



PRESIDENT: The Viscountess Hanworth. F.S.A

VICE PRESIDENT: Mr. Arthur Turner

BULLETIN NO. 113

MARCH 1995



FORTHCOMING PROGRAMME 1995

Thursday 16th March 7.30 p.m. at Mitcham Parish Church

A talk by Eric Montague on the monuments of its people 1750-1900.
Collection in aid of the Restoration Fund.

Friday 7th April 8.00 p.m. at Snuff Mill Environmental Centre

The Story of West Norwood Cemetery. A slide lecture by Gill Dudman,
Secretary of the Friends of West Norwood Cemetery
(The lecture on the Huguenots has been postponed).

Saturday 29th April 2.30 p.m. at Lower Morden Lane Library

A display of archive material held in the store here.
Commentary by Eric Montague & Bill Rudd.

Saturday 13th May 12 noon - 4.30 p.m. MITCHAM CARNIVAL

The Society has a display stand and sells its publications.
HELP REQUIRED!!!! Please contact Marjorie Ledgerton
no later than 5th May as help is urgently needed.

Friday 26th May 7.15 p.m. for 7.30 p.m.

Visit to Watermeads led by Paul Rutter & Eric Montague.
Meet at the locked gates to the Watermeads.

Saturday 17th June 2.00 p.m. Guided Tour of Painshill Park

See booking form enclosed.

Saturday 15th July 2.00 p.m. Visit to Cheam.

Lumley Chapel and Whitehall. See booking form.

Saturday 12th August Visit to Richmond on Thames

Details to follow. Book this date now!



EDITORIAL

What do you think of the new format for the Bulletin? It is now printed by our own 'in house' printer at half the cost of the commercial printer's charge, so that must be good for our budget. The programme for 1995 has more or less been finalised and the Committee feel we are offering you a varied selection. Please inform the Committee if there is any subject you are interested in for a talk or a place to visit.

The membership has now increased to 107. This is the first time we have achieved over a century for a number of years now. Congratulations to our hard-working Membership Secretary. In an endeavour to publicise our meetings we are now appearing in 'The Pump' (Streatham) and K.U.T.A.S (Kingston) journals and in turn you will find their meeting details in the Bulletin. Also Judy Goodman has been asked by Streatham Society to give a talk on the artistic side of William Morris. Dates will be available later, and in return one of their speakers will come to us.

I am visiting Australia for 6 weeks so I leave the distribution of this bulletin in the capable hands of Eric Trim and other members who do this so willingly. I do not know whether I will come back with any news of other Mitcham connections as did Eric Montague when he was there last, or even Merton or Morden ties. My destinations are Albany (near Perth) Western Australia and near Sydney, New South Wales.

I am pleased to say that all the bulletins have been indexed and here again Eric Trim did this single handedly, although there were two other offers. A copy can now be obtained on request of any of the previous numbers from 1 upwards. The first bulletin appeared in July 1965. I am always in need of fresh material for the bulletin and have now got to the stage where my stock is running out. No matter whether it be a paragraph, a page, or more, I am always happy to hear from members and the wider the subject range makes the choice easier. Do seriously think about what you can offer. If you need any advice I am always available.

Marjorie Ledgerton

SURREY LOCAL HISTORY COUNCIL

The Spring Meeting of the Surrey Local History Council will be held at the Soper Memorial Hall, Caterham on Saturday, 25th March 1995, on the subject of **SURREY ELECTIONS**.

- 2.00 pm. Chairman's Introductory Remarks
- 2.05 pm. Dr. David Robinson: **KNIGHTS OF THE SHIRE & BURGESSES - ELECTIONS & ELECTORS**
- 3.00 pm. Mr. Richard Muir: **HASLEMERE - NEITHER ROTTEN OR POCKET.**
- 3.45 pm. Interval for Tea and Biscuits.
- 4.15 pm. Mrs. Mary Saaler: **THE COMMONS & THE COMMON MAN - THE BLECHINGLEY ELECTIONS**
- 4.35 pm. Dr. Gerry Moss: **BRIBERY & TREATING IN REIGATE 1858-63.**
- 4.55 pm. Dr. Ron Cox: **...AND WHAT HAPPENED ONCE THEY WERE ELECTED ...**
- 5.30 pm. Close of Meeting.

The Soper Hall is situated within the District Council Offices in Harestone Valley Road, close to the Railway Station in Caterham Valley. (From the Station cross the road at the Traffic Lights, turn right and turn left almost immediately. The Council Offices will be found on the left in a few yards). There is only limited parking at the Council Offices, the car park to the left belonging to a Supermarket, but the roads beyond the hall are unrestricted.

TICKETS: For members if ordered in advance : £4.00 including Tea
 For visitors and all tickets at the door: £5.00 including Tea

from Mrs. G.M. Crocker, Hon. Secretary,

c/o The Guildford Institute of the University of Surrey, Ward St., Guildford GU1 4LH
Cheques payable to Surrey Local History Council. Please enclose a stamped addressed envelope.

A VINTAGE WIRELESS COLLECTION

We had a most interesting and amusing talk on Saturday 10th December from Peter Brunning on the subject of his vintage wireless collection. There was a good turn out, over 30 members together with some new visitors, at least one of whom has indicated an intention to join the Society. Peter brought a half-dozen assorted wireless sets for us to see, and to support his talk, all of which he assured us were in working order.

The slides which accompanied the talk were varied and of very good quality. Some of them, Peter tells me, were taken from the television screen. They were not all of wireless sets but of personalities concerned with the development of wireless telegraphy and telephony, and some of these were of engravings on postage stamps.

The talk began with a sketch of wireless development, and we heard of the contribution made by James Clerk Maxwell, Heinrich Hertz, Sir Oliver Lodge and, of course, Guglielmo Marconi who came to England in 1896 to develop his wireless telegraphy and is generally accepted as the 'inventor' of wireless. We also heard a passing reference to another contender for this title, namely A. S. Popov the Russian.

Next we heard about the beginnings of broadcasting and the establishment of the BBC and how we, in Britain, soon had the finest public broadcast system in the world with programmes like the Promenade Concerts and dance music by the BBC's own dance band under Jack Payne.

Then it was on to slides of various wireless sets from Peter's collection, from a 1922 Gecophone crystal set to a Philips FM table model in bakelite. He has 60 plus sets, none of them very valuable, he told us, as he collects wirelesses because they represent some development or because he thinks it is a good set or looks nice or sounds nice but not because they are 'cult' collectors' items.

After the talk (and one or two slides of Peter's cat, Patches) the audience asked a number of questions, some of which caught Peter out, but, as he said, "I don't know the answer to that one, but I know a book that does!" This caused a certain amount of amusement and after an opportunity for us to examine the wireless sets on display, we all parted on a happy note.

Bill Sole

COLES SHOP

As stated in Bulletin No. 110, Cole & Co. Silk works were at Hackbridge. And from 1919 onwards they were Arthur Coles Ltd. Calico printers.

The local Directories in Morden Library show that Arthur Coles Limited, Calico print works were at Merton Abbey (alias Station Road) from 1909 to 1919. Possibly backing on to the Morris works who were at 11 Merton High Street. Certainly near the Liberty & Co. Ltd silk printers.

Might I suggest that when Coles at Merton Abbey closed in 1919 and transferred to their former silk works at Hackbridge, some of their fittings, perhaps including a set of doors with keys, went into the New Shop (1890) at Libertys. The keys are said to have had the Coles label or tag on them. Thus the New Shop became Coles Shop.

Bill Rudd

KUTAS Diary

Tuesday 4th April	Roman Body Armour	Richard Watson
Tuesday 2nd May	The Work of the Lower Mole Project Team	Connor Morrow
Tuesday 6th June	Deserted Villages in Surrey	Judie English
Tuesday 4th July	The Roman Temple Site at Wanborough	David Bird

at Friends Meeting House Lower Hall, Eden Street, Kingston, starting at 8.00 pm.

PAINSHILL PARK

On Saturday January 28th Mrs Maina Teltscher from the Painshill Park Trust gave a fascinating lecture to 32 members and 5 visitors at the Snuff Mill Environmental Centre, for the opening meeting of the 1995 Spring programme.

Painshill, along with Stourhead and Stowe, was one of Europe's finest 18th century landscape gardens and was created by the Hon. Charles Hamilton, plantsman, painter and designer, between 1738 and 1773.

Mrs Teltscher showed us, with a unique collection of slides, the gardens in their original glory as seen by painters of the period.

Hamilton successfully transformed barren heathland into ornamental pleasure grounds surrounding a fourteen acre lake fed by the River Mole. The whole Park was enhanced by a variety of 'follies' built in strategic positions to give vistas of lakes and woodland, including The Gothic Tower, The Grotto, The Ruined Abbey and The Turkish Tent.

Poverty caused Charles Hamilton to sell his Estate and it passed into many hands, eventually becoming derelict before being purchased by the Council in 1980. They were able to buy 156 acres out of the original 250.

An independent Trust was then set up with the express purpose of restoring Painshill Park to its former glory.

Mrs Teltscher then took us on a walk round the Park on slide showing it at different stages of its restoration including clearing fallen trees to improve viewpoints, restoring the Chinese Bridge, and rebuilding the follies like the Ruined Abbey and The Grotto.

The Grotto has needed a lot of painstaking restoration. Fortunately, a watercolour of the 1780's exists showing the original construction. It is now being completely restored with man made stalactites worked by art students under the direction of a Grotto Restorer.

The latest completed project is the restored Turkish Tent which was opened to the Public last season. About two-thirds of the work of restoration of Painshill Park has been completed, and the Trust is to be congratulated on their magnificent effort.

The Society has arranged a visit to Painshill Park, near Cobham in Surrey, on June 17th, as part of our Summer Programme of events. Anyone who attended this lecture will be looking forward with anticipation to seeing one man's vision of Paradise restored.

If you wish to make up the party, please complete and return the enclosed slip as soon as possible.

Sheila Harris

OUR FIRST LOCAL HISTORY WORKSHOP

The first meeting of our new Local History Workshop got off to a flying start on the evening of the 13th January. Ten members attended, and a most useful round table discussion took place.

Lionel Green and Peter Hopkins opened, with comments on a paper postulating the diversion of Stane Street between an estate in what is now Colliers Wood and Sir William de Mara's court at Morden in 1225, copies of which had been circulated. Hopefully, further work will now follow on the original records, since it transpires that Heales' translation may be suspect.

This was followed by a fascinating summary of recent researches by Judith Goodman into the history of the villa which preceded the present Wandle Villa, including descriptions of a grand party held there in August 1806, its interior decor by Frederick Crace and Son (who transformed the Prince Regent's 'Marine Pavilion' at Brighton in 1802), and Abraham Goldschmidt's tragic suicide in 1810.

Bill Rudd described an ingenious approach to the study of progress in suburban development, in this case Morden, using early electoral rolls, directories and maps. Eric Trim sought guidance on family history research prior to 1812, while Monty outlined recent work on the copper milling industry, which appeared in Merton and Mitcham in about 1700, flourished at Mitcham until the mid 18th century and Merton until the late 19th, and then ceased.

Peter Harris told of work he has undertaken in restoring 13 paintings, by Albert Chevallier Taylor (1862-1925) of the Newlyn school of artists, in the chapel of St. Ignatius in the Sacred Heart Church at Wimbledon. Tony Scott, who on this occasion chaired the meeting, concluded with a brief reference to a murder at Figges Marsh in 1883.

The next meeting of the Local History Workshop will be at the Wandle Industrial Museum at 7.30 p.m. on Friday 24th March. Anyone is welcome to attend, either merely to listen, to introduce a pet subject, or to enter into the discussion.

E.N. Montague

THE RAVENSBURY MILLS

In this new publication, Mr. Montague has brought together research from a number of sources to clear away any confusion about the beginnings of these mills, their owners, their uses and their developments, until finally around 1925 Whiteley Products Ltd. acquired the buildings for the manufacture of sports equipment. Now, after standing empty for some years, the mills are once again to have a new purpose, surrounded by new housing. The attractive illustrations and map which accompany the text add to our understanding of the mills' history and development.

For everyone interested in the future - and the past - of the Ravensbury Mills, this booklet contains an amazing amount of information.

Margaret Carr



Price 75p.

60p. to members.

Cover Picture:

**Ravensbury Mills from
Morden Hall Road
Spring 1968**

THE 'HAY FURLONGS', WESTERN ROAD, MITCHAM

The map produced in 1853 for the auction of the estate of the late James Moore (principal of the famous firm of Potter and Moore, growers of medicinal and aromatic herbs) shows the area which later became the King's College sports ground, and is now partly covered by Lavender Park, to have been known as the 'Hay Furlongs' as late as the mid 19th century.

The 'Hay Furlongs' are shown as comprising part of the general area known as the 'Blacklands', which in Mitcham was an alternative name applied to the open west common field.

Whereas most of the west field lying between what is now Western Road and Church Road remained arable - the soil here was a rich, dark loam - and was still held in unenclosed strips by various freeholders and copyholders, the 'Hay Furlongs' would appear to have been permanent grassland. (This is supported by the memoirs of one old resident who remembered them as meadow land in the 1860s).

The map shows that, like the west field, the 'Hay Furlongs' were also in multiple tenure. The name implies that they were customarily reserved for the annual haycrop, followed presumably by controlled grazing. This type of communal farming was of great antiquity, and it is fascinating to see custom in Mitcham perpetuating a system of land management which could well have dated back to the early middle ages.

The underlying stratum of the former west field, as in much of Mitcham, is composed of sands and gravels of a post-glacial river system, overlain by a stony subsoil. Exploratory excavations in 1989 by the Department of Greater London Archaeology of London Museum, in advance of housing development on two areas of the sports ground, demonstrated that to the north of Western Road the layer of topsoil was relatively thin. Although the land here may well have been worked from time to time, it was probably incapable of sustaining cultivation for long without becoming impoverished. Hence its ultimate role as permanent grassland in the economy of the village.

Recent archaeological work on the few remaining undisturbed areas of alluvial gravel in the Thames valley has indicated that settlement on the river terraces has been widespread and continuous since the early Neolithic period.

Whereas no actual ditches or other features from this period were found at King's College sports ground, probably due to disturbance by ploughing, a fragment of pottery was recovered in the 1989 excavations to indicate settlement here, or in the immediate vicinity, sometime around 3000/2500 BC.

The truncated remains of later ditches, together with pottery and worked flint, indicated use of the land from c. 1500 BC into the late Bronze or early Iron Age, with signs that stock raising might have been of increasing importance.

Although of necessity limited in extent, the excavations conducted by the Museum of London served to demonstrate what had long been expected - that in Mitcham, as on favourable sites elsewhere in south-eastern England, occupation by farming communities has been more or less continuous for some 5,000 years. It also confirmed that, even in an urban environment and on a site not previously regarded as having an archaeological potential, careful work is still capable of extending our knowledge of the past.

Eric Montague

Editor's Note: This was passed to me in April 1992 by Eric Montague, and now some houses have been built on some of the ground.

THE SEWER PRESS !!

In the course of some research Bill Rudd found copies of the 16th century *Minutes of the Surrey and Kent Sewer Commission* (published by the LCC in 1909). Below are some extracts relating to MURDONE.

Page 34. **1569**

Murdone

hopkyns (115) *Richard hopkyns gent to take vpye a deade Ayshe fallene into the ryuer in Murdene lyenge betwixte busshe close & longe poole*

X^s 28 Septembris

Garth (116) *Rychard Garthe Esquyere to Cut vpye a Bancke or Poynte lyenge in Stele hawes in Murdene betwixte a parcellle of newe planted wyllowes & the ryuer there beyng*e* iij^{or} roodes in length by estymacone to make the poynte Strayghte & take yt vpye close to the bodyes of the newe planted wyllowes & to Cut downe & avoyde oute of the sayde Ryver there sundrye wyllowes wythin that parcellle of lande*

XX^s 28 Septembris

Garthe (119) *Rychard Garth Esquyer to bancke & make vpye that vi foote in the laste resyted presentment extendynge to hys meadowe called stele hawes meade in Murdone aforesaid so that no water maye passe oute of the mayne ryuer ther into the Quenes maiestyes hyghe waye as the presentement proxime precedente ys*

X^s vltimo Julii

Garth (121) *Rychard Garth esquye to cut downe & conveyghe oute of the water & ryuer alle hys wythyys nowe stondynge lyenge & growynge in or ouer the ryuer throughe oute alle hys groundes*

X^s 28 Septembris

Woode (123) *Thomas Wood Smyth to take vpye a shelve lyenge benethe Murdene brydge welnyghe in the Middeste of the ryuer in Wymbleton in the Countye of Surreye & to laye yt vppone the mayn bancke*

X^s 28 Septembris

Page 120. **1572**

Carewe (436) *Item we present ffraunces Carewe esquier or his fermor John Muschamp gent to stake walle or wreath his banke against the riuer of thames in the parishe of Murden in the countie of Surrey filling it vp & Inhaunsinge it higher then now it is substancially with claye or other fast earth for the safe kepyng*e* in of the water into the riuer in sondrye places conteyninge by estimacion xij roddes*

iijs iiijd eueye rodd 20 septembris

It is quite a puzzle to put these notes into our every day language. How much did you decipher?

A MITCHAM MAN

Did you see in the December Merton Messenger the article headed 'A MITCHAM MAN' and referring to a Ben Slater born in 1924 and still living in Mitcham? He is the grandson of Seward Slater and son of Ben Slater who were all part of a family growing quality lavender in this area for at least 250 years. He is also the great nephew of William Henry Slater who emigrated to Victoria from Mitcham in the 1860s. See Bulletin No. 111, September 1994, 'THE OTHER MITCHAM' about Eric Montague's visit there last year. I have obtained a list of Ben Slater's written in 1911 of the plants grown by the herb gardeners of Mitcham in his youth.

Liquorice	50 acres	
Peppermint	100 acres	Distilled for its oil. A cure for cholera gripes and pains in the stomach
Camomile	50 acres	
Lavender	50+ acres	Distilled for its scent
Provence rose	20 acres	Distilled for scent and rosewater (used for "weak eyes")
Damask rose	20-30 acres	Petals dried before sale.
Caraway		Seed distilled for oil. Also used in cakes.
Belladonna	Several acres	Used for plasters and bad backs.
Henbane	Ditto	
Rosemary		Boiled in water, and used as a hairwash, and to clear dandruff.
Saffron		
Pennyroyal	1 or 2 acres	
Horehound		Boiled with liquorice. Liquor a "sure cure for colds, coughs, asthma and bronchitis".
Feverfew		For the relief of fever.
Wormwood		As a bitter, in place of hops.
Rue		Used in rue gin, and for croup in fowls.
Lavender cotton		
Loveage		
Angelica		
Squirting cucumber		
Poppy	2 or 3 acres	Dried before sale.
Monkshood aconite		Grown for its root and top
Tansey		

The Editor

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.