



PRESIDENT: Vacant

VICE PRESIDENTS: Lionel Green, Viscountess Hanworth and William Rudd

BULLETIN NO. 156

CHAIR: Judith Goodman

DECEMBER 2005



PROGRAMME JANUARY - MARCH 2006



Saturday 28 January 2.30pm

Snuff Mill Centre

'Ludlows and Penfolds – the story of the Post Office letterbox'

Neil Lloyd, who two years ago gave us such an enjoyable talk on the history of London's Underground, makes a welcome return with this illustrated talk.

To reach the Snuff Mill Centre from Morden Hall Garden Centre car-park cross the bridge between the café and the garden centre, go through the gateway in the wall, turn right and follow the main pathway to the right, which leads to the Snuff Mill Centre. Numbers here are limited.

Morden Hall Road is on several bus routes and is close to Morden town centre.

Saturday 11 February 2.30pm

**South Wimbledon Community
Association Centre**

'Sir Richard Hotham at Bognor'

Sylvia Endecott, a well-known local historian from Bognor, will give an illustrated talk about this picturesque character who lived for a time in Merton.

The Centre is in Haydons Road, on bus route 200, near to Merton High Street buses and not far from South Wimbledon station. Access to the car-park is from Victory Road via Quicks Road.

Saturday 4 March 12.30 for 1.00pm

Park Place

Annual Meal

To encourage members who prefer daytime events, this year we have booked a room at Park Place, Commonsides West, Mitcham for **lunch**.

Book early using the booking-form on page 13.

Saturday 18 March 2.30pm

Raynes Park Library Hall

'St Pancras Station: 1865-2007 – a journey through history'

Roderick Shelton, architect and historic buildings consultant, is the speaker for this illustrated lecture on a remarkable piece of Victorian architecture and engineering.

Raynes Park Library is in Approach Road, close to Raynes Park station, and on or close to bus routes 57, 131, 152, 163 and K5



**The Society's events are open to the general public.
You are invited to make a donation to help with the Society's running costs.**



VISIT TO CITY HALL

City Hall is the home of London's government, the Greater London Authority. It stands in Southwark by the river on a site near Tower Bridge. Here, in sunny weather on 15 August, twelve of our members were greeted by our young guide Richard. As part of his job in the education section he had been regularly conducting tours like ours on Mondays, but, as he told us, these tours are to happen no longer. They have proved too difficult to plan around the GLA's timetable. Richard was an ideal guide – knowledgeable, articulate and enthusiastic, even though (or because?) this was his fourth tour of the day, and the last one ever. (The public are still able to visit the lower floors of the building in working hours, and weekend access will be extended.)

Norman Foster was the architect of City Hall, which cost £53m and took three years to build. It is not owned by the GLA, but is on a 25-year lease. We heard that its shape – a modified sphere – was chosen to minimise its surface area, thus reducing heat loss. Its backward tilt was designed to shade the southern side, and hence minimise the need for air-cooling in the summer. Every aspect of the design and the infrastructure has been planned with 'green' considerations a priority. For instance, frosted dots on the windows reduce heat absorption on sunny days, and a deep borehole provides cold water for the air conditioning. The water is then used for flushing the lavatories.

After going up to the top (9th) floor and admiring the view from the balcony – better than from the Eye, claimed Richard – we began the descent, part stairs and part ramp, down the spiral that forms the core of the building. Light and spacious offices and meeting rooms are accessed off this, all the way down. At ground-floor level is the debating chamber, a flexible space carpeted in imperial purple, and open to public and press. The chamber lobby is used for exhibitions, changed monthly, on London-based themes.

Richard reminded us that the GLA is responsible for London's planning, culture, environment, economic development and so on, and stressed that the mayor and members are very keen for the public to write, telephone, or e-mail them with their concerns. He clearly loves his job, and the building, and we thanked him for an excellent visit.

Before we left we descended to the lower ground floor, where, as well as a café, there is the London Photomat. This is a 1:7000 aerial photo of Greater London made of hard-wearing nitrile rubber, which you can walk about on – and locate, for instance, your own home. A fascinating experience.

The GLA Public Liaison Unit is on 020 7983 4100 or mayor@london.gov.uk. The website is www.london.gov.uk.

Judith Goodman



On the 9th-floor balcony at City Hall

A WALK AROUND MERTON'S PUBS, PAST AND PRESENT

On Thursday 15 September 15 members gathered at the **Leather Bottle** in Kingston Road with umbrellas and wearing wet-gear for a walk and talk with Society member Clive Whichelow. He started by telling us about three pubs in the west of Merton beyond the range of the walk. The **Earl Beatty** (1938) near Motspur Park station has a nautical theme; the **Duke of Cambridge** (1925) – now Krispy Kreme Doughnuts – at Shannon Corner lost part of the building when the A3 flyover was built, and was at one time part-owned by the Kray twins; and the **Emma Hamilton** (1962) at Wimbledon Chase is one of Merton's newest pubs, although proposed in the 1930s as the Earl Jellicoe. There has been a pub on the site of the Leather Bottle since before 1700, the earlier building being a few yards east of the present one built in 1897. The name possibly comes from the vessel used to take ale to the farm-workers in the nearby fields.

Clive then led us along the Kingston Road to the **White Hart** (before 1700), one of the oldest pubs in Merton. It was built on land owned by William Rutlish. The Merton fair was held on land at the side until the railway was built, and the pub owned a field opposite called the Hart Field, which gave its name to Hartfield Road. The pub was used for local meetings, vestry committee and inquests, and in 1823 was the venue for the sale of the last part of Nelson's estate. The present building is largely a 1958 reconstruction after wartime bomb damage and "is a shadow of its former self", but at least it now has its correct name restored to remind us of its important place in local history.

Further along the Kingston Road at the corner of Southey Road the fire station stands on the site of a Victorian corner pub, the **Duke of Edinburgh**, bombed in 1944 and never rebuilt. However, this was a Wimbledon pub. Luckily by now the rain had largely cleared, so it was dry on the way to the next Merton pub, the **Grove Tavern**, on the south side of Kingston Road. This opened in 1865 and was named after Merton Grove, a 'gothick' house built by Sir Richard Hotham across the road in Wimbledon. The Grove Tavern held a notable commemoration of Nelson's centenary in 1905, and in 1912 made local history, as it was required to provide ladies' toilets as a condition of approval of its rebuilding plans. Close by along the road the **Anchor** was a beer house that lasted for only about ten years around the 1870s. Beer houses opened as a result of the Duke of Wellington's Beer Act of 1830. They were designed to make beer more easily available and wean people off gin. We had passed the site of the **Bay Tree Temperance Hotel** at the bottom of Montague Road.

At the **Kilkenny Tavern** (c.1860) we had a short halt for refreshment. This pub was previously named the Dark House, possibly because it was the last pub in the area to have electricity. Before that it was the Horse and Groom, and the Bricklayers' Arms.

Suitably fortified, we walked past the site of the **Dog & Partridge** (1878-1974) to the **Nelson Arms** at the corner of Abbey Road. This pub originated in 1829, although not quite on the present site. The present building dates from 1910 and has attractive tile pictures, made in Poole, of the *Victory* and of Nelson on the exterior. The site is that of the entrance to Nelson's estate, so the name has some real connection. It is rumoured that there is a tunnel under the pub leading under the High Street, but it is not likely to be the same tunnel that Nelson used to cross from one part of his estate to the other. Clive now took us down Abbey Road away from the High Street and into an area that held a number of small pubs that I, for one, never knew existed. Past the sites of two former beerhouses, the **Corner Pin** and the **Beehive**, we came to the **Princess Royal** (1859), still a traditional little pub which escaped the nearby redevelopment in the 1960s. The sign shows a ship, and the *Princess Royal* was one of the ships that took part in the battle of the Gulf of Genoa in 1795 with Nelson, but his ship was *Agamemnon*. So perhaps that is not the origin of the name.

The Princess Royal, Abbey Road, in 1932, taken from Pubs of Merton (Past and Present)

We bypassed the **William Morris** at Merton Abbey Mills, opened in 1990, and went down High Path to the **Trafalgar**, the last free house in Merton, and Merton's smallest pub. This also survived the High Path redevelopment. It is mentioned in local records in 1868, and had no inside toilets until the 1930s. We went along High Path past Nelson Gardens to Morden Road to look across to the site of the **Nag's Head** (1844-2001), which was another free house. This pub hosted Merton's fair when it had to move from the White Hart. It was demolished to make way for new flats. Our last port of call was the **Princess of Wales** (the Prince of Wales until 1997) in Morden Road. Hilaire Belloc drank here while researching his book *The Stane Street*. Unfortunately it was closed this afternoon, so we had to abandon our planned parting drink. In spite of this we offered our sincere thanks to Clive Whichelow for a most enjoyable and informative discovery of Merton's hostelries, and intend to sample their interior delights in the near future. For many more fascinating details consult Clive's book *Pubs of Merton (Past and Present)* published by Enigma Publishing.

Tim Fripp

‘AN APPRECIATION OF VICE ADMIRAL VISCOUNT NELSON, DUKE OF BRONTE’

Nearly 100 people attended the 2005 Evelyn Jowett Memorial Lecture on Wednesday 5 October at St Mary the Virgin, Merton. Given by members Pat and Ray Kilsby, the lecture was a fascinating insight into the life of Horatio Nelson, which was illustrated by a large number of slides.

Born at Burnham Thorpe, Norfolk, on 29 September 1758, Nelson was a precocious child. Saddened by the early death of his mother, he joined the Navy in 1771. During his first years in the Navy he travelled widely. There is a painting of him in the Arctic fending off an attack from a polar bear. Later he travelled to the West Indies. Nelson met his wife Frances Nisbet in Nevis in 1785. Two years later the couple were married, with Prince William (later William IV) giving the bride away.

In 1793 Nelson was received at the court of the King of Naples. It was there that he met the British envoy Sir William Hamilton and his wife Emma. Nelson was promoted commodore in 1796, and a year later was made rear-admiral of the Blue, and awarded the Order of the Bath, as well as becoming a freeman of the City of London.



Nelson's fight with the polar bear
R Westall

The Battle of the Nile in 1798 was a triumph for Nelson. For this he was awarded the title Baron Nelson of the Nile and a pension of £2000 a year. In 1799 he became rear-admiral of the Red and he was received again at the court of Naples where he became reacquainted with Sir William and Lady Hamilton. The king of Naples awarded him the dukedom of Bronte, in Sicily, for his part in rescuing the royal family from a revolt. It was around this time that Nelson and Emma became intimate.

1801 saw another victory for Nelson, now vice-admiral of the Blue, at the battle of Copenhagen. This led to him becoming Viscount Nelson. Another promotion in 1804 saw Nelson become vice-admiral of the White as well as commander-in-chief. Around this time the threat of invasion by the French was becoming more real. April to July 1805 saw Nelson chasing the French fleet to the West Indies and back. For a short time he returned to Merton. Nelson and Emma exchanged rings at St Mary the Virgin before, on 13 September 1805, he departed for Portsmouth. By 28 September the French fleet had assembled around Cadiz. Nelson spent his birthday working out his battle plans. October 21st saw the Battle of Trafalgar. The battle ended about 4.30pm with victory for Britain, but with Nelson dead.

The news of Nelson's death arrived at Falmouth on 4 November. When his body was brought back to Britain he lay in state at Greenwich for three days. His funeral took place at St Paul's, and he was the first commoner to be given a state funeral.

Nelson was much loved by the nation. This is shown by the number of monuments erected to him after his death. By his leadership skills, discipline and humanity Nelson inspired men of all ranks in the navy of the 19th century, and he continues to inspire today.

We thank Pat and Ray for a great talk.

Sue Mansell

[This event received an appreciative review in St Mary's parish magazine.]

Nelson's teapot, made by Chamberlain's of Worcester
From the *Art Fund Review* 1994

TRAFALGAR 200 IN THE BOROUGH OF MERTON

- ◆ Three interesting and very different Nelson exhibitions have been put on this autumn: at the Heritage Centre, the Wimbledon Society Museum and the Wandle Industrial Museum.
- ◆ Merton Library Service has arranged a whole series of lectures and events on a variety of Nelson themes.
- ◆ Schools have taken part in drama, dance and music events, and there was a street procession.
- ◆ Haydn's Nelson Mass received a fine performance at St Mary's, Merton, on 9 October. The professional soloists and small orchestra were supported by a choir drawn from the church choir and the Academy of St Mary's, Wimbledon. The Mass was preceded by the cantata specially composed by Haydn for Emma Hamilton, to celebrate the Battle of the Nile. The occasion was a sell-out.
- ◆ There was an impressive Commemoration Service at St Mary's, Merton, on 16 October, presided over by the bishop of Southwark and with an address by the Chaplain designate of the Fleet.
- ◆ Among all the local events one of the most moving was a re-enactment of the start of his last journey to Portsmouth. So, on 12 September (the anniversary day of the departure) in beautiful early autumn sunshine, a post-chaise came briskly up the A217 and entered Morden Hall Park. From Morden Hall itself, which was standing in for Merton Place, onto one of the park's pretty bridges walked Nelson and Lady Hamilton (aka Alex Naylor and Finni Golden from Portsmouth, who have played these roles often before). With them was a small Horatia, and all three looked their parts. They were then met by Captains Blackwood and Hardy, who by rights shouldn't have been there, of course, but who were an immense success with all the schoolchildren watching, as they chatted to them about their uniforms and weapons. At last the anguished couple embraced for the final time, and Nelson made a farewell speech, climbed into the post-chaise and departed for Portsmouth and destiny. Indeed he 'arrived' in Portsmouth the next day and walked through crowds gathered to see him there.
- ◆ A most entertaining talk was given at the Civic Centre on 12 November by our member, and new arrival on the Committee, David Roe, as part of the series arranged by Sarah Gould and the Heritage Centre. He called it *Nelson and his Times – as commemorated on pub signs*, and a truly impressive variety of images he had collected, from many parts of the country, including some real oddities. A sea battle at Waterloo?



*'Nelson' and 'Hardy' at Morden Hall Park.
Photo: Jane Smith*

IN BRIEF

- ◆ Look out for *The Nelson Trail* at libraries and the Heritage Centre. Compiled by Heritage Officer Sarah Gould, it is an attractive and useful fold-out sheet with map, text and pictures and covers all the sites in the Borough with Nelson connections. Its production was supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund and it is free.
- ◆ The latest GLAAS review lists six **MoLAS excavations** between July 2003 and March 2005 on land bordered by Bennett's Ditch, the River Wandle and Merantun Way. The site is that of recent blocks of flats. Some features have been identified as fishponds; a monastic mill and the later Bennett's mill were also on the site.

LOCAL HISTORY WORKSHOPS

Friday 19 August 2005. Seven present. Cyril Maidment in the chair.

- ◆ **Sheila Harris** reported on a recent tour of the Pendle area of Lancashire, which had taken her back to Barrowford, near Nelson, where her grandparents used to live. The area now has a thriving tourist trade, focussed on ‘the Pendle Witch Experience’. In the Spring and Summer of 1612 a number of local people, mostly women, were accused of practising witchcraft. They were arrested and imprisoned at Lancaster Castle and, after trial at Lancaster Assizes, 11 of them were hanged. Local sites now form a heritage trail.
- ◆ The ‘childhood memories’ theme was continued by **Madeline Healey**, who brought two items of interest. A large flat wooden spoon or scoop was identified as a snuff shovel, from Ravensbury Mill. Madeline’s grandfather worked for the Hatfeilds and lived in the bailiff’s house behind the mill. The other item was a wooden toy made by Italian prisoners of war, employed on building work at Ravensbury. Trained as toymakers, any spare time was used in making action toys such as this group of pecking hens, activated by a pendulum.
- ◆ **Judith Goodman** showed us the map of the Trafalgar Way, published by the Ordnance Survey. (See her review *Bulletin* 155 p.3). Also, following on from the cricket articles in the last *Bulletin*, she brought her son’s copy of the 1947 *Wisden*, with its report and photographs of the match to celebrate 100 years of Surrey Cricket Club and Kennington Oval. The king had attended the match, as patron of the club.

Judith had also been following up two items from previous Workshops. She had obtained a copy of the article in *Apollo* magazine about Holbein’s painting *The Lady with a Squirrel and a Starling*, which had identified the sitter as Anne Lovell, who we believe to have been the mother of Gregory Lovell of Merton Abbey (see *Bulletins* 151 and 154). The author is an expert in stained glass who recognised the significance of the two creatures. She had also tracked down the birthplace of Sir Joseph John Talbot Hobbs (see *Bulletin* 155 pp.14 & 15) in Ranelagh Grove, Pimlico, now a very desirable 1830s terraced town house, but originally built as artisan housing.

- ◆ Mention of Gilbert, sheriff of Surrey, in a recent book review, had caught the attention of **Peter Hopkins**. The founder of Merton Priory, according to David Crouch, author of *The Birth of Nobility*, was an example of ‘nobility of mind’. Peter is looking forward to reading the book.

Peter also reported on progress with the Morden manorial court rolls. He has almost completed scanning the microfilms, and is about a third of the way through his initial translation. Already he has spotted several clues which should help towards locating the 70 or so properties mentioned in the rolls. In the ensuing discussion, Madeline mentioned the fishponds near Morden Lodge, which had been filled in by her grandfather during flood-prevention work. These may well have been of medieval origin.

- ◆ **Bill Rudd** had attended the recent event in Morden Hall Park – *Hatfeild’s Park: The Untold Story* – (see *Bulletin* 155 p.10). Bill had attended the school children’s parties organised by Gilliat Edward Hatfeild in the 1930s, and remembered the roundabout and the slide, punt-trips on the river (ducking under the ornamental bridges!), fishing with nets and jam-jars in the river by the rose garden and, of course, the marquee filled with long tables of sausages, cakes and tea. On the way out Mr Hatfeild gave each child an apple.

Bill had also attended the second Wandle Festival at Merton Abbey. He deplored the building developments.

- ◆ **Cyril Maidment** had been near the Chapter House when workmen were renewing insulation on the pylon. Cyril brought along photographs taken for him by one of the workmen from his vantage point on the pylon. Cyril also showed old views of St Mary’s Church, Merton Park, and nearby Church House, from the Wimbledon Society collections.

- ◆ **Lionel Green** had with him this photograph, also from the Wimbledon Society collections, which aroused fierce discussion! Lionel identified it as a 1929 view of Martin Way, from the junction with Crown Lane and Links Avenue.

He also showed early views of Abbey House, and wondered if they could be matched with the survey and plan of 1802-1805.

He also commented on the virtual reality model of Nonsuch Palace, displayed at Surrey History Centre.

Peter Hopkins



LOCAL HISTORY WORKSHOP

Friday 28 October 2005. Seven present. Peter Hopkins in the chair.

- ◆ **Bill Rudd** had brought along two curiosities from his collection. A fragile and yellowing copy of the *Merton & Morden Courier* for March 1934, published by the Federation of Ratepayers' Associations ('Without Fear or Favour, Party or Politics'), seemed to be short on news, if long on opinion and advertising. The front-page editorial was 'Whither Merton and Morden?' The other item was a catalogue of an exhibition held in 1957 to celebrate 50 years of the Urban District of Merton and Morden. The impressive list of exhibits included loan items from the National Maritime Museum at Greenwich. Do any of our readers remember going to the then council offices at Morden Hall to see the exhibition?
- ◆ **Cyril Maidment** spoke about the Nelson (Merton Place) deeds/indentures held by the Wimbledon Society Museum, eight in all. He felt that there was a lot of important material contained in them, and accurate transcriptions would be good to have. However the language of old legal documents was difficult for most people to understand, and there was a case also for shortened and simplified 'laymen's' versions. He was concerned too about the best way to care for the deeds. All agreed that it would be wise to consult Surrey History Centre on both counts.

Cyril had also brought along some interesting old photographs, including a tram (the first?) in Coombe Lane in 1907 and 'Perry's Cottages' in High Street near Merton Bridge; and some modern ones of early buildings in Colliers Wood, near the Royal Standard. There was some discussion about the dates of these.

- ◆ **Madeline Healey**, having noticed that the barracks in Stonecot Hill, which stood close to the line of Stane Street, had been pulled down preparatory to redevelopment, wondered if there would be an archaeological investigation before building started.

- ◆ With Nelson still receiving a great deal of interest, **Lionel Green** reported that a Dorking antique dealer had been offering a desk described as having been presented to the Revd Edmund Nelson (the Admiral's father).

Lionel went on to tell us of correspondence he had had with Michael Franks, author of *The Clerk of Basingstoke – a life of Walter de Merton*, Oxford 2003, about the history of a ring said to have been removed from Walter's tomb. Lionel had recalled seeing a ring identified as such in an exhibition at Rochester in 1951 and, to his great credit, had noted the name of the lender. While the experts are reluctant to date the ring, which has now been located, to the 13th century, it remains an important and interesting object. For *Postmaster and The Merton Record 2005*, published by Merton College, Oxford, Mr Franks has now written an article about the ring, the family who own it and their connection with the college, acknowledging Lionel's contribution to the story.

The ring, now owned by the Arnold family, from *Postmaster and The Merton Record 2005*

- ◆ As a brief respite from Nelson **Judith Goodman** had been reading William Morris's *A Dream of John Ball* and had come across two local references. In the prologue to this imagined episode in the Peasants' Revolt he dreams that he has "an engagement to lecture at Manchester and Mitcham Fair Green at half-past eleven at night on one and the same Sunday" (was Fair Green a site for soap-box orators?) and later he mentions "the Prior of Merton with his hawks and hounds".

Judith had received, via Nicholas Hart of Wandle Industrial Museum, an enquiry from Northern Ireland about the Robinson family, who are commemorated by monuments in St Mary's, Merton. There is a connection with an 18th-century archbishop of Armagh.

- ◆ **Peter Hopkins** had received by post from Dr Roger Logan, a member who now lives on the Isle of Wight, a limited edition Trafalgar 200 commemorative postcard, with special stamp, postmarked 21 October 2005. Peter had heard from David Saxby of MoLAS that the 'pillar footings' uncovered in the Merton priory infirmary are now thought to be hearths, installed when the infirmary's interior was rearranged to give individual accommodation.

Peter has nearly completed translating the Morden manorial court rolls from the reigns of Richard II to Henry VIII.

Judith Goodman

Next workshops: Friday 9 December at 7.30pm, and Friday 17 February at 2.30pm.

Both meetings are at Wandle Industrial Museum. All are welcome.

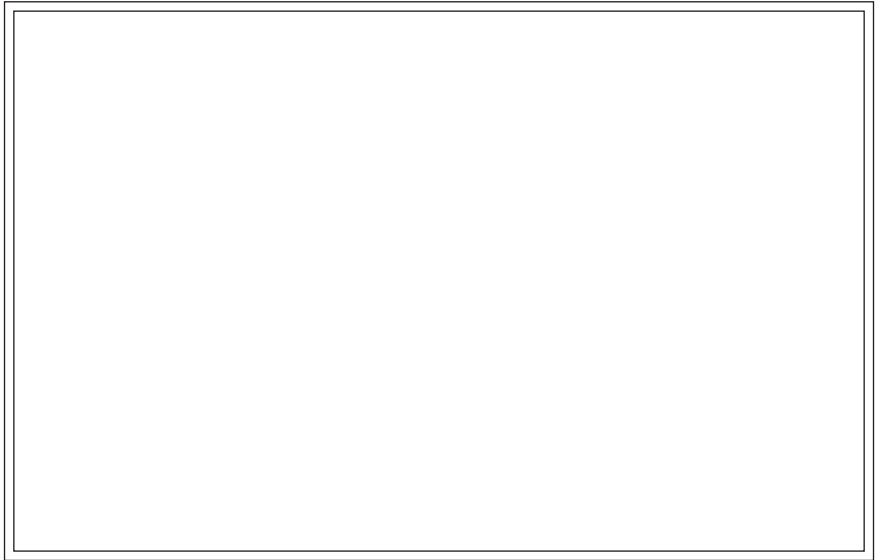
The afternoon workshop is an experiment to see if the arrangement suits more people.

200 YEARS AGO ...

The Funeral.

On 4 December 1805 the battered *Victory* reached Portsmouth, bearing Nelson's body preserved in a barrel of brandy. It was decided that it was fitting for his own flagship to carry the dead hero onward to the Thames, but, after delay caused first by essential repairs to the ship and then by adverse weather, it was 20 December before the *Victory* reached Sheerness. On the 22nd the *Victory* sailed for the Nore, and on the 23rd the body, now dressed in uniform and decently coffined, was transferred to the yacht *Chatham*, which bore it, covered with an ensign, up the river to Greenwich. On the way every vessel hoisted colours to half-mast, church bells tolled, and the forts at Gravesend and Tilbury fired minute guns.

The body was received at Greenwich by Admiral Viscount Hood, Governor of the Royal Hospital, and there it lay in state in the magnificent Painted Hall, until 8 January. Then, borne by a State Barge, and accompanied by three other ceremonial barges, the City barges and the boats of the River Fencibles, it made its way up the Thames. Thousands thronged the banks, heads bare, and the guns of the Tower sounded. At Whitehall Stairs the body was carried on shore to the Admiralty, where it was to lie overnight.



Nelson's coffin leaving Greenwich, drawn by C A Pugin

Nelson, whose early ambition had been to merit burial in Westminster

Abbey, had early changed his mind in favour of St Paul's (he is said to have believed the Abbey too likely to sink into a marsh), and St Paul's it was. An immense procession began to gather in the early morning sunshine of Thursday 9 January. The cathedral's great bell started to toll at half past eight, and ticket-holders entered to take their places, but it was two o'clock before the coffin was finally lifted from the funeral car by twelve *Victory* men and borne over the threshold of St Paul's.

The Chief Mourner was Nelson's old friend and patron, Admiral of the Fleet Sir Peter Parker, now 84 years old and somewhat frail. The Prince of Wales and his royal brothers were there, with many members of the aristocracy, distinguished commoners, senior churchmen, naval and military figures, men from the City, and representatives of orders of chivalry. There were Greenwich pensioners and seamen and marines from the *Victory*. Nelson's friends were there, his servants and the male members of his family. (It was not customary then for women relatives to attend funerals. So Nelson's wife did not attend, and nor of course did Emma Hamilton.) After the first part of the ceremony a "grand solemn Dirge" was played on the organ by its composer Thomas Attwood. He was the cathedral's organist and, through the musical Goldsmid family of Morden Lodge, he had known Nelson and Emma and had been a guest at Merton Place. The burial service was then read by the dean and an "excellent contrivance" as the *Gentleman's Magazine* called it, smoothly lowered the coffin into the crypt, and into the magnificent Italian porphyry tomb, originally destined for Cardinal Wolsey. This was the gift of George, Prince of Wales.

It was observed that at the end of the service the *Victory* seamen present, when furling the tattered ship's colours and placing them on the coffin, tore a large piece off the ensign and divided it among themselves as a precious relic. Onlookers found this a most moving incident.

Nelson's funeral car as depicted in the Times of 10 January 1806. In the event, neither the pall nor the coronet were on the coffin for the funeral, so that the onlookers could have a complete view of the coffin.

... AND AFTERWARDS

(1) The Nelson family

The Reverend William Nelson DD, his brother's senior by a year, had always been an ambitious, not to say, greedy man. He had tried, and with some success, to use his brother to advance his own career. Lord William Gordon wrote a satirical verse:

“... this same worthy Vicar,
Who loves, you say, good eating and good liquor
Know, lady, that it is our earnest wish,
That we, ere long, may greet him – Lord Archbishop”¹

His honorary doctorate and his prebendary stall at Canterbury he had managed to extract from the system, but he never did become a dean, let alone a bishop.

However, in an unprecedented gesture, following Nelson's death, the government, by a patent of 20 November 1805, created William Nelson a peer. He became Earl Nelson of Trafalgar and of Merton and Viscount Merton of Trafalgar and of Merton. Not only that, he was awarded £90,000 to purchase an estate, and an annuity of £5000 for him and his successors. Standlynch Park, near Downton, Wiltshire, was his choice, and he renamed it Trafalgar House.

The new earl rejoiced in his totally undeserved wealth and dignity. Fate however held a horrible blow in store for him. His only son, called Horatio after his uncle, used the lesser title as a courtesy one. Sadly however young Viscount Horatio ('Horace' within the family) died suddenly in 1808, aged only 19. Twenty years later the earl's wife Sarah died and William, aged 71 and still desperate, we may guess, for an heir, married a young widow Hilaire Barlow. But to no avail: the marriage was childless. So William's dream of founding a line of earls died. When he himself died in 1835, the title passed to Tom Bolton, son of his sister Susannah and her husband Thomas, whom William had always despised.

William's daughter Charlotte however was able to inherit the Sicilian dukedom of Bronte from her father. She married the grandson of the Governor of Greenwich Hospital, young Sam Hood, who became the second Baron Bridport, and the head of that family is still the Duke of Bronte.

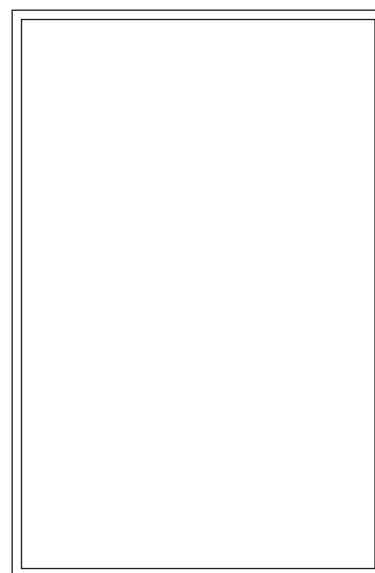
Nelson's two surviving sisters were granted £15,000 each by the government, and Fanny Nelson, his wife, received a pension of £2000 a year. She lived until 1831 and is buried at Littleham, near Exmouth.

(2) Emma and Horatia

The country, at any rate the government, saw no reason to provide for Emma. Moreover Nelson in theory had left her reasonably well off. She had Merton Place and 70 acres of land, plus £2000 and the interest on £4000 left to their daughter Horatia, although a legacy of £500 a year to come from the Bronte estate did not reach her until the year before her death – it being William who administered his brother's estate. From Sir William Hamilton, her husband, Emma had inherited £800 a year and the contents of his house in Piccadilly. She should have been able to manage comfortably. But she kept a house in town as well as Merton Place, and when she recovered from her grief she returned to her life of parties, shopping, eating and drinking rather too much, and house improvements at Merton. She seems to have been only a casual mother to Horatia.

By 1808 it was clear that Merton Place would have to be sold to pay for her extravagance. But no buyer appeared, and finally a consortium of friends led by Abraham Goldsmid bought the estate and advanced money to pay debts. Emma however continued her reckless way of life. There was a spell in debtors' prison; her health declined; friends and Nelson's family washed their hands of her. Finally she and Horatia took refuge across the channel in Calais, where in 1815 she died, aged only 49.

Horatia, now a girl of 14, found a home with the Boltons, until, seven years later, she married a curate, the Revd Philip Ward. Their contented life together was spent mainly at Tenterden, Kent, and the marriage produced nine children. Horatia lived to be 80 years old, and is buried at Pinner. She was proud to be Nelson's daughter, but she never, during all her long life, accepted that Emma was her mother.



*Charlotte Nelson, niece of the Admiral,
who became Duchess of Bronte.
Painted by Hoppner.*

JG

¹ Quoted in T Pocock *Horatio Nelson* The Bodley Head, London 1987 p.243

**With this year's Armistice Day a recent memory it seems appropriate to look at
OUR WAR MEMORIALS**

(i) MERTON

Merton's war memorial, which stands at the north-east corner of the churchyard, facing Church Lane, was unveiled in September 1921. It was designed by H P Burke-Downing, FSA, FRIBA, whose practice was in Westminster, but who was the architect of several attractive local buildings. Singlegate School in Colliers Wood, St Barnabas church in Gorringe Park Avenue and Pelham School in Wimbledon (now apartments) are all by him.

Merton's memorial, unlike those at Mitcham and Wimbledon, seems to have been a church-led project. It is in the form of a cross displaying the figure of the risen Christ and the words *Lift up your hearts*. The main inscription once read:

*In memory of the men of
Merton who gave their
lives in the war 1914-18*

However it was re-inscribed after the second World War to include a fourth line, which reads:

and in the war 1939-45

According to the local newspaper in 1921, 656 men from Merton had served in the Great War, of whom 97 had died.

The memorial is now badly in need of repair and cleaning. Plans are well in hand, with a grant having been awarded by English Heritage, and events being held to raise the £3000 still needed. Contributions, payable to St Mary's PCC War Memorial Appeal, should be sent to St Mary's Parish Office, Church Path, London SW19 3HJ.

*Architect's drawing of Merton
war memorial from
Wimbledon Boro' News
18.2.1921*

JG

(ii) MITCHAM

I suppose most Mitcham residents and even regular travellers through Mitcham know the location of Mitcham war memorial. If you haven't noticed it, it is on the part of the Lower Green behind the Vestry Hall and next to the fire station. However, its very location makes it frequently seen but rarely visited, since it is in the centre of a grassy area surrounded by the busy A217 one-way system. Generally, only on Remembrance Day does anyone approach closely enough to be able to read its inscriptions.

Since the memorial was mentioned at a recent Society committee meeting I thought it worthwhile to examine it more closely and report my findings.

The memorial is made of a rectangular block of Portland stone standing on a stepped stone plinth. It is surrounded by wrought-iron railings with a gate. It is inscribed on all four sides, and the list is headed:

*Their name liveth for evermore
To the men of Mitcham who falling, conquered in the Great War, 1914-1919*

I assume the date 1919 was used to cover those who died of their wounds up to a year after the war ended.

There follows a total of 588 names, 123 on the front below the above inscription, 156 on two further sides and 153 on the remaining side.

There is an additional rectangular stone plaque affixed to the steps at the front of the plinth of the memorial. On it is inscribed:

*And to the memory of the men, women and children of Mitcham
who lost their lives in the Second World War, 1939-1945*

Below this there is yet another, but smaller, rectangular stone plaque inscribed:

and those killed in other conflicts

Tony Scott

(iii) MORDEN

Carved on the crossbar of the St Lawrence parish church lychgate are the words 'IN MEMORY OF THOSE WHO DIED FOR THEIR COUNTRY 1914-1919'. On the two side panels are the names of 36 men of Morden who were killed in action. On the bottom of the right-hand panel is an extra name, of a soldier who died of wounds in the year after the war ended. Hence the, not uncommon, date on the crossbar. The name, out of sequence, is Newell W. This matches the name at the top, which is Newell J. Were they the same family?

One was Derek Campbell Rutter; one was Guy Wormald, the son of John Wormald of Morden Park. Another was Donald R Rewcastle, the Morden School headmaster. His girlfriend was Elsie Marion Chennell, a foremost figure in the church. She died a spinster, faithful to his name, aged 90. **Bill Rudd**

(iv) WIMBLEDON

Wimbledon's memorial, on the edge of the Common, was unveiled on 5 November 1921. It was designed by the distinguished architect Sir Thomas Graham Jackson Bt RA (1835-1924), who lived nearby at Eagle House, and it cost £1000. A Portland stone obelisk raised on a stepped pedestal, it bears Wimbledon's arms and a bronze figure of Peace by a well-known sculptor Alfred Drury RA, who lived in Lancaster Road, Wimbledon. The memorial bears the inscription *Invictis Pax* – 'Peace to the undefeated'? Sir Thomas Graham Jackson was the architect of Oxford's Examination Schools and the 'Bridge of Sighs' at Hertford College. Nearer home, he designed the church of St John the Baptist, Spencer Hill. Drury's work includes bronze figures on Vauxhall Bridge, and the statue of Sir Joshua Reynolds in the courtyard of Burlington House. **JG**

'NELSON IN HIS OWN WORDS'

On Monday 12 September, St Mary's church in Merton Park was packed full to hear Dr Colin White, Director of Trafalgar 200 at the National Maritime Museum, speak about the Nelson Letters Project. A portrait of the admiral had been lent for the occasion; a victor's laurel wreath hung near it; and there were flowers in patriotic colours. This was where Nelson himself worshipped when he was at his "dear, dear Merton".

Dr White has become a familiar face and voice on television and radio this year. He and his team have revisited all the collections, public and private, known to hold correspondence of Nelson's, and have unearthed more than 1300 unpublished letters, many of which will add to our knowledge of the hero's character and abilities. Dr White praised Nelson's vivid and direct language, and let him speak for himself, as he read out a selection from *Nelson: the New Letters*, the book of the project. So Nelson's own words revealed him as friend, lover, commander or man of destiny. Particularly interesting perhaps were the letters relating to 'intelligence'. In an age when there was no national security organisation the gathering and sifting of information was yet another skill needed by the effective military or naval leader. This was an unfamiliar but important aspect of Nelson's career, in which he showed perhaps unexpected skill (though he never did manage to learn French).

By contrast, on a domestic level, there is a letter, dated 15 April 1803, to 'Benjamin Patterson Esq.':

"I am much obliged by your kind letter & should I unhappily be called from Merton by the conduct of that Insolent Scoundrel Buonaparte, I shall be happy in accepting your kind offer of assistance for much of my farming affairs at Merton. The Cow sold well. The Hens I sold for 100 Guineas. I have now 6 Pigs five weeks old, do you buy pigs for your farm if you do I wish you would take them and give me the price which you may think proper. Lady Hamilton desires Me to thank you for your obliging enquiries ..."

While Benjamin Pat(t)erson owned some land in Kingston Road, Merton, he seems not to have farmed there. At this date he was at Cowdrey Farm in Wimbledon, where he was known as "a large scientific farmer".¹ He also managed the Wimbledon copper mill, which stood on the Wandle at the end of Copper Mill Lane. One wonders how and when the two men met.

Dr White's bravura presentation of these new glimpses into Nelson's life was much enjoyed by his audience. Afterwards he answered questions and then signed copies of his book for a number of buyers.

Our thanks are due to the Wimbledon Society and to St Mary's church. Members of both did most of the work arranging the event.

Judith Goodman

¹ R Milward *Historic Wimbledon* Windrush Press, Adlestrop 1989 p.93

[*Nelson: the New Letters* by Colin White (ed.) is published by the Boydell Press in association with the National Maritime Museum and the Royal Naval Museum. RRP £25. It includes 507 letters, commentary, illustrations, maps, a chronology, bibliography and short biographies of the chief recipients of the letters, and is very readable.]

NEWTON HOUSE, COMMONSIDE WEST, MITCHAM

When a glossy flyer came through the letterbox in the summer advertising “refurbished offices in a listed building in the heart of bustling Mitcham” I turned to ERIC MONTAGUE to fill in the background of this attractive old house. What would the earlier occupants have made of its 21st-century electronic gates, CCTV and advanced IT connections?

Newton House, No.1 Commonside West, is to all appearances an early 18th-century detached two-storey building of three bays, with a central entrance doorway. The assumed dating is supported by the simple canopied doorcase, and internal panelling surviving in one room. The origins of the house are somewhat obscure, but it may be occupying the site of one of the ‘messuages’ mentioned in documents relating to 18 acres (7.5ha) of enclosed land, copyhold of the manor of Ravensbury, which were known as ‘Blowers’ in the 17th century.¹ The most likely clue to the date of erection is in the granting by James Cranmer, squire of Mitcham, of a lease of one of “five new messuages with a garden by Mitcham common” to Edward Foster in 1727. The lease, initially for 11 years at four guineas (£4.20) per annum, was subsequently renewed.²

The name of Charles Foster, who was described as a millwright, occurs in the Mitcham Freeholders list of the 1760s,³ and the poor rate books show that from 1753, when the records begin, until 1766 an Edward Foster was the occupier of a large mill on the Wandle at the end of Willow Lane. The business was carried on by another Charles, presumably Edward’s son, until 1796. The Mitcham rate books and the land tax records confirm that Charles Foster was the owner/occupier of a modest house on Commonside West, which was either the Newton House of today, or else another property very close by and since demolished. The evidence is admittedly circumstantial, but the Foster family’s position in the community, the obvious stylistic indications that Newton House must have been standing since the early 18th century, the position of the entries relative to other properties which can be identified, plus the lack of any other likely occupants, all lend support to the assumption that the house was the family residence.

Charles Foster was also the tenant of various other plots of land, a barn, and ‘tenements’ extending along Commonside West towards Cold Blows path. In addition he held, probably on lease, a “house and mill”, also standing on Commonside West, which was owned by James Cranmer, the son of the lessor mentioned previously, who had died in 1752. The rateable value of this property was £64 per annum – seven times that of Foster’s house on its own – and obviously comprised a substantial commercial element, reflecting the economic importance of the mill.⁴ Little else is known about this mill, but there seems to be a strong possibility that it was the unusual horizontal windmill illustrated in a little sketch of about 1800 now in the possession of Croydon Library, and reproduced in Farries and Mason’s *The Windmills of Surrey and Inner London*. The location of this mill is given merely as ‘Mitcham Common’, and the authors, commenting that it was not a robust structure, observe that “the sails seem to have been of the feathering type”.⁵ Nothing more is recorded of this fascinating little mill, and it disappears from the local records by the early 19th century, when a more conventional hollow-post mill was erected in the centre of Mitcham Common.⁶

From the turn of the 18th century until the early 1830s the house formerly occupied by Charles Foster was

owned by John Oxtoby and let or leased to tenants,³ but by the 1840s Newton House had once more become owner-occupied as the residence of James Barber, a stockbroker, and his wife Sarah.⁷ They were followed by Mr and Mrs John Coles in the 1860s and 1870s, but apart from the fact that John Coles was a half-pay naval officer⁸ and Mary Cole belonged to the Ladies Visiting Society of the parish church, and was active in good works among the poor of the parish,⁹ little is known about them.

In the post-war period Newton House was occupied, and well maintained, by T G Baker, a builder and decorator. At the rear there survived a fine weatherboarded outbuilding, which enhanced the 'olde worlde' appearance of the property, but unfortunately it was considered necessary to remove this when the property changed hands and was subsequently renovated. In 1984 the house was taken over as the Mitcham offices of the South West London Probation Service. It had been included in a provisional list of buildings of architectural or historic importance drawn up in 1952 by the Borough of Mitcham,¹⁰ and was in the supplementary list approved by the Minister of Housing and Local Government in 1954, but it was not until 1988 that it was given a formal Grade II listing by the Secretary of State for the Environment.¹¹

1 Surrey History Centre: Court Rolls of the manor of Ravensbury 320/1/1. From 1680 on into the 18th century there is mention of various buildings erected on this land, none of which can be identified as specifically relating either to the structure we now know as Newton House, or its antecedents.

2 Surrey History Centre: James Cranmer's Rent and Memorandum Book 1717-49 470 p.89

3 Surrey History Centre: He is also described as a wheelwright.

4 Surrey History Centre: Mitcham land tax book 1792 p.3 for example

5 K G Farries and M T Mason *The Windmills of Surrey and Inner London* 1966 p.152

6 E N Montague *The Windmill and 'Mill House', Mitcham Common* 1970 p.1

7 Census returns 1841, 1851; tithe register No.847; and Post Office directories for 1845 and 1851, in which the address given is 'The Common'

8 Census return 1871. The property was then known as Newton Cottage.

9 Canon D F Wilson's pastoral letter

10 Ministry of Housing and Local Government Ref. No. 1411/11/A May 1952

11 NGR TQ2768. Serial No. of list entry: 12/29. Descriptive note: "Detached house, now offices. Early C18, with late C20 additions. Stucco. Steeply pitched machine tile roof to eaves. 2 storeys plus dormers. 3 windows wide plus single storeyed 1 bay wing to right and left. Central square headed entrance, pilastered and corniced. C19 6-panelled door, partly glazed. Square headed sashed windows, glazing bars. Band between storeys. Gabled casemented dormers. Front room to right of entrance fully panelled, early C18. Turned baluster staircase. Late C20 additions to rear not included in listing."

ANNUAL LUNCH

At

PARK PLACE BEEFEATER RESTAURANT

Commonside West, Mitcham

On Saturday 4 March 2006

At

12.30 for 1 o'clock

The cost will be £8.95 for two courses, chosen from starter, main course and sweet. Drinks, coffee or tea will be extra, to be individually paid for. Members are welcome to bring friends.

Please book as soon as possible by completing this form and sending it by Friday 17 February 2006, with your cheque, to:

The Secretary, 100 Cannon Hill Lane, LONDON, SW20 9ET

Cheques to be made payable to **Merton Historical Society**.

(If you do not wish to cut into your *Bulletin* please send a copy of this form)

Please reserve ... place(s) for me at the Lunch at Park Place on Saturday 4 March.

I enclose a cheque for £.....

Name (please print)

Address

.....

Telephone

**ROGER PACKHAM of the Bourne Society reports on an investigation and a discovery relating to
THE FOUNDATION DATE OF MITCHAM CRICKET – 1685?**

Mitcham Cricket Club recorded its tercentenary (1865-1985) with a special souvenir brochure entitled *300 Years of Mitcham Cricket: a Historical Record* by Tom Higgs (1985).

The foundation date intrigued me. What does the brochure say about cricket at Mitcham in 1685? How does the Club arrive at such an early date? Mr Higgs' book (page 7) states:

"... it is known that cricket was played upon its [Mitcham's] Green 300 years ago. An exceedingly rare and very old cricket print bears the inscription

'Crickette on Ye Olde Meecham Green'. It is dated 1685."

The book also has an article by Dr Tony Scott of Merton Historical Society on 'The Green in 1685', but nowhere is this "exceedingly rare and very old print" reproduced or described.

Soon after the book's publication I wrote to Mitcham Cricket Club and to Eric Montague to enquire about the whereabouts of this print. As an amateur cricket historian and local historian I was anxious to have sight of it and perhaps be allowed to acquire a copy so that I could establish whether it was the earliest known cricket print or depiction of a match.

I do not have my correspondence to hand, but I remember my disappointment at learning that Mr Higgs had passed away and nobody could throw any light on the 1685 cricket print.

There the matter rested. I was aware that cricket historians accepted the 1685 date, notably Rowland Bowen¹ and Stephen Green,² but I wanted to see that print and examine this picture of cricket from the distant past.

Some 20 years after my initial interest, I have now discovered a reference in a cricket magazine which I believe is the source of the 1685 reference. It comes from an article by E A C Thomson in *The Cricketer Spring Annual* 1933 (p.51) entitled 'The Genesis of Club Cricket' where the history of some cricket venues is discussed, including Mitcham Green. I believe that it is from this article that the 1685 date originates. I quote:

"Then there is Mitcham Green where it has been impossible to trace when the first cricket was played thereon. The first reference to the game is about 1707, when the name was spelled 'Meecham'. No living person can satisfactorily inform you how ancient is this cricket green because all the old records have vanished, lost in the limbo of the past. But fifty years ago, an aged villager, close on ninety years, informed me that he recollected seeing an old print, then hanging up in a wayside cottage, showing 'Crickett on Ye Old Greene' and giving the approximate date as about 1685 ..."

So it seems that the evidence for the 1685 date rests on Mr Thomson's memory of 50 years previously (c.1883) concerning a conversation he had had with a 90-year-old who recalled seeing a print with an approximate date at an unspecified time in his long life. In 1883 Thomson was 11 years old.

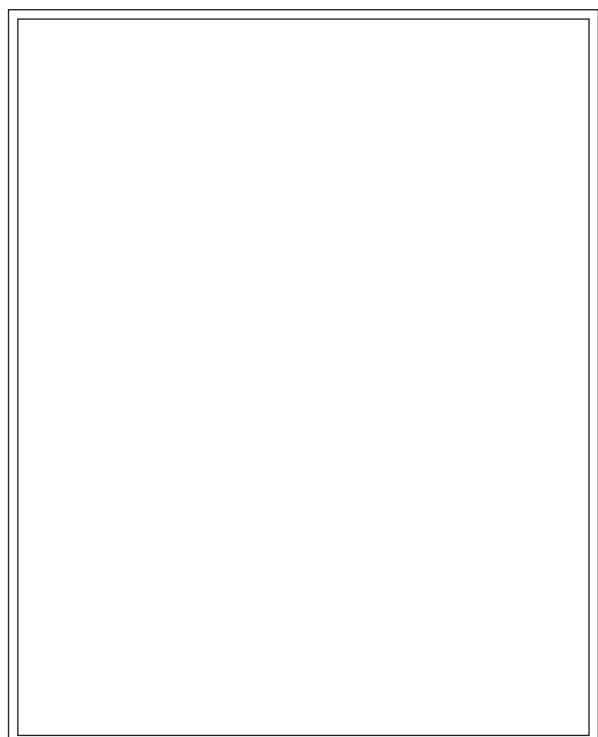
I am sure that Mr Thomson's article is the basis of the Mitcham cricket tercentenary, and I respectfully suggest that 1685 does not stand up to serious historical examination: the year in question should be relegated to a footnote at best.

If Mr Thomson's evidence is discounted, the earliest Mitcham cricket reference is that of 1707 when a challenge was sent out to London. The earliest reference to cricket on Mitcham Green would be that of 1731 when Mitcham played Ewell.

1 R Bowen *Cricket: A History of its Growth and Development throughout the World* Eyre & Spottiswoode 1970

2 S Green 'References to Cricket pre-1700' *The Journal of the Cricket Society*, autumn 1981

[Tony Scott suggests that the "aged villager" was probably John Bowyer, depicted here in an 1879 cartoon by Collingsby. Bowyer was also the source of the legend that Nelson came over from Merton to watch cricket at Mitcham. We would be glad to hear from readers who have views on the subject of this article. JG]



NEW PUBLICATIONS

The Upper or Fair Green, Mitcham

The seventh volume in **Eric Montague's** *Mitcham Histories* will be available from Saturday 3 December.

For many old residents the Upper or Fair Green was the centre of Mitcham. Here the main concentration of shops was to be found, and here the roads from Merton, Tooting, Croydon and Sutton met. The Green itself was part of the common lands of Mitcham and, as 'The Fair Place', was for centuries the venue for the annual fair. The story of the Green and of the buildings around it reflects much of the evolution of Mitcham itself, and is a fascinating study.

Another bumper volume of 180 pages, with over 50 maps and illustrations, it is available at the usual price of £5.95, but just £4.80 to members (plus 90p by post), as are volumes 2,4,5 and 6.

A Priory Revealed using materials relating to Merton Priory

Lionel Green's long-awaited study of Merton Priory will be launched at our December lecture, when Lionel will be our speaker. Lionel, a founder member of Merton Historical Society, and now a Vice President, began researching the history of Merton Priory during the 1950s, and here brings together the results of more than 50 years of diligent study.

Merton Priory played a key role in many aspects of medieval life. From its foundation in 1114, until its dissolution under Henry VIII, it was an important centre of religious life and education. From its members emerged leaders of international repute in both church and state. This book explores its religious, political, economic and social significance in local, national and European affairs.

Professionally printed, as is our *Mitcham Histories* series, but in a larger format, its 140 pages include over 70 maps and illustrations. The cover price is £7.50, but members can buy it at £6 (plus £1 by post). This book has been published in association with Merton Priory Trust.

Both these books will be available at our monthly meetings, or from our publications secretary, 57 Templecombe Way, Morden, Surrey SM4 4JF.

Please tell your friends and neighbours about these and all our publications.

St Mary the Virgin, Merton Park: a guide and history

This booklet, which is also by **Lionel Green**, is not just an updating of the previous guide but is a completely new product. The first thing that catches the eye is colour! Not only is this used to great effect on the cover – both outside and inside – but there are four colour pages within. So Paul Hitchens' excellent photographs of fabric and furnishings are not only crystal clear but even seem to glow.

Lionel's succinct text tells the story of Merton and its church from Saxon times to the present day, including brief accounts of some incumbents and important local residents, and dates and phases of building and alterations. He devotes several pages to a 'walk round' the interior of the church, and then, after describing features of the exterior and the churchyard, he concludes the main text with details about the six bells, the registers and the plate. The last two pages are given over to a chronology of the church fabric; a list of the post-Reformation incumbents up to the present day; a list of the patrons of the benefice; and footnotes to the main text.

In other words this guide is not only attractive: it is readable, accurate and useful!

Congratulations, Lionel! And well done, the church's publications team who set themselves a deadline of 12 September, the date of Colin White's lecture, and came in on time.

The guide costs £2.50 and is obtainable at the church (normally open every morning).

Mount Ararat: The House, the Estate and the role of Thomas Devas

The Wimbledon Society Museum of Local History has produced the first of its *Local History Notes*, with text by Richard Milward, and maps, plans and photographs from the Museum's collections arranged by Cyril Maidment. This 12-page A4 booklet is available from the Museum at £1.

The 100-acre estate lay between the present Langton Road and Pepys Road on the west and Arterberry Road on the east. Devas owned the estate from 1850 until his death in 1900. Richard Milward informs us that he "was one of the most important Wimbledonians in the last fifty years of Queen Victoria's reign. Had he not lived, Wimbledon would hardly be the same".