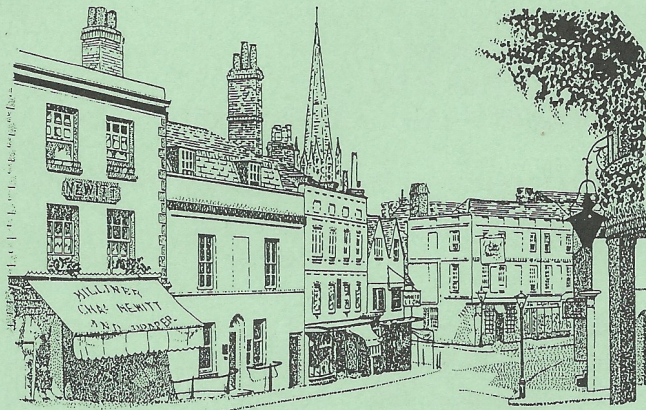


DORKING & DISTRICT PRESERVATION SOCIETY



Established in 1929

NEWSLETTER

No.10 SEPTEMBER 1994

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DORKING & DISTRICT PRESERVATION SOCIETY

President: Mr Gordon Lee-Steere DL

Chairman: Mr. B. Collins JP

Editor: Mr. Alan A. Jackson FRSA

Editorial address: St. Michael's Steps,
Deepdene Park Road,
Dorking RH5 4AN (0306 883324)

EDITORIAL

Ever since the late seventeenth century the countryside around Dorking has been visited by those seeking recreation, enjoyment and recuperation, in long and short stays. Day trippers were once far more numerous than they are now: on Easter Monday 1954, perhaps the peak year for this traffic, as many as 6,000 arrived by train at Boxhill station and 10,000 at the three Dorking stations.

In the last 35 years or so, vastly increased ownership of private motor cars and the ready availability of cheap package holidays by air to foreign parts has led to more ambitious recreational and holiday forays, and a sharp decline in visitors to British resorts, not least to the Mole Valley. Now the local authorities and British Rail are attempting to reverse this decline. Attractive brochures have been produced portraying, mapping and listing what is on offer and, for the curious, these are available free of charge at the enquiry counter in the Pippbrook Council Offices. Earlier this year notice boards were erected at Dorking Deepdene and other stations along the Guildford-Redhill line to display useful tourist information, including a map which shows the main places of interest in the area. We are told the County Council wants to see more visitors to Bocketts Farm Park, and has plans to enhance the attractions and interest of Norbury Park. In Dorking itself the West Street antiques traders endeavour to publicise a rather special aspect of the town's attractions in the hope of bringing more people into this area

where, with luck, some may even notice their shops (and our Museum) as they struggle to dodge cars, buses and lorries. In the countryside, although SCC's signposting on footpaths is below the high standards set by some counties, an effort is made to keep the fingerposts in good order and thus to encourage visitors who are prepared to use their legs.

Some will no doubt find the prospect of more tourism a depressing one, citing increased road traffic, litter, and wear and tear on the countryside paths as likely results. We shall also be told that to meet the needs of the invading hordes, there would have to be more unsightly car parks, petrol stations and public lavatories. And that in the town and villages, craft and gift shops, tea rooms and such like would multiply, perhaps pushing out traditional small shops. Others will warn that such developments will only increase prices for everyone or that, at Box Hill, concern about visitor damage is now so strong that serious thought might have to be given to restricting car access.

Those living south of Dorking who take this negative view may be encouraged to hear that the aforementioned map of 'Places to Visit in Surrey' shows Capel, Beare Green, the Holmwoods, Newdigate, Charlwood, Leigh, Okewood Hill and Ockley as a vast desert into which any brave visitor will venture at grave risk of boredom, or worse, since it appears quite devoid of anywhere worthy of tourist attention or even to divert

the kiddies. Other, that is, than the quiet pleasures offered by Holmwood Common and Lowfield Heath Windmill; and - oh yes, right at the edge, almost in Sussex - the Gatwick Zoo and the Hannah-Peschar Gallery-Garden.

But is this 'Nimby' attitude to the tourist initiative justified? Quite apart from the obvious benefits that an increased flow of visitors brings to local traders, hotel owners and others offering accommodation, and the extra business encouraged onto our beleaguered public transport facilities, the knowledge that people find it worth while to explore our area should heighten our pride in it, bringing us to appreciate it more ourselves. It is always pleasing to give strangers directions and advice on what they might enjoy seeing, and it is right that we who are privileged to live in such a beautiful part of Surrey should be glad to share it with others who may be less privileged in this respect.

We must certainly admit to being impressed by the high standard of the new visitor and tourist publications. Their emphasis on local rail and bus services is highly commendable.

There's the rub. Whilst we might welcome more tourists, we certainly do not want more tourists **in cars**, but is our public transport sufficiently convenient and user-friendly to attract most of the desirable increase? The effects of bus deregulation and the non-senses already apparent in the convoluted preparations for disintegrating the rail system make it difficult to give a positive answer. Under the former we have lost our bus station and enquiry office, and as a result of the latter we have different 'train operating companies' which have abolished the former Network SouthEast system maps in the trains and, as at Redhill, are refusing to connect with each other.

Alan A. Jackson

Chairman's Remarks

During the three months since I took over as Chairman from Brian Carr the Society has been involved in a number of important issues which will affect all of us living in the Mole Valley District. Perhaps the subject attracting the most debate and anxiety is the possible development of a Sainsbury supermarket on the edge of the town

As many of you will know from having attended the public meeting at the Dorking Halls on 17 June, there was an almost unanimous thumbs down to the location of the store on the present site of the Swimming Centre, as suggested by Sainsbury plc. Indeed the meeting was clearly of the view that any edge of town site selected would be to the detriment of the town centre. Various examples of the siting of supermarkets on the edge of towns elsewhere in the country and their ill effects on town centre vitality were quoted at the meeting, and the Society takes the view that the most appropriate way forward would be a development in the St. Martin's Walk area, which would keep shoppers in the town centre, allowing other

retailers to benefit from the increasing numbers using the new facility.

We now await publication of the Shopping Survey commissioned by Mole Valley District Council, and you may rest assured that the Society's Council will continue to campaign vigorously for a solution which will not only provide improved shopping facilities in the town centre, but also maintain the unique and historic character of Dorking.

The Society is also involved in the consultation regarding the review of local government which, if its recommendation is introduced, will cause immense changes in the area. I very much endorse the remarks of Brian Carr (below) in urging you to write to the Local Government Commission setting out your views.

A great deal of work has been undertaken by the Society's Planning Group in reviewing the Mole Valley Local Plan Consultation Draft, and detailed comments have been submitted to the Chief Planning Officer of

the District Council. The group, chaired by Brian Carr, are to be congratulated on their submission of behalf of the Society and I wish to take this opportunity of thanking them publicly.

Lastly, we have organised two membership recruitment evenings, one in Westcott and one in Brockham, to influence more residents to support the Society. A further 41 members were recruited and as a result our membership now totals 1,108 ordinary and

46 corporate members. A great deal of preparatory work was undertaken by existing members in both villages, as well as the involvement of Lynda Bailey, our Membership Secretary, and I wish to acknowledge the Society's indebtedness to everyone concerned. It is the intention that membership recruitment drives will continue next year, thus building up our numbers, an important matter if we are to continue to be seen as an influential and respected organisation.

Barry Collins

The Local Government Review

The Council of the Society hopes that every member will write to the Local Government Commission expressing a view on the Commission's recommendations, if they have not already done so. This must be done **before 19 September 1994**. Every household will have received the Commission's leaflet which contains a section in which you can tick YOUR preferred option and return it post free. In other counties there has been an average response rate of 10%. We must do better than that. It really is important!

There are only two options on which to vote. One is to have five 'Unitary Authorities' with Mole Valley split between two, and Dorking and district along with places like Caterham and Oxted, Reigate and Redhill becoming 'South East Surrey'. The other is for the present structure to remain so that we would still have a County Council to deal with strategic matters, with Dorking and district as part of an unchanged Mole Valley District Council.

If you have not already done so, please return this form straightaway or write direct to the Local Government Commission, Dolphin Court, 10/11 Great Turnstile, LONDON WC1 7JU expressing your views. PLEASE DO NOT DELAY! We include with this newsletter a reply-paid envelope in which your completed form or your letter can be enclosed.

Of course each member of the Society will have a personal view but it may interest you

to know that the Society holds to its opinion and supports the second option, i.e. NO CHANGE. Indeed the more the subject is discussed the more convinced we are that to spend up to £44,000,000 to change a system which we think works well is quite a wrong use of *your* money.

Of course there are theoretical advantages of having a unitary system of five authorities with the County left in a purely symbolic role but we do not consider this to be the best solution for the Mole Valley or for the County as a whole. Quite apart from the financial cost, we fear that the unitary authority, with only half the present number of councillors will be too far from the people. Do you know, for example, that it is intended to have only one councillor representing Westcott and South West Dorking together, with no County Councillor? It is also obvious that under the unitary system the centre of our local administration will no longer be here in Dorking. In addition, our fear is that on strategic matters the new unitary authority would not be strong enough to stand up for our interests in all the matters where we now look to the Surrey County Council.

The Commission says in its report that while the unitary system is its preferred option 'there is a good case for retaining the two-tier system in Surrey' and goes on to say 'the judgement as to whether a new unitary structure would provide an improvement over the present arrangements is finely balanced'. You know the cost of change. Is it really

worth it? Whatever your view may be, the Society Council urges you to express it. If you are in any doubt do please contact any member of the Society Council; we will be pleased to help you.

Brian Carr

Have you paid your 1994 sub yet?

If you have not yet paid you 1994 subscription and you usually pay by cash or cheque **please send the appropriate amount (see below) NOW to the Membership Secretary, Lynda Bailey, Danesmount, Tower Hill, Dorking RH4 2AT, or drop the envelope in the Museum letter-box in West Street, marked for 'Lynda Bailey'**. If you have any query about your subscription, please telephone Lynda at 0306-743418.

Individual membership	£2.50
Senior Citizens	£1.00
Family membership	£4.00
Corporate Membership	£10.00

M25 Improvements

The Secretary of State for Transport has recently published details of three-lane wide link-roads to be built on either side of the existing M25 between junctions 15 and 12 (the Thorney M4 and Thorpe M3 interchanges). The published details vary little in comparison with the consultancy documents published in 1992 to which your Society raised grave misgivings.

Although we believe the latest proposals will not have any significant impact on the M25 in our area, nevertheless, if approved, they could be seen as creating a precedent for making similar proposals eastwards between junctions 10 (Wisley), 9 (Leatherhead) and 8 (Reigate), and thence towards the M23, to which your Society is totally opposed.

We further believe that the problems the Department of Transport is seeking to cure between junctions 12 and 15 should not be seen

in isolation and that an overall strategy should be resolved in relation to the M25 as a whole before attempting piecemeal improvements.

A Public Inquiry presided over by an independent inspector, to whom the Society's concerns have been forwarded, is due to begin in November.

Peter A. Mills

(it's rather like the man whose only reaction to increasing corpulence is to let out his belt - Editor)

Sunday After the Night Before; or the Death of a Tree

Passing north beneath the railway bridge at Dorking Deepdene station on Sunday morning 3 July, we noticed with a heavy heart that once again one of the young trees planted in the central reservation of the A24 had been deliberately snapped in half. On reaching the Up platform, we found it to be ankle deep in litter - evidence of a drunken Saturday night orgy; uneaten food, empty beer cans and wine bottles lay everywhere. No attempt had been made to use the bins provided.

It is good that we have a caring local authority which does try to temper the dreary ugliness of dual carriageway motor roads with tree planting, but it is folly to leave saplings unprotected at such very vulnerable sites. The tree concerned has since been replaced but remains open to vandalism. Doing without metal treeguards begins to look like false economy at this location.

A.A.J.

South Street caves

The responsibility for these caves has been transferred from the Local History group to the main Society, and a new Caves Officer, Richard Adey, has been appointed. It is hoped to resume visits in the near future.

Mole Valley Festival of the Arts

The Society is participating in this Festival and it is hoped members will support what promises to be a most enjoyable evening. Derek Forss, the well-known local personality, will be presenting a celebration in pictures and sound of Dorking and its countryside, including features on Polesden Lacey and Ralph Vaughan Williams, one of Dorking's most famous residents. This will be augmented by a supporting programme on the English Lake District and Dorset.

Refreshments will be available during the interval.

Please book the date now: 19.30, on Friday 28 October at the Dorking Halls, entry by tickets only (£3 stalls, £5 balcony). Tickets must be obtained by post from L. P. Hawkes, 15 Yew Tree Road, Dorking RH4 1ND (please enclose a stamped addressed envelope with your cheque) or from Albert's Music, 190 High Street, Dorking.

News of the Dorking & District Museum

Chairman's Report

We are about to extend the premises to provide more space for our pictures and for school parties. A new lease will shortly be signed with the Mole Valley District Council, with whom we are cooperating closely, conscious of our responsibilities to councillors and residents in this part of the Mole Valley.

The effect will be to double the size of the Museum. A further 20 stewards will be required to protect extended displays and assist what we hope will be an increased number of visitors. We are a voluntary body, depending on the help of the people we serve. If you are not at present on the list of stewards, please offer your help for at least three hours a month within our opening periods (Wednesday and Thursday 14.00-17.00 and Saturdays 10.00-17.00). No special knowledge is required but don't blame us if you find you become interested in the history of your surroundings. There is no age limit and the company is convivial. Names please to GRAHAM POTTER, 0306-743821.

In planning for the future we are looking further ahead than 1995 and are aware that the next generation will expect all our data to be accessible on computer. A small group of those possessing computers is examining the potential and problems of computerisation. Is there a business about to install a new system and unable to dispose of the old?

Lionel Green

Library

Much has been happening at the Museum Library. As well as the small band of stewards who have taken on extra work such as keeping the Newspaper Cuttings Albums up to date, or indexing various parts of our collection, there has been a steady stream of visitors working on their own projects. Many come to research their own family, house or immediate locality. Although most are relatively local, we have had visitors from both New Zealand and the USA.

We have purchased a few items lately and have had gifts too numerous to list here in detail. Bess Dowling has donated the minute books of the Girl Guides Dorking Local Association (1919-1978) and UNUM presented a copy of their publication *Milton Court: Heritage Regained*. We have purchased a special map, a photographic copy of the 1753 version of the 1649 Survey of the Manor of Dorking and have just acquired Vivien Ettlinger's transcript of the Dorking Court Rolls, 1648-1909.

As can be imagined, the Library often appears to be bursting at the seams and the one thing we really need is more space. Sometimes there is hardly a corner for a researcher to position a book or photograph album, let alone spread out a map. Perhaps we might gain a little more room for the Library to carry on its useful work when the expected expansion takes place.

Mary Turner

Acquisitions

The following items have been acquired since 1 February 1994 (* = on display):

Two small crested china vases marked 'Brockham Green' and 'Dorking'*;
 Scullery Maid's box c.1900;
 Interrogatory Game of English history (1836)*;
 Hotpoint electric iron c.1925*;
 Baby's lace veil c.1900*;
 Walking stick owned by G. C. Robertson VC MM*;
 Set of child's alphabet bricks (letters on one face, pictures on another) c.1890*;
 Set of five World War I campaign medals, including French Military Medal, with certification, awarded to C. P. O. Dowling RN;
 Royal and Ancient Order of Buffaloes apron, marked 'KOM';
 RAOB medal with clasps, Deepdene Lodge, A. King (1912);

ditto 1900 and 1901;
 A telescope*;
 Four pieces of Coldharbour Women's Institute crested china and crested spoon*;
 Framed photograph of King George VI inspecting Dorking-made pneumatic aircraft shelter in France, 1940*;
 Two framed watercolours of Abinger Wood by Florence Bennett;
 One smock;
 Three children's garments;
 One card of mending silk and one card of buttons*;
 Framed oil painting of Lyon's Cottages, Dorking, 1969, by Stella Watson;
 1937 Coronation mug*;
 1935 Silver Jubilee mug*;
 Handwritten fire-watching rota for West Street, Dorking, World War II*;
 Framed print of watercolour of The Old 'Gun', North Street, by George H. Downing*

Brian Hodges

Local History Group

A new booklet dealing with the history of Pixham, written by Patricia Bennett and well illustrated with maps and photographs, is in preparation and should be available in the late autumn.

The Group will be exhibiting at the Surrey Local History Symposium at Chertsey in November. This year's theme is *Surrey on Picture Postcards*, to celebrate the centenary of the introduction of the picture postcard in Britain.

Current membership of the Group now totals 391 plus six corporate members.

The policy of encouraging family members of long-standing Dorking tradespeople to address the group was very successfully

launched in April with a most interesting talk by Mr. Dick Arthur on his family's building firm and his own career in it. Mr. Alan Woodcock will be talking to the Group on pharmacy in Dorking later in the year and Mrs. Sherlock has also agreed to talk to the April 1995 meeting.

The Group has expressed to the main Society its concern about the possible detrimental effects of the abolition of the Surrey County Council, recommended by the Local Government Commission. This will raise difficult problems for the future of the Surrey Record Office, Archaeological Services, and the Surrey Library Service, in particular the Surrey Local History Library at Guildford

A. A. J.

ON THE OPENING OF THE RAILROAD
TO DORKING · JULY 1849

Sure old Time's running on with a step passing fast
For the Railroad to Dorking is opened at last
And where nought save green pastures and Cornfields were found
Now the Train casts its Smoke, Fire and Cinders around.

Yes the Railroad is come! In our quiet old Town
People run to and fro, looking out for "the Down"
And the Rustics all gaping with wonder, are still
As the "Four-Twenty-five" rises over the Hill!

Oh, how changed from the Time when with Trappings so fair
BROAD's grey Team rattled by through the clear Summer air
And himself on the Coach-box so trim and so neat
Cracked his Whip as they cheerily dashed up the Street.

surely Changings and Shiftings on all sides we view
For the Times are all changed and we change with them too
where our Sires were content to arrive there in FOUR
We complain if we don't get to Town in an Hour.

And now that our Railroad has opened so true
May it do all the good we hope it would do
May it further our pleasure, our Trade, our renown,
Be of use to our Gentry, our Tradesmen, OUR TOWN.

W·H·HART