

DORKING & DISTRICT PRESERVATION SOCIETY



Established in 1929

NEWSLETTER

No. 25

March 2000

Contents

Waste Disposal (Editorial)	1 & 6
Rail Stations Improved	3
War Memorial	4
Internet	4
Waitrose Canopy	4
Letters	5
Subscriptions	5
Planning (Leisure Centre, Statues, Waste Disposal)	6
Museum	6
Library and Archives	7
Acquisitions	8
Green Belt	8
Sculpture	10
Transport Plans	10
Graffiti	11
Annual General Meeting	11

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NEWSLETTER 25: March 2000

Free to members

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The opinions expressed in this Newsletter by the Editor and contributors do not necessarily reflect the views of the Society. The Editor welcomes letters and items for publication from members and other readers. All unattributed material is contributed by the Editor.

EDITORIAL NOTE

Surrey County Council's latest publication about household rubbish disposal (available at Pippbrook) concentrates on new "energy from waste" treatment facilities (ie incinerators) to be sited at Clockhouse Brickworks, Capel and at Copyhold, Reigate. However, since this leaflet was printed, a proposal has emerged for an alternative incinerator site at Slyfield, north of Guildford. Only one of these seems likely to receive planning approval.

Having passed its waste disposal responsibilities over to private contractors (Surrey Waste Management Ltd) without reserving for itself some residual powers of control of important aspects of these responsibilities, the County Council appears to have shot itself in the foot and created problems of planning approval and environmental protection for which it also has responsibility.

There can be no doubt that the contractors' Capel proposal forms an important issue for this Society and the elected representatives of this area on the County Council, both Conservative and Liberal.

Before considering the main topic, we should briefly explain how this crisis has arisen. Until recently, 90 per cent of Surrey's huge output of waste was tipped into landfill sites such as old brickworks, clay pits and the former chalk quarries at Betchworth. Central government and EU directives now require (or are about to require) that landfill must be reduced by 70 per cent by 2005. To cope with the new situation, the contractors propose to burn the non-recyclable waste in two large incinerator plants, one at Capel, costing some £200,000,000; these installations will produce saleable electrical energy, in the process emitting limited quantities of carcinogenic dioxins, which will have to be monitored. It will be necessary to carry the waste to the new incinerators from improved waste transfer sites, over considerable distances. All concerned, including the supposedly environmentally-caring County Council, seem to assume this can only be done by huge road trucks.

Continued on next page

To dispel any fears about the consequences of burning waste in Surrey's countryside, the County Council's publicity leaflet seeks to reassure by playing down the health risks and environmental consequences, saying these are not "significant". We are told that the dioxins released into the atmosphere will be mere wisps compared with the amounts of similar cancer-causing fumes emitted by Guy Fawkes season bonfires, by garden barbecues, by the clouds of diesel fumes belched out on our roads daily by cars, vans and trucks, and by the untreated aviation fuels burned in the hundreds of jet aircraft that render Surrey's skies so noisy every day. In other words, "what does a little bit more of what does you no good matter when you are ingesting a goodly dose anyway?"

Let us accept this for the sake of argument. We might even concede that a treatment plant at Capel or Slyfield could look just a tad prettier than the industrial clutter on these sites at the moment. It is interesting that whilst the leaflet starts with the heading WASTE - A GROWING THREAT TO THE ENVIRONMENT, the environmental threat it deals with is solely that related to the waste materials and the present methods of disposal. What the leaflet does not address, does not even mention, is the *crucial question of the regular traffic of waste trucks over the congested and inadequate local road system*. When the waste contractors revealed that they were proposing to route the trucks through Dorking town centre and up and down the congested and accident-prone A24 and A25 roads to feed their hungry boilers at Capel, this stimulated some angry letters to the local newspaper. After attending one of the contractors' public consultation meetings, the Dorking Town Centre Manager expressed his concern at the way the transport and other aspects of these proposals are being handled.

One letter in *The Dorking Advertiser* suggested the waste should be carried to Capel by rail from Guildford, via a restored link between the two lines at Dorking Deepdene and the under-used Dorking-Horsham railway. Not practicable, we fear.

If it were a case of building a new road, public money would meet the whole cost, but any rail siding grants from the Exchequer for the Slyfield and Clockhouse sites, if approved, would cover only 50 per cent of the cost. Railtrack, as a shareholder-based, market-oriented company, would demand that the cost of restoring the single line connection at Dorking be met in full by Surrey Waste Management Ltd, and be backed by guarantees of viable traffic levels. Nor would it just be a question of a little rebuilding of the old railway earthworks; Chester Close now occupies much of the route of the old line, and its

residents would have to be uprooted and rehoused. Integrating the link into today's complicated and remote signalling arrangements would not be cheap. Consider this a non-starter.

There is of course no point in using rail unless there is to be direct rail access right into the transfer station and into the incinerator plant. If for a moment we assume these facilities are to be installed respectively at Slyfield (Guildford) and Capel, a glance at the large-scale map suggests it would not be impossible to construct a siding over more or less open land from the Slyfield site to the Guildford-Leatherhead line at Woodbridge, Guildford, or to build another rail siding into the site at Clockhouse, Capel. With the necessary signalling, both new works would be very costly, even if central Government released siding grants. Additionally, a fleet of rail wagons would have to be bought or hired by the waste contractor.

Even so, it could be argued that the environmental benefits to be gained by diversion to rail would be worth the financial outlay and renegotiation of the contract, since this option would entirely remove the road traffic nightmare foreseen for Dorking and its neighbourhood (up to 70 vehicles a day carrying waste from Slyfield and returning for more. Diversion via the M25 is hardly an answer, since this route is often blocked by accidents, and such events would see the trucks routed through Gomshall and Dorking; nor would using this longer way round remove the new traffic from the busy A24 through Leatherhead and Dorking and the dangerous section of that road south of Clark's Green, Capel.

A reassessment of this ill-conceived proposal for feeding the Capel site by road is most certainly indicated. It is not just Capel that would be affected: the whole precious rural sector between Guildford and the Sussex border is under threat from the additional volume of road traffic predicted.

But is Capel the right site? Would not the optimum solution be to develop the Slyfield site as a central "energy from waste plant" (to use the euphemism)? A siding there would enable non-recyclable waste to be brought there by rail from at least some of the proposed "improved transfer stations". Here perhaps is the basis of a sensible, more environmentally-friendly solution. The revenue from the electricity generated could be used initially to offset the extra capital outlay on rail infrastructure and rolling stock.

It is to be hoped we shall now see democracy in action on this issue. Some suggestions are offered overleaf.

Alan A. Jackson

What YOU can do about the Waste Disposal Proposals

As will be seen from our Planning Officer's Report on another page, the Society is well aware of the facts and is keeping a close eye on this matter. But do not sit back and wait for others to act. If you are moved to object to the plans put forward for Capel, which the County Council's leaflet appears to accept without question, or wish to suggest alternatives, get involved now. Names and locations of the County Council officials responsible for the contract and for guidance as to how to object to the Capel planning application may be reached by telephoning 08546-009-009 (a local rate call). It is suggested you then put your views and objections in writing. It may be productive also to approach your own elected

representative, the County Councillor, expressing in writing any concerns you have and seeking a reaction. If you do not know your County Councillor's name and address, ask at Pippbrook (Dorking 885001), giving the enquiry clerk the precise area in which you live. You can also write to Paul Taylor, deputy managing director of Surrey Waste Management Ltd., the waste contractors. His address is 21 Chessington Rd, Epsom, KT17 1TT. If you feel moved to seek the views of your local MP on this matter, so far not made public, write to Sir Paul Beresford (Con) (Mole Valley), House of Commons, London, SW1A 0AA.

NEWS and other NOTES

LOCAL RAIL STATIONS IMPROVED

At **Boxhill**, the cycle shop is now operated by a new owner who will be selling tea and coffee to commuters in the mornings. It is not clear whether he will also have a ticket agency. The waiting accommodation on the Up platform is to be reopened this year and CCTV is to be installed on the station. At **Dorking**, CCTV is soon to be installed to cover the station and car park. A table has been provided in the ticket hall with reading matter for passengers waiting for trains, many of which now depart from the adjacent platform outside rush hours, thus avoiding the necessity of negotiating the stairs and subway. At **Holmwood**, the platforms have now been resurfaced and other improvement work carried out. It is hoped that CCTV will be installed in the near future and new fencing erected. This may deter child trespassers, who are apparently not told that the railway is a dangerous place to play, especially when as here, there are no staff to watch their activities and check their natural tendency to explore. At **Dorking Deepdene**, new seating has been provided, but this station continues to be very vulnerable to youthful vandalism and graffiti scrawling.

OCKLEY STATION THREAT DIVERTED?

Platform resurfacing with tactile paving for the visually impaired has also been completed at Ockley. Additionally the subway has been repainted and other improvements made. CCTV and stronger lighting to deter crime are proposed for the near future. As part of the general refurbishment, Railtrack apparently intended to demolish the wooden canopy on the Down platform and install new waiting shelters on the Up platform in place of the existing wooden structure, which dates from before 1914.

At this point enter Mr Trevor Burlinson of Beare Green, a regular user. He was not convinced of the need to demolish the structures, believing them to be generally sound. He pointed out that, with a little care, the Down side canopy and the existing shelter on the London platform could be restored to their original condition, thus allowing the station to continue exhibiting its Victorian aspect. He has commented:

"Thanks to its location in the Metropolitan Green Belt, surrounding fields and woodland complete a timeless and charming scene for the visitor and regular traveller alike. The whole assembly represents the finest example of a complete standard London Brighton & South Coast Railway country station which has been in continuous use for 133 years and has survived more or less intact."

Mr Burlinson has been very active indeed in pursuit of sensitive restoration and listing by English Heritage and has also written to the local MP. He appears to have at least secured a pause for reconsideration.

Here is another example, following the PAL saga, of how determined and well-organised independent effort may achieve some success in overcoming the not always well-laid plans of officialdom. Anyone wishing to help Mr Burlinson in his efforts to preserve this uniquely complete example of the first standard design for a small LB&SCR country station should contact him direct (01306-711252).

DORKING WAR MEMORIAL

We understand that the main panels showing the names of the victims of World War I will be restored this year. The floodlighting proposal also seems likely to go ahead.

AUTUMN MEETING (28 OCTOBER 1999)

The Society's meeting in the Masonic Hall was held inside an elaborate nylon (and hopefully fireproof) tent, lit by electroliers. It was vaguely reminiscent of the pavilions used by medieval monarchs and knights at tournaments and on battlefields; one expected King Henry V might walk in at any moment. Apparently erected for an earlier function that day, this structure engendered crowded and stuffy conditions which made it difficult to appreciate the display of colour photographs of the entries in the Best Development Competition or to concentrate on the best efforts of the speakers. Once again we regretted that the talk on the winning entries lacked the elucidation that accompanying colour slides could have brought. But this time it was perhaps as well, since the heat generated by a projector would certainly not have been welcome.

WE'RE ON THE INTERNET

Our internet pages are now up and running. If any of you would like to see what they look like, go to www.ddps.org/uk/. There are separate pages for the Museum and the Caves. For those who wish to join the Society, there is also a Membership Application Form, which they can print out and fill in. (Interactive pages may follow later, if we can afford them.) Feed-back will be welcomed. MW

W. SONGHURST LTD.

This Corporate Member is now located at Rayleigh House, Chapel Lane, Westcott, Dorking, RH4 3PJ; the telephone number is unchanged.

COUNTRYSIDE CONSERVATION OFFICER

Miss Margaret Benselin has resigned from the Society and its Council following her move to Petersfield. Mr N Owen now has sole responsibility for the Countryside portfolio.

DEPARTMENT OF APOLOGIES

The Editor was solely responsible for absent-mindedly attributing the Report of the Local History Group in *Newsletter 24* to Mrs Mary Turner and adding her present post description. Mrs Turner is of course no longer Chairman of the Group. As no Report of the Group's activities was submitted by copy date, the Editor made use of a report, apparently by Mrs Hunter, noted in the Minutes of the DDPS Committee.

Mrs Turner also points out that Patience Gapper was wrongly referred to in this report as *Florence Gapper* and (in the Museum Report) Denys Hodson was inadvertently renamed *David Hodson*.

As the Museum Report also did not appear in time for acceptable reasons, one was compiled by the Editor from various sources. In future, in view of the possibility of similar errors occurring from last-minute work, may we please ask all concerned to make sure their reports reach the Editor by the dates noted on page 1 of each issue. Apologies to all whose names were so cruelly distorted or misused.

CANOPY OUTSIDE THE WAITROSE STORE, SOUTH STREET, DORKING

General opinion, including that of the Editor, is that this canopy, erected towards the end of 1999, is a very elegant solution to the difficult architectural problem of adding to this very ugly 1960 frontage some much-needed weather protection for customers waiting with their purchases for their cars and taxis. The result is arguably a visual improvement to the whole facade. But you can't please everyone: the Society's Planning Committee received no less than three complaints about it!

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Thank you for the *Newsletter*, which I always enjoy reading. This is a very UNimportant point but on reading the poem on the back of the last issue about the loss of the beech tree, I thought you might like to know that in 1998 24 beech trees were planted by the Mole Valley District Council in the Dorking area with money provided by friends, to celebrate an 80th birthday. There are no plaques and no names but I thought you might like to know that all the trees are doing well and are under the care of the tree department of the Mole Valley (Council).

Thankyou for all your work to keep this area so attractive and such a glorious place in which to live.

(Name and address withheld by request)

We trust the birthday lady is doing as well as her trees - Editor.

I would like to comment on the excellent editorial in the November *Newsletter*. This outlined the problems we will all have to face if there is further housing development in our area and how this will affect our lives.

As an example you quoted the *Rokefield* development at Westcott and said that the "Village Association greeted it with little protest, even saying that many think it quite handsome". Anyone reading this and not knowing the background would, we feel, perhaps get the wrong impression of our Association and think that we welcomed development.

In fact *Rokefield* has been a large nursing home for many years with residents and living-in staff. The site of over 12 acres is being developed by alteration of the main house and new building only within the footprint of the old service area, to give 19 residential units. By far the main part of the site will be taken up by gardens and woodland.

The volume of traffic from the new housing will not be materially different from that generated by the old nursing home and its servicing.

Our Association is well aware of the problems that construction work will cause to local residents. However, we know that some sort of redevelopment of the site is unavoidable and we felt that we would prefer to have this development, which is in keeping with the area, rather than something less acceptable and of a far greater density.

D W Webb
Co-Chairman, Westcott Village Association

We are pleased to give space to this considered view of the effects of the Westcott redevelopment. Our comment, given above in quotation marks, was closely based on a report in "The Dorking Advertiser". Would representatives of Village Groups and Residents' Associations please send me reports of local problems, development proposals and events, along with their views; this was one of the original aims when setting up this Newsletter and we shall be delighted to give such items wider publicity, especially when they consider the wrong impression has been given by uninformed comments and reports, whatever their source - Editor.

SUBSCRIPTIONS NOW DUE

Unless you pay by Banker's Order, your 2000 subscription is now due.
The current rates are -

Individuals - £5 (£3 if over 60)
Family membership - £7

Cheques - including any donation you may wish to add - should be sent to:
Mrs Mo Bushell, 51 Deepdene Vale, Dorking, Surrey, RH4 1NJ.

If you wish to discuss membership and subscription matters,
please 'phone Mrs Bushell on 01306-883941.

REPORTS OF SOCIETY OFFICERS AND GROUPS

PLANNING OFFICER

Dorking Halls are becoming increasingly popular, and two very smart banners are to be erected to advertise forthcoming events.

The former garage building next to the Halls (at present in use as car showrooms) is to become the new Leisure Centre with much-improved facilities. We have been assured that the number of car-parking spaces will remain the same.

Outside Pippbrook Council Offices there is to be placed a life-size bronze statue of Thomas Cubitt (1788-1855). Cubitt was a builder who revolutionised practices in the industry and was responsible for many large projects in London, including Belgravia and the East Front of Buckingham Palace (refaced in 1912); he bought the Denbies Estate in 1850, replacing the house with a grandiose new mansion (demolished in 1953).

If a similar statue of Ralph Vaughan Williams were to stand on the opposite side of the Reigate Road outside the Dorking Halls, this would make a most attractive entrance to the town.

We are very aware of the pressures for more housing and in particular infilling, and will make a very careful study of any such applications.

The best method of waste disposal for Surrey is currently under discussion, including the possible erection of an incinerator at the Clockhouse brickworks, one mile south of Capel village. This would

be a huge development on an existing landfill site. We attended the Open Day in Capel Village Hall and our concerns are:

1. *Air pollution:* Pollutants are governed by European Union regulations and must be constantly monitored by an independent authority. We are concerned that pollutants could be combined with other local pollution sources (eg Gatwick Airport) to produce unacceptable levels.
2. *Associated road traffic - proposed routes and volume:* One suggested route from the depot near Guildford to Capel is via Abinger Hammer, Wotton and Dorking town. This is quite unacceptable. A preferred route and one which would probably burn less fuel and reduce pollution is via the A3, M25 and A24. The volume of traffic will need to be monitored very carefully.

A planning application has yet to be submitted but we are of the opinion that Surrey Waste Management Ltd has a great deal to consider following their "Open Days". The attendance at these was very good and a lot of questions were put forward. We are on the mailing list for further information.

ANN CHAMPION

Editorial note: The statues mentioned above are quite separate from those discussed in the Chairman's article printed elsewhere in this issue.

DORKING MUSEUM

RESTORATION WORK ON OIL PAINTINGS

We are very pleased with the progress of the work on cleaning and repairing 20 of our oil paintings depicting local scenes. Dr Richard Hearn, a professional conservator, has been using the workshop at the Museum to painstakingly restore the pictures to their former glory. Some are over 100 years old and had accumulated an immense amount of grime which dimmed the colours. Others had torn or wavy canvas and needed remounting or new stretchers. One or two of the paintings are on wood panels or board and are in quite good condition. Where paint has flaked, missing pieces are touched with acrylics; apparently the blue sky is the most difficult to match.

Some of you may have seen the *Dorking Advertiser* photograph of our "Picture Ladies", Barbara Turnbull and Joyce Foster, with the picture frames

they had been cleaning ready for the return of the restored paintings. Several of the very old frames with gesso mouldings need specialist attention, and this work will be carried out by Nutley Galleries, Reigate.

The cost of the picture restoration work is being met by the South Eastern Museum Service and Mole Valley District Council, each providing 50% of the total cost (in the region of £3,630). We are most grateful to Mr and Mrs C Kohler of the Bantam Trust for a grant of £250 for repair work to the picture frames.

When finished, the paintings will be displayed in the Museum extension in the Spring, and we hope some will be on view in the Mole Valley Millennium Festival of Arts exhibition in the Autumn.

MUSEUM EXHIBITS

A start has been made on rearranging the Museum exhibits to make use of the additional floor space in the extension. The radio and TV display, and our large collection of domestic items, have been moved to their new locations. Brian Hodges and Fred Plant have recorded details of all the items for our computerised data base.

LIBRARY & ARCHIVES

Curatorial work necessitated closure of the Library until 1 March, and we apologise for any inconvenience caused. It may not be realised that an immense amount of work is needed to properly look after our collections. Gladys Arlett and Margaret Reed are overhauling our large collection of post-cards, for which Alan Jackson is compiling a computer-based record and index. Mary Turner and Brian Overell have been sorting and improving the storage conditions for our collection of plans,

ephemera, records and historical notes, and Rita Percival has been recording and filing away the backlog of press cuttings.

FUND-RAISING

We have been fortunate with grants and legacies but the running costs of our Museum have increased with its expansion and development. The Society is looking at ways of enhancing its assistance with the revenue expenditure of the Museum, but we would like to encourage members and any non-members they may know, to make a regular donation for the benefit of the Museum. When you make use of our library and archives, please be as generous as you can.

MARTIN COLE
Chairman

LIBRARY

During 1999 there were 114 accessions to the Museum Library, not including photographs. Some of these are single items and others are collections of documents, maps etc., making a total of 300. All are indexed and available for study. Obviously I cannot fill the *Newsletter* with the complete list, but here are a few of those not mentioned in my summer report:

1. Printout of database of the URC Registers (1722-1837). (Ref R297)
2. Copies of 63 charters relating to Dorking (13c-16c) and copies of the 13 membranes of the Manor of Dorking Court Roll (1282-3), all with transcripts and translations. (Ref R308/1-76)
3. A collection of documents relating to 4-6 Reigate Road (1930-1964). (Ref MA26 & R310/1-7)
4. Material relating to the Dorking Relief Road Scheme (1963-71). (Ref H369/1-11)
5. *The Railway in Surrey* by Alan A Jackson (1999).
6. *Local History, a Handbook for Beginners* by Philip Reden (1999).

As well as the work involved in accessioning, packing and indexing new material, we also have to deal with visiting researchers and postal enquiries. For instance, at the end of 1999, I was in correspondence with a 94-year-old gentleman

in New Zealand. He was asking about his grandparents, who emigrated from Dorking in the late 19c. It turns out that his family were millers at Milton Court Mill for at least 80 years. In 1879 grandfather, Alfred Wells, was made bankrupt and after a few years took his family to NZ to make a fresh start. And, just to show that Museum Curators can use modern technology, I have been in contact by e-mail with an American descendent of a member of the Stilwell family, who left Dorking in 1638 and settled on Manhattan Island.

Three groups from Powell Corderoy School visited in November. They studied old photographs in the Library and did a children's quiz in the Museum. We hope to be able to set up other services for local schools during the year.

As I write, the Museum is in the process of buying a large collection of sale particulars and photographs (1821-1988). It was thought that the collection should be preserved for Dorking & District and, after a generous discount, the cost is £810. This means that the Library budget is now entirely used up for the next two years. The Museum Committee would therefore be very grateful for any donations towards the purchase and conservation of this collection.

MARY TURNER
Museum Curator (Library & Records)

LIST OF ACQUISITIONS SINCE 28 SEPTEMBER 1999

1. Ironing Board - c 1950 *
2. Nash Petrol Mower (J A Prestwick) - c 1950
3. World War II night-light (Osram) *
4. Small cuff-links box from W B Cull, Watch-maker, Jeweller and Optician, 100 High St, Dorking *
5. Genuine hand-made doll's clothes (two items) - c 1912
6. Label from a "Utility" blanket purchased during World War II, with accompanying explanatory notes *
7. Four fragments of crockery inscribed "The Fort Tea Gardens, Box Hill"
8. Civil Defence First Aid Manual issued by the Home Office - 1950 *
9. World War II First Aid materials - four packets of bandages and one zinc oxide adhesive plaster *
10. One-gallon stoneware ginger-beer jar with wooden tap. Brewed by R T Daniells, Dorking *
11. One poster relating to the South African War and Dorking - Service of thanksgiving in Parish Church on 20 May 1900 *

* On display in Museum

B S HODGES
Curator (Exhibits)

 OTHER REPORTS

If your Report is missing, or the Report you seek is nowhere to be found in these pages, it is because none had been received by the Editor by 5 February (see dates on page 1) or indeed in the subsequent week, when this issue was being assembled by him.

THE THREAT TO THE GREEN BELT IS STILL THERE

In our last issue I wrote about the truly dreadful threat to the Green Belt arising from the 'Crow Report', and later in November I sent you all a separate letter on the same subject, asking as many as possible to write to the Secretary of State for the Environment, Transport and the Regions, John Prescott.

Some of you who did this copied their letters to me. In these cases I was able to thank you individually. I would also like to thank now those of you who wrote but whom I have not been able to thank before. Many thanks also to those who were able to attend the CPRE protest meeting at the Leatherhead Institute on 10 December. It was an extremely good and well-attended meeting, and the resolution passed, condemning the Crow Report, was forwarded to the Secretary of State.

After discussions with our President and several members of your Executive Committee, the following letter was sent to the Secretary of State over my signature as your Chairman:

22 December 1999

Dear Deputy Prime Minister,

The Crow Report

Our Society has over 1,000 members, and from our name you will see that we concern ourselves with environmental problems in the southern part of the district of Mole Valley. We are affiliated to the CPRE Surrey, whose letter of 10 December you already have. It will therefore be no surprise to you that we read the Crow Report on SERPLAN with amazement and disbelief. It causes us great concern. We find we are not alone in this; indeed it is difficult to find anyone who holds a contrary view.

Our seven main concerns are as follows:

1. *The Report is full of mercantilist, extreme right-wing prejudices in favour of the primacy of market forces, leading to a return to discredited 'predict and provide' attitudes and to the rubbishing of concerns for the quality of life (see para 8.1 and passim thereafter). These prejudices are not discussed; they are simply assumed.*
2. *The reasoning behind the suggested revised figures for housing development in the Region is peculiar. 'They are not merely the best (figures) we have; we are persuaded of their reliability' (para 7.27). These figures, however, were the result of an analysis carried out in 1992 of changing social patterns (see point 4 below). So how can this set of figures be 'reliable' for the quite different purposes to which Prof Crow proposes to put them?*
3. *Instead the houses, we learn, are needed to satisfy the natural demands of the south-east as an 'engine of growth in the national economy' (para 2.4 and elsewhere). The net reproduction rate of the UK is now less than 1.0, and what growth there is in the working population is mainly through immigration. Modern technology makes the siting of new industrial plant and services less critical than it used to be. One region's gain is thus another's loss.*
4. *There is no discussion of the type of housing required, or of the predicted growing need for housing affordable by single-parent households or by the elderly living alone.*
5. *There is only the most perfunctory reference in the Report to the huge public cost of the expansion being recommended. The construction in the south-east over the next 20 years of the equivalent of five towns each the size of Southampton will require an immense public investment in infrastructure. Can your department guarantee that there will be extra allocations of public funds from the Treasury to pay for this investment without robbing Peter (ie other regions) to pay Paul?*
6. *The revised housing figures are particularly hard on Surrey, much of which is in the Green Belt. Professor Crow's hints that the Green*

Belt should be sacrificed to development in areas of greatest pressure are ominous, but particularly so for Surrey. Where does he honestly think the houses can be put?

7. *Even though Prof Crow's views were already well-known, the actual contents of the Report came as a surprise to many. He appears to have ignored all the evidence of those with whom he disagreed. In effect he tears up the SERPLAN Report and proposes the imposition of a plan which every Member of Parliament of the Region, every County Councillor and every District Councillor regards with horror. So much for the consensual policies to which your Government is believed to be committed.*

It may well be that your department will pick out those recommendations of the Report with which it is possible without difficulty to agree, and select others which may be acceptable if appropriately amended. The Report is, however, so deeply imbued with that concept of the be all and end all of 'market forces' that was such a feature of the 1980's, that the simplest as well as the best way, Sir, of dealing with it is to reject it in toto.

Yours sincerely

(Signed) Martin Wedgwood
Chairman of the Society

To bring you up to date: The Report and all letters received by the Secretary of State were passed by the Department for the Environment, Transport and the Regions (DETR) to the Government Office for the South East (GOSE) in Guildford, to prepare their response to the Report. By this stage the GOSE response is probably in the hands of the DETR, whose draft revision of the Regional Planning Guidance for the South East could perhaps be published in the second half of April. It is at this point that comments from the public will be officially invited. We await it with great interest, and expect to have further comments to make.

We have heard that Professor Crow is not now to chair a similar Examination Panel that is to comment on the draft Regional Planning Guidance for the North East. Is this a straw in the wind?

MW

SCULPTURE IN DORKING

In April last year we heard an excellent talk by Michael Gwilliam, the Director of the Civic Trust. Those of you who were there will remember that in the course of his talk he showed a number of slides in which various town centres had been enhanced by the installation of specially-commissioned sculptures. Most of them were in the north of England. This idea, in my case, fell on fully receptive ears. Since then I have discussed it with the Executive Committee and with your Council, who have both given me their support. I would now like to canvas everyone in the Society for their views.

The plan is, briefly, that first we identify sites in the centre of Dorking which would be embellished by a suitably designed piece of sculpture. For several years in succession thereafter we first invite artists to send photographs of their work and then invite a short-list of artists to submit drawings of their ideas for the site we have chosen. Finally we commission one of them to carry out his idea.

The sculptures should be user-friendly and accessible, which means in effect that they should be at least partly figurative - and certainly not bafflingly abstract! One also has to say nowadays that they

should be made of solid non-destructible materials, for obvious reasons.

The role of the Society is to provide the organisation and the fund-raising to get this done, not to pay for it itself. It is, indeed, important that as many people as possible in the community be able to contribute to the cost, in order to encourage a feeling in the public at large that the sculptures belong to them. We need sculptures that will cause a smile of pleasure in those who look at them. We will have chosen well if they want to touch them. Touching them, indeed, should be encouraged.

Michael Forster, Beryl Higgins and Hannah Peschar have all agreed to join me on a sub-committee to implement the scheme, and plans are being developed. Our first tentative site has been identified, which will require permission from the County Highways Authority. Much remains to be done and I have been warned that progress will be slower than I had at first realised. I hope to have more to tell you at the AGM and in subsequent *Newsletters*.

MW

TRANSPORT PLANS

The recent proposal of Connex South-Central to reintroduce a train service through Dorking to Horsham and Littlehampton has been widely welcomed, but it is far too soon to open the champagne. The proposal is conditional on Connex being able to renew its franchise when the tenders for the next seven years come up for renewal in two years' time. Currently it is not, of course, the Strategic Rail Authority's favourite rail company. There is nothing like showing willing. Rail-users will have to wait and see. A proposal is not a plan.

Meanwhile, Surrey County Council has published the first draft of a new County Transport Plan, setting out a number of unexceptional aims and policies. Public transport is to be encouraged to improve, in order to lure the public away from the private car, but there are no proposals to discourage car users. There are no proposals either to persuade commercial users back to freight trains, but that would have to be national policy.

Our criticisms will cover the following points:

1. If public transport is to win customers back from the car, it must become more reliable and, in the case of buses, its services more frequent.

A small improvement in reliability would be achieved if the rules prohibiting cars from parking on bus stops were properly enforced.

2. The interface between rail and other forms of transport should be improved. This involves the provision of greater facilities for parking cars at railway stations and a better dovetailing of rail and bus timetables. A small part could be played by policies in the County Structure Plan and in Local Plans to discourage the further conversion of currently little-used station car-parks to other uses, such as housing.
3. Contrary to widely-held belief, speed restrictions on congested roads do not increase journey time but ensure a more even traffic flow. In the interests of road safety, there should be further reductions and extensions of speed limits.

Do readers have any additional points of their own? Please remember that the County Transport Policy is not about particular instances, but about the general aims and policies within the context of which traffic regulations are imposed.

MW

ACT ON GRAFFITI!

Graffiti scribbling (originating in New York and largely the work of children and teenagers) is fortunately still rare in our area although we are by no means immune, and the threat may be growing. Those who know the dreadful desecration wrought on public and private property in the Croydon area and in much of London generally will be all too conscious of the wanton ugliness produced. The perpetrators delight in reaching seemingly inaccessible surfaces, often placing themselves in great danger; some have been killed by falls, by trains and by electrified rails. They take pride in seeing their 'art' remaining on view and are discouraged if it is **promptly removed** as soon as it appears. The act of scribbling with paint and pens on every kind of surface has been described as a form of territory-marking like that instinctively and unpleasantly practised by dogs and cats.

On discovering graffiti, first identify the property owner, seeking advice if necessary from Pippbrook (Mr Parr 01306-879190) if you are unsure; Mr Parr will deal with events affecting Mole Valley DC property, but if Surrey CC property is involved you should telephone 0181-541-8800. In both cases it will then be removed by the Councils' specialist contractor.

If the offence is found on private property, the owners may wish to contact the Council Contractor (Graffiti Solutions 1273-857785) if they are unwilling or unable to remove the scrawl themselves. Removal is always the property owner's responsibility but the cost may be covered by the building insurance policy. If on the property of Railtrack, Train Operating Companies, British Telecom, Seaboard, British Gas or similar bodies, their Property Surveyors should be informed (consult the telephone directory for the appropriate address). Go back to them if it is not removed after say three weeks.

Legally, graffiti are classified as "criminal damage" and the police can take appropriate action if the 'artists' are caught in the act or there are firm and useful clues as to their identity; if they are then convicted, it may be possible to get the culprits to remove it, a salutary punishment indeed. Don't bother 999 but do give any relevant information likely to lead to identification to the Surrey Police at 01306-882284.

Remember, above all, that it is most effective to **ACT FAST!**

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

in

The Ashcombe School

7.30 pm

on

Thursday, 13 April 2000

Speaker:

VICKY ELCOATE

Director, Council for National Parks

"National Parks; not ours, but ours to look after"

CORPORATE MEMBERS SUPPORTING THE SOCIETY

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

Name	Address	Tel.	Business
Abbey Information Systems Ltd.	1 Paper Mews, 330 High Street, RH4 2TU	740 553	Computer consultancy
John Arthur Gallery	Old King's Head Court, 11 High Street, RH4 1AR	741 120	Fine art gallery
Ashcombe School, The	Ashcombe Road,	886 312	School
Bits & Bobs	20 South Street, RH4 2HL	743 119	Party Shop
Betchworth Park Golf Club	Reigate Road, RH4 1NZ	882 052	Golf Club
Bradney & Co.	56 Dene Street, RH4 2DP	743 939	Chartered accountants
Bray Estates	278/280 High Street, RH4 1QT	740 837	Valuers, Surveyors & Property Managers
Browns of Dorking	2 Allen Court, 56 High Street, RH4 1AY	881 212	Delicatessen and Catering
G Burley & Sons	Burley Corner, Moorhouse Lane, S.Holmwood, RH5 4LJ	711 799	Amenity Horticulturist
Broadheath Restorations	Myrtle Cottage, Newdigate, RH5 5AD	631 773	Window frame restorers
Chandler Cars	Unit 23, Vincent Works, Vinc't Lane, RH4 3HQ	882 001	Services and Sales
Bullimores	156 South Street, RH4 2EU	880 880	Chartered accountants
Classic Bedrooms	120 South Street, RH4 2EU	880 330	Retailer
Country Gardens Ltd.	Reigate Road, RH4 1NP	884 845	Garden Centre
Cowan & Wood	114 South Street, RH4 2EZ	886 622	Solicitors
Omya UK	Curtis Road	886 688	Mineral extraction
Dorking Golf Club	Club House, Deepdene Avenue, RH5 4BX	886 917	Golf Club
Dorking School of Motoring	3 Lyons Court, RH4 1AB	880 119	Driving School
Downs	156 High Street, RH4 1BQ	880 110	Solicitors and notaries
Edolph's Farm	Norwood Hill Road, Charlwood, RH6 0EB	01293 862 130	Farm
Ellis Atkins & Co.	1 Paper Mews, 330 High Street, RH4 2TU	886 681	Chartered accountants
Friends' Provident Life Office	Pixham End, RH4 1QA	740 123	Life Assurance
Garth House Nursing Home	Tower Hill Road, RH4 2AY	880 511	Nursing home
Graham Leather Ltd.	64/65 West Street, RH4 1BS	887 727	China and glassware
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 advisers
Holly & Laurel	Horsham Road, South Holmwood	885 460	Fireplaces; Tea-room
Hurtwood Litho Printers	39a South Street, RH4 2JX	877 557	Printers
Ian Munro	10 High Street, RH4 1AT	882 270	Men's outfitters
International Sports Mktg. Ltd.	Bales Court, Barrington Road, RH4 3EJ	743 322	Marketing consultants
King's Court Galleries	54 West Street, RH4 1BS	881 757	Art gallery and framers
Kuoni Travel Ltd.	Deepdene Avenue, RH5 4AZ	840 888	Tour operators
Newspaper Press Fund	Dickens House, 35 Wathen Road, RH4 1JY	887 511	Charity
Newton & Co.	173 High Street, RH4 1AD	884 208	Chartered accountants
R G Palmer	21 Monks Court, Monks Walk, Reigate, RH2 0SR.	01737 243 980	Public Relations
Patrick Gardner & Co.	16 South Street, RH4 2HQ	877 775	Estate Agents
Rose Hill Nursing Home	9 Rose Hill, RH4 2EG	882 622	Nursing home
Michael Schryver Antiques Ltd.	The Granary, 10 North Street, RH4 1DN	881 110	Antiques restoration
Philip Sears Designs	18c Horsham Road, RH4 2JD	884 477	Architectural building surveyors
Seymours Garden Centre	Stoke Rd, Stoke D'Abernon, Cobham, KT11 3PU.	01932 862 530	Garden Centre
W. Songhurst Ltd.	Rayleigh House, Chapel Lane, Westcott, RH4 3PJ	880 411	Builders
Treeline	The Spinney, Horsham Road, Wallis Wood	741 800	Tree care and maintenance
C J Uden & Co	Pledges Yard, Falkland Road, RH4 3AD	887 551	Drainage Consultant and Surveyors
Unum Ltd.	Milton Court, RH4 3LZ	887 766	Disability insurers
Venhill Engineering	21 Ranmore Road, RH4 1HE	885 111	Specialist cable manufacturers
Viscount Agencies	Concept House, 3 Dene Street, 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 Road, Beare Green, RH5 4LQ	713 200	Electrical engineers

OTHER CORPORATE MEMBERS SUPPORTING THE SOCIETY:

Bartholomew Court Residents' Association
 Box Hill Afternoon Women's Institute
 Brockham Green Village Society
 Coldharbour Sports and Social Club
 Friends of Box Hill

Holmwood Women's Institute
 Leigh Residents' Association
 Mickleham Parish Council
 Newdigate Parish Council
 Westcott Village Association

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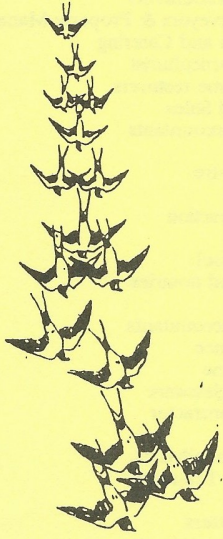
Hon Secretary: Mr Ian Brotchie, Windscrest, The Fleet, Fittleworth, West Sussex, RH20 1HN. Tel. 01798 865567

NEWSLETTER No. 25

Birds...



Without the birds, what would life be
Their perfect beauty not to see?
Would we not miss their song, at dawn
That wakes us on a summer's morn?
The larks like specks up in the sky
Do lift our weary spirits high
And with continuous notes so sweet
Grow smaller as the clouds they meet.
Swallows diving after flies
Like acrobats before our eyes
We feel freedom through their flight
And thank God for the gift of sight.
The graceful swan through waters glide
Majestic bird- so full of pride.
The Barn owl - ghost-like, seeks his prey
In the fading light of day.
Woe betide the roaming vole
Who wanders too far from his hole!
The peacock, glorious his display



He almost takes our breath away
His fanning tail such colours show
So rich with iridescent glow.
Martins on migratory flight
O'er land and sea, through day and night.
We hope that they return each year
To gladden hearts deprived of cheer,
And through the empty winter days
The homely Robin with us stays
And many more will brave the cold
Their varied charms to us unfold.
From birds much joy we do derive
So we must help them to survive.

JENNIFER M. HUBER

