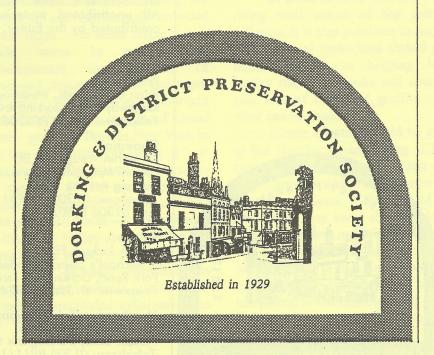
# NEWSLETTER

of the Dorking & District Preservation Society

No. 37

April 2004



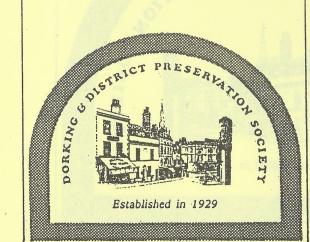
Registered Charity 246806

# NEWSLETTER

of the Dorking & District Preservation Society

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Registered Charity 246806

NEWSLETTER 37: April 2004 Free to members

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

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### editorial

As it is now 14 years since this Newsletter first appeared, it is perhaps permissible to revisit the subject of litter, which featured in our very first editorial. Not that there is much progress to report, except perhaps in the town centre, which is kept quite commendably clean and tidy, apart from the 'litter' of empty parked cars, selfishly and thoughtlessly left in positions which impede the smooth flow of through traffic and heighten the risk of accidents.

Litter remains a perennial problem: in the countryside, on the many urban footpaths and along the verges of our increasingly crowded motor roads. In some respects it is made worse by more recent developments, the dumping of unwanted domestic items and worn out cars. To this we must now add what is after all a species of visual litter - graffiti. Born in New York in the late 1960s, this ugly form of 'art' was successfully exported to our cities in the late 1970s, since gradually spreading outwards into the countryside and small towns - it was not seen in the Mole Valley area until the last three or four years.

It is probably unrealistic to imagine that schools, with their already overcrowded syllabuses, can be expected to teach children to respect and care for an attractive and pleasing environment such as that we enjoy. This is a clear duty for parents but when children outside the home see adults throwing down packaging and drink containers or pitching them out of car windows it is hardly surprising that they are tempted to follow suit. Likewise when they see graffiti left intact on walls and other flat surfaces it creates an impression that it is to be regarded as an accepted form of self expression, even admired when it is executed, as it sometimes is, with a certain artistic flourish.

In these days of Council Taxes rising well ahead of the rate of inflation, it is also pointless to suggest that the local authorities should give higher priority to keeping Mole Valley roads, footpaths and countryside free of litter and graffiti. So what can be done?

Closer attention could be given to the distribution and siting of litter bins; areas prone to heavy litter drop may justify additional, larger or resited containers. Readers of this Newsletter may know of such places, and as with new outbreaks of graffiti, can bring them to the attention of the authorities\*. It does work: someone has recently managed to get a litter bin placed at the Lincoln Road end of the litter-prone footpath between the

station and Pixham (or was this an unofficial act of desperation?).

More difficult, given the fragmented muddle and blame culture produced by the now much derided privatisation, is the clearance of litter thrown onto the railway and erasure of graffiti on railway property. All except the very large stations are the responsibility of an 'operating company' but the tracks are managed and owned by 'Network Rail' (formerly 'Railtrack plc'), so that litter is sometimes dumped from a station platform onto the track or vice versa and when the graffiti lads decorate the brickwork under the platform edges (as at Leatherhead), removal involves track occupation because the operating company's staff are not allowed to get down onto the track, a situation providing endless scope for expensive and time-wasting argument, blame and negotiation. Litter on the trackside or elsewhere than at stations can remain for years (as at the 'country end' of Dorking station) because track maintenance is now undertaken by private sub contractors who have no direct interest in the railway as a whole and no remit to remove rubbish.

Returning to our main theme, it should be recorded that some Society members already help by carrying a plastic bag and picking up litter as they walk in the countryside or along a footpath they regularly use.

Occasionally, to our certain knowledge some go even further; one member, now moved away from the area, paid regular visits to woodland near his house with his car and a trailer to remove large items of dumped household goods to the Council's site in Ranmore Road.

Perhaps regular voluntary litter picks should be considered, with either the Council or the Society taking the initiative. If these brought in younger people (say aged 10 upwards) and sought the cooperation of the Scout and Guide troops and other youth organisations, they would certainly generate a useful educational and publicity value for all concerned.

Such group projects could also tackle graffiti removal but not perhaps litter clearance from the centres of roundabouts and verges of major roads - this task is probably too dangerous for voluntary effort and presents a challenge that our County Councillors and County officials could and should address. One idea we have mooted before is that contractors employed to cut the grass be asked to remove litter before mowing, instead of churning it up and spreading the bits more widely as the grass is cut. Or if that is too difficult, how about sending out the litter teams just before the grass is cut?

One thing is certain. If nothing is done, despoliation of our environment will grow much worse.

Action on litter and graffiti is not something which can be left entirely to the District and County Councils and the Police.

Alan A Jackson

\* If you have any suggestions about litter problems and bin siting or wish to report

new outbreaks of graffiti in public places please speak to the General Services Department at Pippbrook (01306 885001) or write to Terry Beswick at MVDC Dorking RH4 1SJ (Fax 01306 876821), or email <street.cleaning@molevalley.gov.uk>. His staff will also advise who to contact if the matter is outside MVDC's responsibility.

## chairman's report

# The search for our own Museum building

We have spent much time in 2003 in the search for a permanent home for the Dorking and District Museum. During the year no fewer than three properties adjacent to the museum came onto the market. One was sold within days: the other two, both of which aroused initial enthusiasm, were eventually rejected. These were 61 West Street, the easternmost unit of the William Mullins House, which members will know better as the now defunct 'Victoria and Edward', and 1 North Street, which some time ago was the bikers' hangout known as 'The Tiroler' and some time before that was a pub known as 'The Gun'. The street façade of 61 West Street is seventeenth century. 'The Gun' is a

mixture of eighteenth century and nineteenth century. Both are adjacent to the Museum and so in theory could be joined onto it.

The problem was that the purchase of either would have taken practically all the proceeds of the money that had been left to us, without adding sufficient extra space for museum display. Both buildings are cut up into numerous small rooms, difficult to supervise without a large increase in the numbers of museum They also have constant staff. changes of level which it would have been difficult or even impossible to abolish in listed buildings where alterations have to be strictly controlled. As our museum advisor. Simon Lace, and our architect, Robin Wade, said on several occasions: 'The ideal building for a museum is a warehouse, and that is what you have already.' More and more we found ourselves driven back to the idea of bidding Mole Valley for our current premises. Once we had the freehold it would be possible for us to raise money, with help one hopes from the Heritage Lottery Fund, to rebuild and extend our building. With a short-term lease, albeit on favourable terms, our hands are tied. But to do so is not easy.

The present museum occupies about one half of the Dorking Foundry site and the District Council, quite rightly given the rules within which it has to operate, has told us that it must sell the whole site as one lot. To sell only part of the site would reduce the market value of the remainder, as entry to the site is cramped and the whole site would have to be redeveloped at the same time. The whole site, however, is more than we would need or could afford.

We have nevertheless decided to bid for the whole site, and do so as the lead partner of a consortium. A major problem is that the remainder of the foundry site is leased as workshops to three tenants, whose leases run until 2012. Their leases include a six-month break clause, at the freeholder's discretion should he wish to redevelop, but even that is not simple to arrange. Should we be successful, no redevelopment will be

possible until the site is clear – and our fund-raising goals have been achieved.

We have also noted another site opposite the Council offices on Reigate Road, which is that part of the site of the old swimming pool that will not be occupied by the relocated Medwyn surgery but it is not clear whether it will be available. We are, however, pursuing this as a possibility with the District Council. There is also the 1871 Public Hall at the western end of West Street, which now belongs to Surrey County Council. It is on a list of properties which have been declared surplus to their requirements, but it is taking them a long time to set up the arrangements to administer disposal. Until then they are not allowing us or anybody - access, not even to establish whether it is suitable or not for our purposes.

Martin Wedgwood

# Changes in planning laws – where will they lead?

Just over two years ago, in December 2001, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) announced plans to reform the planning system in a Green Paper called 'Planning: delivering a fundamental change'.

That the nation's planning system needs an overhaul is nowhere in doubt. The evolution of County

Structure Plans and Districts' Local Plans is cumbersome and can take years. The Government's aim is that the reforms should speed up the preparation of plans and ensure that they are thereafter properly monitored and reviewed and kept up to date. It also wants to ensure that communities are more deeply involved in their preparation. In practice this would mean that it is not enough for local government to announce that it is inviting public criticism of its drafts; it should also take the initiative in involving the public. These are all aims which we applaud.

The devil, however, is in the detail. Hitherto the structure within which local plans have been evolved has been set by a series of documents called Planning Policy Guidelines (PPGs). These are now to be by Planning Policy replaced Statements (PPSs). The change of name is an indication that the new PPSs will be of a distinctly more mandatory nature than the old PPGs, which were only advisory, even though it was advice that had almost always to be taken.

The next stage lay in documents known collectively as Regional Planning Guidance. We live in the South East Region (SER), which runs from Kent in the east to Hampshire and Berkshire in the west, plus Buckinghamshire, i.e. from Dover via Southampton to Milton Keynes. The

Regional Planning Guidance is to be replaced - is in the course of being replaced - by a Regional Spatial Strategy. The SER as a concept is relatively new and is being subsumed into a South East England Regional Assembly (SEERA). SEERA is already up and running in Guildford with numerous enthusiastic officers paid for by central government and working closely with the Government Office in the South East (GOSE), our local branch of the ODPM, also in Guildford. Regrettably it is not yet, despite its name, a regional assembly. It has a kind of forum or talking-shop attached to it, whose members are there to represent various organisations within the region but are effectively self-appointed.

This has relevance for the next stage of the planning process, the County Structure Plans, which the government wants to abolish. Bill arising from the Green Paper, known as the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Bill, is proceeding slowly through Parliament. The House of Lords, having debated it, is asking that the County Structure Plans be retained until such time as there are proper Regional Assemblies. Government has no plans for any further regional assemblies in UK. Until we do, therefore, there may be not one but two layers of regional or local government between central government and Mole Valley. We hope that the government will accept the advice of the House of Lords, because we distrust SEERA. Until it becomes clear whether or not it will do so, there is considerable uncertainty at county and district level as to how to proceed.

It is perhaps a mistake to think of SEERA as being regional at all so far, despite the presence of that word in its name. Neither its officers nor the ODPM is under any statutory right to listen to the opinions or the advice of the members of the talking-shop. It is no more nor less than an arm of central government, allowing central government to impose its views on local affairs more pervasively than before.

On the one hand government wants to extend the process of consultation more effectively down to the grass roots. On the other hand it wants to increase its control of local affairs. It probably does not appreciate that it is simultaneously seeking to pursue two conflicting aims.

The bottom layer of the documents that relate to planning, and the one that affects us most closely, is the Local Plan. Local Plans are to be replaced by Local Development Frameworks. The aim is that there should be not one document, but many, each one of which can be reviewed and updated separately.

The procedure that the Act (when it is passed) will lay down for

the setting up of these Local Development Frameworks (LDFs) is complicated, and the time allowed for doing so uncomfortably short. The principal document, not the first to be completed, will be the Core Strategy, which should contain strategic objectives and a vision, a spatial strategy, core policies that apply to the whole area and a monitoring and implementation framework. It may resemble a County Structure Plan although covering a smaller area. We hope it may also be shorter than a County Structure Plan. There will then follow a series of policy documents covering specific areas. such as affordable housing, development control (this one will be of particular interest to our own planning committee), countryside, transport, town centres and conservation areas. Each document, however, needs to go through a full, pro-active and much accelerated consultation process. Every year, once the system is up and running, an annual monitoring report should draw the Council's attention to areas where the relevant planning document needs updating.

One of the government's aims was to simplify, yet the system that is emerging is more complicated. Nevertheless it is one that it will be possible to update and adapt to changing needs more quickly, with only the affected documents being rewritten. We hope that this new

system, which is already requiring a substantial amount of extra work by council officers, will be a success. We are sure it will be if central government, once it is set up, recognises that thereafter it needs to intervene less not more in local government. A properly constituted

regional assembly, replacing county councils, would also help.

One thing, however, is certain: the Dorking & District Preservation Society will be playing an enhanced role in the more frequent exercises of consultation that the new system demands.

MW

### news&views

#### **Old Brewery Court**

The new development of 22 one-, two- and three-bedroom apartments in two blocks behind the south side of the High Street was almost complete by the middle of March. Differing architectural styles are employed; one block is red-bricked, roofed in tiles, with corner towers on its east flank: the other, more domestic in appearance, is slate-roofed with wide eaves and a white finish to its exterior walls. Seen from the higher ground at the back of the car park, the new structures blend quite happily with the disparate styles of the existing urban roofscape, looking well against the background of the North Downs.

A panel showing the building date '2003' has been incorporated in the south face of the western block, reverting to a practice that until the early 20<sup>th</sup> century was not uncommon,

even for quite humble properties. This also demonstrates that such dating can be slightly misleading since it sometimes provides the expected rather than the actual date of completion.

# Old Swimming Centre and Gymnasium site

It is pleasing to note that the gates of this site are now padlocked to frustrate the unauthorised car parking mentioned in our last issue.

# Former police housing site Spital Heath

Demolition of buildings at the east end of Spital Heath, Reigate Road (opposite Deepdene Vale), and excavation of foundations for three- and four- bedroom houses began in late February. **Deepdene Gardens** 

The historic gardens of the former Deepdene mansion, the original Deepdene, immediately behind the modern Kuoni building, have been awarded Grade II\* status by English Heritage (EH). Only one other garden site in Surrey has this level of listing and the decision opens the way for funds to be sought from EH for restoration. In recent years the Society has commissioned and received an Historical Survey, a Species Survey and a Groundwork Plan. Still outstanding are reports on public access and the archaeology of The Society is now the area. exploring the possibility of external financial support for these.

A big one?

Seen in the window of an antiques shop in West Street, a neatly printed notice reading "OBJET D'ART ON THREE FLOORS". Whatever it is, it must be very tall!

A case for listing?

A 1914 chemist's shop in Berkhamsted, Hertfordshire, has recently been listed Grade II. Reading about this suggests that the attractive shopfront and interior of the Alan Woodcock pharmacy in the High Street, now around a century old and retaining many Victorian features, may be worthy of similar protection.

#### Heritage Open Days 2003

There were over 5,000 visitors to Mole Valley events and sites. Woodhouse Copse, Holmbury St Mary (a new site this year) attracted much interest. The entire allocation of tickets was distributed within hours of the opening of booking. Nearly 200 people visited the Dorking & District Museum.

**Best Development** competition

Twelve entries were received. The Highly Commended certificates went to: An extension to Ringer's Farm, Charlwood and Fredley Manor, Mickleham. The Commended certificates were awarded to The Old Rectory, Newdigate (flats conversion/extension) and No. 9 Westcott Road, Dorking (garage extension). No cup award was made this year.

#### School awards

Following a Society initiative, Priory School organised a geography project for year 8 pupils based on Denbies Vineyard. In January book tokens to the value of £20 were presented to the 20 pupils earning certificates whilst the four winners also received £15 each. Our former Chairman, Barry Collins, who was responsible for introducing these awards, presented the prizes.

#### planning committee

My Committee and I look at an average of 12 applications every week from our eerie at Pippbrook. We comment, either by letter or by discussions with Case Officers, on quite a few of them with mixed results as you will see below.

As you will see below.

As usual, the majority of the applications are for side and rear extensions to a range of properties. Most of the 'designs' are unexceptional but, sometimes, quite awful. When we come across these, we are in a dilemma: should we make some representation or not? In most cases we do not because, at present, unless the design is entirely inappropriate to the appearance of the property being extended, there appears to be little that an LPA can do about it. However, if our aesthetic senses are really outraged, we do write a letter.

Since I became Chairman, and being an Architectural Illustrator, I have tried to put some emphasis to the design element of applications. Of course, we also consider the guidance laid down in the Local Plan and comment accordingly, quoting from it when necessary.

Although we find it difficult to decide whether or not to criticise mundane extensions to mundane properties, we have quite a lot to say about vintage building extensions where we feel something is not quite right with the proposed design. An example of this was a proposed extension to such a property at Denbies. After a briefing from the owners, the architect designed the extension in the same style as the building being extended. In doing this, we felt that the result was slightly 'awkward'. In our comments to MVDC, we suggested a totally different - but sympathetic - solution be found, and said that an 'Orangery' style extension might be more suitable. After the Case Officer had discussed this with the owner, a new design was submitted based upon our suggestion. On the other hand, our design suggestions for a rather ugly glass extension into a courtyard of an old vicarage was not taken up. can't win them all.

The Linden Homes Development at Deepdene Roundabout has gone to Appeal on a technicality, and is due to be heard in August of this year. However, we understand that talks are going on between Linden and the MVDC to reach a satisfactory conclusion before that time. Appeals of this nature are costly and time consuming, and it is in the interest of both parties to avoid them if possible.

The Appeals for two versions of

a proposed church hall at St Bartholomew's at Leigh have both been rejected by the inspector who took into consideration our objections and those of other Preservation Societies. The Parish Church Council will now have to come up with an entirely different scheme in a different part of the church grounds.

The two Appeals by the Parish Council about the proposed Sports Pavilion at Beare Green have now been withdrawn. In our letter to the Inspector, we offered to help them with a new design *Pro bono*.

We have also looked at plans to. restore Juniper Hill to its former glory. However, we were not happy about a proposed high brick wall along one flank of the grounds, and discussed this with Peter Mills, the Preservation Officer. He told us that English Heritage and the Victorian Society had also commented about this, and that a meeting would take place with the owner to discuss it: we await the outcome. We also commented on a 'new' driveway proposed for the front of the main building but were informed that this was a restoration of one that had been there originally.

We looked at an application to convert the ground floor of 'The Gun' in North Street into two small apartments. We felt that this was not a good idea, and I planned to write a letter about it. However, before doing so, I spoke with the Case Officer who told me the application had been withdrawn. We will wait and see what new proposals are submitted and comment at that time.

We were approached by local residents in St Paul's Road about a proposed extension to the Wates development at the old school. We had originally commented upon the high standard of design of the buildings in the extension but decided to look at the proposal again. We spoke with the Case Officer who said that the scheme was likely to go ahead because this part of Dorking is considered one of high density. The application has now been approved.

We objected to the design of two proposed apartment blocks in the grounds of Heath Cottage on Reigate Road, describing them as 'looking like Cotton Mill factories'. The application was refused and the applicant has gone to Appeal.

I think that the above shows that your Planning Committee is pretty active on your behalf, and I must thank the members of the Committee, Lady Sandra Wedgwood, Beryl Higgins and John Gilliard for their sterling efforts, which take up a large amount of their time.

Hank Etheridge Chairman of the Planning Committee

### dorking museum report

Three options remain under active consideration for the future home and enlargement of the Museum, following the Owen Russ bequest. Please see the account on page 3.

#### Accessions -

- (a) Apothecary pots found in the 1920s on the Ansell Road site of the present Post Office garage: three 17<sup>th</sup> century Lambeth ware pots and one 18<sup>th</sup> century pot.
- (b) An Adze found near the 'temple' in the Nower. Possibly used by a worker on the Bury Hill Estate. This item now forms part of the Agricultural Collection in Room 2.
- (c) Two heavily embroidered smocks of unbleached linen found at Lyne House, Capel.

Display changes -

Following a period when it attracted much favourable comment, the display of Victorian Dress Accessories has been replaced by a collection of 14 framed embroidered British birds. These beautiful representations were worked during the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century by a Dorking resident, Miss Clifton, who continued with this pastime when she was well past her eightieth year.

Lighting improvements -

As part of the continuing process of reorganising and improving visual aspects of the displays, lighting has been installed in several cases. General lighting has been upgraded in Room 2.

Fred Plant
Exhibits Curator

## local history group report

Mary Day, the Chairman of the Group, has questioned whether the Group is itself at the risk of becoming history, since no volunteers have come forward from the membership of over 200 to fill the vacant positions of Secretary, Membership Secretary and Editor. The future of the Group is to be raised at its 37th Annual

General Meeting, to be held in the Friends' Meeting House, South Street, at 19.30 on 6 April. We hope to report more positively in our next issue.

This year's summer outing, on 18 July, will visit Arundel and Parham Park, a 16<sup>th</sup> century house with 18<sup>th</sup> century gardens.

# Letters to the Editor

Sir,

May I join with Renée Stewart (Newsletter 36) in also expressing my appreciation of the new format. It seems so much easier to read and therefore to extract salient points of interest. I found the item concerning the National Provincial Bank Chambers quite absorbing.

I should also like to say that, as an ex-resident in the Dorking area, it is good to know that the best interests of those that remain are held in such capable hands and may the Society long prosper!

Yours sincerely Derek Sheen
Hilton, Huntington
15 November 2003

Dear Mr Jackson,

I write regarding the query in the last Newsletter (36) about [the road near] Archway Place, just to say it was still a private drive in the late 1920s and early 1930s and we would sometimes walk down the drive, feeling a bit cheeky, instead of going down Archway Place. Sometimes we would have our 'comeuppance' when the gate at one end or the other was closed. It wasn't properly made up and was a bit rutty. So it was a good

deal later than the 19<sup>th</sup> century when it was still a drive and [this] might account for the fact that it was never officially named.

With kind regards Helen Rivers
Roman Road, Dorking
4 February 2004

(We are most grateful for this further elucidation of the 'Road without a name', especially valuable as it enriches our knowledge of local history and comes from someone with such a vivid recall of Dorking in the 1930s. Thanks also to MURIEL WOLVEN, who also wrote on this subject. Editor)

#### Membership

We welcome the following new Members –

Mrs M Morley, Parkway, Dorking Peter Camp, Blackbrook Mr & Mrs C J Hodson, Mason's Paddock, Dorking

We regret to report the death of the following Members —
Miss M Greaves
Mr D Somerville (Bookham)

Please check that your subscription for 2004 has been paid.

Peter Parkin (01306-881111)

#### 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, telephone number Business
	Abbey Information Systems Ltd, 1 Paper Mews, 330 High Street, RH4 2TU (740 553)
	RH4 2TU (740 553)
	Betchworth Park Golf Club, Reigate Road, RH4 1NZ (882 052) Golf Club
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	Bray Estate 278/280 High Street, RH4 1OT (740 837) Valuers, surveyors & property managers
	Broadheath Restorations, Dean House Farm, Church Road, Newdigate,
	Broadheath Restorations, Dean House Farm, Church Road, Newdigate, RH5 5DL (631 773)
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¥	DH4 3HO (882 001)
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	annote dealer
	Dorking Cold Club Club House Deepdene Avenue RH5 4BY (886 917) Golf club
	Dorking Desk Shop, The, 41 West Street, RH4 1BN (865 321)  Dorking Golf Club, Club House, Deepdene Avenue, RH5 4BY (886 917)  Downs, 156 High Street, RH4 1BQ (880 110)
	Downs, 130 right Street, Art 102 (See 179)
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Charlwood Parish Council
Coldharbour Sports and Social Club
Friends of Box Hill

Friends of Boxhill
Headley Parish Council
Holmwood Parish Council
Mickleham Parish Council
Newdigate Parish Council
Ockley Parish Council
Westcott Village Association
Wotton Parish Council

Published by the DORKING & DISTRICT PRESERVATION SOCIETY

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