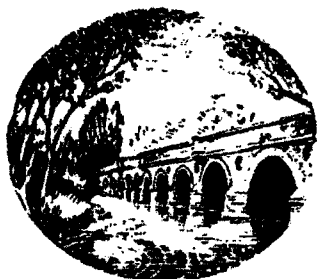


LEATHERHEAD & DISTRICT
LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER



November, 2000

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	Vacancy	Judith Mills
01372 452301	01372 386348	01372 372146

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

2001 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
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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 in February, May, August and November.
Copy for the February 2001 issue should reach the Society's Office by 19th January, 2001.

NEWSLETTER EDITOR	John Wettren	01372 459277
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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

First of all I would like to thank all our members who helped with Heritage Open Days. Unfortunately I was out of the country at the time but from reports I have received the weekend was successful despite the fuel shortages at the time. In fact only one property (Fetcham Park House) was unable to open because of this.

This year there were about 70 events in the District programme, significantly more than previously. There was a wider range of properties open including Leatherhead Hospital, Elmer Water Treatment Works and the Westcott Static Engine Collection for the first time. In order to help visitors interpret the properties and appreciate the wider history of the area the programme included a number of talks and walks, and for the first time we had evening events with a talk by Nigel Barker at St John's School on the Saturday and a civic service at Leatherhead Parish Church on the Sunday.

It is hoped to continue Heritage Open Days next year but the scope could be reduced as some property owners may want a break from opening to the public. However, if *new* properties, walks, talks or displays could be included the organisers would welcome this. Please let me have any suggestions and I will pass them on to the planning committee for next year's events. Remember that any booking or ticketing arrangements will, where requested, be handled by Dorking Halls thus relieving owners or guides of the need to organise this. We are very grateful to Mole Valley District Council for their support, both financial and with staff, with the organisation of the Heritage Open Days.

Next another word of thanks, this time to all who, at very short notice, organised the removal of the sign from the Bull Hotel and its display in the museum garden. This is a useful addition to our outdoor exhibits and to the museum collection.

I mentioned in earlier issues of the Newsletter the two walk leaflets which are being produced this year in conjunction with Mole Valley District Council and others. As I write this both leaflets are in the final stages of production and by the time the Newsletter is published copies of the River Mole Walk leaflet will probably be available at local libraries, museums, the Help Shop, the Tourist Centre, etc. The Town Centre Guide involves installing plaques on various historic buildings (including Hampton Cottage). The launch date has yet to be agreed.

I have previously referred to the publication of *Bookham in the Twentieth Century* by Bill Culley which the Society has produced. This recently received a very successful launch and is now on sale. Any member having difficulty in obtaining a copy should contact the acting Sales Secretary (me).

Finally, members are reminded that when they use the Society's library or records in the Letherhead Institute the car park is not available for their use during the daytime on weekdays. We are privileged that the Trustees and the Leatherhead Community Association allow us the use of space in the library but there have recently been complaints about our members taking up car parking spaces which the L.C.A. rent for other purposes.

Peter Tarplee

MEMORIES OF OLD ASHTEAD

A heat haze shimmered over the field as the livestock whisked their tails in the shade of the trees. The scent of newly cut hay filled the air in the beautiful summer afternoon. We walked through to the main road where the Street Farm House lay to our left and crossed the dusty street, making our way to Rectory Lane. We passed the newly-built houses three to a block and the inn and turned into the lane, past the old Tudor cottages to the forge. The blacksmith's hammer rang out as we walked on to the Rectory, where extensive gardens ran down behind the high, red brick wall. We returned to the field margins and threaded our way through the wild flowers and waving grass parallel to The Street to Park Lane. We walked on through Ashtead Park gates to the lodge and then turned left into Farm Lane and Ashtead House, where our hostess provided delicious refreshments in the garden before showing us round her elegant home.

Superimpose on the above Ashtead in the year 2000 and you will experience the enthralling walk we had led by Howard Davies and Jack Willis. The field is covered by the Peace Memorial Hall car park and the scent was of exhaust fumes, not hay. The rest of Ashtead is still there and the experience of this remnant of rural England still remains to be discovered, as we did, that day in August. Our thanks too to Mrs. Daphne Woolaston the owner of Ashtead House who royally entertained us.

Cherry Pepler

HERITAGE WEEKEND

Our Society was, as usual, involved with various aspects of Heritage Weekend on 11th and 12th September. The Museum was open both days and attracted a record number of visitors. We provided displays for The Mansion and Wesley House and, with assistance from Mr. N. Benger, took groups of people round Sweech House which is always a popular place to visit. Members of the Society led guided historic walks round the town on both afternoons, and although the weather was not brilliant, at least it stayed dry.

Our thanks to all those members who helped in different ways to add to the success of the weekend.

Linda Heath

HERITAGE DAY AT LEATHERHEAD HOSPITAL

Leatherhead Cottage Hospital opened its doors to the general public for two hours on Saturday 16th September. This was part of National Heritage Weekend, and the first time the hospital had been included. There has been a cottage hospital in Leatherhead since 1893 and it has always been held in great affection by the local community.

The public were greeted by a member of staff and by the League of Friends. They were then taken in groups on a tour of the hospital including the new outpatient suites, X-ray department with a demonstration of X-ray films, our award winning physiotherapy rehabilitation unit and an exhibition of medical memorabilia with a dummy patient and nurse in older style uniform. The entrance hall

contained details of history of the hospital together with photos of staff parties and events. The League of Friends shop dispensed tea and cakes.

Forty six people came and were appreciative of what the hospital does and the enthusiasm and dedication of the staff. The League of Friends has raised nearly one million pounds since its inception in 1960 and judging by the interest shown will benefit from new members and extra funds.

Grateful thanks to Meg Clarke and the staff who gave up their own time to make the day a success.

Dr Fred Meynen

MORE FROM LEATHERHEAD HOSPITAL

Things were not as cosy in past times as our member Meredith Worsfold has discovered. He sends us an extract from a record dating back nearly a hundred years .

The Leatherhead and District, Queen Victoria Memorial Cottage Hospital Criteria for Admission, 1904.

Patients shall not pay less than two shillings and sixpence and not more than ten shillings and sixpence per week.

Every patient admitted must be provided with decent clothing and proper changes of linen.

No person shall be eligible for admission who is afflicted with any disease considered to be infectious, contagious, with epilepsy, insanity or any disorder not likely to be cured or mitigated by treatment.

Women advanced in pregnancy are inadmissible.

All patients shall be discharged after one month.

No patients shall remain for more than two months.

Doctors responsible for the care of patients must be resident in the area and must have been practising for at least two years.

From the Minutes of the Medical Staff Committee , 1904

With acknowledgements and thanks to Dr F.G.C.Meynan, MB, BS, DRCOG, FRCGP.

ASHTEAD COMMON

Most of us think of Ashtead Common as a place of natural beauty - but it needs active management to keep it as such. Adam Curtis, an assistant Keeper of the Common, explained his work at our September meeting. Left alone, open grassland is soon overgrown by trees and bushes as well as bracken (a fire risk), paths choked by thorns and ponds silted up. The Corporation of London looks after the Common at no cost to the public, using traditional practices: it also owns Epping Forest, Hampstead Heath and Burnham Beeches. Uniquely at Ashtead, there is local community involvement through a consultative committee as well as in other ways, notably volunteers who meet every Thursday and on the first Sunday of each month to do a variety of jobs.

The Common is a wildlife haven, a birdwatcher's paradise. In 1995 it was declared a National Nature Reserve by English Nature. In its ancient woodland, grassland and wetland areas are fifty species of native tree, four hundred species of plants and several hundred lichens and fungi, and many *minibeasts* ; over a thousand species of beetle, 150 being internationally rare.

Man has lived on the Common at least since Roman times - there are the remains of a villa and tile factory which supplied settlements throughout southern England. The big triangular earthwork nearby may be a medieval stock enclosure, for the Common was farmed as wood pasture, the trees being coppiced or pollarded to provide building timber, firewood and forage for beasts whose grazing kept the grassland open. But this woodfarming was abandoned when brick and iron became the main building materials. During both world wars, trees were felled and the slopes ploughed up for food production, as could be seen on old maps and air photographs.

Adam concluded by answering many questions, showing us some of the finds made (including huge wheels from a large timber *tug*) and inviting us to visit the displays in the Estate office (adjoining Ashtead railway station).

Derek Renn

“LEATHERHEAD’S CHURCH AND PARISH”

THE DALLAWAY LECTURE BY LINDA HEATH

James Dallaway was a man of many parts - chaplain to the British ambassador in Constantinople, secretary to the Duke of Norfolk and author of the first history of Leatherhead, but it was as a vicar of Leatherhead that he figured in our Millennium Dallaway lecture on October 20th.

Linda Heath, vice-president of the Society, described him and his long-serving predecessors and successors in her fascinating survey of the impact of the church on the life of everyone in Leatherhead. Up to 1894, when local government took over, the church provided all social welfare (including primitive health care) for the poor, repaired the roads, maintained law and order, and operated a fire brigade by raising local rates through largely unpaid officers. These unpopular duties were overseen by the vestry, a body of church folk who met at first in the room where the church vestments were kept (hence the name), but more often in a hired room in one of the many inns of Leatherhead. Records existed from the late 17th century of the Leatherhead vestry meetings which built up a lively picture of local life.

Derek Renn

SECOND WORLD WAR DEFENCES

Trevor Marchington who gave a joint paper to the Society in April 1999 on the defence of Southern England in 1940, wishes to know whether any member can supply further information about structures in this area. He writes :-

“Although the *GHQ Stop-line* was intended to be the last line of defence in 1940, this concept was soon abandoned. Most settlements on important routes became defensive sites. Hints of local involvement occur. The “Leatherhead Advertiser” reported that :
' . . . work, on improvements to Leatherhead High Street had been, delayed by the discovery of so-called *anti-tank traps* during excavations.'

“There appears to be no comprehensive record of defence structures such as anti-tank cylinders in Leatherhead and its immediate vicinity. Nor is there much information about the local Home Guard. Most evidence is probably found in the memories of wartime residents. It would be greatly appreciated if anyone with information would contact me on 01372 372572 so that this can be recorded.”

Trevor Marchington

NEWS FROM THE LIBRARIAN

After the visit to Slyfield Manor by members of the Society this year, and its opening to the public over Heritage Weekend, how many people know that it was once rented by Gerald Du Maurier early in the twentieth century. From the book "Gerald: a portrait" by Daphne Du Maurier published by Gollancz in 1934, comes this extract : -

"It was good to be in the country after the dust and noise of London, and he wandered about with a book on birds in one hand and a book on wild flowers in the other, dressed in shabby tweeds, with a spy-glass round his neck and Angela and Daphne trotting at his heels. He was beginning to love those summers in the country. ... the Elizabethan house at Cobham [sic] was a positive joy, with the River Mole at the bottom of the garden, and rapids to shoot in a cranky boat, and snakes in the long grass, and a ghost on the staircase, and in the trees and the hedges every conceivable form of bird.

On a long day in which to idle, with the hot sun above, and a sky the colour it ought to be, there was nothing better than this. But let it rain, let a cloud appear as small as the back of your hand, let the trees sob in a wind and something appear for lunch that was not underdone roast beef and cos lettuce, then somehow - difficult to explain, but the charm would be gone, a sense of desolation would come upon him, the house seem cramped and dark and strangely uninhabited, and he would begin to fret for London.

"I'm a Cockney", he used to say. "It's no use getting away from it. A day or two in the country is all very well, but not for ever; it's too slack. I find trees depressing after a while, and I can't relax. It's no good, one is either born like that or one isn't. It's something in the blood".

This and other books are housed within the Institute Library room.
Recent additions include:

SURREY- Individual Towns & Villages

EPSOM

Swete, C.J. - *A Handbook of Epsom*. Republished E.P.Pub.Ltd, 1973
(Includes Ashted & Leatherhead)

LEATHERHEAD

Leatherhead & District Local History Society – Proceedings Vols 1-4,
bound copies (presented by Derek Renn & purchased by him from
the library of the late Ken Gravett)

SHERE

Noyes, Ann - *Shere poverty: from parish workhouse to Union workhouse*.
Twiga Books, Gomshall, 1996 (presented by Ernest Crossland)

In case of difficulty in finding what you want please contact the Society's Librarian (details on the front inside cover of this Newsletter).
Do not forget your current L&DLHS card when you visit the library.

Gwen Hoad

BOOK REVIEW

Ewell Past by Charles Abdy; published by Phillimore; 132pp; ISBN 1 86077 135; price £14.95; hardback.

Many of our members will know Charles Abdy for his many local history publications and for his work with the Nonsuch Antiquarian Society. Most will probably know him for the talks he has given to our Society. These are notable for the clarity of the words and the excellence of the illustrations; and this can also be said for his latest book.

Eight years ago Charles wrote *A History of Ewell* and this was well received and soon sold out. This new book introduces fresh material but inevitably there is some repetition in order that the book may stand alone. He has dealt with this problem by presenting the book in two parts; Part 1 gives a summary of the history of Ewell before 1800 whilst Part 2 gives more details of the happenings over the last two hundred years.

The information on the development of Cuddington and Stoneleigh adds to the whole picture of the area and that on Stoneleigh particularly is a good description of a *new* pre-war suburb spawned by Southern Electric trains.

The book, by its title, does not have to bring the story of Ewell right up to date, but it seems rather surprising that having included a chapter titled *Post-War Ewell* it only contains four pages. However, the author has, in general, succeeded in producing a book giving the history of his town which is both readable and comprehensive which will be useful to all with an interest in the history of the area.

Peter Tarplee

NEWS FROM THE FRIENDS

Really good news this month. We have seven new Stewards plus one lady who will be joining us when we re-open in April. Thank you for all your recruiting efforts to find these Stewards, they will really make a difference to our ability to staff the Museum rota adequately.

Unfortunately Ernest Crossland has decided to give up after many years as a Steward. Thank you so much Ernest for your long service. We hope you will continue to pop in and see us whenever you feel able.

As you know the Stewards have been helping the Museum Chairman, Alan Pooley, to find out the most popular times for visitors to the Museum. The figures show that Friday morning is the least popular time, so with the agreement of the Museum Committee we are going to open the Museum on Friday afternoons from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. instead of in the mornings. The new times will commence when we reopen in April. Most of the present Friday morning Stewards can do the afternoon instead, so by using some of the new Stewards we should be able to cover the different hours. Let us hope that Friday afternoons prove more popular with the public.

Talking about dates may I confirm that the Christmas Party for the Stewards will be held on 19th December at the Letherhead Institute from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. This is a *thank-you* to them for all the hard work they have done.

Another item of news is that we have joined the British Association of Friend of Museums which we believe will give us some useful contacts and new ideas.

You may not know that the Museum celebrates its 21st birthday on 6th October next year. We are busy planning a suitable function to mark the occasion as well as *anniversary events* throughout the Summer season. If anyone has any ideas please get in touch with the Friends Chairman, John Wettren (459277) or myself (844345).

Thelma Lucas

FORTHCOMING LECTURES

15th December

Christmas Miscellany - short talks by members. This is **YOUR** evening! Please contact Gordon Knowles (458396) as soon as possible if you have a subject you would like to talk about for about 5-10 minutes.

19th January "*The Landscape Archaeology of Mickleham Downs*" by Julie English. Julie is a scientist at the University of Surrey researching brain hormone melatonin and she has been involved in archaeology for thirty years. Her interest in landscape archaeology goes back to the mid 1980's. She has been closely involved in the Mickleham project of the Surrey Archaeological Society. She will be leading a walk for us on Mickleham Downs in April.

16th February "*The History of Chessington*" by Mark Barker. How little we know about the history of neighbouring parishes! Mark Barker has written a fascinating book about the history of Chessington, and we should know a lot more about this *not so far away* place after his talk. In the summer we are planning to arrange a visit to the church there with Mr. Barker.

16th March "*Leatherhead in 1851*" by Dr. Ron Cox. This should be of great interest to anyone interested in the history of Leatherhead. Dr. Cox has made a detailed study of the 1851 census throughout Surrey and he is an experienced lecturer on many subjects and author of several books. He is consultant archivist for Croydon Education Department and former Chairman of the Bourne Society.

20th April *Annual General Meeting* followed by a talk by Goff Powell, one of our more active members, who will show us some more slides of his extensive postcard collection, some of which have not been on view at all before. Further details in the February Newsletter.

18th May. "*The Wonderful Patterns of Nature*" by John Bebbington. John is in charge of the Field Studies Centre at Juniper Hall and anyone who has seen his marvelous photographs will not want to miss this superbly illustrated talk. There will be a visit to Juniper Hall in August or September.

Linda Heath

SURREY ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

MILLENNIUM PROJECT, VILLAGE RESEARCH

The Surrey Archaeological Society is holding an open two-day conference at the Letherhead Institute on 26th and 27th November from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. each day.

On Saturday morning there will be a talk on land tenure, and presentations on work at Mitcham, Merton, Morden, Wimbledon and Capel. In the afternoon Shere, Ewhurst, Hambledon and Thorpe will be discussed, also manors and buildings generally.

Southwark, Ewell and Horley will be reviewed on Sunday morning, and Dennis Turner will deliver a final lecture on the origins of Surrey villages at 2 p.m., to be followed by the AGM of the Surrey Archaeological Society.

Further details can be had from the Society at Castle Arch, Guildford (Telephone : 01483 532454,

Website : [http://lourworld.compuserve.com/home/pages/surrey arch](http://lourworld.compuserve.com/home/pages/surrey%20arch)).

ANNUAL SYMPOSIUM

The Surrey Archaeological Society's Archaeological Research Committee's Annual Symposium for 2001 will be held on 17th February. Please note that this will not be at Dorking as hitherto but at the Peace Memorial Hall in Ashted. Further details should be available later but members requiring information should contact Rose Hooker, 59, Thornton Place, Horley, RH6 8RZ; tel: 01293 411176.

CONFERENCE, JUNE 2001

Members' attention is also drawn to the leaflet enclosed with this Newsletter about the conference to be held at the University of Surrey on 2nd and 3rd June 2001. This is a major conference with well-known speakers and those interested who are not members of the Archaeological Society should make arrangements to be put on the mailing list.

LOCAL HERITAGE GRANTS

The first two Local Heritage Initiative grants for Surrey have recently been announced. The scheme is run by the Countryside Agency and is funded largely by the Heritage Lottery Fund helped by the Nationwide Building Society.

One grant is to the Elmbridge Diggers Heritage Group for research and interpretation of the Digger movement in the Weybridge/Cobham area. The other is to enable an investigation and conservation of an area of downland pasture at Mickleham Downs which may once have been part of a prehistoric field system. This follows a landscape survey by the Surrey Archaeological Society who now intend to use the L.H.I. grant to research the field system and determine the history of the site. From our lecture programme on page 10 readers will have noted that Judie English will speak to us on this topic on 19th January, 2001.

Peter Tarplee

VISIT FROM THE NONSUCH ANTIQUARIAN SOCIETY

Alan Pooley writes :-

“On Sunday afternoon 8th October, fourteen members of the Nonsuch Antiquarian Society with Peggy Bedwell as their leader, met us in Cobham Road, Fetcham.

I gave them a short introduction to the Parish of Fetcham and then took them on a walk up to the church where Ed Tims was waiting to give a brief summary of its history and pointed out the salient items of interest. We then continued with the walk back to the Village Hall for tea and biscuits. No charge was made but voluntary donations were sought for the tea which covered the costs and of photocopied handouts. Fortunately it was a fine day between two very wet ones.”

IN MEMORIAM

Members will be sorry to learn that Ron Johnson of 27, The Garstons, Great Bookham died on 16th October.

Ron had been a member of the society for a number of years and regularly attended our lecture meetings.

Peter Tarplee

MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTIONS

Please note that annual subscriptions are due on 1 January. Full details are given in the enclosed subscription renewal form.

If you pay income tax or capital gains tax you can help the Society's finances, without further cost to yourself, by signing the Gift Aid Declaration attached to the renewal form. Details are on the back of the form.

If you pay your subscription by standing order, please ensure that it covers the current subscription rate.

N.B. The minimum subscription to the Friends of Leatherhead Museum has increased from £1 per person to £3 per person, £5 for couples.

Jack Barker - Membership Secretary

HOW TO FIND US ON THE INTERNET

In increasing number of people are asking us whether the Society and the Museum are accessible through the Internet.

Members might therefore be interested to know that we are 'online' at the museum and that we do have a website.

Our E-mail address is :

localhistory@localhistory.free.online.co.uk

Our Website can be accessed as follows :

<http://freespace.virgin.net/frank.haslam/sites>

[/ladlhistoc/index.html](http://ladlhistoc/index.html)

John Wettern

