

LEATHERHEAD & DISTRICT
LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER



February, 2001

LEATHERHEAD & DISTRICT LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

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Tel: 01372 386348

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Registered Charity No. 802409

CHAIRMAN

Peter A. Tarplee

01372 452301

SECRETARY

Vacancy

01372 386348

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.

2001 Membership Subscriptions

Ordinary.....£9.00

Associate.....£4.00

Junior (under 18)..... £1.00

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY

Jack Barker

01372 458469

The Museum will be open from 5th April until December at the following times :

Thursday 1.00 p.m. - 4.00 p.m.

Friday 1.00 p.m. - 4.00 p.m.

Saturday 10.00 a.m. - 4.00 p.m.

SUB-COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN

Alan V. Pooley

01372 374093

The Library at The Letherhead Institute is open on Tuesdays and Fridays from 10.30 a.m. to 1.00 p.m. and on Saturdays from 10.00 a.m. to 12.30 p.m. 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 Co-ordination of the Society's lecture and visits programme and L & D L H S speakers for local societies.

PROGRAMME & LECTURE SECRETARY

Gordon Knowles

01372 458396

The Newsletter is published quarterly in February, May, August and November.

Copy for the May 2001 issue should reach the Society's Office by 14th April, 2001.

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

I am writing this soon after Christmas and because of the Newsletter publication dates I have just prepared the Annual Report and other papers for our AGM which is not until April! However, at the next AGM it will be necessary to elect either a new Treasurer or a new Secretary. During the past year our Treasurer Judith Mills has helped greatly by preparing the agendas and minutes for our Executive Committee meetings but we cannot continue without a Secretary. For one thing our meetings are not quorate if either Judith or I are unable to attend. The Society needs its quota of officers if it is to continue with all its activities, and the Executive Committee decided that one person should not be doing both jobs as at present. If any member thinks they could help with either of these roles will they please speak to Judith Mills or to me. For information, brief job descriptions of each post are given below:

SECRETARY

- Prepare and distribute the agenda and other papers for the Executive Committee meetings (one every two months), and the AGM.
- Attend and minute the meetings of the Executive Committee.
- Attend and minute the AGM.
- Deal with the Society's correspondence - usually between two and six letters a month.
- Any other duties the Secretary feels he or she is capable of taking on.

TREASURER

- Keep the Society's books (currently kept on an Excel spreadsheet)
- Pay invoices, expenses, etc.
- Receive monies and ensure that they are paid into the bank.
- Keep records of Covenants and Gift Aid declarations and periodically recover tax (a form filling exercise).
- Annually report on the Society's financial activities to the Charities Commission (form filling exercise).
- Attend the Executive Committee meetings (one every two months) and report on financial matters as necessary.
- Prepare annual Balance Sheet and present it to the External Examiner and then to the AGM.

- Hold the Society's insurance documentation and, if necessary, make claims on behalf of the Society.
- Arrange collection of entrance money at the Society's lecture meetings.

Whilst considering the officers of the Society there are two Committee posts which have not been filled for a few years and I have attempted to provide 'job descriptions' of these in the hope that there is someone among the membership who feels that they could help the Society by undertaking one of these roles. It would be good if at this year's AGM we can have members to fill all the vacancies so that people are not trying to do a number of jobs.

SALES SECRETARY

- Visit appropriate book shops, including Friends of Leatherhead Museum and the County Library Service, for orders, and supply books ordered together with Delivery Notes and/or Invoices.
- Where Delivery Notes are supplied ensure that invoices are sent to the appropriate accounts office.
- Ensure that appropriate review copies of the Society's publications are issued and arrange book launches as necessary.
- Receive and record payments for invoices and send these or the paying-in slips to the Treasurer.
- Obtain quotations and arrange printing of the Society's publications and the provision of the necessary material for the printer in accordance with an agreed programme.
- Fix the selling price of publications in accordance with quotations for printing and other work.

MUSEUM CURATOR

- Take overall responsibility for the conservation and documentation of the Society's museum collection in accordance with appropriate standards. In this work a number of Society members will be carrying out specific tasks and the curator's role is to co-ordinate these.
- Attend meetings of the Society's Museum Committee, which has responsibility for the management of our museum.
- Liaise with the Friends of Leatherhead Museum who organise the sales in the museum and provide stewards to man the museum during public open hours.
- If possible the Curator should represent Leatherhead Museum at meetings of the Surrey Museums Group which are held four times a year at various museums around the county.

I hope that this has helped members to know what is involved in some of our unfilled positions and I shall, of course, be very willing to discuss any of this with anyone who may be able to help. Reading again the minutes of last year's AGM which are circulated with this Newsletter I notice that the shortage of committee members was emphasised then; I hope that by this year's Annual Meeting the situation will be eased. We are a very busy society, organising lectures, publishing and selling books, running a museum and an archive service among other activities, but this can only continue with the active participation of more members : otherwise those who are now doing two or three jobs will find that they do not want to do any.

REGISTERED STATUS FOR LEATHERHEAD MUSEUM

Since the last Newsletter was prepared our Museum has been awarded *Registered* status by RE:SOURCE (The Council for Museums, Galleries and Archives). The Certificate, which is displayed in the museum, states that

The award of this certificate shows that this organisation: 1. has achieved approved standards in museum management, collection care and public service, 2. is a suitable home for collections which are part of our common heritage, and 3. is worthy to receive support from public sources.

I think that this is an achievement of which we can be proud and for which we owe a debt of gratitude to Alan Pooley and the Museum Committee and all those members who have been, and still are, cataloguing and conserving our collection. Our thanks too to the Friends of Leatherhead Museum who ensure that the museum is manned whenever it is open to the public and that there is something to sell in the museum shop.

Peter Tarplee

CHRISTMAS MISCELLANY

Tradition was maintained at our December meeting, with the series of short talks by members, organised by Gordon Knowles, together with mince pies and coffee. Our chairman, Peter Tarplee, not only produced a taxing set of pictures of local buildings for us to identify, but described the history of the Fairmile Works at Cobham. Mr Macklin had first assembled racing cars at *Glengarriff* in 1920, moving to Fairmile Cottage where he developed the '*Invicta*' car and later the 'Railton' (used by the police with fabric roofs to allow for radio reception!). During the second world war, the company designed wooden launches as rescue and torpedo boats which were made in furniture workshops and assembled in shipyards throughout Britain. Peter has tracked down two on the River Dart which are still in use, and importantly, hardly modified. His slides well illustrated this.

The second world war was also Trevor Marchington's theme. He described the false leads in his search for surviving defences: the 'pillbox' which turned out to be septic tanks, the concrete base belonging to a modern wind turbine designed to protect vines from frost, and the dewponds on Fetcham Downs which looked like gun positions.

John Wettren had inherited his father's love of collecting, and took us into his magic world of travel tickets, bus, train and plane, as well as a look at slides of other interesting items in his collection.

Judith Mills described how parish magazines had begun in 1859 in Derby as a response to the *penny dreadfuls*. Their core was a mass-produced commercial journal, full of moral stories and competitions, with excellent engravings and early use of photographic reproductions. Round this core was wrapped a locally-produced record of church events.

John Morris appealed for (and got) volunteers to help with the processing of data relating to individual inhabitants of Leatherhead in the nineteenth century, using census returns, civil registers of births, marriage and deaths, church baptism, banns and burial records, local newspapers and the evidence of living people.

Derek Renn and Gordon Knowles

DISCOVERIES ON MICKLEHAM DOWNS

At the January meeting of the Society Judie English gave a most interesting lecture to a large audience on *The Landscape Archaeology of Mickleham Downs*. Judie is a member of the Surrey Archaeological Society project group which has been working on the site for several years, and work will be continuing for at least two more years.

She explained that the term *Landscape Archaeology* is a fairly recent branch of archaeology, prompted by the publication in 1953 of Hoskin's book *The Making of the English Landscape*. She contrasted the west side of the Mole Valley with that of the east, by first briefly describing the work, supported by Surrey County Council, that the group had done at Norbury Park. The aim had been to survey a 4 x 2 km site in 3 years. After 4 years about a third of the site had been covered and to date the results of the work had not been published. There has been a further year's work attempting to identify ancient sites, and the project team is being cautious in not promising too much too quickly this time. The emphasis with Landscape Archaeology, compared with the traditional approach, is not to destroy any remains as traditional archaeology digs tend to do, but rather by air photographs and ground surveys at different times of the year to attempt to identify ancient field boundaries and, by limited excavation, uncover pottery shards, lines of enclosures and, hopefully, other more positive proof of early settlements.

The 'Long Ride' was ploughed up during World War 2, and both Celtic and Romano-British artifacts have been discovered. The field system has been reconstructed with the aid of air photographs, Judie showing us some examples taken over the downs.

Since about 1800 the land use has gradually changed from farming and has been replaced by large country houses and estates. Many of the large properties have now themselves gone. Cherkley Court, the wartime home of Lord Beaverbrook, remains, though no longer in private hands. Judie explained several lynchets which had been identified, where ploughing has created ridges, and a more pronounced double bank and ditch which could have been a sheepfold or possibly a defence work. The group plans to write up and publish its work and to erect interpretation boards on the site, subject to obtaining funds.

We all now know much more about interpreting the downs at Mickleham and look forward to walking them with Judie on Saturday 21st April.

Gordon Knowles

ARCHAEOLOGY AT POLESDEN LACY

The *Surrey Archaeological Collections*, Volume 87, just published contains an archaeological and historical survey of Polesden Lacey and Ranmore Common estates by Christopher K. Currie, which summarise his research for the National Trust (A copy of the full report can be seen in the Surrey Archaeological Society's library at Castle Arch, Guildford).

Worked flint scatters have been found near the house and on Goldstone Farm, and Roman finds suggest that more permanent settlement was beginning. The documentary evidence for a Saxon estate and its medieval development and management are studied in detail. Old records mention the *hatches* or gates on to the common, alongside which farms grew up to exploit the grazing.

Close study of the maps and other records has shown that the 1994 official guidebook to Polesden Lacey will now need revision, not least in the account of the nineteenth-century rebuildings of the house.

Derek Renn

CENSUS STUDIES

LEATHERHEAD IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

New light on the lives of the people of Leatherhead will be shed during the coming months as the study of the Census returns for the years from 1851 to 1891 gets under way. Details from copies of the census returns will be entered by a team of volunteers working at home on their computers. Under the guidance of Peter Tilley, the author of the Kingston Census Report, and supervised by John Morris, the team met for an initial briefing in mid-January.

Eight volunteers expressed willingness to undertake computer entering and a further six will perform the valuable supporting role of checking the results obtained. Although this represents a very satisfactory number to be taking part, John Morris says that still more volunteers would be welcome.

He can be contacted on 01372 377158.

John Wettern

REMINISCENCES OF A WARTIME 'CLIPPIE' IN LEATHERHEAD

by Irene Churchill (nee Kissick)

Mrs. Churchill now lives in London, but recently visited Leatherhead and came to the Museum. She asked if her memories of the war would be of interest and very kindly sent them to Linda Heath, of which the following is an extract:

*My early childhood was spent in Leatherhead, but then we moved to London until we were bombed out and returned here in 1940 when I was nineteen. After my marriage in 1941 I worked for two firms in Leatherhead, but I was attracted to become a 'clippie' and work as a bus conductress from the Fetcham Bus Depot. Training was minimal, but one thing I remembered from my days at All Saints School was mental arithmetic, so the way-bill side of the job was a doddle for me. But navigation was not my strong point. At first, I rarely knew where I was. Though an Epsom girl by birth, I had become a 'limey'. All identifying names had been removed from buildings to confuse the Germans as much as me. But fortunately, Public Houses remained. I remember the **Jenny Lind** at Sutton, **The Bear** at Cobham and, of course, **The Spread Eagle** at Epsom - the latter always a welcome sight. 'If this is Epsom, Leatherhead cannot be far behind'.*

The buses on the 462 route were powered by gas cylinders towed behind the vehicle. On my first day I was scheduled to work with a perfect gentleman driver (Johnnie Crowther) on the last bus to the garage from Redhill. I don't know which of us was most apprehensive. The scene from the top of Reigate Hill was amazing. Searchlights playing as lasers might today, barrage balloons hoping to intercept the German bombers, and fires all around us. All this, and far too many Canadian soldiers aboard the bus, on their way back to barracks near Kingswood after a very liquid evening in Redhill and Reigate. Arriving eventually at the Fetcham Garage well after midnight, cash and way-bill needed to agree. Was the clerk waiting for me to pay in wondering what sort of mess this slip of a girl had made of things? There was only him and me around! I showed him! Then off through some woods that I can't now identify, to Dilston Road. Another day and a half over. Bombers still overhead.

I remember my time on all six routes with great affection. The day of the Normandy invasion, a passenger got on at Ashted and told me she had just heard the news on the radio. I gave Johnnie (the driver) the emergency three bells and ran round to the cab to tell him. He was much more professional than me, and when I noticed we were perched precariously on a hill-top I quickly returned to the running board and gave the necessary two bells to proceed.

Only once was I reprimanded. I had let a known 'free-rider' go too far for fourpence. He feigned sleep and I had not the nerve to wake him to see his ticket, but the Inspector had! I was really scared I would lose my job by the severity of my 'carpeting'. Did the Supervisor enjoy the interview as much as I remember? I doubt it.

Memories of the war-wounded from Horton Hospital in their bright blue suits, white shirts and red ties, and their jovial spirits. The soldier with the badge of a medical regiment who actually persuaded me he was a rear-gunner on a submarine! And the soldier on the way home from Guildford late one night. I physically stopped him getting on the moving bus, and expected him to be lying in the ditch next day! Rock cakes and cheese at the Kingston Garage and two 'doorsteps' of bread and jam at the cafe next to the Fetcham Garage, which I am delighted to see still remains there even though the Garage has gone.

LIFE AS LIVED AT *THE HAVEN*, OTTWAYS LANE, ASHTREAD, 1900.

RULES

All inmates are bound to observe the following rules, neglect of any of them will lead to dismissal from the Haven.

1. Perfect sobriety and respectable living must be invariably maintained.
2. No quarrelling with or unkindness towards any other inmate.
3. To attend public worship, health and weather permitting.
4. The rooms to be kept perfectly clean and tidy at all times, they will be inspected occasionally.
5. An occasional holiday or change may be taken, but it must be so arranged that there are two inmates always left at the Haven.
6. No friend or visitor to be allowed to sleep at the Haven.
7. No children to live or visit at the Haven.
8. None of the furniture to be taken away or lent to anyone, and to be taken proper care of.
9. No bills for work or repairs done at the Haven will be paid unless a written permission for the same is first obtained from the Trustees.
10. The Haven is intended for able-bodied persons able to wait upon themselves. Any inmate becoming helpless or developing an incurable disease requiring attendance is no longer eligible and may be required to leave.
11. The Trustees reserve to themselves the right of admitting candidates to the Haven and also of dismissing any inmate.
12. In addition to a furnished cottage, each inmate receives five shillings a week and an allowance for coal paid monthly in advance. A gardener is also provided.
13. Every inmate must be of unblemished character, either un-married or childless widow, above fifty years of age, and have lived in respectable service and been able to lay by some little money.
14. No oil lamps or naked lights to be used except in case of emergency.

M. Worsfold

SUBSCRIPTIONS FOR 2001

Thank you to all those members who have already paid their subscriptions for the current year, whether by standing order or direct to me. If you have paid, your new membership card will have been enclosed with this Newsletter. If you have not received a card, please let me have your subscription as soon as possible.

If you pay by standing order and wish to help the Society's finances by way of the Gift Aid scheme please note that you will need to fill in the Gift Aid declaration which was enclosed with the November 2000 Newsletter.

(Thank you to those *Standing Order* members who have already sent me their declaration).

Jack Barker, Membership Secretary

NEWS FROM THE FRIENDS.

I am sure that all the Friends will agree that we have had a successful and enjoyable year .

Due to the hard work of our members we have obtained twelve new Stewards. This is great news and will make the stewarding much easier to arrange.

Our *Thank You* party for the Stewards was held just before Christmas. Because there were fewer tables to sit at, friends were able to move around more easily and so talk to more people. Also it was good to see a number of Stewards' *better halves* joining with us.

During the party John Wettern, our Chairman, made a presentation to Ernest Crossland to mark his retirement from stewarding. Ernest has always been an example to us in the way he copes with the visitors, and his wide knowledge has been helpful on many occasions. Thank you very much Ernest— we shall miss you very much and I hope you will pop in and see us whenever you are passing by.

A new venture this year was an informal meeting of the Stewards held at the Reeves room in Leatherhead, where we could get to know each other and raise any queries we had. If anyone has to contact another Steward it is always easier I feel to talk to someone you know rather than just a name.

I feel we are gradually becoming much more of a friendly group of people who share the task of helping the public to enjoy their visits to the Museum, and this can only be a good thing, so we will meet again informally this year. Our outing this year was a visit to East Surrey Museum at Caterham and then to Croydon Airport. After lunch some of the party went on to visit the new Clocktower Museum in Croydon.

Fortunately the weather was kind to us for our coffee morning but we need more visitors. It is difficult to advertise this event and I am wondering if we have the date and time right. Perhaps we should take a stall in the market? Please think about this and let me have your ideas.

The Museum re-opens on April 5th. The working party has been busy all winter and there are now two new cabinets which The Friends have helped to pay for, and some re-arrangement of artefacts.

Plans for the year 2001, which is the 21st anniversary of the founding of our museum, will include several special events to celebrate this fact.

We intend to make the task of stewarding even more interesting and rewarding and will be running refresher days during the run up to opening. Stewards, as well as having the chance to brush up on the Museum and its contents, will we hope bring us some valuable feed-back and new ideas.

The Friends now have an interesting insight into the business of being a "*Friends*" organisation. Much useful information and advice has come our way as a result of our having joined the British Association of the Friends of Museums (B.A.F.M.) a nation-wide society uniting the Friends of U.K. museums large and small.

On behalf of the Friends of the Museum may I wish all readers of this magazine a Happy and Prosperous New Year.

Thelma Lucas

FORTHCOMING LECTURES

All meetings are held on the third Friday of the month at the Letherhead Institute, 67, High Street, Leatherhead, starting at 8.0 p.m. Coffee is served from 7.30 p.m.

Admission : Members - £1, Non-members - £2.

16th March *'Leatherhead in 1851'* by Dr. Ron Cox.

In view of our Society's project of recording the census returns for Leatherhead, this lecture about the census in Leatherhead 150 years ago should be of particular interest to us. This year, 2001, is a census-taking year. Will there be a lecture about us in 2151?

20th April Annual General Meeting followed by a talk by 'Goff' Powell on *'Postcard Connections'*. We shall have the opportunity of seeing some postcards which have not been on view before.

18th May *'The Wonderful Patterns of Nature'* by John Bebbington who is in charge of the Field Studies Centre at Juniper Hall. Anyone who has attended his talks in the past will look forward to seeing more of his really beautiful slides. We are planning a visit to Juniper Hall in August.

FORTHCOMING VISITS

Saturday, 21st April. Field Visit to Mickleham Downs led by Judie English, following her talk in January on the Landscape Archaeology of Mickleham Downs.

Meet at 2.0 p.m. at the Surrey Wildlife Trust Car Park, Nower Wood (Mill Way, B2033) which they are kindly allowing us to use. Applications and £1 per person to Gordon Knowles. (458396) *Form enclosed with this Newsletter.*

Sunday, 27th May. Guided Walk round Little Bookham led by our former President, Stephen Fortescue, the acknowledged 'expert' on Bookham. It is a Bank Holiday weekend, so while motorists are fuming on the motorways, our members can enjoy a Sunday afternoon stroll round Little Bookham.

Meet at 2.30 p.m. at All Saints Church, Manor House Lane. Ample car parking. Applications and £1 per person to Derek Renn. (454880) *Form enclosed with this Newsletter*

Wednesday, 20th June. Evening Walk round the Woodcote area of Epsom, led by Ian West. This will be quite unusual, because it is a relatively unknown part of Epsom, and it will include visits to the inside of two private houses which are 16th and 17th century timber-framed buildings. For this reason, the group will be limited to twenty people, so early booking is recommended.

Meet at 7.30 p.m. outside *The Ladas* public house on the corner of Chalk Lane and Woodcote Green Road. Cars can be parked on road near sports ground in Woodcote Green Road. Applications and £1 per person to Linda Heath. (372603).
Form enclosed with this Newsletter

We are planning visits in July, August and September to Chessington, Juniper Hall, and Headley. Full details and application forms will appear in our May Newsletter.

Watch this space !

Linda Heath

Forthcoming Events – Surrey Buildings

“*Interpreting 19th and 20th Century Surrey Buildings*” is the title of a half-day meeting on 24th March, 2001. The organisers are the Surrey Local History Council and the programme will include three lectures. One of these is entitled “*Becoming a House Detective : tracing the History of a Victorian House from Builder to 2001*”.

The meeting , starting at 2.15 p.m. , will be held at :

The Museum, Croydon Road, Reigate.

Admission : Members - £4, Visitors - £5.

Enquiries to : Mrs Anne Milton-Worsell, Hon. Secretary,
62, Harriotts Lane, Ashted, KT21 2QB

NEWS FROM CROYDON NATURAL HISTORY & SCIENTIFIC SOCIETY

We have received two notices from the C N H & S S which will be of interest to some of our members.

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

This will be given by Paul Sowan (who is a member of our Society) at 7.45 p.m. on Thursday 26th April 2001 in the David Sweet Hall , East Croydon United Reformed Church, Addiscombe Grove, which is five minutes walk from East Croydon station.

The address will be entitled:- "*Wildlife, Bricks and Concrete: Sites of Industrial Archaeological Interest in East Surrey.*"

NEW PUBLICATION

The Re-discovery of the early Anglo-Saxon Cemetery at Croydon in 1992 and its Partial Excavation in 1999: Trials and Tribulations by Martin G Welch of the Institute of Archaeology, University College, London. ISBN 0-906047-14-5; Price £2.95 +50p p/p, from C N H & S S, 96a Brighton Road, South Croydon, CR2 6AD.

FROM THE EDITOR

This edition of the Newsletter has brought an exceptionally rich crop of contributions for publication. I take this opportunity to thank all those who have sent in material, all of excellent quality and varied in content, ranging from the academic to the light-hearted and covering all parts of our district.

Sadly it has not been possible to incorporate every one of the articles sent to me. I hope this will not cause disappointment to those who have failed to make it for this edition. I will do my best to see that their article gets included next time we go to press.

John Wettern

