



PRESIDENT:

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Mitcham Common: A mural mosaic at Mitcham Junction station. Photo: Judith Goodman. See report on page 4.

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PROGRAMME SEPTEMBER – DECEMBER

Thursday 8 September 2.30pm

Visit to West Norwood Cemetery

Meet under the stone archway at the main entrance at Norwood/Robson Roads for a free guided tour of this Grade II* listed cemetery. Nearest stations: West Norwood or Tulse Hill. There is a direct service to the latter from Wimbledon at 28 and 58 minutes past the hour. The 1.58 (check train time) is suggested.

There is still time to book a place.

Friday 23 September 10.45 for 11am

Guided Tour of New Wimbledon Theatre

Meet outside the entrance. The tour costs £3 per head, payable on the day.

This tour is now fully booked, but a second tour has been arranged, for 11am on Friday 25 November.

Saturday 29 October 2.30pm

Raynes Park Library Hall

‘The Story of Morden Park’

For this year’s *Evelyn Jowett Memorial Lecture*, Sarah Gould, London Borough of Merton Heritage Officer, and our own Peter Hopkins will be presenting an illustrated account of the story of this much loved open space and the fine house that graces it.

Saturday 19 November 2.30pm

Christ Church Hall, Colliers Wood

Annual General Meeting (agenda enclosed)

After the business part of the meeting our member Clive Whichelow will entertain us with a talk about **Local Highwaymen**.

Saturday 10 December 2.30pm

Raynes Park Library Hall

‘Violette Szabo’

Daphne and Richard Marchant will present an illustrated talk about the World War II heroine and her local connections.

Raynes Park Library Hall is in Aston Road, off Approach Road, on or close to several bus routes, including the 152, and near to Raynes Park station. Some parking possible in side streets.

Please use the hall entrance in Aston Road, not the library entrance.

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.

Merton Heritage Showcase

MHS was invited to take part in the first Merton Heritage Showcase on Friday 20 May 2011, organised by Merton Library & Heritage Department to highlight the variety of heritage organisations in the Borough. Morden Baptist Church in Crown Lane was hired for the occasion. Several local organisations displayed their work and interests, including Merton Heritage Centre, Wandle Industrial Museum, Wimbledon Museum, Wimbledon Windmill Museum, Merton Priory Trust, Wandle Heritage Ltd, Wandle Valley Festival, Mitcham Cricket Green Conservation & Heritage Trust, National Trust, and Cricket Green School, as well as the conservation department and the Heritage Lottery Fund. During the day presentations were made on aspects of local heritage, volunteering, and Lottery grants. Our display featured items relating to Merton, Mitcham and Morden – WWII Civil Defence maps of Merton & Morden, the 1910 Valuation of Morden, Merton Priory, and the 1838 survey of Mitcham – as well as our current programme and publications. Five members of the Society manned our stall for the day, and a few publications were sold. Unfortunately the publicity was not as effective as had been hoped, and few passers-by came in. Unfortunately everything was arranged after the March *Bulletin* was circulated, so we were unable to inform members. However, it proved a useful opportunity to get to know others involved in heritage activities, and we have been promised that any future events will be planned well in advance and be better advertised. Our thanks to Sarah Gould and colleagues for their hard work in organising this event.

Peter Hopkins

VISIT TO KNOLE AND CHARTWELL

The weather on Saturday 14 May was lovely, as we expect when Pat and Ray Kilsby have planned a trip for the Society, and, our numbers swelled by friends from Sanderstead and Selsdon WEA branch, we all looked forward to some of the best that Kent can offer. Mick, our familiar genial and capable driver, took us on a cross-country route, down the North Downs escarpment and through little lanes to Limsfield. Here we paid our respects to the 'musical' graves in the churchyard – Frederick Delius, Eileen Joyce and Norman Del Mar are buried there.

Then on to Sevenoaks and, at the top of the town, the entrance to Knole Park, and, after a swooping drive past groups of Fallow and Sika Deer peacefully digesting under the trees, we arrived in front of the great house.

The statistics of this amazing building are hard to take in. It covers 1.6 hectares (four acres), has seven courtyards and, give or take, 365 rooms. Perhaps fortunately, only a small fraction are on show to the public.

The original house was built by Archbishop Thomas Bouchier, who bought the manor of Knole in 1456. He added successive parcels of land to create an estate that could support the building of a grand house. On his death Knole passed to the See of Canterbury, and subsequent archbishops added to the house, until in 1538 Thomas Cranmer was forced 'voluntarily' to give Knole to Henry VIII. It seems that though the king did not spend much time there (it was only one of about 60 royal residences) he did spend some money on it – most particularly on the impressive gatehouse. Later, Queen Elizabeth gave Knole to Robert Dudley, but he returned it in exchange for another property, and Thomas Sackville, Earl of Dorset, first acquired a lease on it, and subsequently purchased it. Knole has remained with the Sackvilles (now Sackville-Wests) ever since.



*The Green Court at Knole,
from a 1920s postcard (JG)*

After passing through the Green Court, originally built probably to house Henry's attendants, but embellished subsequently (including the addition of an elegant 19th-century orangery), the visitor comes to the smaller but handsome Stone Court. From there the very grand Great Hall is the start of the tour of 13 great staterooms. While most large houses had a long gallery, for display and exercise, Knole has no fewer than three, with accompanying bedrooms, dressing rooms and closets, as well as a ballroom, a billiards room, and everywhere a fine collection of pictures. In the late 17th century the Sackville of the time exploited his position as Lord Chamberlain to acquire one of the glories of the house – a unique collection of early 17th-century furniture from the royal palaces. This includes the famous 'Knole settee', distant ancestor of the modern sofa.

Novelist, and inspired gardener, Vita Sackville-West knew and loved Knole as a child. Though, as a female, she did not inherit it, the story of her life, and her place in the Bloomsbury set, is also celebrated here.

What a contrast Chartwell is with the Sackvilles' built-to-impress mansion. Churchill, who first saw Chartwell in 1922, committed himself to its purchase before telling Clementine, and her reaction to it was that (a) it was hideous and (b) it would cost far more money than they then had, to make it the sort of house they wanted. She was quite right. The Victorian owners, the Campbell Colquhoun family, had 'improved' a modest farmhouse so that it became a tall, gaunt, awkward, red-brick house, made damp and gloomy by too much creeper on its walls and by dense rhododendron cover on the slope above. The Churchills' long-suffering architect Philip Tilden made, and revised, and re-revised, plans to extend the building, to open it up to the sunlight and to make it a comfortable and welcoming home. The glory of Chartwell however is its Wealden hillside setting, overlooking a valley below and rising ground beyond. The Chart Well, a natural spring, still rises above the house and feeds a stream, pond and bathing pool. The house is not a thing of beauty but sits happily in its wonderful setting, with fine views from the principal rooms. The gardens, including the wall by the kitchen garden, which Churchill built with his own hands, are an additional attraction.



Chartwell (photo JG)

Clementine's taste is reflected in the principal rooms: chintz curtains and comfy sofas in the drawing room and furniture from Heal's in the dining room. Particularly in the library, museum and study the visitor can see maps, medals, uniforms, 'siren suits', ceremonial gifts, robes, awards and trophies. Copies of all his writings, in many editions, are displayed. And Chartwell, which provided him with many 'paintatious' (his word) subjects, has on display more than 160 of the 530 or so known paintings by Churchill.

This was a most enjoyable day out. Our thanks again to the Kilsbys for arranging it.

Judith Goodman

MITCHAM COMMON WALK

On 9 July MHS members were joined by a group of Sutton Ramblers for an afternoon walk on Mitcham Common. Despite very unsettled weather during the week, we were blessed with a dry day that was not too hot for walking. We gathered outside Mitcham Junction station/tramstop on the Carshalton Road, where we were met by our guide Melanie Nunzet of Friends of Mitcham Common. Melanie is also a Rambler, and a new member of our own Society.

We entered the Common by the gate near the meeting-point, and approached the area known as the Gunsite. Here Melanie gave us an introduction to the Common, and explained that it has very varied habitats, with a bio-diversity which is greater than that of Wimbledon Common. The Gunsite got its name from the anti-aircraft guns that were placed there during the Second World War, along with huts associated with the same period. These are now gone, but some were informally occupied for years afterwards. Now cleared, the acid soil here supports an area rich with many different plants and grasses. In contrast, we then moved into a wooded area, where the path wound its way among large trees, many of them oaks. By this time the sounds of the traffic had faded and it was easy to imagine that we were deep in the Surrey countryside. A fleeting glimpse through the trees of players on the Mitcham golf course increased the feeling of leisure time and relaxation. Overgrown paths led off at various places. Melanie pointed out one that was an old right-of-way to Beddington Park, near an area where there were once farms.

We were swiftly brought back to the noise and bustle of the 21st century when we crossed the tramway and busy road at Beddington Lane, where we all needed to recover our wits! After making it across the road, we walked through meadowland to One Island Pond. The pond, a result of gravel extraction in the 19th century, is the deepest pond on the Common. Its position, partially surrounded by trees, gave it a feeling of seclusion.

Small hills in this part of the Common consist of building rubble, part of a controversial scheme of the 1960s and 70s, when other such mounds were proposed, but eventually stopped by public pressure. And across busy Croydon Road is Mill Hill, an entirely man-made structure of domestic rubbish capped with clay and soil. On the day of our walk the hill and the area surrounding it was a picture, being covered with grasses and many different kinds of wildflowers. Facing Mill Hill is Mill House, now a restaurant. Melanie pointed out the remains of the windmill nearby. Here we met up with Janet Morris, the President of Friends of Mitcham Common. We crossed Windmill Road, and Janet guided us through the next stage of our walk. On the path long known as Workhouse Path, we stopped near the site of the old workhouse, which was in use between 1782 and 1838. A series of factories followed on the site, including one that made rubber groundsheets for the Crimean War. The factory still remembered by older Mitcham residents was the Tower Creameries, which manufactured margarine (*Some Memories of Tower Creameries, Mitcham* by Irene Bain was published by MHS last year). The site is now being developed with housing.

Janet took us through another stretch of woodland. It would have been easy to assume that it was ancient, but Janet explained that 50 years ago this area had been open grass. Hawthorn trees had sprung up, to be gradually supplanted by oak trees that had grown up through them. Janet gave us a fascinating insight into how and why this occurs. As we passed through the wood she pointed out a patch of nettles that masked the site of a bomb crater created during the Second World War.

Finally, we emerged into the sun on the open grassland surrounding Seven Islands Pond. (Melanie pointed out that there are only five islands!) We paused here for a while, looking at the wildfowl on the pond, and admiring the red colour of the sheep's sorrel growing around this area. After David Luff had persuaded some of us to pose for a group photograph the official walk came to an end. Several of us again braved busy roads to adjourn to Park Place for a well-earned drink in the garden. It had been an extremely enjoyable walk, led by our two very knowledgeable guides.

Irene Burroughs



MHS members at Seven Islands Pond. Photo: David Luff

PS: Look out for *Mitcham Common: a short history* by Janet Morris, which has just been published. Attractive and informative, it is a bargain at £3 (plus £1 postage). Available at meetings or from our Publications Secretary Peter Hopkins, 57 Templecombe Way, Morden, Surrey SM4 4JF.

MORDEN VILLAGE FESTIVAL

The festival took place on Saturday 9 July at the church of St Lawrence, Morden. Peter Hopkins had been asked to produce a display from our Society and another from his church, St Martin's. Peter was the ideal person to do this, given his extensive, and continuing, research into the area.

I was on an adjoining table as a member of the Liberty Lacemakers. We have our meetings in the church hall every month, so were invited to have a display, and also to demonstrate lacemaking. A 'have a go (lace) pillow' proved very popular – but Peter declined! As I was next to the MHS stand I wore two badges, so that I was available when needed.

Other churches and organisations had displays in the church centre, and there were flower arrangements in the church. A highlight was a videoed interview with Madeline Healey discussing her family's links with Gilliat Hatfeild, complete with photographs. Councillor Richard Chellew, representing Merton Priory Trust, had replicas of the Magna Carta and the Merton charters. He will have a display at our AGM, with copies for sale. We were greeted and made welcome when we arrived, and were kept busy, sometimes very much so, all day by a continuous stream of visitors, with many questions as well as reminiscences.

Other events had been arranged for the weekend, but the displays remained in place until the following Friday. Peter was there on four days, and sold £42 of publications, of which we gave 20% towards the Festival expenses.

Rosemary Turner

Cyril Maidment reports:

The first meeting of the Council's **Heritage and Design Working Group** (HDWG) took place on 5 July 2011. The notes have been circulated and can be seen as http://www.merton.gov.uk/environment/designandconservation/heritage_and_design_working_group_.htm. The names of those attending, 28 in number, are not recorded.

Two 'Actions' were noted – one to prepare a list of all our Heritage Lottery projects, and the other to list links to all heritage groups on the Council website future.merton@merton.gov.uk.

The heritage event on 20 May was thought to have been well organised. The fact that the public did not attend was not stressed. The 'Information Exchange' was useful, but I cannot recall a proposal for 'a new museum for the Borough'. It is a fact that Merton does not receive as much lottery funding as other Boroughs, and it is hoped that this balance can be corrected. It is intended that wider publicity should be achieved for the events, walks, talks and visits arranged by the organisations of Group Members.

On 13 July 2011 Merton Council formally adopted the **Development Plan Document of its Core Planning Strategy**. Clause 6 is as it was in the December Draft for Comment. It notes that Merton is one of the few London Boroughs without a recognised archive service. (Neither does Merton have an archivist.) There is no plan to correct this deficiency. It is stated that a possible solution would be to lodge archival material with local museums, subject to appropriate access and publicity arrangements. This proposal is nonsense. It is also thought that it may be possible to transfer local material to Surrey History Centre (which has suitable archival storage and conservation support). We left Surrey in 1965. How can we expect Surrey History Centre to absorb these costs? Are we never going to have a recognised archive service? The Objectives 2011-2013 in Clause 7 include worthwhile material, but no proposals to reduce or solve these problems.

COLLIERS WOOD – A CORRECTION

We have received an email from Victor Hamilton about the photograph which appears on page 116 of Eric Montague's *Colliers Wood or 'Merton Singlegate'*. Mr Hamilton tells us that the houses shown were not in Warren Road, but in Robinson Road. He once lived in No.107, at the centre of the photograph. The houses have since been demolished (though others like them remain) and replaced by Defoe Close.

LAMAS WORKSHOP

London and Middlesex Archaeological Society Local History Committee are putting on a Local History Workshop called 'A Guide to the 1911 Census for Local Historians' on Saturday 15 October 2011 from 10am – 1pm in the Museum of London elearning suite. It is free to members of affiliated societies (MHS is affiliated). There are only 16 computers, so interested enquirers should not delay. Write for a booking form to LAMAS Local History Workshop, c/o 9 Umfreville Road, London N4 1RY, or email to johnhinshelwood@btinternet.com - subject LAMAS Local History Workshop.

LOCAL HISTORY WORKSHOPS

Friday 6 May 2011 – 8 present – Judy Goodman in the chair

- We began with a discussion of arrangements for the Society stand at the Heritage Showcase due to be held at the Baptist Church on 20 May (see p.2).
- **Tony Scott** has been looking at the draft of Eric Montague's new book on the Church Road area of Mitcham. He suggested that he could compile, from the 1838 Survey, an Appendix for the book, in the form of a table showing addresses, owners and occupiers at that date. (Peter Hopkins provisionally accepted the offer on Monty's behalf.)
- **Madeline Healey** can help Tony with information on some of the shopkeepers in Church Road, such as the Williamses. She showed us a 1946 document giving the Sale Particulars of those properties lying in Mitcham and Morden, 'Houses, Flats, Shops and Sites', which formed part of the estate of G E Hatfeild, deceased, and which were to be sold at auction. There are large-scale plans of each plot, and extensive details, which include the current occupiers, uses and rents (see extracts right – the Civic Centre site – and below). Much has changed in the last 65 years.



By Order of the Trustees of G. E. HATFEILD, Deceased

The foregoing Properties form the residue of the Estate of the late Mr. G. E. Hatfeild, who owned Morden Hall, which was under his Will bequeathed to the National Trust, and a large acreage of surrounding land.

The Auctioneers call special attention to the inadequacy of the present Rentals and although it is realised that at present these rents cannot be brought up to an economic basis, the position can be summed up by saying that the late Mr. Hatfeild was more of a philanthropist than a landlord.

- **Rosemary Turner** has begun to input information into her database of the 1910 Land Valuation Survey of Morden – 200 entries down, rather more still to do, and she hopes to find someone to check that her typing is correct. [Post meeting: two volunteers have now been recruited for this task.] Almost all the initial valuation assessments were subject to appeal or quibble, so there are often extra notes scribbled on top of the original ones. Furthermore, there can be two or more entries for one property in the Survey, which can be widely separated. Rosemary has been impressed by the minute level of detail recorded, such as the number of chicken coops in a yard, and the number of fruit trees in an orchard; there is far more information than in the equivalent surveys of Croydon and Streatham. Overall, her first impressions are that Morden was 'wet and dilapidated'.
- **Bill Rudd** brought along two Ordnance Survey maps of Morden for us to compare, dating from 1866-67 and 1967-68. The main roads are almost identical, apart from some straightening of London Road, but the 19th century farmland is now almost entirely built-up (or 'covered in bricks' as Bill puts it). Curiously, almost all the present-day open green spaces surround the big houses of 1866, which, apart from Morden village proper, formed the main built-up areas of their day, what with their annexes and stables and carriage-houses and dairies and so forth.
- **David Haunton** read a short Civil Defence correspondence from 1943, showing that the phrasing of Sir Humphrey Appleby was well practised even in war-time. (For a future *Bulletin* article.)
- **Peter Hopkins** has been looking critically at the recently-published *Town Trails* booklet, and has noted several misprints, and mis-punctuations which alter the sense. In anticipation of a second edition, he has started a 'master copy' to be annotated with corrections. So if you happen to notice any, please tell him.

David Haunton

Friday 24 June 2100 – 6 present – David Haunton in the chair

- **Rosemary Turner** updated us on progress with her project on the 1910 Valuation for Morden. Bea Oliver and Keith Penny kindly volunteered to check Rosemary's transcriptions, and have completed the first 200 entries. Only another 228 to go! (See the extract from the Valuation of Hatherleigh on p.14.)
- **Cyril Maidment** has discovered an unusual local link with the 2012 Olympics, revealed on a splendid new map of the site, produced by the ICE and the Ordnance Survey which is full of interest. Some twenty years ago some four and a half miles of the top surface of the Northern Outfall Sewer, created in the 1860s by Sir Joseph Bazalgette, a former resident of Morden, who later moved to Wimbledon (see Bulletins 142 & 154) was adapted as The Greenway, a long distance, pedestrian and cycle path. About one hundred yards north of West Ham Station, where the sewer crosses Manor Road, Bazalgette's original pipes are visible from underneath. Whilst Stratford Station will carry most of the Olympic traffic, alternative pedestrian access will be provided from West Ham Station, making use of the Greenway.

Cyril in an attempt to popularise the use of the four published reprints of the 1894 15-inch-to-the-mile Ordnance Survey maps that cover the northern part of our Borough, all on sale in the Wimbledon Museum, has produced a chart showing the main locations included in each map.

He has also been continuing his work of mapping Lord Nelson's Merton Place estate, and has turned his attention to the location of the tunnel beneath Merton High Street, connecting the Merton and Wimbledon portions of the estate. (For a future *Bulletin* article.)

- **Peter Hopkins** sought advice from members over various aspects of his researches into medieval Morden. One question related to a document of 1225 regarding the re-routing of a road that had previously passed through Westminster abbey's manorial centre at Morden Hall, which explains that the new route was to extend to the southern corner of the abbey's tenement 'next to the house of William son of Sweyn on the west side'. Was William's house west of the abbey's tenement, or the tenement west of William's house, or was it the road that was to pass to the west of both properties?!! Peter also discussed the direction of 19th century field boundaries in Central Road, Morden, some parallel to the road, and others at right angles, probably preserving the alignment of the ploughed strips of the medieval furlongs.

Peter also drew attention to the national Landscapes of Governance project, which is studying early medieval moots, courts and meeting-places (see <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/archaeology/research/projects/assembly>). Jeremy Harte of Bourne Hall Museum, Ewell, is co-ordinating the Surrey sites, and Peter had drawn his attention to the name Motspur Park, formerly Mott's Furze Farm, on the boundary of four parishes and three hundreds.

- **Bill Rudd** brought along a series of photographs recording the demise of old trees along Green Lane, Morden. He also showed photos of the former double bend where Epsom Road becomes London Road, before the straightening of the road, as mentioned at the last Workshop. We were also shown a photograph of North Lodge, in London Road, home of Mr North, proprietor of a sheet metal works. North built the cottages in Crown Lane, with corrugated iron roofs and corrugated iron cladding on the upper frontages, now sadly modernised. Finally we saw several photos of Hatherleigh, a Victorian villa in London Road, demolished in 1957 (see p.14). Its name is preserved in a road off Hillcross Avenue.
- In preparation for the Morden Village Festival, the rector of Morden, Ray Skinner, had arranged a taped interview with **Madeline Healey**, discussing her large archive of photographs and papers relating to her family's long residence in Morden. Everyone present looked forward to seeing the presentation at the Festival, which will include images of the various documents and photos alongside Madeline's commentary.
- **David Haunton** read us more extracts from Ken Gibbons's wartime reminiscences (see p.10). He also showed this photograph of Jean Reville's midget racing car, carried by Reville and friends, demonstrating its light weight (see articles in *Bulletins* 169-171).



Peter Hopkins

**Dates of next Workshops: Fridays 30 September, 4 November and 9 December at 2.30pm
at Wandle Industrial Museum. All are welcome.**

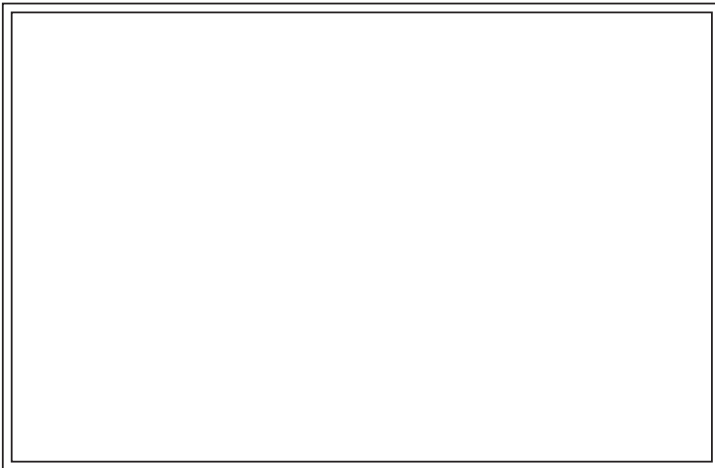
TONY SCOTT, who keeps a boat on the Thames, explores

LONDON'S RIVERS AND SEWERS

There are a number of rivers in London that drain into the tidal Thames, some visible and some now well culverted underground. A few centuries ago most, if not all, of these tributaries in central London were, in effect, open sewers into which human, animal, domestic and commercial waste was thrown. The hygienic and health problems associated with this were not of immediate concern to the local people; a far more serious problem for them was flooding caused by blockages due to the sheer quantity of solid rubbish dumped in some of the rivers.

Strangely enough, the growing popularity of water closets in the late 18th and particularly in the early 19th centuries meant that 'nightsoil', which had previously been removed manually from cesspits to be used as agricultural fertiliser, was now flushed out of each house into a sewer and thence to the local river. Often, the local river was also the source of drinking water. London's cholera epidemic in 1849 has been attributed to the introduction of WCs.

The responsibility for London's sewers was shared by eight Commissions of Sewers that had been set up in Tudor times to serve a much smaller population. There were earlier, unsuccessful, attempts to unify these



The Fleet Sewer c.1830. By courtesy of London Metropolitan Archives.

Commissions, but in 1847 a Royal Commission was established, to 'Inquire what special means might be requisite for the health of the Metropolis with regard ... to better house, street and land drainage'. The Royal Commission recommended that seven of the Commissions of Sewers be amalgamated into one Metropolitan Commission of Sewers, with the City of London having its own Sewers Commission. These recommendations were accepted, and the Metropolitan Sewers Act of 1848 gave the Metropolitan Commission of Sewers jurisdiction over parts of the counties of Middlesex, Surrey, Kent and Essex within 12 miles (19km) of St Paul's Cathedral. This intentionally excluded the City of London. The Act forbade the construction of houses without suitable drains and required them to be connected to public sewers. In addition, all new houses were to have a WC or privy and ash-pit.

This still left the problem of sewers draining into local rivers. The Commission recognised this, and in 1849 issued a general invitation to engineers to submit their own schemes to alleviate the problem. A total of 137 proposals were received, but there was no agreement on a solution. A new Commission fared no better, and in 1853 another Royal Commission recommended establishing a Metropolitan Board of Works to 'execute drainage and other common works'. The Board took over responsibility for sewers on 1 January 1856 and immediately appointed as its Chief Engineer Joseph Bazalgette (1819-91).

During April Bazalgette submitted plans for the drainage of south London, and during May plans for the drainage of north London. These plans consisted of culverting many of London's rivers and constructing a system of 'interceptor sewers' to take sewage out of central London and a long way down the Thames before discharging it into the river. Bazalgette estimated the cost as between £2.1million and £2.4million. There was great resistance, on the grounds of cost, and no decisions were taken.

The smell from the open sewer rivers that ran into the Thames, and also from the Thames itself, was particularly severe in the summer months and came to a climax in the exceptionally hot summer of 1858. Members of Parliament could not open windows in the House nor use the terrace or the library because of the smell from the river. *The Times* called this the 'Great Stink' and ran a campaign for a proper sewerage system.

This provided the incentive for action, and the Metropolitan Local Management Amendment Act of 1858 authorised the Board to borrow £3million for the work, underwritten by HM Treasury, to be repaid over 40 years. Work commenced almost immediately. Many rivers were culverted, and interceptor sewers constructed. The lowest of these ran each side of the Thames and were incorporated into the Embankments we see today. The sewage travelled to Beckton (near Barking) and Crossness (near Abbey Wood) for storage and later discharge into the Thames on the falling tide. The Prince of Wales officially opened the system in 1865.

(Bazalgette remained Chief Engineer of the MBW for the whole of its existence, retiring in 1889, when it was replaced by the London County Council. After some years' residence in Morden he moved in 1873 to Wimbledon.

He died there in 1891 and is buried in St Mary's churchyard.)

What currently remains of London's tributaries of the Thames?

Let's take an armchair cruise down from Teddington, from where the river becomes tidal. The first tributary we see is the **Stamford Brook**, which drains the western side of Wormwood Scrubs, feeds the lake at Chiswick House, and enters the Thames through a pipe at Chiswick. Next we see the **Beverley Brook**, on the south bank at Barnes, almost opposite Fulham football ground. It rises in Worcester Park and flows past Wimbledon Common and across Richmond Park before entering the Thames. Next, also on the south bank, is the mouth of the **River Wandle**, which rises in Carshalton and Waddon, near Croydon, and flows through our area to Earlsfield and on to the Thames at Wandsworth. The Wandle may look navigable at high water, but there is a concrete weir about 100m upstream to retain water at Wandsworth at about half-tide level.

Further downstream we get to the totally covered streams and rivers. Near Battersea Old Church the **Falconbrook** enters the Thames. This has a couple of sources – one near St Leonard's church, Streatham, from where it flows across Tooting Bec to Trinity Road, and the other at Streatham Hill, from where it flows under Cavendish Road to Balham High Road. The streams join in Balham and then flow to Northcote Road, pass the Falcon, under Clapham Junction's railway lines, before arriving at York Road, Battersea.

Almost opposite this point, **Counter's Creek** has been enclosed to form Chelsea Marina. A stream of the same name drains the eastern side of Wormwood Scrubs and flows past both Olympia and Earl's Court exhibition halls before passing through Chelsea to the Thames.

The **Westbourne** rises on the western side of Hampstead and flows down to Kilburn and on to Hyde Park, where, in 1730 it was dammed to form the Serpentine. As the lake's outfall it then flows across Knightsbridge and down to Sloane Square, where it crosses the District and Circle Underground line in a large pipe visible above the tracks when standing on the platform. It then passes through what was the Grosvenor Canal Basin, and joins the Thames in the small gap between Chelsea Bridge and Grosvenor Railway Bridge.

The next hidden river is the **Effra**, which appears as a large tunnel outfall under the Albert Embankment near the Fire Brigade HQ. It rises in Norwood, flows in a culvert to Herne Hill, then under Dulwich Road, Water Lane and Effra Road to Brixton, and past the Oval to the Thames.

The **Tyburn** rises on the south side of Haverstock Hill in Belsize Park and flows down to Regent's Park where it supplies the lake and feeds the Grand Union Canal. Its course is indicated by Marylebone Lane. It then crosses Oxford Street, once giving its name to Tyburn gallows that stood near Marble Arch, and then to Piccadilly. After that it feeds the lake in St James's Park and flows into the Thames in an outfall just downstream of Westminster Bridge.

The **Fleet** is the largest of the underground rivers in London. It has two sources on Hampstead Heath: one in the Vale of Health supplies Hampstead Ponds, and one at Kenwood supplies Highgate Ponds. They both go underground where the Heath ends, and join near Camden Town. From Kings Cross it flows under Kings Cross Road, Farringdon Road and Farringdon Street, where its valley is clearly visible and is bridged by Holborn Viaduct, and under Ludgate Circus and New Bridge Street to reach the Thames under Blackfriars Bridge.

Another watercourse draining the City is the **Walbrook**, which enters the Thames between Southwark Bridge and Cannon Street Railway Bridge, having flowed from its source at Islington. It was probably the first river to be covered over, as this was done by 1463.

On the south there was the **Neckinger**, which has also been covered for a very long time. Its source is in East Dulwich and it used to flow past Bermondsey Abbey before entering the Thames at St Saviour's Dock below Tower Bridge.

Now, cruising further out from central London, the tributaries are open rivers again. First is the **Ravensbourne** on the south bank. It rises in Addington and flows through Beckenham, Catford and Lewisham to enter the Thames at Deptford Creek. It was the historic boundary between Kent and Surrey.

Next is the **River Lea**, which enters the Thames at Bow Creek on the north bank, opposite the Greenwich peninsula. It originates in Hertfordshire and flows through Waltham Abbey before draining Hackney Marshes and reaching the Thames. Navigable in its lower reaches, it has been canalised into the Lea Navigation further upstream.

Although there are more rivers joining the Thames further down I will conclude this little armchair cruise at the Thames Barrier, but I can recommend *The Great Stink of London* by Stephen Halliday (1999 Sutton Publishing) and *The Lost Rivers of London* by Nicholas Barton (1962, repr. 1982 Historical Publications Ltd).

MEMORIES OF EXCITING TIMES: Part 2

Evacuation Again

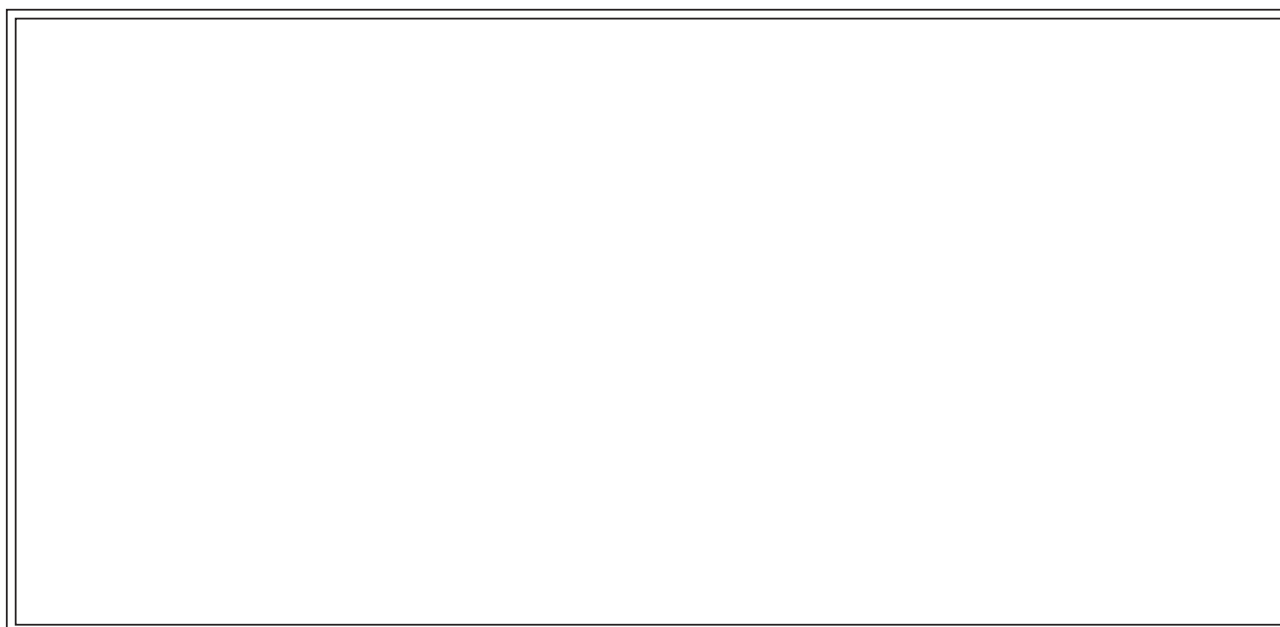
After their experience of the bomb that exploded near their home on 25 October 1940, Ken's parents applied for him and Peter to be evacuated again, and shortly afterwards they moved to the little village of Toddington, a few miles north-west of Luton in Bedfordshire. Green buses took a crowd of children on the last stage of their journey. The children were from many different parts of London, including Fulham and the East End, and most of them had been bombed out. Of them all, Ken only knew one Wimbledon lad, Peter Gundry from Wandle Bank. Once assembled in the village school, they were ready to be picked out for billeting. 'When the crowd was down to about four or five there were no more billets and I thought "Here we go again".' The local vicar was asked to take them, but he 'did not want to know, he only wanted girls'.

Eventually Ken and Peter were taken home by Lilian Maud Stringer, a helper at the billeting reception centre. She lived at 58 Dunstable Road, with her husband Albert and their little boy Stewart, aged 3 or 4, not yet at school. Mrs Stringer, always known as Maud, was about 28, and had a home job making hats, for which Luton was famous. Mr Stringer was about 30, and worked at SKF in Luton, where they made ball bearings, an important job during the war. He used to cycle the six or seven miles into Luton, and did a lot of shift work. When at home, he would often go out shooting rabbits and partridges for the pot, sometimes accompanied by Ken and Peter, who were never short of food. Mrs Stringer used to make a lovely dish called a "Bedfordshire Clanger".²

58 Dunstable Road was one of five or six cottages, 'all joined together'. None of the residents used their front door, the accepted entrance being a covered alleyway through the middle of the cottages that led to the back doors. There was no running water, so for drinking water the cottagers used a well with a hand pump in the back yard. Mr Stringer used rain water from a butt by the back door to wash, while the lavatory was a 'bucket at the end of the garden' which was emptied once a week by the night cart.

There were several Stringer families in Toddington, apparently all related, and the boys used to visit some of them. Maud's married sister and her husband, also living in Dunstable Road, had a smallholding where the boys would help out.

There were two schools in the village, one run by the Council and the other by the Church, each of them about ten minutes walk away from the Gibbons boys' house. All the evacuees attended the Council school, which was much liked, though 'things were a bit basic, I seemed to go backwards with my education'. Mr Shepherd, the headmaster, was a local man, but at least one of his teachers, Mr E Wilmore, had come from London with the evacuees. He organised the annual inter-school sports match in April 1941 (see the local paper cutting), at which the evacuees shone. Peter and Ken from Merton and the Arnold brothers from Fulham were all evacuees, and enabled the Council School to beat the Church School for the first time ever in this local derby, so that reportedly 'the Church school were not very happy'.



*View from the Church Tower, Toddington, late 1920s
Courtesy Bedfordshire and Luton Archives and Record Services, Ref. Z1306/126uncat*

Ken remarks that, when he was there in 1940-41, Toddington village looked just the same as it does in the accompanying photograph, taken in the late 1920s. Dunstable Road runs up on the left of the picture, with 'their' cottages just out of view, while the Council school is to the right of the picture, also just out of view, and the Church school is behind the photographer. When he visited in 1979, the village was much changed, with lots of new buildings.

Ken had only been in Toddington for a week or so, when early one evening he and his brother noticed a regular stream of German aircraft passing overhead, one every 30 seconds or so, travelling northwest. There was no anti-aircraft gunfire to disturb them. Later that night Ken could see a red glow in the sky to the north – it was 14 November 1940 and the aircraft had been on their way to Coventry. That same evening the boys noticed a light flashing intermittently from a cottage; was this someone signalling to the airmen? They hastened off to alert the authorities, in the person of the village constable. He investigated, and told them afterwards that, sadly no, it was not a spy, it was a curtain blowing in the wind. However, at least one aircraft dropped its bombs near the village, large patches of oil being found on several fields.³ In addition, Mr Stringer found a hole in one field, just like a rabbit hole, which he showed to the boys, before notifying the local policeman. For a while this was merely marked by a notice saying 'Unexploded Bomb', but eventually the Army Bomb Disposal squad arrived and dug out a small (50kg) high-explosive bomb.

Ken's fascination with aircraft continued: he remembers 'in the evenings watching the Wellington bombers going on raids over Germany; the aircraft were very low so you could see the crews. We used to wave to them and you could see them wave back, we always got a good wave from the rear gunner. Very sad as some were not to come back. Their airfield must have been just north of Toddington.'⁴

He was told by the school children that a Wellington bomber had crashed just outside Toddington about the middle of October 1940. One of the children, who lived not far from where it came down close to a farmhouse, said that the farmer never heard a thing till there was a knock on the door in the early hours. He answered the door to an RAF man who said "Sorry to wake you, could you get some help? My bomber has crashed. It's knocked a tree down and made a bit of a mess." The crew 'said to mention that they were from 9 Squadron in any claim for compensation.'⁵

Dad brought the boys home for Christmas. Mrs Gibbons had a nasty experience on 23 December 1940. The ambulance taking her to Kingston Hospital to have her new baby was caught in an air raid and just missed being hit by a bomb. The vehicle rocked so violently in the blast that Mrs Gibbons thought it was going to turn over. Fortunately all was well and Ken's sister Barbara was born later that night. Early in the New Year, the boys returned to Toddington. However, in April 1941 Ken was summoned home to Leyton Road to help his Mum cope with his two young sisters – Sheila now aged three and Barbara three months and not in the best of health. Peter stayed on in Toddington as he liked it there, but Ken was glad to be home, and he never went back to school. Effectively he left education at the age of thirteen years and three months – 'no-one ever checked up on you in those days'.

School Sports At Toddington

Toddington Council School met teams from the Church of England School in two events at the Council School sports yesterday week. These were relay races for girls and boys, respectively, and each was won by the Council School.

In the other events points were given to winners of heats and of finals, the child with the highest number being champion in his section. A prize was given to the winner of each final.

Results: Infants, 50 yards, H. Fulcher; rabbit hop, N. Oakley; glove race, J. Tann; walking race, J. Tann; scarf race, B. Craker; box race, S. Barham; over and under, N. Oakley; champions, B. Craker and J. Tann (10 points each).

Juniors: 80 yards, G. Arnold; 100 yards, P. Gibbons; three-legged, 8 and 9, L. Anderson and A. Dary; 10 and 11, M. Bevis and J. Soul; high jump, P. Gibbons; long jump, 8 and 9, K. Hunt; 10 and 11, A. Soper; skipping race, 8 and 9, D. Simmonds, 10 and 11, B. Gray; egg and spoon, 8 and 9, K. Hunt 10 and 11, D. Coleman.

Potato race, 8 and 9, P. Coles; 10 and 11, P. Gibbons; wheelbarrow, 8 and 9, D. Horner and K. Hunt; 10 and 11, L. Hart and B. Oakley; obstacle, 8 and 9, G. Arnold; 10 and 11, R. Anderson; champion, P. Gibbons (19 points).

Seniors: 100 yards boys, J. Arnold and K. Gibbons (dead heat); girls, J. Hobbs; three-legged, girls, J. Hobbs and J. Simmonds; long jump, J. Arnold; obstacle boys, K. Gibbons; girls, A. Howard; skipping, J. Simmonds; needle-threading, boys, E. Armstrong; throwing the cricket ball, J. Arnold; egg and spoon, E. Buckingham; potato race, mixed, N. Brinklow; bun-eating, G. Capp.

Relay: girls, J. Hobbs, J. Simmonds and K. Branghen; boys, J. Arnold, G. Capp, L. Hart and K. Gibbons; champion girl, J. Hobb (12 points), champion boy, J. Arnold (19 points).

Prizes were distributed in the school on Thursday by Mrs. Fawcett, J.P., C.C. A special prize was handed to L. Brinklow, youngest child in the school for his gameness and pluck. Community singing brought to a close a very happy and pleasant interlude in the work of the school.

The event was organised by Mr. E. Wilmore.

TODDINGTON

Work

In December 1941, aged 14, Ken took his first job, at Connolly's 'leather factory' in Wandle Bank, where he mixed paints and dyes for flying suits. During canteen breaks there were talks by famous people – notably Squadron Leader Roderick Learoyd, VC.⁶

In the spring of 1942 Ken and his friend Alfie Hill, of 33 Leyton Road, cycled from Wimbledon on a visit to Toddington – at least 40 miles (65 km) away by road. It was on a Sunday when the clocks went forward, and the ride turned into something of an epic. To quote Ken's words exactly: 'We left about nine o'clock, all went well, no traffic in 1942. No signposts either. Lot of excitement at Leavesden where I saw my first Mosquito aircraft just landing, still on the secret list. Got to Toddington about 2:30, Mrs Stringer very surprised. After filling ourselves with bread and blackcurrant jam we had to go. All went well till we got to Hendon airfield, where Alfie got a puncture at about 6:30. Trouble. Starting to get dark, no lights on bikes, set off again about eight o'clock. Pitch black by the time we got to central London, totally lost, blackout, no lights. Eventually found our way to Vauxhall Bridge, by now it is about 12:30 am. Finally got home 2:30 am, both sets of our parents at wits' end, having told the police, who said they would look out for us. Alfie had to go to work next day at Foster's Transformers in Merton⁷, while I had to go to Connolly's factory, well tired.'

Ken later moved to Huntley and Sparks, whose small factory at 105 De Burgh Road⁸ produced sound-deadening materials in peace-time, but was now making metalwork parts for aircraft.⁹ In June 1944, aged 17, he decided he preferred working in the open air, and applied to the Labour Exchange for a job repairing the houses that were being damaged by the V1 flying bomb campaign, which had just started. He was directed to a firm of small builders in Hamilton Road,¹⁰ South Wimbledon, where he was taken on as a roof tiler, staying with the firm until his National Service with the RAF in March 1946. His supervisor was Mr James Young 'a very quiet man, did not say a lot' who had been awarded the George Medal for his actions one night in the Blitz.¹¹

Each day the firm would be instructed by the Council where to go, and the workmen would be taken to the job by lorry. They repaired all types of residential houses and shops – including putting the roof back on the Locarno Dance Hall in Streatham. Ken remembers repairing the roof of Wimbledon High School twice, the second time very soon after the first. As well as working in the local area, there were jobs elsewhere in south London, in Penge and at Elephant and Castle, and especially in Croydon, which was hit by a large number of V1s. Work there got very repetitive, with the firm returning to the same area time and again; so much so that Ken got to know some residents, including a 'young family who one day were not there – they had been killed by a direct hit on their shelter'. One day, going home from a job in the Old Kent Road, he saw a V1 flying over 'it was quite low and wobbling as if something was wrong with it'. As he watched, it turned right round and went back the way it had come; he hoped it got all the way back to its launcher but thought probably not.

The warning sirens rarely sounded,¹² so as the man on the roof with the best view (and perhaps the best eyesight) young Ken was appointed 'roof-spotter'. This entailed keeping one eye open for approaching V-1s, but only calling out the warning 'Flying Bomb!' if it was coming directly towards him. On such occasions, while other workmen were taking cover, he usually stayed on the roof to watch the bomb, cheerfully oblivious of all danger.

Air Training Corps

Besides working, Ken was in the volunteer Air Training Corps (ATC) between 1942 and December 1945, at first in 164 Squadron, and then, when that was disbanded, in 18F Squadron.¹³ The main purpose of the Corps was to prepare the lads for a future role as aircrew in the RAF.

On one beautiful summer evening in 1944, a V-1 bomb came down nearby while his ATC squadron was having a lesson in aircraft recognition at their HQ, Lakefield, the big black and white house on the corner of Dorset Road and Kingston Road. Ken actually saw the bomb in the air, coming towards them, when the engine stopped and the bomb fell to earth. The boys were immediately ordered to help, and dashed down Dorset Road and Poplar Road, to where Circle Gardens meets Kenley Road. Several houses looked badly damaged, but 'the first thing we saw was a dead body on the grass verge'. A neighbour had brought a grey blanket to cover the man; when the Rev H W Dunk, vicar of St Mary's, Merton Park, lifted the blanket to check, Ken noticed that 'his feet were clad in men's socks', i.e. he had lost his shoes.¹⁴ The ATC cadets helped the rescue crews to rope off the area.

There were not only ATC evening classes, but camps and long weekends at airfields such as Biggin Hill, sometimes with 'air experience' flights. Ken remembers one flight in a Tiger Moth (single engined biplane, with the passenger in front of the pilot, both in open cockpits) from Fair Oaks airfield in Surrey.¹⁵ Another such was in an Airspeed Oxford, flying from Coltishall airfield near Norwich, where the Squadron was in camp in July 1944. This aircraft was a twin-engined light transport, and there were half a dozen young cadets on board

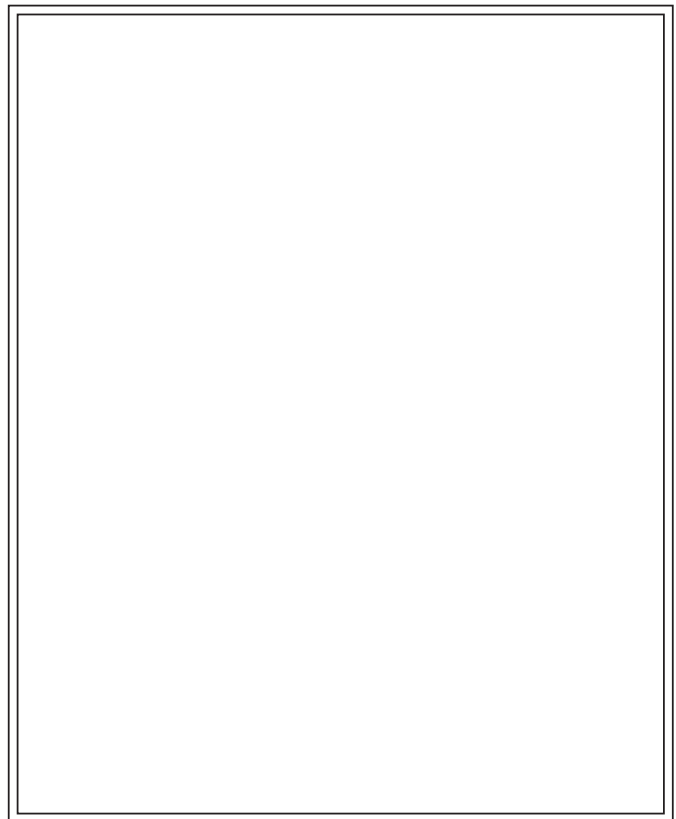
as the pilot headed eastward and out over the North Sea on a day with a lot of cloud. Ken prided himself on his aircraft recognition, so when suddenly they nearly collided with another aeroplane coming the other way, he instantly identified it as an RAF Vickers Warwick. The other cadets insisted it was a German Junkers Ju 88 or Ju 188, a heavily-armed fighterbomber, but when they urged the pilot to 'turn round and chase it', that officer pointed out that he was flying a slow, unarmed aircraft with no radio, that could do nothing about a raider, and they were going to go home.¹⁶

Another memorable adventure happened during Christmas week 1944, when the lads visited Blackbushe airfield in Hampshire,¹⁷ home to 418 and 605 Squadrons, RAF, flying de Havilland Mosquito fighterbombers, twinengined twoseaters where the navigator sat beside the pilot. Most were Mark VIs, but one aircraft in particular drew Ken's attention; it was a nightfighter NF Mark II, painted gloss black overall ('my favourite'). The officers served Christmas dinner to the other ranks, and the cadets, but alas Ken lost his copy of the special menu some time ago. The weather had been bad, so the squadron had been unable to fly recently, but one day the clouds lifted, so flying was permitted. On this redletter day, Ken was lucky to be one of 12 cadets allotted a place on a Mosquito, sitting in the navigator's seat. His pilot took him 'south at really low level down to Brighton, out over the sea, and back, hedge-hopping all the way. A real thrill.' Thus a few weeks later it was a shock to hear Cyril Black, at the time their senior ATC officer, announce to the boys that Ken's pilot, and a colleague, had both been killed on operations.

Ken sums up: 'At 15 and 16 years old you don't think of the danger, but for a teenager – they were exciting times.'

Postscript

In March 1946, Ken was called up for his National Service, in the RAF. Much of his time was spent at RAF Marston Moor, Yorkshire, where a couple of dozen RAF staff looked after wartime stores and 100 or so German prisoners of war. 'Bit of a Dad's Army situation – let the POWs go anywhere during the day, and guard them at night in case they escape'. Ken's two-year engagement was extended to three years, 'courtesy of the Russians' when they imposed the blockade of Berlin. Throughout that tense period, Ken was working at Lyneham airfield in Wiltshire, loading aircraft for the Berlin Airlift, mostly with spare parts and food. After demobilisation, Ken became a student farmer, coincidentally near Lyneham, and then came home to work for 30 years on Wimbledon Common, until he retired to the Isle of Wight in 1996.



Varied ATC rides: Tiger Moth, Oxford, Mosquito

1 As told to David Haunton, who added the footnotes.

2 According to Bedford Council's website, Bedfordshire Clanger is rather vaguely defined: it can have a suet pudding or pastry case, with a savoury filling (onions, minced pork, cooking apple, peas) or a sweet one (dessert apples, dates, sultanas, orange peel), or half and half.

3 Probably from an 'oil bomb', a primitive type of incendiary bomb, which had failed to ignite.

4 Probably Cranfield, about nine miles (15 km) away.

5 They were some way from home: at that time No.9 Squadron was based some 60 miles (100 km) away at Honington in West Suffolk.

6 He was awarded the Victoria Cross for a night attack at very low level in a Hampden bomber of 49 Squadron RAF on 12 August 1940, which destroyed the aqueduct carrying the Dortmund – Ems canal.

7 The factory site is now the Nelson Trade Park, off Morden Road.

8 So named at the time, in memory and street and telephone directories of the 1940s. However Wimbledon Voters Lists from at least the early 1930s consistently call it 'Deburgh Road'. So does the present street sign, the London Borough of Merton map and the A-to-Z.

9 The building was shared with May Acoustics Ltd, acoustical engineers.

10 Ken cannot be certain of the firm's name, but 'the name that sticks in the mind' is H Meech. A speculative builder working in our area around 1900-1925 under the name of Frederick John Meech and Sons built houses in Willows Avenue, Central Road and Farm Road in Morden, and also worked in Bathurst Avenue, Melbourne Road and Brisbane Avenue in Merton. "H Meech" could be one of the "Sons" but I haven't found any mention of him locally. Can anyone help? Notice that Ken did not need to travel far for a job – all three firms were less than half a mile from his home.

11 Mr Young, of 62 Havelock Road, was an ARP warden from 1939, having previously served 12 years with the Gordon and Seaforth Highlanders. His GM was awarded for his actions on 15 September 1940, in helping to rescue several people trapped by debris, notably the hours-long recovery of a woman caught in the bakery at 300 Haydons Road, with the gas main broken and the bakehouse fire still alight. Shortly afterwards, he was satisfying himself that everyone was clear of the area in danger from an unexploded bomb, when it blew up, fortunately inflicting only bruises and cuts on him.

- 12 At 300 – 400mph (500 – 650kph) the V1s flew so fast that frequently the warning service could not keep up with them. Quite often the bombs were fired in salvos of a dozen or more, which made tracking each one more difficult (at that date there was almost no radar coverage inland). Thus deciding which areas to warn became problematic for the defenders.
- 13 18F (Wimbledon) Squadron ATC is still going strong, with headquarters at 192 Merton Road. Since cadets are not adults, the Corps does not keep records of past members, as this would contravene the Data Protection Act. (*pers comm.* Warrant Officer H Smith, 18F Squadron, ATC, April 2011)
- 14 Ken's recollection is fortunately quite clear on this. The most likely V-1 is the one that hit 12 Martin Way at twenty past seven in the evening of Wednesday 5 July 1944: Circle Gardens would be well within range of its ability to cause serious damage to houses, and the point of impact is due south of the ATC HQ in Dorset Road, from where an observer would see the bomb coming directly towards himself. According to the local paper, the casualty was a Czech soldier, Lt Alois Simck, aged 27, who was visiting his father-in-law. The Rev Dunk conducted his cremation service. Lt Simck does not seem to be commemorated locally.
- 15 Fair Oaks is still a general aviation airfield, offering civil business, training and private flying.
- 16 I back Ken's judgement here; at this date, only a few weeks after D-Day, the *Luftwaffe* was strenuously attempting to attack the troops on the ground in Normandy, rather than targets in the UK.
- 17 Blackbushe was opened in November 1942 as RAF Hartford Bridge. It was renamed in November or December 1944, and the RAF left in 1947, many squadrons having been based there. Since then it has been a civil flying field, accommodating Blackbushe Airport as well as general aviation.

Post Note

Readers might like to compare Ken Gibbons' experiences as a wartime evacuee with those of Irene Bain, recorded on pp.6-7 of her *I Remember – Childhood memories of Wartime Mitcham*, MHS Local History Note 7 (64p to members + 60p postage from Peter Hopkins, 57 Templecombe Way, Morden, Surrey SM4 4JF). A good read.

BILL RUDD'S MORDEN



Hatherleigh, London Road, previously known as Parkside, appeared in local directories from 1876 and was renamed in 1895. Occupants included a French-born tailor named Theobald Cocquerel, and his large family, in the 1890s, and a Captain and Mrs Clipperton a decade later, both of whom are buried in St Lawrence churchyard.

Photographed in 1957 shortly before demolition.

Rosemary Turner has found this description of the house in the records of the 1910 Valuation (entry 190):-

Detached double fronted – 2nd floor: 4 good attics 3 with stoves, 1st floor: 3 beds 2 dressing rm bath & WC,

Grd:- 3 reception rooms kitchen scullery larder WC porch verandah conservatory

House built of brick timber & cement panels above tiled roof. The house is not particularly well built.

Brick & tiled stable 2 stalls loose box large loft over coach house woodshed WC greenhouse garden frames. Pleasure & kitchen gardens paddock

An attractive one storey red bricked & tiled roofed gardeners cottage – 2 beds sitting rm kitchen scullery WC – in good order
Timber & galvd iron roof fowl house

The owner has been in the habit of repairing roof drains & fencing. The roadway at side is a private road gate from paddock on to same

PETER HOPKINS reports on progress with his project on

MANORIAL RECORDS RELATING TO MEDIEVAL MORDEN

It is now more than 40 years since Canon Livermore drew attention to the archive of Westminster Abbey, and in particular the manorial rolls, as a valuable source for research into Morden's medieval past. He suggested that 'An interesting study might well be undertaken also in the system of cultivation and land tenure'.¹ I remember reading this many years ago, and thinking that it sounded interesting, but it certainly didn't cross my mind that I would ever undertake such a study! My O-level in Latin was completed half a century ago, and I only achieved that by memorising the set books!

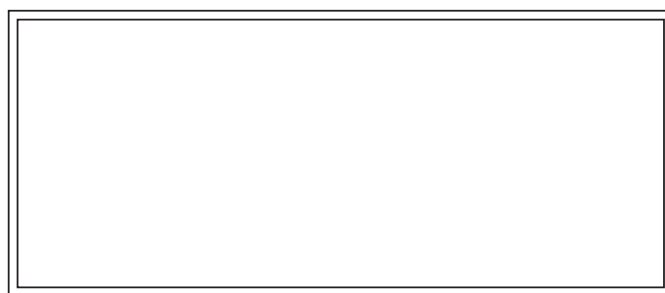
Fortunately the account rolls follow a regular pattern, so once one account roll had been translated, it was not too difficult to make sense of most of the remaining rolls. I turned to Surrey Archaeological Society for help with the initial translations, and was put in touch with a lady who grew up in Mitcham and who offered to correct my attempted translations free of charge. She made sense of an account roll, a set of early manorial court rolls, a custumal of c.1225 and an extent or survey of 1312.

Such generosity has been typical of the help I have received with the project. Total strangers have been happy to share their expertise. I have had to employ professional help to sort out a number of problems, but they have always been willing to answer further questions, and even to reconsider their translations. The various archives that hold Morden documents have all been willing to supply microfilm or digital photographs of their documents, and have even allowed me to publish these on the society website, alongside the translations, each of them graciously waiving their reproduction charge. The keeper of the muniments at Westminster abbey, where the majority of the documents have remained for centuries, put me in touch with Barbara Harvey, who has published several learned studies dealing with aspects of the administration of the abbey's estates,² and she regularly emails me to enquire about progress. She has helped with a number of difficult points, and even commented on a draft of my study on the manorial economy of medieval Morden. Recently she has sent me her transcripts of the Morden sections of some documents that she is preparing for publication.

All the documents have now been translated, and put on the website,³ though I haven't yet finished proofreading them all. Every time I look at a document I find some silly mistake that I have missed! Fortunately it is not too difficult a task to put corrected versions onto the website. I now feel more sympathy with Major Alfred Heales, whose 1898 study of *The Records of Merton Priory* was published by friends during his final illness and with errors of translation and interpretation unrevised. C A F Meekings warns of Heales's book, 'No document in it should be cited without recourse to the original',⁴ so I am relieved to know that images of the original documents accompany my translations on the website.

A wide range of records survives, dealing with the manor of Morden, its church and clergy, as well as various conflicts with neighbouring villages over communal pastures. More details of each type of document are given on the appropriate pages of the website.

There is a vast amount of information in these documents, which I am now attempting to interpret. So far I have been able to complete a study of the manorial economy, which is working its way around our long-suffering editorial committee. I have made a start on identifying the many properties mentioned in the various records, and hope to knock that into shape in the not too distant future. I also want to begin looking into the complicated network of social interaction in medieval Morden, and that is the task I have set myself for the summer.



A medieval doodle from WAM 27370, account of William Mulseye, farmer of the rectory and demesne of Morden, 1409-10, reproduced by courtesy of the Dean and Chapter of Westminster

When completed you will be able to discover everything that you never wanted to know about medieval Morden! But the project has already taken 12 years, so don't hold your breath!

1 T L Livermore *The Story of Morden and its Churches* (1968, revised W J Rudd 1983, updated and reprinted 1993) preface

2 Barbara Harvey *Westminster Abbey and its Estates in the Middle Ages* (1977), *The Obedientiaries of Westminster Abbey and their Financial Records, c. 1275-1540* (2002)

3 www.mertonhistoricalsociety.org.uk/projects/manorial+documents

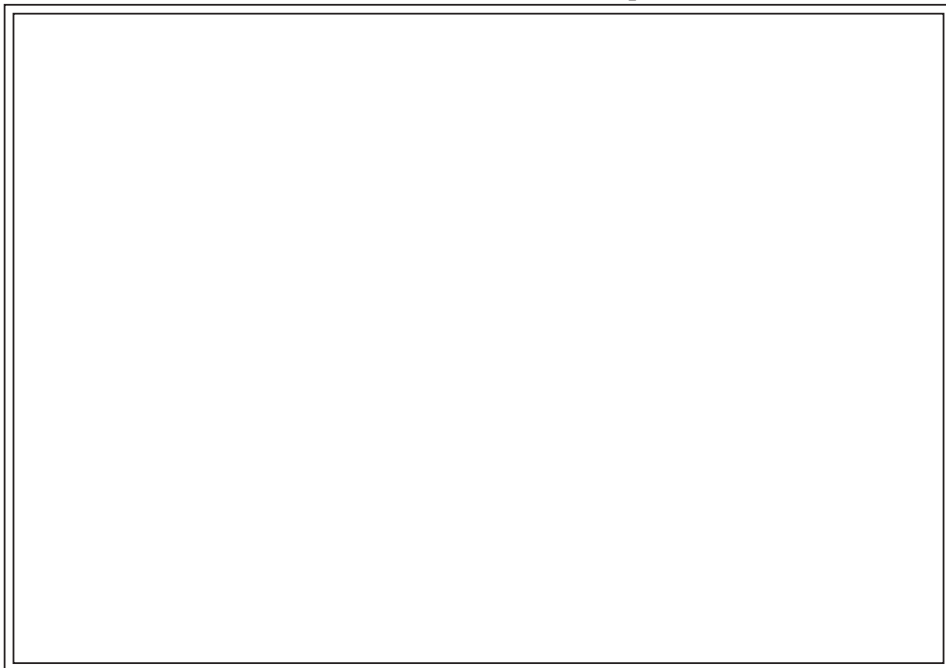
4 C A F Meekings & Philip Shearman (eds) *Fitznells Cartulary* Surrey Record Society XXVI (1968) p.xxvi

From GEOFFREY WILSON:

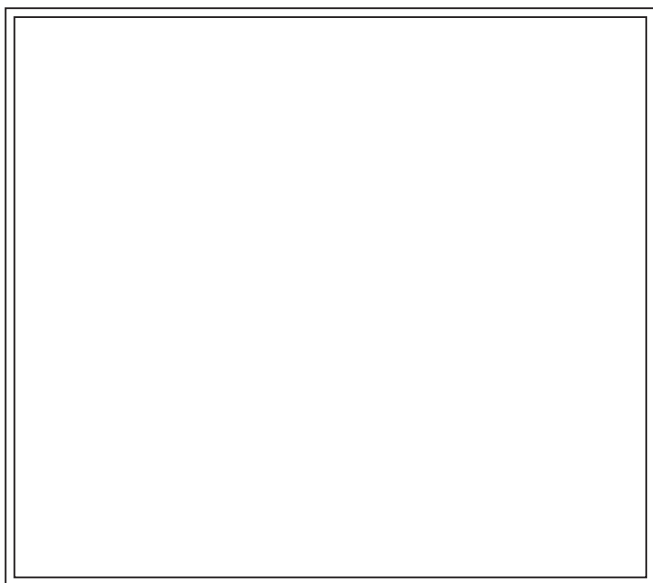
BATH COMMEMORATES MERTON'S LEADING SUFFRAGETTE

Overlooking a housing estate in the Bath suburb of Batheaston stands a lone Austrian Pine tree planted by Merton's leading Suffragette Rose Lamartine Yates on 30 October 1909. The tree formed part of an arboretum in the grounds of Eagle House, the home of Colonel Linley Blathwayt and his family, committed supporters of the Suffragette (Women's Social and Political Union) movement.

Rose was one of some 60 Suffragettes who enjoyed the hospitality of the Blathwayts between 1909 and 1912 while recovering from the harsh treatment they had received during imprisonment for their political activities. Each was encouraged to plant trees and bushes, as symbols of their hopes for political equality.



Rose Lamartine Yates planting her tree, watched by Annie Kenney, West of England Organiser for the WSPU. Photo: Col. L Blathwayt. Reproduced by courtesy of the John Innes Society.



The tree today. Photo: Cynthia Hammond for the Bath Chronicle of 23 December 2010. Every effort has been made to trace the copyright-holder, but without success.

However, in the late 1960s part of the former grounds of Eagle House was used for the new Eagle Park estate. This involved the felling of all the trees in the arboretum, with the exception, by chance, of the pine planted by Rose, which is now the sole survivor of this unique record of their struggle.

In 2010 historians from the Centre for History and Culture at Bath Spa University raised money from the public for a commemorative series of events to celebrate the centenary of the involvement of these Suffragettes both in the history of Bath and in the movement as a whole. These events included an exhibition of Colonel Blathwayt's extensive collection of photographs of the tree-plantings at Eagle House, and, most significantly, a symbolic planting of trees in two of Bath's public parks and in the grounds of the university on International Women's Day, 8 March 2011, to commemorate the original arboretum and the Suffragettes who created it.

JG adds: The plantation was known as 'Annie's Arboretum' after the charismatic Annie Kenney, though 'Pankhurst Pound' (!) was another suggestion for its name. Commemorative plaques were affixed to the trees; some of these survived the clearing of the land and could still be seen in a museum in the late 1970s. In 1979 a little book was published about the Blathwayts and their guests. Called *A Nest of Suffragettes in Somerset*, it was written by B M Willmott Dobbie.

Letters and contributions for the *Bulletin* should be sent to the Hon. Editor, Mrs J Goodman.

The views expressed in this *Bulletin* are those of the contributors concerned and not necessarily those of the Society or its Officers.

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