

For the Record...

For our April meeting, **Michael Archer** entertained us with anecdotes from his career in sports broadcasting in a talk entitled **"From Wembley to Big Daddy"**.

Michael's career began as a trainee journalist with the Oxford Mail, where he was required to learn law and shorthand. A highlight included covering Oxford United football matches captained by Ron Atkinson. He also worked with Lord Archer in his days as President of the University Athletics Club, and once drove the "fragrant" Mrs Archer from Oxford to Cambridge to see a hurdles match. Lord Archer's best man was Adrian Metcalfe, holder of the UK 400m record, and who got Michael a job at ATV on Sportsweek. This was fronted by Dickie Davis, and their boss was Billy Wright who, although he had 105 England caps, was not quite such a natural at television commentary; "the crowd is very excited" was one of his stock phrases.

From ATV, Michael went to World of Sport, at that time fronted by Eamonn Andrews. The team often used to go to his house in Chiswick to discuss scripts over a drink. Eamonn would read the autocue without question, and it became a game to see what he would read—he once read Juan Fangio as Fang 10. Michael was then invited to join the new team being assembled for a World of Sport revamp. The Head of Sport at ITV at this time was Jimmy Hill, with Brian Moore the radio commentator and Dickie



Davis as World of Sport frontman. The programme was made initially at Wembley Studios, and to mark the new line-up Jimmy Hill and the team had a photocall at Wembley Stadium in 1968. The Horse of the Year show had just taken place and churned up the pitch, but this had the lucky side effect of enabling the team to take pieces of the sacred turf home with them as souvenirs—one colleague swore that he had taken the very patch where the ball had bounced into the goal - on the right side of the line, of course—in the 1966 World Cup final.

Michael then had to make a choice—stay with World of Sport or work on a new soccer preview programme. Michael chose the football, but what to call it? Michael suggested "On The Ball" but his boss didn't like it. However, when the TV listing came round, Michael filled in "On The Ball" as the programme's title, and the name remained. The strength of the programme was that it had access to all ITV's regional companies, allowing access to footage of goals which the BBC did not have. Michael remembers the fun they had at work, such as cricket matches in the studio. Mike Murphy, who went from ITV to the BBC, described the ethos at ITV as a "holiday camp". The BBC would never accept challenges to cricket or football matches as they knew that ITV had the contacts to raise better teams. Some matches did take place, such as when Lawrie McMenemy brought a team to play a World of Sport team, but as they have all grown older golf has replaced football as the sport of choice.

FA cup finals and World Cup finals were, of course, huge events. Michael met his wife at the 1974 world cup in West Germany. For Spain 1982 the team were taken to survey the match locations in a private jet. In Mexico 1986 they used local youngsters to drive them around. One girl offered to get a priest to bless the boots of the England team, as it was vital for England to win. Michael thought this would be a great idea, and would give them one up on the BBC who would not know about it. However, their boss Ted Croker found out about it and told them not to use the information, which turned out to be just as well, as England drew 0-0 with Morocco, Brian Robson injured his shoulder and Ray Wilkins was sent off, so knowledge of the blessing would not have been that impressive after all.

For FA cup finals ITV and the BBC went head to head, which led to intense rivalry. There was a war to grab the relevant people for your side for post-match interviews, and it was known for people to stand on electrical cables to prevent cameras reaching the correct spot. For the 1969 final between Manchester City and Leicester, ITV had "Mr Manchester" himself, Peter Doherty, on their team, which meant that ITV bagged all the Man City players first.

Michael's final two years in television were spent televising wrestling on ITV. The consultant for the show was William George Matthews, otherwise known as Mick McManus, the wrestler who counted the Queen Mother among his fans; he always played the baddie, so successfully that old ladies would stick hat pins in him as he walked to the ring! Michael also worked with Dale Martin Promotions, run by the Crabtree brothers of whom Shirley Crabtree, or Big Daddy, was one. His elder brother Max was a promoter and his younger brother Brian was a wrestling MC. There was a rival group, All Star Wrestling, run by Brian Dixon, known in the ring as Giant Haystacks. Another famous wrestler was Kendo Nagasaki, who Michael knows better as Peter Thornley, a British Judo international. The advent of WWF from America led to the end of British wrestling on the TV—leaving Michael to answer all the letters asking why it had been removed!

Michael shared many other stories of a long and illustrious career in TV sports, and we all enjoyed his trip down memory lane.

Last year Jim Allen took a fund-raising tour of all 42 Anglican cathedrals in England. The trip took 24 days, using 16 Travelodges and visiting one cathedral, or sometimes two, per day.

The tour started in London with two cathedrals, St Paul's and St Saviour's, Southwark. Jim toured the crypt at St Paul's, which contained the tombs of Admiral Lord Nelson, the Duke of Wellington and a memorial to Lawrence of Arabia. Jim was struck by the contrast between old and new at Southwark which is in the shadow of the Shard. The tour ended at our own Guildford Cathedral, where Jim was welcomed home by friends and supporters. Jim had so much to tell us about his trip that there is not room here for it all, but here are some highlights.



A list of all the cathedrals visited is below, and the buildings visited were many and varied. They included the oldest cathedral at Rochester, the cathedral with the tallest spire at Salisbury, and the newest cathedral at Liverpool. He also visited Bristol, the first cathedral where women were ordained. Jim saw daily cathedral life continuing around him, such as at Hereford where the normally quiet atmosphere was broken somewhat by the organ being tuned. At many places the buildings were covered by scaffolding as the battle to maintain and conserve these ancient structures continues.

Jim sometimes encountered royalty on his trip. He saw the tomb of Edward II at Gloucester, a king who has links with our Manor House and also a Byfleet road named after him. King John's tomb was seen at Worcester, and the tomb of King Richard III who was recently re-interred at Leicester. The new tomb is a beautiful piece of stone weighing three tons. You are permitted to touch the stone and feel the fossils within it, but you must not touch the royal crest which is made up of precious stones. And at Peterborough Jim left flowers at the tomb of Katherine of Aragon on behalf of the Heritage Society and Mary McIntyre; Henry VIII's first wife had links to Byfleet Manor, and is greatly revered at Peterborough, where they hold an annual Katherine of Aragon day.

And of course, Jim encountered the unexpected. He was publicly welcomed as a pilgrim at Canterbury by the Dean, and on the day he visited Gloucester the nave was being reinstated, following three days of being used as a skateboard park during half term.

We greatly enjoyed hearing about Jim's fascinating tour of English cathedrals.

The Cathedral Church of St Paul, London.

The Cathedral Church of St Saviour, Southwark.

The Cathedral Church of St Andrew, Rochester.

The Cathedral of Christ Church, Canterbury.

The Cathedral Church of the Holy Trinity, Chichester.

The Cathedral Church of St Thomas

of Canterbury, Portsmouth.

The Cathedral Church of the Holy and Invisible Trinity, Winchester.

The Cathedral Church of St Mary, Salisbury.

The Cathedral Church of St Peter, Exeter.

The Cathedral Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Truro.

The Cathedral Church of St Andrew, Wells.

The Cathedral Church of the Holy and Undivided Trinity, Bristol.

The Cathedral Church of St Peter, Gloucester.

The Cathedral Church of St Mary and St Ethelbert, Hereford.

The Cathedral Church of Christ and the Blessed Mary the Virgin, Worcester.

The Cathedral Church of St Philip, Birmingham.

The Cathedral Church of St Michael, Coventry.

The Cathedral Church of St Martin, Leicester.

The Cathedral Church of St Mary, Lichfield.

The Cathedral Church of All Saints, Derby.

The Cathedral Church of St Peter, Sheffield.

The Cathedral Church of Christ and the Blessed Virgin Mary, Chester.

The Cathedral Church of Christ, Liverpool.

The Cathedral Church of St Mary, Manchester.

The Cathedral Church of St Mary, Blackburn.

The Cathedral Church of the Holy and Undivided Trinity, Carlisle.

The Cathedral Church of St Nicholas, Newcastle.

The Cathedral Church of Christ and the Blessed Virgin Mary, Durham.

The Cathedral Church of St Peter and St Wilfrid, Ripon.

The Cathedral Church of St Peter, York.

The Cathedral Church of St Peter, Bradford.

The Cathedral Church of All Saints, Wakefield.

The Cathedral Church of the Blessed Mary the Virgin, Southwell.

The Cathedral Church of St Mary, Lincoln.

The Cathedral Church of St Peter, Peterborough.

The Cathedral Church of the Holy and Undivided Trinity, Ely.

The Cathedral Church of the Holy Trinity, Norwich.

The Cathedral Church of St James, St Edmundsbury (Bury St Edmunds).

The Cathedral Church of St Mary the Virgin, Chelmsford.

The Cathedral Church of St Alban, St Albans.

The Cathedral Church of Christ (formerly St Frideswide's), Oxford.

The Cathedral Church of the Holy Spirit, Guildford.



On a warm July evening we enjoyed an interesting talk from **Alan Guy, MBE** entitled **It's Only A Winter's Tale**, about his experiences in the army, particularly in Korea.

Born in Liverpool, Alan joined the army in 1950. He accepted the King's shilling at a recruitment office in Wrexham. As a child Alan had enjoyed the story of Jack and the Beanstalk, and he expected this shilling to perform miracles. But the "miracle" turned out to be that his acceptance transformed the previously charming and polite recruiting sergeant into a raving lunatic. Alan arrived at the training camp in Aldershot. At meal time, Alan learnt about the systematic nature of the army. He joined a queue and worked his way along the line, first taking a plate. At the next stage he was supposed to take two slices of bread, but only took one. The next man put a sausage on one of his slices of bread—so far, so good. However, at the next service post, the man was dispensing jam. As Alan did not have a second slice of bread to put it on, the man placed the jam on top of Alan's sausage, and that was his first Army meal.

There was also the trip to the barber, who was nicknamed Geronimo due to his job of scalping the men. The next stage was to get kitted out at the Quarter Masters stores. On being told they would be seen by a tailor, the recruits imagined beautifully fitted uniforms, but the reality was very different. Rather than silk lined wool, Alan said the uniform was more like horsehair lined with sharp sand. His greatcoat in particular was on the large side, leading an office to observe, "You look like a pregnant penguin!" Then there were the joys of webbing. Webbing is made from thick canvas with brass buckles attached. It needed treating daily with Blanco. This was a green block of compressed powder. Water was added to make a paste, and then this paste was applied to the webbing and allowed to dry to a smooth finish. However, all the brass buckles also needed cleaning with liquid Brasso, but if any Brasso touched the Blanco it dried white and left a greasy stain and you had to start all over again. The new recruits cheered up a bit when they were told they would be issued with a housewife, but soon realised this was not someone who would look after them, but a canvas holdall containing needles, a thimble, thread and wool to enable them to do their own repairs. Finally, there were the army boots that caused hours of work and care. The leather was hard and covered in small pimples, and a soldier's first job was to remove these by a process called boning, using a spoon handle. First the toecaps would be covered in boot polish. This was then set fire to and rubbed with a spoon handle to press the pimples back into the leather. More polish was added, a bit of spit added and then the polish was rubbed in small circles using a finger. The resulting shine was almost like patent leather, but took many hours, and woe betide the soldier that stepped on your toes and ruined the polish.

On being pronounced fit for service, Alan was sent to Cambridge Military Hospital where he became trained as a male nurse in the Military Infectious Diseases Hospital, and saw the results of diseases such as smallpox, leprosy and meningitis. Then he was posted to Korea. Alan's first impressions of the country were, firstly, the bitter cold followed by the smell. South Korea was a farming economy and the fields were fertilised with human manure. In Korea Alan served with the Field Hygiene Section. Many people think this deals with latrines and such like, but actually is manned by highly trained medics who had received basic training plus instruction in anatomy, physiology, first aid and qualification as an Army nurse, and this was before starting training as a Hygiene Assistant. It was an important position; malaria and dysentery caused huge damage, and there was a real need for Hygiene Assistants to advise on disease prevention.

After a brief stationing at Horse Guards in Whitehall, Alan was sent to Suez. This was very different to Korea. All services had been destroyed, which the army had to restore. 44 gallon latrine drums were issued which, when full, were taken to sewage farms to be tipped through a grille in the floor. Alan observed a member of a Scottish regiment tipping one of these drums out and losing his hat at just the wrong moment. The prevention of disease in Suez was a real problem, due to flies and poor sanitation, and the advice given by Alan and his team saved many lives. One of Alan's more sombre jobs was to recover bodies from their temporary graves. Alan was in charge of the associated health concerns, and all men involved were strengthened with plenty of rum, whiskey and cigarettes.

Alan was awarded the MBE in 2011, which he was proud to receive from Princess Anne. He had joined the British Korean Veterans Association and became the Korean Liaison Officer, providing a link between the Korean Embassy in London and British Korean Veterans. The Koreans are very keen to honour veterans of the Korean war, and the relationship is a warm one. Alan is also the holder of the Civil Merit Medal, the first British man ever to receive this award. It was given to him by the President of Korea himself.

Alan finished with an army joke. Some national servicemen in Malaya were being briefed about possible dangers on patrol. Their Sergeant told them that the real danger was the black and yellow banded snake. The only way to deal with this was to grab it by the tip of the tail, work your way along grabbing black, yellow, black, yellow and then strike out both eyes at once with your fingers. The patrol returned with one man on a stretcher, badly injured. The Sergeant asked what had happened. Was it the enemy? No, the soldier replied, I saw a black and yellow banded snake crawling in the bushes and did what you said. I grabbed it, worked my way along—and stuck my fingers up the backside of the biggest Bengal tiger you've ever seen!



Alan receiving the Civil Merit Medal (photo from the Woking News and Mail)



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QUESTIONS AND QUERIES
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Film queries

Robin Wareham contacted our website with an interesting query. He wants to find the locations used in the 1939 Will Hay film 'Ask a Policeman'. He has a website called Reel Streets and the link to this particular film is here:

http://www.reelstreets.com/index.php/component/films/?task=view&id=2357&film_ref=ask_a_policeman&start=10

There are stills from the film and the unknown locations are marked with a red border.

Robin is particularly interested in scenes 2,3,4,5,9 and 10. Do have a look at Robin's

interesting website, and if you do know any of the locations, let him know at robinwareham@hotmail.com



The second query is from Michael Archer, who is completing a history of Byfleet Manor in modern times. He has heard that actor David Niven stayed at Byfleet Manor while filming at Shepperton. Michael thinks it would have been in about 1954. However, he does not know what film he was making, and would also like to confirm the date.

Does anyone remember the distinguished star staying at the Manor? If so, do let us know and we will pass the information onto Michael. Either speak to one of the committee at one of our meetings, give Tessa Westlake a ring (01932 351559), or drop a note in at Byfleet Library. Thank you.



The Byfleet Oral History Group was founded in 2000 as a project to mark the millennium. The team collected the memories of older and long-term residents of the area and won the Not Old Just Older award. Paddy Holroyde, the group's chairman, moved away and although the group carried on, it has been quiet for some time now. Margaret Rowe is very kindly transcribing the interviews collected so far, but there are still many memories that need to be captured, and we would like to revive the group.

If you would be interested in either helping to run the group, or perhaps take part in an interview, please let us know. Ring Jim Allen (01932 342659) or Tessa Westlake (01932 351559) or drop us a note at Byfleet Library. Thank you.

There was a treat in store for those at Byfleet and New Haw station on the evening of Friday 9th June. The Flying Scotsman was passing through the station on its way along the main line. It came up from the Addlestone line, but stopped at Byfleet for a few minutes as it waited for an electric train to pass before it could cross over onto the fast line to Woking. Steve Guess, a member of our Facebook group and a train enthusiast, commented that it could be the first time a steam train had stopped at the station since electric trains began serving the station (then known as West Weybridge) in July 1937.



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Byfleet Methodist Church recently held a flower festival, with a theme of “Maytime in Byfleet”. Byfleet Heritage Society were invited to take part, and Marlene Davis created this wonderful display based around L R Stevens’ book, “Byfleet, A Village of England”. Many thanks to Marlene for her beautiful arrangement.

OUR COACH TRIPS



The Society's first three coach trips this year were very different in nature. On 30th May, 25 members visited the Houses of Parliament on a guided tour organised by our Member of Parliament, Jonathan Lord (although by the time of the trip, there were in fact no MPs as the General Election was imminent). After going through strict security checks, we assembled in Westminster Hall to meet our guide. Westminster Hall has seen many historic events over the centuries, including the Lying-in-State of Monarchs, and addresses given to both Houses by dignitaries including Nelson Mandela. These events are commemorated by plaques laid into the floor.

Our guide was Gareth, one of the Parliamentary Hansard team. He led us to the top of the stairs at the Victoria Tower entrance, through which the Queen enters when she opens Parliament. We then followed her route through the Robing Room and the Royal Gallery into the House of Lords. Next we walked through the Central Lobby, often seen when correspondents are reporting on television news programmes, and on through the Members' Lobby, where MPs go to vote, and finally into the House of Commons.

The tour was scheduled to last 75 minutes, but we spent two hours walking from one end of the buildings to the other, and we were continually fascinated by the stories that Gareth told us relating to the history of the building, the many paintings and statues, and the traditions of parliamentary procedure. We were able to enter both chambers and to stand (but not permitted to sit) by the seats where MPs and Lords sit in their respective Houses. After thanking Gareth at the end of the tour, we visited the cafe for well-earned refreshments, and the gift shop.

On 21st June, 24 of us visited Brighton. It was a glorious hot day, and members were free to do as they wished. Some of us played 'Crazy Golf', whilst others went shopping in areas such as The Lanes, or walked along the seafront or the pier. Despite the fine weather, the beach areas were not too crowded. Some of us were disappointed that we were unable to ride on Volk's Electric Railway, but this is currently closed for substantial refurbishment. However there was plenty to see or do, and everyone agreed that they had a good day at the seaside.

We had a return trip to the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire on Saturday 8th July, having first visited there in 2015. An impressive new Visitor Centre has now been opened. Our party of 28 spent just over four hours touring the 150 acres of woodland and 300 memorials, many taking advantage of the land train to show us around the site, where new memorials are being added all the time. On the day of our visit the Parachute Regiment was holding a special event, accompanied by their band, and many military uniforms and medals were in evidence. We were fortunate in choosing a sunny and warm day, and delays on the motorways seemed to be on the opposite carriageway to ours on both journeys.

On all these outings we used the services of Safeguard Coaches from Guildford, whose drivers look after us well. Our next trip will be on Thursday 14th September, when we will be going to Eastbourne. Tickets, at £16 each, are now available from Mary McIntyre, on 01932 341586.

Jim Allen

Don't forget—you can also find us on-line at : www.byfleetheritage.org.uk and on our Facebook page — search for Byfleet Heritage Society and ask to join the group. Or come and see us at one of our monthly drop-in sessions in the Heritage Centre, Byfleet Library on the first Saturday of the month, 10.30-12.30.