



PRESIDENT: Lionel Green

VICE PRESIDENTS: Viscountess Hanworth, Eric Montague and William Rudd

BULLETIN NO. 159

CHAIR: Judith Goodman

SEPTEMBER 2006



PROGRAMME SEPTEMBER-DECEMBER



Tuesday 5 September 1.15 for 1.30pm **Visit to Poppy Factory, Richmond**
This visit has now been booked, and no further applications can be accepted.

Saturday 14 October 2.30pm **Snuff Mill Centre**
'Lost Country Houses of South London'
For this year's Evelyn Jowett Memorial Lecture we welcome a well-known and popular speaker. **Brian Bloice**, of the Streatham Society, will share some of his encyclopaedic knowledge.

Saturday 11 November 2.30pm **Snuff Mill Centre**
Annual General Meeting
This will be followed by a talk by member **Vince Webb** on the Battle of the Somme, which took place 90 years ago.

Saturday 2 December 2.30pm **Snuff Mill Centre**
'Frosts, Freezes and Fairs: 100 years of winter on the Thames and elsewhere'
In these times of climate change it is hard to believe that the Thames once froze over regularly. Our speaker, **Ian Currie**, will bring those days to life. Social, as well as meteorological history.

To reach the Snuff Mill Centre from Morden Hall Garden Centre car-park, cross the bridge between the café and the garden centre, go through the gateway in the wall, turn right and follow the main pathway to the right, which leads to the Snuff Mill Centre. Note that numbers here are limited.

Morden Hall Road is on several bus routes and close to Morden town centre.



The Society's events are open to the general public.
You are invited to make a donation to help with the Society's running costs.



LOCAL HISTORY WORKSHOP

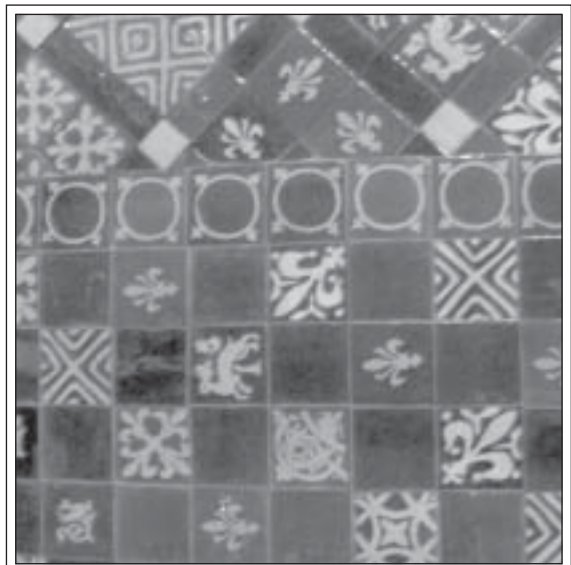
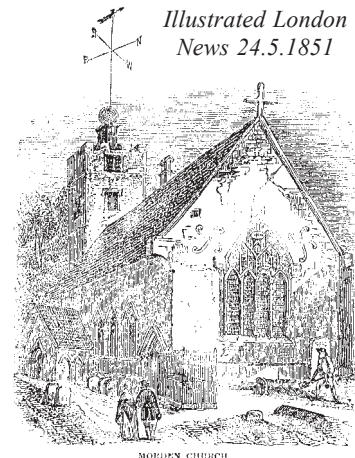
Friday 30 June, afternoon meeting. Eight present. Sheila Harris in the chair.

- ◆ **Rosemary Turner** reported that in the East Surrey Family History Society *Journal* of June 2006 there was an item seeking information about Mowbray Bessell of Mitcham. She had found the name mentioned in MHS Local History Notes No.20, *Parishioners of Mitcham 1837/38: the Reverend Herbert Randolph's Notebook*. On 9 January 1838 Randolph had visited a Mrs Bessle [sic] of Phipps Bridge, who was ill.
- ◆ **Madeline Healey** spoke of her happy time as a young girl starting work at Fielder's bookshop in Wimbledon. She was urged to make a record of that part of her working life in a local family business. (This would be very welcome at the Wimbledon Society's parallel to these Workshops – the monthly meetings of their Local History Group.)
- ◆ **Judith Goodman** had noticed that in the ESFHS *Journal* for June there was another local reference, supplied by Sheila Gallagher of that society. A Walter Martin Burnham "of Carlingford House, Merton, Surrey, gent." had been found guilty of speeding in May 1904. He does not appear in local directories of the time. She had continued to research the substantial material on the Leach/Bennett families, which included the Smith/Cook connections. There was information on Nelson renting Bennett's stables on the east side of Haydons Road. Furthermore, Bennett's wife Sarah Jane had turned down an invitation from Emma Hamilton. Three substantial family trees had been produced. Then eventual publication was anticipated by members with pleasure.
- ◆ **Peter Hopkins** had done further research on the former stream that had determined the north-eastern boundary of Sheila Harris's property, built 1910, in Cannon Hill Lane [see page 3 in *Bulletin* 158]. He handed out an extract from the 25-inch OS map of 1895 which showed the course of the stream from the future Springfield Road, crossing Cannon Hill Lane to the footpath that became Whatley Avenue, with a footbridge across the stream. Until 1923, Sutton's Cottages (see illustration 6 in *Merton and Morden: a pictorial history*) would have been the next building on the left, going towards Kingston Road. The site had been enclosed from Merton Common in 1816.
- ◆ **Sheila Miller** had picked up at a Covent Garden stall a print of Morden church from 1851, and also one of the great house at Houghton Conquest, near where she was an evacuee as a child, and she recalled the fascination the place had for her.
- ◆ **Lionel Green** spoke of a recent visit to the remains of Plympton priory in Devon. It had been suggested that a certain grave slab had marked the site of the grave of William Warelwast, bishop of Exeter from 1107 to 1137 [see page 3 in *Bulletin* no.158], who had been buried in the chapter house. However Lionel concluded that the grave slab, with a floriated cross, was that of a 13th-century priest. Probably it had been unearthed when the church was rebuilt in 1858-61, and the floor lowered by a foot. The slab was flush with the new floor-level, orientated north-east and against the east wall.
- ◆ **Cyril Maidment** had prepared a new conducted walk 'Double Gates to Singlegate' for 14 May, and he had brought along two workbooks that he had compiled. These were examined with interest. The Wheelhouse potter, Stephen Llewellyn, with the support of Wandle Heritage Ltd, had made and laid on the Wheelhouse floor a large number of precise replica floor tiles, based on those found at the priory site. A photograph and a tile (£10 at the Wheelhouse) were circulated and admired.

Cyril Maidment

The next workshops will be held at Wandle Industrial Museum on Friday 6 October at 2.30 and Friday 24 November at 7.30.

All are welcome



VISIT TO FARNHAM

On 18 May our party travelled by train from Clapham Junction to Farnham, where our tour started at The Maltings, a short walk from the station. Our guide Brian Pittuck gave us an introduction to the history of Farnham and of The Maltings, followed by a tour of the building. He then took us round the town, pointing out interesting buildings and features, and telling us about people who used to live there.

Fearnhamme, a fern or bracken area by water-meadows, had a pre-Roman community by the River Wey, but the name is Saxon. The Romans used the extensive clay deposits. Some kilns produced blue pottery, and at that time production was the largest in southern Britain. In Saxon and Norman times wool predominated. The Cistercians at Waverley Abbey south of the town were good administrators and traded wool to Flanders as well as southern Britain. Wool declined, and at the end of the 1600s corn was all-important: for 35 years the corn market was one of the busiest in the country. This declined in turn, but wealth remained in the town, leaving it with many fine Georgian buildings. Huguenots brought hops, and so brewing increased, and with it a demand for malt. This aspect of Farnham's development led us into more details about The Maltings. Originally a tannery, in 1830 half the site was turned into maltings, local barley being sprouted and toasted in kilns to 'malt' it. In 1845 the other half of the site became a brewery, the owner John Baird opening pubs all over the area, taking advantage of the army now being garrisoned at Aldershot. Later the whole site was owned and operated by Courage who continued malting there until it became uneconomic in 1956. The buildings remained derelict until 1968, when they were offered to the town. The people of Farnham raised the required £30,000 within six weeks, and The Maltings is now a flourishing arts and community centre, thanks to grants, public donations and enormous voluntary effort.



The building beside the Maltings, the sign from the time before Courage took over the brewery

Our tour of the town now took us past Firgrove House (with some disputed connection to Nelson and the Hamiltons). However we were told that the Nubian Fatima, taken out of a slave ship and given by Nelson to Emma was, in later years, removed to the workhouse in Bear Lane, Farnham [this story is now discounted by most historians – Ed.].

We paused at the *William Cobbett* pub, formerly the *Jolly Farmer*, in Bridge Square, where there is a blue plaque stating that it was the birthplace in 1762 of the politician and writer, best known for *Rural Rides*. He is the most famous son of Farnham and has been called Champion of Democracy, Master of English Prose and Enemy of Cant in Public Affairs. His *Parliamentary Debates* was later taken over by Hansard. He died in 1835 and he and his wife are buried in the parish churchyard. We passed the police station with three modern murals depicting Farnham history. Middle and Lower Church Lane have buildings older than they look, timber-framed behind later brick fronts. The Old Vicarage beside the church is 13th-century and the oldest inhabited building in the town. The parish church of St Andrew, one of the largest in Surrey, is partly Norman but mostly 15th-century. Under the centre of the nave lie the burnt remains of a Saxon church.



The group with the William Cobbett pub in the background

In West Street with many Georgian houses we were shown the interior of a shop, owned by the Earl of Shaftesbury in the 16th century, with a marvellous plaster ceiling said to be the work of an apprentice to Inigo Jones. Further along is Vernon House, now the library, where Charles I spent a night in December 1648 on the way to trial and execution in London. The king gave his host Sir Charles Vernon his embroidered morning cap as a memento. It now takes pride of place in the museum. Farnham Museum which we visited later is in Willmer House, early Georgian with a fine hand-cut brick façade. Its wealthy hop-growers and brewers left Farnham a legacy of Georgian buildings. Lion and Lamb Yard on the north side of West Street is partly Elizabethan, has woodblock paving to quieten the sound of hooves and cartwheels, and recently won awards for sympathetic restoration.

Castle Street, wide to hold fairs and markets and lined with 17th- and 18th-century houses, leads up to the castle. Its width allows a good view of the varied façades, mostly Georgian, since many of the older houses had later fronts added. Farnham was owned by the Bishops of Winchester from 688. In 1138 the bishop started to build the castle, which remained a bishop's palace until 1927, and was then the residence of the bishop of Guildford until 1956. We did not have time to visit the castle (limited opening) or the extensive grounds, which are open to the public.

This account gives only a summary of the interesting things we were told and shown, and hopefully will encourage you to visit Farnham. The museum with its excellent displays of local life and industry is worth a long visit, as is the parish church, not to mention the castle and its park.

Further information: www.farnham.gov.uk; www.farnhamsociety.org.uk; www.farnhamtownwalks.org.uk;
W E Newman *The Story of Farnham* 1978; N Temple *Farnham Buildings and People* 1973; Maxwell Fraser *Surrey* 1975

Tim Fripp

VISIT TO THE ROYAL HOSPITAL, CHELSEA

On Saturday 24 June about 30 members and friends were met at the Chelsea Gate of the Hospital by Sergeant Bill ('Paddy') Fox, our assigned guide. Resplendent in his scarlet summer coat (blue coats in winter), and with the brilliant sunlight reflecting from his polished buttons, Paddy, assisted by an old soldier friend (whose purpose we were told was to be a Jack Russell, who would snap at the heels of any straggler) started by telling us something about the foundation and the institutional structure of the Hospital.

Despite little support, Charles II, inspired by Louis XIV's Hôtel des Invalides in Paris (a hostel instead of pensions to provide care for veterans of the regular army who had become unfit for duty), determined to found such a hospital in England. Help came at last from ex-Paymaster-General Sir Stephen Fox, still in control of the Pay Office through one of his sons. But deductions from pay and pensions were the Hospital's main source of revenue until 1847. Since then it has been supported by Parliamentary votes. Sir Stephen bought the site (on it James I had once intended to establish a theological college) out of his own pocket. As stated by the Latin inscription on the Figure Court colonnade, Charles II's foundation (1682) was augmented by James II and completed by William and Mary in 1692; but further buildings were erected during the 18th and early 19th centuries.

Management of the Hospital has been vested from its earliest days in a Board of Commissioners appointed by the Crown, some (including the Governor and Lieutenant-Governor) by virtue of their posts in government or Crown service, plus others as individuals. This composition has varied from time to time, but the Paymaster-General has always been the chairman. The administration is organised on military lines, and in addition to the Governor and Lieutenant-Governor, there is an adjutant, three medical officers, a chaplain, a quartermaster and six retired officers, styled Captains of Invalids, in charge of six companies of 'In-Pensioners', whose uniforms are a modernised version of the service dress of Marlborough's time. In earlier days the companies were armed and had to mount guard, but (un-armed) parades are now virtually limited to those for church and pay.

The In-Pensioners number about 400 and are drawn from 'Out-Pensioners' of good character, and normally of not less than 65 years of age. On entry, an old soldier surrenders his (as yet there are no female In-Pensioners) out-pension, and receives instead board, lodging, clothing and medical care. Some 120 In-Pensioners are employed in the Hospital, as guides, chapel staff, clerical assistants, ground staff etc. Each company has a sergeant-major and complement of NCOs – all on a voluntary basis, and this arrangement helps in running the Hospital, and provides interest and purpose for the In-Pensioners.

From the colonnade on the north side of Figure Court the recently re-gilded statue of Charles II drew our attention, and from here also we could appreciate the cool, detached character of Wren's classicism – all in red brick with white stone quoins. Two four-storied Long Wards run towards the tree-lined Thames from the northern block. Giant columns and pilasters of the Tuscan, severest of the classical orders, mark the centre of each wing. The whole complex is an elegant, if understated, architectural answer to Louis XIV's Invalides.

We now entered the vestibule between the Great Hall and the Chapel. Its cupola, supporting a stone lantern, gives, with the regularly spaced chimney-stacks, the necessary vertical accent to the whole group of buildings. Steps on the east side lead to the Chapel, a perfect Wren interior, essentially a long rectangle, barrel-vaulted, with an apse at the eastern end. It is filled with light through its big clear-glass windows (more so than Wren's two, smaller, college chapels at Cambridge – Pembroke and Emmanuel – due to the later insertion there of stained glass). Ornament is confined to the plaster ceiling panels and the woodwork, all of the finest quality.

The organ is modern, but its case is of the Wren period and it stands on the western gallery supported by Corinthian columns which match those of the reredos. The Riccis' *Resurrection of Christ* on the apse ceiling is an explosion of colour and movement. A cohort of Roman soldiers scatters left and right of the sepulchre, and above, around the figure of the risen Christ, is a vortex of angelic wings, bodies and drapery; over all is a group of putti – which it has been suggested may be a reference to those children of Queen Anne who died in infancy.



Statue of Charles II in Figure Court

But not all is quite 'Wren'. The former three-decker pulpit has been substituted by a lower pulpit and separate reading desk. The altar candlesticks in Wren's time would have flanked, not a cross, but a large alms dish. Paddy pointed out the golden altar frontal and falls for pulpit and reading desk with oakleaf and acorn motifs, referring to Charles's escape after the Battle of Worcester, and the many kneelers embroidered with regimental badges. He also told us that Sir Denis Thatcher's funeral service took place here, and that Lady Thatcher sometimes attends Divine Service.

The Great Hall, to the west side of the vestibule, is a plain, flat-ceilinged rectangle. On the west wall a huge painting shows Charles II on horseback, with allegorical figures, against the river front of the Hospital. The large brass chandeliers and the royal portraits make up for lack of architectural detail, and the well-arranged dining tables add to the conviction that the Hospital is indeed a good place in which to retire. In 1852 the body of the Duke of Wellington lay here in state – a table by the door bears a commemorative plate. In those days the Great Hall was used, not for eating, but for administration, including Army entrance exams.

The other interior we saw was that of the present museum, built originally for administrative purposes to the east of Wren's main block. It is a single-storey structure, the exterior evidently designed, by Sir John Soane, to match Wren's buildings, but concealing an eminently Soanian interior. The entrance hall is dedicated to the memory of the great Duke of Wellington. It is dominated by large paintings of him and of the Battle of Waterloo, and there are several objects associated with him. There is also a recent portrait of HM the Queen. A model of the Hospital enabled us to further understand the location and purpose of each part of it. Various facets of the Hospital's life and history are presented in the Long Gallery, including a mock-up of one of the 'berths' or cubicles. These were only six feet (1.8m) square, but they have been enlarged and improved several times, and there is now the intention to modernise the Long Wards, with 'en suite' facilities. A further room houses a large collection of medals.

While on this western side the burial ground was pointed out to us, containing 900 interments. It was closed in 1840, but cremated remains may still be placed here. Soane's Infirmary was destroyed in World War II, and its replacement is now being itself replaced by a building which, though Wren-style externally, is a state-of-the-art installation within.

At the south-west end of Figure Court we saw some interesting cannon and huge mortar bombs intended to be used (but were not) in the Crimean War. Round the corner we passed what was once Sir Robert Walpole's orangery but now houses the Roman Catholic Chapel and the Library. There is also a clubroom, TV and billiard rooms, and a bowling green. Finally we were impressed by the allotment gardens' colourful display of roses and magnificent delphiniums. In the far corner is a former mortuary, which we were pleased to see now houses garden equipment.

Back at the Chelsea Gate (and in the shadow of the former stables, the only surviving building here whose exterior shows it to be by Soane) we expressed our thanks to Paddy (who, in addition to imparting so much information, entertained the group with amusing anecdotes); to his 'Jack Russell' (who never would have snapped at the heels of any of us even if we *had* failed to keep up); and to Sheila Harris for arranging such a very enjoyable visit.

Ray Ninnis

DON FLEMING

We were saddened to learn in early July of the death at the Royal Marsden of Don Fleming. Don lived 'over the border', in Sutton, but he had picked up our programme somewhere and thought it looked interesting, and he joined the Society in 1998/9. At the 1999 AGM he volunteered from the floor to join the Committee, and within two years offered to take on the duties of Membership Secretary. In this role his genial face and voice were an admirable recruiting aid, and our numbers rose steadily during his tenure. He also served for a time as Vice-Chairman.

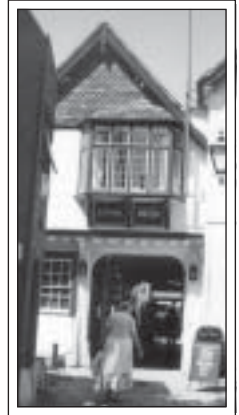
Don was a delightful raconteur and mimic: not a few committee meetings and workshop sessions overran on account of his stories. A real enthusiast for history, he would always have an interesting nugget of information to share with fellow-members, and many will remember his lively account of Elizabeth I after the AGM of 2002. He relished occasions and events; he was an active member of his NHS retirement group and a dedicated theatre-goer and jazz fan.

Don enjoyed belonging to this society, and his roles within it. He chose not to reveal that ill-health was the reason for his resignation from the Committee early last year, and for his increasingly rare appearances at our functions. We miss his cheerful presence.

JG

VISIT TO *THE KING'S HEAD*, AYLESBURY, AND HUGHENDEN MANOR

On 19 July, the hottest day (so far) of the year, 32 MHS members and 20 WEA members embarked on an air-conditioned expedition to Buckinghamshire. We first visited *The King's Head* (now owned by the National Trust), an ancient former coaching inn in the centre of Aylesbury, the earliest records of which date from 1450, when three messuages were granted to the Verney family. Following a very welcome cup of tea or coffee, and biscuits, there was a conducted tour showing the various rooms dating from different periods from 15th-century to Georgian. Parts of the building have over the years performed many different functions, including one of the earliest Post Offices, a private mint (trade tokens), a courtroom, a tourist information centre, a priest's hole and a World War II black-market stash. Cromwell is known to have stayed there, and Henry VIII and Ann Boleyn are popularly supposed to have met there. We were also able to try for size two cavalry swords used by the Royal Bucks Hussars, which were found behind panelling during renovations.



After lunch at Watermead, a modern lakeside development outside Aylesbury, we went on to the National Trust's Hughenden Manor, home of Benjamin Disraeli. Before he was known as a politician he was already a successful writer (he produced 13 novels in total) and was the first novelist to receive an advance of £10,000. It was partly this success, together with his marriage to a rich widow, that enabled him to buy Hughenden Manor in 1848 for £35,000, although nearly all the money was borrowed and he spent much of his life one step ahead of his creditors. However, it enabled him to join the landed gentry, and shortly afterwards he became leader of the Conservative party in the Commons, having been an MP since 1837. He later became Prime Minister twice, briefly in 1868 and again from 1874 to 1880. During the latter period he was elevated to the peerage as earl of Beaconsfield (which he always pronounced Beeconsfield).

Hughenden Manor itself began life as a farmhouse, which was later (mid-1700s) converted into a gentleman's residence. At this time it was a plain stuccoed building, but when in 1840 it was acquired by a local antiquary, he decided to Gothicise some of the interior. When Disraeli bought it he continued the process, removing the stucco and adding battlements, elaborate chimneys, vaulted ceilings etc. The interior is full of pictures of Disraeli's family and friends, including the earl of Derby, Bulwer Lytton, and of course Queen Victoria, whose favourite Prime Minister he was. He was a witty and charming man and a master of debating, with no great opinion of his rival Gladstone whom he dismissed as "a self-made man who worships his creator". When Queen Victoria sent a message offering to visit him on his deathbed, he is reputed to have said, "Tell her not to bother; she only wants me to take a message to Albert".

Many of the rooms have been restored by the National Trust to an appearance as close as possible to that of Disraeli's time, but part of the house is a museum of his mementos. These include his robes as Chancellor of the Exchequer (which he should have passed on to the next Chancellor, Gladstone, but refused to do so), the manuscript of his final, incomplete, novel, showing his alterations to the text, and statuettes of Queen Victoria 'at her spinning-wheel', and of John Brown with her favourite pony (both given to him by a grateful monarch). Disraeli also took a leading part in the Congress of Berlin, 1878, when Britain was awarded Cyprus, and there is a cherrywood fan, signed by all the participants in the Congress, including Bismarck. Queen Victoria visited Hughenden incognito, and although she could not, by protocol, attend his funeral, she did visit the house shortly after his death, so that she could sit in his study and remember him. There is even a chair with specially shortened legs to suit the tiny figure of the queen.

The gardens have also been restored to their Victorian appearance, although in fact Disraeli left the running of the garden and indeed the house to his beloved wife Mary Anne. He preferred to walk in the woods or to sit in his library when he wasn't busy with his novels or state business. He also restored the local church of St Michael and All Angels, which stands in the grounds. Here he is buried, together with Mary Anne, and Queen Victoria had a memorial erected to him in the chancel. The more energetic of us managed to include this in the two hours which we were allowed at Hughenden, while most of the rest retired thankfully to the tea-room.

Many thanks to Ray Kilsby for organising this very interesting outing, and to the National Trust guides who helped us to understand the history and significance of all the various buildings and artefacts.

Desmond Bazley



PETER HOPKINS has been reading about

SURREY PROBATE INVENTORIES 1558-1603

In the 16th and 17th centuries, inventories of domestic goods were required to be taken when someone died and their will was being proved. These valuations of an individual's belongings cover all assets, from silver and cash in a wealthy household to a single sheet or bolster in a poor man's cottage. Some inventories list items room by room, thus enabling us to understand something of the size and layout of the property.

In 2005 Surrey Record Society published Marion Herridge's transcription of *Surrey Probate Inventories 1558-1603*. The volume is enhanced with extracts of the related wills, and also includes a comprehensive glossary. The extracts below are those relating to residents of Merton, Mitcham and Morden, arranged in chronological order.

Extracts relating to Merton, Mitcham & Morden

[The number shown in brackets after each heading is the reference number used by the editor of the inventories]²

The first two inventories seem to have been placed in the wrong order, as Nicholas Goryng's widow seems to have then married John Frysbee. Goryng was among the 'tenants and farmers of the King's manor of Morden' who appealed to Edward VI during a conflict with tenants of neighbouring Cheam over common rights in Sparrowfield, as a result of which two plans or 'plotts' were made of the area. The second plott marks 'the place of takyng the distress by Frysby', suggesting that John Frysbee may have served as constable or a similar office in Morden.¹ Unfortunately nothing else about them is known at present, though Nicholas Smythe, Frysbee's landlord, held a freehold property in Central Road, Morden, and several copyholds nearby, as well as two tenements in Merton. John Mantle or Mantyll, who is mentioned in the first three extracts, was curate of Merton and vicar of Morden.²

John Frysbee of Morden, husbandman; taken by Nycholas Smythe, Thomas Heryngman and John Mantle, 23rd December 1558. [12]

Note: The Will was written and the Inventory taken on the day of the testator's death, 23rd December and Probate was granted to Joan Frysbee, the widow, six months later on 30th June 1559. It seems possible that his executrix, his wife Joan, had been widowed once before, leaving her with 3 children, John Goryng, Joane Goryng and Alis Goryng, who were each given 20s in the Will. The testator left bequests to his sister Ellen and to the son and daughter of another sister, Anne Palmer. George Myller was to take care of the livestock, both for them and for his own two

	£	s	d
4 kyne	4	0	0
A horse	1	0	0
A mare		13	4
5 wether tegges		6	8
2 Hogges		6	8
5 acres of wheate	2	0	0
Brasse and puter	1	6	8
Spyttes and cobyrons		3	4
Sheetes and table clothes	1	6	8
One fetherbed and 2 mattresses	1	0	0
Coverlettes and blankettes to them belongyng		13	4
One table, one cubborde, a fourme and chestes	1	0	0
In money	2	0	0
Debtes owyng	1	10	4
[the total should be £17.7.0]	£17	10	0

sons Lennard and John Myller. The clothes were bequeathed to the testator's brother Thomas Frysbee and to a certain Henry Cotes. The lease of 2 acres of land in Mitcham was given to the aforesaid brother, Thomas. Nycholas Smythe, his landlord and George Myller, his brother-in-law were appointed overseers. Richard Myles and John Mantyll witnessed the writing of the Will.

GLRO Ref: DW/PA/5/1559/117 Will and Inventory on same document.

Nycholas Goryng of Morden, labourer; taken by Nicholas Smythe, Thomas Heryngman and John Mantyll, 2nd February 1558/9. [13]

Note: The Will, dated 2nd February 1558/9, is interesting because the bequests include 6 kine, two each to the testator's 3 children Alice, Jone and John, who were to receive the profits from Nicholas Rolande of Merton, [-] Goldsmith of Merton, Rychard Randolfe and John Tyler, all of whom "hyred" cattle and sheep from him. Monetary bequests were added to the livestock and the residue was bequeathed to his wife, Jone, who was to be executrix. The first two appraisers of the goods were appointed overseers. Richard Myles and William Mathew were witnesses. No date of Probate was recorded on this copy of the Will.

	£	s	d
10 kyne	6	13	4
A horse		13	4
10 sheepe	1	0	0
Brasse and puter	1	0	0
Spyttes and cobyrens	2	0	
Lynnen and beddyng	2	0	0
Two acres of wheate	13	4	
One hogge		3	4
	£12	5	4

GLRO Ref: DW/PA/5/1558/118 Will and Inventory

Thomas Morrell of Merton, tailor; taken by Richard Woodnet and Nicholas Clarke, 30th January 1564/5. [54]

Note: The Will, the list of debts and the Inventory, were written on one document on the same day. The will was proved on 1st June 1565, leaving the residue of the estate to the executrix, his wife Jone. The overseers appraised the goods and chattels listed in the inventory. The unnamed children of the testator were left 20s apiece, to be paid to them before any subsequent marriage of his wife. Were the widow to remarry, her future husband was ordered to secure money for the children's legacies beforehand. Rafe Chylmyd, brother-in-law of Thomas Morrell, was left a white fustian doublet. He and John Mantyll had witnessed the signing of the will and two days later, on 2nd February, Thomas's burial was recorded.

Ref: 1565 B 67 Will and Inventory

There is no mention of Morrell in any of the known records of Merton.

	£	s	d
Two bullockes	1	8	0
One old mare		10	0
In the hall			
Two old cupbordes		6	8
One chayre		1	4
4 stooles		1	4
Payntted clothes		2	0
In the parler			
Two chestes		4	0
Paynted clothes		2	0
In the fyrst chamber			
Two fetherbeddes and bolsters	1	0	0
Two bed stedles		4	0
One presse		3	0
4 chestes		4	0
Paynted clothes		4	0
Two shred coverles		5	0
In the second chamber			
Two olde mattresses		2	0
Two bedstedles		2	0
Two old coverynges		2	8
Paynted clothes		2	0
8 payre of shee[te]s of hempe	1	0	0
In the keychyn			
3 brasse pottes		10	0
4 olde kettles		8	0
5 candlestickes		4	0
4 puter platters and dishes and sawcers		5	0
5 puter pottes		3	0
One spyt, a payre of cobyrons and a gyrdyron		2	0
	7	16	0
Debtes			
I owe unto my brother in law Rafe Chylmyd		4	0
I owe unto Goodman Clarke for 2 bushells of wheate		[blank]	
I owe unto the bruer for olde debte	1	0	0
I owe unto Mr. Steeven of Kyngstone		7	0
I owe in new debte unto the bruer		10	4
I owe for my halfe yeares rent		8	0
	2	9	4

William Walter of Mitcham, yeoman; taken by William Jackson, William Longe, Robert Giles, John Everist, Edward Sone and George Frith, 20th May 1585. [218]

Note: The Will was dated 10th April and proved on 27th May 1585. The executrix and residuary legatee was the testator's wife Isabel. The overseers were William Jackson and William Long, both husbandmen of Mitcham. The family messuage, together with 18 or 19 acres of arable land called Nisils Hoult at Tonbridge in Kent, was the subject of detailed order of inheritance.

	£	s	d
In the hale			
A Table, a Forme and a paire of Tresseles		3	4
A Cupbord and 2 lyttell Chayres, 2 stoles		5	0
A Cradell		2	0
2 Wheles		1	4
In the parlor			
2 bedstedes of bordes, 2 Flocke bedes, 3 kiveringings,			
2 payre of blankettes, 2 bowlsters	1	13	4
6 Chestes whereof one waynestecote and 5 of bordes		16	0
A Cowpbord of Waynestecote and a chaire		8	0
5 Cowssions		3	4
14 payre of Sheites fyne and cowrse	2	0	0
8 table clothes, a dozen of napkins and 5 pillowbeares		13	4
A Testor of a bed of lynnen		2	0
A Cote, a payre of hose, 3 Clockes and a doblett	1	0	0
3 paynted clothes		1	0
In the chamber over the parlor			
A sadell and 10 pounds of hempe		4	0

(continued on opposite page)

Alice Walter, William's mother, was still to occupy the land with his brother John, as long as the old lady lived. Then it was to go to William's 2 sons, the next generation of William and John Walter. They were each to deposit on bond 100 marks [£66 13s 4d] to ensure an annual payment of £3 each to their mother Isabel. The boys were to have 12 wethers and the 3 daughters, Katherine, Ellen and Joan, were each given £6 13s 4d and 4 ewes. The Will was witnessed by the overseers, together with Robert Musgrave the curate, Edward Soan, Richard Hargrave, Raphe Tissie and John Betts. The widow and the overseers bound themselves well and truly to administer the estate. The burial was registered on 14th April 1585.

Ref: 1585 B 72/1 Will
1585 B 72/2 Inventory

No mention has been found of William Walter in Mitcham documents, though he may have been related to William Walter of Wimbledon, who died in 1587.³ His landlord, Mr Rutland, was probably Nicholas Rutland who held an important copyhold estate in Colliers Wood, as well as property in Wimbledon, and who died 21 February 1585.⁴

Other debts listed in the Will:

Owing by the testator to
Mr. Knowesbery of
Wansworth
6 quarters of barley £3 12 0

Owing to the testator
by the Widdowe Deacon
of West Throme 2 0

(continued from opposite page)

In the lofte over the buttry			
A Bedstedle		2	6
3 peces of wollen clothe, 2 white, one Russett	1	10	0
One payre of Stocke cardes		1	0
One Bow and 6 Arrowes		1	8
In the entry betwene the hale and the parlor			
A bowltinge hutche		1	0
In the buttry nexte the parlor			
11 platters, 5 pewter dishes, a bason, 3 Sawzers, a pewter pynte pott, 3 Salte sellers, 5 pewter spones, 2 Candlestickes of latten, one mortar of latten with a pestell	1	0	0
Tubes with other lomber		8	0
In the buttrye nexte the hale			
2 kylderkins, 2 Firkins, one cherne and 2 bottelles		3	4
In the sarvantes Chamber nexte the entry			
One olde bedsted, an olde kivering, a payre of Sheites and a bolster		5	0
A Cowlter and a shaire, 3 Sithes with other olde Iron		5	0
In the Kytchen			
2 brase pottes, one Caldron, 4 kyttes, a Chaffinge dishe, 2 Skylettes, a payre of pothangers and a spite	1	0	0
2 Fattes to Brew withall and 3 towbes, 4 payles		13	4
In the Corne lofte			
3 quarters of Rye and 5 bussheles of Barley and 9 sakes	2	0	0
In the malte lofte			
Certayne malte		7	0 0
In the stable			
2 geldins, 2 mares and harnis belonging to them, a carte sadle and a riding pannell		5	0 0
3 Coltes		1	6 8
A Carte and a plowe, 2 payres of harrowes and a donnge carte		1	10 0
2 Oxen		5	0 0
4 kyne and 2 hayfayres		6	0 0
40 shepe and 20 lammes		10	0 0
14 hoges and piges		1	13 4
In the barne			
2 Fannes, 2 Pytche pronges and one bushell and a wynoinge sheite		5	0
Growinge in the Feildes			
13 acres of wheate and Rye		13	0 0
17 acres of barley at 18 shillings the acre		15	2 0
12 acres of beanes, peace, Tares and otes		8	0 0
Good Dettes			
John White of Mitcham, alekeeper, for malt		2	0 0
Wydow Etheridge of Mitcham for malt		15	0
Owinge more by John White for malte		13	4
Desperat Dettes owinge to the testator in his life tyme at Westram			
Owinge by Christopher Bawcome 29 bushells of malt at 22 pence the Bushell [£2.13.2]		2	1 6
owinge by Hew Johnson for malte		1	10 0
		96	0 4
Owinge by the said testator in his life tyme as ffolloweth			
Owinge to Mr Rutland his landelorde		5	0 0
Owinge to Richard Powell of Martyn		5	0 0
Owinge to a kynesman of the said testator dwellynge in Kent		3	0 0
		13	0 0
The chargis of the Funerall of the said testator			
Payed for the same		1	0 0

Robert Seith of Mitcham, yeoman; taken by Roger Tomson and William Jacson, 27th April 1592. [312]

Note: The Will was dated 30th March and proved on 9th May 1592, The executrix and residuary legatee was the testator's wife Helen. Of the three overseers, the most important, without whom no decision was to be made, was Mr Henry Sytern, parson of Ewhurst; Robert Gyles and William Swillinghurst of Mitcham were singly or together to assist in determining the just cause of any controversy between the executrix and Margaret, Joan, William and Elizabeth, four of his six children. He asked to be buried in Mitcham churchyard and gave 3s 4d for church repairs and 10s to the poor. To both Robert, his son and Frances, his daughter, a gift of £20 was made, each being the other's heir if one should die young. The four other children were likewise given £20, but at the age of 21 rather than 26. A gift of £1 went to his brother Henry Seith and to his sister Jane, the wife of Edward Russly of Kingston. The maid Joan, the manservant John Augustine and his brother-in-law Laurence Smith, were given 3s 4d, 5s and £1, respectively.

The lease of Newbarn and the tithe of Mitcham, which the testator had of Mr Richard Burton, were given to the executrix provided that she brought up the four children in a manner befitting "their state and condition"; this last bequest would be revoked if any future husband of Helen's were to neglect them in any way. The overseers witnessed the Will, Henry Sytern and William Swillinghurst signing the document. Robert Gyles, Laurence Smith, Henry Seith and John Augustine made their marks. The parson of Ewhurst provided the administration bond.

Ref: 1592 B 51/1 Will
1592 B 51/2 Inventory

	£	s	d
In the Hall			
One Table, one forme, three stooles and one Chaire	6	8	
Six Cusshins and painted Clothes	4	0	
Two pair of small andirons and a fire shovell, a pair of tonges and 2 pair of pothookes	3	4	
In the Chamber over the hall			
One bedstead and a Truckle bedstead with one fetherbed and a flock bed, two bolsters and three pillowes, one Coverlet and a pair of blankettes	2	0	0
2 Chests, a stoole and a small Deske and painted Clothes	14	8	
In the maides Chamber			
One bedstead of boardes, a mattresse, one old Coverlett a bolster and a pair of sheetes	6	8	
In the Chamber over the Parlor			
Wheat threshed	2	10	0
In the parlor			
A small Joind bedstead, a fetherbed, a Coverlett and bolster, a pillow and a pair of blankettes, a small stoole and a forme	2	0	0
Painted Clothes		2	0
in the Milk Howse			
A poudring tub, 10 booles, 2 shelves	10	0	
in the Servantes Chamber			
A bedstead of bordes, a mattresse, a Coverlet, a pair of blankettes, a pair of shetes and a bolster.	13	4	
In the Buttrye			
Thre kilderkins, two firkins, a lether bottle	5	0	
In the Kitchin			
one brasse pott, one litle brasse pott, a Chauldron and one Copper Chaldron, a skymmer, 3 brasse skillettes and a kettle	1	15	0
10 platters, 8 pewter disshes, 6 porengers, 3 pewter potts, 3 salts, 2 pewter basons, 4 pewter Candelstickes and two brasse Candelstickes	1	10	0
Two Coules, 2 hoghedes, two bryung tubs and two half tubs		4	0
Two Iron tryvetes		3	4
Bacon in the rowfe	2	0	0
In the kitchin loft			
In Malt		13	4
one axe, 2 bills, one mattock, one spade and a shovell		2	0
A Cheesepresse		1	0
In the Stable and Yarde			
Six Cart-horse and 2 Twelmonthing Coltes	11	0	0
Harnesse for the horse		10	0
8 Drawing oxen	16	0	0
10 Steares of the bigger sort	14	0	0
8 two yearling bullockes	8	0	0
6 kyne	8	13	4
6 Twelvemonthing Calves	3	0	0
20 small shootes	2	10	0
10 piggs		10	0
Two long Cartes and two dongue Cartes	4	6	8
Two ploughes, two pair of small harrowes, one ox harrow, 8 yokes and Cheines and a pair of Draftes	2	6	8
40 sheep and 12 lambes	10	0	0
In the barne			
Wheat unthresht	20	0	0
Barlie threst and unthresht	5	0	0

(continued on opposite page)

We are told in his will that Seith held the lease of Newbarns Farm, Commonsides East. The late 17th-/early 18th-century successor to Seith's home was renamed South Lodge, and occupied by Tooting Bec Golf Club from 1905 until its demolition in the 1920s.⁵

References:

- 1 'An Old Plan of the Country near Nonsuch Palace' *The Home Counties Magazine* Vol. 1 (1899) pp.284-285 ed. W J Harvey FSA
- 2 *MHS Bulletin* 149 (March 2004), pp 10-11
- 3 R J Milward *Tudor Wimbledon* (1972)pp39-53
- 4 E N Montague *Colliers Wood* (in preparation)
- 5 E N Montague *Pollards Hill, Commonsides East and Lonesome* (2002), pp78-87

<i>(continued from opposite page)</i>		
Wheat upon the ground	18	0 0
More in an other place	6	0 0
Rie upon the ground	16	0 0
Barlie upon the ground	8	0 0
Oetes upon the ground	4	0 0
4 geese and a gander, 40 hennes and 2 Cockes	1	0 0
In haye	2	0 0
Timber in the gate	1	10 0
In Linnen		
15 pair of sheetes, 6 table Clothes, 4 Towels, two dozen and a half of napkins, two pair of pillowbeirs	3	0 0
In the barne		
Two Fannes, one busshell and a skryne	13	4 4
	[182	4 4]

There are no inventories relating to Wimbledon from this period.

OUR TREASURER(S)

When Winifred Mould stepped down as our Honorary Treasurer in mid-1994, it was a worrying moment, until **David Luff**, a long-time member, valiantly offered to take on the role – as Acting Treasurer. He said at the time, and has said regularly since, that he would gladly step down if and when anyone else volunteered in his place. Well, it has taken 12 years, and now **David Roe**, who joined the Committee at the AGM in 2005, has kindly done just that. As the Society's financial year ends on 31 May, it was convenient to begin effecting the handover at that time. The appointment cannot be ratified until the AGM in November, but the two Davids are sorting things out together, and David Roe is Acting Treasurer until then. We are very grateful to them both.

JG

IN BRIEF

- ◆ One of our members, **John Pile**, will be a speaker at Surrey Archaeological Society's autumn conference '**Aspects' & After: the research framework** on Saturday 7 October at The Dixon Hall, Leatherhead Institute, Leatherhead from 10.00am. The day costs £5, payable to Surrey Archaeological Society, and sent to Conference 2006, Surrey Archaeological Society, Castle Arch, Guildford, Surrey GU1 3SX. John's subject is spring-line parishes between Croydon and Ewell.
- ◆ TV archaeologist **Julian Richards** will be leading **workshops at Surrey History Centre, Woking**, on Saturday 9 September. Tel: 01483 518737 – there might be some places left.
- ◆ Look out for another well-researched book by Dorian Gerhold, well-known to us particularly as a historian of Wandsworth. It is called ***Carriers and Coachmasters: trade and travel before the turnpike***. Published last year by Phillimore, it is a hardback and costs £19.99 – or request it at your library.
- ◆ A new and already highly praised biography of John Donne [see *Bulletin* 185 p13] is in the shops, and, it is to be hoped, libraries. It is ***John Donne: The Reformed Soul*** by John Stubbs, published by Viking at £25.
- ◆ The Society has been given a number of back issues of ***Current Archaeology***, to be sold at 20p each for the Society's funds (six copies £1). They will be available at meetings from October, or from the Publications Secretary (postage extra).
- ◆ The current **exhibition at Merton Heritage Centre** looks at the twelve men with Merton connections who have received the VC. It is on until 18 November at The Canons, Madeira Road. Tel: 020 8640 9387

RICHMOND AVENUE CENTENARY

In July it was reported in the local newspapers that the enterprising residents of Richmond Avenue, in Merton, had held a street party to celebrate the 100th birthday of their road. Land which had been used as a sports field by the Regent Street Polytechnic began to be developed for housing in 1905/6, and the grid of new roads was known in early days as the Polytechnic Estate. Quintin Avenue and Merton Hall Road were begun at about the same time as Richmond Avenue, and Chatsworth and Sandringham Avenues soon followed.

MITCHAM STATION AND ITS REAR EXTENSION

[This is a shortened version of a letter in the July 2006 edition of *London Railway Record* by **MIKE WATTS**, once of Mitcham, now of Ajax, Ontario. Thanks to David Luff for drawing our attention to it.]

Partial views of the extension have appeared over the years, as well as plans from OS maps, but I was not able to properly establish what connected the extension to the up platform.

I think it was built when the LBSCR took over the main building as its station house. In building a model of the station I discovered that the platform buildings were exact mirror images of the other on the opposite platform. More importantly they included only waiting rooms and porters' facilities. As far as I can tell they did not include any station administration rooms for use as offices, such as a ticket hall or parcels room.

For many years tickets seem to have been issued both on the up side, probably from the extension, and from a building situated higher up the embankment on the down side (south), adjoining London Road. Whether this down side building went out of use for such purposes when the footbridge was built in 1892, I do not know, but it did survive well into the 20th century. However, I speculate that the chimney on the extension was there to serve a fireplace put in just for administrative offices, including a parcels office. Of course, the goods facilities for Mitcham were far to the west, through the road bridge.

The road bridge is interesting, as it was completely rebuilt in 1929 in connection with the electrification of the line, as a single span, spanning both tracks. Prior to this the road bridge had been twin arches, each over the single tracks, one up and one down. I have a postcard view of this bridge in the process of demolition in 1929, with the new replacement bridge having been built immediately to the west of the old bridge. It also explains why on the 1896 OS map, the up and down roads seem to diverge slightly in passing under the main London Road.

The history of the main station building has been examined in detail by the renowned Mitcham historian E N Montague.* There can be no question that what became the main station building in LBSCR times was originally built as twin private homes, with the archway entrance(s) being in the original building, but only as entrances, not trackways as has been speculated.

It has only been possible to date it as "early 19th-century", which has raised speculation that it was a feature of the Surrey Iron Railway. I think this speculation can be laid to rest for several reasons. It was not only a pair of dwellings, but it was separated from the SIR by a strip of land on the whole of its length, several feet wide. If there had been need for a tollhouse, or some similar office, at Mitcham, it would not have been such a building, but probably one similar to the very small older one that existed at Colliers Wood until the 1940s.

The building appears to be symmetrical, when looked at from the front (road side). In fact it is not. Halfway along the right-hand side (south side) the outer wall tapers in slightly, about one to two feet, which makes the rear wall asymmetrical. I took numerous photos of it when the extension was removed and it was being renovated for use as private offices. From very detailed examination of the brickwork I am absolutely sure that it is original brickwork on the side walls, although the demolition of the rear extension meant that patches of the brickwork on the rear wall had to be renewed. This was done very sympathetically, using the old yellow bricks, so common in the area from the 19th century, and from which the main building is constructed. The re-used bricks almost certainly came from the demolition of the extension.

The interesting point is why it was built in such an asymmetrical fashion. I feel it had something to do with the strip of land between it and the SIR. Looking at the levels of land here, I suspect that the surveyors of the SIR decided to purchase the parcel of land for their railway track set back from the Archway House or the boundary of the previous property, because they needed to establish an easier gradient for their line. The land generally slopes southwards here to the valley of the River Wandle, a quarter of a mile or so away. Their 'motive power' was horses, and they needed a track bed as level as they could obtain, hence siting the rail bed well away from the house, and at a lower level.

As to the purpose of the original building of Archway House, it is very likely that the site was 'carved out' of an existing estate. Certainly the SIR cut across one at this point. Artisans needed good, respectable homes, and Archway House provided a touch of Regency elegance.

* E N Montague *Mitcham Histories: 4, Lower Mitcham* Merton Historical Society 2003 pp.115-120.
The book is obtainable from our Publications Secretary.

PROGRESS ON THE SOCIETY'S PHOTOGRAPHIC RECORD PROJECT

This has been under way since the end of 2004. Our prime objective is to establish a record of the Society's area of interest as it is today, for the benefit of future historians and members of the Society. To date 445 photographs have been professionally archived at Surrey History Centre, and the Society's copies have been kept on CDs and in albums, with an accompanying database. The albums were displayed at the 2005 AGM. We have been able to procure donations to fund the project, so it is being run at no cost to the Society.

We are photographing buildings, parks and open spaces, other scenes, specialist or traditional shops, events, everyday activities – anything that may be of historic interest in the future. As expected, it has proved relatively easy to photograph buildings and general scenes – given good light and spare time. However, activities are more of a problem. In particular, we sometimes learn of a special event too late. We would much appreciate advance information of, for example, community celebrations, opening ceremonies, displays or open days organised by schools, clubs etc.

Next year we plan to make a serious attempt to locate and if possible borrow old photographs held by various organisations and individuals. I would like once again to ask members to lend such photographs for the project. I stress that such photographs will only be borrowed for a short time – to allow copying (we can scan in to the computer both prints and slides), and that the copyright will remain with the photographer.

If you want to help please telephone me.

David Roe

BOOK REVIEWS

Sara Goodwins *Merton & Morden Past & Present* Sutton Publishing, 2006. £12.99 (£8.57 from Amazon) pp.128; nearly 200 illustrations. ISBN 0-7509-4189-8

Sara Goodwins is a freelance writer specialising in business and education, so it is no surprise that the book is well-written and most readable. It contains a lot of previously unpublished historic photographs, reproduced to a good standard. Many were provided by the professional photographer Alan Cross, and also by various schools, churches and local organisations. They are of particular interest because many cover the post-war period from the 1940s to the 1970s, when relatively few photographs are publicly available, as distinct from 100 years ago, when photographs were taken for commercial postcard production. The old photograph of a scene is often contrasted with a modern-day one, taken from the same viewpoint by the author's husband George Hobbs.

The inclusion of a map or two would have benefited readers new to the area, or living outside it, or just becoming interested in local history. It would also help spell out the difference between Merton the old village and Merton the London Borough. The text appears to be as factually accurate as can be hoped, bearing in mind that the author is not a local historian in the area – inevitably a few familiar errors from secondary sources have crept in. One photograph is wrongly identified – on page 63 a view said to be of the interior of the church of St John the Divine in 1914 in fact shows St Mary the Virgin, Merton Park.

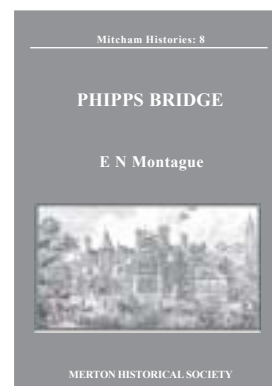
There are some parts of Merton and Morden not covered as comprehensively as others, because the emphasis is on certain subjects or locations where several photographs were available – such as the widening of London Road at Morden Park, Merton Abbey Primary School, Emmanuel church, old buses, and the 43F (Merton & Morden) Squadron of the Air Training Corps. However, in many ways this is a strength, as it allows room for some detailed and fascinating information on specific topics that are not covered in previous books about the area. It is a valuable addition to the published history of Merton and Morden.

David Roe

E N Montague *Mitcham Histories 8: Phipps Bridge* £5.95 (£4.80 to members + 80p p&p). pp. 160; 51 maps and photos. ISBN 1 903899 53 2. Available from Peter Hopkins (address at foot of page 12).

Monty's latest volume replaces the small booklet we published in 1999, which has been updated to form the opening chapter of the new book. In addition there are chapters on the calico printers – Nixon, Rucker and Howard & Co; diversification – Peter Wood, silk throwster, the Patent Steam Washing Factory, and the silk printers; the Hatfields and Wandle Villa; Everett's Place; Wandle House; New Close; the paint and varnish manufacturers – Harlands, Hadfields, etc; the area north of Phipps Bridge; and the Phipps Bridge Estate – a wide range of subjects that brings the area to life.

Peter Hopkins



JUDITH GOODMAN looks at the life and the two careers of

‘LITTLE HOBBS’

[Most of the references for this article have been kindly provided by John Taylor, architect, of Perth, Western Australia, who is writing a PhD thesis on Sir Joseph John Talbot Hobbs.]

In May of last year an email enquiry reached me, by way of Nicholas Hart of Wandle Industrial Museum. John Taylor, of Perth, Western Australia, wanted to know of any local information about a boy called Joseph Hobbs who attended Merton National Schools in the 1870s. As it happens, I recognised the name at once. It appears in the boys' school log-book,¹ kept by Edward William Pillinger, the boys' headmaster:

July 14 [1897] ...

Capt. & Mrs. J. Talbot Hobbs visited the Boys' School this Afternoon. The Captain, an old School Boy, admitted 4.73, left 7.79, had entered an architect's Office at Twickenham, accompanied his master home eleven years ago to West Australia, married one of his employer's daughters, was taken into partnership and is now an exceedingly prosperous man. He holds the post of Diocesan Architect, is Captain in the W. Australian Artillery Service & was selected to command his Colony's Contingent of Artillery to assist at the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Commemoration Festivities. The following are extracts from his letter written upon his arrival in England:

"It was the writer's good fortune some 17 years ago to be a boy under your tuition & care."

"Owing in a very great measure to the care & interest taken in me at School ... I prospered."

"I should esteem it a very great favour if you would allow me the pleasure of once more seeing & thanking you & also viewing the schools I remember so well."

Joseph John Talbot Hobbs was born on 24 August 1864 at 13 Ranelagh Grove, Pimlico, the firstborn child of Joseph Hobbs, a joiner journeyman, and his wife Frances Ann (née Wilson). Joseph senior and Frances had been married in May of the previous year at Chelsea – presumably the bride's parish, as Joseph's place of residence appears as Merton on their marriage certificate. Most probably, the couple settled in Merton, and Frances perhaps went to stay with family when due to give birth. Joseph senior's father, John Thomas Hobbs, was described as 'gentleman' (which may only have meant that he was not earning) and Frances's father Talbot Thomas Wilson was a coachman. It is clear where the names of the infant Joseph John Talbot Hobbs came from. In subsequent years two more sons and five daughters were born.

Joseph Hobbs is listed in local directories in Merton High Street as a cabinet-maker in 1870, 1872 and 1874 and as a 'wardrobe dealer' (secondhand clothes) in 1876. A Samuel Hobbs, thought to be his brother, appears as a furniture dealer and then a wardrobe dealer, also in the High Street. 'Our' Hobbs family lived at No.2 Somerset Place, High Street,² which lay between Abbey Road and Pincott Road. These modest terraced premises have been replaced by post-war housing.



13 Ranelagh Grove – December 2005

Young Joseph John appears in two admission books³ for the Merton Schools (the second book overlaps the first, as a new method of recording admissions came in). In the earlier book his father is described as a french polisher, Joseph John's age at admission is given as eight years and eight months, and his 'place of previous instruction', rather mysteriously, as "Kenyon's, Cabinet Maker". In the second book it is given simply as "Kenyon's". The "whole time during which the Scholar ha[d] been at School before coming to this School" is given as six weeks. I have not so far been able to locate "Kenyon's".

There is no mention of Joseph John in the log-books during the six years he spent at the Merton school, but the boys whose names were logged by the master were generally those whose behaviour, health or attendance were unsatisfactory. Young Hobbs is likely to have been a model student. Considering that the Education Act of 1870 had made schooling available to all children (though neither free nor compulsory at this date), it is surprising that a clearly able boy had reached the age of nearly nine having had only six weeks teaching. After this late start he stayed until he was nearly fifteen, in a period when most children were in employment well before that age. By early 1880 the Hobbs family had moved to Mill Lane (now part of Windmill Road) in Hampton, Middlesex,⁴ and Joseph John was apprenticed as architectural draftsman to a builder in Teddington called John Hurst.⁵ According to one of Hurst's sons 'Joe' Hobbs "acted as office boy" and "became one of the family, really an adopted son".⁶ The Hursts, with Hobbs, had moved by the time of the 1881 census to Brighton, where

Hurst continued in his trade. Mr Pillinger's comment above implies that Hurst was an Australian, but in any case, when in 1887 Hurst went (or returned) to Western Australia, Hobbs, by now aged 23, went with him and his family.⁵ He set up on his own, first as a carpenter (an early job was building seats for Fremantle railway station),⁷ but soon as an architect, and in April 1890 he married the eldest Hurst daughter, Edith Ann, at St George's Anglican Cathedral, Perth. He rapidly became a leader in the small community of Perth architects, prominent in the new West Australian Institute of Architects and successful in obtaining commissions for churches, hotels, schools, offices, the Swan Brewery and many large private houses.^{5,7} His own house, The Bungalow, at Peppermint Grove, was set in spacious grounds, with a summer-house, orchards, stables, a fern garden and vinery.⁷ What a distance he had come from High Street, Merton.

Despite small stature and apparent physical frailty, Hobbs was a fencer, gymnast, oarsman, sailor and boxer. He was a devout Anglican: he served in synod and, as Mr Pillinger noted, had been appointed diocesan architect. But perhaps his greatest love was the science of soldiering. Unusually, this successful architect had a parallel career in the army.

Hobbs had joined the 1st Cinque Ports Volunteer Artillery in 1883,⁵ and, it appears, immediately on arrival in Perth he joined the Volunteer Field Artillery. He was commissioned in 1889, and, as we have seen, was a captain by 1897. In 1903 he commanded the 1st (West Australian) Field Battery, Australian Field Artillery; by 1908 he was lieutenant-colonel the Western Australian Mixed Brigade; and by 1913 he was a full colonel, the 22nd Infantry Brigade. He twice attended gunnery courses in this country, as well as a military science course in Sydney, and he was attached to the British Army twice for training (1897 and 1913). Most of this was at his own expense. (He also served as aide-de-camp to several governor-generals.) A Gallipoli veteran wrote in 1934, "He gave his Youth, Leasure[sic] and Purse to perfect himself and us".⁵

On the outbreak of war in 1914 Major-General W T Bridges announced, "I am going to make 'Little Hobbs' CRA of the division."⁷ Command of the artillery of the 1st Division, Australian Imperial Force, was a striking compliment to the abilities of this part-time soldier. On 21 October Hobbs sailed with the first convoy of 20,000 Australians for overseas service.⁷ At Gallipoli he clashed with his commander over the deployment of batteries on the Anzac front, and won his point. Briefly in command of the whole 1st Division, early in November 1915 he was stricken with dysentery and relieved of his duties, despite his protests, and not until he was unable to stand.⁷ In March 1916 he was with the AIF in France and he commanded successfully in several heavy engagements. At the end of the year he was given command of the 5th Division, and on 1 January 1917 he was promoted major-general. He was said to have "commanded a division with great distinction, made fewer mistakes than most, and earned the undying affection of 20,000 men".⁷ He was known for his common sense, justice and integrity; he created harmony in his division and won the affection and loyalty of his staff, and he often spoke bluntly to his superiors in (successful) defence of the well-being of his men. At Polygon Wood his determination helped swing the situation round. He was appointed KCB in December 1917. In April 1918 he was largely responsible for the recapture of Villers-Bretonneux. Further successful actions in the last months of the war led to his succeeding the brilliant Lieut-General Sir John Monash as acting lieut-general. In 1919 he was appointed KCMG. He was awarded a Serbian order and the Croix de Guerre avec Palme, and was mentioned in dispatches eight times. The younger of Hobbs's two brothers, Howard Frederick Hobbs, became a lieutenant-colonel in the British Army and won the DSO and the MC, and Hobbs's eldest son, John Mervyn, served at Gallipoli, won the MC in France and ultimately became a brigadier in the Indian Army.^{5,7}

After the war Hobbs continued in the army until 1927, while resuming his practice as an architect. His younger son Athol, after serving for a time in the Indian Army, had joined his firm. Hobbs involved himself in the erection of memorials to the Australian divisions in France. Four of the five designs chosen were his, including that at Polygon Wood. And he was also chosen to design the Western Australian war memorial in Perth. An important public figure now, he held a variety of posts, including chief scout, and president of Toc H. But in particular he was concerned with the well-being of returned soldiers.⁵

Mr Taylor is in touch with Tony Hobbs of Lewes, a grandson of Talbot Hobbs, who has provided him with a copy of a letter written on 20 January 1920 to Hobbs by James King of The Oriels in Kingston Road. At The Oriels was the Merton Park Estate office and that of estate agents Edwin Evans. King's paper was headed 'THE OLD MERTONIANS':

Dear Joe

I am quite sure that in your pile of correspondence you will not find anyone addressing you so familiarly. The reason I write you now is to congratulate you upon your well earned honours.

When I remember that nearly 50 years ago I had the privilege of sitting on the same form in school & profiting by your kind help in one's juvenile studies, it seems almost inconceivable

that I should be reading in an Australian newspaper of your marvellous doings. It makes one proud of the old school for having started you in the 3Rd.

Our dear old friend & master [Mr Pillinger] died in 1915 & was never tired of telling the youngsters about "Colonel Talbot Hobbs" whilst he dug his thumbs in his braces & expanded his chest with pride in the telling.

The newspaper in which I read of your welcome home [after the war] was sent to his brother by David Fininley [member of a local family] who is somewhere in your country & always keeps his brother informed when your name appears in print.

An old schoolboy Abner Lane of Mitcham asked me some time ago if it was true that you had "gone under" in Gallipoli as he had heard the report that you had. So it was a pleasant surprise to me to find that you had returned to become a "good citizen" according to the West Australian paper.

When you next come to the old country call & see me -

I have no doubt you have the photo of the Old Boys taken in Hatfield Park in Morden [Morden Hall Park].

Mr Pillinger gave me before his death an old School Register to keep the Old Boys on record for future use.

I see you entered on 30 April 1873 & your birthday is 24/8/64 Son of Joseph High St & from Kenyons School

Many years have passed since that time but you are still remembered with kindly interest by

Yours sincerely

James King

In April 1938 Talbot Hobbs left for France, with his wife and daughter, to attend the unveiling of the Australian war memorial in that country (and perhaps hoping to visit the 'old country'). However he suffered a heart attack and died at sea on the 21st. His body was brought back to Perth for burial with state and military honours. There is a memorial to him on the Esplanade in Perth, and a portrait of him in the Australian War Memorial in Canberra, where his papers are held.⁵

A remarkable man, and two remarkable public careers. A little gift which he made to his old school at Merton was probably typical of Hobbs the private man. It was recorded by Mr Pillinger as follows:

Dec 23 [1897] ...

Capt Talbot Hobbs' Prizes for Punctuality – Good Manners – Clean & Neat appearance, awarded to

Ernest Ockleford	5 th Standard
Herbert Payn	" Do.
Bertie Clift	4 th Do. ¹

1. Merton Boys' School Log-Book 15 June 1896 to 23 May 1922. Held by John Innes Society. Transcript at Surrey History Centre, Woking
2. 1871 census for Merton
3. Merton Schools' Admission Books, 1868-74 and 1869-90, held by John Innes Society
4. J Taylor, personal communication
5. P Serle *Dictionary of Australian Biography* Vol I Angus and Robertson, Sydney and London 1949 pp.435-6. B Nairn and G Serle (eds) *Australian Dictionary of Biography* Vol 9: 1891-1939 Melbourne University Press 1983 pp.315-317
6. Photocopy of single sheet of typescript headed 'Memoirs of John Herbert Hurst', provided by J Taylor
7. L Hunt (ed.) *Westralian Portraits* University of Western Australia Press 1979 pp.152-158

Our MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY wishes to remind members that subscriptions are due on 1 October.

The new rates are:

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A copy of the AGM Agenda is also enclosed. Please bring it with you to the AGM on 11 November.

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.