

SURREY MUSEUMS

BY

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THE following list of Surrey Museums does not profess to be complete, and the Editor will be grateful for particulars of any Museums which have been omitted as it is of some importance that a full record should be preserved in the *Collections*. Certain small collections have not been included as they are of insufficient importance to rank as Museums; such for instance as the few cases in a building next to the Old Hall, Woking Park, and the Old Church, Esher. Of the Museums described below five are confined to exhibits of strictly local interest, and four only have been catalogued.

BRIXTON.

The Minet Library, now supported by the Lambeth Borough Council, was founded and endowed by Mr. William Minet, M.A., F.S.A., Treasurer of the Society of Antiquaries. It possesses a valuable collection of Surrey Topographical prints, many MSS., books and original drawings relating to Surrey. There is an excellent catalogue compiled by William Minet and the late C. J. Courtney, F.S.A. (Scotland). There are card indices for convenience of reference, and a good room which is reserved for the use of students.

CAMBERWELL.

The Camberwell Museum was founded about 1890, and is housed at the Central Library, Peckham Road, Camberwell. It is open every week-day, and is under the control of the Borough Council's Chief Librarian and a Committee, with Mr. Arnold Bivett as Curator. Relics of Ruskin, Burton, Browning and Chamberlain are included,

with some few local antiquities and many prints and drawings. The Museum is practically confined to Surrey exhibits.

In the opinion of Mr. Philip M. Johnston the chief exhibits of interest are the old prints, drawings, water colours and oil paintings of Camberwell, Peckham and Dulwich, illustrating the drastic changes which have occurred as the tide of buildings has swept over these once rural districts. In particular, the Museum is enriched by the Collection presented by the late Mr. J. A. Poulter of his own water-colour and pencil drawings of these neighbourhoods, made between 1839 and 1915. These are unrivalled for their topographical interest and artistic excellence.

CHEAM.

The Cheam Museum was founded in 1925 by the Cheam Parish Council at the suggestion of Mr. Charles Marshall, F.R.I.B.A. It is housed at the Old Tudor Cottage, Malden Road, which was removed bodily from the position in which it was isolated by the widening of the cross roads at Cheam to its present site. (Vide *S.A.C.* XXXIV, p. 107.)

The Museum is supported by the Council and is under the care of the Clerk, as no official curator has been appointed. It may be viewed on weekdays, between the hours of 10 a.m. and 5 p.m., with the exception of Saturdays when it closes at 1 p.m.

There is no catalogue; but the chief exhibits are the find of Pottery from the Mediæval Kiln at Cheam¹ and the Roman Pottery from the find in Manor Road, Cheam. The Museum exhibits are limited to strictly local finds.

CROYDON.

The Croydon Museum.—In actual fact Croydon's Museum consists only of a few cases of exhibits at the Central Library in the Town Hall, where there is also a collection belonging to the Croydon Natural History and Scientific Society. These may be viewed at such times as the Library is open.

¹ A full description of this find is given by Mr. Charles Marshall in *S.A.C.*, Vol. XXXV.

The Thornton Heath Museum is in such a neglected condition that it scarcely deserves mention. The Mansion in the Park called Grange Wood at Thornton Heath was at one time devoted to a miscellaneous general Museum, but in late years the greater part of the building has been used by the Education Committee as a school for mental defectives, and the Museum has been crowded into one room to which the public has access. It is under the control of the Roads Committee and has neither curator nor catalogue.

FARNHAM.

The Farnham Museum is housed at the Institute, South Street, Farnham, and is supported by the members' subscriptions. It is not confined solely to Farnham exhibits, although it contains most of the finds of local interest. Mr. W. Stroud is the present curator.

GODALMING.

The Godalming Museum, founded by the Godalming Corporation in 1924 and supported by the Borough Council, is housed at the Old Town Hall, Godalming. Mr. J. H. Norris, L.R.I.B.A., is the curator.

It is mainly, although not exclusively, confined to local exhibits; the most interesting being the Wardens' accounts from 1670, a collection of Godalming Tokens, a loan collection of Stone Implements, and the Woods Collection of MSS.¹

The Museum is open for inspection on Wednesdays, Saturdays and Sundays from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. At present no catalogue has been compiled.

The Charterhouse Museum was founded about 1874, largely through the efforts of the late Rev. G. S. Davies, Master of Charterhouse. It is housed in one of the School buildings, but is open to the public at certain hours, usually from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. in winter and from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. in summer.

¹ See *S.A.C.*, Vol. XXXVII. Part 1.

Many of the exhibits are of Carthusian interest; such for instance as the collection of autographs and the MS. of "The Newcomes." There are examples of local products, a natural history collection and a type collection of ancient pottery. There is no catalogue.

GUILDFORD.

The Guildford Borough and Surrey Archæological Society's Museum.—The Society's Museum was originally housed at Croydon and later at Danes Inn, Strand, London; but it was removed to Castle Arch, Guildford, in March, 1899, where it remains to-day. The present Museum was enlarged in 1911 at the expense of Alderman F. F. Smallpiece, J.P., a Vice-President of the Surrey Archæological Society, and from that time it has been managed by a joint committee of the Guildford Town Council and the Surrey Archæological Society. The present curator is Mr. F. H. Elsley.

The Museum is open to the public, free of charge, on Mondays, Wednesdays and Saturdays from 2 p.m. until 6 p.m. in summer, and until 5 p.m. in winter. It is also open on Sunday afternoons from 2 p.m. until 5.30 from April to September; and at other times on payment of the sum of threepence from 10 a.m. until 4 p.m.

The Museum has no catalogue at present, but the exhibits have good explanatory labels. A very representative collection of Surrey finds and exhibits of interest is shown; it includes a part of the valuable collection of Surrey "Bygones" presented by Miss Gertrude Jekyll, which are illustrated in her fascinating book *Old West Surrey*; a very fine collection of Flint Implements found in Surrey, lent by Miss Mangles; a smaller collection containing finds from Blackheath Chilworth, presented by the late Lady Roberts-Austen; also some very fine cinerary urns from Blackheath Chilworth, presented by Sir P. Magnus and Mrs. C. D. Hodgson, and other cinerary urns from the Titsey Collection, presented by Mr. Charles Leveson-Gower. A most interesting collection of Surrey and Sussex Iron Work has been loaned by Alderman H. F. Phillips. Other valuable exhibits include Pottery

from the Roman Villas at Abinger, Compton and Chiddingfold, presented by Lord Farrer and Mrs. G. F. Watts; Encaustic Tiles from Chertsey Abbey; mediæval tiles from Titsey; mediæval Pottery from Cheam and Guildford, and fourteenth, fifteenth and sixteenth century glass made at Chiddingfold. Dr. G. C. Williamson has presented an interesting collection of Trade Tokens of the seventeenth century. On the whole, the Society possesses a very representative Museum, especially as the exhibits are mainly, although not entirely, of Surrey interest.

HASLEMERE.

The Haslemere Museum was founded in 1895 by Sir Jonathan Hutchinson, F.R.S., F.R.C.S., and until he died in 1913 it was maintained at his expense in the buildings erected by him on Museum Hill, Haslemere. After his death the Museum was managed by an elected Committee and supported by voluntary contributions at a cost of roughly £500 per annum; but in March 1926 the collections, buildings and site were presented by Sir Jonathan Hutchinson's Trustees to the Museum Trustees. To perpetuate the memory of the donor, and as a new home for the Museum, premises in High Street, Haslemere, were purchased and enlarged by public subscription, and the new Museum was opened on August 27th, 1926, by the Right Hon. the Earl of Midleton, K.P.

The original object in founding the Museum was that it should be essentially an Educational Museum, the teaching to be given by lectures and by explanatory labels attached to the specimens. The Museum contains the following sections:—Geology, Botany, Peasant Arts, Natural History, History of Mankind, Scientific and Reference Library and Loan Collections, including an all-the-year-round exhibition of living wild flowers, mosses, fungi and lichens. There is no attempt to limit the specimens shown to those of purely Surrey interest, although special attention is given to local archæology and botany.

The most interesting features of the Museum are the local exhibits, which include a fine collection of Late Keltic Pottery (*S.A.C.*, XIX, p. 34), the "Space for-Time"

schedules of geology and human history, the Collection of British Birds and the Exhibition of Peasant Arts. This Exhibition was presented to the Museum by the Trustees of the Peasant Arts Museum, together with a donation of £1,000 to the Museum Building Fund, and is the collection formed over a period of many years by the Rev. Gerald S. Davies, Master of Charterhouse.

The hours of admittance to the Museum are from 10 a.m. until 5 p.m. from April to August 31st, and from 10 a.m. until 4 p.m. during the winter months. The only days on which the Museum is shut are Good Friday, Christmas Day and Boxing Day. This is a fine example of a local Museum, and well deserves a visit.

Mr. E. W. Swanton is the Resident Curator.

KINGSTON.

The Kingston-upon-Thames Public Library, Museum and Art Gallery, supported by the Kingston Borough Council, was founded by Andrew Carnegie at a primary cost of £8,400. He subsequently paid for the Museum and Art Gallery which were opened by Lord Rosebery, High Steward, on October 31st, 1904. The gift by Alderman Gould of his private collection formed the nucleus of the Museum, and this was augmented by the purchase of Dr. Root's collection of Neoliths and Bronze Implements, and from that time specimens have been added continually. There is no catalogue, but this lack is noticeable in the greater number of our Surrey Museums. The Borough Librarian is the present Curator, and the Museum is open daily from 9 a.m. until dusk.

The exhibits are varied and of much interest: they include the Gould Collection of locally-found Roman and other antiquities, Dr. Finny's Collections of local Neolithic and Bronze Age Implements, human and animal bones, urns, a dug-out canoe, etc., Colonel Bidder's loan exhibits from the Saxon Cemetery at Mitcham, Mr. Lowther's loan Collection of exhibits from the Ashted Roman Villa, a set of Coins of the Saxon Kings crowned at Kingston, a collection of seventeenth-century local Trade Tokens, and many other valuable exhibits presented

by Dr. Finny. There is a very fine collection of local water-colour and other paintings of Kingston, including examples by Rowlandson.

PETERSHAM.

The Petersham Museum was formally opened on September 12th, 1925, by Mr. G. T. Biddulph, the Chairman of the Trustees appointed for its custody, and since that time Mr. Charles D. Warren has served as the Hon. Curator. The Museum was founded for the custody and exhibition of all objects of interest relating to the village, and may be quoted as an example of a purely local village museum. As a nucleus for the Collection the village was fortunate in securing the loan from Mrs. W. H. Oxley and Mr. Selwyn Oxley of a large number of pictures, and in addition some coins and other objects of local historical interest which had been collected by the late Rev. W. H. Oxley during his vicariate of the parish from 1891 to 1913.

The Museum is housed in one of the spare classrooms of the Russell School, Petersham, and may be viewed on Saturdays from 2.30 p.m. until 4.30 p.m., admittance being by the entrance gate and door facing Petersham Park.

The initial expense incurred in establishing the Museum amounted to about £20, and the actual working expenses are roughly £8 per annum, which sum is subscribed by private contributions.

REIGATE.

The Reigate Museum was originally housed at the Public Hall, but was moved to its present address in Croydon Road, Reigate, about fifteen years ago. It was founded by the Holmesdale Natural History Club, which has been in existence since 1857, and the Museum Collection, which depends entirely on private support, has been gradually formed by the Club. It is not confined to local exhibits; the chief pertain to Natural History, but there are a certain number of local finds of archæological interest. These will probably be increased, as in 1923 an archæological section of the Club was founded with Dr. Wilfrid Hooper as the Hon. Secretary.

No catalogue has been compiled, and there are no fixed times of admittance, but permission to view the Museum is granted on application by letter to the Hon. Secretary of the Holmesdale Natural History Club.

WALLINGTON AND CARSHALTON.

There is a joint Museum, belonging to Wallington and Carshalton, of which Mrs. Birch is the Curator, but full particulars are not yet available, as it is being transferred to new premises.

WALTON-ON-THAMES.

The Walton-on-Thames Council Museum is housed at the Council Offices, Walton-on-Thames, and may be viewed at such times as these Offices are open. It was founded about 1913 by Mr. P. H. Webb, who still continues to take an active interest in it. The Museum is catalogued, and possesses a good series of old local prints and many exhibits of local interest, although others of a more general character are included.

WEYBRIDGE.

The Weybridge Museum was founded in 1911 by Dr. Eric Gardner, M.B., F.S.A., the late Mr. J. E. Harting, F.Z.S., and the late Dr. H. G. Willson, M.D. It is supported both privately and by the Weybridge Urban District Council, this body having granted a room for its use in the Council Offices in Baker Street, Weybridge. Dr. Eric Gardner has been the curator since the Museum's foundation, and thanks to his care the collection is excellently classified and labelled. He has also compiled a descriptive Catalogue which includes records and valuable information of the history of Weybridge. This Catalogue, which is over 200 pages in length, has been hand-printed and illustrated by the writer of this article. Abridged type-written copies are available for general use.

The Museum is open daily from 9.30 until 4 p.m., and on Saturdays from 9.30 until 1 p.m. Only local exhibits are included, and as this rule is adhered to strictly the collection is one of much interest. There is a very good

collection of local Prehistoric remains; exhibits from the Wey Valley Iron Age Villages; an early dug-out canoe; Roman, ninth-century and Mediæval exhibits; and an excellent representative collection of views of old Weybridge.

WIMBLEDON.

The Wimbledon Museum, founded by Richardson Evans in 1903, is controlled by the John Evelyn Club for Wimbledon, and is housed in a room in the Club premises at The Ridgeway, Wimbledon. The present curator is Miss Margaret Grant.

It is confined to local exhibits within a radius of five miles of Wimbledon Parish Church, and is partly catalogued through the record of donors and purchases. The Museum contains a most interesting collection of pictures, sketches and prints of Wimbledon, portraits of former residents, a photographic survey of Wimbledon and Merton, many geological and botanical specimens from the locality, and domestic and trade articles of bygone days which illustrate the past life of the district. There is a collection of early pottery from Cheam, and a valuable feature is the library of topographical, biographical and other works of local interest.