



Society volunteers at the Award ceremony, Albury

Major Award for Surrey Hills Society

The Surrey Hills Society was named as a recipient of the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service (QAVS) when the list of successful organisations was issued on the Queen's birthday at the beginning of June. Clearly, the Society was thrilled with this recognition and included a celebration within our annual 'Volunteers Picnic', along with presentation of lapel badges to our many active volunteers.

The official presentation of the Award takes rather longer to organise and deliver! In many cases, organisations host a visit by the Lord Lieutenant or their deputy where the Award and Citation are presented. However, in some instances, a member of the Royal Family is nominated to make the presentation as part of their work in visiting locations and organisations across the country. Thus, a definite date for our presentation was delayed whilst Royal diaries were reviewed.



Volunteers picnic 2019



Receiving the Award and Citation from HRH The Earl of Wessex

The Society was finally informed at the end of September that Prince Edward, Earl of Wessex, had been requested to make the presentation to us on Wednesday 6th November. What a privilege!

This notification immediately led to a flurry of discussions and decisions. As a Society composed of volunteers, we don't have a fixed base to work from and hence no obvious venue for the presentation. Similarly, we knew that we would have to identify somewhere which fitted in with the Earl's itinerary for the rest of the day so that travel time was minimised.

After a bit of brainstorming, we identified that Albury was the logical area to hold the event and, in a moment of inspiration, thought of using the Saxon Church in the grounds of Albury Park. Contact with the Friends of

Albury Old Saxon Church and, through them with the Churches Conservation Trust and the Albury Estate, gave us permission to use this venue. With the clock ticking, we then had to create an itinerary, displays and all the other elements necessary to put on a stunning and professional event to promote the work of the Society and to celebrate the Award with the Earl.



The Queen's Award
for Voluntary Service

We are very proud of the Award and have devoted the inside pages of this newsletter to focus on the various themes created to explain to the Earl what the Society does and how its work has made it a worthy recipient of the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service. We hope that you, too, will enjoy seeing and reading about some of the items which we showcased on this very special day.



Anthony Wakefield & Co
Protecting what's important to you

Chairman's Views

Receiving the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service (QAVS) was honour enough, but to be selected as one of the few organisations that would receive the award from a member of the Royal Family was fantastic additional recognition of the work done by SHS volunteers. I must confess that it was with some pride that I introduced the Earl of Wessex to our fifty or so volunteers that packed the Albury Old Saxon Church to give such a tremendous display of all the various activities that the Society supports. It is truly amazing how much the Society does in a year and this was brought home to me again when I prepared the Chairman's summary of our 2018-19 year for the AGM. It was a real challenge to make sure that I covered

everything that we had done – including nearly 50 events – and to recognise all the hard work of our many enthusiastic supporters. No small wonder that our 2018-19 Annual Review records that 8,779 volunteer hours were achieved in the year, equivalent to about 4.5 full time staff, and this is probably an underestimate!

The QAVS provides us with an excellent springboard from which to continue to build the Society. In September we helped with 12 walks for Guildford Walkfest and are participating in Farnham's Walking Festival during May 2020. We will support Surrey Wildlife Trust's Youth Engagement Day in 2020 and our partnership with the Arts and Crafts Movement is developing well. I am also delighted that Surrey Hills Arts have succeeded in raising £8,000 through a

crowdfunding initiative that the Society supported. This will enable the installation of a new sculptural bench above Newlands Corner as part of the Inspiring Views project.



Earl of Wessex with SHS Chairman, Gordon Jackson



Certificate presentation with Mary Huggins, Chairman of MVDC

Recognition by Mole Valley District Council

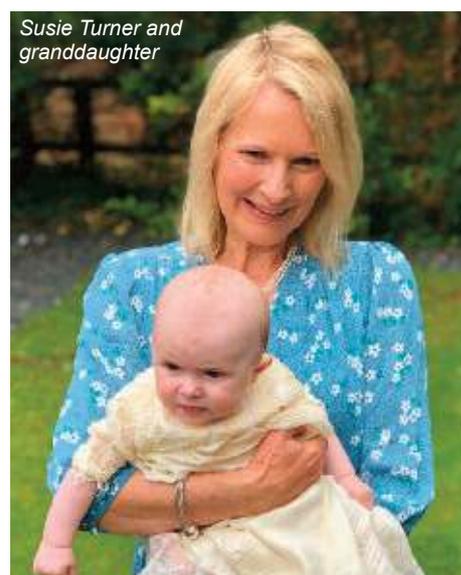
Following the announcement of our QAVS success, we were contacted by Mole Valley District Council (MVDC). They wished to add their congratulations and invited representatives from the Society to attend a full council meeting to give a brief presentation on our work. We, along with the nearby Patchworking Garden, were then presented with a certificate by Mary Huggins, Chairman of MVDC.

Volunteer Portrait – Susie Turner

Having spent over 20 years working in London and travelling extensively for an international newspaper, I always dreamt of moving to the countryside. Becoming self-employed and with the daily commute finally a distant memory, my husband and I decided upon a barn at the foot of Box Hill as our home. The Surrey Hills suited me perfectly; I lived as a child near the South Downs, and it enabled me to keep in close touch with my daughters and friends who live closer to London. Every morning when I take our dog, Poppy, across the fields and look up at Box Hill, I realise how lucky I am to live in such a beautiful area.

A few years ago, flicking through a copy of Surrey Life, I read an article by Chris Howard – that was my introduction to the Society.

I loved the walks and visits and always looked forward to seeing what was on offer. One such visit was to the Patchworking Garden. I had wondered what went on behind the wall in Pixham Lane Dorking and the visit was the time to find out. I was so captivated by the beautiful walled garden and its mission to bring positive change to people's lives through gardening that I became a volunteer. Having written an article about the visit, I subsequently became a member of the SHS newsletter committee, which I love as it enables me to indulge in two interests – writing and research. I cannot be more thrilled that both the Society and Patchworking Garden Project received the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service in 2019.



Susie Turner and granddaughter

Tales and Trails of the Tillingbourne Valley

Over the last three years, we have reported several times on various aspects of our first foray into the world of projects funded through the National Lottery. Although the development phase was completed back in 2018, the legacy stage is still going strong. The visit of the Earl was therefore a good opportunity to mount a display about the project and to explain the ongoing success of the Tales and Trails of the Tillingbourne Valley (TTTV).

Almost the first sight that greeted the Earl was a group of seven puppets. These had been created to represent the workers at different mills along the Tillingbourne valley during its heyday as one of the most industrialised rivers in the country. Whilst the puppets can normally be found on display in Shere Museum, they had been lent to us for the royal visit.

Standing alongside the puppets were the artist who designed them and sculpted their heads, the costume designer who made their period-style clothes and the project co-ordinator who undertook the historical research. The Earl, apparently, has an interest in history and archaeology so we clearly set off on the right foot with this



Chris Howard explains the TTTV project

display. He showed an obvious interest in the topic and chatted for several minutes with this group before our vice president, Chris Howard, was able to explain the other aspects of the project to him.

Chris particularly highlighted the work with local schools and the Yvonne Arnaud Youth Theatre which brought the topic to life for local schoolchildren. Towards the end of the royal visit, a pair of actors presented a playlet. Based on a bargee transporting a cargo of gunpowder along the Wey, it acted as an example of how the topic could be developed as a way of teaching and interacting with a youth audience. The play was also a trailer for a new project which we hope will extend the TTTV work into another one entitled Tales of the Wey.

A final aspect of the TTTV display which Chris explained to the Earl was the set of seven walks leaflets – one for each of the Tillingbourne villages. These had been developed by the SHS team and are used regularly by the Society as the basis of local walks. This topic created good linkage with the next display and group of volunteers which included a number of our walk leaders and map creators.



Creators of the TTTV puppets meet the Earl



Playlet by actors from GeeYou

The QAVS Presentation

Walks and Events

The core of our activities for SHS members is the extensive events programme which includes regular walks through different parts of the Surrey Hills. As a backdrop to this part of the tour, we had a display highlighting the wide range of visits and topics covered within the programme. It was not until we started to create this display that it became clear what a fascinating variety of locations, industries, properties and countryside areas we had visited in recent times. The biggest challenge was to select a cross section that would all fit within one display.



Some of our Walks volunteers and supporters

However, the volunteer group here were particularly selected because of their involvement with the walks element of our work. The group included walk leaders, backmarkers, a map-reading trainer and our own expert walk route developer / map designer (who created the routes and maps for the TTTV project). Also in the group was one of our regular walk leaders who was just back from walking up Kilimanjaro. That definitely provided an unusual introduction for the Earl and the whole group had a long and lively discussion about walking and the SHS walks in particular.

Newsletter and Communications

Much of the public awareness about the Society comes as a result of the work done by our PR and Newsletter teams. It was therefore fitting that we should introduce a number of these volunteers (and the newsletter sponsor) to the Earl. As the image shows, humour was much to the fore during the tour and it's fairly certain that one of the memories that the Earl will have taken away with him is that of the enjoyment and dedication shown by all the volunteers whom he met on the day.



The Earl meets our current and previous newsletter sponsors



Members of the Surrey Hills AONB team

Working with the AONB

Since the reason that the Society exists is to promote and enhance the Surrey Hills, it is natural that we need to have a good relationship with the AONB team and to support each other in our work. This is particularly true in relation to our communications activities, liaison on planning matters and mutual support on external events and projects. We were therefore pleased to be able to introduce the Earl to the AONB team. They explained what they do and how the Society has taken on many of the initiatives which their small team would have been unable to deliver.

A New Girlguiding Badge

One excellent example of working with the AONB Team is the recent development of a Girlguiding badge specifically aimed at getting young people out into the Surrey Hills. We have reported on the development of this in recent editions of our newsletter but it was a good opportunity for us to highlight the way that a volunteer idea can be converted into a really successful project.



Stella Cantor explains the Girlguiding project to the Earl

One of our volunteers, Stella Cantor, is a former Girlguiding Commissioner and still runs a local Rainbow group. She felt that by creating a work programme for all age groups, which would lead to a badge, we could encourage young people to explore the Surrey Hills – and also get their parents and friends interested too. Working with the AONB team on badge and worksheet design and with the agreement of the Girlguiding counties of Surrey East and West, our volunteer drove this project through and launched the badge early in 2019. It has been a great success with over 1,000 worksheets and badges already distributed. So popular has been this initiative that the Society is now looking at ways to extend it to other youth groups.

Surrey Hills Hare

Our mascot, Hilly the Surrey Hills Hare, was the result of our support to a community arts project in Haslemere during 2018. Hilly was sponsored and purchased by the Society as a way of raising our profile in the west of the county and as an important element of our displays at shows and external events.



The Surrey Hills hare and its artist, Charlotte Choi

Having been painted for us by Charlotte Choi who is one of our volunteers, Hilly has formed a very eye catching way of making our presence known and of getting the public – and particularly younger people – interested in us. Much of this success is down to the beautiful artwork on the hare which includes small cameo landscapes complete with the appropriate plants, animals, birds and insects. One of the great attractions of the hare is for the public to look for the various features and to enable us to explain why they are found in that environment. In the photo, our artist had just challenged the Earl to find the adder curled up underneath the heather in a heathland cameo. The Earl was clearly enjoying the task.

Our Volunteers

This Queen's Award for Voluntary Service was in recognition of all the high quality work undertaken by the active members of the Society. As such it was important to us that we include as many as possible of them within the royal visit and Award presentation. Whilst the selected images within this newsletter cannot capture everyone who was present, all of our volunteers were contributors to making the Society the success it has become and our congratulations go to all of them.



Some of our long-standing volunteers



The parkland around Albury Old Saxon Church



Friends of Albury Old Saxon Church

Friends of Albury Old Saxon Church

Much of the work of the Society is done in association with other organisations and, in this instance, the Award ceremony could not have taken place at Albury without the willing support of the Friends of Albury Old Saxon Church. Apart from helping us set up the space inside the church, they created flower arrangements, provided a bell-ringer, liaised with the Albury Estate for car parking, toilets and all our other infrastructure needs and even arranged with the Estate Manager to move some sheep within the parkland to create the right atmosphere for the royal visit. We are very grateful to them for all their help.

As part of the Earl's visit, the Friends introduced him to the delights of the Drummond Chapel and talked about their plans for its restoration/conservation. With the discovery of the Earl's interest in historic buildings and in particular the Anglo-Saxon period, this additional element of the visit was an evident success.



Volunteers relax after the Award celebration

Surrey Hills Symposium 2019 – Our Natural Health Service

It has been proven that green spaces can contribute to the prevention and treatment of physical and mental health conditions. From active pursuits to forest schools, the outdoors plays a big part in keeping minds and bodies healthy. Whether improving memory, fighting depression or lowering blood pressure – the outdoors is our Natural Health Service.

To examine this subject further a Surrey Hills Symposium took place at the end of November at the University of Surrey. It brought together Health Care professionals and academic researchers to look at the

benefits of landscape to society – from young people to healthy ageing. The event topic proved popular, with over 400 people booking to attend.

Professor Max Lu, President and Vice-Chancellor of the University of Surrey, commented: "This year's theme of 'Our Natural Health Service' is significant to everyone. It has been shown in measurable ways that spending time in a natural landscape benefits wellbeing. Gradually, the inter-reliance of people and nature is becoming an unarguable fact."

In the opening presentation, Dr William Bird



Presenters at the 2019 Symposium

(founder of 'Walking for Health') explained how getting people physically active not only improves health and wellbeing, but also saves public money and improves our environment. He explained how, in evolutionary terms, our bodies are still more aligned to being active hunter-gatherers even though most of us now remain seated for much of the day. This indoor, sedentary, lifestyle creates much of our poor mental and physical health and hence getting out into green space and increasing our activity is beneficial to our wellbeing.

Academic researchers Professor Caroline Scarles and Dr Birgitta Gatersleben presented their findings on 'Living Environments for Healthy Ageing' and 'Into the Wild: Restoring Young Minds in the Surrey Hills'. Their presentations can be viewed by visiting www.surreyhillssymposium.org



Walking for Health members with Dr William Bird and Dame Penelope Keith

New Surrey Hills AONB Management Plan launched

The new Surrey Hills AONB Management Plan, an important step in the conservation of the Surrey Hills AONB, has been officially launched.

The Plan has been adopted as a priority by Guildford Borough Council, Mole Valley District Council, Reigate and Banstead Borough Council, Tandridge District Council, Waverley Borough Council and Surrey County Council – all of which have a part of the AONB within their area. Effective conservation needs all of the local authorities to work together and requires a single Management Plan that sets out policies and proposals focused on conserving the special landscape character of the Surrey Hills.

The following long term vision statement sets the context and guides the Management Plan policies:

"The Surrey Hills AONB is recognized as a national asset in which its natural and cultural resources are managed in an

attractive landscape mosaic of farmland, woodland, heaths, downs and commons. It provides opportunities for business enterprise and for all to enjoy and appreciate

its natural beauty for their health and well-being".

The plan can be viewed and downloaded by visiting www.surreyhillboard.org



Launch of the new AONB Management Plan

Sponsor's View – The Year of the Mayflower

We have had some important anniversaries to celebrate in the past couple of years, but none will have as much impact on our Dorking economy as the 2020 commemoration of the voyage of the Mayflower in 1620.

Already local hotels and B&Bs are reporting record advance bookings from US citizens, keen to discover their links to the Mullins family, who emigrated from Dorking on the Mayflower to try their luck in colonising the New World.

William Mullins lived in a large house in West Street from 1612 until 1619, when he sold it to take his shoe and boot making business

to America. The ship finally set sail on 16th September 1620. William and most of his family died soon after the first settlement was established, but his daughter Priscilla survived and married the ship's cooper, John Auden. Many of their descendants will be coming here to visit the house and the town. Celebrations in Dorking commenced during the 2019 Heritage Open Days and will continue throughout 2020.

For more information visit hellodorking.com/celebrate-mayflower-400 and dorkingmuseum.org.uk.

Anthony Wakefield



Blue plaque outside Mullins house in Dorking

Planning Views

In the summer, the Government published planning guidance on 'Natural Environment'. It stresses that Local Plan policies and decisions on planning applications should ensure development enhances biodiversity. Indeed it promotes 'net gain' in planning which describes an approach to development that leaves the natural environment in a measurably better state than it was beforehand. Net gain is an umbrella term

for both biodiversity net gain and wider environmental gain.

Environmental net gain aims to reduce pressure on and achieve improvements in the wider concept of natural capital and ecosystems. The Surrey Hills is a valuable component of natural capital. Consequently, any development, including larger development near the AONB, should arguably compensate for any resultant environmental harm they cause. Beyond on site mitigation measures, this should

include developer contributions to landscape enhancement projects outside the sites. If this requirement is made clear at the Local Plan stage then the payment can be offset against the substantial increase in land value before the site is bought by a developer.

These are strong measures and reflect a growing environmental awareness and consideration of climate change impacts.

Clive Smith

Surrey Hills AONB Planning Adviser

Walking in Surrey

With such glorious scenery on our doorstep, it is not surprising that the Society has become increasingly involved in local walking festivals. Indeed, Society members are key in helping to organise the Guildford Walking Festival which takes place in September, but we also appreciate that there is far more to walking in Surrey (whether within the AONB or further afield) than just enjoying the views.

There are many organised and informal groups who can regularly be seen walking in the area and for many of them, exercise, fresh air, social interactions and friendship are important elements of the walk. For most, it is not about clocking up the miles but about enjoyment and a sense of wellbeing.

The Society's events programme has always included a number of walks and the educational elements are particularly popular. Having competent leaders who can explain to the group what it is they are seeing and often with a bit of local history has always added to the enjoyment.

With the theme of our recent Symposium being about the health and wellbeing which results from getting out into the countryside it was good to see the clear linkages to our

work. The keynote speaker, Dr William Bird, was the founder of Walking for Health and the Guildford group provide many regular walks in the area. The Walking Group based at Ash serve a similar function in their area and numerous other groups have been formed by organisations as diverse as

U3A and local parishes.

Why not make one of your 2020 resolutions to explore our beautiful countryside on a regular basis by joining one or more of these groups – along with the Society for its wonderful walks?



Walking for all ages in Surrey

Event Programme February 2020 – May 2020

Visit our website for more information and additional events.

Booking is essential – even for free ones. Bookings generally open about 6 weeks before each event. Non email users can get more information by sending a SAE to the address above.

Sunday 2 February

Explore Farnham  

A free guided walk around Farnham. Meet at the railway station, Approach Road, Farnham from 10.30am for an 11.00am start.

Saturday 8 February

Map Reading Course

Training and practice in map reading and simple navigation techniques to enable you to explore the Surrey Hills.

Thursday 13 February

The Surrey Copper Distillery

A private tour of this distillery, newly set up by the Smart family. Includes a tasting and a take away gift.

Sunday 23 February

Gatton Park – Snowdrops 

Stunning displays of snowdrops in this 'Capability' Brown parkland. 20% off for SHS members.

Thursday 27 February

Grayshott Pottery

A tour of this small independent pottery including refreshments in their café using crockery made in their kilns.

Sunday 1 March

Explore Newlands Corner  

A free guided walk around Newlands Corner. Meet in the car park at Drove Road, Guildford GU4 8SE from 10.30am for an 11.00am start.

Sunday 1 March

Gatton Park – Snowdrops 

Stunning displays of snowdrops in this 'Capability' Brown parkland. 2 for 1 for SHS members.

Tuesday 10 March

Prosperity in the Middle Ages – Guildford's wool trade

Local historian, Matthew Alexander, gives an illustrated talk about the history of Guildford's wool trade, followed by a short walk to sites connected with the industry in the middle ages. Followed by an optional pub lunch.

Thursday 19 March

Passionate about Glass

An exclusive demonstration by Adam Aaronson, who has been at the heart of British studio glass for nearly 40 years. Adam will create a piece for us. Refreshments will follow.

Sunday 22 March

Charity Walk along North Downs Way supporting the Mayor of Waverley's charities  

Join the Mayor of Waverley, Mary Forszewska, for an 11 mile sponsored walk along our national trail from Guildford to Farnham.

Tuesday 31 March

The influence of the Italian Renaissance on Arts and Crafts Gardens

A joint meeting with the Arts and Crafts Movement in Surrey. Illustrated talk by ACMS Acting Chairman, Carolyn Smith.

Sunday 5 April

Explore Hammonds Copse, Ewood  

A free, guided, easy 4½ mile walk around this pretty woodland area. Meet at The Surrey Oaks Pub, Newdigate RH5 5DZ from 10.30am for an 11.00am start.

Saturday 18 April

Dunsborough Park – Ripley

Take a walk to the River Wey and see Newark Priory on the opposite bank before returning to see the fabulous tulip display at Dunsborough Park. Optional refreshments at your own cost.

Wednesday 22 April

Clandon Wood Burial Ground

Simon Ferrar will talk about the ecology of this unique award winning natural burial ground and nature reserve followed by a talk by Sarah Jane Chimbwandira, Chief Executive of Surrey Wildlife Trust on biodiversity in the Surrey Hills and the challenges we face.

Sunday 3 May

Explore Bluebell Woods – Oxted  

A free guided walk around Staffhurst Wood famous for its bluebell displays. Meet at Staffhurst Wood TN8 6QF near Oxted from 10.30am for an 11.00am start.

Friday 15 May

Investec Music Festival   

As part of the festival we have organised a circular walk from Denbies to Ranmore Church where we will enjoy a short musical interlude.

Monday 25 May

Busbridge Lakes  

Mr and Mrs Douetil acquired the property in 1966. It is now a grade 2A Heritage garden renowned for its follies, grottoes and trees. The 40 acres of grounds including 3 lakes is a haven for many exotic waterbirds.

Dates for your diary

Investec International Music Festival, Concerts 7, 8, 14, 16 May 2020. See www.iimf.co.uk for more details

Farnham Walkfest, 17 May - 6 June 2020. More information at www.farnhamwalkingfestival.org



Dog friendly but kept on a short lead throughout the walk



Family Friendly



Signposting to third party events



Easy/flat



Moderate



Challenging



Our free walks on the first Sunday of the month are open to all, including non-members. Please book so we have a note of numbers and relevant contact details.

To join us go to www.surreyhillssociety.org or phone 07530 949302