

SPAB KENT & SURREY REGIONAL GROUP

EVENTS 2019

Visit: At the Sign of the Pipe, West Malling
Date: Friday, 22 March
Time: 2.00pm
Cost: £15.00
Maximum number: 15

For the first time we are able to offer a visit to an organ builder to see what is involved in this ancient profession. David Shuker is an independent organ builder specializing in the building and restoration of small wooden pipe organs. His restoration work includes 18th century instruments, and members will be able to see all aspects of an organ builder's work within Mr Shuker's workshop. This is an outstanding opportunity that has taken some time to arrange. Your ticket price includes tea and a donation to Trottiscliffe Church which, if you do not know it, is well worth a visit.

Visit: St Andrew's Chapel, Boxley
Date: Saturday, 27 April
Time: 2.00pm
Cost: £10.00
Maximum number: 35

The Society has been fortunate to purchase this exceptional grade II* building with an outstanding architectural history. At the heart of the building is a late 15th or early 16th century chapel, with priests' lodgings associated with Boxley Abbey converted into a house in the 16th or 17th centuries. The building consists of the chapel with south aisle attached to a two storey lodging, which is a timber framed structure. The house was extended and altered in the 16th and 17th centuries, with the addition of a central stack. There are also a series of 19th century alterations and additions. The Society has purchased the buildings to enable them to demonstrate conservation and repair techniques and it is hoped we will be able to visit later in 2019 to see progress as the building is repaired. This initial visit is to see the building in its unrepaired state and is a wonderful opportunity to see this remarkable building which has not been previously available to the public.

Visit: Starkey Castle, Wouldham
Date: Saturday, 11 May
Time: 2.00pm
Cost: £15.00
Maximum number: 20

Never before have I been able to offer a visit to this grade I listed house which, quite simply, is the finest 14th century private house in Kent. The house is said to have been built, possibly by Rochester Cathedral, between 1360 and 1380 and consists of a main hall with a southern wing. Both have magnificent roof structures, very similar to those at Penshurst Place, and are simply breathtaking. The building includes remnants of private chambers, the cross passage, garderobe, and clear evidence where lost structures formerly existed. A rather fanciful castle-like structure was added in the late 20th century. Full details can be found in Archaeologia Cantiana 81. The present owners have very generously given permission for a small group to visit but there is STRICTLY NO PHOTOGRAPHY. If this visit goes well, I hope to be able to arrange further visits as I suspect demand for places will be very high.

Visit: Pattynenne Manor, Goudhurst
Date: Thursday, 13 June
Time: 2.00pm
Cost: £15.00
Maximum number: 25

There has been a building on the site for over 1000 years and the present house was constructed by the Pattynenne family circa 1470 and is listed grade II*. This Wealden hall house is perhaps the best surviving example and remains largely untouched, with only minimal later additions. In 1530 the house was bought by Lord Berkeley, who was a close companion of Henry VIII. It is known that the king stayed in the house while hunting. The present owners inherited the house from their parents and this is the first time I have been able to gain access. Members are being allowed to see the entire ground floor, as well as parts of the second floor and attic with the famous crown post roof.

Visit: Westbrook (Thackeray Turner's house) Godalming
Date: Friday, 21 June
Time: 2.00pm
Cost: £15.00
Maximum number: 28

H Thackeray Turner was the second secretary to the SPAB and is a well known Arts and Crafts exponent. Westbrook was his personal house, designed in 1899 to 1900, and is constructed of Bargate stone with sweeping roofs, all set in a garden designed by Gertrude Jekyll. The house featured in Country Life 20 January 1912. It is set in an isolated position with commanding views over Godalming. Thanks to the present owners, we are being allowed an opportunity to see this wonderful house and gardens, which are not open to the public. The town of Godalming is also well worth a visit, with the spectacular St Peter and St Paul's Church at its heart.

Visit: Boxley Abbey
Date: July (date to be confirmed)
Time: tbc
Cost: £15.00
Maximum number: 30

At the time of writing, we are still trying to arrange this visit. Approximately 12 years ago, the group was fortunate to see the Abbey which was founded in 1146 as a Cistercian monastery. It was famous for the Rood of Grace, which was burned in London in 1538 as a fake as its miracles were all down to levers within the structure allowing the monks to give the impression the figure's lips were moving. Today, substantial remnants of the Abbey Church survive, along with the gatehouse, boundary wall and the outstanding 200 foot long Hospitium, which is largely intact. The house and grounds are privately owned and it is well worth a visit if you have not been before.

Visit: Leybourne Castle
Date: Saturday, 10 August
Time: 2.00pm
Cost: £15.00
Maximum number: 30

We visited this castle in 2018 and, unfortunately, not all who applied for places were able to go. There has been a building on the site for 1000 years and the present castle dates from the 13th century. Today, the double drum tower gatehouse survives from circa 1275, along with elements of the curtain wall, another tower, and the chapel. The castle had a farmhouse built into it in the 16th century, which was replaced by the present art deco house of circa 1930. The castle sits within extensive grounds and is privately owned and not open to the public.

We hope to arrange other visits for September, October and November and further details will be forwarded in due course.

Visit: Rochester Cathedral Behind the Scenes Tours
Dates: To be confirmed
Time: To be confirmed
Cost: £12.00
Maximum number: 6 on each visit

Last year, many members expressed a desire to see behind the scenes at Rochester Cathedral and I am very happy to arrange visits for those who are interested. I can only take 6 people at a time and we can see the Lapidarium, Indulgence Chamber, roof spaces, central tower with its two storey 14th century timberwork, and even stand on the nave roof. Please would you let us know if you are interested and we will try and arrange convenient dates. Visits will be on weekday afternoons.

Other possible visits at the end of the year are:

Clandon Park

Headcorn Cloth Hall

A second visit to St Andrew's Chapel, Boxley.

The Brooking Collection

Please would you mark these on your booking form and you will be informed if they are arranged.

JOHN BAILEY

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Ref: EVENTS 2019