Datchet Village Society

# SUMMER 2019

# 68



# NEWSLETTER

## In this issue


**Wildlife walk**
Upcoming events
**Recent events**
The Ellis Journey
**Datchet Fete**
Bird & butterfly surveys
**Around the village**
Milestone update
**Bronze Age Settlement**
Riverside sunset
**Postbag**
Neighbourhood Plan
**DVS Membership cards**


## WILDLIFE WALK AT DATCHET GOLF COURSE

**Sunday 15 September 2019, 11am**

Last year, Brian Clews gave a fascinating and well-attended talk about the wildlife of the Jubilee River. We're delighted that he's agreed to return this year to lead a special wildlife walk for DVS members at Datchet Golf Course.

Brian's main interest is birds - he has written many books for the RSPB - but his expertise extends to insects and wildlife generally, and he has contributed to dozens of Berkshire wildlife guides. More recently, he has been very supportive of the new community group, Wild About Datchet, and their local wildlife surveys (see page 5).

The DVS aims to stimulate interest in local geography, history and natural history and we're aware that we have somewhat neglected the latter. We hope to put that right by introducing natural history walks and talks into our programme of events.

**WHERE:** Meet at the main entrance to Datchet Golf Course.

**COST:** Free to members though spaces are limited. We are invited to visit the club house afterwards for drinks (not included).

**TO BOOK:** Please email Marjorie.Clasper@tiscali.co.uk or call 01753 545110.


Email: info@datchetvillagesociety.org.uk

**www.datchetvillagesociety.org.uk**



*Datchet c1905. We hope to present an exhibition of old photographs and maps this winter*



*Tommy Sopwith created quite a stir in 1911 when he landed his bi-plane on the golf course, twice!*

## DVS PHOTO GALLERY

To see photographs of our events, please visit the 'Gallery' section of the DVS website. There are also photographs of events in previous years

## DVS EVENTS 2019

We're already half-way through our programme of events for 2019, and we'll be putting together a provisional programme for 2020 very soon. If you have suggestions for places to visit, speakers to invite, topics to cover, or local walks, please let us know.



- **FROGMORE HOUSE, 28 August**
  The DVS will be visiting Frogmore House on 28 August. Public interest in the house has increased since Prince Harry and Meghan held their wedding reception here but the house and gardens can now only be visited on three Charity Open Days each year or as a pre-booked group on selected dates in August. (Bookings for this have now closed.)



- **WILDLIFE WALK DATCHET GOLF CLUB, 15 September**
  Led by wildlife expert Brian Clews. See page 1 for more details.




- **EXHIBITION: OLD PHOTOGRAPHS AND MAPS**
  We hope to present a display of old photographs and historic maps during the run-up to Christmas, and to make it a festive social occasion with mulled wine and mince pies. Date and details to follow.

## RECENT EVENTS



- **MAY/JUNE Bird and butterfly surveys with Wild About Datchet**
  See page 5 of this newsletter for details.



- **JUNE Brooklands Museum**
  We organised a special members' visit to Brooklands Museum, 'the birthplace of British Motorsport and Aviation', to learn more about aviation pioneer Tommy Sopwith. Brooklands' volunteer David Hassard gave a fascinating talk then we were free to explore the various halls and exhibits at leisure, with the opportunity to test drive an F1 car simulator, board a variety of aircraft, and even sit in the cockpit of a Harrier Jump Jet and Hawker Hunter.



- **JUNE The Ellis Journey** See page 3 for details
- **JULY Datchet Fete** See page 4 for details



- **JULY Geophysics at Ankerwycke**
  The Berkshire Archaeological Society invited DVS members to help with a geophysics survey at Ankerwycke as part of the Festival of Archaeology.

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## THE ELLIS JOURNEY

The veteran cars returned to the village on 30 June on their now-annual recreation of the first recorded journey of a motor car on English roads, made in 1895 by Datchet resident, the Honorable Evelyn Ellis, from Micheldever Station to his home, Rosenau, in Southlea Road (now the site of Woollacoombe). Around 40, pre-1905 motor vehicles, most with drivers and passengers in period costume, set off at 8.26am, just as Ellis had done, and started arriving in the village around midday. They were welcomed on to the Green with bells and whistles, literally, courtesy of Datchet Border Morris, and their arrival was announced by the booming voice of Windsor's Town Crier. Meanwhile a display of Victorian tricycles, bicycles and penny-farthings had gathered on Memorial Green and, on Gossip Green, there was a 1931 Railton Terraplane from Brooklands Museum, a 1907 Berliet Curtiss with a 1916 8.3l aero-engine, 1946 Railton Hudson Straight Eight, 1931 Morris Minor flatbed truck used by Hill & Sons, Datchet, and 1931 Rolls-Royce 20/25hp. (Did you know that the model for Rolls-Royce's Spirit of Ecstasy mascot used to live in Datchet?)

The future of motoring was represented by hydrogen fuel-cell cars from Hyundai and Toyota; and a trio of three-wheeled Morgans also parked up to join in the fun.

In the WI Hall, Datchet Village Society had displays about Evelyn Ellis and Victorian Datchet, and the two paintings of Datchet from the 1850s/60s which were purchased last year; Windsor Museum had brought Victorian artefacts as well as photographs of Evelyn Ellis and his 1896 passport; and the ladies of the WI were doing a brisk trade in cakes and coffee.

On the stage, local residents Mike Hill and Richard Jensen had individual displays of engineering and artefacts which ranged from a scale working steam locomotive and tender to a 'candlestick' telephone, wind-up gramophone and a mannequin of Charlie Chaplin. Also in the WI hall were bicycles, penny-farthings, and motorbikes including a 1914 Douglas and 1954 Douglas Dragonfly, BSA Goldstar 500cc, and, for contrast, a 1994 custom-built Harley Davidson.

Music and entertainment was provided by the Romsey Ukulele Group, Jazz Magic trio, and Datchet Border Morris, while Datchet Players strolled around in period costume.

**2020 will be the 125th anniversary of Ellis's famous journey. The provisional date for the run is Sunday 5 July.**














***Above:*** *Churchmead House which used to stand on the present site of Churchmead School.* ***Below:*** *An early 20th-century riverside regatta*

## DATCHET VILLAGE FETE: PEACE CELEBRATIONS

The theme of the fete, held on 6 July, was *Peace Celebrations: 100 years on*, to commemorate the festivities which were held in the grounds of Churchmead House (now the site of Churchmead School) in July 1919, marking the end of WWI. The DVS had a stand at the fete, as usual, and this year our display was about those Peace Celebrations. Janet Kennish, DVS President, also wrote an article for the fete programme about that special day, drawn from contemporary reports in local newspapers.

The 1919 celebrations had begun with a peal of church bells as a procession of sailors, soldiers and schoolchildren made its way from the village green to the grounds of Churchmead House, along a route bedecked with flags, for an afternoon of sporting activities.

Throughout the afternoon, children's egg-and-spoon, wheelbarrow and three-legged races caused endless amusement. The adults were also keen to join in the fun, racing over a variety of distances from 100 yards to a mile, followed by relay races and a tug of war. At four o'clock, there was a high tea for between 300-400 children, then at six o'clock, the soldiers and sailors with their wives and mothers were served dinner before prizes were presented to race winners.

In the evening, a Venetian fete and regatta were held at the riverside which, the newspaper reported, had been turned into a 'fairyland' with illuminated boats and punts and lanterns all around the lawns. The river races included double sculling, double canoe, ladies dinghy, ladies punting and gents swimming, as well as a greasy pole race and an intriguingly-named 'elopement race'.







*25 bird species were recorded at Willowfields and the Land at Mill Place, including the lesser whitethroat*



*On the butterfly survey, the group saw a painted lady and learned how the species migrates from Morocco each year*

**WILD ABOUT DATCHET**

is a new community group which aims to discover, celebrate, improve and protect wild things and wild places in Datchet and the surrounding countryside. For more information, visit www.WildAboutDatchet.com

## BIRD & BUTTERFLY SURVEYS AT WILLOWFIELDS

In May, DVS members were invited to join Wild About Datchet for a bird survey at Willowfields and The Land at Mill Place. The survey was led by Brian and Liz Crathorne, volunteers from the Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust, who have a remarkable talent for being able to identify birds from their songs and calls. Birds are an indicator species so the numbers and types of birds can tell us a lot about the condition of the area and how well it can support wildlife. Around 25 different birds were identified which we're told is a good number for such a small site.

In late June, DVS members were again invited to join Wild About Datchet with Brian and Liz, for a butterfly survey. There were 11 butterfly and 7 dragonfly species recorded. Various factors influence the numbers recorded; for example, different species may be present at different times of the year, but we are told that this is a good number for a relatively small site.

On both occasions, the groups were made up of keen wildlife watchers and others who were just eager to learn more. Everyone found the walks interesting and informative.

The habitat at Willowfields and the Land at Mill Place is largely dense shrubland which Brian said is ideal for many of the passerine species (perching or song birds). He recommended that the site be maintained largely as it is, apart from the occasional mowing of footpaths to encourage walkers to keep to the defined walkways and minimise disturbance.

The grassy open areas are also important to insects and other invertebrates and to maintain diversity. Brian advised that some of the shrub growth will need to be cut back during the winter months to ensure that these areas are not invaded by the scrub.

We hope that the results of these surveys will inform future decisions made by Datchet Parish Council about how best to manage the trees and scrub in that area.

**For more details, see the Datchet Village Society website.**





***Above**: photographs of the Grade II listed wall on London Road, taken in 2018*

## AROUND THE VILLAGE

### LISTED WALL ON LONDON ROAD

Some members have expressed concern about the Grade II listed wall which lies within the Conservation Area on London Road.

The wall is dated to 1748 by an entry in the Manor Court Rolls for that year, when Lady Kilmorey of Datchet House leased a strip of land from the Lord of the Manor in order to build a wall alongside her property. It runs from the entrance gates of Datchet House to the gardener's cottage by the Cricket Ground and Riding Court Road, and lies very close to the road which takes increasingly heavy traffic. The wall now forms the rear boundary of a number of modern houses; each has responsibility for the section along their garden.

DVS brought the wall to the attention of the RBWM Conservation Officer some years ago. At the time, we were told that the wall was more stable at its core than it seemed. There appears to have been considerable deterioration since then and we have written again to the Conservation Officer to ask if this is still the case. There is no direct legal obligation on the owners of a heritage asset to carry out repairs, however local and central government may force repairs to be carried out where work is urgently necessary for its preservation.

*Read more about Datchet House on the Datchet History website.*

**DO YOU KNOW**

which of Datchet's buildings are Listed? Janet Kennish has compiled a list, click here for details. The War Memorial on the village green has also recently been Listed.



***Above**: For many years, Curfew Villa was hidden from view*

### CURFEW VILLA



In the Conservation Area, on Queens Road, there is a Victorian house which, until recently, was covered in ivy. It was sold earlier this year and the new owners have stripped back the vegetation to reveal Curfew Villa, right.

The house was built c1893 by the Hammerson family of Datchet blacksmiths and it appears on the 1899 OS map (see Datchet History website). In the 1901 census it was empty but in 1911, sisters Louisa and Amelia Hammerson were living there. Their occupation was listed as 'let apartments' which suggests they rented out the rooms. The sisters never married and lived at Curfew Villa for the rest of their lives. Louisa died in 1933 and Amelia in 1962.

If you have any information about the history of this house or its occupants, please get in touch with us. The new owners are keen to learn more.






***Above:*** *Datchet's milestone on London Road is thought to date from c1768.* ***Above right:*** *The damaged milestone in 2018.* ***Below:*** *Further damage in 2019*




## MILESTONE UPDATE

DVS is working with the Parish Council to help protect Datchet's listed milestone which was damaged by a vehicle in September 2018 and again in July 2019. It has now been removed temporarily and is being stored in the Parish Yard until it can be reinstated. The Parish and Borough Councils have agreed, in principle, that it can be moved a few yards to Memorial Green out of harm's way, but there was some concern that moving it might result in the loss of its listed status. Marjorie Clasper, DVS Secretary, consulted Historic England and recently received some encouraging news from their listing adviser: 'Generally the significance and historic authenticity of a milestone will be linked to its positioning and this would be a relevant factor in any listing assessment, however, here there are clearly practical reasons for moving this stone a relatively short distance. As long as the relevant local Borough Council process is adhered to then it is anticipated that we would simply process any future request to reassess this as a straightforward minor amendment to the List entry in order to record its new position.'
The milestone's future listed status will also depend on its condition and other relevant criteria at the time of assessment, but the Historic England officer advised that the Parish Council should not be deterred from proceeding with the planning application for the work. Our report about the milestone can be found on the DVS website.

## BRONZE AGE SETTLEMENT NEAR THE MYRKE

In June, an archaeological investigation took place in the field east of The Myrke where the horses used to graze (between the M4 and Slough Road) in preparation for the Smart Motorway. Some residents were told unofficially by the workmen that 'something of interest' had been discovered. They alerted DVS and we contacted Highways England who told us that evidence of a late Bronze Age settlement (1200-800BC) has been found. This part of the Middle Thames Valley appears to have been a hive of activity in the later Bronze Age with farms, field systems and burial monuments recorded in many locations between Staines and Maidenhead. Further investigation is taking place and we look forward to receiving updates in due course.
This follows the exciting recent discovery of a Stone Age causewayed enclosure at Riding Court (the subject of this year's DVS AGM presentation); and the spectacular finds at Southlea when DVS investigated cropmarks seen in aerial photographs. Visit Janet Kennish's Datchet History website for more details.



Wessex Archaeology

*Archaeologists are discovering evidence dating back to the end of the last Ice Age at the Riding Court site*





*"The views out of the Conservation Area across to the expansive Home Park and along the River Thames have important historic and aesthetic merits. This view is little altered from the early 17th century when it was the public route across from Datchet to Windsor and glimpses of this tree-lined route can still be seen"*

Extract from the Datchet Conservation Area Statement

## SUNSET AT THE RIVERSIDE

The DVS has been collecting recent photographs of the riverside on our website. Here are just a few, with thanks to, ***clockwise from above***, Davey Thompson, Allen Corcoran, Nigel Knighton and Andrew Brotherston. If you have photos of the riverside you would like to share, please let the DVS have copies for our archives and the DVS website. The DVS photo archive contains historic photographs of the riverside too, see examples below.
For more information about the area, the DVS Riverside Study, published a few years ago, can be downloaded here: www.datchetvillagesociety.org.uk/datchet-riverside/

***Below left,*** *Lumsden's boat hire business in the early 1900s.*
***Below right,*** *this 1930s shot shows a young chestnut tree.*









## POSTBAG

The DVS is often the first port of call for anyone wanting to find or share information about the history of the village.
Here's a recent selection from our postbag.



*Evelyn Ellis's pocket watch*

- The owner of **Evelyn Ellis's pocket watch** sent us photographs of it to add to our display for The Ellis Journey weekend. The Right Hon. Evelyn Ellis made the first recorded journey of a motorcar on UK roads, driving from Micheldever Station to his home in Datchet in July 1895. See page 3.
- An author writing a book about the search for the missing of WWI, has asked for permission to reproduce information from the DVS website about the grave of an unknown lieutenant in the RAMC recently discovered to be that of Lieut John Gillis Butt, remembered on **Datchet's Memorial**. His grave was rededicated last October.



*The Rising Sun pub*

- Janet Kennish, village historian and DVS president, joined a lively discussion on the Datchet Eye Facebook page recently, about the **WWII anti-aircraft gun emplacement** which stood on Horton Road, just past The Rising Sun pub (now Turk Shish restaurant). Before the reservoir was built, this area used to be the Polo Fields where the horse guards from Windsor played. Some people remembered being paid a penny as a child to hold a guardsman's horse while others were sent to shovel up manure for the garden. One former resident remembered the gun site being manned by the first women from the ATS to be trained in gunnery. He said that the Polo Pavilion became the officers' mess and concrete huts were built for soldiers. He lived with his family in Hut 30 after their home in Horton Road was declared unsafe due to the vibration from guns. You can read more about this area on Janet's Datchet History website




*Clean Air Day 2019*

### CLEAN AIR DAY SURVEY

Members of the DVS committee are assisting with the development of the Datchet Neighbourhood Plan (DNP). On Clean Air Day 2019, they were on the village green, launching a survey to ask residents what would make it easier to walk or cycle around the village.
It is much healthier for us to walk or cycle, if we can, but the narrow footpaths and lack of cycle paths or pedestrian routes make this particularly difficult in some areas of Datchet. For details, see www.datchetneighbourhoodplan.org




### DO YOU LIVE ON MONTAGU ROAD?

Did you know that there's a history of Montagu Road and other streets and houses in the village on Janet Kennish's Datchet History website? See http://datchethistory.org.uk/streetshouses/

## 25 YEARS OF DATCHET VILLAGE SOCIETY

The DVS will be 25 in 2020. How should we celebrate our anniversary? Please get in touch with any ideas.

## HAVE YOU RECEIVED YOUR NEW MEMBERSHIP CARD?




If you renewed your annual membership this year, you should have received a new membership card for 2019-20. If not, or if you have any queries about your membership, please contact DVS Membership Secretary, Sandra Needham, call (01753) 593771, or email sandra@e-brimbles.com.

**Membership runs from April each year to March the following year.** From April 2020, membership categories will be simplified to individual, junior and life. A rise in membership fees was agreed at the 2019 AGM. This will be the first increase in eight years. From 2020, the annual membership fee will be £10 per adult, and life membership will be £125 per person. Junior membership will remain £1.

## NEW MEMBERS

Welcome to our new members Penny Russell, Gordon Davidson, Carl Pennington, Margaret and Ian Bacon, Valerie Butler, Debbie and David Buckley, Joanna and Chris Norman.

## DVS MAIN CONTACTS

**President: Janet Kennish**
Tel 07778 455706, email janetkennish123@gmail.com
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**www.datchethistory.org.uk**

## WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT THIS NEWSLETTER?

Please tell us what you'd like to see in your DVS newsletters. We're always happy to receive feedback and ideas.

## ABOUT THE DVS

In 1995, the Datchet Village Society was formed to help preserve the special character of Datchet and to encourage interest in its history and environment. The focus is primarily on Datchet but also includes its locality and historical connections. The DVS organises talks, exhibitions, guided walks and visits to places of interest for members and publishes Datchet-related books, leaflets and cards. We're the first port of call for anyone wanting to know more about their family history in Datchet, or about the history of the village generally. The Society also monitors local planning policy, conservation and development issues and is contributing to Datchet's Neighbourhood Plan. Regular updates about our work and events are posted on the DVS website. New members are always welcome.