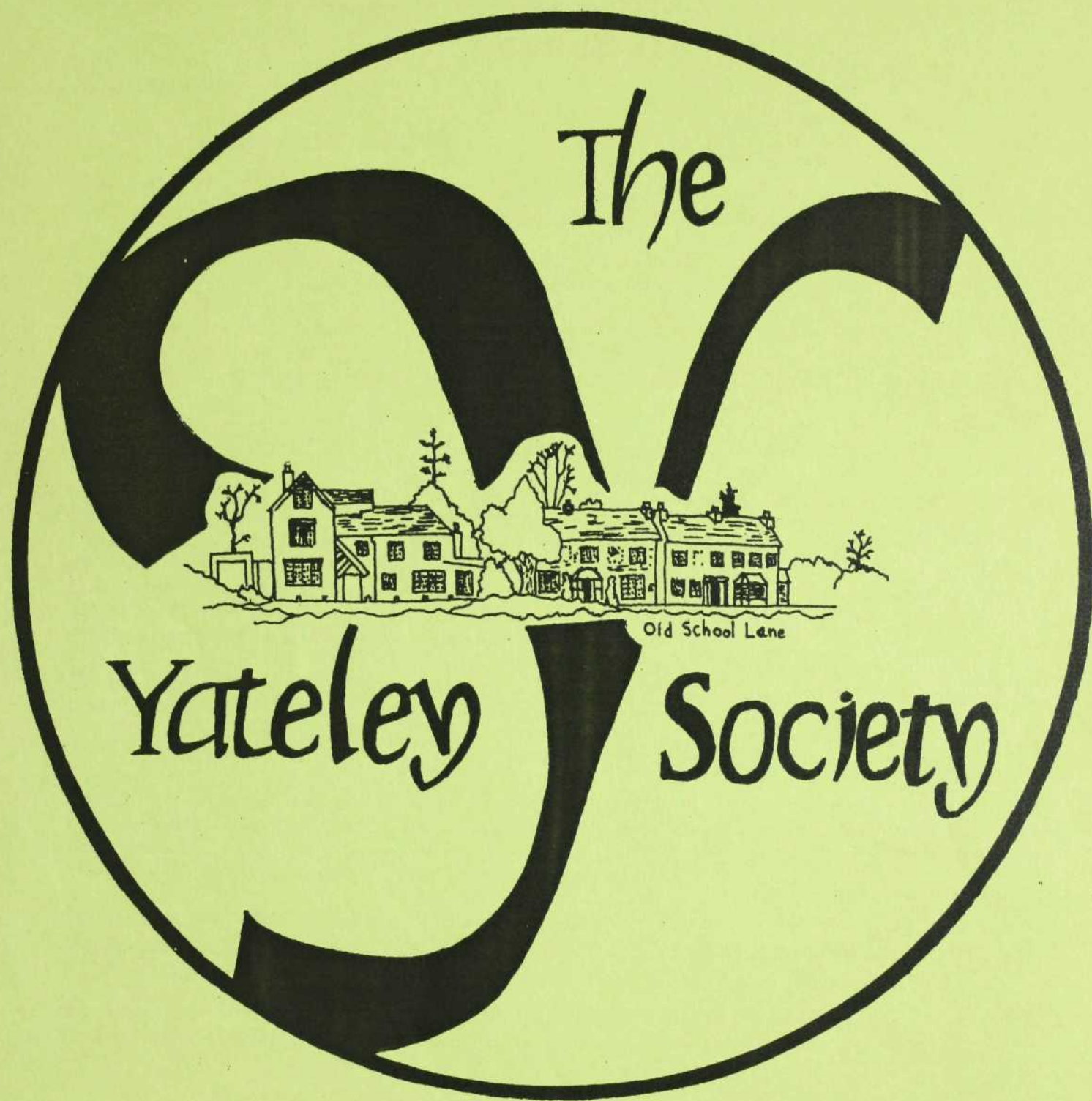


No. 47

NOVEMBER 1991



Newsletter

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-THE YATELEY SOCIETY-

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

THE EDITORIAL.

Dear Member,

Firstly, a PROGRAMME CHANGE

The talk on PAINTING PLANTS - THE HISTORY OF BOTANICAL ILLUSTRATION will now be on THURSDAY 12 DECEMBER, all other details unchanged.

Finding that several members missed the Bonfire Night social because of a course on Tuesday nights and learning that the same members, all keen on natural history, would miss the talk, it was decided to change the date to one after the course had finished. (The speaker could only manage Tuesdays until the week of December 12th.)

There is an introductory article about this talk in this Newsletter.

---ooDoo---

On the subject of Bonfire Night, about 40 people had a most enjoyable evening. There was plenty of "ooooohing and aaaaahing" at the fireworks (which ended with the most ear-shattering crescendo of explosions!), and similar expressions of delight over the excellent food and mulled wine. Our grateful thanks to Elizabeth who did the lion's share of the cooking, and to all those who provided a wide assortment of apple pies, cakes, tarts, etc.

It was particularly nice to see new members taking part, and to meet two Dutch visitors.

---ooDoo---

There is a plan to form a "PUBLICATIONS SUB-COMMITTEE" who will review all aspects of publications, including the Newsletter, Stop Press, the membership leaflet, and all items published for sale and for spreading the word about Yateley and the Society.

It would be most helpful if we had members' comments and suggestions - so please write to or phone the editor, address and 'phone number as at the top of page 1.

If you are experienced in writing, illustrating, publishing, the Committee would like to hear from you - please contact the editor.

---ooDoo---

You may have noticed that CONSERVATION WORKING PARTIES have started again.

These take place on the last Sunday of each month, meeting at Wyndhams Pool car park at 10:00am. They are organised by Mike Mann on behalf of Tony Davis the Country Park Ranger. Tony, or one of his colleagues, always leads and supervises the working parties, so there is no danger of anyone doing anything that is detrimental, or contrary to the overall scheme for the common.

One part of the long term plan is to create a swathe of heather from the top of the path leading up from Heathlands cemetery across to Cricket Hill. This involves removing the grass and birch seedlings from the area south of Brandy Bottom, and this task was started at the end of October.

It is perhaps inevitable that one person's idea of beneficial habitat creation is viewed by another person as destruction of another habitat - and hence it is not possible to please everyone. Paul Edgar in his recent talk to the Society pointed out that Hampshire is unique in the extent of its lowland heath, but that this is constantly being reduced by natural and unnatural causes. The heather on Yateley Common has vanished from large stretches in recent decades, and so far the Society has supported efforts to reestablish heather wherever possible.

This is obviously a contentious issue - should we continue to encourage heather, or should we allow other types of vegetation to take over? WHAT ARE YOUR VIEWS? - How about a "letter to the editor" on the subject (or on other aspects of management of the common)?

NEW MEMBERS

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

Mr & Mrs Brown	Hartford House, Vicarage Lane, Yateley.
Mrs Hudson	1, Florence Close, Yateley.
Mr & Mrs Morris	6, Canberra Close, Yateley.
Mrs Chugg	46, Lymington Avenue, Yateley.

BOTANICAL ILLUSTRATION, setting the scene for the talk on Thursday December 12th.

The Yateley Society is exceptionally lucky to have been able to secure Christabel King as a lecturer. She will talk and show slides of the art and history of botanical illustration.

It was the Revd. Keble Martin who in recent times first inspired an interest in this subject in 1965, when his book "The Concise British Flora in Colour" appeared with a foreword by HRH Prince Philip. The history extends much further back to the Herbalists and to the great names like William Turner and John Ray in the seventeenth century and to William Curtis and Albrecht Durer. The first woman artist, Maria Merian, published three books in 1678 and at the age of fifty one travelled with her daughter to South America to collect and paint plants.

The genius of flower painters was Georg Ehret (1708 - 1780) who really put feeling into his art. Others, like the German Bauer brothers worked at Kew for fifty years and painted plants throughout their stay. Pierre Jean Turpin (1775 - 1840) was another 18th century great. In the 19th century Walter Fitch (1817 - 1892) published over 10,000 paintings while at Kew, and illustrated the "Botanical Magazine" for more than forty years.

In our own times the modern Field Guide, containing serious

technically correct pictures, has replaced the sentimental age. The 20th century brought women to the fore with several artists working freelance at Kew. Marjorie Blaney is, perhaps, the best known of the "field guide" illustrators.

Into this tradition of Kew botanical artists comes Christabel King who emerged in the 1980s as one of the best young artists of her times. Her exquisitely beautiful paintings first appeared in a hardback book "All Good Things Around Us", published in 1980. She also works for Curtis's Botanical Magazine. I hope you will all support this lecture which promises to be one of the most fascinating of recent events.

Edward Dawson.

A STEWARD AT YATELEY HALL

by Valerie Kerslake

Companies interested in setting themselves up in Yateley Hall were so slow to make up their minds that the owner allowed The Yateley Society to open the house to the public again in September. This time the call was for stewards rather than guides, and the public could wander around at their own pace without the bottlenecks that caused such difficulties at the first opening last July. Richard Johnston's history of the house and detailed room-by-room guide were on sale, and there were brief notes displayed in each room, so that the stewards' main duties were to prevent the paintwork being kicked and the chairs sat upon. More positive guiding was necessary upstairs where people tended to get lost amongst the little flights of steps and angular passages and in the maze of interlocking rooms in the attic.

Most of the house was empty, but on the staircase and in the wide, pine-panelled hall and two adjoining downstairs rooms there were pictures and antiques lent by a local firm. Stewards not otherwise occupied could contemplate their elegance and study the information on the price labels. The owner of the furniture was also around, an extra pair of eyes especially welcome when visitors were growing weary and children bored.

I took up my position in the dining and ball room at the south eastern corner of the house, surprised to find this serene and dignified room still unattended. It was built about 1800 and remodelled in 1871 by Norman Shaw who put in the blue Delft tiled fireplace, high panelling and floor to ceiling bay window looking on to the canal and gardens beyond. The newly painted panelling gleamed white beneath pale blue walls and ceiling (but why aquamarine so close to the cobalt blue of the tiles?). Visitors had already arrived by ten o'clock and continued to flow through the building until after four, never crowding unduly, but at such a steady rate that I wondered whether our car park attendants had devised some cunning system of staggering. Many friends went by, some new, some I had not seen for years - rather like a party without the clutter of plates and glasses. All sorts of information came my way too. Mrs Lovell, who was brought up at the Hall, her mother being on the domestic staff, remembered the hours she had had to sit here sewing with the grown up ladies at the dining room table while Miss de Winton Corry read aloud - very tedious for a little girl who longed to be out of doors. Preparing for a ball was more fun; the whole household was required to polish the superb sprung floor, on which we were standing, by sliding up and down in padded slippers. Later I learnt that this same floor had weeds growing between the boards when restoration began five years ago.

A wide archway led into a former classroom added in the 1950s, and here the Society's exhibition attracted a good deal of attention in spite of having been on show several times since May. Of particular interest was an extra board with photographs of this room and others in the 1920s when they were in a more than fully furnished state.

The children behaved fairly well, I thought, recalling the dreadful tedium of accompanying my parents around stately homes. They peered up the chimney and wiggled the heavy wooden shutters folded back beside the window, but showed a worrying tendency to trail their fingers along the walls as they rounded corners, and I failed to interest them in the little pictures on the fireplace tiles. There were fifty-eight of these, each depicting a scene from the Bible. I found Jonah with an endearingly monstrous whale, a raven bringing crusts to Elijah, Job and his com orters, the ark both before and after the flood and many from the New Testament. Anyone with a good knowledge of the Bible could probably have identified them all but chapter and verse were quoted on each tile. I was told that there had been quite a lot more until 1988 when thieves who stole three fireplaces from upstairs prised off parts of this one too.

As far as I could see, the day passed smoothly - although anything might have been going on at the other end of this immensely long house. There was some anxiety at my end when an Alsatian turned up in the medieval hall which held furniture and knick-knacks worth thousands of pounds. The dog sat tranquilly enough beside its mistress, but are not Alsatisans notoriously unpredictable, and suppose it suddenly bounded on to the Regency sofa or wrapped its unmuzzled jaw around a Georgian leg? We stewards conferred and agreed on no action but still greater vigilance, and happily it soon became apparent that its owner was also co-owner of the furniture and ornaments.

Outside the window groups of visitors were enjoying the sun and bringing life and colour to the new formal gardens and arched bridge across the canal, while a couple of children were somehow inducing little silvery fish to leap from the water. Let us hope that the new tenants of the Hall will appreciate the house and grounds as much as everyone did on this open day, and that from time to time they may allow local people to see it again.

YATELEY ATTENDS AMENITY SOCIETIES FORUM

As President of The Yateley Society I was delighted to represent it at the 1991 meeting of Southern Comfort, held on Saturday 9 November.

Southern Comfort is alas not a Bourbon Whisky tasters' convention but a gathering of local amenity societies. The venue did, however, share a pleasant if distant connection with fermentable carbohydrate. It was the Farnham Maltings, a rambling complex on the banks of the Wey, dating from the 1720s. Originally a tannery, it became a brewery in 1830 when Robert Sampson came to live at his cottage by the river, at 18 Bridge Square, now the home of our MP, Julian Critchley.

Courages Brewery bought the building in 1925 and continued malting, the roasting of sprouting barley, until 1956 when it was closed for demolition. Twelve years passed while plans to save the historic site were put forward by Dr Tony Crowe, Chairman of the Farnham Society. His vision was to turn it into a major arts and community centre. £30,000 was raised for the purchase within 6 weeks, after a town meeting gave the go ahead in January 1989.

Some £70,000 has been raised so far to convert the building but a third is still empty. The whole project is a fine example of local people coming together at grass roots level to preserve a superb industrial building from demolition, providing a wonderful amenity for the town and a fascinating venue for our meeting.

This was the sixth Southern Comfort Meeting and our host, the Farnham Society, is one of the largest and oldest amenity bodies in the country, dating back originally to 1911, with more than 1,000 members today. The meeting brought together representatives of 23 amenity and civic societies from five counties. After a welcome by the President, a keynote address was given by Francis Tibbalds, an architect, on making towns more pedestrian-friendly. His concept was that Britain, which once led the world in civilised urban living, had allowed its towns and cities to become dominated by indifferent office blocks, surrounded by pavements cluttered with gratuitously sited street furniture and banal signage. The human scale of traditional townscapes had been lost. The private car was in control while the highway engineers displayed a poverty of imagination in attempting to solve the problems it created. All this struck a chord with the audience and a lively discussion ensued.

We then broke for lunch in the Tannery and after a tour of the Maltings went on a short walk around Farnham, especially to see the Lion & Lamb Yard. This is a marvellous restored old shopping thoroughfare with, as its focus, a delightful wooden sculpture, over which young children crawl endlessly.

The afternoon session was a discussion on four topics. The first was on Local Plans and Inquiries during which I spoke about the importance of strategic issues in structure plans and the new emphasis on the value of local plans in the 1991 Planning Act. Topic 2 was on non-listed buildings in Conservation Areas, and I pointed out that, as a result of a recent High Court ruling, demolition of all buildings had now been brought under planning control. The third topic, on the sale of publicly owned land, led to a lengthy and animated debate about the need to balance financial gain with community and environmental benefits. Finally, local museums were discussed, with reductions in the museums service becoming manifest in many parts of the county.

The summing up was by Michael Blower, Vice President of the Farnham Society, who led the discussion on several resolutions resulting from the day's proceedings. One from me, which called for new county-based groupings of amenity societies so that these might hereby be invited to participate in structure plan EIPs, was adopted unanimously. The meeting ended with a brief report from Lesley Burton and Denis Cronin, elected representatives for the Southern Region on the National Council of Civic Trust Societies. The recession was biting and the Civic Trust has decided to axe its education group and suspend the publication of "Heritage Outlook". Those present urged that these matters be reconsidered.

I very much enjoyed the day and picked up lots of new ideas. I met some old friends and colleagues in other local societies, including Odiham, Camberley, Reading, Fleet and Fareham, whilst establishing valuable new contacts for the Yateley Society. The 7th Southern Comfort is to be held on Sunday 11 October 1992, and our host will be the Salisbury Society. Any offers to attend?

Edward Dawson
12 November 1991

-YATELEY SOCIETY PROGRAMME - 1991 (FROM NOVEMBER 21)

Thurs 21 TALK POSTPONED TO DECEMBER 12TH

Sun 24 CONSERVATION ON THE COMMON Wyndhams Pool 10:30am
Every little helps! Ring Tony Davis on 874346 for details.

- December -

Mon 2 PROGRAMME COMMITTEE MEETING Barclay House 8:00pm

Mon 9 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING Barclay House 8:00pm

Wed 11/Fri 13 YATELEY ISSUES AT THE HART PLAN INQUIRY

Thurs 12 TALK - PAINTING PLANTS - the art of Botanical Illustration. Y.C. Green Room 8:00pm
By Christabel King, one of the top botanical illustrators, who works at Kew.

Thurs 19 MONTHLY REVIEW OF LOCAL PLANNING Lime Tree Cottage 8:00pm

Thurs 26 BOXING DAY WALK - On Yateley Common, looking at an area under active Wyndhams Pool 10:30am
conservation, an area under threat and the common in general. Car Park
An excuse for walking off any Christmas excess! Led by Irene Draper.

Sun 29 CONSERVATION ON THE COMMON Wyndhams Pool 10:30am
Every little helps! Ring Tony Davis on 874346 for details.

- January 1992

Thurs 16 MONTHLY REVIEW OF LOCAL PLANNING Monteagle House 8:00pm

Fri 17 SOCIETY DINNER The venue is being rearranged in view of the relatively low numbers interested - you will be kept informed.

Thurs 30 YATELEY SOCIETY AGM Y.C. Green Room 8:00pm
Your chance to hear what goes on and why!

Sun 26 CONSERVATION ON THE COMMON Wyndhams Pool 10:30am
Every little helps! Ring Tony Davis on 874346 for details.

- February -

Thurs 13 MONTHLY REVIEW OF LOCAL PLANNING Lime Tree Cottage 8:00pm

Thurs 20 "A HAMPSHIRE VILLAGE" An audio-visual presentation covering a year Y.C. Green Room 8:00pm
in the life of a village (Sherfield-on-Loddon).

COPY DATES

STOP PRESS 1 JAN 1992, NEWSLETTER 14 FEB 1992.