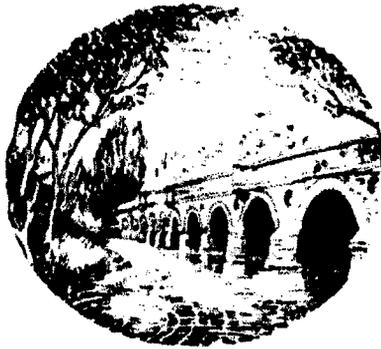


LEATHERHEAD & DISTRICT  
LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

# NEWSLETTER



August 1997

# **LEATHERHEAD & DISTRICT LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY**

**Hampton Cottage, 64 Church Street, LEATHERHEAD Surrey KT22 8DP**

**Tel: 01372 386348**

**Registered Charity No. 802409**

## **CHAIRMAN**

**Peter A. Tarplee  
01372 452301**

## **SECRETARY**

**Thelma Lucas  
01372 844345**

## **TREASURER**

**Peter E. Starling  
01372 273092**

**NEWSLETTER 3/97**

**AUGUST 1997**

## **HONORARY GENERAL SECRETARY**

We are pleased that once more the Society has a General Secretary. At the Committee's meeting in May Thelma Lucas joined to take the minutes. Subsequently she expressed her willingness to take on the post of General Secretary until the AGM next year and at it's July meeting the Committee co-opted Thelma to the position. Her address is 14, Clockhouse Mead, Oxshott KT22 0RW; telephone 01372 844345. Correspondence for the Society should continue to be sent to the office at the Museum.

Thelma's appointment following those of Jack Barker as Membership Secretary and Anthony Gordon as Newsletter Editor completes the search for members to perform the many duties that Joyce Fuller undertook.

## **MUSEUM NEWS**

At the Annual General Meeting of the Surrey Museums Group one of the trustees of the Museum, Anthony Gordon, was elected to be one of the representatives of the governing bodies of charitable trust museums on the Surrey Museums Consultative Committee.

We wish Anthony well on this important committee which aims to help museums in Surrey to develop their greatest potential, for the enjoyment and education of both residents and visitors.

## **LEATHERHEAD COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION**

The Leatherhead & District Local History Society is affiliated to the Leatherhead Community Association. On Friday 18th July the LCA held a reception in the Abraham Dixon Hall of The Institute to commemorate 20

years of the Association as well as the 10th anniversary of the official re-opening of the Hall on Saturday 18th July 1987 after two years of restoration.

Many members of the L&DLHS were among the large gathering at the celebration which was attended by the Chairman of Mole Valley District Council, Cllr. Kit Oliver, as well as a number of other local councillors.

We all thank the Leatherhead Community Association for what they have achieved and wish them well in the future.

### **JOAN KIRBY MBE**

We offer our sincere congratulations to Joan on the award of an MBE in the recent Queen's Birthday Honours list.

The award is for community service to Leatherhead, and if ever an honour was deserved surely this is it. Joan is Chairman and Treasurer of the Leatherhead Community Association and has been instrumental in bringing the LCA to the vibrant active organisation it is today. She is also actively involved with the Leatherhead Society as well as with the Leatherhead & District Local History Society.

Joan organises coffee mornings at our meetings in the Abraham Dixon Hall as well as being a keen Museum Steward and Friend of our Museum. She is an excellent example of the saying that if you want anything done ask a busy person.

I am sure that we are all pleased that Joan's unstinting efforts have been given public recognition.

*Peter Tarplee*

### **DUKE & OCKENDEN**

During a recent visit by some of the Society's members to the Weald & Downland Museum we went into a barn from Lee-on-Solent which houses an exhibition by the Worshipful Company of Plumbers illustrating the craft of the plumber.

One of the photographs taken during the 1890's shows several workmen with a pump installed by Duke & Ockenden of Littlehampton. This firm was founded by Albion Ockenden who, in later life, came to live at Devonshire Cottage in Church Street, Leatherhead. In his old age he moved next door into Hampton Cottage, now the Museum, where he died in 1904.

As well as the photograph in the exhibition is the information that Duke & Ockenden provided mains water supply to Littlehampton and that it prevented a typhoid epidemic in Worthing by drilling new wells. *Mary Rice-Oxley*

### **ST. MARTIN-IN-THE-FIELDS HIGH SCHOOL**

This school was evacuated from South London to Leatherhead between 1932 and 1945. The school was based on St. John's but was involved in many ways with the town.

A history of St. Martin's School is being written by Mrs. Margaret Siddall and she is keen to hear from anyone with memories of the school being in Leatherhead. If anybody had a St. Martin's evacuee or remembers any details of their stay in the town they are invited to get in touch with Mrs. Siddall at 9, SMITHAY MEADOWS, CHRISTOW, DEVON EX6 7LU.

*(from Surrey Advertiser)*

### **WORKED FLINTS FROM THE LEATHERHEAD AREA**

The June/July 1997 Bulletin of the Surrey Archaeological Society contains a list of Surrey finds in West Midland museums. The Birmingham City Museums and Art Gallery collections include eight Neolithic or later flint flakes (1991. A259) from Ashtead, palaeolithic flints, a sub-cordate handaxe and three flakes from Leatherhead (1991. A95) and nineteen later flints (1991. A258) and a retouched blade flake from Millfield (1991. A262). It is suggested that this is near Little Bookham (perhaps the Millfield near Slyfield House) but there are many alternative possibilities in Surrey. *(Derek Renn)*

### **"ABINGER AND THE ROYAL GREENWICH OBSERVATORY"**

This booklet by Peter Tarplee and published by the Surrey Industrial History Group is about the Royal Greenwich Observatory (RGO) is very timely, as the RGO is much in the news at present with its threatened closure. It is a compact, well illustrated and extremely readable booklet about the history of the Observatory while it was at Abinger between 1924-57. Many people in this area are unaware that parts of the RGO were situated near Abinger for over thirty years.

Peter explains at the outset why the Magnetic Observatory had to move from Greenwich in 1924 and the Timw Department just before the outbreak of World War II. There is a brief description of how the earth's magnetic field works, followed by an account of the operation of the Magnetic Observatory. Everything in the building had to be made of non-magnetic materials - even the

nails, the fuse boxes and the keys! The next section deals with the measurement of time and transference of time signals and a fascinating account of the standardisation of time and clocks for the whole of Britain, at sea, and throughout the world. What we now take completely for granted took a very long time to evolve.

The final section is about the history of the observatory at Abinger until 1957 when it moved to Herstmonceux. It moved to Cambridge in 1988 and now may be closed, with the loss of expertise built up ever since it opened at Greenwich in 1675.

The booklet costs £2.50 and can be bought at the Museum, local bookshops, or postfree from Peter Tarplee, "Donard" East Street, Bookham KT23 4QX (tel. 01372 452301). Cheques payable to "S.I.H.G."

*Linda Heath*

## **NEWS FROM THE LIBRARIAN**

*"The village of Leatherhead is agreeably situated at the intersection of the roads leading from Ashted to Bookham, and from Kingston-upon-Thames to Dorking... The principal street ranges along the eastern bank of the Mole, leading immediately into the celebrated beautiful vale of Mickleham. It is a place of considerable antiquity, and at one period possessed the privilege of a market, which, however, has long been disused. On the tenth of October annually, in a field northward of the town, is held a fair deserving of record, from the following association with which it is invested. The celebrated Madame d'Arblay, during her residence at Camilla Lodge, a sequestered retreat in the valley, in conjunction with some of her fair neighbours established a bazaar at this fair, where they personally superintended the sale of various fancy articles of their own manufacture, appropriating the proceeds to purposes of benevolence; and from this circumstance the festival became, and for a length of time continued to be, a fashionable resort for the nobility and gentry throughout the district. With the departure of the attractive authoress, the influence of her example gradually ceased, and of late, on this anniversary, instead of the green lanes of Leatherhead being filled with gay equipages, no vehicle is seen but the tinselled itinerant show - no sound is heard, after the trifling business of the day is concluded, save that of the boisterous revelry of the inebriated*

*peasant. Although it may be argued that the time expended at these places of periodical resort - now too frequently scenes of dissipation and of crime - might be more profitably occupied by the lower classes, we must reflect that the human mind requires relaxation from toil. These are the only recreations within the reach of the English labourer; the scenes of riot they will continue, so long as the upper orders of society in this country withhold that influence and example of a taste for the more innocent enjoyments which an occasional intermixture with their humbler fellow-creatures would instill."*

This delightful example of Victorian condescension comes from "London and its Environs" by William Trotter published by Allans of London sometime before 1870. Although the book is not in our library, I am indebted to Linda Heath for drawing my attention to it. We thought the "inebriated peasants" of North Leatherhead might either be amused or outraged at this description of their worthy ancestors!

The usual list of additions to the Library has had to be held over until the next issue of the Newsletter due to pressure of space but one item must not pass without mention. The Society has been presented with a bound volume of Leatherhead Parish Magazines 1880 by Mr. M. Worsfold. This is now the earliest volume of Magazines which we have, and we are exceedingly grateful to Mr. Worsfold for his kind gift.

This and other books in the Society's Library are housed within the Institute Library room, and may be borrowed or referred to during the LCA Library's opening hours - Tuesdays, Thursdays, Fridays and the first Saturday in the month, 10am to 12.30pm, or by special arrangement with Gwen Hoad (01372 273934). Don't forget your LDLHS Membership Card when you go! The Library catalogue is being revised, in preparation for updating the Society's computer record, but a copy of the current catalogue is available in the room together with a card index of books on Surrey. In an attempt to make some items more accessible, some pamphlets or booklets of local interest, are now ket in 2 plastic wallet files on the ledge with the catalogue.

Enquiries about the Society's very large collection of maps, photographs, document and all other material apart from books or pamphlets, should be made to the Record Secretary - Brian Godfrey (01372 454654).

***There will be articles about the Society's records during the next issues of the Newsletter starting with an introduction by Brian.***

## COTTAGES FROM ASHTEAD AT SINGLETON

On Monday 21st July a ceremony took place at the Weald and Downland Open Air Museum to mark the opening of Whittaker's Cottages which had been moved there from Ashtead some years ago. With his permission we reprint an article by Dennis Turner which appears in the current issue of the Bulletin of the Surrey Archaeological Society.

*The March 1997 edition of the Weald and Downland Open Air Museum's Magazine carried a long and detailed article by Richard Harris describing research into materials used in the museum's latest building exhibit - Whittaker's Cottages, a pair of four-room, semi-detached cottages from Ashtead.*

*The March 1995 edition of the same magazine reported that the cottages would be erected at Singleton in that year but in the event the work was delayed. The cottages had been dismantled in May 1987 to make way for housing development and the reconstruction was funded by a generous donation from the Leopold Muller Estate.*

*On their original site, the cottages were on Ashtead Common adjacent to the railway line and so were strictly neither 'Weald' or 'Downland' but they are of a type (slate roofed over weatherboarded soft-wood frame with sash windows that was once found extensively on the Downs and in the Weald as well as in the Thames Basin. Over the last half century or so these vulnerable buildings have become sadly rare: examples are rarely 'listed' and it is wholly appropriate to have the type represented at Singleton. Richard Harris' article adds greatly to our knowledge of this once common housing type.*

*According to the Tithe Map, Richard Whittaker, a labourer, lived (and possibly died) in a nearby cottage in the 1840s and, in 1859, the London and South-Western Railway line was opened crossing Richard Whittaker's one-time paddock about 200m west of Ashtead Station. The re-erected cottages are thought to date from around this time, probably built for rent by Richard's widow, Elizabeth, or a descendent, and paid for from money received from LSWR. Richard Whittaker's own cottage survived the construction of the railway.*

*It is understood that one of the pair is to be furnished as it might have been in the 1860s while the interior of the other will display the construction and detailing.'*

## **THE LOST PALACES OF CLAREMONT**

To assist those members who were unable to attend our meeting on 16 May and to remind the rest of us there follows a brief synopsis of the interesting lecture given by Stephen Webbe about the two houses at Claremont and their various owners.

The site was bought by Vanbrugh in 1708 when he built the first house in the baroque style. By 1715 he had sold the estate to the Duke of Newcastle whose widow sold it to Clive of India in 1768. Although some of Vanbrugh's buildings remain, the main house was demolished by Clive in 1769/70 before he had a new house, the present one, built by Capability Brown with assistance from John Soane, completed in 1774.

Clive of India sadly died before the house was finished and it had a number of private owners before it was bought by Prince Leopold of Saxe-Coburg and his wife Princess Charlotte in 1816. The following year Charlotte, the only child of George IV, died in childbirth, together with her infant child, thus the succession to the throne was affected by an event at Claremont. Leopold remained in residence until 1831 during which time the house was often visited by Victoria.

Later the house became the home of the French royal family and both Louis Philippe and his wife died there (1850 and 1866). Queen Victoria then gave the property to her son Leopold, Duke of Albany, who died there in 1884. although his widow stayed on in the house.

After a spell as an officers' convalescent home in the Great War the property was sold by the government in 1922 to Sir William Corry, the chairman of the Cunard Steamship Company.

In 1931 the house was bought by the Christian Scientists for a girls' school, for which use it remains today. During the Second World War the school was evacuated and the house was used by the Hawker Aircraft Company as design and drawing offices when designs for the Tempest, Sea Fury and Sea Hawk were carried out.

That this important house remains intact today is probably because of its use as a school and the Society will be taking the opportunity to visit Claremont on Sunday 7 September.

## **PROGRAM**

### **Lectures**

All meetings are held in the Dixon Hall at the Letherhead Institute at 7.30 p.m. for 8 p.m.. Entrance 50p for members and £1 for guests, except the Dallaway Lecture on 17 October when it will be 50p for members and £2 for guests. Coffeee is available from 7.30 p.m. (in the interval in December) and is included.

#### **Friday 19 September - "How much do you know?" by Derek Renn**

This is a talk for everyone interested in the history of this area and we hope that members will encourage visitors to come to this meeting to learn more and perhaps join the Society. People are sometimes daunted by the title of the Society and think that all our meetings must be very learned, so this will be a chance for them to discover more about the area. It takes place during the Leatherhead Festival week, so Mole Valley have promised to give some publicity to this lecture.

#### **Friday 17 October - The Dallaway Lecture:**

##### **"The Royal Pavilion at Brighton" by Cynthia Campbell**

Cynthia Campbell, the former Head of Public Services at the Pavilion, is reputed to be an excellent speaker and, again, we hope to attract plenty of visitors to this talk which will be followed by a visit to the Pavilion next summer.

#### **Friday 21 November - "Excavations in 1997 at the Roman Villa near Abinger" by Steve Dyer.**

Although Steve has given talks to other groups about excavations at Abinger, he will be talking to us about the most recent work there this summer - "red hot off the archaeologist's trowel" so to speak. Some of our own members have been working there, so this is the project in which we are closely involved.

#### **Friday 19 December - Christmas Miscellany arranged by Gordon Knowles**

This year we are going to have a "local literary" theme, and members are invited to produce and or/read excerpts either about the area or about local authors, or both! We have invited members of the Literary Society to join us for this occasion and, as usual, coffee and mince pies will be served in the interval (provided that some members remember to bring some!).

## **Local Events**

### **Heritage Day - Saturday 13 September**

Although this Society is not directly involved in this event this year, we are providing information and photographs for an exhibition of Leatherhead from Edwardian times to 1939 arranged by the Leatherhead Society and the Leatherhead Community Association in the Council Chamber at Wesley House. There will be another display at the SeeAbility Chapel (formerly Royal School for the Blind) with a shuttle bus between the two from 10.30 a.m. to 3.30 p.m.

### **Progress through Leatherhead - Saturday 20 September**

There will be a "Progress" through the town - "A dramatic candlelight tour" staged by Theatre Exchange in four scenes at different venues:

1. An Introduction to early Leatherhead, in the Parish Church
2. Queen Elizabeth's Progress 1591, in the Mansion garden
3. Leatherhead in the Second World War, in the Swan Centre
4. Buffet Supper at St. John's School with entertainments from Leatherhead's cultural past.

Tickets cost £10 to include buffet supper. Tel. 01932 247198 or see local press and posters.

**Copy for inclusion in the November Newsletter to the Society's office  
by 11th October 1997 please**



## **THE FRIENDS OF LEATHERHEAD MUSEUM**

### **CHAIRMAN**

John Rosser  
26 Randalls Road  
Leatherhead  
Surrey  
01372-372158

### **SECRETARY**

Mrs. Iris Butler  
19 Yarm Court Road  
Leatherhead  
Surrey  
01372-372479

### **TREASURER**

Mrs. Gwen Hoad  
66 Craddocks Avenue  
Ashted  
Surrey  
01372-273934

### **NEWSLETTER AUGUST 1997**

We have to report, with sadness, the passing of several museum stewards during the last year. Joyce, the History Society Secretary, served on our committee as membership secretary, edited this newsletter and helped at the Museum in so many ways. Roberta McNulty, who had been a steward since the Museum opened in 1980, Joyce Alexander, Fred Gelder and Eileen Smith will also be greatly missed.

On a happier note, on 14th June 1997, the Queen's Birthday Honours List included an M.B.E. for Joan Kirby, for service to the community in Leatherhead. A greatly deserved recognition for her many years of hard work on behalf of the town of Leatherhead. Congratulations from us all, Joan!

### **THIRTEENTH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

This meeting was held at Leatherhead Institute on Friday 11th April 1997. Those attending, including Local Councillor Richard Eckersley and History Society Chairman Peter Tarplee, were welcomed with coffee served by Joan Kirby. Many thanks Joan.

The papers for the meeting had been circulated to most Friends, but when Joyce Fuller died suddenly, she was transferring the Friends' Membership List to her new computer and had not completed this task. We sincerely apologise to any members who did not receive their notification of the A.G.M. and copies are available at the Museum. The accounts for 1996 were approved by the meeting, and it was announced that Joyce Fuller had generously bequeathed £1,000 to the Friends in her will.

The meeting re-elected the previous committee who were all willing to continue:

Chairman	- John Rosser	John Clark
Secretary	- Iris Butler	John Wall
Treasurer	- Gwen Hoad	
Ex Officio	- Janet Goldsmith (Curator)	

There are two vacancies for committee members and we would like to fill them. Is there anybody out there who is prepared to attend a committee meeting on a Monday afternoon about five times a year? We will be pleased to hear from you.

The Friends' membership subscriptions will now be collected by Jack Barker, the History Society Sales Secretary (01372-458469).

After the business of the meeting, Howard Davies, the History Society Sales Secretary, gave a talk about the 1802 Wyburd Survey Map of Ashted, which came to light after the death of Lord Barnby. It was a fascinating talk after which a full-size copy of the map was available for Friends to look at. A4 versions of the map, drawn by Howard, are now on sale at the Museum, price 60p. Our thanks to Howard for giving the talk and for sharing his enthusiasm with us.

### **FUND RAISING EVENTS**

#### **Bookham Talks:**

Bill Culley has given two talks at The Old Barn Hall, Great Bookham, on behalf of the Friends. In October 1995 "Bookham In The Early 20th Century" raised £192, and in May 1996 "The Recent History of Bookham" raised £254. A third talk is planned for Thursday 2nd October 1997, again at the Old Barn Hall, so please note the date in your diaries. We are truly grateful to Bill for all his hard work, not only on the night, but beforehand on research and the preparation of slides, and his popularity as a speaker makes these evening very successful.

### Coffee Morning:

The aim of this event is to bring together all those people who are interested in the museum, and in addition to raise some money. This year the coffee morning was held on Thursday 19th June 1997, with a raffle, bring and buy plants and bric-a-brac, and coffee served by Joan Kirby. The weather was very wet so all activities were confined to indoors, but a pleasant morning was enjoyed by all present and we made £100 for the Museum.

### EXPENDITURE ON THE MUSEUM IN 1996/97

Items purchased for the Museum during the past year include:

Brick paving of the front garden, and other small building works	£427
Small sales racks	£48
Four folding tables	£252
	£727

The front garden looks much tidier now and rubbish is easily removed. The gardens have quickly become indispensable to those working at the Museum.

### FUTURE PROJECTS

Several items of expenditure are planned during the next year:

Renewal of the front door and frame to Hampton Cottage,.

Renewal of the back door and frame in due course.

Replacement of the trellis to the top of the garden wall, which will be carried out later in the year by our Curator's husband, Alan, who quietly does so many jobs around the cottage.

Thank you Alan.

Purchase of a trolley to carry boxes and equipment to and from our various storage places.

Using Joyce's legacy, plus donations given to the History Society in her memory, together with donations received in memory of Roberta McNulty, it is hoped to undertake the refurbishment of the first floor front room with modern display cabinets and new floor covering. A grant will be applied for to double the money available. This project will be a fitting memorial to Joyce and Roberta, and one of which they would both heartily approve.

### SALES

The Friends sales to continue to provide a steady income, with maps, bookmarks, notelets and tea towels still being popular, while the fridge magnets and pencil tins appeal more to younger visitors.

It is just three years since we published our first postcard of Leatherhead Bridge by John Varley; it has sold out and we have had a second 1,000 printed. This year we have produced another three new cards to date - a steam train passing through Leatherhead Station photographed by John Wall, a water-colour of a woodland scene in Norbury Park by George Barrett (1780), and the first of three cards of Ashtead Pottery. Our first Fetcham card has been ordered - a lovely water-colour of Fetcham Splash c. 1900 by Henry James Rhodes. All our cards are on sale at local libraries and we look to extending sales to some other outlets.

### MUSEUM OPENING HOURS

The Museum opened this season on Thursday 3rd April and will close for the winter on Saturday 20th December, 1997.

The Museum will open again for the 1998 season on Thursday 2nd April 1998, Thursdays 1pm-4pm, Fridays 10am-1pm, Saturdays 10am-4pm.

## WORKING AT THE MUSEUM

Once again our sincere thanks to all those who act as stewards at the Museum. Without your continued support the Museum could not be opened to the public. However we still need more stewards - we have lost six this year, and several more are temporarily away which has left the Curator manning the Museum on her own quite frequently. This is not only undesirable from the security point of view, but does not give visitors the amount of attention they may require, especially if they have enquiries to be dealt with.

We also need volunteers to help in other ways - cleaning windows, gardening, keeping the cottage clean and tidy, helping with the packaging and cataloguing of artefacts, making labels for museum exhibits (is someone able to use the computer for this job?).

How about undertaking research on a small project for a future museum exhibit? "A Chemist's Shop", "Shaving & Razors", "Shoemaking & Repairing". We have the artefacts - we just need some of your spare time.

We are all agreed that the Museum is a valuable educational and cultural asset in Leatherhead, but it would be able to carry out these functions better with more HELP. Do we have any retired school teachers who could help with school visits? We are more likely to get grants if we provide some basic educational facilities.

Many of our visitors come with specific enquiries - house or road history, family history, identification of objects dug up in their gardens (very often sea urchin fossils). It is very interesting helping them to find the answers.

If anyone is at all interested in helping in any way, please call Janet on 01372-386348. Many thanks again to all those who do help.

### DON'T FORGET

to complete and return the booking form overleaf  
for the Friends' Outing on 28th September

THE FRIENDS OF LEATHERHEAD MUSEUM ANNUAL OUTING

SUNDAY 28TH SEPTEMBER 1997 - VISIT TO CARSHALTON

The Friends Annual Outing this year goes to Carshalton for a busy afternoon. We start with a visit to Little Holland House, 40 Beeches Avenue, Carshalton. This is the former home of artist, designer and craftsman, Frank Dickinson (1874-1961). The house has a Grade II listed interior which is a unique example of the English Arts and Crafts Movement.

We then visit the Water Tower in the grounds of Carshalton House (now St. Philomena's School). The Tower has a plunge bath surrounded with hand painted Delft tiles and is opened to the public by the Carshalton Water Company.

Our final call of the afternoon will be to the Heritage Centre, Honeywood, a listed house on the banks of Carshalton Ponds. This is the local history museum of the London Borough of Sutton and offers most interesting displays of the area's past. The tea rooms at Honeywood offer morning coffee, lunches and afternoon tea. Members may wish to arrive earlier and have lunch. The Greyhound Hotel across the road also provides Sunday lunch.

Parking at all the venues is very restricted so please allow plenty of time to find a parking space. It would probably help if members could share cars wherever possible. Please be prompt at 2pm as we have quite a lot to fit in.

- 2.00pm Little Holland House,  
40 Beeches Avenue, Carshalton
- 3.30pm Carshalton House Water Tower
- 4.00pm Heritage Centre, Honeywood  
(Open until 5.30pm Tea Rooms close at 5.15pm)

The charge for this outing will be £4 per head which includes all entrance but no refreshments which are an optional extra. Please send your completed slip to Janet at the Museum.



To: Mrs. Janet Goldsmith  
Leatherhead Museum  
64 Church Street  
Leatherhead Surrey KT22 8DP

VISIT TO CARSHALTON - 28th September 1997

Please reserve \_\_\_ places @ £4 each

NAME .....

ADDRESS .....

.....

POST CODE ..... TELEPHONE .....

Can you give/do you need a lift?

Cheques payable to Friends of Leatherhead Museum