

PRESIDENT: J Scott McCracken BA FSA MIFA

VICE PRESIDENTS: Viscountess Hanworth, Arthur Turner, Lionel Green and William Rudd

BULLETIN NO. 131

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## PROGRAMME SEPTEMBER-DECEMBER



**Saturday 25 September 2.30 pm**

**A Second Mitcham Pub Walk**

**Dr Tony Scott**

Tony Scott's enjoyable guided tour in Mitcham in September 1996 by no means covered all Mitcham's pubs of historical interest, and he has agreed to introduce us to some more. The afternoon is likely to include sampling!

Meet at the Clocktower, Fair Green, Mitcham.

Buses: 118, 152, 200

**Friday 8 October 8.00 pm**

**St Peter's Social Club Hall, Bishopsford Road**

**'The St Helier Estate and Monastic Britain' by W J Rudd**

**Evelyn Jowett Memorial Lecture**

For many years Bill Rudd has been investigating the 'abbey' names of the roads in the St Helier Estate, where he has lived for most of his life. In this illustrated lecture he will reveal to us the fruits of his travels and research.

Buses: 80, 280. Routes 118, 157 and 164 are within reach.

**Saturday 6 November 2.30 pm**

**Snuff Mill Environmental Centre**

**Annual General Meeting**

After the business part of the meeting is concluded, **Scott McCracken BA FSA MIFA**, president of the Society, has kindly agreed to speak about **'The Archaeology of World War I'**.

**Saturday 4 December 2.30 pm**

**Snuff Mill Environmental Centre**

**'Daughter Houses of Merton Priory' by Lionel Green**

Merton Priory in all its aspects has long been a particular interest for Lionel Green, as his scholarly series of articles in the Bulletin makes clear. In an illustrated talk he will discuss the varied, and far-flung, daughter houses of this important Augustinian establishment.

(For the Snuff Mill Centre drivers should park in the Morden Hall Garden Centre car-park and take the path across the bridge; go through the gateway and turn right towards Morden Cottage.

Buses 118, 154, 157, 164)



**The Society's events are open to the general public, unless otherwise stated.**



## A VISIT TO CARSHALTON HOUSE, WATER TOWER AND GROUNDS

On Saturday 26 June 25 members paid a visit to the water tower and Carshalton House. Unusually for a Merton Historical Society outing it was a beautiful summer's day.

Our guide for the tour, Andrew Skelton, and two volunteers, had opened up the water tower especially for us, as normally they are only open on a Sunday afternoon.

We walked around the lake, now sadly lacking in water, and up past the swimming-pool building to the rear of the main house. The swimming-pool was built in 1910, and is still used. It has a pool of 25 yards in length, but as I am not a swimmer and we did not get access, I can only assume that this is a fairly large one.

The house stands on a low mound and overlooks the lake, hermitage and parkland. Connected to it is a later, Victorian, complex of buildings that tend to overpower the main house. All are now part of St Philomena's Catholic High School for Girls, but we were allowed access to the main house, where we viewed the famous painted room, blue room and library.

From here we walked around to the stables and chapel, where a number of alterations have taken place to the buildings, all complementary, with similar style and colour brickwork. One exception is an aluminium boiler-house chimney which looks somewhat out of place.

The hermitage was the subject of part of Andrew's talk that he gave us last December, when he showed us its restoration. They have certainly done a splendid job, and it was a lovely retreat on such a hot day.

Once more we returned to the lakeside, and followed it round back to the water tower, where a very welcome tea awaited us.

After tea we had the freedom of the water tower, with its history expertly given by Andrew. Unfortunately most of the machinery has gone, and only half the water-wheel remains. Once beams operating pumps would have been moving up and down, filling a large tank above, which itself is no longer with us. Possibly this will one day be restored with working pumps, and that would certainly be a sight worth seeing.

The water tower also contains an orangery, saloon and a bath. The bathroom is located on the coldest northern side, and we were told there was no hot water when it was in use. It is tiled with Anglo-Dutch tiles, and was possibly used for some cure for ailments that were thought to improve with a cold ducking.

From the top of the tower a splendid view is obtained of the house, parkland and Carshalton village.

All in all, a splendid afternoon out, and so much more enjoyable with such a knowledgeable guide as Andrew, who can point out all the history that we would most likely not have known had we done the tour on our own.

**David Luff**

**The Water Tower is open each Sunday from Easter until 26 September 2.30-5.00 pm. Events are held throughout the year.**

## TOUR OF 'BIG BEN' CLOCK TOWER

Our party met at St Stephen's entrance to the Palace of Westminster on 8 July for a tour at 11.30 am, and was directed through to the base of the clocktower. Here we were able to contemplate a small notice which informed us that there 334 steps up to the bell chamber. Our guide does the climb twice a day, though he is not lightly built - and he admitted he really felt it after returning from holiday.

When, following the destruction by fire of the old Houses of Parliament in 1834, a Commission was set up to arrange a competition for designs for a new building, Charles Barry's winning design included a clock tower. A second competition was held to decide who would design the clock, and the winner, surprisingly, was an amateur horologist, the barrister Edmund Beckett Denison QC. The Great Westminster Clock was made by Dent's and was ready before the tower was completed. It is said to be the largest striking, most powerful and most accurate public clock in the world.

It is the hour bell, as we know, that is Big Ben, not the clock. The original bell, which, at 16 tonnes, was heavier than the one that was finally installed, was cast at Stockton-on-Tees and brought to London by rail and sea. While still undergoing tests it cracked, and had to be recast at the Whitechapel Bell Foundry. It was about this time that it acquired its name, being called after either Sir Benjamin Hall, Chief Commissioner of Works, or possibly Benjamin Caunt, a popular boxer of the time. Both men were large.

About a third of the way up the tower is the Prison Room, which now houses a small historical display. It was last used for its earlier purpose in 1880 when Charles Bradlaugh, an atheist, sensationally refused to take the oath of allegiance to Queen Victoria. Our guide thought that Emmeline Pankhurst had been held there briefly during the Suffragette campaign early in the 20th century, but I have been unable to find confirmation of this story.

When we reached the level of the clock faces we were able to walk round the tower behind each face in turn. They are framed in cast iron, and each is glazed with 312 pieces of opal glass. The glass has to be both strong and thin, so that it can flex in high winds. At first German glass was used, but British technology has caught up since. The faces are seven metres in diameter - the length of a Routemaster bus, we were told. Originally lit by gas, each is now fitted with 28 low-energy long-life electric lamps.

We had heard the three-quarter-hour chimes as we climbed, and our arrival at the belfry just preceded the mid-day chimes and striking of the hour. Almost literally stunning, it was a memorable experience - actually to *watch*, while the chimes we all know so well were played, followed, after that familiar pause, by the twelve reverberating strokes of Big Ben. The bell weighs 13.5 tonnes and is 2.7 metres in diameter (it had to be hoisted sideways up the tower when installed); the hammer which strikes it weighs 200 kilograms. The quarter bells weigh between one and four tonnes.

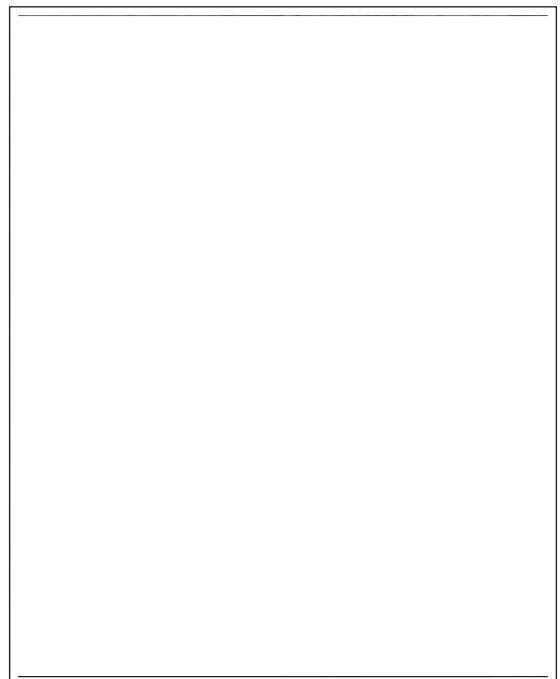
The public is not allowed above the belfry, but we could see above us the lantern of the Ayrton Light, which since 1885 is lit whenever Parliament is sitting after dark. Seen from the belfry: an aerial view of the much-criticised Portcullis House across Bridge Street; the Millennium ferris wheel propped up on its side above the river in front of County Hall; and, eastwards in the distance, the Dome.

We then entered the clock room to see the mechanism, which weighs about five tonnes. The pendulum, which beats every two seconds, is adjusted by adding or removing small weights, including old pennies. There is a small shelf for this purpose on the rod. The clock is wound and tested for accuracy three times a week. When, in 1976, a metal shaft broke and the mechanism was torn apart, the extensive repairs included a stronger replacement shaft, and a fail-safe device to limit damage if something similar happened again.

Having safely accomplished the descent, we thanked our guide for a fascinating tour. Our gratitude is also due to Siobhain McDonagh MP and to our Secretary, Sheila Harris, for arranging the visit.

**JG**

*Behind one of the clock faces in the days of gas-lighting*



## A VISIT TO ST MARY'S WIMBLEDON

17 members joined Richard Milward at St Mary's Wimbledon on 3 August. The rain had stopped, so we were able to walk around the outside of the church. Richard took us to the east end, among the graves (and brambles) to remind us that, first and foremost, the church is a part of the ongoing spiritual life of the community. For 1000 years people have come here to worship week by week. Generations have been baptised, married, and buried. More than 10,000 burials have taken place. Though mortality rates were high, many lived to 70 and beyond.

The east end is the best place to observe the various stages of the building. The original Saxon church has vanished without trace, but the chancel of its medieval successor remains. Beyond this can be seen the brickwork of the Georgian church, now mostly concealed by the rebuilding of 1843. In fact only the west end was demolished, the remaining Georgian walls being faced with flint and the round headed windows replaced by the newly resurgent Gothic. The architect was the, as yet, little known George Gilbert Scott.

Why was the church built half a mile from the village, especially as in early medieval times Wimbledon was part of the Archbishop of Canterbury's manor of Mortlake? Richard suggested that the church was located on the hilltop to be visible from Croydon, another Canterbury possession, and an old Saxon minster church.

Walking through the churchyard, Richard pointed out the Bazalgette vault (see **In Brief** p.11), and the unusual pyramid tomb of Gerard de Visme, a Huguenot merchant who lived in Wimbledon Lodge in Southside. Richard is on record as saying that the tomb was probably inspired by Napoleon's conquest of Egypt in 1798, but now realises that this was the year after de Visme's death, and the details of his tomb had been set out in his will! It is encouraging to know that even an historian of Richard's calibre can make mistakes, and admit to them!

Moving into the church, we heard of the consecration service on 20 March 1843, of which a seating plan survives. Richard told us about many of the people present, and also of earlier parishioners who have memorials there. Various items of interest were pointed out including the roof of the chancel, uncovered in 1860, as was an old window opening, erroneously interpreted as a leper window. Richard suggested it was either for ventilation or to enable the parish clerk to ring an external bell at the moment of Consecration during the Mass. Some ancient stained glass, possibly of the 13th century, depicting St George, has been repositioned in the Cecil Chapel, a mortuary chapel of 1620. The adjoining Warrior Chapel is a memorial to the dead of World War I.

This brief report cannot do justice to an enlightening evening led by a well-informed guide. Thank you Richard.

**Peter Hopkins**

## THE MAN WHO LOVED IRISES

[This article is a slightly expanded version of one written for the John Innes Society Newsletter No.123 (April 1994). It appears with permission.]

William Rickatson Dykes (1877-1925), who lived in Merton Park between 1920 and 1924, was an unorthodox but distinguished figure in the world of horticulture. Born in Bayswater as the son of a bootmaker, he was educated at the City of London School, followed by Wadham College, Oxford, where he read classics, and then the University of Paris. He then became a master at Charterhouse School, where he was noted for disciplining unruly pupils by making them wheel loads of earth up his steep garden, and where he went by the strange nickname of "Sweaty Butcher".

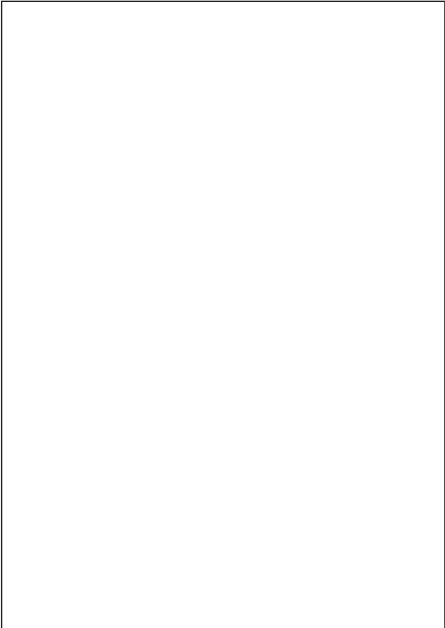
It was at Charterhouse, where he taught for 16 years, that a lasting passion for irises was born in Dykes. He wrote later, "The first flowers of my first *reticulatas* proved so fascinating that, once I had seen them open in my garden, I was eager to go on growing all obtainable irises, raising seedlings of them and hybrids between them." He published three books and many articles about his favourite genus, and extended his enthusiasm to include tulips and crocuses.

Dykes's first marriage was not a success. The couple finally parted, and his wife died in 1920 - of actinomycosis, a fungus-induced disease, which her family is said to have claimed she caught from her husband's irises! In 1918 he met Katherine Kohnlein, with whom he lived for several years before they married, under family pressure, in 1924. She illustrated many of his articles.

When Dykes was, perhaps surprisingly, appointed Secretary of the Royal Horticultural Society in 1920, he had to look for a London home. Most of his huge plant collection was sold, but William Bateson, whom he already knew, and who was Director of the John Innes Horticultural Institution in Merton Park, offered to accommodate those irises and tulips which Dykes wished to keep. Dykes and Katherine moved into the nearest house available, which proved to be 1 Manor Road, Merton Park. This could not have been much closer to the Institution, which occupied what are now the grounds of Rutlish School. It is one of a number of houses in that immediate area built in the Edwardian period by Henry Coombs, who himself lived at Broadwater House, which stood between Bakers End and Kingston Road, off Cannon Hill Lane.

However, during the whole of his residence in Merton Park, Dykes continued to look for a home elsewhere. Not only was his garden small, but the local soil was not what he would have chosen for his precious irises. Over and over again, houses which Katherine liked he rejected unseen, on account of the soil. When at last what is said to have been an ugly and inconvenient house, hated at sight by Katherine, proved to have the ideal soil, the couple left Merton Park and took with them their plant collection from the Institution. The new house was Bobbingcourt, Pyle Hill, at Sutton Green, near Worplesdon.

Though he was described by Bateson's wife Beatrice as "having no scientific mental equipment", relations between Dykes and the Institution seem to have been cordial. He gave some lectures there, and from 1911 onwards presented them with many plants and seeds, including not only irises, but crocuses, tulips, and specimens of canna, nerine, agapanthus and other exotic genera. During his residence at Merton Park he was also an intermittent voluntary worker at the Institution. Correspondence survives which records a wariness, shared with Professor Bateson, at the prospect of Ministry interference in the testing of vegetable seeds.



*W R Dykes*

Dykes proved an energetic, though sometimes controversial, Secretary of the RHS, at a period when its membership was increasing dramatically. When the British Iris Society was founded in 1924 he also became its first Secretary, and first editor of its Bulletin. In the same year he was awarded the Veitch Memorial Medal, a great distinction. A year later he was nominated for the Victoria Medal of Honour for Horticulture. However he did not live to receive it, for in late November 1925 he and Katherine were involved in a car accident. In snowy conditions near Woking they collided with a lorry, and, though Katherine survived with nothing more than bruises, Dykes, who was horribly injured, losing an ear and an arm, died on 1 December, aged just 48. A memorial service was held at St Stephen's, Rochester Row, close to the RHS Old Hall.

Katherine, described as "vigorous, charming and with great ability with plants", was made an Honorary Life Member of the RHS. She ran the garden at Sutton Green as a nursery, made botanical drawings for the Society, and edited and illustrated some of Dykes's research for publication. But she too was to die a violent death, at only 44. On 25 May 1933, returning home after conducting King George V and Queen Mary round the Chelsea Flower Show, she was one of five passengers killed in a rail crash outside Raynes Park station. The engine and first carriages of her train, the 3.10 from Waterloo to Alton, were derailed, probably because of slack sleepers, and were hit at 3.23 by the delayed 12.11 Southampton to London train. Katherine was believed to have died "almost instantaneously". The injured were taken to the Nelson Hospital. Both inquiry (at Waterloo station) and inquest (at St George's Hall, Wimbledon) were held promptly, and Katherine's funeral, attended by many great names in horticulture, was held at Woking Crematorium on 31 May.

Dykes's most important work, particularly remarkable for a self-taught botanist, was the massive *The Genus Iris*, published in 1913. No-one before this date had written a single monograph dealing with an entire genus. It is not clear that he did much travelling himself, but he was in touch with collectors in many parts of the world, or at least the northern hemisphere - apparently the Iris does not grow south of the Equator. There were two other books which dealt with the Iris. Of one he wrote breezily: "It was rather a rapid survey of Irises as garden plants and the fact that it was written in the space of a long week-end at the time of the Coronation of 1911 is evidence that it was never intended to be exhaustive". In 1924 he published *A Handbook of Garden Irises*, which was also meant for gardeners rather than botanists, but included botanical and distribution information. He was a regular contributor of general horticultural articles to *The Times*.

He is believed to have introduced 37 irises into commercial cultivation - most notably perhaps the one named after him posthumously. 'W R Dykes' was the first large yellow iris, and, though it is no longer much grown, its strengths have been bred into new irises. His introduction 'Douglasiana Merton' received an Award of Merit in 1923. The Dykes Medal was instituted by the British Iris Society in his memory.

**Sources:**

W R Dykes *A Handbook of Garden Irises* London 1924  
*Nature* 19 December 1925 p 908  
*The Gardeners' Chronicle* 5 December 1925  
*The Times*, 3 and 5 December 1925; 26,27,30 and 31 May, and 1 June 1933

*The Garden* August 1992 pp 357-9  
*Journal Royal Horticultural Society* vol LI pt ii 1926  
*Wimbledon Borough News* 26 May and 2 June 1933  
Documents at John Innes Centre, Norwich

**Judith Goodman**



## LIONEL GREEN goes in quest of LOCAL LANDLUBBERS

Merton is famous, not only for its sea captains, but for those close to them who never went to sea. Pride of place must go to Emma Hamilton and her association with Nelson. Then there was Elizabeth Cook who came to live in Merton after her husband, Captain James Cook, and all her six children had died. She lived at Abbey Gatehouse with her cousin, another sailor, Rear Admiral Isaac Smith.

Even earlier, in Elizabethan times, the district had connections with the sea. Richard Hakluyt collected narratives of all the early English voyages, which reveal other local landlubbers. In the 1589 edition of his *Divers Voyages* (divers = sundry) the preface makes reference to a Morden resident:

*“And whereas in the course of this history, often mention is made of ... strange curiosities, which wise men take great pleasure to read of, but much more content to see. Herein I myself, to my singular delight have been, as it were, ravished in beholding all the premises gathered together with no small cost and preserved with no little diligence, in the excellent cabinets of ... Mr Richard Garth one of the clerks of the petty Bags...”*

So here is evidence of an early antiquarian living in Morden in the late 16th century. Did he travel much?

A Dutchman, John Huighen van Linschoten, recorded the early voyages to the East and West Indies, and Hakluyt arranged for a translation from Dutch into English, and published the accounts in 1598. The dedication of the book was to a Mitcham man, Julius Caesar, Master of the Court of Requests<sup>1</sup>. It was through Caesar's marriage to Alice Dent in 1595 that he acquired his Mitcham property. Richard Hakluyt and Julius Caesar were contemporaries at Magdalen College, Oxford 1573-8. Caesar was a Member of Parliament from 1588 until 1622. In September 1598, the year of the book dedication, Queen Elizabeth spent a night at Mitcham with Julius before going on to Nonsuch Palace after lunch the next day.

In 1612 Hakluyt published Peter Martyr's *Historie of the New World*, which was also dedicated to Sir Julius Caesar, who had been knighted in 1603<sup>2</sup>.

Among Hakluyt's acquaintances was Michael Lok, a younger son of William, who acquired property in Merton and Wimbledon. Michael had been a successful trader travelling to France, Flanders, Spain, Portugal and the Levant. He possessed scientific tastes and interested himself in navigation, purchasing books, charts and instruments costing £500.

In 1572 he married the widow of Caesar Adelmare, and thus became the stepfather of Julius Caesar. Lok supported Frobisher in his attempts to discover a northwest passage to China, and set about raising funds from other merchant adventurers.

A royal grant was issued in 1576 incorporating the Cathay Company, and in March of the following year Lok was appointed Governor. Frobisher never found a northwest passage, but did discover iron ore, which an Italian goldsmith in London maintained contained gold. A second voyage secured 200 tons of ore, but assayers concluded that their furnace was not powerful enough, and larger furnaces had to be constructed. Meanwhile Frobisher was off on his third sailing in May 1578 with 15 ships, and returned with a further 1200 tons of ore. To support these journeys Lok spent £7,500 of his own money.

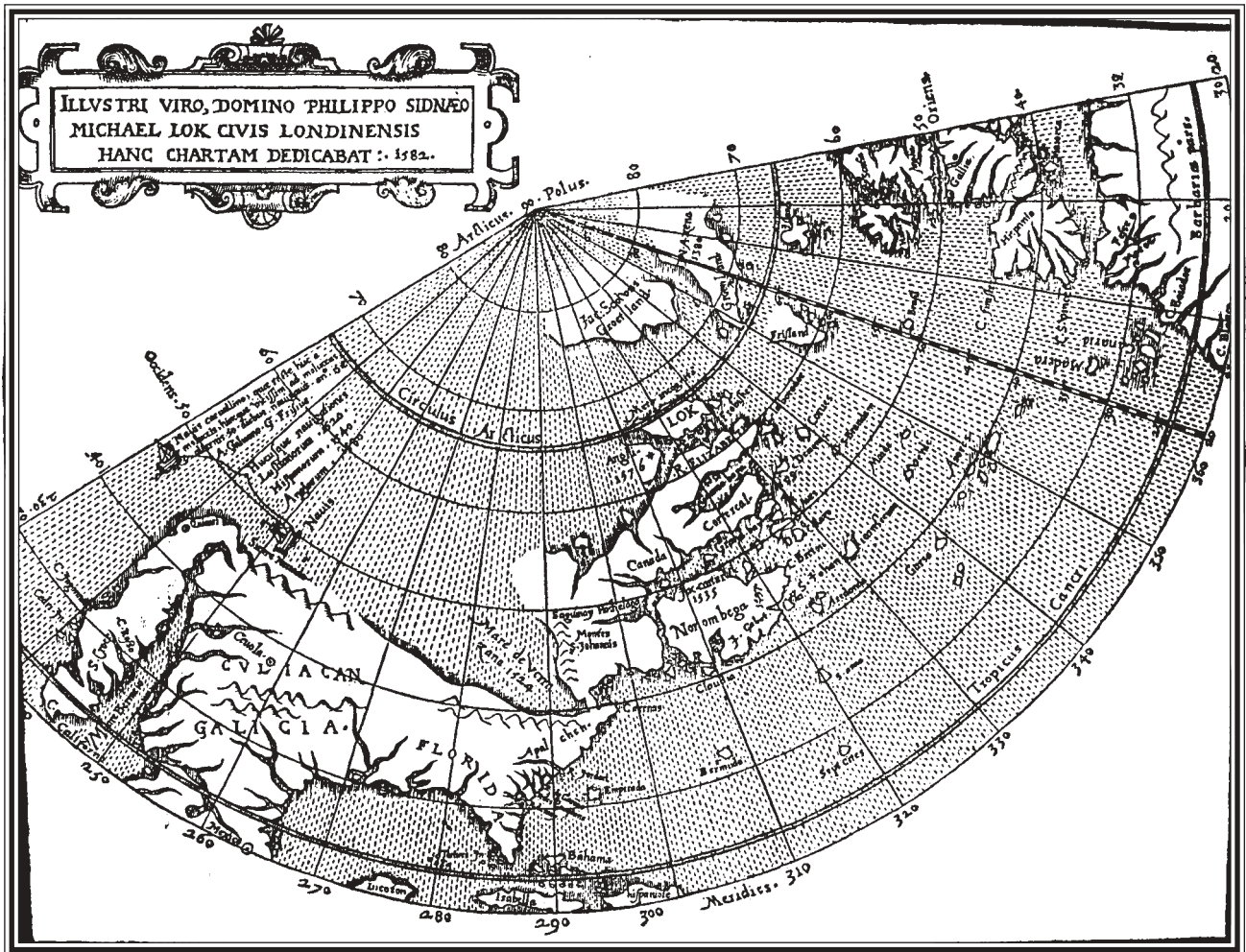
When it was shown that the iron ore was pyrites (fool's gold), all turned on Lok, including Frobisher. Backers refused to pay their subscriptions, whilst ship owners required payment for their ships. One sued Lok, and Lok was imprisoned for debt in the Fleet prison in 1581.

When Hakluyt first published his *Divers Voyages* in 1582, he asked Lok to provide a map of the northern lands depicting the latest discoveries. As can be seen on the map, Lok used his name for some of the land<sup>3</sup>. To avoid possible further litigation, Lok had to go into virtual exile. His wife died, and we find him living in Ireland, Turkey and Venice, supported by his numerous sons, including his stepson Julius Caesar. In Turkey and Venice he lived with his son Benjamin. In 1598 Hakluyt published *Decades of the New World*, part of which Lok translated into English. Finally, Lok returned to England at Christmas 1602. As late as 1614/5 the Cathay Company was still pursuing him for debt, when he was aged 83.

Hakluyt published Peter Martyr's *Historie of the New World* in 1612, with its dedication to Sir Julius Caesar, and the title page informs the reader that it was translated from the Latin into English by Michael Lok<sup>2</sup>. This may have been a son, a contemporary of Julius Caesar, and in fact his step brother.

### References:

1. Reprinted in *Hakluyt Soc. Publications* 1885 70, 71
2. Reprinted in Hakluyt's *Collection of the Early Voyages* Vol.V 1812. A retranslation of the *Historie* was published by F A McNutt 1912, 2 vols.
3. Reprinted in *Hakluyt Soc. Publications* 1850 7



Map of North America, by Michael Lok. From Hakluyt's *Divers voyages touching the discoverie of America*, London 1582

[It seems worth pointing out that Emma Hamilton did make one adventurous voyage. In late December 1798 she helped Nelson in the *Vanguard* to evacuate the King and Queen of the Two Sicilies, with their huge household, from Naples to Palermo. In appalling storms Emma proved herself brave and capable - and seemingly impervious to seasickness! JG]

## SURREY HISTORY

*Surrey History* is the annual publication of Surrey Local History Council, normally sold at £3.95 but available to members of Merton Historical Society, as a member society, at £2.65. The latest edition - **Vol V No 5** - is on order, and will be available at meetings or by post. Articles include:-

Surrey Elections and M.P.s from the Reform Act to the Present Day

by David Robinson, Surrey's County Archivist

A Brief History of Cuddington

by Charles Abdy of Nonsuch Antiquarian Society

New Facilities for Surrey Historians

by David Robinson, Surrey's County Archivist

We have a few copies of earlier editions in stock, which we are offering to members at just £1! Among a range of topics, they each have an article relating to our area:-

**Vol. IV No. 2** - Les Belges à Wimbledon - A Curiosity of 1867

Michael Robbins

**Vol. IV No. 5** - William Harland and the Paint & Varnish Industry in Mitcham

Eric Montague

**Vol. V No. 1** - The Paper Mills of Surrey III (including Merton, Morden & Wallington) Alan Crocker

Contact Peter Hopkins 0181 543 8471 to order a bargain. Stocks are limited. (Postage 40p each).

## **ERIC MONTAGUE** traces the Mitcham connections of SIR AMBROSE CROWLEY (1658-1713)

At a meeting of the Society some years ago I asked if anyone would care to undertake research which might throw light on how it came about that Mitcham parish church should contain a memorial to Sir Ambrose Crowley, the 18th-century industrialist, who, as far as I knew at the time, had neither lived in Mitcham nor had any connections with the parish.

Our late member, Jack Bailey, responded, and it is largely through his genealogical researches that an account of the Crowley family, and a plausible explanation for their monument's presence in Mitcham church, can now be presented.

By the late 15th century, when it was the last resting-place of Alice, the wife of Ralph Illingworth of Hall Place, the north chancel of Mitcham parish church had become popular as the burial place of several families prominent in the life of the parish<sup>1</sup>. Successive owners of the Hall Place estate retained a proprietorial interest in the north chancel until the early 19th century, and in Manning and Bray one can find described monuments to the memory of a number of Mitcham's leading parishioners interred here in the 18th century when, with the house, the chancel was held on lease by William Heath and subsequently his son Thomas<sup>2</sup>.

One of the families whose members were buried here was that of a remarkable character, Sir Ambrose Crowley, a wealthy iron manufacturer, whose large marble memorial can now be seen in the baptistry. Quite apart from seeking to demonstrate a relationship between the Crowleys and either the owners or lessees of the north chancel, it is the natural instinct of the local historian to attempt to locate their residence in the village. Frustratingly, so far the quest has not borne fruit, and there is in fact very little evidence to associate Sir Ambrose with any particular house in Mitcham, and his will makes no reference at all to his being in possession of property in the village. There are however several entries in the burial register to associate him, his wife and two of his sons with Mitcham, the volume for the latter part of the 17th century recording the burial in April 1696 and April 1698 respectively of Ambrose and Owen, young sons of "Mr Ambrose Crowley". In 1713 we find recorded the interment of "Sir Ambrose Crowley Kt. Alderman of London" himself, and finally "Dame Mary Crowley, relict of Sir Ambrose Crowley", who was buried beside her husband in 1727<sup>3</sup>.



*Sir Ambrose & Lady Crowley  
Monument in Mitcham parish  
church*

The Crowley grave was marked by a ledger slab set in the floor of the north aisle, its inscription drawing attention to the monument to their memory, affixed to the north wall of the chancel nearby. This, one of the most impressive memorials to be seen in the old church, was executed by John Michael Rysbrack, one of the best sculptors of the 18th century. It bears the profile portraits of Sir Ambrose and Dame Mary Crowley in a medallion, and was fortunately preserved for re-erection in the new church, when the medieval building was demolished in 1819. For over half a century the memorial was a conspicuous feature to be seen in the west porch as one entered the church, but when the present baptistry was formed in 1875 the monument was relocated. The inscription reads:

*Near this place are deposited the Remains of Sir Ambrose Crowley Knight, Citizen and Alderman of London, whose numerous Family and great estate were the present rewards of an Indefatigable Industry and Application to Business, an unblemished probity, and a sincere belief and practice of true Christianity, and particularly a boundless Liberality towards the Poor, many Hundreds of whom he constantly employed. Near him lies ye Body of Dame Mary his wife, ye daughter of Charles Owen Esq, a Younger Son of ye Family of Condor. She buried seven Children Infants, and saw one Son, John Crowley Esq, and five Daughters married. John was married to Theodosia Gascoign of Enfield; Mary to James Hallett Esq of Essex; Lettice to Sir John Hind Cotton of Cambridgeshire Bart; Sarah to Humphrey Parsons Esq of Surrey; Anna to Richard Fleming Esq of Hants; and Elizabeth to the Right Hon. Lord St John of Bletsoe. Sir Ambrose died Oct. 11 1713, aged 54 years; His Lady in the 63rd year of her age, 1727.*

Provision for the erection of this memorial had been made by Mary Crowley in her will, £300 being left for the monument to be erected in Mitcham church. For much of his life Sir Ambrose seems to have lived in the City (he was living in Thames Street when he married Mary at the church of St Bartholomew the Less) and his children



were baptised either at St Giles, Cripplegate, or in the parish of All Hallows the Less in Thames Street, where he held various parochial offices from 1690 until 1695. In 1704 the family moved to Greenwich, where Sir Ambrose died in October 1713<sup>4</sup>. The reason for his burial at Mitcham can best be explained by the ruinous state of Greenwich church, which had collapsed in 1710 after years of neglect, his wife's family connections with Mitcham through her father Charles Owen, and the fact that two of the Crowley children were already buried there<sup>5</sup>.

All five Crowley daughters evidently secured wealthy husbands, two at least of whom were to be nationally well-known. Sir John Hind Cotton became a prominent Tory politician, whilst Humphrey Parsons was Lord Mayor of London in 1730-1 and again in 1740<sup>6</sup>. It is possible that it was Parsons, and not Sir Ambrose, as stated by Lysons<sup>7</sup>, who was characterised in *The Tatler* No.73 as "Sir Humphrey Greenhat"<sup>8</sup>. A Mrs Frances Parsons, who died in 1742 aged 43 and is commemorated by an oval memorial tablet now in the north vestibule of Mitcham church (in the old building it was on the wall of the north chancel, near the memorial to the Heath family) was almost certainly a relative.

It is the marriage of John Crowley to Theodosia Gascoign(e) that provides the second major link between the Crowleys and Mitcham, for the Gascoigne family retained a connection with the parish throughout the 18th century. In the mid-1780s a substantial house on the south-western side of the Upper Green, described by Edwards as being used as a girls' school under the proprietorship of Mrs Fowkes<sup>9</sup>, was listed in the Land Tax records as belonging to Mrs Elizabeth Gascoigne<sup>10</sup>. The name is not common in the parish, and it seems likely that she was the widow of "James Cloberry Gascoigne gent.", who died in June 1796 and was commemorated in the parish church by a small white marble tablet against the wall of the chancel<sup>11</sup>. James Gascoigne, who owned land to the south of the Green in 1762<sup>12</sup>, appears to have been related to Sarah Chandler (formerly Selby), widow of George Chandler, a merchant of Mile End, for we are told that on her death in 1789 she gave several pecuniary legacies and all her freehold land and copyhold estates in Britain (including Hall Place, Mitcham) and all her plantations in Jamaica, to a George Gascoigne, on condition that he changed his name to Chandler<sup>13</sup>.

With these links, imperfectly understood, it must be admitted, we have found a connection between the Crowleys and Mitcham, although the actual location of the Crowleys' residence in the 1690s, when two of their young sons were buried in the parish church has yet to be established with any certainty. There is however circumstantial evidence to support the belief that the house might have occupied a site to the south-west of the Upper Green.

Ambrose Crowley was born in 1658, the son of Ambrose Crowley, a blacksmith and 'nailer' of Stourbridge, Worcestershire, who prospered as a wholesale dealer in iron goods, and of Mary Hall of Bromsgrove, his wife<sup>14</sup>. Young Ambrose began his career in commerce in 1671, when he was apprenticed to Clement Plumstead of the Drapers' Company. His marriage to Mary Owen (whose mother's family, the Knights, are understood to have been long domiciled in Mitcham<sup>5</sup>) took place in 1681 at St Bartholomew the Less. Crowley seems by this time to have set himself up in business as an 'ironmonger' in London, for in 1682 he was in dispute with his suppliers in the Midlands, and by 1684 he had established a nail manufactory at Sunderland.

Before long he had become the owner of slitting mills (in which iron bars or plates are slit into nail-rods etc) and steel furnaces at Winlaton, near Newcastle upon Tyne, and of foundries and forges at Swalwell, where he made anchors, chains and other heavy goods<sup>15</sup>. As his interests expanded he acquired large warehouses in London and at Greenwich, and smaller depots at Blackwell, Ware, Wolverhampton, Walsall and Stourbridge. Transport was vital to the successful conduct of the enterprise, and Crowley owned a small fleet of vessels plying between the Tyne and the Thames.



*An 18th-century slitting mill*

Ambrose had had a Quaker upbringing. He applied his immense natural energy unsparingly to his business interests, and expected his employees to do the same. It is said, for instance, that in the early years of the 18th century he required his men to labour for 13½ hours a day, for six days a week<sup>16</sup>.

The Crowley family was at 151 Thames Street in 1686/7, and from 1690 to 1695 Ambrose held various offices in the parish of All Hallows the Less. His sons John and Ambrose (the second son to bear the name) and daughters Lettice, Ann and Elizabeth appear in the baptism registers of All Hallows the Less in 1688 and 1701, and 1692, 1698 and 1702 respectively. In 1792 the Crowleys moved to Greenwich<sup>4</sup>.

Abraham Crowley received a knighthood from Queen Anne in January 1707 whilst holding office as Sheriff for the City of London<sup>17</sup>. Although he had risen so far in the society of his time, he seems never to have attempted to disguise his origins, and is said to have kept his north country accent throughout his life. A member of the Drapers' Company, of which he was Master in 1708/9, his political career had begun with election to the Court of Common Council in 1697, representing the Dowgate Ward of the City. He was sworn as an Alderman for Dowgate in May 1711, the same year



*Crowley House & Crowley Wharf, Greenwich,  
looking towards the Royal Naval Hospital*

that he became a director of the South Sea Company, of which he was a major shareholder<sup>18</sup>. In 1712/13 he was deputy governor of the Company, and, at the height of his career, was returned Member of Parliament for Andover in 1713, ready to take advantage of the position in which he would have found himself under the Tory government of Harley and St John. Fate however determined otherwise, for on 11 October 1713 Sir Ambrose Crowley died at Greenwich, aged 54.

In Crowley's will<sup>19</sup>, where he is described as of East Greenwich, his son John is the principal beneficiary, receiving all his father's houses, lands, and other premises in Durham, Worcestershire and Kent. John Crowley (who was satirised by Addison in *The Spectator* [No.299] as "Sir John Anvil") was also a member of the Drapers' Company<sup>6</sup>. He too was elected as Alderman for the Dowgate Ward, in 1727, after serving six years in the Court of Common Council. He was MP for Okehampton from 1722 until 1727, and for Queenborough in Kent from 1727 until his death the following year<sup>20</sup>.

Sir Ambrose Crowley, one of Britain's first industrial entrepreneurs, owed his financial success to sheer hard-headedness, business acumen and organising ability. He built up a highly articulated structure; he appointed managers and supervisors to each of his establishments, drew up an elaborate code of company "laws", and exercised direction not only of policy, but also of day-to-day operations through a continuous flow of correspondence from London. In 1728, after the death of John, the estate was valued at nearly £250,000<sup>14</sup>. This did not consist wholly of industrial assets, but it is clear that by this time the business organisation Sir Ambrose had founded had grown to an incredible size.

After John's death the works were run by Sir Ambrose's grandsons Ambrose (d.1754) and John (d.1755), and thereafter by their mother Theodosia, who was a widow for 54 years. The head office, principal warehouse and family residence were firstly at Thames Street, and after 1704 at Greenwich. The business, which collapsed in about 1863, was considered to be the most extensive in the country, and at one time controlled the largest ironworks in England<sup>21</sup>.

As we have seen, Dame Mary Crowley, daughter of Charles Owen Esq. of Mitcham, survived her husband for nearly 14 years, and was laid to rest beside him in Mitcham church on 5 July 1727 at the age of 62. In addition to the money set aside for the memorial to Sir Ambrose and herself, she also left £50 for the poor of the parish. Her mother was the sister and sole heir of John Knight of Mitcham<sup>22</sup>, and her grandfather was probably the Francis Knight Esq. whose name appears in the Hearth Tax records of 1664, paying tax on what, with its eight hearths, was one of the larger houses in the parish<sup>23</sup>. There was also a connection with the Cranmer family through the marriage to a member of the Owens by Anne Cranmer, sister of Robert Cranmer the East India merchant, who purchased a large estate in Mitcham and lordship of the manor during the Commonwealth<sup>24</sup>. More work on the parish registers of Mitcham and the various wills is needed before the precise relationships of these interesting families can be clarified.

#### Notes and references:

- 1 Something of the prestige attaching to a grave in the north chancel can be read into the entry in the parish burial register, which records that on 23 March 1737 Mary, wife of Mr Joseph Baly from Hertfordshire was interred in Mr Heath's chancel, "the burial place of the late Sir Ambrose Crowley".
- 2 Manning O and Bray W *History of Surrey* II (1809) 500
- 3 Ms. copies in possession of Surrey Archaeological Society (Ref: Cockayne MS. Vol.III) Originals are at Surrey History Centre
- 4 It is for detailed biographical information on the Crowley family that I am indebted greatly to my late friend and fellow-member of Merton Historical Society, Jack Bailey.
- 5 Flinn M W *Men of Iron: The Crowleys in the Early Iron Industry* (1962)
- 6 Beaven A B *The Aldermen of the City of London* II (1908) 195
- 7 Lysons D *The Environs of London* I (1792) 356
- 8 *Gentleman's Magazine* (1803) 1004  
Correspondent "Q", referring to Lysons, argues the case convincingly for Humphrey Parsons.
- 9 Edwards J *Companion from London to Brighthelmston* Pt.II 16
- 10 Surrey History Centre, Land Tax Records - Mitcham
- 11 Manning and Bray II (1809) 501
- 12 Deeds of Glebelands, seen in the Chief Executive's Department, London Borough of Merton, in the 1980s
- 13 *Victoria County History of Surrey* II (1905) 372
- 14 Le Neve *Pedigrees of Knights*; Beaven I (1908)
- 15 Ashton T S *An Economic History of England: The 18th Century* (1955) 164-5, quoting Flinn M W 'Sir Ambrose Crowley, Ironmonger, 1658-1713' in *Explorations in Entrepreneurial History* Vol.V No.3 120
- 16 Ashton 212
- 17 Beaven I 258
- 18 Beaven II 122 and I 142
- 19 PCC 22 Leeds June 10. Proved 19 October 1713
- 20 Beaven II 126
- 21 Crowley's Winlaton Ironworks, where he harnessed the waters of the Derwent for power, was Europe's first integrated manufacturing plant, taking in raw materials and producing the finished articles. The once beautiful valley was still attractive enough to be painted by Turner in 1817, but it was desecrated in the late 19th and early 10th centuries by steel mills and the massive Derwenthaugh Cokeworks. The plant closed in 1985, and in the early 1990s the valley was reclaimed, and is now parkland. Williams P 'Paradise Regained in Turner's Rural Idyll', *The Times* 6 August 1998
- 22 Professor M F H Rose, in a personal communication 17 March 1993
- 23 Surrey Record Society *Surrey Hearth Tax* XLI and XLII Vol.XVIII (1964)
- 24 Manning and Bray II (1803) 497

## IN BRIEF

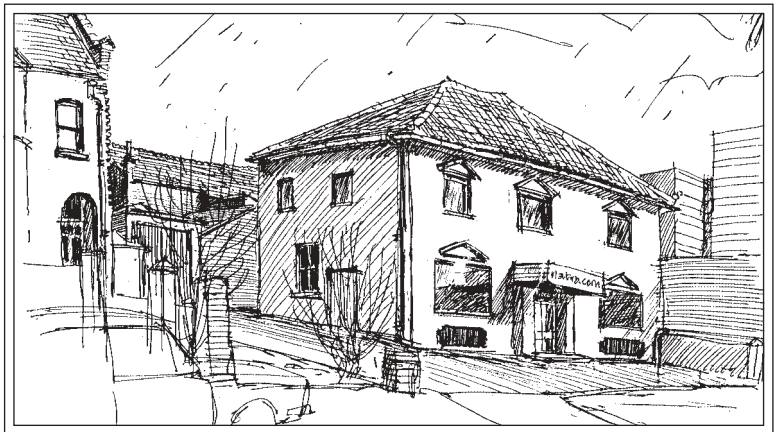
- ◆ On Southwark Diocese Open Day, Saturday 18 September, many churches in the Borough will be open for special events and displays. These include:
  - St Mary's Church, Merton.** A chance to see some of the old records usually housed at Surrey History Centre, Woking
  - St Martin's Church, Camborne Road, Morden.** An exhibition on the history of the Lower Morden area - plus free cream teas!
- ◆ In the run-up to the bicentenary of Trafalgar in 2005 there will be many, perhaps too many, new books on Nelson. However, anything by Tom Pocock is welcome. In *Nelson's Women*, the author of one of the best biographies of Nelson deals briskly but perceptively with the hero's mother, wife, mistress, niece and daughter, as well as the delicious Mary Moutray, the simpering Elizabeth Andrews - and the opera singer of Leghorn. Published by Andre Deutsch at £20.
- ◆ Another 'local hero' stars in *The Great Stink of London* (£19.99) by Stephen Halliday, which is in this year's list from Sutton Publishing. The story of **Sir Joseph Bazalgette** and the construction of London's sewers in the 19th century has a foreword by Adam ('Local Heroes') Hart-Davis. Bazalgette had a house in Morden for many years before moving up the hill to Wimbledon. He is buried in St Mary's churchyard.
- ◆ The Museum of London pays tribute to **Alfred the Great: London's forgotten king** in an exhibition opening on 8 September to mark the 11th centenary of Alfred's death in 899. Recent excavations of Saxon London have thrown new light on this still mysterious era. Loans on display will include the marvellous Alfred Jewel from the Ashmolean Museum. The exhibition runs till 9 January.
- ◆ Food and catering in Merton is the theme of the Heritage Centre's current exhibition, **Sugar and Spice & All Things Nice**. Open 10-5 Fridays/Saturdays till 30 October at The Canons, Madeira Road, Mitcham. Admission Free. It will be followed, from 12 November, by **The Peopling of Merton**, which, appropriately for the end of the Millennium, will look at how Merton has been shaped by its various communities over the centuries.

## HAMNETT PINHEY AND ROSE COTTAGE, WIMBLEDON

The early history of Rose Cottage, now 101 Hamilton Road SW19, has been elucidated by DR BRUCE S. ELLIOTT of Ottawa, Canada, with considerable help from the late JOHN WALLACE of Merton. Dr Elliott related the story of the house and its builder in two issues of the *Horaceville Herald*, which is the newsletter of the Pinhey's Point Foundation, 270 Pinhey's Point Road, R.R.1, Dunrobin, Ontario, Canada KOA 1T0. Part of his account, written for Canadian readers, is reproduced here in slightly amended form, with kind permission.

When Hamnett Pinhey, a young importer and merchant, decided in 1819 to emigrate to Canada he proudly described himself as a gentleman of property, and after becoming a colonial he retained ownership of two small estates in England. One was a residence called Rose Cottage, situated on eight acres of land in the parish of Wimbledon, close to the boundary with Merton. Though much altered Rose Cottage still stands, as 101 Hamilton Road.

The land had been part of the Merton Place estate of Admiral Nelson. When Nelson died at Trafalgar in 1805 he left to his mistress Emma Hamilton 70 acres of the Merton Place estate of her own choosing. His unorthodox bequest of Lady Hamilton herself to the people of England was not honoured by the government, and mounting debts forced her to turn to friends for support. One of her friends was Abraham Goldsmid, a Jewish financier of Dutch birth who maintained a residence nearby at Morden Lodge.



*Rose Cottage in the 1980s drawn by John Wallace*

In November 1808 Goldsmid and several friends became trustees of the Merton Place estate and advanced Lady Hamilton £3500<sup>1</sup>. This sum was soon expended however, and Merton Place was put up for sale. There were no buyers, and in 1809 for £13,000 Abraham Goldsmid and his brother Asher purchased the freehold to 72.5 acres in Merton and Wimbledon, including Merton Place house, as tenants in common<sup>2</sup>. The lands in Merton parish were sold off in small lots, but those on the Wimbledon side were for the most part still owned by the Goldsmids in the 1850s. The coming of the lands onto the market did however present an opportunity for rising London merchants and gentlemen to obtain sites for country residences.



*Hamnett Kirkes Pinhey  
(Courtesy of Dr Bruce Elliott and  
Pinhey's Point Foundation)*

Enter Hamnett Pinhey, whose Rose Cottage appears to have been the earliest development on the Merton Place estate<sup>3</sup>. Pinhey may have had previous associations with Merton. The curate there was the Rev. Thomas Lancaster, who also ran a boys' boarding school in Wimbledon. Hamnett's aunt Mary Pinhey (born in 1747 at Totnes, Devon, died in 1824 and buried at Stoke Damerel) had married a William Lancaster (1748-1820). It is possible that Thomas Lancaster was a relative of Pinhey's uncle-by-marriage, but this needs further investigation. Pinhey does seem to have lived in the area while negotiating with the Goldsmids, for his brother-in-law wrote many years later that while visiting juvenile haunts of 25 years earlier he had seen "your old lodgings in Morden", and a servant of Pinhey was buried at Merton in August 1811<sup>4</sup>. However the family bible in the Bytown Museum notes that his children were born at his London residence, 3 New London Street, Crutched Friars.

Pinhey first consulted his solicitor about purchasing property from the Nelson estate in August 1810, and was referred for an abstract of title to Abraham Goldsmid. Goldsmid, despite his financial acuity and ostentatious wealth, was renowned for his philanthropy, but Pinhey's involvement with him came as the meteoric rise and unparalleled financial luck of the Goldsmid family took a tragic turn, and the transaction ended up costing Pinhey much bother and not a little money.



Abraham Goldsmid (1756?-1810) and his brother Benjamin were brokers whose fortunes had risen spectacularly since 1792 when they had successfully bid to handle a government loan. In so doing they had broken the monopoly of the English banks, which had been extorting high rates of interest from a government starved for credit during the French Revolutionary Wars. Following several years of declining fortunes after the death of their patron William Pitt in 1806, Abraham was a joint contractor in 1810 with Baring Brothers for a government loan of £13.4 million. Market declines and the death of Sir Francis Baring left Goldsmid unable to meet his obligations - the press noted a loss of nearly £200,000 on the government loans - and on 28 September 1810 he shot himself in the grounds of his house at Morden<sup>5</sup>. (His brother Benjamin had hanged himself two years earlier.)

The Crown was the Goldsmid partnership's principal creditor, in the sum of £466,700. Fearful that the creditors' claims would be met at a much reduced level if the estate were disposed of during the immediate panic ensuing upon Goldsmid's suicide, the Treasury agreed that the rights of the Crown would not be enforced to collect the debt immediately, and that the royal debt would stand equal with the other claims, so long as inspectors appointed under Act of Parliament approved the administration of the Goldsmids' affairs. On 27 November 1810 an indenture was signed by all parties agreeing to the appointment of four Inspectors<sup>6</sup>, and an Act of Parliament on 27 June 1812 confirmed the indenture, and exempted those purchasing from the trustees from any liability towards the Crown<sup>7</sup>. Hamnett Pinhey's little property transaction had thus become entangled in the ponderous intricacies of national finance.

Soon after Abraham Goldsmid's death a lawyer raised doubts to Pinhey's solicitor that Jews were qualified to own land in England. The question was argued by the lawyers until Asher Goldsmid admitted a 1793 precedent that appeared to resolve the question in the affirmative.

It was February 1814 before Pinhey was allowed to pay half the purchase money to Asher Goldsmid's bankers, who refused to receive it before reading through the Act of Parliament. A request to have the deeds drawn up brought the reply that a meeting of the devisees and Inspectors would be difficult to set up and that Mr Pinhey's solicitor should meet with them individually. Through February and March Mr Sagers made the rounds of the counting houses and coffee houses securing signatures from Goldsmid's heirs and partners and from the Parliamentary Inspectors. Then in May the Goldsmids demanded interest on the outstanding half of the purchase money, and reimbursement from Pinhey for land tax expended on the property since the signing of the deeds. After an attempt at arbitration failed because of a disagreement over the facts of the case, Pinhey went to see Asher Goldsmid personally in December and threatened a suit in Chancery. With little principal involved the matter was not worth taking to law and it appears to have been settled amicably, with Pinhey paying an additional £516.11.7 of the purchase money and agreeing to pay interest at 5 percent on the remainder. On 18 April 1815 Pinhey met with the Goldsmids to complete the purchase and receive the deeds<sup>8</sup>.

Pinhey may have secured a long-term building lease to his Merton land before he was sure of purchasing the freehold, for on 16 July 1813 he signed a construction contract with a builder, Thomas Young of Water Lane, Fleet Street. For £1050 Young agreed to complete and finish the building to Pinhey's specifications by 12 January following<sup>9</sup>.

The architect of Rose Cottage was Pinhey's brother-in-law Thomas Tasker. Tasker submitted designs for a pavilion at the Royal Academy of Arts in 1812 and for the interior of a hall in 1814<sup>10</sup>. He was born in London late in 1794 and so was not yet 20 in 1813 when he designed Rose Cottage, probably the only example of his work to see the light of day<sup>11</sup>. He listed his address as 7 Idol Lane, Tower Street, the house in which his father ran a wine shop (later bequeathed by his sister Lucy to the Pinheys in Canada). We have no idea what kind of architectural training he may have had, but it is unlikely that he ever pursued the business professionally. After his father's death he was evidently a partner in the wine business with his brother William for a few years<sup>12</sup>. There was a family of architects named Tasker, the original of whom, John Tasker (c.1738-1816), was nearing the end of his career when Thomas Tasker was beginning his.



*'View of a Cottage Building at Merton Surry'  
(Courtesy of Dr Bruce Elliott and Pinhey's Point  
Foundation)*

We know little of the family of Pinhey's wife, but relationship to the better-known and accomplished John Tasker appears unlikely, for the latter was a Roman Catholic<sup>13</sup>.

The original plans for Rose Cottage have not been found, but Mr John Wallace, a Surrey local historian, and architect, has very kindly prepared measured drawings based on personal inspection, the specifications in the contract, and a photograph taken during renovation and loaned by the current (1987) occupier. The house was of two stories, with central stair and hall flanked by a dining-room and drawing-room in the front, and by a kitchen, scullery, and wash-house to the rear, some of the service rooms no doubt being in the wing. There were bedrooms both front and rear on the upper floor.

The house was built of grey brick, the front stuccoed with "Parker's Cement Jointed and Tinted by a superior hand", and the remaining three sides were rough cast with "Sharp Sand & Stone lime". It was roofed with Countess slating, pointed inside, each slate nailed down with two strong copper nails, and the eaves were laid with two courses of slates.

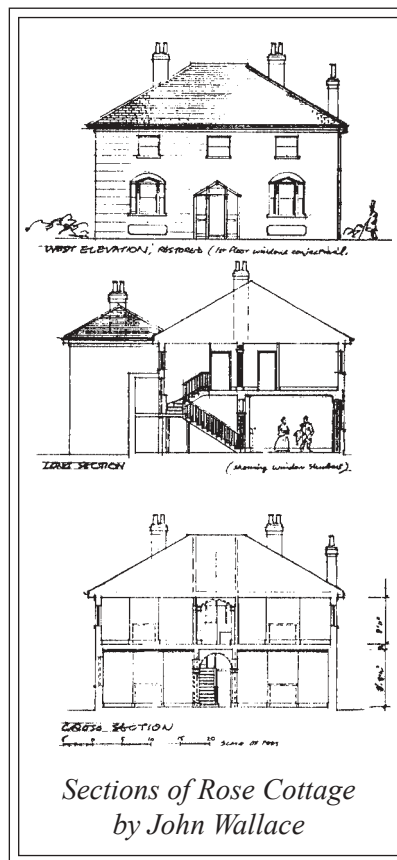
The two main chimney stacks were placed centrally on either side, so that each served fireplaces front and back on both floors. The back hearths were of Purbeck stone, and the chimneypieces in the dining- and drawing-rooms were of marble and were to be provided by Pinhey. The framing was of oak and the woodwork of Baltic fir and deals, the main floors being of 1.25" yellow deal. The ceilings and partitions were of fir lath and plaster. The kitchen, pantry and washhouse were whited, while the rest of the interior walls were to be painted colours appointed by Pinhey.

The grandest feature was the portico. Presumably of wood, it was sanded to appear as stone, and rested on an eight-inch semi-circular slab of Portland stone. At the end of the narrow central hall a half-stair rose at the side to a landing, and then wound up another flight to the chamber floor. The contract specified a mahogany moulded handrail, twisting to follow the stairs and landings. The present rail curves round decoratively at the bottom, and the stair is entered beneath a hallway arch flanked by fluted pilasters. The arches are original, but the present pilasters were removed to convert the house into offices. The high, nearly semi-circular archway may have once been echoed in the portico.

The windows consisted of a central sash with double-hung sides. Those in the principal rooms were to be "of the very best Newcastle crown glass", while the rest were to be of "second Newcastle glass". The windows had sliding deal shutters mounted on horizontal brass rollers.

Some of the furnishings were built into the house, as was usual at the time. The dining-room included cupboards with folding, locked two-panel doors and a shelf within. The contractor undertook to provide the kitchen with a dresser with turned legs, a pot board with shelves above, a spit rack over the chimney, and a deal ironing-board clamped under the window with hinges. The washhouse, paved with bricks on edge, was equipped with a pump, and had a plate rack over a sink of Purbeck stone. There was a dresser in the pantry, and a shelf hung in the centre of the ceiling.

Rose Cottage was a small country house appropriate to the middling position which Pinhey had achieved in English society. In Canada he had a grander vision. It is planned to publish a Society booklet on Pinhey in England and Canada, his property and his career.



**References:**

- 1 Philip Rathbone *Paradise Merton* London 1973 p12
- 2 PRO PROB 11/1663 f.585, will of Asher Goldsmid, proved 25 Nov.1822
- 3 Letter from John N Wallace 21 April 1986
- 4 Archives of Ontario (OA), Pinhey-Christie-Hill Papers MU-7525, Charles Tasker, Gloucester, to Mary Pinhey, 17 June 1848; Merton parish register
- 5 Chaim Bermant *The Cousinhood* New York 1971 pp21-3; *DNB* VIII pp80-1; *European Magazine* 58 (1810) p314; *Gentleman's Magazine* LXXX Pt.2 (1810) pp382-5
- 6 52 Geo III c.75 p439
- 7 *Ibid* p453
- 8 OA, Hamnett K Pinhey Papers, Series A-3, no.76, account of J Sagers, solicitor, with H Pinhey
- 9 *Ibid* Series A-1, no.1
- 10 Algernon Graves *The Royal Academy of Arts: A Complete Dictionary of Contributors* VII p322
- 11 Baptism 12 November 1794 at St Katherine Cree Church, London, son of Jeremiah Tasker
- 12 Directories 1827-32
- 13 Howard Colvin *A Biographical Dictionary of British Architects* London 1978 pp807-8; letter from Nicholas Savage, Royal Academy 5 February 1987

(The above text is taken from the *Horaceville Herald* issues of December 1987 and April 1988)

## LOCAL HISTORY WORKSHOP REPORT

**Friday 25 June 1999** Peter Hopkins in the chair. Five members present.

- ◆ The opening contributor was **Eric Montague**, who, on a recent tour of the Canadian Maritime Provinces, had been intrigued to find another **Morden, in Nova Scotia**. Attractively situated on cliffs overlooking the Bay of Fundy, this Morden appears to have its origins in a French Acadian fishing settlement of the early 18th century, but at the moment one can only speculate on how it acquired its name. Monty has written to the secretary of the local history society, seeking information, and hopes to be able to report further at a later meeting.
- ◆ **Sheila Harris** sought information on a number of **copper printing blocks** which she had discovered in a cupboard. Examination showed these to be relics of the Society's first venture into publication, back in the 1960s, when booklets were produced on *The Canons* and *The Elms*. Modern methods of printing have rendered such blocks museum pieces, and they have been placed in the Society's store at Lower Morden Library.
- ◆ A chance visit to an antique shop in Kingston enabled **Judith Goodman** to acquire a late-19th-century glass mineral water bottle embossed **CAMWAL** - the initials of the company (Chemists' Aerated and Mineral Water Association Limited) operating from the Ravenspring Works in Western Road, Mitcham, where an artesian bore once supplied water of high quality. The bottle will be loaned to Sarah Gould for display in her forthcoming exhibition on Food and Drink at the Heritage Centre.  
Judith had also accidentally stumbled on the location of **William De Morgan's pottery**, usually assumed to have been near his friend William Morris's works at Merton Abbey. He was in fact at Stone Cottage Pottery, a short walk away in Colliers Wood. Mitcham directories list the pottery here from 1884 until 1891. The actual site has yet to be confirmed, but it is believed to have been off Byegrove Road, where, until the 1960s there was a cork factory. The name "Stone Cottage" was probably inspired by the small gatehouse, close by, built by the Surrey Iron Railway.
- ◆ **Lionel Green**, one of our Vice Presidents, produced copies of the *Catholic Herald* dated 4 June 1999 carrying an excellent article on **Merton Priory** and the short service held in the Chapter House on 2 May. The Priory is one of our major Heritage Sites, and yet remains sadly neglected. Efforts are being made to establish a Trust, with the object of making the Priory better known. We wish it success.  
Lionel also presented a short paper (a future article in the Bulletin?) on **Taunton Priory**. Founded during the late Saxon period, when it functioned as a minster, Taunton was reformed as an Augustinian house early in the 12th century - a process in which one of the outstanding Merton canons, Guy of Merton, played a significant role.
- ◆ Next, **Peter Hopkins** displayed two draft display panels from a series he is preparing for an open day at St Martin's, Lower Morden, in September. They illustrate various aspects of the history of **Lower Morden and Morden Park**, and Peter has been encouraged to consider reproducing them as a booklet for sale. Drafts were distributed to workshop members for comment, and it was immediately obvious that Peter's work, drawing upon hitherto unpublished primary sources, and using modern computerised technology, will prove an invaluable aid to understanding the early history of this part of the Borough.
- ◆ Following an entirely different thread of local history, Peter and Judith had recently met Roy Passingham, on Old Rutlishian, to discuss a history of **William Rutlish**, on which Roy is working. With his partner George Pinkney (to whom there are references in Pepys's diaries), Rutlish was involved in producing the elaborately embroidered regalia ordered by Charles II prior to his accession to the throne. Another 'local hero' about whom far more ought to be common knowledge, Rutlish acquired considerable wealth, and was a great benefactor to Merton.

**Eric Montague**

**Next Workshop Dates: Fridays 22 October and 10 December at 7.30 pm at the Wandle Industrial Museum.**

**Everyone is welcome at Workshop meetings. You don't have to be actively engaged in research just come along and listen, talk and enquire.**

**49th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING  
SNUFF MILL ENVIRONMENTAL CENTRE, MORDEN HALL PARK  
SATURDAY 6 NOVEMBER 1999 at 2.30 pm**

**AGENDA**

- 1 Apologies for absence**
- 2 Minutes of the 48th AGM held on 7 November 1998**
- 3 Matters arising from the Minutes**
- 4 Chairman's Report**
- 5 Membership Secretary's Report**
- 6 Treasurer's Report:** reception and approval of the financial statement for the year, copies of which will be available at the meeting
- 7 Election of Officers for the coming year**
  - a) Chairman
  - b) Vice Chairman
  - c) Hon. Secretary
  - d) Hon. Treasurer
  - e) Hon. Auditor(s)
- 8 Election of a Committee for the coming year**
- 9 Motions of which due notice has been given**
- 10. Any other business**

At the conclusion of the business part of the Meeting Scott McCracken will speak about **'The Archaeology of World War I'**.

NOMINATIONS for Officers and Committee members should reach the Hon. Secretary 14 days before the AGM, though additional nominations may be received at the AGM with the consent of members.

MOTIONS for the AGM must be sent to the Hon. Secretary in writing at least 14 days before the meeting.

The MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY reminds members that subscriptions are due on 1 October:-

Single member	£6
Additional member in same household	£3
Student member	£1

A renewal form is enclosed with this Bulletin. Please return forms by post, with subscription, to the Membership Secretary, Mr C E Sole or in person at a meeting.

Members who pay their subscriptions by Banker's Standing Order, please ignore renewal form.

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**PETER D HARRIS**

In memory of Peter Harris, whose death was reported in the previous Bulletin, the Committee has made a donation of £50 on behalf of the Society, to the St Helier Association for Kidney Patients (SHAK).

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Letters and contributions (of any length) for the Bulletin should be sent to the Hon. Editor,

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