



## *For the Record...*

Did you miss a meeting? Find out how it went.

Our February talk was from **Ian Kirby**, who had spent 22 years as a flight engineer on Concorde. Concorde's beautiful and aerodynamic shape allowed it to fly at 2.5 times the speed of sound. A flight to New York would take 3 hours 20 minutes, and to Barbados 3 hours 50 minutes. In fact Concorde could have been to Barbados and back before a normal jet from Gatwick had arrived.

Before any flight, the flight engineer and pilot will check the flight deck and the fuel requirements. A full load of fuel would be 97 tons, and a flight to Barbados could use 84, and to New York 80 or 81. The flight engineer would also complete the external checks. Meanwhile the cabin crew would check the seats and menus, making sure there was a Concorde information pack for each passenger. Ian remembered one time the Cabin Services Director (also known as the Chief Sandwich Dispenser) noticed that the menus did not match the meals that were being loaded. The efficient catering system meant that it was actually quicker to change the meals to match the menus rather than vice versa.

Loading the baggage could prove tricky. Concorde had a very small hold with not much room for access. All luggage was loaded by hand, and if no ground crew were available, the engineers would often help out. The crew had to turn a hand to everything—even at times standing in for check in duty.

The rear passenger cabin had 60 seats and a mach meter. The front cabin contained 40 seats. The toilets and basins in the middle centre of the plane had originally been made of stainless steel, but when the designers changed them to plastic with electronic taps, problems arose, as the plastic basins cracked with the temperature change that expanded the fuselage during flight. The temperature of the nose when Concorde was in flight could reach 127 degrees C, and no part of the outside was cooler than boiling water. It was often commented that the windows were very small—this was, should there be a failure at 60,000ft, to prevent the cabin's air escaping too quickly.

To take off, two engines were started at the departure gate and then the plane was towed out to the taxiway. A glass visor came down in front of the windscreen and the nose was lowered (its position when taxiing, take off and flying below 250 knots). Inside the cabin a display would show its speed, height, outside temperature, ground speed and distance to destination. Concorde would fly with its nose 4 degrees up and the tables in the cabin were adjusted for this, so that passengers often complained on the ground that their table was not level, but were amazed to be shown that once in flight, it was.

Concorde was the only plane where the faster you flew, the less fuel was burned per mile. This was because the intakes increased in efficiency at a greater rate than the drag increased. Its four throttles would stay open for the whole flight, and the minimum power was 108,000 horse power per engine.

Ian remembered several amusing incidents from his long service. Sometimes on New York flights, luggage could be seen being loaded with the name "Thomas de la Rue" on them. These contained 20 million dollars' worth of newly printed notes. On one flight to Barbados, one of the in-flight channels was playing the Radio 3 play. Ian didn't think this would prove too popular with the mainly American passengers, so he put on his CD of The Merrymen calypso group, which went down very well. Also from Barbados, they managed to get an in-flight gift for the passengers of five miniature rums—one of the best appreciated gifts that they provided. And on one memorable occasion, on a charter flight to Jordan, the crew found out that the normal carnets used to pay for refuelling would not be accepted. They could not very well fly back to England with no fuel, so Ian ended up paying for a Concorde tank-load of fuel on his own Mastercard. Luckily the company paid him back swiftly.

Alas, after 27 years' service, Concorde no longer flies. It was proposed to try and get one of these iconic aircraft flying for the Olympic opening ceremony, but this was not to be. The miniature Concorde that used to stand outside Heathrow now stands on the approach to Brooklands Museum, which Ian thinks is fitting as more of Concorde was designed, researched and built at Weybridge than any other factory.





In March we heard about a well known local landmark that not many have actually visited. Paul Martin is the Deputy Chief Executive and Cottages Manager at Whiteley Village, and gave us a fascinating insight into its development and future.

Whiteley Village stands at the junction of Seven Hills and Burwood Roads, and was founded by William Whiteley (1831-1907). Mr Whiteley was a Yorkshireman who came down to London for the Great Exhibition, and loved it so much he stayed. Determined never to borrow, he spent 7 years working and saving, and eventually bought his first shop in Bayswater, a then unfashionable area. This proved successful, and he bought more shops along the road until he owed then all. He then turned this block into Whiteleys, Britain's first department store. The building still stands today, although now it is a shopping centre rather than one department store.

Mr Whiteley was rather a ladies' man and it is said that the shop girls would avoid him, especially when he was planning a business trip to Paris. One day in 1907 a man claiming to be William's illegitimate son arrived. William held a meeting with him and the man left. Later, as William left the store, he was shot. Horace George Rayner was arrested and sentenced to death, although this was commuted to life imprisonment. He served 7 years of his sentence and then disappeared from history.



William Whiteley left one million pounds to purchase homes for the needy elderly—those who were old, poor, of sound mind and good character. These are still the principles on which residents are selected today. However, there was some dispute over whether it had been Mr Whiteley's intention to build one village or several houses in different locations. The matter went to court, and William's two sons, who were in favour of building one village, won.

In 1911 225 acres were purchased on the Burhill Estate, and a design competition was held to decide the layout of the village, which was won by Frank Atkinson. He devised the octagon ground plan, with eight distinct areas. Six leading architects were given an area to design, and to give symmetry and balance, each architect was given a plot on either side of an avenue or green. The original plan was for 262 cottages. The first resident—or inmate as they were then called—was Miss Palmer who moved in on 10th October 1917, to 96 Octagon Road.

There are many on-site facilities. St Mark's church was dedicated on 25th April (St Mark's day) 1918. The adjacent mortuary had latterly stood empty for 30 years, but has now been cleared out and converted into a museum and visitor centre. The congregation of a second, non-conformist, church - the Sanctuary - has declined, so an alternative use is being sought. The Village Hall is the centre of village life. It has seating for 500 (although 200 is more usual), a stage and various function rooms. There is a rest home for 114 residents, which provided the opportunity for rest and recuperation, but now provides last days care, available to people outside the village as well. At the centre of the village is a monument, showing Industry on top, with Enterprise on the back. There is also a Summer House, which appears on the very earliest maps.

In 1926 179 more cottages were added in Chestnut Crescent. The Trustees were opposed to any use of the area around the monument, so it was proposed to build 7 groups of cottages outside the octagon, but only Chestnut Crescent was completed. Very little development occurred in the village from then, until Drapers Crescent, the long overdue second phase of the "new" cottages in 2002. These are considered the "Mayfair" of Whiteley Village! There is also Huntley House Extra Care Scheme of 51 flats, where residents can live independently but with a care team on site should they be needed.

Cottage refurbishment began in 2005, and in 2001 the village won the Conservation Award from Elmbridge Borough Council. Also ongoing is the redevelopment of the Works Yard, which will become 16 new properties called Coach House Mews, which are the first ones that people are able to buy within Whiteley Village.

So today there are about 525 people living there. There is a village shop and post office and the facility for the delivery of frozen meals. There is also a cafe and bar open to the public, and a social club. In former times residents were provided with a meal and had to take their billy cans along to the shop to receive it. The Trust would also provide coal, but also laid the law down as well. During the war, a note was sent round warning residents that if they did not close their curtains during the blackout, their light bulbs would be removed!



Looking to the future, there was still the cottages upgrade to be completed and it was hoped to provide 34 more units at Huntley House and Drapers Crescent and hopefully even a new nursing/residential home to provide dementia care. We thanked Paul for giving us a glimpse of life at a local landmark.



For April's meeting we heard from **Rolie Luker**, at present a volunteer at Brooklands Museum. But Rolie has also had a long career in the film and TV industry as a cameraman, producer and director. Rolie explained how he had gone **From Camera to Concorde**.

His love of aircraft began with his father, who was in the aircraft industry. Rolie went with him to air shows at Croydon Aerodrome and Biggin Hill, where as a boy he was delighted with the air displays and was even introduced to some of the pilots. But then his attention was caught by the TV vans and equipment turning up to film the events, and he decided that he would like a career as a TV or film cameraman.

Soon the visit to the school's Career Officer came round. Rolie's friend before him was asked what he would like to do. He did not know, so the teacher asked "Have you considered a career in butchery or supermarket management?". He had not, and went away with the necessary leaflets to consider it further. The teacher then asked Rolie what he wanted to do. When he revealed his ambitions in TV cameramanship, the teacher replied, "Hmmm. Have you considered a career in butchery or supermarket management?". Rolie asked if this would lead to a job as a TV cameraman, but was warned that it could very well lead to him being caned for being facetious!

Rolie's father was more supportive, however, and supported his son's efforts to find a job. Rolie only had to write 15 letters—to the 14 ITV companies and the BBC. Rolie duly received 14 rejections, but ABC liked him, and started him off as a Press Office Runner (which Rolie regarded as the "best job ever" for the variety of things he was asked to do). From there he moved to the film library and then to be a trainee film editor. This involved cutting the scheduled films so that they would fit time-wise into the TV schedule. This was quite a delicate art, as you had to find enough pieces of the film to cut out without making the story difficult to follow. Unfortunately, one colleague had a tendency to cut out parts of the story. He went on to work on the now cult TV series *The Prisoner*, which has whole internet message boards dedicated to pondering its meaning. Rolie wonders if his colleague's unique cutting style might have something to do with this. He also recounted one memorable time when the British Board of Film Censors decreed that there should be no hanging scenes shown on television. This was tricky when Rolie's first film to cut was called *The Hangman!*

Rolie's next career move was to become a trainee cameraman at the historic Teddington Studios. Teddington had been the first studio in the country, starting with films in 1905, seeing many big stars like Errol Flynn and Margaret Lockwood in the 1930s, and making war propaganda films in the 1940s. The studio successfully made the transition to television in the 1950s and hosted such greats as Tommy Cooper, Benny Hill and Armchair Theatre. Rolie fondly remembered his friendship with Tommy Cooper, who would try out his new jokes on the crew.

In the mid 80s Rolie went freelance, working for the BBC, Granada, and Thames television, who were thinking about a new police drama, shot with a single camera. This had never been tried before, but went on to be a great success. The series was, of course, *The Bill*, and Rolie was honoured to be awarded the BAFTA for his camerawork in 1990. *The Bill* was shot in the streets, which is technically illegal, and only the council can legally close roads. One day, as Rolie was shooting near an army camp, he thought he would ask if the army could help out. The Colonel in charge was only too pleased, and suggested an armoured car at one end of the road and a tank at the other. Rolie thought this may have been a little over the top, but as the Colonel seemed happy, he left them to it and went home. Two hours later, the police turned up. Apparently a citizen ordering the army to do something constituted a coup against Her Majesty and her government, so would Rolie please go and persuade the Colonel to stand down!

After *The Bill*, Rolie went on to work on other flagship dramas such as *Casualty* and *London's Burning*, and had the honour of having one of the Spitting Image puppets (a cameraman!) modelled on him.

Rolie ended up at Brooklands due to his love of old cars, which had led to him getting a freelance job at the National Motor Museum at Beaulieu doing their trade shows. There he heard about Brooklands Museum, and he ended up working for them as well. Now he works on the shows all summer and is a tour guide on Concorde in the winter, which he feels has completed the circle, as his father was one of the Concorde design team.

And as for the boy who was offered a career in butchery, he did indeed open a butcher's shop, which became a chain, which he then sold to Dewhurst for a very tidy sum of money. Rolie often wonders—what would have happened if he had been first in the queue for the careers officer!

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**QUESTIONS AND QUERIES**  
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**WORLD WAR I**

2014 sees the centenary of the outbreak of World War I. Byfleet Heritage Society feels that we should commemorate this date in a special way.

Is any member of your family (or of a family that you know) commemorated on any of the village's war memorials? These memorials are located near the High Road/Parvis Road/Chertsey Road junction, inside St Mary's Church and in St Mary's School in Hart Road.

We would like to gather as much information as possible about these men who did not return from the battlefields. Details such as growing up in the village, where they went to school, their families' occupations, and so on, including of course details of the regiments into which they were sent and any of their war history. Although we can, and will, access various military websites and reference sources, these do not provide the local detail that is so important to our village history.

No matter how much or how little information you can provide, it will help us to build up a picture of each of them. If you are unsure as to the names on the war memorials, look at our website, or contact Jim Allen, who can supply a printed list.



We have received some information on the Sanway Close query we received last newsletter. The two cottages (Nos 21 and 23) belonged to Grace Nash, who also kept pigs on the piece of land where there are now some new houses. There was also a pig farm on the land that is now Fullerton Way and Fullerton Drive. Grace lived in number 23, and her sister, Olive, lived in number 21. There was also a third sister, Phil, who married into the Denley family. Thanks to Mary McIntyre for the information.



Here is a rather fine picture of, we believe, Byfleet Football Club in 1953.

Does anyone recognise any of these sporting heroes? If you can put any names to the faces, please let us know by the usual routes (give Tessa a ring on 01932 351559, or leave a note at Byfleet Library, or via our website [www.byfleetheritage.org.uk](http://www.byfleetheritage.org.uk)

# SOCIETY SNIPPETS

We were very pleased to hear that, after the latest round of Surrey County Council grants, two Byfleet projects have received funding.



St Mary's Church have received money in order to collate the churchyard survey onto a website, allowing people to search the entries and perhaps find their Byfleet ancestors. The Friends of Byfleet Fire Station have also been offered a grant of £3,000, which it is hoped can go towards updating the electrics and maintenance on the outer doors.

The fire station was open to the public on 20th April and welcomed just on 60 people through its doors, including a group of Beaver Scouts taking a break from their

annual litter pick around the village. We received some very kind comments on how pleased people were to see the building still standing and open, and an interesting time was had by all. It is planned to open the fire station again on 4th August for the cycle races and over Heritage Open Weekend in September - watch out for further details.



## PARISH DAY



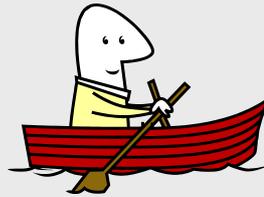
Don't forget— Parish Day will be on **Saturday 20th July 2013**, at Byfleet Recreation

Ground. Lots of fun for everyone—and surely the sun will shine! If you can help out on our stand for half an hour, please let us know.

## DON'T FORGET

**Visit to Byfleet Boat Club, Friday 17th May at 7pm.**

Come along for an evening by the canal, with a chance to have a look at the club house and the club's photos.



## Bio Blitz 2013

Surrey Wildlife Trust are having a BioBlitz, where members of the public and experts work together to record as many natural species as possible over 24 hours.

This will take place on Saturday 15th and Sunday 16th June on Wisley Common. Adults £2, children £1. More details from [www.surreywildlifetrust.org](http://www.surreywildlifetrust.org) or from Katy Gower 01483 795471

From the Parish Magazine, August 1937 ( which refers to less than summery weather —nothing much changes!)

### “The Rectory Garden Party.

In spite of the rather cold windy day on June 30th the Garden Party proved a great social success, and I think all who came seemed to enjoy themselves. We again enjoyed, as we always do, the dancing of the school children. Miss Ponsford's girls did some delightful country dances; and Miss King's infants were charming in two little character dances. Mr Hudson kindly provided us with a ventriloquist, the well known Mr Nelson Lloyd, who caused much amusement.

Miss Beardmore's "Keep Fit" class gave a demonstration, which was also a very popular item. This class has made great strides under Miss Beardmore's able instruction, and so impressed

were the onlookers that there were quite a number who came to enter their names for joining the class in the Autumn.

Then followed a very smart display of team work by the Boy Scouts, under the direction of Scout-master Evans.

Dancing followed at 9pm and continued until 11pm. In the interval hot sausages were fried and served over the camp fire by Mrs Carter's gipsy troupe, and very acceptable they were too! The evening closed with a vote of thanks to The Rector and Mrs Cheverton for kindly allowing the use of their garden.

The tithe barn proved to be a great asset on this occasion as, owing to the uncertain weather, teas were served here instead of on the lawn. People were able to sit and chat over their teas, which they certainly could not have done had they been out on the lawn in the wind. As usual, the refreshments under Mrs Clarke's arrangement were very excellent and at absurdly low prices.