

NEWSLETTER

of the Dorking & District Preservation Society

No. 49

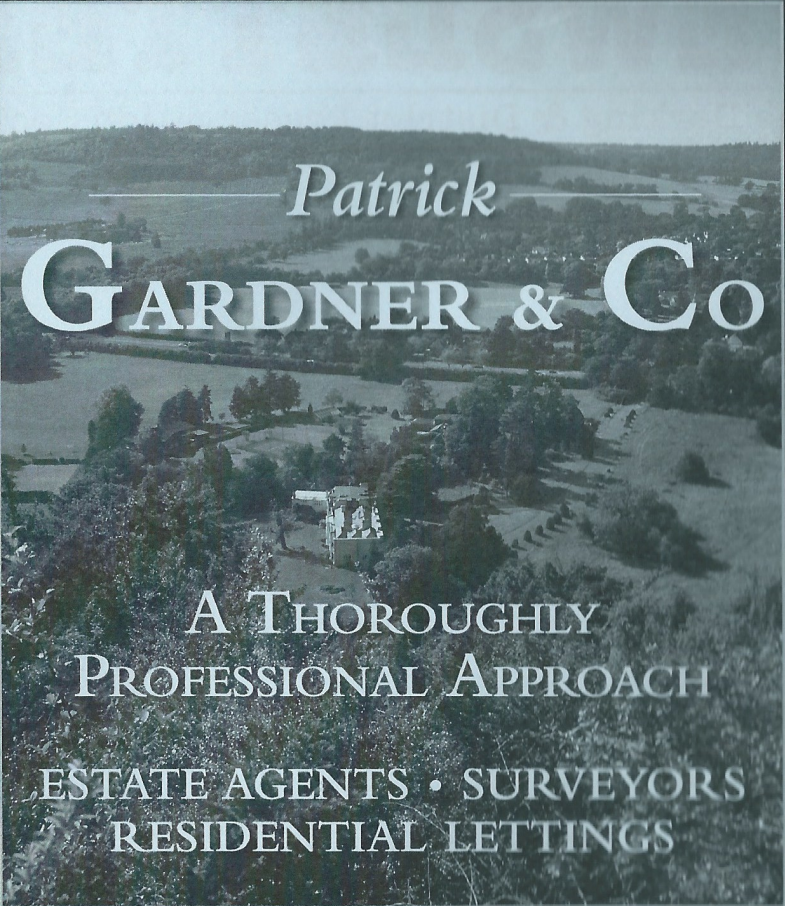
Spring 2008

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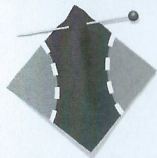
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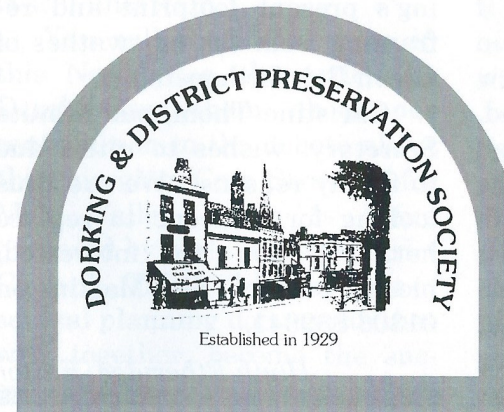


NEWSLETTER

of the Dorking & District Preservation Society

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NEWSLETTER 49: Spring 2008
Free to members

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editorial



£20.00 per issue or £50.00 for 3, and £12.00 for a half page or £26.00 for 3 issues). It would be a great help.

No letters this issue: a disappointment. This is your means of letting the Society know how you feel about Dorking issues we could tackle. Why not put something on paper about things you like or – Heaven forbid – dislike about the Society and what is going on in our area.

As you will see further on in the Newsletter, the Society has been, and still is, involved in all sorts of issues that will affect all of our lives in Dorking for years to come. Issues such as the Capel Incinerator; the Betchworth Common Field and, most important of all, to influence MVDC's decisions for the upcoming Local Development Framework, especially about retaining the integrity of Dorking's present footprint and refraining from taking swathes of Green Belt for housing.

Christine Thom, our Minute Secretary, wishes to retire due to family reasons. We are thus looking for someone to replace her. If you are interested, please contact Sir Martin on 01306 889941.

Hank Etheridge, Editor

Well, here I am, on my fourth edition of the Newsletter, and still enjoying it in spite of the pressures of my other tasks in the Society. Mind you, I have exceeded the budget for production of the last three, but my feedback is that it was worth it. However, I shall try to keep within budget this year without losing my graphics.

One of the reasons for exceeding the budget has been the cost of postages. In the past, we had quite a few members who delivered issues in their own localities. Unfortunately, advancing age has reduced their numbers, and we have been unable to recruit new blood, hence the high postage costs. If any of you feel that you can help in this way by delivering a few copies in your neighbourhood, please contact John Ball on 01306 876198 – it would only be three times a year, and the walk will do you good.

Another way you could help if you own a business, you might consider taking advertising space. It's at silly prices (1 page,

chairman's report



Our Annual Report for 2007, which is included with this Newsletter, contains a good account of the Society's activities during the past year. What does the current year hold for us?

2008 will, we expect, be the year in which the future of the outrageous proposal for a waste incinerator at Capel will be decided one way or another. News that West Sussex have decided to build another waste incinerator barely three miles from Capel, just outside Horsham, makes the Capel proposal seem even more inappropriate. We have strongly supported the Capel Action Group in their fight to stop it, but the outcome is still uncertain.

You will read, elsewhere in this Newsletter, the article by Derek Rowbotham about our contribution to the debate about the emerging 'Core Strategy' for Mole Valley which is being prepared by Mole Valley District Council. This will be the first of several planning documents that will, together, become the successor to the current Local Plan,

and it will set out the basic principles by which subsequent documents will be guided. It is thus extremely important that the Core Strategy be right. The problem we face is: how can we square the ever-growing need, emphasised by Government, for more housing units with the preservation of the character of Dorking, which is entirely surrounded by Green Belt and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty? We are pushing for the Core Strategy to contain policies that will aim to enhance the ring of woodland and open spaces around the town, thus ensuring that they will be seen by all as a vital amenity, contributing to our quality of life, to be well looked after and not be encroached upon.

Our view for villages is much the same. They too need housing units, but they should be properly planned, so that 'sprawl' is avoided, and the countryside still remains accessible.

Other ongoing matters that concern us include the configuration of the lights at Pump Corner. Delays in east-bound traffic between Westcott and Dorking are still unacceptable. We are pushing for the return to a Pelican crossing with pedestrian-controlled lights. The

proposed plan for a Controlled Parking Zone has met massive criticism, and is unlikely to go ahead, but the fact remains that at peak times there is inadequate parking in Dorking. This includes parking around Dorking Halls in the evening. More parking here in the evening could also serve as extra, long-term parking during the day. But more parking is also needed in the centre and at the eastern end of the town – that will be less easy to achieve.

The Best Development Competition and the Heritage Open Days are superbly well-run, and both are a huge success. I see them becoming ever more important features of the Dorking year.

Finally, I am most happy to report to you that Professor Richard Selley has most kindly agreed to become Chairman of the Museum, taking over from Martin Cole who generously stepped in, at short notice, for a few months only last year. The future path for the Museum has only become clear during the course of last year, and I am confident that, under Richard Selley, the Museum has a bright future.

I have many people to thank for the work they have done for the Society during the year.

First, there are members of our Council and Executive. Hank Etheridge is included in the above, but I would like to thank him for his work on the Newsletters, now a most sparkling publication, as well as our beautiful new website. He tackles everything he does with enthusiasm and humour, and that includes his chief job, which is his weekly trawl through planning applications and his ensuing letters to the Planning Department. Our thanks must also be extended to John Bell and his distributors, and to the members of Hank's Planning sub-committee. Congratulations also to Kathy Atherton in her first year as Chairman of the Local History Group, for a most successful year. Thanks also to Sarah Hawkes and all those who helped her with the Best Development Competition and the Heritage Open Days. Thanks, finally, to Martin Cole and the members of the Museum Council and the many Museum volunteers for keeping it running so well – with congratulations for the most successful Dr. Who exhibition which drew record crowds.

Martin Wedgwood

planning report

One of the problems of writing a 'Planning' article in a publication that is only published three times a year is being reasonably up-to-date at the time of issue. So, I shall enlarge on my last report to the Society's Council but leave some room for the odd comment.

As you are all no doubt aware, the long-running 'Greystone' saga ended with the developer getting approval to build two houses on the site. We had expected the builders to move in and start work quite soon, but this was not so. After getting approval, the developer put the two plots on the market with planning permission to build houses. Whether or not the design of these houses will have to be those of the approved application that we found reasonably attractive, we shall have to wait and see.

The old Harley Davidson store redevelopment, in which we championed a really modern design, was approved by MVDC with a lot of conditions. This development will include a large restaurant with a wonderful concrete and glass feature, and three retail units with apartments above.

The development at Mole Hill, at the end of Leslie Road, has been deferred for further consultation, but the other Leslie Road scheme, to which we had objected, was approved.

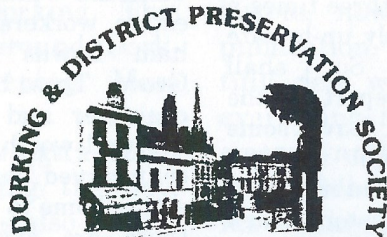
Yet another piece of local history bit the dust when the demolition of the Coach House at Cleveland Lodge was approved, leaving

the site with a modern replica of the original Lodge and some grandiose properties around it.

Our major effort over the past few weeks has been trying to save a Victorian Coach House, stables and estate workers' houses at Mickleham Downs up above Givon's Grove. These buildings are of great character and historic value and are well worth saving. A magnificent carved bargeboard on a gable end is home to a colony of bats, and there are examples of Victorian engineering in a deep well on the site. The residents living in the houses have, along with ourselves, organised objections from CPRE, the Surrey Wildlife Trust, Mickleham Parish Council and many local residents. We have sent a copy of our letter to English Heritage in Guildford, hoping that they too will join the campaign to save these buildings.

The new owners of Burford Bridge hotel applied to change the name on all the small signs already existing around the hotel, but also included a brand new, 12' high, illuminated 'monolith' sign right on the roundabout. Of course, we objected, suggesting something less intrusive. In the USA, hotels of the vintage of Burford Bridge would get the full treatment of the gallows bracket with a decorative 'Georgian', handwritten swinging sign. How I miss New England. Fortunately, the owners of the hotel have withdrawn their application.

Hank Etheridge
Chairman of the Planning Committee



Established in 1929

The Annual General Meeting of the Society
will take place on
Thursday April 17, 2008 at 7.30pm
in the
Christian Centre
St. Martin's Churchyard,
Dorking

After the formal meeting there will be
an interval for tea and biscuits

followed by an illustrated talk by

Gail Sperrin

on

Launching the Surrey Hills Society

Annual Reports

Chairman

As always, I would like to thank the members of our Committee who, as can be seen from the following reports, have achieved much this year in their respective areas of responsibility. In 2007, however, I have been especially fortunate to be able to rely on them, because the Society has had, in conjunction with the Museum, to evolve new policies with regard to the Museum's future, and in this I have inevitably to be involved. Not only are large sums now not likely to be forthcoming to finance a new structure, but also we must be absolutely sure that we do not saddle ourselves with a building that we cannot afford to maintain. We are thus working towards new plans for the Museum, in which we have been receiving much help and useful guidance from our President, Adrian White. Expect more news of this in the current year.

Martin Wedgwood

Vice Chairman & Planning Policy

The Strategic Planning Group was formed in the last year to assist the Society to comment intelligibly on the varied but important planning output from all quarters. This work has been developed to produce a researched publication entitled 'Preserving Dorking's Integrity' that will be presented to the MVDC Planning Group as part of the consultation on their proposals covering the Local Development Framework Core Strategy – Further Issues & Options. We have also written a detailed comment that conveys the Society's concerns about this important future Plan. The Society's final submissions were conveyed to SCC and GOSE on the Capel, Clockhouse Incinerator proposals and the proposed Betchworth Common Field mineral extraction. These disturbing developments form part of the Surrey Waste Plan and Mineral Plan. Government involvement in the call-in of the Betchworth proposals was turned down, and both the Incinerator and Mineral Development decisions now rest firmly with the SCC.

Derek Rowbotham

Chairman, Planning

It's been a mixed year, conflict with some members, especially about the replica Clevedon Lodge in Westhumble, but plaudits from those where we supported their proposals. We approved of the wonderful, contemporary house at Vann Lake, as well as the beautifully designed, kit-built 'Huf House' in Abinger. We objected to the proposals for the Malthouse pub in Mill Lane that has since been withdrawn, and are rooting for a modern building to replace the old Harley Davidson store. My Committee and I are currently (February) trying to preserve a group of character, Victorian buildings at Mickleham Downs that a developer wants to replace with some bland, pastiche 'Surrey' houses. I have also been involved with the Strategic Planning Group mentioned in Derek Rowbotham's report.

Hank Etheridge

Transport

I have conveyed the Society's views to both MVDC and SCC about the contentious Pump Corner traffic lights and the proposed Controlled Parking Zones (CPZ's). I attended an SCC Highways meeting at Dorking Halls. At this meeting, Highway officials agreed that

the Pump Corner scheme had not improved the vehicle flow from West Street but, they also said that 'hooding' the lights infringed regulations. They have thus effectively walked away from the problem. They must not be allowed to do this.

Sir Martin and I visited an exhibition in St. Martin's Walk, organised by JMP Consulting for MVDC and SCC, in connection with the proposed introduction of a controlled parking zone (CPZ) in Dorking. The scheme contained many faults, but most important was that, at a time when there is already a shortage of parking spaces in the town, it was in effect proposing that their number be reduced. We argued that a CPZ, to be acceptable, would have to be accompanied by more, not fewer, spaces.

Peter Mills

Membership

The main task in the last year has been organising new Standing Orders following the necessary increase in subscriptions. This exercise went very well, and we were inundated with new SO's, some of which have been for generous amounts. Unfortunately, we still have, after 3 years, 40 or so SO's being paid into our old bank account with Barclays. We finished this

year with a total membership of 800, still a long way off our 2003 aim of 1,000.

Peter Parkin

Publicity

We commissioned a set of full-colour display boards to highlight the work and objectives of the Society. These colourful boards were displayed in a number of locations during the year – most notably for a number of months in the former Gallery 238 shop front. We are currently seeking an alternative high profile location to display them again. The Society received regular press coverage on a variety of issues, plus a full feature on the Best Development Competition.

Simon Matthews

Best Development Competition

There were 15 entries in 2007, the Judges awarded 3 winners – Longfield Grove, Dorking; The Granary at Springfield Farm, Westcott and the extension at 8 St. Paul's Road in Dorking. This called for a third Cup that has been called 'The Peter Hawkes Memorial Cup'. Highly commended was the former Unigate Dairy (The Burrell) in Westcott; 48-51 Church Street, Dorking and Longmeadow Cottages in

Westcott. Parkhurst in Abinger and Gardeners' Cottage in Jayes Park were both commended. The judges this year were: Greta Morley (former Editor of Dorking Advertiser); Beryl Higgins and Peter Mills (of DDPS); Pete Mills (of MVDC); Cllrs. Carolyn Corden and Chris Hunt. Greta Morley resigned as a judge at the end of the 2007 competition, having been a judge since the inauguration in 1990.

Heritage Open Days

We had our best year yet with close on 100 events, and over 7,000 visitors. The theme was 'War and Peace' and many of the events were over subscribed. Rod Shaw of MVDC and Sandra Grant (Town Centre Manager) devote an enormous amount of time to Heritage Open Days, for which we are most grateful. MVDC have agreed that we may have an assistant for 2008, and Marion Rodgers has been recruited. Arrangements are underway for Heritage Open Days 2008 that will be from Thursday 11th to Sunday 14th September: the Theme is 'Hidden Treasures'.

Sarah Hawkes

Deeptime Gardens

Sadly, I have to report, once again, that virtually nothing has occurred toward the implemen-

tation of the Master Plan proposals that the DDPS promoted many years ago in 1996. Kuoni, the site owners, have always made it clear that they have no objection to the Society carrying out survey work, but they are not prepared to put any money towards the surveys nor the implementation of the Restoration Plan. Some changes of personnel have taken place in the firm, and we are keeping in touch, but there has been no change to the fundamental attitude to the proposals.

*Richard Ingle,
Committee Chairman*



Dorking & District Museum
Exhibits, archives and educational aspects have been very active. Additions to our collections continue, but more selectively. More archive enquiries are coming in by e-mail from home and abroad. Uptake of Loan Boxes to schools has increased. The temporary exhibition of Dr Who memorabilia brought in many more adults and children, who also enjoyed viewing other exhibits. Total income from ticket and shop sales nearly doubled. Website hits increased substantially. A

'future needs' analysis led to a proposal, accepted by the Society, for restructuring the 'Warehouse' part of the building to provide new facilities for exhibits and achieves. Jeremy Knight was appointed Curatorial Advisor. Dr Martin Cole, as acting Chairman, took over from Mrs Bette Phillips in April 2007. Prof. Richard Selley has been appointed Chairman from February 2008.

Martin Cole

Local History Group

This year, the Group has enjoyed ten speakers, a members' evening, a guided walk, two outings and a private tour of Juniper Hall. We took a display to Surrey Archaeological Society's Local History Symposium, displayed at Village Days, and contributed to the Museum's exhibit for Heritage Open Days. We have also contributed web pages to SCC's 'Exploring Surrey's Past' website, and dealt with queries from around the world, one of which resulted in us hosting a researcher from New Zealand for a week, to whom members provided information and assistance. Our annual journal was published in October, and sales of other publications have been good.

Kathy Atherton, Chairman

Protecting the boundaries of Dorking



By Derek Rowbotham

The Society's Strategic Planning Group compiled a document to present to MVDC our strongly held beliefs about the integrity of Dorking's present footprint, to influence their deliberations when composing the Local Development Framework. This is the Introduction to that document.

Ed.

The reports in this document deal with the important issue of the future size of the town of Dorking. In October, 2006, the Society urged that the piecemeal location of new housing in Residential Areas of Special Character (RASC's) on the fringes of the town should be constrained in order not to damage the coherence and natural beauty of the setting of the town. In this current document 'Preserving Dorking's Integrity', the Society argue to retain existing boundaries of the town, but to prevent its sprawl and the destruction of the attractive countryside that surrounds it.

Dorking is a rare example of a small market town encompassed by the planning designations of the Metropolitan Green Belt, and by the combined Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and Areas of Great Landscape value (AGLV). The Society argue that the imposition of housing targets, if carried to extreme, will expand the spread of the town to such an extent as to sacrifice the Green Belt, thereby losing for ever the openness of the green and natural setting of the town.

The photographs of the existing, contained, linear shape of the town show just how important it is to prevent house building outside the urban fringe. We suggest that it would be better to explore the redevelopment of old industrial sites to the west of the town, with housing in the general areas off Vincent Lane and Curtis Road.

In this document, the Society directs Mole Valley's attention to the valuable green girdle surrounding the town with regard to future recreational resources and active participation of the community. The path network circles the town using this 'green girdle'.



These pictures, taken from Ranmore, show (above) central & western parts of the town, and (below) the eastern extremes.



Marketing Mix

By Sandra Grant
Town Centre
Manager



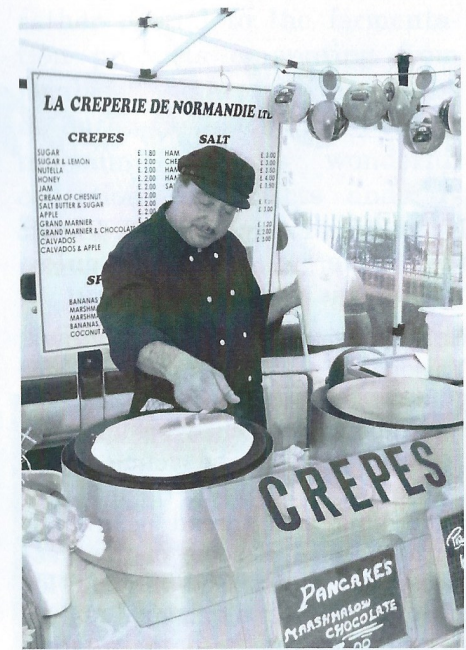
England managed to claim the win in the Six Nations rugby match against Italy in February, but all that is forgotten and forgiven as Italy's 'Latin Quarter' Market joins forces with Dorking Farmers' Market from 8.00am on Saturday, March 29, to host a one-off 'Special' market in St. Martin's Walk car park. This 'Special' market marks the start of a new season of Continental markets and the first Saturday Farmers' Market of 2008.

Last year, Dorking Town Management ran a series of Continental Markets which proved hugely popular with the public. People enjoyed the ambience of the markets, and being able to purchase from a selection of foods and produce not normally available. Many retailers reported an increase in customers visiting their premises, while one of the main reasons for organising the Continental market in the first instance was to encourage more people and visitors to Dorking, with the aim of reinforcing Dorking as an historic market town.

Dorking's market received its Royal Charter over 700 years ago, although modern traffic needs have since moved the market from the High Street to its present location behind St. Martin's Church in the main St. Martin's Walk car park. The Dorking Friday market offers a wide range of goods which include fresh flowers and plants, meat, cheese, fish, confectionery, pet supplies, picture framing, household goods, inexpensive clothing, sports goods and an excellent fruit and vegetable stall. The Farmers' Market gives local producers the opportunity to sell direct to the public, helping the rural economy and reducing the 'food miles' from producer to consumer. By its very nature, the type and number of stall holders varies with the seasons. There is a Farmers' Market held on the second Wednesday of every month, and a special Saturday market when there are five Saturdays in the month. From March 29th 2008, a Continental Market will be held once a month, alternating between the Italian Market 'Latin Quarter' and a French Market.

The Continental Markets, alongside the Friday and Farmers' Markets, offer the public a choice of markets to enjoy, and the opportunity to take pleasure

in re-discovering our delightful market-town. For more information, please call Dorking Town Management on 01306 655017, or you can find out more on the town website: www.visitdorking.com.



Photos by Simon Matthews

* ephemeris *

No one had any News & Views this issue. I hope you enjoy 'ephemeris', a journal.

Hair today – deer gone tomorrow

Various of my friends and acquaintances complain from time to time about Deer chewing up their favourite shrubs and young trees. In the past, I have told them to buy Lion dung and spread it around. With the size of some of their estates, they would need an awful lot of dung, and it isn't cheap. Also, a pained look comes to their faces, and their nostrils twitch when I mention the word 'dung'.

Help is at hand however, a very cheap, highly effective deterrent is now available: Human Hair. It seems the Bambi's cannot stand the smell of it. It is easily obtained, for free, at any hairdressers. Just spread it around the plantings you want to protect, and watch the deer disappear in a cloud of divots or, in these times, a shower of water droplets. This is such a good idea, I am thinking of packaging it and calling it 'HIRSUTE SCOOT'.

A daffy mystery

I was taken out to lunch at Denies by an old colleague of mine and his wife. On the way, we spotted some of the first daffodils of the year, not in a Wordsworth sense but just two or three struggling in the cold wind blowing around them. My friend's

wife suddenly said, "I picked some daffodils from the garden the other day, put them in a vase containing softened water and, overnight, the flowers turned pure white". "What do you mean by 'softened water'?", I asked. "Because our water is so hard, we put special tablets into it for doing the laundry and washing up", she said. I thought a while and said, "It must be some chemical in the water".

When I returned home, I 'phoned around, and ended up with a friend of mine who had been a top scientist at The Soil Association. He got onto the Internet and printed out the chemical breakdown of the particular tablets my friend's wife used. After studying it, he could find no element that could have caused the bleaching, so we decided to ask the lady to do a test. We asked her to pick six blooms, place two into the softened water, two in tap water and two in rain-water from her garden butt. After six days, she rang me to say that *all* of the flowers had turned white, but at varying lengths of time. Obviously, water was not the cause. We have now asked her to send us a sample of the soil in which these plants have been sitting for over three years so that we can do an analysis. Have any of you experienced this phenomenon? Let us know.



Dorking Museum

Our new Chairman

As many of you will know, I have been Acting Chairman of the Museum Committee since April last year. We are very pleased to report that Prof. Richard Selley, well known for his interest in our local geology, agreed to take over from me as of February 19th. Richard, who lives in the Deepdene area, has often visited our museum with parties of both professional and amateur geologists to inspect our fascinating collection of fossils and minerals. He is President of the Mole Valley Geological Society and, until recently, Professor of Petroleum Geology at Imperial College, London. He is also known for his conducted tours of the Dorking Caves in South Street, and is very interested in local history, in particular the history of wine-making. Having advised on the suitability of local rocks for growing vines, we are not surprised to learn that he is

rather partial to the fermentation products emanating from Denbies. We are sure he will be an enthusiastic champion of our museum and its wonderful collections of objects and archives, and progressing the redevelopment plans.

We wish him well in his new position, and are sure he will find it rewarding.

Mrs. Patricia Bennett

We were saddened to learn of the death of Pat Bennett in November. Pat, a much respected and long-time steward at the Museum, was also author of various publications, including 'Ale, Anvil and Archive – Dorking Museum's Historic Site' and 'A Green and Pleasant Heritage', the history of the Society. Pat was gifted at writing reports of the meetings of our Local History Group, and about the Museum for the Dorking Advertiser. We shall miss her.

Redevelopment of museum buildings

Much discussion and consultation has been going on within and beyond the Museum Committee, to try to come up with new, more affordable buildings and facilities, and in trying to get some extra space. Our

Curatorial Advisor strongly recommended a modest rebuilding project, largely funded from our reserves, rather than apply for a Lottery Fund Grant, requiring difficult-to-meet conditions.

Various proposals have been discussed, but the one which most closely fits our needs has been selected for recommendation to the Society, as owners of the museum site, involving a partial rebuilding of the current exhibits building. The proposal is that the whole of the area below the corrugated cement roof be rebuilt on two storeys, with a partial extension into the passageway between this building and our Library and Archive building. This would not only provide replacement of a badly deteriorated and poorly insulated roof, but would provide space at first floor level for a new library, archive and research area all on one level, accessed by stairs and stair-lift. The ground floor could be refurbished for display of exhibits and to provide a new entrance with a reception and sales area, and an internal WC to disabled-access standard.

It has to be appreciated that our current buildings are not only in poor condition – we have had items damaged by leaking

roofs – but the walls, in many places, are only single brick and the roof is only the thickness of the corrugated cement sheet or synthetic slate. Heat loss is enormous. To economise, we only have the heating on during visitor opening hours. The net result is that, at other times during the winter, our volunteers shiver and, in the summer – particularly in the library building – they bake.



There has been some support for refurbishing the current library and archive building, and keeping it for this purpose, but the opportunity to have new facilities on one floor, more space, with one entrance and reception desk, seemed more attractive. So, the suggestion is that this building would become a meeting room/museum office on the first floor, with store/workshop on the ground floor, but not open to the public. It is possible that our library and archives could continue in

use during construction work on the main building.

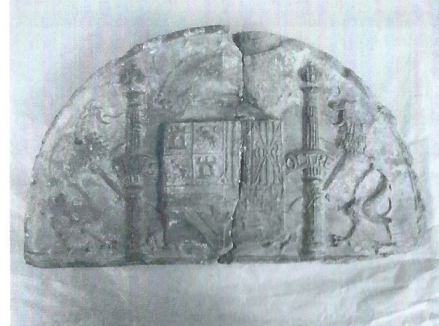
The cost of all this

You are probably wondering how much all this will cost? Can we afford it from the Owen Russ bequest? We are obtaining professional advice on the building work required and estimates of the cost. However, it seems very likely that we will need to raise additional funds, particularly as we would want to provide new furniture and fittings for archive and exhibit areas.

The mystery object – what is it?

While checking items in-store, Fred Plant was intrigued by the Accession Register description for 'Fire Bricks (2) with relief decoration from Burford'. The receipt records showed that they were donated by a Mrs Hughes on 1st June, 1976. With an Accession Item No. of 360, they were amongst the earliest donations – the numbering started at 100 – and, at this time, our Register seldom had more information than a brief identification description and the name of the donor.

The photograph of Item 360 shows the 'brick' to be roughly semi-circular, the base being 33cm (13") across, the height 19cm (7½") and thickness 5.8cm



Please let us know if you, or anyone you know, would be prepared to assist financially. We really think that we have within our reach the possibility of an attractive new museum facility for our town. Of course, we would have to be able to afford to run it. We are not proposing to take on paid staff, but we shall have to generate enough income to pay the bills for heating, lighting, maintenance and – a very expensive element – Buildings' Insurance.

(2¼") It is made of a terracotta-like material which, although slightly stained with age, does not really look as though it has been at the back of a fire. The words on it are PLVS – OLTRE.

The fact that the item was broken down the middle may explain why it is recorded as two. But of interest to me was that the relief decoration appeared to be some kind of heraldic crest and that there was a connection with Burford; a label actually said 'Burford Lodge'.

As Lady Alexandra Wedgwood's grandfather lived at Burford Lodge, I consulted her to see if she could help with the identification. The heraldic motif did not seem to fit with the Lawrence family, but she wondered whether it had been collected on a trip abroad to Italy or Spain.

Following a suggestion from Lady Wedgwood, I have sent a description and photographs to Marjorie Trusted, Senior Curator in the Department of Sculpture at the V&A London, and hope that she or her colleagues can enlighten us. But can you, our reader, tell us anything? Do you know Mrs Hughes? We have no address.

Martin Cole

STOP PRESS

I have had a reply from Marjorie Trusted, and she says:

"Your terracotta relief fire brick is stamped with the coat of arms of Spain (the Pillars of Hercules, the arms of Leon, and Castile and those of Catalonia). It is likely to date from the 16th Century: Charles V, who ruled Spain from 1516 to 1556 introduced the Pillars of Hercules into the Spanish coat of arms. The shape of the piece suggests it may have originally been placed over a window, although it is relatively small for such a function."

By way of coincidence, after I had written the original piece about the mystery object, I was reading an article in the Motoring Section of the Daily Telegraph, Saturday 16th February 2008 (which I don't usually read!) and noted that Fiat had displayed an unarmoured civilian version of a military LMV (Light Multirole Vehicle) at the Bologna Motor Show in 2003, and had called it OLTRE, meaning 'beyond'.

Some recent comments taken from the 'Visitor's Book' at Dorking Museum

Very interesting artefacts and library.

A great display, it is great to see where relatives came from and how they lived (an Australian).

Great fun, especially the gramophone.

Dr. Who – it needs to be kept open for memories to come back.

Extremely interesting and informative. Definitely worth a second visit.

Good collection of well displayed items from yesteryear.

Brilliant museum.

Absolutely wonderful displays, thoroughly enjoyed the museum.

Lost in time, wonderful memories, beautifully presented (South African).

Fantastic collection of geological specimens. Enjoyed looking at the stuffed birds, and World War II.

Fantastic and such helpful staff too!

Wonderful and varied collection, suitable for both old and young visitors.

Compiled by Mollie Jensen
& Martin Cole

Museum Archives

It is exactly 25 years since the museum proper opened its doors to the public in March 1983. For seven years before that, a small temporary museum was set up on the ground floor of what is now the museum archives building, while a team of volunteers slaved to turn the old industrial premises across the yard into an attractive home for its ever-growing collections. Our archive collections include photographs of the interior of that building in its original state, and the working party's achievements cannot be overstated. The same applies to the 1990's expansion when a section, previously used as a warehouse, was converted into the first room into which the visitor enters.

The museum has always run on a shoestring and, as recently as 10 years ago, even the installation of a telephone had to be carefully considered: was the expense justified? After that, of course, it was just a matter of time before the museum embraced the modern age and acquired second-hand computers. The internet arrived, and with it a wider audience – we now have e-mail enquiries not only from this country, but from across the globe. Working closely with the Local History Group, we endeavour to answer

most of their questions whilst encouraging the senders to visit if they can.

In October last year, the editors of the 'Played in Britain' series of books, published for English Heritage, visited the museum looking for information and illustrations for a book about Street Football. Their visit coincided with the opening of the Dr. Who exhibition, when over 200 visitors passed through the doors. 'Organised chaos' best describes the museum that morning. Nevertheless, we were able to provide material for the editors, and they spent a happy morning photographing the Shrove Tuesday Football Standard and copying photos of the old Dorking High Street event. Their book, called 'Uppies and Downies', was launched in Ashbourne, Derbyshire, on Pancake Day, and we were sent a complimentary copy for our library. A handwritten note inside said, "Thank you for your help – you are our featured museum on our website". Sure enough, there was a photo of our standard, and underneath the unsolicited advertisement: "If you like your museums small, friendly and gimmick-free, Dorking is a real pleasure". Things like that make all the hard work worthwhile.

Mary Turner, Curator of Archives

NUMB3RS

With acknowledgements to Paramount TV Corp.

928,000

The number of rural households below the government's Poverty Threshold due to lack of Affordable housing.

250

The number of organisations lobbying the government for more support for rural communities.

44%

is the percentage of UK adults who say they would use poor ratings in HIP's to negotiate discounts when buying properties. (*Hydec Consulting Survey*)

3.3M

is the tonnage of waste that SCC has to cope with each year, 55% of which goes into landfills.

Source: Planning Magazine

(Dr.) Who's a pretty boy then?

After a very successful season, the Dr. Who exhibition closed on March 1st. Attendance was boosted to figures previously unknown at the museum. There can be no doubt that the attendant publicity put Dorking Museum on the map. It has been particularly gratifying to observe the wide geographic area from which visitors have been drawn. Features publicising the event appeared in the Dorking Advertiser, and Southern Counties Radio interviewed Matt Parish, owner of the Dr. Who Collection, and myself at the museum. Mercury Radio at Crawley also carried a news item. The museum website also played its part in attracting visitors, as probably did mentions on Dr. Who-dedicated fan club websites.

The Museum team is not resting on its laurels, however. Planning is already in hand for special displays to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the death of Dr. Ralph Vaughn Williams in August 1958. These special features will highlight many of the perhaps little-known activities by RVW in the day-to-day life of Dorking during the many years he lived in the town. An introductory display will be on view to visitors from Wednesday April 9th, to coincide with the 2008 Leith Hill Musical Festival, and will remain in place until Heritage Weekend in September.

Following the closure of the Dr. Who exhibition, a display of footwear from Curator Barbara

Turnbull's collection now occupies one of the released display cases. A second case shows a previously unseen collection of woodworking tools from the Victorian era.

Fred Plant, Curator of Artefacts



A Cyberman

The Dickens you say

I spent part of my birthday, at the beginning of March, at my son's 'Egyptian Revival' Victorian villa in Ramsgate: my two daughters and their husbands were also there. On the Saturday I was taken by them to Broadstairs, to show me the wonders of a Victorian seaside resort oft depicted by Pre-Raphaelite painters but, most of all, by Charles Dickens who had lived there. Apart from the dramatic seafront and sandy beach, I was struck by the narrow streets, the large number of stores with Dickens-themed names – The Old Curiosity Shop et al – and the equally large number of Italian ice-cream parlours. The place was like a Victorian, Pickwick Papers-style, Naples. Added to this, it was stuffed full of antique and second-hand bookstores, to which I am always drawn like a moth to a lighted candle.

In one of them, in amongst books on a shelf labelled 'Miscellany', was *'Memories of Dorking'*. I had heard of this book from extracts and references in various articles from the Local History Group and local magazines, but here it was in my hands.

Serendipity came into play when the first page I turned to mentioned the likelihood that

the Dickens character, Sam Weller's father, was indeed a Dorking Coachman, one Mr Broad. The following is quoted from the book.

'Coachman Broad is thought to have been the original of that remarkable character in the Pickwick Papers, Mr Tony Weller, the father of the renowned Sam, and the landlord of the celebrated Marquis of Granby. Which of the old inns the Marquis was has been definitely settled by no less an authority than Dickens himself. The readers of "All the Year Round" will remember that in one of a series of articles entitled "As the crow flies", which appeared in that periodical, September 18th 1869 – less than a year before the great novelist's lamented death – the following interesting statement was made: "The crow drops from Ranmore Hill upon Dorking, which stands close to the old Roman Road, or 'Stone Street', leading from Arundel on the Sussex coast. The literary pilgrim looks in vain for his special throne – the Marquis of Granby. The famed house where the fatal widow beguiled old Weller, and where the Shepherd, after imbibing too deeply of his special vanity, was cooled in the horse trough, is gone ...".'

Hank Etheridge

The entrance of the Lion, but where was the Lamb?

I know I said in my last article that I no longer give gardening advice, but the strong winds we experienced in early March could have caused problems that are not immediately obvious. I am talking about shrubs and small trees which may have been unsettled by the 'Lion' winds. If there are signs of roots coming out of the ground, firm around them with your foot, the horticultural form of 'Putting the Boot In'.

I did have a gardener in during February, who pruned my Cotinus, Fuschia and Yew tree. I myself tidied up my Virginia Creeper, which was trying to take over the wall by my fruit patch, which I shall have to tackle the next time we have some warm, fine weather – in short supply as I write. I need to cut away the centre of my ten-year-old Gooseberry bush to allow air in and so stop the dreaded 'Rot'. At the same time, I shall remove some of the long strands of my Loganberry which appears to be playing 'Chicken' with the Virginia Creeper.

My Rhubarb, however, has

not sprouted this year. I forgot to dig it up last Autumn and expose it to a frost before splitting it in half with a spade and replanting. As a young lad, before WW2, Rhubarb was the springtime treat which my grandfather's cook, Mrs Prankard, used to prepare for me when I was home from school during the Easter Break. Truckle, the gardener, would pile rotted manure around the roots of the plant in February and cover with an old plywood barrel. This would produce a mass of long, bright pink, succulent stems with which cook would work wonders in all manner of ways, my favourite being them simmered with sugar and lemon peel. Whenever I cook Rhubarb I can never recapture the joyous taste of the annual treat prepared by cook Prankard.

Adam Jolyon

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Thank you to all the members who have paid their subscriptions, and a gentle reminder to those who have not.

Cheques, to Peter Parkin

Ordinary: £10.00

Family: £15.00

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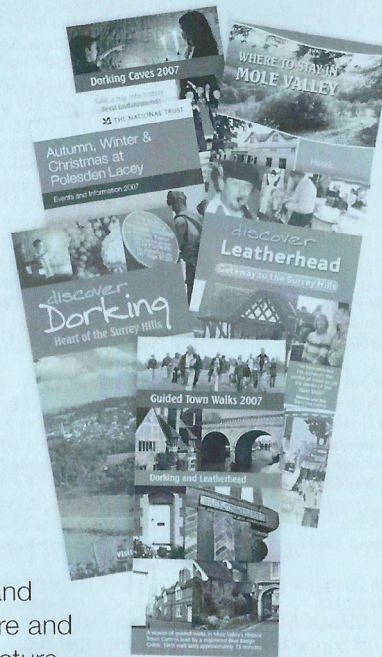
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A visit to Dorking Caves is one you will not forget!

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