

Byfleet Heritage Society.

*Issue 7*

*Newsletter*

*June 1998*

***Hello again.*** Our third AGM has come and gone and membership renewals are now due – see the news section for details. I hope you were able to attend and enjoy the slide show of old postcards. – Paddy has booked some more interesting events to take us through the summer and into the autumn – details below.

At the AGM some of you may have seen the “prototype” journal that we hope to bring out. This is nearing completion, but we are always pleased to consider articles or ideas for both the journal and future newsletters. Please contact either Tessa Westlake (8 Brewery Lane, 351559) or Jeff Sechiari (Manor Side East, Mill Lane, 341084).

So once you’ve renewed your membership, all that’s left to do is to find a shady (or should that be dry!) spot in the garden and catch up on this edition of the newsletter. As you can see there has been a fair amount going on. We hope to see you at Parish Day on the 18<sup>th</sup> July or, failing that, at some of our events over the next few months.



***MAKE A NOTE IN YOUR DIARIES AS EVENTS WILL ONLY BE ANNOUNCED IN THE NEWSLETTER. AND DON'T FORGET TO TELL YOUR FRIENDS!!***

***Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> JULY:*** A nature walk with Dr Nigel Reeve. Meet at Plough Bridge, 10.30am, for a circular walk along the River Wey and Wey Navigation Canal lasting approximately 3 hours (although you can drop out sooner if you wish). Bring a picnic and enjoy the scenery.

***Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER:*** A talk by freelance archaeologist Steve Dyer on Woking Palace. Venue to be announced, 8.15pm.

***Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> OCTOBER:*** A talk on the cultural history of British folk music and song. The evening will be interspersed with pieces to illustrate periods and style. Byfleet Village Hall, Room A, 8.15pm.

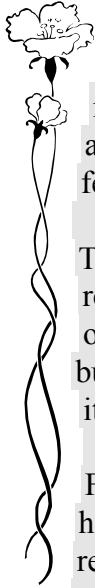
***Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER, 10am:*** A visit to West Hall. Places are limited to 30, and there are still a very few places left. Please ring Paddy on 352681 if you would like to come.

***NON MEMBERS WELCOME, ALTHOUGH THERE MAY BE A SMALL CHARGE.***



## *For the Record...*

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



On **20<sup>th</sup> March** we enjoyed a very interesting slide lecture on **West Hall** by former Byfleet resident **David Chapman**. He is a keen photographer who worked for Mouchel at West Hall and photographed changes there over the years. He has also collected photos and postcards featuring the Stoop family, former residents and benefactors of Byfleet.

The building was named after the West family who lived there in the eighteenth century. Later residents included the Sparks, Murrays and the Stoops from 1898 until 1939. During the war its occupiers included the Swiss Bank, Vickers, the Land Army and Latvian refugees. Now the main building is owned by Mouchel, the contracting consultants and they are bringing the building back to its original grandeur.

Frederick Cornelius Stoop came to England from Dordrecht in Holland. He was a banker who helped in the early growth of the Anglo-Dutch Oil Company, now known as Shell. He is remembered as a great benefactor of the village, particularly for his gift of the Village Hall built to celebrate Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee in 1897. The best known of his children was Adrian who played rugby for the Barbarians, became Captain of the Harlequins and gained fifteen caps for England. One of Frederick's daughters married Dr Ward who had a practice in West Byfleet. This paid special attention to the needs of those working on the Stoop estate, who lived in the estate houses in Birchwood Road.

We saw slides showing the many inside and outside staff who amongst other duties kept the house supplied with fruit and vegetables all year round. The Head Gardener, Mr George Carpenter, bred new varieties of flowers and plants, and bred three new apples including the "Byfleet". In winter the outside staff also filled an ice-house in the grounds for use during the summer.

In 1913 a Dutch Fair was held at West Hall to raise money for charity. Howard Cook remembered it, and another member of the audience attended, but didn't remember much about it – he was in a pram at the time. There was a street of Dutch shops built like a film set, and a windmill. Most attending dressed as Dutch people in their traditional attire including clogs. Some dressed as windmills and great fun was had by all. Unfortunately the Great War started in 1914 and at its end it was a very different world. The Society greatly enjoyed a glimpse into the past of West Hall and the lives of those who lived there.

By Doug Bright



On **21<sup>st</sup> April, Museum Director, Amanda Devonshire** updated Byfleet Heritage Society on progress at the Galleries, Woking Museum and Arts and Crafts Centre. The WMAACC Society was set up in 1993, and there were now a Museum Director, two additional part time staff and a freelance education co-ordinator on the staff. Amanda started her talk by clarifying that the Museum was not the Surrey History Centre. This was part of the Surrey Records Office which was moving to the old school in Goldsworth Road and would combine the Kingston and Guildford branches, the Local Studies Library and a Surrey Archaeological Society unit. This was scheduled to open in the second half of October, and there was much public confusion between the History Centre and the Galleries.



The Galleries will be a local museum, its aims to collect, preserve, record and interpret Woking's history so that it is available and accessible to everyone. At present the Galleries' collection is limited. As well as various photos, ephemera and memorabilia they hold two stained glass windows from the Royal Drama College and a collection from Brookwood Hospital donated by the Heathlands Mental Health National Health Service Trust. The Galleries has formed a policy to make sure the collection is formed systematically and appeals will be made for articles. Thought would be given to which objects could be collected to show different or unique aspects of Woking's history as well as whether the item would be better for display or for education or research. The Galleries will also start a separate education collection for use by local schools. Once a large enough collection has been built up, items could possibly be lent to Societies such as Byfleet's for display and it is hoped that local societies will be able to help the Galleries in return. It is intended to include the arts and crafts at the Galleries too with exhibition and workshop space to display work by local societies and national collections.

How to interpret Woking has not yet been finalised, but above all The Galleries project is intended to dispel the myth of Woking as "Dullsville".

The speaker said the biggest headache is finding town centre premises as the lease available at The Galleries in Chobham Road would not be long enough to satisfy lottery requirements. In the meantime an oral history project is being set up. The Galleries are involved in co-ordinating the Schools Adopt Monuments scheme, a European Community project where local schools "adopt" a local monument and study it in various ways throughout the curriculum. Our own Byfleet Primary School is involved and there will be a display of the school's work in the summer. The Society thanked Amanda for keeping everyone up to date on developments and everyone looks forward to the opening of the Galleries.



The AGM on the *19<sup>th</sup> May* was followed by an illustrated talk by *Chris Glasow* on *Bygone Byfleet*. This was no ordinary slide show, but a very professional presentation using the latest technology – an LCD projector controlled by a computer and the pictures themselves looked different and fresher and they appeared to be mounted on a ring binder.

Members of the audience joined in with their memories of some of the pictures. A view of the original boat club brought back memories of the regatta held there each summer. There were photos of cricket and football teams from the past and earnest discussions on whom were particular players. Pictures of the fire brigade in various years caused a similar response. The Clock House prompted the memory that the village had been entertained by the managing director of HMV playing his early models of the gramophone from its balcony. A picture of the High Road with the Sanway Laundry on one side and Arkel's (later Boundys) the haberdashery shop, showed how different Byfleet was then to how it is now.

By Doug Bright

### **New Members**

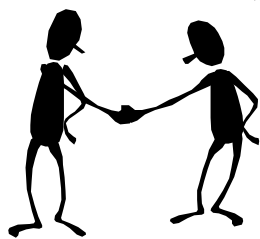
Mr R V Coakes  
Mr and Mrs E Robins  
Mrs Vater

### **Welcome to:**

Mr and Mrs M Bishop  
Mr and Mrs P Brown  
Mr and Mrs D Savory

Ms A Fabb

# SOCIETY NEWS



Thank you  
very much to

various members who have responded to cries for help in our last newsletter. Firstly to Pat Andrews and Janet Fludder who many of you will have seen at our talks providing very welcome refreshments, and Margaret Simmons who has also offered to help.

Also to Mike Weber who has offered to see what local museums might hold on Byfleet in order to compile a list for the Heritage Centre.

And thanks to Alan Griffiths for taking the trouble to write and send us his memories of his time at St Mary's School in the 1940s – my son who goes to St Mary's now was fascinated to read of lessons in the air raid shelter.

**Gratefully received.** *We have been lucky enough to receive more donations for our archive. Thank you to Richard Alder who has donated copies of the local paper The Review from the 1950s – these old papers are full of wonderful snippets like old advertisements for local shops and what was playing at the cinema. Many thanks also to David Chapman who after giving a fascinating talk back in March on West Hall, has given the Society a folder containing photocopies of his research. And thanks too to Miss J Cawsey who has donated a wedding photo of her father and mother taken outside the Village Hall, as well as some beautiful tray cloths embroidered by her mother. This lovely work won her a set of knives at Parish Day, and these have also been donated.*



**Sylvia McQuire of the West Surrey Family History Society** has the following query. Perhaps someone out there can help.



“Last July I wrote to you about my 2x great aunt Rosetta Ransom who ran a small school in Byfleet in the 1890s. At the time I was unable to identify the property with certainty due to the poor quality of the 1891 census. Through the 1881 census I have discovered the following: In 1881 John and Mary Crickson, both in their 60s, ran what appears to have been a children's home/orphanage on Foxlake Farm. The adjacent property at this time was Vanners Farm occupied by George Howard, who was also there in 1891. By 1891 my aunt had taken over the home/orphanage and it then became a school as she is described as a “certified teacher” and the children are listed as borders and scholars. I believe Rosetta Ransom died in Southwark in 1921 by I have no idea how long she was in Byfleet.”

If anyone knows or comes across any information on the above school in the Byfleet records, please forward it via Tessa Westlake, 8 Brewery Lane, Byfleet.



**Take a walk round Byfleet.** The Self Guided Walk Leaflet for Byfleet, with fine illustrations by Howard Cook, has now been completed. Copies are available free of charge from the Civic Offices, Woking Visitor Information Centre and Woking Library. A supply of leaflets is on the way to the Heritage Centre too, so why not pick up a copy and take a walk around our village.

**A New Idea!!** One of our members is interested in researching Byfleet's past, but would like some guidance about how to use the Record Office etc. She suggested forming a research group, made up of members, but with the extra ingredient of a "tame" researcher, archivist or other knowledgeable party who might be prepared to guide people in the right direction.



I think this would be an excellent idea, not only to encourage the more timid of us (like me!) to tackle the Record's Office, but also to gather together members already researching a subject or looking for information. A research group would be a great place to pool research and resources.

If there is enough interest, our member will search out a willing expert, so if you've always meant to get around to looking something up, but been afraid to ask, give Tessa Westlake a ring on 351559.

**And following on...** Simon Fowler, who came to give us a talk on the Public Records Office a while ago, is running a series of one or half day workshops on doing research and the major sources for local history over the summer and autumn. He will offer guidance and practical advice on how to get started and what to do once you are on your way. Workshops are likely to cost in the region of £10-£15 per person and will be held at the Records Office in Kew.

If you are interested and would like more information, please contact Jeff Sechiari, Manor Side East, Mill Lane, Byfleet, 341084



Parish day is almost here again. This year it is to be held on 18<sup>th</sup> July at Byfleet Recreation Ground. The Society will be there - as ever - and if you could help man the stand for half an hour or an hour during the afternoon we would be very grateful. Please contact Tessa Westlake on 351559. Thank you.

**Artists at Work!** We have launched a Poster competition at the three Byfleet schools (The Manor, St Mary's and Byfleet

Primary). The idea is to get the children to draw a poster to advertise the Heritage Society. Winners will be announced at Parish Day, and the winning designs will be on display there. The winners and other entries will also be in display at the Heritage Centre over the summer.

The committee is very much looking forward to the entries. So why not pop



along to Parish Day or the Heritage Centre to see what talented youngsters Byfleet has.

**Schools Adopt Monuments**

**Come and see what it means to Adopt a Monument!** The Schools Adopt Monuments Exhibition will be held from July 14<sup>th</sup> -18<sup>th</sup> at the function room at Woking Leisure Centre. On display will be a selection of the children's work on their chosen building or location, including some by our own Byfleet Primary on the manor and church. The children have all worked really hard, so go along and have a look.

## **Don't Forget**

*It's that time of year again – you should find a membership renewal form inside this newsletter. If you don't find a renewal form, then don't panic. This is probably because you have only recently joined, and therefore do not need to renew until this time next year. Subscriptions can be sent either to the membership secretary (address on form) or dropped into the library. Thank you for your support over the last year, and we hope to welcome you again this year*



## **Can you help?**

*We would like to offer lifts to those in need to the Village Hall or Heritage Centre when we have a talk or event. Would anyone able to help be willing to put their name on a list? We would then contact you if someone nearby needed a lift to an event, should you be going that way yourself. Please ring Tessa Westlake on 351559 – many thanks.*

## **Research Information News by Mike Webber.**

In the February newsletter it was suggested that someone might compile a list of what information on Byfleet is available and where to find it. I volunteered to take on the job. For this, the first of my occasional reports, I am passing on news about bringing all the departments of the Surrey History Service under one roof at Woking.

The move to the new centre in Woking means that there will be a period of a few months this year when researchers are unable to get access to records. Here are the latest details, obtained from the Guildford Muniment Room on 3<sup>rd</sup> June:

**Guildford Muniment Room**, Quarry Street, Guildford 01483 573942

This will be closed from Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> June 1998. Their research facilities are fully booked until then but cancellations may mean that there will be a few opportunities to go there.

**Surrey Local Studies Library**, Guildford Library, North Street 01483 534054

Closed from Monday 6<sup>th</sup> July 1998.

**Surrey Record Office**, County Hall, Kingston 0181 541 9065 & 9058

There will be a restricted service relating to original documents from 1<sup>st</sup> June. Access to OS maps and the microfiche/film and library material will continue until the Office finally closes from Monday 31<sup>st</sup> August 1998.

**Surrey History Centre**, 130 Goldsworth Road, Woking, Surrey GU21 1ND

The present target is for the new Centre in Woking to open in the second half of October 1998.

The Surrey History Service will be completely closed during September and early October except for urgent *legal* enquiries only which should be addressed to the new Centre in Woking. Up to date news on the Surrey History Service is on their website at <http://www.surreycc.gov.uk/libraries-leisure/shs>.

If anyone can help build up our list of information sources please contact me at 8, Old Orchard, Byfleet, West Byfleet, Surrey KT14 7RW or on 01932 344174. A file containing all the details will be available in the Society's cabinet at the Byfleet library