



*Leatherhead & District Local History Society  
covering Ashted, the Bookhams, Fetcham, Headley,  
Mickleham and Leatherhead*

## *Newsletter*     *September 2018*



*Above: No 3 Company, Public School Battalion, Royal Fusiliers  
marching through Ashted early in the First World War.  
Below: Daily life on the home front.*



**Corporate Member:**

**MICHAEL  
EVERETT**

**58 The Street, Ashted**

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### LETTER TO THE EDITOR

In the oral history report of Miss Jean Read (*L&DLHS Newsletter* June 2018) there is mention of a militant Suffragette, Mrs Cruttwell who lived at 'what is now Bookham Grange'.

The house referred to must have been what was then Bayfield, later the Bookham Grange Hotel, now a housing development on Little Bookham Common. The other Bookham Grange in Rectory Lane was throughout this period owned and occupied by Arthur Bird.

In Peter Tilley's *Bookham in Edwardian Times*, Bayfield [12/291] is recorded as being occupied by Edward Cruttwell, a civil engineer and his son at the time of the 1911 census. Remarkably, the house's four resident ladies, refused to give any information to the census enumerator 'as long as the vote is refused to women'. This act of defiance must have required considerable courage at that time.

The book refers to 'four female domestic servants' but presumably one of these four ladies was Mrs Cruttwell herself. Does anyone have more information on the courageous Mrs Cruttwell?

**W E Whitman**

**EDITORIAL**

Welcome to our third edition of the year, featuring selected events from this month's annual Heritage Weekend. As well as the Museum's special Sunday opening, we have four special events in Leatherhead and the Bookhams so do check them out if you can.

This *Newsletter* also features several of our oral histories for the first time. One of these was recorded by Edwina Vardey 37 years ago and concentrates on the history of Leatherhead Parish Church, the town's most obvious landmark. Edwin Taylor, clerk to the vestry, was a leading authority on the building and its heritage over more than 11 centuries. His fascinating interview will be continued in a future edition.

Three of the district's most senior women residents also appear in this *Newsletter*. All interviewed last year, they have very different tales to tell of their lives here but together they continue our theme of emphasising local women to coincide with the centenary of women's suffrage. The 1918 end of World War 1 is of course the other centenary currently covered by the Museum and elsewhere.

Memories of old Leatherhead feature extensively in this edition, with thanks to Brian Hennegan for his last-minute talk in May, to Brian Bouchard for his piece on the historic toll-houses, and to John Morris for his curious story on social mores 200 years ago.

Our search continues for new activists on behalf of the Society. To the existing vacancies for people to sell our publications, promote corporate membership to local firms, and organise future talks and other events, we now also require an audio editor for the oral history interviews. This is a technical skill which can be learned with patience and care. Several existing recordings need audio editing before they can be uploaded to our online sound archive and future interviews will also need attention. If you know of potential candidates for any of these roles, please do get in touch. **TONY MATTHEWS**

## CHAIRMAN'S REPORT



As I write this report I can confirm it has been a long hot summer, no doubt proving especially hard work for our local archaeologists in this digging season. Coping both with persistent Mediterranean conditions and rock-hard ground cannot have been easy.

There has not been much definitive progress on the Society's status. The business of restoring the Museum building to its former glory - hopefully with additional facilities - is progressing but with much consultation of authorities, experts and potential contractors. A project plan should be in front of the Executive Committee soon.

'Television advertising in Britain began 22 September 1955', or so a *Short History of British Television Advertising* has it. However, the *Dorking and Leatherhead Advertiser* recycled a piece from that same year a few months ago.

Our redoubtable local newspaper identified the possibility that advertising had been demonstrated as early as 1928 by Ronald Frank Tiltman. He had already begun publishing books about television the previous year but it was at demonstrations of his system by John Logie Baird in London's Olympia on 26 September 1928 that Mr Tiltman had a 'light bulb moment' and held up a newspaper page in front of the TV camera, resulting in a clear imagery display on three receiving sets.

Most of Mr Tiltman's seven books seem to have their first edition dates prior to World War 2 but further imprints can be obtained on-line. So what was his connection with our area? The *Advertiser* tells us that he lived at Woodside Cottage, Crampshaw Lane, Ashted. He may have been the first occupant of this house, built after WW2, as his name appears in street directories for 1950 and 1961. We cannot be certain where he lived when writing his books but he was living in Hookfield, Epsom, according to the 1939 population register.

I have not been able to confirm his BMD but his dates are given as 1901-1986 in one bibliography (<http://worldcat.org/identities/lccn-no2015031497/>). It is, perhaps, stretching a point to claim that TV advertising itself was invented by a district resident. Nevertheless, he is someone we can be proud of. **JOHN ROWLEY**

## NEWS FROM THE FRIENDS OF THE MUSEUM

The summer has seen a steady stream of visitors to the Museum despite the long hot period. It is pleasantly cool inside and they have clearly appreciated that.

Visits by 60 pupils from Fetcham Infant School and their teachers on 10 and 13 July provided one seasonal highlight. Walking from the school, they divided their time between the Museum and the public library, changing over at half time.

Our gallant team of helpers took over groups of four or five at a time. Lin Hampson dealt with the Victorian kitchen and that period, Diana Rogers was upstairs in the 1945 room, and Robin Christian



supervised the archaeology box in the garden. Due to the number of children, the helpers found themselves giving 15-minute talks or demos six times each day. They were exhausted but were very well received by the children and appreciated by the school. They felt it had been a well worthwhile exercise. Well done all.

As usual the Prudential Cycle Race on 29 July provided a great opportunity for visitors to come to the Museum while they were waiting for the participants to whizz past outside.

The Craft Days were scheduled from 1-4pm on 3, 10 and 17 August in the garden. We are extremely grateful to Ros Rudd's team at the *Ashtead & Leatherhead Local* for designing an eye-catching poster which was displayed at the Museum and in the town. Lin and Diana handed out A5-size flyers during the week beforehand.

Our 'guests' in costume and character have re-appeared. Among activities available for our visitors have been the graffiti wall, photo booth and other crafts complementing this season's Museum displays. These include making and painting clay items in the style of Ashtead Potters, medals, crowns and a collage in purple, white and green to celebrate the centenary of women's suffrage. We thank all the helpers and Friends who have made this such a success, especially the group from Horsham.

**GWEN HOAD**

## PROGRAMME OF ACTIVITIES

**Monthly meetings/talks, Abraham Dixon Hall, Letherhead Institute.**  
**New season starts 21 September. Coffee at 7.30pm and 8pm talk.**

**2 September, 11am, Polesden Lacey:** Mrs Greville's Donkey Derby and Family Fun Day, organised by National Trust and Leatherhead & District Lions Club. L&DLHS features in the programme.

**15 September, 9am-5pm, Manor Farm Tithe Barn, Manor House Lane, Little Bookham:** End of World War 1 exhibition on Little Bookham and local villages. One of seven properties in the Bookhams and Effingham open on that day and accessible on foot.

**15 September, 11am, Letherhead Institute:** Lorraine Spindler on *The Women of Leatherhead: Suffrage and Struggle 1850-1950*.

**15 September, 2pm, Pastoral Centre, St Nicolas Parish Church, Great Bookham:** Judith Witter on *Mary Chrystie, Benefactor, Property Developer and Temperance Activist*.

**16 September, 10am-4pm:** Special Sunday Museum opening for Heritage Weekend. Ashted Pottery and centenaries of the introduction of female suffrage and the end of World War 1.

**16 September, 3pm, Letherhead Institute:** *Keep the Homefires Burning*. Poignant drama commemorating World War 1.

**21 September, 7.30pm:** Lucy Quinnell gives the new season's first monthly talk on *Rowhurst, Leatherhead's 'Blessed Plot'*.

**19 October, 7.30pm:** *A Study of Country House Services at Polesden Lacey*. Fetcham U3A Industrial Heritage Group will outline their research on the house's utility services in Mrs Greville's day. Together these helped to make 'Polesden Lacey fit for a maharajah'.

**16 November, 7.30pm:** Authoress Alice Graysharp on her mother's youth in *Out of the Frying Pan: The Wartime Experiences of a Leatherhead Evacuee*.

**14 December, 7.30pm:** Christmas Miscellany. Seasonal celebratory wine, accompanied by three short talks on local history topics.

## HERITAGE WEEKEND

### **Mary Chrystie, Benefactor, Property Developer and Temperance Activist**

**2pm, Saturday 15 September**

**Pastoral Centre, St Nicolas Church, Great Bookham**

Local historian Judith Witter will tell the tale of one of the most remarkable women in the district.

Mrs Mary Chrystie (1838-1911) of Fife Lodge, Church Road, Bookham, (shown right) was a wealthy widow



whose activities and development of property made a major contribution to the appearance of the villages of Great and Little Bookham that we still know today. Judith will look at her life and the family background that influenced her decisions.

Judith's biography *Mary Chrystie and her Family* was published by the L&DLHS in 2013. It revealed how Mrs Chrystie came by her fortune, how her family dealt with various crises and were involved in both Jamaican sugar plantations and the East India Company. But at the talk Judith will add recent research not previously published.

Tickets available until 5pm on 10 September by email from [boxoffice@molevalley.gov.uk](mailto:boxoffice@molevalley.gov.uk) or by writing to Dorking Halls Box Office, Reigate Road, Dorking RH4 1SG. Refreshments will be served after the talk.

## HERITAGE WEEKEND



### **Keeping the Homefires Burning**

**3pm, Sunday 16 September**

**Abraham Dixon Hall,  
Letherhead Institute**

Manor Theatre Group, an amateur company from Horsham, will perform *Keep the Homefires Burning*, a poignant drama about love and loss commemorating World War 1.

Reviewed by the National Operatic and Dramatic Association as ‘an exceptional production’, it tells the interweaving story of men in the trenches, nurses in the field hospitals, and the loved ones left behind.

Already performed in Horsham and Crawley, this will be a special performance for Heritage Weekend. It complements the Museum’s commemoration of the 1914-18 war during the last four years.

No booking is required, entry is free and the play will be accompanied by a small exhibition. Four of the cast members were also due to make appearances at the Museum’s Craft Days in August. Manor Theatre Group.



**ROBIN CHRISTIAN**

## INTERVIEW FEATURE

### **LEATHERHEAD'S PRICELESS HISTORIC CHURCH**

**Edwin Taylor (1893-1983), clerk to the vestry of Leatherhead Parish Church, was 88 years old when he was interviewed in June 1981 by Edwina Vardey, exactly a month before the royal wedding of Prince Charles and Lady Diana Spencer. He gave a detailed account of the structure and history of the church, reading from church wardens' accounts over the centuries. He himself appeared among decorations on a curtain in the church. Part One of the interview appears here, to be continued in a future edition of the *Newsletter*.**

My full name is Edwin Dudley Kenneth Taylor. I have lived in Leatherhead (or rather Fetcham) since 1936. I moved to Leatherhead itself.

#### **You brought up your daughter here.**

She was brought up here, yes. She is married. She went to St Andrew's Convent School where she had her education. She didn't get any O levels. She is an extremely practical young woman, running the local church in the village of Cleeve Prior [in Worcestershire, southwest of Stratford-upon-Avon]. A great success.

#### **What was your profession before you retired?**

I was a pharmaceutical chemist. I went into wholesale and was area sales manager for a chemical/pharmaceutical firm.

#### **Now you work for the church.**

My official title is clerk to the vestry although I am down in the book as parish clerk. The present church warden has been very kind to me and allowed me to do loads of the things which I have done from time immemorial. They haven't objected when I put my nose in because I am a bit of a formalist and I like all the lights to be working, you know. I do the registers, marriages; attend the baptisms to help the vicar; attend to the book of remembrance and give him the names of the dead to be remembered every Sunday.

The vicar says I ought to be official historian and have a fee for it. Which is absolutely cracked as I love the work and don't want anything for it. I love the church and everything about it.

The official name is St Mary & St Nicholas. The origin of this name comes we think from the priory of Leeds Castle in Kent. It is all tied up with the advowson they obtained through Edward III.



### **When was it built?**

The little mound on which the church is built was from the time of King Alfred in the year 900 AD. It was a royal manor not belonging to the King as such but to the Crown and it has always been a royal



manor. It was the custom that the one who held the advowson had the privilege of presenting the priest to the bishop for institution into the church for the cure of souls.

There is no doubt that Edward the Confessor was our original founder. We think the church itself was started to be built by the villagers in about 1060.

It was a very rough building. There are still remnants to be seen in the outside walls. The church was originally built in the same form as the Roman wall of London.

### **A common design?**

It must have been a great effort for the people. Materials were obtained locally except for the Reigate stone which was used for the masonry for the openings, obtained from the quarries at Merstham. That was very difficult because they had to come on oxcart by way of the Downs. The labour problem must have been acute.

There were no builders or contractors. Labour was provided entirely by the abbey, apart from the masons, in whatever time they could spare from cultivation of their land upon which their food entirely depended. Help no doubt came from the King's manors at Ewell and Fetcham but the greater part was done by locals, even the women and the children who collected flints and helped in other ways.

The only craftsmen were the masons, probably with an assistant or pupil from outside the district. Any carpentry was rough and unfinished by primitive tools, a tedious job to reduce a tree to timber for use. The mason was responsible for design of the building, setting out and supervising the work as well as working the dressed stonework and setting it in position. The traditional methods were learned by work on other churches.

The nave was 54 feet long and 23 feet 9 inches wide with a small chancel 18 feet long and 15 feet 3 inches wide with a space or choir in between, probably to build a tower. The mason must have had some defective vision as his angles are very far from accurate. The original walls were north and south above the arcades and the east wall. The chancel arch came later. There was a thatched roof with a ceiling above. The priest probably lived above the church as he did at Stoke d'Abernon.

### **That's why Stoke d'Abernon had the double altar area.**

Yes. The great height of the walls, equal to the width of the nave, indicative of pre-Conquest days of building, as at Fetcham and at Stoke d'Abernon. The walls were built of flints from the neighbouring ground. As regards the construction, the outer and inner facing of



large flints were carefully set in mortar to about 18 inches, forming a trench. When the sides were set, small stones gathered by the local women and children were thrown in and levelled off a few inches from the top. Mortar of a very liquid nature was then poured in to fill the interstices and the whole left to set solidly before another height was built. That was as in the Roman wall of London.

### **What about the site of the church?**

The situation of the building had a great charm because it sat on a hillside overlooking the beautiful valley of the Mole. As far as the terrain is concerned, the hills are unchanged over the centuries. It was mostly surrounded by scrubland. No buildings or roads existed. The river often flooded, becoming marshland. Mere track-ways - only meant to be traversed by a horseman or a rough oxcart - drawn by oxen and then infrequently. So the small community needed great effort.

### **Was it a very small community?**

The population at a guess in 1086 - the time of the Domesday Book - was 250. In 1725 it was reported at a census that it was 700 and in 1801, 1078 only.

## **Why was the hillside site chosen?**

I think it was probably because of the flooding but the main thing was that it was the custom of the lord of the manor to provide a church in which he and his descendants could be buried before the high altar. As he was the King he was also the lord of the manor so we feel he is our founder and we should be a royal church.

The ancient church was a simple building, roughly constructed. It was more or less rectangular, very dark without windows. There were probably high up orifices covered by shutters. The darkness didn't matter because the priest was the only one who could read and he used candles. There was no tower at the west end as there is today. There was probably a small archway there which was the entrance to the church.

In the 14th century when more room was needed, countings of the sacrament became very important and it was decided to lengthen the church. The chancel was lengthened by 14 feet to make more room for the growing need of the processions and ceremonies.

If you examine the chancel you will find there is a double squint. This often puzzles people but it is now considered that although there was never a central tower built, they obviously had the idea of building one. It is quite possible there was a small wooden tower or spire above which held a bell.

It was the job of the sacristan to ring the bell at the elevation of the host and necessary parts of the ceremony. When the church was originally built he could see this happening through the squint which was cut. When they lengthened it by 14 feet they had to cut another one side by side because he couldn't see it any longer.

In the 12th century, the entrance was probably at the west end of the nave. There were no seats until the 13th century, the congregation either stood or knelt and they sat round the edges of the church which is the origin of the expression 'backs to the wall'.

According to English custom there were three altars, the high altar and one on each side of the entrance to the choir, each one being enclosed by screens. There was probably a rood or carved crucifix on the wall over the entrance to the choir with St Mary and St John at the foot of the cross. The font originally was probably a large tub shaped stone with some shallow carving. It was situated in the nave

at the west end until replaced by the present font at the end of the 15th century.

There was probably a rood loft across the chancel arch. There was a gallery which had a row of candles along the front of it. It also contained a small organ and sometimes a small choir which sang or harmonised while the main choir sang below. It was also used as a storage place for the great curtain which was probably destroyed at the Reformation.

The gallery was four to five feet wide. The steps inside the wall are now blocked up. That entrance is now closed and showing St Mary and St Gabriel on each side. They are the exits from the stairs to the rood loft. The entrances from the transepts were closed in the Victorian restorations of 1873.



### **BRINGING THE IMAGERY UP TO DATE**

*Above: In May 2018, Rev Graham Osborne, Rector of St Mary & St Nicholas, thanked L&DLHS records secretary Roy Mellick for his hard work in producing the new book of photographic images on behalf of the Society and Bookham Camera Club, produced following a survey for the Making History project. Roy donated an album and DVD of all the images to the church, free of copyright.*

## INTERVIEW FEATURE

### **If ‘philately’ sounds too high faluting, just call it stamp collecting!**

**The Bookham Stamp Club celebrated its 25th anniversary this year with a luncheon at Effingham Golf Club. While many other local philately societies have literally died out, Bookham continues, with members throughout the Leatherhead district and other parts of Surrey. Trading officer David Bravery was interviewed in Fetcham.**

My name is David Bravery. I was born in Cardiff in 1943 and have lived in Leatherhead since 1983. Our club meets on the fourth Tuesday of every month in the afternoon at the Old Barn Hall in Bookham Village. We pull in stamp collectors from the Leatherhead, Bookham, and Fetcham area but also from Dorking, Kingston, Bansted, and Redhill.

Our current membership is 109. When the club was formed in 1993 it was 25. We have been as high as 128 but although we lose some members through death we also attract newcomers, usually those who have suddenly reached retirement and think: ‘Ah, stamp collecting. I used to do that.’ So they join us.

Like all young boys of my era there was always a stamp club at school. Most boys collected stamps. They were fascinating, attractive, and one learned a lot about geography and exotic countries. My own collection has developed over the years so that now I am very specialised. I still have some that I bought as a young boy in the local stamp shop in Cardiff. A lovely husband and wife Hungarian refugee family ran the shop and he would always insist that if I had sixpence to spend he would only ever sell me one stamp, not a packet of 100 for sixpence.

Most schoolboys’ collections at that time tended to be British and



*David Bravery*



*Above: Members of Bookham Stamp Club at the Old Barn Hall.  
Left: 1874 telegraph stamps from specialist collection of Austria.*

Commonwealth stamps with a smattering of other countries. That changed when foreign countries started producing stamps - eastern European stamps - as a way of financing their various regimes and put out very attractive triangular and big square stamps which the children liked. They were very different from British stamps which were at that time very staid. Ours were all line-engraved, beautifully produced but completely different from the very colourful material that came out of foreign countries.

When the Bookham Stamp Club was formed, they wanted to encourage all types of stamp collectors. That was why they called it a stamp club and not a philatelic society, because they wanted to encourage people who might be put off by the high sounding term 'philatelic'. Our members include everyone from beginners to advanced collectors.

The trading section is the hub of the club. It provides financial stability because the annual membership fees are very low at £5 per annum. That covers the hire of the hall and a Christmas luncheon, all free and without the trading section that couldn't be considered.

Members come to view stamps and buy stamps. We have three distinct sections - Great Britain, Foreign and Commonwealth. The last of these is still by far the most popular and we have handled some pretty rare and expensive stamps in our time.

Perhaps the most expensive was the famous Queen Victoria £5 orange stamp which we auctioned for club members recently. That raised around £1000 for that one stamp, even though it was not in perfect condition.



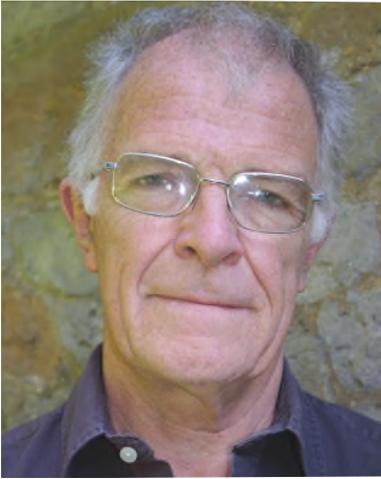
*Above: The Queen Victoria £5 orange. A wonderful find in a schoolboy collection.*

For all stamps condition is paramount and those that have missing or short perforations, tears and heavy postmarks etc can often be uncollectable or sold at huge discount compared to stamps in top class condition. Most collectors are extraordinarily fussy. Likewise for mint stamps. Those that are unhinged are much more expensive than those that have been hinged.

Surprisingly that £5 orange stamp came from a schoolboy collection. It was a three-volume collection full of very common stamps except for one page with outstanding Victorian ones. All the remaining stamps in that collection went to charity. Common stamps are all taken out of albums and sold by the kilo. When we have a grocery box full they are taken to a specialist dealer who pays us £20 a kilo.

One of our past chairmen and a longstanding member is Graham Mytton, who used to be the director of the BBC Africa Service and is still consulting for them. He is very involved with Save the Children. He spends a vast amount of time sorting and categorising for sale and all the money from these sales goes to Save the Children. On average Graham makes around £1000 a year in aid of the charity. He has been doing this more or less continuously since 1980 and the total thus far is over £30,000, all from the sale of stamps that have been donated and also from remainders.

What of the future? Attracting young people into stamp collecting is very difficult. They have other priorities on computers and gaming and the fact that one gets so few stamps on mail these days speaks



*Left: Charity fund-raiser Graham Mytton has been selling stamps for Save the Children for decades. Bottom left: Historic postcards are now as collectible as stamps and also add context. Bottom right: Edward VII vintage stamp with a Leatherhead postmark.*

for itself. But stamp collecting is developing and always finds some way of continuing. Many people now don't just collect stamps to fill spaces in an album but for wider postal and social history reasons. It is much more interesting to find a grubby envelope with a letter inside and to research the history around that than it is just to have the stamp itself.

All sorts of ephemera go with that. Post office receipts, revenue stamps, receipts from shops. There is also a big movement towards thematic collection concentrating on subjects such as music, animals, butterflies, even nudes! Artworks are very popular.

Many people are interested in the postal history of a particular town. Leatherhead and the surrounding villages are prime examples of that. They want original letters and documents and stamps with Leatherhead and other local postmarks. Very often the postmarks are more interesting than the stamps. One can have a postcard that says: 'I'll see you for tea at four o'clock.' Clearly it was posted in



the morning and they had it straight after lunch. This sort of thing is very collectible now.

We have had speakers at the club on running the post offices in local areas. I particularly remember a wonderful talk about the Croydon post office and the millions of items a year that it handled. The only real way of communication was the post office. We had four deliveries a day and the service was absolutely excellent. Far better than the service we get today. In addition of course there were telegrams. Special ones from Leatherhead, for example, for weddings and other celebrations.

It is amazing the amount of stamps that were produced. Tax stamps were produced for all sorts of things. All the revenue stamps - from being frowned upon as rubbish in the old days - have now become popular and sale prices are increasing dramatically.

The biggest threat to all stamp clubs is the lack of people who come forward to hold office. Several clubs have disbanded purely because they can no longer get a secretary or a treasurer to do any work. People are very happy to have everything waiting for them - the trading tables, the tea and coffee, the speaker and everything - but not willing to help facilitate it.

For more information, go to [www.bookhamstampclub.com](http://www.bookhamstampclub.com)

*The world's most valuable stamp is the British Guiana four cent magenta from 1856, shown right. The colony ran out of stamps and the local postmaster printed some temporary four cent and one cent denominations.*

*All soon disappeared but in 1873, a 12-year-old boy found one in a pile of old newspapers.*

*He sold it for a small sum but in 1922 it was auctioned for \$35,000. In 2014 it was sold again - for some £6 million.*



## FEATURE

### Leatherhead's Turnpike Toll-Houses

by BRIAN BOUCHARD

On 11 January 1755, a petition of JPs, clergy, gentlemen, freeholders and other inhabitants of the borough of Horsham was presented to Parliament, stating that ‘the main roads from the market place at Horsham through Warnham, Capel, Dorking and Leatherhead (to



*Above: The Church Side Gate toll-house with its 19th century addition to the right, now known as The White House.*

Epsom) by reason of the soil thereof, and of the many heavy carriages frequently passing the same, some parts thereof are become so ruinous and bad that in the winter season are almost impassable for any manner of carriages and very dangerous for loaded horses and travellers and, in many parts, so narrow as to render them dangerous to passengers’. The petition prayed leave to bring in a Bill to amend the same.

In response to a query in the *L&DLHS Newsletter* May 2016, there is evidence, from a letter dated 18 June 1756, that Leatherhead’s first toll-house had recently been erected by that date. This gave ‘great offence to the inhabitants on that road’ and is presumed to have been sited at the eastern entry to the town, at the top of Great Queen Street. This is mentioned in Edwina Vardey’s *The History of Leatherhead* (1988), Page 129, as being near the Letherhead Institute.

It appears, however, that problems arose from traffic passing through the town centre and needing to negotiate a right-angled turn into Little Queen Street. Consequently, before 1772, an early form of by-pass had been created cutting diagonally across a number of freehold parcels of land on the edge of the Common Field to Church Lane. This seems to have led to the establishment of two

new toll-bars – Leatherhead Gate and the Leatherhead Side-gate, which also took the name Church Gate.

Leatherhead Gate was close to the parish boundary with Ashted, 440 yards from the Grange Road/Ermyrn Way crossroads. It appears on Page 131 of Edwina's book as Tollgate Cottage on the Epsom Road. Described as opposite the Knoll, Leatherhead Gate is in fact marked (TG) on the 1896 Ordnance Survey map at TQ 174 568 - a triangular plot with a small T-shaped building up against the edge of the road. Sold off in 1880, it was demolished during construction of the Leatherhead by-pass in 1932.

In 1775, in connection with a proposal to widen the turnpike, Thomas Hart of Dorking, clerk to the Horsham Trustees, had reported 'the payment of the tolls have been frequently evaded, and that in order to prevent the same for the future, [it is] necessary to shut up a lane called Gravel Lane (Borough Hill) in the parish of Leatherhead, and also occasionally to shut up a lane called Parsonage Lane in the said parish, and that the shutting up the said lanes will be no inconvenience to the public.'

Leatherhead's second replacement toll-house on the Epsom to Horsham



*Above: Nos 63 A & B High Street, Leatherhead, seemingly the original keeper's lodge and separate toll-booth.*

turnpike was merely a 'side bar' introduced to catch local travellers who only used sections of a road between the main turnpike gates. The 'Side Gate' near St Mary & St Nicholas Church appears on a map of the parish and manor surveyed 1782-3 by George Gwilt, again as a triangular plot, un-numbered but at the easterly end of Church Lane, abutting plot 240.

In the 18<sup>th</sup> century a rectangular wooden building had been erected with a continuous rear outshot on this small island site. The steeply-pitched roof had a half-hip at its north gable end. It faced tracks across the common and, in particular, seems to have been located to intercept traffic coming from the direction of Headley, along what has become Highlands Road.

The structure's footprint remained unaltered at least until a survey had been undertaken for the 1869 Ordnance Survey Map. Extended by 1897, the property became known as The White House, 18 Church Road, Leatherhead. Its OS coordinates, TQ 16 56, match those for Leatherhead Church Side Toll-House, recorded in a national register at <http://www.turnpikes.org.uk/>.

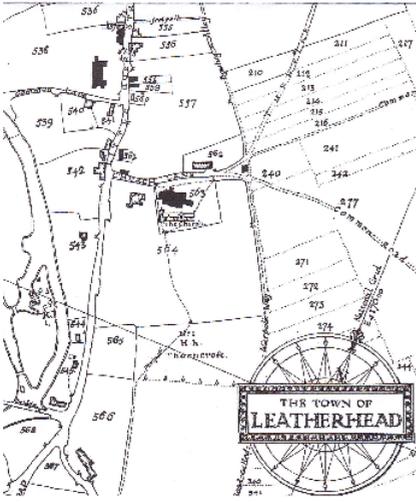
The original toll-house, rendered redundant by the by-pass, remained in the tenure of the Epsom and Horsham Turnpike Trustees to be noticed by George Gwilt on Plot 143, later Nos 63 A & B High Street, Leatherhead. This was seemingly a keeper's lodge and separate toll-booth. Significantly the main building was also built with a half hip gable at the rear similar to The White House's Sussex hip.

A Horsham Act in 1823 contained a clause providing that 'tollhouses that become useless may be sold'. Possibly this provision presaged disposal of the Great Queen Street premises by the trustees.

The Kingston and Leatherhead turnpike was constructed in 1811 with an additional two toll-houses in the parish of Leatherhead. The more distant bar, at Woodbridge, Leatherhead Common [TQ 164 585], had fallen out of use before 1846, being only about 300 yards from the bar at Barnett Wood.

The toll-gate at Barnett Wood had been erected on the Kingston Road (B 2430) between a later site for the town's gasworks, now Ashted Plant Hire depot, and the present railway line.

After the railway arrived in 1859, an increasing volume of traffic began to flow along the road from the Swan Inn to the station beside



Key to the sequencing of Leatherhead toll-bars is dating of the turnpike town by-pass. If you compare Gwilt (left) with Rocque's Map of Surrey - published 1768-70 but surveyed 1762-3 (below left) - it may be seen that the turnoff through the Common Field to the church appears in the latter.

It implies that the Epsom Road toll-house and Church Side Gate would have been erected quite soon after the turnpike trust's



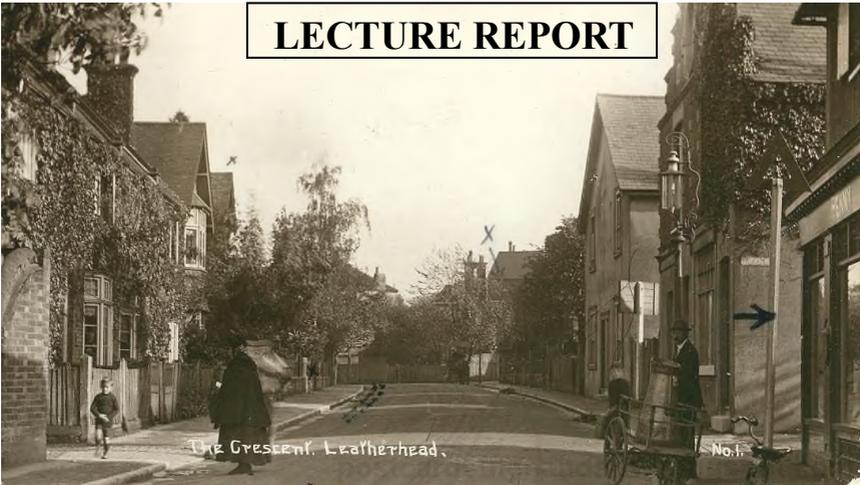
formation in 1755 and certainly before 1772. On Rocque's map, the triangular Side Gate site is suggested just north of the parish church.

Kingston Road. As a money-raising exercise the indebted Kingston and Leatherhead turnpike trustees then built a new gate within half a mile of the town centre, not only to catch railway passengers but others intent on avoiding Epsom and Horsham Trust's Leatherhead Gate by coming round through Barnett Wood Lane.

This action caused a public outcry and petition, with the vestry negotiating to maintain the length of road within the parish conditional upon the barriers being removed. The terms on which this dispute was finally resolved have not been established.

Curiously, the Leatherhead and Stoke-by-Guildford turnpike [A 246] which extended from the Swan Inn to the May (Summer) pole in Guildford, had no local toll-house. Indeed only one has been identified along the road, at Effingham Common.

## LECTURE REPORT



### HOW THE CRESCENT AND OTHER STREETS ONCE LOOKED

**At the May meeting, BRIAN HENNEGAN recalled Leatherhead as it appeared in his youth and earlier.**

The Crescent was once known as London Road but changed around the turn of the last century. Imagine the corner of The Crescent, the High Street and Elm Road, where the three roads meet. Linden Road is just a narrow way and there is no Leret Way.

There was a massive elm tree on the junction. As you went round to the right you climbed steeply and made your way to The Crescent. The line of the road has been changed since that time. The first building we see on the right hand side is a large Victorian house on the corner. In the late 1940s and early 50s this housed two businesses, one of them a doctors' surgery.



*Brian Hennegan*

The general practitioner was Dr Box and his waiting room had a lino floor which had seen better days as the war had just finished. There was a gas fire in the corner with five long lattice mantels. They sometimes gave light, sometimes heat and popped frequently. You would sit in the waiting room and wait for Dr Box to call you

in. By the late 1940s there were two doctors as Dr Phillips had returned from armed service and began to practise with Dr Box.

I had a growth on my neck when I was young. You can still see the scar. My mother ran for the doctor. Dr Box came to the house. This was before the days of the NHS. I was in bed and had just had a supper of beans on toast. Mum and Dr Box talked. She told me: 'Dr Box will make your neck better. You will be OK. Just lay back and let him do what he has to do.' I had something like a small sieve put over my face with lint gauze. Dr Box dripped stuff on this gauze for the anaesthetic. I had a big bandage round my neck on when I woke up and Dr Box had gone. I recovered quickly. I had a poultice that sucked out the badness and two or three stitches which came out later.

How things have changed nowadays. You would never get a GP now telling you to lay back while he took a lump out! But Dr Box was a lovely man who lived in Lower Road, Fetcham. As you drive off Cobham Road and into Lower Road it was about the third house on the left. Difficult to find now because all the houses have been modified but it was a house that would have suited for a *Poirot* series. One of those lovely places. His daughter taught at Leatherhead Secondary School. Dr Phillips lived in Chapel's Mead in Ashtead. He was a lovely man too.

In the same building next door was a photographers, Aylings. There have been many photographers there - Laurence, Powers and Aylings. I got to know Mr and Mrs Ayling very well at a distance because they were not easy to get to know. I say this because when I married my dear Rosie 57 years ago, Aylings took the photos. We got married in the parish church and after the service you go down to the West Door where everything happens.

There was myself and Rosie and Mrs Ayling. I just wanted to go down to the Running Horse, have something to drink, get on the train to Waterloo and go on my honeymoon. But Mrs Ayling was busy doing the dress and then the bridesmaid came in and the best man. Various friends and family. All the photographs must have taken half an hour.

There were just the two businesses. The Crescent has changed very dramatically. The right hand side has completely changed.

There are office blocks there now and other incidental buildings but in those days at the end of the road where the photographer was there were houses - terraced, semis, all Victorian or Edwardian - which ran all the way up to Elm Road. Elm Road goes between the High Street and The Crescent and comes out almost opposite Church Walk but in those days it came out right opposite Church Walk. There would have been a continuation across the London Road, up Church Walk, on to Worple Road leading out to Downside and all places south.

But there was an interesting block of buildings there. Where the road bends to the right you have got a Chinese takeaway on the left. Roughly opposite then were a load of concrete huts.

The Ministry was very good at erecting in very quick time for sundry purposes. They housed the Ministries of Food and Health which was where you went for your orange juice and your National Insurance number. My mother always said to me: 'This is very important, darling.' She called me that until she died at the age of 103. It was rather comforting. 'You must remember your National Insurance number.' It was ZP967612P. This identified who you were and probably as much information as somebody could write on a card index.

On the left side of the road at the bottom were all shops, the whole way from Waverley Road back to the junction. Now it has completely changed and I think the way they have done the alterations is pretty appalling. There were all sorts of shop fronts - woollens, electrical (Morris Richards selling televisions and all sorts of other things), bookshop, grocers. We had some interesting names up there. We had Wilde, Virgo and Winter.

Miss Virgo ran the bookshop. I can't keep away from bookshops. I go in to have a look at what is there and do one of two things. I will either buy a book if I like it or if I am feeling in a generous mood I go back to Barton's and ask him to order it for me. To support the local bookshop. In the 1950s I was very interested in railways and aviation. Miss Virgo always had a wide selection of books.

When you went into the shop it rather reminded me of my sister's home in Cambridge, a Fellow at Trinity Hall. She has books up the staircase on both sides. You go into the kitchen and there is just

enough space to put something on a burner. Miss Virgo's shop was like that. If you asked for a book she would tell you straight away whether she had it and if not she would order it for you.

Morris Richards I remember well because we rented a TV from there. Life is very different now when you just go out and buy a television. There was also the hairdressers there. Charles Jacobs who was a little man with a clubbed foot. I went to school with his daughter Pamela at Fetcham School.

Crossing Waverley Place, a little road on the left that cuts across the corner and comes out in Church Street, from there onwards there has been hardly any change. One or two changes to shop fronts but that side of the road was mainly residential like the other side. But if you went up Church Walk there was a shop on the right, also the opticians. There was a proper shop front there.

Up Church Walk, not very far, the Jug House was the first house on the left hand side as you went up. This belonged at one time to a Guildford brewery. Mrs Fentiman ran it. You went into the Jug House which was the front room of her house. There was a counter there and she had bottles of everything. Every bottle and the counter contained that much dust. People used to take a jug with them to get ale or beer at the Jug House. It would be filled up and you went home.

Cross the road towards Russell Court where there is a now a 1960s development. Before that they were part of the gardens of the buildings in Church Street. I contacted David Skilton who was born at 8 The Crescent and is now 97. His brother Leonard is still alive and living in Sunmead Close. He has written part of a book called *Fragments* which I think should be called *Historical Golden Nuggets*.

In Elm Road in the 1950s and before there were three houses. One house on the left, the remnants of which are still there. But when you go to the top and turn sharp left it now goes through the arcade of the new office block in The Crescent. Turning left there, were a couple of cottages. One of our school-friends lived in one, the other was occupied by the projectionist at the Crescent Cinema. In the days before the centre was pedestrianised and before they had the first attempt at a one-way system, those were just left as they were.

In those days we travelled differently from the way we do now. A bus came down The Crescent, went straight across the road and

hit the buildings opposite. The driver said he saw a body in the road, swerved and went straight across the road. There was an enquiry and he was suspended. It was the London General Omnibus, not East Surrey. Both had buses here. But the enquiry found a street lamp casting light in a window opposite and which created a shadow in the road. The bloke got off and his pay was reinstated.

That window was at Blakers, the house on the corner. Where Gascoigne Pees is now was Blakers the ironmongers. Sold everything from garden rollers to door hinges, door bolts and anything else you required. Rosie's mother always told us the story that there was a ghost at Blakers, an upstairs ghost. They discovered that it was an optical illusion from a mirror in one of the upstairs rooms and the streetlights were tricks. I have written back to David Skilton saying there's either two ghosts or it is the same ghost. We had a similar situation when a car later made a bit of a mess of the Museum front [in 2008].

There were traffic lights at the crossroads where Barclays Bank is now. The buses that came from Epsom went down The Crescent. There was the 470 which went to Dorking. There were three Green Line coaches, 712, 713 and 714, making their way back to Dorking bus garage. In the summer was one more bus. The red bus 93 came all the way from London and normally that ran from town into the Underground station at Morden but in summer it was extended to Dorking so that folks in 'the Smoke', further north than us, could go to Boxhill. Very well patronised but only in the summer months.

The other bus was the 408 from Epsom. It ran from West Croydon to Guildford. It ran straight down the High Street. There was a stop almost opposite the Duke's Head. It went over the traffic lights and stopped in Bridge Street where the stop still is now. When the buses came back from Dorking they ran along Church Street to the crossroads, turned right and came and back up the High Street.

There was no traffic. Having two buses meeting in the High Street, they used to stop outside Argos. Every bus stopped outside Argos when going back towards Epsom. They used to keep going and seemed to manage very well. Mind you, at the top of the High Street the pavement was half the width of this table. When you passed Cullens the path was very narrow.

## ORAL HISTORY FEATURE

**MOLLIE CANNING, ANNE WALKER, MARY LANGDALE**



*Mollie Canning, Anne Walker in earlier days, and Mary Langdale.*

**Three of the district's most senior ladies were interviewed towards the end of last year under the Society's oral histories project. All were born in the 1920s and have lived in the Leatherhead area for most if not all of their lives. While their experiences were very different, all retained happy memories.**

Anne Walker of Maple Road, Ashted, was the daughter of an instructor at the former Royal School for the Blind, now known as SeeAbility, and had always lived in the district. She had been married to a piano tuner who had played in a band and lived to be 100 years old.

Mary Langdale was partly-sighted and had lived at SeeAbility longer than anyone else. She had arrived during World War 2 aged 16 when the school ethos was very different from today.

Mollie Canning of Elmer Cottages, Fetcham, had also first come to Leatherhead during the war and later returned with her husband who was working nearby. They had lived at Givons Grove for many years. Always active in church activities, she still drove her car at 97.

**Elizabeth Anne Walker** was born in Church Walk, Leatherhead on 5 September 1929. Her father, Arthur William Palmer, had arrived there from London when the Royal School for the Blind moved to Leatherhead as his own father had taught the basket-making. Her mother, Isabel, had lived in Ashted. Anne went to Poplar Road and

Leatherhead Central schools. She said: 'It was all very happy. Poplar Road School was a lovely place for small children. They were very keen on music. I think every room had got a piano and a great big maypole with ribbons. It was a lovely school.

'Leatherhead was a much quieter place with a good selection of shops. We had got the Crescent Cinema and we still had a little theatre in the High Street which was underneath Moulds shop I think. Underneath the theatre there was another room where you could have a dance. Most of the little shops were very good. There was still plenty of countryside fairly near. You could go to Norbury Park and towards Ashted Park. It was a very happy time.

'But when the war came things were not much good. We had quite a lot of bombs around here. I went to start work in 1943 when I was 13. I went for a week's trial and stayed 27 years. That was at Randalls Park, Prewetts Dairy. I went in the office there. It was a very happy time again but then of course the bombs started falling and it wasn't much good. If you were in the office you were wondering what was going on at home. Anyway, we survived all right. We didn't have a proper air raid shelter. We used to just go under the stairs.

'Later on I joined the junior branch of the Red Cross. I think there were about 70 little girls in that group at that time. I have a group photograph. We are all sitting in chairs in the pouring rain. The Red Cross was my main interest for a long time. There were five of us went up to Buckingham Palace and we had to march along from the barracks to the palace. The Queen [Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother] said we all had to go in the garden and sit down because it was so hot. I kept on in [the Red Cross] until I was about 18.

'There was quite a lot of [bomb] damage in Leatherhead. The chapel in St John's School was flattened by an explosion. In Grange Road there was the convent school and that was bombed as well. I used to cycle to work and coming home in the blackout with bombs falling was no joke. But I think Poplar Road School made up for it all.

'When I got to 11 I had to go down to the Central School and we were sharing with a big London school. So we only had half a day each. Then we had to meet in all these different halls, carry all our books from place to place. It was quite hard-going for little ones.

‘Behind my old home in Church Walk there was a lovely little hall. It was like a little meeting place. You went in from The Crescent. There was a footpath going past the house and then there was this little brick building. I think it was a Toc H hall. Very tiny.

‘We were carrying our books from place to place for each separate lesson. Of course, half of our teachers had gone into the Army so we had the London teachers down with the London pupils. It all worked quite well really. A lot of the London children were billeted with us anyway. We had one of the pupils from St Martin in the Fields High School which was in St John’s at the time. They were a girls’ school and St John’s was a boys school so they had to be kept separate. Our evacuees stayed with us until the end of the war. We were like sisters actually, it was lovely.

‘[Later], Prewetts Dairy was very old fashioned. It had a long desk with great big ledgers. When there was talk about an air raid we all got under this desk while the bangs were going on. I know one of our windows in Church Walk, a bomb fell in Aubrey Fields and when I got home my mother said look what has happened. The whole window frame, like a box set, got shifted in about six inches. That must have been quite a weight. But we managed.

‘After the war there was still a load of rationing of all sorts of things you just couldn’t get. I know when I was married in 1951 I had to go and get some extra rations for the wedding cake. I got six ounces of butter. That was it. Nothing else. All the neighbours, two of the ladies worked in the Co-Op and they used to get hold of currants and fruit. We finally got a cake but it was quite hard-going.

‘I can remember the neighbours very well. No 1 Church Walk, the lady had a little cellar and it was called the Jug House. You would see people going along with their jugs to fill up with ale. She was a funny lady though. Had a little old dog in there. She was forever going up and down Church Walk with these great jugs of ale.’

Anne was still living in the house in which her late husband Geoffrey had been born in 1914. She had moved there in 1951 when they were married. He had served in the RAF during the war and then signed on for another six years. Afterwards he had been trained in piano construction and become a tuner of pianos and organs, only retiring at the age of 82.

Geoffrey and four friends had formed the *Rhythmic Five* dance band before the war and had had many bookings for concerts and dances. He and Ann had met at a dance in Ashted Peace Memorial Hall. They had no children but during their marriage they would travel to music festivals around the country in their camper van and they had founded the Kingston Organ Club. Geoffrey died at Epsom Hospital on 22 January 2014, two months after his 100th birthday.

**Mary Langdale** was born 11 October 1928 in Kilburn, west London, daughter of a furniture removal man called Charlie. As a young child she had attended the London Society for Teaching the Blind to Read based at Swiss Cottage but was transferred during the war to the Royal School for the Blind in Leatherhead. She said: ‘We had to get away from the bombs. I was about 16. I used to go to a school where I could go home at night but my mum brought me here and she stayed at home.

‘They taught me how to work in the kitchen. Then I did what they called round machine which made socks and stockings. They also had a flat machine which made jumpers and cardigans but I didn’t do that one. I made a friend of a person called Beattie Stuck. When she first came she was a member of staff and as she got older they took her off the staff and she became one of us. She was partially blind. There was also a [member of ] staff called Miss Timmens. She was very nice. She used to take the services, play the organ.

‘Sometimes we had concerts and things. Entertainment, and sometimes we would get together with the help of staff. We used to do a bit of acting as well. Mostly plays. Some were funny and some were serious. We used to go down the town and back. We didn’t have taxis like we do now, mind. We used to have to walk down or not at all. I used to when I was younger. I used to like going up Forty Foot Road and they used to have a little roundabout park.

‘In some ways it has changed for the better and sometimes not. It [now] makes you more independent but sometimes it makes it difficult because if you get a difficult member of staff you don’t know quite what answer to give them. So you just have to think twice what your answer is.

‘We used to make things. You could choose what you wanted to make. Sometimes I used to say, do I have to go fast? I used to hate

arithmetic. They had a special tin thing with holes in and you had to put these bean things inside them to tell you how many numbers there is. That's how they did it.

'I remember what we used to call woodwork. I made a chest of drawers. I must have been about 17 or 18. Of course I had quite a bit of help with it. To put it in properly, to put the screws in and things. But that has lasted as long as me. I used to think to myself sometimes it is never going to get done but it was. Months it took. The person doing it with me said you can't do it any quicker Mary cause I can't so you won't. He was fully sighted. They always used to come out with a joke of some sort and start us all laughing. He was very, very good to us actually.

'You could do what you wanted. You could say I'd like to make so and so and the person in charge used to say all right. Have a go. Which was good because it gave us a chance. If we couldn't do it they just used to say I'll give you something else. But if you wanted to do something you persevered to do it.

'We used to go to Southend and places like that. We had a staff member with us but we could wander around on our own. But we always knew where the staff was if we wanted them. ...We stayed at the Isle of Wight a couple of years.

'They had a nurse there who was fully trained. I always wanted to be a nurse but I hadn't enough sight for that. So they said would you like to go in with Joyce? That was her name. Oh yes I said. I would. OK she said come tomorrow Mary and we will see what you want to know and I'll teach you it. So that's how I knew a bit about first aid. I used it a couple of times. One or two of them used to have epileptic fits and I used to help them. Then we had one or two that found it difficult to dress themselves so I taught them how to do it.'

Mary was a keen member of the Tandem Club where she rode the bike behind a sighted person. They would visit Polesden Lacey and other places. She had ridden on the tandem until a few months earlier when she had fallen on the grass near her flat and broken her hip. When she recovered she had come back, riding on the side by sides.

This was her second accident but she was not put off. In November 2001 she had fallen off the tandem and broken her collar bone when a car ran into the bike she was on in the middle of Leatherhead. The

club members had been making a special afternoon trip to St Helier Hospital in Sutton to visit a friend. They had travelled to Leatherhead Station by tandem and then gone on by train. Returning from the station afterwards Mary's bike was involved in the club's first ever traffic accident. The car driver involved had admitted liability and as a result Mary, who thankfully had made a good recovery, had received a sum in compensation.

**Hilda Mollie Canning** was born on 24 July 1920 in Wandsworth. Her father, Ross Doling, worked for the London Passenger Transport Board, keeping records of tyres. Mollie was working for the Air Ministry as a clerk during World War 2. When bombing started in London her branch was evacuated to Leatherhead.

She said: 'Opposite the church there is a complex. The Priory. We took over all those buildings. My office was in the little white cottage that sides on to the Dorking Road. My office was upstairs. Beautiful view. It was the inspection department of the aircraft manufacturing. My husband [John] came as an aircraft engineer. He wanted to join the Fleet Air Arm but he was very deaf so he hadn't a chance but he was in a reserved occupation. I remember my boss calling me, a man who had been in the First World War with one arm. He said: "Mollie I want to warn you. Engineers don't marry clerks." Well I thought, this one is going to if I have anything to say about it. But it shows the changing attitude, doesn't it? I mean now, it doesn't matter what you do, does it?'

They were married in 1942 and had four children. Before marrying she lived in Poplar Road. 'I was in digs with a family called the Daniels. He was a bus driver. I didn't like him a bit. She was terribly motherly and looked after you. But John was billeted in Ashted with the posh people. They didn't want him. They didn't want his money, his billeting money, so he was very unhappy there. I finally got him a room with a friend of my landlady in Poplar Avenue so we were quite close there. They wanted your money. They needed your money. But apart from that they were terribly kind and welcomed you.'

Once married they soon moved away but returned in 1969 to live in a cottage at Givons Grove. Mollie remained there until 2006. At the time they didn't think they could afford it but the estate agent

told them it was an old house so cheaper than a modern one. She said: 'When we walked in I loved it. They had a three-piece suite covered in the same material as mine so I felt terribly at home. It's 1860. It was the farm bailiff's cottage so it was a bit bigger than the farm workers'.

'When we came back they had given up The Priory. They worked in what were hospital huts in Chessington near the zoo. I think they had been wartime hospital huts and the Air Ministry took them over....John was there for a long while. It was the days when there were no laws about drink and drive because I remember going to a party at the French Embassy or something and driving home with careless abandon. Mind you, there wasn't as much on the road.'

John died in 1993 aged 79. 'We were preparing to do his 80th birthday. I lived at Givons Grove a long while afterwards then I decided it was time to move. Everything had worn out - stair carpet, carpets, curtains in ribbons. Every room wanted decorating. I felt right, it's time to go. I've never regretted it. I sold it to lovely people who have extended it, built a swimming pool. Really love it. It was such a lovely home.'

Leatherhead had changed since the war years, she said. 'It had this tiny high street both ways and the footpaths were really minute. Half way up on the left, if my memory is right, there was a shop, still there with a curved front, and that was a hardware. Moulds, I think. But underneath I think there was a cinema. I do remember going there because I remember bombs. Everything rattled. But my memories are that there wasn't much damage in Leatherhead during the war. I remember a postman being killed but I don't know where else there was bombing....I think it was lucky in a way. Nothing in the central bit.

'I remember the Thorndike being built. We all bought a brick, didn't we. I remember buying a brick for Guildford Cathedral too. That remained unfinished for years. New. I hated it at first. It was so bare. I quite like it now. I don't remember the vicar because I had been brought up as a Plymouth Sister and John was Church of England. He wasn't going to change so we compromised and went to the Methodists.'

Brought up in Wandsworth where her family were active Plymouth Brethren preachers, she had known Surrey from her childhood. 'Being in London we did everything on the train. Our Sunday school outings were always to Box Hill. So we came by train to Westhumble, all the way up that grass slope. The most exciting Sunday school outing we had - I am ashamed now - a boy fell down the hill. We kids thought it was marvellous. Fortunately he got caught in a tree.

'So one of the men teachers climbed down and held him until the ambulance came up and hoisted him up with ropes. We thought it was wonderful. I can't believe how thoughtless we were. He was all right. He hadn't broken anything. I expect he was larking about when he fell over the edge. I have always loved Box Hill.'

## **STORY: A SPECIAL ELOPEMENT**

### **JOHN MORRIS tells a curious tale of love in a different era.**

In 1816, the year without a summer, Dorothea Bland, whose father owned Randalls Park estate as well as an estate in County Kerry, Ireland, decided to elope with Richard Henry Holland. They were both living in Marylebone, near London, at the time.

Dorothea might have been living at her father's town house or at her grandmother's. Either way, she was about half a mile away from Marylebone Church. On 22 July 1816 she strolled down there. The church had frequent visitors and her visit was not suspicious. Dorothea wore her best clothes and the bitter weather allowed her to cover them under her cloak. Richard had ridden to London to obtain a marriage licence. On his return they were married.

Dorothea would have been accompanied by one of her sisters, respectable young ladies did not wander about alone. The newly-weds would have needed her for the return journey too. They could not walk home as a married couple before their parents knew of the wedding. It would not have been tactful.

Richard's father was outraged. He declared that his son might have been a minor, needing his father's permission to marry. Richard had been privately baptised and there was no record of his birth.

The groom and his father returned to the licensing office. They

obtained a new licence treating Richard as a minor who was now marrying with his father's permission. The couple were married a second time on 31 July.

The curate was baffled. Dorothea Holland, formerly Bland was described as a spinster. If so, why was she using

her married name? If she was already married why the second wedding?

After the ceremony, Richard's father thought again about his son's age. Hang on, he wondered. Richard must have been born on the same day as his brother Thomas. They were twins! Thomas had been baptised in church and the date of his birth had been noted. It turned out that Richard had been old enough to get married without his father's permission after all. To avoid further confusion Richard was baptised again in order to produce a record.

Dorothea later re-married while Richard was still alive. Yet they were not divorced. This time the wedding took place in the British Embassy chapel in Paris and once again she described herself as a spinster. She was simply far enough from home to get away with it!

This story first appeared in the book *WestEnders*. In view of the many illustrations a printed version would have cost £25. Instead it is available on CD and you can buy a copy for just £5 either from the Leatherhead Museum or from Barton's Books

Other stories include a narrow escape from an execution, a bigamous marriage, the loss of a huge fortune by gambling, a dodgy solicitor, exploitation and betrayal. There is also lots of information about old Leatherhead and its people.



The Elopement  
Church of St Marylebone as in 1750  
by 1816 the area would have been less rural

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

Registered Charity No 1175119

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Website: [www.leatherheadhistory.org](http://www.leatherheadhistory.org)

Online Archive: [www.ldlhsarchive.co.uk](http://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 16 September 10am-4pm

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## **Museum Managers**

Peter Humphreys and Duncan Macfarlane

[museum@leatherheadhistory.org](mailto:museum@leatherheadhistory.org)

## **Archival Material**

The Society's archival material including documents, illustrations and maps, may be accessed through the following members:

[ashtearchive@leatherheadhistory.org](mailto:ashtearchive@leatherheadhistory.org)

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Roy Mellick

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Alan Pooley

[leatherheadarchive@leatherheadhistory.org](mailto:leatherheadarchive@leatherheadhistory.org)

Nigel Thompson

## **Historical Enquiry Service**

This tries to answer questions about the histories of Leatherhead, Ashted, Bookham and Fetcham submitted via the Museum.

## **Kirby Library (Letherhead Institute)**

The Library is open Tuesdays, Thursdays, Fridays 10am-12.30pm. Exceptionally, arrangements may be made to use it at other times by applying to the Librarian.

## **2018 L&DLHS MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTIONS**

Ordinary £20 Associate/Student £6 Small Corporate £125

## LATEST BOOK FROM L&DLHS

Society member Vivien White has written our latest publication (right), based on research for the 2014 exhibition of the same name and updated for this year's restaging at Manor Farm Tithe Barn to cover the end of the war. See Page 6.

At 4500 ft<sup>2</sup>, the 15th century Grade 2 listed Tithe Barn, originally used by All Saints Church, is one of the largest in Surrey. Its own history will be displayed.



### LITTLE BOOKHAM in WORLD WAR I *Vivien White*



## DORKING CONCERTGOERS AT THE DORKING HALLS

**Saturday 6 October 2018** 7.30pm Martineau Hall  
**Oliver Wass** Harp & **Henry Roberts** Flute  
*Sponsored by the Countess of Munster Musical Trust*

**Saturday 10 November 2018** 7.30pm Martineau Hall  
**Clare Hammond** Piano  
 Haydn, Mendelssohn, Chopin, Debussy,  
 Rimsky-Korsakov & Rachmaninov

**Dante String Quartet Series** Martineau Hall

**Saturday 12 January 2019** 7.30pm  
 Haydn, Smetana & Beethoven

**Sunday 3 February 2019** 3.00pm  
 Glazunov, Shostakovich & Beethoven

**Sunday 24 February 2019** 3.00pm  
 Haydn, Schumann & Beethoven



Clare Hammond

Join the Dorking Concertgoers and receive a discount on your tickets  
 Membership costs £12.00 per year (£20.00 for 2 people at the same address) and entitles  
 members to discounted tickets, saving up to 20%, and priority booking to all our concerts.  
**Tickets from Dorking Concertgoers' Box Office 01306 740619 or Dorking Halls: 01306 881717**  
**Details of membership from Dorking Concertgoers on 01306 740619**  
[www.dorkingconcertgoers.org.uk](http://www.dorkingconcertgoers.org.uk) [www.dorkinghalls.co.uk](http://www.dorkinghalls.co.uk)

