

LEATHERHEAD
& DISTRICT
LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY



PROCEEDINGS VOL 6 NO 3

1999

p 53-76

SECRETARIAL NOTES

The following Lectures and Visits were arranged during 1999:

January 15th	Lecture: 'Frosts, Fairs and Freezes', by Ian Currie.
February 6th	Visit to Chilworth Gunpowder Works Site, led by Prof. Alan Crocker
February 19th	Lecture: 'Anglo-Saxon Surrey', by John Blair.
March 19th	Lecture: 'The Mystery of Coade Stone', by Gerry Moss.
Marcy 29th	Visit to the new Surrey History Centre, Woking.
April 16th	The 52nd Annual General Meeting, followed by short talks by Alan Gillies and Trevor Marchington.
May 21st	Lecture: 'Sir Francis Carew's Garden at Beddington', by John Phillips. Meeting arranged jointly by the Surrey Gardens Trust and the Surrey Archaeological Society.
May 23rd	Guided Walk round Fetcham, led by Alan Pooley and Ed. Tims.
June 18th	Guided Walk round Guildford, led by Marjorie Williams.
July 18th	Visit to Carew Manor and St Mary's Church, Beddington, led by John Phillips.
September 17th	Lecture: 'The History of St John's School', by Richard Hughes.
September 18th	Visit to Reigate, led by Gerry Moss.
October 2nd	Visit to St John's School, led by Richard Hughes.
October 15th	Lecture: 'The Cobham Bus Museum', by Bill Cottrill, and guided tour two days later.
November 19th	Dallaway Lecture: 'Guildford Castle and Royal Palace', by Rob Poulton.
December 17th	Christmas Miscellany on 'People and Places', arranged by Gordon Knowles.

No. 2 of Volume 6 of the *Proceedings* was issued in February 1999.

FIFTY-SECOND ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Held at the Lethered Institute, 16 April 1999

The Report of the Executive Committee and the Accounts for the year 1998 were adopted. The Committee elected to serve until the next AGM and the Officers of the Society are shown below.

OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE FOR THE YEAR 1999-2000

<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>	JUDITH MILLS
<i>Editor:</i>	JACK STUTTARD
<i>Museum Curator:</i>	Vacant
<i>Treasurer, Museum Trust Fund:</i>	JOHN BULL
<i>Sales Secretary:</i>	Vacant
<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>Newsletter Editor:</i>	JOHN WETTERN (Part Year)

Leatherhead and District Local History Society

PROCEEDINGS

Vol. 6, No. 3

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OCCASIONAL NOTES

SURREY HISTORY CENTRE, WOKING, OPENED BY THE PRINCE OF WALES

The fine, new Surrey History Centre in Woking was opened on 31st March this year by the Prince of Wales. It replaces the Surrey Record Office in Kingston and the Muniment Room in Guildford which for many years were visited frequently by Society members. The occasion was attended by many County officials and local historians. The Prince unveiled a tablet to commemorate his visit.

J. C. STUTTARD

LEATHERHEAD PARISH CHURCH MARKS THE 350TH ANNIVERSARY OF KING CHARLES I'S EXECUTION

On 30th January 1999 a service of Choral Evensong was held in Leatherhead Parish Church to mark the 350th Anniversary of King Charles I's execution. The Vicar of Leatherhead, the Rev. David Eaton, took the service, together with the Rev. Charles Lawrence, Vicar of Effingham and the Rev. David Hobden, Vicar of Shalford. Although this service commemorated a particular anniversary, a similar one is held at Leatherhead every year on 30th January. This derives from the charitable trust of the Rev. Hugh Shortridge, Rector of Fetcham 1683–1720, who left money in perpetuity to Leatherhead and nearby parishes, one of the conditions being that a service should be held annually on the anniversary of King Charles I's death.

REV. DAVID EATON

WAR MEMORAL PLAQUES AT WESLEY HOUSE, LEATHERHEAD

Mole Valley Council is considering the sale of the former Council Offices, now known as Wesley House. These offices were opened by Mr Chuter Ede on 27th July 1935, but ceased to be the Council Offices in 1983 when the Leatherhead Urban District Council was replaced by the Mole Valley District Council, located in Dorking.

Not many members of the public now go into Wesley House, and if the building is sold the public may not be admitted at all. In the entrance hall are plaques on the walls commemorating the town's contribution to the war effort and the adoption of *HMS Scout*. The inside of the building is now listed and so the plaques should be able to remain there, but many people have never seen them and will perhaps no longer have the chance to do so. Outside the building is the Civil Defence Coat of Arms presented in 1946 and there is also a plaque commemorating the visit of John Wesley to the house on this site in 1791.

Those who can recall the perilous times of 1941 will remember that shipping convoys bringing essential supplies from North America were being sunk all too often by U-boats. Everyone was asked to give or lend money for the War Savings Fund to help pay for the enormous cost of the war. Leatherhead UDC formed a Savings Committee and people gave generously, often going without necessities themselves to help the war effort.

Around the walls of the Council Offices' entrance hall the plaques record the various ways in which the people of Leatherhead, Ashted, Bookham and Fetcham contributed to the War Savings



PLAQUE PRESENTED BY THE WAR OFFICE TO LEATHERHEAD, 1944.

This plaque was in recognition of Leatherhead's contribution to the 'Salute the Soldier' Week.



SHIELD PRESENTED BY THE ADMIRALTY TO LEATHERHEAD, 1941.

This shield was for Leatherhead's contribution to Warship Week and adoption of *HMS Scout*.

Fund. (One has to remember that the amounts given were worth a great deal more than they are now.)

'Wings for Victory Week' was held from May 1st–8th 1943 and a plaque presented by the Air Ministry acknowledges a gift of £240,000. 'Salute the Soldier' Week was from April 29th–May 6th 1944 and the plaque from the War Office is in recognition of a contribution of £299,519.

The remaining three plaques are all concerned with Leatherhead's adoption of *HMS Scout*. The first is a shield presented by the Admiralty for the donation of £222,500 to Warship Week, which was held from October 18th–25th 1941, and for the adoption of *HMS Scout*. Another shield was presented to Leatherhead UDC by the officers and crew of *HMS Scout* 'in appreciation of many kindnesses'. On its right there is a bronze plaque which was presented to *HMS Scout* by the people of Leatherhead & District during Warship Week in 1941. This plaque was carried by *HMS Scout* for the rest of her war service and was returned to Leatherhead by the Royal Navy on 8th April 1948.

While *HMS Scout* does not appear to have been involved in any spectacular engagements, she nevertheless took an active part in the war in the Far East and it is good to know that we played our part in 'adopting' her and that this was both recognised and appreciated.

LINDA HEATH

SOLAR ECLIPSE, 11TH AUGUST 1999

The Leatherhead area was not in the line of the eclipse's totality but that did not stop people visiting Box Hill and Ranmore Common to view it, with many more at home glimpsing it out of their windows. They were rewarded at about 11.15 am by a view of the sun being partly obscured by the moon passing over it, accompanied by the light of day fading away for some two minutes. The eclipse was an impressive phenomenon, last seen in England in June 1927 and not expected again until September 2090.

J. C. STUTTARD

THE LONG HOUSE, ASHTEAD

The *Proceedings* for 1998 printed an article by J. R. Clube on this house and the following interesting comment has been made about it:

Abraham Dixon and his family were the first occupants of the Long House which had just been built by Daniel Pidgeon. In July 1893 Cherkley Court suffered a disastrous fire and the Dixons were fortunate in being able to occupy the Long House on the Epsom Road at the junction with Ermyn Way.

G. W. HAYWARD

The Society has published two books this year. In the early months Meredith Worsfold produced an account of Ashted in the 1920s and later in the year a book in the Archive Photographs Series on Bookham and Fetcham came out, compiled by Linda Heath with text provided by Brian Godfrey, Alan Pooley and Ed. Tims.

Erratum: Procs LDLHS 6(2), 1998: Under 'Secretarial Notes' November 20th: for 'Sittingbourne' read 'Tillingbourne'.

HENRY SMITH'S CHARITY: A SEQUEL TO THE 1996 ARTICLE

By E. A. CROSSLAND

SINCE the article on this subject was written for the issue of the *Proceedings* in 1996¹ further research has amplified and corrected the information given there, particularly about Iwood Place (wrongly given as Inwood previously), the manor house at Warbleton near Heathfield in West Sussex. This estate provides the money for the benefit which Leatherhead and nine other parishes have enjoyed for over 350 years. The main sources for this article have been William Bray's *Collections Relating to Henry Smith Esq.* (1800),² the archives of the Warbleton & District History Group and the recent reports of the current Trustees of the Charities.

Bray inferred that because Henry Smith lived in Silver Street, Cheapside, he was a silversmith and many subsequent writers have followed him. However, the monument to Smith in All Saints

Church, Wandsworth, where he was buried, shows he was a Salter. In the days before refrigerators salt was a most important commodity for preserving meat and fish. Smith owned property at Longney, on the north bank of the Severn, and at Southwick on Shoreham Harbour where fishing was important. Salters dealt in flax and hemp used for the sails and rigging of ships. They also traded in potash, an essential ingredient in the manufacture of gunpowder.³ An associated trade located in the Wealden area of Sussex was the making of guns. From his association with an ironmaster on acquiring the Manor of Warbleton (see below) it could well be that Henry Smith's great wealth arose, in part, from his being connected with the arms trade of the time.

Another clue to Henry Smith's interests is in his will in which he left £1,000 for the 'relief and ransom of poor captives being slaves under Turkish pirates'.⁴ This suggests that Smith had business connections with the Middle East, perhaps with the lucrative spice trade. Another bequest of £1,000 was "for the use and relief of the poorest of his kindred". These two sums were used by the trustees to buy a small farm of some 84 acres on the outskirts of London which produced a rent of about £150. It is now covered by the streets to the east of South Kensington station as far as Cadogan Square, most of them named after trustees at the time they were built in the mid-19th century. Recently, the estate was sold to the Wellcome Trust for £284 million and other properties have been purchased. This, with investments already made, has brought the total value of the 'Kensington Estate' (by which title this charity is still known) to more than £500 million, producing income which enables the trustees to make grants in excess of £20 million a year to over 1,000 organisations.⁵ The Charity Commissioners have, over the years, varied the objects so that help is given in the fields of medicine, disability, social service and moral welfare. Help is also still given from these funds to the descendants of Henry Smith's "Poor Kindred" to the extent of some £200,000 a year.

Farms and Other Purchases

During his life-time Henry Smith bought a number of farms and other properties in different parts of the country as well as in London. The trustees continued to make further purchases with the large amount of money left to them when Smith died in 1628. The first of these was Eastbrook at Southwick bought from Charles Howard in 1595 for £550. This was shortly before Howard was created Earl of Nottingham (his son, another Charles, bought the manor house of Minchin—the Mansion in Leatherhead—after Edmund Tylney's death in 1610). Longney farm and the Manor of Longney was acquired from Lord Lumley in 1605. The income of this estate, together, with investments deriving from the mansion in Silver Street where Smith had lived, is now used to assist hospitals and hospices with donations of varying amounts ranging from £2,000 to £18,000 and totalling over £144,000.⁶ Another estate, Alfriston, makes grants to 'godly preachers', as Smith's will puts it. In 1997 over 700 clergy were helped.

Mortgages, Loans and Legacies

Henry Smith lent large sums of money in his lifetime, sometimes on mortgage but also on unsecured loans. One mortgage of £10,000 in 1585 was to Thomas Stollion, the Warbleton ironmaster, secured on Iwood Place, the manor house of Warbleton. This manor was held by Goda, the Confessor's sister, in 1066,⁷ but the earliest record of Iwood (yew wood) dates from 1324 when John de Iwode paid a subsidy of £3 0½d.⁸ The Iwood family continued to live there until they married in Tudor times into another old Sussex family, the Almans of Westham. Thomas Stollion demolished the manor house in 1591, building another there with the same



IWOOD PLACE, WARBLETON.

A watercolour dated 1785. Courtesy, British Library (Burrell Collection).

name.⁹ Smith redeemed the property in 1616¹⁰ when the first court in his name was held. Stollion died soon after and his widow and son disputed the legality of the purchase, settled only many years later when Stollion's grandson was granted a 99-year lease of the property.

As originally built Iwood Place was considerably larger than that shown in the watercolour sketch of 1785, by S. H. Grimm for Sir William Burrell.¹¹ It was replaced by the present Iwood Place, a smaller but still quite commodious building, using much of the material from its predecessor. A mounting block at the gate carried the legend 'This gateway was built in 1591'. The house is of red brick, facing east with 'Galletting' (pieces of stone embedded in the mortar).

In his will Henry Smith left legacies to many of his friends and servants,¹² including £200 to the Countess of Dorset. Her husband, the 2nd Earl, and his predecessor, had both fallen into debt through extensive purchases of manors around Sevenoaks, building and extending Knole and lavish entertaining (including Queen Elizabeth). Henry Smith advanced £10,000 on mortgage and then as had happened at Warbleton acquired the ownership in satisfaction. The Sackville family regained possession when they were granted leases. They again became the owners of Knole by exchanging the lease for that property for a rentcharge secured on other lands owned by them in Bexhill.

When, in 1641, the trustees came to implement the terms of Smith's will they endowed 22 parishes in Surrey in amounts varying from £1 (Addington) to £30 (St Olave's Southwark)

including £4 to Mitcham. This has been unfortunate for the parishes concerned, as in contrast to the very large increase in the value of the 'Kensington Estate', as mentioned earlier, the value of the Bexhill one is now less than £20,000 and the donations to the parishes amount to little more than £800 with Mitcham getting only £28.¹³ The Iwood Estate on the other hand is valued at £1¼ million and funds its parishes with donations totalling over £40,000.

Growth of Henry Smith's Charities

There are now two charities referred to as the Henry Smith Charity: the 'Kensington' one, being by far the most valuable, and that known as the 'General Estates' charity, which hold the funds that originated in the other properties bought by Henry Smith and his trustees, now valued at some £16 million. Although many of the properties have been sold and the proceeds reinvested, sometimes in other properties, the various funds are still called by the names of the first purchases. Thus, although when bought by the Trustees in 1629/30, Worth in Sussex comprised woods, farms and cottages, this estate has now no freehold property but has investments of nearly £5 million for the benefit of over 30 Surrey parishes, including Ashtead.

The following table shows how great has been the increase in value of Henry Smith's investments (for the 'Kensington Estate' see p. 57):

Iwood Estate	1641	1977	Worth Estate	1641	1977
Total Donations	£80	£40,700	Total Donations	£160	£176,000
<i>including:</i>			<i>including:</i>		
Leatherhead	£8	£4,400	Ashtead	£4	£4,400
Gt Bookham	£10	£5,500			
Lt. Bookham	£5	£2,750			
Bexhill Estate	1641	1997			
Total Donations	£160	£808			
<i>including:</i>					
Mitcham	£4	£28			

As explained in the previous *Proceedings* article, Fetcham was given a capital sum which the churchwardens invested in the purchase of strips in the Common Field and so received no annual sum.

Both the 'Kensington' and 'General Estates' charities are administered by the same body of Trustees. They receive no remuneration, despite the size of the funds for which they are responsible.

Few of the thousands of people throughout the whole of Surrey and in many other places from Somerset to Durham who benefit, either directly from the 'General Estates' charity or indirectly from the help given in hospitals etc., by the 'Kensington Estate', realise how much they owe to the generosity of a citizen of London who died over 350 years ago. Certainly his name should no longer be sullied by him being called "Dog Smith".

Refutation of the 'Dog Smith' Story

William Bray, Joseph Gwilt, E. W. Brayley, the Rev. Edward Turner and, more recently, Juliette Jaques in *Surrey History* Vol. IV, No. 5, have all refuted the absurd story that Henry Smith wandered around Surrey posing as a pauper and was known as "Dog Smith". Turner considered that John Evelyn was to blame for it,¹⁴ but the continued repetition is probably due



IWOOD PLACE TODAY.

This house was built in 1795, designed by Mr Clutton, the architect for the Trustees of Henry Smith's Charity. It is today the residence of Mr & Mrs Alastair Smellie. Photograph by Linda Heath.

to it being given in a side note on a *Map of Surrey Divided Into Hundreds* by Emmanuel Bowen published in 1760. He says, 'At his death he (Henry Smith) left in Charity to the Poor of all the Market Towns of Surrey, about £50 per annum each, and to every other Parish in the County, except Mitcham, £6 or £8 yearly more or less at the discretion of his Trustees. The reason of his excluding Mitcham from a share in his Bounty, was because he was whipped as a common Vagrant by the inhabitants thro' their Town.' This is totally wrong because:

1. The only places mentioned in Smith's will are Wandsworth, given £500, and Richmond and Reigate, given £1,000 each. During his lifetime he had given £1,000 to each of Croydon, Dorking, Farnham, Godalming, Guildford and Kingston, telling them to invest the money in property to bring in at least £60 a year for their poor. He used this yardstick in advising other Trustees. He also gave very precise instructions as to the types of poor persons who were to benefit and also those who were to be excluded, e.g. drunkards, whoremongers, those who would not work etc.

2. The allotments to the parishes were made by the Trustees after Smith's death in 1628 and also in 1641, following an Order of the High Court.

3. The places that do not benefit were, and are still, very small, viz, St. Martha's (Chilworth), Tatsfield and Wanborough.

4. Mitcham was allotted £4.

Another source for the alleged 'Dog Smith' story has been the Surrey County Council's *List of Antiquities* (widely circulated) which includes Bowen's map and its misleading comments.

William Bray suggested that the mistakes over 'Dog Smith' were due to confusion with Pedlar Smith who was buried in St Mary's Church, Lambeth and is shown with his dog in a window there.¹⁵ Joseph Gwilt called the allegations about Henry Smith 'an idle tale'. He was descended from Smith's sister and so entitled to benefit from the 'Kensington Estate' as one of Smith's 'Poor Kindred'. His father, George Gwilt, the elder, was the Surrey County Surveyor who rebuilt Leatherhead Bridge and made a survey of the town in 1783. Joseph Gwilt investigated his family's history and showed that although Smith refers to his 'poor kindred' he was in fact the son of a court official, Thomas, who married as his second wife Sir John Throckmorton's daughter. Gwilt says that Thomas and Henry Smith's church memorials show the same styles as in Henry's *Funeral Certificate of the College of Arms*, so proving their relationship.

NOTES

1. E. A. Crossland, 'Henry Smith's Charity', *Procs LDLHS*, 5 (9), 1996, pp. 230, 233.
2. W. Bray, *Collections relating to Henry Smith Esq.*, (1800). The copy used was once owned by Joseph Gwilt and is now in the Library of the Society of Antiquaries. Gwilt's annotations are part of his campaign to thwart Bray's attempts to demonstrate that the Gwilt family were not entitled to benefit from Smith's Charity, as being of the 'Poor Kindred'. He was also critical of Bray's capacity as an antiquarian, with some justification.
3. Weinreb & Hibbert, eds. *The London Encyclopaedia* (1984), p. 170.
4. W. Bray (1800), *op. cit.*, p. 16.
5. Report of *Trustees of Henry Smith's Charity for the Kensington Estate*, 1997.
6. Report of *Trustees of Henry Smith's Charity for the General Estates*, 1997.
7. J. Morris, *Domesday Book*, Sussex, pp. 9, 84.
8. Sussex Record Society, Vol. 10.
9. D. Martin, Report No. 1001 for the Rape of Hastings.
10. Manor Court of Warbleton, 1616.
11. B. L.: Add. Mss. 5670, f. 71.
12. D. Martin, *op. cit.*, p. 4.
13. *General Estates Report*, 1997, pp. 16, 20.
14. E. Turner, 'Memoir of Henry Smith', *Sussex Archaeological Society*, 1869, Vol. 22, p. 30.
15. W. Bray in Manning & Bray (1809), *History of Surrey*, III, p. 344.

Acknowledgements

Much help has been given by the following for which many thanks: Molly Beswick, Warbleton & District History Group; Michael Boggan, B. L. Dept. of Mss.; Julian Pooley, Surrey History Centre; K. J. Raynsford, Henry Smith's Charities; Anne Marie Smellie, Iwood Place, Rushlake Green; Dr A. R. Smith, Curatorial Officer, Hist. Mss. Commission.

Linda Heath and Derek Renn of this Society have also been most helpful with the writing of this article.

PEACE CELEBRATIONS AT ASHTEAD IN 1919

By J. P. WILLIS

THE First World War is usually described as ending on 11th November 1918, but the ceasefire on that date was officially an Armistice. The Peace Treaty of Versailles was not concluded until 28th June 1919 and it was decided that there should be a national day of celebrations on Saturday, 19th July. This gave local organisations only three weeks to prepare for the event and Ashtead decided to break with the rest of the country, holding its own 'Peace Day' on Monday, 4th August, the Bank Holiday.

The great day was heralded by the ringing of Ashtead church bells, the local ringers managing to complete a peal of 'Grandsire Triples' in 2 hours 48 minutes.

By 12 noon some 250 Ashtead service and ex-service men had arrived at the council schools in Barnett Wood Lane where they were entertained to lunch. By this time a small multitude of local residents were already foregathering a short distance away at Woodfield, opposite St George's Church, in readiness for a fancy dress procession through the lower part of the village. This moved off at 1.15 pm headed by the band of the 2nd Battalion The Queens (Royal West Surrey) Regiment proceeding along Barnett Wood Lane past the pond, turning right opposite the entrance to Woodfield Farm and then up Woodfield Lane to the cricket ground; here the competitors paraded in front of a judging panel of 15 ladies and gentlemen of the parish. A temporary cenotaph had been erected nearby and wreaths were laid there in memory of the fallen.

During the afternoon there were children's races while at the same time the combined choirs of the parish sang patriotic songs.



EX-SERVICEMEN MARCHING TO THE WOODFIELD LANE CRICKET GROUND, 4 AUGUST 1919.



PART OF THE CROWD AT ASHTEAD PEACE CELEBRATIONS, 1919.

After all their exertions the children retired to a large marquee to be served with tea and to receive souvenir presents. The adults, probably glad to be free of their offspring for a while, either sat down to enjoy an open air concert or joined in their own sports events which included such mind boggling activities as “Greasy Pole”, “Tilting the Bucket” and “Novelty Races in Pairs, Ladies and Gents”. Perhaps it was as well that the children were not there to watch!

It was now time for the distribution of the prizes. This must have taken rather a long time but those unlucky enough not to have won anything could amuse themselves in the side shows which included a Punch and Judy show and throwing missiles at a representation of the Kaiser’s head.

In the fading light there was a second performance by the concert party, dancing on the green to the music of the military band, a cinematograph exhibition and finally at 9.30 pm a fireworks display.

Judging from personal recollections and from contemporary photographs it would appear that there was a large attendance at the celebration, possibly a high proportion of the population of Ashted. There could have been few present at the jollifications who were not all too painfully aware of those who were absent and their thoughts must have been with them for much of the time.

The prize for the best outfit in the fancy dress competition went to a toddler, a pretty little girl with long curly auburn hair, who was dressed like a fairy. She was Lila Denman of Barnett Wood Lane and her costume represented “Peace”.

Acknowledgements

The writer’s thanks go *The Leatherhead Advertiser* and to Mrs Elsie L. Henderson, née Weller, for personal recollections.

THE LEATHERHEAD GAS COMPANY, 1850–1936

By J. R. CLUBE

THE archives of the Society contain two full reports about the production and distribution of gas in Leatherhead. The first, written by Ralph Hume in 1989,¹ was based on company papers deposited in the Surrey History Centre. The second is an account by John Young, the Company Secretary, written on his retirement in 1936 when the company ceased trading.² These papers reveal the following story.

Formation of the Company

The Leatherhead Gas Company was set up on 25th June 1950 with a capital of £1,600 and seven directors under the chairmanship of Samuel Parke. A plant was soon built on a quarter acre site, costing £20, at The Pound, north of Leatherhead near the Plough roundabout today. The first gas was produced on 3rd February 1851 and distributed mainly in street lighting but also to some private houses. The public lighting was described as “brilliant and satisfactory”. By 1858 gas had replaced oil lamps and remained the standard until the 1890’s when brighter, incandescent, mantles were introduced.

Price of Gas

In 1851 the price of gas was 82s. 4d. per thousand cubic feet but the coming of the railway to Leatherhead led to a reduction by 1888 to 5s. 6d. and even lower with discount for prompt payment. The lowest price, 3s. 8d., was reached in 1914. In 1922 it was about 7s., in 1924 about 5s. 3d. at which the figure remained, approximately, until the merger in 1936.

For many years it was the practice to distribute gas via meters and to render accounts to private customers on a quarterly basis. However, coin meters were introduced in 1895 and proved to be most satisfactory. There was an immediate increase in business and lighting and heating were available to customers with “a penny in the slot”. By 1935 there 3,800 such meters representing 34% of all sales. They had the additional advantage of obviating bad debts.

Method of Production

For many years there was little change in the basic means of production. Coal was simply roasted in ovens, or retorts, leaving coke and tar as by-products. It was not until 1927 that oil gas plant was introduced—perhaps influenced by the 1926 coal strike—and even this represented only about half of the output.



GAS BRACKET, CHURCH STREET,
LEATHERHEAD, c. 1900.
Society Collection.

Output increased from 837,100 cu. ft. in 1852 to 129 million in 1920 and continued to rise thereafter. At one time there were four gasholders in use and the last were dismantled as late as 1987.

Street Lighting

Lighting in public roads and some private houses was provided from the start. Responsibility for this lay with the first manager, William Hutson, clearly a busy man. He ran the gas works, handled the accounts and collected the money, all for a wage of 25s. per week. In addition he was responsible for the cleaning, lighting and extinguishing of the 33 lights in public roads. For this he was paid an additional £7 per annum. By the early 1900's a town map shows there were 129 lights in central Leatherhead with others in the Kingston Road.³

Staff

In the 1880's there were four regular workers—four stokers in winter and two in summer. In winter the first job of one man on the two man shift was to light the public lights which entailed activating each light individually. Later in the night he had to go round again to turn all the lamps off. In the summer, to allow for one stoker's time off, an additional employee had to be employed as a lamplighter. In the early days public lighting was provided from October to March only and not at all on nights when the moon was shining.

Competition with Electricity

There was a slow, modest expansion of the gas business in Leatherhead which in fact enjoyed a virtual monopoly. Towards the end of the century some large houses had acquired their own generators to make electricity, and in 1896 St John's School threatened to change to electricity if their gas charges were not reduced. The gas company gave in, but in view of the competition the company reorganised itself in 1897 into the Leatherhead Gas and Lighting Company. However, although they now had authority to produce electricity, they apparently chose not to do so believing it wiser to keep to gas only. The company was aware in any case that at that time most private generating sets for the production of electricity were fired by gas.

In fact the gas company had already begun to face this competition, and in the 1890's had introduced the "Welsbach" mantle, an incandescent lamp of particular brilliance invented in Austria. Although somewhat delicate it was very efficient. But in 1902 an independent electricity company was set up, whose customers were able to "switch on" on 9th August, the evening of the coronation of King Edward VII. These electric lights were soon seen to be inferior to the bright incandescent gas lamps which accordingly replaced the electric lamps within two years. The incandescent lamps continued in use during the 1914 war and were so bright that they had to be blacked out. Gas therefore remained popular during the war but by 1919 electric light began to replace it, except in Cobham. Inevitably though the convenience and reduced cost of electric power from the town supply obliged the gas company to reduce costs more and more in their efforts to retain customers.

Premises and Showroom

In the 1880's the Gas Company office consisted of a room in a thatched cottage in North Street, next to the Congregational Chapel, occupied by Harvey Nunn the ostler from the *Swan Inn*. The office opened on Tuesdays and Thursdays only. Between 1893 and 1902 the office transferred to Church Street (site of No. 52 today) after which it moved back to North Street into new premises built on the site of the old smithy on Bull Hill (No. 30 today). Here the first

showroom opened in 1903. However, there was soon need for a larger showroom and when the Westminster bank vacated premises in North Street (No. 3 today) the Gas Company built an enlarged showroom on the site which was opened in February 1914. Finally a move was made to the Old Bull site in 1929 when the Old Bull moved to Elm Bank nearby. A modern gas showroom was built at a cost of £12,000.

Take Overs

In the competitive world of gas the Leatherhead company sought to take over other companies and was itself eventually taken over by a larger concern. In 1911 Leatherhead absorbed the Cobham Gas Company thereby extending their area to Byfleet and Brooklands. As this included Weybridge, the Vickers company was soon their largest customer. A new main was laid to Cobham and the price of gas there reduced. In 1929 a bulk supply was likewise given to Woking through a connection at Effingham Junction.

Leatherhead had itself already been the object of an attempted take-over. In 1900 it was learnt that the Dorking Gas Company was seeking Parliamentary approval to supply gas to Fetcham and other districts supplied by the Leatherhead company. Drastic action was called for by Leatherhead, a special issue of *The Surrey Advertiser* carrying an advertisement which would provide the basis for a petition against the projected Dorking bill. The resultant legislation, the Leatherhead Gas Act of 1901, basically favoured Leatherhead and gave the company statutory rights hitherto not enjoyed. Their area was then defined as Leatherhead, Fetcham, Bookham, Effingham, Mickleham and Headley. An attempt was also made by the Southern Counties Gas Corporation to take over Leatherhead in 1933. This too was unsuccessful.

Closure of the Company

It was perhaps inevitable that the Leatherhead company would eventually be taken over by the neighbouring Wandsworth Gas Company. This was a large concern with its own fleet of supply ships which had already taken over Epsom and Ashted. Following negotiations an amalgamation took place in 1936. Wandsworth promptly began laying a new high pressure main to Leatherhead which was completed by 1938. With this decision of the Company the production of gas in Leatherhead was brought to a close after a period of 87 years.

NOTES

1. Society Records: LX 1084.
2. Society Records: LX 1082.
3. Ordnance Survey map: OS 2500. Sheet SVIII/15.

Acknowledgements

In preparing this article, the writer acknowledges the assistance of Mrs Greta Morley of *The Leatherhead Advertiser* and Mr Alun Roberts.

THE MANOR OF ASHTEAD, PART II, 1189–1296

By H. J. DAVIES

THIS article is the second in a series which seeks to address the questions: who held the Manor of Ashtead, from whom and when? (For the first article see *Procs LDLHS*, 6 (2), 1998, pp. 43–8.) The writer is indebted to Dr David Crook of the Public Record Office who loaned him unpublished notes by the late C. A. F. Meekings on Henry de la Mare and gave permission for them to be used in this article. The good offices of Mrs M. Vaughan Lewis of the Surrey History Centre and the Surrey Record Society are also appreciated.

After the death of Henry II, the manor of Ashtead continued to be held by the de Mara family, descendants of Laurence of Rouen, in the reign of Richard I (1189–1199). In a charter in *The Book of Seals* dated between 1191 and 1200, probably about 1197, Ralph the Chamberlain of Tancarville, son of William the previous chamberlain, confirms the holding from him of Ashtead, and land in Mitcham, Harlaxton and Londonthorpe, Lincs., by William de Mara, the husband or the son of Lecia.¹ He holds the land 'in feodum firma' in return for an initial payment of ten pounds 'stelling' and of 4 marks of silver per annum. This charter adds to the evidence for the conclusion that the manor of Ashtead was held by the same family from the Chamberlains of Tancarville for most of the 12th century, although there is evidence to suggest that the overlordship of the manor was at times in dispute.²

One hundred years later, in 1296, an Inquisition Post Mortem was held on behalf of the king, Edward I, upon the death of the holder of the Manor of Ashtead. The jurors said that the manor was held not from the King but from the Earl of Warenne.³ There was no mention of the Chamberlain of Tancarville. The deposition of the jurors was accepted without further question. It is therefore clear that a change of overlordship had occurred since 1200. There is no hard documentary evidence for the change. The jurors were a motley crowd: John de Newnham, Adam Atteley, Richard the innkeeper of Ewell, Gilbert Attwood, Richard Attechurch, Robert of the inn, Adam the innkeeper, John de Maldeford, William le Adlake, John le Leche, Richard de Bochesworth, and John, son of John, of 'Acstude' (thought to be Oxted). They swore their evidence on oath and it is unlikely they were all pressurised or bribed. On the day of the death of John de Montfort, they swore, the manor of Ashtead was held by him from the Earl of Warenne in socage. This was the most common tenure in the 13th century, a form of free tenure involving suit of court. In this case it involved the right of wardship of a minor, John, aged 5 years, the son of the John who died. However, the jury said that the manor had been leased to William de Montfort; although William had died the manor was in the hands of his executor, Richard, Archbishop of Canterbury. Neither the King nor Warenne was to gain any reward from John de Montfort's death!

For how long had the Manor of Ashtead been held in socage from the Earls of Warenne? There is no certain answer.⁴ The most likely time for this is 1204/5, when King John lost Normandy to the French King, Philip, after the siege and loss of the castle of Chateau Gailliard and the outflanking and subsequent surrender of Rouen. Warenne, the 4th earl of that name, lost his territory in Normandy and was rewarded with land in Sussex, Grantham and Stanford [sic], grants confirmed by Henry III in 1220. Similarly the Chamberlains of Tancarville must have lost their lands in England and during the 13th century they possessed and acquired considerable estates in Normandy.⁵ If Ashtead was not given then to Warenne, it would have been retained, as were many other manors formerly held by Norman French nobles, by the King himself. If the

latter is the case, the second most likely time for transfer to the Warennes is after the upheavals of the Baronial revolt of the early 1260s. John de Warenne, Earl of Surrey, took the side of the King, Henry III, in that conflict and after defeat at Lewes, returned to take part in the defeat and death of Simon de Montfort at Evesham.⁶

In 1278 answering a plea of Quo Warranto [by what warrant do you hold land?], John de Warenne, the Earl, claimed the castle, Honour and town of Reigate, Betchworth and Dorking and rights in Southwark and Guildford 'from a time before legal memory' i.e. before 1189.⁷ The Honour included unnamed manors, possibly Ashted. There was much agitation in 1285 over Quo Warranto proceedings; the Earls claimed lands and rights from the time of the Conquest. Warenne is claimed to have said "*Here is my warrant. My ancestors came with William the Bastard and conquered land with the sword; with the sword will I defend them against anyone who wishes to usurp them. For the king did not conquer and subdue the land by himself but our forefathers were with him as partners and helpers.*" On which H. E. Malden comments "Brave words, but coming with doubtful truth from a representative of the old Warennes of the Conquest in the female line only, who owed his earldom and most of his lands to grants subsequent to the death of the Conqueror, and half his importance to intermarriages with the king's relatives."⁸ Such a claim could have included the manor of Ashted and may be the answer to one or more of the questions posed by the 12th century documents discussed in the first article. The most likely period when Ashted could have been held by the Warennes was between 1089 and 1100 by the 1st and 2nd Earls and between 1138 and 1147 by the 3rd, possibly continuing under Isobel and her husband, William of Blois, and into the 1160s. Of this there is no proof. It is just as likely that the whole Warenne claim is a case of reading history backwards both in the 13th century by John Warenne and by subsequent chroniclers and local historians!⁹

Although the overlordship is thus uncertain, much more is now known about the holders of the Manor of Ashted in the 13th century. Much is owed to the work of C. A. F. Meekings of the Public Record Office, published and unpublished.¹⁰ The manor was held for many years by William de Mara, the son of Lecia and William de Mara, the elder; he was present when Lecia made her gift to the priory of St Mary, Southwark. It is not certain when he inherited the manor, whether he or his father was the subject of Ralph the chamberlain's charter above. He and his successors are usually known by the French form of the name, de la Mare. William, presumably the son, was involved in a number of recorded actions both locally and in Lincolnshire in the early 1200s. One in 1206 against Richer (decanus, a tithing man) of Ashted in the Curia Regis was claimed for the Earl of Warenne's seignorial court by his steward, perhaps the earliest evidence for the transfer of the overlordship of Ashted following the loss of Normandy. William de la Mare had a house with a courtyard in Ashted indicating a substantial former manor house. He also had land in Newdigate, a connection which appears at various times in the history of the manor. William had to defend himself in 1206 against a charge brought against him by the parson of Ashted, Robert, the earliest known incumbent and possibly rector. The death of this parson in 1213 led to a dispute between William and the Prior of the Abbey of Colchester over the advowson: 'who appointed the last parson?' It took seven years before the Curia Regis decided the case in William's favour.¹¹ From this point on the Rectors were appointed by lay lords of the manor of Ashted. From 1217 to 1226 he was deputy sheriff of Surrey. Because the Earl of Warenne, the high sheriff, was much absorbed in national affairs, William was in effect acting as sheriff.¹² As late as 1233 he was acting as an assize commissioner. He died a very old man in 1239.

William's son, Henry de la Mare, has been described as the most distinguished Surrey man in the royal service in the 13th century.¹³ Born and brought up in Ashtead, he left home to enter the service, first, briefly, of Gilbert de Abernon and then of William Longespee, King Henry's half-brother. Longespee was his patron and set him on his distinguished diplomatic and legal career. Although he received several manors in west Surrey, Hampshire and Wiltshire, Ashtead was his chief seat and he doubtless spent much time here both before and after his father's death. He also held the family's land in Lincolnshire. In 1240, on the death of William Warenne IV, he was acting for his heir, the 5 year old John, the future Earl of Surrey. King Henry III gave him timber, oaks from the Warenne lands in wardship in Dorking in 1241. By 1245 he was high in royal favour, being sent on diplomatic missions to Rome and France, for which he was personally provided with court dress by King Henry III before embarking at Dover. It may be at this time that he was knighted, Sir Henry de la Mare. In October 1247 he became a justice of the court *coram rege*, the highest court in the land, which had been re-established in 1234. He sat with Bracton, to whom has been ascribed the *De Legibus*, a codification and development of English law, first attempted by Granville 60 years earlier. Henry also became an assize commissioner and purely by chance his clerk's assize roll is the earliest to survive and begins with a sitting at Leatherhead on 26 March 1248.¹⁴ Henry's salary was £50 p.a., a considerable sum in 1248; he also had income from wardships and his manors and other sources.

Henry's death in 1257 was not the end of his contribution to Ashtead's history. Under his will, he provided for a family chantry to be set up in the chapel of the Blessed Mary at Ashtead with the service in perpetuity of three chantry priests. For this purpose he gave the prior and convent of Newark a sum of 250 marks sterling and provided a house and close which had belonged to Amfrid Gocelin in the village of Ashtead. The executors in 1260 were Mathias [Mathew] de Mara, John la Warre and Reginald Murtenk who was described as the Rector of the church of Ashtead.¹⁵ Mathias was not Sir Henry's son as has been alleged. He was a cousin and his ancestry can be traced to another Henry de Mara who lost his estates in Normandy in 1204/5 and settled in this country leaving debts which were a continuing source of embarrassment to Sir Henry and the family.¹⁶

Henry's heir was his eldest daughter, Matilda or Maud, who inherited the Manor of Ashtead. She married Peter de Montfort the Younger in circumstances which included the eviction from the manor of Ashtead of Walter de le Hyde and his wife, Joan, who claimed the wardship of Matilda. This was effected by the de Montforts, the Provost, also Pain de la Mare, brother of Mathias, and the Rector, Murtenk!¹⁷ The de Montforts had their chief seat in Warwickshire and manors in Rutland and elsewhere, the Ashtead members of the family being in the minor line. John, the son of Peter and Matilda, died in 1296 giving rise to the Inquisition Post Mortem (see p. 67).

The third article in this series will trace the history of the manor from 1296 to 1547 and will include an account of Ashtead's other manor, the 'Little Manor' held of Merton Priory.

NOTES

1. L. C. Loyd, and D. Stenton, *Sir Christopher Hatton's Book of Seals*, 1950.
2. *Procs LDLHS*, 6 (2), 1998, p44.
3. *PROC* 133/316 (4). The Inquisition followed a writ of Diem Clausit Extremum; this was addressed to the escheator north of the Trent and answered by the Earl of Warwick because the larger part of the land held by John de

- Montfort was in Warwick and Rutland. The Earl replied that John held nothing from the King. Three Inquisitions were held: in Rutland, Warwick and Lambeth. Only Ashtead was held from Warenne.
4. The only full history of the family of Warenne is in the Rev. John Watson's book, *Memorials of the Ancient Family of the Earls of Warren [sic] and Surrey*, 2 vols, 1782. Courtesy of the British Library. A copy of this rare work is in the George III Collection.
 5. Information supplied to the writer by Ron and Evelyne Hillier, visitors from France to the Leatherhead Museum, from L' Association des amis du Château Medieval de Tancarville, 1997.
 6. Watson, *op. cit.*
 7. *Handbook of Dates*, ed. R. H. Chaney (R.Hist. Soc. 1945, reprint 1997), p. 65.
 8. H. E. Malden, *A History of Surrey*, 1900, p. 110.
 9. See Sir Maurice Powicke, *The Thirteenth Century*, 2nd ed. 1961, p. 521 and footnotes for a critique of the Warenne claim.
 10. *The 1235 Surrey Eyre*, edited by David Crook with an Introduction by C. A. F. Meekings, Surrey Record Society xxxi, 1979, pt I. Appendix 2, p. 218f.
 11. PRO Cal. CRR 16 John KB 26/58, rot 21 et al.
 12. D. Burns, *The Sheriffs of Surrey*, Phillimore 1992 for P. J. Westwood, Sheriff of Surrey, and Surrey Local History Council.
 13. Meekings (*The 1235 Surrey Eyre*), *op. cit.*, p. 220.
 14. PRO JUST 1/870.
 15. PRO KB 26/169, rot 6, and CP 25/1/226/17 No. 37.
 16. Meekings (*The 1235 Surrey Eyre*), *op. cit.*, p. 220.
 17. SHC 448/1/3.

WARTIME DEFENCES BETWEEN BOX HILL AND SHALFORD

By T. MARCHINGTON

In a lecture to the Society early last year, Chris Shephard, under the title 'Surrey Defences against Hitler', vividly described the steps taken in Surrey to counter a possible enemy invasion. Details of some of the defences then built, and their present condition, are outlined in this article. The writer, a surveyor for the 'Surrey Defences Survey', has based the information on his recent field study of the area.

Introduction

The fall of France in 1940 and the danger of an invasion across the Channel led to the rapid preparation of Britain's defences. There had been another threat like this during the Napoleonic Wars when local defence 'volunteers' were called up, similar in their duties to those of the Home Guard in the Second World War.¹ A strategy of defence lines were also planned at the end of the 19th century, including a fort on each side of the Mole gap. The Denbies structure has been replaced by a house. The Box Hill Fort has been renovated by the National Trust.²

Defence lines in Surrey during the Second World War included road blocks and pillboxes, constructed to delay movement. The final defence was the GHQ Stop-Line, intended to protect London and the industrial Midlands.³ Where possible, the aim was to make use of natural features such as rivers and hills. The strategy was to hold an invading force long enough for a



ANTI-TANK PILLBOX NEAR THE STEPPING STONES, BOX HILL.

This is a rectangular box showing the stepped aperture that dominates the River Mole and fields opposite.

mobile force to be concentrated against it. In the study area the GHQ Stop-Line may be traced from the base of Box Hill to Shalford, south of Guildford. There are many contrasts in the defence structures, in their tactical siting and in their condition more than 50 years after construction.

Defences of the Mole Gap and Box Hill

The Mole Gap, a major breach in the North Downs, would have been a great prize for an invading force. The prime defence site was Dorking itself, surrounded by barbed wire and anti-tank obstacles. The siting of these, together with locations for rifles, machine-guns and 'projectors'⁴ is shown on the Home Guard map held in Dorking Museum.

An impressive structure survives on the banks of the River Mole, visible from a point just below the Box Hill viewpoint. Twelve anti-tank cylinders, 4 ft. in diameter, are embedded in a concrete platform. Lower down river, as the woodland is reached at the foot of the hill, a hexagonal pillbox stands, covering the approach from the south and the open land across the river. The walls are fluted, the concrete having been shuttered with corrugated sheet. The thickness of 42 in. was considered at that time able to resist a 6 in. shell.⁵ Further downstream and difficult of access, there are concrete cylinders of 18 in. diameter. They are in groups of three, held together with crude gussets of mortar. Only these groups continue to stand, others having fallen on both

sides of the river. Originally they may have straddled it. Another structure stands just upstream from the Stepping Stones. This is a rectangular pillbox, built into the slope and dominating the land across the river with a 6 ft. 10 in. wide, stepped loophole and a mounting that still survives, for an anti-tank gun. A further pillbox stands near the A24, a few hundred yards north of Burford Bridge.

Across the river, on the Denbies estate, there was an anti-tank ditch of which little evidence remains.⁶ This ditch and the sites mentioned above were clearly intended to deal with an attempt to bypass Dorking or a successful breakthrough by the invader. There were numbers of other defensive works in the Mole Gap of which little trace survives. The full story here remains to be told and research continues.

The North Downs' Defence Sites: Ranmore to Newlands Corner

From Denbies it is more than a mile westwards to the first surviving defence structure. Defences along the Downs are concentrated where surfaced roads cross the escarpment. The effectiveness of the Downs as a barrier must have been based on more than gradient alone; in most places the scarp face has a lower angle than 30°, well short of the 45° which was believed in 1940 to prevent tank movement.⁷



HEXAGONAL PILLBOX EAST OF WHITE DOWN LANE.

This stands by the North Downs Way. Bricks were used for shuttering as timber was in short supply. Damage by weathering and vandalism is apparent.

South of the escarpment is the heavy Gault Clay of the Vale of Holmesdale. Along the Vale runs a railway with cuttings and embankments. Between the Gault Clay and the Chalk there is a narrow outcrop of the Upper Greensand. This gives a belt of fertile soils, the upper limit of which is often marked by a hedgeline. Below this a step down of several feet results from the drift of disturbed soil downslope in the cultivated fields. On top of the Downs dense woodland has developed on a layer of Clay-with-flints. Apparently the military saw this combination of obstacles as a substantial barrier.

White Down Lane, which runs south from Effingham, is the centre of a continuous line of 15 pillboxes. These are seldom more than 200 yards apart except at Pickett's Hole, where there is a gap of over a quarter of a mile. The pillboxes are sited just below the crest close to the North Downs Way. Most conform to a standard pattern. They were built back into the slope with sunken rear entrances and concealed under yew trees. They are hexagonal with a longer rear wall and loopholes in those walls facing the likely direction of attack. Loopholes are stepped with steel plate on the face of each step. Construction was of reinforced concrete behind brick shuttering. The roof is usually 1 ft. thick, while the walls can be up to 4 ft.

There are interesting exceptions to this pattern. The easternmost pillbox was built of brick only 13 in. thick and there is no sign of roof material. Most of the bricks have been removed. At the western side of Pickett's Hole a pillbox is on such a steep site that only the front of a hexagon shape could be built; the entrance is in a side-wall and there are only three loopholes. Another box appears to be an afterthought; the loopholes are cut in sheet steel, a design found nowhere else on this section of the Stop-Line. The pillbox that dominates White Down Lane is familiar to all who use the road. It stands on a concrete plinth over 5 ft. thick. Another box to the west is similarly elevated, needing the extra height to overlook the convex slope in front. This box shows signs of former habitation, with door posts, coathooks, glazed windows and a sleeping platform.

Beyond the White Down Lane group of pillboxes the spacing is erratic with long gaps, although the design is similar. Several structures merit special mention. Hackhurst Down has a single box of unusual design. It is exposed on open downland and is deeply buried with loopholes (with one exception) scarcely above ground level. Concrete slabs mask the loopholes from above and the whole is covered with several feet of overburden where downland turf grows. Only a concrete slab suggests where the entrance may have been. At Combe Lane, north of Shere, a surfaced road crosses the escarpment. The Lane is guarded by three pillboxes which are sited along it and not astride it as at White Down Lane. The topmost pillbox stands near the hairpin bend and is close to a 5 ft. high anti-tank block. This was slotted for heavy rails to bar the farm track to tanks attempting to bypass the road. No evidence remains of any barrier on Combe Lane itself. Just north of the Silent Pool there is a pillbox with an adjacent brick platform apparently to mount an anti-tank weapon such as a spigot mortar.

There is evidence of a road block on the A25 road where it rises to cross the North Downs at Newlands Corner. As the road passes through a low cutting there are chalk pits on the north side. At the former entrances to these there are eleven anti-tank cones and one cylinder.⁸ These are necessarily in situ, though the cylinders, with rounded bases, could have been man-handled into position.

Newlands Corner to Shalford: A Change in the Defence Pattern.

West of Newlands Corner the North Downs become lower and less steep and cease to be so effective a barrier so the GHQ line was diverted to the south. The River Tillingbourne was a



CIRCULAR PILLBOX, MADE OF CONCRETE, OVERLOOKING THE TILLINGBOURNE VALLEY.

suitable alternative, but this diversion of the Stop-Line to the south created a potential weakness where the 'dog-leg' occurred. This situation was worsened by a surfaced road crossing the area, that is the Guildford Road from Albury. The Stop-Line responded with defence in depth, as the threat was now from both south and east.

The first line of defence was the deeply sunken Water Lane, an old drove road running southwards from the bottom of Albury Downs. This was an effective anti-tank ditch and was protected by three pillboxes, two of which survive. Two hundred yards west of the top of Water Lane a bank and ditch feature stretches 100 yards up the scarp face. This was probably an anti-tank ditch and, although now much degraded by soil creep and slumping, could have been an effective feature in the 1940's.

Several pillboxes stand further west in case of a breakthrough at Water Lane. One is on the east side of St Martha's Hill, another stands in open fields near White Lane farm, facing east in the Vale of Holmesdale. Other pillboxes cover the Guildford Road. Two form a unique pair, with a traditional box supporting a rectangular one which had a 7 ft. aperture (now bricked up) for an anti-tank gun. Significantly this covered the fields to the east as well as the road.

South of St Martha's Hill the River Tillingbourne flows on the Lower Greensand and has cut into this to produce a broad flood plain with a steep north bank. The plain is often marshy and springs emerge at the base of the bank. To this natural barrier, strings of ponds and artificial water courses have been added. This environment contrasts strongly with the North Downs and produced an interesting military response. Most pillboxes are sited on the top of the north bank.



ANTI-TANK MOUNTING IN CIRCULAR PILLBOX NEAR EAST SHALFORD BRIDGE.

With few exceptions they are circular in design and entirely of reinforced concrete. Some have a straight rear wall with loopholes each side of the entrance. River crossings are all safeguarded. At Postford Pond an attempt has been made to demolish an anti-tank block. Near Lockner Farm a similar block is in near-pristine condition. At Chilworth the block stands behind a wall masked with ivy and had to be pointed out by a local resident. East Shalford's bridge was protected by a 20 ft. diameter circular pillbox with a 6 ft. aperture at the front and the same type of gun mounting as in the box at the foot of Box Hill.

At Shalford the River Tillingbourne reaches Shalford Mill. Fifty yards west of that is the A281 and another slotted anti-tank block. This stands where *The Seahorse Inn* restricts the broad roadside verge that lies to the south. The block bears a small plaque that states:

"GHQ STOPLINE. This roadblock marks the line of the 'Last Ditch' defence against German Invasion, summer 1940".

This survey of defence structures shows that many have survived.⁹ Concrete has proved remarkably resistant to the ravages of weather and vandalism. Brickwork has suffered more, both where exposed to the weather and in popular places where vandals have attempted to strip

the brickwork, sometimes with regrettable success. Remote pillboxes often remain untouched, though dense vegetation may hinder location and even cause damage. Fortunately there is now a growing awareness of the value of this part of our heritage.

NOTES

1. See J. R. Clube, "Leatherhead and District 'Home Guard' in the Napoleonic Wars", *Procs LDLHS*, 5 (4), 1991, pp. 103–106.
2. Box Hill Fort was built in 1899; it is now a bat sanctuary. A leaflet is available at the nearby Information Centre.
3. In practice it was not the 'final defence' as other structures were built behind it.
4. "Projectors" would be either spigot mortars or Northover projectors. See S. P. Mackenzie, *The Home Guard* (O.U.P.).
5. Henry Wills in *Pillboxes* (1985), p. 6, quotes the 1936 *Manual of Field Engineering* of the Royal Engineers on this point.
6. The anti-tank ditch is described by S. E. D. Fortescue, *The House on the Hill*, pp. 22–23 and in a thesis by Ross, Charles, *Dorking at War* (copy held by Dorking Museum).
7. See Henry Wills (1985), *op. cit.*, p. 39.
8. The cones are 2 ft. high and 2 ft. 8 in. in diameter. The cylinder is 4 ft. high and 3 ft. in diameter.
9. A list of all the structures located, with grid references and brief notes, is being made available to the Society.

Acknowledgements

Chris Shephard's advice on the wartime defence lines was particularly appreciated; he supplied the 'List of Known Sites' which helped to locate most of those studied. The Dorking Museum kindly made available the Home Guard map of Dorking and other materials.



THIS SEAL WAS AFFIXED BY MARY OF ASHTEAD TO A CHARTER OF THE 12TH CENTURY PRESERVED IN THE BRITISH LIBRARY (COTTON CHARTER VII, FORMERLY BM 6635). THE SEAL WAS HER SIGNATURE, ENSURING AUTHENTICITY. MARY WAS THE DAUGHTER OF LAURENCE OF ROUEN WHO WAS SETTLED IN THE MANOR OF ASHTEAD BY 1120 [SEE *PROCS, LDLHS*, 6 (2), 1998, P. 43]. SHE WAS THE GRANDMOTHER OF THE SECOND WILLIAM DE MARE (DE LA MARE) AND GREAT GRANDMOTHER OF SIR HENRY DE LA MARE.

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