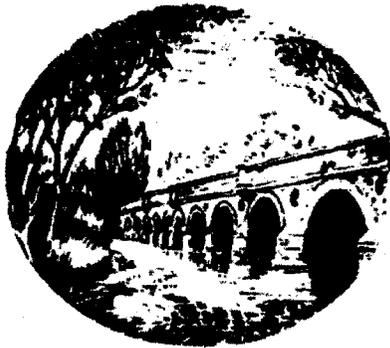


LEATHERHEAD & DISTRICT  
LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

# NEWSLETTER



November 1999

# 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**

**Judith Mills**  
01372 372146

---

---

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

## 2000 Membership Subscriptions

These are now due. Please see the Membership Renewal form enclosed with this Newsletter. The subscription amounts and the classes of membership are given on the back of the form.

**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 a.m. -	1:00 p.m.
Saturday	10:00 a.m. -	4:00 p.m.

**SUB-COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN**

**Alan V. Pooley**

**01372 374093**

---

**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 February 2000 issue should reach the Society's Office by 15 January 2000*

**NEWSLETTER EDITOR**

**John Wettren**

**01372 459277**

---

**The Friends of Leatherhead Museum** support the Society's work in the Museum

**SECRETARY**

**Thelma Lucas**

**01372 844345**

**FROM THE CHAIRMAN**

As I write this we have just got back into our winter routine of monthly lectures. We have had two excellent talks so far, each of which has been followed by an appropriate visit.

Other recent activities have included the walks and visits which took place on the weekend of Heritage Open Days. This Society was one of those in the District involved in the planning of the weekend and I think that we should all be grateful to Mole Valley District Council who organised and publicised such a wide range of places to see. I would also like to thank the many members of this Society who helped with the various activities, some of which, I know, were almost too popular.

There will be a similar event next year and we anticipate that Leatherhead area will want to participate again. If any member has any suggestions for alternative places to visit I shall be pleased if they will let me know and we will try to arrange it.

One of the most popular venues during the Heritage weekend was Fetcham Park House which had not been open to the general public for many years. Over 1500 people visited the property over the two days. Many of you took advantage of the second opportunity offered to visit this Listed mansion when we launched '*Bookham and Fetcham*' compiled by Linda Heath. This book is in the *Images of England* series and contains photographs reflecting life in the villages over the last one hundred years or so.

It was good to see so many members and friends at this function and we were also pleased with book sales on the night.

The Society expresses its thanks to Linda (and her group of helpers) for producing this fascinating book and we also owe a great debt to Parallel Business Centres for allowing us to use their grand rooms for the event.

If any of you have not yet bought your copies of the book please buy them from the Society if you can - either at the museum or at the Friday meetings. The cost is £9.99. What better Christmas present for someone who lives in, or used to live in, the area?

I regard our publications as a very important part of the society's activities. This book will increase the knowledge generally available about the history of Great and Little Bookham and Fetcham. Other books are in the pipeline about other aspects of the history of our area.

As many of you will know, Anthony Gordon who had been our Newsletter editor for a number of years has been unable to continue with this work. We were grateful to Jenny Gordon for editing the May issue and to Thelma Lucas and John Wettern for the August issue, all at very short notice. I am very pleased to report that Thelma and John have agreed to carry on with this and that John Wettern was co-opted on to the Executive Committee at their last meeting as our Newsletter Editor. All contributions should be sent to the editor at the museum.

Anthony has relinquished all his activities with the Society at present but I would like to put on record the thanks of the committee for all the help he gave whilst he was serving with us.

In the last Newsletter I appealed for help with storage of the material which we are having to move from the basement of The Mansion. I am pleased to report that two members have offered the use of garages and that these will solve our immediate problems. We are very grateful for these very generous offers. Any help with transport of the books or erection of shelving will be very much appreciated.

Finally, as this will be the last Newsletter of 1999, I would like to wish all members a happy Christmas and a pleasant new Millennium.

*Peter Tarplee*

## **MEMBERSHIP**

**Annual Subscription – due on 1<sup>st</sup> January**

Please note the enclosed subscription renewal form.

If you pay by Standing Order please ensure that it covers the **current** subscription rate.

*J.Barker – Membership Secretary*

## THE CURIOUS CASE OF THE DISAPPEARING BARNs (sic) - PART 2

Mrs. Joy Morgan has recently deposited with the Leatherhead & District Local History Society the research material for her dissertation '*Continuity and Change in a Surrey village - the Bookhams 1870-1914*'. This material includes extracts from documents in the Surrey Record Office which, together with photographs and plans in the collection of the Leatherhead and District Local History Society, suggest answers to the questions posed by Mr. Youngs in his article on the building at 50 Church Road, Great Bookham, destroyed in 1998 (Surrey Archaeological Society Bulletin 323, reprinted in Leatherhead and District Local History Society Newsletter November 1998). A longer study of the Sole Farm estate is in preparation, but a summary of the evidence for the '*disappearing*' barn is given below, together with a possible solution to the mystery.

The First Edition Ordnance Survey 1:10,560 and 1:2,500 plans, surveyed 1868-70, show four ranges of buildings west of Sole Farm house, together with a roadside barn to the north-east. The present village hall (always known as The Old Barn Hall) exactly corresponds in size and position with the former north range. The Second Edition OS large-scale plans of 1894 show three new buildings between the ranges and the roadside barn. By the time of the 1914 OS revision, all four north-east buildings had gone, but the new house and an adjoining building to the north, which were both destroyed in 1998, were now marked for the first time. Of the buildings which vanished, the pre-1870 roadside barn corresponded most closely in plan size to the new house. A photograph shows the roadside site cleared and the barn on the trackway behind. In July 1896 the Hon. Eustace Henry Dawnay granted the Eggleston brothers a lease of Sole and Grove Farms for a minimum of eight years, but in the following November he sold the farms to Arthur Bird, a solicitor and estate developer. In March 1905 after the lease fell in, Arthur Bird sold Sole Farm House with the barn and cow stall west of it. By May 1906 he had converted the north range of the farm buildings into a public hall and in June 1906 he sold the next plot to the north to Donald Poole with a proviso that any house to be built on that plot was to be worth at least £1000 and be approved by him, with one private stabling and a coach house or motor house.

*The Bystander* (March 28 1906) stated that : "A large farm building on the estate of Mr Arthur Bird, at Great Bookham was moved recently from one

end of the village to another, the owner wishing to convert it from a farm shed into a dwelling house. The building was fifty four feet long and our photograph shows it mounted on rollers and being drawn across some fields to its new site. The movement was executed without the displacement of a single roof tile, which must be regarded as a triumph for those engaged in it: Mr. Richard Lee of Great Bookham (architect) and Messrs Cummins and Sons of Dorking (builders)". All the photographs of the building on rollers show windows at two levels in one wall with a large painted sign '*Freehold Land For Sale/ or On Long Building Leases/ With Good Road Frontages / For Plans & Conditions/ Apply To R. Lee, Architect, Great Bookham Surrey*' on another. The windows might have been inserted not simply to light the interior, but to give it a domestic appearance to attract property buyers. The sight and photography of the '*moving house*', with its placard provided further publicity for the Sole Farm estate development.

Although Arthur Bird had just successfully converted a barn into a village hall, this proposed '*conversion*' was hardly a £1000 house in 1906. The Bird Poole sale plan of June 1906 has a north-south building line, crossed by a small east-west building near the north boundary (apparently the coach house/garage/office which survived until 1998) but no house is indicated. Close scrutiny of the photograph showing the barn as a skeleton (apart from some cladding and the roof covering) reveals that the picture was taken no earlier than summer 1906 with the barn on the site of the house. There are windows at different levels from those in the other photographs but no trace of an upper floor. The barn frame has been lifted several feet and propped with long wooden beams whilst brick walls are being built beneath. The later postcard photographs labelled '*Pitscottie - the house that was moved*' show that the lower storey of the house was almost entirely of brick, whatever happened to the rest of the barn's timber framing. What may be the only other surviving fragments of the '*disappearing*' barn are the iron '*saddlestones*' (rearranged in the walls in front of the Old Barn Hall) which were cast at Bartlett's foundry in Dorking, which was working from c.1820 to 1870.

*Derek Renn.*

## **GEORGE GWILT--RE-BUILDER OF LEATHERHEAD BRIDGE** **His family and their connections with Henry Smith's Charity.**

The Society has a valuable watercolour of Leatherhead Bridge painted by Varley which is on loan to Surrey County Council and hangs in the office

of the Deputy Chairman. A copy of it is in our Museum and postcards are on sale there. The bridge was built in the 14<sup>th</sup> century and the original foundations can still be seen below the brickwork and much of that is attributable to the reconstruction undertaken by George Gwilt, the Elder (1746-1807). He was appointed the Surveyor to the County of Surrey in 1771 at the time when a number of private bridges were being taken over by the Counties to overcome the frequent disputes as to who was responsible for their maintenance so that they fell into disrepair (see Derek Renn's article in the "Proceedings" Vol.3, No.6, pp 115-7). Gwilt also made a survey of Leatherhead at the same time. It was reproduced as Map NO8 in Vol.2, No.6, p.169 of the "Proceedings". Copies of it are on sale in the Museum.

When I was researching an account of the Henry Smith Charities, Julian Pooley of the Surrey History Centre directed me to a copy of William Bray's "*Collections relating to Alderman Henry Smith*" in the library of the Society of Antiquaries which had once belonged to Gwilt's second son, Joseph, and which had been annotated with some highly critical views on Bray's capacity as an antiquarian. The Gwilts were descended from Henry Smith's sister and so were of his "*Poor Kindred*". In Joseph Gwilt's opinion they were entitled to share in the rents of the Kensington estate owned by the Charity. Bray's view was that they had to show need.

The family had originated in Wales but moved to Southwark, where a Richard Gwilt, a silk-stocking weaver, married a descendant of Sarah Jackson, Henry Smith's sister. His grandson, another Richard, was a peruke maker who had two sons, Richard an auctioneer who sold the estate of John Lade in Warbleton (Henry Smith bought Iwood Place, the Manor House of Warbleton about 1614 and later the Manor itself. Leatherhead parish's Henry Smith Bounty comes from the Trustees' ownership of Iwood). The other son was George the Elder, the re-builder of Leatherhead Bridge.

George had been apprenticed to a mason and later became Master of the Mason's Company in the City of London, but he soon joined the practice of a surveyor. In addition to his appointment as the County Surveyor he was also the District Surveyor of Southwark (1774) and of the Surrey Commissioners of Sewers. With his elder son (also George) he designed the range of nine large warehouses in West India Docks (largely destroyed in the 1941 Blitz). He had been a protégé of Henry Thrale the brewer and designed Streatham Place for him, so was acquainted with Dr. Johnson.

As well as other commercial properties he was also responsible for work on a number of churches and chapels in the Southwark area. Both his sons, George the younger and Joseph (mentioned above) were also prominent architects. The latter, with his son, John Sebastian, wrote an *Encyclopaedia of Architecture*. John and his brother were both in turn King's scholars at St. Peters College, Westminster and one became a barrister of Middle Temple in 1827.

**Ernest Crossland**

## NEWS FROM THE LIBRARIAN

Hunting and shooting in Fetcham? Yes there was, and not so long ago either, as is proved in this extract from "*Town and County*" by Charles W. Cooper.

"I went to Fetcham Park at the beginning of August 1895, and found they kept a big staff, 20 all told. I had no time to get to know anyone well or get settled down before we packed up for Scotland, Mr Hankey having taken Sir William Gordon Cumming's place, Dallas Lodge, Forres, for the grouse shooting. Getting back to Fetcham Park seemed like going into a fresh place: having been there three days before going to Scotland, I had scarcely met the rest of my fellow servants. We had several house parties during the shooting season, there being plenty of pheasants, partridges, and hares in abundance; the Glebe land in front of the house was a sanctuary for the latter.

During the hunting season, Capt. George Hankey, Mr. Edward and three young ladies used to ride, but not me. The riding habits were much longer then and consequently got very muddy ; on many occasions I had three of the beastly things to scrub twice a week.

It was a great day when the Hounds met there, the butler and us two men handing round the stirrup-cup of wines and liquers, sandwiches, cakes, etc., whilst for the villagers and others following on foot there was plenty of beer, bread and cheese.----

During the racing season a lot of entertaining was done, especially for the Spring and Derby meetings at Epsom and all meetings at Sandown Park. These two places, of course, are within easy driving distance, so they used a bus and pair of horses, the luncheon baskets and ice-pail for the champagne being packed on top"

This and other books are housed within the Institute Library room.

Recent additions include:

**SURREY - Archaeology**

Miller, Pat and Stephenson, Roy. *"A 14th century pottery site in Kingston upon Thames, Surrey; excavations at 70-76 Eden Street"*.

Museum of London Archaeology Service 1999.

**SURREY - Individual Towns and Villages**

**HEADLEY, WALTON ON THE HILL etc.**

Walton on the Hill and District Local History Society -

Newsletters 1-30, 1991-1999.

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 current L&DLHS Card when you visit the Library.

*Gwen Hoad*

**LEATHERHEAD AVIATION SERVICE.**

Did you know that immediately after the end of the first World War Leatherhead had, for a short time at least, its own commercial flying venture ?.

In February 1920 Mr.W.G.Chapman of Leatherhead Motor Works installed an RE8 hangar , which he had obtained as war surplus from Brooklands, in a field at Byhurst Farm, Malden Rushett. The field was owned by a Mr.Pruit and was on the west side of the Kingston Road, now the A243, just south of Fair oak Lane and Chessington Zoo.

Mr. Chapman based a smart de Havilland D.H.6, powered by a 90 h.p. American Curtiss OX-5 engine, at Chessington. The aircraft, registered G-EANU, was used extensively for joy-rides and charter flights and became well-known around the country in its smart blue livery with brass turn-buckles and engine cowling. Chapman sometimes flew the airplane himself, he also employed a professional pilot named Muir.

Unfortunately Mr. Chapman, flying as a passenger in an Avro 504 during an aerobatic display at Slough on 27th August 1922 was seriously injured when the aircraft spun and crashed to the ground.

Both the pilot and his passenger eventually recovered after a long spell in Windsor hospital but the accident brought about the demise of Leatherhead Aviation Service and the end of Chessington as an aerodrome. I have been

unable to discover whether Mr. Chapman lost his nerve after the accident or whether the long spell in hospital financially crippled his business. Whatever the cause it was the end of commercial flying in the Leatherhead area. The field at Chessington is still part of the farm and looks virtually the same today as it must have done seventy-nine years ago.

*Gordon Knowles*

### **"SURREY'S INDUSTRIAL PAST"**

This book, produced by the Surrey Industrial History Group, was launched at Dorking on 29th October.

The book describes the history of the varied industrial activities within the county and includes chapters on extractive industries, public utilities, textiles, chemicals, food processing, entertainment, defences etc. The various subjects have been researched and written by members of the Group, at least four of whom are also members of this Society.

The book costs £12.95 and may be obtained, post free, from : John Mills, 35 Trotsworth Avenue, Virginia Water, GU25 4AN; cheques payable to 'SIHG'. Alternatively you could obtain copies at our meetings or from Leatherhead Museum.

*Peter Tarplee*

## **FORTHCOMING EVENTS**

### **LECTURES**

*All meetings are held in the Dixon Hall of the Letherhead Institute at 7.30 for 8 p.m. Entrance : £1 for members and £2 for non-members. Coffee is included; served from 7.30 p.m.*

**Friday 17th December.** - Christmas Miscellany on 'People and Places' (local if possible). Short talks by members, arranged by Gordon Knowles. Please let Gordon know as soon as possible if you will talk about some building or person of local interest for about 5-10 minutes, with or without slides. This is a real opportunity for members to take part rather than just sit and listen ! Ring Gordon (01372 458396) if you would like to contribute something - it can be very lighthearted.

***N.B. We have mince pies and coffee in the interval at this meeting - provided that members bring some mince pies, please !***

**Friday 21 January.** - *'Family Life in 19th Century Kingston'* by Peter Tilley. Peter has made a great study of this from census forms and will show us how research can be done with the aid of census returns on computer.

**Friday 18 February** *'The Philosophy of Conserving Buildings'* by Richard Eckersley. Richard is an architect who lives in Leatherhead and is a member of our Society. He has worked with English Heritage and is an expert on the conservation of buildings. His talk will include the work he has recently been doing at Syon Park.

**Friday 17 March** *'The History of Bookham Commons'* by Ian Swinney. Ian is the Warden of Bookham Commons and those of us who have been round the commons with him will know what a wide knowledge of the area he has. He will take us on a guided walk round the commons on Saturday, 8 April.

**Friday 14 April** Annual General Meeting, followed by a short talk by our President, Derek Renn, and one by another member if time permits. If we have too many would-be speakers at the Miscellany, maybe this is your chance !

**Friday 19 May** *'The History of Painshill'* by a member of the Painshill Trust. This will be followed by a visit to Painshill in June.

## **VISITS**

As mentioned under the talk in March, there will be a guided walk round Bookham Commons led by the Warden, Ian Swinney on 8 April. Other proposed visits next year include a visit to Chatley Heath in May, Painshill in June, and Slyfield Manor in July. Details of these visits in the February Newsletter. Any other ideas? Gordon Knowles has not been flooded with suggestions !

*Linda Heath*

## **CALLING ALL MUSEUM STEWARDS**

Please would you make a note of this : the Stewards Christmas Party will be held on December 10th from from 6 to 8.0 p.m. at the Letherhead Institute.

*Thelma Lucas*

## INDUSTRIAL ARCHAEOLOGY

Gordon Knowles will be holding another series of ten lecture-discussion meetings, plus a site visit, on behalf of Fetcham & Bookham WEA at the Letherhead Institute on Thursdays from 10.00 a.m. to 12 noon, commencing 13th January.

The programme topics will once again be taken from both Britain and overseas and will NOT have been covered during earlier meetings in this series. This year's topics will be :

The Great Docks at Portsmouth, 1830 – 1914.

Isambard Kingdom Brunel and some of his achievements.

Betty's Hope - an Antigua Sugar Plantation and Mill ,  
1650-1972, associated with the Codrington family.

150 years of Waterloo Station, 1858 – 1998.

Raasay iron mine, 1912 – 1942.

The Lynton and Barnstaple Railway, 1895 – 1935.

100 years of Messrs Dennis at Guildford.

Sir Charles Parsons & the steamship "Turbinia".

The Severn Railway tunnel.

The Knight family Iron Dynasty in the Midlands 1695-1902.

A visit will be made on the 6th April, the last meeting of the course. Provisional arrangements are in hand for a *behind the scenes* visit, not available to the public, to the Royal Naval Dockyard at Portsmouth where both the historic and modern sites will be seen. If this visit does not materialise then alternatives to the Plan Arch at Waterloo station, again not readily available to the public, or to London sites associated with Brunel.

Enrolment can be made either at the first meeting or by obtaining a form from the WEA Secretary, Joy Tapping, phone 01737 844937.

The full fee is £40, concessions £34.

## NEWS FROM THE FRIENDS OF THE MUSEUM

### VISIT TO CHATHAM DOCKYARD, WORLD NAVAL BASE

One Saturday in September a small group of members went to Chatham Dockyard.

There was a very efficient Visitors Centre where, if you had studied all the information panels and watched the videos you could have spent the day there. However we decided on the advice of the Staff to go to the *Wooden Walls* Gallery where a tour was due to begin.

Here we took a step back in time to the 18th Century when the dockyard was built. It has been sensitively restored and there was a tremendous sense of history about the site. We started our tour in the Masthouse and Mould Loft where after a brief welcome we were told to imagine we were a young apprentice being shown around. We then progressed at our own pace around the house, stopping at the various demonstrations where a disembodied voice described the processes being performed - very atmospheric. In the Mould Loft we saw where the ships were just planned by a series of lines on the floor. H.M.S. "Victory" was designed here.

There are three dry docks, one containing a submarine, one a destroyer and one in current use. The tour of the destroyer was about to begin and we were shown round by a retired service man. At present it is only possible to visit the decks but by next year they hope to have 'below decks' open. Apparently the money is available but labour is lacking.

After lunch we set out to see more of the beautiful Georgian site : the Officers' houses, the Admiral's Office, the Garrison Church and the Commissioners House. Here there was a lovely restored garden bathed in sunshine, a veritable haven in such a built-up area. We passed the Sail and Colours loft where flags and bunting are still made commercially and then 'tackled' the Ropery. Rope is still made there and some was in position. We could appreciate the enormous length, 1135 feet, needed to make the length of rope required by sailing ships. Women were employed in rope making which is a complicated process starting with the raw hemp fibres which are then spun into yarn and then rot-proofed by immersion in hot tar before returning to the ropery to be made into rope. Rope is still made commercially here but using different fibres some of which are synthetic.

By now, verging on exhaustion we had a much needed 'cuppa' sitting in the sunshine watching the traffic on the Medway. Time to go. No time to see the Lifeboat Museum and other features. We had been lucky with the weather ; the sun shone most of the day and what a day it had been. A real step back into the past, haunted by the ghosts of all those people who had built the sailing ships and left us such a wonderful heritage. My sincere thanks to John Wettern for organising the outing. I must go back.

*Pat Seymour*

## **RECORD KEEPING AT THE MUSEUM**

It is confidently believed that the application for full Registration as an accredited Museum will be approved later this year and the Museum Committee has decided that during the coming winter's closure of the Museum, volunteer efforts should be concentrated on tackling the task of bringing the documentation to the required standards. Each item in both Hampton Cottage and the store has to be examined and separately documented from the available existing records, and its condition, location and other facts set down. Work has started already on a modest scale and it seems that it is best done by a team of two or three people working together. We have only two teams at present and must build up numbers if we are to have any chance of meeting the target date of the end of the year 2000.

The work is not arduous and the process quite simple, the only proviso is that it must be done methodically. After initial instruction and guidance, teams can work in Hampton Cottage whenever they want to, though it would be best if not more than two teams were working at any one time.

Please consider if you could spare a little time (to suit yourself and team partners) to help the Museum improve itself over the next fourteen months.

If you would like to know more about what is involved, please complete and return the accompanying slip to Thelma Lucas at the Museum address.

*Alan Pooley*  
**Chairman Museum Committee**

## WALKS AND TALKS

The Committee has decided to publish to members a note of the various talks and walks that some of us do on their behalf. They publicise the Society and hopefully stimulate interest and encourage membership.

- (i) There was a very successful series of Leatherhead walks during the summer and on Heritage Days, starting from the Museum and organised by Linda Heath supported by a number of volunteer guides.
- (ii) Derek Renn has led two walks around Bookham, following a talk he gave earlier in the year to the Eastwick W.I. in Bookham.
- iii) Similarly Alan Pooley conducted two walks around Fetcham, both well attended.
- (iv) Linda Heath has given three talks during October on '*Bygone Leatherhead*' to Walton-on-the Hill Local History Society to Ashted Women's Register and to Banstead U3A.

*Gordon Knowles*

## MILLENNIUM CHURCH SERVICE

The Vicar and Churchwardens of St. Mary and St. Nicholas with All Saints Church, Leatherhead cordially invite members of the Leatherhead and District Local History Society and Leatherhead Museum to a Civic and Community Service to MARK THE NEW MILLENNIUM and to celebrate

### **Leatherhead, its Life and People**

on Sunday 2nd January 2000 at 10.30 a.m. at the Parish Church.

This service will be followed by a Commemorative Tree Planting Ceremony by the Chairman of Mole Valley District Council in the Park Gardens and by coffee in the Parish Church Hall.

RSVP Mrs. Veronica Kay  
Parish Office, Parish Church Hall  
Leatherhead  
KT22 8AY

