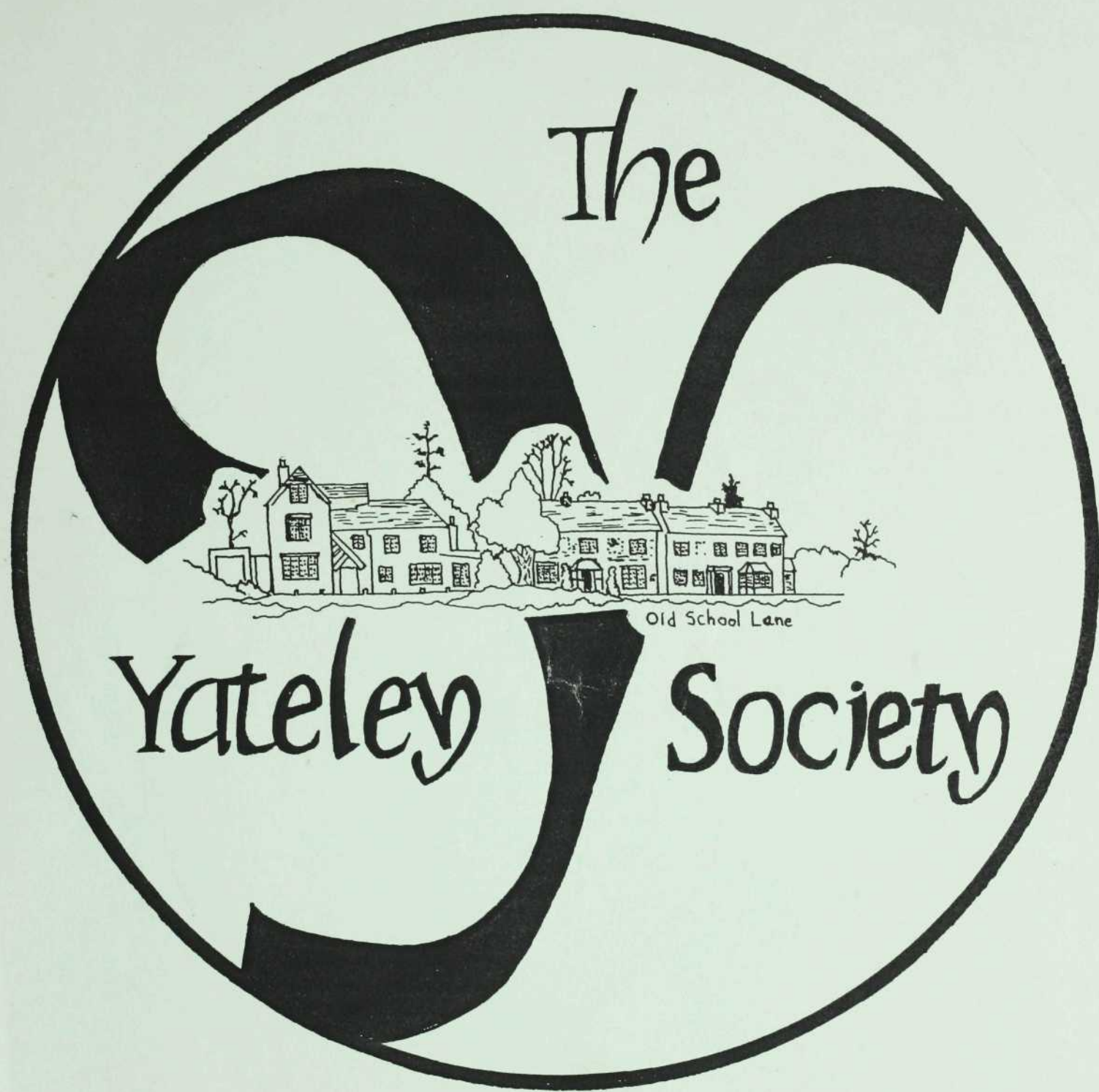


No. 42

JULY 1990



Newsletter

-THE YATELEY SOCIETY-

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

THE EDITORIAL.

Dear Member,

Here we are half way through the year and it seems to have only just started! The May Fayre came and went, the exhibition and sales were popular, but I doubt we will have the inflatable hut again - it was an awkward shape and the noisy, evil-smelling air pump was a bit anti-social. There are thoughts of getting a large tent for the future and not worrying too much about keeping the public dry, just us!

The Programme Sub-Committee, which I mentioned in the last Newsletter, has been revitalised and is busy thinking up lectures, visits and so on for your entertainment, and we hope enlightenment. The Sub-Committee seems to have almost taken over the entire Executive Committee - maybe this is the way to go?

Unfortunately for us Elaine Crisp has taken up a new job and the pressure of work has forced her to resign from the Executive Committee. We wish her well with her job.

NEW MEMBERS

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

Mr and Mrs Spiers. 7 Foxley Close, Blackwater.

-oOo-

OBITUARY

It is with deep sadness that we announce the death of Hugh Rose.

Chris and Hugh Rose have led several walks and shared their knowledge of trees and forestry with us.

We extend our sympathy to Chris and their family.

-oOo-

A NEW SOCIETY PUBLICATION!

The first Yateley Society history trail booklet has been published.

In "Today and Yesterday, a Walk in Yateley" Valerie Kerslake takes the reader on a walk round part of Yateley and comments on the historical associations of the buildings on the way, and adds many other fascinating titbits of information. The walk starts and ends at Forge Court and takes in Vicarage Road, Chandlers Lane and Mill Lane.

The booklet, which is illustrated and smartly bound, will shortly be on sale at Yateley Industries, Yateley Library and other local shops.

The Recommended Retail Price is £2.40 (available to members at £2.00 - see Valerie or Malcolm Pope)

A GREEN NEWSLETTER

Yes, we have had green covers for a long time, but now for the first time we are printing the Newsletter on 100% recycled paper.

THE GARDEN AT LITTLE COOPERS

by Valerie Kerslake

Last May the Society was invited by Keith and Cynthia Oldale to visit Little Coopers, one of the loveliest gardens in Eversley. Moving there in 1970, and enchanted with the possibilities of the overgrown wilderness where lupins grew all over the tennis court and brambles everywhere else, they gave themselves ten years to clear it. After that they could begin re-creating the garden, and this they have been doing ever since.

Little Coopers covers ten acres of a south-east facing slope. On the south-west side a woodland path winds through daffodils, bluebells and many varieties of rhododendrons and azaleas. It was extended last winter down to the bottom of the garden where it circles round a wild bog which is to be left untouched (except for tearing out the brambles). From the solid path we could see violets, wood anemones, yellow pimpernel, marsh orchids and the uncommon marsh valerian. To step off the path to identify more would have been rash as this bog is a genuine wet one.

The house, which was originally a small cottage belonging to the former Cooper's Farm, stands on the high ground at the other end of the garden. Creepers grow all over it - clematis, wistaria, climbing hydrangea, blue ceanothus and fremontia which has golden flowers like huge buttercups. All were in bloom for our May visit, and were apparently unscathed by the recent severe frosts. Below the house, lawns fall in green billows as far as the stream which rises in a rock-edged pool on the right and unhurriedly crosses to join a small, newly created lake on the other side, eventually leaving the garden to become an ordinary little ditch.

Azaleas and rhododendrons are beyond the stream, with some unusual trees and shrubs among them. The ground forms a semi-circular bowl here, and Cynthia visualises filling it with azaleas and bluebells. She is halfway there already, having put in scores of different bushes, and though some are still only a foot or two high they were flowering brilliantly this year, pink, mauve, red, white, yellow, spotted and plain.

Elsewhere planting is as profuse. There is a fluidity about this garden, with not only plants but paths and pools and terraces too on the move from year to year. Even trees are shifted from point to point without losing a leaf. A well-established little Japanese acer we admired beside the stream had been growing elsewhere less than a month before. Cynthia must be green to the elbows. She has regular help from Bill Strange who turned to gardening after retiring some years ago, and when some major construction is under way, like the hard path around the bog, all available hands are called upon, including any children that may be home and any passing able-bodied visitor.

If you missed seeing Little Coopers in May there is likely to be another chance next year; the Oldales open it in aid of the National Gardens Scheme. And by 1991 there may be a newborn Mediterranean garden surrounding the house.

With this newsletter you will receive a copy of SPISE News. The Yateley Society has been a supporter all along but decided to join when a membership structure was introduced earlier this year. Yateley Town Council has also joined.

During the past four years SPISE (Sane Planning In the South East) has made an outstanding contribution towards the promotion of sound and sustainable planning policies which respect the countryside, in other words Sane Planning. Their involvement in four major new town appeals in the Hart area ensured that all were refused. The best known, Foxley Wood, the imaginary creation of Lord Northfield, the Chairman of Consortium Developments Limited, also gave rise to changes in the whole country's planning system. SPISE will continue to exist and is now busy commenting on the SERPLAN review of the regional strategy for the south east and on DoE reviews of planning circulars.

One issue of great import at present, and mentioned by SPISE, is the new draft Hampshire Structure Plan. In this the county council is trying to reduce the number of houses to be built in the 1990s by at least 8,000. The 13 Hampshire districts took a different view and opposed the county. SPISE issued a declaration (see the next article) supporting the county's aim and CPRE is similarly asking for a reduction in the figure for the county. This is a matter we all need to be concerned with and informed about. If not we will never be able to remove the pressure for excessive growth in this area.

DECLARATION ON HAMPSHIRE STRUCTURE PLAN AND HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

The Executive Committee of Sane Planning in the South East having seen the draft Hampshire Structure Plan and the Secretary of State's letter of 5 May 1990, believing it right to make a public declaration of principles to assist in uniting opinion, is convinced from the outset that the county structure plan must seek to balance the needs of housing and the protection of the countryside in a positive and creative manner;

UNDERSTANDS that the advice in PPG9 was never intended as a target but that local policies must be tested during public consultation and at the EiP; and that conflicts may arise in the evolution of a viable and effective policy;

RECALLS that historically the county has made a full and important contribution to meeting market-oriented growth in housing over four decades;

CONSIDERS that the county council is justified in pursuing a policy of housing restraint in the 1990s, and further considers that this should not proscribe the recycling of land in urban areas and must establish a conclusive presumption against the growth area in the north Hampshire and central Berkshire sub region;

ACCEPTS that public awareness of the importance of the natural environment is undergoing fundamental changes requiring a new approach and significant adjustments to policy; these stem both from a clearer perception of the real value of natural ecosystems and an enhanced appreciation of the dwindling countryside;

BELIEVES that the structure plan strategy should reinforce the primacy of the environment and should proclaim the development of green field sites as no longer justifiable reducing their use to an absolute minimum;

TAKES into account the deficiencies in infrastructure and the inadequacy of facilities well recognised by local communities;

CONTENDS that this opportunity to provide for a good quality future environment for this county while ensuring a fair and reasonable allocation of land for housing should not be lost;

URGES that these points be addressed when reaching an agreement with the Department of the Environment bearing in mind the changed role for Hampshire, and other areas to the west of London, accepted by SERPLAN in the 1990s in relation to accommodating excessive housing growth.

May 1990

TREES - SOME REACTIONS

by Tony Hocking

You may recall that I introduced a resolution at the 1990 AGM deploring the loss of trees on development sites and calling for increased efforts to safeguard trees from damage and destruction.

As is our habit, this resolution together with the others which were carried was circulated to those parties who could or should act on it.

Regrettably motions do not often generate much more than a polite acknowledgement; but this time we received a much livelier reaction!

Firstly there was a letter from the Civic Trust (the country-wide organising body for all civic amenity and local societies, to whom we are affiliated). The Civic Trust thanked us for this and the other resolutions, lamenting the fact that many societies fail to advise the Trust of their resolutions, and indeed many do not have formal resolutions at all! The Trust then invited us to report on the progress of all our resolutions so that other societies can be encouraged to follow our example. Obviously we are doing things in the correct manner!

As a constructive comment the Trust advised us to obtain a guidance leaflet about trees on development sites, published by the Arborial Association.

Secondly there was a letter from the Association of District Councils. This letter pointed out that the Association was very concerned about the tree problem, and said that there was hope of a British Standard on the care of trees on building sites, but that this had not yet been published. We were recommended to read "Landscapes for New Housing" issued by the New Homes Marketing Board.

The last reaction came from The House Builders Federation. The Federation expressed its concern over tree protection and stated that it, and the National House Building Council, issue guidelines to their members on how to protect the landscapes of their sites. In addition they keep local authorities informed of their literature, and said that Hart District Council will soon receive a copy of their manual.

They too recommended "Landscapes for New Housing" to us, and were kind enough to enclose a copy! Finally, we were offered a speaker from the Federation should we like one.

All in all a very encouraging response to what, to some of us, seemed like a voice crying in the wilderness. This does show that we are not alone, and that people do listen to us.

BUILDING AN EXHIBITION

by Valerie Kerslake

"Local building materials and techniques" is the subject proposed for our Environment Week and May Fayre exhibition for 1991. It has not yet been settled who will be putting it together (any volunteers? several would be wonderful!) but please start looking out for information and material that could be used. As well as writing, drawings and photos stuck on the boards, it would be good to have actual objects that could be touched and compared: for example, old and new tiles, fragments of plaster from an old house, or unusual bricks or nails. This is not an incitement to pick bits out of your neighbour's wall, but if he is making alterations you could ask him for interesting leftovers.

LOCAL HISTORY

by Geoff Hoare

Calling all those members interested in local history. As you are all probably aware, development will be taking place in the area immediately to the north of St Peter's Church comprising part of the churchyard, what was Ramon's DIY shop and yard, and Chaddisbrook House.

This is an ideal opportunity for a group project and will require documentary research, physical recording of the present buildings, and a watching brief during the demolition of Ramon's and subsequent site preparation.

Some archaeological excavation will be carried out using expertise supplied by North East Hants Archaeological Society but it is hoped that Yateley Society members will also participate in this phase of the investigation.

The first meeting will proba'ly be held in September, so please keep an eye open for the actual date. There will be a variety of work to be done and all will be welcome.

LOST AND FOUND

A large umbrella, curiously inscribed with logos, etc, was left at Lime Tree Cottage after the barbecue on July 7th.

Will the owner please contact Valerie or David Kerslake (Yateley 872 240).

CHARITIES AND POLITICS

by Edward Dawson

At AGMs of the Yateley Society the question of politics is often raised in the context of resolutions. How far can we go in advocating changes in the law e.g. on common land, or changes in national or local policy e.g. improved planning systems? Should we actually address the government in our statements or simply have motions as neutral proclamations?

It seemed appropriate to obtain some authoritative advice prior to our next AGM, our 10th. I therefore consulted the legal officer of NVCO (National Council for Voluntary Organisations), and several key reports of enquiries, under Lord Goodman and Sir Philip Woodfield. Guidance also appears in the annual reports of the Charity Commissioners.

From all these august sources the conclusion is that as the law now stands a political purpose is not charitable. However, political

activity which is ancilliary to a charitable purpose is permissible. The following political activities are therefore quite proper for a charity:

- (i) Where a charity is invited by the Government implicitly or explicitly to comment upon legislative proposals.
- (ii) Where a charity puts forward proposals for a change in the law "provided that in doing so the charity is acting in furtherance of its purposes".
- (iii) Where a charity advocates legislation which has the purpose of conferring enabling powers upon that charity.

It follows from this that any charity can address itself to the Government and indeed help it to reach a decision on a particular issue through rational persuasion by providing information, ideas and arguments, but it should fall short of bringing actual pressure to bear.

In addition, the Rt. Hon, Chris Patten, Secretary of State for the Environment, provided the most recent summary of the situation while giving the 7th Lord Goodman Lecture on 7th June 1990. He said, "a charity can comment on proposed changes in the law and can advocate changes where they would further its charitable purposes; on issues germane to its purposes, it can brief MPs and contribute to public debate; and it can in effect exert political pressure provided it is ancilliary to its charitable purpose."

This is a slight refinement and shows how far one can go. We can see from this that the Society's activities have always been well within the bounds of the law. No one need worry about our pronouncements. They are all firmly within the confines of our charitable objectives.

Edward Dawson, President.

ORCHIDS ON THE CHALK DOWNLANDS by Norma Dowling

On the evening of Friday 15th June sixteen of us travelled in Cole's mini-bus to Box Hill, near Dorking, which forms the edge of the gap in the North Downs made by the River Mole.

It was a beautiful spot to be in on a warm, still evening. We were met by Dr. John Ward-Smith of BBONT (Berks, Bucks & Oxfordshire Naturalists Trust), who had kindly spent time earlier in the day hunting out the orchids to show us, and we were joined by a few other BBONT members.

Unfortunately the very dry weather has resulted in smaller and far fewer orchids than usual and one species, the Musk Orchid, couldn't be found at all. Possibly also, with the lack of lush herbage, the large rabbit population (one member of which showed itself to us) has nibbled on some of the orchids.

In spite of these setbacks we were thrilled to see Fragrant and Man Orchids; new species to many of us. It was noticeable that the larger patches of Common Spotted-orchid occurred in the shaded, damper areas. We also saw Twayblade and some beautiful specimens of Bee Orchids that were well worth dropping to the knees to examine!

We all agreed that it made a pleasant change to be up on the chalk downland and enjoyed noting how the habitat differed from our own sandy heathland. Other flowers seen were: Yellow Rock-rose, Yellow

Rattle, Milkwort (in all shades), Salad Burnet, Thyme and Marjoram. Sadly many of the Yew trees nearer the top of the hill had suffered from storm damage and the Box trees that give the hill its name looked rather yellow, but the beeches were full of mast and the many ash trees seemed unaffected by drought or wind.

From the slope where the Musk Orchids should have been we saw a Fastigate Beech (rather like a Lombardy Poplar in shape).

Altogether a memorable evening, well worth repeating another year (only an hour's drive away). Our thanks to Malcolm Pope and Irene Draper for organising it and to Dr Ward-Smith as without him many of the orchids may well have gone un-noticed!

Footnote

Orchids on Yateley Common have also suffered, though not only from the dry weather. An exceptionally large clump of Common Spotted Orchids was seen flowering as vigorously as ever in early June, but a few days later, on the 10th, there was nothing but a hole in the ground and a few of its four-inch flower spikes lying in the bushes. An equally large and longstanding clump, the only comparable one in that area, had vanished last summer.

THE FUTURE OF COMMON LAND

The following background press feature was prepared by our President, as part of the commons campaign by SPISE and CPRE, in conjunction with the Open Spaces Society. It was distributed to the media in March and abbreviated versions of it appeared in The Sunday Correspondent and The Guardian. The full text of the article is reproduced here because it sets out the context of common land issues, many of which are of direct importance to us in Yateley.

Edward Dawson also appeared on BBC television's Country File, as did Peter Tipton speaking on Yateley Common.

Now, of course, we have the results of the Hazeley Heath test case from the House of Lords. The appellants, Hampshire County Council, Hart District Council and Mattingley Parish Council won their case conclusively, thus preventing the land's removal from the county register. Deregistration would have meant that the land could have been treated as any other, opening up the possibility of enclosure or development perhaps for building or for a golf course.

The success of this case has major national implications. Basically, the Law Lords' judgement says that the landowner's act of selling off the Lordship of the Manor did not, as of right, convert the common into "manorial waste". This is a great victory and prompted The Independent headline, "Common but to the Manor born".

Congratulations to the County Council and to the other appellants for their tenacity and far-sightedness. But, the battle was not cheap. Ted Mason estimates the legal costs at well over £80,000. Sir Anthony paid his own. Since the written, delivered judgement runs to eight pages, that's £10,000 per page!

So, what's the next step? The urgent need is for fresh legislation to protect commons, before the next loophole is discovered and exploited. The Yateley Society should campaign to this end. We've staunched the flow of blood from one wound but the patient could still bleed to death from the others.

AN UNCOMMONLY GOOD CAUSE

Next week the highest court in the land will hear a case which could decide the future of hundreds of thousands of acres of British countryside. Yet few people are aware of what is at stake, or that their own local open space could be up for grabs. Edward Dawson spells out the dangers for our cherished landscape.

COMMONS are our oldest institution, older than Parliament and the Monarchy. They were once the very basis of our economy. That was in medieval times.

Since then they have become neglected and eroded. Land which once fed the citizenry now lies unprotected and abused or buried under bricks and mortar. Common land is often thought to be the property of everyone and no one. In fact, all common land is privately owned but is subject to the rights of a named group of individuals known as commoners. Monday's hearing for the deregistration of Hazeley Heath is a test case. If lost it could set a precedent for the destruction of much of our valued countryside, since the 8,675 commons cover nearly 1.37 million acres of England and Wales. There are none in Scotland.

But to understand the present moves it is essential to feel the force of history. Rights of common are attached to property and may comprise grazing of animals like cattle or sheep; pannage, grazing pigs on fallen acorns; estovers, gathering wood or bracken; turbary, cutting peat for fuel; piscary, fishing; and mineral rights. In parallel with these ancient rights has grown a new use for commons for fresh air and exercise. This is by far the most important use for commons but the truth is that the public is only legally entitled to walk on just a fifth of our common land.

There is evidence that common rights are one of the earliest recognised human rights, going way back into prehistory to the first domestication of animals, over 5,000 years ago. In Neolithic times Dartmoor was grazed in common and the rights passed to the inhabitants of Devon.

Lords of the manor during the twelfth century were granted large tracts of common in order to open new farmland. In the period up to the Black Death enclosure of common land began and then intensified as the population grew in the sixteenth century. Action to prevent too much enclosure started in the reign of Elizabeth I, and with it came the first recognition of the value of common land to urban dwellers.

The enclosure of commons went on apace particularly as agricultural improvements in the eighteenth century meant more profit from the land. Most enclosures required application to Parliament for private and local Acts. They were little more than landowners' charters allowing them to make money from the land, while squeezing out the peasants.

There were over 4,000 separate Inclosure Acts before a general act in 1845 provided for some, though meagre, compensation for loss of rights. But social changes were coming as the Victorian era advanced and the opening up of the American mid-west led to cheap corn imports. This, coupled with the growth of urban populations, led to a demand for open spaces for informal recreation. Reformers like John Stuart Mill and Lord Eversley added their voices to a campaign to save commons from speculators, especially in the south east.

The campaign was led by the Commons Preservation Society (now the Open

Spaces Society based at Henley-on-Thames) which was formed in 1865. The first battle was to prevent commons in London from being built on and this was achieved through the Metropolitan Commons Act 1866.

Not all those who have tried to destroy commons have been successful. One, Sir Thomas Wilson, who threatened to build on Hampstead Heath was embroiled in such lengthy proceedings that he died before its completion. Another, Earl Brownlow, actually put up an iron fence around Berkhamstead Common in Hertfordshire illegally. The Society sent a trainload of navvies one night and the fence disappeared.

The failure of government to do anything to protect common land is chronic. The Royal Commission on Common Land which reported in 1958 argued for a register of rights, universal public access and better land management. Only the first point was ever implemented in the Commons Registration Act 1965. It was intended to protect commons but was poorly drafted. For example, if no common rights remain over a piece of land, perhaps because they were bought out, it can be deregistered and exploited.

Other commons currently at risk include Greenham which has the biggest runway in Europe. Fears that it could become a commercial airfield have led to campaigns by Lord Denning, former Master of the Rolls, and Sir David Napley, well-known criminal lawyer, to force the Ministry of Defence to give the common back to the people of Newbury. Yateley Common, only a few miles away, also has an airfield, Blackbushe, for which legal consents were never granted or even sought. Sometimes former commons governed by their own Acts may prevent development, as in the case of Bugs Bottom near Reading where a planning battle still rages.

The focus of attention is now on Sir Anthony Milburn, Hampshire landowner and 5th baronet, who applied in 1981 to have Hazeley Heath taken off the county register. The land itself is heather-clad rolling heathland, designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest, for its rare wildlife species, by the Nature Conservancy Council. It is a mere two miles from Bramshill, site of the now discredited Foxley Wood proposed new town, and within the "Forest of Eversley" - the first Countryside Heritage Area ever to be declared. Sir Anthony argues that the absence of commoners means that the land should be classified as "manorial waste" under the 1965 Act, and relies on a fairly recent Court of Appeal case to support his claim.

Enter Mr Edward Mason, Hampshire's Assistant County Secretary. He has managed to obtain the consent of the House of Lords to "leap-frog" direct to the Law Lords and will argue next week that the Appeal Court case was wrongly decided. The County's case is that the 1965 Act contains narrow wording which has defeated its own object. The intent of the Royal Commission, and the Act, was to protect common land, yet a loophole means that it has become the vehicle for its destruction.

Concern to sort out this muddle led the Countryside Commission to set up the Common Land Forum in 1983. Chaired by Maurice Mendoza, it was an assortment of landowning interests, local authority organisations and conservationists. After nearly three years' work it produced a concerted report, remarkable in itself.

The case for action to save common land is as undeniable as it is urgent. The Conservative Manifesto for the 1987 election said, "We will legislate to safeguard common land on the basis of the Common Land Forum". But when will Chris Patten find the Parliamentary time for a Commons Bill? Who will act to protect what the Royal Commission called "the last reserve of uncommitted land in England and Wales"?

15 March 1990

YATELEY SOCIETY PROGRAMME 1990 (FROM JULY 26)

- July -

Thurs 26 PRACTICAL HISTORY 2 Firglen Drive 8:15pm
Another look at the records and curios kept by Jean McIlwaine.
Please ring Jean on 872768 if you wish to come. Yateley

Thurs 30 PROGRAMME SUB-COMMITTEE Barclay House 8:00pm

- August -

Thurs 2 MONTHLY REVIEW OF LOCAL PLANNING Monteagle House 8:00pm

Sun 12 WALK - The ford on the Blackwater River to Farley Hill (with a stop
at the pub) and back, via the river bank, lanes and footpaths. The ford, Ford Lane 10:30am
Led by Irene Draper. between Eversley and Riseley.
Limited parking, share cars if possible. Map ref SU 634 743

Thurs 30 MONTHLY REVIEW OF LOCAL PLANNING Lime Tree Cottage 8:00pm

- September -

Wed 5 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING Barclay House 8:00pm

Thurs 6 TALK - How to Start a Local History. Y.C. Green Room 8:00pm
An illustrated talk on getting going in local history by Nigel Bell,
Chairman of Newnham Parish Council and researcher into Newnham's past.

Thurs 27 MONTHLY REVIEW OF LOCAL PLANNING Monteagle House 8:00pm

- October -

Thurs 11 TALK - Conserving Hampshire's Garden Heritage. Y.C. Green Room 8:00pm
An illustrated talk by Billy Drummond, chairman of the
Hampshire Gardens Trust.

Thurs 25 MONTHLY REVIEW OF LOCAL PLANNING Lime Tree Cottage 8:00pm

ADVANCED WARNINGS!

- November -

Mon 5 GUY FAWKES! The Tiptons have offered to resurrect an early "tradition" of the Yateley Society and hold a
BONFIRE PARTY at Monteagle House - these used to be very popular, so keep the date free!

Thurs 15 or 29, a General Meeting on "Society Members' OTHER INTERESTS. Most of us have interests in addition to the
Yateley Society, the aim of this meeting will be to entertain each other and to find out if you share your
interests with other members.

Thurs 22 MONTHLY REVIEW OF LOCAL PLANNING Monteagle House 8:00pm

STOP PRESS

10TH ANNIVERSARY HISTORY PROJECT

Thurs 20 Sep 90 HISTORY PROJECT MEETING Y.C. Green Room 8:00pm

Geoff Hoare	project leader for the archaeological investigations prior the the building of the Yateley Church Worship Centre, will explain the project and show slides of the site and buildings.
Jean McIlwaine	the Church Archivist will show the original vellum deeds of Chaddisbrook and ex-Ramons DIY back to 1838
Peter Tipton	will explain the Society's involvement in providing a documentary research support team.

Geoff Hoare has been asked by the Hampshire County Council Archaeologist to supervise the archaeological excavations before development of this site lying between the Church, Michael Lee-Photographers, and Yateley Manor. Geoff explains on page 5 that NEHAS will be providing the necessary archaeological expertise. The Yateley Society has agreed to provide support in researching the documentary evidence of the site which could be called 'the cradle of Yateley', possibly revealing the town's Saxon origins.

The Society will therefore need the support of experienced members who took part, for instance, in the Yateley History Project with Dr John Porter, but there will be a place too for members new to local history and keen to learn the techniques.

It is intended to research all the adjoining sites, including the "Dog & Partridge" and Yateley Manor School. In the same way that archaeologists move backwards in time from the present, revealing each layer of history, so the documentary group will work backwards from the present into the Victorian Era. The wealth of material available to family historians, including the Census from 1841 to 1881, and birth marriage and death certificates, will provide some of the documentary evidence, so anyone with experience of, or intending to research their own family history will be welcome.

The TALK on 6 September 'How to start a Local History' by Mr Nigel Bell is an interesting illustrated talk on aspects of 18th century Newnham but it is also intended as an stimulating starting point for those keen to get involved in local history for the first time, who might like to join in the Yateley project a fortnight later. Later in the calendar we hope to arrange lectures from the Victorian Society and on the Civil War in this region.