



VICE PRESIDENTS: Arthur Turner, Lionel Green and William Rudd

BULLETIN NO. 125

MARCH 1998



### PROGRAMME MARCH-JUNE

**Thursday 19th March 7.30 pm**      **Merton Local Studies Centre,**  
**‘Tramlink and its Historical Connections’**

by **John Gent** of Croydon Natural History and Scientific Society  
Mr Gent is well-known as a transport specialist, a historian of Croydon,  
and the author of a number of books.

(The Local Studies Centre is situated on the ground floor of Merton Civic Centre,  
London Road, Morden.)

**Friday 24th April 8pm**      **The King’s Head, Merton High Street**  
**‘The History of Young’s Brewery’**

by **Helen Osborn**, archivist at Young’s and author of *Inn and Around London*,  
a history of Young’s pubs.

(The King’s Head is opposite Savacentre, on bus routes 57, 152, 155, 200 and 293  
and near Colliers Wood Underground station.)

**Saturday 16th May 2.30 for 3pm**      **Guided tour of Southside House** Cost: £5  
(a concession rate of £3 is for members of the Historic Houses Association only)

Behind a fine brick façade were until fairly recently two separate dwellings  
dating from (probably) the mid-18th century. Now, as a single house,  
Southside offers the visitor the chance to see an unusual interior and  
a collection around which myth and romance have accumulated.

(Wimbledon Common Southside, buses 93, 200)

**Saturday 20th June**      **Visit to Horsham, Sussex**

The visit will include the museum, the church, and a guided walk led by  
**Marjorie Ledgerton**, a long-time member of the Society  
and for a number of years our Bulletin editor.

For visit arrangements see page 5.



## THE SPENCERS OF WIMBLEDON - lecture by Richard Milward

A large audience at the Snuff Mill Centre on 6 December enjoyed an absorbing account of the Spencers and their association with Wimbledon over the last two and a half centuries. Richard Milward's close study of many hundreds of Spencer family letters, first at Althorp and later in the British Library, enabled him to bring to life some of the varied characters in this interesting dynasty.

Prosperous Warwickshire landowners in the 16th century, the Spencers became the Earls of Sunderland, with a mansion at Althorp, Northamptonshire, before marriage into the Churchill family set the scene for their rise to become, as did the Churchills and another set of in-laws, the Russells (Dukes of Bedford), one of the greatest families in the land. The Wimbledon connection began in 1744, when Sarah Churchill, Duchess of Marlborough, left her Wimbledon Park estate to her grandson, John Spencer, rather than to her Churchill relatives, with all of whom she had quarrelled.

It was John Spencer's son, also John, who was created the first Earl Spencer. His son George, the second earl, was a notable First Lord of the Admiralty from 1794 to 1801. In the letters and papers of these two men and their remarkable wives, Georgiana and Lavinia, can be traced the story of the family's life in Wimbledon. Mr Milward took us through the complicated sequence of the Spencer houses here (none of which unfortunately survives), and the enlargement and improvement of the park. The Spencers owned many other estates, but Wimbledon's convenience for London, and its 'healthy air' meant that the families visited this property regularly. They entertained there too. We heard about large sporting parties, and 'breakfasts' for hundreds of guests. Someone who, from October 1801, lived not far away, but was never received at Wimbledon Park, was Lord Nelson. He had dined with the First Lord a number of times at the Admiralty, but his scandalous household at Merton Place was not recognised by the Spencers.

Debts and illness persuaded the second earl and his countess to leave Wimbledon finally in 1827, leasing the house and estate to the Duke of Somerset. The third earl sold off much of the land to J.A. Beaumont of the County Fire Insurance Company, for development with housing. It was the fifth earl whose plans to enclose part of the park and sell off the remainder were successfully resisted, with the passage of the Wimbledon and Putney Commons Act in 1871. This Act meant the loss of the rights as lords of the manor, though the family retained the courtesy title until the present Earl Spencer sold it recently to an as yet unknown buyer.

Mr Milward had some excellent illustrations to accompany his most entertaining talk, enjoyed by everyone present.

Richard Milward's book *The Spencers in Wimbledon 1744-1994* (£10) is almost out of print, but you might still be lucky! A number of his other titles are available in local bookshops and libraries.

Judith Goodman

### HISTORIES FOR THE MILLENNIUM

The Open University has sent the Society an invitation to take part in a concerted effort to mark the historic occasion when one millennium gives way to another, by undertaking a community historical project. Various topics for this project, such as a study of the community at a specific date within living memory, or at a nationally historic date, or when a specific local event (eg disaster, celebration or just rapid expansion) took place, were suggested.

The Committee has considered this invitation and has decided to take it up. It has chosen as the research topic "**Local Life in 1953**". This was the year of the Queen's Coronation, the end of clothes rationing - but the continuation of food rationing; big blocks of council flats were being built in Mitcham, and National Service conscripts still had the fear of being sent to Korea, and were thankful that the war ended in July. What do you remember of 1953?

The Committee would like to hear from you with your written reminiscences. Provided enough members put pen to paper, we can compile the articles into a booklet to be published nearer the Millennium. Let's hear what you think of the idea. All comments and reminiscences in writing please to the Hon. Secretary.

Tony Scott

## NORTH MITCHAM - lecture by Eric Montague

On Saturday 17 January at Mitcham Library Eric Montague, our Chairman, gave us an illustrated tour of North Mitcham, the area surrounding Figges Marsh. The rows of housing which we see there today are almost entirely the creation of the last 100 years, for before that the area comprised fields and a few old-established farmhouses.

The name Figges Marsh for this piece of common land probably derives from its proximity to land belonging to William Figge and his son in the 14th century. They occupied Pound Farm, located in London Road, near the junction with the present Armfield Crescent.

Tamworth Farm Recreation Ground was the site of Figges Marsh Farm, probably originally Tudor, and became known as Tamworth Farm in the 1840s. The house was demolished in the 1860s and a 'modern' villa, Tamworth Farm House, was built nearby. More recently this was the home of Chuter Ede MP (Home Secretary 1945-51). The farm lands were split up and sold in 1923, the major part being bought by Mitcham Council for the Bordergate Housing Estate and a cemetery, and a part being bought by James Mason, owner of the OK Sauce factory in Wandsworth, and given to the Council as a public open space. Tamworth Manor House, a large house, farm, and oil and essence distillery, was the headquarters of Potter & Moore, physic gardeners in the 18th and 19th centuries. The buildings were in London Road roughly where Eveline Road joins it today at the traffic lights. The estate was sold in blocks in 1885 and the house demolished ten years later. The row of shops dates from 1899.

Most of The Chestnuts (more familiar as Renshaw's Corner) was built in 1840, as two private houses, which from the 1850s were used by a private school. When this closed they were bought at auction in 1898 by James Pain & Son firework manufacturers, as residence and office. It was probably intentional that they were well removed from the assembly factory over the railway line in Eastfields. John F. Renshaw & Co moved from Battersea in 1920 and built their factory on the old tennis court and paddock of The Chestnuts, buying the houses from Pain's in 1926. Renshaw's moved to Liverpool in 1992 and housing now occupies the site (see Bulletin No. 122).

James Pascall's sweet factory in Streatham Road was established there in 1905 on an area of fields known as Furzedown (once land owned by the Moore estate) as an extension of the firm's operations in Blackfriars. After a couple of takeovers production was moved to Bourneville and the factory was closed in autumn 1970. Mitcham Industrial estate is there now.

Biggin Farm, of medieval origin, was located roughly where the middle of Gorringe Park Avenue is now. Its lands extended from Figges Marsh to the River Graveney and were bounded by Streatham Road and London Road. The farm, known as Gorringe Park House in Victorian times, was sold and split into building plots early this century, and most of the land was bought by Isaac Wilson (after whom the Wilson Hospital is named) for housing development. He was a benefactor of St Barnabas church, which was consecrated in 1914. Most house building stopped during World War I and recommenced in the 1920s.

Tony Scott

### ADMIRAL ISAAC SMITH - a footnote

The *Gentleman's Magazine* for August 1831 has some additional information (see December Bulletin). Isaac Smith entered naval service c.1766 at the age of 12 or 13 and served for a while in the *Grenville*, a brig commanded by Captain James Cook on a trip to survey the Newfoundland waters, before joining the *Endeavour* on the South Seas voyage of 1768-71.

Smith was made post-captain in December 1787 and commanded the 36-gun *Perseverance* in the East India station for several years from 1789. In September 1807, seriously ill with hepatitis, and still a captain, he was granted superannuation as a Rear-Admiral, and never served again.

He thus became what was derisively known as a 'yellow admiral'. This term for a permanently land-based rear-admiral was a reference to the red, white and blue divisions which were then still observed in the promotion ladder of flag officers. Poor Isaac Smith, with his diseased liver, was both literally and metaphorically yellow! However he did live for another 24 years.

(Admirers of Patrick O'Brian's novels about the early 19th-century Navy, will know that the most recent title in the series is in fact *The Yellow Admiral*.)

JG

## LOCAL HISTORY WORKSHOP - FRIDAY 30th JANUARY 1998

- ❖ Sheila Harris read a letter she had received containing memories of growing up in Wandle Road in the 1920s. We hope to publish the full text in a future bulletin.
- ❖ Sheila also read to us two fascinating letters written in the 1930s to the original owners of her house. These had suddenly appeared in her loft in a bag of Christmas decorations that she uses every year. Presumably the wind had dislodged them from some hiding place this winter!
- ❖ Bill Sole put forward an unusual hypothesis regarding the mound in Morden Park. A Roman origin has been suggested, though it is unlikely to have contained human remains. Bill wonders whether it was a neolithic construction with an astronomical purpose, such as the more famous Silbury Hill near Avebury.
- ❖ Bill also showed photographs of the recent excavation of Stane Street at Colliers Wood. Another vestige of the Roman road has now been entered onto the Greater London Sites and Monuments Record:  
SMR Ref: 023195      Borough: MERTON      Address: MORDEN RD      Grid Ref: TQ 25870 68890 E  
This is a ridge running diagonally across Morden Road (the A24), which Mr C.E.Sole of MHS postulates is evidence of the continuation of the route of Stane St.
- ❖ Peter Hopkins referred to a couple of documents in the Surrey Record Office which traced the history of *Growtes* Manor House, south of *Morden Hall*, from 1710 to 1817, when it was sold by Abraham Goldsmid's Trustees to Robert Rutter, the snuff manufacturer. Goldsmid had built up quite a substantial estate of freehold and leasehold lands in the area. His other freehold property in Morden, the later *Hazelwood*, was sold to John Tyrrell, proprietor of the *Patent Steam Washing Factory* at Phipps Bridge. Tyrrell had also briefly occupied *Morden Hall* in 1826.
- ❖ Peter Harris reported that the edge runners from *Ravensbury Mill*, once Rutter's snuff mill, have now been erected in Ravensbury Park, and showed us photographs - a very impressive structure.
- ❖ Peter also showed another of his acquisitions from the Merton Abbey car boot sales - a first edition reproduction from a watercolour by Alice Cole showing Chamomile sketched at Mitcham in 1905.
- ❖ Lionel Green referred to various Graingerised versions of classic Surrey histories - special editions with additional pictures and etchings. A 30-volume set of Manning and Bray's *History of Surrey*, with 6000 illustrations, is in the British Library, and 14 volumes of Lysons' *Environs of London* (1792-1796) are in the Guildhall Library. This collection, which includes views of *Cannon Hill* house and *Moat Farm* at West Barnes, is being digitised and should soon be available on CD ROM.
- ❖ Sheila Fairbank is a new member of the Society, and is involved with the *Sacred Land Project*. Sheila, a music teacher, has lived in Colliers Wood for 15 years, and is interested in promoting *Merton Priory*. She has a number of contacts, and is determined to put *Merton Priory* on the map for the Millennium. We wish her well. Watch this space (and any other that Sheila manages to get her hands on)!
- ❖ Eric Montague reported on recent discoveries at *Chestnut Cottage*, Cricket Green. Traces of an earlier thatched roof and remains of weatherboarding have been discovered, plus evidence that it was originally a 'Salt Box' house (see *Bulletin* 121) subsequently raised with a second pitched roof. Eric has also been given copies of the old deeds which have helped him follow its history.
- ❖ He has also managed to identify a portrait now in the *Local Studies Centre* in Morden, of Stephen Simpson, born 1700, presumably an ancestor of William Simpson who married the Cranmer heiress of the manor of Mitcham in 1818. A companion portrait of a lady cannot at present be found.
- ❖ Eric has also been trying to track down Daniel Hurst, a publisher who appears at *Grove Cottage*, Mitcham, in the Census returns of 1871 and 1881. His firm published books "rather like *Mills & Boon*" in the 1920s and was taken over by Hutchinsons.
- ❖ Judy Goodman has been discovering more about well-known people with local connections. Dr Hueffer the musicologist lived at 5 *Fairlawn Villas*, now 245 Kingston Road, Merton Park, following his marriage in 1872 with a daughter of Ford Madox Brown. His son was the novelist, Ford Madox Ford, author of *The Good Soldier*. Sir Oswald Mosley rented *Morden Park* in the summer of 1932, while preparing his programme for the British Fascist Movement, published September 1932. Edna O'Brien wrote her first novel *The Country Girls*, published in 1960, while living at 257, Cannon Hill Lane, Merton. An interview with her and her husband appeared in the local paper in January 1960.

**Dates for future Workshops:-** Fridays 13th March, 17th April, 12th June at *Wandle Industrial Museum*, Vestry Hall Annexe, Mitcham - 7.30-9.30 pm. All are welcome!



## VISIT TO HORSHAM ON SATURDAY 20 JUNE

Marjorie Ledgerton has now settled happily into life at Horsham, in a comfortable block of flats with large grounds which overlook the park. She reports that she enjoys the independence of her own front door and the convenience of communal facilities - and she has wasted no time in learning about Horsham and its history!

Marjorie has planned an interesting visit for members and friends. This is the timetable she suggests:

### ARRIVAL

About 11.30 am

**By train.** There is a good direct service from Sutton to Horsham (50 minutes). From Wimbledon or Raynes Park use the Epsom service and change there for Horsham. From the bus-stop to the left outside Horsham station there is a frequent service (93 or H3) to the Carfax Centre. Alternatively it is a 10-minute walk: along North Street, cross at the pedestrian crossing by the Arts Centre, follow the road past Sun Alliance, with its interesting window, at Chart Way, to the Carfax.

**By car.** Park in Albion Way car-parks which bring you down into Swan Walk Precinct, named after an inn which once stood here.

### MUSEUM

12 noon - 1.00 pm

There should be time for a cup of coffee before arriving at the museum about noon. It is well signposted and is located in one of Horsham's fine old buildings. Admission is free. The museum tells the story of Horsham and of the building itself, which is in the Causeway. Town trail (20p) available.

### LUNCH AND THE CARFAX

1.00 pm - 2.00 pm

There is ample choice for lunch in the Carfax: sandwiches, coffee bar, cafés, or the very old *King's Arms*, which has coffee shop, bar meals and restaurant. Marjorie will do some consumer research and list some recommendations for the next Bulletin.

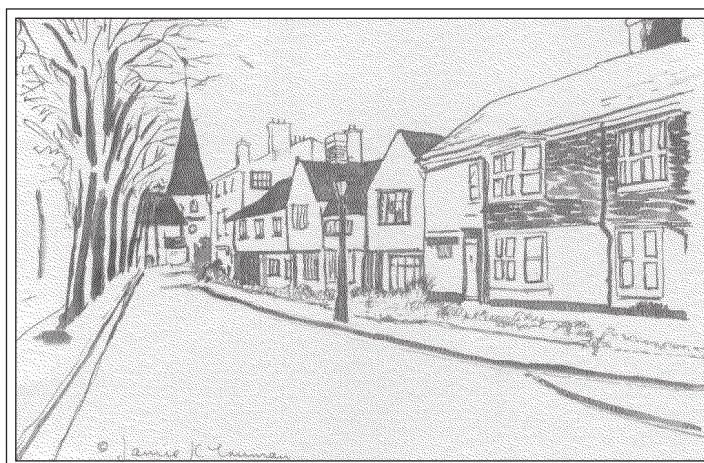
Things to look out for in the Carfax include the old-established bakery run by seventh-generation master bakers; the post office on the site of the old gaol; traditional butcher and fishmonger; tiny cheese shop and greengrocer's; café with a secret garden; and The Old Stout House. There are timber-framed buildings from the 15th to 17th centuries. In Pirie Place is a statue of a Horsham schoolmaster and his donkey-cart. See also the controversial new Shelley fountain.

### GUIDED WALK OF THE CAUSEWAY

2.15 pm - 3.15 pm

Marjorie will meet us at 2 pm at the rear of the old town hall, where there is a triangular island with shrubs and wooden seats, adjacent to the museum. At 2.15 she will guide us on a tour of Horsham's historic Causeway, a conservation area full of interesting buildings. This will finish at 3.15 at the church, where we can linger to enjoy a flower festival. Strawberry teas etc will be available in the church rooms to fortify us for the return journey.

Marjorie will let Sheila Harris, the Hon. Secretary, have some (free) leaflets with a town plan. Contact Sheila nearer the time if you would like one.



*Horsham  
The Causeway  
by J Truman*

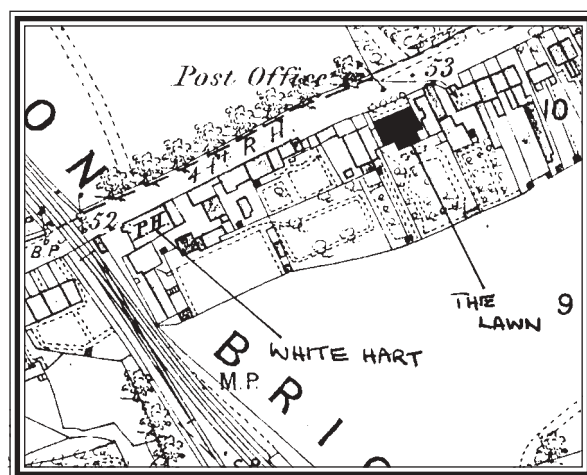
## THE LAWN, 138 KINGSTON ROAD

January 1998 saw the contractors move in to demolish this property, which had stood empty and boarded up for a few months while displaying a yellow planning notice. Facing Gladstone Road, next to the 1970s sheltered housing which replaced the old Rutlish School buildings, the site is set to become a small development of flats.

To a casual glance No.138 used to look like part of the row of purpose-built late Victorian shops which runs eastward from this point. In fact it was older than these neighbours, seemingly dating from the 1850s, and was built as a private house called Merton Lawn. The site was part of the land owned by the Rutlish charity. By 1860 Merton Lawn was occupied by a Thomas Andrew, and the census of the following year tells us that he was a young Londoner, a merchant, with a younger wife and two small children. They had a general maid and a nursemaid, and two Andrew brothers also lived with them. One can guess that Andrew's trade was in corn, as one brother was a corn salesman and the other worked for a corndealer.

The house was quite substantial: a squarish two-storey brick-built (later rendered) dwelling with a slate roof, it fronted almost directly onto the road. However the 1865 OS map shows a relatively large and attractively laid-out rear garden - making the house's name less incongruous than it might otherwise have been.

Presumably the house had been built as an investment, and early commuters, such as the Andrew brothers seem to have been, would have been the sort of tenant expected. The situation was convenient enough for Wimbledon station, and soon more so for Lower Merton (later Merton Park) station. Merton Lawn may have been the first purpose-built commuter's house here, but was followed at the beginning of the 1860s by the 23 Fairlawn Villas (now Nos 209-253 Kingston Road). These were rather larger than Merton Lawn, and were very rapidly taken by tenants whom trade, profession or other occupation took regularly to London.



*Extract from Ordnance Survey map 1866*

The Andrews did not stay long, and with the next occupant, Horatio Stewart, the house's name changed to just The Lawn. Stewart was followed by William Johnson and his wife, four children, and two maids. Johnson, 61 in 1871, was a naval and military outfitter; his grown-up son was a civil engineer. Again both were likely to have journeyed into town each day.

This family was soon succeeded by an Edward Marsh Stiles and then by Charles Henry Bate, a surgeon. Neither stayed long, and the house was standing empty at the time of the 1881 census. A Charles Groom was the next occupant, and he was followed by an Irishman, Edward Sinclair, who was there for about ten years from 1889. He was an accountant's clerk, 46 in 1891, with a London-born wife, Louisa, ten years younger, and three very small children. The family must have spent some time in New Zealand, as three-year-old Olive had been born there.

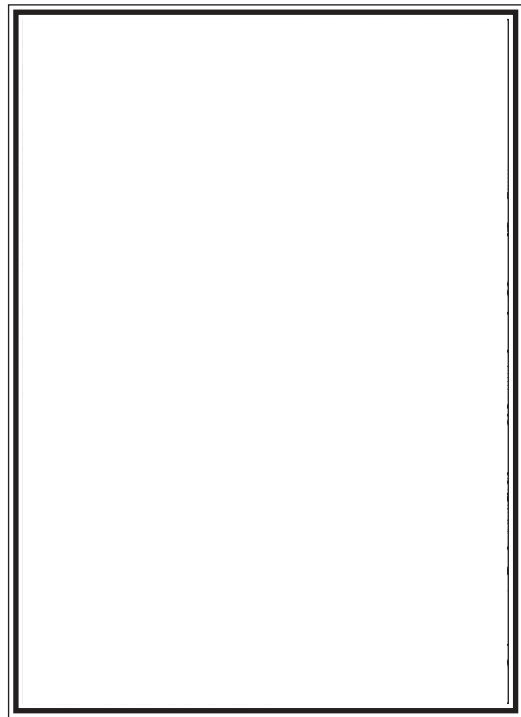
The Lawn was empty again at the end of the century before being occupied by a Thomas Hayward. From 1904-7 he appears in the directories as Thomas Hayward Ltd, busk manufacturers ('busk' as in corset stiffeners?), and this period seems to mark the real end of The Lawn as a private house.

By 1908 it was The Lawn Laundry operated by Mrs Georgina Wade, who soon renamed it the Wade Laundry and remained until 1917. The 1913 OS map shows that several outbuildings had encroached on the garden. A Frank Warner then appeared, but by 1922 Notable Electric Co.Ltd, electric lamp manufacturers, were listed alongside him.

By 1927 the property had been divided into four separate premises, each commercially occupied, but with a private resident apparently co-habiting with what was now the Nelson Electric Co.Ltd.

From then on businesses came and went - or indeed stayed. What had once been the garden was almost covered with outbuildings. For several years in the late 1960s there were nine separate businesses trading at Nos 138, 138a, 138b, 138c and 138d - such as shoe and watch repairs, Arthur the barber, a carpet dealer, builders, spraygun makers, and printers. The number then slowly diminished until in the 1990s a decorators' merchants was the only business in occupation. When this closed a secondhand furniture dealer took a short lease while the developers waited. And then he too left (he moved across the road).

No pre-1997 photographs of The Lawn are known (I took a slide of it only weeks before demolition), though glimpses of one corner can be seen in some postcard views of the old Rutlish School buildings. An undistinguished building with an undistinguished history, The Lawn nevertheless has something to say about life and change in Merton Park.



*Extract from Ordnance Survey map 1970  
with additions of 1973*



*The Lawn, 138, Kingston Road, SW19 c.1990 drawn by John Wallace*

Judith Goodman

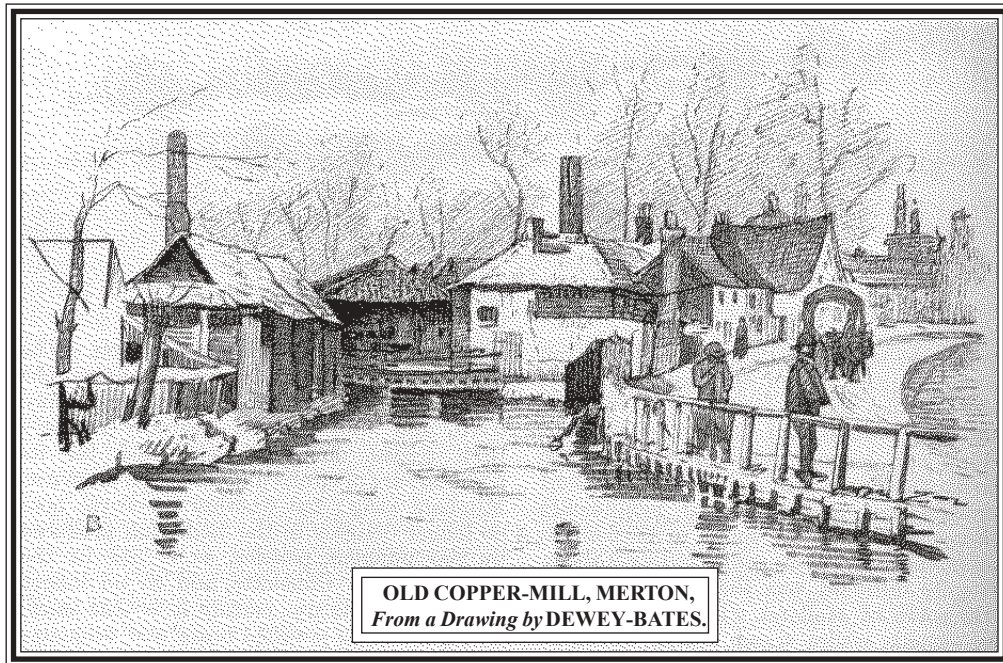


## ‘THE WANDLE GUIDE’

The long-awaited and completely new revision of the ‘Wandle Guide’ has at last appeared. Produced by the Wandle Group, edited by Doug Cluett and John Phillips, it is published by Sutton Leisure Services and sponsored by Thames Water.

I must admit to not having yet used it as a guide, but as a read it seems to do a good job. After a short introduction, the river’s course is covered in four sections, one for each Borough. Then follow several short chapters on separate aspects of the river and its setting. The booklet ends with a bibliography.

History, topography/geology and ecology each get a reasonable share of the text - but don’t throw away your 1974 *The River Wandle* just yet! While the new bibliography has been brought up-to-date, and is broadly-based, I was sorry to lose, for instance, the reference to Dewey-Bates’s quaint account and charming pictures from 1889, and some of the other books and articles listed in 1974. More importantly there is no mention of the excellent specialist Wandle collections held at Croydon, Sutton and Wandsworth.



*from The English Illustrated Magazine 1889*

A serious defect, as with the previous guide, is no proper maps! The sketch on the back cover, repeated (why?) as frontispiece, is of little use. A clear map for each section covered would make the book genuinely what it purports to be - a guide. One can of course use the Wandle Industrial Museum’s Wandle Trail map. But then the problem is that while the Guide follows the river downstream (which is logical, and is certainly the way many prefer to walk it), the Trail goes upstream. So, for maximum enjoyment, you will still need to arm yourself with a good modern street map and/or the OS Explorer map as well as the Guide - and the Trail!

Some irritating editorial slips: for instance, no acknowledgement of the cover picture of what seems to be Beddington Park (title, artist, date?); occasional eccentric spacing and word-breaks throughout; misspelling of Abraham Goldsmid’s name (p38). There are also careless references to Waddon flour mill as a ‘brick factory’ instead of a ‘brick-built factory’ (p14); to a stretch of river being ‘below’ (which sounds like downstream of) the Arndale Centre, when ‘under’ or ‘beneath’ is what is meant (pic. 23); and to a ‘Queen Anne’ terrace of 1723 (p49, ‘early Georgian’ might be better)!

The term ‘clapperboard’ belongs to the film industry, and is *not* a synonym for ‘clapboard’ (p51). It cannot be repeated too often that both naturally obtained and laboratory-made bleaches are ‘chemical’ - as is, of course, every substance. So, on page 65 the reference should be to ‘powerful *synthetic* bleaches’. And Eric Montague points out that Deen City Farm was named after Aberdeen Road, Mitcham, not Aberdeen Road, Thornton Heath!



The works at Beddington is not a sewage 'farm' (p73). I believe that that Victorian term has been out of use for many years. I would also query the reference on page 66 to 'almost the entire working population of Merton' being engaged in the calico trade in the 18th century. Merton's works would have attracted employees from Mitcham, Wimbledon, Tooting and further afield, as well as using local labour. One must be cautious when matching reported numbers of workers against a putative local population.

Most importantly, it is absurd that in a publication brought out in 1997 there is an almost complete avoidance of metric terminology. For young, and future readers, the statistics given will be meaningless. (Oh yes, in the introduction we are told that the river's drop is four metres per mile. Do the writers calculate their cars' consumption in litres per mile? Or perhaps gallons per kilometre?) All measurements in this booklet should be in metric form, with either imperial equivalents in brackets, or, preferably, conversion tables at the beginning.

It must have been an enjoyable task choosing illustrations from the wealth of Wandle material; an attractive selection has been made, and they have been reproduced well. It is good to see some quite modern ones among them. A pity though that the lack of dates in some cases reduces their value - and the captions are not always helpful. Which way are we looking in no.10, for instance? (In the text Ansell's is located on both banks, and Denyer's not mentioned at all.) Where are we in no.9? What are the volunteers doing in no.35?

Something so eagerly waited for is bound to be warmly welcomed. Even if the new Wandle Guide seems less than perfect we enthusiasts will certainly find room for it on our shelves and will slip it into our pockets on future Wandle wanderings.

The Wandle Guide (pp78, 36 b/w illustrations) costs £4.95, and is obtainable at the Sutton Heritage Centre, Honeywood, Carshalton.

JG

## STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS FOR YEAR ENDING 30 SEPTEMBER 1997

<b>Income</b>		<b>Expenditure</b>	
Midland Bank A/C:		Bulletin	140.20
Brought forward 1.10.96	528.16	Hire of Halls	118.00
Subscriptions/donations	603.87	Affiliation fees	50.00
Sale of publications	245.47	Lecturers	60.00
Teas	21.11	Publications	192.35
Interest	<u>7.83</u>	Petty cash expenses	133.41
		Misc. expenses	<u>91.05</u>
			785.01
		Balance at bank	<u>621.43</u>
	<u>£1406.44</u>		<u>£1406.44</u>
N/A Building Society A/C:		Balance at 30 September 1997	
Brought forward 1.10.96	1086.17	Midland Bank	621.43
Interest	<u>21.46</u>	N/A Building Soc	1107.63
	<u>£1107.63</u>	Petty cash in hand	<u>6.08</u>
			<u>£1735.14</u>
Hon. Auditor: Audrey J. Thomas (signed)		26.11.97	
(This statement was too late for the previous Bulletin.)			

## MAY DAY REVELS IN OLD MITCHAM

Until the mid-19th century Mitcham remained in many ways a medieval village, ruled by an oligarchy of Squire and local gentry. A large proportion of the working population was tied to the land by force of economic circumstances or lack of opportunity, and in many cases the field structure and pattern of land tenure had changed little since the Middle Ages. The stewards of the three manors of Ravensbury, Vauxhall and Biggin and Tamworth still held courts baron, at which fealty to their respective lords was sworn by incoming tenants before a 'homage' or jury. Admission fines and heriots were still demanded by the lords of the manors, whilst copyholders firmly defended their rights to turn out their cattle on the Common, or to collect turf and wood for fuel. East and west of the village centre the open fields remained largely unenclosed and were cultivated in typical medieval strips or 'lands', grouped in furlongs and held by numerous farmers and smallholders on a variety of tenures. Crops in these fields were mainly medicinal and aromatic herbs which, as it happened, lent themselves to cultivation in long rows, thus perpetuating an ancient field system which elsewhere in the country had long since given way to more rational patterns of land management.

It is hardly surprising that in a community so rooted in its past old customs should die hard. Both secular and agricultural years were tied to the cycle of the seasons, conveniently punctuated by the feasts of the Christian church and the far older pagan festivals of Spring and Autumn. Since the early Middle Ages the needs of communal agriculture had dictated a time for ploughing and a time for excluding cattle from the sown fields. By common consent, the aftermath in the open fields could not be gleaned or grazed until the last crops had been lifted or the harvest gathered.

As late as the 1870s the election of the parish officers on Easter Sunday and at Michaelmas, and the beating of the bounds at Ascensiontide were still as much part of village life as the ritual burning of the old year - the pre-Christian Celtic feast of Semain - on 5 November, or the celebration of new life and regeneration at the end of winter. Woven into this background there survived ancient folk customs often rendered meaningless to the participants by the passage of time.

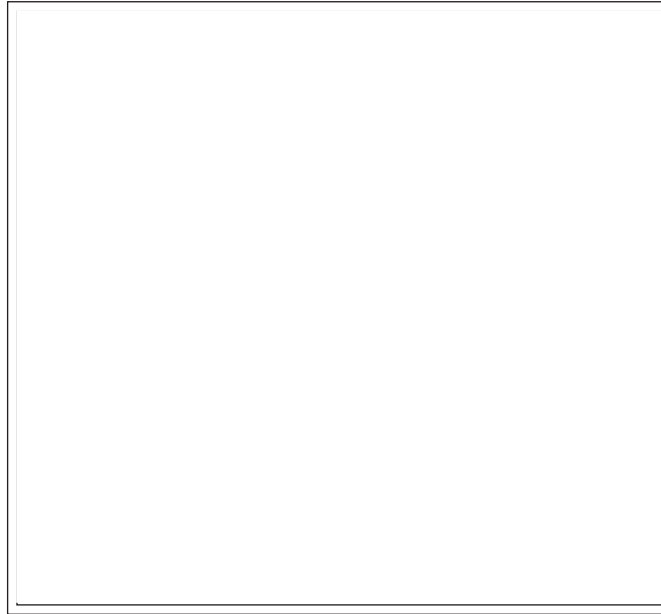
Every year thus had its sequence of events, starting with Easter Monday and its fun and sports on the Green. The annual crowning of the May Queen, shorn of its primitive undertones of nature worship and fertility symbolism - it is, in reality, an aspect of the old pagan festival of Beltane - is even today perpetuated as a pretty ceremony on the Green, giving pleasure to children, parents and onlookers. Strangely enough, the ceremony finds no mention in the recollections of mid-19th century childhood in Mitcham, and may have been a late Victorian revival. A maypole on the Upper Green was mentioned in an 18th-century guide, and would seem to have been a permanent feature of the landscape, but of the rituals attached to it, nothing has come down to us. There are, however, two early photographs of girls in their May dresses - one of a group primly posing for the camera outside the British and Foreign Schools, and the other of dancing round the Maypole on the Lower Green.

More robust and earthy, the May Day revels of the local chimney-sweeps and butchers are by chance well recorded. A sweep, as all brides know, brings luck at a wedding, but how many would blush to know that he represents the May King, pagan symbol of male sexuality? A century and a half ago, in what must have been a grotesque procession, the butchers and chimney-sweeps, with a 'Jack-in-the-Green' or May King, cavorted round the village, the sweeps knocking their brushes on their shovels, and the butchers making a din with marrow bones and cleavers. Melody was added to the percussion by two flute players, who completed the 'band'. The ultimate object of the cacophony was blatantly pecuniary, for in their rounds the revellers took care to include the residences of the principal gentry, where they hoped to collect largesse for their future refreshment. In the 1860s Jack Heaton, a sweep who lived in a cottage in Half Acre Row, off Fieldgate Lane, his wife, three sons and a daughter, presented to the villagers their own version of Jack-in-the-Green.

Tom Francis described the scene, recounting stories he had heard from his father, and it was also recalled in 1940 by George Sheppard, who was born *c.* 1855. According to George, every May Day Jack and the rest of the Heatons, dressed in black to match their faces, issued forth armed with brushes, pans and all the implements of the chimney-sweeping trade. The children danced round the 'maypole', which was their father, inside a six-foot high wooden frame interlaced and covered with greenery. Nothing could be seen of him except his wary eyes and the lower part of his sooty face, where the beer entered. He walked inside his cage from point to point, or rather pint to pint, and sat on a crossboard within the structure while the revels went on around him. Mrs Heaton and the family made a merry din with utensils and voices, while Jack was happy receiving libations. The best part of the show, George Sheppard told his listeners, was Jack's progress in the full - the very full - of the evening. Horses used to shy at the strange sight of a tree trunk zig-zagging across the road towards them and threatening to topple over, first to one side and then the other, in spite of the athletic efforts of Mrs Heaton and her attendant blackamoors.

The symbolism of these capers was undoubtedly lost on performers and onlookers. Unwittingly they reincarnated the Hilaria, ancient Roman spring festivals, in which the young men felled a sacred pine tree to represent Attis (Phrygian counterpart of Adonis) who died after self-emasculaton. The decorated tree was erected in front of the temple to the goddess Kybele on the Palatine Hill, and with the clashing of cymbals, beating of drums and the blowing of flutes and trumpets the 'mourners' joined Kybele in her grief for her dead lover. The resurrection of Attis at the vernal equinox, and his reunion with Kybele was the occasion for feasting and merriment accompanied by Saturnalian licence. The May Day revels of peasant Europe had much in common with the ceremonies of the Kybele-Attis cult. The decorated maypole replaced the Attis tree and the May Queen in her flower-decked arbour and her spouse the Green Man recalled the sacred marriage of their Romano/Phrygian prototypes. In England it was common for the May King to be represented by a chimney-sweep hidden in a framework covered with leaves, and it was this custom that Jack Heaton, staggering from pub to pub in the 1860s, was more than happy to preserve.

E N Montague



*'Planting the village maypole'*

This picture is taken from *Dates And Time* by Lionel M. Munby, British Association for Local History, 1997 (£8), an excellent new publication.

### **TRAMLINK UPDATE**

Very little so far has taken place in Merton. The various sites continually have their fences repaired and even Morden Road Station has finally been fenced off. The platform lights here were still on every night and, as I haven't checked recently, they may still be so.

The West Croydon line has been cut from the Sutton line at Wimbledon Station, where part of the track from platform 10 has been removed. The part to be used by the trams will either have to have the platform lowered or the track bed raised due to the low entry to the trams themselves.

All footbridges along the line are to be removed due to the overhead electric cable, and replaced with track level crossings. Other preliminary work is taking place around Kingston Road and Dundonald Road crossing, which is probably due to securing all the services - gas, electric and telephone - that run here. Some, I believe, are very close to the surface.

Next month I am planning to cycle along the entire route and have a look at the progress.

David Luff



## GEORGE HAITÉ OF MITCHAM

A volume in the V & A Colour Books series called *Designs For Shawls* (pub. 1988) caught my eye not long ago in a secondhand bookshop. I was hoping for a mention of the Wandle, and was pleased to find the book entirely devoted to someone with impeccable local connections, though (I am ashamed to say) I had never heard of him. For George Haité (1825-71) was born in Mitcham, the son of a calico printer and nephew of a textile designer.

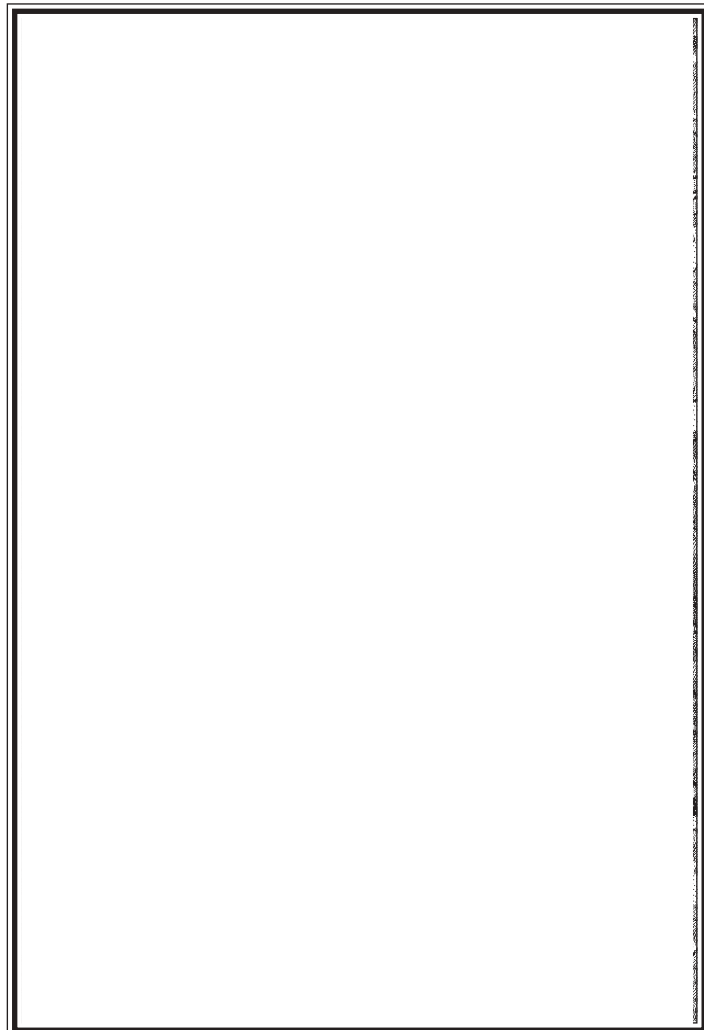
It is likely that Haité was apprenticed as a youth at Swaisland's printworks at Crayford, Kent. (The site survives as a small industrial estate called Swaisland Drive, which is just downstream on the Cray from Crayford's other historic printworks, still operational as David Evans & Co's silk-printing works.) It certainly seems that he did designs for Swaisland's through the 1840s and 50s.

By 1860 he had returned to Mitcham, with his wife (he married in 1853), and remained there for the rest of his life. It is thought that he provided designs for a number of the shawl printers around Mitcham and elsewhere in the Wandle valley. 'Cashmere' patterns were then in vogue, loosely based on traditional Indo-Persian motifs. According to his son, also a designer, Haité became disgusted by having to "vitate his taste and set his judgement in defiance" by working as market and fashion dictated.

Haité died of smallpox in Mitcham in July 1871 at the age of 45. Sixty of his designs were later presented to the V & A by his son, and more than 200 to the Paisley museum by his granddaughter, though he is not known to have worked for any Scottish manufacturer. The fact that so many designs were in the possession of his family suggests that Haité worked mostly as a freelance designer.

The book consists of a short biographical introduction and 32 colour plates of Haité's opulent designs. (No member will be surprised that the name E.N.Montague appears in the Acknowledgements in this book!)

JG



## THE LOCKS OF MERTON (PART IV)

This is the concluding article on this enterprising yet little known family. Earlier instalments, (Bulletins 119, 121, 123) dealt more with the family's interests and events outside Merton but it is to be hoped that this article will stimulate further research into their connections in the area.

Even before the Dissolution of the monasteries, the Loks were involved with acquiring property in Merton. As early as 1487, six mercers of London, including Thomas Lok (d 1507) were in possession of land and meadows in the ville, together with a freehold messuage and adjoining garden. Thomas appears to have become the main holder of this property in 1491. In that year he also acquired various copyholds in Merton, including *Gardeners* in *Est Strete*, a yard called *Palfreymans* and a 'tenement with garden and three selions of land' called *Brasteds*<sup>1</sup>. He obtained several more copyholds in 1493, and in 1497 added an important holding with considerable lands belonging to it. However, a year later he had sold all his copyholds in Merton apart from *Gardeners* and *Palfreymans*.

According to Manning and Bray, John Lok (d 1519) and his wife Jane were enfeoffed in 1499 of the estate which subsequently became *Church House*.<sup>2</sup> Thomas reappears in 1501 when he regained possession of *Brasteds*, and in 1506 was granted the copyhold of a toft called *Caleys* (which had been described in the court roll of 1497 as being 'next to *le Rush*'). In October 1506, Thomas and his wife Joan obtained a messuage with garden and one acre of land adjoining called *Berewykes*. On Thomas's death in the following year, their son William (d 1550) inherited all the copyholds acquired by his father, together with a freehold messuage and garden called *Ffylpottes*.

On his own account William Lok secured an acre of land in 1515 in *Beselfeld*, next to *le Shepehouse*, which consolidated other land he held there. In 1521 William negotiated with Merton Priory to obtain a lease of *Brykehouse Closes* with other closes containing an acre and a barn, and a further lease in 1532 of a tenement called *Merton Holts* with closes and pastures. The latter eventually became known as Merton Hall Farm, north and north-west of the Rush, including land in Wimbledon. He bought *Merton Holts* in 1548, when it was described as a messuage with garden and barn, 30 acres of arable land, 30 acres of meadow, 40 acres of pasture, 20 acres of woods, 20 acres of moorland, 40 acres of heath and furze plus 20 shillings rent in Martyn.<sup>3</sup> In the meantime he had acquired four more copyhold tenements in Merton between 1542 and 1546.

Henry VIII was short of money to fight his war with France and William Lok took the opportunity to convert his leases with various monasteries into 'freeholds' as soon as they were dissolved. He acquired in the City properties which were owned by Elsing Spital priory; the holdings of Clerkenwell Nunnery in Tottenham, Middlesex, as well as those from Merton Priory. In addition he owned other buildings in the City and Southwark and land in Wimbledon and Kingston.

William Lok died on 24 August 1550 and his 'freehold' properties in Merton passed as directed to Matthew, a surviving son by an earlier marriage but he died early in 1552. They then passed to his half-brother, Thomas II. The copyholds went to the youngest son Michael according to the custom of the manor.

Most of the brothers were mercers, trading in London, but now looking for new markets. Michael went to Spain in 1552 to observe existing trade with both the West and the East Indies. Another brother, John, as a ship's captain, sailed to the Levant in March 1553<sup>4</sup>. On the 14 March 1553 the Rectory of Merton was granted to Thomas II and Mary Lock 'for ever' in consideration of the sum of £359.

Thomas and Mary must have looked forward to bringing up their family in a country community supporting the new religion in Merton church. In 1552 the Second Prayer Book had been published which removed many Roman practices. In 1553 Edward VI died, Mary seized the throne of England in July and catholic orthodoxy was reintroduced into all churches. The Locks were still living in London and Thomas, together with his brother-in-law Anthony Hickman (see Bulletin No. 123), was arrested and imprisoned for aiding Protestants to leave the country. In October 1555, when Thomas was in the Fleet prison, his brother Michael surrendered most of the Merton and Wimbledon properties to Thomas, and in the following April, when Thomas was released from prison, the two remaining copyholds in Merton.

On their release from prison in 1556, Hickman went into exile but Thomas could not do likewise because his wife Mary refused to travel. Thomas, "being constrained for fear of further trouble ... was so grieved in mind thereat, that he died shortly after with seven of his children."<sup>5</sup> A poor wheat harvest in 1555 created a dearth of food and in the following year the harvest was even worse, causing many deaths through famine. The harvest of 1557 was good but an influenza epidemic resulted in high mortality in 1557 and 1558. When Thomas died in October 1556, the Merton freehold properties were left to his eldest surviving son William II then aged 11, though his mother Mary was granted a life interest. As was customary, the copyholds passed to his youngest son, Thomas III, born posthumously, and Thomas Woodnett, a neighbour, was appointed guardian in September 1557. In 1558 William II died, while his mother was still running the estates. On her death in 1579, her next eldest surviving son, Matthew inherited the freeholds in Merton. He had already inherited the copyholds on the death of his youngest brother Thomas III in 1576. By 1592 he was holding all his grandfather's estates in London, Merton, Kingston and Wimbledon.

Matthew Locke was appointed Reeve of the manorial court in the 1590s as well as being lay rector of the parish. There are references to 'Matthew Locke of Merton Abbey'<sup>6</sup>, but Gregory Lovell leased 'Merton Abbey' from the Crown from 1568 until his death in 1597 and is likely to have entertained Queen Elizabeth I there in 1571<sup>7</sup>. Matthew Locke had already surrendered two copyhold properties in Merton to his wife Margaret before his death in 1599, and she was also granted a life interest in the freehold properties. She used the title 'Dame of Merton' and soon became the wife of Thomas Muschamp who was appointed guardian of her youngest son, 10 year old William III who had inherited the remaining copyhold properties. The eldest son, Thomas IV, inherited the substantial freehold estates in Merton and held property in London and Kingston. In 1602 he sold Chapel Farm in Kingston which included land spread over a wide area between Surbiton and Norbiton extending to 300 acres. In 1611 another 390 acres in Kingston were sold, and in 1623 two messuages in London. It is not known why he found it necessary to dispose of this property. His mother's death was presented at the manorial court in 1626 when Thomas succeeded to the freeholds and the two copyholds she held. He also received further property in London in which she had had a life interest. Thomas was now receiving income as lay rector but the sales continued. In 1634 he sold 4 acres of land in Tottenham, Middlesex. This was land first acquired by his great-grandfather almost a century earlier<sup>8</sup>. Further sales of property in London followed in 1640 and in November 1643 he mortgaged the Rectory, church tithes and other estates in Merton to Katherine Highlord and sold in 1646<sup>9</sup>.

William Locke III was in possession of his father's considerable estate in Wimbledon and around 1614 he instigated the exchange of tenurial strips in the large open field which led to the enclosure of land<sup>10</sup>. This enabled the consolidation of small holdings into larger ones and resulted in more efficient tillage to produce more food. William was regarded as 'a friend' by others of the local gentry. Some enclosures resulted in the conversion of arable land into pasture which required fewer labourers. Tenants, commoners and cottagers (who had been ploughmen) could lose employment, forcing the movement of labour into London. William Locke prospered and built himself a new mansion at Southside on the Common (unenclosed). About 1660 he enlarged his mansion by building a serving area at the rear and dividing the loft into five chambers (for additional servants?). He died in 1664 and after the death of Susanna his wife in 1674, the house passed to their son Thomas V who sold it in 1679. Thus ended the recorded history of the Locke family, with the sale of land first acquired by his great-great-great-grandfather almost two centuries earlier.

Lionel Green

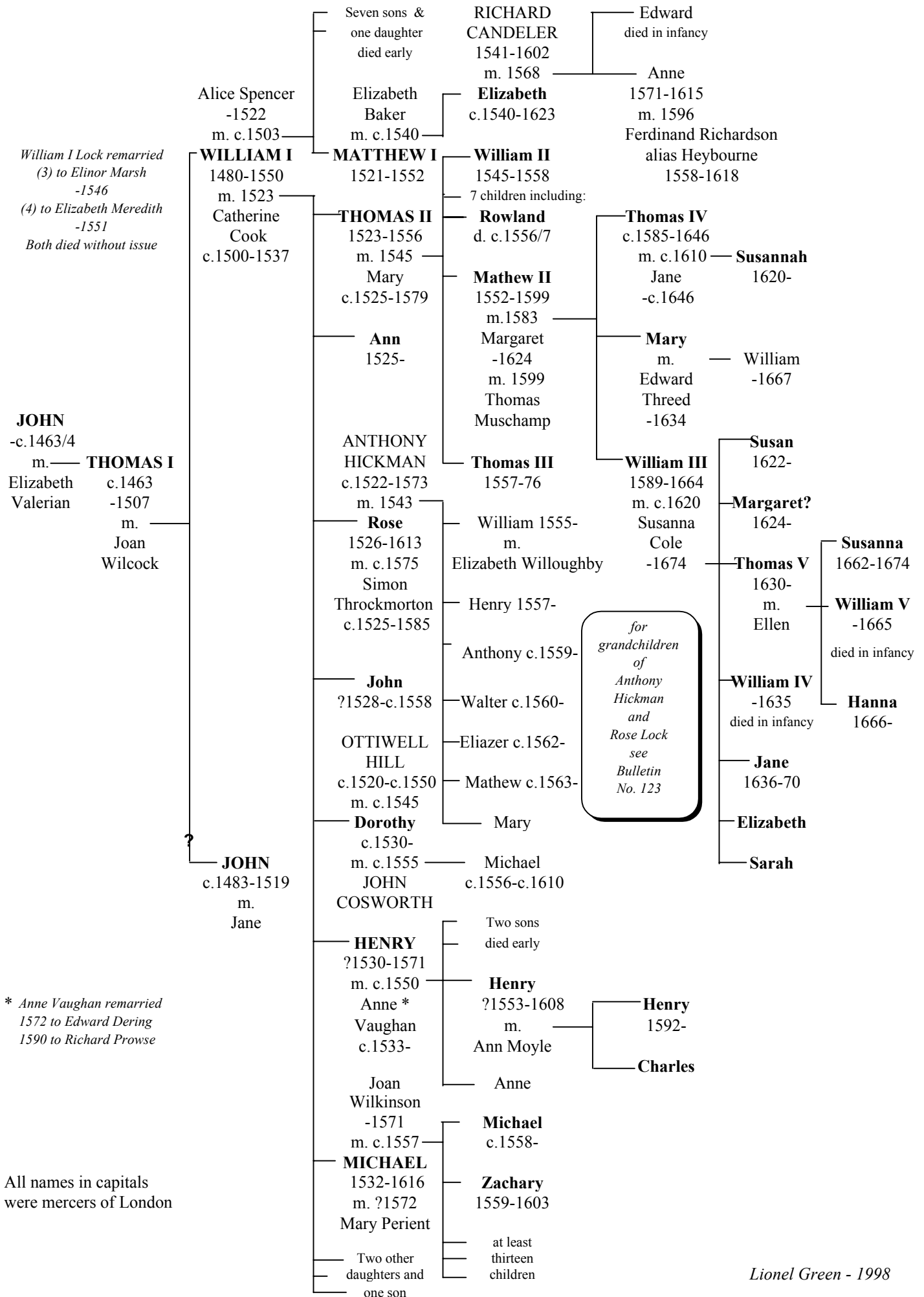
Peter Hopkins

#### Footnotes.

- <sup>1</sup> Merton Court Rolls - Surrey Record Office Zs286. A Selion was land dividing the open fields and its area depended on the custom of the manor.
- <sup>2</sup> Manning & Bray - *History of Surrey* I 265.
- <sup>3</sup> Surrey Fines 1548 - 518/40 - SRS XLV/XLVI (1946) p 73.
- <sup>4</sup> R Hackluyt *The Principal Navigation...*(1589) II i 101-2; II ii 14-23; 52-4.
- <sup>5</sup> BL Add MS 43827 fo 16.
- <sup>6</sup> SxAC 56, p167; 57 p215.
- <sup>7</sup> D Lysons *Environs of London...* 1792 I p347n.
- <sup>8</sup> VCH Mddx. v, 331; Cal Pat. 1558-60 No 438-9.
- <sup>9</sup> VCH Sy. iv, 68; Manning and Bray I 263, 265. (refers in error to John Lock)
- <sup>10</sup> R Milward. pers. com.



# A POSSIBLE GENEALOGICAL TREE OF THE LOKS, LOCKS AND LOCKES



*William I Lock remarried (3) to Elinor Marsh -1546 (4) to Elizabeth Meredith -1551 Both died without issue*

*\* Anne Vaughan remarried 1572 to Edward Dering 1590 to Richard Prowse*

All names in capitals were mercers of London

## BRIEF REPORTS

- ◆ The leather fittings in the new British Library have been winning praise in the press. This is of course all the work of **Connolly Leather Ltd.** This company, which occupied Merton Mill at Wandle Bank SW19 for most of the 20th century, has for many years supplied high quality leather to the top end of the motor trade, and other prominent customers. For more information see 'Merton Mills and Wandlebank House', *Surrey Archaeological Collections* **83** (1996) pp137-57, by our Chairman Eric Montague.
- ◆ It seemed last year that the *Prince of Wales* in Morden Road, Merton, a Young's pub, would be closed, despite vigorous appeals from Thames Television's 'The Bill' (who otherwise drink at the 'Bill' Morris at Merton Abbey Mills!). However Young's suddenly repented. This plain but pleasant 19th-century pub has been reborn as the *Princess of Wales*, in tribute to Diana. By a happy inspiration the new sign depicts a rose, presumably the one named 'Princess of Wales'.
- ◆ **Local History Publications**, 316 Green Lane, Streatham, SW16 3AS is a small company that specialises in reprints under local headings from old topographical works, such as Lysons, Aubrey and Brayley, and from early directories and periodicals. They also publish Eric Overton's excellent *Guide to the Medieval Manor*. Price-list on application.
- ◆ Barbara Webb of New Malden, who contributed an intriguing little tale from the 19th century to our last issue, has published a well-researched booklet called **Millais and the Hogsmill River**, subtitled "the story of a search to find where Sir John Millais painted the background of 'Ophelia'". The satisfying piece of detective work that forms the first part is followed by directions for a walk in the footsteps of the artist and his friend Holman Hunt. The booklet (40pp, illustrations and maps) costs £2.25 at Kingston Museum.
- ◆ Some members may have heard, late last year, an entertaining Radio 4 Kaleidoscope programme in which Paul Vaughan, the presenter, revisited scenes of his childhood, in Malden Way, and at **Raynes Park County Boys' School** (now Raynes Park High). Vaughan was there in the days of the first headmaster, the deeply eccentric Mr Garrett (who persuaded W.H. Auden to write the school song). Robert Robinson was another of Garrett's pupils. Both men have written memoirs which include recollections of the school. *Something in Linoleum* by Paul Vaughan, and *Skip All That* by Robert Robinson (recently serialised on Radio 4) are both available in paperback.
- ◆ **David Evans & Company**, the silk printers of Crayford, are running a series of one-day block printing demonstrations this year, including the Saturdays 4 April, 4 July and 3 October. Ring 01322 559401 for information and booking. Crayford can be reached by train from Waterloo (east) or London Bridge. Or the 726 Heathrow-Dartford (if it has not been withdrawn) passes close by.

### FORTHCOMING PUBLICATIONS

Merton Historical Society publications in preparation at the moment include:-

The Railways of Merton

A History of Lord Nelson's Merton Place

The Patent Steam Washing Factory at Phipps Bridge Mitcham

The Parish of Merton in 1844 - The Tithe Apportionment Map

Morden in 1838 - The Tithe Apportionment Map

Life at The Cranmers, Mitcham before the 1914-18 War

Stane Street and the Roman Invasion

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.

*Printed by Peter Hopkins*