

For the Record...

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

Phone 449 Byfleet. Daily Deliveries in all Districts.
Sea Fisheries
BYFLEET, WOKING, PORTSMOUTH
FISH CATERERS AND POULTERERS (Wholesale and Retail)
Speciality - - FISH CAKES DAILY

To open the year, Jeff Sechiari continued his tour of the old shops of Byfleet. First he addressed a couple of questions posed by our last visit. W N Ashworth's chemist was in the shop now occupied by Boots. Mr Webb was the chemist there, and he later bought the shop and changed the names to Webbs. Sea Fisheries was thought to have been or have become Josie's Fish Shop, where Richard and Jean's flower shop is now. They offered fish cakes daily!

Jeff continued his tour around the village, starting with Hopfield Parade by the Village Hall. This was thought to have consisted of Kingston's Fish Shop, Rannies chemist's, Athols green grocer's, Betty Brown the hairdresser, Venn the butcher, a grocer's shop and on the end was MacDonald's tobacco and sweet shop which also contained a library. After crossing Hopfield Avenue, which was built before the parade, you came to Tyler's wine shop. The second building was originally only a single storey and was a second hand clothes shop during the war. The rest was added after the war, and the shop that is now Head First was added in the 1960s. This was originally Phyllis' ladies clothes shop and haberdashers and sold Ladybird children's clothes.

The street numbering used in some of the adverts caused some headaches in trying to locate the shops. Maison George the hairdressers, Jumbo's sweet shop and Betty Brown were all at various times listed at 72 High Road. The audience consensus was that Betty Browns stood next door to Rannies in the middle of Hopfield Parade, and Maison George may have been on the corner next to the Plough, in what was later known at the Log Cabin (now Treasures opposite the Binfield Bakers). It was thought that almost the whole of Byfleet was renumbered in the 1950s and the Sanway area in the 1960s. Before that, there were a lot of addresses such as York Cottages 1 and 2. As one member commented, when Byfleet's post was sorted behind the post office by local people, this did not pose a problem, but later the sorting was moved to Weybridge so the element of local knowledge was lost.

The Copper Kettle restaurant was fondly remembered as a lunching spot by people from BAC, where a tasty meal could be had for 1/6.

The first shop in the parade leading from Beech Close to the Plough pub was Albrecht's. This had been a very high class grocer's before the war, but went into decline. It was remembered that the old dear who served there was always in full Victorian dress. They were also a hay, straw and corn merchant and would give a discount

ALBERT SHORTLAND

THE NOTED HOUSE FOR RELIABLE FOOTWEAR
QUALITY SHOE REPAIRS SURGICAL BOOTMAKING

HIGH ROAD, BYFLEET
Also at WOKING and COBHAM

to farmers who paid in cash. This shop was later a bicycle shop and Shortland's shoes. Shortlands were a Woking company with several branches, one of which had originally been next to Byfleet war memorial. When these buildings were knocked down to build the office block, they moved to Albrecht's old shop. A Miss Moor worked in Shortlands all her life and her mother was one of the Shortland family. After she retired she could be seen pushing her mother around the village in her wheelchair. The rest of the parade consisted of the Gas Showrooms (now the plumbing shop), a fish shop, Wosley's, Howe's gentlemen's outfitters (in half of what is now the cafe), and Albrecht's on the end. One member remembered Howe's having a doorway with a large advertising plaque on it with, he thinks, a gentleman advertising overalls.

In between the outhouse on the end of the parade and the Plough pub was a wall with a gents' toilet on the other side. This was later knocked down and the pub garden opened up. During the war that corner had some bad luck. A Bren gun carrier mounted the pavement and one person was killed, and also a load of oil bombs landed there (and also near the Queen's Head). They caused a lot of mess, but luckily no serious damage.

So much was discussed and so many memories revived that there is not room to recount it all here, and we had still not completed our tour around the village. It was agreed that the shops would be the subject of another talk in March.

WINE and Cocktail Glasses
BEERS
CYDERS
SQUASHES

WINE
SPIRITS
MINERALS

for your Coronation Party
loaned FREE

If you see the manager of your local Tyler's branch he will tell you how you can borrow all the glasses you need for your Coronation Party—FREE. A good supply of glasses is available at the moment. But, as we anticipate a heavy call on this free glass service, we suggest you see the manager of your local Tyler's branch NOW.

Tyler and Co. Ltd.
WOKING
Wine and Spirit Merchants from London to the Coast

WEST BYFLEET—
4 BANK BUILDINGS
Telephone Byfleet 88

BYFLEET—
80 HIGH ROAD
Telephone Byfleet 109

At **February's** meeting our speaker was **Roger Bird** who took us back to the **Birth of Brooklands** and the construction of the track.

This was a mammoth undertaking. All the labouring and earth shifting was done using horses and carts, with help from two steam locomotives. The River Wey was diverted and parts straightened and 30 acres of woodland was cleared. Earth was moved from one part of the track and used to build up other parts, with the ultimate height of the banking marked by poles and cross pieces. Work began on the last day of August 1906; by October most of the woodland was cleared, but that month also saw twice the usual rainfall, meaning that by November the River Wey was in flood. There were also problems with the mixing of the concrete used to build the track, meaning that there was some variation in quality.



Before the track was built, the area was criss-crossed by footpaths, going from Oyster Lane to Byfleet, from Brooklands Farm out to the entrance lodge on Brooklands Road, and a third followed the old entrance road to the original Brooklands House. This large house had been demolished in 1803, but it is thought that some traces of it were found during the building of the track. An old photo seemed to show some brickwork where the track was being built. Also in a picture of Members' Hill, some ornamental trees outlining a winding path had belonged to the original house.

The original plan had been to keep the footpaths open. Originally the racing was run along the same lines as horse racing. As the finish in horse racing was probably the most important part, so grandstands were built at Brooklands with a good view of the finishing line. However, it soon became apparent that the two footpaths that crossed the track were being used by people to view the motor racing action at all parts of the track - for free! The management applied to the Council to have the footpaths closed on ground of public safety. There were many objections, but in the end the Council agreed.

Naturally with such heavy earth shifting going on, the railway was hugely important to Brooklands' construction. In total approximately 5 miles of track were laid around the site, with 80 wagons and 2 locomotives at work. Roger pondered as to where the railway came into Brooklands from the main line. We know that in February Hugh Locke-King applied to South Western railways for a spur line, and it is thought that this branched off from the main line into a siding just past Weybridge Station on the down side. There was also a marshalling yard and locomotive sheds with a water tower near Byfleet Road (now Brooklands Road) just past the finishing straight fork.

Of course none of this would have been possible without a large workforce of labourers. Roger showed us a photo of Locke-King in the middle of the workmen, holding one of his many poodles which were always called John. Many of the men came up from Locke-King's estates in Sussex, arriving in 1906 and staying until the middle of 1907, although many did end up staying in the Byfleet area.

As well as the navvies, there were specialist tree fellers, who it is believed worked for no charge other than to be able to take the wood for sale (Roger said that as yet he had not come across any evidence of bills for the tree felling). Extensive saw mills were set up near the Judges' Box opposite the paddock, which could not have been cleared until the very end of construction, as all the benches and grandstands were made from the trees that were felled.

Accommodation for the navvies caused some local concern, and the building of Brooklands would have seen around 2,000 extra men, women and children descending on the area. Around 500 came down from Charing Cross every day from the works at Hampstead tube line, attracted by the 24 shillings a day pay. Many of the navvies travelled from job to job, living at their place of work in makeshift shelters, and so were regarded with suspicion by the local inhabitants. A formal complaint was made and a report commissioned by Parliament. As a result all the temporary shelters were torn down, and the vicar of Byfleet asked to set aside a room for the navvies' use and provided with a supply of coal. For some reason the navvies never came to use the room—so the vicar asked permission to keep the coal! The workmen caused a lot of local disruption, and the constructors of the track were blamed for not foreseeing this.

We thanked Roger for a fascinating insight into the birth of this major local landmark.

In **March** we continued our look at Byfleet's shops over the years. We picked up our tour at Plough Corner where the Binfield Bakers has stood for many years. Two adverts from 1909 and 1937 showed how long a former owner, the Scherers, were in residence. The building has not changed much in the meantime, although an old postcard shows the door to the shop on the corner of the building. In 1944 the owners were A G Bury who had moved from Tewkesbury Close to Byfleet, and then later went to West Byfleet.

H. C. SCHERER,
Fancy Bread and Biscuit Maker,
Pastrycook and Confectioner.

Cakes and Pastry of all kinds fresh daily.
 Wedding & Birthday Cakes. Superior Nursery Biscuits

BINFIELD BAKERY, Byfleet.

Travelling along High Road you would have come to Boundy's haberdashers, which promised "Up to Date Service with Old Fashioned Courtesy", and opposite stood Lovesy's Old Log Cabin tobacco shop (now Treasures). This also sold a variety of things, and one member remembered they had a radio relay station, which could relay two radio stations to houses in Byfleet.

E. H. LOVESY,
The Old Log Cabin Tobacco Shop.
For everything Wireless, Overhauls and Repairs.
Accumulators Charged.

Electric Lamps, Bells and Fittings, Wiring.
 Gramophones and Records. Expert Repairs on the Premises.
 Fishing Tackle. Cameras and Photographic Materials.
 Developing and Printing.

HIGH ROAD - BYFLEET.

A big feature of Byfleet life was the Sanway Laundry. It stood opposite the Binfield Bakery on the site of the old Byfleet Brewery. Jeff wondered if the laundry had used the old brewery buildings or built new premises on the site. An member of the audience told of the drying grounds in what is now Beech Close, and also that there were two laundry sites. The other was near Binfield Cottages in Sanway Road, with a drying ground on the site of the Sanway Stores. A hooter used to sound at 8am and 1pm to summon the workers, and member Sheila Bailey recounted that her husband, Jack, had had to take the clean laundry in a trolley across the fields from Sanway to the Manor, where he had to wait until it had all been checked by the staff. Two of the former laundry staff were remembered—Titch, the laundry driver, was a common site in the village. He had previously worked for Athols the grocers and, as he was only about 4'6" tall, he used to sit on an upturned fruit basket in order to see over the wheel. The boiler man Jimmy Muggerridge was also recalled. He lived in Petersham Avenue near York Road, and had a lucky escape one Saturday morning. He had got the boilers going in the laundry in the early morning and returned home to bed. A lone German raider chose to have a go at the Hawker's factory, and the plane's machine gun came off the plane, through Jimmy's roof and landed in his bed.

On the corner of Brewery Lane stood Vanners Farm, and then W A Chuter's newsagent's (now the fencing/DIY shop). This was *the* newsagent in Byfleet, and also a library. The proprietor was a brother in law of Barry Chuter the baker, and both of his sons rode in the Byfleet Broadsiders cycle racing team. On the opposite side of the road stood Chuter's garage (previously Rowley's, then Chuter's, then it was owned by Francis Beard who would tune Norton motor bikes in the back). The garage was on the corner, with workshops at the back. Motorcyclist Ray Petty worked for him and used to ride a BSA Bantam. He had this tuned up at the garage, and one member remembers after this was done, seeing Ray airborne coming over



Parvis Bridge! Next to the garage were Brackadale Kennels, which were later bought up by the garage for expansion. The whole site later became a petrol station and is now flats.

The space between Chuters and the Post Office was filled with hoardings. Some members remembered watching fascinated as advertising posters were pasted up. The bed shop used to be Byfleet's Co-op, but before that (just before the Second World War) had been a piggery run by Mr Smithers. (cont p 5)

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QUESTIONS AND QUERIES
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A point of discussion at one of our talks about the shops was this picture. It shows the Whittingham and Mitchell factory which was in the area of Beech Close with, it was thought, an entrance in the gate opposite the Binfield Baker's. Boats were built there, and the factory was possibly set up during the Second World War to take some of Vickers' production. It is thought that Austin's Furniture works was previously on the site. This moved to the Petersham works in York Road and became Byfleet Furniture. If anyone knows any more about the factory, please let us know by either leaving a note at Byfleet library or on our website (www.byleetheritage.org.uk), or give Tessa a ring on 01932 351559.

From the corner of Studland Road ran a wool shop, Ted's Cafe (otherwise dubbed "Luigi's High Class Catering Establishment!"), Goldings which sold radios and bikes, Cullingham's and Mrs Sear's shop which sold tombstones in the front, and children's clothes in the back! Further round, the garage had once been a Mobil petrol station and opposite that had stood Foxlake Farm. The farm had once belonged to Christ's Hospital, and the barn was marked with crosses to signify this. Next to the farm stood Digby's high class grocers, which in 1909 was proud to advertise its "Italian warehouseman", and in 1944 provided "honey from our own bees". One member remembered the shop cat who would sit on the bins of oats.



Finally we reached the last parade of shops opposite the Blue Anchor pub, known as Coronation Parade. Munday's cafe stood on the corner next to Circle Gardens (it was remembered that this had always been some sort of restaurant or cafe), Elkins' sweet shop, a hairdressers, and Brockwell's greengrocer's (who later moved to Kingston market).

Many memories had been revived by our trip round Byfleet, and it is interesting to see how many shops have come and gone, but also how many similar businesses are in the same place now.

SOCIETY SNIPPETS

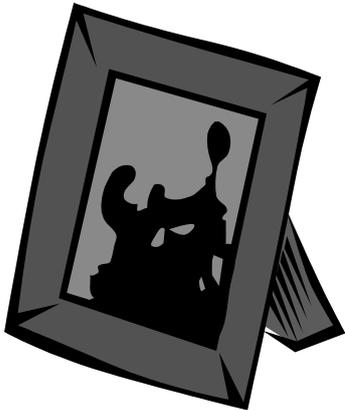
VISIT TO WEST HALL

As you may be aware, there has been a lot of work going on at West Hall to convert it into a care home. Work is now complete, and Anchor Homes have agreed to show the Heritage Society around to see what they have done.

The visit will take place on **Saturday 26th May** at 10.30am. Numbers will be limited to 25, so book your place early. We will be taking names at our next meeting on 19th April, so come along and let us know if you would like to come. If you are unable to make our meeting but would like to put your name down, please give Tessa a ring on 01932 3512559.



NEW DONATION! We were delighted to be given two pictures. One was a composite picture of drawings of Byfleet landmarks by Pam Starling, and the other was produced for the Millennium and shows scenes from the Borough of Woking.



We hope to have these on display in the Heritage Room shortly, so pop in and see them.

Thanks very much to Avreil Fabb for giving us these lovely items for our archive.

DON'T FORGET! Our AGM is fast approaching, and we hope to see you on Thursday 17th May—don't forget the earlier start time of 7.30pm.

This year our speaker will be Iain Wakeford and there will also be the opportunity to pay subscriptions for the coming year. Full details in the letter enclosed and we look forward to seeing you!



For those of you on-line, or who use the computers at the library, you may like to have a browse on the Pathe News website (<http://www.britishpathe.com/>). This has 90,000 historic clips of film, from footage of the Titanic and The Beatles to clips closer to home. A search for Byfleet reveals 4 different films including a very interesting one of the Girl Carpenters at what is probably Tarrant's yard and features the outside of the Village Hall. The site is well worth a look—but be warned! It can get very addictive!

Roger Bird's fascinating new book about the Birth of Brooklands is now available. This is available from the Brooklands Museum shop at £19. The Society has some copies to sell at a small discount. It is a fascinating story, so if you would like a copy please see Jeff Sechiari for details at one of our meetings.

THE BIRTH OF BROOKLANDS



ROGER BIRD

Don't forget! The Society website is up and running. Why not have a look at the forum, which is now building into quite a collection of memories—and maybe add some of your own! There is lots of other information there too, so why not take a look and see what you can find.

Find us at
www.byfleetheritage.org.uk