Datchet Village Society

WINTER 2019

69



NEWSLETTER

Photograph of River Thames by Davey Thompson, from DVS Photo Archive

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OLD MAPS, PAINTINGS & PHOTOGRAPHS OF DATCHET

Thursday 28 November 2019, 7-9pm

St Mary's Church Rooms

Please come and join us for our Christmas event when we'll be displaying some fascinating old maps, paintings, photographs, and other items relating to Datchet, that Janet Kennish and the DVS have collected over the years. As you follow the historic sequence of maps, you'll be able to see how the village has grown and changed, with paintings and photographs providing additional context. We'll also have some interesting and surprising documents for you to browse through as you enjoy a mince pie and a glass of wine or hot drink. Please feel free to drop in anytime between 7pm and 9pm or join us for the duration.

TO BOOK: The event is free (although donations are welcome) and for members only. To help us with catering arrangements, please email Marjorie.Clasper@tiscali.co.uk or call 01753 545110 to let us know if you're intending to join us. We look forward to seeing you.

Email: info@datchetvillagesociety.org.uk

www.datchetvillagesociety.org.uk

DVS PHOTO GALLERY

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





Above centre: *Our visit to Frogmore*
Above right: *at Datchet Golf Course*











RECENT DVS EVENTS

- **FROGMORE HOUSE**

Our members' visit to Frogmore House in summer was very enjoyable. The house and gardens can now only be visited on a Charity Open Day or as a group on selected dates. Tight security meant that we had to arrive by coach and were not allowed to take photos. We were split into two groups and shown around the public rooms on the ground and first floors by the very knowledgeable guides. (DVS members who had visited on a Charity Open Day told us that we were able to see so much more on our private visit.) The Mausoleum is closed for restoration but we were able to visit the gardens and see Queen Victoria's teahouse. We finished the visit with a cuppa at the Windsor Farm Shop.
Many thanks to Marjorie Clasper for organising this event.

- **WILDLIFE WALK AT DATCHET GOLF CLUB**

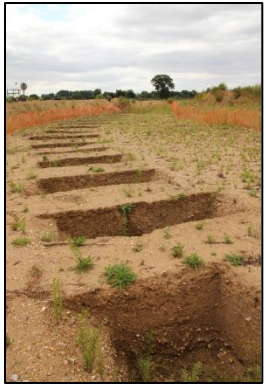
Wildlife expert Brian Clews took a group of DVS members around Datchet Golf Course on a sunny Sunday morning in mid-September. Our walk focused on the practice field between Windsor Road and the river and Brian later wrote a note about it on Facebook: 'We saw a few varieties of hoverflies on a lovely walk around the golf course with Village Society members this morning. Some busy shield bugs (Coreus marginatus), several orb web and sheet web spider species, a couple of the parasitic wasp species, and a few butterfly species. A highlight was a day-flying Large Red Underwing Moth; a large and stunning creature I had only seen a couple of times before. Birds included a Chiffchaff on passage, a busy Jay looking for acorns, and families of Blue Tits, Great Tits, Coal Tits and Long-tailed Tits. We found some galls and wondered whether they would be containing eggs or larvae at this time of year and we counted the growth rings on a snail shell. On the various Ivy bushes, it proved too early to find the "new" Ivy Bee which has been with us in UK for just a few years but keep an eye open as they are due to emerge from their nests in lawns, etc, any minute now *[Sep-Nov]*.'
Many thanks to Sandra Needham for organising this event.

PLEASE TELL US YOUR IDEAS FOR EVENTS

We're coming to the end of our series of planned events for 2019. We'll be putting together a provisional programme for 2020 very soon and hope to organise another event in the new year before the Annual General Meeting in spring. If you have suggestions for places to visit, speakers to invite, topics to cover, or local walks, please let us know.

















ARCHAEOLOGY UPDATE: RIDING COURT

John Powell, Wessex Archaeology's senior project officer, who visited us at last year's AGM, had hoped to offer the DVS a visit to this site but numbers had to be limited in a working quarry so places were offered to the committee, with the promise of a public exhibition in the future. Kitted out in hi-vis jackets and hard hats, we trudged off in hot sunshine across the huge site. The top-soil had already been removed down to the sand and gravel level so the site looked and felt very much like a desert, with newly uncovered wild plants flourishing due to recent rain. In DVS' field-walking experience at Southlea, evidence of Neolithic people was scanty although there was a great deal more from the Bronze and Iron Ages and the early Roman period. Here at Riding Court, the archaeologists have been very excited to discover an early Neolithic earthwork and the post-holes of two houses from the same period, roughly 4000 BC to 3000 BC, or about 6000 years ago. The site is also rich in finds of Neolithic pottery and sophisticated flint tools, making this excavation nationally, perhaps even internationally, important.

The earthwork is a 'causewayed enclosure', an unusual and unexpected discovery, which Wessex Archaeology is very excited to be excavating. The aerial photo, ***top left***, shows its scale, with archaeologists standing within its partial curve. Each dark segment is the surface of a ditch which, if joined together, would produce an oval. There is a space between each ditch section, providing pathways (or 'causeways') into the centre of the oval. More of the original oval is being revealed as the excavation progresses. We can never know how this earthwork monument might have been used in the distant past but the number of animal bones placed or discarded in the ditches implies large-scale feasting. Current thinking is that causewayed enclosures were ritual meeting centres for kinship groups within a local area, perhaps including those from the Southlea settlement? Here they could have carried out religious and seasonal rites, exchanged and traded specialised goods and met potential spouses beyond their immediate family, all accompanied by feasting and drinking. These causewayed enclosures are only found from the early Neolithic period, after which they were abandoned in favour of stone monuments in the landscape. *Janet Kennish.*

▶ Watch out for a longer article in December's edition of *The Link*. We look forward to Wessex Archaeology's public displays and talks in the village, as part of their post-excavation research programme.

With thanks to John Powell and his team, and to Wessex Archaeology for online information, aerial and Neolithic pottery photos. Additional photography by Adrian Giddins for DVS.







Above and centre: *The damaged milestone.* ***Right:*** *This detail from a 19th-century painting shows Datchet's toll gate and toll house which stood opposite The Bridge, by the proposed site for the restored milestone*

MONUMENTS ON THE GREEN

There are many interesting monuments on the greens, mostly the result of philanthropic one-upmanship practised by Datchet's *grandes dames.* Read more on Janet Kennish's Datchet History website

LISTED BUILDINGS AND MONUMENTS

DATCHET'S MILESTONE

Datchet Parish Council has submitted an application to RBWM Planning Department for Listed Building Consent to restore Datchet's milestone and move it to a place of greater safety on Memorial Green. This listed monument has been knocked over and badly damaged by vehicles twice in recent months and has suffered from acid erosion in its position at the road edge. It is particularly vulnerable because, at some point in its history, it was cut in half and has lost the 'root' which would normally help to stabilise it. It is not possible to relocate it further back from the road edge because of the utilities which run under the pavement in that area. RBWM's Conservation Officer is due to decide in early November whether work can go ahead. This is specialist work and we have recommended stonemason Andy Chalk to the Parish Council. Andy regularly does work at Windsor Castle and has restored a number of Datchet's monuments including the war memorial. We hope to be able to mark the milestone's former position with a plaque. Please click here to read DVS's report on the Milestone.



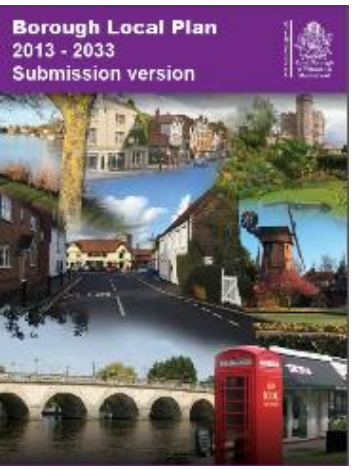
WAR MEMORIAL FLOWERBEDS



You may have noticed that, in the beds around Datchet's Grade II Listed war memorial, some of the flowers have been removed and replaced by two deep concrete blocks topped with metal plates, measuring approx 45 x 45cm, ***left***. These were installed so the 'Tommies', the WWI soldiers' outlines, purchased by the Parish Council this year, could be displayed on D-Day, ***right***, and on Remembrance Day.

When a monument is listed, it is not only the monument that is important but also its setting. The DVS committee is concerned that these blocks and plates, which will be in use for only a couple of weeks each year, detract from the displays in the flower beds throughout the rest of the year and are inappropriate around a Listed monument.

DVS has asked the Parish Council if the blocks and plates can be removed. An alternative discreet and inexpensive solution has been offered so that the 'Tommies' sculptures can be positioned securely for Remembrance Day and other commemorative events without detracting from the memorial's setting.



Revisions have been made recently to the Borough Local Plan, with two of the three proposed housing sites in Datchet removed. You can view and comment on this plan on RBWM's website and also view it at council offices and libraries.

The DNP team has helped to compile a Datchet Design Guide. There will be an opportunity to evaluate and comment on this in early 2020

DO YOU KNOW...
how Mays Crossing got its name? Find out on Janet Kennish's Datchet History website: Mays Cottages and Mays Crossing

MAKING SENSE OF PLANNING IN DATCHET

As you may be aware, there is a lot going on in local planning at present. Importantly, several major decisions on future planning policies, which will have a profound effect on Datchet over the next decade, are due to be taken next year.

♦ First and foremost is the draft **Borough Local Plan (BLP).** This covers the whole of the RBWM and sets the ruling guidelines for all other local planning initiatives. Recently a revised BLP has been agreed. There is an opportunity to say what you think about it during the consultation period, from 1 November until midnight on 15 December 2019. Of many supplementary documents which will be attached to the BLP is the **Borough-wide Design Guide (BDG)** which, when approved, will set out design standards to improve the quality of our towns and villages.

♦ Under the umbrella of the BLP is the **Datchet Neighbourhood Plan (DNP)** which is being compiled by a group of residents and parish councillors to focus on particular Datchet planning issues which residents have identified as being important. Hopefully you will have contributed to the DNP surveys already, and will continue to do so. The DNP Steering Group has helped to research and compile a draft **Datchet Design Guide**, in conjunction with a planning consultant and RBWM planners, to be supplementary to the BDG. This will help home owners, developers and planners to maintain and improve Datchet in ways which will be in keeping with the character of local areas. Residents will have an opportunity to evaluate and comment on this guide in early 2020.

PRESERVING THE SPECIAL CHARACTER OF OUR VILLAGE

There is an immediate and growing pressure for more houses, extended houses, space for cars, etc, as well as the recognition that wildlife, clean air and the environment must be factored in urgently. This produces planning applications which upset or please people, or buildings and various activities which don't seem to have planning permission, and enforcement issues which are difficult and protracted. It is not easy to find a way through this labyrinth. Although the DVS Committee can't answer every question on all of this, we can:

- Keep members posted on the progress of Local Plans (see above).
- Assess new planning applications in the Conservation Area and object or support them as we find appropriate.
- Monitor new developments to Datchet's Listed Buildings, and report the use of unsuitable materials, designs or quality of workmanship to Historic England and the Conservation Officer.
- Monitor decisions taken by the Parish Council and, if appropriate, give advice on contentious planning issues.

When it comes to making objections to planning applications, the DVS' voice is no more important than that of an individual. The DVS committee cannot represent the opinion of an individual member or resident. We can only forward a complaint about planning to the Parish Council, Borough Planning Officer or Conservation Officer. The most effective way to object is to do so when the planning application is published on the RBWM website. Your opinion will have as much clout as that of the DVS or Parish Council; submitting a group objection, or petition carries the same weight as that of an individual. It takes a bit of work, especially if there are multiple applications for the same development, but it is necessary if you want your opinions to be taken into consideration. The new planning policies should help make this task easier.





ANCIENT TREE INVENTORY

The Woodland Trust maps and records the UK's oldest and most important trees. There are 160,000 trees listed in its Ancient Tree Inventory (ATI), including veteran and notable trees at Ditton Park. Only one tree in the village centre, a 150-175-year-old Redwood in Southlea Road, has been recorded on the ATI. The Woodland Trust welcomes nominations from the public so, if there are trees in the village which you think are historically significant, a local landmark, or worth preserving for their intrinsic beauty and contribution to the landscape, please nominate them at the Woodland Trust website

DATCHET'S TREES

Datchet has many magnificent trees but did you know that only a few are protected by Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs)? Generally a TPO is only issued if a tree is under threat; a Redwood on Southlea Road has recently been given a TPO for this reason. The Conservation Area offers some protection for trees with a trunk diameter greater than 75mm when measured at 1.5m above ground level. (In this case, six weeks' written notice must be served to RBWM before works can be carried out, to allow time to consider whether to issue a TPO. Carrying out work without notice can result in a hefty fine.) But there are also magnificent trees around the village which are not in the Conservation Area and which are not afforded the same protection.

Village-wide surveys by the Datchet Neighbourhood Plan (DNP) team showed that the green and rural nature of Datchet is something that residents value highly. The DVS is supporting the DNP team in considering how the Plan might help to protect and preserve this.

EEL SCREENS ON THE THAMES AT DATCHET

You may have read Janet Kennish's article in the autumn issue of *The Link* magazine about the history of eel fisheries in Datchet, from the Domesday Book to more recent times, and the collapse of the European eel population. In England and Wales, elver numbers have fallen by an estimated 70%. This dramatic decline is thought likely to be a combination of factors including climate change, habitat loss and obstruction of waterways. The eel is now on the endangered list and the UK government has a target to increase the returning silver (adult) eel populations to 40% of historic pre-1980s' levels.

Thames Water is working with the Environment Agency to install new eel screens along the River Thames. A screen is being installed at their Datchet Intake Site on Southlea Road, opposite Beaulieu Close. This will protect eels from being drawn through the water intake system and will also benefit the wider environment and wildlife.




Left and far left: *Construction of the eel screens is taking place at the Thames Water Intake Site on Southlea Road*





Above left: *the unveiling of the war memorial in 1920*
Above right: *Remembrance Day commemorations in 1923*

NURSING AT THE FRONT



During WWI, Datchet resident Norah Robinson, ***left****, worked at the Abbaye de Royaumont voluntary hospital. Located 30kms north of Paris, it was one of the closest to the Front Line where many of the wounded soldiers from the Somme were treated.*





REMEMBRANCE IN DATCHET

WOMEN IN WWI

DVS has recently been researching the role of Datchet women in WWI. We're finding information in Red Cross Records, in Medal Rolls, in local newspapers, directories, genealogy websites and other sources, and are publishing details on the Datchet Village Society website. Their contributions range from driving ambulances in France and nursing near the Front Line to caring for wounded soldiers at local hospitals and helping in the kitchens. Click here to read more.

DATCHET IN WWII

We are in the very early stages of researching the WWII soldiers remembered on the War Memorial. If you have any information about any of the men and their families that you would be willing to share, please do let us know.

DATCHET IN THE GREAT WAR 1914-1918: A MEMORIAL TRAIL



If you would like a copy of the DVS WWI leaflet which outlines briefly the lives of the men remembered on Datchet's War Memorial, please click here. Alternatively, you can pick up a paper copy from The Bridge. There are longer versions of the soldiers' and sailors' stories, including those whose names were added to the memorial last year, on the DVS website

NEW COMMEMORATIVE BENCH ON MEMORIAL GREEN

Following a request from The Datchet Branch of The Royal British Legion, the Parish Council has purchased a decorative metal remembrance bench, ***left***, to commemorate the centenary of the end of WWI. It replaces one of the wooden benches on Memorial Green (which will be moved to a new site on the Green), and was unveiled by the Deputy Mayor and chair of the Datchet Branch, Councillor Gary Muir, and Albert Gregory, ***above left,*** on Saturday 2 November 2019.


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GREETINGS CARDS OF DATCHET

Please help us choose an image for the next DVS greetings card.

Click here to tell us which view you prefer.

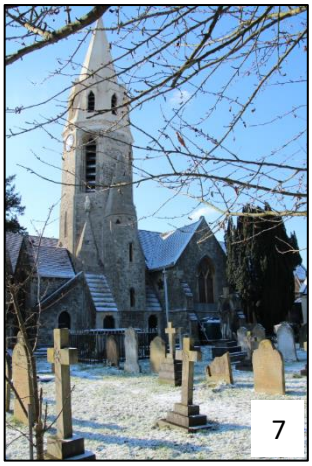
The link will take you to an online survey (with Google Forms) where you can select up to three of your favourite views. Or send an email to alison_crampin@yahoo.co.uk with 'DVS Greetings Card' in the subject line, and list the numbers of your three favourite views.

DVS greetings cards are on sale at The Bridge and at village events where the DVS has a stall.

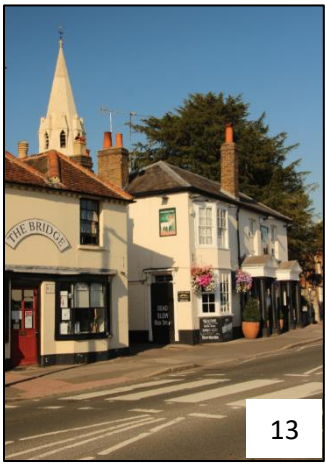

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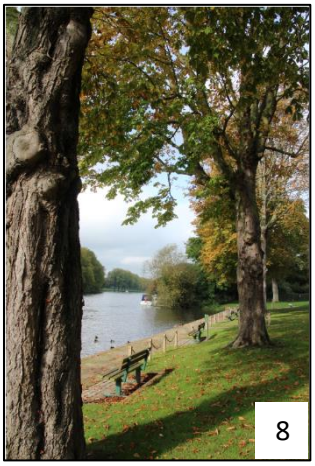

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POSTBAG

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.

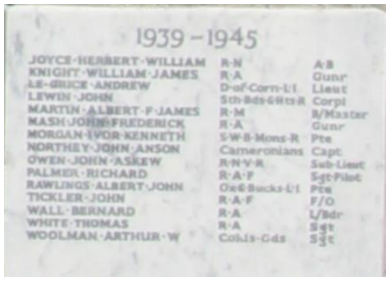


***Above**: The Parravicinis hope to visit the village again next year and hold a reunion here for family members*

- For some months we've been corresponding with Mr Parravicini who lives in France. He was keen to find out more about his family who lived in Datchet in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. He and his wife visited the village in September and we were able to show them the various houses owned by the family; the gravestones, memorials and a stained-glass window dedicated to the family in the church; the Golf Club founded by Percy John de Paravicini; the war memorial where John Marcus de Paravicini is remembered and his WWI plaque which DVS purchased a few years ago. Marjorie Clasper very kindly baked some scones and we finished our walk with a traditional cream tea. The Parravicinis have presented DVS with a book, ***right***, written in Italian, which outlines the history of their family through the centuries. Mr Parravicini has now contacted other English branches of the family and is hoping to organise a reunion in the village next year.



- We were asked for more information about a memorial in the church dedicated to Canon Thomas Reginald Russell Potter, vicar of St Mary's, and his wife, Dorothy. The inscription reads: '*Inseparably they served the parish of St Mary's Datchet. Inseparably they met death in Windsor Great Park 19 February 1970'.* Janet Kennish was able to explain that the Potters had tragically lost their lives in a head-on car collision in the Great Park.



***Above**: A Dutch gentleman is keen to trace descendants of Ivor Kenneth Morgan who is remembered on Datchet's war memorial*

- We have been contacted by a gentleman in The Netherlands who is keen to trace descendants of WWII soldier Ivor Kenneth Morgan whose battalion helped to liberate his village. Ivor's parents, Thomas and Winnifred, lived at 23 Lawn Close in the 1940s-50s. His sisters, Margaret and Irene, married Herbert Hatch and Charles Dixon, so we're also looking for Hatch and Dixon relatives. If you have any information, please let us know.
- The DVS has been given handwritten records from Datchet's Working Men's Club dating back to the 1880s by the family of David and Barbara Jefferson who passed away last year having lived in Datchet since 1964. We hope to put some of these documents on show at our November event, before sending them to the Record Office.
- We have also received a photo album which was compiled by Miss Gollop and Miss Dean who ran Datchet Post Office for 20 years. The album contains photographs of the WI Hall and shops being built, as well as newspaper cuttings and cartoons. We hope to have this on show at our November event, too.

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. We've had one or two ideas from members already, including the suggestion that we hold a regatta at the riverside.



***Above**: DVS will have a stall at St Nicholas's Fayre at St Mary's Church on 30 November. Please come along and see us*

CHRISTMAS IN DATCHET

If you're thinking of giving books as Christmas gifts, the DVS will have a stall at **St Nicholas' Fayre** at St Mary's Church from 11am to 4pm on Saturday 30 November. This year's fayre is set to be bigger than ever with around 50 stalls with gifts, food and drink, plus great activities and family fun, and free teas and coffees for shoppers.

Christmas on The Green will take place the following weekend, from 3-7pm on Saturday 7 December. There will be live music, singers, local choirs, dancers, Datchet Border Morris and Santa's grotto, and the Christmas tree lights are due to be switched on around 6pm. Food and drink, mulled wine and mince pies will be served along with refreshments and cakes in the WI Hall, and indoor and outdoor Christmas gift stalls. St Mary's Church Service will take place from 4pm to 5pm.

DON'T MISS: WILD TALKS, 7 NOVEMBER

DVS members are invited to join Wild About Datchet for an interesting evening of wildlife and environmental talks, with tea and biscuits, on Thursday 7 November from 7-9pm in the WI Hall in Datchet. Some of the experts who were present at the September wildlife gardening evening will be there again, and topics will include Bees and Pesticides: The Full Story, Large Herbivores (conservation heroes), Clean Energy, and The Wildlife of Madagascar.

Wild About Datchet will also be at both Christmas events, see above. For more information about Wild About Datchet events and local wildlife surveys, see www.WildAboutDatchet.com

125 YEARS OF DATCHET PARISH COUNCIL

After a preliminary meeting in December 1894 to nominate and elect councillors, the first official meeting of the new Datchet Parish Council took place in January 1895. At that first meeting the new Council had to tackle the complex situation of responsibilities passing from previous Parish Church Council control to the Civil Parish Council. It was the first time that ordinary men had a chance to publicly express their views, rather than leaving the running of village affairs to the gentlemen and clergy whose job it always used to be. Social change developed slowly but inevitably, as the Council found its feet. Janet Kennish is studying the handwritten minutes from these early council meetings which have been deposited in Berkshire Record Office in Reading, and reading the local newspaper cuttings which provide verbatim accounts of the proceedings. Look out for Janet's article in a future issue of *The Link* for more information.

Datchet Village Society

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.

INTRODUCE A FRIEND TO THE DVS



Do you know anyone who would enjoy DVS events, visits, talks, walks, and regular newsletters? It's easy to join, they just need to contact DVS Membership Secretary, Sandra Needham, telephone (01753) 593771, or email sandra@e-brimbles.com. Or maybe membership would make a nice gift for someone? **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.

MEMBERS' NEWS

We have some sad news about Robert Giffin, from The Avenue, who passed away recently. We send our condolences to his family and friends.

DVS MAIN CONTACTS

President: Janet Kennish
Tel 07778 455706, email janetkennish123@gmail.com
Acting chair: Alison Crampin
Tel 01753 547090, email alison_crampin@yahoo.co.uk
Secretary: Marjorie Clasper
Tel 01753 545110, email marjorie.clasper@tiscali.co.uk
Websites: www.datchetvillagesociety.org.uk
www.datchethistory.org.uk

WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO READ ABOUT?

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