

LEATHERHEAD & DISTRICT  
LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

**NEWSLETTER**



November, 2005

## LEATHERHEAD & DISTRICT LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Registered Charity No. 802409

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CHAIRMAN

Peter Tarplee

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SECRETARY

Position

vacant

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

### 2005 Membership Subscriptions

Ordinary.....£15.00

Associate.....£6.00

Junior (under 18).....£1.00

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY

Jenny Morris

01372 362524

**The Museum** is open at the following times until Winter closure after Sat., 10 December 2005

Thursdays and Fridays .. 1.00 p.m. to 4.00 p.m. Saturdays .. 10.00 a.m. to 4.00 p.m.

CURATOR

Graham Evans

01372 386348

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

CHAIRMAN

John Wettren

01372 459277

**The Library** at The Letherhead Institute is open on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays from 10.00 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

Peter Wells

01372 272367

**The Historical Enquiry Service** offers to seek answers to questions about the history of Leatherhead, Ashtead, Bookham and Fetcham submitted via the Museum

CO-ORDINATOR

Peter Wells

01372 386348

**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

David Hartley

01306 743828

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

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## FROM THE CHAIRMAN

I started my contribution in the August Newsletter pointing out that there were two opportunities for members to serve the Society. I have, so far, had no response to this appeal and so we are still trying to operate without a Secretary.

A further future opportunity also exists. As you know, when we were without a *Newsletter* Editor last year Brian Bouchard kindly agreed to produce the publication for a year. This means that Brian will edit this issue and that for February 2006 but after that a replacement is needed.

So please is there someone amongst our members who could take on some of these jobs? Without the *Newsletter* and without a secretary the day-to-day operation of the Society is very difficult.

Perhaps the most significant event since the last issue was the celebrations of the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the opening of Leatherhead Museum. It was great to see so many people in The Theatre on the Saturday morning and we were pleased to welcome Sarah Goad and Neil Maltby as our special guests. This was particularly fitting as at the opening in October 1980 Lord Hamilton of Dalzell, Lord Lieutenant of Surrey, and Ben Tatham, Chairman of Mole Valley District Council, were both present. Mrs Goad cut the commemorative cake then gave a most interesting and appropriate address. (Reported in full later *Ed.*)

After this she presented the prizes to winners of the photographic competition and quiz organised by the Friends of Leatherhead Museum. Our curator, Graham Evans, produced an excellent display on the history of the museum from well before its opening.

Unfortunately it was unable to be displayed for the longer period originally planned. However, some of the display boards are in the museum and others will be shown when an opportunity occurs.

Although I was unable to stay after the ceremony in the theatre owing to a previous engagement it appears that the jazz band and the vintage buses were appreciated by the folk in the town. Certainly the number of visitors to the museum was much higher than usual. The Society is very grateful to the 'Friends' for organising all the events on the day and giving the museum this extra publicity.

On the next morning the museum held a 'Finds Day' when David Williams, Surrey's Finds Liaison Officer, was present to identify artefacts brought in by members of the public. Again the response was good and David was able to record and identify a number of objects of interest.

An incidental occurrence during the event in The Theatre was the launch of the new book *Leatherhead and District Then and Now* which had been compiled for the Society by the President and Chairman. The book was delivered a few days before and Linda Heath presented signed copies to the Lord Lieutenant and the Chairman of the Council. The book is published by Tempus Publishing Ltd and contains a collection of past and present images of Leatherhead and the surrounding area.

The book costs £12.99 and is on sale at our museum, the lecture meetings or, post free, from the Sales Secretary, 64 Church Street, Leatherhead, KT22 8DP; cheques payable to "L&DLHS". Copies are also available at the best bookshops and sub-post offices in the area.

Whilst considering anniversaries and celebrations do remember that 2006 marks the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the formation of the Leatherhead and District Local History Society. The first event to commemorate this will be the Diamond Anniversary Dinner to be held on Friday, 27

January 2006. Fred Meynen will be organising this and he will have given full details elsewhere in this Newsletter. I would just like to encourage as many members and guests as possible to join us on this occasion. Our two previous dinners have been very enjoyable so there is no reason why this one should not be the same. I hope to see you there!

*Peter Tarplee*

## NEWS FROM THE LIBRARIAN

Recent additions to the library:

### SURREY- Literary and other associations

JAKUBAIT, Muriel & WELLER, Monica- Ruth Ellis: my sister's secret life. Robinson, 2005 (mentioned by Brian Bouchard in the August Newsletter)

Monica Weller lives in Bookham. The "Leatherhead History Society" is included in the acknowledgements; Alun Roberts is acknowledged separately.

This book purports to be "the truth about the last woman to be hanged, her wrongful conviction and the identity of the real killer". There are references to Leatherhead and Ashted, e.g.:

"If my father had not had a stroke in 1940 he would not have been sent to Leatherhead Hospital and maybe I would not have made the discoveries I have."

"The Paddock Club was hidden at the end of a hundred-yard gravel drive, off Ottways Lane in Ashted village, just north of Leatherhead."

## SURREY-Individual Towns & Villages

### FETCHAM

MEMBERS OF FETCHAM, SURREY, VETERANS' CIRCLE- So soon forgotten: reminiscences of service and wartime life, 2005

This booklet was initiated at a meeting of the Royal British Legion, Fetcham Branch. To quote from the introduction:

"...some of us felt that as we had all had experiences, some odd, some silly, some funny, during our service careers, it would be nice if they could be passed on to our descendants. They all date from the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War, or just after, and 60 years on we remember those who did not come back."

Each reminiscence is preceded by an interesting sketch of the 14 contributors, including Roddy Clube.

### LEATHERHEAD

SPENCER, Brian- The Leatherhead Golf Club, 1903-2003: the history

To continue the Second World War theme:

"During the Second World war the membership dwindled dramatically. Thirty-two acres running along the boundary of the Leatherhead / Kingston Road up to the Star Public House, was requisitioned for crops. In September 1940 during the Battle of Britain, more than half of the Clubhouse was destroyed by a direct hit from a German bomber. The course was reduced to 16 holes."

(History of Leatherhead, Ed. Edwina Vardey, on page 266, has 1906 as the year of foundation but this pamphlet reveals that the club was instituted in September/October 1903 as The Surrey Golf Club which was renamed Leatherhead Golf Club in November 1908. It appears to have been up and running by January 1905 which would tie in with the cessation of Caen Leys Golf Links, Ashtead, during 1904 as suggested in the May,2005 Newsletter . Certainly, members of the Ashtead Golf Club moved over because Miss E. Cluff, Dunmurry, Ashtead became Hon. Secretary of Leatherhead Ladies Golf Club. *Ed.*)

**LEATHERHEAD TRUST- Wild walk on the River Mole: a walker's guide to the River Mole**

This leaflet, which is available free of charge at the museum, is a companion to "Leatherhead riverside walk".

[Note: Jeremy Early's book is entitled "Hidden Jewels", not "Hidden Treasures", as stated in "Wild walk on the River Mole"]

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 who can help.

*Peter Wells*

**LEATHERHEAD AT WAR**

Specially produced videos, DVD's and booklets remain on sale in the Museum to accompany the Leatherhead at War exhibition currently showing there.

Prices are:- Videos £6.50, DVD's £7.50, & Booklets £3.00.

## CANADIAN SOLDIERS IN BOOKHAM DURING WW 2

Roddy Clube has telephoned to suggest that members might be interested to know a commemorative plaque has been set up in Eastwick Drive, Bookham, recording the use from 1941 of Southey Hall, formerly Eastwick House, as the Canadian army's headquarters in Bookham. During their occupation of these premises, the Canadians planted a green-leafed maple and a red-leafed maple side by side; over time, their branches have become intertwined to form "The Friendship Tree"

*Brian Bouchard*

## NEWS FROM THE FRIENDS

The task of coping with current affairs and planning for the future provided plenty of stimulus for activity by the Friends. Once again the annual outing was done in combination with The Society. The visit to Singleton, reported elsewhere in the *Newsletter* was not too well attended but provided much enjoyment for those who came. Heritage Days meant busy times and good attendances at the Museum: one special arrival was the Chairman of Mole Valley District Council, Mr Neil Maltby. He showed an intense interest in the exhibits which was very gratifying.

The Jubilee celebrations are now past history but it is worth mentioning that the Friends played an important part in organising the day and its associated events. The photographic competition, the museum's Photo Quiz, the printed programme with its adverts which brought sponsorship money, the buses and the jazz band, all happened thanks to the efforts of volunteers directed by The Friends.



The question might be asked: 'Why was all this effort expended ?' and the answer is simple 'To bring still more people to visit the Museum'. And it did, and hopefully will continue to do so.

Pat Seymour, in charge of Stewards, reports that a few new people have joined although we have also had some leaving as well. Next in the Stewards' calendar will be the usual Christmas get-together.

The Friends Committee which meets bi-monthly, is beginning to plan for 2006. They are appealing for someone to act as publicity officer and would welcome interest from any member of the Society. Next year's A.G.M. will have a new format in order, hopefully, to bring greater numbers. Another event scheduled for next year is a visit to the museum at Shere. Details will appear in the next *Newsletter*.

*John Wettren*

## **VISITS AND WALKS**

### **The Roman Road walk along Stane Street on Sunday, 24 July**

Twelve interested and hardy individuals turned up to take part in this advertised L&DLHS walk along the Roman Road Stane Street last Sunday, including a Warden from the Box Hill National Trust who videoed the event and two National Trust Volunteers. Among the party was also Fred Meynen our programme secretary. The purpose behind this walk was to give the opportunity to those interested to meet and learn something about our local Roman Road and mark the close of National Archaeology Week.

It was not a very auspicious start to the day with the weather as bad as it was; there was no let up in the rain all morning. It was, I suppose, only to be expected that a change was imminent following the

preceding weeks of very dry weather. Notwithstanding this, however, all those that did attend came well prepared to brave the elements and seemed quite prepared to walk in any weather.

We all met up at the Juniper Hall Field Centre at Mickleham ([www.field-studies-council.org](http://www.field-studies-council.org)) at 12, noon. Thanks to Nick Laphorn at the field centre, we had the opportunity to park within the grounds which was much appreciated considering the conditions.

Following a brief registration of all participants, we all congregated in the entrance porch at Juniper Hall which afforded us some shelter from the driving rain. We received an introductory talk from Alan Hall, the leader of the walk and a keen Roman Roads enthusiast. Alan proceeded to inform us about Stane Street from Noviomagus (Chichester) to Londinium. Both Winbolt, in his book 'With a Spade on Stane Street', and I. D. Margary in his books, 'Roman Roads in the Weald' & 'Roman Roads in Britain', have dealt extensively with the subject in the last century. Alan Hall, himself, has dug a number of other sites at North Holmwood and at Epsom and, in both cases, he was able to confirm the alignment of Stane Street in each of these areas. Alan also explained the difficulties of tracing Roman Roads which can prove very elusive, especially the section between North Holmwood, south of Dorking, and the Burford Bridge where the road allegedly crossed the river Mole by a ford. A resistivity survey carried out in the grounds of Juniper Hall where, allegedly, it crossed the lawn proved inconclusive. The recent excavations, earlier this year on the Denbies Wine Estate, also turned out disappointing and inconclusive because we had hoped to find the Winbolt/Margary alignment in the vineyard but this was not proven. Current thinking is that it is, possibly, partially buried under the A24, but has yet to be established. Hopefully, some obliging contractor laying pipes or some major road works in the near future may expose a section of this enigmatic road to confirm or disprove the theory.

Moving on, the walk started in earnest: negotiating our way up on to Mickleham Downs, evidence for the road was pointed out to us, first on

the right and then the left in the plantations and woods. This was in the form of what appeared to be the Agger of the roadway. Further along the track way we were told that the road cranked, or was offset, as it traversed the hillside and then straightened up again on the top of the downs for a direct alignment towards Thirty Acre Barn. At this point of the change of direction, we paused to discuss how the Roman engineers/surveyors would have sighted between two or more points. It was, in fact, difficult for us to visualise how this could be done, due to the current surroundings being woods and plantations, but then our thoughts turned to how the landscape had changed over the millennia.

We were informed that in the more recent past, in the living memory of some people, this same landscape was completely different, with sheep grazing on the Downs, so, perhaps, a similar view could then be imagined in Roman times. It has now, therefore, become much more important, and an essential part of current archaeology, to study and understand the environmental condition prevailing at any given period from the remains of flora and fauna, pollen grains and rodents' teeth to get a better picture of our history and heritage.

The Groma, a Roman piece of surveying equipment, was originally used to set out right angles in land and was probably employed in the surveying and sighting of roman roads and laying out towns. It was comprised of a staff supporting two cross arms with a lead weight plumb bob hanging from the end of each arm. When in use one plumb was positioned over the station or starting point and the angles were set off by sighting through the plummet strings. Used together with ten-foot poles or rods, similar to the ranging poles used in surveying today, the Romans would have been able to establish their alignments. The Romans also used two kinds of level, one a water level (libra aquaria), the other (a chorobates) comprising a 20 feet long level with feet at each end and a plummet.

The walk continued on to Tyrrells Wood where we sought some shelter under the tree for a very brief snack before returning the way we came

and back to Juniper Hall. On the return leg of our walk, of course, the rain stopped and the sun broke through: it turned out to be quite a nice afternoon, pity about the morning.

Thanks to all those who attended the walk and to Alan Hall, our leader, who kept us very usefully informed and stimulated active discussion between those present.

*David Hartley*

## **REPORT OF THE AUGUST VISIT**

### **The Weald and Downland Museum at Singleton on Saturday, 6 August**

The Weald and Downland Outdoor Museum is well known to many of us. Spread over 50 acres of park below the South Downs between Midhurst and Chichester, it offers some of the best insights into how domestic life was lived in times gone by. It grew from small beginnings, and now it is possible to 'visit' dwellings of every period since mediaeval times. A look inside each building offers a twofold experience: on the one hand it shows interesting and well explained structural details; on the other, we can see how people lived during that era, with contemporary furniture and decorations bringing reality to the scene.

All but one of those who came on this occasion said that they had been there one or more times before. This in no way blunted their appreciation this time round: there is always so much to absorb and many new developments to explore. On arrival we were greeted and offered coffee by The Friends of the Museum. Afterwards we toured the site, though unable to see all that was on offer : time would not allow.

Flitting from one century to another, between locations only a few paces distant, was an experience one began easily to take for granted. First we were in the 19<sup>th</sup> century as we entered the house transported from beside the railway at Ashtead; next we were in the high-Middle Ages hall house with a central hearth open to the blackened rafters and upstairs a projecting 'garderobe' (toilet). Then an Elizabethan kitchen with a roaring fire and tastings of period food. There was a house carefully reconstructed to reveal two aspects of its three-century life—one half, bare and primitive (1600s), the other showing refinements added from the 18<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. A brief stop at a nineteenth century village school-room; then to the sound of rushing water, a mill with its wheel turning and flour emerging from the grindstones.

These descriptions can only hint at the variety of impressions gained as the tour of the site continued. "Must come back to see some more" was the feeling as we explored the extensive layout. In the "Market Square" a real-life wedding had just taken place. Was that blue horse-drawn wagon going to be used instead of the wedding carriage ?

Before we left, one further surprise was to follow. We were on an excellent guided tour of the Downland Gridshell. Completed in 2002, this huge, award winning, wooden structure is built of criss-crossing oaken strips bolted at each intersection and clad with softwood panels. Unique in its architectural design, it comprises an upper storey housing workshops and assembly space. Below this is a vast store room housing the museum's collection of artefacts, a fuller description will be left to our own Museum Manager, Alan Pooley.

*John Wettern*

## **The 'Gridshell' at Singleton**

The Gridshell building is in shape rather like a short tunnel of semi-circular construction albeit with rather wavy sides. Thus the lower level is probably about six times as long as it is wide and partially set into the

hillside. We approached it having left the upper floor from the "mouth" of the tunnel, down a track past several stacks of timber to a glass door about two thirds along the length of the building. Looking through windows to the left in the hallway, envy commenced upon the sight of the office and, after noting the computers, filing racks, conservation areas and apparently ample space, we were ushered through a door on the right into the store room. This was a bit like walking into an Aladdin's cave but without the genie. Sure, there are conventional racks with bulky items like stoneware jars and large pieces of blacksmiths equipment on them but a considerable number of the "racks" consist of vertical frames holding steel mesh of about 150 mm pitch. Here it is not only possible to store smaller items like tools but significantly to display them by tying them securely to the mesh using plastic cable ties. All of the racks are mounted on runners so that they can be moved to increase or reduce space between adjacent ones. Several of the items kept there are for use on special occasions like the shepherd's smocks or are for eventual use in a building as part of the "furniture" but others are of interest just as representing the tools of the old crafts. The tour, open to members of the public, is a real eye-opener.

Mentioning old crafts, the wheelwrights at Amberley Museum have been commissioned to make the museum a new cart wheel using the metal hub and rim from the old one but with all new timber spokes and felloes put together in the traditional way. They are all volunteers and will try to have the new one ready for the 2006 season in which case the tying (when the rim is shrunk on) may take place in March next year.

Both Singleton and Amberley benefit from acres of space, are constantly expanding as funds permit and make a great day out but both apparently suffer from a shortage of volunteers. Where have I heard that before?

*Alan Pooley*

## **AUTUMN PROGRAMME**

### **“JUBILATION IN LEATHERHEAD”**

**At the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the opening of Leatherhead Museum,  
Saturday 8 October**

Crowds gathered round the jazz band playing to an eager audience in Church Street. A giant 1937 London bus was standing outside The Theatre. Bunting and balloons adorning the local Museum left no one in doubt that important happenings were taking place on a sunny Saturday morning on 8 October. The reason for the celebration was explained in the Programme that was being widely distributed to passers-by.

It was the twenty-fifth anniversary of the museum's inauguration; a Silver Jubilee which brought important guests as well as supporters. Most notable were Mrs Sarah Goad, the Lord Lieutenant of Surrey and Mr Neil Maltby, chairman of Mole Valley District Council. Others included the founder of the Leatherhead Local History Society, Mr Stephen Fortescue.

After a brief inspection of the museum, full of fascinating reminders of Leatherhead's past, the party moved across the road to The Theatre where some 150 members and friends awaited the principal guests. The Chairman gave a speech of welcome and invited the Lord Lieutenant to perform the cake-cutting ceremony. She then spoke to the gathering, reminding us that history was not just about the past but in many ways influences our future: the museum therefore helped to emphasise the importance of history. She praised the work of all those who had assisted to develop and maintain the museum and she wished success to all its future enterprises.

Prizes were then presented to the winners of a photographic

competition organised by The Friends. Pictures by the winners and runners up were on display, all devoted to the theme "*Leatherhead and District in the 21st Century*". Also for inspection by the guests was a display of pictures entitled "*Leatherhead Museum, Then and Now*". This helped to visualise the work needed to turn the semi-derelict 17th Century cottage, only just saved from demolition, into the present thriving centre for local interest.

The celebrations were not ended by the departure of the main guests. Two double-decker buses from Cobham Bus Museum continued to be on view, one of these offering free rides on a tour of the Town's landmarks. The jazz band played on, and crowds flocked to the museum to view the treasures in the collection garnered over the past twenty five years.

**Postscript:** Following the event, many expressed appreciation for an enjoyable and interesting day. The *Leatherhead Advertiser* published a front page feature and a further page of illustrations in the subsequent issue.

*John Wettern*

**Speech by Mrs S. Goad, The Lord Lieutenant of Surrey  
at The Theatre, Church Street, Leatherhead on 8 October**

"Chairman of Mole Valley, Ladies & Gentlemen,

Thank you for inviting me here to stand in the shoes of one of my predecessors in office, Lord Hamilton of Dalziel, and commemorate his opening of the Leatherhead Museum of Local History a quarter of a century ago.

Because this seems a suitable occasion on which to give you a bit of history, I can tell you that his predecessor in office was the Earl of Munster, Lord Lieutenant of the County in my youth and



also, like myself, a resident of Blechingley. He actually lived in a house built by my great grandfather. Blechingley I believe also has links with the Mansion here in Leatherhead for Lord Howard of Effingham, Commander at the time of the Armada, was a one time resident and he was also Lord of the Manor of Blechingley.

It is said, and I quote only approximately, that a people which forgets its history is doomed to repeat itself and I fear that in an age which has largely expunged history from its culture that may well happen, for the lessons of history- if we care to look- are all around us.

Indeed, we think of the future as lying ahead of us and the past, as it were, seen only in the rear view mirror. But ancient civilizations actually thought of the past as lying ahead, because they knew what happened there, while the future - unknown and unknowable - was behind their backs. It is an interesting and instructive reversal of our modern perception of history and one which may give you pause for thought.

So your Museum here in a small but important local way gives us a glimpse - a sign post - into the past and helps us see how life has been lived and evolved over the centuries and how our skills and perceptions have changed.

For at the same time as history fades from the cultural scene, the thirst for it remains. I'm told that more people than ever are searching for their roots - through army or parish records, on the internet. or by other means of detection. It seems there is an innate urge in most of us to find out where we come from, and who were our forbears. It helps to place us, if you like, in context. It helps to give our lives meaning and perspective and gives us a place in history. I believe also that it helps to build up a sense of family- which again is endangered in this modern world.

So thank you, Leatherhead Museum, for the part you play

in raising our awareness of the past and may you continue and flourish in this task for the generations to come."

*John Wettern*

## **SILVER JUBILEE CELEBRATION**

**Archaeology "Finds Day" at the Leatherhead Museum, 9, October 2005**

The Silver Jubilee celebrations in marking twenty-five years of Leatherhead & District Local History Museum at Hampton Cottage culminated on Sunday, 9 October with Archaeology "Finds Day" a follow up on a previously very successful and interesting event staged earlier in the year on 23 April. The 9<sup>th</sup> October session was a rather muted affair, following as it did the events of the previous day which was full of anticipation and excitement.

As part of the celebration our museum was opened especially on that Sunday from 10.00 am to 1.00 pm. David Williams, our Finds Liaison Officer (FLO) for Surrey, kindly consented to participate in meeting the anticipated visitors with finds and artifacts of interest. Graham Evans the museum's Curator and David Hartley were in attendance acting as Stewards for the morning.

David Williams was again keen to publicise the work of the Portable Antiquities Scheme ([www.finds.org.uk/conservation](http://www.finds.org.uk/conservation)) in the context of 'Conservation Advice Notes' 1-5, contained in a very useful little booklet of the same name (ISBN:1 874454 34 5), which has been produced by the Portable Antiquities Scheme with the support of the York Archaeological Trust ([www.yorkarchaeology.co.uk](http://www.yorkarchaeology.co.uk)) and Museums Libraries & Archive Council (MLA), the Heritage Lottery Fund and the Department of Media Culture & Sport (DCMS).

This booklet is free and is aimed principally at the individual metal detectorists and detecting groups and intended to encourage a responsible approach for dealing with all finds discovered using metal detecting equipment. It also comes recommended by me to all members of the History Society and Friends of the Museum interested in collecting and the conservation of artifacts and finds that turn up in our gardens from time to time.

Two of our first visitors were Pam & Ian Exwood, members of the Historical Society, with a number of small finds made during gardening at Bridge Cottage formerly the original gate house to Thorncroft manor. Their interesting collection of clay pipe stems, terracotta roof tile, Oyster shells, Delft tile and a ceramic dolls leg circa 1850 together with some small pieces of 17<sup>th</sup> /18<sup>th</sup> cent Chinese porcelain and an example of Westerwald Stoneware from Germany circa 1690 made a fascinating start to the proceedings.

Brian Bouchard, the editor of our *Newsletter*, dropped in with an intriguing artifact, a crude glass bead discovered some 3 years ago in what is believed to have been a former watering place on a drainage ditch to the Rye Brook, beside a field once known as Jack Adam's Meadow, at his home in Ashtead. Although impossible to date with any accuracy, David Williams thought this bead could have been Roman or earlier and thus was of sufficient interest to be recorded. The item was offered as a donation to the Museum.

Alun Roberts, John Morris and Gwen Hoad, members of both the History Society and Friends of the Museum, together with John Wettern, Chairman of the Friends, looked in to lend support to the event.

One young lad came in with his mother to show off his collection of bottles.

Michael May of Ashted, an avid collector of artifacts and finds, came in with a number of items turned up in his garden and other finds discovered some years ago when he lived at the Priory in Church Street, Leatherhead. Whilst he resided there some artifacts were found behind the fireplace during restoration work, in 1995, on the Ingle Nook fireplace when they discovered the remains of the half timbered cottage. The finds include 17/18<sup>th</sup> cent. Metropolitan slip ware, Delft ware 17<sup>th</sup> cent. Tiles and London tin-glazed earthen-ware - Lambeth. Mr. May also had further sherds identified as Medieval Surrey Ware. A number of flints were brought in amongst his collection, one of which was identified as a mid-Neolithic flint core from which flakes had been struck. It is the actual flakes with the bulb of percussion that are selected for further work and retouching to produce flint tools.

We were also informed that Shire Books publish a very interesting little book on Delftware Tiles by Hans van Lemmen for those who are interested which could, I feel sure, be purchased through the Museum's bookshop. This has a collection of Shire Publications on various subjects of interest also a good stock of local history publications.

The morning session concluded, unfortunately, without any visits this time from local metal detectorists who may well have been out prospecting that morning.

Thanks are extended to both David Williams for giving up his time to attend and support our event and to my fellow steward who was on duty that morning.

*David Hartley*

## LECTURES

Lectures are held on Friday evenings in the Dixon Hall, Letherhead Institute, the High Street at 8.00 p.m. with coffee beforehand at 7.30 p.m. - including the December meeting.

### REPORT OF THE SEPTEMBER LECTURE

Friday, 16 September. "Surrey and the Motor Car" by Gordon Knowles.

Over 100 different companies have made motor cars in Surrey, Gordon Knowles told us at our September meeting. Many of them produced only a single vehicle, although Cooper racing cars and Caterham kit-cars were made in large numbers.

Surrey was in the forefront of road improvements, from the charging of tolls for upkeep on the Reigate to Crawley road from 1696, and the turnpiking of the Portsmouth Road between 1711 and 1749. A more recent plan for an express tollway from Kingston to Brighton, to run across Epsom Common and under local roads, was never implemented. The last turnpike in Surrey, near Dunsfold, was begun in 1836 but traffic was being taken away by canals and railways. The invention of the motor car led to increased road use just at the time when County Councils were being set up. The dusty roads were improved by the use of tar macadam, first used on the road between Esher and Cobham in 1905, and the County Council set up its own asphalt plant in Dorking in 1914. In the same year, Surrey was the first county to be inspected by the new national Roads Board for its road surfaces and dangers.

Captain Sant, Chief Constable of Surrey from 1899 to 1930, was the scourge of 'furiously riding' cyclists as well as motorists, Ripley being notorious for speed traps. However, the Reigate division appointed

Malcolm Campbell as inspector of a high-speed police car squad, and even had a volunteer air patrol.

Between the world wars, car numbers increased tenfold. Dual carriageways and by-passes were built, not to everyone's joy: Farnham wanted it on the other side of town, Ewell and Shere petitioned against the loss of trade. The blight of 'ribbon development' and the delight of a 'Green Belt' were both addressed in the Surrey County Council Act of 1931, which was followed by other counties.

A Farnham inventor, John Henry Knight, fitted a tricycle with an oil engine and was fined in October 1895 for driving it in Castle Street, Farnham. This publicity led to the repeal of the Red Flag Act and the annual London to Brighton Emancipation Run. Knight's car was not the first British car to be driven on British roads, since one had been built and run in east London a few weeks earlier. Knight was one of the founders of what became the RAC, and a cycle patrol set up by another Surrey man to warn motorists of speed traps on the Brighton road led to the formation of the AA.

Mr Knowles said the story of Brooklands needed several evenings' talks to do it justice. The Hon. Locke King had seen cars racing round the streets of Brescia, and determined to set up a private circuit to let British cars compete. Part of his estate was quickly landscaped with banking and a ferro-concrete track built and opened within a year (1906). A new world land speed record was made here in 1914 and the first two British Grands Prix held here in 1926 and 1927. Campbell's Bluebirds and many other famous cars ran here including Count Zborowski's aero-engined monsters long known as 'Chitty Chitty Bang Bang', one of which was developed by Parry Thomas, who lived at Brooklands, to attempt to beat the landspeed record, which cost him his life. The car racing circuit closed in 1939, but the museum retains much of the old atmosphere and many historic cars are still fired up from time

to time.

Two motor manufacturers have existed for over a century in Surrey. John Dennis made cycles in Guildford and in 1899 was convicted of driving a motorized tricycle 'at a furious pace' up Guildford High Street, just four years after Knight had done the same in Farnham. The Dennis car factory of 1901 is the oldest purpose-built multistorey surviving in the world, now known as the Rodborough Building, a Wetherspoon pub opposite the Friary. Dennis diversified into commercial vehicles and then into fire engines and 'bus chassis. The AC Cobra sports car is the best known produced of the company originally called AutoCarriers (or 'Amazing Cars' from the slogan on its factory wall). As well as sports saloons and racing cars, they also made a simple single-seat invalid carriage on Government contract. A rather different record is that of Venthams, who made stage coaches from the 1840's in Leatherhead, then moving into motor body making and repair and only closing in 1936.

Gordon mentioned the work of other firms such as Brabham at Chessington, Invicta and Railton at Cobham, Tyrrell at Ockham, and Allard and Lister here in Leatherhead. For more detail, you must get a copy of Gordon Knowles' new book *Surrey and the Motor*, available from the Museum or at meetings.

*Derek Renn*

## **REPORT OF THE OCTOBER LECTURE**

**Friday, 21 October. The Dallaway Lecture: "Surrey's ancient houses and their dating by tree-rings".**

The age of a tree can be worked out by counting the growth rings when

it is felled. Also, the relative width of the rings indicates climate change - narrow rings during dry, cold years and wide rings when the weather was generally wet and warm. The sequences of relative ring widths form a unique 'fingerprint' over time and, by using a series of overlapping 'fingerprints', the year of felling a particular piece of timber centuries ago can often be determined. In the Middle Ages, wood was used 'green' while it was easy to work, and not seasoned for any length of time. In 80% of timber-framed houses in Surrey where the building date was known from building accounts, the tree-ring felling date coincided with the documents, and the rest were built only a year or so after felling took place.

Rod Wild, co-ordinator of the Surrey Dendrochronology Project, explained this at our October meeting. The Project's main aim was to determine the dates of change in timber-framed building styles. The oldest surviving houses in Surrey had the main room open to the high-pitched roof, with a central fire from which the smoke rose to coat all the roofbeams with soot. Later the fire was placed under a smokehood and a narrow 'smoke-bay' channelled the smoke between the upper rooms and roof spaces of the house. Later still, proper chimneys were built, usually of brick.

So far, an hundred houses had been dated by a professional dendrochronologist, funded by members of the Domestic Buildings Research Group, the Surrey Archaeological Society, together with a local charity and the Heritage Lottery Fund. The procedure is to take a pencil-thin core from a timber using a hollow drill and then automatically to measure optically the rings of 6 to 10 samples, presented as a computer-generated graph of width against time. Ideally (as at Clock House, Capel) the final bark ring would survive - otherwise the date had to be estimated from the ring marking the boundary between the outer sapwood and the inner heartwood. The first region to be explored was around Charlwood, where many old timberframed



buildings survived in a relatively remote part of Surrey, impervious to rebuilding fashion elsewhere. Later, two other areas had been studied, comparing dates of change: around Godalming and latterly around Shere and the Clandons. Near Leatherhead, Brook Farm at Westcott is dated to 1407, Church House at West Horsley to 1434 and the ornamental panelling on Tunmore Cottage in East Clandon to 1573.

The dates of timber towers and roofs of churches sometimes proved to be rather later than had been expected (Newdigate's belfry was of 1525, although the west porch and roof of Capel church was of 1410). Howard Davies reminded us of an [earlier] tree-ring dating for Ashted church roof to 1450/1483. The dissolution of the monasteries had led to increased wealth trickling down to smaller landowners.

The famous Great Barn at Wanborough had been dated to 1388. House and barn might have similar dates (for example, Ivy House, Newdigate 1517). Closely similar timbers might come from the same tree or stretch of woodland (Black and White Cottage in the Hannah Pescar Sculpture Garden at Ockley matched exactly with Nyes Place eight miles away in Newdigate, both of 1608). So far the earliest dated building within the three 'clusters' was Greens Farm at Newdigate (1309), although Forge Cottage at Dunsfold had now been dated to 1254. Future work will be needed on a post inside the hall of Farnham Castle which has Norman decoration and a door to Old Woking church may even be pre-Conquest. Although all the Project funds have been spent, work continues if the houseowner meets the cost of up to £400. The Quinells at Rowhurst Forge have done so: the provisional results there indicate a date in the seventeenth century.

Mr Wild said that the story that ship's timbers were re-used in houses was a myth: why use old, probably rotted, wood already weakened by mortice and peg holes, when good sound oak abounded? Surrey was still the most wooded county in Britain. The misunderstanding

probably arose from the fact that 'ship's timber' was a grade description, that is, wood of a quality suitable for naval construction. However, occasionally a house timber might be re-used (one of 1312 had been found among others consistently of 1460)

*Derek Renn*

**Friday, 18 November. "Landscape Archaeology in Surrey" by Judie English MA.**

This talk is in substitution for "Iron Age Forts in Surrey", as scheduled in the last *Newsletter*, because Trudie Cole will be unable to attend as had been hoped.

Judie has been involved in her subject for twenty years and teaches archaeology at Horsham and Sussex University.

**Friday, 16 December. "Leatherhead, then and now"**

This meeting will be preceded by mince pies with coffee at 7.30 p.m.

Last year we made a break from our traditional Christmas Miscellany by substituting a question and answer session with audience participation, and this year there will be something on similar lines. Linda Heath and Peter Tarplee are going to talk about compiling their new book on "Leatherhead & District Then and Now" which is due out in the autumn. They will show "Then and Now" slides of some photos used in the book and some which were not used, to be followed by questions and comments from the audience.

## **SPRING LECTURES 2006**

**Friday, 20 January. "The River Mole" by Charles Abdy**

Charles Abdy is secretary of the Epsom and Ewell History and Archaeology Society, formerly the Nonsuch Antiquarian Society. His talk describes various places along the Mole from its source to Molesey and is illustrated by slides taken by himself and shown by his wife Barbara. Anyone who has seen Charles' superb slides will know they are in for a treat.

**Friday, 17 February. "Management of Norbury Park Estate" by Graham Manning**

Graham is Head Ranger of the Estate and he has been in estate management since attending Merrist Wood College. His talk will include the history of the Estate and control of its flora and fauna.

Details of the following lectures will be provided in the February, 2006 *Newsletter*:-

**Friday, 17 March. "Surrey Vineyards, ancient and modern" by Prof. Richard Selley**

**Friday, 21 April. AGM of the Society followed by "Time and Tithe" by John Morris**

**Friday, 19 May. "Selborne and Gilbert White" by Gwen Hoad**

*Fred. Meynen*

**SURREY ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY**  
**Archaeological Research Committee**  
**Annual Symposium 2006**

Although we have not yet received a detailed programme for this, we have been notified that it will be held at Ashted Peace Memorial Hall on Saturday, 25 January 2006.

This is an all-day event to which our society has already agreed to provide a display and sales stand. If any member who is coming is willing to help man our stand I should be pleased if they will contact me before the event.

*Peter Tarplee*

**ANNUAL HISTORY SOCIETY DINNER, 27 January 2006**

The annual dinner in 2006 will be a special one as it marks the Diamond Jubilee of the Society. The dinner will take place on Friday, 27 January 2006, at 7.00 pm for 7.30 pm in the Bookham Grange Hotel, Bookham Common. This has proved to have been a comfortable venue in the past with spacious accommodation, a cosy bar and ample parking. It is a good opportunity for members, spouses, partners and friends to meet in a relaxed and informal environment and, for this special occasion, we have invited Audrey Monk, president of the Surrey Archaeological Society to be our after dinner speaker.

The meal will have three courses with coffee, the cost being £22 per

person. A cash bar is available and seating will be at tables for six and eight people. Friends will be made most welcome and please indicate on the return slip with whom you would like to sit. Dress for men will be lounge suits.

To reserve a place, please fill in the enclosed form indicating your choice of menu and seating preferences, making a note for yourself of your choice as this avoids confusion later. I am afraid that cancellations made after 23rd January cannot be refunded.

We look forward to seeing you there for what should be a memorable and enjoyable occasion.

*Fred. Meynen*

## **FUTURE EVENTS**

The programme committee remain open to comments and ideas for future lectures, walks and visits. Any suggestions should be sent, with your name and telephone number, or anonymously if you wish, to me at the museum, Hampton Cottage, 64 Church Street, Leatherhead, KT22 8DP.

*Fred Meynen*

## **ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS 2006**

Subscriptions for the calendar year 2006 become due on 1 January next and, enclosed with this *Newsletter*, you will find a subscription renewal form. Please complete the form and send it with your cheque to me at the address shown on the form, at any time from November. Subscription rates are: **Ordinary Member £15 for the initial member in any household; Associate Member £6 per head for any additional members at the same address; Junior Member £1.**

**You will see that you can pay a subscription to the Friends of Leatherhead Museum at the same time.**

If you are a taxpayer and wish the Society to benefit from tax refund under the Gift Aid Scheme please complete the form at the bottom of the renewal form. Last year's declarations will still be effective but, if in doubt, complete the form.

*Jenny Morris*

## **Adieu**

Members generally may not have been aware that when I was asked to consider filling the vacancy as editor of the *Newsletter*, arising from Peter Wall's resignation, it had to be explained that my eyesight was becoming impaired. Nevertheless, I undertook to assume the role for a period of twelve months subject to review. Since the situation has in fact deteriorated, regrettably, it will not be possible to extend my commitment beyond compilation of the February 2006 edition, apart, naturally, from providing such assistance as might be required to facilitate a smooth hand-over in due course.

**Items for February, 2006 *Newsletter* to the editor at the address given on the inside front cover (or, as an attachment to email, to [bouchard40@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:bouchard40@tiscali.co.uk)) not later than 31st January, please.**

*Brian Bouchard*

