



Byfleet Heritage Society.

Issue 27

Newsletter

March 2005

Despite the freezing weather, spring is on the way at last, and we have some new meetings with which we hope to whet your appetite. Below are details of the upcoming talks kindly booked for us by Chris Glasow. Chris is working hard to book a series of interesting and varied speakers for your delight and entertainment throughout the year. Our meetings play a huge part in making the Society what it is, allowing members to meet up with each other and also advertising the Society to the general public, so we are very grateful to Chris for giving us his time and help. So mark the dates on your calendars and we hope to see you there. Don't forget, too, that non-members are very welcome to any of our events for a mere £2 on the door, so bring a friend and the more the merrier. As soon as we confirm our list for the year, the usual leaflet will be issued, but until then, watch this space!

FORTHCOMING
EVENTS 2005



2005

Thursday 17th MARCH: Judie English from **Surrey Archaeological Society** will explore the world of **Landscape Archaeology**. Come and find out how to tell what went on in our landscape by reading the existing clues.

Byfleet Heritage Centre, Byfleet Library, 8.15pm.

Thursday 14th April: David Barker will tell us of the "**The History of Addlestone**", our near neighbour.

Byfleet Heritage Centre, Byfleet Library, 8.15pm.

Thursday 19th May: Society AGM followed by **Barry Davis** on "**The Secret Garden**".
Cawsey Room, Byfleet Village Hall, 7.30pm (please note earlier start and change of venue)

Thursday 23rd June: to be confirmed.
Byfleet Heritage Centre, Byfleet Library, 8.15pm

Thursday 21st July: Alan Winn will come to give us an insight into the glamorous world of early motor racing and aviation with the "**History of Brooklands**".

Byfleet Heritage Centre, Byfleet Library, 8.15pm.

Thursday 15th September: To be confirmed.

Thursday 13th October: Chris Glasow comes to give us the second part of his fascinating **History of Byfleet Church**. Come and find out about our local church.

Byfleet Heritage Centre, Byfleet Library, 8.15pm.

Thursday 10th November: To be confirmed.
Byfleet Heritage Centre, Byfleet Library, 8.15pm.

Thursday 8th December: Society Christmas Get-together. Speaker is yet to be confirmed, by Christmas cheer and the odd mince pie is assured. **Byfleet Heritage Centre, Byfleet Library, 8.15pm.**

Members free. Non members £2
Everyone very welcome.

For the Record...

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



In **November** the Society were very pleased to have a special visit to **St Mary's Church**, to see "in the flesh" some of the things mentioned by Chris Glasow in his interesting talk back in May. Jim Allen acted as our tour guide.

There has been a church on the site since Saxon times, but now the oldest parts, just as you enter the church, date from the time of King Edward II.

Before the 1863 renovations, there were two galleries, one above the nave along the north wall, and the other along the end of the nave under the bell tower. The first window to the right of the doorway (from the inside) was originally the entrance to these galleries. Wealthy parishioners would have attended services here.. Above and to the left of the main door are some fine medieval wall paintings. There is a consecration cross by the door (originally one of 12) and a picture of an unidentified king. Some say he is King David or King Solomon, some say Edward II or even Jesus. The paintings are covered with lines forming what look like blocks of masonry and this possibly dates from the Civil War, when all imagery in churches was frowned upon and many medieval pictures were painted over.

Many former villagers are commemorated on the church walls. Some famous, such as Joseph Spence, a former vicar and well-known poet in his day. Some less so, such as Admiral Wonham, owner of a ceremonial sword that was dug up in his former back garden and given to the Society. Further along the nave is the pulpit which dates from 1616. It is painted with the initials RS, but who or what this refers to is a mystery.

There is still some ancient stained glass still in the church. Some 14th century glass on the north wall of the chancel is not original to the church, but a head of Christ and a probable coronation of the Virgin in an east window is original. There is a fine commemorative brass to Thomas Teylar, Rector of Byfleet from 1454-89 now on the wall behind the pulpit. This was originally set into the floor of the chancel, and this is where Thomas still lies. And Jim pointed out that if you turn with your back to the altar and look up above the archway leading to the chancel, two stone memorials remain high up on the wall. Unfortunately for whoever is commemorated there, it is not easy to read the names carved on them, and they are easily missed by passers by.

The font dates from the 15th century. It originally stood at the west end of the church and had a painted conical lid which has at some time sadly disappeared. The font is octagonal and carved with alternate quatrefoils, angel's heads and shields. The shields are blank although why is unknown—perhaps it was never finished.. It was quite a thought to think of all the people of Byfleet who had been christened in that font over the years. It was also very moving to stand in front of the collection of wooden grave markers of Byfleet men who fell in the First World War. These were collected and brought home by Mr F C Stoop and placed as an unusual memorial in the church that the men would have known.



Also on display for the evening was a collection of photographs and pictures given to the Society by Monica Ransom, daughter of former vicar Rev Callendar Wake. There were photos of the old Rectory in the 1930s and 40s as well as copies of prints of the Rectory in the 18th century and the church from the early 1800s. Copies of the Parish Magazine from the 1920s and 30s were also on display, prompting quite a few memories from members present.

Thanks very much to Jim Allen for taking us around our local church and also to the Rector for letting us into the church on a wet November evening.

For our Christmas meeting, **Mike Webber** presented an illustrated talk on some of the shops and businesses that had existed in Byfleet in years gone by.

Mike had bought a booklet on Surrey at a postcard fair, and on sifting through it, he noticed the high number of adverts for firms in Byfleet, such as Royston Industries, Roycott Seeds and Fruit Protectors and Charles Austen. This led him to investigate further, and his talk was based on what he found listed for Byfleet under commercial entries in the Kelly's Directory 1938.

Byfleet contained a variety of different shopping areas. Chertsey Road contained a mixture of the ordinary, such as Miss Winifred Bedwell's wool shop, and the industrial, such as the Cumberland Mowers, G Berry & Sons saw mill owners and timber merchants (who sold blank dartboards among other things!) and not forgetting Tarrants Builders, with the phone number Byfleet 1—and two telephone lines!

Moving further into the village, we had Petersham Buildings. In what is now Lloyds Bank was Miss Evelyn Glide hairdressers, a fruiterer (now Raycross kitchen shop), a fishmonger (now the florists), an electric shop and a cycle shop.

There were a number of different parades built at varying times to supply the people of Byfleet: Hopfield Parade between the Village Hall and Hopfield Avenue, the older Commercial Buildings opposite Plough Green, Oak Parade at the end of High Road (where the chemist now is), one simply called The Parade which went from Studland Road along High Road. This housed a wool and knitcraft shop (now plumbing supplies), Ted's Café (now The Red Rose curry house), a wireless dealers and a bootmaker (where the beauty parlour now is). One member remembered that previously the shop had sold carved gravestones at the front—and children's clothes in the back! Mike also came across two other parades listed for High Road—Coronation Parade and Park Parade, but was not able to say with certainty where these were.

In the heart of the village, Foxlake Farm House was the home of Viola Axell Dog Breeder, next to the Byfleet Precision Tool Company Ltd run by Mr Moore in a tin shed. Opposite stood Chuter's tobacconists, which is now Byfleet DIY. A few months ago the shop sign was removed for repainting, and the original Chuter's sign was briefly visible.

Other businesses listed included Dedman motorcycle and tool dealer which was demolished to make way for the McCarthy and Stone building. Shortland Shoe shop is now Southern Demolition, and there was also Polley's chimney sweeps, a poultry farmer, the Fire Brigade, Ernest Griffin estate developer (who built Winern Glebe—a mixture of his name and his wife's), Byfleet District Angling Association and the Byfleet Miniature Rifle Club. One member revealed that Unity motors had once been Lucas General Stores (in the picture next to Derisley's Butchers shop), but before that it had been a potters and the kiln from that time still existed inside.

It was wonderful to see pictures of the old shops and to see how many businesses thrived in the village. It was also a reminder to us to keep using those shops in the village that still remain. We thanked Mike very much for another great tour of Byfleet's past.



Questions and Ponderings

We thought you might like an update on Jeff Sechiari's project to transcribe the **Byfleet Inclosure Act**. This book lists every field and the ownership and usage details, and provides an amazing snapshot of Byfleet at a particular point in time. The idea of providing a typed copy is to make the material easier to read and to access, as it would save having to trek to the History Centre to study it.

We are pleased to say that a few willing volunteers stepped forward and the process is now under way, and it really is very interesting reading. It's not too onerous a task and the writing isn't too hard to decipher. Also someone at the History Centre will be checking our efforts to ensure accuracy. So if you fancy joining in, you can type as many or as few entries as you can manage. Please get in touch with Jeff on **01932 341084**. Thanks very much.

We have had a call asking if we know anything about **Chapel Cottage**. Does anyone know of this house which stood—or maybe still stands—in Byfleet? Any information at all would be gratefully received. Please call Tessa on 01932 351559 or drop a note in at Byfleet library. Thanks very much.

Members might be interested in a find I made in St Mary's churchyard. You may know that the churchyard is often covered in molehills, and it was in the loose earth from one of these that I noticed some oddly shaped stones. There was also a small quantity of charcoal. I took the stones home and gave them a wash, and sent a picture of them to Trudie Cole at the Archaeological Unit at Surrey History Centre. She consulted her colleagues and it seems that the stones are metal working waste or slag from iron smelting. It is definitely not from blast furnaces, which came in around 1500AD. However, the more traditional way of working also continued after this date. So the only way to date the stones for sure would be carbon dating, which unfortunately costs a great deal of money. Could the stones be as old as the Iron Age? Kilns and furnaces have been found in the area at Wisley and Brooklands, but until something else turns up to aid dating, we won't know for sure. So if you see a strange figure roaming the churchyard rummaging in molehills, I haven't lost my marbles!! I am merely keeping an eye out for any clues as to the slag's origin—honest!

Tessa Westlake



Some answers to previous investigations

We have been told that the Wykeham Hatch that appeared in the book of photos brought to the Heritage Centre by Mr and Mrs Reynolds still stands in Dartnell Park. It was later split into two houses. Thanks very much to Janet Fludder for the information. It turns out that she used to work in the house in the 1960s.

You may remember from the last newsletter about Mrs Stevens from Lake Close and her ornamental brick found in her garden, inscribed "George V 1910". We still haven't found out where it is from or what it was for, so if you have any inkling, please let us know. Thank you.

BYFLEET LIBRARY

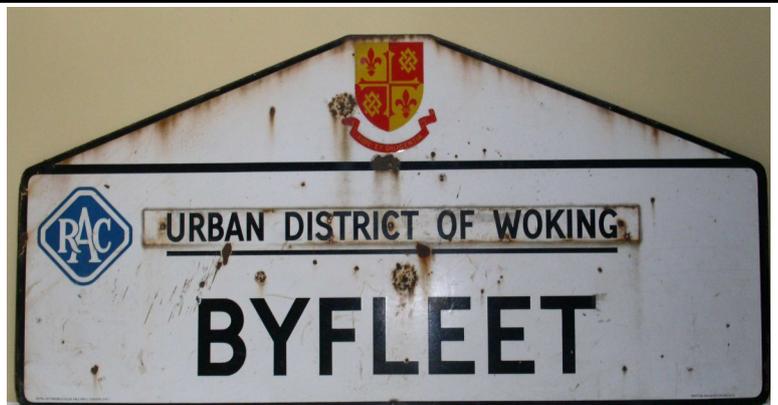
With all the various plans for Byfleet flying around, this seems like a good time to remind members to keep supporting our local library and keep encouraging friends and neighbours to do the same.

None of us wants to lose our library, but without the constant support of villagers they will find it harder and harder to justify their existence. All manner of local information can be found there, free internet access can be booked and there are a number of social clubs and activities on offer. And not least the staff always make every visit a friendly and pleasant occasion. Also on a purely selfish note, if the library closes, the Heritage Centre also loses its home, and finding another that so suits our needs would be no easy task.

So visit your library soon—it really is a case of “use it or lose it”

DO YOU REMEMBER THIS SIGN?

We were very pleased recently to receive this old Byfleet village sign which had been rescued by Mrs Baglow of Queens Avenue. She writes: “In 1980 when the M25 was being constructed I walked along the Parvis Road across what would now be the central reservation of the



motorway and found the old Byfleet road sign embedded in the sand. This sign used to be at the bottom of the hump-back bridge over the Wey Navigation Canal (on the Byfleet side) which everyone used in the “old days”. The M25 construction workers did not seem interested in this sign and allowed me to take it home. If I had not done this, the sign would have been buried under tons of concrete never to be seen again”. We are certainly very grateful to Mrs Baglow for rescuing this little piece of Byfleet’s history and for kindly giving the sign to the Heritage Society and we hope to have it on display in the Heritage Centre in

St Mary’s Day Centre would like to put on a display to mark the 60th anniversary since the end of World War 2. They are looking to borrow any pictures or items anyone might have relevant to that time. If anyone has anything they might like to loan, or that we could scan for them, please contact Tessa Westlake on 01932 351559.
Thanks very much.



Woking History Society have a couple of interesting meetings coming up. Meetings are at Mayford Village Hall, Saunders Lane, Mayford, 8pm, non-members £2.
4th April: The Use of Oral History in Drama by Rib Davis
6th June: Aerial Photography and its Application in Historical Research by David Graham
5th September: Tudor Surrey
3rd October: The History of Mouchel’s West Byfleet by Ken Bewsey
7th November: Pyrford
5th December: AGM and Members Evening