

**Leatherhead & District Local History Society**  
**Potted Histories No: 6**  
**Fetcham Reading Room – Cobham Road**



Thanks to the generosity of the Hankey and Moon families, the Reading Room on the left of the picture was built in 1885. It was erected on the exact site of the earlier Almshouses (of which there were 4), when the 'new' Almshouses were built on the other side of Cobham Road that same year.

It was to give the workers in the village (mainly farm hands and servants from the big houses) a purpose-built meeting room, where they could spend their afternoons off. Ladies would take turns to read newspapers to the people who were unable to read. In keeping with the trend of the time, magic lantern shows were also shown there. Whilst alterations were being carried out at Fetcham Village School in 1886, some classes were taught in the Reading Room. The village ladies found it useful in the winter when serving free hot soup the school children and to the needy.

In the 1920s and 1930s, Fetcham became a popular centre for a cycling club whose members came from South London and Surrey. The cycling club would meet regularly in the Reading Room where Mr & Mrs. Wright lived in the end cottage with an earth floor, a small bedroom and primitive toilet conditions. The 'stable door' opened from the main hall directly into their living room from where Mrs. Wright dispensed cocoa and tea. The caretaker's accommodation was in use until the 1950s when it was condemned as unfit to live in.

Today the Hall is still in active use by several local groups and organisations.

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

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