



PRESIDENT: J Scott McCracken BA FSA MIFA

VICE PRESIDENTS: Viscountess Hanworth, Lionel Green and William Rudd

BULLETIN NO. 150

CHAIRMAN: Peter Hopkins

JUNE 2004



PROGRAMME JUNE-OCTOBER



Saturday 12 June 1.30pm

A visit to the Museum in Docklands

Meet outside the Museum, which is on West India Quay.

Nearest stations are West India Quay or Canary Wharf (DLR) or Canary Wharf (Jubilee).

The cost will be £5 per head or £3 concession.

Saturday 10 July

Coach outing to Portsmouth

Booking forms for this visit went out with the March *Bulletin*. All places are now reserved and there is a waiting list in case of any cancellations. If you have booked a place please remember to send your cheque to Ray Kilsby by Monday 7 June.

For any queries ring Pat or Ray Kilsby.

**Saturday 14 August 2.30pm John Innes Centenary Walk around Merton Park
Judith Goodman**

A hundred years after John Innes's death Merton Park is still recognisably the pleasant planned estate that Innes laid out and closely supervised as its 'squire'.

Meet at entrance to John Innes Park at the corner of Church Path in Mostyn Road.

A short walk from buses 152, 163, 164;

Thameslink (Wimbledon Chase or South Merton); Croydon Tramlink (Merton Park).

K5 bus (hourly) will stop at Church Path, which is in a hail-and-ride section.

Thursday 23 September 2.00pm

Visit to Dennis Severs' house

18 Folgate Street, Spitalfields

The late Dennis Severs was an artist who restored his house to how it might have been when lived in by a Huguenot silk-weaving family called Jervis early in the 18th century.

It is less a museum than an extraordinary total experience, and one has to use all five senses plus imagination to get the most out of a visit.

Maximum of 30 people.

Cost £8 a head, payable on the day.

Meet in Folgate Street, which is only a short walk from Liverpool Street station or can be reached by bus along Bishopsgate.

Thursday 7 October 10.30am

Visit to new Mosque at Morden

Full details in September *Bulletin*



**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.**



GEOFF POTTER of Compass Archaeology has kindly provided the following report, which arrived just too late to be included in the March *Bulletin*:

THE GROVE MILL AND FORMER CROWN MILL SITE, LONDON ROAD, MITCHAM

In January three evaluation trenches were dug in the eastern part of the site, in the area of, and beyond, the former Crown Mill. These did not reveal any significant remains, and it appears that the land was not developed until the 18th century or early 19th century. Natural gravel was generally overlaid by a shallow layer of sterile organic silt, and thence by a reworked soil containing occasional fragments of post-medieval pottery, clay pipe and brick/roof tile.

Two of the trenches crossed the line of a north-south water channel that appears on the 1828 Estate Plan and OS maps up to the 1950s. To the west the channel was bordered by the foundations of Crown Mill, built c. 1870. At the northern end of the channel was a brick 'floor' of similar date, apparently constructed to prevent erosion from an adjacent sluice. The northern trench also revealed made deep ground deposits under Crown Mill, continuing below water level and apparently closely predating its construction. This is not recorded by contemporary maps, which show the area as dry land with buildings.

Recording work has taken place within the standing structure of Grove Mill and in the partly-surviving waterwheel housing to the east. The records include an elevation of the earlier (c. 1860s) west front of the Mill, which can be reconciled with contemporary evidence for the original three-storey structure.

We are currently [late February] carrying out a watching brief during groundworks. Most of the findings have come from within Grove Mill, and include a number of earlier brick structures which may date to the rebuilding of 1789. These remains include the brick casing for a waterwheel, of approximately 4m diameter and apparently located within the contemporary mill (rather than in a separate but adjacent building, as later).

Two chalk wall footings have been exposed under the northern part of the present Mill, presumably of earlier date, although evidence is currently limited to one sherd of ?17th-century pot.

THE SOCIETY'S ANNUAL DINNER

This event, now established in our calendar, took place as usual in the appropriately historic setting of Morden Hall, in its present guise as an 'Out and Out' restaurant. The date of 27 February was one day short of the precise anniversary of the founding of the Society (as Merton & Morden Historical Society) in 1951. More than 40 members and their friends enjoyed a convivial meal and applauded a brief but well-phrased speech of welcome by the Chairman.

JG

A MILESTONE FOR THE *BULLETIN* AND A LOOK BACK

When our Chairman pointed out that this was the Society's 150th *Bulletin* it occurred to me that readers might like to know something of the contents of issue No.1, which came out in April 1965.

It was in fact called *Newsletter* No.1 - not till No.15 did it become *Quarterly Bulletin* and not till No.43 was the '*Quarterly*' dropped. No.1 was produced on a duplicating machine and comprised not far short of three foolscap pages. No editor's name appeared, but I suspect that Miss Jowett, the Hon. Secretary, was the one who undertook the task. A message from Chairman Arthur Turner commended the "new venture" to members and hoped it would encourage good attendances at monthly meetings and visits, which, he wrote were "not arranged by your Committee without considerable thought". He hoped too that suggestions, contributions and historical queries would come in from members.

In that year of the creation of the London Borough of Merton the Society agreed to subscribe £5 towards the cost of the new civic regalia, and it was also noted that, but for his death in January, Winston Churchill would have become a freeman of the new Borough on 1 April.

There were reports on talks by Mr J Dodgson on 'The Place-Names of Surrey', Mr D R Pollock on 'The Railway History of London', Mr R Latham of the PRO on 'Public Records and Local History' - and Mr W J Rudd on 'The Great Steam Fair'. Members could look forward to coach trips to Pinner and to Canons Ashby, a walk around Wimbledon village and a talk by Canon Livermore on the History of Morden.

The Hon. Treasurer, Mr S E Cobbett, noted that some members might have "inadvertently forgotten" to pay their subscriptions of 3/6d (17.5p).

JG

THE HISTORY OF PUB NAMES AND SIGNS

I suspect that most of us pass by pub sign boards without giving them a second glance until perhaps an unusual one catches our eye. It was therefore with great interest that a good number of members of our Society attended a talk on this subject by David Roe on 13 March. Appropriately enough, it was held at the Burn Bullock pub in Mitcham.

He started by explaining that ale houses and taverns have probably been in existence for something like 1000 years. One which claims to be the oldest in England is the Trip to Jerusalem in Nottingham which, it is said, refreshed those who set out for the Crusades.

An ale house, as its name implies, sold only beer and ale, whilst a tavern usually sold beer, ale, wines, spirits and food. There were some taverns which provided overnight accommodation as well and became known as inns. Obviously inns considerably increased in number with the advent of the stage coach era. The terms 'public house' and 'pub' go back only a century or so.

A chequer board or a bunch of grapes was used as a sign over drinking places in Roman times. In medieval times the sign for an ale house or tavern was a stake of wood with a bush on the end of it projecting from the building facade. The so-called 'ale stake' became a legal requirement in the reign of King Richard II and over the years the ale stake became longer and longer. Most shops had distinctive signs hanging outside to indicate their wares to those who were illiterate and the heyday of shop signs was the first half of the 18th century. However, accidents due to falling signs became quite common and in the 1760s many local by-laws were passed requiring projecting signs to be taken down and affixed to the facade of the premises. Only a few shops now have trade signs - the barber's pole and the pawnbroker's three balls are remaining examples. Pubs were exempted from these bye-laws due to their 14th-century legal requirement to have a sign. The ale stake eventually became a sign post outside the building.



*An English inn of the 14th century
from the Louterell Psalter*

David Roe did not mention when pubs took on individual names, but The White Hart in Mitcham was known by that name in 1609. The name remained until changed (contrary to planning permission) to The Hooden on the Green in November 2000. In England, many pub signs lost their pictures in Victorian times, possibly to show that it was a high class establishment which was patronised by literate drinkers. The pictorial signs were revived in the 1920s. Curiously, although Ireland was part of the United Kingdom for many centuries, the bars (as they are called there) are identified only by the name of the proprietor just like any other shop.

A high proportion of pub names arise from heraldry, eg. The King's Arms, The Queens Arms, The Ravensbury Arms, The Manor Arms. Pub names are frequently derived from heraldic animals and were used to show loyalty to the monarchy. For example, The White Hart (an albino deer) which was the symbol of Richard II, The Red Lion was the symbol of England, The Greyhound was the Tudor symbol and The White Boar was the symbol of Richard III. Other coats of arms may originate from the trade of the people who predominately used the pub, such as The Gardeners' Arms and The Bricklayers' Arms.

The names of royalty often appear on pub signs, such as William IV, Queen Victoria and The George. The picture shown on this latter sign varies from George I through to George V. Pictures of living royalty are not normally permitted although there are a few exceptions. The Queen's Head is usually shown as Elizabeth I, but one pub sign shows Mary Queen of Scots losing her head to the executioner.

The Three Kings is probably of biblical origin and not associated with three UK monarchs. The Adam and Eve and The Lamb and Flag certainly have religious origins.

Many signs represent the rural surroundings, eg. The Fox, The Dog and Fox, The Fox and Hounds, The Bull, The Dun Cow, The Grove, The Plough and The Wheatsheaf. The Cock could have been the site of a cock-pit. The Dog and Duck evokes either retrieving after duck shooting or the old village entertainment of setting dogs on the ducks on the village pond. Finally, we were told, the Elephant and Castle name pre-dates 'L'enfant de Castille' and probably arose from the castle-like carriage (called a howdah) used for seating passengers on an elephant's back.

David Roe's talk on pub names and signs was extremely interesting and for me at least, made me look at pub names and signs in a new light.

Tony Scott

‘ROCKETS, RAINS AND ROMAN CANDLES’

This was the title Dr Gerry Moss, chairman of Surrey Industrial History group, gave his talk in Mitcham Library Hall on 3 April.

Gunpowder is thought to have originated in China. It was in the 14th century that guns started to be used in Europe. The components of gunpowder are saltpetre, charcoal and sulphur. Each of these components is used in different quantities depending on what the gunpowder is to be used for.

The first display of fireworks in England took place at Temple Fields, Warwick, in 1572. In 1698 a law was passed prohibiting the making or sale of fireworks. Despite this, displays of fireworks became popular, with effects becoming more elaborate. Pleasure gardens were popular venues for displays. Often these displays were set to music.

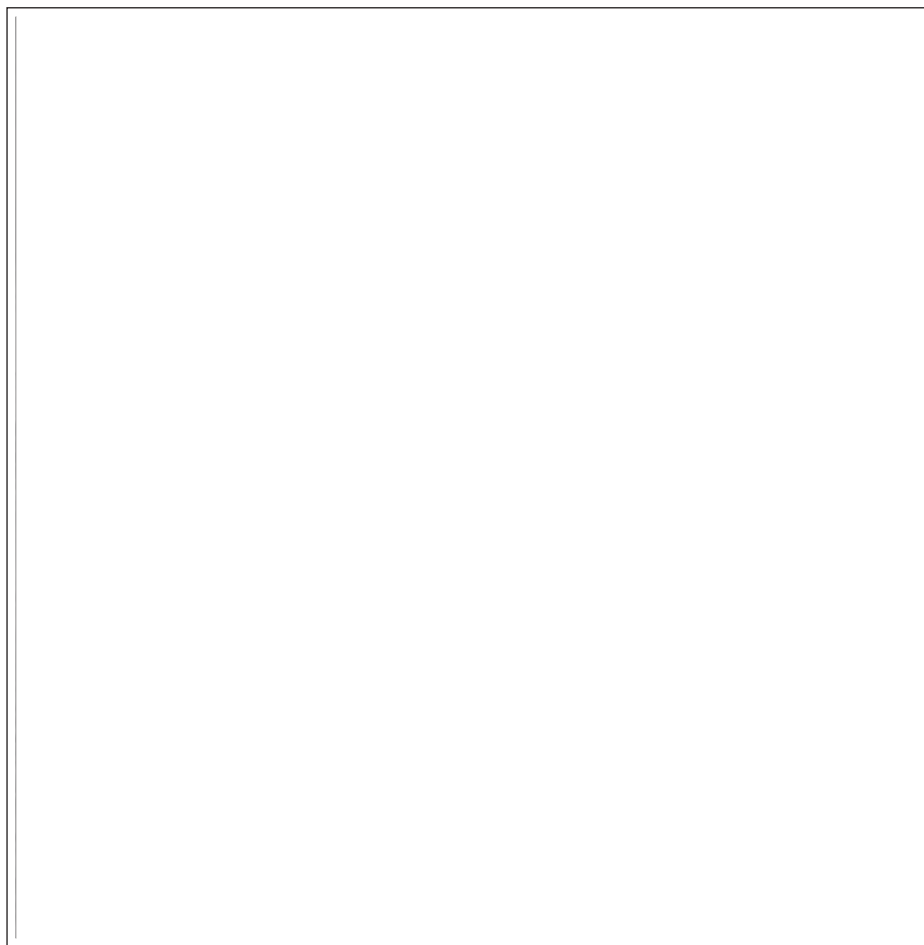
Surrey has a history of gunpowder making. There were gunpowder manufacturers in Worcester Park. The firework manufacturer Brocks had a factory in Sutton. Pains made fireworks to commemorate the coronation of Queen Victoria. In 1872 the company moved to Eastfields, Mitcham. Bryant and May acquired the company in 1960. Five years later the company moved to Salisbury.

The talk concluded with a description of how the different kinds of fireworks are made and how the lovely effects, i.e. colours, stars and whistle effects are achieved.

Sue Mansell

*The Duke of Richmond's
magnificent private firework
display on the Thames at
Whitehall in 1749*

*from a Christmas card showing
a picture in the V&A*



MERTON HERITAGE CENTRE IS TEN YEARS OLD !

In its first decade the Heritage Centre, at The Canons in Mitcham, has put on more than 60 exhibitions, 17 coach tours and numerous events such as lectures, workshops, fairs and demonstrations. We congratulate Sarah Gould and her team, most of whom are volunteers, on this great record of service to the Borough.

Don't miss the current exhibition **Triumph & Tragedy: the Cranmers of Mitcham**, which is on till 17 July. Admission free. Information on 020 8640 9387.

VISIT TO GUILDFORD

On Saturday 8 May 16 members of the Society enjoyed a very informative guided walk round the historic sites and buildings of Guildford, on a rather dull day which started badly in Wimbledon when it was learnt that there was a reduced service to Guildford that day as track work was in progress along the line. However we all managed to arrive at the meeting-place opposite the famous clock by the Tunsgate Arch in the High Street by 11.30 and met our guide, Marjorie Williams. She divided us into two groups and we set off to visit the **Guildhall** across the road first.

The Guildhall is Elizabethan, and it is said that Queen Elizabeth visited it when she visited friends at nearby Loseley. The front is dominated by the magnificent bracket clock built in 1683 by John Aylward. The hall was the venue for the magistrates' courts, the quarter sessions and the assizes when held in Guildford.

Mrs Williams showed us the civic plate, which included a mace, the second oldest in the country, made in the reign of Henry VII, and a gold chain given by the Onslows in the reign of Charles II.

From there we had a quick look inside **Guildford House**, now a gallery, built in 1660, and went upstairs to see the beautiful decorative plaster ceiling and original window fastenings.

Continuing up the High Street we next entered the peaceful quadrangle of **Abbot's Hospital**, built as an almshouse by George Abbot, a distinguished scholar who became Archbishop of Canterbury and was a great benefactor to the people of Guildford. It was founded in 1619 and completed a few years later, and resembles the Whitgift almshouses in Croydon. It is still in use today, together with a new block built behind the original building in 1984. We were able to go inside the chapel, which contained two beautiful stained-glass windows thought to be Flemish.

We then crossed the High Street and entered **Holy Trinity church**, the oldest Georgian church in Surrey and the home of George Abbot's tomb.

Going down the hill we were fortunate to be able to find the **Medieval Undercroft** open to the public. In the 1200s a merchant built the undercroft as a shop, with his house above. The undercroft has a wonderful vaulted stone roof and may have been used as a wine merchant's, which it certainly was in Victorian times. Evidence of the original steps up to the house above remains. It is now looked after by Guildford Museum and opened in the season at weekends, manned by volunteers, who come on duty well wrapped up, as no heating is allowed in the undercroft. It contains an exhibition about its history, old wine barrels and reproduction furniture.

Leaving this fascinating building, we walked via back lanes to **Guildford Castle**, which is being restored at present and is not open to the public, but is due to be re-opened at the end of June. The castle is typically Norman, and the keep dominates the town on the east side. The keep, built around 1140, replaced the original tower built on the mound, or motte. In the 13th century the building contained one of the most luxurious palaces in England. It is thought to have been once used as a barracks, and later a prison, but by the end of the Middle Ages had fallen into ruins.

The castle is surrounded by beautiful landscaped gardens, which were full of lovely spring flowers, and is very close to **The Chestnuts**, a Victorian house acquired in 1868 by the Reverend Charles Dodgson, better known as Lewis Carroll, as a home for his brothers and sisters. He frequently visited The Chestnuts, and died there in 1898. In 1998, the centenary of his death, several sculptures of Alice and characters from *Alice in Wonderland* were placed in various sites around the castle grounds and the River Wey.

Finally we made a brief visit to the **Guildford Museum**, where our guide quickly showed us the Lewis Carroll collections, the model of Guildford friary, now remembered in the Friary shopping precinct, and the reconstruction model of a Saxon cemetery.

As it was now 1.30pm we thanked our guides for a very fascinating and informative morning's walk. Members were then free to get lunch and spend the rest of the day doing their own thing. We had been given a taster, and could return to explore the attractions of Guildford later in the day, and in the future.

Sheila Harris



*The 13th-century entrance to Guildford Castle from an engraving of 1829. Castle Arch is now the site of Guildford Museum.
From Surrey: A County History by John Janaway (1994)*

CYRIL MAIDMENT has been examining and assessing images of remnants of the Merton Priory precinct, and he now offers his thoughts on

ACCESS TO THE PRIORY

Whilst digitising the photographs in the Wimbledon Society Museum, I came across many that puzzled me. One in particular I couldn't place. This is No.3 on the page opposite. The title was 'Gate House entrance in High Path'. Try as I might, I could find nowhere in High Path where it might have been. Months later I came across the drawing from 1925 (from Chamberlain's *Reminiscences of Old Merton*), which is No.4, 'Entrance Gateway to Gate House opposite Priory Gateway', and the problem was solved. You can see they are one and the same gateway. Today it would not be High Path but Station Road. I suppose before the houses were built in Station Road it was part of High Path. The photograph of the garden is interesting. There is a railing round the end of a long narrow lake that covered the length of the garden, and much flint to be seen in the garden wall, suggesting that at one time it belonged to the priory.

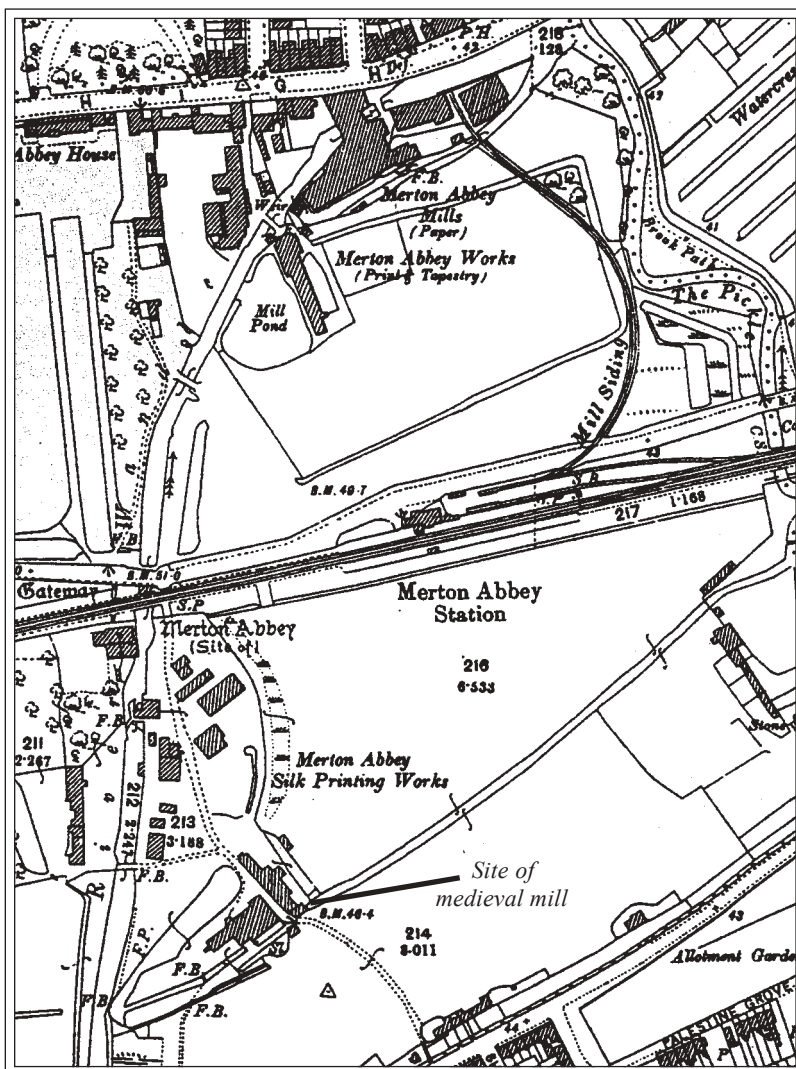
Picture No.1 shows what Abbey Road looked like until 100 years ago, again a long priory wall. On the High Street stood the mansion (No.2) once lived in by Rear Admiral Smith, and thought to occupy the site of the priory gate house. Pictures 5 and 6 are of our much-loved Norman arch, firstly as it is today and secondly as it was found in what had become part of Liberty's premises. It is thought that the original building, of which it was part, was the prior's house, or possibly a house for visitors. Picture No.7 is the entrance gate of the prior's house. It was exactly opposite the rear gate of Gate House across the road. Many of us can remember it. Sadly it was dismantled, never to be seen again. If you walk along Station Road you can still see parts of the priory wall in between car repair shops, which cannot be expected to take great care of the old wall.

In the centre of the page there is a little plan putting this all together, and showing how close was the west door of the giant priory church.

Certainly this area of the priory does seem to be of importance as far as access is concerned. Dave Saxby, for many years the leading Museum of London archaeologist on the site, looks at the open area still evident at the junction of Abbey Road and Station Road, and thinks there may have been a gate house at this point, particularly taking into account the avenue of trees to be seen on the 1741-5 Rocque map, running through the Gate House gardens, parallel to Abbey Road.

One needs to bear in mind that once the main course of the Wandle was south and east of the priory, setting the parish boundary. The Roman ford carrying Stane Street 50 metres south of Merton bridge, and the site of the large priory mill, east of Bennett's mill, confirm this. Consequently access to the priory complex would have been easier from the west. In addition, is it possible that when the Augustinians arrived there was still some limited use of Stane Street, which was inconvenient because it goes through the middle of the site, and the priors chose to seal off that approach?

[It is likely that other readers may have some ideas on this subject and would like to air them in the *Bulletin*. We would be very glad to have further contributions on this topic.]



The main course of the River Wandle from Phipps Bridge once flowed south and east of the Priory. (Today it is west and south of the Priory site.)
Detail from 1894 OS map

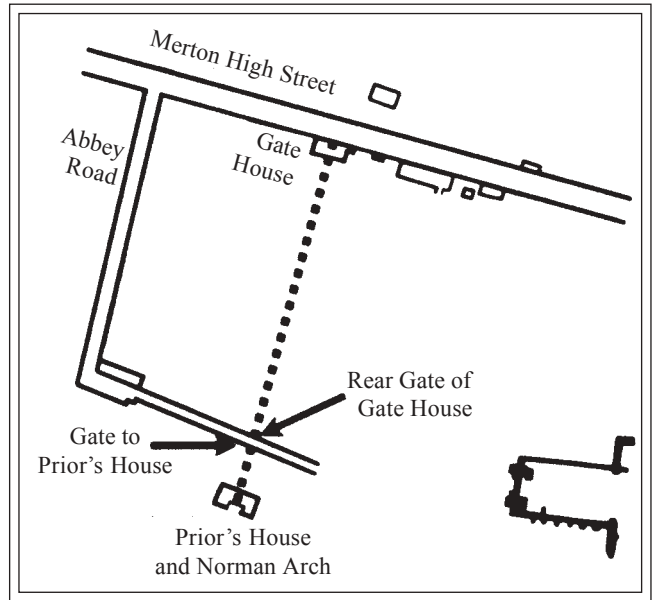


1 Abbey Road

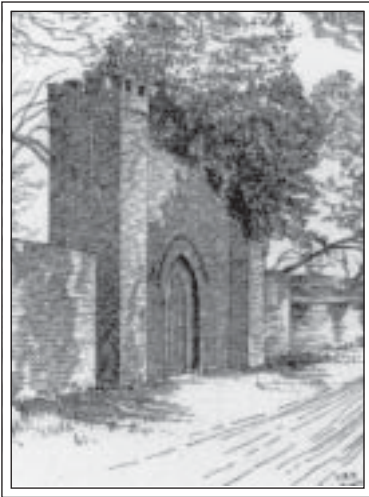


2 Gate House

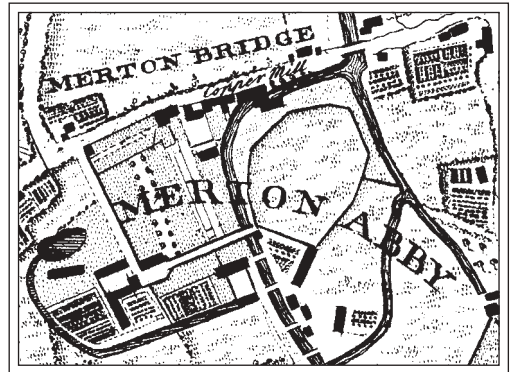
3 Rear Gate of Gate House from the garden



4 Rear Gate of Gate House from Station Road



Detail from John Rocque's map of 10 miles around London 1741-5



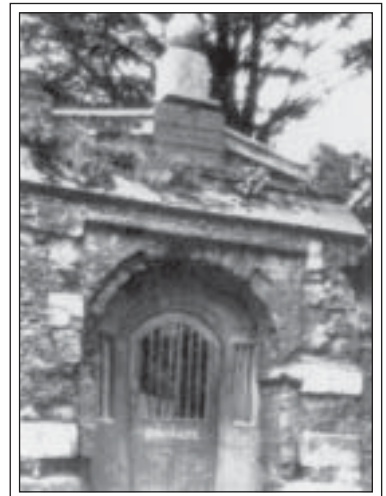
5 Norman Arch re-constructed at Merton Parish Church



6 Norman Arch of Prior's House



7 Gate of Prior's House



MERTON PRIORY, THE SITE OF THE FIRST ABBEY MILL (MoLAS)

[The text has been slightly shortened.]

The second half of November saw the last phase of archaeological work on the Merton Priory site: almost two decades of work here ended with a flourish, with the discovery of the site of the monastic mill, quite probably founded with the priory itself in the 12th century.

The site is owned by Countryside Properties plc and Cophorne Homes. The monastic buildings had completely disappeared by 1800, and for most of the 20th century the site was covered with industrial buildings. As a result the entire area was covered in concrete and asphalt, the archaeology being penetrated here and there by heavy concrete foundations. The development plans, for apartment blocks, are predicated on the idea that the remains should be left untouched, and this zone used for car parking (an advance on the earlier phases, when important parts of the priory remains were covered by Merantun Way and the Savacentre).

Evaluation of the site in 2001-2 had made it clear that the river Wandle had altered its course dramatically since medieval times, with an infilled channel running right across the site: the main river channel now runs to the west. As the evaluation proceeded, evidence of a large historic mill-pond and masonry revetments and what looked like the head-race of a mill-lead appeared, and then one flank of a large brick and stone building, all well outside the Scheduled Ancient Monument.

The developers agreed that a further evaluation should be carried out. The work, like previous phases on the Merton site, was carried out by Museum of the London Archaeological Service. David Saxby was the site supervisor.

The work, recently completed, revealed the complete foundations of a mediaeval watermill with a revetted mill-lead and a large associated building. The mill-wheel, about 3m wide and undershot, sat between massive masonry abutments. The foundations were generally robbed towards the north, but on the south side towards the mill-lead, preservation was very good indeed. The buildings, initially constructed on chalk rubble and flint footings, were repeatedly remodeled: initial assessment has identified six putative building phases. The later phases, tentatively ascribed to the 16C and 17C, were mostly in brick, with a lot of re-used clay tile.

If the mill itself was relatively small (c.5m by 8m), the associated building immediately to its east was a good deal larger. A particularly interesting feature was what appeared to be a large pool or tank within this building, divided into two sections. It seems likely that the structure had an industrial purpose perhaps associated with cloth production. Another interesting aspect relates to the great quantities of animal bone, mostly sheep and cow, found on the site, which may represent further evidence of industrial uses.

*The medieval mill
and head-race
(MoLAS)*



**LIONEL GREEN has another tale to tell of Merton priory and its place in national history:
EDWARD II AND ISABELLA**

Edward II: a lonely childhood

“O, solitude! where are the charms
That sages have seen in thy face?”

Wm Cowper

A critic of Edward has suggested that he was over-endowed with human failings, and some probably arose from happenings he endured in early childhood. When he was only two his parents went abroad for three years.¹ His mother, the cherished Eleanor of Castile, died when he was six, and no doubt he was taken to see some of the crosses later erected to commemorate her. As he progressed towards youth, Edward of Caernarfon had no living brothers to play with.

In 1298 the son of Sir Arnaud de Gaveston was made a royal ward and became an official companion of the king's son. Both were about 14. In the following year prince Edward was betrothed to the daughter of the king of France, when she was only eight. His immediate introduction to Piers Gaveston must have been more satisfying to Edward than the distant prospect of marriage to someone who was then a child.

The cause of many of the prince's failings arose from his intimate friendship with Piers Gaveston. Convention would have governed the relationship with a code similar to courtly love, and homosexuality would have been strongly censured. His infatuation was to an individual more than to a sexual habit.

Edward II: an unloved king

“And, seeing there was no place to mount up higher
Why should I grieve at my declining fall?”

C Marlowe *Edward II*

Edward reigned from 8 July 1307 and was always short of money, having taken over the debts of his father. The priory of Merton was also pleading poverty, “the result of the care displayed in ministering to the poor and the exercise of frequent hospitalities”.² On 11 June 1309 the king granted a licence for the priory to appropriate revenues of the church of Cuddington.³ The bishop of Winchester also graciously granted his permission.⁴ In June 1310 the king ordered the prior of Merton and others to send wheat, malt, beans and oats to York to help feed his army. On 2 August 1310 he requested 20 marks (£13.33) for the king's use as a gift for the war in Scotland. The prior was admonished for not supplying the victuals which had been requested, “... and his excuses ... were considered insufficient”.⁵

The most depressive moment of Edward's reign must have been the death of Gaveston, brought about by the king's cousin Thomas earl of Lancaster in 1312, followed by the total defeat by the Scots at Bannockburn in 1314. The nadir for the country came in 1315-7 when the crops failed for three consecutive years and famine was rife, especially in London. In 1317 Merton priory mortgaged all tithes of corn and fruit in Effingham to the archdeacon of Surrey for six years in return for a loan of £26.⁶

The highlight of his reign was probably the defeat of Thomas of Lancaster, who had never allowed him unfettered sovereignty. The king had been desperate to remove the earl of Lancaster, and exhorted the nation to muster at Coventry. He even turned to monastic communities, and on 16 February 1322 asked the prior of Merton to raise men-at-arms to march against the earl.⁷ The king's army began marching north from Coventry in January 1322 to attack the earl at Pontefract. On 17 March Lancaster surrendered himself at Boroughbridge and was sentenced to a traitor's death by hanging. The king commuted the sentence to beheading as an earl.⁸

Throughout this period Isabella had played her part as the dutiful queen, acting as peacemaker between the barons and the king. On 13 November 1312 she gave birth to a son, the future Edward III. Eventually the king's fondness for the dissolute Gaveston, and later for Hugh le Despenser, proved too much for his wife Isabella, and she began to complain of her husband's coldness and neglect.



*Effigy of Edward II,
Gloucester Cathedral*

Isabella: she-wolf of France

“Ranging like a she-wolf ... drenched by the rain of exile ...”

B Brecht *The Life of Edward II of England*

In 1325 Isabella went on an official visit to France as mediator between the king of England and her brother, Charles king of France, over the land of Aquitaine⁹ (Guienne and Ponthieu). She arrived in Paris on 1 April 1325 and concluded a settlement by 14 May. The treaty was drawn up on 30 May, whereby the lands were to be held by Edward with homage due to the king of France.¹⁰

Edward made plans to do homage and was at Dover on 24 August but feigned illness, not willing to be mortified as a lesser king. He created his son duke of Aquitaine and count of Ponthieu and Montreuil, and sent him to France. At the Bois de Vincennes on 21 September 1325 prince Edward acted as the king's substitute to perform homage to the French king. The 13-year-old heir apparent was now in the power of the queen and her family.

Isabella spent the winter in Paris and formed a liaison with Roger Mortimer, who had escaped from the Tower in 1323 to live in France. The king of France, Isabella's brother, did not approve of her conduct, and in June 1326 asked them to leave France. They made their way to William II, count of Hainault, Holland and Zeeland. Here Isabella arranged for her son prince Edward to marry Philippa, one of the daughters of the count.¹¹

The count of Hainault advanced a portion of Philippa's dowry to the queen, which enabled her to raise an army, led by the count's brother, John of Hainault. Isabella returned to England, landing at the estuary of the river Orwell, Suffolk, on 23 September 1326. With her were Mortimer, John of Hainault, many disgruntled exiles and a force of 2757 soldiers.¹² London received her, and she advanced to Bristol on 26 October. The king was captured on 16 November and placed in Kenilworth castle until his fate could be decided by a parliament summoned for the purpose. Isabella was at Woodstock from 3 December until the 22nd, and spent Christmas 1326 at Wallingford.

Parliament had been called for 7 January, summoned in the king's name, but he refused to attend. Isabella set out for Westminster and the journey included visits to Reading, Windsor, Chertsey and Merton.¹³

The queen visits Merton

“Hear the other side.”

St Augustine of Hippo

The superiors of the monasteries of Reading, Chertsey and Merton were parliamentary barons, and Isabella would have sought their support to force the king to abdicate. She arrived at Westminster on 4 January, which suggests that the visit to Merton priory was on the 3rd. She would have been received by the prior, William de Brokesborn (1307-35), who had been prior for longer than Isabella had been queen. She may have wished to use him as a sounding board for her scheme to rid England of Edward II. The queen's visit, with many attendant persons, must have been a strain on the resources of the priory and its officials.

How the inhabitants of Merton must have chattered as news passed around that the queen had been in their midst! They would not have guessed that within a month they would have a new king.

Edward was deposed, and on 29 January 1327 the royal son was proclaimed king as Edward III. He was 14 years old, and his father was finally monstrously murdered in Berkeley castle on 21 September 1327.

Left: Queen Isabella with John of Hainault returning from France and The Netherlands (Bibliothèque Nationale)

Isabella the queen mother

“Tomorrow do thy worst
For I have lived today.”

J Dryden

The queen virtually ruled England with Mortimer from 1327 until 1330, when Mortimer was tried before parliament and executed as a traitor. Edward III obliged his mother to retire to Castle Rising, Norfolk.

On 24 May 1337 Philip of Valois, now Philip VI of France, confiscated Aquitaine from the English crown. He had assumed the throne of France as nephew of Philip IV. This caused Edward III to revive his claim to the French crown through his mother Isabella, daughter of Philip IV and sister to the last three kings of the Capetian line (begun in 987), which became extinct in the male line in 1328.¹⁴ Thus began the Hundred Years' War.

In June 1340 Edward destroyed the French navy at anchor in Sluys (Sluis, Netherlands). In July 1346 he returned to Normandy and took Caen. This was followed on 26 August by a battle at Crécy-en-Ponthieu which involved Edward's son the Black Prince. Finally the English were able to take Calais in 1347. (For Edward's celebrations involving Merton on 6 January 1347 see *Bulletin* No.141 [March 2002] p.8.)

Throughout all these engagements queen Isabella was still living at Castle Rising, no doubt enjoying vicarious satisfaction over her son's successes. The king visited her “twice or thrice a year”¹⁵ until she died on 22 August 1358. She was buried at Greyfriars monastery in London.

1 C Bingham *Life and Times of Edward II* 1973 p.22

2 Merton cartulary f146; *Victoria County History of Surrey* II p.97

3 Patent Roll 2 Edward II pt.2 m4; *V C H Surrey* II p.97; A Heales *Records of Merton Priory* 1898 p.201

4 Manning and Bray I p.250; Heales *op.cit.* p.202

5 Heales *op.cit.* p.203; Close Roll 4 Edward II m4; *V C H Surrey* II p.97

6 Merton cartulary f184; *V C H Surrey* II p.97; Heales *op.cit.* p.218

7 Heales *op.cit.* p.224

8 Bingham *op.cit.* p.145

9 Julius Caesar named southern Gaul Aquitaine, from the numerous rivers and fine ports. The poetical inhabitants of the district adopted the name for their dukedom. Guienne possessed the ports which provided the ships for the Gascon wine trade.

10 T Rymer *Foedera* p.601; J Hunter 'Journal of the mission of Isabella to the court of France' in *Archaeologia* 36 (1855) p.247

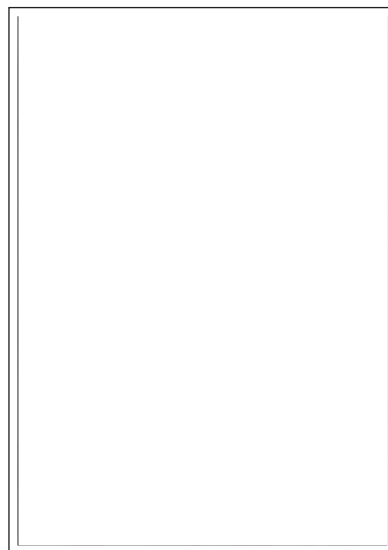
11 Hunter *op.cit.* p.256

12 A Strickland *Queens of England* 1866 Vol. I p.512

13 Hunter *op.cit.* p.257

14 The title 'king of France' was retained by the kings of England until George III.

15 J Froissart *Chronicles* Ch XXIII *A queen's head at Beverley Minster, believed to be Isabella (Pitkin Pictorials)*



IN BRIEF

- ◆ An exhibition about the **Wandle** is on at **Wandsworth Museum** until 4 July. The Museum is at The Courthouse, 11 Garratt Lane and is open, free, on Tuesday-Friday 10-5 and Saturday 2-5. An accompanying series of talks includes one by David Saxby on 3 June on the Merton Priory excavations. Tickets £2.50. Booking and further details on 020 8871 7074.
- ◆ Watch out for events throughout the weekend of 12-13 June marking the **Wandle Valley Festival**. The chapter house will be open, with archaeological finds on display; the new bridge will be inaugurated; there will be guided walks and family events. Information from David Saxby and from John Hawks
- ◆ Lambeth Local History Forum is again offering a programme of **heritage walks in south London** this summer. Telephone Lambeth Archives on 020 7926 6076 for a leaflet.
- ◆ **Streatham Society talks** coming up include 'Streatham's Story' by John Brown on 7 June and 'Streatham's Fine Architecture' by Brian Bloice on 5 July. Both at Woodlawns, 26 Leigham Court Road SW16 at 8 pm.
- ◆ A facsimile of part of Stanford's interesting **Library Map of London and its Suburbs (1862)** is on sale at Wandsworth Museum for £4. The scale is 6 inches to the mile, and it covers much of our area, reaching as far south as Cannon Hill Lane, Phipps Bridge and Mitcham's Eagle House.

The following is a slightly shortened extract from an essay by ERIC MONTAGUE, written as part of his course requirement for his MA in Local History:

MITCHAM'S CHOLERA OUTBREAK IN 1866, AND ITS AFTERMATH

Since the late 17th century the village of Mitcham, barely nine miles from Westminster, and 12 from the City, had been highly regarded for its 'fine air',¹ and had attracted many merchants and legal men seeking a healthy place of residence for themselves and their families away from the City.²

By 1866, though Mitcham was still managed by a vestry, several local government functions, such as policing and the administration of the Poor Law, had become the responsibility of *ad hoc* bodies. The remit of the Croydon Local Board of Health, formed in 1849, which had secured many improvements in the town itself, did not extend to Mitcham,³ though under the Public Health Act of 1872, with neighbouring parishes like Merton and Morden, Mitcham would soon come within the Croydon Rural Sanitary Authority. For the purposes of registration of births, deaths and marriages Mitcham at this time was in the extra-metropolitan Surrey district of Croydon. This study is concerned with the effect on Mitcham, if any, of the fourth and, as it proved, the final serious outbreak of cholera in this country.⁴

With a population of 9381 in 1861, Mitcham experienced only six deaths from 'Asiatic Cholera' in 1866, a death rate of 0.64 per 1000,⁵ the same as in the adjoining district of Wandsworth, within the metropolitan area.⁶ Remarkably, in the Croydon registration district as a whole the cholera death rate per 1000 in 1866 was half that of the sub-district of Mitcham. For Croydon town centre, where one might expect it to have been higher, the rate was 0.24 per 1000. The full significance of these figures needs further research, for the Croydon registration district embraced a swathe of extra-metropolitan (and largely rural) Surrey, extending from Merton to Penge and Norwood. Nevertheless, the low mortality rate for Croydon itself is impressive and, assuming no 'adjustment' of the figures to exclude temporary residents, could well be attributed to the improvements in sanitation in the town centre achieved by the local Board of Health in the 1850s and early '60s, and, above all, to the provision of an excellent water supply.⁷

Examination of the details recorded of the handful of villagers who succumbed to cholera in Mitcham in 1866 tends to confirm that here, as in London itself, it was the elderly, women and children who were the most vulnerable. The number involved is admittedly small and therefore statistically insignificant, but it does seem that mortality in the parish due to cholera was confined exclusively to members of the labouring class.⁵

The first to die, in August 1866, was the 75-year-old wife of a leather-dresser. The address, given as 'Mitcham Common', makes it very likely he was an employee of Peter Pharaoh, whose tannery was on the banks of the Wandle at Mill Green, Beddington Corner.⁸ Several small cottages are indicated on the 1867 OS map next to the works, and it is highly likely that in the absence of a well the tenants would have drawn water from the river for domestic purposes, if not for actual drinking.

Two weeks later, the second Mitcham victim died. She was the wife of a floorcloth printer, aged 33, and within a month two of her children had also died. The floorcloth factory at which her husband probably worked can be located at Phipps Bridge, a mile and a half downstream from Mill Green. A third Mitcham child, nine months old, died in October. The father was a 'carman' (or carter), who lived on the Causeway, off Mitcham's Cricket Green, and although one cannot be sure, it is possible the family were tenants of one of several very dilapidated cottages to be seen in early photographs.⁹ Two further cholera deaths occurred in Mitcham in October 1866, one an 84-year-old 'labourer', and the other the 60-year-old wife of a labourer. Where they lived is not stated.

Given names (which should be in the burial records) and using the 1861 census returns, it would not be difficult to ascertain precisely where all these people lived and to identify their dwellings on the 25'' OS maps of 1867. Contemporary accounts confirm that shallow wells were relied on extensively at this time,¹⁰ and the Wandle and several ditches are described as receiving domestic waste as well as land drainage.¹¹ Both wells and ditches are shown on the large-scale OS maps. Further research would be interesting, but the demographic pattern of mortality due to cholera in Mitcham is clear, and the implication is strong that contaminated water supplies were the cause of the infection.

Historians have noted the initial lack of widespread public concern when cholera returned to Britain in 1865,¹² and as far as can be judged from local records the reaction in Mitcham to the outbreak of the disease in the summer and early autumn of 1866 was minimal. Minutes of the Mitcham vestry meetings, formal as usual at this period, contain no reference whatever to the matter,¹³ and in his annual report on parish affairs for the year 1866/7 Daniel Wilson, the vicar, apparently did not consider that the few cases recorded called for any comment.¹⁴ The impression given is that a slight increase in deaths due to gastro-intestinal infections in late summer was quite normal. This may be an illusion and further research could produce more evidence. For instance, the minutes of the Croydon

Board of Guardians might contain some medical references to Mitcham at this time, and it is possible that the Croydon or county press may have carried news items, but their coverage of outlying districts tended to be superficial, and a search (if copies survive for the period) could well be unproductive.¹⁵

The published statistics certainly indicate that in the neighbouring parts of Surrey the incidence of cholera in 1866 was low, with one death, that of a seven-year-old child of a carpenter, being recorded in Wimbledon, for instance,⁵ whilst in Sutton no cases at all were reported.¹⁶

Water closets were in use in some of the larger houses in Mitcham early in the 19th century,¹⁷ and 18th-century drains of brick and tile have been uncovered in several archaeological excavations.¹⁸ Until the mid-19th century for the majority earth or pail closets had to suffice, the contents being dug into the garden or yard, if there was no night soil collection. Braithwaite in 1853 noted domestic privies overhanging the Wandle near Mitcham bridge,¹⁹ and old residents, recalling their childhood in the 1860s, mention the open 'Western Ditch' alongside Merton Lane (Western Road), taking sewage from cottages between Fair Green and Fieldgate Lane.²⁰ The ditch was probably abolished in the late 1870s by the new Croydon Rural Sanitary Authority which, between 1878 to 1880, laid 55 miles of trunk main serving Mitcham, Merton, Beddington and Wallington. The outfall of the new sewerage works was the Wandle Valley Sewage Disposal Works at Colliers Wood, land for which (mainly in the parish of Mitcham) was acquired after a public enquiry.²¹

These works, complete with such innovations as screens, 'straining tanks' and intermittent filter beds, were opened in 1877.²² The civil engineer was Baldwin Latham who, soon after his appointment to the Croydon Local Board of Health in 1849, had been responsible for the design and construction of the Beddington sewage 'farm' to deal with Croydon's waste.²³ The Colliers Wood works were extended in 1882 to deal with the increasing volume of sewage needing treatment, water closets having by this time come into general use, and a sludge-processing plant was added.²² Such improvements to the main drainage had to be paid for, and in 1889 the vicar of Mitcham, the Revd Daniel Wilson, reviewing changes that had taken place in the parish since his institution in 1859, commented that "The Rates have also increased from 3s. 6d. in the pound, which was their normal amount in 1872, and are now 5s., supplemented by a Sanitary Rate of 2s. or upwards".²⁴

Artesian wells delivering water of high bacteriological purity served many of the larger houses and several factories in Mitcham by the middle of the 19th century²⁵ but, as we have seen, the great majority of villagers obtained their water from shallow wells.¹⁰ A public pump, newly installed in the centre of the Fair Green in 1865, where it drew water from a well sunk into the underlying gravel, was replaced in 1898 by the 'Jubilee Clock Tower', which incorporated a drinking fountain supplied with mains water.²⁶ Presumably by this time piped water was readily available to the shops and domestic premises around the Green, and the pump was no longer needed. The Lambeth Water Company had laid their first main through Merton and the adjoining Mitcham hamlet of Colliers Wood in 1850.²⁷ Precisely when the company extended its supply network to the centre of Mitcham has not been ascertained, but it most unlikely that the whole of the village was 'on the mains' before 1900.

Refuse disposal remained in private hands in Mitcham until the 1920s.²⁸ Collection had for many years been in the hands of contractors like the Clarksons, who owned a worked-out gravel pit on the banks of the Wandle at Phipps Bridge, where they tipped house refuse and, no doubt, the contents of the few remaining ash-privies. Pollution of the subsoil was evidently not considered a problem, nor was potential contamination of the river by the leachate a matter for concern.

Finally in 1895 Mitcham had the benefit of a new 64-bed fever hospital, the Wandle Valley Isolation Hospital, built by the Croydon Rural District council at a cost of £35,000.²⁹ By coincidence, it stood at Beddington Corner, close by the cottages where the first victim of the last cholera outbreak had lived, and died, in 1866.

[It is planned to publish the complete text of Eric Montague's study of cholera in Mitcham, which sets the outbreak against the regional picture, as one of our *Studies in Merton History* series. JG]

1 I Walton *The Life of Dr John Donne* (1640)

2 E Bartley *Mitcham in Days Gone By* (1909) p.5

3 Information from the Archivist, Croydon Local Studies Centre, in interview February 2003

4 Previous outbreaks occurred in 1831-2, 1848-9 and 1853-4.

5 'Report of the Epidemic in England of 1866' *Parliamentary Papers 1867-68* xxxvii p.206

6 *ibid.* p.5

7 J Gent *Croydon: the story of a hundred years* (1970) p.11

8 Merton Local Studies Centre. Copy of Mitcham Tithe Survey: Register and Map 1846/7 and *Post Office Directory* 1851

9 T Francis *Old Mitcham* (1993) plate 101

10 J Drewett 'Memories of Mitcham' in *Old Mitcham* Part II ((1926) (ed.) H Bidder pp.2-3

11 F Braithwaite 'On the Rise and Fall of the River Wandle: its Springs, Tributaries and Pollution' *Proceedings of the Institution of Civil Engineers* XX (1861) p.201

- 12 For example N Longmate *King Cholera* Hamish Hamilton, London (1966) p.212
- 13 Surrey History Centre. Mitcham vestry minutes (not paginated)
- 14 Merton Local Studies Centre. D Wilson 'Letters to the Parishioners of Mitcham 1866/7'. In bound volume of letters (1889) shelved at L2 (361) WIL
- 15 Neither Merton Local Studies Centre nor Sutton Archives and Local History search room have copies of the local press as early as 1866.
- 16 Information supplied by the Archivist, London Borough of Sutton, in interview in February 2003
- 17 Surrey History Centre, Particulars of the Sale by Auction of the Estate of Henry Hoare in 1828 2361/2/2. Mitcham Grove, the late Henry Hoare's residence had water closets installed.
- 18 Merton Heritage Centre, The Canons, Mitcham. Site books: Excavations by MHS members at Hall Place (1970) and Ravensbury Manor House (1973)
- 19 Braithwaite *op. cit.* p.200
- 20 Merton Local Studies Centre. Transcript of evidence of Henry Tanner in Ecclesiastical Commissioners v Bridger *et ors* (1890)
- 21 W Santo Crimp *Sewage Disposal Works* 2nd ed. (1894) pp.191-7. Crimp worked under Baldwin Latham as resident engineer in charge of construction works at the Wandle Valley sewage disposal works.
- 22 Plans and details seen and copied at the Wandle Valley Sewage Disposal Works office when visited in 1948. Present whereabouts unknown
- 23 Gent *op. cit.* p.9 states that *The Builder* (1866) reported that the River Commissioners had visited the Beddington sewage farm and had been much impressed.
- 24 Merton Local Studies Centre. D Wilson *op. cit.*
- 25 Merton Local Studies Centre. Ms and typescript notes by 'F.P.R.' LP 994 L.2 (628.1) LUC quoting J Lucas in *Journal of the Society of Arts* XXV (1877) and Barrow and Wells *Record of London Wells* (1913)
- 26 Merton Local studies Centre. Tom Francis's lantern slide lecture notes
- 27 R Milward and C Maidment *The Lull Before the Storm* Wimbledon Society Museum (2002) p.56
- 28 Information from K Gutteridge, Chief Sanitary Inspector, Borough of Mitcham, in interview in 1948
- 29 Kelly's *Directory* (1925)

ROSEMARY TURNER has been tracking down

THE MORRIS & Co TAPESTRIES AT WESTMINSTER ABBEY

In 1910 Morris & Co was commissioned to make three small tapestry panels for Westminster Abbey. They were designed by Professor E W Tristram, an authority on medieval painting, and the weavers were John Martin, Gordon Berry, John Glassbrook and George Fitzhenry.¹ My book on William Morris textiles describes the design as "neither modern nor historically based".² Two of the designs, representing St Edward the Confessor [below right] and Henry III [below left] were based on 14th-century painted sedilia panels at the side of the presbytery in the Abbey. The third, St John as a pilgrim [below centre], was taken from the manuscript Life of St Edward preserved in the University Library, Cambridge.

According to Jocelyn Perkins, former Sacrist of the Abbey, the three panels were the gift of Mr and Mrs A Murray Smith and Mr Henry Yates Thompson, and were presented shortly before the coronation of King George V and employed at the ceremony to decorate the lantern. This was at the crossing where the coronation chair was placed and the lantern altar now stands. The coronation took place on 22 June 1911.

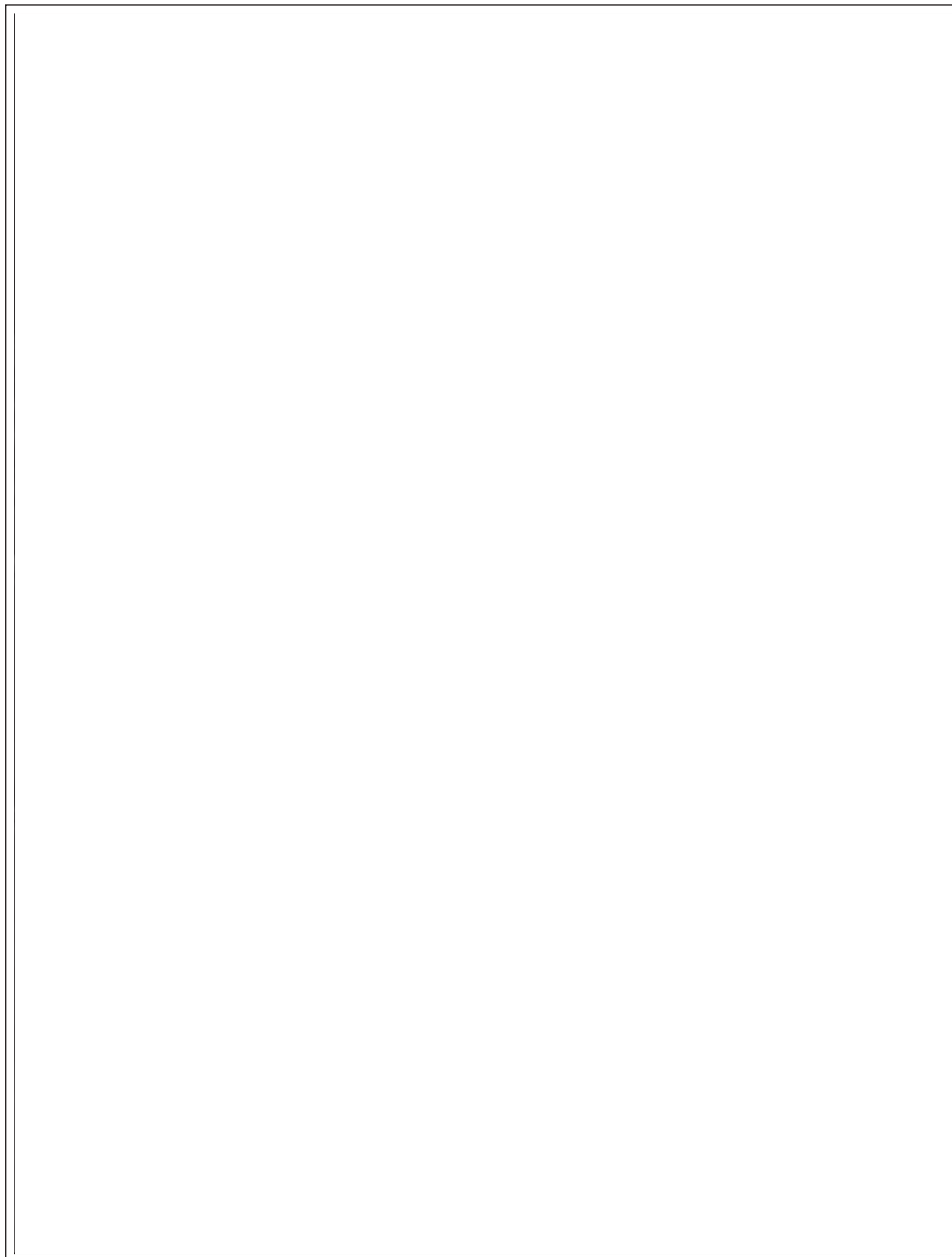
Subsequently they were suspended at the back of the sedilia, with the idea that they took the place of the obliterated panels.

In 1938 the paintings were restored, and the tapestries were moved to the north aisle of Henry VII's chapel.

A book published in 1986 quotes their position as being "at the eastern end of the north aisle of Henry VII's chapel, adjacent to the monument to Edward V and Richard Duke of York [the 'Princes in the Tower']".³

The tapestries have recently been moved to Samaria, a room adjacent to the Jerusalem Chamber, and are no longer on view to the public. The colours are still very good.

In the book on Morris textiles there are a few discrepancies. It quotes one of the tapestries as depicting Henry II rather than Henry III. It also says the panel depicting St John was not woven until 1914. This would have made it too late for it to have been used at the coronation of 1911.



Notes

1 H C Marillier *History of the Merton Abbey Tapestry Works* Constable & Co, London 1927 pp.23,35,36 gives Henry II, rather than Henry III. According to him, Martin and Glassbrook wove *St Edward*; Martin, Berry and Glassbrook wove *Henry II* and Martin and Fitzhenry were responsible for *St John as a Pilgrim*. Henry Currie Marillier was managing director of Morris & Co from 1905 until the company's liquidation in 1940, and was an authority on tapestries. There was another tapestry in the same series designed by Professor Tristram, which was of St Michael and St George, and was derived from screen paintings at Ranworth church, Norfolk. This is not at the Abbey.

2 L Parry *William Morris Textiles* Weidenfeld and Nicolson, London 1983 p.120. Linda Parry, an authority on Arts and Crafts textiles, curated the centenary William Morris exhibition at the V&A in 1996 and is president of the William Morris Society

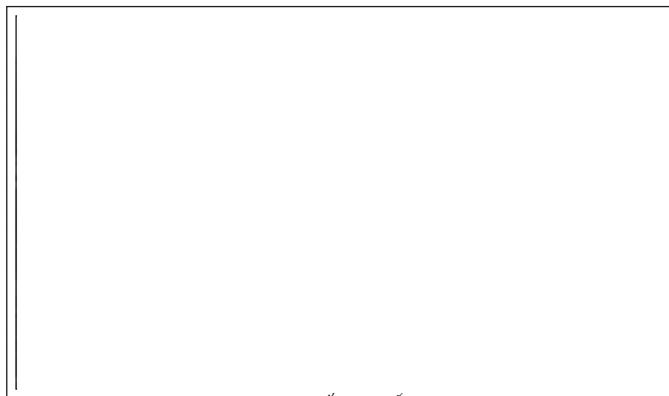
3 *Westminster Abbey* Bell & Hyman, London 1986

The sedilia at Westminster Abbey with its two restored paintings. There have been various interpretations of these paintings over the years. The left-hand figure used to be identified as the 7th-century Sebert (Sigeberht), who may, according to legend, have founded the first monastery on the site. Reproduced by courtesy of the Dean & Chapter of Westminster

LOCAL HISTORY WORKSHOP

Friday 19 March. Seven present. Peter Hopkins in the chair.

- ◆ **Bill Rudd** welcomed, on the whole, the appearance of articles on Merton history in the local free *Guardian* newspaper. It was apparent that the writer consulted our publications (and those of the Wimbledon Society), as shown, for instance, by a reference to Morden Hall as dating from about 1750. He was not happy however with a description of Liberty's Colour House as a "former barn"!
- ◆ Ancient access to Merton priory was the subject that had been occupying **Cyril Maidment**, and he had brought along several images of gateways into the precincts [see page 6]. There was some discussion about the eastern parish boundary of Merton, earlier courses of the Wandle, and Bennett's Ditch. The 'treasure map' of Merton Abbey [see *Bulletin* No.147], otherwise 'Doctor Shockwell's map', had come from a friend of the man operating the crane when Scott McCracken was excavating in the 1980s. Nothing more is known of its provenance. Cyril, who is inclined to accept its authenticity, suggested that its peculiar orientation, with east at the top, might refer to the direction of access to the site.
- ◆ **Rosemary Turner** had been tracking down the present whereabouts of tapestries made by Morris & Co at Merton Abbey for Westminster Abbey early last century. They had been moved at various times and unfortunately are not now accessible to the public. Her account of their history is on pages 14-15.
- ◆ As reported in the last *Bulletin* **Judith Goodman** hoped to identify, for a correspondent, the settings of three views of buses in Morden from the 1950s. She had now located the view reproduced last time as being the west side of St Helier Avenue, with the house glimpsed to the left being one of Nos 88, 96 or 108. The east side of the same road and the west side of Morden Hall Road figured in the other two photographs.
She had been to Southend Museum to see the temporary exhibition of finds from the (princely?) Saxon burial chamber recently excavated at Prittlewell. Everything is now at the Museum of London, where they expect, with today's techniques, to learn more than was possible from the Sutton Hoo remains. A most exciting discovery.
She also reported that she had been reading Margaret Gelling and Ann Cole *The Landscape of Place-Names* Shaun Tyas, Stamford 2000. The authors point out that there were once about 30 places called *meretun*, of which most have become, in modern form, Marten, Martin or Marton. There are only four English Merton's – a reminder to be wary of identifying our Merton with any certainty as the site of an infamous murder or a notable battle in Saxon times.
- ◆ **Peter Hopkins** has been attempting to identify dwellings mentioned in the Merton Land Tax records and also in a survey of the Merton Abbey estate dating from 1802 and shown on a plan of 1805. Recently he had been preparing for publication the text of *Beating the Bounds of Mitcham in 1833* (edited by Eric Montague), and was therefore particularly interested in the section where Mitcham adjoined Merton. He asked for help in identifying locations shown in old photographs, so that he could begin to match them to the buildings mentioned in these texts.
- ◆ For decades **Lionel Green** has been researching every aspect of Merton priory, and he brought to the Workshop a draft 'Contents' list for his projected history – the proposed title is *A Priory Laid Bare*. There followed some discussion about what should prove to be a definitive work



Judith Goodman

Dates of next workshops: Friday 25 June and Friday 13 August at 7.30pm at Wandle Industrial Museum.

All are welcome.

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.