



PRESIDENT: J Scott McCracken BA FSA MIFA

VICE PRESIDENTS: Viscountess Hanworth, Lionel Green and William Rudd

BULLETIN NO. 146

CHAIRMAN: Peter Hopkins

JUNE 2003



PROGRAMME JUNE-SEPTEMBER



Friday 6 June 11.00am

Day visit to see Westminster Abbey Vestments, Library and Muniment Room

Rosemary Turner, who gave us a fascinating talk on the Abbey vestments last year, will be our guide on this part of the visit. There will be a charge of £5 a head for the day.

Numbers are limited.

Saturday 5 July

Coach trip to William Morris Gallery and Audley End

This visit is now fully booked.

Details of the day's arrangements are on the information sheet sent out with the March *Bulletin*. If you have any queries please ring Ray Kilsby.

Saturday 16 August 2.15pm

Wimbledon Park Heritage Trail

An opportunity to learn more about the history of this part of Wimbledon, once part of the Spencer estate. The park itself retains features designed by 'Capability' Brown.

Local historian **Douglas Gardiner** will lead us on the walk of about 2½ miles.

Meet at the Park entrance in Home Park Road, close to Wimbledon Park station.

Wednesday 17 September 2.00pm

Visit to Chelsea Physic Garden

This is the second oldest physic garden in the country, having been established by the Apothecaries' Company in 1676. Botanical research is still carried on here.

Numbers are limited.

Meet at the entrance in Swan Walk, which is off Royal Hospital Road.

Nearest station is Sloane Square. There is a charge of £6 a head.



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

Non-members are invited to make a small donation to help with the Society's running costs.



REIGATE STONE, UNDERGROUND QUARRIES AND STANDING BUILDINGS

Reigate stone was quarried and used for building purposes before the Norman Conquest, and continued so to be throughout the Middle Ages, until as late as the 18th century. On 15 February members and friends were privileged to hear, with a good few laughs, from the expert on the subject, when Paul Sowan enlightened a receptive audience. It was in 1963 that he became Secretary of the Croydon Natural History and Scientific Society and embarked on a career of studying stone quarries – particularly of Reigate stone. His first task was to prevent a local authority from permanently blocking the entrance to Godstone quarry. (Was it really God's stone?)

The term 'Reigate stone' refers to a stone found in the Upper Greensand of the North Downs, but the name varies according to the ancient parish in which it was quarried, i.e. Reigate, Gatton, Merstham, Godstone and Chaldon. It is not a true sandstone, although its composition includes about 60% silica (quartz), along with glauconite (one of the mica family), calcite and fossil debris. Reigate stone was a prestige stone used for important castles, cathedrals and palaces. Wren used large quantities for the lower part of St Paul's. The large blocks were cut with picks, chisels and wedges. Saws were not then available.

How was the stone conveyed to London? Most quarries have access to the sea or rivers, but the Downs prevent easy access, although, once the stone reached the Thames, rafting to Hampton Court, Westminster, the Tower, Rochester and the Essex churches would have been easy. Paul suggested that some roads may have been specially constructed, such as Ditches Lane from Chaldon to Coulsdon.

As well as the building stone the quarries produced hearthstone, i.e. stone used to construct hearths, but it could also mean pieces of stone used for cleaning hearths. The best hearthstone came from Godstone, and continued to be extracted until the late 1950s.

Paul conveyed all this information with humour to a rapt assembly. We learned the difference between mine and quarry. Quarries produce building stone – ashlar, freestone etc – whereas mines bring forth minerals – metal ores, coal, salt etc. Reigate stone came from underground quarries, and not mines. But underground quarries were regulated by mining regulations, although these were not legally operative until 1872.

Great Britain has (or had) mines in every county except the Western Isles, and Paul is the expert for Surrey. Various government departments continually approach him for information. He was involved with the Transport Ministry when the M23 motorway cut through countless cavities. But the ministries are oblivious of each other's requests, so that Paul has to tell the government what it already knows. When the Inland Revenue began asking questions about mines in Surrey Paul found it difficult not to safeguard his favourite beauty spots with his 'mine' of information!

Over the past 40 years Paul has visited quarries and mines in different parts of the country and abroad. Members enjoyed hearing of his sometimes hilarious experiences.

Lionel Green

SURREY ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY – VILLAGE STUDIES GROUP

On Saturday 1 March 25 members of Surrey Archaeological Society met at The Canons, Mitcham, under the chairmanship of Dennis Turner to review recent work by their respective societies on the origin of selected Surrey villages.

Proceedings commenced with a presentation by our chairman Peter Hopkins on the boundaries of Morden, which he illustrated with a fascinating succession of overlying maps containing hints of land holdings preceding the creation of the ecclesiastical parish. Concentrating on the area around St Lawrence's church and on Central Road, both of which engendered lively discussion, Peter was obliged by shortage of time to leave until a future meeting similar examinations of Lower Morden and finally, but certainly not least, the centre(?) of late Saxon Merton.

Equally intriguing studies of the structure and early development of the villages of Thorpe and Cobham by Jill Williams and David Taylor respectively, followed by discussion, occupied the afternoon. Proceedings concluded with the promise of further sessions to be arranged, and a vote of thanks to Merton's Heritage Officer Sarah Gould for kindly arranging for The Canons to be used again, and for providing refreshments.

Eric Montague

WORCESTER PARK, CUDDINGTON AND NONSUCH

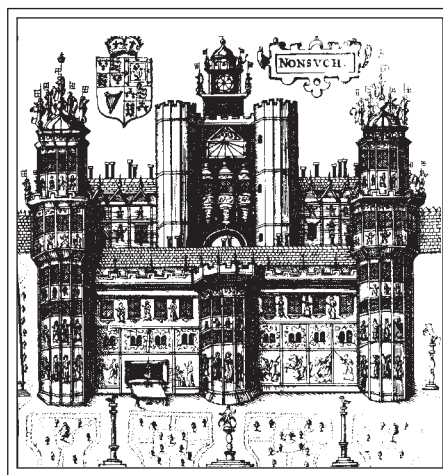
It was a full house at the Snuff Mill Environmental Centre on 15 March, when we welcomed David Rymill as our speaker. It is encouraging to have had such numbers at our meetings over recent months, but it is embarrassing to turn away members, and we do apologise. The Committee is looking for larger accommodation for next year, but this year's venues are already fixed. So come early to ensure a seat once we resume our indoor meetings in October!

David Rymill, an archivist at Hampshire Record Office, is a native of Worcester Park, and in 2000 published *Worcester Park & Cuddington: a walk through the centuries*. In his talk David took us on a virtual walk around Worcester Park and through the centuries, with the aid of the dual projection of slides.

Worcester Park took its name from Edward Somerset, the 4th Earl of Worcester, who held the office of Keeper of the Great Park of Nonsuch under James I. Nonsuch Palace had been built by Henry VIII as a hunting lodge and the Great and Little Parks, which Henry created in 1539 around the palace, formed part of a new hunting forest based on Hampton Court. Unfortunately the medieval village of Cuddington occupied the site which Henry had chosen for his new palace, but that posed no problem to the Tudor monarch. The lord of the manor of Cuddington, Richard Codrington, seems to have been happy enough to surrender his ancestral home in exchange for the manor and lands of the recently dissolved priory of Ixworth in Suffolk. Ixworth was adjacent to Great Livermere, which belonged to Richard's stepson, and as Richard was childless, the two estates were consolidated on his death in 1567.

Having obtained the manor of Cuddington, Henry arranged for the manor house and its barns to be demolished, together with four other farms and the parish church. Cuddington church had been in the possession of Merton Priory, and they had appointed its rectors, one of whom, Walter de Merton, became Chancellor to Henry III, Bishop of Rochester, and founder of Merton College, Oxford.

A more substantial link with Merton Priory was the use of over 3500 tons of its demolished stonework, carted from Merton to be used in the foundations of the new palace! Other stone came from Reigate, tiles from Kingston and Streatham, timber from Bookham and Newdigate, scaffolding from Dorking. Kilns were built at Nonsuch for making bricks and lime. Four neighbouring farmers were compensated for damage done to crops by the brickworks, so perhaps the villagers of Cuddington had similarly received compensation for losing their homes to make way for the palace. The palace itself was spectacular – there was indeed 'None such'.



from John Speed's 1610 map of Surrey

By 1682, however, the building was old-fashioned and probably the worse for wear, and in that year Barbara Villiers, Duchess of Cleveland and one of Charles II's mistresses, obtained permission to demolish the palace and sell its materials. The district once more reverted to arable farming, with five farms in the area. One of these was Sparrow Farm, a name which brings to mind the vast medieval common of Sparrowfield, which served the communities of Cheam, Cuddington, Ewell, Malden and Morden. Frequent disputes took place concerning the all-important rights of common, and in the mid-16th century the two earliest maps or 'plots' of the area were drawn up to settle one such dispute. A colour photograph of the later and more detailed of these is included in David's book. Another local farm was Worcester Park Farm, where Millais and Holman Hunt stayed in 1851 while painting *Ophelia in the Stream* and *A Huguenot on St Bartholomew's Eve* (Millais) and *The Hireling Shepherd* and *The Light of the World* (Hunt), using various locations in the vicinity.

It was the coming of the railway in 1859 that led to the development of Worcester Park, and this was accelerated with the electrification of the line in 1925 and the opening of Stoneleigh station in 1932. Worcester Park station was at the junction of the three ancient parishes of Cheam, Cuddington and Malden, and the name Worcester Park now refers to roads and houses in all three parishes, even though they are in three different boroughs, and two administrative counties. Cuddington waited 350 years for its parish church to be replaced, but in 1867 an iron church was erected, and in 1895 the present church was opened, at the opposite end of the parish to its medieval predecessor.

Two other links with Merton should be mentioned. Blakesley School was originally set up in 1913 in Blakesley House, next door to the Nelson Hospital, but moved to Worcester Court in 1939. It closed in 1959, and is now the site of Worcester Gardens. Kingsley High School also moved from Merton, having been founded in 1927 in a house near Raynes Park station. A branch was set up in 1934 in Malden which moved to a tall Victorian house in The Avenue in 1936. In 1942 the two schools amalgamated at the new site.

Of necessity, the above represents just a few highlights from a very detailed and interesting afternoon. Perhaps we can follow it up with a real walk one day?

Peter Hopkins

A DEMONSTRATION OF ANGLO-SAXON ARMS AND ARMOUR

This was the subject of our April meeting on Saturday the 12th at The Canons, Mitcham. David McDermott, a former teacher and now a re-enactor, provided the presentation described by his own publicity as an “interactive exposition” of the life and times of the people who lived in these islands 1000 years ago, as seen through the eyes of an Anglo-Saxon thegn (lord). David has contributed to many television programmes, including Simon Schama’s *A History of Britain*, Channel 4’s school programme *Conquering the Normans*, and - in a lighter mood - *Big Breakfast*. He has also given demonstrations to many museums including the Museum of London.

The audience was therefore privileged to see David in the flesh, as were the travellers on Tramlink who witnessed him carrying his stock of costumes in his large rucksack as well as an assortment of weapons of the period. When he crossed the road one motorist wound down his window and shouted, “The Romans are coming!”

During a fascinating two hours we were introduced to all the arms, armour and clothing an Anglo-Saxon warrior would have worn (or carried), including the **helmet**, which was heavy and strong, but lined inside with something soft like a tea cosy; the **shield**, which was 36-40 inches across; the **spear**, which was about six feet long; and the **sword**, made of steel, which could cut off a head with one blow.

During the interval people were invited to handle all the objects and to ask questions of the speaker. Many articles of clothing were examined and passed round, such as the goatskin **shoes** with integral sole, hand-stitched, with toggles; the **trousers** made of wool, close-fitting for warmth, with a gusset and a drawstring waist; and the **chainmail**, which contained 2500 rings handmade by David himself.



Many of our members acted as willing volunteers in allowing themselves to be dressed in the clothes or to carry the weapons, including Tim Fripp, Desmond Bazley and Ellen Eames. A special mention must be made of Pat Brown, who volunteered to be dressed in the **gambeson**, or under-tunic, with the chainmail on top. Many thanks to all these volunteers, and many thanks to David McDermott for providing us all with such an exciting afternoon. Finally, the last and possibly best part of the event was watching him pack away all his articles in his copious rucksack and set off for the Tramlink stop!

Sheila Harris



THE SMR NEEDS YOUR HELP!

The English Heritage Sites and Monuments Record is a searchable database which includes listed buildings, archaeological sites and other local historical information. It is now an essential tool for anyone interested in researching a particular area, and for planners who need to be aware of a site’s historical significance when faced with development proposals.

Merton Historical Society, with its long background of involvement with archaeological investigation locally, has a good collection of artefacts and other material. If this were to be recorded in the format required by the SMR its value would be greatly increased. We need volunteers for this interesting and rewarding task – no experience needed, and training is available. It is not a huge commitment, and you would learn more about your local area, have ‘hands on’ contact with artefacts and meet others interested in local archaeology and history. Please contact Peter Hopkins.

We welcome the following new members, and hope they enjoy their membership:

Miss E M Bell	London SW17	Mrs P M Cole	Birchington, Kent
Mr M Hanson	Wimbledon	Mr J Ward	Morden
Miss J A Wick	Merton Park		

And we are pleased that Ms S Vogel of Mitcham has rejoined the Society

LOCAL HISTORY WORKSHOPS

Friday 7 March – 6 present. Don Fleming in the chair.

- ◆ **Don Fleming** informed us that it had been reported in volume 53 (2) of *History Today* (February 2003) that rare illustrations of *HMS Victory* had recently come to light in Glasgow. John Constable painted the three representations of Nelson's flagship in 1803, two years before Trafalgar, and they have remained in the possession of Constable's descendants to the present day.
- ◆ **Sheila Harris** had been contacted by Mrs Kathleen Watts of Preston near Dorset. She grew up in London Road, Mitcham, in the 1920s and 1930s, and she has generously offered the Society a copy of her childhood memories.
- ◆ **Peter Hopkins** discussed ideas for the Society's proposed website. Peter would like to include a wide range of historical information on the area, as well as details on the Society. One advantage of the Internet is that information can be arranged at various levels, so that serious researchers can delve more deeply than casual enquirers.
- ◆ **Eric Montague** is at present researching the effects in the Mitcham area of the 1860s cholera epidemic. A document in the British Library mentions an outbreak in cottages behind the floorcloth factory, which was at Phipps Bridge. Cholera was waterborne, and a well is shown here on early OS maps. Another outbreak was in The Causeway, near the 'Dipping Place' opposite the present *Queens Head*. In Merton an outbreak is mentioned at 'the Bush', presumably the Rush, in the area of the present Nelson Hospital.
- ◆ **Bill Rudd** presented a set of programmes featuring the Mitcham County Grammar School for Boys, performing several of the Gilbert and Sullivan comic operas between 1948 and 1954. They were kindly donated by Society member Alan Shelley, to whom we offer our grateful thanks.
- ◆ **Judith Goodman** had followed up the two 'sporting heroes' mentioned by Peter Hopkins at the last Workshop. 'Southey House' was really No 2 Southey Villas, Pelham Road, Wimbledon. The curate of Merton, Rev J C Crawford, also lived over the parish boundary, at 63 Merton Hall Road.

Judith then told us more about the artist G A Storey, also mentioned at the previous Workshop. An article will appear in the next *Bulletin*. Judith was congratulated on gaining her recent Diploma in Art History.

Peter Hopkins

Friday 9 May – 5 present, Peter Hopkins in the chair.

- ◆ **Bill Rudd**, in nostalgic mood again, had brought along some comics from the '60s and '70s, and members chuckled over *Whizzer & Chips*, *Beano*, *Hornet*, *Dandy* and something called *The Sure-Shot Shooter*, which was new to your reporter. More seriously, he had been watching, and enjoying, the new TV series *Castle*. Bill had also been looking at the changing faces of two modest little Morden buildings. No.118 Central Road was built c.1875 as a small bakery, with No.120, one end of a short row, serving as the baker's house. After many years No.118 became a hairdresser's, and then a car accessory shop. The building was altered and enlarged, filling the space between it and its neighbour, and now the whole site of No.118 is a car repair business, though No.120 is still a house. Nos 138 and 140 London Road were built c.1900 as Nos 1 and 2 Monmouth Villas, and are now, after extension into the gap between them and the next pair, occupied as South Seas Wave Whale Ltd, Bathroom Fittings.
- ◆ **Ellen Eames**, new chair of her local Residents Association, is exploring the possibility of getting Conservation Area status for her patch, which includes the roads Hamilton to Victory, as well as Quicks, Latimer, Ridley and part of Haydons, and was part of Lord Nelson's estate. It was suggested that a dossier on Rose Cottage (101 Hamilton Road) [*Bulletin* 131, September 1999] might be useful.
- ◆ **Don Fleming** had been reading about William Morris's Red House and its acquisition by the National Trust, in the April issue of *History Today*. He reported that there would be an exhibition of art inspired by the Wandle, in the Sun Lounge at Croydon's Fairfield Halls from 23 to 28 June.
- ◆ **Peter Hopkins**, with the help of two of our members, had made a serendipitous discovery that clarified the history of a small part of Hotham's land in Wimbledon [see page 6]. He had also brought along a photocopy of what MoLAS like to call 'the treasure map'. David Saxby and his colleagues at the Museum of London believe it to be genuine, though nobody is quite certain who it came from. It seems to be a tracing of a map of 'Merton Abbey' dating from before 1727, not to scale, but with some dimensions marked on it. It shows a number of buildings, ruined walls and piles of stone, and there are some names of owners or occupiers – some familiar, others not. Peter intends to provide a (reduced) copy and an article for the next *Bulletin*.

Judith Goodman

Dates of next Workshops: Friday 27 June and Friday 8 August at 7.30pm at Wandle Industrial Museum.

**PETER HOPKINS reports on the discovery of
A MISSING PIECE OF THE PUZZLE**

When I was researching for my booklet on Lord Nelson’s Merton Place estate in 1998 I found a number of documents in various local archives. The Lambeth Archives Department at the Minet Library has documents relating to the estate as it was assembled by Richard Hotham. The Wimbledon Society Museum has deeds from the time of Nelson and Lady Hamilton. There were Sales Particulars in the Merton Local Studies Collection and at the Guildford Muniment Room. And there were maps and plans in each of these places, and at the Surrey Record Office, then at Kingston.

But there was one part of Sir Richard Hotham’s estate for which I could find no documentation. As well as the house and lands ultimately bought by Nelson, Deed 3764 in the Lambeth Archives mentions:

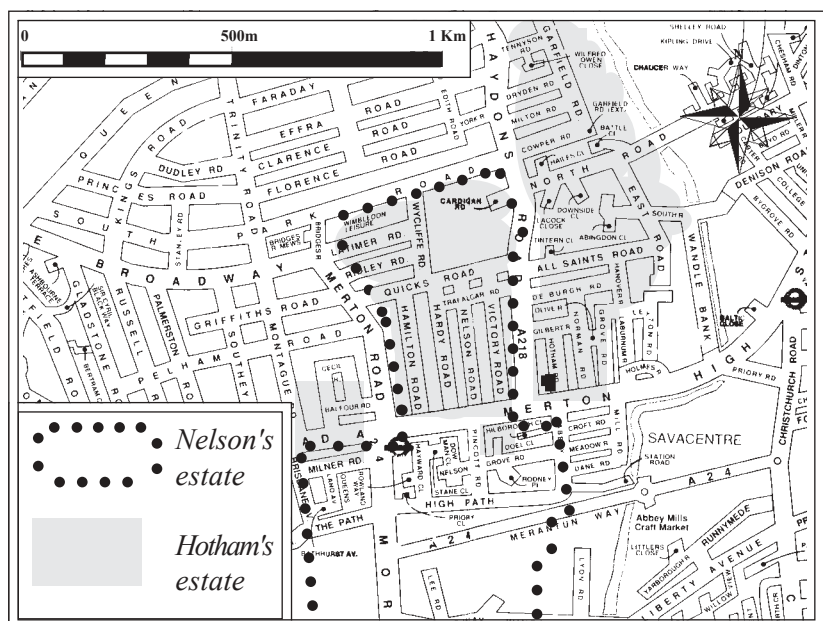
barns, coach houses, stables, dovehouses, outhouses, sheds, gardens ... lately erected, built and made by Sir Richard Hotham in the field or close over against Merton Abbey wall where an ancient messuage or tenement formerly stood and all those two several closes or pieces or parcels of meadow or pasture land formerly one close and heretofore known by the name of the field or close over against Merton Abbey wall but which have lately been divided by the said Sir Richard Hotham and which are now called or known by the name of the two home closes and containing by estimation 9 acres more or less ... and all those several closes pieces or parcels of meadow or pasture ground now known by the respective names of the Upper and Lower Mill fields containing together 16 acres more or less

It had been part of Henry Pratt’s original Moat Farm, bought by Hotham in 1764 – the house and grounds in Merton plus 78 acres in Wimbledon. Hotham extended the estate by purchasing another 52 acres in Wimbledon. When he sold the estate in 1792, to the calico printers Greaves, Hodgson, Newton & Leach, the 25 acres mentioned above, excluding an acre or so for the buildings and gardens, had been reorganised as:

- Home Mead containing 4 acres 1 rood 21 perches
- Middle Mead containing 3 acres 3 roods 7 perches
- Rick Yard containing 2 roods 17 perches adjoining next piece described,
- parcel called Sheephouse Field containing 5 acres 3 roods 38 perches
- also Mill Field containing 9 acres 26 perches

Greaves invested a considerable sum in the company and was granted possession of the house and 52 acres land, all part of Pratt’s estate, while the company retained the rest of Pratt’s estate and the lands later added by Hotham, totalling another 78 acres. On Greaves’ death his executors sold their part to Nelson in the autumn of 1801, but what happened to the remaining 78 acres? The land that Hotham had added to the estate ended up in the possession of James Perry of Wandle Villa, later known as Wandlebank House. But I finally had to admit “it is not certain what became of the remainder of Pratt’s former estate”, though I did suggest that “three fields shown on the Wimbledon Tithe Apportionment, plots 273, 274 and 276, could possibly be the property formerly owned by Henry Pratt”.

At our March lecture this year, discussion arose about the British Land Company, and after the meeting Mr and Mrs Bellew told me that they had several deeds relating to a property in All Saints Road Wimbledon bought from the company in 1865, and they kindly offered to lend them to me to take to our next Workshop. Imagine my surprise and pleasure when I discovered that one of the documents covered the very property that I had been attempting to trace!



Outlines of Hotham’s and Nelson’s Merton Place estates traced on a modern street map produced by Merton Design Unit, Merton Council reproduced with permission

The Abbey Lodge estate

All Saints Road, formerly Hubert Road, was part of a 20-acre plot of land suitable for development, formerly part of Abbey Lodge, Wimbledon, bought by the British Land Company Ltd from the executors of John Pryce. On 23 September 1800 John's uncle, Edward Pryce, had bought at auction from Greaves, Hodgson, Newton, Leach & Co:

- All those the farm yards and buildings situate at the south east corner of the road leading from Merton to Wandsworth ... consisting of two brick built seven stall stables a five bay barn a cow house piggery a brick built poultry house and dove cot poultry yard tool house husbandry stable for eight horses and a granary and brick built tenement
- And all that garden adjoining to or near the said farm yards and buildings containing by estimation 1a 2r 14p more or less
- And all that piece or parcel of land called Home Mead containing by estimation 4a 1r 21p more or less
- And also all that piece or parcel of Land called Middle Mead containing by estimation 3a 3r 7p more or less
- And also all that piece or parcel of ground called the Rick Yard adjoining the piece next hereinafter particularly described containing by admeasurement 2 roods 17 perches
- And also all that field called Sheephouse Field and the sheep house and large cart lodge thereupon containing by estimation 5a 3r 38p more or less
- And also that piece or parcel of ground called Millfield containing by estimation 9a 0r 25p little more or less

All which said farm yards buildings pieces or parcels of land and other hereditaments are comprised in the first lot of said printed particulars

Mathematicians among you will have noticed slight variations in the totals of the acreages given in the different lists. It is interesting to note that the area of the small Rick Yard had been obtained 'by admeasurement' whereas the other acreages were 'by estimation ... more or less'. In the earliest deed, in the Lambeth Archives, the figures had been rounded to whole acres, whereas later estimates were in acres, roods and perches (1 acre = 4 roods; 1 rood = 40 perches).

The document followed the history of Pryce's new property, from its purchase, on 30 June/1 July 1747, by Sir Daniel Lambert Knight and Daniel Lambert Merchant from Thomas Hammond, and its sale on 15/16 June 1748 to Henry Pratt Esquire. Pratt's son, Henry, sold it to Sir Richard Hotham, who sold it to Charles Greaves, William Hodgson, James Newton and John Leach on 22/23 June 1792.

It would appear that Edward Pryce was already leasing an adjoining property from Richard Mansel Philipps and Caroline his wife, née Caroline Bond Hopkins, which he then bought from them in 1803:

- All those two messuages or tenements with the outhouses and buildings some time then since erected and made by Thomas Berryman with the appurtenances thereto belonging
- And also those two fields closes or parcels of arable land one of them known by the name of the East Close and containing by estimation 5a 0r 20p (more or less)
- and the other called the West Close containing by estimation 4a 2r 20p (more or less)

Which said messuages or tenements lands and hereditaments were situate lying and being in Wimbledon in the County of Surrey and were formerly in the occupation of said Thomas Berryman afterwards of William Thoys and then of said Edward Pryce his heirs and assigns

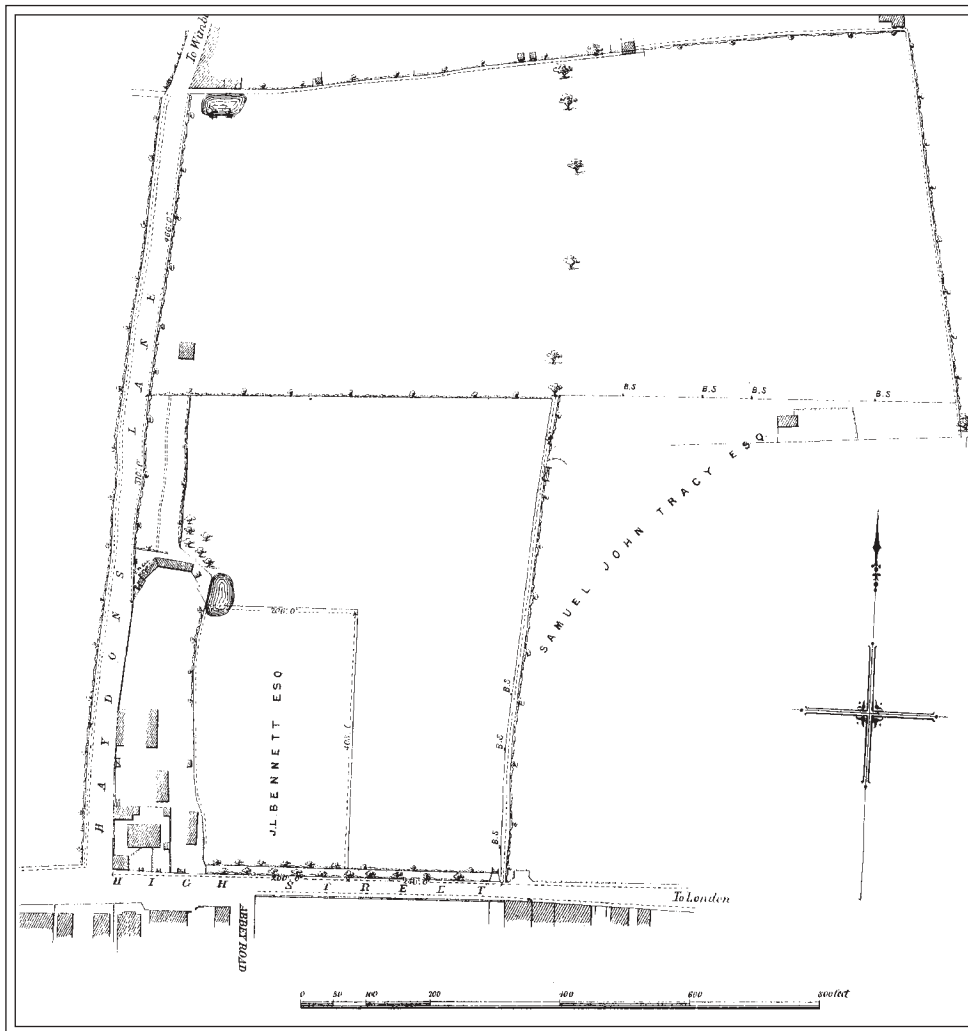
Thoys had been granted a sixty-one-year lease in July 1769.

In the Wimbledon Tithe Apportionment of 1850, Pryce's estate totalled 31.5 acres. It was in the occupation of Eleanor Ridge, formerly resident at Morden Park. The estate was variously known as Merton Abbey Lodge or just Abbey Lodge. The farm yards buildings and garden, on the corner of 'Haydons Lane', had come into the possession of John Leach Bennett, whose father, Thomas Bennett, had leased the stable and other buildings to Nelson in 1801. In 1863 or 1864 John Leach Bennett bought further land from John Pryce's executors, and another 9a 3r 0p, including Abbey Lodge itself, were sold to Samuel John Tracy.

A summary of the transactions

PROPERTY	OWNER 1	OWNER 2	OWNER 3	ACREAGE	SOLD TO	IN	ESTATE
Berryman's	Hopkins	Bond Hopkins	Philipps	9¾ acres	PRYCE	1803	Merton Abbey Lodge
Moat Farm	Pratt	Hotham	Greaves, Hodgson & Co	25½ acres	PRYCE	1801	Merton Abbey Lodge
Moat Farm	Pratt	Hotham	Greaves	52 acres	NELSON	1801	Merton Place
extra lands	various	Hotham	Greaves, Hodgson & Co	52 acres	PERRY		Wandlebank
Merton Grange			Axe	114 acres	NELSON	1802	Merton Place

The abstract includes this plan showing the situation in 1864, before the sale of land to the British Land Company.

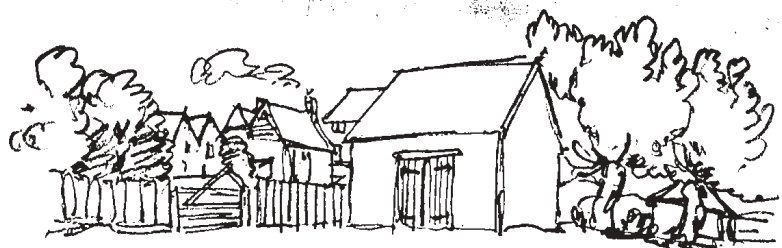


The document also includes a plan of the boundary between Pryce’s land and Perry’s land, originally marked by a public footpath. A new footpath having extinguished the old one, the boundary was redefined in December 1808.

Merton Abbey Farm

The mention of Thomas Berryman may also help solve another mystery. In the British Library is an extra-illustrated edition of Manning & Bray’s *History and Antiquities of Surrey* (BL Crach 1.Tab.1.b.1.). One of the illustrations in Volume 3 is a drawing by ‘Berryman’ labelled “A sketch of Merton Abbey Farm before it was pulled down for Lord Nelson’s mansion. It was the birthplace of my father, Mr John Berryman, Free School master, Chertsey. Oct 1798 in going the annual rounds of visiting my relations”. The following is a copy drawn by the late John Wallace.

Steve Turner’s transcript of the Merton Parish Registers, to be published on microfiche by East Surrey Family History Society, includes a John son of Thomas and Jane Berryman, baptised on 28 October 1736. It seems likely that this may have been the artist’s father, but where was ‘Merton Abbey Farm’?



Although Emma Hamilton extended Merton Place, the house certainly wasn’t pulled down for Nelson! Neighbouring Merton Grange was added to Nelson’s estate in 1802, but we have no evidence of any Berryman tenure. According to the Merton Land Tax assessment books it was being farmed by Robert Linton from 1784. The 1799 Land Tax Redemption certificate for Greaves & Co’s 78 acres shows that part of their land was, or had been, in the occupation of ‘Berriman’, but the “ancient messuage and tenement” within that property had been replaced between 1764 and 1792 by the “barns, coach houses, stables, dovecotes, outhouses, sheds, gardens ... lately erected, built and made by Sir Richard Hotham”. These buildings were leased to Nelson in 1801 by Thomas Bennett for use as stables, but could not have been the birthplace of our artist’s father, if he was the John son of Thomas baptised in 1736.

One candidate remains. Thomas Berryman had built “two messuages or tenements with the outhouses and buildings” on the neighbouring property that he leased from the Bond Hopkins family. Was it in fact Edward Pryce who demolished Berryman’s structure, not Nelson? The property was leased to William Thoyses from 1761, so the Berrymans were no longer in occupation in 1798. But the artist does not say that his relations were still in residence in October 1798, only that he drew it while visiting relatives at that date. Other members of the family were still in the area. The name Berryman appears in records throughout the 18th and early 19th centuries in Merton, Morden, Mitcham and Wimbledon. Richard Berryman, who served as assessor for the Merton Land Tax from 1780 to 1790, was tenant of Baker’s Farm, on the corner of Cannon Hill Lane and Kingston Road, until 1787. He was buried at Merton on 31 October 1790. Edward and Susan Berryman’s children were baptised at Merton between 1788 and 1796. Rebecca Berryman was buried there in April 1798, aged 72. Richard and Ann Berryman were living at Abbey Row, Merton Abbey, between 1815 and 1821. And no doubt there were also aunts and cousins with other surnames.

We cannot be certain, but the new evidence from Mr and Mrs Bellew’s document is a strong indication that Thomas Berryman’s ‘Merton Abbey Farm’ was demolished to make way for Edward Pryce’s ‘Merton Abbey Lodge’ some time after 1803.

Mr and Mrs Bellew intend to deposit their documents at Surrey History Centre at Woking. I am extremely grateful that they let me examine them first. No 11 Hubert Road, later All Saints Road, was Lot 146, so there would have been at least 146 copies of the Abstract of Title printed in 1865, yet this is the only copy that I have come across. Do any other members have similar important documents in their possession? If so, can I encourage you to follow Mr and Mrs Bellew’s excellent example and offer them to Surrey History Centre for safekeeping? I will happily deliver them to Woking for you, as long as you don’t mind me reading them first!

JUDITH GOODMAN adds further information on SAMUEL JOHN TRACY

Samuel John Trac(e)y – the spelling varies – appears in local directories from 1860, when he was at Merton Cottage, whose modern address is Church Path, Merton Park. However, according to John Wallace, it was not until the following year that he was leasing this property from Henry John Wyatt.¹ Interestingly, the 1861 census tells us that Tracy’s youngest child Henrietta, aged eight, had been born in Merton, so the family had been resident somewhere else in the parish since at least 1853. Tracy was 47 in 1861, and had been born in Hampshire at either Alverstoke (1861 census) or Aldershot (1871 census). Presumably he knew where his birthplace was but one or other of the enumerators failed to read his own notes! Fanny, his wife, aged 42, had been born at Arcot in India, scene of Robert Clive’s stand against the French in 1751. As well as Henrietta the Tracys had three other daughters, all born in London, and they employed a governess to care for them.

Tracy was qualified in both medicine and dentistry and is believed to have been Queen Victoria’s dentist. He was also interested in property development, and was apparently in some kind of partnership with the lord of the manor of Merton, John Hilbert Tate, when the latter proposed in 1858 to sell 5.3ha (13 acres) of demesne land, called Churchfield, between Church Lane and the Rush, for housing. This scheme came to nothing, and Tracy conveyed his interest to the British Land Company in 1862.² However, in 1864 he was again involved in a plan to develop Churchfield, with three roads and perhaps 100 houses.³ Again the plan came to nothing, and the land was finally purchased by John Innes.

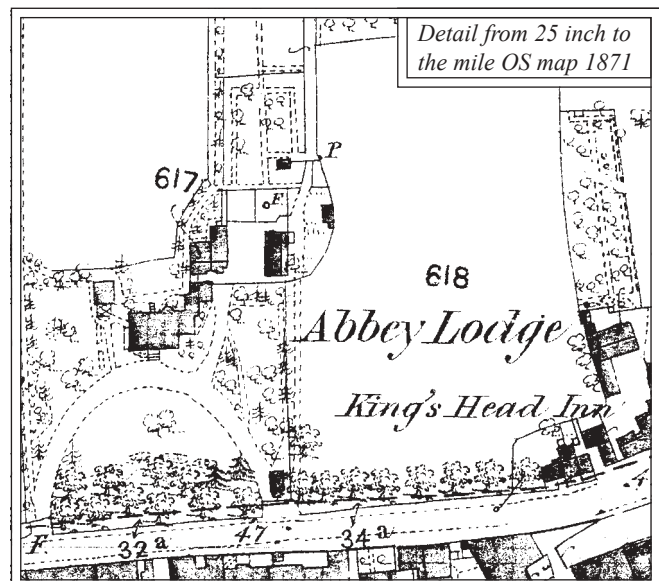
In 1865 the Tracys moved to Abbey Lodge on the Wimbledon side of Merton High Street. Their housewarming party began with afternoon croquet and continued till 4 o’clock the next morning. As guests included many surgeons from St Bartholomew’s (where Tracy also worked) it may well have been a noisy occasion!⁴ By the time of the 1871 census Tracy was describing himself as “dentist and landowner”, but whether he continued an interest in development is not known. He is not listed at Abbey Lodge, or anywhere else local, after this date.

1 J Wallace *Ancient Copyholds in the Manor of Merton* unpublished typescript n.d. p22

2 J Wallace *Dorset Hall in Merton* privately printed 1991 p18

3 J Wallace *Long Lodge at Merton Rush* privately printed 1993 p20; E M Jowett *Raynes Park: a social history* Merton Historical Society, London, 1987 p100

4 Jowett *op.cit.* p105



‘THIS SICKLY GAOL’

I thought it would be interesting to know the conditions in which convicted felons from our part of the historic county of Surrey would have served their time 200 years ago. The text is taken from the Everyman edition of *The State of the Prisons* by John Howard (c.1726-1790). It was written in 1784. JG

SURREY

COUNTY GAOL IN SOUTHWARK

The new gaol, besides the gaoler’s house, and the tap-room, has – for master’s-side debtors, a parlour, and four other sizable rooms: and for common-side debtors, three good rooms. Mr. Hall prevents their being crowded with the wives and children of the debtors. For these prisoners, there is a court; into which felons are not admitted; except a few, whom the gaoler has reasons for indulging with that distinction.

The ward for men felons has six rooms on three floors; in these they sleep. There is a court belonging to it. The ward for women felons has two lower rooms, two above; and a court. The felons’ court should be paved with flat stones, not only for the convenience of washing, but for safety, as pebbles are dangerous. In the men’s court there should be a pump and a convenient bath, for at several of my visits the Thames water was off.

In the two upper rooms of the women’s ward, are put malefactors of either sex condemned to die, and sometimes pirates. I have here noted eighteen rooms: yet they are not sufficient for the number of prisoners. Mr. Hall is sometimes obliged to put men felons into some rooms of the women’s ward. In so close a prison situated in a populous neighbourhood, I did not wonder frequently to find several felons sick on the floors. No bedding nor straw. The Act for preserving the health of prisoners and the clauses against spirituous liquors are hung up.

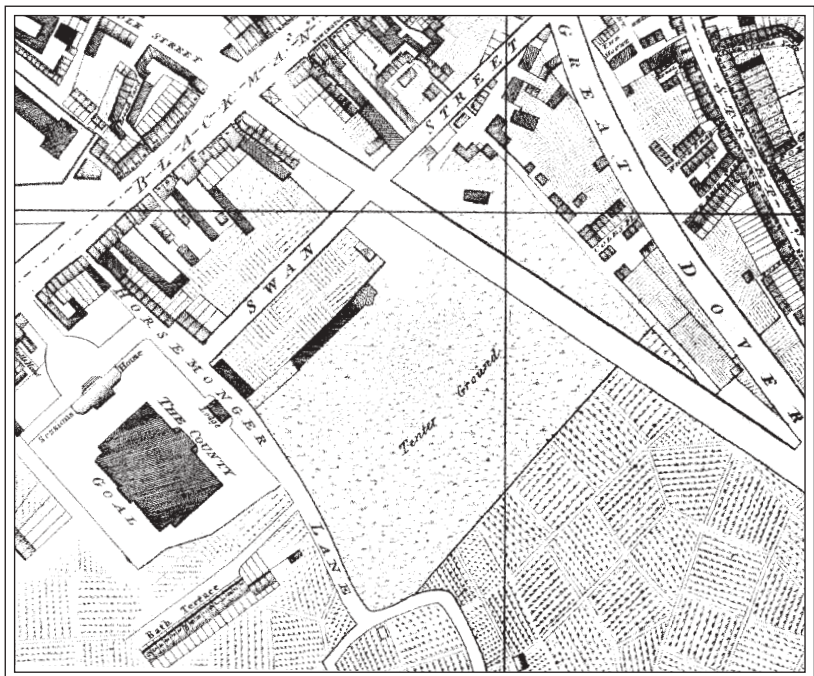
A chapel and two close rooms for the sick, lately built on the vacant ground where formerly was the house of correction; after the riots in 1780, were used for a bridewell till that in St. George’s Fields was rebuilt. At my last visit the chapel was fitted up, and the two small rooms for an infirmary: these are on the ground-floor, only one window in each. Many were sick on the dirty floors; one of the turnkeys had lately died of a fever: of the fifty-five felons, etc., in October 1783, sixteen were fines, and I have the names and the sentences of twenty-five convicts, who are left languishing in this sickly gaol.¹

Transports have not the king’s allowance of 2s. 6d. a week. For these a merchant formerly contracted with the county to take them at the gaol: the gaoler sent them to the ship, attended by his servants; and received from the merchant 10s. 6d. for each prisoner so conducted.

Lent assize is at Kingston: summer assize at Guildford and Croydon² alternately.

There is hung up in the gaol a printed list of sixteen legacies and donations. The dates of the first six are 1555, 1571, 1576, 1584, 1597, 1598. Three are in the next century, viz. 1609, 1638, 1656. The other seven are not dated: and one of them noted on the list, has not been received since 1726. There are also other articles which seem to need inspection. Two of the charities are for debtors expressly: the others are not so distinguished: but debtors have them all. In the title of the paper it is said, “The gaol was formerly called the White Lion Prison”. The common seal of the prison is a lion rampant. One of the legacies to this prison was bequeathed by Eleanor Gwynn, from which are sent to this prison once in eight weeks, sixty-five penny loaves. Common-side debtors have this as well as the preceding gifts.

Here I would just mention, that all the rags left by the felons after every assize, ought to be immediately burned, or rather buried; as they only serve to harbour vermin, dirt, and infection.



Surrey County Gaol as shown on Richard Horwood’s map of London 1799-1819. Note the spelling of ‘gaol’! The site is now occupied by Newington Gardens.

- 1 The occasion of my visit at this time, to this and two or three other prisons, was, that I had seen on board the hulks a few days before, several sickly objects, who told me they had lately come from this and other gaols; which, by the looks of those convicts, I was persuaded must be in a bad state. I was sorry to find them confirm my suspicions, that our gaols are verging to their old state. Without much additional and unremitting care, the benefits produced of late years by attention to this object, will prove merely temporary.
- 2 During the assize at Croydon the prisoners are confined in two stables at the “Three Tuns”.

**TONY SCOTT contributes a report on
EXCAVATION AT 54/56 CHURCH ROAD, MITCHAM**

At 54/56 Church Road, Mitcham, was a pair of semi-detached weatherboarded cottages, each with a brick front and sharing a brick dividing wall. They were last occupied c.1975, were significantly altered by renovation begun without planning permission c.1980, and then left semi-derelict until half demolished, again without planning permission, in 2000. Permission to demolish and redevelop the site was granted on 19 December 2002, and the ruins of the buildings were examined by Robin Densum of Compass Archaeology soon afterwards. Following complete demolition, two trial trenches were excavated in January 2003, and the results of both investigations are contained in a substantial volume recently received by the Society.

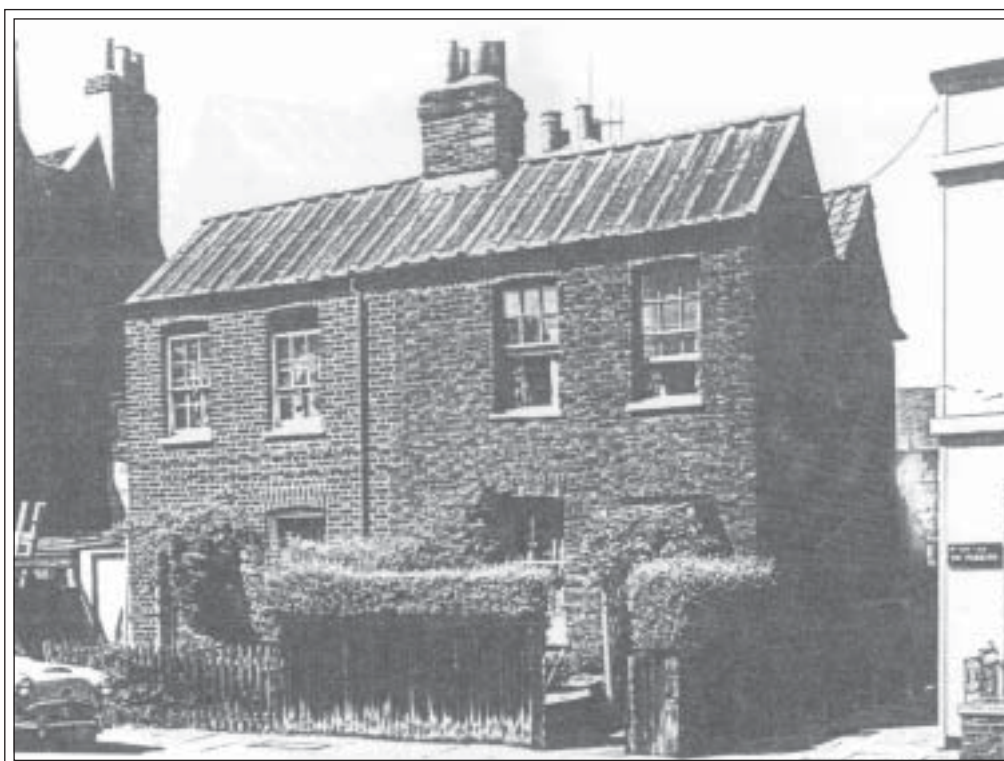
The houses were dated to the period 1800-1819, using evidence that no pottery finds later than c.1800 were found underneath the houses, that the construction backfill around the foundations contained pottery pieces from c.1720-1780 and that the houses are shown on a map of 1819.

They were of an interesting and somewhat unusual construction, being a transition between earlier timber-framed and completely weatherboarded structures and the later totally brick construction with which we are all familiar.

It is thought that the reason that the front wall was built in brick was to present a solid, affluent front to the street, with the brick dividing wall providing support for the weight of the four fireplaces (two downstairs and two upstairs) in each house. At the time of construction a brick wall would have cost more than a weatherboarded timber studding wall. The first occupants could well have been village tradesmen. They were unlikely to have been farm labourers.

Post-demolition trenches produced very little. There was no evidence of an earlier building on the site, and the only finds substantially earlier than the houses were a Roman potsherd, a fragment of Roman tile and two sherds dated c.1140-1220. These are not thought to be significant.

The strips of land that can be seen on the Tithe Map of 1847, and even on a modern map, running northwards from Church Road to Love Lane are thought to represent medieval planned tofts and house plots which were laid out along the north side of Church Road from the church towards Lower Green as an overall plan, perhaps in the 12th or 13th century. If this was the case, the absence of any previous buildings on our site, and the fact that the layout of the presumed medieval plots appears to be less regular to the east of this site (i.e. further away from the church) may possibly indicate that the development of the medieval village along Church Road was halted by the Black Death of 1348/9. This, together with the ensuing economic depression over the following century or so, cut England's population in half and would have halted any expansion of the village.



The street frontage of Nos. 54 & 56 Church Road, Mitcham, c.1960

BEATING THE BOUNDS OF MORDEN

BILL RUDD has contributed this extract from the vestry minutes of Morden:

1882

August 18th. The following report was received from Mr. R. M. Chart relative to the Beating the Bounds of the Parish, Ascension Day, May 18th 1882.

“At 10 O’clock a.m. on this day the following parishioners met at the “Crown” Inn for the purpose of perambulating the boundaries of the Parish.

Viz;

The Rev ^d . William Winlaw	Rector
Messrs. Hugh Knight	(Clerk & Sexton)
Henry Hallam	(Schoolmaster)
J. Kimpton	(Assistant Overseer)

F. K. Barclay Esq^{re}. North Esq^{re}.
Earnest Knight & Worsfold

William Willoughby Winlaw)	
George P. Kelsall Winlaw)	sons of the Rector
Frederick Moss)	(The Laurels)

Charles Harvey)	
John Kimpton)	
William Jackson)	
Henry Turner)	Scholars of the National School
Will ^m . Stockbridge)	
Stephen Hales)	
John Worsfold)	
Francis Burrough)	

Mr. R. M. Chart, Surveyor attended at the request of the Rev. Rector with a copy of the Tithe and Ordnance Maps, and it was resolved that on the former should be marked such points as it might be deemed advisable to erect new boundary stones or posts: The Surveyor stated that notice in writing had been given to each adjoining parish of this perambulation of the boundaries.

The Rev^d. W. Winlaw having read quotations from the Acts of Parliament authorising the proceedings: the perambulation of the Boundaries was commenced at Iron Boundary post near the Crown Inn; where Merton Parish was represented by Mr. Downing, – Assistant Overseer who accompanied the party to the intersection of Boundary with that of Mitcham in Mr. Hatfield’s grounds, where Mr. Chart represented the Parish of Mitcham. Beyond this no parish sent a representative, and the course was interrupted following the line shown on the Tithe Map aforesaid: which line was found to accord with the Boundary posts recently erected by Mitcham Parish and Carshalton Parish, except that at a point where the Boundary crosses the Site of an ancient hedge dividing the field numbered 282 and 285 on the Tithe Map. Carshalton was found to have erected a Boundary post some 25 feet East of their proper line of boundary, which was protested against, and it was resolved that the same be reported to the Morden Vestry, with the view of its removal to its proper and ancient position.

The course from this point was uninterrupted: the perambulation terminating at the starting point aforesaid which was reached at 5–30 p.m. when the distance travelled was reported to be about 8½ Miles.”

The Surveyor subsequently reported that the number of New Posts determined as being required to maintain the boundaries of the Parish was 32, and that he had marked the position of the same in Red Ink upon the Copy of the Tithe Map aforesaid, and recommended the erection of Cast Iron Boundary posts as being the most durable.”

Signed Robert M. Chart,
Surveyor, Mitcham.

[When Bill originally transcribed this entry in 1981 he identified the point at which the boundary crossed the ancient hedge, and where Carshalton had encroached upon Morden's territory, to be that of a large oak tree in the playing-field of Chaucer Middle School. There was a cast-iron post on either side of the tree, marking the Morden and Carshalton sides of the boundary. This tree was later removed for a housing development. The iron posts were reset, at Bill's request, near the front fence of Canterbury Centre, opposite Dore Gardens. He hopes they are still there!]



IN BRIEF

- ◆ The next entry for Kingston University's **MA in Local History** course takes place in September. The full course involves two years of part-time study plus a dissertation, though there are shorter certificate and diploma options. Details on 020 8547 8361/7378 or www.kingston.ac.uk
- ◆ **Merton Heritage Centre** at The Canons has new opening hours: Tuesdays and Wednesdays 10am-4pm; Fridays and Saturdays 10am-4.30pm. Events include: 3-14 June a small-scale repeat exhibition upstairs at The Canons: *Prevention or Cure: Hospitals & Health in Merton*; and 17 June – 19 July in the main exhibition space: *Unearthing the Past: Merton Archaeology* (a MoLAS exhibition). Tel: 020 8640 9387; www.Merton.gov.uk/libraries; e-mail: Sarah.Gould@Merton.gov.uk
- ◆ GLIAS (Greater London Industrial Archaeology Society) is running a series of **walks of industrial archaeology interest** throughout the summer. e-mail: secretary@glias.org.uk, or consult their newsletter at Merton Local Studies Centre.
- ◆ And Lambeth Local History Forum have again organised a programme of **Heritage Walks in South London** from May to October. They last about two hours and most are free. For information and leaflet contact Lambeth Archives Department, Minet Library, 52 Knatchbull Road, SE5 9QY, tel: 020 7926 6076, or compiler Brian Bloice, at weekends, on 020 8764 8314.
- ◆ And Brian Bloice will be speaking about **Streatham's Architectural Heritage** for the Streatham Society at Woodlawns, 16 Leigham Court Road SW16 at 8pm on Monday 7 July. All welcome.
- ◆ English Heritage has a new online image resource for England's history – www.english-heritage.org.uk/viewfinder makes **20,000 photographs** from their vast collection available to the public.
- ◆ As part of Wimbledon Society's centenary celebrations some of their fine collection of **watercolours, including local views**, will be on display at Eagle House, High Street, Wimbledon, from Monday 9 June to Friday 20 June every day from 10am to 4pm. Not to be missed.
- ◆ The Society now exchanges journals with **East Surrey Family History Society**, so if you wish to see their journal and/or publications list speak to Tony Scott, who has the latest number, as well as publications from numerous other societies and organisations. Back numbers go into our store at The Canons, but can be accessed by members by applying to Bill Rudd.
- ◆ The ESFHS *Journal* is one of many **periodicals** which can be consulted at the Local Studies Centre at Morden Library. Look out for British Association for Local History publications, *Local History News* and *The Local Historian*, and Surrey Archaeological Society's *Surrey History*.
- ◆ It has been suggested that Merton Historical Society should include the text of past issues of our *Bulletin* on our forthcoming **web site**. If any contributors object to this, please contact the Editor or the Chairman.

RECENT EXCAVATIONS IN THE LONDON BOROUGH OF MERTON

The *Quarterly Review* for the last quarter of 2002 from GLAAS (Greater London Archaeology Advisory Service) highlights, with coloured pictures, two Merton excavations – the MoLAS work at the Bennett's Mill site, and Time Team's visit to Merton Abbey Mills. In the complete borough-by-borough list there are reports on four sites in our borough. Little of importance was found at the Sandy Lane football stadium, at the Rutlish School site, or at 80 Plough Lane.

The report of the Bennett's Mill site was as follows: (pp46-7)

Borough: MERTON

Site Name: MERTON ABBEY MILLS: SITE 2CW

Arch Org: MOLAS **Report Type:** EVAL **Site Code:** MMY 99

Summary: TQ 526520 169840: 24 trenches were dug for this evaluation. Trenches 1-6 were located within the eastern area of the scheduled ancient monument where medieval wall foundations, a medieval tile drain, medieval painted window glass and a series of 16th and 17th century ditches and later 18th century calico ditches associated with the Merton Abbey were discovered.

Trenches 7-24 comprised the second phase of the evaluation. Alluvial silts and peats were recorded over the low-lying parts of the site, and good topographic and palaeochannel evidence was found to survive well. There was evidence for the modification of the River Wandle channel in the 12th century to meet the needs of the Priory; a water mill and mill pond were identified with an associated crushed Reigate stone road or path; the silty sand fill of the mill race indicated reasonably fast flowing water. Finds including lead comes and waste, and medieval window glass, raised questions as to whether the Priory windows were being manufactured on the site, or whether they represented window repair work. The building materials present, all used in the construction of the Priory, included brick, stone roofing tiles and some unusual floor tiles - whose sources might illustrate how the Priory obtained supplies and its role in the local and wider economy.

The foundations of a medieval building was also discovered. The location of the aisled hall, first noted on the site during archaeological works in 1986-90, was probably identified by pier bases. Nearby pits and ditches were apparently the remains of bedding root and pits associated with a vineyard. In the Tudor period the mill was rebuilt, the mill pond partly infilled and a head-race built by reusing stone and brick from the Priory. Evidence was also found for a number of calico trenches associated with the 18th century Merton Abbey print works. Parts of the Bennett's Mill, known to have been rebuilt in 1802, were recorded and good evidence for associated workshops and the working and hydrology of the mill was identified. Associated finds and environmental remains were recovered, including animal bones, waterlogged plant and invertebrate assemblages which contribute to the reconstruction of the local historic environment and an understanding of the diet, economy and disposal patterns of those people living and working on the site through the ages.

Date of Report: JUN 2002

MERTON REPRESENTED ON THE LONDON ARCHAEOLOGICAL FORUM

For many years the Society has maintained links, either as a corporate member or through individual members, with Surrey Archaeological Society and various archaeological groups and organisations in the Greater London area.

Awareness of the broader issues affecting archaeology in the capital and co-ordination of effort are both vital, as is maintaining contact with others whose interests we share. With all this in mind, at its meeting on 25 April, the Committee was pleased to accept Ellen Eames's offer to attend meetings of the newly formed London Archaeological Forum, as the Society's representative.

Eric Montague

ANNUAL DINNER

It may have taken us 50 years to take the plunge, but, now we have begun, the annual dinner seems set to be a fixture in the Society's calendar. On 28 February, for the third time, a convivial group of members and their guests met at Morden Hall, where they enjoyed the food, drink and conversation. And if not all the talk was about serious historical matters the setting at least was appropriate to the occasion, Peter Hopkins made a model (ie brief) chairman's speech, and a pleasant evening was had by all.

JG

PETER HOPKINS reports on

THE ANNUAL SERVICE AT MERTON PRIORY

For the past six years a short inter-denominational service has been held at the Chapter House of Merton Priory on the Sunday nearest to 3 May, the day on which the canons of Merton entered into their new buildings on the banks of the Wandle in 1117. Although numbers were low this year, the acoustics of the Chapter House assisted our singing as we praised God for the work and witness of Merton Priory over the centuries. Can I encourage others to join us in this service of celebration next year. Our thanks are due to those who led the service, and those who organised it, especially Sheila Fairbank of the Friends of Merton Priory.

Our Vice President, LIONEL GREEN, opened the service with the following thoughts:-

MERTON PRIORY - WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

What does Merton priory mean to us in the 21st century? The name may conjure up different thoughts to different people.

To the legal historian it must be the important council of 1236, the forerunner of our parliamentary legal system providing the first entry in the Statute Book.

To an architect it would be the creation and size of the buildings covering 60 acres and the styles of every period.

To the water engineer, how the river was channelled to drive mills, to make fish ponds, to flush toilets and to control flooding.

To the hotel manager, how the traveller enjoyed the hospitality of the monastery. From the humble pilgrim to the proud baron and his entourage. Think of the guest house - what an entrance it had!

To the academic it might be the founding of the collegiate system at Oxford and Cambridge.

It could be the thousands of youths who completed their schooling here and went on to flourish in other fields. Not forgetting a few who became saints.

Some may consider the effect of Merton's daughter houses founded by canons from here. Cirencester became the richest Augustinian house in the land. Holyrood influenced relations between Scotland and England.

To musicians it might be the development of church music and singing.

It could be the close connection of each reigning sovereign with Merton and its effect on the community.

To the economist it might be the intricate workings of the priory. Looking at the duties of just one officer, the granger; it was required of him to ensure corn supplies, their milling and the issue of flour to the kitchen and bakehouse.

To the farmer and countryman who knows about forward planning – wool sold before the lambs were born, trees planted for generations unborn, huge barns built to garner the grain not yet sown.

To the medics, the well being of all members of the community through adequate fresh water and drainage.

To the topographer it could be the varied land holdings in many counties. The regular repair of roads and building bridges.

These are some of my thoughts and I hope they stimulate fresh thoughts on Merton Priory. Let us now remember all that has been achieved here.

In a final (perhaps!) exchange of views JOHN PILE and ERIC MONTAGUE illustrate how difficult are the finer points of terminology:

John Pile

There is really only one point in Eric's *The Evidence of Place-Names* (part 2) in the December *Bulletin* that I really ought to take issue with, and that concerns the land in Mitcham granted at some date before 1170 by "the whole parish" to the priory at Southwark. Unfortunately I have not had the opportunity to read John Blair's transcription, mentioned by Eric, of British Library MS Add.6040 No.16, but I do not subscribe to the view that some land in Mitcham, presumably common or 'waste', could lie "outside the jurisdiction of any manor". To call this land 'folkland' is unhelpful as it has long been recognized, for example by F W Maitland, *Domesday book and Beyond* (1907) pp244-258, and more recently by Christopher Jessel, *The Law of the Manor* (1998) pp21-22, that folkland is an Anglo-Saxon term for land which might be granted by a king to a subject for his use, but to which the king retained the right to receive all the customary dues relating to it. This contrasted with bookland, which a king granted to the Church or to an individual, but retained only the dues known as the *trinoda necessitas*: service in the royal army, repair of bridges, and a contribution to the upkeep of town defences. What folkland most emphatically was not, was, as Jessel puts it, "land of the folk, rather like African tribal land". This is a nice idea, but one completely at odds with the evidence.

Since reading Eric's article I have come across the following passage by Charles Francis Trower, an author evidently well grounded in manorial law, in an article on Findon in *Sussex Archaeological Collections* vol.26 (1875), "I believe [it] to be the case (though I have not been able to find any lawyer or law book distinctly pledged to the position) that every acre in a parish was, in its early history, parcel of some manor ...". This is an interesting admission, but it is my belief that the nineteenth-century lawyer who, after examining all the available evidence, finally declared that Mitcham Common never formed part of the possessions of any of the manors, did so because the old manorial bounds on the waste had, by that time, become irretrievably lost.

And Eric Montague

Having read John Pile's comments, I think it is important to stress that we have to be very wary of espousing too readily the theories expounded by late 19th- and early 20th-century antiquarians (and even legal 'authorities') when writing of the origin and history of manors. Writers like Hone in *The Manor and Manorial Records* (1906) however emphasised the complexity and diversity of manorial structures, whilst Bennett in *Life on the English Manor* (1948) reminded his readers that manorialisation was not universal. It is certainly a mistake to believe, as Trower evidently did, that the whole of medieval England was neatly parcelled out in manors.

Folk-land, a term which Shaw-Lefevre (later Viscount Eversley) used when speaking of Mitcham Common in Parliamentary debates, is a useful concept, and despite various attempts in the 18th and early 19th centuries to determine by agreement the extent of each manor's jurisdiction over the parish waste, this proved impossible. Far from agreeing with John's submission that the manorial boundaries had been "lost", I hold to the view that across much of the Common they had never been established. Certainly, as late as the 18th century Mitcham vestry was sanctioning enclosure of small parcels of common waste without recourse to the lords of any of the manors.

a comment from Peter Hopkins

I am not sure that I have the effrontery to intervene in a discussion between such experts as Eric and John, but sometimes the observer can see more of the battle than the participants! The frequency of disputes over the centuries between tenants of manors sharing rights of common over an area of 'waste' is evident in the history of Sparrowfield, which was intercommoned by tenants of manors in Morden, Cheam, Malden, Cuddington and Ewell. No doubt there would have been similar disputes between tenants of the various manors claiming rights over Mitcham Common. It is only natural that the canons of Southwark Priory would have sought to safeguard their title to the parcel of land enclosed from the Common by ensuring that all who claimed rights of common in the land registered their approval of the enclosure. Normally an enclosure would be approved at the manorial court by the 'homage'— the tenants of the individual manor. Where several manors shared rights of common, it is surely not surprising that "the whole parish" was involved in the 'grant'.

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.