



**PRESIDENT:**  
**VICE PRESIDENTS:** Eric Montague, Judith Goodman  
**CHAIR:** Keith Penny

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*MORDEN'S BILL RUDD: digging at Merton priory in the 1970s (see page 3)*

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## PROGRAMME MARCH – MAY 2015

**Saturday 14 March 2.30pm**

**Christ Church Hall, Colliers Wood**

**‘Past and Present: How Merton, Morden and Mitcham have changed’**

Presentation by **David Roe, Keith Penny** and **Mick Taylor** of the MHS Photographic Project

**Saturday 11 April 2.30pm**

**Christ Church Hall, Colliers Wood**

**‘Britain’s WW2 air-raid warning system’**

Talk by **Gordon Dennington**, Chairman of Lewisham Local History Society

Note: this is a change of programme

*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.**

**Thursday 21 May 11.00am**

**Visit to the Parliamentary Archives (Planned)**

The Archives contain official records of both Houses of Parliament and collections of private political papers, as well as records about the post-1834 Palace of Westminster. The tour is provided free of charge. With notice, specific documents can be produced for viewing.

Some form of picture personal identification is required (passport or new-style driving licence preferred) but a Freedom Pass will suffice. The visit is for a maximum of sixteen people and a minimum of eight. If you are interested, please get in touch with Bea Oliver or Keith Penny

**Unless the minimum number of people is attained, the tour will not take place.**

**There is no visit planned for June**

**July, August and September** – visits to **Nonsuch, Southside House** and **The British Library** (not necessarily in that order) are being discussed but no dates as yet arranged.

## NEW VICE PRESIDENT

The Chair and Committee are very pleased to announce that Mrs Judith Goodman has accepted their invitation to become a Vice President of our Society.

Judy is well known as a distinguished local historian. She has published two books: *Merton & Morden, A Pictorial History* (Phillimore, 1995) and *Coal and Calico, Letters and Papers of the Bennett and Leach Families of Merton and Wandsworth* (Merton Historical Society, 2008). She has made many original contributions to the *Bulletin*, often on her favourite literary, artistic and pictorial themes. This happy practice continues in this issue, and we trust will continue to do so for many years.

She served as a Committee Member 1990-2005, then as our Chair for three years, and then as our Vice Chair for a further two. Her lasting influence has been as the Editor of the *Bulletin* for more than 18 years. She established its present form early in this lengthy period of service, in what can be a quite time-consuming office. Always encouraging to new contributors, she nevertheless rigorously examined each piece for its link to Merton, Morden or Mitcham and its use of grammatical English, while checking that titles of persons and institutions were given absolutely correctly. She also insisted (but always very politely) that typescripts should conform to the house style that she established. (The new Editor aspires to attain her high standards, but fears that it may take a little time.)

Judy continues to serve the Society as a member of the Publications Sub-Committee. This involves vetting each potential new work for suitability as a Society publication, and then, if it is accepted, carefully checking each draft (and there is usually more than one) for errors and omissions in accordance with her editorial principles.

**MANY FRIENDS have contributed to:**

## **BILL RUDD – AN APPRECIATION**

William John Rudd was born in Brixton on 19 September 1925 to Emily (née Wood) and John Rudd. The family moved to 15 Easby Crescent on the Morden section of the St Helier Estate on 27 October 1930, while the estate was still under construction. Bill was educated at the new No 2 School in Canterbury Road. He was in the first admissions group there and remained at the school for all of his education, leaving at age 14, just as the Second World War had begun. After his father died, Bill looked after his mother in Easby Crescent until she died in 1960. The following year he moved to a single flat in Glastonbury Road, where he lived until his own death on 30 October 2014.

Bill's first job was at Liberty's factory as a general assistant. He combined this with a volunteer job as an Air Raid Precautions Messenger during the evenings ('own bike' a requirement), which gave rise to some memorable and quite dangerous journeys in the black-out. Called up in November 1943, Bill was quietly proud of his four years in the Royal Army Service Corps, during which he was promoted three times, being demobbed with the rank of Sergeant. Post-war, he was offered his old job at Liberty's, but, advised by his sister about the firm's future prospects, decided on a more open-air life as a postman at GPO Morden, where he remained happily until he retired.

But it is for his activities outside work that Bill is remembered. He developed an interest in history, stimulated by an exhibition of local history by Merton and Morden Historical Society. He joined the Society in May 1962, was elected to the committee in November 1964, and served almost continually until November 1995. He was elected a Vice-President at the 1997 AGM 'by acclamation'.

He built up an unrivalled knowledge of the area, particularly of Morden, which he was always willing to share. Over the years he became a leading light of the Society, taking part in many of the early archaeological digs. He was particularly delighted to discover evidence of Romano-British settlement on his very doorstep – spreading from St Helier Station and across his garden! He is remembered as contributing much information, both written and oral, to Wandle Industrial Museum's archive, as well as being an occasional volunteer in the museum's outreach activities. Sarah Gould of MH&LSC recalls Bill as 'such a mine of information on Merton's history and a great help to the Heritage Service over the years. He was particularly supportive to me during my early years as Heritage Officer and I have clear memories of him bustling round the Historical Society store when this was based at The Canons, telling me about his epic cycle tour visiting Britain's monasteries and religious houses'. An illustration of the range of his knowledge is the report of a Society walk he led round Morden Hall Park in 1989, where Bill's commentary ranged 'from Roman roads to railways, from St Peter's Abbey at Westminster to the St Helier Estate, from statues to snuff mills, from boundary stones to billiard rooms, passing through several generations of Garths and the Hatfeild family on the way'. Basically an unassuming and rather shy man, Bill affected an abrupt manner that hid a kind and helpful nature. One example of his unobtrusive kindness: Bill started recording gravestones when St Lawrence's churchyard was being partially cleared for the church extension, and for many years thereafter he just carried on keeping the place tidy, cutting the grass and even helping to dig the occasional grave. In 1978, after a move of the MHS store, the *Bulletin* commented 'If there is any hard work to be done, it is a certainty that Bill Rudd will be in the first line'.

Bill collected unwanted local artefacts – rescuing railway lamps and station signs, road-names and signposts, Liberty print blocks, even redundant 19<sup>th</sup>-century grave markers, most of which he successfully returned to relatives. When the GPO sorting office was replaced by a new purpose-built office in London Road, Bill rescued some of the old furniture – MHS still possesses the old sorting bureau, with its pigeon-holes labelled for the individual 'walks'.

His abiding interest in photography was a considerable aid to his historical and archaeological activities. He was always careful to label each photo in detail and then to index his collection, which eventually amounted to several thousand images, and has now been given to the Society.

Bill's other major interest was in cycling and maps. Much of his weekend leisure in the 1940s and 1950s was spent with the Wimbledon Branch of the YHA, particularly on cycling weekends with integral sing-songs and country dancing, and on occasional weekend working parties improving hostels at Chaldon (Tollsworth Manor) 1949-1956, and Milford thereafter. He was the Map Librarian for the Branch, and a member of the YHA Youth Council for several years.

It was while on a cycling holiday that he conceived his great project of locating and photographing the remains of each of the abbeys and priories whose names are preserved in the street names of the St Helier Estate. To visit and record as many as possible in the time available became his guiding principle in selecting his next holiday

area and route. He became a newspaper celebrity in the early 1960s, when news of his journeying seeped out. There are copies of a couple of those articles at the Wandle Industrial Museum. He was persuaded to give a lecture about his experiences to Merton Historical Society in March 1969, illustrated with his own slides, and a display of plans, maps and photographs. He was a little diffident about this, but the *Bulletin* summarised it as ‘a most instructive and interesting talk’. The title he chose, *Abbey Roads: a modern pilgrimage*, has been adopted by the Society as the appropriate title for the forthcoming publication of his journeys, illustrated with over 100 of his photographs. Bill had completed the text, but alas saw only a final draft of the book, about which he was enthusiastic.

Bill was a practical man; he built the Society stand used at Merton Annual Shows and Mitcham Carnivals in the 1960s ‘virtually single-handed’, while as a technical draughtsman he produced posters for Merton Scientific Society (of which he was of course a member) and painted the coats of arms of Merton priory (shown on the back cover of Lionel Green’s *A Priory Revealed*), and of Merton and Morden UDC (in our store).

Bill contributed many short articles to our *Bulletin*, and in the *Town Trails* booklet his distinctive voice can be heard as you follow trail no.5 *Morden Town Centre and Morden Hall*. He revised Canon Livermore’s 1968 booklet on *The story of Morden and its churches* in 1983, and collaborated in revising Evelyn Jowett’s booklet on *Morden Park* in 2002. We published his booklet on *Morden Hall*. He wrote most of Local History Note 3 *Stane Street in Upper Morden*, recording an archaeological trench in London Road, and all of Local History Note 8 *Liberty Print Works – Wartime Remembrances*, which contains much on the details of actual practice and procedure in the fabric printing works there, which would otherwise have been lost. Nicholas Hart recalls that, more recently, when *Time Team* came to Merton Abbey Mills, Bill was passing by when Mary Hart was trying to help the team sort out a block printing problem. Bill pitched in when grabbed by Mary, and was thrust into the limelight. That part of the program worked only because Bill gave of his time and knowledge unstintingly, as always.

Bill’s late interest in steam-powered engines was stirred by visiting (during a cycle ride, of course) a gathering of fairground steam engines in 1968, whose music and movement delighted him. In the 1970s he was giving talks on ‘The Great Steam Fair’ illustrated by slides and recorded music from fairground organs.

Bill was joint recipient of the 1983 Cyril Black prize for services to Merton ‘for his work in the conservation of many parts of Morden’, and David Luff’s address at his funeral made the point that, all across Merton, references to ‘Bill’ would be accepted as references to Bill Rudd, without further qualification. The whole borough is the poorer for his demise, but perhaps the last word should come from his niece, Linda Hunt, who said:

‘Thanks to all who came to Bill’s send-off. I think he would have enjoyed it.’

*Bill in 2008 with ‘the’  
bike, lovingly restored.*

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The television program *Digging Liberty, Merton, South London* is Episode 6 of Series 10 of the *Time Team* series and may be viewed on [channel4.com](http://channel4.com). Bill appears briefly during minute 41 of the 48-minute program.



## LADY HANWORTH, FSA 1918-2014

Lady Hanworth, more correctly addressed as Rosamond Pollock, the Dowager Viscountess Hanworth, died in October 2014 in her 97th year. Among many other public posts, she served as a Senior Commander in the ATS during WW2, and as a Deputy Lieutenant of Surrey.

Her interests lay particularly in rescue archaeology, whether prehistoric, Romano-British, or medieval; she was well-known for her work at Rapsley Roman villa. She was for more than 30 years a pillar of Surrey Archaeological Society, both on the Council, and as an energetic member of the excavations committee from the mid-1950s, a period when amateur and rescue excavation was far more prevalent than today. It was the excavations carried out in 1962-63 at Merton priory and published in the *Surrey Archaeological Collections* that drew her attention to this area. She advised or commented upon several of our digs in the 1960s, being always very supportive and encouraging to others.



*Excavating at Abinger Roman villa in 1995, photo by Shirley Corke from Surrey Archaeological Society Bulletin 448 (December 2014)*

At our November 1969 AGM, we were honoured that she kindly agreed to become our President, in succession to the late Col. Bidder. In this position she was far from a figurehead, giving talks on archaeological subjects, leading a Society outing around Basingstoke, and briskly handling the AGM on several occasions. She enthusiastically led Society volunteers assisting in the excavations of the Roman villa at Binscombe, near Godalming, in 1971, and at Merton priory in 1976 and 1977. Bill Rudd, for one, was very proud to have worked with such a distinguished archaeologist. She had an unexpected sense of fun, typified by her driving to digs in her lowly Morris Minor – which had an Austin Healey engine hidden under the bonnet.

She served us as President until she stood down in 1996. However, we were reluctant to lose her, and invited her to become a Vice President at the 1998 AGM. She graciously consented, and served us for a further fourteen years, finally retiring from the post at the age of 93.

### WANTED – Membership Secretary

The task is not difficult or too time-consuming: (1) to enter subscriptions in the membership books; (2) to keep an up-to-date membership list of current members, so that they receive the quarterly *Bulletin*; (3) to liaise with the Treasurer, who is responsible for banking cash and cheques; (4) to provide members' addresses for the Publications Secretary for *Bulletin* distribution; (5) to ensure that all attendees at meetings are recorded in the attendance book (for fire safety purposes) and to collect the £2 from visitors.

Records are also kept on a personal computer, so ability to use one is important.

Most subscriptions arrive in September/ October by post or are paid at the meetings, although a large number of members now pay by standing order. A few new members join throughout the year.

Audrey King, the present Membership Secretary, will be available to help during the first few months.

Interested? Speak to Audrey or a member of the Committee.

### A Voyage of Discovery ...

From 10am to 4.30pm on Saturday 28 March, Merton Heritage Service will be hosting the 2015 Heritage Discovery Day. This free event promises something for everyone, from photography workshops and local history displays, to competitions and computer sessions offering guidance on useful heritage websites. Younger visitors can enjoy children's craft activities, dressing-up sessions, storytelling and Kids Archaeology. Heritage stalls will reveal more about Merton's many museums, local history societies and conservation groups. The programme will also feature bitesize heritage talks including: 'Merton at 50' by Heritage Officer Sarah Gould; 'Mitcham Cricket Green' by Tony Burton (MCGC&H) and 'Sindy and her Family Tree' by Merton Historical Society's own David Luff. Event venue: Morden Library, Merton Civic Centre, London Road, Morden SM4 5DX. For more information, contact

Heritage Officer, Sarah Gould: Tel. 020 8545 3239; Email: [local.studies@merton.gov.uk](mailto:local.studies@merton.gov.uk)

## ‘MEDIEVAL RELIGION AND THE FOUNDATION OF ‘NEW TOWNS’: WINDSOR AND ETON, A CASE STUDY’

Following our AGM in November we were privileged to have a talk by Windsor historian Dr David Lewis, who illustrated the development of Windsor and Eton using a series of reconstruction maps based on data from surviving medieval documents. Most of the town’s archives were thrown out and burnt c.1690 when the old guildhall was replaced by a new building. Fortunately, selections had been copied by Elias Ashmole in the 1660s and survive in the Bodleian Library, Oxford. David has supplemented these from the archives of St George’s chapel and Eton college, together with the records of the three manors within which ‘New Windsor’ was founded.

The Saxon settlement of *Windlesora* was at Old Windsor, three miles downriver from the present town around the castle, which retained the name New Windsor until 1974. Old Windsor was a royal estate before the Conquest, and continued to host national events even after the building of the first motte and bailey castle around 1070. It was not until c.1110 that Old Windsor was abandoned, leaving the church standing alone amidst the fields until housing development in the 1930s. The townsfolk moved into the lower ward of the bailey, the upper ward being reserved for royal accommodation. In the 1130s the town was moved again to its current site outside the castle walls, around a T-junction formed by the present High Street and Peascod Street, with a new church and an open marketplace. The castle was fortified with a stone curtain wall in the 1170s, and the first timber bridge across the Thames probably dates from this period, encouraging greater investment in the town, and further expansion.



One of the key features of such planned ‘new towns’ was the creation of long narrow ‘burgage plots’ for its resident tradesmen, with houses and shops fronting the roads, and crofts extending back for livestock and some crops, though each plot also had associated arable strips distributed among the open fields surrounding the settlement. [Members who came to East Grinstead last year will remember visiting a similar burgage plot there and exploring the long croft still surviving at its rear.] Merton priory held property in Peascod Street around 1180, when it was known as *Pesecroftestrette*, and also a manor house near the bridge. Across the Thames within Eton parish it held a ‘manor house’, as well as the east mill, the advowson of St Mary’s church and some tenant land, all later ‘granted’ to Henry VI for his college. Further along the road to London lay the priory’s important grange at Upton. The priory also claimed the valuable assize of bread and ale within the town of Windsor. Other monasteries held rights and properties in the area, the advowson of New Windsor parish church being in the hands of Waltham Holy Cross, while Chertsey abbey founded the hospital of St Peter in the town, and Reading, Abingdon and Burnham abbeys, Ankerwycke convent and the Friars Preachers also had interests there.

Although the population in the country at large fell dramatically from the mid-14<sup>th</sup> century, especially in the wake of the Black Death and subsequent outbreaks of plague, New Windsor continued to attract settlers and increased steadily in population and in wealth through the centuries, ranking as one of the thirty wealthiest towns in England by 1524. The castle was further extended in the late 13<sup>th</sup> century, and a gaol was built, as was a new mill. The market place was in-filled with permanent shops and houses, while New Street (now River Street) also dates from this period. In the late 14<sup>th</sup> century a guildhall was erected in the market place, and the royal mews was built over the former ‘red-light’ district adjoining the churchyard. In the late 15<sup>th</sup> century the present St George’s chapel replaced an earlier chapel, becoming a major place of pilgrimage after Henry VI’s body was translated there from Chertsey abbey in the 1480s.

Henry VI was responsible for the transformation of Eton from an insignificant village of Saxon foundation to its present fame as the home of Eton college. Originally planned as a collegiate foundation of priests or ‘secular canons’ to say masses for the souls of the king and royal family, its educational aspect was limited to a group of 70 King’s Scholars. Under Henry’s successor, Edward IV, the college’s landed endowment was severely curtailed and it could only survive by taking in fee-paying pupils. Henry’s plans changed frequently, with an initial extension to the old parish church being demolished and replaced by a chapel intended to be on the scale of a cathedral. This was incomplete at Henry’s deposition in 1461, and the pope consented to the college’s closure, but Edward allowed William Waynflete, bishop of Winchester, to complete the project. The college’s continued ownership of the surrounding land has ensured that Eton remained undeveloped compared to its ever-growing neighbour.



We are grateful to David for a most enjoyable presentation.

**Peter Hopkins**

## ‘TRAPS, TRADITION AND TRANSFORMATIONS: THE CURIOUS HISTORY OF PANTOMIME’

For our meeting on 13 December, Dr Chris Abbott, a member of our Society, gave us a lively talk, extensively illustrated with slides and short videos. He was assisted by Peri Kennedy and David Golder, two members of the Parish Players, who kindly demonstrated some of his points ‘on stage’.

Chris began by reminding us that pantomime is for children, and has never been ‘as good as when we were young’, especially when deviation from the traditional is detected. He quoted a letter complaining of a pantomime ‘set in a gentleman’s club, with scantily-dressed young ladies smoking cigars’, written by John Ruskin as far back as 1866.

Pantomime has its roots in the Italian *commedia del’arte*, which featured improvisational comedy, singing and

acrobatics, from which we still hazily remember some of the character names such as Pierrot and Punch. In the early 1700s, this developed in England into the Harlequinade, a form of production usually using a script, and offering story-telling, singing, dancing, acrobatics and stock characters such as Harlequin and Columbine. This was usually preceded by a short classical fable featuring Immortal characters, from which we derive one of the oldest English theatre traditions, that stage right (ie. left as viewed by the audience) is allocated to Good, and stage left to Evil. Thus the Demon King always enters stage left, and the Good Fairy stage right; further, as she addresses the Demon King, she passes her wand from her right hand to her left, thus crossing her heart for further protection from his wiles.

These fairy tale openings gradually increased in length, introducing a Clown as well as the standard pair of lovers and Pantaloon, and incorporating satire. The Clown might use the new ‘slapstick’ – two flat pieces of wood bound loosely together to make a sharp clap when lightly struck, to emphasise the effect when striking another character. (In another direction, Harlequinade developed into Burlesque, whose productions incorporated much broader send-ups and local allusions.)

By the early 19<sup>th</sup> century the stock characters were well established – the Principal Boy (usually played by a woman), the Principal Girl (ditto), the Dame (played by a man), and the Clown, whose rôle was often expanded to include a comic Chase. In the 1840s Drury Lane Theatre began to place more and more emphasis on spectacle, with a focus on visual impact. Swift transformations from one set to a completely different one demanded much from the ingenuity of the scene-painters and scene-shifters. Titles became increasingly lengthy to advertise the delights in store: eg. ‘Jack and Jill, Harlequin, King Mustard and the Four and Twenty Blackbirds Baked in a Pie’ at Drury Lane in 1854, with a running time of six hours. By the 1880s all the characteristics of ‘real pantomime’ had emerged, the story based on one of the traditional fairy stories (Forty Thieves, Cinderella, Jack and the Beanstalk, etc), the production employing large casts – often including many children – elaborate props, and the latest technical devices, such as flying on wires.

The Chase now featured much acrobatic use of ‘traps’, a term covering many mechanical devices – hinged parts of the scenery through which the cast could dive (in either direction), rising planes to give the impression of the cast climbing up, and trapdoors for sudden appearances. The great clown Grimaldi was an ingenious inventor and user of tricks and traps, as was the later Lupino Lane, who claimed that in one panto he hurtled through 83 traps in six minutes. The most hair-raising device was the star trap, whereby a man was propelled up through a trapdoor in the floor which was made in several petal-shaped sections. These opened out just before he hit them, and then closed quickly enough that when he came down, he landed on the closed petals. (A theatre on the Isle of Man still has a full trap collection, including a star trap, not yet working, but enthusiasts are trying...) Not



*Peri, Chris and David – photo: Hazel Abbott*

without its dangers, pantomime artists were occasionally injured in the course of a show, perhaps the most tragic being a lady who died shortly after a performance because her wasp-waisted costume had been tied too tightly. This period also saw the rise of superstitions: a trip in the wings before your entry is lucky; ‘Sinbad’ is always an unlucky pantomime; no-one should whistle back-stage. This last is a sensible one, for once, as the ex-sailors who handled the often very heavy scenery and curtains communicated by whistles, and they might hear and misinterpret your light-hearted tune with disastrous consequences.

With the rise of Music Hall, some pantomimes began to employ celebrities from the halls: one Drury Lane production in 1891 featured Dan Leno and Herbert Campbell (the Laurel and Hardy of their day), Marie Lloyd and Little Tich. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century the emphasis on spectacle continued – Drury Lane’s 1935 Jack and the Beanstalk had 50 principal actors, with 60 singers in the choir. Costumes and traps were often retained for use and re-use in different shows, and the mechanism of ‘portable’ traps began to be properly tested. The stock characters continued – the Dame (‘from George Robey to Les Dawson’), the Principal Boy (now often played by a man), the Principal Girl, and the Chase, now often expanded to include the Brokers Men, with a second comic and plentiful whitewash. Some things did not change – Cinderella’s ‘consolation’ scene with Buttons, sweetly re-created for us by Peri and David, has been repeated for more than 100 years.

However, by the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, commercial pantomime was struggling, and the form became more the province of rising repertory theatres, with much smaller companies and fewer resources. Up stepped Henry Marshall, failed actor, failed playwright, but brilliant and inventive writer and producer of pantomimes, who dominated the field for three decades from the mid-1940s. He was principally associated with the Salisbury Playhouse, where he assembled a creative management team and mounted an annual pantomime, but his scripts were used by many other theatres. He cheerfully stole ideas from other shows, noting them in a ‘gag book’ for future reference. The Playhouse itself has an epic history; it started as a Methodist chapel, was converted to a cinema and then to a theatre with very restricted back-stage space, and was eventually demolished to be replaced by the present building.

Nowadays, technical aids allow swift transformations and staggering three-dimensional illusions, and new celebrities appear in panto (John Barrowman, David Hasselhoff, Jerry Hall – ‘nothing changes’ commented Chris), but the most popular pantos in 2014-2015 are still Cinderella, Aladdin, Jack and the Beanstalk, Snow White and Sleeping Beauty, just as they were a hundred and fifty years ago.

Chris, Peri and David were roundly applauded by a large and appreciative audience for a thoroughly enjoyable and informative presentation. At Chris’ suggestion we have made a donation to the Royal Theatrical Fund, a charity which supports people who have worked in the entertainment industry.

NB. Chris Abbott’s book *Putting on Panto to pay for the Pinter* (2012, Hobnob Press, £14.95) discusses the pantomimes at the Salisbury Playhouse, and contains a transcript of Henry Marshall’s gag book.

**David Haunton**

## **A TOPICAL ‘IT MIGHT HAVE BEEN’**

This item appeared in the very first number of the *Bulletin*, in April 1965:

“But for the passing of Sir Winston Churchill on Sunday 24 January, he would have become, on 1 April, a Freeman of the Borough of Merton.”

## **A NOTE ON HARRY BUSH, MERTON ARTIST**

An article about Harry Bush (1883-1957) and his wife Noel Laura Nisbet (1887-1956), also an artist, appeared in *Bulletin* 135 (March 2001). Some more information has now been provided by Dr Peter Quartermaine of the Public Catalogue Foundation. He relates that Harry and Noel met at Regent Street Polytechnic, and, when married, shared No.6 Stamford Studios, Fulham Road. Though Noel’s father bought 19 Queensland Avenue, Merton, for them in 1914, war service took Harry to Scotland, and Noel moved to Speen, near Newbury, where their daughter Janet was born. Thereafter, the Bushes lived in Merton for the rest of their lives. Though Harry’s work, which consisted mostly of scenes near his house, was admired and was exhibited frequently, regular income was hard to come by. He did some teaching from time to time, and occasionally took private pupils. After her parents died, Janet and her husband lived in the house for nearly 30 years. In 1984 a studio sale was held at Christies. Institutions that hold Bush’s work include the Museum of London, the Imperial War Museum, and the Art Gallery of New South Wales, but most of his work, sadly, is in (unknown) private collections.

**Judith Goodman**



## FROM OUR POSTBAG: Direct Mineral Water Supply Lorry

In October, Terence White e-mailed us from Spain. A relative had passed on to him 'that very nice picture' of the DMWS lorry – Bill Rudd's photograph that appeared in our March 2013 issue. Terence enquired about the lorry, hoping Bill could supply more information about the company, to assist his research into his great-uncle Henry James Hicks. Henry, born in 1856 and last heard of at the age of 15 in the 1871 Census in the London parish of St George in the East, was one of the founders of the DMWS (Direct Mineral Water Supply) company under the name of 'Feargus, Hicks and Pitt'. Terence remembers free lemonade being delivered in about 1948.



We eventually identified the lorry as a Ford Model AA, built in the USA 1927-1932, and at Dagenham from 1931, finding this information and some pictures at [www.en.Wikipedia.org/wiki/Ford\\_Model\\_AA](http://www.en.Wikipedia.org/wiki/Ford_Model_AA).

The DMWS number plate JH 864 indicates that this vehicle was first registered in Hertfordshire, in the early 1930s. Intrigued, we searched the internet for 'Feargus, Hicks and Pitt', with no result, so we tried 'Hicks and Pitt' and got a lot of irrelevant American sportsmen. But then trying 'Feargus, Hicks & Pitt' gave a single result – an item on Ebay. This was a '1930's original Syphon Bottle'. It was inscribed 'THE ORIGINAL DIRECT SUPPLY / THIS SYPHON IS THE PROPERTY OF / D.M.W.S Ltd / Feargus Hicks & Pitt / Reg'd / KEEP IN A COOL PLACE / ACTON, TOTTENHAM, TOOTING / ILFORD & WATFORD / BRITISH SYPHON CO LTD LONDON'. It had the hallmark of the British Syphon Co, and the initials DMWS on the top silver pump, with 'Reg no. 699553' on the bottom. This was interesting, as giving several places for the DMWS factories or depots in the 1930s. Presumably Bill Rudd's 1957 photo is of a delivery from the Tooting site, since all the other places are north of the Thames.

Then we tried 'Hicks & Pitt' alone and found a single golden result: the *Trademarks Journal* of 3 December 1902, listing applications for two trademarks:

'Facsimile signature ; for mineral and aerated waters. By Feagus, Hicks & Pitt (Direct Mineral-water Supply), 10a Enfield Road, Acton, W. 249,737 and 249,927.'

Note the mis-spelling 'Feagus'. Acton is still a semi-industrial area of west London.

So we have both a latest date for the foundation of the company, and an address where Terence White may pursue his great-uncle's history. And a lesson about internet searching – don't expect everything on the net to be spelt exactly as you have been told.

PS. If you recall DMWS in Tooting, please get in touch.

**David Haunton**

*Ford Model AA still working in Uruguay in 2014. Photo copyright Jason Vogel*



## AMENDMENT

**Bert Sweet** points out that in John Sargeant's article 'The British Rototherm Co Ltd' in the June 2014 *Bulletin*, the Wimbledon to Croydon railway line is said to pass through Abbey Mills. The reference should of course be to the Wimbledon to Tooting line.

**JUDITH GOODMAN tells the story of an unexpected outcome:**

**‘THE SMITH A MIGHTY MAN IS HE’**

Under the Local Government Act 1894 the civil functions of vestries outside London were transferred to new elected parish councils. In Merton John Innes, landowner and ‘squire’, had tried to persuade Surrey County Council to designate Merton an Urban District. His efforts failed, much to his chagrin, and so Merton had to remain only a parish. A resentful Innes decided to ignore the coming election.

However, despite Innes, there was no lack of interest. Fifteen names were put forward for the 12 positions on the new council. Each elector (man or woman) had one vote. The candidates, all men, were a varied social mix, including, as they did, tradesmen and ‘gentlemen’. There were no electoral wards at that time. The poll was held in early December and the names were announced in order of the number of votes cast for each candidate, with the last three being eliminated.

And there was a shock. At the top was not John Wells, the farmer/maltster of Merton Farm, not Hugh Wallace, the prosperous manufacturer of Dorset Hall, not even Revd Edwin Alfred Kempson, the vicar – but G W Shotter, a gasfitter/blacksmith of Nelson Grove Road in the industrial part of Merton.

*Punch* magazine of 15 December had a bit of fun with this outcome:

THE VILLAGE BLACKSMITH

New Parish-Council Version

(By a Landlord and Lover of the Good Old Times)

[At Merton, Surrey, where Mr. WILLIAM

MORRIS has his factory, a blacksmith was highest  
of the fifteen {sic} successful candidates for the Parish  
Council, the vicar being eighth.]

(four further stanzas)

1. OVER the vicar, top o’ the tree,  
The Village Blacksmith stands;  
The smith a mighty man is he,  
With power in his strong hands;  
And his victory well may stir alarms  
In Squire-Parsonic bands.

7. “Broiling – orating – borrowing,  
Swelling the rates, he goes.  
Reform’s large tasks he will begin,  
But who shall see it close?  
Church will be robbed, and Land be sold.  
Farewell old-time repose!

2. The Squire looks black, his face is long, –  
“Vicar not in the van?  
Oh! things are going to the doose!  
As fast as e’er they can!  
The blacksmith with his grimy face  
Has proved to be best man!

8. “’Tis thanks to you, my loud Rad [Radical] friends,  
These lessons *you* have taught!  
By folly from the flaming forge  
*Our* fortunes must be wrought.  
And *won’t* there be a blessed mess  
Before the fight is fought!”

The reference to William Morris leaves the reader to infer that, in the view of the ‘Landlord and Lover of the Good Old Times’, Morris’s well-known socialist activities have ‘infected’ the decent working-men of Merton.

So who was this popular hero?

George William Shotter<sup>1</sup> was born in 1847 at East Cowes, Isle of Wight. He joined William Waller Lampert’s blacksmith’s business in Chelsea as an apprentice, and then, aged 17 or 18, moved to Lampert’s Merton branch c. 1865. Lampert’s were in the High Street, in premises later numbered 113. Their trade was then as blacksmiths, and later they branched out as whitesmiths, bellhangers, gasfitters and so on.<sup>2</sup> Shotter seems to have stayed on briefly after completing his apprenticeship, but c. 1870 he set up his own business at 10-12 Nelson Grove Road. This was a brave move, and it is believed that he had to pawn his watch to pay his men their first week’s wages. In 1872 he married Emma Clapham, whose widowed mother kept house for the landlord of what became the *Dog & Partridge* at 101 High Street. The Claphams were from Maldon, Essex.

Eleven children were born to this marriage – all at the Nelson Grove Road premises. Two died in their teens, but the rest thrived. All went to the Merton Schools near St Mary’s church. Two of the boys went on to Rutlish School and two of the girls seem to have attended the pupil-teacher centre at the Technical Institute in Gladstone Road that would grow into Wimbledon County School for Girls. In fact three of the girls went into teaching. The eldest surviving son, Thomas Falkner Shotter, would take over his father’s business when G W died in 1914.

G W's brother Tom worked with him, and it appears that an important element in their business was a contract with Harland's of Mitcham, varnish manufacturers, presumably for servicing and repairing machinery.

In 1905 Shotter moved to a much larger, detached, house, Sunnyside, 32 Griffiths Road, Wimbledon, and brother Tom had to move into the Nelson Grove Road house and get work started each morning with the five or six men employed.

GW did not serve a second term on the council. Blacksmithing is a notoriously thirsty trade, and he was said to 'go on benders' from time to time, which took two or three days to recover from. Sometimes he had to be sobered up with coffee before council meetings. Apparently Emma's view of marriage was 'bear and forbear', which indeed suggests something to be borne.

All the family prospered. One example was daughter Alice, born in 1884, who became a pupil-teacher at Merton Infants' School before qualifying, and then taught at the Girls' School. Harry Pleydell, from Cheltenham, son of a widowed mother who ran a butcher's shop, joined the staff of the Boys' School in 1902, and the two young people got to know each other at the fence which separated the playgrounds. They became engaged in 1907 and married in 1910, when they moved into a house in Melbourne Road. After briefly serving in the Army and being discharged with varicose veins, Harry was appointed headmaster at Caterham Board School, remaining in the post until he retired. He and Alice were two of Caterham's best-respected figures.

The Shotters can be seen, it seems to me, to represent many families of the time, families who benefited from the series of Education Acts and from the extension of the franchise. Their geographical and social mobility also reflect a changing society.

Sadly, nothing remains today to recall the Shotters. No.113 High Street, 10-12 Nelson Grove Road, the *Dog & Partridge*, and Sunnyside have all gone, swept away by post-war redevelopment.

1. For most of the biographical information that follows I am indebted to John Pleydell, a grandson of G W Shotter.
2. See J A Goodman 'Goodbye to Lampert's' in *MHS Bulletin* 164 (December 2007) p.3



*A Shotter family outing to Boxhill c.1902. George W and Emma are seated. Brother Tom is standing second from the right.*

### **New exhibition at the City of London Heritage Gallery**

Located at Guildhall Art Gallery (adjacent to the Roman Amphitheatre), a new exhibition for 2015 will run until 4 June 2015. It will feature the 1215 Mayoralty Charter, Richard Whittington (four times Mayor) and London County Council Tramways posters. Entry is free.

Opening hours: Monday - Saturday, 10am-5pm; Sunday, 12 noon-4pm

## LOCAL HISTORY WORKSHOPS

**Friday 26 September 2014. Six present. Rosemary Turner in the chair.**

- ◆ **Judith Goodman** had received another (photocopy of a) photo from bus enthusiast Mr P Hotchin, showing a 93 bus outside South Wimbledon station in August 1950. But instead of the familiar red paint, this was in the brown and cream livery of Maidstone Corporation, on loan to London.

Judy also reported that some weeks ago she received a telephone call offering some documents relating to Hadfields paint manufacturers from the daughter of the former works manager. Sadly, she has heard no more, and has no contact details, but continues to wait in hope.

She had been given a copy of Ian Mortimer's *The Time Traveller's Guide to Elizabethan England*, and had been delighted to find a section on Mitcham, based on the probate inventory of William Walter, taken from the volume published in 2005 by Surrey Record Society. Extracts from this and other local inventories were published in *Bulletins* 159 (Sept 2006) and 163 (Sept 2007).

- ◆ **Keith Penny** had received from member John W Brown of Streatham this photograph of one of the two iron mission churches built to serve the Lonesome area of Mitcham in the early 1900s. Keith is sure it is the Anglican mission of the Good Shepherd, opened in 1906 as a daughter church of St Mark's Mitcham. It shows a small group of rather well-dressed men, women and children – not typical of the Lonesome inhabitants at that time – standing outside the pristine building. It burnt down in 1916. Fortunately the insurers paid £500 to have the iron church rebuilt. It was hit by a hail of mud and pebbles when a Zeppelin raider bombed the nearby Mizens' market gardens in Mitcham and sites in Streatham in September 1916.



Copyright: Pat Loobey & John W. Brown from Streatham in Old Photographs (1993)

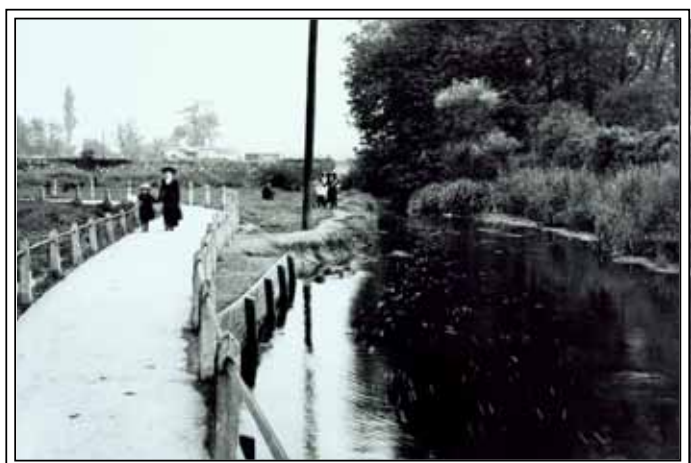
- ◆ **Peter Hopkins** was interested to hear about this bombing, because it had been mentioned in the WW1 drama *Fields Unsown*, performed in Morden Hall Park recently by the Attic Theatre Company. Based on the story of the wartime auxiliary hospital at Morden Hall for injured soldiers, much of the background material relating to the Hall had been provided by our own Madeline Healey.

Peter had come across a 1912 report from *Surrey Archaeological Collections* XXV about the recycling of the 'door and pilasters of Merton Abbey House' to front Stonecourt, Murray Road. This was presumably Abbey Gate House, not the Leach/Bennett family home Merton Abbey, which wasn't demolished until 1914.

Peter also reported on Merton's Medieval Rebels (see *Bulletin* 192 pages 10-12).

- ◆ **Cyril Maidment** had been hard at work identifying the position the photographer was standing for an Edwardian photo of the Wandle, showing Brook Path (right) following the curve of the Pickle ditch. He then pointed this out on maps of the early 1800s and 1900s, enabling David Luff to identify the building in the distance as Merton Abbey Station.

Cyril also brought along a photograph of a delightful painting of Christ Church Colliers Wood by William Sleith RA c.1895 (see *Bulletin* 192 page 1). *Wimbledon Society* P0294



- ◆ **David Luff** updated us on the state of the priory wall, which has been taking up much of his time lately. He has been monitoring one 14m section which is leaning over and in danger of collapse due to the action of tree roots, though there had been no further movement during the six months prior to the Workshop. The trees around another section have been cut down because of a leaking sewer. A recently repaired section in Station Road is already cracking. The National Trust is responsible for the wall, though Sainsbury's own the adjoining land.

- ◆ **Rosemary Turner** concluded with a shaggy dog story! She had found among items handed down in her family a medallion inscribed *Tailwaggers Club*, an organisation founded in 1928 to encourage dog-owners to register their pets. 200,000 were registered in the first year. Registration fees were put to charitable uses, including the Royal Veterinary College and Guide Dogs for the Blind. Unfortunately its records were lost when Spillers, the pet food company, who bought the club's assets, was in turn bought out. Two other medallions are on the same chain, one depicting Emperor Napoleon III of France, the other a plain shield.

**Peter Hopkins**

**Friday 7 November – six present. David Haunton in the chair.**

- ◆ **David Luff** showed reproductions that he had purchased from Merton Memories of watercolours by William Sleath. Dating from the late nineteenth century they showed the Merton Abbey gateway, the copper mill, Simpson's gardens, the windmill on Mitcham Common, and Ravensbury Park. Following a map reproduced by Lionel Green, he had investigated a place where a channel had been made c.1750 below the priory wall to bring water to a calico-bleaching field. There was still evidence of this channel, in the portion of the wall adjacent to the Sainsbury's service road. He noted that the wall had been repaired with cement, which had allowed water to penetrate. David's final offering was a painting that he had found on eBay, of Colliers Wood station; its lively and colourful style caused some surprise.



*Painting of Colliers Wood station, by permission, from Facebook Group 'South London artist Dan'. Copies of this and other artworks may be bought on eBay under 'requiemballad on eBay'*

- ◆ **Madeline Healey** was looking into some names in her family Bible, itself of some interest because of its Roman Catholic provenance from a time before the 1829 emancipation. Olivia Searle b.1776 had married John Chesterman, by whom she had three daughters. In the *Mitcham Bridge* volume of "Mitcham Histories" Eric Montague mentions a miller called John Chesterman b.1760, and Madeline was trying to establish whether he was the man who married Olivia Searle.
- ◆ **Peter Hopkins** had continued his research into the life of the Tudor artist Anthony Toto of Ravensbury. One German multi-volume Dictionary of Art claimed that Toto was in royal employment as early as 1527, but the published sources cited made no mention of him. Peter had found three documents at the British Library that related to his ongoing litigation in the court of Star Chamber with his tenants and neighbours in Ravensbury. There had been 13 hearings between 1547 and 1556 relating to the status of the mills above Mitcham Bridge, but at the last of these hearings the case was dismissed out of Star Chamber, and the complainant against Toto's successors was told to take the case before the Common Law courts.

Also at the British Library, Peter had found references to William Lovelas, one of the Merton residents listed in the pardon following Jack Cade's rebellion. (See December *Bulletin* p.10) Outside Merton and Morden he was part of a consortium with property interests in Beddington, Bandon, Mitcham and Wallington, by a grant of 1449. The property rights passed quickly to other consortia and were probably a convenient way for merchants to invest surplus funds between trading ventures. Lovelas had been executor to another Merton

resident, Beatrice Hayton, whose husband, Thomas Hayton, was a member of a consortium who held the Carew manors of Norbury and Beddington, together with associated lands in Mitcham and elsewhere in Surrey. By 1430 these same manors, and other Carew estates in Beds, Bucks and Herts, were being leased by Nicholas Carew to another consortium of knights and others, for three years at 100 marks (£66 13s 4d) a year.

- ◆ **David Haunton** reported on the success the Society had had in responding to recent queries that had arrived via the website. A correspondent from Spain asked about the Direct Mineral Water Supply company, as one of their lorries was shown in the late Bill Rudd's photograph that appeared on the front cover of the March 2013 *Bulletin* (see p.9). An inquiry about an eighteenth-century marriage had been answered by consulting the relevant *Mitcham History*, and one about the age of a house in Gorrington Park Avenue by reference to directories in Merton Local Studies Centre. A request for information about literature related to the Wandle had been fully answered by supplying Judith Goodman's articles, and details of two Society publications. The expenditure of time had not been great, but goodwill for the Society had been generated, along with a book sale and a new membership subscription.
- ◆ **Judith Goodman** offered to the Chair a folder formerly owned by Lionel Green, full of cuttings and notes about Merton people, Rutlish School and St Mary, Merton.
- ◆ **Keith Penny** had continued reading Mitcham newspapers from the First World War. From March 1916 there were extensive reports of the proceedings of Military Tribunals, set up to deal with appeals against the conscription of men aged 18–41. Although they did deal with appeals made on conscientious grounds, most of their business related to appeals on compassionate grounds, and to others supported by employers who claimed that the applicant was indispensable to the conduct of business. Such claims reveal a lot of the enormous damage done by the war to the stability of local commerce: a firm of market gardeners reported that only 39 men were left from a pre-war staff of 216; at Streatham Park Cemetery only 6 out of 12 men remained as gravediggers, but there were still 100 interments a week. Women did indeed replace men in many jobs, though one employer of a gardener opined that women were only useful for weeding. Initially the cases reported were nameless, but from 1917 claimants were identified.

Some of the officials of the Tribunal in Mitcham were unsurprisingly older members of the better-known families; the Military Representative was often Dr Worsfold of Hall Place, later to be Mitcham's MP. Keith admitted that he had been expecting to find evidence of harsh or unsympathetic pro-army attitudes, but had found the Tribunals to be fair in procedure (the Military Representative was asked to withdraw while the members decided the outcome) and aware of the problems faced by individuals, even though the Tribunal was bound to work within the Military Service Act. Most of the applicants were indeed refused and had to accept conscription, but they were often allowed time to sort out personal affairs. Even a conscientious objector was asked only routine questions and then passed as a non-combatant.

Keith suspected that the newspaper editors were quite pleased to have the fortnightly reports, because they provided a constant supply of human interest stories. Most cases were noted briefly, but the cases of conscientious objection were covered at length, as were some cases selected for their oddity value.

**Keith Penny**

#### **Friday 19 December 2014 – seven present. Keith Penny in the chair**

- ◆ **Cyril Maidment** is supporting a campaign (led by John Hawks of Merton Priory Trust) to replace the broken and displaced Commemoration Stone at Merton priory. Partly funded by Merton Historical Society, this was unveiled in 1959, allegedly on the site of the high altar. During much later road-works the stone was removed and broken, probably accidentally: the pieces remain in the chapter house. Cyril has established that the stone had actually been positioned outside the church: he would like any replacement to be a feature of the piazza, where it could definitely mark the site of the high altar. Possible forms of inscribed replacement were discussed – a lectern, a squat pillar, and a metal plate let into the floor.
- ◆ **Rosemary Turner** produced a useful plan of the Priory area, used as an illustration on a walk by Evelyn Jowett, in the 1970s, which confirmed Cyril's analysis.
- ◆ **David Luff** has been reviewing his personal ciné films, in response to the recent appeal for 'home movies' for the Film London 'Bigger Picture' project. He has worries about potential mis-handling, and copyright. He entertained us with a history project file, compiled in the 1990s by his then ten-year-old great-niece who lived in Charlton. She decided to do Merton, where many of her relatives lived and worked. Making use of David's books, photos and notes, she added a petrol ration book and school reports, and acknowledged 'David Luff' without revealing that he was her uncle. For which she was awarded five 'Snoopy with a halo' marks (credits ?).

- ◆ **Judy Goodman** was perturbed that, despite her previous corrections, the programme for the opening of the refurbished William Morris House in Wimbledon still repeats gross errors of fact – his factory was not in Wimbledon, but Merton; Morris was neither architect, potter nor furniture designer as claimed, but a socialist and writer. Be warned.

She commended the Public Catalogue Foundation's series of volumes listing and illustrating all pictures in public ownership. This is being compiled county by county; Surrey has been completed, and many of the images are available at [bbc.co.uk/arts/yourpaintings](http://bbc.co.uk/arts/yourpaintings). This will assist Judy's search for surviving pictures by Harry Bush, our local artist (see p.8).

- ◆ **Peter Hopkins** asked where is Morden's WW2 memorial? And no-one present could answer. Does anyone know?

He showed some greetings cards found among Bill Rudd's archives, with a design taken from a 14<sup>th</sup>-century floor tile from Merton priory, discovered in 1976 – the so-called 'dancing ladies' (see picture right, copyright J Scott McCracken).



Peter has continued his investigations into Anthony Toto, the court painter and combative leaseholder of Ravensbury manor, and discovered that some of the decorative panels at Loseley Park, Surrey, may be his work (see p.13). Peter's first article on Toto will be published shortly.

- ◆ **David Haunton** brought some of Bill Rudd's archive. This included two printing blocks, identified by David Luff as Liberty items from the number L2037 on the side of one (right). Each was designed to print a repeating pattern, and comprised a number of identical metal casts mounted on a heavy wooden block. They will be offered to Mary Hart.



There were two adverts for meetings of the Merton Scientific Society, probably produced by Bill himself. The Society, founded in 1945, was interested in engineering as well as science – geology, electrics, and mechanical models all came within its scope – until its demise three years ago.

- ◆ **Keith Penny** continues his interest in WW1 Military Tribunals. He has succeeded in identifying 15 of the 18 members of the 1916 Tribunal. The professions are well represented, with one doctor, two solicitors, two vicars and a minister. There are five employers (building trades and nurserymen), and four others (market gardener, printer, dairyman and 'gas meter prover'). All lived locally and were past the age for conscription themselves. Keith has also started 'Zeppelin-chasing', having found discrepancies in the various accounts of dates, numbers and types of bombs falling on Mitcham. He has found a splendid police report in TNA about an 'Incendiary Bomb found and handed to Police' on 14 October 1916 by Mr A Mizen, who had found it in his field at Lonesome.

**David Haunton**

**Dates of next Workshops: Fridays 13 March, 1 May and 12 June at 2.30pm**

**At Wandle Industrial Museum. All are welcome.**

## SAVING A CENTURY

**A photographic exhibition celebrating the work of the Victorian Society  
Sutton Central Library, Europa Gallery, St. Nicholas Way, Sutton, SM1 1 EA  
4 – 22 MARCH 2015 daily during normal Library hours. Admission Free**

This exhibition of photos from around the country shows examples of the best Victorian and Edwardian buildings and structures that the Society has campaigned to save, and some that have been lost. It demonstrates the Society's success in changing public attitudes towards the architecture of the nineteenth century, and its continued relevance for the twenty-first century.

The Victorian Society is the national charity (no.1081435) campaigning for the Victorian and Edwardian historic environment. Tel. 020 8994 1019 or go to [www.victoriansociety.org.uk](http://www.victoriansociety.org.uk)

## ANOTHER VIEW ON MITCHAM AND THE GREAT WAR

In the December 2014 edition of the *Bulletin* Tony Scott shared some thoughts on how the Great War affected Mitcham and its inhabitants. Mrs Mavis Priestley, one of our members, wrote to him with additional information. Here is part of her letter, printed with her permission.

Dear Dr Scott,

I was interested in your article in *Bulletin* 192 regarding the Mitcham war memorials and the burials in the parish cemetery. You mention it stirring some ideas and thoughts in the reader and I wonder if you are interested in the following, which has some bearing on enlistment and the fact that there may be some hidden stories with the burials.

In the spring bank holiday week our local history Group (in Lingfield, Surrey) mounted a First World War exhibition which was preceded by a small group of us doing very intensive research for two years. It was pretty comprehensive, covering all three services not only on the Western Front, but Salonika, Gallipoli and Mesopotamia, the role of women, nursing, munitions, the Home Front, the Belgian refugees, the Emergency Committee, the Zeppelin air raids, the attacks by the RNAS on the Zeppelin sheds, pacifists, the war horses, etc, etc.

So far as enlistment is concerned, the army policy about local recruitment does not seem to have had any effect. In fact, it seems to bear out something my father once told me (he was in the Bedfordshire Regiment on the Western Front) that the early volunteers could choose their own regiments. The exception could be that engineers were encouraged to join the Royal Engineers, Post Office workers to be in the Signals and railway men, the Railway Regiments. However, the last two groups were vital for the Home Front and they enlisted but were only given badges showing they had done so. The Government had sent the Services a letter to the effect that the men could not be released until a certain date, and when that expired it was possible that the exemption would be extended.

We found our local men from Lingfield chose a wide range of services. Some chose the Hussars since as farm boys they presumably had experience of working with horses. So far as the two County Regiments were concerned, the fact that men lived on the eastern side of the county did not mean that they favoured the East Surreys. A few of them did, but mostly they chose the Queen's, the Royal West Surrey Regiment.

There is no reason to suppose that none of the Mitcham men joined the Navy. We are landlocked here in Lingfield but a sizeable number chose this option. One lost his life when *HMS Formidable* was torpedoed on 1 January 1915. At least two were at the Battle of Jutland and others were at one time on the ships that took part in that battle, but as we cannot find their service records we cannot be certain that the dates they were on those ships coincided with the battle. Another died when the *HMS Bulwark* exploded off Sheerness and another had an exciting time on the *Arethusa*. He was in the Battle of Heligoland Bight, only three weeks after the War started, and he was still designated as a "Boy". He was also on the ship when it acted as escort for the Cuxhaven Raid and then took part in the Battle of Dogger Bank. Another local man served on the Q-ships. All those who enlisted in the Navy did so for 12 years and not for hostilities only – one had his adventure after the War as a member of the group of sailors on the Enzeli Expedition [to the Caspian Sea in 1918] who were captured by the Bolsheviks.

Several men joined the RFC or the RNAS. A few were pilots but most were ground crew. Once a team of pilots and ground crew was formed they stayed together as long as circumstances permitted.

There could be a lot to discover about those names on the Mitcham war memorial. So far as the men buried in the cemetery are concerned, there could be interesting stories about them too. There is much that can be hidden behind those bland Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstones.

**Mavis Priestley**

**Letters and contributions for the *Bulletin* should be sent to the Hon. Editor,  
Mr David Haunton, by email to [editor@mertonhistoricalsociety.org.uk](mailto:editor@mertonhistoricalsociety.org.uk).  
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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