



Byfleet Heritage Society.

Issue 3

Newsletter

February 1997

*A very happy (if belated) New Year* to you all. The Heritage Centre was officially one year old on the 1st February - it seems like yesterday! - and some new display boards are under way. Very many thanks to those of you who have provided material for presentation, and also to those of you who responded to our various appeals - see the articles in the Society News section. We present this first newsletter of 1997 with a new list of events which we hope you will find interesting. Note down the dates in your diaries now. Lastly, thanks to those of you who have contributed to this issue. Remember, if you would like to write any articles or letters or have any queries for the newsletter, please contact me, *Tessa Westlake, 8 Brewery Lane, Byfleet, (351559).*



**MAKE A NOTE IN YOUR DIARIES AS EVENTS WILL ONLY BE ANNOUNCED IN THE NEWSLETTER. AND DON'T FORGET TO TELL YOUR FRIENDS!!**

**Wednesday MARCH 19th:** A talk by Pam Webb, who is a London Tour Guide, on "Interpreting Heritage". At the Heritage Centre, 8pm.

**Thursday APRIL 17th:** A talk by Simon Fowler, Family and Local History specialist at the Public Records Office. At the Heritage Centre, 8pm.

**May:** Society AGM plus speaker. Date to be announced.

**June:** Event to be confirmed.

**Sunday JULY 27th:** A walk on Wisley Common, guided by Ranger Dave Body. Meet in the Wren's Nest car park, Wisley Lane, 2.00pm.

**AUGUST:** No meeting planned, but members might like to know that National Trust Warden Robin Lewis will guide a visit to Langham Ponds, SSSI, on Sunday August 3rd at 11.00am. Meet at Langham Farm off A30, Egham By-pass. National Trust members free, adults £1, OAPs and children 50p.

**Thursday SEPTEMBER 11th:** Visit to Coxe's Millpond, Bournside Road, Addlestone 6.00pm. A talk by Kevin Morgan about the natural and industrial history of the mill and the Wey Navigation.

**Wednesday OCTOBER 15th:** "Before Byfleet" - a talk by Rob Poulton, County Archaeologist about the excavations at Brooklands and Wey Manor Farm. Room A, Byfleet Village Hall, 8.15pm.



## SOCIETY NEWS

**PLEASE NOTE:** A programme of events has now been booked quite far in advance, so to save the committee some shoe leather, **events will only be announced in the newsletter** and no longer by special letter. We're sure you would prefer to have ample notice, so make a note of the events that interest you in your diaries now, and we look forward to seeing you. Very many thanks to Geraldene who has organised an event for us every month since May, ranging from a talk on 18th century landscape gardening to a visit to West Hall. We hope the latest programme holds something for everyone. If you feel you are being left out, then *let us know*, as we want to provide the events that members want to attend.

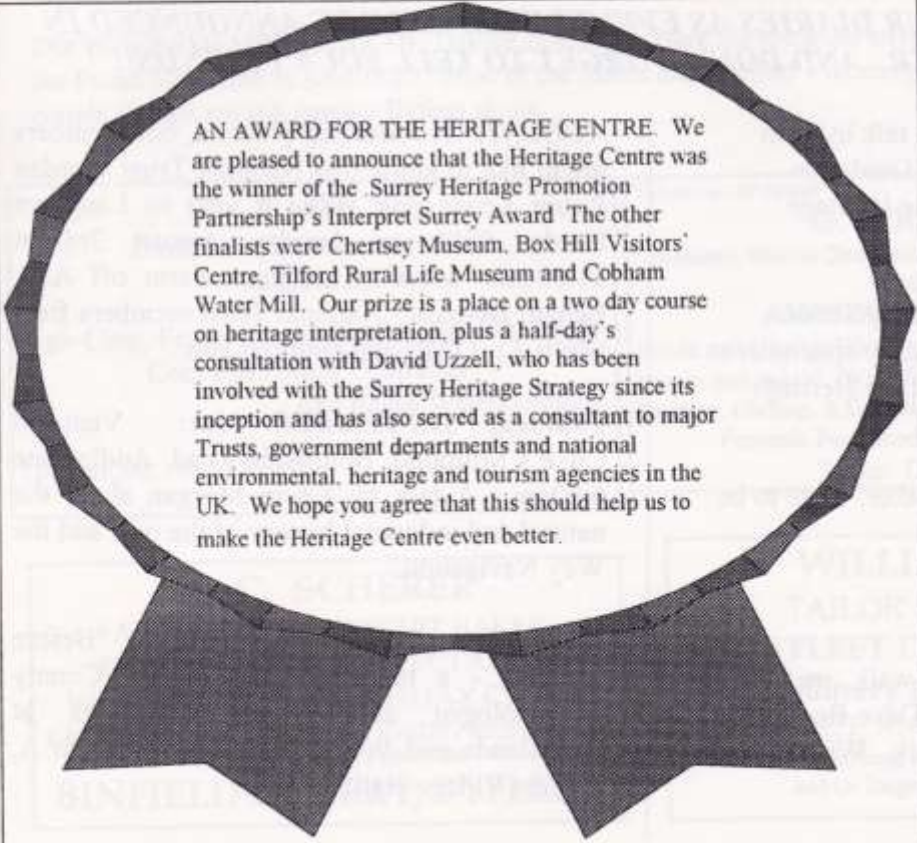
Please contact **Geraldene Done** on 01932 400085  
if you feel you have an idea for an interesting Society event



We're sure that members will join us in sending congratulations and best wishes to one of our patrons, Howard Cook, on the occasion of his 90th birthday in January - and many happy returns!

**We're on the scrounge again.** We would like to keep our display cabinet looking interesting. Do you have any interesting or unusual items that we might be able to display there, even just for a short time? Pictures, china, - maybe you even have a gas mask from the war lurking in the loft! All we ask is that items are relevant to Byfleet or the nearby area, and in a condition fit for display

*Offers to Tessa Westlake on 351559.*



AN AWARD FOR THE HERITAGE CENTRE. We are pleased to announce that the Heritage Centre was the winner of the Surrey Heritage Promotion Partnership's Interpret Surrey Award. The other finalists were Chertsey Museum, Box Hill Visitors' Centre, Tilford Rural Life Museum and Cobham Water Mill. Our prize is a place on a two day course on heritage interpretation, plus a half-day's consultation with David Uzzell, who has been involved with the Surrey Heritage Strategy since its inception and has also served as a consultant to major Trusts, government departments and national environmental, heritage and tourism agencies in the UK. We hope you agree that this should help us to make the Heritage Centre even better.

**Should they stay or should they go?** New display boards are under way to ring the changes at the Heritage Centre. Material has been given (or promised) by John Smith on flight paths of aircraft over Byfleet, Jeff Sechiari on Byfleet Brewery, and Jim Allen on the Byfleet Players. Very many thanks to everyone who has helped out with information. Robert Bowyer (court miniaturist to George III) and Adrian Stoop, the England and Harlequins rugby player are also being researched. But which of the boards already in the centre should make way for the new ones? We thought we would let the public decide, so throughout February you will be able to vote for your favourite displays, and the ones with the least votes will be replaced. The list will be in the Heritage Centre, so when you next go to the library, pop in and cast your vote.

## *For the Record...*

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

**VISIT TO WEST HALL.** We were joined by Mrs Stoop, wife of F C Stoop's great grandson, (who has written the following account) and her mother in law, Mrs Daphne Stoop

"Having lived with the pictures, photographs and history of West Hall for all of my married life, it was with great pleasure that I was with my mother-in-law, Mrs Daphne Stoop on the Society's visit to West Hall on *November 2nd* last year. Over the years I have felt that I had come to know West Hall as an old friend and it was with great excitement to see for oneself how much of the original old house has been preserved. It was most thrilling to see the old Dining Hall, of which we have several photographs of family line-ups, and I was most encouraged that the beautiful ceiling beams are still intact and the wall panelling is still there, although at present covered in paint. The Library with its unusual fireplace and lovely windows seems almost completely as they were, according to my mother-in-law, and she had great fun trying to work out which rooms had been divided and where, from the days that she had known West Hall as a Stoop family home. The main staircase has seen little change except for the fire doors and enclosed gallery. Some of the bedroom doors, now office doors, are still intact with attractive original inlay. It is so reassuring to know that although the function of West Hall has changed into business use, Mouchel has treated it with respect and sympathy over the past 30 years and are interested in bringing some of the original decor back to how it was. I do thank Byfleet Heritage Society for having given me the opportunity of joining them for this most interesting visit."

Very many thanks to Mr John Wheeler, Facilities Manager for Mouchel, for giving up his Saturday morning to show us

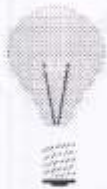
**FOXWARREN CHILDHOOD, a talk by Howard Cook.** On 27th November last year we were pleased to welcome Mr Cook, who gave his talk despite having stitches removed earlier that same day, the result of a fall in West Byfleet. At the age of five, Mr Cook came to live at Foxwarren Park, a large estate off the Redhill Road. His father was Head Gardener there and they lived in one of the estate cottages. The gardens and grounds of Foxwarren Park were extensive, as shown on Mr Cook's sketch map, including large greenhouses, kitchen gardens, bee hives, annual and perennial flower borders (7-8 yards wide and a staggering 80 yards long for which Mr Cook had to provide the flowers from scratch!) as well as the fruit houses, vast lawns and two miles of drive which was edged every Saturday. Mr Cook took us into another world where the estate cottages had no electricity and it was nothing to walk three miles each way to school everyday (although Mr Cook did admit to sometimes hitching a lift on a passing traction engine!). The classes of society were also very distinct. Mr Cook told an anecdote where he had been told by Mrs Ezra, the lady of the house, that by riding his bicycle along the main road, he had prevented her car from coming out of the side road. When Mr Cook refused to give an apology (after all, he had done nothing wrong!), she sacked his father. Luckily, she thought better of it the next day, but it was an example of how much control the gentry had over the lives of their estate workers, and all the more amazing when you consider it is not so very long ago. There is not room here to recap all that he said, but we were all enthralled, and could easily have sat and listened to Mr Cook for another couple of hours. We hope that Mr Cook will be able to come back soon and share some more of his memories with us.

**Response to last newsletter- an update** You may remember our last newsletter had quite a few cries for help! As a result we are pleased to welcome *Andy Andrews* as our new Treasurer. After his experience as Parish Clerk, we feel confident he will keep us straight! His wife, Pat, has kindly offered to help with newsletter delivery too. Carl Neville has arranged for Eric Griffin, son of Major "Pop" Griffin, to record some of his memories of life in Byfleet in the late 20s and 30s, which make fascinating reading. It is hoped to video an interview with him, so that these memories can be shared. Very many thanks indeed to all those who are helping out.

**More about display boards.** There are so many different aspects of Byfleet's history and heritage that we are spoilt for choice. If you feel we are missing something vital, please let us know. We are always on the lookout for information and especially pictures. Remember, even if you only have one little piece of information or one postcard or old photo, it could go together with other items the Society already has and enable us to complete another display. I am more than happy to put the displays together, but I need the information first. Possible topics for the future are St Mary's church, the Village Hall and Village club, local businesses and clubs, or racing drivers from or who lived in Byfleet, to name but a few. *Please contact Tessa*



*Westlake on 01932 351559* if you can help at all. Many thanks.



**Ideas and Helping Hands Needed!** Do you fancy helping out with the teas at Society events? Or helping to put up posters around the village for those events where we go public? Both jobs should need doing once a month at the most. (And remember - the more of you that volunteer, the less often you will have to take a turn!) Or do you have a flair for advertising and PR that would help us promote the Society? Or are you a dab hand at DIY and could help us with some maintenance on the Heritage Centre (nothing major, just a helping hand with some simple woodwork or a screwdriver once in a while). If so, we

would be delighted to hear from you! Please ring the following:

*Social/PR: Jeff Sechiari on 01932 341084*

*DIY: Doug Bright on 01932 346283*

And don't forget to ring *Tessa Westlake on 01932 351559* if you can help with the oral history project or *Doug Bright on 01932346283* for the video project mentioned in the previous newsletter.

**WHAT ARE YOU DOING ON THE 22ND FEBRUARY??** It's short notice, but can you help out at the Woking Local History Festival? All we ask is for someone to mind the stand for an hour. The Festival will be held in the Peacocks Centre, Middle Concourse, in a unit next to Allders. All you have to do is mind the displays and note down any queries (not many, from past experience) that you can't answer yourself. Or if you happen to be in Woking, why not drop in and have a browse. The Festival is on from the 15th -22nd February, with a display on Woking all week, and displays from invited groups on the 15th, and the 22nd when we will be there. If you can help, please ring Tessa Westlake on 351559. PS: We'll also be looking for volunteers for Parish Day on 19th July. Any offers?

**COME AND JOIN US!** Due to pressures of work our poor little committee is a bit thin on the ground. Please could you give us one evening per month for committee meetings, and sometimes a little bit of time in between. Remember - many hands make light work, and the more people that volunteer, the easier it will be on everyone. So if you want to come along to a committee meeting before -er - committing yourself, please ring the Hon. Secretary, Tessa Westlake, on 351559.

**DON'T FORGET** - Subscriptions will be due in June, but new members joining now will not have to pay again until 1998 - so why not tell your friends.

**CAN YOU HELP DELIVER THE NEWSLETTER?** I would be grateful if people could help deliver the newsletter. It would probably only be about half a dozen copies to addresses in the same street as you or nearby, and only four times a year. If you could help, please ring

*Tessa Westlake on 351559*

## **VISIT TO ELMBRIDGE MUSEUM**

There was a good turn out on the *16th January* for a guided tour of the newly refurbished Elmbridge Museum. Ian Platford, Assistant Curator, filled us in on the redesigning work. The Museum's structure had remained unchanged since opening in the Library building in 1967 and it badly needed bringing up to date with more professional displays appropriate for the 1990s. Consultation with locals showed that they wanted a chronological display of local history. Having drawn up a design brief, they chose designer Peter Nay, who had worked on displays both at the Museum of London and Surrey Heath Museum at Camberley, to realise their ideas. In April 1995 Elmbridge was the first museum in the South East to receive funding from the National Lottery and, together with grants from Elmbridge Borough Council and the Museums and Galleries Commission, they were able to proceed with their plans.

The Museum reopened on 10th December 1996 and it has certainly been worth the wait. Peter Nay has used the limited space available to great advantage, creating both open areas and a well designed route around the display cabinets. Displays cover the history of the local area from

prehistory to the present. There is a well equipped local history research area with reference books, ordnance survey maps dating from the late 1860s to the present and photograph albums arranged in local areas and by subject. Eventually all objects, photographs, paintings etc will be held on a computer data base to aid historical researchers.

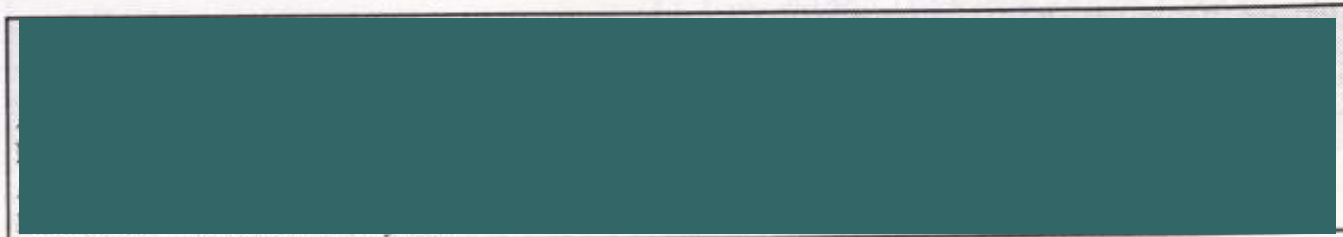
The research area is also the Film Heritage Centre where there are displays of the work of Cecil Hepworth whose film studios were based in Walton from 1899 until 1924. Taken over in 1926 by Archibald Nettlefold, the studios continued production into the 1950s when they made the TV series *The Adventures of Robin Hood*. The Museum is currently copying Hepworth's films on to video so that the public will be able to view them at will, and some video recordings can already be seen playing in the Museum as part of the display.

There is a wealth of information to be found at the Museum and it is well worth a visit. It also has a temporary exhibition area where small displays of contemporary art and craft are shown.

By Kati Reeve

On the *5th February* we welcomed Dr David Robinson, County Archivist, to the Village Hall to hear his talk on **BYFLEET AND THE SURREY RECORDS OFFICE**. With its origins in the 1920s, the Records Office expanded to include the Surrey Archaeological Society's records, and the Surrey Local History Studies Library. For the future, the new Local History Centre in Woking is expected to open in late 1998. The Records Office holds many and diverse records. Those relating to Byfleet including manorial rolls, cricket club records (from 1878), Byfleet Parish Council records, Chertsey Poor Law Union records as well as deeds, maps and plans of old Byfleet - and this is only a small part. After showing us a couple of examples of some of the Byfleet material, including the architect's plans for the old St Mary's school (now the Day Centre), Dr Robinson fielded questions from the audience and gave some useful tips on how to use the Records Office. Two main points were that an appointment is advisable, and the Records Office is shut on Fridays. More information is available by ringing 0181 541 8800, or on the Surrey Web for those of you with an Internet connection.

**SEE THE FRONT PAGE FOR OUR UPCOMING EVENTS  
WHY NOT KEEP THE PAGE BY YOUR CALENDAR FOR EASY REFERENCE.  
EVENTS WILL ONLY BE ANNOUNCED IN THE NEWSLETTER  
WE LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING YOU!**



## SOME SNIPPETS FROM OUR ARCHIVES

From **BYFLEET PARISH MAGAZINE, July 1881**. An account of an early Parish Day, which was first held to celebrate the re-opening of St Mary's church after extensive renovations in 1864. The day used to be called Dedication or Parish Festival, until 1885, when it was first called Dedication Festival (Parish Day and School Feast). Until 1885, the Festival was always held on the first of June.

### **"FIRST OF JUNE**

Our 1st June Festival was this year, owing to the splendid weather, a great success. The sermon was preached by the Rev. W. Jones, Rector of St Nicholas, Guildford; the musical portion of the service being particularly well rendered by the choir, calling forth warm eulogiums from the visitors. After the service, the Rectory grounds were crowded by the parishioners and friends; tea, cake &c. were provided for all, and it is estimated that nearly 600 people were on the grounds. Several games and amusements were provided for the children; Mr Leyland kindly lent his Band for the occasion. At 7.30, after three hearty cheers for the Rector and family, the parents and their children departed, having spent a very happy day."

From **BYFLEET HOME WORDS**, the parish magazine, from April 1920.

### **"BYFLEET SCHOOL**

*In consequence of infectious illness in the Village the School Managers were required by the Medical Officer of Health to close the School for about three weeks. At present we are able to open again.*

*The Diocesan Inspector, the Rev. J.B. West, hopes to visit the School for a Religious Knowledge Inspection in the month of April, on a date which has not yet been fixed."*

### FROM **BYFLEET PARISH MAGAZINE, May 1882** **"EARLY CLOSING**

The Shopkeepers of Byfleet have combined in an effort to shorten their hours of labour; we hope with them to find their customers willing to aid them by making their purchases as early in the day as possible. We are requested to state that the hours of closing will now be the same as in all the surrounding towns and villages, viz. at eight o'clock on the first three nights of the week and at five on Thursdays.

DO YOU REMEMBER ANY OF THESE NAMES? Here are some old adverts for Byfleet businesses from the Parish Magazine of June 1920. Most of the names are now just a memory, but it is good to see that a couple at least are still familiar Byfleet shops.

### **W. F. DIGBY,** UNIVERSAL STORES. BYFLEET

High-Class, Family Grocer and Provision Merchant.  
Corn and Forage Contractor,  
And Italian Warehouseman.

TELEPHONE - 63 BYFLEET

Telephone - 37 Byfleet

Established 1880

### **G. BOUTELL & SON,**

Builders, House Decorators, Upholsterers, House Furnishers,  
and Undertakers,

### **AMPTWADE HOUSE, BYFLEET**

Inside and Outside Blinds made to order. Carpets taken up,  
beaten and re-laid. Wall Papers of all descriptions  
Painting, Glazing, & Distemping. Furniture, Carpets & Linoleums  
Funerals Furnished to suit all classes at Moderate  
Terms. Cremations Arranged.

**H. C. SCHERER**  
FANCY BREAD & BISCUIT BAKER,  
PASTRY COOK & CONFECTIONER  
WEDDING AND BIRTHDAY CAKES  
CAKES AND PASTRY OF ALL KINDS FRESH DAILY  
SUPERIOR NURSERY BISCUITS  
**BINFIELD BAKERY, BYFLEET**

**WILLIAM ARKELL,**  
TAILOR AND OUTFITTER  
**BYFLEET DRAPERY BAZAAR**  
**Millinery and Dressmaking,**  
STYLE, FIT, AND FINISH GUARANTEED.  
Bedsteads, Bedding, and Furniture. Agent for "Viyella"  
and Dr Jaeger's Pure Wool Underwear.