

[107 The History of Newlands Corner by Trevor Brook, online 17 September 2020.mp3](#)

1 hour 18 minutes, including Ralph Samuel. There is also a set of 190 slides accompanying this talk.

In Highways and Byways in Surrey of 1908, Eric Parker wrote:

Pewley Hill is dull enough in itself to-day, when the down grass has gone and the bricks are multiplying, but it leads to one of the wildest and oldest and sweetest of all scenes in the county. You must go over Pewley Hill to come to the downs, and the downs between Guildford and Netley, by Newlands Comer, above Albury and Chilworth, are for me the loveliest spot in Surrey.

Newlands Corner is famous for its views.

The Leith Hill range is across the south-eastern horizon, while in front the rising ground of the sand is backed by woodlands of the Weald, with the Sussex Downs beyond.

St. Martha's, crowned by the church, is on the right.

Towards the south west there are Hindhead and Blackdown.

Sheep grazing is not something you see here nowadays!

This postcard from the 1930s claims:

The Black Cottage, over 200 years old.

The first building to be erected at Newlands Corner....

And this is how it looked in 1976.

Ordnance Survey maps from 1873, show woodland to the west, named The Roughs.

East of the road was simply fields and farmland.

To the north, was Guildford Race Course on Merrow Downs, already marked as disused.

Racing at Merrow lost out to Ascot and Epsom, both of which had closer train stations.

Guildford Races ran for 169 years, from 1701 to 1870.

Its rather modest grandstand, built in 1729, appears in James Seymour's painting of Harriers on the Downs.

The grandstand was demolished and burnt outside Holy Trinity Church by 'guys' on 5th November 1854.

Guildford Golf Club, one of England's first, was established on the same part of Merrow Downs in 1886.

In Victorian times, the Roughs woodland was notable for several areas being marked 'Ancient Yews'.

The cattle trade saw droves of five hundred small black cattle from Wales passing through towards Dorking or Horsham.

By 1916 Ordnance Survey marked the trackway along the ridge as Drove Road.

Now the North Downs Way, an old name was The Tin Way, being a route from the Cornwall tin mines.

Just north of the trackway, there is a bowl barrow, a funerary monument dating from Late Neolithic to Late Bronze Age, 2400-1500 BC.

These were constructed as mounds covering single or multiple burials.

The mound is 19m in diameter and survives to a height up to 1.3m, with a large central hollow indicating that it has been disturbed by antiquarian excavation.

The mound is surrounded by a ditch from which material used to construct the barrow was excavated. This has become infilled over the years, but survives as a buried feature around 2m wide.

The only recorded excavation was by General Lane Fox Pitt-Rivers, who lived at Uplands, in Boxgrove, Merrow, from 1874 to 1877.

He found the Newlands Corner Barrow already damaged and did not spend more time on it, assuming that nothing could be gained from further investigation.

Remains of an extensive cemetery with Roman-British urns were discovered nearby in 1895.

Just north of Black Cottage, is this Victorian country house: Newlands House.

In 1890, John St Loe and Amy Strachey rented the property from Lord Onslow: "*No post, no water and no noise*".

The Strachey's then purchased two adjacent acres from Lord Onslow and, in 1892, built Newlands Corner, with a two storey belvedere in the garden:

He called it: *the best view in England*.

I bought a piece of land on which to build a Saturday-to-Monday cottage, which, though I did not fully realise it at the moment, was close to the Arthur Russells' Surrey house,...

The Ridgeway. The Ridgeway is in Hook Lane, Shere.

No sooner had we pitched our tent in what was then the fascinating wilderness of Newlands Corner, than we discovered that we were only an easy Sunday afternoon walk from our friends.

Soon it became a fixed habit with us to descend from our Downs every Sunday and walk by a series of delightful bridle-paths to The Ridgeway for tea--a serious institution in a family where there were two girls and four boys.

At the Arthur Russells, when re-enforced by Lady Sligo, who had also settled in Surrey, one heard talk such as I have never known bettered and very seldom equalled. Nothing could have been easier or more stimulating.

Cyclist regiments were once a thing, as Eric Parker describes:

Mr. St. Loe Strachey, one of the earliest founders of rifle clubs in the country, has his home on the downs, and Newlands Corner, the centre of the rifle-clubs of Surrey, has been the scene of assaults and the counter-attacks made by Volunteer cyclists against defending bands of riflemen.

The riflemen have held their own under the severest fire; Ministers and distinguished soldiers have watched them.

This early notepaper shows the address simply as Newlands Corner, Merrow, Guildford.

There is no telephone, of course, but prominently at the top left is: Station – Clandon; London and South Western Railway.

Life was not always calm. In 1913, Police Constable Edwin Lawty of Guildford Borough was awarded the King's Police Medal for Gallantry after arresting a housebreaker at Newlands Corner.

During the severe and prolonged struggle the Constable was injured by being struck by a golf club.

These drawings on the notepaper in 1913 were by 26 year old architect Harry Stuart Goodhart-Rendel, of nearby Hatchlands Park in East Clandon.

They have an intriguing inscription: *Sketches to amuse Amabel...* and Amabel was the Strachey's 19 year old daughter.

Goodhart-Rendel later became known as a writer and pioneer in the appreciation of 19th century architecture.

This photo by Percy Lloyd of Albury shows that daughter Amabel, aged 15, riding her horse at Newlands Corner.

Amabel's father, St Loe Strachey, was editor of *The Spectator* for 38 years, from 1887 to 1925.

Lytton Strachey visited: "*A most gorgeous newly-painted scarlet motor car took us to and from the station*" Lytton wrote to his mother in 1908, "*and St Loe insisted on my wearing one of his numerous fur coats, so I felt very grand.*"

"In the evening we all went to the Parish room in the village, where Amy Strachey's 'Masque of Empire' was performed – mainly by village boys and girls. Amabel was Britannia, which was the leading part. She looked nice but her acting was too much in the regular affected 'recitation' style, which Pippa thinks she must have learnt from Amy.

I can't imagine anyone acting so by the light of nature.

Amy was most affable and not at all prononcée. When I left she insisted on my taking away the Masque to suggest any improvements that might occur to me.

It is in the main quite harmless – the chief blot to my mind is that at the end Britannia and all the Colonies and Dependencies fall on their knees, repeating Rudyard Kipling's poem 'Lest we Forget' and praying for mercy, etc...

One thing annoyed me. She talked of Queen Victoria as Britain's 'grandest queen'. I begged her to put 'long-lived' instead – or any other disyllabic adjective – pointing out that that could only apply to Queen Elizabeth. But she would not hear of it."

This is a performance for Empire Day 1909, at Gaskyns in Rudgwick, of Amy Strachey's 'A Masque of Empire – Lest we Forget'.

Yet another performance, in 1914 with Violet Frank as Britannia, is on this postcard, at Jolesfield House in Partridge Green.

Six years later, Amabel Strachey is in her wedding dress with her father St Loe, at Newlands...

before the ceremony at St Martha's Church...

where she married another family friend who was an architect, Clough Williams-Ellis.

St Martha's Church register of July 31st 1915 shows Clough Williams-Ellis as a Lieutenant in the Welsh Guards, aged 32.

Amabel was 21 and the Rector of Albury, Reverend H F Crowley, officiated.

Their wedding received national press coverage.

The Sketch newspaper had *MILITARY MARRIAGES: A TRIO OF INTERESTING WEDDINGS* with their photograph at the top and the description:

Pleasantly and picturesquely unconventional was the recent wedding of Miss Strachey, daughter of Mr John St Loe Strachey, the well known editor of The Spectator, to Lieutenant Clough Williams-Ellis. The ceremony took place at 8.30 a.m. in the ancient Norman Chapel of St Martha, on the old Pilgrim's Way, outside Guildford, the approach to which is so steep that no conveyance can climb the last half-mile of the hill.

Local newspapers noted the picturesque setting and how:

The bride had to walk the last half mile to the church as no conveyance can climb up the hill to it.

Headlined *Bride Runs Away From Press Photographers*, the Surrey and Hants News had a different angle, declaring the marriage...

was probably the most interesting ever witnessed at St Martha's Chapel. Despite the early hour there was quite a large attendance of people, many of whom had walked from Guildford. Included among the well-wishers were a number of members of the Shere and Albury detachment of the Red Cross Society, of which Mrs. Strachey is commandant, whilst a small section of the men's detachment formed a guard of honour at the chapel door.

Miss Strachey herself has been most assiduous as a Red Cross nurse at her parents' delightful residence, which is now a military hospital, and it will be remembered that she recently recovered from an illness contracted whilst nursing wounded soldiers.

This coverage appeared in Excelsior, in France.

After describing the dress and service the Surrey and Hants continues after the ceremony:

There was a totally unexpected climax. The photographers once more began to get busy, and the bride, evidently with the object of escaping their attentions, started running down the hill, closely followed by her husband. The photographers gave chase, and one of them failed to notice a rabbit's hole, with the result that he had an awkward fall. The bride and groom ran the whole of the way to the road – a distance of nearly half a mile – where they boarded Mr Strachey's car en route for London.

They then travelled on to the Williams-Ellis family home of Plas Brondanw in Wales.

I discovered that this sepia photograph with its Tennyson poem had once been colour washed...

and here is a crude idea of how Clough and Amabel walking into a golden future had looked, before 105 years of daylight in Plas Brondanw faded its colours.

The hospital mentioned in that wedding report was the Albury and Shere Convalescent Home at the Strachey's house, later becoming the Newlands Corner Auxiliary Hospital.

The Daily Mirror shows an open-air ward and *patients who are suffering from gas poisoning.*

The Surrey Advertiser reported: *Newlands Corner auxiliary hospital opened on April 19th with 22 beds. This number rapidly increased... with the aid of outside shelters in case of an emergency of patients being received suddenly. In November and December, the beds had been kept continuously full with surgical cases from the Surrey County Hospital and the Royal Herbert Hospital, Woolwich. Tents were used for open air treatment through the summer, but as these were hardly suitable for the winter, the generosity of friends of the hospital was called upon to provide revolving shelters. Mr. Strachey had since installed electric light in the shelters to minimise the works of the night nurse. Considering the growth of the hospital, the dining-room accommodation became insufficient, and a gift of £100 was most generously made from the Lord Lieutenant's Fund towards the cost of building a new dining room.*

In the Annual Report Mr. Strachey said that many people would be inclined to ask how it was that the hospital could not manage on the Government grant. The first answer is that it was due to the isolated position of Newlands. From the economical side it was not an ideal place, since it was four miles from most places, and two miles from anywhere. The workers were not within walking distance, in the sense that they were in the towns, and could not go home to their meals. Therefore, there was the expense of housing and feeding the staff. They were delighted that should be done, but it put more expense on the hospital. The cost of haulage was also an expensive item. The hospital was installed with a system of massage and electrical treatment, with the result that very special cases were received, and special cases meant special expense. He pointed out that the accounts did not include capital expenditure involving altering the drainage system at the hospital, doubling the electric light supply, and the hot water supply. The meeting closed with vote of thanks.

In the centre of that group is the house owner, Mrs Strachey

Her husband wrote: *Four and a half years is a long time to be out of one's house. It is a still longer time in which to turn your home into an institution and yourself into a matron. Altogether some eight or nine hundred men passed through the hospital.*

The doctors of the Royal Herbert Hospital, Woolwich, with which we were affiliated, and Colonel Simpson, the A.D.M.S. of that Hospital, soon found out that Newlands air and Newlands care were excellent things for difficult and anxious cases.

In the centre of this group is the Strachey's daughter Amabel, now Mrs Williams-Ellis.

But most extraordinary in that 1915 photograph is the black nurse.

The Red Cross Voluntary Aid Detachment VAD records list many volunteers at Newlands Corner, including the local names Botting, Bray, Coe, Heath, Parfree and Wood.

The black nurse, however, is the only one without a red cross, so she presumably came from a different organisation, and there is no clue yet to her name.

In the Surrey Advertiser: *The Newlands Corner Hospital begs to thank the Rev W. E. Peters for his generous gift of eggs, and the anonymous donor of a large box of collar studs for her exceedingly useful gift, with which the Quartermaster's department is delighted.*

Amy Strachey states in the 1916 Annual Report: *A second certified masseuse has been added to the staff, and the apparatus for electrical and radiant heat treatment has been more than doubled, while Amabel's bridesmaid:*

Miss Brock continues her excellent services as Head Masseuse.

[Edith Balfour Brock, "Boreau" Hendon Lane, Church End, Finchley, in 1911: 20, Student of Physical Culture, 9 Sylvan Road, Snaresbrook, Essex, born Paddington, Mention October 1917, MBE 1 April 1920, ?married 1920]

Down the hill at Clandon Park, Lord Onslow had advised his wife, Violet, not to turn their own hospital into a convalescent home: *"as the men would get into awful trouble with the women". "I should pass on as many cases ... as fast as you can – they are only a nuisance and get the girls in the family way".*

This photograph in October 1915 shows soldiers sitting outside the newly constructed dining room extension, designed by Clough Williams-Ellis. There is a pile of soil to the left and the wall was built, with help from the convalescents, in pisé, or rammed earth. You can see its rough texture at the right hand part of the wall, where the white wooden shuttering has yet to be completed.

House owner John St Loe Strachey, standing in the left hand doorway, wrote: *A most successful dining-room, designed by Clough, was built as an addition. The ground on which the room was built was found to be quite suitable for ramming, and in a very short time I had a delightful dining-room for the patients.*

My position in the hospital with the men was a strange one. They soon saw that I played the game, and that if I saw them breaking rules, met them, when I was riding, out of bounds, or discovered them at any other of their wicked tricks, I never told tales, or got them into trouble, or evoked any disciplinary reprisals. This intensive cultivation of the blind eye raised me to the position of a friendly neutral and gained for me their confidence. Besides, I believe it soothed them to think that I, too, had to endure the regiment of women to which they were exposed. They suspected that I also quailed, as they must, before "the Sister-in-charge."

Neither my wife nor her staff nor I ever made any pretence to ourselves that they were plaster saints because their manners were good. They were as wicked as demons and as mischievous as monkeys, and seized every occasion for natural wrong-doing. In fact, they were just like schoolboys, but they observed always the schoolboy law. Quarrel they might, and dislike each other, as they often did, very bitterly, they never told tales of each other. The Belgians, of whom we had some at the beginning, were different. Though often excellent fellows, they tended to give each other away, and even complained of each other to the Commandant. But, as one of our men said to me in excuse for the strange behaviour of the Germans, "They was never taught any better. They hadn't the training we've had."

One of the young women here was Amabel's bridesmaid, Miss Edith Balfour Brock, Head Masseuse, awarded an MBE in 1920.

Bordering the hospital, just to the south, and for trained soldiers who had no further military service obligation was the Newlands Corner Surrey National Reserve Camp, to increase resources in the event of imminent danger. Their rectangular enclosure included a canteen and huts.

There were excitements in the area. This German zeppelin, L13, passed overhead on October 13th 1915, *...a beautifully clear night...* About 10pm there was a message from Effingham that a Zeppelin was moving towards Guildford; by 10.05pm it was over Newlands Corner, and by 10.10pm it was

hovering over the borough. Eye witness, William Harvey, said *it was quite low when it first appeared over the town, but rose rapidly to a great height after it dropped the first flare.*

The Zeppelin then moved towards Wood Street turned around and headed back to Guildford. At 10.25pm it dropped another flare, dropped bombs, dropped another flare, more bombs and by 10.40pm disappeared over St Catherine's towards Shalford, continuing to Reigate, Redhill and Croydon.

After the war, here are Clough and Amabel in 1920 with their children, Susan and Charlotte, on the south lawn of Newlands Corner.

In 1925, Clough Williams-Ellis had a local commission for the Duke of Northumberland, designing the Half Moon pond at Albury Park...

which is just in front of the tunnel through Silver Wood.

Immediately post war, building with rammed earth became quite a talking point and its revival started with building this apple store at Newlands Corner.

One photo shows a man ramming earth between shuttering.
Clough William-Ellis designed the structure and St Loe Strachey financed its construction.
The Fruit House was completed with a roof of peat blocks on rough boarding.

This project was followed by a so-called Cottage of Clay.
The work was done by an invalided-out R.A.M.C. sergeant and his son.

The whole work of extracting and building took just under a month – 400 man-hours to be exact, both men received a shilling an hour as unskilled labourers.
The house did, of course, use fire bricks for the hearth and chimney.

This is the pisé bungalow at Newlands Corner, which Clough Williams-Ellis designed and built with rammed earth... for £101.

The house was named White Cottage and it featured in articles and books promoting pisé construction for economical post war housing.

This is White Cottage in August 1976.
Rammed earth did not prove satisfactory in the long term though...

By 1985 the bungalow had been rebuilt in brick.

Beech Cottage next door, with tile hanging, still survives in pisé.

A pisé Wagon-house had also been built at Newlands Corner.
It was described as having plastering on hurdles fixed to the wall.
Without plastic waterproofing at the time, I suspect the damp of the British climate made rammed earth unsatisfactory for houses.

Rammed earth at Newlands would not have been the clay which was headlined in that newspaper article, but rather chalk and flint based soil.
Newlands Corner, marked with the red spot, is defined as chalk in the 1902 geological map.

And is on the summit of the North Downs where it narrows towards the west and the Wey valley gap at Guildford.

Geology used to be of general public interest.
These are men and women on a Geologists' Association Newlands Corner field trip in June 1914.

The abrupt chalk to sand transition going south from Newlands Corner was exploited. Albury Downs Chalk Pit in Water Lane is just 500 metres away from Water Lane Sand Pit.

Here is Albury sand pit in 1912...

And Newlands Corner gravel quarry.

Edgar Tunnell wrote: *I remember when the large flintstones were dug up at Newlands Corner and gravel was graded through a grill with varying sizes of mesh.*

In those days workmen took a pride in their work, and the flints were stacked about one foot high in a rectangle, the sides and top were very straight and level. Fossil hunters used to come from miles around to inspect those piles...

My Father showed us what to look for in the shape of Shepherd's Crowns.

The stones were spread on the roads and pressed into the surface with heavy steamrollers, which used to be parked by the pond in Merrow, where they sucked up water for the boiler.

The driver would put the end of the hose on a shovel to prevent taking in any mud with the water.

In 1929, actress Elsa Lanchester, married to Charles Laughton, went to dinner at the home of the architect and town-planner, Clough Williams-Ellis, a vibrant, energetic man with a handsome, weathered face, and his wife Amabel in Hampstead.

Elsa told them of her problem. Clough had just the place they needed: a cottage in Surrey he was about to give up because he was going to spend much of his time at his new and substantially celebrated model village, Portmeirion in Wales.

As soon as Elsa heard the description of the cottage, her heart skipped several beats. She telephoned Charles excitedly at his theatre. The cottage was called Stapledown, it was only 28 miles from London, and was built 625 feet up in the woods with bracken growing all the way to the front door. It was about two miles from the nearest village, and was surrounded by pine trees and bluebells. That Sunday, Charles and Elsa took the first available train with Clough to see the cottage. They fell in love with it at once. It was thatched, built of wood, and supported by pine-tree trunks about one foot off the ground.

Evacuee Ann Savage remembered a visit: "There," says Mrs. Samuel, "There it is. The biggest tree house you'll ever see."

In front of us, in a clearing, is a beech tree. It is very tall and straight. It branches into an umbrella of orangey leaves high up in the sky...

Built completely around the smooth, fat trunk is a wooden house. It has a balcony supported by thick posts, all the way around it. Wooden steps lead up to the platform.

"Who built it? What children does it belong to? Where are they?"

"Just a minute," laughs Mrs. Samuel, "It is not a play house. It is a real house and it's the home of a famous film star named Charles Laughton. He comes here with his wife when they are on holiday."

"Will he come here soon?" I ask. "Can we ask him if we can see inside?"

"No, I don't think so Ann. He may not come again until the war is over."

In the 1930s, Clough Williams-Ellis was to build the Laughtons a brick cottage in the grounds.

Stapledown became a binding factor in the marriage. In 1929 there was just the wooden house lit by kerosene lamps, with a hole in the garden doing service as a toilet. Later they had an Elsan outdoor septic tank, which unfortunately became known as Elsa when the n was rubbed off.

A man called Burns used to drive up from the village of Clandon to cook the vegetables for them – which took two hours to boil potatoes – to grill steaks or fry them on iron griddles over the wood fire.

They washed with tin jugs of water and tin basins, often they used cold water, because it took an hour to make it even lukewarm on the burner.

But the Laughtons didn't think of it as primitive. They enjoyed the blazing fires, with an endless supply of wood for kindling and the quiet nights, even when it was so cold they had to heap six blankets on the beds.

When they weren't at their houses in California or London, and staying at Stapledown...

the Laughtons would attend The Barn Theatre in Shere and once the brick house was in use...

their original tree cottage was used as a rehearsal and performance space, called The Hut Theatre.

Newlands Corner appears on John Rocque's map of 1762.

The origin of the name is claimed to be highwayman Robert Newland.

A sign at the Bull's Head in West Clandon, which is listed as circa 1500 and was once two cottages, states that Newland slept there.

By 1921, there were both local buses and coach tours from London to Newlands Corner, excitingly also featuring Leatherhead, Dorking and East Clandon!

In 1925, the Stracheys built themselves a new house, further back from the road...

designed by Clough Williams-Ellis and called Harrowhill Copse.

It received a 3 page spread in Country Life's 'Lesser Country Houses of Today' feature.

They then sold their original home to Roper Spyers, who opened it as Newlands Corner Hotel.

The hotel initially kept the building's fine library, here around 1930.

Now as a hotel, this is that same window by the south lawn where Clough and Amabel had been sitting with their children in the earlier 1920 photograph.

Newland's most enduring story is the unexplained disappearance of Agatha Christie, in December 1926.

Her car was found abandoned 'in a hedge,' with the lights left on, at the chalk quarry down Water Lane.

Agatha had left her first husband...

Colonel Archibald Christie RFC, and 7 year old daughter Rosalind at home, The Styles in Sunningdale, at 10pm on Friday 3rd December.

She left a note to her secretary that "*I must get away. I cannot stay here in Sunningdale much longer.*"

The episode became a huge story in the local and national press.

The *RIDDLE OF NEWLANDS CORNER* reported:

Hatless and Coatless at 6am

Husband's Three Theories

Few problems of a more difficult nature have been placed before the Surrey police than the strange disappearance of Mrs Agatha Christie.

At 6:15am, a gravel pit worker from Merrow, Edward McAllister, on his way to work was asked by a hatless lady without a motor-coat to start a motor car 50 yards from the Newlands Corner crossroads.

It then proceeded slowly towards Merrow and away from Newlands Corner. It was still dark, but McAllister saw the woman in the light of the headlamps, and from his description of her the police were satisfied that she was Mrs Christie.

At 8am, George Best, a gypsy boy who had walked up from Albury Street encountered Mrs Christie's two seater Morris Cowley coupe 300 yards from the Corner on the greensward, with its bonnet stuck in a hedge the front wheels actually overhanging the edge of the chalk pit. Only thick hedge growth prevented it from plunging into the pit.

This 1912 glass plate shows a geological visit to Water Lane chalk pit.

Shortly afterwards, Frederick Dore, a car mechanic, arrived and found the battery flat, the gears in neutral and the brakes left off, as though: *"the car had been allowed to run down the hill"*.

He walked up the hill to the refreshment kiosk run by Mr Alfred Luland, who was given charge of the car while Dore went to Newlands Corner Hotel to telephone the police...

Dore said a gypsy girl had heard a car at about midnight being driven along the top of Newlands Corner.

A fur coat, some other clothing, an attaché case and an expired driving licence were left in the car. Police dredged both the mill race beside the road approaching Albury Mill...

And Postford Pond by the gunpowder works.

Somebody had been into Stapledown where, in summer, Amabel Strachey wrote her novels. The end of a loaf of bread and a poison bottle were found there.

Divers explored the Silent Pool and over 40 square miles of the Surrey Downs were examined during the week.

A massive public search ensued.

Authors Dorothy L Sayers and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, from Hindhead, joined the hunt. Conan Doyle contacted a medium.

Constables from Berkshire, Kent, Surrey and Sussex joined the search.

Colonel Christie was suspected of murdering his wife. A note found in a hedge 20 yards from the car, turned out to be a hoax.

Home Secretary William Joynson-Hicks pressured police to do whatever it took to find her.

Over one thousand police and fifteen thousand volunteers searched.

The following weekend...

hundreds of motors arrived quite early on Sunday morning, and other eager searchers in their thousands, possibly inspired by the offer of £100 reward made by one of the dailies, arrived by bus, charabanc and cycle. The line of vehicles stretched for miles along the road.

Upwards of a dozen different dog packs including Airedales, bloodhounds from Sussex and St Albans and beagles joined in the hunt for the missing lady who was aged 35 and 5ft 7in tall.

Flares were found necessary at Newlands Corner to guide searchers who had lost their bearings in the mist.

These searchers taking a break are on a charabanc from Reigate.

One villager said: *A dead rabbit could not have remained undiscovered.*

A motor tractor was used to crush down the undergrowth and two aeroplanes combed out the district from the air.

Eleven days after her disappearance, variously reported as a banjo player Bob Tappin or a maid, identified Agatha Christie staying at the Swan Hydropathic Hotel in Harrogate.

She had checked in as a South African, Mrs. Theresa Neele of Capetown who was recuperating after losing a child... copying the surname of Nancy Neele, her husband's mistress.

With luggage of only one small dressing-case, she was a popular guest at the hotel, sang, enjoyed the dances, played billiards... and appears to have been a diligent reader of the newspapers.

It emerged that Agatha had written a letter to her husband's brother in Woolwich saying she *felt rather queer* and was heading to a *Yorkshire spa*.

Colonel Christie travelled to Harrogate and stated that his wife was suffering from *a complete loss of memory and does not know who she is* after concussion.

“Three years have dropped out of her life. She recognises me, but does not recall our child Rosalind. It is a terrible tragedy.”

Even the New York Times carried the story on its front page.

The Daily Express concluded:

“the joke was on the police, who argued that she was lying dead near Newlands Corner, the willing crowds who tramped the downs in search, and the good people who saw her at various irreconcilable times and places”.

Afterwards, Surrey police sent a bill for £25 to Colonel Christie, as the cost of sandwiches and drinks for police searchers.

The Times claimed Christie had been spooked by her own house. *“It stands in a lonely lane, unlit at night, which has a reputation of being haunted. The lane has been the scene of a murder of a woman and the suicide of a man. ... ‘If I do not leave Sunningdale soon, Sunningdale will be the end of me,’ she once said to a friend.”*

Perhaps Agatha Christie had walked to Chilworth and Albury Station, the nearest to her abandoned car in Water Lane, to begin her journey to Harrogate.

Or, possibly as newspapers thought, to the tourists’ main station: Gomshall.

Or Clandon. Or Guildford Station. It was never explained.

In the Guardian in 2000, the daughter of Nan Watts, Mrs Christie’s sister-in-law and friend, said Mrs Christie was secretly hidden by Mrs Watts at her Chelsea home, before she kitted her out at the Army and Navy store, gave her money, and put her on a train the following afternoon to Harrogate. [Guardian 27 October 2000]

In 1929, the Surrey Advertiser reported:

NEWLANDS CORNER TIDY FOR WHITSUN

WOMEN CRUSADERS HAND OVER TO WARDEN HALF A TON OF LITTER

Combustible rubbish being burnt. Bottles dumped in gravel pit.

The newly appointed commons keeper tended the bonfire – “This is our final effort here”, said Miss Bray.

In 1932, Flora Russell, who lived at East Hills in Farley Green, complained to the Campaign for the Protection of Rural England [CPRE] about motorists littering Newlands Corner, suggesting that an AA scout be employed to solve the problem.

Car parking was originally beside the hotel and development really got under way in 1932. In the Surrey Advertiser:

Mr. Roper Spyers, of the Newlands Corner Hotel, had applied for permission to erect three petrol pumps in the car park at Newlands Corner, ...

The car park is to be improved, with an attendant in charge; a more attractive flood-lit tea garden is projected, where it is proposed to have music and moonlight dancing and a keeper is to be appointed to prevent the disfigurement of the Common by picnic parties leaving litter.

Petrol pumps would be installed for the convenience of users of the park, and a steel shelter erected so that cars could be given any attention necessary.

Asked if there had been any difference in the numbers of motorists using the park since the charge was first made a month ago, Mr. Martin said that there had actually been an increase. It is to the benefit of the public, he added. Before, people left their cars in the park, and picnicked on the downs, making a terrible litter. Now there is a full time man to stop them making any mess.

The fee has enabled us to plan a decent car park with proper amenities. We are going to install a power plant to flood-light the whole park and the tea gardens themselves will be floodlit. We are clearing up the whole place. Some of the unsightly wooden buildings will come down, and in the centre there will be a bandstand, for we hope to have moonlight dancing in summer time.

When the alterations are complete we shall have really a beautiful tea garden here. The petrol pumps and the shelter will be so built that they will not be easily visible from the road, and will not spoil the natural beauty of the Corner, they will, of course, be in the car park itself. The park will also be properly surfaced.

Concerns continued: *For some considerable time now, since motorists were forbidden to park their cars on the greensward at the Corner, there has been a field which has been used as a free car park... It is no longer free. A charge of sixpence is made for all cars parked, but in return the users of it are promised various improvements.*

The first impression presented by a perusal of these proposals is that they will mean the desecration and vulgarisation of one of the most beautiful and most popular summer resorts in Surrey.

This was the Colonnade at the hotel, with the tea gardens beyond.

In letters to the editor:

Sir, I note that a charge of 6d. is now levied on any motorist who wishes to park his car. Surely the powers who have turned off the motorists should, in fair play, provide a free parking area.

I would also point out that the beautiful walk from the corner towards Guildford is now quite spoiled by the mad charging of horses, often under very doubtful control, which scatter mud and turf over the pedestrians. The beautiful turf is turned, and another haven of peace departed.

Yours. etc., A LOVER OF SURREY

This is the Newlands Corner Reserve Garden, with the hotel beyond.

The Surrey Advertiser warned:

...we shall rejoice unfeignedly if our fears can be proved to have no substance. Much will doubtless depend upon the manner in which the proposed developments are carried out, and the character of the control to be exercised over the pleasure gardens.

But we think it right to sound a note of warning, so that the public may know what is contemplated and that those who are interested in the preservation of the amenities of Surrey may use what influence they have to see that nothing is done that can mar the enjoyment of perhaps the most beautiful piece of country to be found in the county.

This snapshot of hotel staff and guests in 1939 is fascinating.

The Hotel Proprietor, Roper Spyers, is MA Oxon and a Barrister-at-Law. There are a Manageress, a Bookkeeper, two General Labourers, Chambermaids, Waitress, Chef, Porter and a Night Porter.

Guests included a Certified Midwife, two Farmers, Secretary to the Congregation of a London Church, George Sansom a Diplomat, Anne Knowles a Childrens' Nurse, Ernest Jacklin an Advertising Sales Representative for Punch magazine, Agnes Brooke with General Duties in Running a Bridge Club and Arthur Barker, a BBC Overseas News Editor.

This was Newlands Corner Tea Gardens

And the Old Farm House tea garden in 1928

This postcard's sender wrote to a Miss F Nunn in Workington:

My Dear,

Claud and I have just walked up to this spot – there is a gorgeous view –

about 40 minutes walk from "Willoughby".

- which is Willoughby at No.13 Albury Road in Guildford.

The place really did become quite crowded.

Clearly, it was time to get out the pocket flask.

Fairyland was the name given to the area of those ancient yews.

Eric Parker wrote: *On the downs by Newlands Corner, near the great trackway of the trading Britons, stand some of the finest yews in England. To one of a group of trees, a monarch whose descendants count their centuries in a ring about him, belongs a noble poem.*

Mr. William Watson, under the shade of its branches, wrote The Father of the Forest, These are the opening lines : —

*Old emperor Yew, fantastic sire,
Girt with thy guard of dotard kings, —
What ages hast thou seen retire
Into the dusk of alien things ?
What mighty news hath stormed thy shade.
Of armies perished, realms unmade, ?
Already wast thou great and wise.*

The yew motif was used in John Armstrong's 1932 advertisement for Shell:

"Everywhere you go you can be sure of Shell"

The Ancient Yew Group and others have published studies:

The oldest cohort of yews originates about the time of the Norman invasion, that is to say there are yews at the site which are about 950 years old...

There also appears to be a "Black Death" cohort which grew up immediately after 1348. These yews are about 670 years old.

Not as old as the 2,000 years guessed by some authors, nevertheless all of these are, or should be, yews of international standing.

This stretch of road up from Shere was not metalled until 1910 and got its own name as well:

The Sweeps.

What is astonishing is the lack of trees compared with nowadays

There had been huge demand for wood and charcoal by the Chilworth Gunpowder Company along the valley ...

Here's a birds eye view in 1891 described as a portion of the Chilworth Gunpowder Factory.

The Sweeps were still seen as an exciting stretch of road in the 1960s

In the '30s, this RAC box was installed at the junction with Trodds Lane, which used to be the A25...

And a No Parking sign appeared on a small post where Water Lane goes off to the left

In 1933, Commandant of the Surrey Red Cross, Mrs Strachey OBE and Mentioned in Despatches, allowed her fields at Harrowhill Copse to be used for a British Hospitals' Air Pageant...

which promised 16 aircraft in 20 thrilling events and *air liners to fly at 250 miles per hour.*

Trees were cut down along the north side of her field so that planes could take off and there were some free flights for Surrey Advertiser readers.

The Mayor opened the display and declared that...

He anticipated the opportunity of flying over the town would be of guidance to any who had thoughts of the establishment of an airport near Guildford.

The Mayor believed that sooner or later such an amenity would come.

An astonishing 15,000 people paid to attend.

The pride of place in the equipment of the Surrey branch of the British Red Cross Society is an air ambulance, which was on view at Newlands Corner on Saturday.

Another show, for King George Vth's Jubilee, took place at Harrowhill on Easter Monday, 1935, inviting you to fly with Lieutenant Owen Cathcart Jones or in T Campbell Black's machine, from 3/6.

Here is Tom Campbell Black nonchalantly approaching the Avro 540 Cadet he displayed in.

Flyers performed spins, loops and rolls.

There were synchronised parachute jumps, formation flying, wing walking, upside down flying and tricks where a paper streamer released high up in the air was cut repeatedly by aircraft as it descended.

In 1935, the King's Jubilee was also celebrated at Newlands Corner with this huge bonfire being constructed with the help of Alfred Weller's coal lorry from Shere.

In 1939, war was declared.

John St Loe Strachey had died in 1927 but his widow, Amy Simpson Strachey, still lived at Harrowhill and she took in evacuees from London in Operation Pied Piper.

THE CHILDREN ARRIVE September 1st 1939; 6 p.m.

We had been on the alert all day.

An abrupt message had been left at the door early that the children were expected, and that nobody could possibly find time to telephone what time they would arrive.

The hours passed quickly. Even tea-time was over when at last there was a shout, "Here are the cars!"

I had asked for and been promised a helper, no boys, and six girls of about 9 "plus," which is the slang of the London County Council for "and upwards".

I ran downstairs. Two cars drew up. The doors opened on both sides and out of them tumbled eight little beings, none of them more than knee-high and half of them boys.

Well, there they were, and they had to be made the best of. A tangle of gas-masks, knapsacks, tiny great-coats, tumbled all over the floor of the hall, and tins of condensed milk rolled about gaily. The children were hot, dirty, and tired. "Baths and bed!" cried I. Then there arose a united shout: "BUT WE HAVEN'T HAD OUR TEA!" The train dust had to be washed off, however, and the end of it was that a very large and composite meal was given them in bed. The children were absurdly small. It turned out that the two eldest, both boys, were only eight, while a little elfin being with big eyes was found to be only five. It was a kindergarten that we were called upon to undertake, a kindergarten of singularly calm and cheerful babies. There was only one case of tears. But the emotional disturbance was there, for when morning came it was found that a proportion of the children had wetted their beds.

Morning sunshine brought reassurance. The woods and fields, full of great beds of rose bay (willow herb), of which the children could make bunches, stilled their anxiety, and when as the weeks went by, the routine of school, meals, and a free weekend was gradually established and the ordinary ups and downs of everyday life resumed their proper value.

It is the first day of February, five months to the day since the loaded motors drove up to the door. A great shout outside the window reveals the fact that it is an ill snow fall which brings no one any good. The road to school is blocked by deep snowdrifts; but here, in the fields, the children are running about in a white snow to which they are quite unaccustomed. "I never saw anything like it in all my life," says the youngest but one. He is just six years old.

The 1939 Register for Lower Lodge, Upper Lodge and Harrow Hill Copse itself shows Mrs Henrietta Amy Strachey as a JP and ARP serving under the Government Evacuation Scheme, along with the staff of her estate.

Edward Parrott is an ARP on Decontamination work, with his wife, Ellen Parrott, helping with evacuated children.

Sydney Raven is Mrs Strachey's gardener and chauffeur.

[Records of the children are officially closed as they may still be alive.]

All of the teachers and pupils from St Michael's School in Southfields, south London, were billeted around Albury, with eight of the children at Harrowhill Copse.

In *The Way We Were*, Antoinette, Ann or Toni Savage described walking through the countryside to their relocated makeshift school at Cooks Place,...

the Catholic Apostolic Church vicarage in Albury. Win Browne said: *school dinners were served and the washing up done by a rota of ladies from the village.*

The sound of army lorries driving over Newlands Corner in the middle of the night disturbed their sleep but a highlight was going to a little shop in Albury to buy sweets.

"We would walk for miles and had the freedom of woods and fields to play in. The war had little direct effect on us except to prevent us from going home.

"We discovered strange objects had appeared, like tank traps and pill boxes, which the boys were more interested in than the girls. As we crested the hill above the road to Shere, on our way to school, we stopped in amazement at a double row of chunky stone pyramids with the tops cut off. They stretched in a line from the other side of the road as far as the eye could see, across the valley. They looked like rows of giant teeth."

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On 30th December 1940, Albury's WVS organiser Helen Lloyd wrote in her Mass Observation diary: *Had to take two of Mrs Strachey's children to Warren Road Hospital with impetigo – and nits!*

By 31st January:

A child admitted to Warren Road for impetigo has measles there; a second child of Mrs Strachey's has scarlet fever though the school doctor pronounces it to be nothing.

This is Ella Samuel with the evacuee children at Harrowhill.

Helen Lloyd wrote:

The evacuee children are now a much loved part of the family circle and it is no longer a sacrifice but the most natural thing in the world to give up the before-dinner bath and a glass of sherry for the sake of telling their children a bedtime story.

3rd May 1941: *Rung up by Dorothy King-Church at 8.30 to say Mrs. Strachey's house was on fire, made hasty arrangements for billeting the children, settling to have Peter Fitzsimon here.*

Ann Savage, transferred to Ottershaw, was told: *"No-one was hurt at all. The fire was in the roof. The thatch caught alight. The hole in the thatch has now to be mended, so it will be a while before you can return."* Mrs Strachey had told the Canadian soldiers camped there...

...if there ever was a fire, to rescue an ancient Virgin Mary statue in the hall. [Actually an old dark wood Saint Barbara]

8th July: *Lunch with Mrs Strachey and talked about fuel. The new rationing order, which limits all householders to one ton of fuel a month... will mean that we shall never be able to get more anthracite and consequently will never again get hot water!*

These are two of the people who looked after the evacuees.

Harrowhill has anti-blast tape on all the windows and its original Clough Williams-Ellis thatched roof. On the left is 45 year old cook and housekeeper Miss Flora Bailey from Uffington in Berkshire. When she had been 21, in 1915, Flora had been a kitchen maid at the Strachey's Newlands Corner Hospital. On the right is 38 year old governess Mrs Ella Samuel, who was German, with her 8 year old son Ralph Arthur Samuel.

This is Mrs Ella Samuel's certificate: 'Female Enemy Alien – Exemption From Internment – Refugee'. It shows her normal occupation as child's gymnast instructor and that she does not desire to be repatriated.

Ella Samuel became naturalised British in August 1947, while at 26 Lincoln Road in Guildford, which had this 4,000 year lease. She subsequently bought the house outright.

Here is Ella Samuel at Harrowhill with her son Ralph. In the evenings the children would sit around Mrs Strachey's rocking chair in the grand parlour while she read Dickens or Rudyard Kipling's Just So stories, always from signed copies. Kipling used to stay with the Stracheys.

With its red J for Jew stamp, this is 7 year old Ralph Samuel's 'Permit To Leave Germany'. Ralph flew to Croydon Airport in a DC3 on 6 January 1939, as kindertransport. He was alone, with a cardboard sign made by his mother around his neck.

Ralph Samuel recalled how his mother arrived from Dresden three months later, while his father remained in Germany. Ralph had polio when he was 4. After the war, his mother had a copy of a German therapeutic machine made for children at her well baby clinic in Guildford who were suffering from polio or rickets due to malnutrition.

Until Ralph's father was killed at Auschwitz, 25 word letters arrived via the Red Cross in High Street, Guildford. This was his final letter:

My dearest great boy. Proud of school progress.

Aunt Mata stayed, husband went. That is code for the husband was sent to the gas chambers.

We're moving into wood houses. Which is code for going to a camp.

Love to Mummy and you,

signed *Daddy*.

This Stolpersteine pavement plaque on Regensburger Strasse in Dresden reads:

Here lived
HERBERT SAMUEL
Born 1894
Interned 1942
HELLERBERG
Deported 1943
Murdered in
Auschwitz

Ralph went on to Woking Grammar School, then worked for estate agent Chas. Osenton [Charles Lockwood and Edward Smith] on the Quarry Street corner of Guildford High Street [No.103, 1961 renumbering: 44], followed by the LSE [London School of Economics] and now lives in the USA. Five of the evacuees held a reunion in 1998.

They lunched at The Withies, stayed at the Drummond Arms and were welcome visitors at Harrowhill, where they had spent five years of their lives.

In 1939, the GHQ Defence Line was constructed along the North Downs to hamper invasion.

Gerhard Höfner one of the hundred Anti-Nazi Sudeten Czech refugees living in Albury, after escaping the takeover of their own country, wrote:

All the pillboxes were camouflaged, usually made to look like haystacks or small barns. This was done with wooden frames covered with canvas and painted, some with thatched roofs.

One looked like an old castle.

The weakest point would have been the A25 road from Silent Pool to Newlands Corner as tanks could drive right through the defence line.

Therefore, at the point where the road climbs steeply up from Silent Pool and through a defile, concrete cylinders about 4 feet high and 2 feet in diameter with a lifting hook at the top, were left beside the road ready to block it.

Southfields evacuee Derek Keens recalled: Italian prisoners of war from Merrow Work Camp 57 came to help. We used to go and watch them and help eat their baked beans on bread – which they cooked on site (delicious at the time).

Gerhard Höfner continued: A pillbox protected the defile and concrete pyramid dragons' teeth, about 3 feet high were placed in a line each side of the road to prevent tanks driving around it. A little further up where the road levels off before climbing up to Newlands Corner was another defence work. This was a large anti-tank ditch, [about 8 yards across and 45 degree sides] dug at right angles across the road at the lower side. The upper side was protected by dragons' teeth.

Again, concrete cylinders were placed ready to block the road. A pillbox was built beside the road on the Newlands Corner side, by the ditch. This was made to look like a filling station with a thatched roof and wood canvas side painted to look like the office. There were even real petrol pumps outside. I remember seeing this as I lived on Albury Heath and the Farley Green bus used to go over Newlands Corner.

After the war, the road was straightened and the pillbox removed.

Canadian troops had camps at all the locations on this map and formed the majority of the new residents under the trees.

As a high point, Newlands Corner was used for radio aerials.

There was a mobile VHF tender for fighter command, with an RAF camp beside it, and also a short wave installation with aerials on four wooden poles providing more distant coverage.

Evacuee Derek Keens remembered: *Canadian troops were camped on Newlands Corner, where we spent many an hour, the real attraction at the camp was free chocolate and spearmint gum.*

Mrs Instone Gallop said: Both Farley Green and Albury were asked to hold dances for their troops. Treetops Holiday Camp organised several dances. Lasting friendships and one marriage resulted.

Win Browne remembered: A rota of women went weekly to Newlands Corner Hotel, to run a canteen for Canadian soldiers.

Robert Weir recalled: Towards the end of the war, troops started gathering in large numbers on the downs – ideal for scrounging!! We paid quite a number of visits – especially Newlands Corner. There was always a welcome when we visited, the soldiers were very keen to chat to us, there were plenty of doughnuts and other goodies.

They were mainly Canadians with a few English units. They used to show us photos of their families (many of similar age to ourselves). Little did we know what was in store for those poor fellows, they were so cheerful and would wave us off as we left. We never saw the same faces twice!!

Aircraft were flying over us on a very frequent basis, both day and night, many of them were damaged and would land at the airstrip just north of Newlands Corner...

And Merrow Flying Field was another exciting place for children. Properly called Merrow RAF Relief Landing Ground or Forced Landing Field, because it was used to practice emergency landings by pilots from Fair Oaks.

It was simply this hilltop 40 acre field of Warren Farm Dairy at Burwood Farm, west of the Newlands Corner woods, with nothing more than a wind sock near the reservoir beside White Lane.

Inspired by Thomas Charlie White, a mounted division of the Home Guard also operated from the same farm.

This postcard, The Green Track, depicts the public mingling with Canadian troops and their camouflage-painted armoured car in a way that is difficult to imagine nowadays. Many of these Canadians perished in Operation Jubilee, the Dieppe Raid of August 1942. The Regional Civil Defence Commissioner reported a tragedy with a mortar shell in 1943:

At approx. 0845 hrs 22 MAY 2 men of the 101st Light A.A. Battery, 8th Canadian Light A.A. Regiment, Royal Canadian Artillery, were killed as a result of a bomb exploding whilst being handled by them. The bomb was found on 14 MAY on an artillery range near ALFRISTON, Sussex, and was put into a lorry and taken to NEWLANDS CORNER, where the Unit is stationed.

A couple of Canadian soldiers were photographed at Harrowhill with the women looking after the evacuees.

The soldier on the left was Scoop, with Peggy Parrot, Ellen Samuel, Mrs Parrot and Flora Bailey. [Flora Bailey later moved on to Wales with Amy Strachey as her cook.]

An armoured car drives through Albury, where Helen Lloyd wrote:

1 July 1940: *The great excitement is the new anti-tank trench which is to form part of our third line of defence from Reigate to Guildford. The trench is to be 18 feet wide. The mechanical diggers are at work between Newlands Corner and the Weston Woods. Decided that when the war is over, the anti-tank trench would probably be turned into the much debated east and west road.*

6 July: *I am told that Shere is suffering sadly from the French Canadians and their immorality is rife.*

7 July: *I walked through Weston Woods to see our anti-tank trench. It is not dug yet but stretches as a scar across the fields below Newlands Corner. From the chalk pit on the road it sprawls in a series of rectangular turns across Water Lane to Bloody Bushes (White Lane). Carpenters and bricklayers were at work in places.*

Walter Moir was one of 10,000 Canadian soldiers who came to Albury Heath from their camps in the hills to be addressed by Field Marshal Montgomery, who arrived in a Rolls Royce.

They were told they would be under his command but not that they were going to France.

The Montgomery Memorial commemorates his review of troops in May 1944, prior to the D Day landings.

After the war, tourists returned.

This was the transport café on the route to Dover, advertising *Breakfast, Hot Meals and Lyons Maid ice cream...*

Soil taken by Dragon Plant Hire from the A25 when it was widened in 1967...

was used to reshape Waterloo Pond's reed beds at Vale End in Albury. Unusual plants still grow there.

The Barn Tea Rooms & Snack Bar in the 1950s...

And in 1976...

By 1985, the Tasty Burger Bar had appeared.

Following the opening of the M25 and the end of the A25 over Newlands Corner as a long distance route, the transport café became Carlo's Trattoria in 1986.

Under P.J. Davies in the '90s, Newlands Corner Hotel was called The Manor, later becoming part of the Best Western chain.

This century, under different ownership again, it became Guildford Manor, re-styled as a hotel and spa.

The hunt gathered at Newlands Corner on Boxing Day, here in 1991.

In 1939, Newlands Corner's signpost had featured on the cover of John Moore's book, *A Walk Through Surrey*...

While in 1955, you needed to buy a Land Rover: "*which makes light work of heavy duty*". The signpost reads '*Newlands Corner and Merrow, Impassable For Motors*'.

This is entitled 'Newlands Corner looking towards Guildford', by W.H. Durham. Where was this painted from, in those treeless days of 1914?

Even in 1926, some photographs were completely fraudulent. The amazing prominence of St Martha's is simply ludicrous in this postcard entitled 'View from Newlands Corner'!

More authentically, this is looking towards St Martha's hill, over The Roughs.

This is Water Lane, as it was in 1961...

And a little earlier...

And earlier still, with no trace at all of hedges.

In 1949, here is Hindhead Common from Newlands Corner.

The freedom to exploit the countryside was not always welcomed. In philosopher and Brains Trust panellist Professor Joad's extraordinarily titled 1945 book...

'The Untutored Townsman's Invasion Of The Country,' he wrote:
Cities should not be allowed to surround themselves with an uncouth fringe of villas, reinforced by petrol stations, advertisement hoardings, shacks, cafes and other attendant satellites of the villas to hide and banish the country from their citizens.
As for the piles of refuse which our towns dump upon their outskirts, wasting good land, annoying residents and disfiguring the landscape these should be burnt, or made into compost and employed to reclaim the swamps and foreshores...

An outcry ensued in 1946 when Guildford Rural District Council planned to acquire for housing a cornfield, on rising ground in full view of Newlands Corner. By 2015, half a million visitors and 120,000 vehicles came to Newlands Corner each year. Despite that popularity,...

Surrey Wildlife Trust, appointed to manage the countryside by Surrey County Council, proposed a large visitor centre and a coach park with other attractions on the hilltop. Over 10,000 people signed a petition of objection.

Happily, that cornfield remains untouched. So, as Professor Joad wrote:

Its like may be seen in many a beautiful place, especially if it be a high, beautiful place with a view, such as Newlands Corner, which looks over the Tillingbourne valley to the pine hills of Leith, Holmbury and Pitch.

END

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