

LEATHERHEAD & DISTRICT
LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER



February 1999

LEATHERHEAD & DISTRICT LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Hampton Cottage, 64 Church Street, LEATHERHEAD Surrey KT22 8DP
Tel: 01372 386348

Registered Charity No. 802409

CHAIRMAN	SECRETARY	TREASURER
Peter A. Tarplee	Thelma Lucas	Judith Mills
01372 452301	01372 844345	01372 372146

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.

1999 Membership Subscriptions

Ordinary.....	£9.00
Associate	£4.00
Junior (under 18)	£1.00

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY	Jack Barker	01372 458469
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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	10:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.

SUB-COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN	Alan V. Pooley	01372 374093
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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
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The Records are available for study by arrangement.

RECORDS SECRETARY	Brian Godfrey	01372 454654
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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
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The Newsletter is published quarterly.

Copy for the April 1999 issue should reach the Society's Office by 20 March 1999

NEWSLETTER EDITOR	Anthony Gordon	01372 458180
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The Friends of Leatherhead Museum support the Society's work in the Museum

SECRETARY	Thelma Lucas	01372 844345
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FROM THE CHAIRMAN

I would first of all like to thank all members who came to the launch of *'History of Fetcham'* in Fetcham Village Hall on 30 October. We had a very successful evening and we were very pleased with the number of books sold and the number of people who attended. Sales have continued well and our thanks must go to Jack Stuttard and his team of authors for this book which is a worthy addition to our list of publications.

As I write this the museum has just closed until April. Whilst it is not open to the public we hope to carry out a large amount of work. The Museum Committee cannot do it all and we would welcome help from anyone who is willing to assist with this important part of the Society's activities. The type of work needed varies from painting and decorating, carpentry, typing and form-filling to inputting information to our computer. Anyone who would like to help with any of these should contact Thelma Lucas, Alan Pooley or me.

In the last Newsletter I reported that Peter Starling will be retiring from the Executive Committee at the next AGFI. I am extremely pleased to say that Judith Mills has agreed to be our Treasurer and that she was co-opted to the Executive Committee in November. She has been undertaking the duties of Treasurer since the New Year.

With this Newsletter you will receive the Annual Report for 1998 and papers for the AGM. There are still vacancies on the Executive Committee and for a Museum Curator. I shall be pleased to discuss details of what these entail if any member thinks he or she may like to help.

This year the Heritage Open Days organised by the Civic Trust will be held on Saturday 11th and Sunday 12th September. Although Leatherhead was not involved last year it is planned that this year Leatherhead, Ashted, Fetcham and the Bookhams will take part. If you know of a building of interest, or indeed if you live in a building of interest, which could be open to the public at some time during that weekend please let me have your ideas. If you would lead a guided walk around any parts of the Society's area please let me know.

We are just one of the local societies who are combining to organise

activities during Heritage Open Days but any suggestions from our membership will be welcome.

This year the Society is also arranging guided tours around Leatherhead on the first Saturdays of June, July and August. The walks will commence at 2.30 p.m. and will start and finish at the museum. This initiative is being organised by Linda Heath, please see her if you would like to be a leader or if you would like to go on a walk with the possibility of joining the team of leaders for future walks.

Peter Tarplee

THINGS DAMNABLE!

"Damnable inventions - paper and gunpowder making in the Tillingbourne" was the title of Prof. Alan Crocker's recent talk during which it emerged that William Cobbett had thus described the industries in his Rural Rides in 1822 when he visited the Tillingbourne Valley.

The valley has long been the setting for gunpowder and paper mills; the Chilworth powder mills since 1636 and Chilworth paper mills since 1704. In 1753 the view from St Martha's Hill included 4 powder mills and 2 paper mills, together with the river and numerous mill ponds. By the 1880s there were 154 buildings on the Chilworth site alone. In the twentieth century their use gradually declined or their products diversified, till now the site is one of great interest to industrial archaeologists.

Professor Crocker described the process of making paper by hand which used mainly rags. The introduction of wood-pulp or straw came much later. Watermarks were made by a framework of wires in the bottom of the mould into which the rag-pulp was shaken. The major part of a paper mill was taken up with the drying process and by its characteristic louvre windows. The Upper Mill at Albury went bankrupt in 1820 and was moved to France, but soon after this. paper-making machinery came in and it was no longer essential for paper mills to be sited near fresh running water.

The making of gunpowder was also described. Three ingredients were necessary: saltpetre (made from pigeon droppings), charcoal and sulphur. These substances were mixed together in a mill containing pairs of limestone stones. The gunpowder mills carried on to end of the First World War, then were sold in 1920.

A visit to the site has just been made by members of the Society.

HAMPTON COTTAGE AND FOLK MAGIC

A student at University College Worcester, preparing a thesis on the archaeology of folk magic asks whether we hold any of the following in the Museum's collection or have knowledge of any relevant papers or books:

"Horse skulls & bones: These are often found concealed under floorboards, in walls or fireplaces.

Shoes: A great many shoes have been concealed for protections from evil spirits throughout the world and these are often found in walls, under floorboards or in fireplaces too.

Mummified cats: Same as above for similar reasons.

Witch-bottles: These are often found under doorsteps and fireplaces but in other places too.

Written charms and curses: Concealed anywhere, usually in gaps between timbers at entry & exit points in a building.

Miscellany: A great many other objects are often found which defy any explanation other than folk magic."

To the best of my knowledge we do not, neither is there any record of such a practice having occurred at Hampton Cottage, unless the pile of oyster shells found beneath the floor has a dark meaning not previously appreciated! However it may be that a Society Member has knowledge of examples of these practices locally and if so could advise me of any details. Even if it turns out to be too late for the student, it would be interesting to collate evidence for our own records.

Alan V Pooley

PETROL PUMPS AGAIN

Whilst reading a book on cars made in the 1920s I came across the following statement:

The 12 hp Suère was available for a reasonable £275 complete from Theo & Co Ltd. Liverpool. Theo also handled Mathis and Iater Unic but was more famous for its Theo Multiple Pumps, which for the first time allowed several grades and brands of petrol to be sold from the same pump.

This was of particular interest in view of the article in Newsletter 4/98.

Peter Tarplee

NEWS FROM THE LIBRARIAN

Meredith Worsfold's new little book "*Ashtead, the Street in the 1920s*" contains this interesting snippet.

"Miss Kitchener's 'Little Gallery' was No.80 [The Street]. ... I was given an introduction to [Miss Kitchener] in the 1920s by a lady in the village who knew of my interest at that time in heraldry. Miss Kitchener was an expert in that field and I learned later that she was also a designer of coinage. In her later years she lived in a bungalow in Crampshaw Lane. When renovating this property after it became vacant, we found amongst the roof clutter a plaster cast of the 12-sided threepenny piece designed by Miss Kitchener. This, a breakthrough in British coinage, was a comparatively heavy nickel-brass coin with straight edges replacing the diminutive 'joey' and not at all suitable to slip into the Christmas pudding!"

This book, of course, is in the Society's library and other recent additions include the following:

SURREY - Records

West Surrey Family History Soc. - Record Series nos. 23 & 24

SURREY - Walks EVENING NEWS - 20 walks by Fieldfare of the London Evening News. Assoc. Newspapers Ltd, 1955

SURREY- Individual Towns & Villages

BOOKHAM

LEONARD, Christine - History of the Bookham Community Association on the occasion of it's Golden Jubilee. Bookham Comm Assn, 1998
YOUNG, Wendy & KILLE, Turville: the life & times of Turville Kille & stories of old Bookham from 1898. Turville Kille, 1998

ESHER

READING, Pamela - How Esher changed between 1850-1918. Esher District Local History Society Monograph no 26, 1998

FETCHAM

STUTTARD, J.C., Ed - History of Fetcham. LDLHS, 1998

SURREY SOC OF MODEL ENGINEERS - To the next 10 years: a history of the Society, 1978-1988. Written by Ralph Dyer, 1989

LEATHERHEAD

KEMP'S - Leatherhead & District local directory, 1962-63

LEATHERHEAD PARISH MAGAZINE - 1890 [Donated by Meredith Worsfold]

In addition, the Kelly's Directory of Surrey 1890 has just been rebound and

will now go forward into the next Millennium in one tidy piece!

This and all books in the Society's Library are housed within the Institute Library room. In case of difficulty in finding what you 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

BACK NUMBERS OF PROCEEDINGS

During the closure of the Museum (until Easter) will members wishing to purchase Proceedings please telephone me on 01372 273934

Gwen Hoad

THE SWAN BREWERY, LEATHERHEAD.

William and Emily Moore ran the Swan Hotel for many years, William advertising in 1859 as a 'Wine & spirit merchant, brewer and fly-master'. Following his death in 1870 Emily continued with the business and, in 1874, their son George had the Swan Brewery built behind the hotel by local builder, Felix Walker.

The Brewers' Journal for January 1875 carried an announcement of its impending completion, with details of the layout of the buildings.

"...The building which is a prominent object when entering Leatherhead by the London Road is built in Italian style with red brick and concrete, blue and white moulded brick enrichments. The chimney shaft is carried out in red, white and blue brick with encourstic tile bands and unlike most chimneys, is an ornament to the building...."

The brewery consists of a tower, containing on the upper floor, the mash tun, hot and cold liquor backs, the malt and hop store on the first floor, and engine pumps and malt mill on the ground floor, with grist being elevated to the upper or mash tun floor. A copper house adjoining, fitted with a receiving back, refrigerator, steam copper, and hop back on the ground floor; cellars running beneath this portion and the tower..."

The report continues with details of the boiler house and the well. The plant included a 12 quarter mash tun and three tanks for hot and cold water with a total capacity of four thousand gallons. Initially there were seven fermenting vessels but an eighth was added in 1905 to cope with increased demand.

The brewery's main output was pale ale, but stout and porter were also brewed.

In 1876 the management of the company was undertaken by George's managing partner, W.B. Heaver and the business grew steadily. In 1903 both Mr Heaver and George Moore retired and the business, with 21 public houses, was offered for sale at £64,500. In the end an offer just short of this figure was accepted from a consortium of local gentlemen, including J.W. James who had been W.B. Heaver's pupil and was now to become General Manager.

During the period of George Moore's management the Swan Brewery took over Charles Dagnall's White Horse Brewery of Epsom in 1885 and W & J Luckock's Rock Brewery of Dorking in 1890. Acquisitions continued under J.W. James with Boxall & Son's Sun Brewery, Dorking, and 8 public houses in 1907 (WT Boxall joining the board of the Leatherhead brewery). During this period they also leased Sayer's Ashtead Brewery and 4 public houses, closing the brewery and supplying the houses from Leatherhead.

On the 9th March, 1922 the business and assets of the Swan Brewery were purchased by Mellersh & Neale of Reigate and four years later they also acquired the freehold of the Ashtead Brewery and its houses.

MELLERSH AND NEALE - THE REIGATE BREWERY

The Reigate Brewery was founded in Church Street in 1801 by Thomas Neale, the son of a family of Reigate maltsters. He seems to have been successful and in 1806 took William Lee into partnership. Thomas and William had served their apprenticeships together under Thomas's father and had remained friends. An inventory which was drawn up at this time valued the business at £1420/8/8 and included 352 barrels of various sizes.

Amongst Neale's competitors was Thomas Cooper who had a brewery in the High Street. Cooper was very successful and had a brewery in Leatherhead in addition to that in Reigate, as well as 55 pubs in Surrey. When he died in 1805 his executors auctioned his estate and it was split amongst a number of purchasers. Thomas Neale bought the lease of Cooper's Reigate brewery when it came up for sale in 1806 and this had the double effect of adding an established business to his existing one and removing a major competitor. At the same time he also acquired a number of public houses.

Having acquired the new brewery the partners ran both together until 1828, with William running the Church Street brewery and Thomas the new High Street brewery. In 1828 William withdrew from the business, the partnership was dissolved and the style of the business changed from Neale & Lee to Thomas Neale & Son. Following the withdrawal of Lee's capital

Neale sold off the Church Street brewery to a maltster named Edward Larmer.

In 1843 Thomas Neale sold the brewery to his two sons, Thomas and William. Some time later he also sold the pubs to his sons before he died in 1850. He had also had businesses as a coal merchant and a banker and the failure of his bank in 1850 reputedly contributed to his death.

In 1854 the sons invited Frederick Mellersh, a friend and family advisor, to join the business as a partner and the trading name of the company was changed to Neale and Mellersh. Also in 1854 Thomas the younger withdrew from the business because of ill health and he died in the April. In 1865 his son, Sisson Watts Neale, joined the firm as a partner and its name was once again changed, to Neale, Mellersh and Neale. Another name change, to Mellersh and Neale, occurred in 1883 when William Neale retired and finally in 1899 the suffix 'Ltd' was added when the company was floated on the stock exchange.

Sisson was very active and by his retirement in 1919 he had expanded the business to an estate of 91 public houses. He also developed an export trade to the West Indies. In 1898 three of Sisson's 10 children, Robert, James and Reginald, joined the business.

Water for brewing had been extracted from two chalk wells halfway up Reigate Hill and piped the mile or so to the brewery but by the turn of the century it was clear that this had become inadequate. The water company was not able to provide a water of sufficient consistency so the brewery sank its own well in Bell Street. This well produced 4,000 gallons an hour and during the Second World War was connected to the mains by the water company as a precaution against their supply being bombed.

By 1903 the brewery and tun room were too small for the firm's trade and a new brewery tower was built.

After the First World War many breweries were expanding and Mellersh and Neale had to do likewise in order to survive. In 1922 the business of the Swan Brewery, Leatherhead was bought. The Swan Brewery had previously taken over a number of other concerns, including the White Horse Brewery at Epsom, W&J Lucock of Dorking, Boxall & Son's Sun Brewery also of Dorking and Sayer's Ashted Brewery.

In June 1931 the business of R&F Pagden Ltd of Epsom, together with 14 pubs, was acquired.

In 1938, by which time they had amassed 90 houses, it became Mellersh

and Neale's turn to be the victim of a takeover. They had already been approached by Hoare & Co Ltd in 1934, and then by the British & Allied Investment Co Ltd in 1935, but had rejected these offers. However, when Meux's made an approach this was accepted with the final brew taking place in June 1938.

The brewery continued in use as a depot for Meux with the beer being sent from London by rail. During the War Meux decided to move their offices out of London to Reigate but in 1942 these offices were destroyed by fire, resulting in the loss of most of Meux's records. Interestingly Meux's London offices were unscathed during the War.

After the War the mineral water factory continued in production until it was sold in 1961 and closed in 1963. The burnt out offices were demolished and the tower was sold for use as a furniture repository. The site was finally cleared in 1988 to make way for a shopping precinct.

The preceding two items have been reproduced by permission of the author Jeff Sechiari who would be delighted to hear from anyone with information on brewery history. As membership secretary of the Brewery History Society he would be pleased to send details of the Society and its brewery bookshop to anyone interested. SAE to Jeff Sechiari, Manor Side East, Mill Lane, Byfleet, West Byfleet, Surrey KT14 7RS

HONOURED MEMBERS

Two of our members, past President Stephen Fortescue and Chairman Peter Tarplee, have been presented with awards by the County for their contributions to local history. We extend congratulations and thanks to them for what they have done both within and outside the Society.

GUIDED WALKS ROUND LEATHERHEAD

On the afternoons of Saturdays 5 June, 3 July and 7 August we are taking guided walks round the centre of Leatherhead to show people some features of historic interest in the town. Walks will start and finish at the Museum at 2.30 and will take about an hour. PLEASE TELL YOUR FRIENDS and encourage them to come along and find out more about some of Leatherhead's past and to look round the Museum which after 1st April is open on Saturdays from 10.00 a.m. - 4.00 p.m.. No charge, but donations for Museum funds welcomed.

We do need more people to lead guided walks, so if any of our members would like to come on one of these walks to "learn the ropes" now is your chance!

Linda Heath

PROGRAMME

Lectures

All meetings are held in the Dixon Hall of the Letherhead Institute at 7.30 for 8pm. Entrance 50p for members and £1 for non-members (EXCEPT 21 May - 50p members and £3 non-members.) Coffee is included, served from 7.30pm.

Friday 19 March - "The Mystery of Coade Stone"

by Dr. Gerry Moss

What is Coade stone? Dr. Moss, President of Holmesdale Natural History Society in Reigate, will tell us all about it.

Friday 16 April - Annual General Meeting

followed by short talks by some of our members

Friday 21 May - "Sir Francis Carew's Garden at Beddington"

by John Philips

New Light on Old Gardens. Recent research has revealed fascinating details of gardens long ago which were later neglected, altered or destroyed. This lecture is one of a series of talks organised by Surrey Archaeological Society and the Surrey Gardens Trust. Admission is £3 per person, BUT our members only (not guests) will be admitted for 50p. Advance booking is recommended - see enclosed leaflet.

Visits

Because we have had a poor response to coach visits in the past few years, (cost?) this year we have arranged more guided walks round local places of interest with much to see and learn. However, any ideas from members will be welcomed!

Mon.29 March a.m. - Visit to new Surrey History Centre at Woking.

In the morning by car, starting at 10 a.m. this will include a 40 minute lecture and tour round building. Cost £1.50. This is limited to 15 people.

Sunday 23 May 2:15 p.m. - Guided Walk round Fetcham.

In the afternoon and lasting 1-1½ hours. Cost £1.00.

Parking outside Budgens, Cobham Road.

Fri. 18 June 2 p.m.- Afternoon guided walk round Guildford.

Cost £1.50 which will go to Friends of Guildford Museum.

Further visits are planned to Carew Manor in Sutton, Reigate and the Bus Museum in Cobham with a bus ride included!

DETAILS OF THESE VISITS WILL BE IN THE MAY NEWSLETTER

