

THE FARNBOROUGH SOCIETY

preserving the past, shaping the future

Newsletter

Issue 7: February 2012



Member of



RECENT EVENTS

Tour of Farnborough Hill

In August, Jo Gosney arranged for TFS to tour Farnborough Hill, built by Thomas Longman, the publisher, in 1860, and subsequently the home of Empress Eugénie. Now a school, our guide was Ann Yarnold, for many years the school librarian, whose knowledge and enthusiasm made the tour lively and interesting.

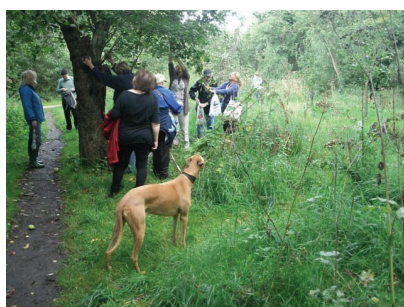
A wonderful display of photographs told stories of the many people associated with the house, both above and below



stairs: a society wedding for the Longman family, the Empress's exile from France and widowhood, the warm friendship between the Empress and Queen Victoria, the tragedy of the Prince Imperial, and wartime at Farnborough Hill. A selection of books was laid out in the library, too. After exploring the house, we were invited to enjoy the beautiful gardens and admire the extraordinary architecture. The restricted number of places on this tour were quickly filled and many people were disappointed, so it is hoped that we shall have the opportunity to repeat it soon.

Fruit Forage

On a perfect September afternoon, Clive Andrews led an intrepid group of foragers, and one dog, along the River



Blackwater, through Tongham Wood and back to the starting place, Aldershot Park. Along the way, Clive told us something of the fascinating history of the area, while members picked sloes

and windfall apples. Although finished by the time of our walk, Tongham Wood boasts apples, (dessert and cooking), pears, plums, cherries and elderberries, as well as sloes and blackberries. Our circuit also took us by a beautiful lake with swans and moorhens, then back to our starting point, where we had hoped to enjoy a well-earned cup of tea. Sadly, the café was not open, the one disappointment in a lovely afternoon.

Coffee Morning at 'Drim Cong' Alexandra Road, Farnborough by 'Tricia Thomas

On 6th October 2011, my husband Brian and I invited



members of the Society to hear Brian talk about the renovation of our home, an Arts and Crafts house which, when we bought it, had fallen into a state of

dilapidation.

We moved in twelve years ago, to the then owners' surprise. The comment was 'You aren't going to LIVE in it?' Well yes, we were.

The initial task was to identify priorities. Making the house waterproof was clearly an essential task, as lead flashing had been stolen from the flat roof to the bay in the music room, resulting in a huge hole in the floor due to someone having sawn through not only the floorboards but also the joists. Brambles and ivy were coming through the windows. Upstairs in the third bedroom, polythene sheets and buckets on the floor were containing leaks from the S.E. chimney stack; underneath in the kitchen, a boiler had been placed on the floor and the flue inserted into the side of the chimney stack, which had to be rebuilt. The Conservation Officer, Alison Davies, at Rushmoor B.C., was extremely supportive of our aims and the Council agreed to our renovation with grants for various stages of the work, which had to comply with the requirements of the Conservation Area in which the house is situated.

The next major work was to the electrics. There was hot water from an immersion heater but the electrics showed evidence of having been one of the earliest to be installed in the country. Wires crossed in the same sheath and, had they touched, that would probably have been the end of our dream. At one point Brian and our son Lewis had just one lamp on a cable which was hoisted up the stair well at night! Lewis is qualified in electrical work and was a great help.

We had a number of sympathetic skilled workmen who renovated pointing with lime mortar, replaced window leading and re-enamelled the bath, the last done by a young man who did work for English Heritage. The window frames were of the original oak and were amazingly sound. Secondary glazing was added to conserve what little heat there was in the house, and an

excellent plumber installed central heating and renewed the plumbing, discreetly hiding pipes wherever possible. Later two keen Polish workers stripped the flooring in the music room, hall and drawing room, revealing beautiful oak with inserted strips of mahogany round the edges.

It was eighteen months before we knew where the bottom of the garden was. In all 27 trees/saplings were removed plus

an enormous quantity of undergrowth, much work being done initially by two of my former Polish students.



The front of the house was a sea

of muddy sand and delivery people were threatening not to call! A drive was laid by two highly qualified people who had done work for the R.H.S. Family members qualified in landscaping also helped to relay the garden.

After Brian's talk, we watched a film showing the house as it was when we first moved in, then we conducted tours so that the members could see for themselves the results of all those years of hard work: our beautifully restored Arts and Crafts house.

Historical Walk with Jo Gosney

The most recent of Jo's popular walks began at the Old Town Hall Gardens, an excellent vantage point for several places of interest such as St Mark's Church and the war memorial. Proceeding along Alexandra Road and down Church Road West to Church Circle, Jo spoke of the fascinating history behind many of the houses,



notably those built by William Knell, as well as pointing out a tumulus and the site of a former maternity hospital. In Albert Road, Jo talked about Devereux House, formerly the Cottage Hospital,

Farnborough's First World War Memorial. Knellwood, in Canterbury Road, now a residential home for the elderly, is a War Memorial to the fallen of the Second World War. The route went along to the Farnborough College of Technology, and on past the sites of several schools, most notably the old Hillside Convent College, then into the former RAE site. Highlights here included The Hub, which incorporates the National Aerospace Library and The Secret Factory, and the five listed buildings, two of which are grade 1. Emerging onto Farnborough Road, the route passed The Swan Inn and the FAST Museum, then took Reading Road back to the starting point. This walk was packed with interest and proved extremely popular.

Remembrance Sunday

On Sunday the 13th November I attended the wreath laying ceremony at The Cenotaph, Municipal Gardens, Aldershot, to lay a wreath on behalf of The Farnborough Society.

On a beautiful autumnal morning with the sun gleaming off medals worn by ex and current service members, the laying of wreaths was led by the Mayor, followed by local civilian organisations, ex-military and current serving military. A total of 13 wreaths were laid on the Cenotaph between four Standard Bearers.

This was then followed by a short service led by the Mayor's Chaplin, Reverend George Newton. A bugler was not available; therefore, *The Last Post* and *Reveille* were not played. However, after the two minutes silence Reverend George Newton read out a very poignant poem written by an 11 year old girl called Jodie Johnson which brought up hidden emotions. Therefore, I was not sure whether it was the bright sunshine or the poem that gave me misty eyes.

All of this was witnessed by a very full Municipal Gardens, with people from all walks of life and of all ages.

David Jennings, Chairman

The Wonderful World of Water by Jo Osborn of South East Water

The presentation took us through a background to the company which supplies drinking water to 2.1 million consumers across from Kent, East and West Sussex, through to parts of Hants, Surrey and Berks, including Farnborough – an area covering 5,657 sq km



South East Water is the second largest water-only company in the UK and supplies 565 million litres of water each day, or 125 million gallons, through 14,500 km of mains.

In Farnborough most of the town is fed from a service reservoir (a bit like a giant covered swimming pool which stores treated water) at Crowthorne Reservoir, which is between Camberley and Bracknell, via large diameter trunk mains (typically 14", 12" & 10" mains). Crowthorne Reservoir receives water from boreholes at Hurley, White Waltham and Beenhams (Maidenhead) via pumping stations. Water can also be fed into Crowthorne from the water treatment works at Bray which takes water from the River Thames and the gravel beds adjacent to the river.

The presentation explained about the water treatment processes, showing that groundwater sources need less treatment than river sources as the water is naturally filtered through the underground rocks.

While South East Water works hard to find new sources of water and to ensure there is enough water for our needs, it is also important we don't waste water. In the South East we use an average of 160 litres per person

each day, this was put into stark contrast with the developing world where many people use around 10 litres per person per day and have to walk many miles to get clean water for their families.

That is why it is important we take small steps to use water wisely. Some of the simple tips to follow at home and in the garden can be found at www.southeastwater.co.uk/waterefficiency.

2011 was one of the driest on record in the Sussex area and customers there are being asked to take particular care not to waste water as reservoirs refill over winter. While Farnborough itself is not at this stage affected it is important we also think about how we can use water wisely. Some of the simple tips to follow at home and in the garden can be found at www.southeastwater.co.uk/waterefficiency.

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Having a water meter fitted is one way to make sure customers pay fairly for the water they use, and encourages people to think about using water wisely. Find out more at www.makingeverydropcount.co.uk.

Finally South East Water reminded us of the simple three-point checklist when a caller claims to be from the "Water Board". Unfortunately some bogus callers prey on vulnerable people and on their way into people's homes – always be stranger aware.

Check their company photographic id card

Look for the South East Water logo on their uniform and van

If you are uncertain keep them out. Call the Bogus caller telephone line 0800 519 2222 to double check

Waste Disposal

Tracy Sacks, of Thames Water, gave a talk on what happens to our waste water, explaining that Thames Water removes and treats 2,800million litres of sewage every day for 13.8 million people, and maintains and runs 43,500 miles of sewer, 349 sewage treatment works, 2,530 pumping stations and 1.2 million manholes. They are also the biggest generator of 'green power' inside the



M25.

The sewage treatment process begins with screening to remove large debris, followed by primary settlement, when the solids that settle on the bottom (sludge) are drawn off while the liquid goes for biological treatment and a final settlement before discharge into a river, primarily the Thames. The sludge is allowed to thicken, then fed into an anaerobic digester. The material is then put into huge storage tanks, undergoes 'dewatering' and is then sold to farmers as a soil conditioner.

Tracy said that there are two things that householders can do to help these processes runs efficiently: flush nothing except lavatory paper down the loo and never wash fat

down the kitchen drain. Both cause blockages, (the fats, 50,000 every year) and add to the costs. Kitchen fats should be allowed to solidify, in the fridge if necessary, and disposed of in the wheelie bin.



Although Farnborough is not affected, Tracy also mentioned the Thames Tunnel, currently in its Phase 2 consultation period, needed for the 39 million tonnes of sewage discharged into the Thames annually. As little as 2mm of rain can now trigger a discharge, and tides mean the sewage stays in the river for weeks.

Finally, Tracy spoke about WaterAid, with its vision of a world where everyone has access to safe water and sanitation.

RUSHMOOR IN BLOOM

Seen receiving the 2011 TFS *Rushmoor in Bloom* award from Christine Osment, with the Mayor of Rushmoor, Cllr Alex Crawford, looking on, is Margaret Greenaway, whose colourful and whimsical garden showed what can be achieved in a tiny space, and that gardening can be fun.



Even more importantly, by entering High View Road/High View Close into the Community category, Margaret not only helped to transform a rather nondescript town centre street, but had a dramatic influence on her community; neighbours became friends, people who had never attempted gardening before created beautiful displays, and a new sense of civic pride permeated the area.



It's not too early to be thinking about this year's competition. Don't forget that, unlike other *Rushmoor in Bloom* awards, spring displays can win the TFS award, so keep your camera handy in case you spot something truly exceptional over the next few months.

Do also consider entering your street or neighbourhood in the Community category. It really is a wonderful way of bringing people together, beautifying our town and raising civic pride. For information, contact Barbara: 01252 405149; barbara@pbhurst.com

EXTRA MILE AWARD

Worthy winners of the *Extra Mile Award* for 2011 are Lynchford Aquatics in Peabody Road, North Camp.



Lynchford Aquatics were nominated by Jane Jones, a customer for 27 years, who praised the very high quality stock and the valuable advice she has

received, always with a smile. Jane said, "They treat customers like old friends."

Manager James Quan accepted the award from TFS Chairman David Jennings on behalf of owners Kevin and Debbie Rose, and said how nice it was to receive public acknowledgement of the high standards they set for customer service.

Established over 50 years ago, Lynchford Aquatics moved to its present site in 1980 from its previous premises in Lynchford Road. They are open seven days a week, and also use social networking extensively. In addition, they engage with the community both by going out to install ponds and by offering work experience opportunities to school and college students.

Why not stop by next time you visit North Camp and see for yourself this exceptional local business?

PLANNING SEMINARS

A presentation by Tony Burton of Civic Voice to the Farnborough Society in April was the catalyst for three local civic societies to join forces to hold a series of three seminars for members of the public interested in knowing more about the planning process and how best to engage in the public participation increasingly encouraged by legislation.

The seminars were the brainchild of the Yateley Society, due to concerns over the need to engage more people in planning policy and development control issues. It was felt that people were reluctant to become involved in planning issues because they lacked experience and/or knowledge. The idea became a reality when informal discussions took place with Farnborough and Fleet & Church Crookham societies at the Civic Voice event. Planning throughout the summer months culminated in the staging of three seminars. Roger Durdle, Secretary of The Yateley Society, said "We could not have put these events on without the invaluable input from our neighbouring societies, and this coming together to share ideas and resources was really beneficial. It has laid the foundations for future co-operation."

These seminars covered the fundamentals of planning, heritage & conservation, and practical advice on challenging planning proposals.

Guest speakers on the first evening were Jane Terry and Nicolette Pike from respected local planning

consultancy Bell Cornwell, whose exploration of the fundamentals of planning was particularly apposite, coming on the very day that the Localism Act gained Royal Assent. Inevitably, there was a lively discussion of the implications of the Act for civic societies and other community groups.

At the second seminar, David Brock from English Heritage in Guildford explained how 'heritage assets' are protected and how local people can participate. He was followed by Dr Graham Rood, the Secretary of Farnborough Air Sciences Trust, who explained how this has achieved the preservation of Farnborough's unique aeronautical heritage.

The third seminar saw Phill Gower, Co-chairman of Fleet & Church Crookham Society, together with local County Councillor David Simpson, talk about how local groups like civic societies can participate effectively in the planning process, and how best to communicate with elected representatives and council officers about planning issues.

The seminars were well attended by over 40 people, with representatives from a variety of other civic societies and parish councils. It was generally agreed that because civic societies will play a pivotal role in the implementation of the Localism Act further seminars will be needed to keep abreast of developments.

Free Financial Advice

Thanks to the generosity of Chief Executive Tom McManners, Treetops Accountancy offers free financial advice to members of The Farnborough Society on the third Thursday of each month. Located near the Clockhouse, Treetops are members of The Institute of Chartered Accountants and the SPA, an independent national association of professional accountants. For your free consultation, call Sue: 01252 541 401

Your Executive Committee

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RUSHMOOR PEDESTRIAN FORUM

by Chairman Clive Andrews

In recent years walking as a mode of sustainable transport for short journeys has taken on an increased significance, with the realisation that catering for ever-increasing car usage was neither affordable nor acceptable, especially in an urban environment such as Farnborough, where there is no longer the room or the finance to build more highway infrastructure.

The idea of forming a pedestrian forum was born out of our response to the Farnborough Town Access Plan (TAP) during May of last year. It became clear that if we wished to campaign more effectively on behalf of the pedestrian we needed a group of like minded citizens to share their experiences and ideas on walking around our town, to provide a mechanism to effectively promote our viewpoint and—more to the point—to be taken seriously by local authorities as a stakeholder in any planning decisions that bear upon the pedestrian environment.

The Rushmoor Pedestrian Forum has evolved into two parts: a small steering committee to handle the campaigning and organisational side of the forum, and a more formal public forum featuring guest speakers and prepared presentations, as well as an opportunity for those attending to raise ideas and concerns about pedestrian routes around Farnborough. We will advertise the public forum meetings to the general public as widely as possible and will encourage those who attend and wish to become more involved to join the steering committee. We hope that these public meetings will raise many of the issues and ideas that we can campaign on.

At the steering committee meetings, we have had some really good and lively discussion on topics such as pedestrian routes in Farnborough, conflict between cyclists and pedestrians and on some of the modern ideas on 'shared space'. The poor signage of pedestrian routes in Farnborough was a subject that was often raised, so that we concluded that, due to the poor signage and way marking, a stranger to Farnborough, wishing to walk from the railway station to the town centre, was more likely to become lost than reach his chosen destination. The steering group has encouraged its members to survey pedestrian routes in Farnborough. We have already looked in detail at the routes between the Station and Queensmead, and are currently noting the usage of popular pedestrian routes into the town centre.

The first of our public forum meetings was held on 6th of December last year and featured three speakers: Rachel Sandys, of Hampshire County Council, who gave us an update on progress with the Farnborough TAP; Sarajane Commarford, who spoke on the problems encountered by the visually handicapped pedestrian; and PC Lee Jeffers who lead a question and answers session on aspects of pedestrian safety and the law. Our next Forum meeting is to be held on Monday 5th March, when items on the agenda include parking, street cleansing and disabled access to open spaces.

Just before Christmas, during the period of public consultation for the Aldershot TAP, I spent a few hours tramping around the centre of Aldershot, and taking a few photographs of traffic and streets, whilst I drew up ideas for our response to this document. As in our response to the Farnborough TAP, we stressed the need to identify popular routes into the town and then evaluate these holistically rather than just talking about a few isolated problem spots.

During the current period of consultation on the future plans for Farnborough town centre, we are again looking at pedestrian routes to and around the town. In our response we will comment on these routes so that our point of view is not forgotten in the redesign of the town centre.

The Future of your Town in Their Hands – or Maybe Not

Your Society's Planning Group have developed good working relationships with the senior planners and other Officers in Rushmoor Borough Council. The Society is now a formal stakeholder and has some standing so this dialogue between the Planning Group and the Council's Development Control Senior Planners, whom we meet every four weeks, is really important.

The Planning Group keeps its collective finger on the pulse of development in our town. It scrutinizes the planning applications, which are published every week, and comments on the impact of developments on our town. We also discuss matters of interest such as pressures on parking and the freedom to walk and cycle about the area, the importance of retaining important buildings, the architectural merits of schemes and the overall character of Farnborough (which should be better than it is).

Asked about the Planning Group's activities within the Society, Brian Fyfe the Group Chairman expressed his view:

"Clearly we have made creditable representations on a number of matters, particularly in relation to the development of the town centre. Members will recall that I formally met the Inspector who considered the Core Strategy for the development of Farnborough. This followed our submission that Farnborough needs a really imaginative proposal for an all new town square and buildings in which performance, visual arts and community activities can take place in support of a vibrant town each and every day, and on into the evening. The Society find support from many of those who live and work in Farnborough who are frankly amazed that a town as well placed as ours has such a dismal town centre.

I think the inspector was sympathetic to our view. Indeed he asked that progress on developing Farnborough be measured and reported upon annually. He also approved the outcome of the discussion I had on behalf of the

Society with RBC that plans for the development of a focal point for the town centre should be brought forward.

The Society's proposal meets that challenge and would best support a more diverse retail economy too. It would be a sustainable way to the future that people who live and work here can be proud of. Imagine if our needs for shopping, leisure, entertainment, arts, education and community activities were satisfied right here on our own doorstep. If Farnborough is to take its rightful place as an exciting thriving destination to come and live in, with a proud history and a bright future, we are at an important crossroads.

Our proposal would replace, and incorporate as required, the library, the police station and the community centre and tie in with the Farnborough Leisure centre and be so much more

We are in danger of sleep walking into a retail led set of proposals for our town. This has signally failed to provide the stimulus needed to attract a variety of national chain retailers and independent traders. The critical mass for a thriving, expanding and exciting town has just not happened. Of course the renovation of Queensmead is welcome and, we all know, overdue. Those who are behind these proposals are to be praised and encouraged. But it will not be enough.

The other consultation on the Farnborough Prospectus is very timely but it cannot be viewed as being so praiseworthy.

It is more of the same old same old!

This is hardly surprising really, for the initiative is hampered by a commonly held view of the policy makers and the landowners in Farnborough that there are no resources for a striking plan such as that put forward by The Farnborough Society in the current economic climate.

I personally do not believe this. If Farnborough was enthusiastically marketed on the demographic advantages and its heritage I believe that the case to participate in the future of Farnborough as compared to elsewhere is compelling.

We may be struggling nationally but the future for those who back our vision for Farnborough I believe will reap a handsome return, transform our town and give it the heart it so much deserves.

If you feel like me that this is an opportunity for a brighter future not to be missed then please do join with us in saying so to Rushmoor Borough Council. And do not delay."

Please see our website www.thefarnboroughsociety.org.uk for our Proposal for a

New Town Square and Arts Complex

Go to the RBC website www.rushmoor.gov.uk and make your views known, or go to current consultations, taking place at the council offices until 4th March.

Forthcoming Events

February 15th:

Farnborough Air Sciences Trust with Dr Graham Rood

March 5th:

Rushmoor Pedestrian Forum

March 20th:

River Management and the Environment Agency

April TBA:

Schools and the Workhouse

With Jo Gosney

Tell Us What You Think

If you have any thoughts on issues we should address or events you would like us to organise, please get in touch. Remember, this is your society and we rely on you to tell us how we can improve.

CORPORATE MEMBERSHIP

Signs Express has become our newest Corporate Member. Owner Tim Burt is seen receiving his certificate



from TFS Chairman David Jennings outside the company's premises in Hercules Way, Farnborough.

Tim's enthusiasm for Farnborough and support of TFS are very welcome, and he encourages other local businesses to show their investment in the future of the town by becoming Corporate Members.

If you work in Farnborough, or know someone who has a business here, we ask you to promote the idea of joining TFS. You might also consider joining the Executive Committee as Business Liaison Officer, finding ways to reach out to local companies, with a view to helping to unlock this town's enormous potential for the benefit of all. If you think that is something that would interest you, please contact Barbara: 01252 405149 or barbara@pbhurst.com

www.thefarnboroughsociety.org.uk