

T H E Y A T E L E Y S O C I E T Y

Newsletter No. 30

April 1987

Editor: Tony Hocking (Yateley 875158)

THE EDITORIAL

Dear Member:

"Under new management!" The editor may have changed but there will not be any earth shattering changes in the format of the newsletter, unless YOU ask for it. Are you happy with the newsletter as it is? If you have any views, please let me know.

By now you should have seen a copy of "STOP PRESS", our between-newsletters leaflet for urgent news, any comments on this would also be welcome.

You may notice that Stop Press has clearer print than the newsletter. This is because different processes are used; the short Stop Press is photocopied from masters prepared using a word-processor and computer printer, while the much longer newsletter is duplicated from typed stencils. Much as the Society would like to relieve Christine Heckscher and Elizabeth Tipton of the chores of typing and printing the newsletters, economics dictate that this method will continue to be employed for the time being. The paper costs and printing costs are much higher for photocopying.

One cosmetic change I hope to make to the newsletter is the provision of a front cover. This would make the periodical more attractive, less likely to be mistaken for some other paper and would advertise the Society. Designs are being looked at and costed.

PLEASE NOTE:

COPY DATE FOR THE NEXT "STOP PRESS" - 3 MAY 87 (REMEMBER, ONLY URGENT ITEMS ACCEPTED)

COPY DATE FOR THE NEXT NEWSLETTER - 6 JUNE 87

THE MAY FAYRE

by Stephanie Pattenden

Isn't it funny that we know certain things will happen, yet they still creep up on us and take us almost by surprise. Christmas is one occasion, and although the prospect of winter seems long and tedious suddenly spring is in the air and it is time for the May Fayre.

Once again we will have a sales stall, so once again I am asking for contributions. Usually there are about twenty members who do all the work, a very small proportion of the total membership. If everyone gave one item what a pile we would have!

So, if you make anything that we can sell please contact me on Yateley 874994 or sign the board at one of the meetings. And - gentlemen, don't leave it all to the ladies! Do any of you make toys, jewellery, picture frames, etc.?

Please bring whatever items you have to 26, Home Park Road, off Hall Lane, during the weekend preceding the Fayre (May 2,3) so that we can price and package them. Thank you.

TALKING AND WALKING ON YATELEY COMMON by Valerie Kerslake

Recent finds and future plans were described by Charles Cuthbert, Hampshire's Conservation Officer, on a walk around the common in February. A number of interesting insects were recorded last summer during an entomological survey of the common by Matthew Oates. He listed 19 dragonfly species, which is good but not so very remarkable since Yateley is in one of the best dragonfly areas in Britain. The Small Red Damselfly was one 'decidedly scarce' species found at Wyndhams Pool. (Mary Robbins had it on her 1982 very similar list of 17 species.) It breeds in small pools in highly acidic bog, and to encourage the tiny colony some of the trees will be removed from the boggy area south of Wyndhams. Elsewhere other overgrown bogs are to be opened up to protect the rich insect communities that flourish in sphagnum moss.

Other finds included some interesting hoverflies; all the crickets and grasshoppers that might be expected on a north-east Hants heath; and a potter wasp that builds pot shaped nests out of mud on heather. One real rarity not recorded before in Hampshire and of which little is known at all was a fly that is parasitic on wasps or bees - which wasp or bee has not yet been established! Several were seen along the water pipeline.

Butterflies were well in evidence, particularly on the usually rather despised disturbed ground near the airport, where there was a colony of Dingy Skippers - not common on heathland - and a few Grizzled Skippers which have been 'declining drastically in Hampshire over the past 10 years or so'. Four Marbled Whites were an interesting find here too. Silver-studded Blues were numerous; they will occur wherever there are open areas of mixed heathers.

The naturalist, Francis Rose, also came last year to look at Yateley Common which he had not seen before. As well as being an expert on wild flowers, he is very knowledgeable about mosses, lichens and liverworts, and identified a good many at the Darby Green end of the common, including two lichens that have previously been known in Hampshire only in the New Forest. His best find was a rare moss, Tetraplodon Mnioides, recorded only twice before in Southern England. It grows on dung, normally sheep dung on mountains, but here it had to make do with dog. Its spores smell rather like rancid butter which attracts the flies that then spread them around. Chris Hall accompanied him on one visit and said he found it bewildering: 'lichens seem

incredibly variable, each species having a whole range of forms and looking different again when fruiting'. Smelling different again too?

The most pressing management problem is the spread of birch, so the discovery of a paper-making company which will take away any hardwood over 2 inches in diameter - and actually pay to do so - was welcome. They have started on about 8 acres of birch woodland between Brandy Bottom and the water pipeline, leaving occasional trees to please the eye.

THE FUTURE OF THE COUNTRYSIDE

by Tony Hocking

In January the Council for the Protection of Rural England (CPRE) wrote to the Society, and other similar organisations, requesting support "for its attempts to ensure that the country's political parties put countryside conservation more securely at the centre of their priorities."

The gist of the letter is in the following comments and quotations.

"Two prospects are particularly troubling."

First, the future of British farming. Second, the future of strategic land use planning in England and Wales.

The EEC produces too much food, it is highly likely that British farmers, who are very efficient, will be encouraged officially to cut down on production. The net result "will be pressure to take a very large area, perhaps up to 20% of England's surface area, out of farming and to make it available for other uses. This in turn would create the conditions for a swathe of urban development across much of lowland England which has successfully been kept green until now".

CPRE believe that the interests of conservation and public enjoyment are not being adequately taken into account, because public opinion is not yet fully aware of what is at stake.

The second worry, the future of strategic land use planning, compounds the problem.

"The government has recently proposed the abolition of county structure plans, the instruments for strategic planning of land use. Its intention is to hand over responsibility to the 333 District Councils". CPRE believe that strategic planning should be in the hands of authorities at a higher level, better able to take an overall, long term view of planning. How otherwise, they ask, "are we collectively to decide where new developments are best sited in everyone's interest? And how are we to ensure that the natural heritage is given adequate long-term priority".

"The risk is that more and more of our farmland may become available for ill-considered development, throughout England and Wales, at the very moment at which the country's long established strategic planning system is being weakened. That is a recipe for chaos and controversy - and would be bad news for everybody".

CPRE point out that this is not a party political matter, all parties have to face the problems of change in agriculture and land use.

"What is important is that those of us involved with long-term environmental concerns should make the conservation issues felt in Whitehall, Westminster and Brussels. If we fail to do so, narrow sectional interests and short term economic arguments will prevail".

Green Belts, nature conservation and pollution control are singled out as particularly vulnerable areas.

CPRE go on to ask for our backing when they discuss these matters with the main political parties.

Needless to say, they have our full support.

CASTLE BOTTOM - A CORRECTION

Chris Hall, of Countryside Action, has pointed out that a recent "Courier" contained an error concerning Castle Bottom, this threatened valley bog is already an SSSI.

ECOLOGY OF BRAMSHILL

In COUNTRYSIDE ACTION Newsletter (Jan. 1987) Chris Hall writes: 'The expected application from Consortium Developments to build a new town on 700 acres of forestry land and gravel workings at Bramshill has so far not materialised. The company heard rumour of the views of local ornithologists and commissioned their own ecological study from Bioscan Ltd. The results sent Consortium reeling.' Chris goes on to say that bird records had already been collated by John Clark's team, and he himself had been asked by the NCC to map the habitats and produce a plant list, which came to 286 species. 'The site probably qualifies for SSSI notification on its dragonflies alone - almost certainly a top national site. Plant species are good, including what may be the largest population of a Red Data Book* species in the country. Bird records are excellent The Forestry Commission have recently listed part of the site as a Conservation Area, which means their future management of it will be sympathetic to nature conservation.'

* The Red Data Book lists rare and endangered species.

YATELEY HALL

by Michael Holroyd

The future of Yateley Hall is in the balance. Planning applications have been submitted for converting the Hall into offices and for building houses in the grounds. Both applications have been refused by Hart District Council, but these are only the first moves in what could be a long process.

The Society's History Group is making an intensive investigation of the history of Yateley Hall, with the hope of strengthening the case for conservation of the building and its setting, and identifying features which need special protection. So far there have been two major discoveries.

The first was a handwritten document in the Hampshire Record Office giving a detailed description of the house and gardens at some date between 1671 and 1682. This was evidently written to tempt a prospective purchaser and uses a dignified 17th century equivalent of estate agents' jargon. The house, then known as Collcatts, was described as a new brick house which cost over £1600 to build, with three storeys and six rooms on each floor. It was surrounded by a deep moat "which feedeth carps very fatt", crossed by a strong new drawbridge.

The gardens were "very richly planted with all sorts of fruits both for winter and summer", including cherries, apricots, plums, and "Kentish Coddlings". The grounds were "well fenced with pales set on a high bank and a deep ditch before it", and the house was "situate in a very healthy and wholesome area, bordering on Windsor Forest".

The second discovery has been that in 1871-1872 major additions were made to Yateley Hall by Richard Norman Shaw, one of the greatest of Victorian domestic architects. The work consisted mainly of a new south wing and a staircase, and the client was Mr. Martin de Winton Corry, the father of the Miss de Winton Corry who lived at the Hall until her death in 1943. In a book on Shaw by Andrew Saint (1976) his work at Yateley Hall is described as "a model of tact" and "a delightful job, done with evident affection".

The link between Yateley Hall and Norman Shaw was brought to the Society's attention by Nicholas Taylor, the architectural historian and editor, who knows Yateley Hall well (his mother is a member of the Yateley Society). Some members may have seen him presenting a television series last year entitled House and Home. In a letter to Hart District Council Nicholas has described Shaw's work at Yateley Hall as "a remarkably early example of the new respect for Queen Anne brick domestic architecture in its own right, the fine red brickwork rising out of the canal in a way consciously designed to reflect the admiration for seventeenth century Dutch landscape painting which inspired Shaw and his painter friends at the Royal Academy".

The Yateley Society has been given permission by the owners of the Hall to make a survey of the house and grounds. If any member would like to help with this, or with documentary

research, such as looking through old newspapers at Reading, I shall be very pleased to hear from them (Yateley 372439).

Any information about Yateley Hall, or any maps or pictures, could also be very helpful.

HISTORY MEETINGS

by Michael Holroyd

Wednesday 29 April Michael Holroyd will give a talk about local place-names - what they mean and what they can tell us about the past. This will cover names originating at any time from the Anglo-Saxon period to the present, including the names of villages, farms, roads, fields, and streams.

Wednesday 20 May Geoff Hoare will give an illustrated talk entitled "Yateley Lost and Found". This will feature some of Yateley's older buildings and other features which have been forgotten and rediscovered.

Wednesday 24 June With the future of Yateley Hall uncertain, members have been studying its history. This will be a presentation of the results of our investigations, using documents, pictures, maps and physical evidence, to throw light on changes in the building over four centuries, and on the people who lived in it.

Wednesday 22 July An outdoor meeting to look at the traces of Blackbushe Airport which remain on Yateley Common, with the help of a detailed war-time map. Meet at the south end of Vigo Lane in the car park opposite the earthed up "gipsy" car park. Map ref: SU 819 591.

MORE ABOUT MOTHS AND BRACKEN

After reading 'MOTHS FOR BRACKEN' in the last Newsletter, Chris Speed has written as follows:

'..... Although much of the theoretical work is being done at Strathclyde and York Universities, the majority of the practical work is being done at the Commonwealth Institute of Biological Control at Ascot, and more specifically by me. Although the *Conservula* moth is a voracious bracken feeder, we are still a very long way from controlling bracken with it. At present we are having trouble maintaining cultures of the moth due to disease, and when this problem is overcome we shall still have at least a year (probably two) of specificity tests to make sure that the moths eat only bracken and not some of our rarer ferns such as *Osmunda* (Royal Fern). After that we could apply for licences to release the moths at test sites (one of which could well be Blackbushe as I work up there quite a lot). As you can see, there is quite a long way to go before your Bracken Bashing can stop!'

Chris is coming to the General Discussion meeting on 2nd April to tell us a little about his work.

A TPO AT MONTEAGLE PARK

by Valerie Kerslake

The exuberant optimism with which I described the trees at the Monteagle development in the last Newsletter was rather misplaced. A Preservation Order has been made but comparatively few of the many trees are included; only, in fact, ones that were already marked for retention on the developers' plan, and not all of those.

Some trees omitted are within the 15 metre woodland strip along the south edge of the site which is to be retained, and which in due course will be adopted by Hart and looked after by them. On the northern boundary quite a number are covered - 5 oaks, 5 Leyland cypresses (!), 2 dawn redwoods, 3 Japanese larches, a sycamore, a crabapple and a small beech - but none from the belt of 30 or so willows and alders growing in the lower, wet ground. Basal decay was found in apparently all of these by Hart's Tree Consultant. Ten of the mature native trees on the field boundary across the site are covered by the Order, including the magnificent beech at the north end, which has already been considerably lopped so although still tall it is no longer broad.

The real loss will be the unusual and colourful group near the east end of the site where only the eucalyptus is covered - not the white poplar, Japanese cedar, silver maple, liquidambar, neither of the two red oaks nor of the two metasequoias, nor any of the other attractive and distinctive smaller trees. All are probably less than forty years old so have many years of potential life ahead. The reason given for their exclusion is that the housing layout would not allow for their retention - an astonishing reason, it seems to me, for if comments on planning applications are invited at all one assumes that the draft plans existing at that time may still be amended.

WALKS

by Richard Johnston

Sunday 5 April A walk from Little Vigo to Castle Bottom "to see what we can find in the spring time". Bits of airfield, the remains of Silver Fox Farm (possibly signs of the replacement bungalow?) and the valley bog. Leader - Richard Johnston.

Sunday 17 May A look at Dogmersfield Park and Tundry Pond, the Basingstoke can towpath, and with luck plenty of bluebells near Sprats Hatch. Leader - Tony Hocking.

Sunday 14 June Irene Draper will lead this year's Society walk for the Blackwater Valley Project. The route will be similar to the last one, from Barclays Bank to Moulsham Green, to Finchampstead Ridges, along to Ambarrow Farm and down the reopened footpath to the Lower Sandhurst Road. By June the path by the gravel pit towards Yateley Mill may be open again, avoiding some road walking. These walks are always interesting and you meet people from neighbouring parts of the Blackwater Valley.

Sunday 26 July The West end of the common and Castle Bottom, a second visit this year, to look at the flowers in the very different airfield and bog environments. There should be a good contrast in appearance compared with these areas as seen in April. Leader - Valerie Kerslake.

A YATELEY WALL PAINTING

by Geoff Hoare

Just recently in St. Peter's Cottage, (The Old Vicarage) it was found necessary to strip back a wall which is now internal but was the southern end wall of the original building. As the later thick surface plaster was being removed the timber framing with its original infill of wattle and daub was revealed. Furthermore, the fragmentary remains of a wall painting became evident on the surface of the daub and continuing across the timbers.

The painting appears to be of a geometric repeating pattern containing a form of Fleur de Lys and other designs within it. The painting, which was hand painted and not stencilled has been provisionally dated to c1600. Fragments of a textile were found on the timbers that had been used to bridge the gap between them and the daub panels to form a continuous surface. This was quite common evidently when painting directly on to daub which tended to shrink in time leaving a gap between it and the timber framing. Obviously therefore the daub had been applied some time before being painted but with the shrinkage time for daub being unknown how long before can only be guessed at.

As far as we know this is the only secular wall painting recorded in Yateley up to the present time.

Apart from the painting structural evidence was found supporting the theory that the cross wing was originally jettied and the rest of the building extended forward to form a continuous frontage later.

My thanks to Ms Joanna Smith, currently engaged in the recording of the wall painting found in the Borelli House Farnham, for the dating information and the explanation for the fragments of textile found on the timbers.

TAILPIECE

The May Fayre again. As well as needing things to sell we also need practical help on the day - to erect the shelter in the early morning, to help man the stall during the day, and to dismantle the shelter in the evening.

If you are willing to help with any of these activities, and have not already volunteered, please ring the editor on 875158.

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** BARBECUE! BARBECUE! BARBECUE! **
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THE SOCIETY WILL BE HAVING A SUMMER BARBECUE ON * SATURDAY
JULY 25 *

THE VENUE WILL BE BARCLAY HOUSE, VICARAGE ROAD.

TICKET PRICE: £2.50 (THE SAME AS LAST YEAR!)

STARTING TIME 7:00 TO 7:30 PM

MAKE A NOTE OF THE DATE NOW!

YATELEY SOCIETY PROGRAMME 1987 (FROM APRIL 2)

April

- Thurs 2 General Discussion. Including an illustrated talk by Chris^Speed on BIOLOGICAL CONTROLS, in particular Control of Bracken with Moths, which he works on. He will bring slides and collecting equipment. Y.C. 7:30pm
B.2.4
- Sun 5 WALK - The Western end of Yateley Common Assemble at Little Vigo, opposite The Anchor. Leader Richard Johnston. Little Vigo
Map Ref SU810597
2:30pm
- Sun 12 CONSERVATION IN PRACTICE - This activity has been cancelled, it is too far into the nesting season.
- Thurs 16 Monthly Review of Local Planning Y.C. 7:30
B.2.4
- Wed 22 FARNHAM MALTINGS - The conversion of industrial buildings to leisure uses. A talk by Bob Blackman. Y.C. 8:00
Drama Hall
- Wed 29 HISTORY - LOCAL PLACE NAMES A talk by Michael Holroyd Y.C. 7:30pm
B.2.3

May

- Thurs 14 NATURAL HISTORY - A meeting with Peter Dinsdale to talk about progress in the Country Park. Y.C. 7:30pm
B.2.4
- Sun 17 WALK - Dogmersfield Park and the BasingstokeWinchfield canal. Leader - Tony Hocking. Meet in the Hurst 2:30
Canal Car Park opposite the Barley Mow PH Map Ref SU778538
- Wed 20 HISTORY - YATELEY LOST AND FOUND An illustrated talk by Geoff Hoare Y.C. 7:30pm

June

- Sun 14 Blackwater Valley Project Guided Walk. Yateley-Moulsham Green-Finchampstead Ridges and return. Leader Irene Draper Barclays 2:30pm
Bank
Map Ref SU816609
- Wed 17 NATURAL HISTORY WALK - Simons Wood near Finchampstead Ridges NT Car 7:30pm
Park
Wellingtonia Av.
Map Ref SU813635
- Thurs 18 Monthly Review of Local Planning Y.C. 7:30pm
B.2.4
- Wed 24 HISTORY - YATELEY HALL A roundup of recent research Y.C. 7:30pm
B.2.3

Programme (Cont.)

July

Thurs 16 Monthly Review of Local Planning

Y.C. 7:30pm
B.2.4

Wed 22 HISTORY - BLACKBUSHE AIRPORT
An outdoor meeting to look at surviving
traces. Meet in the car park near the
south end of Vigo Lane opposite the
earthed up "gipsy" car park.

Vigo Lane 7:30pm
Map Ref
SU 819 591

Sat 25 ***** SUMMER BARBEQUE *****
Ticket price: £2.50

Barclay House
Vicarage Road
7/7:30pm

Sun 26 FLOWER WALK - The West end of Yateley
Common and Castle Bottom
Leader - Valerie Kerslake

Top of 2:30pm
Little Vigo
Map Ref SU809596

THE YATELEY SOCIETY - OFFICERS AND MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE
COMMITTEE FOR 1987

PRESIDENT

VICE-PRESIDENTS

Edward Dawson	15 Village Way Yateley (877458)
Sydney Loader	St. Gwithian 37 Darby Green Lane Blackwater (879430)

CHAIRMAN

David Harverson	1 Broome Close Yateley (876914)
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VICE-CHAIRMAN

Tony Hocking	30 Connaught Close Yateley (875158)
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HON TREASURER

Charles Craven	23 Walnut Close Yateley (870379)
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HON SECRETARY

Pam Harverson	1 Broome Close Yateley (876914)
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MEMBERSHIP
SECRETARY

Geoff Hoare	1 Blakes Ride Yateley (872948)
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CONSERVATION
Officer (Common)

Charles Craven	23 Walnut Close Yateley (870379)
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HISTORY GROUP LEADER
COMMONS & RIGHTS
OF WAY OFFICER

Michael Holroyd	Firgrove Farm Cott. Firgrove Road Eversley (872439)
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MAY FAYRE
CO-ORDINATOR

Tony Hocking	30 Connaught Close Yateley (875158)
--------------	--

NEWSLETTER EDITOR

Tony Hocking	30 Connaught Close Yateley (875158)
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ARCHIVIST

Diana Healey	Barclay House Vicarage Road Yateley (873195)
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CONSERVATION
OFFICER (General)

Valerie Kerslake	Lime Tree Cottage Chandlers Lane Yateley (872240)
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Co-opted

PRESS OFFICER

Margaret Taylor	Aviary House The Street Eversley (93-734804)
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Non Committee Members

Scrapbook Record	Stephanie Pattenden
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Natural History Group Organiser/ Royal Oak Valley/HDC	Irene Draper Liason
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Newsletter Production and Distribution	Elizabeth Tipton
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