

***LEATHERHEAD & DISTRICT
LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY***

NEWSLETTER



May 2013

LEATHERHEAD AND DISTRICT LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Registered Charity No. 802409

Hampton Cottage, 64 Church Street, Leatherhead, KT22 8DP

Telephone 01372 386348

Email: staff@lheadmuseum.plus.com.

Monthly Meetings: Every third Friday of the month at the Letherhead Institute between September and May at 7.30pm for 8.00pm

MUSEUM (Hampton Cottage): open Thursdays and Fridays 1.00pm to 4.00pm and Saturdays 10.00am to 4.00pm

L&DLHS WEBSITE: www.leatherheadlocalhistory.org.uk

2011 Membership Subscriptions

Ordinary.....£18.00 Associate.....£6.00 Junior (under 18).....£1.00

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Editorial

I'm afraid I couldn't resist adding some of my own recollections of WWII to those of Fred Meynen (p15). It undoubtedly shows my age but memories of living in London in WWII remain vivid. It was like a different age with the air raids and vast destruction caused by the bombing. Our house had the doors and windows blown in on a couple of occasions but luckily no direct hit. When I revisit the area where I lived it is easy to pick out the sites of bombs as they are marked with post war housing or high rise flats interrupting the pre-war terraces of housing.



The rationing was severe and sheer poverty was common. Many houses had only outside 'loos'. It contrasts so much with the cries of what below the poverty line means today - it is too easy to forget what true deprivation was. And how little was known of medicine - I remember a boy in my class contracting TB and going into a sanatorium - way before streptomycin (he was lucky and survived). It was way before the days of television - you might have had a crystal set to listen to the one radio programme but families made their own entertainment.

History is continuous and what happens today is tomorrow's history. There are now no survivors of WWI and in a little time the same will be true of WWII. Perhaps it is a good thing that we can't see into the future. Twenty years ago things like computer terminals were primitive with their 8K floppy discs - mobile phones were enormous and rare. In twenty years time the iPod and iPad will be just as primitive and hopefully medicine will have found many cures for some of the severe medical conditions.

Meanwhile the Newsletter does its duty to record history as well as providing good reading for our members. Hopefully you, the readers will continue to provide many more interesting articles to fill its pages.

Martin Warwick

Next Edition Deadline - 6th July

Index to Articles

| | | | |
|---------------------------------|----|-----------------------|----|
| Aerial Photograph - What? | 6 | February Lecture | 5 |
| Archaeology | 3 | Friends of the Museum | 26 |
| Balloon Tragedy at Bookham 1902 | 20 | Future Program | 28 |
| Beverley Nichols | 14 | Henry Collins | 8 |
| Brooklands | 7 | Milestones | 24 |
| Chairman | 2 | Museum Opening | 18 |
| Editorial | 1 | Three Admirals | 19 |
| Engineering Cobham | 17 | WWII Memories | 15 |

Chairman's Report

Annual General Meeting

Retiring President Gordon Knowles chaired the 66th AGM on 15th March in his last role as President of the History Society and there were just over fifty members present.

The Chairman thanked all those members who regularly volunteer and are there on time to set out the chairs, tables and equipment and in particular Goff Powell who handles the sound system, Doug Hollingsworth, Brian Hennegan and others who set out the chairs and all those who assist in putting them away at the end of the evening, Thanks to Roz Hennegan and Maureen Powell who consistently manage to serve up a good cup of coffee or tea with a friendly smile and clear away efficiently at the end of the evening.



The Chairman thanked all his colleagues in committee for turning out and managing their offices and responsibilities diligently and effectively and extended his thanks to all the volunteer members of the museum and The Friends of Leatherhead Museum for their work in managing funding and maintaining the museum. Thanks were extended to Martin Warwick for his consistent support and work in producing the Newsletter, Proceedings and the new books with other members of the History Society and also to Barry Cox Proceedings Editor for his work on the 2012 Proceedings.

The President and Chairman thanked Vivien Hollingsworth for her kind assistance in volunteering to act as the minute taker for this year's AGM

The Accounts for the year end 2012-13 were approved as presented by our Hon Treasurer David Lokkerbol and the independent examiner Adrian Radford was re-appointed

The Executive Committee were re-elected for 2013-14 en-block

The post of membership Secretary needs to be filled and Frank Haslam stepped up and volunteered his services as acting Membership Secretary on a temporary basis until we find a more permanent member to fill this important post.

The office of Hon Secretary remains to be filled as a matter of urgency - the History Society has been without this office being filled for too long - to fill this role please contact me. We also still require a publicity officer to work with John Wettern the Publicity Co-ordinator.

Goff Powell our Sales Secretary has indicated that he is prepared to stay in office for the time being.

Alan Pooley the newly appointed President of the History Society made a short speech on the role of past and present holders of this office before making a presentation to Gordon Knowles in recognition of his service to the Society. Gordon made an appropriate response which was received with approbation of the audience. The 66th AGM was then declared closed by Alan Pooley.

Derek Renn, one of our most experienced speakers and senior members of the History Society provided us with a fascinating talk without the use of notes relying on his excellent

recall on the subject of Surrey Milestones illustrated with slides of some of the most unusual milestones.

At the Executive Committee meeting on 18th March the committee asked me to write to Peter Tarplee our Vice President to express the sincere gratitude of the committee and thanks for the many years of personal service he has given to the History Society. Peter has also been actively involved at the museum with Alan Pooley as long ago as 1998. He has a long record of achievement and commitment to the museum and has been Chairman and now Vice President of the History Society. Peter retired from working at the Museum in December 2012. As a small token for his endeavour the executive committee presented him with an Honorary Life Membership to the History Society which he has generously accepted.

Recently I was informed that Jack Willis our Ashtead Archivist has retired after many years of dedicated service to the History Society and Ashtead. Gwen Hoad, an Ashtead resident and one of our most experienced and capable members has accepted the Ashtead Archive for the time being as acting Archivist for Ashtead whilst we find a suitable candidate to carry on this office. Ideally we would prefer to retain the archive in Ashtead and therefore are looking for an Ashtead member of the History Society to take on this role. To all Ashtead members, if you would be interested in taking on the Ashtead Archive and have some space to accommodate these records locally in Ashtead would you please contact Gwen Hoad via the Leatherhead Museum to arrange to meet to discuss the possibility with her and Roy Mellick our Records Secretary.

I have written to Jack Willis on behalf of the Executive Committee and the History Society to express our thanks, gratitude and appreciation for the many years of personal commitment in maintaining the Ashtead Archives dealing with the many enquiries over the years and for his support of the History Society. We all hope that he will continue to support the Society and that we will see him from time to time at our lectures/talks at the Leatherhead Institute.

David Hartley

Archaeology and Other Local Events

Test Pitting at Great and Little Bookham

Dates for Test Pitting in Great and Little Bookham on 26th-28th April inclusive and 24th-26th May inclusive, Volunteers are welcome. Contact Chris Hayward at chrisarch@lineone.net to sign up or for further details.

Conference: Medieval Pottery and the Transition to Post-Medieval Production

At the Surrey History Centre, 130 Goldsworth Road, Woking Surrey GU21 6ND 11th May 2013 at 9.30am to 4.00pm

Speakers, including Steve Nelson, Phil Jones, Peter Tipton, Jacqui Pearce, David Barker, Clive Orton and Graham Dawson. A detailed programme and application form is available.

Please note that the number of places is limited by the size of the hall, early application for tickets is advised, contact Emma at Castle Arch 01483 532454 or visit the SyAS Website www.surreyarchaeology.org.uk

Bookham Village Day Old Barn Hall, 55 Church Road, Great Bookham Saturday 15th June

The History Society will present a display on the work of John and Edward Hassell, watercolour painting of 18th century houses in the Parishes of Ashtead, Bookham, Fetcham Leatherhead and Mickleham.

St Mary's Meadow Ewell 2013 the 2nd season of excavation (Under the direction of Nikki Cowlard and her team) Church Meadow Ewell – Excavation July: Start 3rd July 10:00am - End: 21st July 4.00pm

Church Meadow is located East of Church in Church Street and adjacent to the new cemetery in Ewell Surrey. Volunteers are being sought for this second season of excavations in Church Meadow, Ewell. The excavation will take place between 3rd - 21st July, Wednesday - Sunday 10.00am - 4.00pm. The site is within the Roman settlement and Stane Street crosses the site.

If you are interested in volunteering please register an initial interest with Lesley Hays louhays@ntlworld.com or telephone 01372 724172

CBA Festival of Archaeology Saturday 13th July - Sunday 28th July

The Leatherhead Museum will be publicising the work of the Surrey County Archaeological Unit (SCAU) and The Surrey Archaeological Society

75th Anniversary Celebration of the Grange, Rectory Lane Bookham 13th July

The Grange are organising a Celebration with a Vintage Theme. This will be a free event - further announcements will be forthcoming.

Ashtead Roman Villas - the 8th and final Season of Excavation (under the direction of David Bird)

The Roman Studies Group will be undertaking its eighth season of excavation on Ashtead Common Surrey. Working days are grouped in three sets of 5 days from Wednesday to Sunday during the following weeks:

Wednesday to Sunday 28th August - 1st September

Wednesday to Sunday 4th - 8th September

Wednesday to Sunday 11th -15th September

Monday to Friday 16th - 20nd September is likely to be needed for tidying up etc.

No charge will be made for members of Surrey Archaeological Society. Non-members of Surrey Archaeological Society will be asked to pay a non-refundable contribution towards the cost of organising the dig of £25 per 5 day week, or part thereof, to be paid before 17th July.

When your application for the dig has been accepted cheques should be made payable to Surrey Archaeological Society marked on the back only 'Ashtead 2013' and sent to 29 Colokes Road, Banstead, Surrey SM7 2EJ. Inexperienced newcomers please note that preference will be given to those who can attend for at least 5 days.

If you are interested in taking part in the excavation and have not already been in touch, please contact Irene Goring on irene@greenhayes.plus.com or 01737 362025 giving contact details and availability. Newcomers need to give an indication of their excavation skills.

Heritage Open Days in Mole Valley 12th - 15th September

Heritage Open Days celebrates England's local and national culture and offer free access to buildings that are usually closed to the public or who normally charge for admission. It is your chance to discover the hidden gems and architectural treasures and enjoy a wide range of events and activities in buildings of every age, style and function ranging from Castles to Factories, Tithe Barns to Town Halls, and Parish Churches to Buddhist Temples.

David Hartley

February Meeting - WWII in Bookham

On Sunday 3rd September 1939 as morning service began the churchwarden of St Nicolas Church, Great Bookham handed the rector a note saying that the Prime Minister had just announced that we were at war with Germany. In 2010 the Military History group of the Bookham & District University of the Third Age set out to compile a record of local events during that war which was published by our Society last autumn and has already gone to a second edition.

Michael Anderson the leader of the U3A project gave us an illustrated account of the book's highlights at our February meeting. As well as interviewing people who lived in Bookham 1939-45, his team had combed the back issues of the *Leatherhead* and *Surrey Advertisers* and the archives of our Society and the Surrey History Centre to construct a picture of the villages from just before until after WW2.

Bookham suffered two fairly peaceful invasions. The first was of 500 children evacuated in September 1939 many of whom soon returned home only to come back when the Blitz and later flying bomb and rocket attacks made London a very dangerous place. Many had never seen fields or woods before and strange surroundings, foster parents and hostility from local children complicated their young lives. The second invasion was of units of the Canadian Army based at Southey Hall since the private school there had removed itself to Devon. The soldiers became very much part of village life and twin trees planted by them (English and Canadian maples) have intertwined in Eastwick Park Avenue. German and Italian prisoners of war worked locally.



Although the Atlas Works near the railway station was making aircraft parts for 100,000 planes it was not bombed - about 50 bombs fell on the village but no-one was killed: the only Bookham civilian was a schoolboy killed in Leatherhead. There were public shelters near both ends of the High Street for anyone away from home during an air raid.

Bookham raised enough money to buy and maintain two Bristol Beaufighters as well as a

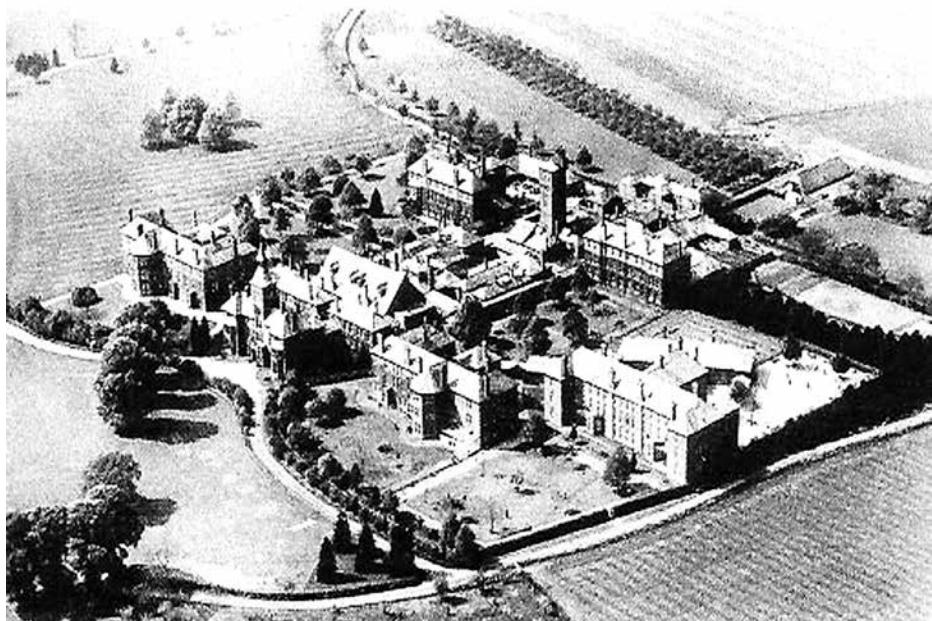
Crusader tank - not bad for a village of 4000 people!

The renegade broadcaster 'Lord Haw-Haw' is thought to have lived in Bookham - he knew a lot of details like the butcher's name. The headmaster of the evacuated Strand School was grilled by MI5 when answers to his crossword clues were code-names for the D-day invasion. The probable explanation is that he was helped in his setting by senior pupils who listened to the Canadian soldiers amongst whom security was lax.

We meet on the third Friday of each month at 7.30 for 8.00pm in the upstairs hall of the Letherhead Institute (top end of the High Street).

Derek Renn

Aerial Photograph - Do you recognise it?



The attached aerial photograph belongs to Steven Poulter a long standing member of the Society who now lives in Dorset. He wanted to know if I recognised the buildings hoping it would be in Surrey.

I have been unable to help him and wonder if any reader could help.

The postcard was published I would guess around the late 1930s with the inscription 'The Surrey Flying Services, Air Port of London, Croydon'.

Goff Powell

News from Brooklands

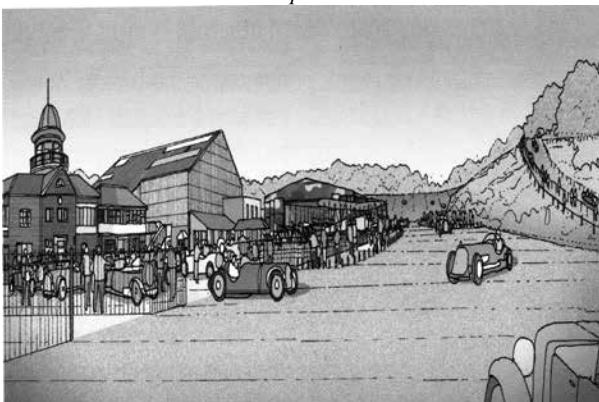
The museum has recently received two significant financial grants. Firstly the Heritage Lottery Fund has given an initial allocation of £410,000 to assist the museum in making an application by 2015 for a full grant of £4.85 million to relocate, restore and reinterpret the Grade II listed Wellington hangar. It will be known as 'The Brooklands Aircraft Factory' and will house more of the museum's historic aircraft and restore the section of the racing track – the former Finishing Straight - on which the hangar currently stands. The project will also include enhanced learning opportunities, a training scheme in historic aircraft restoration and other new activities on the race track.

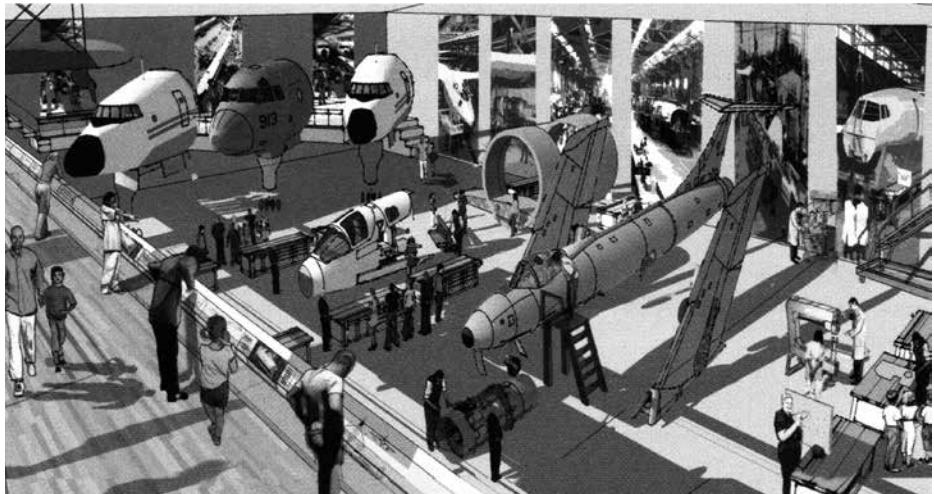
The hangar display will show how aircraft from the earliest types to Concorde were designed, built and developed at Brooklands over an 80 year period. The 'Factory' will be an interactive learning centre in which visitors will be able to soak up the atmosphere of an aircraft factory and try for themselves some of the many skills used at Brooklands in its heyday. The adjoining new 'Flight Shed' will hold the museum's active aircraft which will be rolled out onto the restored section of track for both static and taxiing demonstrations. New workshops underneath the building will be devoted to the training of volunteers who will learn aircraft restoration skills.

The second grant is one of £120,000 from the Association of Independent Museums to restore and interpret Barnes Wallis' Stratosphere Chamber, a huge laboratory building dating from 1947. It was designed for research into high altitude and high speed flight. It operated until 1980 and was 25ft (7.6m) in diameter and 50ft (15.2m) long, taking a complete fighter aircraft or the fuselage and cockpit of larger aircraft. It was also used for cold-weather testing of diesel engines, Arctic clothing and fishing trawlers. Snow and blizzards could be created, with temperatures between -65c and +40c. The air pressure could be evacuated



Classic Finishing Straight 1939 and Finishing Straight on Completion





Aircraft Factory with Manufacturing Presentation Concept

down to 1/20th of that at sea level. Some of the operating equipment will be restored and new exhibits displayed. The original Control Room which had never been open to visitors will also be restored and opened up.

Gordon Knowles

Henry & Lettice Collins of Great and Little Bookham

The Story continues - in the February issue of our Newsletter I attempted to present to you something of the history of a house and its occupants in Rectory Lane Great Bookham backing onto the parish boundary of Little Bookham. This house painted in watercolours by John Hassell circa 1823 stood previously on the site of the present Grange in Rectory Lane but then in the occupation of Thomas Seawell 1792-1832.



Seawell House

Interestingly on closer examination the watercolour of this house actually tells us quite a lot about its style and is a potential for further historical research. Firstly the façade of the house has been re-faced with a new contemporary Georgian façade, it was not uncommon to dress up and modernise a much older building in the past and make them to appear more fashionable. It is therefore my proposition that the core of this house from what we can see of the side elevation of the house is probably at least two hundred years earlier than the date of the John Hassell watercolour of 1823.

The Georgian façade circa 1770 sits somewhat awkwardly along the length of the flank wall of the house. The new façade appears quite thick almost tacked on to the older building behind and is built of solid brickwork with four window openings in the ground floor arranged two each side of a projecting columned entrance porch. The upper floor had five windows and all windows are tall and narrow with deep flat gauged brickwork forming the head over each window with projecting stone window cills to each.

The windows appear quite shallow and are fitted with timber window frames with a pronounced central mullion which indicate that they were probably inward opening casement windows. Above the window heads on the first floor there is a large projecting horizontal cornice probably in matching terminated brickwork stopping short of each end of the façade and returned back to the wall face

The new façade is completed and capped off above the cornice with stone projecting coping stones to protect the brickwork from water penetration.

The left hand side of the building as painted by John Hassell shows the awkward marriage between the older building and its new façade. The older style building presents a number of architectural features and domestic vernacular building styles which place it in the period 1570-1640. It has a high pitched tiled roof with prominent brick gables at each end capped with projecting stone copings and tabling stones. It has a window in the attic storey of the gable with a stone surround and a large first floor window below with stone surround and a projecting bay towards the rear of the front range with a stone cornice and windows with stone surrounds. The five tall chimney stacks, four on the front range and one on the rear range all add to the attribution dates and are a clear sign of the high status of the original building on this site. This was an important building for Bookham in its time on a par with a manor house or rectory.

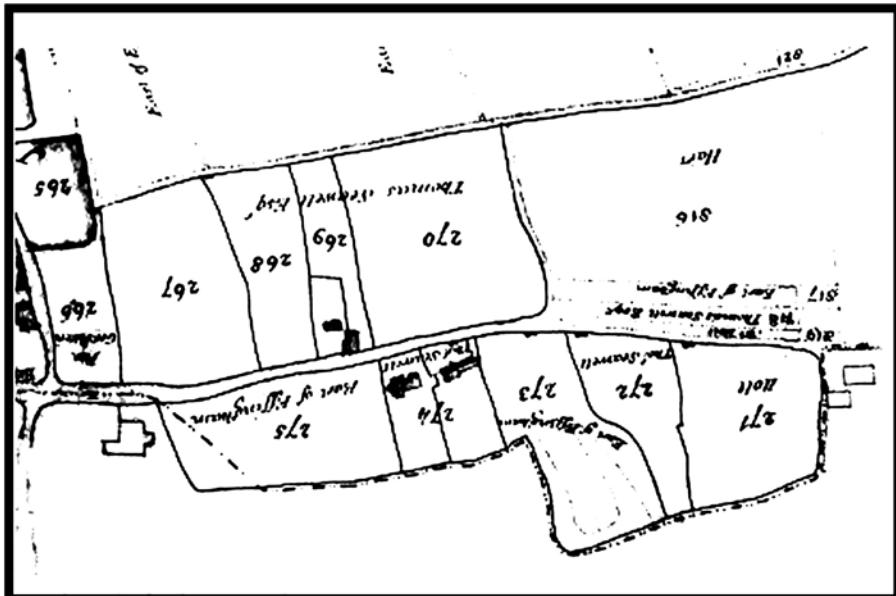
There is other documentary evidence for this early date and a snapshot of the tenure and occupants in 1614. We are fortunate to have documentary evidence for the existence of this building from a ‘Survey of Great Bookham’ dated 1614 commissioned by Sir Edward Howard Lord of the Manor of 1st June 1614 and executed by Thomas Clay, a Surveyor of considerable experience and reputation.

I should also acknowledge the work and research of the late John H Harvey FSA a true historian who brought this survey of 1614 and the Survey and map of Great Bookham 1797-1798 to our attention without which it would not have been possible to have written this article.

So how does this all fit together? We have the Hassell watercolour of 1823, we have the documentary evidence in the survey of 1797-1798 and the evidence for Thomas Seawell and his family living in the house painted by Hassell. We then have to turn the clock back to the survey of 1614. Surprisingly not a great deal had changed in the intervening years apart from the names and the tenure and ownership but principally the plots or parcels of land had changed little in size especially on Rectory Lane known as Preston Street in 1614.

From the Survey of 1614 we find the widow Lettice Collins occupies virtually the same plots of land occupied by Thomas Seawell in 1792-1832.

The following extract relating to Lettice Collins has been copied from the schedule and survey plan of 1614 verbatim



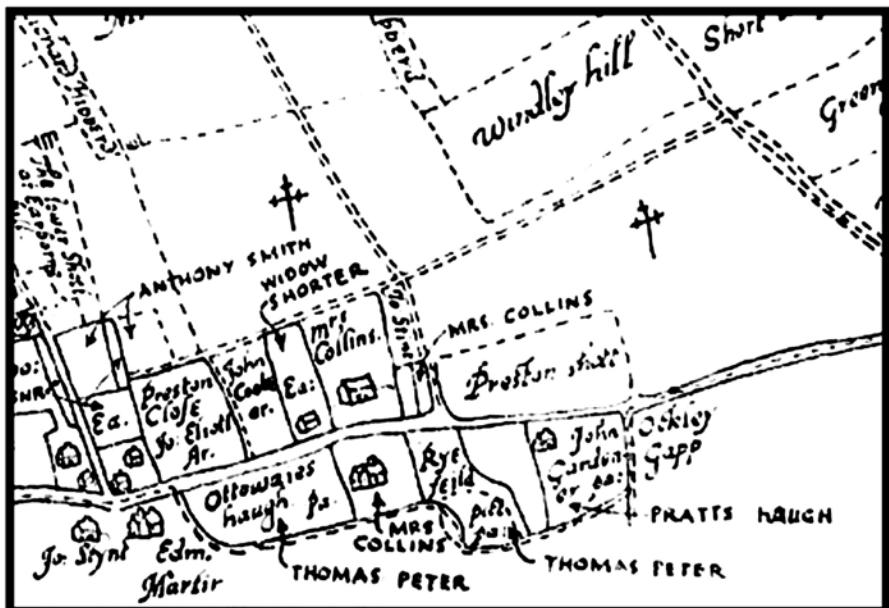
Reversed (Upside down) Location map of the Seawell property on Rectory Lane is an abstract of 'The Great Bookham Survey of 1797/98' to enable comparison with that of the property of Lettice Collins on the former Preston Street in 1614.

Item 79:

"Lettice Collins widow holdeth according to Customs of this Manor a Customery Tenement and a backside sett lyinge and being at Preston streete abutting on the North a paecell of Indenture hold now in the tenure of Thomas Peter called Ottowyes Haughe, Little Bookham grounds West, another parcel of the same Indenture holde called the Ryefield South, and the streete East cont. 3 roods 27 perches. And another parcel of land with a barne thereupon erected lying over against the said Tenemente abutting North upon the Widow Shorter's Tenements the Common field East and parte South a little Close of John Stynts other parte South and the street West cont. 1 acre 1 rood 35 perches

Another small parcel of enclosed ground lying without the gate at the south end of Preston streete, the former parcel of John Stynts North, and the Common field and the highway East South and West cont. 24 perches another Close of arable grounde abutting North upon the Rye field aforesaid Little Bookeham grounds West, a Tenement called Pratts Haughe South and the highway leading to Preston Crosse East cont: 3 roods 1 perche and diverses parcells of arable in the Common feild cont: 25 acres 2 roods 20 perches.....15s 6d., heriot, etc."

The little pictogram of the house shown on this map shows a house of two piles, both with pitched roofs, presenting the gables on each end and indicating a chimney, a clear sign of



Abstract of the Survey Map of 1614 showing the former Preston Street (Rectory Lane) and the House and property of Mrs Collins.

status in this period of 1570-1640.

Lettice Collins was the wife and widow of the late Henry Collins Rector for Little Bookham. Unfortunately it has not been possible to find birth and marriage records or their origins - they probably came into Surrey following his appointment as follows;

COLLINS, HENRY. Matric pens from Trinity, Easter, 1584; Scholar, 1585; BA 1588-9; MA 1592¹.

Ordained deacon: **04/04/1593** (Cooper, Thomas/Winchester 1584-1594)²

Henry Collins appointed Rector of Little Bookham 4 April 1593 -1613

Jurisdiction Winchester - Bishop of Winchester

Patron: was William Howard Esq - Lay patron in his own right.

Sir William Howard. (3rd Baron Howard of Effingham) 1577-1615

Henry Collins appointment followed the death of the previous incumbent George Hueson who had died in office just prior to 4 April 1593.

The appointment to a benefice or dignity or Institution was the act by which a bishop or other ordinary committed a living to the care of a clergyman. It followed after a presentation, the cleric's subscription, and the receipt of letters testimonial and was followed by induction or installation. It was only one of these events normally recorded in the episcopal register or act book and as such can be regarded as furnishing the date from which an appointment

commenced.

There are very few references I have found for Henry Collins life in Little Bookham. He is mentioned in connection with John Reeve the vicar of Great Bookham as Henry Collins clerk of Little Bookham and he and John Reeve are recorded as supporters of the vicar of Leatherhead in his dispute to eject him from his living as vicar of Leatherhead (The Star-Chamber Litigation of Vicar Richard Levitt in 1609.³

Two further references have been found, the first where he is one of three witnesses to the will of John Rogers of Effingham, weak and sick 14 June 1613 where he is the first named witness, Henry Collins, parson of Little Bookham, followed by two other witnesses. The will proved 9th July 1613 by Overseer, William Rogers of the Borough of Southwark, the brother in the minority of the testator's children.

The second a will witnessed by Henry Collins, parson of Little Bookham is that of Robert Chipping of Little Bookham, yeoman sick 5th July 1613, the will was proved The 24th July 1613.

After this date Henry Collins disappears from the records completely, he appears to have died sometime in July 1613. Is it possible in an age of plagues and pestilence in one form or another he did succumb to picking up a contagion from a parishioner when witnessing their will. Unfortunately no evidence has been found for a burial entry or a will - however Lettice Collins survived and is recorded as widow in the 1613 survey.

A new Rector, Johannes Hamden was appointed on 29th July 1613.

Contemporary National Events

1612 - Henry, Prince of Wales, dies of typhoid. His younger brother, Charles, becomes heir to the throne.

1612 - Heretics are burned at the stake for the last time in England.

1613 - James' daughter Elizabeth marries Frederick V, Elector of Palatine. Their descendants in House of Hanover will eventually inherit the British Throne.

1613 - The Globe Theatre in London burns during a performance of Henry VIII

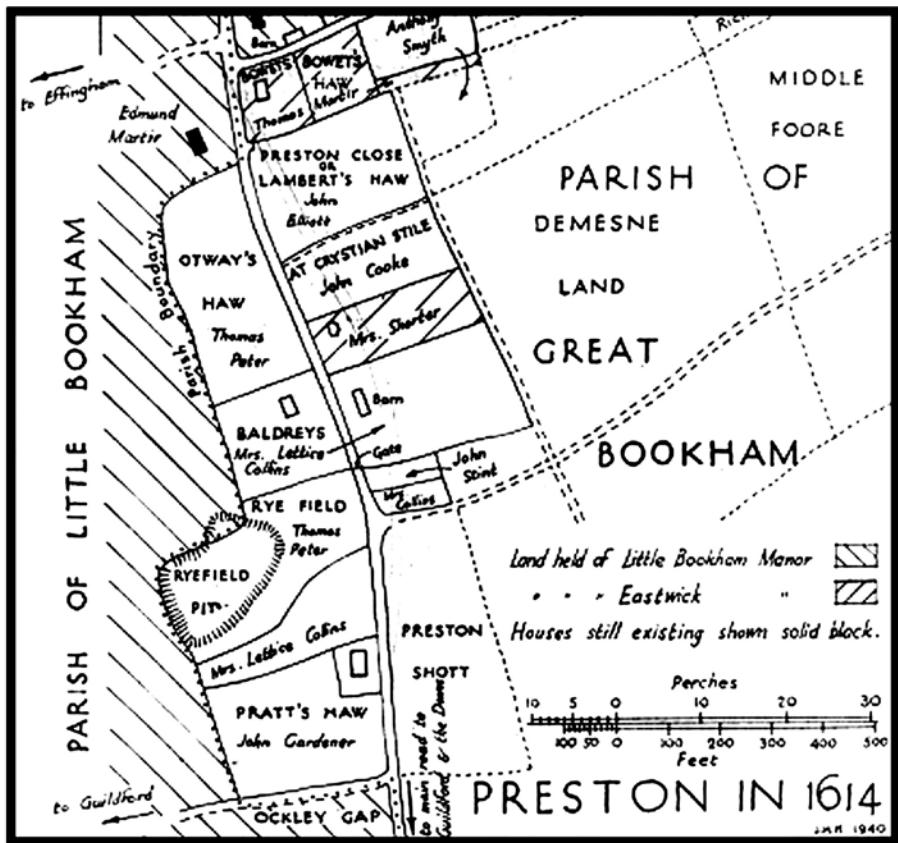
1614 - Second Parliament of James I meet.

An extract from the Burial Register of the St Nicholas Church, Great Bookham records;

Lettice Collins - Widow of Henry Collins clerk - buried 19 March 1656/57

In the absence of finding any wills for Henry or Lettice Collins to date I am unable to establish any children from their union, sufficient to say that the family surname of Collins is well represented in the Parish Registers for Great & Little Bookham and Effingham at this period.

John Harvey has attributed the name of Baldreys to the Tenement in the occupation of Lettice Collins. I am not sure yet what source John Harvey consulted to be able to make this attribution, but it is interesting and is one of my lines for further research.



Part of a reconstructed map by John Harvey (1940) of the boundary of Great and Little Bookham in 1614.

Foot Note:

I should like to thank Bill Whitman after seeing the article on Thomas Seawell in the February 2013 Newsletter informed me that Henry Seawell one of the sons of Thomas Seawell died in 1812 age 22 and is also interred in this family grave in St Nicholas churchyard. It was not previously mentioned in John Blair's article but was picked up by Rodney Cube in his book in the Bookham Archive. I was also informed that the maintenance of the Seawell grave is not the responsibility of the church but is the responsibility of the descendants of Seawell Family and their successors.

Thanks also to Bill Whitman for some Parish Register dates of Baptisms for the family name of Collins, some of which may be descendants of Lettice Collins living in Great Bookham post 1657.

References:

- University of Cambridge, Alumni cantabrigienses; a biographical list of all known students, graduates and holders of office at the University of Cambridge (Volume part 1. Vol. 1)
- HRO, 21M65 A1/27 (Episcopal Register)
- L&DLHS Proceedings Vol.1. No.5 (1951)
- The impact of plague in Tudor and Stuart England By Paul Slack
- Surrey Wills - Surrey Plus Wills Index (internet)
- Dustydocks.com - Great & Little Bookham & Effingham Parish Registers.
- Thomas Clays Map of Great Bookham 1614-1617 Woking History Centre, ref. ZS/82/1-3
- John Harvey's (1940) research work into the Thomas Clay's 1614 Survey, Map and Schedule of Great Bookham held in the Surrey Archaeological Society Archives in the Library at Castle Arch.

David Hartley

Beverley Nichols - Merry Hall, Ashtead



Born John Beverley Nichols: September 9th 1898 at The Woods, Bower Ashton, near Bristol he was the son of a wealthy solicitor. He was educated at Marlborough and then at Balliol College, Oxford. After flirting with politics and abandoning a career in law he became a journalist and author. Between his first novel Prelude (1920) and last Twilight (1982) he wrote more than 60 works on topics ranging from travel to politics, religion to cats, plus children's stories, detective mysteries and autobiographies. His most famous work was 'Down the Garden Path' (1932) illustrated by Rex Whistler. He was for many years a contributor to the magazine Woman's Own. He was also a talented musician and composer and a close friend of many theatrical and literary figures of the day. In 1946 he bought Merry Hall in Agates Lane, Ashtead and stayed for some ten years. He wrote several books during his stay.

One of these, Merry Hall was dedicated to A E Newby, his gardener who is referred to in the book as 'Oldfield'. - this name is preserved in Oldfield Gardens, Ashtead. Many famous celebrities visited him at Merry Hall but few local people were invited into the house. Exceptions were the Maples family who lived at Murreys Court opposite and Peter Yorke, the band leader who lived in Rookery Hill.

He was Vice-President of Ashtead Horticultural Society and opened their summer shows in 1953 and 1954. His was also involved with the productions of the Ashtead Players of which he was a patron from 1954 to 1957. He wrote a most complimentary article in Woman's Own about the 1954 production of Ruddigore, recounting how the cast were invited to Merry Hall after the show and sang and danced in the music room, repeating most of the opera.

He was very open about his sexuality and had a partner for 40 years called Cyril Butcher. When he left the district it was to find another house and write more autobiographical books.

He died on September 15th 1983 at Kingston upon Thames. The day after his death a celebration of his life took place at St Paul's, Covent Garden. Ned Sherrin arranged the programme comprising extracts from his works which included Derek Jacobi reading 'A Bluebell from Twilight'.

Goff Powell

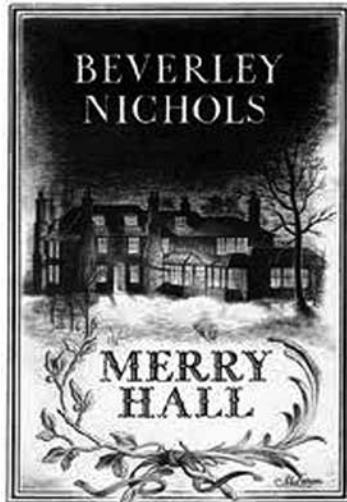
(Extracted from Ashtead, a Village Transformed L&DLHS 1977/History of Ashtead L&DLHS 1995 with additions.)

WW2 Memories

During Michael Anderson's lecture on 'The Bookhams in WW2' given to our Society on 15th February memories and images flashed through my mind. I was born and living at that time in Hampstead Garden Suburb, North London and many of the scenarios mentioned in Michael's lecture were familiar to me. The suburb was part of the Hampstead Heath extension which housed the naval anti-aircraft guns adding to the noise and destruction during the blitz. I could write a book about the events but sufficient just to mention four scenarios linking my memories in North London with those in Bookham mentioned in Michael's lecture.

I was an evacuee for one year, not in the true sense but sent to boarding school in Yorkshire to escape the first year of bombing in 1940. For an eight year old Yorkshire was bleak and cold and a long way from home. My lasting memory is of packing a bottle of codliver oil in my suitcase which later broke permeating everything with a fishy smell. Everything had to be destroyed and my parents weren't pleased!

Michael mentioned the fear that the V1s (doodlebugs) engendered in the local population



of Bookham. They were sinister black objects with a flaming tail, pilotless and capable of enormous and widespread destruction and I remember lying flat in the road on my way to school when the engine cut out on its approach. One sunny Sunday afternoon I was having tea in the kitchen when there was a huge bang and thud which we later learned was one of the first V2 rockets to fall on North London: no siren or air raid warning. The damage caused by these rockets was sometimes less as they buried themselves deep into the ground. On a recent visit to northern France I came across the next generation of V3 rocket housed in a deep bunker and fortunately destroyed by the Allies before it could be deployed. I shudder to think what the outcome would have been should they have been used.

In the first years of the war the air raid sirens heralded the coming of the bombers, the engines droning to confuse the listening devices. The sound of the siren still sends squiggles through me and we longed for the ‘all clear’. Sirens were located in Bookham at the cross roads by the Old Crown and at the Atlas Works by the station. Michael Anderson mentioned the Morrison shelters used indoors. The alternative for many of us was a strong dining room table or a cellar and I remember spending night after night in either of these locations during the height of the bombing. Children’s gas masks cases contained emergency rations of sultanas which we would raid during the long hours spent in air raid shelters at school. We had gas attack practices and I hated the claustrophobic effect of the mask with its smell of rubber.

Air Raid wardens were part of the ARP (Air Raid Precaution) Organisation, their tasks including enforcing blackout regulations and fire fighting. Incendiary bombs were often dropped in clusters and a map showing where the bombs fell in the district is displayed in Leatherhead Museum. The book ‘The Bookhams in WW2’ records memories of Turville Kille saying ‘The Downs were lit up like Fairyland’. The museum has among its artefacts glass spheres measuring 8cm in diameter which were thrown at the burning incendiary bombs shattering the glass and releasing a cloud of carbon tetrachloride which smothered the fire. Some of these fire extinguishers have been donated by Robert Hall who lived in a house in Burnham Road, Bookham. He found numerous WW2 artefacts in the loft including the fire extinguishers and aerials which must have been linked to radio receivers downstairs. The garden has an underground air raid shelter indicating that the house had been a Home Guard post.



Michael Anderson’s lecture will have jogged the memories of many of us and the book with its text and attractive pictures and illustrations puts it all expertly into print.

Dr Fred Meynen

(Photo supplied by Alun Pooley)

Editor’s Note

While the V1 Doodlebugs were very visible the later V2 pure rocket just fell from the sky

at a speed of over 3,000 mph. There was no warning and all that was known was the disastrous end result. Purely by chance I happened to see one just dropping out of the sky as I was idly standing at a bus stop waiting for a 173 bus in Peckham, South East London. It fell seconds later about a mile and a half from where I was standing to destroy a large number of houses at what was known as 'The Brockley Jack'. The whole earth shook and the damage was disastrous. It demolished 26 houses killing 14 with another 69 injured and also a train lost all its windows as it was travelling through Crofton Park station. While Blocks of flats now stand where the rocket fell. Apparently within this small SE4 area around that date five V2 rockets and also 18 V1s fell and the death toll was 94 affecting hundreds of houses.

Martin Warwick



Engineering in Cobham

Some additional notes to Peter Tarplee's excellent article on Noel Macklin and Cobham motor car and motor launch production.

Some early Invicta car bodies, 1925 were made by Gordon England (1922) Ltd, of Walton-on-Thames. The smaller cheaper version of the Invicta car produced in 1933 used a 1498cc 45 bhp single ohc 6-cylinder Blackburne engine in a scaled-down 4.5 litre chassis. But it was underpowered, overweight and overpriced so not successful, only 60 cars being produced. These were mostly four-door tourers or saloons, bodies mainly manufactured by Carbodies Ltd of Coventry.

The original Railton constructed in 1933 had an aluminium body built by John Charles & Co Ltd using the brand name Ranalah in Kingston. It used a Hudson Terraplane 4010cc V8 engine and Andre Hartford Telecontrol shock absorbers (Andre & Co Kingston bypass). From 1934 other coachbuilders built the bodies. In 1935 some special door-less bodies were made by E J Newns of Thames Ditton and these were sold as Light Sports Tourers.

Of the Fairmile motor launches RAF numbers 001 to 040 were 115 foot long range reconnaissance boats ex Royal Navy built between 1943 and 1944. An additional reference source on air-sea rescue launches is a booklet by John Pritchard.

In 1943 towards the end of the war the Airspeed Company set up a design office at Fairmile Manor, Cobham under A E Hagg to design what ended up as the Airspeed AS.57 Ambassador airliner. This was to a requirement identified by the Brabazon Committee for a short-to-medium-haul replacement for the Douglas DC-3. It was eventually ordered by the British European Airways Corporation for European routes. The design office moved back to their normal base at Portsmouth in 1949.

Doug Hollingsworth

The Official Re-Opening of the Museum

It all happened on Saturday 6th April when there was a great turnout of members and visitors to the museum. Cllr Caroline Salmon, Chairman of the Council of Mole Valley kindly consented to re-open the museum launching our 2013 museum season giving a very considered speech on the theme of the 'Value of Local Museums', alluding to her early childhood attending school in Bookham and her first experience of museums.

Our audience showed their appreciation and our Curator, Lorrain Spindler did the honours and presented a bouquet of flowers to her on behalf of the History Society and Museum.

Our special guest was Shirley Collins MBE, the well-known English Folk Singer of 1960s and 70s, who with her sister Dolly were pivotal figures in the English song revival in that period. Shirley had travelled up from Lewes Sussex where she now lives to attend the opening of the museum and the display prepared by Alun Roberts on the Folk Tradition of the song 'The Poor Murdered Women' written by James Fairs (of Fairs Road) about a murder on Leatherhead Common in 1834. Shirley spoke briefly of her involvement and of her rendition of the song. Her audience were very appreciative and Alun Roberts presented her with a bouquet.



Shirley Collins



Shirley Collins & Cllr Caroline Salmon

Three Admirals

In Bookham there is a road sign, the name of a building and a memorial that remind us of three admirals associated with the village in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

The first of these was Admiral Broderick who bought Bookham Grove and about 80 acres of land from the Howard family in 1765. He is commemorated by Broderick Grove. His story is told by S E D Fortescue in ‘People and Places, Great and Little Bookham’ and may also be found in Wikipedia where the name is spelled Brodrick.

Thomas Broderick made a name for himself in the Caribbean under Admiral Vernon in 1738 and in a later war he was at the court marshal of Admiral Byng. In 1756 his ship caught fire and he had to swim for about an hour before being rescued, naked. In 1759 he was second in command to Admiral Boscawen at the Battle of Lagos Bay. He then returned to England and died in 1769. Bookham Grove was later sold to the Dawnay family who lived there until 1903.



Yelverton Court is named for Admiral Bentinck Yelverton CB. His career is outlined in ‘The Dreadnought Project’ but he seems never to have been involved in active warfare. At the start of the 1St World War he was coming up to retirement age and left HMS Good Hope which was sunk at the battle of Coronel. He became the Senior Naval Officer at Folkestone until 1919 responsible for transport of thousands of troops to and from France. In retirement he lived until 1959 at Mead House on the site of which Yelverton Court was built.

Our third admiral has no memorial in the village, although he is the only one buried in Bookham, but there is a magnificent memorial in St Nicolas Church to his son, Cornet Francis Geary.

Admiral of the Fleet Sir Francis Geary of Oxenhoath and Polesden married Mary Bartholomew when he was Commodore of the Medway Squadron in 1748. Their elder son, Francis was killed in 1776 during the American War of Independence and his memorial is in the South Aisle of St Nicolas Church.

Sir Francis bought Polesden in 1748. He had a good naval career and became Commander of the Channel Fleet with his flag in HMS Victory, an Admiral of the Fleet, 1778 and, in 1782, after his giving up command, a baronet.

Their second son, William 1756-1825 who succeeded his father in 1796 inherited both Oxenhoath and Polesden. He sold Polesden and used the proceeds during his election as an MP for Kent serving with Sir Edward Knatchbull, a connection with the Austen family. Sir



Francis and his wife are buried in St Nicolas but their grave is not marked.

References:

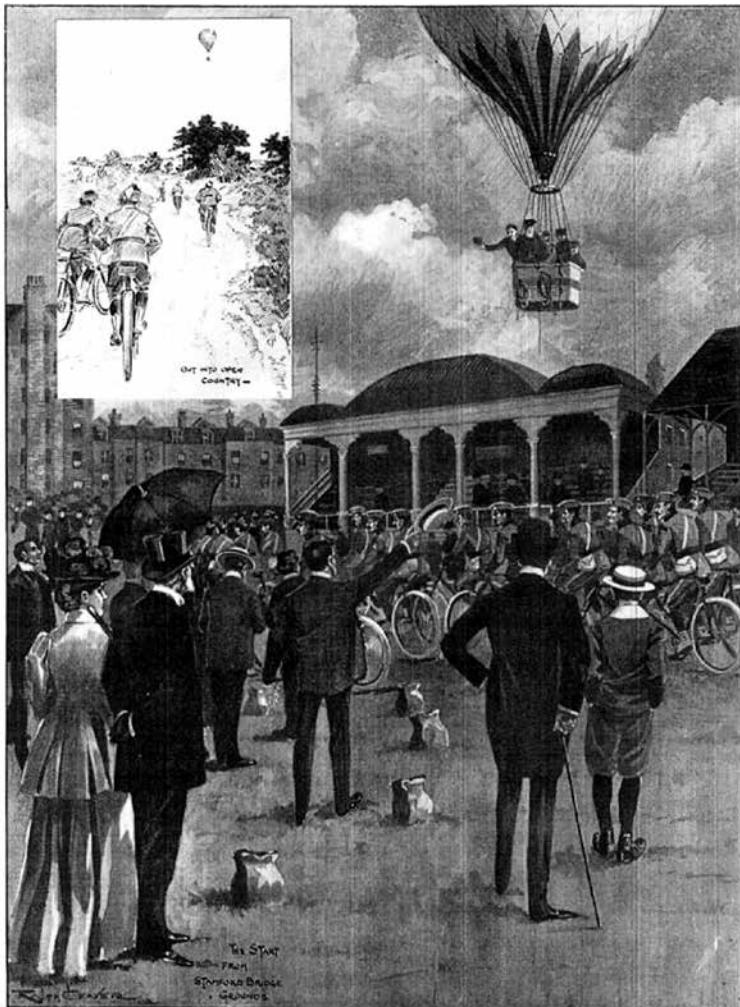
'Bookham in the Twentieth Century', Bill Culley. Leatherhead & District Local History Society.

'People and Places, Great and Little Bookham,' S E D Fortescue.

A variety of web sites including Wikipedia.

Bill Whitman

The Bookham Balloon Tragedy 1902



The Bookham Balloon Tragedy 1902The Reverend John Bacon was not only the Vicar of a village near Newbury, Berkshire he was a scientist, an inventor and an experienced balloonist who advised the War Office on balloon warfare. In this latter role in 1902 he organised a series of military exercises involving the Army Volunteer Force and hot-air balloons

One of the first to take place was at 4.00pm on Saturday August 30th when Bacon masquerading as an enemy spy lifted off from Stamford Bridge, Fulham in a balloon flown by Mr P Spencer, a well known balloonist. All units of the Bicycle Corps of the London Volunteer Force had been alerted by earlier announcements in The Evening Standard and were given orders to follow the balloon and capture the 'spy' wherever he landed.

The moderate wind took it almost due south and after passing over south London, Wimbledon and east of Kingston it headed towards Epsom all the time being followed by about fifty part time soldiers and a number of civilian cyclists who had joined in the chase on the way.

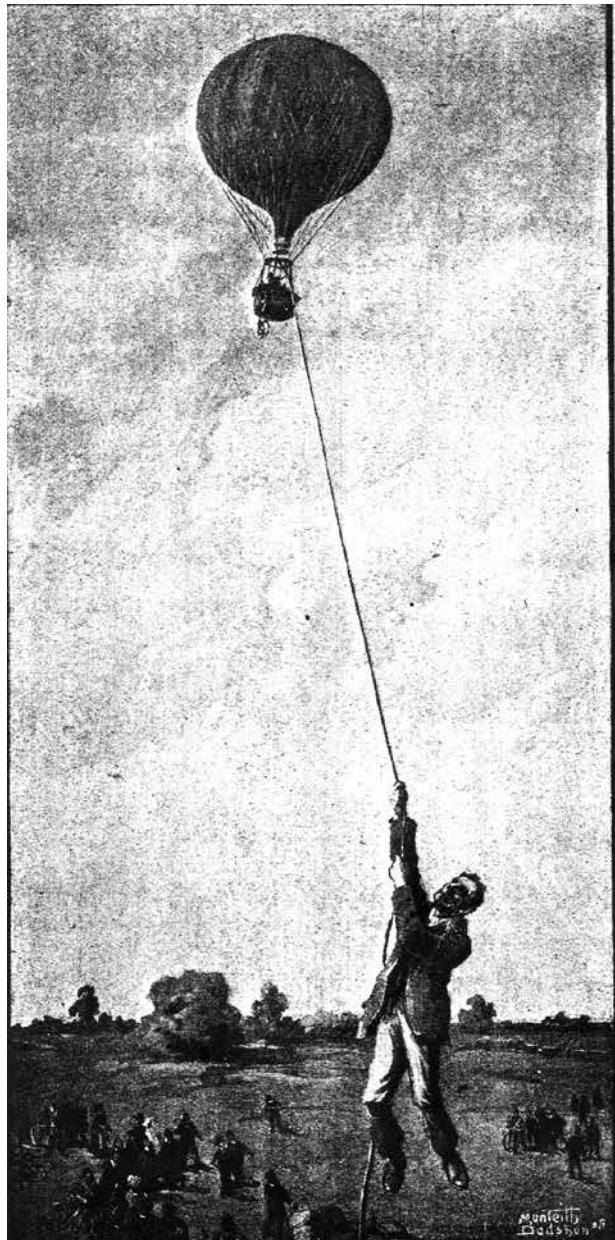
Just after 6.00pm now approaching the Surrey Hills with Box Hill and Polesden Lacey ahead Spencer decided to land in a corn field between Fetcham and Great Bookham owned by Mr Hankey of Fetcham where the crops were still being harvested.



The 'spy' captured in the straw surrounded by the chasing soldiers

Immediately the basket (in those days called 'car') touched the ground Bacon jumped out and ran about one hundred yards to hide in a stack of corn sheaves. He had not to wait long before the military cyclists arrived and the 'spy' was soon discovered and arrested. There followed the presentation of the prize, a pair of field glasses to the capturer and the military exercise was over.

News of the landing spread quickly round the village and a number of local people joined the cyclists surrounding the balloon. After requests for 'rides' Mr Spencer announced that he would allow six passengers at a time to ascend in the balloon which would be controlled by the anchor rope. After ballast, grapple irons and other equipment were removed from the basket men came forward to hold the rope and the rides started. About twenty were completed when the farm's foreman who was collecting up the corn residue approached Spencer to complain that the balloon and crowd were upsetting his horse so Spencer immediately called out 'last ride'. Then as the passengers clambered in and out of the basket the rope came free and the balloon quickly rose with one man still desperately clinging to the rope and when it reached about sixty feet he released his grip and fell back to earth.



Many spectators including soldiers trained in first aid rushed to help the victim but it was immediately clear that he was gravely injured and was placed on a sheep hurdle and taken

to his home at Flint Cottages, Leatherhead Road about half a mile away where a doctor who had been called from Leatherhead pronounced him dead. He was John Tickner who was 42 and father of five children.

Meanwhile the balloon had continued to climb and the four passengers which included a young boy believed it to be out of control and were terrified but much to their relief at about 100 feet the balloon stopped and gently floated back to earth landing a short distance from where it had taken off.

An inquest was held at the Plough Inn, Effingham on September 2nd where Mrs. Louisa Tickner gave evidence of identification. She said that she last saw her husband who worked for the local water company alive at their home at Flint Cottages, Bookham on August 30th at about 6.30pm. He was in the garden holding their baby when a balloon came over and he ran after it. Shortly afterwards Mrs Tickner followed her husband to the field where the balloon came down but did not see the accident happen.

Several witnesses were called including John Tickner's brother who saw the accident and one Thomas Humphrey, a bailiff who said he was at the scene of the accident and saw a group of people fall over after a shout of 'leave go of the rope' but Tickner continued to hold on. Another witness said he saw at one time as many as fifteen men holding the rope. Dr Walter Hearnshaw stated that he examined Mr Tickner at his home and concluded that he had died from a broken neck.

As Mr Spencer the pilot of the balloon was unable to attend the inquest it was adjourned for a week. At the resumed hearing on the 9th Mr Spencer was called as the main witness and he stated that he had full charge off the balloon and when approached to allow spectators to ascend in the balloon he consented. The day was calm and a rope 250 feet long was attached to the basket. He stayed close to the basket so that he could always balance the balloon and had completed nearly twenty ascents when Mr Taylor told him that the balloon was upsetting his horses so he immediately called out 'last ride'. When the balloon descended he was shocked to see three people jump out together and this action allowed it to rise again. He shouted 'leave go of the rope' because he knew that the men would not be able to hold the balloon down and he also knew that the passengers would be safe as the control valve was open and this would allow the balloon to descend automatically. In his evidence Mr Spencer mentioned the safety control valve which was likely to have been a vent in the crown of the envelope which when open would allow the hot air to escape and the balloon to descend. In spite of his warning several men hung on to the rope and were taken off their feet before letting go but the deceased was taken up much higher before he fell. Mr Spencer stated that he was aware that the victim was seriously injured and he suggested to the soldiers who were trained in first aid attending him to place him on a sheep gate and take him to hospital.

The result of the Coroner's enquiry into the circumstances of the death of John Tickner entirely exonerated all those in charge of the balloon from blame. The Deputy Coroner stated that Mr Spencer had a wide experience as an aeronaut and his explanation of what took place showed that all reasonable care and forethought were exercised. Mr Spencer could tell exactly how many might make the short ascents in safety and but for the fact that several people left the basket unexpectedly all would have passed off well. It said much for Mr Spencer's caution and skill that this should have been the first fatal accident in twenty

nine years and we may be sure he regrets the occurrence as deeply as anyone.

After the inquest a Relief Fund for Mrs Louisa Tickner and her children was opened by the Rev Bacon with a donation of £5 and other amounts quickly followed. In September 1902 the Reverend Edward Malleson of Great Bookham Rectory published the amounts received with a statement on the Relief Fund.

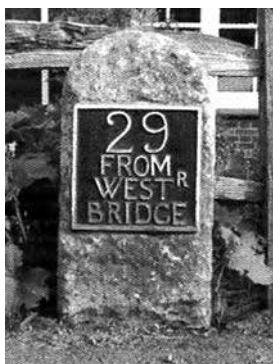
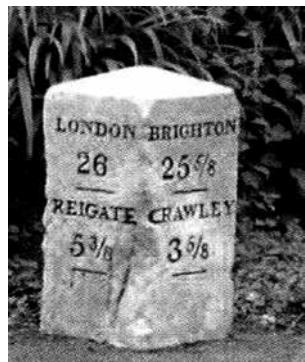
| | £ | s | d |
|--------------------------------|-----|----|----|
| ‘Cycling’ Magazine Readers | 5 | 2 | 2 |
| Subscription List (still open) | 77 | 9 | 10 |
| Rev Bacon & Friends | 30 | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 112 | 12 | 0 |

Mrs Tickner received 10s per week out of the funds which continued for another two years after which she received 7s. 6p per week for another two years and then 5s a week for as long as the money lasted by which time the children would earn wages. (The total amount collected would be worth £10,848 today with Rev Bacon’s initial £5 worth £484).

Jack Watchous

Milestones in Surrey

Dr Derek Renn a former president of our Society gave this talk at a well attended meeting. His story began in the days before the era of the turnpikes. The roads that existed were primitive and often ran through sparsely populated areas and their maintenance was the responsibility of local people supervised by the Justices of the Peace. Their state was often chaotic and it was obvious that a better system was needed. Eventually Turnpike Trusts began to be formed, each set up by an Act of Parliament. Income was levied from passing traffic at ‘toll bars’ and the proceeds were used to pay for the maintenance of the road. The system developed very slowly but one by one Surrey saw the creation of these new routes.



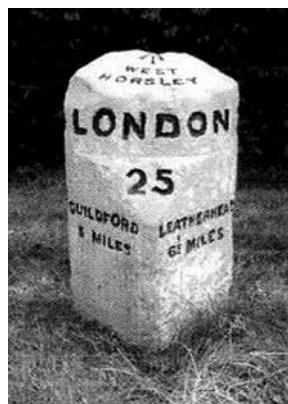
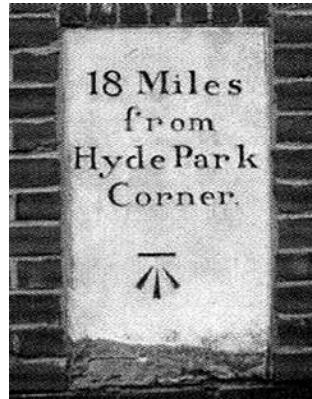
The carriage of letters by road led to the charges being ‘by the mile’, and some way of marking the miles became a necessity. In 1740 an Act was passed obliging all roads covered by the Trusts to have milestones installed. Derek displayed an interesting map showing the location of Surrey’s turnpikes around that time. Where were these milestones to be found now and why had so relatively few survived? To answer this the speaker jumped a couple of centuries and reminded us of World War Two during which there was a severe threat of invasion. All forms of direction sign had to be obliterated or destroyed and for this reason vast numbers of Surrey’s milestones were destroyed, buried or defaced. Some were

carried away and ended up in bizarre places such as private gardens. Nonetheless he was able to speak of the many that had survived and these were of great interest because of their diverse appearances. At this point he displayed pictures illustrating some of these, at the same time explaining how turnpike construction spread to all parts of the county.

One might have thought that milestones would take on some 'standardised' form, but this was far from the case and the interest lay in our discovering how many shapes, sizes and types of inscription there were to be found. Most of those illustrated indicated the number of miles to nearby places as well as naming the final destination, e.g. Brighton, Portsmouth or similar. Invariably the number of miles to London would be stated, but this was not at all straightforward. Whilst some indicated just 'LONDON', the majority were more specific. Some quoted 'WESTMINSTER BRIDGE', others mentioned 'WHITEHALL', 'HYDE PARK CORNER' and still others indicated 'CORNHILL'. One fascinating aspect of the talk was that hardly any part of Surrey was excluded. The extraordinary shapes of these objects and the manner in which the inscriptions were displayed provided a succession of pictures each of interest. In every case Derek described the location and explained how the inscription came to be decided. Many milestones are now badly defaced due to the passage of time or by wilful damage. Some of those in best condition were those made of cast iron. A few of these have even been repainted and are in pristine condition.

The talk was rounded off with an outline of how the turnpike era gradually came to an end. From the turn of the 19th century there appeared firstly of the canals and then the railways. Even with the turnpikes, the carriage of goods by road had always been slow

and sometimes hazardous. With the new competition their end was inevitable. They gradually ceased to remain solvent and one by one they were wound up as being no longer viable. Modern roads eventually replaced them but their route often remains the same as in the case of the Leatherhead to Guildford road. The only reminder of the bygone era is sometimes the occasional discovery of an ancient milestone. Thus ended a fascinating and informative presentation.



John Wettern

News from The Friends Of Leatherhead Museum

Thirteen people from Leatherhead History Society and the Friends travelled to Chertsey on Friday March 22nd to visit Chertsey Museum. This museum is housed in an imposing three storey red brick Regency house on one of the main streets (Windsor Street) of Chertsey town. We were instantly made welcome with coffee and biscuits by Emma Warren (the curator) and her team in their super education room, an Aladdin's cave of built in cupboards piled high with craft resources and loan boxes.

Emma gave us a power point presentation of her twenty favourite items in the museum. They ranged from an embroidered Tudor nightcap in marvellous condition to a Viking sword, tiles from Chertsey Abbey to the largest collection of Greek pots held in any museum. The museum was bequeathed a collection of 4000 costumes by estate of Olive Matthews in 1979. She also left the museum a trust fund for the display and maintenance of these costumes.





their extensive education program.

After lunch Emma took us over the road where she brought Chertsey Abbey to life as we walked (in the freezing cold) around the park showing us the fish ponds, the moat, the position of the water mill and the vegetable gardens. I could picture it all as a bustling Abbey, one of the largest in the country in its heyday.

We were so well looked after by the museum staff. It was a very rich day altogether and I for one will visit again as there were many things that I didn't have time to look at thoroughly.

Future events

We are in the throes of organising The Craft Afternoons for May 30th, 31st and June 1st.

There will be a publicity barrow highlighting the craft afternoons and the work of the History Society and the museum in the Swan Centre on Saturday 25th May.



We then explored the museum with Emma and had fun finding the artefacts from her selection of 20. There was so much to see that I can't possibly do the museum justice here but I do urge you all to go and visit. Their presentation of artefacts is so attractive and clear with 'hands on' exhibits and extra drawers to open. As a museum they are funded by Runnymede and by their trust and they have paid staff to look after the collection and manage

Julia Lack

***Make sure you visit the History Society Website
www.leatherheadlocalhistory.org.uk***

Future Programme

We have no Programme Secretary yet - any volunteers? At present we are taking it in turn. Our programme committee consists of Frank Haslam, Linda Heath, Goff Powell, Dererk Renn, John Wettern.

Autumn Lectures

Lectures are held on the third Friday of the month at the Letherhead Institute, top of the High Street. Coffee 7.30pm lecture 8.00pm admission £1 All are very welcome

20th September ‘The Folklore of Surrey’ by Matthew Alexander former Curator of Guildford Museum.

18th October ‘Local War Memorials’ by Frank Haslam, one of our members and an authority on service graves.

November and December lectures not yet finally arranged. Full details in August Newsletter. Has anyone any ideas for a new format for our December meeting?

Walks and Visits

2nd June Sunday Guided Walk Around Ashtead

Gwen Hoad, local resident and member of this Society will lead a walk around the area of Ashtead south of The Street to look at interesting old buildings.

We meet in the Peace Memorial Hall car park at 14.00 on Sunday 2nd June. The walk will take about one and a half hours and will follow the route described in Barry Cox’s Ashtead Heritage walk leaflet. Comfortable footwear is advised but hopefully there will be no mud !

If you would like to come please let Gwen know or just turn up on the day. Email gwen.hoad@grmali.com or telephone 01372 273934

Owing to lack of support in recent years, **no visits** have been arranged this year. However, the programme committee members are open to suggestions

Heritage Weekend, Friday 13th- Sunday 15th September.

The theme this year is ‘What’s in a name?’ This gives a lot of scope - it could be the name of a person either famous or a family member, a town, street, river, etc. Now Is Your Chance! We are looking for as many members as possible to produce articles with photos or drawings - they can be as short or long as you like. This is an opportunity for a corporate display on a whole range of topics. Send your items to any member of the Executive Committee (see inside covers of Newsletter) which can then be pasted onto boards. Come Forward - Don’t be Shy!

In addition to this there will be other displays in the Institute and a guided walk round the town on Saturday 7th September looking at historic sites. More details in the August Newsletter and a full programme in the Heritage booklet in August.

Friends of the Leatherhead Museum Chairman

Julia Lack 01372 386050 upper.mole@ntlworld.com
Librarian (Leatherhead Institute): Vacant

The Library is open on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays from 10.00am to 12.30pm. Exceptionally, arrangements may be made to use it at other times by applying to the Librarian.

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Committee Members:

Doug Hollingsworth, Linda Heath

Archival Material

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

| | |
|------------------------------|-------------|
| Ashtead | Gwen Hoad |
| Bookham | Roy Mellick |
| Fetcham Documents | Alan Pooley |
| Fetcham Photographs and Maps | Ed Tims |
| Leatherhead Documents | Vacant |
| Leatherhead Photographs | Linda Heath |
| Leatherhead Maps | Alan Pooley |

Historical Enquiry Service

Coordinator Vacant

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

