



PRESIDENT:

VICE PRESIDENTS: Eric Montague, Judith Goodman

CHAIR: Keith Penny

BULLETIN No. 195

SEPTEMBER 2015



Figges Marsh flower display in 1965 – the first year of the London Borough of Merton (see p.10) – photo by Peter Bruton

CONTENTS

Programme September – December 2015	2
‘Britain’s WW2 Air-Raid Warning System’	3
Visit to the Parliamentary Archives	5
Visit to The British Library	6
Local History Workshop:	
Friday 26 June 2015: Stored spade; Drewitt shelter memorial; WW1 objectors and strike;	
Smith family; Spital estate mansion; Dewey Bates; Roman coin; Mitcham Fair; H M Ellis	7
Ode to the River Wandle – Rosemary Turner	8
Stability after Change? The London Borough of Merton is 50 years old	
– Tony Scott & David Haunton	10
Death, Disease and Damnation – Rosemary Turner	11
The Society Store – Keith Penny	12
Anthony Toto, Tudor Artist and Lessee of the Manor of Ravensbury – Peter Hopkins	13

PROGRAMME SEPTEMBER – DECEMBER 2015

Wednesday 23 September 1.45 for 2.00pm **Southside House, 3-4 Woodhayes Road, SW19 4RE**
Tour of the House

£9 per head. We join a public tour. Book with Bea Oliver.

The house is next to King's College School. Buses: 93 to Rose & Crown stop, or 200 to Edge Hill.

Saturday 10 October 2.30pm **Christ Church Hall, Colliers Wood**
'England's Immigrants – aliens in Southwark & Surrey 1330-1550'
Illustrated talk by historian **Dr Andrea Ruddick**

Saturday 14 November 2.30pm **Christ Church Hall, Colliers Wood**
AGM followed by **'Merton and Cinema'**
Illustrated talk by **Sarah Gould**

Saturday 12 December 2.30pm **Christ Church Hall, Colliers Wood**
'Persevering with Father Thames'
Illustrated talk by antiquary and collector **Bob Wells**

Christ Church Hall is next to the church, in Christchurch Road, 250m from Colliers Wood Underground station. Limited parking at the hall, but plenty in nearby streets or at the Tandem Centre, 200m south. Buses 152, 200 and 470 pass the door.

Visitors are welcome to attend our talks. Entry £2.

VOLUNTEER NEEDED AS INDEPENDENT EXAMINER OF THE SOCIETY'S ACCOUNTS

The Society has for many years had a free independent examination of its annual accounts by a representative of Merton Voluntary Services Council. They can no longer do this, so we are now looking for a member of the Society, or somebody they know, to undertake this role on a voluntary basis. An independent examination is much simpler than an audit. No accountancy qualifications or experience are necessary, but a knowledge of bookkeeping is helpful, or at least an absence of fear in dealing with financial records that are lists of items of income and expenditure. An Independent Examiner (IE) cannot be a member of the Committee.

Once a year, the task involves a meeting with myself, where I will explain the accounts, and leave with the IE the account book, supporting documents (bank statements, invoices, etc.), the cheque book and paying in book. About one day's work is required to inspect them. The IE then meets me again, to resolve queries, and if he/she is satisfied that there is no evidence of missing accounting records, nor of the accounts failing to comply with the records, he/she signs the statement of accounts, already signed by myself, which are presented at the AGM (this year on November 14).

We need help ! If anybody is interested, or knows a likely helper, please contact :

David Roe (Treasurer)

SUBSCRIPTIONS

A membership renewal form is enclosed with this *Bulletin*. Only paid-up members may vote at the AGM. Membership fees remain at £10 for one person, £3 for each further person at the same address, £1 for students. Please note that we accept standing orders to pay subscriptions, as an alternative to cheques or cash. If you **already** pay by standing order, you only need to complete the enclosed standing order form if making changes.

‘BRITAIN’S WW2 AIR-RAID WARNING SYSTEM’

On Saturday 11 April Gordon Dennington, chairman of Lewisham Local History Society, fascinated a large audience with the results of his considerable researches, which seem to be unique.

Sirens

The population was warned of impending attack by the sound of sirens. These were designed to give two clearly-different audible signals: the ‘Warning’ or ‘Alert’ – a rising and falling wail, giving butterflies to a young listener, and the ‘All Clear’ – a steady tone.

Sirens were controlled by the Metropolitan Police, so naturally were located on the roofs of Police Stations, or other property owned by police. Subsidiary ones were placed on 30-35 foot poles (wood or metal), close to a blue Police Box, connected to a master control in the station. Almost all sirens stayed in place after WW2, and were only removed in 1992, at the end of the Cold War.

The Alert was never sounded after the war, so all the recordings now available are of Wartime sounds, none of which were professionally recorded. The design was intended to be heard at least as far as one mile distant, indoors, but obviously could be heard further away in open country – up to four miles in Gordon’s experience.

Sirens were made by Gents at their Faraday Works in Temple Road, Leicester. Physically, each siren comprised a hefty cylinder, with a 4hp electric motor in the centre (half the power of the average car at the time) spinning two rotors at 2800rpm. One rotor produced a note of A-major, and the other produced C-Major. The combination of these two notes had been found experimentally to be the most effective (ie. quickest) at catching the human attention. To produce the warbling of the Alert, the siren acted on an eight-second cycle, with the power switched on for five seconds, and then off for three. Initially the Warning sounded for three minutes, soon shortened to two minutes, and later still reduced to 60 seconds.

The police sirens were backed up by factory sirens or steam hooters – most factories had such to announce tea-breaks and clocking-off times. The Alert was given by interval blasts on the hooter. Because of this use, factories were banned from using their hooters for any reason other than an air raid. Factory hooters were eventually replaced by the spread of police sirens.

Detection

Radar detection of attacking aircraft was used to warn civilians as well as the RAF. However, early radar only looked out to sea, and could not detect low flying raiders. Inland, there were some 1400 Observer Corps (OC) posts all over the UK, who reported every aircraft they noticed. Three or four posts were linked in a sector, who could all hear each other’s reports and correct them if necessary. The sector centre then reported to a local OC Centre, where that sector’s reports were collated with those from other sectors, and summarised to an RAF operations room by telephone. The RAF operations rooms had several controllers to scramble and guide RAF fighter squadrons, and one Warning Officer to alert civilians.

Initially quite small, an OC Centre was organised in much the same way as an RAF Ops room, with a plotting table and senior observers above the table, with headsets for outbound information. The country was divided into OC areas, the busiest being 19 Centre at Bromley, covering the approaches to London from northeast round to southwest. It dealt with information from about 12 sectors, of which the nearest to Merton was the Claygate – Clandon – New Malden one.

Warning

By 1944, the OC Centres, each with a Warning Officer, were responsible for warning civilians. Indeed, Bromley had sole responsibility for plotting V-1 approaches. The system became so efficient that the time from the first observation of a V-1 to issuing a Warning and sirens sounding could be as short as 19 seconds.

A Warning District (WD) was a geographical area which was to be alerted, and possibly sirens sounded. The area was constrained by the GPO telephone system – each WD could only have one phone exchange. In London, warnings were normally issued to a whole Groups of WDs (eg. Central London, London Croydon, London

South). The magazine *Practical Mechanics* for November 1941 contained a whole-page diagram of the warning system, which omitted all mention of Radar – a subtle form of propaganda by dis-information. It is often alleged that the principles thus published were rapidly adopted in all German-occupied countries.

Photos from “Time to remember – standing alone 1940” – reel 3 (1941)

Experience

The ultimate intention of the Warning was to save lives, and it did do so. It is estimated that public warnings saved perhaps three times as many civilian lives as the 67,100 that were lost – a total of more than 200,000 deaths avoided. Gordon gave some dramatic examples of consequences of a failure to warn.

It was policy not to issue a public warning for a ‘single-aircraft raid’, to save wasted production time in all the factories in a single warning area. This still applied in 1944, until the V-1s were in use – each one of course being a ‘single-aircraft raid’. The V-2 threat: the missiles were impossible to intercept, but British radar could detect their launches in Holland. A Pyrotechnic Warning was devised which would have given two minutes warning, but the radar data was not sufficiently reliable. So V-2 warnings were never issued.

Gordon was heartily congratulated on his talk, which stimulated an awful lot of memories from members.

DH

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY

As no volunteer for the position appeared, two busy members of the Committee have kindly agreed to split the duties between them. Rosemary Turner takes over dealing with members’ personal details and membership fees, while David Luff will man the welcoming desk at our meetings, and keep the ‘safety list’ of persons in the hall.

OPEN HOUSE WEEKEND 19 and 20 September:

St Mary’s Church, Merton Park, is celebrating its 900 years with guided talks, a Churchyard Trail, a recital on Sunday on the new organ (if it is ready!) and the opening of an exhibition by local artists, ‘*In the Spirit of Place*’. The exhibition continues Monday 21 – Friday 25 (mornings) and Saturday 26 – Sunday 27 (afternoons).

VISIT TO THE PARLIAMENTARY ARCHIVES

On 21 May ten Members met for a visit to the Parliamentary Archives at the Palace of Westminster. We entered the Palace at Black Rod's Garden entrance, and were introduced to our guide Claire Batley, one of the Archivists. We were taken to the second floor, by lift. On this floor we looked down an octagonal opening to the ground floor, where preparations for the State Opening of Parliament were in hand. This opening is primarily for the movement of large objects from floor to floor.



Photo:
Bea Oliver

Claire gave us a very informative and interesting history of the Archives. The documentation of the business of the Houses of Parliament had been kept in part of the Palace of Westminster since the 15th century. Most of the older documents are from the workings of the House of Lords, as a great percentage of the archival material of the House of Commons was destroyed in the fire of 1834. We were then taken into the Archives where there were floor to ceiling shelves of hand written parchments, in rolls of various sizes, containing the historic work of this House. We were told that from the 1850s the documentation of the work of Parliament was printed and kept flat. It is also now computerised, and anyone wishing to see any of the collection can do so online. The work of conservation of documents and other items was explained.

We were then taken to the eighth floor, luckily by lift – there are over 500 very winding steps to the top of the Victoria Tower, which in an emergency one would have to use. Here we were given a slide show of some of the many and diverse items in the collection. Items which members had asked to see were on display with other examples of interest. Many questions were asked and answered on what we had seen, and thanks were given to Claire Batley for a most enjoyable, interesting, informative and worthwhile tour.

The Archives are open to anyone who is interested in the history and workings of our Mother of Parliaments.

Bea Oliver

OUTSIDE REPRESENTATION – SUMMER 2015

During the summer, Committee members have given talks to Mitcham Library coffee morning, to Wimbledon U3A (who have requested another talk), to Wimbledon Library coffee afternoon, and to the West Barnes Library talks group. The U3A talk was very well attended, the others less so. Other talks are planned (as eg. below). Rosemary Turner represented the Society at the *Mitcham on the Green* event, patronised by the Mayor. See also p.11.

CELEBRATING AGE 2015

Tony Scott will give a talk *Discover Mitcham* on Wednesday 17 September at 11:00–12:30
at Mitcham Library.

Booking required: ask a member of staff or call 020 8274 5745

VISIT TO THE BRITISH LIBRARY

On 23 July, members enjoyed a tour of the Library led by Andy Macdonald, who has been a member of staff for 31 years. We started in the courtyard, at the large bronze statue of Isaac Newton, based on the drawing by William Blake. Designed by Eduardo Paolozzi, the face is a self portrait, like all of his work. Andy then took us round numerous public and backstage rooms via corridors, lifts and stairs, with a continuous commentary.



The site used to be the Somers Town rail yard. The architect, Colin St John Wilson, first sketched a design in 1962; building stopped in 1997. The design was in three phases, but when the cost reached £500 million, the project was halted, so the second and third phases were never built. Some minor parts are still unfinished (ceilings etc). The building contains ten million bricks carefully matched in colour to the St Pancras Hotel and Station next door; the Welsh slates on the roof exhausted the single mine they came from. The books are stored on underground stacks, in a basement eight storeys deep (the biggest hole in London, where spaceship scenes in *Alien* were filmed during construction). To make maximum use of stack space, books are stored by size, using the BL's own ID number – there is no hint of Dewey or ISBN. Much of the collection is now stored in the Boston Spa extension, including the newspaper originals (until recently at Colindale); but photographic copies of these are held in London.

The British Library (BL) began as part of the British Museum (which itself originated in 1753), but separated from the Museum in 1972. The four founders of the collection were: Sir Robert Cotton, Sir Joseph Banks and Thomas Grenville, all of whom donated their collections, and Sir Hans Sloane, who sold his 71,000 books, and his curiosities collection, to the nation for £20,000 — and also discovered the recipe for milk chocolate.

The BL is one of six Legal Deposit Libraries (with Aberystwyth, Edinburgh, Belfast, Oxford and Cambridge). A copy of every book published in the country has to be lodged with each of these. The definition of 'book' includes newspapers, comics and sales catalogues, and any other printed item that is intended for sale, as well as all university theses for doctorates. Rare British books are occasionally bought, the Library usually having to bid in the market.

Some 8000 items are received per day, making this one of the two largest libraries in the world; the Library of Congress may be larger, but no-one is sure. The BL does hold the world's second biggest pornography collection – beaten by the Vatican! The BL also holds a stamp collection (and the machine on which Penny Blacks were printed). This began with Thomas Keay Tapling, MP, who collected almost every stamp in the world up to 1890, and donated them to the Library. The stamp collection has since depended on other donations, the BL never having spent a penny on stamps. Much of this collection is freely on view. There is also a sound archive of records on both shellac and vinyl (which may be heard in a sound booth actually being played, as being more accurate than a digital recording).

The King's Collection comprises those books bought by George III with his own money (ie. not the taxpayers'), given by George IV on condition that they be kept together, on display, and that people could consult them. It is now held in a special glass enclosure, with filtered air, five stacks high. The backs of all the volumes are visible to visitors, but the books may only be handled by a few designated persons. The entrance is guarded by a marble bust of King George (who famously lost America) 'recovered from America'. By contrast, outside the map reading room, with its double size desks, is the Klencke Atlas. This was a 1660 gift to Charles II by a group of Dutch merchants. It is physically the largest book in the world, and attempted to summarise all geographical knowledge of the time in 41 maps.

The BL is of course a library, where anyone may register as a reader, on tendering separate proofs of name and address, and your reading list. The catalogues are available online and items can be ordered online from home; useful as items from Boston Spa take two days to arrive: London-held items are delivered in one hour. There are eleven reading rooms with a total of 1400 seats; behind the scenes, your order is picked and sent to your reading room on a tray via a system of roller conveyors. Astonishingly, 50% of the collection may be borrowed, though none of the items held in London may be taken away.

Our final look was at the BL's '200 Treasures' exhibition, with free public access. This includes Beowulf (singled), two copies of Magna Carta, the Codex Sinaiticus (the oldest known bible, from the fourth century), Caxton's Chaucer, the Lindisfarne Gospels and the St Cuthbert Gospel. Many items have been bought at auction at high prices. One could easily spend a couple of hours just in this room. A visit is recommended. **DH**

LOCAL HISTORY WORKSHOP

Friday 26 June 2015: Six present – Rosemary Turner in the chair

- ◆ **David Luff** had some photographs of our moving the contents of the MHS store from Lower Morden to Gap Road. One puzzling and undocumented item is this fire-engine-red painted spade, mounted on a black clip-board (right). Any ideas ?
- ◆ **Keith Penny** had seen in Garth Road Depot the stone memorial tablet removed from the now-demolished Drewitt public shelter on Mitcham Green. It is in good condition, and Keith will ask Sarah Gould to draw it to the notice of the Mitcham Green regeneration team.



Keith had found a newspaper report of the 1916 public examination of a Mitcham conscientious objector, with an extensive discussion of morals between the Bench and the appellant. In 1916 appellants' names were withheld, but later they were usually published. Keith had also found an account of a successful strike by male tram-drivers against the employment of two women drivers – female conductors were tolerated – so there were no female drivers in London during WW1.

- ◆ **Peter Hopkins** had been sent details of a Captain John Smith, related to the Smiths of Merton Abbey, who merited a 12-page entry in an 1830 multi-volume *Royal Naval Biography*, whereas Admiral Isaac Smith barely managed two pages. He was also sent an account of a battle that presumably included a later Smith who served aboard the destroyer *HMS Acasta* in Admiral Hood's 3rd Battlecruiser Squadron [at Jutland].

At SHC Peter had found a Notice for sale or lease of 'a house and lands in Morden and Carshalton', dating between 1660 and 1680. The description of the mansion started, most unusually, with the cellar and continued with its 35 rooms as well as the normal brewhouse, bakery, etc, which made Peter wonder if it the cellar was a medieval undercroft. No identity was given, but the 140 acres around the house probably indicate that it was the Spital estate in Morden, formerly belonging to Merton priory. An inn and associated land also mentioned probably formed the Carshalton land. Much discussion ensued about monastic hospitals/hospices-cum-guest houses, but it is not clear if Merton priory had such an establishment in Morden, or merely land to finance one elsewhere.

- ◆ **David Haunton** had previously mis-identified the benefactor of Dewey Bates. The correct lady was Charlotte Sophia Beer, who left him a legacy of £150 (say £12-15,000 today). Evidently an admirer of his work, she left his 'painting in the Dining room of myself and servant' to her executrix.

Dewey's 1884 painting of 'Two Sisters' was listed on a website as of Grace Emily Blundell and Winifred Mary Blundell. This was incomplete, as their full surname was Blundell-Maple. Their father eventually became Sir John Blundell-Maple, Bart, MP, who was known as the (Maples) 'Furniture King'. When he died in 1903 he was one of the richest men in Britain. So Dewey was moving in up-and-coming circles.

A Roman coin found in the MHS store is a sestertius of the Emperor Domitian, minted in 87AD. Made of brass, it would have had a value of about £50. Assumed to have come from one of the Society digs, it was very worn, and may have been lost near Stane Street some time around 100-120AD.

- ◆ **Alan Hutchings** (by email) remembered the tall red and white poles (*see June Bulletin p.1*) being present at Mitcham Fair, post-War until it ended. They were always around the outside attractions such as swing-boats and coconut shy; he thought they were intended as a sort of public warning of danger areas.
- ◆ **Judy Goodman** had some more information on H M Ellis (*see p.8*). He was a qualified surveyor and valuer (FSI, or Fellow of the Surveyors Institution), and possibly an architect. He served on Surrey County Council for the Merton Division, principally concerning himself with educational matters, and on Merton parish council, but resigned when it became an Urban District (*see p.10*). He was also the Surveyor for Wandsworth and Wimbledon licensing authorities. His house 'Meadholm' still stands in Blenheim Road, off Grand Drive, and had been briefly the first clubhouse for Raynes Park Golf Club.
- ◆ **Rosemary Turner** had even more about Mr Ellis, including two citations for leadership while laying train tracks under shellfire, during service with a Labour Battalion in WW1. She has photographed the six houses he owned in Wandle Road, which still bear their original names (*overleaf*).

David Haunton

Dates of next Workshops: Fridays 25 September and 6 November at 2.30pm

At Wandle Industrial Museum. All are welcome.

(No Workshop in December)

ROSEMARY TURNER tells us more about her

ODE TO THE RIVER WANDLE

Some time ago I discovered amongst my husband's things a photocopy of a drawn map of the river Wandle. The top part of the map covering Wandsworth had been missed off the photocopy. I made enquiries at various meetings and archives to see if anyone recognised it, but no-one did. It was signed at the bottom 'H M Ellis (Ink et Del) Dec 10' and around the border was a poem. I Googled the name and the first line of the poem and got nothing.

The only landmarks mentioned on the map are in Merton (Wandle Park, Mill Pond, etc), with a note in Ravensbury Park 'An acquired strip'. This is the land purchased by Captain Bidder, on which he built his house, mentioned in the 1910 Valuation. It suddenly occurred to me that as the map is dated 1910 maybe H M Ellis is mentioned in those records, so I checked my Morden transcription and found a 'Herbert Moules [*sic*] Ellis', address given as 9 Wallbrook, EC. He owned six houses in Wandle Road, Nos 1-6, named Riverward (*below*), Meadowlands, Woodside, Broadlands, Longmead and Maybank.

I found that the houses are still in existence and have retained their names. In the 1910 Valuation the houses are described in unpunctuated field note books as 'Semi detached 3 beds boxroom bathroom ... 2 sitting rooms kitchen scullery', with 'Outside: Coals WC ... garden not planted' and 'House not papered nor finished painting'... 'prob not erected upon 30.4.1909 as not incl in 1909 assessment'. The entry however shows Miss Mary Parton of 33 Church Rd, Wimbledon, holding a 99-year lease on all six houses from 1908. Three of the houses were leased for three years from 1909 or 1910 to various tenants.



Photo: Rosemary Turner

By much Googling and a jog from Charles Toase I found that this gentleman's name was actually Herbert Moates Ellis, born in 1864 in the Richmond area to Frederick Startridge Ellis (publisher of the Kelmscott Press and much else, and close friend of William Morris) and Caroline Moates. He was an architect and surveyor, and in *The Collection of Letters of William Morris* Vol III 1889-1892 he is referred to as a partner in the firm of Withall and Ellis, based in the City. In the *London Gazette* the firm was noted as architects, surveyors, auctioneers, valuers and estate agents. As well as addresses in London, the *London Gazette* mentions him living at several local places, including Meadholm, Blenheim Road, in Raynes Park (1906-7 and 1911) and Beverley Wood, Coombe (1916). He bought Garbrand Hall, Ewell (later Bourne Hall), in May 1925, but when he died in 1930, aged 65, his will gave his address as Ouzelwood, Ewell. He seems to have married twice. The National Archives show that he was a temporary captain in the Labour Corps 1914-22 and the *London Gazette* details two acts of conspicuous gallantry.

Further Googling, of the first line of the poem around the edges, identified it as *The Tide River*, one of the Songs from *The Water Babies* by Charles Kingsley, who wrote it in 1862, at Eversley, Hampshire, where he had been Rector until 1859. It is written in two lines along each of the long sides of the map, from the bottom upwards; the missing words let us estimate that we have only about 60% of the map.

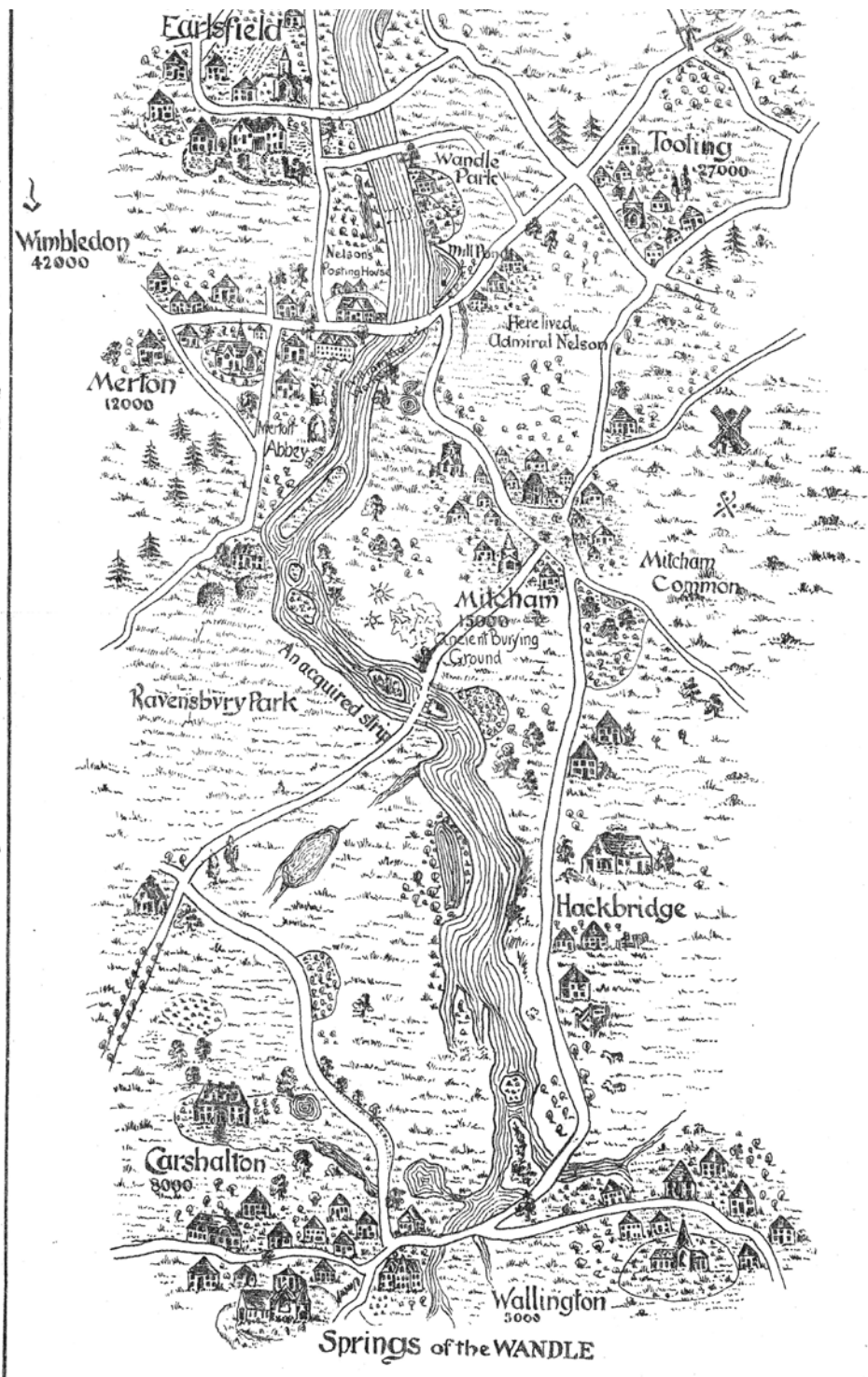
Charles Toase adds:

Herbert Moates Ellis was the author of *Bygone Wimbledon and Merton* (1906, Trim). He was a surveyor, so most likely to have produced a map, and he claimed to own twelve acres in Surrey and twenty elsewhere, which fits with the ownership mentioned. The Mary Parton who leased the Wandle Road houses was active in numerous good works, including being Secretary of the Wandle Open Spaces Committee that led to the National Trust involvement.

***THE TIDE RIVER* (from The Water-Babies)**

*Clear and cool, clear and cool,
By laughing shallow, and dreaming pool;
Cool and clear, cool and clear,
By shining shingle, and foaming weir;
Under the crag where the ouzel sings,
And the ivied wall where the church-bell rings,
Undefiled, for the undefiled;
Play by me, bathe in me, mother and child.*

Clear and cool, clear and cool by laughing shallow and dreaming pool
Cool and clear Cool and clear by shining shingle and
And the ivied wall where the church bell rings, Undeified, for the undeified; Play by me, bathe in me, mother and child



Note - This Map correctly shows the length & course of the River and the position of the main roads. The River width is exaggerated to obtain adequate delineation. Grouped houses show centres of urban districts



H M ELLIS
(INK ET DEL)
DEC 10

Dank and foul, dank and foul, By the smoky town in its murky cowl; Foul and dank, foul and dank, By wharf and sewer and slimy bank; Darker and darker the farther I go, Baser and baser the richer I grow; Who dare sport with the sin-defiled? Shrink from me, turn from me, mother and child

Dank and foul, dank and foul,
By the smoky town in its murky cowl;
Foul and dank, foul and dank,
By wharf and sewer and slimy bank;
Darker and darker the farther I go,
Baser and baser the richer I grow;
Who dare sport with the sin-defiled?
Shrink from me, turn from me, mother and child.

Strong and free, strong and free,
The floodgates are open, away to the sea.
Free and strong, free and strong,
Cleansing my streams as I hurry along
To the golden sands, and the leaping bar;
And the taintless tide that awaits me afar,
As I lose myself in the infinite main,
Like a soul that has sinned and is pardoned again.
Undeified, for the undeified;
Play by me, bathe in me, mother and child.

TONY SCOTT and DAVID HAUNTON ponder if we have

STABILITY AFTER CHANGE?

THE LONDON BOROUGH OF MERTON IS 50 YEARS OLD

In this year when the Borough celebrates its 50th anniversary, it is interesting to describe the varied organisational paths by which our four original parishes became the single entity of the London Borough of Merton (LBM). Remarkably, the fifty years since the LBM was established have been the longest period when no organisational change was inflicted on our area. Internal changes are another matter.

For a long time before the mid-19th century, local government such as highways, care of the poor and any health and hygiene control that existed, was the responsibility of Parish Councils. In the mid-18th century, national legislation established Turnpike trusts to maintain the major roads in return for charging a toll. In 1838 parishes were combined by national legislation into Unions to make care of the poor more efficient.

In London, serious health and hygiene problems brought about the establishment in 1855 of the Metropolitan Board of Works, which was to build an interceptor sewer system across London, removing some responsibilities from the affected parishes. The first Chief Engineer of the Board of Works, of course, was Joseph Bazalgette, who lived in Morden before moving to Wimbledon.

School Boards were established by the Elementary Education Act 1870 and had the power to build and run schools where there were insufficient voluntary school places. It was recognised that London was more than a collection of isolated parishes and the School Board for London was established to cover the whole area of the Metropolitan Board of Works.

In 1888 the Local Government Act took land from Surrey, Kent and Middlesex and set up the London County Council (LCC) as a county with subordinate boroughs. The LCC was to take over the functions of the Board of Works, and commenced its activities on 1st April 1889. (The LCC's remit was later extended to other areas, such as in 1904, when it took over the responsibility for education in London.)

At this point, in 1889, the three parishes of Mitcham, Merton and Morden were situated in the County of Surrey (none in the County of London), and run by local independent Vestries with the next tier of control being Surrey County Council. However, in 1866 under the powers of the Local Government Act of 1858, Wimbledon had become a Local Government District (or civil parish) in its own right, governed by a local board of 15 members.

The Local Government Act of 1894 reconstituted Wimbledon as an Urban District, while Mitcham, Merton and Morden parishes were all taken into the newly-established Rural District of Croydon. Then in 1898, by a Local Government Board Order, part of the civil parish of Merton was added to the civil parish and urban district of Wimbledon. Wimbledon was shortly afterwards incorporated as a Municipal Borough, with its charter being granted 24 July 1905. The new Borough was governed by a mayor, six aldermen and eighteen councillors. Three years later Wimbledon applied to become a County Borough (a term introduced in 1889 to refer to a borough outside county council control) but was refused.

Merton was removed from Croydon Rural District on becoming an Urban District of Surrey in 1907. Morden parish did not become an Urban District in its own right, but in 1913 was removed from Croydon and added to Merton to form the Merton and Morden Urban District of Surrey.

Mitcham became an Urban District in 1915, when all Rural Districts were abolished. The town was elevated to the status of a Municipal Borough on 19 September 1934, the Charter Mayor being 84-year-old Robert Chart, a local benefactor.

Thus in early 1965, our area comprised two Boroughs and an Urban District. The Local Government Act of 1963, with an implementation date of 1 April 1965, established Greater London as a county, to be run by the Greater London Council (GLC). The Act also abolished the County of London, the LCC and Middlesex, took further land from Surrey, Kent, Essex and Hertfordshire, and combined smaller units into the London Boroughs that we know today. The London Borough of Merton was established by amalgamating Merton and Morden, Mitcham and Wimbledon. Following a dispute between Wimbledon and Mitcham over the new borough's name, Merton was chosen as an acceptable compromise.

The target population for each new borough was 150,000 - 200,000. Those within the old LCC area were to be known as Inner London Boroughs, all others as Outer London Boroughs. For all of the last half-century, LBM (along with the other Outer London Boroughs) has been responsible for its own education services, while Inner London Boroughs were not responsible for education until the demise of the Inner London Education Authority in 1990.

The administrative centre of the Borough of Mitcham was the Vestry Hall at the Cricket Green, and that of the

Borough of Wimbledon was the Town Hall beside Wimbledon Station (now the front of Centre Court). Merton and Morden occupied Council Offices at 116-118 Kingston Road, supplemented in the early 1940s by Morden Hall, where Council meetings were held after mid-1942. Initially, these buildings were used for the new LBM offices. The Wimbledon Council Chamber was used for Council meetings, the Vestry Hall, Mitcham, was used for Public Health, the Borough Engineer used offices in Morden Hall, Planning was in Park Place, Mitcham, Housing used Mitcham Court and its annexe, and Education used offices over Morden Underground Station. There was a great desire to bring all of these offices together in one building and when Crown House became vacant in 1984 a decision was made to re-locate all of the Council departments there, which took place in 1985. The first Mayor of LBM was Alderman Cyril Marsh. The only Mayor to have served more than once is Slim Flegg, OBE (1992-3 and 1996-7). Of the first fifteen Mayors (elected 1965-1979), only one was female, while of the most recent fifteen (elected 2001-2015) no fewer than nine have been female; Councillor David Chung, our present Mayor, was born in Guyana, while his predecessor, Councillor Agatha Akyigyina was born in Ghana: interesting indications that LBM is undoubtedly changing. We are stable but happily not static.

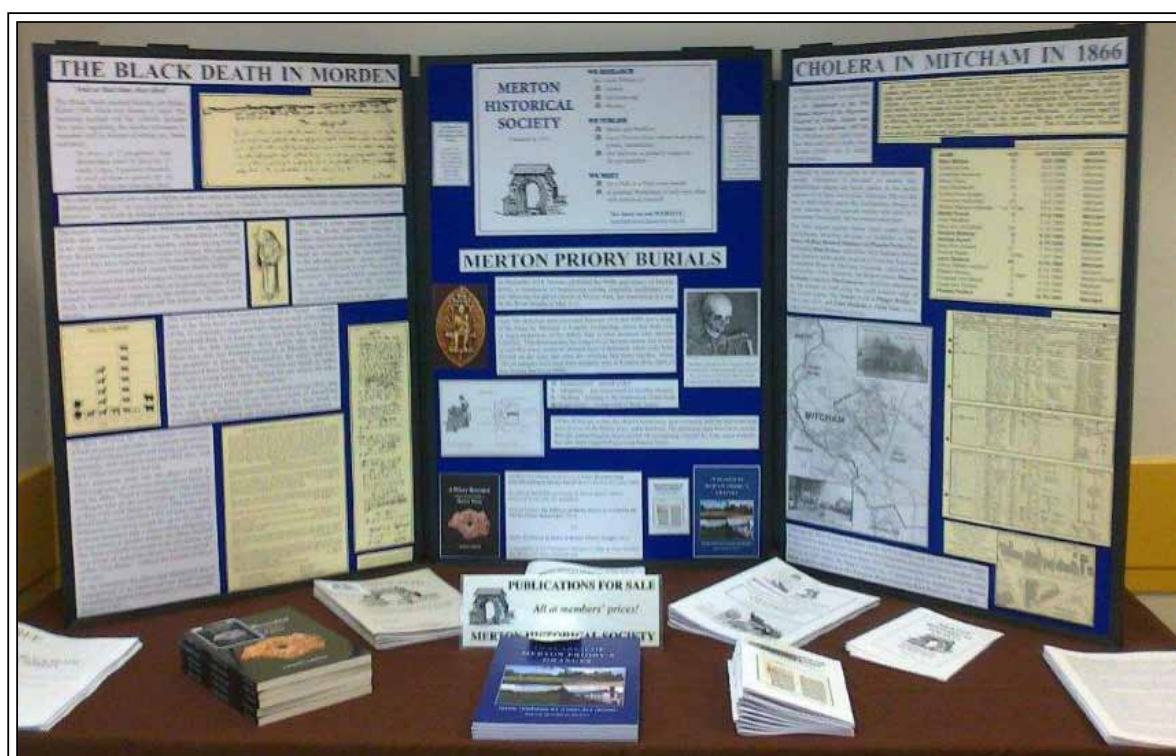
ROSEMARY TURNER reports on our participation in 'DEATH, DISEASE AND DAMNATION'

This was the theme of the Surrey Local History Symposium held on 2 May at Ashted Memorial Hall, attended by Peter Hopkins, Rosemary Turner and Bea Oliver. There were talks throughout the day on related subjects covering different periods.

Societies were invited to have a display relating to the theme and MHS decided to take a table, for the first time. Peter gathered together data from his Medieval researches, an article by Eric Montague and information from the Merton Priory dig. Dave Haunton looked up census entries on *Ancestry* to add information to the panels. Our display comprised panels on *The Black Death in Morden*, *Cholera In Mitcham*, and *DISH in Merton Priory skeletons*. Peter had also produced leaflets on the Black Death and Cholera that people could take away, which proved very popular.

The presentations are judged and the winner receives the Gravett Award. Points are given for different aspects of the display; the judges also asked questions. When the time arrived for the award to be given, we were very pleased and surprised to hear that we had won. The judges explained why they had chosen us. They liked the way that the display had been laid out and that the print was easy to read. They noted the wide number of sources used and that the material came from several people. They were impressed that the display included a piece from each of the areas covered by the Society – Morden, Mitcham and Merton.

Peter went up to receive the certificate which was only right as he had put the display together. I was just the chauffeur, photographer and glamorous assistant.



THE SOCIETY STORE

As mentioned in the 'Extra News' item sent with the last *Bulletin*, Merton Borough Council decided to demolish the premises used by the Society for the storage of objects and papers. Through the good offices of Kevin Hawkes of MBC a new site, at Gap Road Cemetery, has been found, and the Society's possessions were moved there in mid-June. It is not yet clear what charge the Council may wish to levy for the use of the new store. Because of earlier uncertainty about what, if any, accommodation might be offered by the Council, the Committee met and decided to review the Society's holdings. Several archaeological items have been sent to the *London Archaeological Archive and Research Centre (LAARC)* and the Merton Priory Trust; some items relevant to Wimbledon have gone to that museum; some items not relevant to the area are either going to other collections or will be sold. Some items that were neither of local significance nor in good condition were taken for recycling. The review will continue. I should like to thank those Committee members who were able to assist with the sorting and the removal to Gap Road.

Keith Penny



*Photo: David Luff,
who was also one
of the workers*

SOCIETY EMAILS

The Society now offers an information service to email users. This will include reminders of Society meetings and visits, and announcements of other events of local history interest of which notice arrives between issues of the *Bulletin*. For example, we could have alerted members to the first of Sarah Gould's *Carved in Stone* War Story Days.

To start receiving this service, please send an email to info@mertonhistoricalsociety.org.uk. Send another if you wish to cancel. Your emails will be acknowledged, but please note that this is not a correspondence address. Your email address will not be used for any other purpose or disclosed to a third party.

Historical queries and any general questions or comments on the activities of the Society should be sent to mhs@mertonhistoricalsociety.org.uk, and articles for the *Bulletin* to editor@mertonhistoricalsociety.org.uk.

Desmond Bazley

It is with deep regret that we announce the recent death of our colleague Desmond Bazley, after a long illness. A long-time member of MHS, he contributed to the early years of the photographic project, and served on our Committee for many years, quietly, but always alert to ask the probing question that no-one else had thought of. We will miss him.

DH

PETER HOPKINS concludes his account of

ANTHONY TOTO, TUDOR ARTIST AND LESSEE OF THE MANOR OF RAVENSBURY IN MITCHAM AND MORDEN, SURREY

Henry VIII had married his sixth, and last, wife, Katherine Parr, on 12 July 1543, and Toto's name has been suggested as designer and perhaps painter of two (or three) sets of paintings in oil on canvas, now at Loseley Park in Surrey, which include her emblem – a maiden's head rising from a Tudor rose – and the initials KP and HR, and Henry's emblems, including Tudor rose, portcullis and fleur-de-lis. These heraldic devices are mostly found in 18 small canvases some 30x45cm, now mounted within the wooden panelling lining the Great Hall at Loseley, and were probably cut from slightly larger hatchments and escutcheons used in processions and other celebrations, like those at Jane Seymour's funeral.³² The photographs below appeared in *Country Life* 25 May 1935.³³

The larger panels, 127x45cm, mostly depict pagan deities, but include two of the Christian Virtues (so perhaps originally two separate sets).³⁴ The two printed right passed into the ownership of John Paul Getty and were sold after his death.³⁵ Though traditionally reputed to have come from Nonsuch palace, they are now thought to have been produced to decorate temporary banqueting houses – the builder of the present mansion at Loseley was executor to Sir Thomas Cawarden, Master of the Revels and Tents, who met his death in 1559. Cawarden's correspondence and accounts survive among the Loseley Manuscripts now divided between Surrey History Centre and the Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington DC.

No accounts giving details of expenditure for Katherine's wedding celebrations have come to light, so it is not known whether the Loseley panels were produced for that occasion or later, following Toto's promotion. However, accounts survive of Henry's funeral four years later when, as serjeant-painter, Toto had to design the decoration of the hearse and to supervise the painting of all heraldic emblems in the traditional manner.³⁶ He was similarly involved in the coronation of Edward VI in 1547 and in Edward's funeral in 1553.³⁷

Between 27 June and 2 August 1551 a 'Bancketting Howse' was erected in Hyde Park for the visit of the French ambassador. £30 15d was paid to 35 named 'payntowrs woorkyng under Anthony Totto sargyant paynter', including 53s 4d to Toto 'gevyng in reward towards his paynes and charges in the setting forwarde of all the payntors woork apparteynyng to the said bancketing howse', while 11 painters under John Ledys painted 'furnytore' at a further £7 14s 10d. Toto was also repaid £13 7s 5d 'for money by hym layde owte' for materials – all described with details of weight and unit price!³⁸

Although not of the same scale or splendour as the structures created by Toto's predecessor John Brown for the Field of the Cloth of Gold in 1520, the ambassador would have been suitably impressed on 28 July when, according to the king's diary, 'Mons. le mareschal cam to diner to Hide parke, where there was a fair hous made for him, and he saw the cursing [coursing] there'.³⁹

The accounts relating to the Hyde Park banqueting house also include the expenses of the Office of the Tents in repairing, airing and transporting the king's tents and haies [temporary stabling for horses], which had been taken to, and brought back from, Berwick, Scotland and Calais, and were to be set up at Hyde Park 'for offices for bankett there and for the woorkemen to woork in them and to lodge in them'.⁴⁰

Four documents from the Loseley Manuscripts originated from the Office of the Tents, and relate to items painted by Toto and delivered by him in July 1544 'for th' use of the kynges highnes Tentres & pavilions, the kyng fynding canvas & bucrum for all the hadchementes & penselles [pennants]'. These detail the quantities and variety of the items delivered, listed by size and decoration,⁴¹ and include a price list,⁴² and a 'corrected' account of quantities received and the amounts due to Toto, as summarised below, totalling more than £173.⁴³

34 hadchementes	1 ell [45in] square	king's arms + beasts crowned, the garter & king's 'words' in fine gold & colours	@ 30s
33 hatchementes	1 yard square	like above but without beasts	£1
20 hadchementes	¾-yard square	like above without beasts	10s 6d
20 hadchementes	½-yard square	the Rose with H&R, crowned	3s 4d
20 hadchementes	½-yard square	H&R only, crowned	3s 4d
20 hadchementes	½-yard square	flowre deluce [fleur de lis] with H&R, crowned	3s 4d
20 hadchementes	½-yard square	portculyes [portcullis] with H&R, crowned	3s 4d
41 hadchementes	½-yard square	the Rose crowned with H&R,	2s 0d
54 hadchementes	½-yard square	H&R only, crowned	2s 0d
52 hadchementes	½-yard square	fleur de lis, crowned	2s 0d
56 hadchementes	½-yard square	portcullis, crowned	2s 0d
128 penselles	½-yard x ¾-yard	the king's badge on bucrum	1s 4d
200 pottes	10 inches long	for lodgings & stables	8d
9 pottes	16 inches long	for lodgings & stables	8d
190 vanes [fanés]	6 inches square	paynted with king's badge	3s 0d
30 vanes	8in & 9in square	paynted with king's armes & badge	3s 4d

He had already been paid £42 13s 8d in cash and surplus materials, and it was no doubt part payment for these items that is acknowledged in a receipt dated 31 May 1544 and signed by 'Antony Totto' for £20 paid to him for 'paynting of hatchementes, armes & badges of the kynge to be sett upon his highnes tentres and pavilions' (*detail below*).⁴⁴

This receipt is likely to be unique, as it has on the dorse a pencil or 'black chalk' drawing of a rearing horse – probably the only surviving sketch by Toto, albeit very faint and obscured by bleeding through from the writing on the recto (*detail right*).

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But it was not only the decorating of temporary accommodation that fell to the serjeant-painter. Royal palaces provided plenty of opportunities for the installation of heraldic devices – in particular, the badges and arms of the queen had to be altered for each new bride! And other decorations were required, both indoors and out, even on the roofs which were embellished by painting and gilding and the addition of heraldic beasts of painted stone or wood.⁴⁵ It is probably in this light that one must view Vasari's comment that Toto 'served [the king of England] in architecture, erecting, in particular, his principal palace',⁴⁶ which seems to indicate that Toto was

the principal architect of Nonsuch palace, begun in 1538. It is more likely that he helped with its decoration. As serjeant-painter Toto 'would undoubtedly be concerned with both utilitarian and decorative painting at Nonsuch, but there is unfortunately no documentary evidence whatever to connect him with the Palace'.⁴⁷

The responsibility for banqueting houses and tents was a function of the Revels Office, and there is even more information regarding Toto's role in the royal revels during the reign of Edward VI. In 1544 the post of Master of the Office of the Masks and Revels was granted to Sir Thomas Carwarden for life. The 'masks' were masques, not face masks which were known as 'vezars' or 'hedpeces', and the main task was to produce costumes and props for the courtiers taking part in these revels.

In 1547/8 a 'Rewarde' of £1 was paid 'To Anthony Totto Sergeant paynter for his paynes & diligens drawnyng patrons [patterns] and other necessities during the whiles thies maskes were a making', and in February 1550/1, £1 was paid to 'Anthony Totte for diuers his attendance in the Revelles for drawinge & devisinge for painters & other'.⁴⁸ It is clear that Toto was mainly the designer, though he would turn his hand to whatever might be needed, especially for the more detailed work or that using expensive materials, as revealed in later accounts. Toto was also responsible for supplying special materials, being paid 2s 3d at Christmas 1552/3 'for saffron and gum arabic by him at sondry tymes prouided and bought to dropp cloth of siluer for the bodies of a maske of women xv^d and for Synoper blak for ye like purpose xij^d'. More common materials were purchased from the 'grosers'. The theme that year was the 'Tryumphe of Cupide'.⁴⁹ Toto also worked alongside the Master of the Revels in sketching out the Master's ideas for approval before they were turned into reality by his team of painters. In January/February 1552/3 Toto received £2 'for his paynes and attendaunce the seide paynters and theyre adooe in tracynge and setting owt workes and patrons to them by all the same tyme theyr woorkes lasted', and a further £1 'for certen patrons by him drawen after the Masters device for maskes and other percelles of the premisses in paper for syte & shewe of the forme in colours before the woorkemanship began'.⁵⁰

Another aspect of the serjeant-painter's role was in painting ships – not illustrations such as those on the famous 1546 Anthony Roll, but the banners and streamers and other decorations shown in those illustrations (*overleaf*).⁵¹ In March 1555, following Toto's death, a debt of £235 3s due to him from Henry VIII was still outstanding 'for colours and the painting of certain ships'.⁵² The Exchequer frequently delayed payment of large sums due to craftsmen, often for many years.

£235 3s was a considerable amount, and it might be assumed that this was a debt that had gradually accumulated over several years. However, the naval aspect of the serjeant-painter's work involved large sums. On 17 December 1511, £142 4s 6d had been paid to Henry VIII's first serjeant-painter, 'John Browne, of London ... for painting and staining banners and streamers' for his ill-fated vice-flagship *The Mary Rose* and *The Peter Pounde Garnade*, the materials for which – 'tukes, bokerams, Brussels cloth and chamletes, to make streamers and banners' – had been purchased from 'Willm. Botrye, of London, mercer' for a further £50 19s 2d.⁵³ On 2 June 1514 £112 19s 8d was paid for six streamers, 100 penselles and 50 banners 'painted, made for the King's new ship by Vinsent Vulp, painter ... delivered to the King's ship called *the Henry Grace de Due*' also known as the *Great Harry*.⁵⁴ It would appear that the failure of Henry VIII's finance departments to pay for naval contracts forced Toto to pledge his leasehold lands to a London grocer, Robert Walles, who had been supplying him with the various ingredients for his paints. In 1552, when Walles threatened to foreclose on the debt, Toto assigned the lease to John Hopkins, who settled Walles' debt and others – a total of £210 12s – leaving Toto with some £140. Toto's son, Anthony junior, later tried to reclaim the estate from Hopkins' son Richard, without success.⁵⁵

Toto also left a daughter, the Elianora Totte who was admitted in April 1549 to a number of Ravensbury copyhold properties granted by Toto and his wife Ellen to William Glasier on 5 December 1547 in trust 'to the intent it should be ... surrendered and conveyed over unto the use of one Ellen Toto their daughter or such person as she should marry'.⁵⁶ Elianora and her husband Lewes Wylliams surrendered them in December 1559.⁵⁷ Wylliams had worked under Toto at Hampton Court in 1530 in 'new payntyng and guyltyng of certan antique heds brought from Grenwytche to Hanworthe at the Kynges comaundment and new garnyshyng of the same', being paid 9d a day, while Toto received 12d.⁵⁸ With Elianora's surrender in 1559, and Anthony junior's failure to reclaim the lease of the manor from Richard Hopkins, the Toto family's links with Ravensbury came to an end, though the burial of an 'Anthonio Totoe Italian' at St Giles Cripplegate on 3 January 1619/20, presumably a grandson, reveals that the family remained in London.⁵⁹ Toto's artistic work has also vanished over the centuries, apart from the sketch of the horse mentioned above, and perhaps the paintings on canvas at Loseley. But his reputation as a painter is preserved in Vasari's writings and in royal accounts and other records, as is his reputation as a litigious landlord, through the mass of judicial documents from the court of Star Chamber. One question still remains unanswered – was the conflict between Toto and the Mitcham parishioners the result of **their** xenophobia or of **his** artistic temperament exacerbated by concerns over mounting debt, or perhaps a combination of these?

- 32 The Archives of the Duke of Northumberland at Alnwick Castle, DNP: MS 467, ff.46-47: *Third Report of the Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts* (1872) p.113; Erna Auerbach *Tudor Artists* (1954) p.56
- 33 Surrey History Centre (SHC) 728.8 LOS p: Christopher Hussey 'Loseley Park, Surrey' in *Country Life* (1935) I p.546
- 34 Edward Croft-Murray *Decorative Painting in England 1537-1837* I (1962) pp.18, 87-8, 164-5; II (1970) p.313
- 35 Bendor Grosvenor 'A rare Tudor survival' in *Art History News* 15 March 2012, http://arthistorynews.com/articles/1149_A_rare_Tudor_survival
- 36 Erna Auerbach *op cit* pp.56-7, 145 citing TNA LC 2/2 ff.8-9, 63
- 37 Erna Auerbach *op cit* pp.78-9, 145 citing TNA LC 2/3 f.120, LC 2/4 (1) f.25; Edward's coronation celebrations are described in great detail in John Gough Nichols (ed) *Literary Remains of King Edward the Sixth* I (1857) pp.cclxxviii-cccliii, citing College of Arms I.7 f.32 and I.18 f.74
- 38 SHC Z/407/1 (MSLb.21): microfilm of Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington DC
- 39 John Gough Nichols (1857) *op cit* pp.335
- 40 SHC Z/407/1 (MSLb.21): microfilm of Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington DC
- 41 SHC Z/407/2 (MSLb.261): microfilm of Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington DC
- 42 SHC LM/1892/1
- 43 SHC LM/1892/2
- 44 SHC LM/1893
- 45 Erna Auerbach *op cit* pp.13-14
- 46 Vasari *op cit* 6, pp.191
- 47 John Dent *The Quest for Nonsuch* (paperback 1981, reprinted 1988) p.50
- 48 Albert Feuillerat *Documents relating to the Revels at Court in the time of King Edward VI and Queen Mary (The Loseley Manuscripts)* (1914) p.55
- 49 *ibid* p.109
- 50 *ibid* pp.131-2
- 51 Pepys Library 2991, BL Add MS 22047: C S Knighton & D M Loades *The Anthony Roll of Henry VIII's Navy* (2000)
- 52 TNA C 66/884 mm.21-22: *Calendar of Patent Rolls, Philip and Mary II*, p.75; Erna Auerbach *op cit* p.93
- 53 *Letters and Papers* 1 (1920), pp.1485-1503 entry 3608 iii, citing T.R. Misc. Books, 1, f.29. R.O
- 54 *Letters and Papers* 1: 1509-1514 (1920), pp.1285-1297 entry 2967, citing BL Stowe MS 146 f.124
- 55 TNA REQ 2/166 (183) mm.1-2; the argument is summed up in TNA REQ 2/6 (123)
- 56 BL Add Ch 23643 5r-7r; BL Add Ch 23643 3r-4r; SHC 320/1/13 p.9; SHC 643/2/3
- 57 SHC 2163/4/1, 320/1/13 p.8
- 58 Erna Auerbach *op cit* p.92, citing TNA E 36/241 p.110
- 59 Mary Edmond 'Limners and Picture Makers' in *The Volume of the Walpole Society* 47 (1978-1980) p.190 n.10, citing Guildhall MS 6419/2



http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/5/5d/AnthonyRoll-2_Mary_Rose.jpg

**Letters and contributions for the *Bulletin* should be sent to the Hon. Editor,
Mr David Haunton by email to editor@mertonhistoricalsociety.org.uk.**

**The views expressed in this *Bulletin* are those
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