

The Yateley Society



Newsletter

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Horsetingers & Devil's Darning Needles

No 70

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Free to Members

£1 to Non-Members

THE YATELEY SOCIETY

Newsletter No 70 October 1998

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THE EDITORIAL

Dear Member,

IT IS MY pleasant task to thank members for the help that they have given me in terms of contributions to the *Newsletter*.

I was overjoyed when my plea for articles in the recent *Stop Press* was answered virtually overnight. I think this is the first time that I have had such a rapid response to such a plea, and certainly the first time that such a quantity has appeared and been promised. Thank you very much for getting me out of difficulties, and I hope that there will be more to come in the future! (I have given myself a start for issue 71 by splitting the longest article into two instalments and postponing one of my articles, but I shall need a lot more!)

FOR THE MAJORITY of the talks this season we hope to have a historical theme, to counteract the long but necessary concentration on heathland in recent times. This does not mean that natural history, etc will be ignored – it all

depends upon the availability of speakers.

As well as adopting the historical theme we hope to widen our horizons to include other areas adjacent or near to Yateley. It is inevitable that over the years our parish and the neighbouring areas will have affected each others' development and it seems reasonable to learn more about the other places. The Camberley video shown on 17 September is a case in point. There will be more on Camberley, or more accurately Surrey Heath, in January.

IN A DIFFERENT vein, I draw your attention to two activities planned for Yateley Common this autumn.

The November Conservation Day is expected to be supported by a contingent of Gurkhas; we will need **extra volunteers** for this as the Gurkhas want to use the occasion to improve their English. There is more detail in the body of the *Newsletter*.

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CHAIRMAN'S CHAT

by Tony Hocking

WEARING MY OTHER hat I would like to offer thanks to another group of people, all those who gave help to the Society by supporting the May Fayre this year. I realise that it was a long time ago, but this is my first opportunity to offer thanks publicly.

I am delighted to say that the sales and publications stalls took over £260 this year, an all-time record, which, even after the high costs have been met, is of great assistance to the financial wellbeing of the Society.

The May Fayre is our prime opportunity to display our research and other activities to the public and to encourage new members to join, and I and the Executive Committee regard our presence there as most important.

The principal aim of the sales is to offset the considerable expenditure involved in booking the space, hiring the marquee and putting together our exhibition.

On behalf of the whole Society, thank you, all contributors, for your very generous support to the Yateley Society sales stall, and thank you again to all those people who helped organise and man the two stalls and the displays, and those stalwarts who helped with the marquee. I have tried to thank everybody personally, but for those people who have been left out, please accept this article in lieu; I know that, unfortunately, some names were not recorded because of the hectic nature of the preparations.

DID YOU HAVE an enjoyable summer? I hope so, in spite of the variable weather.

Mary and I took part in two organised trips with two very different organisations. The first was in the spring with Senior Ranger Bruce Gwynn and his 'Wild Walkers'. A group of Society members and fellow enthusiasts were led by Bruce on a natural history expedition to the far south west and the Scilly Isles. This could be the subject of a slide show.

The second trip was to Belgium with a large group of lacemakers for an international congress (OIDFA) in Gent, and for a tour of some of the best Belgian cities.

(One of the articles in *Newsletter* No 71 will come out of this trip.)

YET ANOTHER WORD of thanks is due. Some of the ladies who attend most of the talks and other meetings have taken over the preparation of teas and coffees; this is much appreciated by all who come along and it adds a lot to the enjoyment of these meetings.

THAT REMINDS ME of another matter.

The Programme Committee has become short of ideas for talks and other types of meeting, and needs one or two new people to revitalise it, and also someone who would be willing to introduce speakers and either give thanks afterwards, or organise other members to give thanks. How about it? If you have any bright ideas or would like to help the Society in a different way, please ring me on (01252) 875158.

YATELEY'S BUSES, 1921-1975

by Peter Holmes

IN CONTRAST TO many villages and small towns, Yateley never had a locally-based bus company. Coach operators, yes, but not scheduled public services.

In June 1920 the Reading branch of the British Automobile Traction Company started a route via Arborfield, Eversley and Finchampstead to Crowthorne. In the following month, the company adopted the name 'Thames Valley Traction Company', which was destined to remain for a further fifty-one years.

Owing to the poor state of the roads, the service was cut back to Eversley Bridge in November, but in May 1921 it was extended in a different direction, via Yateley to Blackwater. A month later, a further extension into



Camberley settled the route into the form which many of us still remember, served by Thames Valley's red buses.

The company was well known for its policy of establishing 'dormy sheds' – small garages in places remote from its main depots, which avoided the need for an almost empty bus to run out to the terminus in order to operate the first journey into town. A shed adjacent to the lych gate of Yateley church was acquired around October 1921 to house one bus, and was extended to double the size in early 1924. For some time, the operation of what later became Service 4 was based solely at Yateley.

The only competition for Thames Valley, albeit short-lived, arose in November 1923, when Mr J H A Weaver appeared on the scene. He was an opportunist, willing to try a route for a few weeks, and then move on if it failed to show a profit. His route was Camberley – Blackwater – Yateley – Crowthorne, and in subsequent years he tried the Guildford and Cranleigh areas, as well as working his original area of operation at Slough.

Thames Valley's Service 4 had expanded to nine journeys daily by 1929, though Yateley's working people would have found the first runs into Reading (8.50am) and Camberley (9am) of little value. The allocation of pneumatic-tyred (open-top) double-deckers in that year allowed the reduction of journey time between Reading and Camberley from 85 to 73 minutes. Covered-top double-deckers appeared just under a year later. Extra Saturday services were added during the thirties, and the people of Yateley benefited from several additional short workings into Camberley on Saturday evenings, allowing visits to the two cinemas there.

Wartime changes led to the closure of Yateley's dormy shed in 1942, and all the buses on Service 4 were thereafter based on Reading.

Shortly after the war, a new operator appeared in Yateley. Until 1939, Odiham Motor Services had an Odiham - Camberley route, running along the A30, with the Ely Hotel being the nearest stop to Yateley. On 27 August 1945 this was reinstated, but diverted to serve Eversley Cross and Yateley before rejoining the A30 at the Ely. Four buses (later increased to seven) ran daily, and the possibility of travelling from Yateley Cottage Hospital on the bus was one of the benefits soon recognised. The new service even received favourable attention from the *London Evening Standard*.

At the same period, Thames Valley were running their service every hour, with additional Yateley – Camberley buses



Double Decker Bus (HMO 843) (marked on back: Thames Valley 1948

(Photo supplied by Peter J Relf, 26 Oxford Street, Northwood, Coves IOW. No 11029.)



interspersed. However, taxation and falling patronage were making life difficult for bus companies, and at the end of January 1953, Odiham Motor Services withdrew from Yateley, leaving Thames Valley as the sole local operator once again.

In January 1972, Thames Valley was amalgamated with the neighbouring Aldershot and District company to form

"Alder Valley". This resulted in the abolition of the A30 as the agreed boundary between the companies, so that new services such as 40, Yateley School – North Camp, could commence, and the original Service 4 was extended from Camberley to North Camp. Another new service starting in 1972 was from Camberley via Yateley, Finchampstead and Wokingham to Bracknell (No. 49), though this only served Yateley in mornings and evenings.

The era of Alder Valley lasted until 1986, when privatisation resulted in separation into two companies once again, and new names such as Stagecoach and Tillingbourne started to appear. But that's another chapter!

Internet Communications for The Yateley Society

A REMINDER: The Yateley Society has a website, the address is:

<http://www.hants.org.uk/yateley>

This site, which is a subsidiary of the Hampshire County Council site, is maintained by Richard Johnston.

E-mail can be sent to the Society via Richard Johnston's e-mail address which is:

earthhist@aol.com

SPECIAL NOTE:

At the last Executive Committee

meeting it was decided that the Closing Statements submitted to the latest Fox Farm Inquiry by the interested parties would be publicised on the Yateley Society's website, as would the full Yateley Society evidence.

This is being done because this Inquiry has become something of a test case in the defence of Special Protection Areas, and other organisations may well want to see the form of case put forward, to aid their own cases at other Inquiries.

FOX FARM INQUIRY

by Peter Tipton

THE INQUIRY RE-OPENED for four days in early September to consider the contents of the environmental assessment which the Secretary of State had required British Car Auctions to produce. The Inquiry is also considering any matters new since 1996.

Hart District Council is being supported by a formidable line-up on our side of the council chamber. Hart has already called witnesses from English Nature and the RSPB. The County Council is mounting its own case and has already called a senior ecologist from the County Planning Department, plus Tony Davies, the site manager here in Yateley. The Inspector had to adjourn the Inquiry for a few weeks. When it reconvenes he will hear the evidence of Yateley Town Council, the Society, and any members of the general public who want to speak – some ten of whom have indicated they want to make their views known.

The latest information is that 13, 14 and 15 October will be the dates set aside for the 'third party' evidence. The executive urges all members affected or interested in this, or the other potential sites which could be affected by the decision for this Inquiry, to turn up in force to listen to the Town Council's and the Society's evidence. The Inquiry starts at 10am. If you intend to come along please ring me on Yateley 873378, or Richard Johnston on 872832, to verify dates and timings since they may well change.

The story so far is that BCA must prove to the Inspector's satisfaction that their development will not 'adversely effect the integrity' of the EU Special Protection Area. The County Highways Dept state that BCA must have an emergency access, but refuse permission to run it over County property down old Vigo Lane. The second preferred route is through the Little Vigo estate. BCA are talking about locked gates on BW43 and wherever the access starts at the Vigo Lane end. BCA say the emergency access will not affect the SPA since they don't need to build one. BCA is further trying to reduce the issues to whether the greater number of people, dogs and cats from the new housing will affect the EU Special Protection Area. We have already heard a lot of evidence about the protected birds. The Society is extending the environmental argument by fielding an eminent entomologist to give evidence about the harm likely to be caused to insects species, including rare bees and wasps. This all fits into the European Directives which must be taken into account by the Secretary of State when he makes his decision. We do not know what Mr Cooper still has up his sleeve, but he has been cross-

examining on the basis of banning existing inhabitants from the common by security cameras and guards. He has already proposed giving an undertaking that dogs and cats should be banned from the new houses.

YATELEY LODGE INQUIRY

It's all Inquiries right now. The Society has been asked by Hart to provide historical evidence for the Yateley Lodge Appeal in November. We understand that the Appeal is about turning Yateley Lodge into a theme pub. What you see of Yateley Lodge behind its prominent Cedar is only a later casing of around 1800. Buried inside, and exposed by the last private owner, is the original Tudor house. We think it would be better to keep the house in private residential or office use. Pubs destroy the insides of historic buildings with bars, kitchens and toilets, and destroy their settings with car parks and lurid advertising. This is not to mention the increased traffic hazard at an already notoriously bad roundabout and junction with Potley Hill. If you are concerned about this development please contact Richard or myself and we will keep you informed of dates and times.

CAMBERLEY AND THE ATS

by Edna Turner

It is a long time ago now, but I first fell in love with Camberley when I was sent there to do my training as a transport driver with the ATS.

This was in 1944, just a year before HM The Queen also trained at the same place, but as an officer.

It was a very happy time. We drove three days a week and studied maintenance on other days. The first vehicle I drove was a large Army ambulance, then onto Bedford trucks up to 3 tons and finally staff cars. We did our gas drill on Bagshot Heath and for a final test we drove from Camberley to Reading in convoy, where we donned gas masks and continued wearing them for about half an hour while going in the direction of Newbury.

We were billeted in Nissen Huts which rested amongst the woods in North Maultway.

The *Jolly Farmer* was a tiny pub then, often there wasn't room in the bar and we used to sit on the grass outside with our refreshments. I believe the officers were billeted at a nearby house called *Cordwallis* where we also had our meals, this was quite near the *Jolly Farmer*.

The whole course lasted about three months and then those that passed out were sent to different parts of the country. I went to Derby and spent a couple of years at the RAOC depot next to the famous Rolls Royce factory.

We drove an assortment of vehicles, sometimes for long distances. There were no maps and no signposts because

of the war, so we sometimes had difficulties finding our way to some of the little known places where troops were billeted.

It was nice to hand out the rations – chocolate and cigarettes – boots newly repaired, etc. Afterwards a nice meal in the canteen was very acceptable, especially if there was a foot of snow outside.

I didn't know about Yateley then, but one day my husband and I found it when we were house hunting in the Camberley area. We came here in 1977 and now here we shall stay. It is a lovely town although I still think of it as a village. Everywhere is so well cared for and we have lived in many different places since the war where people aren't so well looked after.



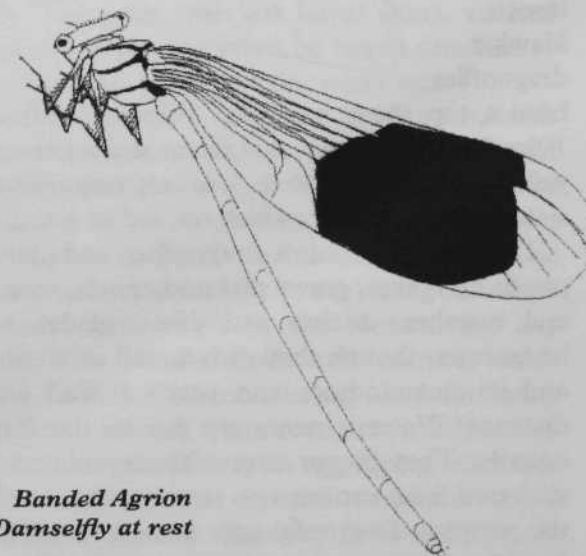
HORSESTINGERS & DEVIL'S DARNING NEEDLES

by Ken Crick

DRAGONFLIES TO YOU and me, insects belonging to the order *Odonata*. To be more precise Horsestinger is an old country name for dragonflies and the Devil's Darning Needle was applied to Damselflies. Both are living fossils, descendants of monsters with 28"

wingspans that cruised the skies in carboniferous times some 300 000 years ago, making them one of the most successful species ever to inhabit the planet.

Dragonflies and their smaller relatives, as some of you know, are my current obsession and Yateley and its environs offer habitats that are both varied and excellent for this order of insect. This year 18 different species have been present in or around the 'village'.



*Banded Agrion
Damselfly at rest*

Damselflies are the small slender-bodied members of the order with a weak fluttering flight, most characteristically hold their wings folded over the top of their abdomen when at rest. The fore wing is similar in shape to the hind wing. The head is rectangular with eyes at the outer ends. Dragonflies are more robust with a strong powerful flight. All dragonflies hold their wings open at rest. The fore wings are narrower than the hind wings. The heads are globular with the eyes wrapping round the top, front and sides. There are 16 resident species of damselfly and 23 resident species of dragonfly in Britain and Ireland. Many species are shy and will make a hasty retreat on being approached, their eyesight is phenomenally good and you will be seen long before they have been observed by you.

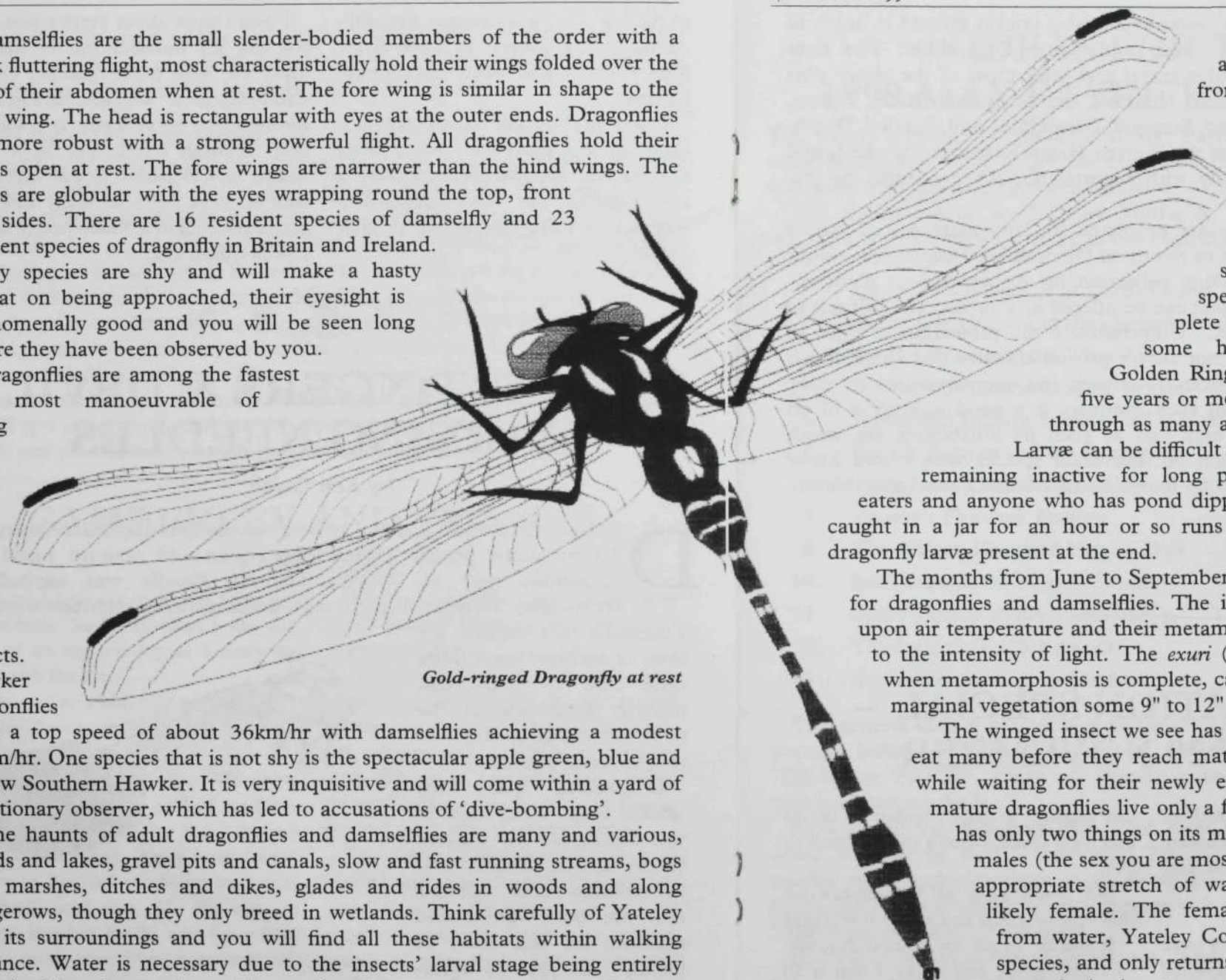
Dragonflies are among the fastest and most manoeuvrable of flying

insects.
Hawker
dragonflies

have a top speed of about 36km/hr with damselflies achieving a modest 10km/hr. One species that is not shy is the spectacular apple green, blue and yellow Southern Hawker. It is very inquisitive and will come within a yard of a stationary observer, which has led to accusations of 'dive-bombing'.

The haunts of adult dragonflies and damselflies are many and various, ponds and lakes, gravel pits and canals, slow and fast running streams, bogs and marshes, ditches and dikes, glades and rides in woods and along hedgerows, though they only breed in wetlands. Think carefully of Yateley and its surroundings and you will find all these habitats within walking distance. Water is necessary due to the insects' larval stage being entirely aquatic. They favour sites with unpolluted water open to the sunlight yet sheltered from exposure to strong winds, with plenty of aquatic vegetation at the margins. Dragonfly eggs usually hatch in two to five weeks, the time of hatching being temperature dependent. The actual temperature depends on

Gold-ringed Dragonfly at rest



the species, 15 to 20°C appears to be optimum. Eggs from some species laid in late summer can over-winter with the emergence of larvæ stimulated by increasing temperatures in the following spring.

Most of the insect's life is spent in the larval form, most species' development is complete within one to two years, some hawkers take longer with Golden Ringed dragonflies taking up to five years or more. In this form they can go through as many as 15 *instars* (moult of skin).

Larvæ can be difficult to find, often going deep and remaining inactive for long periods. They are voracious eaters and anyone who has pond dipped and left all the creatures caught in a jar for an hour or so runs the risk of only having the dragonfly larvæ present at the end.

The months from June to September are the best in which to look for dragonflies and damselflies. The insects' activity is dependent upon air temperature and their metamorphosis from larvæ is linked to the intensity of light. The *exuri* (the last larval skin), vacated when metamorphosis is complete, can often be found attached to marginal vegetation some 9" to 12" above the water line.

The winged insect we see has a very limited life span, birds eat many before they reach maturity, making an easy target while waiting for their newly emerged bodies to dry. Even mature dragonflies live only a few weeks. The mature insect has only two things on its mind – eat and reproduce. The males (the sex you are most likely to see) hang round an appropriate stretch of water on the lookout for any likely female. The female feeds and matures away from water, Yateley Common being ideal for many species, and only returns when ready to breed; at this stage she is almost completely an egg-laying machine.

The ponds and streams on the common above Yateley present good views of Broad Bodied Chasers, Brown Hawk, Common Darters, Azure Damselflies, Blacktailed Skimmers, Emperor and

Golden Ringed Hawkers. The pond at Eversley cricket ground is home to Four Spotted Chasers, Blue Tailed and Azure Damselflies. The river Blackwater and its adjacent lakes/gravel pits offer most of the above plus Migrant, Common and Southern Hawkers, the occasional Ruddy Darter, Common Blue, Large Red and Emerald Damselflies and Banded Demoiselles. Slightly farther afield on the Warren Heath Reservoirs can be found the Downy Emerald Dragonfly with reports, not yet confirmed by the author, of Brilliant Emerald.

Only two dragonfly species are protected by law, making it illegal to collect either Norfolk Hawkers or Southern Damselflies. Dragonflies' colour fades rapidly when dead, making collection for display almost pointless. However, the best protection that can be offered is to protect the habitats in which they mature and breed. Unfortunately the protection of Sites of Special Scientific Interest has not always proved effective and some of our local sites are under pressure from developers and overpopulation by man. The presence of the insects in such numbers is a good indication of an unpolluted water catchment area and as such its inhabitants are worth conserving. Further information on individual species seen round Moor Green and the Blackwater can be found in the Moor Green Lakes Nature Reserve Annual Report.



CONSERVATION SPECIAL – SUNDAY 29 NOVEMBER

BRUCE GWYNN is inviting the Gurkhas to take part in a Conservation Working Party in November, the expected date being Sunday 29 November.

The exercise has two aims:

Firstly – to get a huge amount of work done – these people are renowned 'beavers'.

Secondly – to help the Gurkhas improve their English. For good results

this requires a large number of us, so that each Gurkha gets a good chance to chat.

We Need Lots of Volunteers for this – please come and join in if you can!

It will be an all day session, but you can turn up for half a day if that is all you can manage. Refreshments could be rather more lavish than usual – there is a good chance of curry at lunch time!

IDEAS FOR THE 1999 MAY FAYRE EXHIBITION

Yes, we are starting work on the next May Fayre already! Will we avoid the usual last-minute rush to get the exhibition ready? – probably not, but it should be less panic-stricken than usual!

The chosen theme is: '**Yateley Myths & Truths**', and the following lengthy and impressive list of topics has been drawn up by Peter Tipton.

1. Parson Darby hanged at Darby Green
2. Monteagle House and the Gunpowder Plot
3. Charlie Peace and the *White Lion*
4. Murder at Moulsham Spray Bridge
5. Maharajah kidnaps Society Girl at Poets Corner
6. Brandy Bottom and the Smugglers
7. The Secret Tunnels of Yateley
8. Yateley's Firework Factory
9. The African King and Yateley Hall
10. Sand Lizards on Yateley Common
11. Stone Curlew at Blackbushe
12. Yateley and Gatwick Airport
13. Beaker people and the Urnfield.

The general idea is to pose a question on each of these topics. Then the popular beliefs on each topic will be stated, followed by an answer of 'TRUE' or 'FALSE'. There will then be a discussion of why each conclusion has been reached.

Now comes the important part. Each topic will need careful research in order to come up with a convincing TRUE or FALSE decision. Help is needed to research the topics, if you know something about one of them, or think one of them would be fascinating to delve into – please contact **Peter Tipton on (01252) 873378 now!**

If, having looked at the above list, you think 'why isn't included?', please contact Peter and suggest your extra topic. (We know, you will be worried about being asked to do the research yourself – but this does not have to be the case, the chances are that someone else already knows enough to sort it out! so, please do not be shy!)

!AN UNREPEATABLE OFFER!

Are you interested in Natural History???

Do you need a pair of binoculars to see birds/butterflies etc better?

Richard Johnston has a pair of 7x50 binoculars, in very good condition, which are surplus to requirements and which are available *GRATIS* to a genuine natural history enthusiast!!!!

Please contact Richard on (01252) 872832 if you are interested.

LIFE IN THE 20th CENTURY

by Doris Crosson

THESE ARE SOME of the reminiscences of Doris Crosson, who lived in and around Bristol from 1911 to 1996. They were originally written for Mrs Crosson's grandchildren, and have been offered to the *Newsletter* for their social interest by her daughter, Stephanie Pattenden.

Housing

It was a terraced house with a small garden front and back. There were three rooms and a kitchen downstairs, and three bedrooms upstairs. There was no bathroom, so we had to bath in a tub in front of the fire. This was cosy for us, but hard work for our parents because all the water had to be heated first and then baled out afterwards. This was quite usual in small houses, bathrooms were built only in large ones and when one of my mother's friends had one installed I thought that was luxury indeed! There was only one tap in the house, cold water, in the scullery, and we had to wash there summer and winter, however cold the weather. The loo was outside in the yard, which was not very pleasant when it was pouring with rain or very cold. There was no water flush, so we had to fill a bucket at the sink and carry it out after using the lavatory. When we were too little to carry the heavy bucket my mum and dad had to do it for us each time.

My mother worked very hard to keep the house spotless, as it always was. There was a big boiler built in the corner of the scullery and on washing days she had to light a fire beneath it to heat the water. All the clothes had to be washed by hand then put through a huge mangle with wooden rollers. I sometimes wonder how she managed to keep four children clean and tidy.

There was a fire in the dining/living room with ovens either side. It was black and had to be cleaned with black lead, a dirty job. This was the only form of heating in the house and was used to boil water in a big heavy kettle.

At times the kettle boiled over which made much steam and mess. There was always a tall guard around the fireplace and my mother aired her washing on it. There was a mantelpiece over with a velvet pelmet with tassels hanging. On the wall above was an 'overmantel' consisting of mirrors and little shelves holding ornaments. Sometimes I had the job of dusting these, which seemed to take a long time because I had to stand on a chair to reach each ornament, put it on the table, dust it and put it back again.

Brass was used a good deal in houses then, brass front door steps, door knobs and taps, and sometimes I had the task of cleaning these with Brasso, a messy business I thought. We girls all had to do our share of washing up which was quite a chore in those days. There was no stainless cutlery so each knife, fork and spoon had to be cleaned with some white stuff called Glitto. There were no detergents to soften the water either, only soda, which made hands rough and sore and didn't dispel grease from dinner plates.

Electricity wasn't in general use, even the street lamps were gas and the lamp lighters would come round the streets at dusk each evening to light them with a long pole. We had gas in the house for cooking and lighting, some people didn't even have that. When we returned home after dark someone had to find the matches to light the gas, walking through a long dark passage to reach the living room. We were not allowed to attempt to light the gas when we were small because it was rather a tricky business. The gas mantles were very fragile and could easily be broken by the match if we were not careful.

Christmas and Toys

We looked forward to Christmas for months each year because only then and on birthdays did we receive presents of any kind. We hung up our stockings which were always filled with an orange, apple, nuts and maybe some sweets and usually a pink sugar mouse. We each had a gift also, quite often a book and I would wake early trying to read it before it was properly light. We didn't have many toys so we really appreciated the ones which we did have. There was a big teddy bear which we all shared, and a doll with long wooden arms and legs. One of the arms was broken off at the elbow so I enjoyed myself playing 'hospitals' with her, applying soap as ointment and bandaging it up. We sometimes played Ludo and Snakes & Ladders. One of our favourite games was 'shops'. My mother would give us a slice of bread which we cut up as loaves to 'sell', also some sugar, currants, etc, anything she could spare from her cupboard. We spent a lot of time sitting around the table with crayons, paints and plasticine. One day Phyl (my elder sister) made me a dolls' house. She used a shoe box and it was furnished with bed, dining furniture, etc, made from match boxes. A door and windows were

cut out, walls papered and it even had tiny pictures on the walls and a little fireplace.

Outdoor Games

We had a number of friends living in our street and being a side road with very little traffic we would play outside in the Summer evenings. We were often in groups playing a number of games with a skipping rope and a ball. We played hop-scotch and pottle too, also Queenie, Statues and Off-ground touch. We had wooden hoops which we would bowl along the road with a stick, and wooden tops which we kept spinning with whips. We coloured the tops with chalks and there was intense competition between children to see which top had the best design when spinning. The boys played marbles, conkers and a game with cigarette cards which they flipped on the pavement, also five stones. Some of the boys had skates and at one time my brother had just one to skate on. He would tie a rope around my arms and I would pull him along the road!

To be continued in the next issue.

JOHN JAMES'S HOUSE

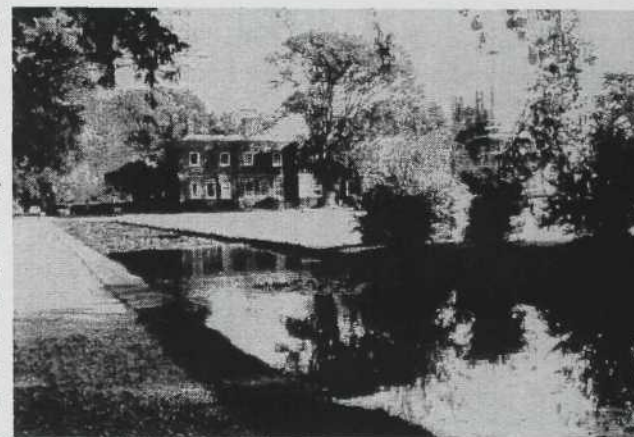
by Valerie Kerslake

THE DRAMATIC RUINS of Appuldurcombe House on the Isle of Wight, with their vast columns, gaping windows and patterned marble floors broken and open to the sky, were where I first heard of the architect John James (1672–1746). The guide book gave him a page, listing some of his appointments – Clerk of the Works at Greenwich Hospital, Surveyor of St Paul's Cathedral – and I instantly forgot him.

Years later I realised that the architect of Appuldurcombe also built Warbrook House in Eversley, for his own home. It has never been regularly opened to the public but the present owners, Style Conferences, occasionally allow visitors to look over both house and garden, and I joined such a



Warbrook House – garden with canal



group led by Sara Beer last autumn. Warbrook is not at all on the scale of Appuldurcombe nor does it share its Baroque grandeur, but the red brick facade looks stately enough with contrasting pilasters of artificial stone rising up two storeys to the pediment, and a wing a little set back on each side. (Much more has been built on recently.) The house stands three steps above ground level; James considered this was necessary for keeping the fabric in good condition – although there is also a basement for the servants who passed from one wing to the other beneath the main house. The additional height adds dignity to the building and enhances views of the garden. It also surprises the visitor with an unforeseen pleasure – through the glass panels of the front door one looks right across the two main rooms to the garden beyond, with the central arm of the three-pronged canal coming straight towards the house. On our visit it was sparkling with reflections of yellow autumn leaves. The sash of the window opposite can be pushed up out of sight and the wall beneath turns out to be a double door which can be completely opened too – the choice of a designer of gardens as well as houses, for James was both, and known for his own books on gardening as well as for translating French ones. 'The Theory and Practice of Gardening', published in his translation in 1712, was one that became essential reading for every up-to-date garden designer.

Inside the house is more modest than one expects; the rooms dignified but not unduly large, the decorative plasterwork on the ceiling attractively light, and the main staircase pretty rather than imposing, with the undersides of the stairs and their outer edges decorated with raised mouldings. Style Conferences have done a good deal of restoration work, including opening up what is thought to have been James's studio between the two pediments at the very top of the house. From this spacious room he could look out in four directions over his garden.

Warbrook was begun in 1724 and completed about 1727. During this time and for some years afterwards James was engaged in rebuilding the whole of Eversley church to the west of the chancel screen. The tower was completed in 1735. He also, Mrs Beer told us, was building other large houses in this part of Hampshire (home ground for him for he was the son of a Basingstoke vicar, the eldest of twelve children), and busy with gardens as well. He had a hand in those of Swallowfield

Park, and constructed a garden for Bramshill House which was later turned into a cricket pitch. A team from Southampton University are engaged on tracing this garden and it is planned to plant roses on the parterre. There are suspicions that he was involved with Firgrove House but local historians have so far been unable to find any evidence.

Sadly James did not enjoy his new house for very long. Within ten years his son and then his wife had died. He sold Warbrook in 1738 to provide for his widowed daughter-in-law and returned to Greenwich where he had friends and colleagues and a considerable reputation as an architect.

Eversley marked the 250th anniversary of his death with an Interpretation Board on John James in St Mary's Hall adjoining the church. It faces a similar one on Charles Kingsley and shows that Kingsley was not Eversley's only hero.

Yateley Society Programme 1998/9

OCTOBER

Thursday 15, Yateley Centre Room D.1.6 at 8pm

Talk - Metal Detecting

Mr Lloyd-Jones has taken up metal-detecting as a retirement pastime.
He will describe his activities and the kinds of artefacts he finds.
He will bring along some interesting examples

Sunday 25, Wyndhams Pool 10am

Conservation on the Common

Assisting the Rangers to manage the Common - more volunteers are always needed!
(Tools and free refreshments are provided)

NOTE: This will be a normal session, the proposed Halloween activities have been cancelled.

NOVEMBER

Thursday 19, Yateley Centre Room D.1.6 at 8pm

Discussion Meeting - 'Sites of Special Scientific Interest'

Peter Tipton will introduce the new Government Green Paper - 'The Consultation on Better Protection and Management of Sites of Special Scientific Interest'. It is hoped that the eventual legislation will contain provisions which will greatly strengthen protection for vulnerable areas and will provide new ammunition to counter unwanted development. The Government is anxious to receive comments on the Green Paper from Civic and similar societies. This evening is our opportunity to make our feelings known and to determine Society policy on this matter. It is hoped that local experts will attend the meeting.

Sunday 29 (Date provisional), Meeting point: Wyndhams Pool at 10am

Conservation on the Common: THE GURKHA SPECIAL!

See article in this newsletter. Assisting the Rangers to manage the Common - more volunteers are always needed! (Tools and free refreshments are provided)

DECEMBER

Sunday 27, Meeting point: Wyndhams Pool at 10am

Conservation on the Common

Assisting the Rangers to manage the Common - more volunteers are always needed!
(Tools and free refreshments are provided). Come along and work off some of the excesses of the last two days!

JANUARY

Thursday 21, Yateley Centre Room D.1.6 at 8pm

Talk - 'The Mediaeval History of Surrey Heath'

by Phil Stevens.

Phil Stevens, of the Camberley History Society, has been researching the history of the Camberley/Frimley region for some time, and this talk will describe his findings for the mediaeval period and before. This is one of the meetings devoted to finding out more about our surrounding communities. In this case it is an 'exchange visit' as Peter Tipton is due to talk to the Camberley History Society in late 1998 about Yateley!

Sunday 26, Wyndhams Pool 10am

Conservation on the Common

Assisting the Rangers to manage the Common - more volunteers are always needed!
(Tools and free refreshments are provided)

FEBRUARY

Thursday 18th, Yateley Centre Room D.1.6 at 8pm.

Annual General Meeting

Once again it is time for you to help organise the Society for another year, and more importantly, to help determine our future policy. Please do come along.

Sunday 26, Wyndhams Pool 10am

Conservation on the Common

Assisting the Rangers to manage the Common - more volunteers are always needed!
(Tools and free refreshments are provided)

Copy dates:

Newsletter
23 November 1998

Stop Press
As necessary

**The Yateley Society**

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