Friern Barnet *Newsletter*

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JUST WHAT THE DOCTOR ORDERED

by Nick McKie

The following advertisement appeared in *Picture Post* of 25 February 1956 and featured a local family who lived at 23 Pevensey Avenue, New Southgate, N11.



Pevensey Avenue runs parallel to the North Circular Road at Telford Road.

I set out trying to trace the Brand family and discovered that Joseph Brand had married Sylvia Godfrey in December 1937. They had two children, Jacinth who is mentioned in the advertisement, who was born in June 1950, and Haydn Denzil who was born four years later.

After much searching I thought I had tracked Haydn to an address in the Isle of Man and I wrote to him in March 2015 to ask him if he could remember anything about the advertisement, fairly unlikely as he would have been two at the time, but worth a shot. Sadly, I never received a reply; perhaps it was a different Haydn Brand.

So how were the family chosen to feature in the ad? Were they paid for it? Were the children thoroughly sick of drinking Ribena? Were they ribbed at school? We shall probably never know.

One thing is for certain - Ribena would not be allowed to run the ad today with a claim that a drink packed with sugar would keep the family fit!

MY GRANDFATHER'S STORY

by Dave Gladding

My grandfather was Walter Arthur Gladding who was born in 1880 in Nightingale Lane N8. When he was a child the family moved to Harringay Road, N8 and whilst there he was involved in an horrific accident. He and his sister were playing in the street as children did in those days, and when their ball ran into the road his sister went after it. My grandad went after her and managed to prevent her being run over by a horse-drawn tram but was himself injured when the tram ran over his leg, severing it just below the knee. He was rushed to St Ann's Hospital where the stump of his leg was placed in a vat of hot tar, a common remedy at the time which cauterized the wound and prevented infection!

The family moved again, this time to Norman Road, N22 and he became a Master Greengrocer and rented stables and storage in Lordship Lane, some 100 yards from what was to become Wood Green Station in 1932. He got married and moved to Kings Road, Harringay where they had two children, Wally and Lilian, but sadly he lost his wife from breast cancer at the age of 27.

His next move was to Brabant Road, N22 where he met a Mrs Nunn who was to become his partner for some years. In 1922 he moved again, this time to a property on the corner of East Barnet Road and Capel Road, East Barnet which had two stables, a coach house and six horse chestnut trees down the left-hand side of the garden plus a large meadow at the top of the garden. The house was demolished in 1930 and is now a housing estate.

His next move was back to Norman Road and Mrs Nunn died there. From there he moved to a number of other homes in the Freehold, firstly to Wetherill Road, off Colney Hatch Lane, then Sydney Road and then to 129 Cromwell Road.

IT may seem odd to have moved so many times but in those days few people could afford to buy properties so most working-class people were forced to rent, but houses and flats for rent were plentiful and easily available.

During the First World War Walter had tried to enlist in the Veterinary Corps because of his experience with horses, but because he only had one leg he was turned down. His brother Sid, however, served as a six-horse gun carriage driver, while another brother, George, had a leg blown off in 1914 after only six weeks' service. His brother Sonny served in the Navy for the duration of the War. Walter died in 1943 in Muswell Hill.

THE BURGLAR AND THE CHURCH BRANDY

This appeared in *Barnet Press* of 17 February 1896:

"William Starkey (17), a hawker of salt, was charged at Highgate Police-court, London, on Saturday, with breaking into Friern Barnet Parish Church and stealing therefrom five surplices, ten pocket handkerchiefs, one pair of gloves, one bottle which contained brandy, one pair of boots, a metal ring, a postage stamp and a farthing, worth 15s, the property of the Rev Frederick Hall, rector of Friern Barnet. The church is only about a mile and a half from the scene of the murder at Muswell Hill, and this offence was probably committed about the same time as the other deed was perpetrated. Police-constable Huggett stated that just before 3 o'clock on Friday morning he saw a light in the church. He went to one of the vestry windows and saw the prisoner with a lighted candle. Prisoner drank some of the brandy whilst in church. He was remanded."

WARTIME MEMORIES OF BARNET

by Philip O'Donoghue

Apart from passing through on family outings by 84 bus to St Albans, my first contact with Chipping Barnet was when I moved there from 74 Lansdowne Road, Walthamstow shortly before World War II. The events were not connected; my father told me that as soon as he was old enough to appreciate Walthamstow he had determined to leave it, and the chance came in 1939. So I arrived with my parents and my mother's parents to take up residence in 94 Normandy Avenue, where were joined by my mother's widowed sister Ethel Webb and her son, my cousin Grahame, who had moved from Great Waltham in Essex.

The house was owned by Mr Raison, who with his wife had gone to live in Dorking. It had been built at about the time of World War I by, it was said, two brothers who were illiterate. The design of the house lent to support that view, with a long back roof changing slope on the way down and the staircase changing tread (and everything else) above the first floor. The elderly Mr Cheek, a chimney sweep of uncertain temper who had resumed sweeping when his son (s?) went to war, used to rail against the ill-behaved front-room chimney while holding in his hand a saucerful of tea (poured from the cup to cool). He never spilled a drop despite vigorous gesturing illustrating the unforgivable twist and turns of the flue.

Nonetheless the house seemed very pleasant to us. On the ground floor were 2 large rooms (or so they struck us – but expectations have risen since then), a kitchen no longer used as such but still housing a battery operated bell system with indicators to show from where the call came, a scullery then also used as the kitchen but with a brick-built "copper" still in it, and a dismantled outside lavatory used as a garden shed. There were three fair-sized bedrooms, a box room, lavatory and bathroom on the first floor, and two spacious rooms for us boys on the second. We all fitted in very well. It had when first built backed on to fields, and there was still a little wooden half-gate, complete with bolt, in the fence at the end of the garden, and just short of it what had obviously been a field bank and hedge. (Mr Rasion remembered those fields and the field path that ran from where Meadway now is.) In a garden shed were partitioned boxes of coloured glass pots that had held night-lights for pre-war festivities.

The garden was mostly clay and despite my father's hope that, if vigorously dug and left for the frost to attack or burnt by the bonfires that he delighted in, it would develop into garden soil, it remained like raw bricks to the end of our stay there. With the clay came mists – swelling up our road from Mays Lane before. Number 94 is sited where the hill down from the top of Barnet Hill pauses before descending to Underhill and the mist frequently used to ebb and flow on that lower slope to within a few doors of us. Unfortunately, the appalling reek from the sewage farm by Dollis Brook along Barnet Lane did not stop short, and the back of my nose can remember its pungent visits to this day.

Our house was semi-detached and its other half, 96, had clearly been empty for some time and remained so until after the war. Its owner, who I believe owned another dilapidated empty house further up the road, was rumoured to be in dispute with the Urban District Council, punishing them by depriving them of the rates he would have had to pay had his properties been occupied. No danger of squatters in those days. Number 96 provided my cousin and myself with an adventure playground, while the produce of the enormous apple tree – set among raspberry canes run wild – in its back garden, equally good to eat or cook, was especially welcome with food treats few and far between.

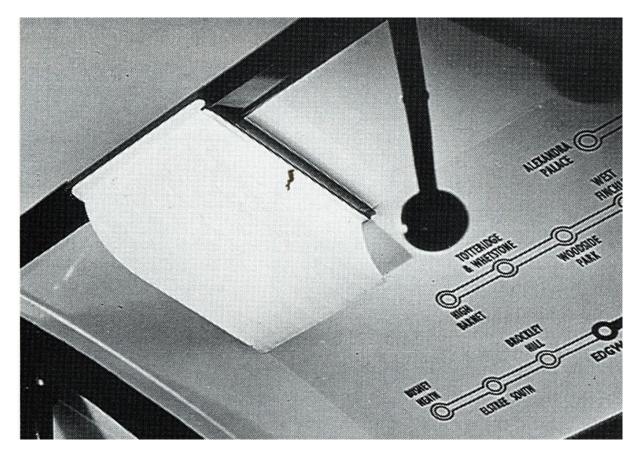
I cannot remember exactly when we arrived in Barnet, but I can recall seeing little, frightened evacuees, each with a name and destination on a luggage label tied to them, waiting for a train on the platform of the old station in Queen's Road, Walthamstow not long before we moved. Our first evening in Barnet turned out to be the occasion of a practice black-out, for which we were totally unprepared. The elderly Miss Fort who owned 92 next door, and her sister Mrs Dicker who lived with her, very kindly if a touch unrealistically brought us a 45cm square of the black tissue paper then in vogue for black-out purposes. At least we were able to show willing by draping it rather dangerously round a light bulb.

Fairly soon after the war had been declared, enormous quantities of Fletton bricks were stacked on the pavement against our fence. My cousin and I hollowed out the stacks by making them higher and longer, hiding within them so that innocent passersby were unaware of our presence and we could overhear their totally uninteresting conversations. It was a sad day when men arrived and converted our castles into street air-raid shelters. Neither we, nor as far as I know, anyone else had used them until the V2 rockets arrived years later when despite being unlocked for most of the time the shelters were found to be unsoiled and undamaged. Meanwhile, in the event of a bad raid, with bombs whistling down not so far away, the whole family sheltered under the stairs along with the gas main. Except for Grandad that is. He refused to interrupt his game of patience, sitting in front of a small window and under the boiling hot-water tank. "If I don't get that down on my head I will get something else."

One other event (apart from my tenth birthday) that occurred not long after our arrival was the electrification of the railway to High Barnet Station, converting it from LNER to Northern Line. Work was too far advanced for it to be put off, as were so many things "for the duration of the emergency". I never saw steam passenger trains in High Barnet, although steam-hauled goods trains continued for some years, and I remember one overshooting the buffers on the east side of the bridge over Barnet Hill and looming excitedly over the end of Potters Lane.

So journeys to London were either by 134 bus, which had an outside staircase with a splendid curved brass rail in those days and which terminated in Pimlico, or by 609 trolleybus to Finsbury Square (the 645 started well through Finchley to Golders Green but then veered off to somewhere useless like Edgware), or by nice new underground train, tungsten-lit with stylish block shaped, fluted opal glass shades - so much smarter than the Piccadilly Line which tended towards Victorian-looking glass bells. Mind you, they did get fluorescent lights first (after the war), and very nasty and glaring they were. One other thing about the Northern Line was its maps showing not only the line as it was but also as it would be, including Alexandra Palace, and, I seem to recollect, Bushey. Coupled with the belief that there had been a scheme, which would be revived after the war, to run escalators up from High Barnet Station to Meadway – even if the

fainter rumour of driving the line on to Hadley if not further was not much relied on – things looked pretty bright for the future. For Barnet's local transport, both buses and trains, the song popular at about that time "It's a lovely day tomorrow, tomorrow is a lovely day" turned out to be rubbish.



The art deco shade on a 1938-stock tube train. Note the route diagram showing proposed extensions to Alexandra Palace and from Edgware to Bushey Heath via Brockley Hill and Elstree South.

I must not forget Green Line coaches of which there were several routes – 714, 716, 717 and so forth – to unlikely places such as Luton and Woking as well as Dunstable – or was it Whipsnade direct in the summer? My memory fails here, and it may be that these mildly expensive, rather swish London Transport express buses did not run until after the war. But when they did, you could get from central London to central Barnet by several overground routes more quickly and conveniently than now.

Coming from a suburban back street, I do not remember Barnet as a quiet town. With no motorways and the Barnet Bypass (the A1 M) unpopular with lorry drivers because their favourite cafe remained in Barnet (Arthur's on Pricklers Hill, now the Hole in the Wall) and also in Barnet itself the Victoria Dining Room – more commonly known as Kiff's Caff after its owner) much if not most of the Great North Road traffic still came through the town. I can remember interesting times as on one occasion a huge ship's propeller and on another a vast Thames lighter were eased through the narrows by the church. Still, all that would pale beside today's domestic traffic. Soon after the war, when fireworks were back, it was perfectly safe to stand in the middle of the St Albans Road (some old Barnet inhabitants still called it New Road) in the late evening in order to project rockets along it from a friend's brass horse pistol. Of all traffic changes, I still regret the passing of the steam lorries which were revived during the War to rattle (they

were chain driven) through the High Street with their bluntly rounded fronts, bellyful of glowing coals and a smell like hot tar.

Barnet then still acted as a country market town and was crowded on Saturdays with people coming in to shop. The market itself included sheep and cattle - I do not remember what if any retail stalls were there. Of the shops I think that only Dewhurst's the butcher, then further up on the east side of the road, and Robinsons delicatessen - probably not called that then and, I believe, sited in one or two shops on either side of the church - have survived. Of course, Smith the paper shop is still with us in The Spires, and Boots the Chemist – whom I find it hard to forgive for pulling down their interesting ancient ex-pub premises, with its pillared porch out to the kerb, and replacing it with the present brick box. Both Smiths and Boots ran modestly priced lending libraries during (and probably before) the War.

Kelsey's the jeweller, Halfords the cycle shop, and Cowing's the printer have disappeared from the High Street as has Clarks – then last of the big drapers. Another large drapery was Nunnery's, further up the street on the right. I do not know how to say where it was – about three quarters of the way between the *Salisbury* and the *White Horse*, roughly opposite Halfords, as all these landmarks are gone. One of the family (a daughter?) was disabled, so that Mr Nunnery was allowed to drive his car during the war. He kept it in a garage built into his shop, reached by swinging aside a large, fully-stocked display window. When he returned on damp days he left the surprising sight of tyre tracks running across the pavement to end flush with the shop front. That would have confused the expected German invaders far more than the filling-in with cement the inscription on Hadley Highstone.

Barnet must have had the worst wet fish shops in London. And some of the worst greengrocers, but my mother was fortunate in going to Mrs Hentall, in the Mitre building next door or next door but one to the Terminus (tram, then trolleybuses) Café south of the arch into the pub yard. She always looked after my gentle, rather unwell mother and treated her most fairly, as did Mr Smith (?) the manager of Dewhurst's, then next to Kelsey's. Such treatment meant a lot in obtaining fair shares and when "luxury" offthe-ration items such as apples were in short supply. The war brought out the best and the worst in people, or perhaps gave us more opportunity to behave better or worse than we did in peace time. To set against the Mrs Hentalls and Mr Smith's we had our share of dedicated, almost professional queuers who went from shop to shop triumphantly accumulating stocks they could never use. I remember my mother indicating an elderly woman entering the shop and correctly prophesying that she would shortly become dramatically poorly and so be allowed to take the head of the queue, after which she would go off to be taken queer in another shop. Officiousness could also flourish, as in the man with an appropriately Hitlerian moustache who sat in the Tudor Hall in front of a queue of supplicants seeking food ration cards and "points" for tinned goods etc. whom he treated as if they were cheating or cadging a favour rather than collecting what was due to them. Maybe the officiousness was sometimes just rather woodenheaded overanxiety to do the right thing. When a ten-year-old school friend and I found a precious packet of butter left on the seat next to the horse trough opposite the police station, we conscientiously took it across. The constable taking details looked up sharply when the other little boy gave his name - Miskin - and said in a voice charged with suspicion "is that a *German* name?" What threat he thought we two with our packet of butter posed I can't imagine.

To be continued....

A HALF-FORGOTTEN FAMILY

by John Heathfield

I don't know whether to believe it or not. Anyway, it's a good tale. The story is that Bad King John was crossing the English Channel and feeling seasick, decided to share his dinner with the fishes. He had a servant called Attfield who held the king's head and helped him to feel better. Ingratitude, King John gave Attfield a considerable sum of money and the right to a coat of arms, and on condition that whenever the king crossed the Channel, Attfield would attend, ready to hold the king's head. In commemoration of this, John became a family name, and the coat of arms include two fishes facing upwards, with their mouths open. However true the tale may be, John Attfield certainly held land in the ville of Staundon (now Standon) in Hertfordshire in 1361.

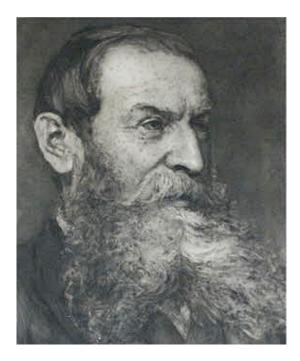
His descendant, Richard Attfield and wife Ann, moved from Finchley to Whetstone about 1788 and set up shop on the north corner of Blackhorse Lane and the Turnpike Road. The house had been built around 1745 and in his will is described as follows: "On the Ground Floor, a large front room or shop, passage, kitchen, wash house, yard and garden; on the First Floor, comfortable sitting room, bedroom with room over:"

Richard's father Henry (1772-1793) was one of the last people to have been robbed by a highwayman on Finchley Common about 1785. It is said that Richard planted the elm trees that for so many years grew along Whetstone High Road.

There were two children, William Poole Attfileld was born in 1780 and John in 1796. William was trained as a Surveyor and later became Clerk to the Whetstone and Highgate Turnpike Trust. He lived in Sunny Cottage on the north side of Hadley Green from about 1806 and so lived about ten steps from his work. He was also employed by local land owners ands for some years was Parish Clerk for Friern Barnet. He wrote an exquisite and clearly legible hand. He died in 1855 and is buried in Hadley churchyard where his tombstone can still be seen. His daughter, Julia, was still living in Sunny Cottage in 1896.

John was also a Surveyor, probably trained by William. He lived in the family home at Whetstone until his death. He too worked for the Whetstone and Highgate Turnpike Trust, the toll gate of which stood outside his house. In 1838 the Trust paid him fees of £136, a considerable sum in those days. He "farmed" or rented the gate in 1855, paying £846 for the year. Presumably the takings were at least 10% higher. In 1853 is shown as paying £7 10s 0d for lighting the gate, probably with oil lamps since gas mains did not come through until 1862. As well as surveying for the Turnpike Trust, John was Parish Surveyor, checking fences and hedges, drains and road surfaces and organising repairs when necessary. He died in June 1877 and is buried in Friern Barnet churchyard.

John's son, also John, was born in Whetstone in 1833. He became Professor of Chemistry at Bart's Hospital, a Fellow of the Royal Society, a corresponding member of 23 international societies and the author of many text book including *An Introduction to Pharmaceutical Chemistry* and was editor of the *British Pharmacopoeia*. He is arguably Whetstone's most eminent son. He lived eventually in 'Ashlands', Langley Road, Watford and died in 1911. The old house where John lived was advertised for sale in 1877 and was replaced by a row of yellow brick shops and is now the Oak Caffé on the corner of Oakleigh Road North and the High Road. John is commemorated today by Attfield Close in Sweets Way.



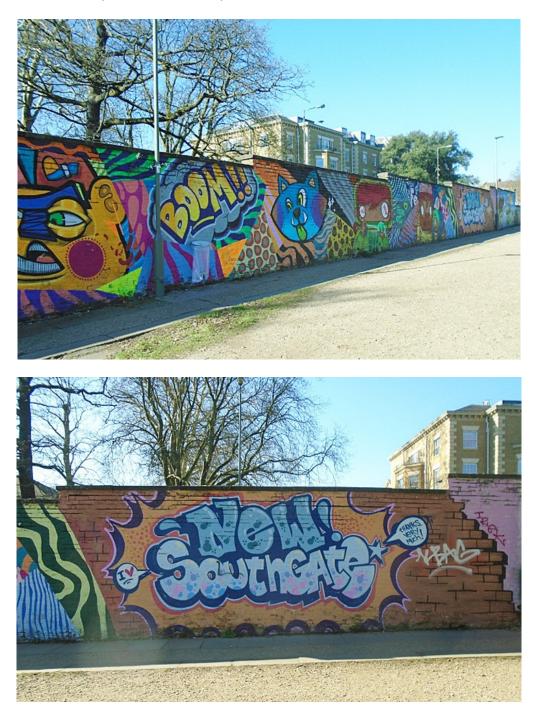
John Attfield (Royal Pharmaceutical Society)

NEW SOUTHGATE STATION IMPROVEMENT

In 2017 a group entitled Friends of New Southgate Station A north London community project, started to transform neglected areas of the station, particularly the line path on the western side which abuts Regal Drive. Initially they installed two planters either side of the western entrance to the station together with a large log planter. Unfortunately, their efforts were sabotaged by person or persons unknown who decided to steal the flowers and plants.



Undaunted, the next project was to brighten up the long wall beside the path leading up to Friern Barnet Road and they used two Brazilian street artists to create colourful images. They intend to try and improve other areas of the station including planting more areas on the platforms in co-operation with local volunteers.



The whole project was the work of GrowN22 which has undertaken a number of projects in Wood Green. Anyone who would like to help them in their work can contact them at hellogrown22@gmail.com. Their website is wwwgrown22.com.

MILL HILL DISASTER

by John Philpott

During her schooldays, my sister-in-law Frances travelled daily between her home in Friern Barnet and her school in Canons Park. A recent visit to Highwood Ash on an "open garden" day brought back this recollection of a particularly memorable homeward journey

"I was coming home from school with some of my friends in October 1950 when we saw a plane flying very low over the houses at the end of Canon's Drive. It was making an incredibly strange loud noise. We went on to catch a 251 bus which was stopped at the bottom of Highwood Hill as the road was completely blocked by a plane that had crashed at the top of the hill. We had to wait for a long time before the road was clear enough so that we could continue our journey home."

The plane was a Dakota of British European Airways, which had taken off from Northolt *en route* to Scotland, when one of its two engines failed. RAF Northolt was in use as a civil airport from 1946 to 1954, when Heathrow opened. The Dakota (Douglas DC-3) first came into use in 1936, was used in its thousands as a transport aircraft during the Second World War by the USAAF and the RAF, and by many airlines worldwide following the war.

The crash was widely reported in the newspapers of the time, including many in Scotland, where the majority of those on board, crew and passengers, lived. For example, this is the report in *The Dundee Courier* for Wednesday, October 18th, 1950:

"MANY SCOTS DIE IN AIR LINER CRASH. Only One Survivor of 29 Aboard. DAKOTA HITS ROOF AND FALLS BLAZING IN GARDEN. Pilot Turned Back After Engine Trouble.

A British European Airways Dakota, bound from Northolt to Renfrew, crashed at Highwood Hill, Mill Hill, London, yesterday and was burned out. Passengers and crew numbered 29, and only one survived—a male steward, who was seriously injured. The passengers included 15 men, 8 women and a baby.

The Dakota tore through the branches of some trees and the port wing struck the roof of a cottage. As the plane crashed upside down in the grounds of Highwood Ash petrol tanks blew up.

A man who was on the scene said: "No one could get near the plane, it was burning so fiercely." The survivor was found, badly injured, more than 100 yards away from the plane.

The Dakota had taken off about half-past three, but shortly afterwards the pilot, Captain Carson, radioed that one engine had failed, and he was trying to return to Northolt. There was no further message from the plane. Mote Mount recreation ground adjoins Highwood Hill, and it is thought the pilot tried to reach that as a forced landing ground.

MISSED JUDGE'S HOME

But the Dakota, losing height, struck the trees at the rear of Highwood Cottage and the port wing struck the roof. It crashed upside down in the grounds of Highwood Ash, where Mrs Ivar Gunn was sitting having tea with her cook.

The plane narrowly missed Highwood Lodge, the residence of Mr Justice Sellers. Lady Sellers was at home. Mrs Ivar Gunn said she heard explosion like



Douglas DC-3 Dakota

thunder and ran out to find the plane in her garden. Mr M. Higham, of Mill Hill, said the plane struck a tree, spun around, lost a wing and crashed in flames.

It hit a roof top, ploughed through a w-all and landed in the garden. The port wing remained on the roof of the house next door. The fuselage quickly burnt out, only the nose, the tail and part of the starboard wing remaining.

One propeller was found lodged more than a foot deep in the nearby roadway. Telephone wires were torn down. Fire brigades from all over Middlesex raced to the scene and sprayed the wreckage with foam.

DIVED UNDER TABLE

In Mrs Kathleen Pateman's garden lay branches of trees which the Dakota had torn down. "I dived under the table in the sitting room", she said, "as tiles and bits of trees came through the kitchen roof." Hilary Preston, a 15-year-old nursemaid, told a reporter: "I heard an explosion then a terrific crash. The wall round the garden of Highwood House had been smashed down and all I could see was a mass of flames."

THREE CHEATED DEATH

Mr J. Neilson, Renfrew-based member of BEA staff, was due to return on the plane to Renfrew, but was unable to do so because it was full. Two others who missed the fatal journey were booked passengers, a man and a woman, who failed to join the flight.

MINISTER'S SYMPATHY

Lord Pakenham, Minister of Civil Aviation, who went to the scene of the crash, said, "I would like to express my deep sympathy for all those bereaved." Air Commodore Vernon Brown, chief inspector of accidents, of Civil Aviation, and Mr Peter Masefield, chief executive of BEA, examined the wreckage. Mr Peter Masefield said — "The chairman and chief executive wish to express on behalf of all members of the corporation their deepest sympathy with all those who have been bereaved by this accident. A full investigation will take place."

Richard Munn, one of the passengers killed, was a Gourock butcher. Mr Munn and his wife had been on holiday in the South. But Mrs Munn did not like flying and made the journey by train.

GLAD NEWS FOR WIFE

Word that Scots steward, 32-year-old James M^cKissick, was alive was given to his wife Anne at her home at Berkeley Street, Glasgow, minutes after she had heard of the disaster. "Thank God he's safe." she exclaimed, as she burst into tears and hugged her 3-year old son."

In following weeks, newspapers reported Mill Hill residents' "resentment" at a plan to aid the accident investigation by re-enacting the flight over the same route with a Dakota carrying ballast, cutting one engine at the point where the pilot of the crashed plane had reported engine failure. BEA gave the assurance that the flight would take place at a safe altitude. The plane would be flown by BEA's chief pilot and among the officials on board would be Peter Masefield, its CEO. The investigation started the following January, chaired by a KC, assisted by a Group Captain of RAF Transport Command and a senior captain of British Overseas Airways Corporation. It found that a major contributory factor to the crash was the failure of the pilot to retract the undercarriage. The Dakota was capable of flying on one engine, but the increased drag caused by the lowered undercarriage prevented its gaining height. Frances found evidence of the crash still visible today in the repaired garden wall of Highwood Ash. Newsreels of the aftermath of the crash can be viewed on-line. Search for: Airliner crash at Mill Hill British Pathé News.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Our 18th AGM will take place on Wednesday 22 May, before the talk on 'Evacuation in World War Two' and we hope to see you there. An invitation, together with a copy of last year's minutes, is attached.

SUBSCRIPTION RENEWAL

For those of you who have not yet renewed your subscriptions for the year commencing 1 April 2019, a further copy of the Membership Renewal Form is enclosed. If you have not renewed by 1 June, you will no longer receive copies of the Newsletter.

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