

Surrey Hills Society **views**



If you go down to the woods...
See page 6

The Famous Gardener of the Surrey Hills



Munstead Wood - the former home of Gertrude Jekyll

During April the Society was privileged to be able to visit Munstead Wood, between Godalming and Bramley, by kind permission of the present owners, Sir Robert and Lady Clark. The ten acres of restored gardens retain much of the genius of the original designer and original owner, Gertrude Jekyll.

Gertrude Jekyll (1843 - 1932) created over 400 gardens in the UK, Europe and America and she continues to influence garden design to this day. Born in Bramley in Surrey, Munstead Wood

became her home. Her influence is seen across the Surrey Hills, often in partnership with the famous arts and craft architect, Edwin Lutyens.

Not a year goes by without the Surrey Hills Society featuring at least one of her gardens. We are grateful to the private owners who very kindly open their homes so the Society can enjoy one of the Surrey Hills' most famous resident's work. Indeed, Munstead Wood no longer participates in the National Garden Scheme so the Society was particularly

See the winning images from our photo competition on page 4.



Chilworth Manor



Loseley Park

fortunate for the opportunity of an exclusive visit.

Other gardens we have visited include Loseley Park and Chilworth Manor, where Gertrude Jekyll's work can be seen.

Our thanks to May Gurney for providing graphic design and printing of our newsletters. Thanks to Andrew Wright and Sean Harrison for their articles plus Society members for their on-going contributions and their photos.

Chairman's View



I recently met our administrator, June Robinson on a beautiful sunny spring lunchtime at Denbies in Dorking. I travelled along the A25 past beautiful rolling green hills and picturesque churches and cottages that would make any American weak at the knees. We sat in the lovely restaurant looking out over the stunning vines surrounding us and both commented on how lucky we were to live in such a beautiful county.

This is why we are both passionate supporters of the Surrey Hills Society. Situated so close to London does makes

this landscape vulnerable to the pressures of development and we are grateful to the visionaries who designated this area as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty after World War II. We are also both constantly amazed by the new information we learn at every event or talk we attend and enjoy the fascinating people we meet through this Society.

I am delighted to introduce May Gurney, Surrey County Council new highways contractor, as the new sponsor of our newsletter. We are so pleased to be working with them and look forward to future collaboration.

We are very grateful to all our sponsors and also the many parish councils that support us by offering rooms, or events or information for us to use. I am also grateful to the many volunteers who kindly volunteer to attend events, like the County Show, with us to attract new members and promote our work as well as those that come every week to volunteer in the office at Box Hill. Thank you to all of you.

One of our original volunteers, Mark Richards (pictured here), has recently stood down as a member of the management committee. Our President, Neil Maltby, said of him "Mark has been a valuable founder member of the Charity since March 2008.

As a National Trust ranger, he has been able to give us advice in organising events and has a knowledge of issues relating to land management.

As a local resident in the Surrey Hills, he is passionate about protecting and enhancing the AONB and encouraging interest and visits to the area. As a young farmer and son in law to a farming family, he understands the challenges of working and farming in the Surrey Hills. Mark's input and enthusiasm will be missed at the Management committee meetings. I am extremely grateful for all he has done for us and send him and his wife, Amanda, our very best wishes and thanks."

I hope you really enjoy the season we have planned and I look forward to seeing you at one of our many events.

Chris Howard
Chairman



Launch of updated walks leaflets

During 2012, the Society was approached by Toyota GB with an invitation to submit details of a project which could be voted for by their employees, leading to financial support.

At the same time we were investigating how to pay for the updating and republishing of the suite of walks covering Tilford, Churt and Frensham. We suggested this topic and were awarded funds which, together with a second grant from the Surrey Hills Sustainable Development Fund, allowed us to undertake the work.

This spring, the new leaflets were delivered from the printers. We decided

that it would be appropriate to launch them by holding a display at the Toyota GB offices so that their staff had first view of the work that they had voted for. We took along our display boards, the walks leaflets and newsletters, which were set up in a prominent area for over a week.

There was significant interest and numerous copies were taken away. If you would like to obtain your own copies, come along to one of our member events or visit our trailer and gazebo at one of the events which we will be attending throughout the season.

Once again, a big "Thank You" to Toyota GB.



Update from the AONB office

Planning update

Out goes over 1000 pages of Government planning statements to guide planning decisions and in comes just over 50 pages of new Government planning policy. All decisions on planning applications and local planning policies will now have to follow this new National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

The draft NPPF was much criticised for being too pro-development and for giving insufficient importance to environmental issues. The Surrey Hills Board submitted its own views to the Government on the draft document.

The final document is more balanced and it does now give greater recognition to environmental interests. Nevertheless, the need to permit developments that are in the national and local economic interests still features very strongly throughout the document.

The "presumption in favour of sustainable development" remains as before but the meaning of "sustainable development" is defined to a greater extent. In practice, further clarification will be determined by Appeal Inspectors and in the courts.

So what does all this mean for the future of the Surrey Hills? Government policy generally remains the same as for many years before. Government policy is that "great weight should be given to conserving landscape and scenic beauty". Major development in an AONB can be permitted in exceptional circumstances and where it is in the public interest.

It can also be argued that the Area of Great Landscape Value (AGLV), being a local landscape designation in Surrey bordering the AONB, is covered by the document's reference to "valued landscapes" that should be protected and enhanced. But they do not have the highest status of landscape and scenic protection as do AONBs. A Surrey Hills AONB boundary is therefore much needed especially as much of the AGLV has the same characteristics as the AONB.

We will see how Surrey planning authorities and Appeal Inspectors interpret this important planning document over the next few years and the weight they give in practice to protecting the Surrey Hills.

Clive Smith
Surrey Hills Planning Adviser

Environment Minister gets a preview of the Olympic venue

Richard Benyon MP officially opened the new National Trust Adventure Play Trail on the top of Box Hill in late March, before being shown and told how spectators will be accommodated. He said: "it is inspiring and uplifting to see that the National Trust is not only encouraging children to enjoy the countryside but encouraging them to learn"



L to R Dan Webb, Chris White, Richard Benyon and Michael Sydney

He also went to Denbies Wine Estate where the Surrey Hills, in partnership with Denbies, is organising a Road Race Festival over 28 and 29 July to showcase the landscape and food of Surrey to the thousands of cycling enthusiasts expected to converge on the Dorking area to watch the races. The festival is an official live site for the road race and visitors will be able to watch events unfold on a large screen sited there. Entry is free – open 8am to 7pm on 28 July and 8am to 5pm on 29 July.

A new chapter begins for Hindhead, Surrey's 'Little Switzerland'

Hindhead lived up to its nickname, 'Little Switzerland' during February for the start of a new chapter in the life of the village. Members of the Hindhead Together partnership braved snow and ice to gather at the Devil's Punchbowl Hotel for their final meeting when the Highways Agency handed the former trunk road bottleneck back to the community 'de-trunked' and re-landscaped as the centre of the village. Chairman Catherine Graham-Harrison of Natural England declared that overall, the project had been an outstanding achievement.



Members of Hindhead Together Partnership

Members inspected the crossroads, now converted into mini-roundabouts, and admired the snowy, lorry-free sweep of the old A3 round the Punchbowl from the

viewpoint of the Sailor's Stone - all now returned to nature. They observed a minute's silence to appreciate the tranquility that has been restored to this area and reunification of the Hindhead commons and the Devil's Punchbowl Special Protection Area.

Guest of honour, Paul Christensen, Chairman of Natural England declared "this project is a blueprint for the kind of major infrastructure development which should be used all around the country"

Photo Competition Results

1ST



A big thank you to everyone who entered the photo competition announced in the previous edition of our newsletter. There were nearly 50 entries covering a whole range of aspects of the Surrey Hills. We were very fortunate to have the services of a member of Dorking Camera Club to act as an independent judge and his comments on the overall quality of the pictures was very positive.

After a thorough review of the entries, three pictures were selected as the winners. The results are:

- 1st - Brian Smith from Chaldon**
(Inglis Memorial in the Snow, Colley Hill)
2nd - Ian Stronge from Reigate
(Bytton Hill, Mickleham)
3rd - Juliet Eberle from Dorking
(Woodland Fungi)

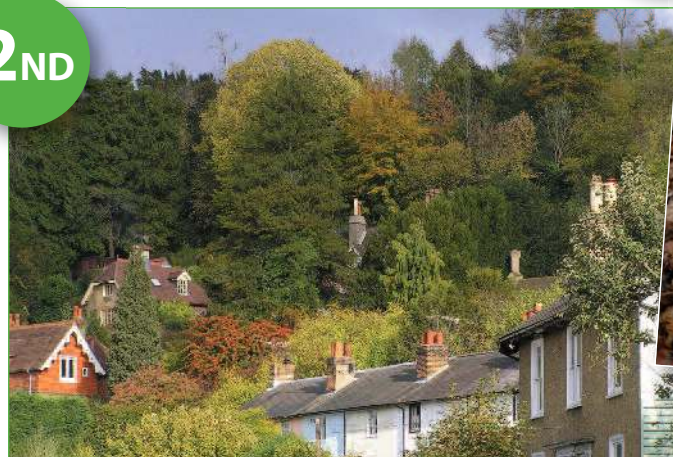
Congratulations to all three of you.

Greyfriar's Vineyard has kindly sponsored the prizes for this competition with each of the winners receiving a bottle of Greyfriar's Vineyard Cardinal's Choice 2005 sparkling wine.

We are currently considering whether we can display some of the images on our website but in the meantime, you can see a large selection of the entries in our promotional trailer. It will be at Ashted Village Day on 9 June and thereafter at shows across the area throughout the summer. Why not come and visit us at one of these events.

Ken Bare

3RD



Book Review

'On Your Bike - In and around the Surrey Hills'



Society member, cycling enthusiast and Guildford resident, Mark La Pensee has sent us in a review of this book, it's widely available in local bookshops or from Amazon and is priced at £8.99.

"I have now cycled two of the routes in the book - firstly around Puttenham Common (no. 5) and secondly around Bramley into Guildford along the River Wey (no. 6). In my opinion, they are both easy access and open to family groups, although at 17 and 13 miles respectively, could be considered quite long for young cyclists. Neither of the trails was technically challenging though and I would recommend them as a really fun and relaxing family day out.

They are both circular routes with easy to follow route descriptions. Both of them are a combination of quiet country roads and 'off road' routes.

By 'off road' I mean towpath

standard of surface, in fact quite a few of the routes follow the very picturesque River Wey. No major climbs to contend with so an easy leisurely pace can be maintained. The scenery is stunning and the trails take in many points across the Surrey Hills.

Some of the routes are accessible from town centres, so it's possible to leave the car at home and have a day out on your bike. Overall I would thoroughly recommend the book and look forward to trying out some of the other trails.

Yours, a Guildford cyclist..."

The Olympics come out of Town

As we get ever closer to the Olympics and with the spotlight shining on our county in the first few days, read on for information on protection measures being taken on Box Hill by the National Trust.



Richard Benyon, Environment Minister and Adam Wallace, Natural England

As you will all know by now, Surrey is a major part of the Olympic cycling road race with Box Hill at its heart. Box Hill is designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest, (SSSI), and a Special Area of Conservation, (SAC). This means it is amongst the most protected habitats in the UK and Europe for the rare and diverse species that live here. These designations mean you have to get permission before you do anything that has the potential to alter or damage them. So even though the National Trust are the landowners with conservation objectives, we still need to seek permission from Natural England to ensure the work we propose has no negative effect. In the case of the road cycling race, the trampling by spectators has been one of our biggest concerns. London Organising Committee of the Olympic Games (LOCOG) commissioned an intensive nature survey of the Zig Zag valley throughout 2011 to provide us with a snapshot of all the species present, and has improved our understanding and management of the site.

As you walk, cycle or drive up that stunning Zig Zag valley most people just see grass, bushes and trees. You might wonder what harm it would do to stand on that grass, after all, this is a once in a lifetime opportunity to see the Olympics on home soil. The thing is, this grass is no ordinary turf, this grass is chalk downland. If you ever get the chance, stop and check out a square metre of

chalk downland. You don't need to be a botanist to see the many different shapes of leaves that make up the multitude of different plant species. In the summer, many of these plants produce the most amazing flowers, including many rare orchids. In turn some of our rarest invertebrates

live on these plants, including some stunning butterflies. The grasses are like miniature tall trees, and in the same way birds roost in the tall trees for protection, some insects and beetles roost in the tall grasses. The Small Blue butterfly is a good example. It is incredibly rare and struggling for survival on many sites. Its needs are very specific in terms of food plant, tall grasses, short areas etc.

LOCOG have paid for lots of bushes and trees to be cut back as they were encroaching onto the species rich grasslands. For the duration of the race spectators will be able to stand on the patches of shaded out ground without doing any damage. In years to come that bare ground will be re-colonised by the chalk downland and will support many rare plants and insects. The same principal goes for the giant Olympic rings that are planned for the Box Hill viewpoint. We have long wanted to widen the views for visitors to enjoy, and by positioning the rings where bushes and trees once stood means we have achieved this.

But by far, the one single species that has had the greatest influence our planning and management of the site has been the dormouse. This impossibly cute little mammal is afforded high levels of protection due to its scarcity. It hibernates on the ground at the base of trees and bushes in perfectly made nests of moss about the size of a tennis ball. Before anything was cut down an ecologist had to carry out a fingertip search for

dormouse nests. Several were found and these areas were cordoned off and protected. Once they wake up from hibernation the dormouse mainly travels through tree branches. In some places the branches from trees on opposite sides of the road touched.

These were protected to save the aerial walkways for the dormouse to travel along. Dormouse boxes have been made from off-cuts from the Olympic Park by school children at Box Hill School.

With just months to go until the big event itself, I can honestly say that everything happening on Box Hill should have a positive outcome for nature conservation.



Dormouse courtesy of Surrey Wildlife Trust

The funding for ongoing surveys will enable us to assess exactly what that impact has been during the next few years.

This project is a microcosm of my 20 year career with the National Trust; giving people a nice time in the countryside whilst protecting landscapes, habitats and species. My fundamental opinion relating to that often used phrase 'access versus conservation' is unchanged. Access is not in opposition to conservation and they should be married so that one supports the other.

Andrew Wright, National Trust
Countryside Manager for the Surrey Hills East

Meet the new Surrey Hills Woodland Adviser



Sean Harrison has recently been employed as the Surrey Hills Woodland Adviser. He will be working with landowners, farmers and contractors to bring neglected woods across Surrey back

into management for timber, wood fuel, conservation and biodiversity. The role has been joint-funded by the Forestry Commission, The Woodland Trust, The Sylva Foundation and The Surrey Hills AONB. He says,

"Most of my working life I have been involved in countryside management of some sort and for over 15 years I was the ranger for the Sheepleas at West Horsley, Shere Woodlands (which included Combe Bottom, West Hanger, Netley Woods and Francis Corner) and the Brockham Lime Works.

In 2006 I became Surrey Wildlife Trust's Tree Safety Officer. This was a broad role concerned with the management of the tree stock adjacent to roads, buildings, railways and anywhere else where there could be a safety issue.

I left in 2010 to set up my own business as a consultant arboriculturalist, specialising in tree safety but by chance I saw the role of Woodland Adviser advertised. I was immediately drawn to its wide remit of not only being an adviser to woodland owners but also engaging with local contractors and encouraging woodland management by the uptake of wood products locally.

My key task is to identify those areas of unmanaged ancient woodland sites, within the AONB, that are unknown to all my funding bodies. This will be achieved by using digital maps, online searches and good old-fashioned detective work. Once I've found the woodlands within my target area the next thing is to find the

owners, approach them and offer to provide the appropriate site management advice. This may include assessment of remnant biological and archaeological features, current and favoured site conditions as well as any opportunities for income generation.

I will discuss the objectives of the owner and can produce a forest plan. This does not commit the owner to undertake works but does help to focus the mind, in terms of long-term site objectives. Also, because I work closely with the Forestry Commission and the Woodland Trust, I can help with the strategic targeting of grants to assist with management of sites within the Surrey Hills area."

If you have woodland within the Surrey Hills AONB, or know of anyone that you feel could benefit from a little help, then please do contact me on:

T: 01372 220651

E: sean.harrison@surreycc.gov.uk

If you go down to the woods today...

...you might see a horse dragging tree trunks out of the woodland. Horse logging is an important and thriving aspect of woodland management. Whilst clear felling and using mechanical equipment to remove timber is the most cost effective way of dealing with large sections of managed woodland, it has drawbacks. Apart from the noise, tractors and heavy equipment can cause significant damage and rutting to the surface and are consequently not particularly suitable where a fragile environment or nearby accommodation are involved. When selective felling is required, mechanised methods become even more of a problem - often with the need to fell additional trees just to provide access.

These difficult situations are where horse logging comes into its own - as was shown in a recent demonstration on Ranmore. The area has lots of bluebells, is in the heart of a peaceful area and selective felling has taken place with a need to get the trunks to a main track which is accessible to road vehicles. Dan Brown and his Suffolk Punch were hard at work dragging out the timber and



stacking it at the trackside. His sure-footed horse has been doing this for almost 18 years and only needs gentle direction from Dan. The horse has learned how to find its own way through the terrain, knows when to accelerate to get up gradients and, generally, how to do the job in the most effective way. It was a pleasure just to stand and watch the team at work.

Members of the public who were out walking were stopping to watch and to talk to Dan. He is always happy to stop and discuss woodland management and

the benefits of horse logging. With more Surrey woodland being brought back into management, horse logging can play an important role in protecting the landscape whilst allowing the timber to be used commercially.

 **Surrey Hills
Wood Fair 2012**

Note for your diary: this years Wood fair is at Birtley House, Bramley. Saturday 6 and Sunday 7 October.

Founder member Graham Butler



Having been brought up in East Surrey, I've since spent many years working out of the county but have always been drawn to come back and spend much of my leisure time in and around the Surrey Hills.

My main love is walking which developed in the late 60s with membership of the Ramblers and many trips from central London to walk in the whole of the South East and beyond. Many Sundays were spent in the Surrey Hills although it must be admitted that the lunch-time visit to local hosteleries featured as much in the memory as the walking!

My involvement with the formation of the Society was largely due to my experience in a volunteering capacity for 17 years as Ramblers Surrey Area Secretary and the role played in setting up several of the Ramblers Local Groups. When it was suggested that a Surrey Hills Society be established, I was approached by staff members of the AONB office to assist.

Having attended the inaugural meeting in October 2007 at Denbies, I volunteered to be on the steering committee and help set up the membership system. Later on as the Society gained charitable status I volunteered to be one of the Trustees, a role which I still do.

Currently I head the Events Committee that seeks to put together a programme of talks, visits and walks of interest to our members. I also help with manning some of the Society's stands at shows and events. My main interest is still walking and in 2011 I organised and lead the 4 day walk along the North Downs Way and I am in the course of planning this year's major event along the Greensand Way in September 2012. Please do come along and join me for part or even all of this.

I have been involved in several outdoor charities in the South East. I am still involved with the Ramblers as the Area Access Officer and I am also Chairman of the Surrey Countryside Access Forum, which was set up by Surrey County Council under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000.

New brewery gets thumbs up



In every edition of our newsletter, we like to find space for an item about one of our Affiliate Members. On this occasion we are pleased to include a new company with whom we hope to build a close association.



December 2011 saw the Tillingbourne Brewery open its doors amidst the Surrey Hills, at Old Scotland Farm on Staple Lane (GU5 9TE), above the village of Shere. New Brewery owners Steve Dodd and Lee Nicholls are committed to making 'local beer brewed with passion', and are delighted that to date every one of their three brews has received considerable praise from landlords and locals alike.

Steve and Lee purchased the original Surrey Hills Brewery equipment last September and after three hard months of cleaning and decorating they were finally ready to brew. Already a regular on local pumps and hailed as a 'lovely pint', is Falls Gold which takes its name from the waterfall on the Tillingbourne River near Wotton. Also currently available is Evolution No.1 and - coming in May - is Spring Ale.

The Brewery opens for retail sales every Friday (1-6.30pm) and Saturday (10-3.30pm) and may be contacted for trade sales, events and special occasion enquiries on **01483 222228**, or at **www.tillybeer.co.uk**

Smarter essential services...

...for 24 million people across the UK.


MAY GURNEY

maygurney.co.uk

Surrey Hills Society

Events programme *June to December 2012*

Keep an eye on our website for further information: www.surreyhillssociety.org

Friday 8 June at 7 pm

A talk by Councillor Ted Howard on the mural in **Chaldon Church** of the 'Ladder of Salvation of the Human Soul' together with 'Purgatory and Hell'. This will be followed by a presentation on the adjacent 14c Chaldon Court by its owner Madeline Hutchins and tours of the house.

Saturday 9 June

Guided walk around **Shamley Green Woods** by Patrick Mannix, followed by lunch at the local pub

Tuesday 10 July

What's new in the AONB

Update from Rob Fairbanks, Surrey Hills AONB Director

Saturday 21 July

Discovery walk along stretches of the **Wey and Arun Canal**

Wednesday 25 July

Easy access Ramble at Polesden Lacey

Wednesday 15 August

An exclusive evening visit to the gardens of **Pratsham Grange** by kind permission of the owners, Alan and Felicity Comber.

This 4-acre garden with excellent views of the Surrey Hills has been created around the late Victorian house over the last five years.

Saturday 18 August

Afternoon Easy Access Trail walk from Margery Wood, Reigate to Colley Hill with time for members' own picnic break to enjoy the views.

Saturday 25 August

A walk across **Reigate Heath** from the Skimmington Castle for a guided visit to Reigate Caves.

Thursday 6 September

President's Day - A visit to Epsom Downs and Racecourse with a visit to a Trainers' Yard.

September 1, 2, 3, 15, 16, 17

Walking the Greensand Way - from Haslemere to Limsfield Chart (and County boundary - average 10 miles each day). Details from Graham Butler.

Saturday 6 October

A Day in the Country "Buckland from 1000 to 2000" a village history walk

around Buckland with Duncan Ferns plus coffee, lunch and visits to the Windmill and Sandpit

Saturday 13 October

Grain and Vine Tour at Denbies Vinery

Bacon butty on arrival then Vineyard grape picking. The 360° film experience will be followed by a buffet lunch with tutored wine tasting, brewery tour and tasting.

Saturday 20 October

Bocketts Farm - a working family farm set in beautiful countryside on the slopes of the North Downs near Leatherhead.

Short AGM followed by Harvest Supper in the Old Barn, further details to come.

Friday 23 November

Ancient Trees - Our Living Heritage Talk by Ted Green MBE at Leatherhead Institute

Saturday 8 December

A guided walk exploring some of the 65 acres of grounds of **Belmont School** in Holmbury St Mary followed by mulled wine and mince pies.

Come and join in with one of our events

Surrey Hills Society

Join us

Membership Application (BLOCK CAPITALS please)

I/we wish to join The Surrey Hills Society.

Membership Fees & Donations

(please tick appropriate box)

Single annual fee £15 ☐ Family annual fee £25 ☐

£25 ☐ £50 ☐ £100 ☐ other ☐

Total Fee & Donation ☐

How to pay

☐ By Standing Order (preferred option - see website for details)

☐ By cheque, payable to The Surrey Hills Society

Membership of The Surrey Hills Society shall be deemed to constitute consent to all the Society's rules. Any information that you supply to The Surrey Hills Society will be held in accordance with the Data Protection Act and not passed on to any third party without your prior permission.

Your Details

(if under 18)

Title	Full Name: (& other family members if relevant)	DOB:

Address.....

.....Postcode.....

Email.....

Tel.....Mob.....

giftaid it

Increase the value of your donation at no extra cost to you. I want The Surrey Hills Society to treat this payment and all donations of money I make from the date of this declaration as Gift Aid Donation.

Signature.....Date.....