



Charity number 273602

Holmesdale Natural History Club

The Museum, 14 Croydon Road, Reigate, RH2 0PG

<http://www.hnhc.co.uk>

Annual Report 2021 – 2022

September 2022

President

The past year has at last seen us escape from our Covid-enforced hibernation. We opened the Museum to the public for one day during the Heritage Open Days in 2021 and it was very successful. We had 65 adult visitors and 14 children, managed a good flow of visitors through the building and attracted some new members. We also collected around £50 in donations.

Covid regulations meant that we weren't able to hold our normal lecture programme in the Autumn of 2021 but we had two very enjoyable and well-attended walks. Sean Hawkins led an interesting and informative tour of some of the notable graves in St Mary's Churchyard at the beginning of October, and later in the month John Austin led an equally interesting walk around Priory Park and some of the remains of Reigate's early waterworks.

We held our AGM online again, with 30 members participating, and ventured into the digital era with an excellent Zoom talk by Keith Betton on 'The Return of the Peregrine'.

In December, given the situation with the new Covid variant and as the heating at the Club was not working, we decided to cancel the Christmas social.

We started our programme in the new year with another excellent Zoom presentation, this time by Chris Duffin on 'Pioneering Female Geologists' including Margaret Crosfield, a Club member for many years in the first part of the last century and the first female fellow of the Geological Society.

Many thanks to Robert Bogin for helping us with the technical side of the Zoom lectures.

In March we had a – very wet – trip to view the snowdrops at Gatton Park and a less damp walk around the Reigate Town Treasure Trail, with members adding their knowledge to the self-guided tour published in 2013 to mark the 150th anniversary of the borough.

We had our first 'live' lecture in two years in April when Gerry Moss gave us a fascinating talk on the history of Redhill, which we followed up in July with a walk led by Gerry around the sites mentioned.

We had a very pleasant Founder's Day social at the Club in June, with tea, cakes and a bug hunt in the garden. Members also had the chance to look at some of our recent acquisitions.

In August the Club hosted a commemorative event for James Pullen, the 'idiot savant' of the Royal Earlswood Hospital known for his fantastical models. The event included a ceremony to dedicate a stone marking Pullen's newly identified grave in St Mary's Churchyard, followed by talks at the Museum by Freda Knight, originally curator of the Earlswood Hospital Museum, and Janet Clare, who is a descendant of Pullen's brother. Although not an official Club event, there was a good turnout of members and it was deemed a great success.

In September we opened again for Heritage Open days with displays by Giuliana Hennessy, Sean Hawkins, Paul Collins, Alan Eggleton and John Austin.

We opened the Autumn season with a fine talk by Peter Lloyd entitled 'Coaches, Cholera and CAMRA: The history of Pubs in Reigate'.

We now plan to have a full programme of events for the rest of this year and for 2023.

Jane Shaw was unable to continue as Curator and we offer her our thanks for the dedication and enthusiasm she brought to the role.

I took over as acting Curator, but drew heavily on the help of the Section Secretaries to carry on the work on our collections. Paul Collins has done a tremendous amount of work updating the Natural History Collections, with Alan Eggleton, Lana North and Rita Batchelor carrying out vital conservation work. Sean Hawkins has been kept extremely busy accessioning significant Local History collections donated by Ken Keasley and the estate of Elizabeth Bremner – with help from Marilyn Eggleton and Geoff Smith. Bob Goddard has continued his work cataloguing our geology specimens and Kathryn Knapp has added to her work as Membership Secretary by taking on the job of cataloguing our herbariums.

John Austin continues his sterling work as our Librarian.

Thanks are also due to Roger Ellaby, Julia Monro, Lana North and Carol Sandford for keeping our garden looking so splendid, and to Carol Sandford for the work she does as Club Secretary.

Thanks also to our Treasurer Judith Cooper for her work over the years. She plans to stand down at the AGM and Helen Saaler has kindly agreed to stand for election to take over.

Sadly, the year saw us lose one of our long-standing members, Doris Bourne, whose generous donation allowed us to complete the extension to the Museum several years ago.

The Museum has had some work done this year, with the wall above the extension sealed to prevent water ingress, and the heating finally fixed.

We remain healthy financially and look forward to a successful and rewarding year ahead.

Andy Sandford, President

Library

Up to the end of August 2022 46 more volumes have been added to the collection since the last report. Thus we now hold a total of 1961

books in addition to a vast number of, as yet uncounted, pamphlets which are housed in the filing cabinet on the landing outside the library. Twenty books have been borrowed this last year.

The following books are those added since the last report:

Adams, P. J. *The Origin and Evolution of Coal*. 1964

Alexander, M. *Folklore of Surrey*. 2021

Audubon, J. J. *The Audubon Reader*. 2006

Banks, F. R. *Surrey – the Penguin Guide*. 1956

Beazley, M. *Exploring the Universe*. 1980

British Museum (NH) *List of British Vertebrates*. 1935

Brock, P. D. *Britain's Insects*. 2021

Burek, C. V. *Margaret Chorley Crosfield*. 2021

Chapman, G and Barker, W. B. *Zoology* 2nd edn. 1972

Chelsea Speleological Soc. *Caves and Tunnels in S. E. England* 1988

Clare, J. *James Henry Pullen*. 2020

Collinson-Morley, L. *Companion into Surrey*. 1973

Forrs, D. and Collyer, G. *The Landscape of Surrey*. 2001

Graham, A. L., Beavan, A. W. R. and Hutchinson, *Catalogue of Meteorites*. 1985

Grigson, G. *Samuel Palmer – the visionary years*. 1947

Guilmant, A. *Surrey of one hundred years ago*. 1993

Haselfoot, A. J. *The Industrial Architecture of S. E. England*. 1978

Harcourt- Burrage E. *Reigate Home and Foreign*. 1901 (2nd copy)

Janaway, J. *Surrey- a County History*. 1994

Jefferies, R. *The Spring of the Year*. 1946

Lister, R. *The Paintings of Samuel Palmer*. 1985

Lloyd, N. *A History of the English House*. 1949

London Borough of Sutton. *The River Wandle*. 1974

Macself, A. J. *Simple Rock Gardening*. undated

Matthews, R. *Paranormal Surrey*. 2010

Mee, A. *The King's England - London*. 1960

Michell, R. *The Carews of Beddington*. 1981

Money, B. E. *Viscount Palmerston*. undated

Moorhead, A. *Darwin and the Beagle*. 1969 (2nd copy)

Moss, S. *Mrs Moreau's Warbler*. 2018

Moss, S. *The Robin: a biography*. 2017

Mullens, W. H. and Kirke Swann, H. *A Bibliography of British Ornithology*. 1917

Parker, E. *Highways and Byways in Surrey*. 1908 (2nd copy)

Phillips, S. R. *A Geological, Historical and Topographical Description of the Borough of Reigate*. 1885 (6th copy)

Pough, F. H. *A Field Guide to Rocks and Minerals*. 1873

Richmond, L. A. *Roman Britain*. 1964

Sammes, M. *Backing into the Limelight*. 1994 (2nd copy)

Smith, A. C. *Windmills in Surrey and Greater London*. 1976

Sowan, P. W. *Firestone and Hearthstone mines in the Upper Greensand of East Surrey*. 1975 (2nd copy)

Stocker, L. *The Complete Hedgehog*. 1987

Stuart, A. J. *Life in the Ice Age*. 1980

Surrey Street Atlas. 1980

Swinton, W. E. *Fossil Birds*. 1958

Williams, D and Poulton, R. *The Medieval and later development of Reigate Excavations in Bell Street and High Street 1979-90*. 2021

Ziminski, A. *The Stone Mason – a history of building in Britain*. 2020

Of particular appeal to many members will be Burek's research paper on club icon Margaret Chorley Crosfield (last year listed as a pamphlet but now upgraded to a place on the shelves), and closer to us in familiarity, the report by the late David Williams (and Poulton) on the archaeological finds in Reigate's Bell and High Streets. Several of us attended the blessing of the new gravestone for James Henry Pullen and enjoyed talks and refreshments afterwards. Janet Clare donated her booklet on her great great uncle and we look forward to obtaining a revised edition in due course. So far my favourite book in the library is Andrew Ziminski's account of growing up in Reigate, becoming a renowned stonemason and describing his works on some of the most historic buildings and structures in the country. Beautifully illustrated on high quality paper in a superior binding we are grateful for this gift from Sean Hawkins.

John Austin

Local History

In the last year the Club has been the grateful recipient of number of collections of quite extensive local material which is still being sifted and assimilated. The first contains archives that had largely belonged to local architect John Norman Keasley 1881-1957 who lived for many years in Meadvale. His forbears ran a successful baker and confectioners shop in Bell Street. Largely consisting of architectural drawings and plans of local building work, with some related documents – mostly invoices from local builders and craftsmen – it also included a useful quantity of local large-scale Ordnance Survey plans which have now been documented and incorporated by Geoff Smith into our already significant holding of local maps. A further large contribution to our archive was gratefully received from the executors of the estate of the late Elizabeth Mary Bremner née Apted. Containing photographic, documentary and personal papers, it improves our knowledge and understanding of certain local families – notably the Apted's, Clifton's and Capel's – who were active in the affairs of 19th and early 20th century Reigate. This accession also includes a 19th century wooden "ballot" box, though without a slit through which to post votes it probably predates the private ballot, and would have contained electoral lists etc. A small selection of photographs from this archive was on show on Founders Day & a larger display incorporating material from it on Heritage Open Day. We wish to thank member Claire Knap for her help in the acquisition of this material. Finally, on Heritage Day we were presented, by new member Alan Ford, with a collection of notebooks and records of local weather kept through the latter half of the 20th century by John Alexander Gladstone, a resident of Somers Road.

A considerable number of questions concerning local institutions, businesses and families have been directed to us in the last twelve months, and to most we have been able to provide answers. A particular instance of this has been the attempt to provide some help to Duncan Fearn in his important history of solicitors Morr & Co. - now of Redhill but remembered by many as Morrison & Co. of High Street,

Reigate. For just under 300 years the company operated here under successive senior partners: Michael & Richard Barnes, Ambrose Glover, Thomas & Charles Hart and later the Morrison family. Thanks must go to Marilyn Eggleton who maintains, catalogues and updates the index of our holdings, and who has this year also contributed a sturdy file of newspaper articles she has kept on the local effects of Covid.

Sean Hawkins

Membership

Our membership numbers now stand at 126; 28 of these are life members and five are honorary members. There have been eight new members during the course of the year, four resignations from the Club and a number of members have allowed their subscription to lapse.

It is with great sadness that we report the death of two of our members:

We have only recently received notice that David Bellamy died in the summer of 2021. He joined the Club in 2017 and we were looking forward to listening to his talk on An Introduction to the History of Reigate Heath. Unfortunately, we were unable to hear his talk as COVID prevented us from meeting.

Doris Bourne died in July 2022, after many years' association with the Club. Her husband, Eardley, had been a trustee of the Club for over 50 years and the extension is dedicated to his memory. This extension was made possible by a handsome donation from Doris Bourne; the members of the Club will be forever grateful as the extension has greatly enhanced the facilities of the Club and given us some much-needed space.

Kathryn Knapp

Natural History

Within the museum I have managed to put new labels on the bird displays in the lecture room, now called the Crosfield Room. I have also shuffled the exhibits, added new shelves and built a new display cabinet. This has allowed the exhibits more space making them easier to see. This applies especially to the smaller passerines which were quite crowded. The new cabinet has given space for the British Thrushes to be displayed together with the nests of the Song Thrush and Blackbird.

I am also continuing the process of creating spreadsheets for all the artefacts (exhibits) beginning with the birds.

We have received donations of butterflies, moths and flies in small cases and a cabinet of birds' eggs which are neatly labelled and with a typed list. Whilst it is very nice to be offered these collections we have reached the point at which we

have little space for any more and may need to refuse future donations. We are trying to rationalise the existing collections.

Work has continued to maintain the existing exhibits. Many of the glass cases containing birds have been opened, cleaned and resealed. This improves the displays and allows us to check for any bugs which may have got into the cases. Thanks to Lana, Rita & Alan.

Kathryn has begun working on the herbarium and has provided her own report.

The natural world is still experiencing declines in species. Some of you may have noticed fewer birds or butterflies in your gardens. Contrarily some of you may have seen increases in numbers. I know from speaking to other people that these numbers are variable. My own experience this year has been to see fewer, particularly butterflies. My garden has seen many fewer butterflies. One species I am pleased to see is the Jersey Tiger Moth. I first saw this and recorded it in 2021 having disturbed one in my garden. This year I have seen them again which means they are breeding somewhere in the locality of my garden. This is a species that is increasing its range, at least in Surrey. It does not necessarily mean an increase in numbers.

The hot dry period of late June to early August decimated many plant species. It was sad to watch trees losing their leaves. However this is a device by which trees defend themselves from the drought. No leaves reduces the need for water. The Alder tree in my garden was attacked by the Alder Leaf Beetle which meant most of the leaves not lost to drought were turned to lace. However it has recovered and now has new green leaves.

The Holmesdale Museum Garden has been quite productive but perhaps not as in previous years. The Box bushes have been devastated by caterpillars of the Box Moth, so much so that we may be losing the fight to retain the bushes.

Back in February we had reports of Bramblings (a relative of the Chaffinch) that had been feeding in a field south of the Pilgrims Way footpath below the Downs. Estimates of upto 800 birds were reported but I did not see them on my visits. I did see a few in Salfords.

Other unusual bird sightings in the Borough included: - Ring-necked Duck at Priory Park; Mediterranean Gull, Jack Snipe & Lesser Redpoll at Holmethorpe (Redhill).

It is always enjoyable to watch the Buzzards and Red Kites almost effortlessly cruising the sky. Their numbers are increasing and both are spreading their ranges slowly eastward. Red Kites were seen quite regularly over Redhill and the industrial estates south of the town.

Club members regularly reported seeing groups of Swifts and Swallows from the Museum garden and even some Swifts quite late in the season.

We did not survey the garden for invertebrates but we have seen Grasshoppers, Comma and Gatekeeper Butterflies, Bumblebees and Solitary bees during our Monday afternoon sessions and during our Founders Day celebrations.

I would encourage everyone to garden for wildlife, increasing habitat for insects which in turn provides for birds and bats. Create habitat piles of old logs or even up-turned flower pots, let some grass grow longer during May and plant nectar rich flowers which have easy access for the pollinating insects.

Paul Collins

Herbarium

A herbarium is a collection of preserved plants, with associated information: family, genus and species together with details which may include where and when the plant was found and by whom.

We have several different herbaria stored at the Holmesdale Museum. These are the Doris Powell collection (1445 specimens); the Index of Surrey Flora, compiled by James Alexander Brewer (1343 specimens); the Dr A H Fardon collection (269 specimens) and what is termed the Cupboards VI and VII Herbarium which is chiefly the J A Power collection (5511 specimens). The J A Power collection contains some very old specimens, the earliest dating back to 1777 and the majority being collected in the mid-nineteenth century.

A hand-written catalogue of the herbaria was compiled by L W Brown in 1981. This catalogue gives the folder and sheet number for each specimen, i.e where the specimen can be found. It also includes the Dandy number (unique to a species but no longer used) and the name of the specimen, together with details of its collection. Modern herbaria identify plants by family (eg Papaveraceae), genus (eg Papaver) and species (eg *Papaver rhoeas*) – the Latin name for Common Poppy.

Over the years as more is known about plants, and DNA sequencing of plants becomes more common, some plants are classified differently and change their Latin name. Latin names follow those given in Stace, C: *New Flora of the British Isles*, 3rd edition, 2010.

I am currently transferring the catalogue compiled by L W Brown to computer and will include all of the information given by L W Brown. However, it will be updated to use new family names, and any new species names. It will also include English names which I consider is a useful addition to the information given. The records in our herbarium do not appear to be arranged in any particular order, neither in Dandy number order, nor in alphabetic family order. Transferring the catalogue to computer will make it much easier to locate a particular specimen and thus will make it far more useful.

Kathryn Knapp

HOLMESDALE NATURAL HISTORY CLUB. Registered Charity No. 273602
Income & Expenditure Account for the 12 months ended 31/03/2022

EXPENSES	2020	2021	2022
Postage&Stationery	240.85	178.63	161.60
Gas&Electricity&Water	2,278.95	2189.94	2,052.08
Council tax	0.00	532.48	0.00
Subs paid to Societies	169.00	182.00	164.00
Lecture Fees	205.99	0.00	74.40
Maintenance Works 14&14a	5,189.94	512.92	4,315.40
Building Insurance	2,807.78	2498.91	2,749.96
Contents depreciation	500.00	200.00	160.00
Miscellaneous Expenditure	1,337.32	44.87	1,063.90
TOTAL EXPENSES	12,729.83	6,339.75	10,741.34

INCOME	2020	2021	2022
Subscriptions	1,401.00	524	1,209.00
Rent 14A	11,696.20	11408.70	10,660.00
Sales/Donations	1,450.63	1079	15,769.59
IR Gift Aid	256.26	510	118.71
Other	284.94	401.16	6.28
TOTAL INCOME	15,089.03	13,922.86	27,763.58
Surplus Income over Expenses	2,359.20	7,583.11	17,022.24

Balance Sheet at Year Ended 31/03/22		
Fixed Assets		
Value of property		733,000.00
Contents		640.00
Sub-total		733,640.00
Current Assets		
Cash in NatWest		35,187.18
Cash in SKBSoc		1,700.48
Current assets sub-total		36,887.66
Liabilities		0.00
Total Net Assets		770,527.66
Accumulated Fund		
Brought forward 01/04/21		753,505.42
Add net surplus/deficit		17,022.24
Total carried forward 31/03/22		770,527.66

I have examined the Income and Expenditure Account and the Balance Sheet for the year ending 31/03/22 and confirm that they are in accordance with the books and records supplied to me by the Holmesdale Natural History Club

Signed

Philip Wilson

Philip Wilson ACA

Date

20/9/22

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