



VICE PRESIDENTS: Arthur Turner and Lionel Green

BULLETIN NO. 120

DECEMBER 1996

FORTHCOMING PROGRAMME

Saturday 7th December 2.30 p.m. Snuff Mill Environmental Centre
Surrey and the Picture Postcard. An illustrated talk by John Gent of Croydon Natural History and Scientific Society.

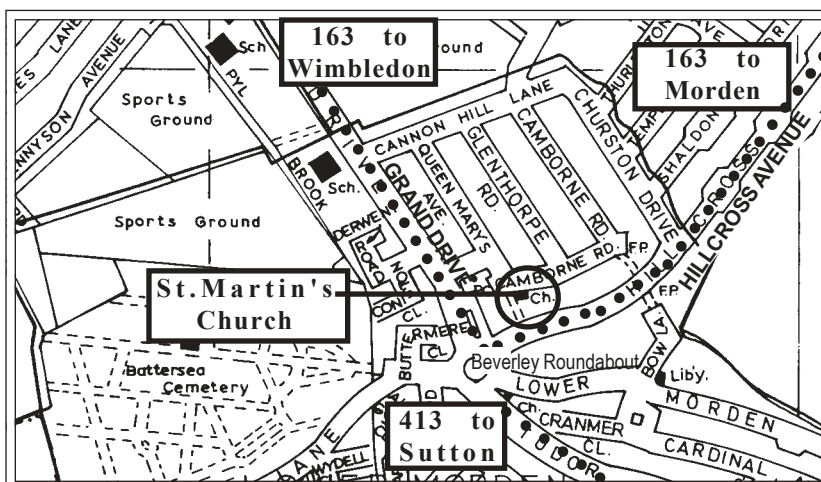
Saturday 18th January 2.30 p.m. Snuff Mill Environmental Centre
Merton in the National Monument Record. An illustrated talk by Diana Hale of the National Monument Record.

(For the Snuff Mill Centre drivers should park in Morden Hall Garden Centre Car Park and take the path across the bridge, go through the gateway, and turn right towards Morden Cottage.)

Saturday 22nd February 2.30 p.m. Merton Heritage Centre, The Canons
The Story of Croydon Airport. An illustrated talk by Doug Cluett, Chairman of Croydon Airport Society.

(The Canons is in Madeira Road, Mitcham, next to the Leisure Centre.)

Friday 14th March 8.00 p.m. St. Martin's Church, Camborne Road
The Story of Lower Morden. An illustrated talk by Bill Rudd.



REPORT ON ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 1996

The President, Viscountess Hanworth, and 37 members attended the AGM on Saturday 9 November at the Snuff Mill Centre. After the previous year's minutes had been approved Peter Hopkins presented his last Chairman's report (printed below). He then informed the members that our President had decided, with regret, to stand down. Bill Rudd, on behalf of the Society, paid tribute to Lady Hanworth (see below), and Sheila Harris presented a bouquet. In her reply Lady Hanworth spoke warmly of the Society, praised its work, and promised to stay in touch.

Bill Sole reported that membership numbers, at 108, had been maintained.

The Treasurer's report (see statement of accounts below) was presented by David Luff, who commented on the current healthy reserves, but pointed out that at present we paid much less than commercial rates for printing and hall hire. He thanked Miss Mould, who was standing down as Hon Auditor, for all her help. The report was accepted. Election of officers and committee members en bloc then took place (list on back page). Eric Montague, the new Chairman, thanked Geoff Down, Marjorie Ledgerton, and Bill Rudd, who were standing down from the committee.

Audrey Thomas's offer to act as Hon Auditor was approved by the membership and gratefully accepted.

With Eric Montague's appreciation of Peter Hopkins' term as Chairman the meeting ended.

Eric Montague, who had kindly agreed to stand in for Paul Rutter, who had moved to Cheshire, then presented an interesting illustrated talk on Morden Hall Park, linking its present appearance to its history. This was much enjoyed by all present.

Judy Goodman

The Chairman's Report for 1995-1996

The last year has been as eventful as usual. Our programme of lectures and visits has covered a broad spectrum of topics, led both by members of the Society and visiting speakers. Judy Goodman's excellent lecture on William Morris at Merton, at last month's Evelyn Jowett lecture remains in our memories, as does Tony Scott's refreshing guided walk around Mitcham's historic pubs in September, but another in-house event took us further afield, when Marjorie Ledgerton revealed some Merton connections with Australia in March. Most of our subjects were much nearer home, though December's lecture by John Cloake on the Charterhouse of Shene took us further back in time, as did Anthony Shaw's long awaited talk on the Huguenots of Wandsworth in February. January took us, in mind if not in body, to Fulham Palace, under the guidance of Miranda Poliakoff, whereas we actually visited Crystal Palace in May after our talk by Ian Bevan in April. We also visited Nonsuch Mansion House in June, Wimbledon Village in July and Carshalton in August, and our thanks go to Gerald Smith, Norman Plastow and Doug Cluett for leading these visits.

Numbers on the visits have been encouraging, and the Huguenot lecture at the Canons was packed to capacity, but the turnout at our evening lectures in particular has been disappointing. We surveyed the membership to find out preferences over the times we hold our lectures, and the numbers split equally between only having Saturday evening lectures and keeping the mixture as at present. However, your Committee feels that the Snuff Mill, though excellent for afternoon gatherings, is not the ideal venue for evening meetings, and is hoping to be able to arrange future evening lectures at more suitable venues. In March we will be visiting St. Martin's church in Lower Morden, and the October Evelyn Jowett lecture will hopefully be in Raynes Park, as the lectures relate to these areas. At the moment the April lecture is booked for here, but hopefully another venue can be arranged in time.

The Workshops have continued to flourish, though it would be good to widen the clientele. Monty, Bill Rudd and I have also attended the three introductory meetings relating to the Millennium Project organised by the Surrey Archaeological Society. It is taking a while to take shape but we should soon be in a position to pass on information to members, perhaps in the March Bulletin.

Members have also been involved on a consultancy basis, attempting to ensure that information boards and displays around the Borough are accurate, though not always with success. Monty has not been able to ascertain the source of the date displayed on the front of the refurbished White Hart at Mitcham, but his notes were used for the displays inside (though the spelling mistakes are not his!), and at Park Place. Bill Rudd has also provided information to the management at Morden Hall, and has continued to supply the Heritage Centre with artifacts from our Store to use in their excellent exhibitions. More from Bill on this subject later.

Several members of the Society are involved in other organisations, some on a personal basis, and others as our representatives, and they keep your Committee up to date. Monty was responsible for suggesting we wrote to the local Council expressing concern over the piecemeal approach to Heritage in the Borough. This has led to the setting up of a Heritage Working Group, with representatives from the various bodies promoting the Borough's heritage, to keep up to date on what each group is doing and to encourage a united approach. Next week the Humanities Adviser for Merton schools will be talking to the group. We have already established contact with him, and have managed to deal with an enquiry passed on by him, one of many received and answered by our range of experts. Monty has provided several archaeological assessments to help identify the potential of various sites in the Borough, and Bill Sole's one-man campaign to get archaeological assessments automatically included in all planning applications seems to be making an impact at long last - he actually found one application which already included it!

On the topic of archaeology, Bill Rudd has proceeded further with uncovering the foundations of the wheelwright's workshop in Morden churchyard, first revealed in the hurricane of 1987. We look forward to an update from him in due course in the Bulletin.

The Bulletin has continued to provide an interesting mix of reports, articles and research projects, and we are grateful to all who have contributed over the year, but especially to Marjorie Ledgerton for the excellent job she has made of editing them each quarter. Sadly, Marjorie is on the verge of moving to Sussex, and has had to relinquish the post, but we know the Bulletin will continue to flourish in the hands of our new Editor, Judy Goodman.

Hopefully you have all seen the latest two booklets in the Historic River Wandle series, with text by Monty and illustrations by Peter Harris. Once again, these were published for us by Merton Library Service, which meant that the only cost to the Society was for the various drafts circulated among the Editorial Sub-Committee. Another publication was the Memories of Lower Morden in our Local History Notes series. There are several booklets in preparation, so start saving up!

As you can see, the Committee has been very busy on your behalf, and as I reach the end of my three years as Chairman I would like to express my gratitude to them all for their support and their hard work. The task of Chairman is not an onerous one when you have such capable colleagues as I have had. A special thank you is due to Sheila Harris for her efficiency as Secretary, (as well as organising refreshments at meetings) and to Sheila and Peter for letting us use the Wandle Industrial Museum for Committee and Workshop meetings. Also special thanks to Madeline Healey, who, though having a year off the Committee, has continued to unlock and set up the Snuff Mill for us. Bill Rudd is looking forward to having a year off the Committee, having served yet another three year stint, and Marjorie Ledgerton and Geoff Down are also stepping down due to moving away. We are glad that several new members are offering to stand for the Committee this year. Another faithful friend of the Society is standing down this year. Winifred Mould has served as Hon. Auditor since retiring as Treasurer, and we are grateful to her for this and for all the help she has given to her successor. She feels it is now time for someone else to take on this important task. Thank you again, Winifred.

Finally I would like to thank each one of you for your support over the past three years, and ask that you will continue to give your support to your new Committee, as I am sure you will.

Peter Hopkins

An Appreciation of our Retiring President, Viscountess Hanworth

In giving this appreciation I would like, for the benefit of new members, and those who may be new to the district, to put them in the picture about Merton Historical Society. The Merton and Morden Historical Society was founded in March 1951, Festival of Britain Year, and at the same time the Merton and Morden Festival of Britain Local Committee published 'A History of Merton and Morden' by Miss Evelyn M. Jowett, Senior Librarian, and four co-authors. The first history of the ancient parishes.

In the Civic Society's Merton and Morden week 19 to 26 May 1962, the Merton and Morden Historical Society held an exhibition called 'Footpath to Pavement', sub-titled 'Our Town in the Making'. The one thing I always remember is a cartoon of two scruffy ancient Britons leaning on a barrier pole grinning down at Roman soldiers building the Roman Road. I joined the Society at the exhibition and was sent the latest Programme, and discovered that on the 12/13 May a survey was carried out on the Liberty Print Works site to discover traces of the vanished Merton Priory. I was more interested in the prospect of seeing the Liberty Print Works where I had worked after leaving school in December 1939. In the event I took part in the excavations and was able to take photographs of the Works buildings which were still largely intact. These are now an invaluable record. It was the start of my interest in archaeology and local history research.

The Merton and Morden Historical Society had as President, Lt. Col. H.F. Bidder, D.S.O., M.A., F.S.A, who was responsible for the discovery of the Anglo-Saxon burial ground in Mitcham, and the surviving foundations of Merton Priory in waste land in Station Road. He also, had lived at Ravensbury Manor in Morden. I was present at the unveiling of a Commemorative stone by Lt. Col. Bidder in a little garden, wedged between the factories that had been built over the site of the Priory. Merton and Morden Historical Society became, in 1965 after the formation of the new London Borough of Merton, the Merton Historical Society, and was able to take in the parish of Mitcham. We conveniently leave Wimbledon in the safe hands of the Wimbledon Society.

After Lt. Col. Bidder died at his Oxfordshire home in 1968, at the age of 92, one item on the Society's Committee Agenda was the matter of a new President. It was suggested that an approach be made to the Viscountess Hanworth in the hope that she might accept. The Society had already made the acquaintance with her ladyship when on 8 August, 1964, members visited the excavation at Rapsley Roman Villa site, near Ewhurst, Surrey. Furthermore, she had given a lecture on the excavation at a meeting 23 March, 1968, at the Morden Central Library. A report appeared in the M.H.S. Bulletin No. 14 July 1968. Later we were all delighted to learn that Lady Hanworth had agreed to become our new President. She attended the A.G.M. 8 November 1969. We have had the pleasure of her association with us ever since.

When an urgent call came in 1971 from the President for volunteers to assist in the rescue excavation of the Binscombe II Roman Villa, near Godalming, I went along to help within my capability. I unashamedly admit to have been in awe of her presence. This changed when she called me across to help her clean up a floor comprised of small stone blocks. I thought they looked like Oxo cubes. I found out how warm, cheerful and, if she'll excuse the term, literally down-to-earth matey sort of person she was. And again when she came along with her friend Miss Smith in the early stages of the Merton Priory excavation in 1976. In 1977 she chaired a Symposium on 'Recent Archaeological Work in South West London'. In 1988 she gave a lecture 'The Iron Age in the Wandle Valley', both in the Morden Central Library.

We as a Society and as individuals have much enjoyed having your Ladyship as our President for 27 years. We understand the circumstances which, sadly, have necessitated your resignation. Be reassured, as we have had your support for all those years, so we support you now. On behalf of the Committee and the members of Merton Historical Society I would like to state that we hold you in high regard. We have been most honoured indeed to have had you as our President. We sincerely hope that you may find it possible to keep in touch with us. We offer you our most grateful thanks.

Bill Rudd

Membership Secretary's Report

For the year 1995/96 the total membership was 108. The subscriptions total was £589.00.

Subscriptions for 1996/7 are now overdue. Those members who had not renewed at the time of going to press will find a reminder in their copy of the Bulletin. Payment can be made by Standing Order.

C E Sole

Statement of Accounts for the year ending 30th September 1996

Income			Expenditure		
Balance brought forward from 1-10-95			Bulletin	123.48	
Midland Bank	337.04		Affiliation fees	80.00	
Nationwide Anglia Building Society	1059.79		Lecturers' Expenses & Donations	132.21	
Petty Cash	00.02	1396.95	Hire of Halls, etc.	72.00	
Subscriptions and Donations	639.59		Stationary	12.33	
Teas at Meetings	24.13		Telephone	1.10	
Midland Bank Interest	6.94		Postage	86.81	508.93
Nationwide Building Society Interest	26.38	697.04			
Sale of Publications	202.71	202.71	Publications	173.00	173.00
		2296.70			681.93

Balance 30-9-96

Midland Bank	528.16	
Nationwide Building Society	1086.17	
Petty Cash	00.34	1614.67

David Luff

We are affiliated to:-

London & Middlesex Archaeological Society

Surrey Local History Council

Surrey Archaeological Society

Town Trails

SCOLA (Standing Council on London Archaeology)

Merton Arts Council

FROM OTHER SOCIETIES

Don't forget that this society receives publications from several other bodies, and these contain articles on a huge range of subjects. For instance, the Bourne Society Bulletin has been running a series by their pub history group, and No.165 has a piece on the Nalders of Nalder & Collyer, the Croydon brewers. I admit that I knew nothing of Streatham's old silk factory until I read about it in Streatham Pump (and went to look at it). LAMAS's newsletter always lists a variety of lectures, visits and publications, and KUTAS's concerns are almost local to us. If you are not sure who lies behind these acronyms have a word with Tony Scott, our 'librarian'. All this literature is available from him for you to borrow.

By the way, Vol 83 (1996) of Surrey Archaeological Collections contains an excellent article, 'Merton Mills and Wandlebank House' by our own Eric Montague. Not to be missed.

The Editor

CARSHALTON WALK

Sixteen members set out from Honeywood, the Carshalton Heritage Centre, on a very hot day in August, for a fascinating walk led by Doug Cluett, the Heritage Officer. Honeywood, with a culvert flowing under the house into the ponds, reflects the fact that Carshalton is built on water. Water power was the basis for its industry, and the reason for the settlement there. But water is also the reason for the survival of so many historic and listed buildings. There was no road south of the ponds until 1825. This date appears over a culvert and step below the High Street. The North Street bridge replaced a muddy causeway in 1829. The fact that the ponds had to be forded meant that it was not easy to pass through the town. Unlike Sutton, which grew up as a way to other places, Carshalton remained relatively untouched for generations.

One of the oldest buildings is the 18th-century Greyhound Inn, originally two distinct buildings. The Lodge next door to Honeywood was probably built about the same time as the Greyhound, though its Dutch gables were rebuilt in the late-19th century. The house next door to the Coach and Horses was a former mill. The Wine Bar adjoining, until recently a butcher's shop, may well have originated as a priest's house. There have been a number of clergy houses over the centuries, but the house known as The Old Rectory, from around 1700, now used as an Ecology Centre, was never the actual Rectory, but the private home of a former rector.

Another misnomer is Ann Boleyn's Well, probably originally the well of Our Lady of Boulogne. The Boulogne family held the manor in the 11th and 12th centuries, and gave the advowson of the church to Merton Priory. The well has recently been re-consecrated. Near by, built into the churchyard wall, is an unusual building, now used as a garden store, but previously a bier house, and before that the Fire House, with its hand-drawn hand-pumped fire engine. Until 1836 a dwelling, known as Dame Duffin's Cottage, occupied the site.

Another spring, now often dry, feeds Margaret's Pool, named after John Ruskin's mother, who died in 1871. Ruskin had the pool cleared in her memory, and set up a stone with this inscription: *In obedience to the Giver of Life, of the brooks and fruits that feed it, of the peace that ends it, may this well be kept sacred for the service of men's flocks and flowers and be by kindness called Margaret's Well.*

Near by can still be seen a pump, next to the site of the former Police Station, now a public open space, an unusual and welcome change in the use of land.

Another outstanding feature of Carshalton is the 200 year old London Plane tree in Festival Walk. An inscription of 1964 gives its girth as 20 feet and its height as 123 feet, making it the third tallest in England. The watercourse running alongside, usually dry and overgrown, has recently been the scene of 'improvements' which mean that it can no longer cope with heavy rain, causing a backwash and flooding, which threaten to damage the Water Tower situated at the far end. The Water Tower had a lead cistern at the top, into which water from the wells was pumped to provide a pressured water supply to Carshalton House. The surviving half of the water wheel is at present being restored.

Carshalton House represents the manor of Kynnersley, whilst the manor of Stone Court included the Grove and most of the North Street area. The main manor of Carshalton was that later known as Carshalton Park, which until the present century bordered the High Street and Pound Street. In 1722 Thomas Scawen inherited the estate, and proposed to build a great new house in Carshalton Park. The design, by Giacomo Leoni, was published in 1742 in Leoni's translation of *The Architecture of L. B. Alberti*, and a new park wall, two miles in length, was built in which great gates of hammered iron were set. Some of the wall still stands, but the new house was never finished. The gates were sold early this century, reputedly being taken to America, though some say that the fine gates at the top of Cecily Hill in Cirencester, opening into Earl Bathurst's Cirencester Park, came from Carshalton Park. The bridge over the Lower Pond is popularly attributed to Leoni, and stands as a gateway to the Wandle, as it flows from one of its sources here at Carshalton through Merton and on to the Thames.

Peter Hopkins

HISTORIC PUBS OF MITCHAM - A walk led by Tony Scott

Under Tony's guidance an enthusiastic party enjoyed an afternoon of looking at and learning about a variety of Mitcham's pubs - both old and new. We rewarded our exertions with refreshments at Mitcham's newest pub and at the most recently refurbished one.

The *Three Kings* stands close to the common's oldest pond, whose western ditch keeps it filled. There were buildings here by the mid-18th century, and the pub appears in a directory of 1823, though the present 'Tudor' building dates only from 1928. The licensee from 1826-45 was Joshua Hancock, whose family built the two rows called Hancock's Cottages close by.

The *Beehive* was probably a private house before the Alehouse Act of 1830, which entitled anyone to register private property to sell ale. The front room of the original house has had a porch added. Alfred Frank Pays, born on the premises, was licensee from 1928-1986 - a national record.

Surprisingly, the *Windmill* is thought to have taken its name from an experimental horizontal windmill which once stood behind No 1 Commonside West. Converted from a private house c1800, its entrance has been resited, but original beams are visible inside. One licensee was a captain of Mitcham CC.

Tony explained that *Ravensbury Arms* nearby was so named because it belonged to Ravensbury Manor. It was also known as Blue House. A mile towards Croydon the next pub was known as Red House, and races along this strip used to take place (some might say they still do!). The manorial pound was behind the pub, whose landlord kept the key, and no doubt took a percentage from the fines.

Park Place has opened only this summer as Mitcham's newest pub. The site, occupied since the 14th century, was once called 'Allmannesland'. In 1773 Francis Gregg, attorney, was permitted by the Manor of Vauxhall (Canterbury Cathedral) to enclose. In 1780 he rebuilt the house as a 3-storey building, which, now minus its top floor, survives as the wing. Later it was bought by the Cranmer family, owners of The Canons, and it became their manor house. The main block dates from 1820-30. Later occupants included the YMCA, and from 1922 *News of the World*, who laid out a training ground, which was also used by local athletes, and built houses in Commonside West and Madeira Road for some employees. The Borough of Merton bought Park Place c1965 for department offices, and now Whitbreads have a 125-year lease. Their new decor includes some interesting historical items.

Now a private house again, the *Britannia*, in Cricket Green, was built c1785, and converted to a pub by 1832. It closed c1910, and the licence was extinguished in January 1911. Fortunately its pretty stained glass 'Britannia' emblems survive. Possibly to replace the *Britannia*, and to cater for occupiers of new houses nearby, the *Queen's Head* was built c1930.

The rear part of the *Burn Bullock*, once the *King's Head*, is thought to be the farmhouse recorded on the site in 1610. There used to be a forge at the back, before the cricket pavilion of 1904 was built. In the 18th century the *King's Head* was a coaching inn. The front was rebuilt c1760, when stage coach services to the coast had begun to operate on the turnpike road. Some windows have been blanked off, probably to evade window tax. The cornice, shell porch and bow windows are all Edwardian. Parish vestry meetings used to be held here before Vestry Hall was built. Burn Bullock, born in 1895, a notable local and county cricketer, was licensee until his death in 1954. When his widow retired in 1975 the brewery renamed the pub, already called by many patrons the *Burn Bullock*.

The *Cricketers* was a pub by 1789, though known as the *Swan* until 1824. It used to serve as changing room and clubhouse, and one licensee played in the first test match in Melbourne. The pub was built on common land of the Manor of Vauxhall, and, as at *Ravensbury Arms*, the landlord held the key of the pound, on the site of Vestry Hall. The original wooden *Swan* was rebuilt in brick c1800. The replacement building of the 1850s was destroyed on 23 September 1940 by a delayed action bomb. The present premises were opened by Alec and Eric Bedser in 1958.

The first known record of the *White Hart* is a lease transfer of 1609. In 1749 the Lord of the Manor permitted rebuilding. Excavation behind the neighbouring building has yielded a glazed stoneware tankard inscribed 'Thomas Harrison 1763' - Harrison was the licensee at the time. This pub has been refurbished recently and now has an interesting display of historic pictures and artefacts.

This was an enjoyable visit, with a knowledgeable guide. Thank you, Tony, and how about Mitcham pubs Part 2 next year?

Judy Goodman

EVELYN JOWETT LECTURE - WILLIAM MORRIS AT MERTON

Judy Goodman gave this year's Evelyn Jowett Memorial Lecture, on 11 October at the Snuff Mill Environmental Centre. An interested audience was treated to an excellently researched talk with a wealth of information about the life and talents of William Morris, with special reference to his 15 years at Merton Abbey.

After a brief resumé of his life from his childhood at Walthamstow, through his time at Marlborough, his experiences and realisation of his talents at Oxford, his marriage to the stunning Jane Burden, and the formation of 'The Firm', Judy then went on to explore in detail his years at Merton.

Morris and the potter William De Morgan looked at many sites, including Crayford and Battersea, before settling for the site on the River Wandle, where the previous occupiers, Welch & Co., had made tablecloths exhibited at the Great Exhibition. On 7 June 1881 the lease for the workshops on a 7-acre site was signed, and by December 1881 production was in progress, in the weaving sheds, dye house, and stained-glass workshop.

The site was in Merton, which Morris described as 'that woeful suburb'. However the site itself was charming and rural, with orchards, meadows and gardens. It was in many ways an idyllic setting, and the workers were cheerful and happy. Their numbers varied, with fewer than 50 in 1894. Apprentices were taken on for the various trades. Boys were found to be especially good at tapestry-weaving, whereas girls were more adept at carpet-weaving. The many visitors to the site were impressed by the standard of work achieved, and by the happy atmosphere.

Judy showed us many slides of the original workshops, as well as maps of the period which indicated the locations of the buildings. We also saw slides of two of Morris's best-known chintz designs: 'Strawberry Thief', inspired by the thrushes which stole strawberries in the garden at Kelmscott Manor; and the 'Wandle', the nearest to a geometric design, and the one with the largest repeat.

Judy quoted from a contemporary account of the site to support her belief that De Morgan's kilns were in the High Street, probably in the old copper-mill, rather than at the location suggested in *William Morris at Merton*, published by LBM Libraries and the Museum of London. However De Morgan stayed at Merton only until 1887.

It was during his time at Merton Abbey that Morris became an active Socialist. He addressed the local branch at 11 Merton Terrace in the High Street (destroyed in the last war), and the Mitcham branch in a shed in Western Road at the corner of Fountain Place, opposite the Holborn Union workhouse. In his diary Morris recorded how downcast he felt 'amongst these poor people in their poor hutch', after a Mitcham meeting.

Morris died on 3 October 1896, aged 62, worn out, it was said, by having done the work of ten men. One of his textile workers wrote to Jane Morris, 'Dear Madam, I loved and honoured my master'. Work continued at Merton Abbey, under Henry Dearle, but gradually went into decline, with only 15 workers recorded in 1930. Morris & Co finally went into voluntary liquidation in May 1940. Merton Board Mills, which had already begun to absorb the site, took over the rest after the war. Most of the site is now covered by Savacentre, but in 1992 the Museum of London Archaeological Service carried out excavations on part of the remainder, before Trellis House flats were built by Shaftesbury Housing.

Judy Goodman used many of Morris's own words, slides from rare books, prints and periodicals, and old maps, to shed light on a part of the fascinating and diverse life of William Morris.

Sheila Harris

LOCAL HISTORY WORKSHOPS

The next meetings are on Friday 24th January 1997 and Friday 7th March 1997 starting at 7.30 pm at the Wandle Industrial Museum. All are welcome.

UNKNOWN AND YET SO WELL KNOWN

Many memorials have been built commemorating the great battles of history and the leaders of the victorious armies but the idea of an unknown soldier being buried with honour is a comparatively recent one. Quite recently I came across the following account of the selection and burial of the Unknown Warrior in Westminster Abbey as recorded in the Journal of the Royal British Legion and I thought it worth repeating.

The idea of a national memorial to the Unknown Warrior sprang from the imagination of an army chaplain, Rev David Railton MC who, during World War I saw a grave near Armentières bearing a pencilled inscription "*An unknown soldier of the Black Watch*". It was, however, not until 1920, the year that the Cenotaph was unveiled that he was able to put forward his plan. He approached the Dean of Westminster, Bishop Herbert Ryle, and suggested that an unknown soldier be brought from the battlefields of France and buried among the nation's illustrious dead in Westminster Abbey. The Dean was able to persuade the government to accept this. A government committee, headed by Lord Curzon, recommended that the foreign minister should arrange for an unknown soldier to be dis-interred and brought to Westminster, that the burial should be on Armistice Day and that King George V should be asked that, after he had unveiled the new Cenotaph in Whitehall, he would follow the gun carriage bearing the body to Westminster Abbey.

The British authorities gave very little information about the selection of the Unknown Warrior, and not until Armistice Day 1939, in a letter to the Daily Telegraph, did Brig-General L J Wyatt, general officer in command of troops in France and Director of the War Graves Commission reveal the full story. Apparently he gave instructions that the body of a British soldier whom it would be impossible to identify should be exhumed and brought from each of the four battle areas - the Aisne, the Somme, Arras and Ypres - on the night of 7th November and placed on stretchers under Union Flags in a row in the chapel of St Pol. In front of the altar was a shell of a coffin which had been sent out from Britain to receive the remains. A guard was then set on the chapel and the bearers were ordered to return immediately to their respective bases.

At midnight on 7th November Brig-General Wyatt, with Col. Gell, entered the chapel and the Brigadier selected a body which, with the help of Col. Gell, he placed in the shell and screwed down the lid. The following morning, chaplains of the Church of England, Roman Catholic and non-conformist faiths held a service in the chapel and the non-selected remains were re-buried in the military cemetery at St Pol. At noon on the same day the chosen remains were sent in a military ambulance under escort to Boulogne. At 3.30pm, after passing through troops lining the outskirts of Boulogne the ambulance arrived at the old castle, local HQ of the French army, whence it was borne by eight soldiers drawn from British and Empire regiments to lay in the castle library as a chapel of rest. It was guarded overnight by French soldiers.

At noon on the following day, 9th November, the rough wooden shell was placed in a plain coffin, made from Hampton Court oak which had been presented by the British Undertakers' Federation. The coffin bore the inscription, "*A British Warrior who fell in the Great War 1914 - 1918 for King and Country*", and had wrought iron bands through one of which was passed a crusader's sword from the Tower of London collection. The coffin was then taken by French bearers to the docks to be placed aboard the destroyer HMS Verdun, chosen by the Admiralty as a tribute to the French nation and the gallant defence of the city. The cortège was a mile long. Six barrels of earth from Ypres were also carried on board to be placed in the tomb at Westminster Abbey so that the body should rest in soil on which so many troops had given up their lives.

An escort of six destroyers joined the ship on its overnight cross-channel journey. At Dover the coffin was transferred to a Victoria-bound train where it had an escort of an officer and 15 men. At Victoria station the coffin remained on board overnight and on the morning of the 11th November 1920 it was placed on a gun carriage and covered with a Union Flag together with a steel helmet, side arms and a webbing belt. The gun carriage, drawn by six horses slowly made its way to the

Cenotaph, led by the firing party and the bands of the Coldstream, Scots, Irish and Welsh Guards. The Grenadier Guards provided the escort and the cortège was followed by troops from all services.

As the gun carriage drew up at the Cenotaph, the King placed a wreath of red roses and bay leaves on the coffin and after the Silence, the gun carriage moved off with the King following on foot as the chief mourner. Royal princes, dukes, earls and leaders of the political parties followed. At the Abbey were Queen Mary, Queen Alexandra and the Queens of Spain and Norway as well as 100 VC holders and widows and mothers of the fallen. Towards the end of the service, the bearers removed the helmet, side arms and flag from the coffin and lowered it into the tomb. At the committal the King scattered earth from the battlefields from a silver shell. Finally, the two lines of VC holders filed past.

In 1921 the flag which had covered the coffin was dedicated and placed above the tomb which was covered by a black marble slab from Belgium. The stone bears an inscription provided by the then Dean which concluded with the text "*They buried him among the Kings, because he had done good towards God and towards his house*". This text is more than 500 years old and is as King Richard II had inscribed on the tomb of his friend, the Bishop of Salisbury, also buried in Westminster Abbey.

In 1923 the then Duchess of York, now Queen Elizabeth, the Queen Mother, placed her wedding bouquet on the tomb. It was an appropriate gesture as her brother, Capt the Hon. Fergus Bowes-Lyons, had been killed at Loos on 27th September 1915 and had no known grave. Who is to know that she was not laying the flowers on his grave?

Tony Scott

Members of the Society have interests which range far - sometimes as far as India!:

NATIONAL RAILWAY MUSEUM, NEW DELHI

England beat India 1-0 in the three-match series in 1996 - a feat sufficiently rare to justify an article (or three) based on a short holiday last March to celebrate Pat and Ray Kilsby's Ruby Wedding anniversary. En route from the airport to our hotel in New Delhi, we passed a steam railway museum. It became Ray's first target, especially as, we understand, many MHS members are interested in steam locomotives.

The museum has a wonderful 10-acre railway yard where many steam locomotives and general railway memorabilia are displayed. The one loco in steam is used for kids of all ages to have rides. We learned that the first train in India ran in 1853, and the I.R. (Indian Railways) has the second largest rail network in the world, involving some 38,500 miles of track. Employees number 1,618,000, making I.R. the world's largest employers. Eleven million people and one million tonnes of freight are carried every day. There are 7,092 railway stations, and the longest journey is 2,331 miles and takes 66 hours. The longest platform measures 911 yards, and the longest bridge is only 172 yards short of two miles.

Steam locos were manufactured hereabouts until 1972, and we saw the oldest preserved loco in the world in working order - Fairy Queen of 1855. The main track is 5' 6" gauge, but there are sections of 1 metre, 2' 6" and 2'. I.R.'s fastest train is the Bhopal Shatabdi, which runs at speeds up to 87 mph. There are six classes of travel, excluding passengers regularly seen clinging to the outside of carriages, trucks and locos.

On show, inter alia, were the Prince of Wales's saloon coach of 1876, a gleaming white Viceregal dining-car of 1889, and the Maharaja of Mysore's saloon, all intact as original. There is a two-tier van complete with sunshades, built to accommodate some 200 sheep. A mono-rail steam engine ran on a single track, but had an adjacent wheel that ran on the road outside. It was of interest that in the construction of Sir Edward Lutyens' New Delhi a 15-mile length of railtrack was created, with five miles of sidings, to convey the 500 million tons of materials that were used.

Not surprisingly, British influence on the rail system was considerable, and most of the preserved locos were of British manufacture. Many of the Ivatt Class Mogul type loco 2MT No. 46521, featured in 'Oh Dr Beeching', were exported to India. Of particular interest was a 5' 6" gauge Beyer Garratt 2-6-0 + 0-6-2 steam loco imported from manufacturers Beyer Peacock of Gorton, Manchester.

Many foreign railways had tight bends. In Britain heavy trains were hauled by double heading, i.e. two engines coupled to one train. This entailed employing two crews, i.e. four men. To avoid the expense of two extra men per train, and to cater for sharp bends, a loco was designed and constructed by Beyer Peacock, which they named a Garratt. It used one boiler, two driving units and a tender, resulting in tractive efforts up to twice those of the standard more powerful locos. In England Beyer Garratts were tested in assisting express trains up Lickey Incline, on the LMS near Bromsgrove, but they provided no benefit. Their chief usage was to haul coal trains from the Notts coalfield to Cricklewood. As so often the research and development in England on these locos was completely inadequate, resulting in a poor reliability record. Their extra length caused problems in the sheds, and in general maintenance. However many were used overseas, including India. There is a B.G. preserved at Bressingham, near Diss in Norfolk.

We could not visit Delhi without following the footsteps of Gandhi, but, as in *The Arabian Nights*, that is another story ...

Pat and Ray Kilsby

A Beyer Garratt Locomotive



A RESEARCH AID

Recently I have discovered a useful research aid. It has probably been used by others before me. It is the Postcode Directories. Having been able to recover old postcode books thrown out in favour of up-to-date editions I have been able to identify factories and offices that existed years ago, and which no longer exist, at least locally. For example the Garth Road factories, and the offices of commercial businesses in Crown House before it became the Civic Centre.

In tracing family history I have been able to use the latest editions to track down houses where past members of the family have lived. Once found they are photographed for the family album.

W J Rudd

COMMITTEE MEMBERS 1996-1997

A WORD FROM THE EDITOR

This is the first Bulletin since Marjorie passed the editorial green eye-shade and chewed cigar to me. Marjorie's is a hard act to follow. I shall do my best, but I need contributions from you, the readers. Articles, short or long, on any topic of historical interest that you would like to share, will be welcomed, and so will letters to the editor.

Looking forward to a flood of material in 1997; with compliments of the season to all ...

Judy Goodman

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

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

