

LEATHERHEAD & DISTRICT LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Newsletter 4/70

December 1970

Dear Member,

Your Programme Secretary, Mr. Geoffrey Hayward, has made every endeavour to complete his arrangements of the programme for the whole of 1971, and he has very nearly succeeded, only October and November meetings needing to have the final details settled.

Programme for 1971

(All evening meetings 8 p.m., Leatherhead Institute)

Friday 15th January

Dr. Geoffrey Beven on "Changes in the bird population of a Surrey oak wood over 20 years." The oak wood referred to is part of Bookham Common. Slides will be shown.

Thursday 18th February

Miss Marguerite Gollancz, Surrey County Archivist, on the Surrey Records kept at Kingston.

March (date to be announced by separate letter.) Annual General Meeting.

Friday 23rd April

We have secured Mr. Broderick-Hartley for the lecture on "Bygone Leatherhead" which he was prevented by sickness from giving earlier.

Saturday 22nd May

Coach trip to Selborne--The Vyne-Calleva Atrebatum (Silchester). Depart Leatherhead about 10 a.m. Usual picking up points at Ashtead, Leatherhead and Bookham - time and exact place will be shown on the tickets. Cost 17/- per head. Bring picnic lunch. Morning coffee at Hindhead.

Selborne - There are 241 acres of common and freehold land (National Trust) where Gilbert White made many observations recorded in "The Natural History of Selborne". The Wakes was the home of Gilbert White. It is hoped to visit the Long and Short Lythes - hanging beech woods overlooking Selborne Stream. The Church should be included if time permits and the Oates and Gilbert White museum.

The Vyne - After lunch we visit this National Trust property just north of Basingstoke. It is an early sixteenth century house of diaper brick built for the Sandys family. The oak gallery of linenfold panelling and the chapel with Renaissance glass date from about 1510.

Calleva Atrebatum (Silchester). The most completely excavated Roman town with its well-planned streets of shops and houses, its inns, forum, baths and temples. The effects of the weather and the needs of agriculture necessitated the excavations being covered over again and thus the only visible remains are sections of the town wall. However, it is hoped to gain admission to the Calleva museum so that we can see what the town was like. It was certainly a great road junction and the original Bath road ran through it.

Saturday 26th June

Natural History Walk on Bookham Common - leader Dr. A.S. Thorley, one of our members. Meet 2.30 in the Bookham Station car park. After the walk members are invited to afternoon tea by special request of Dr. Thorley and he would appreciate an indication of

numbers likely to be present on the order form for the summer outings.

Saturday 24th July

A repeat of the Leatherhead Historical Walk - this is especially for new members and for other members who have missed the walk in previous years due to holidays. Meet at 2.30 p.m. for 2.45 p.m. in the forecourt of the Council Offices.

Saturday 21st August

Visit to Loseley House near Godalming. This is the home of the More-Molyneux family, direct descendants of Sir William More who built the house in the 1560's from stone already three centuries old taken from the ruins of Waverley Abbey. The panelling in the Great Hall came from Henry VIII's palace of Nonsuch. Sir William More was a trusted adviser to Queen Elizabeth and she visited him there on three occasions. In a letter she instructed Sir William to see that the house was cleaner than on her last visit. Members proceed by car (giving lifts where possible) to meet in the car park at 3.15 p.m. Turn right off the Guildford-Godalming road at the sign to Compton and then watch for entrance to grounds on right. Admission charge payable at the house.

Saturday 18th September

Coach trip to St. Albans - Depart Leatherhead about 10 a.m. Usual picking up points at Bookham, Leatherhead and Ashted, time and exact place will be shown on the tickets. Cost 17/- per head. Morning coffee en route. Bring picnic lunch, or lunch where you will in the town. For those desiring tea before leaving, the "Pilgrims Rest" on Holywell Hill is suggested, or "The Brown Owl" in George Street.

We will visit first the second century theatre which in the fourth century became a town refuse dump. In the second century Verulamium became a walled city standing on ancient Watling Street and the town rose to considerable importance. It was the only Roman town in Britain to be constituted a self-governing municipium. Portions of the Roman Wall may be seen and other excavations.

We start with the Roman remains because the cost of admission is included in the price of your ticket and members may wish to picnic here before seeing the town.

In the afternoon it is suggested that members visit the other points of interest shown below as individuals rather than as a group, and the place of departure of the coach will be announced as also the time, before you break up for the afternoon.

St. Albans was on the route of the famous funeral procession of Queen Eleanor who died in 1290 and to whom Edward I was devoted. Twelve crosses were erected near the places where the body of Queen Eleanor rested on the journey to Westminster. Unfortunately the Act of 1643 ordering all crosses in churches, chapels and church yards to be taken away and defaced as "Monuments of Superstition and Idolatry" was put into effect only too well and only three of the Eleanor crosses built between 1291 and 1294 remain. A unique fifteenth century town belfry stands on the St. Albans site.

The Abbey with its grand Norman tower was built by Paul de Caen before the end of the eleventh century from Roman bricks and tiles stripped from the ruins of Verulamium. The legend and history of its foundation is interesting and members should be able to purchase a guide for a modest sum. St. Alban was the Roman soldier who was executed for sheltering a priest who converted him to Christianity.

The inn "Ye old Fighting Cocks" below the abbey church and near the river Ver, built on the site of an abbey gateway, is octagonal shaped and claims to be the oldest inhabited licensed house in England. You can sit and drink where the cock fighting took place - in the cockpit several feet below bar level.

See also the Elizabethan houses of the town, the market place,

the fourteenth century Great Gate, the Marlborough almshouses (1736), St. Peter's church, St. Michael's church, St Stephen's church and the City Museum.

Thursday 16th December

Leatherhead Miscellany - short talks or film strips/slides by members. Contact the Programme Secretary, G.Hayward, to book your part in the evening's entertainment.

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Report on the Outdoor Programme of 1970

This is mainly for the benefit of those members who could not get along to some or all of the gatherings. This year we have been extremely lucky with the weather and we have had some glorious days or afternoons outside. Only the September trip was marred by rain in the morning, but as we had a long coach ride we did not mind a bit as the rain stopped especially for us on arrival at Bodiam Castle. The mud around the castle was a severe test of the morale of the members but observers would have found our members making light of it!

May 30th found us heading for Winchester with a 52-seater coach fully laden, and with the remains of two castles, the cathedral, the museum, court room, King Arthur's table top and delightful walks in the town we had our hands (and feet) full. A further trip is indicated to cover items more thoroughly.

June 13th proved how delightful a short ramble can be under expert guidance. Mr. Clifton, a retired farmer with a keen interest in nature and an officer of the Dorking Natural History Society, showed our members not only how to walk but how to use our eyes in the beautiful scenery between Wotton and Abinger. A watercress tea at Abinger so fortified some of the members that they jumped at the chance of walking back to Wotton (and the cars left there) by another route.

July 25th was the afternoon of the Surrey car ramble and once again the Programme Secretary endeavoured to prove that you can get a quart into a pint pot! So much variety and scenery were laid on that nothing less than a fast sports car was needed! Many members did not cover the full course but this will not be held against them as they admitted that they so enjoyed the trip that they just could not tear themselves away from each point of interest. Any who would like to do the trip can have a copy of the route on application to the Programme Secretary but he recommends a whole day taking a packed lunch.

August 15th can be described as the masterpiece of Mr.S.E.D. Fortescue who went to considerable trouble and expense to make an afternoon in historical Bookham a delight for the many members who were able to come in spite of the holiday peak. Mr. Fortescue's interest in the Society and his adventures in other directions are a great asset and we are grateful for his hospitality in allowing us to finish the afternoon at his home.

The September 12th coach trip has already been touched upon above. Once again we departed with a full coach and in spite of the rain we enjoyed the scenery on the way to Bodiam Castle. The castle was well worth seeing and the moat was filling up again after the dredging. We crossed over the disused Tenterden branch railway (to be re-opened privately) on our way to Battle where we spent a pleasant hour in the town. At nearby Bateman's (Rudyard Kipling's home) we finished the day and the late afternoon sun showed the peaceful situation to advantage.

Many of our members are car drivers and those who go on the coach trips all agree that the relaxation of the journey and the friendliness of the party are well worth bringing to the notice of those who have not yet joined us on these outings.

Membership subscriptions for 1971

Members are reminded that their subscriptions (ten shillings) become due on the 1st January 1971, and should be given to the Hon. Treasurer, Mr. F.A.Stokes, Lloyds Bank, Leatherhead. It would be very helpful if the attached Membership Slip could accompany your subscription, and early payment will avoid the expense of a reminder.

At a time of rising costs, it will be difficult to maintain the subscription at its present level, and we have been able to do so this far partly as a result of the receipt of donations. You can be assured that any amount you may like to contribute, however small, will be most welcome, and an increase in subscription beyond the reach of some of our "fixed income" members thereby avoided.

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It is hoped that the 1970 edition will be ready early in the New Year. Copies will be sent to members who have paid their 1971 subscriptions, and should be regarded as their receipt. Any member not receiving their copy within a reasonable time after the payment of their subscription should contact the Hon. Secretary.

David Bruce,
Hon. Secretary

7, Fox Lane,
Little Bookham,
Surrey.