

The Yateley Society



Newsletter

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THE YATELEY SOCIETY

Newsletter No 74 Autumn 2000

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CHAIRMAN'S CHAT FOOTWAYS IN YATELEY

by Tony Hocking

Have you been looking for footways and short cuts? I have, and I am amazed at how much time it takes to catalogue them, even in an area I know well. My original request for information by June 30th

was a bit optimistic; I suggest a new deadline of November 1st (no one will want to wander the streets later than that!).

I still need the details listed in Newsletter 73, and it would help if

those people willing to help would let me know who they are, and what area they are covering please.

One side-effect of my request for help in the Newsletter has been a contact with the local branch of the Ramblers Association. The Ramblers have recently completed a survey of all designated footpaths, bridleways, etc in the country.

By good fortune one of the local path surveyors is Tony Price, a Yateley Society member, hence the contact.

The Ramblers found that, as Ron Pattenden has been complaining to us and the local paper, the definitive paths and bridleways on and around Yateley Common are in a mess. Some are blocked and overgrown as a result of disuse, some have been superseded by unofficial routes which are more direct, or avoid muddy areas, and so on.

This has been reported to Hampshire County Council, with a set of suggestions for re-routing some paths and bridleways to follow those routes which have become favoured in recent times. This appears to be a pragmatic approach to the who-goes-where problem, and the Society is considering the scheme.

Inevitably, there are some snags. Firstly, it is possible that some ancient and historic routes could be extinguished, *surely a retrograde step;*

Secondly, it may be cheaper for HCC to reopen the blocked routes than to extinguish some and create new ones in a correctly legal manner, *and we know that money is scarce;*

Thirdly, whatever routes are chosen as definitive, they could well be transient in practice as people once again avoid muddy patches or decide that going from A to B is now less attractive than going from C to D, *continuous maintenance will be essential whatever happens.*

If any of you have strong views on the future of the paths and bridleways on the Common, please let me know.

Tony Hocking,
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P.S. Why did I use the term footways in the opening line of this article? Because this is a general term for pedestrian routes, while the term footpath(s) has a specific legal meaning. (Bureaucracy strikes again!)

[Ed's note: Tony can show you how to note information on footways clearly; if you're half-thinking of doing some warm evening ambling, please contact him now.]

EXHIBITIONS IN 2000

Once again we did not attend the May Fayre, for the same reason as last year: it does not attract people likely to be interested in Society activities.

We contributed an exhibition to the St Peter's Week Flower Festival held in Yateley's historic church from June 28th to July 2nd. Using the Myths and Legends format again, a display was constructed using appropriate pieces from our July 1999 event, and some updated pieces from one of The Society's first public displays in 1983 (when church and village history was celebrated to mark the rebuilding of St Peter's.)

There was also a core item of completely new research -- done by the indefatigable Valerie Kerslake -- on the Rev Henry Carswell, hymnwriter, vicar of Yateley, and enlarger of Glebe House.

As usual, a deadline spurred on the

research, and Peter Tipton discovered a quite unexpected family connection with the Burgesses, "Purveyors of delicacies since 1760" and Victorian royal warrant holders.

There will be an opportunity in November to see most of this exhibit again. Because of the success of last October's Library events, the Librarian at Yateley has asked us to take part in another joint event this autumn. Again, there will be an evening of talks to complement the exhibition, the date being Thursday, 16th November. Full details of time and place will be published in due course,

but in the meantime, to whet your curiosity, the title of Peter Tipton's talk is: "Yateley and John Company: Research into Yateley people working for The East India Company, 1600 - 1858."

SALES AND PUBLICITY EVENT

This Autumn, Yateley Industries are reviving their Autumn Fayre for the first time since 1996. This fund-raising event is aimed at many of the traditional Yateley voluntary groups, and The Society's contribution of goods for sale and an appropriate publicity display fits well with the sentiment of the event. The event heralds Inch'Allah, the publication

of TWO NEW POSTCARDS for which we believe demand will be great. Following Roger Coombes' article in the last Newsletter, the postcard committee met twice more to mull over the possibilities and difficulties the volunteer photographers had encountered. There is a list of at least fifteen views we feel would be enjoyed by many,

but so far the clear, postcard-quality images have eluded the lenses. We shall keep trying. Meantime, our new printers, Beric Tempest of St Ives, have been most helpful. Roger,

meanwhile, has had another idea, which has moved our goalposts considerably. More of that at a later date.

DEFUNCT TRUST LEAVES WINDFALL FOR YATELEY

by Edward Dawson

The Yateley Society has recently received a grant from a local Trust. Another successful application, no doubt? No, this one was unsolicited. What, free grants now? Not quite. It is an unlikely, though interesting story. The Chairmen of Hart District Council usually nominate a charity to fundraise for each year. In 1991/92, Anthea Abbott was Chairman, and decided to set up a permanent charity instead. This would be an environment trust able to offer small grants to suitable projects and to support youth initiatives. So the Hart Environment Trust was born. It was registered as a charity, and its first Trustees were: Edward Dawson, Ian Phillips, Bob Rose and the current Chairman of Hart. The Clerk to the Trust was Hart's Principal Solicitor, Charles Herbert.

From the beginning funds were collected but publicity was poor. Edward Dawson prompted Newlands School to ask for a grant. With this

Chris Lewis purchased a coracle; it was used only once. It actually featured in The Yateley News and was then placed on a shelf in the reception area. It is there to this day. The Trust was then largely forgotten. Anthea left Hart for the hay meadows of Norfolk and the Trustees stopped meeting. So it was that Charles Herbert, fed up with submitting nil returns to the Charity Commission, last year asked the Trustees if they wished to dissolve the Trust. All Trustees readily agreed, but the problem was the disposal of the accumulated funds: some £850.

I accepted that the Trust be disbanded, but that the cy-pres rule had to be followed, even if others felt a cy-not-so-pres purpose might be better. Cy-pres is an ancient doctrine which states that after the demise of a trust, any remaining funds must be applied to a purpose as close as possible to the original deed. The Charity Commission later confirmed

this. If not there was a risk the funds would go to a Fleet sports fund. Another possibility was the Fleet Pond Society or the Forest of Eversley Trust. All the Trustees had to agree before the dissolution could legally take place. I proposed that £250 go the Yateley Society and the balance to Fleet Pond. After some protracted faxing and emailing, an agreement emerged. £200 would go the Yateley Society to spend on a

footpaths booklet or anything else deemed appropriate, and the balance to Fleet Pond to spend on a Teachers' Pack and on a new Pond Guidebook.

So, we now have some free money to spend in Yateley. The Committee is free to use the money for any charitable purpose connected to the Society's objects. The Environment Trust that never really lived is dead. It's now over to you.

EXECUTIVE PROFILE

Every in-house magazine these days carries regular features and interviews of key corporate personnel, larding propaganda with human interest in an effort to foster strong ideas of corporate identity and hold up suitable role models. Without, thank goodness, needing to bolster our affinities in the same ways, it seems to the Ed that many members would enjoy knowing a little more about some of the people of diverse talents and backgrounds who contribute to The Society's ingenuity pool. The first among equals is: ...

TONY HOCKING, Chairman

Tony was born in Plymouth and 'developed a lifelong interest in railways when taken, by pushchair, to watch trains at Mutley Plain station.' He went to school in Exeter, where his family moved when he was 5 1/2, and on leaving Exeter School with a full panoply of A's and O levels made a brief investigation of the University College of the South West (now Exeter University), found it was 'too

much like school' and applied for the Civil Service. He was accepted as an Assistant Experimental Officer and joined the Radio Department of the RAE, Farnborough in 1955. He lived in Grange Hostel, Hawley Lane, sharing a room with a keen private pilot and another aviation enthusiast. Soon he was being taken up in light aircraft such as Austers, Tiger Moths and Chipmunks and will still jump at any chance to get airborne for rubber-necking.

His work was in electronic warfare, initially radar jammers being developed for V-bombers. This gave a mixture of laboratory work, flight trials in Hastings aircraft and ground radar observation at Farnborough and Malvern. Between 1956 and 1962 he added more O, A and HNC qualifications to his credit, completing a graduate Institute of Physics qualification in 1962. As it happened, on the very first course he had met a nice girl called Mary Halford. Mary came from Buckhurst Hill, Essex and in August 1962 she and Tony married and moved to their first house, in Cove.

From 1963 to 1969 Tony's job moved to the RAE outstation at Ambarrow Court in Sandhurst, where he worked on Radar Warning Receivers, which alert aircrew to attack from radar guided weapons. He travelled to RAF stations and aircraft manufacturing works, testing and trouble-shooting installations in aircraft such as Phantoms, Buccaneers and Vulcans. It was during this period that, as a result of radio malfunction, he and a Royal Navy Petty Officer were accused of 'unauthorised formation aerobatics' at Woodford aerodrome, Manchester. In reality one was sitting in a firmly tied-down Vulcan whilst the other drove slowly round it in a lorry full of measuring equipment.

In 1972 Tony and Mary moved to

Yateley, to accommodate Tony's parents who were then infirm, by which time Tony was based back at Farnborough, in a hut sited on the edge of the airfield -- a ringside seat for the airshows. The irony of having had to drive from Farnborough to Ambarrow, and then Yateley to Farnborough, makes Tony comments on local planners and their idealised notions of journeys-to-work uncharacteristically acerbic.

By now he was lecturing regularly at RAF Cranwell and seeing all over Britain from light aircraft at 2000 feet. But the desk caught up with him and he became a Principal Scientific Officer, with only trips to Germany and Italy to enliven pen-pushing until, joy of joys, the RAE was asked to conduct flight trials on a new piece of equipment. Tony, being a local expert, was able to 'wangle his way in' and was soon flying in Andover aircraft to places such as Benbecula and Stornoway, Aberporth and West Freugh near Stranraer. Somewhere there is an audio tape with Tony's voice, higher pitched than usual, reporting flames and sparks coming from an engine as an Andover lands at Stornoway. From that trip the team had to return courtesy of British Airways.

When the RAE became DRA in the early 90's, and then part of DERA, there was a complete change of culture to commercial style

operations which Tony frankly hated. He tried to take early retirement, but was deemed too useful and was not released. The only saving grace was the emergence of the 'towed decoy' protective device for aircraft. This was not a new concept -- Tony had worked on it in the 1960's -- but new technology made the idea practicable. Escaping the baleful atmosphere of the office, he was soon supervising trials in Wales, Scotland and Cumbria

'... great fun, even if I was only on the ground.'

Throughout the years, meanwhile, model railways have been both relaxation and passion. Tony's dexterity and meticulous precision are instantly obvious to anyone who comes upon him working on some detail for one of his railway layouts. In 1988 he joined the Railway Enthusiasts' Club in Farnborough and helped build an 'O' gauge layout (7mm to 1ft scale). He is Secretary of the REC Model Railway Group,

with responsibility for all the bookings for the REC annual model railway exhibitions, and is often operator or van driver for the 'O' gauge layout at away exhibitions. He retired from Farnborough in 1995 and is busier than ever.

He and Mary were among the first students of the 'Study of Yateley' group in 1979 and he is truly a Founder Member of the Society. For years it was Tony who drew the posters for lectures and events, spent hours and hours lettering captions and signs for exhibitions, and even more hours -- and ingenuity -- devising weatherproof signage and labelling for the series of improvised shelters which used to be erected for the May Fayre.

His gently self-mocking title of 'dogsboddy' belies his endless patience and reliability, and his willingness to deal instantly with all manner of small crises. He also loves concocting brainteasing quizzes for Society social events.

FERGUS RUSSELL

by Valerie Kerslake

Fergus died on Christmas Day last year at the age of 92. He came to live in Yateley after retiring from Wellington College where had been a housemaster for many years. For a few terms he then taught English and

history at Eagle House School before finally and no doubt reluctantly giving up teaching for good.

After leaving Queens' College, Cambridge, Fergus taught at several prep schools, usually spending the

holidays coaching the dimmer sons of the aristocracy in cricket and more academic subjects. This left him with a fund of entertaining stories on adapting to life in grand houses. In 1945 he joined the staff of Wellington College which became the centre of his life and where he sought to get the very best from every boy. He is remembered with affection and respect by generations of pupils and his many colleagues and friends.

In Yateley, where he had bought his first house at the age of 65, he made efforts to become involved in the community - quite hard for a rather shy elderly man. He was a regular lesson reader at St Peter's, and he also volunteered to give out the parish magazines to the distributors, taking pleasure in laying on a small sherry party for them each month.

After he had been a member of The Yateley Society for a few years he was invited to take on the lecture programme, which he willingly agreed to, calling upon outstanding professional lecturers from amongst his former colleagues at Wellington. These were remarkable lectures, ranging from wintering under the Spitzbergen ice to the Assassin castles in Iran, but unfortunately the topics were too distant from Yateley to attract more than meagre audiences.

As Fergus grew older he suffered

from various complaints including the poor circulation that resulted in one leg having to be amputated. He was extraordinarily philosophical about this, saying it was behind him now, and concentrating on mastering his electric wheelchair. For someone with more optimism than mechanical flair, there were frequent challenges but without it he was helpless, for in spite of having been a keen rugger player, his wrists were too weak for zimmerframe or crutches. He never complained that for him the Hellenic Cruises were over, as were the cultural tours around Europe where his friends found he outdid them all in stamina and enthusiasm for looking at every high cornice and dimly-lit painting. Even the National Trust weekends were now beyond him. Instead he cut down his famous and unfragrant pipe to just one a day, and devoted himself to his garden and to his "things" - china, pictures, antiques, many of which he had inherited but which he had scarcely noticed before.

It was, however, people that were his first interest. He delighted in visitors, and if they had any connection with Wellington that was an added bonus. (When he read The Times there was always one eye on the look-out for OWs.) It was a poor do if someone dropping in on an errand could not stay for half an hour's leisurely conversation as well.

Occasional visits from his "old boys" - now middle-aged and often distinguished men - were a huge treat, and that they kept in touch for so many years indicates the affection they had felt for him.

In his last years his very disability brought him some small and unexpected compensation - the companionship of the carers who came each morning and evening. Some were just a source of irritation - "won't smile, can't cook". Others he coaxed into revealing their life histories and aspirations, and in return he told them about his pictures or china, or perhaps they talked about

his collection of objects from India (he was born there, where his father was medical attendant to the tea-planting community). While they tried to peel the potatoes, he would give them tutorials on the distinctions between Spode and Chelsea, or run them down on some historical incident, and would enthusiastically lend them books, urging them to read this chapter or that. Right to the end he was able to pass on his knowledge and stimulate others with the desire to learn, no doubt reluctantly giving up teaching for good.



TAPING HISTORY

*A report of a talk given to the Society on Thursday, 30
March 2000*

At the March meeting, a well-attended meeting of the Society enjoyed a most interesting and informative talk and demonstration given by David Lee of the Wessex Film and Sound Archive. Since many of those present were interested in achieving best possible oral recordings of the history of Yateley, much of the talk was of a technical nature and fell broadly into three categories.

Firstly, a demonstration of available

types of recording equipment and microphones;

Secondly a demonstration of recording methods and techniques; and;

Thirdly a discussion of various issues such as cataloguing, storing, and copyright.

The introduction dealt with the pros and cons of different cassette recorders and microphones, and was quite technical, the general conclusion being that, in terms of

recording quality, one gets what one pays for, and that it is always preferable to use a separate rather than an in-built microphone. This minimises 'machine hum.' Similarly, cheaper, longer C120 tapes should be avoided; chrome or even metal C60 tapes are best.

The demonstration then turned to the interview itself and we were advised on details such as prepared questions, interviewing techniques and positioning equipment and subject. The pitfalls of extraneous background noises (such as chiming clocks) and attempting to interview more than one subject at a time were highlighted, with the pros and cons of microphones positioned on a table or clipped to the subject being demonstrated through the use of a willing volunteer, i.e. Roger.

After a refreshment break, the third part of the talk covered issues which arise once the recordings have been made but which can easily be neglected, leading to regrets and confusion later. It is important for posterity to label, catalogue and index recordings; the value of transcription - the most difficult and laborious of tasks - is sometimes debatable. The original tape should be regarded as sacrosanct and working copies should be made, with consideration being given to storage and preservation of original and copies. The Wessex Film and Sound

Archive can provide free copies of reminiscence tapes deposited into longterm custody with the Archive, where the originals will be preserved in appropriate conditions. Questions from the audience concentrated on copyright and transcription problems, upon which the Wessex Archive can always advise. Indeed, all possible queries are covered in David Lee's publication "Oral History Guidelines", three copies of which have been purchased for Society use. David concluded his talk by drawing attention to several other useful publications and mentioned that Basingstoke has a thriving oral recording society.

Following this meeting and the 'Voices in Time' meeting in April, several members met to discuss David Lee's advice, to discuss an outline pattern of procedure for Society recordings, and compile an initial hit list of subjects. A tie-clip microphone has been purchased for the Society and has already been used successfully on a subject, with both interviewer and interviewee enjoying the session hugely. A Sony professional cassette machine, or a Sony MiniDisc recorder can be borrowed from Monteagle House by any member who would like to try an interview with a suitable subject. Batteries and initial coaching session provided. Phone 873378 when the mood grabs you!

Letter to Editor

Dear Editor,

Most of us like to have a cup of tea or coffee at our meetings and no doubt our speakers do too, so what about a few new volunteers to make it? I suggest a six-monthly rota (which would seldom include more than 5 meetings), and having two people together would make it easier. No great skills are required for coffee-making so men are just as eligible as women!

Valerie Kerslake

A FISH CALLED BAZIL

So, how many of you saw the TV news item, or read the Times article on Basil the carp, the world-famous fishy king of Yateley's lakes?

After Ian Welch's engrossing talk in June on RMC Angling's fishing complex, Sandhurst Road looked somehow different.

When the news of Basil's brief capture, for only the 59th time in 20 years, brought a definite glow of something that felt oddly like pride-of-association to the Ed's bosom. Even Ian Welch's lyrical slides and definitely partial account of the lakes and their varied fish populations didn't quite prepare one for the sentiments of the victorious fisherman who enthused over Basil's beauty and good nature, and described how he lay quietly waiting to be put back, ending with the comment "I think he must enjoy it."

The fact that it takes expensive high-tech carbon-fibre rods, with

rests, 15lb nylon line, and electronic buzzers, and carefully selected bait (known as 'boilies') to even begin the attempt to lure Basil ashore, is only part of the story of obsession and dedication. Within the benighted bivouac tent on the lake bank, the carp fisherman's soul can be lured into grappling with dark demons of self-doubt, while the cold moonlight gleams, and the giant carp lies at ease within his kingdom.

Back in the sunshine of some warm, late summer days (we hope), there is now an opportunity to see something of the 14 lakes which make up this remarkable area of modern Yateley. Ian Welch has generously supplied the Society with two Honorary Member cards, and the keys which will open the locked gates. Any pair of members wanting to have a wander, please contact the Ed at Monteagle House. The blackberry picking is apparently very good too!

SOAPBOX !

CHILLOUT, SOLE LEONE, LOOK FORWARD TO THE PAST, STUDY TOURS, ADIDAS ... these were just a few of the slogans adorning bosoms of varying sizes, ages and sexes spotted recently from a coffee spot above the Oracle riverside complex in Reading. Badging is everything these days, the style gurus tell us. From the covetable Prada label for bright young trendy females to the sportswear signatures which will grace all the Olympic competitors, it seems that labels give stature and street-cred. Which is not the general reaction to the rash of labels which have appeared, like magic mushrooms, on Yateley's traffic roundabouts!

The Town Council is being very coy about these eruptions, obviously sanctioned, and probably encouraged by, councillors. The refrain seems to be that 'every town has them now.' So when exactly did the idea of patronage die, and the drive of sponsorship take over? The patrons of Victorian Yateley did their good deeds quietly and without fanfare; often the remaining traces of their energies and quiet dedication to good causes of all kinds can be found now only in archive minutes, a faded photograph, or some octogenarian's recollections. They did not seek personal aggrandisement from their involvement in

the community and often sought to avoid any thanks for philanthropy which they regarded as a personal responsibility.

Perhaps the world has moved away from quiet acts of generosity, but even in badging there is a right and a wrong way to go about things.

One set of those roundabout signs is situated in a most sensitive segment of the Yateley Green Conservation Area.

There appears to have been no application for planning permission for their erection, which in any other instance would be sternly demanded by the Town Council and by Hart District Council (ask the White Lion brewers or the corporate proprietors of the BP garage). Consequently no thought has been given to the appropriateness of colouring or design -- though apparently the size of the signs is permissible. One past Chairman of the Society has already 'captured' a town councillor and taken him on an enforced eyesore tour of Yateley. In the past, it was the Yateley Residents' group who paid particular attention to details such as street furniture and parking problems. Without the Residents, Society members need to be more prepared to stir up debate on pros and cons in our community environment!

LOCAL INTEREST ISSUES

Keeping Members Informed

by Jo Hill

I am, and have always been, very keen to make sure that as much "interesting" information as possible is disseminated to as many people as possible. I see the Society as a prime vehicle for achieving this aim and with this in mind, I have taken on the job of producing the Stop Press.

As you know the Executive Committee meets every six weeks to discuss all the areas of activity in which the Society is involved. So I will be regularly summarising the main points from the Meetings and updating you with the Programme of Events via the Stop Press.

If you would like to know any more

about any of the issues mentioned, just contact me and I will do my best to help.

Resources in terms of manpower to cover the activities are always tight - I've found that out myself. Is there anything you think you would be able to help with or enjoy getting involved in? Let me know.

Jo Hill, 45 Darby Green Lane,
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<<mailto:jo.hill@bigfoot.com>>
NB Telephone number was incorrect in last Newsletter. It is: (01252) 870474

CENTRALISED LIBRARIES

The Natural History and History Libraries are now being held by Richard Johnston. If you would like any information about what is held, how or would like to borrow

something, please feel free to contact:
Richard Johnston
email earthhist@aol.com
(01252 872832)

GADFLY - [Thought from Stephanie Pattenden]

With so many urban foxes picnicking on nasties filched out of open rubbish bins on Yateley Green and elsewhere, can't we please have closed bins in all the Yateley public open spaces? Several householders bordering the Green would then not find their gardens strewn with unsavoury objects every morning.

ED'S ENDNOTE

by Elizabeth Tipton

Where did the summer go? With good intentions torn to shreds, the Ed apologises for the lateness of this Newsletter and will try to do better. A thin smokescreen for embarrassment is conjured by using a seasonal label for this and future editions. This then is the Autumn 2000 edition.



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