



PRESIDENT:
VICE PRESIDENT: Judith Goodman
CHAIR: Keith Penny

BULLETIN No. 201

MARCH 2017



Merton Abbey by Vincent Lines, a pen and ink study for the Balham News, drawn in 1928, when the artist was 18 years old. (See also p.15)

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PROGRAMME MARCH – SEPTEMBER 2017

Saturday 11 March 2.30pm

Christ Church Hall, Colliers Wood

‘Artists, Antiquaries and Collectors:

Illustrations of Surrey collected by Robert Barclay of Bury Hill Dorking c.1800’

*An illustrated talk by **Julian Pooley**, of Surrey History Centre*

Saturday 8 April 2.30pm

Christ Church Hall, Colliers Wood

‘Mills of the Wandle’

*An illustrated talk by **Mick Taylor** of The Wandle Industrial Museum*

(No visit is planned for May)

Thursday 8th June 10.30am

Walk along the Wandle with Mick Taylor

Meet at Mitcham Tram Stop, walk to Merton Abbey Mills (c.2.5 miles)

Thursday 6 July 11.00am

Visit to Museum of London Archives

Mortimer Wheeler House, Eagle Wharf, London N1

Northern Line to Moorgate, then bus 141 or 76 to Eagle Wharf Road. Tour lasts 60-90 minutes, at £15 per person, to be paid on booking with Bea

Thursday 10 August 2.15pm

Tour of the Charterhouse

Charterhouse Square, London EC1M 6AN

Northern Line to Kings Cross or Moorgate then Circle or Bakerloo Line to Farringdon or Barbican. Tour lasts up to 2 hours, at £15 per person, to be paid on booking with Bea

Thursday 14 September 11.00am

Visit to Wyvern Bindery

56-58 Clerkenwell Road, London EC1

A tour lasting about 1hr round a traditional book-binding establishment

Northern Line to Kings Cross or Moorgate then Circle or Bakerloo Line to Farringdon or Barbican

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.

CHAIRMAN’S REPORT FOR 2015-2016

Madam Vice President, ladies and gentlemen:

As I come to my second annual report, I find myself repeating some things that I said a year earlier, not just from the vagueness of aging memory, but because last year’s difficulties have not yet gone away, or because repetition may help with a particular campaign. Thus your committee has again been exercised by the destructive actions of Merton Borough Council, of which more later, but also by the quantity of archive material that it has to find a home for. My first repetition is to ask you all to consider offering your services as committee members: six meetings a year, varied topics, some lively discussion among the unavoidable routine, all this with tea and chocolate biscuits. I must thank Michael Child for his contribution to the Committee during the last two years; he has survived the experience, so it can’t be all bad. Give it a try. I should like to thank the members of the MHS Committee for their support and attention to the details of what we try to do as a historical society. Unusually, finance has occupied some of the Committee’s time, as you can guess from item 10 on the Agenda.

Many of you will by now know of the death of Eric Montague. In earlier years you could have enjoyed his lectures; latterly the books have kept his name before us. And what books! Eric was a great enthusiast for anything connected to Merton’s heritage, but he specialised in Mitcham, and his fourteen volumes of histories, besides being a tribute to the publishing endeavours of this Society, leave little for successors to add. His knowledge

came from archaeology as well as from archives. His funeral is on Tuesday, and now is not the time for an obituary, especially from someone who never had the privilege of meeting him. The society is forever indebted to Eric Montague, and it is now further cut off from the personalities of those who shaped its development.

More cheerfully, I should like to make special mention of two members, Ray and Pat Kilsby. Many of you will remember the coach outings they arranged, in association with the Workers' Educational Association, and the three-night stays that were a feature of earlier years of the Society's calendar. Removal to Surrey and health problems meant that they were no longer able to attend meetings, and they reluctantly decided not to renew their membership. The Committee agreed that, in recognition of all that they had contributed, they should be offered Honorary Membership and thus receive our *Bulletin* as before; I am pleased to say that they have accepted this offer in a gracious letter of thanks that records their enjoyment of Society activities and that wishes us all well for the future.

Last year I wondered if the summer visits and outings were being properly supported, and I was delighted to see so many people taking part in this year's programme that Bea Oliver put together. We walked in Malden, then on the bright summer lawns of Fulham Palace, and sat in the sombre interior of Paine's undertakers in Kingston, before experiencing the Gothic grandeur of the Law Courts.

I hope you have enjoyed our marvellously varied *Bulletin*; it's a long way from Sindy dolls and local builders to Tudor wills and long-lost mission rooms, but our *Bulletin* goes the distance in one edition. We have not published anything since *Abbey Roads* – thirty copies still to go – but new titles are on the way. The photographic project organised by David Roe has resumed, with a realisation that we now have so many pictures that we need to be selective about what we take in future.

The Society has continued to respond to inquiries about Merton, usually related to family histories, and we are still offered photographs and memories, some of which make their way into the *Bulletin*. We contributed to the group set up to advance a bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund for the refurbishment of The Canons in Mitcham, and we did this with some archive research and some delightful reminiscences and photographs provided by Irene Burroughs, a member of the Society. We were invited to offer information to the curator of the now-open exhibition at the National Maritime Museum about Emma Hamilton and gave him our publication on Lord Nelson at Merton, but I don't know yet whether it was of use in avoiding error.

In our contributions to outside events, although the Society did not win any prizes this year for literary endeavours, we nevertheless had our usual stall at the Merton Heritage Day at Morden Library, where our pictures and publications occasioned plenty of looking-at and discussion and even some sales of books. I contributed to the series of talks during the afternoon. Several of us attended the launch of the *Carved in Stone* project, which is a good point at which to express our continued support and admiration for Sarah Gould, the Heritage Officer. Tony Scott and I, together and apart, have given talks on aspects of Mitcham to groups, and I took some rather surprised listeners at West Barnes Library on a photographic and historical journey from one end of the borough to another along the route of the 152 bus. We use the assets of the society, its photographic project and Eric Montague's collection of slides.

Last year I reported the sudden move of our archives and artefacts from Morden Park to Gap Road. This year we were suddenly asked to find £40 per week in rental and were then told to leave. What could be stored by private individuals went to lofts and sheds, but some larger items had to be left behind, and may yet be rescued by the Heritage Officer. This led us to write to Councillor Nick Draper, who is the relevant Cabinet member of the Council. All we wanted was dry storage space, not a museum with staff, but this is apparently too expensive. He reminded us to bear in mind that the love of heritage for its own sake, rather than in the wider contexts of education or leisure, is a minority pursuit – so now you know what you are – and that the archival concept of heritage needed to be replaced with one based more around tourism. I suggested that a good museum in the borough might help to generate tourism, but I think that may not happen just yet.

We shall go on as best we can, and any offers of space for storage will be gratefully received. In the wider world it has not been a good year for museums and archives: local museums around the country have closed, and close at hand, in Sutton, the local authority intends to cease funding a post for an archivist. The future may not be easy.

I need to speak to item 10 on your Agenda. There is a £290 annual deficit between subscriptions and the basic items and services they should cover, principally the *Bulletin* and the costs of putting on these afternoons here at Christ Church. The subscription rates have not changed for some twelve years. The Committee recommends that the new rates set out in item 10 be approved, simply to pay for the annual expenses. However, we do not pay for capital items out of subscription income, so if you notice a new piece of technology being used here or at one of our talks to other audiences, it has been purchased from earlier donations in our reserve funds, not from your subscription.

And so we head towards 2017 and the last repetition. There is a lot of interesting local history activity on offer in this part of London and North Surrey, and we have set up an email information service so that we can pass on to you the programmes of other societies and institutions, if you so wish. Just send an email to info@mertonhistoricalsociety.org.uk. There is full information in the *Bulletin*. We hope to carry on providing a good programme of talks, visits and publications, but please feel willing to make requests or suggestions for the sort of thing you would like to be provided – or indeed not provided. Sheila Harris is even now arranging our annual Lunch, which takes place on Thursday 23 February: come along and enjoy a speech-free meal served by some of the young people in education in our Borough.

Keith Penny

TONY SCOTT writes a personal memoir of

ERIC MONTAGUE (1924–2016)

Eric Norman Montague, or ‘Monty’ as he was known by his friends, was born in Wandsworth on 28 September 1924. He left school at the age of 15, and probably went to Wandsworth Technical College where he matriculated and then began studies for a Public Health Diploma. In 1942, as soon as he reached the age of 18, he was ‘called up’ for military service in RAF ground crew, during which he gained the nickname ‘Monty’. After the war he continued his studies, becoming a qualified Public Health Officer in 1947.

He joined Mitcham Council Public Health Department the same year. I can remember Monty telling me that Stephen Chart, the Town Clerk, and Riley Schofield, the Borough Engineer, interviewed him for the job in Vestry Hall. He was told that one of his jobs would be to collect meat samples from local butchers and the abattoir in Bull Yard (now Church Place), off Church Road, and bring them back to Vestry Hall for inspection by a senior member of staff. He was told that transport would be provided. He was then taken downstairs and shown a tradesman’s bicycle with a basket on the front and was given a padlock and chain accompanied by the comment ‘Lose the bicycle and you lose your job’. Much later, probably when the London Boroughs were amalgamated in 1965, Monty moved to the newly formed Environmental Health Department of the London Borough of Wandsworth, where he stayed for the rest of his working life.

Monty met a local girl, June, and they married on 20 March 1948 in Mitcham Parish Church. (There is a photograph of their wedding in *Mitcham Histories 12: Church Street and Whitford Lane*, p.46.) They set up home in Mitcham, just off Streatham Road, and had two children, Robin and Lindsey. It was during the 1950s that Monty became interested in the local history of Mitcham and in archaeology and in 1965 joined MHS. In 1962 he and his family moved to a large house in Sutton, but Monty never lost his interest or love of Mitcham.

In addition to his family and local history, Monty had another love in his life – Vespa motor scooters. One of these was originally his only mode of personal transport. He told me that he and June travelled many miles on them, only purchasing a car when the children came along. I can recall being shown about four Vespa scooters in the garage at his house in Sutton in the late 1980s, some in stages of re-building.

Monty took part in a number of local MHS archaeological excavations in collaboration with Surrey Archaeological Society. The major ones were Long Batsworth in Phipps Bridge (1965), Gutteridge’s site at the Fair Green (1969) and the Mitcham Grove site near the River Wandle downstream of Mitcham Bridge (1973). As the years passed, pre-construction archaeology became more of a commercial and professional enterprise and MHS did not pursue extensive archaeology. However, Monty’s interest in the subject did not wane; he studied for and gained Diplomas both in Archaeology and in Medieval History at Birkbeck College, University of London, and later an MA in Local History at Kingston University.

I first met Monty when he gave a series of evening classes on Local History in the Adult Education Centre at Eagle House in the 1970s. His clear explanations and obvious enthusiasm for the subject gave me a great interest in local history that has remained with me ever since. Monty undertook extensive research in the original historical sources in local libraries and this resulted in him writing a number of monographs on the history of Mitcham. Monty was a prolific author; he frequently contributed articles to County journals and in the late 1970s wrote a weekly local history piece for the *Mitcham News and Mercury* newspaper. After he retired in 1989 he set about recording for posterity all of his vast researches on Mitcham. These were subsequently published by MHS in 14 volumes under the series title of *Mitcham Histories* (2001–2013). They are now the standard reference works for answering any question on the history of Mitcham.



Monty with mayor Ian Munn at the 2001 launch of Mitcham Histories 1

For many years Monty and his family owned a small seaside chalet at Middleton-on-Sea near Bognor Regis and in about 2000 Monty and June decided to have the property re-built as a modern brick bungalow and to move there when it was completed. Monty proudly told me that he had drawn up the plans himself. Sadly, in 2004, during the construction of the bungalow and whilst still at Sutton, June became ill and died. Soon afterwards Monty moved to the new bungalow alone.

Even in Middleton, Monty retained his interest in the local history of Mitcham and he could always be telephoned to answer a particularly difficult enquiry about some aspect of Mitcham history. After Monty's move, my wife Rita and I visited Monty every summer. We would go out to lunch in the local pub and the conversation would generally turn to an aspect of local history, either of Mitcham or of Middleton. He became quite an expert on the local history of his new area, having attended classes and done research on the subject in Chichester, and would regale us with the history of the buildings that we saw as we walked along the road with him. The years may have been advancing but his mind was as sharp as ever. Alas, the years did catch up with Monty and he died on 3 November 2016, aged 92. Merton Historical Society was represented at his funeral in Chichester by Judith Goodman, Rita and I, and Peter Hopkins.

Sarah Gould, Merton Libraries Heritage & Local Studies Manager, writes:

'Eric Montague was a great enthusiast and staunch supporter of anything connected to Merton's heritage. He was an active member of MHS for many years and his many books about the history of Mitcham have always been the 'go to' publications for anyone wanting a clear, detailed and accurate description of that area.

'Eric was a great supporter of my own service (Merton Heritage Centre) from its earliest days and was of tremendous help to me personally and to many of my voluntary staff and library colleagues. Even after his departure to Middleton-on-Sea, he was always happy to respond to phone queries about difficult history enquiries and was often of great assistance when all other avenues had drawn a blank. I know that many of you will have enjoyed Eric's wonderful lectures, articles and books over the years.

'He was, to put it simply, a true gentleman, charming, kind and always ready to offer support. It was a privilege to have known him. He will be greatly missed.' I can only echo these final comments.

Other Publications by E N Montague:

The Archaeology of Mitcham and *Textile Bleaching and Printing in Mitcham and Merton 1590-1870* were published by Merton Library Service. Hard-back volumes include *Mitcham: A Pictorial History* and *A History of Mitcham Common*, and he also edited *Old Mitcham*.

Since 1990 Merton Historical Society has published:

<i>Reminiscences of Park Place, Mitcham</i> (ed)	1990
<i>The Ravensbury Mills</i>	1995
<i>The 'Amery Mills' of Merton Priory, the Copper Mills and the Board Mills</i>	1997
<i>Life at The Cranmers, Mitcham, before the 1914-18 War</i> (ed)	1998
<i>The Patent Steam Washing Factory at Phipps Bridge, Mitcham</i>	1998
<i>Recollections of an Edwardian Childhood in Colliers Wood</i> (ed)	1999
<i>Park Place, Mitcham</i>	1999
<i>Copper Milling on the Wandle</i>	1999
<i>The Canons, Mitcham</i>	1999
<i>Phipps Bridge, Phipps Mill and Bunce's Meadow</i>	1999
<i>Mitcham Gardens and Gardeners of the 18th Century</i>	2000
<i>Lord Monson's Schooldays: Reminiscences of Mitcham 1804-1809</i> (ed)	2001
<i>The Bridges and Roads of Mitcham</i>	2000
<i>The Now and Hereafter Poor: A study in the administration of the Poor Law in Mitcham prior to 1834</i>	2003
<i>Mitcham in the mid-17th century: A Surrey village under stress</i>	2005
<i>Recruitment to the armed forces in Mitcham 1522-1815</i>	2005
<i>Beating the Bounds: Perambulation ... of Mitcham ... 1833</i> (ed)	2005

NEW COMMITTEE MEMBER

We would like to welcome Alan Martyn as a member of our Committee. Alan had not put his name forward for election at the Annual General Meeting, but was subsequently approached by our Chairman, who asked him to serve. We are grateful that Alan agreed to join us: he has already attended a meeting of the Committee.

‘LAVENDER AND MITCHAM’

After the Society AGM on 11 November, Alison Cousins introduced us to the world of lavender and its industry. The plants comprise a class of eight divisions, only four of which are generally available. The most common, *Lavandula angustifolia*, flowers in June, while paler types have more scent, and French lavender flowers earlier. One basic distinction is between varieties with short and long headed “spikes” or flowers. Colours range throughout the blue spectrum from purple to white and on into pink. Alison has about 20 varieties in her front garden, among which her favourite variety is Cedar Blue. She also has examples of Hidcote (blue, pink or dwarf), the white-flowered Artic Snow, Grosso, the compact Munstead (named for Gertrude Jekyll’s garden), Purple Twickel (after a place in Holland), the very short-stemmed dark blue Peter Pan, Silver Sands with its dark foliage, Melissa with its large blue flowers, and the short-stemmed Loddon Blue. Despite the well-known phrase, there is, alas, no actual ‘Mitcham’ lavender variety.

Lavender needs sun and a well drained soil, and is propagated from cuttings. The old Mitcham growers kept their plants for only three years or so, having planted them 15 inches apart; modern nurserymen grow their lavender for up to 15 years. The old stems were used as thatch. The whole plant is fragrant, but only the flower and stalk are used for oil. In Mitcham, the scent of the lavender fields must have counteracted to a welcome extent the smells from the varnish and other factories.

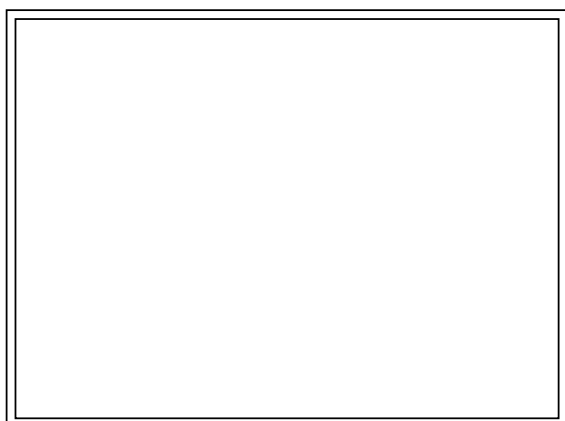
Lavender is not native to our islands, but was probably a Roman import. Locally there is no real evidence before c.1300 when Merton priory received from its grange at Eton 44 quarters of ‘spiking’, which some scholars understand to refer to lavender. Folklore remembers ‘lavender blue’ in the 17th century, while Ham House included lavender in its early knot garden. Mitcham’s demonstrable association with lavender dates from the late 18th century in mentions of acreage used and in local street names.

The shoots and flowers have been much used for their scent – apparently potpourri including lavender was used by Catherine of Braganza, wife to Charles II, while the Victorians used them in ‘faggots’, where a lavender spike was bent in half, woven with ribbon and other herbs such as thyme, cloves and mint, and then hung on a coat hanger or on the furniture. Lavender was also used to flavour snuff and to alleviate high blood pressure. Historically lavender had other cosmetic and medical uses.

In Mitcham, Potter & Moore’s lavender was harvested by people using a small sickle to fill bags of one hundredweight (*right, c.1908*).

Photo Courtesy London Borough of Merton

The work force could include boys and girls on summer holidays, or itinerant Irish people, going on to seasonal work in the hop fields. The flowers and stalks were dried in a loft, and then distilled – half a ton of flowers were needed to fill a still (*below*).

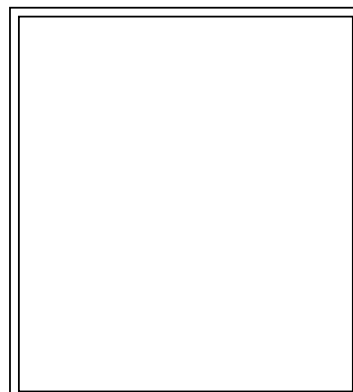


Picture Courtesy Wandale Industrial Museum

Between 700 and 1000 gallons of water were added, and gently heated; as the oil rose to the top it was skimmed off, poured into jars and corked. The yield was inconsistent, though it was possible to obtain one pound of oil from 70lb of flowers. The firm started c.1720 as ‘physick’ gardeners and only added their distillery in 1749; the area under cultivation grew rapidly: by c.1770 they had 250 acres and an artesian well, 500

acres by 1805, and 700 by c.1900. The fields were never fallow, constantly being weeded and pruned by hand. Crops of fresh lavender were taken to Borough Market by the firm’s own wagons, which returned with manure and night soil for the fields. Some was sold in Covent Garden market; the patter of the lavender sales girls was included in the ‘Cries of London’ prints (*right*).

Mrs Nelly Sparrowhawk Photo Courtesy London Borough of Merton



In late Victorian times, lavender could fetch six guineas a pound in high season, or sixpence a bunch. Potter & Moore had at least three or four competitors, such as James Arthur, farming 300 acres, but that company was taken over by Piesse et Lubin around 1871, and their premises in turn leased to John Jakson & Co. Ltd from 1882 (*right*).

Picture Courtesy Wandle Industrial Museum

The industry was on the wane in 1900, diminished by the development of synthetics in the 19th century, fungal infections and cheap French competition. By 1938 there were no entries for it in street directories and Potter & Moore's last offshoot was wound up in 1969. Fortunately the Wandle Industrial Museum holds a large collection of photos and glass items from the industry. With land available after WW2, there have been attempts to restart the industry, with two firms now in Carshalton and others on the Isle of Wight, in Hitchin and Norfolk, in Australia and 'Bleu Lavande' in Canada.

Lavender is making a comeback as a flavouring in biscuits, pepper and ice cream. (Remember that lavender essence is edible, but lavender oil is poisonous.) Downderry Nursery in Tonbridge, Kent, is now home to the National Plant Collection of lavender. Their lavender ice cream is highly recommended.

JOHN INNES MARCHES ON

From *The Times* of Friday 10 June 2016:

A strain of genetically modified rice that promises 50% greater yield and uses significantly less fertiliser has been developed by British scientists. Field trials in China have shown that a particular protein found naturally in rice helps it to access more of the nitrogen in the soil or fertiliser. When the influence of the gene that makes this protein is artificially increased the rice can make better use of the nutrients available, even in poorer growing conditions. Dr Tony Miller, from the John Innes centre for plant research in Norwich said 'Rice uses mainly ammonium as a nitrate source. We have taken a GM approach and taken a gene to enhance the amount of nitrates used.'

FROM AN OBITUARY in *The Times*:

Colonel Stuart Archer, GC, OBE, ERD (b.3 Feb 1915 d. 2 May 2015, age 100)

Second World War bomb disposal officer who won the George Cross ... He qualified as an architect at 21, and joined Ingram and Son, working mainly on building pubs for breweries such as *The Cricketers* on the Green at Mitcham.

ARCHAEOLOGY SUMMARY FOR MERTON 2015

Extracts (some paraphrased) from the *London Archaeologist* annual Round-Up Supplement:

223 Central Road, Morden: nothing archaeologically interesting.

118-120 Christchurch Road, SW19: a sequence of alluvial deposits representing the floodplain development of the Wandle, including river channels, backwaters, peat, and flood silts. The sequence dated from just after the last Ice Age until nearly modern times, the latest soils being typical of 'late post-medieval' water meadows. There were no archaeological features, but the area is likely to contain a lot of evidence for reconstructing past landscapes.

Manor House, 120 Kingston Road, SW19 (see *Bulletin* 197): a survey confirmed that this is in origin a timber-framed building of late 16th- early 17th-century date. The present brick façade replaced some of the timber elements when the house was modified during the 19th century. Internally the painted plaster with floral motifs in late Tudor style is now thought to be contemporary with the house as originally constructed.

Cavendish House, 105-109 High Street, Colliers Wood: nothing archaeologically interesting.

Merton Priory Chapter House: an evaluation to inform decisions about a new layout confirmed the existence of part of the cloister wall, the foundations of the east range and the slype (passage from church to chapter house). Removal of the protective sand also revealed the original east end of the chapter house and three buttresses along the north wall.

‘VANISHED PEOPLE OF THE WANDLE’ The Prehistory of South West London

On Saturday 10 December, Jon Cotton, former Curator at the Museum of London, gave us a fascinating overview of the prehistory of our area, emphasising the importance of the various rivers. The Thames is key, as a shaper of landscape, a supplier of resources (water, fish, flint), a transport artery to the inland areas, and a boundary, both physical and mental. It was very variable: its water levels changed with the seasons and the tides, and it was originally braided, with many channels between low islands. Its tributaries in our area are the Hogsmill, the Beverley and the Wandle, and it is remarkable how much of the archaeology of our area is found close to these streams.

The Hogsmill (much featured in Pre-Raphaelite paintings) flows from headwater springs in Ewell to meet the Thames at Kingston, where there is a concentration of bronze age finds, especially swords. We are still finding such objects, particularly near the 12th-century Clattern Bridge over the Hogsmill.

The Beverley starts in Cuddington Recreation Ground and flows past Wimbledon Common and Richmond Park (itself a fossilised late medieval landscape), but the Brook’s archaeology extends back much further. Bronze axes from 900-800BC have been found in its mid-course and late Bronze Age (BA) Food Vessels on Kingston Hill (by the William Rootes factory), while Caesar’s Camp on the golf course is undated but is probably late BA or early Iron Age (IA). The confluence with the Thames is a particularly rich site: a MOLA dig in advance of sewerage works found upper Palaeolithic flints and IA (third and second century BC) items, and gold coins minted in France c.50BC.

The Book of the Wandle by John Morrison Hobson (1924, Routledge) has a good description of the 9-10 mile trout stream at the time, noting its rehabilitation after the degradation due to William Morris’s dyeworks. The Wandle originally arose on the high chalk of the North Downs, the present head at Carshalton having been part of the mid-course in 8000-4000BC. Early Palaeolithic hand axes, up to 400,000 years old, have been found in very large numbers along the early course. These were used for expert butchery, as at Boxgrove, and were probably fashioned by Neanderthal or Heidelberg Man.

At Carshalton, excavations have found a series of hunter-gatherer sites, from the end of the ice age, using flint blades to hunt reindeer. Other digs have found the microlithic tips of weapons for the post-glacial hunting of deer and pig. The population must have been very small, with little effect on the landscape.

Farmers arrived around 4000BC (a grave in Blackwall has been carbon-dated) and must have had boats, as the English Channel opened c.6000BC. They brought a new neolithic technology of pottery and polished stone, domestic sheep and goats, and cereals for cultivation. They built long rectangular wooden houses, and organised themselves for joint action – a 4km cursus can only have been cleared by a lot of people together.

South of the Thames we do not find large monuments, but lots of small finds, dating to 3200-2700BC. The Bronze Age is represented by single finds, like the long bronze spearhead from Wandle Park in Croydon, and hoards from the Carshalton area: possibly these are confluence deposits? or offerings to the river? At Queen Mary’s Hospital in Carshalton there was a major settlement, home to many people, surrounded by fields and houses, which may have been the focus of a cult and/or a centre of the metal trade (one large bronze hoard dating from the ninth or eighth century BC weighed 30kg). During the last millennium BC the landscape became fully populated and farmed, featuring IA banked enclosures, round houses and many pits. Originally for storing grain, some pits held a horse skeleton, or horse and dog bones – a puzzle.

A dig at Beddington sewage works found warm, dry, probably smoky IA houses, with silver Kentish coins. Overlying these is a Roman villa and its large barns, indicating a highly organised farm, perhaps specialising in horse raising. The villa had a painted plaster ceiling, and one of its occupants had found and kept a neolithic axe, perhaps identifying it as a ‘thunderbolt’. Further down the Wandle at its confluence with the Thames, miscellaneous finds include a fine bronze shield ornamented with two entwined birds (perhaps swans), a cut half of a gold coin dating to 300-150BC (found by Bob Wells, who spoke to us in December 2015), IA brooches, harness fittings and the front of a dagger scabbard, all from the last four centuries BC, an intricate spiral bead, and a number of skulls – was this a major crossing place? Were the skulls deliberately placed?

Finally, Jon spoke about an idea with which archaeologists are still playing. The flooding at Shepperton in 2014 was one of several episodes, a recent increase, confirmed by checking medieval records of Thames floods. The name ‘Thames’ is derived from British **tamesa*, meaning ‘flowing upstream’: a recent suggestion is that ‘London’ derives from a pre-Roman **plowonida*, meaning ‘boat- or flooding-one’. The western parts of Greater London near the river exhibit a series of early-BA landscapes drowned by rising sea level, with metres of flood silt, and later brushwood trackways are found in the mid-BA. All deposits of bronze swords in the Thames have been found in the west London area. Are the swords offerings to the river to persuade it not to rise? Watch this space. And remember there is much on display at the Museum of London.

PETER HOPKINS apologises for confusing members over

MORDEN'S MASONS/SCULPTORS: THE CRUTCHER FAMILY

When I led a walk around St Lawrence church and churchyard in July 2013 I drew attention to ...

the tombstone of William Crutcher, 'Citizen and Mason of London, who departed this life the 22nd day of February 1728/9 in the 33rd [or 83rd] year of his age'.

I explained that the inscription is worn and that F Clayton, a former churchwarden, in his introduction to the parish registers published in 1901, said 83rd, whereas Bill Rudd read it as 33rd. I pointed out that if it was 83rd

'he is probably the sculptor whose only known work is the monument to Sir Robert Clayton (1629–1707) in St Mary's Parish Church, Bletchingley, erected in 1705 in Sir Robert's lifetime and described in Pevsner as one of the most splendid of its period in the country and a huge composition.'

But the registers only record the baptism of a William in March 1695/6, which would agree with a death aged 33 but would make him 10 when the Clayton monument was erected. In fact the sunlight on the day of our visit enabled us all to see that Bill was of course right, and, although worn, the inscription is clearly '33rd year of his age' – as shown on this photo by Bill. So I concluded: 'Another nice story ruined!'



I visited Bletchingley in August and saw the Clayton monument (*left*) – it is certainly huge! And on the plinth of the left hand weeping child is the inscription 'Ric^d Crutcher fecit' (*right*). I had stupidly confused the sculptor/mason Richard with the mason William. No wonder the dates didn't work!

Fortunately I hadn't mentioned this in my leaflet on the church,

and Judy omitted it from her report in the *Bulletin*, no doubt because she was too polite to correct my obvious mistake.

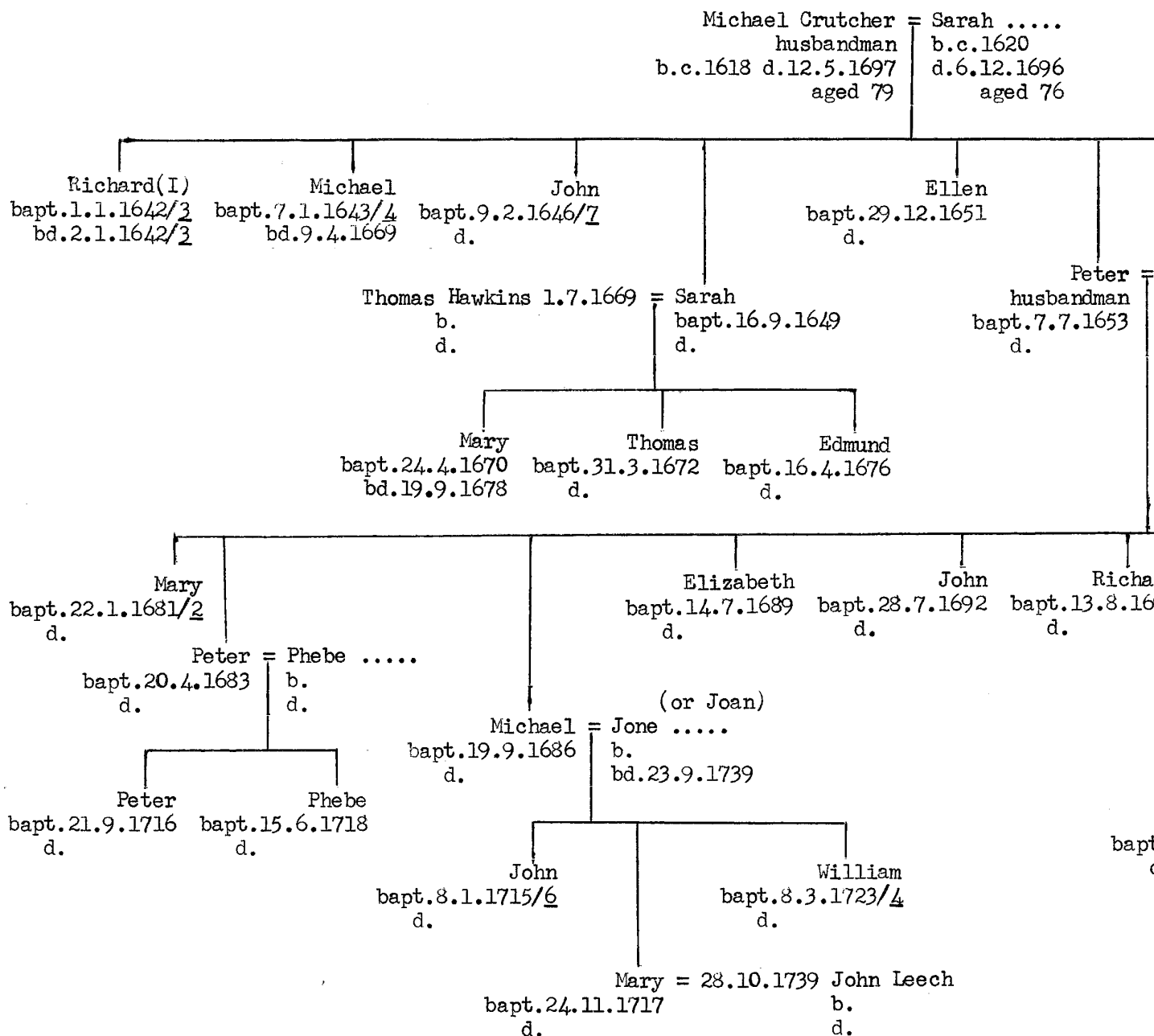


Now that I have Bill's archive, I looked at his file on the Crutcher family. He had worked out from the *Morden Parish Registers* a detailed family tree (*overleaf*, with additions), which identifies William's father Peter (baptised 1653) as the brother of Richard the sculptor (baptised 1659), both sons of Michael and Sarah Crutcher of Morden. Richard died in 1725, leaving two daughters and an underage grandson, also named Richard – son to Michael, whom Bill identifies as the 'Citizen and Mason' to whom William was apprenticed in February 1713/14.

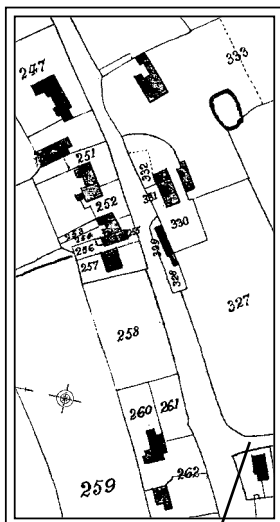
Richard the sculptor was the youngest of five brothers; they had four sisters. He was baptised in April 1659, and apprenticed in May 1674 to William King, a London mason, but was 'turned over' to Edward Pearce by consent of both parties in July 1680.¹

He became free of the Masons' Company in 1681, steward in 1691, renter warden in 1707 and master in 1713. His son, Michael, became free of the Company in 1712, having been apprenticed to his father in 1705. Michael died during his father's lifetime, probably in 1722, the last year he is mentioned as alive.² Their yard was in Billiter Lane – now Billiter Street – off Fenchurch Street, within the parish of All Hallows Staining.

Richard's nephew William, baptised in March 1695/6, was apprenticed to Michael in February 1713/14. He became free in October 1722, shortly after Michael's death, having completed his apprenticeship under Michael's widow Mary.³ He married Michael's niece Eliza, daughter of Elizabeth Willmot, widow of an Epsom butcher.



In Richard's will,⁴ his 'kinsman William Crutcher' was appointed executor alongside Elizabeth Willmot, and was also appointed trustee of the bequest to Elizabeth's sister Sarah Saunders – a device to prevent her bequest from becoming liable to any financial demands or debts of her husband, an Epsom shoemaker.

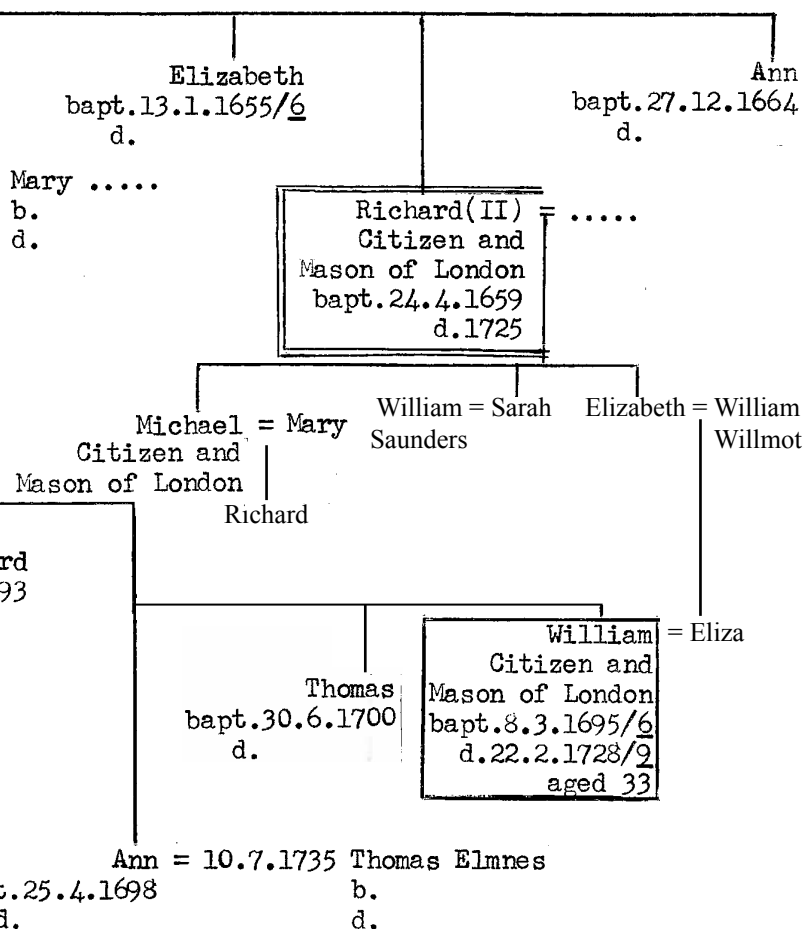


A lane, now Farm Road

On checking the Morden manorial court rolls I discovered that Richard the sculptor owned a copyhold property in Central Road, Morden, for which he paid 4d a year customary quit rent to the Garth lords of the manor. His death was not presented to the manorial court until 1732, by which time Elizabeth Willmot had died, so the property passed to her daughter, William's widow, and to her aunt Sarah Saunders.⁵ A marginal note in a Garth Rent Book from 1728 explains that this property was later acquired by financier Abraham Goldsmid, and it can be identified on the tithe map as the small plots 254-257 (*left*).⁶

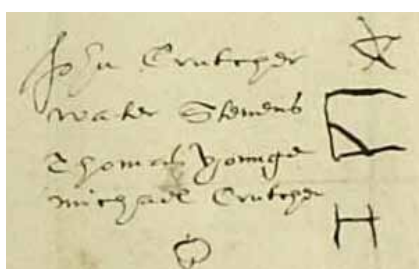
As well as the 1705 Clayton monument in Bletchingley church, Richard was also responsible for the monument to John and Deborah Coghill (died 1714) in Aldenham church in Hertfordshire (*right*), and that to Leonard Bartholomew and his wife in





*The Crutcher family based on the entries
in the Morden Parish Registers*

There has been some confusion over the various apprenticeships, as Morden was variously spelt Morton, Moreton, and perhaps even Mersham, though the latter was probably just a misreading by an editor. Bill checked the Merstham parish registers just to make sure but there was only one comparable entry – the marriage of a William **Croucher** and Martha Thorne in 1633. He also checked the original Masons' Company records at Guildhall Library, and his transcript looks like Morston, or possibly Moreton. The earliest mention Bill found of a Crutcher in Morden was in the 1602 will of Thomas Stevens of Morden, two of the four witnesses being his wife's brothers, John and Michael Crutcher, who were also appointed overseers.¹¹ Each of the witnesses added his mark (*below*), which are

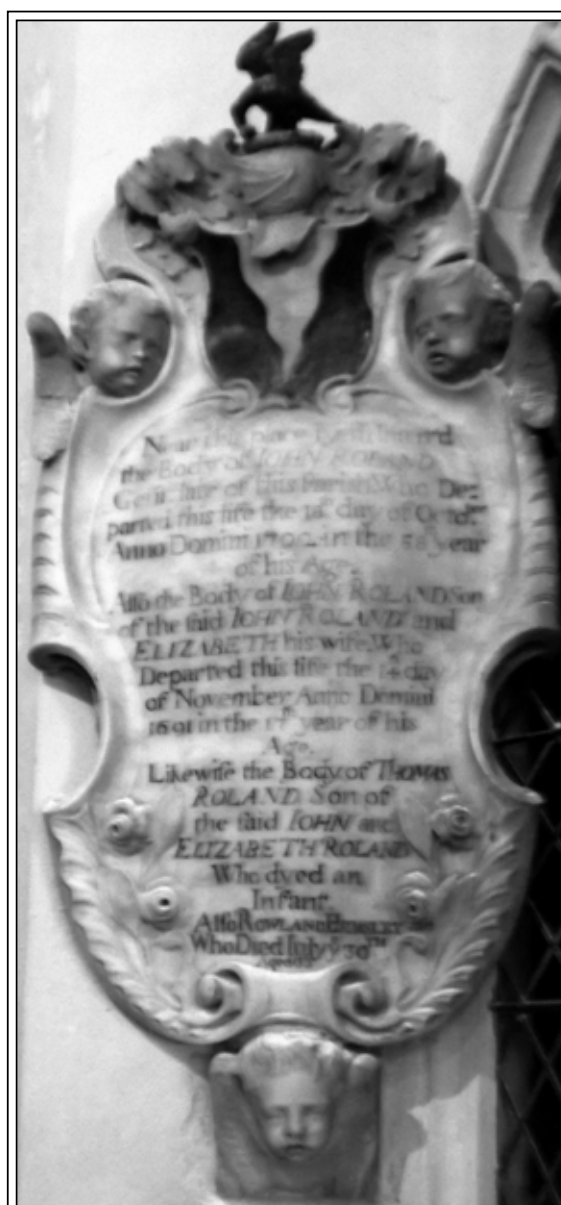


very reminiscent of masons' or carpenters' marks. Richard's father was probably descended from one of these – though the parish registers don't go

West Peckham church in Kent (c. 1720).⁷ He was also the mason responsible for the rebuilding of Baker's Hall, though his building was to be destroyed in the Blitz.⁸ Bill had also found at Guildhall Library a 1720 memorandum of an agreement regarding a mansion of Elias Rich in Old Bailey, London, recently occupied by Sir Thomas Rawlings, for which Richard was to be the mason alongside a 'plaistorer', a painter and two carpenters – one of whom was also a glazier.⁹

There are a couple of monuments in St Lawrence's from this period – John Roland, died 1702 (*below*), and Elizabeth Gardiner, died 1719 (*overleaf & detail*). Could one or both of these have come from the Crutcher workshop? To my untrained eye there is some similarity between the cherub heads at the top of the Roland monument and the weeping children on the Clayton monument. Perhaps we can persuade an art historian to investigate?

Richard the sculptor had another connection with Morden – in 1717/18 he took as an apprentice Richard Wickham, son of William Wickham of Morden.¹⁰



back that far – so Richard and William might have followed a family tradition as masons or other craftsmen. It was not unknown for masons' mark to be used on documents instead of seals.¹²

A John Croucher and his wife Agnes are mentioned in Morden manorial court rolls between 1400 and 1411, so it is possible that the family had long connections with Morden. The 17th-century court rolls consistently spell Richard's father's name as Michael **Croucher** – he was often a juror alongside William Athurbury, the subject of an article in *Bulletin* 199. Michael was responsible for scouring ditches at Stone Bridge (where Epsom Road crosses the East Pyl brook) and in Lower Morden, but by 1745 a later member of the family, Michael 'Churcher', probably William's brother, was leasing a 5-acre smallholding on the site of the Merton Campus of South Thames College.¹³ This was probably the Michael Crutcher whose burial is recorded in June 1761 with the comment 'aged 87 years, the oldest man in the Parish'. However, William's brother Michael was baptised in September 1686 so, if these both refer to the same man, he was either 12 years old when baptised, or he exaggerated his age! William and Michael's mother Mary was probably the 'Widow Crutcher' listed in the index to the 1728 rent book, and presumably the Mary Crutcher whose burial is recorded in August 1729.¹⁴ Another brother, Richard, was going to be apprenticed to a chandler in October 1707, but the parties disagreed before the indenture was sealed and it was never executed.¹⁵

Bill's file includes carbon copies of letters he wrote to a number of experts in this field of research, together with their replies. Sadly his letters to the two authors with most material on Richard Crutcher were returned by their publishers, as both had died. He had hoped to fill in the gaps in their work with the results of his Morden researches. Interestingly a modern website,¹⁶ which seems to be based on one of these publications, has inserted a sentence on Richard's parentage and baptism in Morden, and another on William's tombstone in Morden – though whether this was as a result of Bill's letters I cannot say. Bill wrote articles on the Crutcher family for our *Bulletin* in October 1973 and July 1974.



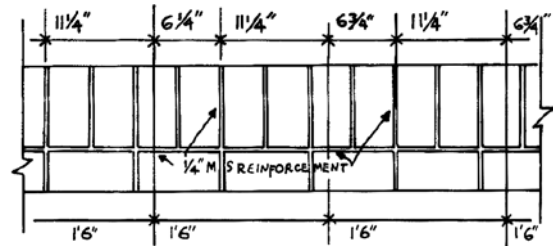
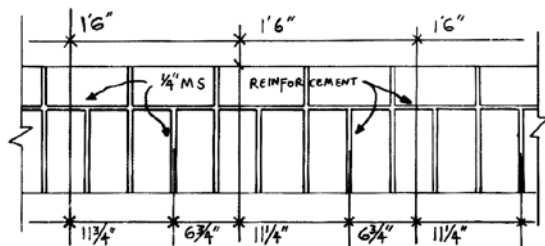
- 1 Rupert Gunnis *Dictionary of British Sculptors 1660-1851* (Odhams 1953) pp.117-8
- 2 Gunnis *op cit*; *A Biographical Dictionary of Sculptors in Britain, 1660-1851* <<http://217.204.55.158/henrymoore/sculptor/browse&recid=681>> accessed 17.8.2016
- 3 Gunnis *op cit*; Guildhall Library MS 5304, 5308; Hilary Jenkinson (ed) *Surrey Apprenticeships 1711-1731* (Surrey Record Society X, 1929) entry 695
- 4 The National Archives PROB 11/603/250
- 5 Surrey History Centre (SHC) K85/1/2 m.2
- 6 SHC K85/8/1
- 7 Sacheverell Sitwell in a footnote to the Introduction of Katherine A Esdaile *English Church Monuments 1510-1840* (1946) pp.28, 30. Image from <www.aldenhamchurch.com/church-history.html> accessed 16.8.2016
- 8 Gunnis *op cit*
- 9 Guildhall Library MS 8790
- 10 Hilary Jenkinson (ed) *Surrey Apprenticeships 1711-1731* (Surrey Record Society X, 1929) entry 2813
- 11 London Metropolitan Archives DW/PA/5/1602/82 (image downloaded from Ancestry 18.8.2016); depositor the Diocese of Winchester ©
- 12 L F Salzman *Building in England down to 1540* (1952) p.121 n.7
- 13 SHC K85/2/51
- 14 SHC K85/8/1
- 15 Transcript among Bill's papers, no reference cited
- 16 *A Biographical Dictionary of Sculptors in Britain, 1660-1851* <<http://217.204.55.158/henrymoore/sculptor/browse&recid=681>> accessed 17.8.2016



LOCAL HISTORY WORKSHOP

Friday 11 November 2016 – six present. Rosemary Turner in the chair

- ◆ **David Luff** brought some photos of the unremarkable gardens at 110-112 Runnymede, Colliers Wood, from where an electricity pylon has been removed. Historic England (HE) are interested in the site, as a deep hole will be dug for water pipes, and HE will be watching. David also showed us a well-illustrated Merton publication (2003) of locally-listed structures.
- ◆ **Cyril Maidment** brought a copy of Raymond Briggs' graphic novel *Ethel and Ernest* (Jonathan Cape, 1998), now being made into a film, which details accurately the Briggs' family life in Wimbledon Park, 1930s to 1990s. Near the beginning, in 1930, Ernest is looking forward to promotion, and a salary of three guineas a week, enough for the basis on which to apply for a mortgage. Compare this with the prices in Liberty's *Yule-Tide Gifts Catalogue 1929-1930* featured in the December *Bulletin*.
- ◆ **Peter Hopkins** read us part of a chapter of his *Medieval Morden*, vol. III (forthcoming), which discusses the curious practice of 'wagering one's law' in the manorial court. This was a procedure whereby a defendant in a civil case was judged innocent (or not) by the number of reliable friends prepared to swear in his favour ('oath-takers'). This ancient Anglo-Saxon custom was still occasionally found in Morden around 1400 – Peter has found 20 cases in the period 1378-1411, which mark the last few occurrences. Unusually for court records of the time, the outcome of most of the cases is known.
- ◆ **David Haunton** brought some photos of the surface air-raid shelter in Phil Phillips' garden, and official 1939 details of how to reinforce the brickwork with steel rods (*below*).



• PLANS OF ALTERNATE COURSES IN 13 1/2" BRICK WALLS SHOWING SPACING OF 1/4" M.S. ROD REINFORCEMENT 1" SCALE •

- ◆ **Keith Penny** continues his interest in WW1 Military Tribunals, and has found an obituary picture of one of the members, Mr Farewell Jones (*right*). Keith has now amassed all the newspaper reports, dating from 25 February 1916 (ie. immediately after conscription began) until November 1918, and showed a selection as transcribed. In answer to questions he explained that the sessions took place in the Vestry Hall, which was then only the building next to London Road, the rest having been added in and after the 1920s. He is wondering how to publish his research, perhaps as a searchable pdf file online, with a booklet on his findings.
- ◆ Judy Goodman's note on Terri Carol, paper-tearer, in the previous Workshop reminded **Rosemary Turner** that she had been taught some elements of the skill at Willows High School, producing ladders and palm-trees among other items.



One of Rosemary's second cousins once removed had been told by his mother that during the war she had worked underground in Churchill's War Rooms. He had always thought of this as 'not entirely believable', but now he has discovered documentary proof that his mother did indeed work there. (Unfortunately, when he visited the Rooms, the part where she worked was still closed off.) But some family legends are true!

David Haunton

A CENTURY OF CHANGE IN LOWER MORDEN AND CANNON HILL

A free exhibition (with free refreshments) at St Martin's Church, Camborne Road, Morden, on Saturday 11 March 10.30am–3.30pm, as part of the church's 60th anniversary Open Day. All are welcome.

Friday 13 January 2017 - 7 present, Dave Haunton in the Chair

- ◆ **Peter Hopkins** had been asked by Mick Taylor if we can identify a railway station photographed by Bill Rudd in 1963, labelled 'Mitcham Junction', but Mick was sure it was not. This was agreed by experts present. [David Luff subsequently identified it as Witney Station, near Oxford, probably dating to 1962-65.]

Mick had noticed a previous enquiry about Augustus William Louis Schermuly, inventor of the Pistol Rocket Lifesaving Apparatus, who was buried in the churchyard of St Lawrence, Morden, in 1929. One of Mick's colleagues on the *Carved in Stone* project, Yvonne Smith, had researched Schermuly's son, William Louis, who was killed in action at Salonika in 1917. Her researches showed that William had been in the navy in his youth. He was on board *Anson* in Portland for the 1901 census, but in 1908 he was discharged for 'Bad Record', having spent several periods in the cells, and having frequently gone 'on the run', according to his entry in the Royal Navy Registers, downloaded from Ancestry. In 1914 he enlisted in the 17th (County of London) Battalion (Poplar & Stepney Rifles), a Territorial unit, which in May 1915 became part of the 141st Brigade of the 47th (2nd London) division, and was involved in several battles on the Western Front before being transferred to Salonika in November 1916. He was buried in the Karasouli Military Cemetery there.

Yvonne has extracted much material on his life and war service. Her material can be added to the extensive file on Schermuly senior that Bill Rudd started in 1970, when changes were being made to the churchyard. Schermuly was of Dutch ancestry but he was born and baptised in Whitechapel in 1857. Bill had gathered documents from a wide range of sources and had even contacted a son of William, receiving a reply from the grandson which included a book about his grandfather. The family said that William carried out experiments on his later invention in Morden but Bill had not been able to find out where. Peter has found the answer in Rosemary's *1910 Valuation Records* (article forthcoming).

Peter has been looking into the standard of living of medieval peasants and their diet using Morden Manorial records. He will use spreadsheets to produce tables for Volume 3 of *Medieval Morden*.

- ◆ **David Luff** brought in photographs of the rubbish accumulated near the pylon by the building housing the Chapter House remains. He wondered who was responsible for that land. With the 900th anniversary coming up it needs to be cleared. Work on the new building is being held up by the council due to a technicality.

Referring to Dave Haunton's article on air raid shelters, David had photographs of the ones on the Liberty site. He had also found a model railway kit for making various styles of shelter. However, in further research on Parnall Aircraft Ltd, he had not been able to find a connection with Merton.

- ◆ **Keith Penny** referred back to the September workshop. He had been looking at the Minutes of the Poor Law Unions of St George Southwark and St George in the East. The Holborn School was earlier run by St George, Southwark, before that Union combined with St Saviour, Southwark. Eric Montague had queried the date that it had opened; Keith found records showing children being sent there from 1856 so presumably it had opened shortly before that. St George in the East took over The Elms opposite for a short time after 1846 and used it as a school, until the children were moved to Plashet (West Ham) in 1852. These results show that queries posed by Eric Montague in his *Mitcham Histories* could often now be answered, as there is more access to documents today than there was 30 years ago when Eric did his research.

Keith had an entry from the *Mitcham Mercury* dated 17 March 1916. Printed below its usual military tribunal report was 'Lloyd George's Suggestion': Sir William Henry Dunn had lunched with Lloyd George, then Secretary of State for War, who was of the opinion that 'it would be a very good idea to put them (objectors) to the work of repairing the barbed wire entanglements in the front line trenches.' Keith wondered why Mitcham readers should have heard of Sir William. He discovered an error on *Wikipedia* which appeared elsewhere (showing that once something is said to be true, it is copied by others and becomes a permanent 'fact'). Wikipedia states that Dunn was born in Clitheroe, Lancashire, and this is found in sources such as *The Times* and biographies of Aldermen of the City of London. Census entries show that he was actually born in London. Sir William was Lord Mayor 1916-7 and did not seem to have a connection with Mitcham.

- ◆ **Rosemary Turner** had been exploring with her daughter on Boxing Day. Her Surrey A-Z Street Atlas (1980) showed a path called Mile Road running from the junction of London Rd and Nightingale Lane, across Mitcham Common to Beddington Lane. A later atlas still shows this but with a break halfway, where the sewage works fencing runs. Beyond this, the large areas of water were a birdwatchers paradise. This side of the fence a grassed path leads left and right, parallel with the fencing. The left hand path was a very pleasant walk which ran along the line of London Road (at a distance from it), reaching the two railway bridges under threat of demolition. The second one offered the first opportunity to get back onto London Road, at the *Goat*. On family history, she gave the welcome news that TNA have introduced a new listing for

births and deaths, with the maiden name of the mother added to births from 1837 to 1910, and ages added to burials. She found for both her Lewer One Name Study and her own family that the only births that she had not attributed to parents had died in infancy. Googling her maiden name she found some newspaper entries, one of which related the death of a great great uncle who was killed by a fly (a type of cab) in 1845 aged 12. Another was of three children, aged between 9 and 12, all from one family, arrested for stealing coal from a railway yard.

Rosemary was concerned about the condition of the workhouse wall at the junction of Commonsides East and Windmill Rd. They are now building flats very close to it. [The wall has since fallen.]

- ◆ **Joyce Bellamy** was looking into Jubilee items in Mitcham. Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee was marked by the drinking trough on Mitcham Cricket Green, and her Diamond Jubilee was celebrated by the creation of the Mitcham Clock Tower, both by public subscription. Joyce has been unable to find anything for the Silver Jubilee. Although celebrations marked other Royal jubilees, Joyce would be interested to know if any other monuments marking these events have survived.

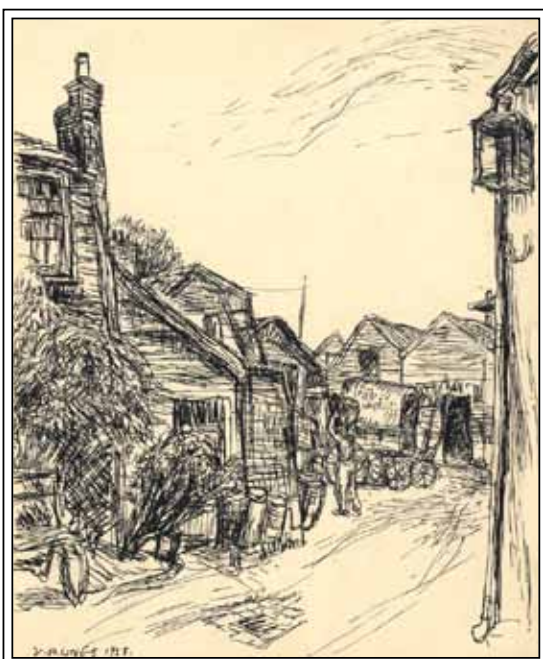
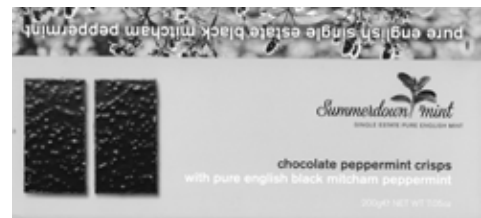
The bed of Golden Jubilee roses at the Cricket Green marks the present queen's Golden Jubilee in 2003, and the Queen Elizabeth Fields at Figges Marsh her Diamond Jubilee in 2012. The Queen is now approaching her Sapphire Jubilee (65 years, the first British monarch ever to do so). It is intended this should be marked by local communities, rather than by a national celebration. Any ideas for Merton?

- ◆ **Judith Goodman** had been looking through her collection of newspaper cuttings referring to William Morris. The *Surrey Independent* 27 September 1884 reported on 'a largely attended' meeting of the Wimbledon and Merton Radical Association held at the Bay Tree. 'Mr Copas [?Copus] said a gentleman present had asked him whether if they got the Franchise, would they then be on an equality with other voters. How could that be when Mr Morris, the Socialist, had told him he had eight votes in different constituencies. Another gentleman had told him he had eleven votes with as many qualifications. How could a man with one vote be on an equality with these men. The time must come when it would be one man, one vote.'

The *Surrey Independent* 30 September 1893 [quoted from the *Sun*] corrects a frequent statement that his front door was blue: 'The factory at Merton Abbey is a long, low, old fashioned building such as we see in Kate Greenaway's pictures, with a green door and a semi circular doorstep.' It goes on to describe the man himself as very erect with 'a somewhat sailorly aspect accentuated by his always wearing blue serge. He has a fine head, leonine in type and thick curly grey hair. He has rather an impatient manner and paces the room while he is talking, like a lion in a cage.'

- ◆ **Dave Haunton** had been given a box of chocolates containing 'Mitcham Black' mint (*right*) and those present were urged to try them. They were made by a firm in Hampshire, whose mint plants had originally come from Mitcham, as documented by the

Wandle Industrial Museum.



Dave had been sent a copy of a drawing by Vincent Lines (*left*), which he had circulated, hoping to identify its location. It had been labelled 'Tooting Broadway', but the Broadway is only 100 yards long. Dave thought the drawing might be of a public house (from barrels in the picture). David Luff lent him a 1913 OS map of Tooting which had a PH marked in a possible site in Tooting High Street, while Merton Local Studies had a street directory for 1887 showing a pub there called *The Fox*. Dave had noticed that at the bottom of the picture that he could just make out a reference to the *Balham Mercury* newspaper. As Vincent's drawings were often done to accompany newspaper articles and Merton Local Studies has this newspaper on micro-fiche, further investigation calls. Another drawing by Vincent Lines from the same dealer shows 'Merton Abbey' (*see front cover*).

Rosemary Turner

**Dates of next Workshops: Fridays 3 March, 21 April and 23 June 2017
2.30pm at Wandle Industrial Museum. All are welcome.**

‘RECENT RESEARCHES’

On Saturday 14 January four members of the Society presented short papers.

David Haunton took a **Look at Kingston Road, Merton, 1892-2016**, or rather the stretch from Wimbledon Chase station (west) to South Wimbledon underground (east), crossed halfway along by a third railway at Merton Park. In 1892 Kelly’s street directory gives us our first reliable information on all addresses. As well as long-established farmhouses (Manor Farm), ‘big houses’ (Long Lodge) and pubs (White Hart, Old Leather Bottle) the present pattern of occupation was already in place, with mixed, mostly commercial, buildings in the eastern half, and mostly residential ones in the western. Over the next 50 years, the remaining fields disappeared as commerce became more prominent, with development around new roads (1910-1930), the Nelson Hospital (1912) and the railway stations (1920s). A slow retreat of commerce began in about 1980, as new large blocks of flats began to rise, and shops began to be converted to living accommodation.

Looking at changes in trades between 1920 and 2016, the home refrigerator is responsible for reducing the 29 butchers, bakers, grocers, greengrocers, fruiterers and dairymen to a single baker, while the 11 confectioners have no successor. Instead of all these we have 10 mini-supermarkets. Clothing and boot shops reduce from 13 to one. Four separate banks have come and gone, though laundries or dry-cleaners (3) and hairdressers (4) remain constant. We have no farrier or foundry, but the two small ‘dining rooms’ are succeeded by 19 restaurants, cafés and take-aways. To a large extent, nowadays we are offered services rather than goods.

Keith Penny discussed his ongoing researches into **Mitcham’s First World War Military Tribunals**. He began by outlining the change from initially voluntary military service to later conscription. The Military Service Bill became law on 27 January 1916. From 2 March single men aged 18 to 40 were ‘deemed to be enlisted for the period of the war’, but the Act allowed various exemptions: the national interest, serious hardship, ill health or conscientious objection. The latter came in partly to avoid a split in the Cabinet, but such objectors were numerically insignificant, 0.33% of men recruited. Registration authorities, in Mitcham the Urban District Council, had to appoint a Tribunal to hear applications for exemption, of between 5 and 25 persons, and providing for ‘the adequate representation of labour in the district’.

At every hearing by a local Tribunal the War Office had a Military Representative, who did not have a vote within the tribunal. Either the applicant or the Military Representative could appeal against a local decision. Mitcham cases were heard by the Surrey and Croydon Appeals Tribunal sitting in Croydon Town Hall. The Mitcham Chairman, George Farewell Jones, was a solicitor in the City of London and a regular worshipper at the Parish Church. He chaired almost all the sittings and seems to have been consistently polite in his manner to the applicants. The Military Representative was Dr T Cato Worsfold, also a lawyer, who later became the first MP for Mitcham. Obituaries noted his dignity, humour and widespread public service. He was obliged to press for recruits, and he argued his case energetically, but he kept to the rules.

Some idea of the socio-economic status of the applicants can be gained from their employments: of the c.570 reported cases, 182 worked in market gardens, the varnish industry, bakeries, cartage or with cows or pigs, while 33 were clerks. Many other manual trades were represented. The social gap between the typical Tribunal member and the general run of applicants can be shown by comparing Dr Worsfold’s stately Hall Place home (*right, copyright London Borough of Merton*) with the small terrace house in Church Road, where Mr Mount, the one ‘worker’ member



of the Tribunal, resided for 5/6d a week rent (*left, photo: Keith Penny*). In the agricultural East Fields things were much the same: Mr Farewell Jones had his 13 rooms, wine cellar, conservatory, paddocks and gardens, whereas the labourers might live in one of Alfred Mizen’s better cottages, or in tiny houses, like those in Ebenezer Terrace.

Even in 1914 it was recognised that there were two Mitchams, the village and ‘the other end’, and going up to the Vestry Hall by the Cricket Green to be judged by your social superiors must have added to the worries of many applicants. They had to submit a completed Form R.41 to the Clerk, and they would then be allocated an appointment. This form must have been alien to many of them, with its footnotes to look at and a duplicate to be completed. Several of the cases heard show men who do not understand what the system requires of them, and their helplessness when the system doesn’t work properly.

Mitcham Tribunal heard 320 cases up to April 1916, 1156 to March 1917, and 1513 to the end of November 1917. On average the hearings lasted about nine minutes each. The conscience cases were sometimes combative, but were not skimmed: one case in 1917 lasted 45 minutes. The newspapers, on which we have to rely for our information, only recorded a minority of cases – about 25% – and while naturally featuring the more ‘interesting’ cases, reporting was fair and did explain the procedure. The grounds for application included some 300 for employment, 161 for hardship, 87 for health and only 24 for conscience. Not all verdicts were reported, but some 97 cases were refused outright, while 366 were granted ‘partial exemption’ (postponement for a period to sort out the man’s affairs before he reported for duty). Of the conscience cases, four, all Quakers, were exempted, six sent to the Non-Combatant Corps and 12 refused.

Some of the Mitcham Tribunal were not insulated from the war: Mr Farewell Jones, the Chairman, Mr Chart, the Clerk, and Mr Drewett all lost sons. The Mitcham Tribunal was almost entirely courteous in its dealings with those who did not want to be involved in conscription, especially with those who appealed on grounds of family hardship. The law became ever more complex as the Government altered the regulations affecting certified or exempt occupations and the Clerk’s abilities stand out in guiding the members. Within the bounds of the law, the Mitcham Tribunal was fair.

Bea Oliver entertained us by reading some passages from *Reminiscences of Old Merton*, a short illustrated book by W H Chamberlain (Mitchell, Hughes and Clarke, 1925), from which the following extracts are quoted. ‘[The Surrey] Iron Road ... consisted of narrow-gauge rails on stone sleepers Many of these stone sleepers can still be seen today at Mitcham, stacked up in piles.’ ‘[My informant] Mr Hudson was born in 1793 and ... married Emma, daughter of Mr Crib, Nelson’s gardener, at Newington Church on 23 September 1816. ... He remembered the coloured nurse of Lord Nelson’s little daughter ... [who] was baptized at Merton Church by the name of Fatima Nelson, Dame Emma Hamilton and Nelson being the sponsors.’ In Merton High Street by 1870 ‘Mr Streatfield was a special constable, postman, market gardener and milkman. Mr Gardener, tailor, also sold boots, leather, snuff and tobacco. Joseph Cork, butcher, established 1840, was a builder and horse dealer. Mr Knox was a grocer, butcher, builder and undertaker.’ ‘At one corner of Watery Lane was the “Plough” beer-house, now a provision store. ... In one of the old cottages [in the Rush] a well-known character named Froggy Stilwell lived, who was a water-carrier and launderer. He was often “between the devil and the deep sea”, in other words, the “Leather Bottle” [right, detail from an illustration in the book] and the “Plough”, and his condition often warranted his being wheeled home in his own barrow.’ ‘Steeplechase races ... started from Rayne’s farmhouse up to a field at the side of Cannon Hill lake, then back down (now Blenheim Road) to the winning post at the side of the farm. The ponds on the golf links denote the course and water jumps.’



David Luff showed us **Three Short Films**, shot by himself and recently converted from celluloid to digital format. The first was a very short film of archaeological excavations in progress on the Merton priory site in 1987/8. There followed a longer film of Liberty’s print works, including some very interesting sequences of work in progress. The major portion of this was a valuable pictorial record of the buildings after the closure of the business in 1984, mostly exterior views with some rather desolate but informative empty interiors. This film was silent, but David provided an extempore commentary. Finally we followed the *Great Royal Sovereign Bed Push* of 1981, warned beforehand by a British Board of Film Censors certificate (possibly not genuine) that it was unsuitable for showing to audiences aged less than 18 years. This portrayed seven hardy gentlemen pushing a hospital bed, containing a young lady, some 20 miles, allegedly, for charity on a day of much rain. The Push began and ended at the *Royal Sovereign* pub in High Street, Colliers Wood. The warning was due to the terrible language recorded, occasioned by the terrible weather and the bed being insufficiently robust to last the entire course.

PETER COUSINS forwards

SOMETHING FOR FROG FANS

This notice first appeared in *The Model Engineer* on 11 May 1933, and was reproduced (with all its original punctuation) in the magazine's Centennial Celebration Collection, Vol 1, no.6, in 1999.

A "F.R.O.G." CLUB

A club is being organised for the model aviators who fly the "F.R.O.G." miniature plane. This model is an excellent miniature of an interceptor fighter, with adjustable controls, which enables the owner to perform all kinds of model flying trials and stunts. Badges are to be provided, and the advice of club expert pilots is always available for members. The flying ground, where regular meetings of the club will be held, is at Merton, but local branches may be formed, and meetings held in any part of the country. Full particulars of the organisation may be obtained from the Secretary, Flight-Lieut. Turner, R.A.F., International Model Aircraft Co., Morden Road, Merton, S.W.19.

Dave Haunton comments:

This little monoplane model (FROG = Flies Right Off Ground) was really up to date when it first appeared in the shops in 1932. At that time no air force anywhere in the world had a monoplane fighter in service, (all were biplanes) though one or two early prototypes were flying. The phrase 'interceptor fighter' first appeared in print only in 1930 (*Flight* 27 June). I presume the 'flying ground ... at Merton' was the large open space within the Tri-ang factory, the sports ground open space where football pitches were laid out.



"FROGS" IN FORMATION : Six of the model Interceptor Fighter monoplanes described below.

On 10 November 1932, the respected aviation magazine *Flight* rather surprisingly published a full-page review of the model, entitled *Almost the Real Thing*. It included the picture above and a three-view drawing of the 'Wilmot FROG IV', carefully detailing its 11.6in wingspan, its 9.275in length and its 2.15in maximum (wing) chord. The review was most enthusiastic, commenting that the model is a 'small 3/8-scale version of a modern machine ... extraordinarily realistic... the slightly larger airscrew being perhaps the only item not in true proportion to a full sized machine ... excellent flyer ... in every way a sound, practical flying model and by no means a mere toy'. *Flight* also enthused that 'Something over 800 a day are being turned out from the remarkably well-equipped factory ... at Merton.'



Picture from an auction catalogue

A little explanation: '3/8-scale' should here be interpreted as '3/8 of an inch to one foot', while the 'modern machine' was one of the Supermarine Schneider Trophy competitors, a racing machine and not a fighter. Charles Wilmot was the designer, and one of the directors of the manufacturers, International Model Aircraft Ltd, alongside all three of the Lines brothers.

Though given its own address in the press notice, the 'well-equipped factory' was completely inside the Tri-ang works, and occupied only a tiny amount of the 22-acre site. International Model Aircraft was set up with initial finance from Lines Bros, but soon became their wholly-owned subsidiary.

Melinda Haunton recommends

‘EMMA HAMILTON: SEDUCTION AND CELEBRITY’

National Maritime Museum, Royal Museums Greenwich (until 17 April)

It is no exaggeration to say that Emma Hamilton led an extraordinary life. Yet the bare bones of her story are familiar in the lives of great beauties before and since. Rising from the humblest of origins, as an innocent country girl debauched in the slums of London, she parlayed her looks and talent into international recognition. She moved through fame and notoriety to attract the attention of a series of wealthy men and huge celebrity coverage in the press and print world of the day. Then, as age and scandal took their toll, the press turned savage, her protectors fell away through death or faithlessness, and ultimately she died, too young and in deep poverty. It is a tragic life, and one which could depress the unwary exhibition-goer.

But this fascinating biographical show aims to reclaim Emma Hamilton from tragic narrative, and it largely succeeds in telling the story of this particular extraordinary woman. At this distance it is hard to recapture the spirit and looks which captivated so many, but having visited *Seduction and Celebrity*, you certainly want to try. It is particularly welcome that the exhibition uses a range of media to recreate this ephemeral celebrity: paintings, letters, furniture, jewellery, dresses, and audio-visual displays, including readings of some of the letters for those who struggle with Emma's sprawling handwriting. A performance space features attempts to recreate her famous 'Attitudes', an art-form she invented while in Naples, which brought her to the peak of her international fame.

The exhibition takes us through Emma's life chronologically. It is loosely arranged in three Acts, a conceit which is less successful than the more detailed division into sections looking at the multiplicity of roles Emma played: servant, seductress, possession, student, performer, political agent, fashion icon, mother, mistress, homemaker, mourner and pauper. We meet the young Emma as the painter George Romney's muse, in well over a dozen of his sequence of seventy paintings focused on her expressive face and body. By contrast, we see Emma as an international force, working with the Queen of Naples, provisioning Nelson's ships, and rather naively seeking intelligence to pass on to her political contacts.

Emma as Circe by George Romney

The displays include a number of documents allowing us to hear Emma's own voice and those of her close companions. It is hard not to sympathise with her desperation in January 1782 as a young pregnant unmarried woman, discarded by one lover and forced to give up her child by her next protector (Charles Greville). She was then passed on to his uncle Sir William Hamilton (whom the exhibition wrongly styles 'Lord') as the most desirable of commodities; Hamilton's letter discussing her as a beautiful possession is one of the more disturbing exhibits. Savage cartoons mocking her weight gain in later life also caused this reviewer to bristle in her defence; it would be easy to become a cheerleader for a much-mistreated woman. But we also meet Hamilton writing to his nephew of Emma's £200 annual clothes allowance, and 'indeed she so longed for diamonds that ... I gave her at once 500£-worth.' It is a reminder that Emma, although always in a precarious social position, was more than capable of looking to her own interests. She did, after all, persuade Hamilton to marry her in 1791, against considerable objections from his relatives. A rather tetchy and defensive letter from Hamilton to an acquaintance in 1796 shows just how long he had to justify his decision to marry such a socially-unsuitable woman. Our sympathy for Emma is challenged by her handwritten note adding names of pro-revolutionary individuals in Naples to a list of suspect prisoners in 1799. Many were executed as a result. The brutality of this period, in which the Neapolitan monarchy was toppled and re-established, was a blemish on the reputations of Emma, Hamilton and Nelson alike.

The curator reflects on how badly history has treated Emma, and how essential it is to reclaim her from simply being an adjunct to men. Although the displays try hard to do this, it is nearly impossible to separate Emma's story from those men who supported her, paid her bills, promoted her celebrity, and whose provision for her lifestyle fundamentally controlled what she could do. This is never more relevant than with Admiral Lord Nelson, and the notoriety of their personal relationship, which began in 1799 and ended with Nelson's death at the Battle of Trafalgar in 1805. It is this relationship which means the National Maritime Museum holds rich collections relating to Emma, and indeed why the museum can plausibly mount such a show about a woman who is otherwise barely connected with British maritime history. The exhibition inevitably climaxes with their very public affair, including steamy readings from their love letters. It then follows Emma's swift decline after Nelson's death, when £800 per annum from Hamilton's estate plus £2000 from Nelson and a country home to

be hers outright proved insufficient to fund her for more than four years, despite Nelson's Trafalgar-eve entreaty to the nation to support her in the event of his death. She landed in King's Bench prison for debt, and finally died in France, in deep poverty, leaving her unacknowledged daughter by Nelson, Horatia, to be cared for by, it transpires, Nelson's relatives.

Members of Merton Historical Society can of course be excused from accusations of seeing Emma only as an adjunct to men – for Mertonians are naturally most interested in Emma as a local resident. 'Paradise Merton', the country residence where she lived with Nelson for a few short years 1801-05, features heavily in the third act of Emma's life, as her domestic ideal, and the focus of her formidable efforts to build a suitable life in England. Although the house and contents were sold to pay Emma's debts, and Merton Place was ultimately demolished, the exhibition manages to bring together images and furnishings to give an idea of what we have lost. A small table, huge mirror, and a resoundingly tasteless set of crockery in 'Horatia' pattern – a special commission from Chamberlain & Co, Worcester – give an idea of the opulence of Emma's Merton lifestyle. Drawings from a sketchbook by Thomas Baxter, a friend and regular visitor, give a more informal, intimate view of the life within the house. Finally, sales particulars from the dispersal of the estate tell us that it contained eight servants' rooms, five principal bedchambers, a water closet, two drawing rooms, a dining parlour, grand entrance hall and saloon, library and much else, including statuary and veined marble chimney pieces. Among the offices were a saltery, ice house, and 'capital cellaring', and the grounds included shrubbery, a canal, a stone bridge, garden, orchard, hot-house...all told 22 acres, 2 roods, and 23 perches. Although these exact measures are slightly undermined by the particulars then adding 'more or less', we can say that Emma's Merton Place was lavish and well-provided, not somewhere Emy Lyon of Ness, Cheshire, can have imagined owning when she first set off for London in the 1770s. It was not hers for long.

As Emma's story descends towards her tragic end and collapsing reputation, the exhibition demonstrates how Nelson could only be maintained as England's great hero in Victorian eyes if Emma could bear the burden of moral outrage over their affair. Her reputation sank as his soared. It is warming to remember that during this period in Merton, far from being written out of history, Emma was commemorated in local street and pub names. In Merton, she is far from forgotten.



Exhibition entrance / photo Melinda Haunton

WHITECHAPEL BELL FOUNDRY: Members will be sorry to learn that the Bell Foundry is to cease operations this coming May, due to falling demand. The Factory can trace its history back to 1570, and has occupied its Whitechapel Road premises since 1738. We visited it in May 2013, when we enjoyed a most instructive and entertaining tour (see *Bulletin* 187).

Letters and contributions for the *Bulletin* should be sent to the Hon. Editor by email to editor@mertonhistoricalsociety.org.uk. The views expressed in this *Bulletin* are those of the contributors concerned and not necessarily those of the Society or its Officers.

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