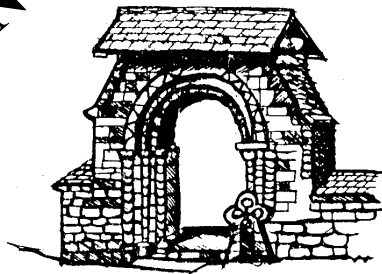


# MERTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY



**PRESIDENT:**

**VICE PRESIDENTS:** Eric Montague and William Rudd

**CHAIR:** David Haunton

BULLETIN No. 191

SEPTEMBER 2014

	 <p>From the pages of railway history comes the model of Stephenson's 'Rocket' Train, with crew. Stack actually smokes. 49/6</p>
 <p>R.S.71 Electric Train Set with track for circular layout. 29/11</p>	 <p>From small beginnings... R.S.70 Clockwork Train Set with track for circular layout. 16/11</p>

*from a 1964 Tri-ang (Lines Bros) toys brochure (courtesy JG) (see page 6)*

## CONTENTS

<b>Programme September - December</b>	2
<b>Visit to the museum of the Order of St John</b>	2
<b>Walk round Worcester Park and St Mary's, Cuddington</b>	4
<b>Local History Workshop 26 June:</b> preparations for war; Lines Bros; Torquay's Morden Hall; St Mary's, Merton, 1930-46; the priory wall; Dewey Bates	6
<b>Mitcham Grove and the Myers family</b> – Peter Hopkins	7
<b>The Priory Wall</b> – David Luff	10
<b>Petty Sessions Minutes for Brixton Hundred, Western Division</b> – Sheila Gallagher	10
<b>Mitcham Brewery</b> – Rosemary Turner	12
<b>'Interesting Times' in China 1923-1950</b> – David Haunton	14

## PROGRAMME SEPTEMBER–DECEMBER 2014

**Friday 19 September 2.30pm**      **Cinema Museum, The Master's House, 2 Dugard Way**  
(off Renfrew Road), London SE11 4TH

**Guided tour** (with tea/coffee and Merton Park Studios material)  
**places limited** – Ring David Haunton to book (£5 per head, subsidised)  
Nearest underground stations: (half-way between) Kennington & Elephant and Castle  
Bus Routes 109, 133, 155, 159, 196, 333 and 415 stop within 3 minutes' walk

**Saturday 11 October 2.30pm**      **Christ Church Hall, Colliers Wood**  
**'Housewives and Heroines of Merton'**

Illustrated talk by Sarah Gould, Merton Heritage and Local Studies

**Saturday 8 November 2.30pm**      **Christ Church Hall, Colliers Wood**  
**Annual General Meeting**

followed by a talk by noted local historian **Dr David Lewis** on the development of Windsor

**Saturday 13 December 2.30pm**      **Christ Church Hall, Colliers Wood**  
**'Traps, Tradition and Transformation: the curious history of Pantomime'**

Illustrated talk by **Dr Chris Abbott**, researcher of performance arts (puppets, circus, etc)

*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.*

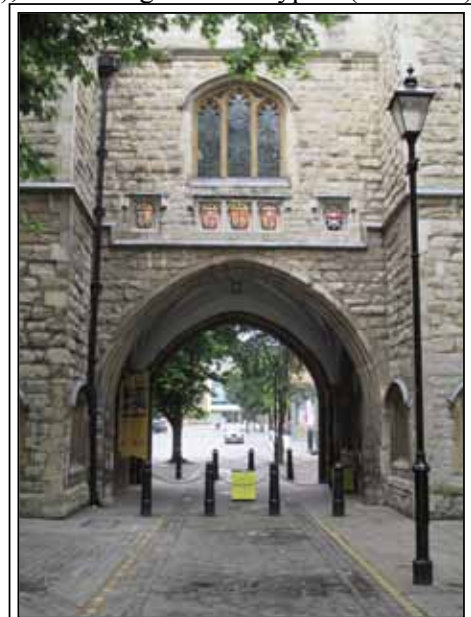
**Visitors are welcome to attend our talks. Entry £2.**

## VISIT TO THE MUSEUM OF THE ORDER OF ST JOHN

I should start with a very summary history of the Order. It was founded after the Crusaders' capture of Jerusalem in 1099, to serve and protect the patients of the hospital there (set up c.1080), its knights becoming known as Hospitallers. The hospital became popular and was given grants of land and money to support its work. It built churches where it could (and forts – Krak des Chevaliers is one of theirs) and a Priory in each 'home' country, as a local headquarters. The Knights moved from Jerusalem (lost 1291), and then again from Cyprus (lost 1309) and Rhodes (lost 1530). They moved to Malta and successfully defended the island against an epic siege by the Turks in 1565. But Malta was taken by Napoleon in 1798, the Hospitallers moved to Rome, and rather lost their purpose.

In England, the Priory was established by a gift of ten acres of land at Clerkenwell in 1144 and continued until 1540, when it was suppressed by Henry VIII as part of the Dissolution. The modern Order of St John in England was essentially re-founded in the 1870s, with the establishment of the St John Ambulance Brigade, and was granted a Royal Charter in 1888.

The Museum itself is situated in the gatehouse of the Priory. Our tour was led by Keith Schaar, a volunteer guide (and chairman of the St John Historical Society), and he surprised us by immediately taking us outside and 200 yards north to a rather modern-looking church, which turns out to be very multi-period. The original 1144 Priory church was circular in plan; part of its outline is marked by cobbles in St John's Square. The building was destroyed by Wat Tyler's



rebels in 1381, but the fascinating rectangular crypt survives. The first three bays have typical semi-circular Norman arches, while the two bays and the side chapels of an 1185 extension have the new pointed 'early Gothic' style arches. These contain intriguing sculpture and memorials, including the tomb and effigy of a Spanish Knight (*right*), sold to an English one at a clearance sale (!) of Valladolid Cathedral in 1902.



*left: carved wooden plaque of Abraham and Isaac (c.1500) in the Gallery*



Above ground, the post-1380s building was 'mucked about' in royal use after 1540; in 1722 it was refurbished by Queen Anne's Commission, eventually fitted with large galleries, and in 1930 passed to the order of St John. Then in 1941 the *Luftwaffe* destroyed much of the interior, eventually rebuilt c.1960. So what we have now comprises three largely 15th-century walls, one mostly 18th-century one, and modern fenestration, giving a lovely light church decorated with the colourful banners of knights and knightly establishments. The Gallery attached to the church holds a display of life in the Priory.

We then went back to St John's Gate, where Keith pointed out a piece of iron embedded in the masonry, about three feet off the ground. This is the remains of the *upper* pintle of one of the gates; as the gate originally hung some six or seven feet

below this, we have a measure of how much the ground has risen since Tudor times, when the Gate was rebuilt. The Order purchased the Gate in 1874, and in 1902 sympathetically extended the Tudor building of two towers joined by a single room (now the Council Chamber) over a vaulted archway.

Inside, upstairs, the three main public rooms are what you would expect from a late-Victorian architect asked to do 'impressive', with much wood panelling, pendentives, chandeliers and so forth, redeemed by much excellent heraldic stained glass. Fortunately no wallpaper. The interest lies in the contents – a large collection of silver, mostly from Malta and Naples, many fine portraits of Knights, some from the 16th century, and much interesting furniture, including an 18th-century inlaid table and an exquisitely elaborate carved and inlaid 17th-century ebony cabinet of curiosities.

The rooms in the West Tower are much plainer, and still retain many Tudor features. The principal of these, to my mind, is the tower staircase – one of the very few remaining Tudor spiral staircases made of solid blocks of oak – a most impressive piece of joinery.

Downstairs is the small public museum with much of interest – chased and engraved armour, the odd cannon retrieved from the sea-bed, colourful pharmacy jars, illuminated manuscripts, insignia of the Order, and a fine model of a lateen-rigged galley. At the end of our tour, we thanked Keith enthusiastically for his knowledgeable, humorous and occasionally subversive guidance – 'I'm not allowed to bring you through here, so please come quietly on tiptoe'.

**David Haunton**

**Photographs: Katharina Mayer Haunton**

\* We had a private tour, but volunteers conduct public ones (£4) at 11:00 and 2:30 Tuesday, Friday and Saturday.

## SUBSCRIPTIONS

A membership renewal form is enclosed with this *Bulletin*. If you **already** pay by standing order, you only need to use this form if making changes. Please note that, after a period when we suspended accepting new standing orders, we are now willing to accept new standing orders as one of the methods for paying subscriptions. Cheques and cash payments are also acceptable.

The AGM agenda and the programme of Autumn and Spring talks are also enclosed.

## WALK ROUND WORCESTER PARK AND ST MARY'S, CUDDINGTON

On the morning of 14 June a group of members met our guide David Rymill at St Mary's, Cuddington, at the top of The Avenue, Worcester Park. David began by explaining why a church belonging to Cuddington was situated in Worcester Park. When Henry VIII chose Cuddington as the site for his Nonsuch Palace the village and its church were demolished, and for 300 years there was no church in the parish. However, following the opening in 1859 of the Wimbledon-Epsom railway, the Landed Estates Company and the Worcester Park Building Company laid out The Avenue, Cleveland Road, Royal Avenue, and Grafton and Salisbury Roads, built large detached villas, and sold or rented them to professional men, ex-diplomats, merchants and other substantial citizens. (The name 'Worcester' derived from the appointment in 1606 of the 4<sup>th</sup> Earl of Worcester as Keeper of the Nonsuch Great Park.)

These new residents wanted their own church, and a temporary iron building was opened in 1867, to be replaced in 1895 by the present church, designed by local architect John Alick Thomas. The as yet small population meant that only three of the five nave bays intended by Thomas were completed at the time. The final two bays were not added until 1959, and in 1995 some meeting-rooms were added at the north-west corner. In the main porch hang a stone and a tile from the medieval church.

The church is built of brick and knapped flint, and has a polygonal apse. The organ is by Henry 'Father' Willis, and some of the glass is by Clayton & Bell. The west window, which commemorates a Flying Officer, shot down over Normandy on D-Day, is by Lawrence Lee.

As we left the church we walked past the Old Vicarage, a substantial red brick house, also by Alick Thomas. The present vicarage, next door, dates from 1985.

From Royal Avenue we could look across Parker's Field, named for a local family who used to exercise horses here. Where Royal Avenue meets The Avenue probably lies on the royal route to Nonsuch, and, as one of the highest points in the Great Park, it was a fitting site for the Keeper to have his residence. Worcester House was 'one intire pile of very good brick building fower stories high covered with tile well built and ordered'. A later owner of House and Park was the Parliamentarian Colonel Thomas Pride, of 'Pride's Purge'. And in 1750 the estate passed to the Taylor family, gunpowder manufacturers, who retained it for a century. By the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century the site was occupied by Worcester Park Farm, notable for its connection with the Pre-Raphaelites, particularly Holman Hunt and John Everett Millais, a number of whose paintings are set in the near neighbourhood.

In 1873 it was replaced by a large house called Worcester Court, home of Alexander Hector, whose career involved commerce, archaeology and diplomacy, in Baghdad. Hector's wife wrote popular novels under the name 'Annie French', and, later, 'Mrs Alexander'. Titles include *Look Before You Leap* and *Which Shall It Be*.

In 1939 Worcester Court was acquired by Blakesley School, a successful mixed preparatory school which had been established in Merton in 1913 by Jack Dudley and his wife Alice. With the outbreak of war its premises, next to the Nelson Hospital, had been taken over as a first-aid post. Blakesley School continued at Worcester Court until its closure in 1959. The house is now gone.

*'BLAKESLEY' – sketch by Eric Dudley*

We turned off The Avenue into the elegantly curving Salisbury Road, which was laid out before 1867, but had to wait until the 1920s before any houses were built. It was named after Edward de Sarisburie, who was connected with the Codrington family, medieval lords of the manor of Cuddington.

The pretty Shadbolt Park takes its name from Ernest Ifill Shadbolt, a retired railway engineer, who bought the piece of land in 1921, laid out the grounds with trees and shrubs from all round the world, and built a house without chimneys (central heating throughout – innovative for the time). When he died in 1936 the local authority was able to buy the property at half its market price. The grounds became a park and the house, for a time, a branch library. It now houses a doctors' surgery, and a volunteer group help care for the grounds, which still include many unusual trees. There is also a large collection of day lilies (*Hemerocallis*).

Where Salisbury Road meets The Avenue is The Croft, built c.1900 in understated Arts & Crafts style, as his own home by architect Alick Thomas.

In The Avenue still stand a handful of the original tall Gothic or Italianate pale brick villas from the 1860s. These are all on the north side. (The south side was developed later, with red brick houses, some of which survive.) The present No.41 is on the site of Heatherlea, the home for about a year in the 1890s of H G Wells and his

wife. In his 1909 novel *Ann Veronica* Wells gently mocked Worcester Park, lightly disguised as ‘Morningside Park’, as a suburb which ‘had not altogether, as people say, come off’.

The block of flats, called Kingsley Court, opposite Woodlands Avenue, are on the site of a house which became Kingsley High School, another establishment that moved from Merton to Worcester Park.

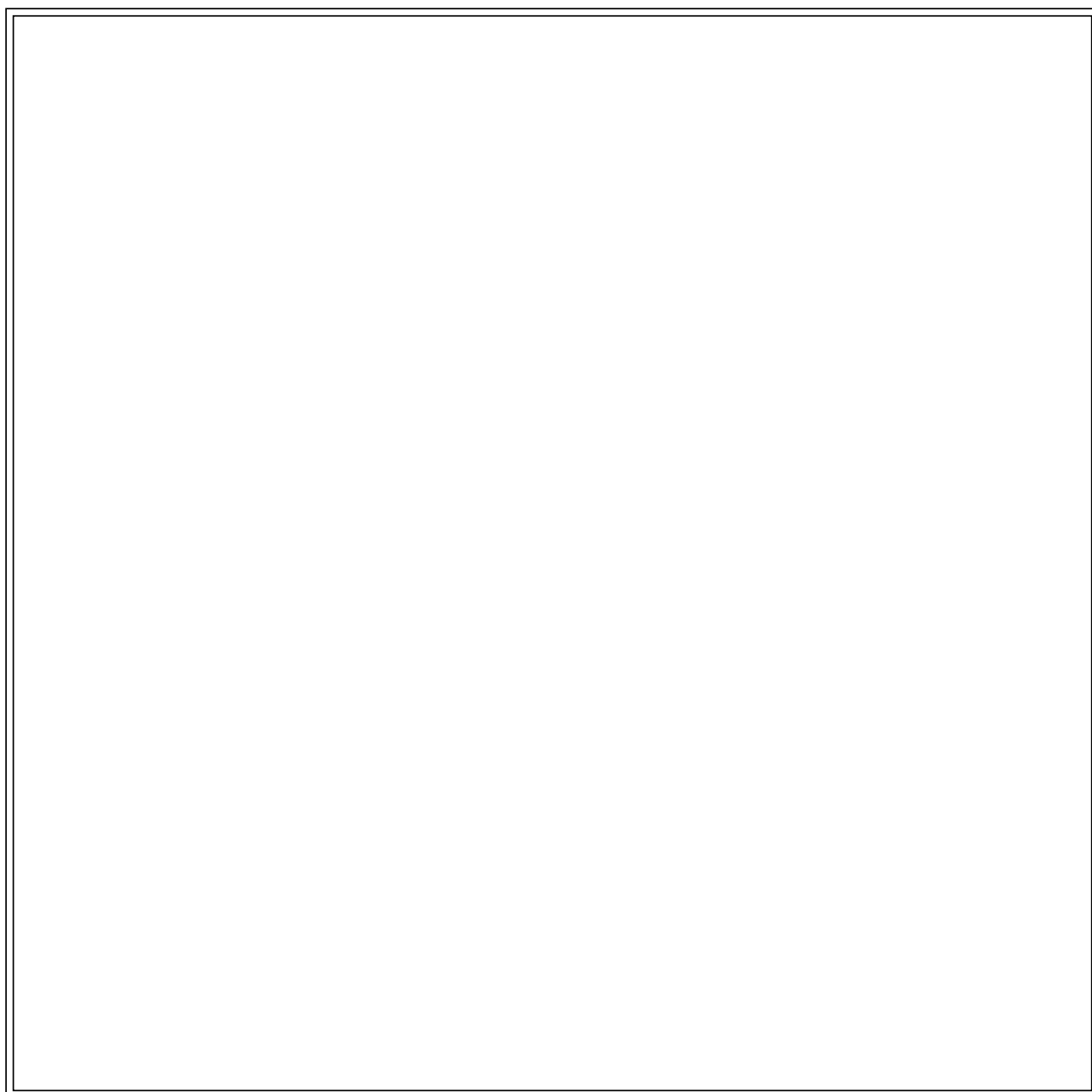
The sites of some of the original villas have been replaced by small ‘closes’ of modern houses. We were amused to learn that one of these is called not ‘----- Close’, as others were, but ‘Roland Way’ – which happened to be the full name of a then 21-year-old architecture student.

During our walk David’s mother handed out photocopies of relevant images, and afterwards she and her husband provided welcome refreshments in the church. Our thanks to them and especially to David, for a lucid and interesting taste of Worcester Park. No apologies then for reminding readers that you can explore further, using David’s two books, and for repeating the details from our last issue:

**David Rymill** *Worcester Park & Cuddington: A Walk through the Centuries* (2000, The Buckwheat Press) £8.95 plus £1 p&p; **David Rymill** *Worcester Park, Old Malden & North Cheam: History at our Feet* (2012, The Buckwheat Press) £10 plus £2 p&p; (both books: £18.95 plus £3 p&p)

Cheques made payable to D R Rymill can be sent to 77 Cromwell Road, Worcester Park, Surrey KT4 7JR

**Judith Goodman**



*Detail from Plan of The Avenue c.1890  
(Surrey History Centre 70/34)*

## LOCAL HISTORY WORKSHOPS

**Friday 26 June 2014. Six present. Judith Goodman in the chair.**

- ◆ **Keith Penny** had been reading copies from 1938/9 of the *Sutton Advertiser*, which covered the Mitcham area. *Long Thornton and Streatham Vale Notes* were written by Brinsmead Gough, whose article *Down Lonesome Way* appeared in the last *Bulletin*.

These clippings related to the preparation, or lack of, among the local authorities and organisations, for the war. Dave Haunton said that the records show that preparations were not very advanced in 1938. Advice on gas-proofing rooms and the construction of garden shelters, and instruction and training in air raid precautions, were arranged. There was some concern that by July 1939 only 100 men in Long Thornton had volunteered as Air Raid Wardens. Meanwhile community life went on much as usual.

- ◆ **David Luff** had been researching the history of Lines Bros, including their model railways, and Sindy ('the doll you'll love to dress'). Merton was the head office of the organisation. David has never been impressed with the quality and accuracy of their trains, which were toys rather than models. They had made several abortive attempts to sell abroad, but their scales were not compatible.

Sindy was based on a character in a cartoon by Bill Liddy, and the original doll was sold in tobacconists. David has some of these. Most Sindy dolls were manufactured at Merton, but some were made in Hong Kong.



from a 1964 Tri-ang brochure  
courtesy JG

- ◆ **Rosemary Turner** had recently stayed in Torquay and had come across a property there called Morden Hall, which included a Morden House and Morden Lodge. They were opposite St Luke's church, Warren Road. She wondered if there was any connection with the Morden Lodge in Morden that she has been researching. The last member of the Hoare family to live in Morden was Henry James Hoare, who moved to Torquay with his family in November 1858, and lived there till his death on 16 February 1859. At Torquay library Rosemary learned that Hoare had lived at 12 Hesketh Crescent. 'Morden Hall' was first occupied in the summer of 1859, so perhaps it was being built for Hoare, but he died before it was completed. The archivist at Hoare's Bank, who had been helpful in the past, had no information to add.
- ◆ **Dave Haunton** had brought the layout of the story-boards he and Peter Hopkins had produced for the Merton Priory exhibition at the Wimbledon Museum.  
He had been looking through the parish magazines of St Mary's, Merton, for the period 1930-1946, in connection with the joint publication with the John Innes Society covering that period. He had found an article about the broadcast of a church service on the BBC. There was also a report of a Garden Fete which went on for three days and raised £510. The church supported a lady missionary in China, who received £120 a year to live on. There were many entries relating to her life there (see page 14).
- ◆ **Cyril Maidment** had been compiling a catalogue for the Priory exhibition. He has put a lot of work into it. He had some recent photos of the Priory wall, which is now highly visible, having been cleared of vegetation. He had been in touch with the council officer, who has been continuing to try to get the National Trust or English Heritage to look into repair and conservation of the wall. David Luff said that the higher level of the land on Sainsbury's side is putting pressure on the wall.
- ◆ **Judith Goodman** had found an illustrated article about market gardens by Dewey Bates in the *English Illustrated Magazine* for 1884-5. It is possible that some of the illustrations may be of places in Merton. The article says 'In Mitcham parish alone there are 300 acres devoted to medicine plants, such as lavender, mint, parsley, camomile, liquorice; although the lavender fields, for which the place is renowned, have retired further south to give way to more paying herbs and vegetables.'

**Rosemary Turner**

**Dates of next Workshops: Fridays 26 September, 7 November and 19 December at 2.30pm**

At Wandle Industrial Museum. All are welcome.

**PETER HOPKINS is excited by newly-discovered documents about**

## **MITCHAM GROVE AND THE MYERS FAMILY**

In chapter 7 of his volume on *Ravensbury* in his *Mitcham Histories* series, Eric Montague traces the history of the Mitcham Grove estate which extended into Mitcham, Morden and Carshalton, based around the mansion that occupied the site of the present Watermeads housing development.

In 1725 this estate, together with other properties in Mitcham, Merton, Wandsworth, Croydon, Witley and Thursley, was inherited by William Myers from Susanna Smith, whose forebears had owned the properties since the mid-16<sup>th</sup> century. A few late-18<sup>th</sup>- and early-19<sup>th</sup>-century leases and indentures<sup>1</sup> of sale survive at Surrey History Centre, Sutton Archives, and Merton Heritage & Local Studies Centre. These reveal that in 1773 the main Mitcham Grove estate came into the possession of Alexander Wedderburn, who was raised to the peerage as Lord Loughborough in 1780 on becoming Lord Chief Justice to the Court of Common Pleas.<sup>2</sup> An adjoining section of the estate, which also extended into Mitcham, Morden and Carshalton and included the mills above Mitcham Bridge, had been purchased in 1768 by Rowland Frye of Wallington from a Robert Cochran of Mitcham, surgeon.<sup>3</sup> However, it had not been possible to trace the steps or the circumstances whereby these portions of the Myers's estate had changed hands.

In June this year the Society was approached by Mrs Susan Braun, former owner of the *Buck's Head* inn on London Road, Mitcham, offering a collection of old documents that had come into her possession on purchase of the property some 20 years ago. It was agreed that we would examine and copy the documents before depositing them with Surrey History Centre. The *Buck's Head* was one of the properties inherited by William Myers in 1725, a buck's head being the heraldic device of the Smith family.<sup>4</sup> Tony Scott has offered to examine the documents relating to the inn, but I have had the opportunity to explore some of the earliest documents – attested copies made in February 1776 of six indentures dating from 1748 to 1776, plus copies of the wills of William Myers and his son, also William, originally drawn up in 1739 and 1774 respectively. I was delighted to discover that these fill many of the gaps in the record, either directly or by reciting details from other lost indentures.

Susanna Smith's bequest had been to her 'kinsman' William Myers and 'his heirs and assigns forever'.<sup>5</sup> Similarly, William bequeathed the entire estate to his eldest son, William II, and to 'the heirs of his body'. Such bequests limited the legatee's rights in an estate, as each generation only enjoyed 'use' of the property during his lifetime, remainder and reversion being 'entailed' to future heirs. William I's will was proved 29 July 1742 and William II soon realised the limitations under the terms of the will. So the earliest pair of indentures, dated 22 and 23 April 1748, record how he used the legal process of granting a lease to 'make a Tenant to the Precipe', followed by a Recovery, to bar and extinguish 'all Estates Tail and Remainders and Reversions'. This enabled him to raise ready money from a mortgage on his estates by issuing Indentures of Lease and Release, redeemable on the repayment of the principal sum borrowed plus interest.

An indenture dated 24 March 1764, which recites a series of earlier indentures now mostly lost, reveals that William II Myers had secured such a mortgage on his estate before November 1754, when Henry Pratt, son and heir of a London merchant of the same name, assigned a mortgage for £6000 plus interest to Nathaniel Hancock of Mark Lane, London, Gentleman. In March 1763 William borrowed a further £1750 from Alexander Stewart and in November 1763 Stewart also took over the earlier mortgage, paying £6000 to Hancock 'with the privity of' William II Myers. By March 1764 William had only paid the interest due on the loans, and a new Indenture of Lease, dated 19 March, and the associated Indenture of Release, Bargain and Sale, dated 20 March 1764, were agreed, by which William, 'in satisfaction and discharge of the sum of £5040, parcel of the said sum of £7750', sold the Mitcham Grove estate to Stewart 'absolutely forever freed and discharged of and from all equity of redemption whatsoever'. This sale may well have been agreed at the time Stewart took over the mortgage from Hancock, as the earliest surviving Mitcham poor rate books from 1755 record Stewart's presence here.<sup>6</sup>

The following day, 21 March 1764, an Indenture of Lease was agreed between Myers, Stewart and Robert Cochran,<sup>7</sup> followed on 22 March by the Indenture of Release, Bargain and Sale, whereby Cochran purchased another part of the estate centred on the mills at Mitcham Bridge, paying £2710 to Stewart. These two sales paid off William's debt to Stewart, so the rest of William's estate was now free from the mortgage.

However, William I's will had raised an additional problem. He had left several personal bequests to various individuals, including life-annuities of £50 each to his three younger sons George, Thomas and Skynner Myers, 'issuing out of all or any part of the manors, messuages, lands, tenements, tythes and hereditaments whatsoever which came to or are vested in me and my heirs under or by virtue of the settlement or will of Susanna Smith'. Stewart and Cochran wanted assurances that the properties that they had purchased would not be liable for any payment towards these annuities, so the next pair of indentures were agreed, dated 23 and 24 March 1764 and included among our copies, conveying the remaining properties, which had not been sold to Stewart and

Cochran, to John Swaine, probably William II's lawyer (and later one of his executors), under a 100-year lease 'upon Trust that so long as the said William Myers ... do and shall from time to time well and truly pay and satisfy the said several annuities [*sic*] of fifty pounds when and as the same shall respectively become payable ... He the said John Swaine, his executors, administrators and assigns, do and shall permit and suffer the same William Myers, his heirs and assigns, to receive and take the Rents, Issues and Profits of the Premises comprized in the said Term of One Hundred Years to his and their own Use and Benefit'.

Our final pair of indentures reveal that this 100-year lease was extinguished on Boxing Day 1775, following an agreement made on Christmas Day 1775 by Skynner Myers – the only surviving son of William I – to exchange his annuity, charged on the whole estate, for an equivalent annuity, charged on a specific property allocated by his nephew William III Myers, son of William II. This freed the estate from its remaining encumbrance, enabling William III to sell as much of the estate as was necessary to pay his late father's bequests – William II's will was signed 28 February 1774. The Particulars of Sale for the auction to be held at 11 am on Monday 6 November 1775 in 17 lots, one of which was the *Buck's Head*, survive at Surrey History Centre.<sup>8</sup> It was the sale of these individual portions of the estate that gave rise to the creation of the attested copies of the earlier indentures, a set presumably being prepared at the request, and cost, of each of those purchasers who wanted them.

As we have seen, Cochran sold his property to Frye in 1776, and it was held by Frye's descendants, the Spencer family, at the time the tithe apportionments for the three parishes were prepared in 1838 (Morden), 1846 (Mitcham) and 1847 (Carshalton). A document now in Sutton Archives reveals that in July 1773 the Mitcham Grove estate passed from Archibald Stewart to his son John Stewart, who sold it to Alexander Wedderburn in 1779.<sup>9</sup> Henry Hoare purchased it from Wedderburn in April 1786 and full particulars of Hoare's extensive estate, including a numbered plan and matching schedule of lands, survive from the sale following his death in 1828.<sup>10</sup>

Field-names shown on the 1828 plan and schedule, and other documents in Sutton Archives, help to locate neighbouring properties noted in the 1764 indentures (see map opposite).<sup>11</sup> Stewart's estate can be summarised as:

All that Capital Messuage or Mansion House with the Barns, Stables, Outhouses, Gardens, Orchards, Dovehouse and Appurtenances whatsoever ... in Mitcham and Morden ... late or heretofore in the possession or occupation of the same William Myers and now of the said Archibald Stewart,  
together with the Pews or Seats in the Parish Church of Mitcham aforesaid and Chancel of the same to the said Capital Messuage or Mansion House belonging;

3 fields in Morden adjoining on east on lands of Edward Nash, miller, late in tenure of Nathaniel Cooper	20 acres
Seven Acre Field adjoining Kings Highway to Sutton on east & lands of Penelope Woodcock on south	7 acres
Five Acre Field adjoining on the south on lands now or late Penelope Woodcock	5 acres
Twelve Acre Field adjoining to the said last mentioned field	12 acres
Seven Acre Field adjoining on south on lands belonging to Peter Batt in tenure of Archibald Stewart	7 acres
Eight Acre Field adjoining on the south on lands now or late of the said Peter Batt	8 acres
Six Acre Field adjoining on the Old Wandell River	6 acres
Land called Rushy Mead	1 acre
two other fields called Cranmish Lands	14 acre

– all which premises are in the said Parish of Cashalton [*sic*] and late were in the tenure of Nathaniel Cooper  
And also all that Messuage or Tenement and 17 acres of Meadow and Pasture Ground adjoining the said Messuage in Mitcham in the Tenure of Thomas Woodcock, the major part of which is or late was used as a Whitening Ground for the Whiting of Linen Cloth 17 acres  
3 meadows opposite to said Messuage on the east side of Road leading through Mitcham towards London 7 acres

Cochran's properties consisted of:

All that Messuage or Tenement and the Garden and Yard thereto belonging  
two Closes of Meadow Ground near the said Messuage or Tenement 3 acres  
Mill House and the three Water Corn Mills therein with Barn and Buildings adjoining;  
small parcel of Ground on south of said Buildings with 3 small Messuages and Barn thereon  
– all in Mitcham, heretofore in the occupation of Charles Parry, now of Edward Nash  
the Long Meadow in the Parish of Morden  
parcel of land called the Island between the two Streams in the Parish of Mitcham  
– formerly in the occupation of [blank] afterwards of [blank] and now Edward Nash  
new erected Water Mill called a Copper Mill with the Wheels and other parts thereof;  
small piece of Meadow Ground in Carshalton at North end of a little meadow of Nathaniel Cooper and late or heretofore  
parcel of the same Meadow... bounded by the River there on the East and North parts and by the said Lane and other  
Lands of William Myers in the tenure of Nathaniel Cooper on the West and South 2.75 acres  
and also the Water of the River Wandle/Mitcham River running along or across part of Mitcham Common/Heath  
otherwise Cranmarsh into or along the Watercourse or Canal called the Mill Head and the great Pond of James Cranmer  
– all which said Copper Mill and Premises last mentioned in the tenure or occupation of Edward Foster



As these various parcels of land were sold by indenture, one would assume that they were all freehold properties. However, the March 1763 indenture, recited on 24 March 1764, also lists various copyhold properties held from Ravensbury manor and the manor of Biggin and Tamworth. Some ten acres of one of these copyhold properties, the 23-acre 'Bennetts Field' in Morden, was held by Mrs Spencer in 1838, five acres of which were called 'Long Meadow' – 'The Long Meadow in Morden' was part of the property sold to Cochran in 1764 and thence to Frye. The remainder of the former Bennetts Field and the other Ravensbury copyholds in Morden formed the twenty acres 'in Morden' sold to Stewart, held in 1838 by Sir John William Lubbock, whose father had bought Mitcham Grove in 1828.<sup>12</sup> I have not yet examined the Ravensbury court rolls (or rather books) at Surrey History Centre to see if these transfers were recorded at the manorial court.<sup>13</sup>



William I Myers had also inherited 'two closes of pasture ground in Morden called Ladys Close containing by estimation fourteen acres, adjoining to the brink of the River there and a little close of the said William Myers next the Highway North East, the Highway leading from Mitcham to Sutton South East, the land of Sir Nicholas Carew North West and South West, late or heretofore in the Tenure or Occupation of Richard Ferrand Esquire deceased and formerly in the Tenure or Occupation of the said George Smith'. These had been leased from the Ravensbury estate for 99 years from 20 September 1683 (and were still held by lease in 1828).

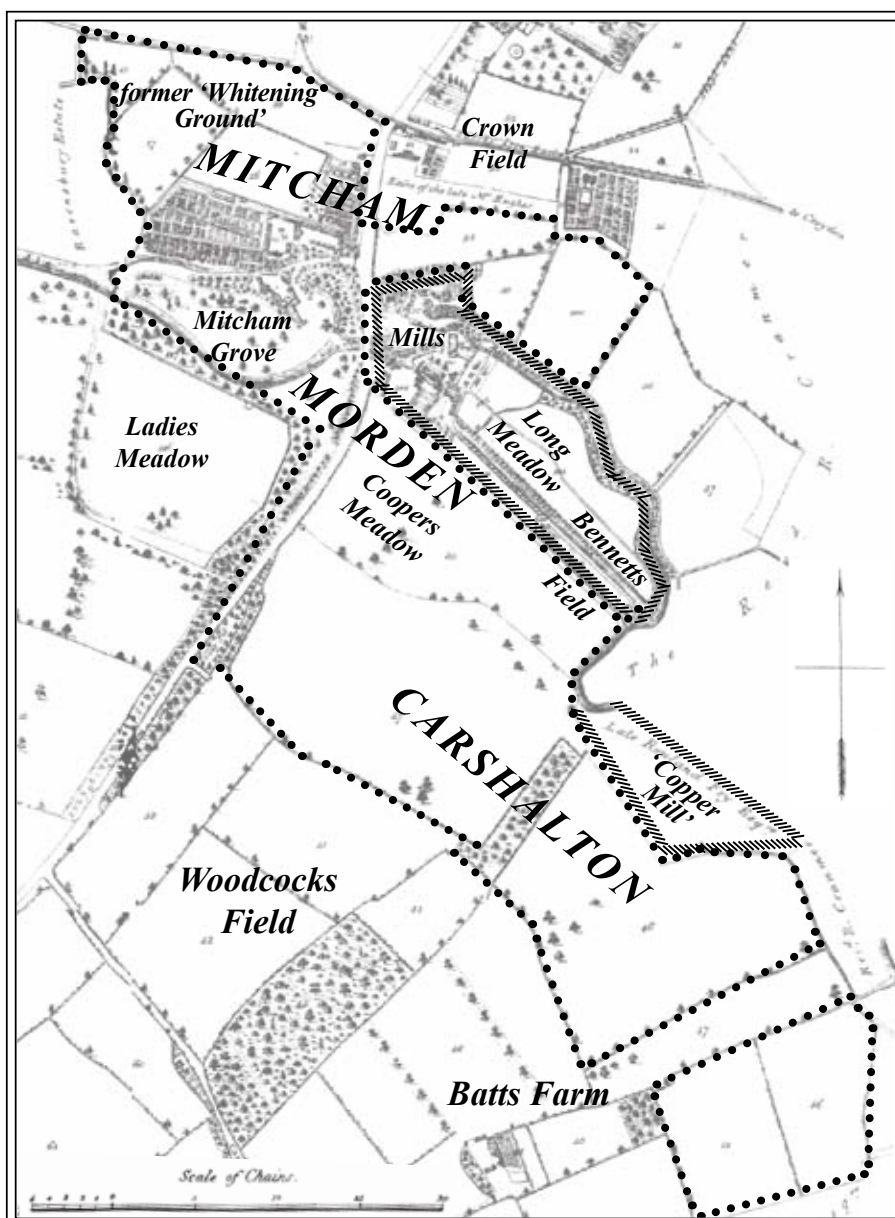
Frye also purchased the 6-acre Crown Field from William III Myers on 16 June 1770, probably in settlement of a mortgage agreement, now lost, dated 18 June. He leased the field back to Myers for 98 years on 19 June 1770 at £12 a year, and this lease was held by Hoare in 1828.<sup>14</sup>

These newly-discovered documents help to trace these properties back into an earlier period than has hitherto been possible. I am extremely grateful to Mrs Braun for making them available to us.

- 1 Indenture: agreement written twice on a sheet of parchment and cut along an indented or wavy line so that authenticity of each party's copy could be judged by matching them together.
- 2 E N Montague *Mitcham Histories* 10 (2008) p.118
- 3 Surrey History Centre 303/21/4/4; E N Montague *Mitcham Histories* 6 (2005) p.37
- 4 E N Montague *Mitcham Histories* 10 (2008) p.100
- 5 E N Montague *Mitcham Histories* 10 (2008) p.157
- 6 E N Montague *Mitcham Histories* 10 (2008) p.112
- 7 Surrey History Centre 303/21/4/1
- 8 Surrey History Centre 599/254
- 9 Sutton Archives 2361/2/6
- 10 Sutton Archives 2361/2/2
- 11 Sutton Archives 2361/2/1-6 – some undated pencil notes enclosed in Sutton Archives 2361/2/3, a document dating from 1828, summarise the lost indenture of 20 March 1764
- 12 Sutton Archives 2361/2/6
- 13 Surrey History Centre 320/1/1-12
- 14 Merton Heritage & Local Studies Centre L2(347.2); Surrey History Centre 303/21/4/6; Sutton Archives 2361/2/2; the lost mortgage indenture is noted in an 1818 affidavit in our collection, confirming they were not in the possession of Mary Everingham, whose husband had bought Myers' house – that known as Manor House in London Road – in 1775

*Annotated detail from 1828 map of the estates of Henry Hoare – Sutton Archives 2361/2/2*

-  Probable outline of properties sold to Stewart
-  Probable outline of properties sold to Cochran



## THE PRIORY WALL

When clearing vegetation between the most northern section of the Priory wall and the public footpath, I found this Groundwork Merton signboard. This now makes five organisations that are supposed to have been looking after the well-being of the wall.

There has been some work done so far in 2014. Ten metres of the southern section has been re-pointed. The site has been surveyed, and the Museum of London has made a very detailed photographic record of the wall. A large area of the site appears to have been treated with weedkiller, and the roots within the wall have been poisoned – though it may be that these roots have been contributing to the wall's stability. In my opinion there are two very vulnerable sections.

Fortunately there has been no vandalism. But there is still some rubbish not removed earlier in the year.

**David Luff**



**SHEILA GALLAGHER** has been looking at

### **PETTY SESSIONS MINUTES FOR BRIXTON HUNDRED, WESTERN DIVISION**

His or Her Majesty's Justices of the Peace, or Magistrates, administered local justice and regulations at Petty or Special Sessions, acting alone or two or more together, depending on the gravity of the work. They had power to impose fines, and of arrest and bail. Acting in pairs, they could summarily try and issue sentence against certain offences, including breaches of excise or weights and measures regulations. They could also hear complaints and examine defendants preliminary to a case being sent to Quarter Sessions. Their surveillance over parishes included nominating officers, approving their rates and accounts, hearing examinations as to bastardy or a person's right of settlement in the parish, and signing orders of removal or vagrancy if it was elsewhere. They supervised Special Sessions of the Highway and Brewster Sessions, issuing alehouse licences and taking recognizances from the licensees and those acting as their sureties.

Recording the proceedings of the Court was a full-time job for the Clerk, usually a local attorney who was allocated a percentage of the fees.

West Brixton Half Hundred included the parishes of Barnes, Battersea, Merton, Mortlake, Putney, Roehampton, Tooting, Wandsworth and Wimbledon, for which Petty Sessions Minutes survive from 1786 to 1869, and are held at Wandsworth Local History Library. The Sessions were held usually at the *French Horn* at Wandsworth, initially monthly, but later weekly, as work increased. Merton had the lowest population of the parishes recorded, and hence fewer references, but they include interesting clues to what life was like around 200 years ago.

The Minutes from 1786 to 1830 were transcribed in a calendar or abbreviated form by Maureen O'Sullivan, a member of East Surrey Family History Society.

In 1786 the victualler at the *White Hart*, Merton, was Alexander TULLOCH whose surety to his 'good fame' in £10 was Samuel MASON. William MASON replaced TULLOCH in 1787 and continued for several years.

Names of Overseers of the Poor and Surveyors of the Highway are recorded annually.

On 5 Jan 1788 John & Robert WHITE were examined as to their settlement and removed to their own parish, unfortunately not recorded. On 1 March 1788 Judith NEALE, her daughter and three other women were committed as vagrants, having 78 forged passes, their value being the small amount of casual relief they could obtain from parishes they passed through.

Similar records continue; the parish officers submitted their accounts and reported 'All well'. Merton appears to have been a well-conducted parish, compared with others. However not all inhabitants were law-abiding: men left their wives and children unprovided for, and were brought before the Magistrates, and putative fathers had bastards sworn against them, incurring financial penalties or imprisonment.

In 1795, when Napoleon threatened invasion, Merton balloted males from 16 to 45 years to provide militiamen, and recruited and paid for men for the Army and Navy, as was required from each parish by the County authorities. War and poor harvests brought hardship and higher poor rates, and parishioners refused relief by the Overseers exercised their right to appeal direct to the Justices.

From 1827 a typical entry:

### **A DISTURBANCE AT MERTON TOLLGATE**

[Heading as given in original documents]

Present At a Petty Sessions and Special Sessions of the Highways

[Justices held at the French Horn at Wandsworth in the West Half Hundred of  
Names \*] Brixton in the County of Surrey the 11<sup>th</sup> day of June 1827

Merton Richard DODD v John TOMPKINS – summons for passing the turnpike gate at Merton and evading toll.

#### **16 Jun 1827**

Merton Thomas ABBOT v Richard DODD – summons for a misdemeanour –  
Info[rmation] by William LAURENCE, Bow St. patrol: rec[eip]'t moiety [*half*] of fine + 3s. costs. DODD guilty, fined 10s. + 10s. costs.

Thomas ABBOT of Montague Place, Montague Sq [-, ?MDX]: On 1 Jun [1827] about 12 p.m. he was travelling from Epsom to London: at Merton Tollgate he tendered ticket for the day. Defendant v[ery] drunk – refused to let him pass, delayed 20-30 min[utes]. Men with a cart forced their way thro'.

Wyles COOPER, servant to Mr. ABBOT: confirms his evidence – offered to pay the toll.

Edward BALES, hairdresser of Rochester Row, Vauxhall Rd. [- MDX]: he passed Merton Tollgate from Epsom about 11.45 p.m. on 1 Jun [1827], saw DODD refuse ticket and after 12 p.m. [the] toll – refused to give change – v[ery] drunk.

William RICHARDSON, Bow St. patrol: on duty 1 Jun p.m. between Ewell and Morden Gates. He came to Morden Tollgate about 12.30 a.m. – defendant v[ery] drunk –swore Mr. ABBOT should not pass, pay or not pay.

Def[endan]t calls 3 witnesses who say he was not sober.

Richard DODD v John TOMPKINS – info[rmation] for passing thro' Turnpike Gate evading toll –convicted – fined 5s. + costs 2s.

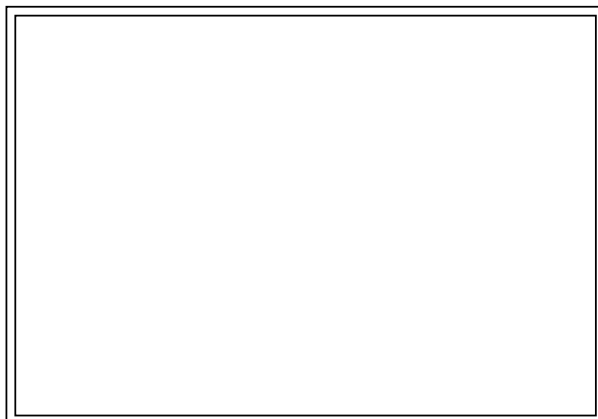
\* names omitted

**ROSEMARY TURNER has been investigating  
MITCHAM BREWERY**

Due to the large numbers of 1910 Valuation entries for Mitcham (much larger than for Morden), I thought that, rather than an overall transcription, I would concentrate on buildings of special interest.

One that is topical at the moment is the brewery that stood on the site of Funnell's Removals – the site where the new fire station is to be (the present fire station is on Lower Green West).

Eric Montague takes the history back to the 1700s in *Mitcham Histories No.6: Mitcham Bridge, the Watermeads and the Wandle Mills*. His history follows the changes of names and ownership over the years. The buildings were later taken over by Lactagol, manufacturers of a patent medicine for 'expectant and nursing mothers', and had other uses until they were demolished by the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. *(Photo: 1959, Surrey History Centre)*



I was concerned about the brewery's water source, given the pollution at the time noted in other Valuation entries, in relation to fishing. However the Valuation records mention well-houses, and Eric says that in the years prior to the first World War water was obtained from a sub-artesian well 351ft (107m) deep, and was raised to cisterns using pumps. He had found no mention of the quality of the beer.

At the time of the Valuation it was known as the Surrey Brewery, although the entry just says 'Lower Mitcham Brewery, Offices, stables & residence'. The owners were Mitcham & Cheam Brewery Co. Ltd, Mitcham, Surrey. The total area, including the residence, was just over two acres (0.8ha).

The description states: *Old brewery in occupation of E J Pearson & Co. Ltd of 49 Watling St. EC and the residence The Beeches was occupied by Thomas Clancy.*

The Brewery – now being converted into chemical food factory 8.2.1915

Offices – Well built of yeo stocks and slate. General office spirit room boarded off. Urinal WC strong room. Private office large coal cellar with pantile roof 2 WC & urinal.

Gas meter house – Brick & tile Iron engineers shop & store

Beer Store – 1. Brick and pan tile with loading wharf WC & 2 basins, part sunk with stone floor.

2. Brick slate beer store with small loading bank Engine room.

Tun room etc – Old building brick slate, tun room 8 mash tub 2 stores, malt room, office store room. Storage in roof. Large cellar in basement 4 rows of iron joists and columns.

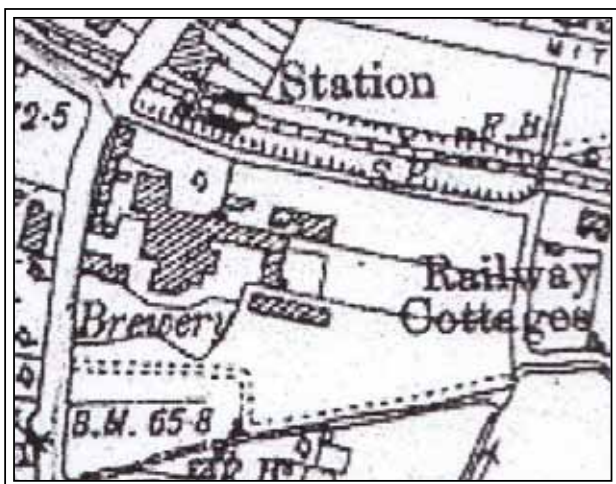
2 Boiler Houses – Engine & well rooms. 2 store rooms. Brick shaft about 45ft.

Open Iron sheds. Malt house old. Brick & tile with floor. Used as stores.

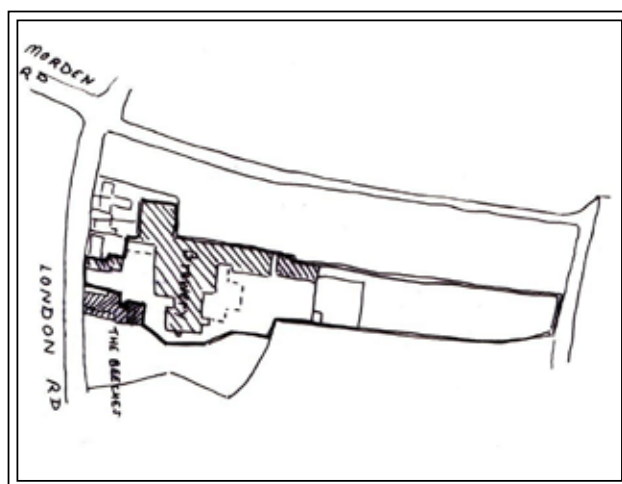
Stabling – Timber & tile 2 stalls & loose box. Fodder room & stalls 7 stalls & loft over. Brick & Iron roof. Harness room 5 stalls.

Timber & Iron roof 2 stalls & 3 stalls 6 bay iron cart shed.

Paddock yards.



*The brewery site as shown on the OS 1:2500 map 1912*



*Plan of the brewery site as shown in the 1910 Valuation record*

## HOT OFF THE PRESS

Richard Chellew's talk at our April meeting has now been published under the title *The Influence of Merton Priory*. At 28 A5 pages, illustrated by full-colour copies of the splendid facsimiles of the original documents specially prepared by a calligrapher from the College of Arms, the booklet sells at £5 (£4 to members) plus 53p postage, and will be available at indoor meetings or from our Publications Secretary, Peter Hopkins, 57 Templecombe Way, Morden, Surrey SM4 4JF (or ring Peter to arrange collection).



### ‘MERTON PRIORY IS 900 YEARS OLD’

This exhibition in the Museum of Wimbledon occupied the whole of the Norman Plastow Gallery. Its main subject was the Priory buildings themselves – where they were, what they looked like, how they changed, what has been detected through archaeology, and the current state of the remains. Cyril Maidment (*right*), the curator, assembled an astonishing wealth of illustration – some 44 A3 panels – of photographs, drawings and maps, with scholarly notes. Merton Priory Trust exhibited some of the surviving decorative stonework, and panels on what is proposed for the future. Richard Chellew kindly allowed some of his precious Merton Priory Manuscripts to be displayed. MHS contributed four panels on granges (how could we not ?), manors, priors and myths, and we must thank Cyril for advertising *The Influence of Merton Priory* under the simple instruction ‘Get this Book’.



The Museum deserves high congratulations for the exhibition, which was open for six weeks. There is no publication, so those who did not see it should hasten to Merton H&LSC, where our panels and a few of Cyril's will be on display until the end of September, alongside their WW1 exhibition (*see below*).

**David Haunton**

### MERTON HERITAGE & LOCAL STUDIES CENTRE

2nd floor, Morden Library, Merton Civic Centre, London Road, Morden SM4 5DX

#### Merton Remembers – Images of the Borough During the First World War

1 August–12 November – Mon–Fri: 9.30–7.00; Sat: 9.30–5.00

Part of Merton's commemorations of the Great War, this exhibition features photos, reminiscences and memorabilia from the period.

Display topics include Wimbledon Army Camp, local military hospitals and Merton VCs

ADMISSION FREE

### ATTIC THEATRE PRODUCTION – ‘FIELDS UNSOWN’

Members will recall Attic Theatre's request earlier this year for memories of the WW1 hospital at Morden Hall. The Theatre is presenting *Fields Unsown*, an open-air play in Morden Hall Park, based partly on your information, on Wednesday 17 September (6 pm), and Thursday 18 to Sunday 21 September (2 pm and 6 pm). At 70 minutes long, the audience does some standing and walking: there are no chairs: umbrellas and shooting sticks could be recommended. Book tickets through [www.attictheatrecompany.com](http://www.attictheatrecompany.com). Attic Theatre's relevant exhibition is open in the Stable Yard at Morden Hall Park from 24 October.

### SURREY LOCAL HISTORY COMMITTEE

Autumn Meeting Saturday 18 October 2014 1pm–3.45 pm

#### RESEARCHING THE FIRST WORLD WAR

Surrey History Centre, 130 Goldsworth Road, Woking GU21 6ND.

Tickets £8 payable on the day. Places limited. To book ring 01737 765508 or email [g.p.moss@qmul.ac.uk](mailto:g.p.moss@qmul.ac.uk) or write to 10 Hurstleigh Drive, Redhill, Surrey RH1 2AA

**DAVID HAUNTON was fascinated by what he calls**

## **‘INTERESTING TIMES’ IN CHINA 1923-1950**

### **The experiences of St Mary’s (Merton) Own Missionary<sup>1</sup>**

The Church Missionary Society (CMS) was founded to spread the Anglican Gospel around the world. To this end, they built schools and hospitals in ‘faraway places’, staffed by volunteer Christian teachers, doctors and nurses. Each missionary was expected to stay in post for four or even five years, after which they came home for a 4-6 month sabbatical before returning to their post abroad. The CMS appealed to parishes throughout the United Kingdom to raise the money to support such volunteers.

One parish which responded to the appeal was St Mary’s, Merton Park, which agreed to sponsor a medical missionary to China. St Mary’s promised to raise £120 per annum to cover the basic salary, and an unspecified further amount (probably £30-£40 per annum) for CMS expenses such as transport to and from China for the missionary. In 1923, when this commitment began, the total would be the equivalent of some £7,500 today. This money was raised entirely voluntarily, by direct donations, by holding Sales of Work, and by running a ‘White Elephant’ scheme, whereby parishioners donated surplus hardware items for resale (eg. a bookcase, an iron, a baby’s cot; even an upright piano at one point).

The person selected to be ‘Our Own Missionary’ was Miss P McLauchlen, an experienced midwifery and maternity nurse, who in 1923 went out to the CMS hospitals at Hing Hwa, (now Putien) in Fukien province, China. This is almost on the coast, about 50 miles south-west of Foochow, the provincial capital. Her duties included visiting the local villages, teaching midwifery to the women and Bible classes to the girls. The CMS had quite a large establishment at Hing Hwa, dating from 1897, and comprised St Luke’s Men’s Hospital, the Stewart Memorial Women’s Hospital, and the Annie Walker Hospital for Maternity. The CMS and other missionary societies continued to extend their efforts, so that by 1937 there were no fewer than 254 mission hospitals in China.

Miss McLauchlen wrote at least twice a year to the vicar of St Mary’s, mentioning progress or otherwise, and the occasional pleasure – a boat trip or a picnic – but always to thank the parishioners for their continued support. Not the least of this was extra gifts ‘for personal use’ of between £35 and £60 per annum, raised over and above the parish’s financial commitment to the CMS. Parts of her letters are often quoted in *St Mary’s Parish Magazine*, strictly formally, so we never do find out what her initial ‘P’ stood for. After she had been some ten years in China, we do learn that she still did not speak any Chinese, and thus constantly required a translator.

### **Civil War**

At the start of Our Missionary’s time in China, the Republic was officially at peace, troubled only by the occasional warlord making a bid for local independence (what Jung Chang in her book *Wild Swans: Three daughters of China* (1992) calls ‘landlords and their gangs’, or what we would term ‘medieval barons and their armed retinues’). However, in 1927 civil war broke out between the government (the Kuomintang) and the Communists (the Reds), resulting in more serious, if sporadic, warfare over much of the country.

Sustained by her faith, Miss McLauchlen demonstrates a stiff upper lip, and rarely remarks on war news. Other hardships are mentioned only in passing, as will become evident below. But in January 1931<sup>2</sup> she does mention ‘we may have to leave Hing Hwa for Foochow, as the country places are overrun with Communists and Bandits’. Evidently the hospital staff did move for a while, though eighteen months later in June 1932 she comments casually that there are ‘still dangers of bandits and reds’, en route to the more interesting topic that the Men’s Hospital has been extended. She sums up that ‘in spite of all the war and the floods and the famine, we are safe, with food in plenty’.

In January 1933, she reports ‘There is a change in the Army guarding the city, so all the sick soldiers have left; the Reds have got into Kiawang,<sup>3</sup> so it may mean that we have to pull out of here again’, but in March ‘the Reds have met with a setback, so we are able to remain ... I have had two bouts of malaria’.

In July 1933 ‘the post is a little awkward these days, the Siberian route being closed [due to the Japanese annexation of Manchuria closing the trans-Siberian railway]; ... there is quite a lot of smallpox around; fortunately the staff have been vaccinated; ... Bandits have taken one person, Bishop Ding of Fukien’, but we never learn why he was ‘taken’, or his fate. In December 1933 ‘we were delayed on returning from our [local] holiday, there being trouble with communists’.

In the autumn of 1934, Miss McLauchlen returned to England for her second furlough, and in February 1935 was welcomed to Merton by vicar and parishioners during a short visit, before setting off again for her third period in China. In October 1935 she reports from Hing Hwa that she is ‘now able to get around the country, using the ambulance, though it is very costly at 6/8d per day, [as] at present the bandits are not too bad ... The

people are very badly off because of the famine; ... Our Silver Jubilee picnic had to be re-directed because of bandits, but was a very pleasant and cheerful occasion'. Her December 1935 letter casually mentions 'the August typhoon'. One of her few medical references is in March 1937 'A number of women patients are here trying to break off their opium habit ... [as] there is a Government decree that from January 1937 the penalty is death'.

### Japanese War

1937 saw the Japanese invasion of China: one result of this was a rapid cease-fire agreement between the Kuomintang and the Communists, ensuring a hiatus in the civil war until the final defeat of Japanese forces in China in 1946. The 1937-1946 conflict is known to Chinese historians as the Second Sino-Japanese War. Miss McLauchlen's only notable comment in 1937 is that 'the house is riddled with white ants, and is in danger of collapse'.

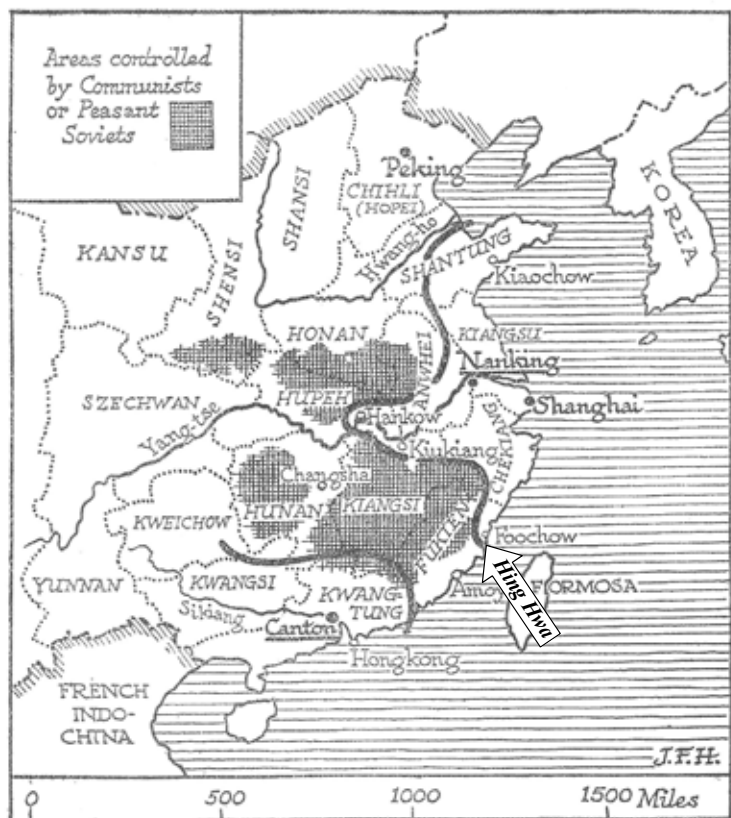
In January 1938, after having been in the country for fifteen years, she reports that 'as foreign tinned food is getting so expensive, I resolved to try a new experiment, and *eat Chinese food*. [My italics] This proved a complete success and I am well and happy on it ... We never hear the wireless these days due to the troubles and martial law'. In May 1938 she is 'very cold ... the war still goes on but we have not felt much effect here', but in October '... in this part nothing has happened, though there was a real scare when Amoy<sup>4</sup> was taken, Hing Hwa being so close ... it is difficult to plan as so many of the roads have been destroyed'.

Then in a letter dated June 1939: 'The war has been coming nearer to us ... we had our first air raid last Thursday week at 3 pm. Three planes flew very low and dropped bombs one after the other: last Wednesday they came again. It lasted 90 minutes with 12 bombs dropped ... it honestly is an awful moment when they keep flying over and over the house ... The result is a general exodus [of townspeople] in the morning and a return in the evening. Business is almost at a standstill, electric light cut off, all our roads and bridges gone; [these] the Chinese themselves have destroyed'.

There is nothing more until May 1941, when, still in Hing Hwa, Miss McLauchlen writes 'I hope to be coming home in the late Spring or early Summer, via Canada. ... Letters are scarce and take months [in delivery] and some never arrive. Writing this has been interrupted by another Air Raid Alarm'. Her hopes were to be unfulfilled; she stayed in China, and on 15 December 1941 (just after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour) she reports that she is 'safe in Foochow'. With no other details, this rather bald statement arrived in Merton swiftly enough to be published in the January 1942 *Parish Magazine*, so perhaps it was in a telegram to the CMS.

In April 1942, the vicar informs us that Our Own Missionary remains in China, continuing to work under war conditions. In August a special Gift Day to support her raised £262, some £62 more than the previous best. And in October 1942 she reports the ominous fact that 'St Luke's is now taking in wounded soldiers [so fighting must be quite close]'. However, the battle lines must have receded after a time, as in a letter dated July 1943 (but not published until December) her concerns are more civilian – she has 'written letters but not received a reply ... she has been working at one of the country churches with no Pastor or Catechist, but lay preachers have stepped in and increased services; there is quite a good Sunday School in a village a mile away ... there has been a long drought; plague is very bad'.

In November 1943 (published in March 1944) she writes rather sadly that she is 'not returning this year, there are so many difficulties ... Quite a number of missionaries have gone home'. On the other hand, in the war 'we have had quite a long spell of quiet ... though a few days ago there was bombing not far away, with enemy planes flying over ... This year plague



China in 1934. Chiang Kai-Shek's Nationalists held Nanking and the east, and Canton and the south, while a Japanese-controlled puppet government 'ruled' around Peking.<sup>5</sup> From J F Horrabin An Atlas of Current Affairs (1934, Gollancz)

and cholera have been very bad indeed. Plague in late Spring and early Summer, cholera all last month and not over yet' and sadly again 'We have not received any mail for well over a year now'.

In February 1944 she has at last received mail 'Thank you for your letter ... I have had to give up my work for a while ... to nurse a colleague with a fractured hip'. These brief messages seem to have touched the parishioners of St Mary's, as the August Gift Day raised over £323 for the CMS, nearly £50 more than the previous year's record amount.

At last in December 1944 she was evacuated, and had reached Calcutta on her way home. Passing through Bombay, she reached England in February 1945, having been away for ten years. She paid a short visit to St Mary's in May, and on Missionary Gift Day in July gave a vivid talk on her experiences to the congregation.

### **Civil War Again**

Having defeated the Japanese forces in China in 1946, the Kuomintang (Nationalists) and the Communists resumed hostilities against each other. Despite this, in April 1947 Our Own Missionary prepared to return to Hing Hwa, having enjoyed an extended furlough and a course of post-graduate training. After her 25 years in China, she was deeply conscious that the Hospital was the only medical and surgical resource for 600,000 people. She reached Hong Kong on 17 June and Hing Hwa 'seven or eight weeks after sailing'.

Miss McLauchlen wrote a cheerful and optimistic letter from Hing Hwa on 14 September 1948, which reached Merton in only 11 days. ('Such is our modern world' observed the vicar.) She was now in charge of all maternity students, which owing to an overlap of classes meant she had 59 students at once. And evidently she coped. She reported that the rebuilding of the hospital was progressing well, and that the new ambulance (a gift from Sheffield) was used much more freely than the old one because of its higher wheel-base – 'the previous one so frequently bogged down when the roads were soft after rain'.

But optimism was not to last. In May 1949 'Fukien [province] is being over-run [by the Communists]; CMS thinks missionaries should stay put *pro tem*, but there is much difficulty in buying things, both as to cost and the awkwardness of finding negotiable money'. By 24 June 'we have still not been taken over ... We have had two notices from the British Consul in Amoy to evacuate, but we have no intention of doing so'. Foochow was occupied in August.

In January 1950 'we have had three or four letters recently. There is perplexing change in Putien [ie. Hing Hwa]; now there is only one surgeon left. The rebuilding of the hospital has stopped, but work has been insufficient to make the place useable'. On 8 April 'we are in a bad way; the women's hospital has closed, and maternity is empty; there are less than 30 patients in the whole place... We are limited in our movements and may not go far afield.' The end came in August 'I am coming home "at the request of the Chinese Church" ... Under the Communists the presence of foreigners is embarrassing Chinese Christians because they are made suspect'. In January 1951 Miss P McLauchlen, St Mary's Own Missionary, a brave and dedicated soul, arrived back in England 28 years after she first left for China.

### **Help Wanted**

Do you have a photograph of Miss McLauchlen ?

Can you tell me what Christian name her initial 'P' stood for ?

I have failed to find the modern name of the town or village she calls 'Kiawang'. Can anyone help ?

- 1 I am grateful to Hazel and Chris Abbott, for allowing me much access to the Parish copies of *St Mary's Parish Magazine* while I was composing this note.
- 2 In the extracts quoted, the date given is usually that of their appearance in the *Magazine*, as the date of writing of the letter is often not stated. The post could be erratic, so a letter may have been written anywhere between three weeks and four months before its contents were published.
- 3 Unidentified. The only Kiawang I have found is a large town far away to the north, beyond Nanking: Miss McLauchlen's Kiawang must be much nearer (and smaller).
- 4 A large off-shore island about 90 miles south-west of Hing Hwa.
- 5 By the end of 1935 the Nationalists had advanced and the Communist-controlled areas were hugely reduced. The remainder of Mao Tse-Tung's Red Army was sheltering in northern Shensi after the 'Long March' (October 1934 – October 1935).

**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.**

**website: [www.mertonhistoricalsociety.org.uk](http://www.mertonhistoricalsociety.org.uk)**

**email: [mhs@mertonhistoricalsociety.org.uk](mailto:mhs@mertonhistoricalsociety.org.uk)**

*Printed by Peter Hopkins*