Datchet Village Society

SPRING 2019

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NEWSLETTER

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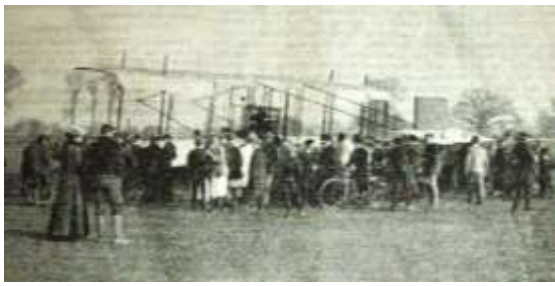
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VISIT TO BROOKLANDS MUSEUM: TOMMY SOPWITH

Tuesday 18 June 2019, 11am. Please book by 12 June.

We've organised a special members' visit to Brooklands, 'the birthplace of British Motorsport and Aviation', to learn more about aviation pioneer Tommy Sopwith. He created quite a stir in Datchet in 1911 when he landed his bi-plane on the Golf Course, twice! Once on the way to see his family who lived here and, two weeks later, en route to visit the royal family at Windsor Castle.

Brooklands' volunteer David Hassard will be giving a talk about Tommy Sopwith, we will then be free to explore the various halls and exhibits at leisure, with the opportunity to race in an F1 car simulator, board a variety of aircraft, and even sit in the cockpit of a Harrier Jump Jet.



WHERE: Meet in the ticket office, Brooklands Museum, Brooklands Rd, Weybridge, KT13 0SL, at 11am.

COST: £14.50 including talk and entrance fee to the main museum. There is a café on site.

TO BOOK: Booking essential and payment in advance please, by 12 June. Email Marjorie.Clasper@tiscali.co.uk or call 01753 545110.

MORE INFO: For museum details, see www.brooklandsmuseum.com

See also: Datchet History - Tommy Sopwith

Email: info@datchetvillagesociety.org.uk

www.datchetvillagesociety.org.uk



HOW TO BOOK

If you'd like to join the members' visits to Brooklands and/or Frogmore House, please contact Marjorie Clasper. Call (01753) 545110 or email, Marjorie.Clasper@tiscali.co.uk

VISIT TO FROGMORE HOUSE

Wednesday 28 August 2019, 1.15pm. Book by 1 July.

Standing in the Home Park of Windsor Castle, Frogmore has been a favourite royal retreat for more than 300 years. Public interest in the house has increased since Prince Harry, Princess Eugenie and Lady Gabriella Windsor held their wedding receptions here.

The house and gardens can now only be visited on three Charity Open Days each year or as a pre-booked group on a few selected dates in August. We had hoped to visit last year but available slots sold out very quickly. This year we booked in January for a guided tour for DVS members in August. Security will be tight, not least because Prince Harry, Meghan and Archie are living at Frogmore Cottage. Groups must now arrive all together by coach, with names and details of visitors supplied in advance, and the driver must stay with the coach.

COST: £25 per person to cover the guided tour and coach hire.

WHERE: We are finalising booking details for the coach but our plan is to meet at 1.15pm at Windsor Farm Shop to board the coach there. The tour is scheduled to finish around 3pm. Please join us for tea at the Farm Shop afterwards (not included).

TO BOOK: Booking is essential, and payment by 1 July, please as we have to book the coach. This will be non-refundable. To book, please email Marjorie.Clasper@tiscali.co.uk or call 01753 545110.

MORE INFO: www.rct.uk/visit/frogmorehouse

WILD ABOUT DATCHET

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. They are looking for people who are interested in helping to run the group, and getting involved in wildlife conservation locally. They would love to hear from gardeners, bird watchers or anyone who just likes the outdoors and cares about the environment. DVS is hoping to work closely with the group and to organise a nature walk in conjunction with them very soon. They have a Facebook page, see www.facebook.com/groups/WildAboutDatchet or contact Hannah Needham, WildAboutDatchet@gmail.com, tel 07760 993599.



Above: *Colnbrook Turnpike Trust erected milestones to measure the length of their roads and help navigate long distance journeys. Datchet's milestone is thought to date from c1768.*
Right: *The damaged milestone before the temporary repair; One of the watercolours DVS purchased last year, c1850/60, shows the toll gate which stood approximately where the zebra crossing is today*

MOVING THE MILESTONE

DVS has been working with the Parish Council to help protect Datchet's listed milestone which was damaged by a vehicle in September 2018. Since then, it has been temporarily cemented in place while a decision is made about its future. At the moment, it is particularly vulnerable to further damage by vehicular impact. The section closest to the road has previously been damaged and some lettering is missing. The lower section also suffers from salt-spreading, rainwater sprayed from the gutter, and exhaust pollution. It has no gravel breather margin and the temporary repair is causing 'wicking'. In its current position, the milestone is suffering significant ongoing and disfiguring decay. Its location and insecure temporary fixing mean it is at real risk of further damage or loss. DVS liaised with The Milestone Society and produced a report for the Parish Council which can be found on the DVS website. The proposal is to move the milestone a few yards, to the village green. The Parish and Borough Councils have agreed that it can be moved. As it is a listed monument, Heritage England will now be consulted.







Stonemason Andy Chalk pulled out all the stops to put the new stone in place for Remembrance Sunday

NAMES ADDED TO MEMORIAL



While researching the history of Datchet in WWI, DVS discovered 11 soldiers whose names had been omitted from the war memorial. (See the DVS website for details.) It took a few months to receive the necessary permissions to add their names to the memorial but we were delighted that the stonemason, Andy Chalk, (who restored Edmund Earley's gravestone and the Cemetery Chapel gates) was able to put the new stone in place in time for the WWI centenary commemorations. It was generously funded by The Barker Bridge House Trust. Then, in April, Historic England designated the memorial as a 'listed' building, due to its special artistic and historic importance. This gives it more significance and protection. At present, responsibility is taken by Royal British Legion (Datchet Branch), the Barker Bridge House Trust and Datchet Parish Council.



"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

RIVERSIDE GARDENS

Datchet's riverside is looking exceptionally beautiful at the moment. The new river wall, financed by RBWM, the Barker Bridge House Trust and Datchet Parish Council, is weathering well, and the various improvements including York stone paving, new white posts and chains and sealed gravel margin at the roadside, and the restored water fountain have all helped to create a delightful riverside garden. The rope fencing by the path, installed to deter the geese from damaging the lawns, seems to be working and the lawns, which have been levelled and returfed, are in better condition than ever.



Much of the riverside frontage is privately owned and fenced off making this small public section, owned by Datchet Parish Council, especially precious. The area is now more popular than ever. The new picnic tables and benches are in regular use, and boats, which are allowed to moor for 24 hours free of charge, are using the mooring rings on the new wall. The view from here across to the Home Park has changed little over the centuries and is noted in the Conservation Area Statement, **left**.

- If you have any good photographs of the riverside, please let the DVS have copies for our archives and the DVS website.
- 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/







RECENT DVS EVENTS

- **OCTOBER 2018 New to Datchet**
  Last autumn the Baptist Church ran a 'New to Datchet' event inviting people who had recently moved to the village to come along and find out more about the various groups and organisations here. We were delighted to support this event and hope that it will become a regular fixture.
- **NOVEMBER 2018 Wildlife of the Jubilee River**
  During the past 22 years the DVS has tried to fulfil its stated aims of helping to preserve the special character of Datchet and stimulate interest in its geography, history and natural history. We are aware that we have achieved little under the last heading and hoped that Brian Clews' talk in November would help us to look at the topic of local wildlife. It was a fascinating evening, open to members and non-members, and we were delighted that it attracted about 40 people. There was an entrance fee, with a discount for members. This allowed us to cover the costs of the speaker and the hire of the hall. We hope it will be the first of many events focused on Datchet's environment and wildlife.
- **DECEMBER 2018 St Nicholas Christmas Fayre**
  As usual, we had a stall at the Christmas Fayre in St Mary's church this year. We are always happy to support community events and were delighted to be invited.
- **MAY 2019 AGM Discover Stone-Age Datchet**
  After a brief business meeting, at this year's AGM John Powell from Wessex Archaeology told us more about the remains dating back to the end of the last Ice Age which have been found on the Cemex site at Riding Court Farm. One of the most exciting discoveries is a Neolithic circular enclosure which is of national importance. Excavations are revealing the hidden secrets of this monument, including what is thought to be a Stone-Age house, as well as fascinating and unique finds of pottery, tools, and a rare antler comb. John explained how the team of archaeologists is discovering not just one or two pieces but hundreds of kilograms of important finds. He described the dig as a 'once-in-a-lifetime' opportunity.



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

DVS CONSTITUTION

The proposed changes to the DVS constitution were accepted unanimously at this year's AGM. A copy was sent out with AGM invitations but, if you missed it, there is a link on the DVS website, towards the bottom of the home page www.datchetvillagesociety.org.uk

VOTE ON THE REVISED CONSTITUTION

At the AGM meeting, there was an opportunity to vote on a revised constitution for the Society. The main changes included the removal of sections which were no longer relevant, such as references to investments and properties and to land-fill operations which were only added to obtain a grant for the play area on the recreation ground a few years ago. New committee roles have been added, covering membership, photo archive, PR and marketing, planning, events, and environment and wildlife, to reflect the current make-up of the committee. Membership categories have been simplified to individual, junior and life, and a rise in membership fees was agreed. This will be the first rise in eight years. From 2020, the annual membership fee will rise to £10 per adult, and life membership to £125 per person. Junior membership will remain £1.



Janet Kennish has taken on the role of president of the DVS

DVS PRESIDENT

The role of president was originally included in the DVS constitution as an option for Janet Kennish when she moved from Datchet to Brighton, in case she felt the role of chair was too demanding from 70 miles away. (Generally, a person is invited to become president because of their specialist knowledge; they're the face and often the spokesperson of an organisation, attending key meetings and contributing to communications and publications, such as newsletters, articles, leaflets and books.)

For many years now, Janet has been tirelessly travelling back and forth, allowing us the benefit and enjoyment of her knowledge and research, but also taking on lots of the time-consuming admin involved in running the DVS and our events.

Over the past year or so, Janet has been experiencing severe back problems. This has made trips to Datchet increasingly difficult and painful, so for some time the committee has been discussing ways to lighten her load.

Although Janet was unable to attend this year's AGM, we were able to let members know that she has agreed to accept the role of president. We hope that this will allow Janet the freedom to do what she most enjoys — researching Datchet's history, writing articles, books and leaflets, and staying closely involved with the village and the DVS — but also that it will release her from the time-consuming, administrative side of her current role. In the coming months, a new chair will be elected by the committee to fulfil what will now become a more administrative role. In the meantime, Alison Crampin has been appointed Acting Chair.

POSTBAG

The DVS is the first port of call for anyone wanting to find out more, or share information, about the history of the village or the people who lived here. Since the last newsletter:

- we've been contacted by relatives of three soldiers remembered on the War Memorial and, as a result, have added information to their stories on the DVS website;
- we've answered queries about the Pride of Datchet Lodge of the Royal Antediluvian Order of Buffaloes in the 1920s; and the occupants of Old Priory in the 1940s;
- we've helped researchers from the Imperial War Museum who are recording details of all war memorials and plaques, and shared photographs of Datchet soldiers with the Buckinghamshire Remembers website;
- Janet Kennish has taken a group of German tourists on a guided walk of the village centre;
- and we've answered questions about the windmill which once stood in Datchet.



NEW INFORMATION LEAFLET

DVS recently published a new information leaflet, left, which has been distributed around the village. The aim is to publish these leaflets annually to promote the Society, to let more people know about the DVS, to generate interest in Datchet's history and environment, publicise the vast amount of information available on both the Datchet Village Society and Datchet History websites and, we hope, attract new members. The DVS received a generous grant from The Barker Bridge House Trust to cover the cost of these leaflets for the next three years.

BIODIVERSITY OFFSETTING GRANT

Datchet Parish Council recently applied for funding to help regenerate Willowfields and the Land at Mill Place. Grants were available from The Greater West Programme to regenerate land at sites next to railway lines and compensate for habitat loss resulting from the electrification of the Great Western Railway line. Unfortunately, Datchet's application was turned down because the site suffers from fly-tipping and is used by motorbikes. However, we understand that, even in its current state, the conditions are good for attracting wildlife. The new local group, Wild About Datchet, invited DVS members to join a bird survey with a representative from the Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust in late May. We hope to report back with their results very soon.



NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN UPDATE

Members of the DVS committee have been assisting with the development of the Datchet Neighbourhood Plan (DNP).
The DNP team held a Drop-in Session at the Village Hall in January which was very well attended. It was an opportunity to present the findings of the Character Assessment walks around the village with residents and to ask for further input. There were colourful displays highlighting the key issues and residents were invited to add comments, noting what works well in Datchet and what could be improved by better planning. Thanks to the feedback received, the DNP team is now focusing on the key planning issues for the village and starting to develop policies for the Neighbourhood Plan which will support the conservation and enhancement of Datchet's local character. The aim is to set out criteria for positive change through the planning system in areas which you've identified as being in need of upgrading or redevelopment.
The DNP team is also working with urban, landscape and heritage planners to create a set of design principles for Datchet.
For more details, see www.datchetneighbourhoodplan.org



A temporary tree preservation order has been placed on this landmark Wellingtonia

PROTECTING DATCHET'S TREES

At the entrance to Datchet's Conservation Area on Southlea Road, a very tall Wellingtonia (Giant Redwood) stands sentinel. It is one of a pair, believed to be around 150 years old, which were planted at both entrances of a large and unusual Italianate house built between 1833 and 1868.
This Wellingtonia was under threat because it is one of a number of trees which might be implicated in the subsidence in a nearby structure, an outbuilding which was built later than the main house and converted into a dwelling in the 20th century.
Towards the end of last year, a planning application was submitted for the Wellingtonia to be felled and a temporary tree preservation order was placed on it. The Royal Borough's Planning Department objected to felling, saying that the evidence to implicate the tree in the alleged damage was *'lacking in reasonable detail'*. The planning officer's assessment was that, *'if the tree is involved, there are other options, in terms of appropriate remedies, that would allow the retention of the tree. These should be explored first so a more informed view can be taken.'* In January, a new planning application to fell the tree was submitted without any indication that an alternative remedy had been explored. Datchet Parish Council and the DVS objected and, in March RBWM refused the application. As yet, there is no clear evidence that the Wellingtonia is causing the alleged damage. It would be a tragedy to fell such a magnificent tree only to discover it wasn't the cause.

HOW TO BOOK

If you'd like to join the members' visits to Brooklands Museum or Frogmore House, please contact Marjorie Clasper. Call (01753) 545110 or email Marjorie.Clasper@tiscali.co.uk

EVENTS 2019

Here's our proposed programme of events for the coming year. If you have suggestions for places to visit, speakers to invite, topics to cover, or local walks, please let us know.

WILD ABOUT DATCHET WALKS
Spring/autumn 2019
We hope to organise some village nature walks soon with new local group, Wild About Datchet. Details to follow.



VISIT TO BROOKLANDS MUSEUM
18 June 2019 See also page 1 of this newsletter.
A special members' visit to Brooklands to learn more about aviation pioneer Tommy Sopwith and his links with Datchet.



THE ELLIS JOURNEY
Sunday 30 June 2019
The pre-1905 veteran cars are returning to the village on their annual run from Micheldever to Datchet, recreating the first recorded journey of a motor car on English roads in 1895. This year is also the 200th anniversary of Queen Victoria's birth and DVS will be joining in the fun with displays in the WI Hall. The aim is to bring to life the Victorian era when Datchet resident, Evelyn Ellis, made that first recorded journey, travelling to his home in Southlea Road. See www.ellisjourney.co.uk





VILLAGE FETE
Saturday 6 July 2019
As always, the DVS will have a stand at the village fete. This year the theme of the fete is Peace Celebrations: 100 years on, to commemorate the celebrations which were held in the grounds of Churchmead House (now Churchmead School) in July 1919 to mark the end of WWI. This year there will also be a new Datchet Art Festival and competition.



VISIT TO FROGMORE HOUSE
28 August 2019 See also page 2.
Visits here are now restricted to groups or charity days. We've managed to secure a special guided visit for members. Please book early.



EXHIBITION: OLD PHOTOGRAPHS AND MAPS
Winter 2019
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.



Subscriptions due 1 April 2019

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.

MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTIONS DUE

Please note that membership subscriptions for 2019-20 were due on 1 April. (Annual membership runs from 1 April to 31 March the following year.) For 2019-20, annual membership is still £7.50 per adult, £14 for two adults in the same household, £1 for under 18s.
Donations are also gratefully received.

HOW TO RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP

There are a number of ways you can renew:
Online: you can make a transfer directly into the DVS bank account, sort code 09-01-29, account number 04339438. Please email Membership Secretary, Sandra Needham, sandra@e-brimbles.com to let her know you've paid and to update your contact details.
By cheque: please send a cheque payable to Datchet Village Society to Sandra Needham, Brimbles, 114 Slough Road, Datchet, SL3 9AF. If you have any queries, please call Sandra on (01753) 593771.
Thank you!

DVS MAIN CONTACTS

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Honorary Secretary: Marjorie Clasper
Tel 01753 545110, email marjorie.clasper@tiscali.co.uk
Websites: **www.datchetvillagesociety.org.uk**
www.datchethistory.org.uk

WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT THIS NEWSLETTER?

Please get in touch and tell us what you think about this new-look newsletter. It's longer than usual as it's been a while since the last issue and there was a lot to catch up on, but the plan is to produce shorter newsletters more frequently in future. We're always happy to receive feedback and ideas.