

The Yateley Society



Newsletter

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Ring Ditch Dig • History Library

Do You Have Old Yateley on Video?

No Trouble at t'Mill • Myths Miss May!

Medieval Surrey Heath

No 71

Free to Members

April 1999

£1 to Non-Members

THE YATELEY SOCIETY

Newsletter No 71 April 1999

Editor: Tony Hocking, 30 Connaught Close, Yateley GU46 6QQ (01252) 875158

THE EDITORIAL

Dear Member,

IN THIS ISSUE you will find two articles based on, or about, talks which have been given to the Society. I was asked to provide, or obtain, such articles for the benefit of those members who missed the relevant talk(s), and possibly to allow some development of the themes of the talks. I am much indebted to Roger Coombes and Phil Stevens for starting the scheme off.

It seemed a good idea to include the minutes of the Annual General Meeting, again for the benefit of those who could not attend, and also because no one will remember a thing about the meeting if the Minutes wait until February 2000 for issue!

FOR ONCE WE have all the Talks for the year arranged at an early date – thanks

mainly to a good supply of ideas from members, if you have a good idea for a talk, even if you do not know a suitable speaker, please let me know – I can always investigate.

Please note that the talk scheduled for April has changed from that advertised in the last *Stop Press* – a question of fitting in speakers when they are available. (That should stop you ignoring the Programme!)

IT IS A long time since we had a research article in a formal format, I am very pleased to present the archaeological investigation article by Carol White, it makes an interesting change.

OTHERWISE, THE *Newsletter* is as usual, I trust that you find it interesting and enjoyable.

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MINUTES OF THE 18th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE YATELEY SOCIETY

MINUTES OF THE 18th Annual General Meeting of The Yateley Society held at 8.05pm on Thursday 18 February 1999 in D.1.6, The Yateley Centre, School Lane, Yateley, Hampshire

1. Attendance

Tony Hocking *Chairman*, Peter Tipton *Treasurer*, Roger Coombes *Vice-Chairman*, Richard Johnston *Secretary* and some 18 other members.

2. Apologies for Absence

Sue Warren, Maisie Hoare, Ted Dowling, David Lister, Ann Knott, David Kerslake.

3. Minutes of 17th Annual General Meeting held 26 February 1998

These were approved unanimously. (Prop Norma Dowling, 2nd Ron Pattenden).

4. Matters Arising

a) Item 8) Executive Committee Members. Although elected, David Ashworth had never accepted the trusts of the Society.

b) Item 9) Resolutions. Letters had been sent to the relevant authorities, and had elicited the predictable responses. However these resolutions were important as determining the policy of the Societies on the issues in question.

The site of Old St. Barnabas has now been cleared and planted with trees, but the legal situation is unknown.

Applications for lawful use certificates were still causing problems at The Flats and at Cricket Hill.

5. Chairman's Address

The Chairman summarised the main features of his report, which had been circulated before the meeting.

The Annual Report was adopted unanimously. (prop Graham Brown, 2nd Norma Dowling).

6. Treasurer's Report

Peter Tipton presented his Treasurer's Report, which was prepared on the same basis as the previous year.

The cash balance of about £3400 represented an increase of approaching £1000 over the previous year, however expenditure on an expert witness for the Fox Farm Inquiry during the year, but not paid until after the year end, effectively reduces this by £350. This year, the purchase of a set of eight new postcards will cost some £1250.

The accounts were adopted unanimously. (prop Irene Draper, 2nd Ted Brooks)

7. Election of Officers

These had all been proposed in advance as required under the Constitution, and had been nominated as follows:

Chairman:	Tony Hocking	prop Richard Johnston	2nd Norma Dowling
Vice Chairman:	Roger Coombes	prop Tony Hocking	2nd Ken Crick
Treasurer:	Peter Tipton	prop Norma Dowling	2nd Ken Crick
Secretary:	Richard Johnston	prop Ken Crick	2nd Norma Dowling

These were unanimously elected unopposed, en bloc.

8. Election of Committee Members

The following were proposed for the committee:

Graham Brown	Prop Irene Draper	2nd Elizabeth Tipton
Philip Todd	Prop Peter Tipton	2nd Michael Mann
Pam Medley	Prop Edward Dawson	2nd Elizabeth Tipton
Colin Medley	Prop Jean McIlwaine	2nd Mary Hocking

These were elected en bloc, unanimously.

Irene Draper proposed a vote of thanks to the retiring committee members.

9. Discussion: the future of Yateley Town Centre

Peter Tipton, who represents the Society on the recently reconstituted Yateley Town Centre Management subcommittee of Hart District Council, introduced a wide-ranging discussion on the future of the Yateley 'Town Centre'. The subcommittee had already begun its work by carrying out an analysis of its Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats, but there was a need for Society members to say what they would prefer for the future.

During the discussion, which reached no formal conclusion through lack of time, a number of important issues were raised.

The existing situation had amounted to a long period of stagnation and decline during a long period when there had been a boom in shopping developments elsewhere. In spite of this, shop rents remained unrealistically high.

The Town Centre is too small and spread out to function properly, suggesting that some existing housing might need to be redeveloped for commercial use in order to make an effective centre. Unfortunately, Hart's policies had been counter productive, as they had given permission for yet more housing in areas which should have been devoted to Town Centre development.

Parking problems, which have also recently become worse as a result of losses of car parking to development, were recognised as a serious discouragement from using the Town Centre, and all-day commuter parking by users of London Link buses was another major irritant.

Yateley lacks sufficient businesses and other commercial activities to provide a firm basis upon which to build a successful shopping centre. Some of its existing office space has been empty for years.

Simply tinkering with the present situation was unlikely to be effective: a broader vision was needed. What sort of place should it be, as compared with other local centres like Fleet, Hartley Wintney or Sandhurst, for example? There were signs that owners of some shops were changing their style, and opening in the evening and over weekends, rather than closing just at the time when most Yateley people were returning home. It was important to recognise that such shops needed to be retained and encouraged if any changes were made.

Perhaps, as a dormitory suburb, Yateley Town Centre needs to concentrate more on evening-based entertainment facilities like a cinema, museum or environmental centre,

with associated pub and shopping, or to encourage some form of specialist activities. Such uses would need to be chosen carefully to avoid attracting the less socially desirable elements of society, as they would have a negative impact on the perception of the area and so discourage the renaissance of the centre.

10. Any Other Business

- The Yateley Society has been invited to stage an exhibition in September to mark the 25th anniversary of the opening of the Yateley Library. The exhibition will be on the Myths and Legends of Yateley. Volunteers are needed to undertake research.
- Jean McIlwaine drew attention to the fact that 5 May 1999 will be the 20th anniversary of the St Peter's Church fire. It is not known whether anyone will be marking this event in any way.
- Michael Mann drew the Society's attention to discussions local residents are having concerning the possibility of closing Stevens Hill to through traffic.

The meeting closed at 10.15pm.

Richard H. Johnston, Secretary. 19 February 1999.

CHAIRMAN'S CHAT

by Tony Hocking

ANOTHER YATELEY SOCIETY Annual General Meeting has been put behind us. By now you should all have seen the Annual Report which forms the backbone of the meeting, and the all-important Financial Report.

Our Officers for the new year are unchanged as: Chairman: Tony Hocking; Vice-Chairman: Roger Coombes; Secretary: Richard Johnston; Treasurer: Peter Tipton.

The Executive Committee Members are: Graham Brown (Membership Secretary); Philip Todd; Pam Medley; Colin Medley.

I am very grateful to the Officers and Committee Members who are continuing their good work, and very pleased to welcome the new Committee Members.

HAVE YOU NOTICED that in the last few

months the sad remains of St Barnabus' church have been removed and some trees planted? An unfortunate end for what we hoped could have been both a useful building and a preserved bit of Yateley's story. However, looking on the bright side, we now have a bit of land restored to greenery instead of being built on!

THIS YEAR WE are breaking with a tradition which has lasted from the very first days of the Society. We will NOT be on show at the May Fayre. This may seem a bit earth-shattering, but in recent years we have noticed that the return from our presence, in terms of public interest in our activities and the gaining of new members, has waned considerably. It has become increasingly obvious that the general change in the May Fayre

from 'serious' displays and exhibitions to a glorified funfair has resulted in a largely different clientele, mainly those people who are less interested in our kinds of activity. The sales area, while providing a most useful income, has involved the faithful sales team and the contributors of goods in a great deal of hard work.

This does not invalidate the list of topics for research and presentation which was published in *Newsletter* No. 70, they will still be used, so do not stop work!!! To replace the May Fayre we are considering a Society 'Open Day' at a suitable location, probably in July, at which we can have displays and show the History Database. With advertising we hope to draw in a more sympathetic audience. More details will appear when we have finally decided them.

THE SOCIETY HAS recently been invited to take part in the 25th anniversary celebrations of the Yateley Library move from the Village Hall to its current

building. The suggestion is that we provide an exhibition and a talk or two on local history. This is just up our street!

FINALLY, LOOKING FORWARD to July, we will hold our customary Summer Social, precise date not yet decided. For many years we have made use of the excellent garden belonging to David and Valerie Kerslake; this year I wondered if anyone else would like to offer garden space for this event, to give the Kerslakes a break.

However, before rushing forward, please consider the criteria: firstly you must have space for about 30 people to sit around tables, and have serving tables as well; secondly there should be plenty of parking available (this requirement very definitely rules out my house!), thirdly there must be somewhere to take cover if the weather turns nasty (many of you will remember the tarpaulin which was stretched out from the wall of Lime Tree Cottage). Now you can rush forward! - please ring me on (01252) 875158.

NATURAL HISTORY - are you interested?

FOR THE FIRST time for many years the Executive Committee finds itself without a dedicated natural history enthusiast in its number, and no particular person to turn to for advice and help in that line. This means that there is a danger of us overlooking some vital point during our activities on behalf of the Society.

We badly need someone to act as a liaison person between the Committee and the various natural history enthusiasts in the Society when assistance is required. We are not necessarily looking for an expert in any particular topics, indeed someone with a general interest in nature would be more useful.

This would not entail joining the Executive Committee unless you were keen to do so.

If you would like to support the Society in this way, please contact any member of the Executive Committee.

IDEAS FOR SOCIETY 'OPEN DAY', JULY 1999: YATELEY: FACT AND FICTION

THERE ARE SEVERAL Yateley myths and legends, such as Parson Darby and the Gunpowder Plot, which the Society has so far avoided tackling. There are other interesting events which really did happen, but are not widely known.

Teaching local history in schools tends to focus on colourful characters and events. Teachers rely on secondary sources - which perpetuate questionable oral traditions - rather than research based on documentary evidence.

The Society's Executive Committee suggests the next May Fayre exhibition could feature about a dozen of these oral traditions and real events, treating some more extensively than others. We could then publish the text of the exhibition and sell it at the May Fayre in *Newsletter* format. This booklet would undoubtedly only sell once since when there are several copies in circulation they would then be photocopied by teachers for use in schools.

Although our 'target market' is Key Stage 3 Local Studies (11 year olds) we believe the subject matter would be of great interest to visitors to our tent at the May Fayre. The exhibition would be offered to Yateley Library for a couple of months after the May Fayre.

The type of the subjects suggested are as follows:

1. Parson Darby hanged at Darby Green
2. Monteagle House & the Gunpowder Plot
3. Charlie Peace & the White Lion
4. Murder at Moulsham Spray Bridge
5. Maharajah kidnaps Society Girl at Poets Corner
6. Brandy Bottom & the Smugglers
7. The Secret Tunnels of Yateley
8. Yateley's Firework Factory
9. The African King & Yateley Hall
10. Sand Lizards on Yateley Common
11. Stone Curlew at Blackbushe
12. Mole Crickets & Cricket Hill
13. Yateley & Gatwick Airport
14. Beaker People & the Urnfield
15. George III exchanges clothes with Yateley's Miller
16. FIDO saves Airmen at Blackbushe
17. Bull Baiting on Yateley Green

This is just a selection of possible 'subjects' to give a flavour of the many possibilities. We have at least 17 more. The actual list for the May Fayre will depend on which subjects members are personally interested, and are prepared to research.

The sorts of subject we shall avoid, as being two esoteric, are:

1. The Crystal Cup Mystery
2. Archbishop of Rheims born in Yateley
3. Famous hymn writer born in Yateley

Subjects will include some from each of the three areas of Society interests: local history, natural history, and (loosely) planning. We can then involve a team of researchers from all interest groups in the Society. This exhibition will therefore be a team effort.

One objective will be to prove or disprove some of the 'traditions' which are likely to be untrue. Through proper research we may be able to provide alternative explanations, and some equally interesting real events based on historical fact. We shall review research findings in January 1999.

The exhibition format proposed is to pose a question. Then we shall present a statement of the currently published version; then answer it **True** or **False**, following that by a discussion of why we have come to that conclusion. This discussion will require proper documentary research. If we are to produce a varied list of subjects in time for the exhibition, we need to start now, by allocating subjects to interested members.

Example:

BRANDY BOTTOM & THE SMUGGLERS

Did Brandy Bottom get its name from brandy smuggling?

'Brandy Bottom got its name because there was a Customs Post at Blackwater through which the brandy had to pass on its way to London. The brandy was stolen from the Customs Post and hidden at Brandy Bottom until it could be moved away safely' – the essence of the story given to the current Local Plan Inspector during a site visit.

True or False?: not proven (as yet).

Research plan: First find out who originated this 'version'. The researcher would then have to look at whether there was a 'customs post' at Blackwater, checking whether there was ever any customs posts away from the main ports. Excise Officers, then totally different from Customs Officers (explain), often used inns and hotels as offices. If there was an excise post in Blackwater, then the names of officers manning the post may be available at Kew.

Background reading would also provide clues as to how the contraband system worked to avoid duties at different periods, and the periods when smuggling was most prevalent. A historical study of the settlement at Brandy Bottom will reveal the copyholders, and the census will reveal occupations, and whether there was likely to be any housing there when smuggling could have taken place. This version of the story is new to us, but there are other romantic stories about the origin of the name, which should be checked, plus a rather more prosaic explanation that it was originally 'Branding Bottom' for branding animals grazed on the common.

The Yateley Society Executive Committee wants to involve as many members as possible. You will not be left alone – unless you want to be. We plan trips for researchers to record offices, plus a visit to the British Library Newspaper Archives at Collingwood. Some subjects could take a couple of weeks to research, others much longer.

Anyone who is interested in any of the above subjects, and would like to see our complete list, or even suggest their own pet 'myth' to research, should call Peter and Elizabeth Tipton on 01252 873378.

THE EXCAVATION OF A RING DITCH FEATURE ON YATELEY COMMON, NORTH EAST HAMPSHIRE, 1998

by Carol White

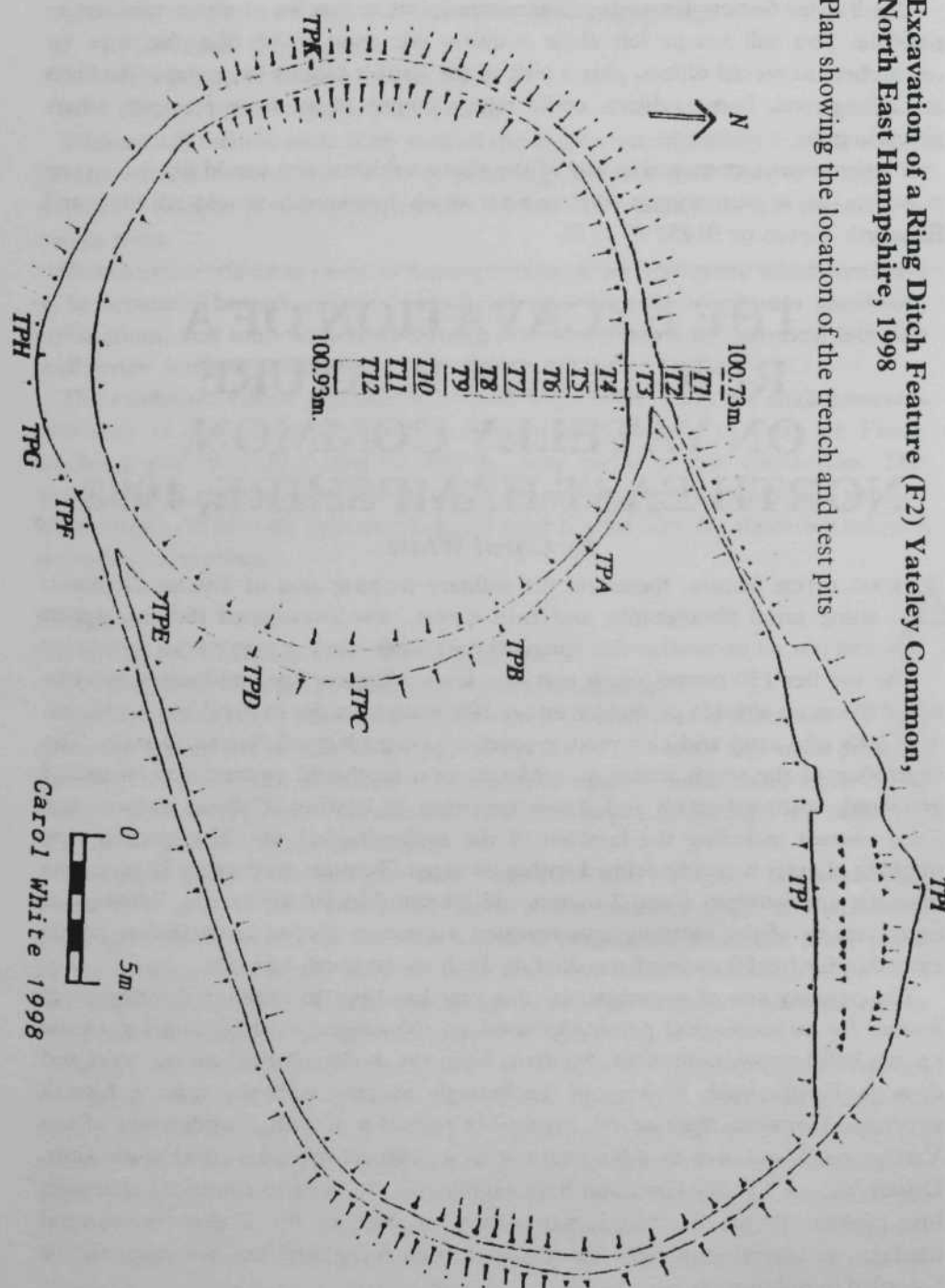
A RING DITCH feature, found on the military training area of Yateley Common using aerial photographs and field survey, was investigated through trench and test pit excavation this spring and summer.

The site lies 150 metres north east of a known Bronze Age bell-barrow (NGR SU 828 586) at an altitude of slightly under 101 metres on the lowland heath plateau, with soils of a sand and clay mixture over a base geology of Plateau Gravels. The vegetation of the south common conforms to a heathland environment of mixed grassland, scattered scrub and dense coverings of heather (*Callunia vulgaris* and *Erica cinerea*) including the location of the archaeological site. The circular ring marking of grass is clearly defined within an area of heather, measuring 20 metres in diameter and between 1 and 2 metres width around its circumference. Subsequent examinations of the location have revealed a crescent-shaped ditch feature which extends a further 20 metres from the ring ditch on the north east side.

The primary aim of investigations this year has been to examine the ring ditch feature for archaeological potential, based on the geographical relationship to the known bell-barrow monument. Students from the Archaeological course organised through Farnborough College of Technology assisted with the main fieldwork activities. However, the research represents part of a general consideration of the Yateley heathland area as a landscape with a prospect of several Prehistoric sites. Discoveries on Yateley Common have established the need to conduct a thorough investigation of the heathland, particularly in view of the Prehistoric cultural heritage, as several landscape features have been recognised but not examined or recorded in publication.

Excavation of a Ring Ditch Feature (F2) Yateley Common, North East Hampshire, 1998

Plan showing the location of the trench and test pits



In April a small trench was opened measuring 12.3 metres by 1 metre. Systematic soil collections were made during the excavation and analysed by the Environmental Management Department of Farnborough College for acidity and ferrous content. As the trench represented a very small percentage of the ring ditch feature it was decided, after consultation with the environmental and land agencies, to place test-pits at specific locations around the ring ditch. Between 22nd and 31st August, the team returned to the site to open test pits at proposed locations within the ditch area.

Using geological information relating to the Blackwater series (Jarvis *et al* 1979), the stratigraphic sequence was found to consist of five main layers overlying the base Plateau Gravels, from (1) topsoil, with (1a) mixed natural fractured flint gravels with topsoil (in bank area only), (2) brown leached soil, (3) flint gravel and sand (in centre of ring), (4) black soil, and (5) dark red-brown ferrous rich soil and ferruginous 'pan'.

1. Landscape feature, evidence assessment

Stratigraphic evidence suggests that the ring-ditch feature has been part of the landscape for a long time. Layers of dark organic soils and brown leached soils overlie the ditch and the natural gravels in the centre of the feature. Soils exhibit evidence of prolonged periods of waterlogging in the black soils covering the ferrous rich soils in the ditch area and underlying gravels in the centre of the ring-ditch feature, but not the crescent-shaped feature.

Notable evidence was found in August during test pit sampling, where a small pit with measurements of approximately 26cm by 14cm was discovered in TP F of the ditch, detected under a small mound of pebbles in the brown soil layer which underlies the topsoil. The pit descended into the Plateau Gravels to a depth of 40cm. One side of the pit presented a convex margin, possibly from extraction of gravels with a Prehistoric tool.

2. Environmental

Processing of environmental material from the trench has revealed a typical heathland environment of highly acidic topsoils with reduced acidity as the sequence deepens. Results for ferrous content show a clear acceleration as the stratigraphic sequence deepens. These results have been noted in other heathland profiles (Roberts 1996).

3. Artefactual

During the present season of research, a selection of lithic pieces have been uncovered, and further analysis will be undertaken on all pieces from surface, topsoil and primary context collection. Consideration will be given to claimed sightings of worked flint scatters on the Yateley heathland area recorded on the county Sites and Monuments records (Boismier 1994).

Conclusion

Evidence on Yateley Common suggests activity extending back to the Post-Glacial period, from records of flint scatters in the surrounding area and evidence during the investigations. Community life in the area is verified by symbols of human organisation in the presence of the bell-barrow site, other local Bronze Age monuments and the ring-ditch feature. Although probably in a highly degenerated state from its original form, the ring-ditch represents further evidence of activity. Yateley Common landscape has much to impart about past human organisation of lowland heath and its environmental history throughout the prehistoric period.

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References

- BOISMIER, WA, *The Evolution of the Hampshire Landscape* 1994 HCC.
 JARVIS, MG, HAZELDEN, J and MACKNEY, D, *Soils of Berkshire* 1979 Harpenden.
 ROBERTS, N, *The Holocene: An Environmental History* 1996 Blackwell.

'OLD YATELEY' ON VIDEO?

by Roger Coombes

THE SHOWING OF a video compilation of 1930s vintage films of Camberley at our September 1998 meeting had a two-fold purpose.

Firstly, there was the intrinsic interest in seeing moving pictures of Yateley's neighbouring town taken 60 years ago, with the possibility, however remote, of recognising someone who might have still been around during the years of one's own youth. (Hands up if you recall seeing 'Camberley Kate' with her dogs in the 1970s?)

Secondly, there was the hope that it might stir some memories of family cine film made in Yateley, perhaps for the VE Day celebrations, the Coronation or the Silver Jubilee. Did Yateley have someone like John King?

John King came to Camberley as a small child with his parents in 1924. They ran a sub-Post Office, off-license and corn and animal feed shop at 125 London Road. They

quickly became involved in Camberley activities, such as the Operatic Society and the Cadet Corps. At Frimley and Camberley Grammar School in the mid-1930s John became passionately interested in cine-photography and with a friend bought some basic equipment, began filming local people and events, and giving shows to school friends and neighbours in a 16-seat cinema which they built themselves, incorporating tip-up seats purchased from a Reading cinema for 2/6d each.

Over a period of some five years these were local documentaries of life in Camberley, ranging from school sports days, local parades and regular tradesmen and customers along their stretch of the London Road, to the activities of the Frimley and Camberley Cadet Corps and its founder Grace Reynolds. They formed a cine society and attempted to make a feature film *The*

Highwayman. but with the outbreak of war in 1939 it was never completed. John was in his prime for war service and on being demobbed in 1946 returned to his love of film to make a career, although not in Camberley but in Brighton and other south coast towns. For the next 40 years he ran a number of shops concerned with the film, audio-visual and film library business, and was involved with various film clubs around Sussex and Surrey. He also served as a magistrate in Brighton.

John's original films of Camberley had been stored away in boxes until the seventies, when local interest led to repeat showings in the Civic Hall in 1970, 1971, 1972 and 1986, with money raised for the ARC and for Frimley Park Hospital. The last showing indicated that the films were suffering from age and the decision was made to transfer them to video, thereby preserving them and making them available for a wider audience of relatives and others keen to see Camberley in the 1930s. John was involved with the transfer process, editing the films and adding a commentary. Two videos of

Camberley now exist, with a third of Brighton in the late 1940s/early 1950s period.

Sadly John passed away recently, but what a legacy he has left for the people and historians of Camberley.

Perhaps it is wishful thinking that Yateley has its equivalent of John King, but hopefully a number of people possess some old films, however short, which when edited and transferred to video might build up a social history of Yateley in the second half (or earlier?) of this century. Why not check on what might be residing in your attic? With the advent of the video camera much more must exist of the last decade or so, and it can't all be of Jeremy Beadle standard. Snippets of recent May Fayres, Carnivals, school and various society events (concerts, sports, etc) all would contribute to a permanent record of Yateley for the Millennium and after.

If you have any film or video to offer, or suggestions or ideas to give, please contact me at 6 Alder Grove, or ring (01252) 879103.



YATELEY SOCIETY HISTORY DATABASE

A NEW ISSUE of the extensive Yateley Society History Database is now available from the Secretary, Richard Johnston, who may be contacted on (01252) 872832, or by e-mail at earthhist@aol.com.

The new issue is number 3.3 and is in CD format.

It will give better support for Windows 95 than earlier issues.

Many more pictures and more written material is included in this issue.

MEDIEVAL SURREY HEATH

by Phil Stevens

A talk given to members of the Yateley Society in January 1999

IN JULY 1996 I was lucky enough to be able to change my career. Since then, instead of teaching full-time, I have been researching and writing local history and to a small degree acting as a supply teacher to Collingwood College, the school where I had enjoyed teaching history for 25 years. As a leaving present I received a computer to which I added a printer. I had already written my first volume – *Surrey Heath in the Dark Ages* – using the printing services of Yes Print of Yateley. *Medieval Surrey Heath* followed in 1997 and at present I am halfway through *Surrey Heath in the 16th and 17th centuries*.

Researching and writing local history has turned out to be every bit as enjoyable as I had hoped. It has the very selfish aspect that I write to please only myself. I want to put local and wider aspects of history together. The story has to be all inclusive: the ideas and attitudes of ordinary people are as necessary as the ambitions and actions of rulers; homes and technology are as important as politics and war. Having a degree, and having taught history at all levels at a variety of schools, I had a background of national, European and even world history. While at Collingwood I had worked with a group of teachers to research local history and produce resources to teach it. In writing my histories I was able to reassess and continue both these activities.

For me there has always been a fascination in examining the way in which local events and people have influenced or been influenced by national events. William the Conqueror's afforestation of the area from Windsor to Guildford was part of the Norman's attempt to set up an all-powerful monarchy. Subsequently numerous villagers purprestured and assarted the land to make a living for themselves which ultimately checked the king's extra-legal powers. The sealing of Magna Carta at Runnymede was but the most famous occasion in the reduction of the extent of the forest and its laws. Another power-mad monarch, Henry VIII, seized the lands of monasteries, such as Chertsey, enriching himself and some local families. In doing so he made possible the fragmentation of the Church. My third volume is beginning to show how religion, taxation and technology in their local settings were the factors which brought down the monarchy.

Researching new areas of documentation, such as wills, inventories or churchwarden accounts, creates a more intimate picture of a locality. Ways of life become established, perhaps with potter's wheel and clay. Inventories shape houses with halls, furnish rooms, state wealth, put crops in fields and describe livestock. The Chertsey Cartularies bring to life the administration of Abbot John Rutherwyk.

Churchwardens list the poverty, and repair the church. Evaluation of previous work by Yateley historians such as Dr John Porter and Derek Doherty allows the comparison of villages and combines it into a new study. Archaeological finds can explain the technology of crafts.

The variety of research is endless. Archaeological sites of inns or houses show their size and some of their possessions. Burials such as that of Bartholomew de Burghersh, who held Bagshot Park from Edward III, showed his physique, illnesses and wounds. Documentation showed his requirements for his funeral – he did not expect to be exhumed! He couldn't have been too excited about Bagshot Park because, immediately before he received it, it was described as 'a ruinous messuage . . . with a small garden and eighty acres of arable, eight acres of pasture and twenty acres of wood.' Maps are always a great help, but I had to have Bagshot pointed out to me on Gough's map (the oldest known map of England, c1350) by one of my students – my concern was what was it for, not 'was Bagshot on it', though once it was found one had to wonder why it was there. The questions are also endless!

As often as not details come to light by accident and coincidence. Records show that Edward Kyngdon was Bailiff of Bagshot in 1461–7. The fact that in Collingwood I was teaching across the corridor from Dave Kingdon, a descendant of his, did not immediately occur to me. When Dave showed me his family history I discovered that there was a memorial brass in St Hugh's, Quethiok, showing Edward with a crown on his shoulder, his parents, 10 brothers and 5 sisters. This must be the earliest pictorial representation of a non-royal person connected with Surrey Heath.

Very often one is pursuing one line of research only to make an exciting find about something completely unexpected. Paintings and drawings are always absorbing in themselves. In trying to find out about old buildings, I was tracking down as many of John and Edward Hassell's paintings as possible. Father and son had been prolific in the 1820s and many of the buildings that they recorded have subsequently been destroyed. Research was going particularly well with regard to Frimley's houses when I found listed 'Norris's Whim' in the grangerised version of Manning and Bray in the British Library. This wasn't of the period that I was currently researching, but what else could it be but a picture of the Obelisk in Camberley (also important as the logo of Surrey Heath Local History Club). No one knew of a close-up picture of this showing the top portion. A visit to the British Library (in fact two, due to teething troubles of this new establishment) produced a copy of this one and only view. It also unearthed a painting of the interior of Frimley Chapel by John Hassell showing 14th century elements for which there is no other evidence since the building was knocked down in 1826.

The most enjoyable aspect of all this research is the people with whom one rubs shoulders. Their enthusiasm to share knowledge or skills is always most encouraging. I am looking forward to many years of co-operative investigations.

THE YATELEY HISTORY LIBRARY

by Norma Dowling

YES WE HAVE a library!

Initially material was accumulated by Sydney Loader, Jean McIlwaine, Peter Tipton and others, and then it was housed and expanded by Michael Holroyd from about 1983 'til August 1995 when I took over. The library consists of published books and journals, photocopies of published and unpublished material with relevance to Yateley and copies of private papers. We are grateful for the many donations we have received over the years.

Much of this material (not the published books), is now available on the Yateley History database, on floppies or CD, and if you have a computer you may wish to obtain these from Richard Johnston (01252 872832). Most of the library items are really for those doing research into Yateley history, but some of the books are of more general interest.

You are welcome to borrow our books.

For example we have: *One Hand Clapping, A Memoir of Childhood* by Colin Middleton Murry, otherwise known as Richard Cowper, the science fiction writer, who was born in 1926. He came to Yateley at about 21/22 years old and describes happenings during the few years before he moved on to Norfolk. His father was John Middleton Murry (1889-1957), English critic and writer, who produced studies of Dostoevsky, Keats, Blake and

Shakespeare. In 1913 he married the writer Katherine Mansfield, whose biography he wrote. He was a friend of the writers DH Lawrence, Max Plowman and HG Wells.

The well known artist, Paul Nash (1889 - 1946), describes a few years of his childhood spent in Yateley in his autobiography, *Outline*. We also have *A Family History 1688-1837* by Hon. HA Wyndham. It was Wadham Wyndham who had Firgrove Manor built in about 1736. Perhaps *The Lost Roads of Wessex* by C Cochrane is more to your taste or you might be interested in some of the booklets on local parishes such as Long Sutton, Sandhurst, Hartley Wintney, Blackwater and Hawley?

If you came to the talk by Phil Stevens on 21 January you could follow up the mention of Camberley Obelisk by reading a booklet about it by another Surrey Heath Local History Club member, Gordon Wellard. If you walk on our local heathland you might enjoy *Heathland Harvest - The Uses of Heathland Plants Through the Ages* by Chris Howkins.

If you are interested in carrying out some research or would just enjoy reading some of the above let me know.

We would welcome any cuttings, postcards, photos or information on Yateley in other formats that you may come across.

Please contact Norma Dowling 01252 870226.

LIFE IN THE 20TH CENTURY, Part 2

by Doris Crosson

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

Shops

I liked being sent on errands, but not going to the Co-op for groceries. We had to wait such a long time to be served at the provisions counter for butter, cheese and bacon, then queue again at the opposite counter for the rest. No goods were prepacked which meant that all groceries were weighed and wrapped in the shops. Bacon and ham had to be sliced, butter patted into shape and cheese cut with a wire, and even tea and sugar were loose. I much preferred being sent to the corner shops for odds and ends, there seemed to be shops on every corner then. I had to take a jar when buying pickles or jam because these were also sold loose from big containers and ladled out to order. Most of the small shops were general stores and sold everything from potatoes to hairpins.

We were always given our pocket money on Saturdays. I had two pence (2d, old money), a penny to put in the savings bank and a penny to spend. In the summer time I would buy an ice-cream cornet for ½d and the rest was for sweets. It was hard to choose from the tempting displays in the shop windows. There were caramels, humbugs, liquorice shoe laces, sweets with messages written on them and many more. 'Duck, peas and potatoes' looked very realistic though I didn't get many for ½d.

Schooling

The school we attended was a grey building with windows set high in the walls, the idea being, I imagine, that if children could not look outside during classes their attention could not wander. Discipline was very strict, even before we went inside the building we had to line up, in our class groups, standing with our hands touching the shoulders of the child in front. Then we would march in two by two. In the classrooms the desks were in rows facing the front, two pupils to a desk. When we were not actually writing we had to sit straight with our arms clasped behind our backs with no talking or fidgeting. In arithmetic lessons we repeated the multiplication tables over and over again. For English we would read in turn around the class. At 'break' we were sent to the concrete playground whatever the weather. One of the girls in my class lived right opposite the school and I remember feeling envious during the cold weather when her mother would bring her a steaming hot

cup of cocoa and hand it to her through the railings. During the Summer we were taken for swimming lessons to Ashton Park, an open air pool. At times the weather wasn't good, the water cold and we stood shivering on the side doing swimming exercises. [Note: At the age of 10½ she passed a scholarship to a school at the other side of town, an hour's journey by bus and train.]

Schools were very particular about their pupils wearing correct uniform. Mine consisted of a gym tunic of navy blue serge, long-sleeved white blouse and navy blazer with a badge on the pocket. We wore felt hats in the Winter and straw ones in the Summer, also long black woollen stockings to the tops of our thighs, black lace-up shoes and navy blue knickers. The last three items were compulsory all the year round, so you can imagine how we felt during Summer! Woe betide any pupil who was discovered on the bus minus cap or hat.

There was a quadrangle next to the playground with wooden huts grouped around it which were used for art and woodwork. One was known as the 'dinner hut' where school meals were prepared. Since it was only a few years after the First World War I expect it was difficult to obtain brick-built buildings to enlarge the school premises. Each hut held a black stove at the end, the only form of heating, so it was very cold during Winter lessons. At 'break' times we would cluster round them to warm our hands. There were four or five steps leading to each hut which we never walked down when leaving, if no one was looking, but slid down the banisters attached. As a result of doing this so often I wore my gum dress right through at the back and my Mother had to patch it as she couldn't afford a new dress. The patch caused me great embarrassment but I could not complain because it was my own fault.

The main school hall was used for assembly and prayers, and dinner at midday. We had a rota of pupils on dinner duty. This involved the boys in setting up long trestle tables and wooden forms and the girls in laying cloths and cutlery out. We had one cook, so the girls also had to wash up the crockery, etc, afterwards.

After the meal we were told to go outside if the weather was reasonable and we usually went to the tuckshop at the end of the lane. I would spend a penny each day buying an apple, ice-cream or bottle of lemonade. In wet weather after the hall was cleared one of the teachers would play the piano and the hall was used for ballroom dancing. It was also used as a gymnasium with parallel bars all around the walls and a climbing rope in the corner. Since we had no sports field we had to walk a considerable distance to Eastville Park for games. I can't remember much about the science laboratory but I do remember using Bunsen burners and an experiment when the teacher, who was a very prim lady, burnt her eyebrows in an explosion! We had two subjects for homework each evening, and two more at weekends.



NO TROUBLE AT T'MILL

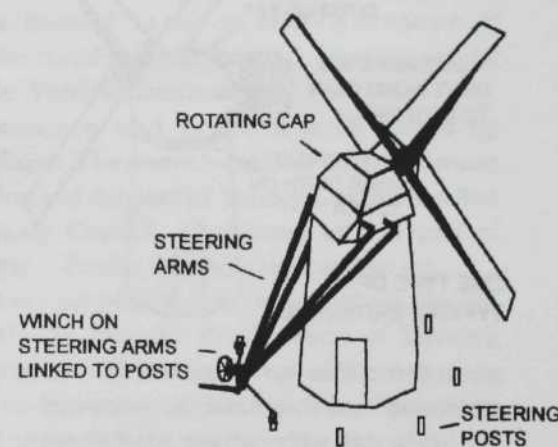
by Tony Hocking

MARY AND I recently went on a coach trip to Belgium. Mary and her colleagues were attending a Lace Congress and I and other husbands went along for the ride and to see the scenery.

One morning the lace party visited a museum in the village of Damme (!) near Zeebrugge to see a special display of Flanders lace. I went walkabout and came across the village windmill. Industrial archaeology is one of my enthusiasms and here was a well-maintained example of a mill worth photographing.

What has this got to do with our corner of Hampshire? Not much really, but some old pictures show a windmill in, or visible from Farnborough. Also, Cove Radio Station, once part of the RAE and now buried under a housing estate, included a building which looked very like a wooden windmill, less sails; this was supposed by some people to be the remains of a mill. Farnborough Hill House, the convent school, stands on the site of an earlier 'Windmill Hill House', is this significant?

To return to Damme; I duly took my photograph and as I did so a young man appeared from a doorway and stuck up an 'Open' sign – so I was in like a shot! It transpired that this mill had just been restored by a Windmill Trust which is very active in Belgium, and a party of local enthusiasts was being instructed in how to run the thing. Incidentally, not

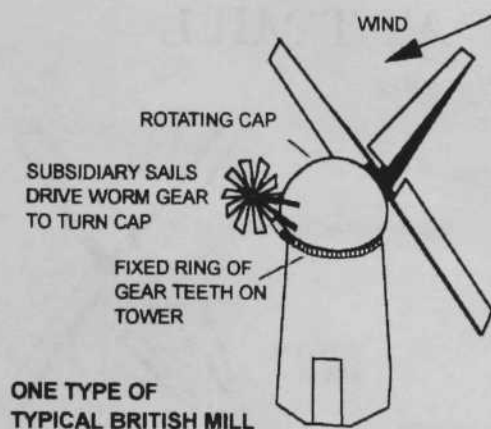


ONE TYPE OF
TYPICAL BELGIAN MILL

only was the mill open to the public, but it was free!

The young man, like most Belgians, spoke excellent English and we had a long technical discussion about windmills in our two countries. During our chat three differences in design came to light which surprised me.

The most fundamental difference was in the method of pointing the sails into wind. The Damme mill, and all the others I had seen around the Brugge area, relied on long wooden arms reaching from the turning part of the mill building to the ground and being pulled towards fixed posts by a winch. Most (but by no means all) British mills have subsidiary sails, or 'fan tails', at right angles to the main sails which, through gearing, turn the sail-carrying part of the mill until the main sails get the full wind and the subsidiary sails get none; a fully automatic process. The man at Damme



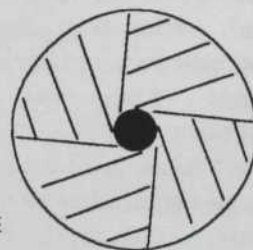
ONE TYPE OF
TYPICAL BRITISH MILL

assured me that no Belgian mills had automatic 'steering' and he admitted that on a day with varying wind direction steering the mill by winch was hard and often frustrating work.

The second difference concerned the mill stones. The grinding set-up is as in England, a fixed bottom stone with a rotating top stone suspended close above it, grain is poured in from above through a hole in the top stone, and flour runs out at the periphery. In England the surfaces of the stones always have a pattern of shallow grooves or 'channels' chiselled in them to control

the spread and flow of the grain and to lead it to the flat areas which are the grinding surfaces; Belgian stones it seems are always perfectly smooth.

The final difference is a more minor detail. Many British mills use or used apple wood for making gear teeth because it is hard wearing. My Belgian friend was amazed - 'Apple as in fruit trees?!!' he exclaimed. The Damme mill used something that looked like beech to me, but the name of the wood was our one language problem and I do not know what it was.



'CHANNEL'
PATTERN ON
BRITISH MILL STONE

Having thoroughly enjoyed my morning I signed the visitors' book, gave a donation to the Windmill Trust, and went to find the lace enthusiasts at the local coffee shop.

COMMONERS' CORNER

by Peter Tipton

ONE OF OUR long-standing members, Ron Pattenden, has quite rightly been complaining about the poor state of the footpaths resulting from intensive use by horseriders on the common. Two common users, a dog-walker and a horserider, who had signed his petition, had asked Ron questions which he had been unable to answer, so he put them to me. I thought the answers might be interesting to all members. The dog-walker had been told by a Ranger that she should not allow her dog off the lead in a 'restricted area'. How come, Ron asked, if

the Rangers could not restrict the horseriders, they could restrict this dog-walker? Was this favouritism to horseriders? Furthermore if the common is legally open to all to walk or ride anywhere, how could the Rangers make any restriction on anyone? The horserider told Ron she was 'licensed' to ride on Hawley Common. If she was reported for causing a nuisance she could lose her 'licence'. How come, she asked Ron, there is no licensing scheme for Yateley Common?

The first point to remember about common land is that it is all owned by someone, even if it is registered common land. The name 'common' does not mean the land is in common ownership. The owner of the part of Yateley Common called Yateley Country Park is Hampshire County Council. The owner of that part of Yateley Common called Blackbushe Airport is British Car Auctions, and so on.

The owner of the common land may have adopted bylaws, even if these are not clearly posted around the common, as is the case for the Ministry of Defence common land south of the A30. Bylaws regulate the management of the common, and they are usually of the 'no fires', 'no gypsy encampments' sort. Hampshire County Council has bylaws for its part of the common, but these are considered to be out of date. I have been asking for their revision and reissue for some time.

The owner of the common may also have adopted a management plan. The County Council are in the advanced stages of revising their management plan. We expect to hear from the MOD regarding their management plan at the Society's next open lecture on 15 April. It is significant that the County Council are reorienting their plan to emphasise conservation of wild life. The plan adopted in the late 1970s had purely recreational objectives. This is not to say that the County has suddenly become anti people-recreation and pro Dartford Warbler. It is a matter of balance. The County now has a legal obligation to protect wildlife as a result of the process of designating the common as part of the Special Protection Area for Wild Birds. Not only has the County a responsibility under European law to manage the common to improve the habitat for the specific wild birds named in the citation, but they also have the same responsibility under the treaty signed in Rio de Janeiro to enhance biodiversity. There is now a County-wide Biodiversity Action Plan. You will see that there has been a considerable shift in attitude towards the management of the common over the last 20 years.

The County are not however going to put high fences around the common and keep everyone out. They cannot. They have to balance the conservation objective against the other laws relating to common land. Up 'til today, there has been no legal 'right to roam' over all commons. That is just about to change. The Government is proposing a 'right to roam' over all registered common land, whether it is mountainous moorland used for pheasant shoots, or lowland heath designated as SPA. This 'right to roam' means the right to roam anywhere, and not just the right to keep to public footpaths as has always been the law. The other law which affects all this is that it is illegal to erect any fence on common land without

the specific consent of the Secretary of State for the Environment under laws relating to common land. It is illegal to erect any fence, or tarmac the surface, even if the Secretary of State himself has given permission for such 'works and erections' under planning law. This means that in managing the common to protect wildlife and enhance biodiversity, the County Rangers cannot, under common law, erect even temporary fences around nesting sites, or put up any stiles to restrict horseriders from particular footpaths. The Rangers thus have a very difficult job balancing the conflicting objectives.

So where does this leave Ron and his petitioners? The Rangers have been told that they cannot restrict anybody, dog-walkers or horseriders, from any path. When the new 'right to roam' legislation is passed, the Rangers will not be able, under common law, to restrict anyone from anywhere. In order to manage the common to achieve their wildlife and biodiversity objectives, and to segregate horseriders and walkers on foot, the Rangers therefore will have to continue to rely on the goodwill of users. To my mind this will mean a massive PR job. The only other way is to put up new bylaws, and to enforce them. I do not know whether bylaws might introduce a licensing system with a maximum quota of horseriders – I somehow doubt it – but I shall ask the question at the next Management meeting.

However the Rangers do have help from a recent statutory instrument. The Conservation (Natural Habitats Etc) Regulations 1994 makes it a criminal offence 'deliberately to disturb' a European-protected species . . . deliberately to take or destroy the eggs of . . . or to damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of such an animal' (including designated birds). This means that if the Rangers are managing a 'restricted area' as a breeding site or resting place of one of the three rare birds on Yateley Common, they can, if a person takes no notice of their request, call the police. Section 39 (6) of the Regulations state, 'a person guilty of an offence under this regulation is liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding level 5 on the standard scale'. My guess is that Ron's petitioner had let her dog stray, off the lead, into a breeding area for one of the protected birds.

The Rangers do therefore have a very difficult job. They have to rely on the goodwill of most users to go where they want particular categories of users to go, and not go where it might damage conservation interests, or make paths impassable for other categories of users. So let's continue to give the Rangers all the support we can, whilst letting them know, as Ron is doing, what our priorities are. On the other hand who is the real culprit in all this – the horseriders? If Hart District Council had not given planning permission for so many stables and livery businesses around the common, there would have been fewer horseriders. The Society has unsuccessfully opposed these expansions and, over the years, has tried to get more restrictive policies into the Local Plan. If you feel strongly about the deterioration of footpaths I suggest you talk to your local District Councillor, watch out for expansions to livery businesses – and object.

Ron is showing the County that he cares about the Common, Mike Mann's conservation team shows the Society cares. We have to make sure the County, the District, the Town Council, and our fellow parishioners, all get our message loud and clear about our priorities. Only by getting our message across, and strongly supporting strategies we feel are right, will commons' managers, and users, all be educated into valuing the common the way we do. Only then will the old name 'waste of the manor' be obsolete.

Yateley Society Programme

April to December 1999

APRIL

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

Talk - Conservation on the Defence Estate

by Victoria Crossland

The Ministry of Defence owns very large tracts of land all over the UK; in spite of the military training and operational activities this land is important to wildlife of all kinds and its conservation is taken seriously. Victoria Crossland works in the Defence Estate Organisation – Conservation, she will describe the work of this branch, with particular reference to local military areas. This talk will provide an update to the talk given to us by Colonel Clayden in 1985.

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)

MAY

Thursday 20, Yateley Centre Room D.1.6 at 8 pm

Talk - Blackbushe Airfield in the War

by Steve Purchase

Blackbushe airfield is a major feature of our surroundings, like it or not! Steve Purchase has recently written a book about the history and operation of Blackbushe. He will give us an illustrated talk describing the early history of the airfield 'RAF Hartford Bridge', and an account of its wartime activities.

Sunday 30, 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)

JUNE

Thursday 17, Yateley Centre Room D.1.6 at 8pm

Talk – The Work of The Hampshire Archives Trust

by Caroline Edwards

The Hampshire Archives Trust is the invaluable repository of the records of all of Hampshire, both official and unofficial in origin. The Society makes great use of it for research, and also contributes to its store of information. Caroline Edwards will describe the purpose, activities and benefits of the Trust.

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)

JULY

FREE EXHIBITION

Saturday 3, Yateley Industries Hall from 1030am to 4pm

Yateley Myths and Legends

The exhibition will give accounts of popular stories and beliefs about Yateley and will present evidence gathered by the Yateley Society to show if the stories are true or false. Various aspects of the Society's activities will also be on show, particularly a demonstration of the extensive computer-based Yateley Historical Database.

Yateley Society publications will be on sale.

Summer Social

details to be announced

Sunday 25, 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)

AUGUST

No formal activity this month.

Sunday 29, 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)

SEPTEMBER

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

Talk – Archaeology in Hampshire

by David Hopkins

David Hopkins is the Hampshire County Archaeologist, well placed to give us an account of the archaeological finds and activities North East Hampshire. This should form a useful alternative view to the excellent local input we receive from Geoff Hoare.

Sunday 26, 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)

OCTOBER

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

Talk – The Vyne

by Margaret Drury

The Vyne, near Basingstoke, is the nearest large National Trust property. While it is well known to many Society members, there have, recently, been great changes in the gardens and the amount of the house open to view. Margaret Drury, who is well known as a local National Trust speaker, will give us a talk on the architecture and social history of The Vyne, and will include an account of the recent changes.

Sunday 31, 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)

NOVEMBER

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

Talk – Caught in Time

by Sharon Cross

Venue: Yateley Centre Room D.1.6 at 8 pm. Thursday November 18th.

'Caught in Time' is a photographic history of the western area of Surrey Heath, to be shown by Sharon Cross who is Curator of Surrey Heath Museum. Sharon gave us a different talk some years ago which was very well received, so this one will be worth going to. Being photographic this bit of history will cover a much later period than the talk by Phil Stevens, forming an interesting contrast.

Sunday 28, 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)

DECEMBER

Thursday 16, Yateley Centre Room D.1.6 at 8pm

Talk – Yateley Lodge

by Richard Johnston

Yateley Lodge, at the bottom of Cricket Hill, is a very pleasant looking mansion which is currently under threat of being converted into a public house / restaurant. The building has considerable architectural merit and some interesting historical connections. Richard Johnston has recently completed a photographic survey in order to preserve a record of the building as it is and to help make a case for rejecting the proposed conversion. This talk is based on the photographic survey.



Copy dates:

Newsletter

24 May 1999

Stop Press

As necessary



The Yateley Society

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Registered Charity No 282397

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YATELEY SOCIETY PROGRAMME

1999

vhj2/18/71/2

CONSERVATION ON THE COMMON - Sunday March 28th

Meeting point: Wyndhams Pool at 10:00 am

APRIL

TALK - CONSERVATION ON THE DEFENCE ESTATE

by Victoria Crossland -

Thursday April 15th.

Venue: Yateley Centre Room D.1.6 at 8 pm.

The Ministry of Defence conservation effort.

CONSERVATION ON THE COMMON - Sunday April 25th

Meeting point: Wyndhams Pool at 10:00 am

MAY

TALK - BLACKBUSHE AIRFIELD IN THE WAR

by Steve Purchase -

Thursday May 20th.

Venue: Yateley Centre Room D.1.6 at 8 pm.

The early story of our local airfield.

CONSERVATION ON THE COMMON - Sunday May 30th

Meeting point: Wyndhams Pool at 10:00 am

JUNE

TALK - THE WORK OF THE HAMPSHIRE ARCHIVES TRUST

by Caroline Edwards -

Thursday June 17th.

Venue: Yateley Centre Room D.1.6 at 8 pm.

The Hampshire Archives Trust is the invaluable repository of the records of all of Hampshire.

CONSERVATION ON THE COMMON - Sunday June 27th

Meeting point: Wyndhams Pool at 10:00 am

JULY

FREE EXHIBITION - Saturday July 3rd from 1030 a.m. to 4 p.m.

'YATELEY MYTHS AND LEGENDS'

in the YATELEY INDUSTRIES HALL

vhj2/18/71/3



Exhibition 1999 Update

In the April Newsletter you will have read that the Society has been invited to provide an exhibition in the Library as part of their 25th birthday celebrations. We have also been asked to stage one or two events, such as lectures, during Library celebrations this autumn. This welcome, but unexpected request has fallen very neatly into the Executive's exhibitions strategy for this last year of the present Millenium. We wanted to do something special, but also something which would help towards our Civic Trust purpose of fostering a "pride of place". David Lister was always very keen on this objective during his chairmanship, and it has not been forgotten. Disseminating interesting historical information about Yateley is a good way to achieve our charitable objective, particularly as we are always being asked by school teachers for something that might capture the imagination of eleven year olds.

The schools seem to be hooked on Parson Darby, Guy Fawkes and other gentleman of dubious character, as well as dubious Yateley connections. Much of the fodder in the local studies section in the the Library deals with highwaymen in general, and Parson Darby in particular. We have therefore decided the make our 1999 exhibition "Yateley: Fact and Fiction" and deal with these myths and legends, together with a few more stories which might actually have happened in Yateley. We might have such headlines as "Victorian murderer apprehended by Yateley Builder" or "Three day police siege at remote Hampshire farmhouse after Maharajah kidnaps society girl", or even "Yateley just misses becoming second London Airport".

Members may well ask why we decided not to stage this exhibition at May Fayre. The answer is that the Executive was very disappointed with the number of visitors to our marquee last year, and the number of new members enrolled. So the Executive has decided to try something new and stage a one-day event independently on 3rd July. We have booked the hall at Yateley Industries to launch the exhibition, demonstrate the Yateley History Project CD-ROM, and hopefully enroll a lot more new members. For this we need an army of present members to make sure people come to our Open Day. We shall need volunteers to leaflet housing estates, arrange newspaper publicity, and act as hosts and hostesses. We also need an exhibition.

In September we shall move the exhibition to the Library and publish a booklet containing the contents of the Exhibition and any more "facts and fiction" we might have researched during the summer. We even hope to include a dossier of Yateley ghost stories. That should keep the 11 year olds happy!

In the April Newsletter was yet another request for willing researchers/authors and other exhibition stalwarts to come forward. We still have many myths and legends to research, and some true events too. We still need more researcher.

Except for Charlie Peace (spoken for by Valerie Kerslake) there is not a lot of "evidence" available locally. It is matter of newspaper libraries, record offices etc. We want to make the booklet as comprehensive as possible, but we must not just parrot the received wisdom of the romantics. That is how errors are perpetuated. We must do our own research. Any one of these subjects might make a good school or further education project. If you know anyone looking for such a project pleas show this article to them.

So far I'm doing Lord Monteagle and Parson Darby (I have been for years). Elizabeth has been volunteered to collate the ghost stories (so if you know of any let her know). Richard is doing various facts and fictions regarding Yateley Hall. Norma Dowling is doing the sighting of a Stone Curlew at Blackbushe (we have several more wildlife myths and legends in our list). Caroline Powell and Rita Jenkins have promised to deal with the Maharajah. Geoff Hoare is clarifying some archaeological facts (and fictions). We want to include archeological, wildlife and planning topics, as well as historical "facts and fictions".

Valerie Kerslake has been trawling everything she can find on Yateley and has come up with another long list of interesting facts (or fictions?). Someone might dispose of some of these in a few interesting lines, whereas others might be the subject of a PhD thesis. So whatever your interest, or your time availability, we have a subject for you -- whether you are interested in history, wildlife or planning:

- how did Yateley miss becoming the second London Airport;
- how did Cricket Hill get its name;
- what happened to the sand lizards;
- how did Brandy Bottom get its name;
- why did Yateley get developed rather than Odiham and Hartley Wintney;
- which king exchanged his wet clothes with a Yateley miller;
- did Wilky Collins write the *Women in White* at Frogmore House;
- when did bull-baiting take place on Yateley Green;
- who was murdered at Moulsham Spray Bridge in the Civil War - and why;
- did Oliver Cromwell really sleep at Monteagle House;
- when was the A30 used as a Gypsy racetrack;
- where was the Monastery;
- when was the last air crash in Yateley;
- why was there a cow in the church;
- how did the Welsh Drive get its name;
- how many mills did Yateley have;
- how long did it take a stagecoach to get from Blackwater to Hartfordbridge;
- when and why was the last time Yateley flooded;
- did Cromwell camp on Yateley Common;
- why do we have so many ponds;
- when did Yateley have four hospitals;
- who ran the first coach service into Reading;
- how did Fido save airmen at Blackbushe?

These are some of the questions which may never get answered if we cannot match them with researchers to dig out the answers. Fact or fiction?

If you are interested in becoming one of this year's exhibition team please phone me. There are now only 8 weeks left. If you have not done this sort of thing before, I should make it plain that the most basic skill is being able to read newspapers. Anyone who has already researched their own family history will be considered as experts! Anyone who is looking for an interesting A level project this summer -- just ring me to book your title.

Peter Tipton 01252-873378
9 May 1999