

Welcome to our latest newsletter which we hope you will enjoy. The end of the year is fast approaching, and Jeff is busy finalising our talks for 2010. If there is a particular subject which you would like to hear about, or you have a suggestion for a talk, please let him know. Also just a reminder that, although the library should reopen on November 24th after its refurbishment, our meetings for the rest of the year will be held at St Mary's Day Centre. We have had to dismantle the Heritage Room and would like to give ourselves enough time to put it back to rights—and take the opportunity for a bit of a spring clean!

Finally, some members will find a subs renewal form tucked into their newsletter—please see page 5 for more details. Thanks to all our members for their support, and we hope to see you all soon.

FORTHCOMING
EVENTS 2009



2009

PLEASE NOTE THAT DUE TO BYFLEET LIBRARY BEING CLOSED FOR FURBISHMENT, WE PROPOSE TO HOLD THE REST OF THIS YEAR'S MEETINGS AT ST MARYS DAY CENTRE, STREAM CLOSE, BYFLEET

All meetings begin at 8.15pm

Thursday 5th NOVEMBER: Entertainment in Byfleet with **Jim Allen**, our Chairman and also long serving member of The Byfleet Players.

St Mary's Day Centre, Stream Close, Byfleet, 8.15pm

Thursday 3rd DECEMBER: Christmas social. Come and join in our end of the year event. **Mike Webber** will review some of the Society's pictures, and I'm sure there will be a mince pie or two around as well.

St Mary's Day Centre, Stream Close, Byfleet, 8.15pm

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

2010 is coming up fast

Jeff is working hard to finalise next year's diary. We hope that upcoming treats will include further detail on Byfleet Village Hall, Chatley Heath Semaphore Tower, and Joseph

Spence of Byfleet, to name but a few. Next year's proposed dates are below, so make a note in your diaries, although please note that these still need to be confirmed according to other bookings.

Thursday 14th January
Thursday 11th February
Thursday 11th March
Thursday 8th April
Thursday 20th May
Thursday 17th June—AGM
Thursday 15th July
Thursday 9th September
Thursday 7th October
Thursday 4th November
Thursday 2nd December

TRIP TO LOSELEY PARK

We would like to arrange a trip to Loseley Park for our members, but need to gauge how much interest there might be.

We propose an evening tour of the house and gardens, which would cost £7.00 per person. We would need a group of 10 to qualify for group rates. We would plan the trip for mid July.

If you would be interested please let us know either at one of our meetings, or by ringing 01932 351559. Thank you.

For the Record...

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

For our June meeting, the members were the stars and took the floor in a series of short talks on their personal interests.

Jim Allen kicked off, with a few items about Byfleet from old local papers. No doubt gossip was rife in September 1882, when the body of George Hyde was found between Byfleet Mill and Park Hall, leading to an inquest at The Plough. Less scandalous, but reported in the paper just the same, a Jesse Harrison was summoned for keeping a dog without a licence and fined 10s! Ten years later in 1892, Byfleet Fire Brigade were in trouble when it was found that £20 had been embezzled from their funds, leaving them very short indeed. Over the year they had spent £69 3s 11/2d, including £40 5s for repairs to the fire engine, including new springs and “all modern fittings”. In October of that year, Adam Egerton obviously felt the firemen were in need of cheering up, as he invited them to perform a drill at his house, but when the brigade turned up he took them all to supper at The Plough instead!

Julian Temple followed this story with an update on the upkeep of the Fire Station. He and Jeff Sechiari had been to see the Fire Brigades of Surrey Preservation Trust’s collection of fire appliances and helmets, to investigate maybe borrowing items to show in the station. An initial working party had removed much of the accumulated rubbish which included a lot of old diving gear. One of the main doors had been freed, so it could be opened to help air the building, and further parties would start tackling some of the encroaching undergrowth around the outside. Julian had obtained a 12 month licence from Surrey County Council which would allow access for cleaning and surveying, and he would be working on a proposal for the use of the building, including the possibility of keeping Brooklands Museum’s fire engine there.

Next Mary Macintyre gave a short talk on her Highland Cattle which are a well known local landmark.

Mary’s father, whose butcher’s shop Derisley’s many will remember, had served in France during the First World War and met many soldiers from the Highland Regiments. This inspired him to visit the Highlands after the war was over, and he was smitten. He visited Scotland every year after that, and in 1921 he returned with a truck full of Highland cattle. It was the second fold in England, the first fold being kept out where Gatwick Airport is now. Some of the cattle became celebrities. Robin was used to advertise the Smithfield show for many years, and Flora was a champion at Windsor Great Park in 1939. The cattle were a familiar sight around the village. Mary showed photographs of the cattle in Mill Lane and two standing outside Arkell’s shop (opposite the corner of Brewery Lane). Mary finished by saying that the breed is very hardy—they never need to be brought inside. They also make very good mothers and are very protective of their calves.



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Julian then returned to the floor to tell us about the Vickers Vimy replica. The original Vimy was intended to complete its first transatlantic flight at Brooklands, but their flight finished in Clifden, Ireland instead. The original aircraft had been prepared and tested at Brooklands, and it was also returned there and repaired before finally being housed in the Science Museum. The replica had been built to recreate the Vimy’s long distance flights. The replica has been on display at Duxford, but has been acquired by Brooklands Museum. It is intended to have it fly into the museum on its final flight, where it will then stay.

To round off the evening, Mike Webber showed us how the village looked in 1913 using the pages of Kelly’s Directory. The Binfield Bakers was run by Heinrich Carl Scherer at that time, with the landlord at The Plough being a Frederick R Castleman. Thomas Henry Freeman and Sons ran the garage, ironmongers and blacksmith’s. At the junction of High Road with Brewery Lane, was Arkell’s Bazaar, the draper. According to the directory they had another branch at Bank Buildings, West Byfleet. The Sanway Laundry opposite was managed by a Miss A Beak. Perhaps a surprising discovery was the number of businesses in Chertsey Road. Morrish’s bakers, Bradley beer retailers, Evans bootmakers, Chuters carpenters, Buddens tobacconists, and Dempsters greengrocers were just a few of the shops, and Ebenezer Mears was listed as a poultry farmer.

So the evening was brought to a close and we thanked those members who had shared their discoveries and interests with us.

If it's July, it must be Parish Day, so it seemed fitting to make it the subject of this month's talk. Tessa Westlake looked back at the origins of our annual fete.

It all began with the church. St Mary's is mentioned in the Domesday Book, although the present building was built around 1310. In 1841 it was enlarged with a new south aisle, and a few further alterations made to doors and windows. The roof between the aisles was supported by iron pillars, and there were several galleries – two at the west end of the nave, one above the other, a small, private one up on the north wall lit by a dormer window. Then in 1864 it was decided that the church needed some serious renovation. All four internal galleries and the staircases to them were removed. The iron pillars between the nave and south aisle were replaced with new stone arches and pillars. The 1841 west door and two lancet windows in the south aisle were made into today's west window and one of the windows in the south wall was made into today's south door. The transept and arch in the east wall of the south aisle were made, making an organ chamber, a new vestry (replacing one at the west end) and space for extra seating. Two windows in the south wall of the chancel were altered to archways. A lectern replaced the reading desk and Clerk's desk, the pulpit was moved to its present position and new pews were installed throughout. Many gifts were given by parishioners, including stained glass for the windows and new oak altar rails. To finish off, the roof was retiled and guttered. The total cost was about £600.

After all their work, it was decided to hold a celebration. So on 1st June 1865 the church was re-opened, and then the whole parish was invited for a lunch at West Hall, with the Bishop of Guildford as the guest of honour. It was decided to make it an annual event. For a while the event was held on the anniversary of the rededication of the church, 1st June. It was known as the Dedication or Parish Festival, or at times just "The First of June". It wasn't until 1885 that the words Parish Day were first used. It was called the Dedication Festival (Parish Day and School Feast), and was now held on varying days in July. The horticultural part of Parish Day that we now know was not yet part of the proceedings. There was a separate flower show, held every year in August in the grounds of Petersham Place (now Lloyds Bank). But in 1888 the festival was significantly expanded, and Parish Day's own horticultural competition was started which, of course, is still alive and well today.

An entry from the Parish Magazine of 1881 shows how the day progressed. There was early Communion at 7.30am, Evensong at 3.30pm with a guest preacher, and then everyone processed to the Rectory field. Free tea was provided for the Byfleet schoolchildren and all villagers over 60, and everyone else could obtain tea from a refreshment stall - but only as long as you had obtained your admission ticket from the Rector at the church gate after the service. After everyone had been fed and watered, the school children had their moment and school prizes were given out.

1888, as already mentioned, was the year the events on offer were expanded. That year Byfleet pulled out the stops. There were sports and races, dancing, roundabouts, a fair and a band. As there was now so much more to fit in, the school prize giving was changed to take place at the school on the morning beforehand. Other events were added over the years. Fireworks took place in 1890; 1892 saw a bicycle race through the grounds of West Hall, and the Fire Brigade gave a display in 1895. There was a bicycle procession in 1898, and fancy dress parades also became a yearly highlight.

Parish Day was not held during the First and Second World Wars, and it nearly died out. After the Second World War there was some feeling that perhaps the event would not be as good as it had been, and there was also the problem of how to raise enough funds. However, the Byfleet, West Byfleet and Pyrford Residents' Association held a public meeting in 1950 and it was decided to give it a go, and the first post-war Parish Day was held on July 16th 1952.

For many years it was held in Byfleet and West Byfleet alternately. More recently the event has settled in Byfleet and is held each year by the Friends of Byfleet Parish Day on Byfleet Recreation Ground. The event always used to be held on a Wednesday afternoon, with festivities kicking off after the old half day closing released people from work. The children were given the afternoon off school so that they could take part in the sports and races. However, after much discussion, it was decided to move the event to a Saturday, and the first Saturday Parish Day was held in 1980.

The new Parish Day kept many features of the original. The homecraft and horticultural competitions remained, plus children's sports, fancy dress, tug of war challenge and dog shows. Also in 1969 there was a procession of decorated floats from West Byfleet to Byfleet, and the cycle races seem to have been reintroduced. These cycle races seemed to have formed quite a regular event, with people coming from far and wide to compete.

The event has been held in various locations over the years. Up until 1890 it had always been held in the Rectory field. From 1891 to 1898 it took place in Pipers Hill Meadow, off Murrays Lane. In 1899 it moved to the brand new Recreation Ground, where it remained until 1908. The event has also been held in Bone's Field, in Chertsey Road in 1909 and 10 and 1912 and 1913, and in Tarrants Field in 1911, also in Chertsey Road.

On special occasions, Parish Day commemorated other celebrations. In 1897 it was merged with celebrations for Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee, and in 1902 it commemorated the coronation of Edward VII. In 1911 Parish Day celebrated another coronation, that of George V. Twenty five years later his silver jubilee was commemorated, as was the coronation and silver jubilee of Elizabeth II. In 1965 Parish Day itself commemorated its own centenary, while Parish Day 2001 celebrated the life of Elsie Stranks.

Many special guests have opened the festivities, including Mrs Odette Churchill, Sir George Edwards, Sir Barnes Neville Wallis, Group Captain Douglas Bader, Cliff Michelmore and Sir Robin Knox-Johnston. Tessa finished by hoping that this year would see stunning weather and that a good day would be had by all.



In September we welcomed Julian Pooley from the Surrey History Centre to speak about the drawings of Surrey collected by Robert Barclay of Dorking.

In March 1995, the Centre acquired 6 portfolios of early 19th century drawings. These had been collected by Mr Barclay to illustrate Manning and Bray's History and Antiquities of Surrey. The high cost of printing meant that many works would be published in volumes over a number of years; Manning and Bray was started in the 1760s but not completed until 1801.

When the works were published, lists would be supplied telling people what engravings and drawings were available to buy, so that you could illustrate your own copy. It became fashionable for gentlemen to collect things such as coins and fossils and also to collect illustrations covering their particular interest to further their own research.

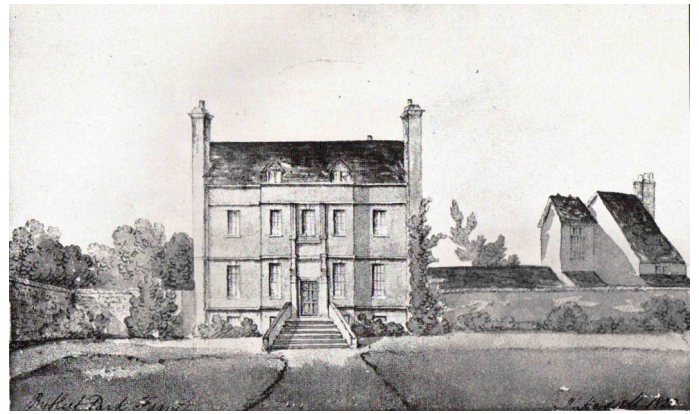
Of course artists were needed to produce these illustrations. One popular landscape artist was William Gilpin, whose sketchbook of Painshill Park is at the History Centre. He specialised in water colours and set out the rules for the picturesque style, which horrified antiquaries, as many of his sketches represented imaginary, idealised scenes with elements of reality, rather than recording what was actually there. John Hassell, who completed many sketches of Surrey, was influenced by Gilpin, but recorded the actual scene more accurately.

Robert Barclay had come to England aged 12 from Philadelphia. He married and had 15 children, of whom 6 died in infancy. He lived in London for a while, but eventually settled in Bury Hill, Dorking. He collected drawings with a will, and his portfolios contained 2,142 separate drawings and also exercise books containing Barclay's indexes. The collection was never bound—possibly Barclay was always waiting for just one more picture before he did so. We do not know exactly how he collected his pictures, but there are clues within the portfolio. Some pictures are priced in pencil on the back, ranging from few pence to higher sums for rarer items, so he obviously perused galleries and print shops. He also commissioned Hassell to create 550 watercolours of Surrey scenes. All the pictures were arranged by parish in their separate hundreds, with the relevant page number of Manning and Bray recorded. The section for each hundred started with an engraved map, and ended with engravings of portraits of notable people who had lived there.

John Hassell was born in 1767, possibly in Wales. He exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1789 and specialised in topographical views. He supplemented his income as a drawing master and wrote several books on drawing technique. Hassell would go from place to place offering to draw your house for you—an older equivalent of the people who knock on your door offering you an aerial photo! While his scenery was in the picturesque style, his architecture was always accurate.

There is a project being undertaken by Surrey Records Society to publish all of John Hassell's drawings, plus those of his son, Edward. New pictures are coming to light all the time, but not all of them are correctly labelled. For instance, Julian showed a picture labelled Burford Park Farm, which members recognised as Byfleet Manor. Help in correcting the captions is welcomed, and this can be done via the Exploring Surrey's Past website (www.exploringsurreypast.org.uk), where pictures can be viewed and captions can be corrected or edited on line.

We thanked Julian for a look at a gentleman collector and the artists who helped him with his project.



Byfleet Rectory before 1832

BYFLEET QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

More family history enquiries.

We have heard from Joan Foster, who is trying to trace an ancestor in the Byfleet area. She has found out from the 1911 census that **James Bailey** lived at 5 Church Road with his wife, Annie. He had three children, Reginald James, born in Emsworth, and Charles Frederick and Ernest Arthur both of whom were born in Byfleet. She believes James was something to do with the Mill, as he later moved to Pirbright where he had Lower Mill. He died there in 1953.

Our second query is a little more difficult. Someone wishes to try to trace a man called Mr Howard who used to work at The Blue Anchor in Byfleet. Unfortunately she does not know his first name.

He may have been the landlord, or he may simply have worked there. She thinks he would have been there from around 1925 until the beginning of the Second World War.

If anyone has any information on the Bailey family—or even better, if you are in some way related, or knows who was at the Blue Anchor at that time, and wouldn't mind sharing information, please get in touch by ringing Tessa on 01932 351559, or come and see us at one of our meetings.

Thanks very much.

OLD PROPELLER AT QUEEN'S HEAD

Do you know anything about an old plane propeller that used to hang in the Queen's Head in around 1989? If so, we would like to hear from you.

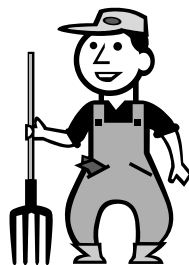
The propeller was made by Paragon, and is about 8 ft long. There is a rumour that it may be from a Vickers Vimy. Most Vimys had 4 blade propellers, but some did have 2 blades, so if anyone could confirm that this was the case we would be very interested. The propeller was taken down during refurbishment, but is scheduled to be rehung.

If you have any information, please contact Julian Temple on 01932 857381 ext 240 or on julianctemple@hotmail.com

MANOR FARM

The Ranger for the Manor Farm site is keen to gather photographs and information on the history of the site for leaflets, boards etc.

He has put some notices up around the area, and would love to hear from anyone who can help.



Do you have any pictures of the farm when it was used as a market garden, or even from before that? Or do you have any information or stories that could be used?

If so, please let us know, or contact James Herd on jamesherdswtms@hotmail.co.uk

NEW BYFLEET COMMUNITY WEBSITE!

Members might be interested to know that there is a new Byfleet website just gone on line.

ByfleetKT14.net is a place where local people can go on line and discuss local issues with other residents, find local businesses, services and events, or you can list your own local business. There is also a brief history of the village and some old pictures from our own archive.

As a community website, it can only get better the more people get involved. So if you want to find out about what's going on, or list something yourself, or would just like to comment or join in the discussion, have a look at www.byfleetkt14.net

FINAL SUBS REMINDER!

Thank you very much to everyone who has renewed their subscriptions so far. If you haven't yet had a chance to do so, you should find a reminder notice inside this newsletter.

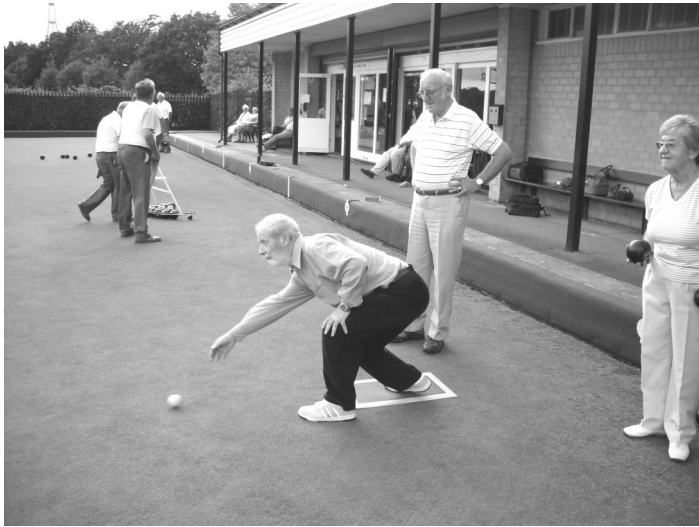
While the library is closed, subs can be sent to the address on the renewal slip, or you can catch Avreil, our treasurer, at one of our meetings.

If by any chance you have received a slip but have already paid, please let us know so we can correct our records. Similarly, if you need to check to see if you have paid for this year or not, please give us a ring, or ask at one of our meetings.

Thanks very much.



August saw the Society returning to Byfleet Bowls Club where members again enjoyed some hands on experience. It's harder than it looks, and I can imagine it can become quite addictive as you try to improve your technique, and it is very satisfying when you get it right! After our exertions, we enjoyed a talk on the history of bowls by Club member Peter Gibbs while being served some very welcome refreshment. A great time was had by all, especially by my middle son, William, who persuaded several of his skateboarding friends to come and have a go. He enjoyed it so much that he has since been back and is thinking of joining up after the winter. Very many thanks to the Bowls Club for making us so welcome.



Our Chairman shows us how it's done!

Some Society members under instruction



Fire Station update

There has been quite a bit of action around the Fire Station over the last few months. A great deal of clearing up has been done both inside and out, and the station has been open to the public on two occasions, Parish Day in July and Heritage Open Day in September. Both times we were lucky enough to be able to have the fire engine from Brooklands Museum to add an authentic flavour to the day.

The Friends of Byfleet Fire Station are in the process of arranging a survey so that the full extent of any problems will be known. If you would like to be informed of any work parties, or have any skills that you think might be of use, please let us know.

