



PRESIDENT: J Scott McCracken BA FSA MIFA

VICE PRESIDENTS: Viscountess Hanworth, Lionel Green and William Rudd

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CHAIRMAN: Peter Hopkins

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PROGRAMME SEPTEMBER–DECEMBER



Wednesday 17 September 2.00pm

Visit to Chelsea Physic Garden

This is the second oldest physic garden in the country, having been established by the Apothecaries' Company in 1676. Botanical research is still carried on here.

Numbers are limited. Please book with Sheila Harris. There is a charge, on the day, of £6 per head.

Meet at the entrance in Swan Walk, which is off Royal Hospital Road.

Nearest station is Sloane Square.

Saturday 11 October 2.30pm

Snuff Mill Environmental Centre

'Merton, Mitcham and Morden Commons'

This year's Evelyn Jowett Memorial Lecture is to be given by John Pile, one of our members.

Though based in Hampshire for many years, where he is a well-known local historian, John spent

his youth in Morden and retains a deep interest in the history of our area. He is a member of

Surrey Archaeological Society, and the history of commons is a favourite subject of his.

Saturday 1 November 2.30pm

Snuff Mill Environmental

Centre

Annual General Meeting

The business part of the meeting will be followed by short talks from members. Eileen Lilley has

agreed to speak about 'City Livery Companies'. Any other members who would like to offer a

brief talk on a subject of historical interest please contact Peter Hopkins or Sheila Harris.

Saturday 6 December 2.30 pm

Snuff Mill Environmental Centre

'Merton in Wartime'

Tom Kelley, one of our members, will recall life in Merton during World War II and illustrate his talk with objects from his large collection.

(The Snuff Mill Centre, in Morden Hall Park, is on several bus routes. Car 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.



A VISIT TO DORKING

An enthusiastic party of members and friends were met at Dorking station on Saturday 17 May by Lionel Green and his colleague, Sue Tombs, and then set off in two groups towards the town centre.

Dorking lies between the North Downs and the Weald, on a band of sandy soil, close to Surrey's most notable high points – Box Hill (Chalk) and Leith Hill (Greensand). It has its own little watercourse, which flows into the Mole and once supported six mills. This is the Pippbrook. The name derives from OE *pipe*, 'small stream', just as does that of Phipps Bridge at Mitcham. The route of the Roman Stane Street from Chichester to London, which has been traced through the town, continued via Mickleham. A later road climbed the Downs towards Tadworth, while the present road, the A24, dates only from a Turnpike Act of 1755.

Pippbrook House (1856), now the library, was designed in the office of, but probably not by, Sir George Gilbert Scott (1811-78). It is large, Gothic, and categorised as "very ugly: the ugliness of carelessness and insensitivity" by Nairn and Pevsner (revised Cherry). It used to house the council offices, which now occupy a modern (1984) set of inter-connected pavilions close by.

In front of the recently refurbished Dorking Halls (1931) is a statue of Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958), composer, conductor and organist, who lived in Westcott Road, Dorking, from 1929 to 1953. His sister Margaret, with Lady Farrer, founded the Leith Hill Music Festival at which Vaughan Williams conducted the choirs for nearly 50 years.

Another of Dorking's notable citizens was Thomas Cubitt (1788-1855), also commemorated by a statue. This great speculative builder is probably best remembered now for his development of Belgravia and Pimlico and for the royal holiday home, Osborne House. In 1851 Cubitt built a 100-room Italianate mansion for himself at Ranmore, just north of the town, called Denbies (demolished 1953, though the name survives as that of one of our best-known vineyards).

The buildings of the High Street (really East Street) offer a mixture of ages and styles. They include the *Surrey Yeoman*, once the *Royal Oak*, but renamed in 1810 in honour of the Earl of Rothes, Colonel of the Surrey Yeomanry. Near it is a row of 18th-century shops, and on a corner site the *Café Rouge* occupies a 16th-century timber-framed building. Parts of the attractive *White Horse* are also timber-framed. Its site was given to the Knights Templars by Earl de Warenne, and on suppression of the Order in 1308 it passed to the Knights of St John. The building became known as Cross House, but did not become a hostelry till 1750.

The extra width of the High Street at one point marks the site of the market which was held here until 1927. It was especially famous for poultry, the Dorking cock being a distinctive breed with five claws on each foot. Church Passage is the site of the kick-off for the Shrove Tuesday football. This match, which lasted three hours, involved first the boys, with a red ball, then the men with a blue ball, and then everybody, with the white ball. This riotous ritual was finally suppressed about 100 years ago.

Thanks to architect Henry Woodyer, say Pevsner *et al*, Dorking is the only Surrey town to be dominated by its church. Woodyer was a pupil of Henry Butterfield, and St Martin's is considered his most important church. It belongs almost entirely to the period 1868-77 (the Lady Chapel is later). There had been several rebuildings of Dorking's church over the centuries and the so-called 'Intermediate Church' which was replaced by the present one had stood for only 30 years, but had become thoroughly disliked. The new church is High Victorian, lofty and well proportioned, with a tall west tower and spire. The west windows were designed in 1884 by Henry Holiday, a well-known artist much influenced by William Morris. Those of the north and south aisles (1875-94) are by James Powell of Whitefriars. Arthur Powell, the firm's senior partner, lived in Dorking from 1858 to 1894. The Powells are known to have supplied much of the glass used by Morris & Co, but their own designs were backward-looking in comparison with Morris's. (While their craftsmanship was superb, it remains surprising that the firm that made the windows at St Martin's also made, for instance, Philip Webb's strikingly modern table glassware for Morris & Co.) There are also a number of panels made by Powell of figures in mosaic on backgrounds of *opus sectile* (stone inlay). In the church we also learned more about Vaughan Williams in Dorking from Renée Stewart, an expert on the subject, and she showed us the kneelers in the Lady Chapel which were made in 1972 to mark the centenary of his birth.

After lunch we divided again into our two groups and took turns to visit the caves and the museum. An unmarked wooden door in the rockface near the war memorial is the unlikely entrance to Dorking's mysterious caves. Cut out of the local sandstone in the 17th century for who knows what purpose, they have at various times been used as storage for wine, dairy products and council equipment, but not, it seems, as air raid shelters. They descend to about 18 metres below street level and culminate in a small chamber with a curved back wall and a low bench cut out of the rock on three sides. Here and there they are penetrated vertically by old well-shafts, which once served houses above. Rough footholds have been cut in the walls of these shafts, and graffiti – of various periods – are scattered about. Our visit was illuminated by candles and was a decidedly strange experience. Harry Tyler and his wife were our able guides.

The museum has a good display of pictures, ephemera, bygones, geological specimens and so forth, and upstairs there is an enviable collection of books, journals, newspapers and photographs on open access to researchers or the merely curious. Bette Phillips gave us a most friendly welcome, and Lionel's wife, Sheila, and sister, Doris, kindly produced cups of tea and biscuits. After thank-yous and goodbyes we set off for the station, along the Pippbrook, and only then did the rain come down.

Our thanks to Lionel, and to the others who assisted him, for an excellently planned and most enjoyable visit.

Judith Goodman

MORDEN COTTAGE

On Friday 25 May Morden Cottage, in Morden Hall Park, was visited by members of the MHS Committee, escorted by the National Trust's estate manager of its Wandle properties. The Cottage, which dates in part from the 1750s, was the home of Gilliat Edward Hatfeild, the last lord of the manor of Morden, who died in 1941. For some 25 years or so following the Trust's acquisition of the Morden Hall estate the house was occupied as offices by the Engineer and Surveyor of Merton & Morden Urban District, and subsequently the London Borough of Merton. The Registrar's Office followed, and remained there until the Registrar and staff moved to more spacious premises at Morden Park in November 2000. Since then Morden Cottage has been thoroughly renovated, and this summer has welcomed its new tenants, Groundwork Merton, the landscape consultants, whose projects include the recent landscaping of Wandle Park. They have moved from premises at Merton Abbey Mills.

The interior, which few members of the public have seen, retains only a few original features, such as a length of moulded cornice in one room, or a door with what could be 18th-century furniture. Inside, the house is in fact a warren of relatively small rooms, betraying the fact that it has been extended on various occasions, but here and there more spacious accommodation has now been created, notably in parts of the old snuff mill. In all, Groundwork are to be congratulated on their good fortune, and we in Merton Historical Society wish them a long and rewarding sojourn in what must be one of the most idyllic settings to be found in the Borough.

Eric Montague



PETER HOPKINS reports on our VISIT TO WESTMINSTER ABBEY

Twenty members and guests gathered at Westminster Abbey on Friday 6 June, for a very special view behind the scenes, organised by Rosemary Turner. Members will remember the excellent talk Rosemary gave us on her work in repairing the historic vestments of the Abbey. She was a founder member of the Guild of St Faith, set up 23 years ago to make use of the expertise of volunteers such as Rosemary.

There was some confusion over the timing of our visit, which meant that we had an hour to spare, which we soon put to good use in exploring the Abbey and the Cloisters. Then the Dean's Verger, Maureen Jupp, who is the official responsible for the vestments, and who set up the Guild, took us across the South Transept and down into the Crypt beneath the Chapter House. The first thing that she pointed out was the massive Norman column, a survival from Edward the Confessor's church, reused to support Henry III's 13th-century building.

She then opened the huge cupboard in which the altar frontals and dossals are kept and, starting with those from George V and Queen Mary, showed us the full collection, with their amazingly intricate needlecraft. After this we saw some of the 17th-century vestments bought for Charles II's coronation, some of which are still used on special occasions. These were imported from the Continent and, unfortunately, were not the work of Merton's own court embroiderer, William Rutlish! Maureen pointed out some of the work undertaken by Rosemary and her colleagues in restoring these priceless items. Other, more recent, vestments were then displayed, including an item from the set given by our present Queen after her Coronation, and used just a few days before at the service to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Coronation. Finally we had the privilege of being taken to see the High Altar with its frontal depicting the Transfiguration, with hosts of angels each side. The colours of the angels' garments had been carefully matched with those of the disciples at the Last Supper depicted in mosaic on the reredos. As we returned to the Crypt to collect our belongings, various visitors attempted to follow us, but were turned away, highlighting the immense privilege that we were enjoying, thanks to Rosemary's influence.

After lunch we were welcomed to the Library by Dr Tony Trowles, the Abbey's librarian. He explained that the Library occupies about one-third of the Monks' Dormitory, the other two thirds having been partitioned off to create a school room in the late 16th century. The school still occupies the other part, though it has been rebuilt after bombing in the 2nd world war. The bookcases are the gift of a 17th-century dean of Westminster, with additions and modifications in the 18th century to house a substantial bequest from another former dean.

While half the group explored the Library, the other half was taken to the Muniment Room by Dr Richard Mortimer, keeper of the muniments. The Abbey has a vast collection of administrative documents, some dating back to the 10th century. The Muniment Room was first connected to the Library in the 1930s, when a gallery was built over the Cloister. A wooden spiral staircase links this gallery with the Library. The Muniment Room itself is also situated over the Cloister and overlooks the South Transept. It is open to the Abbey, and on one side we were able to view the South Transept, looking down on Poets' Corner and up to the square rose window, its shape normally concealed by the Gothic arch in front of it. The Muniment Room is divided by a wall with a 14th-century wall painting of Richard II's personal device, a white hart. This is just visible from Poet's Corner.

Dr Mortimer showed us two of the many documents relating to Morden. The first referred to the institution of Thomas de Senesfeld to St Lawrence Church between 1230 and 1241. The Abbey had the right of presentation of the rector of Morden, who paid the Abbey an annual pension of half a mark (6s 8d or 33p). It was as evidence of their right to receive this pension that the Abbey had kept this small document in its archives! The second document was one of the 100 account rolls detailing, on one side, the cash transactions of the Abbey's estate at Morden and, on the other side, transactions relating to grain, livestock etc.

At the north end of the Muniment Room, which overlooks the Choir, we were shown two massive oak chests, dating from around 1100. They must have been at least 12 foot long and were about 4 foot wide and 3 foot high. How they were brought into the room is a mystery, for they predate the present building. There are several smaller medieval chests around, used for storing documents over the centuries. One large oak cupboard, with its original ironwork, is still used to store the account rolls.

When we left the Library, Rosemary took us to the medieval Infirmary, which is now used as a workroom by the Guild of St Faith. When she first joined the Guild this room had no heating and only one light, a hanging lantern! It was only when the waxworks were stored here for a time that heating and modern lighting were installed. The wax was cracking in the cold! We then went on to look round the Little Cloister, now a delightful garden area, surrounded by various houses and flats occupied by Abbey and school staff. The ruins of the medieval chapel of St Catherine have also been turned into a private garden.

We are very grateful to Rosemary for arranging this fascinating tour of places not seen by the ordinary visitor. It was a very special day for all of us. Our thanks also to Maureen, Tony and Richard for making us so welcome.

VISIT TO THE WILLIAM MORRIS GALLERY AND AUDLEY END

A nicely varied tour planned again by the Kilsbys took a coach-load of MHS members and WEA (Sanderstead and Selsdon) members on Saturday 5 July, first to Essex-in-London and then to Essex-in-the-country. We approached Walthamstow by way of south-east London, the Blackwall Tunnel and then east London, which made Water House (London Borough of Waltham Forest, admission free) in its green setting all the more appealing by contrast. The third of William Morris's childhood homes, and the only one to survive, it now houses a biographical display as well as a collection of textiles, papers, glassware and furniture created by Morris & Co, and ceramics by William De Morgan. The gallery is also home to the Brangwyn Gift of paintings by Frank Brangwyn, who himself contributed some stained-glass designs for Morris & Co, and after whom, presumably, Brangwyn Crescent in Colliers Wood was named. Later designers, including Voysey and Mackmurdo are also represented. Outside there are attractive gardens, a moated island (peninsula really) and an aviary to enjoy.

From there we went on to lunch at Chigwell (not Chingford as the Kilsbys had originally planned, because the restaurant there let us down) in the picturesque old *King's Head* – inspiration for the *Maypole* in Dickens's *Barnaby Rudge*, which, with the church and the green, makes a charmingly rural scene.

Rather slow service at lunch, though the food was good, meant we arrived later than planned at Audley End



Not MHS members at the *King's Head*, but citizens of Chigwell at the *Maypole*. Drawing by Hablot Brown for *Barnaby Rudge* (1841)

(English Heritage), but there was enough time to tour the house and then either explore at least part of the grounds or visit the teashop. Impressive though this handsome Jacobean house is, what we now have is only a fragment of the immense mansion built 1605-14 by Thomas Howard, Earl of Suffolk, Lord Treasurer to James I. It had become so dilapidated by the mid-18th century that to save just a portion most of it was demolished. However what remains is magnificent, and visitors can see a number of different periods reflected in the rooms shown. There is a fine hall, with Jacobean Revival as well as original features, and there are two particularly good staircases. The original state apartments have fittings and furniture of later date. And as in so many grand houses the hand of Robert Adam left its mark here, especially in the dining parlour and two drawing-rooms. The chapel is 19th-century Gothick. Throughout there are some distinguished pictures by Holbein, Canaletto, Lely, Kneller, van Goyen (a favourite of mine) and others.

The grounds were landscaped in 1762 by 'Capability' Brown, who dammed the River Cam and got Adam to design an elegant bridge as a highlight. We saw coots nesting on the lake so formed. There is a picturesque stable block and a huge organic kitchen garden.

Finally we were whisked back home, mainly by Motorways 11 and 25, after a truly satisfying day. Our gratitude to Pat and Ray, and to Banstead Coaches for a comfortable coach and a steady driver.

Judith Goodman

In his *Sketches from Memory*, published in 1899, the artist G A STOREY, ARA, recollected his
SCHOOLDAYS AT MORDEN HALL IN THE 1840s



Events link themselves together so strangely in our memories that the least important seem to crop up unbidden and force themselves upon us. I was debating whether to say anything about my school-days, when the name of Sam Weller called to mind a character who was somewhat akin to him; indeed, he might have been a distant relation, for he had something of the same kind of humour, and his occupation was a similar one, only on a larger scale, for the individual I am reminded of was the boots and general servingman of the establishment at Morden Hall, in Surrey, where I received the first rudiments of my education.

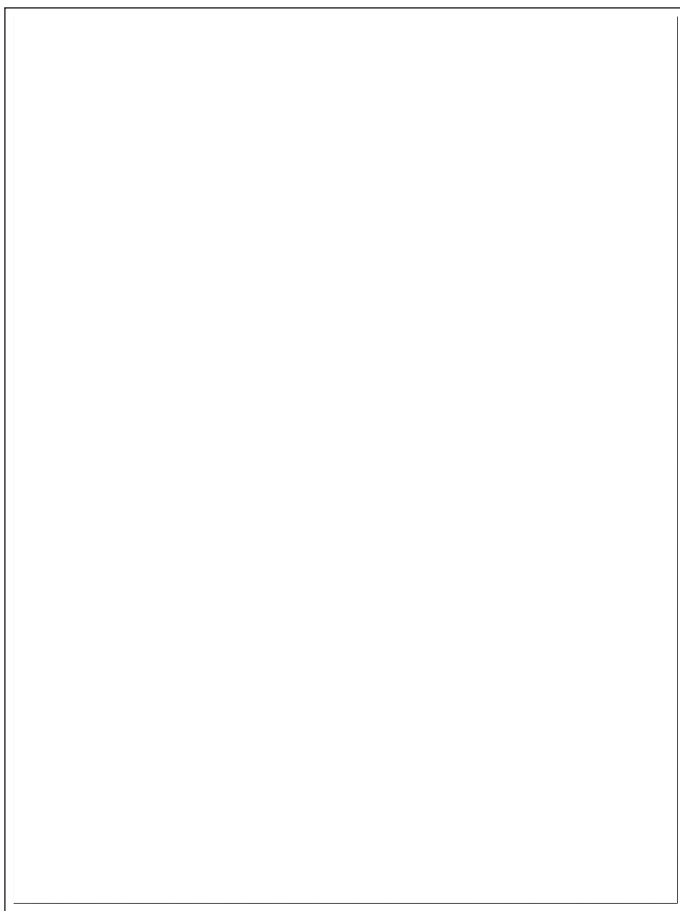
He was always at work, for he had to clean the knives and forks used by seventy boys, wait at their meals, carry in pails of water to the washingroom, clean all the boots, and look after the horse and trap kept by the headmaster. Still, he was cheerful. I can just remember he had light curly hair, a round, reddish, good-tempered face, and invariably appeared to be in a hurry. When he handed round the bread-and-scrape, great thick hunks, which were piled in heaps on his wooden tray, he ran down the tables as fast as he could, telling the boys he had no time for them to pick and choose. They made darts and grabs at the hunks, and a sort of scramble for their daily bread was the result. At dinner the boys were allowed to choose their meat, either fat or lean, well-done or under-done, and our humorous waiter would constantly bring well-done fat to those who wanted under-done lean, and under-done lean to those who wanted well-done fat. He told me one day, with a very serious countenance, that he was going to leave. When I asked him the reason, he said it was because he had no more "spit" left to clean the boots with. Polly, as he called the housekeeper or mistress, was, he said, so economical that she wouldn't buy blacking, and the consequence was that he was dried up. If the bell rang, he would sing out to a kind of chant or hymn tune, "Coming," skip over the forms, and dance out of the room.

To think, that out of all the inmates of Morden Hall, my memory should only single out the boots, whose very name I forget; especially as the headmaster, Mr. T. N. White, was one of the kindest of men. And I ought, certainly, to pay a tribute to the memory of Mr. H. P. Ashby, who was not only a clever artist, but my first instructor in painting. It was he who, at the giving away of the prizes at the end of a term, made me supremely happy. After all had been distributed, and I was lamenting that there was not one for me, he stepped forward and asked to be allowed to say one or two words. He had what appeared to be a little jewelcase in his hand, and when he held it up I could see it contained a silver palette. After a short speech, which I forget, but which made my heart beat violently, he called me by name and presented the palette to me, amidst the deafening shouts and hoorays of my schoolfellows, which still ring in my ears.

G A STOREY RA (1834-1919)

George Adolphus Storey was born in London on 7 January 1834. Even as a small child he was interested in painting and he seems to have had considerable natural artistic talent. As a boarder at Morden Hall Academy he was taught painting by Henry (Harry) Pollard Ashby (1809-1892), who lived at Wandlebank House in what is now Wandle Park. Ashby was a minor artist, son of a portrait and genre painter, also Henry, of Mitcham, and is said to have been an associate of Constable. Both Ashbys were RA exhibitors.

Only about 14 when he left school at Morden, Storey was sent to Paris to study mathematics and then returned to London to work in an architect's office. In 1850 he decided, just as his exact contemporary William Morris would, to abandon architecture and make art his career, and he entered Leigh's art school in Newman Street. At the age of only 18 he succeeded in having a picture accepted by the Royal Academy and at 20 he entered the Academy Schools.



Mistress Dorothy

His early work was pre-Raphaelite in style but he achieved more popularity with what a contemporary critic called his "capital De Hooghish Dutch interior style". Later he became better known for his portraits, his reputation dating from *Mistress Dorothy* (RA 1873), a young woman in riding-dress and broad-rimmed hat – the latter starting a short-lived fashion. Pastiche historical scenes formed another successful part of Storey's repertoire.

He settled in St John's Wood, home to many artists, and he became part of a group known as the St John's Wood Clique, whose members included Philip Hermogenes Calderon, George Dunlop Leslie, Henry Stacy Marks and William Frederick Yeames. They all favoured historical subjects and the poet Swinburne mocked them as "the School of Slashed Breeches". Storey writes amusingly in his autobiography of the Clique's attempts to persuade the wily print-dealer Ernest Gambart to purchase their paintings or reproduction rights to them. Though the artists' names are scarcely remembered today, most of us could recognise *When Did You Last See Your Father?* even if we couldn't name the painter (it was Yeames). In the National Portrait Gallery collection there are amusing photographs of Clique members posing in various fanciful costumes.

In 1876 Storey became ARA, and in 1900 he was appointed RA Teacher of Perspective. In 1914 he became RA, with automatic designation as Professor of Perspective. He died on 29 July 1919, having in the course of his long career exhibited 172 works at the RA. His anecdotal autobiography *Sketches From Memory* (1899) is copiously illustrated. There are works of his in private collections (*Mistress Dorothy* belongs to one of the Rothschilds), in the Victoria Gallery in Bath, the Walker Gallery, the Graves Gallery in Sheffield and, I am sure, elsewhere. If any reader can locate others of Storey's works I should be very interested to hear.

Principal sources:

C Forbes *The Royal Academy (1837-1901) Revisited* exhibition catalogue, New York 1975

C Wood *Victorian Painting* Weidenfeld & Nicolson, London 1999

Witt Library of the Courtauld Institute, file on G A Storey

Judith Goodman

**PETER HOPKINS reports on
LOCK, STOCK & DORRELL – A TREASURE MAP OF MERTON
ABBEY?**

In March I received a letter from David Saxby, the Museum of London Archaeology Service archaeologist responsible for excavations at the Merton Priory site. In it he enclosed a photocopy of the map reproduced opposite, asking if the Society could shed any light on it. Apparently it was dropped to the site c. 1987-1988 by someone from Sutton, but no-one knew who the donor was.

Although I have had to reduce it from an A3 sheet to fit the page, I have made no attempt to clean it up. The smudges in the corners show where tape was fixed when it was traced from the original.

Hidden in the discoloured area at the left-hand side is the heading, "COPY OF DOCTOR SHOCKWELL'S MAP 1653-1727", but MoLAS call it 'the treasure map', as it purports to locate a 'VAULTED ARCH' in which a box of plate had been hidden at the time of the dissolution of the Priory. The note on the right-hand side reads:

"Jeff, this vault is supposed to have been here in 1697 and was called the Arms Vault and a work by a Mr Betty existed then wherein he supposed that inside it lay a box of plate not deposited with Henry VIII and his commissioners. Mr Betty said that a king's coat of arms was kept within but didn't say which king or when."

MR BETTY'S HOUSE is depicted to the left of this note, with a HEDGEROW (marked by a hatched line) separating it from land held by MR BETTY. Above the house an arrow points to a structure labelled MR BETTY AND HIS VAULTED ARCH. To the left of this structure is a buttressed section of an apse, probably part of the Chapter House. STONE WALLS representing part of the Priory Church are also depicted, with one house built against the inside of the right-hand wall, labelled MR STOCKS HOUSE, and another in the centre of the Chancel area, labelled DORRELLS HOUSE. Land occupied by MR DORRELL is shown at the top. STABLES are shown to the left of the Church walls, and an OLD HOUSE in the corner of the west end. Trees grow within the former Chancel and east of the Chapter House. A FALLEN WALL is at the north east corner of the Chancel, and a [REBUILT] LOOSE PACKED WALL at the west end of the Church. A PIT is shown to the east of MR BETTY'S HOUSE, and several STONE PILES are depicted around the site – a reminder that the Priory ruins were still being used as a source of building stone in the locality. Just below the compass rose is a CARTER'S STONE HUT, and another HUT is shown among trees on the east bank of the river. A CHAPEL WITH STABLES is shown next to a water mill labelled MERRY MILL WATER MILL with a BRICK TIMBER BARN adjoining. A POND is shown to the right of the mill, and a DRY POND above it. On the west bank is another HUT, a length of FLINT AND LIMESTONE WALL with a GATE AND DOOR, CALLED NEWGATE. Another GATE AND DOOR abuts another length of FLINT AND LIMESTONE WALL running parallel to the river. A house is depicted in this area, labelled MR LOCKES. In the bottom right corner is a FALLEN BARN, STONE WALLS, MADE UP WALL, TIMBER AND RED BRICK. Above this is marked the SITE OF FORMER DWELLING, among the trees.

According to the key, the solid black lines represent WALLS OF ABBEY OR OTHER STONE BUILDINGS, a pecked line - - - depicts WALLS BURIED BUT STILL TO BE SEEN, curving fine lines delineate PATHS. Straight lines give measurements, though the map is not to scale. The crosses scattered between the church and the river show WHERE CORPSES WERE FOUND BY MR BETTY.

The names Lock[e] and Dorrell are well-known in the history of Merton, though not concurrently. There was one known reference to 'Mr Lock of Merton Abbey', but this map is the first piece of evidence to locate him at the property in which the Norman arch was later discovered. Merton Abbey was not one of the many properties owned by the Lock family. When Aubrey visited c. 1673 the house was occupied by 'Mr Pepys', who had bought the estate in 1668. One branch of the Lock family lived in Wimbledon until 1679 but the family's long connection with Merton itself had been thought to have ended in 1646 with the sale of Church House and Merton Holts, together with the tithes and other rectorial rights. In 1697 these properties and rights were bought by Robert Dorrell, whose son, John Dorrell, bought the lordship of the manor of Merton two years later. There was no manor house in Merton, although a farm and some leasehold cottages were sold along with the manorial rights, so perhaps the new lord of the manor lived in the house at Merton Abbey, small though it appears. However, a John Dorrell of Morden, husbandman, had died in 1624, and a Robert and Catherine Dorrell had leased the meadows now covered by Morden Hall Garden Centre, at some time before 1716, so the family may already have had local connections. Mr Betty's name has not so far appeared in local records, nor that of Mr Stock[s].

The name MERRY MILL attached to a mill on the site of the present Merton Abbey (Liberty) Wheelhouse is also a surprise. The Priory was known to possess a pair of mills known as the Amery Mills, but they were always believed to have been on the site later used as a copper mill and then for the Board Mills.

If this map is genuine then it casts doubts on some of our established ideas regarding Merton's history. If any reader has anything to offer on Dr Shockwell or his map, or Mr Betty and his work, please let us know!

“CALLED IN COMMON PARLANCE AFTER MERTON”

RAY NINNIS reviews *THE CLERK OF BASINGSTOKE, A Life of Walter de Merton*, Michael Franks, sometime Postmaster [Scholar] of Merton College, Oxford, Alden Press, Oxford 2003, paperback £12 (All profits from the book go to the Development Fund of Merton College.)

It is to be expected that a resident of the Borough of Merton, when visiting Rochester, might be aware (in addition to the Dickensian associations) that Walter de Merton is buried in the cathedral. But, having seen much of interest in the city and the cathedral, including Walter de Merton's tomb, it was only by chance that I noticed, among the postcards and numerous souvenirs on the cathedral's sales stall, a copy of this new biography.

In the preface tribute is paid to the main published sources of Walter's life: Hobhouse's *Sketch* (1859), Highfield's *Early Rolls of Merton College* (1964), Martin and Highfield's *A History of Merton College* (1997), and the relevant article in the *Dictionary of National Biography* ("soon to be replaced by a new article by Professor Martin"). Among many whose help is acknowledged is "Miss Barbara Webb of Worcester Park who guided me round Walter's manor of Malden, straddling the Hogsmill River" (some readers may recall a similar guided tour of the same area, but with emphasis on the activities of the artist Millais.

The introduction starts as a verbal visit to 13th-century England (pictorially enhanced by scenes from the Luttrell Psalter). This provides the historical setting for Walter's character and career, and concludes: "Walter's surname 'de Merton' itself reflects his rise in life, being derived from his association from boyhood with the Augustinian Merton Priory ...

[T]here is limited factual evidence about much of Walter's personal life ... but [his] main claim to our attention and interest rests upon his achievements during his life and his educational legacy – which are well recorded".

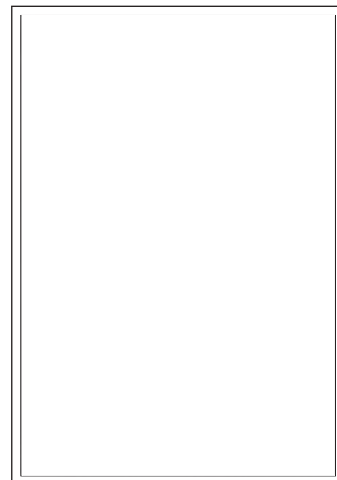
In 12 chapters including those devoted to Origins, Early Life and Education, Merton Priory – the Professional Clerk (c. 1220-38), Royal Service (c. 1235-42 and 1247-74), Serving the Prince Bishop (of Durham, c. 1241-47), the Foundation of Merton College (1262-74), Bishop of Rochester (1274-77) and Walter's Legacy, Mr Franks presents the documented events in his subject's personal and professional life. As well as the significance of Merton priory, Walter's activities in relation to the relatively local manors of Malden, Chessington and Farleigh, and the foundation of his college are dealt with at length. His six years spent in Durham, and the international nature of the medieval church are shown to have probably contributed to the development of Walter's ideas regarding the foundation of a college – and at Oxford.

Here also are found answers, or well-informed related speculation, to such questions as: why did "a well-to-do Hampshire family with land to farm (and probably a property portfolio to manage)" and (eventually) seven daughters to settle in life, launch their only son into a career in the Church?; why was Walter (probably) educated at Merton priory, and what did that education entail?; what was the connection between Merton priory and Mauer's Hall, situated on the east side of the Cornmarket, a few yards north of Carfax, and where Walter probably lodged while a student at Oxford?; are any of the surviving representations of Walter reliable evidence of his actual appearance, and why was he eventually assigned the 'differenced' arms of Clare?; why is it likely that Walter's fall from his horse, and subsequent death, occurred, not in Kent, but in Lincolnshire or Northamptonshire?; and why did *The Sunday Times* in 2000 include Walter among the 200 wealthiest individuals in Britain since 1066?

In spite of "lack of detail" regarding Walter's personal life, a convincing portrayal is provided of "a fascinating, multi-faceted character, at ease in all levels of society, a clerk who (eventually) became a bishop; a much loved and respected counsellor and friend; a generous host; a senior Royal servant (King's Clerk); Chancellor of England (twice, and effectively Regent when Edward I was away on Crusade); successful property speculator and developer; a first class lawyer and conveyancer; an educational visionary, and – at all times a devoted family man". The only hint of dissatisfaction comes from the Rochester Chronicler, Haddenham. Perhaps Walter was not as active on behalf of the diocese as he might have been, but it is suggested that his health may have been failing (he was only bishop in the last three years of his life) and in the spring of 1275 he was at Merton priory "spending much time on writing his will". Visits to Oxford and attending Parliament at Westminster follow, and even a final trip up to Durham barely a month before his death.

Some continental European interests of the English church before the Reformation may surprise, and at least one reader of this biography, if again he passes Ghent on the E40 and glimpses the cupola of St Peter's Abbey there, will be reminded of Walter and one thing he tried to do for Rochester while he was bishop.

The heading of this article is taken from an extract from the Latin Chronicle of Thomas Wykes, Canon of Osney, as translated by Thomas Braun, Dean of Merton College. The extract forms one of three appendices, which together with an extensive index and numerous maps, plans and coloured illustrations, complement the main text.



The 17th-century portrait of Walter that is in the Bodleian Library

LOCAL HISTORY WORKSHOP

Friday 27 June 2003 – 8 present, Judith Goodman in the chair.

- ◆ **Sheila Harris** had received from a Mrs Brooks the original contract papers between her grandfather and George Blay, builder, relating to the erection of four houses in Bushey Road SW20. Agreed that these should be sent to Surrey History Centre, but a copy would be retained in MHS archives. (Blay built many properties in and around Grand Drive in the 1920s and 1930s, including the large blocks of flats called Merton Mansions in Bushey Road.)

Also she had been sent by Katherine Watts, now living in Dorset, a typescript entitled 'A Child's view of Mitcham 1922-34'. She and her family lived in Berkeley Place, London Road (Plate 16 in *Old Mitcham*) before moving to Western Road when the old houses there were demolished. (The site is now the terrace of shops north of the Baron Grove junction with London Road.) An interesting account, it will initially be considered by the Editorial Sub-Committee.

- ◆ **Sue Mansell** reported on the recent demolition of the detached Edwardian (?) house latterly used as Rose Hill Community Centre (just over 'our' boundary, in Carshalton), the history of which she would like to research. Various sources were suggested, and Sue was recommended to start at Sutton Local Studies Library.

- ◆ **Lionel Green** had brought along Michael Franks' *The Clerk of Basingstoke – a Life of Walter de Merton*, borrowed from Ray Ninnis [see page 10].

He then he spoke about the appointments of bishops in medieval times, and how these were not always without controversy [see page 13].

- ◆ **ENM** outlined work in progress on re-writing his account of the calico-printing industries at Merton Abbey (first published 1992) to incorporate valuable new information provided by the late John Wallace of the John Innes Society, and Peter McGow of Croydon.

- ◆ **Judith Goodman** talked briefly on the Mitcham connections of George Haité (1825-71) [see *Bulletin* 125] and his son George Charles Haité (1855-1924). Both were textile designers, and the son, who lived most of his life at Bedford Park, was also an artist and illustrator. Peter Hopkins was able to confirm that a William Haité had earlier lived at the weatherboarded house The Nook, or White House, in Phipps Bridge Road (see Plate 13, facing page 70 of Evelyn Jowett's *A History of Merton and Morden*), the site of which has been redeveloped recently.

- ◆ **Don Fleming** drew attention to an article in *History Today* on the former William Morris home, Red House at Bexleyheath, where, during work by the National Trust, new features are coming to light. Pre-booked timed visits only.

Don also produced photos and correspondence relating to the early days at Banstead Hospital, passed to him by a retired nurse for safe-keeping. It was agreed that these should be offered to Surrey History Centre.

- ◆ **Peter Hopkins** produced an impressive array of annotated maps of Merton 'village' produced after analysis of the 1844 Tithe Map, and circulated pages from his computerised transcripts of the Merton and Morden Land Tax records 1780-1831. These, on disk, now form a potentially valuable database for future studies, providing information on land ownership and occupation.

- ◆ **Bill Rudd** concluded a useful meeting by describing findings from his latest up-dating survey of retailing outlets in Morden. Commencing over half a century ago, he has created a unique (and revealing) record of changes in shopping habits.

From his 'archive' he recently offered the Heritage Centre for exhibition an autographed programme of a performance of *Cavalleria Rusticana* at Covent Garden in 1967, in which Morden's Amy Shuard sang the role of Santuzza. Miss Shuard was first discovered as a schoolgirl by music teacher Miss Knight and went on to become an international opera singer.

Finally he was pleased to report that (perhaps prompted by an article contributed to the *Bulletin*) the Bazalgette tomb in St Mary's churchyard, Wimbledon, is to be restored, with help from English Heritage.

Eric Montague

Dates of next workshops:

Friday 26 September and Friday 21 November at 7.30pm at Wandle Industrial Museum

All are welcome

DON FLEMING reports:

THE 'ELIZABETH' EXHIBITION AT GREENWICH, or WELCOME BACK, ELIZABETH

It is remarkable that just one word, 'Elizabeth', has brought the crowds to the National Maritime Museum for this exhibition, which is running from 1 May to 14 September.

She was born on the site where the exhibition is, on 7 September 1533, and died on 24 March 1603 at her palace of Richmond – so it is appropriate she should return, after 470 years.

Dr David Starkey is the guest curator, who has done a superb job with the help of a talented team who have supported him on this project. Subtle use of lighting and theatrical effects enhance this exhibition.

The best use of this is on the armour of William Herbert, 1st Earl of Pembroke, which is the first thing you see on entry. He murdered two people when he was young, and was a lout. This did not stop him being popular at court. This gives us some clue as to the composition of Elizabeth's court. He had been a favourite of Henry VIII, made a fortune and was a good, tough, soldier. Also on display is the tournament armour of Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester.

The exhibition is in sections – Young Elizabeth; Elizabeth's England; Threat to the Crown (Mary Queen of Scots, of course); Expansion; and the Spanish Armada.

Throughout there are portraits of Elizabeth painted at various stages of her life. My favourite is the first you see on entering, painted when she was just 14, at about the time of her father's death. She has a slightly chubby face with a pointed chin. Her beautiful hands hold a book of devotion. At her right elbow is a large open book, to show us how studious she was. At this time she was nowhere near the throne, but I felt I was being exposed to Elizabethan 'spin'. She wears a beautiful red dress and a string of pearls, for purity, which she would wear all her life. Her black eyes look directly at me, questioning and suspicious, vulnerable and seeking reassurance.

There are letters she wrote and documents she signed. One letter is written in her most beautiful handwriting to her half-brother, King Edward VI. Cheerful and cheeky, it starts "Like as a shipman in stormy weather plucks down the sails, tarrying for better wind, so did I, most noble King, ..." She was 19.

One year later, in the spring of 1544, Edward was dead, and her half-sister Mary on the throne. Elizabeth was being escorted to the Tower of London on suspicion of treason. The writing of her letter to Mary at this time shows she was under great stress, and fearful. Many years later she said this was the most dangerous time of her life. She thought she would be beheaded as her mother had been.

Also on display are her saddle - she was an expert horsewoman - and her locket ring, which opened to show miniatures of herself and her mother, Anne Boleyn, with their joint motto 'Always the Same'.

For the price of my ticket I also received a booklet *Transcripts of Key Documents* which is first-class.

I have two minor quibbles:

On approaching the entrance there is a large screen which showed Dr Starkey glaring at me, which reminded me of Orwell's *1984*.

There is very little about Elizabeth's residences.

However, this is an excellent exhibition, and I intend to visit it again - but the young lady who handed me my ticket told me it is packed at weekends.

PS This is the first verse of a poem by Sir John Davies in honour of Elizabeth:

*E*mpresse of flowers, tell where away
*L*ies your sweet Court this merry May,
*I*n Greenewich Garden allies? [= alleys]
*S*ince there the heavenly powers do play
*A*nd haunt no other vallies.

[With two more verses this acrostic poem spells out *ELISABETHA REGINA*.]



Elizabeth I
from an early miniature portrait

MARGARET CARR

We have learned with sadness of the death on 14 August of Margaret Carr. She had been a member for many years and served as Honorary Secretary for 4½ years between 1988 and 1992. Margaret was an enthusiastic presence at lectures and visits and contributed several reviews to the *Bulletin*. In her quiet way she was a great support to the Society and will be much missed.

IN BRIEF

- ◆ We congratulate **Wandle Industrial Museum** on their new exhibition, which marks the bicentenary of the opening of the Surrey Iron Railway. They have also produced an all-colour fold-out guide to *The Iron Railways of the Wandle Valley* (£2 from the Museum).
- ◆ Autumn talks in Streatham Society's programme include '**The Work of English Heritage in London**' (Malcolm Woods) at 8pm on 3 November at Woodlawns, 16 Leigham Court Road, SW16.
- ◆ At **Merton Heritage Centre** look out for exhibitions on 'Lower Mitcham' (to 20 Sept), 'Wandle Valley Mapping Project' (30 Sept-25 Oct) and 'Merton during the 1980s' (11 Nov-12 Jan). Upstairs there will be reprises of 'Golden Jubilee' (23 Sept-5 Oct) and '999' (28 Oct-8 Nov).
- ◆ Coming up is **London Open House Weekend** on 20-21 September. Information from www.londonopenhouse.org and local libraries.
- ◆ This year's **Heritage Open Days**, everywhere except London, are 12-15 September. Information from www.heritageopendays.org or Heritage Open Days, The Civic Trust, 17 Carlton House Terrace, SW1Y 5AW. Mole Valley, for example, has an ambitious programme of events. Tel: 01306 879 327.

LIONEL GREEN finds that Merton priory was involved in:

SETTLING 13TH-CENTURY CHURCH DISPUTES

Priors of Merton were often called upon to arbitrate in church disputes. In 1221 Westminster Abbey chose the prior to help settle a quarrel with the bishop of London [*Bulletin* No.137 March 2001 p.13]. Here is another example.

In February 1235 Henry Sandford, bishop of Rochester, died. The monastic chapter met, and on 26 March they elected a new bishop, master Richard of Wendover. He was eminently suited, being a scholar, rector of Bromley and law officer of the diocese. Archbishop Edmund Rich felt that he had to defend the rights of Canterbury of which he was trustee, and refused to confirm the election. The monks of Rochester turned to the pope to do so. Pope Gregory IX appointed the abbot of Walden, the prior of Merton (Henry Basing) and the archdeacon of Northampton to determine the matter in England, as papal judge-delegates.¹ If the enquiry was not finalised within four months it was to be remitted to the pope.² The matter was not resolved within the four months, and on 29 August 1236 the pope mandated the abbot of St Alban, the prior of Merton and the archdeacon of St Alban to reconsider the case and decide within four months.³ The pope disallowed the findings of the panel on technical grounds (out of time?). The Rochester chapter sent representatives to the papal Curia to plead their case in Rome, and finally Richard of Wendover was allowed to be elected, but without prejudice to the archbishop's right of patronage over the see of Rochester. In November 1238 the archbishop consecrated Richard in the Augustinian church of St Gregory, Canterbury – a monastery founded by canons from Merton 115 years earlier. Four years later Richard of Wendover was petitioned by the canons of Merton "whom he was bound to hold in special favour for their shining life and conversation" to appropriate to them the church of Ryarsh, Kent.⁴

1 H Wharton *Anglia Sacra* 1691 I pp.348/9 This recounts the lives of English prelates to 1540.

2 *Cal. of Papal Registers* Vol. xviii p.148; A Heales *Records of Merton Priory* 1898 p.98

3 Heales *op.cit.* p.100 4 Heales *op.cit.* p.110

LIONEL GREEN on a topical story with echoes from the past:

SITUATIONS VACANT 2003 – BISHOP OF HEREFORD

A job advertisement for the post of bishop of Hereford has appeared in certain church newspapers. Candidates must be over 30, and no interview will be necessary. Applicants need not even be a priest.¹

The see of Hereford was founded AD676. When a vacancy for bishop occurred in 1129 Pain Fitzjohn, sheriff of Hereford, and Miles de Gloucester, royal constable, recommended an Augustinian canon, Robert de Bethune, to be elected, but Robert was loath to accept. His CV would have stated that he had studied under Anselm of Laon, and became an Augustinian canon at Llanthony. Briefly he worked in the building trade as a mason at Weobley, and later returned to Llanthony as prior. Robert was consecrated bishop of Hereford at Merton priory on 28 June 1131 and was impressed by the standards maintained by the canons at Merton.² Miles de Gloucester became earl of Hereford in 1141, but Bishop Robert found he had to excommunicate him two years later, for unreasonable demands on church lands. Robert died in 1148 when attending the Council of Reims.

1 Thomas Becket was not a priest when he was elected archbishop in 1162.

2 M L Colker 'Latin Texts concerning Gilbert, founder of Merton' in *Studia Monastica* 12 (1970) p.243: "...though he had inspected many Augustinian houses, he approved of the practices of none so much as Merton..."

**DAVID LUFF gives the background to
THE EXCAVATION OF BENNETT'S MILL 2002**

Until the summer of 1974 the former millpond and the waterwheel channel from the former Bennett's works were still part of the Liberty Print Works site. Across part of the channel during my Liberty years there used to be a small wooden building which was always referred to as 'the lab'. Harry Green used it as an office-cum-laboratory of sorts. Harry used to be the works dyer, mixing the dyes for the fabrics, and not the colours used for printing.

A tranquil scene looking down the ditch, with Liberty's new office block to the left and Littlers Close. Taken only twenty years ago, it is hard to imagine now the industrial buildings that once stood each side of the road (D Luff)



The concrete foundation pillars of the former CITB workshops protruding through those of Bennett's mill. (D Luff)

Although the CITB used or made alterations to most of their workshops they did demolish the 1905 wash-house along with the later 1968-built one. They then built a number of workshops, and, as the millpond area was considered unstable and part of the screen store shed was still standing, they were constructed on the southern bank of the millpond.

Having corresponded with Parnall's wartime architect for the Liberty site, and having seen all his plans for the workshops, I do know that there were none for the former Bennett's mill site. It was anyway far too restricted to be of any real use. An access road would have been an essential part, without which no workshop could have functioned, and one was never built.

In 1972 Liberty sold the works to Vita Tex Ltd, who then sold the southern part of the site for almost as much as they had paid for the entire works. The new owner was the Construction Industry Training Board. They had no use for the millpond, and an immediate start was made to drain and fill in.

One interesting aspect of the land sale was that even though over 100 years had passed since Littler had merged the two works along with a complete reconstruction, the easiest way to divide the site recreated the former works area of Bennett's and John Leach.



To the left, two of the CITB workshops on the Bennett's site, c.1980 (D Luff)

With only trespass access to the site, an in-depth photo record could not be undertaken. Uncovered were extensive remains of building foundations, and on both sides of the waterwheel channel. Some were of the Liberty years, and a large concrete block could have been for the post-war oil tank for the boilers. The boilers were housed in the middle one of three workshops and had the flues running under the northern one to the chimney.

The Museum of London team found the remains of a number of furnaces and possibly the site of a steam boiler that was known to have been here some time after 1802.

Along with fragments of woad, madder and indigo dyes there were deposits of coal ash. Coal at this time would have come from the Midlands along the canals to the Thames at Brentford and then down river. From Wandsworth it went by road or the Surrey Iron Railway to the various customers.

My personal view is that Bennett would have purchased coal from some coal merchant rather than order directly from the mines, and therefore would not have invested in an expensive siding from the SIR. There is no known siding from the SIR to Bennett's mill, and had one been built it would have required a bridge over the Pickle ditch. The coal would have been expensive, but it is far more efficient than wood or peat. The number of furnaces, six of which I understand were uncovered, along with the boiler, does indicate a fair amount of coal being used. Just how much is open to debate.

The entire site could not be completely excavated due to the banks of Bennett's ditch having been raised as a prevention against flooding. Liberty had washing facilities alongside and across the ditch, as most likely did Bennett and Littler. These unexcavated foundations are all that now remain of Bennett's Mill. Once the Museum of London team had completed their dig, all the foundations were broken up and removed before the area was backfilled.

At one meeting I attended at Merton Abbey Mills a spokesperson for Countryside Properties plc, with hand on heart, absolutely assured me that they would protect and look after all the local environment there, and its history. In reply I told him his words were a load of unprintable, and so far I have been proved to be correct.



The former waterwheel channel from Bennett's mill, that had been buried since 1974. Looking south to Bennett's ditch (D Luff)



The former waterwheel channel from Bennett's mill, looking north (D Luff)

[For a detailed history of the site see David Luff *Trouble at Mill Merton* Historical Society 2002, (£2.40 to members; £2.95 to others) – Ed.]

**53rd ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
SNUFF MILL ENVIRONMENTAL CENTRE, MORDEN HALL PARK
SATURDAY 1 NOVEMBER 2003 at 2.30 pm**

AGENDA

- 1 Chairman's welcome. Apologies for absence
- 2 Minutes of the 52nd AGM held on 2 November 2002
- 3 Matters arising from the Minutes
- 4 Chairman's Report
- 5 Membership Secretary's Report
- 6 Treasurer's Report: reception and approval of the financial statement for the year 2002-03, copies of which will be available at the meeting
- 7 Election of Officers for the coming year
 - a) Chairman
 - b) Vice Chairman
 - c) Hon. Secretary
 - d) Hon. TreasurerAppointment of the Hon. Examiner for the coming year
- 8 Election of a Committee for the coming year
- 9 Motions of which due notice has been given
- 10 Any other business

At the conclusion of the business part of the Meeting there will be short talks by members of the Society.

NOMINATIONS for Officers and Committee members should reach the Hon. Secretary 14 days before the AGM, though additional nominations may be received at the AGM, with the consent of members.

MOTIONS for the AGM must be sent to the Hon. Secretary in writing at least 14 days before the meeting.

Please bring this copy of the Agenda with you to the AGM.

The MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY reminds members that subscriptions are due on 1 October. The current rates are:

Single member	£7
Additional member in same household	£3
Student member	£1

A renewal form is enclosed with this Bulletin. Please complete it and return it with your subscription to the Membership Secretary, or in person at a meeting. Members who have already arranged to pay their subscriptions by Banker's Standing Order should **ignore** this renewal form.

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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