



THE LYNCHMERE SOCIETY

FOR LYNCHMERE, HAMMER AND CAMELSDALE

Spring Newsletter

Life President: Michael Tibbs **Vice President:** John Hooker

Chairman: Michael Shaw (01428 643406)

Treasurer and Secretary: Robert Dows-Miller (07775 548309)

Membership Secretary: Louise Searight (01428 723715)

Membership Records: Stuart Ibbotson (01428 658179)

Commons Manager: Mark Allery (01428 641708)

Commons Wardens: Stanley: Roy Wolfe (01428 723005).

Lynchmere: Judy Rous (01428 723251) and Louise Searight (01428 723715).

Marley: Chris Pooley (01428 653034).

Trustees: Robert Dows-Miller, Louise Searight, Christina Heath, Stuart Ibbotson, Nic Mann, Laura Ponsonby, Chris Pooley, Judy Rous, Ian Russell, Michael Shaw.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY...

Annual General Meeting

Friday 14th May at 19:30 for 20:00 followed by a talk on The West Sussex Tithe Map Project (see below).

Bat Walk

13th July Meet at the Society notice board on the B2131 to Lynchmere Green road at 8:30pm. Children (accompanied by adults) are welcome.

Volunteers Barbecue

Saturday 26th June at Mare Barn at 6pm. Meet at the Barn earlier for an afternoon of work and clearing up in the barnyard. Park your car at Lynchmere Green and walk up the track. This barbecue will be a celebration of the acquisition of the Barn and Fields. You do not need to be a volunteer to come. Please bring friends if you think they may subscribe to the ideals of TLS.

Shulbrede Barbecue

Saturday 4th September at 17:30. Bring your friends to this BBQ in this historic environment, by courtesy of Laura Ponsonby and Ian and Kate Russell. Barbecued food and wine and soft drinks will be provided. Please bring £2 per head and something sweet for the second course.

Other Dates

Haslemere Fire Station Open Day – 3rd May

Haslemere Charter Fare – 3rd May

St Peter's Lynchmere Flower Festival – 29th to the 31st May

Shulbrede Priory open – 30th to the 31st May

Haslemere Society Summer Drinks Party – 18th June

Lynchmere Pageant - 4 July at 5pm at St Peter's

Fernhurst Furnace Open Days – 11th to the 12th September

Lynchmere Village Fete – 26th September

Chairman's Report

Our **AGM** will be held at the Hardman Hoyle Memorial Hall on Friday 14 May at 1930 for 2000. Three members of your committee (Robert Dows-Miller, Laura Ponsonby and Judy Rous) are due to retire by rotation. They have all indicated they would like to stand again. Any other nominations should reach our secretary Robert Dows-Miller at 22 Heath Road Hammer GU27 3QN by 30th April.

Our annual accounts will be available for inspection at this meeting.

The AGM will be followed by a talk by Gillian Edom (the project coordinator of the Heritage Project at West Sussex County Council). She will speak on "**Joining up our Heritage; the West Sussex Tithe Map project.**" See her article further on in this newsletter. A group from the Society has been working for some months on some Parish records and those of the Society itself in collaboration with the County Archives in Chichester (a most helpful place if you are interested in following up the history of your house or neighborhood - or family if you are a longtime resident). If you are interested in the past in this area (which is a fascinating subject) do come - and encourage others who are not members to come with you.

Peter Burkitt's fields

It is now two years since I told you of the purchase of Stoneyfield and the forthcoming acquisition of Peter Burkitt's fields on Lynchmere Ridge. It has been a long haul but the four fields totalling 35 acres and including Mare Barn should finally have been transferred to the Society by the time you read this. It will be five years in May since Peter died, but at last his wishes have been fulfilled that these beautiful fields should be preserved as they are, for the benefit of future generations. We will endeavour to live up to his expectations and wishes.

We plan, therefore, to run these fields as they have been as farmland (for grazing and hay) as a part of our wider activities, including the three commons as well. And we hope to use the same grazier for all - fields and commons. But it follows that although the commons are open access the fields are not. There are no footpaths through them; they will from time to time contain cattle including bulls (which may not be as benign as the cows we are used to on the commons). At other times the fields will be turned over to hay. Please respect these arrangements. We will try and arrange guided walks every year and we can make special arrangements for school parties.

We are still looking at what further use we might make of **Mare Barn** which Peter had restored some years ago. It is a wonderful building and we hope to make more use of it than just for storage and as a hayloft. At some point we hope a grant may be forthcoming to replace the current corrugated iron roof with something more pleasing. But it has been made watertight and postponed for some time the need for further repairs.

An initiative by the Parish Tree Warden (Alexandra O'Grady) has led us to agree to the creation of a small traditional **Apple Orchard** at the southern end of The Park (the field next to Mare Barn). With the guidance (and possible financial assistance) of the South Downs Joint Committee we will fence an area of about 100 yards by 20 and plant varieties of apples which are traditional to the area. There is nothing to see yet - but there should be by the end of the year.

On **Marley** our joint project with the National Trust is now complete. The first of the young Belted Galloways (owned by the NT) which spent a short time on the Common late last year before overwintering at Shottermill ponds, will be returning shortly and will be joined by a few more. They were quite an attraction last autumn and we look forward to seeing them back. We are considering the possibility of applying for permission to fence our other holding on Marley (the land to the west of Marley Lane). Gallant bands of volunteers have been working hard to control the scrub there, but regrowth is a continuing problem and the good work done soon disappears. Cattle would help a lot but there will be nothing done without local consultation. In the longer term a gleam in the eye is a much larger scheme taking in a large swathe of heathland from beyond Iron Hill right across to Black Down, involving several other landowners as well as ourselves. But not in the immediate future!

Like it or not, and we all know how opinions have been quite sharply divided, **the South Downs National Park** is now in existence and administrative arrangements for it to begin its active functions in a year's time are well advanced. TLS is a member of the South Downs Network, which brings together voluntary and community organisations which will further the purposes of the Park (there is no point now in non engagement).

It is a matter of concern to us that the Chichester District Council Local Development Framework has proposed the building of 2500 houses north of the Downs. These would for the most part have to be within the park. They would be the largest number of new houses to be built in any national park at any time - hardly a good start. We have added our voices to those who oppose this programme.

On the local front we remain concerned that parts of Hammer and Camelsdale which were formerly protected by their AONB status are outside the Park and have now lost that status. It is difficult to see what can now be done, although the Inspector in his report which led to the inclusion of the Western Weald in the park said arrangements should be made for alternative protection. I am afraid our District Council has shown no interest in taking up his recommendation.

We continue to encourage local schools and voluntary organisations to visit the Commons (and the cows will no doubt be a big attraction on Marley); we have made gifts of bird boxes to some of them. Roy Wolfe has put up 16 Bat Boxes on Lynchmere Common (join us for the bat walk on 13 July led by our local bat expert Martyn Fillis) but I'm afraid there is as yet no occupancy of our owl boxes.

Our **membership** holds up well. More of you have taken advantage of life membership which saves you and us administrative hassle. Renewal of membership for those of you who are not 'lifers' is due from 1 May. You can now do it online via our website. Inevitably each year sees some attrition of existing membership. Your committee work hard to attract new members. You could help by yourself encouraging your friends to join - perhaps by bringing them along to one of our events (the lecture on 14th May and the BBQs on 26th June and 4th September are the most obvious). Membership forms are available on our website (www.thelynchmeresociety.org) and notice boards (sometimes a bit soggy I'm afraid) or from wardens or committee members. We are pleased to welcome estate agents Henry Adams to corporate membership alongside Highfield School and Clements Windows.

And we are always on the lookout for **new volunteers**, be it to work on the commons on volunteer days during the winter or for indoor jobs connected with TLS (for example the archives). If you can help please approach one of our committee.

TLS people

Of our members we were delighted to see that Laura Ponsonby was honoured by Haslemere Museum for her 40 years work with them (and she continues to do plant surveys for us which are both a valuable management tool and a historical record). We are very pleased to see Roy Wolfe back after his operation earlier this year (Roy and Mark Allery with Mark Busby do much good work on the commons in an unobtrusive and highly effective manner). And your committee is pleased that Hilary Adair has accepted their offer of honorary life membership. She has served TLS with distinction for many years.
(*Michael - Chairman*)

The Lynchmere Society Archive (*contributed by Gillian Edom*)

Part of **your** local Heritage - please help.

On the day I visited the area around Lynchmere for the first time it snowed. My abiding memory is of a crisp, cold and stark beauty, highlighted by the occasional appearance of a watery sun. Winter is a good time to come because, without the density of plant growth and foliage, I was more able to see the history of local human life and activity etched on the landscape.

The Lynchmere area, like all places, has its own unique historic inheritance. In particular it reflects the mutually beneficial relationship between human beings and their physical environment: the extraction of minerals and rocks from beneath the soil, the management of vegetation to produce wood and provide land for grazing as well as the cultivation of farmland for crops. All of these activities have left marks that can still be seen today and the people of Hammer, Camelsdale and Lynchmere take a pride in preserving this landscape.

Hilary Adair and Nic Mann invited me to visit so that I would have a better understanding when incorporating it into the 'Joining up our Heritage Project'. This Project was launched at West Sussex Record Office at the end of July 2009. It is funded by the Heritage Lottery fund and West Sussex Archives Society and its main aim is to locate historical sources (particularly archives) and record them on our existing Tithe Map Database. These sources in the form of old photos, maps, letters, wills and a variety of other documents and artifacts that have been left behind by past generations are also important, if less conspicuous, clues to understanding lives that were once lived.

The project can only succeed with the cooperation and advice of local people who are familiar with the landscape and history of their area and it is hoped that one of the byproducts of the project will be increased sharing and working together of local groups and individuals who share common aims. The project will provide practical support to those who wish to collect and care for historic evidence for the benefit of future generations. The memory of this history is worth preserving,

If you would like to be involved in the Lynchmere Archive work and the 'Joining up our Heritage Project' or just want to find out a bit more please contact me:

Gillian Edom
West Sussex Record Office
County Hall
Chichester
PO19 1RN
or Laurie Crockford in Camelsdale (01428 658645).

The Rowan - Enchanted Tree

Mark Allery



We have a good number of Rowan trees on the Lynchmere Commons (though I took this photo on the side of the Long Mynd a few years ago). I am pleased to see that the numbers are increasing now that enough of the scrub grown Birch and Pine has been removed as I like the Rowan tree a lot.

The Rowan is widely known as the Mountain Ash, partly because its leaves resemble those of the Ash tree and also because of its ability to grow at high altitudes often as a solitary shrub high on moor or mountainside. Possibly because of this it is often considered a tree of Scotland and of the North and West of the UK and used to be considered scarce in the South of England. It is a pioneer rather than a woodland tree and does not compete well on heavy soils

in our Southern woodlands. But on the poor acid sandy soils of the lowland heaths it seems to do very well and today I would not call it scarce on the Lynchmere commons where we have dozens, and possibly even hundreds of them.

The Rowan can grow to become a substantial tree as this photo of a Rowan in blossom on Stanley Common shows. An ancient tree, there is much folklore associated with the Rowan. It is the second tree in the Ogham Celtic tree calendar (which is thought to be a lunar calendar), the Birch being the first. Rowan is more associated with the spiritual world than Birch and has a reputation for protecting those who live in its shadow.



Its white blossom in the spring is associated with good. It is believed to provide protection against enchantment and evil spirits if you place a Rowan spring over your door and to avoid storms by having Rowan wood aboard ship. Possibly derived from this there is a widespread belief (of which I am oft reminded with chainsaw in hand) that it is bad luck to fell a Rowan tree.

The Rowan is also associated with vision and the spirit realms. Not surprisingly then it's the wood of choice for making magic wands, divining rods and apparently it makes a great walking stick – especially for walking in the dark – so you can throw away the night vision goggles then. But don't forget to ask the tree nicely before you cut the rods!



Though it's thought to be bad luck to fell the tree the wood has very useful properties and I enjoy turning it on the polelathe to make a range of common items including rolling pins, door wedges, garden dibbers and tool handles. Its dense wood is quite similar to apple in characteristics and can have a pretty grain as the larger trunks develop a darker brown pith. Should we have to fell a suitable size tree on the commons then I plan to find out how well it serves to make bowls, and possibly even chairs – though I suspect my wands and divining rods may not have any more success than my brooms do in flying. One thing you can be sure of it that out of respect for the tree nothing will be wasted.



THE LYNCHMERE SOCIETY

FOR LYNCHMERE, HAMMER AND CAMELSDALE