

August 2021

Issue number 4

Ewhurst History Society Journal



Welcome to issue number 4 of the Ewhurst History Society Journal. In June we were able to go on an outing on the Wey and Arun Canal, our first group activity since Lockdown. Sue Willis has written an account of the trip for the Journal.

Local people were shocked and saddened by the devastating fire at the Windmill Inn on 20 July. This is actually the second time the pub has burnt down, so my first note is about the fire of 1906. I have also written a longer article about Lady Allen of Hurtwood and her work promoting the importance of play in child development.

Two of our members have recently published local history books. Joy Horn has taken three names from her book *Cranleigh Road Names* and tells us about the men they were named after. Roger Nash, who is also the chairman of Rudgwick Preservation Society, gave us a talk about the Cokelers a few years ago and has now written a book on the subject entitled *Dependant Brethren of Sussex and Surrey, a History of the Cokelers*.

		Page
Sue Willis	London's Lost Route to the Sea	2
Janet Balchin	History Repeats Itself – The Fire at the Windmill Inn	4
Janet Balchin	Lady Allen of Hurtwood	8
Joy Horn	Three Makers of Modern Cranleigh	14
Roger Nash	Ewhurst's Cokeler Neighbours	16

We would like to publish the next edition in the New Year and hope that members will be able to contribute. Although we hope to keep a strong local slant, we are looking for articles on a wide range of historical subjects – social history, family history, industrial history, antiques and collecting, places to visit, and anything off the beaten track or quirky. 'Local' history could be about Surrey, Sussex or even somewhere you have been on holiday!

If you have an idea for an article (500 – 1,000 words + a few illustrations) please get in touch with the editor at janet.balchin@googlemail.com

LONDON'S LOST ROUTE TO THE SEA

By Sue Willis

Having had so many talks and meetings cancelled over the past year history society members were finally able to meet up as a select group of 15 for a short cruise on the Wey & Arun canal, organised by Hazel Munro.

Wednesday June 30th was one of those rare days this summer with no rain and we met at the Loxwood Canal Centre clutching our packed lunches with the Trust kindly providing a thermos of hot water with tea and coffee on each - suitably distanced - table.

As everybody knew each other there was immediate rearrangement of the tables with friends wanting to sit together - understandable after so long in isolation.

The barge master (skipper?) David Arnold introduced himself, gave us a quick safety briefing and mentioned that his daughter has just moved to Ewhurst, which was a nice connection!

Our boat, the electrically powered 'Wiggonholt', the biggest of the Canal Trust's three boats and named after a small village in Sussex, was cast off by the crew, volunteers with the Trust, and we cruised east towards Brewhurst Lock which is higher at one end as the canal was lowered by 6 ft. for the building of the Loxwood road crossing. To save money the lower gates were not altered but the final cost of that project was £1.85 million.



The next lock, Baldwin's Knob, was restored between 1993 and 1995. Knob is an old Sussex word for a small hill and Mr. Baldwin was probably a local farmer. This lock holds 60,000 gallons of water. The crew jumped out and did all the work while we watched the water disappear amazingly fast!



The lock gates were left open for our return journey and we turned in the 'winding hole' before Barnsill Bridge.

It was an interesting and enjoyable afternoon in weather much kinder than we anticipated, no umbrellas required! Our thanks to David Arnold, Graham Healy and one more volunteer, who was not wearing his name badge!



HISTORY REPEATS ITSELF - THE FIRE AT THE WINDMILL INN

By Janet Balchin

On Tuesday 20 July 2021 the Windmill Inn on Pitch Hill suffered a devastating fire. However, this is not the first time the inn has suffered a fire, as a previous building burnt down on 7 November 1906.



The Surrey Advertiser reported: "The Windmill Inn Ewhurst, at the foot of Pitch Hill, was destroyed by fire on Wednesday morning. At about 1.30 a.m. the tenant, Mr Samuel Saunders, was aroused by the noise of exploding bottles and found that egress by means of the staircase was cut off by the flames, which had already a firm hold of the building. Mr Saunders lowered his wife and two children from the bedroom window to the garden, a height of from 10 to 12 feet and jumped out himself. The Shere and Albury Fire Brigade was summoned but as the house was practically gutted on their arrival the firemen concentrated their attention upon saving the adjacent stabling, a task which they successfully accomplished."



Left: The Saunders children, Doris and Harry, at the Windmill Inn



Right: The old fire station at Shere (now public toilets)

The area has long said to have been a haunt of smugglers. Gertrude Jekyll, writing in "Old West Surrey", notes that the Windmill Inn had a false roof for the hiding of contraband. Smuggling was rife along the south coast in the 18th and early 19th centuries. The smugglers landed their cargos at night in the quiet creeks around Shoreham and travelled inland to hole up in the Hurtwood during the day, before continuing the next night to lucrative markets in London. Brandy, silk and lace (which were highly taxed) were some of the more profitable goods. After the fire, it was said that two flintlock pistols were found in the ruins of the building, although whether this was true or not is debatable.

It is quite likely that the inn was involved with smuggling, but the 'false' roof dates from long after the trade had ceased. The two pictures below show that the roof was altered sometime in the late 19th century, thereby creating a void.



After the fire the Saunders moved to the Ockley Road, where Samuel built up his building business. Friary, Holroyds and Healeys Brewery, who owned the building, had it rebuilt by Clemence and Moon of Guildford in 1908. The Bull's Head in the village was rebuilt at the same time and although at first glance the buildings are quite different there are many similarities in the small details.



The Windmill Inn just after it opened.

The Saunders family had not been at the Windmill Inn for very long. Samuel had formerly been employed as a carpenter at the Brunner Mond factory at Silvertown in the East End of London. He and his wife, Jessie, moved to Ewhurst around 1903 and as well as taking on the Windmill Inn, Samuel had a concession to extract stone from the quarry and started a small building business.



A view from the south with the quarry behind. Note that the hillside of Pitch Hill is bare of trees

In the First World War Samuel volunteered to return to the Brunner Mond factory, which had been adapted for the production of TNT. Having survived the fire at the Windmill Inn Samuel was killed in an explosion at the works in 1917. A fire had broken out and spread to the TNT store resulting in a catastrophic explosion. Thousands of homes in the East End were damaged and over 9,000 rendered uninhabitable. Despite the devastation the death toll was not as high as might have been expected. Seventy-three people were killed, including 16 munitions workers. During the war Jessie volunteered as a VAD at Oaklands Hospital in Cranleigh.

LADY ALLEN OF HURTWOOD

By Janet Balchin

Early life

Marjory Allen (née Gill) was born in Bexley Heath, Kent, in 1897 and had two older and two younger brothers.

Her parents, George and Sarah, were somewhat unconventional for a middle class family in the early 20th century. The children addressed them as Sala and Georgie. They were keen on cycling and camping and in 1901 were founder members of the Association of Cycle Campers. In 1908, they moved to a small farm near Brambletye, Kent to live the simple life and to give their children an idyllic childhood. After the children had left home they sold the farm and bought a horse-drawn caravan and followed a travelling life for five years.



Marjory was educated at Bedales School and then took a diploma in horticulture at University College Reading.

Clifford Allen and Marriage

Clifford Allen was a noted pacifist. Known as CA to his friends, he was a co-founder of the No-Conscription Fellowship in 1914. Whilst some conscientious objectors were prepared to serve in non-combatant roles, Allen refused to do any type of war work and was imprisoned for his beliefs. After further refusing to co-operate with the prison authorities he was put in solitary confinement on a diet of just bread and water. As a result he developed TB and was on the point of death when he was released on compassionate grounds in 1917. During the war he had been drawn into the intellectual circle of the famous society hostess Lady Ottoline Morrell. Her husband Phillip, a liberal MP, was also a noted pacifist and the Morrells invited many conscientious objectors to their home at Garsington.

Marjory's artist brother Colin had studied at the Slade and in 1913 had been awarded a scholarship to study in Rome. However, the First World War interrupted his studies and he joined the Royal Garrison Artillery. In March 1918 he was invalided home suffering from the effects of gas poisoning, but returned to the Western Front later in the summer of 1918 as a War Artist. In 1919 he was able to take up his scholarship in Rome and in March 1921 Marjory went to stay with him. In Rome she spent her time visiting gardens and sketching. On a trip to the mountain village of Anticoli they bumped into Lady Ottoline Morrell at the railway station. Colin already knew Lady Ottoline as she liked to take young contemporary artists under her wing. Among her party on that day was Clifford Allen and, when the two parties combined, Marjory found herself sitting next to him on the train. They all got on together very well and in the impromptu spirit of the times Marjory and Colin invited Allen to join them on a three-day hike they were planning in the Apennines.



On their return to England they got to know each other better and became engaged in August. They married in December 1921 at Chelsea Registry Office; he was thirty-two and she was twenty-four.

Left: At Anticoli - Lady Morrell (centre) with CA to her left and Colin on her right, Marjory kneeling in front, (and some curious local children)

At first they lived in CA's flat in Battersea and, in 1922, had a daughter, Joan Colette. Marjory's mother affectionately called her 'Polly Peachum' and from then on she became known by all the family as Polly.

CA was still suffering from poor health and they decided that they should move to the countryside. They already had close links with the Surrey Hills as CA had spent some of his post-prison convalescence at Lemon's Farm, Abinger and their close friends, the Trevelyan, at The Shiffolds on the slopes of Leith Hill near Forest Green. In 1924 they bought a plot of land near Abinger Bottom and built Lemon's Cottage. They were very happy there, although sadly there was little improvement in CA's health, but after a few years they realised that they had outgrown the cottage and started the search for a new home.

Hurtwood House

Their friend and neighbour Sir Reginald Bray offered them a secluded plot with far-reaching views above Jelly's Hollow. They got a local builder, Joseph Harrison of Abinger, to build a house according to Marjory's own design. They called it Hurtwood House, from 'hurts', the local name for the bilberries which grew wild on the common, and moved in 1928.



Hurtwood House - the roof terrace at the top of the house seen from above Jelly's Hollow in 2006.

The house has since been demolished and a new house, renamed Sandy Hill, built on the site.



Marjory instructs a gardener in the Selfridges roof garden

During the 1920s and 1930s Marjory developed her career as a landscape architect with commissions to design gardens for Lady and Sir Oswald Mosley (who was yet to become involved with the fascist movement), H.G. Wells, and John Christie of Glyndebourne. In 1929 she was a founder member of the Institute of Landscape Architects. In 1930, with Richard Sudell, another founder member of the ILA, she embarked on her most notable commission, the Selfridges roof garden. The garden featured an old-fashioned English flower garden with a lawn, formal pool, pergola and cherry tree walk. It was open to the public and had over 30,00 visitors per week when it first opened.

CA hoped to become an MP and was selected as the Independent Labour Party candidate to fight a safe seat in the Gorbals, Glasgow, but his health was not up to it and he had to withdraw. In 1932 the Prime Minister, Ramsey MacDonald, elevated him to the peerage to boost Labour's representation in the House of Lords and he became Baron Allen of Hurtwood. His pacifist beliefs led him to support the policy of Appeasement. He met Hitler on several occasions and, although he abhorred his right-wing politics, believed him to be sincere in his desire for peace. He never recovered his health and died in March 1939, aged 49.

Hurtwood School

The Allens wanted a progressive education for their daughter Polly. Marjory had enjoyed a liberal education at Bedales, which had been founded in 1898 to offer an alternative to traditional Victorian boarding schools. It was co-educational and non-denominational with a curriculum that placed an emphasis on the arts and drama. CA had a more conventional boarding school education and originally planned to enter the church. At Bristol University he became involved in the University Settlement Movement, and became aware of the problems of poverty and slum housing. He then won an Exhibition to Peterhouse, Cambridge where he joined the Fabian Society.

Initially, they sent Polly to Beacon Hill school near Harting in West Sussex, which had been set up by Dora, the wife of Bertrand Russell. The Russells were close friends and CA had shared a flat with Bertrand in his younger days. However, they then decided to set up their own school closer to home, and with a few like-minded neighbours, opened Hurtwood School in Peaslake in 1929.

Originally a small day school for children aged three to fourteen it expanded to accommodate boarders in the 1930s, and a new purpose-built building was erected. The school had a wide-ranging curriculum, but there was no particular timetable, and classes were not arranged by age or ability so that children could learn at their own pace and follow their own interests.



Above left: The Allens at the original Hurtwood School.



Above right: the purpose-built new school, at Peaslake.

Apart from the name, the school has no connection with the modern Hurtwood House School, between Ewhurst and Holmbury, which was established by Richard Jackson in 1970, but, by coincidence, Hurtwood House has now acquired the building for use as a boarding house.

Lady Allen's work for children

With CA's death and the coming of war, Marjory threw herself into work and became increasingly interested in children's welfare. From 1942 she was the chairman of the Nursery School Association and after the war served as a liaison officer for UNICEF.

She had a particular concern for evacuated children who were already under the care of local councils (because they were orphans, or had parents who were unable to care for them, or who were considered unfit as parents). Many had special needs that could not met by the overstretched local authorities in the reception areas. On 15 July 1944, Marjory wrote a letter to The Times highlighting the plight of children who, she said, had been deprived of a normal home life. The response was unprecedented and The Times received more letters in reply than to any other subject in the war years. In December the Home Secretary, Herbert Morrison (a personal friend), set up a committee to enquire into the special needs of deprived children, but little progress was made.

Then in 1945 came the shocking case of Dennis O'Neill, who was so badly treated that he died. The case became a national scandal and Marjory published a pamphlet entitled 'Whose Children?' A new government committee was set up, headed by Dame Myra Curtis, the Principle of Newnham College. Marjory was upset when she was not chosen as a member of the committee, but Herbert Morrison told her that she would not have been objective enough. She was, however, called as a witness before the committee and The Children's Act was passed in 1948.

In 1946 her interest in the importance of play led her to visit Denmark where 'junk playgrounds' had been established. This led her to set up Adventure Playgrounds on cleared bombsites where children could express their creativity using old waste material. After the war this was extended to cater for disabled children. She published numerous articles and books on play and child development.



Left: Lollard Street Adventure Playground, London. Right: 'planning for play' published 1968

Shoreys

After the war Marjory found that her work kept her in London and in 1951 she made the difficult decision to sell Hurtwood House. But after only a short time she missed the Surrey Hills and began to look for a smaller, more manageable house. In the winter of 1952 she heard that the Folly Hill estate, in Moon Hall Road, was for sale. The large Victorian house was totally unsuitable, but the outbuildings had potential so Marjory made an offer for the gardener's cottage, garage and stables. She sold the stables on to a friend and converted the former garage into a house, which she named Shoreys, after her mother's family name.



*Shoreys
featured in an
article in
'Homes and
Gardens' in
September
1958*

*Left; The
terrace has far-
reaching views
to the South
Downs*



Top left: the garage before conversion.

Top right: The common room after conversion.

The portrait on the wall by the bookcase appears to be of CA

Left: The Kitchen

'Homes and Gardens' noted that it blended "utility with rustic beauty. It has every necessary modern appliance, yet is simply furnished with a table of scrubbed natural wood and wheel-back chairs"

Herbert [Bert] Morrison had been a frequent guest at Hurtwood. After CA's death he became a supporter of Marjory's work and they became increasingly close friends, but she had not realised that he was in love with her until he asked her to marry him in 1954. The proposal caught her completely off guard as she had thought of him as one of many dear friends. After giving it much thought she decided she could not accept, and sadly their friendship ended.

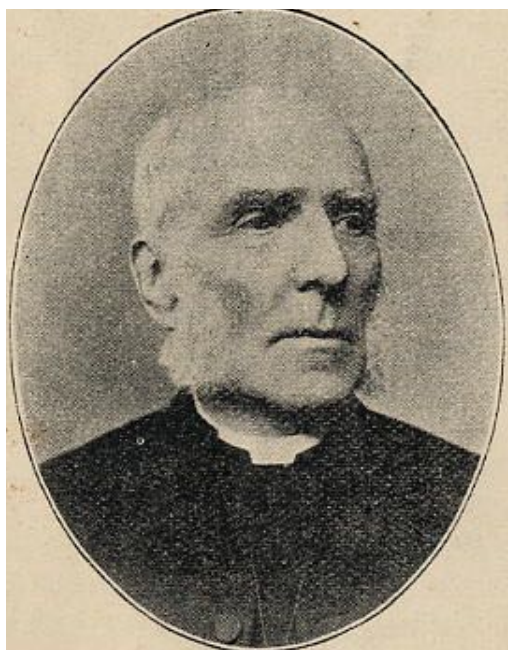
Marjory continued her work for children and lived at Shorey's until 1968. She died in London in 1971.

I would like to thank Colin and Anna Banyard for allowing me to copy the picture of the garage and the 'Homes and Gardens' article, and thanks to Mike Sanders for putting me in touch with them.

THREE MAKERS OF MODERN CRANLEIGH

By Joy Horn

Look out for roads in Cranleigh named after John Sapte (1821 – 1906), Albert Napper (1815-1894), and Stephen Rowland (1841-1940). All three of them were 'in-comers' to Cranleigh in the nineteenth century, and all three left a profound mark on the village.



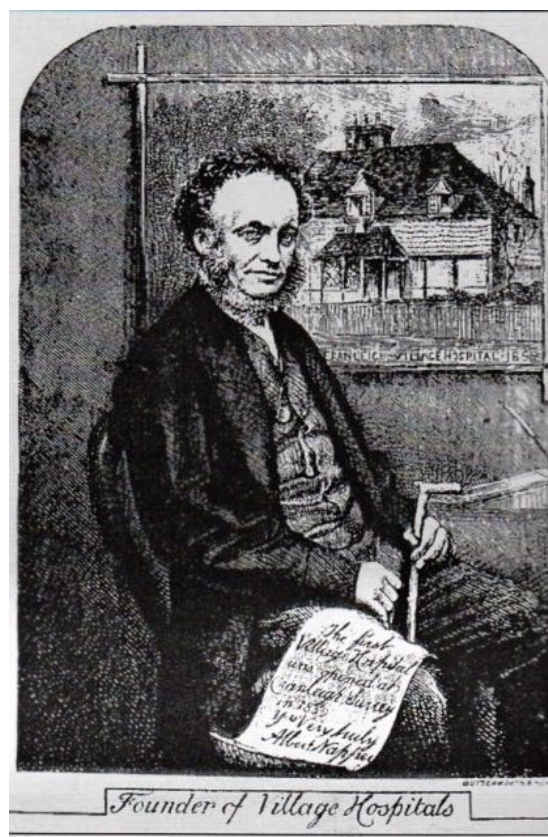
Sapte Close on the Park Mead Estate is named after John Sapte, who was the Rector of Cranleigh from 1846-1906. His father, a wealthy banker, had bought the right to appoint the rector (the advowson) of Cranleigh and nominated his son John, straight out of university.

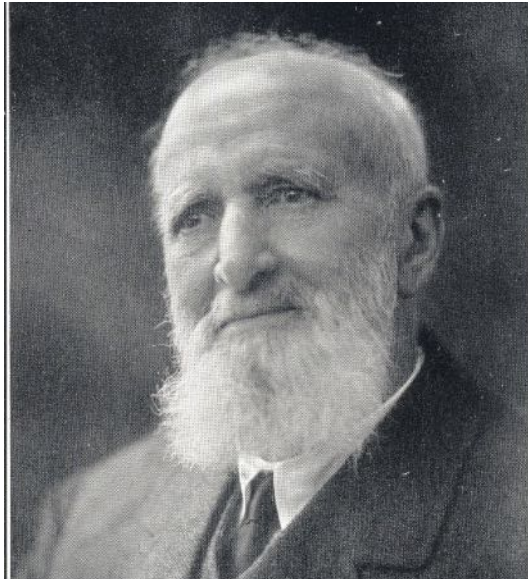
John spent the rest of his life here, renovating and enlarging the church building, extending the churchyard to the main road, giving a church house to be used as the village hospital, and being an active mover in the founding of Cranleigh School.

Napper Place, on the Hitherwood Estate, is named after the local doctor and surgeon, Albert Napper, who came to Cranleigh in 1854 from Wisborough Green.

He was horrified at the conditions in which the victims of farming accidents had to be treated for their injuries in their own cottages.

In 1859 he founded the Village Hospital in a cottage given by the rector John Sapte. It was maintained by subscriptions and gifts-in-kind by Cranleigh residents who could afford it. Patients paid what they could. This pattern was the inspiration for many other 'cottage hospitals' throughout the country.





Rowland Road, leading from the High Street to Glebelands, is named after Stephen Rowland, who came to Cranleigh from Ditchling, at the age of 16, to help his uncle in his shop (now the Lemon Grass restaurant). He soon took control of the business and moved it to a prominent site in the High Street.

In 1876 he was a prime mover in establishing a gas company here, followed by a piped-water company. These transformed every-day life. He then developed the 'Woodlands Estate' including New Park Road, Woodland Avenue, Bridge Road, The Drive etc.

Wherever you go in Cranleigh, you will see the legacy of these three men.



Above: the Cottage Hospital, founded by Dr Napper in a cottage given by the Rev. Sapte



Above: The Cedar of Lebanon said to have been planted by Rev. Sapte after his honeymoon in the Holy Land



Left: Houses for the middle classes in New Park Road

Ewhurst's Cokeler Neighbours

By Roger Nash

The Cokelers, properly known as the Society of Dependants, were a Christian sect, which was established in several villages in West Sussex and Surrey.



In Shamley Green, in 1851, John Sirgood (left) had recently arrived, with his wife Harriett. His place of birth was marked "unknown" (hers was Godalming); he was a 30-year-old boot and shoemaker. In this manner, we are introduced to a man destined to create a new non-conformist church in communities across Sussex and Surrey, although not in Ewhurst.

As all attempts to find him in 1841 have failed, there is an air of mystery over his origins. However, it is highly likely he was in London, perhaps in Southwark, living below the radar.

It is thought he was evangelised there. As for his birth, both the traditions of the Cokelers, as they came to be called, and some indirect evidence of the birth of a brother, Joseph, in Forest Green hamlet, Avening, Gloucestershire, mean we can perhaps accept his supposed birth there on 23 August 1821.

One of the first communities emerged at Lordshill (or Lords Hill), Shamley Green, then in Wonersh parish. Many of the earliest brethren lived across the river in Bramley.

One of the first elders in Lordshill was William Hampshire (right), who became a close associate and friend. Sirgood's association with this community was sealed when he became a trustee of its new chapel, thought to have been built about 1870 on land conveyed by Hampshire.

However, Sirgood was soon off to Loxwood where he was living in 1861. I imagine him tramping the lanes, getting a lift on a cart, preaching in farmyards, on commons, and outside pubs, not staying in any one place for long, except when he needed money from making shoes.



It was in Loxwood that the Dependant Brethren, to give them their formal registered name, first graduated to a chapel. This building, in Spy Lane, was from the outset a bigger chapel, with good catering space, a bigger plot with a graveyard, room for occasional Big Meetings, and the first to be built in 1861. It was to the Petworth Congregational minister that legal responsibility fell as sponsor. He also took the first funeral in 1866.

Sirgood's travels were extensive. Another early community set up in Northchapel, near Petworth, a fourth in Warnham, near Horsham. A later one was to form in South Norwood, then in Surrey. These five became the core. Others were set up in Chichester, which spawned two satellites in Felpham and Hove. There were enough adherents between Loxwood and Northchapel for a satellite group in Plaistow. All these had chapels, as did one in Haslemere (recently discovered from newspapers archives). His travels to Kent converted some in various places, including Headcorn, but no community established itself there; instead, they migrated west, some to South Norwood. He is believed also to have travelled as far as Bath and Lincoln.

One of the curiosities of researching the Cokelers is that their death register and burial register are the best source of information on membership. There was a strong belief in the afterlife, funerals being joyous occasions. One such was Charlie Hickman's, who died in 1917 with a funeral at Lordshill (burial probably in Shamley Green). Elsie Piper wrote at length of "one of the most beautiful times ever spent in God's house. When we sat down [after singing a hymn unaccompanied] we had such a glorious shout together".

Sometimes their worship drew ridicule, attacks both in chapel and in the countryside, as documented in the press. In Loxwood there was worse. The gentry (egged on by Henry Frederick Napper of Lakers Lodge, Loxwood) and clergy (of both Wisborough Green and Alfold) wrote a letter, to give notice of unlawful assembly in 1861. Sirgood showed his true colours, replying with literate, polite, but strong, put-downs. In fact, it was not illegal owing to a change in the law.

John Sirgood died in 1885, but in his last years he had possibly worn himself out by embarking on a bold and forward-thinking experiment to create Cokeler "combination stores" in each of the main communities. Here, "combination" was used in the sense of co-operation, and communality. We might say it was a proto-department store because of the extraordinary wide range of goods and services on offer, but it was a residential, mainly female community who worked together, lived together, and attended chapel together. It is possible to chart the rise of combination in the censuses. Only Warnham had a small group in 1881; by 1891, all five did.

It was rare for anyone living above the stores to be married, but another set of members, outside this core, were married, as many with children as not. Undoubtedly, the stores gave rise to the thinking that Cokelers never married. This was compounded by their eventual decline in the 20th century, but this was as much to do with their lack of a marriage service or baptism, or Sunday School, and as time went on, a loss of their zeal for evangelism and conversion.

The success of the stores is extraordinary, some still trading into the 1970s. Sirgood was right that girls and women in service were seldom allowed by their mistress to attend chapel, sometimes at some distance. The stores provided an alternative and a lifetime job. Many women never had that opportunity. In my book, I have drawn heavily on the minute books of Loxwood's Aylward, Smith & Co., and Northchapel's Brown, Durant & Co., all four named directors of companies the Cokelers had to set up to conform with the law. There were therefore two routes to leadership, a senior role in the company or as a chapel elder, some taking on both, like my great uncle Walter Nash in Loxwood from about 1930 to his death in 1960.



The stores in Loxwood

To be leader in Loxwood was effectively to lead the entire brethren. However, Walter was an interesting maverick. He was a farmer's son from Rudgwick, who came into the Cokelers through working on his stepfather's Cokeler farm in Plaistow, later spending most of his leadership diversifying into farming in Loxwood, where my father and uncle (neither were Cokelers) worked for him, and where I played as a boy.

Some communities reached the endgame sooner than others. Warnham stores closed in 1948 (the company wound up in about 1970), Loxwood in 1973 (the stores ceased trading in 1980). Loxwood chapel limped on until 1984, when The Emmanuel Fellowship took it on and still worship there today. Lordshill had closed in 1967, with, it was reported, just one member preaching to his housekeeper, then was demolished, a house built on the site.

So why were they called Cokelers? The popular answer is that having been coaxed out of pubs, Sirgood and his followers drank cocoa. However, early spellings varied from Cocoalers, Coplers, and Coglers, to Cocklers, even Cuckolders. Might the name have come from Cokkes Field where the Loxwood stores was built? Apart from denying themselves

alcohol, they led a very abstemious life, with few possessions, no frippery, no political leanings except a strong ethic of conscientious objection in two world wars, and a strong sense of service to their community and to others in need. Yet their business ethic was strong, to the last farthing!

Roger Nash has written *Dependant Brethren of Sussex and Surrey, a History of the Cokelers*, 2021, 330pp, paperback, copious illustrations. Available from Shamley Green Stores (same ownership as Hazelbank Stores, so ask Damian if you would like a copy), £17.95, or from Lulu online bookshop, £18.00 + shipping.