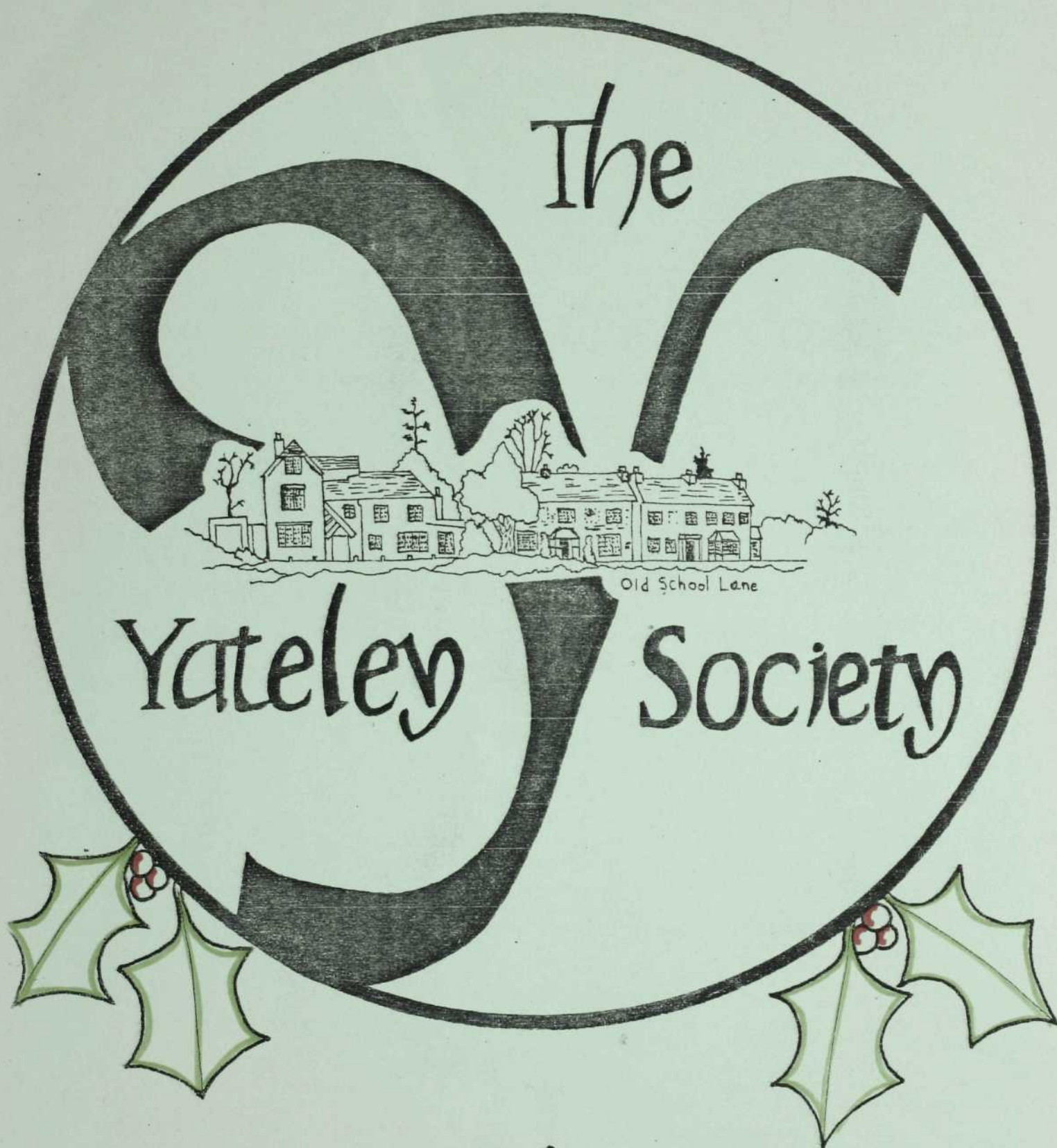


No. 40

DECEMBER 1989



Newsletter

-THE YATELEY SOCIETY-

Newsletter No. 40

DECEMBER 1989

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

THE EDITORIAL.

Dear Member,



The Festive Season is with us once again - how quickly it comes round!
This is the excellent excuse for one of our regular social occasions
and I hope that many of you will come to this year's CHRISTMAS SOCIAL.

The Executive Committee is, of course, thinking about 1990. January
25th will see the AGM, this too has become something of a social event
as well as the most important Society business meeting.

Also in January we have the first of our 1990 visiting speakers. On
Wednesday January 17th Mr Les Jones, from the Thames Division of the
National Rivers Authority, will tell us about "The Water Industry and
the Environment", this is a topical theme in view of the furore
caused by water privatisation. A colleague of mine heard Mr Jones
give a similar talk to the local CPRE recently and said that he was a
very interesting speaker - so come and hear for yourself.

While I am in the mood for advertising - the Fleet Lions have their
annual Model Railway Show in Fleet on Saturday January 27th (I shall
be there as a layout operator).

Back to 1989!

There was an unusual meeting in November to discuss the Society's
future. It was at times controversial in nature, and is reported
elsewhere in this Newsletter. One thing that impressed me was that
every Chairman we have ever had made the effort to come along, such
being their enthusiasm and interest in the Society. (David Harverson
came all the way from his home near Oxford!). Their interest was
shared by other members of course, but I wish there had been more!

Several members at the special meeting said that more should be made
of the Newsletter to encourage more members to become active, and to
gain publicity. One of these members, Garry Tapper, emphasised his
point by being the first person to submit an article for this issue -
my thanks to him and the other contributors to this issue, and for all
those during the past year. The more articles about activities
completed, in progress and planned, both in the Yateley Society and
similar organisations, the better - please keep writing!

THE FOREST OF EVERSLEY

by Garry Tapper

Were you aware that Yateley is part of a Forest? Not the conifer plantations that are to the south and west, these are recent additions to the landscape and have no place in the area. The Forest of Eversley was an ancient Royal Forest and was part of the Royal Forests stretching from Windsor to the New Forest. Most people think of a forest as a dense area of trees; however a Forest (spelt with a capital F) was land on which the King or some other noble had the right to keep deer. This is the original sense of the word - a place of deer, not a place of trees. Eversley Forest was a Royal Forest. Perhaps we could think of turning it back into the same.

With the objective of conservation and preservation, the Hampshire County Council and Hart District Council have made Eversley Forest Hampshire's first Heritage Area. A Heritage Area is a new concept and falls somewhere between an SSSI (Site of Special Scientific Interest) and a local Nature Reserve. In this case we are talking about a very large area encompassing Hawley and Yateley in the east to Hartley Wintney and Heckfield in the west with Bramshill and Eversley in the middle.

Hart District Council have many ideas on how to turn the area back into its original state; most of these entailing a good deal of work. Committees have been set up to carry out various activities and two of these are working at a local level to look at both the history and the natural history of the area.

The history committee is concerning itself with origins of the Forest, the boundaries, which are by no means fixed, land use through the ages, archaeological sites, listed buildings and other historical aspects of the whole area. Geoff Hoare is one representative on the committee but we need more people to help us in our studies.

The natural history committee is attempting to compile a comprehensive list of all wildlife species in the proposed Forest and the identification, planning and carrying out of projects for the preservation or conservation of wildlife. Contact is being made with local groups and specialists for ideas and action. Any possible help is welcome.

One of the imaginative ideas is the regeneration of neglected heathlands. The heathlands which originally formed the heart of Eversley Forest were reckoned to be at least 3000 years old. A large part of the area consists of unenclosed land created in medieval times by clearance from the valley bottoms up the hillsides to create poor quality land which was used by commoners as of right for grazing and gathering peat and wood for fuel. The opportunity to restore such land is rare as open heath is rapidly disappearing throughout Britain from constant urban development. Yateley Common is just one of these areas and although not completely neglected, much more could be done to bring it back to much nearer it's former state.

Considerable effort has been expended by our County and District Councils in taking the initiative, but it is up to local people to respond by providing ideas, helping with studies, unearthing information, identifying and planning projects, and, finally, providing effort and labour. Once we have shown them that we can follow their lead with some constructive ideas their support will be forthcoming.

Further information can be obtained from, or help can be offered to, the Chairman of the Group, Garry Tapper on Yateley 878151.

NEW MEMBERS

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

Mrs Shanks	55 Bloomsbury Way, Hawley Hill.
Mrs Hodgson	30 Ives Close, Yateley.
Mrs Welford	22 Ives Close, Yateley.

!! CONGRATULATIONS !!

Congratulations to Susan Dawson and to our President Edward Dawson on the birth of a daughter on November 21st.

AN 'IMBY RARITY

by Valerie Kerslake

Pillwort! We live within three or four miles of the largest population in the world of this little fern. It would nevertheless have been easy to overlook had not Chris Hall pointed it out during the walk around Bramshill Plantation that Irene Draper led in October.

Pillwort is established in many of the Bramshill gravel pit ponds, growing both under the water and around the edge. It is tiny, its cylindrical fronds only an inch or two long. The specimen I was standing on I'd supposed to be a sickly little tuft of grass. One can just make out the minute curls of the young fronds; the spores are produced in a "pill" at the base of the plant.

Alongside the pillwort grew waterwort, another tiny plant with oval leaves along its creeping stems. It must be regarded as less noteworthy for although this is the largest population in Britain, there are sites with greater numbers on the Continent. Chris dabbled about until he found one with a pinhead-sized pink flower.

We walked on wide paths between gorse and reeds and bands of young and mature woodland with glittering water beyond it. Here and there were groups of small saplings of various unusual species that the Forestry Commission had planted experimentally. Someone asked where "Foxley Wood" was to have been built; the answer was, as far as we could see in every direction. We turned off what might have been the high street and entered the SSSI as a late dragonfly darted out from the reedmace to remind us of the rich variety we can expect to see again next summer.

YATELEY HALL MOAT

by Geoff Hoare

As part of the on-going investigation into the moat at Yateley Hall an archaeological excavation was carried out across its northern arm in September this year by the North East Hants Historical and Archaeology Society.

This arm of the moat was located where we thought it should be and while there was not an over-abundance of artefacts recovered there was sufficient for our purpose. This apparent paucity was understandable as household rubbish, such as broken pottery which would form the greatest proportion of the material expected to be found, would more likely to have been deposited at the rear of, and close to, the house rather than at the front and 7 to 8 metres from it.

There were a few puzzling features revealed which we expect to be resolved as the evidence is processed and analysed during the next few months.

Richard Johnston assisted on several occasions and we were visited by a few of the Society members.

THE YATELEY SOCIETY AND FOXLEY WOOD

The following article is reproduced by courtesy of the Odiham Society Journal. It was written by Edward Dawson who gave detailed evidence at the Bramshill Public Inquiry on behalf of SPISE and The Yateley Society.

Yateley has been vigorous in opposing the new town in this area: Yateley Town Council, the Yateley Residents Association and the Society all publicly denounced the scheme. It is probably because of this concerted approach so much was achieved. At the time of writing we still do not have the final result of the Foxley Wood appeal. What is certain however, is that the Minister's mind has been changed because of the efforts of a dedicated and effective campaign team. We applaud their work and look forward to a decisive conclusion.

FOXLEY WOOD - A CAMPAIGN FOR ALL SEASONS

by Edward Dawson

(Chairman Hart & Rushmoor CPRE, Vice-President SPISE,
President The Yateley Society)

The fight needed to resist a major development proposal can turn into a huge campaign, costing a great deal of money and involving large numbers of people. This article looks at the amount of effort and skills that need to be devoted to make an impact. The example here is the Foxley Wood campaign to stop a new town of 4,800 houses being built on the Hampshire/Berkshire border.

WHY CAMPAIGN AT ALL?

First of all there is an obvious question that must be asked. Why is it that we have to campaign at all? Or put another way, why can't we simply leave it to the local authorities? After all, we elect councillors to represent us and we pay rates to employ professional officers. The truth is that the local authorities actually do an excellent job at parish, district and county levels. They may find themselves at the forefront of battles to protect towns and villages or open countryside. They are the first line of defence, appearing at the public inquiry that so often now seems to follow a refusal of a planning application. But they need the backing of the locality, and not just tacit support. This is especially so when they have to convince the Department of the Environment. We can often say things which they cannot.

THE THREAT

The campaign against Foxley Wood has certainly been an all embracing one. Its origins are contained in the need to respond to the announcement by CDL (Consortium Developments Ltd) of their intention to create a new settlement at Bramshill. That was in 1986, and subsequently a number of people got together and decided that the only way to defeat this amalgam of major house-builders was to adopt a regional view. We should look at and promote the concept of "good planning", which respected the environment and did not gobble up the countryside.

SPISE (Sane Planning in the South East) was born out of this need to take a wider view, and has been remarkably successful. It would not be merely another action group taking a NIMBY (not in my back yard) stance, but one which could match the sophistication and resourcefulness of the developers. This was regarded as important because CDL had stated their intention to find sites for no less than 15 new towns in the south east of England. They could only be defeated by considering regional needs and how well their case stood up at this

level. The experience of some of our members attending SERPLAN (London and South East Regional Planning Conference), a grouping of all local authorities in the region, provided impetus, information and contacts.

CO-ORDINATION OR CHAOS?

The campaign had to be well run and professionally managed, though it had no paid staff. Its Executive Committee contained at various times a powerful and awesome array of experts. These have included a solicitor, a planner, two bankers, several high-ranking military men, councillors, scientists, and others from the world of business, environmental conservation, marketing and public affairs. And if this is not enough, outside help was called in, paid or otherwise, including leading counsel, planning advisers, ecological experts, highway engineers and media relations consultants. SPISE was able to become highly effective not only because of the skills it could draw on but because it also operated a central Secretariat using computers and a full-time dedicated team. Its communications network was extensive and aimed at informing people locally and influencing others nationally.

BEYOND THE PUBLIC INQUIRY

Although I am not considering the planning issues here it is important to understand the sequence of events. The CDL bid to put a new town in Hart came at the time of the review of the North East Hampshire Structure Plan. Both needed a response and there was a clear link between the two. Both would be the subject of public hearings. In actions of this sort the public inquiry is the test of one's mettle. SPISE was able to co-ordinate many of the parish councils, local amenity societies and other bodies like CPRE (Council for the Protection of Rural England). Its own case with expert and celebrity witnesses, like Professor Alice Coleman and the Duke of Wellington, was thus augmented by local people under one banner. The expert part of the case covered the policy issues, while the second part concentrated on environmental impact and local opinion. A feature of the case was the presentation, which involved a team leader or advocate who called and examined witnesses much like a court of law. The offer of the facility ensured the enthusiastic participation of the smaller bodies. After the Inquiry the campaign continued into a period of lobbying of people in high places. Press releases also went out to a growing list of the influential. Another factor was the arrival of "Green Politics", and the emerging unpopularity of the party in government especially from an area of traditional support. Did they favour planning or not? Were developers being encouraged to break the planning system in some kind of free for all? Attending national conferences also helped keep the issue alive.

Then came the shock. Nicholas Ridley announced on 7 July 1989 that he was minded to overturn the recommendation of his own Inspector and to allow the Foxley Wood proposal to go ahead. The public was incensed, and a rally organised to show the strength of local feeling erupted into a symbolic burning of the hapless Minister. Local MP Julian Critchley was brought in and helped to target the campaign and to give advice. Within days Ridley was gone and we were into a new phase. Chris Patten was appointed Secretary of State and heralded a greener vision for the country. As a result the delivery of comments at the end of the public consultation period was done in style. Mr Critchley agreed to take the written comments and about 40 petitions to Mr Patten's office in a magnificent Victorian state coach pulled by two white horses. The event was arranged in less than a week and on the appointed day some 70 local people went up to London and stood at Mr Patten's front door making an impressive climax to the publicity campaign.

A FAMOUS VICTORY

Since writing this piece we have heard the marvellous news that Foxle Wood is to be dismissed and that the Structure Plans for Mid and North East Hampshire have been approved without the additions of any further housing. And, as a bonus, the special presumption in favour of housing development (where a 5-year land supply is not in place) is threatened with abolition. The front page news and television coverage have been greeted with celebrations and delighted relief. It is a glorious outcome: 110% success! But for how long will we be safe from Consortium? Much of this article is written in the past tense, but our mission goes on. In the future we must continue to show, through our various organisations, that developers and governments will only ride roughshod over the views of local people at their peril.

YATELEY IN PICTURES

by Valerie Kerslake

Some attractive watercolours of local scenes were produced from the Society archives for our meeting last September. Several were painted over a hundred years ago by Margaret Mills who lived at Holly Hill (on Potley Hill Road but recently demolished). Michael Holroyd told us how in 1879 she was invited to join a class of six ladies at Mrs Gibson's house in Blackwater for a course of drawing lessons from Paul Jacob Naftel, a Guernsey artist, by then living in London, who exhibited regularly at the Old Water Colour Society. He was "the most liberal of teachers" wrote Margaret's husband, Dr John Mills, in his diary, probably referring to time, for that day John had been sitting waiting to drive his wife home while the lesson ran on for an extra forty-five minutes.

Margaret seemed to find him a good teacher as well, and she was clearly a diligent as well as a talented pupil. One day John noted that "M. has rather a bad eye - right - think she has been working too hard, sitting so long at her painting. So today she has rested it". Earlier lessons are referred to in the diary, and Margaret had also belonged to a sketching club that apparently posted drawings to each other for criticism. Her style was naturalistic and lively, and the colours are still so clear and bright that they could seldom have seen daylight. Of particular interest was a view of Yateley Mill from the Berkshire side of the river, showing the wooden footbridge beside the ford. We could compare it on this occasion with a drawing of the mill from the Hampshire side made by Sydney Loader after a sketch from about the same time by Admiral Nepean.

Our archival treasures include a few more watercolours from around the 1870s which we refer to as The Stilwell Paintings. It is not clear who painted which. Though John Mills mentioned Mrs Stilwell's attending Mr Naftel's classes, her three daughters were also keen amateur artists. Cottages were a favourite subject: a picture signed with the nickname "Gooseberry" shows a white cottage that Sydney Loader believes was one of the Stilwell properties on Cricket Hill. One wonders whether it is still there. "Wm Searle's Cottage" is portrayed in three similar paintings which might be by three Stilwells on one occasion or by one on three occasions, like Monet's haystacks. This old brick cottage in a sea of purple heather does still stand but is concealed in the heart of the Casa dei Cesari.

Painting was a popular pastime before cameras became widely available; it would be interesting to hear of other local work still surviving in old albums or hanging on walls.

Sydney Loader, who has presented the Society with many of its archives, contributed some of his own drawings to this evening of non-photographic pictures, and Jean McIlwaine had scooped up an armful

from the the archives she keeps under her bed. They included a pencil sketch of the Green about 1875 by Mrs Georgina Stilwell, showing two small cottages beside St Peter's where Ramon's shop is now.

Among more up-to-date exhibits were some of Tony Hocking's scraperboard drawings of local houses, while Tom and Anne Hughes brought along three delightful watercolours of trees on Yateley Common by their daughter Julie which are likely to be on show much further afield than Yateley.

INTO THE 1990s
(OR DON'T DECAY IN THE NEXT DECADE)

by Margaret Taylor

That the Yateley Society is alive and ticking was the general conclusion reached at last month's meeting to discuss the Society's future - or indeed, whether it has a future as it approaches its ninth birthday. The "t" in ticking is not a misprint for "k" - although as a group we may seem to have lost some of our kick there clearly is a heart still ticking over, supported by a strong team of working members many of whom have been nurturing the Society since its birth. But should these supporters take a rest from their duties, as some of them now wish to do, the Society's whole existence would hang in the balance - unless others are prepared to inject into it new ideas, energy and enthusiasm.

Twenty-one people, including our present and the three past chairmen, sat around the table to discover what had kept the Society going for nine years and brought together a membership of around two hundred people with a mutual interest in the welfare of the town and its countryside. We looked back over past activities since a Yateley Study Group first met in 1980 and formed the nucleus of the civic amenity society born in January 1981. A list of general and specialised activities that have been or are being carried on within the Society's framework was circulated by the chairman and most of us were surprised at its length and scope. (Ed's note: the list is reproduced on pages 8&9)

Perhaps we are trying to do more things than are feasible with such a small number of active members and should concentrate our energies into one or two major projects. But the great thing about The Yateley Society is its diversity of interests and activities, covering so many aspects of our local environment in an effort to study, enjoy and protect it as a whole. The work of all sections is interrelated in some way, and each gives strength to the others.

The answer seems to lie - as it usually does with voluntary groups - in encouraging more members to take an active part.

Most of the Executive Committee and other members who work to keep the Society going - and this includes many essential tasks such as editing, printing and delivering newsletters, keeping membership records, creating exhibitions, organising the May Fayre display, and refreshments at meetings - have been doing sterling work for a long time now, several since the very beginning. Some of them, quite simply, would welcome a rest if they could find others to take over.

Those who have spent many years specialising in their own interests, be it the study of wildlife on the common, tracing the history of local houses, or discussing controversial planning applications and writing the ensuing letters and reports, may seem to some to be too expert in their own fields to follow. But their knowledge and expertise is simply the result of many years of finding out how and what - they had little idea of how to do it when they started.

Perhaps a team of "shadow" committee members and workers could help with routine tasks while at the same time learning what is involved

before hopefully reversing roles - always assuming that they are elected to the committee where necessary of course.

Members need to be reminded that Executive meetings are open to interested observers, and we should have reports on discussions and decisions made at these meetings in the newsletter. (I have already been asked to do this, but... I promise to try next time.)

Our newsletter could be used to promote the Society's activities amongst non-members - it could be on sale throughout the town and contain information about other organisations and meetings. The people of Yateley would then appreciate what the Society stands for and what it is doing for them.

I have kept this report a general one, deliberately not using specific quotes and names because the meeting was informal and so many things were said, but I will make one exception to bring this all to a happy conclusion. Hart District councillor Mrs Pamela Collett, who had had much experience of sitting through similar discussions, summed up her conclusions at the end of the meeting. Although the evening had started on a note of doom and gloom, she said, it soon became obvious that such feelings were unfounded. From what she had learned about the past and present activities of the Society - many of which were new to her as a recent member - there was a wealth of knowledge and experience that had accumulated over the past nine years and it would be worth repeating much of it for the benefit of those who missed out the first time or who would like to hear about it again. By taking its responsibilities seriously the Society had certainly gained respect and kudos with other organisations in the area.

So perhaps one way to trigger off a revival of enthusiasm and renewed interests for the 90s would be a series of meetings to review achievements of the 80s.

If you have enjoyed hearing about a particular subject or a past activity why not let us know through the columns of the newsletter/by writing to the editor.

ACTIVITIES

People often ask WHAT THE SOCIETY DOES, and WHAT IT HAS DONE, this list was compiled for the general meeting called by the Executive Committee in November.

(see the report of this meeting on page 7)

GENERAL ACTIVITIES

Newsletter. Walks talks and visits. May Fayre display and sales stall. Exhibitions in Yateley and elsewhere. Press and publicity work. Talks to local groups, schools. Press cutting collection. Postcards of Yateley. Representation at local seminars and functions. Liaison with: Councils, CPRE, Blackwater Valley Project, BTCV, Countryside Action, Yateley Common Management Sub-Committee, Open Spaces Society, local schools and other amenity and natural history societies.

PLANNING

Consider planning applications each month & comment when necessary. Present evidence at appeals and enquiries. Extension of Yateley Green Conservation Area initiated. Try to maintain the aims of the Civic Trust. Look out for unlawful use of Yateley Common, damage to SSSOs, and encroachments on Common, green or highway land. Watch for obstruction, misuse, diversions of footpaths and rights of way. Try to protect trees, and plant them in appropriate places.

CONSERVATION

Work on the Common, footpaths, ponds.

ROYAL OAK VALLEY

Management and liaison with Councils, Conservation Volunteers and Blackwater Valley Project. Flora and fauna studies. Guided walks. Design and erection of illustrated maps. Descriptive leaflet (in preparation). Conservation work and rubbish clearance.

NATURAL HISTORY

Meetings, walks, ecological surveys. Toad Crossing scheme established. Tree Walk leaflet (published). Ecological survey of part of Yateley Common commissioned (under way, sponsored by Johnson Wax).

LOCAL HISTORY

Talks and meetings. Information supplied for research, displays, planning enquiries, and to members of the public. Research projects include: Recording of churchyard inscriptions, transcribing of church registers, continuing photographic records of old Yateley, Surveys of old houses, analysis of Yateley Wills, analysis of Tithe Award, copying of Tithe Map for use by members and others, Booklets on local research (now out of print), local genealogical research, transcription of rate books. History trail (in preparation). Detailed archaeological, historical and architectural survey and photographic record of Yateley Hall.

All this requires not only a committee but many additional people to organise, write, type, photocopy, circulate, deliver, telephone, arrange programmes, book rooms, welcome speakers, fix projectors, cater, cook, sell, advertise, draw, photograph, catalogue, collect subscriptions, liaise, plan and inform - as well as enthusiasts, experts or willing learners, in the many aspects of our Society activities.

THE YEAR OF THE HOLLY BLUE

by Robert Guest

During the record-breaking summer of 1989, when a number of butterfly species did well, one in particular, the Holly Blue, was outstandingly successful. Looking back over nearly a decade of butterfly watching in this area, I have never previously seen it in anything approaching this year's numbers, and I have heard of many other sightings in local gardens.

The Holly Blue is typically a garden and woodland butterfly, whereas the other Blues that occur locally, the Common Blue and Silver-studded Blue, are found on rough grassland and heathland respectively. It also emerges somewhat earlier than its cousins, usually being seen for the first time towards the end of April; the Common Blue normally appears in late May and the Silver-studded Blue about a month later. There is a second brood of Holly Blues in the summer. The caterpillars produced by this brood feed on the developing fruits of ivy, while those of the first brood feed on holly flowers.

My first sighting of a Holly Blue in 1989 was on 28th April, and they were then seen on all but about 4 days during May. The second brood emerged about three weeks earlier than usual, appearing in my garden on 2nd July. I then saw it very regularly throughout July and the first half of August, with further occasional sightings until mid-September.

Numbers of this butterfly are subject to considerable fluctuation from year to year, often without any obvious reason, and it will be interesting to see how it fares if we have another good summer next year. Somehow I feel it is likely to be a long time before we witness another year like 1989!

BOXING DAY REFRESHER

*Valerie and Malcolm Pope
cordially invite you to
Rorke's Drift, for a 10am*

10:00am

7:30pm

7:30pm

8:00pm

7:30pm

"Finchampstead Stroll"

RSVP - IF POSSIBLE

'IT WILL HELP WITH THE BUFFET ARRANGEMENTS'

Telephone: Yateley 872782 (Day) - 872761 (Evening)

Delighted to see you...bring the family

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Future events:

MARCH 1990

Wed 21 VISITING SPEAKER
Mrs Nicholson will speak on "THE LIFE OF JANE AUSTEN"

Y.C. C.I.A

7:30pm

MAY 1990

Sun 5 A VISIT - THE GARDEN AT LITTLE COOPERS, EVERSLEY

Sun 12 BLUEBELL WALK

COPY DATES:

STOP PRESS 1st February 1990 NEWSLETTER 1st March 1990

YATELEY SOCIETY PROGRAMME 1989/90 (FROM DECEMBER 26)

- December

Tues 26	BOXING DAY WALK - Rourke's Drift to Finchampstead Church. Led by Malcolm Pope (with some refreshment afterwards)	Rourke's Drift Map Ref 811 831	10:00am
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- January -

Thurs 11	MONTHLY REVIEW OF LOCAL PLANNING	Y.C. C.1.4	7:30pm
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Wed 17	VISITING SPEAKER Mr Les Jones, General Manager of the Thames Division of the National Rivers Authority will speak on "THE WATER INDUSTRY AND THE ENVIRONMENT"	Y.C. C.1.4	7:30pm
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Thurs 25	The Yateley Society AGM Come and hear about the running of the Society, and have a social chat and a drink afterwards.	Y.C. Green Room	8:00pm
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- February -

Thurs 9	MONTHLY REVIEW OF LOCAL PLANNING	Y.C. C.1.4	7:30pm
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Future events:

MARCH 1990

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