

## The Bygrave family; 374 years rooted to land and community.

Part2

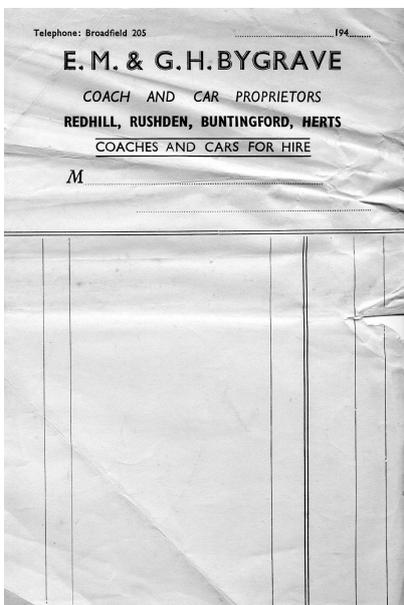


Elsie, Sylvia, John & Eileen Bygrave, visiting Church Farm 1920. Eileen died of meningitis in 1924.



Sylvia, Elsie, baby Edward, John & John Bygrave circa 1926, Redhill.

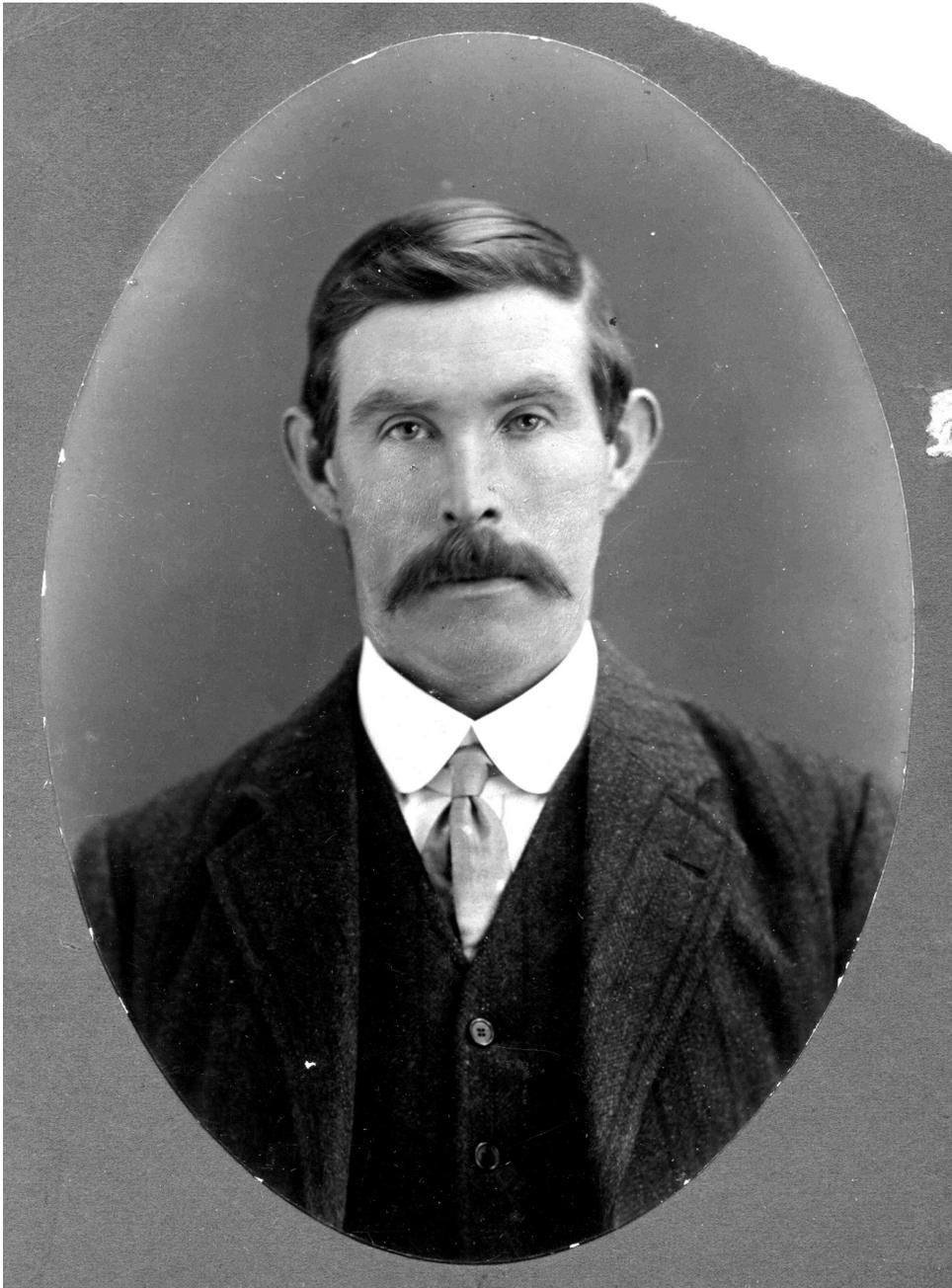
John Bygrave bought a lorry sometime after 1921 with which to take locally products to Baldock market. He soon found that the locals also wanted to ride it into the market. So he fitted the lorry out with seats. This proved to be the beginning of the Bygrave Coach and taxi service.



Invoice docket for the Bygrave Coach and taxi service.



The second vehicle purchased by John Bygrave circa 1934. John's main contract was to provide a local School and Public bus service. Occasional he ran the odd day excursion at weekends. Sadly John died in 1945 on the road. He'd just completed a School run, presumably not feeling well he had parked up and suffered a heart attack.



John Bygrave 1845-1914.

Whilst it might now seem the Bygrave's are no longer part of Rushden village life this would be to completely misunderstand the dynamics of rural life in those days. I was recently in discussion with my father (Edward Bygrave, aged 94 in 2021) and asking him why Rushden village was at the centre of rural cultural life in the area and not say Wallington, which was only a couple of fields distant from Redhill?

He said Wallington consisted of two farms, Lower and Top. After WWI these were bought by a Danish Company who tried to create a model village community, which employed the whole village and controlled its daily activities. He remembers that every child who went to Wallington School received a toy at Christmas from the Company.



Wallington School – taken about 1895. George Bygrave son of John & Charlotte's in the middle of the picture.



George Bygrave age about 8-9, Wallington School.

My father recalls in the late 1920's and early 30's receiving his presents from the Company, run by Mr & Mrs Christianson who lived in the house opposite Lower Farm. The model village failed and the two farms were sold to a Mr John Innes after WWII. The new owner did not live there but the two farms continued to employ most of the Wallington villagers. However, the Christmas toy to the children at Wallington School was stopped. My father also remembers with some amusement, Mr Innes used to visit his farms occasional and drive his rather swanky car around the fields to do thistle spudding.

So Rushden village free of such controlling influences became the cultural focus for the rural community, even those living in Wallington. The Julians estate by the early & mid 1900's had what might be considered a soft influence on the local community.

When Colonel Cooper owned Julians he used to host regular parties for the local children.

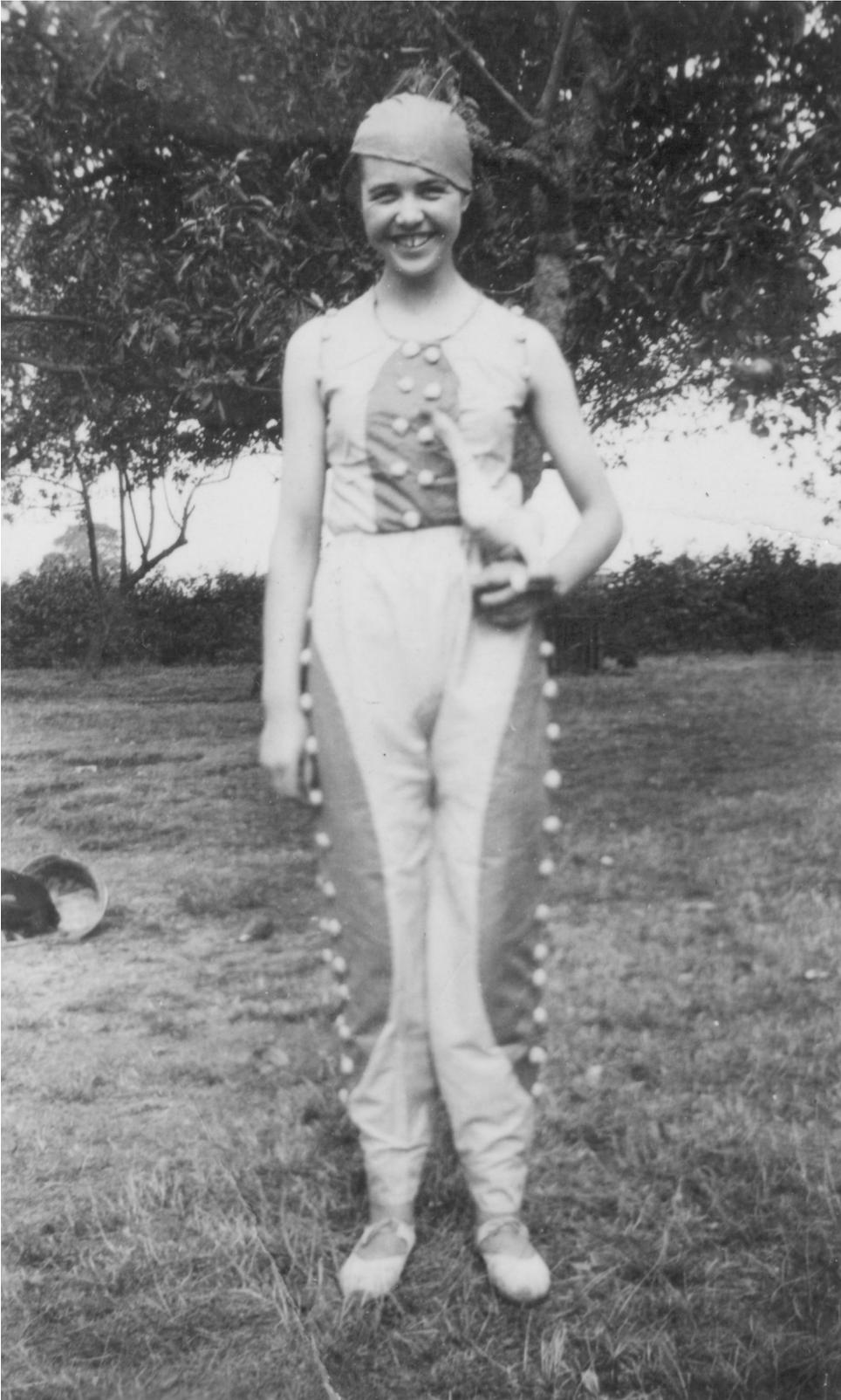
The Pleydell-Bouverie's spent most of their time in London, using the house as a retreat for themselves and friends from London; hosting the occasional private party.

My father (Edward Bygrave) recalls Mrs Pleydell-Bouverie had quite a relaxed attitude. When she was way the servant hosted occasional parties, to which locals were invited. Though these parties where mainly held in the staff kitchens it was not unusual for them to also make use of the dance hall attached to the main house.

Nearby Rushden church there was a pond in the Julians estate, until it was filled in by Mrs Pleydell-Bouverie. Up until then it was regularly used by the villagers for summer picnics and swimming. In the winter they would set up candle lanterns around the edge of the frozen pond for skating evenings.



Elsie Bygrave dressed as a witch (top right) with her little fairy friends for the summer fete at Rushden vicarage. Sylvia her daughter is the one with the long hair and star on her forehead, circa 1925.



Sylvia dressed for a village fete at Rushden vicarage – costume duck and peas, circa 1928-29.

Sylvia first worked at a printing firm in Letchworth before being transferred to Irvin Air Chute Ltd as part of the war effort.



Foreground Sylvia working on a flying jacket.

Sadly Sylvia died of TB in 1940.



Wreath from her colleagues at Irvin Air Chute Ltd

Before WWII, Edward and his brother John joined up with two of their friends to form 'The Harry Mynott and his Accordion Band'. They became very popular performing at the local village hops. By the beginning of WWII they were being booked to entertain both the public and the locally stationed troops. Edward remembers, regardless of the weather they cycled to all the local villages with all their equipment on their backs. As their popularity grew they were also performing regularly in Hitchen, Royston and occasionally Cambridge; for these events the organisers would arrange a taxi. Elsie Bygrave used to make all their costumes, which tended to be of a Mexican theme popular at the time.



'Harry Mynott & his Accordion Band'; Edward Bygrave, Geoff Allen( on drums), John Bygrave & Harry Mynott.

The band broke up when John Bygrave got his war call up papers in 1942. Edward being the youngest did not receive his call up papers until 1944. Even so Edward wanted to do his bit for the war but was too young to join the Army. Lying about his age he auditioned in front of Geraldo (Big Bandleader) at Dury Lane theatre, London and got accepted into ENSA (Entertainments National Service Association). He spent the next two years touring round the county performing with his ENSA group. He recalls one night on the south coast near Dymchurch, Kent after a concert hearing the first doodle bug sent over by the Germans.



Edward Bygrave

After the war Edward and John returned to help their mother Elsie run the growing coach and taxi business. At first they picked up the original contract for running the local school bus service then later on the Ashwell to Hitchin school bus service contract. The coaches were also used at the weekends to provide the local community with day excursions to the coast, such as; Southend-on-Sea, Clacton-on-Sea and Hunstanton. They also provided regular trips to see the West End show in London.

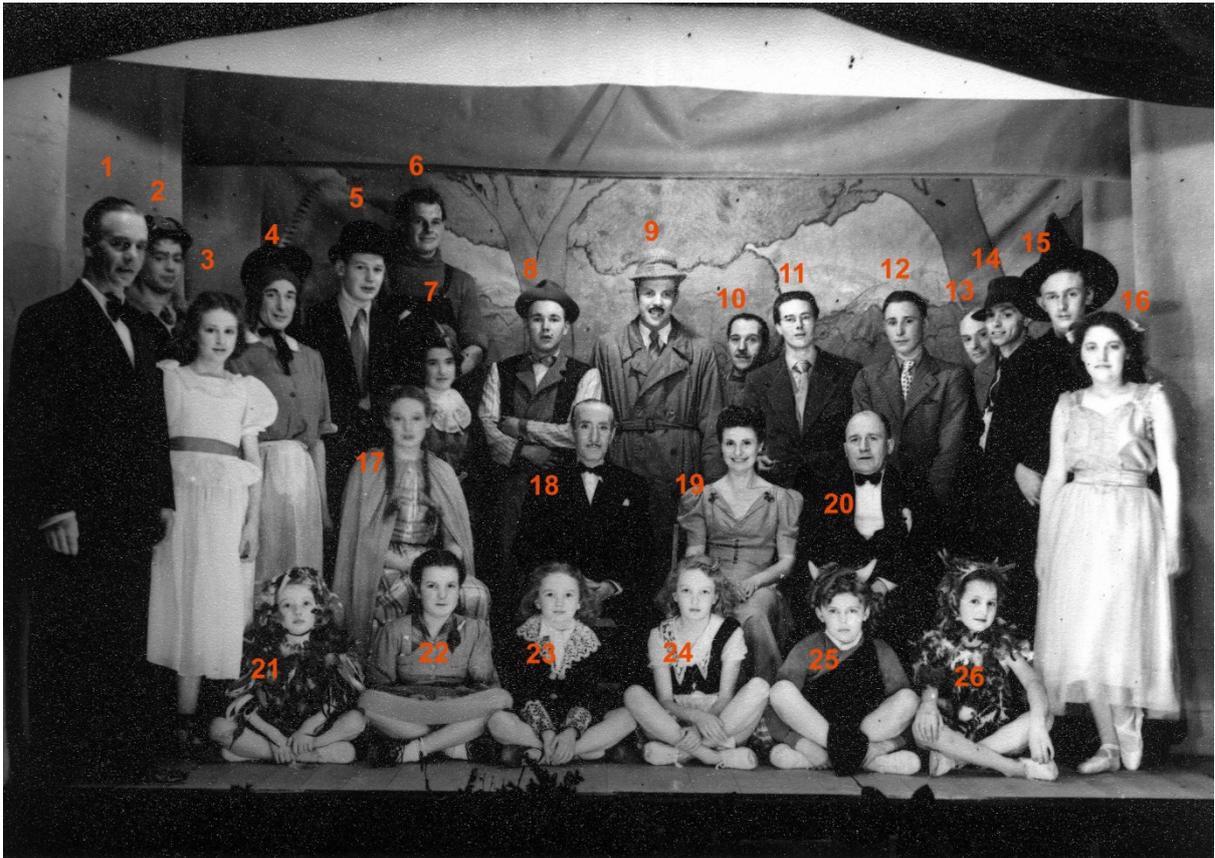


Driver unknown, Elsie Bygrave, driver unknown, Edward Bygrave & John Bygrave with their fleet of coaches.

After the war the Bygrave family again became involved in Rushden village life. Especially the village hall shows.



1948-9 Performance at Rushden village hall.



RUSHDEN VILLAGE SHOW 1948-9?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15  
 17 18 19 20 16  
 21 22 23 24 25 26

1 JOCK HENDERSON  
 2 HENRY WYATT  
 4 JOE SKINNER  
 5 JOHN HAMMOND  
 6 TONY HAMMOND  
 8 GEORGE HILLS  
 9 EDWARD BYGRAVE  
 10 RON BROWN  
 11 JEFF ALLEN  
 12 RON CARTER

13 DON CARROLL  
 14 KEITH DRIVER  
 15 MICHAEL ROSE  
 16 VALERIE BROWN  
 17 JEAN SKINNER  
 18 MARIO "HARP" LORENZI  
 19 MRS LORENZI  
 20 HARRY PHILLIPS

RUSHDEN VILLAGE COMMITTEE  
PRESENTS  
ON WITH THE SHOW  
1954 EDITION  
Produced By:-  
MARY LORENZI  
Programme ..... Price 3d.



The cast of the 1954 performance at Rushden Hall



1. BILL STORAN
2. KEITH DRIVER
3. JOE SKINNER
4. MRS LORENZI
5. TONY HAMMOND
6. MAUREEN STORAN.

7. VALERIE BROWN
8. MARIO 'HARP' LORENZI
9. JOHN HAMMOND
10. ?
11. GEORGE HILLS.
12. DON CARGILL

13. RON BROWN
14. EDWARD BYGRAVE.

PROGRAMME

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1. Watch Them Shufflin' Along - The Company.  | 10. Rumours .. Malise, Vivian, Diana, Kevin, Richard.                    |
| 2. The Sunshine of Your Smile .. The Girls.   | 11. The Farmer's Boy ..... .. Keith.                                     |
| 3. Cameos (The Strong Silent Man) ...<br>Malise & Keith.<br>(Out West) .. Tony, Richard,<br>Sidney, Robert, Kevin.<br>(The Deserted wife - husband)<br>.. Mrs Hay, Keith. | 12. Sunshades .. Brenda, Vivian, Diana<br>Sheila, Josephine.             |
| 4. Serenade ..... Mike Jakes.   | 13. Three Village Gaffers .. Richard,<br>Kevin and Robert.               |
| 5. Ain't T.V. Marvellous! .. Malise, Keith,<br>Richard, Vivian, Kevin, Tony.  | 14. Singing for you .. Mike Jakes.                                       |
| 6. Harmonica Tonic .... Tony, Terry, Kevin,<br>Richard, Sidney, Robert.   | 15. Scouting Days .. Kevin, Richard,<br>Sidney, Tony, Robert,<br>Sheila. |
| 7. Longing for you .... Brenda and Keith.   | 16. Piano Playtime .. Irene Stacey.                                      |
| 8. The Trousers ..... Kevin & Co.   | 17. Today I feel so happy .. Diana,<br>.. Tony.                          |
| 9. Toymaker's Dream .... Sheila, Josephine,<br>and the Youngsters.  | 18. The Old Plantation .. The Company.                                   |
|   | 19. Finale ..... The Company.  |

INTERVAL.

Dances Arranged by Mary Lorenzi

Music by Mrs Halliday and Irene Stacey.

Scripts by - M.K.Driver and E.G.Bygrave.

Stage Manager - J.Skinner assisted  
by Mr. Hay.



sketches performed at Rushden Hall. Keith Driver, Michael Rose, Tony Hammond, Henry Wyatt & Peter ? .



Tony Hammond, Maureen Storan, Keith Driver & Valerie Hills



Mario Lorenzi & Mary Lorenzi



Mario 'Harp' Lorenzi



Michael Rose & Joe Skinner – singing there's a hole in my bucket.



George Hill – worked at Julians



Valerie Brown



George Hill, Joe Skinner, Michael Rose, Tony Hammond, Henry Wyatt, Kevin, Keith Driver, Malise, Josephine Skinner & Valerie Brown.



Josephine daughter of Joe Skinner. Joe worked at Southern Green Farm responsible for the pigs.



Josephine Skinner, Malise, Valerie Brown & Keith Driver.



The audience in a sing along with Edward Bygrave, Rushden village hall.



Edward Bygrave.



2 Mrs Semple,5 Peggy Warner,6 Gladis Hills,8 John Bygrave , 9 John Kent, 10 Percy Hills, 12 Mr Stubbs, 25 Brenda Spender, 26 Clara Spender,30 Joan Kent, 33 Alf Hooper, Alfred Rowley, others unknown.



1954 sketches performed at Rushden Hall. Keith Driver, George Brown, Edward Bygrave, John Hammond & George Hills.



Edward Bygrave married Pamela Rowley of Southern Green Farm in 1955 at Wallington church.

John Bygrave married Joyce Pope in 1950. Joyce had come from Yorkshire to the area as a 'Land Girl' in the war years. After the war the barrack building in Redhill used to house the 'Land Girls' was converted into a number of simple dwellings. John and Joyce first set up home in one of these temporary homes. Later they were allocated one of the new 'Agricultural Homes' built on Treacle Lane, Rushen. Theirs was on the lane-side of the semi-detached property.

Elsie Bygrave moved from Redhill to Southern Green in the about 1970. She passed away in 1982.



Joyce (nee Pope) & John Bygrave

John and Joyce Bygrave were the last Bygrave's to live in the village, moving away to be nearer their daughter and grandchildren in August 1991. Bring a recorded 374 years of Bygrave association with the village of Rushden to an end.