



*Leatherhead & District Local History Society
covering Ashted, the Bookhams, Fetcham, Headley,
Mickleham and Leatherhead*

Newsletter December 2020

For a Few Nights Only!!!

THEATRE, LEATHERHEAD.

By their Majesties Serbants,
On WEDNESDAY Evening the 23rd of JULY, 1807,
Will be presented a Favorite Comedy called

She Stoops to Conquer:
Or, The Mistakes of a Night.

Mr. Hardcastle.	Mr. JERROLD,	
Mr. Charles Marlow,	Mr. ASHLEY, — Young Marlow,	Mr. LEWIS,
Hastings,	Mr. FITZHENRY — Diggey,	Mr. RUSSELL,
	Tony Lumpkin,	Mr. WILKINSON.
Mrs. Hardcastle.	Mrs. LEWIS, — Mas Ne-ille,	Mr. JERROLD,
Maid,	Miss JERROLD, — Miss Hardcastle,	Mr. INCHBALD.

DOUBLE HORNPIPE BY THE Miss JERROLDs.

A SONG BY MR. RUSSELL.

The whole to conclude with a Musical Entertainment, called, The

REVIEW

Or, The Wags of Windsor.

Deputy Bull,	Mr. RUSSELL, — Captain Beaugard,	Mr. FITZHENRY,	
Charles Williams,	Mr. JONES, — Caleb Quotem,	Mr. WILKINSON, — John Lump,	Mr. LEWIS,
Dubbs,	Mr. ASHLEY, — Looby Mactwolter,	Mr. JERROLD,	
Grace Gaylove,	Mrs. INCHBALD, — Lucy,	Mrs. LEWIS,	
Martha,	Miss JERROLD, — Phoeby Whiteborn,	— Mrs. JERROLD.	

BOXES, 3s. — SECOND PRICE, 2s. — PIT, 2s. — GALLERY, 1s.

Doors to be Opened at Six, and to begin precisely at Seven o'Clock.

LEATHERHEAD VOLUNTEER BAND WILL ATTEND

LANGLEY, PRINTER, DORKING.

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2021 MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTIONS
(Reduced for this year only)
Ordinary: £10. Friends of Museum: £3.

A renewal form is enclosed with this *Newsletter*. Your subscription supports the Museum and funds this quarterly *Newsletter*. The 2021 membership year begins 1 January.

Cover: Oops, missed it by 213 years! This playbill was given to Hazel Vincent Wallace, founder of today's Leatherhead Theatre, in 1954 and later passed to our Museum as a historical document. The full story appeared 30 years ago in the *Proceedings*, Volume 5, No 4. You can read it again on Page 23 of this *Newsletter*.

**EDITORIAL**

You may have seen our public appeal in local free media for fresh volunteers to fill crucial vacancies among our officer posts. The vacancies have arisen over time as longstanding figures have departed without successors and they now pose an existential threat to the Society's ability to function properly.

The appeal has already brought an encouraging response as our Chairman says on Page 4. We need archivists, a Museum curator, and others who can also replace existing post-holders as and when the need arises. As the L&DLHS approaches its 75th anniversary we must ensure we can continue to record local history rather than just becoming a footnote ourselves.

This year's extraordinary circumstances have obviously reduced the services available to our members with the Museum closure and replacement of all normal meetings by on-line talks only. As a result, we have had discussions about the level of subscriptions that could reasonably be levied for the year ahead and the full member subscription has been reduced to £10 for the 2021 calendar year. Thanks to a special grant, gratefully received, the Society can afford to bear this reduction including a lower level of Gift Aid.

The long delayed Annual General Meeting from last March will now be held via Zoom in the near future. Details will be provided digitally to members with email addresses and post to others. The Charity Commission appears relaxed about postponement for organisations such as ours in view of the pandemic.

As usual this *Newsletter* covers a wide variety of material including press reports of local celebrations at the end of World War 2, memories of pre-NHS doctors and the old Leatherhead Station, and tales from much further back. Local figures sometimes feature in surprising developments, perhaps thousands of miles from home - Cornet Geary and Nipper the HMV dog being cases in point.

TONY MATTHEWS



CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

I hope you are all keeping well and coping with the pandemic restrictions. I am pleased to report that our public appeal for volunteers with some crucial roles has been fruitful with at least six welcome offers.

This *Newsletter* remembers the late John Morris, a stalwart Society member for many years, both as a researcher and Museum exhibit contributor. Our condolences go to his family.

We say goodbye to Roy Mellick, Records Secretary and holder of many other portfolios, who is moving away from the district after being the powerhouse behind our on-line archive. When completed, this archive should put us in the frontline of local history societies.

Our community aims to preserve awareness of our local past and provide the roots for future growth. We are fortunate to live in an area with thousands of years of history to offer new residents from elsewhere whose own roots may be far away. However, communities should grow in wellbeing as well as numbers.

Here in Mole Valley we are instructed by a government algorithm to build homes in numbers way beyond the available land capacity and then, in the next cycle, to build even more! Of course, such algorithms are only as good as underlying assumptions allow. Bob Seely, MP for the Isle of Wight, says his constituency's population has grown by 50% since 1960 while that of many major cities has actually shrunk. It is set to grow still further because of retiree migration from the mainland rather than local demand for affordable homes. The algorithm did not predict this.

Mole Valley is not an island but it is 'offshore' to London. We now see reduced incentives to live in or near the capital for those working from home four days a week. Many may be happy to move much further out than here, yet we see little in the Government's planning White Paper to protect our local heritage. Local councillors have asked us to help conserve this but how can we do that, given the freedom for developers to build regardless of genuine needs?

Christmas and New Year are close. Maybe a vaccine will soon offer us some respite for 2021. In the meantime, good cheer to all.

JOHN ROWLEY

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Sir

During the Society's Zoom lecture about Kingston on 12 October (see report on Page 18) we were told that the so-called Coronation Stone at Kingston is Sarsen stone. This is a hard compacted siliceous sandstone found in Wiltshire and used at Stonehenge and Avebury but is comparatively rare elsewhere.

The block at Kingston is reputed to have come from a church. At St Nicolas Church in Great Bookham we have pieces of Sarsen stone in the east wall of the chancel built in 1340. My question is whether other local churches have pieces of Sarsen stone used in their construction.

The stone is easily identified as it is very hard, a rusty brown colour and looks as if it has been worn flat. There is an online article in *Wikipedia* and a pub called Sarsen Stones at Farnborough.

I look forward to hearing from your readers.

W E Whitman

CORONAVIRUS EPHEMERA APPEAL

In the last two *Newsletters* we carried an appeal for relevant ephemera linked to the Covid-19 epidemic in order to create an *In the Time of the Coronavirus* collection. Suitable items listed during the first national lockdown and still sought include:

- Public notices, letters.
- Photos of empty shelves in supermarkets, overloaded trolleys, queues, empty streets, residential roads clapping the NHS.
- Offers of help by community volunteers and churches.
- Diaries from the lockdown period.
- Business reactions. Furloughing and hardship stories.
- Examples of kindness and generosity among neighbours as well as social distancing. Photos and diaries may be either hardcopy or digital. Please send anything and everything to records@leatherheadhistory.org.

Thank you and continue to stay safe.

PROGRAMME OF FUTURE ACTIVITIES

Our programme of free online lectures using Zoom technology has been under way since September (see lecture reports on Pages 15 and 18) and continues to substitute for the traditional series at the Letherhead Institute during the pandemic.

These talks are organised jointly with Dorking Local History Group and with those we each contribute, there are now two a month. They are held at variable times and dates rather than our traditional third Friday of each month. For more information or help with Zoom please contact talksonline@leatherheadhistory.org

At time of publication some arrangements and dates are still to be finalised. All L&DLHS members in email contact will get clear guidance on how to join the talks. With the pandemic uncertainties continuing, the programme could still change but here are the known L&DLHS talks.

December 2020: *A Christmas Miscellany (two short talks): Vineyards along the Mole Valley*, speaker Bill Whitman.
Guy Byam - Fetcham's Richard Dimbleby?, speaker Frank Haslam.

14 December 2020: *Saving the View from Richmond Hill*, speaker Anne Milton-Worssell.

January 2021: *Mrs Frederica Lock of Norbury Park*, speaker Bill Whitman. Around 1790 Mrs Lock created a haven of culture and peace at Norbury Park, appreciated by royalists and republicans, artists and authors.

February 2021: *A Secret History of Kingston on Thames, Part 2*, speaker Julian McCarthy. The first part given in October (Page 18) was a great success. We look forward to the rest.

March 2021: *The School of Stitchery, The Grange, Great Bookham*, speaker Vivien White. L&DLHS member and author Vivien has been writing a book about this historic establishment.

MUSEUM NEWS

Sadly this *Newsletter* has to report to death of John Morris, one of the Museum's most dedicated supporters (see Obituary, Page 36). We like to think that he would have appreciated seeing again the two fun pictures below depicting unusual attractions at summertime craft days in the Museum. He personally recreated the hair-brushing machine, invented in 1856 and still used in 1909.



FEATURE

MEMORIES OF V-E DAY AND V-J DAY 1945



FRANK HASLAM has a growing collection of fully referenced sources for a war memorials research page on the L&DLHS website. The June 2020 *Newsletter* carried a V-E Day celebrations report from the *Dorking & Leatherhead Advertiser*, 12 May 1945 and a Leatherhead memory from Rosalind Corteen then aged 9. He continues.

Before adding to those memories it is right to recall the sacrifices involved in terms of how people had to live, the real dangers that they faced and the deprivations that they suffered, night and day. Perhaps the Coronavirus pandemic gives sharper focus to what it must have been like. Above all was the impact on family life of those who did not come home and of those who returned with injuries, those of the mind perhaps being better recognised now.

Taking Leatherhead as an example there are 69 World War 2 names on the town memorial in North Street. Two names - William Williams and J Harding are still to be traced. Three of the deaths occurred after V-E Day, 8 May 1945. At least three of the names had died as prisoners of the Japanese. In other parts of the country such as East Anglia, the impact of the war in the Far East was much higher because of where their local regiments had been sent.

Between V-E Day and V-J Day, 15 August 1945, prisoners of war had been returning from POW camps in Europe. For most people thoughts had turned towards making their way in the new world. A

new Government had been voted in on 5 July and now it truly was a different world after the atomic bombings of Hiroshima on 6 August and Nagasaki on 9 August. But let us first return to the V-E events on and after 8 May 1945.

V-E DAY, LEATHERHEAD

After the ringing of a victory peal at Leatherhead Parish Church belfry on V-E Day the bells were 'fired' in a salute of 68 to represent the number of months of the war's duration. Among those taking part were two people who had earlier rung victory peals after the South African War of 1899-1900 and the Great War of 1914-1918.

At Leatherhead Hospital on V-E Day loudspeakers were installed in the wards for the patients to hear the speeches of the King and the Prime Minister and other victory programmes. Visitors were admitted both on V-E Day and the following day and special tea was given for patients and friends. Gifts to the hospital included collections made around victory bonfires in Fetcham and Great Bookham. The organisers of the children's parties in Kingston Road, Cleeve Road, Albany Park Road and Dilston Road, sent a donation of £2 with cakes and groceries, and a red, white and blue blancmange for the children's ward.

Among the many street parties held in Leatherhead in connection with V-E celebrations, Bridge Street and River Lane residents entertained about 60 children and a party of wounded soldiers from Leatherhead Emergency Hospital. Each child received a 2s/6d savings stamp, a shilling and a toy. Cigarettes and razor blades were given to the men. Residents of Linden Road, Queen Anne's Terrace, Queen Anne's Gardens and Fairfield Road also presented savings stamps to their young guests, and a sum of £5/8s/6d. was collected. The entertainment provided included a conjuror.

A series of street parties for children followed V-E Day in Leatherhead in which all the residents cooperated heartily. In each case tea was served on tables in the streets, followed by games, dancing, bonfires, and entertainments of all kinds. In every instance collections were made for Leatherhead Hospital and British Red Cross Funds.



Above: A V-E Day children's street party in Culverhay, Ashted.

Other parties followed such as for the children of Kingscroft Road who were entertained with tea, sports, a conjuring display, pony riding, dancing, and a bonfire. On Whit Monday it was the turn of Kingston Road North, Ryebrook Road, and Woodbridge Grove, and three returned prisoners of war and a number of wounded men from the Emergency Hospital joined the party.

Each child received a savings card with a stamp. A few days later children from Highlands Road, Highlands Avenue, and Clinton Road had their party at Poplar Road School. Their entertainment included conjuring and a cinematograph display. Each child was given a half-crown savings stamp.

V-E DAY, THE BOOKHAMS

Children on the council estate in Great Bookham were given a V-E Day party on the green, organised by Mrs Ayres and Mrs Francis. Tea was followed by games, dancing and bonfire, and music was provided by the Rev Newton Jones and Mr Bundy with piano and drums. A collection, amounting to £3, was divided between the Leatherhead Hospital and the British Red Cross Funds.

In Little Bookham on 19 May, V-E Day was celebrated with a village fete. The Village Hall was beautifully decorated with flowers and flags. A substantial tea was followed by races on the village green. Bill Longhurst created much fun as a clown and each child

received 1s/ 6d.

Children had helped to collect materials for a bonfire which was surmounted by a life-size effigy of Hitler. The flames soared to 60 feet and there was dancing and singing round the fire, and a display of fireworks. Later, adults gathered for dancing and community singing in the hall. A collection, which realised £2/5s/8d, was given to Leatherhead Hospital, Poplar Road.

V-E DAY, ASHTEAD

For events in Ashtead we can turn to *Memories of Ashtead - A Surrey Village in World War II*, the popular book researched and written by John Rowley and Pat Jenkins.

Joan Messenger, then in Cray Avenue, recalled that when the news came that the war in Europe was over it was hard to believe. So many rumours had circulated in the past. There were street parties and much jubilation with those in Read and Taylor Roads outstanding. Decorations were placed all down the roads and trestle tables from top to bottom, sheet covered and loaded with any food that could be spared. 'We all seemed to go mad with joy,' she said.

Colin Clay, who later became a university chaplain, said: 'I shall never forget that day as I rode my bicycle around Ashtead. Everyone was greeting one another in an atmosphere of relief and sheer joy. In the evening we built a huge bonfire at the top of Newton Wood Road with friends and neighbours and gathered around it shouting and singing.'

Ann Graham, then living in Oakfield Road and some 12 years old at the time, wrote in her diary:

Monday, 7 May 1945: 'People are busy hanging out their Union Jacks and other flags. At the 6 o'clock news, correspondents said that the unconditional surrender had been signed by the Germans but there was no official confirmation. At 8pm I was listening to the wireless when an announcer broke into the programme to say the Germans had capitulated and that tomorrow would be V-E Day and that Mr Churchill and the King would broadcast.

'A loudspeaker van went down our road announcing that tomorrow was V-E Day and that it was to be a holiday. It also said that

there would be a service in the recreation ground at 8.15pm. That night we heard several fireworks go off and there must have been some bonfires as there was a red glow in the sky all round.'

Tuesday, 8 May 1945: 'I helped Daddy put up the flags. We did not go to London because Mummy thought it would be too crowded, but a friend went and she saw the King and Queen with the Princesses and Mr Churchill on the balcony of Buckingham Palace.

'I went riding with Janet and at 3pm listened to Mr Churchill's speech confirming the signing of the surrender. Later I went with my parents to the thanksgiving service in the recreation ground. The service finished at about five minutes to nine, so we waited there until 9pm and heard the King's speech. I then went home and fetched my bicycle and went down to Parsons Mead to see the bonfire.

'Someone brought some fireworks. The bonfire was lovely and burnt for nearly an hour. On the way back I went up Paddocks Way where one of the houses was lit up. It had lights in all the windows and trees, as well as the porch. It looked a picture. Before I went to bed I saw the sky lit up by searchlights and the sky towards London had a red glow from all the bonfires. This was about midnight.'

V-J DAY

It has been harder to find coverage of V-J Day, 15 August, and what followed by way of celebrations. On 19 August, thanksgiving services were held at all the places of worship in the Leatherhead district and were largely attended. At Leatherhead Parish Church the service was conducted by the Vicar, the Rev F.A. Page, and the sermon was preached by the Rev B.C. Foulgar, chaplain to the Armed Forces.

In October, the *Surrey Advertiser* carried a headline 'Young People's Day - Bookham's Victory Celebrations.' It reported:

'In beautiful weather on Saturday afternoon the residents of Great and Little Bookham thronged the Bookham recreation ground for the programme of festivities arranged by the Peace Celebrations Committee. The previous day, children numbering 300, accompanied by 70 adults, were taken to Littlehampton, where the sun shone and

the children had a happy time. The proceedings opened on Saturday with a fancy dress parade, headed by the Boys' Brigade band, in which there were nearly 200 entrants.

'Mr A.E. Murrells, chairman of Leatherhead Urban District Council, in opening the fete, said that the day was "Young People's Day." The older people had had their celebrations; now it was felt that they wanted to return to those things which the children had missed during the war.

'The fancy dress entrants included a decorated van, with children to represent all the Allied countries, with an imposing Britannia. Another was a Squander Bug group, illustrating its conquest by war savings. Tea was served to 600 children and 50 adults over 60 years of age in a marquee.

'Tug-of-war contests proved exciting events. A Home Guard team vanquished a Civil Defence team and also a Bookham team, and Great Bookham beat their Little Bookham opponents. Canadian soldiers, besides staging a boxing and wrestling exhibition, threw themselves wholeheartedly into the events. Bouts were also fought by the Army Cadets. Colonel Murdoch presented souvenirs to the exponents. A torchlight procession, in which over 100 residents took part, was a brilliant spectacle, which was followed by the lighting of a large bonfire surmounted by an effigy.'

Amid the joy of the return of prisoners of war from the Far East were the grim stories of their treatment. The *Surrey Advertiser* on Saturday, 3 November 1945 ran a headline: 'Ashtead Men Home - Indomitable British Spirit in Captivity'. It reported:

'Taylors Road, Ashtead, was decorated with streamers and be-flagged from end to end for the return on Tuesday of L/AC Ernest W.G. Haynes after three and a half years in a Japanese prison camp. He joined the RAF in May 1940, escaped from Singapore after its capture, but was taken prisoner in Java.

'After imprisonment in different camps, he was moved to an island where he and fellow-prisoners were forced to work on building an aerodrome. Conditions were very bad, and the behaviour of the Nipponese, as the prisoners were instructed to call them, was in accordance with all too familiar descriptions. L/AC Haynes suffered

from beriberi, malaria and ulcers on the legs. He said he could not praise sufficiently the devotion of the few British doctors. Although they had no drugs with which to alleviate the men's sufferings, their sympathy and encouragement put heart into their patients. The behaviour of the men throughout those years, said L/AC Haynes, made him proud to be British.

'After the Japanese surrender, the behaviour of their captors was "really comic". They loaded the men with gifts, wept and asked them what they thought the Allies would do to them. L/AC Haynes, who is married and has one son, is the son of Mr Walter Haynes, caretaker of Ashtead Peace Memorial Hall. In civilian life he was a house fitter at Messrs Moulds Ltd.

'Lieut Frederick E. Day, RA, son of Mr and Mrs J. E. Day, 64 Skinners Lane, Ashtead, repatriated from a prison camp in Thailand, has also arrived home. Lieut Day was in a very bad camp, and was one of those prisoners forced to help in building the notorious railway, where so many brave men died.

'The officers were ordered to beat their men for any infringement of Japanese orders and when they refused, they received the beating instead. Lieut Day had innumerable bouts of malaria and other tropical diseases, as well as the inevitable ulcers, which sometimes had to be operated on without any anaesthetics. He declared that nothing the Japs could do "could get the British down".

'Always of a cheerful nature, his spirits appear to have been unquenchable. He is musical, and one of the first things he did after his arrival home was to play the *Moonlight Sonata*, which he played throughout without a fault. In one of the camps he met Flight Lieut J. N. Cocks, of The Holme, Oakfield Road, Ashtead, who has also returned home.

'Letters of welcome have been sent to the repatriated men in the district by Leatherhead Urban District Council and at Tuesday's meeting a letter was read from Mr Day, expressing his appreciation and delight at being home again and at finding the neighbourhood so little changed.'

LECTURE REPORT

LEATHERHEAD STATION - THE STATIONMASTER'S HOUSE

The new programme of monthly L&DLHS lectures using Zoom technology kicked off on Friday, 18 September with a talk on Leatherhead Station by Andy Davies, archivist for the Railway Correspondence and Travel Society (RCTS) archive and library.

Leatherhead Station is a Grade 2 listed building of special architectural and historic interest. It was refurbished with a new roof and interior in 2017 and since March 2018 the formerly disused stationmaster's house has been occupied by the RCTS following negotiations with Network Rail, Southern Railway, Amey TPT and the Railway Heritage Trust.

The house became a waiting room and archive library and there were alterations to the windows and doors to the booking hall. The RCTS collected the keys on 16 March 2018, installed furniture in June and brought in the contents of its former library at Uxbridge, Middlesex, during the summer of that year. A formal opening ceremony took place on 6 October with local dignitaries in attendance.

Since then an RCTS rail tour list has been completed and a book list of 6700 publications put on the website at www.rcts.org.uk with 700 books available for sale. A magazine list of 3350 volumes was



completed in September 2019 and placed online, followed by catalogues of leaflets and documents. An accident report list was also completed.

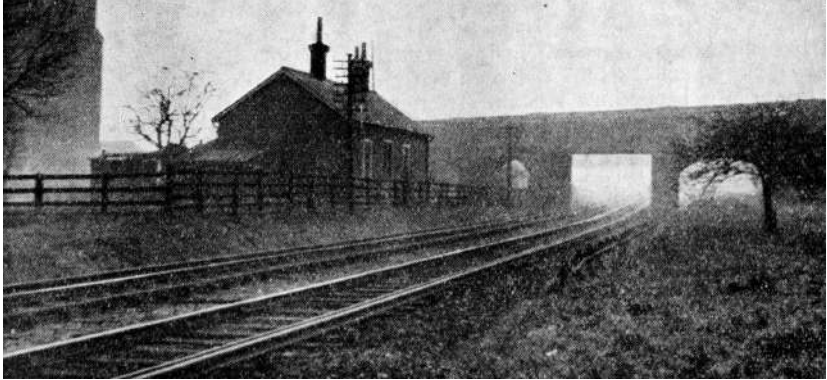
The Coronavirus lockdown has obviously affected progress this year with reduced openings. These have been by special request and like the Leatherhead Museum, the RCTS library relies entirely upon volunteers.

The RCTS itself, a charity, was founded in 1928 in Cheltenham and its library created in 1935, originally in Seymour Street, London. The same premises were used by the British Railway Clearing House (RCH), an organisation set up to manage allocation of revenues collected by pre-grouping railway companies of fares and charges paid for passengers and goods travelling over the lines of other companies. The RCH set technical standards for various items and dealt with lost property.

The RCTS library operated from Eversholt House (London Midland Region HQ, Euston) from 1960 to 1979 and then moved to Uxbridge. Terry Silcock was the librarian and regular library nights were held as the collection was catalogued. However the collection eventually outgrew Uxbridge and the search for new premises commenced, ending finally at Leatherhead.

Andy's presentation included many historical photos of Leatherhead Station from the RCTS collection. He explained the history of the station which was originally owned by the Epsom & Leatherhead Railway Company. This extended the London & Croydon Railway which first reached Epsom in 1847. After the Wimbledon & Dorking Railway, owned by London and South West Railway (LSWR), reached Epsom in February 1859, the Epsom & Leatherhead became a joint company owned by the LSWR and London Brighton & South Coast Railway. Leatherhead Station opened on 1 February 1859 as the terminus and then worked jointly with the LBSCR from 8 August that year.

Further changes followed in the 1860s. The Horsham, Dorking & Leatherhead Railway was incorporated in 1862 by the Mid-Sussex Railway and the LBSCR obtained powers for the connection to Leatherhead in 1863. The additional line finally opened on 11 March 1867. It remained in use until 10 July 1927. That track



Above: Original 1856 station house at the Leatherhead terminus.

remained in situ until the 1980s with one line used as stabling siding. That is now the site of car parks and Wates headquarters.

The original Leatherhead Station was replaced by two stations on 4 March 1867. An engine shed that remained until 1874 was then leased as a church and school. The LSWR station was used as carriage sidings for many years, ending in the mid-1970s.

The RCTS has a complete list of the Leatherhead Stationmasters from 1867, starting with John Lever. Other names included James Sewell and Herbert John Norman who was still there in the 1890s. The post was held from November 1906 by one Horace William Eastland, born 1863 and with the LBSCR from the age of 13. He was at Croydon by 1911. Both he and his father were also ticket collectors.



Above: Leatherhead signal box in the 1970s.

LECTURE REPORT

THE SECRET HISTORY OF KINGSTON UPON THAMES

Tour guide and author JULIAN McCARTHY gave the season's second Zoom presentation on the *Secret History of Kingston upon Thames, Part 1* on 12 October. He introduced fascinating lesser-known aspects of the town's past.

Did you know that Nipper, the Parson's Russell terrier (right) on the HMV logo, was buried in a Kingston park surrounded by magnolia trees behind Lloyds Bank? HMV chairman D.F. Johnson unveiled a plaque there in 1984 to commemorate the centenary of his birth.



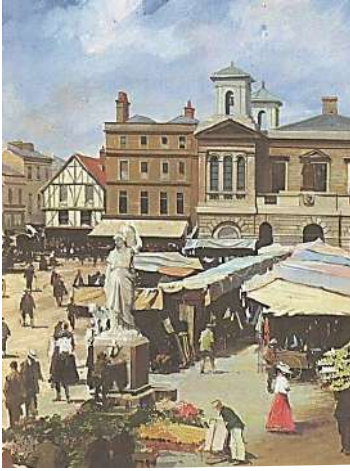
How about the fact that Surbiton Racetrack, located on the corner of Brighton Road and Balaclava Road, was London's premier cycle track in the 1880s and local man John Keen was a champion? Here he is (right) with his penny farthing or 'ordinary'.



The slope down from the railway ensured a fast start and Surbiton was also considered one of the safest tracks as it had no perimeter fencing that could have impaled falling riders.

Julian's special tour of Surrey's former county town showed aspects of Kingston without treading on the toes of the official town guide or his own books. It skimmed some interesting items without repeating everything covered there.

The name actually comes from the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicles* - Cyninges tun, meaning neither 'King's Town' nor 'King's Stone' but 'King's Estate'. It was known for its islands on the Thames, many long disappeared but some, such as Raven's Ait, remaining up or downstream of Kingston. Until 1729 the town's bridge was also the



(bottom right) depicting the local history story.

Also featured was Kingston Cemetery with the graves of African explorer Joseph Moloney, and Alfred Homersham, a World War 1 pilot killed on photo reconnaissance. He spotted two British planes being attacked by six enemy aircraft and was shot down

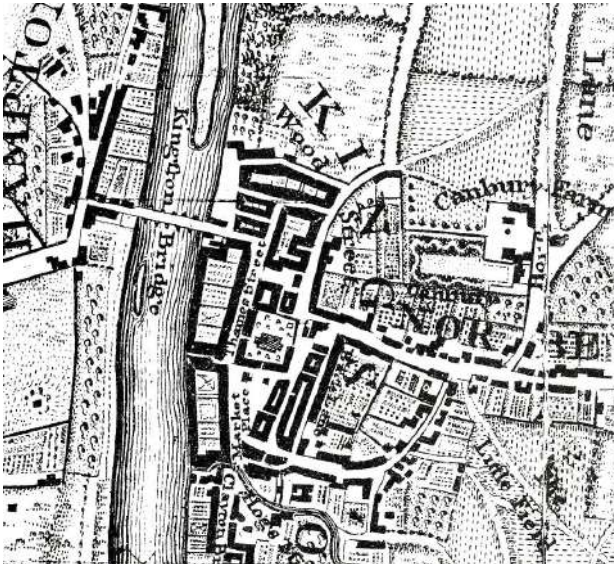
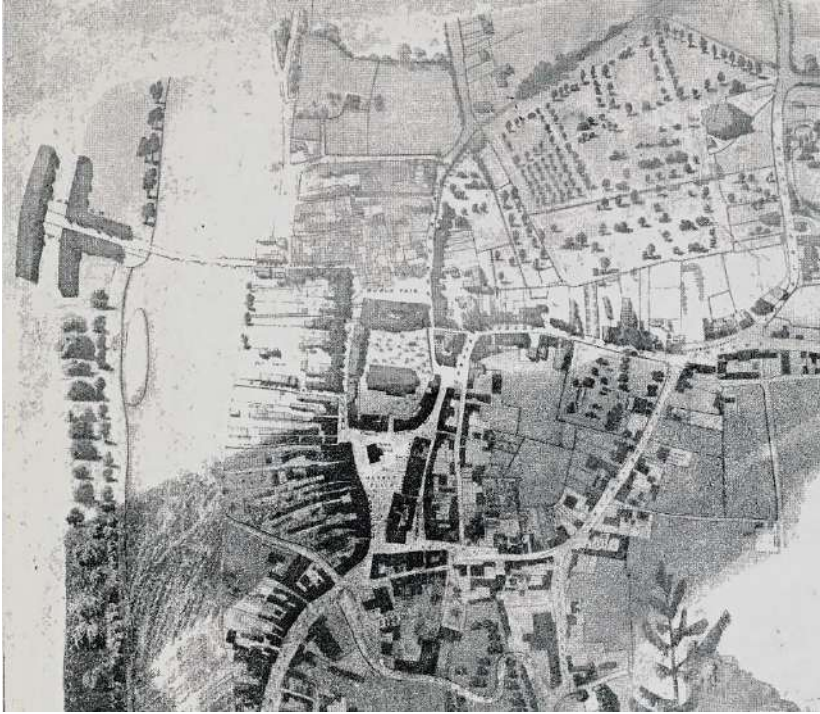
while distracting the Germans. Buried there too but now forgotten are local mayor John Williams, a well-respected and generous contributor to the town, and Netta (Ellen) Broad, a pioneer member of the Women's Royal Air Force who died from poisoning in 1919.

Another figure was confectioner and pastry cook William Leftwich who hit on the idea of buying ice from overseas sources. In an 1828 advertisement, he was selling 'the best and clearest' ice in London from Kingston a century before refrigeration.

closest upstream to London Bridge. In both 1471 and 1554, damage to it changed the course of English history, first because of action during the Wars of the Roses, second due to slowing of a failed attempt to rescue England's nine-day Queen, better known as Lady Jane Grey.

Julian spoke about the marketplace (shown left c1890) and the 50 plus stagecoaches a day which changed horses there in the early 1800s (below). He referred to the golden jubilee panel in Shrubsole Passage





Above and left: Julian used these historical maps to indicate the locations of Kingston's lost islands and bridges. Raven's Ait was originally known as Raven's Arse.

FEATURE

ASHTEAD'S ADMIRALTY TELEGRAPH STATION

Telegraph Hill, now the site of a covered reservoir owned by Thames Water, lies north of the Ashtead border in Malden Rushett. Once known as Cabbage Hill, it provided a trig point on a crucial line of communication between London and Portsmouth during the Napoleonic Wars. BRIAN BOUCHARD explains.

Various mechanical devices for transmitting visible signals on land became generally known as telegraphs in the late 18th century. In France by July 1793, Abbé Claude Chappé and his assistants had created a chain of stations involving a simple two-armed semaphore mounted on upright posts between the Louvre in Paris and the French Revolutionary army, then at Lille.

Over here in March 1796, the Rev Lord George Murray, son of the third Duke of Atholl and later Bishop of St David's, after discussing the subject with King George III, was given the direction of the Admiralty telegraph. Although in holy orders, he is said to have been well fitted for the Royal Navy and had been perfecting a telegraph on the semaphore principle for a considerable time. In September that year his invention was adopted by the Royal Navy authorities and he was awarded £2000 for his labours.

The Board of Admiralty commissioned 87 signal towers, each manned by a lieutenant, a midshipman and two seamen. In addition to signal towers along the coasts, three chains of stations were established. One connected London with Portsmouth, the others with Deal and Sheerness.

The chain to Portsmouth went from the Admiralty to Chelsea, Putney, Cabbage Hill, Netley Heath, Hascombe, Blackdown, Beacon Hill, Portsdown, and Portsmouth. From Putney, what was known as 'The Highland' was a line of sight first crossing Wimbledon Common (at that time a largely treeless heath) and extended to Cabbage Hill, Rushett Common, near Chessington.

The signal stations were intended only for use during the wars with France. They were merely frames which held six wooden shutters and were served from a hut with two rooms and a coal shed.

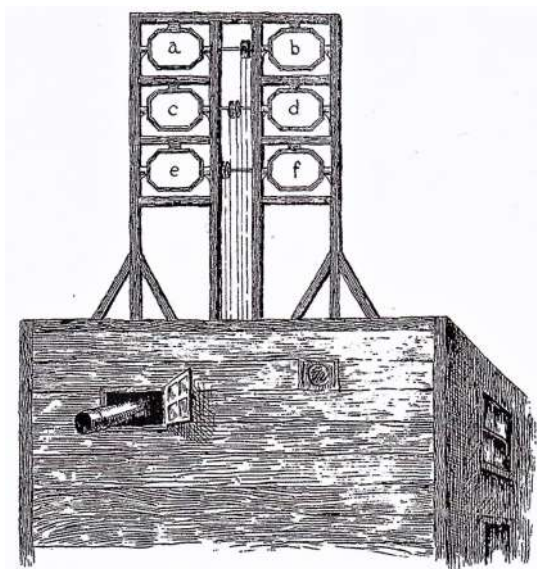


FIG. I.
TELEGRAPH ERECTED ON THE ADMIRALTY OFFICE,
CHARING CROSS, in February, 1796.

Two ‘glass-men’ watched through telescopes for signals from the stations on either side of them. When they saw one, all the shutters closed and they would call two ‘rope-men’ who would operate the shutters to relay the subsequent message along the line.

A report of an imminent mutiny at Spithead in April 1797 was said to have been forwarded to the Admiralty via

Cabbage Hill, Putney and the Royal Hospital within minutes.

An Account of the Trigonometrical Survey by William Mudge in 1811, records Cabbage Hill Telegraph as one of his trig points. The French-garrisoned Spanish fortress town of Badajoz fell to the British after a three-week siege on 6 April 1812. The account says: ‘*The place was taken by assault, after a most obstinate resistance on the part of the besieged, in which the greater number were killed or wounded. The loss on the part of the British was comparatively small. A telegraphic communication to the above effect, was made from the signal station at Plymouth-Dock yesterday, and it reached the station at Cabbage-hill, on the road to town, before night-fall. From this place the intelligence was forwarded by Post, to the Admiralty, where it arrived this morning, at eleven o’clock.*’

On 6 July 1814, the Portsmouth shutter telegraph line was ordered to ‘immediately discontinue’ but Napoleon escaped from his prison island of Elba and returned to France. The shutter telegraph was re-activated until 28 June 1815 when the Admiralty announced plans to establish a permanent system of stations with movable

arms to use semaphore.

Maps of the Admiralty semaphore indicate the line extended from Cooper's Hill (TQ 158 648) past Cobham directly to Chatley Heath (TQ 088 587) and omit mention of Cabbage Hill. The latter had fallen out of use to be replaced from 1822 by a three-storey brick building at Cooper's Hill. This survived as Semaphore House, Telegraph Hill, a stuccoed private residence between Hinchley Wood and Claygate.

In *The Story of the Telegraph* published in the *Mariner's Mirror*, August 1933, Cdr Hilary P. Mead, RN, remarked: 'Examination of the telegraph sites in some instances, such as Cabbage Hill, Ashted, would reveal a rectangular plot of land demarcated by a plantation of hawthorn or other trees, put in originally as a low hedge round the station but now grown into a high screen.'

FEATURE

THEATRE-GOING IN LEATHERHEAD: A PLAYBILL OF 1807 By the late J. R. CLUBE

The playbill of 1807 (see Page 1 *Newsletter* cover) announces the performance in Leatherhead of Goldsmith's comedy *She Stoops to Conquer* and is the only evidence so far uncovered of theatrical entertainment here in the Georgian period.

Leatherhead was then at best a small town and in reality little more than a village, with a population of 1100 or so. In the expansion of drama in the 18th century, theatres were built in many market towns but places such as Leatherhead continued to be served by strolling players in occasional visits. They would perform for a few days in any suitable venue: a large room or hall or more commonly, a barn.

A visiting company would arrange for the distribution of playbills in advance of their visit, and would prepare the stage and auditorium after their arrival. The boxes and pit referred to in the playbill were probably no more than benches placed around the hall, although the gallery sounds somewhat more permanent.

However simple the theatre itself, there is a professional style in

the playbill. It is similar in content and presentation to those put out by the best London theatres of the day. An important clue may be 'By Their Majesties' Servants', a title used solely by the Theatre Royal Drury Lane, the most prestigious theatre in London. It was the practice at the time for such companies to tour the provinces when the London theatre was closed for the summer. Even so, none of the persons named in the Leatherhead playbill appears in those of Drury Lane.

It is known that Samuel Jerrold (1749-1820) was an actor-manager who worked mainly in the provinces. In January 1807 he took lease of a theatre in Sheerness. His second wife Mary (1772-1851) and his daughter, born 1777, are also in the playbill. The company which acted here may have had some links with Drury Lane through the playwright R. B. Sheridan, who had been the theatre's manager for many years and was then living nearby at Polesden Lacey, his home from 1797 until his death in 1816.

Sheridan was obviously closely connected with Leatherhead and spoke of his pleasure, in 1815, in getting a book from the Leatherhead circulating library. It can only be a matter of conjecture, but one wonders whether Sheridan was influential in bringing the company to Leatherhead. *She Stoops to Conquer* had received its premiere at Drury Lane in 1773.

The play is believed to have been performed in a large barn on the west side of North Street where the Nationwide [Anglia] Building Society now stands [in 1990]. There were in this area a number of farm buildings, a bakery and a barn belonging principally to the Ede family. In 1816, when the barn was fitted out as a place of worship for the Congregational Church it was reported to have been 'frequently used by strolling players'. The presence of the Leatherhead Volunteer Band was a clear sign of the times.

Britain was threatened with invasion by Napoleon in the 1790s and more particularly in 1803 and after. In addition to the Militia as a Home Defence force, the Government encouraged the formation of a citizens' army of Volunteer Infantry to provide local defence in case of need. Leatherhead raised two companies of Volunteers and this military band was clearly drawn from its members.

RESEARCH FEATURE

THE SAD TALE OF CORNET GEARY

St Nicolas Church in Great Bookham has a fine memorial to Cornet Francis Geary, killed in action during the American War of Independence in 1776. Cornet Geary was the elder son of Admiral of the Fleet Sir Francis Geary (1709-1796) who purchased the Polesden Lacey estate in 1747. (He served during the War of the Austrian Succession, the Seven Years' War, and the American War of Independence, eventually rising to the rank of Admiral.)

In August this year St Nicolas was approached by American Andy Zellers-Frederick in New Jersey who was researching the story of Cornet Geary's death for an article. He was sent background information by L&DLHS historian Bill Whitman and in return sent the photos of Cornet Geary's grave and a nearby plaque shown on Page 26. He also sent a photo of the grave of rebel militiaman John Schenck, responsible for the killing. See Page 27.

Andy Zellers-Frederick had started his research but was stymied by the closure of most local reference facilities, including the David Library of the American Revolution, some 25 miles from the ambush site, because of the Coronavirus. The library had given its collections to the American Philosophical Society in Philadelphia but that too was closed. Instead Andy was relying upon his local Hunterdon County Historical Society library.

Cornet Geary, named after his father, was born in 1752. He was christened at Bookham, raised in Surrey and educated at Balliol College, Oxford. He purchased a cornetcy cavalry commission in the 16th Light Dragoons in 1773 and was sent to North America in 1776.

In October and November, his unit was mainly occupied with forays in northern New Jersey where they met little organised resistance. However, early in December they were ordered to camp at Pennington and Francis Geary and seven others were sent on a reconnaissance mission. On 12 December 1776 they rode to verify that a supply of salt beef and pork was ready for army collection. Unfortunately the rebels learned of this movement and set an ambush in a wooded area the next morning. When Francis Geary's company rode by they met a volley of musket fire and he was killed.

AMWELL SKIRMISH DECEMBER 14, 1776

SUPPORT FOR THE REBELLION AGAINST BRITISH TYRANNY WAS AT A LOW EBB IN DECEMBER 1776. THE BRITISH OCCUPIED A STRATEGIC AREA IN NEW JERSEY AND WASHINGTON'S ARMY HAD RETREATED ACROSS THE DELAWARE RIVER.

THE BRITISH COMMANDER IN NEW JERSEY SENT CORNET GEARY AND A SQUAD OF DRAGOONS TO CONDUCT A RAID ON FLEMINGTON TO DESTROY COLONIAL SUPPLIES AND TO SEE IF A DETERMINED PATRIOT RESISTANCE EXISTED. THIS FORCE DEPARTED THE MAIN BODY AT PENNINGTON ON DECEMBER 14, 1776 AND CONDUCTED THE RAID, BUT UPON RETURNING THEY WERE INTERCEPTED BY THE AMWELL MILITIA.

DETERMINED TO REPULSE THIS INTRUSION CAPT JOHN SCHENCK HAD GATHERED THE CITIZEN SOLDIERS. DURING THE FIERCE FIRE FIGHT THAT ENSUED, GEARY WAS SHOT DEAD. THE OTHER DRAGOONS FLED IN DISORDER. GEARY WAS BURIED NEARBY. THIS STONE WAS ERECTED BY THE GEARY FAMILY WHEN THE GRAVESITE WAS CONFIRMED IN 1891.

THE ACTION CONTRIBUTED TO GEN. WASHINGTON'S ABILITY TO CONCEAL DURHAM BOATS AT BULLS ISLAND AND TO MAINTAIN THE OLD YORK ROAD SUPPLY LINE.

SEE THE SIGN AND THE AMWELL MEMORIAL - ROUTE 31 EAST - 875' N.W.



The rebels appropriated parts of his uniform, including his sword and the silver plate on his cap with his name inscribed on it. Troops questioned local inhabitants but could not find his body. The rebels concealed it and buried it in a shallow grave. His coat was hidden under a pile of wheat on the floor of a garret and his boots concealed in an oven. His red sash was unravelled and the thread used for various ornamental purposes, his sword was melted to make teaspoons and his stiff leather hat used by a farmer to dip oats from his feed bin for his horses. Despite this, many local residents of Hunterdon County were unaware of what had happened and accounts persisted that the British had recovered his body.



Left: The grave of John Schenck, rebel leader of the ambush.

Francis's mother, formerly Mary Bartholomew, died in 1778. His father, Sir Francis, fell ill in 1780 and returned to Polesden Lacey. Unable to retain his Royal Naval command he received permission to resign and in 1782 was created a baronet. He died aged 86 in 1796. Both he and Mary were buried at St Nicolas but their graves are both

unmarked. Their second son William (1756-1825) succeeded as baronet, inheriting Polesden, but he sold the estate to finance his election as an MP for Kent.

In 1891 the Hunterdon County Historical Society exhumed remains from a site suspected to contain Francis's body. They found silver buttons labelled QLD for Queen's Light Dragoons. His great nephew, Sir William Geary, placed a grave marker on the site in 1907.

The bas-relief at St Nicolas says: 'By his affability and benevolence he gained the love of the soldiers and by his constant attention to his duty, the esteem of his superior officers. At the age of 24 he was entrusted with a command which he executed with singular spirit, but on his return from that duty he was attacked by a large body of rebels who lay in wait for him in a wood and was killed at the head of his little troop, bravely fighting in support of the rights and authority of his country. In testimony of their sincere affection for a dutiful and much lamented son this monument was erected by his most afflicted parents.'

FEATURE

NO 1 GROVESIDE, A HOUSE THROUGH TIME

Local historian BOB KELLEY used a 1946-dated Abstract of Title of his home in Great Bookham plus other sources to trace the origins not only of the house itself but the land on which it stands, right back to the 16th century. He writes.

James Laurell bought the 380-acre estate known as Eastwick Park from the Howard family in 1801. In 1809 he sold it to Jean Louis Bazalgette, a fashionable tailor living in Gloucester Place, London, among whose customers was the Prince Regent. After his death the estate passed through the hands of George Sumner and John Loveridge until in 1833, David Barclay, MP for Sunderland and son of Robert Barclay of Bury Hill, Westcott, bought it and kept it for almost half a century.

In 1882 he sold it to William Keswick, MP for Epsom and the last really active Lord of the Manor of Great Bookham. On 5 March 1912, his son Henry inherited the estate, selling it in 1918 to Hippolyte Louis Wiehe du Coudray Souchon, a retired sugar planter living in Sunningdale, Berkshire. He had come to Britain as agricultural representative of the French island of Mauritius and was awarded the CBE the same year.

His fortunes were mixed. On 5 September 1921 one of his three sons, Lt George Henry Souchon, was shot dead by an Irish republican in Galway while serving with the 17th Lancers. Just over a month later on 7 October, Souchon sold some arable land to the south-west of Great Bookham village for £4750 to Allen Ansell of Hersham, Walton on Thames. This would soon become the site of the first few homes on Guildford Road and in due course the new residential streets of Groveside and Dawnay Road, plus their later off-shoots.

Until 1 February 1922 Souchon retained the rights to 'all game, wild fowl, hares and rabbits ...of shooting coursing and sporting over and upon the said premises'. He also intended to cash in on the timber shortage following World War 1 by 'harvesting' the oak trees of Bookham Common to the north, then part of the manor estate.



Above: No 1 Groveside as it appeared in 1991.

However the prospect of this wholesale destruction understandably outraged local residents who promptly bought the common from him and turned it over to the National Trust.

Frustrated, Souchon lost interest in the village and on 23 October 1922 sold the remaining manor estate to Percy Portway Harvey, a property developer who initiated what would become the Eastwick residential area east of the village while the manor house itself became the school Southey Hall until 1954. The residential home Southey Court is a surviving reminder of that name.

At the other end of Great Bookham in September 1928, Allen Ansell sold the former arable land to William Witton Leavis who built a small house called Westview by the corner of Guildford Road. This would later become No 1 Groveside. Leavis himself lived at what became No 3 Groveside.

From the electoral rolls and the searches done when the property changed hands, we can see that on 10 October 1930 Westview was bought by George Arthur Coombs, a confectioner and tobacconist. Also living there were Marian Drucilla Coombs and Charles Coombs. They appear to have remained during World War 2 and then on 18 November 1946, two women, Helen Wherry, a spinster, and Ethel Bradford, a widow, bought the place for £2850, remaining until 1955.

In that year Keith and Ann Sansom bought Westview. They would have six children and over the following years they would transform it into a much larger house, starting with a new extension to the living room in 1963 with an extra bedroom above it. This replaced a former garage. Six years later in 1969 a two-storey side extension was added to the dining room and a rear extension followed, plus a new garage in 1975.

The Sansom family was there until 1987. Then in 1988, Robin and Shirley Sculthorpe, promoters of corporate golfing events, moved in. Unfortunately during the financial slump that followed they had to move out again in 1990. The house was now owned by the Mortgage Corporation and was occupied by squatters who stripped out many of the fittings and the wiring.

Westview became a sad shell without residents. Now a seven-bedroom property with a secluded quarter-acre garden, it had an asking price of around £200,000 but the estate agents despaired of selling it after dozens of viewings failed to generate any firm offers. They held an open day and there were suggestions of conversion into flats.

However my wife Liz and I took a cursory look around and were persuaded of its potential as a family home for us with our daughters. My itinerant career had led to our living in five homes in three countries over seven years and it was time to settle down. We made an offer and had a survey which reported in January 1991: 'We would not recommend a private purchaser to proceed in this case, as we feel too much requires to be done at too high a cost few purchasers are likely to want to expend the effort and finance required.'

We were not deterred and paid £175,000 for the property, obtaining a £55,000 mortgage and staying in our rented Camberley home while builders did the internal structural work and essential wiring, plumbing, bathroom and kitchen fitting. The seven bedrooms were reduced to five plus a dressing room and two new en-suite bathrooms. We moved in at Easter 1991.

We dropped the name Westview and renamed it Woodgrove, the meaning of the old Cornish word Kelley, also spelt Kelly or Kelli.

**Bob and Liz sold the house in September 2020 for £1,057,500 and have now moved to Tetbury in Gloucestershire.*

ORAL HISTORY FEATURE

**HERBERT GEORGE POWELL (1902-1980)
and PHYLISS GWENDOLINE MANSELL (1905-2003)**

Bert Powell, onetime chauffeur to Dr Carl Wahlgren von Bergen, (1876-1960) and Miss Phyliss Mansell, the doctor's housekeeper, were interviewed by EDWINA VARDEY at 2 Waterloo Cottages, Bull Hill, Leatherhead, on 17 January 1980. Bert, who died later the same year, lived in Leatherhead all of his life. He described the chauffeur's duties, life in the early days of motor transport and local characters in those days. It was a time of long working hours, rigid class divisions and unchallenged social mores.

BERT POWELL: I was born at Maiden Cottages, Ashted on 24 April 1902. My father was the bailiff at Cherkley Court when the Dixons were there. *[Bert's father left the family in 1910 to try farming in Canada. He returned and was killed in World War I.]* I was one of four children, two sons and two daughters. One of my sisters kept the milliner's shop at the top of the street. My other sister still comes and tidies up for me. They both married. One of them, Margaret Simmons, lost her husband 25 years ago.

I went to Mickleham School to start with and then the old school in the Fairfield which is partly demolished now. It had a big apple tree in the yard just below it with wonderful apples. Then I went to the boys' school in Highlands Road. Half of us - the under 11s - went into that school church. Then when we got to 11 years old we went down to the Kingston Road one.

I was 14 when I left school. I went to Cherkley Court and looked after the chickens. They used to have a lot of chickens - several hundred. Then I went to Doctor von Bergen in 1917 when I was 16. I was in charge of the motor car. Dr von Bergen learned me to drive but I picked it up mostly by turning the car round, looking after it and maintaining it. I normally went out once the car had been turned round. I wasn't old enough to have a licence, you see so he made some arrangement with the police superintendent so that I was just allowed to turn it round. I didn't drive it that much.



Above: Leatherhead High Street in the early days of Dr von Bergen.

Dr von Bergen had a wife and two sons. One was lost in the war in the submarine service, the other is still living down at Minehead. I went on to be the chauffeur up to the Depression, just before the Second World War. Chauffeurs were not so popular and weren't so wanted in those days so I went into the garden up there for a few years. (*Dr von Bergen's second local house was Four Acres in Headley Road, built in 1926.*)

Dr von Bergen's first car was an open tourer, a GM Luton. Then after the First World War he had a new one. He had some influence with the Minister of Health and was one

of the first [people] to get a new car and had a Standard 9.5, a small two-seater. Everybody around here came to flock in to see it as it stood in the garage. It was so nice. I kept it all shiny.

Of course we had many other cars but the turning point was the electric lights. Up to then I had to fill the lamps with acetylene for lighting. If you went to Bookham a whole week without having a puncture on the gritty roads as they were then you were lucky. You had to repair on the spot, put a new tube in you see. It was a full time job keeping it moving.

It wouldn't really go all that fast. If we went up over Hawks Hill you'd have to have it in first gear. If it didn't go then in the lowest gear, you turned the car round and backed up in slightly lower gear. He did his calls by car.

PHYLISS MANSELL: They were few and far between in those days. Not so many people. No telephones. Everybody used to say

when there were no telephones about, people thought twice about calling the doctor. You would need to be very ill. Especially at night and also it meant half a crown cost. A lot of money. But he was always kept busy as a doctor. He used to do a lot of work for the hospital. They named the ward after him. [*Dr von Bergen, newly arrived as a local GP, had provided much of the energy and inspiration for the building of Leatherhead's Victoria Memorial Cottage Hospital in 1904.*]

BERT POWELL: It was a full time job [for me] actually. I worked so long that I would be lucky if I got in before seven o'clock with the car. Dr von Bergen was not the only car owner in the area. I knew all the chauffeurs of course. We used to meet at different functions you see. Dinner parties and things like that. You would be waiting outside for them.

He used to go out amongst everybody but he wouldn't go to social functions and such like dinners. The Medical Association dinner, he was always a suspect to them because he always used to get a tummy tug when he went to them, didn't he. He didn't used to like going to them but he used to go, I won't say he went a lot.

PHYLLIS MANSELL: Mrs von Bergen was from an Ashtead family. Allen of Crampshaw Lane. [*She was born Mary Barbara Allen.*] She died long before him in November 1939 and then I looked after him till he died when he was 84.

BERT POWELL: Four Acres was bombed [*in World War 2*]. There was a tip out about 11 o'clock. We were in having a cup of tea indoors. There was another chap out in the garden and the cook and another maid. I went out and looked up and happened to see it straight away. There was this plane all belching black smoke. I said 'Inside!' and we just got into the passage, into there when they were about us. Buffeted up and down this passage.

PHYLLIS MANSELL: There was a telephone from Four Acres down to the surgery which kept ringing and the doctor was taking surgery so he couldn't understand it. He returned to the house and



Above: The Victoria Memorial Cottage Hospital at the junction of Epsom Road and Forty Foot Road, in 1909. It operated from 1904 until 1940 when Leatherhead Hospital opened.

found it had been hit. The front door was right out across the lawn.

BERT POWELL: There was nobody in there. I had just come down. It was the most filthy night. Pouring with rain. The doctor came here and he knocked on the door and said come up to Four Acres. He said we have been hit again. I said ‘What again!’ and he said yes. They had taken two roofs off.

PHYLLIS MANSELL: The bomb had gone in sideways. [The German pilot] was aiming I think for the factory up the Green Lane.

BERT POWELL: They used to fly in on this beam and whatever happened to be there. They got to see the flack bursting all around them and they used to let them go. I’ve seen them. I was in the Home Guard. Back there, all that little valley was beautifully in leaf for summertime, lit up with these silvery flares. Beautiful it was. Of course as soon as we see that we ducked because we thought if somebody had laid a stream of them along they would drop some more in there but they didn’t. But that was a lovely sight. We had

them [raids] night after night.

PHYLLIS MANSELL: 1940 that was. I came to the doctor in February 1941 when he was living at Mickleham. The house wasn't habitable. The Ministry of Aircraft Production took it over and built a large shed. There it remained until about 1945. We went back in 1946.

BERT POWELL: I wasn't there then. I had three and half years of it in the Army. Europe. I was in the bay with D-Day. I was landing. I had a vehicle you see. I drove brigadiers and people.

.....

PHYLLIS MANSELL: The doctor used to tell us about going to the Reeves [*a leading Leatherhead family in the early 20th century*] when he first came here. He usually wore a top hat and black coat but he thought he would go in a nice blue suit on a Saturday morning. He was ticked off about it that he hadn't got his best coat on.

BERT POWELL: Dr von Bergen didn't entertain much in his own house. He was out so much. His wife used to do a lot of directing and she was also interested in some mission in the Isle of Dogs in London. I would have to take her some afternoons. She would go round to the different houses. She was the right class so she had to be welcomed. They used to go hoping they would not be at home and he would just drop in a visiting card. Just to say he had called.

All of the shops at that time never even closed until 10 o'clock, most of them, because that was when people were paid on Saturday evening at the end of the week. No Saturday afternoons in those days unless you worked in the banks or something like that and then we had been foot-balling in the afternoon. There were different teams - the Leatherhead Rose and the Leatherhead Club - and we were all discussing the football, you see.

This policeman, Pickard his name was, he used to come up there. He had got a marble in his glove, the finger of his glove. If you didn't move he just walked up to you and you got a flick with the marble. 'Move on please.'

The doctors never mixed. Dr von Bergen would never go to another man's patient except he'd got permission. So if he came here and you asked him did he mind you having Dr Everett in to see your father and he gave permission that was all right. You could do that. But they could never interfere with one another.

They had to pay for the poor you see. If you were poor you didn't have to pay. It was only about a shilling a visit but the bigger people had to pay a great deal more than that. They would want to pay it. [Doctors] had to be beyond reproach. They couldn't afford to have it otherwise you see. Their living depended on it.

PHYLLIS MANSELL: Dr von Bergen was a fairly modern doctor really. He was a surgeon, an eye doctor. He specialised in eyes.

[Dr von Bergen practised in Leatherhead for 56 years. Born at Middleton St George in Durham, his father was Swedish, Axel Hugo von Bergen. Dr von Bergen continued to work tirelessly and only partially retired on the advent of the National Health Service. He remained chairman of the medical committee of Leatherhead Hospital. He is buried at Leatherhead Parish Church.]

OBITUARY

JOHN STEWART MORRIS (1940-2020)

John Morris (right), one of the Society's keenest researchers and best loved Museum stewards, died at Epsom Hospital on 10 September aged 80.

Born February 1940 in Luton, he was the son and grandson of felt hat manufacturers from Manchester and Luton. He went to Dunstable Grammar School from 1951-58 after his family moved there and had various jobs afterwards back in Luton including at the Vauxhall car plant from 1961-65.

After enrolling in teacher training at Strawberry Hill he taught maths in a secondary school before switching



again to the NatWest Bank in 1969. While there, he came to work in Leatherhead which had a direct bus service home to Dunstable via London at the time. He later left the bank and joined Pearl Assurance as a door-to-door salesman.

In 1974 he met teacher Jenny and after a whirlwind romance they married within months. Their son Chris, born 1979, went to Therfield School and now lives in Guildford. John and Jenny lived for a while in Fetcham but eventually settled at Wood Dene (also known as The Chateau) in Church Street, Leatherhead, in 1999.

It was there that his fascination for local history really took off. As well as becoming very active as a steward at the Museum he became a dedicated researcher, not least about his own house, and he read and wrote extensively about the place.

He also became involved in researching historical links between St John's School and India. The school was founded to educate the sons of poor clergy, many of whom lived in the British Raj. Some served as chaplains at trading posts or to service personnel, others were employed in particular towns. Many wanted to educate their sons in England, some of whom in turn became clergy. The school ethos also influenced other boys to become clergy and head east.

In his book *Leatherhead, India & the Far East*, self-published in 2016, John covered many of these people, using the school register from its founding in 1852 until the intake from 1918. The register had been constantly updated with notes about the careers of former pupils and this provided invaluable source material.

His *West Enders* was a study of Nathaniel Bland, who gambled away a huge fortune, and the Henderson family who were active in the local community. Both lived at Randalls Park.

John wrote articles for this *Newsletter*, pamphlets, and designed displays for the Museum, not least the historically accurate but clearly amusing hair-brushing machine shown on Page 7.

He survived cancer for many years and never let it interfere with his research or other activities such as membership of a German conversation group. Only this year did his health decline. His funeral at Randalls Park on 14 October was attended only by members of his family but many neighbours stood by in Church Street as the funeral cars passed. His cheerful contributions are sadly missed.

LEATHERHEAD & DISTRICT LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

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Museum (Hampton Cottage): Reopening April-December
Thursdays and Fridays 1pm - 4pm and Saturdays 10am-4pm

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Vacant

Historical Enquiry Service

This tries to answer questions about the histories of Leatherhead, Ashtead, Bookham and Fetcham submitted via the Museum.

Kirby Library (Letherhead Institute)

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FOLLOW-UP TO OBITUARY

In the last *Newsletter*, we ran an obituary for L&DLHS founder Stephen Fortescue who died in August aged 99. BILL WHITMAN adds the following about Stephen's involvement with St Nicolas Church, Bookham where he lived for much of his life.

Stephen's first wife, Mary, is buried at St Nicolas. He was deeply interested in the history of Bookham and St Nicolas and published three books about them.

He organised a sub-surface survey of the nave area to look for evidence of a previous building. This located signs of what might have been a wooden framed church pre-dating the Grade 1 listed Domesday Book structure that survives today.

His results were published by the Surrey Archaeological Society and he later organised an exploration of the grassed-over Howard tomb outside the south-west corner of the church. The project included persuading a group of boy scouts to guard the exposed tomb overnight. They were able to confirm the number of Howard family members actually buried there, including the first Earl of Effingham and his countess.

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Jubilee String Quartet

