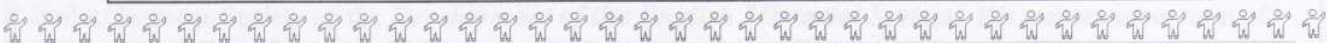




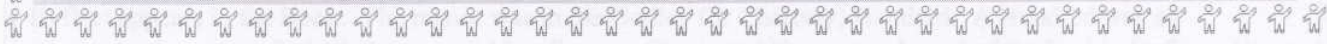
Byfleet Heritage Society.

**Issue 10    Newsletter    June 1999**



*Thankfully I can start this issue of the newsletter with the threat of library closure removed. Surrey County Council have decided that this was not the way to go, which is very good news indeed. As you may have seen from the local press, the council are looking into the possibility of moving the library, heritage centre and possibly the police and Parish Council to the Youth Club building. A feasibility study is taking place, so watch this space.*

*Our AGM has come and gone for another year, and we are very glad to welcome Avreil Fabb as our new Treasurer. But, of course, we are always glad to welcome new committee members at any time! A full list of your committee can be found inside. Enjoy this issue, and see you at an upcoming event.*



**FORTHCOMING EVENTS** 

**Sunday 27th JUNE: Visit to Cobham Flour Mill.** A look at the machinery, weir and fish ladder and the history of flour milling, with practical demonstrations. 10.30am. Numbers limited to 20 - see below.

**Friday 5th NOVEMBER: Guy Fawkes Night Gathering.** Come and spend the evening in the company of friends. We are sure there will be many a happy memory of other Bonfire Nights. Enjoy a little food, a hot toddy or two, a soft drink or a cup of tea. Byfleet Village Hall, Room A, 8.15pm.

**Thursday 22nd July: St Edward and the community of monks at Brookwood** by Tina Cockett, Education Officer at Woking Museum and Arts and Crafts Centre. Miss Cockett will offer a story telling session, where she traces the legend of Elfrida, Edward's stepmother, and her involvement in his murder! Room A, Byfleet Village Hall, 8.15pm.

**Friday 17th DECEMBER: Christmas Customs - Older Than You Think.** An illustrated talk by Pat Elliot

**Thursday 9th September: The History of Firefighting and Fire Protection in the UK from Roman Times to the present.** An illustrated talk by Mr Ron Shettle of the Fire Brigades of Surrey Preservation Trust. Room A, Byfleet Village Hall, 8.15pm.

**Visit to Cobham Mill - 27th June**

This is a private view for Society members before the mill opens to the public. The mill is only small, so places are limited to 20. If you would like to book a place, please give Paddy Holroyde a ring on 01932 406649

**Please note!!**

The invitation to the Assizes of Bread and Ale in October has been **changed** from Tuesday 19th to **Wednesday 20th October.**

**Evening of Wednesday 20th October: An invitation to the mediaeval festival of the Assizes of Bread and Ale.** Park in the grounds of Croxteth Hall, Ripley (room for 90 cars). At 7pm follow the morris dancers in procession to The Saddlers Arms, Send Marsh. Everyone in Victorian or country dress is entitled to a free supper in the pub.

## For the Record...

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

On **February 11<sup>th</sup>** the Lord of the Manors of Dedswell and Papworth, Lt Col Hugh Molyneux-Child spoke to Byfleet Heritage Society on the ***Development of the English Manorial System***. His manors cover most of Send, parts of West Clandon and Merrow and Ripley.

The King granted manors in return for loyalty and men and arms in times of trouble. Many manors were then sub-let for profit to other tenants. Lords held many rights, even that of life and death over their tenants. After the Norman Conquest, William I ordered a survey of his new kingdom, now known as the Domesday Book. Lt Col Molyneux Child pointed out that, while the book gives valuable information about England in the 11<sup>th</sup> century, entries must be taken with a small pinch of salt. Many manors are shown to be worth less under the Normans than under the Saxons. Possibly some land had been laid waste during the wars leading up to the Conquest, but it must be remembered that the book was compiled for taxation purposes, so as little land as possible was reported to bring taxes owed down to a minimum.

Byfleet appears in the Book. The manor was in the Godley (or Chertsey) Hundred. A Hundred was an administrative area, of which there were 13 in Surrey. Chertsey Abbey owned most of the land in Byfleet. Ulwin the Saxon is named as the owner of Byfleet manor both before and after the Conquest. This is unusual, as most Saxon lords fled the country when the Normans arrived. The speaker wondered if Ulwin might have held onto his land by being some sort of turncoat. Also before the Conquest Byfleet is measured as 8 hides (about 800 acres), but is afterwards reduced to only 2½ hides. Such a big reduction is unusual – was Ulwin not only cunning enough to hold onto his land, but devious enough to avoid a large amount of taxes as well? The church is mentioned, and also the mill, valued at 5 shillings. There were 1½ fisheries. A fishery was an eel trap, and the figure possibly means that there was one fully functional one, and one run down and semi-used. The land was worked by 7 villeins, who were farmers, 2 bordars, who were cottagers, and three serfs, who had no land of their own and were completely under control of the lord. Six acres of meadow and enough woodland to feed ten pigs complete the package, which was valued at £4.

Manor houses were not all grand stately homes. One lord might hold many manors, so he would chose one principal residence. The others were let out to his officials or tenants. Each manor held regular courts and recorded its decisions on its court rolls. Each document lists the jurymen who made the decisions and the apologies of those who could not attend. It was a duty to attend the court, so the jury had to decide whether your excuse was good – if not you were fined 2d. Matters such as trespass, crop planting, land maintenance and land holding issues were discussed. The records made it very clear who owned what land and what duties. The Lt Col showed slides of a modern sitting of his court. Stewards and deputy stewards sat at a table covered with a flag bearing the manor badge. The jurymen were sworn in collectively by touching a large bible. Every few meetings certain rights were recited to commit them to memory in an age before most people could read or write. There were many officials for the various jobs around the manor lands. Lt Col Molyneux Child has stewards, bellmen (like town criers), and even a hangman. He is entitled to various instruments of punishment, including a pillory, stocks, a ducking stool and a gallows, but complains at each manor court that he is not properly equipped!

The Lt Col keeps alive some of the traditional events. During the Blessing of the Fields a pair of gilded spurs are handed over as part of Knight Service. Long ago it was the duty of landholders to provide one or more fully equipped knights in time of war. One farmer would provide a man, one the sword and so on. However, farmers gave as little as they could get away with, and in the end what was offered was so sub-standard that the King changed the practice to a cash payment instead! Beating the Bounds was carried out every ten years or so to impress the manor boundaries on each generation. And there is still a twice yearly ale tasting. The tasters are supposed to arrive unannounced and unobserved, but these days about two hundred people turn up along with a band and morris dancers! Lt Col Molyneux Child gave us an excellent insight into how manors were run, and a glimpse into the distant past of our own village, and it was good to know that he is actively keeping some of the manor traditions alive.





The history of Surrey's paper mills was the subject of Professor Alan Crocker's recent talk to Byfleet Heritage Society. He began with Sir John Evelyn's account from his diary of a visit in 1676 to Byfleet Mill, which at that time made paper. Rags (linen for white paper, wool and old ropes for brown) were macerated and pounded by water operated hammers. They were added to a vat of water into which a wired frame (a mould) was dipped. The mixture was spread evenly over the mould and the sheet of paper turned out onto a board between two bits of flannel. The resulting pile of sheets was then pressed to remove as much moisture as possible, and then the sheets were hung on horsehair ropes to dry. Most of the space in a paper mill was used for drying the sheets.

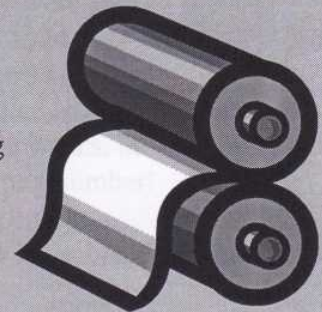
There were forty paper mills in Surrey including ones at Bermondsey, Ewell, Southwark, Godalming, Haslemere and more locally at Guildford, Woking, Ham Haw and Byfleet. The mills at Bermondsey and Southwark did not use the Thames, as to make white paper a source of clean water was needed. The water in London was far too dirty. The earliest paper mill in Surrey was Stoke Mill at Guildford, which opened in the 1630s. Byfleet Mill made paper in the second half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, but was a brass mill by the early 1700s. Paper making was carried on in Surrey until 1928 when the last mill finally closed.

Professor Crocker showed us the paper making processes in more detail. Women made up half the workforce in these mills. They cut up the rags, and smoothed and counted the sheets of paper. From the 1720s a machine called a Hollander took over from the hammers. There was one of these machines at Chilwood. Dipping the mould into the vat was a very skilful job. The mould was heavy and the pulp had to be distributed evenly across the surface.

Watermarks were developed in Italy in the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> century. A design was stitched in brass wire onto the cross wires of the mould to make a slight indentation into the sheet. Later, Mr Baskerville developed a woven mould where the watermark was at the edges of the paper. After 1794 most watermarks included a date. A law had been passed making the manufacturer liable to less tax if he put a date onto his paper. Paper from Byfleet Mill was marked with the word "Company", and a bunch of grapes. The Company of White Paper Makers, who had the monopoly on white paper making, owned Byfleet Mill along with many others. It is unsure whether this watermark belongs specifically to Byfleet Mill or more generally to the Company.

By 1800 wallpaper was becoming fashionable, but could only be made in small rectangular sheets. Then in 1794 Mr Robert invented a machine to make paper in five foot lengths. By the later 19<sup>th</sup> century Postford Mill in the Tillingbourne Valley had a machine that made 20ft lengths, and in the 1890s Woking Mill could turn out rolls of paper 30 yards long. The foundations for their machine can still be seen in Unwins. Machines can now make rolls 150 yards long at a staggering 1600 meters per minute.

Professor Crocker dipped into the past for some interesting stories. Albury Mill became involved with the Comte D'Artois (later King Charles X of France) in trying to undermine the "assignat", the currency of the French Revolutionary government. We also learnt of a Mr Coop of Neckenger Mill who was many years ahead of his time by using wood pulp instead of rags, as well as re-cycling paper. We also saw some of the faces to go with the manufacturing names, such as a lovely photo from 1854 of James Simmons, and engravings of Thomas Sweetapple and Thomas Spicer, who all made their own paper in Surrey.



Professor Crocker finished by urging anyone looking through old books or papers to check the watermarks, and if they find anything to let the Records Office know. In this way much can be discovered about the various manufacturers, especially as regards dating. The Society thanked Professor Crocker for a fascinating insight into an everyday object.

The history of locks and keys held Byfleet Heritage Society's attention After their recent AGM. The speaker, Mr Victor Liardet, has spent most of his working life with Chubb, and is also an Honorary Member of the Master Locksmiths Association.

Locks are mentioned in the Bible, and today's Yale locks are similar to those used by the Ancient Egyptians. We saw examples of intricate and precise work such as the 200 year old Nuremburg Cathedral lock which took two years to make. The complex Armada chest lock had 8 simultaneous catches. There was also a counting lock, which would tell the owner if it had been opened in his absence. However, the speaker doubted the use of a lock which told you that your goods had been stolen!

We heard about some of the characters in the lock-making trade. Joseph Bramah was a cabinet maker and inventor who walked from Yorkshire to London in 1778. He invented a hydraulic press, a fountain pen and a special printing machine, which printed and automatically numbered bank notes. This machine, dating from 1806 is still on display at the Bank of England today. He also made vast improvements to the water closet. In 1787, with the help of the engineer Henry Maudslay, he invented the Bramah lock for which there were 479 different keys available. One of these locks sat in the company's shop window with 200 guineas on offer to anyone who could open it without the correct key. It took 67 years for anyone to achieve this. Maudslay's machine is still used today to cut keys.

Jeremiah and Charles Chubb were also famous lock makers. They introduced a detector device, which would warn the owner that the lock had been tampered with. Competition between lock companies was great, with many challenges issued to see if locks could be unpicked. An American, Alfred C Hobbs, became famous for opening almost any lock he was presented with. He was originally a lock salesman who would challenge customers to buy one of his locks if he could open their existing one without a key. It took him twenty minutes to open the Chubb detector lock, and several days to open the Bramah lock by using what he called the third hand method..

The Great Exhibition of 1851 in the Crystal Palace provided a show case for the best in British lock-making. The Aubin Lock Trophy was made especially for the Exhibition and consisted of 44 locks, which could all be opened at once with a single key. Alfred C Hobbs set up his own lock company, and bought the trophy for himself. Chubb produced a special cage to keep the Koh-I-Noor diamond safe while on display at the Exhibition.

Mr Liardet finished his talk with a miscellany of different locks, such as the paratotic lock invented by Alfred C Hobbs, where the locking mechanism was remote from the keyhole, making it very hard to pick. The aptly named Mr Pearce invented a lock where a small dagger would shoot out and stab you in the hand if you introduced the wrong key. There were also examples of the tiny locks produced by Chubb for Queen Mary's dolls' house in 1924. Mr Liardet left us smiling with an anecdote about Mr Chubb. On a trip to America in 1880, Mr Chubb fell in love with the telephone. On returning to London, he had one installed in his offices and left strict instructions for the staff to fetch him if the telephone should ring. After two weeks, the telephone rang and Mr Chubb was summoned, only to find it was the first recorded case of a wrong number!



We were sorry to hear that it would be Mr Liardet's last talk. His enthusiasm for his subject was infectious, and we were fascinated by the background to such an everyday object.

**WELCOME**

our funds in order.

to Avreil Fabb, who very kindly volunteered to take over from Andy Andrews as our Treasurer. Thanks to her for taking the plunge, and also to Andy for keeping



## SOCIETY NEWS

### Library Update!

Good news for a change! After a very good response to the public consultation exercise, Surrey County Council have decided against closing libraries. As you may have seen in the local press, there is a plan to move the library and heritage centre to the Youth Club building, and possibly to house the Parish Council Office and local police there too. The feasibility of this is still being looked into, and nothing is definite - so watch this space. And carry on using and supporting our library.



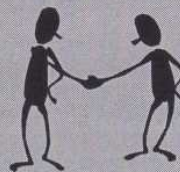
### Membership Renewal

**It's that time of year again! We hope you have enjoyed your membership of the Heritage Society, and that you will decide to renew. Unfortunately, due to rising costs and a rise in rates for hire of the Village Hall we have had to slightly increase the subscription. We are also planning to produce a journal soon, free to members, and we need to finance this. If you are due to renew, a form is enclosed. Thanks for your support, and hope to see you during the coming year.**

*Did you know...? that Robert Boywer, Miniaturist to King George III, once lived in Byfleet? He lived at the Clock House with his wife, Mary, and adopted daughter, Catherine Andras, who was herself a talented wax sculptor. Diane Pavitt has been investigating his life, and has written up her research for the Society. A copy of this is available in the Society's reference folder in the library (please ask the librarians if you would like to see it). We also hope to produce a display board on this interesting but little known former citizen of Byfleet.*

Received with many thanks.

We recently were very pleased to receive a large collection of photographs and information collected by member David Chapman during his residence in Byfleet. There is a large body of information on West Hall, from when Mr Chapman used to work there, and also many photographs of buildings and features in Byfleet which have since sadly disappeared.



It is a valuable addition to our archive, and we thank Mr Chapman very much for his generosity. Thanks also to Andy and Pat Andrews for making the trip north to collect the boxes for us.

**Noted in the Visitor Book** at the Heritage Centre. A note of thanks from a student of Environmental Science who needed information on Byfleet Mill for his BSc final year project. He found what he needed. Glad to be of service!



## Your Committee

Here, for your information, is a list of your current committee. If you have any comments or suggestions, we will be only too happy to have a chat. And, of course, we are always willing to give potential committee members the lowdown on committee life!

Chairman:	Doug Bright 91 Church Road 01932 346283	Secretary:	Tessa Westlake 8 Brewery Lane 01932 351559	Treasurer:	Avreil Fabb 6 Birch Close
Member-ship:	Jeff Sechiari Manor Side East 01932 341084	Events:	Paddy Holroyde 10 Weymede 01932 406649	Schools Co-ordinator:	Karen Stainsby 25 Staniland Drive 01932 856931
Committee Member:	Jim Allen 11 Rectory Close 01932 342659				

## Research Information News

The **Researching Byfleet** file in Byfleet Library has recently been amended. Some information has been updated and new sources have been added. Those of you with access to the Internet should note that the Surrey History Service website address has changed from the one given earlier. It is now <http://www.shs.surreycc.gov.uk> and offers many links to related sites. A couple of sheets of links are now included in the file together with some of their front pages. The file is in the Society's cabinet - please ask the library staff for assistance.

The **Surrey History Centre** in Woking opened several months ago and some of our members have visited it looking at maps, postcards and trade directories. Its distinctive curved cover over the entrance on Goldsworth Road makes it easy to find but its car park is round the back off Kingsway (the turning to the left just before the Centre if approaching from Woking town centre). Inside, the reception and study areas are open and light with helpful staff available. Booking is not necessary, but you will need a Surrey County Libraries ticket or CARN card to use the facility. Some of the records are on microfilm or microfiche, but if you are unfamiliar with them you will be shown how to use the readers. Pencils are the only writing implements allowed for taking notes of your findings - you can buy them at the reception desk if you forget to take one. Portable computers are also acceptable. If a document cannot be put in a copying machine photography is allowed, but not with flash. Outdoor coats and bags are not permitted in the study room, so do not take them in or be prepared to put them in a locker.

Mike Webber

## HELP WANTED!

At the recent South of England Postcard Fair at Guildford I found a couple of photographic cards with **Byfleet V.A. Hospital Surrey 1917** written by hand on the back. Although the dates October and November 1917 are written on them they appear to have been taken on the same occasion, posed in different arrangements: both pictures have the same 6 nurses and 22 patients. The nurses have a (red?) cross on their aprons, the patients are all in (hospital?) uniform with light lapels to their jackets and ties with horizontal light and dark (in black and white) stripes. One has sergeant's stripes and medal ribbons, two others are holding a rabbit and a cat. The matron (?) and some of the patients have the same badge (crossed bars). Some of the patients are wearing what appears to be flag day maltese crosses. If anyone can tell me more about the VA Hospital in Byfleet, please contact Mike Webber on 01932 344174 or at 8 Old Orchard, Byfleet.

