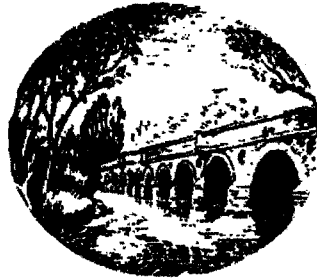


LEATHERHEAD & DISTRICT
LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER



August, 2004

LEATHERHEAD & DISTRICT LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY
Registered Charity No. 802409
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CHAIRMAN
Peter Tarplee
01372 452301

SECRETARY
Judith Mills
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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.

2004 Membership Subscriptions

Ordinary.....£12.00
Associate.....£5.00
Junior (under 18)..... £1.00

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY

Jenny Morris

01372 362524

The Museum is open at the following times: -

Thursdays and Fridays 1.00 p.m. to 4.00 p.m.
Saturdays 10.0 a.m. to 4.00 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 SECRETARY

Fred Meynen

01372 372930

Archaeology

ARCHAEOLOGY SECRETARY

Pauline Hulse

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

NEWSLETTER EDITOR Peter Wall, 8 The Renmans, Ashted, KT21 1PH. Tel. 01372 277690

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

CHAIRMAN

John Wettern

01372 459277

FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Peter Wall, who has edited the Newsletter for a while, is unable to continue after the February 2005 issue. We are, therefore, in need of a volunteer to undertake this work. The Newsletter is an important part of the Society's activities and is, for many of our members, the only contact with us and what we are doing.

The editor is not expected to write articles for the Newsletter (unless he or she wants to) but just to put together material supplied by other members. Nowadays it does mean that the use of a computer is almost essential; if it helps, the Society's computer at Hampton Cottage could be used.

If any member feels that this is something which he or she would like to do I should be delighted to discuss it with them. The Newsletter is published four times a year, in February, May, August and November.

Visitors to the museum may have noticed that we have display boards installed above the new cases in the middle room upstairs. The boards are used to mount descriptive material about the displays in the cases. We have been able to purchase these with the help of a grant from the Surrey Museums Consultative Committee. At present the boards are used for descriptions about the radio and television exhibition. We are pleased to acknowledge the receipt of the SMCC grant of £188.

One of our long standing members, Joan Harding, died on 10th June, aged 93. Joan was an extremely active archaeologist in Surrey but will perhaps be best remembered as the founder of the Domestic Buildings Research Group (Surrey) of which she was chairman for many years. She had worked most of her life as a civil service librarian but before that she had been head of the kindergarten at Parsons Mead school in Ashted. She was elected a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries in 1971, and appointed MBE in 1991.

Peter Tarplee

NEWS FROM THE LIBRARIAN

Back in the 17th century, John Aubrey toured the county of Surrey recording all that was of interest in each parish he visited. After his death his manuscript was discovered in the Ashmolean by Bishop Dr Richard Rawlinson in 1697. He set about revising the work and it was subsequently published in 1718 by E. Curll under the title "The Natural History and Antiquities of the County of Surrey". Here follows an extract from the section on Leatherhead.

"In this town was anciently a Market, which has been discontinued now (1673) about a century. The Market-House was remaining here within these 50 years. The Fair here is on our Lady's Day, viz three Weeks before Michaelmas. It was near this Town where Elenor Rumming liv'd, and sold her good Ale, celebrated by John Skelton, Poet Laureat to King Henry VII". There follows a section from the poem "The Tunning of Elenor Rumming". After a description of the church and its memorials etc there comes this fascinating sentence. *"In Sir Thomas Bludworth's Orchard is a Pond, consisting of several springs, boiling out of the Sands, where are excellent Trouts"*. An edition of this work published in 1975 in 5 volumes, is in the Society's Library, but a reprint of the Leatherhead section is on sale in the Museum, under the title "Aubrey's History of Leatherhead".

New additions this month include:-

SURREY - Archaeology

COTTON, Jonathan, CROCKER, Glenys and GRAHAM, Audrey, editors
-Aspects of archaeology and history in Surrey towards a research framework for the county. Surrey Arch Soc, 2004.

SURREY - Individual Towns & Villages

EFFINGHAM

BRIGHT, J.S. - A history of Effingham compiled from "A history of Dorking and the neighbouring parishes" published in 1884. Local History Reprints, 1996.

The above are housed (along with other books in the Society's Library) within the Letherhead Institute Library room. The library 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). It is most important that you show your current L&DLHS membership card to the librarian on duty when you use the library. Any queries should be addressed by telephone to the Librarian and not to whoever is on duty in the library, unless of course, you know them to be L&DLHS members and can help.

Gwen Hoad

"SURREY ON FILM: 1914 - 1953"

The South East Film and Video Archive (SEFVA) in association with the Surrey History Service, Surrey History Centre, have produced a compilation of archive films entitled "Surrey on Film: 1914 - 1953: a community in peace and war". The film includes part of a Leatherhead film - "Civilians in Uniform" made in 1946. Video copies are available from SHS at £10 each (£7.50 for schools) and a DVD copy is to be produced at £15 each (£12 for schools).

CAN YOU HELP TO FIND A PHOTOGRAPH

I have received a letter from Pat Hawker (a wartime member of the Radio Security Service in Leatherhead) asking about a photograph given to the museum some years ago by Denis Lisney; on the back was a list of all those people in the office in 1945 (thought to be at Highlands House, Clinton Road).

I cannot find this photograph (a group of 25 people standing informally outside a door); unfortunately the donor kept no record, and does not know when or to whom the photograph was sent.

Can any member of the Society recollect what happened to this photograph?

B E Godfrey (Records Secretary)

JOHN HARVEY

John Hooper Harvey (1911 - 1997) was born in St John's Wood, London and educated at St John's School, Leatherhead before architectural apprenticeships with Sir Herbert Baker and with his own father, who had an international practice. John was widely read and travelled: one of his earliest papers was on *The Railway System of Transylvania*. He was familiar with nearly all European and Asian languages. The author of 27 books, his greatest passion was for the architects of the Middle Ages and their works. John was a skilled draughtsman, as the illustrations to his books (and particularly their dustjackets) testify. He was an early disciple of dendrochronology, the timbers of his cottage having (then) been dated to 1499, and a pioneer writer on the history of gardens and of nurserymen.

Before the Second World War, John had begun to examine the original sources for the history of the parishes around his home in Little Bookham. He chafed at the increasing cost and other difficulties of detailed publication of parish histories, and set out his solution in an article 'An Experiment in Local History' (*Surrey Archaeological Collections* 51. 102-109) namely, a series of period

maps and index cards for many topics, using his Bookham material as exemplars. Over half a century ago, he was a one-man Village Studies Group. John joined the Surrey Archaeological Society in 1944, coming onto its Council in 1949. He was a founder member of the Leatherhead & District Local History Society in 1946, and published 'A Short History of Bookham' (in nine parts) in its *Proceedings*, which was a revised and illustrated version of his 24-part articles in *The Bookham Bulletin*, a quarterly magazine distributed to every house in the two parishes.

During the war, John Harvey worked for the Ministry of Works, helping to preserve historical bomb-damaged buildings. In 1965 he moved to York to take up a post with the Royal Commission on Historic Monuments (England) and then to Frome on his retirement.

Re-printed from the April Bulletin of the Surrey Archaeological Society

DOWNSIDE FARM, COBHAM: report on a Test Excavation

Downside Farm lies approximately 2km south-east of Cobham and slightly to the west of the River Mole. The site is currently occupied by a farmhouse and a series of outbuildings, many of which are 18th century in date and originate from the period when the nearby mill was an ironworks.

Documentary work by David Taylor, however, indicates that there was an earlier, and substantial medieval settlement at Downside, and one arm of an apparent moat still remains open in front of the farmhouse itself. This appears to be the site of Down(e) Hall or Place, home of William de la Dune, Keeper of the Hanaper to Edward I who seems to have stayed there on several occasions. Late in 2003 a resistivity survey was carried out on the lawn between the house and the moat and this indicates the presence of subsoil disturbance which, in one area, looked like the corner of a possible building. As a result a small team from the Society spent a day at the beginning of February opening up a trial trench to investigate the results of the geophysical survey.

In the event the subsoil features within the trench turned out to be the remains of a gravel path and a pit containing brick rubble. The bricks were, however, of interest being yellow, extremely hard and showing no signs of having been mortared. They most closely resembled early Georgian rubbed brick and perhaps came from a floor. The only other find of any significance was that of a late 16th/early 17th century 'Nuremberg' jetton. It was apparent from the trench that the entire soil level had been disturbed to a depth of 65cm, but that there was no evidence for any structures, nor for any occupation in this part of the site earlier than the 17th century.

Beneath the disturbed soil, however, lay a band of gravel, one edge of which was exposed in the trench. This lay on the natural clay and, while it might be a natural spread of gravel, might also be an access road, as it lined up with the centre of the extant arm of the possible moat where there are indications of bridge footings. The moat, if that is what it is, appears to continue around to the south of the farmhouse and shows as a slight hollow in the field.

The farmhouse itself lies on slightly higher ground overlooking the lawn and moat and a very small sondage dug to its rear produced one rim sherd of 13th/14th century coarseware from a depth of about 50cm. While one sherd does not make a medieval site it does hint that, if there is such a site at Downside, it lies on the higher drier ground close to the site of the existing house but still within the potential moat 'island'. Only further work will establish whether this is the case, and it is planned to carry out a larger excavation in this area at some stage during the summer and to cut a section across the potential moat as well.

David & Audrey Graham

Re-printed from the April Bulletin of the Surrey Archaeological Society

RESEARCHING THE LEATHERHEAD WAR MEMORIALS

Local military historian Ian Whitlock and I have for some time been researching those named on the various War Memorials in Leatherhead. some of the World War II names on the Leatherhead Town Memorial in North Street (to which there is no longer free access) continue to prove difficult to locate in the marvellous Commonwealth War Graves Commission database (www.cwgc.org) for lack of detail. It would be very helpful if any reader could tell us more about any of these World War II casualties:

A Clark, J Finch, J Gain, J Harding, H Humphrey, H J Prentice, C Richards, D Stevenson, F R Thompson, H Williams, W Williams.

The full names for these men would be a good start and any additional information would be a bonus.

We would also like to contact Mr Liam Sumpton, who moved from Windfield. Leatherhead, to Guildford. In 1991-92 Liam did tremendous research on the First World War casualties on the Town War Memorial, which was deposited with the Society and on which work continues. His last known address was Lindfield Gardens, Guildford.

More information about Leatherhead War Memorials research can be seen via www.leatherheadweb.or.uk - this being updated regularly. For each casualty, the aim is to provide a link to the Commonwealth War Graves entry where available; the unit badge; the cause of death or history of the unit at the time of death, as available; what is known of the person's life or family in Leatherhead; links to relevant websites.

If any member can assist with information about the names on the Leatherhead War Memorials - or knows someone who might help - please write to Frank Haslam, 56 Windfield, Leatherhead, KT22 8UQ.

Frank Haslam

POLESDEN DOWN THE AGES REPORT OF THE MAY VISIT

Shaws, assarts and hatches: A former drove road and an abandoned highway: Tracks and hollow ways to grazing grounds on the Common: Rich owners changing the landscape to enhance prestige: Sunshine and mud: An 'archaeological' golf bunker.

What was there to tie all these together ? Participants of a walk led by Heloise Collyer one sunny evening in May discovered the answers. Thus she was able to tie Bookham's earliest history through succeeding generations, up to the present day. The walk was the follow-up of Heloise's lecture to the Society earlier in the season, and many of the participants were anxious to view the many historical events which had left their mark on Polesden's landscape. We were not disappointed.

Everyone had expected rain which had fallen earlier in the day and on previous evenings, but instead it was clear and sunny but with a legacy of mud underfoot which left its mark on us, at least, on our shoes. Ignoring the great house we circled the estate surrounding it. We were invited to picture the scene that would have existed in bygone years. Traces of settlement in pre-history: a few Roman finds, then the marks of land use in Saxon and early mediaeval times. A wealth of clues could be found as the walk progressed. The open field system south of Great Bookham, the ditches tracing early boundaries, the tracks and sunken ways whereby livestock was led to graze on the common land bordering Ranmore Common (formerly called The South Wood). The control exercised over numbers allowed to graze through the existence of 'hatches' (gateways) some of which later became farms. As the woodland gave way to agriculture, 'assarts' were created often divided by strips known as 'shaws'. We learned about the road to Dorking which used to run through the middle of the property.

Occupiers of the estate in later times left their traces in other ways. Keeping the 'hoi polloi' at bay involved diverting roads and planting trees to ensure greater privacy. Attempts to achieve grandiose effects included the construction of a 'southern carriage drive' and a Great Avenue to the village. In still later times a golf course was built but later abandoned. The visit was nearly over when we were shown a mysterious earthwork. Frenzied archaeological activity had taken place at this location much to the amusement of those in the know. It was a former golf bunker.

John Wettern

REPORT OF THE GUIDED WALK ROUND PART OF EPSOM OLD TOWN, 2ND JUNE 2004

On Wednesday evening 2nd June we had a fascinating walk round part of Epsom, led by Ian West, who gave us an illustrated talk about the old town of Epsom last November. Ian told us not only about the buildings, but about their history, their occupants and Epsom as a Spa Town after the Restoration, mainly from about 1680-1720, when it was a really fashionable place for people from London to come and take the waters and enjoy the social life during the summer when the London season was closed.

We met Ian outside St. Martin's Church and he explained that the church had been vastly extended by the Vicar just before the first World War. This was because the diocese of Winchester had become so large that a new diocese would have to be made and the Vicar hoped that if the church was large enough it would become a cathedral. In the event, of course, Guildford became the new diocese.

We then walked a few yards to look at Pitt Place, a block of flats built on the site of a large house called Pitt Place. Across the road is Ebbisham

House, a very fine large red brick Queen Anne building, which is apparently extremely well preserved inside with lovely doors, floors and ceilings, all hardly altered since the house was built. Looking back down the road, opposite the church, is The Old King's Head from about 1660. Ian explained that The Old King's Head usually refers to King Charles I, i.e. before the Reformation, not merely the previous monarch.

Beyond that is another large Restoration house, originally called Parkhurst, but because of the association with Parkhurst Prison, the name has been altered to Park Place. Next to that is yet another of these splendid houses, now the Westminster Beaumont Nursing Home, but originally called Richmond House. These two houses were bought by Josiah Diston, a Director and Deputy Governor of the Bank of England, who spent quite a lot of money altering it - particularly the roof - and 'doing it up' generally and then sold it two years later at an immense profit. He bought up several properties in the area between 1710 and 1725 and could be regarded as an early example of a 'spec builder'!

The next house is a rather square brick house built as The Vicarage. One Vicar, Jonathon Boucher, who was Vicar from 1785-1804, had a library which he valued at £2,000! He built a rather nice little belvedere over the kitchen block and there is a coach house with ornamentation on the doors. Next to that is what is now called Cedar Cottages, but was originally the stables and hay loft for The Cedars next door. The Cedars itself is an exceptionally fine house which was built for Mr. Myster, at one time Lord Mayor of London, and no expense was spared, although it was almost a mere 'country cottage' for him.

We looked at a house across the street which was originally a seventeenth century cottage with a schoolroom added on later. We then walked through to The Parade and on down a little path to look at some little houses also dating from the same period, with some lovely little details. We returned to the church which was only a very short distance,

and we were all amazed that there was so much to see in such a short space. It was quite literally an 'eye-opener' to study all these houses which we must have passed several times without really noticing them. All in all, a most interesting and enjoyable evening.

Linda Heath

NEWS FROM THE FRIENDS

Only a few weeks after the Annual General Meeting had taken place we learned of the death of John Rosser one of our two newly created Honorary Members. John had been a Friend as well as a steward for many years. He had been our chairman until 2000 having most ably served for five years in that position. We remember him for his kindness, cheerfulness and for his loyalty to our organisation. At a recent meeting we expressed our condolences to his widow, Jill. All those who knew him feel sadness at his passing.

Coffee Morning. This year the event which took place on 12th June, was well supported and blessed with good weather. The stall displaying garden plants, set up at the entrance to the museum, was perhaps the highlight of the occasion. Well stocked with plants contributed by members it achieved record takings and every item had been sold by closing time. Overall, takings were nearly a record, far exceeding those last year. We are grateful to all those who contributed to its success, not least to John Bloxham in charge of the plants.

Education Efforts to awaken the interest of children in local history are succeeding. There has been a sharp rise in the number of visits to the museum by schools and other groups. There have also been visits to schools by members of the Friends committee at the request of history teachers. These have concentrated on a Victorian theme. In the classroom our visitors, dressed in Victorian garb, have spoken about life in those distant times and demonstrated activities such as *the weekly wash* using objects from the museum. These have merited a mention in the local press.

World War 2 is a subject being studied at some schools, and here again the museum has offered valuable help. Recent school visits have enabled youngsters to see exhibits from this period and to learn about life in those days. We have been reminded that those of older generations used words which have no significance to the young of today: words like *evacuee*, *stirrup pump* and *blackout* are now just part of history.

Fred Meynen The efforts of the Friends to pursue our activities in promoting the museum through education are due in very large measure to Fred. He and Thelma Lucas have given their time and energies to bringing about a significant rise in the awareness by schools, etc. of the museum's potential. Without them none of this would have happened. Even more has been achieved however, since the highly successful '*Come and Spin*' events which were held at the museum in June were also due to the efforts of Fred. This display, mentioned in the last edition of The Newsletter, brought many extra visitors to the museum as well as pictures in the papers. All who came were fascinated by the various activities of the demonstrators busily at work in pursuing their crafts.

John Wettern, Chairman of The Friends

AUTUMN PROGRAMME

WALKS AND VISITS

HERITAGE WEEKEND, Fri. 10th, Sat.11th & Sun. 12th September.

Full details of all events in Heritage booklets, available at Library, Help Shop, etc.

N.B. All events in Heritage Weekend are free.

The theme of this weekend will be on trades and industries and our Society will be well represented. The weekend will open with a talk by Peter Tarplee on 'Industrial Heritage in Mole Valley' on Friday 10th September, at 7.30pm. in Fetcham Park House. This is the launch event for the weekend and it is splendid that our Chairman has been asked to give the opening event. Refreshments available. Booking required.

There will be three exhibitions at the Institute - one on Industrial Heritage in Mole Valley' compiled by Mole Valley Council; one on 'Bygone Trades of Leatherhead' compiled by Alun Roberts, Sheila Warner and Linda Heath; and one on 'Mr. Barlow's House at Leatherhead' compiled by John Morris.

On the Saturday morning members of our Society will be describing the history of Sweech House to visitors as usual, (see booklet for times) and also leading two guided walks on both afternoons. On Saturday 11th it will be 'Off the Beaten Track' to the north of the town centre (see booklet for details) and Sunday will be the town centre. Both walks will leave the Institute at 2pm. No booking required for any of these events.

N.B. TWO EXTRA VISITS ARRANGED. Please see below.

Thursday 14th October, Morning visit to Lambeth Palace by train.
Following our talk on Lambeth Palace in May, we have managed to arrange a guided tour round Lambeth Palace at 11a.m. on Thursday 14th October. The cost is £7 per person, no concessions. Numbers are limited and we must confirm or cancel by 16th September, so please apply quickly if you would like to go. We would aim to go by train to Waterloo, then 77 bus or 20 minutes, walk to Lambeth Palace in time to start the tour at 11am which takes just over one and a half hours. Light lunches can be obtained at the café of the Garden Museum adjoining the Palace. Our tour is just the morning, but if members would like to visit other places of historic interest nearby in the afternoon, the Garden Museum is right there, or the little Florence Nightingale Museum at St. Thomas' Hospital, halfway between Lambeth Palace and Waterloo. For details of these, train times etc. please enclose s.a.e. with cheque and application form to Linda Heath.

Sunday 24th October 2pm Afternoon walk round Fetcham.
Because the July walk round Fetcham had to be postponed, Ian Pooley and Ed Tims have very kindly offered to re-arrange it for this date. We will be given maps of 1870 to help us imagine Fetcham village 100 years ago, and the walk will finish with tea and biscuits at the village hall. Meet at 2pm outside Symphony World Travel in parade of shops, just before Budgens in Cobham Rd. Cost £2 each. Applications to Alan Pooley.

LECTURES

'Old London Bridge' by Clive Chambers, A.A., R.I.B.A.

Friday, 17th September. The story of the first stone bridge across the Thames in London from its construction on 1187 until its demolition in 1830. The great bridge supported houses, shops and trades. It acted as a sentinel controlling river traffic and also linked the City of London with the south of the country. The talk describes the construction of the bridge and the everyday life of the people living and working over the arches.

'The History of Croydon Airport' by Robert Duffett of the Croydon Airport Society.

Friday, 15th October. A history starting in 1915 with Beddington Aerodrome and its subsequent merger with Waddon Aerodrome in the 1920's. In 1928 came the world's first *purpose built* civil airport with its designation as The International Airport of London. Illustrated by slides it will cover the numerous types of aircraft, their pilots and passengers that used the Airport, right up to its closure in September, 1959.

The Dallaway Lecture: 'Paper making in the Tillingbourne Valley' ("The other damnable invention") by Professor Alan Crocker

Friday 19th November,

Alan Crocker, Professor Emeritus of Physics at the University of Surrey, spoke to us previously on the local gunpowder industry. As a past chairman of the British Association of Paper Historians, he is very well qualified to speak on this subject too.

Friday 17th December, Christmas Miscellany. 'What happened to that road?' As something different this year we are going to invite questions from members about roads, or other topics. It would be very helpful if members would please send their questions in advance to John Wettern, 15 The Green, Fetcham, KT22 9XE so that the members of the panel are able to have a chance to look up relevant information. If no questions for the team, the situation will be reversed and we shall put questions for the audience to answer!

2005 Programme

Lectures from January onwards will include talks on the history of Claremont, and one by James Dixon about George and Abraham Dixon - his grandfather and great-uncle.

(Lectures are held on Friday evenings in the Dixon Hall of the Letherhead Institute, High Street, at 8.0 p.m., with coffee beforehand at 7.30.)

Items for November *Newsletter* to the editor by 31st October please.

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