

LEATHERHEAD & DISTRICT
LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER



FEBRUARY 2007

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

2007 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 5th April until 15th December, 2007.

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 are given on the inside back cover

FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Dear Members, Welcome to another full and interesting year, with a full programme of lectures and visits organised for the year ahead by our Lectures Committee comprising, Fred Meynen, Linda Heath, Derek Renn, Goff Powell and John Wettern. They are responsible for planning and organising the events throughout the year on your behalf. I hope you will continue to support them in their efforts. I am sure this committee would welcome your suggestions on topics of interest or speakers for a forthcoming programme next year. If you have a suggestion please contact Fred Meynen on the phone number given on the inside cover of the Newsletter. He will look forward to receiving your comments.

Attendance has been good during last year, thanks to your support, and increased numbers of members and visitors have attended the talks at the Leatherhead Institute. This has been due to good advance publicity in the local press. You may like to speak to your friends and invite them to join you at some of the events planned for this year.

The Leatherhead Museum and Heritage Centre Trust

Just a brief note in support of the Trustees of Leatherhead Museum who are launching an appeal for funds to provide for the long term maintenance of Hampton Cottage, a Grade 2 Listed Building, the home of the Leatherhead Museum. John Morris, the Hon. Treasurer and a Museum Trustee has written elsewhere in this Newsletter outlining the case for this appeal. The Executive Committee of the History Society supports the aims and objectives of the Trustees in launching this appeal, and would encourage all members to support this effort.

The President of the History Society

It is with some sadness that I have to report that Linda Heath our President has decided to give up the Presidency of our society at in April. Linda is a dynamic, busy lady who has many commitments, both public and personal to which she would like to devote more time. Linda has served the Society very well over the years both as President and as Chairman and in many other capacities. She has assured me that she will try to continue her many interests in the Society and the Museum. I wish her

well and thank her personally for her support and for the time and commitment she has given to the Society over the years.

The Executive Committee has nominated Gordon Knowles to be our next President of the History Society, and we hope the membership will endorse our recommendation at the Annual General Meeting.

The Museum Curator

Graham Evans our Museum Curator and member of the Executive Committee has written to the committee to confirm that he will be standing down at the next AGM. Graham will be making some changes in his life with a move down to Sussex during the course of this year. He has been our Museum Curator for some five to six years during which time the Museum has undergone a number of changes, and has grown in reputation and in the quality of its displays and presentations. He has also been personally responsible for producing the many posters for the Museum and the History Society announcing forthcoming lectures and events. We all wish him well in his new beginning in Sussex, and thank him for his commitment and time given to the Museum as Curator. Graham, if you have any time on your hands, Sussex Archaeological Society could provide you with a useful outlet. Please keep in touch and let us know how you are getting on.

Election of Members & Positions Vacant

Finally I would like to address you all and make an appeal for members to come forward as volunteers, or allow themselves to be nominated to fill the following important vacancies :—

Museum Curator, Newsletter Editor, Publicity Officer
In the case of Newsletter Editor and Publicity Officer posts, John Wettern has been very helpful in preparing a job description and terms of reference. He would, I am sure, be supportive in assisting any prospective candidates in settling into these posts. [*Yes indeed! Ed.*]

All these are voluntary, honorary positions, and anyone who is interested and is able to give some time for these activities should contact me or the Hon. Secretary before the Annual General Meeting. Details of contact names and phone numbers can be found inside the covers of this Newsletter.

David Hartley

NEWS FROM THE LIBRARIAN

Recent additions to the library

SURREY – Individual Towns & Villages

BOOKHAM

FORTESCUE, S.E.D. - "*Great and Little Bookham: the North End*".

Colin R. Wright, 2006

The publication of Stephen Fortescue's latest book coincides with his 60 years' association with L & D L H S, of which he was founder member. The preface to his book reads:

"So much interest has been shown in my books on Great and Little Bookham and Ranmore that I felt I should complete the record by writing in greater detail the story of the North End which, although in the Parishes of Great and Little Bookham, is really a separate entity, more allied with Stoke D'Abernon. Slyfield, although at the North End, is the area which lies to the East of Cobham Road and included part of Fetcham. It should therefore be treated separately."

This book is for sale in the museum at £5.

COBHAM

TAYLOR, David – "*An Estate for all Seasons: a History of Cobham Park, Surrey and its Owners and Occupiers*". Phillimore, 2006.

This book commemorates the bicentenary of the purchase of Cobham Park by Henry Christian Combe, brewer and Lord Mayor of London. The Combe family still retain the estate.

Cobham was settled in prehistoric times. The manor was owned by Chertsey Abbey, probably from its foundation in 673. The Abbey granted lands including Cobham Park to a fishmonger for his "*faithful services*" in 1468. After the dissolution of the monasteries, owners and occupiers included one of Henry VIII's royal officers, an apothecary to Elizabeth I, and the Suttons. It was Thomas Sutton who helped destroy a settlement of Diggers in Cobham in 1650.

After the Stuart restoration of 1660, one of the occupiers was William Carpenter, a gentleman of Charles II's privy chamber. In 1728 the estate was bought by John Bridges, who had the first Cobham Park mansion built in the Palladian style. The Bridges family were distant cousins to the

novelist Jane Austen, and it has been suggested that the house was a model for the home of Lady Catherine de Bourgh in *Pride and Prejudice*.

In 1749 Bridges sold the estate to John Louis Ligonier, Commander-in-Chief of the British Army, later Lord Ligonier. He was succeeded (as tenant) by his nephew Edward, whose wife Penelope's extra-marital affairs led to scandal and one of the most famous divorce trials of the 18th century. A number of interesting tenants followed, concluding with "Mrs Wedgwood", probably a widow from the famous family of potters.

In 1801 the estate was purchased by Henry Lawes Luttrell, 2nd earl of Carhampton, considered to be "one of the most unpopular men in England". Five years later the Combes arrived, and the history of the family and Cobham is lovingly detailed by the author, who is archivist to the Cobham Park Estate.

The colourful characters of the owners and occupiers of Cobham Park, as well as of other people involved, make this an entertaining book. It is also supported by scholarly appendices, notes, bibliography and index. Visually it is a treat, with a frontispiece plus 142 illustrations, mostly on plates and many in colour. The book is in hardback with a dust jacket. At £17.99 it is excellent value.

LEATHERHEAD

JOHNSTON, David & MITCHELL, Graham — "*How Green is Mole Valley: the History of Leatherhead FC 1946-2006 (and its predecessors 1886-1946)*". Privately published, 2006

Another 60th anniversary! The book includes a season-by-season look at each football club (the original Leatherhead Rose and Leatherhead United as well as the current one), and looks at the development of Fetcham Grove.

SURREY – Literary & other associations

"*Oil paintings in Public Ownership in Surrey*". The Public Catalogue Foundation, 2006

L & D L H S is included on page 177. There are photographs of our two oil paintings: Mickleham Church and Mr S. Maw (both by unknown artists).
Peter Wells

ARCHAEOLOGY REPORT

This year I would like to enlist the support of the members of the History Society in practical, hands-on involvement in local archaeology and history. We have some good evidence for prehistoric and Roman occupation sites from different periods in and around Leatherhead and district. I stress the word *Local* because it is our 'Our Patch' so to speak. It incorporates the parishes of Ashted, Bookham and Fetcham, and it should also include the adjacent areas within the Mole Valley such as Effingham, Headley and Mickleham. In my opinion it is our responsibility under the umbrella of L & D L H S to draw up a map of *hot spots* in our area, naming items of sensitive archaeological and historical interest based current evidence. To these we can add further sites as they are discovered.

I suggest that the starting point for this exercise should be the A.W.G.Lowther map of the district and the archive published in the Proceedings of the our Society together with the Surrey Archaeological Society Collection. To get this project off the ground I would like to know how many members would be interested in joining together to form an organised Field Walking and Detecting Survey Group. The walks would be properly structured and carried out, hopefully with the support of David Williams, the Finds Liaison Officer for Surrey. It would involve field walking and the use of metal detecting equipment on occasional weekends. The proposal is to do the research, and then visit various sites in the Mole Valley with the permission of the landowners concerned, to evaluate the site, record the finds and publish a report.

Please register your interest by emailing me on the Museum email address or my personal email, Hartley1949@msn.com or by telephoning me on my mobile: 07947 471165.

Another group I would like to get off the ground if there is sufficient interest and support is a small Pottery Research Group similar to a group established by Frank Pemberton at Ewell under the umbrella of the Epsom & Ewell Historical and Archaeological Society (EEHAS). I am aware that among our membership we have people who are also members of the Surrey Archaeological Society.

These have acquired skills and knowledge, and I would like to provoke their interest and enlist their help along with others in this project. Subject to the level of interest from members we will then resource the project to find a suitable location to hold our meeting, say for example once a week in the evening between 7.30 and 9.30 p.m.

Pauline Hulse our former Archaeology Secretary, Jill Godfrey and others have done the initial work of accessioning many of the archaeological artefacts acquired by the History Society from sites in the district, namely, flints, sherds of pottery and ceramic building materials, etc. The pottery and ceramic building material is now being entered on to the L & D L H S ACCESS database, but the entries are short on detail. Further work is required to classify and if possible provide a context and date range, thus enabling us to compile a pottery catalogue for old and new sites in the district with the view to publishing the results.

If you would be interested in getting involved please contact me by using the above emails and or phone number.

Forthcoming Events

The Surrey Archaeological Society Annual Symposium will be held on Saturday 24th February 2007 at the Peace Memorial Hall, Woodfield Lane, Ashtead. Registration and coffee is at 9.30am. Tickets purchased at the door will be £10.00 per ticket.

Ashtead Common Open Day on Sunday 13th May is an event starting at 1.0 p.m. and running to 4.0 p.m. It is primarily for children and parents and anyone else interested in the work of the City of London Open Spaces Department, Ashtead Common Estate Office. Look out for the posters. Our Society will be represented at this event.

National Archaeology Week 2007 will run from 14th to 22nd July. An exhibition and programme of events is being planned, details will be published in the May Newsletter.

David Hartley

LEATHERHEAD MUSEUM : THE 2006 SEASON AND A LOOK AHEAD

Last year we recorded 1461 visitors, an average figure, but 200 less than the previous year which of course included the birthday celebrations. Marianne Tate from the Grange Centre who helped us one morning a month, abstracted data from the Visitors Book. This indicated that 50% came from our immediate area, 25% from London and the close South-East, 14% from elsewhere in England and 12% from Europe and the rest of the world. In this last category we recorded visitors from: Australia, Austria, Canada, China, the Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Germany, Holland, Hungary, India, Ireland, Iran, Japan, Malaysia, New Zealand, Poland, Seychelles, South Africa, Spain, Sweden and USA. Whilst this may just seem of casual interest, analysis such as this is a necessary part of the work that has to be done behind the scenes.

Planning for 2007

Even before the season closes, we have to look forward and prepare for the new one. This time, there will not be any significant changes in the displays : however, attention will be drawn more to the industrial and trade history exhibits in the upstairs front room. For quite a few years, Graham Evans the curator has set out and put together both the permanent and in particular the temporary displays, the highlight being in my opinion The Story of the *Titanic*. We are sad to learn that he is planning to move, and thus there will later this year be a vacancy for an honorary Curator. Since our earlier appeals we have gained some help '*round the back*', but we are still desperately short of helpers, in administration, in dealing with conservation assessments and in other fields.

Bairstow Eves, the estate agents across the road, have once again very kindly allowed us, at no cost, the use of their meeting room for our Stewards' briefing sessions that will take place in March. Stewards, the public face of the Society and of the Museum, are regarded in law as being effectively employees of the Society (albeit unpaid), and thus these sessions form a very important part of the operation of the Museum.

The Museum is flourishing, and I look forward to the new season. I would however just like to prod the few members of the Society who have not been in the Museum recently (and I know there are some), to come and have a look.

We open again on Thursday, 5th April.

Alan V Pooley

PUBLICITY OFFICER

The Executive Committee of the History Society is looking for someone to promote the Society and the Museum. This is a key position, namely, to publicise the activities including the lectures which should increase the membership and income of the Society

The job entails liaising with the media and producing posters and leaflets for distribution. It would require familiarity with computing as well as lots of enthusiasm !

If you are interested in helping the Society further in this way please contact me for further information.

*Fred Meynen, Programme Secretary
Tel. 01372 372930*

A Postscript from the Editor

We are constantly finding local residents who do not know that the Town has a museum, or who would become members of the History Society if only they knew about it. It really does need someone who is dedicated to the task of getting us better known. There are many ways that we can 'spread the gospel', and at present the Society has no one appointed to do this, hence the creation of this post.

Doing the job would not involve excessive amounts of time, and learning what needs to be done would not be an onerous task. Above all, you could count on support from many quarters.

John Wettren

NEWS FROM THE FRIENDS OF THE MUSEUM

We ended last year with a flourish if not a bang when the Friends Committee held their annual Christmas party for stewards and volunteers together with partners and spouses. There was a record turnout and it was good to meet our new stewards who have swollen our ranks and decreased the average age ! Our Society owes a great debt to the stewards and volunteers, the latter working behind the scenes cataloguing, indexing and boxing the artefacts, and dealing with a thousand and one other tasks to keep the museum running. Our museum has the reputation of being a well run ship and noted by visitors as being a "*friendly place to visit*".

Well done and thanks to all concerned.

Friends' Events for 2007

8th, 9th and 17th March. Stewards briefing sessions.

14th March. Joint visit with the History Society to Ripley Museum. This museum is even smaller than ours and the visit is to peep behind the scenes, followed by a guided walk around the village. More about this on a later page. *Numbers are limited to 16.*

5th April. Museum opens

23rd April. Friends' Annual General meeting.

Refreshments and meeting followed by a short talk.

19th May. Swan Centre stall advertising the Craft Days and the Museum

31st May, 1st and 2nd June.

Craft Days at the museum, especially with hands-on experience for young and old.

9th June. Coffee morning at the museum with bring-and-buy, cake and plant stalls, etc.

1st September. Swan centre stall advertising Heritage Days, etc.

17th December. Stewards and Volunteers Christmas party

15th December. Museum closes

Fred Meynen, Chairman

THE ANNUAL DINNER, 2007

The Society's Annual Dinner was held once again at the Bookham Grange Hotel on 26 January 2007, and about thirty-five people attended.

This was again a very enjoyable occasion, and after dinner a short talk was given by Frank Pemberton about his career in archaeology. He also mentioned that he was endeavouring to move back to the Dorking area, and would be joining the Society once this took place, a fact welcomed by the Chairman.

We would all wish to thank Fred Meynen for so ably taking on the task of organising the dinner, and thanks are also due to Margaret Meynen for the delightful flowers which graced the tables.

Linda Heath

NOVEMBER LECTURE

Friday, 17th November - "*Surbiton through the Centuries*" by David Bowell

'*Queen of the Suburbs*' is not a title we associate today with Surbiton, but David Bowell (a lifelong resident there) explained its story at our November meeting. Surbiton's coat-of-arms alludes to Chessington Zoo, Elmbridge, Kingston and Coutts' Bank. David then took us back half a million years when the area was covered by shallow seas, then gravel terraces, and the Thames pushed southward by ice. Man first appeared here about 13,000 BC leaving behind crude flint hand-axes and the points of his arrows and spears. At Ravens' Eyot in the river, Bronze Age pottery has been found, with early wharves. A group of five huts had been excavated at Old Malden near the head of the Hogsmill River, and an early Iron Age settlement at Alpine Avenue, Tolworth.

There is little trace of the Romans at Surbiton although Gallo-Roman coins had been found at Chessington. Kingston came into prominence in the Saxon period. The name Surbiton — '*the South Bittoms*'— might mean '*look-out place*' or '*granary*'. The earliest written reference to Surbiton was in 1179 with a lease of land here by John Hog to Merton Priory. Ravens' Eyot was traditionally the site of peace negotiations with the French after Magna Carta (1215). Ravens were bred here, and may have been the origin of the 'four and twenty blackbirds' rhyme.

Moving forward five centuries, Surbiton Common was the scene of the death of Lord Francis Villiers, a leader of an attempt to free King Charles I in 1648. Under the pretext of a race meeting at Banstead, a royalist force advanced on Reigate Castle but had to retreat to Dorking, and were surrounded. Villiers' Elm and King Charles' Road commemorate the event. A century later much traffic passed along the turnpike road to Portsmouth. Troops were often billeted here (for example at the Oak Tavern) en route between Aldershot and Woolwich. Southborough House, built in 1808, was designed by John Nash.

The Kingston-on-Thames borough authorities saw railways as a threat to their coach and shipping trade, so the 1838 line from Nine Elms to Woking (and eventually Waterloo to Southampton) was taken through Surbiton Common. Half a million tons of earth had to be removed, and a very small station built at the bottom of the cutting, soon replaced by one

on the site of the present one. This adjoined the Southampton Hotel whose bar opened on to the platform. Kingston tried to take over 'the district of St. Mark's' as part of the ancient parish, but the inhabitants obtained a 'Surbiton Improvement Act', and managed their own affairs for forty years until the district council was created at the end of 1894.

Thomas Pooley, a Cornish ship owner and maltster, bought 100 acres at Maple Farm beside the railway station, laid out roads and began building villas, some of which survive at Cottage Grove and on the Ewell and Victoria Roads, however he over borrowed and was forced into bankruptcy, Coutts Bank completing the estate after much litigation. Pooley's brick maker, John Selfe, was ruined by a rival's successful complaint about the fumes of the brickworks. The Coutts' influence was very benevolent. The first church on St. Mark's Hill had to be enlarged and rebuilt within ten years, and several others were built in the district, including two successive Congregational ones in Maple Road. Alexander Raphael paid for a Roman Catholic church to be built, but prevaricated over its opening since he had a (correct) premonition that he would die soon after. The 'Seething Wells' were believed to be a cure for eye ailments. The Lambeth and Chelsea Water Companies took adjoining sites before combining. The spoil from their excavations was dumped to form Queen's Promenade on the riverside. Queen Victoria, returning from a visit to Claremont, was not amused to be diverted along it in 1856. The Cottage Hospital was staffed by local G.P.s for a century before it was taken over by the N.H.S. and converted into flats.

Mr Bowell showed us many pictures of past Surbiton. Mr Wait and Mr Rose each had shop in Putney or Surbiton before going into partnership. Now their supermarket, Waitrose, here replaced the 1500-seat Odeon cinema. J.D.Weatherspoons now occupy the Coronation cinema of 1911 — the previous coronation had been marked by the clock tower. The 'Electric Parade' near the railway station commemorated the first street lighting by electricity in 1904. The open-air swimming pool (the Surbiton Lagoon) was well known between 1934 and 1979.

The Surbiton Club was very exclusive : James Bentall was refused membership because he was a tradesman. M.Georges Pigache, the kitchen supervisor at the Café Royal in London weighed 37 stone, and had to be carted to the station daily.

Derek Renn.

THE CHRISTMAS MEETING AND MISCELLANY

Friday, 15th December, 2006

The Society's pre-Christmas meeting stayed closely to traditional lines with stress laid on opportunities to socialise, and plentiful supplies of mince pies. The proceedings that followed consisted of two short talks by members and a quiz event presented by our chairman, David Hartley. Both the speakers chose Leatherhead as their subject but seen from totally different angles and with differing styles of presentation.

Leatherhead's Clock Tower, a history narrated by Goff Powell, author of the recently published book on Our Local Inns and Public Houses. The talk, accompanied by some excellent slides, reminded us of the initial construction in 1859 at a cost of £129. The clock itself came later, having been donated by the nearby Congregational church who could no longer afford the tax then being levied on clocks. It housed the horse-drawn fire engine, and was often the focus of local celebrations. In World War I it became a shrine, and bore the Roll of Honour commemorating the fallen. The names of those lost in World War 2 were later added to the Roll. The shrine still exists, and is now installed in the Chapel of Remembrance in Leatherhead parish church.

The slides shown spanned the entire history of the structure : the location before its arrival ; many reminders of its early days ; the activities associated with it and the site viewed after its demolition in 1952 with the present War Memorial garden now seen in the background. Most memorable of Goff's pictures was that of the Town's fire brigade, its members wearing their shining brass helmets and the team of horses with glossy black coats, ready for departure. Next most impressive was the depiction from 1919 of the crowd attending the Peace Celebrations. One wondered if there was ever a larger concourse of folk filling the streets of Leatherhead.

"Along the Lines", This was the mysterious title given to the talk by Brian Hennigan. We asked ourselves : "*What lines were these ?*", and soon discovered that *railway lines* was the answer, in fact with a very special focus. Equally mysterious was our speaker's request that the lights be dimmed, and without the aid of pictures we had to rely on our individual imagination to transport us to his world of the 1950s.

As a young boy in those days he would accompany his grandfather who was a permanent way inspector on the Southern Railway, to view the stretch of line along Kingston Road towards the Leatherhead station. "Careful of the live rail" he was warned - "At 650 volts you would get seriously burned or worse". An electric express went by – twelve corridor cars including a buffet, bound for Bognor and Portsmouth. There were lengthy sidings with all manner of goods vehicles including a 'scenery van'. So many present-day buildings had to be '*demolished*' in our minds for they did not exist in the picture he conjured up. We learned about the allotments, the gas works, the engine shed and the station once used by the London and South Western Railway, now all vanished. Brian showed us his eye for detail and invited us to recall the advertisement boards at the station including BRASSO and the week's programme at The Crescent Cinema. Then the lights went up and it was over.

The Quiz was the final event of the evening. Each of those attending had been handed a sheet of pictures depicting mystery objects, together with an 'answers' sheet. It was in the nature of an Animal, Mineral, Vegetable competition. Our individual skill would be judged by our ability to identify as many as possible, stating which category they fell into and, if known, what they were. A hard task for most of us. One by one our chairman, the compiler of the quiz, told us what each picture represented : there were sighs of relief from the clever ones and groans from the rest of us. However there was all-round praise for the ingenuity with which the quiz had been compiled and satisfaction at having learned more about some of the mysteries of the natural world.

John Wettern

Friday, 19th January. "Rowhurst" by Lucy Quinell

The spring lectures got off to a flying start with the lecture theatre filled with a large audience listening to Lucy, a local resident, talking about the history and love for her family home 'Rowhurst', a 14th century hall house. She explained that since moving into the house in 1990 she has been involved in researching the history of the house, and has found that showing people round the house and giving lectures has increased her knowledge as well as her archive and photo collection of the house

The story starts when Lucy's parents Richard and Jinny married in 1963, first living in D'Abemon House near the Malden Rushett border and then moving into 8 Clinton Road which had been Leatherhead's first cottage hospital built in 1893. She has happy memories of her childhood there, listening to the clock chiming at the Royal School for the Blind (now SeeAbility) and the singing in the chapel. Her grandmother was living in Rowhurst at the time, with Richard working at the forge, and Lucy remembers summer parties, barbeques and playing in the gardens and woods around the house. Lucy went to Exeter University, her mother dying tragically during her final year. Soon afterwards Lucy and her brother inherited Rowhurst from their grandmother, and she described graphically moving into the house in 1990 with her son Tom. It was mid winter, with no heating, damp beds and icicles hanging from the taps, and sleeping in the attic with strange sawing sounds coming from the floorboards, later identified as a rat dragging a piece of toast through a hole!

Lucy showed photographs of Rowhurst demonstrating the seven floor levels and the various sections of the house. She took us pictorially through the rooms, including the basement, main room with fireplace and a recess possibly used for a coffin, a blue room with a mural, a Victorian bathroom with a roll-top bath giving views over the countryside and Lucy's favourite attic room, all of the rooms having exposed beams demonstrating the timber-frame structure of the house.

The earliest clue to the history of the site is a Celtic gold coin found in the garden of Rowhurst in 1960, probably minted at Maiden Castle in Dorset. During the Roman occupation there was plenty of activity close to the site, with Roman occupation at Woodlands Park, artefacts found south west of the house, and the proximity of a Roman villa on Ashtead Common. It is considered that there had been an earlier hall house with a service wing being added later. Dendrochronology undertaken in 2005 dated the house to 1346, the oak trees having been felled a year previously. This was during the reign of Edward III just before the battle of Creçy. A few years later the Black Death or bubonic plague devastated Europe. The house was plundered for timber by Sir Ivor Fitzwarren and remained in a semi derelict state till the reign of Charles I when the hall was replaced in 1632 by a brick house, square in design, 7.2 metres wide and having mullioned windows. A witch pot thought to be of German origin and dating to early 17th century was found in the

basement floor containing hair, nail clippings and urine, and relating to the time when scores of witches were being put to death.

The name 'Rowhurst' first appeared on maps in 1418, 'hurst' denoting 'wood'. Lucy has compiled a comprehensive record of people and owners connected with the house starting with King Alfred in the 9th century through to 1780 when more detailed records from land tax returns and farm censuses show the occupations of the owners to be those of farm workers and farmers. Richard Quinnell's parents bought Rowhurst in 1932, and 'Boggy' Quinnell, Richard's father, started the forge in 1948. A gas explosion two years later did extensive damage to the out-buildings which were rebuilt to form the present gallery. The forge has gained a national and international reputation, products of which can be seen in Leatherhead's town centre. The house is currently undergoing restoration work : the presence of the M25 causing subsidence. Lucy's kitchen sink is only 100 yards from the hard-shoulder !

Lucy ended a memorable talk with visions for the future including archaeological research into the possible site of a minster church and a dovecote, together with establishing an archive centre and reintroducing farm animals. Her enthusiasm and love for Rowhurst will ensure that the house will remain one of the most important buildings in Leatherhead.

Fred Meynen

PROCEEDING WITH 'The Proceedings'

Members will soon be getting a bumper number of the *Proceedings* – and so it should be, for it marks our Diamond Jubilee. Apart from the speech given by Audrey Monk, President of the Surrey Archaeological Society, at our Annual Dinner, and that given by our first Treasurer, Stephen Fortescue, at this year's Dallaway Lecture, and that given by James Dixon, on Abraham Dixon as last year's Dallaway Lecture, it also contains a contribution by Claude Blair (father of our local historian Professor John Blair of Oxford University) on the brasses in Stoke d'Abernon Church, and other contributions by our home-grown "old lags" Brian Bouchard, Derek Renn, Alun Roberts and Ed Tims.

With that off my chest, I am now ready to receive contributions for the next issue — and, since I have already got several, as I had to hold some over from the last one, don't delay too long! If it is at all possible, I should like contributions by e-mail to me at barry_cox@btopenworld.com as that makes it easy for me to edit them. But if that is not possible, just send it to me as hard copy, and I will type it up and send you my edited version.

Now that we are about to publish the last number of this volume, I can see the dreaded need for the compilation of an index inexorably advancing on me! But, be warned, I do have a need for a life outside that of being your Editor. So I propose to make the following changes compared with the huge index (1800 entries) that the great Jack Stuttard did for Volume 4 (it took him four years !):—

1. Do we need a list of all the Officers and Committee for that decade? Those for each year are already given at the front of each issue.
2. I think that the alphabetical list of all the articles by parish is perhaps the most useful single element in the index, but I would propose to group these firstly by author and secondly by date, as in most reference lists. There would be about 60 entries.
3. I would propose *not* to include illustrations, the topics of which would be entered from the general index.
4. **General Index.** I also propose *not* to give separate entries for each individual if there was more than one for a particular family. Similarly, I should *not* give individual entries for each field name, but merely enter e.g. "*Ashtead — field names*". As a general rule, I would not enter third-level details e.g. "*Headley — mediaeval land deeds — Wight*", but only the first two. Obviously, any guidelines that are agreed would have to be interpreted with flexibility and common sense.

I shall be glad to receive your comments of the above proposals.

Barry Cox, Editor, Proceedings

A CANAL FROM THE THAMES TO FETCHAM MILL

I suppose that if someone had actually built a canal from the Thames to Fetcham Mill people would notice it. In 1794 plans were drawn as the first step in building such a canal. If the canal had been built, it might have connected with another canal to the South which was also proposed.

The canal was not in fact built but the map remains, and a copy is preserved at the Surrey History Centre in Woking. With the permission of the History Centre I have photographed the map in sections together with two copies of the list of the owners of the land through which the canal would have passed.

The map sections have been overprinted with a grid. The lists and features of the map have been combined to form an index to the map, making it easier to study. This A-Z has been placed in the Museum for consultation by members and visitors.

This is the fifth map I have treated in this way. They are all available for consultation in the Museum. The other four are:

1. The Leatherhead Tithe Apportionment Map, 1841
2. The Elias Allen Map of Thorncroft Manor made for Merton College in 1629
3. The Gwilt Map of the Leatherhead Area, 1783
4. The Map of Fetcham Parish made for Dr Sherson, 1791

All this material is available for study in the Museum.

John Morris

LECTURE PROGRAMME — SPRING, 2007

Friday, 16th March, “The Palace of Nonsuch” by Jeremy Harte

“NONSUCH Palace, once one of the architectural wonders of the Western World. was razed to the ground more than 300 years ago. No interesting ruins, no visitor centre. This unique outpouring of Tudor opulence, literally there was ‘none such’, was most efficiently erased from the face of the earth.”

This is how the palace is described in a recent article by Jane Garrett in “Surrey Life” magazine.

The story of the palace, before, during and after its intriguing existence, will be told to us by Jeremy Harte , Curator of the Bourne Hall Museum at Ewell which among its many exhibits now has an interactive computer model based on three artistic impressions offering different views drawn over 144 years.

Friday, 20th April. Annual General Meeting followed by a talk
"Leatherhead Aviation Services" by Peter Tarplee.

Hear about the man, William George Chapman, who operated Leatherhead Aviation Services and the plane whose propeller is now in the Society's collection and on display in our museum.

Friday, 18th May – *"Esher, Claygate and Oxshott in old Photographs and a short History of Postcards" by Paul Langton*

Picture postcards arrived in Britain in 1894. This was the start of the Golden Age of the postcard as people around the world used them to communicate with one another. In this country it was half the price of a letter, half of an old penny as opposed to a penny in postage. One topic of the talk will be the local photographer F. W. J. Fricker who lived in Park Road, Esher. His production of picture postcards started about the end of the Victorian Period.

Many images will be shown of Fricker's work as he created picture postcards of local scenes. Images will also be shown of other local publishers and photographers from the Oxshott, Esher and Claygate areas with emphasis on the local publisher W.J. Martin of Claygate.

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. Entrance : Members £1, Visitors £2.

Lecture Meeting, December, 2007

The Society has always followed the tradition of holding the monthly meeting on the third Friday and there is no intention of changing this. However, the third Friday of December falls this year extremely close to

Christmas, in fact the 21st is at the beginning of the Christmas week-end. Accordingly it has been decided to hold the December meeting on the previous Friday, namely 14th December. Members who like to make entries in their diary well in advance might wish to note this.

FORTHCOMING VISITS

Wednesday 14th March. Ripley Museum and Guided Walk

A visit has been arranged jointly with The Friends of the Museum, organised by Fred Meynen .

There will be a guided walk round the village followed by a pub lunch. Afterwards there will be a visit to a unique collection of vintage bicycles at the home of Les Bowerman, chairman of the local history society, at Send Marsh Green. Numbers restricted to 16, so if you want to come please reply promptly to Fred Meynen using the form at the end of the Newsletter.

Wednesday, 20th June. "Rowhurst"

Elsewhere in these pages we report the lecture by Lucy Quinell the owner of the 600-year-old house near the northern boundary of Leatherhead. Those present at her talk will have been fascinated by her story : about the house itself and the people who lived there in the past and about the experiences of herself and her family since they went to live there.

We are pleased to announce that there will now be an opportunity to visit the house which offers so much of interest. It will be an evening visit, details of which will appear in the next edition of the Newsletter.

Summer Visits.

Further visits are being planned for the summer months. Details of these will appear in the May Newsletter.

HERITAGE OPEN DAYS 2007

As has become usual it has been decided to again celebrate Heritage Open Days in Mole Valley this year. The events will take place from 6th to the 9th September and there will be the usual wide range of properties open again as well as talks and exhibitions throughout the District. The theme chosen for this year is "*In War and Peace*", and this will be reflected in some of the events.

If you have any ideas for suitable activities during the weekend please contact Rod Shaw at Mole Valley District Council or let me know what your suggestions are. The programme is in the early stages at present but more details will be published later; in the meantime make a note of the dates.

Peter Tarplee, 01372 452301

CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE LEATHERHEAD MUSEUM

The three main supporters of the Leatherhead Museum are the Friends, the History Society and the Leatherhead Museum and Heritage Centre Trust.

The Friends recruit, organise and train the stewards. They organise visits to schools and visits from schools, and they arrange publicity. **The History Society** owns the museum's collections, and arranges the exhibitions. It encourages interest in local history through its meetings and publications. This helps to bring visitors to the museum. The Society pays for the heating, lighting, water and telephone. **The Trust** owns Hampton Cottage, the home of the museum. It is responsible for the maintenance and insurance of the museum.

The Trust has a problem. Hampton Cottage was bought in 1976, restored and endowed by an enthusiastic, generous and hardworking group. The endowment is still in place but it produces far less income than it used to do. Interest rates have fallen steadily in the last 30 years. In the meantime the costs of maintenance and insurance have greatly increased.

It is now time to ask the present generation of history lovers to provide additional funds in order to secure the museum for future generations as the stalwarts of the 1970s secured it for ours. In order to obtain grants from outside bodies, we need to show that we have significant support from our members, so please be generous.

If any of our members has experience in identifying and approaching grant making bodies, we would be grateful for their advice and help.

Please see the appeal literature enclosed with this Newsletter or contact me :

John Morris, Treasurer to the Trustees, 01372 36 25 24.

SUBSCRIPTIONS FOR 2007

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

Jenny Morris, Membership Secretary

THE COFFEE GIRL NEEDS HELP

Coffee is very difficult to serve if there is only one person on duty, so I would like to have a small team. Then we could cover or help each other. If eight people volunteered it would work out that we would only have to serve once a year.

Urgent dates are: 16th March The Palace of Nonsuch
 20th April Annual General Meeting
 18th May Claygate, Oxshott and Esher on Postcards

Do phone me if you are interested, on 01372 454749. Thanks,

Lindsay Trim

ASHTEAD ROMAN VILLA AND TILEWORKS

The Roman Studies Group of Surrey Archaeological Society recently published this report by David Bird on progress with their excavation programme on Ashtead Common, and because of its local interest we reproduce extracts from it here

A short programme of fieldwork was undertaken by the Society's Roman Studies Group on Ashtead Common between 19th and 31st August, as part of a longer term project. The site had been cleared of vegetation by the kindness of the Ashtead Common keepers who also delivered our equipment to the site and provided other assistance. As a result it was possible to locate the site of the villa very accurately and set out a trench to test the approach road close to its frontage. The road was located and found to consist of large hard-packed flints at its core, with smaller flints above that and the remnants of a pebble surface. There was a layer of tiles laid flat along the eastern edge, presumably as a repair. The road was about 3m wide and 300mm deep at its thickest point, with a

pronounced camber. The trench was extended to confirm that there was no other sign of a prepared surface in front of the villa at this point, which raises the question as to how this area was used in the Roman period: what happened each side of the road? We hope to tackle this question again in future work.

The road was also tested further away from the villa, on the line recorded on the Ordnance Survey maps. The first set of test pits failed to locate any evidence for a road but did produce Roman pottery and tile in some quantity. A site further away still also failed at first but eventually the road was found about 7 or 8m to the east of the published line. Here it was of much poorer quality than in the trench close to the villa. It was only about 100mm thick although deeper where it filled depressions in the ground surface on to which it had apparently been laid with little preparation. The metalling was predominantly small water-washed pebbles but with some small flints, not sorted by size or layered in any way. There did, however, appear to be a small downhill ditch about 400mm wide by 15mm deep. A further test of the road, where it was thought to leave the common to the south, was unsuccessful. When time and opportunity permit it will be revisited, and its course towards Stane Street will then be pursued.

Thanks are due to all who took part but particularly to Alan Hall who played a key role in setting up and carrying out the work on site. This was a limited programme of work that achieved all its aims, and we are now in a position to prepare a full programme for next year. In the interim, work has started on aspects of finds research, including reassessment of finds from Captain Lowther's original excavations and integration of information from John Hampton regarding his work on the tile works and the surroundings of the villa. John has already been very helpful with information, including a site visit while the fieldwork was in progress.

THE NEWSLETTER, MAY NUMBER

Please make sure that your contributions reach me not later than 25th April. Send to me by email if possible (johnwettern@ntlworld.com) or on a floppy disk addressed to me at 15 The Green, Fetcham, KT22 9XE. (Typescript or manuscript, if needs be !) Ideally your text should not exceed 600 words.

John Wettern, Ed.

**Leatherhead and District Local History Society
and
Friends of Leatherhead Museum**

Visit to Ripley Museum , Wednesday, 14th March.

Meet at 10.30 a.m. at the museum which is adjacent to the village hall
(through the village on the right on the B 2215 coming from Leatherhead.).

At 11.15 there will be a guided walk round the village followed by a pub lunch.

At 2.15 p.m. we will be visiting a unique collection of vintage bicycles at the home
of Les Bowerman, chairman of the local history society, at Send Marsh Green,
1½ miles out of Ripley.

Numbers restricted to 16. Donations to the museum on the day.

To book a place please 'phone or return slip to : —

**Dr F G C Meynen 19 The Mount Fetcham KT22 9EB
(Tel 01372 372930)**

✂

Visit to Ripley Museum , Wednesday, 14th March.

Name(s)

Address

Tel. No.

Send to : — Dr F G C Meynen, 19 The Mount, Fetcham, KT22 9EB

I need / can offer a lift for persons.

Archaeology

ARCHAEOLOGY SECRETARY

David Hartley

01306 743828

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RECORDS SECRETARY

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

Ashtead

Bookham

Fetcham documents

Fetcham photographs and maps

Leatherhead documents

Leatherhead photographs

Leatherhead maps

Jack Willis

Brian Godfrey

Alan Pooley

Ed Tims

John Derry

Linda Heath

Alan Pooley

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

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