

to Daisy? She had not sailed for Australia by 1948.) Jean Reville remained in Brisbane until he died in the early 1980s. Sadly, in later life he made many claims about his involvement with English midget car racing, but most if not all are exaggerated or false. (See Part 2.)

Arthur Palmer occupied his new shop with its prams and toys until at least 1960, when he presumably retired. The shop, with its window display of a working electric train set, is still fondly remembered in Ewell. I must also admit to a soft spot for Arthur Thomas Palmer, confectioner and racing car designer (part-time).

Acknowledgements

Derek Bridgett, author of *Midget Car Speedway* (2006), Tempus Publishing Ltd, for much help, for copies of many cuttings he culled from *The Light Car and Cyclecar* magazine (usually referred to as *The Light Car*), *The Autocar* magazine, and other press notices, and for starting this whole enquiry by his letter to the *Wimbledon Guardian*.

John Williams of Brisbane for encouragement, information and long phone calls from Australia. (John is a Welshman whose parents met in Wimbledon, so he is one of us, and therefore a Good Chap.)

Merton Local Studies Centre for local newspapers, directories, Voters Lists, and finding our first illustration.

Volunteers at Epsom and Ewell Local Heritage Centre for memories.

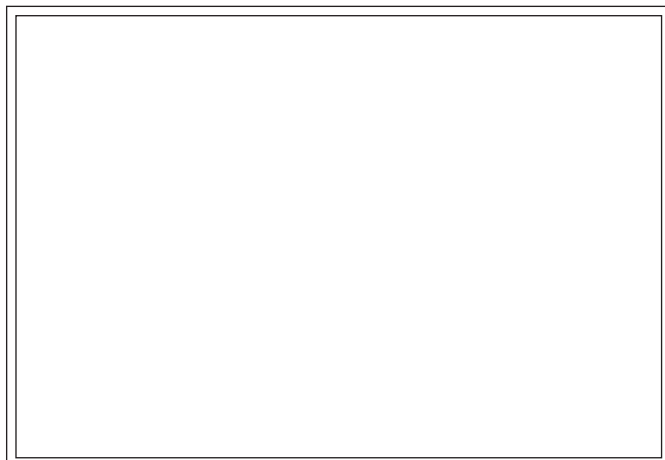
THE 'HIGHGATE' OF MERTON PRIORY

Some years ago I studied the matter of access to Merton priory, and in particular the functions of two gates in Station Road, opposite each other, and separated by the width of the road, say 20 metres. Was there a reason for them to be exactly facing each other? The much-loved southern gate, with a round arch, survived until the 1980s, but the northern gate, with a pointed arch, must have disappeared soon after our drawing was made in 1925. The elaborate small towers on either side of the gate suggested that this was no more than a 'folly' built to please an owner of Merton Abbey Gatehouse. In the photograph, taken from inside the wall, one can see the railings at one end of the long thin ornamental lake, most of which was exactly replaced by the line of Mill Road. Imagine my delight to find on page 122 of the MoLAS book on Merton priory that the gate was ancient and was known as the 'Highgate'. The photograph shows clearly much flint still apparent in the wall, indicating that it was part of the priory. Indeed the wall surrounded the grounds of the gatehouse and also covered the length of Abbey Road. In the late 17th century John Aubrey noted the existence of the Highgate in his *Natural History and Antiquities of Surrey* (pub. 1718-1719).

One wonders why walls existed on both sides of this lane (Station Road). Two possibilities exist. The lane was open to public access, with a further gate at the present river crossing, or thereabouts – the main course of the river Wandle being east of the priory during the life of the priory. The other possibility is a grand entrance gate at the junction of Station Road, High Path and Abbey Road. Dave Saxby, who has spent many years excavating the priory and its surroundings, considers that this is not unlikely.

Cyril Maidment

Right: The 'Highgate' from Station Road, signed 'L.B.T. 1925'



Above: The 'Highgate' from the garden side, photographed before 1915 (Wimbledon Society Museum)

