

We had a lovely Indian summer, but now the nights are drawing in, and it will soon be Christmas. We have produced another calendar for 2016, which would make a lovely gift—there are plenty of ways to obtain one, and details of where to find them are on the back page.

Our 2016 meeting dates have been booked at the Day Centre and speakers are being keenly sought. Please put the dates in your diaries and watch this space, or check our website for updates. We look forward to seeing you there!

FORTHCOMING
EVENTS 2015



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.*

2016

All talks to be held at St Mary's Centre for the Community and will begin at 8.15pm

Thursday 21st January

Thursday 18th February

Thursday 17th March

Thursday 21st April

Thursday May 19th: Society AGM

Thursday 16th June

Thursday 14th July

Thursday 8th September

Thursday 6th October

Thursday 3rd November

Thursday 1st December

**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.

Subscription renewal reminders

A big thank you to everyone who has renewed their subscription with us for the coming year. If our records show that we have not yet received your renewal, you should find a reminder along with this newsletter, but do let us know if you have received your reminder in error. All information on where to send your subs are on the form, but if you have any questions, please give our Treasurer, Avreil Fabb, a ring on 01932 344476, or catch one of the committee at our monthly meetings. Thank you.

For the Record...

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

Our Autumn meetings kicked off with **John Clarke** who came to tell us about **Brookwood Cemetery**. John has been associated with the cemetery since 1976. He gives guided tours, established the Brookwood Cemetery Society, and has written a guide to Brookwood entitled "London's Necropolis". John took us through time, from the reasons for the cemetery's foundation to the present day, where it is now owned by Woking Council, but operated as a private company.

By 1850, London churchyards were literally full to bursting. The outside ground level had become higher than the interior floor level in the church itself, and a cholera epidemic in 1848-9 had caused a crisis. There was so little room that older bodies were exhumed to make way for new burials; the old bones were crushed for fertilizer and coffin wood reused for firewood. The epidemic, killing both rich and poor, finally forced action to be taken. Two schemes arose. The first was proposed by Edwin Chadwick from the Board of Health. Future London burials would take place in two new cemeteries, the Great Western Metropolitan Cemetery in the west (now Kensal Green), one the Great Eastern Metropolitan Cemetery between Abbeywood and Erith.

But it is the second scheme that led to the creation of Brookwood. A private act of Parliament in June 1852 created the London Necropolis and Mausoleum Company. The estate at Brookwood was acquired from Lord Onslow, who sold the company 2,000 acres of common land deemed unfit for agriculture for £25 per acre. The intention was to build a cemetery to contain all of London's dead for ever. However, only 500 acres at the western edge of the site were actually converted into the initial site of the cemetery. Funeral parties arrived at the cemetery via the London and South West Railway from Waterloo. Two stations, designed by Sydney Smirke (whose brother built the British Museum) were built at Brookwood, one for each part of the cemetery divided by a roadway called Cemetery Pales. The North Station served the non-conformist part of the cemetery, while the South Station served the larger Church of England section.

The cemetery opened for public burial on 13th November 1854. Cemetery folklore dictates that the first burial becomes the keeper of the cemetery; thus Brookwood's keepers are the still-born male twins of Mr and Mrs Hoar of Southwark, who were a pauper burial. London parishes and organisations had their own allotments, marked out by cast iron pillars, and could be laid out to the organisation's own wishes. The first private burial, which is number 26 in the register, was Lt General Sir Henry Goldfinch of the Royal Engineers, who had taken part in the Peninsular War. The cemetery contains many interesting monuments, including Lady Matilda Pelham Clinton, one of Queen Victoria's ladies in waiting, and, in the Non-Conformist section, Charles Bradlaw, the first atheist Member of Parliament.

In 1902, Waterloo station was expanded, covering the site of the company's original station. The railway therefore provided a new station, to be built before the old one was demolished, and also awarded the company £12,000 for the inconvenience. The frontage of this station still survives at 121 Westminster Bridge Road, although the name on the frontage is now covered up.

In 1910 the cemetery acquired Earl Cadogan's private mausoleum. This had been built for his son in 1878, but the family later moved his body to the family estate. The mausoleum was bought by the company for £200 and converted into a columbarium for the reception of ashes. Brookwood also provided land for a military cemetery in 1917 for casualties from the military hospitals in Greater London, and the American Military Cemetery next door is the only American cemetery for First World War casualties in Great Britain. It was completed in 1929, but not opened until 1937. The Second World War also brought changes – the London station was bombed at the height of the Blitz on 16th April 1941. Southern Railway would not reinstate the necropolis train, so after the war all funerals came by road. The Brookwood Memorial was unveiled by the Queen in 1958 and features 3,500 names of Commonwealth forces with no known grave.

The 20 acre Glades of Remembrance for cremations was opened in 1950, but there were losses too. The North Station building had been demolished in the 1960s, and the remaining South Station burnt down in 1972, almost certainly an act of arson. The St Edward Brotherhood acquired the site, along with the old Church of England chapel, and converted it to a

shrine dedicated to St Edward the Martyr.

2004 saw the 150th anniversary celebrations, which prompted John's research into the cemetery. Some of the significant memorials, such as that of Lord Nelson's granddaughter, were restored with funds from the Brookwood Cemetery Society, and work is ongoing to arrest decay on others. 2010 saw the 60th anniversary of the Glades of Remembrance, and the lake was restored.

John showed us that Brookwood not only has a fascinating history, but also that this history is still developing and flourishing.



In October we held an evening of short talks by members on a variety of topics.

Ron Brown displayed the fine Grant of Arms for Dr Frank Wall, surgeon to King George V. A Grant of Arms is the official document which confers the right to bear a coat of arms to a person and to their descendants. Ron pointed out that there is only ever one copy of a Grant of Arms with the seals attached. The document records the grant and describes the coat of arms. It also displays the arms of the Duke of Norfolk (as Earl Marshal) and the College of Arms on either side of the Royal arms, with the seals of the Garter King of Arms, Clarenceux King of Arms, and Norroy and Ulster King of Arms attached. Any motto is not mentioned in the description, as this is not part of the grant. The Clarenceux King of Arms is responsible for all grants of arms south of the River Trent, while Norroy and Ulster is responsible for all those north of the River Trent, for which he is known as the "Northern King". Dr Wall's arms were applied for in the name of his father, as this meant that he could then pass the coat of arms to his children. If he had applied in his own name, the coat of arms would only go to him. If you fancy applying for your own coat of arms, a grant would cost you approximately £3,000.



This was followed by Jim Allen speaking on the life of Sir John Whittaker Ellis, who lived at Petersham House (now Lloyds Bank). He is known as the founder of Byfleet Fire Brigade, but Jim looked at the personal life of this Byfleet resident. He was the 5th son of Joseph Ellis who owned the Star and Garter Hotel in



Richmond. He was born in Petersham on 25th January 1829, and married Mary Anne Staples in 1859 in St Pancras. Mary Anne died in 1901, and Sir John remarried to Marion Bailey in 1903 at St George, Hanover Square. He moved to Byfleet in 1859 to Breeches Farm, which he renamed Petersham Farm, and built Petersham House in 1879. He was an auctioneer and estate agent by trade, but also worked his way up the administrative ranks in the City of London, being alderman from 1872-1909, Sheriff 1874-5 and Lord Mayor in 1881-2. In 1882 he was granted the baronetcy of Byfleet for life, receiving this honour on Queen Victoria's visit to Epping Forest. In 1890-91 he became Lord Mayor of Richmond, and Member of Parliament for Mid Surrey in 1884-5, and for Kingston on

Thames in 1885-92. On his election to Kingston, the people dragged his carriage around the market place in celebration. He died in 1912, aged 83, and is buried in Petersham, although Bill Polley in his history believed him to have been buried in Scotland. It was noted that the coat of arms above the door of Petersham House does not seem to match the one listed in other books, but Ron Brown pointed out that the shield on Petersham House shows the Whittaker Ellis arms on the left hand side, and the arms of his first wife on the right.

Our final section was from Jeff Sechiari, who showed some photographs of the Brooklands air raid shelter, which is to the back of what is now the car park for David Lloyd's gym, in Brooklands Road. It was built to accommodate 5,000 people, and is now owned by a wine storage company, as the conditions are cool and stable, perfect for storing vintage wines. Members remembered that post-war, the area became a car park for the senior Vickers staff. The shelter was also used for blood donating, and in the 1970s the company fire brigade held fire demonstrations there, filling rooms with smoke to show staff how disorienting it could be. Other members remembered families from the Vickers cottages sleeping in the shelter during the Blitz. A video on YouTube (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BJ-y7Zpktuk>) shows a visit through the tunnels, where many of the original notices can still be seen. The order to "refrain from singing, shouting and excessive talking" was not only to avoid annoying your fellow inmates, but also to save oxygen in the underground conditions!



By the end of the evening we had enjoyed a varied and interesting range of talks. It was hoped to have further members' evenings in the coming year.

BYFLEET'S FIRST BLUE PLAQUE



Blessed with good weather, a large group of people met outside Byfleet Village Hall on Saturday 12th September for the unveiling of a blue plaque in honour of Frederick and Agnes Stoop, our well-known local benefactors.

We were pleased to welcome Daphne Thissen, the Cultural Attaché from the Netherlands Embassy, to unveil the plaque. Among others present were our local MP, Jonathan Lord; the Deputy Mayor of Woking, Councillor Anne Murray, with her consort Councillor Michael Smith (who also gave a short speech with his memories of the Stoop family); County and Borough Councillor Richard Wilson; all our ward

councillors; and representatives of the many organisations with which the Stoops were associated. We were particularly pleased to welcome many members of several generations of the Stoop family, including one who travelled from Holland specially for the event.

It was good to see a good turnout of our members. The unveiling ceremony was followed by an informal reception.

We express our thanks to all those who attended, and to members George Balchin and Brian Davis who were responsible for fixing the plaque. Thanks also to the Trustees of the Village Hall for allowing us to place the plaque on their building in its prominent position on the front turret wall facing the car park entrance.



Above: Members of the Stoop family who attended the unveiling.

Above right: Speeches before the unveiling

Right: Daphne Thissen, Cultural Attaché from the Netherlands Embassy unveils the plaque

Were there really Oysters in Oyster Lane??

While doing some research on the internet, Jim Allen found a letter, held in a Lincolnshire records office, which might indicate that oysters were farmed in Byfleet.

The letter, dated 5th December 1777, is from William Welby, who gives his address as "Temple". His correspondent is William Earle Welby of Allington near Grantham, Lincolnshire.

Mr Welby begins:

"Dear Sir,

I am favour'd with your two letters of 28th and 30th November. Pursuant to your Order a Barrel of Byfleet Oysters went by Simmon's (?) Waggon on Wednesday last, and I shall continue to send a Barrel of them once a fortnight till the beginning of March. I shall also take care to discharge the Bills you mention."

The letter continues with several matters of business before concluding:

"My Wife and Family join me in best compliments to yourself, Mrs Welby, Masters and Misses. We are sorry that you should attempt an Apology for not sending Game, as we have no pretence to favours of that sort. We are well aware of the scarcity of Game, and should be much more uneasy if you should put yourself to any inconvenience on our account. I am

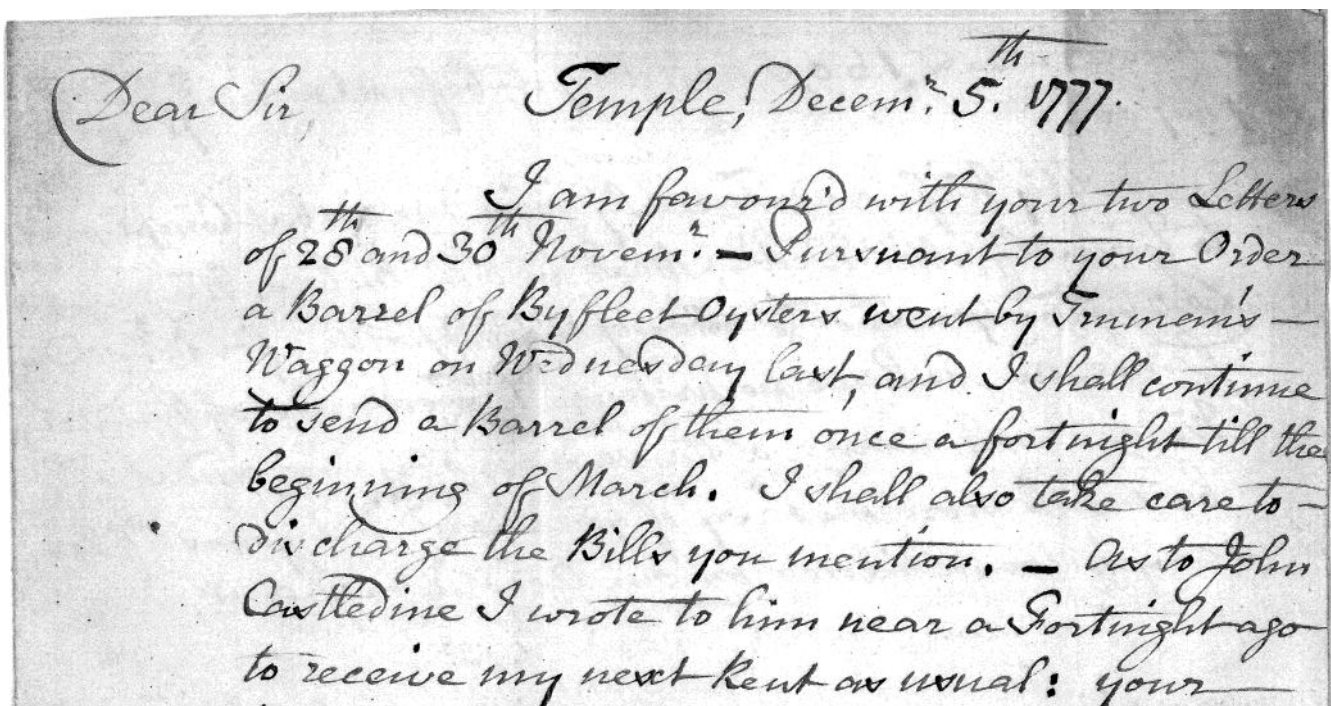
Dear Sir,

Your most obliged and faithfull humble servant
William Welby"

The letter is very intriguing, given that we have an Oyster Lane in Byfleet, and that people have often puzzled over the origin of the name. There is a tale that it came from the large number of oyster shells that were found in the area when building Brooklands Racetrack, but we do not know if the name "Oyster Lane" predates the track (if anyone can help with this, please do let us know). And now we have this letter, which mentions "Byfleet oysters".

Does this mean that one of Byfleet's products in the 1770s was oysters? Or is "Byfleet" just a name or label for a certain type of oyster to which Mr Welby was partial?

As usual, there are more questions than answers! The first section of the letter, with its reference to the oysters, is below, and we would love to hear your thoughts and ideas on what this letter might mean.



Dear Sir,

Temple, Decem^r. 5. 1777.

I am favour'd with your two Letters of 28th and 30th Novem^r. - Pursuant to your Order a Barrel of Byfleet Oysters went by Simmon's - Waggon on Wednesday last, and I shall continue to send a Barrel of them once a fortnight till the beginning of March. I shall also take care to discharge the Bills you mention. - As to John Cawthorne I wrote to him near a Fortnight ago to receive my next Kent as usual: your

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SOCIETY NEWS
 ?

A Query—can you help?

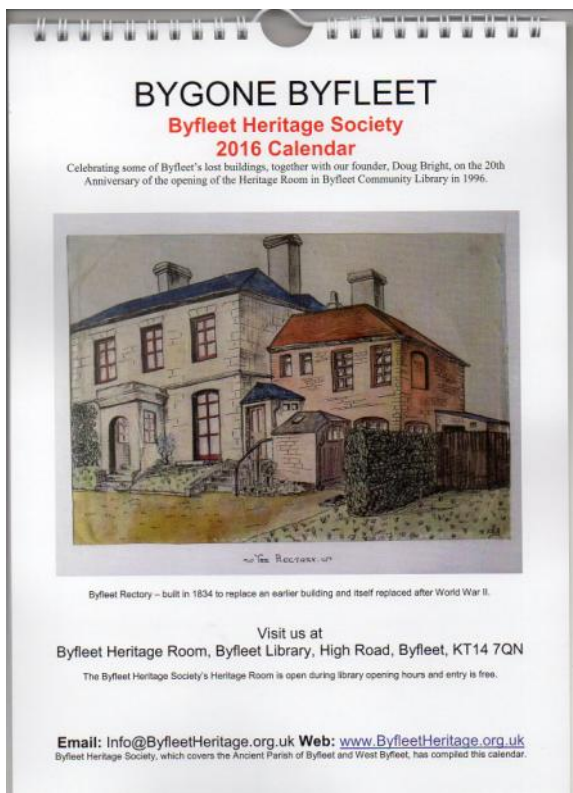


At one of our monthly drop ins at Byfleet Library, we received a visit from a lady with a lovely silver dish. It was engraved as a gift from Mrs and Mrs Trayton Childe to our visitor's grandmother, Ethel Lilian Reeve.

Ethel Reeve had lived above Digby's Stores and our visitor believed that she had been a cook at Byfleet Manor.

We have made a very quick search of the census and electoral roll, but cannot find a Trayton Childe associated with the Manor. Perhaps they lived in one of the other large houses in Byfleet at the time.

Does anyone else know of the Trayton Childes, or Ethel Lilian Reeve? If you have any information, please let us know. Thank you.



HERITAGE SOCIETY 2016 CALENDAR

The Heritage Society calendar for 2016 is now on sale. This year we are featuring some of the buildings that used to stand in Byfleet, but are now no more.

Copies will be available from Byfleet Community Library, our monthly drop-in at the Heritage Room in the library on the first Saturday of the month, or at our talks. We will also be at the Christmas Fair at Byfleet Village Hall on Saturday 21st November. Calendars cost £5. If you would like a preview before you decide to buy, you can see more on our website, www.byfleetheritage.org.uk.

We can also send your calendar to you by post. Please make cheques payable to Byfleet Heritage Society and add £1.40 for postage and packing.

From the Byfleet Review, April 1953—an interesting snapshot of 1950s Byfleet.

LIBRARY SCHEME

The Woking Librarian has reported that all efforts to obtain other premises for Byfleet Library have been unsuccessful and has suggested the provision of a temporary building at the rear of the Village Hall. The Public Library deferred consideration of this until the Librarian had submitted a detailed report showing facilities, book issues, and number of readers at each branch. At the March meeting of the Council the question was raised by Cllr. Cawsey, who drew attention to the urgency of making a decision. He said that if the Council were called upon to close the Civic Restaurant the library would have to be rehoused within three months. Cllr. Cheeseman, Library Chairman, replied that if an emergency did arise there was a scheme to meet the needs of Byfleet.