

THE YATELEY SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER No 8
June 1982

Editor: Elizabeth Tipton 873378

Dear Member,

We hope all members who braved that typical English May day to visit the Society's stand at the May Fayre found the display interesting - and were grateful for the shelter of our "tent." Had you seen PR committee members and helpers battling with poles and plastic early that morning (and the previous Saturday in a hailstorm) you would have realised that without Ted Dowling's expert command, not to mention the loan of his poles and fittings, the task would have overwhelmed us in one swift gust.

EXHIBITION AND INQUIRY

The display boards, as you will have seen from that day, are indeed splendid and a combined committee of Executive, Planning and PR members are now working on the exhibition which is to justify their granting by the DOE. There will be an introductory display during the Yateley Centre's Open Days from Thursday 8 July to Saturday 10 July, with the full exhibition following in late September.

The initial display will also be taken to the opening of the second Joint Local Inquiry for Hart District this year. The Victoria Hall, Hartley Wintney will again house eminent QC's with their backup teams of assistants and boxfuls of files. The Inquiry opens on Tuesday 6 July and will continue if necessary to Friday 16 July, with the hearings on 7th, 12th and 13th July transferring to the Council Offices in Fleet. The presiding Inspector will this time be a woman. Again three sites are in question: Velmead, Monteagle and Little Anstice. Both Hart DC and Yateley TC are engaging barristers and Mr. Michael Mann QC will also reappear, this time pleading for the appellant for the Velmead Farm site.

Members are reminded that if they have not already done so they should send their letters commenting on the Monteagle Lane site and/or the Hart District Plan either to the Director of Planning, Council Offices, Hartley Wintney or to The Secretary, DOE, Room 10/04 Tollgate House, Houlton Street, Bristol BS2 9DV quoting ref. APP/5233/A81/12389.

The second leaflet distributed in March around Yateley by YAP (Yateley Action Publicity committee) was headed "Don't Let The System Beat You." The wheels of government processes grind slowly, and it is difficult to maintain the necessary barrage of letter-writing and lobbying as the months pass. We, after all, are using leisure hours to grapple with the complexities of planning issues and most members undoubtedly prefer to spend what time they have in active conservation or learning. The Society is however pleading for the cessation of housing development in Yateley as part of its concern to

conserve and enhance the amenities of Yateley. In so arguing, it is also voicing the opinion of a growing proportion of Yateley's population.

The Society's representations at this second Inquiry will gain added weight in direct proportion to the numbers of Yateley residents attending the hearings. The daily attendance register is considered, rightly or wrongly, to be a gauge of public interest. Members are therefore urged to attend if at all possible at some time during the fortnight - if not for 5 days then at least for 5 minutes.

POETIC INTERLUDE

Lest you imagine that planning matters are invariably tedious, and that planners are devoid of all humanity, consider the following exchange between a member and the office of Mr Cull:

Dear Sir,

We want no more houses here.

Our village has now grown
From a rural peaceful paradise
To a crowded busy town.
Though we've become quite urban
Our facilities are few
Our countryside is dwindling
And we'll be in a stew.

Caroline Powell

Dear Madam,

In reply to your letter
Hoping this makes you feel better.

You may feel Yateley's in the cart
How about the rest of Hart?
The houses had to be spread out
So Yateley couldn't be left out.

Though some facilities are now lacking
The District Council will give them backing.
They say you need a new youth club
Shops, open space, perhaps a pub,
Which if to rhyme with Monteagle
Could be called The Golden Eagle!

The Council's stand is quite plain
No more housing at Cobbett's Lane
Though if the site goes on appeal
That'll really make you squeal.

As you now read this final verse
Oh the Planners you do curse
But if the Plan still makes you whine
Don't blame us - blame Heseltine!

Yours faithfully,

Director of Planning

WHEN DOES A FIELD BECOME A SITE?

The May issue of the CPRE's journal "Countryside Campaigner" carries a 3-column article on the Hartley Wintney Ma Co inquiry headed "Emboldened builders corral 100's of Hampshire acres." The Council for the Preservation of Rural England is one of the national bodies critical of the countrywide trend towards "planning by appeal" which contradicts the essence of orderly planning and encourages house-building firms to take options on hundreds of acres of farmland. It is some consolation to know that we, as local residents, are part of a huge national issue and that our efforts are not going un-noticed.

COMMONS DE-REGISTRATION

Duncan Mackay, in his humorous and lively public lecture on "The Commonlands of England" drew attention to the loss of commons and rights of common following the 1965 Commons Registration Act. At that time many rights failed to be registered and the related commonland, lacking the protection of commoners and rights, were lost. Duncan referred in particular to a current appeal for de-registration by Corpus Christi College on 1.8 acres in Oxfordshire. There is now such an appeal for de-registration right on our doorstep.

Hazeley Heath common near Hartley Wintney no longer has commoners; they were bought out. The common covers 129 acres and if Hampshire CC sanctions the de-registration application by the owner, fences can go up around the land by August and it will be for ever extinguished as commonland.

It is this vulnerability of commonland without rights, amounting to some 750,000 acres in Britain, which is causing such concern to the Commons Society (to give it its shortened label) and such bodies as the CPRE.

Yateley common still has commoners, though their numbers have diminished as a result of housing development, as long as there are Yateley commoners to uphold their rights over Yateley common, and over Blackbushe airport, that land remains registered commonland.

[See Diary for walk on Hazeley Heath]

THE COMPANY WE KEEP

Although members will know that the Society's chairman, Edward Dawson, is Secretary of CoEnCo and works in London Zoo, most members (like the Ed.) are probably rather unsure what CoEnCo does.

The members of the Council for Environmental Conservation are drawn from some 30 non-governmental organisations concerned with all aspects of the environment. CoEnCo links these members with Government, Parliament and Whitehall and is the forum for discussion and action on issues ranging from transport, energy and pollution to youth environmental education, wildlife protection and countryside policy.

HRH Prince Philip gave the address to CoEnCo's first Members' Conference at the beginning of May - and The Yateley Society was there, printed in green on the elegant programme, in the brief note on Edward's curriculum vitae.

FUN FUNDS

On the spur of the moment, aided by sundry members who just happened to answer their telephones the previous evening, the Tipton Maxi joined an assortment of vehicles in the carpark of "The Swan" pub in Hartley Wintney one bright, chilly Saturday morning in mid-April. Laden with cakes, plants goatsmilk and a suitably censored selection of paperbacks, with the Society's sign swinging from the raised car-boot-lid, we very quickly netted almost £12 for Society funds. And judging from the numbers of passersby who stopped to exchange friendly words, the Society's presence is being noted with interest by our neighbours.

THURSDAY GROUPINGS

In case newer Society members are not certain about these, all Thursday evenings are open to any member who cares to come along. Planning & Conservation, Ecology, and Local History are merely convenient headings for the Society's current activities and are in no way closed shops.

The Ecology group, for example, is undertaking a tree survey this summer and needs more helpers. The aim is to describe the general distribution of trees in Yateley and particularly note any unusual or large specimens and their growth habits. No expertise is needed for the initial tree mapping, and since trees don't move, they are one of the most accessible features of our natural surroundings to begin learning about.

The Society is especially fortunate in having access, through Edward and Susan Dawson, to expert help on everything from mushrooms to bogs. Those of you who have been on a fungal foray with Peter Edwards of Kew will know how infectious is his incredibly wide-ranging knowledge of things botanical. He is almost as good on birds.

With such friendly experts to guide our amateur beginnings, the Society's scope will widen as members' knowledge and awareness increases. Nearly all of us know little but are eager to learn; do join us one Thursday evening.

LOCAL HISTORY QUESTIONNAIRES

Only 10 completed questionnaires have been returned. Of these replies, only 3 say they are definitely interested in attending the WEA course starting in September. The WEA have already had to take the decision to run the course, Analysing the replies of those who will "probably" or "possibly" attend the course, there is most interest in the two tutorial groups Historic Landscape Study, and Medieval and Early Settlement.

We need a minimum of 12 people for the course to survive enrolment night and ideally 4-6 persons per tutorial group so that we can cover 3 or 4 topics in the year. I know there are several people who have said they are interested in the course but have not yet returned their questionnaires. Would these people and any others interested please let me have their replies soon since a considerable amount of planning must go into the course and it would be unfair to ask Dr John Porter, the tutor, to undertake the course if it is going to fail through lack of members.

The replies received revealed only 3 members not interested in the WEA course but interested in Thursday meetings. Of these two are Executive members busy with other aspects of the Society. So unless I receive a flood of completed questionnaires calling preferentially for the ordinary Thursday evening meetings of the History group, I shall conclude that those interested in local history want to pursue that interest via the Society-sponsored WEA course. Of those who have given their answers to me, Wednesday is the preferred night for the WEA course.

When the Society had 40 members, I could phone them all individually in order to accomplish the planning of meetings to fit in with members' requirements. Now with over 150, I must rely on members communicating with me. If you had a questionnaire and still intend to return it, or if you didn't receive one and are interested in local history - even remotely - please phone (Yat 873378), write (Monteagle House, Monteagle Lane) or grab me, Elizabeth, or Michael Holroyd at any Society meeting.

Peter Tipton

DID YOU MISS THESE SPEAKERS?

"Ecology's Infiltrator in London Town"

Such was the headline in the May issue of the "New Scientist" outlining the appointment of Dr David Goode as the GLC's first ever senior ecologist. Remembering his beautiful colour slides of wetland accompanying his fascinating lecture on habitats to the Society, the antithesis of 610 miles encompassing derelict land sites, disused railway lines and canals, dumps and reservoirs seems startling. But remembering too Dr Goode's good-humoured competence, which came across very strongly, the notion of his infiltrating ecological thinking at such a level into London planning becomes very exciting.

Similarly, when Lyndis Cole in her Society lecture showed us her ecological park, miraculously flourishing on a derelict lorry park by Tower Bridge, the secret of its success lay in her understanding and manipulation of the complex interrelations of soil structure and plant life. Her experiment cost next to nothing and its results are startling. In fact her William Curtis Ecological Park, which was due to vanish this year, has had a 2-year extension to its lease. If you have a spare hour in town, do go and find it, at 16 Vine Lane, Tooley Street, SE1, just downstream on the South Bank from HMS Belfast.

With ecologists such as Miss Cole and Dr Goode aiming to create "an environment for both humans and wildlife" there is every hope that the inner life of cities can be subtly changed so that in future extreme urbanisation need not necessarily mean dehumanisation.

But as David Goode warned the Society, once a complex habitat is destroyed by man, it can never be restored by man. Ecologists can encourage comparatively simple associations of plant, animal and insect life, but the richness which Nature has created through thousands of years cannot be reproduced, since so many of its secrets are not yet discovered. Seen in such terms, and in relation to extreme urbanisation, it is clearly ridiculous to allow the semi-rural character of Yateley to be swallowed up without protest.

THEN DON'T MISS THESE ...

Thursday 8 July
Yateley School
Room C.4.1.
7.30pm

"THE HISTORY OF THE BASINGSTOKE CANAL" by David Gerry

Mr Gerry is Hampshire's Warden of the Basingstoke Canal and his lecture will consider the past, present and future of the canal. Constructed with pick and shovel in the period 1788 to 1794, the canal was used to transport goods by narrow boat until the coming of the Railway Age, when canal traffic gradually declined. The canal is now jointly owned by Hampshire and Surrey county councils who are restoring it for recreational use. Mr Gerry is actively involved in this process and will illustrate his lecture with slides and old photographs. His lecture will interest all local historians and the growing number of people fascinated by canals and boating.

Thursday 16 September

"THE COUNTRY HOUSE IN THE 1980's" by John Young

Joh

John Young, Planning Correspondent for the "Times", will open the Society's Autumn Season of lectures. His lecture will have the same title as his book, which was researched while publication of the "Times" was suspended during 1980. Mr Young's book describes how 13 of Britain's historic homes are maintained. Surprisingly, he found one where, with a few economies, the present day Earl lives much as his ancestors did; while others homes are being put to a wide variety of uses to make them financially viable and to ensure their survival. Contrasting buildings are matched by contrasting owners, and the book has many anecdotes about the houses and the people who live in them. John Young's lecture promises to be thoroughly enjoyable, not only for those interested in the details of history and building conservation but for all of us who cannot resist hearing a few good stories about our aristocracy.

Thursday 21 October

"A CONSERVATIONIST IN PARLIAMENT TODAY"
by Lord Peter Melchett

Lord Melchett, the 4th Baron, whose father was Chairman of the British Steel Corporation, entered parliament in 1973 and became one of the youngest ministers in the last government. He was Chairman of the Working Party on Pop Festivals and is now Chairman of Community Industry. His wide reaching conservation interests range from the World Wildlife Fund to the RSPB and the Ramblers' Association. As Leader of the Opposition to the Wildlife and Countryside Bill he spoke on most of its tabled 1,000 Amendments. Once described as "the most eligible Old Etonian millionaire in London" Lord Melchett farms a thousand acres in Norfolk and is well-known from many TV and radio appearances.

This will be an exceptional opportunity to hear and put questions to a statesman and conservationist. The Society will invite local organisations and councillors and urges every member to attend this lecture.

OYEZ! OYEZ' SOCIETY'S FIRST SOCIAL FUNCTION

Come to a Barn Dance in the nearest thing Yateley has to a barn - the Village Hall. If you have never enjoyed the fun of such evenings, do try this one. The "Hampshire Hogs" have an excellent caller, the vital ingredient for an evening of organised and strenuous pleasure. Their music sets feet tapping irrepressibly, the drinks are cheap and the food tasty so do come and get to know more Society members. See diary for date and time.

SOUTH EAST ENGLAND: A GUIDE TO FAMILY WALKS

Published by Croom Helm at £1.95, this booklet of walks is Duncan Mackay's recommendation. Ian Campbell, past Secretary of the Commons, Open Spaces & Footpath Preservation Society, edited the collection of 28 walks covering the sweep of countryside from Chelmsford round to Oxford and south eastwards back to Folkestone. Each walk can be reached by rail, or rail and bus, on a day's outing since the book is dedicated to "all those who perhaps rarely visit the countryside on foot, but often feel they would like to." Each walk has been contributed by someone who knows and loves his or her area and the directions include remarks on historical and topographical points of interest, not forgetting strategically placed hostelryes. The shortest walk is 3½ miles, the longest is 9 miles. Several of them are within easy reach of Yateley, including a 5-mile meander along the Basingstoke Canal from Ash Vale to Brookwood..

Walk number 24 is to Ewelme in Oxfordshire.. If that particular figure-of-eight is a fair sample, 6½ miles traced last Whit Monday in blazing sunshine with larks trilling above fields of young wheat, the walks are indeed "woven into the fabric of the countryside" as they follow ancient trackways across fields, through woods and along streams.

The village of Ewelme is the half-way point of this route and nothing could be more satisfying than to emerge from a belt of trees, cross Cow Common, and come upon the village whose core is the unique and lovely medieval 'development complex' of school, almshouses and church built by Alice, duchess of Suffolk, grand-daughter of Geoffrey Chaucer, in 1437.

AND FINALLY "DEAR MADAM"

In any society there is invariably a nucleus of people who appear to do all the work and possibly wonder if their efforts are appreciated. It has occurred to me that there may be many members of the Yateley Society like ourselves.

We do not live in an old house so have history into which we can delve. We love the surrounding countryside but feel we lack the knowledge to do any serious nature study.. However we really enjoy the outings when we manage to go and also greatly appreciate the various talks and lectures.. We write letters to support you when you are fighting building applications and admired your display at the May Fayre. /no

You have opened our eyes to so many things and we are keeping a scrap book of cuttings about Yateley, having been inspired by Mr. Loader..

Just thought you might like to know°

Yours sincerely,

J S Pattenden

SOCIETY DIARY

- Thursday 17 June Ecology 7.30pm Youth Suite, Yateley Centre
Gravel pits, watercourses, general discussion on project work.
- Friday 18 June Landscape History 7.30pm Joint Field meeting with
NEHAS. Meet at gravel pit carpark on North side of A30 (grid ref. 83594)
Inspection of possible old fishponds and culvert under the A30.
- Sunday 20 June Ecology 2.30pm Wyndhams Pool
Butterfly Survey
- Wednesday 23 June Executive Committee meeting
- Thursday 24 June Walk Hazeley Heath 7.30pm Meet outside Hart
Garden Centre (on the right of the A30 on entering Nartley Wintney.)
John and Liz Preedy will lead a walk over Hazeley Heath through woodland, dry and wet heathland. A good place for orchids and mostquitoes.
- Saturday 26 June Ecology Field Trip to Noar Hill
Meet at 10.30am in the Selborne Coffee Shop.
For further details contact Liz or John Preedy Yat 878871.
- Thursday 1 July 7.30pm Youth Suite, Yateley Centre
Brief update on current Planning matters followed by
History Three members will describe how they have used source material in researching their own local history projects. All interested members most welcome.
- Sunday 4 July Walk Fleet Pond 2.30pm
A circuit of Fleet Pond, Hampshire's largest natural lake, led by Mary Robins. This is an area of natural history interest, particularly for birds.
Take the road to Fleet and after crossing over the motorway turn left at the new roundabout along the B3014 towards Cove. After about a mile turn right over the railway bridge, then right again to a large parking area (grid ref. 823553).
- Tuesday 6 July Public Inquiry opens 10.00am Victoria Hall, Hartley Wintney.

- Tuesday 6 July Tree Walk Meet outside Library at 7.30pm
Mike Savage, an arboricultural officer with Hampshire CC will lead this walk around Yateley. During his recent lectures to the WEA Tree Course he described some of the problems encountered with trees in urban areas, and discussed the trees planted and felled by Hampshire CC in Yateley. Mike Savage's expertise will make this walk enjoyable for all Society members. With all the trees being identified en route the walk will particularly assist Ecology members currently working on the Tree Survey.
In order to take in as many trees as possible, we plan to drive between the main areas of interest.
- Thursday 8 July LECTURE "THE HISTORY OF THE BASINGSTOKE CANAL"
by Mr David Gerry
7.30pm Room C.1.1. Yateley School
- Thursday 8 July - Yateley Centre Open Days
Saturday 10 July
- Sunday 11 July Ecology Tree & Plant Survey, Royal Oak valley
9.30am Meet in public carpark behind the pub.
- Monday 12 July Yateley Gardening Society 8.00pm WI Hall, Yateley
"Wild Flowers of the Countryside" by Mr A Cleave.
Mr Cleave is a conservationist and his talk should interest several members - and the Gardening Society would welcome a few new faces.
- Thursday 15 July Ecology 7.30pm Youth Suite, Yateley Centre
Trees and Heathland surveys.
- Saturday 17 July BARBECUE AND BARN DANCE 7.30pm - 11.30pm Yateley
Village Hall with "The Hampshire Hogs."
Tickets £3 which includes the barbecue.
Tickets from Liz Preedy. Cash bar.
- Thursday 22 July Walk Frogmore Park 7.30pm
Gordon Harland will lead a walk round the boundary of the former grounds of Frogmore Park. These are now occupied by a modern housing estate but some features of the original park can still be seen. Wilkie Collins stayed at Frogmore Park and based his description of Blackwater Park in "The Woman in White" on it (1860.)
From Yateley turn left off Reading Road along Darby Green Road, right along Frogmore Road, left down Bell Lane and park at the junction with Meadow Way on the right.

Thursday	29 July	History	7.30pm Monteagle House, Monteagle Lane Working evening in 3 groups as before. The History group intends to work during August, details to be worked out at July meetings.
Sunday	1 August	Walk	<u>Hawley Lake</u> 2.30pm Michael Waterman will lead us on a circuit of Hawley Lake. Some parts are boggy and there are a number of inter- esting plants. Follow the road to Cove, take the first turning on the left past the Crown and Cushion and park in the car park on the left (grid ref. 840569)

STOP PRESS

Fancy a weekend in York in July? The National Congress of Civic Trusts is meeting at the University of York from Friday 9 July to Sunday 11 July. The cost is a modest £25 which includes accomodation in the university and the Society is willing to help towards that. Registration is at 5.00pm on Friday and the congress finishes at lunchtime on Sunday. The programme is packed with interesting top-line speakers on all manner of topics relating to the concerns of civic trusts. Edward Dawson has full details and any member interested in attending should contact Edward (Yat 877458.)