

LEATHERHEAD & DISTRICT
LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER



May, 2002

LEATHERHEAD & DISTRICT LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Registered Charity No. 802409

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CHAIRMAN

Peter A. Tarplee

01372 452301

SECRETARY

Judith Mills

01372 372146

TREASURER

Norma Robertson

01372 453795

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.

2002 Membership Subscriptions

Ordinary.....£12.00

Associate.....£5.00

Junior (under 18)..... £1.00

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY

Jack Barker

01372 458469

The Museum will be open at the following times: -

Thursdays and Fridays 1.0 p.m. to 4.0 p.m.

Saturdays 10.0 a.m. to 4.0 p.m.

Sundays in June, July and August 2.0 to 5.0 p.m.

CURATOR

Graham Evans

01372 386348

The Library at The Letherhead Institute is open on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays from 10.0
a.m. to 12.30 p.m. It is no longer open on Saturdays.

Exceptionally, arrangements may be made to use it at other times by applying to 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 August 2002 issue should reach the Society's Office by 19th July, 2002.

NEWSLETTER EDITOR

John Wettern

01372 459277

The Friends of Leatherhead Museum support the Society's work on behalf of the Museum.

SECRETARY

Thelma Lucas

01372 844345

FROM THE CHAIRMAN

I am writing this just after the AGM when a number of important changes took place. First of all Derek Renn stood down as President having served five years in that post, and Linda Heath took his place as President. Derek will not, however, be inactive in the Society as he will continue as a member of the Programme Committee. We thank him for what he has done for the Society over the years and are very pleased that he is to continue to help.

Another important change is that we have a Secretary again. Judith Mills takes on the office of Secretary whilst Norma Robertson was elected to be our Treasurer. It will certainly make life easier for the Executive Committee (and for the Chairman) to have the full complement of officers once more. At last year's AGM we elected Graham Evans to be Museum Curator, after a period without one, and all who have visited or worked in our museum will realise what an improvement has been made over the last year.

Trevor Marchington has stood down from the committee and we are grateful for all that he did, particularly taking on the job of Minutes Secretary as well as distributing the Newsletter.

So although things are improving considerably, there is still scope for more helpers. Jack Barker will be leaving the Committee at the next AGM and so there will be a need for someone to take on the tasks of Membership Secretary. He would really like somebody to offer before the end of 2002 so that he or she can see how the membership records are kept at the time of subscription renewal. Other committee members have served for a number of years and we feel that it is time for our posts to be filled by others. Please talk to Judith if you are able to help in any way. We have been without a Sales Secretary for a number of years; the sales of our publications bring in a useful income to the Society and it is a job which really needs doing. If anyone would consider helping with this please let me know.

In the last Newsletter I asked for a member to represent the Society on the planning committee for Heritage Weekend and I am pleased to say that Jenny Morris has taken on this task. The full programme for the weekend of 14th and 15th September will be published shortly. There will be a number of properties in the area opening their doors as well as a good selection of talks and walks. We again are grateful to Mole Valley District Council for their support in organising the events of the weekend.

Anyone wanting more details, or wishing to help, should contact Jenny on 01372 377158.

Peter Tarplee

NEWS FROM THE LIBRARIAN

With the recent passing of Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother, I wondered whether there was a link between her and Leatherhead, apart from the well known association with Polesden Lacey. The answer is all too obvious as this short passage from "*Leatherhead, a History*" by Edwina Vardey, shows :

"In March 1934 the British Legion set up a relief committee in Leatherhead to assist needy ex-servicemen, while the disabled were heartened by the Cripples' Training College acquiring Leatherhead Court School building in Randalls Road. It was opened in November 1935 by the then Duchess of York, now Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother. The college took her name in 1942, becoming Queen Elizabeth's Training College for the Disabled. The founders were Dame Georgina Buller and Stanley Evans, an orthopaedic surgeon. The Queen Elizabeth's Foundation includes the training college and Dorincourt estates. These consist of Banstead Place, an assessment centre for handicapped teenagers, and a mobility centre; Dorincourt itself, with workshops, residential hostel and arts centre, and Lulworth Court, a holiday home at Westcliffe."

This updated version of the long out-of-print "*History of Leatherhead*" edited by Edwina Vardey, may be found in the library together with the following recent additions:

GENERAL-. Family History

HIGGS, Edward — "*Making Sense of the Census: the Manuscript Returns for England & Wales, 1801-1901*"
[Public Record Office Handbooks no 23] HMSO, 1989

SURREY – Literary & Other Associations

BERN-CAMPBELL, Tonia — *“My Speed King: Life with Donald Campbell”*.

Sutton Publishing, 2002

SURREY - Individual Towns & Villages

HEADLEY

RATCLIFFE, Eric — *“The Caxton of her Age: the Career and Family Background of Emily Faithfull (1835-95)”*.

Images Publishing (Malvern), 1993.

[Emily was a daughter of the Rev Ferdinand Faithfull, Rector of Headley 1830-71]

LEATHERHEAD

DORKING & LEATHERHEAD ADVERTISER — *“The 1921 Directory to Dorking, Leatherhead & District”*.

HUGHES, Richard — *“Those Things which are Above: the History of St John's School Leatherhead”*.

Gresham Books, 2001

KELLY'S, pub. — *“Directory of Epsom, Leatherhead & District, 1925”*

MICKLEHAM

WOODS, Samuel, Compiler — *“Mickleham Records; being a series of Papers contributed to the Mickleham Parish Magazine, with Notes and added Chapters by Archd. Gordon Pollock, May 1900”*

[Includes a short section on Fetcham]

These books and other books in the Society's Library are housed within the Letherhead Institute's library room. It is accessible to our members only when the LCA Library is open to its members but not on Saturdays. (See details on the inside cover of this Newsletter).

Do not forget that you must show your current L&DLHS membership card when you use the library.

Gwen Hoad

COBHAM HOUSES AND THEIR OCCUPANTS

At our February meeting, David Taylor, a lifelong resident and writer on Cobham, introduced us to its old houses and their occupants. Many of them had been drawn by the leading topographical artists or portrait painters of their day.

'Cobham' meant '*the settlement at the bend*' (of the river Mole) and had three parts: Street Cobham (on the turnpike road), Church Cobham (by the parish church) and Tilt Cobham, the ploughed land beside the river. David's talk was so full of information that only some of the highlights can be mentioned here: for further details, read his books.

The most eye catching house in Cobham is *Church Stile House*; its 'traditional' date of 1432 now has to be always repainted. Leonard Martin, who lived at '*Overbye*', restored it and many other local houses. Across the river, *Cobham Park* was probably designed by a pupil of Lord Burlington, Robert Morris. Its most colourful owners were Lord Ligonier, who kept a harem of young girls, and his nephew, who fought a duel in Green Park with his wife's lover, Count Altieri, but not with the stable boy who also enjoyed her favours.

The Victorian Gothic *Rose Lodge* had a footbridge to *Cobham Park*: the paintings by William Stubbs collected by one occupant vanished after her death. Gerrard Winstanley, the leader of the radical '*Diggers*' of 1650, married into the King family, whose home later became Conisbee's butchers' shop. *Longbays* still had its eighteenth-century shop front. *Pyports* took its name from the fourteenth-century Pipard ('piper') family. It was originally an open-hall house (like *Cedar House* and the *Mill House*). Thomas Lucy, a miller, seems to have been supported by the more famous Lucys after he visited *Charlecote*. Among the owners of *Pyports* were Henry Skrine, who travelled in the wilds of Wales and Scotland before they were 'discovered' by the Romantic poets and Captain Sir William Poste, '*the second Nelson*'. A Nonconformist school here was satirised by Thomas Anstey Guthrie in his comic novel '*Vice Versa*'.

Painshill Cottage was Matthew Arnold's home for many years, but was demolished in 1963. *Foxwarren*, near the M25, was the inspiration for the drawings of *Toad Hall*, as the artist, E.H.Shepard, had confirmed.

Notable modern houses included *Bentley Hall*, designed by Philip Webb immediately after the *Red House* (Bexley) and the modernist, *The Homewood*, designed by Patrick Gwynne and Wells Coates, recently acquired (like *Cedar House*) by the National Trust.

Derek Renn

THE CIVIL WAR IN ENGLAND

Anyone who thinks that history is boring should have been at our meeting on Friday 15th March to hear a most entertaining and informative talk by Alan Turton, Curator of Basing House Museum, an expert on the English Civil War. He provided an enthralling evening, telling us about the lot of the 'common soldier' at that period — what he was paid, what he wore, what weapons he had and how he was conscripted.

We saw what Pikemen, Musketeers and Cavalry wore, and one of our members, Tom Lunnon, volunteered to become a Pikeman, and was equipped with all the kit, including a 'sapsack' for his food, hat, helmet, armour and sword, but *not* with a pike, which was 16 ft. long ! Mr. Turton explained how there was very little difference, if any, between what the Cavaliers and Roundheads wore — often leading to much confusion in battle. The soldiers wore red coats — not to show up on the battlefield, or to hide any bloodstains, but because red dye (made from onion skin) was the cheapest.

Not only did he describe how the soldier lived, but also what it was like for people in the villages where the soldiers were billeted. It was bad enough for a family in a tiny cottage to have five soldiers billeted on them for just a night or two, but in winter, when battles were not fought, they could be landed with soldiers with them for several months.

Some of the many interesting snippets of information we learned were the origins of many sayings such as '*plain as a pikestaff*', '*lock, stock and barrel*' and '*a flash in the pan*'. Altogether it was a fascinating evening and was much enjoyed and appreciated by all.

Linda Heath

THE LEATHERHEAD AND DISTRICT CENSUS PROJECT

Following the AGM at the meeting on 19th April, John Morris, the leader of the Leatherhead Census Project, brought us up-to-date on progress, but before doing so informed us of the history of censuses.

The first was called by Caesar Augustus to ascertain population numbers in order to enable taxes to be levied, to determine both numbers required to garrison each province and also those needed for military service elsewhere in the Roman empire. Everyone was required to return to their place of birth in order to register. In England William I sent out data gatherers, and Elizabeth I obtained data *on the cheap* by requesting archdeacons to record information during their parish visits. The first modern census took place in 1801 during the French wars and has occurred every 10 years since. The first three censuses only counted heads, but in 1841 a record was made of who lived where in each parish. This was shortly after changes had been made to the voting system.

Turning to Leatherhead, in 1841 out of one thousand adults recorded, only forty had the vote, including a number of absent landowners. The vote was related to ownership rather than residence. Owners of land with a minimum value of £10 annual rental were entitled to the vote. Schoolmasters were regularly employed as enumerators, often being the only literate members of society other than the gentry. They filled in the forms from verbal information given to them by the residents. In 1841 entries in the town were limited to '*born in Surrey*' or '*elsewhere*'. Later on the place of birth was recorded.

Turning to the work of the project team, John said that we were indebted to Peter Tilley who was our inspiration following his talk to the society in January 2000 : this described his work on the Kingston censuses. It is Peter's computer programme that we are using and he has trained those members who have entered the data on to disk. Very important members of the project team are the pairs who check the computer printouts against the original forms. He said that additional volunteers would be welcomed.

Many interesting variations in spelling of names and dates of birth have come to light. Four census records have now been put on to computer

and the programme allows them to be compared and also merged with the church records of births, marriages and deaths. Anomalies where, for instance, road or street names have changed, make it sometimes difficult — but interesting — to make comparisons between one generation of census returns and another. All available data is now nearly completely transferred to disk. The 1901 material should be available shortly; also records of burials in Leatherhead over 22 years are available to enter. The census records plus the church records and the street directories should lead to the better identification of family trees.

It is planned to put copies of computer disks in the local library and for them to be available for individuals.'

Gordon Knowles

SURVEY OF POST OFFICE LETTER BOXES

In October, the Post Office will issue a set of stamps to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the erection of the first box for letter collection in the British Isles which was at the suggestion of Anthony Trollope.

A box of 1853 is still in use in Guernsey. The term 'pillar box' arose from the form of the first standard letter box, a fluted column with classical capital and base, made in 1856.

A survey of public post boxes in Greater London is being carried out by volunteers, and I wonder if any member would like to join me in a more modest local survey of the Leatherhead district? [One was done in Walton and Weybridge some ten years ago.] I hope to cover the Bookhams, but any information, even if only of your local box or a photograph showing one, would help. All records will finally be passed on to the Record Secretary.

Things to record are the royal cipher (which only appears after 1886, and ER [rather than EIIR] can mean Edward VII, 1904-11); the maker's name (usually low down at the back); whether there is more than one opening and/or '*times of collection*' plate; whether there is a stamp machine or a '*pouch box*' attached; and any remains of an enamelled plate (pointing to the nearest post office) bolted to the top. As well as the plain, cast-iron cylindrical box, there is the '*type K*' with a low narrow

grooved "*waist*"; others of oval plan or rectangular (sometimes with a flap for franked mail, or made of sheet steel or concrete The survey will include boxes mounted in walls or attached to posts.

Over one hundred different varieties of post box are recorded in the British Isles. I know of some rare types in our area, but do we have any of Edward VII, or pre-1887 ?

Derek Renn

A MEMORY OF "*FETCHAM SIS*"

The following is an extract from a letter in 1965 to Frank Benger of this Society, from Mr. A. Coleridge, son of Rev. H.B. Coleridge, Vicar of Leatherhead, 1926-1944 :-

"Do you remember 'Fetcham Sis'? She lived rough all the year round, was filthy, as you can imagine, could swear like a trooper and lived by very petty thieving and begging. She would, for example, pick a bunch of flowers out of someone's garden and then sell it down the road for a few coppers. When one winter was coming on, my father felt concerned for her and asked her if she would like to spend it in the Church Army Home and she agreed. He fixed it up and took her to London by Green Line bus, on which she was very sick. In London he asked her if she would like to wash and clean up and she said she would, and also to 'break wind' to quote her, so he took her to a Lyons or ABC tea shop and, after tremendous difficulty with the manageress, she used the cloakroom and he then delivered her to the Church Army. In less than a week she was back in Leatherhead !

"From the Green Line bus my father pointed out to her Lambeth Palace and said that the Archbishop of Canterbury lived there, but she said it reminded her of Holloway Prison where many years before, she had spent six months for pilfering."

Linda Heath

A RE-DISCOVERED LEATHERHEAD LANDMARK

Members who have passed the junction of Church Road and Church Street recently will probably have noticed that a handsome piece of street furniture has recently appeared – the horse trough which used to stand at the junction of Bull Hill and Kingston Road (near the steps which lead to the King George V Memorial Gardens). It was donated to the town in 1905 when Bradmere Pond was filled in in preparation for the building of Park Rise the following year. The pond was traditionally the place where horses were watered and its passing somehow came to the notice of Mary Emma Braybrooke (1837-1915), a leading animal welfare campaigner of the day. She lived in Eastbourne at the time and had, as far as we know, no direct connection with Leatherhead — although her gardener was a certain Charles Chatfield, which is an old Leatherhead name. She is believed to have donated a number of similar troughs to other towns, although none has yet been discovered bearing her name, as ours does [*Presented by Mrs Braybrooke of Eastbourne, 1905*]. The trough also bears the inscription '*Be Merciful to All God's Creatures*', the motto of the Anti-Vivisection Society. Her importance in the early twentieth century animal welfare movement may be gauged from the report of her funeral which appeared in the Eastbourne Gazette on 21st, April, 1915. As well as family and friends, the funeral was attended by several members and officials of the RSPCA, including its acting chairman (the chairman Captain Canton was then on active service in the trenches) and the Secretary of the British Union for the Abolition of Vivisection, another cause which Mrs Braybrooke espoused.

Mary Braybrooke was born in Blackburn, Lancashire, where she lived until 1883 with her husband Charles Henry Stuart Braybrooke. Before he retired he had been a member of the judiciary in what was then Ceylon. He was born in Colombo in that country, the son of a colonial family, and died in 1892. It was evidently his fortune which Mary was spending on the animal welfare cause — he was sufficiently well off to have retired before the age of 50. The couple had no children. Another of Mary's campaigns was for the humane killing of animals in slaughterhouses. She frequently wrote to the press on this and related topics.

The horse trough, which originally also had a drinking fountain for people and – probably – a lower trough for dogs (accounts vary), was removed by the Council when the layout of the junction of Bull Hill and Kingston Road was changed in 1964. It was destined for the scrap heap, but was fortunately saved by Councillor Margaret John. She did not have room for it in her own garden, but arranged for it to be sold (for £5) to her friends Dennis and Lucy Hooker, who hired a JCB and had the trough moved to the garden of Vale Lodge, where they lived at Flat No.1. Dennis Hooker took it with him when he moved to No. 4 Orchardleigh (off St. Nicholas Hill), where it remained until early this year. It was offered to the Museum by Dennis's daughter Sarah Vaughan, but the cost of moving it was more than the Society was prepared to spend. Mole Valley District Council, however, undertook the job and installed it in its present position. Planted with spring flowers, it is a welcome addition to Leatherhead's townscape. It was originally mounted on a granite base, now lost : the present mounting is temporary. The Council has plans to pick out the inscription in black or gold paint. There is a similar trough on the Guildford Road at West Horsley which has recently been restored and shows what our trough would have looked like in its heyday.

The Leatherhead horse trough and drinking fountain seems to have been a private initiative on the part of Mrs Braybrooke. Many others in various parts of the country (not only London) were erected by the Metropolitan Free Drinking Association, which had been founded in 1859 by the MP Samuel Gurney with the aim of providing safe drinking water for both humans and animals. In 1867 it changed its name to the Metropolitan Fountain and Cattle Trough Association, which still exists today under the name of the Drinking Fountain Association. Small grants are available from the Association for the upkeep of those of its troughs and fountains which remain in working order.

Alun Roberts

SIR MORTIMER WHEELER

It is not generally known that the eminent archaeologist Sir Mortimer Wheeler passed the last years of his life in Leatherhead and died here. After the breakdown of his third marriage, he came to Leatherhead to lodge with Molly Myers, his assistant in the years when he worked at the British Academy (1949-1968). Older residents may remember seeing him shopping in town. He died on 22nd July 1976, aged 86, at the Downside Bothy in Downs Lane (almost opposite the old barn, now the home of Sir Michael Caine). He was cremated at Randalls.

Alun Roberts

NEWS FROM THE FRIENDS.

Although there was another important meeting in Leatherhead on the same evening, the Friends' A G M on 29th April, was well attended. Our chairman reported on a year of activity in 2001, above all, success in attracting more people to visit the museum through various types of publicity and a well supported celebration of the museum's 21st birthday last October. The meeting was followed by an excellent talk and demonstration by volunteers at the museum entitled "*How we Handle our Artefacts*". They described how objects offered to the museum were received, '*accessioned*', recorded and stored. This attracted much interest from the audience, especially with the chance to view some of the more exotic objects which they had brought along for inspection.

Stewards Training

The training sessions which took place in March before the museum opened, led by Alan Pooley and Graham Evans, were most successful and I am pleased to say that all the Stewards took part. I am most grateful to all the people who have volunteered to become Stewards. I hope they will enjoy their time with us and be privileged to meet many interesting people.

We still need to get more visitors to come and visit the Museum. There are some new leaflets at the Museum which we would like to have distributed as widely as possible, so if you can help with this please get in touch with our Publicity Officer, David Robinson (Tel. 01372 277372).

NEWS FROM THE FRIENDS (Continued)

Fund Raising

Our one big fund raising effort takes place on Saturday, 29th June when we hold our coffee morning and *bring-and-buy* sale at the Museum. In order for this to be a success we need things to sell, so please start thinking what you could bring. Home-made cakes and jam always sell well, and books generally find a home. There will be a plant stall as well. But we need people to help with the selling too, and plenty of callers to buy our wares. So if everyone brought one visitor it would make a real improvement to our bank balance.

If you are a History Society member but not also a member of The Friends you might like to join our outing to Guildford on Saturday, 22nd June. As you will see from the notice below, it will be a day full of historical interest.

Thelma Lucas

THE FRIENDS' OUTING TO GUILDFORD

Saturday, 22nd June This year's outing will be to Guildford. In the morning there will be a guided walk around historic sites in the Town, including the Castle, a mediaeval undercroft and Abbot's Hospital (Tudor).

After lunch, we will visit the National Trust's canal museum at Dapdune Wharf. Travel will be by own car or rail. Details of meeting points, directions, times and costs can be obtained by sending a s.a.e. to John Wettern. (See coupon enclosed with this Newsletter).

Anyone wishing to take part who is not a member of *The Friends* is welcome to come on payment of £3. This donation will also constitute your subscription for the remainder of 2002.

John Wettern

VISIT TO BASINGSTOKE

On **Saturday 13th July** we have arranged a visit to two very different venues in Basingstoke : to **Milestones Living History Museum**, and the ruins of **Basing House**. It will be by coach if we can get 24 members, otherwise by cars — just under an hour's journey.

We plan to arrive at Milestones at 11.0 a.m. and stay for lunch there; then have a tour of the ruins of Basing House in the afternoon led by the Curator, Alan Turton, who gave us that wonderful talk about the soldiers in the Civil War.

Milestones consists of street scenes, period shop displays, collections of old vehicles, etc., and even a pub selling beer and wine ! It is all under cover with a lift down to the display area. There is a shop in the entrance foyer and an excellent cafeteria for coffee and/or lunch; or people can picnic in the grounds.

Basing House in Tudor times was the residence of William Paulet, Marquess of Winchester and was the largest such residence in Hampshire. It was obviously a magnificent castle, but definitely one of the ones which '*Cromwell knocked about a bit*'. There is not a great deal to see above ground except for the citadel walls on top of a tremendous mound, which are most impressive, but there are lots of very well excavated Tudor rooms below ground level which would be part of our tour. There is also a large Tudor barn, and a reconstructed formal 17th century garden. This site is entirely open-air and some of the castle site walking is very much '*up and down*' on the grass, which some members might prefer to omit.

If we go by cars, the coach fee will be refunded. Full directions will be supplied to all drivers.

Cost by coach with group entry fee for both Museums £15 per head.

Departure 10.0 a.m. from Leatherhead Leisure Centre. (There is parking available and they don't seem to mind us using the facility. Please note that parking, and the pick-up point, is at the farthest section of the car park beyond the centre).

You need to apply to Linda Heath with s.a.e. by 6th.June so that she can confirm or cancel the coach booking.

See coupon enclosed with this Newsletter.

OTHER WALKS AND VISITS

Saturday 10th August Walk around Defence Sites on Box Hill led by Trevor Marchington.

The route will be sometimes steep and rough, stout footwear is essential and the walk is regrettably only suitable for more active members.

Meet at 10.0 a.m. in the public car park by Ryka's Café near Burford Bridge on the A24. The duration will be 2 – 2½. hours. Bookings to Trevor, cost £1, cheques made out to Trevor Marchington.

September There will be no actual visit in September, but on Saturday 14th September, for Heritage Weekend, we are organising and leading a repeat of last year's very successful walk round a less familiar part of Leatherhead which we have called "*Off the Beaten Track*".

Full details will be in the Heritage brochure and in our August Newsletter.

Linda Heath and Gordon Knowles

AUTUMN LECTURES

20th September *“Surrey Castles in the Landscape”* by Dr. Derek Renn.

18th October **THE DALLAWAY LECTURE**

“New Light on the Anglo Saxons” by Dr. Martin Welsh.

15th November *“Fanny Burney in Surrey”* by Linda Heath.

20th December *The Christmas Miscellany, with a Jubilee theme,*
arranged by Gordon Knowles.

Further details will be published in the August Newsletter.

Gordon Knowles

YOUNG ARTISTS COMPETITION

Following the success of their last year’s photographic competition, the Friends of Leatherhead Museum will shortly be launching a competition for young artists. Entries will be sought from anyone under the age of 18 ; the theme being any subject connected with the Leatherhead and District Museum. The judging will take place in October, and entry forms will be available from the museum from June onwards. We hope that there will be a large number of entries. To this end it will be actively promoted at local schools. Any reader who knows of youngsters who might be interested to enter might wish to pass on this news to them.

John Wettern

