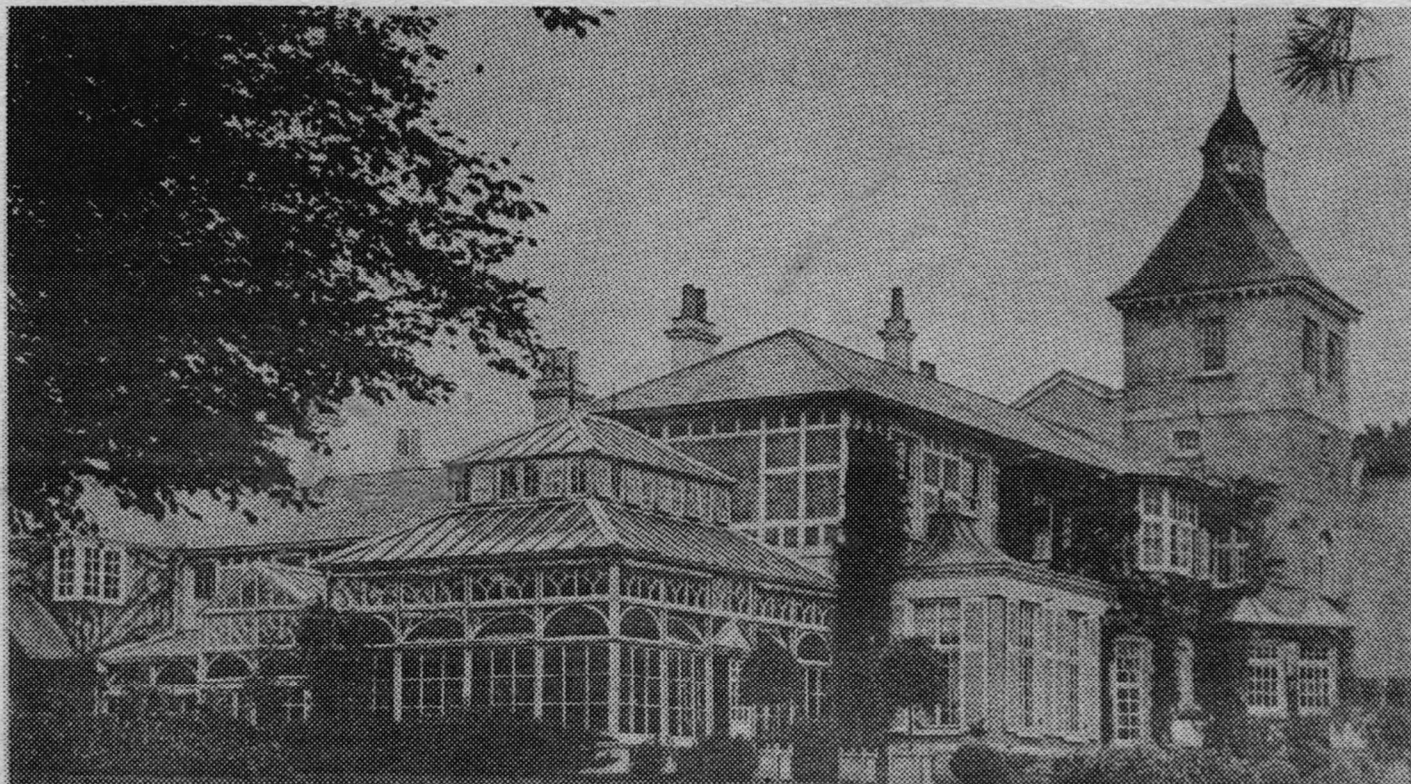


Looking back



TODAY Nymans at Handcross (pictured above) is a romantic ruin in a famous garden but this is the splendid house it once was before fire destroyed the property in 1947.

In his book *Around Old Slaugham*, Roger Ray writes that on the morning of his 75th birthday the owner Colonel Leonard Messel woke to find his room full of smoke. Seventy firemen fought the

blaze but the bulk of the antique furniture, paintings, tapestries and countless other treasures were lost in the flames.

In 1953 the estate was handed over to the National Trust and the beautiful gardens are open to the public in the summer. But it is sad to see all that is left of what was once a proud and noble mansion.