

**CHAIRMAN'S COMMENTARY**

A number of us from The Society listened to the debate on the planning application for the Lavandou Stables from the balcony above the Town Hall Council Chamber on Wednesday 28th January. I must admit that I did not stay for the vote at 11.30 but I understand that the cheers from the gallery welcomed the 11 to 1 rejection of the development proposal. The Council Officers had recommended the plan to turn the stables into offices and homes but the Councillors were not happy to lose the historic racing stables in Chalk Lane and we must hope that a more acceptable scheme may be devised to restore and maintain them.

Rob Austen spoke for his allotted three minutes - in fact he went over by about thirty seconds, and together with his appearance on Southern Counties Radio in the morning, he expressed our opinion on the conservation issues involved extremely well and made up for the accidental omission of our objections from the Planning Committee papers.

We deal with all planning applications in a professional way and try to present our views without fear or favour. We hope that members accept this as a fact and realise that we cannot, and do not, express views which might reflect only those of a member who would be personally affected by a particular application.



The Grade II listed Cicero stable yard



The Grade II\* Listed Indoor Riding School at the Lavandou Stables, Chalk Lane

Two hundred years ago one of our greatest landscape painters, John Constable, came to stay in Epsom and the plaque on Hylands House records that he occasionally lived there between 1809 and 1812. Hylands House is in the Dorking Road about two hundred yards from Epsom General Hospital and the name of the public house nearby is explained - 'The Haywain' - being one of his most famous paintings. Papers which I have found in The Local History Centre in Bourne Hall show that Constable actually came first in 1806 to visit his mother's sister, Mary Watts, who had married James Gubbins, a London surveyor. John Constable came to stay with his relations on many occasions, became fond of his cousins and completed a number of sketches, drawings and portraits whilst there.



Hylands House, Dorking Road, Epsom

We celebrate our 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary this year and we hope to see many of you at the functions which we will be organising.

**Harry Corben. Chairman**

## **PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

Three major cases to mention this time. The most important is of course the *Lavandou Stables* in Chalk Lane which was the subject of a special meeting of the Planning Committee, which I left at 11pm when the main vote was taken. Rob Austen spoke very effectively on the Society's behalf and his report appears later in the Newsletter.

***Magistrates and County Courts:*** I reported last time that the application to redevelop these sites had been refused. An appeal has just been made, and we shall be writing to the Inspectorate in suitable terms recommending dismissal.

***United Reformed Church, Church Street:*** An application by the Church proposes demolition of the present building and redevelopment to include a new chapel/community centre on the front part of the site in Church Street, with a four storey block of student accommodation behind. There would also be a further three storey block of student accommodation on a rear site at right angles to the church and extending behind the Epsom Club to the Depot Road car park. The Church has occupied the main site for many years and the single storey Unity Hall was built on the rear site in 2000.

We have objected to the application on the grounds of overdevelopment and we consider that the new use of student accommodation, totalling 81 rooms, is totally unsuitable especially in these numbers. The height of the proposed buildings conflicts with the neighbouring buildings and with the amenities of the area generally. The windows of the student rooms would

overlook neighbours and would be likely to cause nuisance by way of noise and general disturbance. There would also be a demand for parking by students and there is no provision for this on the site.

**15 Eastway:** Eastway is a small cul-de-sac off Pound Lane and No 15 is at the end, adjoining the entrance to the Ebbisham Sports Club. The proposal was to replace No 15 with two three-storey blocks with a total of 42 students' rooms. We objected that the development was grossly excessive and objectionable in relation to the existing houses, ill conceived in principle and greatly to the detriment of local residents. The application was duly refused, but regrettably the reasons given related to only one of the blocks.

**Alan Baker**

## **CONSERVATION**

We have looked at a further 16 applications since the last Newsletter, and representations made in respect of three of them. Most of the rest were generally small domestic improvements.

Normally we would not wish to give details of our representations where they affect applications made by individuals, as this could seem rather unfair – with 1700 members it might look a little one-sided. However, we have no such reservations when the applicant is a developer or housing association etc. Of the three, two fall into the latter category.

The Society was approached for its views by the Rosebery Housing Association as part of their informal consultation process before submitting their application in connection with West Hill Place. The Association is proposing to replace the existing buildings on the site which are, not to put too fine a point on it, somewhat nondescript. This approach was greatly appreciated and we made one or two comments concerning the materials proposed for the roof (metal) and for cladding the projecting parts of the building (timber). The formal application included a conventional tiled roof, which we feel is much more appropriate to the location. The timber facades are still proposed. We feel that these may be acceptable when regular maintenance can be assured, but this is not always the case with non-owner occupied premises and the building may soon become rather unkempt in appearance. The rest of the design was very good and made excellent use of the site.

We also wrote to express our concern regarding a retrospective application in connection with Peters Court, in St Martins Avenue, by the Epsom & Ewell Housing Trust. Various unauthorised changes had been carried out, including significant changes to the roof-lights and increasing the height of the roof. It is astonishing that such an experienced body can proceed in this way and, given the sensitivity of the location in the Worple Road Conservation Area, we wrote to express our considerable alarm, and recommended that the Council carried out enforcement action.

Perhaps of more importance was the application submitted in connection with Lavandou Stables in Chalk Lane. The Society wrote a lengthy letter in April 2008, outlining nine grounds of objection, as well as casting some doubt on the merits of the accompanying analyses, especially the transport appraisal. A special meeting of the Planning Committee was held on 28 January, to consider this and the associated application relating to Jodie's Yard. The Society was among seven objectors allowed to address the committee. This is normally restricted to one, but this rule was very sensibly set aside by the Chairman, given the impact of the proposal. The rules limit such addresses to 3 minutes, so your representative concentrated on just two points. Firstly, that the assertion made by applicant that there was no demand for training facilities was not borne out by the evidence, citing the second application

of the evening and the recent approved application for an expansion of the Tattenham Corner stables. Secondly, that the application fails completely to comply with the requirements of policy CS1 of the Core Strategy, which, inter alia, 'expects the development of land to contribute to the social, economic and environmental improvements necessary to achieve sustainable development and enhance the natural and built environments and achieve high quality sustainable development'. We closed by emphasising the benefits of the location of the stables, with ideal access to the Downs, for training horses. We are very happy to be able to report that the application was refused.

**Robert Austen**



The collection of over three thousand signatures on a petition to save the Lavandou Stables was a measure of the public concern over this Planning Application.

The picture shows the delivery of the petition at the Town Hall, supported by Chris Grayling our Member for Parliament. (Editor)

## **EVENTS, OUTINGS and TALKS**

### **Christmas Outing to Chichester on 20th November 2008**

The weather was fine and a full coach set off for Chichester. Unfortunately, we discovered on arrival that the set-down place had been changed and involved more walking to the centre of the town but Alan, our driver, very kindly took some people with walking difficulties straight to the theatre where they were able to have lunch. The others spent the time before the coach picked us up at 1.30pm to go to the theatre with various activities including coffee, lunch, shopping and visiting the cathedral. The performance of the Mikado was excellent. Several people wrote or phoned afterwards to say how much they had enjoyed the outing.

### **Summer Outing to The Friars at Aylesford and Ightham Mote on 27th August 2009**

Aylesford is the home of a community of Carmelite Friars. The Friars, 3 miles from Maidstone, is a centre of pilgrimage for all Christian traditions and has conference facilities and a guest house. The Priory, or The Friars to use its traditional name, was founded in 1242 when the first Carmelites arrived from the Holy Land. After the Dissolution of the Monasteries in 1538, it became a private dwelling but in 1949 the Carmelites regained possession of their old home. Today The Friars is a blend of medieval and modern and its chapels contain some outstanding modern works of religious art. The ceramics created by Adam Kossowoski are especially noteworthy.

The early group of Carmelites, gathered round the Well of Elijah on Mount Carmel were hermits but circumstances compelled them to leave their settlement for Europe and a small group arrived at Aylesford in 1242. In 1247 the Carmelites underwent a major transformation of lifestyle and became mendicant friars.

Coffee will be served on arrival in the restored 17th century West Barn which houses the tearoom and shop. This will be followed by a conducted tour of The Friars. Those not wishing to take the tour can watch the potter and/or upholsterer at work. A 3 course lunch (main, desert and tea or coffee) served in the Pilgrims Hall is included.

Afterwards the coach will drive to Ightham Mote which is a National Trust property (NT members will not have to pay entry charge) where we will spend the afternoon at leisure, visiting the house, wandering round the gardens and grounds and having tea - you will be free to choose.

Further details and application form will be in the next newsletter

### **Buffet Supper Friday 9th October 2009**

The Buffet Supper has returned to its original date of the second Friday in October. Please keep this date free. Full details will be in the next newsletter.

### **Talk, Thursday 5th March 2009 at 8pm in Myers Studio, Epsom Playhouse**

This illustrated talk will be given by Nicola Hamill of W.S.Atkins about the Environmental Character Study carried out for Epsom and Ewell Planning Department. Full details were in the last newsletter. There are a few tickets left, £3 each; anyone wishing to come can pay at the door.

**Ian West's Walk About** will be on Sunday 21st June 2009 in Epsom. The meeting place will be given in the next newsletter.

**Joy Furness**

## **50<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY SPECIAL EVENTS**

### **Visit to Chantilly**

Sadly our member Brian Gee who had undertaken to arrange the visit to our twin town of Chantilly died suddenly on the 11th January. Norman Dempster .who is responsible for our 50th anniversary programme and our treasurer Tony Smith have taken over arrangements. Another member John Fowler, Coach Services Manager at Epsom Coaches, has offered to give us advice and assistance to ensure our visit to our twin town is successful.

The arrangements for the programme are in place including our hotel reservations and dinners each evening, and the scheduled visits to the Chateau & Conde Museum, the presentation of dressage, and the Royaumont Abbey and medieval gardens are in hand with the office of tourisme.

We will be giving final details and asking for final payment early in March.

*Due to a late cancellation, there are two places available on this special, 50th Anniversary trip which promises to be both enjoyable and memorable. It is hoped that the cost per person will not exceed £500. Please apply to Norman Dempster (01372 727432).*

### **Anniversary Dinner, Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> July, 7.30 for 8pm at the RAC, Woodcote Park**

To celebrate the anniversary a special dinner has been arranged. We hope that as many members as possible will come to this unique occasion.



There will be a drink and welcome by our Chairman on arrival followed by dinner served at tables in the Cedar Room, which overlooks the extensive grounds of the club. The 3 course meal (main, dessert and coffee) includes a glass of wine and a soft drink and the price is £28 per head. We are indebted to the generous support of W S Atkins for making this possible. Members will be able to purchase additional drinks if desired.

The after dinner speaker will be Peter Grove and his talk will be based on the history and current traditions of the Company of Pikemen and Musketeers of the Honourable Artillery Company of which he is a serving member and which is the bodyguard to the Lord Mayor of London. He gives his talk in the uniform of the Company and includes a short demonstration of one of the weapons they use.

Dress for men is formal (lounge suit) and party attire for ladies.

Parking outside the Club House is restricted to RAC members but there is plenty of space in the visitors car parks situated on either side of the drive as you come through the gates. Guests can be dropped off at the front entrance before parking.

Members should apply for tickets on the application form printed at the end of the newsletter enclosing a cheque made payable to Epsom Protection Society and a stamped addressed envelope (A6 size) and giving the name of anyone with whom they would like to be seated. Early application is recommended as tickets will be allocated on a first come first served basis and the numbers will be limited by the size of the room.

### **Fountain in Rosebery Park**

As part of our 50th Anniversary celebrations the Society is donating a fountain to the Town. It will be situated in Rosebery Park pond at the opposite end to the new duck house. It should be in place and working by early spring.

### **Talk in Epsom Playhouse** in association with the Literary Society of Epsom and Ewell

We planned to hold a significant event at the Epsom Playhouse with a well known speaker to mark the anniversary. It proved difficult to match the availability of the Playhouse with that of the speakers who we had in mind for such an occasion and so, after much effort, sadly we decided to cancel this event.

### **THE DOWNS.**

At the Conservators meeting on 19th January, the new interim Chief Executive, Mrs Frances Rutter, was in attendance. The Head Groundsman, Gerry Ball has retired and a replacement will be sought by both internal and external advertising. Funding for the development of Information and Educational facilities at the Princes Stand is proving difficult, but this remains a long-term project. An application to the Planning Committee to make a car park outside the boundary fence is expected soon from The Rubbing House owners. The Concert on the Downs has been 'credit crunched' and postponed to 2010. The matter of unsightly advertising on the fencing adjacent to The Derby Arms will be referred to the Planning Department. Considerable difficulty is experienced by pedestrians wanting access to the Downs from Tattenham Corner Road especially where it crosses the racecourse – possible solutions are being investigated.

Concerns about the efficacy of present legislation to control unacceptable use of radio-controlled cars were discussed. Mrs Rutter said current bye-laws were sufficient, but were perhaps not as tightly drawn as they could be – and are in other similar areas – the legal team will look at changing the bye-laws. All riders – both racehorse and hack - are experiencing a worrying level of interference by dogs off the lead. Trainers would ideally like all dogs to be on leads between dawn and 12 noon when they are using the gallops (for which they pay a

considerable sum of money). This would be difficult to enforce, as would requiring all dogs to be on leads at all times. Simon Dow made the point that other training grounds ban dogs altogether. Unsightly notice boards would not be welcome, but some means of reminding the general public of their responsibilities is required.

A long time was spent discussing non-racing events, some of which may well negatively affect the training grounds. Eventually it was decided that an official strategy will be put in place and no further applications will be considered until this is done. The new hotel is owned by the racecourse but management has been out-sourced. It is used quite a lot by people from both Atkins and Toyota. One problem to be addressed is the poor walkway from the Grandstand to the hotel. A better surface and perhaps low-level lighting may be the answer. A suitable planning application will be submitted at the appropriate time.

Regarding the state of training in Epsom - trainers in Epsom produced 157 winners in 2008. Currently there are no empty yards for rent by any trainer wishing to come to Epsom.

**Angela Clifford**

### **Local News; Epsom Guardian Report 11<sup>th</sup> December 2008.**

*A council decided to splash their cash to improve Epsom town centre.*

Surrey County Council allocated £60,000 to fix signs, repair railings and put up more street lighting.

The council will also reduce some of the signs causing clutter by moving some signs on to other existing signposts to reduce the number of posts and by getting rid of signs that are no longer needed.

More cycle stands will be built near the station and around the market place.

All of the work is set to be done by the end of March.

Executive member for transport David Munro said: "We are very pleased that the additional funding we made available earlier this year for highways improvements is enabling this work to go ahead in Epsom town centre".

"It is the start of a range of improvements that will be carried out locally in conjunction with Epsom and Ewell Borough Council and other members of the local strategic partnership as part of the Epsom town centre area action plan."

**The following is an extract from the Society's Newsletter No 6 February 1962 and may be of interest to our members. (Editor)**

### **Sandown Lodge Enquiry**

Following the sale of this four acre site last year for the large sum of £63,000, it was to be expected that plans would .be produced designed to extract the maximum, development value from the land.

The ensuing proposal for 96 flats, which would have included two eight-storey point blocks, was opposed by this Society and rejected by the Council. The developers, S .A. Thorne & Sons Limited, then lodged an appeal with the Minister.

When the date of the enquiry was known your Committee got in touch, with .the Woodcote Ratepayers' Society and called a meeting of local residents to explain the proposal to them and advise them on their best course of action, This was- an exceptionally well-attended meeting, and there was no doubt about the strength of the opposition to the proposal.

The Society was represented at the Enquiry (which lasted the whole of one day) by your Chairman who was permitted by the Inspector to cross-examine the developers, and to address him on behalf of the Society. We were naturally pleased to learn last month that the Minister had dismissed the appeal. In doing so he endorsed his Inspector's view that the height and density proposed were excessive for the area and would have an unreasonably disturbing effect on the adjoining residents.

This decision is particularly welcome as being our first positive indication that the Minister does not regard his widely publicised Circular 37 of 1961 (which called for the "intensive use

to its full capacity of land in the areas contained by the green belt") as sacrosanct.

Had the decision gone the other way, this case would undoubtedly have been cited as a precedent in many future applications for planning permission including those pending for the three cleared sites on the other side of Ashley Road.



Epsom's Winter Wonderland, February 2009

APPLICATION FORM FOR 50<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY DINNER  
TUESDAY 7<sup>th</sup> JULY 2009, 7.30 for 8pm at RAC WOODCOTE PARK

NAME

ADDRESS

PHONE NUMBER

I would like tickets (£28 each) and enclose a cheque for £ made payable to Epsom Protection Society and a stamped addressed envelope (A6 size).

I would like to sit with.....

Please return the form to Norman Dempster, 34 Sandown Lodge, Avenue Road, Epsom KT18 7QX Tel 01372 727432

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