

LEATHERHEAD & DISTRICT LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

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NEWSLETTER 4/88

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THE PRESIDENCY

After many years as the Society's President, Mr John Lewarne has asked to be relieved of this duty at the end of this year. He will be particularly missed, not only for the work he has done for the Society, but for his great sense of humour. We hope sincerely that he will feel able to keep in touch with us and that we shall see him at some of our meetings and visits.

The Executive Committee has invited Mr S E D Fortescue (at present one of our Vice-Presidents) to become President from January 1989. Members will be delighted to know that he has accepted.

MRS AUDREY ELMER & MRS JINNY QUINNELL

With much regret we have to report the death of two long-standing and active members - Mrs Audrey Elmer and Mrs Jinny Quinell.

Mrs Elmer had over the years helped with organising many things and had recently been a member of the team arranging visits and lectures. Mrs Quinell with her wonderful enthusiasm, helped us, often at short notice, with the production of posters and leaflets for our events.

We send our sympathy to their families.

NEW MEMBERS

We welcome four new members who have joined the Society recently:

Mr & Mrs B Salsbury of Leatherhead
and Mr & Mrs J C Jarvis of Great Bookham.

"A HISTORY OF LEATHERHEAD"

Our apologies for the fact that publication of the Leatherhead History was delayed owing to printing difficulties - but at last, at last! it's coming. Advance orders may be collected from the Museum any day of the week commencing 21 November 1988 between the hours of 10am and 4pm. When you come to collect books, please bring the receipt issued to you when payment was made: this is your authority to take the books.

NEW HONORARY MEMBERS

The two people whom the Society has to thank most for the production of the Leatherhead history are, of course, Edwina and Lew Vardey, who between them have edited, designed, illustrated and guided it through printing. As part of a "thank you" to them, the Executive Committee have had pleasure in appointing them Honorary Members of the Society, and a small presentation was held at the Institute on 9 November to make this official.

With the addition of the Vardeys, we now have ten Honorary Members.

1989 SUBSCRIPTIONS

1988 seems to have gone even quicker than usual, and it is again time to remind you that subscriptions for 1989 will be due on 1 January. The rates are: Single membership £5; Husband & Wife £7-50; Juniors 18 and under £1. A remittance slip is enclosed.

SITUATIONS VACANT

Stewards for the Institute Library

Extra Stewards are needed to keep the Institute Library open for 2½ hours on Mondays, Thursdays and Fridays. Several years back the Society undertook this duty in return for accommodation in the Institute for its own Library. It has been a successful (and enjoyable) venture, but recently some of the original Stewards have had to resign and replacements - and additions - are needed. Please telephone Liam Sumpton on Leatherhead 372760 if you can spare 2½ hours on a regular basis but at whatever interval of time you wish - weekly, monthly or even longer.

Programme Sub-Committee

The programme of lectures and visits is arranged by a small Sub-Committee, the activities of which are coordinated by the Secretary. Extra people are desperately needed - particularly now we have lost Audrey Elmer - to help with ideas and arrangements. We ask each person to organise one visit or lecture a year. Only two or three actual committee meetings are necessary each year, so if you don't like committee work, don't worry: they are very informal anyway. The more help we get the more events there will be, so please telephone Joyce Fuller on Ashted 277876 if you are interested.

Record Secretary

The Executive Committee are still looking for a Record Secretary to take overall responsibility for the Society's archives through the four "Parish Archivists". Please telephone the Chairman, Lawrie Smith, on Ashted 275466: he will explain the duties more fully.

VISITS AND WALKS

It has been suggested that some of our visits and walks could be arranged on a week-day, rather than always having them on a Saturday or Sunday. The Programme Sub-Committee would like to have members' views on this. Please contact Miss Fuller on Ashted 277876.

Also, if there are any places of historic interest you would particularly like to visit, please let Miss Fuller know.

PROGRAMME

Monthly meetings are held at 7.30pm for 8pm in the Dixon Hall of the Leatherhead Institute. Except for the January meeting, an admission charge of 20p for members and 50p for non-members will be made, to include coffee which will be served before the lectures.

Friday, 18 November - "Methods & Problems of Tracing Your Ancestry"

A talk by Mr Lewis Roworth - "an enthusiastic amateur" is how he describes himself - followed by a longer-than-usual question time. Come armed with all the questions you can think of.

Friday, 16 December - Christmas Miscellany

A light-hearted evening of short topics given by members themselves. We are hoping for new speakers as well as some of our old favourites. Derek Renn is organising the evening: please contact him on Bookham 54880 if you have something to contribute.

Friday, 20 January 1989 - "Leatherhead & Medieval Surrey"

This will be an open meeting at which a collection will be taken. The money collected will be given to the Leatherhead Parish Church as the Society's contribution to the church repair fund. The speaker will be Dr D F Renn, our Vice-President and Editor, and his subject will be "Leatherhead and Medieval Surrey".

Friday, 17 February - "Reminiscences of Fetcham"

We are very pleased that Mr John Lewarne, who by this date will be our Past President - or, as we prefer to describe him: our President Emeritus! - is giving us an evening of reminiscences of Fetcham, his "home town" for a long period.

READING, GUILDFORD & REIGATE RAILWAY COMPANY - From David Bruce

A resume of the Minutes of the Board of Directors of the above-mentioned railway has recently been published by the Surrey Records Society (Volume XXXIII), and we have received our copy. Not unexpectedly, our area does not feature largely in this volume, but gets the odd mention.

In the Minutes of 16 August 1848 is reported the receipt of letters from Mr H M Porratt soliciting a contribution towards making a carriage road over Ranmore Common running through the parishes of Wotton, Effingham, Great Bookham, Little Bookham to join the proposed Dorking station. It was ordered that £25 be subscribed for that purpose.

It would be interesting to learn who Mr Porratt was, and how much parishes, and perhaps individual landowners, contributed to this road. Did they have to purchase land or was there an existing track?

Apparently it was not unusual for Railway Companies to guarantee minimum receipts to the owners of carriages or flies, with exclusive rights to wait at the station on railway property, but this contribution towards the making of a feeder road is the only one recorded in this railway's minutes.

"LONG AGO IN LEATHERHEAD"

Recently a party of 18 children from All Saints C of E First School, Aperdele Road, Leatherhead, visited the Museum. The school produce a magazine and the current issue contains an account of their visit. The Headmistress, Mrs T J Lane, agreed that this very refreshing look at local history could be included in the Society's Newsletter.

"We went to see the exhibition about schools in olden days. When we first got there we went in, it was a very little house with olden day beams, on one of them was a picture of a duck, that means you have to duck if you're tall!! Nine of us went up stairs and nine stayed down stairs. There was old school photographs, we found out that our school is the only school to have moved to three different places and is still called 'All Saints School'. We saw pictures of our school, it used to be in an engine shed first, then in the Community Centre and now in the new building. We saw a case that had the old punishment book in it, one little girl had been caned just because she was crying! The cane was very thin, so it looked vicious but it was amazing because it looked so like a walking stick, it must have hurt! I thought it was a bit silly to have given the cane to a girl just because she was crying all the time, six smacks with the cane she got. We saw some more things in a case, there was a yoyo and a skipping rope, it was quite interesting.

We saw an olden days telephone, it was a hospital phone and was hand connected, and there was a bit missing. It used to be called a 'dolls eye' telephone because the little shutters came down and it looked just like a doll was closing her eyes. There was a clock sort of thing there too, you had to put your card in and if you are one quarter of an hour late you lost a half days pay, and if you were a half hour late you would not have a job for a day and no wages. There was a big picture of the town there too, and we have been doing maps at school, so we thought the picture was interesting.

Then we went out in the garden and there was a deep well there, the well was very deep, I never knew a well was so deep. It had been full of rubbish, but they were clearing it out, and some of us nearly fell in! There were some olden days petrol pumps in the garden too, and a big platform that was how they used to make wheels all the same size.

We then went up stairs and the other nine came down to have their turn at looking at the old pictures of our school. Upstairs there was a big steering wheel on the wall, and we all had a go on it and played cars. And then we looked at the old Hoovers and at some old star like bottles and some milk bottles. There were some old spears and swords in a case what had gone all rusty. In the room was a tiny window with wooden bars across it, and it used not to have any glass in the olden days.

We all enjoyed our outing to the Museum very much and our legs were aching when we got back to school for our dinner."

SWAN BREWERY, LEATHERHEAD - From David Bruce

The Society has been given a number of small mineral bottles, on which are the words "SWAN BREWERY LEATHERHEAD LIMITED". These were found during excavations on the site of the Mellersh & Neale Brewery in Reigate. The bottles are only 6½" high, in light green glass and, we are reliably informed, known in the trade as "splits".

Your Museum Curator has been doing some calculations, and has discovered that since each bottle holds only a fraction over a quarter of a pint, and the weight of each empty bottle (ex cork) is about 12½ ounces, it would take nearly 25 lbs of glass to transport one gallon of mineral water. To this must be added, of course, the weight of the liquid and no doubt sturdy wooden crates to carry the bottles. Pity the poor horse dragging the heavily laden cart, and the carter and cellarmen moving hundreds of these bottles every day for very little end product.

Compare it with today's position. It takes only 3½ ounces of plastic to hold one gallon of milk (2 x 4 pint cartons)!

And finally -

May we wish you all a very Happy Christmas and a healthy, trouble-free New Year.