

NEWSLETTER

of the Dorking & District Preservation Society

No. 50

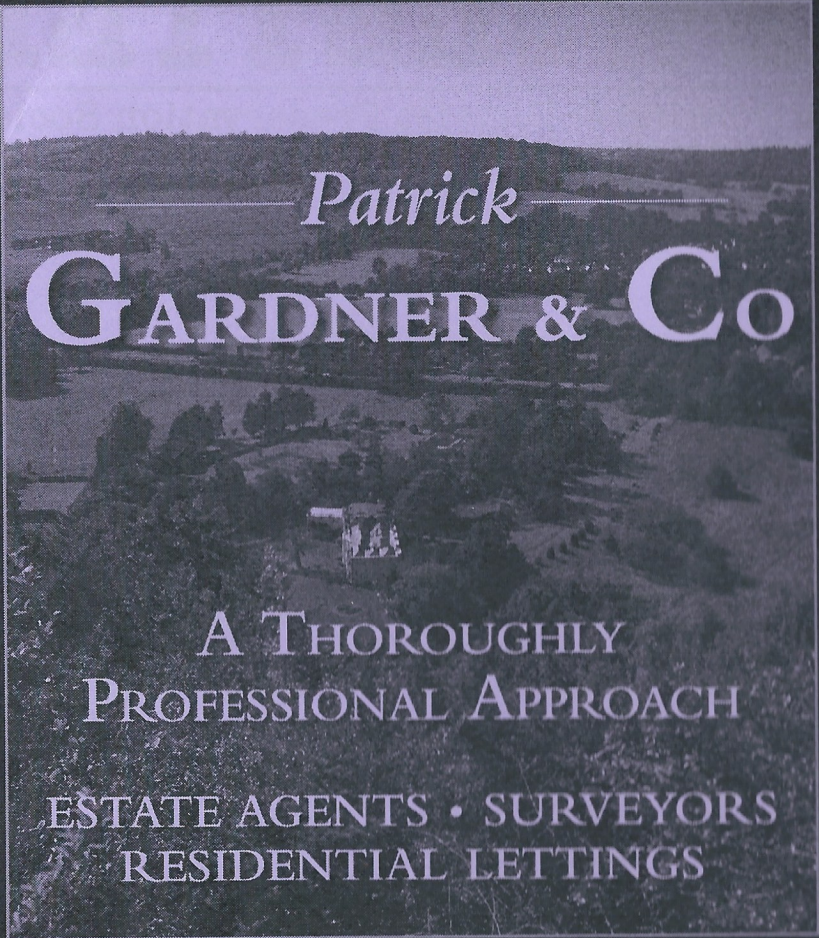
Summer 2008

DORKING & DISTRICT PRESERVATION SOCIETY



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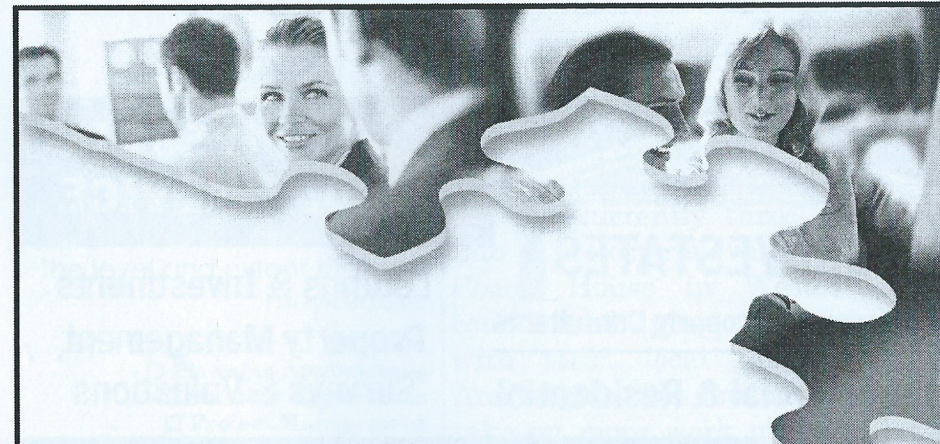
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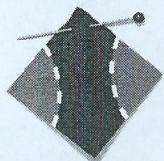
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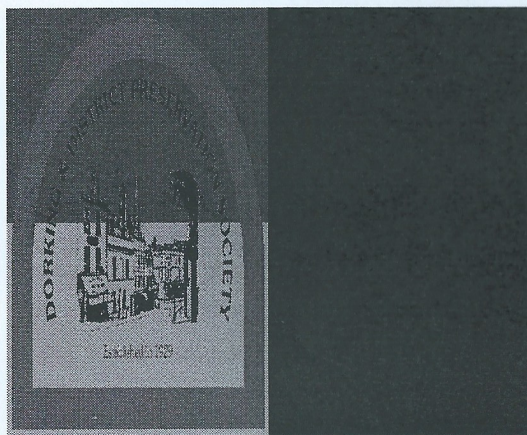
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NEWSLETTER

of the Dorking & District Preservation Society

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NEWSLETTER 50: Summer 2008
Free to members

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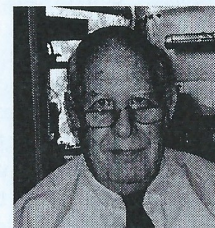
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editorial



I thought, to start off this column, I would do some musing. Much of what I was going to 'editorialize' has been handled in the Newsletter by Sir Martin and me, wearing my Planning hat.

However, one of the items in Sir Martin's report, the Pump Corner fiasco, reminded me of something Adam Jolyon, our occasional horticultural contributor, once said to me about 'Carbon Footprints'. "As far as I know, nobody has sent a balloon into the upper atmosphere to actually measure Carbon Dioxide", he said. "It's all done with computer models, today's Holy Grail. Don't bother physically measuring things, make a damned computer model." I think this might also apply to Surrey County Council's Highways situation regarding Pump Corner.

There are some very interesting articles in this season's edition, not the least of them is about the ongoing renovation of Mole Valley's bit of Betchworth Park. Alex Bagnall, the author, is MVDC's Countryside Officer, a very bright and dedicated guy

who wants to make a difference – my kind of person.

The piece about Little Mynthurst Farm, currently on the market at £6m, was prompted by an advertisement in the Sunday Times. However, it was the mention that Lord Baden-Powell once lived there that had our Museum's archivist and myself in a flurry of research to find out more. See page 24.

My plea in the last issue for more letters was answered by two members. The reply to one of them about 4 X 4's chewing up the Byways appears in the News Section. The other is more difficult to answer. Unless one is a politician or an extrovert, most of us tend to be reserved, only comfortable with people we know: it's a Northern European thing. After you have read the letter, I recommend we all should try to mend our ways and be more welcoming and friendly to members we **don't** know when we are at meetings. When you see a tall, bald and somewhat overweight chap glad-handing around at the next meeting, that will be me folks.

Finally, I ask you to thoroughly read the 'Keeping the Green Belt Buckled Up' leaflet enclosed with this Newsletter.

Hank Etheridge, Editor

chairman's report

Let us hope that sense prevails soon



There is one major piece of unfinished business right in the middle of Dorking, which seeks to make it safer to cross the road, but only at an inconvenience to traffic so huge that it actually deters people from coming into the town. The department responsible is Surrey Highways, and the offending item is, of course, the layout with automatic traffic lights at Pump Corner.

It all began last year when the Highways Department instituted a consultation process for a redesigned layout which had been drawn up following a traffic census and a computerised traffic simulation exercise. It was apparent quite quickly that the layout had a number of obvious faults. Provision had been made for bicycles, but they were required to turn right into North Street along a cycle lane about one foot wide against the one-way traffic. As with the existing system, the crossing was not arranged so as to include the pavement between South and West Street, with the result that pedestrians wishing to reach this side would still have to dodge the traffic. These features were widely criticised. It became apparent, however, that the consultation process had begun at a stage at which, in effect, the decisions were already taken, and the crossing was constructed in the form proposed.

No doubt the computerised traffic simulation exercise, as a result of faulty inputs, produced an over-optimistic forecast of the change in traffic patterns. The result, as we all know, was a horrendous traffic jam at rush hours.

Vehicles converging from Westcott Road, Vincent Lane and Station Road all queued up to navigate the complicated junction at the far end of West Street, with its eastern end blocked by the lights. Complaints poured in. "It's all right", said County Highways, "we will just tinker with the lights until we have got the intervals right." They did so. If there was an improvement, it was barely noticeable.

The traffic lights at the mouth of North Street, however, now have protracted red periods, and green periods that last only a few seconds. The result is that when these lights turn green, cars that have been waiting roar out nose-to-tail at high speed, so as not to get caught by another turn of the lights. This is highly dangerous for pedestrians. A 'No Left Turn' has also been introduced for vehicles emerging from North Street. When traffic is light, this is routinely ignored.

By this stage it had become clear that County Highways recognised that they had made an expensive mistake, but did not want to admit it. They began to clutch at straws. They suggested that all might be well if the flow of traffic along Junction Road were reversed – for the section below the entrance to Waitrose car park. Above the Waitrose entrance it would become two-way. Waitrose agreed to have a trial run on a Sunday a few weeks ago with one of their delivery lorries. The result was a foregone conclusion. It did not work.

On 22nd April I wrote a polite letter to an officer of County Highways who had better remain nameless, making what I hoped were useful suggestions and expecting to initiate a dialogue. On 25th May I received a polite but wholly standard letter in reply which made no reference to any of the content of my

own letter, but which was merely an acknowledgement of receipt. It was signed illegibly by somebody else. I have no idea whether the intended recipient of my letter had received it, let alone read it. I have written again and at greater length, this time to County Councillor David Munro at County Hall, who is responsible for overseeing the Highways department. I am hoping that this time there will be a constructive exchange of letters. This is a problem which must be resolved. We will keep it up until it is.

Trees at Headley

A few days ago, Hank Etheridge was telephoned by a lady in Headley. She was horrified to see that all the trees belonging to the golf course along Mill Way were being felled. Hank investigated and learnt from the golf club that the trees had been condemned by the Highways department some six months before. The golf club told the department that they would get a second opinion, which they did, and learnt that the trees should indeed come down. They contacted the Highways department who said that they would come back to fell them in a further six months. Two weeks later, however, and without warning, the Highways men were back and began the felling.

There was consternation in the village. The golf club had had no warning, and therefore no time to inform the village of what was about to happen and why. It is not surprising that Hank got the call.

What common fact links these two events: the Trees at Headley and the events at Pump Corner? The link is the fact that the Highways department, although supervised by the County Council, is not statutorily required in its decision-making to respond to public

opinion. An unintended consequence of this is that the Highways department pays too little attention to local opinion and indeed to local knowledge. Sometimes, as with Pump Corner, this can be expensive. It is presumably the responsibility of the County Council to see that this does not happen.

A rumour

It has been public knowledge for some time that Friends' Provident was seeking to merge itself with a larger insurance firm, needing the advantages of size in this increasingly competitive world. However, negotiations with one potential suitor broke down and another unwelcome American suitor, who had acquired a strategic holding in Friends' Provident shares has now sold his holding and gone away.

It is assumed that if Friends' Provident successfully merges with another firm it will leave Dorking. The rumour is that this has not escaped the notice of Sainsbury's, who have their eye on the site – for a new supermarket on the site of the car park behind the Dorking Halls. All the disadvantages of that scheme would be repeated even more strongly with this new idea. Let us hope that it is only a rumour. But if it is not, we will be ready for them.

At the Annual General Meeting, I gave as my view that what Dorking wants is a new, bigger Sainsbury's with a frontage on the High Street, and that St. Martin's Walk, which has never been a successful development, should be pulled down to make way for it. I can now report that this is the view of your Society.

Martin Wedgwood

planning report

As you will no doubt already know, the Greystone saga ended with approval for the two proposed buildings on the site. We had expected builder's trucks to start rolling immediately. Instead, the two plots went on sale with the planning permission. We are uncertain whether or not the eventual buyers will have to build the house designs already approved, or whether they will start the whole procedure over again. Watch this space.

The old Harley Davidson store rebuild was approved, retaining the very modern, projecting concrete and glass feature which we and the Head of Planning at Mole Valley liked so much.

The Mole Hill project, which has seemed to go on for ever, finally opted for a two-part development: one with access from Leslie Road and the other from the A25. The latter was approved but the former not.

The Burford Bridge hotel signage was eventually approved to conform to the comments made by ourselves and Planning, who were a tad 'sniffy' about a 12ft, illuminated sign on the roundabout. It has now been replaced by the original-sized signage.

To bring you up-to-date with our recent activities: we were recently involved in a proposed

extension to St. Michaels and All Angels church in Mickleham. The extension was for a toilet for disabled churchgoers, which we were all for. However, because of a step inside the church, wheelchair users would have to go outside and along the side of the church to gain access. We didn't think this was a good idea but, after discussions with the architects, we had to admit that there was no alternative.

We had a battle with our consciences over a proposed playing field for the Brockham Badgers at Sunny Banks Farm, close to the Betchworth roundabout. We are only too aware of the paucity of sports grounds in the County, but felt that, in its proposed siting, it would not be a good idea. Having attended Little League Baseball matches in the States, I remembered the high volume of noise that can be engendered by outraged parents shouting "Kill the Ref.", and others screaming encouragement to their youngsters. I imagine a similar volume of noise would occur at Soccer matches in this country, which would not be appreciated by nearby residents of Tranquil Vale, which would become anything but. SCC Highways, Planning and ourselves weren't impressed by the proposed parking arrangements which could quite well promote dangerous parking in the vicinity.

Regretfully, we recommended refusal. It has since been withdrawn.

At our regular Wednesday meeting a few weeks back, we looked at proposals to demolish all of the buildings between Wickes and Kwikfit on Vincent Lane, for a development involving the building of a three-storey Care Home with 70 beds and six blocks accommodating 88 apartments. Although the majority of my touchy-feely committee thought that a Care Home in among housing was not a bad idea, I was not in agreement. I have had some experience of various relatives in Care Homes. Ambulances come and go regularly at these sorts of establishment, some in the middle of the night. I felt that the Care Home should have a separate entrance and roadway, and should be separate from the other buildings. However, all of us were disappointed by the bland, pastiche design of all of the buildings. We also were not impressed by the unimaginative site layout either. We expressed these points in a letter to MVDC.

On the other hand, we were highly impressed by a proposed new build in Westcott. The architectural design was outstanding and it had a sedum roof, but our cup really runneth over when we saw that it would also have an energy-saving heat pump as well.

We had no hesitation in recommending it.

Although not in our bailiwick, we were somewhat startled to see a consultation paper from Waverley Council to build a new town at Dunsfold airfield, near Cranleigh. It would have 2,456 independent dwellings, 150 sheltered accommodations, 98 dwellings for students, two schools, a church, shops, cafes, restaurants, a museum, sports centre, health centre, an hotel, industrial buildings and a combined heat and energy plant. Oh yes. I almost forgot: and a monument.

*Hank Etheridge
Planning Chairman*

The NUM3ERS GAME

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5,000,000

People at risk from flooding in the UK, according to the Chartered Institution of Water and Environmental Management.

2,500

Total closed or operational landfills in England and Wales, according to the DCLG. It has issued research on how to restore old landfill sites as woodland.

Source: Planning Magazine

Off-Roaders abusing their privileges

The letter from Mrs Miller (see 'Letters') prompted a flurry of telephone calls to MVDC, The National Trust and Surrey Highways. David Kennington of the NT put me in touch with the Head Wardens of Leith Hill and White Downs. Paul Redsell of Leith Hill, who has been involved with the problem of off-road vehicles in his patch, e-mailed me with information and pictures. Rob Hewer, Head Warden of White Downs, also commented.

What are Byways?

BYWAYS are a designation covered by the acronym 'BOAT' – Byways Open [to] All Traffic. They exist on Council, Private, National Trust and Forestry Commission land. Originally meant for Horse carriages, bicycles, slow moving cars and walkers, Byways have been hi-jacked by irresponsible 4 X 4 drivers who are ruining long stretches of these 'Quiet?' roads. Bluebells are being flattened and destroyed; young trees are being uprooted and the Byways themselves churned into quagmires, trapping some vehicles in bogs of their own making – who says there's no justice? – (see picture). Walkers, who are out to enjoy the peace and quiet of attractive woodlands, are being denied this pleasure by unthinking and antisocial individuals. It is to be hoped that the escalating cost of diesel fuel will cramp the style of some of these people.

The National Trust and other concerned bodies have decided that 'enough is enough' and are lobbying parliament to amend the law to ban 4 X 4's from Byways.



Off-Roader stuck in bog



Mole Valley's Viewpoint

In ancient Greece there was the *Agora*, and more recently in our history we had the town square and the village green, public spaces where issues of the day were discussed, ideas generated for action and local problems sorted out before approaching the Shire reeve or the manorial court.

Nowadays, the Internet supplies much of this function. Information and resources can be sourced and points of interest to the community can be debated. This is where MVDC's **Viewpoint** website comes in.

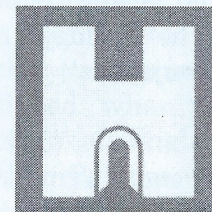
Part of the Viewpoint site is Mole Valley Viewfinder, where you can have your say about all sorts of issues that may affect your life in the District. At the moment, the site introduces the Local Development Framework (LDF) Core Strategy

Document that sets out how the District is expected to evolve over a period of almost 20 years.

A short video kicks off the site, and introduces some of the issues facing residents in Mole Valley: subjects such as housing, employment, retail and leisure facilities, and so on.

The site is interactive, so you can send video, MP3, image and text files to make your views known. Register your Mobile 'Phone on the website, and it is FREE to send in video and text from it.

Visit: www.molevalleyviewpoint.co.uk.



Heritage Open Days - weekend of Thursday, September 11 to Sunday September 14

Arrangements are all in hand, trundling along much as previous years. Marion Rodgers, who has been employed by MVDC to assist Rod Shaw, is proving to be quite a help. Only 60 entries in at the time of writing (June 10), but probably a good thing that we can pace ourselves rather than a last minute rush.

The brochure should be available from Pippbrook, Dorking Halls, the Museum, Downs at 156 High Street and all the other usual outlets, from mid-July. Bookings will be taken from mid-August.

This year's theme is **Hidden Treasure** – "Argh-Argh Jim lad".

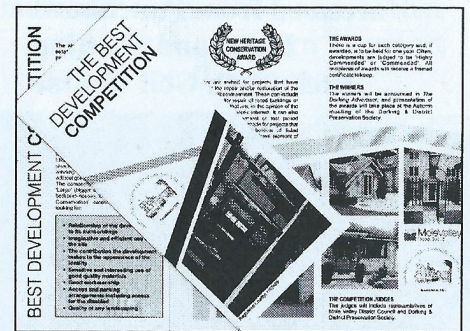
We are also hoping to have several events concerned with Vaughan Williams, it being the 50th anniversary of his death. One, of over 60 events, will be Prof. Richard Selley on 'Mole Valley's Hidden Treasure – its caves, tunnels and subterranean river'. This will take place at Barn Hall, Bookham, on Friday 12th.

An exhibition 'Lord Ashcombe's teeth and other fossils', compiled by Prof. Selley, will be on view at the United Reformed Church throughout the weekend.

Matthew Alexander, a curator at Guildford Museum, will give a talk entitled 'Tales of Life in the Surrey Hills' on Thursday 11th.

For further details, please visit: www.heritageopendays.org.

Best Development Competition



Because of the importance of this competition, we have, for the first time, produced the brochure in full colour.

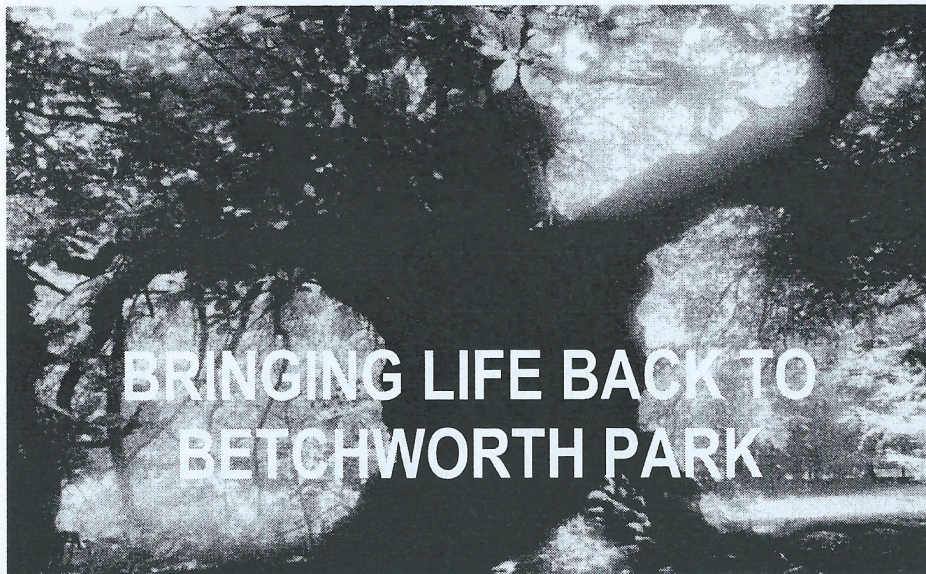
It was designed by Hank Etheridge and artworked at his studio in Epsom.

Printing was by Netherne of Dorking.



By Alex Bagnall
MVDC's Tree &
Countryside Officer

Betchworth Park lies just off the A25 Reigate Road, accessed from Punchbowl Lane, and abutting Betchworth Golf Course



Betchworth Park is one of a number of sites managed by Mole Valley District Council. It is the only historically wood pasture parkland *directly* managed by the Council. It was once part of a medieval deer park surrounding Betchworth Castle.

The site is important because it is a lowland wood pasture and parkland identified by the UK Biodiversity Steering Group as a 'priority' habitat. We in Mole Valley think that it is important that we make every effort to improve and restore it for the benefit of the ecology, and for the public to enjoy.

Ancient Trees

The site contains a small remnant of veteran trees that, because of their great age, size

or condition, are of exceptional cultural value, of great landscape value and have huge wildlife benefit. They are a living part of the history of Dorking, providing a link to the site's historic past. These ancient trees with broad trunks and wide, low boughs are a legacy of when the Park was more open, forming a landscape habitat that is called Wood Pasture/Parkland. They also provide a real sense of continuity, forming a living link to the landscape of our ancestors. The ancient sweet chestnut trees in the Park were probably established when Henry VIII was King of England. They show that Betchworth Park has been wood pasture for hundreds of years, providing a sustainable supply of timber and foliage to be harvested, whilst livestock such as cattle, sheep, pigs and

horses grazed happily away beneath them. There is evidence that some trees were pollarded allowing grazing grasses to flourish.

Wildlife habitats

Veteran trees are capable of supporting a large range of wildlife from bats, owls, woodpeckers and small mammals to a myriad of insects, and communities of extremely specialised lichens, mosses and fungi that play a vital role in deadwood decomposition. Opening up the site and restoring species of rich grasses will greatly improve the ecology and open up important habitats for wildlife such as butterflies, moths and other insects, that in turn support birds and small mammals.

The task

Betchworth Park would have appeared quite different to how it does today. It would have been a vista of open grassland, large trees and small copses of young trees and scrub. It was intensely managed until the early part of the last century. Since then, a dense tree canopy has grown up, Himalayan Balsam is growing among the trees and what was open grassland is now thickly covered with bracken and young trees which

Betchworth Park in the 1900's

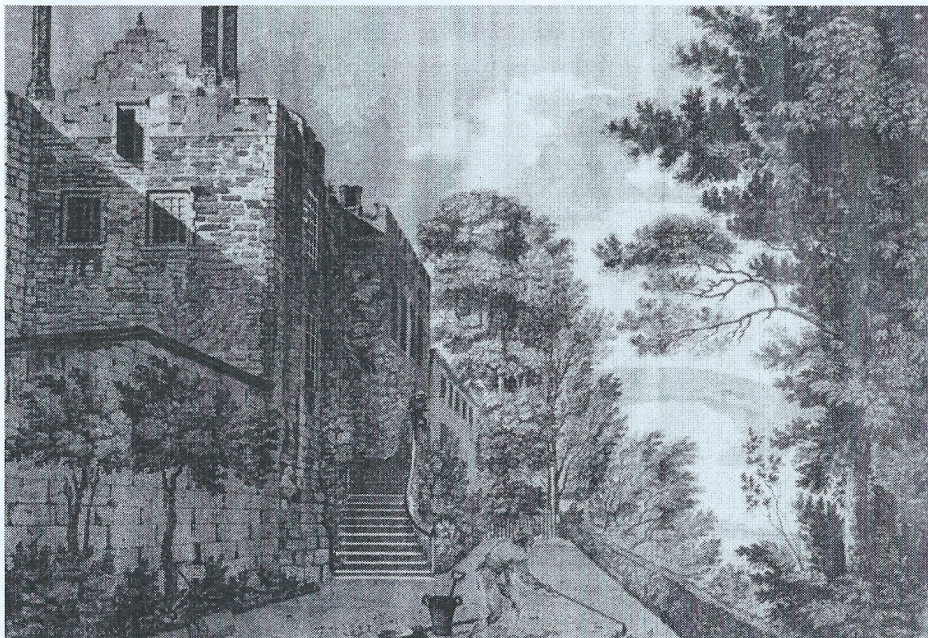


have sprung up since WWII. Our plan is to start removing the bracken and other invasive plants to open up the landscape once more to allow more biodiversity, and make the Park, after an initial regimen of regular mowing, easier to maintain with only a yearly hay cut. We shall also have to remove at least half of the young trees. This will open up the canopy and allow a greater variety of wildlife to return. The ancient trees still standing will be gradually 'halo-released' from the shade presently created by the surrounding trees.

Why it is necessary

Without continued human intervention, variety or biodiversity would be lost. It is possible to see that there is already little biodiversity within Betchworth Park due to the overgrown nature of the site. Betchworth Park is a site of historical note, and has a very good potential as a wildlife and recreational site. By returning sections of the park to open grassland and maintaining a varied wood pasture habitat in other areas, a richly diverse habitat can be created which will attract a wide range of wildlife and greatly improve visitor appeal.

Engraving of Betchworth Castle courtesy of Vici Houghton



Thomas Hope: Regency Designer

*An exhibition at the
Victoria & Albert Museum*

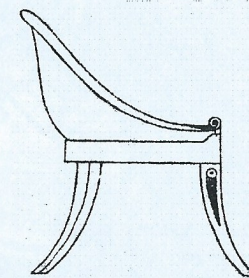
By Alexandra Wedgwood

There is not a statue to Thomas Hope (1760 – 1831) in Dorking, but perhaps there should be. He introduced the term 'interior decoration' into the English language and his two houses, Duchess Street in London and the Deepdene in Surrey (Dorking did not have to be mentioned in this context), played a unique role in the history of collecting, interior design and display. In Dorking itself, of course, the Deepdene estate has been of great importance in the way the town has developed over at least the last two centuries. But undoubtedly its most exciting and original phase was the period from 1807 to 1831 when Thomas Hope lived there. Much about this immensely talented man and his work was seen in an exhibition, the first on this subject, staged at the Victoria & Albert Museum. Unfortunately you will have missed it by the time you read this, it closed on June 22nd. Hopefully, this short article can make some amends.

The Hopes came originally from Scotland, but had been based in Amsterdam for more than a century when Thomas Hope was born there in 1769. Their merchant bank, Hope & Co., was one of the richest of the age, concentrating on business with governments and

dynasties. Thomas was thus possessed of a great fortune when he completed his education from 1787 to 1797, with ten years of travels through Europe and the Near East. His Grand Tour allowed him to follow his inclinations and enrich his knowledge of the arts, particularly those of the Ottoman Empire. There was a serious purpose behind his extensive journeys, and he was making scholarly drawings of the sights that interested him. Meanwhile, in October 1794, the French Revolutionary armies had approached the Dutch border and most of the extended Hope family fled to London where they settled.

In 1798 Thomas joined his relations in London. In 1799 he bought Clerk House, designed by Robert Adam, in Duchess Street, and over the next three years remodelled it to suit his eclectic tastes. It included Greek, Roman, Egyptian and Indian elements. Hope himself designed inventive and exotic furniture for it, including the Egyptian-influence chair illustrated.



The house was opened with a lavish party for nearly 1,000 guests, among whom was the Prince of Wales. The daring eclecticism

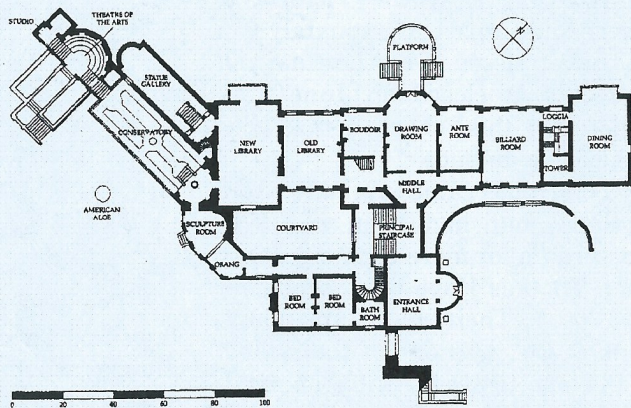
advocated by Hope became one of the chief hallmarks of the nineteenth century.

Hope further influenced contemporary taste with his writings, the most important of which was *Household Furniture and Interior Decoration*, published in 1807. He illustrated the book with his own designs and even included measurements to help cabinet-makers and craftsmen to make their own versions. By this time, he had a popular and beautiful wife, Louisa Beresford, whom he married in 1806. They obviously needed a country house, and a year later he bought the Deepdene. The Deepdene, at that date, was a substantial red-brick Georgian mansion built in 1769-75 by Charles Howard, 10th Duke of Norfolk, with its principal front looking down the Mole Valley. He started to remodel it in 1818-19, with a new entrance wing on the south-eastern side of the building. Its most memorable feature was an Italianate belvedere tower built



Entrance Court looking towards the Tower c.1825. Watercolour by W.H. Bartlett.

over the new staircase linking the existing house to his monumental new dining room at the north-eastern end of the house. He balanced this with a new library on the south-western end. Throughout,



A plan showing the extensions and the 45 degree addition

there was an eclectic mix of styles and unusual motifs. Then, in 1823, he added an extraordinary wing to the north-west beyond the new library, at an angle of 45 degrees on the sloping site.

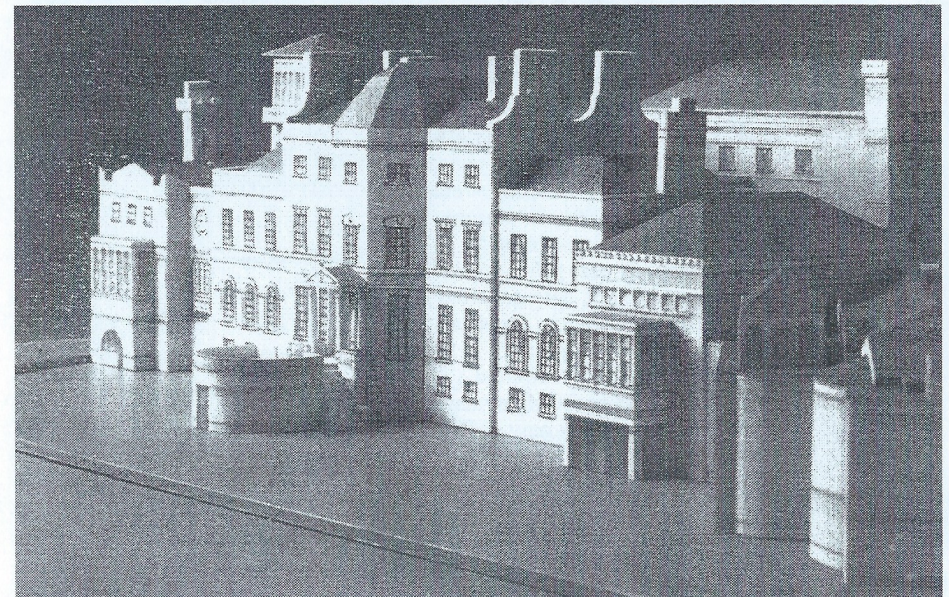
This wing contained a conservatory and a statue gallery, and ended with a Theatre of the Arts. Hope's idea was to blend this asymmetrical group into its beautiful natural landscape, as recommended by recent theorists of the Picturesque.

It must have been a striking sight in all its variety and irregularities, but most sadly it did not stand for long. It was too unusual. Thomas died in 1831 and his son, Henry Thomas Hope, transformed it into a grand, symmetrical Italian renaissance villa between the 1836 and 1841. This has become the

enduring image of the nineteenth century Deepdene, with its arcaded, two-storied entrance hall, in which most of Thomas Hope's collection of sculpture was placed. From lack of precise information it has always been difficult to understand how Thomas's house worked with its awkward joins to the eighteenth century house at its centre. But, at the exhibition at the Victoria & Albert, an excellent model of it was constructed, and so it can be appreciated with all its peculiarities. Wouldn't it be splendid if this model could be lent to the Dorking Museum, to show us the strangest building that the town once had?

Meanwhile, I have a copy of the immense catalogue (more than 500 large pages) which I will gladly lend to anyone who is interested.

The V&A model of the Deepdene from the north-west, as it looked c.1825



Dear Sir,
I apologize for not addressing you by name – I only have an old copy of the D.D.P.S. to hand.

I would like to raise two matters which I am concerned about and feel that others might be also.

Firstly, the continued use/abuse of Byways for four wheel drives and other vehicles. I was appalled, yesterday, to see the damage to the Byways up near White Downs carpark. Even worse perhaps, is the fact that these vehicles are being now driven anywhere up in the Bluebell Woods where the path or bridleway is wide enough. The damage and mess is shocking. Furthermore, walkers, such as myself, are being obliged to make new footpaths along the edges of the original ones, which means inevitable damage to the bluebells.

When is enough pressure going to be made by those of us who love and care for our beautiful countryside to end this intolerable abuse of ancient rights of way? The law must be changed.

I have raised this matter once before, (2005 Summer Newsletter) and have now written also to our Mole Valley M.P. Nothing seems to happen – a few wood stumps here and there do not stop these people getting onto other tracks. A total ban on all, save necessary traffic, (Landowner or National Trust) is the only option.

I regret I was unable to attend the recent AGM to raise such matters – they may well have been then, without my knowledge.

Thank you for the interesting newsletters and all the efforts everyone makes. Yours faithfully,
Rosemary Miller (Mrs)

Dear Sir,
In your Spring 2008 Newsletter you regretted “no letters” [*inter alia*] “about the Society”. So here goes ...

We moved to Leigh 18 years ago, and shortly thereafter joined both the Society and its Local History Group, thinking these were not only “good things” we should support, but would also provide us an opportunity to meet and make friends with ‘locals’ with similar interests.

We subsequently attended 3 of your AGM’s and talks and maybe 5 meetings of the Local History Group, including an all day coach trip to Bletchingly Park. On none of these occasions did anyone else attending speak a single word to us. I concluded that the Society and its Local History Group are an enclosed clique which does not welcome new members. We have stopped attending any meetings because, however interesting the agenda, we do not like being shunned by a “clique”.

We continue to pay our subscriptions to the Society and the Local History Group because we still believe they are “good things”, if unwelcome to “outsiders”. Yours truly,

G.L. Harvey

You will have seen my answers to these letters on the previous pages.

Ed.

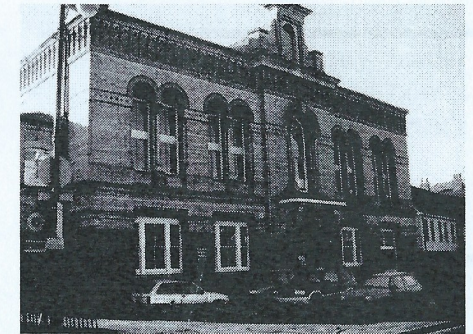
The Old Fire Station – our view

By Martin Wedgwood

Very few people in Dorking, I imagine, will be unfamiliar with that huge and grand building which stands on the southern side of West Street, near its junction with Station Road, and is generally referred to nowadays as the Old Fire Station. For those who approach Dorking from Ranmore, it stands like a gigantic sentinel guarding the edge of the central part of the town which, not long ago, was the edge of the town itself.

It was built in 1871 as a Public Hall, somewhere that civic gatherings or concerts and the occasional ball could take place. In 1905 it became the venue for the first Leith Hill Music Festival and remained so until 1921. At some time around 1900, the ground floor was modified to accommodate Dorking Fire Station, which it remained until relatively recently. The entire building then became the location of Surrey County Council’s archives. An extra floor was installed by dividing the great, tall-windowed assembly room horizontally and ranks of rolling bookshelves were installed. So it remained until 1997.

Since then, the building has started to deteriorate. In 2005, we, together with the Surrey Wildlife Trust and the Surrey Archaeology Society, considered making a joint bid for the whole building and we



wrote to the Council. Their reply was to ask us not to contact them until they had made up their mind. Three more years have passed, and the ivy at the rear of the building grows thicker and thicker, damp is rising and the floorboards are becoming very unsafe.

Now the estate agent’s boards are up advertising the sale. The problem is that any buyer wanting to restore the building will be faced with enormous expense and, thus, restoration is pretty unlikely. If ‘Change of Use’ (CU) is allowed by Mole Valley, the building of a block of apartments is a distinct possibility.

The Old Fire Station is not outstanding architecturally, but it is a feature building and historically important. We in the Society see it as a monument to our past and feel it should be preserved. On the other hand, if we press for its total preservation, no buyer will come forward. Our view is that any buyer must agree to retaining the whole street façade. This is the recommendation we shall be sending to Mole Valley Planning.



Onward Dorking Museum



Professor
Richard Selley

At the DDPS AGM on April 17, I was formally appointed Chairman of the Dorking museum committee. Grateful thanks are due to Dr. Martin Cole for serving as Acting Chairman.

With the approval of the DDPS Council, the museum committee has now an agreed working plan for the new museum rebuild. The present meeting room on the ground floor of the west wing will be moved to the first floor, and the ground floor will serve as a store and workshop. The east wing will be rebuilt slightly larger than its present 'footprint'. The museum on the ground floor will be as open plan as structural considerations allow, permitting maximum flexibility in display. There will be a

Steward's Enclosure adjacent to the entrance. The first floor will hold Dorking town archives and will provide space for researchers. It is hoped to have outline plans drawn up in time for the heritage weekend (September 11-14), when fund-raising can commence. The museum will have extended opening hours over the Heritage weekend, with a Vaughan Williams exhibition. On the Saturday (13th), David Williams, the Surrey Finds Liaison Officer, will attend to identify strange items of unknown age and function brought in by visitors. (Please note: this is not an event for antiques and household objects but things of an archaeological nature.) Also, on the same day, in conjunction with the Mole Valley Geological Society, Lord Ashcombe's teeth and other hidden geological treasures of Dorking museum will be displayed in the nearby Follett hall of the United Reformed Church. (Full details of all events will be found in the Heritage Weekend programme.)

This is an exciting time in the history of Dorking museum. More volunteers are needed to join the team of Stewards who guard the museum's treasures, both hidden and displayed. If you are interested, contact Sue Sheldrake, the Chief Steward, on 01306 886923.

Could this be a Roman Lamp?



The lamp illustrated above was sent to the Museum by 91 year-old Miss Marguerite Chalcraft, now living in Scarborough but a native of Dorking.

Miss Chalcraft, a distant relative of Mr William Wells, resident of Pixham during the 1880's, has offered what appears to be a bronze Roman-type lamp. Mr Wells, listed in the 1880 census as a bricklayer, was working on the foundations of the St. Martin's Church Room sometime in that year. He found the lamp whilst digging and took it home. Mr Wells' daughter married into the Chalcraft family. The lamp remained in use as an ornament in the Wells and Chalcraft families, finally coming into the possession of Miss Marguerite Chalcraft. She wishes it to return to Dorking where it was discovered.

Expert opinion as to its origin

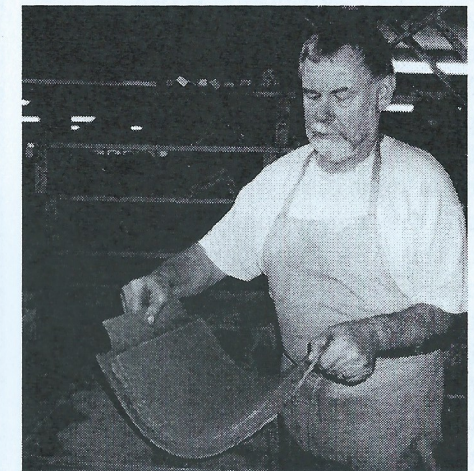
will be sought, but I would be pleased to hear from any reader who may be able to suggest how it came to be buried in St. Martin's churchyard.

*Fred Plant
Curator of Artefacts*

With the dove of peace sitting on a Christian cross bearing a lion-head doorknocker/handle, I would expect it to be late Georgian/early Victorian. I have promised to jump on one of my hats if proved outstandingly wrong. *Ed.*

Sad news about the closure of 150-year-old Swallow Tile Works

Dorking Museum is showing a representative selection of tiles manufactured by Swallow's over the years.



For almost one and a half centuries, Swallow Tiles has been producing genuine, hand-made clay roof tiles on the Sur-

rey/Sussex border. This area is renowned for the quality of its clay deposits and, thus, the heart of the brick and tile industry in the South of England. In fact, clay tile production took place close to the Swallow site back in Roman times. When they started out, Swallow made facing bricks and drainage pipes but, more recently, had been producing a full range of traditional tiles and fittings. Craft techniques at the works have been passed down from father to son for many generations. Indeed, third and fourth generation craftsmen were employed there until the closure.

The Local History Group

In a recent issue of the *Dorking Advertiser* dramatic pictures of the garden of Mr and Mrs McTigue of Mid Holmwood appeared, showing the destruction of the fence and front porch caused by a motorist who had careered off the north-bound carriageway of the A24. The car had swerved over the central reservation onto the south-bound side, ending up in the McTigue's garden. Mr McTigue, who had been painting the fence only minutes earlier, narrowly escaped death.

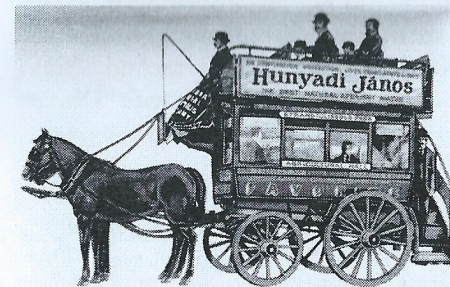
Now, it might be supposed that serious injury or even death as a result of vehicles flying out-of-control is a modern phenomenon: not in Holmwood, however.

The precursor to the A24 was the Turnpike which crossed the Holmwood in 1755, and which could be equally dangerous. The Holmwood clay and the rises in the new road were difficult for horses: the descents could be even more treacherous. In 1777, a servant of a man named Peter King died under the wheels of a wagon while crossing the Holmwood and, in the same year, a man working for Edward Payne of Sussex was run over by a fish cart. In both cases the wagon and horses responsible for the deaths were forfeit by their owners in a penalty known as 'Deodand'.

(Note that only the names of the employers were mentioned in the report: not those of the poor old dead guys. Ed.)

Despite improvements in the quality of the road by the early 20th century (by which time it was surfaced with chalk and flint, flattened by a steam-roller), the Holmwood gradients could still be treacherous. Around that time, Daniel Fairbrother, landlord of the Windmill Inn, and who also farmed at the Goodwyn's, was running a double-decker horse bus between the Holmwoods and Dorking. On a Saturday morning in 1903, this bus met with an accident. Nearly all the passengers – 'bean-feasters' visiting Holmwood – were sitting on the upper deck but refused to come down when asked to do so, despite

the bus being top-heavy. The bus was swaying as it reached the top of Holmwood Hill and, as it came



A typical horse-drawn, double-decker bus

down the hill its speed increased alarmingly and it began to swerve. One woman passenger jumped out in panic, a wise move as the load now proved too much for the horses. The driver jumped from his box as the bus ran up a bank at the roadside and overturned. Two people were taken to Capel cottage hospital with serious injuries. *Plus ça change!*

Kathy Atherton

WANTED

Mary Turner, Archivist at the museum, is looking for a volunteer Librarian to help her with accessioning and cataloguing work.

A library background would be good, but enthusiasm would substitute.

DDPS AUTUMN

WALK

Sunday October 5th

As it is a year or two since the last walk, we are arranging another one to explore the Mole Riverside.

It will be a circular walk, probably starting (and finishing) at Leatherhead Leisure Centre in the afternoon of Sunday, October 15 – make a note in your diary now.

It will be a gentle walk suitable for all. Do bring friends and relatives.

Further details will be in the Autumn Newsletter but, if you need any more information, please ring Sarah Hawkes:

01306 883699

Scouting for a new home? It was the name 'Lord Baden-Powell' that caught my eye when reading an advertisement in *The Sunday Times* for the sale of Grade II listed **Little Mynthurst Farm**, near Leigh, for £6m. As an ex-Scout, I just had to find out when he lived there. Calls to the Museum and the Local History Group didn't result in much, but an entry in a publication of the Surrey Chapter of The Domestic Buildings Research Group elicited some details of the house itself.

They describe it as 'an attractive, timber framed house with most of its framing exposed'. Their research suggested that it may be a 15th century building with additions during the 17th and 20th centuries. Unfortunately, the original rafter beams are covered so it is impossible to see if they are smoke blackened, thereby confirming the hypothesis that it was originally a 15th century open-halled building. It is roofed in Horsham stone.

Although Hamptons' mention BP, the hero of Mafeking and founder of the Scouts in 1908, in their Ad. I could not see anything in their beautifully produced brochure about him., I understand that Baden-Powell and his wife Olave rented the house for one year early in the 20th century.

Should you be in the market for a grand house, Little Mynthurst would tick all the right boxes. The Guildford branch of Hamptons International is handling the sale.



Photo of Little Mynthurst by courtesy of Hamptons International

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 Crumpet Factory, 16 Brockham 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's	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		
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 Scales & 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		
Priory 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 Crumpet Factory, 16 Brockham 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

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Abinger Parish Council	Dorking Town Centre Management	Newdigate Parish Council
Amis de Gouvieux, Les	Friends of Boxhill	Ockley Parish Council
Ashcombe School	Friends of Gouvieux	Sir Paul Beresford MP & Lady Beresford
Betchworth Parish Council	Friends of Holmwood	The Dorking Advertiser
Brockham Green Village Society	Headley Parish Council	The Guildford Society
Brockham 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
Charlwood Parish Council	Mole Valley District Council	Wotton Parish Council
Coldharbour Sports and Social Club		

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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

 MoleValley
District Council

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SOUTH EAST