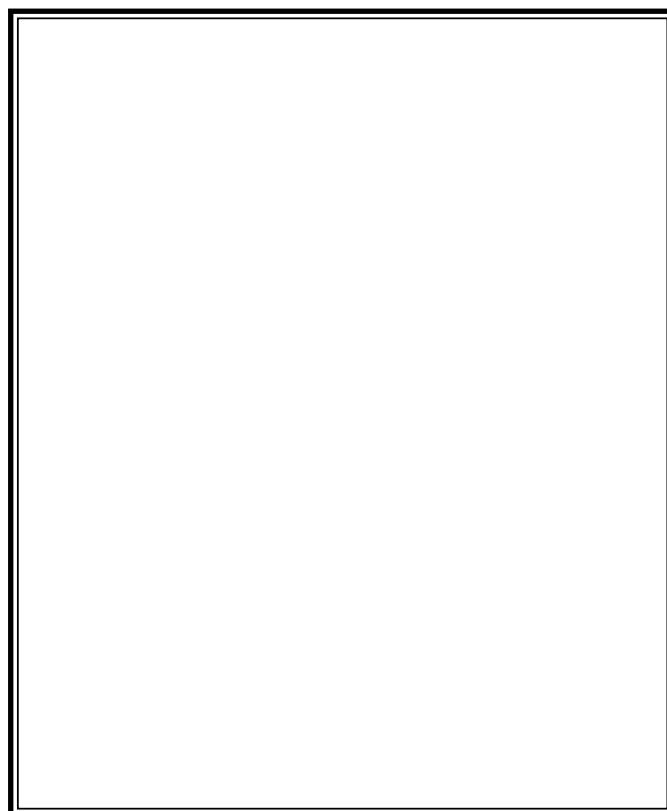




PRESIDENT:  
VICE PRESIDENT: Judith Goodman  
CHAIR: Keith Penny

BULLETIN No. 204

DECEMBER 2017



*Emma Hamilton's personal insignia see p.9*

*Left: Little Cross of St John of Jerusalem  
Photo David Bullock*

*Right: Achievement of Arms  
Photo courtesy The Nelson Dispatch*

## CONTENTS

<b>Programme December 2017–April 2018</b>	2
<b>Visit to Charterhouse</b>	4
<b>Visit to the Wyvern Bindery, Clerkenwell</b>	5
<b>'The Archaeology of the Merton Priory Site'</b>	6
<b>Local History Workshop – 25 August 2017:</b>	
Berkeley first 100; Tram photos; Morden Road Cottages; Pharmacies; Emma's insignia	8
<b>Wartime Childhood in SW19 — John 'Sandy' Catanach</b>	10
<b>A Task Unfulfilled – Eric Shaw</b>	12
<b>The Berkeley First 100 – Rosemary Turner</b>	14
<b>'Where do you think you are?' – David Haunton</b>	16

## PROGRAMME DECEMBER 2017–APRIL 2018

**Saturday 9 December 2.30pm**

**Christchurch Hall, Colliers Wood**

### **‘The Coach Road to Brighton’**

An illustrated talk by **Geoff Hewlett**, author and ‘avid walker’, he says

*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.*

### **NOTE CHANGE OF VENUE FOR MEETINGS IN WINTER AND SPRING 2018**

**Saturday 13 January 2018 2.30pm**

**St James’s Church Hall, Merton**

### **‘Members’ Meeting’**

Short talks by Society members to include ‘The Berkeley Teetotal Society after the 100’; ‘Four WW1 Combatants’; ‘Bill Rudd’s photos – a local selection’; etc.

**Saturday 10 February 2.30pm**

**St James’ Church Hall, Merton**

### **‘Listed Buildings of Mitcham’**

An illustrated talk by **Tony Scott**, our Vice Chair

**Wednesday 28 February 12.00**

**Taste Restaurant, Merton College**

### **ANNUAL LUNCH**

*Full details are given on the enclosed booking form*

**Saturday 10 March 2.30pm**

**St James’ Church Hall, Merton**

### **‘History of the Conservators of Wimbledon & Putney Commons’**

An illustrated talk by **Simon Lee**, the Chief Executive

**Saturday 14 April 2.30pm**

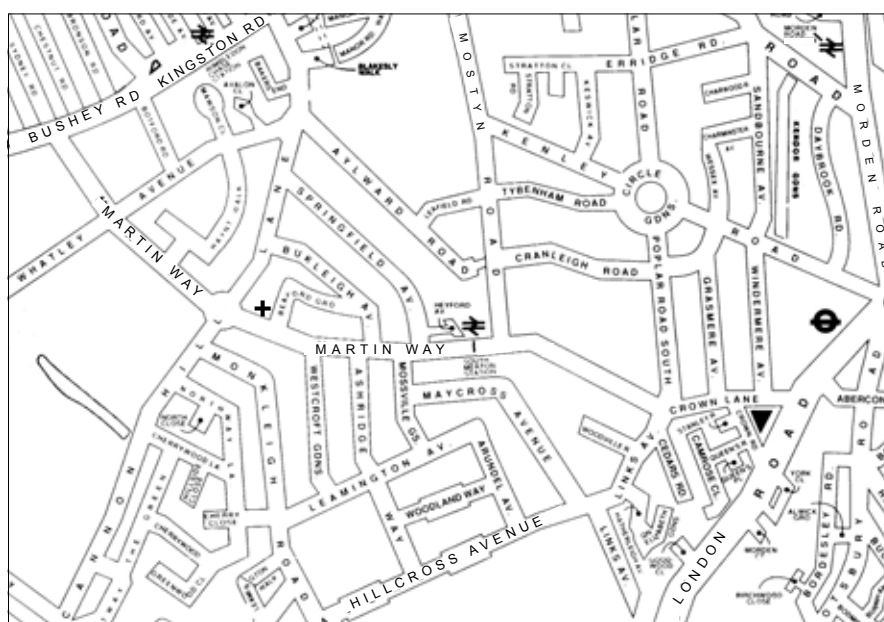
**St James’ Church Hall, Merton**

### **‘For Valour – The Story of Merton’s VCs’**

An illustrated talk by **Sarah Gould**, LBM Heritage

*St James’ Church Hall is in Martin Way, next to the church (officially in Beaford Grove).*

*Buses 164 and 413 stop in Martin Way (in both directions) immediately outside. The church has a tiny car park, but parking in adjacent streets is free.*



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

## HELP WANTED

The Committee are in urgent need of **volunteers with transport** for the following responsibilities, initially for our next four meetings, January – April 2018:

- ◆ someone to store the new screen and bring it to each meeting (as David Roe will have other commitments)
- ◆ someone to transport bags of current publications and act as bookstall manager, liaising with Peter Hopkins on sales and stock (as Peter will no longer have a car)
- ◆ depending on the facilities at St James' Hall, we may need someone to transport the urn for refreshments.

Our situation may be reviewed for the Autumn 2018 – Spring 2019 season of meetings.

Furthermore, it would be much appreciated if anyone could offer **dry storage space** for items saved from the MHS store (much of it paper); even a square yard or two would be helpful.

The current Committee lack some modern skills and would appreciate introductions to people (perhaps junior relatives?) who can offer advice on:

- ◆ setting up and **running an E-bay account** and
- ◆ **colour and design** for our next annual Programme folder.

## HAVE YOU PAID?

**Subscriptions for 2017-18 are now overdue.** Please note that this will be the last issue to reach you if we do not receive your payment before the March *Bulletin*. A membership form was enclosed with the September *Bulletin*.

Current rates are:      Individual member £12,      Additional member in same household £5  
                                 Full-time Student £5,      Overseas member £15

Cheques are payable to **Merton Historical Society** and should be sent with completed forms to our Membership Secretary, 27 Burley Close, LONDON SW16 4QQ.

## VISIT TO CHARTERHOUSE

On Thursday 10 August members joined a Brothers' Tour of the Charterhouse almshouse, ably conducted by two of the Brothers, Charles Duff and Brian (whose surname alas I didn't catch).

The site has a long history: in the 1340s Edward III gave to Sir Walter Manny a 13-acre plot just outside the City of London (the southern boundary of Charterhouse Square is the dividing line). During the Black Death (1348) the Square was commandeered to bury plague victims because it was outside the City. In 1371 Manny and the Bishop of London gave the site to Charterhouse (Carthusian) monks, a quietist and vegetarian order, whose monastery slowly became rich and successful. Alas, in 1535 Prior Houghton and several monks refused to sign Henry VIII's Act of Succession and were executed: the monastery was surrendered shortly thereafter, and formally suppressed in 1538.

In 1545 it was bought by Sir Edward North who pulled down much of the building and built himself a manor house, none of which survives. This passed to Thomas Howard, Duke of Norfolk, who was executed in 1572, and thence to his second son, who sold it for £16,000 to Thomas Sutton, 'the richest commoner in England'. Sutton was an arms dealer and usurer, and possibly the model for the character of Jonson's *Volpone*, but when he died in 1611 he left his fortune to set up the present charitable foundation, as noted by John Aubrey in his *Brief Lives*.

The name is a polite nod to the medieval monks; the charity is not a religious one, but an almshouse and a school. The school is now too big for the site, and has moved elsewhere, but Charterhouse still has an educational learning centre. The Brothers living in the almshouse flats are single men or women, aged 60 or more, with a need for living accommodation, who pay a means-tested rent. There are no female Brothers as yet, but the Master is Anne Henry, the first female in the post.

The existing building is Tudor, built in 1555 with stone from the monastery, and red brick. The old chapter house is now part of the chapel; the original church has been demolished, the entry courtyard now occupying the site. The chapel contains many monuments, notably that to Thomas Sutton (*right*). A fine organ reminds one of the tradition of music here: past organists and players include George Frederick Handel and Benjamin Cosyn, who produced a *Virginals Book* of his own compositions. The current organist is a Brother.

The route to the downstairs Great Hall passes monuments to old boys William Makepeace Thackeray, Roger Williams (the founder of Rhode Island colony), Robert Baden Powell, and John Wesley, as well as war memorials to the Crimean and South African wars. WW2 bombs that demolished the ceiling, now restored, spared the buttery screen of 1571. The hall was the old meeting house, and is now used as a communal dining room. The room displays the Sutton arms prominently, and portraits of past governors, including that of the rebellious Duke of Monmouth (executed 1685). The boys used to eat nearby in the Old Library, with its tapered wooden pillars supporting the ceiling beams, and its portrait of the Duke of Wellington as Prime Minister.



The North Cloister preserves a little of the monastery, as its stone base dates from 1371: a single monk's cell and doorway survive, the others having been filled in and blocked. Originally about 100 yards long by only four or five wide, it has a Tudor brick barrel vault, supporting an external walkway above, for the owner and guests to view the grounds. This curiously shaped space has a place in sporting history, as the Charterhouse boys played football within it and evolved a set of rules to govern play. These included keeping the ball low (or it went out through the large unglazed window spaces), halting play until the throw-in (back through the window) if the ball does go out, and a form of offside rule to stop boys of one team standing on the goal line of the other. In the 1840s, with the coming of the railways, widely separated football teams could meet. In 1863 a meeting was held in Queen Street Tavern, to establish the Football Association (FA) and agree common rules. The Charterhouse boys already had a set written down, and this was a major contribution to the FA Rules.

The upstairs Great Hall was occasionally used as a Council chamber by Elizabeth I. Originally there were two fireplaces, but only one survives. The ceiling was slightly damaged in WW2, but was accurately restored. However it was (wrongly) gilded later by Paget and Seely, who also introduced un-authentic modern chandeliers,



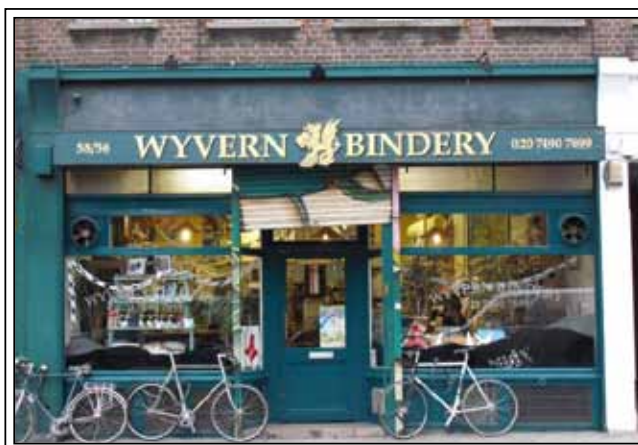
so the room now gives an idea of what 1950s restorers thought was Elizabethan interior decoration. There are several outside courtyards, notably the Master's with impressive stone and brick façades, where the broken-up monastery window surrounds were relaid as courses of stone under Tudor windows.

The Charterhouse site is still owned by the charitable Foundation; a limited area is open to the public free of charge (including the chapel), but more extensive tours are open now 'for money' (which goes to the Foundation, not the Brothers, we were hastily advised). There is a small and fascinating museum, featuring a huge and rare map of the on-site water management c.1431, while the coffee at Thackeray's (the Foundation's café outside the main gate) is to be recommended.

**David Haunton**

## VISIT TO THE WYVERN BINDERY, CLERKENWELL

On 14 September 2017 we were made welcome at the Wyvern Bindery, 56-58 Clerkenwell Road, London EC1M 5PX. Wyvern produces bespoke bindings, portfolios, menus, photograph albums and so forth, and have worked on props for advertisements, installations and artworks, as well as for TV and films. In view of the size of the premises, it was perhaps fortunate that the visiting group was small. We were greeted by Mark Winstanley, the proprietor, who introduced himself, and told us how he got involved in the business. He then showed us samples of the firm's work, which ranged from PhD theses to antiques that needed rescuing from terminal decay.



Mark showed us various kinds of binding, and basically how they were done. He took us around the workshop showing us the different stages. Most of the work was still done manually, as it has been done more or less for all bookbinding history. The interior of the shop was a delight, full of materials and semi-finished work, as well as three specialist workers and tools both traditional and modern.

Mark demonstrated how gold leaf was applied to the titles on book covers, by use of type characters fitted into a block, and how gold lines to form a border were applied with tools that resembled pizza cutters. Older machines used to heat and press the leaf were gas-heated, but the firm also used a modern German-made electric one. Mark let Bea have a go! She did her initials, not in real gold, and came away with a special souvenir.



We were shown one of Mark's favourite restoration projects, a huge ledger that had belonged to a gentlemen's outfitters in the City. The binding outside (leather around sewn sections glued together) was as skilful as the clerk's handwriting inside. All the lines for the accounts had been hand-drawn.

**Keith Penny**

*Photographs: Shopfront © Yelp Co.; Interiors © Photographer Nicola Boccaccini, [www.nicolaboccaccini.com](http://www.nicolaboccaccini.com)*

## **‘ARCHAEOLOGY OF THE MERTON PRIORY SITE’**

On Saturday 14 October 2017 Dave Saxby from MOLA reminded us that it was 900 years since the re-founding of the Augustinian priory of St Mary Merton on the Wandle site, and mentioned that it was 30 years almost to the day from the start of his own archaeological career. He recognised some old acquaintances in the audience, which was a little smaller than usual. Dave had raided the MOLA archives of the various excavations, covering 1976-2004, and he showed us over 100 slides, many of them unpublished.

By 1898 only the extent of the precinct was obvious (from the priory wall), but there were no visible remains of the internal buildings. In the 1920s Bidder excavated around Merton Abbey railway station, revealing the church. His plan was exact – when some of his trenches were re-excavated to check, his measurements were within four or five centimetres (two inches) of the modern ones.

Underneath the priory site, the rammed gravel of Roman Stane Street survived up to 60 feet wide in places, and yielded a number of coins. A number of late Saxon objects were found beside the road, but no Saxon buildings. Documents tell us that a timber church was built in 1117, and a stone one was begun in 1125. No physical evidence of this church was found, but it was rebuilt in the 1170s, and items from it were included in this later church. This was an open monastery: it contained a school and was visited by King John just before he witnessed Magna Carta.

In the 1220s-1230s Henry III financed much building which was ready in 1236 for a ‘big party’ following his wedding to Eleanor in Canterbury and her coronation in Westminster. The previous building campaign continued, so we have two phases of (re-)construction intermixed. The original cloister and chapter house were rebuilt in stone, and a separate cloister appeared, including a reredorter (toilet) and an infirmary complex, of hall, kitchen and chapel. The church layout was similar to that of other great churches of the time. The church floor was decorated with Reigate stone tiles and Westminster-type floor tiles (until c.1300 the same tile maker was making the same designs, in London); in the middle of the church plain tiles had been cut into triangles and then laid to make a pattern. The decoration, columns and windows of Holyrood, Edinburgh, are very similar to Merton priory, probably because Alwyn, canon of Merton, founded the daughter house there. In c.1340 a Lady chapel was added to the east end of the church, giving it a length greater than Westminster Abbey.

In 1976 Merton Abbey station was dismantled, allowing excavation of the priory chapter house, showing buttresses had become necessary, as the walls had kept slipping sideways off their foundations. An apse had been added in the 14th century. The chapter house contained the graves of ‘posh teenagers’ and was a public area, as shown by the frieze of ‘dancing ladies’ decorative tiles. Westminster tiles were also found, as were fragments of deep blue, red and green stained glass – a rare find as medieval glass usually disintegrates.

A slype (passageway) ran beside the chapter house to the infirmary chapel (for laying out the dead), the infirmary itself, with its central hearth, and the infirmary kitchen and lavatorium (for washing), all sited round the infirmary cloister. The kitchen had a pitched tile hearth and a big drain into a fishpond. The cloister had ornate carved window frames, stained glass (fragments found had been painted with flowers and plants, one showing an angel wing), Purbeck marble columns, and at least one ceiling boss carved with flowers and fruit, which was re-used at Nonsuch. The infirmary, originally an open hall, was divided into separate rooms ‘after the Black Prince’s time’ (he died in 1376). One cell, about 3.5m square, was divided off by thin walls added between columns, and given a tiled floor. This was possibly for a paying guest or pensioner, supplied with meat meals from the kitchen. The infirmary needed more and more buttresses as the soil moved, and the 1989 excavation found scaffold pole holes along one wall. A separate little room with a drain was possibly for blood-letting, seemingly a regular date for monks, as it meant they were allowed a meat meal afterwards. A stone cupboard may have been for medicines, as tweezers were found nearby.

Over 700 skeletons were excavated around the monastic buildings: one had a hernia belt (only three such are known in the world), one had a badly broken leg that had healed perhaps two inches shorter than the other, one had a copper disc on a knee with arthritis, and one was face down, possibly a criminal. 90% were of adults, the men averaging 5ft 8.5in tall, the women 5ft 4in, showing they had enjoyed a good diet. Burial rite varied: a kist of stones, a stone coffin with drain holes, wooden planks or only a shroud. One stone kist and three lead coffins were found in the chapter house. Some graves contained objects such as belt buckles and a patten used in church. There were 13th-century grave markers, children in small kists, and one coffin plate, for Michael Kimpton, d.1412.

Small finds around the infirmary included various herbal seeds such as opium and black nightshade, dice for choice of treatment (!), a glass phial for examining urine, a leather dagger scabbard, a Jews’-harp, a bull-roarer toy for children, book clasps, book plates and styluses in the cloister, small spectacles, a gold love ring inscribed

‘I have no-one else but you’ in Latin, an unusual pot hand-painted in red and green chevrons and circles, and wooden bowls marked for individuals.

Other structures within the complex included a chalk-lined fish pond, others lined with wattle and clay (the final one with an overflow drain), an isolated little building of unknown use, and a mill built in the 12th or 13th century, which finally went out of use in the 19th. There was an early water tank, possibly for preparing skins for parchment, which had been relined in the 16th century.

After the dissolution much material from the priory was sent for use in Nonsuch palace, leaving only a few visible remains – a 15th-century chapel was not demolished until 1870 and the doorway to the guest house was hidden in a later building and later removed to St Mary’s, Merton Park. The remaining lengths of the precinct wall, probably of the 13th century, are to be surveyed by the National Trust, and some 20 weeks of work to refurbish the chapter house are now imminent.

The infirmary and chapel together measured over 40m, and should still exist under tarmac, as there has been no later deep construction. They were covered in sand before the planned building of Sainsbury’s Head Office was abandoned. Still to find are the great hall and the central kitchens, and it would be nice to find the furnace for casting the lead ingots known to have been supplied to Nonsuch.

*Conjectural development of the site 12th to 15th century*

© Pat Miller & David Saxby The Augustinian priory of St Mary Merton (MoLAS, 2007)

## LOCAL HISTORY WORKSHOP

**Friday 25 August 2017 – Six present – Rosemary Turner in the chair.**

- ◆ Following Keith's item at a previous workshop, **Peter Hopkins** had found a copy of a teaching pack on the Mizen family business, produced for Merton schools by Groundwork Merton. Some family photographs had been annotated by a later family member – though we were unconvinced by some of the identifications, compared with later photos.

While selecting photos for the new MHS website, Peter had rediscovered among Eric Montague's archives an original photographic print of 'The First Hundred Members' of the Berkeley Teetotal Society, which began in June 1893 (see *Bulletin* 199). It contains a portrait of each person, ordered alphabetically by surname. Each picture is tiny, about 6–7mm square, and it is very difficult to distinguish one person from another. Peter has since scanned it at a high resolution and they enlarge to surprisingly clear images. (see p.14).

Following his recent exhibition at Emmanuel Church, Stonecot Hill, a church member had given Peter a 1950s postcard of the *Crown* inn at Morden and some press cuttings from local papers. Maybe more to follow?

- ◆ **Keith Penny** had been dating some of the transport photographs on Merton Memories. As examples he showed a view for Worple Road (ref. Wim\_15\_5-29) where knowledge of trams and routes placed the picture as 1926–1930, during which period the LCC ran summer Sunday services from London to Hampton Court. A picture of a tram with the destination 'Mitcham Fair Green' (ref. Wim\_28\_3-18) (*right*) could be dated to summer 1933: the London Passenger Transport Board took control in July 1933 (their ownership could be seen on the lower panel of the tram) and the type of tram pictured ceased operation in Mitcham at the end of 1933. Another clue was the white cover on the cap worn by the driver, compulsory wear in the summer months.

Keith had chosen a view of the Vestry Hall, Mitcham (ref. Mit\_Transport\_24-1), for the cover of his Military Tribunals book, and had found two dates for it on Merton Memories, 1906 and 1910. *Mitcham Histories* 5 gave 1906 and also suggested 1910 as the opening date of the tracks from Fair Green to Cricket Green. Evidence in published histories of the South Metropolitan system suggested that the vehicle seen in the picture was repainted and modified in 1906–7, and the register of inspections of tramways in The National Archives recorded that all the Mitcham tram routes were inspected for safety by the Board of Trade inspector on 23 May 1906. The inspecting officer was Lieutenant-Colonel Pelham George von Donop, who reputedly passed his name to P G Wodehouse when he was the future novelist's godfather.

*Photo courtesy London Borough of Merton  
(from Merton Memories)*

- ◆ **Judy Goodman** showed us some of Bill Rudd's photos taken in 1970. There are several of buildings in Merton Road, including the 'Morden Road cottages' (34-40) (*right*), now subject to an unsympathetic planning application. Judy has discovered that around 1900 they were known as 'Union Terrace', and will henceforth so refer to them. The photos will shortly be available on our website.

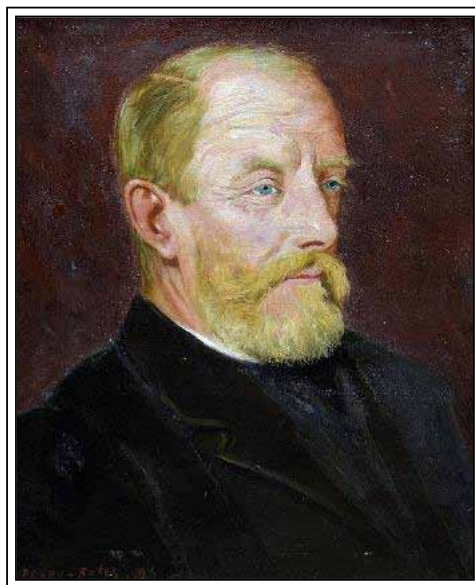




- ◆ **Rita Stanley** recalled riding on trams starting from Wimbledon Town Hall. Upstairs was favourite, since the backs of the seats could be moved fore and aft to suit the direction you wished to face. Riding on local trolley-buses was another story.
- ◆ **David Haunton** reported on the Wimbledon Chase pharmacy. Norma Cox has kindly researched in the Annual Registers of Pharmaceutical Chemists, the Superintendents Registers of Premises, and the Lists of Bodies Corporate, and discovered that in 1950-1982 there was no pharmacy, in 1982-1987 Cospharm Ltd were at 292-294 Kingston Road, in 1989-1999 Mr S Jethwa was at the same address, naming his shop the Mount Elgon Pharmacy, while in 2000-2005 Mr Jethwa's Mount Elgon Pharmacy was at 304 Kingston Road. Mr Raj Patel took over from Mr Jethwa, retaining the pharmacy name and premises, until he moved the business to the Nelson Pharmacy. Mount Elgon is the largest extinct volcano in Africa. Raj told David that Mr Jethwa was born in Tanzania, and during his boyhood lived quite close to the mountain, which he used to see every day on his way to school. So it was as a reminder of his early days that he adopted the name for his own pharmacy.

It is now evident that the The Chase Chemist pharmacy opposite Wimbledon Chase Station, opened in 1938 by Mr Hau, had closed by 1950, and that there was no chemist in the Chase between 1950 and 1982. Apparently properties in that area of Kingston Road had been renumbered in 1999, as the Mount Elgon Pharmacy occupied the same premises for the length of Mr Jethwa's incumbency. We were intrigued by the tendency of pharmacies to be established close to one another, especially when Rita mentioned that there are currently no fewer than four within the Raynes Park shopping area, which is perhaps 600 yards long.

On the Art Sales Index website, David had found an illustration of a portrait of the artist George Clausen by the 'Wandle' artist Dewey Bates (*right*). It is dated 1896, only two years before Dewey died. Thus when Clausen mentioned his 'old friend' Dewey in a letter in 1895 he meant that their friendship was continuous, as opposed to the Victorian convention of 'someone I met a long time ago and have not seen since'.



David Bullock is a direct descendant of Horatia, the daughter of Emma Hamilton and Nelson. When he and his wife Ana visited Merton and met some MHS members, he mentioned that Emma had been decorated with the Little Cross of the Order of St John of Jerusalem (the Knights of Malta), due to her efforts in relieving famine on the island of Malta. He sent photos of Emma's insignia (*front cover*) and of the letter of appointment, signed by the then Master of the Order, one Paul, the Tsar of Russia. Both items are now on display in the National Museum of the Royal Navy in Portsmouth. David told us that in 1806 Emma had successfully applied to the College of Arms for a personal coat of arms. This is discussed in an article in *The Nelson Dispatch*, the quarterly journal of The Nelson Society, from which we have copied our illustration of her achievement (*front cover*). The formal blazon is 'Per pale or and argent, three lions rampant gules, on a chief sable a cross of eight points argent'. The lozenge shape is correct for a Dame, a title with which Emma could formally style herself as a member of the Order of St John. The lions are a punning reference to her father's surname (Lyons) and the Maltese cross is a reminder of her membership of the Order.

- ◆ **Rosemary Turner** had been told by family members how much they were enjoying the St Helier memories website (see link on our website), with which Rosemary had been involved some years ago. People had sent in their reminiscences about their childhood, including the ice-cream supplier that Rosemary had mentioned at a previous workshop. Some recalled that there was no warning or special teaching for the 11-plus exam at their primary school: the children were just told there would be a test in the morning. Not surprisingly, few passed.

More recently an old school friend's sister who lives in New Zealand had come across the site and had looked up Willows High School, which the three of them had attended, and had noticed some of the items that Rosemary had contributed. It's a small world.

**David Haunton**

**Dates of next Workshops: Fridays 1 December 2017, 12 January, 2 March, 20 April 2018  
2.30pm at Wandle Industrial Museum. All are welcome.**

**JOHN ‘SANDY’ CATANACH remembers a**

## **WARTIME CHILDHOOD IN SW19**

I can still recall the deep anxiety shown on my mother’s face as we sat in the cupboard-under-the-stairs waiting for death and destruction, or for the siren to sound ‘all-clear’, or for a doodle-bug to carry on chugging into the distance. If you heard its engine shut off, you could be in big trouble. Under the stairs? We had no shelter then, but much later were given a Morrison shelter, like a steel dining table caged-in with heavy mesh sides to protect from flying debris. This became my ‘bedroom’.

I had been born in the Nelson Hospital on 31 July 1939 and our home was at 117 Kenley Road, SW19. I was christened at St Mary’s, Merton Park, a month or so later, on 3 September, more or less at the same time of day that Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain was announcing that Britain was at war with Germany. What must my parents have thought the future held for them and their newborn?

We stayed in Merton Park. I was not evacuated, as my father was on ‘war work’, but many local children I met after the war had been evacuated to the country. Each morning we got up and checked for damage to our house, cracked windows, broken roof tiles and so forth, and then I was allowed out to go shrapnel hunting. This was the abiding interest of all small boys at the time and entailed us searching local roads for bits of bomb and anti-aircraft shell, pieces of aeroplane and bullets. There were surprising amounts to be found which were taken to school to be swapped for other pieces – what would Health and Safety say now? We would also visit streets where bombs had dropped during the last raid and even now, some 70 odd years later, I could take you to every one of these bomb sites, which became our playgrounds for Cowboys and Indians in the immediate post war years. One such lay at the corner of Kenley Road and the main road at Morden. I have a copy of a typical wartime newspaper photo (*right*) which shows, not a bomb site, but clearing up operations at nos.2 & 4 Richmond Avenue after the Junkers 88 crashed there on 20 September 1940. The *Daily Herald* caption claims that ‘residents,

*Photo by Planet News Ltd (archive now held by Topfoto)*

who were all in their air raid shelters, were all safely got out by Mr F G Paynter, an ARP instructor’. [DH adds: This was Frederick George Paynter, who lived at 303a Kingston Road, between Quintin Avenue and Richmond Avenue, so he was on the spot. In fact one lady was killed, presumably not in her air raid shelter, so the newspaper caption could be *said* to be correct, while not spreading despondency.] There is a website called ‘Bomb Sight’ using data from the National Archives (<http://www.bombsight.org>) which maps all bombs dropped during the blitz from October 1940 to June 1941, though many more fell subsequently.

I don’t remember being frightened during the war except once when I thought a fighter plane was targeting me in Poplar Road. I hid in the bushes. Nor do I remember going hungry though food was in short supply. Dried egg powder (mixed with water and then fried like an omelette) was slightly rubbery but delicious, as was cod liver oil in malt, and concentrated orange juice, but every child’s topmost wish was to *see* a banana, not even to eat one, just to see one! This wish came true when a crowd of us opened-mouthed children stood gazing into a butcher’s shop (yes, a butcher’s) in Morden at one single banana hanging on a hook in the window. This must have been in 1946 when the government declared National Banana Day as 3 January when ‘all children should have a banana’. I regret I don’t remember this at all.

In about September 1944 I started school at Merton Park Primary, where Miriam Benham (always of course ‘Miss Benham’) was head mistress. The playground air raid shelters, two single-storey brick built edifices, were on the right hand side if one stood in Erridge Road by the small gate. Naturally all the pupil’s loos were

outside then, the girls' by the shelters and the boys' by the Erridge Road fence between the gate and the alley leading through to Church Lane.

### ARP Merton

My father, George Macdonald Catanach, was 39 when the war started, so a little old for military service. During the war he ran a small factory in Borough High Street, SE1, manufacturing Tommy Cookers for the troops to use in the field. During peacetime the company was Henry Flack Ltd manufacturers of specialist varnishes and polishes.

He became an ARP Warden and was based at a post in Crown Lane, Morden, opposite the Baptist Church. This was in addition to his job, often doing a full day's work and then night patrols with the ARP, very arduous. I still have two pictures of him in groups of ARP wardens. The first (*right*) was taken at the Old Rutlishians' Rugby ground, with Poplar Road and poplar trees in the background, and probably dates from about 1940. My father is on the right at the end of the back row.



I think the second picture (*left*) must have been taken outside the ARP post in Crown Lane, near Dr Orr's surgery. At that time there were allotments on the corner where the Crown House car park must be now. My father has obviously earned his stripes and now sits in the front row, third from right, so I'm guessing at a date of 1943/4.

I think top row right is Peter Furner, who lived at no.86, Grasmere Avenue, the first house on the right at the Kenley Road end. Mr Furner and his wife (who I knew as 'Aunt Ida') were bombed out in the war and came to live with us for a while.

I remember they had a chow dog.

In the middle row, second from the left, is Theodore Laky John Piers (always known as 'Lackey') who was Burmese and a great friend of my father. He and his wife Shelagh lived at no.20 Grasmere Avenue, at the far end, opposite the Baptist Church and close to O'Donoghue the dentist. My father said that Mr Piers suffered some snide remarks owing to his original nationality but said he had chosen to live in England and was happy to do his bit!

### SPECIAL OFFER

To celebrate the launch of our new website we are running a 'Three for the Price of Two' offer on any titles in Eric Montague's *Mitcham Histories* series. Ideal to give as Christmas presents – or to spend the money you receive for Christmas! Three books for £9.60 to members (£11.90 to others) plus £2.90 postage.

So BUY TWO AT £4.80 EACH AND GET THE THIRD FREE!

All our publications are available by post from

Publications Secretary, 57 Templecombe Way, Morden, Surrey SM4 4JF.

## **ERIC SHAW recalls responsibilities at Tandem works and A TASK UNFULFILLED**

I worked at the Tandem works of Fry's Metals Ltd from 1972 until retiring in 1997. One of the positions I held was Hygiene Officer, which required me to take atmospheric samples for analysis. These were needed because the operations carried out involved lead or alloys containing lead. A sample was taken by using a pump to draw the atmosphere of interest through a fine filter paper, which trapped any particulate matter, and was then sent to the laboratories for analysis.

Pumps were of various sizes, and could be powered by batteries (all of which I had to keep charged) or run from the mains. Taking samples from a worker involved attaching the smallest size of pump to their belt, with the intake probe clipped as near to their nose as possible, so it was usually fixed on their collar. (With ladies this operation could be a little delicate.) They would wear this for an hour or so, after which I retrieved it. A rather larger pump was used to sample the area in which they were working. I carried out these operations not only at the Tandem works and at the Willow Lane depot and foundry, but also in Kidderminster, Rochdale, Glasgow and sometimes (once a year) in Dublin, where branches of Fry's were located. (The Willow Lane site, on the corner with Wates Way, had been a Ministry of Supply works for scrapping aircraft fuselages, and was later passed to Fry's.)

When I was at any of the branches I also sampled the emissions from the Filter / Cyclone stacks (chimneys). Once a month I sampled the emissions from the main stack at Tandem works over a twenty-four hour period. Interestingly, this stack was made of steel, all others on the site being built of bricks. Sampling was from a position 60 feet high up the stack, and used our largest pump, which was far too heavy for me to carry. There was a derrick (a short swivelling arm with a pulley) attached to the stack, and I would use this to haul the pump up to working height and then to swing it onto my working platform. I climbed up to the platform on a steel ladder permanently fixed to the stack, wearing my 'safety devices' – works overalls, gloves and a hard hat. There was a four-inch diameter sampling port in the stack, normally closed with a plug. For sampling, I replaced this with another one, with a hole in it to admit the probe. My interest in the weather started from this time because there was no way that I was going to take samples if there was rain forecast during the next twenty-four hours. The views from 60 feet up were interesting, especially when Savacentre and Merantun Way were being built. I took several photographs from this point, using the works camera (which I also had in my charge). Wandle Industrial Museum now hold my photos in their archive.

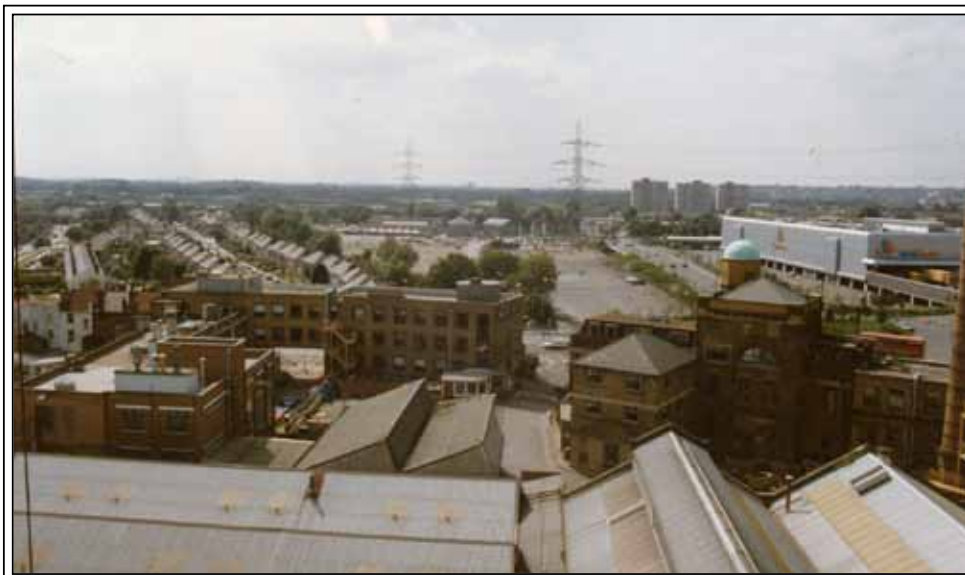
Samples were also taken from the surrounding streets. This was when leaded petrol was used to power vehicles. We could differentiate between our emissions and those from road traffic, because our emissions contained other metallic elements in addition to lead, whereas traffic emissions contained lead only. Our emissions were usually within the limits imposed: we were periodically inspected by the Alkali Inspectorate. Traffic emissions were not analysed. What a difference now with Diesel fuel!

I also used to visit some of the London newspapers at night, in the days of 'hot metal' printing, to take atmospheric samples from and around the areas where the metal print was being cast. Various stained glass workshops (mainly in the Isleworth area) were also visited, because of the fumes from soldering the lead frames, again to take samples for analysis. Fry's provided this service for their customers.

Potentially the most interesting project that I would have had was in the crypt at Christchurch, Spitalfields. The crypt was being cleared for a day-centre and contained many lead coffins. The local Factory Inspector was concerned about lead levels while the coffins were being cleared. Fry's was on his list of companies who provided a sampling service. Because some of the bodies in the coffins died from smallpox I would have had to have been inoculated. By the time this would have happened the crypt was cleared, so I never went. Subsequently it was found that there was no risk from smallpox. In one of their *Chronicle* series the BBC produced a programme called 'The Skeletons of Spitalfields' about the crypt clearance and the re-interment of the bodies. It is an interesting programme of which I have a copy to remind me of a project which I never carried out.

Eric's photos © jointly with Wandle Industrial Museum (where Eric is a frequent volunteer).

[Editor's note: There were probably fewer than a dozen firms in the London area offering an air-sampling service such as Fry's. I can trace no details of the actual use of such services, as opposed to the advertising of them. Thus I believe Eric Shaw's account here to be unique.]



*View looking west  
The ornamental dome  
atop the tower of the  
Tandem main office block  
is centre right. Merton  
Abbey Mills can be  
seen in the background  
along with Runnymede.  
As the Savacentre and  
Merantun Way are open,  
Eric probably took this  
photo in 1987 or 1988.  
The area in front has  
now been built on.*

*Savacentre under  
construction  
Eric took this photo  
prior to the opening of  
Merantun Way in 1986,  
so in 1984 or 1985.*



*Tandem Works  
An aerial  
view showing  
nearly all the  
chimneys. The  
one that Eric  
used to climb  
had not been  
built when  
this photo  
was taken, so  
its position is  
shown by the  
oval outline.  
Photo © Fry's  
Metals Ltd  
(now Alpha Fry  
Ltd)*



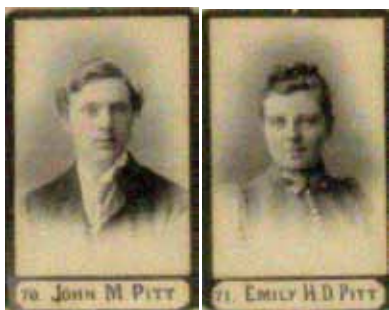
## ROSEMARY TURNER has a look at some of THE BERKELEY FIRST 100

Sometime ago in the Phillimore book *Old Mitcham* I came across a copy of a photograph commemorating the first 100 members of the Berkeley Teetotal Society, Mitcham, each shown in a tiny portrait. Edited by Eric Montague, the book contains a selection of photographs by Tom Francis; Eric says that this particular photo is not one of Tom Francis's, but does not state its origin. I made enquiries but could not find where it came from, until recently Peter Hopkins found it amongst some of Eric's research papers. With the aid of reading glasses and a magnifier I was able to make out the names under the photos. Some of the names appear in the various *Mitcham Histories*, either at length or just as a mention.



The photos are numbered and members listed alphabetically apart from Member 100 George Pitt, who with his wife founded the Society in 1893. George was not a teetotaler but legend has it that during a disagreement with his wife he stated that if she found 99 people willing to sign the pledge he would be the hundredth. She did and he was. He and his wife organised and supported the Society financially until he retired in 1898. He was born in the London Store, London Road, which his father owned. George ran it for a time before making over the business to Tom Francis, senior, and Eliza Cooper (later to become Mrs Francis) who both worked in the shop. George and his wife were both Quakers and held meetings in their various homes including Berkeley House.

Member 72 Priscilla Pitt (née Marsh) 1829-1899, was George's wife. She had been an abstainer since early childhood. She met George at a Croydon Friends meeting and they were married in 1860, she being age 32 at the time of their marriage. She initially held temperance meetings in her home, possibly to mainly Quaker members. According to the memoir of her written by her son (re-published by MHS as *Local History Note no.33*), she took a deep interest in the poor of the parish and took on many official and unofficial roles relating to this. She set up a Band of Hope encouraging and educating children about the problems associated with drinking.



George and Priscilla had just one adult child, a son, others having died. Their son, Member 70 John Marsh Pitt, lived at Shamrock Villa, Mitcham Park Road, with his wife, Member 71 Emily H D Pitt. John was named Marsh after his mother's father. He took on the role of Secretary of the Berkeley Society. John Marsh Pitt was a close friend of Member 26 Tom Francis, junior, who was living at London House, London Road, where he was born. The Francis family were also

Quakers. Tom's sister Hannah is Member 27, while Member 28 is his brother William; all three are unmarried at this time. Tom and William both became committee members and they each oversaw one of the Society's districts. Tom was the local historian and photographer.



Some of the other names in the 1853 photo appear in various *Mitcham Histories*, either at length or just as a line. The membership covered all areas of society. There are no addresses given but if they continued their membership their address appears in the list produced by John Marsh Pitt in 1895. There are a number of names missing from the later list. John Marsh refers to them as 'removals' which covers, death, breaking the pledge, moving away or 'whereabouts unknown'. so I am using the 1891 census to try to find out something about them.



The most elaborate photograph of the group is of Mrs E J Upton, Member 94, who is mentioned in vol 11 page 99 under residents at The Canons. It just says that she appears in the Directories for 1890/1 living at The Canons. The 1891 census shows her there as a widow with her son, a coffee planter, and several staff including Member 14 Charlotte Bloomfield who was her cook. Neither she or her employer are on the later listing. Charlotte was no

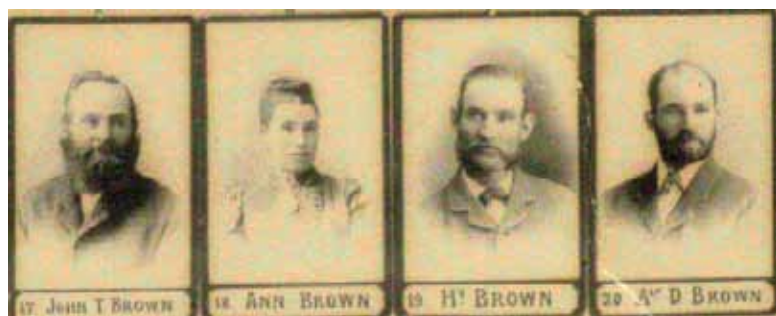


longer employed by Mrs Upton. The 1901 shows Mrs Upton living at Elmhurst and one of the 1891 servants had been promoted to cook. I could find no sign of Charlotte on the census.



Another flamboyant photo is of Member 84 Walter Samson, dressed in his working clothes. His occupation on the 1891 census was coachman and he was living with his widowed mother and sister at the Broadway, Mitcham. His father Philip Samson had been a coach proprietor with premises next to the *White Hart* in Mitcham. Walter's brother was a licensed victualler at the *Kings Head*, later named the *Burn Bullock*. Walter is another who does not appear on the 1895 list. In 1901 Walter and his sister are living in Hurlingham Mansion in Fulham, both living on Independent means.

Member 6 C W Benger appears in my 1910 Valuation Records publication. He is leasing land at Lodge Farm from the Hoare family. In 1891 he is living in one of the Allen cottages, East Field, with his wife Member 7 and his family. His occupation is Nursery man and florist. One of his children is a pupil teacher and another is a labourer in nursery ( I assume this means plants not babies).



Members 17 and 18 John T Brown, a carman, and Ann Brown his wife are also living at Allen Cottages and they have a lodger, Alfred Brown, who is also a carman. He could be Member 20 Alf D Brown. The photo also has a Hy Brown (Member 19 ) but I have not been able to find a definite listing on the census for him.

Members 54 and 55 J M and M A Leather are John M Leather, a nurseryman and florist, and Mary A his wife, also living in the Allen cottages. I did wonder if it was a term of their tenancy or employment but there were 16 cottages and only 3 are represented here.



Member 1 is Anne Allen of Sherborne House, Tamworth Lane, which was near the Eastfield level crossing. In 1891 the family is not yet living at Sherborne but they are in 1901. The head of the house Thomas Allen is a retired market gardener. There is a son Lemuel, Member 2, who is a gardener and florist on the 1891 census. He is married by 1901 and living in Dundonald Road, Wimbledon, as a green and provision merchant. Another son, Member 3 Charles M W, was listed as a moulder in 1891 but by 1901 he is helping his mother in her grocery shop. The nearest I can get to an Anne is a daughter



Nellie A who is a mothers help. There are nine children in 1901, but in 1891 there had been fourteen, five having left home. Three of the children were teachers.

In vol 3 of the *Mitcham Histories* Eric writes about the Misses Allen of Sherborne House, who had lived in the house for many years and were the daughters of the owner. Their family had been landowners since the 1600s. The sisters were landlords for the Allen Cottages which had been built to house local workmen in the 1870s.

Eric mentions one of the sisters as Lizzie but there is no mention of an Anne. Lizzy L is listed as one of the daughters on both the 1891 and 1901 censuses. Sherborne house was demolished in the 1970s along with other buildings, to make way for a road that was planned but didn't happen.

It wouldn't be Mitcham without a Mizen. Member 61 Fred Lewis Mizen, market gardener and labourer, son of Walter and Emma, was living at the Nursery, Killicks Lane, Mitcham, with his parents and siblings. By the time the 1895 list appears no fewer than seven of the family are abstaining.





## ‘WHERE DO YOU THINK YOU ARE?’

This exhibition, a joint enterprise by the John Innes Society and St Mary’s Church to proclaim the history of the Merton Park area, was held on the afternoons of 2 and 3 September, on three different sites.

The Coach House in Melrose Road had a display packed with maps, photographs, drawings and notes from the archives of the John Innes Society, curated by John Harding (and subsequently on display for a month to a wider audience at the Local Studies Centre in Morden Library). The church had explanatory hand-outs about the features of the building, co-ordinated by Hazel Abbott and supported by helpful stewards, and new editions of their *Churchyard Trail* and its associated *Guide*. The church hall offered tea and cakes for sale, a *Scotland Yard* episode from Merton Park Film Studios (notable for the number of identifiable local sites) which was shown continuously, local house plans from Finch’s estate agents, local railway memorabilia by and with Bruce Robertson, a display by the Friends of John Innes Park, and the MHS stand. By a happy coincidence, John, Hazel and Bruce are all also MHS members.



Attendance was high; over 150 visitors came on the Saturday and well over 200 on the Sunday, with most people visiting all three sites. We answered quite a lot of questions, David Luff’s *Sindy* doll panels (*above*) attracted a great deal of attention, and were rarely without an audience, while displays from our new website were much inspected. Each initial panel of this, for Merton, Morden and Mitcham, cycles through a sequence of captioned pictures; many people watched an entire set, reading and commenting on the captions, but very few took up our offer to use our laptop to explore further. We showed a limited set of our publications, cunningly chosen by Peter Hopkins to be those with ‘Merton’, ‘Wandle’ or ‘priors’ in the title, and as a result sold more than £95-worth. Unprecedentedly, we ran out of copies of some titles! All this, and we enrolled a new member. Altogether a very satisfactory couple of days.



*Launching the new website*

We are most grateful to the John Innes Society and St Mary’s for their invitation to take part.

**DJH, Photos by David Luff**

**Letters and contributions for the *Bulletin* should be sent to the Hon. Editor, by email to [editor@mertonhistoricalsociety.org.uk](mailto: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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*Printed by Peter Hopkins*