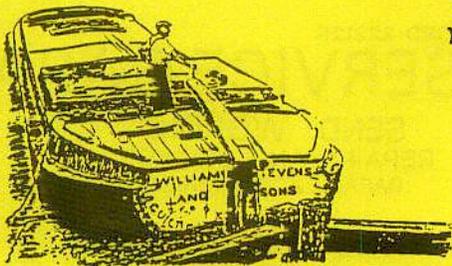
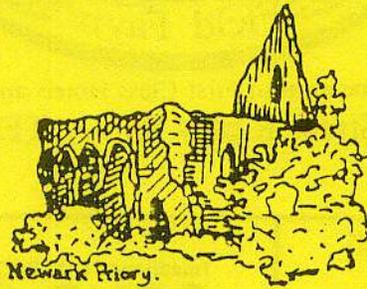
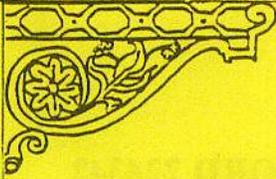
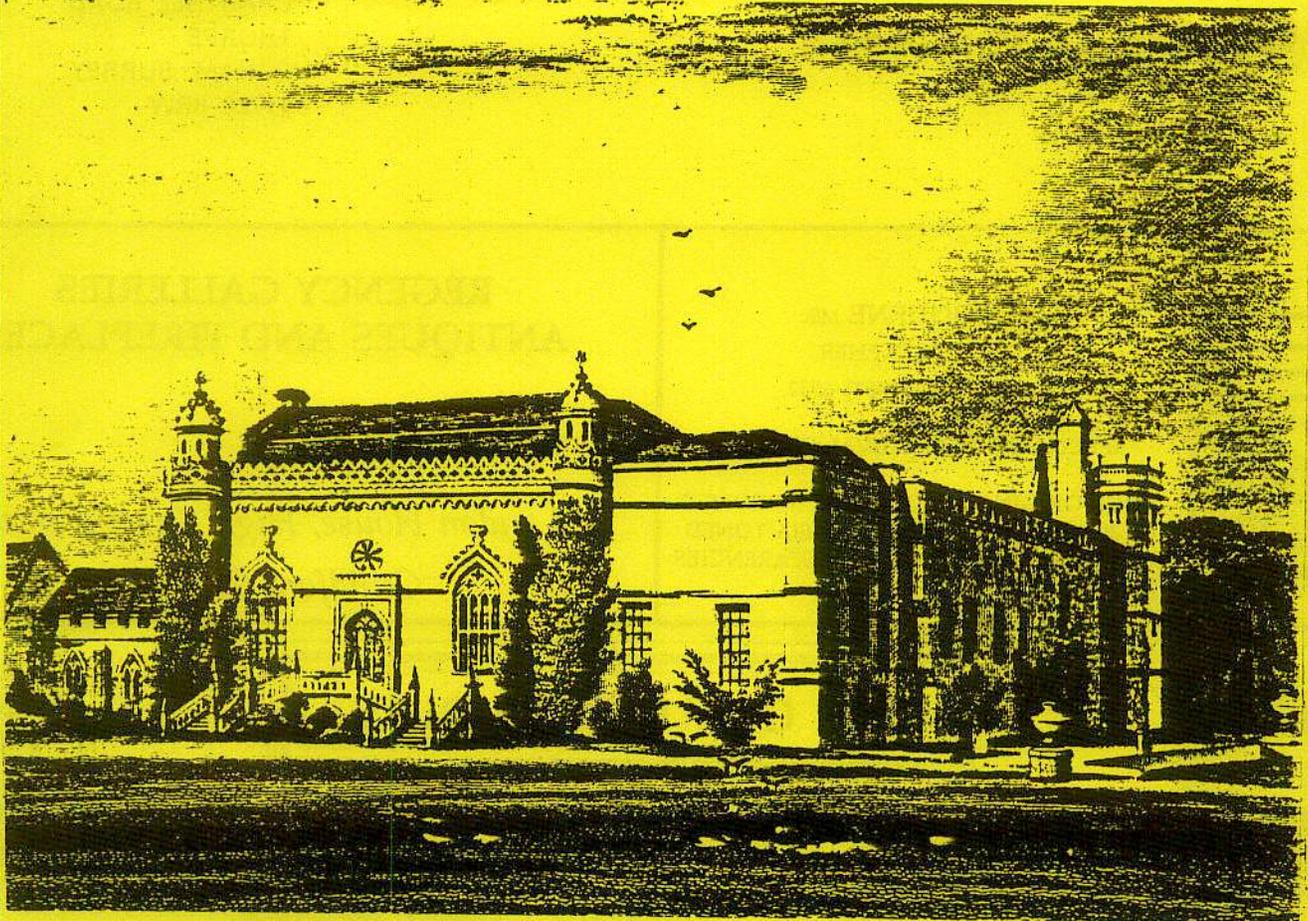


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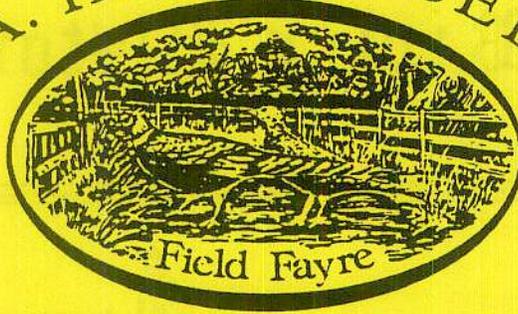


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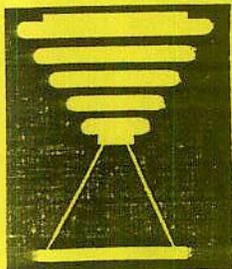
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July/August 1989

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Cover Illustration: This view of the West Front of Lacock Abbey, taken from a print by J P Neale in 1826, appears on the cover of the National Trust Booklet on the Abbey.

THE VILLAGE OF THORPE

The Society is indebted to Jill Williams of the Egham-by-Runnymede Historical Society for kindly providing this account

The guided walk around the village of Thorpe, on June 14 1989, began in Church Approach, an area which contains several of the oldest houses in the village. Probably the oldest surviving house is the 15th century Carl Haws, which stands opposite the 16th century Thatched Cottage. Renalds Herne, opposite Church Approach, is 16th century with a 17th century wing, larger than the original cottage, added facing the road. All these are timber framed with Carl Haws having a crown-post roof, but with the later houses having queen-post roof construction. So do several buildings within TASIC, now a school, but formerly Thorpe Place, home of the Leigh-Bennett family, Lords of the Manor. Originally Thorpe contained two manors, but these were combined in the 17th century by William Minterne. His initials, and the date 1613, are found in a brick wall surrounding the former Thorpe Place. Close by lies Manor Farm, the original manor farm, now part of Thorpe Park, and Blackhouse Farm Cottage, both thought to be 18th century. Thorpe was the home of a number of goldsmiths, and two brasses in the church of the Bonde and Denham families date from 1578 and 1583. A little distance away stands the Red Lion. The building has been extended and much altered internally, but records date back to at least 1700. Next to it once stood a smithy and a little farther along is a cottage which is partly 16th century, and Thorpe Farm, which is now divided into two dwellings. This stands on the corner of Giles Travers Close, named after a local benefactor, who is buried in the church. The village school, replaced by a modern building, now serves as the Post Office and stores. This was formerly in the front room of a house opposite the Red Lion. Just behind the old school is the old Infants School, now also private houses.

Beyond the village lies the 40 acres of Thorpe Green; it is now the other side of the M25, but still preserves some tranquillity, particularly when a cricket match is in progress on a summer Sunday. The Rose & Crown, at the far side, is another old public house, dating from the 17th century, although the building itself has been remodelled in the Victorian era. Several buildings have been lost through motorway development, including Thorpe Mill and Muckhatch Farm, the latter possibly the oldest building Thorpe possessed. However, strenuous efforts are made by local residents to try and preserve remaining buildings.

VISIT TO LACOCK VILLAGE, WILTSHIRE

Notes by Ken Bourne

About 22 members of the Society gathered outside the Fox Talbot Photographic Museum on July 9, a cloudy but warm Sunday, at the start of the Society's all day summer outing. Several members had travelled from various parts of the country other than Send, and all must have been conscious of the dramatic contrast of the atmosphere of this peaceful mediaeval village with the motorways and modern forms of transport used to travel there. So the day spent in Lacock conveyed the feeling of a strong sense of the ancient past in juxtaposition with the achievements of the 19th century photographer, William Henry Fox Talbot, and 20th century craftsmen, ably represented by David McDowell of Lacock Pottery.

The purpose of the visit to Lacock was not only to see a charming village, now owned by the National Trust, but to visit the 13th century abbey, founded for Augustinian Canonesses, and, since the Dissolution, home of the Talbots and particularly William Henry Fox Talbot, inventor of the positive/negative photographic process 150 years ago.

With the prospect of an interesting day ahead, the group did not hesitate to begin the tour with a visit to Lacock Workhouse, now home and workshop of David McDowell, where refreshments were served, following an informative talk on the history of this establishment, and also a brief reference to the adjoining tannery building.

The village derives its name from the Saxon word "Lucuc", meaning Little River. Bide Brook, a small stream, runs through the North-East part of the village and then into the Avon. Nearby Chippenham was a Royal village of Alfred the Great. Described in the Domesday Survey as a manor containing two mills, 20 acres of meadow, half an acre of vineyard and a wood. The manor belonged to Edward of Salisbury, ancestor of Ela, Countess of Salisbury, who founded the Abbey. There is little visible evidence of Saxon architecture, however, the earliest building dating from the 13th century.

The founding of Lacock Abbey, in 1232, for Augustinian Canonesses, coupled with the growth of the wool trade in the Middle Ages, no doubt ensured a prosperous future for the village. Other industries, such as weaving, tanning, chairmaking and fence making, were also important. Many private houses in the village bear witness to this former prosperity by the high standard of carved stone or wood doorways and windows. The coming of the Industrial Revolution in the 18th century, however, caused Lacock to decline in favour of the larger towns and the great cotton mills of the North reduced the demand for wool. Lacock became a village whose buildings, so well constructed, remained frozen architecturally in the period between the 13th to 18th century, with few 19th century buildings, other than the workhouse, the school, and the front to the much older Red Lion Inn.

The tour continued with a visit to the parish church, a typical "wool church", dedicated to St Cyriac, a child saint (AD 303), a dedication popular in Northern France, but rare in England. Built probably on a Saxon site, it is primarily 15th century, except for the 14th century North Transept and base to the tower. It suffered the fate of many English churches in the 18th and 19th centuries, by the rebuilding of the chancel in 1771, which was remodelled in 1902. The later alterations were in memory of Fox Talbot and an appropriate inscription was applied to the chancel cornice (see Proverbs III, verses 13 and 14). There is much to see in this church, however, which still retains an atmosphere of light and tranquillity. The Renaissance tomb, with its beautiful Lierne vaulting above, houses the remains of Sir William Sherrington, the first lay owner of the Abbey after its dissolution. The registers date from 1559 and the church accounts are complete between 1583 and 1821, the latter being kept in Wiltshire Record Office at Trowbridge.

A short walk down East Street took the group past the old butcher's shop and slaughterhouse, now used by Graham Watling as a workshop and retail shop for his creations as a notable silversmith. Continuing past many fine 16th century jettied buildings and the 19th century lock-up,



the group arrived at Lacock's 14th century tithe barn. John Slatford explained that the cruck beam form of construction was common in the Midlands, but there are no examples in the Southern counties, such as Surrey or Sussex. The cruck beam is an "A" frame, more or less continuous from the base (in this case about 1.5 metres from the ground) to the apex of the building. As is common with all barns right up to this century, two double doors are provided on each side, opposite and in the centre of the barn, to permit loading and unloading to be carried out from either side. Also when both the doors are open, a draught is created which assists in winnowing cereals at threshing time.

After lunch, the group visited Lacock Abbey, first viewing the part 14th and part 15th century cloisters and the several neighbouring rooms, which have remained largely unaltered since the Dissolution. These included the Chapter House, the Warming Room below the nuns' dormitory, and the Sacristy.

In the North Walk of the cloister is a fresco of a Bishop (possibly St Augustine) and a nun. Traces of an inscription refer to "Agnes Frary", who was Abbess from 1429-45.

Although the Abbey church was destroyed at the Dissolution in 1539, the new owner, William Sherrington, took great care to preserve the original buildings, particularly at ground floor level, hence the opportunity to see these closely much as they were in the 15th century. Newark Priory, in Ripley, also an Augustinian order, but for Canons, possessed cloisters to the South of the Priory church, the opposite to Lacock. Newark cloisters were probably a single storey structure with a pantiled roof, as was the original 13th cloister at Lacock.



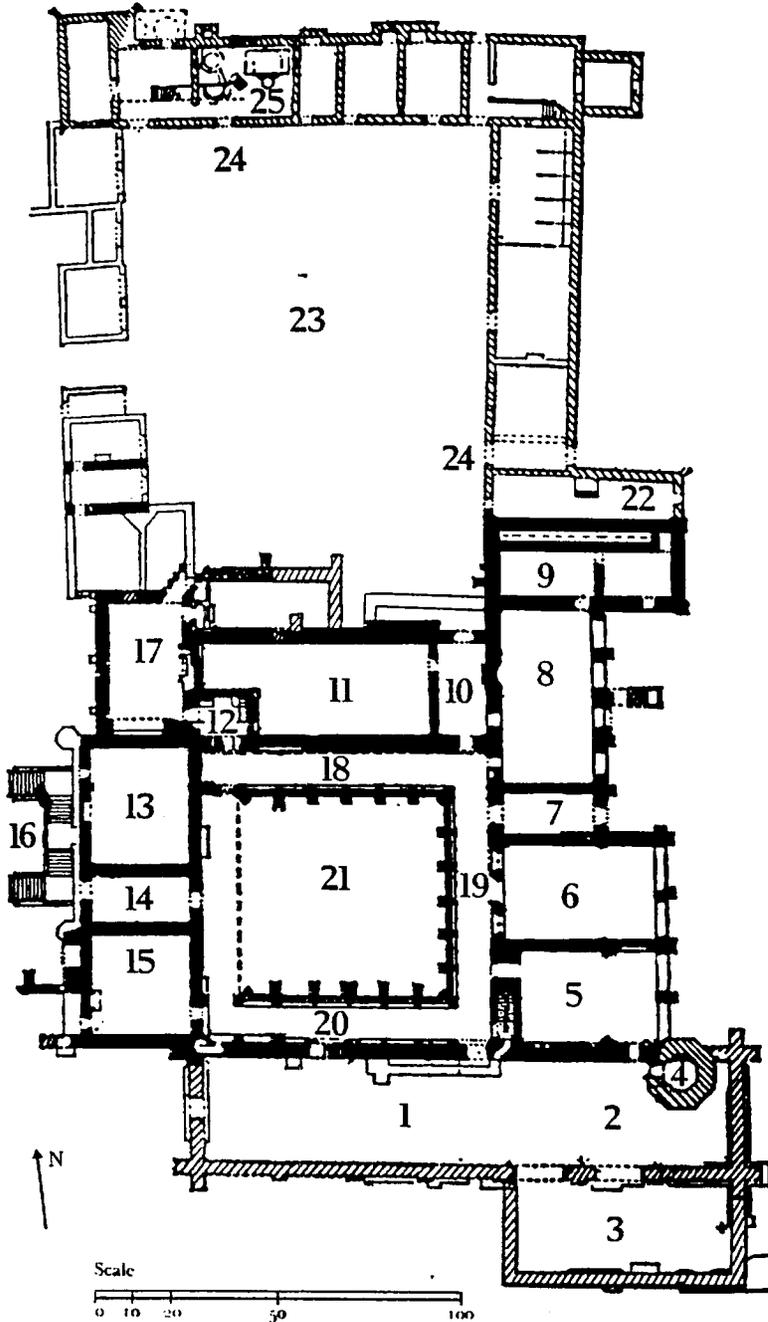
The Cloisters, the South Walk

The founder of the Abbey, Ela, Countess of Salisbury, became a nun and, later, Abbess, and is thought to be buried beneath the stone in the South Cloister Walk. The nuns were mostly ladies of good family, usually numbering 15-25, increased by lay sisters and guests. At its dissolution, the Abbey was described "as of great and large buildings set in a towne to the same by common report a great relief".

A tour of the house was conducted by Janet Burnett-Brown, a descendant of William Henry Fox Talbot. Among the many interesting features associated with the Abbey were the existing night stair, used by the Abbess to gain access direct from her rooms to the Abbey church, and the rooms, now converted, which were once the nuns' dormitory. Also on display was a photographic copy of the last version of the Magna Carta, issued by Henry III in 1225 and in its final form. The original, presented by Miss Talbot in 1946, is now in the British Museum and is one of only two legible copies.

Ground Plan of the Medieval Abbey and Outbuildings

After Brakspear



Key to Plan

1,2,3 Nave, choir and lady chapel of the monastic church, destroyed circa 1540

4 Sharington's tower, erected circa 1550

*5 Sacristy and chapels

*6 Chapter House

*7 Infirmary passage

*8 Warming Room

Over 6,7,8 ran the dormitory, converted by Sharington into the stone gallery and chambers

*9 Rere-dorter

*10,11 Parlour and cellars with refectory over them

12 Refectory stair

13,14,*15 Undercroft to Abbess' hall and lodging, reconstituted by Ivory Talbot in 1753. 15 is the Chaplain's Room

*16 Ivory Talbot's stairway to his hall door

17 Kitchen

*18 North cloister walk with lavabo and wall painting

*19 East cloister walk

*20 South cloister walk. A building ran above it afterwards reconstituted as a gallery

*21 Cloister Court

22 Ladder passage

*23 Stable Court

24 Renaissance doorways

*25 Brewery

* indicates areas open to visitors.

-  Monastic work
-  Monastic work destroyed
-  Post-suppression 1540-53
-  Later and Modern

Space does not permit a more lengthy description of the house and its history, but at this point a few lines about Fox Talbot, one of its most celebrated owners, must be included.

William Henry Fox Talbot was born in 1800 in Dorset at his mother's home. His father died six months later. His mother was remarried in 1804 to Capt, later to become Admiral, Fielding. After many years' travelling in England and on the Continent, the family returned to Lacock in 1827. Fox Talbot did brilliantly at Harrow and Cambridge and showed great aptitude for the sciences. For a short period he was MP for Chippenham. In 1834 he began his career in photography, giving up politics and devoting his time fully to his new obsession. Whilst in Italy, he had used the Camera Obscura to assist with sketching, and he resolved to find a way to capture the projected image and fix it. In 1839 he succeeded in producing a negative image and from this



a positive print. The first image is of the oriel window in the South Gallery of the Abbey. Talbot called this "photogenic drawing". His process involved sensitising paper with a salt solution. He is honoured this year by the Royal Photographic Society and societies throughout the world as the first inventor of the negative/positive photographic process. He died in 1877 following an eventful life, and is buried in the new cemetery in Lacock.

The tour ended where it began, outside the Fox Talbot Museum, which many will have visited, and is well worth seeing for the wonderful display of early photographic equipment and 19th century photographs.

Our thanks are due to the National Trust for the illustrations and the cover picture. Our special gratitude is due to David McDowell and his wife for their kind hospitality in providing us with refreshments, and to David for copies of two letters in 19th century handwriting, addressed to Fox Talbot.

Fox Talbot became MP for Chippenham, Wiltshire, in 1833, in the first "Reform" Parliament. He married Constance Mundy of Markeaton, Derbyshire, but postponed their honeymoon due to constituency and other interests, until the autumn of 1833. He abandoned politics in the next General Election in 1835 in favour of his interest in photography.

A precis of a letter, dated May 8 1833, to Mr W H F Talbot MP, at 29 Albemarle Street, London, states that a Vestry meeting had been held in Lacock to discuss the plan for a workhouse in the village to "check idleness". There was some uncertainty as to whether the village should "go it alone", or wait and see if Lord Althorp's National plan to help the Poor would be implemented. It was said by Mr Thomas Moore that so great was the need for a Workhouse, that occasionally a family had to be temporarily accommodated in a public house! However, no final decision was made, pending the views of Mr Talbot and also that of the Government Ministers on the matter, which would be discussed at a second Vestry meeting to be held on May 27 1833.

A transcript of the second letter, addressed to W H Fox Talbot, is as follows:

Chippenham.
18th Feb 1836.

Dear Sir,

I am directed by the board of Guardians to ascertain upon what terms you are disposed to sell the Lacock Asylum to the Union. It is the intentions of the Board to appoint this Building to the use of the children only, under the superintendance of a Governor and his wife, who would be competent to act as schoolmaster and mistress. I am desired also to ask if you are inclined to part with the old Building formerly used as a Workhouse in case it should be necessary to extend the present Asylum. The land upon which the new Building is erected is about 1/4 of an acre. The cost of the Asylum and Governor's House, exclusive of fixtures etc, was £617-15-0. The old Workhouse is rented at £8-1-0 per annum. I do not think the Guardians could purchase the new Asylum for the remainder of the lease for 99 years granted by you to Messers Awdry & Harman, but must either purchase the property ABSOLUTELY, or rent it upon lease at an annual sum. As you (together with Messers Awdry & Harman) have made yourself responsible for the payment of the £700 borrowed for building and fitting up the Asylum etc, I should think it most to your interest to sell absolutely and discharge this £700 at once, reserving the remainder for the sale of the land given up by you. When you have considered the subject, I should feel obliged by your reply, which the Board would be glad to receive previous to the 26th inst.

I am, dear sir,

Your obliged & obedient servant,
W.H. AWDRY

(Letters transcribed by Audrey Sykes)

ESHER DISTRICT LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY 21st BIRTHDAY AGM

Reported by Les Bowerman

(This note on the AGM of the Esher District Local History Society was occasioned by the 21st anniversary of its founding, and may be of interest to our members, particularly the remarks by Derek Brown, former Chief Librarian of Esher - Ed.)

A wide range of guests was invited to this celebration. They included Viscountess Hanworth, President of the SAS, and Ken Gravett, Chairman of the SLHC. Anne and I represented SRHS as guests of their Chairman, David Taylor. It was instructive to compare the way they conduct their formal business with the way we do ours. I feel we are perhaps more democratic. Among their activities reported, in addition to lectures, were the publication of "Thameside Molesey" and restoration work at Painshill Park, Chatley Heath Semaphore Tower (due to be opened in July) and Cobham Mill.

The guest speaker was Derek Brown, former Chief Librarian of Esher and one of their founders. The Society had been formed as a consequence of a local history fortnight held at Esher. They were interested in early people in the area and what they did. Local history relates people to places which the individual knows. It is more factual and easily grasped than other forms of history as we pass buildings, etc. Within living memory individual communities were much more isolated and parochial. An unescorted boy from Esher was liable to be attacked if he walked into Claygate. The motor car has made strangers more acceptable, but undermined local history by leading to more mixing of communities. The new library opened in 1957 formed a focus for local history. The Esher Library Lecture was inaugurated and there was a local history panel. Local history societies should be the eyes and ears of record offices. The formation of the Painshill Park Trust was a great achievement. There were reunions of old residents who spoke about pre-1914. When the Society started they wanted to popularise local history. They searched through back numbers of "The Surrey Comet", etc. They had lectures and visits, notably to an old bronze foundry at Thames Ditton and to Bodiam Castle. They played a leading part in the Surrey Local History Symposia.

People are interested in local history because when they move, they seek roots, they are worried about change, they are interested in genealogy, and they like a sense of continuity and stability at a time of great technological change. The Society hopes to record more reminiscences, find a home for their records and push back the boundaries of local history.

SURREY THROUGH THE CENTURY 1889-1989

Details of a Study by David Robinson, County Archivist



"You now have in place of the hand loom created a great steam power; you have made a great manufactory, as it were, and you have put into it a powerful machine in the shape of a Representative Body."

The words of the MP, Sir William Harcourt, on the occasion of the passage through Parliament of the Local Government Bill in 1888, legislation which provided for a new form of administration in Surrey, County government by elected councillors. The study has been commissioned to celebrate the centenary of Surrey County Council.

Since 1889 the County of Surrey has undergone many visible changes. Its population has expanded and 19th century villages have become 20th century towns. The County Council has set the pace in protecting the countryside from the effects of uncontrolled growth.

The study also considers other fundamental social changes in Surrey; from the days of the School Boards when secondary education was restricted to the fortunate few, to free education



for all and the break up of the Poor Law leading to the creation of the modern Social Services organisation. The study shows, using original sources and over 80 illustrations, the way in which the County Council has adapted to and directed these changes, playing its part, with the people of Surrey, in the development of the County as we know it today.

Orders to Jane Garnish, Surrey County Council, Rm G9, County Hall, Kingston upon Thames KT1 2DN (01-541 9120). Price £2.50 + 65p postage (total £3.15) with cheque/Postal Order payable to Surrey County Council (quoting code B1943513).

ONE HUNDRED YEARS AGO

EXTRACT FROM "BICYCLING NEWS" 17 AUGUST 1889

Contributed by Les Bowerman

"Hum of the Wheel" Opposite the White Hart at Ripley the Bros. Lewis have opened a repairing shop, where broken-down cyclists can have their wheels put right. This will be a great convenience to some of the thousands who pilgrimate to Mecca, for the village blacksmith, albeit a remarkably handy fellow, is hardly up to all the jobs which wrecked wheelmen take to him.

NEW MEMBERS

We welcome the following new members to the Society. With them, paid-up membership stands at 89 doubles and 69 single subscriptions.

Miss Pen Hunt, 12 Newark Lane, Ripley.
Mrs H Collins, 3 Barataria, Papercourt Lane, Ripley.
Mr & Mrs R Smith, Send Marsh Cottage, Send Marsh Green, Ripley.
Mr & Mrs S Smalldridge-Clark, Clandon Stud, Peasblossom Cottage, Send.
Mrs J Jarvis, Chippings, Milestone Close, Ripley.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Sunday, 20 August . . . Invitation to a conducted tour of Royal Holloway (and Bedford New) College, organised by the Egham-by-Runnymede Historical Society. Includes the Picture Gallery (charge 50p), the Founder's (Main) building, the grounds and modern developments. Tea may be bought for about £3 per head. Intending participants please notify Jill Williams (Chertsey 560476) at least a week beforehand. Meet at 2.15 pm under the Clock Tower (just inside the main entrance, off the A30).

Tuesday, 19 September . . . Open meeting at the Red Cross Centre, Sandy Lane, Send, at 8 pm, when Anne Bowerman will give a talk entitled "The Taste of History".

Sunday, 24 September . . . Conducted tour of West Horsley by Pam Bowley. Meet at 2.30 pm outside St Mary's Church, West Horsley. Enter car park at the East Horsley end entrance.

Tuesday, 17 October . . . Open meeting at Ripley Village Hall, at 8 pm. Subject to be arranged.

Saturday, 4 November . . . Surrey Local History Council Symposium, at Surrey University. Theme: "Leisure and Pleasure".

Tuesday, 14 November . . . Open meeting at the Red Cross Centre, Sandy Lane, Send, at 8 pm, when Dr Peter Brandon will give an illustrated talk on Georgian Surrey, with particular reference to our area.

Tuesday, 12 December . . . Open meeting at 8 pm at Ripley Village Hall. Subject to be arranged.

Saturday, 27 January 1990 . . . The Society's 15th anniversary Social at the Lancaster Hall, Send.

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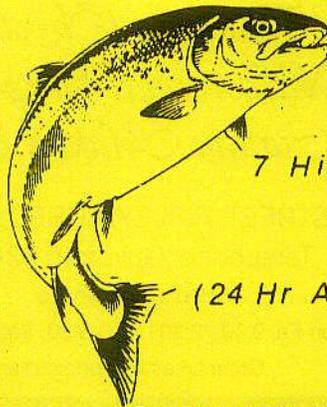
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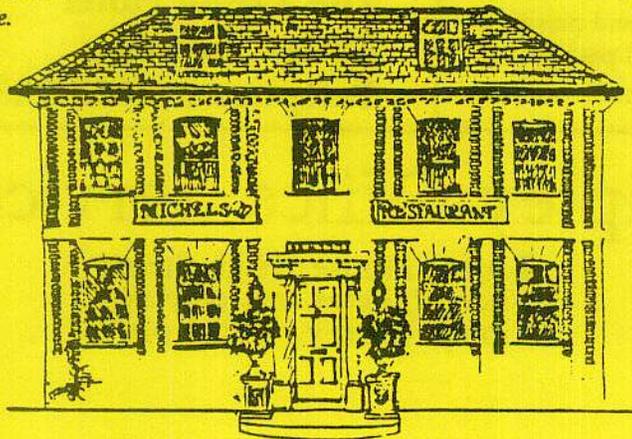


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