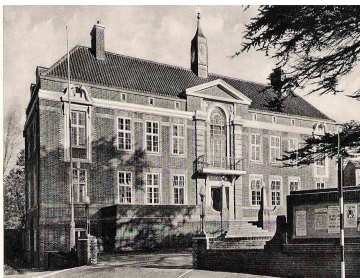


**Leatherhead & District Local History Society**  
**Potted Histories No: 10**

**Kingston House / Wesley House - Leatherhead**



Kingston House, the original site of Wesley House, was mainly a Queen Anne structure and was the home of the Rev. Belson. Perhaps the most memorable event in Leatherhead in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century was the visit of John Wesley on 23 February 1791. He was 87 years old at the time of the visit and died only a week later. During the visit, he delivered what was to be his last homily in an upstairs room in Kingston house. This was the last of 42,400 sermons he delivered in his ministry and he chose his text *Isaiah Iv.6*. He stayed the night with Leatherhead's curate, Mr Durnford, and travelled to London the following day. A legend grew up that Wesley had given his last sermon beneath a cedar tree outside the house. (Right of the picture) There is no evidence for this, although he may have given a blessing to the assembled crowd there, when the cedar can have been little more than a sapling. Dendrochronology (tree ring-dating) proved this when it was felled in 1966.

It was once the home of Emily Moore, proprietor of the Swan Hotel in the latter part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. She died there in 1930. In 1933 the house was demolished. During the demolition many tokens, coins, and an oak cross were found. The cross may have been a medieval gibbet as it has been suggested that the site was once known as Gallows Hill.

A new building was erected on the site, and in 1935 became the offices of the Leatherhead Urban District Council. L.U.D.C became part of the Mole Valley District Council in 1983. Later, rather than be called the 'Council Offices', it was agreed, most fittingly, that the building be given the name 'Wesley House'.

*For information regarding Membership, Lectures and Museum  
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