



Chairman's View

Keeping Up to Date

This winter newsletter is later than we intended, but what a feast of goodies it contains. There are reports about events attended. The story about the acquisition of our new trailer and gazebo, of which I am very proud, and the places it has already been. Also there are ideas for Christmas presents and stocking fillers such as gift membership, notelets, shirts and fleeces, and a preview of next year's programme.

The newsletter is not the only way to keep up to date with your Society and events. Our website www.surreyhillssociety.org also carries the events programme, together with any extra events and changes. There is also a news page which covers any matters that we think might be of interest to you as well as links to other sites about planning, fairs, fetes or events in the Surrey Hills that we have been notified about.

The Society is only two and a half years old and we are still feeling our way. Any suggestions about what we should be doing, or not doing, or ideas as to how we should

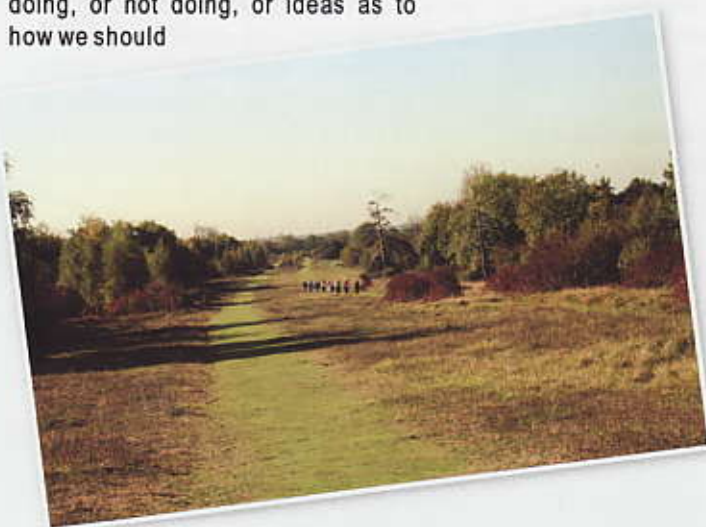
progress, are always welcome, as are any offers of help. Please contact me on chairman@surreyhillssociety.org I would be pleased to hear from you.

As your chairman I am an advisory member of the Surrey Hills AONB Board. They asked me to lead a working group to look at mountain biking in the Surrey Hills and the conflict with other users. The group now thinks that it would help if there were separate dedicated downhill trails for mountain bikers to take them off footpaths, where they are not meant to be anyway, and bridlepaths, where they are travelling fast downhill. What do you think? Should your Society help to try and transform this suggestion into reality?



I wish you all a very happy Christmas and look forward to meeting you in the New Year.

Neil Maltby
Chairman Surrey Hills Society



Our thanks to Chris Howard, Ken Bare, Diane Cooper, Jane Thomas, Katy Gower and other members and supporters who have kindly contributed photos towards this issue

A visit to Banstead Woods Countryside Day



What a treat to discover such a wonderfully, genuine country event, which I attended as a volunteer with the Surrey Hills Society on a beautiful sunny Sunday 12th September.

I witnessed wood cutters and turners, scouts making camps in the woods, horses demonstrating their logging duties, displays from many local societies including Surrey's Downlands Countryside Management Project, who organise the event each year. This, coupled with excellent displays of local produce, a Womens Institute tea and cake stall and Scouts hog roast stand, made for an excellent day out.

I thoroughly recommend this event to all countryside lovers. **Chris Howard**



Georgian Cricket

Cricket on the green – but not just any match! This special event, staged as part of the Heritage Weekend activities at Dorking, commemorated a famous cricketing picture in the Long Room at Lords. Cotmandene in Dorking became the venue for a re-enactment of a Georgian cricket match. Teams from Dorking and Effingham played to the old rules complete with underarm bowling, two stumps instead of the modern three and, possibly best of all, specially made

cricket bats which replicated those used at the time. Glorious weather gave an extra sparkle to the event which was also captured for posterity by a local artist.

The Surrey Hills Society gazebo was there, along with a number of volunteers to support the event and to promote our organisation. It was nice to see so many of our existing members dropping by to say hello and we also gained significant interest from others who had not yet joined us.

A significant component of the Society's work is promoting and conserving the special heritage of the Surrey Hills. Thus, it was especially appropriate that we should have been invited to participate in this Heritage Weekend event with the beautiful hillside backdrop around Dorking. **Ken Bare**



Making an Impact

We have recently taken delivery of a promotional trailer to help us make an impact when the Society attends events. This was a milestone in a process which took almost nine months from concept to delivery.

Last autumn, our Chairman (Neil Maltby) proposed that we purchase a trailer such as he had seen used by other Countryside charities. The management committee thought that the idea was interesting but where would a young society with limited funds find sufficient money to pay for it and could the amount be justified if we raided our reserves. Neil had an answer to that one! He had discovered that partial funding might be available through the Surrey Hills LEADER programme.

As it says on the LEADER website: Rural businesses such as farmers and growers, retailers, tourism, rural enterprises, foresters, producers and community groups may apply for funding to develop projects which improve the financial and environmental performance of rural communities and businesses without damaging the countryside.

The Society investigated further and discovered that, if our application were successful, a large percentage of the capital costs could be covered by a grant – so the hard work began.

We identified what we wanted and obtained quotes from various trailer suppliers. We also thought about branding for the outside of the trailer so that we could promote the Society whilst on the road. Perhaps most importantly, we had long discussions and lots of design ideas leading to the creation of the display which would be seen by visitors when we set the trailer up at events. All these had to be thought through before we could apply for a grant so that detailed costs were available.

LEADER came up trumps and our application was successful! Design and manufacture of the trailer was awarded to Blackburn Trailers of Birdham (near Chichester). Design work for the branding and all the internal graphics was undertaken by Squiggle Design of Dorking and lots of behind the scenes work was undertaken by committee members to bring everything together successfully.

After a long (and at times nerve-wracking) gestation period, we were informed that our trailer was ready for collection. Neil agreed to tow it back to Surrey for us and we oversaw the installation of the internal graphics once the trailer had arrived. Additional fit-out has taken place so that we now have two internal walls with space for temporary displays in addition to the fixed graphics and AONB map.

Committee members had a sneak preview and a representative of the Surrey Hills LEADER programme visited and signed off the grant paperwork during August. So now to start using the trailer and raising the profile of the Surrey Hills Society.

During the autumn, we have already made good use of the trailer with visits to Guildford Farmers Market (see separate article), Banstead Countryside Day, Loseley Ploughing Match & Country Fair, Le Trec event from Newlands Corner, Surrey Hills Wood Fair and our AGM at Gatton Hall. We hope that you will look out for us whenever you visit local events. Come over to say "hello" and take a look at the trailer to see how we are working to promote the AONB and membership of The Surrey Hills Society.



The funding is being made available through the Rural Development Programme for England, which is partly funded by Defra and the European Union, and is managed by SEEDA in the south east.

Society Notelets

Often, one wants to send a brief note to say "Thank You", provide some brief information or just to keep in touch – and sometimes an e-mail or text is just too impersonal. We now have the ideal solution for you, whilst allowing you to support your Society at the same time.

Surrey Hills Society Notelets are now available for you to purchase in aid of Society funds. Each pack consists of eight notelets, each with a different view of the Surrey Hills AONB. Complete with envelopes and in a transparent wrapper these will also make the perfect gift.

We will be selling these Notelets at all our events and from our trailer and gazebo when we go out and promote the Society around the county. They will also be available from the Tourist Information Office in Guildford. The price per pack of eight Notelets is just £4 from any of these sales points.

We realise that not everyone can get to these locations so you will also be able to purchase the Notelets by sending a cheque for £5 (includes postage and packing) to The Surrey Hills Society at Warren Farm Barns, Headley Lane, Mickleham, Dorking, Surrey, RH5 6DG.

Keeping in touch, providing that little gift, or just to have "in case" – buy some SHS Notelets.

£4
FROM



Surrey Hills Dinner

Wotton House (first mentioned in the Domesday book), the home of 17th century diarist John Evelyn (among other famous Evelyns!) hosted the 2nd annual dinner on Saturday 17th July 2010 and attended by 65 members. A drinks reception was held in the beautiful marble vaulted room which was originally designed as a chapel but was never consecrated. Here Jane Garrett, author of the recently published "Portrait of the Surrey Hills" gave a short talk on how she came to write the book and also did some book signings.

At the dinner itself we were entertained by local musicians Reed Maxfield, who not only sang some locally influenced songs but also played on a beautiful instrument called a Bowed Psaltery, locally crafted from wood from the Denbies estate.



Orchid Walk on Box Hill

Society members are obviously a hardy bunch of people! On an early June day, with heavy drizzle falling and worse rain forecast, an enthusiastic group of ten gathered at the top of Box Hill for a walk to see the local orchids. As our guide we had Peter Creasey - formerly Head Warden for Box Hill - who told us that the orchids were late blooming this year so that there were not many to be seen yet. Did we want to postpone the walk for a week or, because of the weather, abandon the event? "Let's do it anyway" was the unanimous response. Two and a half hours later, everyone was really glad that they had taken part. The weather may have dampened clothes but it certainly didn't dampen the enthusiasm of our guide or of the participants. What did we see and learn? Lots!!!

We learned about the relationships between specific insects and the orchids - incredible examples of the continued existence of the plant being dependent of a single variety of insect.

From start to finish this became a memorable morning- for instance, did you know that the Box tree (after which the hill is named) was one of the last species to spread from Europe to England before the English Channel separated us from the continent? But that, as they say, is the subject of another walk!!!



Planning in the Surrey Hills

Since March 2009 the Surrey Hills Board has employed a planning adviser two days a week. Clive Smith was previously Head of Planning at Mole Valley District Council until he retired.

The planning authorities covering the Surrey Hills consult him on the more significant planning applications in the AONB. The decision to consult him lies with officers of the Council Planning Departments. He also offers AONB advice on proposed planning policies affecting the Surrey Hills. His aim is to raise the profile of the AONB so that it is fully appreciated by those making planning decisions.

He is conscious that the nature of planning means that not everyone will accept his views on planning applications. He does not always object but tries to take a balanced view. He has to set out justified planning reasons to substantiate an objection. They may include referral to relevant policies in the Surrey Hills AONB Management Plan 2009 - 2014 that has been formally adopted by each of the Councils. In this way it is hoped that greater weight will be given by the decision makers to AONB objections when they are lodged. Unless the application is relatively straight forward from the AONB aspect he will also usually explain why no AONB objection has been submitted. There can be cases where it would be unreasonable to object.

He is concerned about the vulnerability of the Surrey Hills, especially over time, as it would not take much further development to undermine its distinctive beauty for future generations. The area is subject to substantial and varied development pressures. There can be many different very special circumstances promoted in support of development proposals. They need to be critically assessed. Whilst a proposed development might be well screened, that is no reason in itself for it to be permitted. That argument could be repeated too often and trees do not last forever. A long-term view needs to be taken especially as because the cumulative effect of developments in the Surrey Hills would be so harmful.

It is believed that this relatively new specialised role of the Surrey Hills Office will prove to be very much in the public interest, especially for future generations.

For further information on planning in the Surrey Hills you can contact Clive Smith, Planning Adviser on 01372 220653 or email clive.smith@surreycc.gov.uk.



Gift Membership

Whether or not you are already a Society member, if you are short on ideas for presents or wish to mark a special occasion, the Society might be able to help.

We provide Gift Memberships, which allow you to gift a year's subscription to the Surrey Hills Society to friends, family, work colleagues, etc.

Prices are the same as standard annual subscriptions - £10 for single membership or £15 for family membership – but in addition, you receive a smart gift card to which you can add your own personal message.

To buy your Gift Memberships now, please visit our website: www.surreyhillssociety.org where you can download a request form, call us on 01372 220647 or write to us at:
The Surrey Hills Society, Warren Farm Barns, Headley Lane, Mickleham, Dorking, Surrey, RH5 6DG

Hindhead Revisited

For many years, if one mentioned Hindhead to people, the immediate thought was that of delays on the A3 – possibly followed by mention of the Devils Punch Bowl. Plans to improve the traffic situation and return this important habitat to nature existed for a long time and finally started to become reality a few years ago when work began on the Hindhead Tunnel.

For the last three years, the Society has hosted a walk around the Hindhead heathlands, including Gibbet Hill. This year, the group was joined by a local National Trust



was a detour to the viewing platforms which were erected at either end of the tunnel construction works. Each year, progress in the work has been very evident. This time, the group were able to see the newly installed Miss James Bridge. This important feature is a "green bridge" which, it is hoped, will create a wildlife corridor across the A3.

After a refreshment interval, the tour reconvened at the construction site Visitors Centre, where the lead contractor company has a comprehensive display of various sections of the construction project and also a model of what the area will look like once the project is completed. Next year, the route is scheduled to open for traffic, so this visit really was a piece of history. **Peter Hattersley**



warden who provided information about the future works they are planning to carry out once the areas of heath either side of the existing A3 are reunited. Another highlight

A Maiden Outing

On the first Tuesday of every month Guildford High Street becomes the home of a bustling Farmers Market. In September, we were fortunate enough to be allowed to take our promotional trailer along and talk to the additional shoppers, tourists, local workers and others that the market attracts.

This was the maiden outing of the trailer so we were pleased to see that the morning started out mild and dry. What a relief following our 2009 attendance with a gazebo. On that occasion, heavy rain turned the High Street into a river and left our volunteers rather wet! This time, we had fine weather until lunchtime when – yes, you've guessed – the heavens opened. However, the trailer really came into its' own then. The canopy protected our table of leaflets, volunteers and others were able to stay dry inside, and the trailer proved itself resilient to bad weather. Apart from this brief downpour when, naturally, all our potential customers headed for shelter, we had quite a steady level of interest in the Society and the AONB throughout the day.

A significant part of our promotional work is to raise awareness of the Surrey Hills AONB. Guildford High Street is a good venue for this since it draws in people from a wide area and many of them haven't appreciated the extent of the area and the variety of landscapes, habitats and places of interest to be found therein. As a bonus, we hope to gain a number of additional Society members from this and other events where we take the trailer or gazebo. By doing so, we can grow the Society to help us extend the members social programme and enhance public awareness of the Surrey Hills AONB.



Keep Warm – Look Smart – Support Your Society

This season, we purchased a number of polo shirts and fleeces embroidered with the Society logo for our volunteers to wear when attending shows and events. Since then, we have had a steady trickle of members (not just volunteers) asking if they could buy them. We are now able to offer the entire membership the opportunity to purchase their own fleece or polo shirt. The Polo shirts are white and are made of a high quality blend of 65% polyester / 35% cotton. They are available in a range of sizes (S, M, L & XL) and have the logo embroidered on the left breast. Cost: £15.00

Our fleeces come in two styles – unisex and ladies – and are a soft grey colour. We noted that the unisex fleeces were rather large for our smaller lady members so we have sourced a similar colour fleece with a shaped fit. Ladies should note from the table that the sizing is very different to that of the unisex items and that the shaped fleeces are a snug fit. Both styles of fleece are made from 100% polyester and are embroidered with the Society logo on the left breast.

Unisex Fleece : Size S M L XL / Chest Size 36/38 40 42 44 Cost: £24.00

Ladies Shaped Fleece : Size XS S M / Ladies Size 8 10 12 / Chest 30/32 32/34 34/36 Cost : £24.00 These prices include vat and postage

To obtain your items, please send details of your order together with a cheque made payable to The Surrey Hills Society. Orders should be addressed to The Surrey Hills Society, Warren Farm Barns, Headley Lane, Mickleham, Dorking, Surrey, RH5 6DG

Please note that our supplier has a minimum order policy so there may be some delay to allow us to bulk individual orders together.



Keeping Surrey Moving in the Snow



On Tuesday 30th November 2010 it started to snow in Surrey falling up until Saturday 4th December. In total residents saw up to 10 inches of snow across the county. Sixteen Ringway gritters were immediately sent out from the Witley, Bagshot and Mewsey Depot's covering the west of the county, salting all the primary and secondary routes in order to keep Surrey moving. Keeping Britain's roads and footways clear of ice and snow in the winter months is vital for both the safe passage of the public and the country's economy.

Whilst teams were out tackling the roads, operatives were also working on clearing footpaths with hand gritters on the Thursday and Friday, with extra operatives working over the weekend to ensure the footpaths were clear before schools started back on the Monday.

Ringway operatives worked around the clock, up to 24 hours non stop dealing with emergency situations, for example one operative, Andy Jacques drove a gritter to an emergency situation where an ambulance could not get from the back road onto to A3, on board with a terminally ill patient. The ambulance made its way to the Royal Surrey Hospital and the road was cleared preventing any further hold ups.

The winter maintenance period began on 22nd October and to date we have used 2,300 tonnes of salt. From the severe snow last week we have used (from 30th November) to date 1,725 tonnes of salt.

Ringway's purpose is to improve the nation's transport network by delivering quality products, services and safety for road users and the environment.



Events

A wide variety of events are on offer for Society members. Please book promptly to avoid disappointment, but please also note that we have now introduced a system where bookings for popular events cannot be before a particular date defined for each event (generally eight weeks before the event). These details are on the website.

Friday 4 February

Betchworth Castle: a pile of old stones or a monument worth saving?
Talk at Buckland Reading Room by Martin Higgins

Sunday 6 March

Tour of Limpsfield Common Air Raid Shelters

Saturday 26 March

A Day in the Country hosted by Brockham Parish Council

Tuesday 12 April

The Pilgrims' Way - Mediaeval Holiday Route or Victorian invention?
Talk at Albury Village Hall by Elyot Turner

Saturday 16 April

9.30 am Henley Fort ~ 12.30 Box Hill Fort (lunch) ~ 2.30 Reigate Fort - all with guided tours
Independent travel arrangements

Thurs 28 April

Chairman's Day - Waverley area Spring
Spring Walk (8 miles) includes Mickleham Downs, White Hill, Juniper Top and Box Hill with magnificent hilltop views of the Weald and the South Downs and particularly overlooking the town of Dorking.

Friday 6 May

Guided visit of Feldmore House by the Head Teacher of Belmont School (Arts and Crafts)

Saturday 7 May

Discovering Trees and Shrubs at The Sheepsteas with a plant identification specialist

Friday 20 May

Surrey Hills Cookery School day

Sunday 22 May

Family Ramble for all, including trampers and push chairs Bocketts Farm to Norbury Park 3 to 4 miles, including break for optional BYO picnic.

Saturday 4 June

Exclusive opening for members - Busbridge Lakes, Exotic Waterbirds and Grade 2 Heritage gardens

Saturday 11 June

A Day in Guildford - including tour by the Master of Abbot's hospital (400th anniversary exhibition)

Tuesday 14 June

Box Hill Butterflies - talk in Box Hill Education Centre followed by guided walk

Saturday 16 July

A Nostalgic Victorian Experience Aboard 'IONA'. Tickets £12 per person including cream tea. Travel the Victorian Way along this unspoilt waterway in Surrey as generations of boatmen before you. Our journey on the narrow boat 'IONA', pulled by one of the Godalming Packetboat heavy horses, traverses both river and canal and passes through a lock

July/August

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

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.

Tuesday 16 Aug

Hindhead A3 update visit

Sunday 4 September

Stepping into Newdigate's Socialist Past. A two-hours 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

A tasting of wines from Surrey vineyards - Albury

Autumn

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.

October

AGM and Members' Day

October

Tour of Reigate Caves

November

Annual Formal Dinner

Guided walk by either Land Manager of Hurtwood Control or Forestry Commission Officer on the different aspects of woodland management.

Founder Member Diane Cooper

Back in October 2007, I offered to go along and help at the inaugural event of the Society held at Denbies in Dorking and the idea of the Surrey Hills Society was born. Many people offered help in many different ways that evening and it seemed a good idea to me to volunteer to help on the PR sub committee that they proposed to set up.

I'm already fairly well connected with the Surrey Hills Partnership as I've been working for Surrey County Council's Countryside team as a Promotions and PR Officer for the past eight years and have developed a healthy interest in the great outdoors and some knowledge of what Surrey's diverse countryside has to offer. So getting involved in a Society that aims to raise awareness and protect the Surrey Hills for future generations fits in very well with my work and leisure time interests. A small team of us meet on a fairly regular basis to make sure we are aware of any PR opportunities and to discuss the content and production of this newsletter as well as other promotional items for which we can find funding. I try and get along to a few of the increasing number of SHS events that are organised and help occasionally at the various country fairs and farmers markets around the county. I'm finding that there are more and more people who know of the Society now and that so many people are really inspired by the beautiful countryside we're lucky to call home. Diane Cooper

