

# Leatherhead & District Local History Society

Potted Histories No 34

## Badingham College, Lower Road, Fetcham



From The Rector and Mrs. J. G. Wilkie

With Every  
Good Wish  
for  
Christmas  
and the  
New Year

When Fetcham Park House came up for sale in the early 1920s, it came to the attention of Rev. J. G. Wilkie and a new chapter in its history would begin.

Wilkie initially was a master at St Paul's School but after taking Holy Orders became Rector of Badingham in Suffolk and started a College in the grounds of the rectory in 1922 that outgrew the available

space. A Badingham College brochure records that the move from Badingham to Fetcham took place in July 1927 but there must have been work undertaken prior to this to adapt the buildings etc, to form and equip the school and dormitories but the actual conveyance was not until the 3<sup>rd</sup> April 1928. Apart from the house and 30 acres of land he also bought two further plots that formed the adjacent corner of the Ridgeway and Lower Road, all for £8000.

Prior to 1939, it appears that the College was recognised as a coaching establishment for the first M.B. and thus almost certainly known to the Medical Science faculty of University College London who having had their buildings requisitioned initially by the War Office in 1939, then got them back only to have them severely damaged by bombing in 1940. They took a lease on Badingham College and the Departments of Anatomy and Physiology and the associated departments moved to Fetcham in October 1940. Meanwhile, Wilkie moved his College to Hullvington near Chippenham but about 1941 put the School into suspension and taught at Eton School before becoming vicar of Highmore in Oxfordshire where he continued to take pupils.

University College remained at Fetcham to the end of the 1944/45 sessions. In 1946 Middlesex County Council sought compulsory purchase of the property for use of the "educationally sub-normal". However this apparently failed and later that year, Rev. Wilkie restated Badingham College and by about 1950 had a staff of 10 or 11 for 70 boys at 80 guineas (£84) per term. A legacy of University College's occupation was the "well equipped laboratories (that) have now been added". By about 1957, the school had 14 masters, a matron and assistant, a catering manageress and an entirely Spanish domestic staff for a complement of 100 boys at 120 guineas (£126) a term. Rev. Wilkie junior succeeded Wilkie senior and about 1962 there appears to be thoughts of selling. It was eventually sold and in 1965 the College was moved from Fetcham to Ketteringham Hall, Wymondham near Norwich. This act proved to be a mistake and the school closed permanently in 1968.

Goff Powell · Courtesy of Alan Pooley L&DLHS Proceedings Vol 6 No8 - 2004

**For information regarding Membership, Lectures and Museum opening hours contact:**  
Leatherhead & District Local History Society,  
Leatherhead Museum, Hampton Cottage, 64 Church Street,  
Leatherhead, KT22 8DP

Tel: 01372 386348  
mail to: [staff@theadmuseum.plus.com](mailto:staff@theadmuseum.plus.com)  
Website: [www.leatherheadlocalhistory.org.uk](http://www.leatherheadlocalhistory.org.uk)