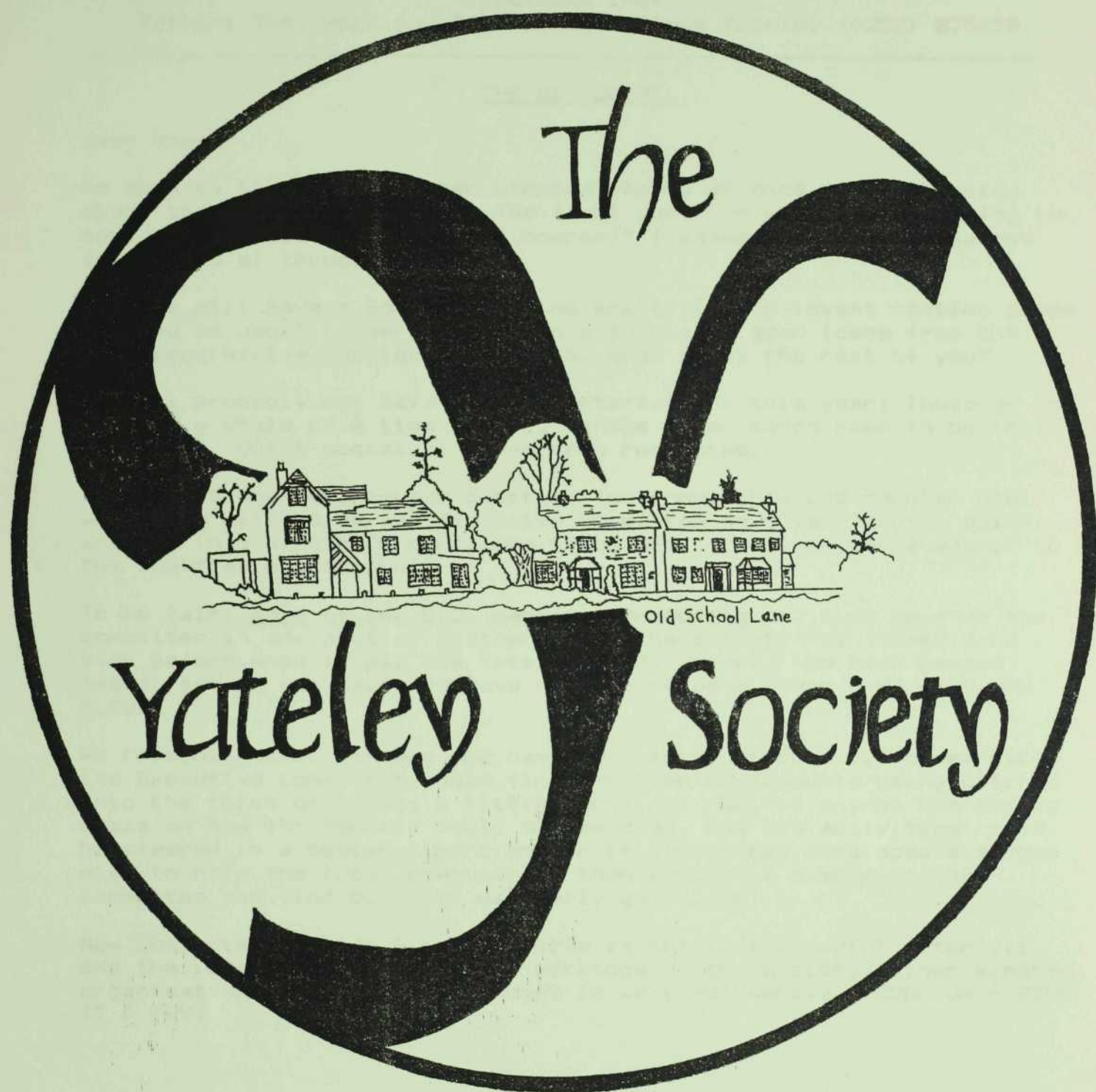


No. 39

OCTOBER 1989



Newsletter



-THE YATELEY SOCIETY-

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Editor: Tony Hocking, 30 Connaught Close Yateley (0252) 875158

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THE EDITORIAL.

Dear Member,

As soon as the sunny weather stopped people at once began thinking about the end of the year! The first question was: "Are we going to have a Christmas Social?" "Of course!" I answered without a second (or second's) thought.

So - we will have a Social - and we are trying to invent teasing games for you as usual. There have been a couple of good ideas from the ever-imaginative Kerslake household, what about the rest of you?

We will probably not have outside entertainers this year; those of us who had a whale of a time joining in the Irish songs seem to be in a minority! Quiet socialising has been requested.

The second end-of-the-year question (an inevitable and regular one) was: "Who will be on the Executive Committee next year?" The quick answer, in deafening chorus, was "Not ME!" (the inevitable answer to the inevitable question!)

To be fair, some of the E.C. members, including me, have been on the committee in one post or another since the Society was formed (and even before when it was the Yateley Study Group). We have become jaded, set in our ways and have run out of good ideas - WE NEED NEW BLOOD!

We recognise that members who have not become directly involved with the Executive Committee would find the idea of suddenly being pitched into the thick of things a little daunting. So, if anyone has strong ideas on how the Society could be improved, how its activities could be steered in a better direction, or if anyone has developed a strong wish to help the local community - then contact a member of the committee and find out what we really get up to!

New Committee members find that life is not that dreadful after all, and the insight gained into the workings of the Society, other kindred organisations and local government is very worthwhile. COME ON - GIVE IT A TRY!

NEW MEMBERS

A warm welcome is extended to the following members who have recently joined the Society.

Miss Greatorex	Centre Cottage, Yateley Grange, Potley Hill Road.
Mr Tapper	33, Tudor Drive.
Mrs Reece	7, Vicarage Road.
Mrs Chivers	21, Ives Close.
Mr & Mrs Lee	'Sinoa', Old Welmore.



## SETTING THE STAGE

by Valerie Kerslake

Westfields School has turned out yet another batch of well-informed young citizens from Form 3B, which each summer term, under the guidance of Kay Bradford their teacher (and a Society member), carries out a wide-ranging study of Yateley. The displays of pictures, writing and diagrams on their classroom walls last term indicated the many directions of their enquiries.

History lessons were brought to life when they were shown round Monteagle House which is said - uncertainly - to have been associated with the Gunpowder Plot; it inspired a row of rascally-looking portraits of the chief plotters. Elsewhere were illustrations of commoners exercising their ancient rights on Yateley Common, and of the birch trees that tend to take over the Common if left unchecked. A dramatic painting of St Peter's Church blazing in the darkness ten years ago (when some of the children were not yet born) was supplemented by imaginative poems on the disaster. More factual information followed an examination of the present church and a talk by the vicar on its history and place in the community today.

An idea of the life and appearance of the old village and of the changes brought by the more recent town came from a one-day field trip with a questionnaire incorporating everything from notable inhabitants to inconspicuous wayside plants. Present day ways of life were scrutinised also. One elaborate chart showed the length and destinations of daily car journeys made by sixty-six Yateley residents.

Litter was one thing with which 3B became particularly concerned after a nature walk in the Royal Oak Valley turned into a rubbish clearance operation. They discovered that gathering up junk could actually make money as well as work wonders for the environment: £6.40 was raised for a school fund by collecting aluminium cans. Recycling on a larger scale was explained during a visit to Blackbushe Metals. It could have been little trouble by then to select a subject for the end-of-term "Grot Spot" Painting Competition, instigated by The Yateley Society who provided the prizes.

The last weeks of term coincided with the appeal enquiry about the proposed development at Fox Farm. The grounds of Westfields border the road that would be taking all the traffic from that site, so it was with very real feeling that the whole class wrote to object to it. Some also live close by, ride there, or hope to use the new Scout HQ on its edge. If the appeal is refused, each child may justifiably feel that he or she has helped towards that decision; if allowed, that he or she has at least registered opposition. The discovery that anyone can, with a little effort, help to influence their surroundings may be the most lasting lesson 3B have learnt this year.

## MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTIONS

The Society's financial year ends on 30th September and to enable the accounts to be finalised as soon as possible after that date it would be appreciated if members who have received reminders but have not yet paid would forward their subscriptions to me at their earliest convenience.

Many thanks,

Geoff Hoare, Membership Secretary.



## HAVE YOU EVER SEEN AN OTTER?

by Tony Hocking

This summer Mary and I went to East Anglia, an area which we had not visited before. Before we went we were advised that the "Otter Trust" was worth a visit.

The Otter Trust has its headquarters near Bungay on the Norfolk/Suffolk border south west of Norwich; realising that some friends of ours now lived nearby we decided that it would be worth a day in that part of the world. We were soon to learn that the Otter Trust was more than sufficient to justify the trip.

The Trust has as its aim the restocking of British rivers with otters. Obviously this can only be attempted where there are suitable habitats, and otters have to be obtained in the first place.

The Trust carries out the necessary research into the otters and the conditions which they demand. Unpolluted water is the first and foremost requirement, so I am afraid that the Blackwater river, smelling of sewage and flecked with detergent foam, will never be considered.

The next stage is to find habitats which meet the requirements. This appears possible in many places, but the activities of man can easily disturb otters and hunting is a severe menace, a lot of sites are ruled out for these reasons. To redress the balance the Otter Trust seeks the cooperation of landowners in establishing habitats and this involves educating them in the ways of the otter.

The remaining important question is - where do the new otters come from? The answer is that they are reared by the Otter Trust.

There are several pairs of otters kept by the Trust for breeding purposes, these plus some foreign species are on display in pens at Bungay. The offspring, once independent, are transferred to larger wilder pens than they were reared in. As they become accustomed to the wilder surroundings they are moved to successively larger pens with less human access and eventually they are totally removed from human contact and made to catch their own fish in the wellstocked ponds and stream running through the pens. When their ability to survive has been demonstrated they are fit for release in the wild.

The great delight of Bungay is that so many of these attractive, normally highly elusive creatures are on view at very close range, and in general go about their business regardless of the admiring public.

When we were there some otters were blissfully asleep in the sun, one group of three packed side by side facing in alternate directions so that they were nose to tail. Some were gliding effortlessly and silently through their pools, and some were invisible, until a round brown boulder amongst a group of such stones suddenly yawned!

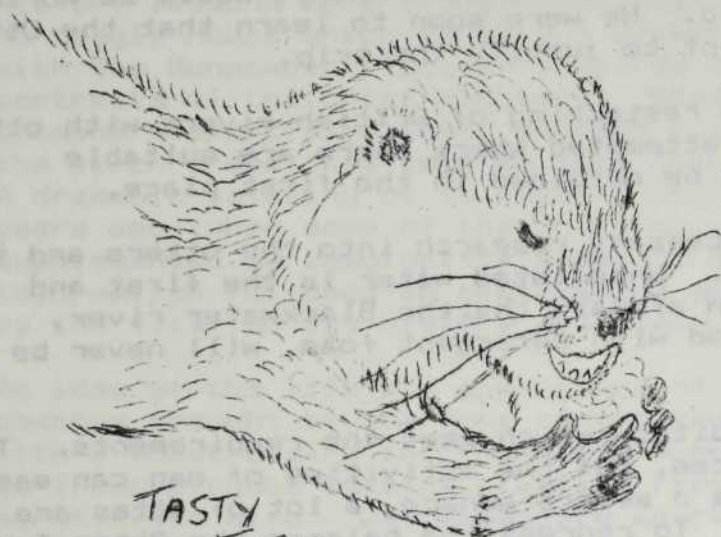
An attendant was feeding a pair while we watched; he said that the otters could never be considered tame and pointed out the many notices warning people not to risk losing fingers. He noticed a piece of paper that had blown into the pen and decided to remove it, before entering he remarked that he did not have his usual boots on and therefore the otters might not recognise him; sure enough as soon as he stepped over the wall one otter growled, spat and tore at his foot with its teeth,



its mate ran up to help, but was handicapped because she would not put down the piece of fish which she had been eating!

As well as otters there are many water birds at Bungay, and somewhat incongruously a cage of night herons.

If you ever go to that area you will find that a visit to the Otter Trust is a delightful, interesting and rewarding experience.



TASTY  
FISH



ZZZ!

#### BLAKES POND

by Irene Draper

Before drawing up plans for restoration work on the pond meetings were held there with representatives from the B.T.C.V., Blackwater Valley Project and the Yateley Town Council, all of whom had practical experience in pond restoration. Chris Hall also looked at the site and sent us a very enthusiastic letter with helpful comments and suggestions on how to tackle the project.

We had originally intended to open up a small area at the South end; but on careful examination we decided this would not be very successful. Large oaks at the South end would have created too much shade. To give a worthwhile amount of open pond a much larger area to the North would have had to be cleared. Just to cut down the willow which grows throughout the pond would only have encouraged even denser growth shading the pond even more. Everyone consulted agreed that a large mechanical digger would have to be used to drag out the willow, roots and all, and to remove a large quantity of silt. (The pond has almost silted up and water is very shallow allowing grasses to grow.) A very large amount of money would have to be found to hire a digger and lorry to take away the silt. Problems with permission to work on the area also arose. Mid-Southern Water Board has put in a planning application to turn the site into a balancing pond in 1991, putting the future in doubt.

After careful discussion by the Countryside Sub-committee it was decided that the restoration project was more difficult than we had first thought. The area is a good wet habitat as it is and we were anxious not to end up with something inferior.

Regretfully the Committee decided that we would, for the time being anyway, have to abandon our plans to restore Blakes Pond.



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ADVERTISEMENT

This year sees the 10th year of the

CRAFTS IN ACTION

Craft Fair

at

Swallowfield Parish Hall

Saturday 14th October

10:30am to 4:30pm

Over 30 crafts demonstrated, coffee lunch and tea available.

Entrance 30p, children 15p.

For further info ring Jill Howell on 876478

Seen in a country lane in mid Hampshire two weeks ago - a real old fashioned round-topped gypsy caravan in use, with horse. The occupants actually looked like gypsies - I wonder?

YATELEY SOCIETY PROGRAMME 1989 (FROM OCT 1)

- OCTOBER -

Sun	1	PRACTICAL CONSERVATION The BTCV will be working in the Royal Oak Valley Reed cutting and wet-land scrub control. Please come and help, for half a day, or more if you can.	Car Park behind the Royal Oak	10:00am
Thurs	5	Regular Planning Review	Y.C. C.1.4	7:30pm
Sun	22	WALK - A look at the mythical Foxley Wood, site of the proposed new town Led by Malcolm Pope & Irene Draper (The car park is off the Eversley-Heckfield Road on the right going West)	Car park beyond St Neot's School,  Map Ref SU 760 613	2:00pm
Wed	25	YATELEY HALL: BEHIND THE PANELLING A talk by Richard Johnston, continuing to unfold the fascinating story of the Hall.	Y.C. C.1.4	7:30pm
Sun	29	PRACTICAL CONSERVATION The BTCV will be working in the Royal Oak Valley Woodland management and shrub planting. Please come and help, for half a day, or more if you can.	Car Park behind the Royal Oak	10:00am

- NOVEMBER -

Thurs	2	Regular Planning Review	Y.C. C.1.4	7:30pm
Thurs	9	HISTORY - Comparative Study of Population Migration in the 19th Century - Yateley and the East End of London by Mrs Pat Hix.	Y.C. C.1.4	<u>8:00pm</u>
Thurs	30	Regular Planning Review	Y.C. C.1.4	7:30pm

- DECEMBER -

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\* FRIDAY DECEMBER 15th at 7:30pm in THE GREEN ROOM \*  
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\* A CHRISTMAS SOCIAL is being arranged, details later \*  
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Tues 26 BOXING DAY WALK Details will be in Stop Press  
Malcolm Pope intends to help you work off the seasonal fare!

COPY DATES:

STOP PRESS 1st November 1989

NEWSLETTER 1st December 1989