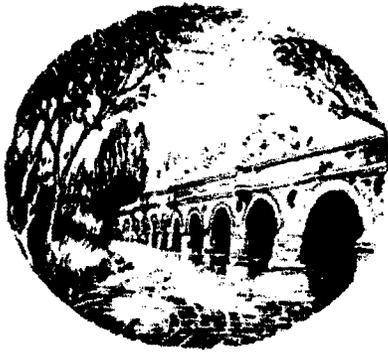


LEATHERHEAD & DISTRICT
LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER



May 1998

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

The Society meets on the 3rd Friday of the month in at the Letherhead Institute from September to May. For details see programme in this issue.

1998 Membership Subscriptions

Ordinary£9.00
Joint Husband & Wife £13.00
Junior (under 18)£1.00

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY

Jack Barker

01372 458469

The Museum is open from April until December at the following times :

Thursday 1:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.
Friday 10:00 p.m. - 1:00 p.m.
Saturday 1:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.

The Library is open from 10:30 am to 1:00 pm on Tuesday, Thursday & Friday and from 10:00 am to 12:30 pm on the **first Saturday** in the month or by arrangement with the Librarian.

LIBRARIAN

Gwen Hoad

01372 273934

The Records are available for study by arrangement.

RECORDS SECRETARY

Brian Godfrey

01372 454654

Lectures on the local history of the area may sometimes be given to other local societies by our members.

LECTURE SECRETARY

Gordon Knowles

01372 458396

The Newsletter is published quarterly.

Copy for the September issue should reach the Society's Office by **16 August 1998**.

NEWSLETTER EDITOR

Anthony Gordon

01372 458180

This Newsletter marks the end of the Society's season of meetings and the beginning of Summer. Between now and Autumn, when Lecture Meetings start again, several visits have been arranged. If one interests you then do join other members of the Society - take a friend or relative if you think they will enjoy the outing. The reply slip for each outing has again been enclosed with the Newsletter.

1998 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Derek Renn presided at the AGM which was held on Friday 17th April at the Letherhead Institute.

The changes to the Executive Committee this year were the election of Thelma Lucas as honorary secretary and Jack Barker as a committee member. As stated in the February Newsletter, Janet Goldsmith and Howard Davies stood down from the committee at this meeting. Introducing the Executive Committee Report, Peter Tarplee spoke of the work carried out by both Janet and Howard over the past years. As Janet was not present, he asked all those present to join with the Committee in requesting that our President write to Janet expressing our thanks for all her hard work on behalf of the Society. This was agreed with acclamation.

The posts of Curator and Sales Secretary as committee members are still vacant. The Chairman confirmed that it was hoped to co-opt people to the committee for these posts. However, the sales operation and museum organisation will continue as far as possible in the meantime.

Details were given of work being carried out at the museum and the curation of our collection, both the archaeological and other artefacts. Some of the archaeological finds were excavated before World War II - and they are now being processed!

Within a few weeks the Society will have a new computer with which to prepare catalogues of our collections of all types. We are grateful to the Surrey Museums Consultative Committee and the South Eastern Museums Service for grants towards the cost of this.

Anyone interested in helping with any of the work is invited to contact Peter Tarplee. The museum will remain open during the previous

sessions, Thursday afternoons, Friday mornings and all day Saturday ***IF WE HAVE ENOUGH STEWARDS.*** At present we do not have sufficient and on some weeks Thelma Lucas is doing one or two sessions herself. Please try to enable us to remain open - speak to Thelma if you could spare three hours at the museum.

At the meeting Anthony Gordon explained the reason for the proposed rule changes as detailed in the papers sent to members. These were both approved.

Peter Starling, our Treasurer, presented the Society's accounts for 1997, which were approved. he also pointed out that the membership subscriptions do not cover the cost of servicing the members and running the Society. The cost of the newsletters, proceedings and routine office expenses exceed the subscription income. The situation is ameliorated by profits from the book sales. Later this year we will be publishing '*History of Fetcham*' edited by Jack Stuttard. This will be the first detailed history about the village, please look for details in the next issue of the Newsletter.

The President pointed out at the close of the meeting the need for more stewards in order to keep the museum open and more participants in visits (particulary where coach hire is involved) if these are to be viable.

Peter Tarplee

JOHN METTAM

John Mettam, who died in January, had been for a long time a valuable member of the Society, especially as the holder of records relating to the history of Fetcham. He carefully catalogued these and the collection of many hundreds included those left to the Society by the late John Lewarne. When the '*History of Fetcham*' was proposed over a year ago he offered to write the history of Fetcham Church. He completed this and it will remain a fine memorial to him. This is most appropriate since he was for many years a leading figure in the life of Fetcham Church, enjoying, as he did, showing visitors round the building and telling them its history.

Jack Stuttard

LEATHERHEAD MAP RECORDS

The management of Leatherhead Map records passed to myself, Alan Pooley, last year and to familiarise myself with the content I undertook an audit and took the opportunity to enhance the indexing. They are sub-classified in five groups: Classic; Specialist; Estate & Parish; Plans & Buildings and, lastly, Ordnance Survey. The Society owns, generally as facsimile versions, various classic Surrey maps such as Saxon (1575), Speed (1610), Borden (1710), Bowed (1749), Racquet (1762) and Fade (1790); an assortment of maps relating to some of the manorial and other estates and photocopied coverage of the 1841 Tithe Map with the 1879 amended apportionment.

Under the "specialist" category a wide range of maps and diagrams is held which, though generally centred on Leatherhead, often extend to give good coverage of surrounding areas, such as Esher for example, and included a fine set of plans for the Chessington Branch of the Southern Railway.

Amongst the "Estate" maps is an 1860 large scale plan of the Woodlands Estate whilst under "Plans" can be found details of restoration work to Sweech House and other ancient Leatherhead buildings.

All maps in the Ordnance Survey category and otherwise if OS based have been indexed to show the sheet number and scale with the survey and revision dates where possible. A full coloured and bound set of the 1st Edition "25 inch" maps (1869) for Leatherhead Parish is held with photocopy coverage for 95% of the area. Many later ones of various scales exist however, surprisingly perhaps, we are sparse in holdings of detailed maps of all or part of Leatherhead for the 1930s to date. Any unwanted map of any scale that covers Leatherhead would be gratefully accepted - it might just be the sole means of answering a tricky question.

Please do ring me (01372 374093) if you wish for advice, help or would like to examine some of the Leatherhead maps held but please note that Ashted, Bookham and Fetcham Parishes have their own archivists.

Alan Pooley

SURREY'S DEFENCES

When is a pillbox not just a pillbox? Answer; when it is part of a complicated line of defences built in the early 1940s to protect the industrial heartland of Britain from the threat of invasion.

Who can talk for nearly an hour and a half on the subject in an interesting and entertaining manner? Answer; Chris Shephard, Chairman of the Surrey Industrial History Group and this is what he did at the February meeting. Chris and his colleagues have embarked on a survey recording all World War II defences in Surrey, not just pillboxes, with a view to getting some of them listed. So far, 500 pillboxes have been identified but there are probably 2000 in Surrey alone and 18,000 nationally. Fortunately this system of defence was never put to the test, but their appearance in the 1940s did much to boost the morale of the worried British people at the time.

Pillboxes of one sort or another have been built from the First World War till the present day, come in all shapes and sizes and may be seen as the last British castle. There are large ones, small ones, round ones, prefabricated ones, very well-built ones which are virtually indestructible and portable ones.

In Surrey the line of defences went across the county from Farnham in the west to Reigate in the east. There was a particular concentration of defences at Waverley Abbey because of its geographical position. There were not only pillboxes, but dragon's teeth, concrete blocks, defensive walls with loop-holes etc. On the approach to some bridges there were plugged holes ready to take telegraph poles or railway track, to form a barricade to tanks, or ultimately explosives to blow the bridge up.

Chris illustrated his finds with slides which showed how many of them are buried beneath undergrowth, or are in almost inaccessible positions, but some have been "rescued" and turned into bat roosts, garden sheds, or even a house, or disguised to look like something else.

Understandably much of this recent history was not documented at the time and some has already been lost but there is still plenty to see. How many of us knew that there was a length of Hitler's Atlantic Wall created in the County?

NEWS FROM THE LIBRARIAN

An article in Vol 3 of the Surrey Magazine published in 1902 describes educational outings from Bellenden Road Higher Grade School, East Dulwich to Ashtead Woods, amongst other destinations.

“By making up a party of 60, the children’s return fare to most of these places is reduced to 6d or 7d, whilst each of these holiday resorts has a caterer who provides a good plain tea at 6d each.....

A trip to Ashtead may be taken as a good example of one of these Saturday excursions. This spot is usually visited in September when the blackberries are ripe. An early train is taken from Peckham Rye – for the boys like to have full value for their money. Such things of interest as the two East Dulwich infirmaries, the L.C. Grounds, the brickfields, the junctions, the lavender fields at Mitcham, the pretty scenery at Carshalton, and the Downs at Epsom, will be looked for and noted. By half-past ten the party of 100 lively youngsters arrives at the Rosery – which has been regularly visited from the commencement of these outings. Here coats and satchels are taken off, and an hour and a half spent at rounders, cricket, or swinging in the spacious field at the back of the house. Lunch is eaten in the open sheds at twelve, and then each class goes off with its teacher for a long ramble through the woods. Not having had their usual cooked dinner the lads do more than justice to the plentiful tea supplied by Mrs. Curnow, at four o’clock. The naturalists resort to the stagnant ponds near the railway station and collect lizards, frogs and newts, wherewith to terrify timid sisters at home.”

Recent additions to the Library include the following:

SURREY - Records

SURREY RECORD SOCIETY - The 1851 religious census: Surrey. Transcribed by Cliff Webb & edited by David Robinson. SRS Vol 35, 1997

SURREY - Individual Towns & Villages

LEATHERHEAD

POWELL, Geoff - “UP the Tanners” from the past to the present. Leatherhead Football Club, 1997

These and all books in the Society's Library are housed within the Institute Library room. Many books are on the open shelves but some have to be kept in locked cupboards and may not normally be borrowed. In case of difficulty in finding what you want please contact the Society's Librarian (details on the front inside cover of this Newsletter). Don't forget your L&DLHS Membership Card when you visit the Library.

Gwen Hoad

NEW PUBLICATION

'A Guide to the Industrial History of the Borough of Elmbridge', another in the series of guides published by the Surrey Industrial History Group is available. Written by Peter Tarpree, it contains notes on almost 300 items and many photographs relating to services and industry in the Borough. 59 pages price £6.95, it is available from local museums, libraries and bookshops or, post free, from John Mills, 35, Trotsworth Avenue, Virginia Water GU25 4AN. Cheques should be made payable to 'S.I.H.G.'.

PROGRAMME

Visits

Three coach visits have been arranged for this summer and we do hope that they will be well supported this year. Only members may apply for tickets, but we need to fill the coaches if possible, so members are welcome to bring friends or relatives with them. PLEASE BOOK EARLY so that we get an idea of numbers as soon as possible in case the coach size needs to be changed. This can't always be done nearer the time.

Details of costs, coach pickup times and car sharing are printed on the application forms.

Saturday 11 July - Coach visit to London's Docklands with guided tour by Lesley Broster. The coach will take us to Tower Hill where members can buy sandwiches or a meal for lunch. The tour will take most of the afternoon, but we shall have a break for tea and will probably leave between 4:30- 5pm. Lesley will tailor the tour to our wishes and stamina!

Wednesday 5 August - Afternoon visit by cars to Shere to have a guided walk round the village and visit the privately owned Museum. Arrive at 2.30 for walk and then visit the Museum. There is a tea shop

where members may have tea afterwards. Walk (very gentle) takes about 1½ hours but people can return to the village centre for refreshment at any time!

Saturday 5 September - Coach visit with Surrey Archaeological Society to Portsmouth to have guided tours round HMS Warrior, the Mary Rose exhibition and ship hall and HMS Victory.

N.B. All bookings for this visit MUST be made by 30 JUNE.

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Saturday 16 May -Coach visit to the Brighton Pavilion and Preston Manor. This follows our excellent Dallaway Lecture on the Pavilion by Cynthia Campbell. In the morning we shall visit Preston Manor - a delightful private house furnished in Edwardian style. We shall then be taken to the Pavilion and have 1½-2 hours to buy lunch or have a picnic and wander round. After that we shall have a guided tour round the Pavilion and time for a cup of tea before returning. See application forms for times and pickup points. Cost £16.25 or Concessions £15.00.

