

The One Hundred and Thirty First Annual Report

of

THE
HASLEMERE
SOCIETY



***FOR HASLEMERE
past, present and future***

1st July 2015 to 30th June 2016

Registered charity number 255287

The Haslemere Society
is a member of Civic Voice and the Open Spaces Society and is
affiliated
to the Campaign for the Protection of Rural England and the
Haslemere Educational Museum.

Most of our two
mailings a year are delivered by hand, courtesy of
committee members and non-committee members, in
order to cut down on postage costs.

This is not an
arduous task, as it is shared among many helpers, and
can be an interesting and instructive way of getting to
know what might be an otherwise unknown part of
Haslemere and Hindhead - as well as including exercise
and fresh air and being therefore a *good thing*.

Please let us know if you are willing able to help with deliveries.

You would be given a bundle
of between 4 and 15 envelopes, with plenty of notice
and a few days to complete the task.

THE ONE HUNDRED AND THIRTY FIRST ANNUAL REPORT

1st July 2015 to 30th June 2016

Committee

President
ROBERT SERMAN MBE*

Chairman
JANE STOPFORD RUSSELL

Vice Chairman
JOHN GREER*

Treasurer
BRIAN DELLER

Secretary
ANN FITCHETT

Other Members

CATHERINE EYRE.
CHRISTOPHER HARRISON*.
CERI-JANE O'HARA.

TONY BENNETT*
CYNDY LANCASTER.
MIKE O'NEIL.

Hon Auditor
CLARE DAVID MA FCA

*Planning Committee

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The 132nd Annual General Meeting will be held on
Friday 18th November 2016 at 7.30pm
In Haslemere Hall, Bridge Road.

AGENDA

1. Welcome to members
2. Apologies
3. Minutes of the last meeting
4. Chairman's report
5. Treasurer's report and accounts
6. Election of Auditor
7. Election of the Officers of the Committee
8. President Robert Serman
9. Speaker is Dr Marion Dell

THE SPEAKER AT THIS YEAR'S AGM

'Our new cottage in Hindhead'

An illustrated talk by Dr Marion Dell based on extracts from Mrs Marshall's unpublished Journal. The social and domestic life of the Marshall family at Tweenways, now the Hindhead Music Centre, from 1889 – 1921.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

On reflecting over the year covered by this annual report, I am amazed by the number of issues your committee has been involved with, many of which are included later in this report. So, as ever, my thanks go to our dedicated committee for their hard work during the year, and to all our members who have done so much to further our objectives by providing a strong body of opinion, to enable The Haslemere Society, your Civic Society, to comment on developments proposed in the Town.

I hope that you have enjoyed the three meetings we arranged during the year with the interesting speakers. We listened to David Forbes-Nixon, talking about Undershaw and its conversion into Stepping Stones School, with its attendant exhibition at the Museum and Mrs Lynne Taylor Gooby talking about the role of women in the First World War from her research on the subject.

The Society has been pleased to offer support for a number of local initiatives including sponsorship of the Waverley Design Awards, a donation towards the cost of Woolmer Hill School's activities week, which provided materials for a creative project reflecting the local Peasant Art Movement of the early 20th Century, and a donation for the development of a Visitors Information Centre at the station. Mike O'Neil has spent time with the design manager of SW Trains development project putting forward our views on the proposed improvements to the station forecourt and car park, some of which were acted upon.

We continue to work towards addressing the situation of the sudden closure of the ancient footpath in College Hill. We shall be represented at the public enquiry to be held at the Museum on 30th November and 1st December and it is hoped that with sufficient support from the public, this path will be registered officially.

The Society took a stand at the Charities Fair in Haslemere Hall last November also a stand at the Town meeting in March, which gave people an opportunity to discuss issues of interest with us. We invited our Surrey County Councillor, Nikki Barton, to update us at the AGM and to attend a committee meeting to launch the Community Station project. Committee members also attended the launch of the National Trust plans for the improvement of the Devil's Punch Bowl, and a meeting arranged by Stewart Brown to discuss the feasibility of establishing a Community Land Trust. Society members volunteered to man a tea station at the very successful Queen's Birthday Tea Party held in the High Street in April. This gives a flavour of our involvements during the year, but we must not forget the hard work put in by our wonderful planning team in monitoring large development applications, participating in the conservation area re-appraisal, compiling lists of Buildings of Merit, and monitoring the black spots of the town needing some tender loving care.

Our Blue Plaque project continues apace under the stewardship of Chris Harrison with two new unveilings. He has contributed to the town leaflet describing a Blue Plaque trail and the Blue Plaque page has been very popular on our website, attracting a huge number of "likes".

We have been fortunate to have a wonderful website set up by Catherine Eyre who has also run Facebook for us but very sadly she has decided to step down at the AGM . We shall also very much miss Tony Bennett who has decided to concentrate his efforts with CPRE and will also be leaving us.

I am pleased that the Society has been able to have an impact in the town over the past year. As many members of your existing committee are approaching the end of their tenure of office, it is ever more important to seek out new people with enthusiasm for the charm of our town , to carry the Society forward. Members can be as active as they wish, by taking a supporting role or by more active participation on behalf of the Society. You should bear in mind, that there is an ever greater need for a group such as ours, if Haslemere is to preserve it's attractive features. It was gratifying to hear one of our Town Councillors say recently, "Haslemere needs The Haslemere Society". Please do your part in keeping it alive and come forward.

Jane Stopford Russell

THE SUMMER PARTY

A couple of years ago it was agreed that we should make the summer party slightly peripatetic; one year at the museum and the next at some other venue so as to add interest and variety.

This year we returned to the museum where a warmish summer evening allowed us to enjoy the lovely garden. About 70 members attended a jolly and convivial evening.

The event coincided with an exhibition at the museum staged by the students of Stepping Stones, the small special school in Tower Road at Hindhead which was started some years ago by a local philanthropist, Larry Sullivan. Larry started the COINS foundation to provide the funding for the school which is a remarkable place to visit because the children, all having a variety of special needs, produce marvellous work of all sorts.

Some of their artwork was on show in the gallery at the museum and charted the history of the school and the development of the (now) two listed buildings. Two, because another philanthropist, David Forbes-Nixon bought the derelict Undershaw and has now completed work on its transformation to create an upper school so as to give greater capacity for Stepping Stones.

We thought it would be a great opportunity to invite David to give a brief illustrated Power Point chat about the work under way at Undershaw. This was done in two informal ten minute talks.

David has very kindly invited us to hold next year's summer party at the perfectly restored house and it's new educational wing. It is all part of the community access that he plans in order to make this important part of our heritage available to local residents.

Robert Serman

PLANNING REPORT

During August 2016 Waverley B C invited comments on their Pre Submission Local Plan for public consultation but at the time of writing this report we had not been able to peruse this important document. It is hoped that many of our members will have submitted comments.

Last year's planning report made reference to poor quality design for a proposed development in Critchmere Lane and following WBC's refusal of planning permission another revised application which was no better was submitted and this has been withdrawn, possibly in the light of our further critical comment. The third Marston Lodge application in Weydown Road has been approved . It will hide an ugly end of the industrial estate.

Waverley's decision on a further planning application at the boarded site at 5-21 Wey Hill to build three 4 storey blocks of flats is awaited. The Society whilst welcoming the proposed development in principle has been critical of the scheme design and height. If approved, this will be the largest construction project to happen in the busy central area of Haslemere. It is regrettable that a public consultation or exhibition has not been demanded.

Given this proposed very large development together with WBC's intended housing development opposite, the eventual development of the Wey Hill car park site, increasing congestion and use of the station and the need to enhance Wey Hill and link it to Haslemere. The Society has been calling for a comprehensive development plan for the area instead of proceeding on a piecemeal basis. Neither Haslemere Town Council nor Waverley Borough Council have shown any interest in this.

We are pleased that an application to build a further house at 31 Hill Road has been refused which will help to retain the character of this area.

The Society was disappointed that WBC, under pressure to meet housing targets, granted outline permission to build up to 135 houses on the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty at Sturt Farm. Not satisfied with this the developer has subsequently applied to alter the position of the access into the proposed estate

with obvious detrimental and adverse effects on the old access to the existing listed converted farm buildings and their occupants. This was the basis of our objection which was headline news in the 19th August Haslemere Herald followed by an almost immediate withdrawal of the planning application.

We have prepared a list of locations in the town (eyesores) lacking maintenance and in need of attention by HTC, WBC and property owners or tenants and these areas are now receiving some attention. The Society considers it necessary for regular inspections to be made to identify areas where repairs and improvements are required to ensure that we have an attractive environment in the town.

John Greer

BLUE PLAQUES

On Saturday 12th March we unveiled the eleventh plaque in the Haslemere Society's blue plaque scheme.

The scheme celebrates Haslemere's rich cultural heritage and to date has recognised an inventor, geologist, two architects, one tennis player, musicians, an artist, novelist, craftsman and a mountaineer. In addition, Haslemere's status as a so called "rotten borough" in the eighteenth century and the Peasant Arts movement of the nineteenth century have been acknowledged.

This latest plaque, commemorating the 'riot' of 1855, is the third to draw attention to a significant event in the history of the town. This was both a dramatic event in its own right and marked probably the most significant time of a transformation in the town's history – the coming of the railway.

The plaque which can be seen next to the front door of the Town Hall has been a joint initiative between the Society and the Town Council. As the tragic event marked the death of Inspector Donaldson, the first serving Surrey police officer to die in the course of duty, Superintendent Duncan Greenhalgh and PC Dan Keen of the Surrey Police joined us for the unveiling ceremony.

A full account both of the riot and the context for the event can be downloaded from our Haslemere Society Website.

The arrival of the railway transformed Haslemere from a remote country town to an easily accessible gateway to the surrounding countryside and heralded the arrival of a significant literary community who came to live in the area in the second half of the 19th century. One of the most notable was Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, creator of Sherlock Holmes, who built his family home Undershaw in Hindhead. We are delighted that we will be unveiling our next plaque in commemoration of Conan Doyle on 8 September, the ceremony coinciding with the formal opening of the new Stepping Stones school at the fully refurbished and extended Undershaw house.

Chris Harrison

OUTING

At the time of writing an outing will take place on Monday 3rd October. The Chairman of the Petworth Society, Peter Jerome will lead a guided tour for a group of our members in Petworth Town. The group will meet at the Angel Hotel for coffee, followed by the Town tour finishing at the Petworth Cottage Museum in time for lunch.

Jane Stopford Russell

THE LLOYDS BANK BLOCKED FOOTPATH & PUBLIC ENQUIRY

Members will probably know about the obstructed footpath which runs from the top of the High Street, between Lloyds Bank and the hairdresser called Headcase, up to the top of the bend in College Hill. It was blocked by a local developer in February 2015.

As a result of action taken by the Haslemere Society the matter was passed to Surrey Highways' Rights of Way Officer. It was supported by the Local Area Committee and, as the developer did not accept that outcome, it will be considered at a public inquiry in November. The point to be determined is: As the path does not appear on the Surrey County Council (SCC) footpaths Definitive Map is it in fact a public footpath - or not?

The case depends upon the evidence of long usage, ie unchallenged use over a period of not less than twenty years. As long as the path has remained open and there is no evidence to the contrary then the planning inspector ought to conclude that it is a public right of way. Many of our members and those of the Half Moon Estate Residents Association have been involved in writing affidavits and some will appear at the inquiry as witnesses, called either by the Haslemere Society or by SCC. Others may wish to add their views too.

Any members of the public are entitled to attend the inquiry and anyone may speak, although they must attend when the enquiry opens on the first day to register with the inspector appointed to hear the case. The inquiry starts on Wednesday 30th November 2016 at 10.00 am in the Haslemere Museum and may last two days. Anticipate a decision being reached within about six weeks of the inquiry.

Robert Serman

HASIEMERE SOCIETY & TOWN ENVIRONS

In the past year Robert Serman and Cyndy Lancaster have continued to represent the Haslemere Society on following up the Conservation Appraisal recommendations presented about 3 years ago. Unfortunately, things have been difficult to progress for various reasons examples are :- permissions needed, identifying funds etc.

Hopefully, some projects such as new rubbish bins in the Town, to replace the current lidless and dirty ones will happen.

The H S committee generally have also been identifying what they consider to be neglected parts of the Town and Weyhill and working with the stake holders to improve matters. This usually needs the cooperation of the three Councils HTC, WBC and SCC to work together. With the added co-operation of Councillor David Round (a HTC and WBC Councillor and also a HS member) who is Chairman of the HTC Amenities Committee there is hope that matters will be resolved.

Cyndy Lancaster

TREASURER'S REPORT for the year to 30th. June 2016

I am pleased to report that The Society made a small profit of £53 in 2015/16, albeit substantially less than the figure of £881 for the previous year. Our income was reduced by around £400 and our expenditure rose by a similar amount.

There are two reasons for the fall in income. Firstly, in 2014/15 we benefitted from subscriptions from 7 new life members but we were only able to recruit 2 couples in this category last year. Also, our membership numbers have fallen once again, though at a lower rate than in previous years. The effect of our reduced subscription income is compounded by a smaller recovery of Gift Aid.

I would like to remind those few members who have not changed their standing orders to reflect the increase in subscriptions last year, that they should do so with immediate effect.

On the expenditure side our major "one off" cost was the installation of the Blue Plaque outside the Town Hall to commemorate the Haslemere Riot in 1855. We also made a couple of small donations to local causes. Our other costs are much in line with previous years.

Our cash position remains acceptable with nearly £2000 in our current account and a further £10,000 on short term deposit as a contingency fund.

The accounts are set out overleaf and a signed copy, audited by our Honorary Auditor Mrs Clare David, will be available for members attending the Annual General Meeting.

Brian Deller

The Haslemere Society

**Annual Accounts
for the year ended 30th. June 2016**

2015		2016
£	<u>INCOME</u>	£
4014	Subscriptions & donations (incl.gift aid)	3515
36	Bank interest	43
265	Members activities & events - surplus	378
43	Other	18
4358	Total Income	3954
	<u>EXPENDITURE</u>	
245	Insurance	266
250	Donations to local causes	200
715	Printing & stationery	851
84	Postage & telephone	54
611	Amenity societies	611
1324	Meeting expenses - members & committee	1341
114	Marketing and local fairs	159
-	Blue Plaques	374
134	Miscellaneous	45
3477	Total expenditure	3901
881	Net profit for the year	53
	<u>BALANCE SHEET</u>	
11335	Opening Balance	12216
881	Net profit for the year	53
12216	Total funds	12269
	Represented by:	
10000	Bank deposit bonds	10000
1983	Bank current account	1931
-478	Sundry creditors	-218
711	Sundry debtors	556
12216		12269

Signed by : Brian Deller Hon. Treasurer

I certify that the statement set out above corresponds with the books and vouchers presented to me and fairly represents the financial position of the society.

Signed by Clare David MA, FCA (Hon. Auditor)

HASLEMERE SOCIETY DATES FOR YOUR DIARIES

2016

AGM Friday 18th November at Haslemere Hall

2017

Spring Meeting Friday 7th April at Haslemere Hall

Summer Party Friday 30th June at Undershaw

AGM Friday 17th November at Haslemere Hall

POST FOR THE SOCIETY may be sent/delivered to
Haslemere Educational Museum:

78 High Street, Haslemere