



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

Newsletter *September 2019*



Headley Court, the Jacobean-style Grade 2 listed former home of the Defence Medical Rehabilitation Centre near Leatherhead (shown above), was sold last year. Developer Angle Property has been holding consultations this summer on how best to use the 82-acre site while safeguarding the mansion and lessening the destructive impact on the Green Belt. See story on Page 32.



*Above and right:
Two works by local
artist Anthony Hill
in the current
Museum exhibition.
Go to Page 8 for
information.*



**MICHAEL
EVERETT**

Corporate Member:

58 The Street, Ashted

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The revised National Planning Policy Framework (Feb 2019) provides government guidance to local planning authorities and defines heritage assets as: 'A building, monument, site, place, or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions because of its heritage interest.' These include sites recognised as important locally and not only those with statutory designations.

Mole Valley District Council does not currently maintain a list of sites of locally recognised heritage assets as it could, but this does not mean they can be ignored. If L&DLHS members become aware of a particular planning application that impacts on something that could merit consideration as a local heritage asset, the Council's Development Control Manager has said he would welcome being informed of the details.



EDITORIAL



**TONY
MATTHEWS**

This edition of the *Newsletter* comes at a time of crucial change for the Society. The current year has seen both positive and negative developments, raising questions about our future direction.

A major Museum refurbishment and then an important exhibition of works by a local



**DAVID
HAWKSWORTH**

artist represent welcome advances to be celebrated. However we have also seen the further diminution of our strength with the loss of some crucial office holders. This has left vacancies which are listed on Page 40 and speak for themselves.

You may have been wondering why there has been no issue of the *Proceedings* for the last two years. This has remained little changed for decades while the *Newsletter* has developed into this quarterly colour publication, often containing some items that would once have appeared in the *Proceedings*. Space is always limited, however.

With David Hawksworth's arrival as Editor, the Executive Committee has now agreed to move to a new-look *Proceedings*, designed more like today's learned journals with colour and more substantial contributions. It should become the journal of choice for material relevant to the district, including both history and aspects of our natural environment.

Each paper will now be published on the website. When enough are available a printed volume will be produced. The first new-look paper by Brian Bouchard examines the long-standing and much-debated issue of the route of Roman Stane Street towards Epsom.

So the L&DLHS continues to develop. See Page 7 for more of what is coming up in the months ahead. **TONY MATTHEWS**



CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

I find my Chairman's Reports quite hard to write as matters of interest have usually been covered elsewhere in the issue. Nevertheless, as your Chairman I do have this opportunity to demonstrate a personal interest in the Society's affairs.

On Page 34 this *Newsletter* contains an obituary for Derek Renn, a very long-standing supporter of and participant in the Society. As a comparative newcomer myself, I was not particularly cognizant of the full range of his activities in earlier times. However I was struck by his remarkable ability to record notes of monthly talks in such detail that he could always produce a meeting report without further assistance from the speaker. Often no mean achievement.

His funeral was held on Monday, 24 June at Randalls Park Crematorium. Several of us from the Society took the opportunity to honour his life and gifts, and we were joined by members of the Society of Antiquaries and Surrey Archaeological Society, both of which were equally important in Derek's life.

By now you will know that the structural refurbishment of our Museum has been completed on budget, ably supervised by Peter Humphreys to whom we offer much thanks. The contract period had to be extended slightly but this was due to unforeseen external factors. An electrical refurbishment was still to come at time of writing, following inspection.

The Museum operations, led by Peter and Duncan McFarlane, have been accomplished not just with the usual visitor enticements but also a new display from the recent bequest of Ashted Pottery. A former office has been converted into additional display space. For the inaugural exhibition, a retrospective of paintings by Anthony Hill has been running since 20 July, covering many subjects in both the water colours for which he was known and other media. A viewing is recommended quickly as it closes on 22 September.

Finally I would like to draw your attention to the appeal for new volunteers on Page 40. We now have a number of crucial vacancies to fill if we are to continue as a successful Society. Please do get in touch if you can.

JOHN ROWLEY

NEWS FROM THE FRIENDS OF THE MUSEUM

BBC Radio Surrey presenter Allison Ferns dropped by at Hampton Cottage on the first of this year's special Craft Days for children at the Museum on 30 and 31 May.

With microphone at the ready she interviewed Friends of the Museum Robin Christian and Lin Hampson, together with actress Suzanne Page from Horsham who appeared for the third year running in costume. Suzanne has twice played the role of dress-maker Hilda Hollis, Hampton Cottage's last private resident, and last year she appeared as a Suffragette to mark the centenary of votes for women since 1918.

Another actress, Anna Bird from Crawley, made her second Craft Days appearance while

dressed as a washerwoman and was especially popular with children who helped her with the washing.

Allison also interviewed Museum volunteers in the garden as they entertained the young visitors. Listeners to Radio Surrey were treated to no less than eight minutes of live coverage on Allison's regular chat show which starts at noon every Monday to Thursday and lasts all afternoon. The Hampton Cottage recording on 30 May can now be heard on the BBC website some two hours and 40 minutes into the show.

The weather was fine on both days, the first time that the annual Craft Days had been organised during the schools' half term break.



Top: Allison interviews volunteers in the garden. Above: The BBC bus near the Museum.



Above: Museum stewards who ensured another successful year for Craft Days. From the left: Jane Tickner, Debbie Humphreys, Diana Rogers, Lin Hampson and Monica Darnell, joined by actress Anna Bird making her second appearance at the event, dressed as a washerwoman. She was a great hit with the children.

Right: Allison Ferns with Suzanne Page in the Hollis Room.

The newly refurbished Museum was busy but not overcrowded with 17 adults and 15 children on the Thursday and 17 adults, 26 children on the Friday.



PROGRAMME OF FUTURE ACTIVITIES

Mole Valley Open Days 13-22 September: Details in our usual emails or you can visit www.heritageopendays.org.uk (Visit > Events then enter your postcode.) Our own Society meetings are held in the Abraham Dixon Hall at the Leatherhead Institute. Coffee/tea from 7.30pm, talk at 8pm. Admission £2.

Friday, 20 September: *Georgian Baths and Bathing Practices.* Queen Elizabeth I famously had a bath once a year, whether or not she needed it. By the Georgian era, advances in ceramics and the delivery of cleaner water allowed the better-off classes to be more fastidious in bathing, leading to development of spa towns like Epsom, Bath and Leamington. However this new health fad could also be used as a cover for more licentious activities. **Ian Betts**, a ceramics expert at the Museum of London Archaeology describes recent research.

Friday, 18 October: *The British Hedgerow - Past and Present.* **Professor Pat Wiltshire** will outline how the hedge came to be and how its management and exploitation have influenced the nature of the local landscape. The natural history of hedges and their importance for biodiversity will also be discussed.

Friday, 15 November: *Fashion and Folly.* **Jane Lewis** of Surrey History Centre describes how people have done alarming and bizarre things over the years to enhance their beauty and be regarded as fashionable. Our ancestors' clothes and makeup were seriously dangerous. They went to extraordinary lengths to be 'à la mode'.

Friday, 6 December: *Christmas Miscellany.* Please note earlier than usual date and start time of 7.30pm so we can enjoy seasonal refreshments before three short presentations. **John Rowley** will introduce **Commander Alexander 'Alastair' Guthrie Denniston** of Ashted. A wartime code-breaker, he headed the Government Code and Cypher School, forerunner of GCHQ. **Nigel Bond** will review the **Test Pitting at Rowhurst** last May, what was found and what may happen next. **Bill Whitman** will show a short photo and film programme *Walking in Leatherhead* shot by Gill Whitman, mainly on the town meadow.

RETROSPECTIVE EXHIBITION

THE WORKS OF ANTHONY HILL

The works of Anthony Hill, the local artist who devoted his retirement and talent to raising funds for local causes, are being celebrated in the Museum's first major exhibition since the refurbishment earlier this year.

Anthony, who died in 1997, and his wife Helena held regular exhibitions of his paintings which were very popular in the local community. Many people have lent their paintings to the Museum for the exhibition, which opened on Saturday, 20 July and runs until the end of Heritage Weekend on 22 September.

As an architect, Anthony had an eye for the beauty of buildings. Many of his paintings feature them in all sizes from his garden shed upwards! He preferred the small and vernacular to grand buildings and also painted many landscapes. His line drawings feature familiar local landmarks including Leatherhead Parish Church, Sweech House on Gravel Hill, the White House in Church Road, Hampton Cottage, and Leatherhead Bridge (see front cover).

As well as his architectural career, Anthony's life included war service in the Royal Navy and 17 years as an Anglican priest. He was churchwarden in Leatherhead in 1989, at the time of the fire which nearly destroyed the parish church. He was among the first people on the scene and one of the paintings in this exhibition shows the fire as he first saw it in the north transept. It has pride of place in the church vestry. His architectural expertise was invaluable in the subsequent repair and restoration of the church.



*Left:
Anthony's
painting of
HMS Malaya
in 1943.*



*Top: Anthony and his wife
Helena. Above and right:
His contrasting rural and
urban settings show
Weston Lullingfields in
Shropshire and Brighton.*



Above: David Eaton, former Leatherhead vicar and friend of Anthony Hill, joins Anthony's son Nick to study the artist's picture of the 1989 fire at the church. Below: David's wife Ginny with L&DLHS supporters Carole Neeser and Sue Parrott at the exhibition launch.



LECTURE REPORT FEATURE

THE USE OF LIGHT DETECTION AND RANGING (LIDAR) IN ARCHAEOLOGY

KRYSZYNA TRUSCOE gave the May lecture on LIDAR. She has worked on aerial photograph and mapping projects since 2005 and uses those sources for her PhD research at Reading University into the landscapes of late Iron Age defended settlements, known as *oppida*. Earlier projects covered the Mendip Hills, the New Forest and the South Downs National Park.



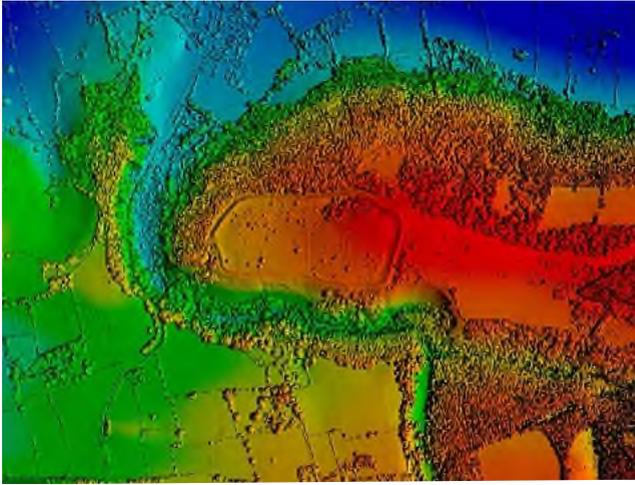
Krystyna Truscoe

My talk covers an introduction to LIDAR, how data is accessed, issues involved in interpretation, and examples of how it has been used in surveys of differing scales.

LIDAR was in the news recently with revelations of the extent of historic settlements in the Maya region of Guatemala. A report in *Science* covered results from the Pacunam Lidar Initiative in 2016, the largest survey to date which mapped 2144 km² of the Maya Biosphere Reserve.

The data made it possible to characterise ancient settlement and infrastructure over an extensive, varied, and representative swathe of the central Maya Lowlands, including identification of 61,480 ancient structures. Evidence was found for settlement of different densities - low in rural areas, dispersed populations in small urban centres, and urban zones where a single, large city integrated a wider population. Large agricultural systems, suggesting centralised planning of resources, were also found.

Another discovery was the extent of structures around Angkor Wat in Cambodia. Surveys carried out by the Cambodian Archaeological LIDAR Initiative showed that the well-known monuments of Angkor were merely the epicentre of an immense settlement



Left: LIDAR courtesy of Mendip Hills AONB. (Cambridge University Unit for Landscape Modelling.)

complex, with engineering works designed to manage water and mitigate the uncertainty of monsoon rains. The project aims to map and compare archaeological landscapes around all the major temple complexes of Cambodia to understand how these complex and vulnerable water management schemes affected the growth and decline of early civilisations in South East Asia.

A LIDAR survey is based on the principle of measuring distance through the time taken for a pulse of light to reach the target and return.



Above: Patches in coverage are clearly seen with data processed. Polesden Lacey is at the centre but the 1st edition Ordnance Survey map does not include coverage of the western part so cannot reveal historic planting details using this data.

Airborne LIDAR uses a pulsed laser beam, measuring between 20 and 200,000 points per second. These points combine to build an accurate, high resolution model of the ground and features upon it.

Aircraft typically fly at around 800 metres above ground level. An active laser beam is transmitted in pulses which

allows a swathe of about 600 metres to be surveyed during a flight. Measurements at 2-metre intervals or closer allow a highly resolved model of the terrain to be generated.

LIDAR can survey entire landscapes. It produces 3D data accurate to within a few centimetres, allows production of 3D elevation models, and can model terrain hidden under woodland canopy. Grassland is very susceptible and it is particularly valuable in improved pasture where features are heavily denuded. On moorland it can be useful, especially when ground survey is difficult. On arable land it may show heavily denuded earthworks difficult to survey on the ground. It is best suited to large-scale features such as field systems and may show earthwork survival of sites showing as crop or soil marks. Surface geology also needs to be considered, particularly in flood plains.

Success in wooded areas depends on type of tree cover and time of year. Higher resolution data is required to achieve similar results to open ground. Tree coverage variations apply to mature coniferous, young coniferous, thin mixed and thin deciduous in ill health.

Although LIDAR is known for 'seeing through trees', several factors can impact its effectiveness. A very dense woodland canopy will not admit the light beam and the only return recorded will be from the trees. It is best to survey a deciduous woodland in winter months when leaves have fallen. It may be advisable to consult forestry professionals before undertaking an original survey.

If you cannot commission specially flown LIDAR, good coverage is available from the Environment Agency. Data comes in varying resolutions with the most complete coverage at 2m and 1m, but with fairly large areas also covered by 0.5m and 0.25m. However, the Environment Agency collects data for its own purposes and this can limit coverage of a particular area for archaeologists.

One way to see online if the available data does cover the area required is to check the Environment Agency imagery on Flickr. The LIDAR index dataset shows the actual extent of cover, indicating whether or not a specific site of interest is included. It is also possible to download raw LIDAR data from the Environment Agency portal. Available in a range of resolutions with varying coverage, the data is divided up by Ordnance Survey sheet and even if only a

small part of the sheet is covered it will still be included in results. The Flickr site helps determine what cover exists for a project area.

Although Environment Agency data is a fantastic resource, it is not collected with archaeology in mind. Patches in coverage are clearly seen when data is processed. I was hoping to see details of the historic planting around the park of Polesden Lacey but overlaying the 1st edition OS map showed no coverage to the west of the park, so the whole area could not be examined with this data.

BOOKHAM VILLAGE DAY



Former L&DLHS vice-president Peter Tarplee joined records secretary Roy Mellick at this year's Bookham Village Day on 15 June to promote the Society and sell our books on local history.

Shown here are the display boards and table set up at the Old Barn Hall to raise awareness of the newly refurbished Leatherhead Museum and the wealth of material available for those interested in learning more about their local heritage. The RAF's Red Arrows also flew overhead to help make the event a success.



ORAL HISTORY FEATURE

JEAN ELIZABETH HUTCHINSON
(1937-)

Jean Hutchinson married into the Hutchinson family which ran the former coal and fireplace business in Church Street, Leatherhead, for more than 130 years. After living in the town for more than half a century, she agreed to be interviewed in April 2019.



My name is Jean Elizabeth Hutchinson and I was born on 17 June 1937 in Earham, West Sussex, on a Sunday.

I was teaching in Taunton when I met my husband, Stuart Hutchinson, on a trip to North Wales. He was a keen mountain climber. We married in 1966 and came to live here in Leatherhead where he ran the family business.

It sold all kind of things to do with fires. All things you had in the house and of course they sold coal and coke. All that kind of thing. We used to deliver

it then. We had drivers who would go and collect it and as my son got older he had to weigh up the pre-pack bags. He didn't think much of that because I don't think his father gave him anything for it.

[The house is called Alnwick, adjacent to the shop. Founder Joseph Hutchinson and his wife had come down from Northumberland in the mid-19th century. Their original coal business had dated back to 1813. They had built the house in Church Street, Leatherhead, and founded what was a new coal business for the town.]

The business had begun here in 1870 when they started selling





Left: Part of Alnwick, the former coal merchant business in Church Street, Leatherhead. It is now a vape shop.

coal. My mother-in-law, Hilda Hutchinson, worked in the shop. I never met my father-in-law because he had fought in the First World War, was gassed and didn't live very long. His name was John Hutchinson. I believe Thomas Hutchinson was a younger relative, a cousin.

He was not the founder of the business. It went back to his family who came down from Alnwick in Northumberland. They are in the churchyard here with one of the smartest marble tombs. Thomas, Stuart's grandfather, was the last Hutchinson to live in this house.

They built the whole lot. There was even a flush loo downstairs in the outside cellar which I think was intended for the workers. Then other relatives, cousins, took over. The original Hutchinsons had no direct descendants. The widow of a coal merchant in Alnwick was Mrs Joseph Hutchinson. I believe the Hutchinson she married had probably been the chief clerk. Often women who lost husbands who had been in charge of businesses like that, in order to be able to continue running it, would marry the man then in charge of the work. It was very common that these things happened.

The family continued to run the coal and fire business in this building under Hilda and then Stuart. My husband died in 1991 at 65 and my stepdaughter, Kathleen, then took it over and ran it for another ten years until 2001.

When I arrived back in 1966 the business was very busy and very prosperous. Stuart was very good. He fitted fireplaces and he was very skilled at that kind of thing. The shop was doing well in those days although I had very little housekeeping from it. But of course with time people gave up coal and stoves. There were lots of bits and pieces to go with it in the shop - coal scuttles, this and that, and they were not selling.

I worked locally as a teacher and when we had our son I didn't work for five or six years. Then I went back to work again. From my point of view I subsidised what went on here in the house. I had been teaching in Taunton before coming here and after my son was well and truly at school I taught at the convent in Effingham for a number of years. Then I came and worked at St John's part time and then full time. I was there when my husband died and I gave up when I was 60.

Then in 2001 what to do? The building was in a trust. I decided everything had to be upgraded so I put in loos and washrooms in every bit of the building except at the bottom where the occupants are the most fabulous furniture makers. But upstairs they now have all these facilities and in the shop downstairs there is kitchenette and so forth. *[Since then the former coal merchant shop has been replaced by a series of businesses, the latest being the vape shop.]*

When I came to Leatherhead it was a busy, bustling little town. Lots of shops and the traffic went right through. There were lights everywhere because the High Street was frightfully narrow. All these shops and all these people but you could buy everything here. A wonderful butcher's and a Sainsburys, there was a Woolworths. Then there was a smart shop at the top where things cost more but very nice quality. Nice dress shops, hairdressers. There was everything that you needed. You didn't need to go to other places.

You couldn't envisage what would happen to the town. People now buy online and small shops can scarcely exist any longer. It takes the whole soul out of a place. Yet I have been here a long time now and people are friendly.

The theatre has been interesting. Stuart used to go a lot to the theatre. It was then in the High Street, a small place right down in a cellar. It had its Green Room. They put on wonderful stuff and there was the cinema in Church Street. Then the cinema closed and Hazel Vincent Wallace transferred into that theatre. My mother-in-law was a Friend and I went with her.

The Friends were allowed to go to the opening of the new theatre when Princess Margaret was there and her husband. My mother-in-law's seat was taken up by the Royals so she was given others nearer the side which was quite an excitement.

FEATURE

DONALD CAMPBELL IN LEATHERHEAD

World water and land speed record holder Donald Campbell (1921-1967) is unquestionably among the most famous one-time residents of Leatherhead. He broke no fewer than eight world records in the 1950s and 60s and remains the only person to set both land and water records in a single year, 1964. Anyone over a certain age will remember his dramatic death in 1967 when he was killed trying to break his own water speed record at Coniston Water, Cumbria, and



exceed 300 kilometres an hour.

Not surprising then that this year's summer event for members of the Speed Record Club, publisher of the quarterly magazine *Fast FACTS*, was a talk on Campbell's former homes, Priors Ford in Leatherhead and Abbots in Norwood Hill near Gatwick. It was given on Friday, 7 June at the Devere Horsley

estate hotel by Speed Record Club enthusiast Colin Cobb, a tour operator from Belfast.

The Speed Record Club was set up in 1991 supported by land speed record breaker Richard Noble. Before the event, Colin Cobb contacted the L&DLHS for help with historic imagery and additional information on Campbell, who was planning his fateful final record attempt while based at Priors Ford on Gimcrack Hill, a large house since replaced by the flats of Campbell Court.

Donald Campbell, a true Surrey man born in Kingston, was the son of Sir Malcolm Campbell, holder of 13 world speed records in the 1920s and 30s. The vehicles used by both men were always known as Bluebird, apparently inspired by a London play about the



Above: Bluebird (centre) parked at Priors Ford, the Campbells' home on Gimcrack Hill at the time of his death in 1967.

Below: The same spot today where the garage of Priors Lodge at Campbell Court now occupies the site.



‘Bluebird of Happiness’.

Donald married three times. His daughter Gina, born in 1946, was the daughter of his first wife Daphne. Gina, herself a speed record holder, can be heard in the oral history section of the L&DLHS website at www.leatherheadhistory.org being interviewed by Edwina Vardey in 1981.

It is thought that some of the panel beating of the doomed Bluebird K7 boat in which Campbell died was carried out in Leatherhead. A lot of work was certainly undertaken there including replacement of the engine. The K7 was parked in the Priors Ford garage before being taken to Coniston in 1967.

It was photographed in the grounds together with the prototype of the next Bluebird, a car rather than a boat, which was never built. There was never room for both vehicles in the garage and before his death Campbell applied for planning permission to build a second garage. His widow Tonia later got it confirmed but Priors Ford was sold and demolished before it could be built.

Bluebird K7 was a very advanced design whose ultra rigid steel frame was stressed to 25G, exceeding military jet aircraft of the day. With an intended design speed of 400 kilometres per hour it remained the world’s only successful jet-boat for some time after Campbell’s crash. He had set seven world water speed records in it between July 1955 and December 1964 but it was not easy to manoeuvre. As it had no wheels it was unable to negotiate bends of any sort and was never able to move independently around Leatherhead, having to be transported everywhere.

In her 1981 interview Gina says she is sure her father had liked Leatherhead although Norwood Hill was his home for longer. He had moved into Priors Ford because it was such an attractive house. Tonia was especially taken with it (although she sold it after his death and moved to the US). Sadly they had little more than a year together there before his death. But during that time he was very friendly with Sir Max Aitken who had recently inherited Cherkley Court from his own father, Lord Beaverbrook. Gina, a keen equestrian, kept her horse at Cherkley and the family attended cocktail parties and dinners there.



Above: Colin Cobb visits the site of the Campbells' Leatherhead home. Below: Priors Ford c1965 at the bottom of the picture. The house was demolished and replaced by the Campbell Court flats.



FEATURE

BARTHOLOMEW CHITTY (1778-1855) AND OTHER OWNERS OF THE LEATHERHEAD TAN MILL

There was a mill by the river in Leatherhead for centuries - possibly since the Domesday Book - but the first known reference to a tan yard is in the will of Edward Hudson in 1692, writes ALUN ROBERTS.

In his will, Hudson established a charity to be paid for from his ownership of a house and tan yard. The Vestry account book refers to a tan yard in 1722 but before that the same book records the purchase of 'tan' (probably spent tan bark used as a cheap fuel for the poor) in 1700 and again in 1720, on both occasions from one Thomas Coe.

We can assume that Coe (a churchwarden in 1702 with saddler Robert Ragge) did own the tannery as his will, proved in 1719, calls him a Leatherhead tanner. Both he and his wife Joanna died in 1718 and are buried in Leatherhead church.



Above and opposite top: Two historical images of the tannery buildings beside the River Mole.



The account books contain no further reference to the tannery until 1778 when George Sanders, tanner, is mentioned. The 1782-83 Gwilt survey (on sale at the Museum) records that the tannery site and adjacent 3½ acres with dwelling house were owned by George Deane Sanders (died 1758). He and his wife Barbary (*sic*) had a son, William Cotes Sanders, in 1785 but seem to have left Leatherhead shortly afterwards as he is not buried here.

His father, also George Sanders (1706-1775), owned the tannery before him and is buried in the central aisle of Leatherhead church. The massive ledger stone which covered the grave was moved during the 1873 restorations and now stands in the tower to the left of the belfry door. It reads *Geo. Sanders, Tanner, died May 9 1775, aged 69.*

The next recorded owner of the tannery was Thomas Smith (1764-1846). He is listed as a tanner (and tannery freeholder) in the 1798 *Universal British Directory*. Bartholomew Chitty, whose family ran the business for most of the 19th century, was born in Farnham and probably came to Leatherhead to work for Smith. They are buried in adjacent graves in Leatherhead churchyard [151 and 150], often an indication that the deceased were closely associated in life.

In *Old Leatherhead* (LX 1082) writer John Young says Chitty came to the town in 1799. His four children were all born here, the oldest, Mary, in 1801. We know that Thomas Smith was living in 'a neat white house belonging to the tan yards' at that date (*Proceedings 1990*, p79).

By 1803 Bartholomew Chitty, then a lieutenant in the Leatherhead Yeomanry (*Proceedings 1991*, p105), was being described as a tanner and may have owned the mill. In 1805 he became a churchwarden for the first time (a post he also held in 1821 and 1822). By 1819 he was definitely the owner (*Leatherhead Tithe Assessment*).

Some time in the early 19th century (c1830) he built 11 brick and flint cottages known as Tanner's or Chitty's Row in Bridge Street to house tannery workers among others. These cottages were reduced to eight in 1881 and then six in 1901. They were also known as Chitty's Alley or Chitty's Cottages and were demolished after World War 2. (Benjamin Simmons was probably the actual builder as they were almost identical to his Flint Row in Gravel Hill, dated 1834.)

Chitty also built a terrace of four cottages between the Running Horse and the river and a dwelling house (Whiteleaf) on the tannery site. All these tannery houses have now been demolished, although photographs are held in the L&DLHS collection.

The 1851 Census records that as well as being a tanner, Chitty farmed 100 acres. His holding, Vallence Farm, was in the Common Field to the south of the town. He raised cattle and sheep whose skins he turned into leather.

In the 1840s the animals were sold to the Moore family. Henry Moore - father of Henry Moore the wool-stapler and corn chandler - was a fellmonger who prepared hides for tanning while his brother William was a butcher with a shop in North Street (1841 Census). Their younger brother, James, became a master glover and lived in Bridge Street (1851 Census). The allotments in Highlands Road now occupy part of the farm site. The old name is commemorated by Vallence Cottages, originally built as police houses.

Bartholomew's son Thomas (1804-1878) took over the tannery after his father's death but the business got into difficulties in the 1870s and was closed when Thomas died. His widow Ann was recorded as living in the tan yard house (Whiteleaf) in the 1881 Census, but no tannery workers were listed in the town.

In 1888 part of the old tannery buildings (the lead lined tanning vat) was opened as a swimming pool. This was taken over by St John's School in 1900 and used until their own pool was built. It was opened to the public in 1908. The tannery was finally demolished



Above: Graves of the Chitty family at Leatherhead Parish Church.

when Minchin Close was built shortly after World War 2. There had probably been a mill on this site for at least 700 years or even longer (although the town's name does not derive from it). There were actually three mills in the Leatherhead area at the time of the Domesday Book.

However, all that now remains of one of Leatherhead's principal historical

industries is a pair of millstones that used to lie on the riverbed to the north of the town bridge and are now in the Museum garden. These edge running stones were once driven by the tannery water wheel, a simple undershot wheel similar to that at Cobham.

The mill race and traces of the attachment point may still be seen near the bridge and were used to crush oak bark to make the tanning solution. Another ingredient was dried dogs' faeces which were collected around the town by men called 'pikers' and sold to the tannery by the wheelbarrow load. They were so called because they used iron spikes or pikes on poles to collect it. (Gunpowder was made in similar mills, although never in Leatherhead, but the remains of the famous Chilworth works near Guildford are worth a visit.)

It is worth noting that the memorials to the three tannery owners, Sanders, Smith and Chitty, are among the most imposing in Leatherhead churchyard. They were obviously important and wealthy citizens. The Chittys in particular owned a great deal of local property. Even in 1885, when the tannery had been closed for seven years, the family and their trustees owned 34 houses and seven parcels of land in the town, as well as the fishing rights to the river. We know from his will that Bartholomew was well off enough to leave £1000 to each of his three unmarried daughters, a considerable sum at the time.

FEATURE

THE SAD TALE OF ALBERT POWELL AND HIS MOTHER FLORENCE



Above: Two-year-old Albert John Powell in 1921 at an orphanage on a farm in Wiltshire.

The Leatherhead origins of a family in Western Australia have been brought to light following an appeal to the Society after 35 years of investigative research.

Barbara Powell is the daughter of a child migrant, Albert John Powell (1919-2000), who was shipped to Australia in 1927. He was just eight years old when he left Tilbury Docks, arriving in Perth at the end of January 1928. He spent all of his adult life trying to find his identity but died without ever discovering his origins.

This year, after taking an ancestry DNA test, Barbara found a match with a family in Wiltshire. She had made two earlier trips to England over several years but had failed to discover any details of her father's birth. Neither government information nor the Child Emigration Society had provided any facts other than that her father had been illegitimate.

However she did locate his birth certificate and noted that he had been born at 5 Bennetts Cottages, Fairfield Road, Leatherhead on 11 February 1919. His mother, Florence Martha Powell (née Vivian) (1881-1971), was living at 76 Beulah Road, Sutton, at the time although her husband and four other children were living in Battersea where she sometimes returned. Albert was not Mr Powell's son, as indicated on the birth certificate.

From Australia, Barbara read on the L&DLHS website (www.leatherhistory.org) about last year's centenary exhibition at Hampton Cottage on the Suffragettes. Barbara contacted the Society

for information about Bennetts Cottages as well as the Sutton address in 1919. She asked whether 5 Bennetts Cottages had been a hospital of any size and whether many children had been born there.

She also asked about another family known to Florence, one Leslie Arthur Sargent, Royal Engineers, of 1 Greenacres, Great Bookham, who died 13 October 1978. Leslie was another boy at the orphanages in Wiltshire and Buckinghamshire where Albert lived as a small child and where Leslie's mother, Ada Sargent, worked as a nanny. Leslie was four years older than Albert and moved to Bookham as an adult. His mother died in 1958.

L&DLHS records secretary Roy Mellick co-ordinated responses from Society members for Barbara. He told her he lived within 50 yards of where Leslie Sargent had lived and showed her the house on Google street view.

L&DLHS member Brian Bouchard told Barbara he knew Beulah Road, Sutton, a working-class street, mainly of terraced houses although No 76 was semi-detached. He discovered that Florence Martha Vivian's marriage to George Thomas Powell, a manservant, had been registered at Wandsworth in September 1904. They had four children between 1905 and 1912 and were living together in 1911 at 14 Green Lane, High Street, Battersea. (A Vivian family lived nearby who may have been her relatives. Among them, Edward Albert Vivian, a possible cousin, later sailed on the same voyage to Australia as Barbara's father.)

George and Florence became estranged and she moved to lodgings at 76 Beulah Road, Sutton. Margaret Tester (wife of Charles Tester, died in France during World War 1), was living at 76 Beulah Road, Sutton in 1916. Why Florence gave birth to Albert at Bennetts Cottages, Leatherhead, remains a mystery.

A neighbour at No 2 Bennetts Cottages, Brickbat Alley, Fairfield, in 1918 would have been the widow of Augustus George Coldman, a military driver also killed in the war. L&DLHS member Alun Roberts provided information on two other neighbours, Thomas and Martha Lewis, who were there from 1892 until 1937, first in No 2 and then No 1 which had a larger garden. They are now buried in Leatherhead Churchyard.

The cottages were owned by James Bennett, landlord of the Prince of



Above: The Lewis family of No 1 Bennetts Cottages would have been neighbours when Florence gave birth to Albert at No 5.

Wales pub next door who may also have owned the nearby Bennetts Farm. The rent was 2/8d a week (£7 a year) in 1895, rising to 5/4d a week (£14 a year) in 1935. The cottages were demolished in 1938 to create a car park for the pub. At the other end of the row was a common lodging house for homeless people and tramps.

One theory is that Albert's actual father might have been a Canadian soldier convalescing in Woodcote Park camp, Epsom, but it is also possible that Florence, working as a housemaid after leaving her

husband, was taken advantage of by someone where she was employed.

Albert is believed to have been taken into an orphanage at South Farm at West Overton, Wiltshire, about three weeks after his birth in Leatherhead. The orphanage was run by a Mrs Beatrice Headlam, wife of Sir Cuthbert M Headlam, a philanthropist interested in providing work for underprivileged girls and boys. Beatrice achieved national prestige with her United Services Employment Scheme which later led to her being awarded a CBE.

Florence is thought to have been working for Lady Selborne (Palmer) of Blackmoor, Liss, Hampshire, a friend of Mrs Headlam's, when Albert was born, although she was then registered as living at 76 Beulah Road, Sutton. An illegitimate child would have been scandalous and definitely not recorded. Bennetts Cottages in Leatherhead, away from both Liss and Sutton, might have provided a discreet getaway location for the birth.

Albert was also supposedly sickly. The matron of the orphanage, Mary K. Ferguson, described him as a puny little thing, 'suffering from jaundice'. In Florence's perilous ongoing situation with her other children living with her husband, it might have been a relief to know that little Albert would be taken care of. She is thought to have gone to work for the Headlams briefly in 1920 although in what capacity is unclear. Maybe she wanted to see how her baby Albert was getting on at the nearby orphanage.

Despite their marriage problems, Florence returned to George and in 1921 they were living together again at 52 Stainforth Road, Battersea. Between at least 1923 and 1926, she was once again in lodgings in Green Lane, Battersea, but by 1930 was back with George and the 1939 register showed them together again at 21 Battersea Church Road, she with 'unpaid domestic duties' and he engaged as a 'crucible helper (heavy worker)'. George apparently died in 1952.

Before Florence died in 1971 at Gosport in Hampshire, she told her family that she had lost a son and she never knew about his new life in Australia or his own family there.

So what did happen to Albert? In 1987 he told an Australian newspaper: 'Beatrice Headlam authorised my emigration, to Western Australia under the Kingsley Fairbridge Child Emigration Scheme

in 1927. Before I left she spent £5 to buy me an overcoat, a suit and a hairbrush and comb.’ On arrival in Fremantle he continued: ‘We were met by Mrs McLaren, a house-mother at Fairbridge Farm, and we left for the farm by horse and buggy almost immediately.’

He spent six years at Fairbridge Farm School and was then chosen with another boy and two girls to work on a farm on the Frankland River, the boys as farmhands the girls as housemaids. He had to work very hard and at the age of 14 was considered good enough to cook three meals a day for three others and himself, besides doing the milking and other labouring jobs. After seven years he boarded a train to Melbourne and joined the Australian army.

In World War 2 he served with the 21st Ordnance Company of the Seventh Division in Palestine, and after Singapore fell, went to fight the Japanese in New Guinea, volunteering as a paratrooper. After the war he developed a returned soldier settlement farm and brought up five children of his own, including Barbara. He has eleven grandchildren, 20 great grandchildren with another due, and two great great grandchildren.

ASHTEAD’S OLDEST AA TELEPHONE BOX?



A small piece of recovered history, writes JOHN ROWLEY. AA boxes were introduced from 1912 and the one shown left, originally located on the A24 just inside the Ashtead border from Epsom, is known as No. 41.

I believe it was the earliest in our district. The only other one I know of was on the A24 in the lay-by due south of the Knoll Roundabout. You can see three pictures of the Ashtead ‘box’ at <http://www.flickr.com/photos/automobile-association/sets/72157632058840127/>

RESEARCH CALL

WHO EXACTLY WAS ARTHUR BIRD?

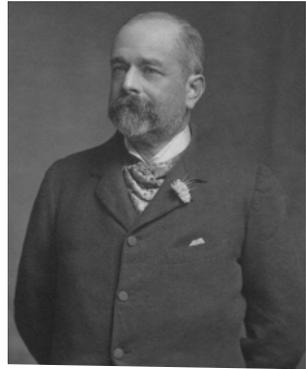
Arthur Bird, a London solicitor and property developer, played a major role in the creation of modern Bookham. At the end of the 19th century he bought what is now The Grange and was formerly the School of Stitchery at Preston Cross. He also bought land west of Church Road and north of Lower Road, dividing it up for development, and gave what is today the Old Barn Hall to the parish.

We know that he laid out a short road running east from Little Bookham Street, called Nelson Road with a terrace of three cottages. That is now part of Oakdene Road. He may also have built Merrylands Cottages at the end of a short spur road running south from Station Road on the only stretch of land immediately nearby not owned at the time by another major developer, Mrs Mary Chrystie.

On 9 June 1905 Arthur's son George became Rector at St Nicolas, the parish church, going on to serve there right up to 1926. Both of them are now buried in the churchyard together with their wives.

This much is known about Arthur Bird but a great many questions remain to be answered about his life. What was his background, for example and that of his wife? Exactly how much land did he buy up and how did he set about breaking it up for development? How much money was involved? Why did the Barn Hall end up with Bookham Community Association rather than the church?

Bill Whitman, former Editor of *The Proceedings*, is appealing for a volunteer to research the answers to these questions with the aim of running a biographical article in the *Newsletter*. Please email newsletter@leatherheadhistory.org if you can assist with this.



*Above: Arthur and
Mary Jane Bird.*

FEATURE

WHAT FUTURE FOR HEADLEY COURT?

Headley Court was originally an Elizabethan farmhouse set within some 300 acres. It was gifted to Walter Cunliffe, later 1st Baron Cunliffe and governor of the Bank of England, by his father on condition he would pursue a career in banking rather than farming. The family fortune had been made by Walter's grandfather, James Cunliffe, developer of the North Eastern Railway. The Jacobean-style mansion and adjoining stables were completed in 1899, on the foundations of, and including some walls of, earlier buildings.

During World War 2 it was first the headquarters of the Army's VII Corps and then used by the Canadian Corps. After the war the estate was purchased and placed in trust for the medical rehabilitation of pilots and air crews of the Royal Air Force. It was expanded in 1985 to include serving members of all the armed forces and renamed the Defence Medical Rehabilitation Centre (DRMC). In July 2014, the Ministry of Defence announced plans to move the centre to a new purpose-built facility near Loughborough and Headley Court duly closed last year.

Air Vice Marshal Anthony J Stables, chairman of the Headley Court Charity trust, said: 'For almost 70 years the rehabilitation facility has cared for wounded, injured and sick members of the Armed Forces and it holds a very special place in many peoples' hearts.' Tony Williamson, director of Angle Property, the new owner, said: 'We will be working with all local stakeholders and the wider local community to discuss our plans and proposals.'

The firm sought a consensual way forward through the development process, he said. Many of the existing buildings were either temporary, very specialist or beyond re-use, which would need to be factored into plans while respecting the mansion's listed status. Angle Property has previously worked on Station Corner in Redhill and Rivernook Farm in Walton.

The site, totalling 82 acres, has been split into three. The existing houses have been sold on to a third party, now being marketed by estate agent Patrick Gardner. The mansion is separate with land along the Headley Road to its boundary. The third area is the other

side of the road including playing pitch, ambulance station, car parks, dormitories and the former officers' mess. At time of sale the site included 133 staff bedrooms and 56 semi-detached and eight detached houses. The grounds comprise both formal and informal landscaped gardens as well as a tennis court, surrounding woodland, sports fields and parking for more than 400 vehicles.

Headley Court Charity started talks in 2015 with Mole Valley Council on potential uses for the site. Apart from private housing this could have included retirement/assisted living, education or a hotel. There are no legal restrictions to what the site can be used for other than green belt and planning policies but Angle Property says housing is the priority. Mr Williamson said his firm wanted to 'lessen the impact on the green belt at the same time as improving the setting of the mansion', adding: 'It's about working around and maintaining the significant mature trees.' The public consultation displays started in early July and a planning application is to be submitted to Mole Valley later this year or by early next year.

Until last year Headley Court was renowned for successfully returning injured or seriously ill service personnel to full fitness. In November 2005, the Prince of Wales visited and met Major David Bradley who had been given a 5% chance of survival after coming under fire from a rocket propelled grenade launcher in Iraq. He was one of many for whom the DRMC meant the chance of a enjoying a future despite horrendous injuries. As recently as 2012 the Prince was back to open a new Jubilee Rehab Complex there.

Some 200 rehabilitation staff worked at Headley Court from all three services' medical and nursing branches. Among them were specialist doctors, nurses, remedial instructors, physiotherapists, occupational therapists, speech therapists, a cognitive therapist, social workers, engineers, and administration staff. They covered both new physical disabilities and victims of post-traumatic stress. There were hydrotherapy pools, gymnasiums and prosthetics workshops.

Until the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq there was little publicity for all this but that changed dramatically when media attention turned to the remarkable work being undertaken at Headley Court. While some patients had to face the end of their military careers, many others were able to return to their units. A remarkable story.

OBITUARY

DEREK RENN, CBE, PhD, FIA, FSS, FSA, FRHistS (1930-2019)

Derek Frank Renn, former president of the L&DLHS, died on 31 May at Epsom Hospital. Among the Society's longest and most devoted members, he was elected a member of the Society of Antiquaries of London on 3 March 1966 and appeared in the L&DLHS *Newsletter* in July of that year after giving a talk on English castles.

Derek was editor of the *Proceedings* in 1985-86 and contributed many articles. He was still reporting the Society's monthly lectures as recently as 2017. He also gave long and active service on the Programme Sub-



Committee. Yet his L&DLHS activities formed only a small part of his overall work for many organisations.

Derek was born in Hackney, east London on 16 February 1930. In 1941 he won a scholarship to Queen Elizabeth's Grammar School, Barnet, coming top out of 301 candidates. As a young teenager, bored with sitting on Folkestone beach every year, he searched in vain for the 'Norman Fort' marked on the Ordnance Survey map, not realising it lay under his feet. Later, reading for a school essay competition and helping JPC Kent with the excavation of the local castle at South Mimms led to a lifelong interest in castles.

Lack of money prevented him taking up places offered at Merton College, Oxford or Christ's College, Cambridge but he was successful in the Civil Service open executive competition in 1948. He joined the Government Actuary's department, staying with them for 44 years until he retired in 1992 as Senior Actuary and Establishment Officer. He served as Assistant Editor and later Editor of the *Institute of Actuaries Journal* from 1970 to 1980.

Derek spent his two years national service with the RAF, completing his actuarial qualification work on day release. His historical interests continued and on a tour of historical sites in Sicily in the early 1960s he met his wife Ann. They were married in 1964.

His first fieldwork was with the North Middlesex Archaeological Research Committee led by W.F. Grimes, tracing the eastern extension of the Middlesex Grim's Dyke and excavating at the Roman settlement of *Sulloniaca*. In 1959 he was part of a BBC radio programme on Norman castles and was awarded the British Archaeological Association's Reginald Taylor Medal for an essay on Anglo-Norman keeps.

He was a founder member of the Chateau Gaillard international castles conference, of the Castle Study Group and the Standing Conference on London Archaeology. In 1969 his association with Arnold Taylor led to an invitation to write a castle guidebook entitled *Three Shell Keeps: Launceston, Restormel and Totnes*. This led to a number of guidebooks for the Ministry of Public Buildings & Works and its successors, the Department of the Environment, English Heritage and Cadw in Wales. (He had a particular appreciation of guidebooks, still retaining his copy of the Tower of London guide from a trip to see the Crown Jewels as a very small child.)

While Derek always maintained he preferred to be an amateur in the field of archaeology he brought a professional's rigour to his studies. After many years of preparation and study his book *Norman Castles in Britain* was published in 1968 and remained in print for over 20 years. He was invited by Barry Cunliffe, then at Southampton University's Archaeology Department, to research further as an external mature student. His thesis, *The Development of Fortification in England: 1166–1236*, led to his doctorate in 1977.

Derek served on the council of the Society of Antiquaries of London in 1972-3. Later as treasurer from 1993-2001 he carried out financial reforms which included trebling the subscription fee, pointing out wryly that one of his predecessors (John Bruce) had halved it in 1852!

He had compounded his own subscription many years before, after warning the Society he believed the rates in force were too low. In this he followed the first Government Actuary who discovered government annuities being sold at a loss in the early 19th century.

He was president of the London and Middlesex Archaeological

Society from 1988 to 1991 and briefly again after the sudden tragic death of his successor, Hugh Chapman, in 1992. That year he was also awarded the CBE for services to the Government Actuary's Department. Other roles included honorary vice-president of the Royal Archaeological Institute and the Surrey Archaeological Society, Freeman of the City of London, and Liveryman of the Worshipful Company of Actuaries.

Despite illness and restricted mobility in recent years Derek continued his lifelong interest, corresponding with colleagues and contributing articles right up to his death. He was especially moved by the publication of *Castles: History, Archaeology, Landscape, Architecture and Symbolism*, a collection of essays in his honour, by the Castle Studies Group just last year.

A long-time resident of Little Bookham, he moved into Gracewell nursing home at Preston Cross soon after it opened in 2018 and gave talks to residents there. He was taken ill in the morning of 31 May and rushed to Epsom Hospital where he died peacefully in the late afternoon. Derek and Ann had two children, Peter and Mary.

At his funeral on 24 June at Randalls Park, Leatherhead, Peter read a tribute. When the Queen had awarded Derek the CBE at Buckingham Palace he had been delighted but the only person he had proudly shown it to was his mother, Dorothy, then well into her nineties. Although he had received the freedom of the City of London in 1990 he had never managed to exercise his right to drive sheep over London Bridge. So he was delighted when Mary did so on his behalf in 2017.

He loved all aspects of history, from Norman castles to industrial archaeology. Almost as soon as he saw the old photographs of Bookham and Leatherhead in Gracewell he began studying and listing them and contacting others who would share that interest.

Blessed with good health for most of his life, he always made friends easily and was universally admired for his affability, modesty and quiet precision. He was both a gentle man and a gentleman.

Stephen Fortescue, a founder of the L&DLHS, wrote: 'Derek was an exceptional person, a man of extraordinary erudition and was always ready to assist the less learned. He will be sadly missed both as a personality and for his historical and archaeological knowledge.'

FETCHAM'S RISING SUN

In the June 2019 Newsletter, John Wettren recalled several previous incarnations of what is now the Zen Garden Chinese restaurant at the junction of Hawks Hill and Cobham Road. In his final Newsletter contribution, DEREK RENN wrote.



Above: Edwardian cyclists outside the old Fetcham pub might well have been very surprised about its 21st century identity.

Now known as the Zen Garden, the building has often changed names and functions. In 1946-7 it was a youth hostel known as the Old Rising Sun. I slept on the bar counter and the warden doubled as a 'retained fireman' at the fire station nearby.

The 'Old' was to distinguish it from the New Rising Sun, a road-house built on the opposite corner in the 1930s, later to be replaced by the current block of flats called Harroway from a story that a prehistoric road of that name ran past.

The story of the Old Rising Sun before 1981 - when it was the Pilgrim Restaurant - is told by Professor Blair in the *Proceedings*, Vol 4.5, pages 126-33. Briefly, it is partly a late medieval building which may have been a chapel. The only tenant, described as a brewer in 1763, was dead within a year. It was conveyed with enfranchisement to Hodgson's Brewery Co in 1896.

LEATHERHEAD & DISTRICT LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Registered Charity No 1175119

Hampton Cottage, 64 Church Street, Leatherhead KT22 8DP

Telephone: 01372 386348 Email: museum@leatherheadhistory.org

Website: www.leatherheadhistory.org

Online Archive: www.ldlhsarchive.co.uk

Monthly meetings at the Letherhead Institute every third Friday of the month between September and May, 7.30pm for 8pm.
Museum (Hampton Cottage): Open Thursdays and Fridays 1pm - 4pm and Saturdays 10am-4pm + Sunday 22 September 10am-4pm

Officers of the Society

President

Alan Pooley

president@leatherheadhistory.org

Chairman

John Rowley

chairman@leatherheadhistory.org

Secretary

Jane Summerfield

secretary@leatherheadhistory.org

Treasurer

Carl Leyshon

treasurer@leatherheadhistory.org

Archaeology Secretary

Nigel Bond

archaeology@leatherheadhistory.org

Museum Curator

Vacant

curator@leatherheadhistory.org

Secretary, Friends of Leatherhead Museum

Judy Wilson

rjawilson6roe@aol.com

Programmes and Lectures Secretary

Fred Meynen

programme@leatherheadhistory.org

Records Secretary

Roy Mellick

records@leatherheadhistory.org

Membership Secretary

Frank Haslam

membership@leatherheadhistory.org

Newsletter Editor/Publicity Secretary

Tony Matthews

newsletter@leatherheadhistory.org

Proceedings Editor

David Hawksworth

proceedings@leatherheadhistory.org

Museum Managers

Peter Humphreys and Duncan Macfarlane

museum@leatherheadhistory.org

Archival Material

The Society's archival material including documents, illustrations and maps, may be accessed through the following members:

ashteadarchive@leatherheadhistory.org

John Rowley

bookhamarchive@leatherheadhistory.org

Roy Mellick

fetchamarchive@leatherheadhistory.org

Alan Pooley

leatherheadarchive@leatherheadhistory.org

Vacant

Historical Enquiry Service

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

Kirby Library (Letherhead Institute)

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

2019 L&DLHS MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTIONS

Ordinary £20 Associate /Student £6 Small Corporate £125

VACANCIES

The L&DLHS now has vacancies for all of the following posts. Filling these really is crucial for the Society's future, as is attracting more ordinary members. For more information, to volunteer yourself, or to recommend someone suitable, please contact Chairman John Rowley on 01372/723417 or any of the existing office holders on Pages 38/39.

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