



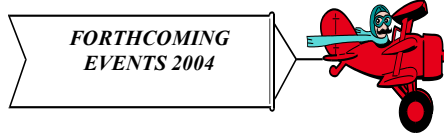
Byfleet Heritage Society.

Issue 24

Newsletter

March 2004

Not much room for the usual cheery greeting, as most of the page is taken up with details of all the events for the coming year. We hope you will enjoy them—hopefully there's something for everyone! Unfortunately, we are still in need of help, especially on the Events Organiser front—please see page 6 for details—thank you, and hope to see you all soon.



2004

Thursday APRIL 22nd: Mary Alexander from Guildford Museum on The History of Guildford Castle. Did you know that Edward I and his new bride Eleanor of Castile spent their honeymoon there? Find out all this and more! Byfleet Heritage Centre, Byfleet Library, 8.15pm.

Thursday MAY 20th: Society AGM followed by The History of St Mary's Church by Chris Glasow. Ever wondered anything about our local church? Come along and find out the answers tonight. Please note change of venue and time. CAWSEY ROOM, BYFLEET VILLAGE HALL, 7.30pm.

Thursday JUNE 17th: Iron Age Roundhouses, Settlement and Life in Surrey. Trudie Cole from the Surrey County Archaeological Unit will show us the very latest archaeological findings from the iron age from around the county. Byfleet Heritage Centre, Byfleet Library, 8.15pm.

FRIDAY 9th JULY: (Please note change of day). Iain Wakeford is conducting one of his excellent Heritage Walks around Byfleet, and we are going to join him. Meet at Byfleet War Memorial, High Road, Byfleet, 7pm. These walks do not cover too

great a distance, and are taken at a gentle pace.

Monday SEPTEMBER 13th: We are proposing to hold a workshop at Surrey History Centre to follow up on our event last year. Please see below for details and let me know if you are interested. If there is not sufficient interest, the event cannot go ahead.

Thursday OCTOBER 21st: The Wey Navigation Canal by Denys Wood from the National Trust at Dapdune Wharf. Come and hear about our nearest National Trust property, past present and future. Byfleet Heritage Centre, Byfleet Library, 8.15pm.

Thursday NOVEMBER 18th: Byfleet Oral History Group will tell us all about their latest project and about their success in collecting and preserving villager's valuable memories of the past. Byfleet Heritage Centre, Byfleet Library, 8.15pm.

Thursday DECEMBER 16th. Mike Webber will revive some memories of the shops and businesses that have been in the village. As usual, mince pies and Christmas cheer assured! Byfleet Heritage Centre, Byfleet Library, 8.15pm.

Members free. Non members £2 Everyone very welcome.

Workshop at Surrey History Centre (September 13th). As a follow up to our workshop last year, we are proposing an evening at the actual History Centre in Woking. Maggie Vaughan-Lewis will help out anyone who has started or wishes to start an actual topic of research. This will not be a talk, but a chance for some hands-on, active research with guidance from the professionals. You will appreciate that this workshop cannot be organised unless Maggie has some idea of which topics members would like to tackle, so that she can get the relevant documents from the archives. So if you have started research, or would like to, this is for you.

Number are limited to 10, and we need to know as soon as possible who is interested, as if we don't get the necessary numbers we will have to cancel. Please ring Tessa Westlake on 351559 to reserve your place, giving an idea of the subject you would like to delve into. Many thanks.

For the Record...

Did you miss a meeting? Find out how it

Members came along in **December** for our annual Christmas get together and also to view a video of a home movie made by St Mary's School in 1967. This was the year that the school moved from its first site on the corner of Rectory Lane to its present home, then a brand new building in Hart Road. The old school building, as many of you will know, is now St Mary's Day Centre.

The video shows the pupils and teachers of St Mary's going about their day. The old school buildings date from 1856, and when the children go out of the main door to the playground at break, you can clearly see marks in the outside wall where previous pupils had sharpened their slate pencils. These marks are still visible today.

The plaque on the wall, showing the date 1856 is shown, and is still there today. We could also see the pupils enjoying games like skipping and football which must have been played by schoolchildren since schools were invented. The background to the children was equally fascinating, showing some of the old shops on Petersham Parade as well as good views of Stream Cottages, which formerly stood in Stream Close. The British Legion club was also shown, which has only recently been demolished.

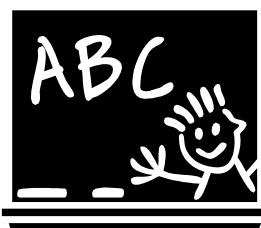
Some of the lessons inside were shown, and it was obvious that conditions weren't ideal. A drama lesson was shown, taking place as best it could amongst the crowded desks. Space was also a problem in a craft lesson, and the lighting too was rather poor. However, this didn't seem to be discouraging the children! The girls were busy with sewing and knitting, while the boys got stuck into Meccano and clay modelling, with a rather nice Viking long-boat being produced. Owing to the lack of facilities, a geography demonstration about water erosion took place out in the playground.

Lunch was next in the school day. The children had to walk across the road to eat their meal at the Village Hall, and the lollipop lady was shown escorting everyone across Rectory Lane. The children sat in the main hall, with the meals being served through the hatch from the kitchen which is still there today. Lunch had to be at the Village Hall, as the school hall was too small. An assembly was shown at the school hall, with the children coming in with their hymn books, and singing to the accompaniment of the piano and pupils on recorders, which brought back a lot of memories for me—I still have my recorder in a cupboard somewhere!

The assembly at the old school was contrasted with the first assembly at the new building, which was held in a large, light and airy room. However, not everything was quite ready on time, and there was still painting to be done, blackboards to go up, wiring to be completed and books to be unpacked. The school field was also still a little churned up from the builder's vehicles.

The new school facilities were then shown off—larger, lighter classrooms, all manner of gym equipment in the school hall, a new canteen—so there was no longer any need to trek to the Village Hall, a library run by the pupils, a large sports field for sports days and last but by no means least, a brand new swimming pool. This had been bought with help from the Parent Teacher Association, and the present pupils still enjoy swimming lessons on site to this day.

The video brought back a lot of memories, both for Byfleet residents who had attended the school themselves, and for those who, like me, had been to very similar schools all those years ago (although it only seems like yesterday!).



January's talk was from **Iain Wakeford**, who gave us an insight into his new book, **Woking Town Centre—An Illustrated History**. This covers the history of the central urban area of Woking, covering Walton Road, Maybury Hill, Goldsworth and Mount Herman, ranging from prehistoric burial mounds Horsell to the present day.



A Victorian picture of Woking showed how the area looked then—a few cottages on the heath, a pond, some geese. The Surrey heathland had been created in the Bronze Age through overfarming, but the sandy soil proved unsuitable for crops, leaving the way clear for the heath-loving plants to colonise.

In the 18th century the Basingstoke Canal was built through Woking. It took this route, rather than just heading north to join the Thames at Reading, as the heathland was much cheaper to buy, not being prime farm land. The canal brought some development to the area, such as the wharves (now Brewery Road car park and Brewsters Timber Yard). For the same reason, the railway also took a route by Woking. In May 1830, the London and Southampton railway reached Woking Common. By September it had been extended to Winchester, reaching Basingstoke in 1839 and finally Southampton in 1840.

The next major influence in Woking's development was the London Necropolis and National Mausoleum Company. London was running out of room to bury the dead. Therefore it was proposed to move burials away from the capital, using the new railway system. There were proposals to close every burial ground in the country and bury everyone at Woking. The cemetery at Brookwood was opened, but not all the land bought was needed for burials. Therefore permission was obtained to sell off the excess for the development of a new town centre. An Act of Parliament was needed, and the developers had to provide land near Woking Station for a church and a school. The land to the south of the station was good and could be sold in large plots. But the land to the north was boggy and not so good, and so only suitable commercial and lower class development. It was this variation in quality of the land which encouraged development of the town on the opposite side to Woking Station's main entrance!

The Albion Hotel was the first place to be built in Woking Town Centre in 1856/7. Its large garden extended from Chertsey Road to Chobham Road and along to Commercial Road. It was demolished in 1897, and the site again redeveloped in the 1960s. The first shopping centre was High Street, although the buildings had originally been constructed as houses. The shopping areas took up the old front gardens. Chertsey Road developed as a shopping area from the 1890s, with Barclays Bank on the corner, the post office and chain stores like Sainsburys, Freeman Hardy & Willis and Boots by 1924.

An picture of Woking from the air showed that nearly all the old buildings have made way for Wolsey Place, Cawsey Way and The Peacocks. Another change is the junction of Commercial Way and Chertsey Road, now covered by The Big Apple. There was an underground toilet at either end of Commercial Way—the one under the market is still there, but just covered up.

Woking Fire Brigade started off as a band of volunteers in 1894 with a handcart. They wanted to upgrade to steam power, but the council wouldn't grant the £400 needed. The council at that time were in temporary offices, hoping to build a permanent home (at a cost of £2,600!). Alas—there was a fire and the council offices burnt down! However, it all ended "happily ever after" - new offices were built for less, the steam fire engine was purchased and a new fire station built in the back garden of the new council offices, where it has stayed ever since! These offices are now the Post Office.

We saw the previous tenants of some familiar sites. The Co-op used to stand where Toys R Us is now, and the Wolsey Place car park was once the Salvation Army Citadel. Christ Church started out as a tin hut in 1877, with the present church started in 1887 and completed in 1908.

In 1894 the Woking Electric Supply Company came to North Road, and won the contract for Woking's street lighting. However, the supply was not that reliable and kept failing and the lights kept blowing. In 1900 the council decided to change back to gas lighting—just as the rest of Surrey were deciding to go to electric! Woking eventually became electric again in the 1930s.

As residents know, Woking saw huge redevelopment in the 1980s, with The Peacocks being built. And the story of Woking's development goes on into the 21st century with plans to bring the Surrey County Council central offices to the town. We thanked Iain for a glimpse into the process of Woking's development.

A chilly **February** night saw members gathering to see articles from the Society's archive that don't normally get to be on display. Also Mike Webber brought along the pictures from his talks on David Chapman's photos of the village. This provided a chance for people who hadn't made Mike's talk to see these great pictures, and awakened many memories and reminiscences.

The Society's archive contains maps—some originals and some photocopies—which we have recently put into archive quality pockets. These pockets were bought with some of the money raised from the L R Stevens book. We also have a small collection of postcards and photos, both old and new. There are a number of original items like a few Parish magazines and Parish Day programmes and a series of Byfleet Players programmes. Otherwise we hold mostly photocopied material from a whole range of sources such as old newspaper articles or items from the History Centre.

The beginnings of our collection came from Howard Cook who gave some of his maps and papers to our founder Doug Bright. Sometimes people donate old photos, postcards or magazines, and we are always grateful when people think of us in this way. And some people have given us copies of their research on a particular topic, such as the Cricket Club, which is wonderful.

As space is limited, we have to put a boundary on what we can collect. We decided, as Byfleet Heritage Society, that we should concentrate on the old Parish of Byfleet. We do have a few notes on Woking, but as a rule something like a large collection of maps of Woking or Weybridge, would probably be sent in the direction of Woking Galleries, Elmbridge Museum or the History Centre. Every so often someone will offer us a lovely collection, but if this is not related in some way to Byfleet, we sadly have to suggest another home. For instance, a collection of beer mats, while lovely, would probably not be taken unless they were from the Byfleet Brewery or referred to one of the Byfleet pubs.

Also, as we are not an actual museum, with museum facilities, we sometimes decide items would be better off at the History Centre where they can be better cared for. For instance, we were given a lovely photo of Vickers Factory that had been taken in the 1920s-30s. Sadly, as it had been in someone's shed for 70 years or so, its condition wasn't the best. So we passed it to the History Centre where it could be treated, stabilised and stored in proper conditions, and be available for anyone to see.

While the point of all this lovely stuff is so that people can use it and learn about Byfleet's past, we have to be a bit careful about access to it. Luckily we don't have the headache of holding anything of huge monetary value, but some of our items would not be easy to replace if anything happened to them. Apart from the risk of something being "borrowed", there is the question of simple wear and tear, possible damage or just things being put back in the wrong place, making it impossible for the next person to find. So we compromise by having a folder of reference material which people can look through as much as they want. A list of contents is displayed on the Heritage Centre wall. Just ask at the desk and the library staff will get it for you. Other items can be accessed through one of the Heritage Committee. It's not that we don't want to share, but we do need to be a bit careful. You can either leave a message at the library, or give Tessa a ring, and she can either let you know what we have on a subject, or get you a copy of something specific. The whole collection (mostly!) has been listed (726 items on 52 pages!), so a quick search on key words will usually throw up anything we might have.

So that is our archive. We hope to have more evenings where we can bring out items for everyone to see, and in the meantime, if there is anything you wish to see or would like a copy of, please don't hesitate to ask.



Questions and Ponderings

Jeff Sechiari asks:

Does anyone have any information, memories, photographs etc about the filming of Robin Hood at Park Barn Farm, in the woods by the Convent of Notre Dame and elsewhere locally? Also does anyone know of anything else being filmed in the area?

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We have also had a query from Gerry Moss from the Surrey Industrial History Group.

“I am writing to you to see if you can help with an enquiry I have concerning Byfleet Industrial School. The superintendent in the 1880s was Alfred Wells and I am trying to find out more about him. Do you know anything about the school and in particular when Alfred Wells was superintendent there ?”

If anyone has any information, please give us a ring, or you can contact Mr Moss directly on g.p.moss@gmul.ac.uk

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A couple of questions thrown up by Mike Webber’s display of some of David Chapman’s photographs of Byfleet:

Does anyone remember the new metal bridge arriving over the river at the Manor circa 1987? How did it get there?

There was a series of photos showing a new sewer being dug, going through Dartnell Park and heading off to Wisley. There was an archaeologist on duty during the digging—does anyone know if they found anything?

* * * * *

Also, we’re still on the trail of Jim Jarrett, the diver. In relation to this, does anyone know where on Oyster Lane there was a house called Kingsbury? Also where on Chertsey Road were Providence Cottages, Edensor or San Toy?

If something comes to light or to mind about the above, please contact Tessa Westlake (01932 351559 or tessa@westlakesystems.co.uk) or leave a note at Byfleet Library.

Some investigations



We had quite a few replies about Juniper Cottage, where the funeral procession began of PC Choate, killed in the Sidney Street Siege in 1911—thanks to everyone who rang up.

Suggestions ranged from Mill Lane and Kings Head Lane, where houses called Juniper Cottage still exist, to Church Road. I went to Surrey History Centre to check the Electoral Register for 1911. Mary Choate is listed at Juniper Cottage, a “dwelling house” in Chertsey Road. Ada Choate is listed at Golding Cottage, also in Chertsey Road. Does anyone know exactly where in Chertsey Road

these houses were?

SOCIETY NEWS



**HELP
WANTED**

Thanks to everyone who helped out after our appeal for help in our last newsletter. But unfortunately **we need more help!**

Unfortunately due to other commitments, Elaine Doe has had to give up the post of **Events Organiser** after a year on the job. Very many thanks to her for all her work.

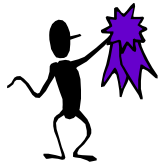
Therefore could we ask that **you** consider taking on the post. I have set up the talks for 2004, but, as you can see from the lateness of this newsletter, I find I can't take this job on on top of everything else. So we really do need your help.

With all events booked until the end of 2004, the lucky volunteer can ease gently into the job. To begin with, all the job would entail is one monthly phone call to the speaker to check everything is still OK. We also have a collection of contacts and ideas for future events, so there would be no need for massive research or brain-racking!

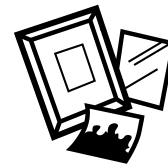
So we couldn't have made it a better or easier time for you to volunteer!

Please ring Tessa Westlake on 351559 if you want to help, or want to ask/discuss anything. Many thanks.

Following on from our appeal in the last newsletter, we'd like to thank all those of you who helped out at the Christmas Fair back in December. It was quite a day, and hopefully will be repeated this year.



We'd also like to thank Daniele Hart, who has joined us on the committee. We're very grateful to her for giving up her time for us.



Visitors to the Heritage Centre will have noticed that the print of a portrait of Anne of Denmark that was kindly donated to us by Mr Alfred Smith is now on display. It looks very eye-catching, and is placed next to an artist's impression of the palace that she built on the site of the present Manor House.

Very many thanks to Mr Smith for his kind donation.

This year Woking Community Play Association will be performing a play based on the true case of the

Murder at the Blue Anchor.

Eighty years ago Frenchman Jean Pierre Vaquier was convicted of poisoning Alfred George Poynter Jones the owner of the Blue Anchor Hotel in Byfleet, and the husband of his lover Mabel Jones. The play has been written by members of the WCPA, based on material from local history books.

The play will be staged close to the original scene of crime at ***St Mary's School, Hart Road, Byfleet*** on the ***16th and 17th April*** (Friday and Saturday after Easter).

Tickets are £5.00 to include refreshments. contact **Anna Molesworth 01483 832089**

Woking History Society programme 2004

April 5th To Our Lady, the Church and the Poor: Religious Faith and Charity in Woking 1480-1580 Mr Alan Crosby

June 7th Chestnuts: Why did the Romans introduce them Mr Chris Howkins

September 6th The National Trust and the Wey Navigation Mr Denys Wood

October 4th the early history of cycling in Surrey Mr Les Bowerman

November 1st the last 40 years in the National Health Service by Doctor J Weston

December 6th AGM followed by Members' Evening including an historical "Call My Bluff" session

Meetings are at Mayford Village Hall, Saunders Lane, Mayford