

THE YATELEY SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER No 15
October 1983

Editor: E J Tipton 873378

Dear Member:

The images of golden September reflect the season harvest time with its feelings of fruition and achievement. Yet in many ways September is the month of beginnings quite as much as the first burgeoning month of Spring. New schools, new jobs, new family schemes mark changes in lifestyle for many. And the thousands who enroll so hopefully in evening classes are responding to promises of new skills and interests, perhaps new commitments.

The same is true for The Society. As the gear changes from the sauntering pace of the past summer, new challenges, new schemes begin to appear. The membership now stands at roughly 200 persons. Of those probably about 50% are supporting members, who pay their subscriptions because they believe in the aims of The Society and wish to see it go from strength to strength. Of the other 100 members, about one quarter are actively working for The Society in history, ecology or planning projects - and on the Executive Committee. There are then some 75 members, some of whom enjoy the walks, the lectures and the social gatherings, whose faces are known and who are interested in one or other of The Society's special pursuits. Yet the average gathering of members, at a lecture for example, numbers between 30 and 40 people. Since 25 of those are the usual well-known faces, where are the rest of you?

The Society programme aims to interest all of the members some of the time. If it is not succeeding, then please come along and say so - and tell us what you would like to see done or attempted. If The Society is really to flourish, to grow and prosper, then many more of the members need to feed ideas into it. We are a very heterogeneous group of people, coming from all backgrounds and having a very broad range of abilities and interests. We are also all learners, wanting to know, wanting to nurture, wanting to build. The fascination of discovery is constantly on our horizons and the companionship of more and more like minds is our constant pleasure.

So as September moves into October 1983, look at the programme for the coming months and see whether you don't feel inclined to say a bit more and do a bit more with this, your Society.

Look for example at:

THE PUBLIC LECTURE PROGRAMME

The past two years' lecture programme has offered a range of topics of general interest unmatched elsewhere in Hart District. Though our usual lecture room in Yateley School has an obtrusive heating system, and the alternative Drama Hall seating had to be abandoned as unkind to posteriors, the speakers who often travel considerable distances to our meetings come willingly to Yateley because The Society is what it is where it is.

Lord Peter Melchett was quite clearly an "important" speaker, but the majority of our speakers have equal status and entertainment value within their particular subjects. Months after the "Operation Drake" evening, conversations were still reverting to that enthralling lecture, whilst Arthur Jolland's lecture this summer on "The Countryside at Night" was equally memorable for entirely different reasons.

The opening lecture for this autumn "HERBS - USEFUL PLANTS" promises to be quite as exceptional. Research biochemists do not usually describe themselves as "a modern Merlin" but that is Dr Conrad Gorinsky's own analogy for his work. At St Bartholomew's Hospital, London, he likens his researches into the chemical constituents of plants to the investigations of a herbalist, alchemist or magician of a past age. There are some 300,000 plants species which have been identified by botanists and of those a mere 10,000 have been investigated for their chemical properties. The herbs Dr Gorinsky examines come from civilisations all over the world; many of them have been used for hundreds of years as cures, poisons or protections. Most of us know that certain Amerindian tribes use curare-tipped arrows to paralyse prey, but Dr Gorinsky knows the constituents of curare and can describe their effects. Cannabis has a dubious reputation with customs officials, yet it may prove to be another drug which can aid cancer treatment. However, when Dr Gorinsky describes the effects of cocoa, you may no longer think it a suitable bedtime drink for children!

Dr Gorinsky will illustrate his talk with slides and promises to be himself every bit as fascinating as his topic.

Don't miss it: Thursday 20 October at 7.30 pm in Room C.1.1. Yateley School

NB Lecture is as usual in Room C.1.1. The October parish magazine note mentioning the Green Room was correct at the time of going to press but has since been amended to our usual meeting place.

Remember: Your membership fee includes
Free Entry to all Society lectures.

"DOES THE LAW PROTECT OUR COUNTRYSIDE?"

...is the title for the second autumn lecture in November. Again the speaker is an authority of repute, being in fact the barrister author of the standard handbook on the law relating to the protection of the environment. Remembering Lord Melchett's account of the probable effectiveness of the Wildlife and Countryside Act, the ambivalence of this title suggests that Mr Alastair Bigham will deal with the large grey areas of legislation and procedure which frustrate so many intentions. Mr Bigham has himself been an advocate in public inquiries, and whatever may be the feelings of some of us about the eloquence of barristers, those who have sat through the local housing inquiries will agree readily that the incisive logic and careful structuring of argument by professional advocates is both enviable and entertaining.

In fact Mr Bigham is on our side, for in his book he sets out to assist the public and "the general professional practitioner" (ie solicitors) to understand exactly what rights they are entitled to enforce. Though the countryside around Yateley cannot be rated as "an area of outstanding natural beauty" its value to local inhabitants is unquestionable. The problem is, how to quantify that value in terms which will be accepted as valid evidence in any debate on land use. If Mr Bigham cannot demonstrate how we may calculate and assess the art of the possible, then no-one else can. This evening will be a most unusual opportunity for discussing practicalities with "an expert" who would not normally be accessible to us. Mr Bigham is naturally a most practised speaker, and with the latest gathering of forces hostile to the continuance of the country's Green Belts, his talk is sure to have revelations of plot and counter-plot equal to any thriller novel - yet of course he will be describing the real world in which we all have to live.

Note it now: Thursday 24 November in Room C.1.1. Yateley School

LOSSES

Not of money but of people. With the death of Maj-Gen Llewellyn Brown in July The Society lost one of its vice presidents. Probably only his obituary in "The Times" or its reprint in the parish magazine caused many in Yateley to realise what a remarkably distinguished person General Brown was. His courteous, modest manner gave no hint of his wartime career in the Desert and Italy, nor of his subsequent director-generalship of the Ordnance Survey. He was honoured by eminent learned and professional societies and in turn honoured us by agreeing to be a vice president of The Society. As churchwarden for many years to St Peter's, it was he who arranged for the Yateley Tithe map to be photographed, for which all local historians of Yateley will continue to be grateful. He frequently remarked to some of us that he wished he were younger so that he could take a more active part in The Society. Now, alas, we have missed an opportunity because we intended him to be one of our 'subjects' for oral recording this autumn. We regret the passing of a gentleman and a friend.

Not of the same nature, but a departure leaving an uncomfortably large gap in the Executive, was the moving of John and Liz Preedy from Yateley. Their plans changed rapidly over the summer months and by the beginning of July they had moved to Wantage. Now the latest news of them is that they are probably moving to Battersea and Liz will resume her previous engineering position with her former employer. John meanwhile is considering an MSc in Conservation. The Preedy's energy and flair contributed so much to all The Society's activities that the Executive in particular feels their absence acutely. They brought professional skills and unflagging enthusiasm to everything they did - and we wish they were still here! Two such exceptionally able people will make their mark wherever they go and we wish them every success in their new urban surroundings; we were lucky to have them when we did.

SOCIETY LOCAL HISTORY GROUP

by Michael Holroyd

This group normally meets on the second Thursday in the month. We have decided that our main project for the time being will be the History of Yateley Common. This will comprise a number of activities, including examination of the common as it exists today, study of maps and documents which throw light on its history, and recording people's memories of the uses formerly made of the common. Eventually we hope to be able to produce a publication.

One of the main objects of investigation will be the changing boundary of the common. The present boundary is the result of a series of incidents over the centuries in which pieces of commonland have been taken for a variety of purposes, both private and public. We hope to track down records of as many of these changes as possible, and to examine their results on the ground. I should be pleased to hear from anyone who knows anyone with records or information about any aspects of the common's history.

Our meetings will have relevance to some part of this project. For example, on the morning of Saturday 22 October Peter Tipton will be taking the Old Houses group to Hampshire Record Office in Winchester to copy out extracts from the records of the Crondall Manor Court relating to transfers of property in Yateley, including enclosures of commonland. The group meeting on 13 October will prepare for the visit as Peter describes the information to be extracted and its significance. On 10 November I shall give a talk about maps of Yateley, based on the Society's growing collection, and we shall discuss how they can be used in our investigations. Anyone interested in any of these topics will be very welcome at our meetings. They are very informal and we usually have a cup of coffee at half-time.

Mr Currie's Exchange

This major change in the boundary of Yateley Common took place a hundred years ago. The southern boundary then followed the boundary of Yateley tithing, and included a long wedge-shaped area to the south-west of Starveacre, extending nearly to Hawley Lake. Mr Bertram Currie of Minley Manor wished to acquire this area, and in 1883 he offered to donate £300 to a local charity if the commoners would give up their rights over it. This proposal was considered by a meeting of the Yateley Vestry and was unanimously rejected. Nevertheless Mr Currie bought the land from the Ecclesiastical Commissioners in 1884, and in 1888 he made another approach to the commoners. This time he offered them land in exchange. If the commoners would give up their rights over the wedge-shaped area of 44 acres he offered them similar rights over 53 acres of land adjoining the Yateley boundary. This offer was eventually accepted, although the areas exchanged were a little smaller - 39 acres and 48 acres. This is the origin of the present southern boundary of the common, running past the tumulus, above Hornley Farm, and on towards Starveacre. There are still details of the story to be filled in: for instance, what was the procedure by which the exchange was actually made, and did all the commoners have to sign an agreement? To help find the answers, we wonder if there is anyone working near the Public Record Office at Kew who could spare a lunch hour amongst the archives. No experience is necessary; we can tell you what to look for. If you could help, please contact either Michael Holroyd (Yat 872439) or Peter Tipton (Yat 873378).

WEA YATELEY HISTORY PROJECT

by Michael Holroyd

This class started its second year on Wednesday 28 September under its tutor Dr John Porter. This is a workshop type of class in which members study local history from original documents. This year we shall probably be working on late medieval Yateley, living conditions in the 17th century, 19th century parish administration, and Yateley as revealed by the 1881 census. Documents to be studied will include wills and inventories and the minutes of the 19th century vestry, the forerunner of the parish and town councils. We may also study the preparation of the 1844 tithe map and compile biographies of Yateley's leading 19th century citizens. There will be 20 classes and the fee is £15 (concessionary rates for pensioners). If you think this could appeal to you, come and sample a class; the next is 5 October in Room A1.5. You will not be expected to join unless you decide to come back next time.

However, if digging is more your style, this may interest you...

ODIHAM CASTLE

by Geoff Hoare

The ruined keep on the North bank of the Basingstoke Canal between North Warnborough and Greywell is well known and was excavated for a fortnight in 1981 and also in 1982 by the Hampshire County Museum Service on behalf of the County Recreation Officer.

Traditionally, King John rode out from the castle to sign Magna Carta but the mound underlying the present ruins was found to contain pottery of the 13th century and early 14th century, giving an early 14th century date for the earliest construction of the keep. In the 1981 dig a trench was cut across the floor of the keep revealing the foundation of the first-storey central support column and a stone and timber lined sump or well. A trench was cut to the West of the bank surrounding the keep in the course of investigating the bank and mound and on the last afternoon of the dig that year part of the jamb of a blocked doorway was found.

The trench was back-filled but the following year was opened up again in anticipation of finding the footings at least of the earlier building associated with the blocked doorway. But all we did find was the other door jamb! Both jambs were only approximately half a metre high but the architectural moulding on them can be dated to the late 12th century and early 13th. Further excavation revealed a large ditch or moat and bank between the present keep and moat which clearly related to the earlier building.

Yet again there was an important development on the last day of the dig. The corner of another building was located on the same axis as the building with the blocked doorway, and evidence points to its demolition being previous to, or at the same time as, the blocking of the doorway.

The site is due to be excavated again this year and while many more questions will result we hope a few answers will also be found. Undoubtedly however the remains of the castle built in King John's time lie under the present ruins and surround.

Odiham Castle excavations: 1 October 1983 - 16 October 1983

Details from: The Director

HCC Museums Service, Chilcomb House, Chilcomb Lane,
Winchester SO23 8RD

And this should interest everyone:

CHRISTMAS GATHERING

Well the charity card brochures have arrived, and the Christmas posting dates have been up for weeks, so the Social committee have been planning ahead too. On Saturday 10 December you are invited to partake of an evening of musical entertainment and convivial revelry. A group of talented music-making artistes calling themselves "In Harmony" have been engaged for the occasion to help us while away some pleasant hours together (you may have seen them featured in this Tuesday's "Yateley News"). We hope you will want to sing too and may request some Edwardian headgear be worn. More of that in the November newsletter.

Supper to the usual high Society standard will be served but you are requested to bring your own chosen liquid refreshment. Ticket price will be announced in November but - be warned: there will be a strict closing date for bookings - Thursday 1 December - so that the catering team will not be confronted with a 50% jump in numbers in two days before the event, a regrettably predictable occurrence up will now.

Names and numbers for tickets to either Caroline Powell (Yat 875706) or
Maisie Hoare (Yat 872948)

ERRATUM

The Neville Glossop cup referred to the July newsletter was in fact an anonymous gift in Neville's memory from a local businessman. The Society hopes to arrange for its permanent display in the Library until next year's May Fayre. The collection by friends and neighbours bought colours for the Yateley Boys' Brigade, of which Neville was a staunch member until his death.

SAXON CHURCH

The latest volume of the Hampshire Field Club's "Proceedings" includes an article by David Hinton and M K Oake on the excavations of St Peter's church prior to the rebuilding. In their preamble they point out that the presence of a Saxon church in Yateley is remarkable (a) because NE Hampshire is "notably devoid of such remains" and (b) because the Domesday survey revealed that Yateley lay in the poorest and least populated part of the 11th century Hampshire. It was therefore not the sort of site with wealth enough for a stone building when the normal material would have been timber.

Why then did Yateley have a stone church? Hinton and Oake tend to see the answer lying in the ownership of the vill, though this is not easy to establish. Domesday refers to 'Effelle' as owned by Hugh de Port and until now Effelle has been identified as Yateley. However, as noted in the August newsletter last year, the new edition of Domesday translates 'Effelle' as 'Heckfield'. Since Hugh de Port's descendants are not subsequently recorded as being connected with Yateley, but are recorded as holding the manor of Heckfield together with the advowson (appointment of clergy) of that church, it looks as though the Domesday commissioners "regarded (Yateley) as part of the estate of Crondall, then held by the Bishop of Winchester for the support of the monks of the Old Minster (St Swithun's Priory)."

In fact the hundred heading above the entry for Effele in Domesday is blank and the new edition has inserted 'Holdshott hundred' ie the hundred with which Heckfield was later reckoned. By 1316 Yateley was recorded as being in Crondall hundred, so the history of the ownership is still puzzling. Since of the 21 Anglo-Saxon churches in Hampshire at least 9 were on the estates of the Old Minster, it would seem that lands held by the Bishop were more likely to have stone-built churches. So archaeological evidence may provide a solution when there is no clear documentary evidence.

In any case, such conundrums are infinitely teasing and enticing and Yateley's archaeological distinction, still safely embedded in the North wall of St Peter's, is the first great 'Why?' of Yateley's history.

ADVERTISEMENT

Smooth-haired Fox Terrier Puppies for Sale

(The original His Master's Voice and Enid Blyton dog.)
Championship stock. Mother well known in Society.
Ready end of October.
Joyce and Michael Holroyd (Yat 872439)

AND FINALLY...

The Ed apologises for the very late arrival of this edition of the Newsletter but "due to pressures" it was impossible to compile this edition and get it reproduced before now. Since the next edition is now scheduled for mid-November, you shouldn't feel too short-changed.

Copy date: 12 November.

THE YATELEY SOCIETY

PROGRAMME: OCTOBER - DECEMBER 1983

Thursday	6 Oct	Planning/ Conservn	Monthly Meeting 8.00 pm Room C1.3 Yat Centre
Thursday	13 Oct	History	Crondall Manor Court Records: Preparation for visit to HRO (see Newsletter) 7.30 pm Room C1.3 Would all participants please attend; any others most welcome.
Thursday	20 Oct	LECTURE	" <u>HERBS - USEFUL PLANTS</u> " Dr Conrad Gorinsky 7.30 pm Room C1.1 Yateley Centre
Saturday	22 Oct		Visit to HRO - Old Houses group working party
Monday	24 Oct	Executive	Committee meeting
Thursday	27 Oct	Ecology	Monthly meeting 7.30 pm Room C1.3 Yat Centre
Thursday	3 Nov	Planning	Monthly meeting 8.00 pm Room C1.3 Yat Centre
Sunday	6 Nov	Walk	<u>Along the Basingstoke Canal</u> led by Mary Robins 2.30 pm Meet at Chequers Wharf, Crookham Village grid ref SU792517
Thursday	10 Nov	History	Maps of Yateley: talk by Michael Holroyd (see Newsletter) 7.30 pm Room C1.3 Yateley Centre
Thursday	17 Nov	Ecology	Monthly meeting 7.30 pm Room C1.3 Yat Centre
Thursday	24 Nov	LECTURE	" <u>DOES THE LAW PROTECT OUR COUNTRYSIDE?</u> " by Alastair Bigham MA, barrister of the Middle Temple 7.30 pm Room C1.1 Yateley Centre
Thursday	1 Dec	Planning	Monthly meeting 8.00 pm Room C1.3 Yat Centre
Thursday	8 Dec	History	Yateley History: members of the group will speak about discoveries or special interests. 7.30 pm Room C1.3 Yateley Centre All welcome
Saturday	10 Dec	SOCIETY	CHRISTMAS EVENT 8.00 pm - 11.30 pm Drama Hall
Sunday	11 Dec	Walk	<u>Water Birds</u> : a walk round the lakes. 2.15 pm Meet at the bridge on Darby Green/Swan Lane grid ref SU 836609. Any queries to Irene Draper (Yat 870470)

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Hants Field Club: Thursday 3 November "The Black Death and Cleopatra's Nose"
Basingstoke Archaeological Society 7.30pm
Jackson Room, Chute House, Lower Church Street, Basingstoke