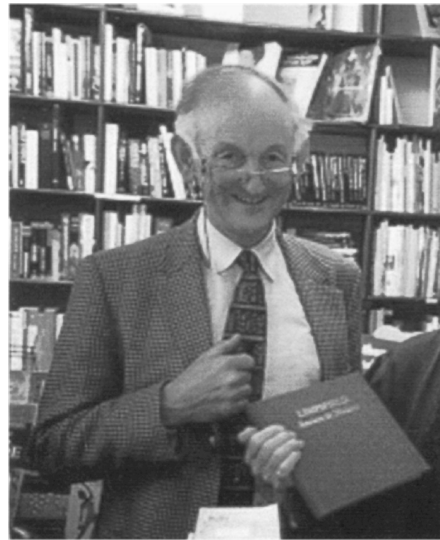


THE RH HISTORY GROUP 7

PETER GRAY



Peter Gray was born on 9 February 1933 in Kingsbury, Middlesex. At the age of 9, Peter wrote in an essay (treasured by his mother), 'Every day in your life is a page in your history'; he lived up to that comment.

At the age of 15, having passed his Matriculation, Peter left school and joined Venning, Hope & Partners where he trained by correspondence course and qualified as a Chartered Quantity Surveyor. In his spare time, Peter had been climbing, quite seriously, in Wales, the Lake District and Scotland even sleeping on Ben Nevis in the snow. In the 1950's he joined the Army, and his uncle who was in the Home Office, got him a posting to South Wales where he managed to continue his mountain climbing.

He returned to Vennings after 2 years service in the Army and there met his wife, Sheila, when she was working for Mr Venning. They were married in 1960 and had 2 daughters, Finella and Jenifer.

Peter continued in private practice until he joined the Property Services Agency in the early 1980s. He was one of the prime movers of 'Design & Build' which influenced the efficiency of public building in the 1980s. He also enjoyed involvement in the building of Crown Courts in Truro, Sheffield, Middlesborough, Southwark and Guildford where he was Project Manager.

Having given up climbing, Peter found new interests locally. In 1973 Peter had been co-opted onto the Lingfield Parish Council and in 1976 he became Chairman. He really enjoyed his involvement in the work of the parish. He also produced the first Footpath Maps in booklet form of Lingfield and its environs.

Early in the 1970s Peter attended Reg Mason's course on Vernacular Architecture. Peter had always been interested in archaeology but this really lit a spark for him and fired his interest. From this date he started to study and record medieval timber framed buildings, particularly in the Tandridge District, and produced many books in which he drew attention to the landscape and its affect on the houses built within it. A list of the books he produced is given at the end of this fact sheet.

He joined the Surrey Archaeological Society and was on its Conservation Committee when it was set up in the late 1960s; later he became Chairman of this committee and joined the Council of the Surrey Archaeological Society.

He was Chairman of the Wealden Buildings Study Group and served on the committee of the Domestic Buildings Research Group. He was invited to join The Vernacular Architecture Group, the national body of researchers, and from 1996 to 2000 worked as a Trustee of the Weald and Downland Open Air Museum. He became a member of the Surrey Historical Buildings Trust and he also enjoyed co-operating with Edenbridge Historical Society and helped look at houses in Kent and Sussex as well as Surrey.

Peter felt very strongly that one's research and knowledge should be available to the public and help future researchers to understand the landscape and the buildings within it.

The Guest House which had become Lingfield's Library was very close to his heart and he helped to make its future secure.

The Lingfield History Centre was first proposed by Surrey County Council following the success of Horley History Centre. Surrey was the first county in the country to establish History Centres within libraries. It was then that Peter took this on board and as a Trustee he felt that a History Centre would be the best interpretation of the will of Arthur Baldwin Hayward who had left the Guest House to Surrey County Council. A meeting to discuss this took place in 1999 and the Hayward Memorial Local History Centre was opened on 7 October 2000. A Management Group was set up to oversee arrangements with representatives from Surrey County Council, RH7 History Group and Felbridge History Group. This group provides stewards for regular sessions in Lingfield Library.

For many years Peter had felt Lingfield and its environs deserved a History Group and an inaugural meeting was held on Saturday 13 March 1999. There was much interest and the RH7 History Group was formed in September 1999 and Peter was its first Chairman.

When Peter died in 2001 most of his maps and a lot of his research were given to the Hayward Memorial Local History Centre for the use of the people of Lingfield. He would have been very proud to have the History Room named The Peter Gray Room. There is even a road, Gray Close, named after him in Lingfield - a fact which would have amazed him.

The following is a list of the publications Peter produced:

Tandridge Explored series: Lingfield, Oxted, Blechingley, Chaldon, Limpsfield, Godstone	
6 attractive publications illustrated by local artists devised with Kay Percy	1978
Nutfield & Burstow - a History of the landscape & buildings	1980
Crowhurst - A Parish History	1980
Lingfield Heritage - An introduction to the heritage of a Wealdon Surrey Parish*	1986
Blechingley, Village & Parish - An exploration of the visible history	1991
Limpsfield – Ancient & Modern	1997
Farmsteads & Farm Buildings of Surrey Preliminary Survey for Surrey County Council	1998
Oxted & Crowhurst – Buildings of Historical Interest	1999
Horne – A History for the Millennium	2000
SURREY Medieval Buildings, An Analysis & Inventory**	2001
*Lingfield Heritage – updated and reprinted in memory of Peter	2003
**Peter saw the proof of this publication before he died in September 2001	