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LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY.

LEATHERHEAD  
& DISTRICT  
LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY



PROCEEDINGS VOL 6 NO 2

1998

P 29-52

## SECRETARIAL NOTES

The following Lectures and Visits were arranged during 1998:

January 16th	Lecture: 'The Privy Garden of William III at Hampton Court', by Anthony Boulding.
February 20th	Lecture: 'Surrey Defences against Hitler', by Chris Sheppard.
March 20th	Lecture: 'The History of London's Docklands', by Lesley Broster.
April 17th	The 51st Annual General Meeting, followed by a talk on 'Parry Thomas, Babs, and the Land Speed Record', by Gordon Knowles.
May 15th	Lecture: 'The History of <i>H.M.S. Warrior</i> ' by Richard Muir.
June 4th	Visit to the Privy Garden, Hampton Court, organised by Linda Heath.
July 11th	Visit to London's Docklands, led by Lesley Broster.
August 5th	Visit to Shere, led by Elizabeth Rich, Curator of the Shere Museum.
September 5th	Visit, with the Surrey Archaeological Society, to Portsmouth Flagship Trust, organised by Alan Gillies.
September 18th	Lecture: 'The Houses of Nonsuch', by Gerald Smith.
October 16th	Dallaway Lecture: 'The Archaeology of the Thames' by Mike Webber.
November 20th	Lecture: 'Damnable Inventions—paper and gunpowder making in the Sittingbourne Valley', by Professor Alan Crocker.
December 18th	'Christmas Miscellany', organised by Gordon Knowles.

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No. 1 of Volume 6 of the *Proceedings* was issued in February 1998.

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### FIFTY-FIRST ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

*Held at the Lethered Institute, 17 April 1998*

The Report of the Executive Committee and the Accounts for the year 1997 were adopted. The Committee elected to serve until the next AGM and the Officers of the Society are shown below.

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### OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE FOR THE YEAR 1998–9

<i>President:</i>	DR DEREK RENN, C.B.E., F.S.A.
<i>Past President:</i>	STEPHEN FORTESCUE
<i>Vice President:</i>	LINDA HEATH
<i>Chairman:</i>	PETER TARPLEE
<i>Secretary:</i>	THELMA LUCAS
<i>Membership Secretary:</i>	JACK BARKER
<i>Treasurer:</i>	PETER STARLING
<i>Editor:</i>	JACK STUTTARD
<i>Museum Curator:</i>	Vacant
<i>Treasurer, Museum Trust Fund:</i>	JOHN BULL
<i>Sales Secretary:</i>	DRUSILLA ATTWOOD (Part Year)
<i>Archaeology Secretary:</i>	ERNEST CROSSLAND, I.S.O.
<i>Lecture Secretary:</i>	GORDON KNOWLES
<i>Librarian:</i>	GWEN HOAD
<i>Records Secretary:</i>	BRIAN GODFREY
<i>Committee Members:</i>	DR BARRY COX ANTHONY GORDON

# Leatherhead and District Local History Society

## PROCEEDINGS

Vol. 6, No. 2

1998

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## OCCASIONAL NOTES

### *HISTORY OF FETCHAM*

This book, published in October 1998, is the only available history of Fetcham and is similar in content and style to those published in the last few years on Leatherhead and Ashted. It covers the history of Fetcham from pre-historic times to the present day, with the most detailed sections on the 19th and 20th centuries. In addition, there are separate chapters on Fetcham Parish Church, the growth of population through the ages, schools and sporting activities; a final chapter looks at the old houses, cottages and farms in and around the village. The contributors were specialists in their fields and the book was edited by Jack Stuttard. As many as thirty-seven half-tone photographs illustrate the text which is well printed. The handsome cover, including a fine colour photograph of the parish church, adds to the attraction of the book.

Many articles in the *Proceedings*, especially those by the late John Lewarne, were used in the compilation of the book, but a wide circle of libraries and learned societies had also to be consulted. No book of this kind can include references to all available source material and it is hoped that the present publication will be a stimulus to further work on Fetcham.

The *History of Fetcham* was launched at a reception held in the Fetcham Village Hall on 30th October. This was attended by many members of the History Society and by representatives of local Schools, Societies and Associations.

PETER TARPLEE

### PROM CONCERTS IN LEATHERHEAD A CENTURY AGO

A series of Prom Concerts was held at a number of Leatherhead's houses in the summer of 1898, perhaps following London's example started a few years before. Between June and September of that year the owners of Cherkley Court, Downside, The Priory and The Red House held open-air concerts in their gardens which proved to be very popular. Music and dancing were enjoyed by all who attended. Electric lighting, rare at this time, was a special attraction at Cherkley Court and The Red House and, according to the local papers, was 'much appreciated' by the visitors to these houses.

J. C. STUTTARD

### LEATHERHEAD HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY AT ELM BANK HOUSE, 1898

Elm Bank House, close to the parish church and the home of the Rickards family, opened its gardens to the Leatherhead Horticultural Society in July 1898. According to the local press, the flowers and vegetables were exhibited in two marquees inside which were also a number of



*HISTORY OF FETCHAM: CONTRIBUTORS.*

*BACK ROW: ERNEST CROSSLAND; PETER TARPLEE; EDRED TIMS.  
FRONT ROW: GEOFF HAYWARD; JACK STUTTARD; ALAN POOLEY.*



*LEFT: ALAN GILLIES,  
CONTRIBUTOR.*

*RIGHT: JACK  
STUTTARD, EDITOR,  
SIGNING HISTORY OF  
FETCHAM COPIES AT  
THE BOOK-LAUNCH  
IN FETCHAM  
VILLAGE HALL ON  
30 OCTOBER 1998.*

*THE LATE JOHN  
METTAM WAS ALSO  
A CONTRIBUTOR.*

*Photographs by Gwen  
Hoad.*





ELM BANK HOUSE, SEEN FROM THORNCROFT BRIDGE, c. 1905.  
The house was demolished in 1924

decorated bicycles, owned by Maggie Utterton, daughter of the Vicar, Mable Budd of Vale Lodge and Nigel Tritton of The Priory. At the end of the day there was dancing on the lawns to music by the Leatherhead Town Band.

J. C STUTTARD

*Erratum: Proc LDLHS 6(1), 1997: Under 'Secretarial Notes' add 'April 19th: Visit, with the Surrey Archaeological Society, to Oak Pollards on Ashted Common. Arranged by Alan Gillies.*

## THE LONG HOUSE, ASHTEAD

By J. R. CLUBE

**I**N 1994 the Society came into possession of an album containing family photographs taken in 1902 at the Long House, a large Victorian house in Ermyn Way, Ashtead. This house, since extended, still stands: for nearly fifty years it was the 'Frederick Milner House' for ex-servicemen and is today a retirement home named simply 'Milner House'.

The owner of the album was Eleanor, Nanetta Klinker, born 1881, who was living at the house with her parents Hermann Klinker and his wife Eleanor, Nairn Klinker née Allison. Nanetta left it to her daughter Marguerite, Nairn-Allison, together with a diary. Her daughter passed the album to the Society.

Hermann Klinker had come to England from Germany in the 1870s living first in Dulwich. However, the family were living in Knightsbridge at the time of leasing the Long House. The diary shows that the Klinkers looked over the house on the morning of 9 March 1901—'the name will have to be changed of course', they invited Mr Osenton the Estate Agent to lunch at the Swan, and by evening a telegram confirmed the tenancy. On 17 June the Klinkers arrived in Leatherhead, staying five days at the Swan. On 24 June the horses 'Prince' and 'Dick' arrived. On 7 July the Klinkers celebrated their 21st Wedding Anniversary; and on 18 September Nanetta was given a donkey cart drawn by 'Roger' as a 20th birthday present. She also noted the presence of Princess Christian of Schleswig-Holstein and her daughter Victoria at the laying of the foundation stone of the Royal School for the Blind on 13 November.

Hermann Klinker was an importer of 'Ibach' pianos, a business which brought him into contact with prominent musicians of the day. The violinist Jan Kubelik was a close friend: on the eve of the wedding celebration he planted a lime tree at the house. Wilhelm Backhaus, the famous pianist, also visited the Klinkers there. Klinker had already remarked on the problem of sending 'foreign telegrams' through Leatherhead Post Office.

Unfortunately, the family stayed in the house for only two years or so. Nanetta celebrated her 21st birthday in 1902, and later told her daughter that the stay in Ashtead was the happiest time of her life. Apparently Hermann's wife like to be driven by carriage to London for shopping and found the distance too great to enable this to be done comfortably in the day. Presumably she did not consider using the train. By 1904 others had moved in.

The presence of the Klinkers is confirmed in the Rate Book—spelt at first as Clinker—the house owner being Mrs Pidgeon. The Long House is shown as a substantial property in four acres of land, lower only in rateable value than Ashtead Park and Ashtead House. An 1896 map shows a gate and drive some 250 yards long leading to the main entrance which was on the Ashtead side of the house. The Leatherhead side, today the main entrance, was the back of the house overlooking the tennis court, garden and fountain. That garden is still visible but 150 yards of the drive was taken in the building of 'The Cedars' close.

There are over 20 photographs in the album acquired by the Society. The house is well shown, but some parts of its grounds have since been built on. Hermann appears twice, in one case with labourers harvesting on land between the house and the main Leatherhead road. In another he is shown tending his cattle.

The circumstances which led to the Klinker's leasing the house were tragic. The house appears in the rate books in 1892, the first owner being Daniel Pidgeon. In 1900 the Pidgeons were in a



THE LONG HOUSE, ASHTEAD, MAIN ENTRANCE, c. 1901.  
Society collection.



BACK OF THE LONG HOUSE, FACING LEATHERHEAD.  
Society collection.





HERMAN KLINKER, WITH CATTLE.  
Society collection.



HAYMAKING ON HERMAN KLINKER'S LAND.  
Society collection.

hotel in Aswan, Egypt, when both appeared to suffer from influenza. Sadly, Mr Pidgeon died. By coincidence the Rector of St Giles was also in Aswan at the time and was thus able to take the funeral service which he later described in the *Parish Magazine*.<sup>3</sup> It took place at a military cemetery near Philae on 13 March 1900. The coffin was draped in the Union Jack, with palm leaves, and the service was attended by the doctor, Mrs Pidgeon's maid, one of their nurses, hotel staff, and the Commandant in uniform. A plaque was later mounted in St Giles Church, giving Daniel Pidgeon's age as 67.

Daniel Pidgeon was born in 1833 and trained as an engineer. In 1862 he was a junior partner in a company manufacturing agricultural implements. In 1870 he was elected a Fellow of the Geological Society of London, contributing papers to the Society on the Submerged Forest of Torbay and the 'Raised Beaches' near Torquay.<sup>4</sup> In his will of March 1898 he left provision for a fund producing a grant to promote original geological research. The Trust was called the 'Daniel Pidgeon Fund'.

Mrs Pidgeon continued to own the house for the next 25 years but did not personally live there. In 1902, during the Klinker's tenancy, she substantially enlarged the property from simply a house in four acres to over 21 acres including agricultural land. The house now included stabling, garden and land. She also acquired or built a house and garden 'near the Long House' also let to tenants.

Rate books show that, after the Klinkers departed, tenants were Henry Myers until 1914; 1915/16 empty; 1917/1922 Brig. Gen. Sir Ernest Gascoigne. In 1923 J. V. Rank, industrialist and racehorse owner, occupied it and changed the name to Ouborough Place. In 1926 it was in Estate Agent's hands and the same year purchased for the Ex-Services Welfare Society and renamed in honour of their President, Sir Frederick Milner MP, GCVO.

The house was run as a home for ex-service personnel between 1926 and 1988 when the building was closed.<sup>5</sup> A sheltered workshop was built behind the house to provide occupational therapy for the ex-servicemen. The prototype electric blanket was made at the home in 1927 and the Thermega factory was established. This was later sold to Remploi who still provide employment for handicapped people. In 1932 the Queen Mother, then Duchess of York, visited the house.

The house is today owned by Ashbourne Homes plc and has been completely refurbished as a high quality nursing home. Many changes have been made since the Pidgeons owned the house but the old photographs reveal how much has remained the same.

#### NOTES

1. Society Collections: AP 1723.
2. Society Collections: AX 1120.
3. *Ashtead Parish Magazine*, April 1900.
4. *Geological Society* records.
5. Jane Gochin.

#### Acknowledgements

The writer acknowledges the assistance of Miss Marguerite Nairn-Allison; Howard Davies on Ashtead Church records; Mrs Lesley Phillips, Secretary, Milner House; Jane Gochin; John Thackeray, Archivist, Geological Society of London; John Clark.

# THE OLD PIPE ORGANS OF LEATHERHEAD PARISH CHURCH

By LINDA HEATH

## Introduction

THE earliest mention of an organ in Leatherhead parish church is a reference in Brayley's *Topographical History of Surrey* (Vol. IV, p. 440) published in 1850. This quotes an extract from parish registers stating that "An organ was purchased by public subscription in 1830 and erected in the gallery at the West end, with sittings for the children of the Sunday Schools; the cost being £140". This was at the time when the Vicar of Leatherhead was James Dallaway, who carried out a number of improvements to the church. Brayley goes on to say:

"In 1843 a large and superior organ was substituted for that before noticed. Built by Snetzler, the stops, particularly the trumpet, for purity and richness of tone, are not surpassed by any made during the present century. It has short octaves; (i.e. the keys were narrow) and the keys are black except the chromatic, which are white, inlaid with a central black slip." The church still has this small two-manual keyboard with the normally white keys in black, and the normally black keys in white with a strip of inlaid black—known as "skunk-tail".

## The original organ of 1830

What happened to the original organ purchased in 1830 when it was replaced by a larger one in 1843? Walkers, the organ builders who installed the new organ, had removed the 1830 instrument. In the 1850's they tuned an organ at what was described as "Leatherhead Chapel". At first sight, this might appear to be the Congregational Chapel in North Street, but in fact it was the chapel of the Boys' Grammar School at The Mansion, started by Joseph Payne in 1846. The school rented pews in the parish church, so the boys evidently came there for services on Sundays, and in view of this connection it is possible that the organ tuned by Walkers in the Mansion School chapel may have been the original organ from the parish church, but there is no proof of this.

## The organ installed in 1843

The organ which was bought in 1843 came from Watford parish church. This was the one which Brayley attributed to Snetzler, one of the leading 18th century German organ builders, who settled in England in the 1740's. It is not known why this organ was attributed to Snetzler, but recent investigation has shown that it does not in fact appear to have been made by him. Although Leatherhead church members may have thought it was a Snetzler organ, it seems to have been an 18th century English instrument. However, its quality was evidently excellent and, to judge by Brayley's description of its "purity and richness of tone", the parishioners were well pleased with their new organ. It was installed on the highest of three galleries in the tower, from where the bells were rung at that time, and surrounded by raked seating for the Sunday School children.

## "Keyboard played upon by Handel"

An intriguing question is the origin of the statement in the parish magazine for January 1886 that "the keyboard of the original (sic.) organ, which was played upon by Handel, is now exhibited as an interesting relic in the church." Handel settled in England around 1712 and lived in London until his death in 1759. It is unlikely that he ever visited either Watford or Leatherhead, but if the keyboard of the Watford organ was second-hand and had come originally from London, it is



WOODEN AND METAL PIPES OF THE 18TH CENTURY ORGAN.  
Photograph by Alison Wright.



KEYBOARD OF THE ORGAN INSTALLED IN 1843.  
Photograph by Alison Wright.

just possible that Handel might have played upon it there. But if this were so, surely Watford would have proudly proclaimed this fact and Leatherhead also would have boasted of this claim to fame. It also seems significant that no mention of this fact was made by Brayley in his description of the organ. So where did this legend originate? It will probably remain a mystery.

Evidently “the purity and richness of tone” so much admired in 1850 had somewhat faded, by 1871, as the Church & Parochial Report for that year stated that at present the organ was a very imperfect instrument and inadequate to the requirement of the services. It was decided to move it from the tower and to incorporate it into a larger instrument and place it elsewhere, as it would be too large and heavy for the gallery in the tower, and this would also provide more seating accommodation in the gallery.

### **Rebuilding of the organ in 1873**

Not only was it proposed to move and enlarge the organ, but a complete “Restoration” of the church was carried out in 1873 and the north transept was extended to provide a clergy vestry with a large organ loft above it. In theory this seemed a good idea, but in practice it proved to be a disastrous mistake that caused problems for the next hundred years and was one of the main reasons for ultimately abandoning the pipe organ. However, in 1873 that was an unforeseen problem and the parochial report for that year gives a complete description of all the improvements carried out to the organ in its new position.

In 1885 a two day fête was held in the grounds of Vale Lodge in aid of funds for further enlargement of the 1873 organ, including a third manual, or keyboard. An article in the parish magazine of August 1886 stated that the organ was already a fine one, and that when the work on it was completed it would be one of the finest in the county.

The parish magazine for January 1886 stated that the organ was originally built by Snetzler, so evidently Walkers had not voiced any doubts about its being a Snetzler organ, but they may have been quite unaware that the church members thought it was. It is interesting, though rather sad, to read in this same article that in a mere thirteen years after the building of the new organ, it had already “fallen into dilapidation”. Evidently it had not been properly maintained since its installation in 1873. The article fails to mention one of the main reasons why the organ needed to be further enlarged—this was because of the disastrous placing of the organ pipes over the clergy vestry with a wall four feet thick over the arch to the north transept between the pipes and the nave. This resulted in a large proportion of the sound being blocked off from the rest of the church.

All through its history, the maintenance of the organ was a story of repeated failure due to the expense incurred, and so it was continually being “patched up to make do” and allowed to deteriorate to such an extent that eventually something major always had to be done at great expense.

### **Renovations between 1907–1934**

In September 1907 the organ once more was found to be in a “deplorable state” and was cleaned and overhauled the following year and an electric blower installed. Until then it had been blown by hand—an arduous task for an organ of this size. The names and initials of the blowers have been carved on the walls alongside where the bellows used to be. By 1925 things had become so bad that the August parish magazine reported that the organ was in a most precarious state and might completely break down at any time. Further work was carried out in

1926 and a modern pneumatic action installed. The improvements were recorded in the magazine for May 1927 thus:

“The organ is now one of the finest in Surrey, being as complete as a modern 3-Manual Church Organ could be. Tubular-pneumatic action has been fitted throughout, making the touch as light as a pianoforte”. The additional improvements included a complete rewiring of the organ loft and vestry. In spite of all this, new bellows and a new electric blower were needed within five years. In 1934 an amplifier was installed to try to synchronise the sounds of the organ and choir when the choir was processing from the vestry at the far end of the church.

### **The organ’s last thirty years**

By 1956 the organ was yet again in a parlous condition and an organ appeal fund was launched to pay for another restoration. The work was to be carried out by Messrs R. H. Walker & Son of Chesham, descendants of the Walkers who had installed the organ in 1843 and later enlarged it. Mr Walker stated that the organ was an exceptionally well-constructed instrument, but that it was in a poor position acoustically. He advised that from the long term aspect, the best thing would be to rebuild it, with a detached console if desired, and install an electro-pneumatic action. The cost of this work was estimated at £4,000—a very large amount in those days, which was more than the church was prepared to pay. So it was decided to settle for revoicing some of the stops and fitting tuning slides to all the open metal pipes.

By the mid 1970’s the organ was once more in a bad way and a further restoration was contemplated, so various firms were approached for estimates. These included J. W. Walker & Sons of Brandon, Suffolk, also related to the original Walkers. In 1980 their director pointed out that the organ was in the wrong place and that if it was to remain where it was, the only viable proposition was to restore it to its original form. This would cost well over £30,000. The alternative was to replace it with a new smaller two-manual organ in the body of the church, incorporating the existing pipework for about the same cost. Two years later the cost had risen to over £36,000. Walkers suggested it might be better to spend £40,000 for a new organ in the right place rather than renovating the old one in the wrong place.

### **Installation of an Allen digital-computer organ**

In the end it was decided to pursue neither of these options, but to purchase a digital-computer organ. In 1983 an Allen digital-computer organ was bought and placed in the north transept, but the pipe organ was to remain in situ in case an unexpected gift of money might enable it to be restored at a later date.

So ended the active life of the organ installed in the north transept gallery in 1873, enlarged in 1885 and with numerous alterations over the next 100 years. This might have been the end of the story but for a fire on 26th July 1989 which destroyed the Allen organ and several nearby items, also causing a great deal of smoke damage. The fire started under the floor boards beside the Allen organ, ironically almost certainly from a short circuit in the wiring of the organ. The heat was so great that some of the organ pipes came crashing down from the old organ loft above the Allen organ. Apart from the pipe organ, all the other items were replaced and a new Allen organ was installed where the previous one had been.

### **After the fire of 1989**

After the fire, Martin Renshaw, organ builder and organ historian, carried out an extremely thorough inspection of the pipe organ with a view to seeing what could be saved. His investigation

proved to be quite a feat of detective work and he was able to piece together far more of the history of the organ than had ever been known. I am greatly indebted to him for much of the information in this article. In his opinion, the remains of the early organ within the later one bore all the hallmarks of an English style 18th century instrument, particularly of the London makers between about 1750–60. He also stated that there is nothing whatever about it that matches Snetzler's style—furthermore, Snetzler always labelled his soundboards with his name and date.

After Mr Renshaw had completed his survey it was decided to dismantle the pipe organ—a work which took quite a considerable time, during which some 2,000 pipes were laid out on the pews throughout the church! Many of the Walker organ (1873) pipes were sold to the Norwegian Government for use in a new church, but the remaining parts of the older organ have all been kept and carefully stored. At some future date it may be possible to reconstruct this small two manual 18th century English organ. So perhaps this is not yet the end of the history of the pipe organs in Leatherhead parish church.

## THE MANOR OF ASHTEAD PART 1 1066–1189

By H. J. DAVIES

**T**HIS article is the first of a series which seeks to address the questions: who held the Manor of Ashtead, from whom and when?

After William, Duke of Normandy, had defeated Harold at Hastings and been crowned King of England, he distributed land to his chief followers and to the church. The entry for Ashtead in the Domesday Book, 1086, reads:

*The Canons hold Ashtead ['Stede'] from the Bishop of Bayeux. Thorgils [lit. Turgis] held it from Earl Harold. Then it answered for 9 hides, now for 3 hides and 1 virgate. Land for . . . In lordship 2 ploughs; 33 villeins and 11 bordars with 14 ploughs. There were 9 serfs. From grazing, 7 pigs; meadow 4 acres. Value before 1066 £10; later £6; now £12.<sup>1</sup>*

Bishop Odo of Bayeux, half brother of King William I, held a considerable area as 'overlord' or 'tenant in chief'; land was given by him to tenants, Ashtead to the Canons of Bayeux.<sup>2</sup> It is unlikely that any canon would have resided in the area. The area liable to tax assessment in 1086 had been reduced from 9 to 3 hides in common with many areas, but the land value was a higher figure.

When Odo was finally disgraced in 1088, after the accession of William Rufus to the throne, his lands were given to other overlords but we do not know to whom Ashtead was given. It has

been inferred that it was William, the first Earl of Warenne, Earl of Surrey in 1089, but most of his land was to the south and east of the North Downs, in particular, Reigate. He died in the same year and was succeeded by his son, William, his chief seat being at Lewes; he also had the lordship of Reigate. This William was involved in a rebellion in Normandy against King Henry I on his accession in 1100, lost his earldom but was pardoned in 1102/3. By a decisive victory at the battle of Tinchenbrai in 1106, Henry established his rule in Normandy and a period of peaceful commerce and settlement began.<sup>3</sup>

From a group of extant charters and the work of L C Loyd and Doris Stenton in the *Book of Seals*<sup>4</sup>, we learn of a family originating in Rouen in Normandy who had settled in Ashtead by 1120. The first member was Laurence, the Laurentius de Sancto Sepulchro of a charter of Henry II dated 1180–3.<sup>5</sup> Another charter describes him as Laurentii Rotomagensis, the old Latin name for Rouen.<sup>6</sup> There was a church of the Holy Sepulchre in the city of Rouen, the capital of Normandy, from which Loyd believes Laurence may have received his ascription. It was situated near the Vieux Marche, the old market, and the present Place de la Pucelle. His name appears six times in the Pipe Roll of Henry I, 1130/1: under London, 'Laurence of Rouen owes 30 ounces of gold which he agreed to pay to the King in Normandy'; under Essex, 3 shillings and 5d, and 30s (two entries). In Surrey he owed Danegeld of 30 shillings, probably in respect of the hides of Ashtead as in Domesday Survey above, and another sum of 21 shillings. He had paid all these debts except that in Normandy.<sup>7</sup> It is possible that he was a merchant with interests in England and Normandy, Rouen being an important trading centre and port. Laurence is also recorded as having given a virgate of land to the chapel at Ashtead on its consecration, probably about 1120.<sup>8</sup>

Laurence was not the overlord. The charter of Henry II makes clear that he and his successors held Ashtead from the chamberlains of Tancarville.<sup>9</sup> The chamberlains had a chateau (being restored at time of writing) on the River Seine between Rouen and the coast. They also had a great house in Rouen in the 13th century near the Place du Marche aux Veaux ['meat market' later La Place de la Pucelle] and doubtless before that.<sup>10</sup> The office of chamberlain had been held by heredity since it was established within the household of William when he was Duke of Normandy from 1034. With immediate access to the Duke and as keeper of the purse the chamberlain was a very important and influential official. After the Conquest he remained in Normandy as William's chief representative. It was the grandson of the first chamberlain, William (d1129), who granted Ashtead to Laurence, described later in the century as 'in fee farm' ['in feodum firma', *sic*], the term for a feudal holding for which rent was paid.<sup>11</sup> Ashtead was held for a payment of six libra (pounds) per year as service to the chamberlain of Tancarville. There is no mention of any other overlord or intermediary such as the Earl of Warenne; the chamberlain was the overlord.

#### The chamberlains of Tancarville:

Ralph son of Gerald c. 1034–pre 1066

Ralph pre 1066–1079

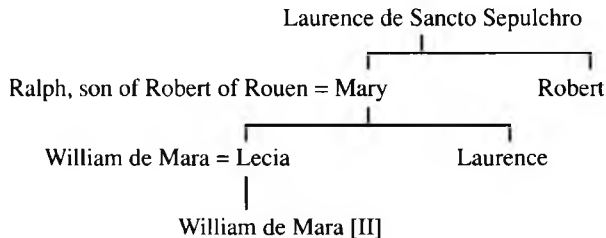
William 1079–1129

Rabel 1129–1140

William 1140–c. 1190



From the charter of Henry II [1180–3] and three charters in the *Book of Seals* we can construct the family tree of Laurence’s descendants:



The inheritance was by primogeniture, the firstborn female taking precedence over the younger male as heir to the estate. Mary’s husband, Ralph, was from Rouen; they are both recorded in another charter of Henry II as having given sums at an unspecified date to the church of St Lo, i.e. St Laurence, near Sancto Sepulchro in Rouen possibly in memory of Mary’s father, the church from which he may have received his first name.<sup>12</sup>

In the charter no 108 in the *Book of Seals*, Mary ‘of Estede’ [Ashtead] gives to the priory of St Mary Southwark half a mark of silver, six shillings and eight pence, each year for her soul and the souls of her family and friends. In another charter, 107, Lecia confirms her mother’s charter. The charters in the *Book of Seals* are regarded as reliable, over 500 having been collected by the heralds in the 17th century for Sir Christopher Hatton; the Mss for 108 and 107 are in the British Library in different collections. Nevertheless there is something odd about the two: both are witnessed by virtually the same 10 people. It is therefore likely that both charters were fairly contemporaneous. It is curious to note that in the list of souls for whom prayers are sought Mary does not mention Lecia or Lecia’s husband while Lecia omits her mother and includes her own husband and her son! Both include Mary’s son, Lecia’s brother, ‘L’ in 108 and Laurence in 107. Loyd attributes two mistakes to the scribe of 108: Robert for Ralph, Mary’s husband and Robert for Ralph, clerk, one of the witnesses. Loyd dates 108 as early Henry II and 107 simply as Henry II.

Henry II reigned from 1154 to 1189, a strong and effective monarch. His charter of 1180–83 comes from a source different from that of the charters in the *Book of Seals* and is therefore corroborative evidence for the Laurence family holding.<sup>13</sup> This charter makes clear that the family had other land in England besides Ashtead. First there was Mitcham, land identified elsewhere as Rainsbury or Ravensbury, given to Laurence’s daughter, Mary, and her husband, Ralph, by Rabel the chamberlain. Second there was land in [the soke of] Grantham, Lincs., namely Harlaxton and Londonthorpe, held in turn by Laurence of Rouen and by Ralph and Mary from successive chamberlains. The Pipe Roll of 1175 [21 Hen II] shows Robert of Rouen paying a debt of 20 s. at Harlaxton.<sup>14</sup> Robert, Laurence’s son, held land in East Bedfont on the future south-eastern perimeter of London Airport. Henry’s charter confirmed a charter which has not survived, in which William the last chamberlain on the above list restored<sup>15</sup> all these lands to William de Mara and Lecia his wife [Bedfont not mentioned]. We do not know the circumstances which gave rise to the need for restoration. It may therefore be possible that the inheritance had in some way been taken from them.

I have two possible scenarios to suggest. First the bequests described above may indicate a family quarrel. The dating of Mary's charter by Loyd and by inference a similar dating for Lecia's requires all the characters in place around 1160. Lecia's son, William, was present when she made her charter. He died in 1239 or thereabouts but does not appear to be so great in age! It seems more likely that both charters in the Book of Seals are of a later date, perhaps as late as 1175. Robert, Mary's brother, was still alive and witnessed both charters but the dating may depend on the dates of some or all of the other witnesses if and when they are known. Mary may have disowned Lecia from the very important spiritual benefit of her bequest to Southwark; she may also have by implication disinherited her. By including her younger son, L or Laurence in the bequest she may also have given him the inheritance. There would be a legal argument for such preference for male inheritance. On appeal to the chamberlain as overlord, perhaps after Mary's death, he, the chamberlain, restored the lands to Lecia and her husband, William de Mara. The confirmatory charter of the chamberlain's overlord, King Henry II, Matilda's son, in 1180/3 was intended to settle the matter. The charter is addressed to all the King's chief tenants and officers in church and state in the usual manner.<sup>16</sup>

The second scenario is more political. It is possible that some other lord was anxious to wrest the land from the absentee chamberlains in Normandy. This may have been a political reality in the time of King Stephen. There is evidence that the chamberlains supported Maud [Matilda] in the civil war. One of Stephen's first acts was to cross to Normandy to put down a rebellion of Rabel, the chamberlain. Evidence from Lincolnshire shows his father, William the chamberlain, providing land in the Soke of Grantham for the service of 10 knights, a service laid upon him by none other than Maud [Matilda], Henry's daughter, the Empress, who had been given the lordship of the Soke and was to be the contender for the English throne.<sup>17</sup> The chamberlain's lands, including Ashtead, may have been forfeit if they, the chamberlains, were on the wrong side.

It is just possible that both scenarios are plausible. The period from Stephen's death and Henry's succession to his charter of 1180–3 is a long one and we may be looking at a long dispute. Did Mary and her husband change sides in the civil war? Most of Surrey and the south-east sided with Stephen rather than Matilda although Surrey saw little of the fighting in the war. Did the repercussions reverberate in the family for many years afterwards? Did Mary marry again, into the other camp if Ralph was killed? Were Lecia and William living in Rouen and estranged from Mary in England? Was Mary's bequest made at the very end of her life in the mid-seventies and did Lecia make her's a short while afterwards? Did Henry II come down in favour of the chamberlains in 1180–3 as part of his policy to strengthen the middle rankers against the might of the earls? We know that this was his policy. And last of all: who might the opponent of the chamberlains have been? An attempt at an answer to that will be made in the course of the next article on the 13th century in the Society's *Proceedings*.

#### NOTES

1. *Domesday Book: Surrey*, Ed Morris J., Phillimore 1975: folio 31d, section 5 Land of Bishop of Bayeux: sub section 20: Ashtead. The translation 'villein' as a form of customary tenure and 'bordar' as bordage tenure, as Latham R.E., *Revised Medieval Latin Word List* 1965, reprint 1994, is preferred to that of Morris, 'villager' and 'smallholder'. 'Serf' is likewise preferred to 'slave' referring to landless persons.
2. Not 'of the Abbey of Chertsey' as in 'The Domesday Book Story' published by the *LDLHS* in 1986. There is no evidence for this in the *Cartulary, SRS XII, 1958: PRO E164/25*. The internal evidence supports the reading in the text.

3. F. Barlow: *Feudal Kingdom of England*, 4th ed., 1988.
4. L. C. Loyd and D. Stenton, *Sir Christopher Hatton's Book of Seals*, 1950. Courtesy of Surrey County Library Service.
5. *Recueil des Actes de Henri II, roi d'Angleterre*. Ed. Berger and Delisle, 3, pp. 456–7, 1909–27, Courtesy of the Public Record Office Library.
6. *Book of Seals*, *op. cit.*, c. 108.
7. 'Magnum rotulum pipae', J. Hunter ed., *Pipe Roll Society* 1833, pp. 145, 56–58 and 51. Courtesy British Library ref. HLR941, Vol. 4; this is the only surviving Pipe Roll before the reign of Henry II.
8. 'Cartulary of the Monastery of St John the Baptist, Colchester', S. Moore ed., Roxburgh Club, 1897, p. 78. Text and translation in *Procs, LDLHS*, 3 (2), 1968, pp. 64–5.
9. Berger and Delisle, *op.cit.*
10. A Deville, *The Chamberlains of Tancarville*, 1834, p. 148, *et al.*
11. 'Charter of Henry II', in Berger and Delisle, *op. cit.*, p. 457; S. Reynolds, *Fiefs and Vassals*, Oxford 1994, pbk, 1996, p. 353 ff. Ashted is not mentioned in the Red Book of the Exchequer 1166, listing knights' fees.
12. Berger and Delisle, *op. cit.*, 3, pp. 205–6.
13. *do.*, pp. 456–7.
14. 'Magnum rotuli pipae', *op. cit.*, HLR 942, Vol. 22, p. 149, Lincolnshire.
15. 'Reddidit': the verb *reddo* is commonly found in medieval documents. For example it can mean 'pay'; in later medieval documents in 'pay rent' or 'render account'. Latham, *op. cit.*, has no examples of its use in connection with 'giving back' or 'restoring land'. Therefore the classical meaning must apply in this document (in accordance with Latham's method): give back, restore; and subsidiary meanings 'give what is due or asked for'. It is used in this sense for example for the restoration to a position of Constable.
16. The scribe of Mary's charter, 108, may have been correct in calling her husband Robert. If he was her second husband and they had a son, Laurence, it would explain the problem!
17. Murden J., 'Harlaxton through the ages', pp. 2 and 3, 1976, courtesy of the Librarian, Harlaxton College. I have not been able to check the identification of Maud by Murden.

## LEATHERHEAD'S RAILWAY STATIONS

By H. G. KNOWLES

**T**HE recent re-development around the Leatherhead railway station has prompted this investigation into the history of the three stations which the town has had during the past 140 years.

### Station Building in the 19th Century

The building of the first station in Leatherhead came as a direct result of the 'race to the coast' between those arch rivals the London & South Western Railway (L&SWR) and the London, Brighton & South Coast Railway (LB&SCR). The L&SWR had opened their route with the Portsmouth Direct via Woking and Guildford in 1859, which ensured that the existing LB&SCR line, from London to Brighton and then along the coast to Portsmouth which had been opened in 1847, was now uncompetitive. The coastal route of the LB&SCR was 95¼ miles compared with the 74 miles of the L&SWR 'direct'.

To restore their competitiveness the LB&SCR planned a route, the Mid-Sussex Railway, some 87 miles long, via Horsham to the south coast. In 1848 a branch was opened from Three Bridges to Horsham connecting the latter to Brighton. Meanwhile at the other end of the line the London & Croydon, originally planned as an atmospheric railway, had reached Epsom town in May 1847. The Epsom & Leatherhead Railway Company was formed in 1856 to extend the line and to forestall the L&SWR which had created the Wimbledon & Dorking Railway Company which would when completed, they planned, allow them to penetrate on to Horsham.



THE L&SWR STATION. WITH A SOUTHERN RAILWAY TANK LOCOMOTIVE, 1924.  
Society collection.

Work started on the extension from Epsom to Leatherhead in June 1857, reaching the latter some two years later. The engineer in charge of the building of the single line was Thomas Brassey, who was well known, experienced and much respected. The route followed that previously surveyed for the abortive Croydon to Portsmouth atmospheric line and included a station at Ashted with a single platform on the down side of the track, though it was nearly not built at all on financial grounds.

The Epsom & Leatherhead became a joint service between the LB&SCR and the L&SWR. The terminus station in Leatherhead was built on the east side of the Kingston Road, near to today's 'Plough' hostelry (which has a plaque, 'Railway Tavern 1907', affixed), about a quarter of a mile north of the site of the present station. It was opened with a L&SWR service on 1 February 1859 followed by the LB&SCR on 8 August. For the first few months of the service passengers to London had to transfer at Epsom by road to the LB&SCR Epsom Town station until on 4 April a junction was opened at Epsom between the Leatherhead line and the Wimbledon and Dorking (L&SWR) line which had come from a junction where Raynes Park station now stands. The Raynes Park station was not built until 1871. Epsom Town station was in what is now Upper High Street, formerly Station Road, and closed to passenger traffic in 1929, when the present Epsom station was opened, and to goods in 1965.

In 1860, by an Act of 23 July, the Epsom and Leatherhead line was transferred to the joint ownership of the two companies. Expenses and maintenance were borne equally; each company had equal rights over the line and at Ashted and Leatherhead stations; each met its own train costs and kept its own receipts. Each company sent three directors to the joint committee which managed staff but each company was responsible for its own booking clerks. The Companies' Act of 1863 confirmed the arrangement.

Epsom stations was retained by the L&SWR although the joint committee controlled the tracks. The station had originally been owned by the Wimbledon & Dorking Railway, which was by this time part of the L&SWR. Passengers from Leatherhead now had the opportunity to travel direct to London by two routes, either to Waterloo on the L&SWR, or to London Bridge with the LB&SCR. Although fares were not cheap by the standards of the time it did mean that the good citizens of Leatherhead could spend a day in town quite easily, something completely beyond the experience of many of them who in all probability had never been to London before.

In August 1857 the Mid-Sussex Railway was incorporated to build the 17½ miles line from Horsham to Coultershaw Mill, near Petworth. In July the next year the LB&SCR obtained an Act to build a 17 mile line from Itchingfield, near Horsham, to the West Coast line at Shoreham. This was spurred on by an abortive Shoreham, Horsham & Dorking proposal, nominally independent, but suspected of being a front for the L&SWR. The LB&SCR had effectively closed another potential breach in their system in the defence of Brighton.

Two gaps then remained to complete the Mid-Sussex route: Hardham Junction near Pulborough, a few miles out of Petworth, to Arundel Junction east of Ford on the West Coast line; and Leatherhead to Horsham. The LB&SCR obtained powers for the former in 1860, and in 1862, on the 17 July, an Act of incorporation was passed for a nominally independent Horsham, Dorking & Leatherhead Company to build the link between Horsham and Dorking with a junction with the South Eastern Railway's Redhill-Guildford-Reading branch at Boxhill (now Deepdene) at Dorking. In 1863 the LB&SCR obtained powers for the remaining 4½ miles to Leatherhead

itself. An Act of 29 July 1864 enabled the LB&SCR to absorb all the quasi-independent companies.

The Mid-Sussex opened its single line to Horsham from Petworth on 10 October 1859. The line was doubled to Hardham in time for the Hardham to Arundel Junction section to be opened on 3 August 1863. The line from Shoreham as far as West Grinstead was opened on 1 July 1861 and to Itchingfield Junction, just outside Horsham, on 16 September the same year. This line was doubled between 1877 and 1879.

All traffic via the Mid-Sussex route had for several years to pass along the first branch from Three Bridges to Horsham, very slow progress being made with building the line up to Leatherhead. It was not until 11 March 1867 that the section from Leatherhead to Dorking was opened, completion of the route to Horsham following on 1 May the same year. This saw the completion of the Mid Sussex route. The connecting spur to the SER at Boxhill was never used.

The L&SWR realised that with the completion of the Mid-Sussex line, officially part of the LB&SCR ever since the Act of July 1864, their hopes of a through line from Leatherhead to Dorking and beyond were thwarted. Thus they sensibly came to an agreement with the LB&SCR that their trains from London would terminate at Leatherhead, leaving the LB&SCR to continue on to Dorking and Horsham. It was agreed that the existing station off the Kingston road at Leatherhead would be too small to cater for the existing traffic and the new through trade so it was decided to close it after new stations were built. These, one for each company, were built on separate but adjacent lines, linked by a common approach road. Waterway Road was built at the same time to provide access to the two new stations without going through the town.

In 1866/67 the single line between Epsom and Leatherhead was doubled in anticipation of the increased traffic. The station at Ashted had a new short platform built on the up line but no additional station buildings. It was not until as late as 1885 that Ashted, the only joint operated station after the opening of the two new Leatherhead stations, had regular stopping trains. Until then neither the majority of the LB&SCR trains nor the early morning L&SWR services called there.

Thus the LB&SCR built its new station just north of the road out of Leatherhead to Cobham. This is the new station we still have today, its architectural style is typical 'Brighton'. The L&SWR built their new station to the west and slightly to the south on the other side of the common approach road. Part of this station is the site that has been recently re-developed for offices and car parking. The new LB&SCR station and the line to Dorking opened on 11 March 1867, following that of the L&SWR station which had opened a week earlier on the 4 March. The first joint station on the Kingston road was closed the same day. Nothing of this first station now remains, although until a few years ago the old engine house still stood, used by Ryebrook Motors Ltd, but it was demolished and the site now has housing on it. Between 1877 and 1891 it had been used as an infants' school until All Saints Infants' School replaced it.

The L&SWR did not rest however. They earlier had plans to connect Leatherhead with Guildford and thus with the 'direct line' to Portsmouth. In 1859 a notice for an independent Bill to link Leatherhead and Guildford was not proceeded with. In 1863 the Bill was resurrected, seeking junctions with the L&SWR at Guildford and with the Epsom & Leatherhead at the station at Leatherhead. The L&SWR publicly discredited the Bill yet were secretly determined to work the route, but persuaded the promoters to drop the Guildford to Bookham



OLD CANOPY OF THE LEATHERHEAD STATION, 1964.  
Society collection.

section in lieu of a single line revised under L&SWR influence in the next session in Parliament. However, the amended Bill, for a line only from Bookham to Leatherhead, foundered in the Lords.

The succeeding economic depression called a halt to any further plans for ten years. In 1874 a planned Leatherhead & Guildford Bill failed to be promoted, as did a West Surrey Bill in 1876 to link Guildford and Ashted. Meanwhile the residents and landowners of Cobham had been agitating for a line connecting them to the L&SWR beyond Esher. A Bill in 1867, represented in 1870, was on both occasions thrown out by the Lords. Also in 1870 another Bill for the Surbiton, Cobham & Ripley Railway disappeared after passing Standing Orders in the Commons.

In 1880 the L&SWR denied support for another proposed Surbiton to Cobham scheme and publicly opposed a plan to link Church Cobham to the L&SWR line west of Hampton Court Junction. Then in October of the same year a Guildford, Kingston & London Railway scheme was mooted, by which the District Line, which was part underground and part on the surface, and had already reached out of London in to Surrey, would have been able to move deep into L&SWR which retaliated by putting forward two Bills of their own, one for a 'new' link between Guildford and their main line at a junction on the Hampton Court line beyond Esher, via Cobham, and a second link from Guildford to Leatherhead, via Effingham and Bookham.



STATION APPROACH IN THE 1970'S. WITH THE L&SWR ONE ON THE LEFT AND TODAY'S STATION (LB&SCR) IN THE BACKGROUND ON THE RIGHT.  
Society collection.

A public meeting at Cobham on 6 January 1881 voted in favour of the L&SWR scheme, the District proposals being rejected due to cost, difficulty in making connections to central London and the details of the route. In March local landowners persuaded the L&SWR to avoid a contest by coming to terms with the GK&L promoters, who included the earls of Lovelace and Onslow; the House of Commons delayed proceedings to allow time for this to take place. On 30 May the companies came to an agreement, the Commons Committee consolidated the two Bills and on 22 August 1881 the L&SWR got the powers it wanted to build both lines, Guildford to Hampton Court Junction via Cobham, and Guildford to Leatherhead via Bookham. The only proviso was that the route across Bookham Common, which had been strongly opposed, led to the Lords deleting this section.

A Bill for a Leatherhead branch skirting south of Bookham Common, with a tunnel to protect it, succeeded in the L&SWR Act of 16 August 1882, but a spur at Effingham to provide a triangular junction was not built, leaving to this day only the junction towards Guildford. The new line to Leatherhead, including Bookham station, opened on 2 February 1885. Effingham Junction station did not open until 2 July 1888. Five trains ran each way on weekdays only between Guildford, Leatherhead, Epsom and London Waterloo taking 1½ hours for the journey. The L&SWR station at Leatherhead was now a through line and on 1 July 1885 the Directors allocated £227 for a new engine shed there.



### **Leatherhead Station in the 20th Century**

Little change in railway terms took place around Leatherhead for the next 30 years until the grouping in 1923 when the Southern Railway incorporated both the L&SWR and the LB&SCR. The Southern altered the layout at Leatherhead by providing a new bridge over Station Road, south of the LB&SCR station. This gave a connection with the L&SWR line enabling both to use the LB&SCR station. Thus the L&SWR station became redundant and finally closed on 10 July 1927. For some time afterwards the lines through the redundant station were used for carriage stabling, but in due course the track was lifted.

The Southern policy of electrification, uniquely in Britain opting for the third rail system rather than overhead wires, was applied to the Leatherhead area in 1925. The lines from Epsom to Dorking via Leatherhead, and from Leatherhead to Guildford via Bookham and Effingham Junction were both converted, opening on 12 July that year. The line onwards from Dorking to Horsham was not converted until 1938.

The only new line constructed in Surrey by the Southern was a commuter line from a point south of Motpur Park through Tolworth towards Leatherhead. It opened as far as Chessington



**LEATHERHEAD STATION TODAY: A RECENT PHOTOGRAPH  
SHOWING ITS LB&SCR FEATURES.**  
Society collection.

South in May 1939 but the completion of the line to Leatherhead was halted by the onset of hostilities and the scheme was not re-instated after the war.

In 1947 the Transport Act nationalised all the main line railways in the country, Leatherhead becoming part of Southern Region. The main changes locally were the introduction in the mid-1970's of modern colour light signalling systems leading to the closure of the Leatherhead box with control of all signals coming from Wimbledon. During December 1971 and January 1972 the old L&SWR station of yellow stock brick construction was demolished and the site cleared.

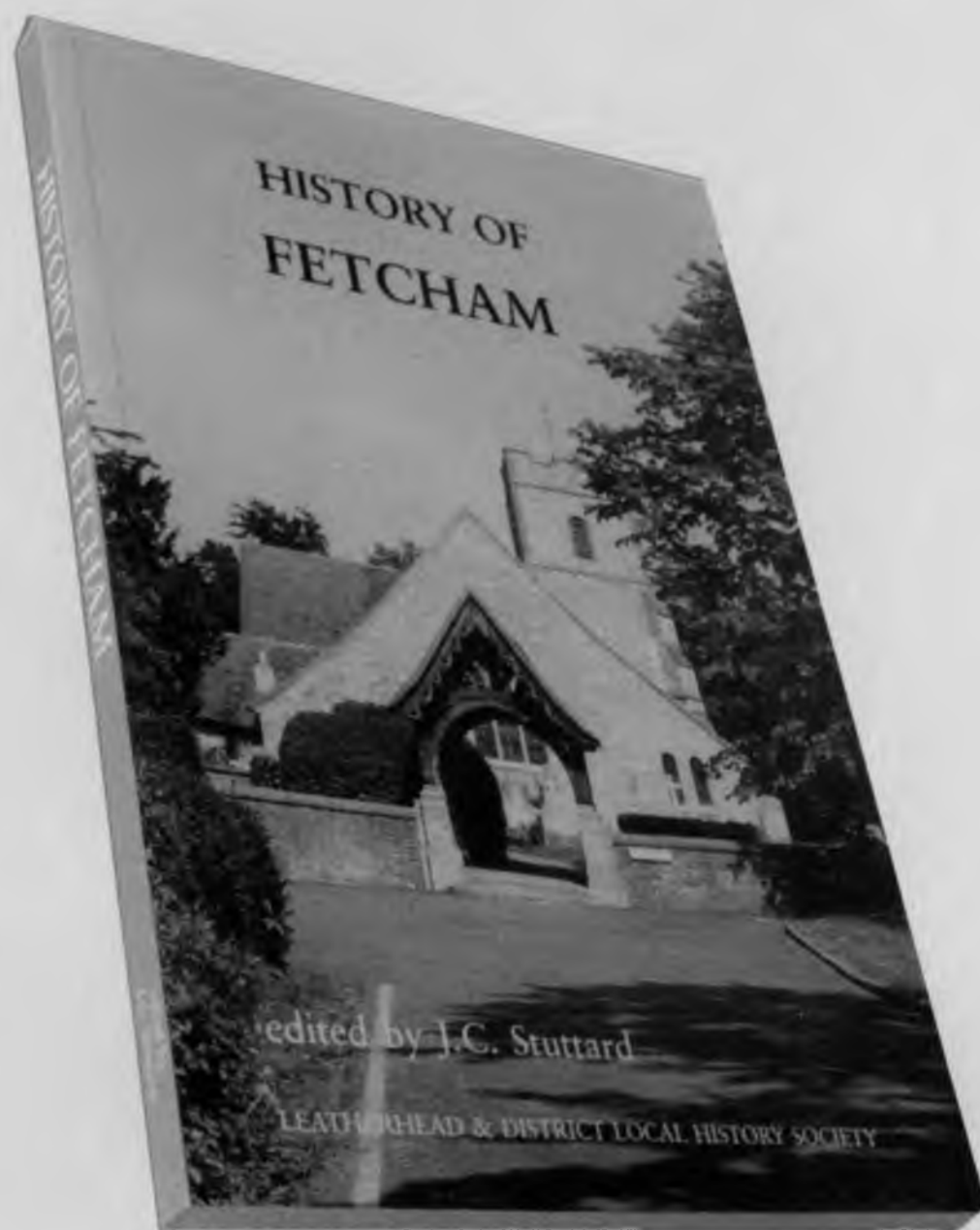
In 1998 we have come full circle. We started with two competing rail companies in Leatherhead and once again have two, South West Trains and Connex, with the added complication of Railtrack owning and maintaining the line. There are few visible remains now of two of Leatherhead's early railway stations, merely several railway houses on the Kingston Road, with more in Randalls Road, together with the retaining wall and the foot of the entrance steps to the L&SWR station in Station Road. Fortunately the remaining station still retains many of the physical characteristics of its early LB&SCR days.

#### NOTES

The following sources have been most useful in writing this chapter. E. W. J. Crawforth, 'The Railway comes to Leatherhead' *Procs LDLHS*, 4(10), 1986, p. 266; D. St John Thomas & P. Whitehouse, *SR150 A century and a half of the Southern Railway* (1988); J. W. Turner, *The London, Brighton & South Coast Railway* (1978); H. P. White, *A Regional History of the Railways of Great Britain*, 2: *Southern England* (1969); R. A. Williams, *The London & South Western Railway*, 2 (1973).

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*HISTORY OF FETCHAM, 1998.  
Photograph by Gwen Hoad.*