

*The weather over the summer may not have been perfect, but perhaps the excitement of the Olympic Games made up for it a little. If you have any pictures of the cycling events that passed by our doorsteps that you might like to contribute to our archive, we would love to hear from you.*

*Subscriptions were due at the AGM in May, and reminder notices should be enclosed if you have not yet renewed. We hope you will continue to join us—details on the back page.*

*We hope you enjoy this latest newsletter and that we see you at an event very soon.*

FORTHCOMING  
EVENTS 2012



## 2012

**Thursday 11th October:** Join us as former Harrier test pilot, Chris Roberts, tells us about 'A History of British VSTOL Technology'. (VSTOL - Vertical and/or Short Take-Off and Landing aircraft.) **St Mary's Day Centre, Stream Close, 8.15pm.**

**Thursday 8th November:** Chris Glasow returns to tell us something of the famous Livery Companies of the City of London. **St Mary's Day Centre, Stream Close, 8.15pm.**

**Thursday 6th December:** The now traditional Society Christmas social—come and join us for drinks and nibbles. **St Mary's Day Centre, Stream Close, 8.15pm.**

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

*Jeff is working hard on booking up next year's events and we will update you on places, times and topics soon. So keep a look out in the newsletter and also don't forget to check the website*

[www.byfleetheritage.org.uk](http://www.byfleetheritage.org.uk)

## BYFLEET LIBRARY

On Saturday 22nd September Byfleet Library became the first of ten branches in Surrey to become a community partnered library.

Volunteers are now in place and have extended the library opening hours. These are now:

**Sunday 2pm – 4pm**  
**Tuesday 10am – 4pm**  
**Wednesday 6pm – 8pm**  
**Friday 10am – 4pm**  
**Saturday 9.30am – 3pm**

It is hoped to further extend opening to Monday and Thursday afternoons for a couple of hours, but this can only happen if there is support from the village.

The volunteers are delighted to be up and running, and are looking forward to providing a great service for the village. But they will only be able to do this with our support. So please go along and make use of this great resource and help safeguard it for the future.

## For the Record...

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

In **July** Jim Allen tested our knowledge of Byfleet and its history to the limit with a quiz night. Members formed small teams and there was much whispering and discussion in search of the correct answers. Once the answers were revealed there was further discussion over tea and biscuits, and everyone agreed they had enjoyed the mental exercise.

For those who were not able to make it, some of the questions are below (with the answers underneath), so why not have a go!

1. What was the original name of Byfleet & New Haw Station when it was opened?
2. In addition to the organ and a piano, what musical instrument can be found in St Mary's Church?
3. What was the name of the landlord of the Blue Anchor murdered in 1924?
4. What is the connection between the film 'Ryan's Daughter' and the Mill House?
5. Who connects 'Nelson Mandela House' in Peckham with 'Two Oaks' in Kings Avenue, Byfleet?
6. What is the connection between 1 Church Road, Byfleet, and 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, Washington, DC?
7. Who was created Earl of Cornwall by King Edward the Second in 1307, but was subsequently executed in 1312?
8. What North American feature used to stand in front of 'Foxholm' in Redhill Road?
9. What was the original name of the Queen's Head public house?
10. Which road links Chertsey Road with Petersham Avenue?
11. Who was appointed in 1389 to be the Clerk of Works in charge of Byfleet and other manors?
12. What was built as a memorial to Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee?
13. Which King's life was saved by John Holroyd of Byfleet Mill, when an attempt was made to shoot the King at the Drury Lane Theatre? (15<sup>th</sup> May 1800)
14. What were Mr Stoop's first names?
15. What were Mrs Stoop's first names?
16. In a list of street names in Byfleet, which road comes first alphabetically?
17. What was the original name of Rectory Lane?
18. Which well-known establishment was relocated to its present site in 1846?
19. Which famous author's widow lived in Byfleet in the late 1870's?
20. Name a road in Byfleet beginning with the letter 'U'

See question 8!



- |     |   |  |
|-----|---|--|
| 1.  | West Weybridge  |  |
| 2.  | A bassoon   |  |
| 3.  | Mr Jones  |  |
| 4.  | The actress Sarah Miles starred in "Ryan's Daughter" and lived at Mill House              |  |
| 5.  | Buster Merryfield played Uncle Arthur in Only Fools and Horses, and lived in Kings Avenue |  |
| 6.  | Both are called The White House   |  |
| 7.  | Piers Gaveston  |  |
| 8.  | A totem pole  |  |
| 9.  | The Leather Bottle  |  |
| 10. | York Road   |  |
| 11. | Geoffrey Chaucer  |  |
| 12. | Byfleet Village Hall  |  |
| 13. | King George III   |  |
| 14. | Frederick Cornelius   |  |
| 15. | Agnes Macfarlane  |  |
| 16. | Aragon Walk (or Abbot Close if you extend the village up to Byfleet & New Haw station)    |  |
| 17. | Workhouse Lane  |  |
| 18. | The Plough pub (from its site by Plough Bridge)   |  |
| 19. | Charles Kingsley  |  |
| 20. | Ulwin Avenue  |  |

We ended the summer break with a talk on the **history of cycling in Surrey** by **Les Bowerman**, amply illustrated by some wonderful old cycles from the collection of Bill Squirrel.



The first proto-bike was the German “fahr machine” built in 1817, propelled by sitting on the saddle and pushing yourself along with your feet. This model was improved upon by Dennis Johnson in 1819, a bike known as the hobby horse, or dandy charger. Then in the 1850s Willard Sawyer developed the 4 wheel velocipede, one of which he rode from Brighton to London for the Great Exhibition. He has often been called the first truly professional maker of man-powered vehicles.

In the mid 1860s, Pierre Michot added cranks and pedals to the front wheel of a “hobby horse”, and the bike as we know it today was born. Its wooden wheels with iron shodding gave it the name of “Boneshaker”, and the Surrey Comet in 1869 reports John Mayall Junior riding one from London to Brighton in 12 hours.

The Franco-Prussian war in Europe interrupted cycle development in Europe, so Britain took over the reins. A leading figure was John Keen of Surbiton, known as “Happy Jack”. He manufactured the “Surbiton” bike, the type often called a Penny Farthing (or Ordinary) due to its large front wheel. As the front wheel grew larger, Keen became renowned for building higher and lighter. In 1870 he raced John Jonson of Kensington from Fairmile to Cobham (which 142 years later formed part of the Olympic cycling route). By 1879 Keen was known as the cycling champion of the world, so he could be said to have made it to the top in cycle racing, manufacture, development and design. He died in 1901 aged 52.

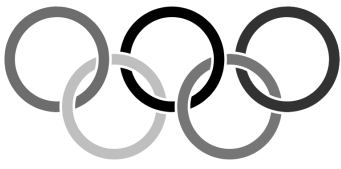
The first man to ride at 20mph was H L Cortis at Crystal Palace cycle track in 1862—on a bike with a 60” front wheel. He also took part in a race from Kingston to Guildford and back to Ripley on a 60” bicycle and his arm in a sling! He died in a horse riding accident in Australia in 1886, and there is a memorial window to him in Ripley Church.

Ripley, in particular The Anchor Inn, was the favourite cycling venue in the country. Mrs Harriet Dibble and her daughter, Annie ran this “mecca for all good cyclists”, providing lunch for up to 400 in two sittings. They also collected cyclists’ signatures, finally gathering twelve volumes. The ladies died in 1895 and 1896, but not before they had seen the rise of the female cyclist. This caused quite a stir, as rather than try to cycle in long skirts, ladies started to wear “rational dress” or (horror!) knickerbockers! In 1893, 16 year old Tessie Reynolds road from London to Brighton and back, not only in rational dress but accompanied by a man. The press were disgusted! By 1895, rational dress was beginning to become accepted, but there were still many pubs or coffee rooms that would not serve women dressed “like that”. Lady Harberton took the Hautboy Hotel in Ockham to court over their refusal to serve her in the main dining room. Lady H refused the offer of a side room, as to get to it she would have to walk through the bar, which was not only full of men, but some of them were not wearing jackets! The court found that although the room offered had been adequate, the hotel had been wrong to refuse service to someone in knickerbockers.

Despite the smooth running of the Olympic events this year, cycle road racing has not always been so well accepted. In the 1880s and 1890s, races could include ordinary cycles, the smaller wheeled safety bicycle, tricycles and even tandem tricycles. In 1883, the police were so unhappy about a 24 hour road race that they placed a pony and cart in the road one mile from the finish, stopped the leading riders and taking their particulars. In July 1894 during a 50 mile race a horse pulling a trap shied. Competitors were unseated and one went under the horse’s hoofs. The accident was reported and the police declared that “racing and furious riding must cease”. Mass starts were banned and from 1900 racers set off at intervals of one minute. This put British riders at a disadvantage in Europe, which still used mass starts. Vic Jenner, a championship cyclist, wished to bring back mass starts to Britain. In 1932 Vic had been pushed off his bike by a rival during a road race in Europe—the same rival then stole one of Vic’s wheels as Vic lay concussed! Vic approached Surrey Police, but they refused, so Vic simply hired Brooklands race course, and on 17th June 1933 102 riders took part in a 100km 17 lap world championship trial which included several ascents of the Test Hill. Then in 1942 Percy Stallard went ahead with a road race, which the police had to agree had been a success. They dropped their objections, and other events took place.

Les finished by mentioning Ethel Brambleby, born in the Guildford area, who died in 2011 aged 93. She began competing against men in 1933 aged 16, rode her last race aged 83 and had her most successful cycling year aged 68. She did much to achieve acceptance for women in cycle racing.

Les’ talk had shown us just how important our corner of Surrey has been in the history of cycling.



What a sporting summer we have just had!

And in Byfleet, West Byfleet and Pyrford we were lucky enough to have some of the Olympic action passing by on our doorsteps.

Many of us cheered on the Team GB cyclists as first the men and then the women sped through during the road races. Then a few days later we caught another glimpse of Bradley Wiggins as he shot down the Seven Hills Road on his gold medal winning



Time Trial ride. (One of my abiding Olympic memories will be seeing Byfleet Road, which had been closed to let the crowds disperse, absolutely full of cyclists, pedestrians, children on scooters and even the odd skateboarder, all making their way back to Byfleet after the race).

For two days the Oyster Lane roundabout was festooned with lovely willow sculptures of cyclists, produced by the schools of Woking Borough with guidance from artists. They were beautiful and really added something to the atmosphere—we were sad to



see them go so soon.

Byfleet has been no stranger to cycling events over the years, with cycle racing once forming part of the Parish Day celebrations, and the village having its own speedway team, the Byfleet Broadsiders. It was great to carry on the tradition by being a (very small!) part of the London Olympics.

If you have any photos of your own that you would like to add to our archive, we would be very pleased to hear from you.



????????????????????  
**QUESTIONS AND QUERIES**  
 ??????????????????

We were recently lucky enough to have been given several photographs by Mrs Chapman, showing scenes from the Sanway Laundry, St Mary's school pupils and a wonderful shot of Albrecht's shop which was in High Road.



This top photo shows the Sanway Laundry staff. We would love to hear from you if you think you recognise anyone in it, or where the photo was taken (we think perhaps in the



Sanway Road area)

The picture on the left shows the Sanway Laundry staff putting on a bit of a show. The location is Byfleet Village Hall, but if you know what the production might be, or again recognise anyone taking part, please let us know.

On the right is a photo of Albrecht's which stood in High Road opposite Plough Green (on the end of the parade next to Beech Close). It was a high class grocers. Later the premises were occupied by a bicycle shop and Shortlands shoe shop.



# SOCIETY SNIPPETS

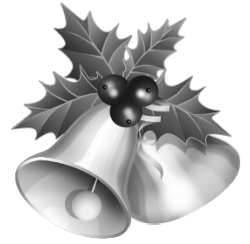


As you will have noticed, the evenings are drawing in, and thoughts will soon invariably turn towards Christmas! Byfleet will start to gear up on 22nd November, with Christmas Lights being switched on at Byfleet Village Hall and Plough Green on Thursday 22nd November.

Then on Saturday 24th November Byfleet Village Hall will host the annual Christmas Fayre. We hope to have another calendar for sale there, and there will be a wealth of stalls to browse for gifts.

On Saturday 1st December there will be another chance to pick up some more bargains at the Table Top Sale at St Mary's Community Centre.

So put those dates in your diaries and keep an eye out for further details around the village.



At the beginning of September we opened up Byfleet Fire Station for Heritage Open Weekend. Over 40 people came along to see the building and get an update on progress, including one ex-Byfleet fireman who provided a wealth of information and anecdotes from when the building was in use.

The Brooklands Museum Fire & Rescue Service's 1986 Land-Rover fire engine was displayed on the forecourt and there were several new indoor displays including a pre-war Merryweather "Fire Suds" fire extinguisher. New pictures from the archive adorned the walls and several items were shown for the day in a new display case, all adding to the picture of what the fire station was like when the fire brigade was in residence.

Sales of refreshments and second hand books, videos and magazines, plus donations, raised over £60 towards the fire station restoration fund, and local newspaper photographer Graham Larter took photos of the team and exhibits outside the building.

Recently the roof was made watertight thanks to the work of three new volunteers who very kindly gave their time so that the building would be watertight for the coming winter.

Keep an eye out for further news in the local press or on our Society website.



## SUBSCRIPTIONS 2012/13

Very many thanks to those of you who have renewed your subs for the coming year. If you have not yet got around to it, there should be a reminder slip in this newsletter. If you have received a reminder by mistake, apologies and please let us know so that we can amend our records. Thanks very much.

## *From our Archive*

(found among some newspaper cuttings. Sadly this is undated, but Mr Carpenter was gardener at West Hall from 1902-30)

"An interesting cricket match between gardeners and coachmen took place on Byfleet Cricket ground on Thursday of last week. The gardeners, under the captaincy of Mr G Carpenter, batted first and made the creditable score of 88... Their opponents, captained by Mr W Gristock, in reply compiled 49... At their second attempt the gardeners scored 52 for 4 wickets. They then declared, leaving the coachmen 92 to make in three quarters of an hour; and so well did the latter bat that when time was called they had scored 88 for seven wickets. An exciting and pleasant game thus ended in a victory for the gardeners by 39 runs on the first innings. After the match the teams adjourned to the Queen's Head, where they sat down to a substantial tea. This was presided over by Mr G J Bruzaud, who kindly provided the tea, and in a neat little speech expressed his intention of making the match an annual one, the winners to play a combined team of firemen."