



PRESIDENT: J Scott McCracken BA FSA MIFA

VICE PRESIDENTS: Viscountess Hanworth, Lionel Green and William Rudd

BULLETIN NO. 142

CHAIRMAN: Lionel Green

JUNE 2002



PROGRAMME JUNE–SEPTEMBER

Friday 14 June 1.45pm

Visit to Croydon Airport

Cost £2 a head.

Meet at the Rayon d'Or café on the ground floor of the Croydon Airport visitor centre, in Purley Way (A23). There is a Heron aeroplane in front of the building, which is opposite the Hilton Hotel. The café serves snacks and lunches from 11am.

The tour includes three floors of the old control tower (there is a lift). There is a historical exhibition as well as the preserved booking hall to be seen.

Bus 289 (every 15 min.) goes past and can be picked up outside Sainsbury's, near Waddon Marsh Tramlink stop. A more reliable service is the 119 Bromley-Purley Way (every 10 min.) from opposite East Croydon station/tram stop.

Car parking may be possible at or behind the visitor centre, or there should be space across Purley Way, at The Colonnades.

Saturday 13 July

Coach outing to Parham House, Sussex

There may still be some places available. Contact Ray Kilsby promptly.

Saturday 10 August 2.30pm

Visit to Dr Johnson's House

Recently refurbished, this 17th-century house preserves the atmosphere of Johnson's occupation 1746-59. He compiled his dictionary, with the help of six clerks, in the attic here.

Meet in Gough Square, off Fleet Street, near Fetter Lane. Cost £3 a head.

Saturday 28 September 2.30pm

Visit to Reigate Priory

A visit arranged to follow up Audrey Ward's talk to the Society last December. The Priory is in Bell Street, Reigate. There is an hourly bus from Sutton, or travel by shared cars.



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



BILL RUDD celebrates a famous local resident:

J W BAZALGETTE IN MORDEN

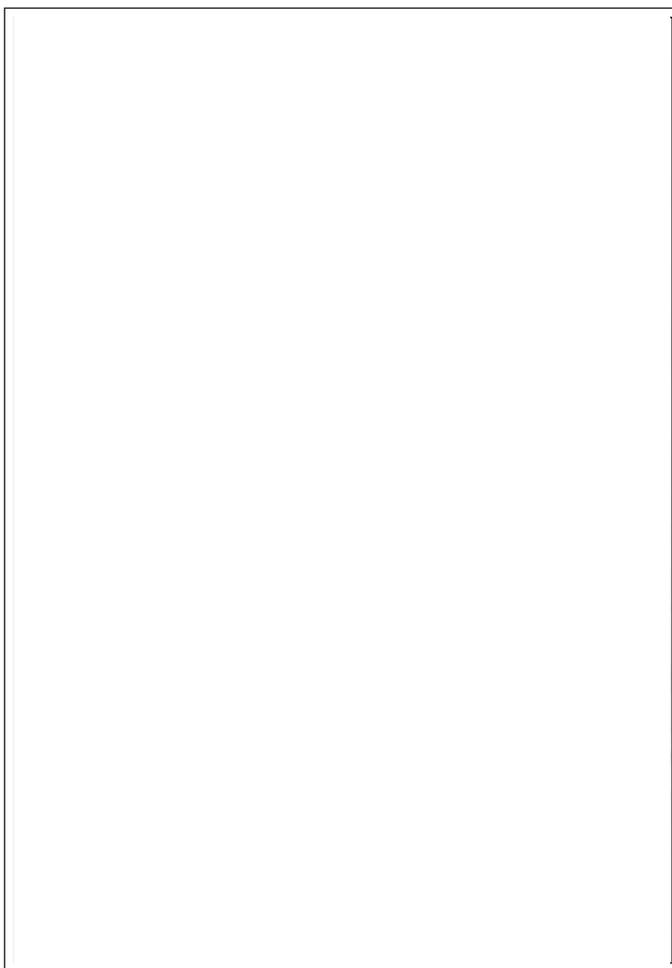
The first the writer knew of J W Bazalgette's existence in Morden was a brief mention in Canon T L Livermore's booklet *The Story of Morden and its Churches* published in 1968, though recent research reveals that he did not live at The Lodge, Farm Road, as indicated by the rector of Morden.

To some people who are particularly familiar with the name of Sir Joseph William Bazalgette CB, he is more disrespectfully and vulgarly known as 'the sewer man', simply because he masterminded the design and execution of the main sewerage system of London. A read through the long entry in the *Dictionary of National Biography* shows that he was responsible for a large number of great engineering works in addition to very many papers and reports. (A copy of a Report to the Rural Sanitary Authority of the Croydon Union on the matter of Wandle Valley Drainage is in the Local Studies Centre.)

A survey of the monuments in St Lawrence, Morden, parish churchyard revealed that the mother of J W Bazalgette, Mrs Theresa Philo Bazalgette, has a simple headstone on the south side, and that she died on 20 June 1850, aged 54. The Register of Burials shows that she was living in the St George, Hanover Square, district of London. The family must have established a connection with the parish of Morden, and J W Bazalgette Esq. appears in the Kelly's directories from 1851 onwards, and somewhat later in the electoral registers, where he is described as occupying a house and land in Morden Lane (later Central Road). He appears with his growing family in the 1851 Census return, where he is described as Civil Engineer, born Enfield, aged 32. Also his wife Maria, born Ireland, aged 31, and three sons: Joseph William, aged five; Norman, aged four; and Edward, aged two, all born in London. Also a daughter Theresa Philo, aged seven months, born in Morden. In fact both she and three other daughters and three more sons were baptised at St Lawrence within the next ten years. The headstone records the deaths of two of Bazalgette's sisters, Theresa Philo (living in Wimbledon), died 1885, aged 68, and Laura Maria (living in Hove, Sussex), died 1907, aged 71. The Census return records the presence of his sister-in-law Emily Keogh, 27, and three servants, Mary King, James Wood and Eliza Potterton.

The house stood on the south side of Central Road near the *Plough* public house, and was named in the Census return as Union Villa. Many years later the house was renamed by a later occupant as The Willows. It was pulled down some time in the early 1930s and replaced by a cul-de-sac called Willows Avenue and another house on one corner also called The Willows. A plan of c. 1866 shows four parcels of land: first, a long narrow strip next to the road and east of the house, referred to as an orchard; second, another narrow strip called Ice House Meadow; next came the house, set back a little from the road, with a large garden at the rear and containing a large pond; finally a large rectangle occupying the corner of Central Road and Farm Road. The total area was over seven and three-quarter acres (three hectares). At a meeting of the Morden Vestry on 8 April 1858 the minutes record that "Joseph W. Bazalgette Esq. having enlarged and improved his house, it was considered proper to have it assessed at £70 p.a. instead of £45 as heretofore".

Bazalgette was like so many important men of the time who found in the little village (population in 1851 - 628) a measure of peace and quiet from the bustle of London, and like such men he took his turn in the running of the parish. At a meeting of the Vestry on 25 April 1859 he was appointed churchwarden on the part of the rector, in place of the late Henry James Hoare, a position he held for several years. Hoare was the son of George Matthew Hoare, and grandson of Henry Hoare, the banker.



Bazalgette c. 1865 (Thames Water plc)
Illustration taken from S Halliday *The Great Stink of London*
Sutton Publishing, Stroud 1999

It is gratifying to know that such an eminent man as Sir Joseph William Bazalgette CB was for a time a part of local village life, although he did not receive his CB until 1871, shortly before he left Morden to live in Arthur Road, Wimbledon, and his knighthood in 1874. The population of Morden in 1861 was 654 and in 1871 was 787, at which time the neighbouring parishes of Merton, Mitcham and Wimbledon were making giant strides into the thousands. He is buried in St Mary, Wimbledon, parish churchyard in a large vault, together with several of his family, but the monument is woefully neglected.

(This article first appeared in the November 1981 *Bulletin* of the Wandle Group. Since then Bill has himself revised Canon Livermore's booklet, and the Bazalgette monument in Wimbledon may have been repaired? JG)

PETER McGOW of Croydon has been able to fill a gap in the account in the last Bulletin of the Wandle site later occupied by Welch's works and then by those of William Morris:

A NOTE ON WILLIAM WEST

Mr Montague's assertion in Bulletin No.141 that the date on which William West left his works at Merton Abbey is not known, is not entirely correct. In fact, the date of his departure can be fixed to within a few months, in the latter half of 1812.

On 21 January 1812 a summons was issued against him by the West Brixton Justices of the Peace, for the non-payment of the poor rates. Another summons for the same offence was issued on 23 October 1812.¹ On that same day he was declared bankrupt.²

In November 1812 it was advertised that the lease of his premises at Merton Abbey was to be offered for sale at an auction to be held on 1 December "by direction of the Assignees". The property was described as "extensive Calico and Bleaching Grounds, with every appropriate and well-arranged buildings, suitable for conducting a business upon a large scale". On the following day all his plant, utensils, stock-in-trade and other effects were to be auctioned.³ The sale of the lease was later postponed to 2 December.⁴

Despite what would seem to have been financial ruin, West tried again, at premises somewhere in Mitcham, not yet identified, but two years later he was again in trouble with the West Brixton Justices. On 1 September 1814 they heard a complaint that West had failed to pay duty amounting to £84 19s 5d due on 5287 yards of linen which he had printed at Mitcham six months earlier, and he was ordered to pay double duty. On 14 November 1814 he was again charged with non-payment of duty of £60 6s 5d on 4685 yards of printed linen. He failed to appear at the court.¹

1. West Brixton Justices of the Peace Minute Book 1812-16

2. *The London Gazette* 20-24 October 1812

3. *The Times* 14 November 1812

4. *The Times* 1 December 1812

IN THE MIDST OF LIFE ...

In Lionel Green's article about the Black Death and the monasteries in the last Bulletin (No.141) the omission of a short paragraph and a misprinted date introduced some confusion to his narrative.

Please note that the following passage should have appeared after the second paragraph:

But to meet the expenses of the war with France, the king borrowed money and requested wool from English monasteries in 1347. The latter was for 20,000 sacks, of which Merton was assessed for two sacks.³

In the first paragraph of the section headed **The Pestilence and the Monasteries** the date in the first sentence should of course be 1348.

Many apologies to the author, and to our readers.

THE WESTMINSTER ABBEY VESTMENTS

In the report of Rosemary Turner's talk that appeared on page 7 of Bulletin 141 it should have been made clear that Rosemary, though undoubtedly a good 'plain needlewoman', is also, and in particular, an experienced embroiderer. Our apologies to Rosemary for appearing to belittle her skills.

LOCAL HISTORY WORKSHOPS

Friday 8 March 2002 - 7 members present

- ◆ **Sheila Harris** started the ball rolling, with letters she had received requesting family information. A Miss Joan Welch of Ealing wrote to say that she was the great-great-granddaughter of Henry Welch, brother of Thomas Welch the table-cloth printer of Merton Abbey [see page 13 for Miss Welch's letter, and also Eric Montague's article on page 14 of Bulletin 141].

Mr Jeffrey Herbert of Crawley is seeking information on the Weller family who had been involved in the watercress industry at Mitcham [see page 13].

- ◆ **Eric Montague** discussed the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834. The Revd. Herbert Randolph, in his fascinating notebook (see below), recorded receiving complaints that some of his congregation were not receiving 'out relief'. This was pecuniary assistance (strictly regulated) given to paupers under the Act.
- ◆ **Don Fleming** followed by referring to the workhouse, and the degradation which this institution inflicted on affected families. The National Trust has restored a workhouse at Southwell, Nottinghamshire. This brick building dates from 1824, pre-dating the Act, but a fore-runner of the hundreds of new ones built as a result of the 1834 Act. The Southwell one is now open to the public, and Don looked forward to a NT workhouse lunch!
- ◆ **Peter Hopkins** produced maps of Merton showing 'tithe-free' land. Church land and glebe fields were always exempt, and some estate holders were granted the right to the tithes from their own estates. A prevalent misconception is that former monastic land was also tithe-free. Merton Priory's former demesne lands within Merton remained tithe-free, but other parcels of their demesne land in Mitcham and in Morden continued to pay tithes. In Mitcham the medieval owner of the tithes was Southwark Priory, while Westminster Abbey owned the tithes in Morden.

Peter then looked at a possible alternative source of information to help identify former Merton Priory lands. When the former Merton Priory estates in Mitcham – Biggin and Tamworth and the Amery Lands – were sold in 1544, an annual payment of £1 13s 8d was due to the Crown. When New Barns Farm in Mitcham was sold in 1695, the Crown was still entitled to a 'farm rent' of £1 13s 8d out of the premises. Peter suggested that this might be evidence that New Barns had once been part of this Merton Priory estate.

- ◆ **William Rudd** is working assiduously on a new history of Morden Park, soon to be published. By comparing maps he had found that the course of the East Pyl Brook had been diverted in the 19th century. Previously it had taken a winding course, but, probably because of flooding, its flow now takes a gentle arc across the south-eastern section of the park. The maps also made clear that an extension had been made to the house.
- ◆ **Lionel Green** read a paper on the life of Roger, bishop of Salisbury (1102-39), a friend of Gilbert the Sheriff. The bishop was able to persuade the king to grant a foundation charter for Merton priory in 1121 [see article on page 6].
- ◆ **Judith Goodman** reported that she had received more Bidder documents from E F Clark, descendant and biographer of railway engineer G P Bidder of Mitcham. When sorted they would be deposited at Surrey History Centre.

She also produced this photocopy of an attractive water-colour from the 1830s of Brookfield Cottage, which was situated near the Watermeads. This was the home of the Revd. Herbert Randolph and his wife Martha in the late 1830s. His diary and notebook are to be published by the Society as a Local History Note. The water-colour was painted by a Miss Wilson whose family lived for a time at Brookfield Cottage.



This is only a summary of what was discussed. Absent members will have missed the banter, the jokes - and not forgetting the treasures which the workshops regularly produce.

Lionel Green

Friday 17 May 2002 - 6 present. Peter Hopkins in the chair

- ◆ **Judith Goodman** began by reporting that she had come across another Merton artist. George Augustus Wallis (1761-1847) was born at Merton, though it needs to be confirmed that it was our Merton. There was an oil-sketch by him in an exhibition at the National Gallery in 1999, and there are works by him in several Continental museums.

She had recently visited the site of the Battle of Maldon (AD 991) in Essex. One of the Anglo-Saxon warriors, a kinsman of Byrhtnoth, their leader in this battle against a Viking force, was called Ælfwine. In the great poem *The Battle of Maldon*, which was possibly written by one of the few survivors, Ælfwine is given a heroic speech. And Ælfwine (this is the local connection) was a nephew of Ælfheah, to whom King Edgar granted Merton in AD 967.

She had also been able to find out some more about John Arbuthnot of Ravensbury [see page 11].

- ◆ *History Today* had provided **Don Fleming** with a challenging view of Nelson. The May issue includes a report of a lecture by Colin White (Director of Trafalgar 200) to the National Maritime Museum, in which he argues that Nelson 'spun' his heroic image like a 21st-century politician, engineering carefully timed leaks of exaggerated material to newspapers, and bribing artists to retouch their paintings. Mr White bases his study on many documents in archives in London and America.

Don's reading had also turned up a typically acid comment from James Lees-Milne's *Diaries 1946-49* John Murray 1996 (page 233):

"Wednesday 18th February 1948. Had an excellent lunch at Baldwin's with John Wilton. Then drove to Merton where, with Robin Fedden, we looked at the abbey wall which the National Trust owns, a ridiculous bit of flint wall in the middle of a paper factory yard, quite pointless."

- ◆ The 1901 Census has begun to turn up some nuggets of information. **Bill Rudd** has been able to solve the riddle of Flitwick Cottage's name. As suggested in an article in Bulletin No.130 (June 1999) the answer did lie in the Census. The Trendell family, one of whom occupied Flitwick Cottage with his wife Caroline, were brickmakers connected with the works nearby in Garth Road. Although the male Trendells all came from Croydon or Sutton, we now know that Mrs Caroline Trendell's origins were at Flitwick in Bedfordshire. Bill is still trying to learn more about Misses Isabelle and Helena Collinge, occupants from 1913 to 1925 of Morden Park, who are said to have bred horses. He suspects, from their name, that they might have come from Lancashire.
- ◆ **Peter Hopkins** had been pursuing medieval field names [see page 15].

Judith Goodman

Dates of next workshops: Friday 5 July and Friday 23 August at 7.30 pm at Wandle Industrial Museum.

Everyone is welcome

WEIGHTS, MEASUREMENTS ETC ETC

Readers may notice that the editor is metrically minded (she has been since the 1950s) and tries to remember to insert metric equivalents where required. Such usage is now general, and should not be daunting. Throughout our history haven't there been changes in the way we measure everything? The booklet *How Heavy, How Much and How Long?* by Colin R Chapman, Lochlin Publishing ISBN 1 873686 09 9 sets it all out clearly and interestingly, in tables, from Ancient British Numerals, rose-nobles and Quantities of Fish to SI Units, (new) pence and tonnes.

SGT P K WALLEY

The Bourne Society *Bulletin* 188 (May 2002) has an illustrated article about some of the many war graves in the churchyard of St Luke, Whyteleafe. Kenley airfield, a key base during the Battle of Britain, is just up the road from the church, which is in Whyteleafe Hill, close to Whyteleafe station, and is signposted from the A22 Godstone Road. Sergeant Peter Kenneth Walley, 819018, of No.615 Squadron Royal Air Force (Aux Air Force) had been at Kenley for only 12 days when, on 18 August 1940, his plane, Hurricane P2768, was hit by Messerschmitts over Worcester Park. He struggled to guide the crippled plane towards the open ground of Morden Park, and safely cleared the houses nearby, only to crash in flames into some trees in the park.

At Merton College a plaque commemorates this brave young man of only 20, but his grave is at Whyteleafe.

JG

LIONEL GREEN, in another chapter in the story of Merton priory, looks at the influence of a powerful man: ROGER OF SALISBURY AND THE AUGUSTINIANS

Prince Henry, the younger brother of William Rufus, entered a chapel near Caen in Normandy with a party of knights. The priest was commencing mass, but on considering the rank of his congregation and the impatience of youth (Henry was about 22), he performed the service with accommodating rapidity in the Latin tongue so that he finished before his hearers suspected that he had reached the moment of consecration. The gathering declared that “no better chaplain could be found for men whose profession was arms”,¹ and Henry took him into his service as a chaplain.

The priest’s name was Roger and on his succession in 1100, Henry admitted him to the highest office of the state as Chancellor. Two years later he was appointed bishop of Salisbury, and about 1108 he became Justiciar. Following Henry’s success in defeating his brother at Tinchebrai, Normandy, in 1106, the king started to reorganise the governments on both sides of the Channel. The youthful knights who had followed him were used with advantage when he required clerks in his chancery and “new men” as sheriffs in the counties. In 1106 Henry appointed Gilbert the Knight to be sheriff of Surrey, Cambridge and Huntingdon.

Recalling his earlier days at Caen, Roger rebuilt Old Sarum cathedral as a copy of the Abbaye aux Dames, and the stone used was fashioned at Caen and transported by ship and cart to Old Sarum. William of Malmesbury was inspired to say that it appeared to be carved out of a single stone. Roger “beautified it in such a manner that it yields to none in England, but surpasses many, so that he had just cause to say ‘Lord, I have loved the glory of thy house’”.² He also built the bishop’s palace and castle, each with its own hall, within the *enceinte* at Old Sarum.

Now “he was second only to the king” said Henry of Huntingdon,³ and head of the royal administration. Most of the sheriffs were his nominees, and many his protégés.⁴ He “acquired a most profound knowledge of the Exchequer, so much so that, as without doubt the rolls themselves made manifest, it flourished mightily under him ...”.⁵

His household included three sons, Roger le Poer, who became Chancellor to King Stephen, Azo of Ramsbury, dean of Salisbury and Ranulf le Poer, later sheriff of Gloucestershire. Nephews included Alexander who was adopted by Roger and appointed archdeacon of Salisbury in 1121, and bishop of Lincoln in 1123, and Nigel, who became bishop of Ely in 1133.

Roger was interested in the new order of Augustinian canons, and materially assisted many foundations. When the founder of Merton, Gilbert the sheriff, sought a royal charter confirming the priory’s rights and endowments in 1121 he approached Roger. The king was holding a Council, and Gilbert invited Prior Robert to accompany him to Winchester. The proposed charter gave the *ville* of Merton to the new foundation and included further liberties which shocked some legal advocates at the court, who were afraid to show it to the king. Gilbert and the prior also dreaded that the king might nullify the whole charter when it was read to him.

Gilbert’s friendship with Roger no doubt began at the Exchequer where Gilbert had become the most senior sheriff in the land and had no trouble in dealing with the grudging officials at the Treasury.

When the king saw the contents he complained that the text reserved no jurisdiction to himself and no provision for service to him. Roger argued that the king reserved everything to himself all the better when he gave freely to God. Henry finally confirmed the royal charter, which required Gilbert to pay 100 pounds of silver and six marks of gold. The church was retained “under the royal hand and protection, as though my own property”, which could be construed as meaning that Merton was a royal foundation. The charter was witnessed by the bishops and nobles of the land attending the Council, and included Alexander, Roger’s nephew, the newly appointed archdeacon of Salisbury. Roger himself confirmed the document with his ‘corroboration’. Subsequently Gilbert was able to use his skill by flattering the treasury collectors and easing the debt.

Roger went to the mountains of Wales to assist a few canons at Llanthony in the 1120s. He was impressed by their strict observance of the Augustinian Rule and urged the king to support them.

About 1123 Roger gave the church of St Sepulchre to St Bartholomew’s priory in London. In 1122 he was instrumental in founding a house for regular canons at St Frideswide, Oxford.⁶ The king installed his chaplain Master Guimund as prior.

Roger supported Serlo, former dean of the Sarum cathedral chapter and canon of Merton priory, as the first prior of Cirencester abbey in 1131. He gave rich endowments but retained a life interest in the properties. He also encouraged the foundation of a daughter house of Cirencester at Bradenstoke in his own diocese. Serlo’s brother became the first prior.

1. "could say mass fitly for hunting men" William de Newburgh *Historia Rerum* (R.S.82) (R Howlett 1885) I.c.6.
2. William of Malmesbury *Gesta Regum Anglorum* (trans. J A Giles) ii 484
3. Henry of Huntingdon *Historia Anglorum* (T Arnold 1879) v 245: *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* s.a. 1122 (Whitelock 1961) p251
4. W L Warren *Henry II* 1973 p15
5. Dialogus de Scaccaria (C Johnson et al 1950), quoted in *English Historical Documents* 1042-1189 II 1953
6. William of Malmesbury *Gesta Pontificum Anglorum* (R.S.52) (N E S A Hamilton 1870) p316

SURREY HISTORY CENTRE

The striking new Centre has replaced the cramped old Surrey County Record Office at County Hall in Kingston and the Guildford Muniment Room. For the staff the convenience of working in purpose-built premises must be a wonderful improvement, and for the public the space, comfort and lay-out should outweigh the relative remoteness (for Mertonians) of its location.

On 14 March our party converged on Woking, mostly by train, in rather miserable weather. After a friendly welcome we were divided into two groups, with meticulous head-counts for the sake of security, for our behind-the-scenes tour.



Once through the security door we first saw the Holding/Sorting Room, where on arrival any new item is assessed. The decision is taken whether or not to keep it. Duplicates are often passed to libraries, and material more appropriate to another record office is routed there. The intriguingly labelled Disaster Control Cabinet holds hard hats, boots, torches etc, so that staff can, properly equipped, rescue objects from the scene of fire, flood or other catastrophe. So far, apparently, the cabinet's contents have not been needed.

Things to be added to the collection are immediately given accession numbers and entered onto the computer. Then they have to be treated. Drying (unheated), cleaning and pest control are carried out at this stage. Any insects are killed by blast-freezing the clingwrapped item to -30°C, in two phases, to allow any eggs to hatch between freezing. Every page of a book or surface of a document is dusted with a soft brush, and a bottle-type brush is used for book-spines.

Packing is the next stage, in acid-free materials, such as transparent pockets and folders, and then special cardboard boxes, secured with archivally safe cotton tape - always tied at the side. Rust is very destructive, so brass is used for all fastenings.

Conservation and repair work goes on upstairs. Light-boxes and even a light-wall, big enough to accommodate a 12-foot map, are an important aid for this meticulous work. Starch paste, safe and removable, is used for repairs. Paper is mended with paper and Japanese tissue, in sandwich form; parchment is repaired with sheepskin; seals with beeswax and pigment.

Then, in the core of the building, we saw the two strongrooms, where temperature and humidity are at optimum levels for safe storage of paper, photographs, lantern slides, maps and so forth. The atmosphere is mainly an argon/nitrogen mix, with only 6% oxygen, which minimises oxidation but will support life if anyone is accidentally locked in.

Opening off the foyer at one end is the Heather D Hawker Room, where members of the public have access to computer screens, books, fiche- and film-readers and modern maps, including the 25" series, and can order items from the collection, for study. At the other end of the foyer is a smaller room used for themed exhibitions.

Many aspects of Surrey's history are referred to in the specially commissioned tapestry that hangs above the reception desk. In a reminder that the county is not and never has been just a back garden to London, it incorporates images from prehistory to the present time as diverse as Nonsuch and the Woking mosque, Roman roads and Brooklands motor-racing, Magna Carta and the worldwide web. Two glass panels designed by Martin Donlin explore other themes - texts, maps, the names of the hundreds, the plan of a Lutyens house and symbols from mythology.



This was a fascinating visit, conducted by informed and enthusiastic guides, and much appreciated by us all.

The Centre is at 130 Goldsworth Road, Woking GU21 1ND tel: 01483 594594, open Tuesday - Saturday. If you do not have a CARN card already you need to take identification with you. The staff are most welcoming and helpful.

JG

THE WANDSWORTH MILLS

On 20 April about 20 members of the Society assembled at The Canons, Mitcham, to hear a talk on the mills of Wandsworth by Dorian Gerhold. There were seven mills in Wandsworth in 1086 at the time of the Domesday Survey, but their locations were not recorded. It is probable that their sites continued in use until Victorian times when although there were only four mills in the parish, each one was identified as a 'double mill', presumably because there were parallel wheels working equipment on each bank.

Milling was a big business in Wandsworth and in the 16th century it has been estimated that between 10% and 15% of Wandsworth's population worked in the four mills. In 1610 all the mills produced flour, but earlier there are references to at least one being a fulling mill. Subsequently, the mills beat copper, ground gunpowder, wrought iron, crushed linseed and even produced a wood dye.

Working our way up the Wandle (against the flow) starting from Ram Creek, the first mill to be seen would have been the Lower Mill (also known as Loampit Mill). This was downstream of the present railway bridge. It was first mentioned in 1371 and for most of its life was a corn mill. By the 1630s it was grinding up to 100 quarters (1270kg) of wheat per week. In the 1820s it was leased to Daniel Watney, son of the Daniel Watney who lived at New Barns Farm, Mitcham. The Lower Mill was converted to steam power in the 19th century, but ceased production in 1893 and was demolished in 1899.

The Middle Mill stood further upstream, between the present railway bridge and the High Street. It was first recorded in 1504 as a flour mill, but was a brazil mill by 1569. The name refers to the process of rasping brazil wood into fragments which would be soaked in water to produce a purple/brown dye. The Middle Mill was a small mill with only four stones, and perhaps for this reason a windmill with two stones was built beside it in 1750. This lasted for only 70 years. The watermill became part of the Watney flour-milling empire in the 1860s and was used until 1893, although the building survived into the 20th century.

The Upper Mill was upstream of the High Street and approached from Garratt Lane. It was first identified in a reference of 1521 when it was owned by Westminster Abbey. It was acquired by the Smith family of Mitcham in 1638 and remained in their possession until well into the 18th century. As mentioned already, the Wandsworth mills were all double mills. The Upper Mill east was a leather mill in 1705, whilst the west mill was a copper mill. By the 1890s one of the mills pulverised linseed to produce oil (for use in paint and in the manufacture of linoleum) and the other was a flour mill, leased by Daniel Watney, grandson of the Daniel Watney of Mitcham. Although at the start of the 20th century the mill was steam powered, it was converted back to water power and was in use until 1928.

Further upriver was Adkins Mill whose lease was purchased in 1363 by Westminster Abbey. In 1535 it was a fulling mill, which removed grease from wool by treating it with fuller's earth and washing it. In 1654 one half of the mill was converted to beat copper into sheets, bowls and kettles, although the other half remained a flour mill. In 1777 the whole mill became an iron mill making forgings and cannons from pig-iron and it continued this role until 1826 when it became a paper mill producing paper for *The Times* and *The Illustrated London News*. It continued to produce paper until the late 1890s and during this time it carried the name The Royal Paper Mill.

Dorian Gerhold also spoke about the gunpowder mills at Earlsfield, although not strictly within Wandsworth parish. A gunpowder mill was established there in 1656 and another was built upstream in 1661. Soon there were five mills in the area, all producing gunpowder, and in 1702 Earlsfield mills supplied 12% of all the gunpowder used by the British government. The mills were closed in 1713 and the buildings demolished and replaced by a double mill. One mill was used for snuff and the other for grinding seeds for oil. In 1853 both mills became a double paper mill which continued in production until burnt down in 1894.

Milling in Wandsworth ceased due to the greater efficiency of steam-powered mills located close to a coalfield, and also to the decreased flow of the River Wandle caused by abstraction of water in the Croydon/Waddon area.

Tony Scott

BOOKS ON LOCAL HISTORY

We do not publish commercial advertisements in the Bulletin, but we have details of one or two local history and topographical booksellers who deal in new/secondhand/remainder/reprint publications. Contact the editor if interested.

A new publication from Surrey Archaeological Society, *Hidden Depths – an Archaeological Exploration of Surrey's Past*, is a 'popular' overview of the archaeological heritage of historic Surrey, which included the present London boroughs. Written by Roger Hunt, the book follows the themes: Hearth and Home, Food and Farming, Religion and Ritual, Power and Protection, and Markets and Manufacturing. It has a wealth of plans and illustrations.

The book costs £12.95 and should be available from local bookshops. (ISBN 0 9541460 1 8)

MORE ABOUT JOHN ARBUTHNOT OF MITCHAM

from JOHN PILE:

I am very grateful to Eric Montague (Bulletin No.141 p4) for providing the answer to a question I had asked myself more than 40 years ago, but had failed to follow up. While transcribing some Morden documents in Lambeth Archives in 1960 I came across a counterpart lease of 19 September 1764¹ confirming the assignment in 1755 of the manor of Ravensbury and land in Mitcham and Morden by Sir Nicholas Hacket Carew to John Arbuthnot for a term of 99 years, the confirmation apparently being necessitated by the fact that Sir Nicholas, the last male heir in the direct line, had died in 1762.² A discrepancy between the two documents concerns the terms of the leases. According to Eric's account the original lease of 1755 was for a term of 30 years, but the Lambeth Archives lease of 1764 refers to a term of 99 years from Christmas 1755.

Having, at the time of examining the latter lease, recalled from my O-level Social History course that a certain John Arbuthnot was an 18th-century 'agricultural improver', I began to wonder whether the lessee of Ravensbury was the same man - a fact which Eric's note has at last confirmed. My curiosity about John Arbuthnot having been re-awakened, I wrote to the Rural History Centre at the University of Reading for further information, and received a very full reply from the librarian John S. Creasey, who very generously provided me with a copy of the relevant section of Arthur Young's 1811 lecture to the Board of Agriculture *On the Husbandry of three celebrated British farmers, Messrs. Bakewell, Arbuthnot and Ducket* [fig 1].

This refers to the work of "John Arbuthnot, Esq of Mitcham, in Surrey", who began his agricultural experiments at some time before 1771. Stimulated by the difficulties of cultivating "those harsh, wet, tenacious loams, which are normally called clay", Arbuthnot perfected ploughs capable of tilling the land to depths of between six and 18 inches (15-45cm) [fig 2].

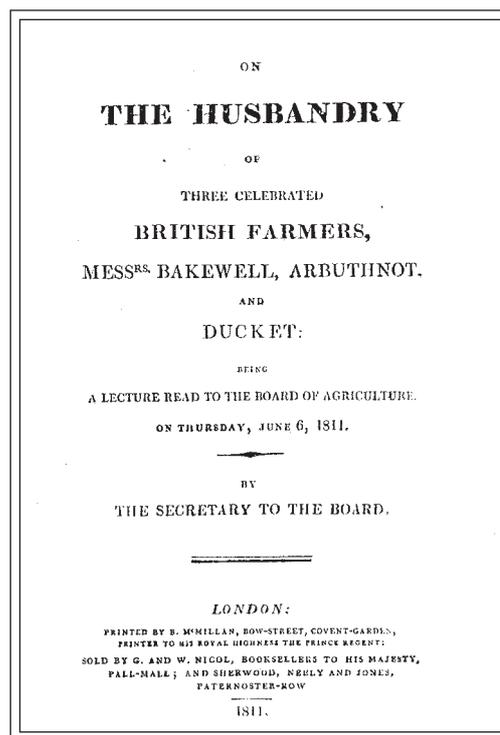


fig 1

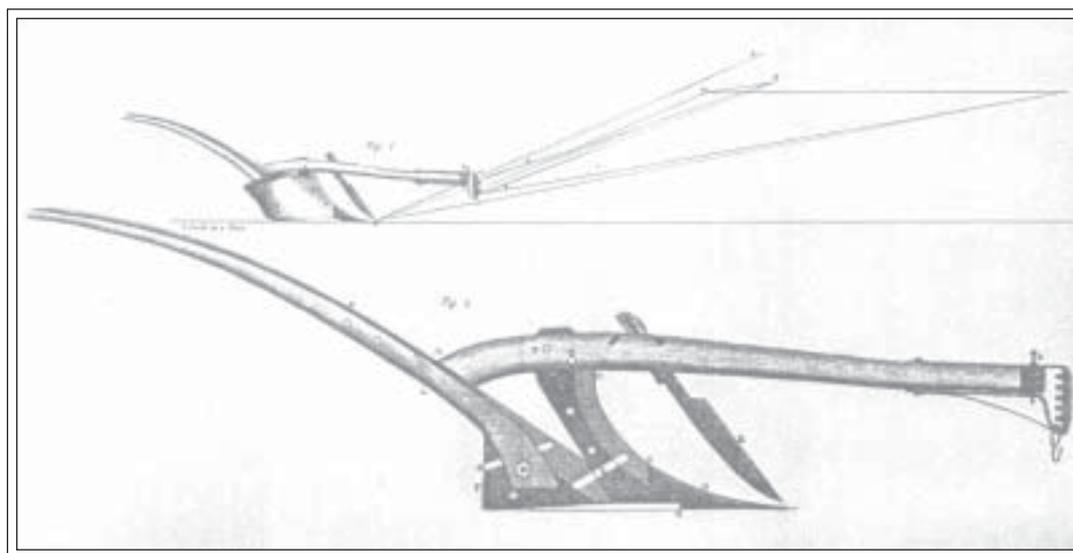


fig 2

According to Young, "the greatest exertion made by this Gentleman in cultivation, was in the article of madder, which he carried to the extent of above 50 acres, and with great success and profit". Madder was one of the principal dye-stuffs employed at Arbuthnot's calico works at Ravensbury, and he found it worthwhile to grow his own madder when it was at the high price of £4 per hundredweight (51kg). The process of mordant-madder printing as it would have been practised at Ravensbury is described fully in Eric's *Textile Bleaching and Printing in Mitcham and Merton 1590-1870*, Merton Historical Society 1992.

Surprisingly, in view of the importance ascribed to Arbuthnot's work by Arthur Young, he does not gain a place in the *Dictionary of National Biography*, and few of the standard histories of agriculture devote more than a line or two to his achievements. However my friend John Cunningham kindly placed his genealogical expertise and resources at my disposal, and was able to provide the following details of his pedigree:

Alexander Arbuthnott

of Arbuthnott, Kincardineshire, mar. c.1687 Catherine Ochterlony
 b. c.1657 d. — b. c.1661

George Arbuthnot mar. c.1728 Margaret Robinson of Leicester
 b. 1688 bur. ?1733 b. c.1701 d. c.1729

John Arbuthnot

of Ravensbury, Surrey mar. (1) c.1753 Sally Margaret Cecil
 b. 1733 d. 1797 (2) c.1760 Ursula Fitzgerald of Taplow, Bucks
 (3) 1762 Anne Stone of Rockfleet Castle, Co. Mayo
 (4) c.1788 Helen O'Halloran of Fife
 (5) c.1791 Anne Elizabeth Heard of Co. Cork

Although John Arbuthnot was related to the Viscounts Arbuthnott of that Ilk he was evidently a member of a cadet branch of the family, and does not appear in Burke's *Peerage* 105th edition, 1970.

The coat of arms [fig 3] is based upon my sketch of the seal attached to the 1764 lease, and may be described, in the absence of the tinctures, as: a chevron ermine between three estoiles. The crest is a bird's head erased (species uncertain). The arms of the Viscounts Arbuthnott as described in *Burke* are: *azure* a crescent between three mullets *argent*, and the crest incorporates a peacock's head. It is puzzling that the arms on John Arbuthnot's seal seem completely unrelated to those of his family. Perhaps a reader better versed in heraldry can offer an explanation.

Since beginning this piece I have unearthed my copy of Eric's booklet *Ravensbury Manor House and Park* MHS 1981. I would like to add the following comments:

Eric states on page 6 that the baptisms of seven of John Arbuthnot's children are recorded in the Mitcham register between 1764 and 1773. It would therefore appear that these were the issue of his marriage to Anne Stone of Rockfleet, although it is puzzling that - according to Eric - John Arbuthnot should be described as of Rockfleet at the time of this marriage when he was presumably still living at Mitcham. It is also odd that Mrs Ursula Arbuthnot née Fitzgerald died in 1781 (*Ravensbury Manor House* page 6), that is, after his marriage to Anne Stone. Clearly there is a need for further research to clarify these details. (And John Cunningham tells me that his genealogical sources are not always reliable with regard to dates!)

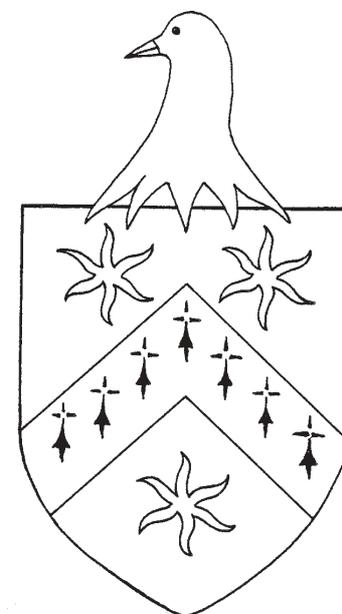


fig 3: Arms of John Arbuthnot 1764 from seal on Lambeth Archives (Minet Library) Surrey Deed No. 3380

The following references supplied by John S. Creasey have not been consulted, but they are included here for the record and the convenience of readers wishing to pursue the subject further. Mr Creasey's comments are included in brackets.

J G Gazley *The Life of Arthur Young 1741-1820* American Philosophical Society 1973 (numerous references to Arbuthnot and to his friendship with Young)

A Young *The Farmer's Tour Through the East of England* vol 2 1771 (pages 251-560, more than half the contents, devoted to an exhaustive account of Arbuthnot's farming, including the culture of madder, and plates of his implements)

J Arbuthnot 'On the culture and curing of madder' *Dublin Society Transactions* vol 1 1800 (copy in British Library)

J Small *A Lecture on Ploughs and Wheeled Carriages* 1802 edn. (contains Arbuthnot's instructions on the formation of ploughs. Copy in the Perkins Agricultural Library at the University of Southampton)

1. Lambeth Archives, Minet Library. Surrey deed No.3380
2. Revd. T Bentham *A History of Beddington* John Murray, London 1923 p23

and from JUDITH GOODMAN:

Having been able to read John Pile's comments before publication, and having already had my interest caught by this unusual story, I have followed up one or two lines of enquiry, and have been able to clarify one or two points.

Fortunately, I discovered, there exists an admirable, lovingly researched history of the Arbuthnot family.¹ Most of the information which follows comes from the dozen pages or so devoted to our John Arbuthnot, his wives and his children. A family tree shows that he was descended from the second son of Robert Arbuthnot of that ilk, who died in 1450. The Viscounts Arbuthnot are descended from the elder son, and may have adopted that second 't' when they acquired the title, in the 17th century. John Arbuthnot was possibly eighth cousin once removed to the viscount of his day.

He was born, not in 1733, but in 1729, and was four years old when his father, Captain George Arbuthnot of Queen Anne's Guard and of Kinghornie, Kincardineshire, died. According to Arbuthnot's own third son Charles (who was himself brought up by his mother's family, the Stones) the young John was cared for outside the family. "The persons under whose care my father had been placed, felt that the best mode of disposing of him was to educate him for trade. This, from what I have heard of my father, was a mistake; as I have understood that, having very superior talents, he was well calculated to succeed in the army or in one of the learned professions. In trade he failed..."

In 1754, aged 25, John Arbuthnot was 'retoured'² heir to his father. By this date he was already married and, Eric Montague tells us,³ established at Ravensbury, which suggests either that he had acquired funds, or had been able to borrow on his expectations. In 1760 he sold Kinghornie. This estate was close to the sea, near the mouth of the Bervie, between Montrose and Stonehaven. Interestingly, in the light of Arbuthnot's future career, but perhaps coincidentally, Inverbervie was a notable flax-spinning centre. A little way up the Bervie is the small town of Arbuthnot, with its great house and its church full of family graves.

Now for all those marriages:

He married **Sally Margaret Cecil**, of the family of John Cecil of Ravensbury printworks in 1753. There seem to have been no children. She died in February 1759 and was buried at Morden.⁴

The second wife was **Ursula Fitzgerald**, whom he married in the following year, only for her to die in 1761⁴ (not 1781), possibly in childbirth, as there was a son John born that year.

On 19 October 1762 he married thirdly **Anne**, daughter of Richard **Stone**, a Lombard Street banker. Anne bore him ten children between 1764 and 1773, seven of whom, Eric Montague tells us,³ were baptised at Mitcham. (It is strange that the wives were buried in one parish and the children baptised in the other.) Anne died in 1782.

In 1788 he married **Helen Fitzgerald née O'Halloran** of Cork, whose date of death has not, as far as I know, been discovered.

And finally there was **Anne Elizabeth**, daughter of Bickford **Heard** of Cork, whom he married in 1791, and who survived him.

There were no children by the last two marriages.

At Ravensbury one of Arbuthnot's enterprises was the growing of madder. This dye root, so important in the textile printing industry, was expensive to buy. In one of his letters to Arthur Young, the great agricultural expert of the time, he wrote, "My madder this year has made me almost mad, having just conquered what I thought [an] insurmountable difficulty; but courage to a degree of wildness, and perseverance, will do great things ... in short madder engrossed me ...".

Young, who, before 1775, had his own problems, once wrote of that period, "The only pleasant moments that I passed were in visits to my friend Arbuthnot at Mitcham, whose agriculture so near the capital brought good company to his house. He was, upon the whole, the most agreeable, pleasant and interesting connection which I ever made in agricultural pursuits". It was a mutually beneficial acquaintance, for through Young Arbuthnot mixed with such notable people as the musical and intellectual Burney family.

In 1773 Arbuthnot published *An Inquiry into the Connection between the Present Price of Provisions and the Size of Farms, with Remarks on Population as affected thereby, etc. by a Farmer*, in which he defended the enclosure of common lands and endorsed scientific and efficient farming practice as a means of reducing the price of food and alleviating the distress that prevailed at the time.

Some time in the mid-1770s there was an extraordinary episode in his career, which must have caused some excitement in Mitcham and Morden. According to Young, Catherine the Great of Russia "sent over seven or

eight young men to learn practical agriculture, two or three of whom were fixed with my friend Arbuthnot". Young was asked to examine them after their training, to see if they were fit for imperial service. One stubbornly refused to be tested and Young was told that he would be sent to Siberia for life. "The intended establishment of an Imperial farm never took place, and after at least an expenditure of £10,000, the men on their arrival [back in Russia] were turned loose, some to starve, some driven into the army, and others retained by Russian noblemen. In this wretched and ridiculous manner did the whole scheme end ..."

Arbuthnot seems to have written a treatise on grasses, which was translated into Russian for Empress Catherine, probably by one of his visitors, with "an English hayloft metamorphosed into a Russian shrubbery". He wrote, "This ... will certainly establish my character with her Majesty as a most ingenious farmer, and as she is very desirous of having a large tract laid out in the style of an English garden, it is not impossible but that I may be sent for to plan and plant her stables in Petersburg. I think I could almost laugh to hear the whole read again into English ..."

Such a Russian trip seems to have remained a dream. Admiral Marriott Arbuthnot,⁴ whose precise descent is uncertain, but can only have been a very distant connection, entered into a Chancery dispute with John Arbuthnot in 1778. It appears that he had advanced the sum of £5000 to John in 1774, and, when the latter refused to repay, without giving a reason, it seems that the Admiral was able to take possession of Ravensbury.

This episode ties in with the recollection of Charles Arbuthnot, John's third son, quoted earlier, who was born in 1767. He wrote, "When I was at a private school at Richmond, my father failed in his trading speculations and he went to reside in France with his whole family". Arbuthnot was certainly described as "of Boulogne" after he was "of Ravensbury". By 1781 he seems to have quite given up farming, and Young writes of "a sad letter from my friend Arbuthnot on his return from France ... written in so melancholy a strain on his own situation and that of his wife and family, that it has made my heart ache to read it". Arbuthnot's letter, of 2 April, survives. "... Happy as I was last year, I am as downcast this, and see nothing but misery before my eyes, for Death would be preferable to living as I do, torn from my family without having it in my power to assist them sufficiently ... Jack got the first year he was in India an appointment of £1000 per ann. and is as happy as a Prince. If I can get George out next Spring I shall regard nothing as to myself, trusting they will assist the girls. Little Alex turns out a Wonder of the Age, is an excellent scholar and though but turned of twelve years has gone through six books of Euclid; he is indeed deservedly the admiration of all the place, having every accomplishment a Boy can have, manly beyond conception... Poor Mrs Arb. was for many months last year at Death's door, I never went through such a scene, but thank God she is now better than she has been for years ..." (this was Anne, who died the following year).

Soon however there was an upturn in Arbuthnot's affairs. According to Young, it was by Lord Loughborough's interest that Arbuthnot got an appointment in Ireland, under the Linen Board, and Young thereby lost "by far the most agreeable friend I was ever acquainted with". The post was Inspector-General of Leinster, Munster and Connaught, at a salary of £500 per annum from June 1782, with a house in Dublin for his use. He apparently threw himself energetically into his new role, and his reports on the condition of the linen trade gave great offence in Ireland. Moreover the man who had considered the appointment his own published a pamphlet pointing out that Arbuthnot had always failed in everything, claiming that he had engaged in smuggling while in France and accusing him of wanting to change Ireland from a linen manufacturing country to a flax growing one.⁵

In 1786 Arbuthnot however acquired Rockfleet, Carrighahooly (Carraig an Chabhlaigh) and Rosyvera, near Newport, Co. Mayo, on a permanent lease, under which he was required to build a "neat, good house". This was Rosyvera House, near the ruined Rockfleet Castle, and was not completed until after his death in 1797. Little seems to be known about his last years, although a letter of Young's says, "I am greatly concerned for Mr. Arbuthnot, tho his silence made him dead to us from the time he went to Ireland; I never knew a family which was the centre of every mild & agreeable virtue so shattered into nothing by a man's failure".⁶ He was buried in Newport churchyard. On his tombstone is the following inscription:

BENEATH THIS STONE ARE DEPOSITED THE REMAINS OF THE LATE
JOHN ARBUTHNOT ESQRE OF ROCKFLEET CASTLE IN THIS COUNTY
AND FORMERLY OF MITCHAM SURREY IN ENGLAND
DIED ON THE 27TH DECEMBER, 1797,
IN THE 69TH YEAR OF HIS AGE
THIS STONE IS PLACED HERE BY HIS FOURTH SON COL. SIR
ROBERT ARBUTHNOT, K.C.B., OF THE
COLDSTREAM GUARDS

As Eric Montague has pointed out,³ three of Arbuthnot's sons have their own entries in the *Dictionary of National Biography* - something that cannot be said of many fathers. Charles became a respected diplomat and politician.

He married two celebrated beauties, the second of whom achieved fame of a sort by becoming the Duke of Wellington's favourite mistress ("confidential friend" as the *DNB* sedately puts it). Robert, who became Lieutenant General Sir Robert KCB KTS, was a gifted and gallant soldier, who saw action in three continents. And Thomas, who became Lieutenant General Sir Thomas KCB, was another distinguished soldier who served under Sir John Moore and General Picton in the Peninsula and ended as regional commander of the English north and the midlands. Of the rest, bright little Alex, the "Wonder of the Age", grew up to become the Bishop of Killaloe. Indeed all the children seem to have thrived, though of the firstborn, John, son of Ursula, and once "happy as a Prince" at his appointment in India, we only know that he died there unmarried. Robert, the son named in the inscription, was in fact Arbuthnot's fifth son (the same error occurs in the *DNB*). John the younger seems to have been written out of family history.

There are some interesting references to Arbuthnot's agricultural projects in Gazley's book on Arthur Young. On 27 May 1771 a trial of various experimental ploughs was held at his Ravensbury farm, including two of his own invention, though neither won the bounty on offer.⁷

As John Pile's correspondent at Reading noted, 300 pages, of *Young's Farmer's Tour* are devoted to Arbuthnot's work, and the latter was horrified when asked to proof-read. "... my Good man, surely you spin me out too long, but you best know, don't think me impertinent, but will people have the patience to go through such scenes of damned bad husbandry ..."⁸

Young described 110 experiments by Arbuthnot - lucerne and madder culture, crop rotations, manures, drains, drills and so on. He was rated as especially skilful at growing madder, having studied this crop in the Low Countries. Despite the not very good soil at Ravensbury he profitably grew 80 acres (32ha) of madder out of his total of less than 300 acres (120ha).⁹ Young also described him as "deeply informed in mathematical mechanics" and his many inventions included the double mouldboard plough, the turnwrest plough, the Berkshire shim, the spiky roller and the turnip drill.⁸ When walking through Ravensbury Park today it is strange to imagine all this activity, not to mention the variety of visitors, at the Ravensbury of more than 200 years ago.

1. A J (Mrs P S-M) Arbuthnot *Memories of the Arbuthnots of Kincardineshire and Aberdeenshire* George Allen & Unwin, London 1920

2. A Scottish legal term

3. E N Montague and J G Berry *Ravensbury Manor House and Park* Merton Historical Society 1981 p63.

4. F Clayton (transcribed and ed.) *The Registers of Morden* Parish Register Society Vol XXXVII London 1901 p59

5. J G Gazley *The Life of Arthur Young 1741-1820* American Philosophical Society, Philadelphia 1973 p146

6. *ibid.* p255

7. *ibid.* p64

8. *ibid.* p70

9. *ibid.* p71

FROM THE POSTBAG:

(i) Joan Welch of Ealing is a great-great-granddaughter of Henry Welch, brother of Thomas Welch, whose table-cloth printing works were featured in an article by Eric Montague in Bulletin 141. She writes:

"... Henry was working with Thomas in 1861, and then ultimately the firm became Welch Brothers in 1870. Henry was also a Baptist minister in Tooting Grove church..."

"... We were always told that the Welches were a Huguenot family and that there was a Jonathan and Joseph Welch on the Wandle in the late 17th century. However I have another 100 years or so [in family tree research] to go before I can tie them in, if indeed they are any relation. Thomas and Henry's father was also a calico printer, and did the classic moves from the Wandle to Crayford, to Waltham Abbey, before Thomas and his son came back to the Wandle..."

"... There is a Joseph Welch who lived in Wandle Villa, and also the firm of Welch Margetson at Phipps Bridge ..."

(ii) Jeffrey Herbert of Crawley belongs to a Sussex family called Weller. He writes:

"... Some [of the Wellers] moved to Mitcham, and I suspect because they were carters more money was made working on the watercress fields along with other aspects of farming.

"... Some lived at Love Lane, Mitcham... My understanding is that a paper was put together about a watercress basket that was invented by one of the Wellers! Maybe someone in the Society has more information about this paper!

"I know that some of the Wellers still live at Mitcham, and have been in touch through the local paper. Any help you may be able to give would be of great value."

The Editor would be glad to hear from any reader who can provide further information for either correspondent.

PETER HOPKINS reports on two talks given by members of our Society to the SURREY ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

As part of a recent six-week series of lectures entitled **Friars, Monks and Canons: some Religious Houses in Surrey**, our Chairman, **Lionel Green** spoke on Friday 3 May on *Merton and the Augustinians*. Lionel has been studying Merton Priory since his youth, and was granted the accolade of writing two chapters on the subject, (plus two other chapters) in Miss Jowett's *A History of Merton & Morden* in 1951.

In this lecture Lionel traced the origins of the Augustinian order, so called because the Canons followed the rule devised by St Augustine of Hippo for religious communities in North Africa in the 5th century. The Order of Augustinian Canons came into being in France in the 11th century, and soon came to England, St Botolph, Colchester, being one of the first houses in England to follow the rule in about 1104. Lionel explained how the Augustinians, as well as being regular at worship, were also involved in parochial work, as well as almsgiving, hospitality, and intercession for the souls of benefactors. They also administered the many estates and other properties given to them for their financial support. They were great innovators, clearing woodland, draining land, building roads and bridges, and quarrying stone. By 1128 there were over 30 Augustinian houses in England, and most of the hospitals in the land followed the Augustinian rule. Over 75% of Augustinian houses set up during the reign of Henry I were founded by the King or his courtiers. Few achieved the status of an abbey, and most were administered by a prior, hence a priory.

Within the community officials were responsible for maintaining provisions (cellarer), organizing services in church (precentor), caring for the church (sacrist), supplying the needy (almoner), extending hospitality (guest-master), food preparation (kitchener), tending the sick (infirmarer), organising the *scriptoria* (librarian), supplying clothing (chamberlain), overseeing supplies of corn and flour (granger), and administering the estates (steward).

The siting of the priory was of paramount importance, especially its proximity to an adequate water supply to drive the mill and to carry away sewage. Ten percent of Augustinian houses moved their site, compared with 33% of Cistercian houses, and only 3% of Benedictine houses, the earliest Order in England. Augustinian houses in Surrey were Southwark, Merton, Newark, Reigate and Tandridge, while Shulbrede priory was just across the border in Sussex.

Lionel spent much of the lecture speaking of Merton Priory, dealing with its foundation, its role as a centre for learning, its outreach in setting up daughter houses (the subject of his new book [see page 16], its important role in national affairs, its endowments, including manors, churches, mills, shops and houses, and its granges, such as Upton Grange in Buckinghamshire, which still stands.

Lionel is to be congratulated on giving such an excellent and interesting lecture to so august a body. Perhaps we can look forward to another publication, dealing with the topics covered in this lecture.

On Saturday 11 May **John Pile**, a regular contributor to our *Bulletin* [see page 9], was the main speaker at the **Villages Study Group** workshop, held at Cranleigh. His title was *The Richest Historical Record – Landscape and Local History*. John, whose interest in local history started when he was a teenager living in Morden, has lived in Hampshire for many years, and has developed a special expertise in landscape history, particularly the development of commons. Although often described as waste, commons were important to the manorial economy, providing communal grazing, and supplying villagers with fuel and building materials. However, as population expanded, pressure for additional farmland and house sites led to many encroachments onto the commons, many of our modern settlements originating in this way.

Starting with examples from the Havant area, John then considered the green near the High Street, Wimbledon; Mitcham Common and the adjoining common land in Waddon; Wrythe Green in Carshalton; Sparrowfield, intercommoned by the inhabitants of Morden, Cheam, Malden and Ewell; Sutton Common, and finally the two commons at Cranleigh, where the lecture was taking place.

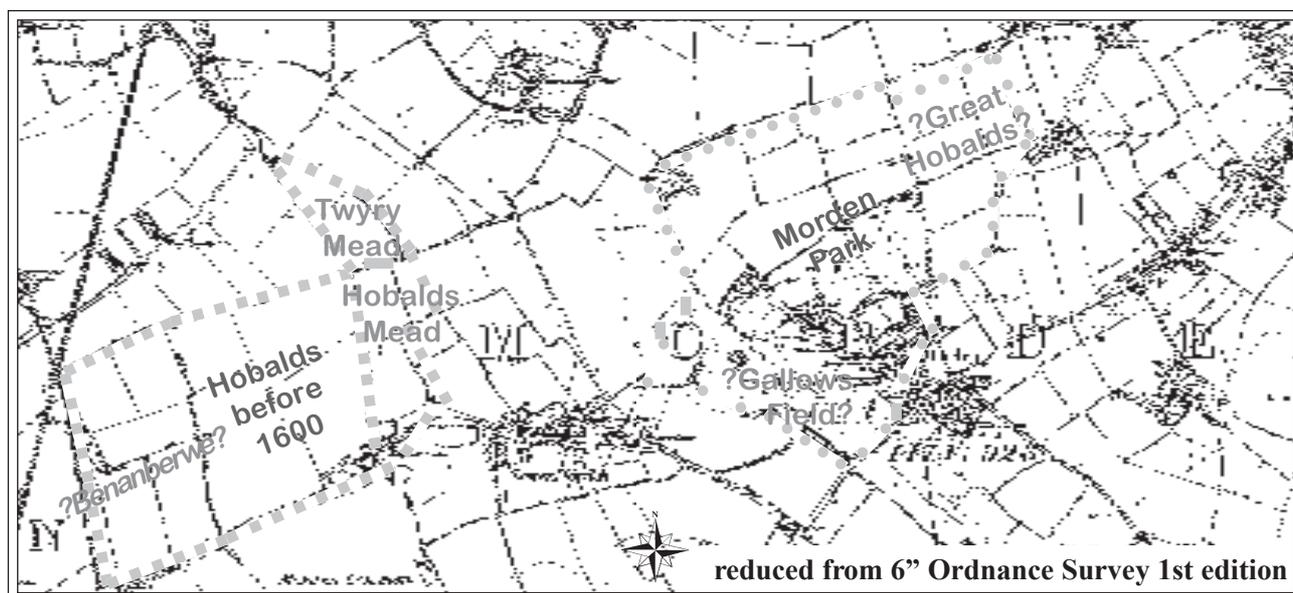
John particularly drew attention to the 'exit-funnels' which formed where the roadways, used for driving cattle, emerged from the commons. Many of these funnels were preserved in 'fossil' form when the commons shrank as a result of encroachments, and they can still be recognised on 19th-century maps. Funnels at Leigh in the Forest of Bere must be very old, as Leigh was enclosed in the 13th or 14th century. John encouraged us to reverse our normal point of view and look at the enclosures taken out of the former waste. Many have an oval form, which gives a good ratio of area to perimeter, reducing the cost of ditching or fencing. Other oval shapes can be recognised on maps, where the alignment of field boundaries within the oval are different to those outside. One such enclosure that has long fascinated John is in the Ravensbury manor lands in Morden, at Moreton Green. Many of these ovals were vaccaries, for dairy breeding and production. John suggested that the Cranleigh ovals may well represent the 'original' Wealden *fold* settlements.

By studying the waste and its boundaries, John suggested, it is possible to formulate theories as to settlement origins. This fascinating talk gave rise to much discussion, and will serve as a new focus for our village studies.

**PETER HOPKINS has been investigating some mysterious
MEDIEVAL FIELD NAMES IN MORDEN**

For some time I have wondered about the significance of the name Hobalds, relating to a farm in Lower Morden which also included land in Malden and Merton. Margaret Gelling, in *Signposts to the Past* (p150), says that *hob* names refer to goblins, and may be associated with earthworks. Among the landmarks delineating the boundary of the Merton estate granted by King Edgar to Aelfheah and his wife Aelfswith in 967 AD is *benanberwe* in the southwest corner of Merton, in the very area of the later Hobalds Farm. This name also suggests a burial mound or earthwork of some kind. Benanberwe's location at the junction of four parishes and three hundreds is significant.

But recently I have been in correspondence with Graham Gower of the Streatham Society, who has been researching a sequence of Saxon look-out posts along the line of Stane Street, and was enquiring about the origins of the mound in Morden Park. Some authorities have suggested that the mound might be a burial mound. I had mentioned references, between the 16th and 18th centuries, to a Gallowsfield within the lands that became the Morden Park estate. Eric Montague had pointed out to me the association of gallows and burial mounds in other places in Surrey, especially Gally Hills near Banstead, the Goblin (Electrical) Works site at Leatherhead, and Guildown near Guildford, all sites where pagan Saxon burials were excavated, along with slightly later execution burials. Graham then pointed out the name Great Hobalds within the Morden Park estate.



So now we have two occurrences of the name Hobalds in Morden, each in the vicinity of a possible burial mound or earthwork site. I had often wondered why the Hobalds name was associated with two distinct estates. Hobalds Farm was a freehold property that came into the possession of Merton Priory in the 13th century. The Morden Park estate was made up from former demesne land belonging to Westminster Abbey. Of course, it is possible that a tenant by the name of Hobald occupied both properties at some time, but there is no other evidence for him.

The earliest local use of the name Hobalds that I have discovered so far is in 1505, when the Merton Court Rolls refer to the "way leading to Hobaldsmede". Hobaldsmede was one of the meadows bordering the Pyl Brook, in the present Grand Drive area. It also belonged to Merton Priory, though by the 16th century it was included among the priory's demesne lands rather than as part of Hobalds Farm. It was in Morden, but adjoined Twyrymede in Merton parish. Presumably it had been the meadowland pertaining to the Hobalds estate when it was granted to Merton Priory in the 1230s.

However, there is an intriguing series of references to a "Hobaldesmed" in some 14th-century account rolls from Wandsworth. Rita Ensing has been transcribing documents among the Westminster Abbey Muniments relating to the manor of Doune in Wandsworth, and she kindly allowed me to take photocopies of her transcripts, for comparison with the Morden documents. Between 1372 and 1396 the Westminster manor of Doune paid 20d a year to the Prior of Merton as lord of the manor of Dunsford, also in Wandsworth, for a piece of meadow called Hoboldesmed. Presumably this Hoboldesmed was in Wandsworth, but is it a coincidence that both Hobaldsmedes were in Merton Priory estates associated with Westminster Abbey manors?

However, it does take the Hobalds name back to the late 14th century. I wonder whether there are any other Hobalds names in Surrey. Do any of our readers know of other occurrences of the name?

IN BRIEF

- ◆ Lambeth Local History Forum are running their spring and summer **Heritage Walks in South London** until October. Mostly free, and led by local historians. Leaflets and further information from Lambeth Archives Department, 52 Knatchbull Road, London SE5 9QY; tel: 020 7926 6076
- ◆ Next exhibitions at the Heritage Centre, The Canons, Madeira Road, Mitcham: **Merton During the 1970s**, from 11 June to 21 July, and, upstairs, **Leg before Wicket: a Celebration of Mitcham Cricket Club**, from 12-30 July.
- ◆ The new **De Morgan Centre for the Study of 19th Century Art and Society** is now open. It is housed in the West Hill Library Building, 38 West Hill, London SW18 1RZ, close to rail and Underground and on four bus routes. Open Mon - Wed 12.00-18.00; Fri - Sat 10.00-17.00. Closed Sun, Thurs and all Bank Holidays. Tel: 020 8871 1144; www.demorgan.org.uk
- ◆ On Saturday 27 July the Museum of London is offering two guided visits (90 minutes each) to **Merton Priory**, at 11am and 1pm. Fee £5 (£3 conc.). Book on 020 7814 5777.
- ◆ The microfiche version of the **1901 Census** is now available for use at the Local Studies Centre, 2nd floor, Morden Library.
- ◆ The **Wimbledon Park Heritage Trail** has been created by the Wimbledon Park Heritage Group, with support from various organisations and the Boroughs of Merton and Wandsworth. There are numbered posts at points with views/historic interest and you can pick up a (free) leaflet, with map, at Wimbledon Library or the Wimbledon Society's Museum. Or take a virtual stroll on www.wphg.demon.co.uk.
- ◆ **Kingston upon Thames Archaeological Society** is organising a Multi-Period Archaeological Research and Training Excavation at Tolworth Court Farm from 20 July to 25 August. Volunteers are invited to apply, and a training course is on offer. Peter Hopkins [address below] has copies of the application form.

TWO NEW PUBLICATIONS

Merton Historical Society's latest publications scan the centuries.

Our Chairman, Lionel Green, has produced *Daughter Houses of Merton Priory*, based on the talk he gave to the Society in December 1999.

Profusely illustrated with plans, photographs, drawings and tables, the book traces the spread of Merton's influence in England, Scotland and Normandy, through the setting up Augustinian communities at Taunton, Plympton, Canterbury, Bodmin, Edinburgh, Cirencester, St Lô, Dover and Christchurch within 33 years of the foundation of Merton Priory beside the Wandle.

Lionel has been studying all aspects of Merton Priory for over 50 years, and shares some of the results of his studies in this excellent book.

36 pages, A5 format, £1.50 full price, £1.20 to members, plus 35p postage & packing.

Available from Peter Hopkins, Publications

Our Treasurer, David Luff, brings us to the 20th century with *Trouble at Mill, A brief history of the former Liberty Print Works site including Textile Printing at Merton Printers Ltd (Libertys) 1965-1982*. David started work at Merton Printers Ltd in January 1965, and completed the last-ever print-run at the Merton Abbey Works before it closed in December 1982. In this book David traces the early industrial history of the site, and then takes us on a personal tour of the production processes, introducing us to many of the personalities along the way. This unique view 'from the shop floor' makes fascinating reading, and the abundance of photographs, diagrams and plans complement the text perfectly.

52 pages, A4 format, £2.95 full price, £2.40 to members, plus 55p postage & packing.

Secretary

Letters and contributions for the Bulletin should be sent to the Hon. Editor.
The views expressed in this Bulletin are those of the contributors concerned and not necessarily those of the Society or its Officers.

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