

**DORKING & DISTRICT PRESERVATION SOCIETY**



*Established in 1929*

**NEWSLETTER**

No.17

May 1997

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**DORKING & DISTRICT PRESERVATION  
SOCIETY**

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**NEWSLETTER No 17: May 1997**  
**Free to Members**

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**The opinions expressed in this News-  
letter by the Editor and others do not  
necessarily represent those of the  
Society.**

**The Editor welcomes letters from  
Members and other readers.**

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**GUEST EDITORIAL**

Who is to speak for the countryside? The population of Britain is now over 90 per cent urban. Even though Mole Valley is a predominantly rural district - overwhelmingly so if the towns along its narrow northern edge are disregarded - only a small minority of its population live in villages or in the countryside, and only a minority of those make their living from the land.

Should the farmers speak for it? They have their own powerful trade organisation in the National Farmers' Union, just as they do in many other advanced countries. There is also the dear old **Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food**, known to its friends and enemies as MAFF, which until the end of April was notoriously more concerned for the material well-being of farmers and fishermen than for the despised consumer, i.e. the rest of us. But both the NFU and MAFF have an agenda, which is the well-being not of the

countryside, but of agriculture. Not quite the same thing (see below).

How about the various ecological groups? There is a quango, **English Nature**, and there are various charities, such as the **Friends of the Earth**, the **Council for the Protection of Rural England**, to which we are affiliated and, more locally, the **Mole Valley Geological Society** and the **River Mole Action Group**. These all have their part to play and have been outstandingly successful in the last decade or so in rallying public opinion to the cause of the countryside. They have been less successful, however, in educating the public in an understanding of the countryside. Herein lies a danger: we may indeed all love the countryside and feel strongly about it, but if politicians respond to us, as every now and then they do, they will respond to our perceptions, and if in general these perceptions are wrong, there is a danger that the responses of politicians will be ill thought out.

So if the countryside is to be properly protected, there must be a better understanding of what it is. Perhaps the first misconception to dispel is that it is, even in part, undisturbed nature. It is not. It is now known that the Wild Wood, the natural forest that spread over Britain as the ice retreated some 10,000 years ago, had all gone some time before the Romans came. For at least 2,000 years there has not been a tree, almost a single blade of grass, that has been there without either being planted or sown by humans, or being allowed by us to continue where it was. The English landscape, in other words, is totally man-made.

So, you may ask, since the countryside is all man-made, why be concerned if humans continue to interfere? The answer is that hitherto the technology at our disposal left plenty of room for nature at the fringes of our activities. Wolves and wild boar have long since gone from our islands, and the European lion and the European bison are long extinct, but many other creatures benefited, like the butterflies in grazing land and the numerous birds and rodents that live in our hedges. Modern technology is not so 'eco-friendly'. Formerly farmers spread manure on their fields; nowadays they also spread

nitrites which, if not used correctly, poison our food and our waterways. Hedges are ripped up, to create the large fields more suited for combine harvesters, and where there was once a diversity of species, there is a monoculture. Herbicides and pesticides kill more than the weeds and the pests for which they were intended. If these practices are now less frequent than they have been, much of the credit must go to the public, who have asked for organically-grown produce and been prepared to pay a premium for it.

The other major threat to the countryside is development. In Mole Valley we are lucky; most of the open country in our District is classified as Metropolitan Green Belt, and about two-fifths of the rest is classified as Area of Great Landscape Value (AGLV). In all of it the planning regulations severely restrict what development can be done. If anyone should think of taking this for granted, go and see the countryside round Nottingham, Derby and Stoke-on-Trent, and see what we have escaped. Isolated houses pepper the hillsides, interspersed with short rows of terraced housing. Though there are fields aplenty, there is no open countryside for mile after mile. In Mole Valley, similarly treated, the ridge of the North Downs would have had houses from end to end.

We have, however, no room for complacency. Just because they have helped make Mole Valley a desirable area to live, the regulations are under immense pressure. We may dislike the erosion of our amenity by a housing development next-door, but many of us, if we own a plot of land, would like to make a profit from it by developing it. Meanwhile the Government reckons that there will be a requirement by 2020 for four million more houses than currently exist, and Surrey is under pressure to identify land for what is seen as its fair share.

A third threat, which may come as a surprise to some, lies in the growing demands for recreation. All organised sport needs space, none more than golf-courses, but there are also football and cricket pitches, rifle-ranges

(now under threat from a change in the law) and woodland for war-games. Those who have horses frequently want sand-schools to exercise them on and, in order to do so at night, ask to have lights for them. All these things can constitute erosion of the countryside, even though they do not often involve buildings.

If we want to help the countryside, it is not enough to love it, we must also understand it. There is much publicity for campaigns to save threatened species, but the most successful campaigns are either for showy animals, like the butterflies, or for furry animals which are perceived as being cuddly. We should be just as interested in the natterjack toad, which is now practically extinct, but on the whole we are not. With deer it is the other way about. We hardly ever see them and to our human eyes they are one of the most beautiful species on earth. But in the south and south-east of England, as many gardeners know to their cost, there is a serious problem of over-population of deer. Unless we find a successful and acceptable means of culling them the Surrey Hills in a hundred years or so are likely to be as bare as the Highlands of Scotland have been for centuries, for the same reason. Yet the public misconception about deer is one of the main obstacles in solving this problem.

So buy books about the flora and fauna of the countryside, and read them, and then go out and walk in the countryside and above all look, and try to identify species and their habitats. The more you look and learn and understand the incredible intricacy of nature, and see how each species has its niche and lives in balance with dozens of others, the more you will find that your knowledge becomes subsumed in two other things. The first of these will be a huge sense of wonder at the complexity and harmony of it all. The second will be a realisation that it does not do to stamp all over it for our convenience or profit. We should respect the harmony and learn to live modestly alongside it.

MW

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## THE CHAIRMAN WRITES

Many Dorking residents will have noted with concern the increasing number of empty shops in Dorking - particularly in the High Street, in mid-April no less than 16 premises. A thriving shopping centre is the life blood of a town and reflects the relative prosperity of the immediate environs and also its surrounding countryside. There is little more depressing than a country town with numerous empty shop premises indicating a withering commercial/retail sector with the concomitant decrease in attracting new retail and business investment to the area. Psychologically it lowers prestige and ultimately discourages tourists and casual shoppers from using the facilities of the centre.

It is difficult to know the exact causes for this decline - perhaps the lack of a large supermarket situated in the town centre, the imposition of excessive rents or even the residents' own apathy in failing to support local retailers in favour of using nearby larger shopping centres such as Redhill or Guildford. The situation is analagous to the 'Village Shop syndrome' in which the lack of custom in favour of the larger shops in town

centres gradually reduces the viability of the shop to the point of closure - to the ultimate cost of all the community locally.

Dorking must not go down this road. We now have a splendid renovated Dorking Halls complex, a projected new Sports Centre and a renowned antiques trading community which in some measure are all interdependent, generating the retail prosperity of the town. Landlords must awaken to the fact that rents charged are proportional to the retailers being able to make a reasonable livelihood - and on past performance there appears to be some doubt that this factor has been fully appreciated, especially in the case of the smaller individual shops not belonging to large national chains.

The Society, although not specifically involved in commercial matters, nonetheless has an interest in raising this concern and hopefully causing a debate on the subject by local authorities, retailers and the public at large. Let us hope that the decline can be arrested in time.

BC

## THE SOCIETY'S NAME: MEMBERS' VIEWS

*More views on this topic have been received and are summarized below but this matter is still very much open to discussion and the Society has yet to reach a final decision.*

"No matter what name is chosen, our membership secretary will not be overwhelmed nor will it put off those who genuinely wish to support us and what we stand for. Members know that 'Preservation' is not a negative image. Change and progress continue and the Society encourages the best. The Preservation Society was formed in 1929 in order to preserve Leith Hill district from the developer, to preserve the character of the town, preserve designated footpaths of the countryside. Today we take up new challengers - to preserve the shopping centre, preserve us from air pollution, noise pollution."

(LIONEL GREEN)

"Could I vote for 'Heritage'? I agree 'Preservation' sounds old-fashioned and unmovable." (PETER D CUNNELL)

"The existing name is perfectly satisfactory and fully descriptive of the aims of the Society. However if there is a majority in favour of a change then my wife and I are both in favour of either 'Dorking & District Conservation Society' or 'Dorking Heritage Society', the latter as suggested by Mr Elias." (JOHN EVANS).

"What is the purpose of the D&DPS ? Is it not to preserve the character of the town of Dorking and the surrounding countryside from the 'improvements' of the 20th (and in future the 21st ) century ?..What would be the purpose of the 'Dorking Society'? The title is meaningless, and 'Citizens' Association' suggests the French Revolution. 'Heritage' (what is or may be inherited -OED) is no

better. What is a 'negative image'? Surely active preservation demands positive action."  
(TERENCE O'KELLY).

"I agree that the present title is both somewhat misleading and cumbersome. I suggest, quite simply, we call ourselves 'The Dorking Society'. I was a member for many years of the Knutsford Society, south of Manchester, which concerned itself with the district round the town and as far away as the Airport, some six miles distant. There was no confusion about its role. Good luck with your ideas to alter our title."

(T.M.KENDRICK)

"I am very much in favour of 'The Dorking & District Society', it is easier to roll off the tongue. 'The Dorking Society' is even better, though perhaps not comprehensive enough. 'Friends' suggests we are looking for financial support from outside. 'Citizens' sounds too legal and suggestive of the Advice Bureau."

'Residents' would exclude corporate and non-resident members. 'Heritage' is too specific. Many people will associate this with the upkeep of historical monuments and the like. 'The Dorking & District Society' says more because it says less and incidentally, also provides us with a useful acronym."

(MARGARET BENSELIN).

"I very much welcome the idea of leaving out 'Preservation' in the Society's name. It has always seemed to me wrong to try and preserve everything rather than 'review' situations and problems as they arise. I am afraid I cannot think of a suitable name but shall take a great interest in what you decide".

(BARONESS HYLTON-FOSTER DBE)  
(President of the Society 1970-78).

"I agree with Mrs Scarlett that a shorter name for the Society is a good idea. Perhaps 'Dorking Heritage' would be too brief?"

(PAMELA PERKS).

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## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR and SOCIETY OFFICERS

*(Again we have to summarise owing to lack of space.-Editor).*

"On revisiting Dorking some three years ago, one thing that disturbed me was the amount of traffic using the High Street, South Street and West Street, remembering how it used to be in the late 1950s and early 1960s. There is no doubt that before very long something will have to be done to reduce the flow of traffic away from the streets I have mentioned.

...in our High Street etc. they have built humpback ramps, very wide, paved and have planter boxes with trees. And the old fashioned bollards have made a return. Traffic still drives through but at very reduced speeds, people walk and stroll from one side to the other. These humpbacks are at 200-300 metres apart.....If the Dorking town planning engineers would like photos or drawings of these humpbacks please contact me.

Once I have read the *Newsletter*, I pass it on to an old schoolfriend in Victoria BC, Canada, so working on the mileage it travels, it

must be the longest travelled booklet to leave Dorking. Thank you all. May the Society prosper and give pleasure to many overseas Dorkinians such as myself". (ALAN TARR, Lower Hutt, Wellington, New Zealand).

"I had thought not to renew my subscription but having read the *Newsletter* and other matter feel compelled to make my small contribution to a very good cause."

(G.I BELL).

"We wonder whether we could encourage the local council to cease to pay host to the huge amount of motor cycles at the weekend, allowing them to have a large area to park at the Burford Bridge. The noise that the motor cyclists make as they tear up and down the A24 is completely unacceptable - and dangerous....could we [also] persuade the local council when they next resurface the A24 to use the special Tarmac (which is aerated) which considerably cuts down the traffic noise levels and does not cost more to lay."

(MRS JILL FARRER-BROWN)  
*[Surrey CC are imposing parking charges at Burford Bridge in an attempt*

to reduce the environmental impact of the motorcycle meets; whether this will have any effect at all on what has become a major nuisance to those who live in the immediate vicinity remains to be seen. The SCC are experimenting with the new road surface mentioned but point out that it is slippery in icy conditions and possibly requires more frequent renewals which would make it more costly -Editor].

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## NEWSLETTER DELIVERIES AND A PLEA FOR RESEARCHERS

Mrs Vivien Ettlinger of Cliftonville, who has delivered this Newsletter in her area since our first issue has decided to stand down. Her place is being taken by an existing helper, Eric Jenkins of Flint Hill. New volunteers for the delivery task are Mrs Jane Busby (who is taking over the Tower Hill round from Mrs Lynda Bailey and her family, who have moved to another part of the town); Mrs Pam Toler, who is assuming the job in the the Deepdene Wood area; and Graham Smith who will work the Knoll Road district. My grateful thanks to Mrs Ettlinger and these new volunteers who play such an important role in keeping members in touch with their Society.

Mrs Ettlinger is of course well known as an archaeologist and local historian; we remember her substantial contribution to *Dorking: A Surrey Market Town Through Twenty Centuries* (available from the Museum shop and Waterstone's bookshop) and other local history publications. She is at present working on a history of the Holloway Estate in the south west part of the town and tells me that she would very much like to hear from members interested in undertaking local history research. Her telephone number is 01306 883839.

MB

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## LIONEL GREEN 'RETIRES'

Lionel Green decided that it was time for him to hand over as Chairman of the Museum Committee and as Vice-Chairman of the Society at the last AGM. It is typical of him that his reason was not his own benefit or because he wanted to give up, but because he felt that it was best for the Society.

the opposition to the plans for a Central Development Area and a Relief Road in Dorking. His contacts with the Surrey Archaeological Society and his own personal knowledge were of special help in relation to Listed Buildings.

People are surprised to learn that Lionel only came to live in thjs area as recently as 1952. His knowledge and love of Dorking and District make people think that he must be Dorking born and bred. It was indeed some years after he came to Dorking that he joined the Society, its work having been brought to his attention by the advertisement we used to have on the island platform at Dorking Station.

The History Group was first formed in 1967 with the object of conducting research and stimulating interest in local history and archaeology. Lionel was Chairman from 1976 to 1978, when it became the Local History Group, and again from 1980 to 1982. He has continued as an enthusiastic member and supporter of this thriving section of the Society.

When Lionel joined the Society there was no Local History Group and no Museum, and he was much involved in their formation and expansion. He was also concerned in the work of the main Society and in particular in

This is not the place to set out the history of the formation of the Museum and of the many colourful personalities involved. Despite all the efforts, plans never seemed to come to fruition and by the late 1960s the then Chairman of the Society was becoming increasingly concerned at the lack of progress. Items were

stored at Lyne, at Pippbrook House and elsewhere, but no proper home could be found to display them. What was worse was the feeling that, without a working Museum, items important to Dorking were being lost.

Lionel was asked to chair a group looking for premises and this frustrating task was carried out over the next few years with various disappointments. Finally the efforts were rewarded when in 1974 the newly-formed Mole Valley District Council offered premises in the old Dorking Foundry.

For the first few years the Chairman of the Society chaired the Museum Committee, relying on Lionel to support him in harnessing the enthusiasm of the talented and dedicated group who have made the Museum and the Society Library into the success they now are. Then in 1988 Lionel became the Museum Chairman and has continued the steady progress.

In addition to his work with the Local History Group and the Museum, Lionel has been a member of the Council of the Society since 1972 and Vice-Chairman of the Society since 1987, considering that he was doing more good for the Society as the Museum Chairman than by taking over as Chairman of the Society itself. Space does not permit the detailing of all his activities on behalf of the Society, but his interest in and work for Holmwood Common must be mentioned.

Lionel's work in the Museum involved all aspects of its development, including the collection, maintenance and display of exhibits, the evaluation and preservation of many items, dealing with security problems, the lease and other legal matters, financial planning, the publications, the creation of the reference library, the extension of the Museum premises, the Lottery Bid and all the day-to-day activities involving the work of the Curators, the stewards, the working party and the Museum Committee itself. His leadership and calm determination held a diverse team together.

Lionel welcomes Martin Cole as his successor as Museum Chairman and wishes him well. He feels that planning is needed on a long-term basis and that this is the time for a new face and new ideas. Be that as it may, he will be much missed by all associated with the Museum.

No local Society can be expected to flourish without dedicated workers like Lionel Green, prepared to put the interests of the Society first all the time. At the recent Annual General Meeting, the Society presented him with membership of the London Library in recognition of his service on our behalf and he became one of our Vice-Presidents. We look forward to many more years of Lionel's association with the Society, recognising with gratitude all his many contributions to every aspect of the work of the Society over so many years.

**CBC**

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#### **BEST DEVELOPMENT COMPETITION 1997**

Have you been impressed with the standard of a new building recently? Is it a worthwhile, even beautiful, addition to the buildings already in place? Is it, perhaps, a vast improvement on what was there before?

The Best Development Competition is run by the Society and the Dorking Advertiser in conjunction with Mole Valley District Council to promote excellence in a new building. This might be a completely new or a converted building, a large complex such as Denbies Winery (a winner in 1993) or a smaller project like the extension to the Seven Stars at Leigh (a winner in 1996). There is much we can all learn from the considered planning of a new garage or an extension to an older house - all can be considered for an award in either the large or the small category of the Competition.

If you think you would like to make a nomination and want to know more, please contact the Hon. Secretary, Mrs Lynda Bailey (10 Deepdene Vale, Dorking, RH4 1NL; tel: 01306 884969) before 30 June.

**LB**

## A NEW BOOK ABOUT LOCAL WILD LIFE

*Hidden Jewels: the Wild life of Leatherhead and Fetcham* by Jeremy Early, a local naturalist and the voluntary warden of Fetcham Mill Pond. This publication seems likely to interest many of our members. Jeremy has spent ten years studying, photographing and lecturing on local wild life and his 96 page case bound book of A4 format contains maps, a species checklist and guidance on where to observe wild life. There are 70 colour photos of such species as kingfisher, mandarin duck, goosander, water rail, roe deer, fox and 17 types of butterfly and dragonfly. At £12 (plus £2 p&p) this looks like good value at today's book prices, especially as all proceeds are to be donated to the Leatherhead & District Countryside Protection Society and the Surrey Wildlife Trust. Copies are obtainable from the author at 16 Bridge Court, Leatherhead, KT22 8BW (01372 375940). **LB/AAJ**

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## HERITAGE OPEN DAYS 1997 Saturday and Sunday, 13 and 14 September

Last year over 1,300 people visited properties or enjoyed guided historic and architectural walks that were a part of the Heritage Open Days in the Dorking area.

This year the Society is working again with the Civic Trust and Mole Valley District Council to organise a weekend of visits and events that will help everyone to appreciate the architectural and historic background to this part of the Mole Valley.

If you have any ideas for properties that you would like to see open or that you would like to know more about, please contact the Hon. Secretary, Mrs Lynda Bailey, 10 Deepdene Vale, Dorking, RH43 1NL; tel: 01306 884969 - before 30 May if possible.

Do make a note of the dates now and watch out for more information in the local press nearer the time.

**LB**

## LOCAL HOUSES OPEN TO MEMBERS

Two historic house owners who are not able to take part in Heritage Open Days have kindly offered to show small groups of members around by appointment. If interested in visiting either of the houses below, please contact the Hon. Secretary as above.

Betchworth House, Betchworth (partly by Thomas Cundy, 1765 and early 19c.)

Hopedene House, Holmbury St Mary (Norman Shaw, 1873)

The Old House, Mickleham (exterior of the 1640s) **LB/AAJ**

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## DATA PROTECTION ACT, 1984

All members of the Dorking & District Preservation Society should be aware of the following information regarding data protection.

The Society is not registered under the Act since names and addresses of members are held on a computer for the sole purpose of producing address labels to assist in the distribution of information regarding the Society to members.

It should be noted that one of the conditions of exemption from registration is that the names and addresses shall not be used for any other purpose other than that for which they are held. Thus the information held cannot be passed to a third party except in the limited circumstances allowed by the Act (broadly speaking this is when an individual authorises it, or when there is a legal requirement to do so).

Under the provisions of the Act relating to exemption, any member who objects to his or her name and address being held on a computer for the purpose stated should notify their objection to the Society by writing to the Hon. Secretary, Mrs Lynda Bailey, 10 Deepdene Vale, Dorking, RH4 1NL.

**LB**



## DORKING & DISTRICT MUSEUM

The Museum has a new Chairman, Dr. Martin Cole, D Sc, PhD, who assumed office from the date of the A.G.M. (24 April 1997). A tribute to his predecessor, Lionel Green, appears elsewhere in this issue. Congratulations are due to Martin and to the inimitable Eric Mansfield for their fine efforts, at some risk to life and limb, in retrieving the stable clock from Burford Lodge.

After a delay of no less than 18 months, the refusal in April of a bid for £25,000 assistance from the Heritage Lottery Fund on the grounds of 'technical and financial viability' came as a bitter blow. The Museum had hoped this sum would help it bring to realisation its architect-designed plans for a £50,000-£60,000 scheme for extending the present cramped premises and reorganising the displays. Some financial contribution from the local authority had been expected had the bid proved successful. AAJ

### Acquisitions since 1 December 1996

- 1 Children's book, *A Kiss for a Blow*, H C Wright, 1887\*
- 2 Framed oil painting *Spring in West-humble* - 1952 by Michael Harvey
- 3 *Her Ladyship* - First Knitting Book for making woollen garments, price 1/7d, early 1920s\*
- 4 Scholar's slate from Powell Corderoy School\*
- 5 Fire Service medal awarded to Supt F Hudson for long service (fifteen years) - May 1907\*
- 6 The mechanism of a 1858 John Moore & Son Tower Clock from the stable block and coach house of Burford Lodge, Mickleham
- 7 Dorking County Grammar School cap - 1959
- 8 Printing Block for drawing of Deepdene North Lodge made for Arnold & Son's 1922 sale
- 9 Blacksmith's hand operated drill - early 20th century
- 10 Chaff cutter - 1938
- 11 Wooden hay rake - c. 1930s
- 12 Framed oil painting of Rose Hill Arch by Agnes Ruff - c. 1971\*
- 13 Imperial Model 50 Standard Typewriter

- 14 Small drinking glass inscribed *To commemorate the 60th year of Queen Victoria's Glorious Reign\**

\* On display in the Museum

BSH

### Library

Mention Dorking Museum and most people think only of the exhibits - that Aladdin's cave of artefacts, natural history and minerals illustrating the Dorking of yesteryear. But the Museum also has another building, just across the yard. Here we house our collection of books, documents, maps, newspaper cuttings, rate books, photographs and much else. Some Preservation Society members tend to associate the library with the Local History Group but it is, in fact, an integral part of the Museum, looked after by its two curators, Gladys Arlett, who is in charge of the photograph collection, and myself, rejoicing in the title 'Curator (Library & Records)'. Of course the History Group do make good use of the library, and several of its members regularly steward there.

Gladys and I are kept very busy. Not only do we have a steady stream of researchers during museum open hours but we also have to deal with many postal enquiries, some coming from as far afield as America or Australia. Additions to the collection arrive weekly and these must also be accessioned and indexed.

Although the Museum has failed to gain lottery funding for its expansion plans, we have still benefited from having more space. The working party have cleared the room under the library (the old store room) and have made it into a comfortable 'meeting room'. This means that we have more room for researchers, which is often needed on busy days; we can entertain visiting parties and at events such as Heritage Weekend we can put up suitable exhibitions.

We can also use our new room for school groups. In the last few days sixty children from Powell Corderoy School used the library for part of their local history lessons. In three morning sessions the children worked on various activities based on maps, photo-

graphs, census returns and sale particulars and they also interviewed some long-standing local residents. It was very rewarding to see them all making good use of the museum library and I hope it will be the start of more contact with local schools in future.

Of course, all this makes even more work for Gladys and myself and we often say that we seem to have taken on full time jobs. Luckily we have a small band of willing helpers and we are very grateful to them for their hard work.

MLT

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### LOCAL HISTORY GROUP

Our well-attended meetings during the last four months have included a wide range of topics. As well as a New Year evening of quizzes and local ghost stories, we have enjoyed an entertaining talk of the traditional uses of plants and a lively members' evening on the subject of 'Schools & Schooldays', which culminated in a spirited rendition of Powell Corderoy's old school song. After our AGM in April we were treated to a short history of photography and a magic lantern show.

We were very lucky with the weather for our winter outing to St Albans in March. Fifty-two members were able to enjoy a guided tour of the Cathedral and a visit to the Verulamium Museum and still have a little time to explore the town.

At the AGM we paid tribute to Doris Mercer by making her an Honorary Life Member of the Group. Doris, a founder member and past chairman, has worked very hard for the Group over the years. She is the co-author of our latest publication, *The Deepdene, Dorking*, and previously of *A Corner of West Street* and *Chart Park*. Her meticulous research into the history of the town has also been used to great effect in the many exhibitions she has produced for the group in the past. In conferring Life Membership on her, we thank her for all her help, inspiration and above all her friendship over the years.

MLT

If you are interested in joining the Local History Group, please contact the Member-

ship Secretary, c/o the Dorking & District Museum, West Street, Dorking.

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### SAINSBURY FOODSTORE PLAN

The proposal to build a large 'foodstore' at the corner of Reigate Road and the A24 (Deepdene Avenue), involving demolition of several detached houses and destruction of some large gardens, has not gone away. The determination of Messrs. J Sainsbury plc to pursue it is demonstrated by no less than eleven objections entered on their behalf to the Deposit Version of the Mole Valley Local Plan. The Local Inquiry before the Government-appointed Inspector (Mr R O Evans) will be held in the Council Chamber, Pippbrook, Dorking between 28 May and 31 July and will then be resumed on 23 September. The Sainsbury items will be heard on Wednesday 30 July from 10.00 and the public will be able to attend. Any enquiries on this matter should be addressed to J P Leslie, MVDC Pippbrook: 01306 879350). AAJ

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### PUBLIC TRANSPORT TOPICS

Reading-Dorking-Gatwick services, now operated by the private company Thames Trains using modern stock introduced by British Rail, have shown a traffic growth of 30 per cent in the past year. The company has plans for a new information system at stations (including Dorking West and Dorking Deepdene) which will feature speech announcements of any disruptions to services and possibly closed circuit television to counteract vandalism, which is particularly virulent at Dorking Deepdene. Luggage stacks and cycle racks are to be fitted to the trains, which were originally designed for commuter services out of Paddington rather than their present role. A speeding up of services and extension of more trains across Reading to Oxford and possibly beyond are promised in the medium term. The new privatised system fell down badly on Sunday 19 January when the rail service was withdrawn during engineering works. No information was exhibited about the replacing bus services and passengers were waiting on the platforms for non-existent trains. Although

the ticket clerk at Dorking station knew of the bus replacement, he had no information to offer on bus times or stopping places ('another company'....) and when the Guildford direction buses arrived they were seen to be stopping inconveniently on the northbound carriageway of the A24 and required smart guesswork to identify.

This year there will be summer Saturday seaside specials at reduced fares from Dorking to Bognor on Saturdays at 10.05 and 11.05 with a later train from Horsham to Dorking for the return (a change of train at Horsham will be necessary in the evening).

South West Trains, our third private operator, will inaugurate this summer a half hourly service between Dorking and London (Waterloo) in the off peak period in addition to the Connex South Central's services between Horsham, Dorking and London (Victoria). The Waterloo trains will connect at Epsom with a half hourly Guildford-West Croydon service.

We had to smile at recent article in *The Daily Telegraph* in which a woman who had moved with her husband to a house in one of the Dorking area villages wrote of the awfulness of commuting from Dorking. She admitted it was easy enough to get a seat at Dorking but the trains filled up as they got nearer to London (with those dreadful fellow human beings, no doubt). Perhaps she should befriend someone else we read about recently in the same newspaper, a man who complained of the misery of driving up to London every day and when asked why he didn't go by train, replied that his company provided him with a motor car and petrol but would not pay his railway fare. It's a hard life, Henry!

AAJ

### DORKING HALLS

The Mole Valley District Council deserve every congratulation on the splendid and sympathetic refurbishment of the Dorking Halls, which reopened on 9 April. We look forward very much to the opening of the cinema later in the year (the projection equipment has yet to be installed). If sound and sight lines are as good as they seemed likely to be at our Annual General Meeting in

the Martineau Hall, Dorking's new cinema will be a real asset to the town. The appalling sound quality of film shows formerly held in the Grand Hall which deterred many potential customers seems likely to be a thing of the past.

But as always there is a down side. Whilst the book and antique fairs appear to be returning to the Halls, the very popular and well-attended postcard fairs have been deflected to an alternative venue in distant Worthing. The organiser of these fairs, Richard Kennett, has commented in *Picture Postcard Monthly*, 'The local council have made it very difficult for us to use the refurbished halls'. We are not in possession of all the facts, but such a statement does reflect badly on Dorking and the loss of such a popular event, drawing as it did large crowds from London and all over the south east as well as from the immediate area, is most regrettable.

AAJ

### TOWN ENHANCEMENT

Dorking is soon to have a 'Town Enhancement Officer with the objectives of attracting new shops and generally "enhancing" the town centre.' There are already proposals for traffic islands and tree planting in the High Street between Dene Street and the White Horse Hotel. In your Editor's view, all this skates around the more difficult and fundamental problem of the heavy and still growing flow of road trucks and cars through West Street and High Street which is doing major and increasing damage to the environment, to pedestrian enjoyment of the town centre and (yes !) to retail prosperity. A recent visit to Dorchester showed once again how delightful it is to use a town centre free from traffic noise and the attendant air pollution. With one main street given over to pedestrians and many delightful shoptlined passageways leading from it, Dorchester's retail trade appeared to be prospering and I am told that this is confirmed by the experts. Dorking could be like that if West Street were closed above Junction Road (see page 4 of our last issue) and think too how it would benefit our Museum, at present only accessible by those prepared to brave its traffic fumes and dangerously narrow pavements!

AAJ

## SPRING WALK

This year's Spring Walk, led by Sue Tombs, will start at 14.00 on Buckland Green and finish there about two hours later on Sunday 18 May. There will be the usual charge of £2 per person. Participants may wish to explore a private garden which will be open on the walk route.

AAJ

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## RANMORE FOOTPATHS CAMPAIGN

The battle to preserve public access over seven footpaths across the Denbies part of Ranmore, now in its eighth year, goes to the High Court for Judicial Review later in 1997. The Ramblers' Association has made a generous contribution towards legal costs. A Ranmore Appeal has however been launched to secure the financial cover and we have been asked to publicise the ways in which DDPS members can if they wish, contribute to this. All offers of help, financial and otherwise should be made to Robert D Billson, Keeper's Cottage, Ranmore Common Road, DORKING RH5 6AZ (Answerphone 01306 741602).

Here's how you can help:

1. Send a cheque payable to The Ranmore Appeal (money found not to be required after the legal hearing will be refunded).
2. Donate unwanted jumble/equipment (it will be collected and sold at car boot sales).
3. Donate prizes for events planned this summer.
4. Enter the sponsored Ride, Walk and Dog Walk on Sunday 17 August 1997.
5. Assist organisers on Sunday 19 October 1997 at a Horse Cross Country Event at Kenilworth Equestrian Centre Great Bookham.
6. If you run a business, sponsor classes at (5) and for £25, receive programme publicity.

HG/AAJ

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## CHANGES IN OFFICERS

The Chairman announces with regret that Mr N F Maltby, a member of the MVDC, has resigned from the Society's council but continues to be a member of the Deepdene Gardens Committee. Mr Maltby has been thanked for his contributions to the Society's efforts.

Mr M K Forster has been confirmed as Treasurer and Mr L P Hawkes has been elected as an Honorary Life Member. Sir Martin Wedgwood, the Chairman of the Planning Team, has been appointed Vice-Chairman in succession to Mr. Lionel Green.

AAJ

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## NEWS FROM THE PLANNING TEAM

These notes cover the first four months of this year. As a result of our meetings during this period we have written to the Chief Planning Officer on 36 separate planning applications. Of these, five related to sites in Dorking, four to designated settlement areas, four to village conservation areas, 21 to rural sites within the Green Belt and only two to sites beyond the Green Belt. These categorisations are extremely rough and include all kinds of applications, but the pre-dominance of Green Belt sites among our representations is interesting, although it may be unrepresentative.

In fact of the three examples we would like to comment on individually, two are in Dorking. The first of them is the old Deepdene car showroom site, on the north side of the High Street, opposite the Kentucky Fried Chicken shop. An application to convert this into a theme pub was turned down last year. An application for a change of use to car-repairs, on which we wrote, was in its turn rejected in February. We felt that the site was best suited to flats or offices and commented that the only change of use which we thought would be acceptable would involve the redevelopment of the site.

The other Dorking application in which readers might be interested is the one received from the owners of St. Martin's Walk, who wish to floodlight their façade. We wrote in support of this, and encouraged

them to approach the Vicar of Dorking in order to include the east end of the church, and possibly also the spire, in their scheme. permission was granted, and we shall be interested to see in what form the scheme goes ahead.

The Landmark Trust, which now leases Goddards, in Abinger, from the Lutyens Trust, applied in January for permission to show parts of the house to the public on Wednesday afternoons. This required a report from the County Highways Department who are required to make a pessimistic estimate of the increase in the volume of traffic that this would cause. They objected and so the application, on which we had written in strong support, was refused. A further application from the Landmark Trust has now been received, stipulating that visits are to be by appointment only, and again we have written in support.

Despite the steady flow of planning applications requiring comment, the last four months seem in retrospect to have been dominated by work in advance of the impending Public Inquiry on the new Mole Valley Local Plan, which is starting at the end of May. Daphne Rice writes separately on this below. It has also been dominated by appeals and pending appeals.

The Green Belt has already the shock of two significant reversals this year. The first is the result of the Mizens Farm appeal, which is outside Mole Valley but creates a grizzly precedent. An important part of the Green Belt land between Woking and Runnymede is now to go under a factory and testing track for a manufacturer of racing cars. No matter all the regulations protecting Green Belt land; Woking District Council held that employment is of overriding importance. The Inspector and the (Conservative) Government agreed. The second is Tapwood Pit alongside Buckland. This silica sand mine was not included in the Surrey Minerals Plan 1993, as it was envisioned that mining would come to an end in a few years, once the existing area is exhausted. The application was to extend the area of extraction at both ends, allowing mining to continue for a further 12 years. The County Council refused permission. At the appeal, the Inspector

agreed with all the main points raised by objectors, but allowed the appeal.

A few days ago we had the first day of the appeal by the owner of Juniper Hill, at Mickleham, against the enforcement order requiring him to re-instate the old bridleway he had filled in and diverted without permission but, because of a technicality, the second day has been postponed to July 21. This, as it happens, is the day before the appeal starts on the Upper Farm caravan site, at Box Hill Village Hall. Here a developer hopes to build a 35-unit housing estate on ten acres, on Green Belt land right up against the National Trust property, and threatens to bring in 119 caravans if he is refused. Could I put in a plea for as many members as possibly can to attend these appeals. A high attendance is a good indication of the extent of public feeling and this is something that Inspectors take into account in reaching their decisions.

MW

### **Mole Valley Local Plan**

The Local Plan for the whole of the Mole Valley District is now entering its final phase. In April 1994 the Council published a consultation draft on which the Planning Subcommittee of this Society commented in detail. In April 1996 the Deposit Draft was published and in December 1996, following consideration of the representations made, the Council published a further series of proposed modifications. The Public Inquiry into the Local Plan starts at the end of May and will continue until the end of July. It will then reconvene in September to consider the Leatherhead policies and proposals. Your Planning Sub-committee have gone through all the documents and made comments on behalf of the Society. When I explain that the Local Plan is some 200 pages long with another 78 pages of appendices, and includes 198 policies, you will understand that the process required several lengthy sessions with wet towels round the head to complete! The cross-referencing between the deposit draft, the schedule of objections and the list of proposed alterations (of which there were two versions) was extremely complicated, but we hope that we did not miss anything important.

Section 54a of the 1991 Planning Act fundamentally changed the way in which the planning system operates. Prior to the Act, the Local Plan was just one of a number of material factors that the local authority had to take into account when considering planning proposals. Section 54a, which was a late amendment to the Bill, gives the Local Plan a pre-eminent position. All applications must first be considered against the provisions of the adopted Local Plan and if they conflict with them there is a presumption that the application will be refused. The system has therefore become plan-led. This change to the planning framework makes it vital for organisations such as this Society to play an active role in ensuring that the Local Plan contains policies which represent our views and also to support the local authority in resisting changes proposed by many objectors who may wish to see the current policy framework changed or weakened in order to enable their own agenda to be successful.

At the deposit stage in April 1996 we lodged 27 objections on behalf of the Society. As one would expect, the majority of policies are ones with which we had no fundamental disagreement, many of them having been included in earlier Local Plans, but there were a number of areas where we felt the wording could be strengthened or clarified.

In December the Council published its response to all the objections and it was very gratifying to see how many of the points we made had been taken on board. In particular

a complete new policy had been included on Light Pollution, at the suggestion of the local branch of the CPRE. The policy is very comprehensive and states that proposals for illumination which adversely affect residential properties, listed buildings or conservation areas, or the character and appearance of the countryside, will not be permitted. If proposals are permitted as exceptions then strict conditions will be imposed to limit their impact.

Thirteen of our original objections had been resolved in a satisfactory manner. On the remaining fourteen we have had further discussions with the Mole Valley Planning Officers and it appears that seven of those will be resolved by further suggested amendments to wording. The seven remaining points will be discussed at the Public Inquiry, either by putting in written submissions or by an informal hearing where the parties meet with the Inspector to make their case and discuss the issues. Three of our objections relate to the detail of the policies for the provision of affordable housing in rural areas, one is concerned with the designation of potential Sites of Nature Conservation Importance, another with the viability of golf course proposals, and two with the policies relating to agricultural development.

We were very pleased to see how many of our suggested alterations had been accepted by the Council and feel that as a result the Local Plan has been considerably strengthened and improved.

DR

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## 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
Bullimore's	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 IHU	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

## *Lines written in Wotton Churchyard*

*Spare thou these native violets;  
They grow  
From folded hands and quiet hearts  
Below.*

*– Breathe but a prayer, and on thy way  
With slow*

*Soft steps pass by, nor stop to pluck  
One sweet*

*Shy petal from its green retreat,*

*Nor wrong*

*With one crushed flower the dust beneath  
Thy feet.*

H

'H' was probably the Rev. W. E. Hunter, who had preached at Wotton on behalf of the Bloemfontein Mission.