

Hopefully by the time you receive this, the weather will have warmed up and we will be looking forward to a bright summer and a lovely day for Parish Day on July 17th.

Our AGM is coming up, and you should receive the agenda etc with this newsletter. Unfortunately we are having to consider putting up the subs, so please take a minute to read the proposal to see what you think. Hope to see you there on the 17th June.

Finally, please enjoy this issue, and don't forget to let us know if there is anything you want to see featured, or something you have to share.



2010

All meetings begin at 8.15pm

Thursday 20th May: *The Locke King's in Africa - John Pulford*

St Mary's Day Centre, Stream Close

Thursday 17th June: *Society AGM. AGM, Natural history with the Surrey Wildlife Trust*

St Mary's Day Centre, Stream Close

PLEASE NOTE – THIS MEETING WILL START AT 7.30PM

Thursday 22nd July, 6pm: *Visit to Loseley Park. See below for details*

Thursday 9th September: *Memories of Byfleet in the 1950s by Roger Clover.*

Thursday 7th October: *Local Agriculture. Well known local vet, Carl Boyde, will talk about local agriculture, including a look at the Chertsey Ploughing Match.*

Thursday 4th November: *Some Byfleet Houses with Jeff Sechiari. Jeff has been rummaging at the History Centre—come and see what he has uncovered.*

Thursday 2nd December: *Christmas Social. Nibbles and drinks. Speaker to be confirmed.*

Members free. Guests £2 Everyone very welcome.

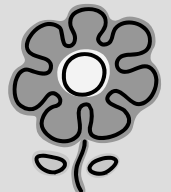
**TRIP TO LOSELEY PARK
THURSDAY 22ND JULY**

Our trip to Loseley Park has been confirmed for Thursday 22nd July at 6pm. As this will be a private visit, there will be an extra cost for this event, which will be £8 per person. You will be able to pay for the trip at the AGM.

Please meet in the car park at Byfleet Village Hall at 5pm. We expect many of you will get together amongst yourselves to arrange car sharing, but if you have any problems, please let us know and I'm sure something can be arranged.

We have had a lot of interest in this visit and we would be grateful if everyone could confirm, as we have a few people on a waiting list. Please check the list on page 5, and if you have not yet confirmed, or would no longer like a place, please give Tessa a ring on 01932 351559.

Thanks very much.



For the Record...

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

Joseph Spence—The Grand Tour and the Five Fine Surrey

Gardens was the title of Bill Tomlin's talk in February.

Joseph Spence was born in 1699 to a Hampshire Rector. Thanks to his generous relatives, he attended Eton, Winchester and New College, Oxford. He became a clergyman and Professor of Poetry in 1728 and later also became Professor of Modern History. In 1726 he wrote an essay defending Alexander Pope's translation of the *Odyssey*, and the pair became firm friends and both later became involved in the English landscape gardening movement. Spence would visit Pope at his house in Twickenham to discuss Pope's garden there and no doubt to swap ideas and tips.

Spence was described as "a man of the sweetest disposition", and this probably made him an attractive prospect as guardian to young men on the Grand Tour. This was an educational trip around Europe taken by young noblemen, to expose them to art, culture and history. Naturally, parents were keen to send their young sons off with someone who would keep them on the straight and narrow, and Spence was seen as such a man. This arrangement suited Spence as well, as he was keen to see the ruins of Rome, and he also took the opportunity to visit botanical collections and gardens.

Spence accompanied Lord Middlesex, and then the son of the Duke of Newcastle, but the most important connection to Spence was Henry Fiennes Clinton, later 9th Earl of Lincoln. Henry was not of good health and had a tendency to gamble. He had also formed an unfortunate connection to a Lady Sophia, who was deemed unsuitable because she had no money. Young Henry was sent away on the Grand Tour in the hope he would forget her, and Spence was the man to keep him out of trouble.

While on his travels, Spence wrote to his mother and his friends about his adventures. He became friends with Horace Walpole, after Spence found him lying ill in a hotel in Reggio and fetched him a doctor. Spence also met Lady Montague, who brought back the idea of inoculation against smallpox from Constantinople. However, Spence was not the only one meeting old friends—his charge, Lord Lincoln, managed to meet Lady Sophia in Rome!

Once back in England, Spence indulged in his love of horticulture and became interested in the new developments in landscape gardening. This moved away from the old style geometric gardens towards a more natural style. As mentioned, he spent time with Pope who was making his garden at Twickenham, but Spence wanted to have a go on his own. He had made some money with a book called *Polymetis*, and he wrote to Lord Lincoln for advice on buying a house. Lord Lincoln went one better and generously gave Spence a house in Byfleet, where Spence settled and spent a happy time designing his garden.

This was no small project, as his land covered 30 acres. He soon had a staff of 20 working on it, carrying out basic jobs such as taking down a brick wall that was spoiling the view and putting up fencing, to planting flowers to make a wild meadow and creating a serpentine stream and canal. He acquired another 12 acres and planted it so that looking from his house, it looked like St George's Hill was part of his garden. Part of St George's Hill is still called Spence's Point, where he planted some conifers and installed seats so the views could be enjoyed.

If ever Spence ran short of ideas, he would have had plenty of inspiration nearby. Byfleet was convenient for five famous gardens—Painshill Park, Oatlands, Woburn Farm, Claremont and Esher Place. The famous landscape gardener, William Kent, had made improvements to the gardens at Claremont, creating the lake and island with grotto. The gardens at Oatlands were laid out by Spence's friend, the Duke of Newcastle. These included the Broadwater, which was so cunningly designed that people thought it was the River Thames. There was also a fantastic grotto with two storeys. Woburn Farm was built by Philip Southcote who was a friend of William Kent as well as Spence and Pope. The plan of his garden was sketched by Spence, and included odiferous plants, trees, a grasswalk and a farm. It is possible that Southcote's garden influenced Charles Hamilton in his landscaping of Painshill Park. Hamilton collected many of the new plants coming in from America, and also filled the garden with theatrical elements, such as the Hermitage and the Temple of Bacchus, built to house a statue of Bacchus that Hamilton had brought back from Rome as a souvenir of his Grand Tour. Unfortunately nothing much remains of Esher Place, which in its heyday had contained a walled garden, a grotto and formal and informal flower beds.

It was pleasant to think of Joseph Spence relaxing after his travels and enjoying his garden in Byfleet, and it was interesting to hear of the area's role in the landscape gardening movement.



In March we welcomed **Rachel Perkins** who presented her talk, **Celebrating Elmbridge Museum**, which looked back on 100 years since the founding of the museum in Weybridge.

The idea for a local museum was first raised by the Weybridge Literary Society in the 1880s. During this time there was a popular move to provide facilities "to educate people of all classes". Discussions took some time, but the first museum was opened on June 23rd 1909 at 3pm by Sir Christopher Holroyd, Director of the National Gallery who lived at Oatlands Park. The first museum was located in Aberdeen House, which is now Lloyds Bank, in the offices of Weybridge Urban District Council.

A Mr J Harting and a Dr Wilson were the first two people in charge of the museum, but the first Honorary Curator was Dr Eric Gardner, a GP with a keen personal interest in archaeology and local history. He served at the museum until 1951. Mr Harting's daughter, Miss E J Harting, also worked at the museum for 20 years. She became an Assistant Curator and was also a fine water colour artist, producing 170 beautiful water colours of local flora which are still in the museum's collection.

During the 1920s a similar museum in Walton had to close, and Weybridge took over its collections. On the outbreak of the Second World War, Aberdeen House was needed to house the Air Raid Precaution Office and the museum was relocated to Mount Felix in Walton. It returned to Aberdeen House after the war, but was moved to the first floor. This caused some problems, as a statue of Venus which had originally come from the grotto at Oatlands House was thought too heavy to go upstairs. It was agreed that it could stand in the front window of the offices, as long as Venus was suitably draped to preserve her modesty.

Another important person in the museum's development was Dorothy Grenside. She was quite a personality. She was a water colour artist, but also interested in motoring and was one of the first women to be able to drive in Weybridge. She was also a swimming champion and played at the tennis club. She was the first woman to serve on the Surrey Archaeological Society committee and in 1951 she secured an educational loan from Surrey County Council. With Anthony Martin, she campaigned successfully for a new museum building, which was begun in 1966, but sadly Dorothy died before it could be completed.

The new museum reopened in 1967 above the new library and for the first time it was manned by paid staff rather than volunteers. Mr Brian Blake was the curator, assisted by Mrs Avril Landsell, who worked on building up the costume collection.

In 1974 the Borough of Elmbridge was created, and the museum was renamed to reflect this. In 1995 the museum applied for a Heritage Lottery Fund Grant to refurbish the museum. This was successful and in fact they were the first South East museum to be awarded a grant. The museum was reopened by Lloyd Grossman and the new layout contained dioramas and a Local Studies Room containing maps, photos, books, microfilm and microfiche. Information about objects was also placed on line and available at kiosks within the museum, so visitors are able to see objects that aren't out on display.

Last year the Museum reached the grand old age of 100 and duly held celebrations to mark the event. There was a large party in the local park, on the theme of an Edwardian picnic, and a good time was had by all.

Things have naturally changed over the last 100 years. There is now a Museum Manager in charge rather than a Curator, and jobs have become much more specialised. The Museum has no acquisitions budget, so has to rely on donations and the generosity and help of organisations such as the Friends of Elmbridge Museum, who also help out the Museum with volunteers who carry out a variety of jobs. A beautiful recent acquisition was the Cobham Ring, found at Downside by a metal detectorist. This is a mourning ring decorated with a skull and cheerily inscribed "Prepare to follow F V 16 May 1670". This is thought to refer to Sir Francis Vincent, who lived at Stoke D'Abernon.

So there is plenty going on at Elmbridge and visitors are always welcome. The Museum is situated above Elmbridge Library on Church Street and is open on weekdays (except Thursdays) from 11-5 (Saturdays 10-1, 2-5). Family fun days are held on the second Saturday of each month, and there is a new exhibition opening on 29th May entitled "The Elmbridge Hundred: over two thousand years of famous lives, from Julius Caesar to John Lennon". This explores the stories of the many famous people who have lived in the area.

So next time you are over in Weybridge, pop into the museum and explore the history of our near neighbour.





Richard Savage spoke to members in April on **The Royal Manor and Palace of Woking Yesterday and Today**. The view over the fields in Old Woking looks as if it has never changed, but there by the river once stood a magnificent palace owned by the most influential people in the land.

The manor is mentioned in the Domesday Book, passing from Edward the Confessor to William the Conqueror, and remaining in royal hands until 1189. It then passed to Alan Basset, military adviser to the King, and after that to three generations of the Despenser family, one of whom was the lover of Edward II. The family fell from power on the king's assassination in 1327. A written description of the buildings at Woking survives from this time. There are large buildings with apartments for officers of state on 2 islands surrounded by moats.

The manor was converted into a palace under the ownership of Lady Margaret Beaufort. This redoubtable woman, who knew French, Latin and Greek and was reputed to ride and hunt as well as a man, had a remarkable life. At the age of 6 she was married to someone only a year older than her, but her guardian fell into disfavour. Margaret was sent to the Tudor family, and as she was the 6th richest heiress in England, Owen Tudor annulled her marriage and married her off to his son, Edmund Tudor. She had her first and only child at the age of 12 (her husband was 26); this son was destined to become King Henry VII. Edmund died during the Wars of the Roses, and Margaret, as a Lancastrian, was brought to London by the ruling Yorkist family and married to Henry Stafford. This turned out to be a happy marriage, and Woking manor, which Margaret claimed in 1465, became the couple's favourite residence in which to spend Christmas, New Year and wedding anniversaries. Many improvements were made to the buildings under Margaret's managerial eye. On the eve of the Battle of Barnet in 1471, Stafford wrote his will and sent it to his wife at Woking. Later the awful news reached Margaret that Henry had died in battle. She immediately left Woking for her London house on the Strand, picked up a troop of servants and flew to the battlefield to recover her husband's body. Thanks to her refusal to give up the search, Henry was eventually found still alive. He was taken back to London and, after a month's recuperation, Margaret took him back to Woking. Unfortunately, despite his wife's determination, Stafford died 6 months later. Margaret was now one of the richest people in England, and was soon married off again, this time to Thomas, Lord Stanley in 1472. Building work at Woking continued, with new lodgings being constructed and the enclosure of a deer park.

Margaret briefly lost Woking during the Wars of the Roses, but on the victory of her son, Henry Tudor, the palace was regranted to her and the King himself lived there for the first few weeks of his reign. In 1503, for some reason now lost to the mists of time, Henry demanded that his mother swap Woking for a manor in Hertfordshire. Margaret strongly objected to this, and a compromise was reached, where Margaret was able to live at Woking for a number of weeks a year—was this the first example of a time share in history? Henry VII died in 1509 and Woking reverted to Margaret. But she did not get long to enjoy repossession of her palace, as she died only six weeks later. The buildings that still exist today probably date from her possession. There is an undercroft that was possibly a wine store, and which would have had a more important room on the floor above. There is also a vaulted building. Interestingly the stonework on this parallels that on the top storey of the church tower of St Peter's, Old Woking, and the windows of the tower are made in the same way as those at the palace, so it is probably that the same craftsmen worked on both buildings..

On Margaret's death, the palace reverted to her grandson, Henry VIII, who visited Woking many times. He completed the main hall in 1511, paid for major works in 1513/14, with a vast rebuild in 1533/4, creating new apartments for his new wife, Anne Boleyn. The accommodation was further enlarged in 1543. Edward VI visited, but by the time of Elizabeth I "all was in decay and without present held past remedy". She carried out some maintenance work in 1575, 1581 and 1593/4, but after this the palace seemed to go into decline. James I was a frequent visitor, but he had inherited over 60 Tudor palaces on becoming King of England, but was very short of cash. He decided to sell many of them off and Woking was granted to Sir Edward Zouche in 1618. He was allowed to pull down any buildings he didn't want, so much of the palace disappeared, and the deer park was turned into farms. Zouche built himself a new house—now Hoe Bridge School.

So not much now remains of Woking's former splendour. The deer park pale can still be seen near the car park on Pyrford Common. The undercroft and kitchen range became a barn, but by 1987 even this was in danger of disappearing, so in 1988 Woking Borough Council bought the 8 acre site within the moats.

Now the Friends of Woking Palace make sure that the site is cared for and properly explored. The Heritage Lottery Fund gave a grant which allows the site to be opened to visitors on three weekends a year. In 2009, with help from the Heritage Lottery Fund, Surrey County Council, Woking Borough Council and Surrey Archaeological Society they managed to organise 14 days of excavations, with 3 professional archaeologists and help from 40 experienced volunteers and 118 volunteers from the local community. This dig uncovered the foundations of the great hall of the Despensers. Another £20,000 has been raised, and there are more plans to dig in 2010. Details on this, and how to volunteer, can be found on the Friends of Woking Palace website (www.woking-palace.org), or ring 01483 768879 and leave a message.

Survey of St Mary's Churchyard

In March a gang of enthusiastic Eagle Scouts from Cobham turned up on a rather soggy Saturday morning to take part in transcribing all the memorial inscriptions in St Mary's Churchyard. They were extremely well organised, with teams covering different sections of the churchyard, and other teams transferring the information onto laptops in the Church Office in St Mary's Church Hall. Doughnuts and pizza kept them suitably fuelled during the day.

They managed a huge amount of work in an impressively short time, and the information is now being collated. Once this is done, the Society will be given a copy that can be used for research.

Many thanks to the Eagle Scouts for their hard work in making sure this part of Byfleet's history is preserved for the future.



TRIP TO LOSELEY July 22nd 2010



MEMBERS CONFIRMED

Adrienne and Alan Fairlie
Mary Smith
June Spurway
Barbara Donaldson
Fred and Jill Pain
Avreil Fabb
Mary McIntyre
Gill and Richard Stevenson
Alison Bright
Mary Joslin
Jean Thackeray
Jim Allen

MEMBERS TO CONFIRM

Louise Clubley +1
Mr and Mrs Cross
Brian and Marlene Davies
Jeff and Anne Sechiari
Tessa Westlake

WAITING LIST

Frank Thurlow, Robin Paul, Moira Franz

If you have already confirmed, we will assume you will be coming unless we hear otherwise. If, however, you find you can no longer come along, please let us know, as we have a couple of people on the waiting list. If you did not put your name down previously, but now find you can come, give us a ring in case there is a chance that a place becomes free.

For any of the above, or if you have any questions, please ring Tessa Westlake on 01932 351559

Thanks very much, and we look forward to a warm and sunny evening in which to enjoy the gardens!

Addlestone Historical Society Programme 2010

June 1 **AGM + MEMBERS' EVE.**

July 6 '**Excavations at Woking Palace**' – Illustrated talk by Richard Savage.

Aug. 3 NO MEETING.

Sept. 7 '**Bygone Times in New Haw – People and Places**' – Illustrated talk by Jim Knight.

Oct. 5 '**The Bee Garden at Chobham (an archaeological investigation)**' – Illustrated talk by Isabel Ellis.

Nov. 2 '**The Meadow at Runnymede**' – Illustrated talk by Richard Williams.

Dec. 7 **SOCIAL EVENING.**

All meetings take place at the Community Centre, Garfield Road, ADDLESTONE, on the first Tuesday of the month (except August). **Meetings start at 8.00 p.m.**

DON'T FORGET! Parish Day this year will be on Saturday 17th July at Byfleet Recreation Ground. If you can spare half an hour or so to help man our usual stand, please let us know on 01932 351559. Hope to see you there!

From our archive

Granny Berry

A letter by Mr G J Bruzaud to the Byfleet Review

This photo of Granny Berry and her donkey and cart was taken by the late Mr Henry Stevens of The Lodge Addlestone (an Uncle of Mr L R Stevens). It won the prize of £1,000 offered by the Graphic in the International Amateur Photographic Competition. There were some 4,000 entries, and the title of the picture was "Worn Out" and well describes the old lady—the donkey and the cart. Mr L R Stevens tells me that a copy was offered to Queen Victoria who graciously accepted it. Mr Stevens also relates that one day the donkey wanted a drink so Granny drove the donkey and cart to the ford which was at Plough Bridge. The donkey walked into mid-stream and would not come out, so there the old lady had to sit for some three hours till presumably she was rescued. I remember Granny Berry quite well, the cart and harness were all tied up with string, and on one occasion the bottom of the cart fell out, and a few friends had it repaired for her. The old lady used to live in a thatched cottage to the north of Sanway, now pulled down, and afterwards went to Addlestone. I believe she was about 94 when she died. Mr Walter Polley recalls...that when the donkey became too ill to move, he had to shoot it and that it was buried in the paddock of the Cedars, and that he received 2/6 for the job, which reminds me that I once got paid 2/6 in connection with Granny Berry. Some two or three years ago I saw a reproduction of her photo in a magazine and it was entitled "No Petrol". I wrote to the Editor and told him about Granny, and the title of the photo, part of my letter was published in the Magazine, and I received a kindly reply enclosing 2/6d for my contribution (this is not a hint to the Editor of the Byfleet Review).

G J B

