

SurreyHills Society **views**



Viewpoint from Box Hill

Chilworth Manor visit



What a treat, courtesy of Mr and Mrs Wrigley, who kindly opened their beautiful garden on a sunny Thursday afternoon to the Society. Nestled in the Surrey Hills below St Martha's this house is built on the ruins of a monastery, the ponds of which still exist! The earliest recognisable part of the manor was created by the widow of the Duke of Marlborough in 1725, who also developed the beautiful tiered gardens

to the rear of the house. It then passed through inheritances to the Duke of Northumberland who held it until the 1930s.

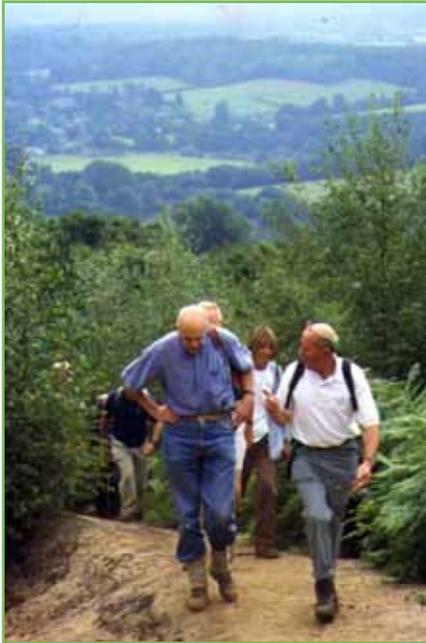
Sir Lionel and Lady Heald lived at the manor for over 60 years. He was attorney General in Churchill's government. She worked for many charitable causes including the National Garden Scheme of which she was chairwoman.



See centre pages for a flavour of what Society members get up to

Our thanks to Ringway for providing graphic design and printing of our newsletters as well as Mole Valley council, Chris Howard, Ken Bare, Grant Pritchard, Amesbury School, Denbies Wine Estate and the Surrey Hills office for photos and finally, our members who have contributed articles.

Chairman's View



Walking the North Downs Way

I have just returned from Umbria in Italy from an area with a similar designation to our AONB. In Umbria, there is strict planning control and grants for 'agri-tourism', which included llamas, restaurants serving only home-grown or local produce and Aloe Vera cactii

farming. It was different, but familiar to many of our aspirations for our Surrey Hills.

Here we are trying to encourage vineyards and other sustainable farming, proper woodland management and green tourism, which links in well with this newsletter.

The south slopes of our North Downs are an extension of the same geological feature that makes up the Champagne region in France. The only real difference is the cooler climate. I believe we will see more vineyards in Surrey in the future.

The search for renewable energy is relentless and necessary if we are to reduce our carbon footprint and meet our EU targets. Why then are we not making more use of wood fuel? Surrey, as the most wooded county in England should be leading the way and, to an extent, it is. Make a point of visiting the Second Wood Fair at Birtley House, near Bramley, in October and see the new technology available.

Come and join me at the beginning of September to walk the Surrey section of the North Downs Way. We will be able to see the changes to the countryside as well as seeing the season change.



The new look website
www.surreyhillssociety.org

All the details of these events and information about your society can be found on our new website thanks to the efforts of two of our trustees, Ken Bare and Richard Pitts, who have worked hard to make the site helpful and user-friendly. I hope you enjoy reading about all of the above in this summer newsletter – more pictorial to give a flavour of the variety of events on offer to members. I look forward to seeing you and hearing your views.

Neil Maltby

Surrey Hills Wood Fair 2011

Saturday 8, Sunday 9 October Birtley House, Bramley, Guildford

All that's Good about Wood

Demonstrations
Trade Stands
Coppice Crafts
Sculptures

Competitions
Wood Boilers
Wood Stoves
Local Produce

Refreshments
Tree Climbing
Children's
Activities

If you are interested in exhibiting or for information please contact:
infor@surreyhillswoodfair.co.uk 0845 478 6370 or visit our website

www.surreyhillswoodfair.co.uk



Surrey Hills Board



Surrey Hills Wood Fuel



Planning update

by Clive Smith

The former home and country estate of Lord Beaverbrook at Cherkley Court south of Leatherhead has been bought from the Beaverbrook Foundation by Longshot. The company proposes to develop a prestigious golf course and clubhouse on the chalk downland, as well as extend the listed building to provide an exclusive hotel and function venue.

In recent years the Foundation carried out an impressive and extensive restoration of the listed building, the gardens and parkland landscape at considerable expense. The intention that the gardens and grounds be open to the public and that the house be available for weddings and other functions only lasted a few years before the Foundation concluded that it was not a viable operation. From the public aspect this was regrettable as the views from the property of the Surrey Hills, River Mole valley and towards parts of London are spectacular. The grounds are lovely and the house most impressive, with an interesting 20th century history associated with Lord Beaverbrook. Some Society members may have had the opportunity of visiting the place during its short public opening.

Longshot have employed public relation consultants who have carried out some early consultation with some local residents and bodies. Longshot believe there is considerable local support for their proposals. However, there are some notable exceptions including the Campaign to Protect Rural England that has expressed its serious concerns.

The Surrey Hills Board Planning Adviser has also made Longshot and Mole Valley planners aware of the likely harmful effects of changing the current most attractive natural and prominent chalkland landscape into a manicured golf course and all that is associated with such a use. The property lies within an Area of Great Landscape Value (AGLV) and borders the AONB. A county-wide study of the AGLV carried out by consultant landscape architects in 2007 concluded that this part of the AGLV has identical landscape characteristics to the Surrey Hills AONB. They recommended that the Surrey Hills AONB boundaries be reviewed by the Government through Natural England as a matter of urgency and this land be included in the AONB.

Longshot have employed several specialist consultants to progress their ambitions for the property through persuading local people and Mole Valley District Planning Authority of the merits of their proposals. They propose to submit planning and listed building consent applications in the autumn. There may be a public consultation beforehand. Society members may wish to keep an eye open for when the proposals are published and make their own assessments of them. Any views for or against the proposals should be submitted to the Planning Department at Mole Valley District Council and possibly local District Councillors and those on the Council's Development Control Committee.

For any matters related to planning in the Surrey Hills, contact Clive Smith on 01372 220653.

Update from the Surrey Hills AONB office

Gateway to the Surrey Hills – Reigate Hill

A Heritage Lottery Fund bid on the theme of Frontline Surrey Hills is being progressed focussed principally on Reigate Fort and maximising its educational use. This seeks to re-create the successful Discover Gatton project of conserving, enhancing and learning about the area, based around a self-guided trail. The programme of bridge refurbishment works is now planned from the end of July to February 2012, which will include three weekend closures of the A217.

'Our Land' – South East Protected Landscapes project (SEPL)

Our Land is an innovative collaborative project developing and promoting sustainable, rural tourism in National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty across the country.

Backed by nearly £1m of funding through the Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE) and supported by a national marketing campaign and sophisticated web platform, the aim of the project is to enhance visitors' enjoyment and understanding of the South East's protected landscapes, increase the number of sustainable tourism businesses and products, and boost visitor spend to benefit local businesses and through them the local economy.

The project has been established not as a grant-giving programme, but to support and enable businesses to realise their full potential by appreciating and working with the Protected Landscape they find themselves in.

Our Land will be launched with a national marketing campaign this autumn. Funding for the project lasts three years, during which time the project will be monitored, evaluated and undergo regular progress reviews by the SEPL Steering Group.

For further information please contact the Project Co-ordinator, Sarah Loftus on 07581 122493 or sarah.loftus@surreycc.gov.uk

De-cluttering the Surrey Hills

Colin Davis Associates is part of the PRIAN network that has been working with the Department for Transport on promoting best practice in de-cluttering and public realm improvements. Colin gave a presentation to the De-cluttering the Surrey Hills Highway Working Group and, with sponsorship from English Heritage, Colin ran a technical seminar at Warren Farm on 21 June for Surrey Highway Engineers. This was followed by a workshop on 7 July focussing on applying best practice in Shere, Albury and Shamley Green. Through the Working Group, it is planned to hold a wider seminar for parish councils and other interested parties later in the year.

The Director is working with Protected Landscapes colleagues and the European Manager at Surrey County Council to look at the possibility of securing Interreg funding to promote best practice and take forward case studies.

Chairman's Day



Day Out at Hampton Estate on Wednesday 4 May

For the third year in a row, our Chairman managed to arrange for a fine, warm, sunny day at yet another fascinating venue – the Hampton Estate at Seale.

After a warm welcome from our hosts, Bill and Bridget Biddell, we boarded mini-buses for a trip to Puttenham Common that forms part of the estate but is managed for them by Surrey Wildlife Trust. During a gentle stroll across part of the common, Bill, Bridget and other family members gave us a fascinating insight into their plans for maintaining and improving the land and ponds.

We moved on to converted barns and outbuildings which now form a thriving business complex for small and entrepreneurial companies, the entire facility being heated by a wood chip boiler using chips that have come from

the estate thus making the whole unit extremely "green".

For a complete change of topic, we then visited the last commercial hop farm in Surrey, located in Puttenham village. We were shown the young spring growth of the hops in the fields and then into the barns to see how the process is completed. The hops grown on the estate are Fuggles and are used by the local Hogs Back Brewery amongst others.

Lunch was enjoyed in Myrtles Barn on the estate cooked by our hosts and we also sampled Hogs Back brew and Greyfriars sparkling wine from a local vineyard. We learned about the home produced "Beef Bags" that are sold regularly from the estate. We then went off to meet part of the local herd of cattle, the family have plans to extend

the herd.

Into the mini-buses again. This time for a trip to see a film set. No, you didn't mis-read that. Part of the estate is currently being used as a location for filming Jack the Giant Killer and has previously hosted the film crews for the blockbuster Robin Hood.

Our final stop of the day was at Manor Farm Craft Centre at Seale (yet another part of the estate) where some of our group managed to find space for a cream tea. Who would have thought there could be so much variety in one day with a fascinating insight into how the Hampton estate has diversified and used its natural assets to keep pace with modern requirements.

So what can the Society Chairman come up with in 2012 to top this??



Pamela Holt's Sheepleas Guided Walk



Loseley 'Grow Your Own' Event characters

Trampers, a Pushchair and Shanks's pony in the Surrey Hills

Sunday 22 May

Peter Hattersley, Mike from the Disabled Ramblers' Association, my family: hubby Graham, daughter Kim and her partner Oliver and their two small girls, Millie and Sophie, my brother Derek, and Alan, a friend of Derek's, have recently had a great outing in the Surrey Hills. (It was advertised as a family outing but none of us, particularly Peter, expected it to be just MY family!)

We met up at Bocketts Farm at 10 to start the day with coffee in their barn cafe and then off we went on our 4 mile ramble through Norbury Park and back to Bocketts. With Peter leading on his trumper and Mike and Quincy his dog bringing up the rear, there was Derek on a Disabled Ramblers' trumper, Graham and Oliver taking it in turns to walk or use a spare trumper and the rest of us walking with Sophie bumping along in her pushchair.

We had a short stop where there was a lovely view over Mickleham and towards Box Hill before arriving at Norbury Park Sawmill. It was their Open Day and what a treat! Wood-turning, wooden signage and toy

animal making, charcoal burning and for the hungry ones amongst us sausages or beefburgers. There was even the chance for Millie to hold a 1 week old lamb. Finally back to Bocketts for a well-earned cuppa and a sarnie! Kim, Oliver, Millie and Sophie took up the fantastic reduction on the entry to the Farm whilst the oldies amongst us settled for home and a rest.

For the uninitiated the trumper is an all-terrain electric buggy that is easy to drive, safe and comfortable and gives those who aren't able to walk or have difficulty walking the opportunity to ramble in the countryside. As Derek said 'It's great to be able to see the countryside from an angle I have not seen in quite a while'.

Our thanks to Mike, from the Disabled Ramblers, to Surrey Wildlife Trust for allowing this outing to take place, to Bocketts Farm (particularly for their special entry offer) but especially to Peter for all his hard work arranging everything. A lovely day!

Pam Bulman, Society Member



Guildford Contrasts

The recent visit in June to Guildford's architectural relics was a day of contrasts.

In the morning we inspected the mediaeval survivals: - Abbots Hospital (like a miniature Oxbridge College – and oh! what wonderful chapel windows), the Undercroft (a marvellous survival underneath High Street shops) and the Guildhall (like a City Livery Company Hall) complete with the Borough silver.

In the afternoon, we visited the Spike Vagrant and Casuals ward, a Victorian survival from the Poor Law regime.

We were met by the Tramp Master resplendent in bowler hat and his assistant (dressed in Victorian rags). Within the building the Master chivvied the inmates to get on with their work. One inmate attempted to steal a visitor's bracelet. It was all very convincing – the coughs were all too painful to hear by one whose father died from consumption and whose great great uncle died in a workhouse.

A most interesting visit – but also for me a difficult one.

Barry Moughton, Society member



Surrey Wines



Did you know that a whole range of Surrey wines are produced as still or sparkling and as whites and roses? There is also at least one red wine in the county, so there really is something for everyone. Not very long ago, English wines were considered by many to be a bit of a joke – but not any longer! Over the last decade, a significant number of high quality English wines have come to the fore and Surrey is well represented amongst them.

Greater knowledge of the climate and geology of potential vineyard sites has led to the selection of optimum vines for different locations. Within Surrey, many still wines are produced from crossings of Germanic varieties such as Bacchus, Ortega, and Dornfelder (for red and rose) whilst the traditional vines of Champagne (Pinot Noir, Pinot Meunier and Chardonnay) and Seyval Blanc are used to make both still and sparkling wines. Consequently, each local vineyard has developed its own characteristic wines.

It's been suggested that, in the not too distant future, the whole of the south-facing slope of the North Downs could be clothed in vines. This may be an exaggeration but the area certainly has close geological similarities with the Champagne area and the climate has shown itself suitable for vines to be productive. The decision by Denbies to produce such a wide range of wines on their Dorking estate (which at 265 acres is three times bigger than any other English vineyard) is a major endorsement of the area. Other vineyard owners such as Godstone, Greyfriars and Albury have also seen the potential of similar sites and more are following in their footsteps.

Painshill may be a special case in that it is a restoration of an 18th century vineyard as part of a larger attraction, but the still rose has been an excellent product and the sparkling wines have been stunning. RHS Wisley is a bit of an oddity in terms of winemaking. They planted their vineyard in 2004 with two cultivars - 'Phoenix' and 'Orion' which were selected because they do well in the UK climate, show good mildew resistance, and are practical for people to manage. They aren't, however, known for being used for commercial winemaking elsewhere.

The Iron Railway is one of Surrey's hidden vineyards - planted on the old route of the horse-drawn Croydon, Merstham and Godstone Iron Railway that was open from 1805 to 1842. The vineyard,

which was initially planted in 1982/3 is part of a 7 acre holding at the summit cutting so this is quite an early vineyard for the area.

This September, the Society will be holding a tasting to showcase examples of wines from all of these vineyards (with the exception of Albury which is not yet in production but whose owner will be co-hosting the event). This will be a ticket only event and demand is likely to be high so book early when you see details announced. In addition, we are privileged to have a talk by Prof. Richard Selley of Imperial College, London, booked for November. He will be discussing the history of viticulture in the Surrey Hills over the last two millennia and the way that climate change may impact local wine production in the future.

English Rosé wins Best in the World

Denbies Wine Estate is delighted to announce that they have been awarded gold at the International Wine Challenge for Denbies Chalk Ridge Rose 2010. England was one of 21 countries to submit a wine in the still rosé category for which there were 367 entries. This is the only gold award achieved in the still rosé category and an unprecedented achievement for an English wine.



25% off

all Denbies
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Denbies Wine Estate, London Road, Dorking RH5 6AA

www.denbies.co.uk

Founder Member Ken Bare



In the Autumn of 2008 whilst out for a walk in the AONB, I saw a poster on a noticeboard which advertised the Society. I had recently retired and was looking for extra activities and the opportunity to build a new social network to replace my former colleagues. I joined! With the Welcome pack I found a note inviting members to volunteer to support the Society. After mulling this over for a while, I made contact and had an "interview" with Gail Sperrin who was doing so much of the administration and organising at that time. I've never been a person to join an organisation unless I was prepared to get actively involved and this obviously became apparent during our chat because the next thing I knew was that I was being invited to sit in on the management meetings and subsequently became a trustee.

Having had a career which included acting as a trainer, internal consultant and problem solver in high profile companies, I had developed the ability to give presentations and sell messages or solutions. These skills have now evolved with a major part of my Society work being to give talks to external groups, promote (sell) the AONB and Society at shows and events and generally try to expand the role and reach of the organisation.

Help run the Society's Events Programme

We are seeking a volunteer to co-ordinate the planning and implementation of our Events Programme. Working with a small sub-committee, the Co-ordinator will ensure that the programme is broadly distributed across the Surrey Hills, has a wide range of topics and that event dates do not clash with other Society activities.

The role will involve liaising with event organisers (by phone and/or email) to ensure that they complete a pro-forma listing event details and to check that all the information is available for publicising to members. Some locations require payments in advance and the Co-ordinator will organise this from Society funds.

The Co-ordinator will prepare brief text about the Event, and possibly a members' booking form. Other volunteers will manage publication on the web-site or in our newsletter.

Most events require members to pre-book and to pre-pay. The role will include managing members' event bookings and payments. After each event, the money will be passed to the Treasurer and, where appropriate, the Co-ordinator will write letters of thanks to venues, hosts etc.

If you are interested and wish to discuss the role further, please contact June Robinson via our email info@surreyhillssociety.org

Forthcoming events

Surrey Hills Society Dinner 22 October at 7.30pm at Guildford County Club

Remember to book your place on the Surrey Hills Dinner, back this year, due to popular request at the County Club Guildford. You will be treated to local food, local entertainment and a rare opportunity to see this private members club formally the town residence of the Earl of Onslow.

Special guest will be Virginia McKenna, famous "Born Free" actress and animal rights campaigner and local Surrey Hills resident who will be joining us to give a talk on her life and her recent book.

Tickets £50 each. Please book on the website or phone 01372 220647



Neil Maltby and guests at last years dinner

AGM on Saturday 29 October



Notice is hereby given that the third Annual General Meeting of the Surrey Hills Society will be held at 11am on Saturday 29 October 2011 (coffee from 10.30 am) at Amesbury School, Hazel Grove, Hindhead, GU26 6BL. There will be a tour of the only school Edwin Lutyens, famous Arts & Crafts architect ever designed, and a talk about the history including its part in World War 2. After lunch there will be a walk led by the National Trust warden around nearby Devil's Punchbowl.

Programme August to December 2011

Keep an eye on our website for additional events to be added to this calendar

Booking is essential and usually opens 2 months before the event - further details at

www.surreyhillssociety.org or by sending an SAE to: Surrey Hills Society Events, Warren Farm Barns, Headley Lane, Mickleham, Dorking RH5 6DG

Friday 12 August

Summer evening visit to Police HQ, Mount Browne, Sandy Lane, Guildford, Surrey GU3 1HG. Displays include a reconstructed lock-up (an old-fashioned holding cell for drunks and criminals), a reconstructed crime scene showing scenes of crime techniques, artefacts and touch-screen technology, all tracing the history of the Force up to the present day.

Download booking form from website

3,4,5,6 September

Walk the North Downs Way (4 days with 11-11-12 and 10 miles respectively).

Day 1 – Farnham to Guildford;

Day 2 – Guildford to Dorking;

Day 3 - Dorking to Merstham;

Day 4 - Merstham to Oxted with option to

continue to Westerham to complete the Surrey section (13.5 miles). Details from Graham Butler - butlergc1@aol.com

Sunday 4 September

Stepping into Newdigate's Socialist Past. A two-hour guided walk around a little known part of Newdigate which was developed a hundred years ago on socialist principals. It is also the site of the first holiday camp in England which was run by a socialist couple who advertised for business in the Lansbury Gazette. We will finish with Sunday lunch in the Six Bells.

Tuesday 20 September

An evening tasting of wines from 6 Surrey vineyards – Albury Village Hall. 7.30pm. Limited numbers. See page 6 for more details.

Sunday 25 September

Autumn Walk (7.5 miles) starts in Shere and ascends to the North Downs Way, with magnificent views from Newlands Corner and St Martha's Church, returning via the Apostolic Church at Albury and Silver Wood.

Saturday 1 October

A Day in the Country - Wonerish

22 October

Annual Formal Dinner at the County Club, Guildford

29 October

AGM and Members' Day at Amesbury School Hindhead

Friday, 18 November

Illustrated talk on 'Winelands of the Surrey Hills' The history of viticulture in the Surrey Hills over the last two millennia, and the impact of past and future climate change by Professor Richard Selley of Imperial College, London. Evening at Dorking United Reform Church Hall

Saturday 10 December

A morning guided walk exploring more of the 65 acres grounds of Belmont School in Holmbury St Mary, followed by mulled wine and mince pies in the School Hall by kind invitation of the Headmistress.

We are already planning the Programme of Events for 2012; if you would be able to organise a walk, talk, or other event - or if you've any contacts - we'd love to hear from you at info@surreyhillssociety.org

Booking for Society Events

Just before this newsletter went to print, a number of our members spent a leisurely afternoon on the Iona – a horse drawn narrow boat which operates from Godalming. The event opened for booking a good two months prior to the date and had already been flagged up in our programme for a number of months. Six weeks ahead of the trip, it was fully booked!

We mention this because it is not the first event of 2011 where we have reached maximum numbers ahead of the day. Although some of our activities have no limit, others have constraints ranging from the size of the venue to the number of participants that a guide or speaker can work with. Occasionally, we plan events which, for

no apparent reason, fail to attract the audience size which we had anticipated. We then have to make a judgement about whether to curtail them before the day. It is then very frustrating if we get a flurry of late bookings after we have downsized or cancelled an event.

The clear message is **PLEASE BOOK EARLY**. Not only will this give you the best opportunity of being able to attend but it will give us the confidence to run more interesting activities which have significant overheads or advance costs.

Editors Note: See website for write up of this event



Narrow boat 'Iona'