

LEATHERHEAD & DISTRICT LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY
Registered Charity No 802409

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NEWSLETTER 4/95

NOVEMBER 1995

MEMBERS

1995 has been a sad year for the Society in that so many members have died, both from the Committee and amongst the ordinary members.

On 30 August, we lost our Librarian, Frank Kirby, one of the best known personalities in Leatherhead. His interests were many and varied, but perhaps his work for the Leatherhead Community Association - and their Library in particular - will be his best memorial. He and his wife, Joan, turned it into a flourishing organisation with a large individual and corporate membership.

In September, we lost Mr H W Mackworth-Praed, a member for many years and one of our small group of members in Headley. He was also a Life Friend of the Museum. Until fairly recently he was taking a great interest in the National Trust's controversial activities on Headley Heath.

We send our condolences to the families of both members.

New Members

We give a very sincere welcome to these new members:

Ashtead - Mrs Susan Gilchrist

Leatherhead - Miss A M Allen, Mrs J R Broad, L E Cotterell, A Roberts, Mrs C J Routh (re-joined), Mr & Mrs P Royal, Mrs P J Smith

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING - 19 APRIL 1996

This is a first notice that the AGM will be held on Friday, 19 April 1996 in the Dixon Hall of the Institute at 7.30pm for 8pm. Papers for the meeting will be distributed with the February Newsletter.

Chairman - Linda Heath has decided to resign at the AGM at the end of her 7th year as Chairman. She is a hard act to follow, but we must have a replacement. We have one person willing to be nominated but further nominations are welcomed. If you yourself, or anyone you know, would be willing to take on this position, please contact either Linda Heath herself on 01372-372603, or the Secretary on 01372-386348.

Librarian - Following the death of Frank Kirby, the Committee were pleased to co-opt Mrs Gwen Hoad, a trained Librarian, to act as the Society's Librarian. She will stand for formal election at the AGM.

New Committee Members - We should also like to know if anyone is willing to join the Committee in any capacity whatsoever. Again, contact either the Chairman or Secretary.

1996 SUBSCRIPTIONS

As this is the last Newsletter of 1995, we have to remind you that 1996 subscriptions are due on 1 January. They remain at the present rate of £8 single, £12 Husband & Wife, £1 Junior 18 years and under. A payment form is enclosed. Subscriptions to the Friends of Leatherhead Museum are also due on 1 January, and these may be added to your Society subscription. One cheque only is needed, payable to this Society. Friends subscriptions will be paid over in bulk to the Friends Treasurer. But PLEASE - make your cheques payable to the Society, not to the Secretary personally. Banking rules these days do not allow cheques to be endorsed over to another payee.

Life Membership - The Committee are occasionally asked if there is a Life subscription to the Society. The answer is No, but it is a subject that is regularly reviewed. The formula for a Life Membership subscription is usually taken as present annual subscription times twenty, which would make the present Life Membership £160 for Single membership, £240 for Husband & Wife. Our Rules would have to be amended to allow the introduction of this category of membership; this would involve negotiations with the Charity Commissioners and these can be very protracted. The Committee do not feel that many members would take advantage of a Life Membership, and are not therefore recommending its introduction, at least for the time being.

"A HISTORY OF ASHTEAD"

Most members will by now have discovered that the Society's publication "A History of Ashted" is on sale, price £9-99. It is a most attractive and readable book, and the Editor, Jack Stuttard, and his team deserve our thanks for all their hard work. It can, of course, be obtained from local book shops and Libraries: but it is on sale in the Museum, which will be open from 2 - 4pm every afternoon, as well as its usual opening times, from 1 - 16 December, when the Museum closes for the winter. Please buy it from the Museum if you possibly can so that we make the maximum much-needed profit to pay for the book's production. If you are out of the immediate area, however, the book can be obtained by post from

the Sales Secretary - H J Davies, 72 Culverhay, Ashtead KT21 1PS. Postage and packing is £2 per copy.

It will also be on sale at all our meetings.

The book was duly "launched" on 18 October at a small party given on our behalf by Esso, who had contributed towards its production costs. 3,000 copies have been printed and judging by the sales already made, they will quickly disappear. So don't delay: the book will make a splendid Christmas present for friends and relations.

At the Society's evening talk on 19 January 1996, Jack Stuttard and some of his team, will give an idea of what was involved in compiling the book.

"A HISTORY OF ASHTEAD" - Reviewed by David Ellis

This is a book of which the Society has every right to be proud, and any member who has not yet bought a copy is strongly urged to do so. It is a splendid example of voluntary teamwork between people who love their subject, convey their enthusiasm for it, and insist on high standards of accuracy and presentation.

About half the book covers the events of the present century. It is arguable where history leaves off and modern life begins, but in that the twentieth century has been one of unparalleled change, it is obviously important that changes, notably in social life, education and means of transport, should be fully recorded. This has been done here with outstanding success.

The development of Ashtead in previous centuries has been handled equally well, particularly through a series of images illustrating how the present familiar pattern of roads, parks, common and residential areas grew up over the years. This pattern emerged clearly as early as 1638, the date of John Lawrence's map. But, of course, the story of Ashtead goes far further back than that, and both the Roman Villa and the recent Anglo-Saxon finds are well covered here.

I hope I have shown that there is a wealth of interesting material in this book, which all our members and others will enjoy reading. They will be sure to want to join me in thanking and congratulating the authors on their achievement, and the designer and the photographer of the cover too - it is a joy.

"AN ASHTEAD ARGUMENT" - From Gwen Hoad

At a time when the new "History of Ashtead" is very much in our minds, it might be appropriate to draw members' attention to one of the smallest books in the Society's Library.

Published in 1932, it is a brief history of Ashtead in verse, entitled "An Ashtead Argument" by "St Anthony". Just what the argument is all about would be up to readers to find out for themselves, but the following lines from the poem seem just as appropriate now as in 1932.

"Fast grows our village, hard to recognise,
Its features viewed through years or aged eyes.
The glory of the woodlands still remains
And there is beauty in our shady lanes.
But in the wind is often heard the roar
Of outer London, whose extending claw
Is eager to disturb our pleasant place
With noisy sound of growing populace.
Our outraged valleys blush to bungalow
Or endless villas in a serried row
And naked roads trace lines in ugly scars,
The pace is set to jazz and motor cars."

This and other books from the lending section of the Society's Library are available for loan or reference during the times the Institute Library is open, ie Tuesday, Thursday and Friday mornings between 10am-12.30pm. More valuable or specialised books are available for research or reference by arrangement with the Librarian: Gwen Hoad on 01372-273934.

THE INSTITUTE LIBRARY

The Trustees of the Leatherhead Institute have for some time allowed the Society to use the Library free of charge for small meetings or research between 2.15pm and 5pm on Monday to Friday afternoons. Much use has been made of this privilege, which is greatly appreciated.

If any member wishes to use the Library, please arrange your time through the Secretary - Joyce Fuller on 01372-386348, partly to avoid double booking and partly to keep a record of the use made of the room. The one proviso is that **NO PARKING IS ALLOWED** in the Institute car park: during the day the spaces are used, and paid for, by the businesses in the Institute building.

PROGRAMME

Evening Lectures

All lectures are held in the Dixon Hall of the Institute, on the third Friday in each month at 7.30pm for 8pm, with coffee available before the lecture. Admission 50p members, £1 non-members.

December 15 - Christmas Miscellany. Our Annual evening of short items presented by the members themselves. Gordon

Knowles is organising it, and if you have anything you can present, please get in touch with him on 01372-458396.

1996

January 19 - "A History of Ashtead" - Jack Stuttard, the Editor of this newly-published book, with others involved in it, will give a talk on its writing and production. Some of the problems they faced will be referred to, as well as the decisions on what should be included and what left out. They will show how much hard work and detailed research is called for in producing a work of this kind.

February 16 - "Anne of Cleves in Surrey" - by Mary Saaler. Anne was the fourth of Henry VIII's wives, and was Queen for only six months before he divorced her. After the divorce, she spent much of her time in Surrey, mainly in Richmond Palace and at Bletchingley.

March 15 - "The Industrial History of Mole Valley" - by Peter Tarplee, of the Surrey Industrial History Group, and also a member of our Committee. Mole Valley district covers about 100 square miles, stretching from Chessington to Gatwick Airport, and from Abinger Hammer to Leigh, and contains a wide variety of past industrial activities.

Peter Tarplee is the author of a new book being published by the Surrey Industrial History Group, entitled "A Guide to the Industrial History of Mole Valley District". It is being launched at a meeting at Dorking Christian Centre at 8pm on Monday, 11 December. All members of this Society are invited to attend, have a glass of wine and listen to a presentation by the author.

April 19 - AGM, followed by a talk by Dr Derek Renn, CBE, FSA, on "Old Sarum" - a hill two miles from Salisbury, on which a castle and town were built by the Normans.

Summer Programme for 1996

The Programme Sub-Committee has thought long and hard about our visits during the summer of 1996. This year's visits were very poorly supported and in fact they could only take place at all after a real "hard sell" of tickets to members and the general public.

The day of the week on which visits are arranged is not always under our control: we have to fit in with the days the relevant organisation will deal with parties. We know that whatever day we choose will not be convenient for someone. And we do realise that this summer was extremely hot.

There are many organisations, coach companies etc in this area putting on visits but for value you cannot beat the Society.

Visits are costed at break-even prices (which is why coaches must be filled) - we do not aim to make a profit; all visits are history based and at times we see things not usually on show to the public.

What, then, is wrong? A short while ago we had waiting lists for visits only a few days after they were announced.

The Programme Sub-Committee have decided not to organise any day visits for next year, or any half day visits by coach, until you - the members - tell us what you want. Please write to, or telephone, the Secretary, Joyce Fuller, 15 Kingston House Gardens, Leatherhead KT22 7HL, telephone 01372-386348

THE FRIENDS OF THE LEATHERHEAD MUSEUM

Visit to Dorking Museum - A group of "Friends" paid a visit to the Dorking Museum on 17 September 1995, where they were given a most interesting afternoon in the Museum and were also shown the Records and Library, which are housed with the Museum. After a welcome cup of tea, they were given a surprise tour of the Dorking Caves. Thanks to all members of Dorking History Group for the trouble they took.

"Early 20th Century Bookham" - This was the title of a most successful evening talk at the Old Barn Hall, Bookham, organised by the "Friends" and given by Bill Culley, one of our members. In spite of the date of the talk being Friday, 13 October, everything went well and 120 people came to listen and enjoy Bill's talk, the second part of which will be given at the Old Barn Hall, Bookham, on Wednesday, 29 May 1996.

Thanks to Bill Culley for all his efforts.

Early as it is, this is our only opportunity to wish all members a good Christmas and a very happy and healthy new year.

PS. 1996 is the 50th anniversary of the founding of the Society. It will be duly marked throughout the year.