

*LEATHERHEAD & DISTRICT
LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY*

NEWSLETTER



AUGUST 2010

LEATHERHEAD & DISTRICT LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Registered Charity No. 802409

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David Hartley

01372 377839

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01372 801357

TREASURER

David Lokkerbol

01372 375756

The Society meets on the third Friday of the month at the Letherhead Institute between September and May.

For details - see programme in the Newsletter

2010 Membership Subscriptions

Ordinary.....£15.00 Associate.....£6.00 Junior (under 18).....£1.00

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY David Wall

01372 374773

The Museum is open at the following times (from 2nd April)

Thursdays and Fridays .. 1.00pm to 4.00pm Saturdays ..10.00am to 4.00pm

CURATOR

(Vacancy)

01372 386348

The Friends of Leatherhead Museum support the Society's work on behalf of the Museum

CHAIRMAN

Fred Meynen

01372 372930

The Library at The Letherhead Institute is open on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays from 10.00am to 12.30pm. It is no longer open on Saturdays. Exceptionally, arrangements may be made to use it at other times by applying to the Librarian.

LIBRARIAN

Peter Wells

01372 272367

Lectures Co-ordination of the Society's lecture and visits programme and L&DLHS speakers for local societies.

PROGRAMME SECRETARY

Fred Meynen

01372 372930

Further details are given on the inside back cover

Editorial

We can now look forward to the Friday evening lectures soon starting up again at the Letherhead Institute. The first of these in September is preceded by an Extraordinary Meeting at 7.30pm to gain the official consent of the Society to the change to our current objects to enable the amalgamation of the History Society Trust and the Museum Trust. A calling notice to this effect is included with the issue of this edition. The change should not make a visible difference to our members but hopefully it will establish the Society on a firmer and more logical basis.



The latest publication ‘Past Industries of Ashted, Leatherhead and Bookham’ by Peter Tarplee has sold well with good figures for the first two months. If you haven’t got yours yet I suggest you should invest in a copy. The text is good and there are over 120 illustrations.

This August edition always suffers from the lack of Summer meetings and the subsequent lack of reports on lectures. We have managed to fill 28 pages but we still have a need for more articles. So often we seem to rely on a small band of regular contributors. I am sure that there must be some more members of the society who could contribute articles by describing their own reminiscences or experiences.

There is still a far too long list of vacancies and unfilled posts. Each quarter we issue the same plea. We really do believe that taking up one of the post would prove of interest to you and great benefit to the society.

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Chairman's Report

Merger of the Museum Trustees with the History Society

Following the AGM in April when the executive committee received the clear mandate of the members present for the resolution to merger of the Museum Heritage Trust into the Leatherhead & District Local History.

Progress has now been made with the museum's Trustees and their Solicitors, the Trustees' position is now regularised to enable the merger to move forward.



As part of this process the History Society are obliged to make some minor but important amendments to the Objects of the Society as recommended by solicitors for the museum Trustees to enable the History Society to own and maintain a museum. Our current objects only allow us to run a museum.

Ultimately the official custodian appointed by the Charities Commission will hold the title to the property on behalf of the History Society.

An extraordinary general meeting has been called for Friday 17th September at 7.30pm in the Dixon Hall at the Letherhead Institute. This extraordinary meeting is to vote on the resolution to amend the Objects of the History Society as previously described - you will find formal notice for this extraordinary general meeting in this Newsletter and if for any reason you have not received a copy please let me know immediately and a copy will be provided to you.

Following this meeting our usual September Friday evening lecture will start at 8.00pm and will be given by our President Gordon Knowles.

Bookham Village Day

Another wonderful sunny Saturday heralded the launch of this year's Bookham Village Day which was well supported as usual by local schools, residents and visitors alike, this years theme was The Circus Comes to Town.

Our Society provided a number of display boards on this theme, something of the history of the circus over time from the Roman period of gladiatorial contests between man and man and man and beast. Mosaics and remains of wall paintings were used to illustrate this theme. Other boards illustrated the Victorian & Edwardian Circus and a reflection of circuses as represented through the paintings of a number of well-known European artists. Finally we had some of the familiarity of the circuses of the 1950s & 60s that we would recognise to the present. Aside from this, the Society set out a table of books for sale from our collection of book titles. The timely launch of Peter Tarplee's new book 'Past Industries of Ashted, Leatherhead and Bookham' also proved to be a big draw we completely sold out of the ten books we had available on the day.

My thanks go to Lindsay Trim, Jill Godfrey and Gordon & Pam Knowles for their support in operating the bookstall for the morning and afternoon sessions.

Positions Vacant

We still need your help and support - unfortunately your silence has been deafening. Following our May Newsletter I had hoped to find that one of our members would have some spare time to pick up one of the positions on our Executive Committee. Here is your opportunity to shape the future of your History Society - we need to fill the following posts in order of priority;

Honorary Secretary
Records Secretary
Publicity Officer
Part-Time Curator

Please speak to me if you would like more information or would talk about any of the positions on offer

David Hartley

Archaeology Report

There are no new events to report - excavations, meetings and events are as previously outlined in our May Newsletter

Heritage Open Days 9th – 12th September

Please lend your support to this local even in Mole Valley - if you would like to volunteer to help and participate in this year's event contact Linda Heath at the Letherhead Institute or Alan Pooley at the Museum.

John Hassell 1767-1825 & Edward Hassell 1811-1852

Recently I purchased from the Oxfam shop in Guildford a copy of volume 75 of the Surrey Archaeological Collections dated 1984 - to my pleasant surprise it contained an article by James C Batley and Gerard P Moss called 'A Catalogue of Pictures of Surrey and Elsewhere by John Hassell (1767-1825) and his son Edward Hassell (1811-1852)'.

It is a fascinating and interesting article and an original piece of research into the work of the two artists with a full and extensive catalogue of their known topographical work in Surrey.

I would recommend this article to all those interested in local history research of this period and I also understand there is quite an extensive collection of Hassell's at the Surrey History Centre at Woking - well worth a visit.

David Hartley

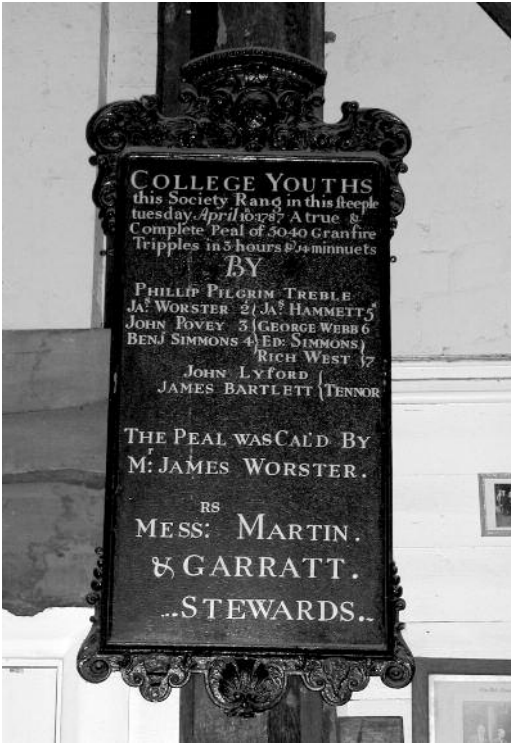
Occasional Notes

The Museum was contacted in April by Olivia Farley, the manageress at the time of our Church Street neighbours the Queen Elizabeth Foundation Charity Shop, who asked us to give an opinion about a vase which had recently been donated. It was signed 'A.G. Hopkins, Lambeth, 1929' and we suspected that it might be of some interest. The Curator of Ceramics at Aberystwyth University was able to tell us that it was an interesting example of early salt glaze studio pottery by a fairly well known artist. The advice was to sell it at a specialist auction, but in the event the charity went for a quick sale locally. It raised £250 and the Museum was duly thanked.



In the course of research undertaken for the Heritage Weekend Exhibition, which is focussing this year on Georgian Leatherhead, confirmation was received from Dr Clare Rider, the Archivist of St George's Chapel at Windsor Castle, that the renowned Leatherhead carpenter and builder Benjamin Simmons was invited as a member of the College Youths' bell ringing team to ring a 'Complete Peal of 3040 Gransire Tripples' (sic) in the Castle's Curfew Tower (then known as the Julius Caesar Tower) in June 1787. It took 'three hours and fourteen minnuets' and is recorded on a board in the tower. Dr Rider was kind enough to send a photograph and was interested to learn of the tower's name at the time, which had been forgotten. It is not yet known what the occasion for the peal was, but Simmons was accompanied among others by his brother Edward and by James Bartlett, thought to be another Leatherhead man. Simmons was an enthusiastic ringer in Leatherhead and his name is on many boards in the Parish Church.

The Internet has proved a fruitful source of information about local history. We have been concentrating recently on The Times database and that of a number of other nineteenth century newspapers, both of which are available without charge to Surrey Library members. Fascinating sale details of The Mansion (property of the late Colonel Spicer) appeared in The Standard on June 8th 1844. It will feature in an exhibit which the library staff are preparing for Heritage Weekend. Interesting details are given of the



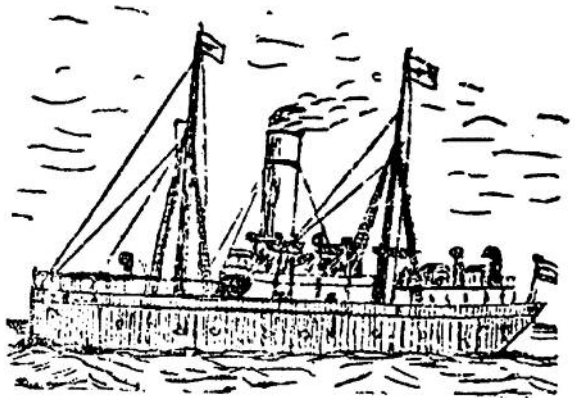
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layout of the grounds ('plantations of luxuriant growth and great beauty, adorned by a large fish pond and extending to THE RIVER MOLE, full of fish ... rockwork, grottos and summer house ... the lawn resplendant with flowering shrubs ... a rich meadow of three acres'). Part of this meadow later became the playing field for Joseph Payne's school. The Mansion was bought by Nathaniel Bland, who leased it to Payne, whose school flourished there until around 1875.

Stenning is a well known Leatherhead name (Stenning Court in Church Road was named after Claud Stenning) but the fate of Claud's father Herbert was new to us. A London solicitor, he came to Leatherhead in 1895 and lived with his family in Leith House in Station Road (where the Telephone Exchange is now). He came top of

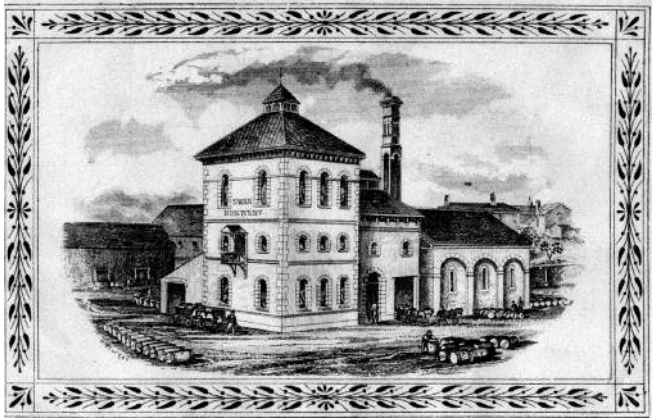
the poll in the Council elections in 1899 and took a trip to the Channel Islands, perhaps to celebrate. Unfortunately he was one of the victims of a famous Victorian disaster, the wreck of the South Western Railway packet *The Stella* (picture from the *Cornish Advertiser*), which struck a rock off Alderney and sank with the loss of many lives. His widow Louisa, who had moved with her family to London House opposite the Museum, was awarded £6200 compensation. She moved shortly afterwards to a large newly built house, no longer standing, in the St Nicholas Hill development.

We are all familiar also with the name of the Budds of Vale Lodge. Perhaps less well known is a case which came to court in August of 1886, which was widely publicised in the national press under the headline: 'Charge of throwing boy in river'. The 20 year old



THE STELLA.

Cecil Budd got into an altercation on the banks of the Mole with young Alfred Shurville, a Gravel Hill bricklayer's son aged 13 and threw him into the water (having first offered a sound thrashing instead), an assault from which he nearly died. The family responded to the criminal charge which resulted by counter-suing the Shurvilles for damage to the river bank and to a canoe, the original cause of the argument. The case was settled out of court.



The Swan Brewery

These two incidents are given as a small example of the local colour which can be gleaned from the databases mentioned above. Members who have not yet done so are urged to access them, which can be easily done either at the local Library

or on a home computer by entering your Surrey Library number. Did you ever wonder why there are so many research establishments in Leatherhead? The answer is to be found in a Times report of 1944 about the proposed foundation of a new 'Industrial University' based here. There are more than 18,000 references to the town in this database alone.

Also of interest is the John Johnson collection of the Bodleian Library, from which the G. Moore & Co Brewery advert pictured came. This is also available through Surrey Library.

Alun Roberts (with thanks to John Morris)



World War I “Q” Ship VC Born in Leatherhead

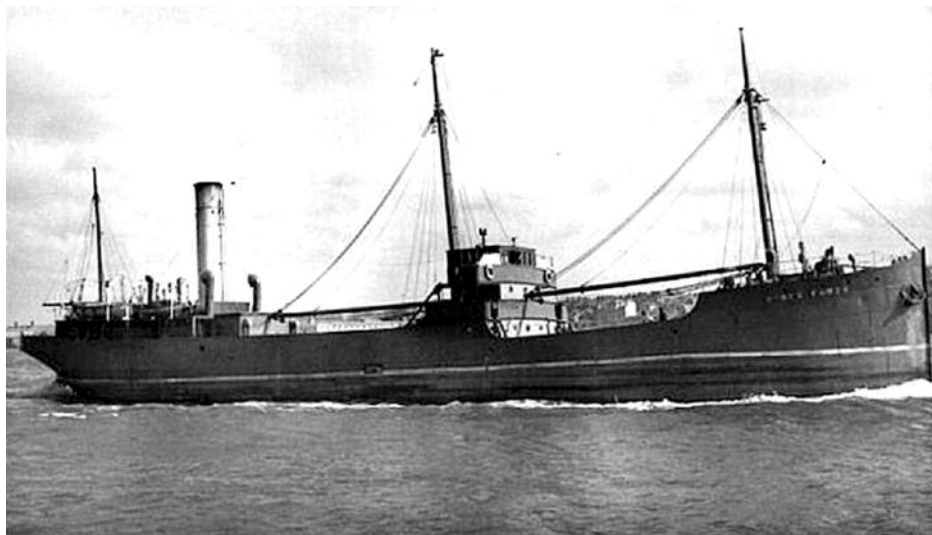
Harold Auten was born in Leatherhead on 22 August 1891. He was the son of William Blee Auten, born Plymouth 1861, a retired naval paymaster and the family lived at the ‘The Shrubberies, Church Street.’ His mothers name was Edith Fanny Mary, born Dulwich, 1872 and he had a brother named Guy, also born in Leatherhead in 1894. Guy died in 1941 and is buried in Richmond (Surrey) Cemetery. The family later moved to Camberwell where Harold attended grammar school and was apprenticed to the P&O line at the age of seventeen.

In 1910, he joined the Royal Naval Reserve and was promoted to Sub-Lieutenant just prior to the outbreak of the war in 1914. Auten mainly served on Q-ships. These were decoy ships, armed vessels but disguised as innocent merchant ships with the aim to fool U-boats into surfacing. Once the U-boat had surfaced, the guns were opened and the U-boat fired upon.

Auten served on SS Zylpha, a former collier, from early in 1915. In April 1917, he took over the command of Q16, also called Heather after her Commanding Officer had been killed in action against a U-boat. While he was serving in this ship, he won the Distinguished Service Cross. Afterwards, he joined the former collier, HMS Stock Force, a vessel that he had seen for himself in Cardiff docks. On 30 July 1918, the ship was twenty five miles south west of Start Point, Cornwall when it was torpedoed by a U-boat hitting forward bulkhead and the vessel sustained severe damage, including the bridge. Some of the crew, known as the ‘Panic Party’ left in the boats, but Auten, the gun crews and the engine-room crew remained aboard. The U-boat surfaced half a mile from the damaged ship and the ‘Panic Party’ rowed back in the boats to try and get the submarine to follow, which it did. At 5.40pm, the Q-ship opened fire. Three direct hits were made, one blowing off the periscope, one blowing up the conning tower and the third ripping into the submarine’s hull. Firing continued until the U-boat sank beneath the surface. Four hours later, the little Q-ship also gave way to the damage sustained earlier in the day and sank, still flying the White Ensign, after the crew were taken off by torpedo boat. Auten’s Victoria Cross entry in the London Gazette made no mention of the action, merely giving his name and rank. He was presented with his medal by King George V at Buckingham Palace on 18th September 1918.

After the war, he wrote about his naval wartime service in a book ‘Q Boat adventures’,





and in 1922, began work in the film industry. In August 1925, he was promoted to Lieutenant-Commander in the RNR.

In 1929, the Prince of Wales gave a dinner for Victoria Cross holders in London's Guildhall and Auten replied to the Prince's speech on behalf of the naval VC's. He became Executive Vice-President of the Rank Organisation in New York and lived for thirty years in Bushkill, Pennsylvania, where he owned a hotel and cinema.

In August 1939, he was promoted to Commander RNR and during the Second World War he was employed in routeing convoys across the Atlantic from New York. He died on 3rd October 1964 in Pennsylvania.

His Medals: Victoria Cross, Distinguished Service Cross (DSC), 1914 - 15 Star, British War Medal (1914-20), Victory Medal (1914-19), Defence Medal (1939-45), War Medal (1939-45), King George VI Coronation Medal (1937), Queen Elizabeth II Coronation Medal (1953), Royal Naval Reserve Decoration Officer, Legion of Merit (USA), Order of Orange Nassau (The Netherlands)

Goff Powell



St Mary's Church, Stoke d'Abernon

On a sunny morning in mid-June a group of our members met to visit this historic church. We were fortunate to have as our guide the vergier, Mr Peter Wells whose knowledge of the church from a point of view of history and of architecture won him great praise.

Its claim to be not just an 'ordinary Surrey church' derives from its antiquity and from some of the features to be found within it. Its construction dates from the late seventh or early eighth century and Roman bricks can be seen in the exterior walls. (Evidence of a possible nearby Roman villa.) As a manorial church it had a west gallery where the lord could oversee the service. Although the gallery no longer exists, the high walled-up access door is still in evidence.

Another notable feature is the pair of mediaeval brasses in the chancel that mark the graves of two d'Abernon knights from the early 14th century. Despite their age they are wonderfully preserved, exhibiting the superbly engraved figures in full





armour. They are said to be the finest military brasses in existence.

In the adjoining Norbury chapel are monuments commemorating the seventeenth century lords of the manor. Despite the stilted posture of the recumbent figures they show the figure and the costume of those they represent with uncanny realism.

In this short résumé it is impossible to list all of the features that we were shown – the finely carved Jacobean pulpit, the brilliant pre-Raphaelite mosaic, the modern Frobenius organ – these are just some. From the comments of many participants this had undoubtedly a very high rating both for interest and for enjoyment. We are grateful to the church authorities for making it so.

John Wettern



Leatherhead U3A's Local History Group

Leatherhead has a thriving U3A (University of the Third Age) and one of its special interest groups focuses on Local History. Thus there are about a dozen people who have, for the last three and a half years, been researching particular aspects of local history in our district. In some ways the Leatherhead label is a bit of a misnomer as we have members who live in Ashted, Leatherhead, Fetcham and Bookham, so our interest is wider than the strict boundaries of the town of Leatherhead.

Our current project, begun in January, is to produce a catalogue of the buildings in the district that were in existence by 1800, and that are still standing, but omitting the churches as these are well known. Through tapping into resources both local and the Surrey History Centre we are aiming to create a summary of these buildings to include brief architectural and historical facts and a current photograph. If we are able to find an archive photograph we will also include this. The aim is to complete the task by early 2011 and to make it available locally if there is demand. If you are aware of any properties that fall into this category we would be very pleased to hear from you. We have various members working on the different areas so I can pass on any relevant details to them.

The spur to the project is a document found by one of our members that was put together in the 1950's by the Leatherhead and District Protection Society, together with the Leatherhead and District Local History Society, where some 122 old properties were listed. Our research has already identified several of these that are no longer standing, such as Eastwick Park in Bookham and Pound House in Fetcham, while others have been subject to some alteration and development in the past half a century. The original document included the various parish churches but as local publications already cover these extensively it was decided to omit these from our catalogue.

Our U3A Local History group has previously looked into numerous aspects of the district, but so far in a summary form. With members from the breadth of the district it has been possible to share information for the benefit of all, and as we document our findings we put these on the U3A's own website for the wider membership to review. We have sections on education, transport, and the development of the villages through the ages. We acknowledge that until now our



Slyfield House

work has been at a general level, but we are becoming more research based as we develop our skills. We have had two visits to Surrey History Centre to learn how to make best use of that facility and we have been grateful to members of the History Society for visits to Fetcham and its Church. In May we had a guided tour of Slyfield House, one of our older buildings for the current project.

We will be pleased to share our findings with the Society in due course and would welcome any helpful information as we progress, particularly with reference to any family histories associated with the older residential properties in the district. Please contact Martin Kruger as group leader, either by email at martin.kruger@ntlworld.com or by telephone, 01372 453063.

Mary Chrystie 1838-1911

In the early years of the nineteenth century several members of the Chrystie family owned slaves in Jamaica. William Chrystie was one of them. Born in 1795 he married Catherine some time before 1831. They had eight children, Margaret born 1832, Catherine born 1833, William born 1835, Frances (aka Fanny) born 1836, Mary born 1838, Alexander born 1839, George born 1841 and Selina born 1844. Slavery in British colonies was abolished in 1833 and from the recorded birthplaces of the children we can see how the family moved on from Jamaica after 1833. In 1835 they were in Edinburgh, in 1836 in Marylebone, in 1844 in Clifton in Gloucestershire. William senior probably died before the family moved to Ealing about 1851.



Mary Chrystie was born in 1838 in Marylebone. In 1859 she was living in Bookham with her widowed mother when she married John Alexander Chrystie, possibly a relative. His occupation in the marriage register is Capt, HM 1 Royals. After their marriage they moved to Elie in Fife where they are recorded in the 1861 census as living with his parents Alexander and Ann. It has been suggested that he was killed serving in the Indian army but the 1861 census records his occupation as retired army captain. Notwithstanding that, by 1871 Mary was widowed and living in Bookham with her mother and two unmarried sisters, Catherine and Selina. In 1889 her mother, Catherine, died.

It was after this date that Mary Chrystie embarked on her plans to buy up places selling alcohol and turn them into dwelling houses. Examples were the Saracen and Ring and

the Fox alehouse. She also built the Merrylands Hotel and the Victoria Hotel as temperance hostelrys only offering non alcoholic beverages. She acquired the land where Maddox Lane and Burnhams Road now stand and built several large properties which were rented out, all with restrictions on the sale of alcohol. These included the houses now known as Foxmead, Oaken Hill and Wolverley. Other land nearby was sold as building plots.

She also bought land in Dorking Road which she gave to the community as a recreation ground, again with a restriction on the sale of alcohol. She was very concerned about the young people of Bookham and built the Victoria Hall in East Street as a venue where they could meet and socialise. She was also a school manager and apparently provided the children with hot soup during a particularly harsh winter. In Little Bookham she is reputed to have given Little Bookham Village Hall to the community. However, investigations show that the hall in its current shape was not constructed until about 1926, some 15 years after her death in 1911. What she gave was a piece of land on which stood a small club room from the days of the Fox alehouse. The current large hall was appended to this club room paid for by funds raised by the newly formed Women's Institute.

When she died in 1911 her estate was valued at £37,808. With inflation this would now equate to about £3.3 million. This was shared between her three brothers except that £1,000 was bequeathed to the Church of England Temperance Society. Her various properties were sold by public auction in 1912 on the instructions of the executors to her will. After Mary's death her sister Selina continued the temperance campaign although she had moved out of the family home in the 1890s. She died in 1926.

Peter Tilley, March 2010

The Link between Andrew West and Mary Chrystie

In 1881, three Chrysties (mother Catherine, daughters Mary and Catherine) are recorded as living in Church Street (?Fife Lodge) with two servants. Harriet Money was cook (as she had been in 1871) and Margaret Galbraith was housemaid. Margaret was 24 years old and had been born at Cameron Bridge in Fifeshire.

Tracing Margaret's ancestors back to Scotland we find that in 1871 she was living with her widowed mother at 61 Heigh Street, Elie, Fife. Also at home were her five younger siblings (three brothers and two sisters). The youngest sister was Catherine aged 4. Eighteen years later Catherine married Andrew West.

In 1851 their 33 year old father John Galbraith had been a teacher of English, married to Margaret and also living with her sister Grace. By 1861 the couple are residing in Markinch and his occupation is railway agent. He died sometime between 1867 and 1871. In 1871 his widow describes her occupation as annuitant indicating that he had possibly taken out some form of life insurance to provide for her.



Andrew West & Son

Why would the Chrysties have employed Margaret Galbraith in 1881? Elie was a small Fife village in the 1860s when Mary Chrystie was living there with her husband and in-laws. She is quite likely to have known the Galbraiths as a family and when she herself became a widow may have had some sympathy with another recent widow and had been very willing to offer employment to a daughter when the opportunity arose. Whatever the reason Margaret's stay in domestic service did not last long and by 1891 she had moved back with her mother and brother Robert into a substantial property on Wimbledon Common, South Side complete with four servants. At the same time her sister Catherine was living with her husband Andrew West on the Burhill estate near Walton where he was employed as estate carpenter.

By 1901 there is no trace of Catherine and Margaret's mother. However Margaret is a boarding house keeper in Elm Road, Cobham including in her household two nieces and a nephew. Catherine is living with Andrew and their two children in Milton Villas, Little Bookham Street where his occupation is described as foreman carpenter. It is likely that in this capacity he supervised all Mary Chrystie's building work from the time he arrived in Bookham during the 1890s until about 1905. When she then had no new building developments he turned to constructing similar style houses for people who had bought building plots from her or from her fellow property entrepreneur Arthur Bird. This work would probably have been undertaken under the auspices of his newly set up company - Andrew West and Son. Whilst most of these projects were substantial dwellings, they were not necessarily owner occupied but often let out to wealthy commuters and senior public servants. In Burnhams Road / Maddox Lane area they could have included Woodside, Southwood, The White House, OakLawn, Longheath House, The Sundial, and possibly Rickeldene. Buildings on land originating

with the acquisition of the Sole Farm Estate in 1895 by Arthur Bird and sold off about 1906 would have included the five large houses between the Barn Hall and Sole Farm Road, two in Oakdene Road, two in Sole Farm Road, one in Childs Hall Road, one on Lower Road, and two in Rectory Lane.

Peter Tilley

Visit to Cherkley Court, Monday 3rd May

Monday 3rd May was the last day on which Cherkley Court was open to the public. As most of our members will know, Cherkley Court was built by Abraham Dixon, who founded the Letherhead Institute. Abraham Dixon lived at Cherkley from 1871 until his death in 1907 when it was bought by the future Lord Beaverbrook who also lived there until his death. The gardens have been beautifully restored by the Beaverbrook Trust and have been open to the public for the last few years but, sadly, the house is now going to revert to private ownership.

James Dixon, a member of our Society, is the great-great nephew of Abraham Dixon, and he suggested that any of us who were interested, together with some of his friends and other Dixon descendants should meet there for a picnic lunch on the 3rd May Bank Holiday. There were seven from the Society and about twenty of us altogether. Fortunately, he was able to arrange for us to have the use of the ex-stable, which was good, as although it stayed fine, there was a very cold wind which would not have added to the festivities. James provided a magnificent spread which we all thoroughly enjoyed in the relative warmth with tables and chairs.

Afterwards, James gave us a half hour talk about Abraham which was extremely interesting. We then had time to visit the gardens, leaving us with many memories, but with more than a touch of sadness and regret that neither the house nor the gardens with all their historical connections will be open to us again. Thank you, James, for inviting us on this last occasion.

Linda Heath

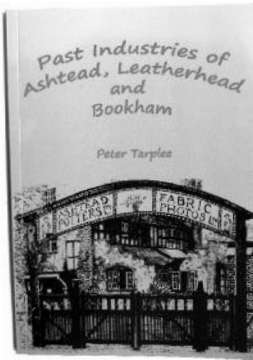


Book Review

“Past Industries of Ashtead, Leatherhead and Bookham”

Peter Tarplee: Leatherhead & District Local History Society

ISBN 0-9552785-5-6: £8.99 from local booksellers and Amazon, or post free from the Society Sales Secretary at Hampton Cottage Museum, 64 Church Street, Leatherhead KT22 8DP



Peter Tarplee is Vice-President of L&DLHS and its former Chairman. This new publication by the Society is a welcome addition to the range of local histories, is reasonably priced and well produced. The paper is of good quality, the font in the text easily readable and the many black and white pictures are excellently reproduced, particularly bearing in mind the age of most of the originals. There are a few spelling and punctuation errors; unfortunately what modern publication does not have them. It is perhaps a reflection on the lower standard of proof reading today.

There are thirteen chapters, each devoted to a particular industry or business. These range from Roman tile and brick making on Ashtead common, through silk and pottery manufacture to major engineering firms such as Ronson, Goblin, Neil and Spencer and the old and new Atlas works in Bookham. I have certainly learnt more about a number of the industries and firms eloquently described, I am sure most readers will too. Peter has drawn on his extensive researches over the years which have formed the basis of the many lectures he has given but he does not claim to have covered every industry in the area and asks that any errors or omissions be notified to him.

One realises that it is virtually impossible to include every business or industry and that there must be a limit to the number of pages, and thus the cost, of such a book but I do wonder if Fetcham had been included, it is one of the districts covered by the Society, then the mill on the Cobham Road could have been mentioned. Also perhaps the tannery by the bridge in Leatherhead or Ventham the Coach Builders in Bridge Street.

This most welcome book is strongly recommended; it will be of great interest to industrial, social and local historians as well as to those who worked in one or other of the factories, or perhaps their parents did. It is a much needed and essential record of the industries of the area which is now almost entirely given over to housing, offices or warehousing. Like so much of Britain there is now very little manufacturing industry left in the area.

Gordon Knowles

May Lecture

Early Saxon Landscapes in Surrey

The presenter for the last in the Spring series of monthly talks was Chris Howkins, known by many in the audience for his books and his courses on a wide range of subjects. His topic on this occasion was centred on the people of Surrey during the post-Roman period.

In contrast with the earlier Roman era, there is very little evidence to enable historians to visualise what conditions could have been like in those dark days. Scanty archaeological data and the virtual absence of written records make it hard to create a picture of conditions as they were. Nevertheless our lecturer, drawing on his studies over many years, gave us some vivid insights into how the people of Surrey might have lived their lives: what they did, what they believed in and how they earned their livelihoods.



An understanding of the landscape plays a crucial part here. Geology, the various types of soil, the whereabouts of hills and river basins; these help to provide a picture – to pinpoint the location of woodlands, of fertile and infertile places, hence the activities of local people in these locations. Forests were a source of timber for building, for fuel and for burning charcoal. In places land was cleared of trees to provide space for crops and grazing. The settlements that were created to house the people were given names that have come down to the present day, and indeed the meaning of these names gives us a great deal of information about the lives of the Anglo-Saxons.

At many points in the talk there was a mention of local place names. These provide much evidence of Saxon beliefs, facts about their society and even their attitude to life. It was a time when the pagan gods were being worshipped and when certain objects were seen as having divine significance. Many villages commemorated the gods such as TIW, THOR and WODEN. In Surrey we have Tuesley, Thundersley and Wooton for example. Trees even had a divine importance: the elder was personified as the female god, ELLEN, and Elstead remains to remind us of this.

Animals played a vital part in the life of those days - sheep for meat and wool, cattle for drawing the plough and dogs for guarding the flocks and for herding. There is now considerable knowledge about the likely breeds that existed then. It appears that goats were both domestic and sacrificial animals. Farms where goats were reared find their way into place names – hence Gatton and Gatwick.

Saxon society was orderly and family oriented. A good deal is known about contemporary clothing which suggests the garments being well made and colourful, sometimes with finely crafted brooches for fastenings. Much controversy exists about the language of the time. It hinges on the time it took for the Celtic language of the British people to transform into the speech which ultimately became English. Some maintain that as much as eighty years could have elapsed between the departure of the Romans and the adoption of the new tongue. Others, Howkins amongst them, believe that it was far more rapid. He instances the rapidity with which modern day immigrants come to master the language of the host country. He reminds us of the speed with which children pick up new words, and he believes that economic necessity, the need to trade and barter, forces the pace.

Many years of study have given Chris Howkins a great knowledge of this subject in all its aspects and it was a considerable feat therefore to have distilled so much of it into a single lecture. As a result there followed a barrage of questions, and requests to enlarge on many of his points. Thus ended a memorable presentation.

John Wettern

Milner House, Ermyn Way, Ashtead

An illustrated talk by the Society's former chairman, Peter Tarplee, followed the Annual General Meeting held by the Society on Friday 16th April.

The history of this property, now well known as a home for the aged, turns out to be full of interest and in some cases, one of historical importance. It was originally a private residence, built by Daniel Pigeon whose monogram DG can still be spotted in parts of the structure. His first tenants were the Clinker family, described as 'a country gent'. A later tenant was Abraham Dixon who later built Cherkley Court and who endowed the Letherhead Institute.

In 1926 it was bought by Sir Frederick Milner to be the home of the Services Welfare Society which he had founded. Milner was born in 1849 and died in 1931. In 1906 at the age of 57 he ceased to be an M.P. and became concerned about the lot of the disabled men who had survived the Boer War. His efforts were directed towards securing a pension for these men. But his main concern was for those who had suffered 'shell shock' as it was then called (now 'combat stress'). In the Great War (1914-1918) there were many similar casualties. Their treatment then could be described as barbaric, amounting to relegation to a mental hospital with little if any accompanying therapy. Milner opposed this form of treatment. His solution was to provide a sheltered environment and this he set about to provide.

At Milner House he built a large workshop as well as accommodation for the interns. Twelve cottages were built to this end. The workshop became a factory for the manufacture of electrically heated blankets. It was not a charity but a business and the

workers there earned a living wage. The firm known as Thermega had success in the marketplace and was a pioneer in the creation of this product. This was but one of Milner's persistent efforts to better the lot of ex-servicemen. The principles which he espoused were incorporated by the Ex-Services Mental Welfare Society, formed in 1958. The turnover of the factory was eventually taken over by the firm Remploy, which alas has also since ceased to exist.



To illustrate his talk Peter provided an interesting selection of slides taken at various times during the history of the house. They included shots of a visit by royalty during the 1930s and some to remind us of how the house looks at the present time with its considerable extensions built in the 1990s.

John Wettren

News from the Museum Committee

The museum is still receiving a good number of visitors with the numbers being boosted by some events organised by the Friends such as the Craft Days and the Coffee Morning. Also some museum staff visited Seeability and gave a presentation featuring some of the museum artefacts.

On 24th May the Society chose the museum as the venue for the launch of its latest publication. This was considered appropriate as the book features some local industries and the museum had displays about some of these. Although it could have been warmer a number of people enjoyed wine in the museum garden.

We are continuing with recording, monitoring and conserving the collection but with the staff available it is a bit like painting the Forth Bridge! We have an excessive amount of rubbish which has accumulated in our store over the years and we hope to get rid of this shortly to make more room. I assure you that we do not intend to get rid of parts of the collection, just junk from many years. We do have, however, a large number of bottles, more than we would wish to accession. We are told that some of these may have a value but we do not have the necessary expertise to know which, if any. If any member can help with this, or knows someone who may be able to help, will they please contact Alan Pooley (01372 374093), it will help us to tidy the Priory Basement.

Peter Tarplee

News from the Friends of Leatherhead Museum

Craft Days

This is the seventh year that we have been holding these events at the museum. They are designed to introduce children to various crafts with hands on experience. We had a record 209 visitors including 100 children in the three days with many people staying on to look round the museum. It is always rewarding to see the



dedication and concentration with which the children tackle the various items, testimony to the expertise and enthusiasm of the demonstrators. We are very grateful to them for the time they give to these events.

Justine Munson brought her potter's wheel and children with no previous experience produced the most amazing pots at first attempt, better than some of the adults! She graduated in ceramic design from St Martins School of Art , is a member of the Surrey Guild of Craftsmen and her ceramic drawings of floral and aquatic subjects can be seen in galleries and exhibitions. She has her studio in Garlands Road and is well known for her teaching skills.

Richard Trim OBE is a member of our society and is an expert on electronics and aviation. He was

previously a director of Racal Decca Research and demonstrated the making of paper airplanes which the children could then colour using the appropriate aircraft markings. Then came the flying instructions with the planes flying true courses, well nearly always !



Robin Christian is one of

our museum stewards as well as being on the staff of Horsham Museum. Apart from being a producer of amateur dramatics he is a woodland management expert and had on display items of flora and fauna found in woods including a skeleton or two! He demonstrated the making of model hurdles from hazel and willow which the children could then take home.



Margaret Meynen and Sylvia Oliver are experts in various crafts and showed children how to make peg dolls including a handsome man and a pretty woman with floral dresses which could be taken home. Simple materials and simple techniques resulting in an attractive toy.

Meg Crome came with her spinning wheel on the Saturday and demonstrated spinning, carding and drop spindles. She has lived in Mole Valley since 1962 and is a member of the Epsom Spinners and U3A craft group. She is an expert in embroidery, cross stitching, patchwork, quilting and knitting. Ann Lamb demonstrated lace making and showed some of her exquisite work. She is a member of The Epsom Spinners and Epsom Weavers and exhibits at county fairs and farm open days.

Coffee Morning

We held our usual event on 12th June which this year was not so well attended as it clashed with The World Cup, Ashted village day and various other sporting events. It's a social occasion as well as raising funds for the museum and this year 35 people attended and £167 raised. Grateful thanks to members for their gifts for the raffle, bric a brac, plants and cake stall. Also to the Leatherhead Horticultural Society for their donation of plants and to Carole Neeser for her help with the plant stall and her donation of plants, jam and allotment produce. The day was blessed with good weather and enjoyed by all who came.

Fred Meynen

Heritage Weekend 11th/12th September

As usual, we shall be taking part in Heritage Weekend on Saturday 11th and Sunday 12th September. The theme the committee has chosen this year is Georgian Leatherhead, and to attract publicity on the website, it is entitled 'By George!' There will be displays of Georgian Leatherhead in the Institute on both days; (including two Georgian residents, James Barlow and Benjamin Simmons) the Museum will be open on both days, and there will be a walk round the town centre from the Institute on the Saturday afternoon which will focus on Georgian buildings past and present.

The parish church of St Mary & St Nicholas will be open on Saturday 11th September from 10.00-12.00 and Sunday 12th from 14.00-16.00 hrs. There will be opportunities to see and hear the magnificent Georgian organ made by Thomas Parker in 1766, re-installed in 2007. There may also be visits up the tower to the bell ringing chamber.



(Details in the Heritage brochure and on the website)

Linda Heath

Letter to the Editor - Can you help?

Dear Mr. Warwick,

My name is Donna Workman-Streater and I am hoping you may be able to help me with some knowledge on my family. I reside in Sydney, Australia and have actually recently visited Leatherhead but unfortunately, had little luck in finding any information.

My mother is a Loxley and her father, my beautiful Da, was Leonard Arthur Loxley. His father was George. I believe there were 4 children in the family; another brother who emigrated to Argentina and definitely, a sister Lillianne. My grandfather emigrated to Australia in 1912 to join the Australian Army as a Light Horseman. He was sent to the Middle East and the Somme and was seriously injured and hospitalised in France. He returned to Australia to marry my grandmother.

Growing up, I used to write to my cousins who lived in Leatherhead. Their names were

Margaret, Carol and David. My mother used to write to Eric Loxley, a postmaster, who unfortunately passed away several years back. I know there are a Peter and Kathleen Loxley, but they also are deceased.

I am very keen to find my history as it is something I very much want to pass on to my children. One of my sons is actually attending Exeter University at present. I have tried extensively to find my cousins, but have had no luck at all.

If you can offer me any information or if you could pass this email to someone who may be able to help me, I would be truly appreciative.

I am very proud of my heritage as my grandfather was a beautiful, beautiful man.

Kind Regards,

Donna Workman-Streater (donnaastreater@optusnet.com.au)

Dated Buildings in the Leatherhead area

Help needed!

Provisional lists of the buildings in the Leatherhead district which bore an inscribed date were published in the Newsletters for May and August 2005. Five years later seems an appropriate time to produce a consolidated list, and I invite you again to contribute. Do not think that the ones you know are obvious - they may not be to others

Derek Renn 17 Burrows Close, Great Bookham Surrey KT23 3HB-Tel 454 880 (no email)

Two corrections to the May Newsletter

Public Meeting-Places in the Leatherhead Area

The Barn

John Henderson has pointed out that the barn used by strolling players before being leased as a Congregational place of worship in 1816 was not in the Swan Pit (now the Swan Centre) but was very close to the later chapel in North Street (see J R Clube, 'Theatre-going in Leatherhead; a playbill of 1807', Leatherhead & District Local History Society Proceedings 5.4 (1991), 116-8).

Effingham Women's Institute

Mary Rice-Oxley says that the Effingham Women's Institute hall site was adjacent to Manor Gardens, where now stand the houses confusingly called 'The Cross Roads'.

Autumn Lecture Programme

Lectures are held in the Abraham Dixon Hall of Letherhead Institute (top of the High Street)- coffee 7.30pm lecture 8.00pm (admission £1) - ALL WELCOME

17th September ‘Early Motoring in Surrey‘ by Gordon Knowles

Gordon is the President of our Local History Society and is a member of the Surrey Industrial History Group. He is the author of the book ‘Surrey and the Motor‘, published in 2005

15th October ‘Just Fish : Recollections of a Village Fishmonger‘ by Ron Fowler

Ron Fowler of Great Bookham will talk about his flourishing business and his life in the Trade

19th November ‘Searching for Stane Street : Mickleham to Ewell‘ by Alan Hall

Alan Hall lives in Leatherhead. He is secretary of the Roman Studies Group and honorary local secretary of the Surrey Archaeological Society

17th December Members Evening Presentations by Members on ‘My Favourite Building‘

The evening will be informal with bistro-style seating, wine and canapés followed by coffee and mince pies. It will be hosted by the Master of Ceremonies Brian Hennegan and will end with a raffle. If you would like to take part with a short talk on your favourite building please get in touch with me.

The evening is a social occasion with the accent on informality and conviviality! Guests and friends of members will be very welcome.

Dr Fred Meynen Programme Secretary, tel 01372 372930 email fredmeynen@live.co.uk

Archaeology

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Records

RECORDS SECRETARY (Vacancy)

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

Ashted	Jack Willis
Bookham	tba
Fetcham documents	Alan Pooley
Fetcham photographs and maps	Ed Tims
Leatherhead document	John Derry
Leatherhead photographs	Linda Heath
Leatherhead maps	Alan Pooley

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

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