

# the Yateley society



## *Newsletter*

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**No 63**

Free to Members

**September 1996**

£1 to Non-Members



## THE YATELEY SOCIETY

Newsletter No 63      September 1996

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

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## THE EDITORIAL

*Dear Member,*

You have no doubt noticed that a price has appeared on the front cover – but do not panic – members will continue to receive them free! We intend to offer copies of the *Newsletter* for sale to the public, both as a means of spreading information and as a means of advertising the Society.

Some of the meetings listed in the Programme are in unusual venues, this is an experiment to see if the choice of venue has any influence on

the people who come to meetings. Your reactions would be most valuable – please speak to any Committee Member if you have any comments.

One of these occasions will be the Christmas Social, which this year is being organised by Irene Draper and Norma Dowling – apart from the enjoyable social activities there will be a short introduction to a proposed series of talks in 1997 which will follow a set theme – come and find out what is going on!

## WALKS - SO WHERE DO YOU WANT TO GO?

IT WOULD BE nice to have more walks in the Society Programme, but unfortunately the usual walks leaders have run out of ideas.

If you have a favourite walk, either local to Yateley or not more than 15 miles away, we would like to know about it.

**You would not have to lead the walk** (if you did not wish to) – leaders are no problem – it is the inspiration that is lacking!

Any suggestions will be gratefully received.

Please contact:

Tony Hocking on Yateley 875158

or

Irene Draper on Yateley 870470.

## ANTHOLOGY: MIRAGE or REALITY?

*by Elizabeth Tipton*

TO THOSE OF you who think the Birthday Anthology of thoughts on Yateley was a momentary insubstantial idea, there is indeed substance, but it has been buried beneath a pile of dross labelled Planning. With both the responses to the proposed alterations to the Hart District Plan and the stop-start progress of the Fox Farm III planning inquiry monopolising (for what seems like a lifetime) the computer command seat and the mealtime conversations chez Tipton, the anthology has remained a pile of fascinating contributions from over twenty members. Now, without making any further rash promises as to publication date, I will attempt to assemble it and find an appropriate mode for publication. You will be kept informed of its progress.

## THE YATELEY SOCIETY HISTORY DATABASE

Richard Johnston will soon be issuing a new updated and enlarged version of the History Database

This will be Version 2.5

Issue is expected by the end of September

Queries to Richard on Yateley 872 832.



# Yateley Society Christmas Social

on

**Saturday 7 December**

at

**The W.I. HALL**  
Reading Road  
8 – 10.30pm

## Tickets

£3.50 for Yateley Society members  
£4 for non-members

To include buffet supper and a glass of wine or non-alcoholic fruit punch.

As with the summer social we hope to raise a small amount of money – to help pay for further ecological surveys on Yateley Common.

We hope that members will give their full support to this event.

There will be another diabolical quiz devised by Tony Hocking (hint: brush up on bird names), good food and good company.

Do join us for a thoroughly enjoyable social evening.

Donation of raffle prizes would be appreciated.

## *Tickets available from:*

**Irene Draper 01252 870 470**

**Norma Dowling 01252 870 226**

or at the monthly Society meetings

# AN APPRECIATION OF AUDREY TAYLOR 1908 – 1996

*by Peter Tipton*

THE SUDDEN DEATH of Audrey Taylor in May this year, just two months short of her eighty-eighth birthday, has robbed The Yateley Society of one of its staunchest supporters. The Shorter Oxford Dictionary defines staunch as 'standing firm to one's principles or purpose, not to be turned aside, determined' (1623). The definition almost conjures Audrey alive before the mind's eye. At her funeral, her son Nicholas filled out for her many friends more unknown facets of her remarkable personality. Though her upbringing, education and marriage all contributed to a forthright style and impeccable standards reflecting the ideals of an age which has almost disappeared, her mind and ideas were far from conventional. Her curiosity and energetic interest in everything constantly grew, whether through pride in the achievements of her family of sons, daughters-in-law and grandchildren; in response to the varied demands of her life as a military wife; or in dealing with the hundreds of anxious relatives she directed from the Enquiries desk through the corridors of Frimley Park hospital. Her vitality was inexhaustible and her determination to help others absolute. When the WRVS finally discovered her true age, bureaucracy went all of a twitter and shamefacedly had to decline her continued services as a volunteer. Audrey promptly went and offered her services to Yateley Industries. Many people in Yateley will be familiar with the beautiful garden of Handford Cottage, which the Taylors bought in 1959. In springtime especially, the garden glows with the colours of azaleas and rhododendrons beneath the rare towering conifers grown from seed by Audrey and her father. The oaks which line the garden's eastern boundary were saved by Audrey and incorporated into the garden when neighbouring 'Edgelane House' was razed and developed. The garden's paths are laid out with bricks collected by Audrey in her bicycle basket 'with permission, of course', as she said, when the nearby World War II hangars were being demolished. Audrey was a founder member of The Yateley Society, always attending the monthly talks and lectures. She was continually aware of the currents of concern in Yateley and wrote good stiff letters of objection on planning issues which affected the wider community. With her death we have lost not only a firm supporter but a member whose opinions counted.



## YATELEY SOCIETY ARCHIVES A QUERY AND A PLEA

It is a long time since there was any serious attempt to catalogue the Yateley Society archive material, and much has changed.

The Society possesses a multitude of documents, periodicals, books, photographs, maps, paintings and even a few more concrete objects such as floor tiles and the odd brick!

Some of these things are Society property, some are on loan to us, and some we are not certain about.

Human nature being what it is

items get hidden or forgotten, or change hands without always being recorded.

If you have anything which you know belongs – or believe to belong – to the Society or to be on loan, can you please tell the editor, Tony Hocking on Yateley 875158 or the Tiptons on Yateley 873378 or Richard Johnston on Yateley 872832.

Thank you for your help.

*Yateley Society Executive Committee*

## NIGHTJARS

*by Tony Hocking*

**N**IGHTJARS ARE STRANGE, rare and fascinating birds. In the past there have been several Yateley Society visits to Bramshill Forest to see them and Mary and I have become very interested in them.

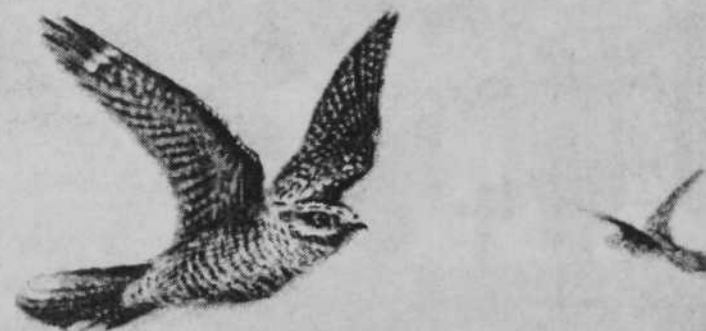
The evidence used to help counter the development appeal in the Fox Farm enquiry makes much of the birds in Castle Bottom, which include nightjars. Castle Bottom being within easy walking distance makes it a more attractive site for bird watching than Bramshill. In June there was a Hampshire County Council nightjar walk led by Ranger Andy Davidson, so I decided to see what happened (unfortunately Mary was otherwise engaged). In the event six people gathered near the top of Castle Mound, overlooking the Castle Bottom stream at dusk.

As the light started to fade there was a distant 'churring' call. Shortly afterwards a nightjar landed on a low branch about fifty feet away from us. There was still enough light to see its colours and markings clearly, something I had not been able to see before. After this it flew around the valley and returned to the branch several times and churred obligingly. Another bird sat on a more distant tree, nicely silhouetted against the dusk

sky – again it churred for us. In all we decided that up to four birds were calling at a given time, from distinctly separate directions. This was a most satisfactory expedition. Andy assured us that the nightjars hunt and call both at dusk and in the morning half-light, and could be seen from early June to early September.

A cousin of mine and his wife, who live in Swindon, are keen bird-watchers and, knowing that they had not seen nightjars, we invited them to come and visit Castle Bottom on 29 June.

We walked to the same position on Castle Mound, and stood between two firs near the top. Spot on cue the nightjars started calling from a variety of directions. Then, exactly as on the earlier visit, one bird landed on the same branch fifty feet away.





My cousin's wife had brought an excellent bird-watching telescope and we were all able to study the male bird which stayed for several minutes churring and muttering occasionally. Again, as if scripted, a second bird perched on the same more distant tree and was silhouetted.

Next, the nightjars departed from the sequence of the earlier visit. To our delight the bird that favoured the nearby tree began to hunt close to us and flew around us, only about twenty feet away, circling the two trees we were under at a height of some ten feet above the ground. It would hunt for several minutes, then return to its branch and rest for a few minutes, repeating the sequence many times.



During this it was joined by a second bird, and then a third. We did not discover where the other two perched. One came even closer and hovered, as if about to land on one of 'our' trees beside us, changing its mind at the last second – but it gave us a superb view. All the birds made occasional wing-claps while flying.

After about half an hour of hunting activity the birds vanished, and the churring stopped. It was now after 1030pm, it was definitely getting cooler and the midges were biting so we called it a day.

It had been a most enjoyable occasion, and it had been very interesting to see how the birds seemed to keep to a routine for part of the evening. Our visitors were very pleased that they had come.

## ORIGINS OF YATELEY

by Geoff Hoare

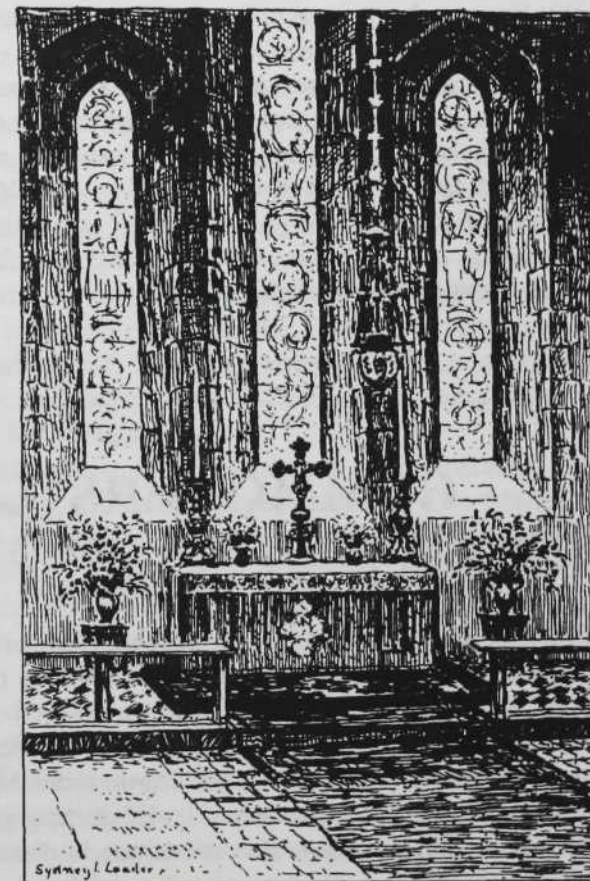
WITH ALL THE modern building that is evident in and around Yateley it would be quite easy at first glance to dismiss it as of fairly recent foundation, but nothing would be further from the truth.

First the documentary evidence.

Yateley was part of the Manor of Crondall which Alfred the Great left to his nephew in his will. The Records of the Manor of Crondall, which include references to Yateley going back to the 13th century, are held in the Hampshire Record Office at Winchester.

Now the archaeological evidence.

The parish church of a medieval village is an indicator, not only of the age of the village, but of the rise and sometimes fall of its fortunes and Yateley is no exception. The present church was founded by the Saxons in the early 11th century, with that part of the north wall running east from the north door to the 13th century chancel (now the chapel) containing the small double splayed window being Saxon work. The north doorway and the wall running west to the tower is Norman and can be dated to the 12th century. The tower and the porch are 15th century, but much of the church building to the south is of modern construction carried out after the fire of 1979. As there



*Sidney Loader's sketch  
of the interior of St Peter's Church*



was a church here in the early 11th century it follows that there must have been a settlement that it served.

To go back in time, while it may be assumed that there was settlement back into the early Saxon period, we have no evidence of Roman settlement here although there is such evidence from Hook, and just over the River Blackwater flanking the Roman road known as the 'Devil's Highway'. Nearer to home were funerary urns of possible Iron Age or early Roman period found during digging for gravel at Darby Green in the 1920's.

Going back further in time to the Bronze Age there is a Bronze Age burial mound on Yateley Common south of the A30, but such burials can be considered high status. Possibly lower in the social scale, at Moor Place Farm in Moulsham Lane, evidence of a Late Bronze Age cremation cemetery (urnfield) and settlement was uncovered during gravel digging. Late Bronze Age cinerary urns have also been found in other parts of Yateley on the same contour.

Interestingly there was a report at the time of a 'domed underground cavity' four feet high found by the workmen and used by them to store their tools but subsequently destroyed. This sounds more Neolithic or New Stone Age rather than Bronze Age which, if so, would take evidence of settlement back even further.

To recap, the available evidence points to at least 3000 years of settlement at Yateley and most probably more.

## COMMONERS' CORNER

### WHY DOES YATELEY HAVE SO FEW COMMONERS?

*by Peter Tipton*

**B**Y NOW MANY regular readers of this column must be wondering why, if all properties historically had common rights, there are now so few Yateley Commoners. I have mentioned some illustrious names such as Air Chief Marshal Sir William MacDonald, General Llewellyn Brown, Daphne Kirkpatrick and Commander Mike Chappell. None of these appear to need the 'subsidence level' grazing guaranteed by the Statute of Merton in 1236. I have also mentioned some real farmers, such as Tom Dodd and Gordon Dickinson, who might seem obvious choices to have common rights. Jack Gregory was from an old Yateley family, who lived in a relatively new house (built in 1912), whereas Elizabeth and I are a relatively

new Yateley family living in an old Yateley house (before 1600). So who qualifies?

In fact, pretty well all properties which existed in Yateley on 1 January 1926 still had common rights. Up to that date Yateley had not emerged from its feudal past. There were still Lords of the Manor who controlled the bulk of property transactions for ordinary folk. The Lord still effectively owned the freehold of the village. The tenants, successors in title to the serfs and villeins, were called copyholders. Each property transaction was recorded in the Manorial Court Books. By 1926 some of the owners of the larger houses had already bought out their freehold from the Lord of the Manor. The document recording purchase of the freehold was called a Deed of Enfranchisement. This was recorded in the Manorial Court Books which still exist.

In 1915 Henrietta Mary Ward, wife of the Vicar of Marlow, and a daughter of the former owner of Robins Grove, wanted to sell Monteagle House to a Boer War holder of the Victoria Cross, Colonel Alexis Doxat. The Deed of Enfranchisement was duly recorded in the Manorial Court Books and when Elizabeth and I bought Monteagle House, this document was the first in the large stack of freehold deeds. It is the irrefutable proof that Monteagle House had common rights. In addition to that I have full documentary proof back to 1619.

However, forty years after the end of the feudal system it was becoming difficult to establish who had common rights, so the Commons Registration Act 1965 was enacted by Parliament. With categorical evidence from the deeds it was easy for Colonel and Mrs Tuck, the owners in the 1960s, to register the common rights of Monteagle House.

After 1926, the smaller properties, which had not been enfranchised, became freeholdings by means of a Deed of Compensation. The Manorial Court Book records a Deed of Compensation dated 19 December 1935 when Frederick Thomas Cobbett, Farmer, was 'admitted' to Heatherside. This again provided evidence that the property had common rights. A summary of some of these deeds which converted copyholdings into freeholdings can be found in the Yateley history computer program compiled by Richard Johnston.

Both the documents mentioned above were provided as documentary evidence to The Commons Commissioner, Mr A A Baden Fuller, who gave his decision confirming common rights for 23 persons on 26 March 1975. All these applicants for registration gave adequate supporting documentary evidence.

Almost a hundred applications were originally made to register common rights, but many had been scared off by the threat of legal costs against



them. Registration was strongly contested by three of the four owners of the Common. The County Council, being the exception, had strongly supported the registration of rights from the start.

At the hearing there were 49 applications for registration still standing. Some of these were withdrawn during the hearing and some were found 'to be not properly made', ie the applicants did not provide adequate supporting documentary evidence.

Applications were made for 10 houses in Mistletoe Road but, along with 16 other applications, were made void by the decision of the Commons Commissioner. Thriftswood lost its application since the deeds were not produced. Only one other property was struck off: Silver Fox Farm was deemed by the Commissioner not to warrant registration since it had previously been the Parish Poor House, and in his opinion the 'paupers' would not have owned any animals. The Commissioner's decision to register the Common and the rights of 23 properties was then challenged in the High Court. That was when Elizabeth and I came on the scene! We won that too, in a case which is still quoted by lawyers.

So the answer to the question in the heading above is that Yateley has so few commoners because they are only the survivors of the registration process under the 1965 Act. On the other hand the answer to the question 'Who *should* qualify to have common rights?' is, I suppose, anyone in Yateley who has a working fireplace.

Certainly in the last century all householders and owners of land qualified as commoners. Those who are now left are the survivors of the legal process of those who registered in 1965 and had the fortitude to withstand the 15-year legal process. They were not just those with deep pockets who could cover legal fees, that is another story, but people of principle, many of whom were brought up to care about traditions and the environment.

If that small dedicated band who supported their registration, had not stood their ground then the heritage of all Yateley's present inhabitants might have been lost.

We have to thank them that most of the common land they registered is now a proposed Special Protection Area for Wild Birds, the highest level of protection under European legislation. If the registration of the Common had not been successful it is highly likely that much of it would now be covered by development of some sort, and therefore would not now exist 'for the benefit of the neighbourhood' who, as enshrined in earlier laws, are the true successors of our commoner ancestors. The few remaining commoners are effectively therefore the legal custodians of the heritage of the town, since without them there is still a risk that the Common could be deregistered.

## BEES IN MY B... ON THE PATIO

by Tony Hocking

THE PERIODS OF hot weather we have been having have resulted in many meals being eaten in the garden, lulled by the drone of bees on the surrounding flowers.

These occasions have provided the opportunity to observe the behaviour of the bees.

The most common species to visit the patio plants is *Bombus Lucorum*, a white-tailed bumble-bee with two yellow bands. These wander about in large numbers with a pleasant low-pitched hum.

On plants with distinctly separate flowers, such as lithospermum or four o'clocks, they spend about one second at each flower, then fly to the next in about half a second. The result is a systematic, but unhurried, coverage of the plant.

In marked contrast is their treatment

of a plant with heads of closely grouped florets such as Spirea. On these they do everything at a gallop! They land on a head and then charge madly over the surface at a speed which one would think gave totally insufficient time to extract nectar from the florets. It is only after very careful watching that you realise that there is an almost infinitesimal pause at each floret (still apparently too brief for useful work). What is equally surprising is that in spite of the frenetic activity no floret is visited twice during the particular visit to the flower head.

While *Bombus Lucorum* is keeping us amused we sometimes receive visits from a very different bee. This is another bumble-bee, but rusty red in colour. Unlike *B. Lucorum* we have never seen more than one at a time. It arrives at great speed with an angry sounding whine, lands on a flower, leaping off again in next to no time to whine noisily to a plant four or five feet away and so on for about ten seconds and then disappears as fast as it arrived, still whining loudly. So far this bee has not settled long enough for us to get a good look at it, so its species is still a mystery. How it gathers enough food to fuel its high speed, its noise and its apparently extremely inefficient gathering pattern beats us!



'The Bumble Bee' - a classic engraving from Thomas Bewick (1753-1828)



## A LOCAL POTTERY INDUSTRY

by Geoff Hoare

**C**OVE, WHICH WAS in the Yateley Outer Tything, was the site of a pottery industry from the medieval period up to the first half of the present century and must have been the economic mainstay of the area.

The wares produced were not only day-to-day items for local consumption but high grade pottery etc, that was exported to other places including London. Seventeenth century Cove, along with Hawley, Farnborough and Ash, was one of the main sources of domestic pottery used in the capital. London was not the only market as such pottery has been found in dated archaeological contexts in the south from Dover to Bristol including such high status sites as Dover Castle, Basing House, Nonsuch Palace and Farnham Castle.

Excavations in London have brought to light many examples of the pottery manufactured which consisted mainly of Drinking Jugs, Mugs, Cups and Goblets – with the Inns of Court producing the largest collection of these to date. The production of fine thin-walled drinking vessels indicates a possible connection with Yateley. William Geale, who died in 1638, is described as 'The King's Cupmaker' in the Yateley Parish register. This title, possibly self-bestowed, has associated William Geale in the past with the Silver Gilt Crystal Cup given to the church in 1675, but Elizabeth Lewis in *The Blackwater Potters Revisited* suggests it is more likely that he was a potter producing the fine drinking vessels referred to above.

One example of another high grade product was fragments of a ceramic stove tile bearing the arms of James I found on the site of Yeoman's Potteries in Cove Road which is one of the very few production sites of these known in the country.

Very few actual kiln sites have been excavated and most of our evidence is from 'waster' deposits which would have been close to the kiln where they would have been produced. Unfortunately, most sites have now been built over but every now and again redevelopment reveals new evidence.

**References:** PEARCE J, *Border Wares* 1992  
LEWIS E, *The Blackwater Potters Revisited*

### Yateley Society Programme

from September 1996

SEPTEMBER

Thursday 26, Room C.1.4, Yateley Centre, 8pm

**Talk - BARCLAY HOUSE**

by Richard Johnston

Barclay House, a fine Italianate building in Vicarage Road, was until recently owned by our former Treasurer, David Healey.

Richard took advantage of David and Diana's departure to study the house in detail

Sunday 29, Wyndhams Pool, 10am

**Conservation on the Common**

Our monthly working party supporting the Country Park Rangers

*We always need more volunteers!!!*

OCTOBER

Thursday 24, W.I. Hall, Reading Road, 8pm

**Talk - INSECTS & HEATHLAND MANAGEMENT**

by Mike Edwards

Mike, an internationally renowned entomologist, that surveyed the insects of Yateley Common for The Yateley Society and Hampshire County Council. He supplied insect exhibits for our May Fayre display this year. As well as knowing his stuff on insects he is a very entertaining speaker.

Sunday 27, Wyndhams Pool, 10am

**Conservation on the Common**

Our monthly working party supporting the Country Park Rangers.

*Please come and help!!!*

NOVEMBER

Thursday 21, Yateley Centre Main Hall (in 'B' Block), 8pm

**Talk - THE ENVIRONMENT AGENCY & THE PLANNING SYSTEM**

by Hugh Howes

Hugh Howes is a Principal Strategic Planning Officer in the new Environment Agency. He will explain the Agency's role in planning in the Thames Basin area.

Sunday 30, Wyndhams Pool, 10am

**Conservation on the Common**

Our monthly working party supporting the Country Park Rangers

*Keep warm by working with us in the fresh air!!!*

DECEMBER

Saturday 7, WI Hall, 8-10.30pm

**YATELEY SOCIETY CHRISTMAS SOCIAL**

For details see article on page 4

Wednesday 25

**\*\*\* Have A Very Good Christmas \*\*\***

Sunday 29, Wyndhams Pool, 10am

**Conservation on the Common**

Our monthly working party supporting the Country Park Rangers

*Working off the Christmas excess in the fresh air!!!*



**Copy dates:**

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24 November 1996

*Stop Press*  
When necessary



**The Yateley Society**  
Registered with the Civic Trust  
Registered Charity No 282397

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