

# LEATHERHEAD & DISTRICT LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER 2/86

MAY 1986

## THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING : 4 APRIL 1986

Last year, the AGM was held on a Wednesday, as the old Council Chamber at Wesley House is not available on Fridays. The attendance was very low. This year, the meeting was held at the Leatherhead Institute, so that it could revert to a Friday. There were 49 members present, compared with 45 last year, so obviously the night of the week made no difference.

One apology for absence we were very sorry to receive was from the President, Mr J G W Lewarne, who was unwell. His presence was very much missed and the meeting wished him a speedy recovery.

In Mr Lewarne's absence, Mr S E D Fortescue, one of our Vice-Presidents, chaired the meeting.

Important decisions were made by those present. The Proceedings will continue as at present, although it was accepted that because of cost and a certain lack of material, smaller issues might be necessary. (The Editor, Dr D F Renn, would be more than glad to hear from anyone who has suitable material for publication in the Proceedings.) The venue for winter meetings will remain the Red Cross Hall, Leatherhead, but one experimental meeting will be held in the Assembly Hall at the Institute. The subscription for 1987 will remain at £4.

The previous year's Committee was re-elected as no other nominations had been received. Mrs Linda Heath, who had been co-opted during 1985, now joins the Committee officially. No Programme Secretary was elected, but our thanks to Mr S R C Poulter who volunteered to join the Programme Sub-Committee; his role will be to help find speakers for the monthly meetings. Other volunteers for this Sub-committee are needed.

A list of Committee members' names and addresses is enclosed for your retention.

## 1986 SUBSCRIPTIONS

Membership subscriptions have come in well. So far 28 new members have joined this year, and at this moment we have 308 fully paid up members, including Honorary Members and Juniors. There are still about 40 of last year's members from whom we have not heard, and a personal reminder to each of them is enclosed with this Newsletter.

The subscriptions are £4 individual, £6 joint husband & wife (entitling them to one set of papers only) and £1 junior. There is of course absolutely no objection to husbands & wives each being individual members!

Many thanks to those who have sent with their subscriptions donations to one or other "good cause" - the Society itself, the Museum or the Book Repair Fund. These donations are most welcome.

MISS C E DUTNALL & SIR RONALD WATES

It is with much regret that we have to report the death of two of our members - Miss C E Dutnall and Sir Ronald Wates, both of whom had been with the Society for many years.

We extend our sympathy to their families.

NEW MEMBERS

We have pleasure in welcoming the following new members:

<u>Ashtead</u> Mr & Mrs J L Green Daniel Green (Junior)	<u>Bookham</u> Miss M Holden	<u>Fetcham</u> Miss P A Overdale
<u>Leatherhead</u> Miss G Attewell		

'FRIENDS' OF THE LEATHERHEAD MUSEUM - From David Bruce

The AGM of the 'Friends' will be held in the Red Cross Hall, Oaks Close, Leatherhead, at 8.15pm on Thursday, 12 June 1986. The formal meeting will be followed by an informal "Museum Miscellany" which it is hoped will range not only over our own museum but neighbouring museums and other connected organisations.

In addition to the usual Officers - Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer - the Rules provide for four Committee members, but at present only two places are filled. If any 'Friend' would like to take a slightly more active part in supporting the Museum, and stand for any of the positions on the Committee, perhaps they would get in touch with the 'Friends' Secretary, Miss Julia Warren (Bookham 54578) at least 14 days before the AGM.

Existing members who have not yet paid their 1986 subscriptions of £1 are reminded that they are now due and should be sent to Frank Rice-Oxley, Sturminster, Effingham Common Road, Effingham; or left at the Museum. New members are, of course, equally welcome.

The second "Bygone Leatherhead" arranged by the 'Friends' in March last, resulted in a profit of about £200.

Ernest Crossland, the Society's Archaeological Secretary, has kindly agreed to organise for the 'Friends' a "Bygone Oxshott and Leatherhead" evening in Oxshott on Saturday, 18 October. Tickets £1-50. Anyone interested should contact Ernest on Oxshott 2589.

PROGRAMME

"Walk" at Chilworth - SUNDAY, 29 June

Following the very interesting talk on Chilworth gunpowder works, given by Professor Alan Crocker on 11 April, members will be interested to know that he or Mrs Crocker will lead a "Walk" round the Chilworth area, on SUNDAY, 29 June, meeting at Chilworth Station at 2.30pm.

Half-day Visit to Outwood Mill - SUNDAY, 20 July

An afternoon visit has been arranged to the Windmill, Outwood Common, near Redhill, which was built in 1665 and is England's oldest working mill. It won the Surrey Industrial History Group Award in 1984. We meet there at 2.15pm and a guided tour has been arranged. There is no restriction on the number of the party visiting the windmill, but only a few people at a time will be allowed into the mill.

A booking form is enclosed: the entry fee is 60p.

NOTE: You will see that both these events are on a Sunday. This is in fact because that day was convenient to Professor Crocker - and the windmill is only open on a Sunday. However, it will give some of our members who, for one reason or another cannot come on a Saturday, a chance to join in our activities.

Half-day visit to Juniper Hall (Field Studies Centre) - Saturday, 9 August

We have had requests to repeat the visit we made three years ago to Juniper Hall, which houses the Field Studies Centre. We are grateful to Miss L Bonner, the Librarian, for arranging for us to come on Saturday, 9 August, meeting there at 2.30pm. There will be an illustrated talk about the history of the Hall, a guided tour, and tea provided by the Centre's own cook. Numbers will be restricted to 30.

A booking form is enclosed. The charge for this year is £1 and any profit the Centre makes will go to a fund for the restoration of the Adam Room in the Hall.

The Library at the Centre is available for the use of our members, provided they check with the Centre that a visit would be convenient at the time they propose to go.

Day Visit to Lewes - Saturday, 6 September

A day visit to Lewes has been arranged by Alan Gillies, for Saturday, 6 September. The coach will leave Bookham - The Crown - at 8.30am; Leatherhead - Leret Way - at 8.45am; and Ashted - The Street - at 9am. It is planned to arrive back about 8pm.

Visits will be paid to St Anne's Church (dating from the 12th century) and to the Westgate Meeting (Unitarian and Free Church), opened in 1698. Members of the Friends of Lewes will act as guides from St Anne's Church to Barbican House, pointing out the many fascinating buildings with which this area abounds.

It is hoped that during the course of visits to the ruined Norman Castle and to Barbican House, headquarters and museum of the Sussex Archaeological Society, it will be possible to visit the library of the Society and see some of its treasures.

During the lunch break, members may find an opportunity to visit the Parish Church of St John the Baptist, Southover.

In the afternoon there will be a conducted visit to the ruined Priory of St Pancras, founded in Norman times, and a visit to the 16th century Anne of Cleves House, now a folk museum.

The inclusive charge of £7-50 for the visit covers the coach fare, entrance fees/donations, gratuities and afternoon tea. Tea will be served in two sittings which will give members further opportunity to explore the town.

Members may find it helpful, by way of preparation, to read the relevant chapter in "Six More English Towns", by Alec Clifton-Taylor, British Broadcasting Corporation, 1981, pp 102-137.

A booking form is enclosed. We have asked you to send a stamped addressed envelope with your bookings so that we can send you some information before the visit. Please make your envelope a minimum of 9" x 4".

THE ROSARY LEATHER MILLS, ASHTEAD - From David Bruce

The Museum Curator recently purchased an old copy of "Leather" by K J Adcock (one of the "Common Commodities and Industries" series published by Sir Isaac Pitman & Sons) primarily because it illustrated the various hand tools used by tanners, such illustrations being invaluable in helping to identify the unusual tools brought into the Museum from time to time.

Imagine his surprise, therefore, when turning to the frontispiece, to find a photograph with the caption "Bleaching Oil-Tanned Leather by Exposure to the Sun (The Rosary Leather Mills, Ashtead)". The view shows distant ranges of what seems to be single storey workrooms enclosing two sides of a field which is covered by hundreds of skins. The book seems to have been written in the early 1920s.

"Chamois" leather seems to be the main type of leather tanned by the use of oil; in the UK cod oil was used exclusively. The skins were placed in a vat, a few at a time, and cod oil poured over each layer, and they were then kneaded by two large hammers in a Faller Stocks machine. These operations were repeated until the cod oil had thoroughly impregnated the skins. They were then dried in a warm stove, and went through several other processes. The best skins were selected for glove making, and it was found that sun-bleaching made the skins more suitable for dyeing, particularly if delicate shades were required. One can only imagine that the sun-bleaching of hundreds of skins must have been a somewhat odouriferous business, and reminds one that another Ashtead industry, the Rayon Manufacturing Company which occupied the Esso site before Goblins, between 1928 and 1932, attracted many complaints because of the smell of the process.

Does anyone remember the Rosary Leather Mills of Ashtead or know where it was situated? Did the firm process skins from the raw state right through to the finished product, or was it a sub-contractor or subsidiary of the Leatherhead tannery by the Leatherhead bridge? Please let us know.

David Bruce

PS Was "Ashtead" a misprint for "Ashford", a place a mile or so east of Staines where can be found a Rosary Gardens and a Rosary Avenue, just off the Feltham Road?

# LEATHERHEAD & DISTRICT LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

## OFFICERS & COMMITTEE FOR 1986

<u>APPOINTMENT</u>	<u>APPOINTMENT</u>	<u>TELEPHONE</u>
President	J G W Lewarne, 69 Cobham Road, Fetcham KT22 9HT	L 373736
Vice-President	S E D Fortescue, 56 The Mount, Fetcham KT22 9EA	L 372847
Vice-President & Editor	Dr D F Renn, FSA, 7 Burrows Close, Gt Bookham KT23 3HB	B 54880
Chairman	L A Smith, MBE, Hazeldene, Glebe Road, Ashtead KT21 2NT	A 75466
Secretary & Membership Secretary	Miss J Fuller, 6 Siddons House, Howard Close, Ashtead KT21 1DY	A 77876
Treasurer	H J Mears, Beverley, 43 The Glade, Fetcham KT22 9TB	B 53071
Museum Treasurer	J R Bull, 98 Woodfield Lane, Ashtead KT21 2DP	A 72800
Museum Curator	D Bruce, 7 Fox Lane, Little Bookham KT23 3AT	B 58722
Record Secretary	E Marsh, Chandelle, Orestan Lane, Effingham	B 53433
Sales Secretary	G Hayward, Ypriana, 173B Cobham Road, Fetcham KT22 9JE	L 372674
Library Secretary	J R Gilbert, 34 Green Acres, Gt Bookham KT23 3NQ	B 54956
Archaeology Secretary	E A Crossland, ISO, Oldberrow, 13 Clockhouse Mead, Oxshott KT22 ORW	O 2589
Lecture Secretary	N H West, MBE, 2 Beech Close, Effingham	B 54979
Committee Members	Mrs L Heath, 5 St John's Avenue, Leatherhead KT22 7HT	L 372603

L = Leatherhead    A = Ashtead    B = Bookham    O = Oxshott

April 1986