



PRESIDENT: J Scott McCracken BA FSA MIFA

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

BULLETIN NO. 132

DECEMBER 1999



PROGRAMME DECEMBER-MARCH



Saturday 4 December 2.30 pm
Lionel Green

Snuff Mill Environmental Centre
'Daughter Houses of Merton Priory'

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 this illustrated talk he will discuss the varied, and far-flung, daughter houses of this important Augustinian establishment.

Saturday 22 January 2.30 pm
Ray and Pat Kilsby

Snuff Mill Environmental Centre
'From Downe to Galapagos'

An illustrated talk on Charles Darwin by two members of the Society who have been on the trail of the great naturalist - in Kent and much further afield.

Saturday 12 February 2.30 pm
Eric Montague

The Canons
'Around the Cricket Green'

Another chapter of the Mitcham story by the acknowledged expert. Formerly part of the common waste, this open space became one of the most famous of all village cricket greens, and it is set amongst attractive and interesting buildings. The full story will be told in this illustrated talk.
Please note the venue.

Saturday 18 March 2.30 pm
Barbara Webb

Snuff Mill Environmental Centre
'Millais and the Hogsmill River'

It was known that Pre-Raphaelite artist John Millais painted his 'Ophelia' (now in the Tate) with the Hogsmill as its setting, but where exactly on the river? In 1995 Barbara Webb determined to find out. In an illustrated talk she will describe her detective work and the solution of the mystery.

*(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 archway and turn right towards Morden Cottage.
Buses 118,157,164)*

*(The Canons is in Madeira Road, Mitcham, close to bus routes 118,152,200.
Drivers use the leisure centre car-park.)*



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



A SECOND MITCHAM PUB WALK - September 1999

Fourteen members and friends braved the threatened rain to join Dr Tony Scott on the 25th September, and were amazed to reach the end of the journey totally dry, though several of the party set about remedying that at one or two of the hostelrys we had passed earlier!

Tony outlined the route that we would take, from our meeting place by the Clocktower as far as the Swan, or what remained of it. He also explained that as well as the pubs, past and present, he would tell us about other historic buildings, or their sites, as we passed them.

So Tony began with the Clocktower itself, set up in 1899 in celebration of Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee two years earlier. To save having to wind the clock more than once a week, a shaft was dug beneath the tower to enable the weights to drop below ground level, but the weights dropped into water, making them lighter, and consequently the clock never kept good time. Only since its removal to the present site in 1994 has the clock been reliable, though Tony suspects that it probably had a new mechanism installed at that time.

The corner, occupied successively since 1980 by Sainsbury's and KwikSave, was the site of an Elizabethan farmhouse, demolished in 1853, known as Old Bedlam. It is thought to have been one of the properties owned by Bess Throckmorton, who married Sir Walter Raleigh. From 1934-61 the site housed Mitcham's only cinema.

Two pubs which used to stand nearby were demolished in the pedestrianisation of the area. *The Old Nag's Head*, which replaced the original *Nag's Head* in 1903, was demolished in 1991. Its predecessor had the dubious distinction of being one of the last pubs in the London area to have a cock pit.

The *Lord Napier* was an alehouse, also known as the *Roaring Donkey*. Beer houses were set up after the passing of the Beer House Act of 1830, which allowed the licensing of premises for the sale of beers and ales, but not for the sale of spirits, which were a social problem at the time.

Across the green, the Iceland store now stands on the site of the 18th-century Durham House.

The *King's Arms* was rebuilt at the beginning of this century, replacing a mid-18th century building. From 1879 it was leased to Young and Bainbridge, until Youngs bought the freehold.

The *White Lion of Mortimer* was formerly named the *Buck's Head*, built in 1895 to replace an 18th-century building. The inn can be traced back to at least the early 17th century, when it was owned by George Smyth, who had a mansion at Mitcham Grove. A buck's head was the Smyth family crest.



Eagle House is a Grade I listed building, dating from 1705. It remained a private house until 1825, when James Dempster opened his Academy there. In 1855 it became part of a huge school for paupers and orphans from London. Tony gave a full and fascinating account of the St George's Industrial Schools and their successor, the Holborn Union, which deserves an article of its own in a future *Bulletin*. Suffice it to say that Merton Care and Education Centre now occupies the only purpose-built building to survive from this complex.

Mitcham Baptist Church, hidden behind the shops, had originated as a mission started by the Charts, a leading Mitcham family.

Chart & Son were the architects of Mitcham Library, built and paid for by Joseph Owen of 'Pentlands' in 1933. It was built on Pound Field, part of Pound Farm, dating back to at least the 14th century, when it was held by Thomas Figue, a member of the family after whom, presumably, Figgess Marsh is named.

Two weatherboarded cottages are the last remnant of two blocks of six, called Dixon's Cottages, built at the end of the 18th century by Samuel Oxtoby. The *Gardeners' Arms* originally occupied two of these cottages. Described in 1851 as a beerhouse called the *Jolly Gardeners*, it was replaced by the present building in 1881, and renamed the *Gardeners' Arms*. It remained a beerhouse until the 1960s, when it was granted a full licence.

Our final port of call was the *Swan*, which was in process of being demolished. Only the front, dating from 1897, was still standing. *The Swan* was built around 1807 by James Moore, the physic gardener, who owned the manor of Biggin and Tamworth with some 250 acres in Mitcham. He saw the potential of a pub here to catch the passing coach trade from Streatham and Tooting before reaching the other pubs in Mitcham.

Thank you Tony for an enjoyable and interesting afternoon. Where do we go next?

Peter Hopkins

THE ST HELIER ESTATE AND MONASTIC BRITAIN -

The Evelyn Jowett Memorial Lecture for 1999, given by BILL RUDD on Friday 8 October

The Society's president, Scott McCracken, introduced the speaker - who indeed scarcely needed an introduction - to an enthusiastic audience at St Peter's Social Club hall, in the heart of the St Helier Estate.

As we all know, most of the estate's roads are named after old religious houses in all parts of Britain. But why? Apparently, at the planning stage, the London County Council decided that, as Morden had for some centuries belonged to Westminster Abbey, a monastic theme for road-names would be appropriate. It was in the 1950s that Bill, who has lived on the estate for most of his life, first conceived the romantic ambition to visit the complete list of sites represented. After a few somewhat haphazard forays he began seriously to plan his expeditions - which all had to be fitted into his holidays from his job as a postman. In 1962 he wrote to Miss Jowett, outlining his project, and she encouraged him to continue. He took photographs and slides, progressing, over the years, from a Box Brownie to more sophisticated equipment, with wide-angle lenses. And he made notes.

He stayed at Youth Hostels, and mostly travelled by bicycle, typically averaging 80 miles a day (in latter years the train or bus has taken some of the strain). As his slides showed, some of the monasteries have remained remote; some have dwindled into ruins; some have become private houses; some are represented only by their surviving churches; some have seen these churches become cathedrals; and some have become money-spinning tourist attractions. Bill's list of 108 sites took him to Scotland, Wales, all over England - and even across the water to Quarr in the Isle of Wight. Having spent his youth in Easby Crescent, and moved to Glastonbury Road later, he made sure to visit both North Yorkshire and Somerset to see those two abbeys.



Ruins of Bayham Abbey, Kent - June 1951 - W J Rudd

The orders represented by Morden's abbeys, priories, convents and so on are mainly Benedictine, Augustinian and Cistercian, but include Cluniac, Premonstratensian (as difficult to spell as to pronounce!), Trinitarian (founded in 1198 to redeem Christian captives held by Muslims) and more.

Bill met with friendliness everywhere on his travels, whether from the young lad who pointed him to the overgrown ruins in a wood, the Dowager Lady Aberconway at the abbey of the same name in North Wales, or the Duke of Bedford at Woburn Abbey in Bedfordshire. He has also seen some stunning sights - he mentioned the huge frater building at Easby; the great Jesse window at Selby; the awe-inspiring size of Benedictine Peterborough; and the wonderful views still enjoyed by some of the sites. (He also mentioned the finely-built stone tank at Shap, where the monks are thought to have been embalmed!)

Everyone who heard Bill speak with such enthusiasm and knowledge of his subject must hope that he will put into print all the fruits of his research that could not be encompassed in a single lecture.

Judith Goodman

BOOK REVIEWS

Park Place, Mitcham by Eric Montague £1.20 (members) £1.50 (non-members) (+ 50p postage)

In this new entrant to the list of Eric Montague's absorbing Mitcham studies he traces the history of the site once called Almannesland, the 18th-century house called Park Place, and its varied owners and occupiers, up to its present incarnation as a restaurant pub. The author's meticulous research is happily partnered with narrative skill, and the result once again is a thoroughly good read. The booklet is well illustrated, with photographs of various dates, a 19th-century view, and a map.

Once Upon a Time: Recollections of an Edwardian Childhood in Colliers Wood by James B. Bass of Millers Mead Local History Notes - No.15 £0.40 (members) £0.50 (non-members) (+ 30p postage)

These engaging reminiscences, put on paper between 1966 and 1970, have been edited by Eric Montague. Mr Bass, who was born in 1897, recalled with affection the "compact community" of early 20th-century Colliers Wood, the games, treats and semi-rural pleasures of childhood in the days of horse-buses; the annual highlights of Epsom Week and Sanger's Circus; and the coming of the electric tram and the cinema.

Judith Goodman

Available at meetings or from our Publications Secretary

MERTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY - 49th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Some 40 members and visitors attended this year's AGM, surely a record in recent times. No doubt the attraction was the talk given by our new President, Scott McCracken, after the business was completed, on *The Archaeology of World War I - A 20th Century Monumental Landscape*.

Outgoing Chairman Eric Montague welcomed us and introduced Scott, who presided over the meeting, having first taken the opportunity to thank the membership for inviting him to be President of the Society.

Apologies for absence had been received from Lorna Cowell, Margaret Groves and Audrey Thomas.

Minutes of last AGM: These had been published in the Bulletin for December 1998 and copies were distributed at the meeting. No comments being forthcoming, they were taken as read. There were no matters arising.

Chairman's Report

"This year, 1999, sees the conclusion of my three-year term of office as your chairman, and is therefore something of a personal milestone. In less than two months time we will of course pass a point of far greater chronological significance, and within the term of my successor the Society will achieve its half century.

"The next A.G.M. will thus present an opportunity for reviewing our achievements since the Society came into being. Today, I have merely to look back over the last 12 months.

"Firstly, I am sure you will be pleased to hear shortly from the Treasurer, David Luff, that the Society is still solvent. You will also hear from 'Bill' Sole that our membership numbers remain steady.

"During the year 1998/99 the Committee met seven times, our venue being, as in past years, the Wandle Industrial Museum. This is a very convenient arrangement, and much appreciated. The minutes of these meetings are ably taken by Mrs. Lorna Cowell.

"As I commented last year, in planning the annual programme of lectures and visits the Committee follows a pattern which has stood the test of time. This policy seems to have achieved a balance you find generally satisfactory, and reports of meetings have appeared in the Bulletin.

"Potential subjects and venues for future meetings have already been identified, but I am sure the new Committee and the officers you will be electing shortly would welcome suggestions and comments from the membership as a whole.

"This is a suitable point for me to again voice on your behalf sincere appreciation and thanks for the time and effort expended by our Honorary Secretary, Sheila Harris, in contacting speakers, booking halls and making other necessary arrangements.

"I know you will also join with me in expressing sadness at the recent passing of Peter Harris, who served the Society for so many years, and whose talents will be greatly missed.

"Over the years we have maintained the many contacts the Society has with other organisations, both local and national. However, personal attendance at meetings of these bodies by a representative from the Society has not always been possible due to conflicting dates. For this reason it is important that this year we must try to fill more, or preferably all, of the vacancies on Committee. (I will return to this matter later).

"On a number of occasions during the year the Society has been able to provide bodies such as English Heritage, the Museum of London and the Borough Council with historical information not readily available elsewhere. It is gratifying to be able to assist in such cases, and of course we make no charge. We also continue to receive enquires from developers, and from individuals researching their family histories, or engaged in courses of study. This can be time-consuming but, here again, we are pleased to help.

"Our regular workshops, which you will also have seen reported upon in the Bulletin, continue to flourish. The meetings are open to anyone, and an invitation is extended to all, whether they be Society members or not.

"Research without publication is a sterile pursuit, and here I must acknowledge the Society's extraordinary good fortune in having in Peter Hopkins someone with the enthusiasm as well as the necessary technical skills to produce what, over the last few years, has amounted to an impressive array of literature. Thank you Peter. We must also thank our anonymous "Editorial Sub-Committee" (they know who they are), who vet assiduously each draft before it is considered fit for you, our readership.

"It is axiomatic to stress the importance of communication, but the work behind the scenes can easily be taken for granted. This is certainly not the case with our quarterly Bulletin, and the Society is again fortunate, this time in having a talented Editor in the person of Judith Goodman. I am sure you would wish to join me in thanking Judith for producing an extremely readable periodical which continues to receive plaudits from far beyond the boundaries of the London Borough of Merton.

"A matter of recent concern to your Committee has been a consequence of the Council's decision to close the Morden Park Library, where for many years we have enjoyed excellent storage facilities for our collection of archaeological and heritage items. We have been happy to make these available to Sarah Gould for display at the Canons Heritage Centre, but the future location and accessibility of this 'archive' is at present uncertain.

"There is another matter on which a few words from me are, I think, needed. Although we prefer not to dwell upon it, several of your officers and committee members are themselves becoming a little 'historic'. The rules of the Society have for many years stipulated that no-one may serve as Chairman or Vice-Chairman for more than three years consecutively. The same rule applies to elected Committee members. These rules were adopted to ensure the door is open to fresh people and new ideas.

"Under the rules, only three of the present committee (including ex-officers) are eligible to stand for election or re-election and, being willing, have been nominated. This leaves seven vacancies for which I understand no nominations have been received. The Society could just manage if these three were elected, but the situation is not one the retiring administration would like to see continue. It is certainly not too late for volunteers to offer themselves for election as additional committee members, and I do urge you to consider whether you could spare the Society a little time to ensure it continues to function efficiently.

"In conclusion, I would like to thank you all, members of the Society generally and Committee members in particular, for your support, forbearance and encouragement during my term of office. The future of the Society is now in your hands, and you will shortly be making your choice of officers and committee members to take us into the new millennium."

The President thanked Eric on behalf of the Society for the efficiency and enthusiasm he had shown during his term of office, and endorsed his comments on the Committee, and on the various publications. Commenting on the forthcoming anniversary, he expressed his hope that the Society can go forward to the next 50 years.

Membership Secretary's Report: Bill Sole reported a total of 128 members in 1998-99, paying a subscription of £645, both slightly up on the previous year. Bill is not recommending an increase in subscriptions as the increase in membership over the last 5 years had more than compensated for the general increase in costs.

Treasurer's Report: David Luff apologised for two typographical errors on the copies of the balance sheet distributed at the meeting. (A corrected version appears below). The fact that our *Bulletins* are printed on a cost basis, and that venues for meetings are hired at a very reasonable cost, or at no charge at all, has meant that we have a surplus of £100 in our general budget. 1997/98 saw a small deficit on our publications, but this year has led to a substantial profit. Our stock of publications, as at the end of September, was valued (at cost) at £568. A £50 donation was made to St Helier Association for Kidney Patients in memory of Peter Harris, who had undertaken responsibility for the sale of publications over many years.

After a question from the floor as to the appropriateness of the headings used on the balance sheet, the President invited the membership to accept the audited Statement, and acceptance was proposed by Mr Davies, seconded by Mr Conway, and accepted unanimously.

FINANCES OCTOBER 1998 TO SEPTEMBER 1999 (INCLUSIVE)			
Income		Expenditure	
Subscriptions	£629.50	Publications MHS	£790.57
Donations	£77.50	Publications Others	£19.01
Publications	£1485.09	Bulletin	£170.00
Tea Money	£23.03	Hall Hire	£120.00
Interest - Midland Bank	£6.50	Affiliation	£57.00
Miscellaneous	£17.80	Lectures - Donations	£95.00
	£2239.42	Petty Cash	£84.63
		Miscellaneous	£50.00
Excess of Income over Expenditure	£853.21		£1386.21
			BALANCING OF ACCOUNTS
			Midland Bank
			Carried from 1997/98
			£737.18
			Add Excess I o E
			£853.21
			£1590.39
			Statement 30.9.99
			£1590.39
			Nationwide
			Carried from 1997/98
			£1140.84
			Interest
			£28.53
			£1169.37

Elections: The Committee's nominees for Officers were accepted *nem con*. Four nominations to the Committee already notified to the Secretary were augmented by three volunteers at the meeting, and all seven were elected *nem con*. (Details on the back cover of this Bulletin).

There being no motions of which due notice had been given, and no other business except a recommendation by the President of a Symposium organised by SCOLA & SWLALC (see back page), the meeting adjourned for tea.

After the break, our President gave an illustrated talk entitled *The Archaeology of World War I*, but which he explained was neither about battles nor excavations, but rather a 20th-century memorial landscape. As a professional archaeologist for 30 years, Scott compared the World War I cemeteries and memorials with Stonehenge. Just as Stonehenge should not be considered in isolation, but as part of a broader landscape, with earlier wooden henges and later burial mounds, adapted and reinterpreted over the centuries, so the individual sites in France and Flanders, reflecting various national characteristics, form an overall, though changing, pattern.

Some cemeteries date from 1916/17, whereas others were created after the cessation of hostilities. This was the first war which commemorated all its dead individually by name, irrespective of rank. The cemeteries and memorials became the focus of pilgrimage in the immediate post-war years, whereas now they seem to have become tourist attractions. Even as the personal memories of survivors give way to legends fostered by cinema and television, the War Graves Commission is making use of the Internet as it continues to update details.

Our new Chairman, Lionel Green, invited questions and comments, and a vote of thanks was given by one of our visitors. An excellent talk, raising some profound issues, to which this brief report cannot do justice.

Peter Hopkins



Menin Gate at Ypres, rebuilt and unveiled in 1927 as a memorial to British soldiers who fell here.

ERIC MONTAGUE with a further note on THAT OTHER MORDEN

Readers may recall seeing in the report on the Local History Workshop of 25 June last that a visit to another Morden, in Nova Scotia, had set me wondering what connection (if any) there might be with our Morden. The short (and disappointing) answer is "Nothing at all"!

Bria Stokesbury, the curator of the Kings Historical Society's Old Kings Courthouse Museum at Kentville N.S., writing in answer to my enquiry, says

"Unlike many locations in Kings County Nova Scotia which gain their names from sources in Britain, Morden appears to have been named after an early settler - one James Morden ... [who] received a grant of land in 1783, so he would be considered a Loyalist immigrating after the American Revolution."

Morden (coincidentally only a few miles from Kingston N.S.) is a peaceful village of white weatherboarded houses and bungalows delightfully set amongst pine trees on the low cliffs overlooking the Bay of Fundy. Approaching the settlement from the Annapolis Valley, one is greeted by a roadside sign (largely obscured by long grass) saying "Welcome to Morden" and "New Horizons Ahead". It is dated 1978, which suggests a modest burst of civic awareness occurred some 20 years ago before the little community relaxed once more into quiet obscurity. At the village centre, if one can call it that, is St Michael's Anglican church (consecrated 1910) and the Morden Country Store. Down on the shore a small jetty and a few small boats indicate that some of the residents engage in a little fishing, probably for recreation; but the general air is of a weekend retreat, with perhaps a few commuter residents.

A wharf or breakwater had been constructed in about 1842, and in 1847 a town site was laid out by a Col.E.K.S.Butler, after which the settlement grew somewhat larger. The Anglican Christ Church erected in 1854 was consecrated the following year, but was destroyed by fire in 1905. Morden by this time had become a busy little port, where many of the men were fishermen. By the early 1900s ships were making regular stops at the wharf bringing supplies for the stores in the neighbourhood, and were then loaded with farm produce and timber destined for the pulp mills, or to be used a fuel. The era of coastal shipping had ended by 1946, and thereafter the settlement declined to become, in Bria's words "primarily ... a summer vacation spot popular with the cottage crowd".

Morden's main interest for the tourist today lies in its connection with the mass deportation of the French-speaking Acadian settlers from the Maritime Provinces, during the reign of George II. A stone cross erected on the cliff-top commemorates a number of Acadian deportees who died here in the winter of 1756. This was during the Seven Years War, when the authorities, feeling unable to depend on the Acadians' loyalty to the Crown, embarked on the wholesale removal of complete communities, often separating the men from their families, and exiling them to other parts of British North America. This tragic episode (on which our history books are largely silent, but which has never been forgotten in Atlantic Canada) is immortalised in Longfellow's narrative poem "Evangeline".

Altogether, close to 12,000 Acadians were deported between 1755 and 1761. In 1758 Governor Charles Lawrence issued a proclamation to the people of New England, inviting them to settle the fertile Nova Scotia farmland forcibly vacated by the Acadians. By 1768 approximately 8,000 New Englanders, known as the "Planters", had made the move, and Nova Scotia was permanently transformed. From 1764 onwards the Acadians were allowed to return to their homeland, but they found themselves barred from their former farmsteads, and were obliged to settle in isolated groups on the barren lands along Nova Scotia's rocky shore. Here many turned to fishing as a livelihood, emulating their Breton ancestors.

SCOTT McCracken, the Society's President, offers a helpful note on CANADIAN PLACE-NAMES

As a guide for anyone researching Canadian place-names and with access to the internet, the Canadian government has a website dedicated to Canadian Geographical Names: <http://geonames.nrcan.gc.ca>

This database will provide the grid reference of any place-name, along with maps at various scales, all of which can be printed out. A quick use of the system showed two Mordens - one given as an unincorporated area in Nova Scotia, and the other as a town in Manitoba. The one Merton is an unincorporated area in Cariboo, British Columbia (Cariboo seems to be the Canadian place-name spelling!). The website has a facility to leave messages, and I was very quickly given details of the origins of the two Mordens, both being named after individuals. There are no known details regarding the origin of "Merton".

From my military research I have records of *HMCS Morden*, an early Flower Class corvette built in Canada and commissioned into the Royal Canadian Navy in September 1941. *HMCS Morden* served in various escort groups throughout the war and was responsible for sinking U-756 in September 1942. The ship was broken up in 1946. I am not aware of any *Mertons*.

JOHN PILE reviews:-

Discovering the Past: Lower Morden and Morden Park by Peter Hopkins St Martin's Church, Morden £2.95 (+ 50p postage). Available at meetings or from our Publications Secretary (see back page)

In producing this booklet of 25 double-spread pages, Peter offers us a rich source of material, most of which appears in print for the first time and is the result of a great deal of original research into a wide range of documentary sources. A general survey of Morden parish from AD 1 to the year 2000 leads the reader into a detailed account of 20 locations into which Peter has divided Lower Morden. The whole is illustrated with 47 maps and 39 photographs old and new, all reproduced to a remarkably high standard for a desk-top publication.

The introductory section of the booklet explores the development of Morden from a small settlement on Roman Stane Street to the population explosion of the 1920s and '30s. With the departure of the Roman legions in AD 410 Morden disappears from view for more than five centuries, emerging from the 'Dark Ages' in the 11th century as an estate owned and managed by Westminster Abbey. The manor remained with Westminster until the Dissolution, when it came into the hands of the Garth family. The Garths were the 'squires' of Morden until the latter part of the 19th century, overseeing and directing the changes from open-field agriculture to a landscape of enclosed and individually tenanted farms. Two maps showing Morden in the 14th and 16th centuries are an achievement that would surely have astonished and delighted Evelyn Jowett, whose pioneer study was published in the Festival of Britain year, 1951. It is entirely appropriate therefore that the present account, based on an exhibition held at St Martin's church in September 1999, should appear at the close of the millennium and form another important landmark in the study of Morden's past.

Originally written with visitors to the exhibition in mind, this booklet will undoubtedly serve as an important source for anyone with an interest in the area, from the experienced local historian to the general reader curious about the history of this locality.

LOCAL HISTORY WORKSHOP REPORTS

Friday 20 August 1999

- ◆ **Peter Hopkins** had been putting the final touches to the booklet (see review on p 7) and display on the history of Lower Morden, which he had been preparing for 'Open House' at St Martin's, Camborne Road, on Saturday 18 September. There was some discussion about the ancient outlines of Morden, and Merton; and members theorised about the contrasting irregularity (Merton) and regularity (Morden) of these boundaries.
- ◆ **Ian Aldridge** reported that St Mary's Merton registers, including the Elizabethan one, and the vestry book that dates from the early 18th century, would be available for inspection at St Mary's church on 18 September. Bell-ringing, organ music and guided tours would also be featured during this diocesan Open Day.
- ◆ Stane Street, and the dedication, to St Lawrence, of Morden's parish church, was once again pre-occupying **Bill Sole**. Though there is more than one saint of this name, Bill takes the view that 'our' Lawrence was a military man of some standing, based near Dijon, who, in about 250 AD, refused to take orders from the emperor. Perhaps, when the Roman army was building Stane Street, the soldiers set up a shrine to Mithras at the local high point, which later became the site of the church. (There may even have been an earlier shrine there - the mound in Morden Park is suggestive.) The military associations of the site might somehow have influenced the dedication.

Discussion then moved to the development of the parish system in general, and thence to parish boundaries, and the likelihood that they may represent those of much earlier, even Roman, estates.

- ◆ **Bill Rudd** had been preparing his talk on the monastic associations of Morden (see report on page 3). He now had a great deal of material acquired on his visits to 108 sites, which he hoped to collate for the use of future historians.
- ◆ The Wimbledon Society, reported **Sheila Harris**, had passed to Wandle Industrial Museum a (somewhat murky) watercolour (no title, date or artist's name) thought by them to show Mitcham bridge and the Wandle. Sheila had brought it to the meeting, and all agreed that, with six arches, it was not Mitcham bridge, nor indeed any local bridge. The location is likely to prove difficult to identify.
- ◆ William De Morgan was again **Judith Goodman**'s topic (see page 12).
- ◆ **Tony Scott** spoke briefly about the old *News of the World* sportsground at Park Place, which, he said, had been more than a facility for employees. The newspaper had tried to raise the standard of British athletics, and some future Olympic athletes had trained there. He had recently been given some biographical information about runner Brian Hewson. (Mitcham has so many sporting connections - it would be good to see a booklet on the subject. What about it, Tony?)

Mitcham's Brian Hewson (at right) leading in a half-mile race at White City c.1954. Photo: H.W.Neale, from Franz Stampfl on Running 1955

- ◆ There was some despondent discussion about the likely future of the Morden Park Library building - a purpose-built World War II civil defence depot, unique in the Borough, and unusual anywhere.
- ◆ The vicar of Mitcham had observed strange marks on the vicarage lawn, which **Eric Montague** had identified. (Item planned for March *Bulletin*) Monty also reported on information received from Nova Scotia (see page 6).

Judith Goodman

Friday 23 October 1999

Bill Sole in the chair - Eight members present.

- ◆ **Bill Sole** opened the meeting by recalling the discovery in the back garden of Morden Rectory some nine years ago of an area of chalk "slabs" covering roughly 100 m². It was inspected by a representative from the Museum of London, who formed the opinion that the chalk might have been the floor of a large building - possibly the tithe barn commonly found in the vicinity of a medieval rectory. It is understood that Bill will seek to have this feature recorded on the SMR.
- ◆ **Rosemary Turner**, who has elected to produce a paper on Merton Priory in connection with a GCSE in archaeology, sought (and was given) guidance on lines of enquiry, with particular reference to the Chapter House. Rosemary was congratulated for her enterprise, and we look forward to hearing how she progresses.
- ◆ **Bill Rudd** next regaled us with an account of yet more family history enquiries (which one suspects he rather likes doing). Recently he has received numerous enquiries about the Clark(e)s of Morden (in connection with whom he has been supplied with a volume of family research papers), and also the Skilton family. His familiarity with the burial registers and monumental inscriptions at Morden church of course places Bill in a unique position to respond to enquiries of this sort. (See also back page)

Following his talk on the roads of the St Helier estate, Bill is now writing up his notes and assembling a file of photographs, many of which themselves are of historic interest.

- ◆ **ENM** reported he had concluded a study of the roads and bridges in Mitcham, which might be considered suitable for a future MHS publication.
- ◆ **Judith Goodman** brought the story of the "ice house" in Merton Park up to date, with the disappointing information that after excavation the enigmatic structure in the former grounds of Church House appears to have been nothing of the kind, as the presence of a chimney and a window makes clear. It will however be preserved as an example of an (?) 18th-century washhouse, brewhouse, or, as the owner believes, smokehouse.

Judith also outlined results so far of her quest for more information on William Morris's youngest brother, Edgar, who, after pursuing various occupations, was employed at the Merton Abbey works as a dyer. Directories show that between 1887 and 1895 he, his "wife" (no record of a marriage has been found) Robina and their four children, lived in Norman Road and then Quicks Road. Judith hopes to find where George Wardle, Morris's works manager, lived while working at Merton*. Interestingly, Wardle's wife Madeleine (née Smith) was the defendant in a famous Scottish poisoning case which was "not proven". She later became active in the early Socialist movement. (Material for an item in a future Bulletin?)

- ◆ **Lionel Green** has now compiled a chronological list of events in the history of Merton Priory. He described how Henry III's justiciar Hubert de Burgh was obliged to seek sanctuary at Merton - a fascinating account of the hazards of political life in the 13th century, which will be the subject of a future note in the Bulletin. A framed watercolour of Bidder interest has been brought to his notice, and it was agreed this should be reported to E F Clark, descendant and biographer of G P Bidder. Support was also given to Lionel's suggestion that the mayor of Merton be invited to attend the annual commemoration service to be held in the Chapter House next May.
- ◆ **Peter Hopkins**, in pursuit of the Domesday mill of Morden, and seeking resolution of the confusion over the history of land tenure in the vicinity of the Watermeads, produced a series of maps. These clarify the descent of the Mareys' lands through the Smythe/Myers family to Cochran, and then the Frys and Spencers. (A highly complex series of transactions over some 400 years which will take some digesting, feels ENM)

Eric Montague

- * The Wardles turn out to have lived in Charlotte Street, Bloomsbury, throughout the time George worked for Morris; he retired in 1890. The story of George and Madeleine (Lena) Wardle is told by Yvonne Knapp in *In Search of Mr and Mrs Wardle* 1994, a History Workshop Pamphlet from Ruskin College, Oxford.

JG

NEXT WORKSHOP DATES:

Friday 28 January and Friday 10 March 2000 at 7.30pm at Wandle Industrial Museum.

Everyone is welcome at Workshop meetings.

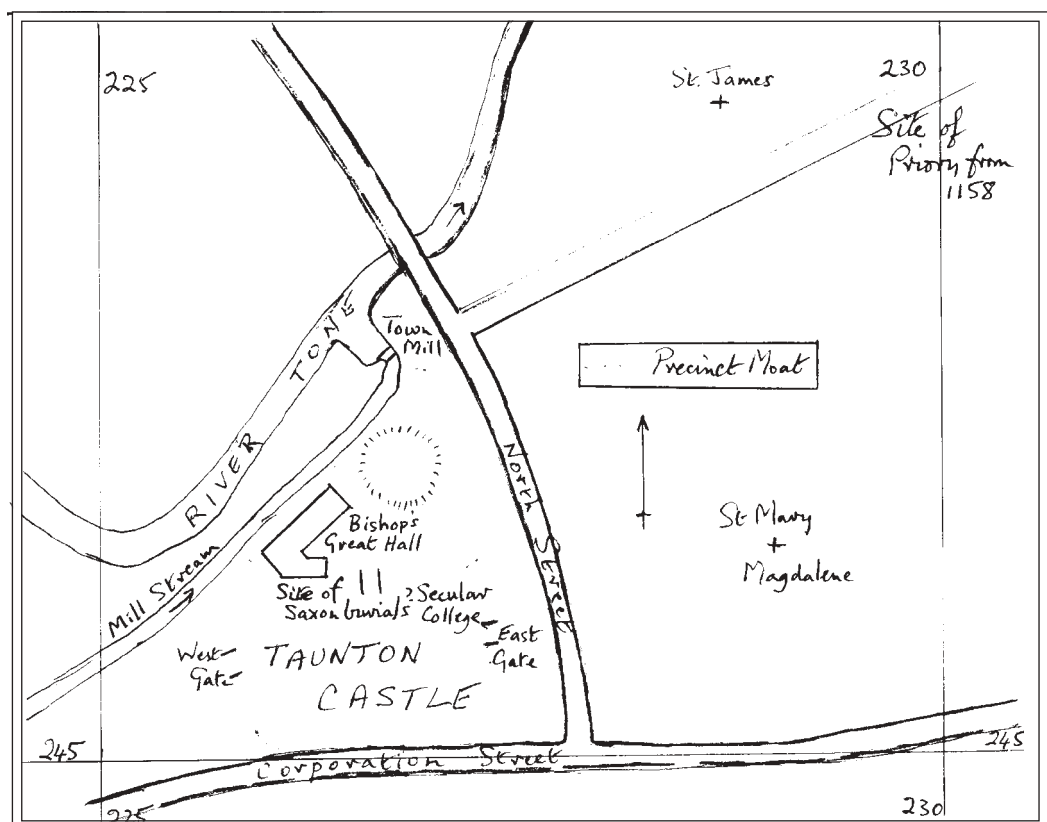
**LIONEL GREEN looks at a daughter house of Merton Priory:-
TAUNTON PRIORY**

In Saxon times there was a college of secular priests at Taunton ('secular' meaning non-monastic). The discovery, in the 1970s, of 9th-century Saxon burials suggests that the original foundation was in the Castle Green area of Taunton. In 904 several estates with chapels around Taunton passed to the bishop of Winchester. There is reference to the *monasterium*, suggesting a minster with dependent chapels. The dead of surrounding *vills* were brought, sometimes miles, to the college graveyard, and fees had to be paid to the secular priests. The priests were known as prebendaries, as they were supported by 'prebends', i.e. fixed income from church property. The Geld Inquest of 1084 shows that the priests held 2¼ hides (about 150 acres) of land. When William Giffard became bishop of Winchester in 1107 he fortified his residence at Taunton¹ so that the precinct moat enclosed the Great Hall² and the castle *motte*, as well as the college.

The bishop was familiar with the introduction of the Augustinian order into England, being personally involved with the foundation of Merton and Southwark monasteries near London. He wished the existing secular priests at Taunton to follow the new Rule, having observed how the canons of Merton were "sublimely aspiring to perfection" after only three years. He therefore requested some canons of Merton to "introduce into his church of Taunton those same observances which they themselves employed."³ Five brethren set off from Merton in 1120 "amongst whom was that Master Guy who with good reason was the most famous amongst us".⁴

The canons followed the Augustinian Rule at Taunton, and a few "who had been there, began to adopt the way of life according to the rule but certain [secular priests] had no wish to change their firmly rooted bad habits". Guy, an Italian schoolmaster, used his best efforts to try to change them, and was deeply upset over his failure. These were priests who did not want to take vows; for the vow of poverty meant giving up their 'prebends' and the vow of chastity their wives or housekeepers.

At Merton Guy had been zealous in religious duties and sincerely devout, but at Taunton he lived an even austere life, for no one could restrain his fervour. As prior, he gave to the poor all that he could, and would assign to the sick and needy the food set on his own table, and be content with bread and water, declaring to his taunters that "what is taken from one's own mouth is more pleasing to God. Let me not fatten my flesh for the worms and see a precious creature of God die before me with hunger". He would buy for the poor capes, tunics and shoes, but always provided whatever was necessary for the canons. Guy was able to do this as he had control over the income from former prebends. The bishop actively supported the new foundation with grants of manors, including Fons George, which contained the Syreford (Sherford) Brook "for grinding their corn and all advantage thence to be derived". The fishponds or *vivary* were within this parish.



It was no doubt Guy's influence that resulted in the foundation of St Margaret's leper hospital and chapel served by the priory. The people of Taunton appreciated Guy's work, and some believed he was a saint, for he frequently calmed storms.⁵

But within the priory there was dissent. The poor were never satisfied, and the rich were jealous over the gifts allotted to the poor. Complaints were made to the bishop that Guy did not show respect to the men of influence who could benefit the Church. He was now finding the administration of the priory irksome, and finally appealed to the Prior of Merton to recall him to the place he loved. His wish was granted and instead of grieving that he was no longer a prior he rejoiced "as if freed from a prison or like a bird released from a trap".⁵

Giffard's successor at Winchester was Henry of Blois, and, when the civil war in Stephen's reign began, the bishop strengthened the defences within his diocese.⁶ The importance of the castle at Taunton resulted in a relocation of the priory by Henry of Blois in 1158. This became the monastery of St Peter and St Paul, situated outside the East Gate. Sherford Brook was diverted to serve the new precinct and the mill.

The leper hospital building of c.1510 still exists (just). It continued as an almshouse until 1936, when it was condemned for human habitation, and is now empty and roofless.

1. J Collinson *History of ... Somerset* 1791 iii p231
2. A Pre-Conquest bank underlies the Great Hall which also might be part of the precinct boundary of the minster
3. College of Heralds: Arundel MS 28 fo.93v; M L Colker *Studia Monastica* Vol.12 (1970) p342
4. BL Royal MS 8 E ix; M L Colker 'The Life of Guy of Merton ...' in *Medieval Studies* Toronto Vol.xxxi (1969) p257
5. *ibid.* p259
6. A record of 1138 states that he built castles at Winchester, Farnham, Bishops Waltham, Merdon and Dunton as well as Taunton, but many of these, including Taunton, were already in existence.

BILL SOLE has redrawn the map of STANE STREET IN GREATER LONDON

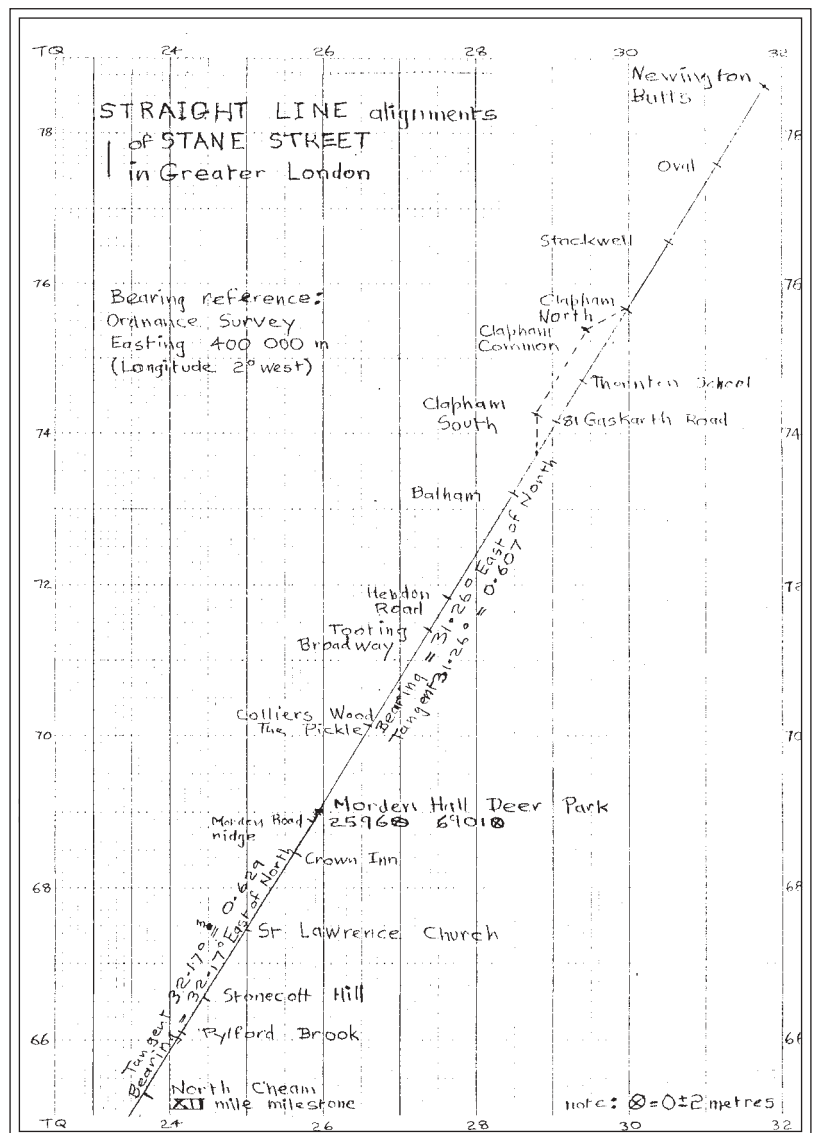
In the *Merton and Morden News* for 3 June 1960 there is a short article and photograph under the headline **Traces of Roman road found on Crown Site.**

It reports that contractors on the construction site of Crown House, the present Civic Centre, had unearthed a layer of chalk covered with flint. Neither material occurs as layers naturally in the district, and the assumption was that these finds were part of the Roman road Stane Street, which is known to have passed through Morden. Sections of it have been excavated in Stonecot Hill.

According to the report, Bernard Sunley, whose firm was the main contractor for the Crown House development, presented some of the flints to Miss Jowett, Librarian for Merton & Morden UDC and founder member of this Society. The photograph, which shows four men and a trench, unfortunately does not reproduce well.

No official record seems to have been made at the time, but, thanks to Bill Sole, the find is now registered with the Sites and Monuments Record. The exact location was in the backyard of the then Crown public house, at Grid Reference TQ 26500 68500, and Bill's new map takes it into account.

JG



JUDITH GOODMAN on WILLIAM DE MORGAN AT COLLIERS WOOD

As mentioned in the Workshop Report in September's Bulletin (No.131, page 15) I recently discovered, quite by accident, that the ceramic artist William De Morgan, friend and colleague of William Morris, had his 'Merton Abbey' workshop, not in Merton, but on the other side of the Wandle, at Colliers Wood.

William Frennd De Morgan (1839-1917) had as father a musical mathematician and as mother a philosophical classicist. Both were free-thinkers. Their seven children grew up in a high-minded, but happy atmosphere, though four were to die relatively young of TB, and the fear of this disease clouded much of William's life.

De Morgan came to ceramics by way of stained glass and experiments with lustre. He had met William Morris (1834-96) in the early 1860s and worked with him briefly at Queen Square before setting up his own workshop in Chelsea.

The two men shared a dream of setting up their ideal factory where men and women would exercise their skills in traditional crafts among beautiful surroundings; and they undertook many fruitless journeys in search of a site for this 'fictionary', as they called it. Finally, in 1881, they came upon a printworks at Merton Abbey, within the old priory precincts, with picturesque buildings, a millpond, trees and meadows. Morris took a lease on this site, and by the end of the year was beginning to manufacture his goods - but it has never been clear where De Morgan established himself and built his kiln.

J.W.Mackail, Morris's first biographer, stated only that the plan of "joint, or even contiguous, factories never fully took effect".¹ Mackail, who was Burne-Jones's son-in-law and also knew Morris quite well, almost certainly would have known exactly where De Morgan's workshop was, but unfortunately did not think it relevant to his narrative. Later writers have contented themselves with locating De Morgan, vaguely, next door to Morris², or very close by³. For some reason however the Museum of London booklet on Morris⁴ placed De Morgan's workshop in the middle of the Morris site. Apart from the fact that no building is shown there on the OS 1:2500 map of the mid-1890s, a very well-known article from 1883 in *The Spectator* makes it clear that the sites were indeed quite separate: "Turning out of the garden [of the Morris site]" it says, "a few minutes along the high road bring us to the building where Mr.De Morgan's pottery is already manufactured, though the whole building is not yet finished..."⁵

De Morgan took a little time to get started at his new site, wherever it was, but early in 1882 he was beginning to produce 'Merton Abbey' wares.

*Impressed 'Merton Abbey' marks on
De Morgan pottery and tiles*

De Morgan stayed at 'Merton Abbey' for only six or seven years. He found the travelling from Chelsea, where he lived, tiring, and he was troubled with a painful back which he was fearful was tuberculosis of the spine (it wasn't). In 1888 he set up his Sands End factory in Fulham, and early the following year finally moved all his manufacture there.

Until now I had been more or less convinced that De Morgan had taken over the old copper mill immediately to the east of the Morris works. Copper milling had ceased in the 1860s. The site had briefly become a flock mill, but seems to have been standing empty by the early 1880s. Admittedly it was scarcely "a few minutes" walk from the Morris site - it was next door and barely a minute away - but I could not see where else De Morgan could have been. And that was because it had never occurred to me to seek him over the border.

It was when looking for dates and addresses for mineral water bottlers in Mitcham (see September Bulletin), and going alphabetically through the commercial pages in the Mitcham section (where I had never before ventured!) of the Kelly's directory of 1884,⁶ that I was astounded to see an entry which read:

De Morgan, Wm, Stone pottery, Singlegate, Merton Road

*Rice plate, with green fish on royal blue ground,
surrounding a central motif in turquoise.
Made at 'Merton Abbey' in the 1880s.*

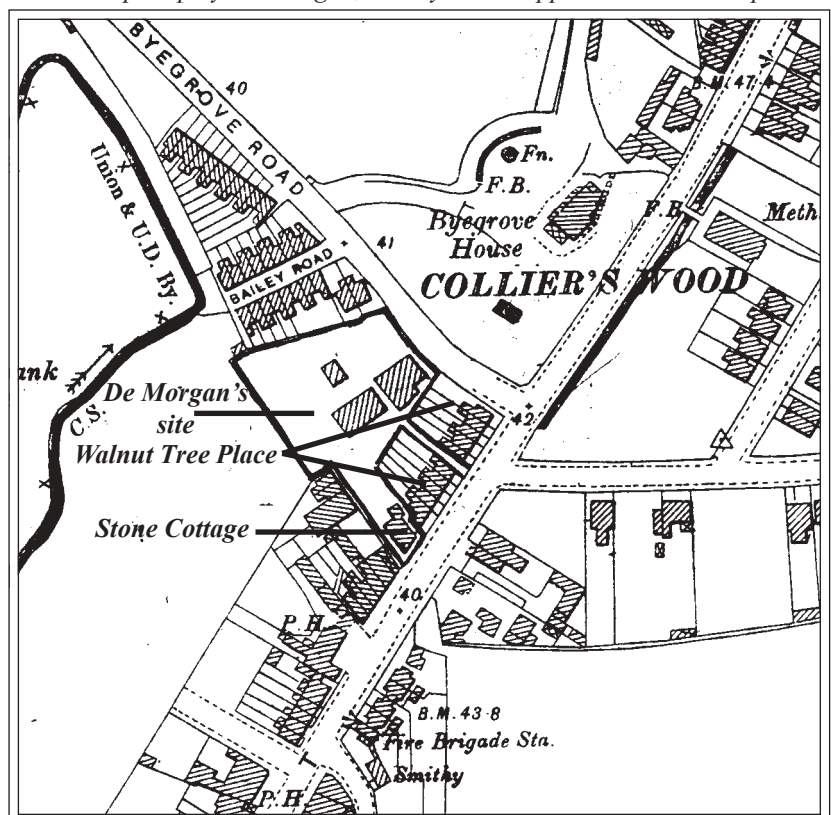
On trawling through the various directories of the period I found that De Morgan was listed from 1884 to 1892. Later entries were more accurate and place him firmly at “Stone Cottage Pottery”. The fact that he had returned to London several years before he ceases to be listed is not surprising. Such directories frequently lag behind events. Stone Cottage was a small one-storey building which may have been constructed in part from remains of Merton Priory. It is believed to have served as the local tollgate house for the Surrey Iron Railway during the early 19th century. The pantiled roof is known to have collapsed in 1838, but presumably it was worth repairing,⁷ and at the time of the 1881 census the cottage was occupied by an agricultural labourer. “Singlegate” in the address refers not to the railway gate but to the turnpike gate which had barred the road until 1870, at what would become the site of Colliers Wood station. It was known thus to distinguish it from Merton Double Gates which stood at Merton Grove, the future site of South Wimbledon station.

Stone Cottage, from a photograph of a pen-and-ink drawing probably by Hubert Williams. Location and date of original not known, but copies are held at Wandsworth Museum, Lambeth Archives and Surrey History Centre, Woking.



From the 1898 OS map 1:2500. The buildings shown on the site are probably those put up by De Morgan, as they do not appear on earlier maps.

De Morgan seems to have taken Stone Cottage itself, which may have served as the office, and also a piece of land which lay behind both this building and the neighbouring cottages known as Walnut Tree Place. In directories which included listings for each road separately the entry “here is private road to Potteries” is shown between the two blocks of Walnut Tree Place. The site, which was about a third of a mile (five or six minutes walk) from Morris’s site, lay entirely in the Colliers Wood area of Mitcham, on the north-west side of Merton Road (the present Colliers Wood High Street). On the west, between it and the Wandle, were meadows; on the east the boundary was Byegrove Road. At the rear, on what had recently been fields, was a new street of small terraced houses, Bailey Road. As at Morris’s site along the road, the suburb which was “woeful beyond description”⁸ was close at hand!



Here De Morgan built a workshop and a kiln - the “magnificent basement” that “became a skyscraper”, as he said.⁹ His foreman described the kiln as “*in and on the ground, right in the centre of the building - the chimney shaft quite a splendid idea, but unfortunately it was built over the centre of the kiln, and the weight of the shaft was enormous ... [I]f it fell it would take the whole of the building with it*”⁹

After De Morgan’s departure the Stone Cottage site stood empty for a while, before being taken over, by 1899, as the Abbey Cork Mills, proprietor Walter Mays. And as a cork works it continued for decades. By the late 1950s Stone Cottage had gone, replaced by part of a motor company’s premises. Today its site lies beneath the forecourt of Colliers Wood Service Station. The cork works site at the rear was redeveloped in the mid-1960s. Here stands Newborough House, named to mark the creation in 1965 of the new London Borough of Merton. It would be good to see it bearing a plaque celebrating De Morgan’s association with the site.

At the end of the 20th century, when De Morgan is seen as one of the great figures of the Arts and Crafts Movement, it seems astonishing that the memory of his presence at Colliers Wood had vanished so completely. In James Bass’s reminiscences of an Edwardian childhood at Millers Mead¹⁰ he mentions the “cork factory (where tiles were previously made)”, and he might have been talking of a sanitary ware works. However it seems to have been true that in his own day De Morgan achieved more fame in his second career. Because of poor health he gave up making pottery and became a successful novelist, producing nine books between 1906 and 1921. They were mainly in a sub-Dickensian vein and have not remained popular, though the first (and best), *Joseph Vance*, was reprinted in the World’s Classics as late as 1954.

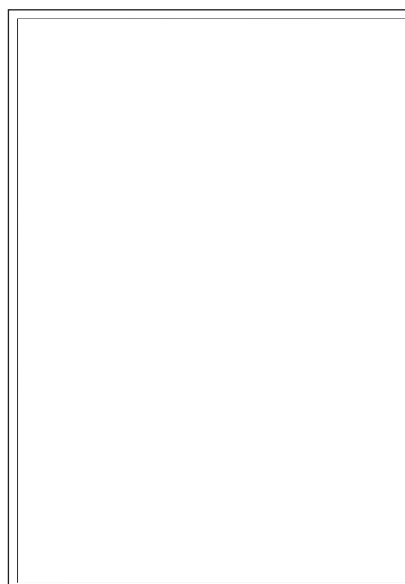
De Morgan was clearly a delightful companion and an entertaining friend. He married, in his late 40s, artist Evelyn Pickering. In a letter to Edward Burne-Jones he announced his engagement as follows:

“Dear Ned,

I meant to come in yesterday evg: but I was engaged to be married and couldn’t!

I wanted to convey the news to you of *two* engagements that have just come to pass. One is my own - I am engaged to a lady. The other is Evelyn Pickering’s - she is engaged to a cove, or bloke...”

William De Morgan, chalk portrait by Evelyn De Morgan, 1907 (De Morgan Foundation)



It seems to have been a strong and happy marriage, though Evelyn, who survived her husband by only two years, was 17 years his junior. There were no children.

Why did he call his works ‘Merton Abbey’? He must have known he was in Colliers Wood, Mitcham. He would have paid rates, after all. However, that part of Mitcham then received its mail through Merton Post Office, and the whole area by the Wandle where the parishes of Merton, Mitcham and Wimbledon met, was generally spoken of as Merton. Moreover the name would have reaffirmed the friendly collaboration with Morris, whose workshops were indeed at Merton Abbey. Would William De Morgan’s Mitcham Works, or Colliers Wood Works have sounded so euphonious as the Merton Abbey Works? Possibly not.

1. J.W.Mackail *The Life of William Morris* (1899) World’s Classics edition vol ii p46
2. e.g. Mark Hamilton *Rare Spirit, A Life of William De Morgan 1839-1917* Constable 1997 pp55-6
3. e.g. Charles Harvey and Jon Press *William Morris: Design and Enterprise in Victorian Britain* Manchester University Press 1991 p132
4. David Saxby *William Morris at Merton* Museum of London Archaeology Service and London Borough of Merton 1995 p5
5. *The Spectator* 24 November 1883
6. Merton Local Studies Centre has copies of various local directories from the early 19th century onwards.
7. E.N.Montague *History of Colliers Wood* 1979, unpublished typescript at Merton Local Studies Centre p61
8. Letter from William Morris to Jane Morris 19 March 1881, *The Collected Letters of William Morris* vol ii pt A 1881-84 Norman Kelvin (ed.) Princeton University Press 1987
9. De Morgan’s words and Bale’s account, both quoted in A.M.W.Stirling *William De Morgan and His Wife* Thornton, Butterworth 1922 p28
10. James B.Bass *Once Upon a Time* Merton Historical Society Local History Notes - 15 (due to be published Autumn 1999)

A comprehensive account of De Morgan’s work in ceramics is given in:

William Gaunt & M.D.E.Clayton-Stamm *William De Morgan Studio Vista* 1971 - copy in Merton Local Studies Centre

Some places to see De Morgan ceramics:

Victoria & Albert Museum	William Morris Gallery, Walthamstow
City Museum and Art Gallery, Birmingham	Leighton House, Kensington
Kelmscott Manor	Standen House, East Grinstead
Old Battersea House	8 Addison Road, Holland Park

(Old Battersea House and 8 Addison Road are not open to the public but may be visited by arrangement.)

**PETER HOPKINS has been exploring the fore-runners of
WYEVALE GARDEN CENTRE, LOWER MORDEN LANE**

After 1000 years of agriculture in Lower Morden, Wyevale Garden Centre alone keeps the tradition alive. A Council-run nursery had preceded Wyevale on the site of Peacock Farm. The Victorian farmhouse still survives. The name Peacock Farm appears on Ordnance Survey maps from the 1860s.

It is possible to trace the succession of tenants of this farm as far back as 1714, when it was leased to Reginald Marriott.¹ He also held property in the Morden Hall area.² In 1719 he assigned his lease³ to William Wickham, and either William or his son of the same name was holding it in 1745.⁴ It covered 75½ acres. William Wickham the younger died in 1771, but he had given up the farm a few years earlier.



Peacock Farm in the 1950s, photo by W J Rudd

In 1768 John Arbuthnot of Mitcham was granted a 21-year lease of this farm, which had been extended considerably.⁵ It now included the farmstead formerly known as Franks Farm, on the opposite side of Lower Morden Lane, as well as other lands which brought the farm to almost 125 acres. In 1780 Edmund Bryon was granted a lease,⁶ and the farm was known as Bryons Farm until at least 1856. During his tenancy 50 acres of the farmland were transferred to the newly formed Morden Park estate. In 1804 'Brions Farm' was leased to James Whitbread Atkinson, by which time another 56 acres had been added from a neighbouring farm, formerly leased to John Manship of Mitcham.⁷ By 1838, when the tenant was William York, the farm extended over 156 acres.⁸



Although we can only trace tenants back to 1714, this farmstead was almost certainly of medieval origin. However, the site was probably not one of the earliest in Lower Morden. A group of eight farmsteads had been built around a triangular green which had formed at the junction of Lower Morden Lane and Bow Lane. Six of these tenements each consisted of a house in a 1-acre yard, a 1-acre orchard and a close of pasture of around 4 acres, three to the north-west of the green, and three to the south. On the north-east of the green Peacock Farm and its neighbour, probably to be identified with Graves Farm, were much smaller, with a ½-acre yard, a ½-acre orchard and a 2-acre close of pasture.

It was recently pointed out to me that these two farmsteads seem to have been built on the green itself, and are therefore unlikely to have been part of the first phase of development. It was not unusual for such encroachments to be made on open spaces, as the increase in population led to a greater demand for housing.

We do know of one such small freehold tenement in the Lower Morden area, which came into the hands of the Garth lords of the manor in 1636. It seems probable that this was a fore-runner of Peacock Farm. Plomer Shawe had just 4 acres - 2 in the Southfield (south of Lower Morden Lane), 1 in Coombestrowde (near the present Cherry Wood), and 1 in the Common Mead (in the Grand Drive area).

The property first appears in extant records in 1596, when Henry Butte left it to his son of the same name.⁹ Butte is recorded as holding 6 acres in a tithe survey of 1583.¹⁰ Perhaps the additional 2 acres referred to the close adjoining the farmstead. In 1603 Henry Butte of Chipstead leased it to William Chary for 21 years at £2 a year.¹¹ Chary was still an occupant in 1609, along with Widow Russell and Thomas Dasset. This was the year Henry Butte of Mitcham sold Plomer Shawe to John Whiteing of Morden yeoman, for £40.¹² In 1624 the farmstead was described as "all that messuage or tenement with barn, stable, orchard, garden and all other edifices in Lower Morden" with "4 acres land and pasture to the said messuage belonging lying dividedly in the parish and field of Lower Morden".¹³ In 1634 the tenant, Nicholas Dumbrill of Morden, carpenter, surrendered the lease to Richard Garth of Morden,¹⁴ who had bought the freehold. The witness was Thomas Heath, who died the following year. He could well have been occupying the adjoining farmstead, as in 1640 Elizabeth Heath (his widow or his daughter?) married William Graves of Mitcham, who became tenant of Graves Farm. James North, a sub-tenant at Plomer Shawe until 1634, was granted the lease of another small farm in Lower Morden in 1636,¹⁵ probably that occupied by Abraham Clarke in 1838, which seems to have been carved out of a former copyhold tenement.

References:

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|------------------|-----------------|------------------------------|------------------|-----------------|
| 1 SRO 85/2/41 | 2 SRO 683/1 | 3 SRO 85/2/41 | 4 SRO 85/2/51-52 | 5 SRO 85/2/42 |
| 6 SRO 85/2/43-44 | 7 SRO 85/2/47 | 8 Morden Tithe Apportionment | 9 SRO 85/1/1 | 10 SRO 85/3/5 |
| 11 SRO 2575/2/C | 12 SRO 2575/2/C | 13 SRO 2575/1/D;2/C & 3/G | 14 SRO 2575/2/C | 15 SRO 2575/2/C |

IN BRIEF

- ◆ **Archaeology in South West London** is the title of a symposium organised by the Standing Conference on London Archaeology (SCOLA) South West London Archaeological Liaison Group for Saturday 22 January 2000, to be held at the Civic Offices of London Borough of Sutton, St Nicholas Way, Sutton, from 10am to 4.30pm. Papers to be presented will include investigations at the Archbishop's Palace at Battersea and Charter Quay, Kingston, and the Thames Foreshore Survey. Tickets at £5, including tea/coffee, from J S McCracken, Flat B, 231 Sandycombe Road, Kew, Richmond, Surrey TW9 2EW. Please enclose a stamped addressed envelope and make cheques payable to SCOLA.
- ◆ The current exhibition at Merton Heritage Centre, at The Canons, explores **The Peopling of Merton**: how Merton in the 20th century has been shaped by its various communities. The Heritage Centre is open on Fridays and Saturdays from 10 to 5. Admission is free. The next exhibition, on life in Merton between the wars, opens on 3 March.
- ◆ Tony Fuller, a Society member, has been researching his wife's family, **the Clarks of Morden**, who have lived in the district since about 1820, most of them in the Crown Road/Crown Lane/London Road area. He has now presented the Society with an impressive dossier on the family and its connections. Among their number have been farm labourers, soldiers, a sexton, a school caretaker, a milkman, and an Olympic athlete.
- ◆ **Tramlink** is currently scheduled to start service between Wimbledon and New Addington before the New Year. The rest of the network is expected to be in service sometime in January. The smart rolling-stock is now a familiar site along the Wimbledon-Croydon stretch, as the drivers undergo instruction and the final (we hope) adjustments are made to signalling etc. The Tramlink information office in George Street, Croydon, has information on the timetable and fares. Leaflets headed *Trams - a guide for Pedestrians, Cyclists & Drivers* are available from Croydon's Tourist Information Centre, but not, it seems, in Merton.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS 1999-2000

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

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

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