News Sheet *January 2010 Issue No 105*

Romsey & District Society

Important 2010 dates: Tuesday 16 February, Annual General Meeting • Friday 23 April, Annual Lecture • Thursday 20 May,Annual Dinner

The Many Faces of Romsey

During last summer's half-term, Roger Harris and Ann Morris set up a Community Art Project based at King John's House. Visitors were offered a rolled-out sheet of terracotta clay and then invited to 'make a face on it', which could be their own or someone else's. They were surprised by the scale of the response. More than 160 people, ranging in age from four to eighty-four, tried their hands at clay portraiture. The tiles were later biscuit-fired in the kiln and a selection hung on the wall outside the King John's Tea Rooms.

I.W. Payne and Company Limited
Historic Building Specialists
Design, Specification and Construction of Works of Repair and Alteration
18 The Loco Shop, Dean Hill Park, West Dean, Salisbury, SP5 1ET
Tel: 01794 341226 enquiries@iwpayne.co.uk

Bradbeers
Romsey's Independent Store
Large ranges of
Mens and Ladies fashions
Homewares
Carpets & Curtains
Furniture
Beds & Bedding
2 Restaurants
BELL STREET / CORNMARKET ROMSEY

Why not dine at La Parisienne?
La Parisienne
RESTAURANT · CAFE BAR
21 BELL STREET · ROMSEY · HAMPSHIRE
PHONE 01794 512067
RESERVATIONS PREFERABLE

Next News Sheet April 2010 Copy deadline March 26

Regional Award for *Look at Romsey*

For many years Phoebe Merrick had nursed the idea of completing a survey of Romsey. As an historian, of course she did not, could not, wish to exclude buildings of historic or architectural interest, but her concept was of a work which would embrace all of the town's many parts. She wanted to exclude nothing that was of importance to people who lived in the town: what was important to them was of interest to her. And part of her concern was to draw on their knowledge and experience. There must have been times during the compilation of her multi-volume design statement *Look at Romsey*, (each volume dealing with a different section of the town and serviced by a slightly different group of researchers), when the labours of Hercules seemed like child's play. Phoebe's resolve never faltered, her enthusiasm never dimmed. All her many friends will rejoice that *Look at Romsey* has been recognised by the Royal Town Planning Institute in their regional planning awards as an example of good practice. The Romsey and District Society and Test Valley Borough Council were jointly awarded a Commendation for Good Practice. The RTPI is the professional body of senior planning officers for local authorities and most independent planning consultants

Philip Turner of Winchester made the award on behalf of their committee and he commented that:

As a facilitator of over thirty Design Statements for villages, one for a neighbourhood, and two other Town Design Statements, I am familiar with the process that many local communities have taken and the hard work involved. As Vice President of ECOVAST, the European Council for the Village and Small Town, I am pleased to be able to commend the citizen participation in the planning system that this Design Statement demonstrates, and the benefits it can bring to the historic small town of Romsey.

The Test Valley team with Martin Willey, the president of the Royal Town Planning Institute. From left to right: David Bibby, Senior Planner; Phoebe Merrick, R&DS; Fiona Burt, graphic artist; Cllr. Martin Hatley, Portfolio holder Planning and Transport; and Martin Willey, the president of the Royal Town Planning Institute

Phoebe, in her official capacity as convenor, adds:

The many residents of Romsey who played a part in the production of the thirteen sections of Look at Romsey can be proud of the fact that we live in a town where voluntary effort can produce a design statement good enough to be acknowledged by professional planners across south-east England. Under the leadership of the Romsey and District Society, the project gave all the residents of the town a chance to look at their built environment and to comment upon it. Welcome guidance was given throughout by TVBC Planning Department, especially by Senior Planner David Bibby, and the final publication was designed by their graphic artist, Fiona Burt. Thus Look at Romsey was a fine example of volunteers and the local authority working together for the benefit of the town.

March Stream Clean

Saturday 27th March

Meet at Crosfield Hall at 9.15

The winter will have brought another crop of litter in our streams. We hope that by spending 2 hours on a spring stream clean we can make the town's waterways look better and be more environmentally friendly for the animals that live in and use them.

Wellington boots and rubber gloves are advised. We could do with more people who have or can borrow waders as some of the streams are deeper than they look. If you cannot come, but could lend some, please phone Phoebe Merrick on 01794 513751.

If you are joining the stream clean it is advisable to be up-to-date with your anti-tetanus shot. They need renewing about every ten years. Check with your surgery if in doubt.

Chairman's Column

This is the time of the year that Romsey decks itself out. Lights, old-fashioned but none the worse for that, and Christmas trees, small and large – although these days the large tree that is the centrepiece in the square is somewhat dwarfed by the central lighting pole which now masquerades as a massive mace. Watching the operations, cynics might conclude that while scouts, volunteer firemen and window-cleaners are allowed to use ladders, that method is far too dangerous for lighting contractors who have to erect a scaffolding tower. Long live Health and Safety!

It's a good way to start thinking about Christmas, albeit rather earlier than many would have it, and it says much about Romsey. It is a genuine piece of community action, carried out by volunteers and paid for by Romsey shopkeepers and local businesses. All to make the town look good.

But, like the dog in the advertisement, making Romsey look good is not just for Christmas, it is for life. As a long-term project it must be a continuing concern of the Society. Nor is this interest limited to grand designs for town centre improvement. We all remember the last occasion when such plans were drawn up. Many of us were unhappy about the way in which those proposals were presented and discussed. We all regret the result, that public money that might have been spent on the improvement of our town was withdrawn and spent elsewhere. But there are also continuing concerns, smaller in scale, but of importance.

Shop-fronts is one such concern. Good design and sensitive treatment of shop-fronts are vital to the look of the streets of Romsey. The Society surveys, photographs, reports and nags about shop fronts. With some success. Street clutter. Romsey is probably no worse than many other places. It is easy to become resigned to repetitive, misleading, ugly and just plain pointless signs, lines bollards and so-called 'street furniture'. (If there were a prize for the most pointless sign, 'Do not misuse this seat' on a seat in the bus station would surely be a contender. It reminds one of the apocryphal 'Do not throw stones at this notice', allegedly seen in Wales.) Here, too, the Society keeps up the pressure and makes slow progress. And, of course, there is planning. As well as responding to the big issues, Core Strategies, and suchlike, we examine all important planning applications and we make our views known.

Romsey is a good place to live in. That is why many of us are here, and it is certainly why most of us joined the Society. It must be our purpose to keep it so. The price of which is eternal vigilance. Not to be against all change, for nothing stands still and no one wants to live in a museum, but to seek to ensure that the best is kept, that the worst is improved and that change is effected thoughtfully and carefully.

Robert Grime

Late News. I have just heard about the important award to the Look at Romsey Team (See opposite). Congratulations to Phoebe Merrick who proposed this major initiative and did so much to make it happen.

Just a few Minutes

A selection from recent reports to give members some idea of the ongoing activities of the Society's committees since our last issue.

July 2009 The Chairman reported that the Medwell prizes and certificates were duly presented at Romsey and Mountbatten Schools. An encouraging reply had been received in response to a letter from Roy Perry concerning street clutter. TVBC are writing a Shop Front Design Guide and the Society will resume shop front audits this year. The Buildings Preservation Trust continues to examine the viability of a mixed residential/office development of the Station House. The Society has met representatives of Hampshire County Council (HCC) as the owners and Natural England about the possibility of Woodley Grange Meadows SINC (Site of Importance for Nature Conservation) being entered into Stewardship, which would fund management including scrub clearance. The NEC (Natural Environment Committee) has received data on 12 of the 43 SINCs in our area and is investigating their status and management. We will join Test Valley Borough Council's Environmental Action Group at meetings where biodiversity and the impact of climate change on it are discussed. Two stream cleans have been arranged for inclusion in the coming season's programme. Data is being collected on obstructions that adversely affect pedestrian movement around the town.

August 2009 No Exco meeting.

September 2009 Romsey Town Council agreed to accept responsibility for maintenance and insurance of the Charter Stone at the recent full council meeting. Together with the Chamber of Commerce, the Society will make representations to HCC about the state of Romsey's highways and pavements. We approved Brian Rogles' appointment as the Society's Independent Financial Examiner (for the purposes of the Charities Commission). HCC are sorting out legal matters that should enable the footpath to be completed up the western side of Fishlake Meadows, something for which we have long lobbied. The Chairman and some members visited Emer Bog in North Baddesley at the invitation of the Hampshire Wildlife Trust, which is keen to establish better links with the Society. The owners of a number of SINCs will be approached this autumn to discuss enhancement of conservation management.

October 2009 The Romsey Show office has confirmed we may have a free table and display in the 'Countryside' tent. About 30 people helped remove 0.7 tonnes of weed and rubbish from the town's streams at the autumn stream clean. We met the owners of Timsbury Lakes to discuss their forthcoming planning application for this site of high wildlife interest and has commented on the brief for an assessment of its impact. An NEC member has produced a summary of the wildlife interest and management needs of Top Green SINC at Lockerley. Blocked gullies resulting in pavements being difficult for pedestrians to use in wet weather have mostly been cleared by HCC. Planning permission has been granted for an office building at 3a Station Road (the old Spacagna building) that in outline accords with our suggestion for the site when we objected to the first application.

November 2009 We continued meeting Southern Water to discuss sewage system weak spots, monitored and reported blocked drains, investigated the effect on Squab Wood and Roke waste disposal sites of the new HCC Minerals & Waste proposals, monitored developments on the Ashfield Tyre Dump tyre "crumbing" plans, surveyed signage on approach roads into Romsey and started a report for the highways authority. We agreed to take from the Romsey 2020 committee the work they had started to study Romsey roads. We will assess the Viridor's Squabb Wood site for wildlife interest next summer. We are also investigating the ownership of some Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs) with a view to approaching owners. A committee member continues to maintain contact with the Transition Towns Steering Group. We declined proposals from the Civic Trust Initiative to join a re-established Civic Trust with a much increased subscription; reviewed the RDS 'Forward Strategy' document and the associated Capital Projects Fund, voted £1000 for Rev Tim Sledge's 'Welcome to Romsey' brochure and website and agreed to again pay for Romsey Railway Station's hanging flower baskets. We noted Buildings Preservation Trust activity on the Stationmaster's House proposals and the Signal Box. The Shopfront Audit Group has completed the 2009 audit with some 200 photos and will complete their report by year-ending.

SHLAA, SHLAA, Quick Quick SHLAA –

Should we dance to its tune, or sit this one out?

The Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment is a statutory part of the lead-in to the new Local Development Framework. Landowners/developers submit a list of all major sites they think potentially developable, and TVBC is obliged to publish this before deciding which to propose for housing in its forthcoming new 'Core Strategy' (CS) draft. The total SHLAA input for southern Test Valley amounts to about 10,000 homes; 3,900 are required in total for the period up to 2026, and several hundred of them are already in plan, and/or will not come from 'major sites'.

Reasonably enough, allotment holders are upset at the thought that their Southampton Road plots are considered, by the landowner, 'potentially developable'. But nearly everyone near, or affected by, a site listed in the SHLAA is unhappy. There is no way 3,900 homes will be built without antagonising many people. The happiest ones will be the 7,000+ new occupants (who, let's not forget, may include our children and/or local families).

So what's the Society's view? Well, as to the SHLAA process, there is a lot to be said for the discipline of listing every conceivable site, good, bad or in-between, though it was never envisaged that there should be detailed discussion of each at this stage. We won't be commenting on the SHLAA – we shall wait for the new CS draft, to be issued for public consultation early in 2010.

As to the substance, virtually all recent public comment has centred on the allotments site, mainly on the grounds that they are a long-established facility, providing an ecologically sound use for good agricultural land near enough to the town for the holders to walk or cycle to. All true. And there is another reason for fearing the development of the Southampton Road site: in the 1990s the Inspector decided against a Tesco supermarket on the football club site across the road, largely on the grounds that the area was/is 'countryside' and therefore inappropriate. The Society was strongly against the supermarket application, so we should take seriously the danger that development of the allotments site could jeopardise the countryside status of the land opposite.

The truth is that every site in the SHLAA has its drawbacks and its advantages. And frankly the argument that the allotments need to be within walking distance of the town centre is exactly the same as the argument for building houses there! The question we shall all have to face up to isn't just: are the allotments a good thing? (The answer to that is clearly 'Yes, a very good thing indeed'). It's more like: following a detailed and multi-dimensional 'sustainability analysis' (economic, ecological, social, etc) are they a better use of the land than housing, and a worse site than the other candidates?

When the new CS draft is published, we shall be in a position to compare and contrast. Meanwhile, allotment holders and others can perhaps take comfort from the view that twelve months ago, in TVBC's old CS, the site was rated as an 'also ran' in the development stakes, and it may be that not much has changed substantially since then.

Chris Amery
Chairman, R&DS Planning Committee

We welcome the following new members

Mrs Ann Smith	Romsey
Alan and Susan Joseph	Romsey
Mrs Jeanette Kell	Romsey
Alwyn & Barbara Marshall	Ampfield
Mrs Pat Boniface	East Wellow
Stephen & Anita Wood	Romsey
Ms Joan Fogarty	Romsey
Terence & Jennifer Adams	Romsey
Mrs Elizabeth Morley	Rownhams
Mrs Dorothy Ross	Braishfield
Mrs Jean Davidson	Romsey
Julian Jones	Romsey

St Nicholas

'Photo courtesy of *Open Door*'

Many visitors to the Abbey have commented on this striking image of St Nicolas which stands on a corbel at the entrance to the chapel dedicated to him. When we asked Liz Hallett, who edits *Open Door*, if she could tell us more about it, she confirmed that it was given to the Abbey in 2005 as a gift from an anonymous donor. It was unveiled by a child named Nicholas, who is a regular member of the congregation. The sculptor is Peter Eugene Ball. As the basis for the figure he used a piece of driftwood that he found on the shore of Southampton Water. Examples of his work may be seen in Winchester and Portsmouth Cathedrals and in many other prominent churches. There is a particularly fine crucifix above the chancel arch in the tiny, gem-like Norman church of St Andrew's at Chilcomb, on the outskirts of Winchester.

JOIN THE SOCIETY

Membership & News Sheets _____ £9 pa
Family _____ £15pa
Seniors _____ £5pa

Membership Sec. 01794 322534 or print form at Romseynet.org. uk

Michelmersh Bricks

The previous owner of Michelmersh Bricks, David Hill. wrote an article for the News Sheet in July1980. At that time they had existed for a hundred years or possibly longer.

Local trades and crafts have traditionally provided employment for villagers. Sadly, many of these have gradually died out because of development, new materials and increased technology. Fortunately, Michelmersh Brickworks have kept pace with the times, culminating in it becoming a public limited company in 2003. This has provided finance for the improvement and development of production equipment for its group of four plants, all specialising in high-quality handmade bricks and tiles. The other three plants are at Telford, Loughborough and Chesham. The improved efficiency has enabled a reduction in energy consumption, an asset as fuel costs are increasing. The company produces eleven million bricks and tiles per annum.

Success is in part due to the local clay. Planning permission for further extraction was granted in 2007 which provided eight acres adjoining the plant in Michelmersh. The bricks last for well over a hundred years and are fully recyclable.

Pallant house New Wing, Chichester: The judges commented "An object lesson in how to respect existing buildings."

In 2006 the group were supreme winners of the brick awards for the western elevation of St Pancras station, the judges saying it was the finest they had seen. The design reminded me of the arches of the great Mosque in Cordoba, Spain. In the Brickwork Development Association's 1997 awards they were supreme winners for the Pallant House Gallery new wing in Chichester.

The recession and uncertain economic conditions have resulted in a cautious view of the business but they are confident of the long-term demand for their expertise. They are a resourceful company with good ideas. Repair and maintenance are always in demand and brick and tile volumes have stabilised.

The new showroom has an interesting display of all the types of bricks available and is well worth a visit.

Gill Roberts

Morale Booster

Our members sometimes mull over the problems of our Society. Are we maintaining our membership? Are we attracting younger members? Are we effective in shaping and caring about our local environment? So here is a boost to our morale, gleaned from his report back to the Executive Committee, after our treasurer Harry Tuffill had attended a meeting of the Civic Society Initiative at Portsmouth on September 1. He observed that there was a strong representation of eighteen local societies, stretching from Chichester to Fordingbridge and from the Isle of Wight to Guildford and then continued:

…I have come away with a definite impression, without becoming too complacent, that Romsey & District Society is doing OK. We don't seem to be at loggerheads with local planners; we do have many capable volunteer specialists; we have a very large membership. On this last point I suspect we have the largest percentage and actual representation amongst all the societies at the meeting, certainly bigger than Southampton and Portsmouth, and maybe even Winchester and Guildford. I suspect this is because the town is small enough to come together in a communal way, so unlike a city such as Southampton, which is a far more heterogeneous mix of different areas. And we have an excellent newsletter …

MICHAEL RHODES

EXPERIENCE AND PROFESSIONALISM

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

SALES 01794 514455 LETTINGS 01794 502500

MICHAELRHODES.CO.UK

ALEXANDRA HEATING SERVICES

Gas Safe Registered

Specialist in maintenance, Installation and servicing

- **Central heating systems installed**
- **Boiler breakdown and servicing**
- **Plumbing • Gas, oil, LPG**
- **Oil tank replacement service**

No call out charge and free estimates
24 hour breakdown service all areas covered

Tel: 01722 417873
Fax: 01722 417874

ADVERTS
in this news sheet
may be read by more than
2000
Some of our members keep
them for more than
10 YEARS
They can be read on the WWW by
MILLIONS MORE
Yet they cost from
ONLY £30
02380 813400
or philipwarneruk@aol.com

BELLS

Your local Family & Company Solicitors

⁕ Wills, Probate & Inheritance
⁕ Residential & Commercial Conveyancing
⁕ Licensing
⁕ Landlord & Tenant
⁕ Family, Children & Divorce
⁕ Employment
⁕ Litigation
⁕ Debt Recovery

5 Market Place, Romsey
Hampshire SO51 8FX
Tel: 01794 513328
Fax: 01794 515689
Email: bells@bells-romsey-solicitors.co.uk
Website: www.bells-romsey-solicitors.co.uk

Waterways of Winchester

A capacity audience in the Court Room of the Town Hall enjoyed a fascinating trip through history as Elizabeth Proudman explained the relationship between Winchester and its waterways. The talk was enlivened with interesting anecdotes and slides.

The source of the main river, the Itchen, is just south of Cheriton. The origin of the name is obscure but it has been known since William the Conqueror's time. Four tributaries, the little Itchen, the Arle, the winter-bourne Candover Brook and later the Headbourne, all meet and flow under the city bridge in Winchester. The river then continues along Weirs Walk to St Cross and the villages beyond on its way to the sea near Southampton. The river is fed by aquifers in the chalk downland. The chalk soaks, cleans and filters the rainfall which gives Hampshire its pure water.

Whereas Iron Age settlements avoided the low-lying valley, the Romans, who arrived in 43AD, changed everything by building near the river. Five roads converged on the city bridge – their own Spaghetti junction! Recent evidence of gravel terraces near the Butter Cross suggests that the Romans found a second river and perhaps canalised it. This might account for the later water problems at the Cathedral. Other excavations revealed the oak lintel of a water gate, cleverly designed to open both ways, allowing ingress and egress of water as required. A land drain in the Brooks area and a large stone block at North Walls, part of the Roman city wall, were also found. As a slide showed, another wall had been built above.

This second wall was the handiwork of King Alfred's time as a defence against the Danes. The river flowed outside the city walls until a division allowed water to flow inside the city for use by residents. These branches still flow across what is now the recreation ground and make their way through Upper, Middle and Lower Brook Street, on to Friarsgate and across the High Street to the walls of the cathedral. The streams served a public lavatory known as The Maiden Chamber. They also served mills of various kinds and as the Bishop controlled the river and all its activity the church took all the profit. Frustrated citizens built their own mill but their enterprise foundered as the water flow was also under the Bishop's control.

In the 900's St Ethelwold made further use of the streams when he erected a Benedictine Abbey with a water conduit near his newly-built Cathedral. Excavations revealed the monks' dormitorium (where water was required) and as late as the 1870's the Rev Woodward excavated a mound behind the Deanery and found the monks' necessarium – two ditches with 23 holes over each allowing 46 monks to talk and do business! The water flowing through the ditches acted as a cleaning mechanism.

After Cromwell took the Royalist town during the Civil War a canal was started in the 1660's giving an 11 mile stretch to Southampton. It stopped as a commercial venture in the 1830's but is now an amenity giving a pleasant rural walk through Eastleigh to Southampton.

King Alfred's urban streams served the town well until its population grew from 5,000 in 1800 to 19,000 by 1880. The newly-built railway attracted many new residents especially nearby at Oram's Mount (an old Iron Age enclosure); the prison and hospital were also built during the 1800's. The new buildings had cesspits but they often overflowed downhill polluting the town's water supply. This led to outbreaks of cholera causing the average life span of its residents (especially the poorer ones in the lowest area of the town) to be 8-13 years less than the national average of 53. In 1851 Dr Andrew Crawford pointed out that polluted water was the cause of the outbreaks and that main drains were necessary. However as this would have put 6d on the rates it was rejected in an election! It took a government commission to force the city to agree and eventually the first sewage works were built in Garnier Road.

Elizabeth concluded by saying how fortunate we are to live in towns with clean water supplies.

Shirley Rogers

SUBCRIPTIONS WERE DUE ON 1 NOVEMBER

Adults £9, Family £15, Seniors £5

Please make life easier for John Wattie our membership secretary. Pay your sub by standing order. Phone on 322534 for the form, or print one out from www.Romseynet.org.uk
Or if you have not done so already please now post your cheque to:
John Wattie, 8 Old Farm Copse, West Wellow, Romsey, SO51 6RJ

a co-educational day school
age range 3 - 13 years

STROUD SCHOOL ROMSEY

IAPS, ISC Accredited

Where a Good Education & Happy Memories go Hand in Hand!

Where Standards are High and Classes are Small

In a Rural Location yet within easy reach of Southampton, Winchester, Chandlers Ford and M27!

Highwood Lane Romsey SO51 9ZH
Tel Romsey 01794 513231
Fax 01794 514432

SASH WINDOW RENOVATION SPECIALISTS

Restoration, Repairs and draught-proofing of Traditional Box Sash Windows

01794 341 225
www.ailimited.co.uk

Ampfield Electrical

Commercial, Domestic & Industrial
Rewires & New Installations,
Electrical Inspection & Testing,
Fault-finding and Repair
Sockets & Lights, Fuseboxes
Heating & Ventilation
Fire Alarms and Security,
TV & Phone Points
Quality work at competitive prices
Phone us now for a free quote
(023) 8073 1205
www.ampfieldelectrical.co.uk
73 Ringwood Drive, North Baddesley

Edwina Mountbatten House

Residential Care Home and sheltered flats for the elderly

Broadwater Road
Romsey 01794 518317

Emer Bog

Hidden amongst the fields and woodlands of North Baddesley and Ampfield lies a little gem of a wildlife reserve. Covering 130 acres, the Emer Bog & Baddesley Common site is jointly owned by the Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust and Natural England. While recognised and designated primarily for its bog and wet woodland, the site also boasts heathland, grassland and mature broadleaf woodland, making it suitable and appealing to all aspects of wildlife. So appealing in fact that there are site records for 297 plants, 100 bird species and approximately 780 invertebrates. Over a third of UK moth species can be found on the site not to mention a fifth of UK spider species.

With ten years' funding secured through Natural England's Higher Level Stewardship scheme back in early 2008, work is well under way to restore and maintain the site's patchwork of habitats. We are removing tall stands of birch trees and birch/bramble scrub to encourage the heather to return to the heathlands. We are also removing willow from the bog to maintain the critical water levels and cutting bracken to persuade the more delicate acid-grassland flowers,such as tormentil, to return. It is hoped that all this work will have a positive impact on other aspects of the site's wildlife and that by clearing and increasing the bog's surface area, the number of dragonflies, such as common darter and four-spot chaser, should increase. This would provide suitable prey for bird species such as hobby, which hawk for food across the water. Sympathetic scrub clearance work should also help other nationally important species such as nightjar, adder and great crested newt.

Improvements have not simply been limited to habitat management. Thanks to additional generous funding by Natural England, the site proudly unveiled a new 560m boardwalk in early spring 2009. The boardwalk passes through the wet woodland habitat where nuthatch can frequently be seen and, in summer, white admiral butterflies can be viewed around veteran oak trees. The boardwalk delivers visitors to the edge of the bog where water rail can be heard calling and tussock sedges and marsh cinquefoil dominate the wetland flora. A mixture of highland cattle and New Forest ponies graze the site. The hardy nature of the cattle works well in the wet grasslands of Baddesley Common and on the bog surface, while pony grazing is more suited to the heathlands and the acid grassland on the southern and eastern edges of the bog. The density of grazing will soon be reduced to match that of the nearby New Forest. For the past few years stock levels have been kept high to help keep scrub and grass growth in check.

If all this work seems time-consuming, spare a thought for the dedicated volunteers who invest their time in the upkeep of the site throughout the year. Without their help and support, we would not have been able to achieve what we have in such a short space of time.

John O'Reilly. Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust's Reserves Officer.

For more information about the work of the Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust or about Emer Bog and Baddesley Common including a map of the site visit the Trust's website at www.hwt.org.uk.

photo: Bob Howlett

Hursley's Leaning Chimneys

During the RDS visit to Hursley Church last February, Chris Esplin-Jones pointed out the lean on some of the highly decorated, rubbed brick chimneys that are such a feature of the village. He explained how this comes about. Because chimneys are subjected to intense heating and cooling cycles when in use, they are better built of brick, a fired material, than stone. However, even brick has its problems. When the chimney is in use, the heat is distributed evenly around it, maintaining its shape. Trouble arises when fires are no longer lit, since the part above the roof line is still exposed to the full force of the weather. At this point, to use a trade term, the chimney may be 'drawn over by the sun' as the lime mortar on the side facing the sun dries out while the side in shadow retains its moisture, ultimately inducing a lean.

Dyslexic?
Stanbridge Earls School
Romsey Hampshire SO51 0ZS
Day and boarding school
Teacher ratio 1 to 7
26 additional specialists
Tel: 01794 529400
www.stanbridgeearls.co.uk
Ref. 8704

Yesterday…

Romsey's market officially originated in the reign of Henry I (1100-1135). Perhaps influenced by his wife, 'Good Queen Maud', who had been educated by the Benedictine nuns of Romsey Abbey, Henry granted the rights of a weekly Sunday market and annual fairs to the Abbess and Convent. Thus the location of the Market Place is significant: it evolved just outside the wall of the Abbey's monastic precinct. The Abbess's Steward could easily make sure that matters were proceeding correctly and all tolls were being collected for the Abbey coffers.

The triangular shape of the Market Place was largely the result of the funnelling effect as stallholders crowded in to catch those leaving the area by crossing the 'Broad Bridge' that spanned the waterway at the east end. This waterway (the Holbrook) marked the eastern boundary of Romsey Infra until 1876.

If there was ever an earlier customary market, all traces of it have been lost.

The success of the weekly market has varied over the centuries, as different influences have come to bear. It is thought that the Puritans were responsible for changing the market day from Sunday to Saturday, though there were more prosaic reasons for the 1826 change to Thursday.

After the First World War, as traffic began to get busier and new government regulations came into force, the weekly market was relocated to the present Newton Lane carpark. That closed in the 1960s. For a while there was a small weekly market in the yard of the Dolphin Hotel, but more recently, since the Cornmarket became a pedestrian area, a small colourful market has been held there on Tuesdays, Fridays and Saturdays. Occasional continental markets are also held, along with special events such as the Beggars' Fair in July, when the place comes alive with street entertainment.

The Market Place became the focus of the town, not only as the location of the weekly market and annual fairs but also as a public forum. Punishments of all sorts were held from whippings to executions, and the more risible stocks were kept there. It was the place where public announcements were first made. It was thus the logical place for a town hall once James I's charter of 1607 had given borough status to Romsey Infra. (No 23 Market Place was the first town hall.) After 1842 until about 1919 the Romsey Agricultural Show was also held in the Market Place, initially as a Christmas Market. Similarly, the Market Place was the centre for the Horse & Poultry Show, which in 1919 amalgamated with the Agricultural Show to evolve as the Romsey Show of today.

Although people get their news via technology nowadays, the Market Place remains a popular venue for a range of 'happenings' from march-pasts to protests, from Christmas and New Year celebrations to royal visits.

Barbara Burbridge

…a

As you walk up the town on a Tuesday, Friday small but lively market. A little investigation rev in the hearts of Romsonians. Here is a chance to

The doyenne of the market and its unofficial In Romsey for twenty-two years. She started as th Then the market lost their current flower-seller Get - or bits and pieces) and whose mother had, to flowers. He introduced her to the wholesale market days. She says there used to be more ca each other and it was easier to call out jokes acr by, she supplies churches, businesses, hotels and

Across from her is Long's the greengrocer's. Th retirement and his two sons. They have a big ce and two or three market stalls. Their stock con emphasis on locally grown produce. What diffe special offers and discounted lines. Their stall ge refrigerated store at the back of the shop.

Perhaps the most surprising stallholder is Kirste She took a first degree at Southampton Univer Diversity. She then spent ten years in Equality a Council and then the University again, holdin she decided to give up the day job and develop

Kimbridge Farm Shop
Kimbridge, near Romsey
Tel: (01794) 340777
open 7 days a week
Delightful country farm shop in the Test Valley, famed for its home-grown pink-fleshed rainbow trout, smoked trout, wide selection of smoked produce, British cheeses, wines and sherries, fresh fruit, vegetables, flowers and plants, farm eggs, local honey, locally made cakes and much more.
Annie's
the place to meet for morning coffee, light lunches and afternoon teas
(01794) 340556
phone for opening times
You'll find us off the A3057 Romsey/Stockbridge Road 3.5 miles north of Romse, turning

A.H. Cheater
Funeral Directors
Romsey
Independent Family Owned
Funeral Directors
122 The Hundred, Romsey
Tel: 01794 513393
Day and Night Service

JB WILKINS • • KENNEDY
Chartered Accountants & Business Advisers
Comprehensive personal and business service for all audit, accountancy and taxation matters.
Free initial discussion without obligation.
Tel: 01794 515441
romsey@wilkinskennedy.co
3-4 Eastwood Court, Broadwater Road, Romsey, Hampshire, SO51 8JJ

nd Today

or Saturday, it's good to see the bustle and colour of Romsey's eals an interesting community with its own dynamic and a place o meet some of the stallholders.

nformation Bureau is the Flower Lady, who has been coming to e Men's Wear Lady when it was held in the Dolphin Courtyard. so Gypsy John, who had a Swag stall (urban slang - Stuff We All in the past, sold flowers from an old pram, suggested she switch ers in Southampton and that's been her line since on all three maraderie in the Dolphin because the stalls were set out facing oss to each other, but she still enjoys her stall. As well as passers d pubs and looks fit to go on for ever.

his is part of a family business run by a father moving towards entral depot at Whiteparish which supplies six shops in the area mes from Southampton docks and London, but they lay special rentiates the stall from the shop is that there is space to display nerally sells out, but leftovers can be handily moved into the big

en Dey, who sells jewellery on the other side of the flower stall. sity in Politics and Law, followed by a Master's in Equality and and Diversity Management at the University, Hampshire County g the line in anti-discrimination legislation and training. Then her hobby of making jewellery. She buys the beads and metals

The Bear & Ragged Staff
Stoneymarsh, Michelmersh, Romsey
tel: 01794 368602
Informal and relaxed dining with
Quality Home Cooked Food; with a variety
that will satisfy any appetite and taste
Fresh Bean to Cup Coffee
Espresso ~ Cappuccino ~ Latte
Quality fine wines by the glass or bottle
Quality cask ales ✲ Real log fires
Everything that you would expect from
A Quality Hostelry

and creates the pieces herself, but finds that she has to keep constantly alert so as not to source the materials, gold especially, from unfair trade sources. It is clear her former job peeps through. She goes to Winchester Market as well, but has a soft spot for Romsey, which has better and friendlier customers.

Her boyfriend is Jan de Filippo, an Italian who, with his chef, the half-Spanish Steve, sells olives. They are based in a factory unit at New Milton, where Steve marinades the olives, infuses the oils and bakes olive bread. Jan does, however, earn the title of Greek Olive Man because the olives are imported from Greece for the very good reason that they are the best olives.

For Tuesday clothes there are V. A. Women's Wear and Regatta. The V is for Val, another longstanding stallholder since the move into the Cornmarket. She loves what she calls the 'village atmosphere' at Romsey and the chance to meet all types of people of all ages. She buys from London factories, builds up a strong rapport with her regulars, knows their wardrobes and can say, 'This would go well with that skirt you bought a few weeks ago.' The Regatta man, who is part of a big concern that is based outside Downton but stretches over Wiltshire and Hampshire, also praises his Romsey clientele as 'lovely people'.

Lesley, of Lesley's Alterations and Repairs, is a newcomer to the Market but not to Romsey since she merely crossed the road from her shop that is now the Oxfam Bookshop. She found that, as time went on, the only successful part of her haberdashery business was the alterations and repairs. Indeed, in the month before she started the stall, she couldn't walk down the street without people coming up to her and handing her alterations to do. 'Don't go!', they said, so she took the stall. There's no changing room, but she is happy to go to customers' houses for fittings.

Perhaps the most unexpected stalls are the French ones. On Friday there is a genuine French boulangerie. The baker says he would be 'normal' in France, but is 'spécial' in England. He is based in Kent, and drives from there to Romsey, but he is a native of Le Touquet and his sales assistant says the only thing that's not French about the stall is herself. They always sell out, so if you want to try their delicious apple tarts, get there early. On Saturday there is French feast, run by an extremely friendly Frenchman who is happy to talk French, so you can buy delicious produce with the bonus of a little language practice.

Over the three days the market offers quite a range of products. Friday is the day for a butcher, pet products, carpets, more jewellery and a stall of phones, phone straps, batteries and watches. There is an Antiques and Curiosities man from Hiltingbury who is, by trade, a builder and carpenter but finds release on Saturdays in running his stall as a hobby. "Romsey is a civilised place," he says and he enjoys the repeat clients. Tuesday's perennial plant stall (where you can get sound advice) is supplemented on Saturdays by bedding plants. There is a second sweet stall, though it appears Romsonians are not great sweet-eaters, an array of herbs and spices and, sometimes, baskets sourced directly from Morocco. It all adds to the interest of our town - indeed, the town seems quite empty on non-market days. Long may the Market continue.

Caroline Gardner

Walks report for Autumn 2009

The Hamble Walkers

On September 26, Martin Gale led twenty-one keen walkers who met at Bursledon railway station on a fine Saturday morning. Hats and sun cream were the order of the day. The walk took them through the lovely village of Old Bursledon and across Hamble Common into Hamble village. A new experience for many was a ride on the small Pink Ferry across the river to Warsash, which at a cost of only £1.50 was money well spent. The second part of the walk took them upstream, following the river as far as Swanick, past the marshes and several boatyards. Then it was back to the main road and across the river to return to the railway station. Some of the walkers stayed on to enjoy a lunch and great views of the boats and river at the Jolly Sailor

On a sunny October Sunday, with the Autumn colours still vibrant, I led a group of about a dozen from Amport to Quarley and back, which took us over Hay Down with its lovely wide views. We then followed a long and very straight path, probably Roman in origin. On the horizon we could see Quarley Hill Fort, originally Iron Age but also believed to have been used by the Romans. After a short breather at St. Michael's church in Quarley we took the opportunity to explore inside this pretty church which has some excellent stained glass. As our walk took us back into Amport, we passed the very grand Amport House. During WW2 it was Headquarters, RAF Maintenance Command and is now the home of their Chaplains' School.

November saw some very inclement weather and Jeff Watkin was unable to lead his proposed walk from Redlynch to Pepperbox Hill, but Martin Gale led four intrepid walkers in the wind and rain and they enjoyed themselves in spite of the weather. Let us hope that we can put this walk back on the calendar for next year.

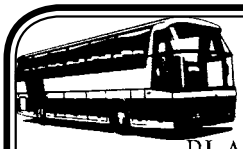
The Hamble Ferry

Walks to come:

On Wednesday, February 3, 2010 Diane Hargreaves tel: 512315) will lead a walk of five miles. Meet at 9.30 at the Lantern Inn, Whitenap; optional pub lunch. On Sunday, March 14, Caroline and Paul Gardner will lead a walk of about 5 miles round the Royal Victoria Country Park. After entering the Park, ignore the first car park on the right, by Southampton Water, and the second one, signposted to the left, and take the last one, to the left, behind the Heritage Centre. The parking metre charge is £2. We start the walk at 10.15 from in front of the Cedar Tea Room, which is reached by a small path from the car park.

On Page 15, you will find preliminary information from Michael and Heather George on the Annual Walk which they are leading on Saturday, June 19.

Sylvia Roverato



SALISBURY PLAYHOUSE

THEATRE VISITS

Once a month we organise a coach trip from ROMSEY, on a Monday Evening to see a performance at Salisbury Playhouse

For further details please contact
Alan Corkill
Salisbury Playhouse
Malthouse Lane
Salisbury
Wiltshire SP2 7RA
Tel (01722) 320117

Chris King
Carpenter, Joiner, Cabinet Maker, Pattern Maker
• Built in Furniture a speciality
• Write or phone for a colour leaflet
Box Cote, Pound Hill, Landford, Salisbury Wilts SP5 2AA Tel Romsey 390520

PEPPERCORN
Natural Foods
11 LATIMER STREET, ROMSEY TEL 513499
we stock a comprehensive selection of natural & specialist foods for allergy diets and vegetarians, homeopathic and natural remedies and also environmentally friendly household products
OPEN
WEEKDAYS: 9.30AM - 5PM
(Wednesdays 9.30am - 1pm)

Avensis
COACH TRAVEL LTD
✓ Full holiday programme
✓ Day trips
✓ Private tours arranged
✓ Private hire
T: 01794 515260 F: 01794 512260
E: info@avensiscoaches.co.uk
W: avensiscoaches.co.uk
Avensis Coach Travel Ltd. (formerly Buddens)
29 Premier Way Abbey Park
Romsey Hampshire SO51 9AQ

The Secret Life of Bees

Most of us have a little knowledge of bees. We know of queens, workers and drones living in highly organized societies, pollinating plants as they collect nectar. We may have seen a swarm, and certainly we will all have tasted honey at some time. And we might know that bees are in a worrying decline and that the Government is spending £2,000,000 on research into the problem.

But when Roy Godfrey, *the Honey Man*, came to talk to the Society in October a whole new light was thrown on the lives of these extraordinary creatures. The statistics are amazing; bees have been around for two hundred million years, there can be up to 120,000 bees in one hive, a queen can lay 2,000 eggs a day, and it takes twenty kilos of flowers to make one jar of honey. However, although these numbers are impressive, it is in the lives of the individuals that the real fascination lies.

Worker bees live for only five weeks. And yet in those five weeks each bee follows a career path of such diversity that one can truly say it is a life filled with variety. Spending a few days in each job the bee will be employed as nursemaid, queen attendant, housekeeper, undertaker, forager, scout and guard. Each job requires entirely different skills, and yet only in one does the bee seem to get a 'practice run' – the maiden flight it takes on its first journey outside the hive when it circumnavigates its home to orientate itself and learn the landmarks.

Drones, on the other hand, have just one purpose in life and that is to inseminate the queen. When a new queen sets off to form a new colony she flies high with the drones in pursuit, and one or two will keep up with her and mate. You may think they are the lucky ones. You would be wrong – as soon as copulation is complete the drone's genitals explode and that is the end of him.

But the queen lives on, perhaps for five years, closely monitored and cared for by her workers who constantly check her fecundity. At some stage they will decide that her productivity rate is falling below that required for the health of the colony, and they will kill her, replacing her with a new queen reared in the special 'queen cells'. A sad end to a dedicated life you may think – but there is a final twist to this already extraordinary tale.

Enter the beekeeper. He too knows when a queen is likely to start failing, and he will transfer her to a retirement home. Here she will spend the rest of her natural reproductive life laying a few eggs which will be developed as new queens for the keeper to introduce into hives as required.

What incredible little lives, and what on earth would we do without them? We would simply starve.

Kate Clark

Little Herons

Our photograph shows the upper part of the striking nameplate to 'Little Herons', the new house built at Timsbury to replace the former home of artist Norman Thelwell. This carving on slate is the work of Caroline Dear, whose studio is based in Winchester. Her work was exhibited at last year's Chelsea Flower Show.

Heaton Wines Ltd
Independent Wine Merchant
Wines of character for people of distinction
Apéritifs
Sherry
Champagne
Wines
Port
Digestifs
Glassware
Accessories
35 Church Street
Romsey SO51 8BT
Tel. 01794 830330
www.heaton-wines.com

MCT Electrical
DOMESTIC - COMMERCIAL
All aspects of work undertaken
.New fuse boards
.Security lighting
.House re-wiring
.Down lighting installed
.Storage heating
.Fault finding
.Pat testing
.Smoke alarms installed
For a free no obligation quotation call mike:
02380 861440
07919408103
Smhiscock@btinternet.com
All work niceic guaranteed

Your Carpets cleaned
for just £19.99 each!
Usually £39.98 each
Your Carpets Dry in 15 mins!
Have any three of your carpets thoroughly cleaned & freshened, for only £59.97 total – – that's half our normal prices, just so you can try out our super guaranteed service.
01794 350 003

Norman Court
Preparatory School
Co-educational day and boarding school for children aged 3 to 13+
"An outstanding ethos for learning"
Source : ISI Inspection report
Daily minibus from Romsey
West Tytherley, Salisbury, SP5 1NH
Tel: 01980 862345
www.normancourt.co.uk

The Millennium, Ten Years On

Man has a deep instinct for commemoration. We remember personal and familial anniversaries and centenaries of outstanding people in all areas of human endeavour. We recall events both good and bad. Over centuries, the Christian liturgy has provided a model for national and international ceremonies. To mark and honour or pay tribute is a part of our humanity. It seemed, therefore, a good idea to look back ten years ago to the Millennium to see how it was celebrated in our district and, in particular, what visible signs remain.

In fact, ten years on, there is not a lot to see. Furthermore, memories proved short. It took some digging in The Romsey Advertiser files to catch the sense of occasion, the buzz of plans one might expect for such a huge celebration. Fittingly, our own Phoebe Merrick, a closet Time Lord, conveyed the historical scale with eleven letters to the Advertiser 'sent' at the start of each century since the first millennium. The first one, dated January 1, 1000, began:

Dear Romsey Advertiser,

The world did not end at midnight as had been widely prophesied and I have arrived safely in Romsey, which is a dear little town of under a thousand people. It has an abbey of about ninety nuns who are very grand ladies from the best families in the land. People still talk about Abbess Aelflaeda, who was King Alfred's grand-daughter. Life is very difficult here at the moment because of the Danish raids and the nuns have gone to Winchester to escape them.

Sadly, a future visitor would find scant tangible evidence in Romsey of the end of the second millennium. There were projects. The most ambitious one, reported in our own News Sheet as early as 1996, was Test Valley's carefully crafted proposal for the Sprat and Winkle Way, a pedestrian and cycle link to run between Andover and Romsey by an attractive route along the Anton and Test valleys. It was opposed by landowners. Our own scheme for a modern fountain, themed on a waterwheel to evoke Romsey's heritage, met a shortfall in finance despite Gill Roberts' eloquent appeal in the Romsey Advertiser for support 'so that future generations can say, "This is what Romsey did for the year 2000." 'A flurry of interest arose when the eleven-foot, 108-year-old Fox Mill waterwheel was found in a doomed Hampshire Museums store in Gosport. It was confidently reported that, although in bad shape and needing cast replacements and a steel cradle, it would be placed on the Southampton Road roundabout. It didn't appear. A diligent search has even failed to locate the 'Liquid Amber' tree planted in the grounds of Romsey Rapids by schoolchildren after a service in the Abbey for sixteen schools. It may be there, but without a plaque who is to know? In the end, it was decided that raising funds for the Romsey Hospital Appeal was a worthy millennium project, combined with more ephemeral celebrations.

Ken Fonteneau's Lebanon cedar bench.

Of lesser events, there were an astonishing variety. Planting was a popular choice. Mary Fagin, the Lord Lieutenant of Hampshire, asked people to plant daffodil bulbs for the community and the environment. A Lynx helicopter delivered some 400,000 bulbs to the grounds of Winchester Cathedral and schools in numerous villages, Wellow, Lockerley, East Dean and Crampmoor among them, often supported by Women's Institutes, got out their trowels. Many villages took up their spades to plant trees. North Baddesley's award-winning scheme included oaks, ashes wild cherries, yews, beeches and Scots pines. Mottisfont planted an apple orchard near the Post Office and created a Millennium Walk along Hatt Lane, depicting 2000 years of history, now permanently closed to motorised traffic, while Hursley planted blossom trees along the route to Standon. Perhaps as eye-catching in its way, Romsey Extra ordered a Rowan tree to replace a dead Acer at Woodley Green. Stockbridge, Broughton, Houghton, Michelmersh, Ashley and the Sombornes all made this hopeful gesture to the future.

Refurbishment was similarly seen as an apt way to celebrate. Awbridge renovated the iron railings round its War Memorial, Mottisfont stumped up for a new church lych-gate and Hursley for a new parish notice-board. Kings Somborne had the happy idea of restoring and re-hanging their church bells, last done in !900. Sherfield English built on the need for an improved recreation ground. Plaques in the village hall and All Saints' Church at altruistic Awbridge record their determination to restore sight to blind and partially-sighted Africans by donating to the Kikuyo Eye Clinic in Kenya.

Of course there were plenty of events to mark the occasion, which, though ephemeral, may make a lasting impression on those present. One of our members told me he will never forget being present at the service in Romsey Abbey. Church services were a favoured way to meet the future - the people of Mottisfont walked from all points in the village, in a torchlight procession, to assemble in their parish church. On the night, or over the subsequent year, there were musical concerts, parties and balls, guided walks, an Easter Passion Play and other theatrical performances, exhibitions, workshops, flower and fire festivals, fayres and sporting events, including Test Valley's baton relay that covered its three towns and fifty-six parishes. Children received mugs, women sewed banners and altar frontals, whole villages posed for parish photographs and compiled records of their daily life, lit up their greens, let

The rite of passage stone at West Tytherley.

off fireworks and rang bells. Afterwards they cleared up - by 6.0 am in Romsey.

But what visible signs were left? What can we see ten years on? Next time you drive past North Baddesley Village Hall, look up at its weather vane which features on the top the cross of the Knights Templar and a bridge to symbolise passing into a new era. Or drive northwards through Timsbury and admire the carved village sign set on a plinth of Michelmersh brick with a time capsule in it. Inspired by similar

Broughton village sign, by the Buckinghamshire woodcarver, Jeremy Turner, reflects aspects of the village, notably its dovecote.

signs typical of East Anglia, it testifies to the unity of the two villages. A village sign was also one of three artworks that Broughton commissioned to symbolise its character and nature in marking the Millennium. Jeremy Turner's colourful structure stands on the old Pound. Two other sculptures are sited at either end of the village where the Clarendon Way enters and leaves it. (See photos).

The last village with a physical legacy of the Millenium is West Tytherley. The main monument is a magnificent rite of passage stone, placed in front of the Primary School, 'designed by Daniel Denton aged 10 years'. By invitation, any child or villager who reaches a landmark in their lives may climb through and have their name recorded in a bound logbook (see photo). Besides this striking monument, the village boasts three beautiful benches, each chastely carved with the year 2000, made by our well-known RDS member Ken Fonteneau. He tells how a West Tytherley businessman called Charlie Vincent, who figured in the list of Britain's fifty richest men, donated wood for one of the benches from a Lebanon cedar that had fallen down on his estate and also gave a site for it on top of his septic tank (see photo). Perhaps this mixture of aspiration, imagination, practicality and underlying unease sums up the era pretty exactly.

So, as people who care deeply about our town and district, what conclusions can we draw from all this? There were two problems to celebrating this major event. Phoebe's evocation of the dread felt at the approach of the first millennium had a curious echo at the second, for there was huge concern about the millennium bug. Only about 1% of all computers are the ones we are generally aware of - the rest are imbedded in all the machines and systems that keep our civilisation running. At the very least, we feared that planes might drop from the sky and cash machines refuse us our money. Local authorities and industry were too busy avoiding chaos to fiddle around with inessential matters. Until the dangerous minutes had ticked by, there could be no relaxing. But, more strongly if more abstractly, it seems that the whole scale of the event was too much for us. We commonly use the phrase 'a once-in-a-lifetime event', but here we were dealing with a span of thirty or so generations and the 'dark backward and abysm of time' since the

'Rooks', sculpted by Zoe de l'Isle Whittier in Portland stone, incorporates a map of the Clarendon Way which passes through Broughton

last such event was too remote to build on. Added to this, modern man has to deal with the opposite and astounding perception of time expressed in Richard Corfield's Origins of Life Clock. This spans four billion years and human life does not appear until 11.59. Is it any wonder that time baffles us and that to many it seemed easier to treat the millennium largely as a mega New Year's Eve? Thankfully, with the return of a more normal timescale, Romsey, assisted by the presence of our monarch, recovered to celebrate its Charter in great style.

Caroline Gardner

The village sign at Timsbury.

Oasis
Christian Centre
Christian Books
Tearcraft & Traidcraft
Cards & Stationery
25 Church Street, Romsey
Hampshire. Telephone 512194

Made Marion
Ladies, Men and Children
STYLISH HAIR FOR ALL THE FAMILY
Open 6 days a week
Late nights Thursdays and Fridays
47, The Hundred, Romsey, Hampshire
Telephone (01794) 513173

The Romsey Show

Mr Mike Nokes gave a talk about the Romsey Show and its History on September 22 in the Town Hall. The aim of the Show is best summed up in its motto 'Town meets Country'.

The Romsey Agricultural and Horse Show Society is a registered charity which makes donations to some eighteen good causes every year. The Society is managed as a business, with a president and vice-president elected annually and a council whose members are elected for three-year terms. The lead executive progresses over three years from junior Vice Chairman, through Vice Chairman to become Chairman. The responsibility for organising the detail of each show falls to the secretary and her part-time assistant. The base capital of the organisation is around a third of a million pounds with income coming from show entrance tickets, sponsorship and members' subscriptions.

Over the years the timing of the show has settled to follow the Alresford Show in mid-September. The Society's research has shown that a two-day show would not be attractive to exhibitors nor would it be economic to run. On the day of the show some six hundred volunteers take part in stewarding the parking, entrance ticket booths, site movements, safety, cattle, horses and ponies, the ring events, the trade stands and the exhibitors' marquees. For the past three years the show has expanded to include the Romsey Food Show which aims to promote produce from the locality.

The origin of the show, which is now the oldest in the UK, can be traced back to the formation of the Romsey Agricultural Society. After the usual winter cattle-market in 1840 a meeting was held in the White Horse Hotel where it was decided to hold an agricultural show. The first Romsey Agricultural Society show was held in April 1842. Prizes were to be offered for root vegetables, for lean and for fat stock cattle. Entry fees for the competitions were as much as ten shillings. The animals came from a catchment area including Dorset, Hampshire and Sussex and were walked to the show, quite an undertaking in itself. The first president of the show was Sir John Barker-Mills of Mottisfont. Lady Mills must have retained a real interest in it as she is recorded as winning seven prizes as late as 1879. In the early days there were two events, an Easter fair and a Christmas market. In 1914 there was no show but it was re-started the next year. In 1919 the Romsey Agricultural Society and the Romsey Horse Society amalgamated and the first annual combined Romsey Show was held in September that year at Broadlands. Shows have been held there every year since - except during the period 1939 to 1946 - and the site of the show now covers 75 acres and is one mile across. The 2009 attendance figure is expected to be around twenty seven thousand.

Chris Esplin-Jones

Side-saddle rider at the Show.

Trip to London
Portobello Market and the Royal Parks, Saturday April 24

The Society has arranged a coach trip to London, in which we will walk about 6 miles in 6 hours and then come home by coach. At a cost of £15 each, this is less than the train fare from Winchester. We meet at Romsey bus station at 8.30 a.m.

The walk starts in Ladbroke Grove from whence we will wander through Portobello Market as we make our way Notting Hill Gate. The market is full of entertaining stalls, many of which sell food – with items to suit all tastes.

From Notting Hill Gate we will walk to Kensington Gardens where, after a break, we will look at the sunken garden by Kensington Palace, circle the Round Pond and make our way down to Peter Pan's statue. A walk along the Serpentine will take us to the Lido café, our next resting point.

From there we will walk alongside Rotten Row, the horse-riding track to Hyde Park Corner. The underpass to Green Park is completely decorated by pictures of the Duke of Wellington and is a splendid example of creative use of the walls of an underpass.

Buckingham Palace lies at the other end of Green Park with its flamboyant Queen Victoria Memorial outside the gates. We then come to Regent's Park, where there is another refreshment point. There the lake contains the famous pelicans. Leaving the last of the Royal parks, we come to Horse Guards Parade, then cross over Whitehall and walk to the Embankment where we will find our coach.

Booking send £15 (made out to R&DS) with a stamped addressed envelope for receipt to Phoebe Merrick at 19 The Thicket, Romsey SO51 5SZ. Queries phone 01794 513751.

MINTON CHINA · WEDGWOOD
ROYAL DOULTON · ROYAL WORCESTER
PORCELAIN · ROYAL COPENHAGEN
F.W.KERSEY & SON
EST. 1888
WATCH & JEWELLERY
REPAIRS A SPECIALITY

3 & 5 THE HUNDRED
ROMSEY, HANTS., SO5 8YP
Tel: Romsey (01794) 512230

Aztec Fascias Ltd
For all your roofline needs
Professional installers of UPVC fascias, soffits, guttering and cladding
- Repairs and advice also available
- Very competitive rates
- Lloyds certified 10 year guarantees

For a free quotation call/email
023 8086 9715
078 8870 5455
enquiries@aztecfascias.com
www.aztecfascias.com

ROGER A J DRURY
THE FUNERAL DIRECTORS

• Traditional or Modern Services •
• 'Green' and 'Woodland' Options •
• Floral Tributes • Catering •
• Advice on Pre-Paid Funeral Plans •
• Full Memorial Masonry Service •
• A Caring Family Owned Firm •
FOR A MORE PERSONAL SERVICE
ROMSEY - 01794 515300

Please note

Change of date

The talk by Dr. Robert Page, Chairman of the Society's Natural Environment Committee, is now on **Wednesday, 12th May 2010 (NOT** Thursday 13th May**).**

Dr Page will be looking at the wildlife richness of the many Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs) in the Romsey area.

The talk will be followed by a wildlife walk on Saturday June 12th (details to be found in April News Sheet).

35th A G M

An informal meeting

coffee, a short business meeting, a chance to question the committees, an update on planning matters, and a slide presentation of the year's activities in and around Romsey

---

Tuesday 16 February 2010
7.30 (coffee) for 8pm
Linden Road Hall

Agenda

1 Apologies for absence
2 Minutes of the 2009 AGM
see April 2009 NewsSheet P.3
3 Matters arising
4 Treasurer's report
5 Membership report
6 Chairman's report
7 Election of officers
8 Election of Executive Committee
9 Re-appointment of Independent Financial Examiner
10 Reports of the year's activities and slideshow
11 Any other business

In the Autumn 2009 news sheet we asked that nominations for committee be sent to the Secretary by 26 January 2010 but please 'phone him if you have a later nomination.
NOMINATIONS FOR COMMITTEES ARE ALWAYS WELCOME

R&DS Secretary, Birch Wood House, Cadnam, Southampton, SO40 2NR
Tel: 02380 813400
or philipwarneruk@aol.com

Annual Dinner

Thursday 20 May 2010, 7pm

If you went last year you know that

Berties Restaurant

takes very good care of us

3 courses, coffee & a glass of wine £19.75 inc. service
Large tables to encouraging mixing. No seating plan but phone if you want to sit with friends. Lounge suit.
Book early – numbers limited
You can cancel later if you have to. Please send an SAE with a note saying how many and your phone number to:

R&DS Secretary, Birch Wood House, Cadnam, Southampton, SO40 2NR
Tel: 023 8081 3400
philipwarneruk@aol.com

DO NOT PAY YET
We will write in April asking for your menu choices and payment.

33rd Annual Lecture
Of importance to us all

James Humphrys
Area Manager Southern Region Environment Agency

Hampshire in the future
Flood, drought or what?

Friday 23rd April 2010
7.00 (wine) for 7.30
Romsey Town Hall
Council chamber upstairs
Admission by (free) ticket only.
Please send an SAE with a note of how many tickets to: Geoff Morris, 32 Church Street, Romsey, SO51 8BU
or e-mail philipwarneruk@aol.com

Italianissimo!

An evening of
Italian wine-tasting,
led by Heaton Wines
– with Italian-style delicacies in the interval.
Linden Road Hall, Saturday 6 February 2010, 7.30pm
Tickets £10 (members only)
Please send a cheque payable to Romsey & District Society, with s.a.e., to Denise Amery, 5 The Harrage, Romsey SO51 8AE.
Tickets are limited to 60

Annual Walk 2010

Date:	Satuday 19 June
Leaders:	Michael and Heather George
Venue:	Isle of Wight
Ferry:	Lymington to Yarmouth at 8.45
Distance:	12/13 miles.
Parking:	Lymington ferry terminal. Arrive by 8.25.
Refreshments:	Bring packed lunch.
Return:	Aim is for the 5.35pm ferry.

If alarm bells are sounding re the length of the walk – fear not!! There are several bus options from Freshwater Bay, Alum Bay, Totland & Colwell Bay if required.

The walk takes us from Yarmouth to Freshwater Bay along a very scenic nature path along the Yar. At Freshwater we stop for ice creams, pub or just to admire the view. Then, a very steady but pleasant ascent to Tennyson's monument enjoying superb vistas. Lunch by the monument and view the Round the Island Race.

Onwards to the Needles – bring NT cards if you wish to visit the Needles Old Battery. From here, downhill to Alum Bay with views of the Solent. We then follow the north coast, through Victoria Park to Yarmouth.

More information in the next News Sheet.

ROMSEYNET

This news sheet will be on the Society's pages on Romseynet.org.uk. You can send it as an attachment to an e-mail to your friends and family.

Production Team

Editorial:	
Caroline Gardner	**517743**
Paul Gardner	**517743**
Gill Roberts	**368387**
Phil Warner	**023 8081 3400**
Delivery	
Romano Roverato	**518305**
Membership	
Dr John Wattie	**322534**
Graphics and Printing:	
Gemini Design & Print	**01962 621493**

Bishops and Base Crucks

or

A tale of mice and Benedictine B & B

Phantom mice took a brief but starring role on the stage of the Plaza at the Romsey & District Buildings Preservation Trust's AGM on Wednesday 2 December. The meeting was the occasion for an illustrated presentation by a renowned authority on Hampshire's heritage of old buildings.

Dr John Crook FSA, a distinguished Hampshire academic, whose home is in Winchester, has written many books on Winchester Cathedral and its Close, other cathedrals, churches and monasteries as well as articles on the architecture of other iconic episcopal buildings. He is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Antiquaries, a noted photographer and a celebrated medieval specialist, architectural historian and archaeologist. He inherited an enquiring mind from his architect father and from an early age had a bent for solving puzzles and, crucially, had developed an interest in interpreting the phases of construction and adaptation of old buildings.

John Crook taught French at The Pilgrims' School in the 1970s where the enigmatic school building soon engaged his curiosity. The adapted and converted upper floor levels and the roofs of the School became the scene of what he termed the above-ground equivalent of potholing. He squeezed and squirmed into boxed-in dark and dusty spaces long hidden from view, with a torch, rule, camera and notebook. With a wry and conspiratorial smile Dr Crook spoke of a miraculous and timely infestation of mice that nibbled away, most conveniently, at cracked and distressed plaster in key areas, leading the way to the later identification of a base cruck section of the main timber frame of the 14th century building. Mice cannot be prosecuted for damaging a Scheduled Building.

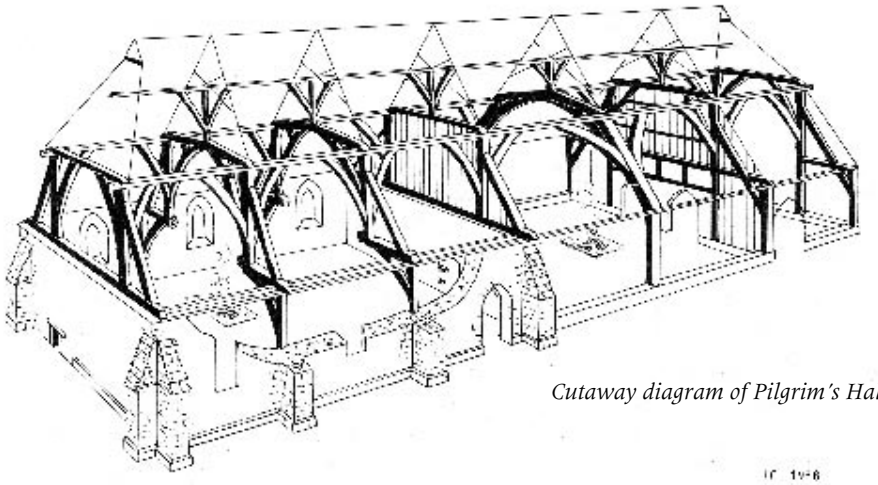
John Crook has revealed a long and fascinating history of the building we know as The Pilgrims' School. It originated in 1309/10 in the form of two halls constructed end-to-end and built by monks. These consisted of a three bay Guest Hall - in essence a Benedictine bed and breakfast house, in the stone walled northern end closest to the Cathedral - and an abutting three bay Guest Master's house, in the seventeenth century brick section to the south. The Guest Hall section (now the School's hall) has the oldest surviving hammer beam roof in the UK, eighty years older than Westminster Hall. At the Dissolution in 1539 the halls were used as a brew house and later at the Restoration, in the 1660s, they became the Dean's stables, at which time the upper level was floored to form a hayloft. Prior to its conversion for a school the building was used as a garage.

Dr Crook further illustrated his talk with examples of crucked hall buildings in Hampshire, both aisled and unaisled, giving as examples episcopal buildings at Marwell, Wherwell and Titchfield and, most recently, an imaginative rehabilitation of a house at Old Burghclere.

During his fascinating and discursive tour of medieval halls and their ingenious carpentry John Crook took us across the Channel to St Pierre sur Dives in Calvados, to show us a magnificent medieval aisled hall. There was not a single curved, crooked or crucked timber to be seen: no doubt the crux of differing national carpentry and forestry traditions. This may be why there appear to be straighter trees in France and many more crooked ones in England.

Dr Crook's knowledge and insights provided a memorable presentation.

Ted Mason



Cutaway diagram of Pilgrim's Hall