

*The summer is almost over, and September sees our monthly meetings start up again after the summer break, so we hope to see you there. We are sorry that there has been a slightly longer wait than usual since our last issue, but thank you for bearing with us, and we hope you enjoy its contents despite the wait.*

*You will find news of the unveiling of the first blue plaque in Byfleet, dedicated to the Stoop family—please see below for details, and come along if you can. Also, if you haven't managed yet to renew your subs for this year, details are on the back page.*

FORTHCOMING  
EVENTS 2015



**Thursday 10th September:** Join us as John Clarke tells us all about "**The History of Brookwood Cemetery**". *St Mary's Centre for the Community, Stream Close, 8.15pm.*

**Thursday 8th October: An Evening of short talks by members.** Our own members take the floor this evening to give short talks about their particular interests. *St Mary's Centre for the Community, Stream Close, 8.15pm.*

**Thursday 12th November:** Martin Cutler returns to continue his talk about the **Second World War**. *St Mary's Centre for the Community, Stream Close, 8.15pm.*

**Thursday 10th December: Christmas Social.** Nibbles and drinks, together with Mike Webber's annual **Collection of new Photographs** that the Society has come by throughout the year. *St Mary's Centre for the Community, Stream Close, 8.15pm.*

**Members free, Guests £2  
Everyone very welcome!**

**Don't forget—if you have a topic or an idea for a talk, please let us know.**

### Frederick Cornelius Stoop

We would like to invite you to the unveiling of a blue plaque (the first in Byfleet) at 2pm on Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> September in commemoration of Frederick Cornelius Stoop and Agnes MacFarlane Stoop. The location is Byfleet Village Hall, High Road, Byfleet, Surrey KT14 7QL. Others present will include the Cultural Attaché/ Deputy Head of Public Diplomacy at the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, the Deputy Mayor of the Borough of Woking, local councillors, and members of the Stoop family. The unveiling will be followed by a short informal reception.

As you know, Frederick Cornelius Stoop was a member of a prominent Dutch family, who came to this country in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. When he married he moved to West Hall. During his lifetime in the village, he became well-known as a philanthropist and benefactor, and as a result was held in high esteem locally.

Although he provided the finance for many local buildings, including Byfleet Village Hall, two boathouses on the Wey Navigation Canal, a cricket club, and a new church, St John's at West Byfleet, there is no memorial as such to him and his wife (apart of course from the naming of Stoop Court).

Byfleet Heritage Society is pleased to rectify this omission, and I hope that you will be able to join us for this significant event.



## For the Record...

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

In April, we were pleased to have a second talk from Martin Cutler who this time displayed some of his medal collection from the Second World War, and told us the fascinating stories behind them which, Martin explained, are as important to medal collectors as the actual medals, as they keep the people who originally earned them alive. He also told us that the Second World War medals were designed by King George VI, with the different coloured ribbons signifying different things. For instance, the ribbon for the Air Crew Europe Star (right) is pale blue for the sky, with black edges for night flying, and a yellow stripe for enemy searchlights.

Martin told us many stories of bravery behind some of the medal groups he had collected; sadly there is only room here to include a few. Pilot Officer P G Dexter joined the RAF in 1938, and before the Battle of Britain he flew Lysanders in France. During a reconnaissance flight over Amiens he was attacked, and earned a citation for the DFC for shooting down two planes, returning to base safely despite a damaged rudder. He was evacuated back to England, but when Air Chief Marshal Dowding made a request for pilots, Dexter volunteered and was sent to Fighter Command, flying with No 54 Squadron and then No 603 Squadron, where he flew Spitfires. He was friends with another pilot, Philip Cardell, with whom he was in combat over the English Channel. Cardell destroyed one German plane, but is thought to have been wounded in the engagement. He tried to get back to the English coast, but had to bale out a quarter of a mile off Folkestone. Dexter tried to attract the attention of people on the beach to Cardell's plight. When he failed to do so, Dexter made a forced landing on Folkestone beach, commandeered a boat and headed for his friend but Cardell was dead when they reached him. He was only 23 years old. Dexter himself was killed in action on 14th July 1941, after colliding with a Spitfire from No 54 squadron. Although he managed to bale out, he did not survive and is buried at Samer, France.

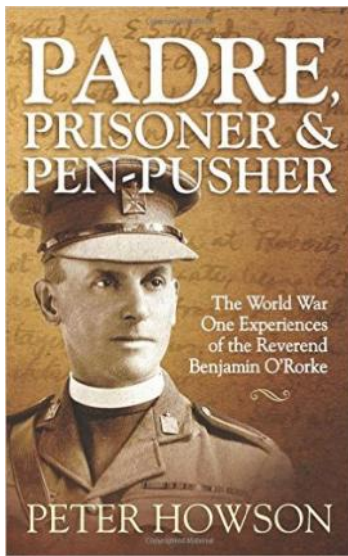


Wing Commander Coplestone Lemon was a pre-war regular, and although he was not a brilliant flyer to begin with (he managed to crash his commanding officer's plane!) he went on to be awarded both the Distinguished Service Order (left) and the Distinguished Flying Cross (right), the 1939-45 medal, the Air Crew Europe medal and the Africa Star, and was mentioned in dispatches. A photo of his wife, Dot, was his prize possession and went with him everywhere. On the day of his posting to the Middle East, Peter was married in the morning, played rugby for the RAF in the afternoon, and was taken off at half time to be sent on his posting. He was later sent to 12 Squadron, and was shot down on his 76th mission. His poor wife received a telegram saying that he was missing, but later heard from a Lord Haw Haw broadcast that he was a prisoner of war, which was later confirmed by the Red Cross.



He was a prisoner at Sagan at Stalag Luft 3, from where he made three escape attempts. The first one was on the roof of a delivery lorry, and he actually got all the way to the docks at Danzig, where he was captured waiting to board a ship. His second attempt was via a tunnel from the latrines. Unfortunately someone had forgotten to put in a trapdoor to the entrance of the tunnel, so their escape had to be made through two days worth of - well, you can guess! But he was at large for four days before being picked up. He was force marched from Saganto Luckenwald in the winter of 1944/5 in sub zero temperatures. He tried one escape attempt during the Great Escape. A New Zealander was supposed to be keeping watch for German guards, sitting on an old barrel, innocently reading a book. When anyone approached, he was supposed to knock on the wall. Five Germans approached, but there was no signal. Luckily someone else was able to tip off the escapers. When asked what had gone wrong, the New Zealander explained that his book was printed on flimsy war-time paper which was disintegrating in the rain, and the man had become absorbed in trying to finish his story before it all disappeared. After the war, Peter found he had been awarded the DSO in 1942, but due to being captured he was unable to pick it up until 1946, when it was presented to him by the King. He then flew Dakotas during the Berlin Airlift, completing 130 supply missions, finally retiring from the RAF in 1957.

This is only a sample of the fascinating stories behind some of the medals in Martin's collection. We thoroughly enjoyed hearing about the men behind the medals, and the stories of their bravery and service. Many thanks to Martin for talking to us, and for bringing along so many of his medals for us to look at.



Following his previous talk on army chaplains, we were pleased to welcome back Rev. Dr Peter Howson to tell us about his new book entitled "Padre, Prisoner and Pen-Pusher: The World War One Experiences of the Reverend Benjamin O'Rorke". Rev Howson had bought O'Rorke's diary from a second hand book seller. It covers January to June 1918, giving particular insight into his life, and it became the basis for his book.

Rev Howson has always been fascinated by the work of individuals, and particularly how chaplains face up to being part of the army. Being within the church, yet within the army has always created a sense of tension for chaplains. By the end of the First World War particularly, there was a lot of negativity about them. Robert Graves' "Goodbye To All That" was particularly scathing about Anglican chaplains, and this set the tone as to how people regarded the First World War as people began to contemplate what had happened. Rev Howson wanted to see what had actually happened, how the chaplains worked and the pressures they were under.

Rev O'Rorke went to war in 1914 as a regular army chaplain, and managed to survive the whole of the war, but died of the Spanish Flu on 25th December 1918. O'Rorke had written a book, "In the Hands of the Enemy", about his time in the war from August 1914-August 1915. He left his wife and three small children and went to France, where he was caught up in the general withdrawal of the British Army after Mons. There had been heavy casualties, and one hundred men were too badly injured to be moved. It was decided to leave them stay in a barn to be handed over to the Red Cross by the Germans, and Rev O'Rorke stayed with them. As a chaplain, he expected to be exchanged after capture, but found, to his dismay, that he was taken prisoner and sent to a camp in Torgau. At first he demanded to be sent home, but after a while he set up a congregation in the camp, so that when he was offered release in 1915, he declared he did not want to go, and had to be ordered home. He took four or five months off from his ministry, which is when he wrote his book. It was one of the first accounts about being a prisoner of war in Germany.

Ben O'Rorke grew up in Nottinghamshire. His father was a hotel keeper and his brother, Fred, was in the regular army as a vet. His brother's diary is in the Imperial War Museum, and tells how the army moved animals to France. Ben was prepared for confirmation by his vicar, Llewellyn Gwyn, who later became Bishop of Bangor. Gwyn was made head of a breakaway group of chaplains in France, and largely organised O'Rorke's career, and in 1917 he took O'Rorke off the front line to work for him as staff chaplain. O'Rorke's diary covers his time in this post.

His diary gives a picture of the man in his office and within the administrative machinery, but his diary is also interesting for what it does not contain. There is no mention of any other denomination other than Church of England, and he only records one death among the chaplains, that of Maurice Peel on March 21st 1918. He also says very little about the ending of the war, and it contains no sense that the Allies were ever going to lose. In the winter of 1917/18 the chaplains were concentrating on general morale. They issued a tract signed by Field Marshal Haig, Llewellyn Gwyn and John Sims, about the nature of British society as it should be after the war was finished. The chaplains felt that unless there was a clear idea of what to aim for after peace, the war would have been pointless. However, nearly all copies of this tract were lost when the Germans overran the printing press, although Rev Howson did find one during his research. In March 1918 a group of chaplains organised "Chaplains Bombing Schools", a week of lectures and reflection before returning to the front. Senior Chaplains got together to discuss their vision for the future for the Church of England, calling it Plus And Minus, discussing plans to organise aspects of the church such as regularising stipends. O'Rorke's diary records that on March 10th 1918 he totally forgot to celebrate 7am mass for the Women's Corp because he had been at conference discussing these matters.

However, O'Rorke began to worry about whether he should stay in France, or whether it would be right for him to return home. Many of the discussions he would have held with Gwyn would have been in Gwyn's diary, but unfortunately the section from March to September 1918 is missing. O'Rorke's diary ends with his posting back to Falmouth, where he succumbed to the flu and died. He is buried in Falmouth cemetery, although his grave is in very bad repair, having been damaged in a bad storm. Rev Howson intends to draw the attention of the authorities to this, especially as, since O'Rorke was serving at the time of his death, he is entitled to a Commonwealth War Grave. Rev Howson said that to read O'Rorke's actual diary gave him a chance to walk in O'Rorke's shoes, and it was utterly absorbing to relive life as a First World War chaplain. We thanked Rev Howson for taking us through the fascinating life of this serviceman.

In June we tried something a little different, and had an evening of research and questions on the Sanway area. For the purposes of the meeting, the area of Sanway was referred to as covering as far as the Rectory to the west, Sanway Road and Close, and along to Fullerton Road and Cornwall and Ulwyn Avenues.

The 1896 OS map shows Sanway Road (now called Sanway Close) with three cottages on the left hand side, and three buildings at the top end. By 1934 the map shows allotments and pig-sties, perhaps giving rise to Bill Polley's tale that Sanway Close was known as Pig and Gramophone Alley. Another village tale was that to live in Sanway, you had to be related to one of the families already there.

No-one is quite sure where the name Sanway comes from, but it is believed to have something to do with the sandpits in the area, possibly a corruption of Sandy Way. One of the old maps identifies the area as Sandy Field. It is also a bit of a mystery as to why the church is in this area, rather than more central to the village. Perhaps the church was built on the highest lying land in the area. Flooding has always been a problem, and in 1893 the local press reports Mr Darrant, the Sanitary Inspector for Chertsey Urban District Council, proposed a drainage scheme for the Sanway area that would have cost £85.

The Sanway Laundry was at one time Byfleet's largest employer. It was possibly founded in around 1900, on the site of what is now the Sanway Stores, or possibly further back. It later moved to the old Byfleet Brewery buildings in High Road, opposite the Binfield Bakers (where The Willows now stands). This



photo of the laundry staff is unfortunately undated. It shows an old house in the background, but it is difficult to pinpoint the exact location. There was another laundry, run by Amelia Bailey and her two sons at the time of the First World War. She was listed as living in Binfield Cottages, which is another puzzle, given that Binfield Road and Binfield Bakers are both in another part of the village. Her laundry was on the site of the Manor School. Amelia's husband died in 1915, although she later remarried, and died in 1936, and the laundry closed. Her laundry served the owners of the Manor House.

The field next to the church was the site of a plane crash in 1946 when a Vickers Warwick suffered engine failure on take off, clipped the power lines in Hart Road and crash landed in the field. Luckily no-one was hurt. However, the churchyard contains less fortunate aviators. Richard H Barnwell was killed at Joyce Green airfield in Kent in 1917. The monument was erected by his brother and sisters—did they perhaps live in Byfleet? The grave of Gerald Napier was also found when the edges of the churchyard were being cleared. He was the first man to die in an aircraft at Brooklands in 1911, aged just 19.

One of Sanway's most famous residents was Bert Denley, the motor cyclist. He started life as a butcher's boy for Derisleys, and had a glittering career as a record breaking motor cyclist for Norton. When he gave up racing in 1930, he was recruited by George Eastman to look after his car, an Alfa Monza, which was very complicated mechanically, but posed no problems for Bert. He later worked on MTBs during the war, being the only person who could get the Italian W18 aero engines to function.. He later worked as Castrol's Chief Development Engineer. From butcher's boy to head of a Research and Development department! Bert originally lived in Richmond Cottages in Sanway, and also resided in another house in Sanway in the 1950s.

There is still much research to be done on Sanway, which is a fascinating area and one of the oldest inhabited areas of Byfleet. Church Cottage, on the corner of Sanway Road, is thought to be one of Byfleet's oldest buildings.



Bert Denley, aged 87, at an event at Brooklands in 1987.

Our July meeting was another quiz set by our chairman. There was a good turnout, with lots of the little grey cells working overtime. Some of the questions were easy to answer, others required a little more thought, whilst the remainder required some guess work.

For those who were unable to be there here is a sample of the questions (the answers can be found on page ??):

1. Which famous actress died in West Byfleet on 3<sup>rd</sup> June 1986?
2. What was the name of W G Tarrant's ill-fated aeroplane?
3. Whose father became Head Gardener at Fox Warren in 1911?
4. What business did Mr Perbody open in Chertsey Road in 1920?
5. How many fires did Byfleet Fire Brigade attend in 1930?
6. What stands on the site of the old village pound?
7. Sir John and Lady Snell lived in a big house in the village, the furniture of which included a large organ. What was the house called?
8. Peggy Scriven, who lived in West Byfleet in the 1930s, was an international player in which sport?
9. Which building designed by J Robb Scott was built in 1927?
10. After whom is Bruce Close named?



There were also some picture questions, looking at some of the footpaths in the village, as well as other features seen in Byfleet.

Answers:

1. Dame Anna Neagle
2. The Tabor
3. Howard Cook
4. Dentist
5. 1 – at the Co-op shop in Chertsey Road
6. The Village War memorial
7. Wey Barton
8. Tennis
9. West Weybridge (now Byfleet & New Haw) railway station
10. Lady Magdalen Bruce, who created a charity in 1635 “for the relief and comfort of the honest poor painful people and such as were past labour”.

## FROM OUR ARCHIVE

This is an early photo of Byfleet Manor House. The photo itself is undated, but the wings to either side have not yet been built. L R Stevens notes that Mrs Rutson bought the manor from Hugh Locke-King in 1891, and the eastern wing was added in 1893, so this photo must have been taken before then.



