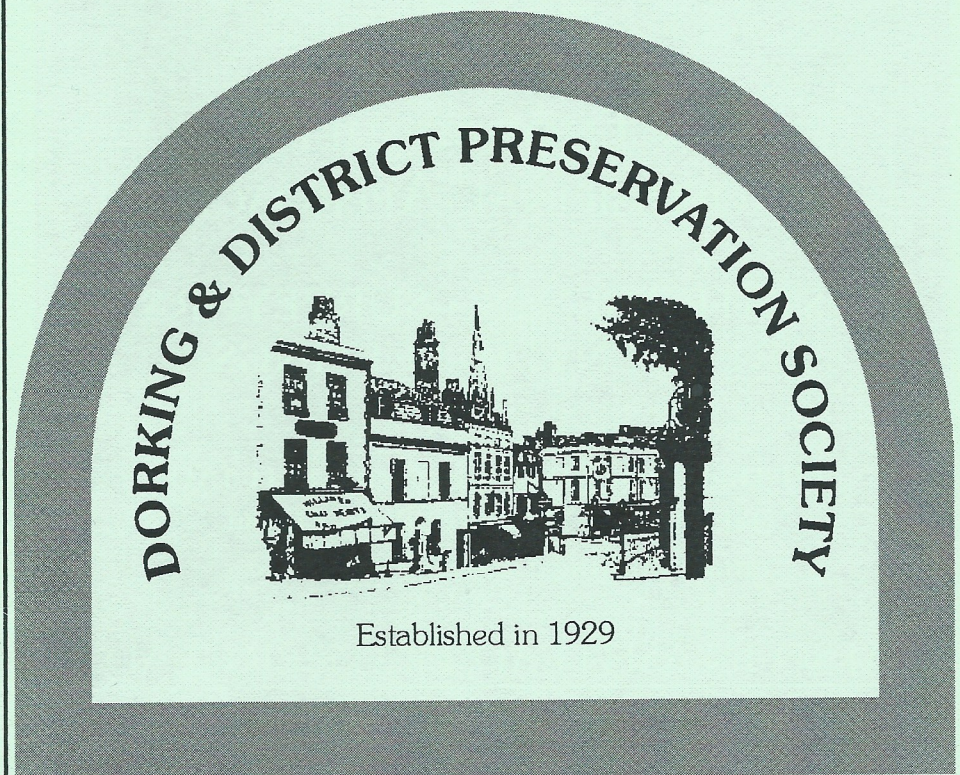


NEWSLETTER

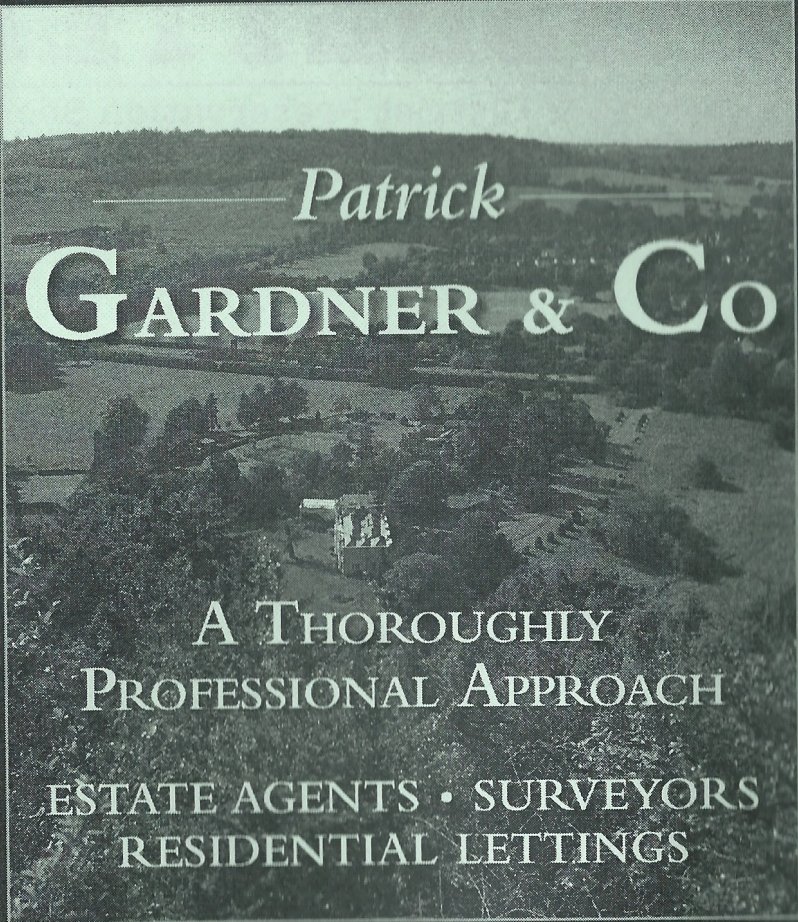
of the Dorking & District Preservation Society

No. 48

Autumn 2007



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Autumn Meeting

Thursday, October 18, 2007

At 7.30pm

United Reform Church . West Street . Dorking

Presentation, awards & certificates of

THE BEST DEVELOPMENT

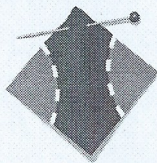
COMPETITION

Followed by an illustrated talk by

Jeremy Knight

The Life of a Museum Curator, or
Learning from Experience

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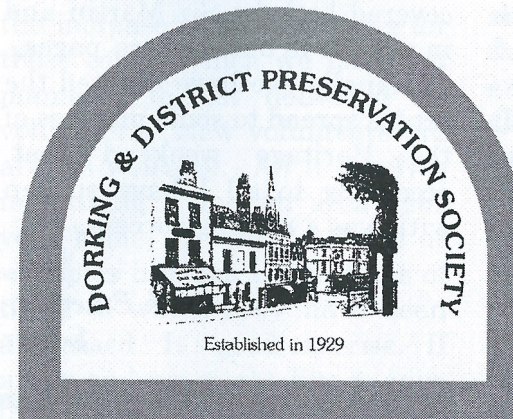


NEWSLETTER

of the Dorking & District Preservation Society

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NEWSLETTER 48: Autumn 2007
Free to members

Published each April, July and October

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editorial



A quick glance to the bottom of this page will reveal that I know when I'm beaten, and have removed the 'locum' from my title. No-one has volunteered so you are stuck with me. Mind you, I must admit to enjoying the task, and from the appreciative comments colleagues in the Society and I have received from many members, you enjoy reading it. When you have finished reading it, why not pass it on to a friend or colleague; they may even be tempted to join you in the Society. We need as many members as we can get to help us in combating over-development in Dorking and the villages, not to mention our work rebuilding the Museum.

It is the subject of over-development in Dorking and the villages that Sir Martin and I urge you to read Derek Rowbotham's article on page 10. It concerns all of us. The 'quiet enjoyment' of our homes and countryside is under threat from the government's headlong rush to build 3 million homes that could lead to over-development on the fringes of Dorking, the outskirts of villages and to the

integrity of the Green Belt. The villages of Westhumble, Mickleham, Headley and Box Hill have even more reasons to be alarmed. SEERA has placed them in the 'London Fringe', thereby denying them the status of rural villages although they are in the Green Belt.

On a slightly lighter note, I took the liberty of changing the title to Peter Creasey's interesting article about the renovation to the Box Hill Fort bat sanctuary. There is also a fascinating article by Martin Cole about the discovery, fifty years ago, of the 'nucleus' of Penicillin at Beecham's laboratories at Brockham Park in Betchworth, and Kathy Atherton, Chair of the Local History Group, highlights the work of the local, Victorian engineer George Rennie, the famous bridge builder.

The vexed question of the Traffic lights at Pump Corner is covered both by Sir Martin and in a letter in our 'Letters' pages.

Finally, we have devoted the centre spread to some pictures of the Heritage weekend that, according to all I have spoken with was a roaring success.

Hank Etheridge
Editor

chairman's report



This edition, our 48th, has a new feature which I hope that the majority of readers will approve of – advertisements. Issues have been getting bigger, the result in no small part of the exuberant enthusiasm of our new editor. Costs have in consequence been getting higher, although steps have been taken that have helped hold the increase in check. Advertisements will go some way further to keep net costs under control. I hope too that you may find the ads actually useful, as with Box Hill News and the various parish mags of our district.

Any Volunteers?

A further cause of higher costs is the increase of postage rates for those copies which we have not managed to get delivered by volunteers. New volunteers are always welcome. All it involves is walking round an area near your home, dropping a dozen or so copies into the letter boxes of those to whom they have been addressed. It's good exercise. If any members might like to give it a go and would like some more

information, do please ring John Ball on 01306-876198. It would help a lot.

Housing Threat

The most important article in this issue is the one with the heading 'The Government Drive for Homes' contributed by Derek Rowbotham, my deputy. Do please read it. It is difficult to overestimate the potential threat posed by the government's determination to ease the housing shortage by the methods it has laid down. Despite all the emphasis it has placed on consultation, the government still expects local authorities to come up with the solutions it wants, and is prepared to impose them. We are prepared to fight for the right solution.

The Traffic-lights at Pump Corner

On a more mundane level, I am becoming increasingly concerned about the new arrangement for the traffic lights at Pump Corner. Traffic coming eastwards along West Street is now more held-up than ever. At peak times the tailback can reach all the way to Westcott. Westcott people can take 40 minutes to drive to Dorking and, not surprisingly, many now drive east to the Crossways, up onto Ranmore, down into Ashcombe Road

and into Dorking from the east. It's more than twice as far but it's quicker. People in Abinger and Shere can shop either in Dorking or in Guildford. Why bother to come into Dorking at all? There is anecdotal evidence of house-hunters crossing off Westcott as a place to look, because of this traffic problem. If the housing market turns down, as it appears that it is about to do, we can expect house prices in Westcott to be more seriously affected that would otherwise be the case.

During the weeks when the old lights at Pump Corner had gone and the new ones not yet installed everything worked perfectly. Not only did the traffic flow more smoothly but pedestrians too had to wait less long before they were able to cross the road, since most car drivers are polite and considerate, particularly of the aged and infirm. The traffic lights at Pump Corner are not only inconvenient, they are unnecessary.

Heritage Open Days

Sarah Hawkes has given an account of this year's Heritage Weekend, which appears on pages 16 & 17. This annual event is run jointly by this Society, Mole Valley District Council and the

Dorking Advertiser. In terms of number of events, numbers of places open to view and numbers of visitors, Mole Valley seems this year to have been the best in the whole country. The amount of work that goes into setting it all up is huge, and we must congratulate all those who managed to make it such a success. I would like particularly to congratulate our Sarah Hawkes, and Rod Shaw, Senior Planning Officer at MVDC. They really deserve it.

October Meeting

One final word: The notice of our October Meeting was published in our Summer Newsletter, but you may not have kept it. The meeting is booked for 18 October at 7.30pm in the United Reformed Church Hall. We will, as before, start with the distribution of the prizes and certificates for the Best Development Competition. I can tell you that the entries this year are distinguished both by their number and by their quality. After the interval we have our new Museum Advisor, Jeremy Knight, to talk to us on *The Life of a Museum Curator, or Learning from Experience*. He has a sense of humour and it should be good. Do come.

Martin Wedgwood

news&views

Come, O thou traveller unknown

Charles Wesley

Both we and the CPRE have completed a questionnaire survey by four East Surrey Districts: MVDC, Reigate & Banstead, Epsom and Tandridge. The point of this consultation exercise is to find extra pitches for Gypsies and Travellers, a requirement of the government that quotes the Human Rights legislation and the Race Relations Act to back them up.

Because I wrote an article about the subject two years ago, I was asked to respond on behalf of the Society. In my response, I questioned the wisdom of a combined questionnaire because, I felt, respondents would tend to be parochial in their answers. The Epsom people suggesting that the other three districts take most of the extra requirement, and *vice versa*. It would all be highly subjective and, I thought, difficult to interpret the answers. Another question that would only serve to highlight the antipathy of County residents toward more pitches was "Would you prefer sites to be in the country or on the edge of and in towns?". I bet

my bottom dollar that people in the towns would want them in the countryside and people in the countryside would want them in towns. I also questioned the government decision to deal with this very complex question via a 'Circular' and not a PPS. I also pointed out that my research has revealed the tensions between Romany's (Gypsies) and The Irish (Travellers) which suggests that it would be unwise to put them together on the same sites.

Let there be NO lights

The Chairman in his comments has already dealt with the inexcusable chaos caused by the traffic lights at Pump Corner, but I was amused by a letter in the *Dorking Advertiser* which said that they were a 'Good Thing'. The author said that he could stop in West Street in the line of traffic, get out of his car, do the banking and shopping and come back just as the lights changed and the line started to move.

Will bio-fuels really be the answer?

As I write this, Radio 4 is telling me that I shall soon be paying £1.00 per litre for petrol – that's £4.40 per gallon. Now, here comes a nostalgic bit. In the

late sixties, I remember driving up to Scotland for a conference in my beloved Rover 3600 which used 4-star petrol. The trip there and back cost me about £20.00. Ah me!

However, there are warnings from the scientific community that bio-fuels may not be a good thing after all. The crops that produce ethanol, etc., are totally removed from the ground, leaving nothing behind to plough-in to enrich the soil which, in turn, means masses of organic and non-organic fertilisers. Organic fertiliser will be in short supply because most of the arable land will be turned over to bio-fuel crops, and means fewer cattle to produce manure. As it is calculated we need to increase the growth of agricultural produce by 300% over the next few years to avoid worldwide famine by 2050, there's an air of *Alice in Wonderland* about the whole subject.

The Numbers Game

42%

The South East of England is responsible for 42% of the UK's Gross Domestic Product.

£6.1 bn.

The estimated cost, so far, of this year's flooding after 10,000 homes are affected.

10%

Is the current proportion of all built-up areas to the UK's total land mass.

Woodmen did not spare the tree

Recently, I was contacted by Mrs Patricia Parker, Chief Executive of the charity 'Kids for Kids', who lives on Cotmandene. She told me that SCC tree surgeons, while culling trees alongside the A24, had come onto Cotmandene and cut down what looked like a perfectly healthy tree on the edge of the Green.

When I looked at the remaining 3ft high stump, I was inclined to agree. I spoke with Mole Valley and SCC to get some sort of explanation, but to no avail. An MVDC spokesman did say, however, that the tree in question was on MVDC land and, in theory, should not have been cut down without reference to them. The story so far – I may have a fuller answer for the Spring issue. Hold your breath until then.

planning report

My and my committee's lives do not always run smoothly. We had a minor scuffle about rebuilding Cleveland Lodge in Westhumble as a replica after it had been inadvertently knocked down. As we pointed out, any Preservation Society worth its salt would never contemplate replica buildings. In this, we are in line with the National Trust and English Heritage. We labelled this replica as an 'architectural forgery'.

We have had two or three interesting applications to deal with since last I wrote. Cala Homes put up a scheme to demolish three houses in Longfield Road, Dorking and replace them with 13 semi-detached dwellings and car parking that was withdrawn. They have revised the initial scheme but, as far as we are concerned they are little improvements on the first application. This new scheme has also been refused and has gone to Appeal. We have written to the Inspectorate recommending Dismissal.

A new application has been submitted to build a small apartment block at the site of a large bungalow on Leslie Road. As with the first application for this scheme, we have written, again stressing our concerns about the increase in traffic movements that would be engendered if the apartment block was allowed. It is already extremely difficult to navigate Leslie Road, and it was for this reason we

objected to a larger scheme at Mole Hill at the end of the road.

A large, wrap-around extension to a dwelling in Burney Road, Westhumble earned a letter from us objecting to the size of the scheme that, we felt, would dominate neighbouring properties. It has since been refused.

You will remember that the latest application for two houses on the site of Greystones in Deepdene Park Road was refused. The developers have now gone to appeal. When I read the Appellants grounds for the appeal, I was impressed by the sheer technical logic of it. I tried various responses to the Inspectorate but, in the end, gave it to Derek Rowbotham to deal with. He majored on the infilling on the fringes of Dorking to which the Society is opposed.

The wonderful 'Hof Kit house we liked so much has been approved, as has the equally wonderful house at Vann Lake. Both should be a shoo-in at next year's Best Development Competition.

We also commented upon a proposal to enclose a courtyard at Garth House at the end of Tower Hill and infilling it with four 'Affordable' apartments. Although not recommending refusal, we questioned the affordability of these Affordable homes. It has since been refused.

Hank Etheridge
Chairman of the Planning Committee

The Government Drive for Homes

Yvette Cooper, the Minister charged with the task of building 3 million new homes by 2020, announced in a Green Paper at the end of July how this will be carried out. The first thing every local authority will have to do is to find enough sites to deliver a greatly increased programme of building. This major policy decision amounts to the revival of the role of local authorities in building and managing homes, and it will amount to a new numbers game! To deliver this new programme the Government will expect to see in every Local Development Framework Core Strategy a site assessment as to where and when the numbers of new homes, in the period to 2020, will be built. The search for sites will cover a wide canvas over areas in rural countryside, including market towns and villages. In Mole Valley this could mean development attached to village settlements, particularly in the south of the district not designated Green Belt.

The Treasury and the DCLG have, over the past three years, devised Planning Policy Statement 3 (PPS3) which sets out mandatory planning requirements involved with housing. The Green Paper offers carrots to persuade all the local authorities to shoulder the work that will be necessary to drive up the delivery of the numbers of

Derek Rowbottom



homes required. There will be a new Housing and Planning Delivery grant payable to those local authorities who achieve this. Of course, those who do not reach the high numbers expected will not receive the special grant: the 'stick'.

It is most illuminating to study the report issued at the end of July by the Panel of Inspectors appointed to conduct the Examination in Public of the draft South East Plan. A careful reading of this long document shows just how a major step change in housing supply will be achieved. The recommendation is to increase the housing provision level in the draft Plan from 28,900 dwellings per annum (dpa) by an additional dpa of 3,100, an overall increase of 10%. The London Fringe is put down for 438 dpa, the next highest increase in a sub-regional allocation. Mole Valley (part) is within this sub-region, and the allocated housing provision in the Plan for Mole Valley has risen from 171 per annum to 188 per annum.

The report states that this increase will pose a challenge and "it may well be that greenfield development may require selective (larger scale) or smaller scale reviews of Green Belt boundaries".

An extraordinary omission is any mention in the detailed analysis of the strategic issues regarding the future size and shape of Dorking as an historic market town. The Society has given evidence in the examination in public of the Surrey Structure Plan 2004, in which we firmly ruled out the inclusion of Dorking in the Sub Region termed the London Fringe. Our case against including the town in a densely settled and polycentric settlement area on the fringes of London was accepted and our intervention to leave the town in a mainly rural sub-region beyond the North Downs has continued to be urged. Nevertheless, the SE Plan maintains the sub-region which, in our view, has left open a certainty that more development, especially housing, will be bound to be directed into the area. This has proved to be the case.

The clear need for housing in meeting the demand for affordable housing in Mole Valley and the Panel's strong recommendation for the local determination of the level of provision will undoubtedly focus attention on the LDF planning process in testing the housing capacity of the district. It will not be surprising if the target for homes will again be revised upward when the Government issues its comments on the report and puts this out for consultation. In increasing the housing provision, the Panel believed the demographic reasoning behind the calculation of the level of housing provision in the region in

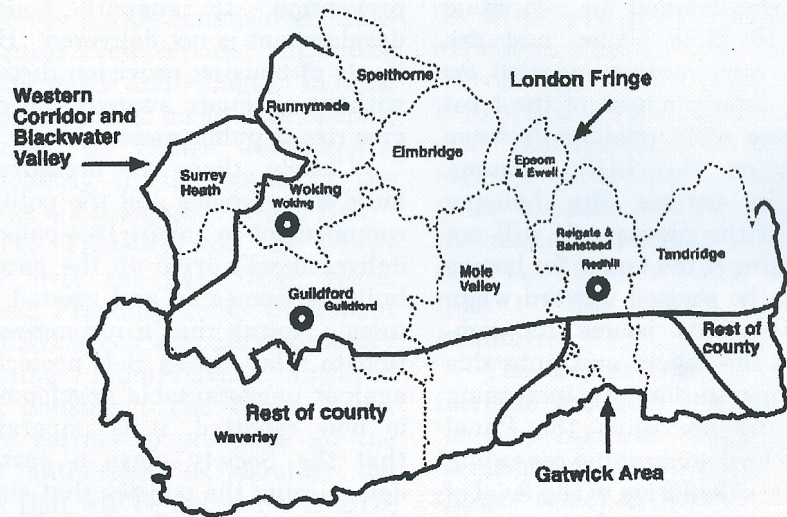
the draft plan failed to account sufficiently for in-migration to the regional and a political commitment to meeting a backlog of housing need. The analysis also placed emphasis on the huge drive for homes that are needed attendant on the powerful economic forces that are being delivered in the South East.

The Panel recommendations on the need for planning-in infrastructure provision is very weak. The Panel says "that to make housing levels contingent on the delivery of particular pieces of infrastructure would produce a stop-go climate unhelpful to investment". Their answer to the perceived infrastructure deficit is to leave this to the mainstream programmes of Government. However, experience has shown that without the clear allocation of funds, grave public disquiet grows as the infrastructure, from transport to water supply and flood prevention, to support housing development is not delivered. High levels of housing provision dictated without adequate support can only give rise to public resistance.

Clearly, then, the pressure to build more homes and the political commitment to ensure this policy is delivered will drive up the pace of building homes in and around the town. Noting that a recommendation to relax Green Belt protection against unsustainable development is now reported, it is imperative that the Society plays a part in determining the policies that shape the town in the future. No-one

wants the character of the town to be damaged by sprawl, and it would be foolhardy to sit back and hope that others will have a clear view of what the town is to become. The Society has already taken a lead in devising a policy to limit incremental housing development in the demarcated areas of Dorking in order to protect character and prevent town sprawl. We will build on this with the co-operation of MVDC and we welcome the help and encouragement of members in this work. The Society wants a form of collaboration in devising planning policy together with the district planners and Councillors to achieve this input into the Mole Valley LDF Core Strategy.

Picture taken from Box Hill showing the present compact boundaries of Dorking



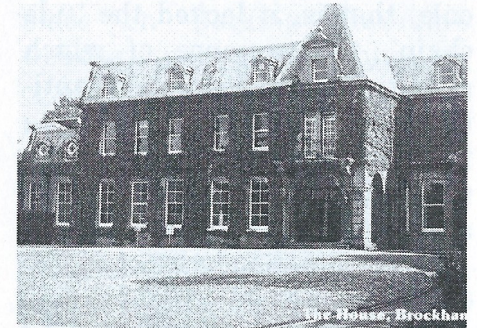
Dorking Museum

Discovery of the Penicillin Nucleus at Brockham Park

Fifty years ago (September 1957) the 'nucleus' or core of the penicillin molecule was discovered by staff of Beecham Research Laboratories at Brockham Park, Betchworth. The availability of this substances was to have a major impact in the world of bacterial infections because it led to the discovery of a range of new 'semi-synthetic' penicillins such as amoxycillin and cloxacillin with much improved properties compared with Fleming's penicillin. There can be few of us who have not been treated with these antibiotics, which are used around the world for treating a wide range of infections in both humans and animals.

Dr Rollinson and colleagues discovered that under certain cultural conditions, the mould *Penicillium chrysogenum* would not complete the synthesis of penicillin but stopped at an

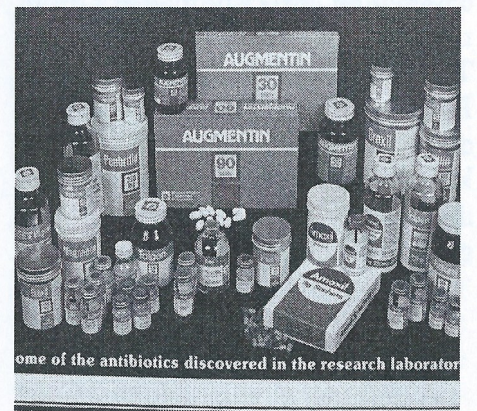
intermediate substance which had little antibacterial activity.



House at Brockham Park where research was carried out



Amoxycillin containers on display in the Museum



one of the antibiotics discovered in the research laboratory

Analysis revealed that this was the 'core' of the penicillin molecule, that is, it lacked the 'side chain', the presence of which gives penicillin its potent antibacterial activity. A way was found to isolate this 'core', which was named 6-aminopenicillanic acid or 6-APA for short.

By synthetic chemical methods it was possible to put different 'side chains' on to 6-APA, so enabling hundreds of different types of what were then called 'semi-synthetic' penicillins to be made. It was found that some of these new semi-synthetic penicillins had much-improved antibacterial properties such as 'broad spectrum' activity or activity against penicillin-resistant bacteria.

The connection with our museum is that we have on display the whole range of prescription containers for all the semi-synthetic penicillins discovered at Brockham Park and made available in the UK. These came from Brockham Park when the laboratories closed in 1996. As far as we know no other museum has such a collection displayed with background information.

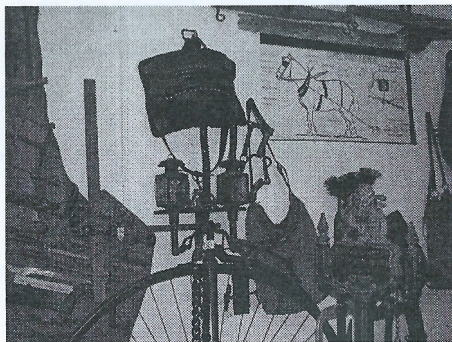
Martin Cole

Heritage Open Days – 6-9th September

As in previous years, we opened our museum, free of charge, to visitors under the Heritage Open Day Scheme. The theme for the event was "In War & Peace" and, in association with the Dorking Local History Group, we had a special display relating to WWII wartime incidents in Dorking and District.

Over the three days - Thursday, Saturday & Sunday – we recorded by ticket 203 adults and 20 children, but this must be an underestimate as, on occasions, we were a bit overwhelmed. In addition, Allan Brigham, as part of his Vile Victorians tour, brought in 54 children, including accompanying adults. The visitors seemed to enjoy themselves and had a good rapport with our stewards – we learn a lot from our visitors. We took £88 in sales and £80 in donations.

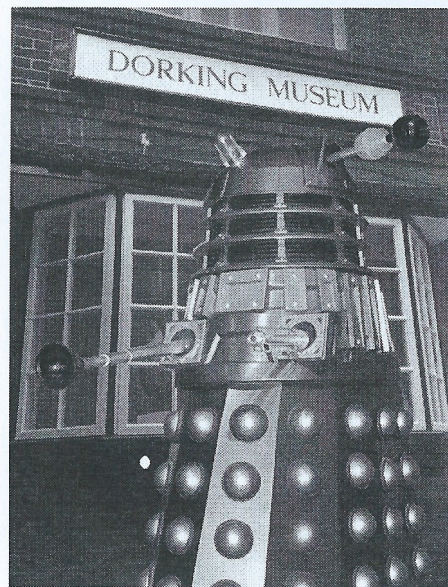
Martin Cole



There's no sofa at the museum to hide behind

Exhibition of Dr Who memorabilia at Dorking Museum

Fred Plant, Curator

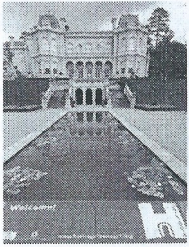


This photograph and accompanying wording, occupies pride of place on Dorking Museum's website (www.dorkingmuseum.co.uk) to publicise the forthcoming exhibition. One might ask why the museum should mount such an event when it is difficult to see the connection between monsters from outer space and the charming market town of Dorking. I answer this question by venturing to suggest that the connection lies in the undoubted interest generated by the Dr Who series on BBC Television, and there will be many viewers – children and their parents – who live in the Dorking area who may be encouraged to follow-up this interest with a visit to the exhibition.

The website wording

In advance of the forthcoming 'Dr Who' Exhibition to open at the museum on Saturday, October 20th, this visitor arrived out of the blue to startle the stewards on duty. So shocked were they, that they failed to get it to sign the visitor's book. Not all is lost though, for the Dalek will return to form part of the exhibition of memorabilia, figures and artefacts from the first BBC series. To give the youngsters of Dorking the opportunity to visit the exhibition, the opening is timed to coincide with the Au-

Continued on page 18



Heritage weekend 2007

By Sarah Hawkes

This was one of the most successful Heritage Weekends, one hundred events, all of which reported large numbers of visitors. The Stewards at the Museum were rushed off their feet, and Cherkley Court proved enormously popular, as did the Green Room theatre in Dorking, where the wartime soup kitchen did a roaring trade.

We did have a touch of organised panic before the weekend because several organisers were a tad late getting their details in, which caused a bit of a rush to get the brochures printed, but all's well that ends well.

Very many thanks must go to Rod Shaw of Mole Valley DC. He worked tirelessly to make the weekend the success it was, notwithstanding he holds down an important job in the Planning Department at Pippbrook.

Thanks must also go to all the people who organised the fascinating, interesting and beautiful events.

All the pictures on these pages (apart from one) were taken by Rod Shaw.

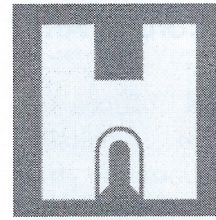


1



2

1. Dorking Cemetery
2. St Paul's Church, Dorking
3. Milton Street walk, Westcott
4. Friends Meeting House, Dorking - performance of 'North Star for Freedom'



3



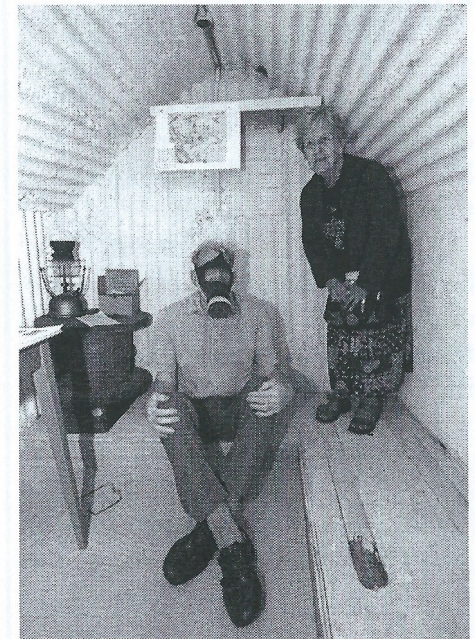
4



5



6



7

5. Exhibition at Pippbrook, Dorking
6. The team at Downs Solicitors, Dorking
7. Air Raid Shelter, Westcott

turn half-term holiday. Adults who enjoyed the programmes in those long-gone days will also find the displays of interest.

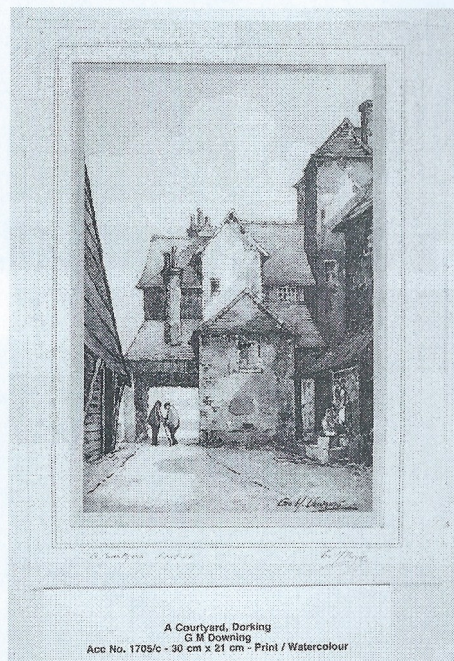
The Museum Committee would like to see an increase in the number of young visitors throughout the year, and this event is designed to encourage many first time visits by youngsters and their parents. Bette Phillips, the Museum's education officer, will be sending details to local schools as part of her ongoing contact with local education establishments. It is expected that special out-of-hours visits by groups from youth organisations will be arranged.

The Museum is grateful to Matt Parish, a Senior Designer with Clockhouse Marketing Ltd. of Dene Street, Dorking, for kindly lending the memorabilia from his collection.

The exhibition will run from Saturday, 20th October to the end of the 2008 February half-term holiday, thus encompassing three school holiday periods.

Photographic record of Art Collection

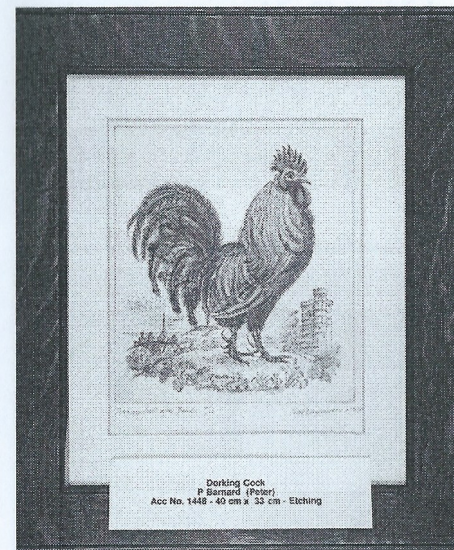
Through the good offices of Councillor Stephen Cooksey, Surrey County Council has provided funding which has enabled the Museum to commission the creation of a photographic record of its collection of watercolours, pencil drawings, prints and etchings.



212 high quality TIFF format images are stored on four CD-ROM disks, while the same 212 images in the compressed JPEG format are stored on one CD-ROM disk.

The former would be used when making a photographic

print, the latter is adequate for on-screen viewing.



The pictures accompany this item are representative of the collection.

*Barbara Turnbull,
Curator*

From the Archives

We are told that family history is one of the fastest growing hobbies, and the advent of the Internet has now made it much easier to get started. Census returns from 1841-1901 can be searched to find your ancestors and discover where they lived, their occupation, age and place of birth. Having got that far, most people want to fill-out those basic facts, and this is where the museum archives come in. A recent letter from Henley-on-Thames asked about shoemaker James Boorer, who moved into Church Street in the 1860s and was later described as a Coffee Room Keeper. Information was duly found and passed on.

Before the advent of the Welfare State, the Church played a major role in helping the needy. St Martin's Paris Room was opened in February 1879, and now forms the southern end of the Christian Centre. In the same year an Invalid Kitchen and Coffee Room was set-up alongside. The kitchen

supplied meat dinners and beef tea twice a week on Tuesdays and Fridays. Each person receiving a dinner had to bring a plate or bowl, and 1d for bread, etc. In its first two months it distributed 636 hot meals to those who could not fend for themselves.

The Coffee Room also served a very useful function. It opened daily from 5.00am to 10.00pm, when hot tea, coffee & cocoa, eggs & bacon, bread & butter and cake were always available. Provided you could afford it, there was no need to start work on an empty stomach.

Having gas and electricity in our homes, we tend to forget how our forebears brewed their hot drinks. Announcing the opening of the Coffee Room, the Parish Magazine of June 1870 said that "as the summer comes on, it will be a convenience to many to send for a pint or quart of good coffee or tea, with bread and butter if desired, instead of having to light a fire and boil a kettle at home, and due provisions will be made for this purpose. Thus a good tea may be had at once, and carried home, with the saving of fire and delay".

In hot weather, this take-away service must have been a

boon and the takings for the first two months amounted to £18 15s 6½d – a tidy sum in those days.



Church Street in the 1860s showing the West end of the Intermediate Church. This nave was built in 1835-37, and had interior iron pillars instead of the more usual stone. After only 35 years it was demolished and replaced by the present nave and tower, which were completed in 1877.

Mus. Ref. A1/Ch/18

James Boorer died in 1887, and his wife Mary continued to keep the Coffee Room for a while. She died in 1907 and was buried with her husband in Dorking Cemetery.

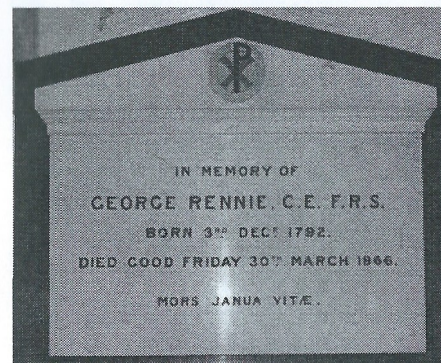
*Mary Turner,
Curator*

Local History Group

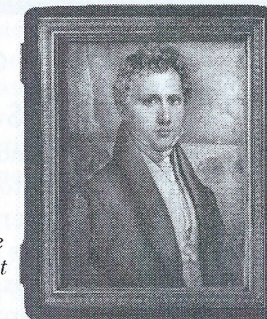
The Local History Group will be exhibiting a board on the life of local engineer and bridge builder, George Rennie, at Surrey Archaeological Society's annual symposium on October 27th. For anyone wishing to attend, the theme is 'Bridges and Tunnels in Surrey' and programme details and tickets may be

obtained from Kathy Atherton. George Rennie was the son of the great John Rennie, the civil engineer responsible for the design and construction of a trio of bridges over the Thames in the early nineteenth century. He kept a detailed diary throughout the construction of Waterloo Bridge, then the largest bridge contract ever to have been undertaken in Britain, from 1811-1817. At the same time he was credited with the theoretical calculations for Southwark Bridge, the largest cast iron arch bridge ever built, on which he acted as engineer. A government appointment, as Inspector of Machinery and Clerk of the Irons at the Royal Mint, prevented his being appointed engineer to London Bridge in 1821, though he worked on the designs. It is as a naval designer that he is chiefly remembered,

The memorial at St Mary Magdalene, South Holmwood, to George Rennie carries a representation of the three arches of Southwark Bridge. A church had yet to be established at North Holmwood on Rennie's death.



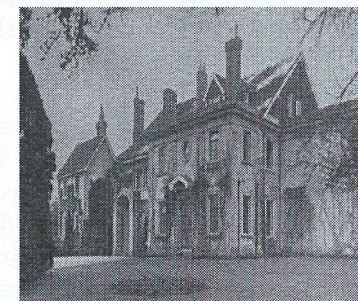
however, in particular for the engine for the Dwarf, the first vessel in the British Navy to have been screw propelled. Whilst the Group's display recounts the family's immense contribution to the industrialisation of Victorian Britain, it also examines his connections with Dorking. Our researches have established his residence in the area as early as 1839. How he alighted on Dorking is not known,



*George Rennie
(Photograph: the
National Portrait
Gallery)*

however in the early 1830s his brother surveyed a London to Brighton railway line which might have run through the town had there not been objections by landowners. Possibly George was involved in that project, which would have brought the attractions of the unspoilt Holmwood to his notice.

*Holmwood Lodge
(Photograph courtesy of Dorking Museum)*



His home, Holmwood Lodge, was built on the site of an ancient settlement on the edge of the Common. Backing onto Stubs Farm – it was one of Holmwood's first grand homes. When Rennie died in 1866, (from injuries sustained in a street accident) his body was returned to Holmwood for burial at the parish church some two miles to the south. The display then charts how, over

the following century, the Lodge, once a lone mansion surrounded by farmland and common, was encroached upon by artisan housing and the rise of the brickworks towards it, leading to its demolition in 1969. After the Symposium it is expected that members will have a chance to see the display at village shows or in the Museum.

Kathy Atherton

Grumpy old man founds Dorking

At a party I attended recently, conversation turned to films, music and TV. A close friend of mine, a lady who is always teasing me about my 'Anglo Saxon Monomania', spoke of a recent programme she had watched that downplayed 'Englishness'. Of course, I immediately went in with both feet (one of them in my mouth), defending my ancestry. During my enthusiastic riposte, I mentioned that my ancestors had called the British 'foreigners' or 'slaves' *Wielisc* in Old English, pronounced Welsh. My foot was well and truly in my mouth. I'd forgotten that one of the guests was Welsh. She stopped me in mid flow and said, "I understand that it is thought that Dorking was founded by a Briton".

An embarrassed quietness descended on the gathering: I was being challenged. Mind you, I wouldn't have been surprised. In the decades before Constantine III left Britain to fend for itself, a

substantial number of Saxons were recruited as *foederati* – federal troops – in Roman pay. Their task was to defend the south and east of Britain from fellow Saxon pirates. Indeed, some historians say that the 'Saxon Shore' was so named because it was manned by Saxons. When some of the *foederati* completed their term of service, they were given land in Anglia and Kent as their 'de-mob' pay, marrying local British women and having children. The progenitor of the West Saxon Royal line was named 'Cerdic', an anglicised version of the British 'Caradoc'.

Getting back to the challenge. The Anglo Saxon word *deorc*, presumably the first part of the Dorking's name, means 'dark'. The Saxons were very good at giving names to individuals based upon their characteristics. *Deorc* could have been so-named because he was a miserable sort of lad in his youth: who knows? Add 'ingas' (the people) and you get 'Deorcingas', the original spelling of the name.

Aethelric

Dear Sir,

Traffic Lights at Pump Corner
No one should be surprised that the new traffic signals at Pump Corner are causing problems. In the last 25 years, I can not think of a single set of traffic signals anywhere that has created more benefit than cost to motorists and pedestrians combined. Consider the new signals at Vincent Lane/Westcott Road or the "upgrade" to the signals at the end of Ashcombe Road.

Whatever they said at the time, the Council will always claim later that the changes were made for safety reasons. This is a convenient claim as it is usually impossible to quantify and argue against.

The simple fact of this scheme like all the others is that the costs outweigh the benefits. So why do they go ahead? I have come to the conclusion that these projects are job creation exercises – in short, if money is not spent then council jobs are threatened.

Councils have no competition and Council staff have only other Council staff to manage them. As ratepayers, we have no control over this. The Council and its staff are untouchable and as long as they do not push their luck too far, they can take in taxes year after year and provide themselves with secure, well paid jobs and a limitless prospect of empire building and promotion. That, I'm afraid, is the reality of the new signals at Pump Corner – a job creation scheme. Yours sincerely

Geoff Cox

Dear Editor,

How I agree with the sentiment expressed in the final sentence of Mr Benoy's letter published in the Summer Newsletter.

Mole Valley District Council should face up to their responsibilities and insist that the developers build much needed affordable 1 and 2 bedroom flats for people (of which there are many) who do not own and do not wish to have cars.

Space would only be needed as open cover for wheelie bins, prams and bicycles with a small area for visitor's cars, thus eliminating any so-called traffic problems. Yours faithfully

Mrs Muriel Woolven

Dear Sir,

I would like to endorse the remarks of Ann Champion regarding the Spring edition and to say that I thought the Summer edition was even more delightful and contained many articles that interested me – particularly the detailed planning report and Beryl Higgins's fascinating article on the High Street.

The piece I particularly want to comment on was the one in the Spring edition headed "Untidy footpaths", concerning the footpath behind the new Linden Homes development and running between the A24 and Moores Road. Not only do I live in Deepdene Gardens which is very close to the aforesaid path, but also, as a member of the Mole Valley Group of the Ramblers' Association, I am a liaison officer responsible for inspecting

the rights-of-way within Dorking Parish and reporting any deficiencies to the Group Footpath Secretary. The Dorking Parish is not confined to Dorking and its immediate environs but extends to parts of Ranmore, Box Hill, Norbury Park and Holmwood Common. As there are more than 100 rights of way – footpaths, bridleways and by-ways – I am hard pressed to visit all of them in the course of a year.

During the last 16 years I cannot recall any path I would describe as “untidy” or “messy” – these descriptions would imply considerable quantities of litter had been deposited – and I would hasten to assure readers of your newsletter that Dorking’s footpaths are in excellent order. I have walked FP78, behind the old Sandpit, and FP105 quite recently.

As for appointing a new Footpaths officer – is this really necessary in view of what I have written? Yours faithfully

Geoff Quantrell

Dear Sir,

Mr. Benoy writes as a very satisfied inhabitant of present day Dorking (Letters, Summer Newsletter 2007). To start with his unkind words about the cockerel on the Deepdene Roundabout: He should be aware of the difficulties of public art commissions compared with the ease of criticism. For my part I think that it makes the place distinctive and memorable, and the squawk of delight from one of our grand-daughters each time we pass by is worth a

lot to me. Surely the fear of insensitive criticism stifles attempts to produce public art, which would otherwise give pleasure to many, if never all.

Mr. Benoy has lived in Dorking for nearly as long as I have and, like him, I have always shopped there. But he must know that the town is always changing and that our two small supermarkets do not cater well for everyone, most particularly for mothers with young families. The empty shops in the High Street and St. Martin’s Walk, and the recent downturn in Dorking’s niche market, the antique shops in West Street, must be a concern and show that not all is well.

The wasted spaces at ground level in Mill Lane, the lack of trade in the northern end of St. Martin’s Walk and the badly planned Marks & Spencer all call for a better solution, even if we have been saved from the major dislocation of a new superstore in the centre of the town.

Recently and unusually, I shopped in Reigate and I was astonished by the convenient flat car park, and the ease of access to both the supermarket and the High Street. The topography of Dorking presents much more of a challenge. Yours sincerely

Alexandra Wedgwood

The Bat Fort – Robin lives outside in the trees

Peter Creasey
NT Head Warden
Box Hill & Headley
Heath



In the late 1880’s London, unlike other European capitals, did not have a ring of defensive forts. This was because it had been felt that money was better spent on warships for the navy rather than land defences. At about this time, doubts began to be expressed about the navy’s ability to defend the country, so an act of Parliament was introduced in 1889 to build a ring of 13 ‘mobilisation centres’ along the North Downs and in Essex to protect the Capital. The Box Hill ‘Fort’ was one of these.

From the start, the word ‘fort’ was carefully avoided, and the Opposition was asked “in the national interest” not to press for details. Work started in 1896 and was completed in 1902. The Box Hill centre was built in 1899.

Initially, there appears to have been some confusion about the exact role of the centres. Care was taken to avoid the word ‘fort’, and evasive answers in the House must have suggested a lack of openness

by the scheme’s supporters, and it appears that, in trying to confuse the Opposition, they confused their own planners, as all the forts were built to a different plan.

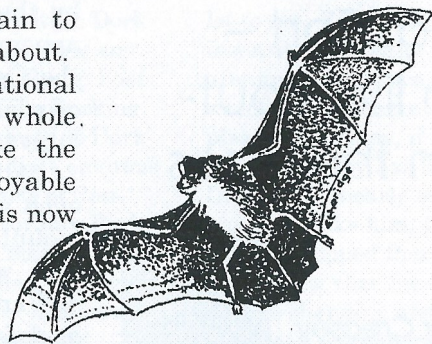
Although some of the centres, such as Reigate, had the facility to mount artillery, most, such as Box Hill, were storage centres for tools and ammunition, and only meant to be defended as a last resort.

The Box Hill fort was inherited by the National Trust as part of the whole estate in 1914. It had lain derelict for many years, and was in a poor state of repair. In 1990, work was done to make the roof more waterproof and to repair the ventilation shafts to the original design. The iron doors and shutters were also treated in the original manner by boiling them in linseed oil to weatherproof them.

A rather ugly chain-link fence was erected around the fort to protect it from vandalism and to prevent people getting in to the underground storage rooms that had been colonised by various species of bats, which are legally protected. The Trust has now taken the decision to allow more public access to the exterior of the fort. In order to do this, we have started clearing some of the vegetation that has grown up over the years. An iron fence of a design of the period will be put up to discourage people getting onto the roof, and the old exterior fence will be removed and the surrounds landscaped. A new information board

will also be put up to explain to visitors what the fort was all about.

This is all part of the National Trust's plan to reorganise the whole of Box Hill Centre to make the visitor experience more enjoyable and to protect the fort, which is now a scheduled monument.



'Arboring' thoughts about the Tree of Life The vital importance they are to life on Earth

Throughout my long life, I have been aware of the vital importance of trees on our planet. They produce all of the oxygen we breathe and soak up CO₂ into the bargain.

Back in April, on a beautiful sunny day, I had to go to Fordingbridge in Hampshire on family business. This was finished by eleven, and I decided to go back onto the 27, then turn south toward Lymington – one of my boyhood haunts. I bought some hot pies from the bakery and some fruit from a market stall and headed out.

Parking the car, I walked about a mile into the forest, found a quiet, sunny clearing and, leaning against an old oak, tucked into my lunch. Feeling satisfied, I toyed with the idea of a snooze but, instead, got to thinking about all the rich oxygen being pumped out of the trees

around me. Had anyone measured and quantified the oxygen produced by just one leaf and then multiplied that figure by the number of leaves on a tree? I decided to get in touch with the RHS of which I am a member.

When I returned home, I fired off a long letter to Wisley detailing my questions about carbon take-up and oxygen production, the reply to which forms the basis of this small article that I shall enlarge upon at a later date.

Trees have an astonishing number of leaves. A large Apple has between 50-100,000; a Birch, 200,000 and an Oak, 700,000. The Grandpappy of them all, however, is the American Elm with around 5 million. A Beech has about the same amount as an Oak and produces enough oxygen every year to supply 10 people. It also 'fixes' 2kg of CO₂ per hour. That's 17,520kg per year (32.63392 tonnes). Most of this, however, is released again at night and during winter, making the net reduction in carbon quite small.

Blue Chip Companies in Dorking?

When, at various regional economic meetings, I introduce myself as Head of Economic Development for Mole Valley District Council, you can often see the thought bubbles "economic development in Mole Valley, they are rural with just market towns and a few sheep" appear subconsciously. Even though we are rural, we have some of the UK's and even the world's top companies based right here in 'sleepy' Mole Valley. Part of my job is to liaise with them, understand their needs as major employers and economic drivers, aiming to retain them in the area. With many thousands of local jobs and millions of pounds of local expenditure at stake, we as a local authority want to make them feel as welcome as possible.

Although the northern part of the district boasts some of the best known corporates, such as the UK headquarters of Exxon Mobil, who have just undergone a £30m refurbishment and redevelopment of their site, leading global engineering, construction and services company KBR known to many as Halliburton and, soon to join us in 2008, international consumer product group Unilever, Dorking can boast its own 'blue-chip' corporates nestling in the rolling Surrey Hills.

Probably the best known and most visible is Friends Provident, one of the UK's leading financial services groups and a member of the FTSE100 Index, with a history dating back to 1832. Although the company has many regional offices across the UK, Dorking remains one of their key operational centres, within easy reach of London, providing specialist services to the whole Friends Provident group.



Just across the road from Friends Provident is another key player in the local economy, Denbies Vineyard, not only England's largest wine producer, but also one of Surrey's key visitor attractions, looking after many hundreds of thousand visitors per year. With a recent run of prestigious international wine awards, Denbies has

established a reputation for producing top-quality English wine, so much so that many vintages, especially their sparkling wines are immediate sell-outs on release.

Down the A24 from Denbies, we have an internationally renowned company better known for taking people out of the UK to foreign climes, Kuoni Travel. This Swiss-based company has offices in over thirty countries worldwide, with their main UK headquarters based in Dorking. They have consistently won many of the travel trade top awards for long-haul tour operator, their trophy cabinet literally bulging with numerous cups and trophies. Their recent acquisition of brands such as Voyages Jules Verne and Kirker Travel further reinforce their place at the top of the quality travel market.



Venture into Dorking on the A25 and you pass the still-talked-about Mole Valley District Council 'pepperpot' offices. Loved and hated by probably an equal number of people, these offices provide the civic focus for the district, sharing the nearby zone with the new sports centre, Dorking Halls thea-

tre & cinema complex and the grade II listed Dorking library based behind the council offices. Although all these are 'public sector', through the amount of people they employ and the financial output they generate they are a significant economic driver to our local economy.



Heading on further through the town on the A25 you pass Sabre Insurance. Although not a 'household' name Sabre is one of the foremost specialist motor insurers in the UK, insuring commercial vehicles, high-value vehicles and high-risk drivers. Employing over one hundred people Sabre is one of our more hidden corporates, which quietly operates in the south side of Dorking town centre.

Another corporate, which is mainly hidden up in the Curtis Road Industrial Estate, is the world's leading manufacturer of road and industrial sweepers, Johnston Sweepers. One of the very few true manufacturing companies left in Surrey, let alone the South East, Johnston still manufacture the majority of their European models right here in Dorking.

From research and development, through manufacturing to servicing and repairs Johnson employ circa four hundred people at their Dorking site.



Head west out of Dorking on the A25 and, as you enter Westcott, you go past the entrance to Unum Provident, confusingly similar in name and business as Friends Provident but not connected. Unum Provident is one of the largest insurance groups, providing both companies and individuals income cover for illness, disability, accident and injury. Part of an American group, since 1990 Unum's Dorking office, employing around five hundred people, continues to be a key party of Unum's UK



operation.

You will see from this short trot round some of our major companies that even Dorking, 'at the heart of the Surrey Hills' in both an area of outstanding natural beauty and in the green belt, has its fair share of corporate companies. These companies all make a significant contribution to our economy and many support local good causes through their corporate social responsibility policies. They add to the diversity of the district and I hope will choose to remain in Mole Valley for many years to come.

Simon Matthews, is Head of Economic Development for Mole Valley District Council, he can be contacted via email at simon.matthews@molevalley.gov.uk or via telephone on 01306 655017.

Simon Matthews



Reminiscences from the bottom of my garden

What a wonderful early start to the year but what a dreadful Summer. All this, of course, fed the Global Warming feeding frenzy but, in the midst of the doom monger's 'Ragnorok' predictions, came the news that the planet Mars was also undergoing global warming and not a gas-guzzling 4x4 in sight. Don't you think that our global warming has something to do with the sun rather than CO₂?

(Oh dear! I bet we get lots of letters about this.Ed.)

My reaction to this phenomenon has been to buy some more *Agapanthus* and an *Oleander* that, disappointingly, did not flower although it was covered in buds: the rotten Summer I guess. I have just bought a book entitled 'Tropical Garden Style with Hardy Plants', my winter reading.

Back in March, on 'Gardener's Question Time', I heard that one of the attractions at this year's BBC event at Sparsholt, near Winchester, was to be a 'Dig for Victory' garden, reproducing the things we grew back in WW2.

I was away in school in the

early forties, and every other Wednesday afternoon, alternating with sports, we boys planted, dug, hoed and generally tended a large section of our playing fields growing a wide range of vegetables and soft fruit that was transformed into wonderful meals by our cooks. In addition, we had our own pigs that thrived on our leftovers and peelings from the veg. Our 'leftovers' were promoted by housemasters who insisted that we always left something on our plate for 'Mr Manners': a cunning plan worthy of Blackadder's Baldrick.

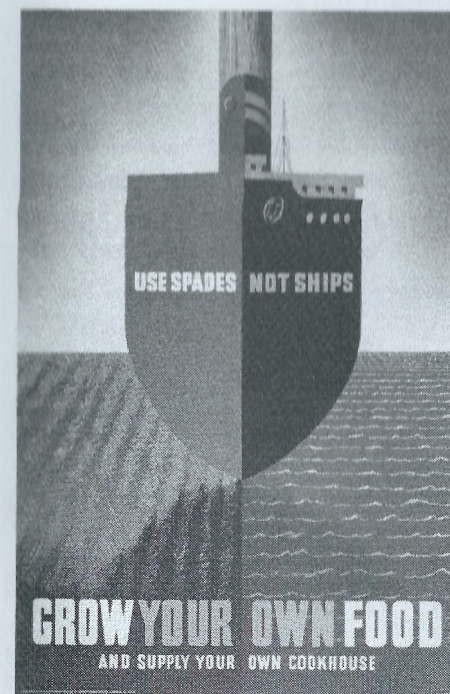
I cannot speak of those living in the towns and cities during the war but, with the balanced diet forced upon everyone with rationing, and the vast numbers of allotments producing fresh produce, youngsters like myself were very healthy indeed, especially those living in rural surroundings.

In my many articles on gardening that I have been writing for many years, I have, from time to time, given advice on most aspects of it. Just lately, however, I have become more interested in the philosophical side of growing things and promoting the delights of enjoying the garden rather than concentrating on the hard work bit.

We all know that gardening can be a hard slog at times (that's all the time at my age) but I enjoy just sitting and looking, and inevitably, reminisce about my horticultural experiences in the various parts of the world I have visited. My old friends, my fork and spade, are in retirement in the shed and only see the light of day when I have someone in to tidy up the garden.

Adam Jolyon

We old'ns are used to the iconic Dig for Victory poster that was displayed in post offices and on hoardings throughout the war, but below is the more up-market version designed by Abram Games which appeared on the underground, in fire stations and military bases.



My four legged friends

My Grandfather and father both loved horses – not to ride – but to gamble on. On the other hand, they knew everything about 'form': they knew their fetlocks from their hocks, and all about 'the going'. None the less, they both lost large amounts of money satisfying their addiction – so much for their expertise. I was blissfully unaware of this until my father's funeral in '75, when my aunts 'spilled the beans'. My inheritance was swelling the bank balances of assorted books throughout Hampshire and Sussex.

I also love horses, not to bet upon but to admire, and in my younger days, ride. At the end of the war, I was stationed at 11 Group Fighter Command at Tangmere near Chichester. On my off-duty times, I would either hitchhike or bicycle to Bedhampton near Havant and hack the morning or afternoon away. Most times, I would take an apple with me to treat my favourite mount, Sinbad. A combination of this fact and forgetting never to walk close behind a horse got me into an embarrassing situation with the stores sergeant when I asked for

a new battledress because mine was stained with horse saliva, and a new pair of shoes (I was aircrew) because Sinbad had stepped back on my foot.

Twenty years after my demob, I took up riding again, this time in the New Forest at a stable run by Lester Piggott's cousin. My wife accompanied me on the first two outings but couldn't 'hack' it – excuse the pun. In the seventies, I was working as a freelance part of the time and as a marketing director for the rest: I just did not have the time for a vacation let alone one week's riding so, since then, all I can do is to watch them and learn about their history, and how they have changed history.

It is almost certain that horses originated in North America as tiny dog-sized animals that migrated over the frozen Bering Straits into Asia, moving ever westward and evolving over thousands of years into the smallish Steppe horses that are still around today.

They were domesticated by people we call 'proto-Indo Europeans' but used at first as draught animals. When the Indo Europeans and the Indo Aryans migrated east west and south, eventually they were harnessed to the Weapon of

Mass Destruction of their day, the chariot. Linguistically, horses were called 'asva' in Sanscrit; *ek-wons in Indo European; 'ech' in Old Irish; 'eoh' and 'hors' in Anglo Saxon and 'Equus' in Latin. The Indo Europeans that migrated eastward, the 'Tocharians', called the horse 'yakwe'.

The Hittites used horse-drawn chariotry to lethal effect at the battle with the Egyptians at Kadesh. The Hittites' expertise in chariotry was later sought by Egypt and provided on a pile of clay tablets by an Hittite horse trainer called 'Kikulli' that are extant in a museum today.

However, it was the Persian branch of the Indo Aryans (Iran is the present day version of Aryan) who developed the large 'Charger' and the Arabians breeding the famous 'Arab' horse whose genes exist in many of today's horses.

Two of the heroes of Anglo Saxon history were named after horses, Hengist (stallion) and Horsa (Horse). Local English place names include the horse. Horsley and Horley (horse fields) and Horsham (the hamlet where horses were kept and sold).

Adam Jolyon

CORPORATE MEMBERS SUPPORTING THE SOCIETY

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

Name	Address	Tel.	Business type
ADV (UK) Ltd	The Old Crummet Factory, 16 Brookham Lane, Betchworth, RH3 7EL	01737 845 450	Building Preservation & Construction
Antony Wakefield & Co Ltd	Suite C, South House, South St RH4 2JZ	740 555	Fine Art & general insurance brokers
Betchworth Park Golf Club	Reigate Road, RH4 1NZ	882 052	Golf club
Bray Estates	278/280 High Street, RH4 1QT	740 837	Professional property consultants
Bullimore	Old Printers Yard, 156 South Street, RH4 2HF	880 880	Chartered accountants
Burley, G & Sons	Burley Corner, Moorhurst Lane, S. Holmwood, RH5 4LJ	711 799	Amenity horticulturist
Carrington (1953) Ltd	5 Stacey's Meadow, Elstead, Godalming, GU8 6BX		
Chandler Cars	Unit 23, Vincent Works, Vincent Lane, RH4 3HQ	882 001	Services and sales
Christique Antique Centre	11 West Street, RH4 1BL	883 849	Antique furniture & interior design
Clear, S J & Co Ltd	65 High Street, RH4 1AW	883 340	Electrical contractors/shop
David Cowan	114 South Street, RH4 1AW	886 622	Solicitors
Dorking Desk Shop, The Downs	41 West Street, RH4 1BN	883 327	Antique furniture dealer
Downsman Ltd	156 High Street, RH4 1BQ	880 110	Solicitors and notaries
Ellis Atkins & Co	Overdene, Paper Mews, RH4 2TU 1 Paper Mews, 330 High Street, RH4 2TU	887 023 886 681	Management services Chartered accountants
Fothergills Coffee Lounge	19 St Martins Walk, RH4 1UT		Coffee lounge
Friends Provident plc	Pixham End, RH4 1QA	654 4220	Financial services
Garth House Nursing Home	Tower Hill Road, RH4 2AY	880 511	Nursing home
Hart Seales & Hodges	159 High Street, RH4 1AD	884 432	Solicitors
International Sports Marketing Ltd	Bales Court, Barrington Road, RH4 3EJ	743 322	Marketing consultants
Kuoni Travel Ltd	Deepdene Avenue, RH5 4AZ	840 888	Tour operators
Munro, Ian	10 High Street, RH4 1AT	882 270	Men's outfitters
Newton & Co	Ranmore House, 19 Ranmore Road, RH4 1HE	884 208	Chartered accountants
Patrick Gardner & Co	171 High Street, RH4 1AD	877 775	Estate agents
Penwizard Ltd	Dene Lodge, Cotmandene, RH4 2BN		
Priority School, The	West Bank, RH4 3DG	887 337	School
Rose Hill Nursing Home	9 Rose Hill, RH4 2EG	882 622	Nursing home
Sears, Philip, Designs	18c Horsham Road, RH4 2JD	884 477	Architectural building surveyor
Songhurst, W Ltd	Rayleigh House, Chapel Lane, Westcott, RH4 3PJ	880 411	Builders
Treeline Services Ltd	Chadhurst Farm, Coldharbour Lane, RH4 3JH	741 800	Tree care and maintenance
Uden, C J & Co	The Old Crummet Factory, 16 Brookham Lane, Betchworth, RH3 7EL	01737 845 451	Building Preservation & Construction
Viscount Agencies	Concept House, 3 Dene Street, RH4 2DR	880 715	Duty free agency
Whitelegg Machines Ltd	Fir Tree House, Horsham Road, Beare Green, RH5 4LQ	713 200	Electrical engineers
Woolcock Partnership Ltd, The	Hulsta Studios, 120 South Street, RH4 2EU	880 330	Furniture retailer and installation
Wyevale Country Gardens	Reigate Road, RH5 1NP	884 845	Garden centre

OTHER CORPORATE MEMBERS SUPPORTING THE SOCIETY

Abinger Parish Council	Dorking Town Centre Management	Newdigate Parish Council
Amis de Gouvieux, Les	Friends of Boshill	Ockley Parish Council
Ashcombe School	Friends of Gouvieux	Sir Paul Beresford MP & Lady Beresford
Betchworth Parish Council	Friends of Holmwood	The Dorking Advertiser
Brookham Green Village Society	Headley Parish Council	The Guildford Society
Brookham Parish Council	Holmwood Parish Council	The Reigate Society
Buckland Parish Council	Leigh Parish Council	The Surrey Advertiser
Capel Parish Council	Mickleham Parish Council	Westcott Village Association
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MoleValley Visitor Information Centre

Visitor & Tourist Information on:-

- Hotels, B&B's and self-catering accommodation
- Local and regional attractions and events
- Dorking Caves and Guided Walks
- Local places of interest
- Local travel information

Stockists of maps, guides, books & dvd's.

Two internet access stations.



Town Guided Walks

The Mole Valley Towns of Leatherhead and Dorking are steeped in history and culture and both have some fine and diverse architecture.

Enjoy a guided walk through the streets of these historic market towns, learn about the fascinating people and interesting events that make up their past. To book contact Visitor Information.

Dorking Caves

Take a trip into history – deep underground!

The Dorking Caves are one of Surrey's best kept secrets. Carved out of the Lower Greensand, these hidden galleries have been in use for hundreds of years and are the last remaining set of the towns' network of caves open to the public. To book contact Visitor Information.

A visit to Dorking Caves is one you will not forget!

Visit Us: Dorking Halls, Reigate Road, Dorking,
next to the box office Tel: 01306 879327

Email: visitor.information@molevalley.gov.uk



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