

SUMMER 2025

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Datchet Village Society

NEWSLETTER

***Above**: Jubilee Green and North Green. Adrian Giddins*

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Welcome to the summer edition of your DVS newsletter

Thank you to everyone who joined us in early April for this year's AGM to learn more about 'Life on the Home Front'. If you weren't able to come along, there's a review inside, along with details of what we've been up to recently. We hope you can join us for our next visit, a private tour of Eton College in August. Please see page 3 for details.

There are lots of new discoveries to report in this issue, not least that Charles Dickens seems to have been a regular visitor to the village in the 1860s, making full use of local transport options.

We have some good news on the conservation of the listed London Road wall which dates from 1748, as well as an update on local planning matters, flood protection, and details of a new guide to the Conservation Area.

Our DVS email account has been busy too; we received a request from the Netherlands for information about a WWII soldier, and a fabulous 1905 photograph of a shop at Datchet Common. We've also been doing more research into the history of local houses and their former residents, and have found out more about an inventor at Ditton Park.

We hope you enjoy the read and thank you for your continued support. We look forward to seeing you very soon.

Your DVS Committee

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DVS AGM





Above: *Karen and Bret shared some astonishing facts in their audio-visual presentation, not only about what life was like for people on the home front during the war but also about the enormous variety of roles available to women.*
Top: *They brought with them a display of wartime artefacts, including a baby's gas mask, knitted toys and clothing.*
Below: *During the business section of the meeting, Marjorie, DVS secretary, appealed for volunteers to take on the roles of membership secretary and treasurer. Please get in touch if you can help.*





DVS ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING: 24 APRIL 2025

Many thanks to everyone who joined us for this year's AGM. As usual, we quickly covered the 'business' section of the meeting, discussing our finances and membership - which are both in good health - and Alison spoke about our activities during the previous year and plans for the next.
The highlight of the evening was a fascinating talk about 'Life on the Home Front' by Karen and Bret Wiles of 'Doing Their Bit', arranged to coincide with the commemorations and celebrations of the 80th anniversary of the end of WWII. We were delighted with the positive feedback we received, which we passed on to Karen and Bret.
Thank you, too, to everyone who stayed afterwards to enjoy a drink and a chat and to view the exhibition. DVS had created a display about life in Datchet during WWII. This included information about the evacuees who came here and the memories of one young evacuee who learned to swear at the village school! There was information about Datchet's Home Guard, too, and the personal recollections of 100-year-old resident Les Smith who served with them.
We also presented information about the 30 men who are remembered on our war memorial and the names of others who perhaps should be commemorated, including a soldier who is buried in Ditton Road Cemetery with a Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone.
Wartime defence was covered: the important top-secret work at Ditton Park; the anti-aircraft gun post at Datchet Common; the Datchet designer of a flame-thrower tank; the Hawker Aircraft Company at Langley where Hurricanes were built; the Battle of Britain Bunker at Uxbridge from where the Battle of Britain was coordinated; and more.
We had a map showing where bombs were dropped on Datchet; details of monies raised by the schoolchildren's Spitfire Fund, and a photo of Billingsgate fish market on North Green. We also discovered that the materials for a 120-ft Thames bridge were stored somewhere in Datchet during the war. (If you know where, please get in touch!)
Among the newspaper cuttings on display were descriptions of VE Day 1945. On 8 and 9 May, huge crowds gathered on the Green, bonfires were lit in front of the school, an effigy of Hitler burned, and there was singing and dancing till dawn. In the weeks that followed, rations were pooled so the children could enjoy victory tea-parties, too.





***Above**: the DVS team at work*

OTHER EVENTS

DATCHET FETE 5 JULY 2025

12.30pm-4.30pm
Churchmead School
DVS will have a stall at the fete which returns this year with more than 40 stalls and attractions.

ELLIS JOURNEY

The Ellis Journey, the veteran car event which is unique to Datchet, will not be going ahead this July due to lack of entries.

BLUE PLAQUE UPDATE

Plans are underway to install the blue plaque for Henry William Engleheart VC in Lawn Close at the end of June.

CHRISTMAS ON THE GREEN 6 DECEMBER 2025

This date is already in the Parish Council's diary for Christmas on the Green and the St Nicholas Christmas Fair at St Mary's Church.





***Above**: The grave of James Neil Grant McGrigor before and after cleaning and tidying*

SERVICEMEN'S HEADSTONES

In Ditton Road cemetery, there are graves of servicemen who served in WWI and WWII. Datchet Village Society received permission from the parish council to honour these men by cleaning those headstones which are not maintained by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission. (See the DVS website for details of these servicemen.) A small but determined group of us, *left*, started cleaning these on 8 June. We'll be doing another session soon. If you would like to help, please email alison_crampin@yahoo.co.uk

FRIENDS OF DATCHET CEMETERY

Caroline Wise, the parish councillor who now looks after the cemetery, has asked for residents' thoughts about setting up a Friends of Datchet Cemetery group. She would also be grateful for plants or bulbs to brighten up the cemetery, especially the children's areas. If you'd like to find out more, please email Cllr.cwise@datchetparishcouncil.gov.uk

SAVE THE DATE! ETON COLLEGE VISIT, 21 AUGUST 2025



We have arranged a private heritage tour of Eton College for DVS members on Thursday 21 August at 10am. We are finalising details and will have more information soon

***Left**: Eton College 1746, Canaletto*

ARCHAEOLOGICAL DISPLAY AT DATCHET LIBRARY

Some time ago, we asked if a different selection of archaeological finds from the DVS' fieldwalks at Southlea could be displayed at the library. RBWM Museums team agreed, and the original set was taken away. Since then, RBWM's museum store in Tinkers Lane flooded (and remained closed for months) and there have been various problems with staff changes and cuts, resulting in a very small team working part time to secure the future of the Museum. RBWM's Museum Manager has now said they will contact Reading Museum again to renew the loan agreement so that a different selection of finds can be insured and put on display, however Reading is under similar pressures with budget cuts. We hope to have news soon.

CHARLES DICKENS



THE MERE, UPTON

Upton claims another Dickens connection; his former publishers, Bentley's, moved there.
In 1836, Dickens was employed by Richard Bentley (1794-1871) as editor of Bentley's Miscellany. *His novel* Oliver Twist *was serialised in the publication and later Bentley became Dickens' book publisher. (Dickens felt that his remuneration didn't reflect his success and after three years the association ended.)*
Richard's son, George (1828-1895) took over the London-based business in 1867. Some years earlier, following the development of the railways, George had moved to Upton Park. Over time, he and his son Richard bought up contiguous plots of land nearby. They then commissioned the architect George Devey to design and build 'The Mere' ***(above)*** *with double-glazing and hot and cold running water. It was completed in 1887, and George ran the business from his new home.*
His son, Richard, took over in 1895 and, in 1898, Bentley's passed to Macmillan & Co but The Mere stayed in the family until 1961. In 1964 it became the HQ of the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER).

FURTHER READING

Dickens Incognito *by Felix Aylmer, Rupert Hart-Davis, 1959*
Writers in Windsor *by Hester Davenport, Cell Mead Press, 1995*
The Invisible Woman *by Claire Tomalin, Penguin Books, 2012*





***Above**: Charles Dickens, left, and Ellen Ternan, age 19, right*

DICKENS IN DATCHET

If you'd been living in the village in the 1860s, you might very well have seen Charles Dickens hopping on and off the train at Datchet station or walking across the fields to and from Slough.
By the late 1850s, Dickens' marriage had broken down. His wife Catherine had given birth to nine children who survived infancy, which had taken its toll on her health. It was said that Dickens resented the younger children, as if they were a problem with which he was unconnected. His attempt to have Catherine institutionalised had failed and the couple separated. Divorce would have been out of the question.
Publicly, the break was attributed to incompatibility. Privately, the 45-year-old writer had fallen in love with an 18-year-old actress, Ellen 'Nelly' Ternan whom he met in 1857. She was hired for the production of *The Frozen Deep* and was only six months older than his youngest daughter.
The Datchet connection came to light in one of Dickens' diaries. He used to destroy them at the end of each year, but he lost his diary for 1867 in New York. It surfaced in a New York auction-room in 1922, was purchased by the brothers Berg, then lay unremarked in their collection until the curator drew attention to its importance in 1943. (It now a prized part of the New York Public Library's Berg Collection.)
In the 1950s, actor Felix Aylmer was analysing the diary for his book *Dickens Incognito*. He noticed that the destinations Dickens visited for his book readings were written in full, but some recurring journeys were identified only by initials. He appeared to be regularly visiting a place noted as 'Sl', with the initials P, W, V or D. Aylmer reasoned that 'Sl' was Slough, and the other initials represented Paddington, Waterloo or Windsor, Victoria and Datchet. Further research revealed that Dickens had paid for a cottage for Nelly in Slough High Street. He regularly visited her by train and Aylmer deduced that, to avoid being spotted too frequently in the same area, Dickens would use different routes. For example, he might travel to Slough in the evening, under the cover of darkness, and return home the next morning by walking over the fields to Windsor or Datchet.
In 1868, Dickens rented another house for Nelly, Windsor Lodge, in Linden Grove, Nunhead, where he was again a frequent visitor.
(With thanks to Windsor historian, Derek Hunt, for the tip off about Dickens' Datchet connection!)

HERITAGE & CONSERVATION

HISTORIC ENGLAND LISTING

The 18th-century brick wall in London Road is Grade II listed. Details can be viewed on the Historic England website. (The online listing includes photographs provided by DVS which show the extent of the deterioration.)

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. The wall runs from the entrance gates of Datchet House to the gardener's cottage by the Cricket Ground, alongside London Road which takes increasingly heavy traffic.

The RBWM Local Transport Plan, 2012-2026, noted that vibration from HGVs was causing a direct physical impact to important historic structures, such as the "significant Grade II listed Georgian wall on London Road". The level of the most significant erosion would suggest that vehicle exhaust, tyre and brake-dust pollution, salt-spreading on the road, and rainwater, sprayed and splashed up from the gutter, may be contributing factors.



***Above**: An image from 2020, showing where bricks had fallen out of the wall*

AN UPDATE ON THE LISTED LONDON ROAD WALL

For many years, the deterioration of the 18th-century listed wall on London Road has been a cause of concern. Datchet Village Society has written regularly to RBWM's Planning and Conservation teams to ask if they will monitor its condition. Several years ago, RBWM told us that the wall was more stable at its core than it appeared, but there has been considerable deterioration since then.

From time to time, we have been sending photos of the progressive erosion, especially the most damaged section towards Riding Court Road, where bricks have fallen out and there are holes right through. Owners of listed buildings and structures have a responsibility to maintain them in good repair, ensuring their unique character is preserved, and each of the modern houses behind the wall is responsible for the listed section which forms its rear boundary.

In 2019, RBWM's Conservation and Enforcement teams wrote to the various owners, advising them of the deteriorating condition of the wall and their responsibilities to maintain the listed structure. Although it was in poor condition, the wall was still not considered to be structurally unsafe, so RBWM could not issue an 'urgent works notice'.

We continued to send updates and photos to RBWM and, in 2023, they opened a planning enforcement investigation, 23/50259/ENF. We were told that a Conservation Officer would investigate and provide a comprehensive response in due course…

Some sections of the wall are in much better condition than others but, by 2024, some of the rowlock course of bricks, along the top of the 3m-high wall, had started to fall off. Bricks continued to drop out of the body of the wall, and new holes had appeared. We asked RBWM whether the falling bricks presented a danger, not just to the preservation of this historic listed wall but to road users, too.

We have been told that RBWM issued Section 215 Notices in May this year to secure repair works to the listed wall. The notices have a compliance period of 12 months. We hope this will mean the future of the wall is more secure.

LOCAL CHARACTERS



Above: *Fred Avis' painting of Slough Road 1950*

FRED'S MODEL VILLAGE

Some time ago, we received an email from New Zealand, sent by someone who grew up in Datchet in the 1950s. He remembered the model village which Fred Avis built on the north side of Slough Road, before Whites Lane heading out of the village, on the edge of Barkers' fields. He recalled that it had 'a generic row of houses and a cart with a large sawn tree trunk pulled by a horse. The whole thing was around 2m x 1.2m with a brick backdrop which might have been a small shed housing the irrigation they used to lay out in the cabbage fields.'

THE CORONATION ARCH

On the day of the Coronation of King George VI in 1937, the village woke up to a fantastic surprise. A coronation arch had been built in secret in the village centre by local builder Nelson Masters and painted by Fred Avis. It spanned the top of the high street from the Manor Hotel.





FRED AVIS

A few weeks ago, this amazing photograph turned up in our email inbox. The sender, a great, great, granddaughter of Fred Garnett Avis, asked if we'd like a copy and whether we had any more information about him. Avis & Son's butcher's was at Gable End House on the corner of Ditton Road and Horton Road, where Drunken Fish is now. If you look closely at the photo, it appears to be Christmas time; there are decorative paper chains and sausage chains, pork chops on hooks, and a great variety of poultry and meat carcases, some studded with holly leaves. There are also pot plants on the pavement and, for whatever reason, a sketch of a couple watching policemen march past is hanging up by the entrance.

Marshall's Directory shows Avis & Son at Gable End from around 1905 and, currently, our best guess is that this photo shows Fred Nathanial Avis and his sons Stanley Harold and Fred Garnett Avis, around that time. The later 1911 census shows Fred Garnett Avis (1882-1960) as the butcher/ shopkeeper, living at Gable End with his wife Louisa, three daughters, and his younger brother, Stanley (1895-1916), who was his assistant. The men's father, Fred senior (1859-1940) lived at Brands Hill in 1911, and listed his profession as a journeyman butcher.

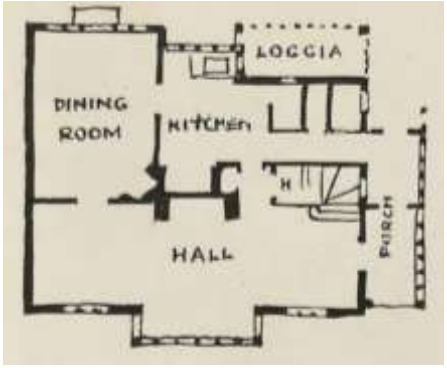
In WWI, Fred G Avis served at home in the Royal Army Services Corps as a signwriter and painter. His military records show that his former employer was James Gillett at Gable End Stores. (Gillett had a butcher's shop at 20 High Street, later the hat shop, from around 1900, and, for a time, a shop at Datchet Common.) Fred's brother, Stanley, joined the 2/1st Bucks Battalion of the Oxford and Bucks Light Infantry but was killed in 1916. (He is remembered on Horton's memorial and at St Thomas's Colnbrook.)

After the war, Fred continued to work as a sign-writer and painter. The 1921 census shows him at Gable End, with Louisa, six daughters and his parents-in-law, who previously lived at Albert Cottages on Horton Road. Fred was working as a coach painter for Willis & Son, coachbuilders in Thames Road, Windsor. By 1924 Fred and his family had moved to Beechcote, 34 Eton Road, and by 1939, they were at Sunways in Slough Road. He was still working as a painter and signwriter. Fred died in 1960.

HOUSE HISTORIES







Above: *The Dial House 1915*

WHO LIVED THERE?

The house was designed in 1913 for Charles Thomas Hunt-Helmsley and his wife Mary. Their initials are on the lead hoppers on the front of the house.

Kelly's Directory shows some of the early occupants, with the Helmsleys there from 1922:

1920 John William Armstrong

1921 Alexander Warren Dury Mitton, Rouge Dragon Pursuivant, College of Arms

1922 Charles Thomas Hunt-Helmsley, Theatrical Manager, St James' Theatre, London

Sources:

Biographical Dictionary of British and Irish Architects 1800-1950

The Bourne Society

RIBA Journal, Volume 24, 1918



WILLIAM RUPERT DAVISON: THE DIAL HOUSE

We recently received an email from someone who regularly passes the Dial House on Windsor Road on their way into and out of the village. They asked if we knew anything about this lovely Arts and Crafts building. We didn't, so we decided to do some research.

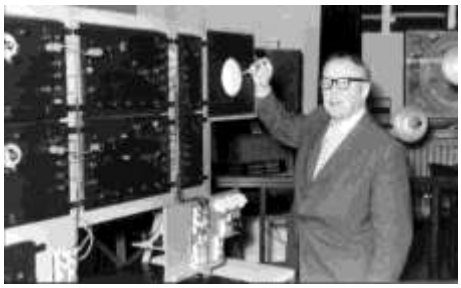
Dial House was designed by William Rupert Davison (1881-1917) and features in *The Studio Yearbook of Decorative Art 1915* (above and left). Rupert was born in Flixton, Cheshire, the son of Thomas Raffles Davison (1853-1937). The family moved south to Woldingham, Surrey, c1890. Rupert became an architect, like his father, and was articled to William Wallis Baldwin of Lincoln's Inn Fields. He married Constance Alice Gibson in Croydon in 1904 and commenced practice in London the same year. He later had an office at 6 Duke Street.

Rupert made a name for himself designing houses and cottages. It was said that the Davisons, father and son, 'bridged the gap between the extremes of plain functionality and the necessity for artistically appealing exterior and interior design'. They were responsible for the design of numerous homes in their home town of Woldingham including Rupert and Constance's own home, Whistlers Hollow.

Rupert had an illustrious early career. In conjunction with Alfred Cox and Harold Conybeare Trimnell, he won a competition in 1905 to design and carry out the Wakefield Public Library. With Trimnell, in 1906, he was awarded second place in a competition to design the Central Library in Hackney, London. He was awarded third premium by Sir Edwin Lutyens in the *Daily Mail* Cottage Competition which resulted in an invitation to design a cottage for the central feature in the new Ideal Home Exhibition at Olympia in 1908. He also frequently exhibited architectural drawings at the Royal Academy in London.

In 1910, he won a competition for the design of a garden village at Blackley in Manchester. Plans were published in *The British Architect,* but the project was eventually abandoned due to the onset of WWI. Rupert served in WWI and was killed in the fighting around Cambrai. We can only wonder what he might have gone on to design, had he lived.

DITTON PARK



ROBERT WATSON-WATT

*One omission from our growing list of former local residents who might merit a blue plaque, was Robert Watson-Watt, **above**. He is particularly remembered for the development of radar which was crucial to Britain's wartime defences. He worked at the Radio Research Station at Ditton Park, Datchet, and lived at 'The Inch', 33 High Street, around 1928-1931.*



***Above,** Ernest Burton, compass inventor and 'SINS' team member at the Admiralty Compass Observatory, Ditton Park.*

The work of the ACO and the 'SINS' team was written about by Commander A E Fanning, one of the former Naval Commanders at the Observatory, in his book, Steady As She Goes.

One of Ernest's three daughters told us that Ernest was incredibly talented at anything he turned his hand to, from making and mending their toys to rebuilding cars and making a new bay window for their home.



***Above,** the late Prince Philip had one of Ernest Burton's compasses in his car*

ERNEST JAMES BURTON

As so often happens when we're researching, we start looking for one thing and, by happy coincidence, discover another.

We were seeking information about Datchet's Home Guard for our presentation for this year's AGM and the 80th anniversary of VE Day, when we were contacted by someone whose father worked at Ditton Park during the war. She told us it had its own Home Guard and, in the exchange of messages, we also learned that her father, Ernest James Burton, was an inventor there.

Ernest started work at the Admiralty Compass Observatory (ACO), in 1938 as a Drawing Office Assistant. (The ACO was co-located at Ditton Park with the Radio Research Station). He moved up through the grades and was promoted to Experimental Officer in 1951. He married in 1955 and lived in Datchet with his family, until his premature death in 1968, at the age of 55.

Until the mid-1950s, the ACO focused on the development of gyro and magnetic compasses. It was a very competitive field with great rivalry between two key institutions, the ACO at Ditton Park and the Royal Aircraft Factory at Farnborough. Ernest worked on various navigation systems for submarines and aircraft carriers. At the time of his death, he held the rank of Senior Scientific Officer and was working on a project for SINS (Ships Inertial Navigation System) gas bearings.

He designed a gimbal compass named the E2B and his daughter, Helen, remembers being told that he was offered a lot of money for his design by the Americans but refused to sell and submitted it to the ACO. She was very young when he died so never had the opportunity to talk with him about his work but learned snippets from his former colleagues and friends over the years: 'I was informed that my father's compass had been used as a backup navigation for the RAF and was used for the same purpose in Concorde. A photo exists of Prince Philip with one on the dashboard of his car!'

His obituary, written by the ACO, states that 'his mechanical abilities were left in a wide variety of enterprises including SINS gas bearings, metrological Polaris navigation, and laser gyros' and that 'there was scarcely a branch of this class of engineering of which he had no knowledge, his help and advice in this field were frequently sought and willingly given.'

PLANNING

REPORT IT

Did you know that the RBWM website has a 'Report it' function? You can use it to report various issues online, for example: enforcement requests related to planning and building control, flooding, potholes, street cleaning, overgrown trees, grass and shrubs, missed bin, change of address, noise, and more. Your report will be given a reference number. If you don't get a response, you can ask one of our Borough Councillors to follow it up for you, using that reference. https://www.rbwm.gov.uk/apply-pay-report/report-it


Company to pay £4,200 after losing door move appeal

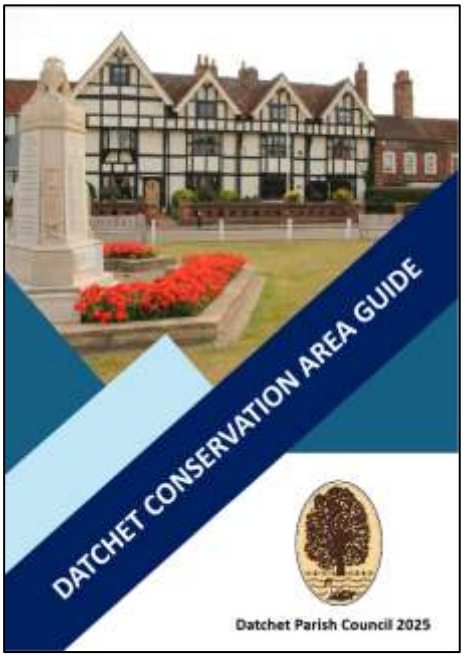
The application and appeal to move the door were both turned down by authorities

BBC REPORTS ON LOCAL PLANNING BREACH

Last year, we wrote about an appeal which had been submitted to the Government's Planning Inspector. It was an appeal against RBWM's refusal to grant retrospective planning permission for changes which had been made to the frontage and signage at Hardware House.

The planning inspector dismissed the appeal and upheld the decisions made by RBWM's Planning Officers. The inspector agreed that the alterations would harm the significance of Datchet's Conservation Area and would conflict with the Borough Local Plan; and the proposed advertisements would harm the visual amenity of the area.

The BBC reported recently that after breaching the enforcement notice to restore the building, issued by RBWM in August 2024, MJM Property Investments Limited is now facing a bill of £4200. The company admitted that it had breached the notice and was told to pay a £500 fine, a £200 surcharge, and £3,500 costs by Slough Magistrates on 16 May 2025.



CONSERVATION AREA GUIDE

The Datchet Neighbourhood Plan Delivery and Monitoring Group was given permission by Datchet Parish Council (DPC) to write a guide to Datchet's Conservation Area, ***left***.

The DNP Group, which includes DVS members, is hoping that the Guide will raise awareness of the location of the Conservation Area, and lead to a better understanding of the Conservation Area Statement and the specific planning procedures which are in place there to make sure that development, alterations, or work to trees do not detract from the Conservation Area's character and appearance but, instead, conserve and improve its qualities.

The guide brings together useful information from various sources for anyone living or running a business in, or adjacent to, the Conservation Area. Although it has been compiled by the DNP team, it is a standalone document; it is not associated with the Neighbourhood Plan, and it is not a new policy document. The text has been reviewed by RBWM's Conservation and Planning Officers and the guide is now available via a link from the homepage of DPC's website: Datchet Conservation Area Guide.

A TRIBUTE TO CAPTAIN GOOD

Captain Good's Commanding Officer sent a tribute to Mrs Good:

'He was an extremely efficient gunner officer. I always knew that any difficult jobs could be left quite safely in his hands and that the more unpleasant the prospects, the more cheerful would be his acceptance of them.

'Combined with this technical efficiency and personal example, he had the true gift of leadership which resulted in his being one of the best loved officers in the regiment. His own troop swore by him and would have followed him as a man to the ends of the earth.

'He was killed in action whilst doing his duty with complete disregard of danger. He was in a certain village with his acting Battery Commander. The mist, which had limited visibility to a few hundred yards, suddenly lifted and up the road there appeared what seemed to be a German tank. 'Bunny' crossed the road to get a better view and also to point it out to one of our own anti-tank guns which was in action there. Unfortunately, he was just too late. The tank fired one round which hit the gun, killed its crew and Bunny instantly. It then tried to withdraw but was cut off and destroyed later by our own tanks.

'Bunny was buried alongside the Guardsmen of that gun, in a garden of a house beside which he had been killed. The villagers have made a most awfully nice cross for his grave and have kept it covered with flowers. We will let you know the exact place as soon as we can and hope to get a photograph. Till then one can only say that it was with the forward troops, the absolute spearhead of the British 2nd Army. If Bunny had to fall, I'm sure he would have wishes it so – at the head of the hunt whilst doing his duty.'



CAPTAIN WILFRED GEOFFREY GOOD

One Sunday morning, DVS received an email from Stichting Erfgoed 40-45, a Dutch heritage foundation which is dedicated to researching and remembering the soldiers who fell in the region of Valkenswaard and Waalre in the Netherlands during WWII.

They contacted DVS because one of these soldiers, Captain Wilfred Geoffrey Good who served in the 55 (The West Somerset Yeomanry) Field Regiment of the Royal Artillery, was a Datchet resident. He was killed in action on 11 September 1944, at the age of 31, and is commemorated at Leopoldsburg War Cemetery. The researchers asked if we had any more background information so they could honour him as personally and respectfully as possible.

Wilfred Good is remembered on the war memorial on Datchet's village green and, by coincidence, we'd learned more about him as part of our research into Datchet in WWII for our AGM presentation.

Wilfred was born in Slough, the son of John and Beatrice Good. (His grandfather, Arthur Jacobs, of the Thames Hotel, Windsor, was a Windsor boat owner; and one his boats helped rescue soldiers from Dunkirk.)

After he left Slough Grammar School, Wilfred was employed by Aspro, and later joined the staff of the Government Training Centre in Slough. He was a member of the Old Paludians FC and Slough Athletic Club.

He moved to Evelyn House on Slough Road, Datchet, after his marriage to Gladys Webb in 1936, and they had a son, Clive, born in 1939.

At the start of the war, Wilfred ran the Local Defence Volunteers in the village and continued as a member of the Home Guard until he joined the Royal Artillery in December 1940. He went through an Officer Cadet Training Unit course in 1941, was commissioned in March 1942, and was posted to a field regiment of the Royal Artillery. He was promoted to Captain in April 1944, went overseas with the British Liberation Army in June that year, and was killed on 11 September.

After his death, Gladys received a letter from her husband's Commanding Officer, ***left***, which was reprinted in the *Windsor, Slough and Eton Express* on 29 September 1944. Datchet's Parish magazine also published extracts from the letter and referred to Wilfred's wife and five-year-old son, Clive.

It wasn't until we looked at the wording on Wilfred's headstone that we realised he had a daughter too, whom he never met. His family chose a cross to mark his grave and the words, 'To the world, just a man, To us all the world. Gladys, Clive and Hilary'. Hilary was born a few months after Wilfred's death in early 1945.

FLOODING

COMMUNITY LIAISON GROUP

The 'Datchet to Hythe End Flood Improvement Measures (DHEFIM) Community Liaison Group' was set up by the Environment Agency (EA) in 2024. It is made up of representatives from the EA's DHEFIM project team and volunteers from Datchet, Wraysbury, Horton and Old Windsor. The group meets every three months or so. It is not a decision-making body; its purpose is to provide a direct link between the Environment Agency's DHEFIM project team and the local communities. From Datchet, there are three Parish Councillors who attend meetings along with representatives from DVS and Wild About Datchet.

The information on this page was sent by the EA's DHEFIM team to the Community Liaison Group so that it could be shared with the local community.

JUBILEE FLOOD RELIEF CHANNEL

There's a new section on the Environment Agency's website about the Jubilee River. Visit: https://engageenvironmentagency.uk.engagementhq.com/jubileefloodreliefchannel

It provides information about the Jubilee and other elements of the Maidenhead, Windsor and Eton Flood Alleviation scheme.

You can also find details of maintenance activities and how the Jubilee is operated, as well as videos explaining how it works.

The Jubilee River is operated when flow increases in the Thames, and it stops operating once flows and levels decrease. To find out if the Jubilee is being operated, visit the Jubilee Operational Status section.



FLOOD FUNDING REFORM - CONSULTATION

The Government is looking to change the way flood schemes are funded. Key proposals include a simplified approach to funding new flood-resilience projects, and a proposed approach for prioritising projects. Details are now on the Government website and a consultation has been launched which is open until 29 July 2025.

See https://www.gov.uk/government/news/reforms-to-bolster-flood-protection-for-communities-across-the-country

Given the history of flooding in our area, the Environment Agency's Datchet to Hythe End Flood Improvement Measures team is keen for us to take some time to review the proposals and respond to the consultation, either as individual residents, or as local groups.

The link to the consultation pages is here:
https://consult.defra.gov.uk/floods-and-water/reforming-our-approach-to-floods-funding/

DATCHET TO HYTHE END FLOOD IMPROVEMENT MEASURES

Did you attend the public events across the area late last year, when the Environment Agency (EA) presented the proposed shortlisted options to reduce flood risk in our area (Datchet to Hythe End), and set out the process and timeline for the next phases of work?

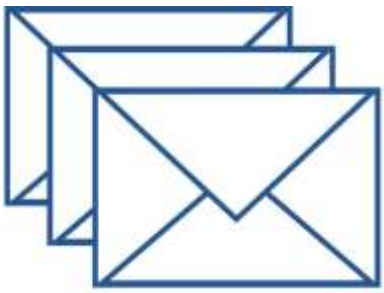
There were two options on the shortlist:

- Option Purple – Flood walls and embankments
- Option Orange – Flood relief channel

For details of these options, please have a look at:
https://engageenvironmentagency.uk.engagementhq.com/datchet-to-hythe-end-flood-improvement-measures

In assessing the preferred option, the EA's Datchet to Hythe End Flood Improvement Measures Project Team must ensure that it is deliverable, makes best use of public funding, and can achieve the long-term goal of sustainably reducing flood risk. They have completed work on assessing the costs and benefits of each option and are continuing to explore flood resilience measures. They are still waiting for a few key pieces of information before they can move ahead. They also want to consider fully the proposals set out in the flood funding reform (above), as these will have an impact on whether any scheme can be funded. As a result, they have had to delay further community engagement until later this year.

POSTBAG





Above: *The Hall stood opposite the Jubilee Cross. It has since been replaced by the houses of Hall Court*

AGE CONCERN WINDSOR

For a change, we had an email sharing information rather than requesting it. Age Concern has details of local groups, clubs and other events for older people. Events listed on their website range from 'Pubs and Pastries', 'Chatter and Natter', Mens Matter and Wellbeing Wednesday, to cooking groups, butterfly conservation walks, and dementia coffee mornings.
If you, or someone you know, might be interested to find out more, please see https://ageconcernwindsor.org.uk/whats-going-on-near-us/community-events/

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.

Mary Langton

We received an intriguing email from someone who had just purchased "a pile of envelopes addressed to Mary Langton". He hopes that, in time, they may add to our history of Mary and her sister Frances Margaret on the DVS website. "I have only just started to look into them", he wrote. "It is all a bit basic at the moment but hope to be in touch."
Mary and Frances lived at The Hall, ***left***, between 1910-1920. During WWI, they became full-time 'ambulancières' in France with the Anglo-French Hospital Committee and French Red Cross. As the name suggests, an ambulancière usually worked with an Ambulance Company, transporting and caring for wounded soldiers. We look forward to hearing more.

Step-grandson of Henry William Engleheart VC

At the end of April, we had an email from a relative of Henry William Engleheart, VC, who had just read about the Blue Plaque.
While we were researching, we tried to track down any living family. Neither of Henry's sons, Hugh and Geoffrey, had children of their own but Hugh married Evelyn Terry (nee Hind). We discovered she had children from a previous marriage and left a couple of messages on Ancestry family trees in the hope that someone might get back to us, but we didn't have any success. (We did, however, find someone who, as a boy, used to go to the football at Windsor FC with his father and Hugh.)
Although it was some time after the unveiling in November, we were delighted to be contacted by Evelyn's grandson who had found the DVS website. He told us that he was a regular visitor to the house in Lawn Close right up until Hugh's death. He knew that Henry's VC and medals had been returned to his regiment, the Royal Hussars. He told us that, unfortunately, other memorabilia, such as a clock made from a Boer War shell, disappeared in the month or so before Hugh's death.
We apologised for not being able to find him in time to invite him to the Blue Plaque unveiling but we were delighted to share information about the event with photographs, and we sent him one of the new DVS leaflets. He is hoping to visit the village after Datchet Parish Council installs the plaque which is now likely to be towards the end of June.

Datchet's Community Orchard

From time to time, we get notifications about the progress of the orchard next to the Village Hall and requests for volunteers. On 11 May, volunteers planted some more shrubs and around 300 wildflower plugs between the trees. It's now being left to nature to take its course. There will be more opportunities to get involved in the future.
Details are usually posted on the Datchet Parish Council website and on the Wild About Datchet Facebook page.

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 DUE IN APRIL

Very many thanks to everyone who has renewed their membership or made a 'top-up' donation. If you would like to continue to receive newsletters and invitations to DVS events, please make sure your membership is up to date.

Annual membership runs from 1 April to 31 March the following year.

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 for your continued support. 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, the new pavement plaque to mark the original site of Datchet's milestone, and the official unveiling of Datchet's first Blue Plaque. We are currently investigating what can be done to restore the WWI crucifix memorial on London Road; and have been given permission to clean the soldiers' graves at the cemetery. The funds also allow us to publish cards, leaflets and booklets.

We couldn't do all this without your support, thank you.

DVS MAIN CONTACTS

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Secretary: Marjorie Clasper

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www.datchetvillagesociety.org.uk, **www.datchethistory.org.uk**

Current committee 2025/26: President, Janet Kennish; Chair/sales and Marketing, Alison Crampin; Secretary and temporary Membership Secretary, Marjorie Clasper; Photography and Archive, Adrian Giddins; Committee Members, Glenda Croft, Lesley Giddins, Sandra Needham. Our current treasurer, Adrian Needham, is stepping down this year.

If you would like to join the Committee, please get in touch.