

Leatherhead & District Local History Society
Potted Histories No: 9
Fetcham Cottage – Bell Lane, Fetcham



This house, close to Oakfield School is of late 18th century origin, though often described as of 'Regency' style. This house belonged to the Hankeys of Fetcham and was rented by Dr Thomas Munro from about 1795 to 1804. Dr. Munro was a noted physician. He was also a patron of artists, like Thomas Girtin, John Varley, Peter de Wint, John Sell Cotman, William Hunt and the romantic landscape painter J.M.W Turner. They frequently called on him at the house, all of whom painted local scenes while they were there. The critic John Ruskin wrote in his "notes" on Turner in 1878.

"His true master was Dr Munro; to the practical teaching of that first patron and the wise simplicity of method of watercolour study, in which he was disciplined by him and companioned by Gison, the healthy and constant development of the greater power is primarily to be attributed; the greatness of the power itself, it is impossible to over-estimate."

Dr. Munro was physician to the Royal Bethlem Hospital, known as Bedlam, where they studied and treated mental illness. He attended on King George III in his hour of need. Ironically it was Dr. Munro who certified Turner's mother as insane and committed to her to his hospital in 1799.

In the Victorian era the cottage was occupied by Edward Degrave a retired scale maker, also Gervas Parnell who played a prominent role in village affairs and was a local benefactor.

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

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