



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

Newsletter

March 2019



Corporate Member:

**MICHAEL
EVERETT**

58 The Street, Ashted

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Information for our Annual General Meeting on 15 March and a Society membership renewal form for those who still need it are being provided electronically for all members for whom we have email addresses or delivered by hand with this *Newsletter*.

Cover: Cherkley Court, now known as Beaverbrook. One of Leatherhead's most controversial historic landmarks. See Lecture Report on Page 10.

**EDITORIAL**

Spring approaches and our first *Newsletter* of 2019 is here. This edition covers recent talks at the Christmas Miscellany and my own on Cherkley Court's fascinating owners. There are also excellent pieces on Leatherhead's Self-Build Trojans in the early 1950s, a much older tale from Tudor times, the second part of an historic interview about an historic church, and an up to date report on an archaeological investigation at the same venue, Leatherhead's parish church of St Mary and St Nicholas. Happy reading.

Duncan Macfarlane, joint Museum manager and now Curator too, writes with news of the first major external refurbishment at the Museum for many years during the winter. When it re-opens in April for this year's season it will be embarking on a new era so if you are not already a regular visitor, do drop in and admire the new look. It was badly needed and a very worthwhile investment of the Society's funds.

We still need a Books Secretary to manage the publication and distribution process. This role is essential for raising funds and promoting the Society. It also provides a great opportunity for getting out and about around the district so do contact us if you fancy giving it a try. Our recent publications have sold in gratifying numbers in several outlets across the patch. Our chairman John Rowley and co-author Patricia Jenkins got particularly excited as a certain local post office requested another 20 copies of their book *Memories of Ashted in WW2* every few days over Christmas.

Sadly one of our best venues for book sales - Barton's Bookshop in Leatherhead (See Page 8) - has now closed so if you still haven't purchased your own copies of this book or any of the others on our list, contact our Records Secretary who can advise where they are still available. Once the Museum reopens of course you will also find copies there for sale.

TONY MATTHEWS

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT



My report for December began with a request to hear from anyone who knew Margaret Joyes Mayell after she left us a generous legacy. I am pleased to say a response was quickly received and Margaret's details are on Page 35 of this edition.

I also mentioned Joy Hallam's Ashtead Pottery legacy. Work began on accessioning this fine collection during the year but has not yet been completed or recorded in the Museum database. It has been delayed in part by the resignation of our Curator, Lorraine Spindler, a really enthusiastic officer of the Society alongside her many other activities. We will miss her advice and leadership, especially on Museum presentations but the show must go on. Duncan McFarlane has agreed to step in as acting Curator while we consider how to lighten the burden of organising work in the Museum.

The December 2017 *Newsletter* (Page 2) mentioned the artist Frank Brangwyn who designed pots for the Ashtead Pottery. He also worked for Royal Doulton among others and Libby Horner has now produced a *catalogue raisonnée* of his ceramics featuring Ashtead designs on the dust cover. Definitely a coffee table volume, it is available by emailing mail@frankbrangwyn.org.

A recent letter has suggested that we do not sufficiently encourage our members 'to put forward ideas and voice opinions'. I know that as both a learned Society and a Museum, opportunities are few for active members of either group to be fully aware of each other. As an interim step, I encourage members to contact our trustees/officers by email or approach us at one of the regular meetings. For example, if you feel your garden would be a suitable site for an archaeological dig please contact Nigel Bond. Yes, it has happened! Meanwhile, I hope to see you at our Annual General Meeting on 15 March.

JOHN ROWLEY

NEWS FROM THE MUSEUM

By **DUNCAN MACFARLANE**
Joint Museum Manager/Curator



In early February 2019, work started on the external refurbishment of the Museum when scaffolding was installed all around the building. This is the first major building work on the Museum since Hampton Cottage was bought by the L&DLHS in December 1976. Following major restoration work by professional builders and volunteers, it opened as the Leatherhead Museum in October 1980.

Hampton Cottage is a small timber-framed 17th century detached house, built between 1649 and 1682. When the Society purchased the building most of the external timber framework at ground floor level had deteriorated but above that point the original timbers had survived surprisingly well. The solution was to suspend the whole building on jacks while footings were dug out and all the outer walls underpinned.

The current refurbishment is of the main upper timber framed parts of the building. In placing the contract, care has been taken to find a contractor with experience of working on historic buildings. As the Museum is listed, Mole Valley Council has been involved at all stages of the project and its conditions are being met.

For example all new timbers will be of reclaimed oak and lime mortar will be used in place of mastic. For the Society the project is being managed by my fellow Joint Museum Manager, Peter Humphreys, a qualified civil engineer.

The builder estimates that the project will be completed in six weeks. Work started on the area in worst condition. This was the corner of the south and west walls, the front and left hand side of the upstairs office. This area deteriorated further following last summer's heat-wave and the timber framing there is being replaced with temporary works necessary to

minimise any lateral movement. Most of the office contents are now in a temporary store.

Following a survey of the Museum electrics, some work will be undertaken but this will not be done while the external works are ongoing. To allow for this and the need to re-establish the Museum displays after completion of the refurbishment we plan to re-open the Museum on Thursday, 25 April after Easter.

The **Friends of Leatherhead Museum** Annual General Meeting will be held on Monday, 29 April in Room G6 at the Letherhead Institute from 7pm for 7.30pm. Tony Matthews will repeat his talk on Cherkley Court (see Page 10) after the business. Will Friends of the Museum who are not also members of the L&DLHS please send their renewal subscriptions of just £3 to: Gwen Hoad, 66 Craddocks Avenue, Ashted, KT21 1PG.

PROGRAMME OF FUTURE ACTIVITIES

Monthly meetings/talks, Abraham Dixon Hall, Letherhead Institute. Coffee at 7.30pm and 8pm talk. Visitors welcome.

Friday, 15 March: Annual General Meeting. This will be followed by chairman John Rowley talking about the research behind his new book, *Memories of Ashted, A Surrey Village in World War 2*.

Friday, 12 April: Emma Corke, former president of the Surrey Archaeological Society, on *Worms, Ashes and Bones: from Darwin to today at Abinger*.

Monday, 29 April, 7pm, Room G6: Friends of Leatherhead Museum Annual General Meeting with repeat talk on Cherkley Court.

Friday, 17 May: Krystyna Truscoe of Reading University on the *Use of Light Detection and Ranging (LiDAR) in Archaeology*.

Friday, 20 September: Ian Betts, Museum of London Archaeology, on *Georgian Baths and Bathing Practices*.

Friday, 18 October: Professor Pat Wiltshire on *The British Hedgerow - Past and Present*.

Friday, 15 November: Jane Lewis of Surrey History Centre on *Fashion and Folly*. The bizarre lengths that people have gone to in order to enhance their beauty and appear fashionable.

LECTURE REPORT

LADY ADA LOVELACE - THE WORLD'S FIRST COMPUTER PROGRAMMER

Society member SIMON RITCHIE gave the Christmas Miscellany talk on Ada Lovelace (1815-1852) shown right, the world's first computer programmer who lived at East Horsley, Surrey.

She was the daughter of Lord George Gordon Byron (1788-1824) the romantic poet, an early media-created celebrity described as 'mad, bad and dangerous to know'. He married Annabella Millbanke, Lady Wentworth in January 1815 and their daughter

Augusta Ada was born in December that year. The couple promptly separated the following month so Ada never knew her father. In any case he died in Greece in 1824 aged just 36.

Unusually for a girl at the time, Ada was educated in mathematics to counter her father's influence but she seems to have inherited something of his rebellious nature and tried to elope with her tutor in 1833 aged 18.

That year she also met the mathematician, code-breaker, political agitator and designer Charles Babbage (1791-1871). A Fellow of the Royal Society and Lucasian Professor of Mathematics at Cambridge, he had already designed a sophisticated mechanical calculator known as the Difference Engine which used £17,000 of public funding, yet he only managed actually to produce parts of the machine. These he demonstrated at society parties as he tried to raise support for the project.

Ada saw it in its unfinished state and indeed the Difference Engine was never actually completed. But Babbage followed it up with another



invention, the Analytical Engine, a mechanical programmable computer, now described as the world's first of its kind. Although this too was never built, Ada wrote the first complex program for it in 1843.

She had secured a place in society some years earlier, marrying William 8th Baron King of Ockham Park in 1835 and her husband became Earl of Lovelace in 1838. The couple commissioned Horsley Towers, the magnificent neo-Gothic mansion that survives today at East Horsley as a hotel and wedding venue.

Sadly, Ada's extraordinary talent and promising social position had unfortunate results. A gambling addict, she invented a mathematical betting system in 1851 but lost all her syndicate's money one afternoon at Epsom Races. She died of cancer the following year at 36, the same age as her father, and was buried next to him in Scotland.

As for Babbage's Difference Engine, this finally became a reality 130 years later in 1991 when two complete Difference Engines were produced. One is now in the Science Museum in London but no longer appears to be working as it is susceptible to jamming. The other is in the Computing History Museum in California.

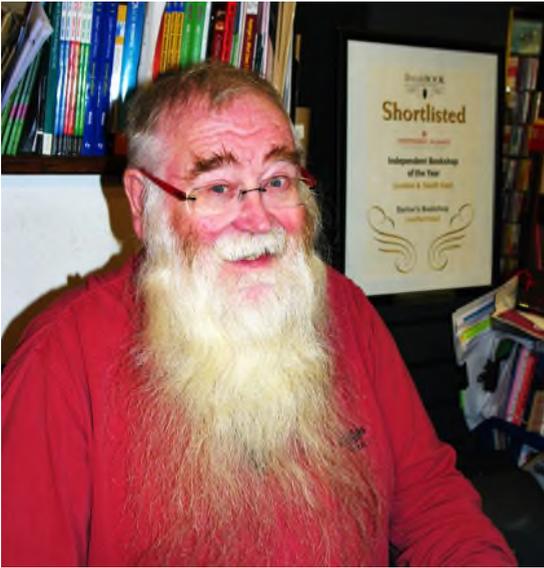
LECTURE REPORT

THE ORIGINS OF BARTON'S BOOKSHOP

FRANK HASLAM gave the second Christmas Miscellany talk on Barton's Bookshop in Bridge Street, Leatherhead, which finally closed last month, and the site's earlier uses for a bakery and a bank. Barton's owner, Peter Snell, has just retired but has been equally well known locally for his annual appearances as Santa Claus. His recorded voice was heard at the pre-Christmas talk.

Peter started off in insurance and finance and then became a primary school teacher in Guildford. His main interest was history. After an illness he started work at the former Corbett's bookshop in the Swan Centre where Clinton's card shop is today. Within three years he was managing it and when the owners put it up for sale seven years later Peter's wife, Josephine, bought it.

In 2008 they had to move the business to Bridge Street and renamed it Barton's after her family. For those old enough, it may evoke memories of the 1940s BBC radio show, *Dick Barton Special Agent*.



Top: Owner Peter Snell, aka Father Christmas. Above: Barton's Bookshop by artist Peter Irons.

The Jacobean-style building only dates back to 1928 but it is clearly so distinctive a landmark that it was given Grade 2 listing in August 1990. However it has not impressed everyone who sees it. The 1972 edition of the Surrey volume of *Buildings of England* by Nairn & Pevsner describes it as 'hideous'.

It started life as the National Provincial Bank but was built on the former site of Wild's Bakery and there is evidence that the land was used by bakers as early as the 18th century. The Gwilt map of Leatherhead from 1782-3 indicates a bakery there which was replaced in the early 19th century by another.

James Marks was then the baker and he rented part of the site to William Moore, a butcher. Moore bought the Swan Hotel in 1850 and Marks took over

the whole of the corner site at the Bridge Street crossroads. This was eventually sold by George Wild in 1927. A photo of a very old brick bread oven on the premises, thought to have dated back earlier than the first census, once hung in the office of the National Provincial branch manager.

In 1968 the National Provincial merged with the Westminster Bank to form the NatWest. This was - and still is - based in the premises across the road so the striking Jacobean-style building was surplus to requirements. It was then occupied by the Woolwich Building Society which was taken over by Barclays Bank in 2000. Banking there ceased in 2006 and Barton's arrived in 2008. A relic of the original fine wood panelling remained around the front door in North Street, although the bookshop's address was 2 Bridge Street.

Access to the upper floors was originally through an internal doorway which led to the shop's storage space. Another feature was the splendid fireplace located in front of the stairs from the Bank Chambers entrance in Bridge Street to the premises above the bookshop.

The basement retained a large vault from the bank's days. Peter, known for his wry sense of humour, had a life-size figure of actor and Leatherhead resident Michael Caine locked inside. Caine's many roles have included several about robberies so the vault seemed an appropriate place for the figure. Barton's will be sadly missed.

LECTURE REPORT

THE CONTRASTING OWNERS OF CHERKLEY COURT

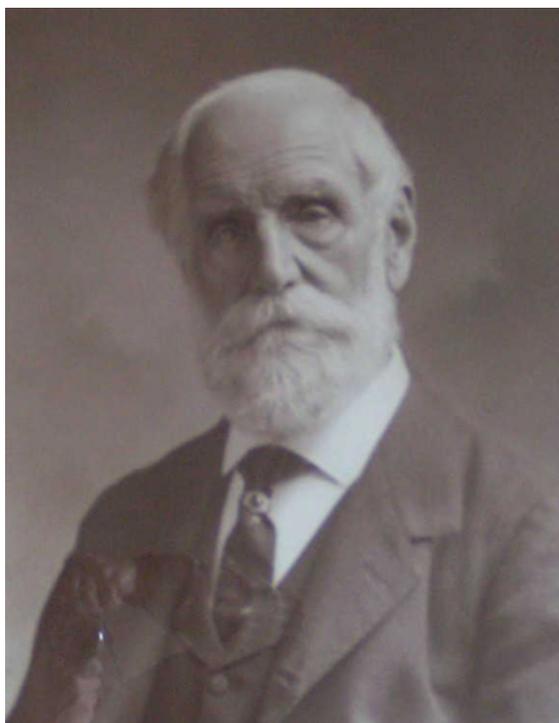
Cherkley Court, the neo-classical mansion on some 370 acres south-east of Leatherhead, ranks as possibly the most controversial of all buildings in the district. Known today simply as Beaverbrook, it opened in 2017 off Reigate Road as a luxury hotel with an exclusive members-only golf course, an upmarket restaurant some way from the main building and a Japanese-style dining spot that received rave reviews thanks to the publicity campaign. A luxury spa has been added and new self-catering accommodation is expected soon.

There have only been three separate owners since construction on Cherkley started back in the 1860s. These were the Dixon family,



*Above:
The tropical house
at Cherkley in the
1880s.*

*Left:
Abraham Dixon.*



the Aitken family and its charity foundation, and now the hotel company.

The Birmingham businessman Abraham Dixon (1815-1907) who had Cherkley Court built between 1866 and 1870, is known as one of the town of

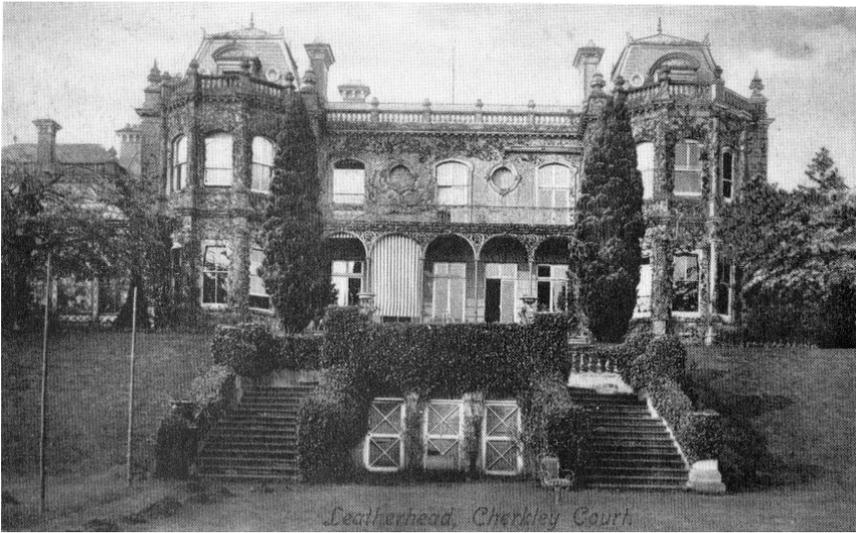
Leatherhead's great historical benefactors. As soon as he came here with his family in 1871 he took an active interest in local affairs. Years later at the age of 77, he masterminded and funded creation of the Letherhead Institute for the educational benefit of the whole community. Education provided the basis of better citizenship he believed and he implemented the principle as far as possible for the rest of his days. His family followed suit.

He bought the estate in 1866 and in 1871 the newly built mansion known as Cherkley Yews became his home. Abraham and his wife Margaret (1821-1909) had married in 1847 and had four adult daughters when they arrived at Cherkley. These were Ada Mary (1848-1922), Letitia Margaret (1849-1916), Winifred Anna (1851-1935) and Edith (1852-1943). Only Edith ever married and her wedding on 29 October 1873 at Leatherhead Parish Church was a major local event. The groom was Grosvenor Caliste de Jacobi du Vallon (1851-1940), a distant cousin of the Duke of Westminster and probably born of an old aristocratic family in Brittany. The marriage service was conducted by the Rev William Taylor Dixon, uncle of the bride.

Abraham and Margaret Dixon, both from north of England families, had moved to Birmingham by the time their first daughter, Ada Mary, was born. Apart from their father's wool manufacturing business, Abraham and his brother George ran an export operation, chartering no fewer than 47 ships for transatlantic transportation to the Caribbean. They were also major arms traders. Despite this, George and the pacifist Liberal MP John Bright became close and the latter once visited Cherkley Court, writing about his walk 'to the top of Box Hill, the country and the view of unsurpassable beauty.' Cherkley was 'large and almost palatial, his conservatory very fine,' Bright wrote in his diary.

After Abraham moved to Leatherhead, George, also a Liberal MP for many years, was a frequent visitor. Both brothers were deeply committed to widening educational opportunities for the poorer classes. The family appeared frequently in parish church magazines from the 1870s as local benefactors although they did not make great show of their good deeds and gifts.

In 1891 Abraham wrote to the *Letherhead Parish Magazine*



Above: Cherkley Court rebuilt by Abraham Dixon after the disastrous fire of 1893.

with information on the building of what would become Letherhead Institute. He said: 'Its object will mainly be to provide means and opportunities for educational, social and recreative occupation, for the working men, and for all classes in the town and its immediate neighbourhood, available to subscribers only, combined with a coffee bar and refreshment room open to the public at large. In providing this building I wish it to be distinctly understood that I do not desire to disturb or to interfere in an unwelcome manner with any of the existing institutions of the town, and therefore religion and politics will be expressly excluded from its scope.'

He wanted to provide a venue for technical education as well as literary, social and recreational activities. Alcoholic beverages and playing for money were to be strictly prohibited. In November 1891 it was reported that W. H. Batchelar had been awarded the contract and clearing of the site had begun. The memorial stone of the Letherhead Institute was laid 10 February 1892 by Abraham's daughters Letitia and Winifred in front of a large gathering. Abraham himself couldn't attend for health reasons but his daughters were suitable representatives as they took an active interest in home arts and cooking and laundry classes in the neighbourhood.



Above: The staff were said to be very happy working at Cherkley under the Dixons but not under their immediate successors.

The building came into use on 26 October 1892 and Margaret Dixon attended an entertainment in the lecture hall on 7 November in aid of the Church of England Waifs and Strays Society. The formal opening followed on 14 February 1893.

In July 1893 the Girls' Friendly Society held a festival at Cherkley Court, received by Letitia Dixon. The same month on 26 July the house was struck by lightning and destroyed by fire. Nothing could be saved from the family's bedrooms although the Leatherhead, Epsom and Dorking fire brigades were all quickly on the scene. By nightfall the entire mansion was gutted. Just the shell remained. The Dixons moved temporarily to the Long House, in Ashted. A year later they returned to a restored Cherkley Court said to be an exact replica of the original.

Abraham immediately donated generously towards the enlargement of the Infants School on Gravel Hill. Later in the year Winifred Dixon presented prizes at technical classes and other competitions at the Institute. July 1896 saw another horticultural society show at Cherkley Court and that Christmas and New Year the Letherhead Brass Band serenaded the Dixons and other notables there. In 1897 an orchestral society was formed and a cycling club, the latter

being invited to Cherkley Court on 11 August.

At the Institute's Annual General Meeting in January 1898 Abraham received condolences for George's death and promptly donated funds to pay off the Institute's cash deficit. Promenade concerts in September that year took place at Cherkley Court and three other big local houses to raise funds for the cottage hospital and town band. The National Schools were to have had a summer treat at Cherkley in August 1900 but a heavy thunderstorm prevented the visit and tea was served in the schools instead.

From 1901-5 Abraham subscribed regularly to the Friendly Society's Parade and in 1902 he gave a donation to the Church Lads' Brigade to clear off their debt. The cottage hospital in Clinton Road closed down on 12 April 1902 and Abraham gave the largest donation to help clear its debt too. Collections were made on Hospital Sunday, 29 June 1902 for the new Queen Victoria Memorial Cottage Hospital.

His obituary in the June 1907 parish magazine said: 'His name will always be remembered with gratitude in the town for the handsome Institute which he built in 1892. He was also ever ready to help on the work of the church, and was a liberal supporter of the Assistant Clergy Fund and helped largely to restore the church. His

death will leave a gap in Letherhead that it will be very hard to fill.'

Abraham's widow Margaret lived at



*Left:
Winifred
Dixon
with her
pet dogs.*

Cherkley Court, also a great donor to local causes. She died of heart failure on 29 October 1909 aged 88. Their daughters Letitia and Winifred too were actively engaged in the life of the Letherhead Institute. They both moved away after their mother's death, Letitia dying in 1916. Ada Mary was an invalid for nearly all of her life but died in 1922. She was buried near her parents at Leatherhead Parish Church. Winifred died in 1935. Their youngest sister Edith was 85 in 1938 when she wrote her memoirs, providing an intimate glimpse of the Dixon family way of life.

Cherkley Court was acquired in 1910 by the Canadian entrepreneur William Maxwell Aitken (1879-1964), who would later become the first Lord Beaverbrook. Having recently moved to Britain, it is said that while out driving with his friend Rudyard Kipling he noticed a for sale sign at Cherkley Court and bought it after a single inspection for £30,000. In 1911 he spent another £10,000 on improvements including electricity, heating, a swimming pool and one of the UK's first home cinemas. It remained one of his homes for the rest of his life although he was mainly there for weekends only in the earlier years and later on he spent more time at his other houses in the south of France and the Bahamas.

He could hardly have been a greater contrast with the greatly loved Abraham Dixon. The families too were very different.

Helping local causes was never a priority. A millionaire by the age of 30, Aitken had married his first wife, Gladys Henderson Drury (1888-1927) - the very young daughter of a major general - in 1906 and deciding that business opportunities were greater in the mother country than his native Canada, he migrated to Britain in 1910 and befriended the Conservative Party leader, Andrew Bonar Law. The next year he won a seat in Parliament and immediately made enemies, arousing widespread suspicions among his fellow MPs which were not laid to rest when he was also given a knighthood.

He bought the London *Evening Standard* newspaper in 1911, the *Daily Express* in 1916, and founded the *Sunday Express* in 1918. He would use these as his power base for the next half century, building them into populist propaganda vehicles and claiming for the daily the world's largest circulation of any paper. Admirers called him the 'First Baron of Fleet Street'. In 1916 too he



Left: Everything changed after newspaper tycoon Max Aitken arrived.

helped to oust the Prime Minister, Herbert Asquith, and would be rewarded with a peerage in 1917 by the resulting coalition government led by David Lloyd George. He was briefly in the Cabinet as Minister of Information during World War 1, successfully bringing large groups of Americans

to visit the front but after he resigned for health reasons the ministry was promptly closed down.

The *Daily Express* was one of the first papers to replace adverts on the front page with news and its other specialities were gossip, sports, and women's features. It fought a vigorous circulation war with other populist newspapers and Beaverbrook used it to pursue his own personal campaigns for British imperial trade preference and appeasement of the Nazis during the 1930s.

Cherkley Court had ticker-tape machines with the latest news continually arriving, banks of telephones ringing and sound scribing machines. When he was there, Beaverbrook could be found amidst it all, firing off memorandums, leaking gossip, and barking orders down the telephone to terrified editors.

He was friendly with Winston Churchill who made him Minister of Aircraft Production from May 1940 and he played a major role in mobilising industrial resources during the Battle of Britain. That year he installed what was called *Radio Bungalow* at Cherkley to



*Above: Beaverbrook with Sir Winston Churchill.
Left: With his son, Max Aitken junior, the wartime RAF pilot.*



communicate with mainland Europe. It is claimed the house was used as an alternative war bunker, occasionally hosting the entire War Cabinet. Despite his

support for Churchill, Beaverbrook was also quick to point out his character flaws such as short temper and dogmatism and he also developed a particular loathing for Churchill's deputy in the war coalition, the unassuming Labour leader Clement Attlee.

Beaverbrook resigned in 1941 and after a spell as Minister of Supply in which he worked to increase tank and gun production to help Britain's beleaguered Russian ally, spent the rest of the war moving in and out of government as his health and preferences allowed, trying to negotiate aviation and oil supply issues with the Americans.

Cherkley Court itself was not immune to disaster during the war. In 1942 another fire at the house caused Beaverbrook to move to Wellbottom Cottage temporarily and in 1944 a V1 fell on the estate,

narrowly missing the building. After the war he concentrated on running his newspaper empire but also held a Canadian academic post and wrote books on political and military history.

Beaverbrook owned Cherkley Court for over 50 years. His wife Gladys died in 1927. They had three children, the eldest their daughter Janet Gladys Aitken (1908-1988). Their first son was Max Aitken junior (1910-1985), an RAF fighter pilot in World War 2 who briefly inherited the baronetcy on his father's death but quickly gave it up. Their second son Peter Rudyard Aitken (1912-1947) died age 35 in hospital in Stockholm after falling off a yacht.

A widower for decades, Beaverbrook attracted many famous weekend guests including writers like Rebecca West, H. G. Wells and Rudyard Kipling as well as both like-minded politicians and those who disagreed with his views. The house also became notorious for his hosting of actresses and chorus girls and he was noted for showing little respect for women or indeed anyone else. In 1963 he remarried - Marcia Anastasia Christoforides (1910-1994), the widow of a fellow Canadian industrialist - but he kept a mistress too.

His 85th birthday was marked by a dinner at London's Dorchester Hotel given by fellow newspaper magnate Lord Thomson of Fleet. He died at Cherkley just two weeks later. His obituary on 9 June 1964 said his death 'removes a personality held in affection and vehemently criticized for more than 50 years'. He was described as 'a natural and disarming self-publicist' whom old age had changed relatively little in appearance and not at all in 'his relish for power and his sense of fun'.

But fun was not something for which he was generally remembered in Leatherhead. Historical interviews with Leatherhead residents who remembered Beaverbrook are consistent. He was unpopular. In 1982 Thomas Henry Lewis (1904-1996) whose father had worked in Venthams Motor Garage when it was still building horse-drawn carriages, recalled the entire period of Beaverbrook's residence at Cherkley Court. The atmosphere there under the Dixon family had been happy but in contrast he said: 'Beaverbrook was a businessman, pure and simple, didn't do much for Leatherhead, nothing at all actually.'

Leatherhead plumber Arthur Rapley (1909-1989) had a more

personal reason to resent Beaverbrook. Son of a head gardener at Vale Lodge, he was injured by the magnate's car one icy day at the top of Gimcrack Hill. Asked if Beaverbrook had paid him any compensation he continued: 'No. I lost the job through it. I was laid up about three weeks. It was a plumbing job on a house. Doing the whole house and of course I lost the job.'

Leonard Rogers (1906-1988) worked briefly as a footman for Beaverbrook at Cherkley Court. He was not happy. After just five months he followed his predecessor in swapping domestic service to become a bus conductor. He said: 'Beaverbrook only had half a staff up there [at Cherkley Court]. He had a full staff in London. But he only come down at weekends and he used to bring staff down from London. Weekends [were for entertainment]. Actors, actresses. He was very fond of actresses, Lord Beaverbrook. He had Tallulah Bankhead there once, I remember that. They were playing billiards one night, Beaverbrook and another bloke, so that they could entertain one of the actresses.'

Cherkley Court passed to Max junior some time before Beaverbrook's death. His stepmother, the second Lady Beaverbrook, spent only the summer months there during the horse racing season. The estate was sold after her death in 1994. However, the new owner was the Beaverbrook Foundation, a charity set up in 1954 by the man himself to support causes such as preserving heritage buildings.

By 2002 the house had fallen into disrepair but was restored over seven years with the aim of allowing public access. In April 2007 the 16 acres of formal gardens and walks were opened to paying visitors. Yet just over two years later it was decided that this was not profitable and the house closed again in 2010.

A century after coming into the Aitken family, Cherkley went on the market in September 2010 at £20 million. It was bought by the firm Longshot Cherkley Court which aimed to bring the estate 'back to life whilst retaining its special character'. This would involve turning the house into a hotel and the grounds into an exclusive golf course. The Campaign for Rural England and other local interests objected that the project would have an adverse effect on an area of outstanding natural beauty and that Surrey did not need another golf course. However, in 2012 Mole Valley's planning

committee concluded that the opportunity to safeguard the historic building and protect the integrity of the estate, together with the jobs to be expected from the hotel, health club and spa, golf course and the woodland management, outweighed the strong local opposition. In September 2012, planning permission was granted.



Above: Media marketing of the new hotel, stressing celebrity.

It was not quite the end of the story. In August 2013 campaigners won a High Court appeal overturning the council's decision. The Council for the Protection of Rural England said it expected the developer to repair damage caused by work already started. But in May 2014, the Court of Appeal reversed the High Court decision and in October, the campaigners' request for a second judicial review was rejected by a High Court judge. The battle was over.

Development work recommenced and in 2017, while the house itself was still being completed as a hotel, the Garden House Restaurant and Garden Cottage opened in the grounds of what is now simply called Beaverbrook, for reserved bookings only. The hotel opened that summer with its own gourmet restaurant. Reviews were mainly very good but the company's determined exclusivity puts it in a very high price bracket and the golf course which caused such upheaval - both literally and metaphorically - is said to require a personal invitation before it can be used by anyone.

The onetime home of the Dixons and the Aitkens is now somewhere to stay for a luxury weekend. Attractions include an Art Deco cinema where Beaverbrook and Churchill watched wartime Pathe newsreels. The library is filled with first edition books. The living room is decorated with costly artworks and vintage satirical cartoons. The hotel has 18 guest rooms named after Lord Beaverbrook's own guests including H G Wells, Rudyard Kipling, Charlie Chaplin, Ian Fleming, Elizabeth Taylor, and of course Churchill himself.

FEATURE

THE SELF-BUILD TROJANS

In the early 1950s a group of civil servants and part-time craftsmen built an entire new housing estate beside Leatherhead in their spare time. It was a tightly controlled project which provided new homes for those involved during the post-war years. RON BATCHELOR is the last group member still living there.



Age 24, I met a colleague I used to row with in St Paul's School. We got talking and he said he had just joined a self-build in Leatherhead. Why don't you come along, he said. Didn't you learn to do bricklaying as part of your training with the Bevin Scheme? We can get you in. We only go there on Saturday and Sunday. Come along on Sunday and get more information.

Above: Ron, bricklaying on site during his spare time.

So I came on to the site. They had started the self-build but there were not any houses, just the foundations of one and a lot of people milling about. I was introduced by my friend. They said what's your trade? I said I'm a structural engineer. They said we are looking for a bricklayer. Would you like to join. I said yes. They said put up £30 and come along. So the following week I came with my tools and took it from there.

The Canadians had had the site from just before D-Day and there were four Nissen huts. One we used as a lock-up for tools, another as a place to eat. Another became a plumbers' workshop and another a carpenters' workshop. The group started in Chessington and was called the Trojan Self-Build Group because the telephone exchange there was known as Trojan. It started with over 50 civil servants but they quickly realised that they needed craftsmen so they began to recruit until it was rather overloaded. Before they built anything, they had to start cutting down trees because there were no roads,

nothing. Just a site to the south of Leatherhead on top of a hill. Yarm House was pulled down between the first and second world wars and the half road to it was Fir Tree Road. Yarm Way was just one or two houses at the top and Clinton Road a gravel road ending at the bottom.

Lots of civil servants found it was too heavy work. They were required to come in the morning at 8am and work till 6pm with a break for meals. It quickly depleted the membership and they were replaced by craftsmen. We started with 34 people building 34 houses. Then it settled down and we started to build 38 houses. Some people left while we were building and as we got further down towards completion more left so we ended up with 32 of us.

We used to work from 8am. At 10am we would have a quarter of an hour tea break and then we worked right through to 1pm for a one-hour break. Then we worked through to 4pm, had a quarter of an hour break and went on to 6pm, in the winter with lights and in the summer until 9pm or 10pm.

We were in two groups. One was members who had served in the forces in the war. The other half of us were young apprentices, many of whom had been in the Bevin Scheme and we learned our craft there. As we went on we got more equipment to meet the needs. We acquired scaffolding for one building. We had to find a building society that would put up the money as well as finding a piece of land. The land we eventually bought was from Major Howard who sold it in three parts. The first at the bottom of the hill in Yarm Court Road. The second was further up the hill and the third was Yarm Close. There were no roads, just a field. Trees all over the place. Yarm House had been pulled down but the orchard was still standing there.

They had the foundations in when I joined at the first house. We were replacements for people who found they were too old, not strong enough, or felt they had something else better to do with their time. They didn't have the vision. It was the vision we had.

It was started by a chap called Tom Wigman. He was in the army during the war and never forgot he was a captain. He was the eldest and we couldn't throw him out because he had started it. But he was useful and everybody had their job to do.

At the beginning everybody had to lend a hand doing everything. So if you were a carpenter and there was no carpentry to be done, you were laying concrete foundations, you were digging trenches or whatever. Fortunately for me bricklaying came into force early on. We laid the first foundation by hand. Everything was done by hand. We had no equipment other than two cement mixers.

The other building societies just laughed at us but the one that took us up was the Co-Operative Building Society. They said we will give you a number of houses to choose from and you are to build two types only, not a mixture. They were A, B, C and D. We chose A and D, one the traditional square type house and the other a mansard which I now live in.

We went to Major Howard and bought the first parcel of land. We then were able to build foundations up to damp proof course level. The building society surveyor came along and said yes, that's worth so much. They gave us the money for the value of the building which was more than the cost of the materials so we were in credit, slightly. We then built another foundation and got more credit. They paid us for the work and were sure to get their money back because the foundations were there while the land was ours.

We were working really for the building society with the idea that on completion we would take out the mortgage. Then we built from foundations to the first floor and we got another amount for that. We had a minimum amount of scaffolding. Health and safety were completely out of the window! We didn't have enough equipment. Eventually we progressed and it was first floor to roof on.

When each house was finished we drew lots to what house you would be in. The building society wanted us to build detached houses but it would have cost us more time and the women in the group who were married with children were anxious to be housed because they were living just after the war in what they called half-way houses. Sheltered accommodation and pretty poor conditions.

So the prospect of having a house as soon as possible swayed the committee and the vote went for semi-detached houses. We regretted it later because we had had the opportunity to build detached houses. I know it would have taken longer but look what we built and the value of them today.



Top: Yarm Close in 1954. Above: As it appears today.

As a house was finished the person moved in. They paid rent but this would be more than what the mortgage would be and it wasn't their house. The house belonged to us and we belonged to the building society. So if they didn't pay we would suffer.

Everybody worked hard. Normally if you work for a company and someone doesn't work hard you don't worry about it. But when it is your own livelihood, your own money and your own labour, we could not afford to fail. A letter was written to us all to give to a doctor saying that under no circumstances were they to give us time off unless it was medically important. We were chasing each other.

As soon as the foundations were done, four bricklayers - I was one of them - would pounce on the work to start building. Then when we got to damp proof course level the concreters would come and concrete the floor right over. Then immediately we would go on to the next level. The carpenters would come in and put in the flooring and then go back to digging trenches as we had to put drains in.

The civil servants got used to being fit. Also many of us were Freemasons so we bonded together and if you were shirking or if you were late you had to pay a pound for one hour. In those days people only earned 3s/6d an hour so a pound was a lot. We signed in on the book and had a timekeeper who worked like everybody else. All the book work was done by the civil servants in government time or at home.

When you moved in you were immediately required to work Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, coming out in the evening. Bricklayers generally work in pairs, one on one side of the wall, one on the other. We had four bricklayers with one bricklayer doing the drains all the time.

Most of us came from London and we all caught the same train down and the same one back. We did not tell anybody what we were doing but the stationmaster got to know us because we all turned up on the empty station about 7.20am on Saturday and Sunday. We would all disappear and later a great crowd of people would return to the station.

The stationmaster allowed us to use one of the sheds. When we had anything coming down from London, any building materials such as baths and hand basins, he would get his people to put it in their shed. We bought a hand-cart and pulled it up the hill all the way from the station. We were beasts of burden because everything was done by hand. Today there is so much equipment in the building



*Above:
Ron Batchelor in
2018, still living in
Yarm Close with his
wife Thelma.
Right :Their
wedding day in
1970.*



industry that you have people laying bricks with gloves on.

We laid 2000 bricks a day. Now they do 300 and go home. It shows you how hard we worked to build all these houses. Because more and more people moved in we made one of the civil servants, on top of his normal job, a ‘knocker upper’. He would go round and knock on everybody’s door who lived here to be up on site ready to be on the job. No over-sleeping or anything like that. Many of them opened up their houses when they moved in for somebody to sleep there. One chap didn’t move in so we used his house like a hostel.

Underneath the carpets here we have wood block flooring. The quality of the work is good and the houses are now 60 years old and I feel very proud that they think they are good enough to extend. It should have gone on for two years but it went on for three.

Len Oakes was the last one. We used to joke with him, saying you’ll be coming out here by the Underground. The Northern Line will be out here by then! He was the last one to move in. One chap had to move out again because his wife divorced him. She found

somebody else because he was always away at weekends!

In those days property did not go up in value. It went down. The war was over, there was shortage of property but nobody had any money. So there wasn't this greed for land. Developers were not developing. It was too far out of London. Too far out of Leatherhead, and no prospects. No road, no drainage, no electricity, no gas. We played the gas company against the electricity companies and said we would put all gas cookers in. Then we went to the electricity companies and said vice versa so we got them in the end to connect up the road. It was in Fir Tree Road and they connected us up there.

When we finished the last house we started building the garages. When we finished those we built the front walls. Just before we built the front walls we laid out the kerb for the road. One of our chaps was a surveyor. We laid the kerbs out all the way round.

Before we wound up the group we sold the houses. They were sold for £3500 but the mortgage was only £1200 so there was a big profit. Everybody lived in their houses for several years but people have gradually moved or died. A couple of years ago the chap opposite was the last one to move. I am the last standing member of the Self-Build Trojans.

INTERVIEW FEATURE

LEATHERHEAD'S PRICELESS HISTORIC CHURCH

Edwin Taylor (1893-1983), clerk to the vestry of Leatherhead Parish Church, was 88 years old when Edwina Vardey interviewed him in June 1981. The first part of that discussion appeared in the September 2018 Newsletter. Here in Part 2, is more from his account of the structure and history of the church, reading from wardens' accounts over the centuries.

Edwina Vardey: The side chapels are called chantry chapels and were additions in medieval times.

Edwin Taylor: They are now the transepts of course but in the 14th century, a chapel was built by the lord of Thorncroft, a descendant of the Norman de Clare family. It was built for the deposit of his own remains and those of his descendants, as was customary.

This chapel was destroyed in the 15th century when the transepts

were made. There was another chapel on the south side which belonged to Pachenesham, the other great manor. There were two great manors in Leatherhead, Pachenesham and Thorncroft. The chapel on the north side belonged to the lords of Pachenesham who also owned the patch of ground on which The Mansion now stands. They had a proprietary interest in this chapel and it was not until the middle of the 19th century - 1855 I think - that they eventually gave over to the vicar and church wardens the use and ownership of the north transept which had been the chantry chapel.

It had at one time belonged to the Aperdele family. There was an inscription on the old screen which divided it from the chancel in Latin which said that it was built by Roger de Aperdele in 1300. This was put up by [Rev] James Dallaway, one of his alterations.

In 1190, owing to the need for more altars for various saints and more room for processions, they decided to construct the aisles. The manner of work was the usual one in which the services could not be interrupted during the day so lodges were built outside the walls so the masons could work without interrupting the services.

First, the pillars, round and octagonal, were built and then the brickwork between them was removed. We had the aisles complete, north and south. There is a very interesting carved capital on the eastern column, a thing of great beauty, probably done by a mason as a thanks offering or a celebration of his visit to Canterbury or the Holy Land. That is the north-eastern pillar.

Edwina Vardey: What about the church monuments?

Edwin Taylor: One of the most prominent is the inscription and funeral helmet of Robert Gardener, lord of the manor of Thorncroft in the time of Elizabeth I. He was an official of the court as were all of the incumbents of the church in early times. They very often didn't appear in Leatherhead at all and had vicars who worked for them. Robert Gardener was Sergeant of the Wine Cellar, quite a high office to Elizabeth I and his inscription is on brass on the south respond of the chapel and the chancel arch. It was composed by Churchyard, the Poet Laureate of Queen Elizabeth I. It is in Elizabethan English.

*'Here ffryndly Robert Gardener lyes. Well born of right good race.
Who served in court with credit still in worthy realm and place.*

*Chief Sergeant of the Cellar long where he did his duty show.
 With good regard to all decrees as far as power might go.
 He passed his youth in such good fame he came to aged years.
 And thereby purchased honest name as by report appears.
 A friend where any cause be found, courteous unto all.
 Of merry mood and pleasant speech, however haps did fall.
 Fair children to furnish forth a table round he had
 With still a wife most matron-like to make a man full glad.
 Prepared to die long ere his day which argues great good mind
 And told us in the other world what hope he had to find.
 We leave him where he looked to be, Our Lord receive his spreet
 With peace and rest in Heydram's breast
 Where we at length may meet.'*

Of Churchyard himself: *'He departed out of this transitory world the tenth day of November Anno Domini 1571 being then of the age of 73 years.'*

Edwina Vardey: A good age for that era.

Edwin Taylor: It certainly was and we are very proud of it. Over the inscription is his funeral helmet, crowned with ram's head and horns. That I think is the greatest monument. There are three ledger stones in the chancel, inscribed gravestones. The central one is to Richard Dalton Esq, Sergeant of His Majesty's Wine Cellar, who died on 4 October 1681 in his 65th year. Above are his arms. There is also a stone to Laud Cordell Esq, one of the pages to His Majesty's Bedchamber who departed this life March 12, 1685 in the 36th year of his age.

Edwina Vardey: A Stuart courtier.

Edwin Taylor: To Charles II. The remaining stone in the chancel is to Mary, daughter and co-heiress of Peter Whitcomb of Brackton in Essex, wife of the Hon Thomas Paget, Brigadier General of His Majesty's forces and Groom of the Bedchamber. She died on 15 February 1740. Her husband survived her by two months and died at Mahon in the island of Minorca where he was buried with all the military honour due to his rank. The Hon Thomas Paget was grand-

son of William, fifth Baron Paget who purchased the manor of Parham Pageter or Randalls in 1736. He has a ledger stone.

On the east wall of the porch is a stone with very beautiful lettering:
'In memory of Mrs Diana Turner, granddaughter of Cecil, Earl of Salisbury and relict of John Turner Esq of Stoke Rochford in Lincolnshire, who departed this life March 7, 1736 aged 72 years. Robert, first Earl of Salisbury was the second surviving son of William Cecil, Lord Burleigh, Lord Treasurer to Queen Elizabeth. Mrs Turner was a relative of the Dacres who lived in the fine timber-framed house now pulled down near the church and was staying with them at the time of her death and at her request was buried in the porch where her chair used to stand during service time, she being an invalid.'

The Dacres family lived in a fine Elizabethan house which stood on what is now the gardens in front of the west tower of the church and was pulled down a few years ago.

If you look at the chancel on the north side, on the outside, you can see the remains of a doorway and above it a small window. At one time this was thought to be the position of an Anchorite cell because the doorway into the chancel was the doorway in which he went in to take his sacraments. But with later investigation it was decided that Anchorites were bricked up permanently and died in their cells.

When they died the walls and the door were knocked down and they were buried underneath. An archaeological investigation was done in 1906 and it was found that the room - eight foot square - was the Sacristan's place of abode. He lived above it and the little window, the stones of which can be seen outside, was so that he could sleep in his bed and keep a watch on the light in the picks (sic) above the high altar.

Edwina Vardey: So it never went out.

Edwin Taylor: No. That was his job. Because people gave bushells of wheat in their wills and all sorts of things.

The final part of Edwina's interview of Edwin Taylor will appear in another *Newsletter* later this year.

ARCHAEOLOGY REPORT

MAKING HISTORY by NIGEL BOND

Leatherhead Parish Church's *Making History* project is providing the opportunity to study parts of the church otherwise hidden from view. As required by its authorities (the Faculty), the church has employed professional archaeologists to monitor the work as it proceeds and intervene where necessary to examine and advise on protection of any significant finds.

Project manager John Andrews has also kindly agreed to keep me, your Archaeology Secretary, informed of developments and invite me in to observe the professionals at work and examine their discoveries.

The first significant development was late last year when work in the north and south transepts exposed brick family vaults and a fine memorial stone. The two vaults in the north transept belong to the Gore and Spicer families with some of their names recorded on memorial plaques on the transept walls. These vaults were known to be there and the Spicer vault had been exposed in 1989 after a fire.

The L&DLHS *Proceedings Volume 5, No 3* said: 'Beneath the fire-damaged boards of the north transept two interesting discoveries were made. One was a fine memorial tablet dedicated to Mrs Henry Gore of The Mansion who died in 1752. The other was a vault containing the coffins of three members of the Spicer family, also of The Mansion. These were of William, Henry Spicer, Maria Charlotte, his wife and Charlotte Amelia Carvick, their daughter. They died in 1841, 1855 and 1886 respectively.'

However, the current work also made a new discovery – a lead coffin. Frank Haslam and I were able to watch as the professional archaeologist carefully trowelled around the coffin to define the cut lines of the grave in which it had been placed. He then gently picked and brushed away the deposits covering the coffin to expose an ornate panel with the inscription '*Mrs. Catherine Wade, wife of William Wade Esquire – Died 26th April 1787 age 52 years*'.

An on-the-spot Internet search quickly found reference to her on the National Archives website in a conveyance dated 1808. The



*Far left: The inscription reads: 'Mrs. Catherine Wade, wife of William Wade Esquire – Died 26th April 1787 age 52 years.' Left: Portrait of William Wade Esq. (From *Leatherhead: A History* by Edwina Vardey. 1988, 2001.)*

sellers in this transaction were 'William Wade Esq., of Leatherhead, Surrey and Henry Gore Wade, Lieut. Colonel of 25th Regiment of Light Dragoons now stationed in East Indies (only grandson and heir of Henry Gore Esq. of Leatherhead, deceased, and son and heir of Catherine Wade, deceased daughter and heir of said Henry Gore and late wife of William Wade).'

On the wall overlooking Catherine's grave is her father Henry Gore's memorial: born 18 October 1699, died 11 June 1777 '*whose charity was not confind but lov'd and was belov'd by all mankind.*'

Frank Haslam, church archivist as well as Society membership secretary, is in touch with a descendant of this Gore family and plans to write about their research in a later *Newsletter* edition.

Separately, Frank has recommended a book, *Hidden Histories* by May-Anne Ochota 'for the times when you're driving past a bumpy field and wonder why is it like that, or walking between two lines of grand trees and wonder when and why they were planted, or even when you see a brown heritage sign pointing to a mystery tumulus'.

This book, in our local library, is entertaining but factually rigorous, he says, and 'will help you decode the story of our landscape and spot the human activities that have shaped our country. Photographs and diagrams point out specific details and typical examples help you get your eye in and understand what you're looking at.'

FEATURE

A SURREY TALE OF TUDOR CONSCRIPTION by BRIAN BOUCHARD

In the spring of 1539, Sir Edward Aston, Lord of Ashtead Manor, ordered some of his Surrey tenants to prepare to serve in a contingent of soldiers he was sending to war. Other men had been similarly ordered at his principal residence of Tixall in the Hundred of Pirehill, Staffordshire.

Yet Aston found that the same Surrey men had already received a similar summons from Sir Matthew Browne of Betchworth Castle. It is thought Browne could have been appointed ‘steward’ of the manor of Ashtead to exercise local oversight on Aston’s behalf and consequently included the tenants concerned alongside others under his authority. He had either forgotten that other men’s tenants should be left with their masters or was unaware of Aston’s order in Staffordshire.

The confusion arose following steps taken by Thomas Cromwell toward national military reform by proposing his *‘Articles for the ordering of the Manrede of this the King’s realm, and for the good advancement of justice and preservation of the common weal of the same with constant threats of insurrection and foreign invasion on the horizon.’*

In Tudor times the vassals or dependants whom a landowner had the right to muster in time of war were called the ‘manred’, a word derived from Saxon, meaning to make man-rent or do homage. Their service lay at the heart of the quasi-feudal military system of King Henry VIII’s reign (1509-1547).

Each village in England was responsible for maintaining arms necessary to defend itself. This was known as the furnishing of harness. Muster commissioners would inspect the harness, which would include long bows, bills, salets (helmets), brigandines (torso armour) and gorgets (neck and shoulder protectors) and ensure that every man was also assessed with his quota of the cost. The muster roll records who owned the arms, along with value of land (*valor terr et tent*) or goods (*valor bonorum*) held by the other residents of the village who were liable to provide financial support if necessary.

The commissioners appointed to make preparations for war in 1539 were largely the same men responsible for maintenance of peace in the shires. Troops were mustered by county but selectively from particular Hundreds. The Surrey Muster for 1539 was conducted by Browne, Robert Wyntreshull and John Skynner but only covered Blackheath, Tandridge, Reigate, Wotton and Wallington.

Sir Edward Aston had inherited Ashtead Manor from his father in 1522 but granted the site to Thomas Frank(e) and his wife Agnes for their lives in consideration of a yearly payment of 23 marks by an indenture dated 18 November 1526.

He wrote to Cromwell requesting *'that I may have my owne teynauntes to do servyce unto the kynges hyghtnes with me, as in tymes past they have downe'*. As it happened, however, the men were not mobilised on this occasion anyway and in 1543 Aston granted the manor of Ashtead to the king in exchange for other lands.

MARGARET JOYES MAYELL AND FAMILY

In the December *Newsletter*, Chairman John Rowley asked whether anyone knew anything of Margaret Joyes Mayell who had left a donation of £3500 to the Society. Her cousin Jackie Cunningham (née Wild) replied with some explanatory details about the family.

Margaret was born in Leatherhead Hospital in 1932 and lived at 5 St John's Avenue until 1965, her parents' home since 1926. Her father Frank Mayell OBE, CBE was a distinguished civil servant who served as private secretary to the Metropolitan Police Commissioner and the Lord Chancellor, was Deputy Sergeant-at-Arms in the House of Lords, Head of Courts Branch, and also practised as a barrister in the Inner Temple.

Margaret's mother Dorothy, an early L&DLHS member, was also born in Leatherhead in 1892, daughter of Arthur Wild who owned the bakery where the former Barton's Bookshop now stands.

Margaret herself attended The Lindens School in Park Rise and later had a distinguished career in medicine, working with the disabled. She was Nottingham City Hospital's first consultant paediatric surgeon. Although the family was buried at Leatherhead Parish Church where her father had been a churchwarden, Margaret was interred at Nottingham. The road Mayell Close, Leatherhead, keeps the name alive.

BOOK REVIEW

by ANNE FRASER

MEMORIES OF ASHTEAD IN WORLD WAR TWO

‘Nothing is ever really lost to us as long as we remember it.’¹ This is the story of the village of Ashtead during World War 2. Oral histories, letters, photographs and documentary evidence flesh out the effects of conflict during this dark period of history.

Time marches on and the recording of first-hand accounts through the eyes of those who were children at the time is invaluable. Thankfully, the authors have painstakingly collected interviews and documentation over the last five years to ensure that these memories don’t stay silent. The book is thoughtfully collated and clearly divided into sections for different aspects of life at the time. The first concerns the start of the war and the narrative moves on through areas such as food, military service and visiting Canadian troops, before coming to the end of the war and ... bananas!

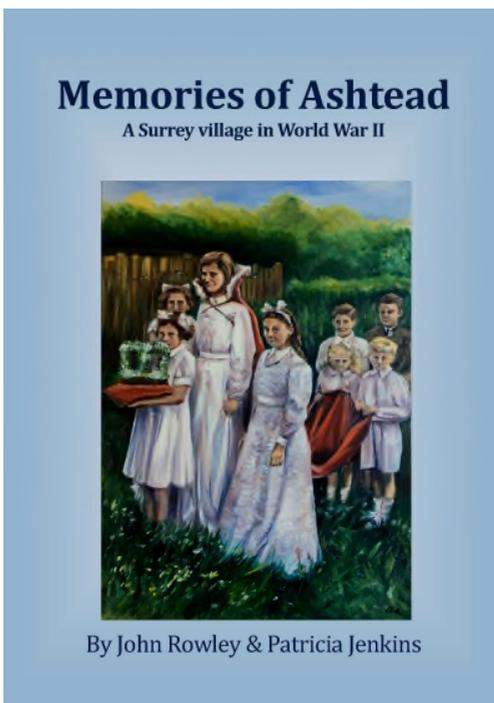
Our senses are invoked. One witness recalls the terror of an eerie silence when the roaring engine of a V1 flying bomb would suddenly cut out. You soon learned what that meant. Later, there are photographs of homes in Gaywood Road after a direct hit from a landmine. The fronts of the houses give no clue but if you look beyond at the next image, you will see the terrible destruction that would devastate lives and change families forever.

What comes across is the resilience and resourcefulness of the inhabitants. A recipe for a pie using economical ingredients is detailed. I can almost believe it tasted delicious! Entertainment took minds from troubles. This included sporting activities such as cricket at the City of London Freemen’s School and never mind the small matter of sheep droppings on the pitch! While times were often harrowing, there is a lovely current of humour running through the book as people recall friendships and family life with great fondness.

The chapter on war brides is poignant but life-affirming. The young bride, Marjorie Ashwood aged 19 and a barmaid at the *Leg of Mutton and Cauliflower*, married her Canadian sweetheart,

Andy Stewart in 1942. They set up home in Montreal before returning to Ashtead in 1947. A wedding photo shows the happy couple with the bride in white, carrying a beautiful bouquet.

Documentary evidence is fascinating and gives further figures and statistics to accompany the stories. The appendices at the end of the book list categories such as military service as well as air raid warnings, of which there were 30 in the first week of October 1940 alone. There is also a long list of contributors, and it must have been a real



joy to listen as they recalled events of over 70 years ago.

The authors have successfully managed to pull all of these resources into a coherent, lively, comprehensive testament to the lives of people concerned, their sense of community and their bravery at this most challenging of times.

Copies of *Memories of Ashtead in World War 2* are available from the following outlets in Ashtead: Michael Everett Estate Agents, The Street; Bumbles, The Street; Post Office, The Street and Post Office, Barnett Wood Lane. Also from the Wishing Well in Great Bookham. Additional copies can also be supplied by directly contacting John Rowley and will be among the many publications on sale at the Leatherhead Museum in Hampton Cottage when it reopens in April after the current refurbishment.

¹*Lucy Montgomery, The Story Girl. (Quiet Vision Pub. 2000. First published 1911)*

LEATHERHEAD & DISTRICT LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Registered Charity No 1175119

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Telephone: 01372 386348 Email: museum@leatherheadhistory.org

Website: www.leatherheadhistory.org

Online Archive: www.ldlhsarchive.co.uk

Monthly meetings at the Letherhead Institute every third Friday of the month between September and May, 7.30pm for 8pm.
Museum (Hampton Cottage): Open from April, Thursdays and Fridays 1pm - 4pm and Saturdays 10am-4pm + Sunday 16 September 10am-4pm

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Alan Pooley

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Nigel Thompson

Historical Enquiry Service

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

Kirby Library (Letherhead Institute)

The Library is open Tuesdays, Thursdays, Fridays 10am-12.30pm. Exceptionally, arrangements may be made to use it at other times by applying to the Librarian.

2019 L&DLHS MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTIONS NOW DUE

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*Right:
Barton's
Bookshop,
one of
Leatherhead's
best loved
landmarks,
which closed
for business in
February.
See Page 8 for
our lecture
report on its
history.*



DORKING CONCERTGOERS AT DORKING HALLS

Emily Sun Violin & **Jennifer Hughes** Piano

Saturday, 30 March 2019 Martineau Hall 7.30pm

Beethoven Violin Sonata No.8 in G major; **Poulenc** Violin Sonata

Strauss Violin Sonata; **Saint-Saëns** Intro & Rondo Capriccioso

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James Meldrum Clarinet & **Maciej Kassak** Piano

Saturday, 11 May 2019 Martineau Hall 7.30pm

Gershwin Three Preludes; **Robert Muczynski** Time Pieces;

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La Traviata di Verdi; **Debussy** Premiere Rhapsodie;

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Poulenc Clarinet Sonata

The piano for this recital sponsored by Chris & Sue Pratt

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