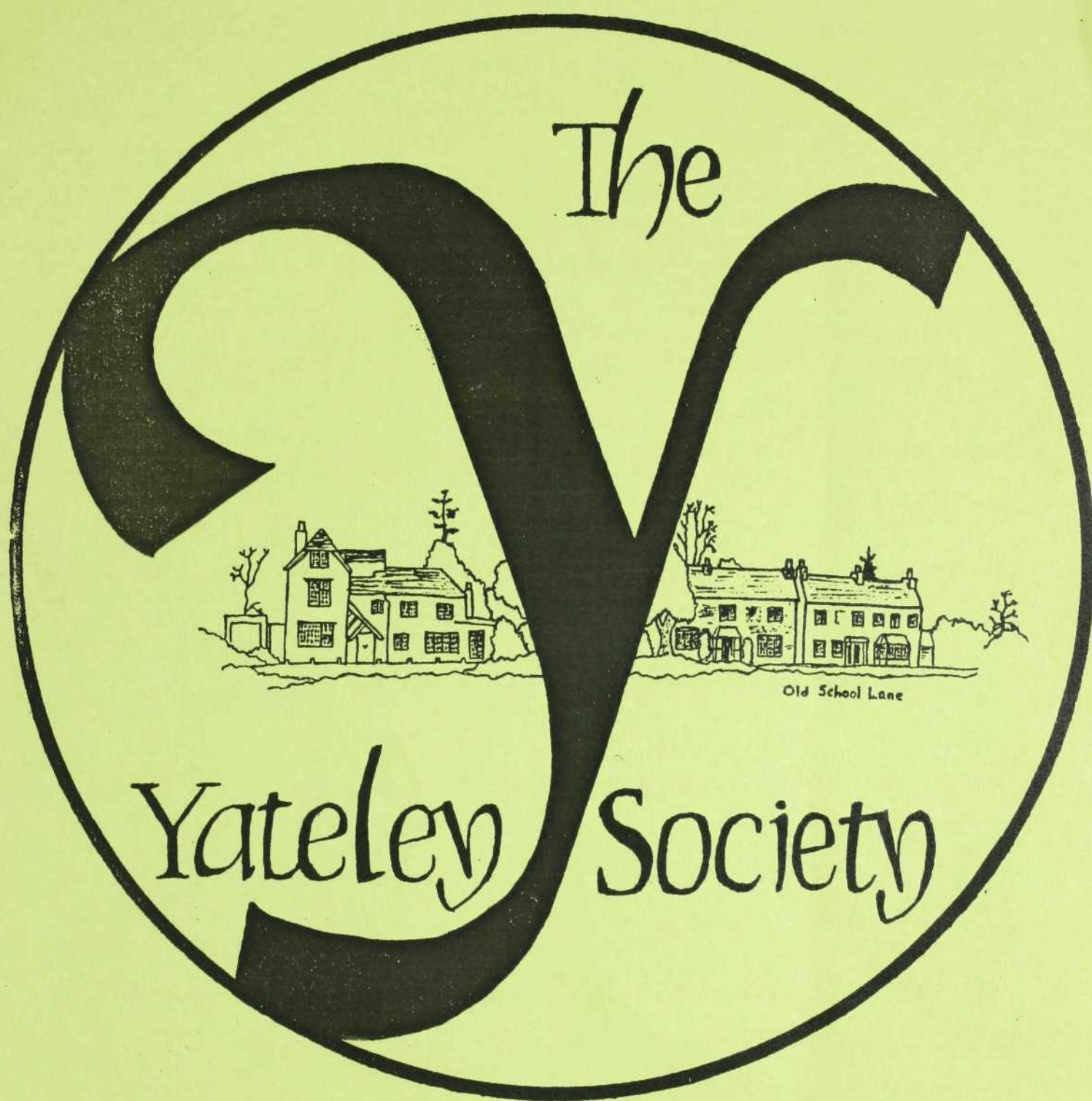


No. 49

JULY 1992



Newsletter

- 1 -
- THE YATELEY SOCIETY -

Newsletter No. 49

JULY 1992

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

THE EDITORIAL.

Dear Member,

I hope you were able to see the Society May Fayre exhibition. It attempted to stimulate interest in the Society and in its aims by publicising the resolutions passed at the AGM and by pointing out the problems of tree losses and threats of development.

Some care was taken over our resolution on the "Traveller" problem to point out that we did not wish to penalise such people unduly, but that the laws of the land should apply to them as well as to other sections of the community.

Our very grateful thanks are due to all those who contributed to a successful day, not least to Stephanie Pattenden whose efforts with the sales stall once again kept us solvent.

---oOo---

The urgent news in this Newsletter is the Summer Barbecue - always a popular event. As already advertised, Valerie and David Kerslake have very kindly offered the use of their garden - on the extremely reasonable understanding that others do the hard work!

***** THE YATELEY SOCIETY SUMMER BARBECUE *****

Date: SATURDAY JULY 18TH

Place: LIME TREE COTTAGE, CHANDLERS LANE

Time: 7:30 pm

Admission: Adults £3-50 Children £2-00

You are asked to provide either a sweet or a salad (the admission charge has been kept low on this basis).

Nevertheless, if required, the costs can be refunded.

PLEASE TELL CAROLYN SEYMOUR (Yateley 871 294) IF YOU ARE COMING - NOT LATER THAN JULY 8th, preferably earlier!

Admission will be collected at the Barbecue - please try to bring the right money, it makes life much easier!

We always have a RAFFLE, so if you can donate a prize we would be very grateful. Any offerings to Valerie Kerslake at Lime Tree Cottage please.

One minor problem - with a lot of people coming chairs can be in short supply, so if you like to sit it would be safer to bring your own!

HOPE TO SEE YOU THERE!!!

PS BLACKBUSH APPEAL 18-20 AUGUST

A VISIT TO ELVETHAM HALL

by Valerie Kerslake

Few people today would call Elvetham Hall beautiful, even if they did when it was built in 1860, but it is certainly fantastic and fascinating. As one approaches on the drive that for a while runs beside the little River Hart (diverted in 1880 to flow nearer the house), a mountain of a mansion in red brick and grey slate looms up ahead, craggy with turrets and towers, buttresses, balustrades, cupolas and crenellations. The 5th Baron Calthorpe, who had earlier been on the Grand Tour with Prince Albert, incorporated features from all over Europe when he replaced the old house that had been burt down in 1849. Steep slate roofs surmounted by little iron balustrades recall the grand houses of 17th century France; in this case they are patterned with contrasting shades of slate, like the brickwork patterns in the walls below. Here and there stepped Dutch gables can be seen while castellated towers, round and square, are reminiscent of castles from the Rhine to the Mediterranean. Statues and emblems carved in stone and terracotta are above the main entrance where a splendidly commodious carriage porch was added in 1901, and everywhere there are carved or painted decorations.

A Society picnic was held last May in the grounds of Elvetham Hall which is not normally open to the public, but before picnicking we were invited to look at the principal rooms of the house itself.

It is as remarkable inside as out, not precisely for magnificent or finely proportioned rooms but for the profusion of colourful paintigs on walls, ceilings and windows. Every ceiling tells a story, and shame on any child brought up here who failed to grasp the history of both house and country. A carved stone fireplace in the drawing room depicts the Earl of Hertford welcoming Queen Elizabeth on her visit to Elvetham in 1591. On the ceiling are Elizabethan court scenes from Sir Walter Scott's "Kenilworth". These are divided by decorative beams that conceal steel joists, used here for the first time in England aparty from at Osborne House on the Isle of Wight. The ceiling in the morning room has portraits of literary men - Ben Johnson, Shakespeare, Massinger, Drayton, Beaumont, Fletcher and many others. Thoughtful sentences inscribed in gold and each including the word "wise" or "wisdom" separate them from each other.

The main hall has the layout of a church - Victorian architects liked to do this, we were told. (Nowadays churches are shaped like halls.) A fireplace takes the place of the altar. As there is a stained glass window over it the smoke was channelled away behind the wall on one side where it is just possible to distinguish a panel for inserting the chimney sweep's boy. The history of Hampshire is illustrated in the windows, and the walls are adorned with armorial bearings of family friends and relations - a sort of Christmas card list, suggested our guide. Both Wyndham and Tyndall, presumably the occupants at various times of nearby Firgrove Manor, are present, and there is a Harris whose shield boasts three fat pigs. Could this be Harris the Bacon? Windows beside the staircase show nobles who entertained Queen Elizabeth on her Progress around England.

Years before Queen Elizabeth, Henry VIII twice visited Elvetham which was then the home of Jane Seymour who became his third wife and died giving birth to Edward VI. Her brothers Edward and Thomas both gained high office at court but failed to avoid the perils of Tudor politics and each in turn lost his head on Tower Hill. Edward's estates were forfeited but restored to his son who was created Earl of Hertford, but then he displeased Elizabeth by a secret and undesirable marriage. He spent some time in the Tower until payment of a huge fine bought his release. It was in order to regain royal favour that he put on

the most stupendously lavish entertainment for the Queen in 1591. Four hundred men dug a crescent-shaped lake and erected a range of luxurious pavilions for the Queen and her retinue of five hundred, since she refused to sleep under the same roof as the Earl. There were fireworks, water sports and galleons on the lake, and also, it is thought, the world premiere of "A Midsummer Night's Dream". It was considered to be the most spectacular entertainment of all the Queen's Progresses; an account of it was posted up outside St Paul's a few days later. The Queen was so pleased by it all that she decided to extend her stay from two days to four - thereby begging her host - and planted an oak tree which is still to be seen just beyond the hah.

The present house, we were told, was designed by the architect Teulon and built entirely by local craftsmen. The plans were agreed at Easter and the family moved in for Christmas, though much remained to be completed in house and grounds, continuing to give welcome employment to hundreds of men at a time when agricultural jobs were disappearing.

The lively commentary of our guide, Julie Trenear-Hardy, was supplemented by a leaflet outlining the history of Elvetham from its Saxon origins to its present day use as a rather super conference centre. This helps one to follow its long and intricate connections with court and state (later Seymours too were confined in the Tower). A deeper, more scholarly history by the late David Gorski has been published in the Hartley Row Journal.

NOW READ ON!

by Tony Hocking

The Newsletter is vital to the life of the Society and is the principal means of communication between the members and between the Executive Committee and the rest of the membership.

I have now been Newsletter Editor for 5 years, an interesting job, and I believe that I have added an important new dimension by introducing "Stop Press" for urgent news.

Two problems have now arisen. Firstly I feel that I have settled into a rut and that the Newsletter is becoming less and less innovative and therefore less appealing to members. It needs someone to ginger it up and give it a more lively and attractive image.

The second problem is more technical. I have been using an ancient BBC computer and a very hard-worked old printer which are on their last legs, and I cannot justify buying replacements. In any case I get a basinful of word-processing at work every day and enough is enough.

So - HELP!!! It is time for someone else to have a go at the Editorship!

All volunteers will be welcome.

ELECTRIC WIND

by Tony Hocking

Mary and I recently had a visit to the southern part of Jutland in Denmark.

Almost the first sign of Denmark as you approach Esbjerg is a row of thirteen spindly giants waving a welcome. These are wind-powered generators, giant propellers on slender columns up to about forty feet high.

These generators are scattered all over the wide coastal plain of Jutland, and on the first row of hills inland.

There has been much debate in Britain over the effect of such machines on the landscape, and apart from a few half-hearted attempts in Wales wind power is little used.

We were pleasantly surprised by the minimal visual impact the generators have on the Danish landscape. The group of thirteen on the island of Fano are the exception, in general they are built in groups of two to four, or often singly, with the groups well spaced, by at least half a mile, so that they do not jar the sensibilities, the individuals in a group are usually some two hundred feet apart. The fact that the majority of the generators are on the flat, agricultural, coastal plain helps; indeed they become interesting features. Those on hills are more widely spaced and are less obtrusive than power line pylons.

The one aspect which we could not assess was noise. We did not have the opportunity to get really close to a generator, and in any case the wind itself was noisy while we were in the right area.

The local birds seemed to ignore the generators - familiarity breeding contempt no doubt.

If our prevailing wind was from the east, and propellers were built on some of the less interesting parts of the east coast they would probably be acceptable. Our problem is that the windy west coast is the most attractive side of the country.

CO-OPERATIVE GAGGLE

Observed on one of the Chandlers Lane lakes on 15th May: A close-packed troop of 40 (yes, forty) tiny goslings being shepherded along by three pairs of doting Canada geese.

CUPBOARD LOVE

Seen on the shore of Wyndhams Pool on 31st May: A pair of Canada geese with four half-grown goslings, the gander drew himself up to full height and hissed as a couple walked past, about ten feet away. A second couple approached and pulled out a bag of food, the entire family of geese crowded round their feet with not the slightest sign of hostility!

THE WATER OF THE BLACKWATER

by Valerie Kerslake

A forum on the quality of the water of the River Blackwater was organised last May by the Blackwater Valley recreation and Countryside Management Service (the cumbersome new name for the now permanent successor to the Blackwater Valley Project - but Blackwater Valley Team does well enough, they say). Presentations were made by the National Rivers Authority, a public body which is committed to the maintenance and improvement of our aquatic environment (to quote the briefing sheet), and by Thames Water Utilities who own the six sewage treatment works that discharge into the Blackwater. Thames Water's representative bitterly denounced the recent item in a local paper which blamed inadequately treated sewage for the heavy pollution of the river. On the contrary, he said, the cleanest water in the Blackwater was the 80% that was sewage effluent. Tables were shown indicating that the quality of the discharged effluent over the past few months

was always well above the standard required for its particular classification for quality.

Dr Malcolm Griffith of the NRA said the catchment area was under heavy pressure from the huge population along the valley. He explained the system of classification of water quality standards which takes into account uses of a river, such as supplies for homes or industry, boating, fishing, wildlife, recreation and so on. The upper reaches of the Blackwater from Aldershot to the A30 roundabout is assessed as Class 3 (poor); from there to its joining the Whitewater is 2b (fair); and from the Whitewater to the Loddon, 2a (fair). Nowhere is it 1a or 1b (good), nor for that matter Class 4 (bad). The method of classification is at present under review by the NRA and the Department of the Environment, who have a new scheme for how water quality objectives should be set. A public consultative document should be available about the end of the year when applications to particular rivers can be considered.

Someone asked what was the 20% of water that was not the good clean treated sewage effluent, and which must therefore cause the murky water with which we are familiar. Part was from springs, Dr Griffith said, and part from gravel washings and permitted discharges (about 100) such as septic tanks and industrial outlets. Consents for these outlets were not easily come by and they were carefully monitored. Nevertheless, sometimes things went wrong, and anyone coming across suspicious substances or foul discharges was asked to notify the NRA immediately by ringing 100 and asking for Freephone River Pollution. One surprisingly bad source of pollution was the unrestricted drainage of surface water, particularly when heavy rain followed a long dry spell which had allowed dirt to accumulate on roads and built up areas. To counteract this and delay the rush of water, local authorities will be required to make balancing ponds, and on large developments the developers will have to pay for them. (There is a balancing pond on Yateley's latest estate on Firgrove Road).

The participants included members of the eleven councils that finance the Blackwater Valley Team, as well as local people and organisations that use the river. Some of them made brief presentations - canoeists, anglers, Friends of the Earth and Crowthorne Natural History Society. Sydney Loader, who with Michael Holroyd and myself was representing the Yateley Society, spoke from the historical viewpoint. His father used to tickle trout in the Blackwater until the Camberley gas works were built in the 1880s and poured poison into the river, while Sydney himself remembered the river regularly flooding the adjoining meadows, with children pulling off their clothes to swim and having to duck under the water when a train went by. A riverside landowner spoke of his extreme anxiety about the numerous children he saw swimming in and actually drinking the water at New Mill ford, Eversley. Dr Griffith agreed that the water was not safe for water contact sports, and though it was theoretically possible to make it so the cost would be astronomical. The NRA was reluctant to stud the river bank with warning notices, which might in addition imply safety where there was no notice. There was not much reassurance on this matter.

At the end of the meeting there was a proposal to set up a group with the initial aims of raising awareness of the river, co-ordinating interested local organisations and lobbying councils and MPs for improvements. These seem important and worthwhile aims, with which the Society should be associated.

YATELEY SOCIETY PROGRAMME 1992 (FROM JULY)

- July -

- Thurs 2 REVIEW OF LOCAL PLANNING Y.C. Green Room 8:00pm
- Sun 5 A WALK IN THE ROYAL OAK VALLEY - Public car park 2:30pm
Led by Tony Hocking. Up the valley to the common, and return. behind Royal Oak P.H.
- Sat 18 ***** YATELEY SOCIETY BARBECUE ***** , Lime Tree Cottage 7:30pm
£3.50 for adults, £2.00 for children Chandlers Lane
Ring CAROLYN SEYMOUR - Yateley 871 294) as soon as possible if you intend to come!

- Thurs 30 REVIEW OF LOCAL PLANNING Y.C. Green Room 8:00pm

- August -

BREAK FOR HOLIDAY SEASON

- Thurs 27 REVIEW OF LOCAL PLANNING Y.C. Green Room 8:00pm

- September -

- Thurs 17 TALK - STORIES OF GAMEKEEPING Y.C. Green Room 8:00pm
Entertaining accounts of Gamekeepers and their adversaries!

- Thurs 24 REVIEW OF LOCAL PLANNING Y.C. Green Room 8:00pm

- Sat/Sun 26/27 VISIT?
It is hoped that a visit can be arranged for some time this weekend.

- October -

- Thurs 15 TALK - PAINTING PLANTS, the art of Botanical Illustration. Y.C. Green Room 8:00pm
A talk by Christabel King, one of the top botanical illustrators.
This talk was originally planned for December 1991, but postponed because of illness.

- Thurs 22 REVIEW OF LOCAL PLANNING Y.C. Green Room 8:00pm

COPY DATES: STOP PRESS - 9TH AUGUST, NEWSLETTER - 13TH SEPTEMBER