



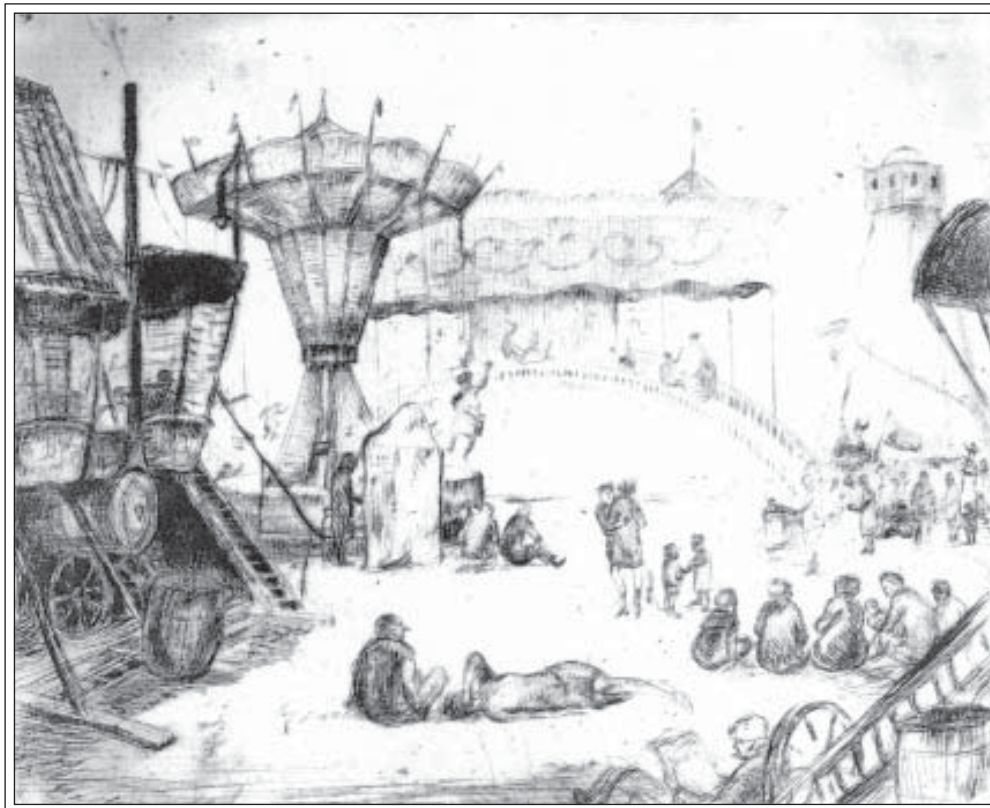
PRESIDENT: Lionel Green

VICE PRESIDENTS: Viscountess Hanworth, Eric Montague and William Rudd

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CHAIR: Judith Goodman

SEPTEMBER 2008



Vincent Lines *Mitcham Fair* c.1928 (drypoint print) – see page 14

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PROGRAMME SEPTEMBER – DECEMBER



Wednesday 17 September 2.30 – 4pm Guided walk in Merton Park

The walk, led by **Judith Goodman**, will start from the war memorial outside the church of St Mary, Merton Park. It is part of this year's Merton's Celebrating Age Festival and is free, but numbers are limited.

Contact the Secretary to book.

Saturday 11 October 2.30pm Mitcham Parish Centre, Church Path, Mitcham

This year's **Evelyn Jowett Memorial Lecture** will be given by **Eric Montague**, historian of Mitcham for many years. He calls it

'More Mitcham Memories'

The Parish Centre is opposite the church of St Peter and St Paul, a short walk from Mitcham's Vestry Hall. The 200 bus stops close by in Church Road, and the Belgrave Walk Tramlink stop is close by. There is some parking possible.

Saturday 8 November 2.30pm St James's Church Hall, Martin Way **Annual General Meeting**

This will be followed by a talk '**Cannon Hill Common**' by **Carolyn Heathcote** of the Friends of Cannon Hill Common.

St James's church is on the 164 bus route, and about ten minutes walk from Morden town centre.

Saturday 6 December 2.30pm Raynes Park Library Hall **'The History of Scotland Yard'**

This promises to be a fascinating talk by **Maggie Bird**, head of the Metropolitan Police Historical Collection.

Raynes Park Library hall is on or close to several bus routes and near the station.

Very limited parking. Please enter the hall via the Aston Road entrance.



HOT OFF THE PRESS!

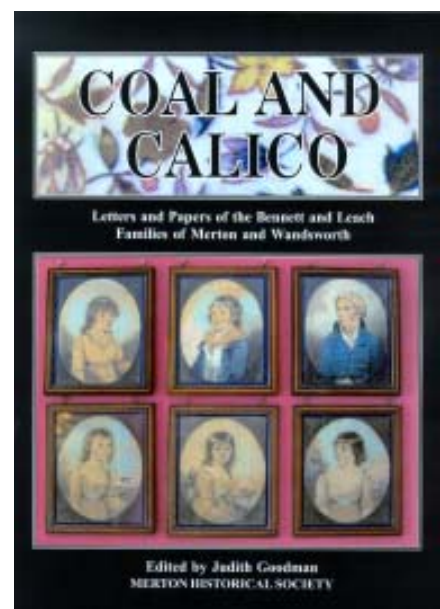
Judith Goodman has spent many months editing the family letters and papers of the Bennett and Leach families. The Leaches were calico printers at Merton Abbey in the 18th century, and Thomas Bennett, from a Wandsworth coal-merchant family, took over the works after marrying the eldest daughter of John Leach in 1797.

The collection, assembled at the end of the 19th century by Thomas's grandson and still preserved within the family, gives information about the two families, their business interests and their social activities, and also provides interesting glimpses into other local families and events, including their better-known neighbours, Nelson and the Hamiltons, and the Smith family of Abbey Gatehouse.

The 200-page A4 book, titled *Coal and Calico*, is a rich source of local and social history for the period. It has a wealth of illustrations, including many previously-unpublished items from the collection, and has three genealogical trees covering the various branches of the families.

Available at MHS autumn lectures or from Peter Hopkins, 57 Templecombe Way, Morden, Surrey SM4 4JF at £7.50 (£6.00 to members) plus £1.35 p&p, .

Judy will be one of John Hawks's guests at a Merton Abbey Mills event for Wimbledon BookFest in the Chapter House on Friday 10 October from 7.30pm, when she will be discussing the new book.



VISIT TO HASLEMERE

On 15 May 20 members of the Society caught the 9.50 train to Haslemere from Clapham Junction, getting to Haslemere at 10.45, and walked via Tanners Lane and West Street, past a replica green Victorian posting box (commemorating the octagonal box designed by John Penfold in 1866), and the Georgian House Hotel, to the Haslemere Educational Museum at the north end of town. There we were welcomed with coffee and an introduction by Kay Topping, Educational Development Officer. Arabella Christou, Audience Development Officer, gave us a guided tour of the galleries. The Museum was founded in 1888 by the Quaker surgeon Sir Jonathan Hutchinson to provide educational opportunities for local people, and is still doing the same today, with its galleries on geology, natural history and social history. A popular resident in the natural history section is Arthur, a Siberian Brown Bear. The geology section houses the only meteorite in Surrey, and the social history section the only mummy (from 700BC) in SE England outside London.

After a break for members to get some lunch, we were taken on a fascinating tour of the town by volunteer guide Tim Winter. He led us down the High Street, telling us about the buildings and many points of interest. Town House was an old stone-built house updated with a Georgian brick façade, owned in the 18th century by General Oglethorpe, and in the 19th century by Josiah Whymper, artist and engraver, father of mountaineer Edward Whymper; the Old Smithy with its stone water trough; cottages with typical Haslemere fish-scale tile-hanging; Well Lane leading to the town well, a dipping-well in use from medieval times until late the 19th century (Haslemere's last public water-carrier Hannah Oakford, who died in 1898, charged a penny ha'penny per bucket to deliver water to houses in the town). The Georgian House Hotel was built by a leather tanner, tanning being a big trade in Haslemere in the 18th century. The town hall, replacing an Elizabethan market house, is at the southern end and has a memorial plaque to Sir Robert Hunter, who lived in the town from 1883 to 1911, a co-founder of the National Trust in 1895.



In the High Street, Haslemere (photo: Tim Fripp)

The layout of the wide T-shaped High Street has changed little over 600 years, the town market held there originating in the 13th century, and it is still the location for the biennial charter fair. Unusually, the town appears to have grown up centred on the market area of the High Street, and not around the church, which is on the edge of the town.

This is only a very brief account of a most enjoyable visit to Haslemere and it is only possible to mention a few of the famous residents over the years, including Tennyson, Arnold Dolmetsch the musician, and Sir Archibald Geikie the geologist, who took over the museum after the death of its founder. The town would be well worth a return visit, as there is plenty of interest to see, and the museum deserves a lot more time than we were able to give it. Many thanks to the museum staff and the volunteer town guide for making our visit so interesting, and, of course, to Sheila Harris for arranging the trip.

Tim Fripp

The Long Shop

David Luff has been photographing the deplorable alterations to the Long Shop at Merton Abbey Mills. To reconfigure this attractive building as separate units the site owners have, to their great shame, allowed the removal of the distinctive arched windows.



‘TREASURES OF THE ENGLISH CHURCH: a thousand years of sacred gold and silver’

Thanks are due to Sheila Harris for arranging this group visit on 17 June at Goldsmiths’ Hall in the City of London.

In his foreword to the book accompanying the exhibition, the Archbishop of Canterbury says ‘the material collected here ... tells us something about the ups and downs of Church history. Style varies as the understanding of what is happening in worship changes: the pursuance of splendour as a vehicle for the sacramental presence of God in our midst gives way to a more sober post-Reformation idiom, seeking simple functional elegance for the gathering of believers at the Lord’s Table ... then a reaction towards elaboration and intricacy, before the wheel goes round again towards simplicity.’

Bede recounts in his *History* that Augustine approached Canterbury in 597 in a procession carrying a silver cross, while in *The Dream of the Rood* a cross appears ‘clad in gold and shining gems’. These and other references and some manuscript depictions hint at the richness of the treasures of the Anglo-Saxon church. Due to the destruction wrought by Vikings, Henry VIII and ‘Puritans’, only one or two of the outstanding early English church vessels and other ornaments survive. But, from the British Museum, the Trewiddle Chalice, c.865, though extremely plain, has a circular foot and, incidentally, the deep bowl that was suitable at a time when the Communion wine was received by both priest and laity. This is in contrast to the relatively shallow bowl (and the hexagonal foot) of chalices dating from the mid-14th century, when only the priest received the wine.

Among the earlier pieces on show were a seventh-century pectoral cross in gold and glass, and a late tenth-century silver pocket sundial, both from Canterbury. From Durham came a crosier head and three gold and sapphire bishop’s rings, all from the late 11th-12th century. The medieval crosses shown were either pectoral or processional, and it seems that altar crosses in the form familiar today came into general use very late in this period. The items from Corpus Christi and New Colleges at Oxford represented the particular splendour of bishops at Winchester. A small display of patens showed a range of engraved devices: the Hand of God, the Lamb of God, the Head of Christ, the Resurrected Christ, the Sacred Monogram, and several black letter (Gothic) inscriptions. Many other symbols were then in common use, but few were to be applied to plate of the immediate post-Reformation Anglican church.

Much Anglican plate comprised straight-sided Communion cups and covers (a form of paten), and flagons to hold the large quantity of wine required to administer to the laity, insisted upon by the reformers. Huguenot goldsmiths in London in the late 17th century introduced stylistic development, and Jean Cartier’s cup of 1699 (Christ Church, Oxford) is an example of French baroque subtly anglicised. A prominent element in Anglican altar plate was the alms dish. Particularly large ones were included in the magnificent altar sets (or services) ordered by cathedrals and collegiate churches to replace plate confiscated during the Civil War and Interregnum, and to celebrate the restoration of both the monarchy and the established church in 1660. Throughout the 17th and 18th centuries much secular plate was donated to Anglican churches. These silver and gilt pieces were sometimes only decorative but they made a splendid show on ceremonial occasions. Though not exhibited, it might be noted that in 1744 Dorothy Card left Mitcham parish church ‘two Silver Decanters which cost me five and Forty pounds’.

The design and production of plate as an applied art continued to follow changing stylistic fashion, and modified rococo is the style of an altar set of 1766 from Durham Cathedral. Only a few years later, Sir William Chambers designed a Greek Revival chalice, and, in Birmingham, Matthew Boulton produced a silver chalice in a restrained classical style that was to set the pattern until the more massive forms of Paul Storr came, in the early 19th century.

Continental items featured much in the section dealing with recusant plate. After the Reformation the practice of the Roman Catholic faith was severely restricted. Nevertheless, in London mass was celebrated in the chapels of foreign embassies, and the Catholic aristocracy were able to maintain places of worship on their landed estates. The Howard and Petre families in particular were able to acquire beautiful pieces such as Cardinal Howard’s Antwerp-made chalice of c.1700, and Lord Petre’s chalice and paten of c.1735. A notable English-made piece is the reliquary by Affabel Partridge of 1551. Continental plate in English churches includes an impressive silver-gilt Nürnberg cup and cover of c.1611, and a mid-18th century South German or Austrian crosier (Christ Church, Oxford).

The 19th-century Gothic Revival in church plate was the outcome of the efforts of both the Roman Catholic A W N Pugin and the Anglican leaders of the Oxford Movement. Pugin designed a glorious mitre in silver-gilt and jewels in 1848 (Westminster Cathedral), and John Hardman & Co of Birmingham produced much other plate and ornaments from the designs of both Pugin and William Burges. Stunning examples of these and from other designers and manufacturers were on show.

A reaction to the somewhat strident character of high Victorian Gothic led to a development that became known as the Arts and Crafts movement, and an example of its style is J D Stedding's processional cross of 1899 (St Matthew, Sheffield). C R Ashbee and Henry Wilson produced memorable pieces, and Omar Ramsden's monstrance of 1906 (Westminster Cathedral) is exceptionally splendid (it was interesting to compare the artist's design with the piece itself).

Later 20th-century work includes Elizabeth Frink's minimalist 'corpus' on a cross, of 1970, for Liverpool Metropolitan (RC) Cathedral, and an exquisite enamelled box by Jane Short, part of the large silver altar set made for Lichfield Cathedral in 1991. An equally large set was made for York Minster in 2000. Attention was drawn to the Goldsmiths' Company's part in establishing treasuries in various cathedrals, where the most historic and precious items, which would otherwise be locked away in bank vaults, can be displayed to the public.

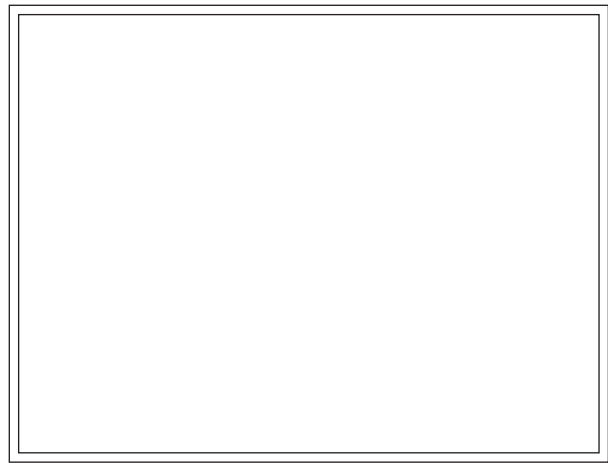
Some of us will long recall such rarities as Archbishop Walter's pallium pins, the silver collecting 'shoe', the liturgical bread knife, and the unique pax of c.1520.

Ray Ninnis

Paul Lamartine Yates

The little boy who c.1910 was photographed with his Suffragette mother Rose outside their Merton Park home, Dorset Hall, recently celebrated his 100th birthday. He lives, with his third wife, at Annecy in France, and until quite recently enjoyed mountain walking. Though he nearly became a concert pianist (he studied for a while under Hindemith) Paul's distinguished career was as an economist with the UN. His sight is now poor but, according to his daughter Yolande, he enjoys listening to music, to electronic versions of *The Economist* and to serious novels, and he loves a good argument.

Don't forget that *Rose's Story*, the Wimbledon Society's Museum exhibition about the Women's Suffrage movement locally, runs until the end of November.



*Mitre, silver-gilt and jewels, designed by A W N Pugin, 1848
(Westminster Cathedral)*



LOCAL HISTORY WORKSHOP

Friday 20 June 2008 – 6 present – Peter Hopkins in the chair

- ◆ **Bill Rudd** told us that a lime tree in St Lawrence's churchyard has been taken down (because it was leaning more than 10° from the vertical), so we may now view the church as people could 100 years ago.

He noted that Gilbey's Menswear had closed their Crown Lane shop after 38 years – a replacement enterprise is due soon. Bill brought along a series of photos he took from the roof of the Co-Op ('with permission') in 1972. These show a flourishing Morden centre with an inter-war suburban, but quite modern, architecture, with enough muted details to give a unified and tasteful whole. And remarkably few cars. Gilbey's then occupied 11 London Road, as in this view of June 1971.



- ◆ **Eric Montague** recalled not entirely official efforts to trap the pigeons that infested Hawes roof in Morden, attracted by bread scattered on the ground by a little old lady. Though constrained by the need to spare any birds with rings, as they would be valuable racing pigeons which should be returned to their owners, he and his colleagues still enjoyed some tasty pigeon pies.
- ◆ **David Haunton** showed some prints in different techniques by local artist Vincent Lines, which we hope to display at the AGM. (See article page 14)
- ◆ **Madeline Healey** noted that her picture of Ravensbury Mill in Dave Saxby's new book on the Wandle Mills should be dated 1890 and not 1935, as printed. She believes that the traction engine seen in the Lines prints of Mitcham Fair is now in the Carter's Steam Fair collection (see their website).
- ◆ **Cyril Maidment** brought along some 20 excellent photos of Merton Rush, taken by two different photographers in about 1911 – 1913, which it was suggested are sufficiently interesting to be published as a *Local History Note*. Cyril ticked off David Haunton for stating in *Bulletin* 166 that Wimbledon was part of London in 1940, when it was not officially so until 1965. David humbly resolved to check tales by 'oldest inhabitants' more carefully in future. Cyril then showed us this 1944 picture from *The Times* of the Morden Road Congregational Chapel in use as a British Restaurant, with a splendid John Piper trompe l'œil painting.



- ◆ **Peter Hopkins** discussed three matters concerning the medieval parish church of Morden and its clergy. He first demolished Canon Livermore's argument that the church may have been dedicated to St Lawrence of Canterbury, the successor to St Augustine, rather than St Lawrence the Martyr, by a consideration of references to saints' days in the manorial accounts. Then Peter took us through the evidence for the tangled tale of the vicar's fluctuating portion of the appropriated and farmed tithes of Morden, over a period of 350 years. People were much confused about who was entitled to what in a court case in 1590 – and we still are. Finally Peter queried the age of the east window in St Lawrence church; is it the original of 1356 (for which the accounts survive) re-used in the 17th-century rebuilding? Or a copy made in 1636 in what was then a decidedly old-fashioned style? Or something else again?

Betty Crisp kindly invited us to inspect her house in Upper Green East. We accepted with alacrity. Grade II listed, it is an 18th-century timber-framed and weatherboarded building, with a surprisingly large garden and yard at the rear. The original pantiles had been supplanted by slates, but these have now been replaced with pantiles to restore the original appearance. For many years the downstairs front room was a cobbler's shop, but the house has recently been converted to completely residential use. Our thanks to Mrs Crisp for an unexpected treat.

David Haunton

Next Workshops: Fridays 3 October at 2:30 and 21 November at 7:30pm at Wandle Industrial Museum

DAVID HAUNTON concludes his series of articles.

THE FIRST RAID ON MERTON PART 3: ON THE GROUND

To re-cap: on Friday, 16 August 1940, the air-raid warning had sounded at 12:20 and the ‘all clear’ at 1:10 pm. The warning sounded again at 5:15 pm, as people were shopping or preparing to go home from work, and bombs were dropping soon afterwards. In a very short space of time, nearly a quarter of all the bombs which were to fall on Merton and Morden during the war had exploded in the District.

Preparedness

The Air Raid Precautions (later Civil Defence) Combined Report and Control Centre for Merton and Morden lay next to the Council offices at 118 Kingston Road. A formal inspection report of 12 April 1940 admired the exemplary premises, but on 29 May an Inspector of Training was less impressed with ‘the “it will be alright on the night” attitude [which] prevails in this Authority’ and a more senior officer wrote on that report ‘Not a very satisfactory position’. On the other hand, on 12 July a further inspection report noted that the services were generally up to strength, and that the response to a recent ‘yellow alert’ was ‘very good’.

More than 2000 men and women staffed the Control Centre, the 38 Wardens Posts, the First Aid Posts, the Auxiliary Fire Service stations, and the Mobile Services Depots. The First Aid Posts were at Blakesley House (by the Nelson Hospital), in Middleton Road and beside South Wimbledon Station. There were four AFS teams, each with three trailer pumps. No.2 Team was situated in the grounds of Joseph Hood School on Whatley Avenue, but I have not yet located the others. The long-established District Fire Service, based at its station on Kingston Road, was integrated with ARP emergency procedures, but was still expected to deal with ‘civilian’ fires as well.

The ARP Mobile Services comprised the stretcher parties with 15 ambulances and 10 sitting-case cars, the 16 light and three heavy rescue parties, and the decontamination parties, all with their own transport, distributed among five Combined Depots. The Heavy Rescue teams with their specialised equipment were based at the Council Highways Depot in Garth Road, and the Decontamination parties at the Control Centre (with some of their equipment stored behind the fire station next door). The Stretcher parties were at the pavilion in Morden Recreation Ground, at Morden Farm School in Aragon Road (taken over before it opened, ‘for the duration’) and at the old Library building in Aston Road, Raynes Park (library services were displaced). The Light Rescue parties were based at these three and also at Garth Road.¹

The Council was also responsible for the provision of Rest Centres, places of temporary refuge for people who were bombed out or evacuated from their homes. These were at the Catherine Gladstone Home, in Bishopsford Road, the Salvation Army Hall and the Church Hall adjoining the Baptist Church, both in Crown Lane, the Farm Road Mission, and the Parochial Hall of St Saviour’s in Grand Drive.

All now faced their first test, imposed on them by the first significant raid on Greater London.

Aftermath

In total, in two widely-separated areas, Merton and Morden Urban District had suffered about 120 bombs within two or three minutes. For the ARP services, criticised for their attitude two months earlier, apparently it was ‘alright on the night.’ The five or six fires were extinguished and people rescued, delayed-action bombs were identified and marked, and nearby residents evacuated, and damaged buildings made safe. Though not without cost – AFS fireman Charles Tompkins, of Southfields, lost his life at 10 Bathurst Avenue, while among the Merton ARP wardens, John Stacey, of Dorset Road, died in Brisbane Avenue, and George Cowin,² of Bayham Road, Morden, and Percy T Whisker, who kept a leather goods shop at 33 Merton High Street, died on duty in High Path.

Help came from other sources – Mitcham sent ambulances (and offered their fire services, but these were not needed), the works fire crew of Foster’s Engineering put out a fire ‘in the vicinity of their premises’,³ while private citizens used their own cars to ferry the injured to hospital. A bit of tut-tutting was reported, as people arrived at hospital without the ‘proper’ documentation, but I do not suppose the injured people minded. A start was made on essential repairs – the debris blocking Kingston Road was swiftly cleared, while the Fire Service house bell circuits (the 999 alarms) were redirected and replaced in minutes. There was much praise for the emergency services and their organisation quoted in the local papers.⁴ Much of this successful outcome must be due to the inspiring leadership of the Chief Warden, Mr H Abrams, a 6-ft 5-in tall Metropolitan Police officer.

Many Merton people who had lost their homes, or who had been evacuated from houses that were damaged or near unexploded bombs, were taken to the Rest Centre at the YMCA opposite the Council offices – officially in the Borough of Wimbledon, but there were no demarcation disputes. This Centre was run by YMCA and

Women's Voluntary Service (WVS, later WRVS) personnel, and helped over 200 people on the Friday, and comparable numbers, mostly evacuees, over the week-end. In the west, similar respite was offered at the Parochial Hall.

The wardens were wary about letting evacuated people back into their homes, for fear of delayed action bombs. In the interim, Home Guards with fixed bayonets were posted at the entrances to evacuated streets 'to keep back the crowds of onlookers' which included young lads Hubert Bradbury and Tom Kelley on their bicycles. (And to deter looters, a fact not mentioned in the newspapers.) At least two delayed bombs did blow up on Saturday morning, but the locations of these were not reported. Other bombs failed to explode, one for example being found near the Tooting railway line outside Merton Park station on Sunday. Merton Council noted on 17 September that 'the unexploded bomb at 51 Brisbane Avenue has now been reached; after it is removed, part of the property must be rebuilt'.

There were some odd reactions after the raid. Mrs Florence Luff, travelling home with her one-year-old daughter after shopping in Tooting, was put off her bus at Merton Bridge by the conductor - 'you should be in a shelter' he insisted. The bus carried on down damaged and smoking Merton High Street, leaving lady and child to make their own way home to Hartfield Road by the same route.⁵ Miss Vida Brown, age 28, was working as a secretary at Dean's Rag Books. When the siren sounded, her father had just arrived in their car to take her away on holiday and she persuaded him to (reluctantly) accompany her into the works air-raid shelter. They emerged after the 'all-clear' to find all the car windows had been shattered by machine-gun fire, but that engine, petrol tank and tyres were untouched. As they reached home in Stratton Road, this respectable young lady thrust her head and shoulders through the side window-space, wildly waved both arms, and yelled 'We're all right! We're all right!' This was intended to reassure her mother, but whether it did...⁶

Harry Bush's painting gives a good idea of the general mess left behind. Leaves and small branches have been blown off the trees, with light material sucked out of the houses by the backdraught, and broken glass and tiles everywhere. The bomb crater measures about 15 feet in diameter, which is consistent with a 'small' 50-kg bomb fitted with a short-delay fuse.⁷ The depiction of seven damaged houses allows us to guess there are another three or four not visible to the sides of the picture, giving about 10 houses damaged by this bomb. Multiplying up by the number of bombs, we can estimate that this single raid damaged more than 1000 houses in Merton and Morden. Thus it was a matter for some congratulation that the Honorary Housing Officer, Councillor George MacDonald, could announce on 10 September that 'every house capable of being repaired has been adequately weather-proofed'. The Housing Officer had previously organised a panel of local builders for emergency repairs, and eight 'responsible firms' had actually started work on the Saturday, despite the potential danger from unexploded bombs. Subsequent repairs and rebuilding have in almost all cases been sympathetic to the neighbouring house designs, so nowadays it is difficult to realise the extent of the damage caused by this single raid.



*'A Corner of
Merton, 16 August,
1940'*
Oil painting by
Harry Bush
Photo courtesy
Imperial War
Museum,
reproduced by
permission of Diana
Robinson

Casualties and Censorship

On 20 August Merton Council recorded the deaths of 19 (unnamed) residents in the raid, while, on the following Friday, all three local papers (Merton, Wimbledon and Mitcham) published the identical rather scrambled article, word for word. This gave some detail on each of 14 deaths, none of them named or located, and referred coyly to the events having happened 'in South-eastern England'. However, in the same issue, the note on the funeral of Lawrence Johnstone, aged 13, of 98 Kingston Road, mentions that he 'met his death under tragic circumstances last Friday'; a sufficient hint, I presume. There were a few outright fibs (at West Barnes level crossing 'no casualties' were reported, but two men had died there) and some mistakes (the person who died in a telephone box at Shannon Corner was a woman, not a man as reported).

In fact, no fewer than 81 civilians lost their lives as a consequence of this raid: 33 in Merton and Morden, nine in Wimbledon and 39 in Malden and Coombe.⁸ The total for Merton and Morden Urban District included 20 residents, five people who lived in Wimbledon, and eight from further afield. One Merton resident was killed in Wimbledon, while two others, the Marriott brothers, died at New Malden Station, which had been heavily bombed and machine-gunned. The last person to succumb to their injuries was Marie Bassett, aged 71, of 85 Kingston Road, who finally gave up her struggle six weeks later, on 30 September.

Wartime censorship makes it difficult to establish the number of injured people. Few injuries were reported at the time, probably as public policy. Casualty figures published in the Wimbledon local paper after the war give 14 killed, 24 seriously injured and 36 lightly injured 'in the district'.⁹ These figures are presumably those recorded by Wimbledon authorities at the time, and include a proportion of Merton residents. No comparable figures were published for Merton and Morden, but we may guess that there would have been about 100 injured people in Merton.

We do know that two Merton ARP wardens were so severely injured as to be out of action for three months until mid-November, when, at the height of the Blitz, the Council minuted with implicit approval that they had 'applied to return to the Service'. I am sorry to say that these stout-hearted gentlemen remain anonymous, as they seem to typify the spirit of the times.

Assessment

Later comments have been casual, such as '[by] 25 August ... the outer suburbs had already been bombed'¹⁰ and 'Friday 16 August 1940: Some raids penetrated as far as London',¹¹ while some historians pretend that the idea of 'Greater London' did not exist in 1940, and ignore us completely – 'On the night of 24/25 August ... the first bombs to fall on the capital since 1918'.¹²

Contemporary opinion was rather different: the mayor of Mitcham wrote a letter of condolence to Wimbledon (and presumably to other affected places) expressing his outrage, while the summary bomb map bears a special label inscribed 'Malden and Merton - Heavily Bombed', with the words doubly underlined.

1 The National Archives HO 207/756 *Merton and Morden / Wardens Organisation* and HO 207/757 *Merton and Morden / Inspection Reports* [There are no reports in these files after August 1940.] ; Minutes of Merton Council Civil Defence Committee 5 June 1945

2 Thus spelt in the Electoral Register, though given as 'Cowan' in Merton Council minutes, and in the Commonwealth War Graves Commission list. My thanks to Mr Jim Creasy of Raynes Park for this information.

3 Minutes of Merton and Morden Urban District Council 1940: Special (full) Council Meeting 20 August 1940; Civil Defence Emergency Committee 20 August 1940, etc.

4 *Merton and Morden News* 23 August 1940 and 30 August 1940; *Wimbledon Borough News* 15 September 1944; *Mitcham News and Mercury* 23 August 1940 and 30 August 1940

5 David Luff, pers.comm. July 2008

6 Pers. comm. April 2007 [I understand Miss Brown died recently, aged 95.]

7 Fleischer, Wolfgang *German Air-dropped weapons to 1945* (2003, Motorbuch Verlag, Stuttgart, English translation 2004, Midland Publishing) p.12

8 My calculations from the List of Civilian War Deaths in Surrey held by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission.

9 *Wimbledon Borough News* 11 May 1945 p.1

10 Deighton, Len *Fighter* (1977, paperback 1979) Jonathan Cape

11 Ramsay, Winston G (ed) *The Blitz: Then and Now* (3 vols 1987-1990) Battle of Britain Prints International

12 Helm, John W E *The Bombing of Britain's Railways, Part Two* in *Back Track* (September 2007) Pendragon Publishing Vol.21 no.9 p.534 [My thanks to Bert Sweet for this reference.]

Mitcham's new station

The first new suburban station in London to be built since the war, Mitcham Eastfields station was formally opened on 10 July by Transport Minister Tom Harris. Ingeniously fitted onto a cramped site, the building was designed to tick the 'green' boxes, using recyclable materials, solar energy where possible, and rainwater for the washrooms, and minimising carbon emissions. Between them, Southern and First Capital Connect serve Eastfields with four trains an hour in both directions, convenient for commuters, trippers and shoppers.

GEOFFREY WILSON describes the birth of THE WIMBLEDON AND SUTTON RAILWAY

Just a century ago a group of landowners and representatives of local government met at the Westminster Palace Hotel to discuss a project for a new railway to link Wimbledon and Sutton. The meeting was convened by Messrs D Smith, Son & Oakley, surveyors and agents, on 7 October 1908, and was presided over by Sir George Smallman and H D Searles-Wood. The scheme had been germinating for some two years.

There was no great public need for such a line. In fact Sir William Forbes, chairman of the London, Brighton & South Coast Railway (LBSCR), deposed that his company had restored a direct service between Wimbledon, Mitcham and Sutton, but that it was losing money: indeed the increased opening and closing of the level crossing at Merton Park was causing local resentment.

The proposed new line was clearly a 'landowner's line' intended to open up for development the wide expanse of open land between the fringes of Merton and Sutton.

One of the leading lights concerned was William Ernest Reid Innes, son of James Innes who, with his brother John, had developed the Merton Park Estate for almost 40 years. Ernest (as he was usually known) Innes explained that they (James and John Innes) had not been able to complete their planned estate because of the need for convenient public transport. Consequently, the Merton Park Estate Company earmarked £200,000 towards the proposed line (equivalent to about £11 million today).

The 1908 meeting and subsequent discussions led to the submission of a Parliamentary Bill in the 1910 session. On 26 July 1910 the Act received royal assent. The sponsors may be considered fortunate in gaining their Act, because by 1910 such 'landowner's line' promotions had become almost things of the past.

The proposed railway was to begin by an end-on junction with two of the terminal tracks at Wimbledon station used by a good service of District Railway electric trains running over a London & South Western Railway (LSWR) line from East Putney. This line was also used by a scantier steam service from Waterloo via Wandsworth.

The new line was first to pass under part of the Wimbledon station forecourt and properties on the west side of Wimbledon Hill Road. It would then run in the open on the north side of the Wimbledon-Raynes Park railway footpath, some demolition of property being necessary.

At the foot of Elm Grove there was to be a station, tentatively called Tennis Ground, after the nearby original championship courts of the All-England Croquet and Lawn Tennis Club. Thence the line was to pass diagonally under the LSWR main line, and then cross the Thomson nursery grounds, after which a bridge would take it over The Chase. Fortuitously an expanse of open ground still lay between Sandringham and Oxford Avenues.

A high embankment brought the line to a second bridge, over Kingston Road, and thence, skirting Bakersend Farm, to another bridge, over Cannon Hill Lane. At this point another station was proposed, to be called, not quite appropriately, 'Cannon Hill'.

The line was then to drop to ground level at the southern end of Mostyn Road, where that road joined the track called Green Lane and gave access to the Merton Park Golf Club. Here a third station was planned to cater for development of the yet unbuilt parts of the Merton Park Estate. It was named provisionally Merton Park, although that name had applied since the 1880s to the station close to the Merton Park level crossing served by trains to and from London via Tooting.

From that point the line was to rise to cross the future Links Avenue and the London-Worthing trunk road. A shallow cutting was to take it under the southern end of Central Road, where a station would serve the then small community of Morden.

Passing into the area of the Sutton and Cheam authority, the railway was to continue mainly on embankments, with stations at Love Lane and Collingwood Road. The final station was to be built adjacent to Gander Green Lane, to serve parts of both Sutton and Cheam. From there the route rose steeply through a deep chalk cutting to join the LBSCR at Bridge Road, with the intention that trains would continue to that company's Sutton station. However, the LBSCR successfully resisted its station being shared, so that the promoters of the Wimbledon and Sutton Railway were obliged to include their own terminus with the two stations linked by a footpath.

The promoters put the capital cost of the new line at £350,000 and the engineering costs at £311,554, equivalent today to about £37 million. This was a very high cost at the time for a railway of only 5¼ miles, and was explained by the number of bridges (24) and heavy earthworks needed. The work at the Sutton end included the removal of 500,000 tons of earth. In addition compensation had to be paid for properties which were demolished, and for those which were otherwise directly affected.

When the Act had been passed the District Railway in effect took over the project as its own, replacing the landowning directors with its own nominees.

The LSWR was anxious that its Putney-Wimbledon line would not become over congested by extra District trains bound for Sutton, and planned to quadruple parts of this section to allow for overtaking trains. The District Railway made a careful assessment of the potentialities of its new acquisition. One concern was that the stations should initially be of simple construction, to be replaced by sturdier buildings as the traffic grew.

Although the course of the line was staked out and land and properties on the route acquired, no construction had begun by the outbreak of war in 1914.

By the end of the war in 1918 the LSWR had carried out an ambitious programme of suburban electrification, including the Waterloo-East Putney-Wimbledon route.

In 1923 the situation changed dramatically. Hitherto Britain had been served by over 100 independent railway companies, but in that year they were grouped geographically by Act of Parliament into four major companies. The LSWR and the LBSCR were duly absorbed into the new Southern Railway, which resumed the LSWR's electrification plans for some of its outer suburban lines.

The Underground Group then produced a bombshell. It not only resumed its intentions to extend District trains over the authorised line to Sutton, but also proposed to modernise its City and South London tube line and extend it from Clapham Common through Tooting and Merton to join the planned Sutton line.

The thought of tube and District trains running to Sutton was too much for the new Southern Railway management. They attempted to persuade the Underground to extend its tube only as far as Tooting, with trains then running to Wimbledon over the Southern line through Haydons Road.

A compromise was reached whereby the Underground would extend the tube as far as London Road, Morden, there rising to the surface and ending in a depot to be laid out on vacant land.

The Southern then proposed to take over the former District Railway's Wimbledon-Sutton project, with amendments, as its own from the Underground Group. It gained its Act on 1 August 1924.

It might be thought that the Southern had the better of the bargain, and indeed it might have done so, but for the fact that it had the preoccupations of continuing with a large programme of electrification of existing suburban lines and the considerable task of merging its three main constituent companies into the new organisation.

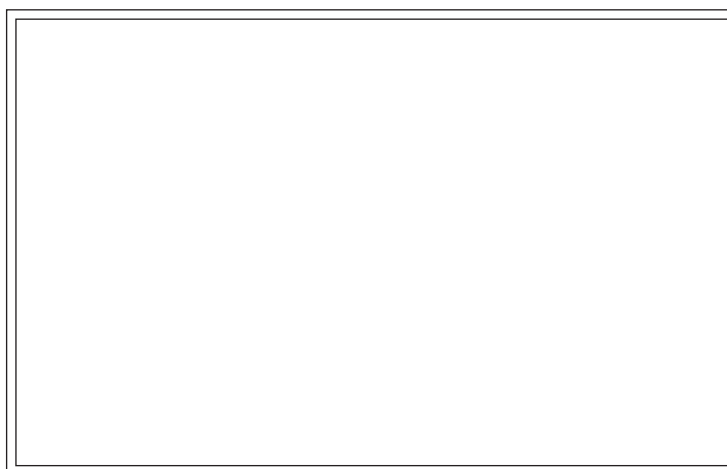
Although having a large modernisation programme of its own, the Underground was in a position to begin work without delay, and the Clapham Common-Morden extension was opened throughout on 13 September 1926.

Ironically the new tube terminus with its frequent service of trains to the City and the West End at once enabled the Merton Park Estate to be completed in large measure, particularly the part between Mostyn and Dorset Roads, which was quickly covered by houses built by speculative builders. The station was originally to be called North Morden, but became plain Morden (although Merton & Morden council stuck to 'North Morden' for some time) and fostered the creation of a new suburb. At least the new 'Morden' was nearer to the original village than the station of the same name (later 'Morden Road') opened on the Wimbledon-West Croydon railway in 1855.

Within a few years the London Road at this point had profoundly changed character. Shops began to open, flanking and facing the tube terminus, displacing a scattering of small shops and cottages and two large, almost country, houses. A cinema was soon added.

Provision for private car parking at Morden station had soon to be increased, not least because of its use in the evenings by those travelling to West End theatres who were using the station as a railhead. Lord Ashfield, the Underground chairman, foresaw a 'second Golders Green' for Morden.

All these changes had taken place before the Southern Railway had completed the Wimbledon-Sutton line, which meant that it had already lost valuable potential traffic, both to buses and to the tube line. Nevertheless it laid out its line in substantial fashion, including well-equipped stations from the outset.

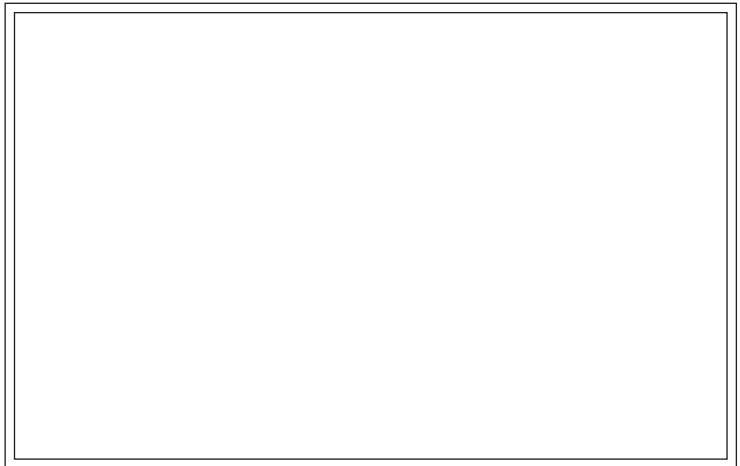


1. Approaches to Wimbledon station from the west, showing the new Sutton line in the foreground

In 1913 some alterations had been made on the terminal side of Wimbledon station. The course of the line had been staked out but no other construction had been carried out. When the Southern Railway took over the powers it decided that the new line should instead begin by a junction with the Wimbledon-Croydon line immediately to the west of the station, and continue between the main lines and the sidings serving the railway engineering works and the Wimbledon West goods yard. After passing under Elm Grove footbridge it was to curve sharply southwards to pick up the former route, thence following it throughout. The originally planned connection with the former LBSCR at Bridge Road, Sutton, was restored.

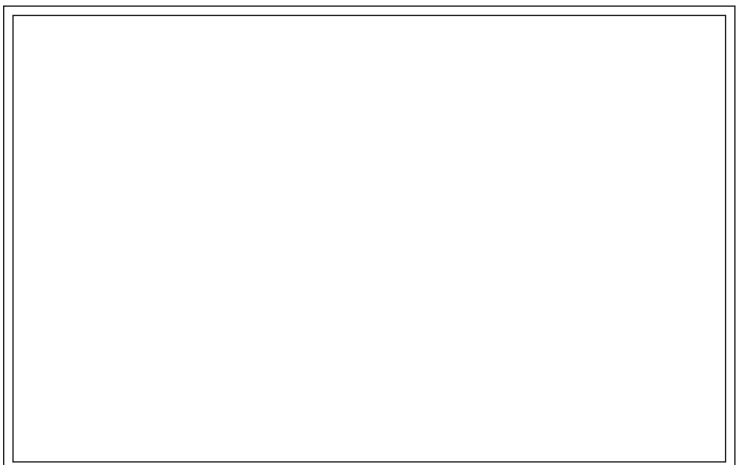
Three additional bridges were required in Wimbledon, Merton and Morden because of new roads which had been built subsequently. The first of these was over the extension to Toynbee Road which linked it to Dundonald Road, the roadway having to be lowered so as to preserve the authorised levels of the railway. Another new bridge was needed to span the eastern end of Whatley Avenue immediately before that over Cannon Hill Lane.

With the revision to the route out of Wimbledon the first station was now on the embankment between The Chase and Kingston Road. There was much agonising over its name. One suggestion of the Southern Railway, 'Wimbledon South', would surely have caused confusion with the misnamed South Wimbledon station on the new Morden Line, which was actually sited on the Merton side of the boundary. Other suggestions were 'Bushey Mead' and even 'North Merton'. In the end Wimbledon Chase was the adopted name, but not before Merton & Morden council had argued, rightly, that the station lay neither in Wimbledon nor in The Chase. However, the inclusion of 'Wimbledon' in the name probably presumed greater snob value, regardless of local boundaries.



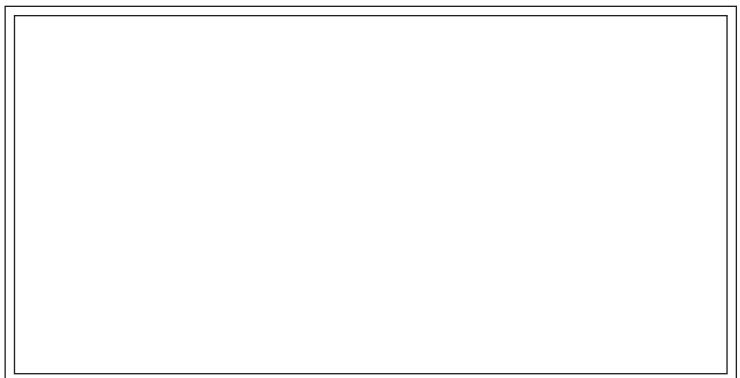
2. Wimbledon Chase station, showing the lift tower; now gone

The next station was intended to be called Merton Park, but was now given the more appropriate title of South Merton. An interesting piece of work was required here. The former track called Green Lane had been subsumed by the new Martin Way, which had been extended at each end. The eastern end, which ended at Crown Lane, Morden, had to be taken over the railway, with the southern end of Mostyn Road ending in a slope to join it.



3. South Merton station looking south

To the south of Martin Way and to the west of the next section of line lay Merton Park Golf Club's course, shortly to be taken over for housing, from which the railway was able to derive reasonable patronage. The line rose once more to cross the new Links Avenue, successor to the former private 'Hatfield's Road'. Beyond here a substantial skew span bridge was required to cross the London-Worthing road (A24), where the next station was built. Its name, Morden South, was almost an acknowledgement that the tube railway had created a new Morden.



4. General view of platform buildings, Morden South station

No station was built after all at Central Road. Instead one was provided at Green Lane, Morden, to serve part of the vast new London County Council St Helier Estate, already served by buses. St Helier, as the station was called, was given a small goods yard. Beyond here the line included a station at Sutton Common Road. The original plan for a station

at Collingwood Road was abandoned, but the last intermediate station, West Sutton, was sited where an original station had been planned, however, flanking Gander Green Lane and almost midway between Sutton and Cheam.

From West Sutton a deep cutting brought the line in a continuous curve, partly inclined as steeply as 1 in 44, to join the former LBSCR Sutton-Cheam line.

All the stations were of the island platform type, that is, with a single wide platform flanked by the up and down tracks. Steps led either up or down to the booking hall at road level. The platforms had ample roofing, and incorporated waiting rooms and toilets. In recent years the platform provisions have been simplified, particularly at St Helier, which has lost its roof and now has merely a bus shelter type of cover. This station has also lost its goods yard.

The Southern Railway itself built the Wimbledon-South Merton section. The rest of the line was constructed by the firm of Sir Robert McAlpine & Sons.

Train services began running from Wimbledon as far as South Merton on 7 July 1929, using a single line only at first, but not to Sutton until 5 June 1930.

Beyond Wimbledon the service continued to London to end at the now demolished Holborn Viaduct terminus, via Haydons Road, Tooting, Streatham and Tulse Hill, over lines opened in 1868 and 1869 for the use of both LSWR and LBSCR steam trains to the then Ludgate Hill station and to London Bridge. This route had been the source of many complaints by John Innes and others about high fares and slowness, but the latter failing could not be ascribed to the new electric trains with their greater acceleration. From Sutton the service was extended over the existing line through Wallington to end at West Croydon.

The electric trains were composed of compartment type coaches converted from steam stock, and included both first and third class accommodation. They ran every 20 minutes at peak times and every half hour at other times. Like the other electric suburban trains of the Southern Railway they received power at 600 volts DC from a raised live rail.

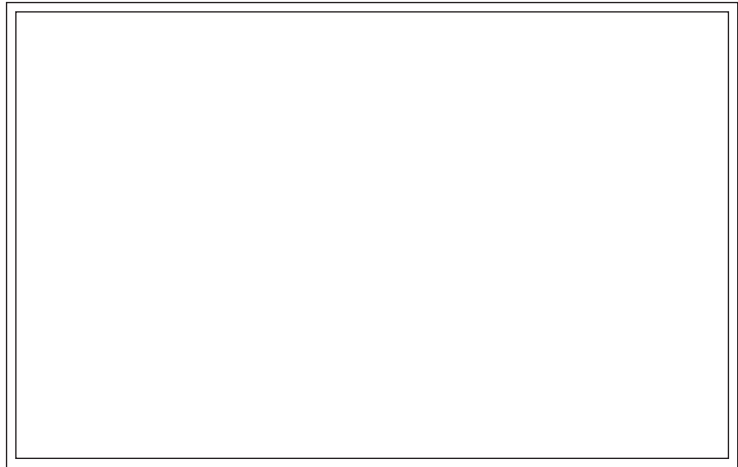
Although patronage at peak periods appears to have been satisfactory, it was sporadic at other times, and it is doubtful whether the line ever repaid its great capital cost.

In recent years, since the privatisation which followed nationalisation under British Railways, the Wimbledon-Sutton line has been served by trains operated first by Thameslink and latterly by the oddly named First Capital Connect franchise holder. It now forms part of a through north-south London link, with trains running to and from St Albans (some to and from Luton). From Sutton the service doubles back on itself to Streatham. The frequency is half-hourly throughout the day.

Between 1925 and 1930 my boyhood home lay close to the main line railway between Wimbledon and Raynes Park. I was therefore able to watch at close hand the building of the Sutton line in Wimbledon and Merton. I have three main recollections. The first is standing on Alt Grove footbridge and seeing the nearby signal box being moved sideways bodily to make room for the two extra tracks required for the new line. Secondly, I gazed in wonderment at the sight of two powerful locomotives running slowly up and down the completed line to South Merton. They were being used to test the stability of the embankments and for any deflection of the bridges. One of these was certainly 'Camelot' of the King Arthur class. I seem to recall that the other was a sister locomotive called 'Maid of Astolat'. Thirdly, my father treated me to a trip on one of the first trains to run as far as the brand-new station of South Merton. My excitement was rather dimmed however by the sight of a little white post beside the track at South Merton indicating the grave of an unfortunate dog which had either been run over by one of the first trains or electrocuted on the live rail.

It may be concluded that the Wimbledon and Sutton Railway was a victim of great changes which could not have been foreseen when it gained its Act. The delay by the District Railway in starting work before 1914, the further delay caused by World War I, and the inability in the early 1920s of the new Southern Railway to make a start on what had become by then its own project, all combined to offset its original object.

In 1929-30 the Southern Railway rebuilt both Wimbledon and Sutton stations.



5. *St Helier passimeter booking office and part of booking hall*

Photos: 1, Merton Local Studies Centre; 3,4,5 from *Railway Engineer* 1930, courtesy Merton Local Studies Centre; 2, copy print from Lens of Sutton

KATHARINA MAYER HAUNTON is a well-known authority on Old Master and modern prints. Here she looks at

SOME EARLY PRINTS BY VINCENT LINES

For several years around 1930 the *Wimbledon Borough News* and its sister weekly papers published sketches of local scenes, with accompanying text, by the artist Vincent Lines (1909-1968). He was born in Dulwich but brought up in Tooting, and was a distant relative of the Triang factory Lines family. This note discusses some original prints by him of local interest. They show him experimenting with different techniques of print-making. One print is dated 1928, the year he gained a scholarship to the Royal College of Art. The others are likely to have been works executed while he was still a student, either at the RCA, or earlier at the Central School of Arts and Crafts, where he studied etching, engraving and lithography under A S Hartrick.

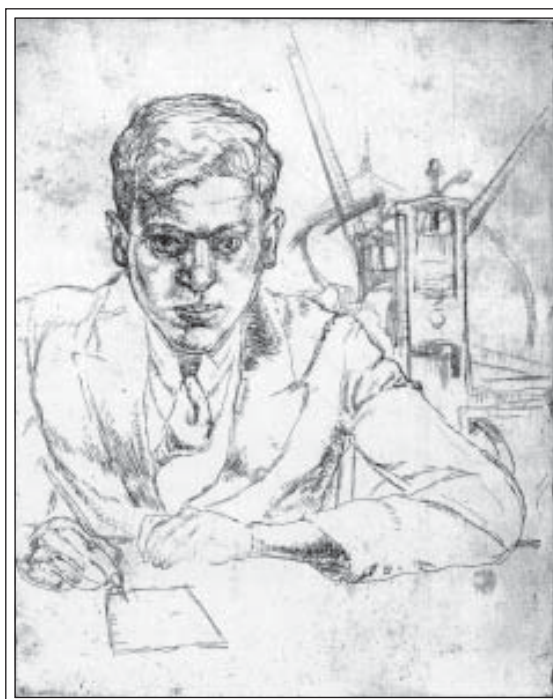
Vincent Lines produced engravings, drypoints and etchings – three of the earliest intaglio processes, where, after it has been inked, the surface of the plate is wiped clean, leaving ink only in the artist's lines on the copper (or other metal) plate. Intaglio prints are made on dampened paper, using an intaglio press (see second illustration) to exert the pressure necessary to pull the ink from the incised lines. Because of this pressure, all such prints lie within an indentation, or 'platemark', marking the extent of the copper plate. Engraving was originally employed to decorate gold and silver objects, and was first used as a graphic medium in the mid fifteenth century. Drypoint was invented rather later in the century, while etching – a technique developed to decorate armour – was first used for print-making in the early sixteenth century. All three techniques were first employed as graphic media in Germany.

The first print is a drypoint of *Mitcham Fair* (see page 1). For this technique, the artist uses an 'etching needle' (either a metal point in a holder, or a pointed double-ended instrument shaped like a large pencil), to score lines directly into the plate: the etching needle is necessarily pulled towards the artist, or moved diagonally or sideways, otherwise the point would merely catch on the copper. The aim in drypoint is to produce a groove with a rough, burred edge, which holds more ink than an engraved line. Heavily burred lines yield a rich velvety black when printed, but do require force to produce them. (By contrast, the engraving technique employs a V-shaped graver to incise V-shaped lines into the copper, and the tool is always pushed away from the artist. Again, considerable force is required to make deep lines.)

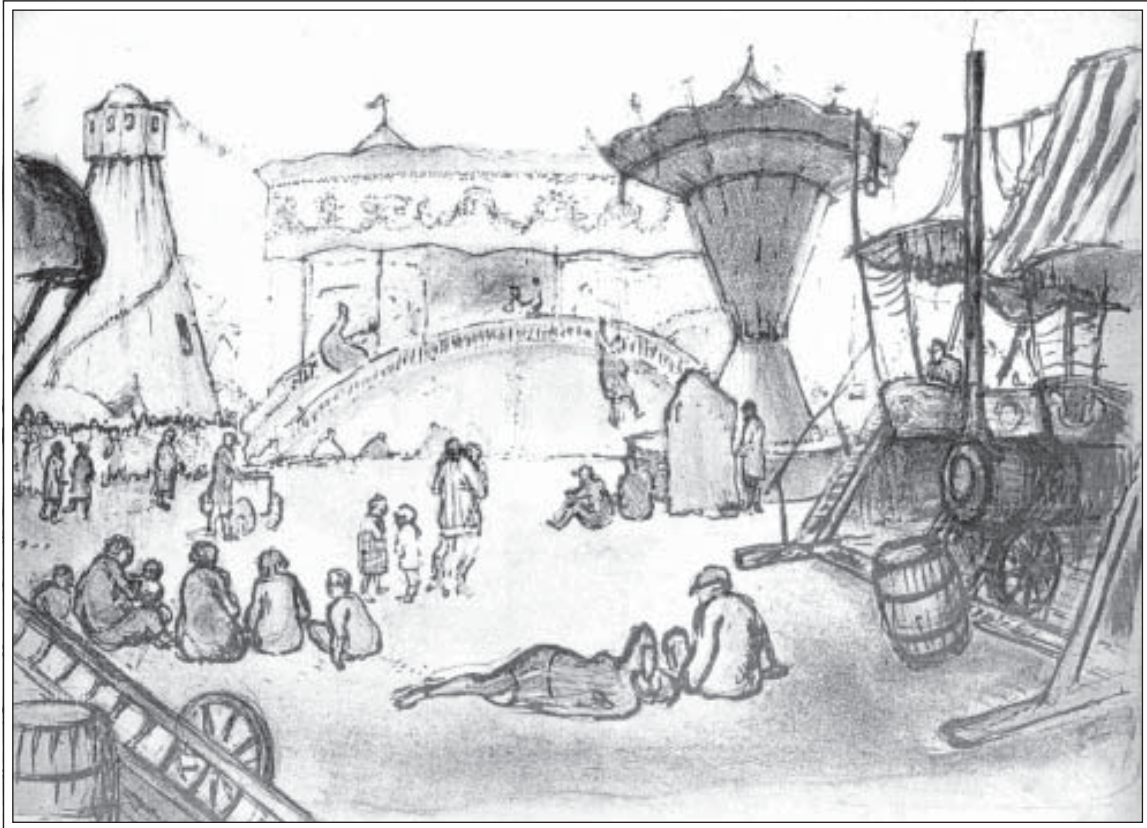
Here, Vincent Lines has quite effectively differentiated darker foreground and lighter background, but has underestimated the pressure he needed to apply to the needle for detail in the lighter areas, resulting in a right-central area which is altogether too pale. This effect can occur in fully-worked drypoints after 25-30 prints have been taken from the plate (as the burr is worn away), but since the shadows on the left here retain a rich blackness, it is likely that only a few impressions have been taken from this plate. The print is signed 'Vincent' on the copper plate. This is rather cheeky, since his teacher, A S Hartrick, had for a while been a student in Paris, where he became friendly with a certain Vincent van Gogh, who habitually signed his pictures 'Vincent'.

The second print (right) is an etching. It is a *Self-Portrait*, showing the artist holding an etching needle, about to start work on a copper plate, with an intaglio press in the background. For this technique, a copper plate is prepared by being varnished on the back, and painted on the front with a special acid-resistant ground. The design is drawn with an etching needle or other sharp point. Much less force is required compared to the other two methods, as the artist only has to penetrate the etching ground, and does not need to incise the copper. The plate is immersed in acid, which bites away the copper along the lines of the design. Bubbles arising from the chemical reaction are sometimes brushed away, traditionally with a feather, to ensure that the lines are bitten evenly. If, after a trial print has been taken, the artist decides to darken some areas, he/she applies more acid-resistant material to the other areas of the image ('stopping them out'), and returns the plate to the acid for a second bite.

Vincent Lines' etching is rather more successful than his drypoint, probably because he was a practiced and excellent sketcher and thus more used to the light touch needed for pen or pencil than the sheer brute force often needed when



creating a drypoint. This plate has definitely had two bites – the hair and the outline of the jacket are more deeply bitten than the press and parts of the face – and possibly three. However, the plate is not a complete success, as there was a failure of the biting on the artist's left hand, which has been touched up, probably with drypoint. This unsigned etching has been printed on a sheet of paper which has some swift pencil studies of people on the back (see the last illustration overleaf), and scribbles round the edge.



The third print (above) is again of *Mitcham Fair*, but this time it is a lithograph in four colours (brown, yellow, red and blue). Lithography is one of the planographic techniques. The design is drawn on the surface of a matrix (a very smooth and absorbent limestone, or later a zinc plate) using a special greasy crayon. The stone is then wetted; the water is repelled by the areas drawn in crayon and absorbed elsewhere. The stone is then covered with an oil-based ink, which sticks to the crayon but not to the wet stone, and the design is then printed on a lithographic press. For a colour lithograph, the appropriate parts of the design must be drawn on separate stones, usually one for each colour (though it is possible for a stone to be inked with more than one colour in patches, provided these are well separated). The great problem is to ensure that the images are precisely lined up ('registered'), both during drawing on the stone and during printing. Vincent preferred to use lithographic stones rather than the lighter and cheaper zinc plates which had become common in the twentieth century. (Many so-called lithographs are strictly speaking zincographs.)

This print is signed 'Vincent Lines 1928' in pencil on the back. The black and white reproduction for this article is poor, but suffices to show the same scene as our first print, with several changes, notably the omission of the man reading a newspaper in the foreground, and the intriguing point that the two pictures are mirror-images. Thus the lithograph has apparently been based on an impression of the drypoint, rather than on an original sketch of the subject, perhaps to explore the effect of mirroring the image. The lithograph is more than twice the size of the drypoint, and the design is quite adventurous for a student work, using wash and stipple effects as well as line.

The yellow wash sits correctly within the brown outlines. However, registration elsewhere has been a problem; crosses at the sides of the image have pin-holes at the centre to help line up the stones, but, despite this aid, the red is too far to the left (in our reproduction the shading overlaps the outline of the conical chair-o-plane at the left, leaving a white strip at the right) and the blue is much too high (the recumbent lady in the foreground has a ghost outline above her legs, another lady has a halo instead of a hat, while the striped pattern on the dress of a third starts above her ears).

These prints all appear to be early proofs, taken before any edition was printed. Together they demonstrate a young artist grappling with new techniques and, on the whole, succeeding.

Vincent Lines spent his entire life as an artist. He was however unfortunate in that the market for original prints collapsed with the slump of 1928, and did not recover for decades. He first taught lithography in the Bethnal Green Institute, and then art at Manchester Boys High School, but in 1935 he became Principal of the School of Art at Horsham, Sussex, which developed a lively reputation. At the end of the second world war he was appointed Principal of Hastings School of Art, where he remained until his death. As a teacher, he emphasised the importance of direct study of nature, and of avoiding mannerism in one's work. His reputation rests mainly on his water-colours and book illustrations, but he became increasingly interested in oil painting later in life. He was elected to the Royal Watercolour Society in 1939; he exhibited there regularly and served as Vice-President in 1966. The British Museum Print Room has impressions of two lithographs and a pen and chalk drawing by him.



?*Underground Passengers* (detail)
(Pencil sketch)

The ARP depot in Aston Road

As reported in *Bulletin* 166 David Haunton had identified the location of a photo in the Heritage Centre collection (*right*) and recognised it as related to one acquired at a postcard fair by Judith Goodman (*below*). The former was published in the *Merton & Morden News* for 5 April 1940, with the caption 'OPEN-AIR BILLIARDS proves a popular pastime for Aston-road A.R.P. workers in their leisure moments'. The location was the rear of Raynes Park's old library.



Merton Heritage Centre

The exhibition *Through the Eyes of a Child* continues at Merton Heritage Centre until 27 September, and will be followed, from 14 October, by *My Local Area – Mitcham*.

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