SUMMER 2024
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Datchet Village Society

NEWSLETTER

Above: The ferry across the Thames at Datchet showing the remains of the old bridge prior to rebuilding, and the Crown and Angel on the Windsor side. Robert Havell, 1811.

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Welcome to the Summer edition of your DVS newsletter

Thank you if you joined us at the recent AGM, came along to see us at the Ellis Journey event on The Cut, or saw our display about the new milestone pavement plaque at the Tabletop Sale in St Mary's Church in July.

We hope you can join us for our next DVS visit; we've arranged for the National Trust archaeologist to show us around Ankerwycke and tell us about their exciting recent excavations and conservation work.

In this issue, you can read about a brass rubbing given to Janet Kennish which is currently on view in the Church Rooms; also our proposals for a Blue Plaque to be installed at the home of Datchet's only recipient of the Victoria Cross. There are details of the last chapter in the history of Datchet's bridge, when the remains were dredged from the riverbed in the 1980s; and we report on the public outcry caused by a fish shortage in Datchet in WWII.

Please note, annual membership fees were due in April, see page 12.

We thank you for your continued support and look forward to seeing you soon. ***Your DVS Committee***

Email: info@datchetvillagesociety.org.uk
www.datchetvillagesociety.org.uk

PAST EVENTS

MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS

Please note, **annual DVS membership runs from 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025.** Annual subscriptions are £10 per adult, £1 junior. If you have not already renewed, you can pay by bank transfer or by post. Please see the back page for details. Donations are also gratefully received.

THE DVS COMMITTEE

Committee members relinquish their office every year and are eligible for re-election at the AGM. The current committee members were all willing to stand in 2024-25 and were nominated and seconded at the AGM.



Above: *Veteran cars on The Cut. The first recorded journey by a motor car was made on 5 July 1895 by pioneering motorist and Datchet resident, Evelyn Ellis, from Micheldever to his home at Rosenau on Southlea Road (since replaced by Woollacoombe).*
Below: *DVS braved the rain too*





DVS AGM: THE HISTORY OF OLD WINDSOR

Very many thanks to everyone who attended the Annual General Meeting in May. Our guest speaker was Blue Badge Guide Tony Howe, whom you may have already met in his role as a steward at St George's Chapel.
He presented a talk on 'The History of Old Windsor' which was once the third largest town in Berkshire. Along with many fascinating facts and surprising details, we learned about Roman tombs, Saxon settlements, and the Royal Palace/Hunting Lodge used by King Edward the Confessor. (It was William I who later moved the royal court to Windsor Castle.)
We also heard about the subsequent development of the grand estates and how that affected the way the town grew, leaving the remnants of a village green near the present-day Fox and Castle pub.

ELLIS JOURNEY

On Sunday 7 July 2024, we celebrated one of Datchet's few claims to fame; the anniversary of Evelyn Ellis's first recorded journey by a motorised carriage in the UK. Ellis's journey, from Michedever to his home in Datchet, was marked by the return of the veteran cars to the village, re-enacting that first journey.
The vehicles had assembled the previous day at Norton Park Hotel, and set off on Sunday morning from Micheldever Station, as Ellis had done in 1895. They departed at timed intervals, the slowest first, and started arriving here from around midday.
This year, there were fewer of the pre-1905 vehicles than previous years, but the drivers braved the downpours and difficult conditions and parked up under the trees on The Cut.
DVS was out in the rain too. The organisers, who also run The British Motor Show, had invited us to present our Evelyn Ellis display so spectators could learn more about that first journey, and about Ellis and his companion Fred Simms.
Datchet Parish Council organises a welcome reception in Datchet so residents can enjoy the event and view the cars, too. This year they invited some local enthusiasts to bring their cars to display.

EVENTS



Right: *Ankerwycke Priory ruins*
Above: *The site is renowned for the Ankerwycke Yew (one of the Trust's oldest trees, thought to have been around for as long as 2500 years) but it was also the location of a Benedictine nunnery, dedicated to St Mary Magdalene, from 1160 to 1536; and then the site of an imposing Tudor House, which once hosted Queen Elizabeth I; before a former plantation owner made it his country seat in the 1800s. This Georgian building was then repurposed in the 1930s as a nightclub and haunt for movie stars*
Below: *There are attractive walks around the site and along the river*



COMBERMERE BARRACKS

We hope to arrange a visit soon to the Barracks and the Household Cavalry Training Wing Stables, to learn about the history of the Household Cavalry and visit the museum. We'll keep you posted



ANKERWYCKE GUIDED VISIT

We're delighted that James Brown, regional archaeologist for the National Trust, has agreed to show DVS members around Ankerwycke on Friday 20 September, at 11am, and tell us more about the exciting recent discoveries there. (If you're a regular viewer of *Digging For Britain*, and were watching the show in January, you'll know that the programme joined James and his team during one of their excavations at Ankerwycke.)

The National Trust, together with Berkshire Archaeology Society and Surrey County Archaeological Unit, has been carrying out investigations to learn more about Ankerwycke's past, as part of the Runnymede Explored Project, supported by the National Lottery Heritage Fund. This had led to many more discoveries about the history of the site, not least the medieval layout which had been preserved beneath Tudor landscaping gravel. We hope to learn more about this on our visit.

Since DVS last visited in 2015, the site itself has changed quite a lot, too. There is a seating area, with interpretation panels, from which to view the famous ancient yew. The picturesque ruins of the Benedictine nunnery have been consolidated, and the damaging historic interventions have been removed. The heavy concrete capping was carefully taken off and the highest sections of the walls have been capped with vegetation which helps to protect them from water as well as extreme fluctuations in temperature. This work has resulted in dramatic visual changes, leaving the chalk walls not only more authentic but also more stable. In turn, this has allowed the removal of fencing, enhancing the setting of the site.

HOW TO BOOK There are 20 places available. Please book with Marjorie, email Marjorie.Clasper@tiscali.co.uk or telephone 01753 545110. We expect the visit to last between 60-90 mins.
GETTING THERE: We will be able to use a private entrance and parking area for our visit. This is reached via the first turning after Magna Carta Lane, off Staines Road, Wraysbury. We'll send full details nearer the time. Parking spaces are limited, so we will need to car-share where possible. Please let us know if you would be willing to give someone a lift or would be happy to travel with someone else. Our plan is to meet up just before 11am in the parking area.
COST: The National Trust has suggested a donation of £5 per head for this tour, payable in cash on the day.





Lesley Giddins, Marjorie Clasper and Alison Crampin from the DVS Committee were there to see the installation, while Adrian Giddins, DVS photographer, took photographs of the event for our archives

For more information about this project, please see the DVS website.



THE MILESTONE PLAQUE

It gives us great pleasure to announce that, on 26 April 2024, the DVS's pavement plaque was installed on London Road to mark the former site of Datchet's 1768 milestone.

When the DVS began a campaign to preserve the milestone, we did not think it would take more than 20 years! To quote Janet Kennish, as reported in *The Royal Borough Observer* on 26 June 2002: 'If we don't move it, we will lose it… It is going to be a long process and we will need the support of the Parish Council, the Royal Borough and Highways Agency'.

At the time Janet's prophetic words went unheeded and the parish council of the day decided to leave the listed milestone near the kerb of the busy London Road. It was knocked over by a vehicle and damaged in 2018, then again in 2019, after which it languished in the parish yard, out of harm's way, while Datchet Parish Council sought permission to move it.

DVS prepared the Heritage Statement for DPC's application (and we were delighted when the representative from the Milestone Society told us it was the best letter supporting moving a milestone that he had ever read!).

In 2019, listed building consent was granted. Stonemason Andy Chalk, of Architectural Heritage Conservation, was engaged to do the conservation work on this much-eroded and damaged Portland-stone landmark, and to attach a replacement 'root' to help anchor it securely into the ground.

The pandemic then delayed the restoration for many months, however, on 4 November 2021, the restored milestone was relocated to Memorial Green, and its listed status subsequently restored.

DVS had offered to pay for a pavement plaque to mark the original site of the milestone. There was much to-ing and fro-ing between the Parish Council and RBWM, and various delays, before permission was finally granted and the plaque was commissioned at the end of 2023. We're grateful to Datchet Parish Council which contributed £100 towards the cost (which had risen during the intervening period), and to Volker, RBWM's contractor, who installed it free of charge.

We continue to monitor the condition of the milestone. Nitrates from grass cuttings left on The Green are sinking into the surrounding gravel, and are believed to be fuelling green growth on the milestone's surface. To reduce this, Andy Chalk has suggested that the gravel should be dug out and rinsed periodically. DPC has plans to add granite setts around the border of Memorial Green and around the milestone, so we have asked that Andy be consulted regarding the positioning of this border, to allow space for maintenance.



Above, *Sgt HW Engleheart, VC*
Below, *a mock-up of the plaque*





Sgt Engleheart's bravery was even remembered on cigarette cards

A BLUE PLAQUE IN DATCHET?

As you may know, from previous newsletters or if you joined us at the AGM, the DVS committee is supporting an application for a Blue Plaque in Datchet to commemorate Sgt Henry William Engleheart who fought in the Second Boer War. He was awarded the Victoria Cross for bravery in 1900, near Bloemfontein, South Africa; this is the highest and most prestigious award for gallantry in the face of the enemy that can be awarded to British and Commonwealth forces. He is believed to be the only VC recipient with a Datchet connection.

When he left the Army, Sgt Engleheart was appointed Lodge Keeper at the South-West Lodge of Windsor Castle (near the present-day farm shop), a position he held for 25 years. After retiring in 1933, he moved to Fairlight in Lawn Close. He died there in 1939, following a long illness.

Progress update

The original request for a plaque was made in 2018, when RBWM could still afford to fund one or two plaques a year, and it was added to the queue. In 2023, when an update was requested, RBWM admitted the paperwork had been lost and so another application was submitted.

In December 2023, RBWM's Museum team told us that they would be setting up a panel of councillors in the new year to review requests, and told us that applicants would need to source funding themselves. Since then, we've nudged gently but have heard nothing more.

Last month, we were surprised (and pleased) to learn that a plaque has just been approved in Eton High Street, for George Yeomans Pocock.

We contacted the applicants who were very generous with information. The main difference between our applications seems to be that they had funding in place when they applied. If anything, their application was more complicated as it required listed building consent.

Not to be defeated, we have put together a comprehensive application, with costings, which you can read on the DVS website. Our aim is that the understaffed Museum team should have everything they need to present our case to the panel. We are indebted to Derek Hunt, military historian and author, for permission to use his research in this application. Derek has researched all the VC recipients of Windsor and district and instigated the successful installation of blue plaques for all three Windsor VCs.

Funding request

Cllr David Buckley, chairman of Datchet Parish Council, has agreed to present our proposal for funding to the Parish Council in August. The cost is c£500 for the cast aluminium plaque, plus installation. There is a precedent for funding military memorials; DPC funded the WWI bench on Memorial Green following an application by the British Legion. This was in the region of £1200 plus installation and was funded using money from the 106 Public Arts fund, set aside specifically for public art and heritage.

Do you support this application for a blue plaque?
If so, please write to DPC, clerk@datchetparishcouncil.gov.uk, and RBWM's Museum Service, museum@rbwm.gov.uk, and let them know

BRASS RUBBING



*The Hanbury Memorial, **above**, is tucked away in the chancel, low down, next to the curtain*

What does the inscription say?

At the time the memorial was made, most people could not read or write. Spelling was not standardised until the late 1600s so scribes wrote words as they sounded:

"Here under lyeth buried the Bodies of Mr Richard Hanbery Citizen and Goldsmyth of London and of Ales Hanbery his wyffe by whom he had two Daughters, thone maried unto Mr William Combe of the medell temple Esquier and the other maried unto Mr Edmond Wheler of the Citie of London, Goldsmyth. She departed this Lyffe the v^th^ daye of September in the yere of our Lorde God 1593 and was then Lvi yeares of age. Her sowle is at rest w^th^ God unto whom please the Lord of his mercye brynge us all a men. He Departed this lyffe the _____ daye of _____ in the yere of our Lorde God. 1____ and was then ____ yeres of age."



BRASS RUBBING OF THE HANBURY MEMORIAL

In the chancel of St Mary's Church, behind the altar, there is a memorial dedicated to Alice Hanbury who died in 1593. It shows her kneeling at the altar with her two daughters, Alice and Elizabeth, and her husband, Richard Hanbury of Riding Court. He was a rich City of London goldsmith who had leased Riding Court from Queen Elizabeth I in 1586.

The original stone surround is now crumbling due to its age and being touched by many hands but a brass rubbing of the memorial, ***above*,** can now be viewed in the Church Rooms.

It was made many years ago by Lewis Lupton of Windsor, a historian who wrote about early printers of Bibles including Christopher and Robert Barker of Datchet. He gave it to Janet Kennish on one condition: that it would be displayed in Datchet to help teach village children and their families about the history of St Mary's and its memorials to those who lived and died here long ago.

St Mary's Church kindly agreed to display Lewis's work so that many more people can enjoy seeing it in future, and Janet Kennish has written information sheets about the Hanbury family and the memorial, which are displayed alongside.

When Alice Hanbury died on 5 September 1593, aged 56, her husband had the plaque made, intending it to be his memorial, too. He left spaces for his date of death and age but, for whatever reason, these were not added when he died in 1607. He omitted to mention the names of their daughters on the memorial, adding only the names of their husbands to whom he had arranged their marriages. (Rich girls in Tudor times did not expect to fall in love and decide for themselves who to marry!) Their daughter Alice was married to William Combe, a lawyer of Middle Temple, one of the four Inns of Court, and Elizabeth was married to Edmund Wheeler, a goldsmith like Richard himself. Edmund and Elizabeth had four sons and a daughter, three of whom, Maria, Hanbury and John, have memorial busts in the chancel of St Mary's Church.

DATCHET'S BRIDGES

The bridge was repaired and rebuilt several times. The third bridge opened in 1811 but by 1834 the deck was again unsafe. Buckinghamshire and Berkshire had agreed their boundary ran through the centre of the bridge so each county began rebuilding the deck from its own side: Berks in iron and Bucks in timber. As the workmen approached each other in the middle, arguments flared and injunctions were obtained, until the Lord Chancellor ordered both sides 'to proceed without impeding each other'. The final bridge became an extraordinary structure with a gap in the centre of the deck where the two sides didn't quite join; luckily it was only to exist for another 15 years. It was finally taken down in 1850 when the railway was built. For more info, see Janet Kennish's Datchet History website



*Datchet resident Richard Jensen was working in the boatyard when he saw the remains of the bridge on the barges, headed for landfill. He retrieved a large piece of beech, which still had a wrought iron hook and nail attached. He preserved it and turned it into the beautiful tabletop **above**. Richard thinks the hook may have held the mid cantilever section of the bridge, keeping it clear of the other side.*



Malcolm Head's chess table, made from the remains of Datchet Bridge

THE FINAL CHAPTER

We were delighted to hear from a former dredger master, Malcolm Head, recently. He was part of the Thames River Authority team which removed the remains of Datchet Bridge from the riverbed in March 1982. With the help of family and work colleagues, Malcolm has written his recollections which provide the final chapter in the history of Datchet Bridge. He shares them with us here:

Using a shoal dredger, a tug *Bourne*, and three large steel barges, the dredging team spent two days searching for the remains of Datchet's bridge, using a long wooden sounding pole in a small clinker-built dinghy with an outboard motor, but found nothing. The River Authority then dispatched their underwater survey boat, *The John Bishop*, to help. This large, grey, converted fibreglass Cabin Cruiser had the best surveying equipment available at the time but it still took the survey team six hours to find and locate the remains. They also produced a map of the riverbed showing where the remains were located.

The dredging team then positioned the shoal dredger beside what they thought was the first stone pier of the bridge. They later discovered it was a large brick wall, built with thousands of red house bricks. It was thought it had been built to support the riverbank by the boatyard, so the dredging team decided to leave the wall where it was. They could see a similar, much larger wall on the Windsor bank which they believed to be part of the foundations for the old Crown and Angel pub.

When the remains of the bridge were in the barges, the dredging team could see there were hundreds of broken timbers which they believed to be decking from the bridge. They also found a large wooden fender pile beside the remains of the stone pier closest to the boatyard. Once it was in the barge, too, they could see a cast-iron ring at the top of it and below that a carved coat of arms for Buckinghamshire.

The artefacts were transported to the River Authority's workshops in Sunbury-on-Thames, and the remains of the bridge were loaded into barges, towed downstream, and deposited at a landfill site at Penton Hook.

A year later, Malcolm returned to the workshops but the artefacts were no longer there, apart from a large piece of beech wood which he believed to be part of the decking. Nobody wanted it so Malcolm took it home and stored it in his own workshop until it was completely dry, then made it into a fine chess table with collapsible legs, ***top***.



Above, *Ditton Manor House*

DITTON MANOR DEVELOPMENT

You may be aware that a planning application, ref 23/01063/LBC and 23/01062/FULL, was submitted some time ago for the grade II listed Ditton House to convert it into a hotel and restaurant. There was a presentation about the proposed development at Datchet Parish Council and also a public consultation at Ditton Manor.

The application was for a 'hotel-led development comprising the conversion, extension and alteration of the existing Manor House and associated buildings, including the North Gatehouse, East Gatehouse, South Gatehouse, Chapel and Granary, to a flexible hotel and wedding/conference venue with associated ancillary facilities including bar, restaurant and gym/spa; additional two storey hotel accommodation block; erection of a marquee for wedding/conference use; demolition and erection of a new one-storey community building (Datchet sea scouts' hut); car parking; landscaping; and other associated works'.

The application was 'called in', which means that the final decision whether or not to permit the development was made by Borough Councillors on the Windsor and Ascot Development Management Committee, rather than the Planning Officers.

The application was refused on the grounds that 'The proposed development is harmful to the significance of the listed buildings. Though a number of public benefits can be identified from the proposed development they cannot outweigh the "less than substantial" harm caused by the harm to the significance of the listed Manor House.'

(In planning, there are three levels of harm to the significance of designated heritage assets: total loss, substantial harm, less than substantial harm.) At some point, a solution may need to be found to finance the upkeep of these listed buildings if they are to be preserved for future generations. The maintenance of buildings like these is expensive.

AL39: 80 HOMES ON LONDON ROAD

AL39, the land to the rear of 45-63 London Road, was one of three sites in Datchet put forward for development in the Borough Local Plan (BLP) to meet government housing targets. The BLP went through several public consultations before being submitted to the government's planning inspector for examination. The inspector made various changes and instructed RBWM to focus development mainly on the towns. This resulted in two of the sites in Datchet being dropped, and the number of homes proposed for this site, AL39, was reduced from 150 to 80, including 32 affordable homes. The BLP was adopted by RBWM in 2022.

The developers of AL39 submitted detailed plans to RBWM (ref 22/02737) and the public was also invited to comment.

Planning permission has now been granted subject to a list of 33 conditions relating to, among other things, surface-water drainage, flood risk, tree protection, archaeology, environmental protection and noise. (The early archaeological reports show that a ring ditch was discovered there.) There are also plans for two pedestrian crossings on London Road. For details, see the Planning section of RBWM's website.



LOCAL INFRASTRUCTURE

The developers of AL39, the London Road site, ***above,*** *will have to pay a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) to RBWM. This has to be used to finance infrastructure required to support the development. Datchet Parish Council will receive a portion of this. Previously, without a Neighbourhood Plan, DPC would have received 15% of the CIL. Now there is a Neighbourhood Plan in place, it will receive 25%*



DATCHET DESIGN GUIDE

In 2019-20, Datchet's Neighbourhood Plan group was talking to residents and pounding the pavements with a team of planners, helping to identify the design quality which makes our village a distinctive and attractive place. The information was distilled into a Datchet Design Guide (DDG). Its purpose is to help home owners, developers and planners to maintain and improve Datchet in ways which are in keeping with the character of our village. The intention is that any new development, big or small, extension or loft conversion, should reinforce this character, using cues from the local area to create a design which is sympathetic to its surroundings while providing a contemporary interpretation. The DDG sits alongside the Borough-wide Design Guide and Borough Local Plan, adding a layer of specific local detail. The DDG guidance on shopfronts is further supported by policy in the Datchet Neighbourhood Plan. The DNP forms part of the local development plan and must be taken into account when considering planning applications.

DATCHET GRILL, HARDWARE HOUSE

An appeal was recently submitted to the Government's Planning Inspectorate appealing against RBWM's refusal to grant retrospective permission for the changes to the frontage and signage at Hardware House on The Green. The planning inspector dismissed both appeals, upholding the decisions made by RBWM's Planning Officers.

The inspector's decision notice said that the previous shopfront 'used traditional proportions as set out in the Datchet Design Guide. The recessed front door had a similar form to the neighbouring attached building and the simplicity of the windows moderated the prominence of the white UPVC frames. It blended into the street scene and was in keeping with the traditional and historical character and appearance of its surroundings. The single-storey front of the building also included an interesting, stepped gable over the shopfront and the fascia signs sat between traditionally detailed corbels. This added to its visual interest and … made a positive contribution to the attractiveness of the wider group of historical commercial buildings on the south side of The Green and the significance of the Datchet Conservation Area.

'In comparison, the new shopfront, would be visually intrusive. The repositioning of the front door in line with the front elevation and front windows would not be in keeping with the neighbouring buildings or other buildings around The Green. These buildings typically have more appealing front elevations … that include recessed front doors, porches, or protruding windows, such as bays or bows. Introducing a largely flat, contemporary ground floor elevation, where all the features are flush, would significantly erode the visual interest of the host building and the attractiveness of the wider group, as well as the significance of the Datchet Conservation Area.

'The loss of the recess and canted returns to the shop windows, would result in the new front door appearing wider than the previous front door. This, together with the two fan lights and the new front door only being half glazed would exacerbate the prominence of the white UPVC frames. The thick-framed fanlights and UPVC lower third of the front door would be obtrusive features, which would undermine the traditional proportions of the shop front, contrary to the advice set out in the Design Guide.'

In conclusion, the inspector found that the proposed alterations would harm the significance of Datchet's Conservation Area and would conflict with the development plan; and the proposed advertisements would harm the visual amenity of the area.

You can read the full decision notice if you search for Hardware House under planning applications on RBWM's website.

A revised application, ref 24/01649, has been submitted to replace the new door with a window, retaining the flush frontage, and to remove the illumination from the signage. If you wish to comment on this application, to support, or to object, the Neighbour Consultation expiry date is 9 August 2024.

BILLINGSGATE FISH MARKET IN DATCHET DURING WWII

Maybe Datchet residents had been spoiled with a plentiful supply of fish at the start of the war? In her book, Datchet Past, *Janet Kennish explains: "For a time, traders from Billingsgate fish market came out to Datchet, a relatively safe place with easy access, where their vans occupied the North Green and Slough Road.*

The problem of feeding the swelling community at a time when mothers were employed in war work all day led to the first provision of school meals at the scout hut. At the same time, infants' nutrition was improved by free cod-liver oil and orange juice dispensed from the Working Men's Club."

For more information about how the war changed Datchet, visit the Datchet Village Society website. There is also a personal account of life as an evacuee in Datchet



***Above**: Lots of people still remember Barnes' shop which sold poultry and game as well as fish. It was on the east side of the High Street, pictured on the right above, c1945, with an awning. It later became a popular fish and chip shop, Walfords Fish Bar. The buildings next to the Manor Hotel - the cleaner's, fishmonger's, and fruiterer's (with the bicycle outside) - were later demolished to make way for the railway station development.*



Billingsgate fish market on North Green during WWII

A FISHY TALE

'Datchet wants more fish', shouted a headline in the *Windsor, Slough & Eton Express* of 18 February 1944. Local feelings were running high. Complaints about the allegedly unfair distribution of fish had been made at a meeting of the Parish Council. There were local reports that Mrs Barnes, the fishmonger in the High Street, 'accepted orders over the telephone with the result that when people who had queued up for long periods eventually got into the shop they were told: "No fish left".'

It was 'a disgrace and a scandal', some councillors claimed; villagers were 'at the mercy of this fishmonger'. Others asserted that some residents had not had fish for months. Councillor Bilyard said Datchet got its proper allocation of fish; the trouble was the way it was allocated. Some thought it a pity that fish was not sold on a ration basis. After much discussion, the council agreed to pass the matter to the Food Officer to investigate.

The following week, the newspaper published a letter from Mr W Leigh Parkin of Copper Beeches, Slough Road: 'So far as I and my friends are concerned, the fishmonger does not give preference to phone orders,' he wrote. 'We have repeatedly been told that there is only enough fish for the queue and none for phone orders. Also, we have been told that as we had fish last week, we could have none this week. I consider that Mrs Barnes does her best to be fair both to queue and phone; in fact, until I read your article, I thought she favoured the queue. At times I have had no fish for three weeks as after three goes of pneumonia in a year, I am forbidden by my doctor to queue.'

In March, the *Express* had better news to report. Matters had greatly improved following a response from the Food Executive Officer who stated, 'It appears that while consumers do phone and inquire if fish is available, the majority come along and wait in the queue. No preference is given to phone orders. I am given to understand the proprietor has another shop at Windsor, but the Datchet shop gets the larger supply. While fish is in short supply, I am afraid there is no remedy'. However, people who had not had fish for months had since been able to get some. Cllr Bilyard said the position was very much improved - they even had salmon the previous week - and all the housewives in the queue were grateful to the Council for what they had done in the matter.

With thanks to historian Derek Hunt for the newspaper cuttings used in this article.

POSTBAG



The enquirer sent us a photo to show us their haul of Janet's books and DVS leaflets purchased at The Bridge

A SELECTION FROM OUR INBOX

The DVS is often the first port of call for anyone wanting to find or share information about the history of the village. A steady flow of emails and questions keeps us busy making new discoveries.

A satisfied customer

On the Spring Bank Holiday in May, the DVS website received an enquiry: 'My direct ancestors are listed as living at the Rectory in Datchet in the 1861 census: Sir William George Macbean Colebrooke, daughter Francis and her husband Alfred Reade. I happened to drive through beautiful Datchet this weekend to get to Windsor and it reignited my family history fire. I would dearly love to know if the Rectory still exists.'

By chance, we were able to reply within minutes and we told the enquirer they had very probably driven past Sir William's house, now known as Old Priory, opposite Memorial Green. (There was never a priory in Datchet; an enterprising Victorian owner named Mr Prior caused confusion by renaming the rectory after himself.)

We gave the enquirer a link to Janet Kennish's Datchet History website for more information about the rectory and its occupants.

We also told them about an 1891 photo of Rectory House in Janet's book, *Datchet Past,* and referred them to another of Janet's books, *The Royal Stag at Datchet and the Robert Barker Bridge House Trust* which has information about other Reades in Datchet including Richard Reade, Rector of Datchet from 1565.

Later that afternoon, we received a grateful letter of thanks. En route back home to Cornwall, the enquirer had stopped off in Datchet just as The Bridge café was closing but Caroline, the manager, very kindly opened up again so they could buy Janet's books.

Hawthorn Cottage, Eton Road

We were asked about the history of Hawthorn Cottage as there are several names carved into bricks there, along with various dates from 1893-1918.

The occupants from about 1893 to 1930 were the Nason family. Henry Nason, a former fishmonger and game dealer in Eton High Street had retired there with his wife Mary, and sons, Henry and Reginald.

At least two soldiers' names are carved: Gunner Philps and Gunner Petts 1914-1915. We know from *Datchet Parish Magazine* that the 3rd Home Counties' Brigade Royal Field Artillery made Datchet their HQ on 20 November 1914, and there were 'loyal and most fervent' offers to take them in but, without first names or other clues, it is proving tricky to find these soldiers in the records. (They don't appear on Datchet's War Roll, either. This is the list of men who served in WWI.) Datchet's Working Men's Club welcomed the soldiers as honorary members, and the Village Hall and school rooms were open for reading and letter-writing.

We know there were also Belgian refugees in the village but the carved names, some male, some female, all sound very English.

If you have any ideas of how to solve the mystery of the names and dates, or have anything similar at your house, please get in touch.

Datchet Village Society

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. Our 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 has contributed to Datchet's Neighbourhood Plan and the Datchet Design Guide. Regular updates about our work and events are posted on the DVS website. New members are always welcome.

WHAT NEXT?

If you have ideas for events, visits or guest speakers; suggestions for the newsletter; or if there is a visit, walk, or talk that you missed and would like us to repeat, please let us know

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP FEES

Many thanks to members who have already renewed their annual membership, and to life members who made a 'top-up' donation. Annual membership runs from 1 April each year to 31 March the following year.

If you would like to continue to receive newsletter and invitations to DVS events, please make sure your membership is up to date.

The fee remains £10 per adult. Junior membership is £1.

Donations, too, are always welcome.

HOW TO PAY:

Bank transfer Sort Code 09-01-29, Account 04339438, reference MEMBER and your surname.

By cheque made payable to 'Datchet Village Society' and sent to Marjorie Clasper, 3 Riverbank, 9 Southlea Road, Datchet SL3 9BY.

By cash at a DVS stall at local events.

If you have any queries, please call Marjorie on 01753 545110.

WHAT DO WE DO WITH YOUR MEMBERSHIP FEES?

We are extremely grateful to members for your continued support. DVS membership fees help to keep the Society going, contributing to the cost of the website and research, insurance and admin, our AGM and other events, and towards unique purchases for the village such as the oldest paintings of Datchet we've ever seen, a medal given to schoolchildren for Queen Victoria's Jubilee, a WWI memorial plaque, the original artwork for the rose window in the listed Cemetery Chapel, and a new pavement plaque to mark the original site of Datchet's milestone. We are now also investigating whether a Blue Plaque can be erected to commemorate a Datchet resident who received the Victoria Cross, and whether we can improve the area and signage around the Crucifix on London Road, the first WWI memorial in the village. The funds also allow us to publish cards, leaflets and booklets. We couldn't do this work without your support, thank you.

DVS MAIN CONTACTS

President: Janet Kennish
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Secretary: Marjorie Clasper
Tel 01753 545110, email marjorie.clasper@tiscali.co.uk
www.datchetvillagesociety.org.uk, **www.datchethistory.org.uk**
Current committee 2024/25: President, Janet Kennish; Chair/sales and Marketing, Alison Crampin; Treasurer, Adrian Needham; Secretary and temporary Membership Secretary, Marjorie Clasper; Photography and Archive, Adrian Giddins; Committee Members, Glenda Croft, Lesley Giddins, Sandra Needham.
If you would like to join the Committee, please get in touch.