



PRESIDENT: J Scott McCracken BA FSA MIFA

VICE PRESIDENTS: Viscountess Hanworth, Lionel Green and William Rudd

BULLETIN NO. 144

CHAIRMAN: Peter Hopkins

DECEMBER 2002



## PROGRAMME DECEMBER-MARCH



**Saturday 7 December 2.30pm** **The Canons, Madeira Road, Mitcham**  
**'The Upper or Fair Green, Mitcham'**

In this illustrated lecture, another in his series of Mitcham studies, member **Eric Montague** turns his attention to the Upper Green. Once a meeting-point of roads from surrounding Saxon settlements, it has had a long and picturesque history.

**Saturday 25 January 2.30pm** **Snuff Mill Environmental Centre**  
**'Art of the Shaman? New views on Stone Age cave art'**

Our president, distinguished archaeologist **Scott McCracken**, last spoke to us about military cemeteries and monuments from the first World War. This illustrated lecture promises to reveal another aspect of his wide-ranging interests, and to be something quite different in our programme.

**Saturday 15 February 2.30pm** **Snuff Mill Environmental Centre**  
**'Reigate Stone, underground quarries and standing buildings'**

**Paul Sowan** is a well-known lecturer, and is the expert on the historically important Reigate stone, its mining and its uses. An illustrated talk.

**Friday 28 February 7.00 for 7.30pm** **Morden Hall**  
**Annual Dinner for members and guests**

We shall be offered the set price menu, which will include several choices for each course. Drinks will be extra. Numbers are needed ahead of time

**Saturday 15 March 2.30pm** **Snuff Mill Environmental Centre**  
**'Worcester Park, Cuddington and Nonsuch'**

Historian **David Rymill** is a native of Worcester Park and is fascinated by its history. He published *Worcester Park & Cuddington: a walk through the centuries* in 2000. An illustrated lecture.

(The Snuff Mill Centre, in Morden Hall Park, is on bus routes 93,118,157 and 164. Drivers use the garden centre car-park. Take the path across the bridge; go through the gateway and turn right. The Snuff Mill is straight ahead.)

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



**Non-members are invited to make a small donation to help with the Society's running costs.**



**ERIC MONTAGUE concludes his essay, of which the first part appeared in Bulletin 143, on Mitcham and**  
**THE EVIDENCE OF PLACE-NAMES**

Inspired perhaps by the example of men like de Wickford, or else moved by the spirit of the age, “the whole parish” made a “grant and gift” of land to the priory at Southwark some time before 1170.<sup>14</sup> Although not named by Henry de Blois, the bishop of Winchester, in his charter of that year, listing the priory’s property, we can identify the land given by the parishioners as common land lying between Lower Mitcham (ie Wickford) Green and the main expanse of Mitcham Common. No mention is made of the consent of a superior lord having been sought or obtained, which suggests either that the grant took place during the anarchy of Stephen, or that the land was regarded as ‘folkland’ and outside the jurisdiction of any manor. We learn that by 1170 the canons had erected ‘houses’ on the site, and when, 400 years later the land (known as ‘Cannons’ for obvious reasons) passed into private hands, there were still standing various buildings, including a ‘parsonage house’, a barn, dovehouse and brewhouse.

Adjoining The Canons today is Park Place, a mid-18th century house occupying land known in the deeds as ‘Almonds’. It was referred to in an inquisition post mortem of 1392 as ‘Allmannesland’,<sup>15</sup> a name which indicates that, like the land next door, this was at one time part of the common land - ‘all man’s land’ - of Mitcham. Unlike the land occupied by The Canons, however, Allmannesland was copyhold of the manor of Vauxhall by the late 14th century, and the enclosure would therefore appear to have taken place somewhat later in the Middle Ages, by which time either the fief had been extended, or administration of the manor had become more efficient.

When in 1680 it was found necessary to investigate title to a large house at Colliers Wood, then a copyhold property within the manor of Ravensbury, tenure was traced back to 1487 through the medium of the court rolls.<sup>16</sup> These disclosed that in the reign of Henry VII the property had been known by the name of ‘Jenkingranger’ - the ‘grange belonging to little John’. The presence of what seem from the 18th-century map to have been artificial water-channels in the grounds suggests that the site may have been moated during the Middle Ages, and that the owners were people of some importance. There are various references to a ‘capital messuage’ owned by the de Mara or de la Mare family, lords of the manor of Ravensbury, in the 13th and early 14th centuries, but the location of the house, which might well have had as an adjunct a grange, or large farmstead, has never been established. The de la Mares remained amongst the most important families in the district until the end of the 14th century, by which time lordship of Ravensbury had passed to Sir John Burghersh. It was held subsequently by Sir John Greneville and John Arundel, and in 1424 the reversionary interest was recorded as being held for his three-year-old son John. We thus have a plethora of Johns, but might not three-year-old John Arundel have been the ‘Jenkin’ we seek?<sup>17</sup>

It can be seen from the foregoing three examples that examination of place-names can often throw light on obscure events in the Middle Ages on which other records are silent. More often than not, however, they raise questions which call for answers, and thus lead the historian to further research.

The great period of expansion ushered in by the Tudors seems to have been marked in Mitcham by the bringing under cultivation of what hitherto had probably been secondary woodland and scrub covering the poorly-drained clay lands lying beyond the Common and extending towards the slopes of Pollards Hill and Norbury. A property known as ‘Newbarnes’ and as ‘New Barns Farm’ appears in the records for the first time in the 17th century,<sup>18</sup> and the regular pattern of rectangular enclosures belonging to the farm in later years has little in common with strip holdings in the nearby East Field.

The isolated ‘Lonesome Farm’, a medieval farmstead located on an area of brickearth between the East Field and the outcropping London Clay, may have been enlarged at about the same time. The land worked included enclosures and orchards on the periphery of the East Field like ‘Meopham’, mentioned in deeds of the 17th century,<sup>19</sup> and ‘Longthornton’, but the tithe map shows that by the 1840s the farm had been extended by intakes of former woodland. The new enclosures had been given prosaic names like ‘The Five Acres’, ‘The Nine Acres’ and ‘Fourteen Acres’, and, as at New Barns, their regular pattern betrays the hand of the land surveyor rather than some medieval farmer. There seems to be no documentary record of when this expansion took place, but the field-names take us a little closer to understanding when they occurred.

This study has demonstrated that even in an urban area such as Mitcham field-names can be a useful aid and stimulus to the local historian. Mitcham, of course, is not an isolated example, and, given the wealth of information available, the exercise could be repeated almost anywhere in the United Kingdom.

14. British Library MS Add. 6040 No.16 (Transcribed by John Blair)
15. Surrey History Centre. Collection of Deeds Relating to Mitcham: Copy of Court Rolls (Exchequer Court of Augmentations) Portfolio 12 No.22
16. Surrey History Centre. 320/1/13
17. There was also a John de la Mare, who died in 1314.  
Lysons, D *Environs of London* I, 1792 p353 and Manning, O and Bray, W *History of Surrey* II, 1809 p499, quoting Cart.11 Edw.I No.24
18. Surrey History Centre. 30 June 1679. Grant of annuity by John Cranmer to Thomas Cranmer out of property called Newbarnes. 599/-
19. Surrey History Centre 145/25 and Mitcham tithe map and register respectively

**(We have received some comments from one of our members on the first instalment of Eric Montague's discussion, which will appear next time, and we would be delighted to receive views from other readers. As Mr Montague suggested in the last Bulletin, place-names and their elements are a controversial subject!)**

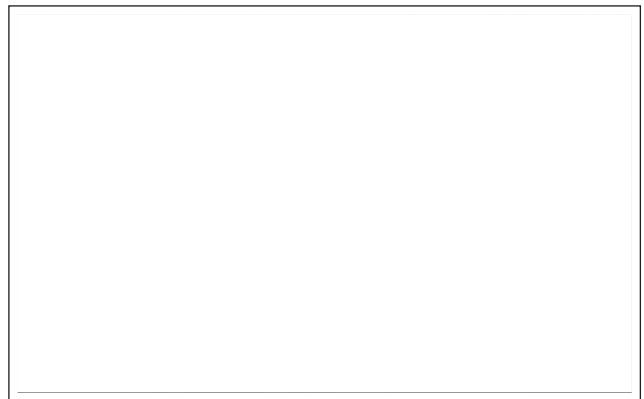
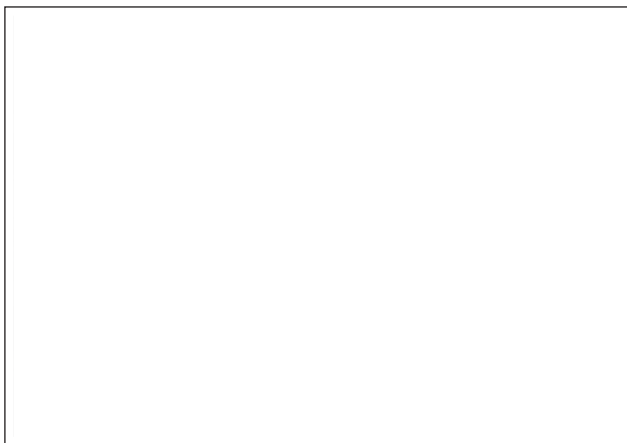
## MERTON AND MORDEN THEN AND NOW

It was standing room only for the *Merton and Morden Then and Now* meeting on 12<sup>th</sup> October, so ably presented by David Roe and Judith Goodman. This meeting was the annual Evelyn Jowett Memorial Lecture, and I am sure she would have been delighted to know that some of her slides were being shown.

David Roe introduced the talk by thanking various Societies, friends and members of the Society – particularly Bill Rudd – for loaning slides. He said he was taking us on a tour of old and present views of Colliers Wood, Morden Hall Park, Merton High Street, Morden and St Helier. It was nice to see some buildings still intact, but the transformation of the Merton Priory remains, now covered by the Savacentre car park, was sad to see.

The slide showing a garden party at Dorset hall in 1912 (*right*) was celebrating the release of three suffragettes, and the building is now council owned.

Long Lodge in Kingston Road (*below*) was the site of Merton Park Film Studios, one of the first in the country, and the house used by the admin. staff is now a listed building.



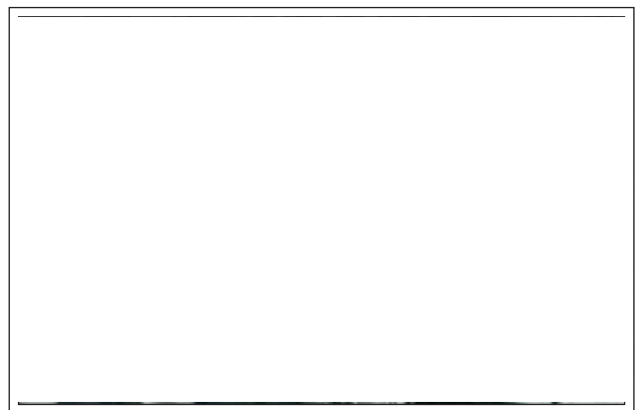
On the horticulture side the John Innes original testing grounds were shown, which are now the Rutlish School playing-fields. John Innes Park is still in being and his house is now used by the school. The Carter's Tested Seeds headquarters in Raynes Park has been replaced by Carter House, sheltered homes. The brickfield at Mostyn gardens was filled in by spoil when the Underground railway was being built in the 1920s, but fortunately still remains an open space.

With the coming of the Underground Morden centre had changed from a country lane to a modern thoroughfare.

Memories were also revived by a slide of the original Royal Arsenal Co-operative Society store in Grand Drive in 1939 (*right*) – and the modern store which has replaced it. It was disappointing to see the way houses on the St Helier estate were being changed from their original design by structural alterations.

I mention just a few of the comparisons we were shown, but it was good to see that some of Old Merton has been preserved.

Sincere thanks to David and Judith for an enjoyable afternoon.



**Doris Green**

## LOCAL HISTORY WORKSHOP

Friday 4 October 2002 – 8 present. Peter Hopkins in the chair.

Vanessa Bunton from English Heritage was welcomed and was shown the Society's 2002 publications.

There was then some discussion about the Society's excavations in the past. Were they on record? We don't always get reports/results back from the archaeologists. Although we are aware that with 'rescue' digs there are likely to be commercial sensitivities on the part of developers, we (and other societies) would like better communications with archaeologists, including MoLAS (Museum of London Archaeological Service).

- ◆ **Peter Hopkins** had been spending all his time on the Society's publications. It had been good to have colour illustrations in the new *Morden Park* booklet, thanks to collaboration with the library service. It had been selling very well.
- ◆ **Sheila Harris** had received a letter from a collateral descendant of the Smiths of Merton Abbey who is preparing a book about Elizabeth Cook, widow of Captain James Cook and a cousin of the Smiths.
- ◆ By coincidence **Judith Goodman**, who is interested in artists of various kinds associated with Merton, had been thinking about the sculptor R J Wyatt. He was a member of the complicated Wyatt family of architects/sculptors/carvers etc, and was himself the sculptor of the monument in St Mary's Merton to the Smith family, which was commissioned by Elizabeth Cook. His sister married the Smith heir. Judith had brought along the Wyatt family tree (males only, of course!) published in Colvin's *Biographical Dictionary of British Architects 1600-1840* (3<sup>rd</sup> Edition). She agreed to reply to the letter to Sheila.
- ◆ **Lionel Green** had been pursuing the numerous associations of Merton priory with Henry III (see page 11).
- ◆ One of our members had told **Don Fleming** that she came from a lavender-growing family in Mitcham and could write something for the Bulletin. He would follow this up.
- ◆ Much of **Bill Rudd**'s time had been taken up by the demands of Channel 4's Time Team (see In Brief), but he is bound to secrecy until the transmission early next year. It was obviously quite an experience! (*Thank you to Rosemary Turner for the photograph.*)



- ◆ **Vanessa Bunton** then spoke about training volunteers from local societies to write up archives/artefacts, by means of special classes. There was a discussion about storage of finds. The London Repository was a possibility.

**Judith Goodman**

**Dates of next workshops: Friday 17 January and Friday 7 March at 7.30pm at Wandle Industrial Museum**

**Everyone is welcome**



## A VISIT TO REIGATE PRIORY

Members will recall that last December Mrs Audrey Ward gave us a talk on Reigate Priory, which our Chairman Lionel Green reviewed in the March Bulletin. This September a group of us enjoyed a visit, and there was much to see.

Our guide took us through 800 years of its history as we sat in front of the 'Holbein' chimneypiece, which is too large for the hall it is in!

The priory was founded c.1200 by William de Warenne.

There is a fine painting on the staircase wall, painted in 1705, possibly by Antonio Verrio, but damaged in places by cracks in the wall.



Well worth seeing was an exhibition (in the museum) on the Home Front during World War II, with 'mock-ups' of 1940s rooms. In the kitchen sink was a washboard. I remembered that in our house Mondays were washdays, and my mother was a dab hand with her washboard.

For Derek Kennett the washboard reminded him of the Lonnie Donegan skiffle group with the washboard an integral part of the skiffle sound.

The priory is also a school for 6-12 year olds, with 580 pupils, with classrooms bright and colourful and countless photos of pupils and teachers at work and play, and all looking cheerful.

We all enjoyed our visit. So our thanks to Sheila Harris for arranging not only this trip but also the others she has worked hard on this year. It is appreciated.

**Don Fleming**

## THE PISHIOBURY HA-HA

Those who have read the new *Morden Park* booklet will have seen the paragraph on p26 about the ha-ha, and the brief mention of the one at Pishiobury House, Herts, but may not have seen one.

So I have found a photo of the Pishiobury ha-ha for your edification. So, how did I come by it?

Much of my local history research requires a train-assisted cycle ride, to help cover a distance in a day.

The reason on this occasion was to see where William Gardiner lived. He was the second husband of Elizabeth Gawden, widow, formerly Elizabeth Garth, daughter of George Garth II and his second wife, Jane Bennett. Elizabeth had previously married Samuel Gawden or Gauden, 31 July 1691, who died two years later, 1 September 1693! He had previously been married.

I took a train out to Harlow, which brought me within a short distance of Pishiobury Park, a mile south of Sawbridgeworth. The drive up to the house is long and straight. Suddenly, just before I reached the house, I stopped. There it was, on the left, the ha-ha. And yes, it does come as a surprise when you see one. It really is only a deep ditch with a retaining wall on the house side.

A description of the house appears in Pevsner's *Hertfordshire*: a late-Tudor mansion which was rebuilt by James Wyatt\* in 1782. The site apparently goes back to medieval times (*vide Victoria County History*). The lake and planting are due to 'Capability Brown'. The house is now a school.



Regretably I have little or no information on William Gardiner, except that he had previously married. I have no date of his marriage to Elizabeth Gawden or of his death leaving, as it appears on her monument in St Lawrence Church, 'a disconsolate widdow'. She was, as we all know, a generous benefactor to Morden parish.

**Bill Rudd**

\* Another Wyatt (see previous page)! It was the same family. JG

## A DATE FOR YOUR 2003 DIARIES

Pat and Ray Kilsby are again kindly offering a coach trip as one of our summer visits. On Saturday 5 July they propose an outing first to the excellent William Morris Gallery at Walthamstow, followed by a carvery lunch on the edge of Epping Forest, and then on to Audley End, one of the grandest of great houses, before returning by early evening. Make a note of the date now; further details and booking form will come with a later Bulletin.

## A WEBSITE FOR THE SOCIETY?

Is there, among our members, someone with the experience and enthusiasm to set up, and maintain, a website for Merton Historical Society? Vanessa Bunton, Community Archaeologist for Greater London, has offered help and advice. The Chairman and Committee would be very grateful to hear from a volunteer.

### From the postbag:

Bill Rudd has responded to Jim Creasy's letter in Bulletin 143 about (Borough of) **Merton's VCs**, with another three names – Coulson (born in Wimbledon), Lysons (born in Morden) and White (born in Mitcham). Scott McCracken, our president, has a special interest in military history, and promises an article on the subject for (he hopes) the next Bulletin.

## ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATIONS BY MERTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Lionel Green and Bill Rudd have provided additional information (see Bulletin 143), and Bill points out that work at Hall Place was interrupted by an urgent call to investigate at Gutteridge's. So here is a revised and expanded list.

<b>Grid ref.</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Findings</b>
TQ 2645 6975	1956	Banks of River Wandle	Early 13 <sup>th</sup> cent. Worked stone
TQ 250 676	1958-60	Stane Street, Morden Park	Nothing significant
TQ 264 698	1961/3	Allotments by Liberty's	14 <sup>th</sup> cent. Cobble roadway
TQ 2673 6918	1966-8	Short Batsworth, Church Road, Mitcham	Romano-British
TQ 2732 6859	1968, 1970	Hall Place, Mitcham	Saxo-Norman
TQ 2780 6898	1969	Gutteridge's, Upper Green East	Med./18 <sup>th</sup> cent.
TQ 250 675	1970	St Lawrence church, Morden	Churchyard clearance
TQ 2650 6970	1971	Banks of River Wandle	Building stone/floor tiles c.1300
TQ 2772 6895	1971	Durham House, Upper Green West	18 <sup>th</sup> cent.
TQ 2618 6815	1972	The Grange, Central Road, Morden	
TQ 2748 6851	1972	346/8 London Road, Mitcham	Mainly 18 <sup>th</sup> cent.
TQ 2665 6804	1973	Ravensbury Manor House, Ravensbury Park	Med./18 <sup>th</sup> cent.
TQ 256 671	1976	Green Lane, Morden	Romano-British
TQ 265 696	1976/8	Priory chapter house	Graves of 35 priors; tiles etc
TQ 250 675	1988	St Lawrence's churchyard	
TQ 257 688	1994	Morden Hall Farm Dairy site	19 <sup>th</sup> /20 <sup>th</sup> cent.

Most of the excavations have been mentioned in the Bulletin, or in Surrey Archaeological Society's *Bulletin* or *Collections*. None has been formally written up. The finds are in our Store at The Canons, Madeira Road, Mitcham, and have been indexed in part. The Borough's Heritage Officer regularly uses items from our collections in exhibitions at the Heritage Centre, which is also at The Canons.

However, members are concerned that these excavations may not appear on national databases, and that the whereabouts of finds is not generally known.

Excavations elsewhere in the Borough have been undertaken by Surrey Archaeological Society, the Museum of London Archaeological Service and the John Innes Society. Many of the finds from the excavation at 10 Church Path, Merton Park, carried out by the John Innes Society, are also held in our Store.

Bill Rudd also points out that in the 1960s and early 1970s Society members participated in a number of digs elsewhere.

**Don Fleming, who has for some time been fascinated by the subject, has written**  
**A BRIEF HISTORY OF TOWN AND CITY WARDS FROM 1066 TO 2001**

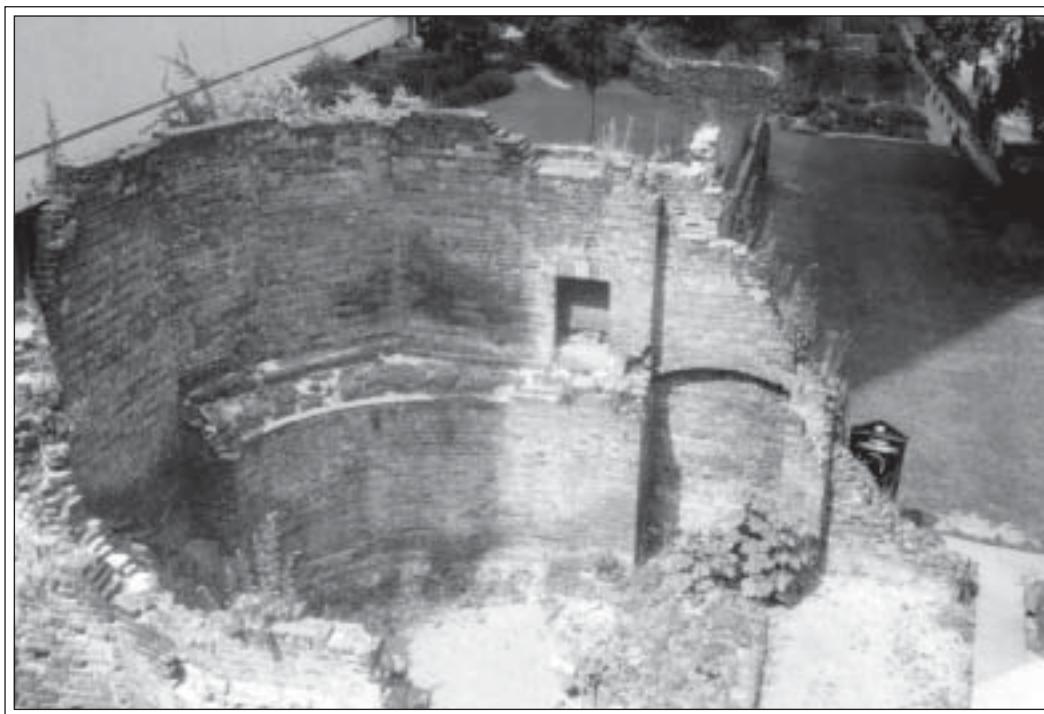
Every city and town has wards which are now only used for election purposes. Wards in places such as Merton, Croydon and Sutton came into being in the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> or early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Wards are sometimes referred to as divisions or precincts.

But what of the history of wards? How long have they existed? What brought them into existence in the first place and how did they develop?

John Stow in *A Survey of London* written in the year 1598, records that “Portsoken Ward was sometime a guild and had beginning in the days of King Edgar, more than 600 years since”.<sup>1</sup> This is interesting but should be treated with caution. King Edgar was born in 944, ascended the throne in 959 and died in 975 after a reign of 16 years. During this time he preserved a superficial peace.<sup>2</sup> (When Stow, who was born in 1525, was researching his Survey, he walked round every ward and looked into every church to record what the Reformation had left. He recalled speaking with old men who remembered Richard III as a comely prince.<sup>3</sup>)

John Schofield in *The Building of London* is both more cautious and more informative. “The origins of the ward and the parish units of organisation at the local level of secular and religious life respectively, are probably to be found before the Norman Conquest. There were twenty-four wards until Farringdon was divided into its present two parts in 1394. The wards of the outer areas lapped over the wall and gates for which they had to provide watchmen”.<sup>4</sup>

The grid system used by the Romans in the early development of London would have made the implementation of the ward system in the 11<sup>th</sup> century that much easier and logical. No evidence exists to support Stow’s assertion that the wards originated during the reign of King Edgar, though historians such as Schofield have looked into this.



*Part of London Wall near the Museum of London*

When William the Conqueror invaded in 1066, he merely asked his new subjects to continue abiding by the laws of Edward the Confessor (1002/7 to 1066) with the additions he had made to them.<sup>5</sup> The day-to-day working of the wards would not at once have been affected by the invasion.

Domesday Book, published in 1086, makes no mention of the City of London, possibly because the census takers would have found the task too complicated even in the 11<sup>th</sup> century. A city such as London was a living fabric with constant growth and the coming and going of too many people. If we reckon that the parish boundaries began to be formed in the 11<sup>th</sup> century and achieved their full pattern in the 12<sup>th</sup> century, we may reckon that the ward boundaries were fixed at some period roughly in the middle of this process or perhaps a little earlier.<sup>6</sup>



A survey of 1127 specifically names 20 wards (most of which cannot now be certainly identified) and includes three or four other passages which describe areas which may already have been wards.<sup>7</sup> In or about 1127, the canons of St Paul's took stock of their city properties, defined them by wards and measured them, so that we know the precise areas of some of their houses and messuages.<sup>8</sup>

Henry I (reigned 1100-1135), successor to William Rufus, married Matilda (1080-1118) of Scotland, and joined with her in the foundation of many religious houses. Matilda (formerly called Edith) was the orphaned daughter of Malcolm III, King of Scots (surnamed Canmore) and Margaret (sometimes called St Margaret). Margaret was a sister of Edgar Aetheling and so, through her mother, Matilda was in direct descent from Alfred. She had been educated and had taken the veil in Wilton nunnery. After her marriage she devoted herself again to religion.<sup>9</sup> She was grandmother to Henry II<sup>10</sup> and great-granddaughter of Edmund Ironsides<sup>11</sup>.

In London Matilda made herself popular with the people, due to the fact that she was appalled by the poverty she saw there and enlisted her husband's help. However, Henry had a reputation for mood swings from piety to brutality. We have no way of knowing how their combined efforts alleviated the suffering of the poor, if at all. But Etheredeshithe became Queenhithe in her honour.<sup>12</sup>

The Queen's Soke in the early 12th century included both Queenhithe and the Soke of Aldgate, where Queen Matilda founded Holy Trinity Priory.<sup>13</sup> (A soke was a private jurisdiction, involving exemption from some customary legal and financial obligations. Sometimes the ward was used for the area covered by such a jurisdiction.<sup>14</sup>)

Henry I granted London the right to collect its own tax and to choose its own sheriffs. An astonishing concession since the sheriff was the local representative of royal authority.<sup>15</sup>

The wards as in 1246 are mostly named from their aldermen, and this gives us the earliest list of aldermen and a most interesting cross-section of the City patriciate.<sup>16</sup> The ward was (at least by the 13th century) a military, judicial and administrative unit. In theory there is no reason why its boundaries should march with the boundaries of ecclesiastical parishes.<sup>17</sup>

The naming of wards for their aldermen in the earlier years of their existence makes it well nigh impossible to trace the history of any particular ward. On the death of an alderman or his passing on to other things, the ward would be renamed. With over 20 wards in London there would have been a constant changing of names.

As Christopher Brooke notes, before 1550 there were 25 wards and before 1394 there were 24. From the end of the 13th century, the wards were beginning to acquire their modern names, and a few names go back much further than that. The normal practice in the 12th and 13th centuries had been to label each ward with a man's name – the name of its headman – its alderman for the time being. When the alderman changed so did the ward's name. It makes identification of wards and of their history extremely difficult.<sup>18</sup>

The wards still flourish and define the temporal divisions of the City as they did in the 12th and 13th centuries. Like the parishes, they represent order imposing itself on chaos, the conflict of city government with local rights and self-help.<sup>19</sup>

The enclosures or *hagas* or even *burghs*, have impinged in a most interesting way on the place names of the City. Thus Bassishaw Ward and Basinghall Street recall the *haga* of the men of Basingstoke, a name of very high antiquity.<sup>20</sup> Basingahaga, first documented in 1160-80, is now represented by both ward and parish of Bassishaw, which uniquely occupy exactly the same area.<sup>21</sup>

The wards were arranged around principal streets, as some of their names show. The Walbrook stream, cutting the City into two almost equal halves, was used to divide them into two administrative groups from at least the 13th century. Its smaller contributory channels defined parts of the boundaries of seven wards as it flowed to the Thames.<sup>22</sup>

Four men of each ward were appointed as 'scavengers', whose responsibilities were to keep the streets of their ward clean and the pavements in good repair, using men called 'rakers'. The expenses were levied on the citizens of each ward (approximately 1337-8). Tolls were also periodically imposed on carts passing through the gates in aid of local repairs to the highway.<sup>23</sup> The scavengers and especially the 'rakers' must have had very unpleasant duties to perform, but, as John Schofield goes on to explain, things were about to change.





Although many houses had indoor privies, a major problem was the disposal of everyday waste, especially that discarded by butchers, tanners and other tradesmen. The habit of keeping pigs in the street was tolerated as a natural remedy. In 1297, however, the City ordered that pigsties in the street should be speedily removed and no swine should be found in the streets on pain of forfeiture of the beasts. Any fines would go towards the upkeep of the walls and gates.<sup>24</sup>

In the confined spaces of the City the parish church was often the centre of neighbourhood life. It would be used as a meeting place by the ward authorities, debating policing or military matters and occasionally the mayor and alderman would meet in a church to discuss a local case of 'assize of nuisance'. When All-Hallows-on-the-Wall had fallen into ruin and decay, the church applied for a licence to hold a stage play to help with the funding.<sup>25</sup>

In 1244 an alderman's ward was called his 'soke'. Thirty years later the Prior of Merton's soke-reeve was described as his 'alderman'. Nine other wards beside Portsoken (the only extramural ward) and Farringdon were coterminous with ancient sokes, fixed by property limits. Other wards were formed around axial thoroughfares, gates and street markets.<sup>26</sup>

In 1327 the good men of the ward were still the basis of the police system but with wider powers and responsibilities and greater reliance on registration. A staff of enforcement officers came into being, from searchers in the wards to guildhall clerks seconded to peace duties.<sup>27</sup> The title 'alderman' survived in its more general sense of a headman of a ward, first recorded in 1111, or of a guild and so to the leading men of any city – the usage that has survived to the present day.<sup>28</sup>

The formal division of Farringdon 'Within' and 'Without' came in 1394 but was already in use in 1246.<sup>29</sup>

The parishes would have been too small to support the functions of a hundred court, too small to supply 'watch and ward' to police a gate or a main thoroughfare. The parishes respected the wall; the wards, on the whole, did not. The reason for this is plain; the prime function of many wards was to protect a gate into the City. Thus Bishopsgate, Aldersgate and Cripplegate wards each lapped around their gates and included a substantial area within, and the whole faubourg without.<sup>30</sup>

The ward of Castle Baynard took its name from the castle built by Baynard, a Norman who came over with the Conqueror. Rebuilt in 1275, it was destroyed by fire, and again rebuilt, in 1428, by Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester, brother of Henry V.<sup>31</sup> Members of Merton Historical Society were part of the archaeological 'rescue' team who worked on the site in the early 1970s.

By the reign of Edward II (1284-1327) the ward had become a flexible instrument of government. A moot presided over by the alderman, directed by his clerk, registered freemen, examined victuallers and hotel keepers, appointed scavengers, ale-conners and other officers, and sealed measures. All proceedings were recorded.<sup>32</sup> The alderman and men of the ward were responsible for reporting deaths to the Chamberlain.<sup>33</sup> Staff of the ward were headed by the beadle, his serjeants, constables and temporary officials. It would appear that the titles of 'serjeant' and 'constable' were interchangeable, dependent upon the ward.

'Bridge Ward Without', in Southwark, only came into the City's hands in the 16<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>34</sup> (There was already a 'Bridge Ward' to the north of London Bridge.) It was an extra-mural ward well known for its theatres, bear baiting, cockfighting, brothels, pickpockets and taverns, mainly on land and property owned by the Bishop of Winchester. Prostitutes in Southwark were known as 'Winchester geese'! Administering this area on a ward basis would have been well nigh impossible. In 1550 the ward of Bridge Without was created as a sinecure for the senior alderman past the chair (that is to say those who had served the office of Lord Mayor). This was abolished in 1978, so there are now 25 wards.<sup>35</sup>

There was a great increase in building from the 1570s in response to the influx of migrants from the countryside and abroad. Suburbs sprang up and rural hamlets sprouted houses, especially in Radcliffe, Limehouse, Shoreditch, Whitechapel and around St Katherine's Hospital – the east end of London was born.<sup>36</sup> The ward of Billingsgate reported that 'aliens' now occupied 150 houses within the ward, 30 in the small parish of St Botolph, Billingsgate. An 'alien' was someone not from England, Ireland, Scotland or Wales. A 'foreigner' was anyone who did not originate from the City of London. These two words would be used more and more from the latter half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century onwards. There appears to have been no especial discrimination against people of other creeds or colour.

The population of the City of London in 1550 was 50,000. This rose to 200,000 by 1630.<sup>37</sup>

Of the 24 wards of the City, the Great Fire of 1666 utterly destroyed 15 and left eight others shattered and half burnt.<sup>38</sup>

A form of census taking, or head-counting, was carried out from time to time but found to be very difficult. Some City-dwellers were often away on business and others had reasons for not wanting to be included. The only accurate head counting was in prison. Separate inquisitions (head counting) were held in each ward. A panel of 12 men had to swear to the accuracy of their list. Jurors were citizens of middling economic status but of local importance in the ward. They would have had the help of guild officers' knowledge of alien competitors in their trades if they needed it.<sup>39</sup> London juries were summoned by the ward bealdes - sometimes as many as 50 jurors from five or six wards.<sup>40</sup>

**(to be continued)**

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4. *The Building of London from the Conquest to the Great Fire* by John Schofield, 1984. A Colonnade Book published by British Museum Publications Ltd in association with the Museum of London, p.30.
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7. *Ibid*, p.164.
8. *Ibid*, p.166.
9. *The Feudal Kingdom of England 1042-1216*. Frank Barlow, Longman. First published 1955, p.173.
10. *Ibid*, p.237.
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12. Schofield, p.46.
13. Brooke, p.156. (Cart. Aldgate No 11 Bateson, pp.483-4.)
14. Brooke, p.xxi.
15. *A History of London* – Robert Gray, Hutchinson of London, 1978, P.77.
16. Brooke, p.166.
17. Brooke, p.167.
18. Brooke, p.163.
19. Brooke, p.149.
20. Brooke, p.154.
21. Schofield, p.29.
22. Schofield, p.31.
23. Schofield, p.79.
24. Schofield, p.79.
25. Schofield, p.115.
26. *Medieval London – from commune to capital* – Gwyn A Williams, University of London (the Athlone Press), 1963, p.33. Note There is a good topographical analysis of the wards in H A Harben *A Dictionary of London* (London 1918), pp.610-11. See also W Page op.cit. 173-6.
27. Williams, p.80.
28. Brooke, p.155.
29. Brooke, p.164.
30. Brooke, p.168.
31. Schofield, p.132.
32. Williams, p.80.
33. *Studies in London History, presented to Philip Edmund Jones*. Edited by A E J Hollander and William Kellaway. Hodder and Stoughton, 1969, p.80
34. Brooke, p.162.
35. *The London Encyclopaedia*, edited by Ben Weinsreb and Christopher Hibbert. Published by MacMillan, London, 2<sup>nd</sup> (revised) edition 1993, p.951.
36. Schofield, pp.143/144.
37. Schofield, p.157.
38. Schofield, p.174.
39. Hollander and Kellaway, p.253.
40. Hollander and Kellaway, p.80.

***POLLARDS HILL, COMMONSIDE EAST AND LONESOME***

This, the third volume in Eric Montague's series of *Mitcham Histories* is now available. We are grateful to the Commonside Community Development Trust for commissioning the Society to produce this book, and for buying 200 copies in advance. This perhaps lesser known part of Mitcham has a history of farming, some unusual industries, a variety of houses and many local 'characters'. 160pp. Many illustrations. Price £5.95, it is available to members of Merton Historical Society at £4.80. It will be on sale at meetings, or is available by post from our Publications Secretary at an additional charge of 70p.

The first two titles are still available at the same price: *The Cricket Green* and *North Mitcham*. A further twelve volumes are planned, to cover the whole of Mitcham, as finance (and time!) become available.

**LIONEL GREEN looks at another episode in the history of Merton Priory:**

## **HENRY III AND MERTON PRIORY 1216-72**

Merton was a favourite abode for Henry III from an early age. When only ten, soon after he became king, he was involved in a peace conference in September 1217, settling his father's war with France. It was from Merton that the *dauphin* was despatched home on 22 September (see Bulletin No 127, September 1998 p.9).

Henry certainly had faults. He was self-indulgent and fickle, never firm or reliable, seemingly incapable of inspiring the respect of his friends or fear in his foes. He was fond of religion and art, and appreciated the handy location of Merton priory, and its ways. Wherever he was, Henry attended mass each day. It was his custom to spend Christmas at Westminster for the crown-wearing ceremony and sojourn at Merton for a week or two in January. His inclination was also to spend Easter at either Windsor or Merton.<sup>1</sup>

### **Trouble at the top 1227-32**

Until 1227 England was virtually governed by Stephen Langton the archbishop, and Hubert de Burgh the justiciar. The king declared himself of age to rule in that year, and on Langton's death in 1228 de Burgh was at the helm almost alone.

The pope demanded a tenth of all income from the whole realm of England. Objection was silenced by threats of excommunication, but such was everyone's annoyance that tithes gathered for the pope and foreign clergy were seized and given to the poor. The pope accused de Burgh of connivance in this. In 1231 the king also blamed de Burgh for failing to provide transport for his army to sail to Gascony, and also for misappropriation of funds. Hubert de Burgh came to Merton to prepare his defence in August 1232, but had to seek sanctuary when 20,000 armed Londoners marched on Merton to attack him (see Bulletin No 134 June 2000 pp.9/10).

### **Financial problems 1233-55**

An invasion of Poitou in 1233 bankrupted Henry and he demanded special grants and taxes. Monastic houses collected amercements (fines, manorial dues etc.) from tenants, and accounted for them at the exchequer without formality when they produced the relevant royal charter. In 1234 the right was made dependent upon 'express mention' of such a procedure in the charter. This meant that fresh charters had to be obtained from the king, at a cost, containing express words clarifying their rights. Merton priory was obliged to seek six new charters.<sup>2</sup> In 1242 the monasteries were asked to contribute aid to the king "for his passage abroad", and Merton paid £10.<sup>3</sup>

In happier times Henry spent a week at Merton priory following his marriage to Eleanor of Provence on 14 January 1236. He held a parliament, but did not entirely get his own way with the barons over the Statute of Merton (see Bulletin No 138 June 2001 pp.14-16).

Henry began promoting continental relations and friends, inviting them to occupy royal castles and fill administrative posts in England, so that the saintly Edmund Rich, now archbishop, realised that the country was in a sorry state and misgoverned (see Bulletin No 137 March 2001 p.13). In 1244 a new pope sent an envoy named Martin to England to extract further revenues from the English clergy. He suspended the rights of patrons to appoint priests to benefices and sought vacant churches to sell in the papal market.<sup>4</sup> He demanded gifts from prelates, especially the heads of rich monasteries, and made it clear that gifts of horses must be "fit for a special clerk of the pope to ride upon". Those who refused, and gave "even reasonable excuses such as the abbot of Malmesbury and the prior of Merton", were to be punished severely by suspension until they had made full satisfaction.<sup>5</sup> The suspensions were invalidated the following year at the council of Lyons. The prior of Merton was Robert de Hexham, and he did resign, but not until 12 October 1249.<sup>6</sup>

The king passed much of the year 1254 in France and Gascony. He was with the king of France for eight days negotiating a peace settlement and spending over £1000.<sup>7</sup> Gascony was the only land which England still held on the continent. On returning to spend Christmas at Westminster he was delayed at Boulogne waiting for a favourable wind. Peter Chacepore, keeper of the king's wardrobe, died there, and bequeathed 600 marks (£400) to buy land so that a chantry could be built at Merton priory church.<sup>8</sup>

The king called for a council meeting at Merton in January 1255 to discuss how to meet the king's expenses abroad, and it was agreed that the king should tallage his demesne land throughout England. Londoners protested that royal charters excluded them from paying tallage (a tax on towns and demesne lands of the Crown). The mayor and other Londoners were summoned to Merton, and the king demanded 3000 marks (£2000). They went away and returned saying that they were willing to grant 2000 marks (£1330) as an aid, but would not pay more.<sup>9</sup>



*Effigy of Henry III in Westminster Abbey*

### **The Sicilian adventure 1252-58**

By 1252 Henry had negotiated an arrangement with the pope (Innocent IV) whereby the king would receive an annual grant of a tenth of the property values of all religious premises in England for three years. This was in order to assist in a projected crusade. In March 1254 the pope converted Henry's crusading vow into an engagement to conquer the Kingdom of Naples and Sicily from Henry's nephew Conrad IV, promising that Henry's second son Edmund would rule there. By the end of 1254 the collection of the tenth began and the clergy of England were outraged, as there had been no consultation. The pope engaged mercenaries to fight Conrad (who died on 21 May 1254), but they were soundly beaten by Conrad's half-brother Manfred. Pope Innocent IV died from shock at the news, and his successor Alexander IV then asked Henry to pay for the costly failure, which amounted to 135,541 marks (£90,400). This was three times Henry's gross annual revenue as king of England.<sup>10</sup>

The pope sent his legate Rustand, a Gascon, to England to collect the tenth. He arrived on 29 September 1255 and immediately called a council of the clergy for 13 October. He demanded such exorbitant amounts that compliance would have meant ruination for the church and kingdom, but Rustand and the king were in formal alliance, being involved in the claim to the crown of Sicily. The clergy postponed their decision until a further council met after Easter 1256. Here the bishops, backed up by the barons present, refused to listen to Rustand's demands. They also appealed to the pope, complaining that the legate had misused his powers. To the joy of England, the pope recalled him to Rome in 1257, but in January 1258 despatched him once again, but with diminished powers, accompanied by an envoy, Herlotus. They arrived in England in Lent, and Herlotus was probably received at Merton priory, where Henry spent the whole of April.<sup>11</sup> Although Herlotus was only an envoy, Henry received him with all the pomp due to a pope's legate.<sup>12</sup>

The account for the Sicilian fiasco had still not been paid and Herlotus presented an ultimatum. All must be paid within the year, and Henry had to lead an army from England to conquer Sicily. The barons loudly complained, and the king summoned the magnates to Westminster, imploring them to help. All met at the great hall of Westminster on 30 April at 3pm. The barons were wearing armour to frighten the king, but left their swords and shields at the doorway. They accepted the situation, realising that excommunication of the king would mean ruin for the country. They were conscious of their duty to rescue him from his own folly, so Roger Bigod, earl of Norfolk, presented terms for assistance by the barons. Walter de Merton, a member of the royal household, was sent to negotiate with the pope to alleviate the threat.<sup>13</sup>

On 2 May 1258 the king and prince Edward agreed to a royal commission of 24, jointly chosen by the king and magnates, which was to determine what reforms were necessary to govern England. The commission was to report to parliament on 10 June.

### **Convocation at Merton 1258**

On 19 April 1258 archbishop Boniface, at Harlotus's pleading, summoned a convocation to meet at Merton on Tuesday 6 June. The envoy probably underestimated Boniface's concern for the church in England and felt confident he could influence the clergy to support the pope and the king. Clerical assemblies were not encouraged by Henry, as they usually only met when there were taxes to be resisted. He opposed this meeting on the grounds that he needed the bishops on his Welsh campaign scheduled to commence on 17 June.<sup>14</sup>

Summoned to the meeting were the heads of the great monasteries, and archdeacons were to represent their clergy as well as attend in their own right. All received letters of proxy.<sup>15</sup> The preamble stated that it was to consider papal demands, including the tallage of three marks levied on every monastery in England, but also to devise measures for opposing the claims and exactions of the pope and king and to provide for the restoration of ecclesiastical liberty.

To the horror of both Harlotus and Rustand who were present at Merton, Boniface made a vigorous denunciation of lay encroachments on clerical rights by both pope and king. The meeting resolved that the dire oppression of the church must be remedied.

At the conclusion of the convocation, the bishops made their way from Merton to Oxford for the next encounter, not with the bishop of Rome but incompetent secular leaders. (See Appendix for a list of articles of complaint and their remedy.)

### **The Provisions of Oxford 1258**

The Barons availed themselves of the summons to the Welsh war as a pretext to appear at Oxford fully armed and with each noble accompanied by a large body of retainers. Not only did they distrust the king, but they wished to show the alien followers their intentions. Parliament met at St Frideswide (Augustinian) monastery at Oxford<sup>16</sup> on 11 June 1258, and the occasion led to a new constitution for England.



A committee of 24, jointly selected by the king and barons, nominated a permanent council of 15 to advise the king. The magnates were to share the responsibility of framing policy and reform, and of governing “through native-born men, and that aliens depart and not return save those whose presence the faithful men of the kingdom shall jointly accept”.<sup>17</sup>

Ultimate responsibility for ruling remained with the king, but the barons had the power to act if the king could not discharge his duty.

Parliament was to meet three times a year “whether summoned by the king or not” and the “commonalty” was to elect 12 honest men to attend. Sheriffs were to be appointed from the chief tenants of the county.

Strict oaths were required from the justiciar, chancellor and treasurer to act only under the joint Council of king and barons. The Great Seal which authenticated public documents was included in the supervision, and the chancellor was sworn to seal nothing contrary to the provisions of the council. A royal proclamation, published in English,<sup>18</sup> ordered the observance of the provisions.

### Royal gifts

Henry was munificent to his relations and friends, and Merton priory received many gifts. He confirmed all previous royal charters granted to the priory. This included the *ville* of Merton given by Henry I, five gifts of Henry II and those of Richard I. This important charter of April 1252 was confirmed in turn by later kings, including Henry VI and Henry VIII.<sup>19</sup>

The king was at the priory on 22 May 1252 and granted free warren throughout all the priory’s possessions except in the royal forests.<sup>20</sup> Further gifts for use in the priory itself were bestowed by Henry in 1253 and 1255.<sup>21</sup> Gifts for use in the priory itself were bestowed on Merton. These included cloths of gold in 1245, 1246 (two gifts) and 1253; copes of red samite (the silk was interwoven with gold thread) in 1245, 1246, 1253 (two gifts) and 1255; a gold cup in 1247; silver statues in 1253 and 1257. The king gave wine “for the prior’s use” in 1253, 1255 and 1257, a tun each time (which held 250 gallons), but in 1259 four tuns were provided.<sup>22</sup>

### APPENDIX – Convocation at Merton

Article of complaint	Remedy
1. Prelates summoned before secular tribunals regarding purely ecclesiastical affairs	Excommunication of sheriffs and bailiffs
2. Patrons appointing clergy into their benefices without ecclesiastical authority	Clerks to be anathematised and if they persist, excommunicated
3. Release of imprisoned excommunicated clergy by secular authorities	Clergy to be excommunicated afresh, with any who were party to the release. King to be warned to cease issuing such mandates.
4. Clergy unjustly imprisoned by secular authorities	Authority to be publicly denounced and excommunicated
5. Lay persons procuring royal prohibition to escape ecclesiastical judgement involving contract with clergy	Excommunication of lay person
6. Magnates forbid lay persons to obey summons of prelate in matters of morals, sins and excesses	Excommunication of secular magnates
7. Violation of the privilege of sanctuary	Excommunication of offenders
8. Wasting of church property in vacant benefices	Excommunication “even if it be the king himself that does it”
9. Royal officials enforcing litigants to use royal court	Excommunication
10. Writs of prohibition used outside proper sphere	To be refuted by bishop
11. Archbishops and bishops summoned by justices to appear in person	King to be requested to order that they may be represented by deputies

The meeting put on record the grievances expressed by Grosseteste, bishop of Lincoln (d.1253), who had been so firm against the encroachments of the pope and the abuse of issuing writs of prohibition in order to evade obligations to be dealt with in church courts.

Subsequently Henry III asked the pope to abrogate the resolutions, which he did.

1 J E A Jolliffe ‘Some factors in the beginnings of Parliament’ Transactions of the Royal Historical Society 4th series Vol.XXII(1940) p.134

2 C Ch.R.1226-57 pp.381-2,431; Close R 1254/6 p.83; C/60/51 m9; E/368/29 m3; E/368/26 m9d

3 A Heales *The Records of Merton Priory* London 1898 p.110

4 In 1246 Nicolaus Lupacii, canon of St Peter’s Rome, became the absent rector of Morden church

5 Matthew Paris *Chron. Majori* Vol.IV p.284

6 Pat. Roll 33 Hen III m3

7 Matt. of Westminster *Flores Historiarum* 1853 ii 203

8 Matt. Paris *op. cit.* Vol.III p.343; The office of the king’s wardrobe operated from Merton priory, and Peter signed the foundation charter of Bilsington priory, a daughter house of Merton, in 1253.

- 9 F M Powicke *King Henry III and Lord Edward* 1947 Vol.I p.308  
 10 R F Treharne *The Battle of Lewes 1264* 1964 p.26; *Annals of Burton* p.390  
 11 *Liberate Rolls 1251-60* Vol.IV pp.431-2; *Close Rolls 1256-9* Vol.X pp.287,470  
 12 Matt. Paris *op. cit.* Vol.V p.673  
 13 *Dictionary of National Biography* Vol.XIII p.298  
 14 Matt. Paris *op. cit.* Vol.V p.677. The king termed the gathering an illegitimate *convocatio* (calling), and subsequent church councils were known as convocations. The term did not become official usage until the 15th century.  
 15 F M Powicke *The Thirteenth Century* 2nd edition 1961 p.457  
 16 Which became Christ Church College, Oxford  
 17 *Liber de Antiquis Legibus* Camden Soc. 1846 p.59  
 18 The first state paper in the English language. The Provisions were also proclaimed in Norman French and Latin for all to understand.  
 19 Heales pp.123-4  
 20 Heales p.124  
 21 Heales pp.125,130  
 22 *Liberate and Close Rolls* (writs *delivered up* and writs folded or *closed up*)

**(to be continued)**

*Lionel Green's contribution to the Christmas holiday spirit is a vintage Punch cartoon.*



## CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2001–2002

**LIONEL GREEN presented his last CHAIRMAN'S REPORT at the AGM on 2 November.**

(His text has been slightly shortened.)

The Committee has met on eight occasions, dealing with wide-ranging topics. Events included talks on the vestments of Westminster Abbey, the Great Exhibition of 1851, Wandsworth Mills and a presentation of views Then and Now. The summer visits took us to the Surrey History Centre, Croydon Airport, Morden Park and church, Dr Johnson's house, Reigate Priory and around Cricket Green. We also had our coach outing to Parham House and Goring-by-Sea, organised by Ray Kilsby, for which many thanks.

The Society was invited to hold its own exhibition at the Heritage Centre at The Canons throughout May. This was most professionally done, complete with video of historical sites in the Borough. Displays showed past activities, digs, outings, artifacts, maps and even a model of the priory. William Rudd chaired the subcommittee which undertook the arrangements.

The Village Study Group, part of the Surrey Archaeological Society, met at The Canons on two occasions, with input from members of this Society. Another meeting is planned for March.

Time Team came to the Abbey Mills at the end of September, and one of your vice-presidents played a prominent part. This will be on Channel 4 in March.

English Heritage has created a post of Community Archaeologist to support the work of local societies in London. Vanessa Bunton was appointed in September, and in October we invited her to one of our workshop meetings. It proved a worthwhile meeting for all.

A committee is useless if it does not have a secretary with good sense. On your behalf I thank Sheila Harris for the efficient way she runs the affairs of the Society. We have always been blessed with excellent Secretaries. Sheila organises our programme and solves inevitable problems. She pre-visits sites to foresee difficulties with transport, comfort amenities, costs etc. She provides refreshments at all our meetings – not only at public gatherings but at committees and workshops.

I regard our publications as a very important part of the Society's activities, and we are indeed fortunate in having our own 'in house' publisher in Peter Hopkins who not only prints our Bulletin but publishes booklets on Merton's

history. Now we are producing books and colour illustrations in the booklets. The second volume in the *Mitcham Histories – North Mitcham* – has been published. Booklets in our normal format published during the year include *Daughter Houses of Merton Priory*, *Trouble at Mill*, *Randolph's Notebook*, *Mitcham in 1838: A Survey ...*, *Mitcham in 1846: Tithe Apportionment Map* and *A Mitcham Childhood*. And now a new history of *Morden Park* with coloured pictures. Peter steers the publishing of these through an editorial committee. I wish to place on record our thanks to him, in particular for added negotiations require for the Morden Park publication. Funding was obtained through the Merton Library Service, plans and drawings from the private surveyors and architects, Guildhall Library and Surrey History Centre for colour photographs. Bill Rudd provided additional pictures.

The success of the Society Bulletins is known far and wide as other organisations note the high standard of our quarterly issues. Praise for this must go to Judith Goodman. You could make her life a little easier if from time to time someone would ring her to say, "I will write up an account of the next talk or outing". But make the offer before the event. This is the vehicle for all members to publicise their interests and knowledge. Don't be put off with thoughts that others know more than you. We are all amateurs and we are all learning how much more there is to know.

Workshops have continued throughout the year. These are informal gatherings for members to float ideas and interests. I find these meetings stimulating. They give a spur to original research and provide a place to share problems and gain encouragement. We also learn a lot, which is no bad thing.

I must not steal our Treasurer's thunder, but I would like to say a few words about subscriptions. If the number of members increases so will our income and conversely if numbers don't increase the annual subscription will have to increase. In a Borough the size of Merton there should be at least 500 members. Speak to your neighbours! If you agree that the subscription is good value for money, don't keep the good news to yourself.

And now I want to say something pleasing. I would like to congratulate you, the members, on doing what I asked you to do last year at this meeting – to pay your subscriptions promptly – and you have. By the 3<sup>rd</sup> October, only three days into this current year, 82 members had paid their subscriptions. Few societies can boast a paid-up membership of 63% within three days! This immediately improves our cash flow, with £500 in the kitty. Thanks must also go to Don Fleming for his efficient handling of this.

Being successful brings with it unsought problems. The fire regulations for this building [Snuff Mill Centre] restrict numbers to 50. Where it would appear that this number will be exceeded we may have to display a notice debarring further entrance. To ensure a seat, please come early – at least ten minutes before starting-time. If you come even earlier you can help set out the chairs, assist Peter to set out the book display, set up the screen, black-out the windows, fill the tea urn, welcome your fellow visitors at the door. The more you put into the afternoon, the more you will take home.

Nobody is too young, or too old, too unimportant, too stupid to fully enjoy their membership of this Society.

## IN BRIEF

- ◆ From 3 December to 23 February the exhibition space at **Merton Heritage Centre** (tel: 020 8640 9387) will be devoted to all kinds of music in the Borough's heritage.
- ◆ Channel 4's **Time Team** were at Merton Abbey Mills in late September. The programme is due to be shown in February or March 2003. They found the foundations of the building just behind the wheelhouse shown in *Ancell's Merton Abbey works* (1825), shown on page 15 of the *Historical guide to Merton Abbey Mills*.
- ◆ The latest archaeology report from London Archaeological Forum (May-August 2002) included an evaluation by PCA Ltd at Tooting and Mitcham Football Club, **Sandy Lane, Mitcham**. Nine trenches were investigated, but revealed only topsoil overlying sub-soil and natural brickearth.
- ◆ The current exhibition at the **Imperial War Museum**, Anthem for Doomed Youth, looks at the life and works of 12 soldier poets of the Great War, including Edward Thomas, who died at Arras in 1917. Thomas knew and wrote about Wimbledon, Merton, Mitcham and Morden (see Bulletin 127, September 1998). The exhibition is on until 27 April.
- ◆ Congratulations to **Richard Milward** for being awarded one of the London Borough of Merton Golden Jubilee Medals 2002. It is good to hear that Fielder's of Wimbledon Hill, who were the original co-publishers with Windrush, have reprinted Richard's *Historic Wimbledon: Caesar's Camp to Centre Court*. This highly readable book, which has long been unobtainable, is well illustrated, mainly with pictures from the Wimbledon Society's collection, and with excellent maps and small drawings by John Wallace. Obtainable at Fielder's (signed copies) and, no doubt, elsewhere. An excellent Christmas present! Price £20.

## COMMITTEE MEMBERS 2002-2003<sup>471</sup>

The minutes of the AGM are enclosed with this Bulletin.

### SUBSCRIPTIONS

**Subscriptions became due on 1 October. If you do not pay by banker's order and have not already paid direct, your subscription is now overdue. Please use the form which was enclosed with the September Bulletin. Membership is £7 for one person, £3 for any additional member of the household. Cheques are payable to Merton Historical Society and should be sent to our Membership Secretary**

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.

*Printed by Peter Hopkins*