



Romsey & District Society

talks - excursions - walks - poetry readings - dinners - wine tastings - garden parties - magazine



Collection of Tom Drew in the care of LTVAS

8 May 1945: Romsey remembers

see VE articles - pages 8,14/15

For forthcoming events not in the Calendar see:

Walks.....page 7

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CAB Talk.....page12

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Forty Years of Change The Society's Twenty-Eighth Annual Lecture



The Society's Annual Lecture was given on Thursday 14 April by the Vicar of Romsey, Canon Neil Crawford-Jones. It was not, as he rather ruefully pointed out at the end of his address, a sermon: although he did get more time to speak than he usually did on Sundays, the audience in the Town Hall had the power to question him. But the lecture was, as might be expected, concerned with religion and the spiritual dimension to life. His title, 'Change and decay in all around I see', is, of course, a line from the well-known hymn (and, bizarrely, soccer anthem) 'Abide with Me'. This led him first to contrast the placing by the hymn's author, H F Lyte, of God as the solid centre to life with Matthew Arnold's bleak view of embattled humanity in 'Dover Beach'. Such might be expected from a speaker as well-read in the classics of English literature as Canon Crawford-Jones, but it was but a preliminary. His concern as a man approaching retirement in two years' time was the opinions and attitudes of the last forty years, not those of 1845 nor 1867.

He looked back over those forty years to a golden age, when he was studying theology at King's College, London, amid the intellectual ferment of the early 1960s. It was a time when 'South

Bank religion' fizzed in Southwark and just down the road Dr John Robinson was being Honest to God. It was a time when social and religious certainties - akin to, but not as unqualified as Lyte's - were challenged. Today not only were those assumptions debated and argued over, often in a combative way, but many current concerns involved, directly or indirectly, religion. Religion and politics obviously intertwined in debates on abortion, on constitutional reform (the place of bishops or other religious leaders in Parliament), on the second marriage of the Prince of Wales, but religion also arose in discussion of global warming, stem-cell research, economic growth in China and India, family responsibilities and the raising of children, technological advance and much more.

He described a shift from a rather compartmentalised, perhaps authoritarian, way of thinking forty years ago, to a more questioning, but a more outward-looking, community-based co-operative style of today. (He seemed rather to enjoy today's habit of questioning all things. He recalled asking a man to remove his hat in church and being asked why. "Better in church with a hat than not in church at all", was his comment). He swept through the years, multiplying apt examples, raising parallels, making contrasts, reminding us of the events, the people and the arguments of our recent history. It was stimulating and gripping. Of change there was much. Of decay, it would seem, rather less. As

a churchman he confessed to pride in the ecumenical movement, in the co-operation between Christian churches, in the drawing together of liturgical practice. Within a week of the funeral of Pope John-Paul II, he was able to draw much from the great respect for the man and from the breadth of culture, background and religion of those attending in St Peter's Square. He could also take examples from the Pope's discourses and dialogues with other religions.

Not everything was perfect, of course. There was the looming problem of fundamentalism, and the political dimension and complexities there. And, without expressing overt criticism, he drew a gentle contrast between the high quality and civilised debate held in the Church of England on the matter of women priests and the more recent debates in his church on homosexual priests. Nor was he in the slightest complacent. There was clearly much to be done in the next forty years.

His tone was positive. One felt that, despite his greater affinity to Matthew Arnold's view of the world than to H F Lyte's and his apparent preference for Arnold's poetry, his optimism drew him closer to Lyte than to Arnold. He clearly welcomed most of the change he described. But he was not, he said, a campaigner, just a local parish parson. This last description, Sandra Gidley, who had suggested him as the Society's Annual Lecturer and who proposed the vote of thanks, would not have. He certainly demonstrated a breadth of vision which is not parochial in any sense. And, one wonders, where Neil Crawford-Jones might have been had politics and not the church called him.

Robert Grime

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150 Years of the Lady with the Lamp



The director of a museum devoted to somebody famous is well placed to acquire a thoroughly grounded and completely updated knowledge of that person. So it proved in February when, at the first-ever joint meeting of the Society and LTVAS, Alex Attewell, the scholarly and enthusiastic Director of the Florence Nightingale Museum, spoke on *150 Years of the Lady with the Lamp*.

His theme was based firmly on his museum experience. The image of Florence in the engraving that appeared in 1855 in the *Illustrated London News* became deeply embedded in English culture, a symbol of the light she brought to the dark sickness and death of the Crimea that so shocked the Victorian public; but the myth also diminishes her greatness, obscuring her many and enduring achievements after Scutari. Even the lamp is wrong. Instead of the Grecian lamp of the engraving, she would have used the historically accurate but less romantic Arabic candle lantern made of folded linen, concertina style, and brass.

The gentle nurse of legend was given by her father a man's education that helped to form her as a tough administrator, a pioneer of what is now called 'quality management'. But first she had to fight the expectations of her mother and sister that she conform to the frivolous pursuits and domestic virtues demanded of her sex and class. When, called by God, she realised she wanted to nurse the sick, her

family reacted as though she had "wanted to be a kitchen maid". Yet somehow she resisted their "tyranny" and managed to study and visit many European hospitals and even work in Kaiserwerth, in Germany, before being appointed Superintendent of the Hospital for Invalid Gentlewomen in Harley Street. In this way she was prepared to seize the opportunity offered by Sidney Herbert to improve the appalling conditions of the sick and wounded common soldiers in the Crimea.

There she galvanised the Government to reverse the total lack of care and preparation for the catastrophic number of wounded. And there she began to ferret out the truth that it was disease, not wounds, that killed her beloved soldiers. Cholera, typhus, typhoid, dysentery - germs that flourished in unhygienic surroundings - made hospitals dangerous. Eleven nurses died and Florence herself nearly died in 1855. She suffered for the rest of her life from some kind of bacterial infection, probably, it is now thought, brucellosis.

The extraordinary fact is, as Mr Attewell told us, that her greatest work began at this point when she laid down the famous lamp. The Nightingale Fund, set up to enable her to reform civil nursing, was a millstone in spite of which she was to pour out a huge volume of letters and reports to the Royal Commission on the Health of the Army. However, driven as she was, she found others to drive. Sarah Wardroper became the head of the Nightingale Training School which began the transformation of the status and profession of nursing. Florence delegated, but also found time to supervise the syllabus and training and

take a close personal interest in the students. She also pioneered hospital design and organisation.

Since the Army was in India and she was interested in the Army's health, she became, through correspondence, an expert on India and was consulted by viceroys and governors. She analysed the mortality of the Army in peace and found that it was higher than that of the population. This set her to write about thirty reports on public health in India. She combined observation, shrewd commonsense and a flair for statistics (she was the first woman to be elected a Fellow of the Royal Statistical Society) with tireless campaigning to improve public health and hygiene. Another of her many activities was the pioneering of Health Visiting. With her idea of a continuum of Sick Nursing and Health Nursing she even foresaw the modern emphasis on well-being and preventative medicine.

Besides his exhaustive knowledge, Mr Attewell brought with him a sense of the excitement of his post. Reading Florence's Egyptian diary, recently returned anonymously to Claydon House, set him thinking about the lamp. He conveyed his feeling of privilege at being the last person to walk through Lea Hurst before its sale, choosing items for the Museum. He twinkled at the recent discovery that Henry Bonham Carter, who administered her Nightingale Fund, worked for her for thirteen years without being admitted to her presence. Perhaps he regards her with something of the unwinking but affectionate appraisal of her pet owl Athena who stands guard with the memorabilia in the Florence Nightingale Museum.

Caroline Gardner

Athena

Florence Nightingale's adoption of Athena, the owl she rescued from ill-treatment on a visit to Athens, is one of the more charming incidents in her illustrious life. The owl became her pet and the two were mutually devoted to each other. When the call came for her to lead a party of nurses to Scutari, the pressure was so great that she handed over Athena to the care of her sister, Parthenope. Her sister, willing but absent-minded, forgot to feed Athena and the poor bird died.

Extraordinarily, almost a century and a half later, Athena, stuffed and bright-eyed, turned up in an attic in the Verney home. She was one of scores of fascinating exhibits viewed by Dee Tuffill's delighted party who visited the Florence Nightingale Museum on 8 March. They were warmly received by Alex Attewell and his staff on what turned out to be a memorable and wholly successful visit. Dee's sure touch and careful planning enabled members of the party to visit galleries and exhibitions of their choice during the rest of the day.



Committees & Working Groups

Executive Committee: Kate Clark (Chair), Brian Palmer (Vice chair), Philip Warner (Sec), Rita Nunn (Treasurer), Dr John Wattie (Membership), and Denise Amery, Chris Amery, Cheryl Collier, Clive Collier, John Davies, Tom Gould, Phoebe Merrick, Geoff Morris, Mike Richardson, Gill Roberts, Shirley Rogers, Deborah Wilson

Environment & Footpaths Sub-committee: Ron Genge (Chair), Kate Clark (Sec), Jeff Watkin (Walks organiser) and Peter Cradock, Magdalene Sleeman, Norman Hurst, Jeanette Kell, Theresa Hibberd

Planning Sub-Committee: Chris Amery (chair) and Neill Beasley, Nick Bell, John Burgess, Paul Gardner, Tom Gould, Diane Hargreaves, Brian Palmer, Mike Richardson, Gill Roberts, Tony Roberts, Romano Roverato

Public Services Sub-committee: Shirley Rogers (chair) and Cheryl Collier, Bill Lees, Geoff Morris, Kate Allen (& Hal Sanchez – consultant)

Social Sub-committee: Denise Amery (chair) and Mary Akerman, Diane Hargreaves, Joann Hill, Gill Roberts, Anne Scarborough, Dee Tuffill

Special Projects: Geoff Morris (projects leader) with *Library Bell* - Paul Gardner *Shopfronts* - Val Morris, Jeff & Mavis Hawksley, Paul & Caroline Gardner, Michael Friedli; *Parking* - Phoebe Merrick, John Davies; *Street Clutter* - John Burgess

Charter Celebrations Statue/Artwork: Clive Collier and: Chris Amery, Geoff Morris, Shirley Rogers

Look at Romsey: Phoebe Merrick (project leader) and many others

Membership Database: Romano Roverato, Harry Tuffill

News Sheet: Paul & Caroline Gardner, Gill Roberts, Phil Warner

Romsey La Ronde: Jo Kyte

Press Officers: Jean Denham, Geoff Morris

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Gables

This sharply-angled photograph of the new Bradbeer's building shows how its architecture not only harmonises with the other gables along the Fishlake but enters into direct and friendly dialogue with the great East End gable of the Abbey itself.

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Treasurer's Report - Rita Nunn: a loss of £24 this year, against a profit of £1,390 last year. However, with the expenditure of £3,500 on the Dr Peter Johnson Memorial, and £500 on display materials, we could have anticipated a much larger loss. Operating income decreased by £385 as we issue 3 instead of 4 newsheets a year; subscriptions holding up well. Operating costs decreased £917, due to fewer newsheets. Operating income, less costs therefore produced a profit of £1,327. Our Social Committee had a very successful year - a profit of £804. We received from the Inland Revenue £1,695 Giftaid for 2000-2004.

Membership Secretary - John Wattie: membership continues to increase, 928 members, 673 households, 304 are life members.

Chairman and Committee - Brian Palmer, warmly thanked former chairman Romano Roverato who is standing down from the committee. Brian handed over the chair to the new chairman Kate Clark and Brian becomes vice-chairman. The other officers and committee were re-elected en bloc (see diary card).

Buildings Preservation Trust - Peter Shoolingin-Jordan showed slides of 40 projects completed since 1974. The Trust will shortly publish a book illustrating these.

Social - Denise Amery: there were some well-attended changes in the programme - summer barn dance, quiz night, a visit to Highgrove. The programme of winter speakers included a Florence Nightingale talk with LTVAS - this joint meeting might become an annual event. In the summer we shall be supporting Romsey La Ronde, the tour of town gardens, one of our contributions to the Arts Festival.

Environment/Footpaths - Jeanette Kell reporting for Ron Genge: improvement of the footpath and strip of land between the Waitrose car park and Station Road gardens. TVBC may acquire the strip of land and maintain it. The final link in the Fishlake Path circular walk is still not in place as the building of the footbridge is delayed while HCC obtains a court decision on land ownership. On the northern section of the Canal Path the Environment Agency has been persuaded to replace many large safety notices with a few smaller, more specific, signs suitable for a rural path. Footpath work included clearing the path near Crampmoor Lane, application for finger posts at Ashley, kissing gates on Halterworth Footpath 15, and a maintenance contract for the gravel path at Fishlake Meadows, used by schoolchildren. Land ownership issues delayed progress on the southern Canal

Path but this will be resurrected shortly.

Guided walks were all well-supported. 60 on the Mottisfont walk, 25 or more on five others. The annual walk on 16th May is ten miles from Lulworth Cove, or come if you just want a day in Lulworth

Look at Romsey - Phoebe Meyrick reported: money from the Society and three councils is spent carefully. Voluntary work keeps costs down. The town has been divided into ten areas and every area is now up and running. Areas 1 (Whitenap), 3 (Tadburn Valley), 4 (Tadburn Gardens), 6 (Upper Cupernham and Winchester Hill) and 10 (Eastern Romsey) are drafting their Statements. Areas 2 (Halterworth) and 7 (Lower Cupernham and Fishlake Meadows) are preparing to draft. Areas 5 (Woodley), 8 (Romsey Old Town) and 9 (Romsey New Town) are still in phase one and have yet to collect their questionnaires and stage their exhibitions. Romsey New Town's

Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting in February was well attended and members seemed to appreciate, enjoy even, the reports of a wide range of activities some illustrated with film slides. Here is a précis of the minutes. For full minutes
Telephone 023 8081 3400,
or e-mailphilipwarneruk@aol.com



exhibition in the Town Hall on 23rd April, the Old Town 18th June, Woodley later.

Public Services - Shirley Rogers reported: the late Graham Langdon's Public Utilities sub-committee is reconstituted with more responsibilities, covering flooding, sewerage, minerals extraction and waste disposal, minor waterways and town renovation.

Southern Water is making important improvements following work on flooding by the former committee. We are represented on the Romsey Council's Flood Action Group working to implement the Environment Agency's report. Bill Lees reports to us on meetings with the HCC on their new waste disposal programme. The draft report has just been published for consultation. Geoff Morris is engaged in a feasibility study for better clearing and maintenance of Romsey's minor waterways. Geoff and others are

working on car parking and street clutter. He produced a booklet on clutter. We are keen to be told about 'blots on the townscape'.

Special Projects - Geoff Morris reported: the last 4 of 14 blue plaques are under way and the project should be completed within budget this summer. We wrote to TVBC about car-parking early last year. Since then, the Council has opened a free site at the Rapids and is negotiating another site. The shopfronts audit team of eight aims to complete assessments by the summer and then develop an audit plan with TVBC. We will meet with council representatives to discuss our report on street clutter. We have negotiated £4,000 from the landfill tax scheme to replace and hang a bell in the turret of Romsey library. HCC should fit it this summer.

Planning Subcommittee - Chris Amery paid tribute to his 'irreplaceable' predecessor, Don Hargreaves, then reported: the sub-committee has two main strands of action. First, reviewing official proposals for plans, policies, and documents from central and local Government and we may give written or verbal evidence to inquiries. Second, we review selected planning applications, and where appropriate we express our view on them. We may write letters of objection to four or five a month, or sometimes a letter of commendation

There are big changes in the whole planning system. The South East Plan will affect us all and we will comment on the first consultation draft. Romsey is just within the 'South Hampshire Sub-region', which is singled out for high growth and regeneration. We think that Portsmouth and Southampton will dominate the strategy to the detriment of our vision for Romsey. Please look at the draft South East Plan, respond to the consultation before 15 April and let any Planning Subcommittee member have your views.

Please let us know if you are interested in joining any of the above sub-committees.

GIFT AID

Our Treasurer's report in these edited AGM minutes mentions that the Society's income last year was increased by a £1695 Gift Aid present from the tax man. Many thanks to all members who have completed a Gift Aid form but if you did not, or cannot remember, please phone Rita Nunn (01794 515005). Thanks are overdue to Rita, and to her predecessor Brian Rogles for their work on Gift Aid, and also to the late Graham Langdon who persisted in his determination that we could and should operate the scheme.

Shopfronts

Members of our Society care about the appearance of our town. We appreciate our two great buildings, the Abbey and Broadlands; we discuss the public buildings, the Town Hall, King John's House, the churches and banks. And yet until Geoff Morris came along we virtually ignored the buildings that actually comprise the town centre and stamp their character on it - the shops.

All shopfronts should respect the scale and character of the buildings onto which they are fitted. The centre of Romsey is a conservation area, the scale is small and the impact of unfortunate design, including even details, is correspondingly great. We have a mixture of chain stores and small shops. The latter, priding themselves on their independence and personal service, display a wealth of individual interest. Traditional designs, which for half a century were seen as old-fashioned and therefore bad for business, are increasingly being recognised as assets in the fight for survival and prosperity.

There are four main components that make up the essentials of traditional design: the top projecting part or

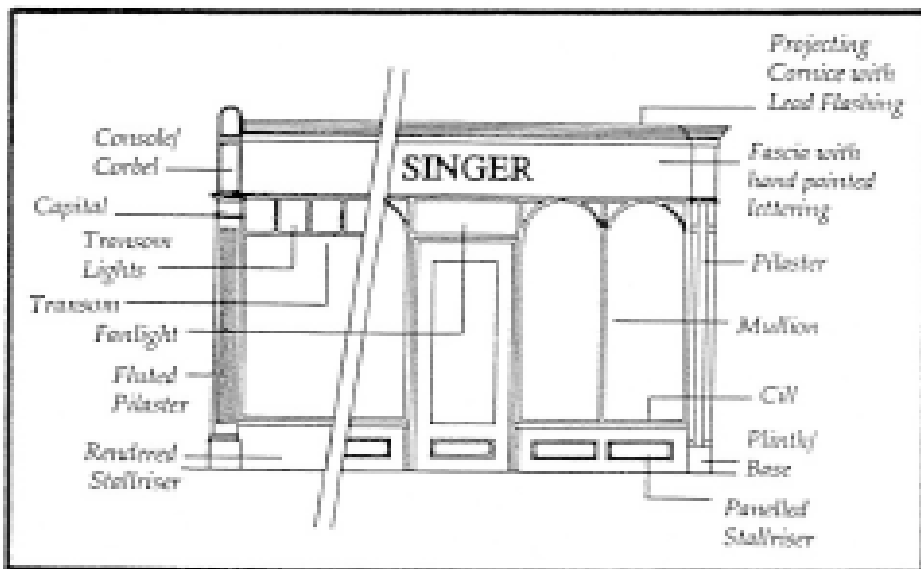


A fine example of a traditional shopfront

cornice, the band beneath or fascia which usually bears the shop name, pilasters framing either side of the glazed opening and the stallriser, the panel below the glazing. The stallriser, medieval in origin, would have supported a board lowered over the pavement to reveal an unglazed opening through which goods were

modified. After the development of plate glass and the removal of excise duty on glass in 1845, larger-paned windows became feasible, enhancing the possibilities of display. Stallrisers lower in height followed, sometimes with deep mouldings. Elaborate and imaginative touches came into fashion - stallrisers in glazed tiles or marble, mosaic paving, etched or coloured glass, cast-iron grilles and ornate glazing bars. (Have you ever noticed those in the windows in the front added to the Tudor Rose?) Doorways were inset to give increased display. By the end of the nineteenth century the availability of artificial lighting diminished the importance of the shop window as a source of natural light, allowing deeply-recessed fronts and lobby entrances. With all these developments, however, the traditional style persisted.

By around the 1920s such traditional shop front designs began to deteriorate and die out as modernism discouraged decoration and commerce became more aggressive. To draw in customers, shop entrances increased in size, signs had to



passed. Georgian shopfronts introduced the cornice, the fascia and the pilasters based on the classical temple. Later, the bay window was used to protect and display goods previously set out on the pavement. Characteristic of this period is the subdivision of the windows into small panes by glazing bars, often externally moulded and vertical in emphasis.

The same basic elements survived into Victorian times, but with some

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Talking Newspapers

be striking and the emphasis changed to the horizontal. High quality modern shopfront designs enhance modern buildings, but all too often unconsidered modernisation involves an utter disregard for the architectural composition of older buildings.

Corporate and chain stores do not score highly when we consider these principles, nor do discount stores, nor, dare one say, charity shops. Corporate uniformity, ease of maintenance and economising dictate design in preference to good taste. Fascias in particular suffer, being often disproportionately deep or indeed narrow, extending uninterruptedly across a number of buildings or protruding too far from the wall surface. Instead of traditional hand-painted sign writing, too often highly reflective and strident plastic signs disgrace the conservation area. It does not have to be so: look at Clarks in Romsey and next time you are in Chichester at their Marks and Spencer, their Burton and their Boots. In fairness one might add that some individual shops offend in these ways.

One must never lose sight of the basic purpose of a shop and the requirements of commerce. On its success depends the livelihood of people. However, in a market town like Romsey it must be true that good quality shopfronts are good for business. Planning laws for shops exist because, as with all buildings, their appearance is of interest to everyone, but on the whole we have left the matter to our local authorities. Considering the impact of shopfronts on our town we might well begin to support our officers' efforts to maintain them to a high standard.

Caroline Gardner

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Mike Diamond of St. Blaize Road, Romsey (*pictured here*) has been a listener since he lost his sight in 1996. He is now one of the blind members on the Talking Newspaper Committee, acting as a link between them and the Romsey Blind Committee. In addition to the Romsey tapes he has the fortnightly *Daily Echo* tapes and a Daily Newspaper Tape from National Talking Newspapers.

The contact for the Romsey or any Talking Newspaper is Chris Pashby-Taylor, telephone 01730 890406.

Jean Denham

Walks News

On the morning of Wednesday, 9 February, 27 walkers (and the usual two dogs!) met at the Hatchet Inn, Sherfield English for our 6.5. mile walk. Led by Diane and Sarah Hargreaves, we were soon on a pleasant country track, our first brief stop being at the site of the former medieval church, with its lichen-encrusted gravestones, surrounded by drifts of snowdrops. Passing along quiet country lanes and footpaths, we enjoyed the sweeping views of the countryside, with a further stop being made to look at Telegraph House, which was one of the chain of naval communication between Plymouth and London. At this point we also admired a family of buzzards as they soared and mewed above a nearby wood.

A particularly attractive part of the route was the ridge above Lockerley, after which we turned south on the return leg of the walk, arriving back at The Hatchet, with good appetites for the tasty pub lunches that followed.

Future Walks

Annual Walk, Lulworth – Sunday, 15 May

Departure from Romsey Bus Station at 8.30 a.m., return at approximately 6.30 p.m.

This will be a circular walk of some 9.5 miles, going inland via Chaldon Herring, with a stop at the Sailor's Return pub for a drinks/short lunch/picnic break. We will then return along the coast to the west of Lulworth, and whilst we will contour along a fairly level path above the 'switchback' coastal path, there will be one or two climbs and one steep descent. There will also be a short circular walk option of 2.5 miles, which will go out with the main group as far as West Lulworth/Durdle Door, with the further option of visiting Lulworth Castle (English Heritage – admission charge for non-members: £7 adults, £5 concessions) in the afternoon.

As we have booked a 35-seater bus, places will be available strictly on a first-come, first-served basis, with any spare places being available for non-walkers. The price will be £11. Please send SAE to: Jeff Watkin, 2 Smith's Field, Romsey SO51 7WD (Tel: 501539), stating number of tickets needed and your phone number, with cheque payable to 'Romsey & District Society'. Non-walkers wishing to participate should 'phone Jeff initially, to establish if any spare seats are available.

Evening Walk, Mottisfont Estate – Tuesday, 7 June

A river/woodlands walk on the Mottisfont estate with a National Trust Warden. Donations on evening to NT. Meet at NT car park Mottisfont (GR322270) at 6.30p.m. Contact: Jeff Watkin 501539.

Jeff Watkin

Mrs Winifred Reynolds remembers the Second World War

In 1909 a baby girl was born in the cottage in Romsey Brewery. She was two months early and weighed under 3 pounds. The doctor wrapped her in a blanket and said he would return. He came back twelve hours later and stated, "She is still alive; she will live." He was right. Ninety-six years on, that baby is the bright and lively Mrs. Winifred Reynolds, now living in Edwina Mountbatten House.

Her memories encompass two world wars and much more besides. Mrs Reynolds ran the West Dean Post Office from 1937 to 1967 and so was there throughout the Second World War. "We used to watch the dog fights in the sky, involving planes from the nearby Wallops RAF base," she recalls. "On one occasion a plane returning from a raid crash-landed at Dean Farm. I had to get a message through to his base for them to come and fetch him and send someone to look after his plane." She saw German Luftwaffe planes flying over on bombing raids to Coventry and Birmingham in 1941. When they bombed Southampton she could see the glow of the burning buildings clearly from West Dean.



Mrs Reynolds with her treasured Cherokee mug

Mrs Reynolds has happy memories of American airmen, black and white,


stationed around the area and knew that General Eisenhower sometimes stayed at Norman Court. "I knew that it was not safe for him to stay in one place more than one night at a time so he was always on the move." She recalls that some of the black airmen would go to sing negro spirituals at St. Mary's Church, West Dean. "So many people from all around started to come to listen that they had to relay the music out into the Churchyard." Up on Dean Hill the American Airforce had a collecting point for mail to the USA. "It would come in sealed bags to me in the Post Office. The airman bringing them was a Cherokee Indian. One day he gave me this beautiful native Cherokee jug. It is one of my most treasured possessions." Another much-loved keepsake is a book given to her by another American, Don Collins, and to this day she is in touch with his family in Minneapolis.

Of all her wartime memories one in particular stands out. "I shall never forget the occasion not long before the end of the war when I saw so many planes going over from the Wallops, all of them towing gliders behind them. They were going to Holland to try to seize the bridge at Arnhem. A great friend of mine was the head of a glider battalion, but sadly he was killed." Although that attempt failed, it was only a few months later in May 1945 that the Germans surrendered.

In West Dean, Mrs. Reynolds, like so many other people throughout Britain, celebrated the Allied victory. People made cakes, sandwiches and other goodies for the jolly street parties that were held to mark victory in Europe on VE Day.

Jean Denham

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A Website for Romsey

Do you have a computer or Internet access? If not, why not? Try it and see! There are such a lot of interesting things to read about and fill time especially in retirement years. The Internet offers a great deal of information and many learning opportunities for all ages.

Make a start by looking at RomseyNet - the website especially for Romsey and local areas.

Local information is given for people wishing to visit the Southern Test Valley, and links to others, who may be able to advise on local matters of interest. Romsey & District Society pages are linked from RomseyNet. The local LTVAS Group, Romsey Town Mayoral annual charity events and Romsey Twinning and the new, 'Look at Romsey' Project all have representation on the website. There are details about places of interest and local accommodation, links for businesses and charity groups, links to and pages for societies and clubs, entertainments and sports, eating places, shopping and more.

In addition to general email enquiries many viewers request information about local history or genealogy. All email and genealogy enquiries are shown and any replies, in order to help other viewers with their searches. Enquiries have been received from many parts of the world.

A public events page is available and a business diary for forward planning, intended to help avoid a clash of dates for important events.

RomseyNet is a non-profit-making organisation. Entries by clubs, societies and charities are free of charge. Businesses that wish to advertise on RomseyNet are asked for a small charge to be donated directly to a charity of their own choice.

Please pay a visit to <http://www.romsynet.org.uk> and do send an email from there if you would like to include some information.

Ann Perrett - webmaster
Email: ann@circularsound.org.uk

Interview



with Kate Clark

Dr. Kate Clark, recently elected as Romsey and District Society Chairman, is only the second woman to hold the position since the Society was formed thirty-one years ago. She has been a member of the Executive Committee since 1999, is keenly interested in the whole area of the Society's activities and believes that the committees and the working parties are its engine room.

Kate is a retired archaeologist with an air of quiet authority and a seriousness and enthusiasm punctuated with flashes of gentle humour. She lived in Mill Lane, Romsey for eight years before moving to Lockerley Green three

years ago, so she has an insight into both Romsey and its district. "I came across the Romsey and District Society, and LTVAS", she says, "more or less as soon as I came to the area. I became a member and in my very first News Sheet saw Ron Genge's appeal for a secretary for the Footpaths Committee. I volunteered and have been doing the job ever since. I am passionate about footpaths because the network is rooted in history, sometimes even prehistory. We are so lucky that in this country they are protected by statute. We are the only country in Europe that does this, and Hampshire has an excellent Rights of Way Department. Romsey is an historic place where every road that is dug up is likely to reveal evidence of the past."

Kate was born in Hampshire and attended the Hampshire College of Agriculture. She belonged first to the Whitchurch Young Farmers' Club, and then to the Alresford branch. "This was when I first heard of Romsey; their club was so good, they were the ones we always aspired to beat." She took part in many Young Farmers' activities, including amateur dramatics, public speaking, cake-making and sheep judging. Although Kate no longer works full time she does accept the occasional archaeological commitment in her fascinating and unusual speciality, the study of dogs from the past. She says that before the Romans there were not many different varieties of dogs in Britain but within one hundred years there were all shapes and sizes. Sometimes skeletons are found of hitherto unknown types.

Kate leads a busy life. In addition to the Romsey Society she is also Chairman of Romsey and District Help the Aged.

This work, as she points out, is entirely different from the Romsey and District Society in that it is people-based. It is a very busy charity that provides a service and has its own hall. At home she looks after her elderly mother. Kate enjoys her garden; her philosophy is to grow what the garden allows naturally, which, because it is has a lot of sun, means plants that can survive drought. She likes the idea of being linked to something that follows the seasons.

We wish Kate a happy and productive term of office.

Jean Denham

David Jeffery's Briefcase

Our member, advertiser and friend David Jeffery, the restoration expert, generously gave of his time to organise the recent Building Preservation event in King John's House. His reward was that someone since stole his briefcase containing details of several contacts who expect a call from him. If you were one of these please ring him on 01794 367422 or 0771 5003105.

Planning

As we went to press, the Society finalised its response to the consultation on the South East Plan, as well as its comments on the latest application to develop the Brewery site. You can read them both in full on the R&DS website on www.romsey.net.org.uk

Chris Amery

Cornerwise

The ends of streets have been compared to punctuation marks. Sometimes they act as full stops, bringing a line of buildings to an abrupt end. Sometimes they are more like commas, marking a slight pause before a row of buildings moves out along another axis. Sometimes again, they resemble semi-colons, drawing a deep breath between two different kinds of building. However one interprets them, for better or worse, the corners of streets are important because they make a strong visual impression on a townscape.

Our three photographs show three street corners in the Romsey townscape: in Linden Road, Station Road and Middlebridge Street, each of which has been radically altered in recent times.



Legibility -musings from *Look at Romsey*

One of the important aspects of the street scene is its legibility. Can you easily determine where you are and find where you want to go?

Look at Romsey involves a good deal of leaflet delivering, and in some places it is singularly difficult to find specific addresses. Try it for yourself. Pick any two house numbers, one odd and one even and go and find them. You could do this as a way of taking exercise, instead of taking your usual walk. In particular I nominate Stapleford Drive and Lansdowne Gardens as the most difficult streets in Romsey.



First of all, locate the street and see what number is in front of you. Go to the left and see if the next house is numbered and if so, you may be able to determine whether the odd and even numbers are adjacent or separate and which way the sequence runs. Head off in the direction which you think leads to the number you want, preferably laying a trail of crumbs so that you can eventually find your way back.



Is it really necessary for streets to be so difficult? I suspect that the numbering looked logical on a plan in a designer's

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office, but it is a nightmare on the ground. Woodley is a particularly difficult area. The roads lead to the backs of houses, the footpaths lead to the front and some bear legends such as '14-28 even', without saying which road is referred to or how to find numbers 12 or 30. One road has two names because it relates to the back access of two blocks of houses which have different addresses.



Street name signs need attention too. Streets are named on the basis that only drivers need to know where they are, and then only if they come from a pre-determined direction. One sign at Woodley faces into a bush while the other side of the road is not signed. If we want to encourage people to walk about, we should perhaps put some thought into informing them where they are. Whereas Woodley is the most difficult area, the problem arises in other places for the unwary pedestrian. Crossing the Canal by some of the bridges can leave the traveller completely unsure of where she is. When I photographed lower Cupernham and Fishlake Meadows, I could not risk putting captions on any of my photographs because as often as not I did not know which street was the subject of my art work.

This may not be the highbrow stuff of town centre design, but surely it is not unreasonable to expect to live in a legible town and to know where you are. For my encore, I would ask you to go and check your own house number at twilight. And then there are letter boxes...

Phoebe Merrick

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Abel was I

As you enter King John's Garden today a curious figure greets you by the gates. He is a stranger, yet he seems familiar. This is Abel, and he looks as though he may have strayed from one of the illuminated pages in the Duc de Berry's *Book of Hours*. He reminds us of primal gardeners of long ago, bending his back, delving and sowing, so that others can enjoy the fruits and flowers of his labour. His mute appeal for a copper or two is one that few can resist.



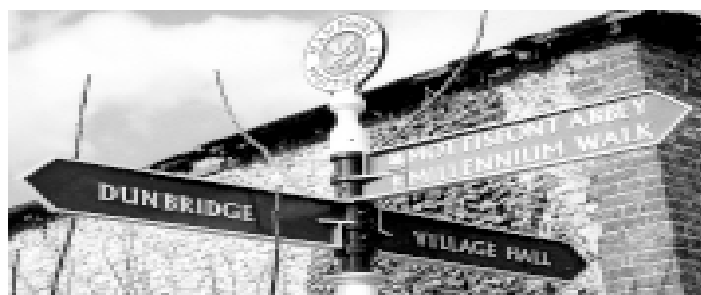
Abel is the brainchild of Diane Hargreaves, who designed and painted him. He has already become a much-loved member of the Romsey family, a colourful guardian and a friendly fundraiser. The garden he is appealing for was recently placed among the top ten period gardens in Britain, when over 200,000 readers of the magazine *Period Living and Traditional Houses* were invited to nominate their favourites. The editor had expected a lively response but was overwhelmed by the sheer volume of readers who replied. We would like to join with those readers in saluting the wonderful team of skilled and devoted volunteers who tend King John's Garden. In a period of only ten years, they have transformed a wasteland into one of the loveliest gardens in the region.

Pointing the Way

Some villages around Romsey, including Braishfield and Michelmersh, have traditional metal signposts at junctions which, besides their inherent usefulness, add character to the lanes. Each has a finial with the word 'Hampshire' and the name of the village itself.

In Mottisfont, unusual in that it is a village owned by the National Trust, traditional signposts have been erected during the past year. These bear the oak leaf emblem of the Trust on their finials in addition to the words 'Hampshire' and 'Mottisfont'. At the junction of Bengers Lane with the B3084, the arms show the directions to The Wallops and Broughton going north and Dunbridge and Lockerley to the south. They also point the way to the Village Hall (once the School) and to Mottisfont Abbey.

In the centre of the village, in front of the former Post



Office and Tea-rooms (why, one wonders, has the National Trust not removed the sign more than 3 years after it closed?), another fingerpost indicates local features for the benefit of walkers on the Test Way and



visitors to the Abbey. Also signed is Hatt Lane Millennium Walk, a narrow road leading from the centre of the village towards Dunbridge, which after its official closure to vehicles in 2002 became a safe route for walkers, cyclists and horses. Here, truly, is a Quiet Lane to be enjoyed without traffic, a concept recently adopted as an aspiration by the CPRE.

These signs were made by Essex Replica Castings and are fabricated from cast aluminium. All painting is done by hand and up to 6 coats are applied to achieve a high quality. The custom-made National Trust emblem can now be used throughout the village, where appropriate. Such fingerposts are not cheap and for a small parish (population 407) they are, at over £1,200 each, a significant expense to the Parish Council Tax Payer. Fortunately, grants were available from the Hampshire Village Initiative (County Council) and the Small Areas Environment Enhancement Scheme (Test Valley), supplemented by a donation from a local business.

Mary Lees, Clerk to Mottisfont Parish Council.

Medwell Essay Competition



From the left. David Kessel Judge, Mary Beton 2nd Prize, Kirsty Weedon 3rd prize and Nicola Fripp 1st prize with Brian Palmer, the Romsey and District Society Chairman, in the Hall at Romsey School.

The prizes were awarded on Achievement Day at the school in January. The topic this year was famous or infamous characters from Romsey in Victorian times and how they had lived. Two entrants chose Florence Nightingale, describing her family and links with Romsey as well as the deplorable state of military hospitals before she transformed them. One entry on the Reverend Berthon brought out opinions of him locally and assessed his two roles as an inventor and administrator of the affairs of Romsey Abbey.

Two runners-up also received certificates for their entries: one was on Tommy Sopwith, who was born in Victorian times but died relatively recently; the other was based on research the writer had done on a member of her own family who was born in 1886 and took part in WW1.

We are indebted to our judge David Kessel for the considerable work and enthusiasm he has put into judging the annual Medwell Essay and, of course, to the Medwell Family for donating the prize money in the first place.

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Autumn Day-Trip to Dorset

We will be running a coach trip to the Dorset Coast on Saturday 17 September. The trip will include a visit to the Bridport Museum, a conducted tour of the Village of Chideock and an optional walk over Golden Cap and the Jurassic Coast. You may reserve lunch in the local hostelry or, if you prefer, bring a picnic lunch.

Will anyone interested please contact Brian Palmer to be added to the list. Obviously no commitment is made until prices for coach and pub lunch (if taken) are finalised.

We need to know numbers as soon as possible as there is room for only 35 people.

Names, please to:

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Lost for Words

Recently an eloquent photograph of the Library roof appeared in The Romsey Advertiser. The damaged and empty bellcote looked out over Nesfield's fluted finial, a sad victim of age, neglect and misuse. Someone once remarked of this same image almost twenty years ago that the empty bellcote reminded him of a handsome grandfather clock which had lost its hands. Here, for those who did not see the accompanying article, is the good news. The long period of neglect is over. We need mourn the lost bell no more.

Thanks to the splendid generosity of CSG Ltd., money has been made available for the purchase of a 15inch Gillett and Johnston bell cast in 1888. At present the bell is with Eayre and Smith of Derby, who will be making the fittings and mounting the bell this summer. Giles Pritchard, the County's architect, will incorporate the restoration into the HCC's extension and refurbishment of the library later this year.

As it happens, CSG is also celebrating its own 70th anniversary this year, and this generous grant to supply the bell is a fitting testimonial to the standards which have guided the company throughout its existence. Its tax funding account requires a 10 per cent third party contribution towards its community projects. This has been generously provided by the Romsey Town Council, so all should be well.

However, one puzzle remains. Our photograph shows the crude state of the damaged stone plaque which stands between the two high windows on the front façade. Originally words and



emblems had been carved into the stone which are now lost. No photograph can be found either in the LTVAS archives or in the Hampshire Records Office to tell us what the missing words were. Can any of our readers help? Perhaps a former pupil from the school with a good memory, or an old Romsonian who used his Kodak to record the way the school once looked. Should such information come our way, we would try to put it to good use.



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The new Abbey Gates

In a recent issue we reported the dedication of the refurbished gates in the South Garth which lead into the road known as The Abbey. Your Society contributed £3500 to this project in memory of our late President, Dr Peter Johnson. We did not print a photo at the time as the work was not then complete.



Mosquitoes

Dr Gill Roberts, an internationally recognised expert on mosquitoes, gave the Society an insight into her specialism when she spoke in King John's House on March 14. What she had to say was not reassuring.


Mosquitoes continue to be very efficient vectors of disease. Obviously they are experts in survival and avoidance tactics or the problem of malaria would have been solved years ago. They are now resistant to nearly all the pesticides thrown at them and the malaria parasite is becoming resistant to nearly all the medicinal drugs currently available. There are 300 million cases a year and up to 5 million deaths, which makes malaria easily the worst insect-borne disease in the world. The female Anopheline mosquito is the vector and takes blood in order to mature her eggs. Samples of the tiny eggs, larvae and pupae of a British mosquito from Hayling Island were used to illustrate the talk.

The life cycle is speeded up by warmth and available food. In considering the question whether malaria could come to Romsey, Gill warned that with global warming some European countries have already experienced a rise in the number of cases. So it is well to be vigilant: on a warm evening, when the Anopheline likes to bite, it is tempting to sit outside. Water shortages this summer will encourage people to own waterbutts. It is essential that they have tight-fitting lids to prevent mosquitoes from getting in and laying eggs – up to 250 a time. With no natural enemies they will have the opportunity of a population explosion.

Natural disasters and wars also offer plenty of opportunity for the mosquito and malaria to flourish. In many wars there are more deaths from the disease than from combat.

Gill illustrated her experiences of field trials in the tropics and a community action project in Sri Lanka with slides. She described safe biological and physical methods of control unlikely to suffer from resistance or to harm natural predators. She concluded with some advice on self-protection and the consoling news that a new drug, developed in China, offers hope for the future.

Paul Gardner



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VE Day

- Some Local Memories

Although I wasn't in Romsey on VE Day 1945 I wasn't far away. I was in Southampton, encased in a plaster cast from neck to crutch, recovering and convalescing from a fractured spine sustained in a training parachute jump earlier in the year, and was staying with my wife, small daughter, nearly one, and my widowed mother in her house in Shirley.

We had a quiet day, no wild partying, but nevertheless we did celebrate the end of the War in Europe which had taken its toll of servicemen and civilians alike. Everywhere in Southampton there was much evidence of the havoc and destruction caused by the enemy's air raids.

There was, however, revelry and boisterous celebrating in the town centre throughout the day and night with much dancing, including the 'Palais Glide', and singing in the main street, the blitz-scarred Above Bar. The town pubs, in particular, were packed and some even ran out of glasses bringing jam jars into use as replacements. In the suburbs the main features were the ubiquitous street parties.

The Mayor of Southampton later writing in the 'Southern Forces Newsletter' aptly summed up the general picture, which was typical of most cities and towns: "We celebrated the great and glorious triumph of the Allies in various ways. Some marched round the town singing, others went into churches to quietly offer up thankful prayers, some danced in front of the Civic Centre, whilst others spent the hours of celebration quietly in their own homes."

The lasting memory I have of the day is the almost continuous blowing of the sirens of the many ships in the Docks well into the night, a night when we were able to enjoy street lighting once more with the cessation of the wartime blackout. Such was my day, but what are the memories of some of the Romsonians who were in the town at the time?

Mrs Elsie Chafe, who now lives in North Baddesley, well remembers VE Day. She



White cotton socks on parade at the Mill Lane party

then lived in 48 Love Lane, Romsey, with her two small children, a boy aged 5 years and a little girl of 3 years. Like millions of other young wartime mothers, for Elsie the main significance of the end of the War in Europe brought hopes of her husband, Percy, a serving soldier in the county regiment, 'The Hampshires', returning back to Romsey and being reunited with his young family.

Nevertheless she was able to celebrate this special day, albeit in a modest way, by taking her two small children to an outdoor tea party held at the back of Footners (the solicitors) off Love Lane. By today's standards it was a modest affair, but typical of such celebratory treats - trestle tables, plates of sandwiches, cakes and cups of tea for the Mums and squash and lemonade for the kids.

Although VE Day signalled the end of the War in Europe, there was still fierce fighting in the Far East and that campaign had to be won before any general demobilisation could take place. So Elsie's hopes at the time were qualified by this serious proviso. In the event, following the dramatic conclusion of the War in the Far East, Percy was demobbed and returned to Romsey in 1946 to resume his job as a local signalman on the old Southern Railway, as it was known before the nationalisation of the railways. Elsie laughingly recalls Percy's arriving home in his demob suit, only to find that, because of the rationing of clothing with all sales controlled by official issues of clothing coupons, his

pre-war stock of shirts had been cut up by Elsie and used by her to make blouses, skirts, shirts and shorts for her two youngsters.

John Sullivan, who now lives in North Baddesley, was 13 years old at the end of the War, and well remembers his VE Day tea party held down at the Salmons' Leap in that 'square' in front of the Mill. It was a lovely sunny day and the old trestle tables had plates of sandwiches, home-made buns and cakes, plus (he thinks) jellies - quite a feast for those days of rationing and austerity. After, in true kid style, they let off steam by running off and chasing each other up the overlooking Green Hill.

It was as a direct result of the War that John's family were living in Romsey. His father was a regular soldier in the Royal Artillery and John was born in India when his father was stationed out there with his family. Later, John's Dad, the Regimental Quartermaster Sergeant (RQMS), survived the evacuation of Dunkirk and was stationed with his regiment in the Romsey area. He managed to arrange accommodation and bring his family to the town, where he rented the gardener's cottage in the grounds of La Sagesse Convent. As a result John became an adopted Romsonian attending the Convent School which at the time educated both boys and girls.

Among his schoolfriends, with whom he has kept touch over the years, is Ann Somers, (nee Tryhorn), who now lives in Romford. Ann, lived in The Meads, with her mother, Molly, (now 97 years old and resident in the Cedar Lawn Nursing Home) and her father the late Charles Tryhorn. Charles was the organist and choirmaster at the Abbey



The party that John Sullivan and Ann Tryhorn attended at the Salmon Leap, the distinctive porch of number 3, The Causeway is still there. At that time the cottage was occupied by Mrs Pay.

Ann's mother (in her hat!) is at the right with the tea urn in front of her, the tall gentleman looking at the camera is Colonel Downes, DSO, a veteran of WW1 and a much respected Romsonian. John Sullivan can be seen - just - at the other end of the table. Somehow Ann doesn't appear in the photo.

and a plaque on the back of the organ in the north aisle records that he carried out these duties for some thirty years, from 1927 to 1957.

Ann recalls being at the same tea party as John on VE Day but her fun for the day didn't end there because in the evening she went on to a Bonfire Party, organised by the residents of Botley Road and held in The Harrage. One has to remember that there was plenty of open space around Harrage House at that time, before it was developed. After this party Ann with her parents and friends walked home and remembers that there was dancing late into the night in the Market Place to music provided on a Tannoy system. There was, apparently, plenty of space for the dancing in the Market Place because Palmerston's statue had been removed for the duration of the War

and placed lying down in the grounds of the Abbey, where she recalls it being used by the children for scrambling and play. He was not moved back to his present plinth until well after the War. For Ann, as a young girl, the night-time bonfire treat was an exciting and new experience, being out late at a party and outdoors too, having fun and then seeing all those people dancing in the street at night with the street lights blazing away after almost six years of the blackout. She has never forgotten: the memory of VE Day 1945 remains with her to this day, sixty years later.

However, the biggest VE Day party in the town must surely have been the

one that was organised by the residents of Malmesbury Road. It was held in the old Scout Hut, which was then in Mill Lane, but is now the site of the home of Mr and Mrs Alan Price, 'The Gate House', 37 Mill Lane. It is reckoned that about one hundred children were at this party.

James Dunning

We would like to thank Tom Drew, Major Dunning, Malcolm Heathcote and LTVAS for their help with the VE Day photographs

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Romsey Arts Festival 2005

Romsey's three-yearly Arts Festival comes round again this year, from July 9 to 24. It's a fine thing for the town, and as you would expect the Society is supporting it *con brio*. We are organising and sponsoring:

'Romsey La Ronde'. This traditional opening of Romsey gardens, big and small, formal and informal, will be on Sunday July 17, starting earlier than usual at 12 noon, and going on till 6pm. Refreshments will be available in three of the dozen or more gardens involved in this relaxed and always enjoyable event. Jo Kyte is organising it on behalf of the Social Committee, and she would welcome a few volunteers among the membership to spend an hour supervising one of the gardens – to give the owner a break and a chance to see some of the others. If you can help in this way please call her on 522865. There will be a 'dial-a-ride' bus roving between gardens to help those unable to walk far.

'Some Romsey Buildings and their Architects' - an illustrated talk by Paul Gardner, on Monday July 11 at 8pm in King John's House. Though Romsey has never been particularly fashionable, a few of its buildings are the work of

notable architects. Paul will place some of these in the context of their architects' lives and other work, including Broadlands (Henry Holland), the former Vicarage (Benjamin Ferrey), the present Library and Sunflower Lodge (William Eden Nesfield) and the former Congregational Church (Bonella and Paull).

Ovid's 'Metamorphoses' – extracts read by Chris Amery, on Monday July 18 at 8pm in King John's Garden (or the House if wet). In the year 8 AD the Roman poet Ovid produced this definitive account of the Greek and Roman myths – at once subtle and violent, erotic and elegant, tender and terrifying. Starting with the creation of the world, Chris's readings (mainly of Ted Hughes's translation) will aim to bring these wonderful stories to life.

'On the lighter side' - an evening of light-hearted verse, songs and good humour organised by Mike Bull, with music by the local singing group 'Cantilena' and hopefully the Mountbatten School Jazz Band as well. It will be on Thursday July 21 at 7.30pm in King John's Garden (or the House if wet).

Every household in Romsey will soon get a copy of the Arts Festival 2005 programme, and tickets will be on sale at the Heritage Centre. Please support and enjoy the Festival as a whole and the Society's events in particular!

Quiz Night



It was full house on 4 February when the Social Committee put on an evening's quiz in Linden Road. John Scarborough teased the cognoscenti with a raft of fiendishly ingenious questions which he and Mike Richardson presented. The Committee laid on a ploughman's supper. There was plenty here to satisfy all tastes and to make a good profit for Society funds.

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