

**DORKING & DISTRICT PRESERVATION SOCIETY**



*Established in 1929*

# **NEWSLETTER**

No. 15 SEPTEMBER 1996

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*Registered Charity No: 246806*

**DORKING & DISTRICT PRESERVATION SOCIETY**

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**Chairman:** Mr B. Collins JP

**Editor:** Mr Alan A. Jackson FRSA

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**EDITORIAL**

What is to be done about controlling the use of the motor car and road truck in a small town like Dorking, where the streets were designed for the occasional passage of horses and carts? This question daily becomes more urgent as the number of cars on the road relentlessly increases, trucks get larger and heavier and any limitation on the use of the car, even for short journeys which could be made on foot or bicycle, is greeted with cries of pain about restricting personal freedom (an argument, incidentally, used in the USA to justify ownership of another type of lethal weapon).

Make no mistake, this is an issue for the Society. It is a palpable threat to the environment, to the very enjoyment of a precious part of Dorking town, where ancient buildings are having their foundations shaken daily.

In the measured, restrained language for which it is famous, our local newspaper recently carried an article about a 'Dorking Movement Plan' evolved by Surrey County Council officers. Local traders were said to be alternatively 'stunned' and 'horrified' and district councillors 'angry' at the very idea of diverting through traffic away from the town centre. When consulted by the newspaper, traders and councillors suggested the town would be 'decimated' (whatever that means), that the SCC proposals were a 'load of junk'; and, if implemented, would result in a 'shambles'. The reader could be forgiven for

assuming that World War 3 was about to start, with Dorking as the major battleground.

The newspaper report was distinctly short on constructive alternatives from the opposing parties, so we should be grateful that in at least one quarter, some positive thought is being devoted to this problem before the town clogs up completely around the year 2010.

The small shopkeepers' attitude is totally predictable; as a special interest group, they have always reacted in this way ever since the first restrictions on main street parking came into force in the 1950s, confining themselves to repeating the mantra about traffic being the lifeblood of the town. They long for the days when the customer could park at will outside their shop for half an hour or more.

It is a fact that in many towns where through traffic is diverted away from the centre and streets have been pedestrianised (as West Street in Dorking should be, and probably Dene Street too) *trade has actually increased*. And it seems to us that the all day nose-to-tail stream of traffic (mostly cars) up West Street, creating noise, stink and physical danger to pedestrians, positively deters retail trade. As a shopping centre, West Street is virtually a non-starter, rendered totally unattractive by the unpleasant and threatening atmosphere created by road vehicles of all sizes and shapes shuffling for space. Equally

the High Street is becoming increasingly difficult for casual shoppers who, unable to cross at will from one side to the other, are dragooned into using one of the three-light crossings. This obeisance to the 'lifeblood' makes shopping tiresome and unpleasant. Shopping in Dorking should be a pleasurable experience, not a continuing hassle with motor traffic. And let's hear no more insecurely-based comparisons with Leatherhead's unsuccessfully pedestrianised town centre. That town is not in the same league as Dorking for shopping interest: and never has been since we first knew it in the late 1950s. Guildford is a better comparison and there are many others within 100 miles of Dorking.

We would dearly like to know what proportion of those in the constant daily flow of cars through the High Street and West Street are actually going to stop and spend their money in Dorking's shops. A careful and thorough census of regular journeys should be carried out over several days - the pauses in the flow are long enough to make this easy. Given that an east-west bypass of Dorking is a non-runner on the grounds that any feasible route would cause unacceptable environmental degradation, some alternatives must be found. The speed of through traffic in the

High Street is frequently far too high and might be reduced by judicious traffic calming measures; if this diverts some of the non-shoppers away from Dorking altogether, so much the better. Another possibility might be to provide better vehicular access to the central car parks (e.g. allowing cars coming from the west to be diverted via Station Road and a new road into the St Martin's Walk site). On the east side, unimaginative pricing policies and poor pedestrian access to the town centre (which could be reversed at low cost) have resulted in low use of the Reigate Road car park. Not surprisingly, retail trade at that end of the High Street has largely given way to financial services and estate agencies and this continues to be the case; even more estate agents are arriving.

Of course there is a problem about carrying shopping back to car parks; this is where the traders selling bulky or heavy purchases need to exercise some imagination. Is it beyond their competence to revive the once universal home delivery services or alternatively to develop the manual trolleying service between shop and the customer's car park location already provided by the food super-markets?

**Alan A Jackson**

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#### **The Chairman writes:-**

Members may recall that in the last Newsletter, I posed the question whether more frequent members' events would result in increased membership. I also invited the views of readers on ways they would like to see the Society promoted so that we are able to count on greater support from the community.

To date, I have not received one letter or any comment, critical or supportive, of the Society's programme or on ways to increase the involvement of the community! (One has just arrived! See below - Ed.) Surely there is someone amongst you with views on how we can progress and thereby attract more people to join us? Come on, members, let's have some reaction!

Although this apathy has been somewhat disappointing, I am happy to report on a number of projects which have commenced or continued in the last few months.

#### **Heritage Open Days**

On 14/15 September, a national celebration of England's Architectural Heritage will be observed all over the country - this being the third year of the open house weekend coordinated by the Civic Trust in partnership with local societies and district councils. This year the Society, in association with Mole Valley District Council and with the unstinting co-operation of the owners of 17 properties in the district, is presenting a programme ranging from visits to historic churches and tours of Milton Court and Brockham Lime Works to conducted tours of

Dorking Caves and the Museum. In addition there will be conducted walks featuring 'Dorking through the Centuries' and 'Building Materials in Historic Dorking'. These will start at the Friends Meeting House, South Street, at 10.30 on Saturday, 14 September, and 15.00 on Sunday 15 September.

#### **Town Twinning News**

As members will have read in the local press in June, a delegation was received from Gouvieux, in North-west France, over the week-end 1/2 June. The programme included a tour of the district, a formal meeting of the two twinning committees in the Council Offices and a dinner in Mickleham. On the Sunday morning, a visit to the Dorking Museum and the Local History Library was followed by a visit to Polesden Lacey and the return to France was made after lunch. A number of important contacts were made and arrangements are in hand for visits of interest groups such as U3A, sports teams and schools to France in the next few months.

I must make it quite clear that the costs of the entire visit, excepting the cost of hiring the Dial-A-Ride Bus, were borne by the indivi-

duals participating in the arrangements and not, as is popularly supposed, from Council Tax payers' funds!

#### **Autumn Meeting Speaker**

I am very pleased to announce that Mr Paul Redsell will be the guest speaker at the Autumn meeting on Thursday 24 October at The Priory School (formerly Sondes Place School). Mr Redsell is the Head Warden for The National Trust on Leith Hill and Holmwood Common and his illustrated talk promises to be of considerable local interest.

#### **Forthcoming Changes on the Council**

Members will recall that following the election of our new President, Brian Carr, our Hon. Treasurer, Sir Martin Wedgwood, agreed to become Chairman of the Planning Team - a crucial task for the Society. Since that time, we have been endeavouring to find a new Hon. Treasurer and I am delighted to announce that, subject to formal approval at the next Council meeting, Mr Michael K. Forster FCA has agreed to take on this important task. I look forward to welcoming him to our committee in due course.

**B. Collins**

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#### **Letter to the Editor**

Oak Tree Cottage  
Westhumble  
4 August 1966

Sir,

In the May Newsletter the Chairman invited suggestions for promoting the Society more actively. I have given some thought to this, and although my response is somewhat tardy, I nevertheless append some reflections.

The title 'Preservation Society' is indeed worthy but perhaps projects a somewhat old-fashioned image in that we are to preserve a many-faceted heritage which we have known and respected and treasured for a long time. Is this enough? What I feel we should be seeking is the endeavour to protect ourselves against the further invasion of unwelcome factors, viz. the huge lorries invading our precious roads and countryside, the ever-

increasing number of cars travelling at even greater speeds - all endangering physically and aesthetically the many historic buildings and villages in our vicinity. We need to woo people on to trains and into car parks by attractive prices and better services throughout the day. No doubt the trains would be running at a loss at the outset, but given time and encouragement, I am sure their revenue would pick up. Are plans for superstores safely jettisoned or will they rise again? Distasteful advertising need to be checked; we don't want to become bigger - just better.

I am left with the feeling that something in our title needs to be more inviting to promote the need for a more active outgoing role as opposed to the rather static image posed by 'Preservation'. Would 'Friends of Dorking and District' be a more inviting name for our Society?

With regard to more frequent meetings, I agree that this would be unlikely to promote increased membership. I would also suggest that there are plenty of organizations already in existence in various fields which cater for social activities.

(Mrs.) **Helena F Scarlett**

P.S. I should like to take this opportunity to say that I think the Newsletter is now a splendid publication; my comment deserves better placing than as a P.S.!

We like the suggested new name - what about it, Council? Editor

### Spring Walk

This was enjoyed by 25 members, who assembled at Ashcombe Cottage, Ranmore, and returned there for a magnificent tea.

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### Notes from Dorking & District Museum

#### An observation

The Museum contains a comprehensive display of 'stuffed birds' and the very name engenders derision by many adults. Why is this so? Perhaps it is an abhorrence of what man has thought to do to the natural world, or does it conjure up remembrances of Victorian country houses? Not so for the younger generation. To them, this is a chance to see birds closely. On television they appear and disappear but in the Museum they can be viewed intensely. The curators have received appreciative letters from classes who have visited the Museum and although their interests are varied, many letters contain a mention of our natural history display.

**Lionel Green**

#### List of Acquisitions by Dorking Museum since 14 March 1996

1. Quart size milk bottle\*
2. Cardboard container for precipitated chalk - Savory & Moore, dispensing chemists (formerly of 40 High Street, Dorking)\*
3. Bed warmer - galvanised metal (possibly of Dutch origin)\*

#### A Visit to Painshill Park

As a follow up to the interesting talk by Tom Picking at the Society's last AGM, at the request of the Society's Council, Mrs Sarah Hawkes has arranged an exclusive two-mile guided tour of the Park on Saturday 5 October 1996. Numbers are restricted to 45 and the coach will leave the White Horse Hotel, Dorking, at 9.30, returning at around 13.00.

Tickets at £8.25 per person, which includes coffee and biscuits on arrival, are obtainable from Mrs Hawkes at 15 Yew Tree Road, Dorking, RH4 1ND (883699). Cheques should be made out to The Dorking & District Preservation Society and should be accompanied by a stamped and addressed envelope. A draw will be held should demand exceed capacity.

4. Stone hot water bottle (1930)\*
5. 'Dulcitone' keyboard instrument - St Martin's Church c.1930s. Used by Dr William Cole when organist and choirmaster from 1930-1954.
6. Two hand-made ferret nets - 1920s.
7. Newey's 'Kut-Out' tin opener (late Victorian)\*
8. Silver plated caddy spoon with Dorking Cock badge on handle\*
9. Wooden letter opener with picture of 19th century Dorking High Street on blade\*
10. Burroughs electric adding machine c. 1950
11. 'Belvedere' wringer with stand 1950
12. Bush portable battery-operated radio set c.1935\*
13. Kodak vest pocket camera c.1930
14. South Eastern Railway Company sledge hammer - pre-1923 (a working exhibit)
15. Collection of children's games (1920-1930)\*
16. Mueller toy sewing machine c. 1920s\*

\*On display in the Museum

**B S Hodges**  
Curator (Exhibits)

### **Brian Sellick (1918-1996)**

We regret to announce the death of Brian Arthur Sellick, who was born in Dorking on 13 June 1918. A highly respected anaesthetist, Dr Sellick was the son of E. Letts Sellick, who donated his very substantial collection of Dorking and Surrey books, photographs, post-cards and ephemera to the Dorking Museum. This collection contains a small amount of material relating to Brian Sellick's early medical career which, like the remainder, is freely available to researchers at the Museum Library. AAJ

### **Local History Group**

Well attended monthly meetings have included a presentation by the U3A Oral History Group, a report on the recent archaeological dig in Betchworth and a talk about a Model Farm in the 1860s. The summer outing to Chawton and Selborne on 6 July was greatly enjoyed, despite afternoon showers.

The latest Local History Group publication, a

history of the Deepdene and its later residential development, written by Doris Mercer and Alan Jackson is, now as I write, in the final stages of production. The book is fully illustrated and has maps drawn by Beryl Higgins. We hope you will all want to buy a copy. Full details may be obtained from the Local History Group Sales Officer, c/o Dorking Museum, 62A West Street, Dorking, RH4 1BS.

**Mary Turner**

If you are interested in joining the Local History Group, send for details to the Membership Secretary, c/o Dorking Museum. Meetings are held on the first Tuesday of each month at 19.30 in the Friends' Meeting House, Butter Hill (Local History Group members free, non-members £1).

### **Miss Frances Wade**

Miss K F (Frances) Wade, a head teacher, who retired to Westcott in 1965 with her friend, Amy Bull, died in 1994. A tribute to her life has been produced in booklet form at £3.50. Anyone interested in obtaining a copy should telephone Lionel Green (883038).

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### **Deepdene Gardens Restoration Committee**

Members may like to be reminded of the background to this venture. The Committee was formed about a year ago with the Council's instruction to carry out a feasibility study on the Restoration of the Deepdene Gardens within the ownership of Kuoni Travel Ltd. The Committee decided that the best way forward would be to prepare a project brief for a Restoration and Management Plan and to invite three consultants to tender for the work. In February of this year your Council appointed Cazenove Architects Co-operative to undertake the work for the sum of £14,362 plus VAT. There has been a good response to appeals for sponsorship and Surrey County Council, Mole Valley District Council, the Surrey Gardens Trust and three private donations have contributed a total of some £5,870 so far.

The Brief required a survey of the whole garden, the various levels on site, the condition of the various structures and the site boundaries. The Management Plan will include advice on the period of restoration, with detailed advice on the historical development of the garden and a phased restoration programme with appropriate costings and an indication of likely sources of grant assistance. The consultants' draft Report is due to be submitted in September.

Work on site has been progressing to schedule. The preliminary work of clearing sight lines through the overgrown woodland was finished at the end of May and a topographical survey undertaken by the Royal Commission on the Historic Monuments of England completed in June. It was interesting to note that the Garden, which is in effect a huge amphitheatre of some four and a half

acres, rises forty six metres from the flat garden level adjoining the offices to the top of the terrace. Cazenove carried out the detailed survey of the structures and major trees on site in July.

The historical background investigation is now under way from published documents and from archival material in various record offices, libraries and museums including the Norfolk archives in Arundel Castle.

The Committee were able to show some of the sponsors around the site on 29 June and we have had good publicity in the local press and in a live interview on Radio Surrey.

This is a most exciting proposal but of course the Report is no more than phase one of a long term scheme; we look forward to the draft report and to the work of advancing the detailed plans. Kuoni have been very helpful but have said that although they would in no way seek to impede the scheme, they are unable to assist financially. But the excitement grows!

**Richard Ingle**  
**Chairman of the Deepdene Gardens**  
**Restoration Committee**

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#### **A Pub by Any Other Name is Just as....?**

Around 1868 an hotel was erected at the corner of London Road and the LB&SCR station approach for the accommodation and refreshment of passengers using the newly-opened railway between Leatherhead and Horsham. Since it could not be named *The Railway Hotel* (there was already one at the SER station of 1849 at the other end of the town) it was given the dignified title of *The Star & Garter*, and so it remained for over a century and a quarter.

Now, if signs erected in July are to be believed, the present owners wish it to be known as *The Happy Days Hotel*, to which is appended something called *Deano's Diner*.

We understand that this is part of a nation-wide exercise to give trendy names (some much more outlandish than this) to licensed premises to attract what is seen as the core trade - the 18-30 age group. We await the erection of the new sign with interest and further renamings of Mole Valley pubs with trepidation.

Hot on the heels of this news comes the intelligence that the present owners of *The Jolly Farmer* at Buckland want to convert it into a *Wacky Warehouse* for the amusement of children. AAJ

#### **Parking Zones in Dorking**

The County Council has sought views on two parking zones in the town. One zone, around the main and Deepdene stations, would bring an end to all-day commuter parking in the area by rail commuters seeking to avoid payment for the station car park. The second zone would assist residents' parking by imposing a two hour limit on all other parking or restricting parking to those with residents' permits. This second zone however excludes Deepdene Gardens and the Chart Lane extension of Dene Street, both of which are daily clogged with free-loader all day parkers. The results of this consultation will be reported in November to the clumsily-named Partnership Area Transportation Sub-Committee. Eventually some concrete decisions will presumably be taken and implemented. AAJ

#### **Newsletter Arrangements and Copy Dates**

This Newsletter will in future be published three times a year in May, August and December. The last dates for receipt of copy by the Editor will be respectively 30 April, 31 July and 30 November.

In order to relieve the seasonal burden on the voluntary distributors, the December issue will be posted. AAJ

## Corporate Members Supporting the Society

Note that all addresses are of Dorking town, unless shown otherwise, and all telephone numbers shown have the code 01306.

Name	Address	Tel:	Business
Abbey Information Systems Ltd.	1 Paper Mews, 330 High St. RH4 2TU	740 553	Computer consultancy
Bales Tours Ltd.	Bales House, Junction Road, RH4 3EB	885 923	Travel agents
Betchworth Park Golf Club	Reigate Road RH4 1NZ	882 052	Golf club
Biwater Group Ltd.	Biwater Ho., Station Appr, RH4 1TZ	740 740	Water treatmt, eqpt, services
Bradney & Co	56 Dene Street, RH4 2DP	743 939	Chartered accountants
Bradshaws	94 South St., RH4 2EW	882 540	Newsagents
Bullimores	156 South Street, RH4 2EU	880 880	Chartered accountants
A. B. Clear	246 High Street, RH4 1QR	883 455	Antiques
Country Gardens Ltd.	Reigate Road, RH4 1NP	884 845	Garden centre
Cowan & Wood	114 South Street, RH4 2EZ	886 622	Solicitors
Crow's Auction Gallery	Behind Dkg Halls, Reigate Rd, RH4 1SG	740 382	Auctioneers & valuers
Dorking Golf Club	Club House, Deepdene Avenue RH5 4BX	886 917	Golf club
Dorking School of Motoring	3 Lyons Court, RH4 1AB	880119	Driving school
Downs	156 High Street, RH4 1BQ	880 110	Solicitors and notaries
Ellis Atkins & Co.	1 Paper Mews, 330 High St., RH4 2TU	886 681	Chartered accountants
FdK Design Consultants	South House, 21 South St., RH4 2JZ	741 343	Design consultants
Friends Provident Life Office	Pixham End, RH4 1QA	740 123	Life Assurance
Graham Brown & Co (Dkg) Ltd	43 South Street, RH4 2JX	882 264	Insurance brokers
Graham Leather Ltd.	64/65 West Street, RH4 1BS	887 727	China and glassware
Grosse UK Ltd.	Portland Road, RH4 1JL	743 333	Fashion jewellery mfrs.
Hammond Concrete Tstg & Servs	P. O. Box 75, 2 Cedar Close, RH4 2YX	887 854	Concrete contractor
Hart Scales & Hodges	159 High Street, RH4 1AD	884 432	Solicitors
Harvey-Jones, Phillips Prtnrship	57 West Street, RH4 1BS	742 200	Ind. financial advisors
International Sports Mktg Ltd.	Bales Ct., Barrington Rd., RH4 3EJ	743 322	Marketing consultants
Kuoni Travel Ltd.	Deepdene Ave., RH5 4AZ	840 888	Tour operators
Locomotive Software Ltd.	Unit 10/11, Vincent Works, RH4 3HJ	747 757	Computer software
Martin Brown	253 High Street, RH4 1RP	884 685	Estate agents
National Westminster Bank plc	14 High Street, RH4 1AX	881 823	Clearing bank
Newspaper Press Fund	Dickens Ho., 35 Wathen Rd., RH4 1JY	887 511	Charity
Newton & Co.	173 High Street, RH4 1AD	884 208	Chartered accountants
Rapley & Co.	Jubilee Terrace, RH4 1LE	882 605	Wheelchair sales/repairs
Rose Hill Nursing Home	9 Rose Hill RH4 2EG	882 822	Nursing home
Michael Schryver Antiques Ltd.,	The Granary, 10 North St., RH4 1DN	881 110	Antiques restoration
Philip Sears Designs	18c Horsham Rd., RH4 2JD	884 477	Architectural bldg surveyors
Simply the Best Party Stores Ltd.	238 High Street, RH4 1QR	885944	Novelties and party goods
Tricia Topping Associates	40 Upper Mulgrave Rd., Cheam SM2 7AJ		Public relations consultants
Unum Ltd.	Milton Court, RH4 3LZ	887 766	Disability insurers
Venhill Engineering	21 Ranmore Road, RH4 1HE	885 111	Specialist cable mfrs
Ventrolla	Myrtle Cottage, Newdigate RH5 5AD	631 773	Window frame restorers
Viscount Agencies	Concept House, 3 Dene St., RH4 2DR	880 715	Duty free agency
L. A. White (Dkg) Ltd.	11 Yew Tree Road, RH4 1HU	885 245	Builder
White & Sons	104 High Street, RH4 1AZ	887 654	Estate agents
Whitelegg Machines Ltd.	Fir Tree House, Horsham Rd., Beare Green RH5 4LQ	713 200	Electrical engineers

## Other Corporate Members Supporting the Society:

Bartholomew Court Residents' Assoc.	Brockham Green Village Society	Leith Hill Group of Women's Institutes
Box Hill Afternoon Women's Institute	Coldharbour Sports and Social Club	Holmwood Women's Institute
	Friends of Box Hill	Leigh Residents' Association
		Westcott Village Association

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Published by the DORKING & DISTRICT PRESERVATION SOCIETY, Hon. Secretary,  
Peter Hawkes, 15 Yew Tree Road, DORKING RH4 1ND  
NEWSLETTER No:15



## DORKING

This friendly, thriving market town  
With its famous Stane Street history  
And its five-line entry in the 'Doomsday Book',  
Still keeps for me

Many a nostalgic memory -  
Sheltered by green hills and wooded slopes  
In its river valley,  
There is an evergreen vista even in winter:

Seen from the rising ground of Cotmandene  
The tall spire of St. Martin's  
Silvered in the sunlight  
Pinnacles the rooftops -  
A magnet that attracts many visitors  
And a pivot around which the town's  
Busy life hums.

The red-tiled terraced High Street  
Sinks old with new,  
Where ancient timbered hostelryes  
Nudge bow-fronted shop windows  
Beside the prosaic layout  
Of supermarkets and modern offices.

Only a walk away cobbled lanes  
Lead to unexpected cottages  
Whose pretty gardens tumble to a stream  
Where snow-white swans glide gracefully by  
And the blush pink blossom of spreading cherry  
Opens parasols to the springtime sky.

South of the town  
Brooks feed the watercress beds  
As houses thin out  
Towards farms and fields,  
While up the hill the Glory Woods  
In a drift of blue carpet the ground,  
And nearby villages with musical names  
Are pleasant neighbours.