

*LEATHERHEAD & DISTRICT  
LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY*

*NEWSLETTER*



NOVEMBER 2008

# LEATHERHEAD & DISTRICT LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Registered Charity No. 802409

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PRESIDENT : Gordon Knowles 01372 458396

## CHAIRMAN

David Hartley  
01372 377839

## SECRETARY

Vivien Hollingsworth  
01372 801357

## TREASURER

Ron Clarke  
01372 375496

The Society meets on the third Friday of the month at the Letherhead Institute between September and May.

For details - see programme in the current Newsletter

### 2008 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

Thursdays and Fridays .. 1.00pm to 4.00pm    Saturdays ..10.00am to 4.00pm

CURATOR    (Vacancy)    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 10.00am to 12.30pm. 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&DLHS speakers for local societies.

PROGRAMME SECRETARY    Fred Meynen    01372 372930

Further details are given on the inside back cover

## *Editorial*

We are now fast approaching the end of the year and it seems a long time ago that a car ran disastrously into the front of the museum wrecking not only the building but also the exhibitions. The museum is now a totally different scene, brightly painted and full of good exhibits inside. In a devious way the enforced renovations and renewal of the exhibits mean that we have a far better museum than ever before, one that is well worth a visit. Of course it represents a vast amount of work for the committee and the faithful few who willingly give their time to plan, support and maintain the building and its valuable contents. Hours and hours have been devoted to the accurate reconstruction of the building and the recovery and restoration of its contents. Currently the only outstanding item is the model of the house and even this is well in hand.



The museum of course has many exhibits on display but serves the function of being a centre for collecting and maintaining all objects, records and knowledge of historical and archaeological interest of the area. Every item and fact has to be categorised, logged and recorded for posterity. It means keeping paper records and inevitably nowadays a computer database. None of this is done without many hours of work from those faithful volunteers. History does not stand still - yesterday forms the history of today. To the older amongst us the second world war is a vivid memory - to younger generations it is just history. The computer of today in just a few years time will be a curiosity of yesteryear. Recording history is a continuing task.

The work of maintaining the records is not trivial. Objects and information arise in an assortment of ways and from many diverse sources. Rationalising it to be not only useful but accessible is no mean task. There may be paper records but also a proper account must be kept on a database – there is always the question of how it should be indexed? How soon will the database itself be out of date?

None of the volunteers is getting any younger and many activities of the Society would welcome an injection of new talent. The Society would welcome some of you to come forward to help. There are a variety of tasks and your particular talents would surely soon be put to good use. Go into the museum and discuss it with those there – it's rewarding work and good company.

## *Chairman's Report*

Did you know that this November is the 90th anniversary of the end of the First World War? Like most anniversaries they are very important events that should be marked, therefore The National Archives, the Imperial War Museum and the Surrey History Centre at Woking and some other organisations will all be remembering the event.

On Saturday 25th October I attended the Surrey Local History Symposium at Chertsey. Our history society joined with other history societies to listen to a programme of talks, making our contribution to the start of the 90th anniversary celebration with the title of 'Surrey and The First World War'. The range of subjects were diverse and interesting ranging from 'Aircraft Production in Surrey in World War I' and the 'Frith Hill Prisoner of War Camp' to talks on 'The Royal British Legion Poppy Factory' at Richmond and



*Display at Surrey Symposium*

'The Mobilisation of the Woodlands in Surrey in the First World War'.



What most impressed me were the displays mounted by each of the participating local history societies, the effort put into drawing on local history archives, photographs and personal family histories - this in a way proved to be a very fitting memorial to all those soldiers who had died and those who survived

the conflict in the first of the modern wars.

I would be interested to hear from any member of our history society or Friend of the Leatherhead Museum who has First World War photographs, service records and memorabilia of soldiers, sailors and airman family members or otherwise who are recorded on our local War Memorials and in Books of Remembrance in Leatherhead and District during the period 1914-1918 War. The district as far as this research project is concerned, will cover all the parishes of Ashted, Great and Little Bookham, Effingham, Fetcham, Headley, Leatherhead and Mickleham.

Turning to other more pressing local history society matters I would like to make an urgent appeal on behalf of the History Society and the Executive Committee for volunteers to fill two very important posts, namely that of Hon Treasurer and Membership Secretary. Due to his personal family commitments our former Treasurer Ron Clark has tendered his resignation. Our Membership Secretary Jenny Morris did indicate some twelve months ago her desire and intention to give up this post.

These two posts need to be filled as a matter of urgency and are critical to the health and the functioning of the History Society. I am hopeful that one or two of our members out there would be able to step forward and offer to fill one of these most important vacancies.

If you would like to volunteer your help, would you please contact our Hon Secretary Vivien Hollingsworth on 01372 801357. Thank you.

*David Hartley*

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## *News from the Museum Committee*

We opened on 29th May following the repair to the building after a car had entered through the front window. Since the re-opening the visitor numbers have increased and so have the donations received from visitors. The new displays are giving interest and we continue to receive further artefacts which will enable us to make some changes during the winter closed period as we trust that our time will not be occupied this year by clearing up after an accident.

We also hope that further improvements can be made whilst we are closed. The Friends of Leatherhead Museum have money available and there are several projects we have in mind which we hope to achieve before April 2009. It is hoped to repaint the sign from the Bull Hotel as well as the museum notice board, both of which are looking the worse for wear. We also have ambitions to replace some or all of the upstairs carpeting but this will depend on costs and manpower availability to empty the cabinets.

The only outstanding item of damage is that to the model of Hampton Cottage; however, this is in hand and it is expected that it will be returned before this Newsletter is published. It will then need some work on it before it can be displayed.

On most Mondays there is a group of people working in the museum but we had a change of occupation on 21st July when we had a visit by 12 people from Seeability together with three helpers. They all appeared to enjoy the visit and were able to appreciate what we had on display.

In my last report I mentioned a PAM radio which is now on display. We recently received a large radio in a wooden cabinet made by BVC in Ashted and were pleased to add that to our display of Goblin products. We now have fairly comprehensive collections from Goblin and Ronsons as well as examples of items made by other local firms. One thing which we lack is any example of products made by Thermega and if anyone has any such items (they don't need to work!) we would very much like to add to the Society's collection.

We close in December for four months so if you wish to see our displays before they are changed keep this in mind.

*Peter Tarplee*

# *Archaeological Secretary's Report*

'Lest We Forget' is the title for a programme of events to be held at the Surrey History Centre at Woking to be held during November. Unfortunately due to the timing of these events at Woking and the distribution of our Newsletter a number of these dates will have passed so I have therefore only recorded here those forthcoming talks for the latter half of November. I hope you are able to get to some of them if they are of interest. Contact: Surrey History Centre – 01483 518737.

## **Saturday 22nd November**

11am -12.15pm – 'RC Sherriff's Journey' - from Soldier to Playwright by David Filsell. Tickets £3

2pm -3pm 'Soldiers Two' by Tim Richardson and Craig Appleton, come and learn more about soldiers of the First World War. Tickets £2

## **Thursday 27th November**

7.30pm – 'Welcome Home' the reception for the returned Queen's Royal Surrey's prisoners of war – Duncan Sutton, Surrey Heritage, the talk looks at the reception given by the Corporation of Guildford in January 1919 for 270 repatriated prisoners of war. Tickets £3

## **Saturday 29th November**

11.30am – 12.30pm – Commemorating the fallen 'Village War Memorials in Surrey', by Keith Grieves, Kingston University. Tickets £4

2.00pm – 3.00pm – 'Boy soldiers of the Great War', by Richard van Emden.

Tickets £4.

3.30 - 4.30pm – 'Tommy: the British Soldier on the Western Front', by Professor Richard Holmes, CBE TD JP. Tickets £4.

## *Ashtead Roman Villa*

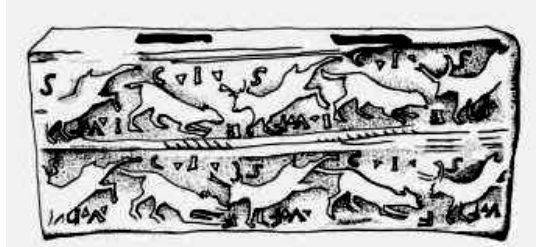
This season's excavation on the roman villa site on Ashtead Common by the Roman Studies Group of Surrey Archaeological Society and the support of the Corporation City of London Open Spaces Department, English Heritage and English Nature proved very successful in spite of some dreadful weather conditions.

Dr David Bird, Director of the Excavation Committee gave an interesting illustrated talk to our history society and is reported separately. An interim excavation report is in preparation for publication by Dr Bird who has kindly consented to allow us to publish the report in our next Newsletter in February 2009.

*David Hartley*

## *Roman Villa in Ashtead Woods*

The Abraham Dixon Hall of the Letherhead Institute was crowded for our October meeting, to hear a report on the latest excavations of the Roman villa in Ashtead Woods. Dr David Bird, the former County Archaeologist who is directing the excavations, began by setting the scene. The Romans had not invaded Surrey from the Weald and had no towns in the county. Their road system connected major settlements, but a road from London to Winchester was still unproven. The varied geology of Surrey meant that there were many different landscape areas and although the heavy London clay was very unfavourable, there was some evidence of pre-Roman activity nearby, particularly near the present village. A new survey of the triangular earthwork just west of the villa suggested that it might be prehistoric too, but an excavation made here had never been reported. Saxon finds had also been made at the villa and nearby, particularly in a cemetery on the site of what was now the headquarters of Esso Petroleum.



*Tile of the Roman Villa*

AWG Lowther (our first Chairman and then President) noticed Roman tiles on the ground during a survey of the natural history of the Ashtead woodland in 1924. Over the next five years he and his friends dug out a villa and bath-house, each with central heating. Unfortunately the excavations were poorly done, clearing the rooms but not the tops of the flint walls, and records were scrappy. Heavy rain on the London clay meant digging conditions were awful, and one of the most interesting rooms was vandalized the night after it was found. Captain Lowther changed his mind (and his drawings) and his reports were incomplete and contradictory - his later writings on other sites often mentioned his finds here for the first time. The most reliable accounts were the press cuttings of the 'twenties'.

In the 1960's John Hampton resurveyed the site and examined the Roman and later claypits nearby, finding tile dumps but not the baking kilns and a corner of either a building or an enclosure wall. Recently, it had been discovered that at the same time scientists from Kingston University had produced pollen diagrams which suggested clearance of the woodland both in Roman times and in the sixth century AD. Carbon dating of the former gave a period of 50-240 AD which agreed with coins and pottery found at the villa.

Not only is the villa a scheduled ancient monument requiring permission from English Heritage to excavate, but the woods are a site of Special Scientific Interest. Nature England specified that no digging was to take place within 15 metres of any tree.

*(Continued from page 5)*

David gave particular thanks for much help from the Commons' keepers employed by the owners, the City of London. Over 500 people visited the site over the Heritage Weekend in September

The apparently unique plan of the villa has often been commented upon. The different floors (one of chalk, another of bricks laid in herringbone fashion, a third in small square pieces of tile) at different levels had been re-examined. Pottery had been deliberately broken during building.

The front porch proved to be rather smaller than had been recorded by Captain Lowther and various rooms had been added afterwards. Dr Bird drew attention to the odd shape of the hollow boxtiles, with slots in the sides either for linking pegs or sharing heatflues and their arrangement entirely jacketing one room both above and below floor level. The stamped designs on such tiles had suggested distribution patterns, but it would be necessary to analyse the clay fabric to differentiate sources. A visit to Swallow Tileworks at Cranleigh, shortly before it closed after a century of hand tilemaking, had given much insight into working methods; for example, the right firing temperature was determined by eye, not by instruments.

The tall 'lamp chimneys' found may have been for incense not light or heat. The famous 'dog and stag' tiles bore initials, probably of the owner and of his foreman. These images were often meant to seek protection for the building by the gods. The only sculptured stone fragment found here was the corner of an altar. The owner may have been a retired army officer as there were small but unique links with Roman military sites at Corbridge (Northumberland) and Holt (Denbighshire). 'Wasters' showed that pottery vessels were made here as well as tiles. There may have been commercial timber management too.

There were still unsolved questions:

- \* How widespread was the industry? A tile kiln had been found on the site of Horton Hospital four kilometres to the NE.
- \* Why was the bath house separate from the villa? Was it for the workers rather than for the owner's family ?
- \* Why was the villa sited at the claypits rather than near Stane Street?
- \* Had Epsom salts been found here in Roman times?

Future excavation work was planned to look for some of the ancillary buildings suggested by John Hampton's work and a subsequent magnetometer survey, and also to investigate the problem of water supply. Questions to the speaker suggested the whereabouts of some still existing wells near the villa, and whether the high site was partly for observation or was it once a sacred site?.

*Derek Renn*



# *Two New Books for Bookham*

## **Bookham, Jane Austen and Others**

Three great writers resided in the village of Great Bookham during the period 1795-1815. Why were they in the village? Did they ever meet? What did they think of the village and of its inhabitants? What was Great Bookham like at this time?

A book entitled '1800 - Great Bookham at the time of Jane Austen, Fanny Burney and R B Sheridan' has just been published describing the village, some of its inhabitants, the houses and of course the ancient church. It tells us something about these well-known authors and what they thought of Bookham and of their neighbours.

The book is published by the Parochial Church Council of St Nicolas and copies are available from The Secretary, 2a Fife Way, Great Bookham, KT23 3PH, price £3.00.

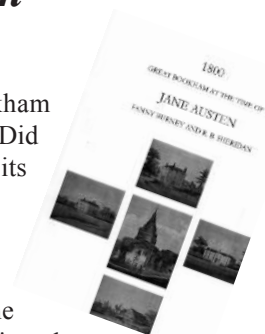
## **A History of St Nicolas Church**

Just published is the eighth edition of the book describing and presenting the history of St Nicolas, Great Bookham's Parish Church. The church is extremely old with its origins in the seventh century, over 1,300 years ago while St Nicolas himself lived around the year 300AD. The original parts of the church as it now stands go back to the 11th or 12th century with the Slyfield Chapel mid-fifteenth century and the north aisle rebuilt mid nineteenth century.

The book describes in detail all features of the church and how it has changed over the centuries. It includes a wall painting of the Norman era and the 12th century oak roof. There are many ancient brasses of the greats of their day, of the Slyfields who lived in the Elizabethan manor house at the north of the parish and added the Slyfield Chapel to the main structure. The parish for all this time was under Abbot of Chertsey who owned all this land and to whom tithes were paid. The tower of the church is very distinctive with its stonework base, timber cladding and its tiled pointed top with two bells.

The book tells the tale of the noble Howard family who were Lords of the manor from the middle of the sixteenth century when William Howard of the Duke of Norfolk's family was Lord High Admiral. From 1626 they owned the Eastwick Estate and Manor House. In the churchyard to the left of the porch and now overcovered by grass is a large vault, some 24ft by 13ft in which sixteen coffins of the Howard family lie dating from 1743 to 1857.

The book is full of interesting facts, historic photos and tales of the church and village residents. It is well worth the price of only £2. It is available from the church itself or local shops in the High Street.



## *MILNER HOUSE*

The recent opening of Milner House for Heritage Open Days 2008 as well as the closing of the Remploy works led me to revisit the history of the building in Ermy Way, Ashted and the associated industries.

'The Long House' was built in 1892 by Daniel Pidgeon, hence the initials 'RP' which are moulded into the stonework over the front door and depicted at other parts of the building. Various owners occupied The Long House including Abraham Dixon who spent about a year here whilst Cherkley Court was repaired after a fire in July 1893. Further details of the history of The Long House (now Milner House) are given in the article by JR Clube in L&DLHS Proceedings volume 6, No 2, 1998.



Following World War I in 1919 the Ex-Services Welfare Society had been formed to help the thousands of veterans who were suffering from shell-shock. During actual fighting there was a great risk that the individual would have been sentenced to death by firing squad although officers who were afflicted did get treatment in mental hospitals. After the Great War, rather than the victims being confined to asylums, the Ex-Services Welfare Society felt that they could and should be treated with rehabilitation so that they could work in an industrial setting.

In 1917 Sir Frederick Milner was among those who pressed for recuperative hostels although the government at the time found it difficult to distinguish between the genuine certifiable men and those who could respond to treatment. Sir Frederick was a former Conservative Member of Parliament who had been forced to give up his seat because of deafness and became champion of the war disabled. He founded hostels for shell-shock victims starting with one in Hampstead.

In 1924 the Ex-Services Welfare Society opened the Sir Frederick Milner House in Beckenham followed two years later by the establishment at Ashted set up in The Long House which was unoccupied at the time and had been bought by the Society. The following year a sheltered workshop was built alongside the house and this was used by Thermega who manufactured electric blankets and heating pads. The factory was staffed by residents of the Sir Frederick Milner Home and they continued making electrically heated blankets and similar goods until their closure in 1980.

Electrically heated pads had been developed by an American doctor, SI Russell, around 1912 particularly for the use of tuberculosis patients who spent a lot of time out of doors. The first commercial production of electric heating pads and blankets was carried out by World War I veterans for Thermega. At a function at the Sir Frederick Milner Home in 1928 Sir Frederick reported that staff at Thermega totalled 40 and he stressed the need for cottages to be built to accommodate married couples where the men worked in the factory. In 1930 twelve cottages were built at the home and these survive in Ermy Way. At that time the factory was producing over 500 electric

blankets each week as well as some 2,000 electric pads to take the place of poultices for local heat application. He insisted that the factory was not a charity but a business run on commercial lines and that all the staff were paid a living wage.

In 1931 Sir Frederick Milner died, 'the Soldiers' and Sailors' Friend', who had enabled many disabled ex-servicemen to live a life of dignity rather than be placed in an asylum.

Admiral of the Fleet, Sir Reginald Yorke Tyrwhitt became President of the Society In 1933 and they opened a treatment centre in Oaklawn Road, Leatherhead in 1946 named after him which is still in operation. The society changed its name to the Ex-Services Mental Welfare Society in 1958 and are also now known as Combat Stress.



*The Factory*

Following the closure of Thermega, Milner House became a private nursing home whilst the factory was taken over in 1981 by Remploy. 'Remploy' was a brand name originally devised by the Ex-Services Mental Welfare Society, and the organisation grew to have a network of facilities throughout Britain which enabled disabled staff to carry out useful functions in a work situation. Leatherhead was part of the manufacturing services group and they acted as a contract manufacturer engaged in the batch production of electro-mechanical and electronic equipment, as well as the assembly and packaging of a wide range of products.

In November 2007 it was announced that the Leatherhead Remploy factory would be closing as well as many others throughout the country. After extensive lobbying by trades unions and others the state-owned company closed 29 factories with the loss of 2,500 jobs. This brought to an end this industrial initiative where disabled people had been enabled to live a worthwhile life whilst being productive. It is worthwhile recording the existence for over 50 years of the Thermega operation which pioneered electric blanket manufacture as well as having a sheltered workshop with a commercial purpose. I have obtained a copy of Thermega's catalogue for 1942 which is a record of the range of their medical products and also gives an indication of the wide variety of hospitals and medical institutions which used them.

Further reading:

Barham, Peter; *Forgotten Lunatics of the Great War*

Brook, Roy; *The Stress of Combat; the Combat of Stress*

Clube, J R; *L&DLHS Proceedings, Vol 6 No2*

*The Times*, 8-11-28, *Training the Shellshocked.*

*The Times*, 9-6-31, *Obituary of Sir Frederick Milner.*

*Peter Tarplee*

## *Wayneflete Tower*

Living in a medieval tower today may be heaven - or hell. In September, Penny Rainbow shared with us the excitement she experienced after buying the derelict Wayneflete Tower at Esher.

The estate had been bought by William Raleigh, Bishop of Winchester, in 1245 for its position between the episcopal palaces at Southwark and Winchester. The nearby River Mole provided good access by water and a small timber-framed lodging was soon built, and a stone manor house added about 1331. Its heyday was during the time of Bishop William Wayneflete, who lived in the reigns of eight kings, from Richard II to Henry VII. Born in 1398, William was Master of Winchester College in 1429 and Bishop of Winchester from 1447, a reward for his work at royal Eton. He was made Lord Chancellor of England in 1456 but had to resign in 1460 having backed the wrong side in the Wars of the Roses. He still had a stupendous income from 240 different properties and rebuilt Esher Palace on a courtyard plan, with a great hall and



magnificent tower and gatehouse, both four storeys high. He built similar gatehouses at Farnham Castle and for a new school at his birthplace, Wainfleet in Lincolnshire. Large residential ‘solar’ towers were then fashionable and Penny showed us slides of those at Buckden, Caister and Tattershall. John Evelyn, who saw the Palace in 1673, described it as being ‘of the best burnt brick I ever saw’ and the hall roof with carved angels ‘not unlike Westminster Hall’.

The palace stayed with the Bishops of Winchester. In 1515 the blind Bishop Fox lent it to Cardinal Wolsey while he was rebuilding Hampton Court Palace. Wolsey became Bishop himself in 1539 and retreated to Esher for some months after his disgrace, dying in Leicester Abbey the following year. King Henry VIII incorporated the Esher lands into his royal hunting chase. Owned briefly by Robert Dudley, Queen Elizabeth I’s favourite and by the Howards of Effingham, it was sold to Richard Drake, cousin of the famous Sir Francis, in 1583. Three captured Spanish admirals from the 1588 Armada were lodged here, with large retinues, becoming a sight for tourists until they

were ransomed in 1593. More positively the first Spanish/English dictionary was composed here by admiral Don Pedro de Valdez. An engraving of 1678 shows that additions had been made on each side of the tower, but the rest of the buildings had been demolished and replaced by orchards, gardens, avenues of trees and ornamental ponds. A tulip tree here may be the oldest in the country coming from the Americas where the then owner of Esher was a sugar baron.

Henry Pelham, brother of the Duke of Newcastle who owned Claremont, purchased the estate in 1729, employing William Kent to remodel the tower and landscape the grounds, including a grotto which survives in Pelham's Walk. Carvings of the family emblem, the buckle of the King of France captured at the Battle of Poitiers in 1396, can be seen on the Tower and (upside down) in the High Street. The estate was bought by John Spicer in 1805, who removed some of the additions to the Tower. He built a new house (now Esher Place) on a higher site between 1895-8 which was greatly enlarged by Lord d'Abernon and bought in 1927 by the Electrical Trades Union.

Wayneflete Tower was given to the Shaftesbury Society for use as a girls' school in 1930 and the rest of the estate 'developed' with expensive houses costing up to £5,000. Frances Day, the actress and singer, bought the Tower in 1941, installing main drainage and water, with a lift (to supplement the spiral staircase) found on a bomb site. The Tower had been empty and vandalized for seven years before Penny Rainbow bought it and began to repair it as a family home in 1992. She has not seen any ghosts there yet, although a horror film was made there in 1975. She described the work carried out by 'Time Team' in 2005 and later by the Surrey Archaeological Society, when a 1960's garage was replaced by an extension to the gatehouse. Stone foundations of the early lodgings were found and part of the brick footings of the great tower. Documents suggested building here in the 1460's, and expert tree-ring dating of beams in the gatehouse indicated a felling date range of 1462-72. A 1473-78 silver penny came from the topsoil, as did a 1661 jetton of Thomas Carter, a Portsmouth hatter. A complete (but empty) Georgian wine bottle was also found!

After her talk, Penny drew the raffle tickets for pairs of clean socks donated by John Bird (founder of The Big Issue), Adam Hart Davis, John Julius Norwich, Tony Robinson and Phil Harding (Time Team), and Dr David Starkey. This raised over £200 for the Leatherhead Museum and Heritage Centre Trust.

(Bishop Wayneflete's silk-covered linen stockings and ankle boots are still preserved by Magdalen College, Oxford, which he founded in 1458.).

*Derek Renn*

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## *Ashtead Village Historical Trail*

Readers may like to know that Barry Cox has written an illustrated leaflet describing an Ashtead Village Historical Trail with walks from the village, published by Mole Valley District Council (free, available in the Museum and the Leatherhead Help Shop)

# *News from the Friends of Leatherhead Museum*

## **Stewards**

The museum is dependant on stewards for remaining open and over the recent months we have had our share of illness and stewards leaving. At times it has been difficult to cover the opening hours but it is gratifying to record that we have had four new applications to be stewards and hopefully we shall soon be welcoming them to our happy band. We are very grateful to all our volunteers including those who work behind the scenes inputing data, indexing and responding to enquirers. Painstaking and time consuming work. Our museum has the reputation of being a professionally run organisation as well as being welcoming to visitors.

## **Activities**

A display barrow in the Swan Centre in August advertising the museum and the Society produced interest resulting in increased attendance at the museum on the day . Heritage Open Days in September saw 150 people visit the museum over the four days with 90 people on the Saturday. The stewards had barely time for a cup of tea!

## **Future Events of the Friends**

**6th December** The museum will close for winter refurbishment for three months

**13th December** Unofficial opening of the museum from 10.00am to 12.30pm for those last minute presents (and a mince pie with every purchase!)

**15th December** Stewards and volunteers party - Letherhead Institute 7.00pm for 7.30pm

**March 2009** Steward briefing sessions (dates to be announced)

**March 2009** Joint visit with the History Society to a local museum (date and venue to be announced)

**2nd April 2009** Museum reopens

**24th April 2009** AGM of the Friends of Leatherhead Museum

*Dr Fred Meynen Chairman of the Friends*



## *The Proceedings and its Indices*

I am grateful to our hardy stalwarts who have come forward with one or two new contributions to next year's Proceedings. We now have just about enough to fill a somewhat slim number (I estimate about 24 pages, compared with 36 last year). But I remain very worried about the future in even the short-term. I think that I have more or less exhausted our 'regulars', and there is no sign of any new researchers/contributors who might take up the baton. Unless our members do respond to this challenge, I can see a time when we shall either have to publish every other year, or cease publication altogether – not long after we celebrated our Diamond Jubilee! If anyone is interested in pursuing the fascinating history of our area over the last 500 years or more, I know that any of our existing group of researchers would be very pleased to help them in finding their way around the literature and research tools available today – and I should be very happy to help with advice on how to write-up the results for publication.

As you may remember, we have also been wondering how to make available the index for the last volume. To help us please let me know (if you haven't already done so) if you would like a printed copy of this, rather than referring to it via the Society's website. We are also debating in what form, or forms, to make available an integrated index for the whole series of the Proceedings 1947-2006, to capitalize on the labours of our web-master Frank Haslam and those of Alan Pooley. So watch this space!

*Barry Cox, Editor Proceedings*

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## *Cast Iron Firebacks*

We have received a letter from a Jeremy Hodgkinson who is a lecturer and writer on the Wealden Iron Industry requesting the assistance of any members of the Society who may own or have information on cast iron firebacks. He is compiling a catalogue of English iron fireback types and designs and would welcome any records, photographs or sketches which anyone may have to help him in his researches.

If anyone can help Mr Hodgkinson, would they kindly contact him direct at the following address, telephone number or email: Mr J Hodgkinson, MA FSA, 3 Saxon Road, Worth, Crawley Sussex RH10 7SA. Tel: 01293 886278 Email: [JSHodgkinson@hodgers.com](mailto:JSHodgkinson@hodgers.com)



## *Heritage Weekend, September, 2008*

Thanks to the excellent publicity given to the event by the organisers, Mole Valley District Council, there was abundant support at the venues which our Society provided. The museum, open on the Sunday in addition to the usual Saturday times, had a constant influx, including many children accompanying their parents.



The theme this year was ‘Hidden Treasures’, and this was particularly appropriate for the museum since many of the artefacts need to be kept in store due to limitations of display space. For this occasion several ‘hidden’ items were put on special display.



To draw attention to the museum’s contribution to the ‘hidden treasures’ theme, the Society also organised a display at The Letherhead Institute. This was mainly photographic, although a few actual objects were there for visitors to see. The photo display highlighted the variety of objects that are on view at the museum as well as giving basic information about the building and its contents – hopefully encouraging more visitors to come. An appeal for new stewards was also featured.

*John Wettern*

## *Recent Additions To The Library*

### **Surrey – Individual Towns & Villages : Ewell**

Rymill, David- Worcester Park and Cuddington: a walk through the centuries (including Stoneleigh and Nonsuch). The Buckwheat Press, 2000 [a donation].

Short extract: “The railway station, opened in 1859, has perhaps had a greater effect on Worcester Park than any other secular building since Nonsuch Palace... However, when the proposed Wimbledon-Epsom line was being considered by a Parliamentary committee, the principal argument put forward by Thomas Weeding of Fullbrooks in favour of opening a station was that it would enable local farmers to have chalk brought from Ashted to improve the soil.”

### **Nonsuch Antiquarian Society- The Trial of Joan Buts for Witchcraft [in 1682]**

Brian Bouchard has brought to light this Occasional Paper (no.3: March 1973). Short extract: ‘About three days after, they were suprized with new wonders, for there was to be seen such sights as they never saw before, viz. The Bellows flew about the house, and the Candlesticks and other things thrown after the Girl as she passed to and fro in her masters house, and going to her Mothers house, which was at Astead about three



miles distant from Yowel, such numberless stones were thrown at her that she found it hazardous to Travel...’

### **Surrey- Individual Towns & Villages : Bookham**

Goodman, Judith (editor) - Coal and Calico: letters and papers of the Bennett and Leach families of Merton and Wandsworth. Merton Historical Society, 2008 [donated by the editor, in view of the references to Bookham].

Short extract: “The ‘cottage’ was the substantial house later known as (The) Hermitage which still stands, near the parish church of St Nicolas, Great Bookham, Surrey. John Leach bought it in 1813, and it was occupied by the family until 1881. Sketches of the church by Leach’s son William, a surveyor, survive. The house had earlier been the home of the novelist and diarist Fanny Burney and her French émigré husband General d’Arblay.”

*Peter Wells*

## ***Brooklands- Leatherhead Connections***

Recently, during my work in Brooklands library, I came across some references to one or two motor-cyclists from Leatherhead & District Motor-Cycle Club competing on the track. So I investigated a little further, and found at least ten riders entered under the L&DMC banner in clubmen’s races between 1931 and 1939. Such names as S.H.Goddard, F.G.Collins, W.C.Cullingham, R.G.Gubby, E.J.Knox, C.S.Mason, L.F.Peacock, D.B.Sedgwick, H.C.Shorto, T.F.Tindle and A.F.Wheeler. Does anyone know anything further about these riders?



After the first world war, servicemen back from their travels abroad, wanted to travel freely for pleasure as well as to work. So although the bicycle was the first choice, motorised transport was obviously the way to go, and many motor-cycle clubs were organised from like-minded groups in the 20s and 30s. The Leatherhead Club is referred to in many copies of ‘The Motor Cycle’ magazine of the period, and apparently they ran grass-track meetings at Randalls Park Speedway, trials over Ranmore Common, one starting from Sandford’s Service Station in Kingston Road and treasure hunts and gymkanas on Barnet Wood Farm.

I imagine the club closed during the second world war, but reopened afterwards, as they were still holding meetings in the 1950s. If anyone has any further information on this club and its activities, we would be interested to know when it was formed and closed and where did they meet? What about cycling or motoring clubs in the Leatherhead area? Any information on these? I know of the Mid-Surrey Social Motor-Cycling Club, whose secretary lived in Bookham, and the Surrey Motor Cycle and Light Car Club with secretary in Dorking both in 1933-4. Any others? and connections with Brooklands?

*Doug Hollingsworth*

## ***FUTURE EVENTS***

The lectures of the Society are held on the third Friday of the month at Letherhead Institute. Coffee and biscuits are served from 7.30pm onwards and the lectures start at 8.00pm. Everyone is welcome, admission £1 for members and £2 for visitors.

**19th December** ‘John Evelyn’s Gardens in Pictures’ by Beryl Saich.

This is a short visual presentation following on from her lecture given to the History Society in January. Coffee and mince pies at 7.30pm, lecture at 8.00pm followed by canapes and wine as part of our Christmas Social event.

**16th January 2009** ‘Early Water, Gas and Electricity Supplies in Surrey’ by Peter Tarplee

Peter is the Vice President of our History Society and has published several articles and books on Industrial Archaeology. He will explain how these three basic utilities started and developed in this county.

**20th February 2009** ‘Leatherhead Hospital, Past, Present and Future’ by Dr Fred Meynen

Leatherhead has had a cottage hospital serving the community for over a hundred years. The present hospital dates from 1940 and has inpatient and extensive outpatient facilities. What are the plans for its future? Come and find out!

**20th March 2009** ‘Godalming Past and Present’ by John Young

Born in Godalming John has lived in the town for most of his life and is passionate about its history and character. He is actively involved with Godalming Museum and is a member of several local history groups.

**15th May 2009** ‘A Butcher’s Tale of Woe’ by Keith Rawlings.

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### ***Volunteer Stewards Needed***

The work is rewarding as it involves dealing with the public, receiving artefacts, answering queries and learning about local history.

Training is given, so come along and meet us - we are a friendly crowd. Please tell your friends and if you need more information give me a call.

*Dr Fred Meynen 01372 372930*

Archaeology

ARCHAEOLOGY SECRETARY David Hartley 01372 377839

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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 document	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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