

The Chertsey Society

Registered Charity No 235402

Newsletter: January 2011



The Society's Aims
The Chertsey Society is a non-political organisation dedicated to enhancing and preserving the town's heritage and amenities.

WINTER-SPRING PROGRAMME 2011

31st January
28th February
28th March

TOWN FORUM
MUSEUM VISIT -The Cedars with Emma Warren, Curator
Addlestone Historical Society: the first 25 years - talk by Jocelyn Barker and the AGM
18th April *Great Fosters: Past & Present* - talk by Jill & Richard Williams

Meetings are held on the last Monday of the month, St Peters Church Hall, 7.45pm
Visitors Welcome

Members £1 -Visitors £2

CONTENTS

	page
Spring Programme 2011	1
Autumn Meetings 2010	2
50th Anniversary Event	3
Remembrance Day	17
Christmas Lights	17
St Peter's Church Flagpole	17
Monks Visit Chertsey	18
Comments from The Committee	18
Officers and Committee 2010 / 2011	18

Ray Lowther

At the time of going to press the sad news has been received that Ray Lowther died at his home on Friday 28th January 2011, aged 87.

He will be greatly missed by his family, friends and colleagues. A full appreciation will appear in the next Newsletter.

Land Speed Records

On Monday 25 October 2010 in St Peter's Church, Donald Wales from Addlestone spoke to an audience of seventy people at a meeting hosted jointly by The Chertsey Society, The Chertsey Rotary Club & Friends of Chertsey Museum.

The Presenter for the evening, Donald Wales, was introduced to the meeting by the Chairman, Malcolm Loveday. The subject was World Speed Records by British Steam/Electric Cars and Lawnmowers. The speaker started with an overview of what he and his family have achieved in the name of speed and with the emphasis on British Engineering.

Donald Wales is the grandson of Sir Malcolm Campbell and the nephew of Donald Campbell. He has attempted and achieved a speed of 148.308 mph on 26 August 2009 in a Steam Powered car. They have trialled these cars on the Pendine Sands in Wales and Edwards Air Force Base in California, at the latter working in unbelievable temperatures under a thin canvas awning!

Reflecting on his Grandfather and Uncle's efforts, he felt they were never fully acknowledged, as all that people remembered was the accident that killed his Uncle in 1967 on Coniston Water. Both of these men had achieved similar records in 1920 and 1960 respectfully for Land and Water Speed Trials. His Grandfather had also been heavily involved with the infancy of Motor Racing Days on the Brooklands Circuit in Weybridge.

Stephanie M.Hunt

2010 MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTION

Families £10
Single £7
Corporate £20

Thank you all who paid promptly by 1st September 2010.

Payment by Standing Order minimises administration and guarantees the Society's cash flow.

Please sign the gift aid declaration if you are a tax payer and the Society can then benefit by approximately a 30% increase in the value of your subscription with no additional cost to yourself.

Chertsey's Dunkirk little Ships

On Monday 27th September 2010 our Autumn Programme started with the talk '**Dunkirk Little Ships: restoration of boats & the 70th anniversary crossing May 2010**' presented by Steve and Heather Dennett and David Cherrett.

Over the years at the local boat yard on The River Thames at Laleham Reach **Michael Dennett- Boat Builders** have restored a number of the '*little ships*' which helped rescue many of the troops from Dunkirk.

For more information see
www.dennettboatbuilders.co.uk



From May 27-30, 1940, the British Expeditionary Force (BEF) consolidated around Dunkirk, along with half of the French First Army. Five French Divisions set up a roadblock at Lille, where they held out for four days against seven German Panzer divisions. This allowed the British and the French in Dunkirk to set up a defensive perimeter and wait for evacuation. The possibility of the total evacuation of the BEF was first raised on May 19, only nine days after the first German attack. Codenamed Operation Dynamo,

Admiral Ramsay was delegated to secure small and large craft from civilians for the evacuation. Secrecy was maintained as Naval Officers scoured the docks of London and other cities for small boats to take troops from the shore to the waiting transports.



By May 27 they were on the way to France. Many of the boats on the upper reaches of the Thames were gathered together, checked over and towed by tugs organized by T. Brothers of Teddington, and taken down river to Sheerness. Here they were fuelled and taken to Ramsgate where Naval Officers, Ratings and experienced volunteers were put aboard and directed to Dunkirk.



As a result of the Operation of the Little Ships and the considerable fleet of Naval and

Merchant Marine vessels which operated off the Dunkirk beaches and harbour between the 28th May and the 4th June 1940, no less than 338,000 British and French troops were evacuated.



Mike Dennett and his son Steve together with their staff have restored over nine of the surviving '*little ships*' based on The Thames and have participated in the reunion voyages to Dunkirk.



The excellent talk was supplemented with a collection of memorabilia and illustrated with photographs.

MSL

The Chertsey Society

Registered Charity No 235402

50th Anniversary Souvenir Supplement



To mark the 50th Anniversary of the formation of The Chertsey Society a celebration event was held at *The Orchard* at the end of November 2010.

This supplement is based on the illustrated review of The Society's activities over the last 50 years which was presented by the current Chairman, Malcolm Loveday. It provides a short history of The Chertsey Society and the Committee hopes that it will be of interest to past, current and future members.



Our former Secretary, Mary Lowther provided an excellent cake to mark the anniversary.

The Formation

The Chertsey Society was formed in Autumn 1960 by a group of likeminded local residents who were concerned that the historic character of the town was being eroded by sequential replacement of notable local landmarks.



Denmark House, Windsor Street

The threatened demolition, approved by Chertsey UDC but resisted by SCC of



Curfew House,
Windsor Street

Denmark House in Windsor Street in 1957, provided a catalyst. Eventually a meeting was convened at *Curfew House*, the home of the Medd family in October 1960 at which it was agreed to establish "The Chertsey Society".

The meeting was extensively reported in *The Surrey Herald*, 21st October, 1960 (see right).

COUNCIL GIVES A BLESSING TO THE NEW CHERTSEY SOCIETY BUT THERE MAY BE TROUBLE AHEAD

Surrey Herald, 21st October, 1960

With eyes wide open to the possibility of future disputes between them, Chertsey Council and the newly constituted Chertsey Society set off resolutely down the path to peaceful co-existence at the Society's first meeting last week.

After lengthy discussion, the Society decided that its objects should be:

- 1) To encourage preservation, development and improvements of a kind which will ensure Chertsey is a pleasant place in which to live and work.
- 2) To stimulate public consciousness and appreciation of the beauty, history and character of the neighbourhood and its surroundings.
- 3) To promote the study of civic design.
- 4) To pursue these ends by such means as meeting, lectures, study groups, exhibitions and publications.

The Society would have no political or religious activities and should be a non-profit making, it was decided.

Among the first to speak at the meeting was Councillor R Lowther, Chairman of the Council's Public Relations Committee. As a specially invited guest, he conveyed the Council's full blessing on the meeting. He said it was a particular pleasure to address The Society, for he shared its aim and objects. He said no doubt that from time to time, the Council and The Society would have differing viewpoints, but he welcomed it as being unlike so many similar societies which were formed purely to attack the local authority.

Mr Lowther said the objects of The Society fell mainly into two streams: architectural and historic and preceding generations of Chertsey citizens had failed to safeguard the town's history, said Mr Lowther.

Structure & Activities

From the outset The Society was organised by a Committee which met monthly to scrutinise planning applications submitted to the local council, initially Chertsey Urban District Council (CUDC) and subsequently Runnymede Borough Council (RBC).

The Committee has now met over 575 times and has examined thousands of plans and currently dispatches approximately 200 letters and communications per annum on a wide variety of topics. In addition it organises a regular programme of open meetings during the winter months with speakers covering a wide variety of topics and arranges the Chertsey Town Forum and holds a yearly meeting at the Museum. Newsletters are distributed three times a year to all the Members and Affiliated Societies. Visits and social events also featured in the programme.

Founder Committee Members:

Bernard Pardoe (*Chair*), Mr Hislop (Secretary), Mr Dockerill (Treasurer), Mrs Boater (Membership & Programme) Mrs Carson, Mrs Eyre, Mrs Kark (the authoress Nina Bawden) & Mr Vickery.

Other Founder members & early Committee members included Bernard & Margaret Robinson, Rosalind Wyke, Marjorie & David Easton, et al.



Mr E. N. Medd
(1957 photo)
(President)



Mrs Jocelyn Boater
(1957 photo)
(nee Medd)



Bernard Pardoe



Mrs Austen Kark
(Nina Bawden)

Year	Chairman	Vice Chairman
1961-62	Bernard Pardoe	[President: Mr Medd]
1963-66	H.M.J.Stratton	
1967-68	Mrs Roslind Wyke	
1969-70	G.D.Larkin	Mrs Roslind Wyke
1971	Mrs Jocelyn Boater	
1972-79	Ian Atkins	Mrs Roslind Wyke
1980 - 85	Mrs Freda Atkins	Malcolm S Loveday
1986-88	Malcolm Loveday	Mrs. Beryl Newman
1989-90	Mrs Dorothy M Everall	Victor Spink
1991-2001	Mrs Dorothy M Everall	Malcolm S Loveday
2002-2010	Malcolm S Loveday	David Wheeler



Chairmen:

(Left to Right), 'Mac' Stratton, 1963-1966 (photo 1998 Hannah Lane); Roslind Wyke, 1967-1968; Ian Atkins, 1972 –1979

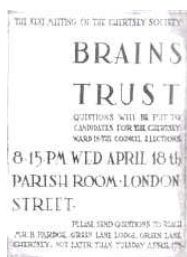
Chairmen:

(Left to Right), Freda Atkins, 1980-1985; Malcolm Loveday, 1986-1988 & 2002-2011; Dorothy Everall, 1989-2001



Year	Committee Members
1960s	Mrs Eyre (Sec) Mrs Vickery (Sec) Mr Medd (Treas), Mrs P Fulbook (Wernham) Mrs Kerr, Mr & Mrs Robinson, F H Goldsmith, Mrs Carson, Mr & Mrs Weaver (Mem Sec 1969 –1979), F J Porter, Miss Daniel, Mrs Lamb, Mr Porter, C.F.Ball, Mrs Easton, Mrs Freeman, Mr Wilcox, Mrs Wilson, Mrs Collie, Mrs S David, Mr W Kerr,
1970s	A D Ashton (Treas 1970-1975), Beryl Newman, Mrs Grover, Mrs MacCalman, Colin Cook (Treas 1976-1979), Miss Sames, Mary Cork, Malcolm Loveday (1974 -2010), Victor Spink (1980-2004), Cynthia Wilson (Treas 1980-1992), Mary Lowther (1980–2001)
1980s	Mrs G Hindmarsh, Mr & Mrs Marsh, Mrs S Dodds, Mr Elfer, Mrs G Orr, Mrs Sue Lambert (1984-2010), Mrs Phillips, Mrs Smart
1990s	Mrs B Prowle (Visits) , Mrs T Lake (87 -2010), Mrs Barker, Richard Grills, Richard Mason (Auditor- to date) , Peter Anderson, Norman Rogers (Treas & Mem Sec 94-2000), Margaret Nichols (Min Sec 2000-2010)
2000s	Brenda Jones (Mem Sec 2003-09) Valerie Lane (Treas 2003-10), David Wheeler, Julie Osborne, Terry Ing (Treas 2001), Fran Harmer, Adrian Rodrigues, Myrna Johnson, Debbie Greenwood (Mem), Mr & Mrs Hunt

Early Successes



Early public meetings were held at The Crown or in the parish rooms which were attached to the Vicarage in London Street. The Parish Rooms were later converted into the vicarage garage.



- As a result of lobbying by The Society, the District Council agreed to their proposal that residents should have the right to see and comment on the plans.
- Hard work paid off when proposed alterations to the town threatened the historic view. The Society succeeded in preserving the street line in Guildford Street.
- Photographic Competition
- When, in 1963-1963, a scheme was put forward for improvements to the area surrounding Chertsey Bridge, the Society's proposals were '*highly commended*' by The Civic Trust, and subsequently implemented by the District Council.

Chertsey

Museum opened 45 years ago on 29th November, 1965, at the Old Town Hall. Mary Daniels was the first curator.

The Chertsey Society was closely involved with its establishment. The Museum moved to '*The Cedars*' 1972



The Old Town Hall,
Frank Galsworthy watercolour,
1960s



Mary Daniels



The Cedars,
Windsor Street



Gravel Raising

On a number of occasions, local residents lead by The Chertsey Society campaigned against gravel raising on inappropriate locations close to Chertsey.

In 1970 Rosalind Wyke led the Gravel Action Group and managed to prevent gravel raising on *The Hollows* and Abbey Mead, together with the Chertsey Meads.

In 1980's at the SCC Minerals Plan - Gravel Raising public enquiry- The Society's representations were led by George Elfer.



George Elfer

Malcolm Loveday pleaded that Dumsey Meadow was an integral part of Chertsey Meads on the other side of the River Thames which, at that time, was a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and therefore should not be dug for gravel.

Applications for gravel raising will be an ongoing issue for many years to come and the SCC Minerals Plan is currently under review with land near Hamm Court being considered as a possible Preferred Mineral Zone (PMZ).

However it is pleasing to note that in 2010 CEMEX (the successor to Ready Mixed Concrete) auctioned the *The Hollows* to a consortium of local residents, and the adjacent land was bought by a farmer, since CEMEX recognised that they would never get permission to dig up the gravel.



Extract from The Surrey Herald, 21/10/1982
SCRAM -(Surrey Committee of Residents Against Gravel)



Surrey Herald, 1970

Wheelers Green

In the early 1970's the Department of Transport proposed to build a link road south of Chertsey to join Junction 11 of the M25 with the local road infrastructure, the road now being known as St Peter's Way. The DoT's proposed route ran over the top of a 16th Century listed cottage 'Wheelers Green' off Bittams Lane.



The Health Authority had previously bought the building and rented it out to staff from St Peter's Hospital. When the proposed demolition was announced The Chertsey Society, together with local residents and the occupants campaigned to prevent its obliteration and sought to get the line of the road altered. A 'sit in' was held and national press and TV followed the activities with great interest.



Drawings by
Victor Spink



Due to an administrative mix up bordering on farce the Listed Building plaque had been sent to be affixed to a council house at the other end of Bittams Lane! In 1976, following a Public Enquiry held in the Old Town Hall the Inspector agreed that the road should be diverted and the building was saved. Our Vice Chairman, who became a Conservative Local Councillor featured on the front page of the Daily Mirror!



The Health authority subsequently sold the building at an Auction held in the Constitutional Hall, Guildford Street on 27th June 1979. About 100 people attended and it fetched a Sale Price of £78,000.

Conservation Area

The Society collaborated closely with Chertsey UDC and its successor RBC in establishing the Town Centre Conservation Area and preparing the Guideline leaflets. In addition The Society assisted in drafting the RBC *Guidelines for Shop Fronts*.



1980s Activities

The Society celebrated its 21st Birthday in 1981 by holding the first event in the newly built Chertsey Hall in Heriot Road. A splendid cake was cut by the Chairman, Mrs Freda Atkins.

During the 1970's the Society's meetings were mainly held at The Old Town Hall, hence the model made by Victor Spink which surmounted the cake.



Lock Keeper's Cottage (1982)

A major campaign in the 1980's, led by Dorothy Overall, concerned the proposed demolition of the Lock Keeper's Cottage near Chertsey lock on the River Thames.

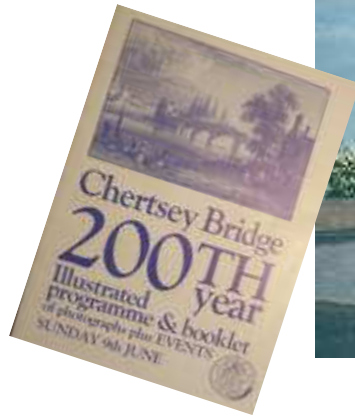
The newly appointed lock keeper's wife was disabled and the steps to the front door of the cottage made access very difficult so the Thames Conservancy proposed to demolish the building and replace it with a modern bungalow. The Society objected to this proposal and managed to get the building, which was built in 1812 when the lock was constructed, listed. The house may have also functioned as a tollhouse, collecting a levy from ships transporting goods along the Thames.

In 1982 a new house for the lock keeper was subsequently built alongside the old building, the latter being sold in to private ownership.



Chertsey Bridge (1985)

In June 1985 members of The Society participated in the 200th Anniversary of the building of Chertsey Bridge organised by Victor Spink. It included a memorable duck race when hundreds of numbered yellow plastic ducks were launched.



Freda Atkins Memorial Garden (1986)



Freda Atkins took over as Chairman in 1979 following the death of her husband, Ian, and served as Chairman until she died in 1985.

Freda was well known as an actress and may periodically may be seen on TV in her role as the office administrator in the 1965 film *'The Ipcress File'* with Michael Caine.

When she died The Society decided, in collaboration with RBC, to restore the sadly neglected remaining walls of Chertsey Abbey buildings between Abbey Field and the Abbey site in Colonels Lane, Chertsey.

Mrs Beryl Newman, Vice Chairman, led a public appeal to raise the necessary funds to consolidate the walls and landscape the area and backfilling the refectory ovens following their archaeological excavation.

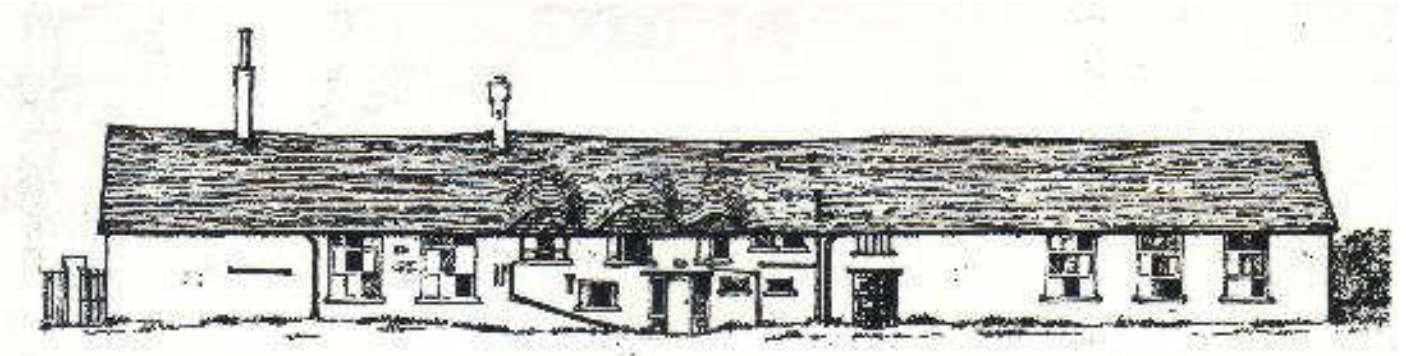


The Garden was opened by Sir Geoffrey Pattie, MP, and a memorial stone was unveiled. The Chairman, Malcolm Loveday addressed the assembled group in the rain, November 1986.



The Saga of Abbey Barn (1986-1987)

Abbey Barn had a long and illustrious past. It was probably built to house workers engaged in dismantling the Abbey and transferring the building materials to build Oatlands Palace. It was in the Chapter House that the Book of Common Prayer was drafted in 1548. From that time until 1800 the Barn was probably used as Royal stabling between Hampton Court & Windsor, as part of Beomond Manor Farm (ref. Bernard Pardoe), and in 1900 it was a builder's yard.



In 1935 J.A. Tulk purchased the Barn and the land around it to stop it being developed as houses. The following year the Abbey Barn Youth Club was formed and thrived for the following thirty years under the Trusteeship of Surrey County Council. Unfortunately in 1970 the Youth Club closed and moved to the CANLO Club, Abbey Moor, next to The Meads School. The Abbey Barn remained empty until 1975 when it's sale and redevelopment in to two houses was proposed. Mary Fitzhugh lobbied hard for its retention for public use, and formed the Runnymede Association of Arts (RAA) with the intention of securing Abbey Barn as an Arts Centre for the town's youth.

In 1978 Surrey County Council sold the Barn to the Acorn Children's Theatre Trust for £10,000. This was below the market value since the Charity Commission agreed that the Acorn's aims for the building were similar to Tulk's intentions. The Acorn trustees, chaired by Stanley Davey, included Prof. Alfred and Mrs Therese Kitchen from Shepperton, and Brian Love. In 1981 Abbey Barn Cottage was sold by Acorn for £20,000.

An open air production of A Midsummer Night's Dream was staged in June 1982, and the Barn continued to be used for classes and rehearsals until 1986. During that time an unsuccessful appeal was launched by Acorns for £250,000 to restore barn (1983), but finally in 1987 the building was put up for auction. With the backing of RBC, The Chertsey Society tried to buy Abbey Barn at the auction with a view to restoring the barn and converting it into dwellings which would be sold to recoup the loan used to acquire the Barn, but with the land being retained in public ownership as a butterfly garden. On the day of the auction a Trust Deed was signed between RBC and The Society, and Malcolm Loveday, on behalf of the Trust, bid up to their limit of £235,000, but were out bid. The Trust was dissolved after the auction.

Abbey Barn was purchased by Richard Cook Ltd. for £267,000 with the Abbey Tiles from the Barn interior being donated to Chertsey Museum. From 1990 to the present day the Abbey Barn has been used as offices.

The Chertsey Society's 50th Anniversary Event



l-r: Malcolm Loveday [Chairman 1986-88 & 2002-10], Mrs Rosalind Wyke [Chairman 1967-68], Mrs Jocelyn Boater [Chairman 1971& Founder Member].

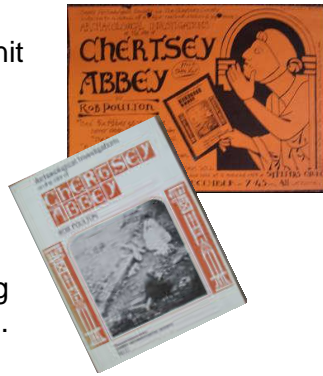


See page 16 for full report

Founder member, Mrs Jocelyn Boater was given a bouquet of flowers in appreciation for helping to form The Society in 1960.

Chertsey Abbey (1988)

The Society lobbied the Surrey Archaeological Unit to write up the 1950's excavation of Chertsey Abbey. It was finally published in 1988 and The Chertsey Society hosted the launch of the book at a special meeting held in St Peter's Church.



Other 1980s Activities

The Society lobbied for the following buildings to be rebuilt in the same style :
Hareton Cottages, London Street
 9-15 Windsor Street following a fire
 132-134 Guildford Street.

In addition The Society organised another photographic competition (1989)

1990s Activities

Blanche Heriot

Representatives of The Society were involved with the design of the statue of Blanche Heriot which was provided by Richard Cook under a Section 106 agreement associated with the development of an office block near Chertsey Bridge.



It was sculpted by Shelia Mitchell of Puttenham. It depicts the 15th Century tale of Blanche Heriot who stopped the curfew bell ringing by hanging on to the clapper and thus stopped her fiancé, Neville Audley, being executed at sunset when the curfew bell was rung.

In 1840 Albert Smith published the story, and stated that it was based on a Chertsey legend. His work became a very popular West End melodrama, and the tale inspired American writer Rose Hartwick Thorpe to pen her poem '*The Curfew Must Not Ring Tonight*' which became one of Queen Victoria's favourite poems.



Town Crier

In 1993 The Chertsey Society decide to reinstated the role of Town Crier 1993 at the suggestion of Mrs Jocelyn Barker and the cost of purchasing a costume was kindly given by Norman Rogers in memory of his wife. Over the last 17 years the task has included leading the Black Cherry Fair, opening shops and various publicity / photo opportunities. The role been undertaken by Robert Knock, Michael Dollery and Terry Pattinson.



Robert Knock
1993-2003



Terry Pattinson
2004



Michael Dollery
2005



Terry Pattinson
2006-2010

See the Newsletter, Autumn 2007, for the full history of Chertsey's Town Criers.



l-r William Taylor, Mary Blaker & Dicky Field. 1936



l-r Ron Taylor, Terry Pattinson & Victor Spink. June 2007

Cowley's Almshouses

In the mid 1990's the triangle of land south of Chertsey railway station was redeveloped for Floral House and the original proposal was to clear the entire site including Cowley's Almshouses which were originally erected in London



Street in 1671 and subsequently rebuilt at their present location in Guildford Road in 1786.

The Society objected to their demolition but agreed to their being extensively rebuilt to meet modern standards, so we managed to ensure that another part of Chertsey's heritage was retained.

Dorothy Everall Memorial Seat

Mrs Dorothy Everall, Secretary /Chairman 1979-2002 sadly died aged 88 in 2002. A seat was erected on the corner of Abbey Field between the Freda Atkins Memorial Garden and Abbey Green within sight of her house, *The Old Parsonage*.

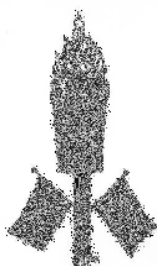


Drawing by Victor Spink



The Beacon

The Society has instigated the lighting of the beacon on St Ann's Hill on a number of occasions. On 3rd June 2002, to celebrate the 50th Jubilee of the reign of Queen Elizabeth II, it was lit by The Mayor of Runnymede, Cllr. Peggy Broadhead, accompanied by her husband, Jim Broadhead and Malcolm Loveday, Chairman, The Chertsey Society, watched by King Henry VIII (Victor Spink).



It was lit again in 2005 to commemorate the 200th Anniversary of the Battle of Trafalgar, although on that occasion the fuse leading up to the basket fizzled out and it was only due to the ingenuity of Society members who scrabbled in the woods to find a long branch and strap on a blazing brand with trouser belts to reach up high enough to set fire to the beacon!



The Tom Banner Photographic Collection

Tom Banner died in July 2003 aged 87. For many years he was on the staff at Holloway Sanatorium, and subsequently retired to live in a flat at Beamonds in the centre of Chertsey.



His hobby was photography and when he died he left his extensive collection of approximately 8000 photographs to The Society together with a legacy. An exhibition of Tom Banner's photos & cameras was mounted at Chertsey Museum in February 2006, organised by The Chertsey Society and the Museum Curator.



Other 1990s Activities

In May 1991 a 'Fun Day' was organised which included the closing of Guildford Street where stalls were erected and street theatre enacted. In addition a circular walk / cycle route was arranged including the operation of the river crossing at Laleham Ferry.

During the 1990's the Goose Fairs were restarted with a view to bring a bit of colour to the town for a couple of Saturdays prior to Christmas. Guildford Street was shut to traffic so that stalls and children's funfair rides could be set up. The Fairs were organised for several years by the Chamber of Commerce in conjunction with The Chertsey Society.



The Fairs ceased when the Chamber were no longer willing to participate and many of the local shops in Guildford Street were not over enthusiastic. It is interesting to note that in 2010 the Chamber of Commerce once again decide to revive the Goose Fair on a Saturday in December.



Recent Activities

Mrs Fox's grave

Charles James Fox is buried in Westminster Abbey, however his wife Elizabeth (1750 -1842) is buried next to the north wall of St Peter's Churchyard.



Over the years members of The Society have cleaned her grave and painted the railings. Unfortunately the inscription on her gravestone is very badly eroded so with financial support from County Cllr Ray Lowther's SCC



member's allocation The Society arranged for a new tablet to be placed on her grave, in Summer 2007, (see Newsletter

Display Stands

The Society has regularly supported The Black Cherry Fair and The Agricultural Association's Chertsey Show on the Meads and has manned display stands at the events.



The Chertsey Society's Town Crier, Terry Pattinson, in front of our stall at the Black Cherry Fair, July 2008



The Society's stand at The Agricultural Show, August 2008



l-r Malcolm Loveday, Thelma Lake, Margaret Nichols & Peter Lake, September 2006.



Black Cherry Fair, 2010

Opening of Phoenix Plaza & Fox Statue Sept 2006

A large area of the town immediately north of the railway station known as The Chertsey Revitalisation Area was redeveloped during the 1990's – 2006. It included a £3 million investment in the road infrastructure including rebuilding of the road bridge across the railway which would allow the platforms to be lengthened to accommodate 8 carriage trains, sadly this latter work has not yet been undertaken. Old buildings were demolished, including the old Chertsey council offices.

The Society objected to the demolition of the listed cottages next to Thompson's blacksmiths in Guildford Street and they were subsequently retained and incorporated into the new development. A number of new office blocks were built together with housing units including some affordable housing and a number of retail units, the latter all now being restaurants or a sandwich bar.

At the suggestion of David Wheeler, the Society's Vice Chairman, The Society proposed to RBC that a statue to commemorate the Rt Hon Charles James Fox should be provided in the square using section 106 money from the developers.



Philip Hammond, MP & David Wheeler, September, 2006



Fox by I Rank-Broadley

The statue was sculpted by the nationally recognised artist, Ian Rank-Broadley who also designs coins for the Royal Mint. It was unveiled by Philip Hammond, MP in September 2006.

The Rt Hon Charles James Fox was probably Chertsey's most famous resident and was an outstanding parliamentary orator who spoke in support of William Wilberforce's Bill for the Abolition of the Slave Trade. To commemorate the 200th Anniversary of the Bill, The Society organised an event on Sunday 25th March 2007 attended by over 50 people which included dramatic readings narrated by Valerie Lane with Peter Anderson as Fox and James Hanley as Wilberforce (from Thorpe Players) using a script prepared by Malcolm Loveday (see *Spring 2007 Newsletter*).

The Mayor of Runnymede, Cllr Prof Morton Moore, laid a laurel garland on Fox's statue and read a stirring address which acknowledged Fox's contribution to British politics which included being Britain's first Foreign Secretary (a post which he held 3 times). The Mayor referred to Fox's passion for Human Rights, originally embodied in Magna Carta and he quoted extracts from Rudyard Kipling's poem 'The Reeds at Runnymede'.



The Mayor, Prof Morton Moore & his wife, Linda with David Wheeler, March 2007



Valerie Lane, James Hanley & Peter Anderson, March 2007

Chertsey's Literary Connections (2008-2009)

Chertsey's rich literary connections were the subject of one of our talks in April 2009 which was based on two guided walks led by Mrs Jocelyn Boater, one of which finished with readings in Chertsey Bookshop. It is hoped to produce a separate publication highlighting Chertsey's links with a number of authors of generally recognised traditional literature including: **Thomas Cranmer** – *Book of Common Prayer 1548*, **William Shakespeare** (1564 – 1616) – **Richard III**, **Sir John Denham** (1615-69) poem from *Cooper Hill*, *Egham*, mentions *St Ann's Hill*, **Abraham Cowley** (1618 – 1667), **John Dryden** lines in *Fox's Temple of Friendship- St Ann's Hill*, **Thomas Love Peacock** (1785-1866), **George Meredith** (1828 - 1909), **Charles Dickens** (1812 – 1870), **Samuel Carter Hall** (1800 - 1889), **Anna Maria Hall** (1800 -1881), **Albert Smith** (1816 – 1860), **J B Priestly** (visited in Chertsey 1920's, biographer of *Thomas Love Peacock*), **Nina Bawden** (1925 –to date) **Edward Lear** (1812-88)– *Limerick*. In addition books on local history and technical subjects have been produced by a number of local residents including Lucy Wheeler, Eric Chambers, Robert Poulton, James Lander, Geoff Chapman, David Wheeler, etc etc.



Thursday 21st August 2008 –
Jocelyn Boater leading a Literary
Tour finishing in Chertsey
Bookshop



Mary Giles Alms Houses, London Street. (2008)



In 2008 The Society wrote to the Alms House Trustees requesting that the badly eroded plaque on the front of the Alms House should be replaced. Since the previous plaque was illegible The Society drafted the wording for the new plaque and contributed toward the cost of its installation.



Town Centre Toilets

When Sainsbury's were first granted permission to open the supermarket in the centre of Chertsey the public were assured that a public toilet would be provided and indeed a toilet block was built near the petrol station. However sadly in the last few years the toilets have suffered vandalism and Sainsbury's have refused to allow the toilets to remain open. The Chertsey Society has lobbied RBC to either enforce the original agreement or take over the maintenance of the toilet block. Alternatively RBC could make arrangements with other shops, halls, pubs or clubs to provide public conveniences and give financial compensation for the facilities. In December 2010 RBC granted Sainsbury's planning permission to rebuild their petrol station kiosk without provision for public toilets.



Visitors to the town find it amazing that a Surrey town the size of Chertsey does not have a town centre public conveniences.

Territorial Army (2008)

To commemorate the Centenary of the formation of the Territorial Army, The Society proposed to RBC that the TA should be awarded the Freedom of the Borough. In addition we organised a Special Service in April 2008 at St. Peter's Church for the anniversary, together with a parade of WWII vehicles.



RBC granted our request at the Council Meeting in December 2008 and subsequently organised a Presentation Ceremony on the 25th July 2009.



The Church Flagpole & Weather Vane (2008-2011)

In December 2008 scaffolding was erected on the church tower roof to repair the flagpole. The weather vane was removed for repainting and re-gilding which was undertaken by Malcolm Loveday and Chris McKay who had previously regilded the clock dials. 5th Chertsey Guides helped to repaint the Vane. The Chertsey Society used the balance of the Dorothy Everall memorial fund to cover the cost of the refurbishment. The cost of the scaffolding was met with a grant from SCC from Cllr Ray Lowther's member's allocation. It was due to be replaced on a reduced height pole as an interim measure, while funds were raised for a replacement flag pole but unfortunately in March 2009 the pole was deemed to be dangerous and not able to support the weather vane so it was cut down leaving the tower without the protection of the lighting conductor. Meanwhile an attempt is being made to raise £10,000 for a new pole and supports and its installation.



Christmas Lights

In 2005 The Society agreed to take on the responsibility of co-ordinating the town centre Christmas Lights when the Chertsey Chamber of Commerce no longer had the resources to undertake the task. Runnymede Borough Council have kindly provided a grant of up to £1850 (2010) on the basis that matching funds are raised. White rope light spirals are fixed by RBC DSO to about 45 lamp posts in the town centre whilst Angels are hung on the church parapet by the bell ringers.



The coloured rope lights on the yew trees outside the church have been put up by Peter Boast, Dorian Mead & Peter Gray. Over the past few years additional financial contributions have been provided by Chertsey Rotary Club & the Black Cherry Fair Team, SCC Councillor's allocations, local firms and private individuals together with those from The Society.



Society's Archives

Over the years The Society has accumulated a considerable archive of document and Photographs, mostly stored at the RAVS centre, in the Sainsbury's Centre. Over the last couple of years or so we have been indexing and cataloguing the archive.



Thelma Lake & Julie Osborne shown alongside the archive store at RAVS

Thanks are recorded to Thelma Lake, Malcolm Loveday, Margaret Nichols and Julie Osborne who are now about two thirds of the way through the task.

Other On-Going Activities

Members continue to take an active part in representing The Society's views on a number of local committees including:

- a) **The Meads Management Liaison Group** which oversees the 170 acres of public open space on the River bank to the east of the town,
- b) **AIR**, the **Association for the (environmental) Improvement of Runnymede**, which was established to assist organisations to get financial support from the Landfill Community Fund funded from tax credits provided from land fill waste disposal. The Society has sponsored a number of local projects including i) new chairs for Chertsey Hall & Thorpe Village Hall, ii) Bournside Play Area, iii) the Church Flagpole, iv) Chertsey Meads trees screen
- c) **Runnymede's Local Strategic Partnership (LSP)** including Chairing the Environment Task Group and representation on the Housing Task Group,
- d) **Runnymede Flood Forum** – the Group that endeavours to lobby for flood alleviation schemes from inundation from The Chertsey Bourne and The River Thames. Although it is dependent on the Environment Agency to deliver suitable schemes, nevertheless it has absorbed a considerable amount of time and generated huge numbers of committee documents.

The Society's 50th Anniversary Event at *The Orchard*



Approximately 70 members and guests attended the 50th Anniversary Event held at *The Orchard* on the evening Monday 29th November 2010. Several founder members, former Chairman & Vice Chairman, former committee members, as well as the present Committee and officers celebrated the achievements of The Society. An illustrated review of The Society's activities over the last 50 years was presented by the current Chairman, Malcolm Loveday. Mrs. Jocelyn Boater (Founder Secretary & Chairman, 1971) together with former Cllr Mrs Rosalind Wyke (Chairman 1967-1968) cut the anniversary cake which had been made by Mrs Mary Lowther (Secretary 1990 -2001).

The assembled company were enthralled by incredible magic tricks executed by Mr Brian Barnes, a member of The Magic Circle, entertained by former Cllr Peter Anderson with monologues of *King John* and *An Unquiet Spirit*. In addition we were fascinated by the aerial photographs of the area taken from an electric powered model aeroplane by Geoff Chapman and enjoyed the photographic quiz presented by former Vice Chairman, Victor Spink. Guests also had the opportunity to study a display prepared by Mrs Margaret Nichols of some of The Society's archive materials.

Malcolm Loveday stated that local residents all owed a debt of gratitude to the founders of The Chertsey Society which helps to overlook the state of the Town in line with the objective specified by the founders of

'To encourage preservation, development and improvements of a kind which will ensure Chertsey is a pleasant place in which to live and work.'

He expressed a big thank you to all who have supported The Society over the last 50 years and a special Thank You to all the Committee members, visits & events organisers, Treasurers & Auditors, Minutes Secretaries, Newsletter Editors, Scrapbook compilers, Speakers, coffee makers, archivist etc, etc, etc.

Current Chertsey Society projects include lobbying for a) the Tulk Field in Stepgates to be publicly accessible, b) Flood alleviation scheme for the River Bourne in Chertsey, c) re-opening of Toilets in Chertsey & d) improvement to Sustrans R4 cycle route crossing in Guildford Street near Chertsey Library. Typically in the last few years, about 200 local planning applications have been considered by the Committee of The Society each year and about 80 letters have been submitted to RBC annually expressing views to the planning committee. In addition a further 120 letters/ e-mails are sent on behalf of The Society on a wide variety of other matters.



l-r: (*standing*): Malcolm Loveday [Chairman 1986-88 & 2002-2010] , Mrs Jocelyn Boater [Chairman 1971], Margery & David Easton, [Members since 1964] , (*seated*): Mrs Rosalind Wyke [Chairman 1967-68] and Mrs Margaret Robinson [Founder Member]

The Future

The Committee thank you for your past support and hope you enjoyed reading this review of The Society's first 50 years. If The Society is going to continue it will be essential that a new generation of local residents come forward to help undertake leadership roles.

St Peter's Church Flagpole



It is nearly two years ago that the flag pole was removed from the top of the tower because it was found to be so rotten that it could not safely support the weather vane. Sadly the grant applications submitted by AIR (the Association for the Improvement of Runnymede) have all been turned down, with the exception of a £500 grant from The All Churches Trust. So we are now back to trying to raise the remaining ~ £9 k to add to the ~ £2.5 k raised so far.

Without the flagpole the church is not properly protected by the lighting conductor. However the regilded weather vane is in safe keeping awaiting the new pole.

Chertsey's Christmas Lights

The Guide & Scout Christingle Service took place at St. Peter's Church at 8.00pm on Friday 3rd December 2010. County Councillor Chris Norman led the Guides & Scouts in a countdown accompanied by The Rotary Club Father Christmas and his reindeer. Thanks are express to all those who attended and to Chertsey scouts who provided mulled wine and mince pies.

Thanks are also expressed to the following groups and individuals:

Chertsey Rotary Club & The Black Cherry Fair Team, RBC, The Chertsey Society, and a number of private individuals for contributing towards the costs

Dave Stedman, Sheryll Moody & Paul Sebego from Runnymede DSO for erecting the lights

Peter Boast, Dorian Mead & Peter Gray for erecting the coloured lights on the Church yew trees

St Peter's Church bell ringers for erecting the Angels and Star on the church parapet.

Thanks are also expressed to all those householders, shopkeepers and commercial organizations who decorated their own premises to help bring a bit of colour to the town.

The Chertsey Society will continue to lobby SCC to replace the old concrete lamp posts in London Street so that Christmas lights could be extended to cover the whole of the conservation area.



Remembrance Day

On Thursday 11th November 2010 a brief ceremony was held at the War Memorial



attended by approximately 80 people. Fourteen wreaths were laid around the War Memorial by representatives from a wide range of local organisations including: Chertsey Agricultural Association, Chertsey Chamber of Commerce, 5th Chertsey Guides, Chertsey Rotary Club, 1st Chertsey Scouts, Chertsey Social Club, Runnymede Borough Council, Surrey County Council, Surrey Police, SS&NR Club, The Chertsey Society, The Royal Air Forces Association (Addlestone & Chertsey Branch), The Women's Institute & UKIP. Approximately 20 small wooden crosses were also placed in the turf frame inside the war memorial railing.



This year the total cost of the Christmas Lights was more than £2,000 and we are grateful to RBC for providing 50% of the total cost, however if Christmas Lights are to continue we need more sponsorship and help to raise contributions for the funds.

Monks Annual Visit to Chertsey
19th January 2010 - 12.20pm

The Orthodox monks from the St Edwards's Brotherhood, Brookwood, will once again be visiting Chertsey to bless the waters of the Abbey River as part of their annual celebration of Theophany, the Baptism of Christ. For a number of years the Monks have come to Chertsey for the ceremony which is an appropriate location because it is also the site where Abbot Beocca and Ethor, the Mass Priest, together with approximately 90 brother monks were slain by Vikings when the abbey was sacked and burnt down in 871 AD. Having been killed by the Danes the monks were evidently regarded as martyrs. All are welcome to witness the blessing of the waters and people will gather in Colonel's Lane near Abbey Bridge Farm usually at about 12.20pm.



Blessing the Abbey River in January 2009

Concluding Remarks

As usual we have had a busy and active time trying to take care of our town's listed buildings and other amenity matters. As a result of reviewing planning applications and other matters during 2010 over 200 letters, e-mails etc have been dispatched on a wide variety of issues. Our letters file is available for inspection by members on request.

We encourage you all to try to recruit new members, and publicity leaflets about the Society's activities are available. The Committee also urgently needs help for some specific tasks such as fund raising for the Christmas Lights. Please talk to any of the Committee if you are willing to help.

Thank you for your continued support.

Malcolm S Loveday, Chairman, on behalf of all the Committee

COMMENTS from the COMMITTEE

Since the last Newsletter was distributed representatives from the Society have attended :
Runnymede Local Strategic Partnership, Environmental Task Group, Housing Task Group, Planning Liaison Group, AIR Management committee and The Meads Management Liaison Group.

OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE 2010/2011

Mr Malcolm S. Loveday
Mr David Wheeler
Miss Valerie Lane
Committee:

Membership Secretary:
Independent Examiner:
Newsletter Editor:

Chairman
Vice-Chairman
Treasurer

Brian Hunt, Stephnie Hunt, Thelma Lake, Sue Lambert,
Margaret Nichols, Julie Osborne
Debbie Greenwood.
Richard Mason
Emma Warren

Phone 01932 561576

Please note: I had hoped that this Newsletter would be available for circulation prior to the Town Forum but unfortunately it took me considerably longer to prepare the text than I had anticipated; please accept my apologies.

Malcolm S Loveday, Chairman.