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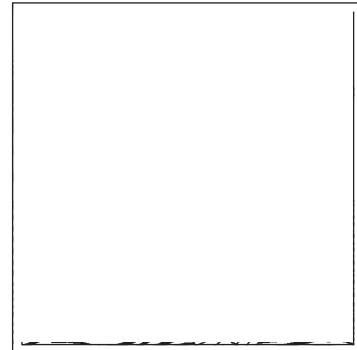
PROGRAMME JUNE-SEPTEMBER

Wednesday 14 June 11am Old Battersea House

Meet 10.45 at 30 Vicarage Crescent SW11 to see ceramics by William De Morgan, paintings by his wife Evelyn De Morgan, and much more. Maximum number for group is 20.

The cost will be £2.50.

Old Battersea House is a 15-20 minute walk from Clapham Junction, or take bus 239.



**Saturday 22 July 2.30pm
Kensal Green Cemetery**

Meet at main entrance at 2.15 for 2-hour guided tour of this historic necropolis. Cost £4/£3 plus £1 for tea and biscuits afterwards. Numbers are limited.

The cemetery is opposite Kensal Green station, which is on the Bakerloo line.

Saturday 12 August 2.30pm

Beverley Brook walk

A Millennium event, beating the western bounds of the old parish of Merton, from Motspur Park to Coombe Bridge. Led by Peter Hopkins and Judith Goodman. Meet outside Worcester Park station, up side.

Saturday 9 September 2.30pm

River Wandle walk

Another Millennium event, exploring part of the western bounds of Mitcham, from Merton Abbey Mills to Morden Hall Park. Led by Eric Montague. Meet at the Wheelhouse.



The Society's events are open to the general public, unless otherwise stated.



**ANNE HALLAM (1696-1740): ACTRESS AND
“AN ORNAMENT TO THE COMPANY UNTIL HER DEATH”,**

who was buried in Mitcham churchyard 260 years ago this month.

The ancient parochial burial ground surrounding the parish church of St Peter and St Paul, in Church Road, Mitcham, in common with many other historic enclosures in the home counties, once contained a number of chest-tombs dating from the 18th and 19th centuries, each surrounded by iron railings. Most of these tombs, which were the memorials of the more prominent parishioners (or their relatives), have now lost their railings, and one such, standing close to the north-east corner of the church, has panelled sides of white, probably Portland, stone, carved into a baluster-like form at each corner, and topped by a moulded-edged grey ledger.

The inscription upon the ledger was recorded by Lysons about the year 1790 thus:

Charissimae suae uxori
Annae Hallam, Histrioni,
Ultimum hoc amoris manus
Maestissimus dedit
Gulielmus Hallam.
Intravit } { 1696 }
 } Anno { } Aet. 44
Exit } { 1740 }



The grave of Anne Hallam in Mitcham churchyard

Lysons commented: “Mrs Hallam belonged to Covent-Garden Theatre, where she acquired considerable celebrity by her performance of Lady Macbeth. She was much admired also in the character of Lady Touchwood.¹ To this, Brayley merely adds that these are “two very opposite characters”,² as indeed they are.

However, the published work of American researchers now makes it possible to appreciate more fully Anne Hallam’s achievement³, even if the question of why she was buried at Mitcham has still to be answered.

The beginning of the 18th century saw the management of the few licensed London theatres of the day pass from the hands of courtiers into those of professional theatrical people, usually actors.⁴ These latter still produced the plays, especially the Restoration comedies of the earlier period, together with Shakespeare’s comedies, tragedies and histories, and also the work of their own contemporaries, such as John Gay’s *The Beggar’s Opera*.

The appearance of women on the English stage became general only after 1660, and two members of the earliest generations of English actresses were still alive in 1720, the year from which it is possible to follow Anne Hallam’s London career. Anne Bracegirdle (c1663-1748) had been inactive since 1707, but Anne Oldfield (1683-1730) played to the last year of her life. They, like Anne Hallam, excelled in both tragic and comic roles.

Evidently no portrait of Anne Hallam, or even a representation of her in one of her roles, can be found,⁵ but in the work of the artist William Hogarth (1697-1764) social, political and moral comment and satire, so much the preoccupation of the contemporary theatre, and that theatre itself, received lasting imagery.⁶ Hogarth was a friend of the theatre manager John Rich,⁷ and one or two of his works represent aspects of Anne Hallam’s theatrical life.

It seems that Anne may have married into the family of Robert Parker, manager of strolling players and puppeteer, whose activities are recorded in 1676 in Norwich, and probably in London, including managing booths at Bartholomew Fair, until 1704. Anne is said to have come to London, as Mrs Parker, from Norwich, where “she had signalized herself so greatly as a Member of the company ... that she received an invitation from Mr [John] Rich to join his company at Lincoln’s-inn-Fields” Theatre. Here she appeared on 15 October 1720 as Regan in *King Lear* and, three days later, as Melinda in Farquhar’s *The Recruiting Officer* (another two very “opposite” characters).

During the 1723-24 season Anne, as Mrs Parker, played 16 principal and secondary roles, including Isabella in *Measure for Measure*. Her salary fluctuated somewhat, but her benefit on 17 April 1727 brought in gross receipts of £74.4.6. Some time before 1726 she married Joseph Berriman, a minor actor at Lincoln’s Inn Fields, who died in 1730.

The Beggar’s Opera, the most famous and popular of ballad operas, was first performed at this theatre in 1728. Anne was evidently not in it, but Hogarth’s painting of the Newgate Prison scene in Act III is of interest because it is said to be the only pictorial record of the interior of this theatre, in which Anne played for more than half the period of her London career.⁸

William Hogarth: *Rich's Triumphant Entry*

For the time being Anne continued to act at this theatre as Mrs Berriman, but by 27 September 1731 she had married William Hallam, and she continued as Mrs Hallam till the end of her career. Anne's husband William Hallam (1712?-1758?), actor, dancer and manager, was the son of Thomas Hallam, "the progenitor of a line of British and American actors and actresses on the stage for at least 120 years". William himself appeared in London theatres - at Goodman's Fields in 1729, in 1730 at the Haymarket, and in 1732 at Lincoln's Inn Fields. Rich's removal of his company from Lincoln's Inn Fields to his new theatre in Covent Garden was recorded by Hogarth in his engraving *Rich's Triumphant Entry*. This shows the actors following Rich's carriage crossing the Piazza. It might be supposed that Anne is in this triumphant procession, as she played Mrs Marwood in Congreve's *The Way of the World* at the opening of the new theatre on 7 December 1732, and we are told that "she remained an ornament of that company until her death". The majority of events at Covent Garden during its first hundred years were of a dramatic rather than operatic nature, but no doubt some of the audiences who saw Anne Hallam and her colleagues would have attended the opera seasons of 1735-37, when Handel's *Atalanta*, *Alcina* and *Berenice* had their first performances at this same theatre.⁹

In the theatre of the day the prevailing style of delivery of lines was stilted and high-flown, and the stage 'business' was influenced by, among other factors, the combination of apron or fore-stage with the proscenium arch, and its doors at either side, through which all the actors entered 'down stage'. It has also been pointed out that the "intimate conditions of the Restoration playhouse made all the more striking the ranting and canting of speech[sic] in tragedy and the kind of large, artificial gesture that was normal before Garrick". When it opened in 1732 the Theatre Royal Covent Garden was less intimate, but its deeper galleries introduced new problems for the actor to be seen and heard.¹⁰ The development of larger theatres may have worked against the more naturalistic trends introduced by Garrick, and may explain how, later in the century, an unsympathetic critic saw the renowned Sarah Siddons:

"The most confirmed idiot of the theatre, who has seen her exhibit but three different characters can tell by the position of one arm when to expect an Ah! And by the brandishing of the other when to expect an Oh!"¹¹

Anne herself was described as "a large unwieldy person", but so able that she was constantly encouraged by her audiences to play roles "which received no advantage from her figure". The actor James Quin (1693-1766) ridiculed her size one morning at rehearsal by asking the prompter what a large barrel which stood on the stage was doing there. Before the prompter could answer Quin cried, "I see what it is: Mrs Hallam's stays in which she played Monimia last night". Monimia is the eponymous tragic heroine of Thomas Otway's *The Orphan*; the twin sons of her guardian are in love with her and, in despair, kill themselves. Finally she takes poison.¹² A part in which it might be supposed that the possession of a slim girlish figure would be an advantage, if not indeed essential! One actor's bitchy reaction to another's performance and appearance may have been par for the course, but it is perhaps satisfying to hear that Quin himself was later to suffer equally acerbic comment on his failure to compete with the superior talent of the, younger, Garrick.¹³

Whatever her appearance and style (surely very different from that of modern performers) in either tragic or comic roles, Anne evidently met and, sometimes it seems, exceeded the expectations of her audiences. Here are just a few of the many roles (in addition to that of Lady Macbeth and the others mentioned elsewhere in this article) that Anne is recorded as playing:

In Shakespeare: Elizabeth in *Richard III*; Gertrude in *Hamlet*; the Duchess of York in *Richard II*; Evandra in *Timon of Athens*; Constance in *King John*; Joan de Pucelle in *Henry VI* pt 1; Queen Katherine in *Henry VIII*; Calpurnia in *Julius Caesar*; Mrs Page in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*.

In Restoration comedy: Lady Touchwood in *The Double Dealer* and Araminta in *The Old Bachelor* by Congreve, (and Zara in Congreve's only tragedy *The Mourning Bride*); Alithea in Wycherley's *The Country Wife*; Clarissa in *The Confederacy* and Lady Brute in *The Provoked Wife* by Vanbrugh; Anne Lovely in Susannah Centlivre's *A Bold Strike for a Wife*.

Anne Hallam's roles in works by contemporary playwrights are represented by Lady Easy in *The Careless Husband*; Amanda in *Love's Last Shift*; Elvira in *Love Makes a Man*, all by Colly Cibber; and Hermione in *The Distressed Mother*, Ambrose Philip's adaptation of Racine's *Andromaque*.

It is also noted that "in addition to her frequent and fruitful labours at Lincoln's Inn Fields and Covent Garden, Anne Hallam probably assisted her husband in his fair-booth enterprises. She had herself acted in booths at the fairs and in the minor theatres".

In the early summer of 1733 the Hallam family went strolling, for William's parents and brothers and sister all seem to have been recorded at the Watling Street Theatre, Canterbury, in June of that year, and Anne herself attracted great attention as Lady Macbeth, a part in which she was already famous.

Later in 1733, during the time of Bartholomew Fair, William managed and acted in a booth in Hosier Lane. At this fair again in 1737 "Hallam's Great Booth" was "over against the Hospital Wall", and probably his brother Adam had a booth "at the bottom of Mermaid-Court" at Southwark Fair in September 1738. Hogarth's painting and engraving of Southwark Fair of 1733 shows, among other entertainments, a play being enacted within a booth under the sign of the Trojan Horse, and it was the strolling companies, and the eventually successful efforts of Walpole's government to stop them, that drew Hogarth's comment in *The Strolling Players* (1737, engraving 1738). Anne was a signatory to a petition to Parliament against the pending Bill to regulate the theatres in 1735, but the relevant Act came into force in 1737, three years before her death.¹⁴

Meanwhile, in 1735, Anne's father-in-law Thomas Hallam died as a result of being struck in the eye by the long-lived actor Charles Macklin (1697?-1797) during an argument over a property wig. There are two reminders of this incident: firstly in the tangible form of Macklin's memorial tablet on the interior south wall of St Paul's church, Covent Garden, where the tragedy seems to be alluded to in the relief of a theatrical mask with a dagger (not the cane with which the fatal blow was delivered) passing through the left eye.¹⁵ The incident occurred in the green room of Drury Lane Theatre, and a less tangible reminder of it is the persistent sighting of what is thought to be the ghost of the remorseful Macklin, and is to be found noted under the entry for the Theatre Royal Drury Lane in popular works on "Haunted London".¹⁶ Also, Thomas Hallam himself is depicted in an engraving published in Chester in 1750 in which a hand holds a stick against his left eye while he holds a wig in his left hand.¹⁷

In 1739 Anne's husband William opened *Diversions and Entertainments* at the theatre in Leman Street, Goodman's Fields, Whitechapel, but soon he "received a crushing blow in the death of his talented wife, Anne, who was earning excellent money as a first-line performer at Covent Garden and was no doubt assisting William's management labours". However, his venture in Goodman's Fields was eventually successful, and in 1744 "legitimate drama" began to be performed there. Thereafter the theatre's fortunes varied, and it was closed in December 1751. After this William turned his attention to organizing a theatrical company under the leadership of his younger brother and partner Lewis, to go to America. This was the first full British company to go there, and it is of some significance in American theatrical history. William may have visited it there around 1755, when he sold his property, interest and goodwill in the venture to Lewis. Thereafter, back in London, William's fortunes seem to have been at a low ebb, and he is thought to have died in 1758.

In April 1740 Anne evidently ended her career in her most celebrated role, Lady Macbeth, "in which she gave greater pleasure than any person who appear'd before her", said the London *Daily Post*, and tickets could be had "at Hallam's house, Leman Street, Goodman's Fields" (at or close to William's theatre); her own address in recent years had been in the locality of Long Acre and Lincoln's Inn Fields. She died on the morning of 5 June 1740, and on Sunday 8 June her corpse was "carried in a very handsome manner" to Mitcham in Surrey "to be buried in the churchyard". The Mitcham burial register under 8 June records "Anne the Wife of Mr. William Hallam -- from London". Elizabeth Carter Hallam, wife of her husband's brother Adam, was taken ill at the funeral and died the next day, and the burial register under 15 June has this entry: "... the Wife of Mr. Adam Hallam -- in the new Isle".¹⁸

Evidently the north aisle of the nave had recently been rebuilt, the foundation stone having been laid in July 1738.¹⁹ Although the church was rebuilt about 1820, a number of older inscribed grave slabs remain in the floor of the present structure, some possibly still marking the relevant places on interment. But there is no record of the name Hallam occurring among them before they were covered by the wooden floor laid in 1991.

Adam Hallam, who played at both Covent Garden and Drury Lane theatres, had married Elizabeth Carter at the Chapel Royal, Whitehall, on 22 May 1738 (Inigo Jones's Banqueting House had served as the Chapel Royal since the Whitehall fire in 1698).²⁰ They lived "next door to the chapel in Great Queen Street", on the south side of that street, behind which was Wild Court, where, at No.6, Anne Hallam lived.²¹

At her death Anne was not resident in, nor even visiting, Mitcham, but there must surely have been some local personal or family connection (and the two separate burials seem to strengthen the likelihood). In 1727-28 a Richard Hallam paid the Mitcham Poor Rate of 1s.10d.,²² and this same name appears in the parish's burial register under 26 August 1736.²³ Various parish records contain the family names of Berriman, Carter and Parker, so further research might establish the connection.²⁴ However, it is a matter of speculation as to whether Anne would have been aware of the Mitcham associations when she played Lady Raleigh - Elizabeth Throgmorton - in a play entitled *Sir Walter Raleigh*.²⁵

Although Anne Hallam's chest-tomb in Mitcham churchyard is somewhat weathered, there seem never to have been any inscriptions on the side and end panels. However, the ledger has five lines inscribed in italics (in addition to the Roman lettering recorded by Lysons). These read:

Life's but a Walking Shadow
a meer PLAYER
That struts [and fre]ts a while
upon the Stage
And then is heard no more

Shakespeare

The ledger stone has been fractured and repaired with cement, so that part of the inscription (given here in square brackets) is illegible. However, the adjective "meer" can be clearly read, and presumably was thought less likely to be seen to cast doubt on an actress's merits than might "poor", and "a while", just as clearly readable, was substituted for the inapplicable "his hour".²⁶ Though not the words of *Lady Macbeth*, this is surely an otherwise most apt quotation (Act V, scene v), deftly adapted by her husband from the play in which Anne Hallam gave her most memorable performance.

1. Rev. Daniel Lysons *The Environs of London* vol.I County of Surrey 1792 pp.357-58
2. Edward Wedlake Brayley and John Britton *A Topographical History of Surrey* [1841] vol.IV p.94
3. The source for this article is, except where otherwise noted, Philip H.Highfill Jr., Kalman A.Burnim and Edward A.Langhans *A Biographical Dictionary of Actors, Actresses, Musicians, Dancers, Managers and Other Stage Personnel in London, 1660-1800* in 16 vols. 1973-93. I am grateful to the staff of the Theatre Museum, Russell Street, Covent Garden, for drawing my attention to this work; it would not otherwise have been possible to write this article.
4. George Sherburn and Donald F.Bond *The Restoration and Eighteenth Century (1660-1789)* p.883 (vol.III of *A Literary History of England* ed. Albert C.Haugh 2nd edition 1967)
5. Neither the Theatre Museum nor the National Portrait Gallery has been able to identify a portrait of Anne Hallam.
6. Stuart Barton *The Genius of William Hogarth* 1972 reproduces the engravings after the works by Hogarth referred to in this article.
7. Lawrence Gowing *Hogarth* Tate Gallery 1971 p.26
8. Stuart Barton *op.cit.* p.15
9. Harold Rosenthal and John Warrack *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Opera* 2nd edition 1979 p.111
10. J.L.Styan *The English Stage* 1996 pp.247,275
11. David Nokes's review of Geoffrey Ashton's *Pictures in the Garrick Club*, *Times Literary Supplement* 27 June 1997
12. *The Oxford Companion to English Literature* ed. Margaret Drabble rev.edition 1998, p.716
13. Lawrence Gowing *op.cit.* p.44
14. Derek Jarrett *England in the Age of Hogarth* 1976 p.161
15. Personal observation
16. e.g. J.A.Brooks *Ghosts of London: the West End, South and West* 1982 p.62; and Peter Underwood *Haunted London* 1973 p.65
17. Reproduced from a copy in Harvard Theatre Museum, in Highfill *et al.*, *op.cit.* vol.7, p.43
18. Surrey History Centre, Woking, microfiche copies of registers of baptisms, marriages and burials
19. I am grateful to Mr.E.N.Montague for allowing me to study his unpublished *History of the Parish of Mitcham*, where this information is to be found.
20. Ben Weinreb and Christopher Hibbert *The London Encyclopaedia* 1983 p.38
21. John Rocque's *Plan of the Cities of London and Westminster etc.* 1746
22. Surrey History Centre, Overseer of the Poor's Accounts (LA5/4/112/35)
23. As in note 18
24. The Poor Rate assessment, March 1761, includes a "Mrs Hallam----10s.5d.", Surrey History Centre (LA5/4/3)
25. Highfill *et al.*, *op.cit.* vol 7, p50 (author and date not given)
26. Personal observation

Grateful thanks are due to Eric Montague for his help and advice, but the writer alone is responsible for any errors and other faults.

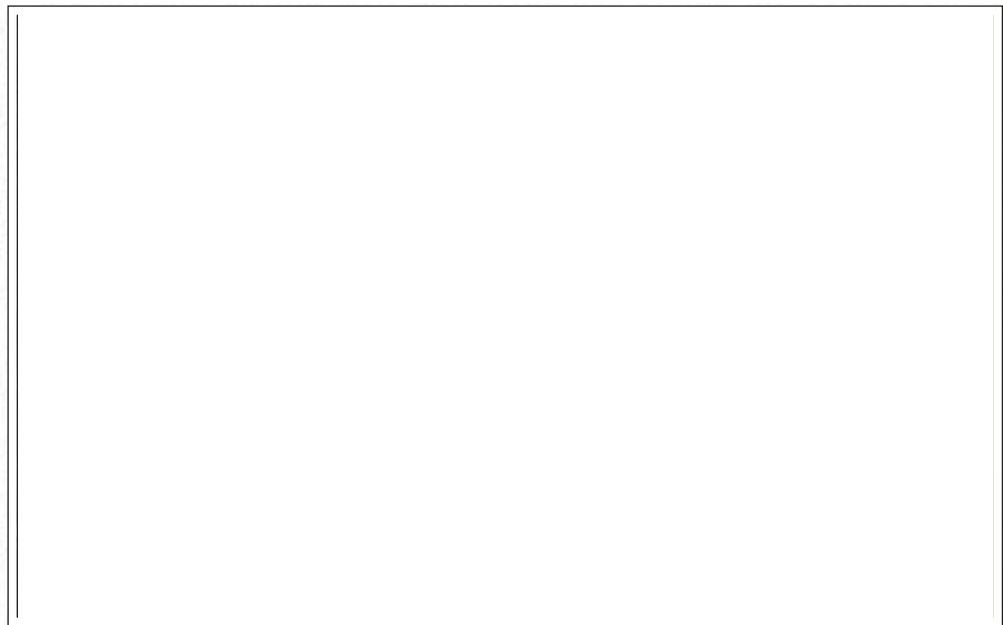
Ray Ninnis

**MILLAIS AND THE HOGSMILL RIVER - a lecture by BARBARA WEBB at the
Snuff Mill Centre on 11 March 2000**

A capacity audience on a fine sunny Saturday afternoon in March enjoyed a most informative and entertaining illustrated lecture by Barbara Webb.

The first half of her talk centred on her research into the painting 'Ophelia' by Sir John Everett Millais, now in the Tate (Britain) Gallery. It was the exhibition of Pre-Raphaelite paintings at that gallery in 1984 that motivated her to investigate into the river background to the painting, which was reputed to be the Hogsmill River at Ewell. On retirement Barbara was persuaded to write the text for a guide leaflet to a walk along the Hogsmill from its source in Ewell to Kingston upon Thames. During this task she started to investigate into the exact spot Millais had chosen for the background.

John Everett Millais
Ophelia
1852



From research at Bourne Hall Library she discovered that Millais and the painter Holman Hunt had been in the area during 1851, and both had written letters and diaries about their stay with Hunt's aunt and uncle at Rectory Farm, Ewell.

From the letters and diaries we learn that in the summer of 1851 Millais and Hunt decided to spend a day exploring the Hogsmill, to find suitable backgrounds for their proposed paintings of 'Ophelia in the Stream' and 'The Hireling Shepherd', and that they found the spot a mile from the river source at Ewell. At this time they were lodging at Worcester Park Farm, which was very close to the river, and to the chosen spot - which "presented [Millais] with the exact composition of arboreal and floral richness he had dreamed of, so that he pointed exultantly saying 'Look, could anything be more perfect?'" to quote Hunt.

The writings of Millais and Hunt, together with the 1851 census and a map of the area in 1866, and comparison of the actual painting and the wildlife of the river today, led Barbara Webb to locate the place where Millais probably sat to paint the river background. It was in a field by the riverbank shown on a map of 1794 as Six Acre Meadow. Today the field, owned by Merton College, is leased to the Borough of Kingston upon Thames. It can be visited by the public and is part of the Hogsmill River Walk. The evidence shows that Millais sat on the west bank of the river looking across it towards Old Malden's Manor House, still there today, and now a listed building. It dates from the 18th and 19th centuries.

Barbara Webb also told us of her research into Holman Hunt's painting 'The Light of the World'. The hut on the left of this picture was probably one of the huts of Worcester Park's powder mills, which were located close to the Hogsmill. The hut door in the painting was previously thought to have been the door of Old Malden church. After the tea break, during which many of those present purchased copies of Barbara Webb's book and map of the Hogsmill River, we continued with a slide presentation of the walk in the steps of Millais and Hunt.

As we walked from Ewell downstream, comparing the slides of the river and today's sites with the writings of Millais and Hunt of 1851, we knew we were motivated to embark on this quest, with Barbara Webb as our guide, in next year's summer programme of outdoor events.

Sheila Harris

TONY SCOTT on THE ATHLETIC FAME OF MITCHAM

Over fairly recent years the grounds of The Canons have been developed by the London Borough of Merton to become the sporting heart of Mitcham. A swimming pool, training pool, large sports hall and a weight-training room have been built, and there are also indoor facilities for badminton, and outdoor bowls and tennis. Next door, the grounds of Park Place are now used for 'Little League' football, and there is also a small running-track.

In the early years of the 20th century the area was quite different. William F J Simpson, the lord of the manor, lived in Park Place with his wife Mary and his two sons and two daughters, and The Canons was a private house owned by Simpson and let out to a succession of gentlemen and their families. Prompted partly by the death of their elder son, also William, in the first World War, and partly by a debilitating illness suffered by Mary, the Simpsons moved out of Park Place in 1917. The property was leased to the YMCA until 1922, when it was sold to the News of the World Organization. Houses for News of the World employees were built along the Commonsides West and Madeira Road frontages, and the grounds were laid out as an athletics sports ground, with a running-track, jumping pits and so on, for the staff. Simultaneously, the newspaper ran a campaign to improve the international standing of British athletics.

Mitcham Athletic Club was founded in 1920 by S H Coleman. As soon as the News of the World sports ground was opened in 1923, Mitcham AC started to train there for track and field events, although its headquarters remained at the White Hart public house at Cricket Green.

The excellent training facilities provided soon attracted outstanding athletes to Mitcham AC, and before long its members were representing their country in international events. The first of these was Muriel Gunn who represented Britain in the long-jump at the World Games of 1926 and 1930 and at the European Games of 1931. In 1930 she broke the world record for the long-jump, and in her career competed in 31 international events.

A fellow competitor in the World Games of 1930 was Kathleen Tiffen, who ran in the 80m hurdles. She was one of four Mitcham AC women who competed in the 1936 Olympic Games in Berlin. She and fellow club member Barbara Burke ran in the heats of the 80m hurdles. Barbara Burke succeeded in getting into the final, but was unplaced. The third Mitcham AC member in these Games was Kitty Tilley, whose family were long-time Mitcham residents, and still live locally. She represented Britain in the discus but did not win an Olympic medal. The fourth competitor from Mitcham was Dorothy Odam, who won a silver medal in the long-jump. Three years later, in 1939, as Mrs Dorothy Tyler, she set a world record for the women's high-jump which stood until 1948. Retaining a world record for this length of time is itself unusual, but Dorothy Tyler's additional claim to fame was that she was an Olympic competitor over a span of 20 years, from Berlin in 1936 to Melbourne in 1956, and won two silver medals.

Another outstanding woman athlete from Mitcham AC was Anne Smith, who ran in the 1964 Olympic Games, but did not achieve the medal list. In 1967 she broke the world record for the women's mile and 1500m races.

The most renowned male athlete coming from Mitcham AC was Brian Hewson, who was the fourth man in the world to run the 4-minute mile. He broke the British Empire and Commonwealth record for the 1000m race in 1958, as well as the European record for the 1500m race. He was also a member of the world record-breaking 4x1 mile relay team in 1958.

Park Place, and the News of the World sports ground, was compulsorily purchased by Surrey County Council in 1963, in order to re-build Mitcham County School for Boys there, but the plans were dropped when local government reorganisation resulted in the creation of the London Borough of Merton in 1965. Mitcham AC continued to use the running-track, but maintenance was by now minimal, and after a few years the club moved to Carshalton, to the track in Wrythe Lane opposite St Helier Hospital. By 1979 they had returned to Park Place with about 180 members, and with permission from the council to build a clubhouse there. In August of that year they were still trying to raise the £8000 required when they heard that the council had rescinded their permission for the building.

THE MITCHAM ATHLETIC CLUB

Affiliated A.A.A., W.A.A.A., S.C.A.A.A., S.C.C.C.A., S.C.W.A.A.A., S.T.C.C.A. & W.H.S.A.

invites

APPLICATIONS for MEMBERSHIP

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(Business House Clubs excepted).

Ladies and Men.

Seniors, over 19	5/- per annum
Juniors, under 19	2/6 per annum
Veterans, 40 & over		2/6 per annum

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"Roxford," 34, Crowborough Road,
Tooting, S.W.17.

Headquarters:

The White Hart Hotel, Mitcham.

Cross Country Season

Commences—OCTOBER 1st.

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OF THE
WORLD**

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Disillusioned with the facilities in Mitcham, the club returned to the Carshalton track after a few years and merged with Sutton AC, initially as equal partners. Subsequently the Borough of Sutton improved the track and sports field substantially, and it is now called the Sutton Arena. Mitcham AC has now become a distant memory of 'veteran' athletes.

Much of this information came from Mitcham AC records some years ago, via Brian Hewson. Other material comes from the Mitcham AC handbook for 1938 in Merton Local Studies Centre, and from recent conversations with Phil Munn, a 'veteran' athlete. Olympic performances in particular have been checked by reference to contemporary newspaper reports in *The Times* (available on microfilm), and local papers held at the Local Studies Centre.

I knew some of the athletes personally. Mrs Kathleen Dale (née Tiffen) was the mother of a class-mate of mine when I was in primary school. Mrs Kitty Dyer (née Tilley) was a family friend of ours, and I met Mrs Dorothy Tyler on several occasions, as she was a good friend of Mrs Dyer.

Illustrations from Mitcham Athletic Club: Handbook and Summer Fixtures 1938



ELLIMAN
'ATHLETIC
'RUB'

For **SUPERB PHYSICAL FITNESS**
Promotes **AGILITY, ELASTICITY, FLEXIBILITY**
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Edward Storrie and Tom Whitaker and a practical, fully illus-
trated and comprehensive handbook specially compiled for
Women Athletes, may be had free on application to :—

ELLIMAN SONS & Co., Ltd.,
SLOUGH, BUCKS.

GOODBYE, PALAIS!

With the recent demolition in Merton High Street of the Wimbledon Palais, alias Furnitureland, we have lost a much-loved landmark, with a remarkable history. Built in 1909 as a roller-skating rink, it was advertised as "THE RINK OF RINKS! The Prices are right, The Floor is right, Everything is all right". However by 1913 the craze had died down and the building had become an airship and balloon factory.

In 1922 it entered its longest phase, as Wimbledon Palais de Danse (though it is of course in Merton), and boasted possibly the largest sprung floor in the country. With the 1960s, and the decline of ballroom dancing, it branched out into other activities, such as wrestling and pop music, even hosting a Beatles performance in December 1963. Then bingo took over as its main function. But fortunes declined, until 1979, when it was acquired by Furnitureland, still with the famous sprung floor (the manager would demonstrate how you could, by jumping gently in the middle of the store, make all the sofas and bunk-beds rise and fall!).

In the 1990s the Society tried and failed to have the building listed, and last year an application to re-develop the site was approved. Furnitureland moved out, and now the building has come down.

The good news however is that the site is of great archaeological interest, being that of the gatehouse of Merton Priory. This building survived in the form of Abbey Gate House until demolished for the skating-rink, and we can hope that excavation will reveal something of its history.

Judith Goodman

THE MERTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY COLLECTION

The Society's collection, informally known as 'the store', has perforce led a wandering life. Its most recent home has been upstairs at Morden Park Library. But, as many members will know, in the latest round of cuts, rationalisations, call them what you may, this library, with the one at Wimbledon Park, has been closed.

However, we have been offered more appropriate new accommodation, thanks to Merton's Heritage Officer Sarah Gould. So Bill Rudd, who guards and orders the store, spent some busy weeks planning the stages of the move, dismantling large items and shelving, and doing some preliminary packing. On moving day, Friday 14 April, Bill, Sarah and four Committee members, with cars, spent the morning shifting the lighter stuff from Lower Morden Lane. Extra muscle, and a van, arrived in the afternoon, in the form of one of Sarah's sturdy volunteers and a friend or two, and all the heavy items, safely and surprisingly quickly, then made the journey.

Bill has now embarked on the task of arranging the store in its new quarters. In the future, we hope it will be possible for members and other interested people to have easier access to the Society's collection. We all owe an immense debt of gratitude to Bill for the time, thought and physical effort he puts into this arduous self-appointed task. More news later. Meanwhile,

Thank you, Bill!

JG

LIONEL GREEN on SEEKING SANCTUARY AT MERTON

Hubert de Burgh, of Norman-Irish descent, was appointed chamberlain to King John. If we believe Shakespeare's history of this king, de Burgh was castellan of Rouen and responsible for the death of Prince Arthur, grandson of Henry II, who was also a claimant to the throne of England.

His first marriage was to Joan, daughter of William de Redvers, earl of Devon, and his second in 1209 to Beatrice, a daughter of Earl Warenne, but she died in 1214, leaving a son as well as much property. De Burgh's third marriage was to Isabella, King John's divorced wife, who died in 1217. In 1221 he married Margaret of Scotland, a young teenager and sister of the king of Scotland. But it was not until 1227 that Henry III ennobled de Burgh as Earl of Kent.

When the Magna Carta was issued, de Burgh was named a conservator, and appointed Justiciar. Like other royal ministers he had little sympathy with the Charter, being a firm believer in law and order. Stephen Langton, the archbishop, wished to restrict royal power over taxation without the assent of the Great Council, and he reissued Magna Carta in 1217. The forest clauses of the charter were expanded into the Charter of the Forest, which ensured that no man was to lose life or limb for taking royal venison. He also curtailed recent extensions of the royal forest.

It was Hubert de Burgh's continuing and successful defence of Dover against the French invasion in 1216 that made him popular in all strata of society. On the death of William the Marshal in 1219 Hubert de Burgh acted as regent. Stephen Langton regarded himself as a successor of St Thomas Becket, having, like Becket, exiled himself at Pontigny. On 7th July 1220 the body of the saint was translated to a new shrine at Canterbury. It was the single-minded effort of the archbishop that won confirmation of the revised Magna Carta at the Parliament of Oxford in 1223. This was promulgated on 11th February 1225, but did not become part of the constitution until 1297.

The king declared himself of age in 1227 and a redistribution of royal castles took place, with Langton taking over the Tower of London, Canterbury, Windsor and Odiham. De Burgh retained Dover Castle. The death of Langton in 1228 left Hubert de Burgh virtually alone in the administration of the kingdom. To increase royal revenues he declared that in order for the monasteries to retain their privileges they must pay for the renewal of their charters. Thus we find him witnessing an important charter of Merton Priory on 26th March 1227, confirming rights and privileges.¹

The king now decided to win back lands on the Continent held by France, and at Michaelmas in 1229 assembled a large force at Portsmouth, only to find he did not have enough ships. Hubert de Burgh was blamed, being accused of mismanaging treasury funds. Now the pope began to put pressure on England. He demanded a tenth of all income. The treasury was low, and the king blamed de Burgh. The practice of providing papal nominees to English parish churches was hated by de Burgh, and by 1231 the presentations of benefices were being sold in the papal market, with Italians taking the choicest. Hostility grew and rents were often withheld, resulting in charges being made by the pope against de Burgh for connivance in the revolt. The king charged de Burgh with accumulating treasure and depositing it with the Templars.

On 29th July 1232 de Burgh was dismissed from office and accused of various crimes. Some of the revenue of his lands was used to compensate the alien rectors. A proclamation was issued in London that the king would receive complaints against de Burgh, and a day was fixed for hearing them. This pleased the citizens, who remembered that de Burgh had hanged the leader of a popular riot in 1222. He was allowed to retire to Merton Priory to prepare his defence, until 14th September. The king held a council at Lambeth, but Hubert did not attend and refused to leave the safety of the monastery. This infuriated the king, who ordered the Mayor of London to raise all the citizens who could bear arms, and take de Burgh dead or alive. It was late in the evening when the mayor caused the city bell to be rung out, and the citizens rejoiced when they heard what was required of them.² Before it was light as many as 20,000 men set out for Merton brandishing arms and waving banners, and when he was warned de Burgh prostrated himself before the high altar at Merton, barefooted and half clad. The bishop of Chichester pleaded with the king and entreated for two horsemen to overtake the Londoners. The earl of Chester warned the king of the danger of the mob. The king took fright and revoked the order, to the disappointment of the crowd. De Burgh fled from Merton and sought sanctuary at a chapel at Brentwood, Essex. Sanctuary was ignored, and de Burgh was captured and imprisoned in the Tower and tried at the king's court on Cornhill on 10th November 1232. He was later removed to Devizes castle, whence he escaped in November to Chepstow, where Richard Marshall, earl of Pembroke, befriended him.

In 1234 the new archbishop Edmund Rich effected a reconciliation, so that de Burgh was pardoned, and his earldom restored. The death of Langton and the fall of de Burgh enabled the king to indulge his preference

for aliens, and hordes of Poitevins and Bretons were invited to occupy royal castles and fill the judicial and administrative posts of England. He chose Eleanor of Provence to be his queen, and, following the wedding, she came to Merton for the first time.

Hubert de Burgh retired to Banstead; he died "full of days" on 12th May 1243 and was buried at Blackfriars.

1. A.Heales *Records of Merton Priory* 1898 p.89

2. Roger de Wendover *Chronica* vol.iv p.250

BEFORE THE COMPUTER SENT THE BILLS

The following is taken from an article written by David Harries for Thames Water News and is reproduced by permission. His father, John Harries, used to send out the water rate bills by hand in the early years of the 20th century and it is interesting to compare this procedure with today's computerised print-outs. John Harries's area covered Tooting Bec, Balham, Wandsworth and Clapham, but there is every reason to suppose that in the adjacent areas of Mitcham, Merton and Wimbledon the same arrangements prevailed. (Morden was just a village at that time.)

Tony Scott

John Harries came to London from Carmarthenshire in the 1890s and obtained a position as a clerk with the Lambeth Water Company. In 1904 this enterprise became part of the Metropolitan Water Board (MWB) and John Harries was appointed a Collector for the Kennington Park District of London. Later, in the 1920s, whilst living at Norbury, he became one of three Collectors based in District 44, covering large areas of Balham, Clapham, Wandsworth and Tooting Bec. He was responsible for compiling the water rate ledgers for the whole of this area and keeping them up-to-date from the electoral roll, plus maintaining a check on any change of occupancy. The District 44 office was at 1 Station Road, Balham, and Mr Harries had to be there in attendance to receive payment from the public every Thursday from 10am to 1pm. The other two Collectors did likewise on two other days. There were no other staff in the office and there was no telephone.

All the office work was done at home in Norbury, where one bedroom was set aside as an office. Again, there was no telephone. It was there that the firm of carriers, Carter Paterson & Co. used to come with their horse-drawn waggon to deliver packages containing thousands of blank water rate demands, together with boxes of MWB envelopes. It was there that John Harries used to calculate, compile and send out the water rate demand twice a year. He had to write the occupier's name, address and the amount of water rate on every demand sent. Having done this he had then to fold each one and insert it into a window envelope. Originally the MWB provided large sheets of postage stamps, each sheet perforated by the printers with the letters "MWB", and each stamp had to be accounted for. Later, the MWB supplied envelopes embossed with a postage stamp. Water rate records were kept in black leather-covered ledgers with marble edging.

Filled envelopes were tied into bundles of 100, and Mr Harries and his son used to take them on the tram from their home in Norbury to the Streatham GPO Sorting Office so that they would be delivered the next day. Streatham was in the London postal area but in the early 1930s Norbury was not.

The first sign of mechanisation to be introduced by the MWB for its Collectors was when Carter Paterson delivered a large wooden box containing hundreds of rubber stamps, each one bearing the name of a particular street in District 44. The chore of writing the street name on every water rate demand became a thing of the past. Further mechanisation came in the form of a hand-operated numbering machine to stamp a serial number on every water rate demand sent out.

John Harries first wrote every letter concerning MWB business in draft form on scrap paper. When satisfied with the draft he then wrote it out again, in longhand, in a correspondence ledger which contained a top leaf marked "Original" and an undersheet marked "Copy". Between these he placed a sheet of carbon paper and underneath the copy sheet he placed a metal sheet to enhance the print due to the carbon paper.

One day in the 1920s John Harries took his son on a nostalgic trip to Lambeth where he started his Water Board service and stopped outside an empty shop. He told his son that in the early 1900s he used to call on a shoemaker who lived there and would never pay his water rate. The man argued that as God supplied the MWB with water free of charge, he didn't see why he should have to pay for it. Eventually the shoe maker agreed a compromise, he would pay his water rate by making a pair of boots for Mr Harries who would then pay his water rate. Shortly after John Harries died in 1948 his son found about ten pairs of Edwardian boots which had never been worn and these were given to charity - a fitting end to an agreement made with the shoemaker nearly half a century earlier.

Postscript: Fifty years ago the MWB office in Mitcham was at the Fair Green, in the same terrace as Lloyds Bank is today. That too was only staffed for a limited number of hours per week. Possibly the staff had the same office arrangements.

IN BRIEF

- ◆ Readers may have wondered what “R&W” meant in the descriptions of convicts in **Roger Reid’s article** about his Mitcham ancestor in the last issue of the Bulletin. He has confirmed that it stood for “reads and writes”, though one can guess that it often meant little more than the ability to sign one’s name.
- ◆ The new exhibition at **Merton Heritage Centre** at The Canons, Madeira Road, Mitcham begins on 9 June, and looks at the story of sport in the Borough. The Centre is open on Fridays and Saturdays from 10 to 5. Admission free.
- ◆ Peter Hopkins, as Publications Secretary, has been receiving orders for his own *A History of Lord Nelson’s Merton Place Estate* from many parts of the country and from abroad, since the Nelson Society reviewed it in its newsletter. (The booklet is £1.60 to MHS members, £2 to others, at indoor events, or plus 40p postage. Cheques payable to Merton Historical Society.)
- ◆ As part of its Millennium celebrations the **Streatham Society** is holding seven guided walks, on Sunday afternoons between June and September. Details from Brian Bloice.
- ◆ The summer exhibition at **Surrey History Centre** will celebrate the county’s mapmakers, historians and artists, 1620-1830. Admission is free. A day of related talks on Saturday 12 August costs £10 in advance. Information/booking: Julian Pooley 01483 594601. The Centre is at 130 Goldsworth Road, Woking.
- ◆ The **Wimbledon Society’s Museum of Local History** at 26 Ridgway, Wimbledon, is now open on Sunday afternoons as well as Saturdays from 2.30 to 5.00. There are interesting and well-designed displays on many topics, and it also has a large collection of pictures, maps and ephemera. Admission is free. Bus routes 93 and 200 are close by.

LOCAL HISTORY WORKSHOP

Friday 10th March 2000 - Bill Rudd in the chair, six members present

- ◆ **Madeline Healey** reported that ancestors of hers had been connected with the Chesterman family of Mitcham, mentioned by Steve Turner at the January Workshop as having lived on what was to be part of the site of the Methodist church, off Cricket Green.
- ◆ It was the dialect/pronunciation of earlier Merton that **Judith Goodman** spoke briefly about. Articles from the *Home Counties Magazine* for 1902 and *Bygone Surrey* (1895) suggest that Surrey then had a vocabulary similar to that of Sussex or Kent, with some cockney overtones. There must be more to discover. (There is an intriguing reference in James Bass’s *Edwardian Recollections* [MHS Local History Note No.15] to the local pronunciation of Wimbledon as ‘Wimpleton’.)
- ◆ **Lionel Green** had been researching the use of place-names as surnames. The names of the canons of Merton at the Dissolution provide interesting examples. There will be an article by Lionel on this subject in the next Bulletin.
- ◆ The medieval accounts held at the Muniment Room of Westminster Abbey cover the period 1280-1532, reported **Peter Hopkins**, and the 150 sheets contain much material relating to Morden. However, they are in Latin, and have not been translated. He had contacted Surrey Record Society for help and advice. London Metropolitan Archives offer a microfilm service.
- ◆ **Stephen Turner** reported that a recent television programme *Breaking the Seal* related to the area where he and Rosemary live. The Barnett-Stanfords owned a tract of land which lies in Mitcham and Norbury, and Stanford Road takes its name from the family.
He also told us that Rosemary’s project on Merton Priory was coming into shape well.
- ◆ **Bill Rudd** had been checking the references in Rev.T.L.Livermore’s *The Story of Morden and its Churches* to Edward Whitchurch and Lionel Datchett (or Duckett), who purchased Morden in 1553. He had been unable to confirm that Whitchurch was a colleague of William Tyndale, though he was undoubtedly a protestant publisher; he was also probably a member of the Grocers’ Company. Datchett belonged to the Mercers’ Company, serving a term as their Master, and also as Mayor. He was a partner of Sir Thomas Gresham (also a Mercer), who founded the Royal Exchange.

Judith Goodman

LOCAL HISTORY WORKSHOP

Friday 5 May 2000: Judith Goodman in the chair; 8 members and 1 guest.

- ◆ We were pleased to welcome as our guest **Lionel Ebdon**, who brought along slides he had taken of 70 Christchurch Road during its reconstruction in 1979-80. This early 19th-century weatherboarded cottage was dismantled and rebuilt in replica, and Lionel had recorded the various stages. In 1853 it was occupied by Messrs Leach & Bennett, the textile printers, but little is known of its history. If any member would like to investigate further, Lionel has kindly donated his slides to the Society.
- ◆ We also welcomed new member **Colin Bearup**, who raised some interesting questions about the siting of local churches. Morden, Malden and Wimbledon parish churches are all built on hills, whereas St Mary's Merton is on a low-lying site. (Judy pointed out it is in fact built on a small area of gravel). On further investigation, Colin had noticed that most of the Surrey churches mentioned in Domesday were low-lying, often by a river, whereas later churches are on higher ground. Colin hopes to investigate this further, as it could provide a clue to the foundation dates of the various church sites.
- ◆ **Bill Rudd** is continuing his work on the monasteries after which the St Helier roads were named. He is re-organising his files, and is gradually having 7"x5" prints made of the 724 black and white photographs he has taken over many years.
- ◆ **Sheila Harris** mentioned the 25th Mitcham Carnival on 10 June, and the Merton Midsummer Fair on 24 June in Morden Park, which is replacing the Green Fair. She also brought along a photograph of an early MHS display at an Arts Council event in the late 1960s or early 1970s. [Bill Rudd has identified the occasion as the Merton Borough Show on 1 September 1969, when the Society had a highly-praised display in the Merton Arts Council's marquee. The event was reported in Bulletin No. 19, October 1969.]
- ◆ **Rosemary and Steven Turner** mentioned the Kingston Project, which is organising the input onto computer of 19th-century data from a variety of sources, including census records and parish registers. This will enable family trees, and various charts to be created. A possible topic for a lecture next year? Rosemary has completed her GCSE project and is awaiting results. They have also had a family history enquiry linked with the Smith family of Gatehouse, Merton, which they hope to share with us in due course.
- ◆ **Judith Goodman** had been on the trail of Harry Bush, a local artist, particularly known for his painting 'A Corner of Merton, 16 August 1940' of bomb damage visible from his house. (No 158 in Judy's *Merton & Morden: A Pictorial History*). He lived at 19 Queensland Avenue, one of Brocklesby's houses, and Judy brought along a slide of his house. She has been to the Imperial War Museum to see this oil painting, and also saw some watercolours, one entitled 'Bombed House in Merton' which Judy has identified as 2 The Path, which did not survive the war. Judy brought along photographs of the paintings and a section from a map of the area.
- ◆ **Peter Hopkins** updated us on his project to get the medieval manorial records of Morden translated. Surrey Archaeological Society have found us a volunteer translator, and Westminster Abbey Muniments Room is getting an estimate for microfilming the documents. Peter has been looking at an Extent or valuation of the manor dating from 1312. The original is in Cambridge University Library, but a 16th-century copy is in Surrey History Centre. A marginal note on the latter enables us to trace the history of the property known in the 1930s as The Kennels (see Bulletin 129), on the site now occupied by Morden Park Baptist Church, to a tenement owned in 1312 by the last medieval rector of Morden, Gerard de Staunden.
- ◆ **Eric Montague** has had a number of local history enquiries: Norfolk Record Office are trying to follow a link between Old Buckenham Priory and Merton Priory; a photograph of the Ravensbury Arms public house recently published as 'from the 1920s' was correctly identified as 1930s from the evidence of trams, cars, etc; a correspondent in South Australia has sent childhood memories of illicitly exploring the empty Eagle House Mitcham in the 1930s(?); English Heritage have responded to an enquiry about recent excavations in the gardens of Mitcham Vicarage (see Bulletin 133); these were limited to the area to be disturbed by new buildings, and finds included a horse burial and some late-Saxon pottery (no connection).

Peter Hopkins

Workshop dates: Fridays 14 July and 1 September at 7.30 pm at Wandle Industrial Museum.

All are welcome.

This year's countryside fair at Morden Hall Park had a Viking theme. And why not?
ERIC MONTAGUE assesses THE IMPACT OF SCANDINAVIAN RAIDS, AND
THE EVIDENCE FOR SETTLEMENT IN SOUTH-EAST ENGLAND,
WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO SURREY.

By the early ninth century many ports and sea-coast towns in south-eastern England were flourishing, linked to Europe by a network of trade routes extending across the North Sea and the Channel. The coasts had long been vulnerable to sea raiders, but the 840s witnessed an increase in the frequency in piratical Viking raids on estuary and riverside settlements, where shelving beaches offered easy landing. Ludenwic, the Saxon trading town on the strand, to the west of the old walled city of London, was a particularly enticing target. In 850/1 a fleet of 350 ships entered the Thames, and, for the first time, a Scandinavian army over-wintered in England, encamped on the Isle of Sheppey. Canterbury was stormed and the Mercian king and his army were put to flight. On entering Surrey, however, the Danes encountered stronger resistance from the men of Wessex, and were eventually repelled.

Thereafter incursions were by armies rather than by summer raiding parties, and in 865 the Danes seized Thetford, whence attention was directed to the subjugation of Yorkshire and Northumberland. By 870 they had moved to a new base near Reading, and in 871 - "the year of battles" - Aethelred and his brother Alfred's West Saxons were defeated at Basing and Meretun. The invaders over-wintered in London in 871-2, using it as a base from which to live off the surrounding countryside. Having overcome Mercia and East Anglia, the Danes again turned their attention to Wessex, and in 877 forced Alfred (who had succeeded to the throne) into hiding. His victory the following year and the treaty of Wedmore were followed by a brief respite, but further fighting ensued before Alfred could take control of London, the old city of which was in ruins, and its trading satellite, the Aldwych or 'old port', largely deserted.

As evidence of the battle of Meretun having taken place at Merton, the discovery in the late 18th century of "several pieces of spears, swords, human bones, and other exuviae of a battle" to the west of the Wandle crossing (where there was a royal Saxon estate)¹ is discounted by most authorities, who prefer to place the battle much further west. Similarly, the claims of Ockley to have been the site of a skirmish (like Merton it is situated on the old Roman road leading from London into the Surrey hinterland) are rejected in preference to a location deeper into the heartland of Wessex.

The repeated sacking of Chertsey Abbey is not in dispute, however, and in Blair's view a garbled account in a 13th-century cartulary, read in conjunction with the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, indicates that the monastery first attracted the attention of Viking raiders in the late ninth century.² Poulton places this event around 871, when Abbot Beocca, his priest Ethor, and 90 monks were killed, the buildings burnt, and the abbey's lands laid waste. It was re-colonised in 884, probably as a secular minster, and in Poulton's opinion "had recovered sufficiently by the early 10th century to tempt the Danes to further ravages".³

Numerous Viking broadaxes, swords and spears dating from the mid- to late ninth century have been dredged from the Thames. It is possibly to the second Scandinavian incursion that we can ascribe the fine example of a Viking sword recovered in 1981 from a silted-up watercourse at Mixnam's pit at Chertsey.⁴ Of Petersen type S and inscribed "Ulfberit", the weapon is paralleled by well over 100 examples from all over northern Europe. Tentatively it has been attributed to a Rhenish swordsmith working in the late ninth to early tenth century, and its ribbon interlace ornament is seen as an example of a type having a predominantly Norwegian distribution. In England similar examples have come from the Thames at Battersea, from Shifford, Essex, and a ditch outside the town walls at Bath. On the Shepperton ranges in 1987 three more iron swords were found, one lacking its hilt, another having a bone handle, whilst the third is held to be of Petersen type L and is dated 840-90.⁵

The 20-hide estate belonging to the bishop of Winchester at Beddington, Carshalton and Bandon, on the slopes of the North Downs near Croydon, was described *c.*900 as "recently stripped bare by heathen men".⁶ From Croydon itself, a wealthy estate held by Canterbury and a centre of religious importance, has come a typical Viking cache of looted silver, the only example known from south of the Thames, and all dated numismatically to *c.*875. In quantity, the Croydon hoard (which was discovered in 1909 at the Old Palace) was relatively modest and consisted of eight pieces of silver bullion - fragments of armlets and rings known as 'hack silver' - and, importantly - a little over 185 coins. These were of mixed Mercian, East Anglian and Wessex currency, plus several Carolingian and Arabic pieces. The ascription of the hoard to Vikings is justified by the coinage not being a representative English collection, and in its design and decoration the silver bullion is similar to hoards recovered in Denmark.⁷

It requires little imagination to visualise the impact these recurring raids, followed by the prolonged presence of the Danish army in London, had on life in the settlements in north-east Surrey.

Eventually England north of Watling Street - 'the Danelaw' - was ceded to the Danes under Guthram, and in 886 Alfred set about refortifying the old city of 'Lundenburg'. In the process Southwark - *Suthringa geworcke* (the defensive 'work of the men of Surrey') became the bastion of the north-east corner of the county.⁸ Other fortified strongpoints, recorded in the Burghal Hideage, were created to form a network of hideage towns, 25-30 miles apart, throughout Wessex. In Surrey Escingum, or Eschingum, situated on a bend in the river Wey, and identifiable with modern Eashing, was one such burgh, and was listed in 920 as one of the fortified towns of Wessex.⁹ Some of these strongpoints were already towns, whilst others developed into urban centres. But only the grassy ramparts remain today at Eashing, as at Burpham in Sussex.

In 911 Edward had taken control of London "and the land that belonged to it". Athelstan, his son, succeeded in bringing the whole of England, including the Scandinavian kingdoms in the north-east, under his control. London's importance as an administrative centre began to emerge, and its role as a focus of international trade returned. It is thought possible that Guildford succeeded the burgh at Escingum in the tenth century, when Athelstan seems to have carried out a reorganisation of the towns in Wessex, replacing purely defensive burghs such as Eashing with defended commercial centres.¹⁰ The town has the appearance of being deliberately planned, and the evidence of a Saxon mint - silver pennies were minted here from the time of Edward the Martyr (975-79) - gives support to the idea that Guildford was an important mercantile centre, possibly enjoying borough status, as early as the tenth century.¹¹

Chertsey recovered towards the close of the ninth century and continued until 964 when, under Edgar's influence, the abbey was reformed, traditionally with monks from Abingdon, and became a Benedictine house. Order was steadily re-established elsewhere in the county, and charters exist from the mid-tenth century recording the grant of the royal estate at Merton to favoured courtiers.¹² Kingston became a town of significance, and is reputedly the place of coronation of as many as seven Saxon kings, from Alfred's son Edward 'the Elder' in 900 or 901 to Ethelred in 978 or 979.¹³

The underlying governmental structure of shire and hundred evidently survived the Danish raids; for instance the hundred of Wallington, an administrative district based on, and taking its name from, an early Saxon royal estate, and including Mitcham and Morden, persisted into the 19th century. *Wimbedonnyngemerke* and *Michamingemerke*, mentioned in the *Mertone* charters of 949 and 967, are identifiable with the later parochial boundaries of Merton with Wimbledon and Mitcham, and are further evidence of long-established territorial divisions.¹² There is, moreover, record of quite rapid economic recovery, the bishop's Beddington estate, for instance, being reported "fully stocked" by 900, with some 300 fully-grown livestock (of which roughly half were pigs and the rest sheep), seven bondsmen and 90 acres under crops.⁶

Towards the end of the tenth century, seeking to regain the Danelaw and taking advantage of discord in England following the accession of Ethelred in 979, the Scandinavians returned. Sporadic raids were followed by increasingly heavy attacks, with London coming under assault in 994. Although vigorously defended (it resisted the Danes for some 20 years), London finally succumbed. English resistance elsewhere was gradually overcome, and by 1016 Cnut was accepted as king of England.

It remains finally for us to consider the evidence for Scandinavian settlement in north-east Surrey during the late Saxon period. Even in the Danelaw, where the Norse element in place-name abounds, there are difficulties in establishing the actual degree to which existing communities were disrupted and the density of the ensuing Danish settlement. In the south-east the evidence is even more difficult to find. London, with its widespread trading contacts, must always have attracted merchants from all over northern Europe. The Danish tombstone from St Paul's is proof of the adoption of Christian beliefs, and there are also fragmentary examples of Scandinavian-style carving in several churches. There were certainly Danes living in substantial numbers in provincial centres such as Oxford in the tenth century, and we can be sure that by the 11th century the population of the Home Counties was of very mixed ethnicity. One suspects that the Guildford street-names of Tungate and Swangate must have Scandinavian origins, and as a commercial centre the town can be expected to have attracted merchants and their families. Slightly more tenuous as an indicator of Scandinavian influence is the bone ice-skate - made from a red-deer metatarsal - found in excavations on the site of the Old Vicarage at Reigate in the late 1970s, which had yielded a large quantity of 11th -12th century pottery. The find site is admittedly well outside the normal area of distribution of bone skates in the Saxo-Norman period, but the use of bone at this time is seen by the excavator as indicative of Viking influence, even if not at first hand.¹⁴

Closer to London, in the Merton area, several personal and place names occur which seem to demonstrate a Scandinavian presence. Firstly, in Domesday we find that at the time of king Edward the Confessor Tooting and

Wandsworth were held by a man called Swein. Swein, or Sven, is very definitely a Scandinavian name. In its various forms it was not uncommon in England, and the precise identity of this particular Swein is not known. One authority however has suggested he might have been Swein of Essex, a kinsman of the king.¹⁵

Next, in Mitcham, close to the Tooting border, we have Swains Farm and Swains Lane. As a smallholding the farm existed until the end of the 19th century, and the farmhouse remained until about 50 years ago. Nothing is known of its early history, but it is an interesting thought that it may have originated as the homestead of an Anglo-Danish settler.

The name also crops up in Morden, where we have William, the son of Sweyn, and a Robert le Sweyn, whose names appear in the muniments of Westminster Abbey in 1225 and 1296 respectively.¹⁶

The theory that there might have been Scandinavian settlement in Mitcham is further supported by the place-name Biggin, first occurring in documents of the early 14th century as a farmstead to the east of Figges Marsh. The name is fairly common in the Midlands, where it is derived from the Middle English "bigging", meaning a building or house. Mawer and Stenton, commenting that Mitcham is unusually far south to find an example of this place-name element, considered Biggin to be of Scandinavian origin.¹⁷ They concluded that since it is of relatively late appearance in the parish the name might be attributable to migrants from the Midlands, where it occurs as far south as Hertfordshire, which, until the country was united under Athelstan, was on the borders of Danelaw.

Tamworth, as the family name "de Tamworth", also first finds mention in a record of land holding in north Mitcham in the early 14th century.¹⁸ It similarly implies a link with the Midlands and the area under Danish domination after the ninth-century treaty of Wedmore. We have already noted that by 1017, following the death of Edmund, London with the rest of England actually came under Danish rule. With Merton a place of importance at this time, and connected to London by a major highway, it would perhaps not be surprising to find evidence of Danish settlement in the vicinity.

Notes and references.

- 1 J.Edwards *Companion from London to Brighthelmston* (1801) Pt.II 25
- 2 J.Blair *Early Medieval Surrey* (1991) 94
- 3 R.Poulton 'Chertsey Abbey' *Surrey Archaeological Society Research* Vol.11 (1988) 21
- 4 K.East, P.Larkin and P.Winsor 'A Viking Sword found at Chertsey' *Surrey Archaeological Collections* 76 (1985 1-9)
- 5 D.Bird et al 'Archaeology in Surrey 1987' *Surrey Archaeological Collections* 79 (1989) 182
- 6 Blair op cit 49
- 7 Anglo-Danish Viking Project (various contributors) *The Vikings in England* (1981) and J.Graham-Campbell 'London and the Vikings' - talk given to the Standing Conference on London Archaeology at the Institute of Archaeology 23 october 1999
- 8 P. Brandon *A History of Surrey* (1977) 36
- 9 M.Gower 'The Late Saxon Burgh at Eashing' *Surrey Archaeological Collections* 74 (1983) 125-6
- 10 M.Biddle and D.Hill 'Late Saxon Planned Towns' *Antiquaries Journal* 51 (1971) 70-85
- 11 M.O'Connell 'Historic Towns in Surrey' *Surrey Archaeological Society Research* Vol.5 (1977) 29
- 12 J.Goodman 'Merton's Two Saxon Charters' (unpublished study 1998)
- 13 A.McCormack and M.Shipley *Royal Kingston* (1988) 4
- 14 R.Poulton 'Excavations of the Site of the Old Vicarage, Reigate' *Surrey Archaeological Collections* 77 (1986) 17-94
- 15 J.Morris (Gen. Ed.) *Domesday Book 3: Surrey* (1975) 6,4
- 16 A.Mawer and F.M.Stenton *The Place Names of Surrey* EPNS Vol.XI (1934) 52
- 17 A.Heales *The Records of Merton Priory* (1898) 187-8
- 18 E.Ekwall *Oxford Concise Dictionary of English Place-Names* (1951) 42

A CORRECTION

The Editor has received the following letter, which she is happy to publish:

Dear Editor

I would like to make a small correction to the item on George Cole on page 3 in the Bulletin No.133 March 2000 [January's Local History Workshop Report].

I was not a "year or two" behind George Cole, but five months; the difference between April and September. As he was in a class above I didn't know him; we played with our own classmates.

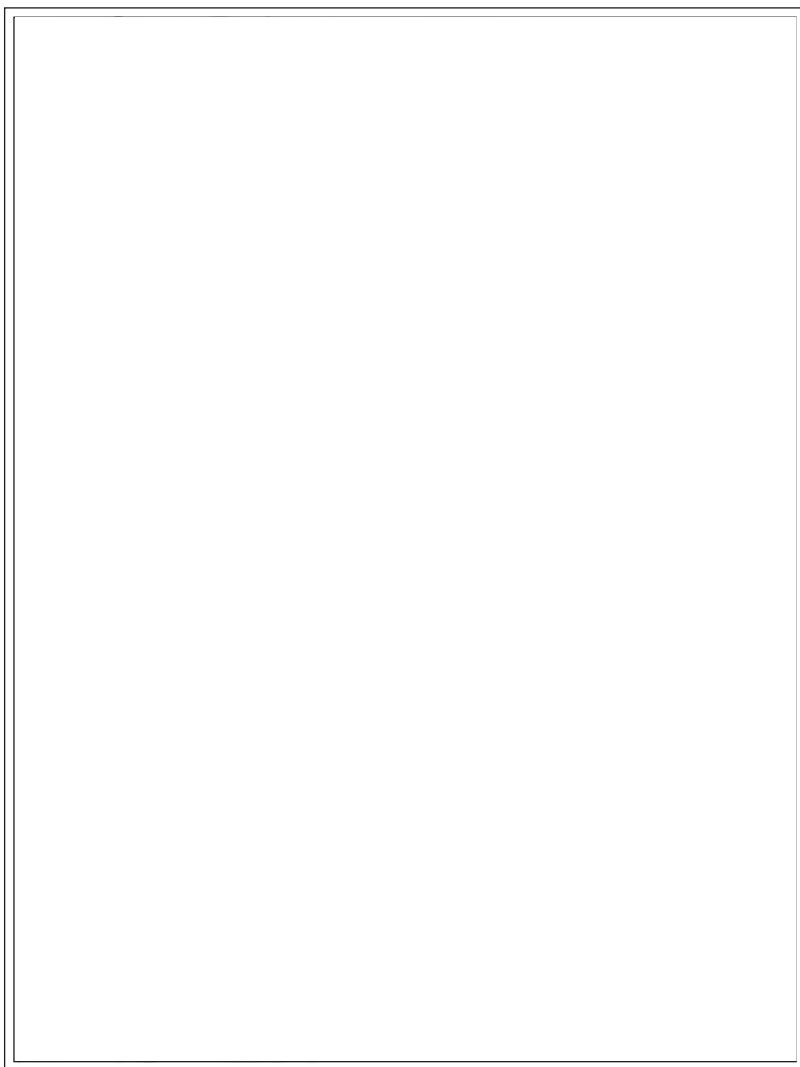
In addition to performing in the St Helier Community Hall in Middleton Road, he must have taken part in the end of term entertainment. His first performance as an amateur before a paying audience was for three nights in the school musical play 'Columbus in a Merry Key' in the Methodist Central Hall in Green Lane in March 1938. The local press report records that "the audiences were kept amused by the antics of G.Cole as president of the savants who did not want America discovered". He left school in April 1939.

W.J.Rudd

CROYDON: AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL UPDATE - lecture by JIM DAVISON of Croydon Natural History and Scientific Society on Friday 14 April at the Snuff-Mill Centre.

It was unfortunately only a relatively small audience that heard Mr Davison's talk. At the last minute the National Trust had, with apologies to the Society, speaker and guests, closed the garden-centre car-park at the official time, because of recent expensive and messy problems with 'travellers'. Although there was pedestrian access some may have given up and gone home.

Mr Davison had a varied selection of slides, and began by describing the topography of 'old' Croydon. Settlement had begun on the eastern side of the Wandle valley. Gravel terraces, laid down during the interglacial periods of the Ice Ages in the Pleistocene, were fruitful sites for the archaeologist. As well as mammoth tusks and rhino teeth, Mesolithic and Neolithic tools, such as stone axes, have been found. Park Hill, the highest point in central Croydon, has yielded a Bronze Age site. There is believed to have been a Roman settlement somewhere nearby, but both it and the course of the Roman road through Croydon have eluded the investigators so far. There was a Middle Saxon village clustered near the church of St John the Baptist, probably a very early foundation. Mr Davison suggests that converts from paganism may have been baptised in the Wandle, which then flowed close by.



Croydon manor was an early holding of the Archbishops of Canterbury, who by the 11th century had improved and enlarged the hall to palace status. Both this site and the Whitgift almshouses continue to yield information about their early histories.

When a house on Park Hill, where Roman coins and pottery had been found in the 19th century, came on the market in the 1980s, archaeological excavation yielded Bronze Age pottery and Iron Age loom weights. A few Roman coins were found at a Whitgift Street site in 1986, including one depicting Emperor Carausius. This find, with an earlier one of many coins in Wandle Road, and a set of Roman pits and ditches uncovered by MoLAS, suggests a local Roman settlement, perhaps a *mutatio*.

Croydon's famous Saxon cemetery was discovered in the 1890s, when Edridge Road was cut into the hillside parallel to and above the main road. Some finds are in the British Museum. A further extent of the cemetery was found in 1992, when three houses in Park Lane came down, but, after an official hearing, it was left *in situ*. About 30 graves were found, and only one cremation, confirming it as an early cemetery. It appears that Park Lane marks the eastern extent of the cemetery, inviting the theory that it represents an earlier landscape feature - the Roman road?

Recent improvements at the Whitgift almshouses had permitted small excavations beneath the floors of the building. Traces of the early adjoining tenement and the old Chequers inn were found - chalk flooring and a flint-lined wall, as well as medieval pottery.

Mr Davison briefly mentioned other recent work, such as medieval and Roman finds by MoLAS at Mint Walk, and he concluded by reminding us that the street layout of part of medieval Croydon still survives in the Bell Street area. He was thanked by Tony Scott on behalf of the audience for an interesting evening.

Judith Goodman

Letters and contributions for the bulletin should be sent to the Hon. Editor.

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

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