



Leatherhead & District Local History Society
Newsletter *September 2017*



Apple Bough Cottage in Rectory Lane, one of Ashted's oldest houses. Inset: The Coupers, who created the building in the 1940s and 50s from two ancient cottages. See story on Page 2.

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Front cover: Cyril (1894-1981) and Sybil (1897-1996) Couper discovered the 300-year-old Apple Bough Cottage in Rectory Lane, Ashtead, when their young daughter was evacuated from London during World War 2. When their own flat was bombed they rented the neighbouring cottage and set about transforming its interior. In 1954 they bought the property itself from an elderly brother and sister who had lived there for over 70 years, operating Surrey's oldest hand laundry from the building. The Coupers joined the two cottages together and created Apple Bough as it is today, including a huge fireplace with a chimney that once served both cottages.

EDITORIAL

This edition includes news of major initiatives, all covered by our Chairman on Page 5. There's also the usual mix of other news from the Museum and the Friends as well as the Society's programme over the coming months.

Included too are details of our most ambitious event this year, the November talk by TV personality Bamber Gascoigne in association with Leatherhead Theatre. We hope the talk on the extraordinary new opera house at Bamber's

West Horsley estate will herald lasting new co-operation between the Museum and the theatre in Church Street.

We also have two oral history features this time as tasters for our online archive as it grows with spoken memories from throughout the 20th century. Other content relates to this month's Heritage Open Days, a controversial look at the Industrial Revolution and a mysterious archaeological discovery.

We urgently need a new Sales Secretary for our books, currently sold at the Museum, Bartons Bookshop in Bridge Street, and Wishing Well in Bookham High Street. Regular contacts determine stock needs and manage payments. Invoicing is done using the WAVE online system and training will be provided. Books are also sold at Society talks and other events where assistance is available. Stocks are mainly kept in the Priory Basement in Church Street with smaller numbers at the officer's home. An annual audit is required, assisted by the Treasurer and takes less than an hour. Re-print costs have fallen as books can now be printed in smaller numbers without setup costs so large runs are no longer necessary. This helps both cash flow and storage space. The officer liaises with printers and re-orders stock as agreed with the Executive Committee.

TONY MATTHEWS

*Newsletter contributions to editor@lheadmuseum.plus.com
Next edition deadline - 31 October 2017*

**Notice of Special General Meeting to be held on
Friday, 15 September 2017 at 8pm in the Abraham Dixon
Hall of the Letherhead Institute.**

The purpose of the Special General Meeting is for Society members to consider two resolutions tabled by your Executive Committee:

Special Resolution 1

The members resolve to fix the rates of subscription to the Society for the year 2018 as follows:

Ordinary Members	£ 20 (no change)
Associate Members	£ 6 (no change)
Student Members	£ 6 (new)
Small Corporate Members	£125 (new)

Special Resolution 2

The members having considered the proposed addition below to the Rules of the Society resolve that the Trustees register this change with the Charities Commission and implement it accordingly:

‘To encourage, where desirable, the preservation of any site, building, monument or record of archaeological, antiquarian or historical interest in the district and to co-operate with public or private bodies or individuals in safeguarding such sites, buildings, monuments or records.’

NOTE: A similar resolution was proposed from the floor at the 2017 Annual General Meeting. This was rejected by the members *pro tem* in favour of further consideration by the Executive Committee. Your EC have identified a suitable clause already approved by the Charities Commission in the Rules of the Surrey Archaeological Society. This is copied verbatim apart from ‘county’ becoming ‘district’.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Your Executive Committee has been very busy, with two competitive procurements under way. The first for a building survey and ongoing project management for the Museum, the second a modernised website.

We have started reorganising the way we work. Our publicity team brought together our membership and promotional delivery in a coordinated grouping. You should see the results in more widely distributed *Newsletters* and local publicity with a much more effective website as an objective.

We have also combined the roles of Museum manager and curator. We now need to nominate assistant roles for formal delegation. An early 'win' is the realisation that our process for adding artefacts to the collection needs overhaul. More space is needed in our basement store as artefacts not on display compete with other demands. So a clear-out is planned very shortly.

Our programme team has organised a full quota of events for the year. The lecture at Fetcham Park House was both a relocation and change in timing and the next two events will include further innovations. The year's most ambitious event is due in November when the well-known TV personality Bamber Gascoigne will be speaking at Leatherhead Theatre on a topic of national interest. With ticketed sales, this will also mark a renewed relationship between us and the theatre trust which we hope will prove of long-term mutual benefit.

The Charities Commission has approved, with variation, the changes to the Society Rules agreed at our AGM. The EC has also resolved the matter of a role in conservation of our heritage. You are invited to a brief Special General Meeting (see Page 4) to consider this amendment. A second resolution concerns the 2018 subscription rates with no change for existing membership grades.

Thank you for your continued support - especially if you are helping with the work in the basement - and look forward to meeting you at our next meeting and SGM on 15 September.



JOHN ROWLEY

NEWS FROM THE FRIENDS OF THE MUSEUM

By GWEN HOAD

The stewards of the Museum have been manning it faithfully during the sometimes very hot summer months. They have also had to contend with the noise and disruption from the road-works outside. It is difficult to say whether attendance has been affected by all this but there have been plenty of interested visitors to make being there worthwhile.

There were two successful visits from Fetcham Village Infants School on 11 and 14 July. Lin Hampson, who organises these visits and contacts the schools, says three areas of the Museum were used.

Robin Christian opened up the outside area so that the children could be paleontologists searching for items buried in the sand tray. The Victorian kitchen was manned by Lin where they had to guess what a carpet-beater was used for and could use a dolly. Finally, Frank and Hilda Hollis's room upstairs was manned by Debby Humphreys where the children could hear music from the 1940s and learn about the couple's lives there during the Second World War. It was clearly deemed a success as a teacher said 'see you next year' and one little boy said: 'I wish I could live in this house.'

Unfortunately we received no responses from other schools or clubs despite phone calls and emails but the Fetcham school success showed what was possible.

This year's craft afternoons were on 11, 18 and 25 August. The activities were a mixture with hands-on crafts, the picture booth, and a graffiti wall. A different theme each week was expected to keep all of the young visitors happy throughout the afternoons. Our 'guests' were Frank and Hilda Hollis, the last private occupants of Hampton Cottage, together with Debra, a Victorian maid. All of the actors wore period costumes, telling of their lives and times. Artist Cathy Brett made a large scale drawing with outlines for the children to fill in or add their own ideas to make a large collage or graffiti wall.

As usual the Museum opened on 30 July for the Prudential London and Surrey Cycle Race. Debby Humphreys, Diana Rogers and Fred Meynen were on hand to welcome the many visitors patiently



Above: Hampton Cottage.

Right: An unconventional sight at the Museum earlier this year.

waiting for the riders to come through.

The Museum is open as normal on Heritage Weekend from Thursday, 7 September, plus 10am to 4pm on Sunday, 10 September.

Sadly, Mary Rice-Oxley, one of our most active local historians, died recently but she left the Friends a generous legacy of £1000 which will be put to good use. We recently bought a new printer for the office to replace the old one.

Under new entitlement arrangements to this *Newsletter*, we now aim to deliver copies to all paid up members of the Friends of the Museum. This is in addition to paid up members of the Society itself who have always received it in the past. However, there will also be copies in the Museum for our stewards. If anyone feels they have been missed please just let us know. We thank you all for your interest and support.



PROGRAMME OF ACTIVITIES

Unless stated, monthly meetings are held in the Abraham Dixon Hall of the Letherhead Institute. Coffee at 7.30pm and 8pm talk.

8 September, 3pm, St Nicolas Church, Bookham: Bill Whitman will talk about the origins of the Howards of Effingham and their involvement with the Spanish Armada of 1588. (Heritage Open Days)

10 September, 2pm, Ashted Peace Memorial Hall: Huw Jenkins will lead a walking tour of Ashted Village. (Heritage Open Days)

8-10 September: Heritage Open Days at the Museum with special additional opening on Sunday. See Page 38 for times.

15 September, 7.30pm: Tony Matthews will give a presentation on the Society's oral history service. After the Special General Meeting.

20 October, 7.30pm: *Leatherhead's Pop Scene - The Bluesette Club.* Chris Stagg on local popular musicians and recording in the 1950s.

17 November, 8pm, Leatherhead Theatre: Bamber Gascoigne will speak on West Horsley Place and the new opera house. See Page 9.

8 December, 7.30pm: Christmas Miscellany of short talks by members.

19 January, 7.30pm: Richard Hughes on *Beverley Nichols, Ashted's Forgotten Celebrity*, who lived in Merry Hall, Agates Lane. He wrote novels and magazine articles and composed musicals.

16 February, 7.30pm: David Williams, head of Surrey's Portable Antiquities Scheme, on *Working with Detectorists*.

16 March, 7.30pm: Annual General Meeting and a short lecture.

20 April, 7.30pm: Jane le Cluse, Archivist at Dorking Museum, on *Mediaeval life in Surrey Villages*.

FORTHCOMING LECTURE

BAMBER GASCOIGNE ON THE STORY OF OPERA AT WEST HORSLEY PLACE



Bamber Gascoigne, the original presenter of TV's *University Challenge*, will appear this autumn in the first joint project for many years between the L&DLHS and Leatherhead Theatre.



Following extensive national media coverage, Bamber, left, will be giving the last of this year's talks organised by the Society at 8pm on Friday, 17 November. But instead of the usual venue at Letherhead Institute, he will be on stage at the Leatherhead Theatre, telling the extraordinary story of how Britain's newest opera house was born this summer in the grounds of his estate, West Horsley Place, not far from Bookham (shown above).

Grange Park Opera - also known as the Opera in the Woods - is now based at the centuries old estate that he

inherited three years ago on the death of his great aunt, the Duchess of Roxburghe. Unusually, this will be a major fund-raising event for all three bodies - Leatherhead Museum, Leatherhead Theatre and the opera company itself, with tickets at £10.50 each now on sale from the theatre box office.

Bamber lived at Ashted Lodge in his youth and later had a role in events leading to the opening of the newly created Thorndike Theatre - now the Leatherhead Theatre - back in 1969. At the time, it had a certain amount of local authority support but today, like the Museum and the new opera house, it has to be self-funding. Working in partnership makes a great deal of sense, especially for Leatherhead's two complementary cultural centres at each end of Church Street. An exhibition by the Museum will be displayed at the theatre from Monday, 6 November until the pantomime season begins.

How Bamber's 50-room mansion, set in around 300 acres of glorious Surrey countryside, became home to the Grange Park Opera is a remarkable story. When his great aunt, the Duchess of Roxburghe, died in 2014 he had no idea it would happen. Only in 2015 was he approached by the opera company looking for new premises. Not only did the company manage to raise most of its £10 million budget without any public subsidy, it also secured planning permission and completed construction of a four-tiered, 750-seat theatre modelled on La Scala, Milan, in time for this summer's first night of Puccini's *Tosca*. The building's finishing touches were still needed but the opera season went ahead regardless.



Left: Bamber Gascoigne with Hazel Vincent Wallace whose public fund-raising appeal brought in £220,000 for the new theatre in the late 1960s.

THEATRE BACKGROUND CORRECTION

In the June 2017 Newsletter, *When Cinemas Were Tops* referred to Leatherhead Theatre's role as our local cinema. Since then, further information has emerged correcting two inaccuracies in the piece so apologies are due.



We said that after the closure of the old *Above: Church Street in 1928. The Crescent Cinema was built ten years later. It is where the theatre stands today.* the site in 1966:

‘Bingo failed to save it and Leatherhead Council bought the building. Major alterations to the stage, the frontage and the auditorium followed before it emerged for the re-opening by Sybil Thorndike in 1969 with 530 seats and a widely admired new theatre design. But it was 26 years before it began screening films as well as live performances and the management company then went bust in 1997. After a four-year break it re-opened as the Leatherhead Theatre in 2001 and despite continuing serious financial challenges it is now very much our local cinema. The building was given Grade 2 listing in 1999.’

In fact, Leatherhead Urban District Council never bought the building at any stage but rather provided £10,000 towards its conversion into the Thorndike Theatre. Nor was it true that 26 years passed before it began screening films. The Thorndike Theatre did so on Sundays and for many years there was a Summer Film Festival for up to two weeks.

The June feature also omitted to mention the amazing public appeal launched by Hazel Vincent Wallace which led to the theatre’s construction. The theatre was built at a cost of £464,000 in 1969 (in today’s money several million pounds). Of that, £90,000 came from

the owners of the old Crescent Cinema, £50,000 from the Arts Council and the £10,000 from Leatherhead Council. Hazel, who had previously run the old Victoria Hall Theatre in the High Street, brought in £220,000 from the public appeal. The town owes a debt of gratitude to her and the theatre was proud to welcome her to last year's Drama Festival.

The land ownership question is clarified by a deed dated 28 April 1969 whereby Leatherhead Property Trust Limited (LPTL) dedicated a small part of the area for public use as part of Church Street when Leatherhead Council wished to widen the road. LPTL was originally set up by the Reeves family whose large house and garden had covered the area. The Land Registry title deed shows the Crescent Cinema site was owned by LPTL following a conveyance between H K Reeves and LPTL dated 23 July 1947.

This accords with the statement by Greville Poke, chair of the board of directors, Thorndike Theatre (Leatherhead) Limited: 'We were first approached by the Leatherhead Property Trust with the suggestion that the Crescent Cinema should be converted into a theatre.' The property title deed subsequently refers to a transfer of land dated 22 July 1993 from Hammerson UK Properties Ltd to Lawgra (No 200) Limited. On 9 August 1993 title absolute was registered in the name of Hague Investments Limited, although the company name change certificate from Lawgra to Hague was not issued until more than a year later on 15 August 1994.

Hague Investments is now the landlord for most of the commercial and residential properties in Church Street. At no stage has Leatherhead Theatre been owned either by the former Leatherhead Council or its present day successor, Mole Valley District Council. It is leased from Hague Investments and receives no public funding at all, relying entirely on its own fund-raising activities to survive. We are grateful to Tim Caffell, the current director of Leatherhead Theatre, for this clarification.

Tickets for Bamber Gascoigne's talk at 8pm on 7 November available at £10.50 a head from Leatherhead Theatre box office. For more details call 01372 365141 or go to www.theleatherheadtheatre.org to book online. (Booking fees apply)

FEATURE

ASHTEAD'S LOST WYCH ELM

Pat Jenkins referred in her spring talk to the felling of the ancient Wych Elm in Ashtead Park. BRIAN BOUCHARD has sent this description from *A Hand-Book of Epsom* by C J. Swete, 1860.



A Wych Elm specimen

‘Around the house are extensive shrubberies stocked with the choicest trees and shrubs, and from its base the ground slopes downward by a graceful declension towards the lake, around which are grouped numbers of goodly forest trees. The beech, the chestnut, the walnut, and the noble ash are here, but the most prominent of all among them is the far-famed Wych Elm (*ulmus Montana*), which has attained a truly wonderful growth, even greater than that of the elm near the church at Kenilworth, to which every traveller to those parts wends his way, to look at that which has been the wonder of past ages, while it remains a glory of the present.

‘The Ashtead Wych Elm is of enormous size, and, although it has attained an age which it would seem fabulous to state, is still verdant and healthy in its upper limbs. Measured clear round the base, it will be found to reach 40 feet in circumference. Does it not look like some aged warrior whose trembling limbs have been well supported by the care of those who loved him, shored up as it is by underposts?’

‘Or may it not be likened to some fierce giant who has grown old in his unsubdued strength of will, tottering but determined, beneath his fetters? It is truly wonderful how, notwithstanding the great weight of its upper branches, this noble elm has stood the force of elements which have swept whole forests with destruction and laid the bravest low. And it seems like some hoary annuitant determined to live on still, now that it is so fondled by the hands of kindness, so that if there be a sapling looking forward to stand in its place, it must reckon on itself growing old, before the stout Wych Elm shall fall.’

LECTURE

MR MOORE'S FINE HOUSE ON A HILL AND HIS SPLENDID GARDENS

Around 150 guests packed two sittings in the glittering meeting hall at Fetcham Park house on a warm July evening to hear historian Vivien White's fascinating talk on 'Mr Moore's fine house on a hill' and his splendid gardens.

The lecture title came from the early 18th century diary *Through England on a Side Saddle in the time of William and Mary* by Celia Fiennes (1662-1741). Granddaughter of a viscount, she visited many country houses in her travels and described Fetcham Park and its grounds in some detail. But Vivien, a longstanding L&DLHS member and professional researcher, brought the place and its owner to life far more effectively than the original diary.

For a start, she explained, 'Mr Moore' was actually Arthur Moore (1666-1730), a remarkable self-made businessman who rose from the humblest of origins as a footman in northern Ireland to become

a well known British Tory politician, narrowly missed being appointed as Chancellor of the Exchequer, and then faced a cataclysmic financial and professional collapse which left him virtually bankrupt.

Yet at the height of his fortunes, he had Fetcham Park built by the prestigious royal architect William Talman, a rival of Sir Christopher Wren; had it decorated by the renowned mural painter Louis



Above: One of the murals by Louis Laguerre which survives to this day.



Above: Reconstruction of the house, garden and park as in Arthur Moore's day. The 100-acre estate then stretched from what is now the Lower Road in the north to the Guildford Road in the south and from The Ridgeway in the west to around half way along The Mount in the east. Badingham Drive, Rookery Close and Links Brow were all part of it. Copyright, courtesy of Fetcham Park Ltd.

Laguerre; and had it surrounded by a park and gardens landscaped by the royal garden designer George London, a predecessor of Capability Brown.

In the days of Queen Anne, Moore became so well known that he was the subject of popular songs and ditties (often rude) and was lampooned by Jonathan Swift in his book *Gulliver's Travels*. He was highly respected by fellow Tories for his expertise in trade but despised by his Whig critics for his origins and although of Protestant Scots stock, was alleged to have some involvement with the failed attempt by the Catholic James Stuart, the Old Pretender, to snatch the throne back from King George I in 1715.

Fetcham Park's creation preceded that by around 15 years. Vivien's extensive researches over some eight years uncovered evidence that work actually began on Arthur Moore's house in 1700 and its previous owner, Thomas Vincent, was not involved as



Above: L&DLHS President Alan Pooley, who presented the talk at Fetcham Park, is accompanied by historian and speaker Vivien White (centre) and Sandra Young, the present owner of the house.

sometimes asserted. The public rooms were designed to impress Moore's visitors and although the site had some disadvantages, it offered him the opportunity to build his own country seat, designed by Talman in a new experimental style known as astylar austerity.

The property also had fashionable water gardens in the French style with terrific views across the River Mole. The gardens covered ten acres of the 100-acre parkland. George London designed them in a simpler style to many of his other gardens. Vivien showed what both the house and grounds would have looked like at that time and although the building was refaced and remodelled in the 1880s, much of its original ground floor interior survived, especially the murals. The original footprint of the front is shown below.

Vivien had consulted most of the primary sources that exist about



Fetcham Park and intends to produce a full history of the house. The audience also heard about Moore's downfall, his death in 1730 and the eventual extinction of his family line.

MUSEUM FEATURE

THE HOLLISES AND HAMPTON COTTAGE

Frank and Hilda Hollis feature widely in the Museum's current display at Hampton Cottage as its residents during the Second World War. But who exactly were they and how did they fit into the cottage's full history of ownership and residency? Research collated by FRANK HASLAM

A recent visit by a great niece of Frank Hollis prompted some rapid research. It seems the Hollis family link with Hampton Cottage dated back to a ten-year tenancy between 1909 and 1919 when a Mr A Barnard lived there. His brother William then moved in with his wife Maria and daughter Hilda, also known as Molly.

William Barnard had been coachman to Thomas Cook of Sydenham, founder of the tour operating firm. He was given a carriage and horse by Mr Cook when he left his employ and started his own business, taking people to and from the station. He also groomed horses for local gentry.

Frank Hollis, a cousin, moved into the cottage when he married Hilda, who ran a dressmaking business from the premises. Hilda was always known as Miss Barnard and enjoyed a good reputation in the town. A brass plate with her name was on the front door of the cottage. Frank, who became superintendent of the Leatherhead Telephone Exchange, had a keen interest in radio and maintained a



*Above: Frank Hollis's great niece, Pam Morley, visiting Hampton Cottage in July.
Photo by Frank Haslam.*



shed in the garden where he recharged the accumulators needed for early radio sets. Hilda's parents remained at Hampton Cottage too until their deaths.

After World War 2 there were several changes of freehold ownership although the Hollises remained as tenants. In 1946 Hampton Cottage and Devonshire Cottage next door were both sold to Leonard Senhouse Baynton Williams, a fine art dealer. In 1955



Left: Pam Morley examines one of Hilda's dress designs. Photo by Frank Haslam.

Opposite top: A room as it might have looked in the Hollises' time.

Opposite below: A uniform in more formal days.

they changed hands again when bought by Stanley Charles Dixon, a jeweller, and once more a year later when purchased by antique dealer Percy Parkhurst.

By 1950 Frank and Hilda were living alone at the cottage, then No 28 Church Street. Ten years later in 1960, Frank bought the place himself for £750 and when he died in 1973 left it to Hilda. She continued living there and is still remembered working as a dressmaker in the front room with her cat Poppet lying in the sunny position in the bay window. In 1975, unable to live alone any longer, she moved into a home for the elderly, Radbroke in Fortyfoot Road, Leatherhead, where she died in 1977. Her cat Poppet moved to a new home with a friend in Minchin Close. Altogether then, Hilda lived at Hampton Cottage for some 56 years.

Church Street underwent a renumbering process following the demolition of Montague House and construction of the modern parade of shops with flats above. So when Hampton Cottage came on the market in 1976 it had become No 64 Church Street. A 17th century detached timber framed house within 100 yards of the town

centre, it was purchased by the Leatherhead & District Local History Society to house its growing collection of artefacts. This followed a fund-raising appeal which brought pledges of well over £3000 plus the promise of a 20 year interest-free loan.

So much for the Hollises. But Hampton Cottage and Devonshire Cottage, now known as Devonshire House, were both already centuries old when William Barnard's brother first arrived in 1909. Who were the owners before then and who lived there?

The land was owned by the church and Hampton Cottage is believed to have been built as a labourer's cottage some time between 1642 and 1682. In that year the widow of a falconer named William Fering was resident there. He is assumed to have worked for the lord of the manor on one of the local estates.

By 1708 Devonshire Cottage belonged to the Mansion and in 1872 it was bought by Mrs Margaret Ottaway, widow of John Ottaway, an Effingham-born brewer at the Swan Pit in Brickbat Alley which led off the High Street behind Cradlers, now Leatherhead's oldest surviving house. The site is covered today by the Swan Centre. On 16 November 1874, Mrs Ottaway offered to purchase the neighbouring cottage from the Ecclesiastical Commissioners for £135 and it was conveyed to her on 11 December 1875 at that price. She became the first known freehold owner of the premises. Meanwhile, a Mrs Haslett was living there as tenant, occupying it for at least 16 years.

On 29 January 1886, Mrs Ottaway died at Devonshire Cottage aged 70. She bequeathed both properties to a niece, Caroline, a schoolmistress in Littlehampton, Sussex, who had married Albion Ockenden, a widower with seven children, some of whom she had taught. During their long and happy marriage they had ten children. By 1887, the Ockenden family had moved up from Sussex with all the children to Devonshire Cottage and could well have named Hampton Cottage after their former home, then known as Little Hampton.

Albion Ockenden had family links with the area long before moving to Leatherhead. His grandfather was born in Ashted but by the 1860s the family was living in Littlehampton where Albion's father, a blacksmith, started an ironmongery business. Albion joined this



Left: Limited space at the cottage would have involved hanging laundry in those days.

and in 1868 they patented the Norton Tube Well for obtaining water supplies in difficult terrain. It was used by the British Army in Africa.

An 1895 photograph by Francis Frith of Church Street, Leatherhead, shows Hampton Cottage with the name Duke & Ockenden Ltd above the upstairs front window. It seems that

the company was using the downstairs front room as an office. Duke & Ockenden Ltd became a leading manufacturer of drilling rigs.

On her death, Caroline left Hampton Cottage to her daughter-in-law Lizzie who had come from Littlehampton to Devonshire Cottage with her husband Wallace to help look after a sick father. Wallace Ockenden continued the business on the premises. A parish magazine advert from March 1909 reads 'Wallace A Ockenden, Artesian Well Engineer and Waterworks Contractor. Pumps and Pumping Machinery. Hot and Cold Water Fitter. Church Street, Letherhead.'

We know that Mr Barnard moved in as tenant during the same year and Lizzie remained the owner of Hampton Cottage until 1946 when it was sold to Leonard Senhouse Baynton Williams.

Information based on Mary Rice-Oxley's 'The Story of Hampton Cottage, Leatherhead'.

LECTURE

THE CHANGING FACE OF EASTWICK

At our May meeting, Peter Edwards, Emeritus Professor of Early Modern British Social History at Roehampton University, described the changing face of Eastwick, where he lives, over the last 400 years. Report by DEREK RENN

Eastwick lies between Fetcham and Great Bookham, centring on the Anchor pub at a crossroads, with heavy clays to the north and thin chalky soils to the south.

Chalk, dug from a large pit nearby, was used to improve the clay for agriculture. Wagons moving the chalk were exempt from the usual limit on the width of wagon wheels, designed to prevent excessive wear on roads. Oxen were better than horses on heavy soils and could live on hay and grass. They did not need oats and their residual value as meat was far greater than that of horses. The pit owners were ordered to fence it in to prevent accidents.

In 1614, Great Bookham belonged to Sir Edward Howard, while Eastwick was owned by John Browne. Professor Edwards showed from early maps how fields and intermingled strips, once part of a jigsaw, became separated and boundaries were marked on trees like that at Markoak Gate.

The probate inventory of John Hibbart (1588) listed residents of his houses and his small possessions. Many of those benefiting on the death of Henry Wilkins in 1576 were illiterate. Henry had a 14-acre farm and lived in Woodcote opposite the Anchor. The south part of the house dates from his time, with an enclosed stair running around the back of the inglenook fireplace. The Poulter family who later lived there carted goods to London and back three times a week. Beyond Finch's yard, the 19th century schoolhouse survives.

Professor Edwards showed extracts from the school log book of 1869, a class of 66 pupils who had to pass an oral examination to move on to the 'big school' in Bookham. An outbreak of scarletina caused much illness and a death and one naughty boy was 'named and shamed'. The children's changing moods were well expressed.



Above: Eastwick Park when it was home to the Keswick family. The picture shows one of Sir William's daughters with a family pet.

At the top of Eastwick Road, the tall pair of Ralph's Cross cottages designed by William Butterfield stood alone for many years. The 18th century creation of Eastwick Park closed off the northern arm of the crossroads which was replaced by the carriage drive to the great house. This obliterated most of the original hamlet. Although the later great house of 1841 has gone, its gates on Lower Road survive.

Eastwick Farm remains as a private house with ornamental bargeboards. Its early 19th century dairy has been re-erected in the Weald & Downland Museum at Singleton. The 1842 tithe map showed little division by enclosure. By means of pie-charts, Professor Edwards demonstrated Eastwick's variations in employment, contrasting St Nicholas Avenue and Eastwick Road, and the proportion of agricultural workers over time. Maps covering the past century showed the infilling and creation of new roads by shortening of long private gardens.

Answering questions, Professor Edwards said the 'wick' part of the Eastwick name was formerly interpreted as 'dairy farm' but this was no longer certain. The Leatherhead-Guildford road had run further south until the Downe family enclosed some cottages into their Bookham Grove estate, creating the Z bend later removed. Enclosure

came quite late to Bookham and Eastwick, because of multiple land ownership and rights of common, unlike large estates at Clandon and Horsley. The high price of land during the agricultural heyday also affected this.

ORAL HISTORY

HELEN KATHLEEN KESWICK
(1903-1997)

In 1991, Edwina Vardey interviewed Kathleen Keswick, last surviving daughter of William Keswick, MP and Lord of the Manor of Great Bookham. She was brought up at Eastwick Park.

My father was a Member of Parliament and we lived at Eastwick but they used to take flats in London. I was born at St Ermine's Hotel because my mother thought it would be simpler. What the hotel thought nobody asked. But we had a suite. We stayed there quite a lot. It was great fun at the opening of Parliament.

All the pages after the ceremony came rushing round, gathering up their trains over their arms and all the peers. The carriages and pairs were whistled up. It was lovely for us, my sister and I with our noses flattened against the window. It was a great haunt of Americans. We looked on Americans then as something quite strange, rather out of a zoo. A small girl roughly the size I was had a check frock - very dashing - with an enormous bow on the top of her head. I thought all Americans were rather dashing and wore saucy frocks and saucy bows. We looked on them as something entirely different.

They went up to London, my mother and father, on Mondays. Sometimes my mother stayed. My father used to drive the phaeton to Leatherhead Station. The train was kept waiting for him as they knew he was coming. He arrived, dashed off, flung the reins at somebody, and rushed into the station. Well I can't imagine him rushing as he was portly and solid, slow moving and Scotch.

Nanny looked after us. She used to read to us - [letter] Hs flying all over the place - but we adored Nanny. Then we had this fierce governess who came from Leatherhead. The dogcart fetched her.

I didn't do many lessons. I was rather bright. I'm said to have read



Left: Kathleen was known to her family as Kay. This passport photo was taken in May 1943 when she travelled to North Africa to work as part of a canteen team supporting the front line troops. She later served in a similar capacity in the Italian campaign and in the final push into Germany. She used to joke that she was the 'first tea wagon into Liberated Germany'. Picture provided by her great nephew, James Marriott to whom she was a dear friend and an inspiration.

the titles in *The Times* to my father when I was five. The doctor thought I was being too precocious.

Of course we had ponies. I was very small when I first rode. But I do remember on my fifth birthday I was let off a leading ring. I was given, I think it was a penny. My pocket money to quite a large age was a halfpenny a week and then you went up to a penny. But on my birthday I walked down to the village. I was allowed to go alone along the footpath into the village, through the churchyard and the Battens' shop. There were two Miss Battens and I sat on what seemed to me a very high stool and discussed how I should spend a penny. You see everything was small and friendly. Everybody knew everybody.

The doctor lived just further on. Doctor Procter and Doctor Fisher. If you got ill you just suffered. Nanny took our temperature and if it was under the hundred we just stayed in the nursery and didn't make a fuss and probably had to eat bread and milk. But if it was over a hundred we went to bed and somebody went down and told the doctor.

If he hadn't gone on his rounds he came and if he had, you waited until he was back and then probably when his coachman and horse were rested he came. You learned not to fuss and you didn't die. We developed resistance. When I think of the germs that I drank in the

water at my grandmother's house near Dublin ...came off the roof and every now and then the filter was cleaned.

I don't know if we ever had tummy trouble. What we did get were awful colds. You see the cold at Eastwick - no central heating. The rooms were hot. You had blazing fires in each room but mostly we lived in the library in the week and in the drawing room. There were double doors and a bearskin mat between so there was practically no draft. Great heavy mahogany doors.

But if you left the library fire and you got into the cooling chamber between the two rooms, you stood on the mat and shut the door. You ran like mad. In the hall there was a boiler down below somewhere that did the hot water. There was a brass ventilator in the floor and a lovely hot current of air came up and you stood over that as a child with your small skirt, gathered up the hot air, shut it in and then ran as fast you could to the nursery where there was another fire. The passages were icy and the bedrooms.... well you had a fire and the night nurse....and of course a bath which was bliss. A bath, hot water in front of the fire.

If we went to the sea, a tent was put up in which we undressed and dressed. Then we were scarred when we came of the sea in a bath towel full of sand. Don't fuss, don't fuss. It doesn't hurt.

We went to Bognor the year King Edward died [1910])and everybody was in black. One wretched woman was caught away from home and she was in bright pink. She looked miserable on the platform.

I think it was 1906. We went out in the pony cart election campaigning. My mother wouldn't canvas. She wouldn't ask for votes. She would just say 'I hope you are coming to the meeting'. We paraded around [in the] pony cart all decorated in orange and purple rosettes on the pony's bridle. My father got in with a big majority. People did love my father. After my mother died when we were going through things, [we found] a letter from the Radical Association, who were the Communists of those days, thanking my father for letting them have their annual general meeting in the garden at Eastwick. His portrait was painted [and] presented [by] all the constituents, not just the Conservatives.

[My father] was very much wedded to his work. But he must have been extraordinarily patient or had an extraordinary gift of



*William Keswick,
MP for Epsom*

concentration because I used to spend a lot of time when he was there in his study. He had a great big desk and there was a newspaper press. It was an enormous thing, about three feet high and a thing at the top that you could turn round. Then there was another thing we called the jelly-graph that copied things. It was a sort of forerunner of the Gestetner. You put the thing you wanted to copy in it and then you spread jelly over it, put paper over it and then you pressed something down and if you got the whole thing straight you got a copy. I was allowed to go and mess about with it which was a great joy. My father cut his own quill pens. I remember the goose feathers on his desk.

We used to ride across Norbury and up to Boxhill. My sister knew where the old pub was. Then there was the forge which was lovely. At the foot of Boxhill. Where there was that low tearooms for a long time. My mother and I went there once, coming back from Sandown races. We'd had no tea and we thought we would go in there. It was most unbelievably full of welching bookies. Never seen so many toughs in my life.

It must have been the Epsom spring meeting I suppose but that forge. They were shoeing animals and it was in the dusk and the fire. I get the smell of burnt horse hoof, the fire blazing and dying down. It was absolutely fascinating. I remember driving past it that night but always the forge was fascinating. Then there was the one in Bookham, I think it was the Hampshire's. There was the village hierarchy. Willy Hampshire - or was he the wheel-right?

Old Doctor Procter was talking once about being paid. He was never paid for anything. If he sent a bill out he got a bill back from the farrier or whoever and it was always just about sixpence more than they owed him. Shoeing the horses. It was all done on a barter basis.

You never worked?

It wasn't done when I was young. No. I just enjoyed life really. I danced and played tennis and was social. Then I got bored with it. An awful lot of nonsense is talked about the Depression. Taxes went up enormously and one's income went down and we were

nearly always rather screwed for cash. It is very difficult if you are not well off in a big house because people expect you to do this, that and the other. Not that we were penniless but it did mean we had different standards and that things had to be considered.

That was after the First War. Then afterwards the Depression, then again dividends went down and taxes went up. You weren't qualified for one thing but it was frowned upon that anybody who wasn't driven to work should go and take a job from somebody who needed it. So you just got bored. It cost a lot of money to do nothing. And clothes. You had to have a lot of clothes. You had your tennis frocks and your little black suit to go to London on a cold day and your little silk frock and coat and a hat and gloves.

ORAL HISTORY

MAURICE AND LILLY BROWNING

Maurice Henry Browning (1906-1993) and his wife Lilly Fawnia Browning (1903-1995) were married in Camberwell, London, in 1931 and moved to Leatherhead in January 1940. At noon on 30 August that year their home at 26 Reigate Road was hit by one of a series of German bombs. They were still living there when they were interviewed nearly 40 years later by Edwina Vardey on 22 August 1979. Mrs Browning recalled the events of that day.

I was in the house, expecting my mother, who was out with my small son, to be coming up the road when the siren went. So I rushed out and helped her in with my son. I noticed two elderly ladies standing there and I said: 'Would you like to come in?' They said they would.

The Sainsbury's boy, who was going to deliver to me, and the postman [Mr Hatchwell] were both opposite the house. I asked them if they would like to come in. They said no, they wanted to see the fun. So we all came in here, that is three elderly ladies, myself and two young children.

I decided that perhaps the ladies were rather nervous so I said: 'I don't think anything will happen around here but I had better pull these curtains.' I went and pulled the velvet curtains. As I did so I



Above: A family home bombed in the war.

noticed that the Canadian dental clinic people who were living in a house on the left of us jumped into a slip trench they had made and put their gas mask cases over their faces.

I looked up and saw a plane whizzing across the sky and then the bombs started crashing down in one gigantic row. I went on pulling the curtains but a piece of shrapnel came through and went between myself and my arm and lodged itself between the gramophone and a magazine that was on top. Another piece went across my head and a small piece cut my daughter's forehead. My small son just turned round and said: 'Naughty man made a mess.' But my daughter who was older was obviously distressed. I thought I had better get her a drink and the little girl's throat seemed to close up completely. I suppose it was shock.

In the process of drawing the curtains with the piece that whizzed over my head, I hadn't taken very much notice but I kept smelling burning. I thought something must be on fire and that worried me more than anything else. So I rushed round the house looking for burning but I couldn't find anything. As was natural in the circumstances, I put my hand to my head and found my hair had come away. I had

been shaved across the front of my head and then had a fringe for a few months.

The captain of the Canadians came round and said: 'Are you all right?' I said: 'Yes but there's a bit of a mess.' So he said well come here. I climbed over the doors which had been broken down and the Sainsbury's boy and the postman were lying on the ground. He whispered to me: 'I'm afraid they're dead.'

The fact that the boy, whom I had got to know quite well, had died worried me. I thought it was so dreadful that a young boy of, I suppose, about 16 had been killed. He had been so keen to go into the army. I had said to him once, you are too young. He had said: 'Yes, I'm afraid it will all be over before I'm old enough to join in.' I didn't know his name.

We all assembled again and put our heads together. I decided I had better phone my husband and let him know what had happened and he decided to come home. We packed up our things as a lady in Ashted had said she would take us in for the time being. The army lorry turned them all over and I stopped behind to write down the name and address for anybody that wanted to know where we had gone. I rushed out, only to find that the lorry had gone without me.

I was at a little bit of a loss but I just thought I am sure I can find them. I went down on to the road but the siren went again and I took shelter. An elderly man came in while I was there, the owner of that house, and said he had spent the morning in the ditch as he thought that was the best place to stay. He looked as though he had been in the ditch.

I got a bus to Ashted and the famous Leg of Mutton pub but they were so full of people they couldn't take me in. So I went down Woodfield Lane and that name struck a chord. I thought this is where they are. The siren went again so I went into a lady's house, told her we had been bombed out and asked if I could stay there. She said yes and we chatted on the stairs.

I came out, walked down the road and met three girls. I said: 'Have you seen an army lorry delivering children plus contents?' and they said: 'Yes, they are at our house.' It was the most extraordinary thing that I should happen to hit on that one person.

My friend came round and said: 'The soldiers are in a terrible

way. Have you got a bottle of brandy?’ I said yes and gave them a bottle, thinking that I might get it back. Of course I didn't, not a drop. Unfortunately one of the soldiers although he wasn't touched in any way, died of shock three weeks later.

Mr Browning said they had subsequently discovered that a whole cache of 72 bombs had been dropped. He explained.

We think they were attacked by one of our Hurricanes or Spitfires and that they unloaded their whole load in one spot. It stretched from here to the Warren estate at Ashted, effectively a straight line. We had five or six bombs within about 50 yards of this house.

The architect of the house said the blast would have caused the house to breathe. In other words just to expand a little bit and then come together again. We still have cracks which have been reappearing every time we have it redecorated. We have had to have them papered over in order to stop them reappearing. Of course we had to have the front door remade, the middle door between the hall and the lounge, and the French windows at the back replaced entirely because they were twisted. One or two other windows also had to be replaced.

I was working with the Bank of England down at Winterbourne near Whitchurch in Hampshire and I got a message through that the house had been badly damaged. I wasn't worried because the family was all right. I got the first train I could to Surbiton. I grabbed a taxi and another alert went on. The cabby said: ‘Do you want to go on, guvner? It's all right by me.’ I said yes I did.

I was stopped at the barrier at the top of the road by police and army but allowed to come through as my house was here and I didn't know where my family was. I found the house in a terrible mess but as I came over the brow of the hill two delayed action bombs went off just on the other side of the trees. As there wasn't an alert on at the time the time I wondered what the blazes it was. There was no noise of bombs coming, no alert. I just turned round in astonishment to see part of the trees going up in the air. I examined the place afterwards and there were two holes big enough to put buses in. So they must have been at least 500 pounds.

HERITAGE OPEN DAYS FEATURE

THE RAILWAY THAT NEVER CAME

The theme of this year's Heritage Open Days is transport. In that spirit, JOHN WETTERN tells a curious story.



Above: Chessington South's 'ghost' platform for the line that never was.

Waterloo Station, 1941: 'The train departing from Number One platform will call at Clapham Junction, Wimbledon, Motspur Park, Chessington South, Malden Rushett, Leatherhead North and Leatherhead Central.'

If World War 2 had not occurred, such a journey might have been reality, not fantasy. A new route from London to Leatherhead was not only planned but it nearly came to fruition. Evidence still exists to prove it.

The Southern Railway's electric system was expanding in the mid-1930s. Long distance lines were being electrified and the inner suburban network grew with new stations and lines. The housing boom followed the railways and vice versa. Just before war broke out the Motspur Park to Leatherhead branch was already half built and had reached a temporary terminus at Chessington South. Beyond

that point land had been acquired and a new embankment stretched southwards for some distance.

The new line was destined to join the existing one from Ashted at a point roughly a mile north of Leatherhead station. It would have run parallel with the A243 Kingston Road, allowing plenty of space for the housing developments which were certain to follow. A station named Malden Rushett was to be built at the intersection of the Epsom-Oxshott Road and another called Leatherhead North was proposed at the junction point.

Three key events put an end to the project. First, with the outbreak of war in 1939 all civilian construction projects ceased. Secondly, the *Town and Country Planning Act* of 1946 put paid to any proposal to absorb the land beside the railway for building development. Later construction of the M25 motorway severed the proposed route for all time. Yet the statutory powers to build the railway remained until 1961.

‘History that didn’t happen.’ However anyone interested in seeking traces of the railway that never came can look at a number of tell tale signs. First, from the platform of Chessington South station. This is clearly a through station and not a terminus. To the south, under the road bridge stretches the embankment that was destined to carry the new line. The tracks actually extend for some distance and were used for sidings. On the north side of Rushett Lane one can still see field boundaries that marked the land acquired by the railway company and further north, Chalky Lane, a side road now opposite Chessington World of Adventures, gives a view of the embankment pierced by an under bridge.

A clear view of the line of the railway close to Leatherhead can be obtained from the train to Ashted. Looking out of the window on the left-hand side of the carriage, just after the bridge under Kingston Road, the line-side fence curves away to the north and a patch of open ground can be seen. This is a clue to the alignment of the intended branch. In the next instant the line dives under the motorway where Leatherhead North Station might have been built.

I am grateful to Alan J. Jackson whose book *The Railway in Surrey* contains references to the Chessington line.

SOCIAL HISTORY FEATURE

THE GUILDS WERE TO BLAME

BOB KELLEY of Bookham U3A Social History Group explains England's north-south divide in the 18th century.

The Industrial Revolution that started around 1765 and continued for over a century increased production of goods, reduced prices, created more jobs, a bigger middle class and a move from subsistence farm labouring to a factory and business way of life.

However, all social changes result in winners and losers, victors and victims. There was a distinct North-South divide, with all the financial winners being in the north. This did not go unremarked and was recorded in Benjamin Disraeli's *Sybil or the Two Nations* and *North and South* by Elizabeth Gaskell.

Outside London, some of the most prosperous towns in the south of England before 1765 were in the south-west rather than Surrey. Frome, Somerset, for example, had been established as a manufacturing centre of woollen cloth since the 15th century and remained that county's only town in which this staple industry flourished.

Families of clothiers had gradually become the principal land-owners. From 1665 to 1725 major expansion occurred. In the 1720s Daniel Defoe said the town had grown in the previous few decades so that it was 'likely to be one of the greatest and wealthiest inland towns in England'. It was confidently expected to outshine nearby Bath.

The river at Bradford upon Avon, Wiltshire, powered the wool mills that gave the town its wealth. In the early 18th century Defoe reported: 'They told me at Bradford on Avon that it was no extraordinary thing to have clothiers in that county worth £10,000 to £40,000 per man'. That is equivalent to around £1.3 million today.

With improving mechanisation in textile manufacture during the Industrial Revolution, the wool weaving industry moved from cottages to purpose-built woollen mills adjacent to the river, where they used water and steam to power the looms. Around 30 such mills were built in Bradford upon Avon alone, and these prospered until the English woollen industry shifted its centre of power to Yorkshire.



Above and below: traditional spinning work could not possibly compete with mass production after the Industrial Revolution.



The decline of the wool industry in the mid-18th century increased industrialisation and rising food prices led to poverty and some unrest among the inhabitants. There were riots during the century. By 1791, it was described in less flattering terms than those Defoe had used 70 years earlier.

What made the south of England lose and the north win the battle for wool? One factor is that southern woollen and cloth trades were governed by the strict and restrictive rules of their guilds. Practices had been passed from masters to apprentices for centuries.

The dominant clothing guilds were the Worshipful Company of Drapers (wool and cloth merchants), Worshipful Company of Skinners and Worshipful Company of Merchant Taylors, Worshipful Company of Haberdashers (clothiers in sewn and fine materials), Worshipful Company of Clothworkers and Worshipful Company of Dyers. However, it would have been local textile guilds in any town with a guildhall that restricted the provincial clothiers rather than the City of London ones. New entrepreneurs in the north were unrestricted by guilds anyway and could simply innovate in ways they felt best. Technological advancements enabled mechanisation of processes in what had been successful cottage industries for centuries.

Innovations in carding and spinning, enabled by advances in cast iron technology, resulted in the creation of larger machinery housed in water-powered mills on waterways. The need for more power stimulated the production of steam-powered beam engines, and rotating mill engines transmitting the power to line shafts on each floor of the mill. Surplus power capacity encouraged construction of more sophisticated power looms working in weaving sheds. The technology was used in woollen and worsted mills in the West Riding of Yorkshire and elsewhere.

The city at the forefront of a cloth-making industrial revolution was Leeds, said to have been built on wool and it is still asserted that 'all roads roam to Leeds'. The industry began in the 16th century and continued into the 19th. Construction of various transportation routes like the Leeds-Liverpool canal and later the railway system connected Leeds with the coast, providing outlets to export finished products all over the world.

The mighty, mechanised Leeds mills, largest the world had seen,

required increasing amounts of raw materials and the expanding British Empire would help to feed the savage beast, with wool being shipped in from as far away as Australia and New Zealand.

In addition to the restrictive practices of the guilds, the social structures of the south were more conservative than those of the north. Master clothiers in the south-west had tried to modernise their production but in 1795 the resistance, exacerbated by two poor harvests, local food riots, and destruction of two machines, had reached such a peak by August that the Wiltshire authorities were unable to control the unrest.

They asked the War Office in London for troops to restore law and order and dragoons were sent in support of the local yeomanry. Afterwards the clothiers were very circumspect about introducing new machinery. Certainly, resistance and reluctance to change lasted far longer in the southern wool industry and it paid the price when its work migrated north.

In 1700 the population of Somerset was 214,000 and Lancashire 238,000. By 1800 they were 282,000 and 694,000 respectively. Somerset showed a 30% increase while Lancashire's population almost trebled.

PHOTO: FETCHAM FROM THE AIR



Programme Committee chairman John Wettern and his son Tom had a rare chance to photograph Fetcham Mill Pond and Leatherhead from the country's highest ladder at Fetcham Fire Station.

LEATHERHEAD & DISTRICT LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Registered Charity No 802409

Hampton Cottage, 64 Church Street, Leatherhead KT22 8DP

Telephone: 01372 386348 Email: staff@lheadmuseum.plus.com

Website: www.leatherheadlocalhistory.org.uk

Online Archive: www.ldlhsarchive.co.uk

Monthly meetings at the Letherhead Institute every third Friday of the month between September and May, 7.30pm for 8pm.
Museum (Hampton Cottage): open Thursdays and Fridays 1pm - 4pm and Saturdays 10am-4pm + Sunday 10 September 10am-4pm

Officers of the Society

President

Alan Pooley 01372 374093 alan.maryon@btinternet.com

Vice-President

Peter Tarplee 01372 452301 ptarplee@ymail.com

Chairman

John Rowley 01372 723417 ashtead.archive@virginmedia.com

Secretary

Jane Summerfield 01372 811422
derrick.summerfield@btinternet.com

Treasurer

Carl Leyshon 01372 377034 leyshon.ldlhs@outlook.com

Archaeology Secretary

Nigel Bond 01372 229125 jnigelbond@yahoo.co.uk

Museum Curator

Lorraine Spindler 01737 813963 lorrainespindler@hotmail.co.uk

Secretary, Friends of Leatherhead Museum

Judy Wilson 01372 275 371 rjawilson6roe@aol.com



MYSTERY OF THE SAXON PENNY



Photo copyright of Surrey County Council Portable Antiquities Scheme.

David Williams reports in *Surrey Archaeological Society Bulletin* 461 that a penny of King Edgar (957-975), found by a metal detector in 2014 near Headley church is of a previously unknown type.

The coin, shown above, was probably minted by Aethelmaer of Shaftesbury. Since it had been gilded and converted into a brooch, it fell under the Treasure Act and both the British Museum and the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, were interested in it.

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