

The  
Yateley  
Society



**ANNUAL REPORT**

FOR THE YEAR ENDING

31 DECEMBER 2000

# THE YATELEY SOCIETY ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDING DECEMBER 31ST 2000

## 1. INTRODUCTION.

Another hectic year has flown past. There have been a few changes within the organisation of the Society, but in general it has been business as usual.

Inevitably 'Planning' has featured largely in our dealings, and towards the end of the year the consideration of new planning applications and the preparation for planning appeals started to loom extremely large. The next round in the Clarks Farm 'Mushroom Farm' saga, effectively a repeat of the original application submitted as an appeal, is a major item under study. Still lurking in the background is the much postponed Hart District Local Plan.

We can only emphasise the desperate need for more people willing to learn the planning ropes and help our small and overworked team. (Prior knowledge of the planning system is not necessary!)

Last year the application to turn Yateley Lodge into a public house cum restaurant was expected to resurface - it has, but the subject building is now the White Lion, and again there are features of the plan which are contrary to the interests of both the listed building and the conservation area.

Historical research has continued. Richard Johnston has poured more information into the History Database, and has also completed a historical survey of the White Lion. The Tiptons and Richard have conducted more research into the history of Yateley's important people and unearthed many unsuspected connections with the East India Company. This latter topic was used for the second in our talks in association with Yateley Library.

The Library talks, and the accompanying exhibitions in the Library, have proved to be the best method yet for attracting the attention of members of the public who are interested in the same topics as the Society members. We concentrated on this event this year, to some good effect.

Our other major outside event was the Millennium celebration at St Peter's Church when we put up an updated version of the Yateley Myths and Legends exhibition. We also attended the Yateley Industries Autumn Fayre and some events at the new Frogmore and Darby Green Social Hall. Our thanks to Jo Hill for waving the flag at Frogmore and to all who took part at Yateley Industries.

Two new Society postcards were published during the year.

The appeal for ideas for Society organised walks, with one exception, fell on deaf ears. Several members are always willing to lead a walk on someone else's route, but we need the basic ideas to start with - please help!!

The Country Park Rangers continue to get our support on Yateley Common, with the usual monthly working parties. We have a few new workers and have lost one or two during the year, this is normal. **There is always room for more people!** - the amount of work that could be done seems limitless! This year we were sad to say goodbye to Bruce Gwynn, the Senior Ranger. Bruce is extremely knowledgeable in natural history matters, and was keen on leading natural history walks and on running classes on conservation and natural history. He has moved to the New Forest where he is a Site Manager, we wish him well in his new post. Replacing Bruce as Senior Ranger is Andy Davidson, a familiar face as he has been Ranger for Castle Bottom and other local areas for some years.

In the last report we announced that the Society would be putting together a list of useful footways and pedestrian short cuts in Yateley as a Millennium Project. A lot of help in collecting the basic data was received from a number of Society members and we are exceedingly grateful to them. The unexpected magnitude of the task and the

hindrances of the weather meant that the November 1st deadline passed with much still to do. There are still some doubtful areas which need a second look and it will be well into 2001 before a worthwhile booklet can be put together, but we are getting there!

## 2. ADMINISTRATION.

The Officers of the Society during 2000 were:

Chairman - Tony Hocking;

Vice Chairman - Roger Coombes; Honorary Secretary - Richard Johnston; Honorary Treasurer - Peter Tipton.

Executive Committee members were:

Graham Brown (Membership Secretary); Jo Hill (Stop Press Editor and Programme); Colin Medley; Philip Todd.

Thank you Pam Medley for your help and advise in 1999. We were fortunate in recruiting Jo Hill to the Executive to replace Pam, as it is always helpful to have a lady's viewpoint at the meetings.

There were 8 Executive Committee meetings (Nos. 160 to 163 and Nos. 165 to 169) during the year in the regular series for Society management. One special meeting (No. 164) considered priorities and resources, and the deterioration of the local Conservation Areas was the specialised topic of another meeting.

The Chairman, Officers and Executive Committee thank everyone who has contributed to the Society in any way during the past year.

## 3. MEMBERSHIP.

By the end of 2000 we had recruited member number 602, which means that we recruited 19 new members in 12 households during 2000. The number of households in good standing is now 128, which is down 6 from the figure in the report for last year.

Last year we proposed changes to the membership rules but did not

finalise them in time to implement them at the AGM, although the comment from the floor was favourable. This year we are better prepared and expect to change the membership renewal dates from each member's joining anniversary to a fixed time each year.

This will simplify the process of collecting subscriptions and should remove any members' confusion over when subscriptions are due.

#### 4. PLANNING.

The Society's planning activities have continued to suffer from too few people being actively involved, and it has been possible only to follow up the most important or most pressing planning issues. With an unusually heavy spate of significant planning applications affecting Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings in the later part of the year, the planning subcommittee became severely overloaded. If the Society is to maintain its competence in this core area in the longer term, it is important that new people come forward to learn and fully participate in the process.

The Executive Committee held two special strategy meetings during the year, one of which dealt with planning priorities, concentrating especially on the rate of deterioration of the character of the Conservation Areas. To stem this decline is now a top priority for the Society, and correspondence is in progress with outside bodies about this issue.

A number of controversial planning applications arose during the year which the Society responded to. Most of them affected Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas, the main ones being (status at time of writing Dec 2000) large business development at Clarkes Farm (gone to appeal, following a turbulent passage through Hart Council), The White Lion (outstanding), the barn at Handfords (refused), Knellers Cottage (granted), Robins Grove Park (gone to appeal), bus shelters at Darby Green (granted), Yateley Hall Park (outstanding), Silver Fox Farm (outstanding). The Society was unhappy with the way in which some of these applications were being handled by Hart District Council, and

made a formal complaint. One positive benefit has been an increased level of co-operation with local councillors.

Yateley Town Council started a new initiative to try to resolve the intractable problem of the "Yateley Town Centre", and the Society is represented on the committee.

The Society continues to be concerned about and actively involved with such concerns as the common, the airfield, and Blackbushe Metals (which has changed ownership yet again).

The activity on specific important issues was as follows:

Fox Farm: BCA challenged in the High Court the Secretary of State's decision to refuse planning permission for housing at Fox Farm, adjacent to the Special Protection Area for Wild Birds and the Castle Bottom National Nature Reserve. This challenge took the legal form of a judicial review. Hart District Council joined in the action as an interested third party; English Nature and the Yateley Society attended in the public gallery. The judge found in favour of the Secretary of State for the Environment, so the refusal of planning permission now stands. Silver Fox Farm. The Society, together with English Nature, is closely watching a series of applications for a replacement house at Silver Fox Farm, a property close to The Castle Bottom National Nature Reserve. An application for this site had been refused by a Planning Inspector under two years ago, so the Local Planning Authority rejected a fresh application in 2000. Now a third application has been made, to which the Society is objecting. Bell Lane, Frogmore: Yateley Town Council was taken to Aldershot County Court by a former local resident on common land issues. The Recorder gave his judgement in favour of Yateley Town Council. Again this hearing was attended by a Society member in support of the Town Council. Hart Local Plan: The Local Plan amendments had been expected in the autumn of 2000. Publication is not now expected till the summer of 2001. There have been changes in government planning guidance which may subtly change the balance in our favour regarding developers' intentions for more housing in Yateley. However the potential pre-release of the Clarkes Farm site for

commercial development is now a foregone conclusion, and the Society's stance to make sure development is sympathetic to the Darby Green Conservation Area and its listed buildings is reported in a separate paragraph.

## 5. HISTORY.

The level of history interest in the Society remains particularly strong at the moment. Individuals continued their research projects during the year. Some of the results of that work were displayed as an exhibition at St Peter's Church flower festival, with displays on the Polyglot Bible and the Caswall family, following new research into these topics.

The Library again invited the Society to give a lecture in November, attended by about 70 people, and to provide an exhibition. This year Peter Tipton lectured on Yateley's multifarious connections with the East India Company, all based on new research which involved Peter and Richard Johnston in making trips to the British Library, and heavy use of the on-line IGI, amongst other resources. These researches are casting much more light on those Yateley people who were more "important" in their own day, but who tend to be relatively under-represented in the local and parish records.

A revived area of historical research this year has been the collecting of oral histories, and a number of people have been interviewed during the year. These oral accounts often suggest new lines of research, fill out the details in official records and reveal much about every day life and people which cannot be discovered any other way. This is an ever urgent task, as this sort of information is lost if the holder dies before it is collected.

The Society continued to try to cooperate with the church authorities concerning the memorials in the churchyard rubbish tip, but still without success.

A planning application for alterations to The White Lion provided the opportunity for an historical survey of this building (at the request of Hart's Conservation Officer), which appears to date from the late C17.

In connection with this, more of the records of the manor of Hall Place (Yateley Manor) were collected from the Arundell collection in Wiltshire Record Office. Robins Grove Cottage was also examined for a planning appeal.

The Society's historical library and archives have been catalogued and partly calendared during the year, following their transfer to Richard Johnston. Three Yateley Mummer's plays, which were found in the archives, were performed at the December meeting.

Computerisation of the remaining Yateley "Parish Records" (christenings (to 1961), marriages (to 1978) and burials (to 1974)) was completed from the microfilms lent by Hampshire Record Office. What is now needed is for someone to take responsibility for reconstructing all relationships and families from this rich resource.

The Society helped the Hampshire Gardens Trust with their review of historic gardens in Hart District.

### *YATELEY HISTORY PROJECT DATABASE*

During the year a substantial amount of new material was accumulated from a variety of sources, including, increasingly, the internet. But it was not possible to produce an updated CD-ROM because of the Society's extensive planning commitments during the latter part of the year.

## 6. CONSERVATION.

This year has been relatively successful on the conservation front with 375 volunteer hours, allowing for the loss of one month's working party, this is at a level close to last year. (In the ten years since detailed records started we have contributed 3020 hours.) Student numbers were down on previous years despite written approaches and follow up telephone calls to Yateley, Frogmore, and Fernhill Schools. Contact was also established by telephone, with a follow up package describing the

activities of the Society Group, with the Trident Office at Fernhill following the departure of our teacher volunteer Andy Grevatt. The suggestion of another approach to Farnborough College Ecology students by Tony Davis, Yateley Common Site Manager, was eagerly accepted to try to boost numbers for the coming year.

The Yateley Common Management Committee has met and addressed some tough issues put forward by Peter Tipton, and other Society members. The difficult subject of horse riding, and the consequent damage caused to the environment, has required further deliberation and policy review by HCC, which is awaited in the New Year.

Liaison with the Forest of Eversley. A very creditable contribution was made by Yateley Society members during a rescue programme, mounted by Directors of the Forest of Eversley Trust, to save a wooden pre-fabricated building from demolition. It is hoped to eventually relocate it to provide an interpretation centre and resource base for the Forest of Eversley Trust, and perhaps other conservation bodies in the area. Yateley Society supporters included Frank Rose (demonstrating his carpentry and diverse skills yet again) and Mike Mann during the dismantling phase, Tim and Nick Round removed the felt roofing and Tom Vance and Tony Hocking at very short notice joined the group, the Trust Directors, and the Royal Engineers to complete the frenetic loading and transport phase. It is fair to say that without the support of the Yateley Society the task would not have been accomplished in the time available. Sincere appreciation and great respect go to all involved for their toil and efforts.

Conservation activities on Yateley Common and Castle Bottom have continued to tackle the perennial problems of Birch, Pine and Gorse invasion, and we were treated to a path re-routing and renewal project during one summer work party.

Recent years have seen a 'special' effort made at the end of the year in the form of hot mulled wine and mince pies to express our thanks to the volunteers for all their efforts. This year we were pleased to welcome two new volunteers for the occasion on New Year's Eve, but the cold

weather proved to be a deterrent for most, even though we had a very pleasant and productive morning. The result is that we will have plenty of mulled wine left over for the end of January - make a note in your diaries now!

Our sincere thanks goes to all the people who turned out to support this worthwhile activity on our local, rare heathland. We are also very keen to extend a warm welcome to any newcomers who will enjoy a little light exercise and fresh air - come and join our friendly little group for an hour or so - we appreciate any help, for as long as you please.

We meet at Wyndham's Pool, 10 a.m. LAST SUNDAY of every month. No prior experience needed!

## 7. YATELEY SOCIETY WEBSITE

This may be found at <http://hants.org.uk/yateley/>

Work started on improving the website pages during the year and will continue into 2001.

Members are reminded that, if they are willing and able, they may receive Society information by e-mail. Please advise Richard Johnston if you have an e-mail address which can be used for this.

## 8. PUBLICATIONS SUB-COMMITTEE

The small group interested in publications met, mostly informally, throughout the year, and was pleased to add two new postcards to the range published by the Society. These cards first became available to members and the general public at the Society's stall at the Yateley Industries Autumn Fayre. This initial launch was far from being a success, in fact if the Sub-Committee Chairman had not purchased a couple of dozen cards for his own use, the stall would have made a loss. We hope that the cards are doing better at our newsagent outlets, although one of our best supporters reports that sales are slow. Whilst we are not particularly concerned about making a profit from the sale of

postcards and booklets, we feel disappointed because they could be doing more to promote civic pride in Yateley and its environment, one of the general aims of the Society.

The two new cards are different views of Shute's Pond on Yateley Green, one depicting young anglers with Brook Cottages in the background, the other looking towards the limes, with cricket in the background.

Tony Hocking has designed a nice transparent, protective display stand which we hope the newsagents will want to use to display our cards more prominently and thereby encourage sales.

We continue to pursue our aim to extend the range of postcards by searching for the perfect images of a number of different features of Yateley, Frogmore and Darby Green. We are grateful to those individuals who have provided so many images so far. Unfortunately, the article in the March Newsletter (No. 73) produced no additional response from members.

We are considering a number of other publications, but the best means of producing them, such as on the Society's website or as loose-leaf sheets rather than the more traditional pamphlets, continues to engage our thoughts and discussions. What would members prefer? Please tell the Committee.

## 9. NEWSLETTERS AND PROGRAMME.

### 9.1 Newsletters.

It was with some relief on the Chairman's part that the Editorship of the Newsletter was passed to Elizabeth Tipton early in the year. This has already led to a subtle and much overdue change in style. Jo Hill then took over the Editorship of 'Stop Press'. It was agreed early in the year that the Newsletter would form more of an occasional journal for the Society, concentrating on informative articles; while the Stop Press would come out more frequently, and more regularly, to give updates on

the Programme and any urgent news.

2 Newsletters, numbers 73 and 74, were published in 2000, plus 4 Stop Press issues, numbers 44 to 47.

There has been some research by Jo Hill into a new source of printing for the Stop Press, while keeping costs to a minimum. She is now able to do the printing for the cost of the paper.

### 9.2 Programme.

The year's programme included, as usual, a mixture of talks and special events

Conservation Working Parties met on Yateley Common on the last Sunday of 11 months of the year. One month the working party was cancelled at short notice because no Ranger was available to supervise. (This serves to highlight the fact that all work on the Common is supervised and controlled by the Rangers.)

#### 9.2 i) 2000 Talks:

This year we have experimented with the Frogmore and Darby Green Social Hall and the Ryder Social Area at Frogmore School as talks venues, the aim being to make it easier for people from that end of Yateley to attend.

January 20th *Members' Evening*, a discussion of the aims and activities of the Society.

March 30th *Taping History* by David Lee, Wessex Film & Sound Archive. How to make successful Oral History recordings.

April 13th *Voices in Time* by Yateley Society members. Examples of Oral History recording and the techniques used.

May 18th *Talking Flowers* by Tim Carr, from the 'Plantlife' wild

flower society.

June 22nd *Yateley Lakes: 50 Years of Angling and Conservation* by Dr Ian Welch, Manager of RMC Angling.  
An account of the famous fish and natural history at the site.

September 21st *Know Your Common* by Yateley Society members. A description of Yateley Common, history and its problems in modern times.

October 19th *Environmentally Speaking* by David Webb of the Environment Agency. The work of the Agency, and in particular how floods can be alleviated.

November 16th *Yateley and John Company* by Peter Tipton. An account of the many connections between Yateley residents and the East India Company (presented in association with Yateley Library)

December 14th *Yateley Mummings Unveiled* by Yateley Society members. A presentation of various versions of the Yateley Mummings' Play, and a social gathering.

9.2.ii) 2000 Walks:

April 2<sup>nd</sup> *Feet, Hooves and Heathland*. Yateley Common Country Park and the impact of use by horses, a walk led by Ron Pattenden.

**IDEAS FOR ROUTES IN 2001 PLEASE!!**

9.2.iii) 2000 Special Events:

January 28th *Chairman's Dinner*

February 17th *Annual General Meeting*

June 28th to 2nd July *Exhibition 'St Peter's Fact and Fiction'* (in St Peter's Church)

July 8th *Summer Social*

November 16th *Yateley Library Talk 'Yateley and John Company'*

The 'Chairman's Dinner' in January was an experimental alternative to a Christmas social. It attracted over 20 people, but while pleasant, was thought not to afford the ease of conversation with all present that another form of gathering might manage.

The Summer Social, which followed the custom of a buffet meal and a quiz, was hosted once more by Valerie and David Kerlake and was organised by Stephanie Pattenden and Mary Hocking, to all of whom we offer our thanks. The occasion was blessed with a marvellous selection of food, and later on with heavy rain during which the ageing tarpaulin saved the day.

As already described, the second Yateley Library Talk took place in November, concentrating on the East India Company.

Anthony J F Hocking  
*Chairman, the Yateley Society*

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