

LEATHERHEAD & DISTRICT LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Newsletter 3/79

November 1979

Dear Member,

I have had no difficulty in deciding how to start this Newsletter, as I feel there is little doubt that the most important event in the Society's calendar this year has been the opening of the Museum. On 16th June 1979 Hampton Cottage opened its doors to the public for the first time and has been open every Saturday since then, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. The decision to admit visitors before the whole building has been restored has been fully justified by the keen interest of those who came into the Museum, not only to see the small collection of photographs and objects assembled in the lower front room (the only room habitable) but also to have the structural features revealed in the unfinished portions of the building explained to them. Many objects and photographs of local interest have been given to the Society by visitors, and sales of our publications have been most satisfactory. The number of new members who have been encouraged to join the Society as a result of a chat with one of the team of enthusiastic stewards, who are to be congratulated on their fine efforts, is also gratifying. The volunteer workforce, ably led by Peter How and Ken Beddoe, fully deserve the grateful thanks of the Society for the hard and skilled work they have performed. Practically the whole of the first floor has now been fully restored - even the missing front ridge-tile has been replaced! A major task was the complete renewal of the floor timbers of the upper back room, a room which is intended to be used as a store and workroom for future exhibitions, and as such it is considered that a linoleum covering would be most suitable. Offers, therefore, of secondhand lino in good condition, measuring approximately 9 ft x 11 ft, would be welcome. Volunteers to help decorate the upstairs rooms are urgently needed, as are offers of help to stage the various exhibitions to be displayed on the ground floor as soon as this is completed. Anyone with experience of display techniques (mounting, lettering etc.) and who can wield a paintbrush, please phone Bookham 58722 for details of ways in which you can help.

Needless to say, all this has not been achieved without cost. Despite the generosity of many people, there are still bills outstanding, and our Chairman, Mr Fortescue, will shortly be initiating a general campaign with the aim of bringing in £3,500 to clear all our present debts on the Museum and to enable the complete restoration of the building.

IMPORTANT - JUST IN TIME FOR CHRISTMAS! A new impression of "ASHTEAD, A Village Transformed" has just been issued. The book has been revised and enlarged and costs £3.00 a copy to members. It is available at Meetings or from any member of the Committee. Don't forget that our next meeting is the LEATHERHEAD HISTORICAL MISCELLANY at the Red Cross Hall at 8 p.m. on FRIDAY, 7th DECEMBER. This is our last meeting for 1979, and as usual at this time of year we will be serving mince pies and coffee.

The Society's other book, the projected history of Leatherhead, is also well under way. Groups covering all periods from earliest times to the present day are busy researching and writing. As repeated calls for volunteers to help have gone out, few members can still be unaware that, although work is progressing, there is still room for anyone who would like to assist. Time, now, is wanted more than expertise. As most of the experts leading the groups have other occupations, they are desperate for people to work under their guidance doing more mundane and time-consuming, but nevertheless essential, tasks. Mrs Edwina Vardey of The White House, 33 Lower Road Fetcham, Tel. Leatherhead 73061 would be delighted to hear from you if you would help.

Mr Barnwell, Programme Secretary, has given me details of some events planned for 1980, but before setting out the future programme, I would like to give a short resume of past happenings. The visits and walks during the summer were most informative and enjoyable, as was the Dallaway lecture in October. Mrs Bucknill very kindly gave a Garden Party in July, primarily for Ashtead members, at which the Society mounted its own exhibition (just one of many put on during the year). In addition, a unique opportunity was provided to see a collection of the work of the Ashtead Pottery, and it was also very nice to be able to talk to one of the original potters. It was all most interesting, especially to those who knew of the Ashtead Pottery, but had never previously seen any of the articles manufactured there. The Museum funds benefitted from donations received at this party, and from the sale of plants, in excess of £120.

PROGRAMME FOR EARLY 1980 All lectures at the Red Cross Hall, Oaks Close, near the station, Leatherhead, unless otherwise indicated. Time of meetings 8.00 p.m. Parking in the Public Car Park, Randalls Road, only, please.

FRIDAY, 18th JANUARY Illustrated talk "Four Centuries of the Country House", by Mr C. B. Pringle, one of our members.

SATURDAY AFTERNOON, 16th FEBRUARY Visit to Horsley Towers, kindly arranged by Mr H. G. Knowles, one of our members, who is principal of the Horsley Towers Training Establishment of the Electricity Council. We are fortunate to have as a guide Mr Stephen Turner, who is an authority on both the area and the Lovelace family. Meet in the car park at Horsley Towers, entrance in Ockham Road, at 2.30 p.m. N.B. The number must be restricted to about 30, so will you please give your name to the Programme Secretary if you wish to be included in the party, also stating if you can give lifts or require transport.

FRIDAY, 22nd FEBRUARY Illustrated talk "The Civil War in Berkshire" by Mr David Disbury, who is from the Egham-by-Runnymede Historical Society, and is extremely knowledgeable on the pre-history of Berkshire, and has recently published a book on the Civil War in that area. He has also been involved in the Sealed Knot Society.

FRIDAY, 14th MARCH The Annual General Meeting will be held in the Council Chamber, Bull Hill, Leatherhead, by courtesy of the Mole Valley District Council at 7.30 for 8.00 p.m.

FRIDAY, 21st MARCH Illustrated talk on "POMPEII & HERCULAENIUM" by Muriel Fuller and Stephen Fortescue. This is not exactly local history but is nevertheless a fascinating subject.

FRIDAY, 18th APRIL Illustrated talk on OLD INN SIGNS, with particular reference to Surrey, by Mr R. J. Webber of the Brewers Society. You will recollect the talk on the history of brewing given last January by this erudite and well organised gentleman.

We are still working on the programme of Summer events and Autumn lectures and among those we have in mind are the following:

- A SATURDAY IN MAY Whole day visit to ROCHESTER under the leadership of Derek Renn.
- A SATURDAY IN JUNE Whole day visit to DORCHESTER, MAIDEN CASTLE and MORETON church. We visited Dorchester a few years ago, but our itinerary on that particular trip was rather full, so that perhaps we did not do justice to that historic town.

FULL DETAILS AND BOOKING SLIPS WILL APPEAR IN OUR NEXT NEWSLETTER.

PUBLICATIONS It is hoped that by now all members will have received their copies of the 1978 Proceedings. We regret that these have appeared so much later than usual this year, but we have had our difficulties and thanks are due to Mr Benger for all his efforts in this respect.

The Society has also published an INDEX to the LEATHERHEAD CENSUS of 1871. This has taken about five years' slow but hard work by Mrs Mary Rice-Oxley. There is a copy in the Society's records, which may be used for reference, or copies may be bought for £3.00 each.

DONATIONS & CONTRIBUTIONS The Society continues to benefit from the generosity of its members, and others. Anonymous assistance helped with the re-issue of the Ashtead history, while Miss Hobson, daughter of a former Vicar of Leatherhead has donated many of her father's papers to assist in the writing of the Leatherhead history. Mr Benger and Mr Ellis have given books, the latter an edition of the "Imperial Shakspeare" (2 vols) to be sold in aid of the Society. Once again I apologise for unintentional omissions in this acknowledgment.

It may be of interest to members to know that the Open University runs a course entitled "DOING HISTORY" (PA982), which shows how to go about historical writing and research. It looks at the purpose and meaning of history and goes on to examine the type of course material which can be used by the historian. A major part of the course is a project in which students are encouraged to start a historical study of some aspect of their own locality and so gain practical experience of historical research. There will also be three radio and three television programmes associated with the course, which lasts eight weeks from February to May 1980 at a cost of £8.00. Applications must be in by 14th December 1979, and forms can be obtained from The Associate Student Central Office, The Open University, P.O. Box 76, Milton Keynes MK7 6AN.

Dr Derek Renn, one of our Vice-Presidents, has been instrumental in the formation of the Surrey Industrial History Group, and some of you may have seen the introductory prospectus. If not, they will be available at the Christmas Miscellany on 7th December, or enquiries may be made from the Membership Secretary, SIHG, 11 High View Road, Guildford.

Last, but by no means least, I would like to welcome all our new members:

<u>Leatherhead</u>	Mrs J. Alexander	Mr R. Harris	Mr D. Hale
	Mrs D. Spearpoint	Mr C.U.M. Latham	
<u>Ashtead</u>	Mrs B. Proctor	Mr T. Gough	Miss J. Fuller
	Mr & Mrs E.A. Lipsham	Mr P. Turner	Mr P.R. Gordon
<u>Fetcham</u>	Mrs P. Winslade	Mrs L.E. Palmer	Dr D. May
	Mrs J.B. Stewart		
<u>Great Bookham</u>	Mr & Mrs J.H.C. Robertson	Mrs I.T. Tennant	
<u>Reading</u>	Mrs E.J. Pearce		

Yours sincerely,

Rosemary Vracas
Hon. Secretary