

LEATHERHEAD & DISTRICT
LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER



AUGUST 2006

LEATHERHEAD & DISTRICT LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Registered Charity No. 802409

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CHAIRMAN
David Hartley
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Vivien Hollingsworth
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The Society meets on the third Friday of the month at the Letherhead Institute between
September and May.

For details see programme in the appropriate Newsletter

2006 Membership Subscriptions

Ordinary.....£15.00 Associate.....£6.00 Junior (under 18).....£1.00

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY Jenny Morris 01372 362524

The Museum will be open at the following times from Saturday, 1st April to mid-December 2006

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 Fred Meynen 01372 372930

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

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

Further details may be found on the inside back cover

FROM THE NEW CHAIRMAN

Hello and welcome to you all, new and old members of the Society. To new members I would like to say we all hope you will enjoy being part of our Local History Society and that you will support us and the Friends of the Leatherhead Museum by participating and getting involved in the many events arranged throughout the year on your behalf. Perhaps you would like to carry out your own research and need some support. We have a wealth of knowledge within the Society to fulfil almost any requirement, and can certainly point you in the right direction if necessary. We also have the resources for publishing your research as evidenced by the Society's *Annual Proceedings* and the numerous books written by members on sale in local bookshops and at the Museum. Our annual series of lectures at the Letherhead Institute, and the events organised the Society and the Friends are central to our existence. These raise the profile of the Society and the Museum and make the efforts of other active members worthwhile.

To our loyal older established membership I would like to say thank you all for your long and continued support of the History Society and the Friends of the Museum over the years, you are the backbone of our Society and without you we would have no History Society. In saying all this we are in a time of rapid change, and we all need to consider the future of our History Society and our Museum in order to make us relevant to the world of today, without *throwing the baby out with the bathwater* metaphorically speaking. History matters to us, to you and to me – also to the general public at large, both at national and at a local level, therefore we need to do more to *fly the flag* for the past, present and the future generations. In this connection I would like to refer you to the parts of the speech given Mrs Sarah Goad the Lord Lieutenant of Surrey on occasion of 25th anniversary of the opening of the Museum on the 8th October last year, published in the Newsletter of December 2005.

Participation is the way forward. We need more involvement and commitment from you the membership to turn up and support events at the Museum, the walks and lectures at the Institute, we also need your positive feedback and ideas and suggestions as to what is relevant to you and how we can generate more support and interest from the public. I look forward to receiving your comments.

Moving on, this is our third newsletter this year and the first under my chairmanship of the Society. I wish to thank our outgoing Chairman Peter Tarplee for his dedication to the History Society and the Leatherhead Museum, fulfilling ten years of active service in this post. Peter continues his many activities and his interest in industrial archaeology, also his involvement with the Society's Museum Committee. He will also continue to represent the Society on the committee which organises Heritage Open Days in Mole Valley. I wish him well and thank him for his continued support.

To Linda Heath, our President, thank you for your continued support and for all your work and activities carried out on behalf of the Society and the Museum. This is especially so in the light of your personal difficulties over the past year. You can count on the Executive Committee's and the Society's support at this sad time.

To the Executive Committee and the Friends of Leatherhead Museum, to you all individually, too many to mention here, thank you for all your hard work and effort organising events and playing your part in raising the profile of the Society and the Museum. You will continue to have my personal support and commitment as Chairman and as a Friend. I am committed to The Leatherhead & District Local History Society and the Friends of Leatherhead Museum, and I look forward to the continued support of the membership.

Last but not least thanks must go to John Wettern our new Newsletter Editor who has stepped into the breach at short notice to plug the gap temporarily or for as long as John wants to sit in that seat. Without his support and of course the contributors we would have no Newsletter today. Peter Tarplee held the fort with support of Vivien Hollingsworth our Hon Secretary and others for the May Newsletter as the post of Editor had been vacant for some time. The Newsletter has a vital role to play in keeping the membership informed and in touch. I do hope you will find this issue interesting and informative.

David Hartley

DAVID HEATH R.I.P.

The Society mourns the passing of a staunch member. The husband of our president Linda Heath. He passed away on 16th July. Many were present at his funeral service which took place at St Mary and St Nicholas church, Leatherhead on Friday, 28th July.

David who was an architect by profession, played an important part in the affairs of the Society and was a key player in the development of the museum in its early days. Roddy Clube who was with him during the post-war years when both were posted abroad on Government business, tells of David's role in helping to ensure the safe conservation of artefacts destined for the Leatherhead museum whilst the building was being renovated. In the first instance the objects were stored in a garage, then subsequently transferred to a basement at a building named "*The Priory*" (still the museum's store house). There was plenty of space here but the extreme dampness of the cellar was a threat to the sound preservation of many items. He explained how David came to the rescue by constructing an airtight enclosure which housed de-humidifying equipment. Thus many vulnerable artefacts were saved from deterioration.

Speakers at the funeral service paid tribute to David, first and foremost as a kind and gentle person ever ready to lend a hand in a practical way whenever there was a need. A perfect example of this was during the aftermath of the serious fire at Leatherhead parish church : he gave himself unstintingly to assist in the renovation of the damaged interior. Referring to his work at the museum, one speaker recalled the time when the contents of the well in the garden were being dug out and sorted. This was an immense job with many curious objects being mingled with much debris. Thanks to his skill and patience David was able to piece together assortments of pottery fragments at various levels. His painstaking efforts resulted in the reconstruction of some interesting pieces of domestic tableware from earlier times.

We share with Linda our sadness at the loss of a dear and noble person.

ARCHAEOLOGY DAYS AT THE MUSEUM by David Hartley

National Archaeology Week is an annual event, sponsored by English Heritage and the Council for British Archaeology and YAC (Young Archaeologists Club), and for the second year running Leatherhead Museum played a part in this countrywide enterprise.

The launch of NATIONAL ARCHAEOLOGY WEEK was on Saturday 15th July with our invited guest the Chairman of Mole Valley District Council, Councillor Valerie Homewood and our Guest of Honour, Dr Frank Pemberton, the noted local archaeologist from Epsom & Ewell Archaeological & History Society. Councillor Homewood gave an excellent address to the invited audience of members of our Society and to members of the public on the relevance and importance of history in today's society. This is reproduced on the next page of the Newsletter. She then introduced Dr Pemberton who reflected on his early years living in Fetcham and his early archaeological experience digging with Fred Hastings on the Iron Age site at Hawks Hill, Fetcham in the 1960s as well as at other archaeological sites around Leatherhead.

The weather was wonderful for the outdoor exhibition which was staged in the museum garden. This illustrated aspects of local history and archaeology going back as far as the Ice Age. Exhibits included Mesolithic flints as well as brick production on the site of the Ashtead Roman Villa and in more recent times in Lower Ashtead. Other exhibits covered excavations of Iron Age sites on Hawks Hill with a new showcase exhibiting Iron Age pottery from the excavation kindly lent to us by Dr Mary Alexander FSA, Curator of Guildford Museum.

Graham Evans our very own curator also arranged a number of archaeological exhibits, artefacts from Leatherhead and the surrounding area which attracted a lot of interest from visitors to our museum. There were a number of *hands on* activities arranged for children including using embossed rollers and blocks with clay to reproduce the famous *Dog & Stag* Roman flue tile patterns from Ashtead Roman Villa, print making, and demonstrations of coil potting techniques given by Justine Munson a noted local potter. The National Ice Age Network provided a number of fascinating artefact identification sheets, free for children, to assist them identifying fossils, shells, insects, and tools of bone and flint.

It was a great week for both adults and children with their parents which will be repeated at same time next year at our museum.

THE MUSEUM'S ARCHAEOLOGY WEEK

From the speech by Councillor Valerie Homewood, Chairman of Mole Valley District Council

“Chairman, Guests and Friends of Leatherhead Museum - Thank you for inviting me as Chairman of Mole Valley District Council to the opening of National Archaeology Week here at Hampton Cottage.

“May I congratulate you on arranging matters so well this year so that this occasion coincides with the launch of the national campaign called *History Matters*. This campaign brings together the National Trust, English Heritage and the Historic Houses Association to remind us all of the importance of history. It was started off last week with a remarkable speech by Stephen Fry, actor and unexpectedly knowledgeable historian. He began with his usual verbal fireworks: –

“How can we know who we are if we don't know who we were?”...

“Life is lived forward but understood backwards”...

“History is a comedy to those who think, but a tragedy to those who feel”...

“Historians are prophets looking backwards” and so on.

But he came much nearer the truth, I think, when he said

“History is not the story of strangers - of aliens from another realm. It is the story of all of us had we been born a little earlier.”

“Some of the story of the past can be understood through the objects that people left behind them deliberately, by way of historical texts, carved inscriptions and things that were meant for us to see. Some of the story we have to pick up through what people dropped, lost, left behind in a hurry to escape invaders, or just put aside because it was broken or old fashioned. Some of the story of the past flows through our libraries. Some we find in stately homes, churches and cathedrals. And the really interesting material is unearthed - literally - through the efforts of dedicated archaeologists, and emerges into our museums to surprise us all. That is shown in the notes and transactions of the Museum and of the Surrey Archaeological Society. Much has been found, but there is much more to discover.”

OPENING OF THE MUSEUM'S ARCHAEOLOGY WEEK

The Guest of Honour, Frank Pemberton, BA, MA, AIFA spoke as follows : —

“As we know there is a wealth of archaeology and history locally. Along the river and stream banks, flints tools and arrowheads of the hunter gatherers and traces of the first farmers have been found dating back to about 5000-3000 B.C.. Excavations and a survey have taken place of farmsteads consisting of round wooden houses surrounded by a stockade dating from the Iron Age, around 700-500 B.C., with an example at Hawks Hill, Leatherhead. For this we had the support of the local council.

“ With the coming of the Romans, a road built from Chichester to London, was constructed in our area, passing through the Mole Valley Gap and over Mickleham Downs. Recent excavations at Dorking and Epsom involving local people, have been taking place on the road.

“Roman villas are known in the area, notably at Ashted, where a research project will enable local people to take part. Other villas are known at Walton Heath and Walton-on-the-Hill. You should know that David Hartley, your Chairman is involved in the coordination of a study of Roman villas throughout Surrey.

“So it's against this background that I took up archaeology, as a teenager living in Fetcham. It is my hope this archaeology week will encourage many local people take up an interest in archaeology. ”

VISIT TO SLYFIELD

Despite the Society having had two successful and well supported visits to Slyfield House it was evident that several members wanted another chance to see this historic place. Thankfully the owners, Mr and Mrs Richards consented to yet another visit which took place on a steaming hot Saturday early in July.

Small groups were given a personally conducted tour of the house and the extensive garden. One could admire the beauty of the external architecture and marvel at the exquisite interiors. The hospitality of the hosts even extended to an invitation for us to picnic in the garden after the tour. Our president, Linda Heath gave a speech of thanks on our behalf, and presented Mrs Vanessa Richards with a cheque as a contribution towards the Friends of the Yehudi Menuhin School of which she is chairman. The money, she said, will be used to help in supporting talented young musicians at the school who lack the means to meet the full fees.

John Wettren

“THE INNS AND PUBLIC HOUSES OF LEATHERHEAD AND DISTRICT” by Goff Powell. ISBN 0-9552785-0-3; 80pp; £5.50

This is the latest book published by the Leatherhead and District Local History Society. It is now on sale in local bookshops and in our museum. Many of you will remember that Goff gave a talk after the AGM of 2005 on this subject, illustrated by many photographs from his collection. This book is based on some of the material used in the talk but it has been greatly expanded. It describes the licensed premises of Ashted, Bookham, Effingham, Fetcham, Headley, Mickleham and Leatherhead, both those still existing as well as those which have ceased to trade.

The book is a useful record of one aspect of our area and we hope that members will support the Society by purchasing copies. It will be of interest to know who among our membership knew of all the pubs and inns described. It is not too early to get Christmas presents for people who have left the area, or even those who have stayed in it.

Peter Tarplee

[If any reader has a recollection of a former pub which our members might like to hear about, please write in to me. Ed.]

STAFF SERGEANT GEOFF BARKWAY D F M - R I P

Geoff & his wife Eileen, both members of the Society, regularly attended the monthly lectures : they were also active members of many other local organisations. Geoff was a quiet man but had a wicked sense of humour. He made light of his war disability and until recent years when the D-Day anniversary commemorations were held, he was little known outside of the circle of his friends and those who followed wartime events.

However, during the D-Day commemorations in 2004 he became a national TV figure and was greeted by the Prince of Wales at the Pegasus Bridge in Normandy. It was here that Geoff brought in his glider, one of three, within yards of the bridge whose capture was crucial to the success of the D-Day landings. Sir Trafford Leigh Mallory, Commander of the Allied Air Forces, described the landing as "*one of the finest bits of precision flying and navigational accomplishments of the war*". Geoff unfortunately lost his right arm as a result of the action, but it did not prevent him after the war from being able to have a successful career on the engineering side of London Transport.

He was in demand to speak of his experiences, always given with humour, and was invited to open an exhibition at the Museum of Army Flying to celebrate the 50th anniversary of D-Day. Geoff was 84 when he died of a heart attack following yet another hospital visit, one of a number he had had in recent years.

His funeral on 26th June at Fetcham Catholic church was a great send off for a remarkable man whom I was proud to call a friend. The Army Air Corps ensured that he had a funeral with full military honours. The church was packed with family, friends and representatives of many military and civilian bodies. Good-bye Geoff, we will miss you and will long remember your exploits, marked in perpetuity by the memorial at Pegasus Bridge.

Gordon Knowles

LECTURE PROGRAMME, AUTUMN 2006

Lectures are held on Friday evenings in the Abraham Dixon Hall of the Letherhead Institute at 8.0 p.m., preceded by coffee and biscuits at 7.30. Everyone is welcome. Members - £1, visitors - £2

Thursday 7th September until Sunday 10th September .

Mole Valley's Heritage Open Days. Brochures are available in the Museum, the Help Shop in the High Street and local libraries. Members of the History Society will be leading a history walk around Leatherhead on Sunday 10th September leaving the Institute, top of the High Street at 2.0 p.m.. Booking details are in the brochure. Further details of local activities during the week-end appear on the next page.

Friday 15th September. 'Roman Surrey' by Dr David Bird

Until recently Dr Bird was the County Archaeologist for Surrey. He is a leading expert on Roman Surrey and his book was published last year. He has now co-coordinated a research framework for Surrey which should be launched at the Institute on 7th October.

Friday 20th October. *The Dallaway Lecture* by Stephen Fortescue

Stephen is a founder member of our Local History Society and of the Museum. To mark the Diamond Jubilee of the foundation of the Society we are holding a reception with refreshments at the Institute for all members and their friends at 7.30 p.m. prior to the lecture. Details are on the invitation slip in this Newsletter. Please come and help to make this a special occasion.

Friday 17th November. '*Surbiton through the Centuries*' by David Bowell

Mr. Bowell is a member of the Surbiton and District Historical Society. He has lived in the area all his life and is a Kingston Town Guide ; also a keen walker.

Friday 15th December. '*Christmas Miscellany*'

Members will be giving short 15-20 minute talks on topics of their own choosing, preferably connected with local history.

Coffee and mince pies will be served at 7.30 p.m. prior to the meeting

Fred Meynen, Programme Secretary

HERITAGE OPEN DAYS 2006

Once again Mole Valley is playing a very active part in Heritage Open Days, which this year takes place between Thursday 7th and Sunday 10th September.

Throughout the District a wide range of buildings will be open to the public. There will also be walks and talks . The theme this year is '*ALL CHANGE*', and some of the churches will be providing bell ringing demonstrations as well as visits to the towers.

The opening talk '*Changing Faces – New Futures for Historic Buildings*' will be given by Nigel Barker of English Heritage. It will take place in the new Menuhin Hall at The Yehudi Menuhin School and tickets will need to be booked in advance. Other talks at our end of the District will be given as follows : –

At the Institute by Brenda Lewis on '*The Glorious Gardens of Surrey*';

At the Parish Church Hall, Leatherhead on '*British Parish Church: Saxon to Modern*' by Jane Kelsall;

and at St Michael's Church, Ashted on '*Roman Surrey*' by David Bird.

Our Society is involved in some of the activities and, as usual, our museum is extending its opening hours over the weekend. We are also leading some walks and will be providing guides at some properties. We have also produced an exhibition in Letherhead Institute.

I urge you not just to attend functions in the north of the District, there are many activities of interest over the rest of the area. Remember that Mole Valley District covers about 100 square miles, and lots of interesting things are taking place throughout the area. In total there are over 90 events arranged for the weekend and these are all detailed in the brochures which are available at the Visitor Information Centre, Public Libraries, the Help Shop and many other places in Mole Valley. The brochure also gives full information about which events need to be booked in advance, but many do not. All of them are free. The brochure was available early this year. Do make sure that you get a copy in order to know what is happening over the weekend.

Peter Tarplee

THE INDUSTRIAL ARCHAEOLOGY OF LEATHERHEAD

As part of National Archaeology Week I led a walk around parts of Leatherhead on the morning of Sunday 15th July to see some present and former industrial sites. Perhaps due to inadequate publicity there was only one member of the public who joined a very small group of society members. We concentrated on Church Street, Bridge Street, the bridge and the riverside, then visited the site of Fetcham Mill, up Waterways Road to the Industrial Park and thence to the railway station.

We then walked along Randall's Road and up Bull Hill, then back into the town centre, finishing our two hour walk at the museum, from whence we had started. I took with me some photographs from the Society collections, which added to the 'then and now' aspects of the tour. It seemed to be enjoyed by those taking part. The weather was perfect, unlike the last time I led a similar walk when it poured with rain and we had to curtail the walk. I have deliberately not detailed here the sites we saw and which I described. We hope to repeat the walk later on. If I had given you all the details, you would have been able to do it on your own, which defeats the object of having a guided walk !

Gordon Knowles

A MESSAGE FROM OUR RECORDS SECRETARY

Should the records of the Society be more accessible in this age of the computer?

The simple answer is YES - but to achieve that aim *your* help is needed and a computerised index is the first goal.

Those members who look after the records need assistance with the compilation of a new detailed index and its transfer to an *ACCESS* database. Specialised knowledge is not required; only a desire to help and a willingness to learn a few simple rules of procedure. There is a lot of straightforward work to be done which needs a lot of hands to do it. Please let me know if you can help; our records managers cannot do it all on their own!

Brian Godfrey, Records Secretary (01372 454654)

TO ALL OUR READERS, FROM THE EDITOR

Having already had a spell in the editor's chair, I find myself back again, filling a gap but happy to help out. The Society is appealing for someone to take over the job, and anyone interested in filling the post should contact David Hartley, our chairman.

I have offered to be of assistance to my successor during their early days.

In the meantime I will be happy to edit the next Newsletter in November, and would ask contributors to send their copy to me either by email or by post. In the latter case, if you have written the text on your computer, perhaps you could put it on a floppy disc.

The deadline date is 28th October.

John Wettern

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Archaeology

ARCHAEOLOGY SECRETARY

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

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Records

RECORDS SECRETARY

Brian Godfrey

01372 454654

The Society has some archival material, documents, illustrations and maps which may be accessed through the following members:-

Ashted	Jack Willis
Bookham	Brian Godfrey
Fetcham documents	Alan Pooley
Fetcham photographs and maps	Ed Tims
Leatherhead documents	John Derry
Leatherhead photographs	Linda Heath
Leatherhead maps	Alan Pooley

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

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