

2007 is well under way, and a belated Happy New Year to all our members. This year the Society has joined forces with the Byfleet, West Byfleet and Pyrford Residents' Association and Byfleet Bowls Club to present a memorial exhibition to Howard Cook, who some of our members might remember. Full details about this on the back page.

Also below are details of some of the interesting speakers we have coming to us this year. As you can see, the list is not yet complete, as some speakers are still to be finalised, but watch this space as full details for the entire year should be available very soon. In the meantime, we very much hope to see you at one or more of our meetings very soon.



2007

**(full list of speakers to be confirmed—
watch this space!)**

Thursday 15th FEBRUARY: Iain Wakeford on Wells, Woking and the Real War of the Worlds. Come and hear about Woking's role in the world famous book. **Byfleet Heritage Centre, Byfleet Library, 8.15pm**

Thursday 15th MARCH: Pablo Howarth on The Bailey Bridge. Mr Howarth shows us the history of this engineering work with film and slides. **Byfleet Heritage Centre, Byfleet Library, 8.15pm**

Thursday 26th APRIL: Please note change of date!! Ian Franklin on Ancient Rome, People and Places. Ian is a State Apartment Warder at Hampton Court Palace, but his other love is the history of Ancient Rome. **Byfleet Heritage Centre, Byfleet Library, 8.15pm.**

Thursday 24th MAY: Society AGM and Antony Hutchings on Brooklands—its origins and its centenary. Get all the information about how Brooklands started and how the Museum plans to celebrate the track's centenary year. **The Cawsey Room, Byfleet Village Hall, 7.30pm**

PLEASE NOTE EARLIER START AND CHANGE OF LOCATION.

Thursday 21st JUNE: to be arranged

Sunday 22nd JULY: Iain Wakeford's Heritage Walk around Pyrford. A gentle walk exploring the history of our neighbour Pyrford. Meet by **Pyrford Lock (near The Anchor) at 2pm.**

AUGUST—no meeting

Thursday 13th SEPTEMBER: To be arranged

Thursday 11th OCTOBER: Ian Franklin on Kew Palace and its Restoration. Ian returns to tell us about the work that restored Kew Palace after many years of closure. **Byfleet Heritage Centre, Byfleet Library, 8.15pm**

Thursday 8th NOVEMBER: to be arranged

Thursday 6th DECEMBER: Byfleet Oral History Group return to share snippets from some of their interviews **Byfleet Heritage Centre, Byfleet Library, 8.15pm.**

**Members free. Guests £2
Everyone very welcome.**

For the Record...

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

In **October** we were pleased to welcome back Professor Peter Edwards, who moved us forward in time to speak about Hanoverian Surrey.

First of all he pointed out some of the architecture that would have been seen. At the top end of the social scale were grand houses in the Palladian style, such as Clandon Park. The fashion was to set these formal, classical houses in naturalistic parklands. However, in the effort to create these “natural” surroundings, any villages that came within the park boundaries were simply moved out of the way, sometimes leaving just the church in place as at Ockham.

Lower down the social scale, people unable to rebuild in the latest style often simply put an 18th century façade on the front of their 15th century timber-framed cottage, as demonstrated by a house in Lingfield. Others simply updated their cottages with classical features and windows as at houses on Worplesdon Green.

New social buildings also appeared. Epsom boasted a spa and two sets of assembly rooms. It became a popular aristocratic resort, which led to a growth in recreational facilities. Bowlings alleys, coffee houses and restaurants all sprang up, and of course one could always watch horse racing on the downs from one’s carriage. Other social buildings began to emerge to, unrelated to recreation. New hospitals and town halls sprang up, all in the latest classical architectural styles. And to deal with the lowest end of the social spectrum, new law courts, county jails and village lock ups were also built, such as the

Surrey was an agricultural county, and during this era farming methods changed greatly. The old strip farming system was dying out and a period of enclosure of open fields began. Attempts to improve livestock also became popular, but on the whole Surrey was thought to be agriculturally backward, with many parts of the county not being enclosed until the late 19th century. However, land along the Thames was intensively farmed as market gardens, to provide enough fresh produce for a quickly expanding London.

Agricultural produce also began to be sold differently. Many traditional markets began to be relegated to being held outside the towns. Also “sample selling” became popular. The farmer would bring in a few ears of corn in a purse to the dealers, and the price for the field would be decided. In the end, this practice developed into the dealers going direct to the farm to do business. Each region of the country began to produce what grew best on the land, exporting produce to other parts of the country. This led to improvements in the transport

system. Traditionally the roads were maintained by the parishes they ran through, but the process was unreliable and work parties seem from the records to have been hard to assemble, or once assembled the only way to keep them working appeared to have been bribing them with large amounts of beer. In the 18th century the turnpike system led to a more organised road maintenance system paid for by tolls paid by road users.

We thanked Professor Edwards for taking us on a trip back through time to Georgian Surrey.



Clandon Park



Lingfield Lock Up



In **November** we were pleased to welcome Ian Franklin, State Apartment Warder at Hampton Court Palace, who spoke to us about his historic workplace.

The inside story of the Royal Palaces has recently been seen in a BBC TV series. Ian revealed that over 300 hours of film was whittled down to 5 shown on television. The first programme had featured the collapse of the Holyday Closet in the Chapel Royal. A warder on duty underneath the Closet heard a crack, and when a nail dropped onto their head it was realised something was badly wrong. Further

investigation showed that the pillars underneath the balcony, where Kings and Queens heard the church services, were not actually load bearing. Scaffolding now supports the area where Henry VIII married Queen Catherine Parr, but sadly the money to start fixing it is lacking.

Life at the Palace is a constant round of maintenance, but they try not to restore or reconstruct the building, but to conserve and consolidate. However, at times a certain amount of restoration is needed, such as recently happened with a stack of the famous Tudor chimneys that decorate the roof. These are actually all Victorian replicas, but a stack on the gatehouse had become unsafe. The red brick is very soft, which allows them to be carved into the intricate patterns, but also means they weather very quickly. The methods and materials used were as close to original as possible. Ian revealed that each chimney was actually built two inches out of plumb, as the lime mortar used expands and contracts according to the weather. Therefore the sunny side of the chimney will move more than the shady side.

The Palace is always finding new ways of interpreting the past for the visitor. A visitor to the Maze now triggers sensors as they walk around, setting off different sounds, adding a new dimension. The kitchens where Henry VIII's dinner would have been cooked have recently been overhauled, and from time to time the group Historia will cook historical food using replica utensils and methods, and answer questions from visitors.

The Palace has a life besides being just a tourist attraction. It has been a barracks and housed a garrison until 1914. A school was set up for the army children, which was in use until the mid 20th century. And until relatively recently there were many Grace and Favour residents in the apartments spread around the Palace. The original residents were members of George II's court who refused to move out when he left the palace. King George III decided to settle the problem by saying that they could stay "by his Grace and Favour" for their lifetime. This developed into the custom of offering loyal servants of the crown a place to live in lieu of a pension. Residents have included Lady Olave Baden Powell, Viscount Wolseley, Lord Birdwood and Princess Xenia of Russia. The two daughters of the last Maharajah of the Punjab lived on Hampton Court Green, one of whom used to sell the Suffragette newspaper outside the Palace gates. There is now an exhibition about the Grace and Favour days in one of the old apartments. At the top of the stairs to this exhibition you can see a basket on a pulley. This basket would be used by the elderly ladies to send down their shopping lists and receive their shopping without descending the 83 stairs. Problems were caused by the ladies "borrowing" each other's goods from the basket, and one resident even used it to put her cat.

Ian also mentioned the former residents who haven't yet left – Hampton Court's famous ghosts. Queen Catherine Howard is said to run screaming along the Haunted Gallery and there have been many strange sightings and odd phenomena over the years, including the recent "Skeletor" video, where CCTV cameras seemingly caught a figure in Tudor dress opening and closing doors in the Palace. The Palace runs ghost tours in the Autumn to allow people to experience the Palace after dark and perhaps make up their own minds about the strange goings on.

We thanked Ian for a fascinating glimpse behind the doors of one of our most famous landmarks.



For our Christmas talk, **Paddy Holroyde** came to speak to the Society about **The Millennium Awards Scheme and its Significance for Byfleet**. Paddy is a founder member of the Byfleet Oral History Group (BOHG) and she paid tribute to the members' effort and commitment to forming a unique collection of "spoken lives" of Byfleet people. The Group's formation was made possible by the Millennium Awards Scheme.

Paddy then took us through the way the Oral History Group had received its funding. It started with the National Lottery. 28p out of every £1 spent on lottery tickets is given to good causes. Sixteen organisations are in charge of distributing this money, one of which was the Millennium Commission. This was set up in 1993 as a short life body whose specific aim was to support projects to celebrate the ending of the 2nd millennium and the beginning of the 3rd. The Millennium Awards Scheme was launched in October 1996. This was run by the Millennium Commission to distribute small lottery grants called Millennium Awards. This was the first grant project to allow individuals to benefit directly from a National Lottery grant, and the money was to go to projects benefitting both selves and the community.

Like many organisations and societies around the country, the Heritage Society wanted to do something to mark the occasion. The Society had heard of the BBC Radio project "The Century Speaks", where all BBC local radio stations joined with the British Library Sound Archive to record the lives of ordinary people, and thought this seemed a good project for the Society. However, an already established group was not eligible to apply, so the Byfleet Oral History Group was formed. As a new group, BOHG could target the Millennium Awards Scheme.

The Millennium Commission worked with established charities known as Award Partners. Each Partner managed their own Award Scheme and distributed Millennium Awards. This allowed Award Winners to get the support, knowledge and expertise needed to make sure their project was a success, but also meant that the project had to provide evidence that they could fulfil the grant's obligations and bring it to a successful conclusion. BOHG's partner was Help The Aged, as the project allowed older people to reflect and pass on their experiences, but they could also join in and offer their particular skills.

Once funding was provided, the hard work began of recruiting and training volunteers and locating people to interview, and making the interviews safe for the future. Half way through 2000 BOHG got its reward! The group was nominated for a NOJO Award (Not Old Just Older) in the technology category. At a glittering reception at the Savoy Hotel BOHG were announced as the winners out of 125 entries. This made the news, and also warranted an article in SAGA magazine, which in turn brought more contacts for interview.

The Millennium Commission stopped receiving lottery money in 2001 and was expected to be wound up in 2006. They have left behind an endowment of £100 million, which will be managed by UNLtd, a foundation for social entrepreneurs. They have invested the Commission's legacy and will use the income to fund UNLtd Awards in perpetuity to people who wish to change the world for the better.

As for the Byfleet Oral History Group, their original project was completed in 2001. Many fascinating interviews were carried out, giving a real flavour of life in Byfleet. The original tapes are now housed in the Surrey History Centre in Woking. Mike Webber, also a founder member of the group, demonstrated just how much the technology had changed even in the short time the group had been working, becoming much smaller and easier to handle, while at the same time being able to record more data.

Paddy finished by saying that oral history was now a hugely popular undertaking. BOHG has the money to do more, and there are many more wonderful stories to be recorded for posterity. The Group is always delighted to welcome fresh faces, so if you would like to get involved, or have a story of your own to tell, or even if you would just like to listen to some of the recordings already made, please get in touch.

BYFLEET FACES AND PLACES

A couple of questions this time. Firstly, at one of our meetings a member was asking if anyone knew when the Byfleet Fire Station closed its doors. The consensus was “the 1960s” but no-one was sure enough to be more precise. Would anyone out there have the answer?



Also another member who lives in Beech Close says she has dug up all sorts of odd things in her back garden, which has led her to wonder what was on the site before her house was built. She has heard that it was a boat yard, and Jim Allen remembers there being a firm by the name of Whittingham & Mitchell, which he believes were some sort of engineers. This firm appears in the Trade Directory for 1947, but tantalisingly doesn't mention what the firm did. So does anyone out there have any information on either the company or what was on the site of Beech Close before the present houses?

As ever, if you have any answers, or questions of your own, please either give Tessa Westlake a ring or an email (01932 351559 or tessa@westlakesystems.co.uk), or leave a note for us at Byfleet Library. Thank you.

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FROM OUR ARCHIVE— A Then and Now scene. The Blue Anchor in High Road in 1994 (right) and the old pub as it looked in the 1900s—and before!

HOWARD COOK MEMORIAL EXHIBITION

Many of our members will remember Howard Cook, who sadly died last year. He was always active around the village and was Chairman and then President of the Residents' Association for many years. He was also a patron of our Society.

To commemorate his long life in the village and the many and varied activities he performed, the Heritage Society, Byfleet, West Byfleet and Pyrford Residents' Association and Byfleet Bowls Club will be holding a memorial exhibition. This will be held at Byfleet Bowls Club, Rectory Lane, on Saturday and Sunday March 24th and 25th, Saturday and Sunday March 31st and 1st April and also on the afternoon of Wednesday 28th March.

We hope you can come along and remember Howard and some of the events in his long and busy life.

*** If you have any pictures of Howard that you might like to lend for display, please contact Tessa Westlake before 20th February. Thanks very much.***

HOWARD COOK MEMORIAL EXHIBITION—HELP WANTED!!

Following on from the above, we could do with some help in manning the exhibition while it is open to the public. If you could give up an hour or even just half an hour on any of the dates mentioned above, that would be extremely helpful.

If you are able to help us out, please contact Jim Allen on 01932 342659. Many thanks.



Also looking for a little helping hand are the Byfleet Oral History Group who we heard from in December. Their aim is to produce written transcripts of all their interviews, but are lacking the manpower to do this. If you have had any experience as an audio typist, or even if you just feel like giving it a go, the group has all the necessary equipment and would be delighted to hear from you. And you get to listen to some fascinating recordings! Please contact Jeff Sechiari on 01932 341084 if you can help. Thanks very much.



And finally—from the Byfleet Review May 1935. Poor Mr Godwin!

ANOTHER VILLAGE HALL INCIDENT

When Mr D Godwin, the proprietor of Woking Parcel Services, got into his van after the Chamber of Trade dinner, he found that all but one of his lamp bulbs had been stolen. If this was meant to be a practical joke it was, indeed, a poor one.