



VICE PRESIDENTS: Arthur Turner, Lionel Green and William Rudd

BULLETIN NO. 126

JUNE 1998

PROGRAMME JUNE-SEPTEMBER

Saturday 20th June

Visit to Horsham, Sussex

The visit will include the museum, the church, and a guided walk led by **Marjorie Ledgerton**, a long-time member of the Society and for some years our Bulletin editor, who now lives in Horsham.

Visit arrangements were given in the March Bulletin

See also inside pages of this issue for map and more information.

Thursday 9 July 10.30 am

The Palace of Westminster

Conducted tour organised by **Siobhain McDonagh MP**

Maximum 20 in group.

Saturday 8 August 2.30 pm

A Walk Around Surbiton

This will be a walk based on the trail leaflet published in 1986 by the Rotary Club of Surbiton, Kingston Upon Thames Society and Surbiton Historical Society.

Leader: **Judith Goodman**

Meet at Surbiton Station

(Frequent trains from Wimbledon and Raynes Park)

Saturday 19 September 2.30 pm

A Walk Around West Barnes

led by **Pat Nicolaysen**

Pat gave the Society's 1997 Evelyn Jowett Memorial Lecture under this title. The walk will illustrate some aspects of the history of this perhaps little-known district, whose name dates from the days of Merton Priory.

Meet outside Motspur Park station (*Earl Beatty* and Library side)

(Trains from Wimbledon and Raynes Park)

PETER HOPKINS reviews:

DEREK STIDDER'S LECTURE ON SURREY WATERMILLS

Fifteen members and fourteen visitors gathered at the Snuff Mill Environmental Centre in Morden Hall Park on 21st February to hear Derek Stidder's 84th talk on Surrey Watermills, and to enjoy some excellent slides. Derek is a traffic engineer for Croydon Council, but for the last 20 years his spare time has been spent studying watermills, both in this country and abroad. His book, *Watermills of Surrey*, which covers the present administrative district rather than the historic county, was published in 1990, and is almost out of print. His new book, *Watermills of West Sussex* is soon to be published, a companion volume to his recent *Watermills of East Sussex*.

Derek began by referring to his home town of Horley, where there is an enormous supermarket selling food from all over the world. He contrasted our present lifestyle with that of 1750, where each community was largely self-sufficient, eating food mostly grown locally. The roads were atrocious and transport was limited. There was little choice of food, and the basic diet was bread made from local stone-ground flour. It was therefore not surprising that every village had at least one mill. In medieval times these mills had been controlled by the manorial lords, who found them to be a good source of income, but by the 18th century, the spirit of free enterprise meant that mills proliferated - for example there were six windmills in Reigate! Mills were not only used to grind flour, but for many industrial purposes which harnessed the power of the waterwheel, including grinding gunpowder, fulling cloth, beating copper and rolling paper.

The development of canals, soon followed by the coming of the railways, opened up the countryside, thus transforming the social structure of the whole country. Food was brought into the village communities, while people commuted to towns for work. Although not everyone benefited from this social upheaval, it was certainly a great opportunity for millers, and many watermills were extended to cope with the demand. Thus Horsham Town Mill in Guildford expanded enormously to cope with grain brought by barge from the Port of London via the canalised River Wey, and eight mills were built in a four to five mile radius of Dorking following the arrival of the railway in 1840. A note from 1838, recently discovered in the rafters of a Dorking mill, recorded the flurry of activity in extending the mill in time to benefit from the opening of the railway from London to Deepdene.

A further bout of rebuilding followed the advent of the roller mill, which could mill so much faster than the traditional millstone. However, the wheat germ stuck to the rollers, and it became necessary to remove it, leading to the introduction of white bread! A roller mill was also used for a new food. A Dr Kellogg, in charge of a Seventh Day Adventist sanatorium for alcoholics in America, came up with the idea of crushing sweet corn to produce a new breakfast cereal. In 1898 Kellogg bought Salfords Mill near Horley, which became the first breakfast cereal mill in the UK. Unfortunately the mill burnt down six months later, and the operation moved to Birmingham.

Great brick-built structures replaced the old weatherboard buildings. Those that couldn't afford to expand closed down in their thousands. The process was speeded up with the repeal of the Corn Laws, when wheat from all over the world flooded into the Port of London, to be ground in huge steam mills in the Port of London itself, before being distributed to the suburbs by rail. At Albury, the roller mill was replaced by a turbine mill to compete with the steam mills at the ports, and the small water mill at Oxted was replaced by an enormous roller mill worked by turbine.

By the beginning of the 20th century, the windmill and the watermill had generally ceased to be economically viable, though many continued in use for specialist industries until recent years. Many have been preserved, others converted to homes or restaurants. Most have lost their wheels, sold for scrap, though Derek has discovered that some 'empty' mills do still have their machinery intact, though not in working order. Many old mills are falling down, some deliberately ignored by their owners because the land it is on is of more 'value' than the historic building itself. Some have been 'accidentally' burnt down soon after their owners were refused planning permission to convert them! Others have been 'restored' which, in the case of the Upper Mill at Ewell involved virtual demolition and rebuilding in concrete and plastic!

We are fortunate that we still have mill buildings in Merton. Some have been sympathetically converted for housing. Ravensbury Mill is partly used for housing, while part is reserved for the Wandle Industrial Museum. The Snuff Mill in Morden Hall Park is used as an environmental centre. Derek was particularly glad to come to the Snuff Mill Centre for our lecture, as on a previous visit some years ago, he was escorted from the premises by security guards, having climbed over a fence to get a better view! We certainly hope that he will repeat his visit, not just to the Snuff Mill but also to the other mills and mill-sites in the Borough. Perhaps one day he will produce a book on *The Watermills of the Wandle*.

DAVID LUFF reviews:

AN EVENING WITH JOHN GENT

On Thursday 19 March John Gent came to Merton Local Studies Centre at the Civic Centre to give us a very interesting talk on Tramlink and its Historical Connections. The evening was well attended, with over 70 present, a large proportion being non-members and transport enthusiasts.

John illustrated the first part of his talk with slides on the history of trams through their many ups and downs until total closure - with the exception of Blackpool in the 1950s.

Trams started life being pulled by horses, for it was quickly realised that a horse could move a far heavier vehicle on rails than on a road. They benefited enormously from the coming of electricity, and were soon competing with railways for passengers. They had a real impact on the railways for short journeys, but could not really compete over long distances. They were also handicapped in that they were inflexible when modes of passenger flow changed, and this happened not only to trams but to their later replacement, the trolley buses. The other main problem was that no provision was made for renewal of infrastructure.

Trams were also required to maintain their part of the road, and to offer a special cheap workman's ticket, which I do not think applied to the motor buses. They also had by law to have skirting around the bogies to protect pedestrians, which again did not apply to the buses.

There were many reasons we lost our trams in London, from the late 1930s until the last one ran in 1952. Many tram routes were of course replaced by trolley buses, but in London these had all gone by 1962. From then on it was diesel buses, fumes, bad tempers and traffic jams.

The British love of sitting for hours on end in non-moving traffic, breathing in carbon monoxide (which must make smoking a healthy practice in comparison) had to come to an end.

(It is said that our love affair with roads came to an end with the building of the M40 extension into London. The demonstrations it caused made it plain to the Government and the town planners that a new solution was required. Just as in the recent countryside demonstration there were claims made that town dwellers should not impose their views on the countryside, so we city dwellers don't want all the country dwellers clogging up our streets with their Range Rovers!)

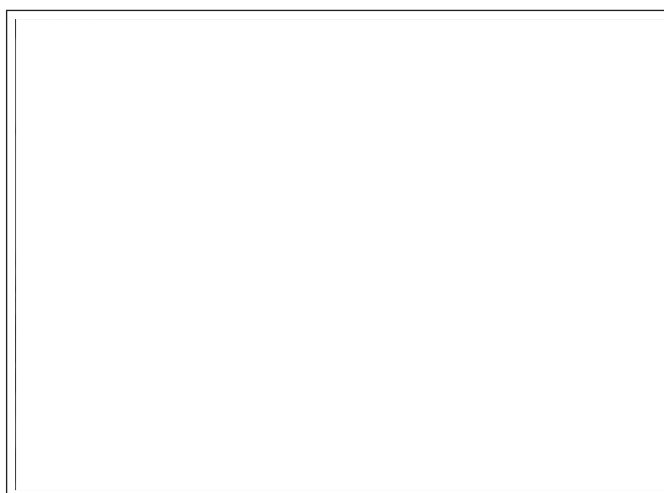
Though John did not mention it, the re-introduction of trolley buses was looked at before the first new tramway was planned and built, but I have no knowledge of the outcome.

John's explanation of the surveys of south London's proposed tramways, of which there were a number, show how the Croydon option stood head-and-shoulders above the rest. This was mainly due to a number of lightly-used lines, and some disused lines, all converging on Croydon.

Once accepted, plans were drawn up and public meetings took place along the routes. Apart from some real opposition by Croydon residents living near the proposed flyover, everyone appeared to support it fully. It was put to Parliament in 1991, and received Royal Assent in 1994.

With the aid of slides John took us over the entire route, showing us the construction work, where it is taking place. He ended by taking a good number of questions.

*Trams in Croydon:
North End by Almshouse, 1950*



DAVID LUFF is our resident transport expert and keeps an eye on the progress of Tramlink for us. Here is his personal survey of the scheme.

LOOKING AT TRAMLINK

Before surveying Tramlink through Merton I will take a look at what we have lost, the branch line from Wimbledon to Croydon. The line used to be regularly traversed by railway enthusiasts, many of whom had travelled hundreds of miles solely for the pleasure of doing so. But it totally lost its charm in the early 1980s when the semaphore signalling was replaced by coloured lights; then, in the 1990s, the line became operational with just one electric multiple unit.

Apart from its unique charm for enthusiasts the line had very little going for it. The real problem, and in saying so I do not intend any disrespect to Wimbledon, Mitcham or Croydon, was that it didn't really go anywhere. Since the dawn of the steam railway age all the important lines went to and from London. This is clearly reflected today, when all trains from Scotland, the Midlands, Wales and the South Coast go up to London. The cross-country and urban lines have always been secondary, with cancellations often done at very short notice. They also suffer from a lack of investment in rolling stock and infrastructure.

The West Croydon line did not suffer too badly over the last 40 years in regard to the types of traction used. It had brand-new 2-EPB units from 1957 and ended its days with the 1990-built 456 units. The cancellation of trains could be fairly frequent, and was often due to flooding in the Mitcham area. Very little was spent on the infrastructure. Stations were reduced to unstaffed 'bus shelters', and there was totally inadequate propping up of the Mitcham cutting, when subsidence became a problem.

As for the train service, its main problem was that it only went from Wimbledon to West Croydon. Perhaps, had the service been extended to either London Bridge or Victoria, or even become part of the Thameslink network, it might have seen a different future. It could also have run trains to Beckenham Junction, one of the Tramlink destinations, by reinstating the Norwood Junction spur.

Most if not all the new Tramlink stations were proposed during the British Railway years, but not built because of BR's very strict criteria for opening new stations. Not only would passenger receipts have had to pay for constructing any new station, but it would have to generate an extra eight percent on top. None were considered able to achieve this; so none were built. This highlights British Rail management's lack of enterprise - brought even more into the limelight by recent management buy-outs in the privatised rail network.

The Tramway

The railway line was built with a view to becoming, one day, double track throughout. This, as we know, was never achieved, and does not look likely to be so for the tramway.

Work has not yet begun at Wimbledon station, where, since the construction of the Centre Court shopping complex, the site has become very compact. There will be a single line only into platform 10 (which will have to be lowered - or the track-bed raised). This could have an effect on the frequency of the service. Considering the length of time Tramlink has been in the planning stage, it is a pity that some space was not allowed during the construction of Centre Court.

Between Wimbledon and Mitcham Junction very little appears to be going on. There has been clearing of vegetation around Dundonald Road, and test boring along the line, but so far I have not seen anyone at work. A red signal still protects Dundonald Road crossing, so the signs are correct - live wires do exist. The platform lights are still on at Morden Road, so Tramlink's first electric bill could be a big one. It was also many weeks after the line closed before the entrance to the platform here was sealed off.

All work at present is on two sites, Mitcham Junction and Therapia Lane. The flyover bridge (at the former) is in place, and will be for a single track. I personally am somewhat surprised at this, and what appear to be other sections of single track, as they could have some effect on tram frequency - more so when you bear in mind rumours of extensions to Colliers Wood and elsewhere.

The signal box still stands at Mitcham Junction, although vandalised. Many old boxes do find other railway use, so possibly this one could be retained. Maybe they could play a tape of clacking levers and ringing bells for old train spotters like myself to listen to as we wait for the next tram.

The new tram platforms at Mitcham Junction will run alongside the present rail ones, and it will be double track here to the road bridge, passing through an existing arch, single once more. I am informed that all this will be done without taking one inch of land from Mitcham Common.

On down the line we come to Therapia Lane, where a tram depot is under construction. The main shell is up, and sits across the former running line, so the trams will be making a slight detour around it. Again I have to rely on information from others, who tell me that there will be only a workshop here, with all trams stabled in the open. (Can't you just see the smiles on the faces of local graffiti parasites?)

From here on into Croydon I would assume it will be double track, and especially so if it is taken into the warehouse shopping complexes in this area. This may sound like a practical proposal, but I would expect that people shop here by car to take large consumer goods home with them rather than use the home delivery services offered. A more practical use of land would be to leave a strip for a possible rail connection for goods coming into the warehouses. Personally I doubt if this would ever be considered. We have never been able to choose the best from all types of transport and combine them.

The footbridges

One aspect of the former railway that will disappear is the nine footbridges between Wimbledon and West Croydon. All but one are to be replaced by level crossings. (The only survivor will be one at Wandle Park, Croydon, which also crosses the Sutton lines.) The bridges are too low for the overhead electric catenary system, and taller structures would be intrusive near to residential property. The prime concern is safety. Some parents recently tried to sue BR on the grounds that overhead electric cables were dangerous, especially when "children were playing on the tops of trains"(!).

One assumes that a tram approaching a crossing will sound its horn. In the industrial sections and open countryside this may not be an annoyance, but will residents of Dorset Road really like it?

The bridges are as follows:

One at	Merton Park
Two in	Morden Hall Park
One each side of	Mitcham station
One for golfers on	Mitcham Common
One at	Therapia Lane
Two at	Wandle Park, Croydon

The stations

One structure that must be facing an insecure future is the former station building at Merton Park. The new platforms here will be at Kingston Road, with minimal facilities. I would expect all stations to be unstaffed 'bus shelters' with ticket machines. We are assured that there will be video surveillance at all stations.

The trams and services

The trams will be single-deck 2-car formations, and if the railways are a guide the interiors will have been designed by a colour-blind metal worker, with seats for short duration.

A tram is usually a slow-moving creature and attracts the short journey passengers. For those like myself who regularly visit the Kent coast I would expect it will still be far quicker to go from Wimbledon to Waterloo or Victoria rather than the tram to Beckenham Junction.

Tramlink should run within zones 3, 4, 5 and 6, and travelcards will be accepted. It will be owned by London Transport and leased out to an operator. This being so, will the West Croydon trams be zone 4, as the buses, and not zone 5, as the trains?

My own experience of modern tram travel is that it can tend to be an uncomfortable ride. This is due to the way the tram travels zig-zag fashion along the track. The higher the speed the more the exaggeration of the zig-zag, which in turn distorts the track and further exaggerates the zig-zag. This is mainly on former railway sections and at higher speeds. The track will need to be relaid on suitable foundations and regularly maintained. It will be interesting to see if all the track and foundations are renewed, and if drainage is installed at Mitcham to stop the flooding there. In 1952 it was the end of shake, rattle and roll on the tram to the Elephant. I wonder if it is going to be a return to shake, rattle and roll in 1999 on the tram to Croydon.

Finally, for those who visit Croydon, you may see track one day and tarmac covering it the next. This is not due to London Transport having second thoughts; it is being done to protect the road section tramway until it is open.

LOCAL HISTORY WORKSHOPS

FRIDAY 13 MARCH 1998 - Peter Hopkins in the chair.

- ◆ Judith Goodman opened the discussion by suggesting that the boundary point “Trdmere” - a defective term, probably “round pond” - in King Edgar’s Merton charter of AD 967 might be identified as Baker’s Green Pond, off Kingston Road, which was still a prominent feature in the 18th and most of the 19th century.
- ◆ Meditation on the subject of Stane Street and its proximity to St Lawrence’s on a high point above Morden led Bill Sole to the subject of bells, their manufacture and their installation in watch towers by the Romans, for the purpose of communication over long distances.
- ◆ This prompted Bill Rudd to quote the dates of the present bells at St Lawrence’s (two are early 17th century and the other late 18th), which can still be rung. He then described results of his researches into the history of Randalls Ltd, confectionery manufacturers of South Wimbledon. This had arisen from his loan of an old ‘Winter Warmer’ sweet tin to Sarah Gould (Heritage Officer) for her current ‘Butcher, Baker and Candlestick Maker’ exhibition at The Canons. His photographic record of shops in Morden from c1970 onwards has also provided useful material for the display.
- ◆ Lionel Green’s account of the history of Calwich Priory in Staffordshire - one of the last properties to be acquired by Merton Priory - is published elsewhere in this Bulletin. The priory has long since disappeared, but the 18th-century house (also gone) which replaced it had connections with Handel.
- ◆ Peter Hopkins showed two variations of a map of part of Morden with Cheam from the reign of Edward VI, with incredibly interesting pictorial representations of Lower Morden, full of fascinating topographical details.
- ◆ ENM has completed his latest “book” - on the Willow Lane industrial estate, and is now writing up North Mitcham. He quoted some local items from his essay (produced for a course at Birkbeck College) on the impact of Scandinavian raids and evidence of settlement in NE Surrey in the 9th and 10th centuries - a period on which little work has been done, but when Merton was a place of some importance.

E N Montague

FRIDAY 17 APRIL 1998 - Lionel Green in the chair.

- ◆ Peter Hopkins began with another look at the two maps discussed in March, which relate to the 16th-century ‘Sparrowfield’ dispute between Morden and Cheam. Crosses on the maps are probably only boundary markers, though Malden men were taken up as heretics for pulling one down. He then outlined his identification of Morden’s Church Field and Gallows Field - both became part of the Morden Park estate. The former lay to the north of the church, and the latter took in the ‘mound’. It seems possible that a pre-existing (?Roman) feature (?burial mound) was later used to accommodate a gallows. Later still, in the 18th century, it was enlarged with material excavated for the Morden Park House cellars to form an important landscape feature.
- ◆ Bill Sole spoke about the recent ‘sighting’ of Stane Street at Colliers Wood. As one who had all along been sure of the route across the Wandle he was quietly complacent. He had predicted too that excavations at the Kango works in Lombard Road would yield nothing, being way off course. He suggested that a raised walkway at Colliers Wood may have contributed to the deposition of silt noted at the excavation. He then threw off some trigonometrical sparks relating to the Surrey alignments of Stane Street, and dazzled his listeners into silence.
- ◆ Bill Rudd had brought some early bound numbers of *Railway Magazine*, books of railway illustrations, and some railway postcards, mainly from the 1920s. The property of the late Jack Bailey, they have been given to the Society by his wife Jessie. When the group had reluctantly torn themselves away from these treasures it was agreed that their future safekeeping and access would have to be carefully considered.
- ◆ A recent letter to him from a Bunce prompted Eric Montague to comment on that extensive family and its place in 19th and 20th century Merton and Mitcham. His second contribution was a comparison of the geography of Figges Marsh in the two Rocque maps (1740s and 1760s). The earlier (London environs) one showed that travellers to Tooting from Mitcham had to undertake a most circuitous route, while 20 years later (on the Surrey map) the ruler-straight road on the west side of the Marsh was in place - a new turnpike trust construction - and indeed a product of the Turnpike Act of 1755. Monty’s final contribution was to suggest that there was a good case for identifying Mitcham’s Lonesome area as a Domesday settlement.
- ◆ JG had been trying to find out a little more about three ‘foot-note’ characters in Nelson’s life: X (perhaps S P) Cockerell, who surveyed Merton Place; Thomas Chawner, architect of alterations to the house; and Thomas Baxter, porcelain painter, whose watercolours recorded life and scenery there.
- ◆ Lionel Green had ferreted out Merton Priory’s many connections with the events surrounding Magna Carta. His account will appear in a future Bulletin.

Judith Goodman

Next workshop dates: Fridays, 12 June, 24 July and 25 September at 7.30 pm at Wandle Industrial Museum

Readers are reminded that everyone is welcome at workshop meetings. You don’t have to be actively engaged in research - just come along and listen, talk and enquire.

LIONEL GREEN teases out another aspect of the story of Merton Priory:

CALWICH PRIORY, STAFFORDSHIRE

This was the last acquisition by Merton Priory. It was a small priory, together with the parish church of Ellastone, which had been founded in 1149 by Margaret de Bubenton and her husband Nicholas de Gresley (d.1166). Calwich was situated five miles south-west of Ashbourne and the monastery consisted of no more than four canons. It was given to Kenilworth Priory before 1169, but bought its independence in 1344.

The prior died in 1530, leaving a single canon who was transferred to another monastery. Suppression of the priory was effected by the Crown (illegally)¹ in October 1532. A survey had been made in 1530 giving a value of £117 4s 10d (£117.24), but it was not a profitable speculation, as the local landowner, Sir Ralph de Longford, was unable to pay the rent.

In 1536 Henry VIII wished to make a hunting chase for Hampton Court Palace, and looked across the River Thames to the manor of East Molesey. This had been in the possession of Merton Priory at or soon after its foundation². The King suggested an exchange with Merton Priory for the distant and forlorn priory of Calwich, and it is not difficult to imagine long faces at Merton. A new lease was drawn up on 8 April 1537 for “the site, foundations, precinct and perambulation of the late Priory of Calwich and their manors and lands there and elsewhere, and the patronage of the church of Ellastone for £43 with the obligation on the lessee [Ralph Longford] to discharge a pension of 60s [£3] to the late [sic] priory of Kelyngworth”³. In the same year the King’s escheators sued Sir Ralph Longford for the rent of lands that he had already paid to Merton Priory. When finally in 1540 Thomas Cromwell acknowledged that the rent had been paid he insisted that this was only up to 1536, and new rents were now due to Merton until 1538, and then to the King⁴. This in spite of the fact that Merton Priory now belonged to the Crown. The matter continued for Sir Ralph until 1543, when Calwich was acquired by John Fleetwood.

Subsequent History

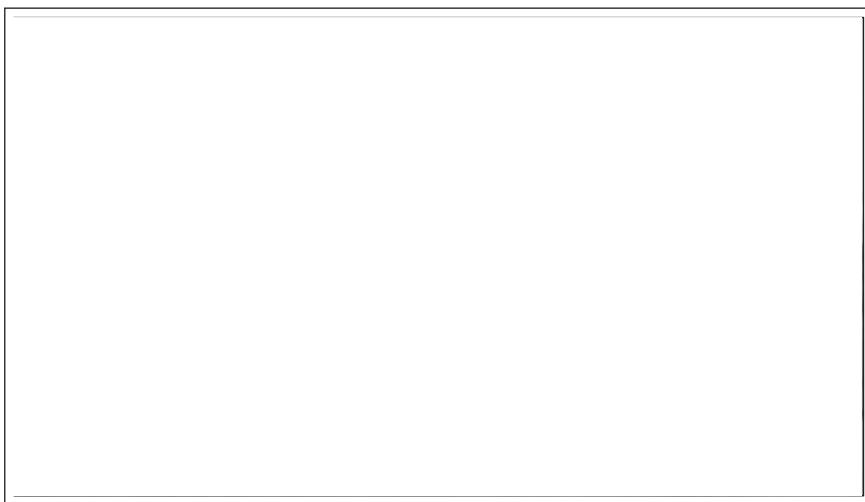
The buildings at Calwich were not systematically destroyed following its dissolution, and Merton Priory had no part in their future. A contemporary historian⁵ in 1593 reported that “a Lancashire man [Fleetwood] is owner thereof, who as I have heard, hath made a parlour of the chancel, a hall of the church and a kitchen of the steeple”.

The River Dove marks the boundary of Derbyshire and Staffordshire and flowed through the precincts. The priory buildings and fishponds were and are in the latter county. The road-bridge which crosses the river two miles to the north-east is today called Hanging Bridge and received its name from the judicial hanging of conspirators aiding the Young Pretender. In December 1745 Prince Charles Edward (1720-1788) marched south from Scotland and reached Derby. Sympathisers were arrested in the town, but the Prince managed to escape northwards.

In the 1740s Calwich was rebuilt by Bernard Granville (c.1699-1775), and George Frederick Handel often stayed at his invitation for summer leisure in the 1750s. Whilst at Calwich Handel is said to have supervised the building of an organ in the dining-room, and may have composed his Music for Royal Fireworks (1749) in a “temple” constructed between the priory’s fishponds, which still exists today⁶. Handel also presented Granville with a manuscript edition of his works in 38 volumes. When he died in 1759 he also left Granville two pictures.

Calwich was further enlarged in the 1790s, but entirely rebuilt around 1880. Today the house is a ruin.

1. The legality was effected in 1536 by adding a clause to the Act for the Dissolution of the Lesser Monasteries. This covered any religious house “that otherwise had been suppressed or dissolved”.
2. O Manning and W Bray, *The History and Antiquities of the County of Surrey*, 1804-14 I p246; T Allen, *A History of Surrey and Sussex*, 1829-30 II p24; W Dugdale *Monasticum Anglicanum* VI, 1846 p245
3. Letters & Papers Hen VIII 1538 pt 2 No 1219. This continued the payment made by Calwich to Kenilworth Abbey since 1344 in order to secure independence.
4. M T Fortescue, *History of Calwich Abbey*, 1914 p29
5. Sampson Erdeswicke (d.1603), *A Survey of Staffordshire*, ed. T Harwood, 1820 p362
6. However Pevsner in the Staffordshire volume in the *Buildings of England* series dates the ‘temple’ to 1790.



The Temple, Calwich Abbey. From an old Water Colour

A local controversy:

MITCHAM COMMON

At the request of Mrs Janet Morris, one of our members, who is also a member of Mitcham Common Preservation Society, we reprint a letter of hers that was published in the local *Guardian* on 26 February 1998.

I sympathise with D Gay [an earlier correspondent] because the state of Mitcham Common is a real problem. He is obviously fond of the Common and wants to keep it the way it is. But he will look in vain for a scapegoat for the changes he sees. The real culprit is nature herself.

Until relatively recently everyone thought that places like Mitcham Common would look after themselves if left alone.

The first Board of Conservators in 1891 appointed a single warden for the entire Common. Unfortunately they also banned grazing, turf cutting and wood collection, little realising that these were the real factors that maintained the Common as an open treeless heathland. From then onwards change was inevitable.

The warden is attempting to reclaim some of the best open places for people to enjoy and to encourage the return of the rich variety of wildlife that used to live there. The details of his actions may be distressing, but doing nothing is not an option. Without positive action now, much of the Common will become rather second-rate woodland within the next twenty years. I cannot believe that this would be an acceptable outcome.

MRS J MORRIS

Mitcham Common Preservation Society

VISIT TO HORSHAM ON 20 JUNE

Marjorie Ledgerton has sent this map of Horsham town centre, on which the car parks are marked. For an idea of the scale she says that from the station to Carfax in the centre is no more than a 10-minute walk.

Meeting time and itinerary were given in the March Bulletin.

For lunch Marjorie suggests:

In Carfax	Panini - Italian sandwich bar
	Global Supply - coffee and cakes
	Cafe over cheese shop (steep stairs) - usual menus
Off Carfax	The Crown
	The King's Arms
	Jack Higgins - fish and chips
Bishopric	Wetherspoon's
	Merrythought - family-run restaurant *
Middle Street	Options - snacks and lunches
West Street	Piccolo - Italian restaurant

Also usual take-aways, including M & S, Waitrose and BhS.

* This is Marjorie's personal recommendation.

Ploughman's lunches and strawberry cream teas will be available in St Mary's church hall, convenient for visitors to the flower festival in the church.

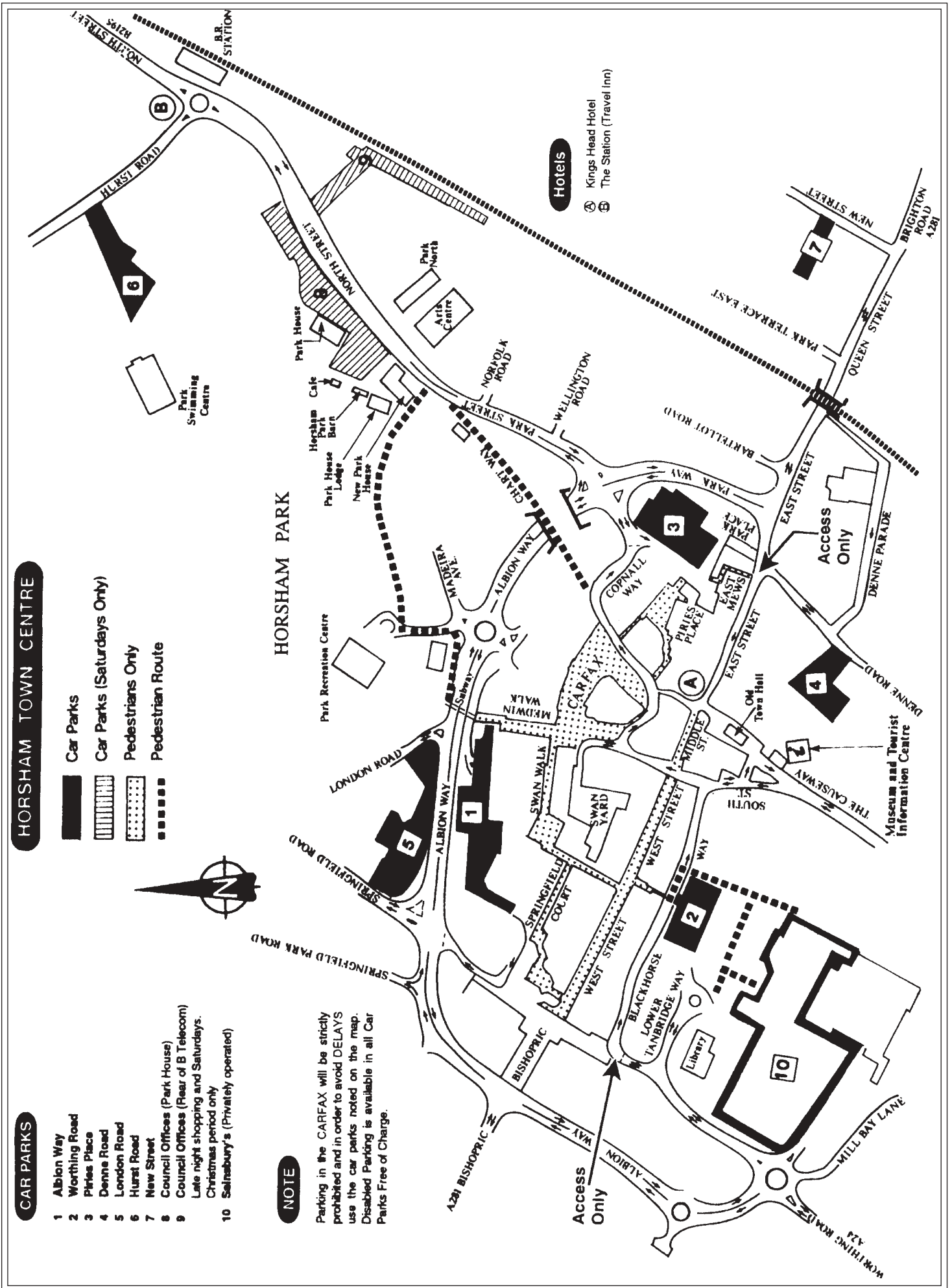
MERTON HERITAGE CENTRE

The current exhibition, called 'BOBBIES, BANDAGES AND THE VILLAGE SQUIRT', is all about the local emergency services. It runs until 1 August.

This is followed, from 14 August to 24 October by 'WEIRD AND WONDERFUL', which will look at the strange and mysterious side of Merton. Ideas are welcome, and if there is something you have always wondered about, let Sarah Gould and her team know.

The Centre is open on Fridays and Saturdays, from 10am to 4pm. Admission is free.

Merton Heritage Centre
The Canons
Madeira Road
MITCHAM
CR4 4HD 0181 640 9387



HORSHAM TOWN CENTRE

- Car Parks
- Car Parks (Saturdays Only)
- Pedestrians Only
- Pedestrian Route

CAR PARKS

- 1 Albion Way
- 2 Worthing Road
- 3 Piries Place
- 4 Denne Road
- 5 London Road
- 6 Hurst Road
- 7 New Street
- 8 Council Offices (Park House)
- 9 Council Offices (Rear of B Telecom)
- Late night shopping and Saturdays.
Christmas period only
- 10 Sainsbury's (Privately operated)

NOTE

Parking in the CARFAX will be strictly prohibited and in order to avoid DELAYS use the car parks noted on the map. Disabled Parking is available in all Car Parks Free of Charge.

Hotels

- Kings Head Hotel
- The Station (Travel Inn)

TONY SCOTT points out that many of us may have a direct link with:

DUNKIRK 1940

Many of the major military campaigns and operations of the two World Wars involved such vast numbers of military personnel that statistically some must have been men from Merton. One such operation was the evacuation of a significant proportion of the British army from the beaches of Dunkirk in 1940.

Today, still in use on the River Thames, there are about 90 elderly wooden cabin cruisers which proudly display a brass plate with the simple message "Dunkirk 1940". What a story these boats could tell! Recently Raymond Baxter, of radio and TV fame, gave an interesting lecture on the Dunkirk evacuation.

Operation Dynamo, as it was called, successfully evacuated over 300,000 men of the British Expeditionary Force from northern France. They were completely surrounded by the advancing German army, and food, water and ammunition were almost non-existent. The whole exercise took a week, from 29 May to 4 June 1940, and was master-minded by Vice-Admiral Ramsey, whose HQ was in the tunnels dug deep into the white cliffs of Dover. His own office was the old dynamo room of the tunnel complex.

In mid-May, when it was clear that the troops would have to be evacuated, and the major ports of Calais and Boulogne had already fallen, a signal was sent to London to "requisition all motor yachts 30ft and upwards in length, not drawing more than 3'6" of water", and RN ratings were sent up the Thames to identify suitable boats. These were taken down to Tough's boatyard at Teddington (next-door, incidentally, to the British Motor Yacht Club premises where the lecture took place), which is at the upper extremity of the tidal part of the Thames. Here they were formed up into 'trots', or groups of boats tied together - perhaps three boats wide and six or seven in length. Each 'trot' was then towed at about five knots by Tough's steam tug down to Sheerness. This was to save fuel, since petrol had to be imported, whereas coal for the tug did not. A few owners took their own vessels, but the great majority had RN crews. At Sheerness the boats were fuelled, fully manned, and stocked with three days supply of food. They were then sailed to Ramsgate and Dover for assembly into flotillas to cross the Channel.

Private motor cruisers were not the only 'little boats' crossing the Channel. Liners in the Pool of London had their ship's lifeboats requisitioned for the evacuation, and 19 RNLI lifeboats also assisted. All but one of these were requisitioned, and manned by RN personnel, as the RNLI charter defines its role as saving life at sea, and would not permit them to send boats to war. Many fishing vessels also crossed the Channel. A total of 1210 vessels, large and small, took part in the evacuation.

The role of the little boats was to beach on a rising tide and load with troops who had waded out to them. They would then float off and take the troops out to large vessels standing by in deeper water. Each boat made many beach trips in the course of one tide, but, clearly, the boats would be stranded if the same procedure were to be tried on a falling tide. At high tide the little boats returned to Dover and Ramsgate for a few hours to re-fuel and change crew.

During the operation there was no radio communication; all signals were transmitted by Morse code and Aldis lamp. On 4 June the signal was sent to all the service C-in-C's: "Operation Dynamo completed". The surviving cabin cruisers from the Thames were sailed back to Sheerness, there to be towed back to Teddington by Tough's steam tug. The description 'Little Ships' has long been associated with these cabin cruisers which took part in the Dunkirk operation.

Raymond Baxter explained that he bought his present boat, a 30ft cabin cruiser, called *L'Orange*, in 1963. The boat had been built at Teddington in 1936 by a firm called Boats & Cars and was originally called *Surrey*. It took part in the Dunkirk operation and was renamed when renovated soon after the war.

In 1965, during the Spring Bank Holiday, 25 years after the Dunkirk evacuation, the *Sunday Times* organised a return to Dunkirk, and 43 Little Ships took part, taking eight hours to cross from Ramsgate to Dunkirk. From this trip the Association of Dunkirk Little Ships was formed, and Raymond Baxter was a founder member. He is now their Admiral. The Association took as its flag the cross of St George with, at its centre, a lion and dolphin taken from the arms of Dunkirk. Boats also fly the cross of St George on the jack mast, at the bows. Since 1965 the Little Ships have made the trip to Dunkirk every five years, and now have a destroyer or frigate as escort.

There are about 115 Little Ships still in existence, of which about 90 are on the Thames. Before a vessel can claim to have taken part in the Dunkirk operation its history is validated by the Little Ships Association, using the Navy requisition lists to ensure that a vessel of that name took part. Then the subsequent history of the vessel has to be confirmed from the British Register of Shipping and Lloyd's register, to ascertain if a name change has occurred, or that the boat was not scrapped, with another vessel later taking the name.

SHEILA HARRIS reviews Helen Osborn's lecture:

A HISTORY OF YOUNG'S BREWERY

Twenty-two members and guests were treated to a very interesting and informative illustrated lecture by Helen Osborn, archivist to the company, in the appropriate setting of the function room at the *King's Head* (a Young's pub), in Merton High Street. The *King's Head* claims to date from 1496, but the rebuilding of 1931 is what we see today. Helen Osborn is the author of *Inn and Around London - a History of Young's Pubs*, which contains brief histories of over 150 Young's pubs. She has just completed a book on the history of the brewery, which should be available in the autumn.

The year 1675 is the date taken to be the start of the Ram Brewery's history, since this is the first written record of it, but it may have much earlier origins. The Brewery was then owned by the Draper family, who in 1763 sold it to the Trittons, who owned it for a further 68 years. After the death of George Tritton it came into the hands of the Young family in 1831. In 1832 and again in 1882 it suffered serious fires, so hot on the second occasion that the beer boiled and lead on the roof melted. The buildings were cleared and quickly rebuilt, and the company expanded and consolidated over the years. By the end of the 19th century the site was very much as it is today. A canal known as the Cut had been built from the Thames to the brewery for barges to deliver coal and other supplies, but was finally filled in, after flooding, in 1935.

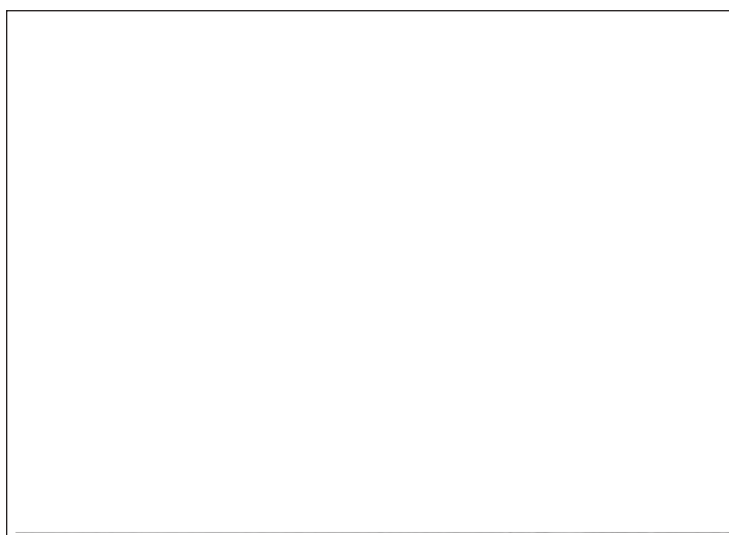
The second World War also saw fire and damage to the brewery, including major damage to the *Brewery Tap*, once *The Ram*, from which the brewery took its name and trademark.

The present chairman John Allen Young, great-great-grandson of the founder Charles Allen Young, joined the company in 1954. It is still very much a family business with many employees serving generation after generation. John Young, chairman since 1962, maintained that he would sell only 'real ale' in his pubs. The Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA), which he inspired, has been a great success, and Young's takings rose. There have been various experiments over the years, including the disastrous Saxon 'lager' of the 1960s, and today's successful chocolate stout.

Listeners were interested to see extracts from the "Black Book", which revealed working conditions and discipline in the brewery in the late 19th century, including fines of a quarter of a week's wages for taking beer, and 2/6d (12.5p) for being uncivil to customers.

After the break the speaker answered questions, including some about the famous drayhorses. Their numbers vary from 12 to 16; they deliver to pubs within a 2-mile radius, and they like to drink beer! It was interesting to note that water from the River Wandle was never used in the brewing process, as it was not thought clean enough.

Members may like to know that they can visit Young's Brewery Visitor Centre at the *Brewery Tap*, which is open seven days a week. Full brewery tours last about an hour and a quarter. Family tours of the stables last 45 minutes. Charges for full tours are £5.50 (£4.50 concessions), to include beer tasting and a half-pint of beer or soft drink. Special arrangements can be made for group visits, with refreshments in the Old Ram Room. Let any Committee member know if you would be interested in a group visit for next year's programme.



The Ram Brewery yard in the 1920s

A SERVICE AT MERTON PRIORY

On Sunday 3 May a service was held in the remains of the Priory chapter house beneath Merantun Way. Introduced by Society Vice President Lionel Green, it was conducted by Father Bonvini of St Boniface, Tooting. It took a similar form to one of the 'offices' in the daily ritual of the Augustinian canons of the Priory, with hymns, psalms, prayers, a reading and a blessing. Heales' *Records of Merton Priory* quotes 3 May 1117 as the date on which "the Brethren ... entered the place of their new habitation, singing ..."

The following article appeared in a slightly different form in the John Innes Society Newsletter 101 (August 1990). It is reprinted here with permission.

“GOD SEND I MAY SEE HER A CORPSE!”

On 13 May 1836 at the Central Criminal Court, Old Bailey, before Mr Justice James Alan Park¹, David Haggerstone of Merton was indicted for the wilful murder of his wife Harriet at Merton on the night of 17 April, either “by striking her divers mortal blows on her head, face, and various parts of her body” or “by thrusting her down by force and against her will into a certain well, and choking her and suffocating her therein”.

David Haggerstone, born at Great Bookham in 1802, had married Harriet Warren at St Martin-in-the-Fields in 1826. A daughter was born in Tooting two years later, and by 1833 the family was in Merton and receiving occasional outdoor relief - bread, food vouchers, a shilling (5p) to help Haggerstone to find work, and midwife payments when more children were born. By 1836 there were four.

At the time of Harriet’s death the Haggerstones were lodging with William Hedges and his wife Elizabeth in Mud Cottage in what is now Cannon Hill Lane. Haggerstone had casual work at the *Crown* in Morden.

The remaining important character in the story was William Claridge, a labourer on the London & Southampton railway, then under construction, who lodged at a baker’s shop at the Rush. This was one of the cottages that were pulled down in 1929 for an extension to the Nelson Hospital.

At that time there was in Watery Lane a row of small dwellings known as Eades Cottages, just to the east of Blind Lane (now Blakesley Walk). In front of them, right by Watery Lane, was a well. In one of these cottages lived Sarah and William Steele. Shortly after one o’clock in the morning of Sunday 17 April they were woken by the sound of quarrelling voices nearby outside, followed by a woman’s scream and a cry of “Oh, my dear children! Oh, my dear baby!” Then, silence. The Steeles gave the alarm, and shortly afterwards a woman’s body, identified as that of Harriet Haggerstone, was found in the well, and taken to the *White Hart* by Steele and a George Green.

When Steele and Green went to fetch David Haggerstone from his bed at Mud Cottage, he began to weep, and refused to leave his children. But at five o’clock, when the parish constable and the deputy overseer² came for him, he was up and dressed. “Damn my eyes, it is all through that Claridge”, he said. His landlord, Hedges, said, “You have brought yourself into a bloody fine mess at last”. They led him to the well and told him his wife had been found in it. “Yes”, he said, “There’s some of the bread [which she had been carrying] swimming there now”. He was taken to view Harriet’s body at the *White Hart* - “poor dear creature” he called her - and was allowed to go. Later that day he was taken into custody, but he was released four days later.

On the same day, the Sunday, Claridge had also been taken into custody, where he remained for 14 days, but he was released after the coroner’s enquiry. Then, it seems, Haggerstone was arrested again and sent for trial.

At the trial the recollections of the main witnesses seem, to take a charitable view, to have been cloudy. Everyone, including the victim, had spent that Saturday night drinking. Certainly the statements are difficult to reconcile.

William Hedges (of Mud Cottage) testified that he and his wife were in the *White Hart* on that night, and that Claridge was there too. Harriet Haggerstone came in and drank beer with Claridge. She asked for bread from Hedges, saying that she had none for her children, and although she had money on her he gave her a loaf. At 11.40 she and Claridge left, and soon afterwards the Hedges moved on to Saunders’ beershop, on the Rush ‘island’, where they stayed till 12.30. They then went straight home, where they found Haggerstone lying on his bed fully clothed.

Elizabeth Hedges stated that her husband was not sober on that night. “After we came out of Saunders’ beershop he fell down several times, but he was sensible”. When they left the *White Hart* she had seen Harriet Haggerstone nearby and walked with her towards Saunders’ beershop, but Harriet would not go in, and when the witness last saw her she was near “a little post on the way home”. Harriet’s route home from the Rush would have been along Watery Lane into Cannon Hill Lane. This witness went on to say that she had the following exchange with Haggerstone when she and her husband returned home:

“Davy, is your wife at home?”

“No, Mrs Hedges. Is she not along with you?”

“It’s a very dark night, Davy. Get up and go across the fields, and look after her.”

“I’d see her damned first. I suppose she is at some of her whoring tricks.”

“Don’t judge her, Davy. It’s a dark night.”

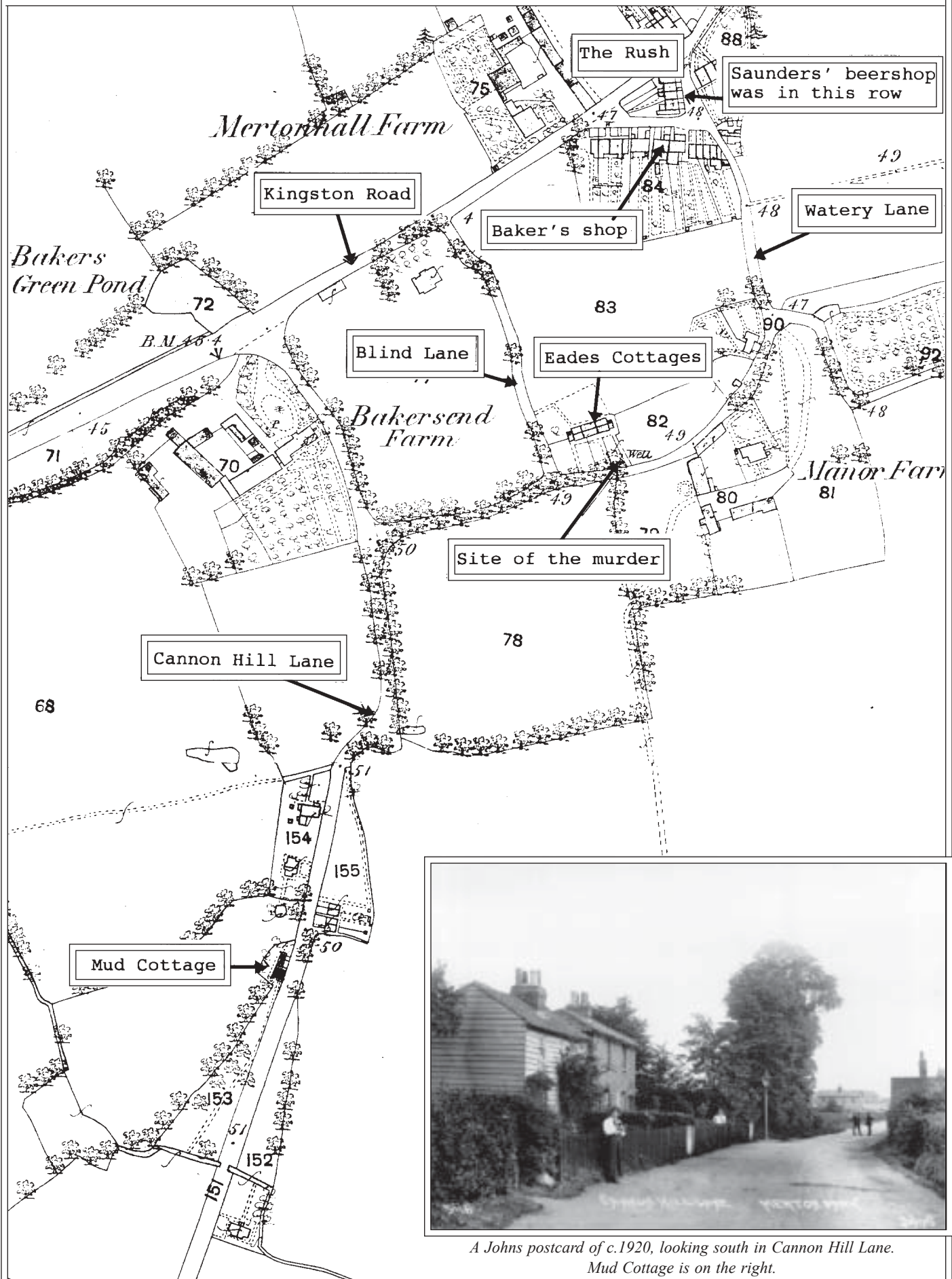
“I’d see her damned before I’d go outside the door for her.”

“Do get up, Davy my lad, and go look for your wife.”

“No, I won’t, and God send I may see her a corpse. I’ll undress and go to bed to my children. She shall never lie in bed beside me or the children any more.”

Mrs Hedges went on to say that, later, when Haggerstone was told that his wife had been found drowned, he wept, and cried out, “Oh, Claridge, you’ve done me! Why did you not stop me? I’ve done it, I’ve done it! The Devil was with me when I did it!”.

Part of Merton from the 25 " (1:2500) OS map of 1871



A Johns postcard of c.1920, looking south in Cannon Hill Lane. Mud Cottage is on the right.

Thomas Wallis, a watchman, testified that at about midnight he had seen Mrs Haggerstone, carrying a loaf, talking to William Claridge near the *White Hart*, that they were then joined by Mr and Mrs Hedges, and that all four walked along the road [Kingston Road] towards the Rush. Mrs Hedges denied that Claridge was with them, but Wallis swore positively that he was, and that he was wearing a “short round light[-coloured] frock [coat]”. Another witness had seen, shortly after midnight, a man and a woman in Watery Lane, the man similar in build to Claridge [who was both taller and stouter than Haggerstone] and wearing a light-coloured coat. The same witness heard, shortly afterwards, a man and a woman talking quietly as they passed his house [in Watery Lane] towards “the Windingshot field”³.

William Claridge said that he saw Harriet Haggerstone in the *White Hart*, that she followed him out at half-past eleven, and that they and the Hedges walked to Saunders’ beershop. When Mr and Mrs Hedges had gone in, he and Harriet waited outside for them. Then David Haggerstone came up, said, “Damn you, madam, I’ve been looking for you some time”, and struck her on the face, shouting, “Damn your eyes, madam, if you don’t go home I’ll murder you.” They then went off, down Watery Lane, and Claridge swore he saw them no more that night. According to him it was now a quarter to one, and, when he then went into the beershop to get a bed for the night [because the baker’s where he lodged was locked up], the Hedges were just leaving.

Further witnesses testified to having found a woman’s cap, a bonnet, a stick, and a torn handkerchief.

The medical evidence from Robert Sims, the local surgeon, listed bruises to the head, wrists and back, scratches on the legs as from brambles, and such “appearances as would arise from drowning”. He estimated the time of death to have been about half-past one, and was unable to say with certainty whether the victim had been raped.

The Times observed that in his summing-up Mr Justice Park “commented in severe terms upon the practice of employing labouring men to work upon the railroads on Sundays, and expressed a hope that the legislature, which appeared to encourage these speculations to such an extent, would provide some law by which this demoralizing practice might be put a stop to. His Lordship also strongly reprobated the habit of paying labourers and workmen at a late hour on Saturday night at beershops and public houses, a practice which encouraged more than anything else dissipation and crime amongst the lower classes”.

After deliberating for half an hour the jury brought in a verdict of Not Guilty. The judge commented, “You have done perfectly right, gentlemen; the case is involved in the deepest mystery. There is no doubt of the woman having been murdered, but who the murderer is cannot be determined by the evidence brought forward”.

From the viewpoint of the late 20th century there are some striking differences from a trial today. In the first place the case was tried barely a month after the event. Then the medical evidence was extremely sketchy by modern standards, though Mr Sims was paid £5 by the parish for a post mortem, in which he presumably examined the lungs. And thirdly the whole trial, including the verdict, was over within a day.

It seems that nothing more was heard of the case. No-one else was tried for the murder. The vestry minutes tell us that the Haggerstone children were looked after for a few days by Mrs Hedges at Mud Cottage, and then, for ten shillings (50p) a week, by Mrs Groves, who lived in one of the old cottages (now pulled down) near the vicarage. The family had disappeared by the time of the 1841 census. No doubt Claridge, the ‘navigator’, moved on to the next stretch of the London & Southampton railway. And Merton, after its brief notoriety, settled back into its rural calm. The episode illustrates however not only the drunken, squalid and violent underside of 19th-century village life, but also the nomadic life endured by the unskilled poor.

The trial was reported in *The Times* of 14 May 1836.

1. Sir James Alan Park (1763-1838), born in Scotland, but educated in England, had a moderately distinguished career, in which he was helped by his patron Lord Mansfield. He was knighted when made a judge in 1816. His town house was in Bedford Row, but his country residence was Merton Grove, the Gothick house built by Sir Richard Hotham in the north-west corner of the crossroads at Merton Double Gates. Cecil, Balfour and parts of Montague and Pelham Roads now cover the site of the estate. Sir James is said to have given winter blankets to the poor of Merton.

Sources: *Dictionary of National Biography*
Gentleman’s Magazine, 1838

2. Mr Webb and Mr Reynolds, the overseers, and their deputy had responsibility for poor relief. The deputy at this date was the parish clerk, George Serle.
3. It has not proved possible to locate this field. The late John Wallace thought that it was probably one whose boundaries have long been lost, lying south of Merton Cottage and the Church Path row. It would have been cut c.1870 by the line of Mostyn Road. Although Windingshot (‘curved piece of land’) is a field-name recorded in Morden, it has not been found in Merton records.

Judith Goodman

LORNA COWELL has been sorting and listing:

DUSTING OFF THE ARCHIVES AT ST MARY'S

For the past few years I have been trying to sort out the "archives" at St Mary's, Merton. Previously they had just been "stuffed in a cupboard"! I am really talking about what might be called minor archives. Our priceless treasures, like registers going back to Elizabethan times, the vestry book from 1832, and other records, are all kept at the Surrey Record Office. There remains a collection of prints of the church going back to 1792, photos, newspaper cuttings, letters, books and pamphlets. Also a Rocque map of 1748 - what a tiny hamlet Merton was then - and some Ordnance Survey maps of the area dated 1887. Probably some of these items are also available elsewhere, in such places as the Wimbledon Society's museum. Then, of course, there are the Nelson memorabilia - always a popular subject for researchers - including copies of the newspapers printed for the 1905 Trafalgar centenary celebrations. We have a very good oil painting of Nelson, several prints and drawings and a small piece of the fabric which covered the seat that used to be in Nelson's box pew. This is, of course, apart from his hatchment, which hangs in the church.

Over the years many people have obviously taken a great interest in local history and "given to the Vicar" all kinds of cuttings from newspapers and magazines with articles and illustrations of buildings in the area, or, for example, details of the excavations at Merton Priory, and the story of how the Norman arch came to be re-erected on its present site as an entrance to the vicarage garden from the churchyard.

There are articles on the very interesting memorials in the church, giving family history, such as that of the Lovell family and Captain Cook's widow.

Some of the cuttings about local events are fascinating, and there is a mine of information about village life in the bound copies of the parish magazines from 1894. Merton then was definitely a place where "you touched your cap to the Squire"! (My own father also told me this.) There is a definite "upstairs downstairs" flavour in many of the descriptions of events.

Photographs bring us more up to date, and some beautiful ones have been taken of all aspects of the church, both inside and out. And of more mundane things like the building of the new church hall. NADFAS bequeathed to us a really beautiful set of coloured photographs of all the stained glass windows and embroidered kneelers. Then, of course, in safe keeping is the vast volume they produced over a period of several years, of every minute detail of the church, its architecture and fittings.

Research in the registers is fascinating. The amazing growth in the size of the village of Merton in the 19th century is easily seen, and sadly the many epidemics that followed. How many times does one read of the death of a child - to be followed next year by an entry in the baptism register of a new child given the same name. This seemed to be a common practice. Sad too that unbaptized babies and suicides were not allowed to be buried in the churchyard.

Up to the beginning of the last century the same surnames and indeed Christian names, occur again and again. It was a small community, who often inter-married.

As I have said, all these registers are kept for safety at the Surrey Record Office, but in case anyone is inspired to delve into their family tree, we have indexes of the registers from the earliest date until the mid-19th century, where preliminary searches can be made.

So the preliminary sorting out has been done, and most of the cataloguing, but one could spend hours and hours just reading!



Church of St Mary the Virgin, Merton, from D. Lysons 'The Environs of London' (i) 1792

BOOK REVIEW:

John Innes and the birth of Merton Park 1865-1904

The John Innes Society has produced an excellent book which somehow manages to fit within 52 pages a wonderfully comprehensive treatment of the history of Merton Park.

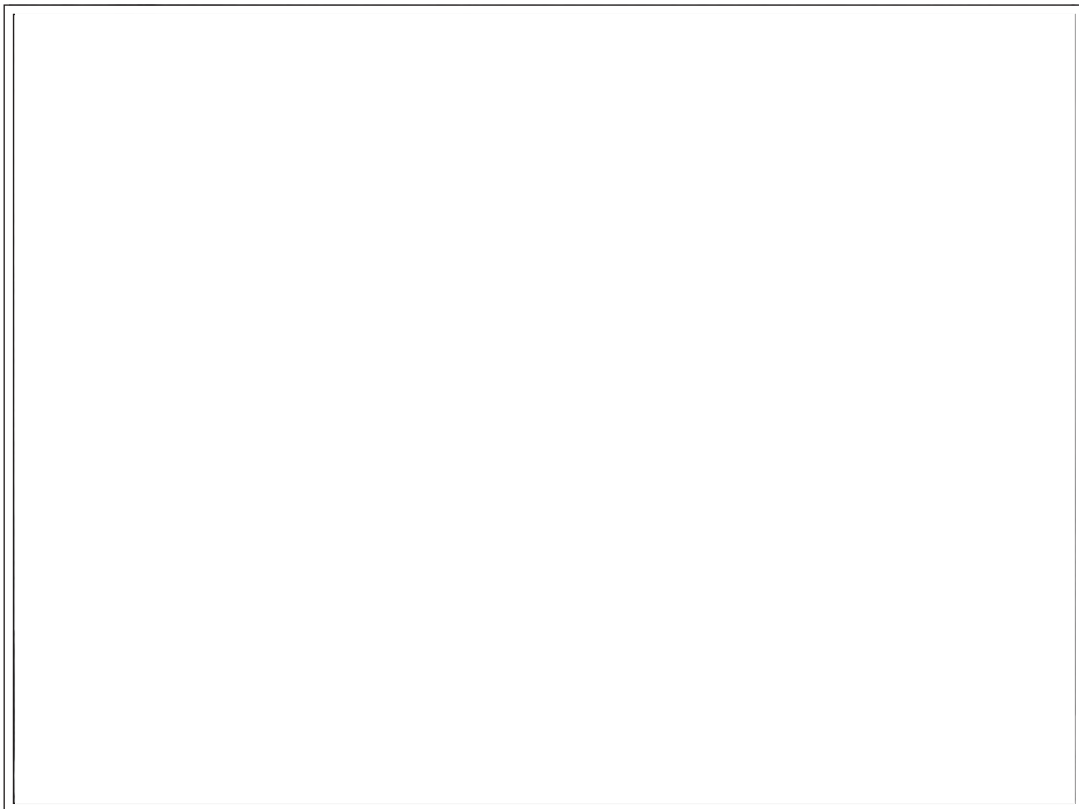
As would be expected, the book provides a biography of John Innes himself, but it also details the life and achievements of his main architect, Henry Quartermain, and introduces us to other notable residents. Again, it not only follows the development of the Merton Park estate, but provides detailed descriptions of the houses, enabling the reader to study them at first hand.

The book also provides an overview of the community of Merton Park in these early days. We have a description of Lower Merton in 1865, before the redevelopment began, and there are also sections on transport, trades and businesses, education, worship, leisure, utilities and services. The book is well illustrated with maps, photographs and drawings. It is fully indexed, and quotes major sources and suggested further reading.

It will come as no surprise that the authors of this book are well-known local historians, Geoffrey Wilson, the late John Wallace, and our own Bulletin Editor, Judith Goodman, who not only wrote much of the text but also edited the whole book and prepared it for publishing. I can wholeheartedly recommend this book not just to those with an interest in Merton Park, to whom it will prove invaluable, but to anyone wishing to examine the transformation of a village into a modern suburb.

The book costs £2. It is available at John Innes Society events. It is expected that it will also be on sale at Morden and Wimbledon libraries.

Peter Hopkins



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

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

Printed by Peter Hopkins