

# BROOME PARK ESTATE.

BETCHWORTH, SURREY.



# AN UNSPOILT SURREY VILLAGE

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## BETCHWORTH AND ITS FUTURE

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES

Sir,—*The Times* has never been slow to defend the beauty of the English countryside against the spoiler, and a village in distress naturally turns to it for aid when the all-destroying builder makes his appearance.

Betchworth was, and is still, one of the few beautiful corners that have been left unspoilt in Surrey. Broome Park, in the very centre of the village, has lately changed hands and a scheme has been set on foot to convert the property into a block of small houses and shops. Betchworth has need of neither. Her populous neighbours, Reigate and Dorking, are already more than fully supplied with both. What sense is there in destroying so uselessly one of the prettiest villages left in this part of England? The new Act, giving additional authority to local bodies in the matter of preserving rural amenities, comes into force on April 1 this year, so that it affords no protection in the present case. The promoters have only just made their scheme public, and presumably their application is now before the Town Planning Committee of the Reigate Rural District Council. There has thus been little time for adequate protest to be made. Betchworth is protesting, but sorely needs a more powerful voice to support its own. Yours faithfully,

WILFRANC HUBBARD.

March 7.

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## DEVELOPMENT OF BROOME PARK

### PLANS FOR SHOPS AND HOUSES

#### BETCHWORTH RESIDENTS' PROTEST

FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

BETCHWORTH, MARCH 10

The proposed development of Broome Park, to which reference was made in a letter published in *The Times* to-day, is causing a good deal of anxiety to the people living in this charming Surrey village.

Broome Park was, in the middle of the nineteenth century, the home of Sir Benjamin Brodie, surgeon to Queen Victoria. It was known then, ironically, as it seems now, as "Tranquil Dale." It has recently changed hands, and application has been made to the Reigate Rural District Council for a certificate under the provisions of the Town Planning Act of 1922, permitting the development of part of the park. There are, in effect, two schemes, for the southern part of the park has been re-sold. The application which has been before the town planning committee of the council is in respect of the northern portion towards the railway station. Here it is proposed to make new estate roads and to build houses at the rate of four to the acre. No decision has yet been reached by the committee, who, I learn, are to meet the owner next week on the site.

Distasteful as this use of the property will be to the residents of the village, their objection to it is far less than to the suggested treatment of the southern part of the park. It is understood that the original plan was to build shops on a portion of the land which is in the centre of the village, necessitating the widening of the road and the demolition of about a quarter of a mile of red-brick wall, mellowed by age and regarded as one of the features of Betchworth. An application for the necessary certificate under the 1922 Act has not yet been put forward, and the residents are in doubt about the intentions of the new owner of the southern side, both with regard to the land and the house.

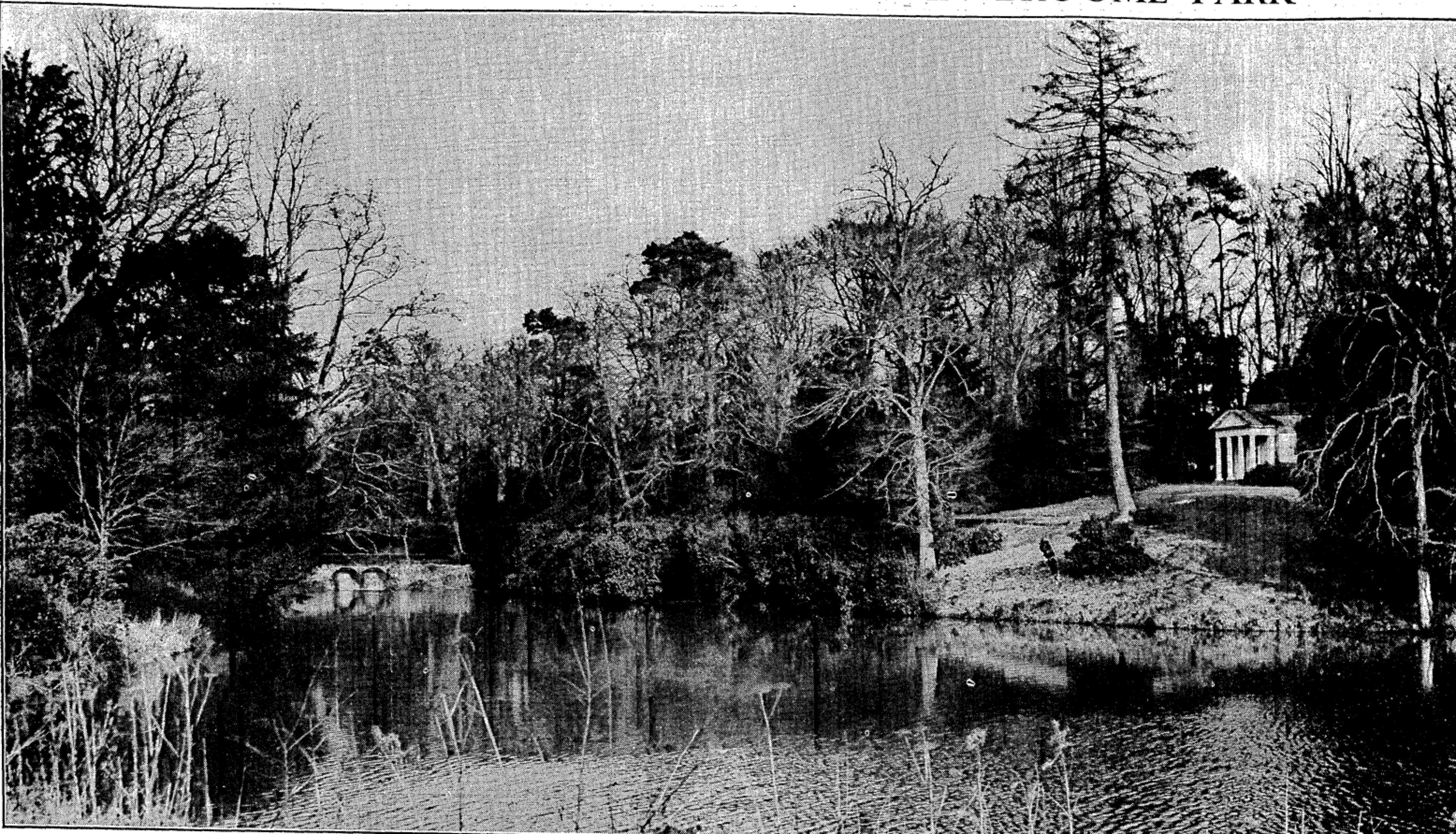
It was not until the end of last month that the objects of the promoters became known locally. Property owners in the district at once called a meeting and decided to make the strongest possible protest against what, in their eyes, would be a maltreatment of a lovely park. They recognize that some development is inevitable, but they emphatically disapprove of the erection of shops and public buildings on the sites proposed. There are, they say, shops in the village and excellent shopping centres in Dorking, Reigate, and Redhill from which tradesmen deliver frequently; and more suitable positions can be zoned for any shops which may be required later on. The whole of the land having frontage to the old main road and facing Broome Park is fully developed with high-class residential property, with a density of approximately one dwelling per acre. The value and amenities of these properties, and of many others in the parish, would, it is urged, be immeasurably depreciated by the "incongruous scheme" proposed, and it is considered desirable that on no part of Broome Park should a higher density than two houses to the acre be permitted. Betchworth is one of the most beautiful villages as yet left unspoiled in Surrey, and the suggested development would go far to destroy its amenities and rural character.

Added to these points is the further substantial one that Betchworth has not been developed in the past because of the commendable conservatism of local landowners, who have been prepared to sacrifice profit for the sake of the preservation of the countryside.

\* Pictures on page 14.



# THE AMENITIES OF BETCHWORTH: IN BROOME PARK





# BROOME PARK

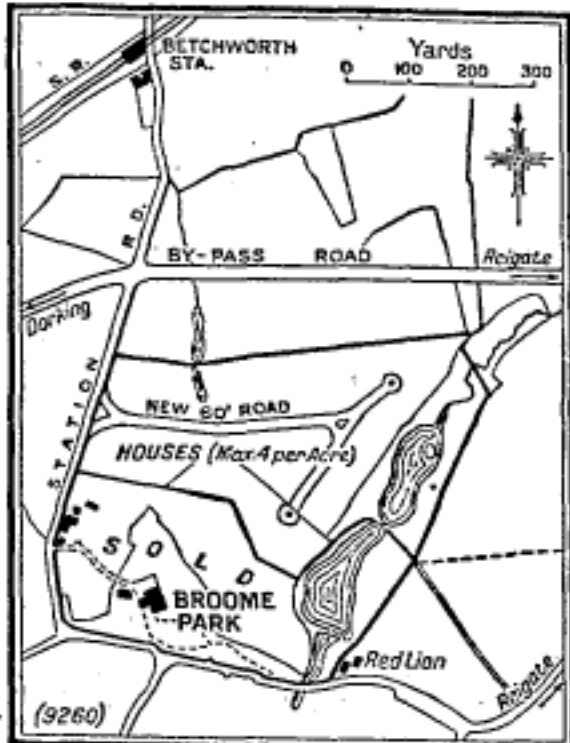
## RESTRICTIONS ON BUILDING

FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

DORKING, MARCH 11

The new owner of the northern part of Broome Park, Betchworth, Mr. L. A. Dibdin, discussed with me to-day his plans for the development of the property for residential purposes.

He made it clear that he is no longer concerned with the southern portion, on which it was originally proposed to build houses and shops, and he also stated that the suggestion of an intention to destroy the amenities of the village is ill-founded. The land he has bought was, he said, sold without any restriction, and he has himself drawn up a restrictive covenant which



builders will be compelled to observe. Other land has also been offered to him for sale for development, so that the desire for rural preservation is not so deep-rooted as those protesting against his scheme would appear to imply.

Betchworth, he argued, must develop. In a month's time it will be within two or three hundred yards of an urban district. It is served by railway and omnibus, and it is close to a by-pass road. It has electric light, gas, water, main drainage, and telephone services, and in these respects is no more rural than Surbiton or Sutton. The amenities of Broome Park have hitherto been enjoyed by one owner. Now it is planned to open it to the enjoyment of about 100 families. The houses will be erected on both sides of a new 60ft. road, which will enter the park in a wide sweep from Station Road. This road will have two rows of trees on each side—a start with the planting of 1,200 of them will be made on Monday—and the promoter intends that no tree in the park itself shall be cut down without his permission. The whole scheme, he said, had been drawn up in such a way that the trees, of which there are many fine specimens, can be included in the general lay-out.

The maximum density will be four houses to the acre, each house will have a minimum frontage of 50ft. and a depth of garden of approximately 300ft. Houses on opposite sides of the road will be 140ft. apart from brickwork to brickwork. The two existing lakes—a photograph of one of which appeared in *The Times* to-day—will be preserved. Mr. Dibdin contends, therefore, that the development, instead of being haphazard and without definite plan, is a carefully co-ordinated scheme which will not depreciate neighbouring property and will not in any way detract from the charms of the place.

The suggestion that there should be only two houses to the acre was ruled out by Mr. Dibdin as financially impossible and as an unnecessary restriction. He pointed out that the four houses to the acre planned by him is a maximum provision, and that it by no means followed that this would be even the average density in the area it is proposed to develop. The houses, he further stated, will be within a few hundred yards of an arterial road, a long way from that part of the village where the old church is situated.

# DEVELOPMENT OF BROOME PARK

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES

Sir,—The statements concerning Broome Park appearing in *The Times* of March 13 will, I think, greatly relieve the adjoining owners in regard to its future. It would appear that the proposal to build shops and otherwise to create suburban development has been dropped, and the house, with about 20 acres, including pleasure grounds and lakes, is still to be retained as a private residence. The lakes have some historic interest and are believed to have been ancient stewponds connected with a small Early Christian monastery, which was probably a resting house for the pilgrims travelling from Winchester to Canterbury along the Pilgrims' Way, which ran along the top of the hills just south of Walton Heath.

Mr. Dibdin's scheme of development will have to receive the sanction of the new Dorking Rural Council and the approval of the Ministry. The layout of his development road seems fairly satisfactory, as he has undertaken to preserve all the trees and amenities, but the question as to density and type of houses to be erected will have to be in accordance with the town planning scheme of the council formulated in consultation with the owners of the adjoining estates. Three principal estates surround the property—namely, the Manor of Betchworth (General Goulburn), the estate of Sir Benjamin Brodie, and the Buckland Court estate (myself).

The hope is that a comprehensive town planning scheme may be adopted to preserve all the surrounding lands around Betchworth Station for a superior class of residence. This area cannot wisely be developed as a suburban dormitory, being only suitable for a good class of residence, and nobody realizes this better than Mr. Dibdin. Owing to the heavy death duties on property it is impossible to expect landowners permanently to exclude their lands from reasonable development. Not only will the town planning scheme for this area have to satisfy the local authority, upon which the landowners are represented, but it is extremely desirable that the Surrey committee of the Central Landowners' Association should also be consulted, and I have no doubt that the technical advice which can be offered will be acceptable to all concerned, including Mr. Dibdin.

I should like to mention that by agreement between the owners of the three principal estates above referred to and the Surrey County Council, under the council's private Act of 1931, there can be no ribbon development along the east and west main road which runs between Reigate and Dorking in the parishes of Buckland and Betchworth.

Yours faithfully,

ROBERT SANDERS.

Buckland Court, Betchworth, Surrey.

# BROOME PARK ESTATE

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## RURAL COUNCIL AND THE DEVELOPMENT PLAN

The Reigate Rural District Council, which becomes an obsolete body at the end of this month, has on its agenda for its meeting tomorrow an application from Mr. L. A. Dibdin for a certificate under the Town Planning (General Interim Development) Order, 1922, in respect of the development of Broome Park Estate, Betchworth, by the erection of dwelling houses, four to the acre, and the erection of shops and public buildings. The Town Planning Committee are recommending the council to grant a certificate for the houses at not more than two to the acre, each plot to have a road frontage of at least 75ft.

The proposals for shops and buildings, which aroused much comment, are in effect withdrawn, as Mr. Dibdin has written to the council stating that since he penned his application he has sold the sites in question.

Several representations and objections were made to the council after the publicity given to the matter, including communications from Brigadier-General Goulburn, Betchworth House; Sir B. V. S. Brodie, owner of lands adjoining; Sir Reginald Butler, Wonham Manor; Mr. F. P. M. Schiller, K.C., The Old House, Betchworth; Major E. M. Selby, Morden Grange; Captain E. H. Goulburn, owner of Betchworth House Estate; the Council for the Preservation of Rural England; Dorking and Leith Hill District Preservation Society; the Rev. E. H. Kennedy, vicar of Betchworth; and others. In most cases the objections were directed to the disfigurement of the countryside.

\* An article on the development of Broome Park, with map, appeared in *The Times* of March 13.

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# BROOME PARK ESTATE

## INTERIM DEVELOPMENT PERMITTED

FROM OUR CORRESPONDENT

REDHILL, MARCH 22

The Reigate Rural District Council this evening granted an application for an interim town-planning certificate to Mr. L. A. Dibdin to develop a building estate on the north edge of Broome Park Estate, Betchworth. The meeting was informed that the proposals to build shops on other parts of the park nearer the village were for the time being withdrawn. A density of two houses an acre with a frontage of 75ft. to each was insisted upon, while there was a further provision that the plans and elevation of each house were to be submitted to the new Horley and Dorking Rural District Council, which comes into being next month.

Mr. R. Sanders made a strong plea to refer the matter back in the absence of a town-planning scheme for the area. Sixty houses were to be built, he said, and he advocated a planning scheme before granting permission to builders to develop this extremely desirable landscape. Mr. Lloyd, who recently disposed of the estate, told the council, of which he is a member, that he sold the property on the condition which was attached to it when he bought it. Before selling it he consulted a neighbouring landowner, who made no protest. While he was abroad all the landowners in the district held an indignation meeting.

This was the last meeting of the Reigate Rural District Council.



# BRITISH AIR DISASTER

## FIFTEEN DEAD

### CRASH IN FLAMES IN BELGIUM

The Imperial Airways liner City of Liverpool, on the London-Brussels-Cologne service, took fire in the neighbourhood of Dixmude, Belgium, when returning to Croydon yesterday afternoon, and crashed. All the passengers, pilot, and crew, numbering 15 persons, were killed. The cause of the accident, Imperial Air-



ways states, is at present unknown. The following is the list of victims, most of whom were British:—

#### PASSENGERS

Mr. and Mrs. L. A. Dibdin, Grosvenor Avenue, Carshalton, Surrey.  
Mr. Louis Dearden, Wright Street, Southport.  
M. Kreglinger, Belgium.  
Mr. A. A. Thompson, Albert Court, Kensington.  
Miss V. F. Forrester Thomson, the Elizabethan House, Henley-on-Thames.  
Mr. Charles Frederick Rowsall, Ridge Green House, Nutfield, Surrey.  
Mr. A. Voss, Upper Brook Street, Manchester.  
Mr. Hugh and Miss Kay McIlrath.  
Mr. Roland.  
Miss Lotte Voss, Cologne.

#### CREW

Mr. Lionel Louis Leleu, Haydon Avenue, Purley (pilot).  
Mr. W. R. Brown, Church Lane Drive, Horley, Surrey (engineer).  
Mr. Ernest Finney Stubbs, Montbelle Road, New Eltham (wireless operator).

As soon as news of the disaster was received in London Major H. G. Brackley, Air Superintendent of Imperial Airways, and Mr. C. A. Barnard, another official of the company, left Croydon by air for the scene. It was announced last night that Major J. P. C. Cooper, Inspector of Accidents in charge of the Accidents Branch, Air Ministry, would fly to Belgium to-day to investigate the accident.

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## **BROOME PARK, BETCHWORTH**

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### **SURREY BEAUTY SPOT SAVED**

Part of Broome Park, Betchworth, Surrey, which was illustrated and described in *The Times* on various dates last March, was to have been built on. Owing to the death of the owner the property has been sold. The buyer intends to keep it as a private residential estate. The risk of the covering of the 66 acres with houses is therefore regarded locally as having been averted. Messrs. Pearson, Cole, and Shorland (Dorking) have been engaged in the various agency transactions relating to the property.

# AN EYE-WITNESS'S ACCOUNT

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## PILOT'S EFFORTS TO AVERT DISASTER

FROM OUR CORRESPONDENT

BRUSSELS, MARCH 28

The City of Liverpool had left the aerodrome at Haren, Brussels, at 3.36 p.m. for London. It took off normally, and nothing untoward happened until the village of Eessen, in the neighbourhood of Dixmude, was reached, when the machine caught fire, as a result, it is assumed, of an explosion, and crashed. According to those in the vicinity, the machine continued its flight for over a mile after taking fire.

An eye-witness gives the following account:—

"When the machine had passed over the village of Clercken an engine caught fire, and in a few seconds the whole machine was in flames. It turned over several times, and the pilot could be seen trying to right it. When the first flames appeared the aeroplane was at an altitude of between 600ft. and 700ft. Finally it fell at an awful speed and crashed in a ploughed field.

"Débris of goods, bags, and objects of all kinds were lying on the roads and in fields for a distance of over 600 yards. A woman passenger, Miss Thomson, threw herself out of the machine when it was about 100 yards from the point where it crashed, and another passenger jumped out just before it touched the ground. The aeroplane was so completely destroyed that only a skeleton of framework remains. Most of the passengers had remained in the cabin and were burned."

The villagers of Woumen hurried to the scene, but from the first it was clear that all efforts at rescue were vain. Imperial Airways at once sent a relief aeroplane and the Belgian company, Sabena, sent two ambulances. Gendarmes arrived from Dixmude and kept the large crowd which was drawn to the spot from approaching the wreckage. In the course of the evening the bodies of the victims were taken to Dixmude in Red Cross ambulances.

The disaster has caused deep emotion in Dixmude and Ypres. M. Forthomme, the Belgian Minister of Transport, has sent a telegram to Lord Londonderry, Secretary of State for Air, in which he refers to the "cruel blow suffered by British commercial aviation," and asking that Belgian condolences be conveyed to the families of the victims.



# MANY BRITISH VICTIMS

## BROTHER AND SISTER KILLED

### THE PILOT'S CAREER

The pilot of the City of Liverpool, Mr. Lionel Louis Leleu, of Haydon Avenue, Purley, was a pilot of much experience, and had been with Imperial Airways since 1926. He was employed by the company as a pilot between Cairo and Basra before being transferred to the Brussels and Cologne service.

Mr. Leleu was in his thirty-sixth year. He was born in London and educated at Streatham College. Entering the Royal Flying Corps as an observer in 1915, he was posted to the North-West Frontier in the following year, learned to fly in Egypt in 1917, and then served in Mesopotamia, returning to England in 1919. He was transferred in 1923 to the Reserve of Air Force Officers, in which he held the rank of Flying Officer until his death. Before entering the service of Imperial Airways Mr. Leleu was for some years with Berkshire Aviation Tours, piloting pleasure flights. He was married.

Mr. W. R. Brown, the engineer on board the City of Liverpool, lived at Church Lane Drive, Horley, Surrey. The third member of the crew, the wireless operator, was Mr. E. F. Stubbs, of Montbelle Road, New Eltham.

Mr. Stubbs, the wireless operator, was the eldest son of Lieutenant Harold Stubbs, an officer of the Army Pay Corps, of Montbelle Road, New Eltham. Mr. Stubbs was 24 years old. He was educated at the Shropshire County School, Shrewsbury. After serving in the Mercantile Marine for three years as a wireless operator, he joined Imperial Airways about four years ago.

### RETURNING FROM HOLIDAY

Mr. Dibdin, a Surrey estate dealer and a member of the Institute of Municipal and County Engineers, was 52 years of age. He and his wife were returning from Lugano, where they had been spending a holiday. They leave a son and a daughter.

Mr. Dibdin had been concerned in recent months in purchases of estates for building development in the Dorking district. His proposals for the development of the Broome Hall estate were the subject of discussion in *The Times* this month.

Mr. Rowsall was visiting the Continent on behalf of the African and European Investment Company, Limited, of which he was chairman. He was also a director of numerous mining companies. Mr. Rowsall joined the air liner at Brussels, and this is said to have been his first journey by air. He was 58 years of age, and leaves a widow and three children.

Mr. Dearden, who was 32, leaves a widow and a nine-year-old daughter. He was a commercial traveller, and had been on a business visit to the Continent.

Miss Valerie Forrester Thomson was part-proprietor of the Elizabethan House at Henley, an old timbered building now used as a restaurant and boarding-house. The house was visited by the Queen a year ago. Miss Thomson had been visiting relatives in Brussels, where she herself had lived until last year.

Miss Voss, a girl of about 16, whose parents live in Cologne, was on her way to England to complete her education at Ivy House School, Wimbledon. The principal of the school, who had never met the girl, was at Croydon waiting to welcome her when she heard the news of the disaster.

Mr. Hugh McIlrath and Miss Kay McIlrath, a brother and sister, were from Sydney. They and Mr. Roland had booked their passages through the German Lufthansa Company, and are assumed to have travelled by air to Cologne before joining the Imperial Airways service there.

M. Kreglinger belonged to a prominent Antwerp family of Bankers and Merchants.

Four of the passengers are stated to have left Cologne in the City of Liverpool, and the eight others to have joined the air liner at Brussels.

# IMPERIAL AIRWAYS' WORST ACCIDENT

## RECORD OF THE ARGOSIES

This is the most serious disaster to an Imperial Airways liner since the company was formed in 1924. When, a month ago, Imperial Airways had completed 10,000,000 miles of flying, justifiable emphasis was given to the statement that in this long record of regular air travel only five accidents involving injury to passengers had occurred.

The last of such accidents to an Imperial Airways machine happened on October 30, 1930, near Boulogne, in a fog. On that occasion four persons were killed and two injured. The earlier accidents to Imperial Airways aircraft were as follows:—

October, 1929.—Flying-boat in the Gulf of Genoa; seven killed.

September, 1929.—Air liner at Jask, Persia; three killed.

June, 1929.—Air liner in the English Channel; seven killed.

December, 1924.—Air liner at Croydon; eight killed.

The Imperial Airways services between London, Belgium, and Germany are run in conjunction with the Sabena (Belgian Air Lines) Company. Imperial Airways operates the service in the direction of Cologne-London on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays, on which days the Sabena Company provides the service in the opposite direction. On Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays the arrangement is reversed. Both companies operate the service with three-engined air liners.

The City of Liverpool was a biplane of the Argosy class, a type first introduced about 1926 and formerly used on a part of the African route of Imperial Airways, but now confined to the London-Brussels-Cologne service. The seven machines of this class, two of which have been replaced by later types, have between them flown over 2,000,000 miles, and no passenger had ever suffered an accident in an Argosy until yesterday. The Argosies were built by Sir W. G. Armstrong Whitworth Aircraft, Limited, of Coventry, and are fitted with three Armstrong-Siddeley Jaguar air-cooled engines, each of 420 h.p. Their maximum speed is 110 miles an hour, with a cruising speed of 95 miles an hour. A crew of three is carried, and there is accommodation for 20 passengers.

# THE CITY OF LIVERPOOL DISASTER

## RETURN OF BODIES TO ENGLAND

FROM OUR CORRESPONDENT

BRUSSELS, MARCH 31

The coffins containing the remains of the victims of the City of Liverpool disaster were removed from Dixmude Hospital to-day. Before their removal the Burgomaster, M. de Keyser, called at the hospital, an annex of which had been transformed into a *chapelle ardente*, and laid wreaths on the coffins on behalf of the municipality. Wreaths were also sent by M. Forthomme, the Belgian Minister of Transport. Flags flew at half-mast.

The coffins containing the British dead were covered with the Union Jack, and were taken to Ostend, where they were awaited by the British Vice-Consul, Mr. E. R. Templer, and Mr. S. Meiklejohn, the Director in Belgium of Imperial Airways. The coffins of five of the victims—Mr. Leleu (the pilot), Mr. Brown (engineer), Mr. Stubbs (wireless operator), Mr. A. A. Thompson, and Mr. C. F. Rowsall—were placed immediately on board the steamer Princess Marie José, which left at 4 p.m. for Dover. The others will leave to-morrow.

The Princess Marie José reached Dover last night and the coffins were transferred to five motor-hearses which had been sent from London.

In the biographical details about Mr. L. A. Dibdin which appeared in *The Times* on Wednesday, reference was made to his proposals for the development of the Broome Hall estate. This should have been the Broome Park estate, Betchworth.







