of Surrey's County History 1760-1832*. Doors open at 7.15pm when complimentary refreshments will be served and the talk begins at 7.45pm. Entry is free for members and £3 for non-members. Please bring along your membership card.

We look forward to seeing you there!

COMMUNITY NOTICE BOARD

If you would like to tell Onslow Village residents about your group's forthcoming events, or issues that might interest them, please email mdk-ovra@ntlworld.com or ring 07720 945430.

Next copy date: 11th October for publication end October/early November.

RECYCLING NEWS

Recycling in Surrey

Surrey County Council has recently produced a leaflet, asking residents to make the most of the county's Recycling Centres.

Where does my recycling go?

- Garden waste is turned into compost for use on farmland
- Engine oil is used to make heating fuel
- TVs and fridges are dismantled so the parts can be recycled
- Clean timber is turned into wood chips to make new board products
- Carpet is turned into fuel and used for cement kilns
- Black bags are used to create energy in the form of electricity and heat

Materials SCC sites accept:

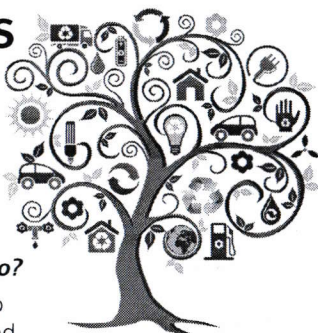
- Fire extinguishers, gas bottles, household & garden chemicals
- Mixed textiles & clothes, tapes & discs, stamps, spectacles, engine oil filters, plastic bottles, large appliances, fridges & freezers, batteries, TVs & monitors, mobile phones, fluorescent tubes, mixed paper & card, glass jars & bottles, household waste
- Garden waste, scrap metal, food & drink cans, foil
- Used engine oil, car batteries, soil, wood & timber, hardcore & rubble

You may have to prove you are a Surrey resident as Surrey residents pay for these sites

Many items can be reused from the house, garage and garden and there is a "reuse container" where these items can be left. If you are unsure if your item can be reused you can always ask the site staff who will be happy to help.

Construction waste (wood and timber, plaster board and hardcore and rubble) cannot be taken free of charge to a site unless it is only a small amount and is in a car.

Top Tip



PH Productions Presents... A LITTLE NIGHT MUSIC

THE YVONNE ARNAUD THEATRE, GUILDFORD

Wednesday 31st August – Saturday 3rd September 2011

PH Productions presents a revamped version of last year's sell-out Mill Studio production of *A Little Night Music*.

Based on Ingmar Bergman's film, *Smiles of a Summer Night*, *A Little Night Music* is a witty musical set in waltz time. The action takes place in a weekend country house in turn-of-the-century Sweden, where surprising liaisons, long-simmering passions and a taste of love's endless possibilities are all brought to light. Featuring the well-known songs *Send in the Clowns*, *A Weekend in the Country* and *Everyday a Little Death*, and with a cast and orchestra numbering more than 35, this musical treat is not to be missed!

This amateur production is presented by arrangement with Josef Weinberger Limited on behalf of Music Theatre International of New York.

Music and Lyrics by Stephen Sondheim

Director: Victoria Jukes

Musical Director/Executive Producer: Alex Parker



RED RIDING HOOD

ONSLOW VILLAGE HALL, ONSLOW VILLAGE

Performances 20th and 21st January 2012

All the traditional ingredients for a thoroughly entertaining evening for all ages.

Two young people (16+ preferred) still to be cast. Help behind the scenes and front of house very welcome.

If interested please contact (01483) 502433 or e-mail j.c.271@phonecoop.coop for more details.

Keep your keys safe

Surrey Police are warning householders not to leave keys...

A SPRUCE UP FOR THE ARBORETUM

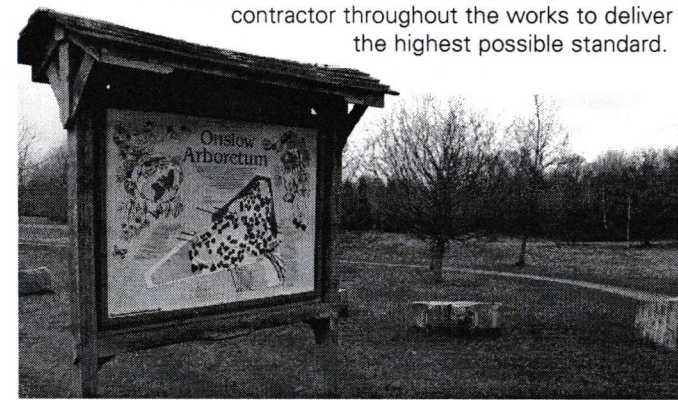
Phil Truluck, who is a Trees & Woodland Officer for Guildford Borough Council, has been in touch to let us know about a scheme of works being undertaken to improve the Arboretum.

All of the works are being carried out to improve access around the site, the aesthetics, and above all the health and establishment of the trees. The works include:

- Crown lifting over paths and opening up entrances. Where possible, the foliage overhanging pathways on both sides will be pruned to form an archway – this really applies to the avenues of limes near the Manor Way entrance
- Releasing specimen trees from surrounding self-sown or sucker trees
- Removal of competing vegetation from around the base of trees
- Formative pruning: removal of crossing branches and 'singling' trees to promote the strongest individual stems where necessary
- Removal of dead wood
- Removal of dead trees and grinding stumps
- Re-positioning of some of the art benches

Chippings generated from the removed trees will be used as mulch to aid the establishment of recently planted trees.

Mr Truluck says he will be working closely with the contractor throughout the works to deliver the highest possible standard.



Playground Problems?

Broken glass is, unfortunately, a perennial problem on the playground. It is one of 37 play facilities that Guildford Borough Council manages and maintains and it is inspected at least once a week to ensure it is clean and safe to use. If you see any vandalism onsite please do call the Parks Helpdesk or Ranger

Sorting your recyclable materials from general waste before you arrive will cut down the time you spend on site. Centres can get very busy at the weekends between mid-morning and mid-afternoon and on bank holidays, so either avoid these times or please be patient and expect queues at peak periods.

To ask questions about recycling, open times and sites, or to obtain a leaflet please contact SCC on 01306 748300, email surrey@sita.co.uk or visit www.surreycc.gov.uk/recycling.

For further information on any of the above please contact Lesley on 01483 533762.

keys on show or store them by the front door following an attempted burglary at a property in Guildford.

The front door was forced open and car and house keys left hanging by the front door were taken but no attempt was made to steal the vehicle as the offenders appear to have been disturbed.

Sergeant Joseph Jones of Guildford Safer Neighbourhood Team said: "Most thieves are opportunistic. Do not leave house or car keys close to doors and take them with you upstairs when you go to bed. Always double lock your front door and do not leave keys in door locks."

Oakleaf Enterprise Aids Recovery

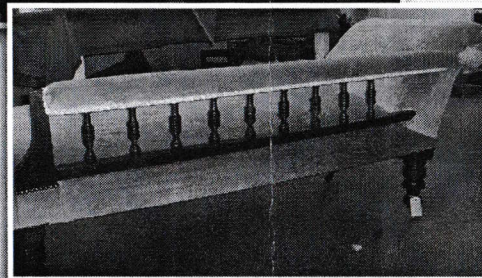
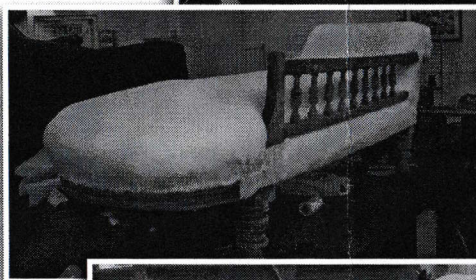
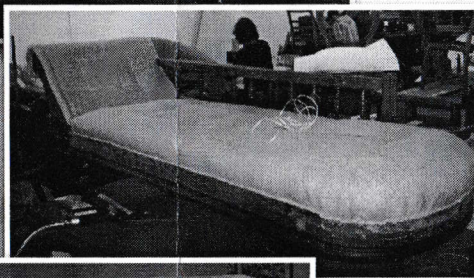
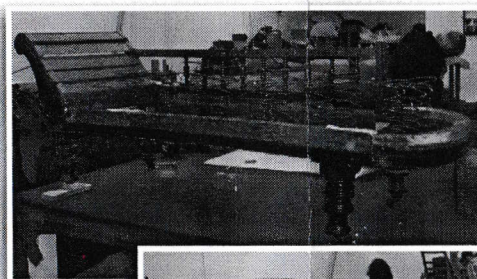
They say charity begins at home, so we are pleased to highlight the work of a local organization based in Walnut Tree Close, that not only helps its clients, but also provides a useful service to the public.

Over the course of a year, one in four people will experience a mental illness, so it's more than likely that you know someone who has suffered. Oakleaf exists for people when they have nowhere else to turn. As well as offering counselling and an employment service, we provide vocational training in IT, packing, horticulture and upholstery so our clients can gain a qualification, build up their self-confidence, make friends, return to employment and ultimately reclaim their lives. The charity acts as a social enterprise, which means that we can offer quality services at competitive prices to the public.

Along with a group of willing students, our horticulture team can do anything from general garden maintenance to complete garden design and everything in-between. You needn't put off inviting friends over any longer, as we can re-energise your garden.

Similarly, our upholstery department is full of talented people who love to re-cover old, tired-looking pieces of furniture for customers: these photographs show the transformation of a battered old chaise longue to a thing of beauty and comfort once more.

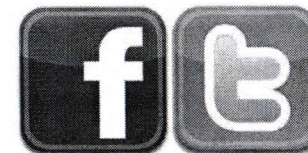
So if you have a set of dining chairs, campervan seats or even a chaise longue that need a bit of TLC, get in touch with us on 01483 303649 or info@oakleaf-enterprise.org. You can also visit www.oakleaf-enterprise.org for further details.



member of staff out sooner to resolve the problem.

OVRA on Facebook & Twitter

Don't forget you can follow us on Facebook and Twitter and receive updates about all our events and news affecting Onslow Village. Just search for "Onslow Village Residents' Association" on Facebook, and on Twitter, find us at http://twitter.com/OVRA_ (Take care to include the underscore or you'll be following someone quite different!).



Comments/views/suggestions

OVRA is your Association, so if you'd like to suggest ideas for talks or events; offer to help with deliveries or at events; or there's an issue you think the committee might help with, please get in touch. Write to the OVRA Secretary, 68 High View Road, Guildford GU2 7RU or email ovrasec@googlemail.com.

Do you know of an OVRA member who would like a large-print version of the Village Voice?

We'd like to be able to offer this as an option to our members, so we need to know how many people would be interested. If you or someone you know would be likely to take up this offer, please let us know by returning the form below to OVRA, 17 Friars Gate, Guildford GU2 7PQ.

Large-print Village Voice

I would be interested in receiving a copy of a large-print version of the Village Voice if and when it becomes available.

Name:

Address:

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