



## ELECTRICITY

As far as the country is concerned, Godalming was the first town in Britain to be lit by electricity, from 1<sup>st</sup> October 1881, but initially just for three years, due to some difficulties and to the fact that the contract with the suppliers ran out (Surrey's Industrial Past, edited by Glenys Crocker, Surrey Industrial History Group, pages 113/114).

In the Lingfield area, in the "settlement known as 'Bellagio', now Dormans Park, an 'electric light station' existed. (*A History of Dormans Park & some of its early residents*, by Commander Geoffrey Lewis, A.F.C., R.N.)

A similar article is included in *A History of Lingfield* published 1933, edited by B Hayward and Stanley Hazel:

'... "Bellagio" was started in the 1880s by Mr Arthur Burr of Kent Coal fame who built a house for himself there. The settlement at first consisted of a club house and about 40 bungalow residences, electric light station, .....

It is possible that some large properties in our area used generators to provide electricity, rather than using gas for lighting, etc., 'Standen' near East Grinstead, for example.

It seems that electric lighting was not generally used in the Lingfield and RH7 area till well after 1900. Francis Napier, in his *History of Lingfield* writes, in reference to Mr Batchelor's grocer's shop – now the Cage Public House: 'on the counter are lighted candles and two paraffin lamps – very poor lighting'. The date was 1906/07.

In the Minutes of the Parish Meeting of 1<sup>st</sup> February 1898 is the following entry: '... for the purpose of considering the question of adopting all, or any part, of the Lighting Act for the Parish (or part of the Parish) and, in the event of such adoption, to fix the amount of money to be raised under such Act, for the year ending March 25<sup>th</sup> 1898.'

57 voted for the adoption of the Lighting and Watching, 22 against. The Chairman stated that the Act would be adopted subject to the poll being demanded.

A later entry reads: 'Minutes of the Parish Meeting held at the Lingfield School Room this day 7<sup>th</sup> October, 1908: ...to consider the question of adopting all or any part of the Lighting and Watching Act for the Parish or part of the Parish and, in the event of such adoption, to fix the amount of money to be raised under such Act for the period ending March 31<sup>st</sup> 1909'.

It is not clear from these two entries whether they refer to gas or electric lighting, maybe both. It is assumed that they refer to public lighting and that at least gas but possibly also electricity was available to some private properties.

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