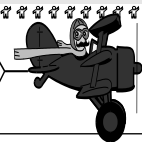


Spring is on the way, which means it is nearly time for our AGM in May. Further details are in the letter which accompanies this newsletter; details of our speaker are below. Don't forget to let us know if you would like to join our committee. Subscriptions for the coming year will be due at the AGM, and again further details are in your letter.

In July we will once again be joining in the fun of Parish Day. If you can spare half an hour or an hour to help us man our stand, that would be very much appreciated. Do let us know if you can help, and we will see you on Saturday 20th July.

Enjoy this edition of the newsletter, and we hope to see you at the AGM, Parish Day, or both!

FORTHCOMING
EVENTS 2019



All talks are held at St Mary's Centre for the Community, Stream Close, Byfleet and will begin at 8.15pm.

2019

Please note a couple of changes to the calendar

Thursday 18th April: West Horsley Place: the House and its History by June Davey. Come and hear about this beautiful Grade 1 listed building, now owned by Bamber Gascoigne

Thursday 16th May: Society AGM followed by our speaker Martin Sumpton on "Byfleet Manor—History and Restoration."

Thursday 20th June: Our annual boat trip along the Wey Navigation Canal. Full details to follow.

Thursday 18th July: 'Apollo 11 by a Byfleet participant' by Pat Norris.

Thursday 19th September: Sue Jones comes to speak to us about Working the Wey.

Thursday 17th October: Chris Glasow returns to tell us more about the History of St Mary's Church.

Thursday 21st November: A talk on Dame Ethel Smyth, composer, suffragette, sportswoman and resident of Surrey. By Chris Wiley.

Thursday 19th December: Christmas meeting. For our final meeting of the year we once more welcome Mike Webber who will show some of the photos and items of interest that the Society has acquired throughout the year.

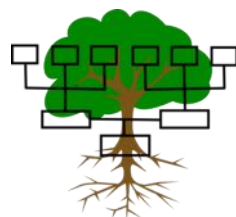
**Members free, Guests £2
Everyone very welcome!**

Don't forget—if you have a topic or an idea for a talk, please let us know.

An important document for those undertaking genealogical research

If you have been undertaking research into your family, have you thought about what will happen to your work when you are no longer around? It is suggested that you add a codicil to your Will, stating who you would like to take custody of your research. This could either be an individual or an organisation.

The West Surrey Family History Society has provided a simple form that can be attached to your Will. Copies are available from Jim Allen at our monthly meetings or "drop-ins".



For the Record...

Our first talk of 2019 was a trip back into **Byfleet in the 19th Century** conducted by **Jim Allen**. Jim has been studying old newspapers and records to find out what life was like in our village a hundred years ago and more.

By 1800, Byfleet covered 1440 acres, including 550 acres of heath and common land, and 12.5 acres of meadows. The main crops produced were wheat, barley, oats, rye, potatoes, peas, beans and turnips. At the beginning of the 19th century there were approximately 300 inhabitants. A coach to London left the White Hart at Old Woking at 6am. This would cost 8 shillings to travel inside, but only 5 shillings to sit on the outside—with a shilling off if you began your journey at Byfleet.

Before the advent of newspapers, Jim found that records such as the Vestry Minutes were an invaluable window onto village life. The Vestry had many responsibilities that would be carried out by the Borough Council today. The 1803 minutes record that William Brown would take in Jane Cook, a waif and stray, for one year. He would be paid 2/6 a week for this. In 1806 it was decided that two tenements in Stream Close, owned by Henry Fenn, were to be used as a poorhouse for the Parish. A loan of £200 was taken out to cover the purchase (£135) and contingencies.

Court records also prove interesting. At the Surrey Sessions in 1839, George Pullen, aged 40, was indicted for stealing a sheep. George was seen leaving a field with a sack, and mutton was later found in his house. George maintained his wife had bought the meat in Weybridge, but he was found guilty—and sentenced to ten years' transportation! In October 1859, 13 year old Thomas Jennings was accused of laying two chains across the railway. He had apparently thought it would be "a good lark to see a train go over the embankment." He pleaded guilty, and began to cry, but got little sympathy from the court. The arresting officer declared him a "very bad boy," his father had been trying to place him in a reformatory, and his friends had told him not to do it. The judge branded him "a wicked boy" and sentenced him to one month's hard labour followed by four years at Reform School. In 1873 Charles and Susan Moore were before the judge accused of stealing meat from Robert Hay Murray, Esq, of West Hall. Susan and Charles were Mr Murray's cook and butler. Susan had managed to send away around 70 pounds of meat without being detected. Susan was rumbled when one parcel lost its address, and an enquiry was made to Mr Murray. A guilty plea was entered, and while Charles was acquitted, Susan received 12 months hard labour.

But it wasn't all illegal activity in Byfleet. Entertainment and good works were also being organised. 16th of September, 1836 saw the first Byfleet Floricultural and Horticultural Show which took place in the gardens of the Blue Anchor between 2-6pm. In 1886 there was a flower show on the cricket field, with prizes given for the best hive of bees, the best honey, and the best dish of boiled potatoes (the prize for that one was a copper kettle). The previous year the cricket pitch had hosted village sports where 700 parishioners had competed in and watched various races as well as wheelbarrow and obstacle races and a tug of war. Many concerts and entertainments were held in the school building.

In February 1841 a meeting was held at the Rectory to discuss enlarging the church. The plan was to add 54 more pew sittings, with 55 free sittings plus a gallery for the girls' school. A tender of £530 was accepted and the work began in August. By 1864 further enlargements were needed, and the south aisle was added. The church reopened in 1865 with a Dedication Festival (which developed into Parish Day) and a lunch for 700 people in a marquee in the grounds of West Hall. The upper classes sat on the top table, with two long tables down each side for everyone else. There was food, a band and the Bishop praised everyone gathering to celebrate their church.

A Coffee Tavern was opened in 1883 next to the Wesleyan Chapel (both now gone to make way for the office block beside the war memorial). It was to open from 5.30am to 10pm (Sundays 8am—10am, 8pm—10pm) and provided a games room and a place to sit and read the papers and enjoy a quiet pipe. At the first meeting of the committee, the minimum age was raised from 17 to 20, although it was decided that the boys should not sit at the expense of the older men. Card playing was allowed, but not for money, and if you were feeling charitable, tickets for refreshments could be bought and given to the poor. The age was later lowered again to 17, as the over 20s were not using the tavern and in November 1883 notice was given to the manager who was deemed too young. Bad behaviour in the reading room in 1884 caused its closure on Sundays, and in April of that year the tavern was passed over to private management under Mrs Hines. In 1888 it was advertised that details of emigration could be obtained at the tavern.

Towards the end of the 19th century, in 1890, it was reported that Mr Gladstone had visited the village, and had attended St Mary's church for the Easter Day service with Mrs Gladstone, and it was on this illustrious note that Jim ended his look back at the village.





With Spring not far away, we welcomed **Andy Mills**, Head of Estates and Landscapes, to speak to us about **Painshill Park** and to take us on a virtual tour of the gardens. Painshill Park was created by Charles Hamilton between 1738 and 1773. He had taken two Grand Tours and wanted to recreate in England some of the sights he had seen abroad. He planned to show his garden off to 1,500 selected visitors a year (the garden now entertains more than 90,000), and it would become “a garden that mattered for the people that mattered.” Sadly, he ran out of money in 1773, and the estate was sold.



We began at the Large Walled Garden. Now a wedding venue, it was once the site of Hamilton’s hothouses where his gardeners skills were tested by growing peaches and pineapples. Head Gardeners were so important that they and butlers were the only servants allowed to use the front door. We moved to the Fir Walk which Andy explained was a result of the 18th century rejection of the previous formal styles. There are no hedges and no straight lines, and you cannot see the whole garden in one go. Andy plans to remove the existing path, as the point is that you should not be led where to go, but explore for yourself. The planting around the Amphitheatre, which creates the sloping effect, does not look necessarily very exciting now, but in Hamilton’s time the lavenders and cistus plants would have been something only encountered abroad on the Grand Tour. The grapes from the 2.5 acre Vineyard are now used to make wine once again. In 1750 Painshill wine was declared to be as good as champagne by the French Ambassador himself.

After Hamilton sold the estate, the landscape was not preserved. By the 1970s features like the Gothic Temple had collapsed and trees were growing through the structure. None of the features are made of stone, but of timber and lathe, so they did well to last so long. They are now gradually being restored, but this is expensive. For instance, the Hermitage, which Hamilton built for £5,000, cost around £20,000 to restore. The wooden structure has been painted with tile grout which, once weathered, will look like stone. Andy explained that the restoration will never be finished. They are trying to hold Painshill in a bubble, showing it as it was when Hamilton created it, which is very difficult. It means that there are always adjustments to make, such as cutting down trees which are only 36 years old, but have grown out of scale for the intended effect.



A major project was restoring the crystal cave in the Grotto. Hamilton had spent £10,000 in the 1760s, a phenomenal amount of money, and the present restoration cost in excess of £1.5 million. None of the inner structure is stone, but wooden framed cones onto which hundreds of thousands of gypsum crystals are stuck. The Grotto is now a venue for musical events by candlelight. The most recent restoration was the Temple of Bacchus, with the new building now standing on the original footings. The statue of Bacchus that is now in the Visitor Centre will be returned to the Temple, although manoeuvring the 9 foot

statue through the temple door might prove interesting.

There have been some surprises during the work. Andy had spoken about how the Mausoleum used to have an altar and a funerary urn as decorations, and how he would like to reinstate them. He then received an email from the resident of the main house at Painshill—the original altar was in his garden from when he had rescued it during the 1970s. While they try to be accurate in their restorations, at times they have had to be adaptable. For instance, the Turkish Tent used to be made of canvas, as it would have been originally. However, being under the trees meant that the fabric turned green, so the tent is now made of fibreglass.

Andy revealed that it is becoming more and more difficult to source the plants that Hamilton would have grown. This is because plant development has moved on, and people are now used to the more showy hybrids or prefer modern varieties that can deal with drought and disease. But these are not the plants that Hamilton would have known and so they won’t do for an 18th century garden. Also the garden as we see it today is overplanted compared to Hamilton’s original idea.

Andy finished with a picture of the beautiful Great Cedar, which is the largest multi-stem cedar in Europe. It is now fenced off, as 90,000 visitors walking on the root plate would suffocate the tree and cause it to die back at the crown. We all agreed with Andy that, while it would be nice to be able to get close to the tree, we would all wish the tree to still be standing in 200 years.



In March we welcomed **Michael Sleigh** who shared some of his favourite examples of **Church Stained Glass** with us. Stained glass can be easy to overlook and is often omitted from any church guidebook. But with such a variety and quality of craftsmanship contained within the windows it is very well worth taking a closer look.

There is very little medieval stained glass in local churches; much was destroyed in the various religious upheavals over the centuries. Very many windows that now exist are Victorian, mainly due to the Victorian enthusiasm for church building and renovating. New windows were paid for by donation or commissioned as memorials. The cream of Victorian stained glass dates from between 1860-1880, largely influenced by the Gothic Revival work of A W N Pugin. The earlier windows sometimes show signs of fading, but this is because medieval coloured glass-making techniques had mostly been lost, and the Victorian makers were still getting their techniques right. Michael showed beautiful examples from some of the larger manufacturers, such as Clayton and Bell, Lavers Barraud and Westlake, and Morris & Co.

Michael's talk was illustrated with some of his many images, taken for the Church Stained Glass Project over ten years, and which he has exhibited at locations like Guildford Cathedral. Many are also available to view on his website, www.neo-gothicguild.co.uk Here are a few to give a taste of Michael's beautiful talk.



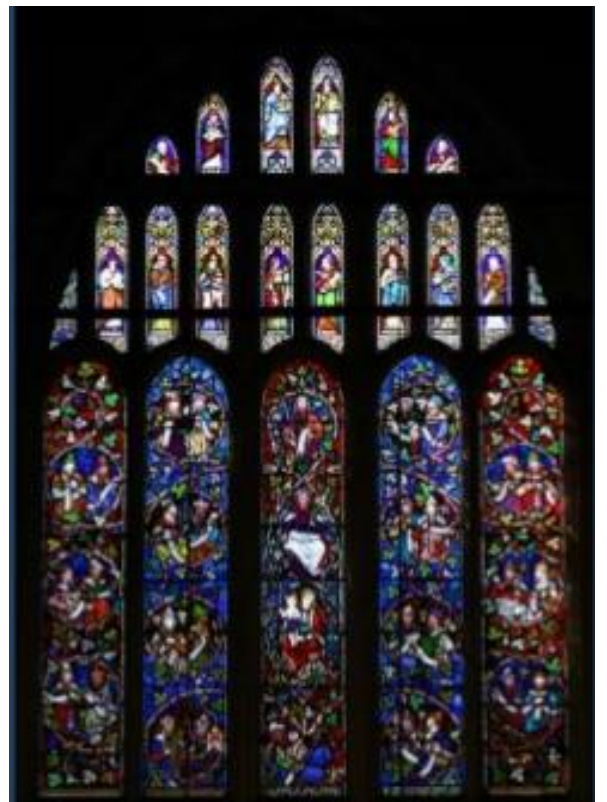
Window from Albury Old Church by A W N Pugin (1839)



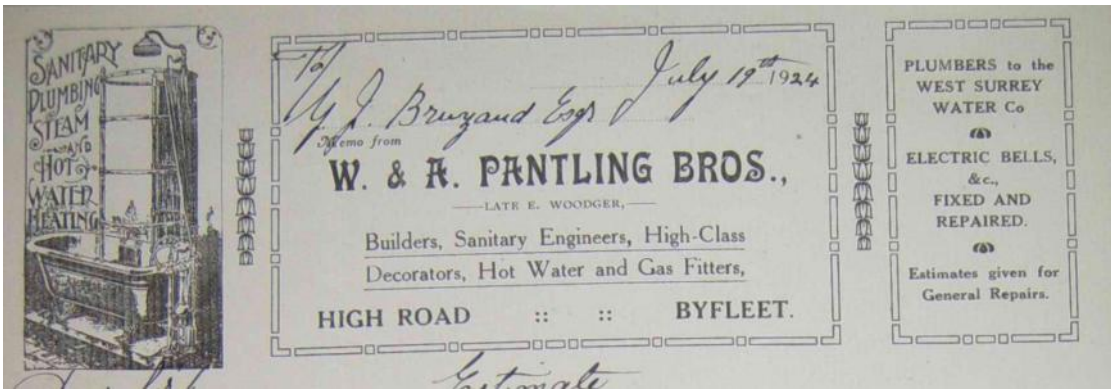
Holy Trinity, Aldershot. Window by Lavers, Barraud and Westlake (1893)



Above: Detail from a Clayton & Bell window at St Nicholas Guildford
Right: the Jesse window from St Mary's Guildford, made by Holland of Warwick, 1876



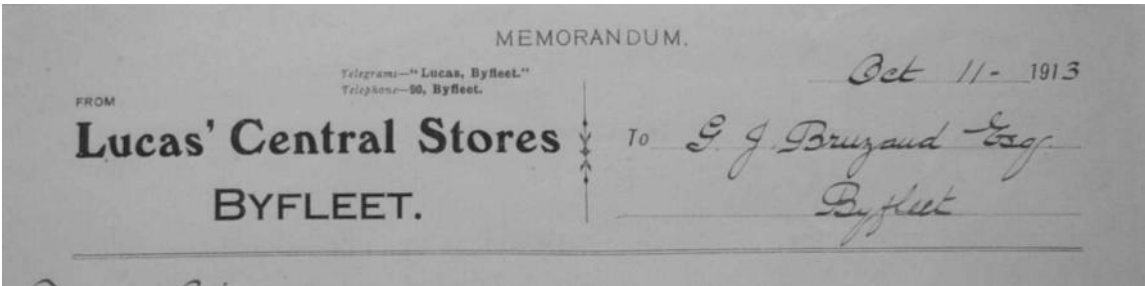
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NOTES AND QUERIES
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Here is a selection of some of the letterheads of old Byfleet businesses.

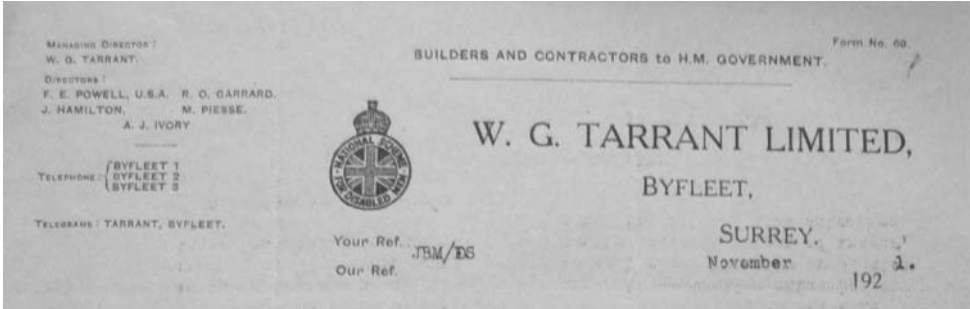
Pantling Brothers Builders, Plumbers and Decorators were in the first house on the right as you enter the village from West Byfleet over Parvis Bridge

Lucas Stores stood near Byfleet War Memorial—it is now Unity Motors.



Freelands ironmongers used to stand near Plough Green at the end of the row of shops next to the Binfield Bakers. The old smithy was removed in 1966, and the shop building was finally demolished in 1982. It was nicknamed “The Tuesday shop” as anything you asked for would “be in on Tuesday.”

W G Tarrant lived in Lake House which is where Lake Close now stands. The house was demolished in 1959 before the building of Parvis Road. Mr Tarrant’s works were in Chertsey Road.



G Boutell & Son (now called Lodge and Boutell) are still at Amptwade House next to Byfleet Village Hall

Do you remember these shops? And have we got the locations right? Do let us know your memories—or have any corrections!

**SOCIETY NEWS,
AND QUERIES**

NEW AVIATION EXHIBITION AT BROOKLANDS MUSEUM

A new exhibition opened at Brooklands Museum on 8th April. The *First to the Fastest* celebrates Alcock and Brown's non-stop crossing of the Atlantic in a Brooklands-built Vickers Vimy in June 1919. Fifty years later, in 1969, Atlantic flights had become routine but to celebrate that great endeavour and spirit of Alcock and Brown's ground-breaking crossing, a new air race was staged. It showcased how far and fast aviation had changed with innovation at the heart of the race.

Both races were launched by the Daily Mail who put up the prize money but in '69, the rules were even more ambitious: the race began and ended at check-in stations on the public viewing platform on the 33rd floor viewing platform of the Post Office Tower in London and the 86th floor of New York's Empire State Building. Journeys had to be made on any of the eight days between 4th and 11th May and could be attempted more than once though only in the same direction and with the same modes of transport. It was open to professionals and enthusiasts and because it was almost certain that a military aircraft would record the fastest time, eighteen different categories of prizes were offered including one for the 'most meritorious and ingenious' non-winning entry.

This exhibition will explore how Alcock and Brown achieved their amazing feat in the wider context of what was happening at Brooklands during a time when flight was still in its infancy. The rapidity of the technological advancements made in aviation will also be explored by discovering how, just fifty years later, it was possible to get from the heart of London to the centre of New York in just under seven hours. At the centre of this exhibition will be Brooklands Museum's replica Vimy (which, itself, has flown across the Atlantic, to Australia and South Africa) and the Harrier GR1 XV741, which achieved the fastest time to New York from St. Pancras in London in the 1969 race. These stories are told using archive footage, historic imagery and personal accounts to bring this incredible episode in aviation history to life, celebrating the role that Brooklands played in achieving what was often seen as the impossible.



Entry to the exhibition is included in the general admission price. Visit: www.brooklandsmuseum.com for all up to date event and Museum information. Film of the 1969 Air Race can be seen at : <https://youtu.be/SbBsLwKjxyM>

COACH TRIPS

The Society has organised four coach trips this year. The first is to Kew Gardens on Thursday 23rd May. This has proved popular, so much so that we have now booked a bigger coach. There are just a few tickets left. On Thursday 25th July, we are visiting Eastbourne and, on Thursday 12th September, Salisbury. Tickets for these will go on sale once the preceding coach trip has taken place.

Our annual trip to see the Christmas lights in the West End takes place on Thursday 12th December. Tickets on sale from mid-October.

For all the above trips, please contact Mary McIntyre on 01932 341586. Look out for the relevant posters for all these trips, which will give details of ticket prices and departure times. In addition, our annual boat trip on the Wey Navigation takes place on Thursday 20th June. We have brought this trip forward so that we will have more time on the boats, this date being the day before the longest day. This year we shall be heading for Weybridge. Contact Jim Allen (jimboallen46@yahoo.co.uk, or leave a message with your contact number on 01932 342659) for further information and tickets, which will be on sale from mid-May.



If you need to contact the Society, we can be reached in the following ways:

Leave a note at Byfleet Library, email us at info@byfleetheritage.org.uk or ring our Secretary, Tessa Westlake on 01932 351559

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