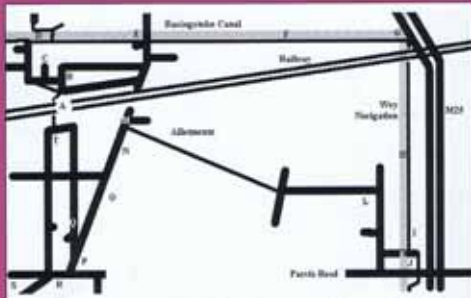


A HERITAGE WALK AROUND WEST BYFLEET
AND ALONG THE BASINGSTOKE CANAL



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|--------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|
| A - Railway Station | H - Way Navigation | Q - Recreation Ground |
| B - The Clarendon | I - Byfleet Boat Club | F - St. John's Church |
| C - Birchwood Road | J - Grist Mills | Q - Lavender Park Road |
| D - Lock 3 | K - Paris Bridge | R - Byfleet Corner |
| E - Scotland Bridge | L - Durnell Park | S - Rosemount Parade |
| F - Back Pumping Station | M - Campsall Road | T - Station Approach |
| G - Three Bridges | N - The Schools | |

This walk should take up to two hours as a gentle afternoon or evening stroll and, as it follows mainly footpaths and pavements, it should be accessible most of the year. In the warmer season of the year the area becomes overgrown with nettles, so wear suitable clothing.

Please follow the Countryside Code, respect the privacy of the owners and residents of the area and enjoy your walk.

For a copy of the complete programme of guided Heritage Walks, please send a S.A.E. to the publisher, or email heritage.walks@btworld.com

GUIDE No. 6 ©2004, Iain Wakeford Published by Iain Wakeford, 108 High Street Old Woking, GU24 0JH £1.50

WEST BYFLEET

A SELF-GUIDED HERITAGE WALK



WITH NOTES AND ILLUSTRATIONS
ON THE HISTORY OF THE VILLAGE
AND THE BASINGSTOKE CANAL

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A HERITAGE WALK AROUND WEST BYFLEET
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Birch Walk - across the green opposite The Clarendon.

Introduction
At the beginning of the 19th century there was no 'West Byfleet'. This area was just part of Byfleet Common - open heath-land where local farmers could graze their cattle and cut turf for their fires. In 1801 the common was 'enclosed' and divided up, some going to the farmers of the area, but most being reserved for the Lord of the Manor, the large local landowners or sold off to cover the enclosure commissioners' expenses. Some land was kept back for the parish poor.

The Walk

This walk starts at the entrance to West Byfleet Station and crosses the green from the Clarendon towards Birchwood Road.

Byfleet & Woodham Station

In 1884 the London & South Western Railway decided to build a station on the former common land of Byfleet. By this time the opening of a main line station meant certain development and soon land at 'Byfleet Corner' was being sold and houses built. The Railway Company looked at three sites for the station - Sheerwater Bridge, Campsall Arch and a site roughly halfway between the two. They chose the latter and in December 1887 'Byfleet and Woodham' Station (as it was originally known) was opened.

The old name last appeared on the timetable in May 1914, after which 'West Byfleet' was officially recognised.

The Claremont.



The Claremont

The first place to be built near the station was the 'Byfleet' or 'Station Hotel' (now re-named The Claremont). It was opened in 1887, when the landlord of the 'Sun Inn' in Pyrford Road transferred his licence to the new building, in what was then expected to be the heart of the new town. Large houses were already being planned to the south of the railway, and the 'poor' land between the railway and canal seemed ideal for commercial development. In the event,

many of the houses to the south didn't last long and in the early part of the 20th century they were already being replaced by shops and other commercial ventures.

Birchwood Road

This is one of West Byfleet's Conservation Areas (the canal, Station Approach, Byfleet Corner/ Roserscourt Parade and Old Avenue being the others). It was built by the Birchwood Tenant Company in 1911 and was designed by Messrs. Barry, Parker & Raymond of Hampstead in what has been described as a distinctive 'cottage style' character. It was one of the first such developments in this area.

An old postcard of Birchwood Road.



Having crossed the small green to the entrance of Birchwood Road, walk around the corner into Birch Walk (towards the Woodlands Avenue car park).



Byways and Lock Cottage, Woodlands Avenue.

Follow the towpath downstream, under Scotland Bridge to the junction with the Wey Navigation.

Cross over the small ditch (see note on Fullbrook) to the Basingstoke Canal. At the canal, turn right on to the towpath by the former lock-keeper's cottage.

Lock 3

An old postcard of Lock 3, showing the lock-keeper's cottage and stables.

The lock-keeper's cottage apparently once had a small amount of accommodation for the barge-men and stables for their horses (where the single-storey extension on the left was).



A barge on the canal at West Byfleet.

The Basingstoke Canal

The Canal was built in the late 1780s and '90s, with work starting at Woodham in 1788 and the canal being opened to Horsell in 1791 (Basingstoke was finally reached in 1794).

It was a mainly agricultural waterway, with timber and flour being carried downstream to London and coal and finished goods carried upstream to the towns and villages along its route.

In 1787 they estimated that over 30,000 tons of goods would be carried each year on the waterway, but on only three occasions did the canal actually carry the projected amount of tonnage - in 1838 (when the canal was used to carry goods for the construction of the railway), and in 1934 and 1935 (just before the transportation of coal to Woking Gas Works ceased). After the railway opened the canal started to decline and in 1869 the original company was wound up.



In 1874 the canal was sold for £12,000, but in 1878 the new owners went into liquidation and over the next few years there was a succession of failed ventures to revive the canal. In 1923 the canal was

Some of the barges by Fullbrook School.



View from the footbridge over Lock 3.



Scotland Lock.



Scotland Bridge in the early 20th century, before the need for traffic lights.

bought by Mr. A.J. Harmsworth for £5,000 and a mini-revival began. After he died in 1947, however, the canal once more fell into decline until in the 1970s Hampshire and Surrey County Councils bought their sections of waterway and the Surrey & Hampshire Canal Society set about restoration work.

Scotland, Fullbrook & the Rive Ditch
Much of the land around New Haw was owned by Robert Fitzpatrick Escott of Ongar Hill House, Adlestone, but over time 'Escott's land' became corrupted to 'Scotland'. The bridge over the canal is known as Scotland Bridge or Fullbrook Bridge.



Scotland Bridge - one of the few 'original' arches on the canal in this area.



The name 'Fullbrook' comes from the Old English word 'Fule', meaning 'foul' or 'dirty' - the 'foul brook' (first recorded in 889 AD). The name probably refers to the restrained Rive Ditch which runs alongside the canal here. The name 'Rive' comes from the Old English word 'Ribe' meaning 'ditch'. The name therefore means 'the ditch ditch'!

The houseboats by Scotland Bridge.

Navigation, canal, railway and motorway - four centuries of transport in one place!

water supply. This has partially been solved in this area with the new back-pumping scheme that recycles the water from the bottom of Lock One back up to the top of Lock Six at Sheerwater.



At the end of the canal, cross the footbridge (built in 1996) over the Wey Navigation and then turn left (under the railway arch) and follow the Navigation towpath to the Byfleet Boat House and Parvis Bridge.

Back-Pumping Scheme.
One of the main problems with the Basingstoke Canal was its lack of a good



Three Bridges
Where the Canal joins the Wey Navigation you can see four centuries of transport - the 17th-century Wey Navigation, the 18th-century Canal, the 19th-century railway and the 20th-century M25!

The original railway arch (1838) with the 1890s bridge in the foreground.

1651 and completed two years later. From Walsham Weir at Pyrford, through Byfleet and New Haw to Weybridge, the waterway is entirely man-made and from claims made against the Navigation owners in 1671, we can assume that one of the 'navvies' employed on

View through the arch.



The Wey Navigation
The Wey Navigation was the brainchild of Sir Richard Weston, of Sumon Place, although the Act of Parliament allowing its construction was actually promoted by the Corporation of Guildford. The waterway was begun in



Byfleet Boat Club.

this section was a 'Thomas Roker of Woodham'. He claimed £12 for work that he had carried out on the waterway, but for which he had not been paid. Thomas was described as a 'husbandman' - a local tenant farmer - who probably only worked on the waterway when there was little work on his own land! Unfortunately this section suffers from the near constant noise of the M25 motorway, which rises here to cross the 310-yard-long 'New Haw Viaduct', built in 1981 for about £3.7m.

The Boat Houses
Only the Byfleet Boat House survives (provided by Mr F.C. Stoop of West Hall for the villagers of Byfleet), the other boathouse (pictured here) having recently been demolished. It was built in the 1890s to serve the Dartnell Park Estate and was for the exclusive use of the estate's residents.

The former Dartnell Park boathouse - now replaced by modern houses.



Parvis Bridge with the former Dartnell Park house on the right.



Climb the slope up on to the bridge and then turn right, following the footpath to Dartnell Park Road.

Company, but by 1675, when it was in need of repair, the bridge was referred to as 'Parishes Bridge' and was presumably repaired at the parish's expense. The brick abutments of the old bridge are dated 1750.

Parvis Bridge

The original bridge over the Wey Navigation here must have been the responsibility of the Navigation



The Wey Navigation from Parvis Bridge.

Byfleet Grist Mills

The mills at Byfleet – producing various animal feeds – were set up here in the 1780s. There were said to be six buildings here at one time, but now only one remains – no longer working as a mill. The towpath has subsequently been diverted around the back of the mill.



Dartnell Park early in the last century.

Dartnell Park

This area was once part of Byfleet and Ham Haw Commons, before they were enclosed in 1805.

In the early 19th-century the land was used as nursery grounds and by the 1870s the area was thickly wooded.

After Byfleet & Woodham Station opened in the mid-1880s the land was developed with large expensive houses.

In 1887 43 plots were on offer – none less than 1.5 acres in size and some up to 3.5 acres.

A later sale, in May 1899, included 58 'good building plots' and promoted the estate with its own exclusive tennis and boat clubs.

Turn right into Dartnell Park Road and then take the second turning on the left – Dartnell Avenue.

Follow the pavement on the right-hand side of Dartnell Park Road.



At the end of the road, where Dartnell Park Road rejoins from the right, cross over the road and take the public footpath to Camphill Road (with the recreation ground on your left and the allotments on the right). At the end of the path turn left onto Camphill Road.



West Byfleet Infant School, built in 1914.

West Byfleet Infant School

The school was originally built in 1914 (just before the outbreak of the war) as a 'mixed and infant school', with accommodation for 350 pupils.

The Junior School, next door, was originally the Secondary School.

West Byfleet Recreation Ground

In 1912 Byfleet Parish Council leased twelve acres of land from the United



West Byfleet Recreation Ground.

Charities for a recreation ground for West Byfleet, but it was not until after the First World War that the ground was properly laid out and opened (on 6th July, 1921).

Apparently, according to the Council records tennis was not allowed on Sundays and the groundsman's

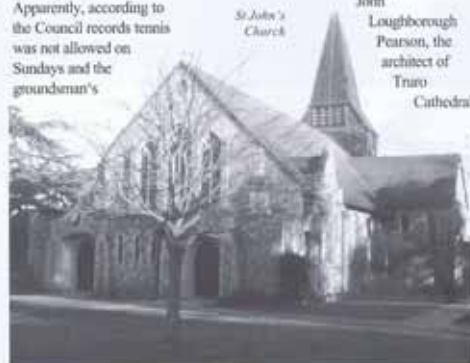
wages were £13.1s.6d p.a. 'with one week full paid holiday p.a. and three days in lieu of Bank Holidays'.

St. John's Church

The original 'church' in West Byfleet was a corrugated iron chapel-of-ease, built in the grounds of Broadoaks in 1872. By the turn of the 20th century it had become clear that this was too small for the growing community and W. D. Caroe (a pupil of Sir

John Loughborough Pearson, the architect of Truro Cathedral

St. John's Church



Camphill Road

The 'camp' on the slight 'hill' here could have been either for the navvies constructing the nearby canal in the late 1780s, or for the railway in the mid-1830s.

Camphill Road.





and St. James' Church, Weybridge) was appointed to design a new church to be built at the junction of Parvis Road and Camphill

St. John's steeple after completion.

Road. The foundation stone was laid in 1910 by Mrs. Stoop of West Hall, with the church finally being opened in June 1912 (by which time it had cost over £12,000).

By the church, cross over Camphill Road to the junction with Lavender Park Road and the car park of Sheer House.



The village sign (by the car park opposite the church), erected to commemorate the coronation of the Queen.

Lavender Park Road, Rosemount and The Essential Oil Distillery
The Essential Oil Distillery opened in the early 1850s in Pyrford Road (near where Melbury Close is today).

It was owned by the Collins family, who in 1872 sold it to John Newland. He apparently ran the business until its closure in about 1905.

The ingredients for the distillery came from the local area, with lavender being grown in the fields where Lavender Park Road is now and roses coming from the land now occupied by Rosemount Parade. The distillery building was demolished in about 1924.



The Bank on the corner with Pyrford Road - now Barclay's.

Turn left, towards the traffic lights at 'Byfleet Corner', and then skirt around the car park to the junction with Station Approach. Across the road is Rosemount Parade.

Byfleet Corner and Rosemount Parade

Some of the first shops to be built in this area were at 'Byfleet Corner' (the junction of Pyrford Road and Old Woking Road), but these were soon joined



An old postcard of Rosemount Parade.



An old postcard of Station Approach.

Turn down Station Approach with Waitrose on your left and the Library on your right.

Station Approach

According to the local listing, this parade was 'largely constructed prior to the First World War, although the far eastern end is a little older'. It is claimed that the buildings were designed and built by W.G. Tarrant of Byfleet, who is associated with the work of the famous 'Arts and Crafts' architect, Edwin Lutyens.

The shop on the corner has always been a butcher's shop, as can be seen by the two pictures here.

in 1906-7 by the shops of Rosemount Parade. The bank on the corner of Rosemount Parade was originally built for Thomas Ashby and Co., of Staines, who traditionally opened their branches at road junctions. Both Byfleet Corner and the shops of Rosemount Parade are now locally-listed buildings.



The parade of shops of Station Approach today.