

THE HIGHER THE FEWER

There's Always Plenty of Room At The Top

By NANCY J. MIDGETT

It's a lovely, sunny day today with just the right quantity of nip in the air to make one feel full of vim and vigor, so let's take a walk. It is a long way I'm taking you, so take it even and easy and we'll cover a lot of ground; are you ready?

First we can just ignore some 3,500 miles of water and start off in the county of Surrey, England. I've walked about these parts many an hour and day and I can promise you that if we do get lost, a few more hundred yards or miles of walking will bring us to a cottage, farm or house where some kind soul will tell us the way, or if we have food in mind and sun is near noon, we can make for a main road and in not too many minutes a bus will be along, the destination board of which will tell us where we are heading and the vehicle itself supply quick transport for our tums.

There are many places we may visit, each with the haunting air of many yesterdays, yet full of the present energy of life with beauty in each changing season and always the promise that round the next coppice, the next bend of the woody road or over the crest of the hill we climb, there will be a lovelier and wider view to urge us on to explore. To name some spots along the way, there is Brook, The Warren, Silver Wood, Shere, Coombe Bottom, Juniper Hill and the Silent Pool and many, many others.

Today we start from the little hamlet of Shere, formerly spelt Schur and Sheere which is the only place of the name in the world and needs no telegraphic code unless some community has been so named in the comparative last few years, that is the last forty years or so.

We go up the road to Shere church and take the field path on the right opposite the church, keeping straight ahead past the forking paths, across two fields to Burrows Lane. Turning to the left down the lane we come to the little village of Peaslake about a mile further on. The sky is blue and new washed by the spring showers and though the tree buds are swelling, very few green leaves are showing except in the sheltered places; the yellow of primroses makes pools here and there by the road sides, in the woods and climbing the rounded hill sides like the mottled shadows cast by passing clouds, it seems as if they too wish to see what is on the other side of the hill. The fields are freshly plowed ready for the sowing and the birds, hungry after a hard winter, are searching the furrows for food.

Passing the village pond at Peaslake we go up the hill and across the common to the church of Holmbury St. Mary and from there we turn right down onto the road by the Holly Bush Tavern. Three hundred yards from there we take a pathway on our left across Pasture Wood to the road to Leith Hill, which we cross and continue on a path between cottages, across the common (common grazing land) to Friday Street, a tiny and out of the past

community. There we turn right, along the path to Leith Hill and from there take a long look at the lovely view while we relax. When rested we back track to Friday Street and by footpaths to Abinger Hammer and Gomshall, we return to Shere, the White Horse Inn, a large, satisfying tea and a lazy evening before bed.

It is good to know something of the history of the country side through which we walked, so here is what information I have at my disposal about two of the places mentioned.

"Leith Hill is — the most elevated hill in the south-east of England. On the top of the hill is a Tower, commanding a very extensive view. Some compute the distance of the circumference (of the view) at 260 miles and from it can be discerned 12 or 13 counties, with part of the sea through Shoreham Gap. The Tower was completed in 1766 by Richard Hull, Esq., of Leith Hill Place, on part of the wasteland of Wotton Estate, granted to him by Sir John Evelyn, Bart. on certain conditions. It bears on the west side the following inscription, showing the purpose for which it was built: (Translated from the Latin) — "That you, traveller, may see the County happy on every side, this Tower, visible from afar, was built at the expense of Richard Hull, Esq., of Leith Hill Place, in the reign of King George III, A. D. 1766, not solely for his own pleasure, but for that of his neighbors and everybody."

"Mr. Hull was, by his own direction, buried under the Tower and within the building on the east wall is a tablet of Portland Stone, thus inscribed: "Underneath this floor lieth the body of Richard Hull, Esq., a native of Bristol, who departed this life, January 18th, 1772, in the 83rd year of his age."

"Till the year 1796, the building served as a Prospect Tower, in accordance with the wishes of Mr. Hull; the privilege, however, was thought to be abused, and it was said to have been a harbour for vagrants and smugglers, so about 1796, the entrance was closed up at the instigation of W. P. Perrin, Esq., of Leith Hill Place, and the neighbouring gentry.

"It was found in this state in 1863, when the Lord of the Manor had it re-opened. Thus the founder's wishes were again respected, but the Memorial tablet remains buried beneath Mr. Perrin's cement.

"During some excavations on Leith Hill in 1837, an earthen jar was discovered containing three sovereigns of Henry VIII, who is represented on his throne, four of Edward VI (two without crowns), one of Queen Elizabeth, a rose of Henry VIII, and twenty angels of the same reign. These coins are now preserved in Wotton House.

Regarding the village of Abinger Hammer, a lovely little place where I have spent many a relaxed hour over a good tea with water-cress grown in the Inn's own cress-beds, the records show much history that in its day would produce anything but peace and quiet for those living near to.

working in Iron penetrated gradually North until the Valley of the Tillingbourne in Surrey became one of the centres, if not the centre of English Iron founding.

"The name Hammer indicates that it was a spot, close to the hamlet of Abinger where the Tillingbourne provided the motive power for the tilt-hammers, and the bellows of the blast furnaces of the local Iron foundries; and today can be seen portions of the Surrey Iron Foundry at the Dorking, or eastern end, of the marsh ground, just where the Builder's Saw Pit is situated.

"Where excavations for building and other purposes have been, and are made, in the vicinity of the Saw Pit, a layer of furnace clinkers has been exposed, which owing to the amount of iron still remaining in them (through the crude and rough and ready method of its extraction), have by the action of rust, welded themselves together into a nearly unbreakable mass. Those clinkers, even if there was no other evidence, are silent witnesses to the exact site where, stood Abinger Hammer Forge.

Regarding to Hatch Farm House, a local residence, the records tell us that "Judging from the older portion of this house, there is every indication that the Hatch Farm House was built at the time of Henry VII, and if not by Bray himself (he having a hobby for building and architecture), then by someone under his direct orders. That he was the proprietor of the Forge, is clearly shown from the discoveries that have been made from time to time, lately at Merstham, of iron chisels and hammer heads bearing the rough sign of a Flax beater, which was, and is, the heraldic device of the Bray family, and the words Abinger Forge.

"In two deeds, drawn up by the then Sheriff of Surrey, Sir William More, of Loseley Hall, a Mr. Eldeston, Master of Abinger Forges, is called upon to contribute large sums of money to provide and fit out ships to prevent the expected Spanish Armada from landing troops on these coasts."

"In the third record, a Mr. Elkington of Abinger Forge, is in

the same year as the former two deeds, haled up to Kingston and fined twenty pounds for not providing for the better upkeep of the bridge paths and tracks of Surrey, 'two horse loads of chalk, sand, or clinkers for every horse load of manufactured iron that was sent from Abinger Forge. This same Mr. Eldeston or Elkington and Sir William More, the Sheriff of Surrey, met together in the Hatch Farm in 1576 'to transact this country's welfare'; because there is still preserved in Loseley Hall, a letter from the Council of Queen Elizabeth, dated from Hatfield, which complains that great inconvenience had arisen from the manufacture of cannons, which being exported into foreign parts, is supplied to pirates haunting the seas, and Sir William More was ordered to visit the Iron Masters of Surrey and forbid them making any more."

Well now! having taken breath, I do see that poor Elizabeth did have her trials and tribulations and home troubles to divert her interest from Sir Walter Raleigh's 'Lost Colony'. Even when the world was 'large and distances great, things still worked "agin or afor," and as since time began, just a little happening away off starts off a long, long chain of events.

STUMPY POINT PERSONALS

Mrs. Nellie Payne, Mrs. Louella Basnight and Juanita Montague returned from Wanchese and Elizabeth City Thursday. Mrs. Payne and Basnight visited their sister and mother, Mrs. Lessie Twiford, who is critically ill.

Mrs. Ruby Best, Mary Wise, Minnie Wise and Melba Hooper spent Monday in Washington.

Mrs. Florine Hooper and Phine Wise attended the Woman's Society of Christian Service, N. C. Conference in Durham.

Sgt. Bill Segriest and family are spending a ten day leave with Mrs. Segriest's mother, Mrs. Cecil Midgette.

Gaskill Payne of Norfolk spent the week end here.

Mr. and Mrs. Melton Hooper of Buxton spent several days at their home here.

Mr. and Mrs. Glenn Twiford spent Sunday with Mrs. A. T. Twiford.

Mr. and Mrs. Horace Hooper and family spent the week end with Mr. and Mrs. John Zachery of Norfolk.

Mrs. Florine Hooper is visiting Mr. and Mrs. Jesse Bell and Mr. and Mrs. John Zachery of Norfolk. Mr. and Mrs. Clyde Payne, Chris and Mike, spent Saturday

in Washington.

Mr. and Mrs. Lewis Porter of Raleigh spent the week end with Mr. and Mrs. George Payne.

Mr. and Mrs. Woodrow Best were in Belhaven Friday.

Mr. and Mrs. W. W. Monette were in Belhaven Friday, where Mrs. Monette was admitted to Pungo District Hospital.

Mr. and Mrs. Mack Brinn were in Elizabeth City Monday.

Mr. and Mrs. C. E. Payne spent the week end in Norfolk with their

son, Dr. Wilbur Payne, and family.

Mr. and Mrs. Oscar Payne and children of Norfolk and Larry Brinn, USCG, Elizabeth City, spent the week end with Mr. and Mrs. Neal Payne.

Thurston Midgett, USCG, is spending some time here with his family.

Mr. and Mrs. Ralph O'Neal were in Engelhard Monday.

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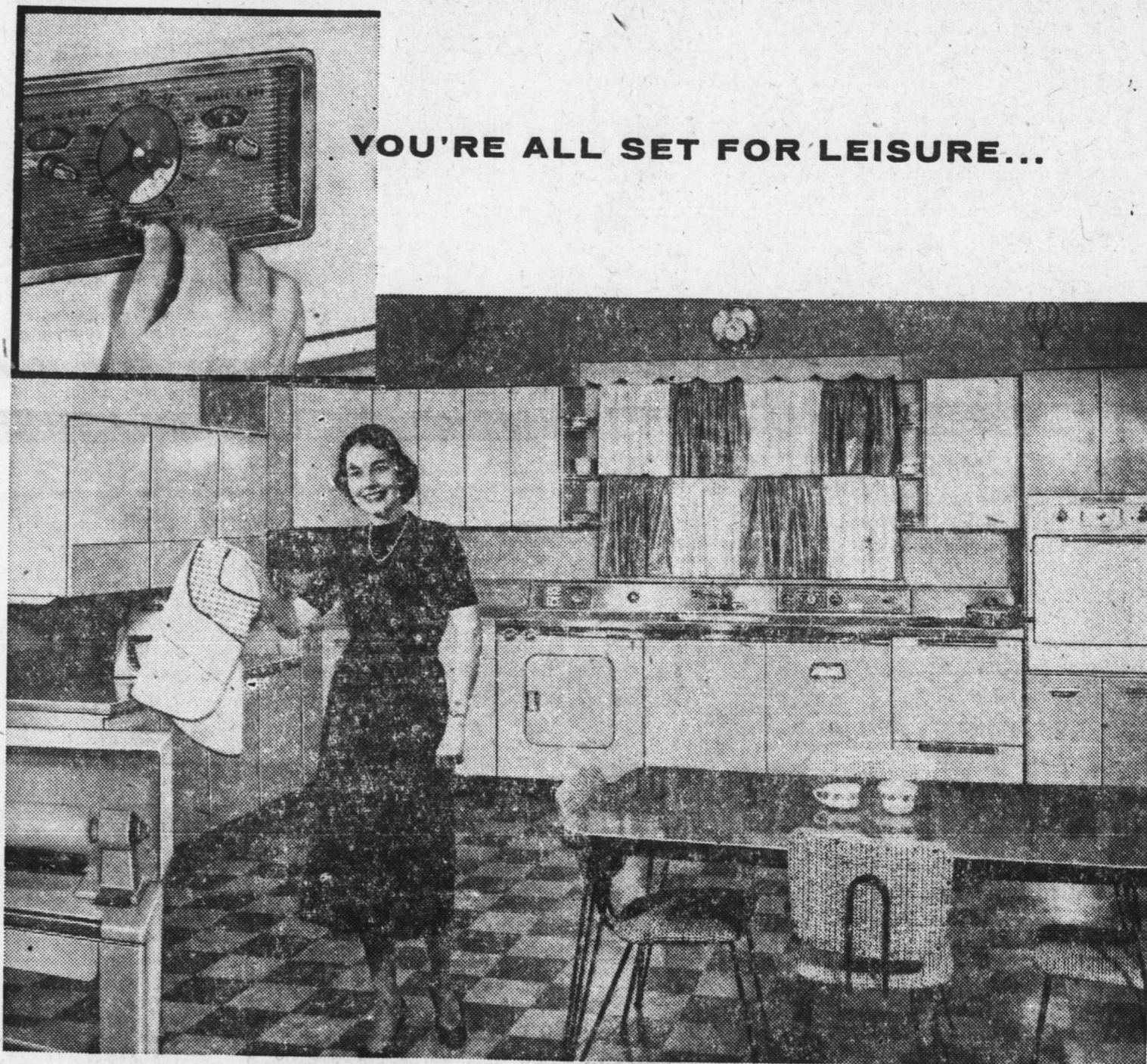
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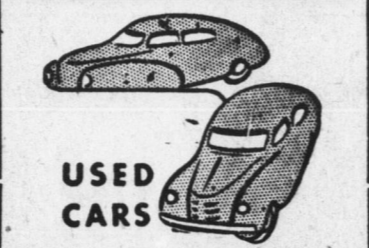
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- USED CARS: 1955 Chev. Bel Air Station Wagon, R&H, Power Glide. 1955 Chrysler 4-door, like new. 1955 Ford Custom, 2-door, R&H O. D. 1954 Chevrolet 4-Door 210 Series. 1954 Plymouth Belvidere, 4-door, like new. 1952 Dodge 4-door. 1952 Willys Six, Station Wagon. 1951 Dodge R&H, white tires. 1951 Dodge 4-door, H. 1950 De Soto 4-door, H. 1950 Studebaker Champion Coupe. 1950 Plymouth 4-door, R&H. 1949 Chrysler 4-door. 1949 Chevrolet, 2-door, R&H \$125.00. 1949 Chevrolet 2-door. 1949 Mercury 4-door, R&H. 1947 Chevrolet Coupe, clean. 1941 Desoto 4-door, R&H. TRUCKS: 1954 Dodge 1/2-ton Pickup. 1953 Ford 1/2-ton Pickup. 1953 Ford 1/2-ton Pickup, Like new, R&H, spot Light, De Luxe Cab. 1953 Ford F-600 V8, Chassis and cab 172" WB, 2-speed axle. 1951 Dodge 1/2-ton Pickup. 1951 Ford Six 1/2-ton Pickup. 1950 Chevrolet 1-ton panel. 1949 Chevrolet 1/2-ton Pickup. Now 15 inch Wheels for Chevrolet-Dodge-Ford. R. D. SAWYER MOTOR COMPANY Your FORD Dealer Phone 116 Manteo N. C. License No. 1969

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