

**Leatherhead & District Local History Society**  
**Potted Histories No: 4**  
**Leatherhead Institute**



The Leatherhead Institute was built and endowed by Abraham Dixon of Cherkley Court in 1892. Its object was to provide for all local working people, education, refreshment and recreation on a subscription of 2d a week. The opening ceremony was in 1893 and the church bellringers rang 1,893 changes appropriate for the occasion. The Institute flourished with activities wide-ranging from billiards to pigeon clubs, concerts and whist drives. A Cycling Club was formed in 1897 with Abraham Dixon as its Chairman. In 1898 a cinematograph show was held there.

When Abraham Dixon died in 1907, two of his daughters continued the family's interest by teaching art and cookery there.

During the Second World War a Food Office was set up there, issuing ration books. It was also home to the Fuel Office controlling the amount of coal and fuel used.

In 1976 at a meeting convened by the Leatherhead Society, there was support for the restoration of the community facilities at the Institute, in particular for the main hall which had been out of public use for over 30 years. With professional advice, many volunteers, mainly from the Leatherhead Community Association, undertook the task and the hall officially opened on 18<sup>th</sup> July 1987 and named the Abraham Dixon Hall after the Institute's founder.

The Institute is now the base for many affiliated clubs and societies, just as the founder envisaged in 1893.

*For information regarding Membership, Lectures and Museum opening hours contact*

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