

the Yateley society



Newsletter

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No 60

September 1995

THE YATELEY SOCIETY

Newsletter No 60 September 1995

Editor: Tony Hocking, 30 Connaught Close, Yateley (01252) 875158

EDITORIAL

Dear Member,

Once again I have some feedback to report – in the form of a 'Letter to the Editor', I hope this will start a run of letters!

There is a strong flavour of conservation and related matters about this issue, due mainly to the Society being asked to make hay – but more of that inside.

One input in this vein is the first of a short series of articles concerning Commoners and Common Rights. There is much uncertainty amongst many people

over what Common Rights are and how people acquire them. Peter Tipton will try to clear up the mysteries.

The Society has always been very interested in local history, and a dedicated group of members has been working for many years amassing a large amount of carefully-researched factual information. The topic gets an airing in this *Newsletter* because the first version of the History Project Database is now on offer. This is a very exciting development.

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NEW MEMBERS

from Geoff Hoare

WE EXTEND A very warm welcome to the following new members who have joined the Society in recent months.

Mr & Mrs Durdle

22 Tolpuddle Way

Mr & Mrs Phelps-Jones

27 Walnut Close

Mr Todd

Dressors, The Street, Eversley

Mr & Mrs Johnson

2 Heatherwood Close

At the end of July the current membership of the Society was 197.

[*Editor's note:* Geoff is resigning the post of Membership Secretary on 30 September. He has been doing this job almost since the dawn of time, with great efficiency and dedication.

Unfortunately, being an archaeological expert, much called upon for digs and tutoring, does not leave enough time for organising our membership. We wish him well in the future and hope to continue to see him and Maisie at Society functions.

Rumour has it that David Lister has recruited Graham Brown to be our new Membership Secretary, so you will still be badgered for your subscriptions!]

THE SIMMONDS GRAVES

by Tony Hocking

IT IS TIME for another update on the progress on this project.

The woodwork has been cleaned and repaired and missing parts replaced, for the agreed sum already reported.

The initial estimates for the painting and lettering turned out to be greatly in excess of the figures anticipated in the last *Newsletter*. As a result the work came to an abrupt halt while other contractors were approached.

David Lister has now found a firm who will do the work for a sum within the anticipated limits and the woodwork has been delivered to this firm.

Any financial assistance will be gratefully received!

Donations should be sent to:

Dr D Lister, Monteagle Surgery,
Tesimond Drive, Yateley GU17 7FE.

The Yateley Society

Registered with the Civic Trust
Registered Charity No 282397

The Hon Secretary

Carolyn Seymour
7 Wren Close
Yateley
Hampshire
GU17 7NZ

Telephone
01252 871294

Copy dates:

Newsletter
5 November(!)

Stop Press
When necessary

COMMONERS' CORNER

by Peter Tipton

What are common rights?

THE SOCIETY HAS several members who have common rights. So I thought it would be a good idea to keep in touch with them via a regular slot in the Society's newsletter. I hope this may also prove interesting to other members.

There are two main tracts of common land in Yateley parish over which commoners have rights: Yateley Common (CL24) and, despite its name, Yateley Green (CL27). The two reference numbers are those in the Common Land Register kept by Hampshire County Council pursuant to the Commons Registration Act 1965. The two tracts of common land have two separate sets of commoners, whose rights are also registered by Hampshire County Council in the rights section.

Some properties such as Monteagle House have rights over both Yateley Common and Yateley Green, and some, such as Brookfield House, only have rights over Yateley Green. Most people only know of grazing rights, but there are others. The right of estovers enables the commoner to take small branches and sticks for his own use either for fuel or for repair of his fences or buildings. The right of turbary is the right to cut turf for fuel for the commoner's own house. Piscary is the right to fish in ponds, streams and rivers, again for the commoner's own consumption in his household, and not for resale. It must be stressed that, although the land is common land, only commoners registered to use these rights can use them. For instance members of the public might have to pay for a fishing permit to fish alongside a commoner fishing for free.

News items

The County Council has been trying to sort out who are now the owners of registered properties in Yateley. Elizabeth and I have agreed to help the Commons Registration Officer to sort out who now owns what, which properties exist on which land, and to help commoners who may still be struggling with apportionment problems to get themselves onto the register. Even the phrase 'get themselves onto the register' is a bit of a story. The 1965 Commons Registration Act provided for the registration of the names and addresses of the then existing commoners and their rights.

This simple sentence in itself took about ten years to be accomplished in Yateley, after a reputed expenditure of £100,000 in legal fees, the arrest and appearance in court of Daphne Kirkpatrick, now our Vice President. There was even, in another case, fisticuffs at Little Vigo. Another registered commoner, well

known to Society members, was Tom Dodd, who appeared on Ester Rantzen's programme after his cottage at Silver Fox Farm on Blackbushe was bulldozed 'mysteriously'. Tom's wife Doreen still defends her corner.

The nice lady at the Castle and I had a little giggle this morning since the 1965 Act did not cater for the fact that commoners sell their properties, sometimes tidily to a single owner and sometimes to several owners, such as did J E Cobbett. Sometimes, like Gordon Dickinson at Yateley House (the old egg farm on Firgrove), they sell their property for housing estates. Sometimes they split a single holding into three such as at Heatherside, or at Windy Ridge, subject of a planning application in today's *Courier*. Since the 1965 Act only provided for a register for the originally-registered commoners, any change of ownership can only legally be written onto the registers in pencil.

There seems to be no law saying that commoners should update their entry (in pencil) in the registers, but if you don't, your rights may get struck off through a technicality of which you are unaware. If you are a new owner of a house with common rights, proud of your stake in Yateley's history, ready to stoke your yuletide fire with sticks collected from the Common 'by hook or by crook', please get in touch with Elizabeth and me on 873378. Likewise if you are a not-so-common member of the Society and you know of any commoners please ask them to get in touch. Elizabeth and I are going to have to bang on doors, and I estimate there are now about one hundred!

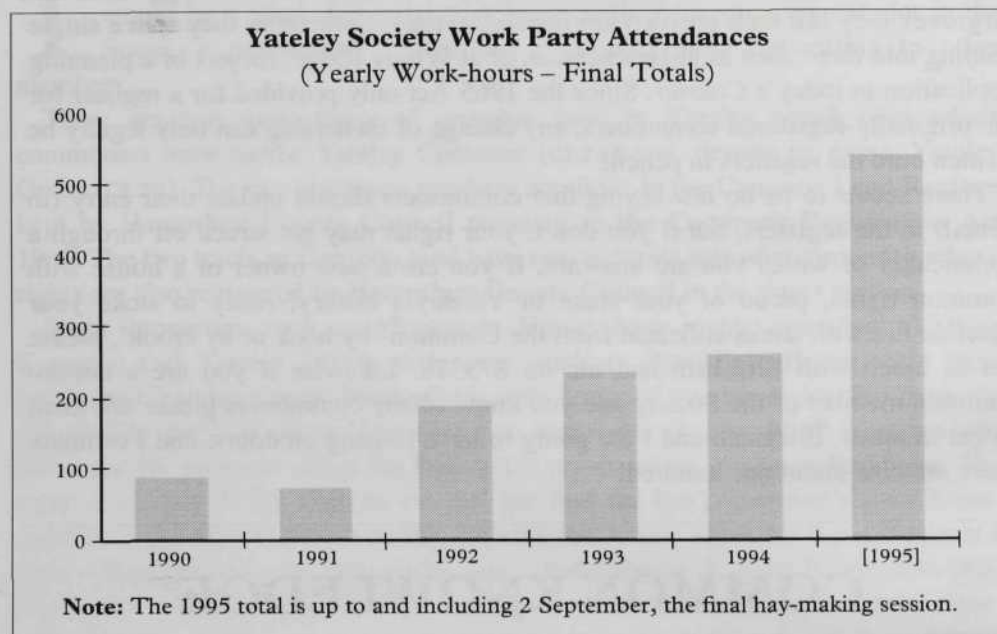
COMMON KNOWLEDGE

by Mike Mann (Conservation Co-ordinator)

THERE IS GOOD news to report on the Conservation front. Firstly, the Yateley Society has applied for, and won, a Hampshire County Council grant of £110 towards the costs of tool replacements for our Conservation Working Parties on Yateley Common. This has enabled us to purchase four new pairs of Loppers and two new Bow Saws which will be very useful this coming winter. An expenditure report and letter of thanks has been sent to Hampshire CC on behalf of the Society.

Secondly, during this year our Conservation Working Parties, like the weather, have smashed record after record. For the last Working Party of 1994, and again for January 1995 we had new record attendances (we think that word of the hot mulled wine and Mary's mince pies might have had a lot to do with it). To put this commitment into perspective, the combined total of worked hours during January and February of this year was greater than for the entire year of 1989, when the author started keeping detailed

records. This record was again broken in June by which time the 1993 annual total of man-hours had been reached and passed. By the end of July we had passed the 1994 total! So the story continues, with the total man-hours for the month of August alone – before we have worked the regular last-Sunday-of-the-month shift – already exceeding the annual totals for 1990 or 1991! This outstanding summer effort is explained in detail below.



(Urgent note: we are always keen to find new helpers, even if you can only spare an hour – it all mounts up! Why not come along to Wyndham's Pool off Cricket Hill Lane at 10 o'clock on the last Sunday of the month and check us out?)

The record man-hour figures are due to a new activity for our group, who are always keen to try new tasks.

Chris Hall, the well-known naturalist and conservationist from Fleet, recently conducted a survey of the meadows below Cricket Hill Lane at the request of our Honorary Vice-President Miss Daphne Kirkpatrick. As a result of this work a designation as a SINC (Site of Interest for Nature Conservation) will be sought for these meadows. Chris Hall believes that the area is of SSSI quality, and he will be conducting further studies this autumn to verify this.

Over the past two years the amount of grazing in the meadows has decreased and they have become overgrown, necessitating cutting by

machine. With the grass cut and lying all over the fields this meant that, unless it was gathered up and removed from the area the nutrients would drain back into the soil, thereby effectively fertilising it, to the detriment of some of the wild flowers that are present. In order to conserve this special part of Yateley's environment for the future, emergency sessions of the Society's Conservation Group were held to turn and dry, and then gather up the hay. A large 'thank you' goes out to the band of stalwarts who toiled for over 160 man-hours in the hottest summer since the 1750s.

The Yateley Society looks forward to supporting efforts to restore this special, secluded adjunct to Yateley Common to its full ecological and habitat potential. Miss Kirkpatrick has kindly agreed to a Society-guided walk to view the wild flowers. Watch the *Newsletter* for details of an invitation next summer.

MAY FAYRE 1996

by Tony Hocking

THE 1996 EXHIBITION will be concentrating on interesting features in Yateley. The intention is to display photographs of objects of interest in the area; either individually or sets of photographs of similar objects to illustrate variations due to changing fashions or variations between manufacturers or craftsmen.

What kind of subjects are we considering? – virtually anything that takes your fancy. So, use your imagination! Suggestions are: gates, trees, chimney pots, windows, fences made of strange materials, styles of brickwork, road signs, decorations on thatched roofs, house nameplates, shop fronts, fancy woodwork, wild flowers/plants, strangely shaped or particularly elegantly shaped garden plants, etc, etc.

If you see something that might be of interest please take a picture and send a

copy to the Editor. Single examples are worthwhile because others may be sent in by someone else, or they may be sufficiently interesting in their own right. Photographs need not necessarily be bang up to date, anything in the 1990s will do, or earlier if the subject has not changed in appearance appreciably. In the first instance all that is needed are standard 6" x 4" prints, any enlargements will be paid for by the Society. If you get carried away and use most or all of a film for this purpose we will reimburse you.

This is an easy way of contributing to the Society's activities, and of sharing an interest in Yateley with other people, so give it a go!!!

Pictures to: Tony Hocking, 30 Connaught Close, Yateley GU17 7QQ. If in doubt, telephone (01252) 875158.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor,

I know you have long cherished the thought that someone might actually write a letter to the Editor – well here it is. In the June *Newsletter* you produced a long-forgotten scrap about the first Society 'Dawn Chorus' held in the May following the Society's formation in 1981. In those pre-computer days I kept a series of notebooks which I took to Record Offices. In them I copied out all the historical items I was researching. But interspersed between the history I have all the happenings of the Yateley Society, from notes when I was Secretary of the Steering Committee to form the Society, to budgets for the Exhibition Committee set up to administer the amazing £1000 grant from the DOE and £500 grant from Johnsons's Wax.

Book 2 starts with my notes from my first visit to the Winchester Cathedral Library to record the earliest records of Monteagle House. But lodged between notes for the New Members' Evening on 19 March 1981 and a visit to Reading Reference Library to copy extracts from the Hatfield Manuscripts regarding Lord Monteagle's involvement in the Virginia Company, is the budget and attendance list for the first 'Dawn Chorus'.

You may well be surprised that there are now only seven members left who went on that first early morning expedition. Apart from you and Mary, Elizabeth, and Edward and Sue, the others are Richard Earnshaw and Margaret Taylor. Appropriately enough

Richard was the Society's first *Newsletter* Editor and also long-time Treasurer, so I hope he will read this, since he did such sterling work to get the Society on its feet. In those days we even had a Publicity Sub-committee, and the seventh 'choruser' was Margaret Taylor, long-serving Press Officer – even after she moved to Eversley. She seemed to be able to talk newspaper editors into mentioning the Society practically every week.

In fact 28 persons paid the £1.00 for breakfast, providing the cook (guess who!) with a budget of £28.00. The cook prepared a budget for 14 edible items, to which the culinary advisor added 'paper napkins 33p' (slob). One box of porridge was budgeted at 50p but 'actual' came in as 52p. 72 rashers of back bacon and 72 sausages were budgeted at £14 but smart buying brought the 'actual' in at £11.83. However, eggs were well over budget at £2.60 compared with £2.00 budgeted. There were 3lbs of butter and 3 loaves – both under budget. Other items included 4 jars of marmalade, 2 bottles of HP sauce and one of ketchup (I did the shopping). The list was rounded off with coffee, tea, brown and white sugar, and 15 pints of milk.

Everybody (or nearly everybody, since there were 4 tables and only 24 chairs recorded) sat down to a properly laid table – boarding house style. Extra bowls, plates and kfs were drafted in. Porridge was ready in two large vessels as the first 'chorusers' drove into the

yard. Unfortunately, because the cook suddenly had to assume the roll of parking attendant, the porridge in the large aluminium jam kettle burnt. Ah well! There seemed to be enough good stuff

on top; plus the other cauldron. On the other hand maybe that's why the other twenty left the Society?

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

Peter J. Tipton

THE YATELEY HISTORY PROJECT

by Richard Johnston

THE YATELEY HISTORY PROJECT computerised database is now available to members of the Society. This database contains most of the data possessed by the Society which has been stored in computer form. There is a great deal of it – some 13.5MB of text (equivalent to approximately 2.5 million words), and plus 2.5MB of graphics (mostly maps and sketches), and this is available for installation from five high density floppy disks. The database represents many leisure-man-hours of hard work undertaken over a long period by members of the Society.

The database is of (mostly) source material for doing history research, though a few articles written for the general reader can also be found if you look hard enough. Studies of Yateley history are really still at an early stage. While particular topics such as Yateley Hall have been quite well researched, it is not yet possible to produce a general history of Yateley based on reliable and tested research.

It is hoped that releasing the database in this way will stimulate more people to recognise the fascination of looking at documents which reveal the details of everyday life of the predominantly agricultural community which is what Yateley was before this century, and to encourage more people to add material to the database.

The material itself is very varied, the largest individual components being the Crondal Manor Court Rolls from 1729 to 1945, material about Yateley Hall, and the Diary of John Mills produced in the late nineteenth century. In addition there are many small files containing interesting snippets of Yateley History, and about Yateley families. Some of the early maps of Yateley are included. It is very difficult to give a full idea of the material in a short note of this sort, and those who are interested will find it much more productive to browse through the database.

Despite the large volume of material already included in the database there are still many glaring deficiencies – none of the Parish Records (baptisms, marriages and burials) are yet included, and many other important records such as the Poor Rate Schedules are only partly available. As time passes it is hoped that these deficiencies will be remedied by the users. The more material that is added to the database the more generally useful it becomes.

Because there is so much material, a specially-written program suite has been constructed to provide rapid, menu-driven access to the data. This program is

intended to be easy to use by people with a minimum of computer literacy, and it will run on any (even the very smallest and slowest) IBM-compatible personal computer (it does not use 'Windows[®]' but can be used in a multi-tasking environment). A hard disk drive is, however, essential, because of the large quantity of data, and VGA graphics is required in order to look at the maps and other graphics files. The database can be very easily augmented by simple alterations to the menu files and the addition of extra material.

This program does not only allow searches of individual files, but the entire database can be searched for the occurrences of a particular word, and a menu is then produced which allows each file containing the word to be examined, or alternatively the lines containing the word can be collected into a single file, together with some 20 lines of context. A search for 'Bunch' would be very useful for anyone who wanted to do a study of the Bunch family, for example.

Those who have other types of computer will be able to have the data files provided, but they will have to make their own arrangements for examining the material.

Copies of the program, data files and further information can be obtained from:

Richard Johnston, 4 Dunggells Lane, Yateley. (Telephone 01252 872832)

A FIRST LOOK AT THE DATABASE

by Tony Hocking

I HAVE HAD my first few looks at the History Project Database. I was immediately impressed by the obvious size of the task which Richard has undertaken. The statistics in the first paragraph give a good clue to the amount of work involved in collecting and typing the information; on top of this there is the development of the software itself. The quality of the information is high because, where possible, original documents are quoted and not later commentators. The occasional notes which point out 'facts' which might be suspect, or highlight possible problems arising from difficulties in translation or decipherment of documents, are helpful, and underline the care with which the database has been prepared.

As with all software packages some aspects are a little daunting at first sight, but while I am no computer expert I found my way around very quickly. Entry can be via a simple one-word command entered at the DOS prompt, and after this you are led through the database in a 'friendly' fashion. It is always advisable to read the 'Read_me' files provided to avoid going astray. (I found myself automatically adding Richard's voice to the 'Read_me' comments!) I found the 'Help' a bit confusing when I first accessed it, but once you realise that the one 'Help' file covers most aspects of the database you can sort out the relevant section for the needs of the moment.

The menus are self explanatory and

there is no difficulty in finding the areas of information one is seeking. The only snag is that there is so much interesting data that one can easily get side-tracked and spend an enjoyable hour or more reading fascinating items that you were not really after! Richard comments that there is little for the general reader, but I found plenty!

I found some apparent difficulty with some of the maps, where I do not think I was seeing all that I should on the screen. I believe this to be a combination of my forgetting part of Richard's instructions and my low level of computer competence!

The search facility appears to work well, however at times a search can take a long time to complete if you pick on a topic or word that appears many times

in the database, this isn't surprising. My computer (a 386 running at 40MHz) is more than adequate for most searches. (Richard did demonstrate to me that if you pick a very popular name for a search you have time to go and have a siesta while the machine beavers away!)

As Richard warns in his article, there are many holes in the data yet to be filled and a long way to go before the database can be considered in any way complete. However, the more people that use it the more encouragement there will be for Richard, and the other members of the Society involved in the project, to carry on their research and recording.

I advise anybody with an interest in the history of Yateley to give the database a try.

HAY ON THE ROOF (or SLEIGHING THE HAY)

by Tony Hocking

IN THE DAYS when our May Fayre exhibitions were held in a scaffolding-framed, plastic-covered enclosure, the roof was a 14ft by 28ft blue tarpaulin. By the time that we had changed to using a marquee this tarpaulin had become distinctly tatty, with many small holes and the edge eyelets beginning to tear out. It was consigned to one of the darker corners of the Hocking loft and forgotten.

The haymaking activities described by Mike Mann in 'Common Knowledge' necessitated the transporting of large quantities of hay around the fields and to barns or dumps. We started doing this with a trailer hauled by an ordinary car. This proved most laborious; the hay had to be picked up and tossed into the trailer

and later dug out of the trailer and heaped. The amount of irritating dust raised was tremendous and the lifting and tossing of the hay was muscle wrecking. In addition crossing the rough fields was not doing the car any good!

Mike suggested dragging the hay about on a plastic sheet, and I then remembered the old tarpaulin. I unearthed the un-gainly bundle from the loft and placed it on my lawn. It was obvious that even when folded in half the resulting 14ft square was a very large area and would take a huge amount of hay. Mike, Mary and I had a brain-storming session about this one evening, ending with us experimenting with the tarpaulin, ropes and bits of wood until after it had got dark.

The result was the tarpaulin folded into the 14ft square with the eyelets of the two halves tied together with lengths of rope for strength, and a roughly 8ft length of 2"x2" timber inserted into one side of the square, held in place by the ropes joining the halves of the folded tarpaulin. The corners of the tarpaulin which overlapped the ends of the wood were folded inwards and secured, so that there were sides to the construction, at least near the front, to help prevent the hay from rolling off sideways. A loop of rope tied to the ends

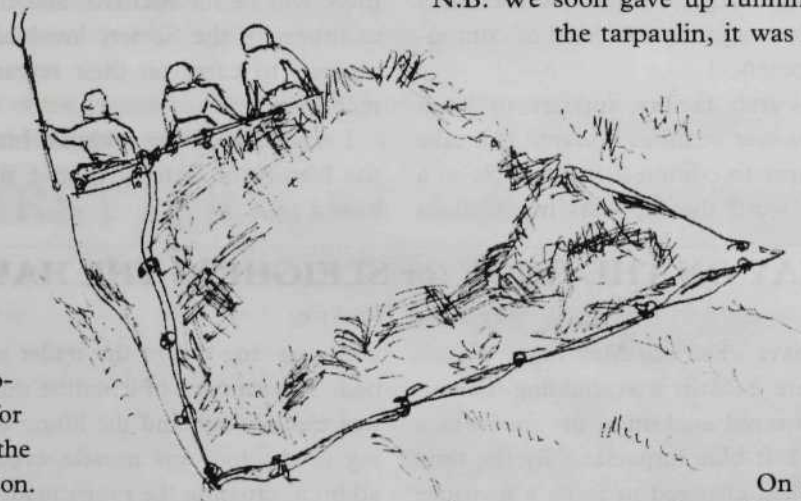
of the wooden beam was provided for towing the contraption. Next day we would try it out.

The first thing we realised was that with the sheet flat on the ground large masses of hay could be pushed onto the tarpaulin rather than lifted and tossed, quick, easy and no dust. We piled a lot on and tugged the rope – it moved easily, so we piled more on, until at last it took three people to get it moving. Once under way it slid easily across the mown field and we were running by the time we reached the unloading site. Again, most of

the hay could be shifted by just pushing, but we still raised a bit of dust forking off the last bits.

On our next visit to the unloading site we were faced with forking all the hay in order to pile it high rather than just cover more ground. At this point the next brainwave struck; we could pick up one side of the tarpaulin and roll the whole load onto the existing pile. This we achieved, with the advantage of raising virtually no dust at all, and again with reduced effort.

N.B. We soon gave up running with the tarpaulin, it was far too hot!



On successive working parties the loads increased to the maximum that four people could pull, and the work was therefore speeded up even more. The only change in the procedure was that we pulled on the wooden beam when the tarpaulin was loaded, as the beam bowed alarmingly if we pulled the rope attached to its ends!

So, it is astonishing what can be accomplished with a tatty and abandoned tarpaulin, a bit of secondhand wood and some old rope!

124th EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING, 6 JULY 1995

1. Matters arising

1.1 Simmonds Graves

- (i) Quotations for painting and lettering ranged upwards from £1200. The use of wood preservative had been ruled out because the woodwork varied greatly in colour.
- (ii) At least one competing estimate was required if a Yateley Town Council grant was to be requested. David Lister agreed to seek other estimates. David Healey pointed out that the Society could not, on its own, afford the prices quoted.
- (iii) Tony Hocking would provide a copy of the inscriptions and a sketch of the grave marker to David Lister.

1.2 New Treasurer

Bob Hobbs had agreed to consider taking the post. David Healey was willing to discuss the details of the job with Bob Hobbs when asked.

1.3 New Membership Secretary

- (i) Geoff Hoare had formally stated that he would be giving up the post on 30 September 1995. David Lister had approached Graham Brown who had agreed to take on the post.
- (ii) It was agreed that Geoff's long service (13 years) should be marked by a suitable gift.

1.4 Distribution of YS Material Held at Barclay House

David Lister will transfer the material to Monteagle Surgery for safe keeping.

2. Sub-committees

2.1 Planning

- (i) Fox Farm. The application was expected to be rejected by Hart DC on the basis of the 25 objections raised by YTC. An appeal was anticipated.
- (ii) HDC Local Plan Review. Edward Dawson explained that this Plan (covering up to 2006) showed little impact on Yateley as yet. This could change however once the developers had sight of it and submitted their comments.
- (iii) A garden subject to a development application might harbour badgers.
- (iv) Hampshire County Structure Plan. The draft of the plan which goes up to 2011 was expected to be issued in October for public consultation. Hart may not suffer too badly.

2.2 Programme

- (i) The Summer Social appeared to have gone well. The switch from a barbecue to a cold buffet had been well received. The absence of barbecue smells being a great improvement.
- (ii) A profit to the Society had been made, in spite of reducing the entry price. The Treasurer applauded the making of a profit and requested that the level

be maintained in the future. This meant no change to the current procedure, which was generally agreed. The need to encourage raffle prizes other than bottles was noted.

- (iii) The Committee expressed their thanks to Mary and Tony Hocking for organising and running the event.

3. May Fayre

- (i) The subject for the 1996 exhibition was discussed. The idea of sets of photographs of interesting features in Yateley, as suggested by Carolyn Seymour, was adopted, with the possible addition of a few boards covering other topics thought to be relevant in 1996.
- (ii) Tony Hocking will publicise the need for photographs in the next *Newsletter*.

4. Publications

- (i) *Yateley Through 6 Centuries*. This book needs retyping onto computer disc for reformatting into a more compact form.
- (ii) *The Stilwell History*. Several years of work were estimated for researching all the topics to ensure accuracy. Ted Brooks suggested that May Fayre 1997 might be a good aiming date for republication. He will discuss this with the Tiptons.
- (iii) David Healey suggested that an 'Evolution of Yateley' using statistics such as those produced by Richard Johnston and including projections into the future would be a topic for publication.
- (iv) Richard Johnston's Car Ownership Paper should be published in a more attractive format to appeal to a wider audience.

5. Forest of Eversley

- (i) Charitable status is still outstanding.
- (ii) Hampshire CC have appointed a Countryside Heritage Area Project Officer for the Forest of Eversley and for the Forest of Bere. This is an encouraging sign that financial support for the Forest of Eversley is increasing.
- (iii) Society representatives were invited to an introductory meeting for the new officer. Ted Brooks asked that the subject of grazing on the Common be raised at the meeting.

6. Other Organisations

- (i) A membership card from the Ramblers Association would be passed to Michael Holroyd.
- (ii) The CPRE membership was due for renewal, this was approved.

7. Date of Next Meeting

8.00pm, Monday 18 September, at Barclay House.

Yateley Society Programme 1995

From 21 September 1995

SEPTEMBER

Thursday 21, Yateley Centre C.1.4, 8.00pm

Talk – The Forest of Eversley Trust

Phillip Todd will describe the objectives of the Trust, and something of its organisation. This should give a very useful insight into a scheme which affects all our local countryside

Sunday 24, Wyndhams Pool, 10.00am

Conservation on the Common

Our monthly working party supporting the Country Park Rangers

OCTOBER

Thursday 19, Yateley Centre Drama Studio 2 (next to Green Room), 8.00pm

Talk – Subject to be arranged

Sunday 29, Wyndhams Pool, 10.00am

Conservation on the Common

Our monthly working party supporting the Country Park Rangers

NOVEMBER

Thursday 16, Yateley Centre C.1.4, 8.00pm

Talk – Subject to be arranged

Sunday 26, Wyndhams Pool, 10.00am

Conservation on the Common

Our monthly working party supporting the Country Park Rangers

