



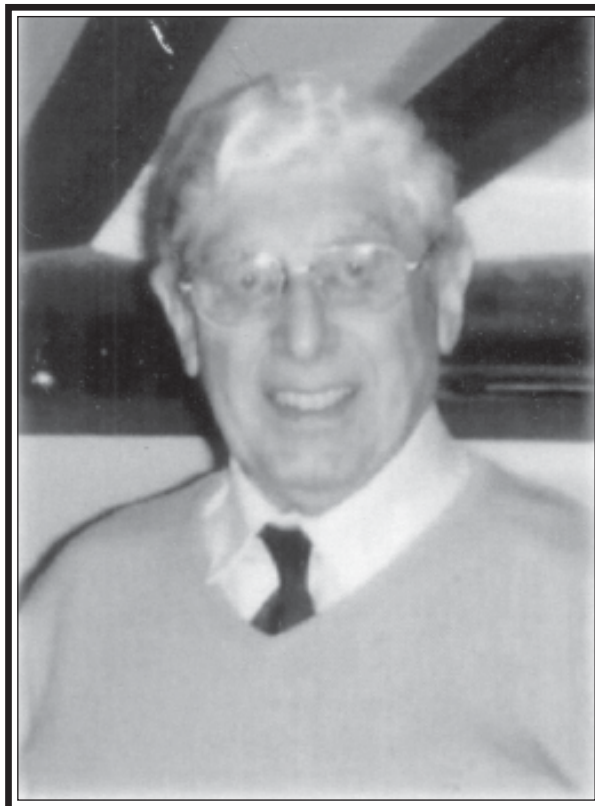
PRESIDENT:

VICE PRESIDENTS: Viscountess Hanworth, Eric Montague and William Rudd

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CHAIR: Dr Tony Scott

SEPTEMBER 2010



LIONEL GREEN  
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## PROGRAMME SEPTEMBER – DECEMBER



Thursday 16 September 11am

Guided visit to the Foundling Museum

£6 per head

Saturday 16 October 2.30pm

Christchurch Hall, Colliers Wood

### ‘Liberty’s at Merton’

**David Luff**, a long-time member of the Society, used to work at Liberty’s Merton Abbey print works, and has unique knowledge of the site and its history.

*The hall is next to the church, in Christchurch Road, 250m from Colliers Wood Underground station. Limited parking at the hall, but plenty in nearby streets or at the Tandem Centre, 200m south. Buses 152, 200 and 470 pass the door.*

Saturday 6 November 2.30pm

Raynes Park Library Hall

### Annual General Meeting

After the business part of the meeting there will be a light-hearted quiz.

Saturday 4 December 2.30pm

Raynes Park Library Hall

### ‘The Princess and the Brewer: Their Duel for Richmond Park’

an illustrated talk by **Max Lankester** from the Friends of Richmond Park.

*Raynes Park Library Hall is in Aston Road, off Approach Road, on or close to several bus routes, and near to Raynes Park station. Very limited parking.*

**Please use the hall entrance in Aston Road.**



## LIONEL EDWIN GREEN 10 July 1926 – 25 June 2010

It is with great sadness that we report the death of our President, Lionel Green, from complications following a heart attack. The Society was represented at his Thanksgiving Service, where tributes recorded his key involvement in MHS, Surrey Archaeological Society and Dorking Museum and Local History Group.

Lionel and his sister Doris, also a member of our Society, grew up in Leaffield Road, Merton Park, and Lionel was educated at Rutlish School. After undergoing training in Canada for the Fleet Air Arm, he joined British Rail, the fourth generation of his family to do so! His office moved to Dorking, where he met and married his first wife, Dorothy, in 1952, the couple settling in North Holmwood. After Dorothy’s untimely death, Lionel happily met and married Sheila, with whom he had two daughters.

As a young man, Lionel joined an adult education class at Merton studying local history and, when the decision was made to publish *A History of Merton & Morden* as part of the 1951 Festival of Britain celebrations, Evelyn Jowett asked him to write four chapters, one on Merton parish church, of which he was a member; one on John Innes, and two on Merton priory – the first flowerings of a lifelong interest.

The local history class developed into Merton & Morden Historical Society in February 1951, and Lionel was a founder member. He served on the first committee and, to celebrate our 50th anniversary, was elected Chairman from 1999 to 2002. He became a Vice President of the Society in 1995 and President in 2006.

Lionel was a regular contributor to our quarterly *Bulletin*. His first publication for the Society was his 1998 booklet on *The Railways of Merton*, followed by *The Daughter Houses of Merton Priory* in 2002, and in 2005 his *magnum opus* was published, *A Priory Revealed, using material relating to Merton Priory*. Also in 2005 his *Guide to St Mary’s Church Merton Park* was published by the parish. More recently he has been researching further afield, on the building of Durham cathedral.

In a recent address (*see facing page*), Lionel quoted a description of the priory’s founder, Gilbert, that could equally be applied to Lionel himself. “*As everyone who knew him would confirm, it is impossible to overestimate the respect in which he was held, so much was he loved, esteemed and praised*”.

He will be greatly missed, both as an historian and as a friend. Our sympathies are with his family.

**Peter Hopkins**

**LIONEL GREEN gave the following address to those assembled in the Chapter House on 2 May 2010 to commemorate the arrival of the canons at the Wandle site in 1117.**

## **GILBERT OF MERTON**

Over the years I have recounted many of the events which took place here at Merton priory, and the persons involved in its history. Today I am going to speak of the early life of its founder, Gilbert.

On the 15 July 1099 Jerusalem fell to the Crusaders. Not of great concern to the people of England seeking their daily bread, but important to the Normans because Robert, duke of Normandy, was involved in the crusade. He was returning home and news of the victory portended great celebrations in the year 1100.

On the 2 August 1099 Rufus, the red king, was killed in the New Forest and Henry I claimed the throne of England. In 1100 he issued his coronation charter, which for the people of England foreshadowed many of the promises which were to be included in the Magna Carta of 1215.

On 11 November 1100 the king married Edith, daughter of St Margaret of Scotland, and she became queen Maud, or Matilda, of England. This event in 1100 returned the royal bloodline of king Cerdic (518-34) to the sovereignty of England, which continues to this day.

Henry found that he could no longer trust the earls to impartially administer justice, and to efficiently collect crown dues from the shires. He decided that Norman aristocracy should no longer govern England, and chose 'new men' of lesser nobility, who had been successful in Normandy, some in public office. A new generation of Norman settlers came to prosper under Henry I, and a possible immigrant was Roger, who was made sheriff of Cambridgeshire, Huntingdonshire and Surrey about 1104. Sheriff Roger brought his nephew, Gilbert, from Normandy to assist him.

In 1106 Roger died and was replaced by his heir Gilbert, who later was to found our priory. Gilbert was a well-born soldier, and bravely fought as a knight in Normandy. Gilbert's father had died and he brought his mother to England.

Gilbert proved to be a reliable sheriff and served in that capacity for almost twenty years, becoming the most senior sheriff in England. He was one of the few experienced and trustworthy sheriffs in the land, and maintained a high standard of integrity and able to deal with a lack of this in others.

Our biographer describes his attendance at the exchequer where the sheriffs of England assembled twice yearly to account for their shire. They were all agitated and apprehensive whilst Gilbert alone turned up fearless and cheerful.

'As soon as he was summoned by the receivers of money, he sent the cash in, and promptly sat among them, quite at his ease, as if he were one of them himself'.

Gilbert had considerable ability to engage the affections of his social superiors and inferiors alike:

'Counts and barons held him in the highest regard and they recognised his nobility of mind with great gifts. He also had the respect of the lesser attendants of the royal household to the extent that he was treated by them all as if they were his own servants. He was served by them all as well as if he were the king. You might frequently see many bishops and other people of the highest distinction hanging around the door of the royal chamber for long periods, begging to go in, but quite unable to get a hearing. But if Gilbert happened to appear the doors were flung open to admit him, as soon as the ushers knew who it was. He was admitted to the royal presence as often as he wanted.. When the sheriffs of England assembled at the exchequer and were all agitated and apprehensive, Gilbert was the only man who turned up unperturbed and cheerful. As soon as he was summoned by the receivers of money, he sent the cash in and he promptly sat among them, quite at his ease, as if he were one of them himself. As everyone who knew him would confirm, it is impossible to overestimate the respect in which he was held, so much was he loved, esteemed and praised'.

When his mother died, he made no public announcement, fearing the sad news might affect the mood of the court. The queen noticed his sadness and enquired the reason from others. She summoned Gilbert and asked why she had not been notified. He responded that he was afraid that excessive grief might disturb her royal dignity. Matilda took him by the hand and offered to adopt him as her own son and treat him with maternal affection as long as she lived. She caused much more excessive grief within a year, by her own death.

'Gilbert alone was fearless and cheerful'. What an inspiration to keep in mind each day!

Quotations from David Crouch *Birth of Nobility* (2005) 42, translated from M L Colker, 'Latin Texts concerning Gilbert, founder of Merton Priory', *Studia Monastica*, 12 (1970), 260-1.

**The Society has commissioned a translation of the whole of this valuable document for future publication.**

## LOCAL HISTORY WORKSHOP

Friday 4 June 2010 – 5 present – Judy Goodman in the chair.

- ◆ **Peter Hopkins** had noted an email appeal for witnesses from Testimony Films, who were planning a TV programme to mark 70 years from 7 September 1940, the first day of the London ‘Blitz’.

Information from a churchwarden at St Mary’s, Merton, confirmed that the north door has never been dendro-dated.

Peter also drew attention to an article in the latest *Surrey Archaeological Society Collections* 95 (2009) pages 193-210 on ‘The rise and fall of the Surrey Iron Railway 1802-46’ by Dorian Gerhold, the Wandsworth historian, based on newly-discovered documents.

- ◆ **Bill Rudd**, having been asked to help with the time capsule commemorating the Willows site, is suggesting the engineer Sir Joseph Bazalgette, who lived in the adjoining house, and actor George Cole and international opera singer Amy Shuard, who both attended the schools. George’s first appearance before a paying audience was at No.2 School, while Amy’s teacher had already noted her pupil’s ‘voice of quality’ well before Amy went on to fame.

Bill also showed us some more of his photos, including this 1962 view of Church Farm Cottage, built in 1813 and still standing near St Lawrence’s, and a nostalgic one of Green Lane, taken before all the elm trees were lost. JG suggested, and it was agreed, that Bill’s fine photography should be a regular feature in the *Bulletin*.



- ◆ **David Haunton** had followed up a suggestion from the previous workshop, and could now confidently date his family photo of St James’s Street in the West End to 7 May 1910. This was the day after the death of King Edward VII, the occasion being the Accession council meeting of the Privy Council, attended by King George V, on his first public appearance as king.

During research on V-1s on Merton and Morden (article forthcoming) David had discovered a special report on the V-1 that landed in front of No.169 Central Road on 4 July 1944. This bomb ‘only’ demolished one house and seriously damaged ten others, while merely cracking the walls of a public shelter very close indeed to the explosion. The report concluded that this relatively light damage was due to a ‘dud’ bomb, and that the shelter was not a particularly ‘good’ one. The 48 people who emerged uninjured from the shelter might have disagreed. (Incidentally this bomb damaged Ronald Read’s home at No.141 as recounted in his *Memories of a Morden Lad*, recently published by the Society.)

The two Wolseley ‘police’ cars used regularly in Merton Park Film Studios [see *Bulletin* 174 p.8] interested David’s neighbour and fellow-member Bert Sweet, who had discovered that, while VON is a local Surrey registration, UML was registered in Birmingham. How did it get to Merton?

- ◆ **Rosemary Turner** has been interviewed as part of London Borough of Sutton’s Middleton Circle Library’s project to record people’s memories of, in particular, the St Helier Estate. She has also been asked to give a talk to their local history group on her research into the Lodge Farm estate.

The photographs of Wimbledon windmill under repair [*Bulletin* 174 p.8] have been welcomed by the Wimbledon Society Museum of Local History, which will also look after the associated paper records.

David Haunton

Next Workshops: Fridays 17 September and 29 October at 2.30 at Wandle Industrial Museum

## OXFORD AND WADDES DON MANOR

Saturday 22 May produced the sunny weather that we have come to expect when the Kilsbys arrange a trip for us, and after a pick-up in Morden and another in Sanderstead (for Sanderstead and Selsdon WEA members), our coach set off for the Thames valley. Coffee stop was at the Rowing and River Museum at Henley. This timber-clad modernist building designed by David Chipperfield opened in 1998 and has won several awards. It stands on stilts, as its riverside location is vulnerable to flooding. Permanent and temporary displays illustrate the themes of the Thames, the history of the town, and every aspect of rowing (though no time to visit it on this occasion). Beside it stand startlingly lifelike polychrome bronze figures of Stephen Redgrave and Matthew Pinsent.

Here our Blue Badge guide joined us, and we set off for Oxford, where, despite the typically congested traffic and the access restrictions for coaches, we had an enjoyable tour, with our guide pointing out the sights and giving us the background (though I wonder when it will be possible to visit Oxford and *not* be told that Harry Potter was filmed at Christ Church!). Among (many) other things we saw the handsome dwellings of north Oxford, the old Radcliffe Infirmary, the running track in Iffley Road where Roger Bannister ran the first mile in under four minutes in May 1954, the new extension at the Ashmolean Museum, the Martyrs' Memorial, the castle, the grand view looking down the High Street, the Saïd Business School with its ziggurat on the roof, and the canal area called Jericho, as well as lots of departmental buildings, and, of course, colleges, old, not so old, and new.

Having said goodbyes and thank yous to our knowledgeable guide, we then had a pleasant journey through the countryside to Waddesdon Manor, which is near Aylesbury in Buckinghamshire. This extraordinary house was built between 1874 and 1889 by Baron Ferdinand James Anselm Rothschild (1839-1898), a great-grandson of Mayer Amschel Rothschild (1744-1812), who, through his five sons, founded the family's financial empire. Ferdinand was attracted by the elevated site, bought the estate from the Duke of Marlborough, levelled the hilltop, planted trees and laid out parterres, while his French architect Hippolyte Destailleur supervised the building that owes much to Chambord and Blois. Ferdinand was a member of the French branch of the family and perhaps the house was some kind of riposte to Lionel Rothschild's more English Mentmore nearby, but it was surprising to learn that Waddesdon has never been lived in. Instead Ferdinand used it to display his magnificent collections and to entertain the fashionable world. After his beloved wife Evelina (a distant cousin) died in childbirth aged only 27, he had a long widowerhood, and it was his unmarried sister Alice who inherited the house. She left it to a great-nephew, one of the French Rothschilds, but it later passed to the English branch and, in 1957, by bequest, to the National Trust. Waddesdon is now managed by a Rothschild family charitable trust, and the family continue to add to the collection.



*The garden front at Waddesdon Manor  
Photo: JG*

Waddesdon has no fewer than 45 rooms open to view, which contain superb quality French furniture, ceramics and other decorative objects, textiles and paintings, including a fine newly-acquired Chardin of a young man at a table. Surprising exceptions are some Dutch old masters, and a number of splendid English portraits by Gainsborough, Reynolds and Romney. The latter's painting of Emma Hamilton as a slender and lovely Circe, the sorceress, long predates the sadly gone-to-seed Emma who lived at Merton Place with Nelson (and her husband), but it is always good to spot a local connection.

Waddesdon was also hosting, in the house and in the old stables block, several modern art displays. One of Jeff Koons's *Cracked Egg* pieces (blue outside and silver within), and some striking chandeliers and rattan furniture by brothers Humberto and Fernando Campana of Sao Paulo, contrasted amusingly with the dominant décor.

The grounds, both formal and woodland, offered pleasant strolls, and there was scarcely time to see everything. Unfortunately the famous cellars were closed on the day – though Rothschild wine was on sale at the shop – and the Bachelors' Wing is not open on Saturdays, but everyone seemed to spend their time happily. Our thanks again, for an enjoyable and varied day, to Pat and Ray Kilsby, especially as Ray had only just been released from a long stay in hospital. Every good wish for your full recovery, Ray.

**Judith Goodman**

## CITY WALK EXPLORING WREN CHURCHES

In fine weather on 17 June, Blue Badge Guide Tony Tucker met a group of our members on the steps of St Paul's Cathedral, and began by setting the scene of Wren's remarkable achievement. Old St Paul's and 86 of the 107 City churches were lost in the Great Fire in 1666. Not all the churches were replaced, but every one was different – their variety is extraordinary, as is the ingenuity with which they are fitted into their sites.

From our meeting point we could see the charming lead-covered steeple of St Martin, Ludgate and the much-loved spire of St Bride Fleet Street. Our route into Paternoster Square took us through Temple Bar, now rescued from decay in Hertfordshire, refurbished and re-erected here. The original structure survived the Fire but was rebuilt by Wren and has the figures of Charles I and Charles II on one side and James I and his queen, Anne of Denmark, on the other.

A short walk brought us to **St Vedast alias Foster** (Foster is a corruption of Vedast, the name of a Flemish saint), in Foster Lane. Not completely destroyed in the Great Fire, it was rebuilt by Wren 1695-1701, retaining some medieval material in the walls, though it was gutted in the last war, and restored 1953-63 by Stephen Dykes-Bower. The Portland stone steeple is baroque in spirit. The (modern) ceiling has elaborate swags of flowers and fruit highlighted with gold and aluminium, and the east window, by Brian Thomas, dates from 1961. Some of the fittings come from other City churches. There is a delightful secluded courtyard (a peaceful place in which to eat one's sandwiches another time!) with a wall-fountain and a fragment of Roman tessellated pavement.

Then on to **St Mary Aldermary** in Queen Victoria Street. The name may mean 'older Mary', a designation that would have distinguished it from another church of St Mary, of later date. Its Gothic style makes it a rarity among Wren's City churches, and may have been specially chosen by the parish. Sadly, the Victorians removed some of Wren's furnishings and introduced stained glass (Wren always used plain glass). Its most remarkable features are the very fine tower and the wonderful fan-vaulted ceiling by Wren's best plasterer, Henry Doogood. The irregular site dictates the shape of the interior. There is a monument to James Braidwood, founder of the modern fire service, whose funeral procession in 1861 was a mile and a half long.

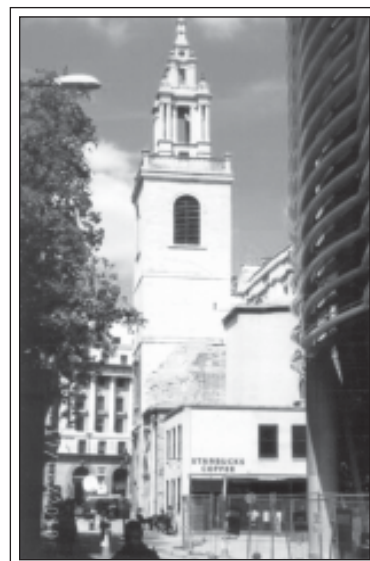
Our lunch stop was at **St Mary-le-Bow**, Cheapside, where the 1000-year-old crypt houses a café. The name may come from the 'bows' or arches down below, where once the Archbishop of Canterbury's Court of Arches was held. Bow bells rang the curfew at 9pm for 400 years. St Mary's tower is one of Wren's greatest and is surmounted by a copper dragon. There is modern stained glass as well as an etched glass screen to the crypt, all by John Hayward.

The name of **St James Garlickhythe**, Upper Thames Street, tells us that we are near the site of the wharf where garlic was brought into the City. Known as 'Wren's Lantern' on account of the light that streams in from the clerestory windows, St James has the highest interior of any of Wren's churches and its ceiling is a bright blue 'sky'. There is outstanding woodwork and a fine Father Smith organ. Outside, the plain square tower is surmounted by a baroque steeple. There is also a projecting clock, with a delightful figure of St James, and his emblem of a pilgrim's scallop shell.

The next stop was at **St Michael Paternoster Royal** in College Hill. 'Paternoster' is a reference to rosary makers nearby, and 'Royal' is a corruption of the name of La Reole, near Bordeaux, from where wines were imported by the vintners also nearby. This was the church of Richard Whittington, four times Lord Mayor of London, who paid for its rebuilding in 1409. It was rebuilt again 1685-94 by Wren after the Great Fire, and restored in the 1960s after severe damage in the war. It now houses the headquarters of the Mission to Seafarers. It has a delightful 3-stage octagonal steeple and a window featuring Dick Whittington (and his cat).

Our last stop was at **St Stephen Walbrook** (the little Walbrook flows underground), which has been described as having the most perfectly proportioned interior in the world. It was rebuilt by Wren 1672-79. Its restoration 1978-87, after subsidence, was funded by Lord Palumbo, and

*St Stephen Walbrook surrounded by modern London. Photo: Geoff and Val Lofts*



included the striking, irregularly round, central altar in travertine, by Henry Moore. An impressively light church, its architecture features squares, semicircles, triangles, columns and a wonderful dome. Architect (of Blenheim, Castle Howard etc), soldier, and playwright, Sir John Vanbrugh is buried here, though he has no monument. This is also the church of the Samaritans, founded in 1953 by the rector, Chad Varah. The original telephone, Mansion House 9000, is displayed.

We saw many interesting fittings in these churches – plenty of handsome pulpits, lecterns and fonts, but also sword rests, both wood and wrought-iron, a poor box, and fine chandeliers and organ cases. And as we wandered along the City streets we passed some striking public art, including Elizabeth Frink's *Paternoster* – a shepherd and five sheep in Paternoster Square; a bravura *Captain John Smith* (1960) in Bow Churchyard; a bust of Admiral Arthur Philip in Cannon Street (he captained the First Fleet of settlers in New South Wales, and later became Governor); and, in Walbrook, an amusing figure, installed in 1997, of a youthful LIFFE (London International Financial Futures and Options Exchange) trader, complete with mobile phone.

This was an enjoyably tour, and we thank Tony Tucker for his fluent and knowledgeable (and loud, when necessary) commentary.

**Judith Goodman**

## **1910-2010: A CENTENARY: FROM THE JOHN INNES HORTICULTURAL INSTITUTION TO THE JOHN INNES CENTRE**

John Innes (1829-1904), who owned several hundred acres of land in Merton, was a single man, whose nearest relatives were comfortably off. He was able therefore, on his death, to dispose of his estate without needing to provide for his kin. He made several draft wills, but the final one was not signed until six days before his death on 8 August 1904. It seems to have surprised everybody that it disposed of his house and grounds (in Watery Lane and Mostyn Road) and most of his fortune of well over £325,000 (equivalent to many millions today) in a form that a newspaper headlined as 'Mr Innes's Splendid Benefactions to the Village'.

The terms of the will were in fact controversial, and his nephew Ernest Reid Innes chose to contest it. Apparently John had only been dilatory or cautious about signing it. His executors (of whom Ernest was one) confirmed that the will had been drawn up months before, and that they had been aware of its contents. Ernest recognised that he had small chance of having the will quashed, and withdrew his opposition, but it was 24 July 1905 before matters were cleared. Once it had been proved the will could at last be published. After a list of relatively small legacies and annuities to family, friends and servants, the main provision was for the setting up of a trust to establish at the Manor House in Watery Lane and on most of its grounds 'a school of horticulture or such other institution as the law will allow, to give technical instruction in the principles and the art of horticulture ...'. The residue of the estate was to be used for 'the benefit of the inhabitants of the Parishes of Merton and Morden', such as a public park.

The trustees of the will had to consult the Charity Commissioners, and it took until March 1908 before the scheme was announced. The local inhabitants gained their park, which comprised the ornamental part of Innes's Manor House grounds off Mostyn Road, and was opened in July 1909. And then in 1910 the John Innes Horticultural Institution was officially opened.

The JIHI Council consisted of the three trustees plus eight members representing bodies such as the Board of Agriculture and Fisheries, the Royal Horticultural Society, the Fruiterers' Company, the National Fruit Growers' Federation, and the principal Universities. The Director of Kew Gardens was an adviser. The objectives set out by the Council were the 'promotion of horticultural instruction, experiment and research' with reference to the growth and breeding of plants in general, but with special emphasis on crops of all kinds.

The first Director was Dr William Bateson FRS (1861-1926), Professor of Biology at Cambridge, who moved with his wife into the Manor House, together with senior staff. Bateson was a pioneer in the new science of plant genetics, and indeed in 1905 he had coined the very word 'genetics'. At the Institution he now had brand new facilities – laboratory, glasshouses, workshops and some acres of trial grounds. Under his direction it soon became a leading centre for such studies, and under his successors the high standard was maintained. The JIHI was also supportive of the amateur gardener, and its formulae for the John Innes composts, familiar to all gardeners, were from the start made freely available to all.

As well as the Mostyn Road trial grounds, now Rutlish School's playing fields, the Institution took over the old Church House (pulled down in 1923) opposite the church, together with its large walled garden. However neither the clay soil off Mostyn Road, nor the sandy soil off Church Lane were ideal for their purposes, and nor was the polluted air so near London. Only the outbreak of war in 1939 delayed a move to a more suitable site, and in 1945 the Bayfordbury estate, near Hertford, was purchased. A slight name change was effected, and in 1950 the John Innes Horticultural Institute was formally opened on the site. The move took several years to complete, but finally its Merton land passed to Surrey County Council, providing a new site for Rutlish School and a new playing field for Merton Park Primary School. Ownership later passed to the local authority.

**THE JOHN INNES CHARITY.**  
**MERTON PARK, S.W.20.**  
 Clearance Sale of 14 Span-roof Glass-houses, principally teak, for demolition. 4,390 ft. of 4-inch and 720 ft. of 2-inch hot-water piping. Brick and tiled potting shed. 68 teak and soft-wood lights. Slate slab staging, frame and other items

Messrs.

**PROTHEROE & MORRIS**

will sell the above by Auction on the premises on THURSDAY, JANUARY 19th, 1950, at 1 o'clock.  
 Catalogues of the Auctioneers, 14, Moorgate, E.C.2.

*From the Merton & Morden News 6 January 1950*

Meanwhile the John Innes Institute, as it became in 1960, flourished for a time in Hertfordshire before, in 1967, moving to the campus of the University of East Anglia at Colney, Norwich. There the John Innes Centre, as it now is, occupies 'state of the art' premises, built and owned by the John Innes Foundation, and works in partnership with the University and the Sainsbury Laboratory. In this, its centenary year, Mertonians can be proud of the international reputation the Centre has won for 'Excellence in Research and Training in Plant and Microbial Science'.

[This text is taken in part, with permission, from J Goodman and G Wilson *Merton Park: the Quiet Suburb* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed. 1998) John Innes Society.

There is further information in N Priestland *John Innes: his Life and Legacy* (2004) John Innes Society. I also had the benefit of Lionel Green's research notes.]

**Judith Goodman**

## THE MERTON ABBEY VOLUNTEERS

(from the *Oracle and Daily Advertiser* London, Monday 8 July 1799)

### ‘LADY JANE DUNDAS

### ‘PRESENTATION OF THE COLOURS TO THE

### ‘MERTON ABBEY VOLUNTEERS

‘Monday last, the morning proving fine, a considerable number of persons of the First Distinction of the county of Surrey assembled at a very early hour on Wimbledon Common, where a handsome and commodious pavillion had been prepared for the reception of Ladies, and consecration of the Colours of the Merton Abbey Volunteers. Soon after eleven o'clock, the Corps, commanded by Captain HALFHIDE,<sup>1</sup> arrived on the ground. Their Band entertained the Company with many martial and select Pieces of Music till after twelve, when Lady JANE DUNDAS,<sup>2</sup> attended by Lady ONSLOW, the Marchioness of DOWNSHIRE, Lady MORINGTON, and several other Ladies of Rank and Fashion; the Chaplain, the Rev. S.D. Myers;<sup>3</sup> the Rev. — RANDOLPH;<sup>4</sup> Mr. DUNDAS;<sup>1</sup> Lord ONSLOW,<sup>5</sup> and many other Gentlemen of Distinction, preceded by a Military Escort (a detachment of the Deptford Cavalry, and led by Captain GOODHEW), arrived at the Pavillion. The Colours were carried, cased, in the Procession, by the Officers of his Troop.

‘As soon as the Party were arrived, Lady JANE DUNDAS was conducted by Lord ONSLOW to the Platform, which was fitted up in a handsome style, and on each side was placed a range of beautiful myrtles and other Plants. The King's Colours were supported on the right by Lord ONSLOW, and the regimental Colours on the left by Captain GOODHEW.

‘The Corps, after a general salute, advanced to the front of the Pavillion, when the Rev. S.D. MYERS, vicar of Mitcham, consecrated the Colours with a very excellent Exordium and [a] Prayer.

.....

‘Immediately after the Consecration Lady JANE DUNDAS presented the Colours to Captain HALFHIDE; and, in a very elegant manner, thus addressed the Corps:-



“In delivering these Colours into your charge, I feel a perfect conviction they will ever be guarded with the same loyalty and zeal, which, in the hour of difficulty and danger, first called forth your exertions for the preservation of all that is dear to Englishmen. Fully satisfied that your conduct in this respect will justify your Country’s expectations, I have only to request that you will accept my sincere thanks for the honour you have done me on this occasion.”

‘To which Captain HALFHIDE made the following Reply;-

“For the very distinguished Honour which this little Battalion, the Volunteers of Merton Abbey, have this morning received, by the very handsome manner in which your Ladyship has presented them with these Banners, as well for the personal and very flattering expressions of respect which they have had the further happiness to experience, I have the satisfaction as well to assure you of that estimation in which they are held, and the very high sense entertained of that condescension, which, on this occasion, has permitted you to become their patroness, but which on every other so eminently attaches to the amiable and accomplished person of Lady JANE DUNDAS.”

‘The Colours Capt. HALFHIDE then committed to the Corps, with [an] Address.

.....

‘Lord ONSLOW now, in a very impressive manner, addressed Lady JANE ...

.....

‘The Address was received with the loudest acclamations of applause.

‘The Corps now retired to its own ground; after which it was inspected by his Lordship, who assured the Commanding Officers of his high satisfaction of the very steady, uniform, and soldier-like appearance of the Corps at large; and in the most handsome manner complimented ABRAHAM GOLDSMID, Esq.<sup>6</sup> for that great example and private station he had engaged with the Corps in the service of his Country.

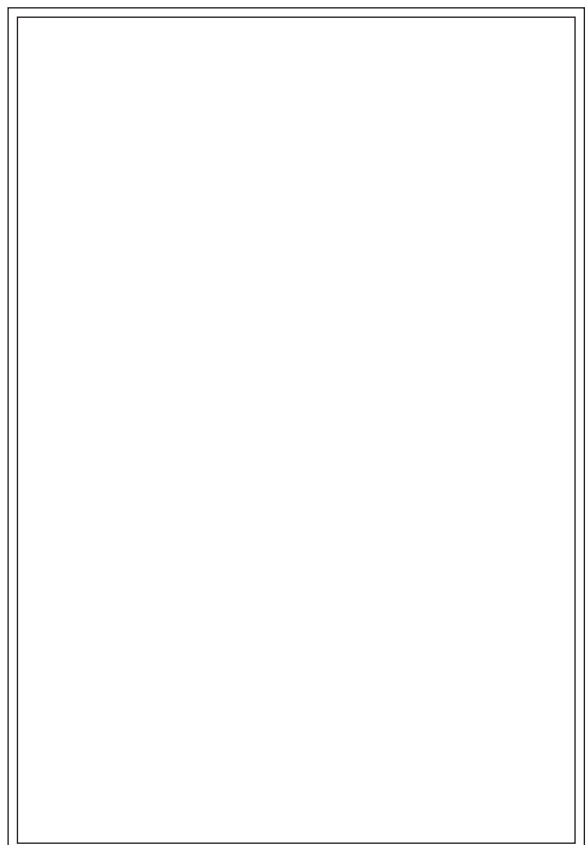
‘The Corps went through their different evolutions to the entire approbation of every person present; and his Lordship was pleased to observe, that the steadiness in their firings would have done credit to any Regiment. During the performance of the exercise, various fruits in season were introduced to Lady JANE DUNDAS by four beautiful little girls, each alike, in white muslin dresses, with baskets on their arms, decorated with ribbons and flowers, which had a very pleasing effect, of which her Ladyship partook with much condescension. With the Officers of the Corps, many Ladies and Gentlemen were afterwards very politely invited to an elegant *déjeune* at the home of Mr. DUNDAS. The day finished with a ball in the evening, given by the Captain of the Corps to the Company present at the presentation, and to the neighbourhood round *Merton*, who retired at a late hour, highly gratified with the taste and liberality of the Captain Commandant.’

1. James Halfhide and his son were proprietors of a textile print-works at Merton Abbey, at the site occupied much later by William Morris’s workshops.
2. Wife of politician Henry Dundas, who became Lord Melville. Lady Jane’s name lives on in Lady Jane Wood, part of Cannizaro Park.
3. Rev. Streynsham Derbyshire Myers held the living of Mitcham for 45 years.
4. Rev. Herbert Randolph was the vicar of Wimbledon.
5. Baron Onslow, of the well-known political family, would become the first Earl Onslow. He was Lord Lieutenant of Surrey.
6. Goldsmid, of Finsbury Square and Morden, was an important financier. The implication is that he had provided funds towards setting up the volunteers.

We can probably assume that this print of a ‘Merton Light Infantryman’ that is reproduced from *Coal and Calico* relates to the Merton Abbey Volunteers.

I am grateful to Dave Saxby, of Museum of London Archaeology, who found this item of newsprint and passed it on to me.

**Judith Goodman**



**GEOFFREY WILSON** scrutinises

## **THE RAYNES PARK STATION ARCH**

In her well-researched book *Raynes Park* Evelyn Jowett expressed the belief that the arch at Raynes Park station dated from the construction of the station in 1871-2. This is not so. The northernmost part of the archway, leading to Coombe Lane, dates from the opening of the first part of the London and Southampton Railway between Nine Elms and Woking, in 1838.

Francis Giles had engineered an excellent route for the railway – excellent, that is, but for one surprising blunder. West of Wimbledon the course lay across the middle of the extensive estates of Sir Charles Pepys, about to become the Earl of Cottenham and Lord Chancellor.

Although the projected line was well clear of Sir Charles's grounds, which had been laid out by Humphrey Repton, it would have traversed fields used for growing cereals and for grazing. Sir Charles understandably objected, with the result that Giles had to realign the whole section between the Wandle crossing and Long Ditton. The lower location required the construction of a long embankment, a feature Giles had not bargained for. To obtain the necessary earth he had to cut right through Surbiton Hill.

Sir Charles relented to the extent that he allowed the line to cut across the extreme south-eastern part of his land immediately east of the confluence of Kingston Road and Coombe Lane.

Edward Rayne of West Barnes Farm yielded a small piece of his land bordering Coombe Lane to the railway, and to preserve Rayne's access to the road Giles built an arch to carry the two tracks over the right of way.

In 1869 two extra tracks were added, south of the original pair, for the use of trains to and from Kingston and Epsom, a branch to the latter town having been opened in 1857. The original arch was then necessarily extended southwards, doubling its length. Hardly had the new layout come into use when a station was built, on the strength of a contribution from Sir Richard Garth, lord of the manor of Morden, who had bought West Barnes Farm with the intention of laying it out for housing development.



*A 1911 view showing Raynes Park station archway from the junction of Grand Drive and Approach Road. The Raynes Park Tavern cupola is visible in the distance.*

Presumably at Sir Richard's behest, the new station was named Raynes Park after the Rayne family. The layout was somewhat cramped. A platform for the up Kingston trains was fitted in between the main line and the up Kingston line. An opening midway along the western side of the archway led to a subway to the platform for the down Kingston line. The diverging Epsom branch platform was reached separately by steps on the south side of the railway. The main lines were not served by the station.

In the early 1880s the polarity of the four tracks between Wimbledon and Malden was altered, as a result of a programme of quadrupling between Waterloo and Hampton Court Junction. As a consequence Raynes Park station had to be much altered, entailing the construction of a new platform on the Coombe Lane side to serve the up local line and a realigned up Epsom line.

In the 1930s the subway from the arch to the down side was replaced by steps from a newly-constructed south side station entrance. However, the sharp-eyed will note the former subway's position in the arch by reason of the lighter, newer red bricks, contrasting with the darker, earlier bricks of the arch. At the same time the up and down platforms were directly linked by a pedestrian bridge obliquely spanning four tracks, so obviating a descent to ground level for passengers changing their direction of travel.

The arch was used by pedestrians and occasional traffic, the latter increasing from 1910, with the opening of a goods yard between the down and up Epsom lines.

Although the pedestrianisation of the arch in more recent years was a boon, it cannot be claimed that the old arch adds to the local amenities aesthetically. Its appearance would certainly benefit from the addition of white tiles to the old brickwork, or whitewashing at least.

**DAVID HAUNTON has been investigating**

## **ONE NIGHT IN THE BLITZ: MITCHAM 16/17 APRIL 1941**

### **Introduction**

On the night of Wednesday 16 April 1941, after a relatively quiet couple of weeks, the German *Luftwaffe* launched a major attack on London with more than 700 aircraft. The bombing effort was scattered, so that most Boroughs and Districts in and around London were hit, some much more heavily than others. This is the tale of the bombs that fell on Mitcham that night, illuminated by a frank eye-witness report from a senior ARP officer to his Regional superior. This officer was Mr D Atterbury, who was in Mitcham for much of the night. He was responsible for the Group 9 area, which included much of south-west London and north Surrey (from Kingston to Croydon) within No.5 Defence Region, which covered London and its surroundings. He conscientiously wrote his report soon after mid-day on Thursday 17 April, probably without having had much sleep, and understandably some of his statements can be amended in the light of later information.

The Air Raid Warning was sounded at 21:05, and thereafter, Mr Atterbury reported, ‘one of the heaviest raids so far ensued. There were ten separate incidents, including two parachute land mines, one of which fortunately failed to detonate and was dealt with by the Navy very early the following morning. The raid was practically continuous from 22:00 to 05:00 and ARP services were at times fully extended.’

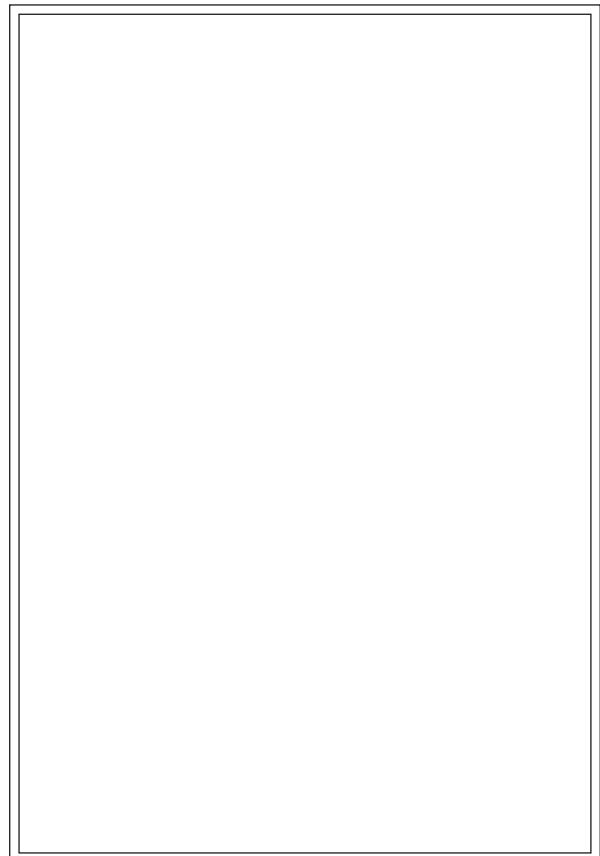
In the reports of the time, an ‘incident’ records the fall of a single high-explosive bomb, or of a spread of incendiary bombs. There were actually 15 incidents in Mitcham that night, with bombs falling in three groups. The standard incident reports held at The National Archives are very terse, and do not record damage to property.

### **Woodstock Way Area**

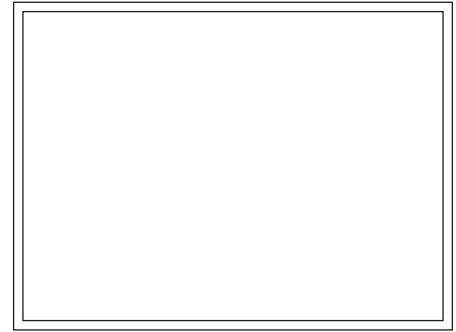
Three bombs fell at 22:10. From their sizes we may deduce that two aircraft were involved. A 500kg bomb hit the centre of the road outside nos.117 and 92 Woodstock Way, leaving a crater 40ft (12m) in diameter. Only one person was killed, at no.94. The same aircraft probably dropped the 250kg bomb which exploded in the back garden of 131 Grove Road, making a 36ft (11m) diameter crater, but luckily failing to kill anyone. Even luckier were the folk in and around 11 Woodstock Way where a big bomb from a second aircraft fell in the back garden, leaving an entry hole 18ins (45cm) in diameter only 20ft (6m) from the house. Where it failed to go off. Initially the size of the bomb was uncertain owing to its very deep penetration into the gravel and clay soil. Only when it was later dug out by the nerveless men of the Bomb Disposal Service was it found to be a 1400kg monster, easily capable of demolishing 15 – 20 houses, and severely damaging another 60 or so.

### **Tower Creameries Area**

Three aircraft dropped bombs here in swift succession, around 22:38. One dropped a parachute mine, which landed in the back garden of 54 Greenwood Road, close to the junction with Ivy Gardens, and fortunately failed to explode. The mine was defused by the BDS and removed by Admiralty workers on Thursday. Mr Atterbury noted that ‘unexploded ... bomb[s] necessitated the temporary evacuation of 3000 persons from their homes. Rest Centres were called into operation and upwards of 1200 persons catered for.’ Presumably this is a summary covering this mine and the UXB in Woodstock Way.



*The sort of thing retrieved from 11 Woodstock Way  
from Danger UXB*



*Wardens' badges and tin hats  
from The Home Front*

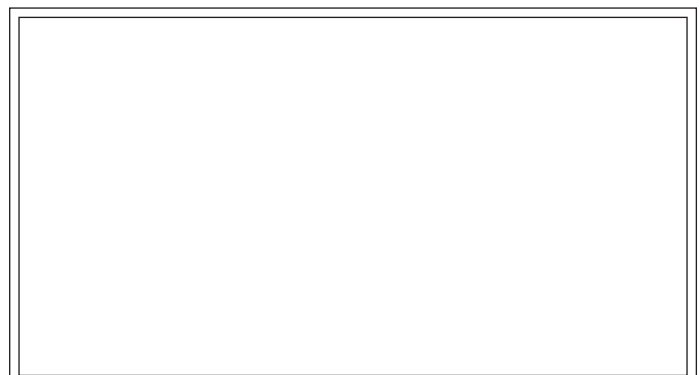
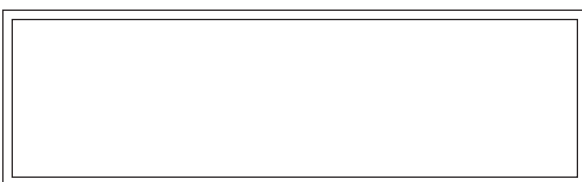
A second aircraft dropped the parachute mine which hit the Tower Creameries on Commonside East. Mr Atterbury reported that this was a 'Factory manufacturing margarine – Direct Hit by parachute mine, completely demolished and gutted by fire... Home Guard detachment was on duty in the building ... many of them and factory fire watchers lost their lives. It is not known exactly the number of persons in the building – perhaps 14; three escaped, seven were recovered dead, and four were still unaccounted for at noon the following day..'

In fact 15 people died as a result of this incident (see the Appendix). The building was the normal assembly post for 'B' Company, 57<sup>th</sup> (Mitcham) Home Guard Battalion, East Surrey Regiment. Mr Atterbury continued 'The building caught fire immediately after the explosion, the margarine burning furiously, and the intense heat and ammonia fumes from the plant caused much distress and exhaustion to members of ARP services.'

Under the heading 'Action of Services' he remarked that the incident was 'discovered immediately by wardens of post E1 who acted promptly and were instrumental in securing the release of the three survivors.' We should salute these gentlemen: strictly speaking, dashing into blazing buildings to rescue injured persons was the province of Rescue Parties and Fire Services, with their special equipment, and formed no part of an ARP warden's brief.

Mr Atterbury continued 'The overhead phone lines from E1 were broken – express [written] reports by cycle messenger were sent off within two minutes. Services responding arrived within 10 minutes of the messenger leaving the post. Express parties were sent from Rowan Road Depot, three-quarters of a mile (1 km) from the site. Very soon after the detonation of the mine another aircraft dropped three or four HE bombs, which exploded harmlessly on the Common [sic].'

Under 'Mutual Aid', he noted that 'assistance was called for by Group Control – [resulting in] one Rescue Party from Merton and one from Croydon "being sent". Merton arrived but were not used and returned to their base at once. The Croydon party did not arrive.' This will be readily understood when we realise that Croydon itself was hit by no fewer than 115 bombs that night. Coulsdon was hit by 61 bombs, Carshalton 5, Beddington 4, Sutton and Cheam 3 and Banstead 3. Merton and Morden suffered the parachute mine on Love Lane, and a second parachute mine that failed to explode.



*Signs of the times  
from The Home Front*

Mr Atterbury continued ‘Mobile Canteen run by the YMCA arrived, no idea who sent it, most welcome. ... I spent some hours at this incident ... [and am convinced that] the conduct of all concerned was most praiseworthy and that everything possible was done to ensure no living persons could have been overlooked... The Fire and Rescue Services were working extremely hard, and would not consider the question of rest or relief whilst there was any hope of saving life.’

The third aircraft dropped three big bombs without causing any casualties: a 250kg one on the back gardens of 1 and 3 Castleton Road, another which fell on the Common south of the Creameries without exploding, and a 500kg one not far from that one which did go off, leaving a crater 45ft (14m) across and 10ft (3m) deep in the gravel.

### Edgehill and Caithness Roads Area

At 02:19 a single aircraft, probably travelling from south-west to north-east, dropped the five small and two large bombs comprising its 1000kg war-load onto this area. One 50kg bomb hit the rear garden of 74 Edgehill Road, one the path between 98 and 100 Edgehill Road, one the road surface itself outside no.144, while two others scored direct hits on no.122 and nos.152/154. None of these succeeded in killing a single person. However, a 250kg bomb made a direct hit on 115 Park Avenue, demolished the nearby ARP Wardens Post, and killed the Warden, Mr Robert Hughes. The biggest bomb of the seven, of 500kg, struck 119 Caithness Road and killed a total of eight people, in that house and its two neighbours.

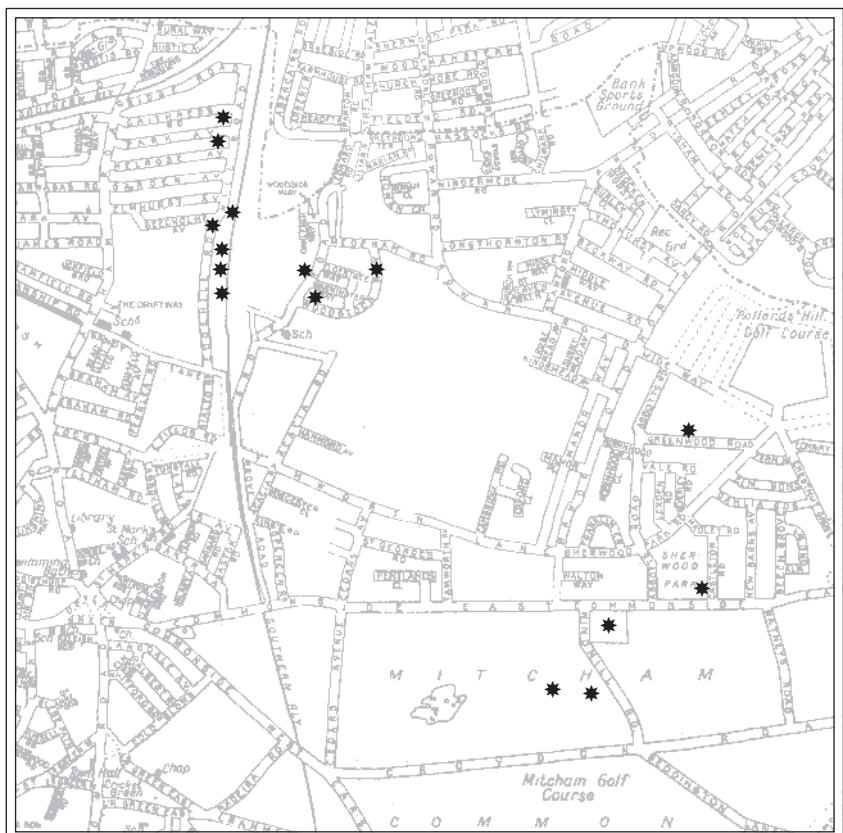
Mr Atterbury now completed his tale: ‘Seven HE bombs (probably 500 kilo [*sic*]) fell in an area bordered by Park Avenue and Hill Road, and caused widespread damage to small working class residential property. About 20 houses were demolished and 50 more were so damaged that they will have to be pulled down. 200 others were damaged in varied degrees but will be capable of repair. Nine persons were killed (including the Post Warden of the area) and 17 injured.

‘The Deputy Warden Mr Phillips assumed complete command and carried out his duties in a most exemplary manner. The handling of this incident by Mr Phillips once again proves the value of a really efficient Warden who is known and trusted by all in his area and knows where everyone can be found. ... entirely due to this that (though the area was badly knocked about) all casualties were cleared from the scene in 45 minutes, and the incident closed with the absolute certainty that no-one was left unaccounted for.

‘Morale ... of the public seemed to be outstanding, and although so much damage had been done and many persons had lost friends and relations, I was met everywhere with smiles and jokes concerning their luck, and I left the district with great admiration for the people of Mitcham, who can certainly take it, and a deep feeling of respect for members of a first-rate ARP organisation.’

### Aftermath

Local papers reported nothing of the night, self-censorship allowing only a detailed photographic coverage of the joint funeral some time later of the eleven Home Guards buried in London Road Cemetery. Even then, neither date nor place of death were mentioned. The Guards were interred in the western part of London Road Cemetery in an impressive ceremony, attended by Mayor and



*Sites superimposed on a 1930s map issued with The Official Guide to Mitcham by the Homeland Association Ltd, London WC2  
Crown Copyright Reserved*

Corporation and contingents of the Home Guard, police, Auxiliary Fire Service, nurses and ambulance crews. The funeral procession was lead by the band of the East Surrey Regiment, and stretched for over a mile.

Sadly the eleven included two of the three men rescued by the wardens, one young Volunteer and a Lieutenant, who had died of their injuries in Wilson Hospital. Most were local Mitcham men, with one each from Battersea, Streatham, Thornton Heath and West Croydon.

Another Streatham Volunteer lies in Streatham Cemetery in Garratt Lane, and a very young Mitcham Volunteer in his family grave in Church Lane Burial Ground.

Two other men died at the Creameries – a factory firewatcher and a member of the British Red Cross Society. Though not members of the Home Guard, they are accorded honorary membership of the 57<sup>th</sup> (Mitcham) Battalion, East Surrey Regiment, by their names being included on the bronze plaque erected to the memory of those who died that night. And very right and proper, too. (I believe the plaque is now in the care of Mitcham Branch, Royal British Legion.)

### **Appendix: The Creameries Casualties**

I give here a full list of the Creameries casualties of that night, as there has been some confusion in published accounts due to misreporting, misinterpretation, misspelling, duplicate entries in lists, etc. All died on 16 April 1941 except where noted. ‘Volunteer’ and ‘Serjeant’ (not ‘Sergeant’) were formal ranks within the Surrey Home Guard at this time.

#### **Home Guard Volunteers:**

William Richard APLIN, age 42, of Streatham (Streatham Cemetery, Garratt Lane)

Charles Albert BRANCH, age 32, of Mitcham (London Road Cemetery)

James William Thomas HENSON, age 18, of Mitcham, died 17 April 1941 (London Road Cemetery)

William JONES, age 37, of Streatham (London Road Cemetery)

Joseph Stanley KILBEE, age 18, of Mitcham (London Road Cemetery)

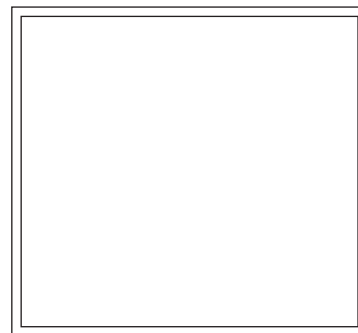
Harold Francis LANGBEIN, age 35, of Mitcham (London Road Cemetery)

Frederick Albert NEWSTEAD, age 56, of Mitcham (London Road Cemetery)

Frederick Thomas O'BRIEN, age 18, of Thornton Heath (London Road Cemetery)

Richard John SHARMAN, age 17, of Mitcham (Church Road Burial Ground)

George Stephen TAVERNER, age 32, of Mitcham Junction (London Road Cemetery)



#### **Home Guard Serjeant:**

Walter Joseph PEACEY, age 36, of Battersea (London Road Cemetery)

#### **Home Guard Lieutenants:**

Charles James LABRUM, age 43, of West Croydon (London Road Cemetery)

Arthur Frederick WHITE, age 38, of Mitcham, died 19 April 1941 (London Road Cemetery)

#### **Firewatcher:**

Frederick Percy ANDREWS, age 59, of 321 Commonsides East, Mitcham

#### **British Red Cross Society:**

Aubrey Edgar MARRIOTT, age 26, of 175 Wide Way, Mitcham

#### **Sources**

Commonwealth Graves Commission *List of Civilian War Dead, Surrey*

The National Archives HO 186 / 2410 *Air Raid Incident Report – Mitcham*

The National Archives HO 198 / 51 *Bomb Census Forms (BC4) for London Group 9B 17/18 Feb 1941 – 27/28 July 1941*

Peter Doyle & Paul Evans *The Home Front: British Wartime Memorabilia 1939-1945* (2007) The Crowood Press

Eric Montague *Mitcham Common* (2001) Phillimore

Bob Ogley *Surrey at War 1939-1945* (1995, reprinted 2004) Froglets Publications

James Owen *Danger UXB* (2010) Little, Brown

*Mitcham News & Mercury* Friday 25 April 1941

New member MAVIS PRIESTLEY recalls

## ANOTHER MITCHAM DOODLEBUG

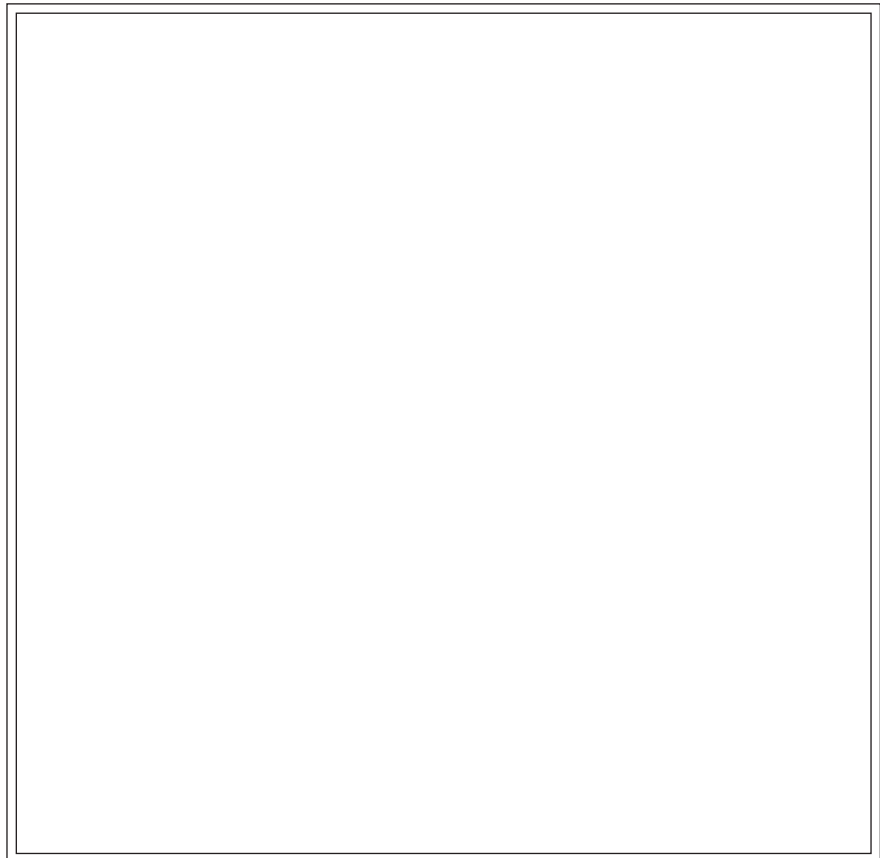
I lived with my parents in a house in Tudor Place, a cul de sac off Alexandra Road. My grandmother lived in the first of the row of cladded cottages (known as the 'Blue House Cottages') in Church Road, opposite the Box Factory. The cottage had been previously damaged by a flying bomb, and subsequently repaired. An ARP warden told the family that wooden houses withstood blast better than brick ones.

On 20th July 1944 I was next door with a friend. Because I had developed claustrophobia I had great problems about going into air raid shelters and this worried my mother if I was away from home. At our own house she would accept that I stood outside the shelter until something happened but she always made me promise I would go in should there be a raid while I was elsewhere. Most shelters had a concrete extension over the entrance so I compromised by crouching in that. Unfortunately when the V-1 fell the blast came between our two houses, straight into the extension.

Back in 1939 I had gone with my mother to our local ARP post, with other non-evacuated children, and there the Warden spoke to us not only about gas and our gas masks but also about the effect of blast on heart, lungs, brains, eyes and ears. It was all very graphic and if he meant to scare us he certainly succeeded. His message, though, was that if the siren sounded while we were out we were to knock on any door and ask to be taken in. (Imagine that advice being given today!)

When the blast first hit me I remembered all he said and thought it had all happened to me. I couldn't breathe, or see or hear, but worst of all were my sinuses. I thought I was dying! It cleared quickly though. A lot of the problem was dust in my eyes and throat. My hearing returned except that it was 'tinny' for some time. My nose and sinuses were worst affected, as a result of which I had catarrhal problems for years and lost my sense of smell.

However, my mother came for me, very distressed, because the bomb had fallen where my grandmother lived and so we took a short cut across King George's Playing Field. Perhaps this route calls for a little explanation. Before the war the gate into the Playing Fields in the cul de sac at the western end of Victoria Road was normally closed, but in wartime it was kept open to allow access by allotment holders to a small area of the field given over to allotments. Due to previous bombs exploding in the fields, the surrounding fence was much weakened in places, sufficiently so that parts could simply be moved aside to allow a person to pass through. Thus local people knew it was possible to short-cut across the field, though it was never an official right of way.



*Plan showing 'A' and 'B' damage to domestic property  
after The National Archives ref. HO 192/586 Crown Copyright*

We found my grandmother was safe, thankfully, sitting on a chair in the road, but the warden told us the house had been destabilised. He said it was alright to go inside for a short while and rescue what we could. We concentrated on what we thought were the most important things first, but my grandmother, obviously, was most concerned about the things with an emotional value and we brought out as many as we could but so much was broken. Among these was one thing that had fascinated me as a very small child

– a beautiful grandfather clock. I used to ask for it to be opened so I could watch the pendulum. Now it was on the floor, completely destroyed. Then the Warden stopped us going in for more and there was my grandmother, in her eighties, sitting in the road with only the things we had had time to rescue around her. Inside the house there was still so much she would have liked to have had and that beautiful clock lay in ruins on the floor. It all seemed suddenly so helplessly, hopelessly sad, that everything had ended like this for her.

My mother now became much concerned about my face, as the injured sinuses were making it swell. My grandmother went to live with one of her daughters.

**Mrs Priestley now wonders** (1) if the assertion about timber-framed houses was true, (2) if a second bomb fell that day, and (3) whether the blast could affect a person as far away as she was.

To which David Haunton responds:

(1) Timber-framed and -clad houses are indeed somewhat better at withstanding blast than brick-built ones. They flex and give rather like the hulls of wooden ships at sea – if not too near an explosion. However, if the bays between the timber frames have been filled with bricks and mortar, the flexibility is lost and then they are no better than a ‘solid’ house.

(2) I am confident that only one V-1 fell on Mitcham on 20 July. The ‘Bomb Census’ recording and reporting procedures were well established in 1944. At that time a summary of the day’s V-1 attacks was considered every evening by the ADGB (Air Defence of Great Britain) commanders – of fighters, AA guns and balloons – and often seen by Cabinet ministers and Mr Churchill, so the reporting officers were kept on their toes. (Reporting was rather less organised in 1940; it only really tightened up by the end of that year.)

(3) As to whether this V-1 could have affected you, my opinion is ‘Yes, indeed’. The direction of bomb-blast was notoriously unpredictable – it could be reflected off buildings and bounce around most haphazardly. A V-1 could (but did not always) strip all the tiles off a roof as much as 600 yards (550 metres) away from it. You were a bit further away than that, but I am not surprised at the effects you report on the delicate structures inside your 12-year-old head. I have read several similar accounts, mostly reporting deafness, in young people, though few suffered the effects for more than three or four months. You seem to have been particularly unlucky.

### **Malden Blitz 1940**

On **Saturday 18 September 2010** at 2pm a service will be held at Christ Church New Malden, to remember civilians killed and injured in WW2 and celebrate the community that is there today.

### **HOT OFF THE PRESS!**

*Some Memories of Tower Creameries, Mitcham* by Irene Bain has just been published as no.31 in our series of Local History Notes. At 12 A4 pages, with a map and two photographs, it sells at 75p (60p to members) + 50p for postage and packing. Available at lectures or from our Publications Secretary.

Stirred by the sight of a massive redevelopment on the site of the Tower Creameries, Irene has recorded her memories of working there in the 1940s. After a short spell with C&A Modes in Oxford Street, she began at the Creameries as a messenger girl in 1944. Her duties took her into almost every department and office, and her memoir takes us by the hand and gives us a guided tour of the entire premises. This is far from a mere list of rooms, as it is illuminated by deft sketches of the people who worked in them. This includes all three directors, who were obviously kind men. Irene moved on to the Accounts Department and then the Typists Room, and gives us a real feel for working in them, with some lively anecdotes. Her affection for the Creameries shows through: ‘It was a lovely place to work’, she says. And this is a lovely read.

**David Haunton**

**Letters and contributions for the *Bulletin* should be sent to the Hon. Editor.**

**The views expressed in this *Bulletin* are those of the contributors concerned and not necessarily those of the Society or its Officers.**

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