



Byfleet Heritage Society.

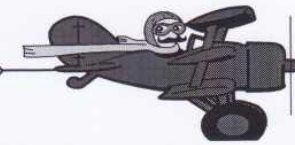
Issue 15

Newsletter

February 2001

A (belated) Happy New Year to all and it was good to see so many of you at our January meeting despite the freezing weather. We are still looking for helping hands with the events side of things—more details below, so please give it some thought as you enjoy this edition of the newsletter. Please also see the news pages for important news regarding the relocation of the library to smaller premises, what this might mean for us, and how to voice your concerns. Many thanks!

FORTHCOMING EVENTS



Thursday 15th FEBRUARY:

*Peter Adams of the Dean Forest Railway will speak on trials and tribulations of a railway preservation society.
Byfleet Heritage Centre, Byfleet Library, 8.15pm*

Thursday 15th MARCH:

*The Natural History of Wisley Common with
Countryside Ranger Dave Boddy
Byfleet Heritage Centre, Byfleet Library, 8.15pm*

Thursday 26th APRIL:

*The Gardens of South East England
An illustrated talk by Charles Abdy
Byfleet Heritage Centre, Byfleet Library, 8.15pm*

Thursday 24th MAY:

*Society AGM followed by guest speaker Tony Hutchings,
a Brooklands Museum volunteer, on Brooklands Then
and Now
Byfleet Village Hall, Room A, 7.30pm*

**Thursday 21st JUNE: To be announced
Byfleet Heritage Centre, Byfleet Library, 8.15pm**

**Thursday 19th JULY: A speaker from The Surrey
History Centre will tell us about their work
Byfleet Heritage Centre, 8.15pm**

SEPTEMBER: A nature walk to investigate local fungi

**Thursday 25th OCTOBER: To be announced
Byfleet Heritage Centre, Byfleet Library, 8.15pm**

Thursday 22nd NOVEMBER:

*The History of the Woking News & Mail
A talk by Editor in Chief Christine Smith
Byfleet Heritage Centre, Byfleet Library, 8.15pm*

**Thursday 13th DECEMBER: To be announced
Byfleet Heritage Centre, Byfleet Library, 8.15pm**

**Members free. Non members £2
Everyone very welcome.**

**Still
Wanted!!**

HAVE YOU GOT TIME TO HELP OUT THE SOCIETY JUST BY MAKING A PHONE CALL ONCE A MONTH?

That's all we need to make sure our meetings carry on smoothly.

Beryl Marlow has kindly volunteered to book the meeting venues, and committee members each organise one speaker each. This system is working well so far, but to avoid things falling between two stools, we need a volunteer to "look after" the speakers.

This would only involve one phone call once a month to the speaker to check their needs (directions, projector, screen etc), and welcoming the speaker on the night of the meeting (or making sure one of the committee can do it). Simple!

**Please ring Tessa Westlake on 01932 351559 if you can help, or would like any more details.
Very many thanks.**

For the Record...

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

In December, *Jim Allen* of *The Byfleet Players* came to put the Society in festive mood with his look back over the group's past pantomimes.

Although founded in 1955, the Players first Christmas production did not appear until 1970, with *Alice in Wonderland*. Jim himself had a part as a gardener, and Peter Moffat also appeared on the cast list—better known to us today as Peter Davidson, from *All Creatures Great and Small*, and *Dr Who*. *Alice in Wonderland* was the Players' first big cast play, but it must have gone well, as very few Christmases have gone by without a Players' pantomime at the Village Hall.

Most of the well known stories have been tackled by the group over the years, such as *Jack and the Beanstalk*, *Dick Whittington*, *Puss in Boots*, *Aladdin* and *Cinderella*. It was interesting to compare prices, such as for the programmes, which cost 10p in 1976. The seats for an earlier production of *Aladdin* cost 25p—35p for the expensive seats, but with a reduction for block booking!

The Byfleet Players seems to have had many loyal and long serving members. As we progressed through the years, not only did the same names crop up, but later on the names of their sons and daughters did too. There also seems to have been a high level of police involvement with local bobbies Barbara Funnell and Nick Griggs playing in *Aladdin* and *Humpty Dumpty* respectively.

We also learned what some former members were doing now—and there was quite a variety. David Rannie, who appeared in *Alice in Wonderland* in 1970, was now Town Crier of Eastbourne, as well as a morris dancer and folk singer. Julie Evans became Julie Sian and now has her own School of Dancing. Rowland Lee is now a BAFTA winning musician and composer. Many of the former Players have gone on to work on cruise ships, become members of Equity or joined major ballet corps as dancers or choreographers. The Byfleet Players' productions were the first stage experience for many of them.

In 1983 the Players tried something a bit different—*Pantomania*, written by Jim himself. It was quite unusual, containing 2 fairies and 3 dames, one of whom was actually a woman, and one of whom kept their moustache! The giant was also played by someone short!

With so many productions over the years, it is no surprise to learn that sometimes things did not go as well as they might have done. In one production sandwiches had to be eaten during a picnic scene. Unfortunately a couple got left behind on the stage in the rush to change the scene. One of the dancers trod on them, causing her to utter some words which may well have been new to the children in the audience, and for which she was ticked off afterwards. Also the use of a dalek one year (hired from a school in Sussex) and of two men in one costume as a two-headed giant caused some problems of manoeuvrability.

But the Byfleet Players have overcome all these difficulties, and we were grateful to Jim for a look back over past productions. The Players pantomime is a feature of a Byfleet Christmas, and long may it continue to be so.



Members turned out despite the freezing January night to hear **Iain Wakeford** speak on **Sir Anthony Browne**, former owner of Byfleet Manor and close friend of Henry VIII. Iain's search for Sir Anthony began when finding out about Newark Priory for one of his Heritage Walks, and his research soon revealed a soldier, politician, courtier and asset-stripper!

Sir Anthony is the man responsible for Newark Priory becoming the ruin we see today. He bought the 12th century priory when it was dissolved in 1539, and became "farmer for the crown". It was worth £294 18/4d, and Sir Anthony set about stripping the buildings of stone, lead, timber, roof tiles and anything useable. The story is that he shipped much of it down the River Wey to rebuild Byfleet Manor, one of his many properties, where he often stayed and where he died. Some stone has been found in the manor grounds, but Sir Anthony's manor house has long since disappeared. It is also believed that a window in Ockham church originally came from Newark.

Sir Anthony was an only son, named after his father, who had been Chief Standard Bearer of England and Constable of Calais. He had seven sons and three daughters from 2 wives, one of whom he married when he was 60 and she only 15! His career blossomed through the years, being knighted in 1523, made an Esquire of the Body in 1524 (a post close to the King), and Lieutenant of the Isle of Man in 1526. In 1528 he was sent to France to give King Charles I the Order of the Garter, and in 1533 he was sent to see the Pope in Nice about Henry's divorce from Katherine of Aragon. His other titles included Chief Standard Bearer of England, Lieutenant for the Forest of Windsor, Privy Councillor, Knight of the Garter, and in 1539 he became Master of the King's Horse. He was obviously a trusted and useful member of court, and has been referred to as "a pliant courtier".

Records show that Sir Anthony also knew Woking Palace, where renovations to his lodgings appear in records of 1534 and 35. An excavation in the early 20th century revealed various buildings, and the wall that still stands is believed to be part of the King's private chambers, but where Sir Anthony laid his head can no longer be known for certain.

Once he started looking, Iain was amazed to find where Sir Anthony would turn up. He acquired the manor of Pirbright, and Waverley Abbey came to him through his half brother, Sir William Fitzwilliam, from whom he also acquired Cowdray House at Midhurst, Easebourne Priory, and Pineham Priory near Arundel. As if this wasn't enough, he also turned St Mary Overie into his chief London residence (it is now Southwark Cathedral), owned Bayham Abbey in East Sussex, and Battle Abbey, and appears to have owned land as far afield as Lincolnshire and Berwick.

He seems to have made a killing from the Dissolution of the Monasteries, stripping and selling off materials from the buildings and acquiring the lands. He rebuilt part of Battle Abbey as a possible royal residence for Henry VIII's children, although plans for Sir Anthony to become their guardian never came to fruition.

The only contemporary picture of the sinking of the Mary Rose was commissioned by Sir Anthony and used to hang at Cowdray until the house burned down. Letters from Henry VIII to Sir Anthony still survive, and the story goes that it was Sir Anthony who was the only one who had the courage in 1547 to tell Henry that he was dying. Sir Anthony himself died the following year, and was buried in Battle church, ending the life of a trusted and important courtier who seemed to have a sound business sense and who took full advantage of the closing down of the religious houses. The Society thanked Iain for his insight into the life of a former Byfleet resident!

BYFLEET SCHOOLS INVOLVED IN NATIONAL HERITAGE PROJECT.



The 'Schools Adopt Monuments' project was a European initiative, coordinated in England by English Heritage. Its aim was to encourage young people to develop a sense of responsibility for their historic environment. Individual schools 'adopted' a monument, or feature of the historic environment, in their locality. The chosen monument was then explored in all sorts of ways, over a three-year period (1997 – 2000).

In Woking, The Galleries were awarded a Lottery grant to coordinate this project locally. Initially 5 local schools were involved, including Byfleet County Primary School. The Galleries enlisted help from artists to work with the children, interpreting their monuments in different ways – painting, stories, ceramics, textiles, etc.

Byfleet County Primary School chose to adopt Byfleet Manor House, and St Mary's Parish Church. Mr Lee, the owner of the Manor

House, and Rev. Trumper, Rector of St Mary's, agreed and the school started work early in 1998, working with ceramicist, Julian Belmonte. Byfleet Heritage Society provided background information and photographs from our archives.

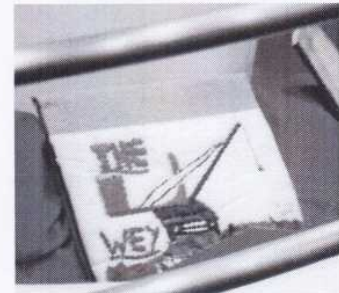
At the end of the first year, in June 1998, The Galleries put on an exhibition of work produced by the schools. Byfleet County had made tiles and gargoyles after studying plaques, memorials, tiles and architectural design found in The Manor House and St Mary's Church. They had also produced some excellent artwork, based on photos of the Church and Graveyard.

Following the success of the first year, more schools joined the project, including St Mary's Church of England Primary School in Byfleet. St Mary's School chose to 'adopt' the old school building, now St Mary's Day Centre, and The Wey Navigation. Children aged 6 – 7 visited the Day Centre, and learned about life at school there. Byfleet Heritage Society assisted with architectural drawings of the school buildings, and by advertising locally for photos – this resulted in several new photos, from 1910 up to the 1950s. The school converted a 35mm film of the move to Hart Rd in 1963 onto video. This was shown at the schools' Exhibition evening in March 2000, with many parents recognising themselves and old school friends.

Meanwhile, children aged 9 – 10 studied the Wey Navigation. In 1999 they were invited by The National Trust to Dapdune Wharf, where they worked with an artist, Howard Romp, and his son, to produce charcoal drawings of a canal barge, its' contents and workers. The children used each other as models in appropriate 'working' poses. The finished artwork was displayed in the Education Centre at Dapdune Wharf.

Each child also produced a hand-made workbook. Some of these were kept for a National Exhibition (see photo, right).

In 2000, the children also looked at the future of the Wey Navigation, and what they thought could be changed. They produced a model of Pyrford Lock, incorporating a Visitor Centre, and picnic area.



The 'Schools Adopt Monuments' project finished in July 2000. Work from each school involved across England has been on display, first at QCA building in London, and now at Eltham Palace, South London (until mid-February 2001). We hope to show some of the local work in the Heritage Room, on its return from this National Exhibition.

Byfleet schools have benefited from the project, with additional resources (photos, and a professional artist and ceramicist), and additional teacher training. The project also led to a new element in the National Curriculum, citizenship, taught in schools from September 2000.

Byfleet Heritage Society have been able to help with resources, making ourselves better known to local schools, and have been able to introduce more children to our Heritage Room. Thank you to both the Byfleet schools that took part, and to the other schools in Woking Borough who were involved in the project.

Going for free! One built in Bosch oven. Will be thrown away if a good home can't be found! For more details please ring Paddy Holroyde on 01932 406649

SOCIETY NEWS

A Return for "A Village of England"?

The committee think it would be a nice idea to try and reprint LR Stevens' work on the history of Byfleet, "Byfleet, A Village of England". His relatives have given permission for us to do this, and we are now looking at how to raise the necessary cash. It would be useful for us to have some idea of the sort of demand there might be for the book.

We expect to be able to offer it for just under £10, and hopefully will be able to print in time for Xmas, so solving all your Christmas present problems! If you haven't seen the book, it is an absorbing and detailed look at the history of the village from prehistoric times to the 20th century, and has been the Society's inspiration and source of much of its knowledge.

If you would be interested in buying a copy, should the project go ahead, please let me or any member of the committee know, or leave a note at the library.

Many thanks—and watch this space for further updates!



Byfleet Library—the future

Plans for relocating the library are currently being discussed again, and the plan seems to mean moving from a permanent to a temporary building, and also a large reduction in space. We are concerned that this plan would not only mean less books for Byfleet borrowers, but would also affect the future of the Heritage Centre. The Centre is used by local children, visiting as school, cubs and brownie groups, and individually. But it may be squeezed out due to lack of space.

Byfleet is the only Surrey library to have increased its book loan numbers, so it seems illogical to decrease a service that is expanding. We must guard against the chances of losing the library in the future. If you wish to write expressing your concern, please write to: Mrs Rose Wilson, Library Services Manager, Community Services Northwest, The Runnymede Centre, Chertsey Road, Addlestone, Surrey KT15 2EP. Very many thanks.

And in the meantime, don't forget to support your library—details of clubs, meetings and events are available at the desk.

Help the Heath Ranger!

Dave Boddy, the Countryside Ranger coming to speak to us in March, would like to let everyone know about his very sociable working parties, held on the first Sunday in the month during the winter.

Meet in the Wren's Nest carpark by Wisley Gardens. Work involves some gentle scrub clearing, or similar, and a cup of tea round the bonfire. Come for the day or just for an hour or two.

For more details please ring Dave Boddy on 01932 862161.

Toad of Toad Hall, Byfleet?

Jeff Sechiari has been told that EH Shepard's inspiration for Toad Hall was Foxwarren (the large house on the corner of Byfleet by the A3/Redhill Road junction). It's striking brickwork can also be seen in various related houses, gatehouses, and farm buildings along and near Redhill Road. Can anyone confirm or refute this?

Please ring him on 01932 341084 if you have any information on this interesting story.



Don't forget!! If you have time for one phone call a month, please consider helping out with our "Events" - see front page! Thanks!

Addlestone Historical Society

Members might be interested to know what 's going on with another local history society. All meetings take place at the Community Centre, Station Road, Addlestone and commence at 8pm unless otherwise stated. Members free, visitors £2.

February 6th:	Stuart Surrey: an illustrated talk by Peter Edwards
March 6th:	Brookwood Cemetery: an illustrated talk by John Clarke
April 3rd:	To be announced
May 1st:	Firefighting: an illustrated talk by Ron Shettle
June 5th:	AGM at 7.45 followed by Addlestone Bands, by Vic Gale
July 3rd:	Five Surrey Gardens: an illustrated talk. Speaker to be announced
September 4th:	History of Brooklands: an illustrated talk by Mike Goodall
October 2nd:	Syon House: an illustrated talk by Andrea Cameron
November 6th:	Conservation at the British Museum: an illustrated talk by Hannah Lane
December 4th:	Social Evening

Collecting for the future!

Remember how interesting photos of the floods of 1968 now appear to those who weren't there at the time? We would like to collect photos of the more recent floods in Byfleet to preserve for posterity.



If you have copies of any photos that you could let the Society have for our archive, we would be very pleased to have them. Either bring them along to a meeting, or if you can't manage that, drop them in at the library, or send to

Tessa Westlake at 8 Brewery Lane, Byfleet, Surrey KT14 7PQ.

Many thanks!

Recent Acquisitions

Following on from our Vickers Evening in November, we were thrilled to receive three models of BAC aircraft from the Chinnery family, and also some photos and paintings from the days of the factory. The models really are beauties, and we hope to be able to display them in the Heritage Centre for everyone to enjoy.

We also received some copies of the Byfleet Review from the 1940s and 1950s from the Tombs family, which we have added to our growing archive.

Very many thanks indeed to both the Chinnerys and the Tombs for their generosity.