

LEATHERHEAD & DISTRICT LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Newsletter 3/75

November 1975

Dear Member,

NOTICE OF A SPECIAL GENERAL MEETING ON 5th DECEMBER 1975, 7.45 p.m.
at the RED CROSS HALL, OAKS CLOSE, nr. LEATHERHEAD STATION

AGENDA

Raising of Annual Subscription to £2.00 as from 1/1/1976

At the last two Committee meetings discussion took place on the question of the Society's ability to meet present and future costs from the income, which is largely derived from members' subscriptions and the annual grants. Members have been fortunate in that subscriptions have remained at £1.25 for three years.

A decision had to be made to recommend an increase in the subscription to a figure which would cover our anticipated costs of printing and leave a little in hand for other smaller expenses. The Committee were reluctant to increase the subscription by 0.75 pence, but a majority came to the conclusion that as the subscription had some time ago ceased to be economically sound, it would be sensible to increase it to a figure which we might hope to maintain for several years, provided that costs now begin to level out.

Members may like to know that (in an age when hard commercial interests automatically accept that they will lose a certain percentage of their clients when charges are raised) the Committee did discuss the question of loss of members whose incomes or pensions do not rise with the cost of living. On this point the Committee did not reach a satisfactory conclusion but even if there are only, for example, twelve members in the category, we would be truly sorry to lose their support, their advice and their talents.

To sum up, the Committee have recommended an increase of subscription to £2.00 and we should like to hear your comments and then take a vote before the evening programme begins at 8.00 p.m.

Remember that apart from enjoying the programme of the Society, you are also helping to finance the publication of the research work which one day will form the basis of a complete history of Leatherhead and district. We hope you will be in favour of the recommendation.

SUBSCRIPTION 1976 - A reminder

Whatever decision is made at the voting on the 5th December the subscription falls due on the 1st January and, as the Society can offset some of its expenses by the interest earned on a deposit account, we make a special plea for prompt payment. Make a New Year Resolution that the first bill you pay in 1976 will certainly be the membership subscription of the Local History Society! Payment can be made to Lloyds Bank Ltd., North Street, Leatherhead, either in cash or by cheque payable to Leatherhead & District Local History Society. To avoid any possibility of mistake please attach to your payment a slip of paper stating the full names and address of the members to whom the payment relates. These members who pay by means of Bankers Order will avoid expensive correspondence if they will kindly notify their Bank to increase the annual amount to agree with the new subscription. We realise that not all members will be present at the Special Meeting on the 5th December, and consequently we suggest that those not at the meeting to hear the result of the vote should renew their membership by sending £2.00, on the basis that the subscription is unlikely to be more! If the voting is for a lesser amount the difference can either be refunded at a suitable opportunity or treated, with your blessing, as a donation.

ADDITIONAL PUBLICATION

It is intended to publish at the same time as the next issue of the Proceedings an additional publication (Occasional Paper No.1) by Mr. W.J. Blair, dealing with the historical background by which a plan for excavation in the centre of Leatherhead could be carried out.

THE PROGRAMME FOR 1976

We are deeply indebted to Mrs. C. Barrett and the Programme Sub-Committee for producing the undernoted which should be entered in your new diaries forthwith to avoid disappointment next year.

Owing to a necessary alteration in their own programme by the Red Cross, as from January 1976 we are unable to use their hall on Friday evenings. Our January and February lectures have been re-arranged to take place in the Red Cross Hall on Wednesdays, which we hope will be convenient for you all.

- Jan. 14th Lecture entitled "Getting to the Roots of the Family Tree," by Miss E.M. Tillman of Leatherhead. Miss Tillman is an expert on Genealogy.
- Feb. 11th Lecture entitled "Transport in Leatherhead" by our Vice-President Mr. J.G.W. Lewarne.
- March 13th Saturday afternoon visit to St. Paul's Cathedral. Coach leaves Leatherhead at 13.40, price of seats £1.00 numbers restricted to 29. Booking form at the end of the Newsletter.
- March 26th A.G.M. Venue still to be decided. Further details will be in the February Newsletter.

Arrangements are in hand for the following events in late spring and summer.

- April An evening lecture by a member of the Ewell and Nonsuch Society, and a Saturday afternoon visit to a local house of historic interest.
- May All day visit to Lacock Abbey and Lacock Village in Wiltshire.
- June All day visit to the church and village of Ashwell, Hertfordshire.
- July All day visit to Jane Austen's house at Chawton, nr. Alton, and then on to Farnham.
- August A Saturday afternoon walk round Guildford.
- September All day visit to Milton Abbas, Higher Bockhampton, Thomas Hardy's birthplace and Dorchester.

Dates, coach fares and booking forms will be in the February newsletter. Also in the latter issue will be details of our Autumn lectures, commencing with our Dallaway Lecture in October.

KEEPING IN TOUCH

Some of the subjects discussed at recent Committee meetings are: Progress with the Ashted leaflet (now at the printers); future excavations; Thorncroft Manor records; publicity for the Society and sales of its printed works; the elm tree in Bookham churchyard; services provided by the Standing Conference for Local History; the Society's lower bank balance; progress with the 1975 Proceedings (now at the printers); our exhibitions.

PHOTOGRAPHS OF LOCAL HOUSES

An approach was made to the local estate agents to enquire if they would be prepared to give to the Society the photographs of houses which are taken for purposes of sale. A very generous response has been received from Messrs.

Ossenton Lamden & Co., Messrs. Norman & Huggins and Messrs. Porter & Smart. The Society is very appreciative of this gesture which is so valuable in building up for posterity a pictorial record of our district. It is hoped that in the course of time other estate agents may also assist us in this way.

THE SOCIETY'S LIBRARY

Members are reminded that Mr. J.R.Gilbert is the Honorary Librarian and the books are available for loan from his home at 34 Greenacres, Great Bookham, Surrey. Tel. Bookham 54956. A list of the books in the library can be obtained from Mr. Gilbert.

LEAFLET ON EWELL

Our neighbour, the Nonsuch Antiquarian Society, has produced a Town Trail leaflet and if any member would like to purchase one at 0.5p each an order could be placed for a supply. Names should be given to Mrs. B. Haynes of Sans Nom, Fir Tree Road, Leatherhead; Tel. L'head 73549.

PUBLICITY

Mrs. Haynes has kindly agreed to become Publicity Secretary and will soon be looking after the sales of our publications past, present and future.

Excavation at Gravel Hill (TQ 1650956574)

A trial trench at a point on the line of the proposed Fairfield Link Road was worked on earlier this year by several members of the Society under the direction of Mrs. Angela Calder. A note reporting the work was prepared by Mrs. Calder for the Bulletin of the Surrey Archaeological Society and part of it is reproduced here with the permission of the Editor.

"A 3 x 2 m. area was examined by excavation. It was hoped that as the site was situated near the town centre and positioned on a well drained hill, there would be evidence of some earlier settlement.

The topsoil was very fertile and contained numerous artefacts and midden of nineteenth/twentieth century origins, providing an interesting insight into the life styles of the previous occupants of the house. Similar material came from the next layer which was akin in composition but more compacted. From it three stake holes and a small pit, 50 cm. in diameter (all suggestive of gardening activities), were found to cut into the next lower layer. On the surface half of this layer were a sheet of flint pebbles, giving a cobbled appearance to the site. Within the pebbles two sherds and a small flint blade were located - the only other artefacts found. The two sherds were small and have been tentatively identified by Mrs. J. Bird, as one medieval and one post-medieval. Only one other sherd of medieval appearance was located, and this was in unstratified top soil.

Beneath the pebbled surface lay a thick section of London Clay interspersed with clusters of larger flint pebbles. This matrix was sterile and continued below a depth of 1 m., at which point the excavation was discontinued.

The writer extends her thanks to the owner of the site, Mr. V. Crabb of Fetcham, for his consent and co-operation."

WORK IN PROGRESS

The Surrey Local History Council has produced a list of research work now being undertaken by member societies. Any interested member can see this list on application to the Hon. Secretary, G. Hayward.

The last event of 1975 for us is the Leatherhead Miscellany on December 5th at the Red Cross Hall. This is always popular with members and it is for this reason that we fix it early in the last month to give everyone a chance to come along before Christmas fixtures engulf us. At this meeting any member, who should give a little advance notice, can take the floor to talk about local history for a few minutes. You may not feel like giving a talk but you can bring some item of interest about Leatherhead's past and also a suggestion or two for future programmes.

The year has been a very satisfactory one for the Society and the interest in local history is still growing, as is witnessed by the appearance of local history societies in quite remote villages. This is a most encouraging feature because it means that more and more research into history is taking place and being recorded. Discoveries are exciting but they can also be quite useless unless they are properly recorded and available to the public.

As Secretary to the Society I wish to acknowledge my debt of gratitude to all those who, by their tasks or by their advice and assistance have made my work so much easier. I feel sure the Society has not succeeded in pleasing everyone, because after all we are all individuals with fixed ideas, but the Committee is available to hear complaints and would prefer that a member aired a grievance before taking the drastic step of not crossing our threshold again!

After the wonderful summer I am not complaining (even though my beans died and the potatoes were not much bigger than peas) and I close by thanking you all for your never failing support of the Society's work and hope to continue to see you all for many years to come.

Wishing you a very pleasant, traditional Christmas.

Ypriana,
Cobham Road,
Leatherhead,
Surrey, KT22 9JE

Geoffrey Hayward
Hon. Secretary

BOOKING FORM FOR VISIT TO ST. PAUL'S CATHEDRAL, SATURDAY, MARCH 13th 1976

Please book.....seats at £1.00 per person.
I enclose £...../+ I undertake to send the appropriate amount one month before the date of the event. (+ delete as necessary)

NAME.....

ADDRESS.....

.....Tel. No.....

Bookings, please, to Mrs. C. Barrett, The Glen, Guildford Road, Gt. Bookham.
Telephone No. Bookham 52937