



DBRG NEWS

January 2026



Croydon Palace Chapel Bench End
(see p.10)

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Front cover picture Courtesy Iain McKillop



From the Editor

Welcome all to our first DBRG News of 2026, containing reports of our visits to Croydon Palace and to Capel.

Your Group is now badly in need of your help on several fronts. Brigid needs volunteers to help with our archive repackaging project (see below) and several committee members are moving away, so we are in serious need of new faces. See Martin's plea overleaf for how you can help.

Rosemary Hughesdon

Group Matters

Domestic Buildings Research Group - Archive Project

Over the past 50 years the Domestic Buildings Research Group (DBRG) has recorded over 4000 buildings in and around Surrey. Each recording results in a report and on average 10 drawings – plans, elevations, sections, architectural details, photos and artistic drawings.

That's around 40,000 drawings detailing the surviving (and some now demolished) vernacular architecture in Surrey.

Photocopies of the drawings have already been deposited at the Surrey History Centre but the original drawings have been loitering in various dark corners for many years. The Surrey History Centre has agreed to deposit the original drawings in replacement of the photocopies. However, they have to be matched up, prepared in acid free inserts, carefully catalogued and boxed.

The bespoke inserts and archive boxes don't come cheap. The overall cost will be approximately £4000. Grants have been obtained from the Vernacular Architecture Group (£1000), the Surrey History Trust (£500) and Surrey Archaeological Society (£500) with DBRG putting up the rest.

The Project was planned to take a year starting in May 2025. After a slowish start, we have prepared approximately 2500 reports so are more than half way there.

On 26th November 2025 a group of volunteers met at East Horsley Village Hall to boost the preparations. All were members of DBRG and some were owners of the recorded buildings. It was a good opportunity to meet up, appreciate the work of the DBRG and ensure this nationally important collection is preserved.

We will be running another session in the spring. If you would like to help, please contact Brigid Fice at Brigid.fice@btinternet.com.



26 November – East Horsley Village Hall.
A group of volunteers having fun with DBRG drawings.

Help urgently needed.

Your Committee does its best to keep the Group going, but some committee members have been doing so for years and would like a break or some help.

Those of you keeping an eye on mailings may have noticed we have no Secretary at the moment as Bridget Workman (and her husband) have sold their Surrey home to travel the World. Less adventurously, David

Chalcraft, our Treasurer, has moved to Cambridgeshire so really will be standing down this year. Long-standing member Ian West, Programme Secretary, spends much of his time in Suffolk so has been helped by Marcella Harris, but she too plans to move to abroad for a reliably warmer climate. Due to other commitments and the lack of 'copy' being sent in Rosemary Hughesdon has had to reduce the frequency of the NEWS.

The long-and-short-of-it that we need some help or new blood in key roles to keep the Group running. The drag of the admin on a diminished committee means the Group makes fewer recordings and meets less often for visits. The consequence is we no longer instinctively know who could be part of a reservoir of potential committee members. In particular we need a volunteer with computer and website knowledge to oversee the work undertaken by our professional contractor: your current Chairman is a bit of a technophobe.

So, when the AGM agenda comes out and you see lots of vacancies please, please consider if you could join typically three Zoom meetings a year and help keep the Group going.

The April AGM will be at Betchworth with a morning tour of the church and its immediate surroundings, then a chat over bring-your-own or pub lunch and brief afternoon AGM.

Betchworth is a nucleated village at the southern limit of Surrey's Common Field settlements. Closer to London the open fields have been lost to progress, but in part due to its poor rail links to the Capital Betchworth's common fields remain open farmland. In the church, a colourful map of 1634 shows that the fields were managed in hundreds of narrow strips.

Martin Higgins, Chairman

AGM

This year's AGM will take place in Betchworth on Saturday 11th April. The meeting will be in the Hamilton room, (RH3 7DN) which is located next to the Church, with the entrance being on the side away from the Church. The access to the Hamilton Room and the Church car park is off Church Street. The proposed schedule is as follows

10am	Hall open
11am	Walk guided by Martin Higgins

12.30pm -1.30pm	Lunch
1.30pm -2pm	Feedback on walk
2pm	AGM

Non-members are welcome on the walk, but the AGM is for Members only.

Visits

DBRG Visit to Capel 24th May 2025

After meeting at the Church Gate we went to The Old House formerly the Kings Head where Lorely Gardiner invited us to visit her home.



Originally this four bay hall house had hips at both ends but these had been replaced by gables to provide larger attic space when the roof space was brought into residential use. A large brick chimney stack was built in the 'cross' passage that only had a door at the front. This doorway remains. Although a DBRG report has been prepared for this building,

carpenters marks hitherto unrecorded were identified during the visit to The Old House that concluded with a discussion in the kitchen that had been added at the rear of the original structure.

Lunch was taken in Mary Day's "museum" (or the Crown Inn) where members were able to acquire books from the DBRG Library that had to be reduced in size owing to its relocation.

In the afternoon our walk started looking at **2 Britannia Cottages** that incorporates a two bay timber framed building of about 1600 with a brick chimney stack located at the rear of the right hand bay. There is a Queen Strut clasped purlin roof and curved step stops on the spine beam in the hearth room. The spine beams for the attic



rooms are located on top of the tie beams. No sign of original stair. There is a late 17th C wing to the rear of the left hand bay.

Bennetts Castle (Garage)

References to “Baynardscastle” date from 1497 and by 1589 the present form of the name existed.

The present building was referred to in 1758 as messuage and building lately erected on croft Bennetts Castle. George Howard considered that tall chimneys are a feature of houses built between 1650 – 1750. The dwelling referred to above is a double pile brick building with mathematical tiles over cladding the brickwork on two walls. Purpose made angle tiles have been used for the angle between the two tiled walls. Corner tiles come into use in the late 18th C. Mathematical tiles (MT) may have been introduced to the property on these two walls to cover non-matching brickwork.



Chestnut House is another 18th C brick house that has been partially covered with mathematical tiles. Again purpose made angle tiles are used for the corners. The original brickwork that is exposed on the east (rear) wall is of good quality red bricks with dark (burnt) headers. The house has a square plan now with a low pitched slate roof having wide eaves. Perhaps there was a major refurbishment of the

building in the early 19th C when the original brickwork would have been considered old fashioned so MT were added and a reconfiguration of the roof taken place. Between 1845 and 1976 part of the property was a shop and part of the restored front is now brickwork.

The Old Post Office

This smoke bay house has a ‘Dendro’ date of after 1552 owing to fast growing timber.



The Armshouses were rebuilt in 1878 using sand stone for the walls and brick for the chimney stack.



Clarks Green Farm is a 17th C timber framed house that was encased in brickwork and extended in the mid 18th C. Each side of the front door are bricks inscribed – WL 1764 and AL 1764. These are probably the owners who were responsible

for the brickwork and the date it was constructed.

Bay Cottage is on the opposite side of the road and is a late 17th C two bay with end chimney stacks (left added). Originally timber framed with a butt purlin roof and lapped rafters. The central truss has a pair of Queen posts and the attic floor has been inserted. After 1974 the dormer windows were added. A hearth



beam at first floor is dated 1771 indicating improvements being carried out at this time perhaps including the underbuilding in brick the front wall and tile hanging the first floor.

The **Crown Inn** has a date of 1697 on the pendant of a gable on the right side of the property. On the left side of the building is a gabled range 2½ storeys in height whilst on the right is another gable below which there are two floors plus attic rooms. A large brick stack in the left hand range that serves the front and back

rooms. On the right there is a side stack. Mary Day who kindly provided the information on which this walk was based confirmed the authenticity of the above date.

As we passed The Old House we noted the later brick wing that had been added to the former Kings Head public house.

Brockholt

There are three options for this development of Phase 1 of this house.

1. Mid to late 16th C smoke bay house with the smoke bay replaced by the stack.
2. A wing to an open hall house since removed.
3. Partial rebuild of house probably on site.

The roof bays in this building do not align with the bays of the structure beneath them.



To the front of the above and slightly wider than it is a mid/late 17th C three bay building containing a brick chimney. A further 'range' of 18th C and 19th C dates has been added to the south of Phases 1 and 2. As this was a

freehold property the records are not as detailed as other plots in the village.

Bakers Cottages

Numbers 1 and 2 include a three bay and smoke bay house of late 16th C date. Later a brick chimney was built outside the smoke bay. This house is built at right angles to the road. It is timber framed with large square panels with the main door at the end of the hearth



room adjacent to the unheated room. The spine beam in the hearth

room has lamb tongue stops. A replacement beam in front of the smoke bay and the short beam across it have sophisticated stops of late 17th date. This is when the brick stack was built? The posts are jowled and the roof has two Queen posts.

Opposite the above is **Yew Tree Cottage**, a two bay timber framed building with an outside chimney built of brick and stone. The roof is Horsham stone. There are jowels to the main posts, all three tie beams are cambered and the walls have square/rectangular panels. There are two Queen posts with collar and through side purlins forming the roof, wind braces only at the ends.



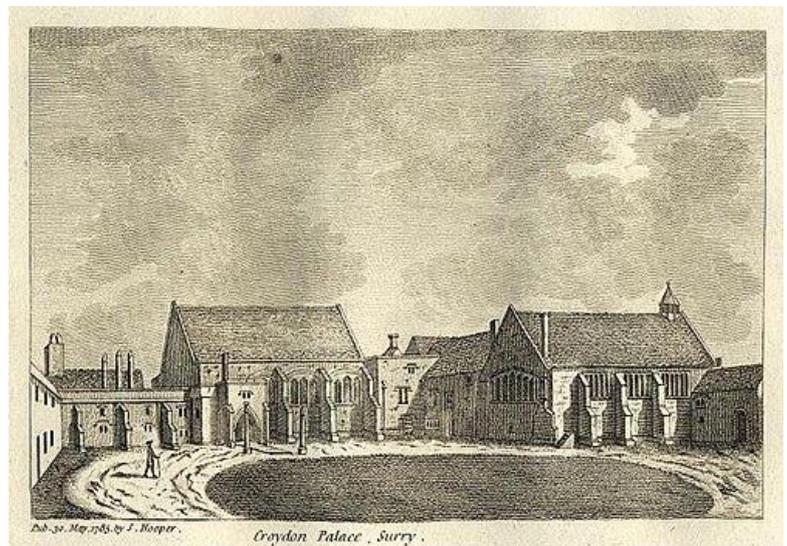
Returning back to the village centre, we passed Capel House a good quality stone building with decorative iron window frames dating from the 19th C.

All the members who attended our day in Capel were extremely grateful to Mary Day for all she did to make the visit so worthwhile.

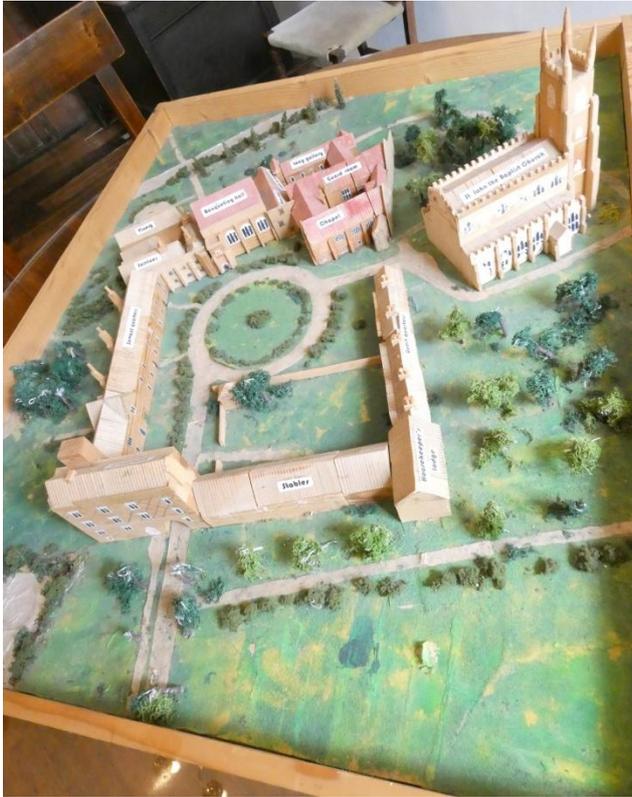
Ian West

Tour of the Old Palace, Croydon

On 1st July, one of the hottest days of the year, nine of us were fortunate to have a last tour of this Tudor palace before its ownership changed. Our expert guides, Janice and Amanda, set the building in historical context and pointed out many features and details that might have been easily overlooked. Now hemmed-in by city-centre buildings, the palace should be imagined as originally set in substantial grounds incorporating large woods,



Engraving of Croydon Palace circa 1785, from *The Antiquities of England and Wales* by Francis Grose



Model of Croydon Palace

three fish-ponds, running streams to the east and south, orchards and a 'fruit-house'. While the main buildings remain, the ranges of extensive stables, servants' quarters and gatehouse were subsumed into the growing town.

The first record of an ecclesiastical residence on this site was in 809 under the Saxon Archbishop Wulfred, when it was described as a 'monasticum', a religious foundation beside the church, now Croydon Minster. The mediaeval church building was devastated in an 1867 fire, substantially rebuilt to George Gilbert Scott's designs, then further damaged in World War II bombings. Six archbishops are

buried there, including two elaborate tombs for John Whitgift [d.1604] and Gilbert Sheldon [d.1677].

Archbishops lived at Croydon Palace from perhaps before the C9th to the late C18th, though in latter years it had declined, eliciting regular complaints about its discomforts and 'unwholesome' atmosphere. In 1780 the archbishops sold the house and in 1807 bought the C18th mansion of nearby Addington Place, which replaced a C16th Tudor mansion. This became the Archbishops' official summer residence until 1897, and under their ownership was originally known as 'Addington Farm', only later adopting the title 'Palace'.



Early flint wall with blocked archway
(Bernadette Sheehan)

Croydon Palace had been added to and altered under successive residents over the centuries, as seen in changes in

architectural style and interior fashion from the early Tudor period to the late C18th. It is built around two open courtyards, though not on as impressive a scale as other archbishops' or royal residences. Many of the early walls combine stone and flint rubble. C12th stones in several walls show the reuse of material from former buildings on the site. Brick became the favoured building material for Archbishop Bourchier's C14th rebuilding of the Chapel, and the south wall of the C16th Long Gallery.

Under Archbishop John Stafford, the present Great Hall, or Banqueting Hall of c1450 was surmounted with an impressive arch-braced oak roof. This replaced an earlier hall of 1391, of which the original stone doorways were reused. There is no trace of a smoke louver, so perhaps the smoke dispersed through the eaves and tiles. However there has been some replacement of rafters. Later chestnut tie-beams bear the initials of Archbishop Thomas Herring and the date 1748. It



Arms of Henry VI

was under him that much of the architecture was restored. The roof is supported on carved stone angel corbels, carrying four archbishops' shields on the south wall, facing angels bearing royal arms on the north. The most intricate carving is that of a stone canopy on the west wall, where elaborately robed angels bear the arms and crown of Henry VI. It was probably installed for one of several royal visitations. Many royal visitors are recorded, including hosting the kidnapped James I of Scotland and Katharine of Aragon, who lived here under Archbishop

William Wareham, after the death of Prince Arthur. Henry VIII rarely came,

regarding the place as injurious to his health but Elizabeth I was a regular visitor to her three archbishops.

A substantial oak, restored Jacobean staircase, with heavy turned balls on its newel-posts and strong turned balustrades, rises to the private Great Chamber/Solar, popularly known as the 'Guard Room'. Built of stone, brick and flint under Archbishop Thomas Arundel [c1396-8] this has an arched roof resembling a ship's hull, supported by large corbels of stone angels displaying further archbishops' shields. Features include a Tudor fireplace, an early C18th ironwork window and a

replacement stone oriel window, added in 1910. Beneath is an undercroft of massive beams and braces, which may be cut-down remains from the earlier Great Hall. What is probably an octagonal aisle-post has been reduced in height and used as a support for the central beam. Martin suggested that the widely-spaced joists may indicate that they originally supported a stone-flagged floor.

The Guard Room was extended c.1490 by Archbishop John Morton to add a dining room, and corridor leading to further chambers and the Chapel. He maximised the space by building up to the boundary of the churchyard, so the walls and ceiling are angled. The joists of the Tudor ceiling are finely moulded, with the floor-boards carefully rebated into them, so that the boards run parallel to the joists. This uncommon feature demonstrates the quality of some of the woodwork. As with the equally finely moulded Tudor joists of the 'best' bedroom, the joists bear signs of changes of ceiling fashion, with regular nail-holes from now-removed later lath-and plaster ceilings. The bedroom and late Tudor, simple oak-panelled Long-Gallery were given large well-proportioned, shuttered sash windows, in the early 18th Century under William Wake [1716-37].

The most impressive wood-carving in the Palace is to be found in the Chapel pew-ends and the screen of its richly carved and moulded ante-chamber. The Chapel developed under the successive archbishops Thomas Bouchier [1454-86] and John Morton [1486-1501], then was re-ordered by William Laud [1633-45] and William Juxton [1660-63]. It replaced an earlier chapel of the 1290s, which itself would have replaced a smaller former chapel somewhere on the site. On the north side the chapel is supported by three massive triangular brick buttresses.



Royal Pew

The interior oak screen is carved with Morton's rebus, the 'tun' or barrel, with intertwined vines. The raised Royal Pew, substantial turned altar-rails and bench-end carvings all date from the time of Laud and Juxton. After Laud's execution and through the period of the Parliament the chapel fell into disrepair, then Juxton oversaw its restoration. Some of the bench-ends

are heavily carved 'poppy-heads'. Unusually some are supported by small armoured arms. Rarer bench-ends in the forms of heavily cartouches are carved with the coats of arms of Laud and Juxton, in seeming defiance of the Reformers.

The painted glass in the chapel, as throughout the building, was added in the early C20th and post-war. After the archbishops left in 1780, the Palace went through several changes of use. With the industrialisation of Croydon, the Great Hall and outbuildings became a laundry in 1818, and factory for printing calico and linen, while the gardens were in use as a bleaching-ground. The removal of outbuildings (formerly the buttery, kitchen and pantry) led to the collapse of the east wall of the Great Hall in 1839 and exposure of its braced roof. Some areas of the palace became a 'girls' school of industry' and lodgings for assize judges, while surrounding land was sold-off by successive owners. Further decline was halted when the 7th Duke of Newcastle bought the property in 1887. He presented it to an Anglican order of nuns, The Sisters of the Church, for religious and educational use. Influenced by the Oxford Movement, they set about restoring the palace, including the Banqueting Hall Roof, installing second-hand stained glass gifted and bought from various sources, and a Norman font for the Chapel, given by St George's Church, the Borough, Southwark. Due to their perseverance and persuasiveness, the most substantial part of these restorations took just 2 years, before they opened a small school, which enlarged to become the Old Palace of John Whitgift School.

The buildings have been recently sold, and it is to be hoped that conservationists and authorities will keep a close eye on any changes proposed and carried out by the new owners. We were fortunate to have such a substantial tour, led by knowledgeable guides, as the future accessibility of the buildings remains uncertain. We express our gratitude to The Friends of The Old Palace and the school for their hospitality and for the generous supply of much-needed refreshments throughout the heat of the day.

Ian West would be grateful if members who attend such informative and enjoyable visits would be prepared to write them up for the newsletter. As on a previous occasion, none volunteered this time, so a non-member felt obliged to offer his services.

Iain McKillop

All photos by author unless otherwise stated

DOMESTIC BUILDINGS RESEARCH GROUP (SURREY)

Surrey is rich in the smaller mediaeval timber-framed buildings. The Domestic Building Research Group (Surrey) is a voluntary group that has recorded, analysed and reported on more than 4,000 domestic and farm buildings, mainly in Surrey, over the past fifty years.

The DBRG has a few remaining publications for sale

George Howard, *The Smaller Brick, Stone and Weatherboard Houses of Surrey, 17th to mid 19th century. A statistical analysis*

Peter Gray, *Surrey Medieval Buildings An analysis and inventory*

Joan Harding, *Granaries in Surrey - An Obituary.*

Currently available from Rod Wild, 01483 232767

and

Marion Herridge & Joan Holman, *An Index of Surrey Probate Inventories.*

Available from Martin Higgins, 01737 842625)

For an index of recorded buildings, glossary and membership forms,
visit www.dbrg.org.uk

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I would welcome items for the next Newsletter
to reach me by 20th May, please

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If it is possible, it is always very helpful if contributions could
be sent by e-mail, as an attachment, to
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Illustrations as separate jpegs please – you can always indicate in the
text approximately where they should go.