

VICE PRESIDENTS: Arthur Turner and Lionel Green

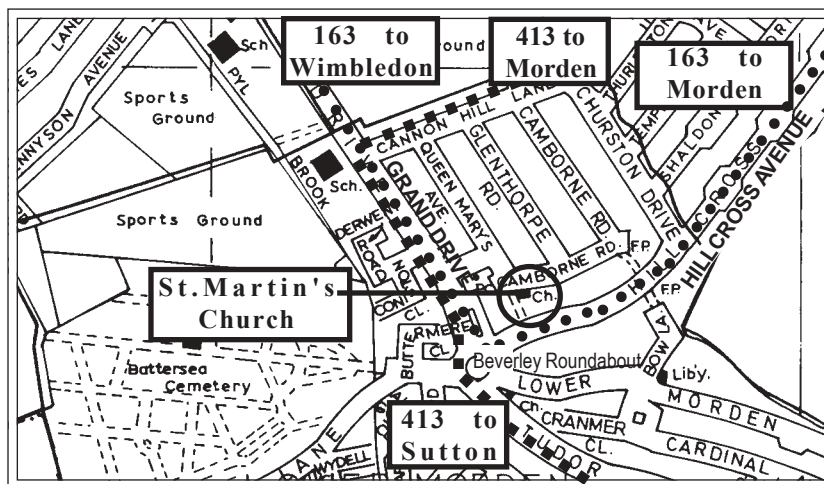
BULLETIN NO. 121

MARCH 1997

FORTHCOMING PROGRAMME

Friday 14th March - The Story of Lower Morden by Bill Rudd
8 pm at St Martin's, Camborne Road, Lower Morden

The farm fields and clustered cottages are gone, but the old hamlet has left its mark on the modern scene. Our Morden expert will take us through the story of Lower Morden, with the help of slides.



Friday 18th April - Anne of Cleves by Mary Saaler of the Bourne Society
8 pm at the Snuff Mill Environmental Centre, Morden Hall Park
Well-known historian Mary Saaler has recently published a biography of the remarkable fourth wife of Henry VIII.

(For the Snuff Mill Centre drivers should park in Morden Hall Garden Centre Car Park. Take the path across the bridge, go through the gateway, and turn right towards Morden Cottage.)

Friday 16th May - Mill Green Walk led by Eric Montague and Tony Scott.

Meet 7.00 pm for 7.15 outside Goat Inn.

Industries have come and gone in this quiet spot between Beddington and Mitcham. A modern business park occupies an old site, and today's small workshops beside the river no longer use its water. Here was also once the district's isolation hospital. Two of our Mitcham specialists will lead a walk around this evocative area.

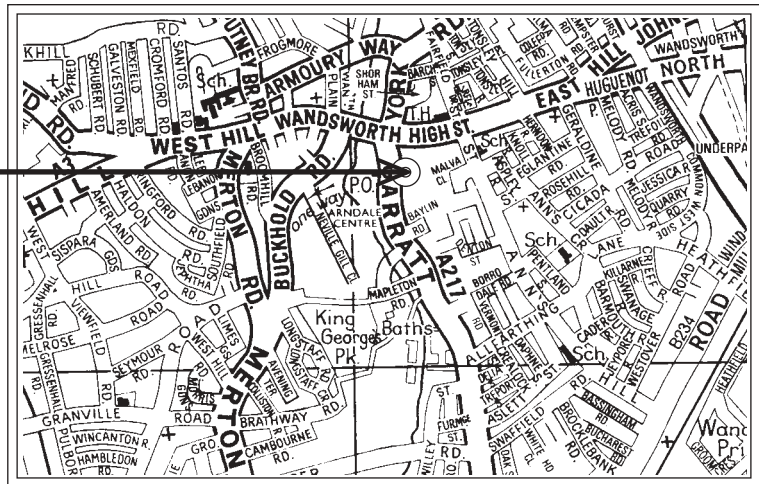
Saturday 21st June - Visit to Wandsworth Museum Meet at 2.15 pm outside the museum, 11 Garratt Lane SW18, for visit and walk led by Margaret Hunt of Wandsworth Historical Society. The museum, which occupies the Old Courthouse, houses permanent and temporary exhibitions relating to Wandsworth's history.

Buses:

270 from Mitcham,

156 from Wimbledon.

The Museum is a few yards south of the High Street opposite the Arndale Centre.



Advance Notice!

Saturday 23rd August at 2.30 pm - Visit to Steam Museum, Kew Bridge

At weekends some of the historic engines are 'steamed up', and there is always plenty to see at this much-praised museum. We need to know likely numbers ahead of time.

Please let Sheila Harris know by 31st July if you intend to come.

Nearest station Kew Bridge (from Clapham Junction). **Admission £3.25 (£1.80 concessions).**

MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR MITCHAM PARISH CHURCHYARD

On Saturday 18 January members of the public were invited into Mitcham parish church to submit their comments and suggestions on a management plan for the restoration of the churchyard. A new use needs to be found for the old building on the Miles Road boundary. Industrial buildings along the boundary of the church yard are unsightly and visually intrusive. Much of the path surfacing throughout the churchyard has deteriorated badly. Many of the newer monuments have suffered badly both from subsidence and vandalism. Replacement of iron railings on the low boundary wall is also being considered.

There are plans for a new vicarage to be built in the grounds of the present building. This will be self-financing, paid for by the building and sale of eight new houses in the grounds. The old vicarage will be converted into six flats. A new church hall will also be built.

David Mann

A RECENT PUBLICATION

Local History Publications, 316 Green Lane, SW16 3AS have brought out a new title in their interesting list of historical reprints. This is '**Mitcham, Merton, Morden & Wimbledon in 1839**', taken from Pigot's Directory of that year. It costs £1.50 plus postage.

!! TWO SUMMER OUTINGS !!

Ray and Pat Kilsby are most kindly arranging two coach day tours which should interest all members. Because of our small numbers it is difficult to arrange such visits economically, but they hope to sell any spare seats to members of the Sanderstead & Selsdon WEA. Whilst Saturday outings are usually most popular, Quex is not open on Saturdays, and Kelmscott Manor does not allow coach parties at week-ends.

Picnic lunches are recommended. Coffee and tea stops will be made. There will be pick-ups in Morden and Mitcham - details later.

Members and family/friends who wish to attend either or both of these outings please 'phone RAY or PAT KILSBY immediately.

Any seats not booked **by Tuesday 1 April 1997** will be offered to WEA members.

Unless you are advised to the contrary cheques per person must be forwarded as follows to reach the Kilsbys by 15 April:-

Faversham/Quex £6.50 (for coach, entrance charges vary)

Kelmscott/Burford £13.50.

Please make cheques payable to R E Kilsby.

Provided full details are given, one cheque per party will suffice, as will one cheque for both events.

Sunday 8 June Faversham and Quex Park, in Kent

Morning: Faversham Museum and town walk, using Town Council's printed guide.

Afternoon: Quex Park, Birchington, to see Regency house, gardens, museum.

Departure: about 8.45 am Return: about 6.30 pm

Cost: about £10 (including admission, which varies, to Quex)

'One of the most rewarding towns in the county' according to John Newman in the Buildings of England series, Faversham has good public buildings and town houses, including the one in which 'Arden of Faversham' was murdered, and a showpiece townscape in Abbey Street. Beer lovers will need no introduction to the names of Fremlin and Shepherd Neame.

Quex Park House was built in 1813 and stands in beautiful grounds which also hold two interesting towers. There are finely furnished rooms to be seen and a separate museum with porcelain, weapons, ethnographic material and exotic animals.

Friday 4 July Kelmscott Manor and Burford

Morning: Visit Kelmscott Manor (William Morris's country home (1871-96) near Lechlade).

Afternoon: Visit Burford, attractive small Cotswold town, for town walk, using Town Council's printed guide.

Departure: about 8 am Return: about 6.45 pm

Cost: about £13.50 (including fixed £6 entrance to Kelmscott)

Kelmscott Manor, a beautiful stone house, is owned by the Society of Antiquaries. House and garden have been restored as faithfully as possible to their appearance when Morris was alive. Furniture, paintings, textiles, books, all recall Morris, his family, and his troublesome co-tenant Rossetti. In the tiny village is the church, where Morris is buried, the village hall with its famous plaque, and a handful of cottages. The Thames flows close by.

The main street of the charming old town of Burford slopes down to the River Windrush. There are Tudor houses, some with later façades, an old grammar school, several picturesque inns, a pretty bridge and an impressive church. Burford's Priory survives - as a private house.

LOCAL HISTORY WORKSHOPS - REPORTS

Workshop meeting on 5th July 1996

Bill Sole outlined the bounds of part of 'New Wimbledon' which he has dubbed 'East Wimbledon', and which he is making his particular area of study.

Bill Rudd gave an example of 'putting flesh on bones', and described recent collaboration with a Canadian visitor to Morden churchyard who was engaged in family history research. In appreciation of his help he had been given a copy of 'The Family Barrand'. Other enquiries recently involved the Moran, Worsfold, Stockbridge, Greenway, and Gibson families - all producing fascinating personal details. He was now working on the Lemon family.

Lionel Green described his recent research on the Westminster archives, focusing in particular on William Lok (1480-1550), a London mercer whose family acquired a lease of Merton Place (not of course Nelson's Merton Place, but a property that stood opposite the parish church). (The first part of the Lok story appeared in the September 1996 Bulletin; part 2 appears in this issue.)

Judith Goodman has now turned her attention away from William Morris, and has been studying the Saxon charters of Merton. She distributed draft accounts of these, and hopes to submit copy for an 'Occasional Paper'.

Judith also reported that the late John Wallace's papers contain a large amount of valuable material. It has been found that he had been corresponding with a Canadian historian, Dr Bruce Elliott of Ottawa, about Rose Cottage, now 101 Hamilton Road. This had been built c.1812 for a Hamnett Pinhey (who had then emigrated to Canada), and may have been the first house erected on what had been Nelson's estate, north of Merton High Street. Correspondence is continuing and should lead to another 'Occasional Paper'. John Wallace's drawings have been given to the Guildhall Library, which is letting Judith have copies of those of local interest, which include some buildings now demolished.

Peter Hopkins has found mention of the Great (or Double) Dovehouse 'outside the walls of Merton Priory' in a lease of 1612 involving a moated messuage or tenement, which was sold to Henry Carpenter of West Barnes. There is a further reference in 1624, when the property passed to Rowland Wilson. Was this the future (Nelson's) Merton Place? (There is mention of fishing.)

Peter Harris had been busy with Morris material, having put on a display at the Civic Centre and added two tapestries to the exhibits at the Wandle Industrial Museum. The V&A had presented the museum with the video 'Topsy', which features the Museum's model of the Morris site in Merton.

Eric Montague

Workshop meeting on 29th November 1996

Judith Goodman reported a letter from Dr Elliott of Ottawa which contained the news that a watercolour drawing of Rose Cottage, Hamilton Road, had been located (see previous report). It appeared to be the work of the architect, Hamnett Pinhey's brother-in-law, and to be in fact contemporary with the building of the house (1812). Dr Elliott would try to obtain a photograph and send a copy.

Ray Ninnis had been investigating the Brereton monument in Mitcham church. This related to Theophilus Brereton, d.1638. At some stage it had been dismantled and had never been reassembled. He had identified parts of it, showing some damage, in the crypt beneath the church, and was going to notify the V&A. The vicar had expressed great interest.

Bill Sole was concerned that recent legislation would make it possible for the planned bingo hall on the Priory site to be developed in fact as a casino.

Eric Montague spoke about:

- (i) Alterations to the Wandle, such as the straight stretch which 'short circuits' the Pickle - itself the original channel. No doubt this was the work of the Priory. Bennett's 'back ditch' is a legacy of the C19 Bennett's mill.
- (ii) William Morris's account of speaking to Mitcham workmen in their small 'hut' in Western Road.
- (iii) Colliers Wood House, the Brereton family (see above) and other connections. A C17 abstract of title had pushed back our knowledge of the estate to 1487.

Bill Rudd had been investigating the Hatfeilds and had found that contrary to accepted belief Alexander Hatfeild had not lived at Morden Cottage, and nor had his son. The family's address was Hyde Park Terrace, and baptismal and other parish records were all in the Paddington area. By 1881 Gilliat Hatfeild was at Morden Hall.

Judith Goodman

Workshop meeting Friday 24 January 1997

Judith Goodman took the chair.

After reminding us of the forthcoming Heritage Centre Exhibition (1950s) and the need for sample artifacts, Eric Montague spoke about his latest piece of work, an account of Mitcham Cricket Green and the houses that surround it.

Margaret Groves continues to show enormous enthusiasm for the area where she lives, and in the wider aspects of local history. She is keen on helping with all manner of research - and archaeology! A very welcome member.

Lionel Green offered his survey of the railways of Merton Borough, and handed round some photographs from his collection, which could be used to illustrate it. He will be continuing with his enthralling study of the Lock family of Merton [see this Bulletin - Ed.]

Peter Harris showed us a Christies (New York) publication, 'The Estelle Doheny Collection', a lavishly illustrated account of books and manuscripts concerning William Morris and his circle. This had been given to the Wandle Industrial Museum.

Bill Sole gave us an unscripted discourse on the life of Edith Cavell - with whom there was a local connection, a bit marginal, but nonetheless welcome.

Peter Hopkins continues his study of Lower Morden and West Barnes, with special attention to the ancient estate of Hobalds (and various spellings). The writer hopes he will offer help for the forthcoming talk in March!

Bill Rudd presented his research into the Grove[s] family, members of whom were well known in Merton and Morden - especially at the Morden Hall Snuff Mills. They originated from Horsell, near Woking, and moved to Merton in the early 19th century. (No connection with Margaret Groves)

Finally Judith Goodman had been spending more time on the study of Merton's Saxon charters. Not forgetting a visitor, or rather new member of the Society, Julie Garner, who lives in the new development at the back of Mitcham station. She is keen to learn as much as possible about the site and its historical background. She was given able assistance on sources and what to look out for.

Bill Rudd

Next workshop meetings, held at 7.30 pm at Wandle Industrial Museum:

Friday 7th March

Friday 25th April

Friday 30th May

Everyone is welcome.

THE LOCK FAMILY AT MERTON (contd.)

Bulletin No.119 (September 1996) contained a paper on William Lok (d.1550) who was involved in acquiring property in Merton. He was a prosperous merchant in London and no doubt desirous of obtaining a country estate and the status of a landowner. There is no evidence that he lived here although he may have accompanied his family in 1536/7 when they came to Merton to avoid a plague in London. William became Master of the Mercers Company, was made an alderman in 1547 and Sheriff of London the following year. In March 1549 Edward VI knighted William.¹

This article will concentrate on his sons, and one of them, his youngest, Michael, affords us a glimpse of how they were educated. He was sent to grammar schools in England until he was 13 and then sent to Flanders and France “to learn those languages and to know the world ...”.² Five of William’s sons became mercers, and most of them played an important part in the history of England and its trade. On William’s death in 1550 most of his London properties were left to Matthew, Thomas, Henry, John and Michael with the intention that as mercers they could dwell and trade in them. Only Thomas had any connection with Merton.

Matthew Lock (1521-52)

Matthew was the ninth and last child of William’s marriage to Alice (Spencer). She had borne eight sons and one daughter, but many died in infancy. Times were treacherous due to the sweating sickness, the plague and other diseases. This must have been a burden on fruitful women having to spend a lifetime mothering large numbers of children. William married again in 1523, and Catherine (Cook) no doubt took over Matthew’s upbringing. Like his father, he was a mercer, but died young. His will was proved on 27 May 1552³ and a daughter, Eliza, was his sole heir. She married another merchant, Richard Candeler (1541-1602) in 1568. On Richard’s death she erected an elaborate tomb to his and their children’s memory in Tottenham church, Middlesex.⁴

Thomas Lock (1523-56)

It is through Thomas that the connection with Merton was maintained. He was the eldest son by Catherine (Cook) and became a mercer trading in partnership with Anthony Hickman. Subsequently (in 1543), Thomas’s youngest sister, Rose, married Hickman and in her ‘Recollections’,⁵ she refers to the trading partnership that “they together had some ships of their own and did make divers voyages into far countries”. In 1545 Thomas married Mary, who at times seemed to be difficult. Stephen Vaughan, diplomatist, sent his commendations to his friend, but remarked that “with his fair wife he had a crow to pull”.⁶ Lock and Hickman continued building and trading in ships. Rose recalls “one goodly ship they built at their own charge, which they named the Mary Rose being the names of us their wives”.⁷

On 14 March 1553 (N.S.) Edward VI granted the rectory of Merton “to Thomas and Mary and their heirs⁸ and assigns for ever in free socage and not in chief” for £359. This must have been purchased as a long-term investment, and remained with the Lock family until 1644. At the dissolution of Merton Priory the advowson or right of presentation of the curate of Merton passed to the Crown. One of the former canons, John Cuddington, became curate of Merton, and this was confirmed when Bishop Gardiner made a visitation in 1541.⁹ Released from his vows of celibacy, he married Alicia and continued as curate for many years. An inventory at Merton in 1547 confirms that the church was equipped for regular services. In 1552 Cuddington became Rector of Morden in addition, but had to resign, following the injunctions issued to every diocese by Queen Mary in March 1554 whereby all married priests were deprived of their benefices. It would seem that he continued to assist at Merton when the Locks became lay rectors.

The mass had been re-introduced into parish services, and the Locks were strong Protestants. In London Thomas Lock was forced to attend mass by order of the Council after failing to attend services at his church of St Stephen, Walbrook.¹⁰ Early in 1554 both Thomas and Anthony Hickman were arrested for aiding Protestants to leave the country and imprisoned in the Fleet Prison. Many of their friends and relations went into exile, but after Thomas’s release he also wished to leave the country in 1556, but failed to persuade his wife to leave England. Mary’s sister-in-law

Rose Hickman addressed her: “‘Sister, you stay here for covetousness and love of your husband’s lands and goods; but I fear the Lord’s hand will be upon you for it.’ And indeed, so it came to pass; for he being constrained for fear of further trouble to fashion himself outwardly to the popish religion in some sort, was so grieved in mind thereat, that he died shortly after with seven ... children”.¹¹ Thomas died in October 1556.

The parish registers of Merton begin in 1558 with the words “Michael Wigmore was first Curate of Merton under Thos. Locke Esq.”. The last-named was barely a teenager. In 1562 the incumbent who answered the archbishop’s questionnaire was John Cuddington, and not Michael Wigmore.¹² Cuddington remained at Merton until his death in 1569. His wife died in 1571, and both were buried at Merton.

Henry Lock (d.1571)

Like most of his brothers Henry was a Mercer in London. He married Anne Vaughan, daughter of Stephen Vaughan, diplomatist and agent for Thomas Cromwell at Antwerp. Anne had been a London silkwoman to Queen Anne Boleyn. A staunch Calvinist, well-educated, she translated Calvin’s *Sermons* in 1550. In 1553 she was exiled to Geneva with others, but Henry decided not to join the exodus. Finally he joined his wife in Geneva in 1556 and stayed there until 1561. They kept in correspondence with John Knox, the Scottish reformer who also resided in Geneva 1556-8. One of Henry’s sons became a poet - also Henry (d.1608).

John Lok (c.1530-c.1558)

London merchants, including the sons of William Lok, were driven to seek new markets and new countries, and John Lok became a ship’s captain in order to achieve this.

The volume of English cloth exported through Antwerp reached a peak in 1550 at 132,000 short cloths. The following year the amount dropped to 112,000 cloths and in 1552 to 85,000. This was the end of the golden age of trading through Antwerp. A glut had been created and prices fell. Maritime expansion had been checked by the taxation for Henry VIII’s wars, and by the diversion of capital to land speculation following the Dissolution of the monasteries.¹³ In March 1553 John Lok sailed to the Levant and Jerusalem as a ship’s captain,¹⁴ and in the same year, vice-admiral Thomas Wyndham sailed round the west coast of Africa to Benin. The latter trip proved to be a disaster, for out of 140 men who set out on 12 August 1553, only 40 returned to Plymouth. The admiral died at Benin. The journey was significant in that a lad aged 14 and named Martin Frobisher was on board.¹⁵

In the autumn of 1554 Captain Lok led another expedition to West Africa to find new trading outlets. At the suggestion of Frobisher’s grandfather (Sir John York, a fellow merchant of London), Lok took young Martin. They landed in what is now Sierra Leone where one of the native chiefs demanded a hostage before he would trade. Trade would have consisted in exchanging cheap cloth, metal goods and firearms for gold dust and ivory. Frobisher agreed to be left behind in a fortified enclosure at Mina. The Portuguese had created settlements along the coast and discovered Frobisher, imprisoning him for a while.

In 1554 Philip of Spain became King of England, and although English merchants were allowed to trade with Spain, the king refused to allow direct trade with Spanish America. Cadiz and Seville held the monopoly of Atlantic trade which had to be carried in Spanish ships. In July 1555 the Portuguese protested to the King of England about the English voyages to Africa and Philip prohibited further expeditions for six months. But by the autumn of 1555 Lok was off again, no doubt keen to find Frobisher. This time he returned with a native, and gained the dubious distinction of being the first Englishman to bring a slave into the country.¹⁶

Michael Lok (1532-1616)

We have seen that Michael’s education included time residing in France and Flanders in order to learn the languages. He then spent 15 years “in continual travail of body passing through almost all the countries of Christianity viz into Scotland, Ireland, Flanders, Germany, France, Spain, Italy and Greece, both by land and by sea ...”.¹⁷

In 1552 he journeyed to Spain (Madrid) to learn about the trade between that country and the West Indies, and also with the East Indies via the Cape of Good Hope. As well as trading, Lok was keen to learn about travel by sea and spent more than £500 on books, maps, charts and instruments.¹⁸ It had always been a dream of English sea captains to find a route to the Orient that would avoid the Portuguese traders. Philip of Spain did not look kindly on the African enterprises by Englishmen at the expense of the Portuguese explorers. He did, however, issue a joint charter with Queen Mary early in 1555 to set up a Cathay Company and a Russia Company endeavouring to establish a route to China via a north-western or north-eastern passage.¹⁹

No doubt he wished to divert the minds of English traders away from Africa and Central America, but other concerns were occupying the Lock family. Thomas Lock and Anthony Hickman, ship owners, were imprisoned for helping Protestants to leave England. Henry Lock's wife had already left for Geneva, and in 1556 he joined her. Michael Lok appears to have adopted a low profile until the death of Queen Mary in 1559. He continued trading in France and Flanders, but was also involved in journeys to the Levant.

Under Queen Elizabeth the west African voyages continued with governmental support. She ignored Portuguese protests although she accepted their sovereignty of existing settlements.

Roaming the seas at this time was Martin Frobisher, making his name as a sea captain, but being suspected of piracy in the Protestant cause, perhaps being secretly employed, at different times, by Philip of Spain and by Queen Elizabeth. Over the years he learnt much from Portuguese and Spanish explorers and was keen to find a possible route to China by sailing around the northern parts of the American continent. It was mainly due to the enthusiasm and financial backing given by Michael Lok that Frobisher was able to embark on such a voyage.²⁰

On 7 June 1576 Frobisher set sail with three ships, one being a barque (20-25 tons) named *Michael*. Although a passage to China was never discovered he returned home with 200 tons of 'gold' on 23 September. Most of the treasure was conveyed from Milford Haven to the Tower of London where the Queen commanded four locks to be placed on the door of the Treasury and the keys dispersed to the Warden of the Tower, the Master of the Mint, Martin Frobisher and Michael Lok. On 30 November Lok informed Walsingham that the mineral was found to be pyritic ore containing little gold.

In 1571 Michael's wife Joan died and he married Mary (or Margaret) Perient, widow of Adelmare Caesar (d.1569). She was the mother of Judge Julius of Mitcham.

In March 1577 the Cathay Company was set up, and Michael Lok was appointed Governor for six years. Frobisher then made several fruitless voyages to discover a north-west passage, all funded by Lok.

By January 1579 Lok was ruined by his investments, and petitioned the Privy Council for assistance. He pleaded that he had spent £7,500 of his own money, and that he had 15 children to support. His pleas were unsuccessful, and he was eventually imprisoned for debt in the Fleet Prison from June to November 1581. Like his sister Rose Hickman he survived into the 17th century and added his recollections of the history of the Lock family.

Notes and references:-

1. His coat of arms depicted three falcons rising, holding in their mouths a padlock. This was a rebus on his name and his residence in Cheapside located 'at the sign of the padlock'. Letters and Papers Henry VIII X. No.981
2. BL. Cotton MS. Otho E viii fo.42. He refers to schools in England and not just London. Two of the grammar schools were supported by the Mercers. St Paul's School was founded by the Dean, John Colet, in 1509. In 1518 he entrusted the Mercers to provide the education. The Mercers' own school operated from the church of St Mary Cole beside the hospital of St Thomas of Acon which was taken over at the Dissolution by the Mercers. This became a Free Grammar School with the Mercers reserving the right for 25 places to be reserved for children of Mercers.
3. P.R.O. PROB 11/35 (PCC 16 Powell)
4. All Hallows church Tottenham was rebuilt by William Butterfield in 1875, but the Candler monument still exists.

5. BL. Addtl. MS 43827 fo.7.
6. Letters and Papers Henry VIII xxi No.26. Vaughan's daughter Anne later married Thomas's brother, Henry Lock. 'A crow' symbolises discord and Vaughan hints at trouble ahead, cf. S.Butler *Hudibras* (1664) pt ii canto 2 - "If not, receive, before we go/That you and I must pull a crow."
7. Not the *Mary Rose* of Henry VIII's navy, the purpose-built warship which sank on 19 July 1545. There must have been a puzzled reaction to the use of the same name so soon after the tragedy. The sinking would have been known by all seamen. Even 85 years after the sinking of the *Titanic* in 1912 no one would consider using that name. The original *Mary Rose* was raised on 11 October 1982 and is preserved in Portsmouth Dockyard.
8. They had four sons - Thomas, Rowland, William and Matthew, and later had three more children. Little did they realise the importance of this clause.
9. Sy A.C. 47 (1941) p21
10. BL. Harley MS 353 fo. 141 v; GLRO DL/C/614 fo.26v; PRO PCC Prob 11/38 fo.180v
11. BL. Addtl. MS 43827 fo.15v and 16, 'Recollections of Rose Hickman'. She wrote with the benefit of hindsight.
12. Sy A.C. 45 (1937) p113
13. R.B.Wernham, *Before the Armada. The Growth of English Foreign Policy 1485-1588* 1966 p76
14. R.Hakluyt, *The Principal Navigation, Voiages, Traffiques and Discoveries of the English Nation* 3 vols 1598-1600; II i 101; II ii 14-23, 52-4
15. C.R.N.Routh, *Who's Who in History*, Vol II England 1485-1603 p412
16. C.S.L.Davies, *Peace, Print and Protestantism 1450-1558* 1976 p258. The name is given as James Lock. Portugal had been importing slaves from Africa as early as 1517. William Hawkins returned from Brazil about 1530 with a 'savage' king and Sir John Hawkins traded 'commercially' in slaves 1562-68.
17. BL. Cotton MS Otho E viii fo.42 - an added account of the Lock family supplied by Michael
18. D.N.B. 'Lok' p92
19. R.B.Wernham *ibid.* 1966 pp225/6
20. C.R.N.Routh *ibid.* p413

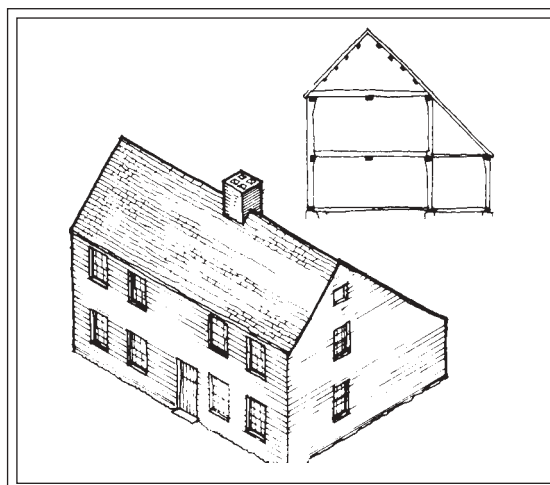
To be continued

Lionel Green

SALTBOX ROW

A row of early 19th-century cottages by this name used to stand in Kingston Road between Dorset Hall and the railway line. Eric Montague points out that this term was commonly used in New England to describe a style of wooden cottage found on both sides of the Atlantic. The roof of such dwellings sloped down at the back to cover a rear room or space ('outshut') at ground floor level. We have no pictures of Merton's saltbox cottages, but perhaps we can guess what they looked like.

Drawing from Illustrated Handbook of Vernacular Architecture, R W Brunskill, 1988. (Merton's 'saltbox' cottages were much smaller than the one shown here.)



ANOTHER RECENT PUBLICATION

Merton, Morden & Mitcham is a new title in the Alan Sutton series, 'Britain in Old Photographs'. The author, Patrick Loobey, is a member of Wandsworth Historical Society and has a large postcard collection, which has provided the material for a number of similar titles. Probably on surer ground in his 'own' area, Mr Loobey would have been wise to have spent longer checking his captions - he admits to having spent only five days compiling the book, and not to have visited Morden Library at all! However, much can be forgiven him for his most interesting collection of more than 200 views. Monty is delighted to see Gorrington Park House for instance, and there are also some unfamiliar St Helier scenes. The book (a paperback) costs £8.99 and is widely available.

THE BLACKLANDS

Part of Mitcham's West Common Field, enclosed with Morden Hall Park

Mitcham had the distinction of retaining well into the second half of the 19th century two large open common fields, Eastfields and the west field or 'Blacklands', still in multiple tenure and worked in strips after the medieval fashion. Some amalgamation of strips had taken place over the years, presumably by agreement, but neither field was enclosed by Act of Parliament, as so many were during the agrarian revolution of the late 18th and early 19th centuries. Eastfields vanished in all but name in the late 1860s, when what remained of the old strip holdings were bought and laid out as market gardens by Edward Mizen. The pattern of the furlongs or 'lands' in the west field can be seen very clearly either side of Church Road in a map produced in 1853 at the time the estate of the late James Moore was auctioned¹. This ancient field structure survived largely intact until the end of the century, and in places has been fossilised in the modern road pattern.

In 1833 a little over 6 acres in the south-west corner of the west field had been enclosed to form 27 plots, all but two of which were let to labourers. The remaining two were glebe². It is not known when, or on whose initiative this had taken place, but the allotments may have been intended to ease the distress experienced by many village labourers during the decade or so of depression which followed the end of the Napoleonic Wars. A similar scheme was adopted at this time in the parish of Beddington. Michell, drawing on Brayley³, observed:

The thirties and forties were not a good time for British farmworkers, and an allotment scheme was first tried out in Wallington in 1835. Called grandly 'The Labourers' Friend Society' it proved a great success. Each worker was allowed to rent a rood of land at a price based on the average value of farming land in the district. The regulations were strict:

'Every allotment is confined to a rood of land; which must be cultivated by spade husbandry and kept in a neat and husbandlike manner. Not more than half of the allotment is allowed to be cropped with potatoes in each year: and no tenant is to labour on Sundays, Good Fridays, or Christmas Day ... certain regulations are enforced to ensure sobriety, honesty and general good conduct.'

The fields east of the Green [i.e. Wallington Green, opposite the Duke's Head] were used for this purpose, which in 1843 was commended in the House of Lords.

By 1846, when the tithe survey was conducted in Mitcham, the land on the edge of the west field was described as 'Late poor allotment', which implies that the scheme had already been abandoned. The outline of the enclosure can be seen on the Moore sale map of 1853, but within the next couple of years the Wimbledon to Croydon railway cut the former allotments in two. Precisely what happened to them over the next 15 years or so is not clear.

If one compares the 1853 map with a modern 6" map of the Borough, one can see that much of the corner of Morden Hall Park lying to the north of the Surrey Arms and between the avenue leading from the Morden Road gate and the fence on the eastern edge of the park was, in 1853, part of the west field. The sale map also shows the surrounding land, and at least one of the strip holdings, to be in the tenure of 'Carew', and one suspects that these came on the market with the rest of the estate of Charles Hallowell Hallowell Carew in the late 1850s, following the passing of the Carew Estate Act in 1857. Around 1870 Gilliat Hatfeild was acquiring land in the vicinity of Phipps Bridge, and in 1872 he purchased Morden Hall from Richard Garth. There seems to be no record of the surrender of the strip holdings separated from the rest of the common field by the railway, or of any formal agreement that they should be absorbed into Morden Hall Park. Nevertheless, it is evident that the last vestiges of Mitcham's west field to the south-west of the railway were acquired and incorporated in the park at about this time. Certainly by 1883, when a plan of the Morden Hall Estate was prepared for Gilliat Hatfeild by Robert Masters Chart, the bounds of the park were very much as they are today.

It is interesting to attempt to identify the remains of the west field and the poor's allotments in the park today. The whole of the area is now under grass, but there is no immediately obvious evidence of the ridges and furrows of the strips, which were orientated north-south, parallel to the avenue. When the vegetation has died down in winter, and with the sun low, they might, however, be discernible. The old bridleway defining the western edge of the allotments is followed fairly closely by part of the broad grassy walk leading from the Morden Road gate to the railway footbridge to the Phipps Bridge housing estate, whilst two manhole covers in this walk presumably give access to a surface water drain in which a ditch bordering the allotments was confined.

Notes and References

- 1 Copy in Mitcham Library
- 2 Original held by Croydon Library in the 1960s. Present location unknown.
- 3 Michell R., *The Parish of Beddington in the Year 1837*, Beddington, Carshalton and Wallington Archaeological Society Occasional Paper No.3 (1991) pp 17-18, which cites Brayley E.W., *A Topographical History of Surrey 1841-8*

Eric Montague

SURREY AND THE PICTURE POSTCARD

John Gent of the Croydon Natural History and Scientific Society gave an illustrated talk on 'Surrey and the Picture Postcard' at our December meeting. The first postcards, which were plain, were produced in Austria in 1869, and the first British postcards arrived a year later. They cost ½d each, which was the postage cost. The retailers protested, and in 1872 a ½d charge per dozen was introduced. At first De La Rue had the monopoly, but from June 1872 anyone could produce postcards. After printing cards were sent to the Inland Revenue to have a ½d stamp printed or embossed on them. The conditions were that the card had to look official; messages were written on the back, but only the address could be written on the front.

When the picture postcard arrived, messages had at first to be written on the same side as the picture. But soon the familiar divided layout was introduced, for address and message. All sorts of cards were produced - mechanical, silk, jigsaw, perfumed, frictograph (to be rubbed with the edge of a silver coin), inflatable and so on. Subjects were picturesque, humorous, sensational, advertising, romantic. Coloured cards arrived about 1900, and the first postcard magazine started at that time. Before the first World War the picture postcard was the tabloid newspaper and telephone of its time.

Mr Gent illustrated his interesting talk with a wide variety of Surrey views, from his own very large collection.

Margaret Groves

THE NATIONAL MONUMENTS RECORD

Diana Hale, from the London search room of the National Monuments Record, gave a most stimulating talk on the work of the Record to members and friends on Saturday 18 January at the Snuff Mill Centre.

The National Monuments Record is the public archive of the Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England. Its main collection is housed at Swindon in a redundant GWR building of 1842. But the London search room at 55 Blandford Street W1H 3AF (0171 208 8200) offers a service for those interested in the buildings of the Greater London area. There is open access to photographs, drawings and surveys. Researchers may also call up information on all sorts of sites on the Commission's national heritage database. Material housed at Swindon can be ordered from London. Many of the Record's photographs date from the last war, and Ms Hale had some interesting and evocative views to show us. Visitors are welcome at the search room, which is open Monday- Friday (till 7pm on Thursdays). Ms Hale advised telephoning beforehand to discuss individual requirements.

Judith Goodman

Marjorie Ledgerton has written from Sussex with her news up-to-date. She tells me that she will send a follow-up for the next issue, when she will have more to tell us. Meanwhile ...

..... AND SO TO WEST SUSSEX

Here I am in Southwater, near Horsham, staying with my daughter and son-in-law, as a temporary measure until I find somewhere to settle not too far away from them.

I would like to say thank you to all who sent their best wishes and messages when it was known I was leaving Mitcham, especially Lady Hanworth, Lionel Green, the members of the Committee, and, among others, Irene Bain, Eric Trim and Joan Bartlett.

Although I sold my property at the beginning of May 1996, it was not until early December that all was completed and I actually moved, so that on the morning the removal men were due I was quite convinced that something would go wrong at this late stage, in view of the many setbacks, but all went well. Most of my furniture went into storage, but there was a problem here with part of the wardrobe and it had to be taken to pieces to get into the bedroom. There was a calamity when the cheque arrived for the proceeds of the sale. I left it on the dining-room table and went upstairs. Imagine my horror when my daughter came in some fifteen minutes later and said to the 18-month old wire-haired terrier, 'Max, what have you done to Grandma's cheque? She will never have so much money in a cheque in her whole life!' He had extracted the cheque from about six other letters on the table and got it on the floor, where he had torn off the piece with the date and part of the branch code number. Luckily the amount and the signature were intact, and after a moment's horror it was accepted by the bank.

Since then life has progressed satisfactorily, and I have begun to find out more about the area. It seems I am extremely lucky in that there is a historical society which is housed in the Horsham Museum. It offers most of Merton's facilities ... monthly winter meetings, summer visits to other museums, local walks in the old town, and a quarterly magazine. There is also an annual garden party!! Shall I have to get a large hat? There are two gardens to the museum (one a herb garden, and the other planted with old-fashioned flowers) where I presume it is held. In the museum is a room devoted to historical books, which is open to members every afternoon, and also from 7-9 pm on Wednesdays. Attendance at a concession rate to the museum meetings, preview of new exhibitions there, and also a discount rate on museum literature are further perks. The annual fee is the same as at Merton, so I am about to join.

Hopefully in the future I will be able to let you know what is happening here. (There is also a flourishing flower-arranging society, so I shall be returning to another of my interests.)

I expect you have seen in the national press that Horsham has honoured its wayward son, Percy Bysshe Shelley, and that a fountain has been erected in his memory. It is in the shape of a golden ball, and the water has leaked, and caused problems. Adding insult to injury, it is outside MacDonalds, and I understand Shelley was a vegetarian!! More later.

In the museum is housed the tourist information office, and an ample supply of leaflets. I have sent Judy one on East Grinstead, which has quite a lot to see, including Standen House (National Trust), which was designed by William Morris's friend Philip Webb and retains many original wallpapers, textiles and fittings. It also has 12 acres of informal gardens and walks. Perhaps the Committee will discuss a visit there in the future where I may possibly be able to join you.

Marjorie Ledgerton

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.