

The Newsletter



Leatherhead Museum

February 2014

The Quarterly Magazine of the

Leatherhead & District Local History Society

LEATHERHEAD AND DISTRICT LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Registered Charity No. 802409
Hampton Cottage, 64 Church Street, Leatherhead, KT22 8DP
Telephone 01372 386348
Email: staff@lheadmuseum.plus.com.

Monthly Meetings: Every third Friday of the month at the Letherhead Institute between September and May at 7.30pm for 8.00pm

MUSEUM (Hampton Cottage): open Thursdays and Fridays 1.00pm to 4.00pm and Saturdays 10.00am to 4.00pm

L&DLHS WEBSITE: www.leatherheadlocalhistory.org.uk

2011 Membership Subscriptions

Ordinary.....£18.00 Associate.....£6.00 Junior (under 18).....£1.00

OFFICERS OF THE SOCIETY

President:

Alan Pooley 01372 374093 Alan-maryon@tecrec.net

Vice President:

Peter Tarplee 01372 452301 ptarplee@ymail.com

Chairman:

David Hartley 0208 393 3922 Hartley1949@msn.com
07947 471165

Secretary:

Vacant

Treasurer:

David Lokkerbol 01372 375756 david.lokkerbol@gmail.com

Archaeology Secretary:

David Hartley (as above)

Proceedings Editor:

Barry Cox 01372 273167 barry_cox@btopenworld.com

Museum Manager

Alan Pooley 01372 374093 Alan-maryon@tecrec.net

Museum Curator

Lorraine Spindler 01737 813963 lorrainespindler@hotmail.co.uk

Publicity Officer

Vacant

Editorial

1914 to 2014 is a significant 100 year period. What incredible events have occurred in that time! Inevitably thoughts are dominated by the world wars of almost unbelievable horror and human destruction.

But also consider the massive changes in every aspect of human life, the attitude to the place of women in society, poverty, education, medicine. Everything has taken a massive leap forward. A black President of the United States! What cures could a doctor offer in 1914? Vehicles were in their infancy. Aeroplanes were primitive. Services such as electricity were only just coming to country areas. Compare all this with what is in common use today with computers in every household item and mobile phones with astonishing facilities in nearly everybody's hand. Most families have at least one car often capable of speeds around 100 mph or more. Television is in nearly every home. Internet is available to all. The whole world is accessible by plane.

One wonders what a future editor will say about current life in say twenty or thirty years time. What is still to be invented, what will medicine have achieved? Surely the pace of change of the last hundred years will never be matched in the future. Let us also hope that the future will never again see the destruction of the two world wars.



***Make sure you visit the History Society Website
www.leatherheadlocalhistory.org.uk***

Next Edition Deadline - 5th April

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Chairman's Report

Welcome to this our first Newsletter of 2014. This year will mark the first centenary (2014 -2018) of the Great War of 1914-1918 the first great European war in history in which so many people died on both sides both combative and non-combative, people and populations displaced as casualties and refugees of War.

The great mobilisation on both sides of men and resources on an unprecedented scale drawn from home and colonial empires overseas all fed the great war machine. In its wake it left devastation, lost generations and an unresolved peace and a time of profound social and economic change.



This centenary is a time of reflection and remembrance 100 years on in time, Society and attitudes have changed out of all recognition - yet today have we learnt any lessons from History?

The forthcoming AGM of the Leatherhead and District Local History Society is to be held on Friday March 21st. This is your opportunity to make your voice heard - we need your engagement in running your History Society, we need you the grassroots membership of the Society to volunteer and get involved.

The success or failure of our society is the sum of its active parts and we need an active and a new membership to sustain its future and carry it forward otherwise it will fade away and only be regretted perhaps after it has gone.

This should be matter of importance to us all and in this Newsletter the formal 'Notice and Agenda for this our 67th AGM' together with the 'Nominations and Elections of the Executive Committee for 2014/15' . This includes a number of positions vacant - the most recent vacancy is that of 'Sales & Publications Secretary' which is a vital and important role which we need to fill without delay as book publishing and sales is a vital source of income for our Society and fulfils one of the principal articles objects of the History Society.

Touching on another matter of volunteering I would personally like to thank both Roz Hennegan and Maureen Powell for their diligent work over the last few years in setting up and providing us all with a good cup of tea or coffee with biscuits delivered with charm and good humour at the lecture meetings in the Dixon Hall every third Friday in the month at the Letherhead Institute. Time has moved on and it is now time that we had two new volunteers to take over these roles, male or female, it makes no difference when there is a job to be done. Both Roz and Maureen deserve a break. In the past we used to run a rota which worked quite well for a period but lapsed for a number of reasons. Better now I would have thought is to re-establish a new rota of three/ four pairs alternating at meetings throughout the year which would greatly ease the task falling on any one pair of volunteers.

David Hartley

Archaeology and Forthcoming Events

The Surrey Archaeological Society to which our History Society subscribes has a very interesting and useful website www.surreyarchaeology.org.uk which provides a full range of countywide activities in Surrey on Archaeology, Industrial History, Local History and Village Studies Group, Prehistoric, Roman and Medieval Groups and access to archives in the Society's Collections. Of particular interest are the forthcoming Group Meetings, Symposium and Conference and Fieldwork;

Saturday 8th March 10:00am to 5:00pm - Village Studies Day at the Surrey History Centre Woking

This day will feature Professor Christopher Dyer CBE FBA Emeritus Professor at Leicester University as the keynote speaker. Other speakers will include Richard Savage FSA who will provide an update of his studies of Old Woking. Further details check SyAS website above.

Saturday 5th April - The Annual Symposium of Surrey Local History Society - The Peace Memorial Hall Ashted.

The Theme for this year's Symposium will be 'Education in Surrey', speakers will talk on a number of aspects ;

Education in the Early Modern Period – Catherine Fergusson

The Role of the National Society in promoting church schools – Dr Lois Loudon

The work of the non-denominational British & Foreign Schools Society – Terry Ransome

Education for girls and women – Dr Stephanie Spencer

Educational work of the Royal Earlswood Hospital – Anne Lea

Details and tickets will be available on the SyAS www.surreyarchaeology.org.uk

Saturday 10th May - How 'Roman' was Roman Britain?

A full day conference organised by the Roman Studies Group which will take place on Saturday 10th May at the Chertsey Hall, Chertsey Surrey, from 09.30am to 5.15pm. Tickets will cost £18.00 (£16.00 for Members) and £10.00 for students and will include morning coffee/tea and afternoon tea/coffee. Lunch is available to order otherwise bring a packed lunch or purchase sandwiches locally. Tickets can be purchased by sending your remittance to the Surrey Archaeological Society at Castle Arch Guildford, Cheques should be made payable to Roman Studies Group, all the details and application form are available on the above website.

Call for Volunteers: June Excavation at Cocks Farm Villa, Abinger

A sixth season of excavation will take place at Cocks Farm Roman Villa, Abinger over two weeks in June (2nd to 6th and 9th to 13th). Work will concentrate in the field adjacent to the scheduled area looking for evidence of Roman activity around the villa. Volunteers from the Society will be given priority and non-SyAS members will be charged £25 a

week (or part thereof) to cover costs.

If you would like to register your interest please contact the volunteer coordinator, Nikki Cowlard, nikkicowlard@btinternet.com or telephone 01372 745432

Call for Volunteers: Church Meadow Ewell – Excavation July

Volunteers are being sought for the third season of Excavation in Church Meadow, Ewell. This independent project is financially supported by Surrey Archaeological Society, Epsom and Ewell History and Archaeology Society, the Council for British Archaeology and the local Committee of Surrey County Council.

The excavations will take place between 2nd to 20th July, Wednesdays to Sundays 9.30am to 4.30pm.

If you would like to register your interest please contact the volunteer coordinator, Nikki Cowlard, nikkicowlard@btinternet.com or telephone 01372 745432

David Hartley

Surrey Maps and Map Makers – November Lecture

Good attendance with an exceptional turnout of non-members greeted Carole Garrard who was invited by the Society to talk to us about the maps in her custody at the Surrey History Centre. How had maps evolved and how had they come to be of such great importance to mankind? This was her theme based on examples from the collection which provided an abundance of illustrations.

An illustration from a book dated 1432 was her earliest example. It depicted the property of an abbey with its church and nearby rivers, a mill and other landmarks - rather primitive and not to scale but it stressed the importance of such records to contemporary landowners. The earliest true surveys began to appear in the 16th century. Still very much concerned with land ownership this took on overriding importance at the time of the dissolution of the monasteries. The marking of boundaries was also important.



Carole Garrard

The first ever map of Britain appeared in 1546. Several examples of Surrey maps from this period were shown and Carole was able to highlight our own district rather than the entire county. It was interesting to note the names of places nowadays considered as unimportant appearing along with the towns and villages. One spotted names such as Slyfield, Polesden and Norbury appearing quite prominently. We also noted the different spellings used at



the time: 'Asted', 'Darking' and 'Ebbisham'. Roads only appeared on maps from a later date such as the surveys of Norden in the 1580 and John Speed in the early 1600s.

One of the most prolific map makers was John Rocque in the mid 1700s. He was the first to use what we now call 'conventional signs' to indicate grassland, marshes, ponds, etc. The emergence of the scale 'one inch to one mile' also came about.

The Industrial Revolution was now beginning and this provided an even greater stimulus for the production of maps. There was increasing interest shown by the military as well as by engineers. This led to the creation of the 'Great Survey of Britain' spanning the period 1783 to 1853 and thence to the creation of The Ordnance Survey as a department of government. New features now included railways, also a geological survey was undertaken. From now on there was an ever wider demand for maps particularly by estate agents and other professionals. They also became available to the general public.

Carole gave us a detailed description of the printing process which was based on the engraving of a copper plate. It required extraordinary skill and it grew in complexity as history progressed. The finest example in the Surrey archive is to be found in the mapmaking of John Speed (1596-1610). On one of his maps featuring the area of Ewell he included pictures of Henry VIII's Nonsuch Palace which are considered the best available representations of the palace known to exist.

Larger scale maps were now evolving culminating in those of 25 inches to the mile. The library at the Surrey History Centre prides itself in that it holds every one of these in its coverage of the county.

Concluding this outstanding talk Carole reminded us of the more recent developments that have occurred. First the national grid and later the adoption of the metric system. Even later has come the digitisation of maps to enable surveys to be uploaded into computers which perhaps foretells the disappearance of paper copies. It seems that the tasks undertaken by the county's maps library will never cease and she affirmed that the collection of Surrey maps

from all eras will always be ongoing.

The success of this presentation was evidenced by the warmth of the applause and even more by the multitude of questions and comments that she was asked to respond to before her departure.

John Wettern

Saxon Finds From Ashtead Villa?

As part of the Ashtead Common Roman villa and tileworks project I have been gathering together as much information about the earlier work at the site as I can. This includes press cuttings, contemporary photographs, original notes and other handwritten scraps (often drafts of published reports) and notes or texts for lectures. (One of these talks by Lowther's collaborator A R Cotton will be given at the next Spring symposium with as best as can be judged the original illustrations - it seems to be a rare survival of an illustrated archaeological talk from the 1920s).

One of the curiosities among this information is that until 1959 there is apparently no published record of a Saxon knife and piece of pottery supposedly found on the site in 1926. It appears in a list of Saxon finds from the Leatherhead area as 'Saxon knife and piece of rim of Saxon pot with pierced lug found in top level beneath soil on site of Roman bath-building on Ashtead Common in 1926' (Lowther 1959a, 72). This may be the 'Saxon knife and piece of pottery from Ashtead. Presented by A W G Lowther' that appears in a list of accessions to Guildford Museum in our Collections (45, 1937, 166). Anne Lea has kindly checked the accessions register for me which shows that the item was deposited in May 1937 as number 1076 again described as just 'from Ashtead'. At the same time Lowther deposited other material from Ewell and Farnham. The bulk of the material from the Ashtead villa seems to have been deposited earlier in 1937 with the accession number 1049.

There is some confusion in the listing of the finds supposed to be from the Ashtead Common villa held in Guildford Museum; a list from the Museum's records kindly provided for me by Mary Alexander several years ago included: AS 4404 'rim sherd of Saxon jar in coarse black fabric. 500-700' = formerly S6990 AS 7510 'Saxon knife, 400-600. 1924-9' = formerly 1076; S6989 AS 7511 'Saxon pot, 400-650. 1924-9' = formerly 1076; S6990. Presumably 4404 and 7511 are duplicates even though there is no mention of 1076 in respect of the first; there was perhaps some confusion when the finds were given separate numbers. The recent dates given for 7510 and 7511 are those for the villa excavation and have probably been added recently. It has always seemed odd to me that Lowther did not make more of these Saxon finds. They are not mentioned in any of the reports on the excavations or in his later discussion of the dating of the villa published in 1959 in the paper immediately following the survey that is the only published record of the find (Lowther 1959b). Saxon finds from a Roman villa site even one that had probably been abandoned in the middle of the Roman period are always of interest (cf Poulton 1989, 93). I therefore find myself wondering if they did actually come from the villa or if Lowther was relying on a faulty memory. A few years before the 1959 finds survey he wrote a series of notes on the history of Ashtead for the Ashtead Resident

reprinted in the Leatherhead Society's Proceedings. In the Roman section we find: 'Of the final phase of the Roman occupation and of its submergence in the fifth century under the flood of the Saxon invasions no material evidence has as yet been obtained from our area'. In the next note including the Saxon period no early finds are mentioned (Lowther 1950, 24; 1951).

The finds held in Guildford Museum (and now attributed to the villa excavations) were identified as Saxon when deposited in 1937. The 1959 note cannot therefore be a matter of them being put aside for further study until suddenly being identified much later on. In the case of some Roman vessels that puzzled Lowther this did happen and when he had got as far as he could he published a note (Lowther 1933, 97-8). But whether or not the Saxon finds came from the villa or just 'Ashtead' (or indeed are two different discoveries) it is odd that they are not mentioned in Lowther's Ashtead history in 1950.

There is no easy explanation. Lowther's house on the outskirts of Ashtead was not far from the Goblin Works site where excavations for a water main uncovered skeletons in 1927 (Poulton 1989, 68). He is known to have thought these might be Saxon, a reasonable enough suggestion in its own right but is it possible that he based this in part on the somewhat illicit recovery of a knife and piece of pottery? If so could he have 'buried' the information about the findspot so successfully that he later became confused about it? There is a kind of parallel in the way that later on he dated the villa excavations to 1926-8 when they certainly began in 1925 and he did some digging on the bath-house in 1924 probably without formal permission. It may also be worth noting that in 1926 the given date for the find most of the work of excavation was devoted to the villa and not the separate bath house (while the bath house attached to the villa had not yet been discovered). If Lowther in 1959 remembered the dig as starting in 1926 that might be explained but it would still mean that in some way at this later date when he was only 57 he erroneously convinced himself about the circumstances of the discovery of the Saxon finds as specifically from the top level of the bath-building. It does not seem likely to me that he would have deliberately invented the story.

I would therefore welcome any other ideas or extra information as this is an important part of the villa story. I have not yet tried to check the objects themselves but they will be included in the reassessment of all of Lowther's discoveries as part of the ongoing work to publish all that we can currently say about this very important site.

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David Bird

War Memorials

As Remembrance Sunday approaches it was very appropriate for Frank Haslam to talk about the Society's ongoing websites project on our local War Memorials. This aims not just to record on-line the names of those commemorated but also to find out who they were, what happened to them and what were their local connections. What came across strongly was that the names on our war memorials were people who lived where we are. We owe it to them to remember their lives.

The Society's website (leatherhead.localhistorysociety.org.uk) has links to websites on the memorials in Ashtead, Box Hill, Great and Little Bookham, Effingham, Fetcham, Headley, Leatherhead, Mickleham and Oxshott.



Our local war memorials can be found in churches, churchyards, village halls, schools and in prominent outdoor sites. Perhaps the most elaborate is Leatherhead's Town War Memorial in North Street. There may be a cross sometimes with the reversed 'Sword of Sacrifice' and there are more or less detailed inscriptions some of which amazingly have proved to be inaccurate!

Frank appealed for help from his audience: the small team on the project has still much to do. Information comes not only from inscriptions, families and former neighbours but also from national websites like those of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission and the National Archives (including census returns). Free and paid-for family history organisations, records of births, deaths and marriages, parish magazines, local and national papers and regimental records are all vital sources.

There is also the unusual. Frank instanced Wing Commander Knocker on the memorial at St George's church, Ashtead. Piloting a Short Stirling to bomb Bremen he was shot down on

the Dutch coast in 1942. His mother was Baroness de Serclaes who had been awarded the Military Medal as an ambulance driver in the first World War looking after the wounded from both sides of the Front. He also mentioned the unravelling of the story of the death of Rev Vivian Redlich, a missionary commemorated in St John's School chapel.

The speaker praised the work of Liam Sumption who in the days before the internet travelled by public transport all over the British Isles to research many of the names on the Leatherhead memorial. He left the Society his extensive manuscript collection (entitled 'Taken not Given') when he moved away.

Janice Steele from Fetcham U3A spoke of two names on the Fetcham War memorials. Trooper Edgar Jones in the Royal Armoured Corps was killed in action aged 34 on 8th June 1944. Originally from Wales he is also on the London Passenger Transport Board memorial. He and his wife Margaret lived at 47 Warenne Road, Fetcham.

Company Sergeant Major Gravett MiD of the 1st Battalion East Surrey Regiment died aged 36 on 16 November 1940 following an air raid in a series of attacks on Poole its important harbour and the residential parts of Bournemouth. A parachute mine landed on the house in which the headquarters of 'D' Company were quartered.

Gravett's family lived in Fetcham Lodge. There is a record of him leaving Fetcham School at the age of 14. His wife Janet who he had married on service in Karachi in 1933 was Scottish which may explain why he is buried in Lockerbie in Scotland.

Ian Whitlock a local military historian inspired the current project. In 1999 intrigued by the Leatherhead War Memorial inscriptions. The first commemorations were the 'Ladies' War Shrines' of 1916-7 panels hung from the old Clock Tower/Fire Engine House roughly where the bus shelter now stands outside Lloyds Bank. The panels were moved to the parish church: there are other plaques in All Saints church and the Methodist church in Leatherhead.

Land for the Leatherhead War Memorial was given by Charles Leach of Vale Lodge later to be President of the Port of London Authority. His son (Grey de Leche Leach) died in 1916 sacrificing himself to save those around him when a grenade which was being primed was seconds from going off. He could not be awarded a posthumous Victoria Cross as his deed was not 'in the face of the enemy'. Instead he was awarded the Albert Medal in Gold (today's George Medal).

The design of Leatherhead War Memorial was chosen after visits to design exhibitions in London. Unusually each casualty had an individual plaque; 117 are commemorated and there are still some blank panels.

Ian had researched those born in Leatherhead who are not on the memorial 'to the sons of Leatherhead'. He spoke of the Taylor family who lost four sons killed in WW1. Two survived, one after losing a leg. Percy Taylor is buried in the Parish churchyard and has a

War Grave headstone. He is one of those not on the memorial at the time apparently because he did not see service abroad. Some of the Taylor family were at the talk.

If you would like to help the project forward please contact Frank Haslam (frank.haslam@gmail.com) or through the Leatherhead Museum.

Derek Renn

The Museum Season

The Museum closed to on the 14th December and looking back over the 2013 season we recorded a total of 1,489 visitors, marginally more than the previous year. This figure includes two private visits by a Scout group in June and a Cub pack in September and two outreach visits, one to Trinity School in October and another to Mickleham School in November. There were five occasions when we were unable to open due to the shortage of volunteers. A quite extensive campaign was mounted towards the end of the year to recruit more volunteers both for stewarding and the separate work around the back of putting on displays, dealing with the artefacts and not the least, the administration of the office and the building. To date when writing this just before Christmas we have had a good response but time will tell just how many stay. Our Curator Lorraine has worked hard on this aspect with a novel, for us, approach and we have formalised some of our procedures.

Several of the stewards whilst on duty abstracted details from the visitor's book for both the 2012 and 2013 seasons. This gives us a broad indication of where visitors regard as 'home ' and from the table it can be seen that approximately half the number were from the Mole Valley. Of the 'Abroad' category we had visitors from Australia, Canada, France, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, New Zealand, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Transylvania [Romania], Uganda, USA and Zambia. One of the French entries was Triel Du Seine which is a town that Leatherhead is twinned with.

Mole Valley	150	52.1%
South East	82	28.5%
Elsewhere in Britain	28	9.7%
Abroad	28	9.7%
Total	288	

The now traditional craft days were held during the Spring half term which saw 84 children come over the three days thanks to a lot of effort from a small band of helpers from the 'Friends ' and we would like to put on more events to encourage parents to bring children or grandchildren if we have the resources to arrange it.

The 'Poor Murdered Women ' display that was opened at the start of the season by the



folk singer Shirley Collins and put together by Alun Roberts remained to the end when it was suddenly discovered by Mark Davison who by chance was preparing an article for the Leatherhead Advertiser. Thus we featured in the two page spread on Thursday 12th December edition and a mention when Mark went next door to the Blue Cafe. Resources permitting it is Lorraine's intention to vary the displays' during next year to attract more visitors and the year does of course have the anniversary of the start of the 'Great War'.

Otherwise the season was much the same as on previous years: the gazebo put up in April blew down in May and was badly damaged in the gales and was replaced by a new one. David Hartley added another alongside for his archaeological display outside. This was much easier to set up following the repaving of the elevated area in March with the tiring platform set level and now ceasing to be the hazard it was in its previous location. Subsequently the bright yellow 'Rising Sun' enamelled sign complementing the one indoors has been fixed to the wall and makes a striking feature.

We have great plans for next year and will reopen at the end of March so make sure you come along and see the changes.

Alan Pooley

Stephen Trenka 1909 – 1990

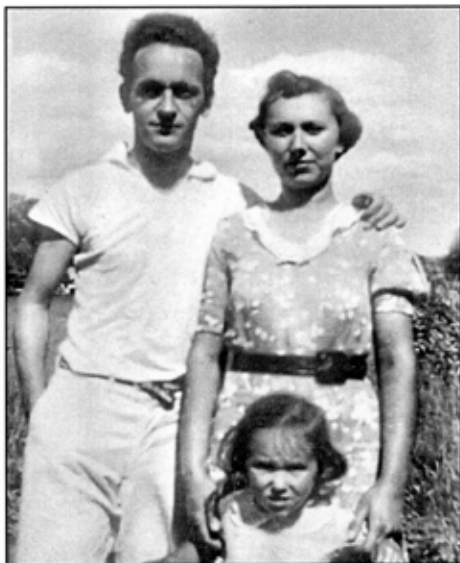
I get to deal with numerous enquiries each year in my role as Records Secretary and Bookham Archivist and am always pleased when these lead to fresh information about the history of our district. The following story is an excerpt from a book, called 'Breaking New Ground' by James A Gledhill, which was sent to me by the author after I helped him with some photographs earlier this year.

Roy Mellick

Born in Hungary July 24 1909 Stephan Trenka was the youngest of 6 children in a struggling working class family. Political turmoil that would eventually spawn WWI was forcing great hardships upon an already battered population but the untimely death of Stephan's father in 1913 delivered a devastating blow to the family. His mother became withdrawn and unable to cope with the demands of raising six children on her own. The war amplified her sense of hopelessness and after the guns stopped firing the battle to survive deprivation and starvation was relentless. In 1921 Stephen's mother died sending the 12 year old adrift in a hostile world.

Stephan was resourceful. He could manage in this world. He knew the rules. He understood what needed to be done so he might make it through the next day. The streets became his home. The places he spent time with his older siblings was just the place he occasionally slept. He had not known the luxury of good food, a warm bed and a loving mother but he yearned for those things. He would never stop yearning and would never stop finding ways to express it.

Trenka Gallery



Trenka Family Photo 1938

Stephen managed to gain entrance to the Royal Hungarian Industrial Art School in Budapest early in 1924. It was there over the next four years that he would receive a solid training in drawing translating blueprints and machine shop skills in both metal and wood. Trenka embraced the furniture classes. Students would design and build chairs, tables, etc. but it was the delicately carved detailed relief enhancements that he would excel at. These were the skills that he hoped to use in creating a better life and upon graduation in 1928 set about utilizing those skills.

During his years at school Stephen's siblings were scattered far and wide. A sister had immigrated to Canada and

*'Trenka' continues on page 17 after
advert and AGM Insert*

The Grange in Bookham

Registered Charity No. 207740

The Grange is a registered charity based in Rectory Lane Bookham and provides help and support to people with disabilities to realise their full potential and live independent and fulfilling lives. To achieve this we offer high quality housing and provide full time registered care and supported living on site in accommodation at Bookham and more recently also in Epsom.

The Grange also offers day activities and skills training programmes. The people we support attend training sessions in horticulture, creative arts and textiles, woodwork and catering - once they have attained these skills they can be used to gain work experience.

Julia Sweet founded the original School of Stitchery and Lace in 1927 in Leicestershire to train nurses who had been injured in the Great War.

Trustees moved the school to the Grange in 1938 and many fine items were produced including layettes for the Royal Family, Queen Mary was a regular customer and on one occasion commissioned a nightdress - the Queen liked it so much that she ordered twelve.

Today we have two shops on site, The Walled Garden shop and Creative Art & Textiles, both are open during the week, also the 'Simply Scones café' which is open Tuesday afternoons and a shop at 'The Grange at No 5 Church Road Bookham. More recently a shop in Lyons Court and a café in the Mayflower Centre both in Dorking.

Do please come and visit us we would be delighted to see you.

The Grange Rectory Lane Bookham Leatherhead Surrey KT23 4DZ

Phone: 01372 455231. www.grangecentre.org.uk



Spring - Cherry Blossom at the Grange

Leatherhead and District Local History Society

Registered Charity No. 802409

Notice of Annual General Meeting

The 67th Annual General Meeting of the Society will be held in the Dixon Hall of the Letherhead Institute at 20.00 hrs. Friday 21st March.

Agenda

1. Apologies for absence.
2. Minutes of the 66th Annual General Meeting
3. Matters arising from the Minutes
4. Presentation of the Executive Committee report for 2013
5. Election of Officers and Executive Committee members 2014/15
6. Presentation of the Society's accounts 2013
7. Review of Subscriptions for the year 2015
8. Appointment of the Independent Examiner for the accounts
9. Any other business (to be notified to the Chairman by 10th March 2014)
10. Our President to declare the proceedings closed

Leatherhead and District Local History Society

Nominations and Election of the Executive Committee for 2014-2015

	Trustees	Office Holders	Status
1	David Hartley	Chairman	
2	David Lokkerbol	Hon Secretary	
3	Dr Fred Meynen	Committee Member	
4	Doug Hollingsworth	Committee Member	
	Members of the Committee	Other Office Holders & Members	
5		Hon Secretary	vacant
6	Frank Haslam	Membership Secretary	
7	Roy Mellick	Records Secretary	
8		Librarian	
9	Barry Cox	Proceedings Editor	
10	Martin Warwick	Newsletter Editor	
11		Programmes & Lectures Secretary	vacant
12		Sales & Publications Secretary	vacant
13	Frank Haslam	Website Editor	
14	John Wettern	Publicity Co-ordinator	
15		Publicity Officer	Vacant
16	Alan Pooley	Museum Manager	
17	Lorraine Spindler	Museum Curator	
18	David Hartley	Archaeological Secretary	
19		Committee Member	Vacant

Nominations For Office

Nominations for office of Trustees, Office holders and Ordinary Members must be notified to the Chairman by Monday 10th March 201 in writing or by email, delivered or sent to the Registered Office of the L&DLHS at the Museum at Hampton Cottage, 64 Church Street, Leatherhead KT22 8DP - email staff@lheadmuseum.plus.com

Retiring Members

The following member has ably fulfilled his role as an office holder on the EC for a number of years among his many other roles for the History Society for which we thank him.

1. Goff Powell Sales & Publications Secretary

Death of a Member

The late Linda Heath a past Chairman and past President died on 21st May 2013. At the time of her death she was an active member of the Executive Committee to the end and this position is now vacant.



Kimon Parry



Jenkinson Frith Duo



DORKING CONCERTGOERS PRESENT

QUARTET SERIES: NAVARRA STRING QUARTET

Sunday 9 February 2014 Dorking Halls 3.00pm PLEASE NOTE DAY & TIME
Mozart String Quartet No.1, K.80; **Borodin** String Quartet No.2
Beethoven String Quartet No.10, Op.74 *Harp*

Sunday 23 February 2014 Dorking Halls 3.00pm PLEASE NOTE DAY & TIME
Mozart String Quartet No.6, K.159; **Dvorák** String Quartet No.10, Op.51
Beethoven String Quartet No.5 in A major, Op.18 No.5

Saturday 22 March 2014 Dorking Halls 7.30pm
Schubert String Quartet No.8, D.112; **Haydn** String Quartet Op.77 No.2
Beethoven String Quartet No.13 in B-flat major, Op.130

Tickets £20

KIMON PARRY CLARINET RECITAL

Saturday 5 April 2014 Martineau Hall at the Dorking Halls 7.30pm

Works by **Milhaud, Debussy, Brahms, Francaix, Rachmaninov & Finzi**
Kimon Parry Clarinet; **Tony Ingham** Piano

Sponsored by the Countess of Munster Musical Trust.

Tickets £15

JENKINSON FRITH DUO (CELLO & PIANO)

Saturday 17 May 2014 Dorking Halls 7.30pm

Works by **Stravinsky, Brahms, Schumann & Rachmaninov**
Richard Jenkinson Cello; **Benjamin Frith** Piano

Supported by the Making Music Concert Promoters' Scheme.

Tickets £20

Tickets and membership details from Dorking Concertgoers'
Box Office 01306 740619; or tickets from Dorking Halls 01306 881717

www.dorkingconcertgoers.org.uk

Continued from p12 - Stephen Trenka

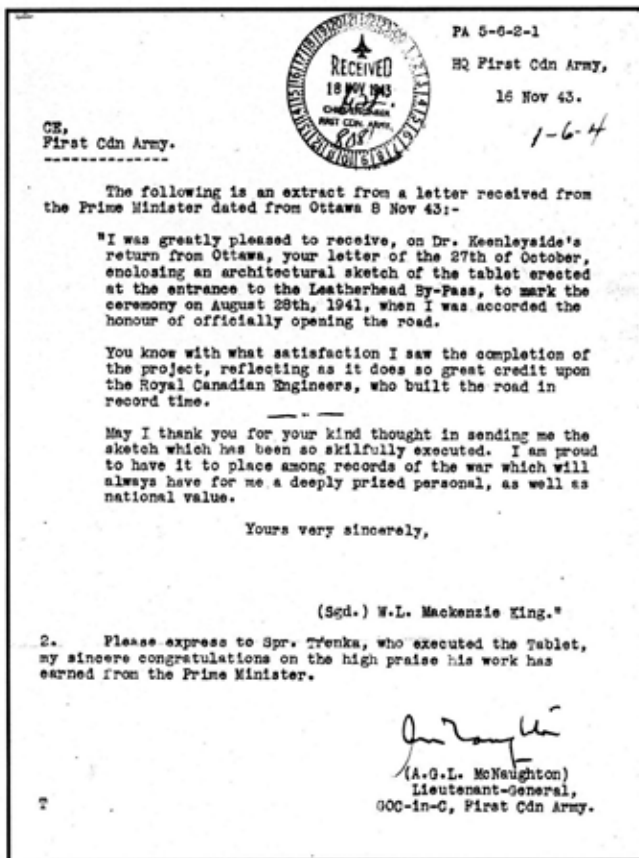
often wrote to her brother telling of the new country and the opportunities that it offered. The future was here she insisted just come and

see for yourself so in August 1929 Stephen arrived in Toronto with skills, carving tools and a hunger to succeed. In October 1929 the Great Depression arrived challenging that hunger.

The hardships of the depression were not something new for Trenka. His life in Hungary had been far worse for him and his family. He knew that to succeed here he would need to speak the language and so enrolled in night classes for that purpose. He also enrolled in the Ontario College of Art in 1930. This was where he would come into contact with the slightly subversive world of the Canadian arts movement. We believe that it was during this time period that he began a mentored collaboration with Florence Wyle and Frances Loring.

These two reclusive sculptresses fondly referred to as 'The Girls' were instrumental in establishing the Sculptors' Society of Canada to which Trenka would become a member and a driving force behind the founding of the Federation of Canadian Artists and the National Arts Council. Their lives and contributions are amply documented in a 1972 volume by Rebecca Sisler called 'The Girls'. Perhaps even more significant was that the sculptresses had converted a church in Toronto into a studio that was a hub for the artistic movement in Canada. It was a place where one might find Lauren Harris discussing poetry with Florence or Stephan Trenka discussing sculpture with Frances. It was a great meeting place and melting pot for artists in the late 1940s and 1950s.

Trenka immersed himself in the culture of Toronto. When he was not attending classes at the Ontario College of Art or carving on the kitchen table he could be found wandering



Letter of Commendation 1943

through the Royal Ontario Museum or his favourite book store Britnells on Young Street. When he required some company for a drink the large Hungarian community provided clubs and conversation in his native language.

The need to eat and have a place to call home was not lost on Trenka and his sister. Finding gainful employment was crucial. Stephen's sister had an idea. She had been in Toronto for several years and was familiar with some folks at a local furniture manufacturer named Ridpath. Established in 1907 Ridpath specialized in high end custom furniture hand crafted in the old world fashion. Thinking this a good fit for her brother she took him over to the shop and made the introduction. She had also brought along a hand mirror very fashionable at the time which Stephen had made for her during his years at the trade school in Budapest. The quality of the carving and his diploma were enough to have Ridpath offer him a job in their shop. It was only an 'as needed' position but did provide Trenka some money new contacts and a place to develop his carving and design skills.

Trenka left the Ontario College of Art in 1933 with his studies officially incomplete. He had received the knowledge and network he needed but saw no reason to spend another year studying for a piece of paper. He took what he needed and ignored the rest. He was free. He was free to follow his dream wherever and whenever he so chose. This was something that was now so dear to him that one day he would defend it with life.

The creative force within him continued to flow: wood carver by day and sculptor by night. His connections to the arts community fueled him with new ideas and opportunities. 'The Girls' were instrumental in organizing yearly exhibitions that featured established sculptors and the new talent to be watched of which Trenka a favoured nephew of theirs if you will was included.

By 1935 the daily pressures of just getting by had begun to ease and Trenka found himself beginning to dwell on his aloneness. The introspection he needed for his artistic endeavours forced up the emotional pain surrounding the loss of his mother family and country. He had found comfort in a relationship with Ann Sekel a first generation Canadian born to a Hungarian immigrant family living in Toronto. They shared a language a cultural background and most importantly a need to start a family of their own. They were married in August of 1935 and would remain so for the next 55 years raising a son and daughter and welcoming many grandchildren.



1935 also saw Trenka return to the Ontario College of Art this time not as a student but as an associate instructor. He was now established in the circle of Canadian artistic heavyweights that included Gustav Hahn, Emmanuel Hahn and Franklin Carmichael all of which headed departments at the college.

1937 saw Trenka become a Canadian citizen. His

PA 1-3-B-1

H.Q. First Canadian Army.

28 December 1942.

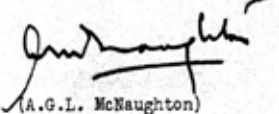
Dear Sapper Trenka,

I have today been given by General Hertzberg, Colonel MacLean and the officers particularly associated with them in the construction of Dunsfold Airfield, the beautiful replica of the commemoration stone which was executed by you.

I am very happy indeed to have the replica which I deeply value, both for what it symbolizes as to a hard task carried forward by the R.C.E. with determination and great professional skill and brought to completion in record time, and also because of the sheer intrinsic beauty of your own craftsmanship.

I thank you for the time and trouble and care you have taken over it and with every good wish for the New Year.

Very sincerely yours,



(A.G.L. McNaughton)

H

Sapper S. Trenka,
R.C.E.

Letter of Commendation 1942

naturalization provided so many more venues for his sculptures to be displayed. 'The Girls' would take him international with exhibitions at the 1938 New York World's Fair and the Tate Gallery in London England in 1939. Northrop Frye references a review of the exhibition at the Tate, singling out Trenka's piece called 'Mother and Child' purchased by Lady Eaton 'as the only memorable piece in that room with its strong lines and commanding prescience.'

In 1940 Trenka enlisted in the Royal Corps of Engineers and travelled overseas to join the war effort. He was prepared to risk his life to help bring peace and freedom to those being denied the rights he had come to embrace. His ability to read and translate blueprints was not overlooked by the recruiters who assigned him to the First Canadian Army Second Battalion and sent overseas to continue training as a 'sapper'. Traditionally a sapper, also called pioneer or combat engineer was a combatant who performed a variety of military engineering duties including bridge building, laying or clearing minefields, demolitions, field defenses and general construction of roads and airfields. Spr. (sapper) Trenka was posted to Leatherhead, Surrey UK in 1941 where the RCE was tasked with constructing a bypass around the town site easing the congestion for military convoys in the area. His reputation as a sculptor was brought to the attention of his commanding officers and it was decided that Spr. Trenka would be assigned the task of designing and executing a memorial

tablet for the completion of the highway.

By May 1 1942 the Second Battalion was posted to Dunsfold, Surrey, UK and tasked with constructing an airfield large enough to handle bombers and combat aircraft. Once again Spr. Trenka was assigned to produce a replica of the memorial erected at Leatherhead and have it ready in a hurry. The pluck and efficiency of the Royal Corps of Engineers had the airfield ready to hand over to the RAF and Allied Air Command within 20 weeks 4 weeks ahead of schedule. Spr. Trenka and the memorial tablet were both honoured at the official hand over of the Dunsfold Airbase on October 16 1942 during a much needed moral boosting ceremony. Among the dignitaries attending were; Air Marshal H Edwards, Major General H D G. Crerar, Lieutenant General A G L McNaughton and Air Chief Marshal Sir C L Courtney. News of the events involving Spr. Trenka were brought to the attention of Prime Minister the Right Honourable W L Mackenzie King where upon letters of commendation were sent expressing the pride and appreciation for jobs well done.

In 1944 Trenka was released from service following a training accident that left him deaf in one ear and impaired hearing in the other. I was told by his daughter that he had neither sent for his service medals nor spoke about his service overseas. Trenka returned to his family and community in Toronto to take up where he had left off. Never one to sit back and wait for something to happen Trenka embarked on the most creatively productive time of his life.

The story continues with how Trenka continued to improve his skills working for an assortment of gun, car and furniture manufacturers in Canada and USA whilst always maintaining his art and honing his delicate touch with fine detail. He entered and won competitions on two separate occasions for the design of new coins for the Canadian Royal Mint amongst others. The Canadian ‘Trenka’ silver dollar was a huge success both in Canada and the USA.

The book ‘Breaking New Ground’ by James A Gledhill can be borrowed from the Bookham Archive for those wishing to read the full story. Please contact Roy Mellick 01372 457839 or email roy.mellick@btinternet.com.

Roy Mellick

News from the Friends of Leatherhead Museum

The 2013 season at Leatherhead Museum ended quietly with a few December visitors and then a party at the Leatherhead Institute to thank our loyal stewards and helpers for all their brilliant support throughout the year. The main part of the news from The Friends to date is contained in our February Bulletin (enclosed with this magazine).

The end of season stewards and helpers party was enhanced by two superb quizzes devised by Alan Pooley. One really tested us on our powers of observation through colour photographs of nooks and crannies in Leatherhead. “I know I’ve seen that somewhere but where?” Also a list of obscure names of crafts and skills to match with the names we are familiar with- testing but most enjoyable. Tasty food was provided thanks to the committee and Robin Christian made sure everyone’s glass was topped up throughout. Brian and Alan spoke briefly to thank everyone who helps to keep our amazing museum open and receptive

to the public.

The main news to announce is that there is to be an outing to Mount Browne, The Surrey Police Headquarters. They have a museum which was opened in 2001 by Sir Michael Caine to help celebrate 150 years of the Force. Through its artefacts and touch screen technology it displays the history up to the present day.

This is an event that Fred Meynen tried to organise a few years ago but was prevented by some refurbishment at the centre. Jane Stilliard their Records Officer is happy to guide us on Friday March 21st at 10.30am.

Please can you let Julia Lack know on 01372 386050,upper.mole@ntlworld.com if you are interested in coming along or would like further information. We are being encouraged to car share as the parking is limited so lifts can be arranged for those who would like or need one. For anyone with walking difficulties

I am assured that they can be set down at the entrance and there is a lift up to the museum. Sadly they do not have the facility to provide tea or coffee for visitors to the museum so we will all need to have morning coffee before we leave home or take a flask for the car!! For anyone wanting a companionable lunch afterwards there are two pubs within a short distance and nearer the time I can arrange to book a table if that is what people would like. I look forward to seeing everyone back in the museum in April 2014.

Julia Lack



Fetcham, a Fond Reminiscence?

The years roll by with ever increasing velocity, rather like the pages of a calendar pad that is blown by an invisible wind, so loved by the directors of those old black and white films when they wanted to show the passage of time. Would that we could empower the wind to blow backwards and replace those lost years back onto the calendar pad. We are however blessed with memory, (but even that plays tricks with our advancing years.)

I invite you to accompany me on a 'Tardis like experience' and travel back to the early 1940's. Where to? I hear you ask. We find ourselves in the delightful village of Fetcham, or to be more precise back to the village school. How did I arrive there? Well perhaps I should provide just a brief background. I am not a son of Surrey, no - I was born in the county of the three scimitars, yes Essex long before its sons and daughters had acquired labels that to say the least can be construed as less than complimentary. I spring to their defence and say that said labels were devised as a defence by those souls who felt themselves to be inferior.

Where was I? Well when the war broke out, (most of us are of a certain age and don't have to ask 'which war?') When the war broke out Dad was invited by the King no less to leave the bosom of his family, me and my Mum and broaden his horizons. The implication was that travel is good for the soul.

My Mum's parents, my grandparents, but you have already worked that out, lived in Leatherhead, a fine location that would become our home after the peace was won and yes I was one of the lucky ones, my Daddy came home. Mum was a school teacher and on arrival in Leatherhead she was appointed a post at Fetcham. For some reason, I being a 'little sprog' was sent along with her and stayed there until I was eleven when I went up to the 'big school' at Leatherhead having failed the 11 plus. 'Hennegan must try harder.'

Back in those days Fetcham School consisted of the two buildings in School Lane augmented by a class in the Village Hall and another in the long since gone and lamented wooden canteen hut that stood in the present car park and backed on to Gatesden Road. Remember that at that time the extensions behind the School Lane buildings were a long way in the future.

It seems implausible that such a comparatively small establishment sufficed for the village. I know, all the old Fetchamites out there will tell me, 'back then we knew almost all the villagers by name and we always left our doors open, and 'cor lummy' not only that, but half of us didn't know where our front door keys were'.

When I first entered the school, the buildings were almost brand new except of course for the 'old building'. It was in this noble structure that my first impressions of the school were formed. The item that left a lasting impression was the grand open fire in the front of which was an enormous fire guard. In the wet winter months there would often be an assorted selection of outer garments that were hung over it to dry. The fire would be stoked at regular intervals by Mr Eastman the school caretaker.

He not only kept the establishment up to scratch but in the winter he would be found in the 'stokehole' tending the furnace that supplied the hot water for the taps and the heating system. The heat was distributed to the class rooms in the new school by cast iron radiators located under the windows that opened onto School Lane.

Mr Eastman was a man of many talents among them was his gift of music. He was the organist at Saint Mary's Church Fetcham.

The new building had an internal paint scheme that was popular at the time, brown on the lower part of the wall and a creamy off-white above.

During my time there the walls which incidentally were plain unplastered brick were repainted with a green lower half. There were four class rooms, two down stairs and two upstairs all of which faced School Lane.

The school was led by the Head Mistress whose office was on the left hand side of the downstairs corridor. Miss Martin was to my mind the type of person that a headmistress should be, hair pulled back in a bun, tweed jacket and suitable skirt, lisle stockings and 'sensible shoes'. As to her age I have no idea, after all when one is just a little 'un all people over twenty were ancient but I suspect that she was nearer to the evening of her vocation

than at its dawn.

Oh! yes, there was a war on not that we were right 'in the thick' of it but there were air raid shelters in the playing field (remember it was bigger back then before the later extensions were added) there were four in all, three backing onto The Street and one at right angles to them backing onto the garden of the first bungalow opposite the Village Hall. When the air raid siren was heard we would be directed into our allocated shelter. We entered by descending four, or was it five steps? The area consisted of a concrete 'tunnel' running along its length with wooden slat benches along each side. At the far end there was a 'necessarium' in other words a chemical 'elsan' type toilet. Dignity was ensured by a screen made from an old sack, no doubt 'obtained' from Henry Moore, the Corn Chandlers located in North Street, Leatherhead.

Was our education impeded? Not on your life, we sung our tables from 2 on to 12. They don't do that now, they have electronic devices and when the batteries fail or there is a power cut they are 'in difficulties'. We also sung 'Ten Green Bottles', 'One Man Went to Mow', or some other sophisticated rendition!

As with all other state schools we had our third of a pint of milk each day. In the very cold weather it would be heated by the kind intervention of Mrs Fisk and Mrs Chapel our 'milk ladies'.

Just by way of an interlude let me name some of the teachers who were at the school during this time. Miss Martin of course; Miss O' Kane; Mrs Grant; Mrs Westbrook; Mrs Maltby; Mrs Startup who was later to be 'keeping order' at Leatherhead Secondary School; Miss Ray, who came a little later. Oh! Yes and Mrs Hennegan, I nearly forgot. No chance, for a time I was in her class, (not good news lads.)

The lack of male teachers was due to the fact that most the men folk unless they were in reserved occupations were with my Dad in foreign climes.

What about our educational activities? The lessons reflected the times and the 'three R's' formed the core supplemented by Religious Knowledge, known as Scripture; and Geography, most of the countries on the large Phillips wall map of the World, were painted in red or pink and 'that my son is all you need to know'. I am exaggerating a bit because even back in those 'dark ages' some of the teachers had travelled and they would describe in some detail the countries possibly France and Belgium that they had seen. Remember with the exception of the armed forces foreign travel was not as readily available as it is today and then only by those with 'brass' in their pockets.

Of course those of you in the know or still awake will be shouting "what about games, or PT"? Yes, this played a significant part of school life. We did exercises in the playground or indoors when the weather was impossible.

"Yes Peter I know it's cold just move a little faster."

"But please miss my Mum says I must not go out in the cold."

"Bring a note in tomorrow and you can join the girls in their knitting class"

The interesting thing about games was that there were winners and losers. This would

become evident when after the war we all attended the District Athletics Meetings at Gibraltar Recreation Ground, West Ewell. Me, I was usually a loser but I could dive and I represented the school at the galas held at the Epsom Baths in East Street.

I almost forgot we did do country dancing and there was no 'get out clause' for us chaps. This activity always took place in the Village Hall. We would choose our slippers, brown elasticated objects from a basket and then choose our partners, not members of the same sex unless there were chaps and girls left over at the end of the pickings. All was set for Circassion Circle or some other dance performed by the red face rustics of yester-year.

The class in the Village Hall occupied the area at The Street end of the hall. A green curtain was hung across the hall to the right of the main entrance. On the wall backing onto The Street there is a section consisting of grey bricks. Back then they were white and contained the names of the individuals or organisations who had contributed to the cost of converting the old barn into the Village Hall. Remember that in comparative terms the hall was very new and the smell of 'newness' still hung in the air. If you look carefully it is still possible to decipher some of these names today.

Back to School Lane. In-between the school and the house next to the school there was a garden. This consisted of an area given over to flowers and another section given over to vegetables. This garden was also part of the school week. Goodness the curriculum just grows and grows. There was also an oval shaped pond, not very big but sufficient to get 'a booter' if you put your foot in it under the threat of a dare. Just put up with the soggy feeling. The alternative was to declare the discomfort and face Miss Martin an act only performed by those of low intelligence. "You know the rules, hold out your hand." There would be no sanctions for the girls but they would be unlikely to be a party to such deeds unless of course it was to push a chap in.

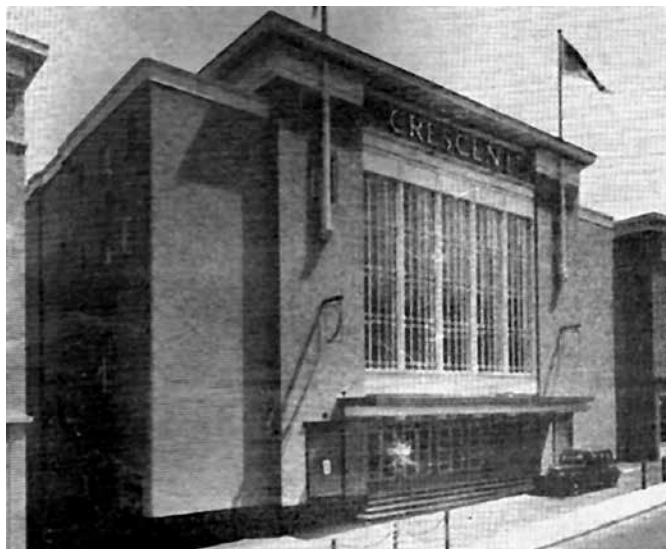
Just before I close please let me acquaint you with the school canteen. As I have mentioned it was in the long gone wooded hut that backed on to Gatesden Road. I understand it was an old First World War building moved to Fetcham from I don't know where. The walls on the inside were decorated with those famous wartime cartoons depicting 'potato pete' and other vegetables. These cartoons also appeared in some of the British Restaurants. Just as an aside the first 'British Restaurant' in the country was in Upper Fairfield Road Leatherhead and was opened by Freddie Grisewood, a well known radio personality. The school canteen also doubled up as a class room and just before the dinner hour the pupils had to move to the end of the hut away from the serving area so that the dinner ladies Mrs McNeil; Mrs Roebuck; among others could prepare the tables for the meal.

Looking back I can say that I enjoyed my time at Fetcham School in spite of the fact that I spent a period in my Mum's class. Dear old Mum died in January 2013 at the age of 103 and although her memory was very much affected she and I did have a laugh about times long ago and Fetcham School days featured with prominence.

Further items of interest concerning the school and the 1940's can be found in my book, *Over the Bridge*, published by the History Society.

Brian Hennegan

The Crescent Cinema – Church Street



Crescent Cinema 1939

The Crescent Cinema built on the site of the old Manor House in Church Street opened in 1939. It had a seating capacity of 1,282 yet every seat had been spaced with forethought for room and situation. Wherever patrons sat they would find a full and unobstructed view of the screen and space to relax and enjoyed it. It was designed in an Art Deco style by architects A E Richardson, C Lovatt Gill and Arthur Percival Starkey. The cinema had a stage 30 feet deep with two dressing rooms provided and the proscenium was 40 feet wide. It was run by a local family – The Manager Mr H G Prickett had spent a lifetime in the entertainment world particularly in the cinema branch and his knowledge and experience of the industry gained in the theatres throughout the West Country, Midlands and Wales enabled him not only to recognise the tastes and needs of the cinemagoer but to cater for them with understanding and happy results.

It was equipped with a Hammond 'Lafleur' electronic organ with an illuminated console. The management was fortunate in securing the services of Don Compton the popular and famous organist.

The Opening Ceremony was on Monday June 26th 1939 at 8.00pm
The very precise programme was as follows:-

The Doors Opened at 7.15pm and Incidental Music was played until just before 8.00pm when everybody stood for 'The King' (National Anthem), at 8.02pm the film 'Down on the Farm' - the Inimitable Jones Family in a riot of Holiday Fun! followed at 8.57pm Special Release News Reel (The management had arranged to incorporate this feature. It meant that the audience would get the news 'hot'.



Don Compton

Events of the day brought before the public in a vivid condensed form absolutely up to the minute). At 9.12pm 'The Mighty Compton' at the Lafler Organ – Don Compton presented a programme of music suggested by the word 'Crescent'. At last at 9.24pm what the audience had been waiting for – 'The Screen's Little Charmer' – Shirley Temple in 'Just around the Corner' For those who attended it must have been a night to remember.



Like most cinemas in their heyday the Crescent offered real value for money programmes started with 'The adverts' – then a short 'B' film followed by a cartoon, the news reel and forthcoming attractions. Whilst during the interval the usherettes would be selling cigarettes and ice creams. Then at long last the 'Main feature film'. Times of showing continuous Daily 5.00pm -11.00pm Wednesday and Saturday 2.00pm-11.00pm – Prices of Admission in the 1940s were 2s/6d - 2s/0d - 1s/6d -1s/0d - 9d - 6d (25p down to 2½p).

During WWII there were concerts and films to keep the spirits high. For example in 1941 there was a Nelson Flag Day concert with songs by Isobel Baillie, Anne Ziegler and Webster Booth and a sketch, Nelson at Leatherhead by Leatherhead resident Frank Benger. In 1942 world-famous pianists Pouishinoff and Mark Hambourg performed there. For many years the Leatherhead Operatic Society performed at the Crescent. In the 1950s they used the offices (Manor House) next door as dressing rooms. I remember it well when I worked the 2.00pm to 10.00pm shift for Ronson Products in their Hollerith Department. In 1953 the LOS staged Merrie England with Anne Ziegler and Webster Booth in the main leads. Keeping it in the family was part of the Cinemas life for many years the projectionist was

John Adams with his wife at the pay desk. I still remember her asking "How old are you Sonny" when somebody was trying to get in to see a more adult themed film. Sometimes youngsters would stand outside and ask a stranger to take you in with them. (Could you imagine doing that to-day?) – not to mention the gentlemen's toilet / fire exit method of entry!!! – Who me? - never !!!



ACE Cinema

In the 1940s and 50s there were two cinemas in Leatherhead, The Crescent which was very modern the other being the ACE (in the High Street) which was much more down to earth. (Built as the Victoria Hall but by 1914 it was operating as a cinema known as the Grand Theatre with 550 seats. Around 1921 it was re-named Picture House and the seating capacity had been reduced to 380. During the early-1940's it was re-named St. George's Cinema possibly due to patriotic feelings during World War II. In around 1946 it was re-named Ace Cinema and it was closed in the late-1940s early 50s)

In fact it was known locally as 'The Bug Hutch' (In 1951 it became home to the Leatherhead Repertory Theatre). It

had no carpets and the floor creaked at every little movement - all part of the premises appeal. (The Ace Cinema c: 1940s)

In the late 1950s and early 1960s with television sets becoming more available either by purchasing or rental (very popular at the time because of the newness of the technology) meant audiences were diminishing. Therefore the price of tickets had to rise to maintain the upkeep of the building and equipment yet another factor that did not help the cinemas demise like many others around the country. The cinema was closed in around 1967 even wrestling and bingo was tried out but wasn't successful and the building was sold to the local council. In 1969 architect Roderick Ham made great alterations to the stage end the frontage and also the auditorium re-opening as the Thorndike Theatre. The auditorium now had a bare brick finish and 530 seats and is considered one of the best theatre designs of its time.

In 1995 the Thorndike Theatre began screening films as well as live performances but the management company went bankrupt and the theatre closed in mid-1997. At the end of 1997 it was taken over by Screen Works to become a 180 seat cinema using only the rear seating area but this was a short lived venture. It then was used by religious groups for meetings. Re-named Leatherhead Theatre it re-opened in 2001. The main auditorium now has 512 seats and there is a studio theatre seating 80 and a 40 seat conference room. The building was designated a Grade II Listed building in 1999

Goff Powell with grateful thanks to Dick Hawkins for entrusting me with the original Souvenir Programme and History of Leatherhead by Edwina Vardey

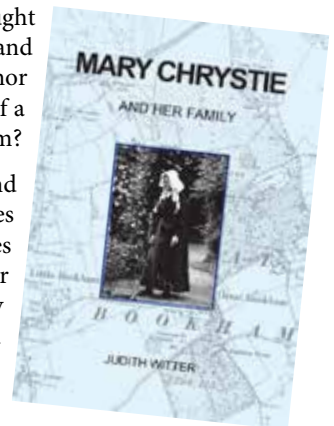
Book Review - 'Mary Chrystie'

Picking up the book by Judith Witter I wonder what has caught her eye, the lady on the cover in her starched white bonnet and long dark dress. What is it about her that intrigued the author persuading her to delve into the past and give us a glimpse of a life that has had so much impact on the little village of Bookham?

The book begins jam-packed with financial accounts and family relationships. If like me you tend to read for two minutes before nodding off this can mean re-reading whole pages several times. However if you start to lose track never fear - the concise and detailed glossary and family trees helpfully provided at the back of the book soon come to the rescue and iron out any confusion.

These very full facts and figures quickly reveal their real purpose in showing how young Mary and her family find themselves in less than enviable financial circumstances after the death of her father, the owner of a sugar plantation now adjusting to the end of slavery. In addition we can see just how crucial the support of and interaction with the wider family is to their survival.

Judith writes with some empathy and warmth towards Mary. We come to understand just how some of her early experiences perhaps shape her attitudes in later life. We see the



struggle of the family to keep up appearances and make good marriages for spinster sisters with little in the way of fortune to help their cause and how ultimately they are able to adapt to their lot. My favourite part is the account of her brother, Alexander sent off to school at a tender age turning out to be the black sheep of the family and eventually carving out some kind of life for himself far away in Australia. Again both Judith and I feel a little sad that circumstances may well have contributed to a downward trend in his fortunes.

The information on the development of Bookham under the sober eye of Mary Chrystie is also eye-opening and wonderfully illustrated with photos and maps of the area. I was particularly interested in the location of the temperance hotels and pleased to see that something of her legacy still remains in the bricks and mortar of some of the more splendid buildings of Bookham.

From a personal view I was also surprised to find that I have something in common with Miss Chrystie. My great-grandfather worked as a sugar baker (rather more lowly than owning a plantation) and signed the pledge; I was born and raised in Ealing and I married a Scot from the east coast!

The book is thoroughly researched and a fascinating read into the life and influence of Mary Chrystie. It is quite short so it won't be hard to get to the end! I would have loved to see more photographs of Mary and her family but perhaps practical or financial considerations didn't allow for this.

I would thoroughly recommend this book for anyone interested in the history of the area or for anyone who'd like to read about a strong, independent woman and the mark she made despite or perhaps because of the very difficult circumstances of her youth.

Anne Fraser

Notes from an interview with Judith Witter:

When I had our first child I read S E D Fortecue's book 'The story of two villages Great and Little Bookham'. I was fascinated by the changes in Bookham but Mary Chrystie caught my imagination as she had closed public houses and I was curious about why she was quite so ardent about the Temperance Movement and about just how much money she had to make her ideas a reality

The most interesting part of the research for me was assembling the data from original documents about Mary's ancestors, her immediate family and her wider family. Each new piece of information lead to other questions and there was always more than one question to be answered so if I was not able to work on one question I researched another. Are there any other photos of Mary?

Sadly at present the only photograph I am aware of is the one photograph that is used in the book.

Friends of the Leatherhead Museum Chairman

Julia Lack 01372 386050 upper.mole@ntlworld.com

Librarian (Letherhead Institute): Vacant

The Library is open on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays from 10.00am to 12.30pm. Exceptionally, arrangements may be made to use it at other times by applying to the Librarian.

Membership Secretary:

Frank Haslam 01372 379341 frank.haslam@gmail.com

Records Secretary:

Roy Mellick 01372 457839 roy.mellick@btinternet.com

Sales Secretary:

Vacant

Programmes & Lectures Secretary:

Vacant

Newsletter Editor:

Martin Warwick 01372 453717 martin_warwick@hotmail.com

Website Editor:

Frank Haslam 01372 379341 frank.haslam@gmail.com

Committee Members:

Doug Hollingsworth

Archival Material

The Society has some archival material, documents, illustrations and maps which may be accessed through the following members:

Ashtead	John Rowley
Bookham	Roy Mellick
Fetcham Documents	Alan Pooley
Fetcham Photographs and Maps	Ed Tims
Leatherhead Documents	Vacant
Leatherhead Photographs	Vacant
Leatherhead Maps	Alan Pooley

Historical Enquiry Service

Coordinator - Vacant

The Service offers to seek answers to questions about the history of Leatherhead, Ashtead, Bookham and Fetcham submitted via the Museum

Meetings and Lectures January to May

The meetings are held on the third Friday of each month except as noted. Location: The Letherhead Institute. Time : 8.00 p.m. Coffee served from 7.30pm. Admission : £2. Non-members are welcome.

17th January

Lecture : ‘Two Hundred Years of Surrey County History ‘ by Julian Pooley from the Surrey History Centre.

21st February

Lecture : ‘Leith Hill Place ‘ by Gabrielle Gale.

21st March

Outing to Mount Browne Police museum 10.30am everyone welcome. For information contact Julia Lack on 01372386050 upper.mole@ntlworld.com

21st March

Annual General Meeting followed by a lecture ‘Researching Mary Chrystie of Bookham and her Family ‘ by Judith Witter.

11th April

(Note the date – NOT 18th April) ‘Donald Campbell’s Water Record ‘ by Donald Stevens.

16th May

Lecture ‘Behind the Scenes at Leatherhead Museum ‘ by Curator, Lorraine Spindler.