

The Yateley Society



Newsletter

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Free to Members

£1 to Non-Members

THE YATELEY SOCIETY

Newsletter No 73 March 2000

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CHAIRMAN'S CHAT

by Tony Hocking

THERE ARE SOME changes to report.

Firstly, I have at long last given up the post of Newsletter Editor. Elizabeth Tipton has very kindly volunteered to take on the job, for which I am most grateful. This will inevitably lead to changes in style, something that I believe has been long overdue.

Secondly, now that the Annual General Meeting is over we have a slightly different Executive Committee. Thank you all Officers and members of the 1999 Committee for your support, and for your invaluable help in running the Society. Thank you in particular to Pam Medley who has stepped down, for a very helpful input and for keeping the Committee aware of the ladies' view of matters.

Taking Pam's place is Jo Hill, a lady very active in the Mushroom Farm planning saga, who I am sure will liven up proceedings, welcome Jo!

All other Officers of the Society and members of the Executive Committee were re-elected. In case you are in doubt as to who is on the Committee, their names are:

Officers

Chairman: Tony Hocking 01252

875158

Vice-Chairman: Roger Coombes 01252

879103

Hon. Secretary: Richard Johnston 01252

872832

Hon. Treasurer: Peter Tipton 01252

873378

Committee Members

Jo Hill, Graham Brown (*Membership Secretary*) 01252 871 934, Philip Todd, Colin Medley.

Those members who did not attend the AGM missed the debate of three complicated resolutions which overran the time available, a rare occurrence.

The subjects were:

1. Development Pressures in the South East (proposed by Edward Dawson). This called for a sensible limit on the new housing to be built in the period up to 2016. The SERPLAN figure of 862,000 was proposed as an absolute maximum.

It was decided that, while it expressed the correct sentiments, the resolution needed some amendment and it was remitted to the Executive Committee for rewording. (It was agreed that the revised wording would appear in a *Newsletter*.)

2. Vehicular Access Across Common Land (proposed by Peter Tipton). The resolution was designed to help fight development where the only access would be across Common Land, which is generally not allowed. The substance of the resolution was that councils should exercise a presumption against such access, and that in the rare circumstances that such access was granted, the developers would have to pay a very substantial financial penalty based on the increase in value of the property as a result of permission being granted, payable to the owners of the land.

The resolution was passed *nem con* with three abstentions.

3. Traffic Congestion and Sustainable Development (proposed by Richard Johnston). The resolution recognised the growing problem of traffic congestion, and the role of unsuitable development and road networks in exacerbating the problem. Properly designed major centres with radial access giving reduced traffic conflicts and allowing efficient use of non-road transport were proposed.

The resolution was passed *nem con* on the understanding that wording to the effect that 'the quality of life would be enhanced' was to be added.

A new Yateley Society Programme Coordinator

For some years the job of arranging the talks and events programme has been linked to the *Newsletter* editorship. This is no longer possible and a vital post was therefore vacant.

I am pleased to announce that Jo Hill has volunteered to take on the job of Programme Coordinator, at least on a temporary basis.

Please help Jo by suggesting ideas for talks and walks for the Society; it is impossible for one person in isolation to dream up a programme!

If you know of a suitable speaker for a talk on a particular subject, even better!

Jo would like to receive your ideas at 45 Darby Green Lane, Yateley on 01252 870473 or by e-mail at jo.hill@bigfoot.com

WHERE HAVE ALL THE POSTCARDS GONE?

by Roger Coombes

IF YOU GLANCE at last year's Annual Report you may be forgiven for wondering whether you have missed the release of new postcards promised for 1999. The simple answer is that you haven't. It had been our intention to launch a series of eight new cards at our July exhibition held at Yateley Industries, but a combination of problems prevented this. The series was to consist of five contemporary views of Yateley, including Darby Green Pond, and three 'old' scenes dating from the turn of the century. The selection of photographs was a long process, as everyone on the sub-committee has their own favourites, and mine are the 'old' views of Yateley, but in the end there were technical difficulties in reproducing from old negatives stored in the database. This led to a rethinking of what we are aiming at, with an evaluation of which cards have been most popular in terms of sales. There are a number of variable factors in doing this, but a general conclusion is that 'old' views are less popular than contemporary ones. This surprises me, as I have favourites in both categories and send them to friends in equal quantities. The card which attracts most compliments is the one of Gadd's Stores, and yet surprisingly (to me at least), it has sold less well than its counterparts.

We have found a printer who is able to produce cards in smaller runs whilst keeping the unit price reasonably low. This will enable us to introduce more cards without the problem of holding stocks which would take a couple of decades to shift at present sales rates. Our photographers, to whom I convey grateful thanks for the huge amount of time which they have spent out and about around Yateley, have been asked to capture well-known, attractive Yateley scenes with a human element, in other words, people doing things! So far we have a lovely shot of two boys fishing at the pond on the Green, and we want to record the ever-popular Yateley Morris men in a well-known location.

The trouble is knowing what other people like, and what they use postcards for. This may sound silly, but sales figures indicate good to very good sales when a new card is available but these level out soon afterwards. This could be due to postcard collectors rushing to buy the latest card for their collection and showing no further interest after that. Do many people actually use postcards for correspondence? I do; for short notes, thank-yous,

confirmations, etc. Does anyone else do the same? As a historian I regard the postcard as an interesting piece of ephemera which helps us to put together a bigger picture of social history. Where would we be without the cards produced by Frith and other companies a hundred years ago? That is another reason why I send postcards of Yateley around Britain and abroad. Does anyone else do the same?

It would be interesting to hear from you, the Society members, or through you from non-members, whether you buy our postcards, and if so how you use them, and what sort of cards you prefer – old views or contemporary scenes? – and what about those old films of family and community events that I appealed for last year? Let's get those old films transferred to video before the film decomposes and the old-style projectors break down beyond repair.

[Extracted from information supplied for the 1999 Annual Report.]

CONSERVATION ON YATELEY COMMON, PAST AND FUTURE

by Mike Mann

THE CONSERVATION REPORT for the Society Annual Report was written on the last day of the old Millennium in the hope that the new Century and Millennium would see a real and lasting improvement in the way in which one of the world's rarest habitats, the Lowland Heath on our doorstep, is treated by the general populace. We hope that this habitat, and all its dependent species, will become secure and that it will prosper in perpetuity.

The year of 1999 was subdued in volunteer terms, with our core group of stalwarts being supported by a late influx of enthusiastic students. The overall volunteer hours were therefore lower than the previous year, a cyclic and predictable warning signal to the decision makers at Hampshire County Council who might be tempted to include ephemeral volunteer labour in manpower planning projections.

Nevertheless, some positive results have been achieved this year and it is hoped that the new century will see a burgeoning respect for the rare Lowland Heath and early moves to instigate and sustain grazing as a long-term habitat management strategy.

The long-awaited Yateley Common Management Plan completed its journey through committee, consultation, and amendments processes, and a five-year rolling programme was accepted and launched. Congratulations

and thanks were heaped upon Tony Davis and his staff. We look forward to the start of the process of 'raising of awareness' discussions and consultations with local residents to assess and manage any perceived problems relating to the issue of grazing of the heathland. The author believes that in light of the considerable resistance to the tree-felling programme in recent years there is a significant body of support in the community for general conservation of the environment. The challenge at the start of the new century and millennium will be to communicate to the wider audience the need to prevent all types of encroachment on the heathland, including that of trees, bracken, garden plants or development. Through the efforts of Tony Davis and his team, an opportunity has now been created to consolidate the recent gains, expand the grazing programme, and obviate the need for large scale tree felling in future. This may then convert the anti-felling lobby into active supporters of the active heathland restoration and management undertaken in recent years.

The year saw a handful of certificates earned by students (some still to be awarded) and the hours worked by the core group of volunteers pushing up to very high personal totals. Conservation activities focused mainly on Yateley Common during this year, with birch, pine and some gorse removal the main tasks for ten months of the year. Work on the Castle Bottom NNR (National Nature Reserve) was conducted during the remaining two months, involving birch and pine removal on one occasion, and a bracken pull on the other.

One departure from the normal heathland maintenance was a visit to Eversley, in support of the Forest of Eversley Trust, in order to maintain a hedge of about 650 trees which had been planted in 1998 by the same team. The loss rate had been a mere 1%, a testament to the skill and application of the group which was heavily dominated by the Yateley Society members.

As usual, our sincere thanks goes to all the people who turned out to support this worthwhile activity on our local, rare heathland and beyond. Furthermore, we extend a warm welcome to anyone who enjoys a little light exercise and fresh air: come and join our friendly little group for an hour or so, we appreciate any help, whatever can be spared for as long as you please. No experience needed!

[Extracted from information supplied for the 1999 Annual Report.]

FOOTPATHS IN YATELEY

by Tony Hocking

YATELEY TOWN COUNCIL has suggested to the Yateley Society that a worthwhile project to celebrate the Millennium would be the creation of a directory of footpaths and short-cuts in Yateley.

The thought is that a better knowledge of pedestrian routes in the town might help to reduce peoples' dependence on cars. This sounds like a very good idea, and I believe that the Society should try to get this under way.

I am aware of many useful alleyways and paths linking local roads and pavements which save me time and shoe leather when going to shops or friends' houses, but I am woefully lacking in such detailed knowledge when in other parts of Yateley. What is needed is for people all over Yateley to each contribute information on their own local area, because that is what they know best.

I am willing to act as the collecting point for this information, so how about going round your local neighbourhood and writing down all the short-cuts or useful pedestrian paths that you can find? They can be properly maintained official footpaths, access lanes to the rear of houses where they form through routes, or convenient tracks worn by feet crossing areas they probably should not!

What I need to know is:

- The start point, *eg* 'Between number 6 and number 8, White Street'. (The National Grid Reference if possible, although this is not essential.)
- The finish point, *eg* 'Between Worplesdon House and Birch Copse, Black Road'. (The National Grid Reference if possible, although this is not essential.)
- The surface type, *eg* hard (concrete or tarmac), gravel or unsurfaced.
- Is it wide enough for prams or pushchairs?
- Does it have any vehicular traffic?

Please send or deliver the information to:

A J F Hocking, 30 Connaught Close, Yateley GU46 6QQ. Tel: 01252 875158.

When do I want the information? As soon as possible, but in any case not later than 30 June 2000.

If anyone is willing to help assemble the information or to cover areas of Yateley where we have no representative, please give me a call. Thank you in advance.

TAPING HISTORY

PEOPLE'S MEMORIES ARE fascinating and often oral recording is the only medium through which ephemeral personal and local events can be captured. For years the Society has wanted to undertake some systematic recording of local residents, especially those who can recall the changes which translated Yateley from village into town. The years have sped by, taking with them irreplaceable memories, increasing the sense of urgency, but not producing the members who could begin the task. Now it seems there are new members who are willing to have a go.

Because oral recording, like any other interviewing process, has techniques and pitfalls, we have asked David Lee, archivist to the Wessex Film & Sound

Archive, to talk us through getting started. He will demonstrate equipment, outline good practice and, by conducting a live interview, show how to achieve good quality recordings whilst responding to the dynamics of the interview situation.

Wessex Film & Sound Archive is part of the Hampshire Record Office in Winchester and for the past ten years David Lee has organised annual Oral History seminars to encourage the recording of memories. We are most fortunate in having easy access to such an entertaining and knowledgeable professional and look forward to a fascinating evening.

Please note the date is not the usual third Thursday of the month.

FISHY TALES

AH YES, WE all know fishermen's tales, tales of wishful thinking and exaggeration, born of soggy solitude and peculiar determination. We all know that Yateley has gravel lakes, lying in the valley between the town and the Blackwater River, once the area of the springtime watermeadows, the only valuable agricultural land in historic Yateley. But how many lakes, and how many fishermen; what sort of fish and who fishes there; and aren't the lakes really only unprepossessing water-filled pits created by gravel extraction?

On either side of Sandhurst Road lie fourteen lakes. RMC began excavating

them in 1947 – as long ago as that? – when the postwar building boom needed huge quantities of sand and gravel. The company still manages the lakes, through RMC Angling, and Dr Ian Welch is the Angling Manager. The story he has to tell, of the lakes and the fish, is quite extraordinary and demonstrates yet again how things lying on the doorstep can be ignored or only partially understood. Would you believe that the Yateley Lakes are 'famous throughout both Britain and Europe'? That it is not merely the revered carp in the lakes, but the lakes themselves which are remarkable?

Come to the June meeting and hear Ian Welch tell 'tales of the fish which didn't get away: of *Basil* the mirror carp, *Heather* the leather carp and poor *Arthur* who has just half a tail'.

Hear too how these stars of television, video, magazine and book are only the *prima donnas* of an evolving habitat which is diversifying the environment of Yateley.



LORNA SIMONS

LORNA SIMONS WAS a founding member of The Yateley Society and her sudden death at Christmastime has broken a small symbolic link. Lorna's home for many years, Greenway Cottage, appears on every *Newsletter* and *Stop Press*: it is the middle one of the three attractive houses which face westwards across Old School Lane to Yateley Green.

Lorna and her husband came to Yateley in 1948, never having had 'a proper home', as she said. Greenway Cottage was 'the first house we'd ever owned, because we'd always lived in Army quarters. Because of this itinerant married life Mrs Simons felt she had no special roots anywhere but, when she was able to settle, she became passionately bound into the community she joined. There were only 2000 inhabitants in Yateley then, and 'Greenway Cottage, Yateley' was all the address needed for letters. During her forty-two years' residence she was an active, energetic supporter of local good causes, and a forthright commentator on parish pump matters.

In 1983, soon after the Society was formed Peter Tipton and John Bird

(Head of History for Frogmore School) taped a pilot interview with Lorna. That tape was intended to be the first of a series which recorded orally the dramatic changes which reshaped Yateley for ever, from small village into dormitory town. Here is a snatch of it:

When we first moved in – I shall always remember – it was the first house we'd ever bought and the first time we saw it the old lady was living in it; it was completely furnished, with fitted carpets. When we'd actually bought it, of course it was empty, and we walked in, and fell through the hall floor! ... It has always been called Greenway Cottage; I think it was converted in about 1921. They were then 1,2,3 and 4 Ferndale Cottages, I think, and I believe our cottage was a sweetshop ... the schoolchildren used to go there and buy their sweets.... We've not done anything to it since we moved in, except we've added a garage at the side.... We had electricity when we moved in but no drainage. We had a pump, in the garden, and we used to have to

pump our sewage out once a week, all over the garden ... really prehistoric.... The old lady who lived in Holmbush [to the left of Greenway] loved trees, she had no flowers but she had a passion for trees; and the garden of Holmbush then went right down to Macrae Road, and it also went halfway across what is now Florence Close.

A striking passage is Lorna's description of Yateley Green from her window, and the animation with which she describes Tice's stores by the church (now Discoveries) and the placing of the weekly grocery order. Although Lorna's memory had been failing over the last few years, she was still as active as her advancing years allowed and was frequently to be seen outside her cottage gate, exchanging news and views with

passing acquaintances.

Since David Lee of Wessex Sound & Film Archive will have talked to us on 30 March, we thought our April meeting could begin to work out a skeleton plan of action for would-be recorders.

To help us begin, we will listen to some short passages from Lorna's recording, and from two tapes made by Norma Dowling and Valerie Kerslake. That should suggest people and topics and perhaps even entice more members to consider making recordings.

If there are names and subjects which immediately spring to mind as you read this, please jot them down to bring with you. Also ask friends and neighbours for suggestions. The April meeting will be on Thursday 13 April, because of Easter, and will be in the usual room D.1.6 of Yateley School at 8.00pm.

GOLDEN CONGRATULATIONS

To two stalwart and inseparable love-birds: Geoff and Maisie Hoare. Calm, methodical Geoff has been chairman of the North East Hants Historical & Archaeological Society for many years and is now its Archaeological Director. He is also a founding member of the Yateley Society and holds the Society's main archive of photographic negatives. There is no prehistoric site around Yateley unknown to Geoff and those who have heard his 'Yateley: Lost and Found' illustrated talk know how much he knows about Victorian Yateley too. In his retirement years he has become a significant consultative archaeologist for this north east part of the county, and

regularly assists the Hampshire County Archaeologist. His particular passion is Roman archaeology and for the past fifteen summers he has directed excavation of the Roman site at Wortley, Gloucestershire for the Extramural department of Keele University. Closer to home, he has been in charge of the NEHHAS excavations at Heckfield, the site of a Jacobean house, and has worked at Basing House and King John's Castle, Odiham for the Hampshire Museum Service.

Maisie, the irrepresible, life-enhancing Maisie, has made homes all over Europe, Africa, the Middle East and the West Indies as Geoff's work as Station

Manager for British Airways took them to Tripoli, Benghazi, Portugal, Rome, Ceylon, Athens, Ghana, Kenya, Johannesburg, Abu Dhabi, Barbados and finally Philadelphia. Earthquakes, hurricanes, military coups, hot and humid climates have been variety and spice to Maisie. Returning to Barbados, where she and Geoff had spent five years from 1966, she was instantly recognised and warmly greeted, especially by women who were once her Guides, and Guiders who knew it was she who had started guiding for retarded girls on the island.

Now she boasts that she is only Geoff's 'pot washer', which in fact means that she is responsible for cleaning, marking, bagging and recording every single shard and fragment unearthed by Geoff's teams of excavators. Have you ever heard her cross or put out? Life is for living, and generosity and inventiveness will always find ways as far as Maisie is concerned. Especially as she is married to the man of her dreams.

Warmest Congratulations to them both from all their friends in the Society

RIGHT TO ROAM?

Criss-crossing Yateley Common on his daily walks with Charlie, the bouncy Cavalier King Charles spaniel, Ron Pattenden has become more and more concerned and exasperated at the disregard with which so many of the local horseriders treat the heathland and its footpaths.

Bridleways and permitted routes are clearly marked, but a substantial number of riders use footpaths and unsanctioned routes every day they ride, and claim not to be aware that they are being inconsiderate and destructive.

The Country Park rangers work to allow everyone to share and enjoy the common, not an easy task, and often fraught with unpleasantness.

Join Ron for a short walk around the eastern end of the common, to see how the Rangers try to balance the demands for air and exercise against the need to conserve and protect the heathland.

The walk will begin at the Gravel Pit carpark, on the north side of the A30, at 2pm on Mothering Sunday, 2 April. Wear wellies or suchlike; unless we have a heatwave, it *will* be muddy.

ED'S ENDNOTE

by Elizabeth Tipton

Has anyone any idea how long Tony Hocking has been editing the *Newsletter*? Perhaps even he has not realized that he has been literally holding it together for *thirteen years*. That is an eloquent testament of Tony's stamina and quiet commitment. Since he has also been Chairman of the Society for the last few

years, the hours of energy and sheer determination to get the job done is something for which we say a most grateful Thank You.

The Newsletter is the pulse of groups such as ours; any contributions (by any medium) and comments to struggling new Ed will be enthusiastically received.

Yateley Society Programme

March to June 2000

SUNDAY 26 MARCH – 'The Feel Good Factor'

10am to 1pm meeting at Wyndhams Pool (off Cricket Hill)

Fresh spring air and exercise on Yateley Common. A chance to 'do your bit' for the conservation of Yateley Common under the guidance and supervision of the Country Park Rangers.

No previous experience needed. Tools and free refreshments provided.

THURSDAY 30 MARCH – 'Taping History'

8 pm at Yateley WI Hall, Reading Road (behind the Esso Garage)

Join the audience for a practical demonstration by David Lee from the Wessex Film & Sound Archive who will show equipment and techniques for recording peoples' memories.

SUNDAY 2 APRIL – 'Feet, Hooves and Heathland'

2pm walk from Gravel Pit carpark on A30. Grid Ref SU 838594

Come and explore a part of Yateley Common Country Park with Ron Pattenden and Charlie.

Nothing strenuous, about 1½ hours long, and you will need wellies.

THURSDAY 13 APRIL – 'Voices in Time'

8 pm at Yateley Centre C.1.4 (Sixth Form block behind main building)

Listen to some snatches of oral recording made by the Society, then help suggest names and topics for recording now – and maybe join the recording team?

SUNDAY 30 APRIL – 'The Feel Good Factor'

10am to 1pm meeting at Wyndhams Pool (off Cricket Hill)

Work off those Easter Eggs and 'do your bit' for the conservation of Yateley Common under the guidance and supervision of the Country Park Rangers.

No previous experience needed. Tools and free refreshments provided.

THURSDAY 18 MAY – 'Talking Flowers'

8pm at Yateley Centre C.1.4 (Sixth Form block behind main building)

Find out how important our native wild flowers are to the eco-balance. Tim Carr, of Plantlife, the flora preservation charity, will 'show and tell'.

SUNDAY 28 MAY – 'The Feel Good Factor'

10am to 1pm meeting at Wyndhams Pool (off Cricket Hill)

Feel the first warm rays of spring sunshine on your smiling face as you 'do your bit' for the conservation of Yateley Common under the guidance and supervision of the Country Park Rangers.

No previous experience needed. Tools and free refreshments provided.

THURSDAY 22 JUNE – 'The Yateley Lakes: 50 Years of Angling and Conservation'

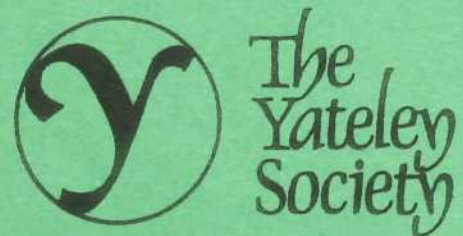
8pm at Yateley Centre D.1.6 (single storey classroom at the back of the carpark)

Yateley has one of Europe's best Coarse Fishing locations, with lots of water and lots of hungry fish. Hear Dr Ian Welch, manager of RMC Angling, describe the famous fish and the natural history of this remarkable site.

Copy dates:

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15 May 2000

Stop Press
As necessary



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Registered Charity No 282397

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