



**PRESIDENT:**  
**VICE PRESIDENTS:** Eric Montague and William Rudd  
**CHAIR:** David Haunton

BULLETIN No. 185

MARCH 2013

### BILL RUDD'S MORDEN



*Home deliveries by the Direct Mineral Water Supply Company,  
 photographed by Bill in 1957 in Easby Crescent, where he lived at the time.*

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## PROGRAMME MARCH – JUNE

**Saturday 16 March 2.30pm**

**Christ Church Hall, Colliers Wood**

**‘Archaeology of the Thameslink Project’**

An illustrated talk by **Peter Moore**, Director of Pre-Construct Archaeology

**Saturday 27 April 2.30pm**

**Christ Church Hall, Colliers Wood**

**‘London Film’**

An illustrated talk by **Ian Christie**, Professor of Film and Media History, Birkbeck College

*Christ Church Hall is next to the church, in Christchurch Road, 250m from Colliers Wood Underground station. Limited parking at the hall, but plenty in nearby streets or at the Tandem Centre, 200m south. Buses 152, 200 and 470 pass the door.*

**Visitors are welcome to attend our talks. Entry £2.**

**Saturday 18 May 1.30pm**

**Visit to Whitechapel Bell Foundry**

Limited numbers for this visit. Book with Bea. £12 with booking.

*Meet outside 34 Whitechapel Road at 1.15pm. The nearest Underground station is Aldgate East.*

**Wednesday 19 June**

**Visit to historic East Grinstead**

For further details and to book call David Haunton.

*Meet at East Grinstead station at 11am for a guided tour, which includes a visit to Sackville House (1520). No charge.*

## A MITCHAM HOME GUARD MEMORIAL

The 57<sup>th</sup> Surrey Batt'n, Home Guard, was based at the Towers Creameries, Mitcham, (now rebuilt as The Meadows housing estate on Mitcham Common at the junction of Commonsides East and Windmill Road). On the night of 16 April 1941 a parachute mine landed on the Towers Creameries. The Home Guard members on duty thought it was a German soldier on the end of the parachute and they went towards it, but it was a land mine. It blew up, killing 13 men outright, including a lieutenant. One man died the following day and another lieutenant died two days afterwards (19 April). This one bomb caused 15 fatalities. The military gravestones to 11 of the men are in London Road cemetery, Mitcham.

A wooden memorial plaque to these men was placed in the re-built Towers Creameries building entrance lobby in 1962. After Towers Creameries ceased business on the site, the buildings had other light industrial uses. The buildings were completely empty in 1996 and vandalism was starting to take place, so the memorial plaque was removed and placed in the Royal British Legion building in St Mark's Road, Mitcham.

Now that the site has been completely re-developed as The Meadows residential complex, a replica plaque has been affixed outdoors overlooking a small memorial garden at the front of the site. The plaque was unveiled and blessed on 14 December 2012 in the presence of Rev Jane Roberts from the Church of the Ascension, Mitcham, Siobhain McDonagh, MP., David Williams (the Mayor of Merton), Allan Barley (Chairman of the Royal British Legion Branch, Mitcham) and Bill Bumstead, whose twin brother John was seriously injured in the explosion. The unveiling ceremony was performed in pouring rain and among the 50 or so people present were a number of members of Merton Historical Society. There was also a group of children from Sherwood Primary School.

Over a year ago I raised the idea with the developers of having a replacement plaque on the site, following a suggestion to Merton Historical Society by Bill Bumstead via Irene Bain, one of our members. I was informed that although



the developers were in agreement with the idea, the work would be delayed until most of the properties on the site were completed and occupied. Since then, detailed arrangements for the unveiling ceremony were made by the Mitcham Common Preservation Society and the Royal British Legion.

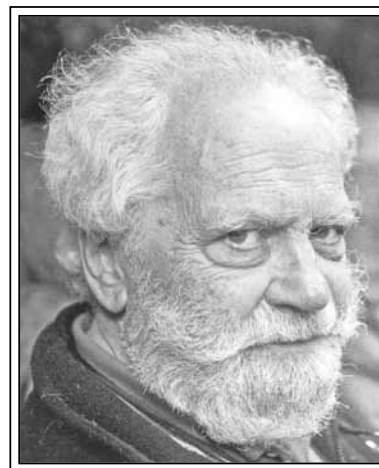
Personally, I am pleased that I played a small part in getting a commemorative plaque re-instated on the site of this wartime disaster in Mitcham.

**Tony Scott**

### **DENNIS TURNER 1932 – 2013**

Dennis Turner was very active in Merton Historical Society in its earliest days. He led a number of archaeological digs in the 1950s and 1960s and introduced several of our longer-standing members to the skills of archaeology.

One such person was Eric Montague who recalled that Dennis Turner led an excavation of the disused Liberty's site at Merton looking for remains of the Priory outbuildings. He used this excavation, extending over many seasons, to teach members of MHS, including Eric, the practical techniques of archaeology. Dennis and his team of volunteers' work at Merton was followed by that of Scott McCracken, a professional archaeologist, who extended the excavation area when the site was cleared for building Merantun Way.



Dennis also led the excavation of the Short Batsworth site just off Church Road, Mitcham, which was a pre-historic burial site. The excavation lasted for two or three seasons and the team was totally composed of amateurs, some from Merton Historical Society and some from the Carshalton Archaeological Society, of which Dennis was a member. The excavation was done prior to the building of part of the Phipps Bridge Estate.

Dennis also led an excavation of the site of Mitcham Grove, Mitcham, which was close to the point where London Road crosses the River Wandle, before the construction of the Octavia Close/ Rawnsley Avenue estate. Another excavation undertaken was that of the remains of Sir Julius Caesar's house in London Road, Mitcham, which resulted in the publication of a small booklet of the results, jointly with Eric Montague. Dennis was also active in the excavation of the Roman Stane Street in Morden Park.

Reports of most of these excavations were published in the *Surrey Archaeological Collections*. The many artefacts that were found were originally housed in the Merton Historical Society's store but when a move into smaller premises was dictated, many of the items were transferred to the Museum of London.

During the 1970s Dennis Turner and his family moved to mid-Surrey and so excavation in Merton ceased. Dennis continued to be an authority on all aspects of Surrey's history and an important member of the Surrey Archaeological Society and was latterly their President

In recent years I used to see Dennis four times a year at Merton Council's Conservation Areas Advisory Committee meetings; he represented Surrey Archaeological Society and I represented MHS.

Dennis Turner died in mid-January after a short illness and his archaeological knowledge and experience will be greatly missed.

**Tony Scott**

### **HOT OFF THE PRESS!**

Two more *Local History Notes* are now available.

No. 34: ***Morden in 1910: The Land Valuation Records ('Lloyd George's Domesday')***, transcribed and introduced by Rosemary Turner, provides a unique view of Morden just before it was overwhelmed by suburbia. Every property, including building plots, is listed, with details of owner, occupier, leases and rents. Many properties have full descriptions, some with plans. The original maps are missing but Rosemary has reconstructed them and plotted each property onto the 1912 OS map. 68 pages at just £2.95 (£2.40 to members) + £1.10 postage.

No. 35: ***Memories of Morden between the Wars***, by Betty Whittick, relives her childhood in Garth Road. Those who heard Betty at our September 'Chat Show', or have listened to snippets on our website, have already had a foretaste of these fascinating reminiscences. 8 pages with maps and photos at 50p (40p members) + 70p postage.

Available at indoor meetings or from our Publications Secretary, Peter Hopkins, at 57 Templecombe Way, Morden, Surrey SM4 4JF,

## ‘A HISTORY OF THE NELSON HOSPITAL’

After the Annual General Meeting on 10 November Bea Oliver, who as well as being on the MHS committee is co-chairman of the Guild of Friends of the Nelson Hospital, gave us a talk about its history – a timely subject as the hospital is even now shrouded in hoardings and awaiting its rebirth in a different form. The origin of the hospital was the South Wimbledon, Merton & District Cottage Hospital which opened at 173 Merton Road, Wimbledon, in May 1900 with the modest provision of six beds and two cots. The nurses slept on the top floor and ate in the basement; the first and second floors were the wards; and the stable loft served as mortuary. Two more beds were added before the end of the year, and more than 100 patients were treated in the first 12 months. The local population was growing, and it was soon clear that a larger and better equipped hospital would be needed. In 1905 the centenary of Trafalgar provided a focus for fund-raising to honour the memory of Admiral Nelson. In 1910 a site in Kingston Road, Merton, was acquired from the trustees of the Rutlish Charity. This purchase, and the first part of the building – three linked pavilions – cost £12000. The Duchess of Sutherland laid the foundation stone in 1911,\* and Princess Louise, Duchess of Argyll, formally opened the hospital in June 1912. Bea told us that the princess remained a patron for the rest of her life.

By this time the old hospital had 12 beds and was treating hundreds of ill and injured patients each year, and though the new building opened with 28 beds, seven more were immediately added. During the Great War the Nelson served as a relief to the Royal Herbert Hospital at Woolwich, and it went on to treat many ex-servicemen orthopaedic patients.

In 1920 579 in-patients, and 729 ‘casualties’, who notched up 5,882 attendances, were treated. An extension was needed. The Merton War Memorial Fund rose to the occasion and raised the money. This first extension was opened in May 1922 by Admiral Sir F C Doveton Sturdee. The ward within was named ‘Falkland’ after the admiral’s wartime action in the South Atlantic. There were also new facilities for X-ray, massage and electrical treatment, and in 1925 the Nelson officially became a ‘Small General Hospital’.

From 1910 to 1947, except during the war years, an annual Charity Cricket Match, organised by the Surrey and England batsman Jack Hobbs, raised money for the hospital.

The next extension was the maternity wing. Several cottages and an off-licence were replaced by this large new building, that included two labour wards, a nursery, and facilities for ante-natal and child welfare clinics. It was opened in 1931 by Mrs Stanley Baldwin.

And the hospital continued to expand, and to improve its facilities. For instance, in 1943 Blakesley, a large house on the west side of the Nelson, was taken over as a nurses’ home, and later on it housed the physiotherapy department.

Throughout this time the Nelson depended on volunteers to help the administration, and in practical ways, such as the work of the Ladies’ Mending Group. Groceries, eggs, fruit and vegetables, magazines and books, linen, flowers, and cakes came in from the public and local traders every week, and were acknowledged in the local newspaper. In 1930 the annual report recorded 80 pounds of Bovril received.

All this changed of course in 1948 when the National Health Service was launched. Nevertheless the Nelson Hospital League of Friends was formed in 1954 to provide extra comforts and small necessities for patients, and to raise money for the purchase of equipment. In recent years there have been many more changes at the Nelson, and now it is to be reborn as a Local Care Centre.

Bea told us that Lilian Grumbridge of Morden, now in her 90s, remembered being taken to the Nelson, with a broken arm, in a horse-drawn cart at the age of five. Probably most of the audience had had treatment, surgery or tests at some time at the Nelson, and it is always fondly spoken of by local people.

Bea had much interesting material – publications, cuttings and documents, which we were able to inspect before and after her talk, which was enthusiastically received.

\* The ceremonial silver trowel she used is on display in the museum at Dunrobin Castle, Sutherland. JG



*The architect's drawing of the 1931 maternity wing.  
This extension was enlarged in 1949.*

## ‘THE HISTORY OF THE CHRISTMAS CARD’

Anna Flood, an archivist at the British Postal Museum and Archive (BPMA) was the speaker at our meeting on 8 December. She told us that until the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century New Year was a more significant festival than Christmas; New Year cards had long been popular in France and Germany, and appeared in Britain in the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

What is believed to be the first Christmas card was commissioned by Sir Henry Cole, who was later a prominent contributor to the Great Exhibition of 1851, and first director of the South Kensington Museum (later the V&A). The design showed a cheery family gathering, and was issued in 1843 from a Bond Street shop part-owned by ‘Felix Summerley’ (a pseudonym of Cole’s), being printed in Holborn from a drawing by John Calcott Horsley RA, and hand-coloured. Only 14 of these original cards are known to exist, though the design was reproduced in 1879.



It was another 20 years after Cole’s card before pre-printed Christmas cards appeared on the market. Some of the firms that produced them were already printing playing cards, and were well placed for this development. Most printing was done in Germany, where quality was considered superior, and some German firms maintained offices in London. One firm that began production in 1871 lasted until the second World War: that was Raphael Tuck (originally Tutch).

The introduction of the penny post (Cole had a hand in this too) helped popularise the sending of cards. Early cards followed Cole’s original one, being printed on pasteboard, on one side only, and about the size of a calling card. Many were printed in black-and white or sepia and hand-coloured. People often adapted visiting cards by glueing tinsel, cotton lace, cut-paper lace, feathers or tiny ornaments onto them, and haberdashers sold ‘scraps’ for this purpose. In fact, throughout the Victorian period Christmas cards were often very like the already-popular Valentine cards. From the beginning, despite their pagan associations, images of holly, ivy and mistletoe were popular, as, in contrast, was the robin, whose red breast symbolised Christ’s blood.

With the development of chromolithography mass production arrived. The more colours the more expensive the final product. The best manufacturers saw the Christmas card as a way to offer small works of fine art to the masses, small affordable luxuries. Raphael Tuck & Sons, for instance, ran competitions to raise the standard of design.

Embellishment reached new levels with ‘frillies’, cards adorned with silk fringes, as well as velvet and beads, and, from 1867, glitter, made by bursting a fine glass blown bubble. At its most extreme decoration could become macabre – who would want to receive a card with a dead bird attached?

There were all kinds of novelties: expensive perfumed cards; shaped cards (e.g. fans or gloves); puzzle cards; pull-tab cards (rather fragile); ‘hold to light’ cards (with pictured windows that lit up in front of a light); 3D cards; even celluloid cards. Father Christmas appeared, and as early as the 1860s was depicted much as he is today. Comic cards began to appear towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Christmas cards were popular material for scrapbooks and albums, and one famous collector assembled 163,000 cards in 700 volumes. With the postcard craze of the 1890s and 1900s the Christmas postcard also became very popular.

Deliveries on Christmas Day itself continued as late as 1960, but the first ‘Post Early’ plea was issued by the Postmaster General in 1881.

Cards sent from the trenches in the first World War were sometimes jokey, but often surprisingly pretty – some were decorated with embroidered flowers – and carried messages of hope and love. In the 1939-45 war National Savings issued free cards to purchasers of savings stamps. In 1941 the Airgraph was launched. Senders wrote their message on a standard illustrated form at their post office. This was photographed; the negative was dispatched by airmail; and the print was made at the destination. The Airgraph’s disadvantages were its small size, and its lack of privacy – there was no envelope.

Anna showed us a fine selection of images – sentimental, amorous, topical, witty, cheeky and so on – and encouraged us to look out for interesting specimens at ephemera fairs, charity shops and ebay, while warning that good quality ones are hard to find, and rare ones are just that. She was thanked for an informative and entertaining talk.

[The BPMA is at Freeling House, Phoenix Place, WC1X 0DL; tel: 020 7239 2570; [www.postalheritage.org.uk](http://www.postalheritage.org.uk)]

**Judith Goodman**

## ‘HERALDRY – MOSTLY LOCAL’

Sixteen members and visitors braved the snow and the cold on 19 January to hear our Chair, David Haunton, enthuse on the subject of heraldry. David admitted that he had no professional expertise in the subject, but had been fascinated by it since childhood – all those tales of Robin Hood – and Woolworth’s model knights!

The earliest known representation of an armorial device is of Geoffrey Plantagenet, father of Henry II. His tomb of 1151 has a four-inch plaque of him holding a shield with the device of ‘six gold lioncels on blue’. At this period most Europeans were illiterate, so a pictorial depiction was more easily understood than a written one. Such a shield would not have enabled a knight to pick an opponent – it would not be recognisable until the combatants were already at close range. Its main function was display. The image of Sir Geoffrey Luttrell in the famous 14<sup>th</sup>-century Luttrell Psalter shows him and his horse covered with depictions of his arms – not just on his shield but on every item he wore or held. Dressed for a tournament no-one could doubt his wealth.

Heralds, from whom heraldry takes its name, were originally messengers between opposing forces, wearing bright tabards to show they were not legitimate targets of war. Gradually they built up lists of coats of arms, to help identify the dead after a battle. Eventually they became regulators of the whole area of legitimacy in arms. The College of Arms is not a State-controlled office but a private organisation.

David showed slides of some of the earliest designs, from the Dering Roll of 1270. They used a limited range of colours (see below). Patterns used mainly straight lines, but also included stylised figures of animals. Later heralds made ‘Visitations’ round entire counties, to assess whether each arms-bearer was so entitled. To help in the arguments, they kept pedigrees from c.1450 onwards, and two Fenwick Rolls survive from that time.

Heraldry can seem confusing until one remembers that a shield is always described from the viewpoint of the **bearer**, not the observer, so *dexter* describes the right-hand side of the bearer, and *sinister* his left-hand side. The words for the colours or ‘tinctures’ are mostly of Norman-French origin – *or* (gold), *argent* (silver), *azure* (blue), *vert* (green), *sable* (black) – but why *gules* for red? Various furs are also used.

The shield was divided by straight lines – *fess* (horizontal), *pale* (vertical), *bend* (diagonal) – but then things become complicated with *barry-bendy* and *paly-bendy* and a multitude of other such terms! Animals devices might be in various positions – lions could be *dormant*, *couchant*, *sejant*, *statant*, *passant*, *salient*, *rampant*, &c. There are over 50 different variants on the cross!

David was impressed by the way a complex shield could be described with such economy of words – for example the Scottish arms – *or, a lion rampant gules, armed and langued azure, within a double tressure flory counter flory of the second!* Some devices made use of puns or ‘canting’ – the late Queen Mother’s family of Bowes-Lyon used lions and bows, while Shakespeare had a brandished lance for his device.

David showed several local examples. The arms of the London Borough of Merton [*depicted right*] incorporate devices from earlier times. The central fret (or trellis) is taken from what is believed to have been the device of Merton priory – *Or fretty azure, with eagles argent* at the crossings of the fret. The lion is from the arms of the Garths, lords of the manor of Morden; the double-headed imperial eagle is associated with the so-called Caesar’s Camp; and the crossed keys and sword are the symbols of the patron saints of Mitcham, Peter and Paul. The helmet of the crest is surmounted by a mural crown (representing a city wall, used by all boroughs), with another Merton priory fret, three



Garth

sprigs of Mitcham lavender, and a Cornish chough (from the arms of Thomas Cromwell, earl of Essex, who received the former archiepiscopal manor of Wimbledon from Henry VIII, though the chough is also associated with Thomas Becket). The supporters are the Garth lion and Wimbledon’s imperial eagle. These had appeared on the respective arms of the former authorities – Merton & Morden, Mitcham and Wimbledon.



In the 19<sup>th</sup> century it became customary to hang ‘hatchments’ displaying the arms of a deceased person on the outside of a house following a death, and these were later hung in the parish church. David showed us various hatchments in St Mary’s Merton, the most famous – and the most gaudy! – being that of Nelson. The arms of deceased gentry often appear on tombs and gravestones – the ‘ledgerstones’ in Mitcham parish church have some splendid examples, now hidden from view beneath carpeting, but fortunately photographed and published in 2004 by Ray Ninnis in his excellent study published by MHS – “*NOT TRAMPLED BUT WALKED OVER*”: *A Study of the Ledgerstones in the Parish Church of St Peter and St Paul, Mitcham* (Studies in Merton History: 4) – a bargain at £1.80 to members! David showed several examples and discussed their imagery.

Thank you David! Perhaps a new series for the *Bulletin*?

Peter Hopkins

## BOOK REVIEWS

### ***MITCHAM HISTORIES 13: WILLOW LANE AND BEDDINGTON CORNER***

The area covered by Eric Montague's penultimate *Mitcham Histories* volume is perhaps not now the prettiest or most glamorous part of Mitcham, but the story of its past is a fascinating one. There are no grand houses, only farmhouses, in this tale, which starts with ancient fields, some later held in common and some always liable to flooding by the river Wandle. We are told of centuries of industrial use, starting around 1600, with successive overlapping invasions of linen bleachers, dye manufacturers, and calico and silk printers (not forgetting millers of copper, flour and leather), all using the water or the water-power of the Wandle. The Surrey Iron Railway arrives and departs. There are legal tussles over common land. Eventually local water-power gives way to steam-power elsewhere, industries slowly subside and the fields flourish again, now under horticulture (especially lavender), market gardens and watercress beds. Then comes the sad 40-year episode of exploitation for gravel extraction, followed by landfill and reclamation, and a new start with a modern industrial estate. Monty has done us proud with the illustrations, which include some good sharp photographs, and no fewer than ten maps and plans. These are very necessary when tracing the history of an area where people dug leets and channels, and diverted the Wandle, apparently at the drop of a hat. Overall, this is a story of developing industries, of the successive uses of fields and mills, and of remarkably varied water management, which gives a real feeling of history – a sense of the flow of change through time. It must be obvious that I enjoyed it.

£5.95 (£4.80 for members) Available at indoor meetings or from Publications Secretary Peter Hopkins (see page 3 for contact details). Please add £1.40 for postage.

**David Haunton**

### ***RIVER WANDLE COMPANION AND WANDLE TRAIL GUIDE***

by geographer Bob Steel, with natural history expert Derek Coleman, came out last year. This substantial book is by far the nearest to being a comprehensive Wandle publication yet produced. The first half covers the geology, archaeology, water management, industrial and social history, and the natural history (this section by Derek Coleman) of the river. The second half is a highly detailed trail guide from Croydon and Carshalton to the Thames. The text has been well researched, and there is a good bibliography, though a few relevant MHS publications do not appear, and where is Alan Crocker on the Wandle paper mills? It is very well illustrated, mostly in colour, with views old and new and fine wildlife photographs. A few quibbles: for instance Morris and Liberty did not share a site, and Morris did not buy his – he rented it. Alfred Smee did not live at The Grange, Wallington – it was his son who built it and lived there; 'Philips' has only one 'l' and was not in Mitcham. Tighter editing might have avoided a few conflicting statements on different pages. I found the trail guide section, where old OS maps have been freely used, confusing in places. It might be a good idea to take a street map with you if you are not familiar with the trail. However this is a most interesting and useful guide, and an excellent companion to the Wandle on foot, or in an armchair.

pp236 paperback £15, published by Culverhouse Books ISBN 978-0-9572582-1-1

### ***NELSON: THE SWORD OF ALBION***

The second and final part of John Sugden's much praised biography of Nelson has now come out. (The first part, *Nelson: a Dream of Glory* was published in 2004.) Not only has Dr Sugden gone back to primary sources in an exemplary way, but he is (amazingly) the first biographer of Nelson who has consulted this Society, which indeed receives acknowledgements from the author. The few small errors in the Merton section – he ran out of time before we could have a final scrutiny – can be forgiven as a trifling blemish in a remarkable work. This well-judged, meticulous, and elegantly written book must be the definitive biography of Nelson for the foreseeable future.

pp1020; Bodley Head, London; hardback £30; paperback edition to come.

### ***PUTTING ON PANTO TO PAY FOR THE PINTER***



This delightfully titled book, which came out in December, is by one of our members, Chris Abbott, and is an account of 30 years of pantomime at the Salisbury Playhouse, complete with a transcript of a legendary gag book, reminiscences from celebrated performers, and a foreword by Stephanie Cole. When not at his day job as an academic Chris writes about and reviews various forms of popular entertainment. We hope he might give us a talk when the next panto season comes round.

pp316, many illustrations, Hobnob Press, ISBN 978-1-906978-26-6, £14.95 from local and online booksellers, or from the publishers at PO Box 1838, East Knoyle, Salisbury SP3 6FA. Add £1 for p and p.

**JG**

## LOCAL HISTORY WORKSHOPS

**Friday 7 December – four present. Judith Goodman in the chair**

- ◆ **Peter Hopkins** had received information from a correspondent in America regarding William Atterberry, who was transported to Maryland in 1733 following a theft in London. His family has been traced to Morden in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, through extracts from the Morden manorial court rolls on our website. More details have been promised.

Peter had been looking at documents in The National Archives, following up some Ravensbury leads from Monty's books regarding Henry de Strete, lord of Ravensbury manor, and his neighbour William Mareys. In 1361 Mareys gave an estate in trust to the vicars of Mitcham and Morden, in return for a lifetime annuity or pension of £5, and it has always been assumed that, after his death, this 'Mareslond' estate passed to Merton priory as a charitable gift. However, the documents reveal that Mareys had defaulted on a £100 debt to de Strete in the mid-14<sup>th</sup> century, apparently bringing de Strete to financial ruin! Merton priory bought up the debt, so it seems likely that they took over Mareys's estate in Wicford in settlement.

- ◆ **Bill Rudd** is still going through his huge collection of local photographs, deciding which to keep and which to throw away. One of the photos he is keeping is reproduced on page 1. Bill was encouraged by those present to ensure that this important collection is preserved for posterity. Perhaps in decades to come there will be an annual Bill Rudd lecture on Morden, using his photos, comparable to the Tom Francis lecture on Mitcham! We understand that Sarah Gould's project to digitise the Local Studies photographic collection is progressing well, and that she is hoping to extend this to include donations from other collections.
- ◆ When **Rosemary Turner** was looking through some 1910 valuation records at Surrey History Centre she spotted a form relating to a property in Gore Road, Merton, owned by the Hearts of Oak Benevolent Society. Named in honour of the British navy, this was set up in 1842 for members to save into a mutual fund to be drawn upon in times of sickness, etc. Rosemary wondered how the society became involved in property.

Rosemary went to see the exhibition on Sutton Garden Suburbs at Sutton Library and noticed a photograph of her mother-in-law's house. She was asked to write a 'memory card' of what her mother-in-law had told her. She also contributed a photocopy of an embroidery that she had made depicting the house. She also helped to identify a plan in the exhibition, which matched an 1875 plan she had found amongst her husband Steve's local history collection.

Rosemary also mentioned two current research projects in Surrey, one on WWI memorials and one on wooden grave boards. She wondered whether MHS could get involved.

- ◆ **Judith Goodman** reported that Rose Cottage, 101 Hamilton Road, Wimbledon – one of the first houses built on Nelson's former Merton Place estate between 1812 and 1815 – is under threat of demolition. Attempts are being made to have the house listed and Judy has passed on a substantial file inherited from local historian and architect John Wallace, who had discovered a great deal about the origins of the property, as reported in *Bulletin* 131 (September 1999) pages 12-14.

Judy also mentioned that John Sugden's second volume of a biography of Nelson has recently been published. Unfortunately a few errors relating to the Merton Place estate have slipped through. (See page 7.)

Friends of friends living in France recently sent Judy photos and transcripts of some documents relating to Morden Hall Academy in 1870 (see page 10)!



*Rose Cottage: 'View of a Cottage Building at Merton Surry'  
(Courtesy of Dr Bruce Elliott and Pinhey's Point Foundation, Canada)*

**Peter Hopkins**



## Friday 25 January 2013 – five present – Peter Hopkins in the chair

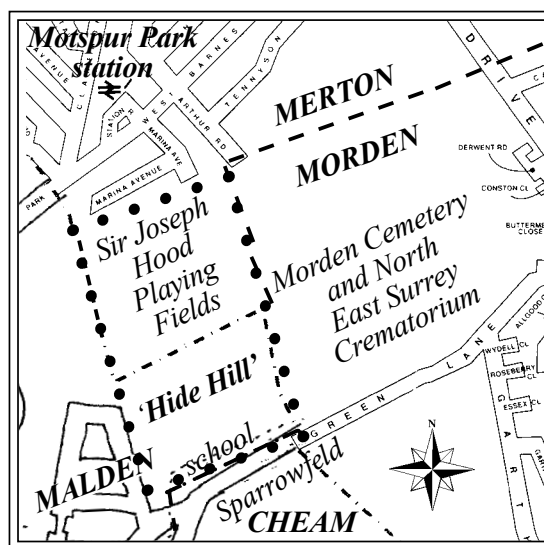
- ◆ **Cyril Maidment** quizzed us on our knowledge of old Merton, with eight views of the parish from the collection of photographs in Wimbledon Museum. After being subjected to his personal handicap system, we each had a negative score, except the one person who answered every question wrongly, but scored zero and thus won the prize. Most enjoyable.
- ◆ **David Haunton** has found a single local reference in the Surrey Record Society's 2012 publication *Warriors at Home 1940-1942 Three Surrey Diarists*. Helen Lloyd was the Women's Voluntary Services organiser for Guildford Rural District, which covered 22 parishes, 28 villages and more than 100 square miles. She wrote in her diary: 'Monday 7 October 1940 ... heard ... that 120 children from Mitcham are arriving on Wednesday. They have spent a week in Berkshire but the billeting there was such a failure that we are being asked to clear up Berkshire's mess... Wednesday 9 October 1940 The children arrived soon after 12, an hour and a half early. I hurried over and welcomed them... All the children were exceptionally nice and I thoroughly enjoyed taking them to their billets ...' This was evidently a school evacuated together – does anyone know which school?

David also read an extract from *When the sirens sounded, a wartime childhood* (AAPPL, 2012) by Kathleen M Peyton, the children's author. This recounted an incident at Wimbledon High School when the first practice for 'filing in an orderly manner to the air-raid shelters while wearing gas-masks' dissolved into rude noises, misted-up eye-pieces, hilarity and chaos, and hence became the last such practice.

- ◆ **Rosemary Turner** has been comparing the 1911 Census returns for Morden with the 1910 Valuation. She found that of 258 entries in 1911, only 164 had the same named occupier (head of household) as for 1910, though there were also several properties that were empty in both records. Total population was about 2000 persons. Captain Bidder's household was intriguing, and included himself (single), a visitor (Captain in the Royal Sussex Regiment, born in Edgbaston), a widow aged 67 (a retired nurse from Southwark), a cook from Banstead, and a butler from Camberwell.
- ◆ **Judy Goodman** had some follow-up to her article on Richard Thornton, via Bruce Robertson. The Trustees of the Richard Thornton Foundation, now supporting Priory School, were most interested in the article, requested multiple copies of the *Bulletin* for their records, for individual trustees and for the School. Bruce also referred Judy to a not entirely error-free article on Thornton in the *Leathersellers Review* for 2010-2011. Judy has found a book on *Surrey Executions* in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In our area it records NONE for Morden, NONE for Merton, two highwaymen in Wimbledon plus a Wimbledon poisoning, and a domestic murderer in Mitcham (see page 16).

- ◆ **Peter Hopkins** has been puzzling over the intersecting boundaries of parishes and hundreds in the area around Green Lane primary school and the Sir Joseph Hood Memorial Playing Fields. Jeremy Harte of Bourne Hall Museum suggests that they probably originated from the privatisation of former intercommoning – grazing land shared by the adjoining communities and estates, in the same way as Sparrowfeld was used on the south side of Green Lane. However, another possible origin of these boundaries has been suggested. The land behind (north of) Green Lane school was known from at least the 16th century as Hide Hill, and research by Dr Rosamond Faith suggests that Hide names may represent 'the oldest type of independent Anglo-Saxon farm, predating the open field system', the hide being 'the measure of land that would support a family'.

The block of land composed of the area surrounding the school (in Malden parish) and the Sir Joseph Hood Playing Fields (in Merton parish) is 60 acres, which is roughly equivalent to four customary virgates (ie. one hide) in Malden. Peter noted evidence of the division of a 'field in Malden called Hide' into two halves c.1170-1180, the very period when Dr John Blair suggests that Surrey parish boundaries were becoming fixed, and thus possibly explaining a partition of the 60 acres between Malden and Merton parishes.



David Haunton

Dates of next Workshops: Fridays 15 March, 26 April and 7 June at 2.30pm

At Wandle Industrial Museum. All are welcome

## A GLIMPSE OF MORDEN HALL BOARDING SCHOOL FOR YOUNG GENTLEMEN

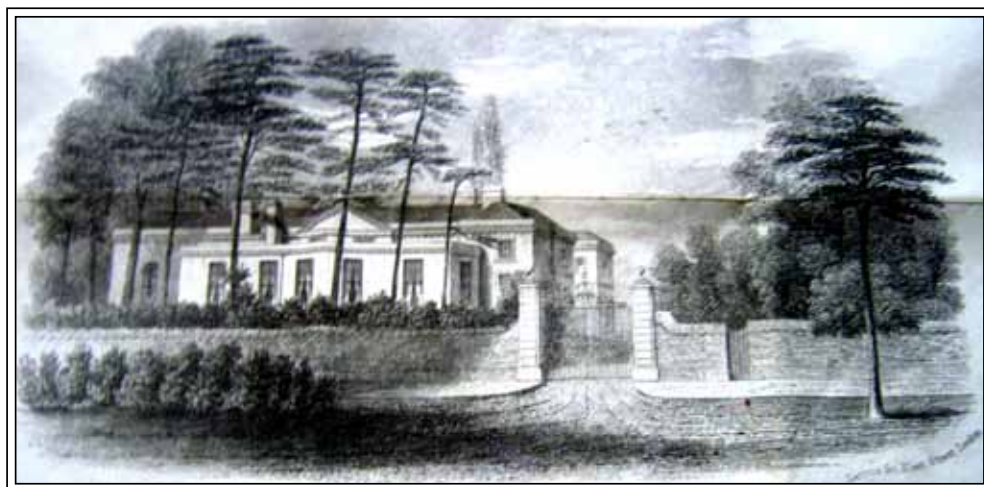
On the dining-room wall of a house in Vendée, France, are some framed documents relating to Morden Hall when it housed a boys' school. These were spotted by friends of mine, who used to live in Merton Park, when they visited their friend Robert Side, an expatriate Englishman. Very kindly Robert has sent me images of these documents – a prospectus and a bill. Having been photographed through glass, they have not reproduced as well as they might have done, but he has kindly emailed me his own transcriptions. He also filled in some background.

Robert's two grandfathers (his parents were first cousins), Louis (b.1854) and Erle (b.1860) Side, attended Morden Hall boarding school together during its last years, around 1870. Their father, Robert Henry Side (1825-1922), despite having been born in poverty in Southwark, first set himself up as ironmaster, and then moved into business, buying and renting out property. He was able to send his five sons to private schools. His one daughter became an artist. Louis Side, who set up a grocery business, died relatively young, and it was Erle who inherited the properties and lived as a rich man. He sent his daughter to Mary Datchelor School and University College London. She was an early woman graduate.

Robert Henry Side apparently disliked the snobbery and cruelty of the public schools, and by giving his sons a 'commercial' education looked towards the modern age of business and progress. His father had been a prominent Chartist, and Robert Henry always supported working class progress, founding a private library in Southwark for working men.

The Morden Hall school was founded c.1830 by Revd. John White, and taken over by his son Thomas Nickalls White early in the 1840s. It closed in the early 1870s. It was overseen by the College of Preceptors, one of the bodies that conducted examinations and monitored standards.

### The Prospectus



*'Morden Hall:  
West Front with  
Carriage Entrance'*

MORDEN HALL  
Boarding School, Morden, Surrey  
FOR  
YOUNG GENTLEMEN

*Conducted by  
Mr Thomas N White  
Terms*

<i>Board and Tuition in every branch</i>	)	36	Guineas P <sup>r</sup>	Ann <sup>m</sup>	
<i>of a Commercial Education including French</i>	)				
<i>German, Latin &amp; Greek</i>		<i>each</i> 2	"	"	
<i>Drilling</i>		1	"	"	
<i>Drawing and Perspective</i>		2	"	"	
<i>Music</i>		4	"	"	
<i>Laundress</i>		3	"	"	
<i>Each Pupil to bring 6 Towels, a Knife &amp; Dessert Fork, &amp; a Silver Spoon</i>					

Morden Hall is particularly spacious and considered the most elegant mansion in Surrey. It is celebrated for its beauty and for the salubrity of its situation. It commands a fine view of the surrounding country. It stands within 10 Acres of its own Garden and pleasure Grounds which are set apart for the use of the school. The School Room, which is well ventilated is 60 feet long, 24 feet broad and 20 feet high and is fitted up with a view to the comfort of the Pupils, there is an excellent and safe Bath 120 feet in length through which a delightful stream from the River Wandlé is constantly flowing. The Play grounds are extensive and so arranged as to afford scope for Gymnastic exercises and the cultivation of Flower Gardens with Cricket Field, Lawn & Reading & Play rooms.

The system of Education is emulative, periodical Rewards are presented and various other incentives introduced suitable to the age and disposition of the pupil, causing study to become a pleasure rather than an irksome task.

The domestic arrangements are under the immediate superintendence of M<sup>rs</sup> White. Habits of Cleanliness and Gentlemanly Deportment are inculcated, and the health and comfort of the Pupils meet with the utmost attention. The Table is liberally supplied with the best provisions without limitation.

Morden Hall is 9 Miles from London, & facilities are afforded to Visitors by Rail or Omnibuses, full particulars of which can be obtained by reference to the Time table of Morden Hall.

## The Account

Morden Hall, Surrey  
Midsummer, 1870

Dr to Thos N White

	£	s	d
To One Quarter's Board and Instruction	)	(9	9 0)
For Master Louis F. Side	)	8	13 9
Instrumental Music		1	1 0
Laundress			15 9
Pew Rent			4
Ciphering Books			3 6
Exercise Books			1 0
Copy Books, Pens and Ink			3 6
Medicine			2 0
Tailor for Repairs			6
Railway Fare			1 10
Tonic Sol Fa Music and Tune Book			1 5
Use of Piano Jan to March			3 6
March to June			3 6
Music			2 6
Porterage of Boxes			9
			<hr/>
	£11	18	0*

Bankers, Mess<sup>rs</sup> Robarts, Lubbock & C<sup>o</sup>  
15 Lombard St City

\*I make it £11 14s 10d. JG

Note: The reduction from nine guineas to £8 13s 9d for boarding and instruction was because there were two brothers at the school. There was also no extra charge for a separate bed, as the two boys shared.

Judith Goodman

## ELSEWHERE

LAMAS's lecture programme includes '200 Years of the Hunterian Museum' on 9 April at 6.30 at the Museum of London. Refreshments available from 6.00pm. Our Society is affiliated with LAMAS, so admission is free for our members.

At Surrey History Centre, 130 Goldsworth Road, Woking, Dr Simon Thurley, Chief Executive of English Heritage will be talking on 'County of Kings: Surrey as a Royal Playground 1450-1650' on Thursday 21 March at 7.30pm. Tickets are £5.00. To book or for further information call 01483 518737 or email shs@surreycc.gov.uk.

The GLIAS (Greater London Industrial Archaeology Society) programme includes 'The Early History of Gas in London' on 20 March. All lectures are on the third Wednesday of the month and start at 6.30pm in the Morris (Main) Lecture Theatre in the Robin Brook Centre in St Bartholomew's Hospital.

**IRENE BAIN shares some more of her early memories of Mitcham. We hope there are some still to come, though she has chosen to call this selection**

## **SWAN SONG**

Mitcham always had the look of a village to me, and still retains that feeling. I see it through the eyes of memory.

Our family moved to Mitcham in the 1930s, and we lived in a road off the far end of Commonside East. There were no 118 buses to get down to Mitcham in the early days for shopping, so we walked down along Commonside East and up and over Beehive Bridge. Before you got to the bridge, on the right-hand side, hiding in a group of trees and shrubs, was an extremely old and dilapidated cottage. A girl who went to my school lived there with her mother and brother. They looked very poor. I would have loved to have been able to see inside the dwelling, which has long since gone, and I always wondered who had lived there before them.



*'Beehive Bridge' – 1953 postcard*

On the top of Beehive Bridge on the right you could see into Sparrowhawk's scrapyard. Further along were some small houses and a shop. On the bit of green in front of these houses there were usually some geese grazing. On the left was Three Kings Piece where the annual big Mitcham Fair was held. Further along on the corner, before you actually arrived in Mitcham was the Three Kings Pond, with its slipways into the water, enabling horses and carts to soak the wooden wheels to swell them, and for the horses to drink, if needed.

Turning right, you came upon the first part of very old Mitcham, which was Crisp's cobbler's shop. We used to take our shoes there to be mended. This shop was a very old building; it is still there today, but is now a private residence. The cobbler was a friendly, slightly plump, jolly man. Very many years later, when he died, his son, who was the image of his father, took over the business. He married a school-friend of mine, and when we were young mothers I was invited in for a cup of tea in the big room upstairs. The room had a lovely calming atmosphere – it was said because prayer meetings used to be held there years ago.

Just along from the cobbler's was another very old shop, and that was Gutteridge's corn-chandler's, where we could buy small quantities of hay for our rabbit – just enough to fill a carrier bag. You had to step down to enter the shop, and it had a real country feel to it. Mr Gutteridge always wore a brown overall in the shop. Behind him, when he was standing at the counter, was a wooden unit with lots of tiny drawers, all neatly labelled with their contents.

Very many years later, on a Sunday morning, when I was married and living in Glebe Court, I happened to go down to the shops, with my daughter who was then about eight years old. To our dismay we saw that Gutteridge's shop was being emptied. We spoke to the people who were sorting things out, who turned out to be members of the Historical Society. They were very friendly, and we were so saddened at the closure of the shop they invited us to go inside and have a look around. We were also shown the huge, deep, square hole which had been dug in the back garden, hoping to unearth artefacts. A member of the Society (which I later joined) saved Mr Gutteridge's brown overall from where it had been left hanging behind a door. I believe this item to be still in the possession of the Society. In no time at all, and much to my regret, the shop was completely demolished, and Barclays Bank was all too quickly built on the site.

There was another shoe shop just along from there, near the corner by the cinema. It was called Tom Ruff's. For all the years I remember it being there an old-fashioned lady's shoe was displayed on a stand in the window. It was so small and such a strange shape that it was fascinating. I wondered how anyone could have worn it! Today as I write this the fashion has turned full circle, and the very same style is back in mode. This shop also went many years ago, along with the dear old Majestic cinema.

The Majestic stood full on the corner there, and with it was the commissionaire, wearing his full green uniform (with epaulettes), ushering in the queues of people. How good it was, and unsophisticated – and what memories of the films we saw. Neither must I forget that there was a ballroom on the top floor, which I only visited once. On the left of the road going towards Tooting, past the *Kings Arms*, was Woolworths. I think everyone loved Woolworths! They sold such a vast array of goods that it would fill several pages to detail them, and, once, I was even able to buy a big shovel there!

Beyond Woolworths was a pawn shop with the three golden balls aloft advertising its presence.

Across the road on the right stood Mitcham Baths where, in winter, the pool was covered over to enable dances and concerts to be held. Then, along from there, was the library, which was well used and much appreciated by young and old. The children had their own separate library in a large well-built wooden hut, and as a child I loved it.

Just past the library are the Elm Nursery flats. I remember them being built. A friend of mine was allotted one, so I was able to see what they were like inside. Along from there were some clapboard houses and the *Gardeners' Arms*, the name surely being connected to the gardeners who used to work on the Mizens' land? On the opposite side of the road there was a wood-yard on the corner, and, I was told by a reliable source, this was the site of the blacksmith's in past times.

Beyond was the *Swan* at the junction of the roads to Tooting on the left and to Streatham on the right. Alas, this building is no more, and can only be seen on postcards of old Mitcham.

Back in the centre of Mitcham, on the left-hand corner facing Fair Green was Hutton's fish-and-chip shop. They had a large tank of live eels. I hated seeing them being lifted out and chopped up, so I used to go to Wilkes, the other fish-and-chip shop further down, just before the *Nag's Head*. The *Nag's Head* was a very old building, rumoured to be haunted.

From this point the road to Colliers Wood begins, and beyond on the left was the Gasworks, but before this was a piece of land set aside for Gypsy caravans, and it was in use for many years. Mitcham always had a strong connection with Gypsies, especially as regards Mitcham Fair. It is said that a Gypsy princess is buried in the parish churchyard.

Then London Road, with the Vestry Hall and our famous Cricket Green. This expanse of green is very pleasing to see. A neighbour of ours used to drive down there to watch the cricket. He would park his (in those days very small) car on the edge of the Green beneath the trees and set up his deckchair beside it to sit and enjoy the game.

Back towards Fair Green, I remember the townhouses opposite the telephone exchange. They were quite tall and had several steps up to the front doors. They also had cellars.

When my daughter was a young woman she decided to move to Devon. While staying at a hotel there before moving, one of the guests had lived in Mitcham. In time he became a family friend. During the war he was actually standing by the telephone exchange opposite the townhouses when the V1 demolished them. His strangest memory about it was that the road in front was showered with coins! These houses were on the site of the present Glebe Court flats. Opposite the flats, on the corner, was a café where my husband and I had a cup of tea after viewing the lovely new flat we had been offered. This café was later sold and turned into the Bamboo House Chinese restaurant, which is still there today.

Thomas Francis's store stood next to Glebe Court and opposite where the Bamboo House is today. It was a pleasantly old-fashioned store, consisting of three separate shops. First there was an ironmonger's selling tools and hardware; I bought three lovely china jugs with roses on them, large, medium and small. There was a great deal of stock in a confined space. The second section was for men's wear – trousers, jackets, boots and shoes. The third section was for ladies' wear and baby clothes. It had glass-topped counters where you could be shown items kept in drawers. Stockings would be shown to you in the traditional way, by the assistant putting her hand inside them to show their quality. They sold underclothing and you could buy things of an intimate nature in privacy, which you cannot do today.

One day when I went into the shop I was surprised to see, piled up on the floor in the corner, lots of 1920s/1930s-style ladies' straw hats. They had brightly coloured ribbons and a slightly nautical air about them. The assistant told me that they had just been turning out the attic. What treasure! I wondered what else was still up there.

In the war there was an underground air-raid shelter in the middle of the Fair Green. My mother was there shopping one day with my young sister, who would have been about three then. Suddenly the air-raid warning sounded and they had to go down into the shelter. My sister was carrying her precious doll. Eventually, when the All Clear sounded, in the rush to get home in case of another raid, the doll was left behind in the shelter, and she has never forgotten this.

The middle of the Fair Green was tastefully re-vamped in the 1950s, with low brick walls containing flowerbeds, and paths, and plenty of benches. It was like an oasis in the middle of all the traffic. A large coloured photograph of the development was displayed in Crown House for many years. Perhaps it is still somewhere in that building. The guest in the Torquay hotel, who became our friend, worked with his father as G R Newell & Son, mason paviours. They actually carried out this work on the excellent new layout of Fair Green.

In later years I worked for a firm of solicitors in the centre of Fair Green. Their offices were above the shops, and one day, without warning, the office door flew open and in stepped a fireman in full fire-fighting gear – brass helmet, protective clothing, and a large axe in his belt – asking where the fire was! Somebody’s idea of a joke. We never did find out who caused it, but it was funny.

Another special memory. As we all worked hard (and none harder than the very clever man I worked for) we had permission to go out to buy sandwiches or cakes from Turner’s, the baker’s opposite. One morning when I



*'Upper Green West' – 1953 postcard*

went over to Turner’s there was a definite buzz in the air, and all the ladies behind the counter were smiling and happy. In those days the bread was delivered all over Mitcham by horse and van, and the horses’ stable was in the yard behind the shop. The drivers were fond of their animals and took great care of them. One driver had had a tremendous surprise that morning, for when he went into the stable he found not one but two horses in there – his horse had given birth to a foal in the night – and nobody had known she was even pregnant! One by one we all went to see mother and baby and there was great delight and happiness at such an unusual event. I knew the driver of the baker’s van, for I had often seen him on his rounds – and people were more friendly then. He was very proud of his horse, and when she was retired and put out to grass in the country, he used to visit her often, and she certainly remembered him and was pleased to see him.

As I reached the end of this selection of memories of Mitcham, where I have now lived for 80 years, I learned that Merton Council plan to re-vamp the town centre at a cost of £3,000,000. It will take three years to complete and will be a massive change.

I hope some of my memories will please the folk of the future as I recall just some of what Mitcham was like in the past.

## **GEOFFREY WILSON describes**

### **THREE RAILWAY ACCIDENTS AT RAYNES PARK**

To be strictly accurate, the first of these accidents occurred before Raynes Park station itself opened. On 28 January 1861 a down express to Southampton became derailed at the Epsom branch line junction. One passenger was killed, Dr Baily, who happened to be Queen Victoria’s physician. A still more prestigious passenger, the Portuguese ambassador, was unscathed. The passengers are reported to have made a collection to the guard in return for his promptness in protecting his train.

A head-on collision occurred at Raynes Park station on 20 April 1890 involving goods trains. Fortunately there were no injuries, and the accident was ascribed both to a signalling error and to an insecure load.

In 1923 the London & South Western Railway became part of the new Southern Railway under whose management the third and most serious accident took place on 25 May 1933 on the curve, just on the Wimbledon side of the skew arch, where permanent way work had very recently taken place. The 3.10pm train from Waterloo to Alton, headed by a Drummond 0-4-4 tank locomotive, became derailed, striking an up Southampton train running ten minutes late on the adjoining line. Five passengers on the Alton train were killed and 34 injured. One side of the Southampton train was badly ripped, but although the driver was seriously injured all 70 passengers escaped unharmed.

As a schoolboy I was returning home, and alighted from the trolleybus to view from road level the coaches of the up train still awaiting removal. The accident was ascribed to faulty work by the gangers in too heavily super-elevating the down track. It is remarkable that no accident had occurred sooner. The line was extremely busy and many fast passenger and goods trains must have passed over the spot, but there is no record of a driver reporting a suspected irregularity. Ironically, if the up train had been on time it and the Alton train would have passed each other much nearer Waterloo.

[One of the fatalities on the Alton train was Katherine Dykes, widow of the internationally respected expert on irises William Rickatson Dykes. He had himself died a violent death in 1925, losing an ear and an arm in a road accident. The couple had earlier lived for some years at 1 Manor Road in Merton Park (see *Bulletin* 131). JG]

## JAMES HINE MILLER

*In February 2012 the Society received an email from New Zealand, enquiring about James Hine Miller, who was apparently at The Canons, Mitcham, in 1838. Peter Hopkins checked Eric Montague's Mitcham Histories volume on The Canons, and found no mention of him there, but he was listed at Sherwood Lodge in the 1838 survey, which we published as Local History Note 21. According to the survey, The Canons was occupied by the Simpsons at this time. Monty had mentioned James as being at Sherwood Lodge in his Pollards Hill, Commonsides East and Lonesome volume, where he also wondered whether this might be the same James Miller who, with his brother George, ran a peppermint distillery at Beddington Corner c.1885. As we now know that James died in 1880, it could not have been him, and no other link with his family has yet been identified. We are delighted that our invitation to contribute an article for the Bulletin has been taken up by our correspondent:*

My great-great-grandfather James Hine Miller was born into a Navy family on 2 July 1807 and baptised at St Mary Magdalene Church at Woolwich, Kent, on 24 September 1807. His proud parents were William Miller, who was Surveyor of Buildings to the Navy Board, and Elizabeth Evans.

The next record I have of James is in the St Clement Danes Marriage Register when he married Elizabeth Harvey on 7 August 1828. Elizabeth was the daughter of William Mason Harvey and Ann Brittain. William was clerk to Jolliffe & Banks and it was the Reverend William Jolliffe that married James and Elizabeth at St Clement Danes.

From 1829 to 1834 James and Elizabeth were living at 9 Agnes Place, Waterloo Road, when their children Anne Elizabeth Miller, William Miller, Thomas Edward Miller and Emily Miller were born. On Anne Elizabeth Miller's baptism record his occupation is listed as Merchants Clerk.

On 26 July 1836 James was granted Freedom of the City of London by Redemption in the Company of Makers of Playing Cards. His occupation was given as seedsman occupying premises in Newgate Street, London.

The Law Journal Dividend List of May 1837 has James and Robert Randall Chubb of 70 & 71 Newgate Street, London, seedsman and florist. James must have had a very close relationship with Robert Chubb as he named one of his daughters after him – Julia Chubb Miller.

The first instance I have of James and Elizabeth living in Mitcham is when James Hine Miller junior was born on 17 August 1837, when James's occupation is that of a florist. By October 1837 he was listed in many UK newspapers as a bankrupt. The *London Gazette* on 25 May 1838 gave notice of a Fiat in Bankruptcy being awarded and issued forth against James Hine Miller of The Canons, Mitcham, Florist & Seedsman, Dealer & Chapman. The Canons address is interesting as this is the only reference I have to this property. On the 1838 Survey of Mitcham James is noted as occupying James Moore's Sherwood Lodge House and farm (plots 768-770, 772-776) and the 1841 census has James and family, together with servant Mary Coleman and labourer John Bussell aged 75, living at Sherwood Lodge.

Two more children, George Pulford Miller and Amelia Harvey Miller, were born to James and Elizabeth at Sherwood Farm in 1842 and 1844, before they next appear in Bucklands, Portsea, with the birth of Harvey Mason Miller on 2 May 1848.

The 1851 census has the Miller family living at Lower Whittaker Place, Chatham, Kent, where James is now working as a Civil Engineer, Foreman of Works, Dockyard. When Herbert Adam Smith Miller was born on 5 August 1853 they were living at Medway Terrace, Rochester, Kent, and they were still there when Harvey Mason Miller died on 12 December 1855.

They had moved again by the time of the 1861 census, this time living at Portland Place, Gosport, Hampshire, where James is Clerk of Works. The 1871 census sees yet another move, where I finally found the Millers at Haslar Royal Navy Hospital, Alverstoke, and James is Director of the Works Department for the Admiralty.

James Hine Miller died 23 June 1880 at Livingstone Road, Southsea, Hampshire.

My grandmother would never talk about her side of the family and it has been a wonderful journey finding out bits and pieces about the Miller family. As I live in New Zealand, the resources available on the internet and through Ancestry have been invaluable and have taken loads of legwork out of the research. I am looking forward to one day travelling to England and hunting out the many places I have mentioned. I still have lots of questions as to how James Hine Miller got into the seedsman and florist business though I have a suspicion it was from his uncle Fingal Clark who was a seedsman and fruiterer in Lewisham, Kent. Also questions about the playing cards and whether anything came of that. One piece in the puzzle leads to so many more questions.

Thank you to Peter from Merton Historical Society for kindly providing me with information regarding Sherwood Lodge and The Canons and encouraging me to write about my great-great-grandfather.

**Anne Galpin**

## SOME HANGING MATTERS

I couldn't resist a book with the title *Surrey Executions: A Complete List of those Hanged in the County during the Nineteenth Century*\*, and bought a copy from a remaindered book catalogue. There is unfortunately no index, and I may have missed some references, but it seems that few capital offences were committed during the 19<sup>th</sup> century in the four parishes that now make up our Borough. I confess to being *slightly* disappointed to find that Merton and Morden had unblemished records. Mitcham and Wimbledon did better (or do I mean worse?).

In 1800 George Hooker was hanged, not for the highway robbery he had committed a year earlier in Wimbledon, but for escaping after being sentenced to transportation to Botany Bay for six years.

And on 22 August 1803 William Hart was hanged for highway robbery the month before, in what the author locates as Wimbledon, but it must in fact have been Wandsworth. Hart 'emerged from the darkness' (of Wimbledon Common?) at the gates of a Mr Rucker. This would have been John Anthony Rucker, who had had calico-printing interests in the Wandle Valley and now lived in grandeur in West Hill. Hart demanded that a passing chaise stop, but one of Rucker's servants chased him away and pursued him to Roehampton Lane where, with the help of a servant of Benjamin Goldsmid (brother of Morden's Abraham Goldsmid), Hart was detained till the Bow Street Runners arrived.

In 1827 Joseph Swaine was executed for burglary. He had had a previous conviction for wounding a watchman, but, by the efforts of respectable friends, including 'gentry of Mitcham', that sentence had been commuted to 12 months in the Coldbath Fields House of Correction. A letter to *The Times* now pleaded on his behalf: '... He was educated at the same school as I was at Mitcham, where his parents formerly resided. At that time he was a steady inoffensive lad and bad[sic] fair to become an ornament of society ... but coming to London ... he gave himself up to vicious propensities ...'.

On 28 April 1882 Dr George Henry Lamson was hanged for the murder in the preceding December in Wimbledon of Percy Malcolm John. This was a horrible and sensational case. Percy was an 18-year-old orphan, paralysed from the waist down, but happy and popular as a boarder at Blenheim House School, in St George's Road, Wimbledon. Percy had a modest fortune of £3000, half of which on his death would go to each of his two elder sisters. His sister Kate was married to Lamson, who was in trouble: guilty of faking his authorisation to practice, addicted to drugs, and in debt. Lamson visited Percy at school one evening bearing a Dundee cake and sweets. Also aconitine – a poisonous alkaloid derived from monk's-hood and related plants. Percy died in agony, caused by 'an irritant vegetable poison'. Lamson was shown to have bought aconitine from a City pharmacist, and an earlier episode of illness for poor Percy on a family holiday on the Isle of Wight was linked to a similar purchase by Lamson. The jury had no hesitation in bringing in a guilty verdict.

The last case I found was the execution in 1890 of George Bowling for the murder in Mitcham of Eliza Nightingale. The couple lived together upstairs at 1, Miles Cottages (perhaps in Miles Lane?). Downstairs was Eliza's sister Sophia Collins. She heard them quarrelling one day, but when all was still quiet the following afternoon she went up to reassure herself, and found Eliza covered with blood from head wounds. Dr Henry Love of Glebe Villas, London Road, the local practitioner, counted 11 wounds to the right side of her head. She had probably been killed as she slept. A hammer with blood and hair on it lay close by. Bowling confessed: he said he had been in a temper after they had been arguing.



\* Martin Baggooley *Surrey Executions* (2011) Amberley Publishing, Stroud

**Judith Goodman**

**Letters and contributions for the *Bulletin* should be sent to the Hon. Editor, Mrs J Goodman. The views expressed in this *Bulletin* are those of the contributors concerned and not necessarily those of the Society or its Officers.**

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