

LEATHERHEAD & DISTRICT LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Newsletter 3/78

July 1978

Dear Member,

This is a special extra because there are several matters of which we must advise you quickly.

TANNERS MARATHON 30 MILE WALK, held on Sunday 2nd July. There were over 800 entries for this walk but unfortunately only four of this number were walking to boost the Museum restoration fund! The day proved to be showery but fortunately cool and this must have helped the results which were as follows:-

Stephen Fortescue	15 miles in 5 hours
Patrick Ashwell	30 miles in 7 $\frac{1}{4}$ hours
Hans Neeser	30 Miles in 8 hours
Geoffrey Hayward	30 miles in 10 hours

Mr. Fortescue had recently suffered from influenza and, although he walked well and enjoyed the scenery, fatigue suddenly overtook him and he, wisely, decided to finish at the half-way point.

One of our members from Leatherhead, Mr. Hans Neeser, volunteered for the walk after the June Newsletter had been circulated and with the aid of his wife collected sponsors to the value of 80 pence per mile.

All the walkers enjoyed the challenge and opinion has been expressed that this could become an annual event for the Society, especially as the walk was also designed for various grades of fitness - e.g. 50 miles, 30 miles, 10 miles and a Mini Marathon. We are especially grateful to Alan Blatchford of Guildford and his Y.H.A. supporters for sparing us the tremendous administration and organising problems at a busy time of the year. The Old Palace School is next to Croydon Parish Church.

A special vote of thanks is here recorded to those members who sent donations to the Museum fund before the walk had begun (nearly £250).

Mrs. Heather Rogers, our Walk Treasurer, at 24 Kingston Road, (near Park Rise) is ready to receive your sponsor forms and cash based on the above results if you can include a note of your name and address. Thank you in advance for your individual effort - we do hope we will reach the £2,000 target. The total reached will be shown at intervals in the Museum window.

FETCHAM WALK. Our chief guide is unable to manage the original date fixed for this event, but would be pleased to meet members and friends at Fetcham Church at 2.30 p.m., Saturday 7th October 1978. Please adjust the date in your diary. We regret the change of plan.

SURREY LOCAL HISTORY COUNCIL A.G.M., at the Old Palace School Croydon, at 2 p.m. The date of this meeting and visit is now confirmed as being the 12th August 1978. All our members are welcome. At the end of the meeting there will be a tour of the Old Palace, followed by tea. This should be over by 4 p.m. after which there will be an opportunity to visit the Parish Church, see the registers and visit the bell tower containing the biggest carillon in the South of England.

LOCAL HISTORY SYMPOSIUM at the Dorking Halls, Saturday (all day) 18th November. The subject is "Old Surrey Industries". Offers of assistance with the sales at our own exhibition bookstall to David Bruce please, Tel. Bookham 58722.

MOLE VALLEY EVENING INSTITUTE The Committee have been so hard pressed of late with the work associated with completing the Museum as quickly as possible that they have not been able to devote proper time to planning the autumn lectures. It is proposed that we defer this course until the winter term, January to March 1979, and further details will appear in the next Newsletter. The course of ten lectures on "Leatherhead in History" begins on the 8th January 1979.

STAMPS FOR THE MUSEUM. Leatherhead Scouts raise money by holding a series of stamp auctions taking a commission on sales. Members may have spare stamps

ancient or modern, home or foreign, which could be made up into lots for sale. Both the museum and the scouts would benefit. Please send them to: David Bruce, 7 Fox Lane, Little Bookham, or 'phone Bookham 58722.

AN APPEAL TO OLDER RESIDENTS

Our parent body, the Leatherhead & District Countryside Protection Society is anxious to approach persons who reside in or were well acquainted with Leatherhead in 1925 and earlier. Will any member or persons known to them who can recall these early times please communicate urgently with the Secretary of the Countryside Protection Society, F.B.BENGER, Esq., F.S.A., of Duntisbourne, Reigate Road, Leatherhead; Tel. L'head 72711.

FUTURE PROGRAMME

The programme for the remainder of 1978 is still as set out in the last Newsletter except for the Fetcham Walk (see above). The most successful past events have developed from suggestions made by members. If you have an idea for 1979, please lose no time in informing Eric Barnwell - telephone no. Bookham 54947.

VOLUNTARY WORK IN HISTORY - THE MUSEUM

You will have noticed the transformation taking place at Hampton Cottage. This is the result of the devoted labours of a small but magnificent team under the leadership of Peter How and Ken Beddoe. Summer and daylight hours are slipping away fast and if the building can be brought to the standard at which electricity could be laid on then the work can continue. If some members have now finished their gardens, painting, etc., the team would welcome more hands. Please contact Peter How (L'head 74941) or Ken Beddoe (L'head 73668).

DISTRIBUTION OF NEWSLETTERS

Not many years ago Ashtead was poorly represented in our membership. The opposite is the case now, for Ashtead boasts the highest membership of the four parishes of the old L.U.D.C. We have four persons in Ashtead who deliver in their districts and this work is much appreciated because of the saving of expense to the Society.

We need one more person who can deliver Newsletters in the area on either side of the Ashtead main road from the Leatherhead roundabout to the Warren and on either side of Ottways Lane. Ideally this person could receive the whole of the Ashtead Newsletters and divide them up into five areas for delivery by the various representatives whose names and addresses can be given on request.

This task is taking up too much of a busy Secretary's time and unless the gap can be filled we will have to revert to posting the Ashtead Newsletters.

Ypriana,
Cobham Road,
Fetcham.
Tel. L'head 72674

GEOFFREY HAYWARD
SECRETARY

REMINDER: WALK ROUND KINGSTON SUNDAY AFTERNOON 17th SEPTEMBER - PLEASE GIVE THIS YOUR SUPPORT.

VISIT TO SUFFOLK VILLAGES OF CLARE, LONG MELFORD & LAVENHAM SATURDAY 1st JULY 1978.

Leaving Ashtead by 7.50 am we proceed via London Bridge to the A.12 towards Chelmsford with a stop of 20 mins at Brentwood. At Chelmsford we join the A.131 and thence the A.604 as far as Great Yeldham where we turn off (note old tree at junction) for CLARE via Tilbury Juxta Clare and Ovington.

Hopefully arriving at Clare by around 11 am we shall first visit the Church and Museum where I trust we shall meet some members of the Clare Historical Society. Here it may be more convenient to split up into two groups. The Vicar has promised to be in the Church to meet us.

Clare village itself contains many beautiful houses and cottages and, it is said some of the finest pargetting in the world. A fine example of this work (the application of moulded plaster) is the Ancient House opposite the Church. This old priest's house which bears the date 1473 is now the Museum which has been open only a short while. There is a charge of 10p for admission.

The Parish Church of SS Peter and Paul has a thirteenth century early English Tower and the body of the Church was remodelled in the fifteenth century. There is a fine 400 year old brass lecturn and eagle with dogs at foot, judged to be one of the finest in England.

Following a turning (Station Road) a short distance from the Church on the left hand side of the main thoroughfare there are toilets in the recreation ground and beyond is the Country Park. Clare Castle Country Park is centred round the remains of the castle which are situated at the top of the Motte. Across the Castle site once ran the Stour Valley Railway of which only the Station remains as a relic of the past. There is an Information Room and Garden there. The Country Park should be excellent for a picnic spot given suitable weather and the Coach will be parked there.

Clare Priory and Grounds are close by and can be reached by crossing the Railway Bridge and taking a narrow overgrown path immediately off to the left. I am hoping to arrange for a brief visit to the Priory and those interested should meet in the Car Park near the Railway Bridge at 1.55.

Unfortunately Clare has decided to hold their carnival on the same day as our visit - a fact not apparent when fixing the date. However, apparently the first event is not until 1.30 and to press on we must leave Clare by 2.30 latest.

We continue along the A 1092 through Cavendish which is a very picturesque village - once voted the best kept in Suffolk - with an interesting looking Church Tower. Nearby is also a Vinery which unfortunately we shall not have time to visit. A short distance further on is LONG MELFORD at the junction of the A 133 Sudbury - Bury St. Edmunds Road.

LONG MELFORD. One of Suffolk's loveliest villages remarkable for the length of its main street - hence the name. The Church of Holy Trinity dominates the village and I hope there will be someone there to show us around. Unfortunately we shall only have time to visit the Church but as the Coach passes down the High Street towards the turn off for Lavenham note Melford Hall (N.T. well worth a visit but closed on Saturdays) on the left and quaint buildings on the right. From Melford the way winds through rural countryside towards LAVENHAM.

LAVENHAM was a weaving town developed during the rise of the cloth trade during the 15th century. Trade there however declined through the development of water power in the manufacture of cloth when the weaving industry moved to the West and North of England.

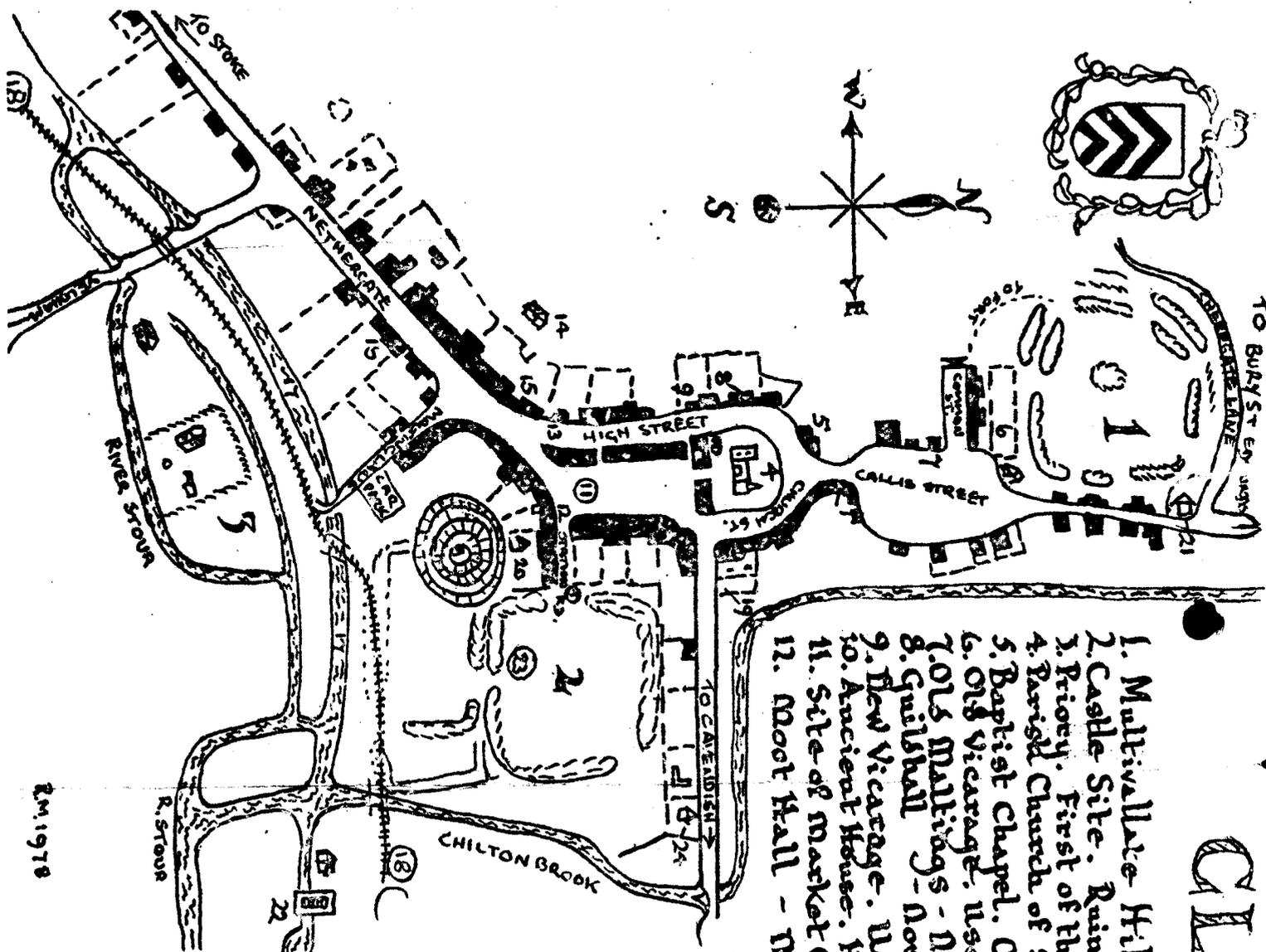
We shall first of all visit the Church of SS Peter and Paul which is said to be the most splendid of all the Wool Churches in East Anglia. There will be someone there to guide us round.

In Lavenham there are streets of timber framed weavers' cottages. The Swan Inn (Trust House) is a notable building and incorporates the Old Wool Hall next door. In Shilling Street (corruption of 'Schylling' a Flemish family name) lived Jane Taylor who wrote "Twinkle, Twinkle, little star". In the market place is the Guildhall built around 1529 with splendid porch and corner posts, now National Trust which should be open - Admission 40p unless already a member. Lavenham is an interesting place to wander round and have a cup of tea.

We shall start for home again around 5.30 pm.

We are indebted to Mr R. Miles, Curator of the Clare Museum for the splendid map of Clare reproduced below.

Mr Miles has also very kindly provided us with a summarised history of Clare copies of which will be available on the Coach.



CLARE MAP

1. Multivallate Hill Fort. Iron Age
 2. Castle Site. Ruins, motte & bailey. Norman Origin. Now Country Park.
 3. Priory. First of the Augustinian Order founded in England. 1268 a.s.
 4. Parish Church of SS. Peter & Paul.
 5. Baptist Chapel. Old School House.
 6. Old vicarage. Used as private dwelling since 1879.
 7. Old Millings - Now Town Library.
 8. Guildhall - Now house & bookshop.
 9. New Vicarage. Used as such since 1879. Once called "Sigors"
 10. Ancient House. Has been called Priests House. Now Museum.
 11. Site of Market Cross. Now demolished.
 12. Moat Hall - Now private house.
 13. Swan Inn - with carved oak sign, probably from castle. Symbol of de Bohun & The Swan Prince of European monarchies.
 14. Congregational Church.
 15. Stonehall - Council Chambers, previously Literary Institute, and former private house.
 16. Nethergate House. Early 16th Century
 17. New Cut or River. Medieval excavation to supply power to Corn Mill
 18. Site of Gt. Eastern railway line built 1865.
 19. Old Quaker's Cemetery.
 20. Site of Quaker's Meeting House.
 21. Bridewell site converted to dwelling 1787.
 22. Mill House & Corn Mill.
 23. Site of Clare Cross found 1865.
 24. Baptist Meeting House.
- (T)** Toilets in Station Road.

LEATHERHEAD AND DISTRICT LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

The story of Clare - Suffolk

Provided by:
Mr R.W. Miles of Clare Museum.

This small market town that today has less than 2000 inhabitants and during a fairly prosperous Victorian age did not have more than 1700 to 1800 people will impress the visitor by its charm and many roots in the past. A closer look will reveal that virtually the whole of written history can be seen in some aspect without a great deal of effort. From the Iron Age until the present days' new housing estate there are buildings to be seen in Clare which span the greater part of the periods between these extremes.

The castle motte and two baileys, now a Country Park, indicate very clearly the size and importance of the Norman fortifications, and suggest an historical importance that its occupants did in fact have.

The Hill Fort - multivallate - Iron Age

This camp can be visited and the appreciable double ramparts still seen. It is obvious that the site provided a wide view of the Stour valley and as a look-out point it served admirably. It appears that the Fort was used by the Iceni as a frontier post to protect their East Anglian kingdom and possibly the avenging Queen Boudicca visited this post on her ill-fated quest for vengeance against the Romans in Colchester. There is evidence of a Roman camp site on the north-east of this encampment. The area now to be seen is slightly smaller than originally as Bridewell and Common Street have encroached on the earlier plot.

The site is now common land and old maps show it as Erbury Garden: the name "Erbury" like "Clare" is obscure in origin but records suggest that the names have been inter-changeable for the Manor lands. There has been no real attempt to excavate the Fort in common with so many locations of this nature, although artifacts have been found from time to time.

The Town

Clare very obviously developed from its proximity to a supply of water and it seems certain that part from the River Stour which runs along the base of the triangle, the other two sides of the town were broadly determined by two tributary streams and that in its early days it was not possible to enter Clare without crossing either a ford or a bridge.

A Saxon chieftain called Aluric held Clare but was dispossessed by the forces of William the Conqueror who rewarded Richard de Bienfait for his notable assistance to William during his invasion.

The market which was held where Callis Street now is, was moved to Market Hill, nearer the Castle the Normans built.

The Clare lands which were given by the Conqueror to his faithful follower consisted of manors in Norfolk, Suffolk and Essex and it was Clare that became the centre of administration of these lands. This aggregate of property was known as the Honor of Clare and courts were held here. The history of these times does of course reflect the importance of the Castle which was the home of the Clare family until 1314 when the last male Clare died at Bannockburn and the female line brought other influential royal families into the lordship. We thus find that the history of Clare shows the Earls of Ulster, March, Gloucester and Hertford and also the first Duke of Clarence who took his title from the town. The last Clare was the son of Joan of Acre who was the daughter of King Edward 1

It seems likely that the end of the 15th century brought the beginning of the decline of the Castle and its eventual decay. But the Clare lands however were still of some importance and Henry VIII for example, gave them to five of his wives in turn, Jane Seymour not apparently receiving this present. The lands then passed to Mary Tudor and finally the Duchy of Lancaster.

During these changes of ownership the town itself acquired economic importance as a wool town and many houses in Clare reflect this period of durable domestic architecture. It may be noted that many of the seemingly inconspicuous houses are in fact of timber built construction but that this is concealed by the Suffolk tradition of plastering the outer walls. The visitor will nevertheless see buildings that proclaim very obviously their history and will do so without more than walking around the town.

One house worthy of special attention lies next to the parish church and on its outer walls there appears a wealth of 17th century pargeting but it is clear that this was applied long after the original construction of the building which bears the date of 1473. Also to be noted is the upper story oriel window with its carved oak support. It might be added that pargeting is largely an East Anglian style of decoration and that it developed and declined within the 17th century. This example of a house of the period in which the woollen trade still flourished was given to the town by a benefactor and is now used as a museum of the life and times of Clare.

During the boom in woollens there were a number of wealthy clothiers in Clare and besides leaving charities to the town the rudiments of which still exist, they left their own small token coinage - see museum. The wool trade gave way to the New Draperies with the influx of continental weavers to Suffolk and this no doubt is the reason for "Callis" Street although this was not its official name until recent times. These New Draperies were produced in Clare upto the end of the 17th century and this gave way to straw plaiting for use in the production of hats and this in turn was superseded by agriculture as the main industry.

It seems certain that quilt-making was an important activity in the 12th century and we know there was an established market apart from this, which continued until the coming of the railway to Clare in 1863. Despite the prosperity of the town in the 19th century, the railway did in fact cause the decline of the market although it still served as a successful shopping centre and a survey made during the 2nd World War recognised that Clare was the best small town for shopping outside of the Sudbury area.

Clare was called a Borough until the beginning of the last century but was never chartered, possibly because it never elected a mayor, and thus lost the official designation with its historic advantages.

The Priory

This house of Augustinian friars was established in 1248 by the Clare family and continued un-til the Dissolution in 1538 when it was confiscated. The Clares very naturally contributed to the support of the Priory and the good works and spiritual support led to many bequests by the people of the town. The history of the Priory shows little or no record of misconduct or corruption but the prize that fell to Henry VIII must have been a disappointment as the jewels were pledged and the plate could have been confiscated only to leave the property in debt. The Priory and its 38 acres of land were granted to the King's trumpeter and this was the beginning of its private ownership during which time it had a number of different families in possession until the last, the Barker family. In 1953 the Augustinian Friars returned and resumed their occupation, the refectory building becoming a church for the district.

Churches

Aluric the Saxon holder of Clare before the Conquest founded a small priory which the Norman Lord of Clare gave to the monks of Bec in 1090 This is believed to have been in the grounds of the Castle but this cell was removed to Stoke by Clare in 1124 when it ceased to have any real influence on the town.

The Parish Church, dedicated to SS Peter & Paul was probably built shortly after 1066 but its foundation and history is not clear. The tower and the Nave arcade date from the 13th century and much of the rest is 15th century. It is certain that the Church was richly furnished no doubt as a result of gifts by woollen merchants but little of this is now to be seen as a consequence of the destruction by Wm. Dowsing during the Commonwealth in 1643 Fortunately this iconoclast delegated the completion of this destruction to others who failed in this and left a little of the windows and the cherubim.

East Anglia has a strong Puritan tradition and it is to be expected therefore that Non-conformist churches would have been established. The Quakers Meeting House no longer exists but the Baptist and Congregational buildings can still be seen.

Schools

The first school in Clare seems to have been one held in the Guildhall for a period prior to 1550 We next hear of a school being held in the Market Cross mainly as the result of a bequest to the school in 1669 There is a reference to the classics being taught no longer in 1818 and this may refer to the school that was held in Grove House in Callis Street until about 1850 There seem to have been a number of academies during the 19th century including one in the Cavendish Road on the site of which there is now to be found the Freemasons Hall and a school was run at Clare Priory and this apparently gained a reputation for its achievements. Clare New Schools were opened in 1859, a medal being struck to commemorate this. The Elementary Education Act of 1870 did of course enforce the establishment of schools and education of children, but this proved very often to be a disadvantage to parents who needed their childrens employment pay to assist with the family income. Because of this it was usual for children to reach a determined standard of certified education when they were free to take up employment.

Clare School is now a modern building on the eastern outskirts of the town, although the old Primary School building is still to be seen near the parish Church,