



PRESIDENT:
VICE PRESIDENT: Judith Goodman
CHAIR: Keith Penny

BULLETIN No. 206

JUNE 2018



The White Hart Inn in 2010 Photo: Tony Scott (see p.6)

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PROGRAMME JUNE–OCTOBER 2018

Thursday 7 June 10.30am

Wandle Walk with Mick Taylor

Meet at gates to Watermeads (on A217 London Road near junction with Riverside Drive)
and walk to Honeywood Museum at Carshalton Ponds (2 miles approx.)

Wednesday 18 July 11.45am for 12.00

Tour of Ham House with Charlotte Morrison

Free for National Trust and Art Fund members, for others £9 concessions, £15 full. Pay on the day.
Please book with Bea Oliver

Wednesday 15 August 11.00am

Walk round Kingston with Charlotte Morrison

Meet outside the Church in the Market Place. £5 pp on the day.
Please book with Bea Oliver

Wednesday 19 September 11.00am

Kneller Hall (Military School of Music)

65 Kneller Road, Twickenham, TW2 7DN, near the Rugby Ground
Nearest stations Twickenham and Whitton.
£5 pp on the day. Visitors need ID for security (Freedom Pass is acceptable)
Please book with Bea Oliver

Saturday 13 October 2.30pm

St James' Church Hall, Merton

'Recent finds on the Thames'

An illustrated talk on Updates and Research by **Bob Wells**

Note also Workshops at Wandle Industrial Museum, London Road
2.30pm on Fridays 1 June, 13 July, 31 August and 19 October. All Members are welcome

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.

DATA PROTECTION NOTICE

We are required by the EU General Data Protection Regulation, which came into force on 25 May 2018, to abide by the following conditions, to which we draw your attention. All personal information supplied to the Society by members will be used solely for communications with them concerning the Society's Membership, Governance, Publications and Events, and only in matters concerning the Society. It will not be shared with any other organisations, except where there is a statutory obligation to do so. You have the right to see and if necessary correct your personal data that we hold. Your data will be deleted (if held digitally) or destroyed (if held physically) twelve months after you cease to be a member of Merton Historical Society.

HELP WANTED (1)

Cranleigh Lawn Tennis & Social Club (Merton Park) almost 90!

Cranleigh Lawn Tennis and Social Club on Cranleigh Road will be celebrating its 90th anniversary in 2019. Lawn tennis was yet a young game in 1929 when the club was founded. The first known lawn tennis club was established in 1874 in Leamington Spa. Lawn tennis evolved from a medieval game played in indoor courts, which is now called real or royal tennis. Henry VIII and Mary Queen of Scots were enthusiastic players. In 1875, a croquet club not far from Merton Park set aside one of its lawns for tennis. It held its first championship in 1877, and soon focused on the new game. That club is now known as Wimbledon, or the All England Lawn Tennis Club. Lawn tennis began as a sport for the leisured classes, but by the early 20th century, people from a broader social spectrum were taking it up. After the First World War, several tennis clubs were established in the Merton Park area, among them Cranleigh.

The land on which Cranleigh Lawn Tennis and Social Club stands was part of a parcel that was formerly the site of the Innes family brickworks. The brickworks closed in 1909, and the local district council initially used the quarry ponds as rubbish dumps. Spoil from the excavations for the extension of the Northern Line to Morden in 1926 was deposited there, filling in the ponds.

The council set aside much of the Innes land for what is now Mostyn Gardens. In 1928, the construction firm of Harry Copp and Sons acquired some of it, on which they built houses on Cranleigh Road and Poplar Road South. The firm built many of the houses in the adjacent area and constructed the original tennis courts. Wilbur Copp was the first occupant of 1 Cranleigh Road, which backs onto the courts (this is the Circle Gardens end of the street). Two other members of the Copp family lived nearby.

We are hoping some members of Merton Historical Society might possess or know of documents, stories, or memories about the club's history. We are especially interested in the early decades, from 1929 to the 1970s. Many of the documents relating to the club's history were destroyed when the original clubhouse burned down in 1975. Please contact the club chair Christine Roe or myself if you have any information on the club's history. Thank you!



Extract from 1932 OS map

Peter McCandless

HELP WANTED (2)

'The Carrington School Mystery'

I have been trying for quite a while to find out two filming locations from my favorite Children's Film Foundation film *The Carrington School Mystery* from 1958. Supposedly it was filmed in Long Lodge on Kingston Road, and elsewhere in Merton Park, but I'm actually more interested in finding out where the chalk cliff scenes with the underground tunnel (right) and the scenes with the lake and the mysterious island have been done. I have written to the British Film Institute, but they couldn't give me any filming locations.



Here is the only information that I have found regarding the film: 'The exciting adventures of five children who set out to vindicate a school friend wrongly accused of theft from the local museum.' Running time was a total of 134 mins over 8 episodes, which were entitled Crisis in the Classroom / Evening of Danger / Gunplay / Kidnapped / Ordeal Under Water / Danger Under Ground / Peril at Sea / The Fatal Slip.

Produced by British Films Ltd; Story by Anthony Wilson; Director William Hammond; Producer John Haggarty; Music by Kenneth Jones. The cast included Jenny Jones, Derek Freeman, Anthony Richmond, Richard James and Arthur Lovegrove.

Christine Mathieu

If you reply to any of the above, kindly copy the Editor

‘MEMBERS’ MEETING’

On 13 January 2018, we met for the first time in St James’ Church Hall in Martin Way, for the, by now traditional, short talks by individual members. Proceedings were begun by **Rosemary Turner**, who reported on the current state of her investigations of the **Berkeley Teetotal Society ‘after the 100’**.

The Society had gone from 100 members in 1893 to members numbered in the 1300s in 1898. At that point the founders retired, withdrawing their financial support, and their son, John Marsh Pitt, Secretary of the Society, produced a Directory of members, in which he stated that ‘the society would have to continue on a self-supporting basis’. The Directory contained the rules by which the society was to continue: the location of the original document is unknown, but Rosemary’s husband Steve obtained a photocopy over 20 years ago.

The membership covered a wide range of occupations and reflected the industries of the area, and included employers as well as employees. People seemed to be constantly on the move, either within a small area or further afield. The members found on the census often came from great distances – couples sometimes came from opposite ends of England and one wonders how they met. The Directory only contains the names of existing members, ‘there having been a number of removals and breakages over the years’ says Mr Pitt. Under ‘Removals’, ‘the society has lost most severely through its members leaving the district, 135 gone in the past two years and no less than 228 altogether’. Under ‘Breakages’ (ie. taken up drinking again) he has visited almost every family to verify particulars and see if they are still keeping their pledge. The large majority have, but some confessed they had broken by doctors orders, or because they had to nurse a child, or some other ‘exploded excuse’. It occurred to Rosemary that the water may have been felt to be unsafe to drink, especially for those unwell or pregnant; she has not yet discovered if all Mitcham properties were linked to the mains water supply at that time. (Utilities were still being laid in Morden in 1910, while the Mitcham Brewery used an extremely deep artesian well to obtain water for its beer.) Even in the 1970s some hospitals provided stout or Guinness to some patients because it was felt to be beneficial.

Women had equality in membership and on the Committee, but John Marsh records the number of members as ‘483 belonging to mankind and 467 to the other kind’. Some of his comments are definitely not PC. The Society sounds very much like a social club, with organised lectures relating to temperance and abstaining, with some interesting titles including ‘The Chelsea Coal Heaver’, ‘Old Ebony’ and ‘Gough’s Orations’ (presumably an American temperance orator, who died in 1886). They also organised an annual trip to Brighton and at one time even had their own brass band, which used to accompany members to the coast and play on their arrival. Many players found it difficult to remain teetotal, so the band left the Society, but continued separately. The Society started a Benefit Club in 1897, with contributions of 3d, 6d or 1s per week covering payment of 4s, 8s or 16s a week during sickness, as a well as a lump sum on death. In 1897 a Teetotal Industrial Exhibition was held in Mitcham for four days and was evidently a great success.

The Directory gives the total number of people who had joined as 1368. Initially people joined as soon as they professed to have given up drink, but each year about half the new membership was lost. (It was obviously harder than they thought.) Thereafter the rules changed: new joiners had to be aged at least 16, and resident in Mitcham, Singlegate, Colliers Wood, Lonesome, Beddington Corner or Morden, and received a preliminary membership card. Once they had completed twelve months they became full members and received a framed engraved pledge card with their photograph attached (on payment of six pence), and the Society’s quarterly leaflet, *The Mitcham Teetotaller*, as well as other benefits.

The time that each member has been teetotal is shown by a letter code against their names, life-time abstainers being marked with an asterisk. There are a dozen who have abstained for over 40 years, 327 all their life and 315 who have become abstainers during the Society’s existence. Rosemary still has a lot to find out (including when the society ended) and there are probably lots of places for her to get side-tracked.

Keith Penny showed us a large selection of Bill Rudd’s colour **Photographs of Morden 1960-1996**, claiming that he could not comment on them. They included an astonishing number of buildings that have been demolished and businesses that have disappeared, and even some shops in the process of closing down. The overall impression is of dynamic change, not always for the better, with the turnover of the various premises around the base of Crown House being particularly noticeable. One building that remained more or less the same shape, the *George Inn* in London Road, displayed considerable variety in its colour schemes over the years (*see p.16*).

Dave Haunton discussed the very different **Experiences of WW1** of four of his relations.

James Albert Cunliffe, born 1881, volunteered for the Royal Naval Air Service in September 1914, despite being married with two small children. He worked as a carpenter (his trade) for four years in France, first

with the RNAS at Coudekerque airfield outside Dunkirk, and then with the Independent Force of the RAF, further inland. He lived to be 89, but as a result of his experiences he never again attended a church service. Three bachelor Haunton brothers, Henry, Walter and Frank, were all born and raised in a small farmhouse in the tiny Suffolk village of Stuston. They all corresponded with their younger sister Annie (16th in the family of 17), who liked picture postcards and kept the 'boys' letters and cards. All three brothers attested in 1915.

Henry (*right*) (no.12, born 1877, a flour miller in Diss), was posted to the Machine Gun Corps and served in France from mid-1916 until he was gassed in spring 1918. Treated and sent back to Britain, he then served with the Norfolk Regiment at Norwich until May 1919. Post-War, he became a depressed drunkard, but was rescued by a Salvation Army lass who later married him and with whom he subsequently had a happy family life.



Walter (*left*) (no.14, born 1880, twin to Frank, a car and lorry body builder in Hammersmith), was posted to the 8th Battalion (Post Office Rifles) of the London Regiment, went to France in December 1916 and saw much action. In December 1917 he remarked in one letter that he had been in a big battle but

had 'come off all right. That makes the third time I have been over with the boys' (ie. over the top!). He sent many cards with thanks for letters, cakes, apples and local newspapers. In the great German attack of spring 1918, he went missing in action on 24 March. Thereafter there was no news of him until, in June 1918, with a six-week delay since writing, his letter arrived to tell the family that he was a prisoner of war at Güstrow camp, more than 100 miles east of the fighting. Annie instantly replied, and then wrote every two weeks or so. Occasional postcards from Walter arrived later, interspersed with many of Annie's letters, ominously marked 'Undeliverable. Return to Sender Free.' Walter had been moved to near Ypres, on the front line: he died of 'exhaustion' there on 13 August. However, confirmation of his death did not reach the family until early March 1919, while the last of Annie's returned letters arrived even later, in April.

Frank (*right*) (no.15, born 1880, twin to Walter, a draper's assistant in London), was posted to the Welch Regiment (not the Welsh Guards, as Dave was told by an uncle – he was far too short – check your oral history!). Frank sent Annie picture postcards, including one from Malta in March 1917, when his unit was on its way, and several of Salonika in northern Greece, their destination. This was a static front, and Frank had a quiet time, apart from when he was in the regimental band playing his fife, which he brought home (*below*).



Frank's fife: Now this has been cleaned and re-padded, can anyone show Dave how to play it?



‘LISTED BUILDINGS IN MITCHAM’

On Saturday 10 February Tony Scott cheerfully showed us how to cope when your slides do not appear in the right order. He first told us of the Grades of Listing – I (national importance), II* (more than special interest) and II (special interest) – and that listing began in 1947, with ‘structures that warrant every effort to preserve’ being added ever since, so that nowadays there are more than 374,000 in the country. Tony went on to discuss many of the 45 ‘Listed Buildings’ in Mitcham: many are residential buildings or groups of buildings, but some are monuments or other non-residential structures.

Mitcham’s only Grade I building is the splendid **Eagle House**, together with its (separately listed) forecourt walls, piers, railings and gates. Built 1705 by Fernando Mendez, physician to Catherine of Braganza, wife of Charles II, it was successively occupied by a surgeon, a South Sea Bubble promoter and a stockbroker, and then by a school and a Poor Law institution. After use by numerous short-lived businesses, it is now a school for children with special needs. The monogram (JMD) above the gates is symmetric and thus may be read from both sides. (*right*)



The site of **The Canons** (one of two II* listings in Mitcham) was for 400 years the site of a grange of Southwark Priory. The house was built by John Odway, who held a 51-year building lease of the property from John Cranmer dating from Lady Day 1681. The only survivor of the grange buildings is the dovecote for 600 birds, built of chalk blocks. The date of MDXI (1511) cut into the chalk was removed by a contractor cleaning the dovecote not long ago.

Tony remarked that one feature of **Mitcham Parish Church** (our second Grade II* listing), rebuilt 1819-22 on a medieval site, is that the original tall finials on the towers were substantially reduced in height, as evidenced by contemporary illustrations. **Mitcham Vicarage** dates from 1826. In the churchyard there are no fewer than **four listed tombs**, one being that of Richard Cranmer, the vicar, who died in 1828, his younger daughter Esther Maria, who died in 1841, and his wife Elizabeth, who died in 1845. Strangely they all died during the month of November. Remarkably for an Anglican monument, the inscription is in Latin.

The earliest listed structure in Mitcham is the **Chapel Arch** preserved in the grounds of Hall Place, dating from c.1346.

The Burn Bullock pub (originally the *King’s Head* inn) is an ancient building based on a timber frame, of which the front was rebuilt in 1760, to attract the turnpike trade; the front was again altered in 1910/11. Burnal ‘Burn’ Bullock, a professional cricketer, was the landlord from 1941 until 1954. His widow kept the licence until 1975, when, unusually, the pub was renamed after the deceased landlord.

The White Hart inn (*see p.1*) was rebuilt as a turnpike inn c.1749, in competition with the *King’s Head* opposite. It was unfathomably renamed *Hooden on the Green* in 2000, and reverted to the *White Hart* name in 2010, when it was realised that the name is cast on the front, and so is part of the listing. It is currently closed. Next door are the timber-framed **346 and 348 London Road**, built earlier than 1783. Holden’s stagecoaches used to start from here for passengers to London, stables for the horses being in the yards at the back.

There is a **Milestone** on Cricket Green opposite Elm Lodge, noting 8½ miles to Whitehall and 9 miles to the Royal Exchange. This was set up by the local Turnpike Trust in the 1740s.

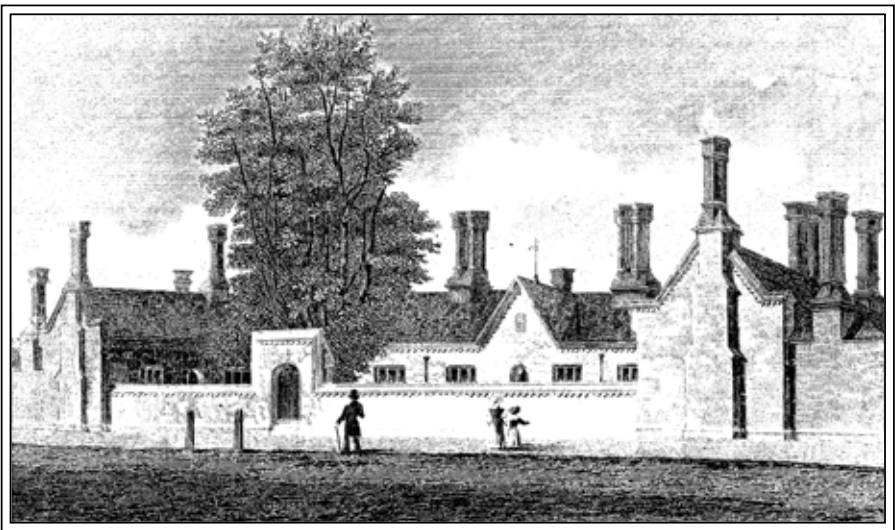
Mitcham boasts a number of listed 18th-century houses, among them **60,62 and 64 Church Road**, built c.1730; **Newton House**, 1 Commonsides West, built early in the 18th century by the lord of the manor and leased to a miller and millwright, who in 1760 established one of the very few horizontal windmills ever built; **Prospect House**, a gentleman’s residence of 1780 in brown brick at 9 Commonsides East; **the Old School House**, 8-10 Cricket Green, built 1788 as Mitcham Sunday School, becoming a National School in 1812; **Chestnut Cottage** on the Cricket Green, built in the 1780s; and **109 and 111 London Road**, a pair of late 18th-century weather-boarded cottages.

There is also **Park Place**: built in mid/late-18th century, it was extended after a few decades, when it was reduced in height by one storey. It was owned by the *News of the World* Group from the 1920s, who used it as an employee sports club and built a running track (still there, but it is an imperial 440 yards, so not so useful for modern rules). The Group also built houses for employees along Commonside West and Madeira Road, and sponsored athletes for the 1936 Olympic Games. In 1963 Surrey County Council compulsorily purchased Park Place and passed it in 1965 to the new London Borough of Merton, who used it as environmental offices. Empty from 1985, Whitbread bought it and opened it as a pub restaurant in 1988. The parcel of land called 'Almannesland', in which it stands, was mentioned as early as 1391. The name probably derives from the Alman family who are recorded in Mitcham in the 1330s.

The weather-boarded **55 Upper Green East** was built c.1800, and modified with a new shop front in 1840. Sometimes known as 'Chart's House', it was occupied by successive members of the Chart family as carpenters and undertakers and as corn merchants. Later it was a shoe shop and is now a private residence.

The **Obelisk** in Madeira Road (formerly within the grounds of The Canons) was erected in 1822 to commemorate the sudden appearance of an artesian spring of good water after the three very dry years 1820-22. It feeds a stream draining into The Canons Pond. The Wandle was heavily polluted at the time and was not a good source of drinking water. Though difficult to read now, there are four appropriate quotations from the Bible (three from the Book of Psalms, one from Joel).

The **Mary Tate almshouses** on Cricket Green were built in 1829 (*right*) and run by a Tate family trust. They were for twelve women, usually retired domestic servants. The high brick wall at the front was replaced in the 1850s with an open railing, to improve the outlook for the inhabitants. During the 1920s and 1930s a local builder generously helped out with repairs; but in 1988 the state of the buildings required conversion to only seven flats, now with individual toilets and bathrooms.



Also on Cricket Green are two fine stucco detached houses: **Elm Lodge** of two storeys (1820) and **The White House** of three storeys, built in the 1820s.

In the 19th century, the Metropolitan **Drinking Fountain and Cattle Trough** Association was established to provide public drinking fountains of cholera-free water for people, later extended to provide for animals. One of their structures was placed on the Cricket Green to commemorate Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee (1887), providing water for people at a fountain, horses at a trough, and dogs at a small low trough. It was recently moved a few yards.

The cast iron **Jubilee Clock Tower** was raised on Fair Green in 1899. Nowadays famously mobile, it was originally sited over the village pump, which was replaced by a drinking fountain in the base.

Mitcham War Memorial is the most recently listed building, commemorating 588 named fatalities of the First World War, as well as more recent ones.

The **Methodist Church** by the Cricket Green is Mitcham's most modern listed building. Built in 1958 by the architect Edward Mills, the 'striking folded concrete slab' roof with multiple valley gutters proved leaky, so the congregation had to move out for some time while this was fixed.

Tony mentioned that one of his 45 Mitcham listings (covering **40, 44 and 48 Mill Green Road**) is not in the modern London Borough of Merton, but does lie within the ancient Parish of Mitcham. Three buildings that perhaps should be listed and are NOT, are: The Vestry Hall, London Road; Mitcham Court, 3 Cricket Green; and Clarendon House, 3/5 Commonside East (the weather-boarded house by the Three Kings pond).

Further details of all listed buildings are available on the Historic England website: historicengland.org.uk.

[DH: I must apologise for the random order in which Tony's slides were displayed on the day. This turned out to be a quirk of the software we were using, which I had not explored sufficiently well. We will use boring standard software henceforth.]

‘HISTORY OF THE CONSERVATORS OF WIMBLEDON & PUTNEY COMMONS’

The 29 members and visitors present at St James’ Church Hall on 10 March enjoyed an excellent talk by Simon Lee, Chief Executive of the Commons Conservators for the last four years. He paid tribute to his staff in the Ranger’s Office, estates and maintenance, property maintenance, the mounted keepers, those responsible for the playing fields, and those who look after the detached Putney Lower Common, but also stressed that without the work of volunteers the commons would return to a cover of secondary woodland within 25 years and many valuable habitats would be lost. The commons extend into three London Boroughs – Merton, Wandsworth and Kingston – the boundary between Merton and Wandsworth running east/west near the windmill, separating Wimbledon Common from Putney Heath. The detached Putney Lower Common is within LB Wandsworth. The Beverley Brook forms the boundary with Kingston, separating the Richardson Evans Memorial Playing Fields from Wimbledon Common. The green around the Rushmere forms a distinct unit close to Wimbledon Village. The commons originated as rough grazing land, described as the manorial ‘waste’ because it was unsuitable for arable farming, though it was still of immense importance in the medieval economy. The waste belonged to the lord of the manor but manorial tenants enjoyed, in addition to rights of pasture, the right to gather firewood, furze, turf, and gravel, as well as food that could be foraged. In the mid-19th century the then lord of the manor of Wimbledon, the 5th Earl Spencer, proposed to develop the area by enclosing 700 acres to create a new park around a palatial manor house, to be funded by the sale of Putney Heath to building developers. He persuaded the nine remaining copyhold tenants of the manor, who alone had the legal right to use the common, but faced strong opposition from influential locals, who brought a suit in Chancery against Spencer in 1864, and four years later he agreed to hand over the three commons for an annuity of £1200. The Wimbledon and Putney Commons Act received the Royal Assent on 16 August 1871, under which Spencer’s estate and interest in the whole of the commons was conveyed to a body of Conservators, who were responsible for keeping it ‘open, unenclosed and unbuilt upon’, to resist encroachment, and to preserve it in its natural state as far as possible, though they were to drain and level it as necessary. The annuity was redeemed in 1968.

The commons are recognised as important natural habitats, being Metropolitan Open Land, a Site of Special Scientific Interest, and an EU Special Area of Conservation, the latter because of its wet heathland and its stag beetles – there is more heather on Wimbledon Common than in the whole of Essex! Grazing of cattle and sheep had been an important part of the management of these habitats, but had to be stopped in the mid-20th century because of problems with dogs. There are 19km of horse rides, and the mounted patrols of keepers (all ex-cavalry) are an essential feature (*right, from the conservators’ website:*



www.wpcc.org.uk). The hay crop is removed to keep nutrient levels down – 70 bales were taken away last year.

The commons have many historic associations – highwaymen such as Jerry Abershawe; bare knuckle fighters such as Bill Richmond, Joe Burke and ‘Henry the Game Chicken’; and duellists including prime minister William Pitt, HRH the Duke of York, Lord Castlereagh, the Earl of Cardigan and many other peers. Graced by the grade II*-listed windmill, Wimbledon Common was formerly home to the National Rifle Association, Queen Victoria scoring a bulls-eye at 60 yards at the inaugural event in 1860 with a carefully positioned rifle fired by pulling a velvet cord. This moved to Bisley over concerns of possible fatalities in such a public space. Military connections led to the introduction of the new game of golf, the London Scottish Regiment forming the London Scottish Club in 1865, the third oldest in the country. Local civilians soon joined, but the two factions separated in 1882 with the formation of what was to become the Royal Wimbledon Golf Club. The Wimbledon Common Golf Club was founded as the Wimbledon Town Golf Club in 1908, and all three still flourish.

In 1891 Kaiser Wilhelm II inspected 22,000 troops by the Rushmere – 16,000 volunteers and 6,000 regulars who had marched from Aldershot. In 1914 the common was used for a WW1 training camp based at the old YMCA building, 10,000 troops passing through, and the following year the first-ever airfield was opened near the windmill – a memorial plaque was erected last year on the wall of the Ranger’s Office. It was not used for military purposes in WW2 though seven doodlebugs left two craters near Kingston Vale Cemetery as ‘dry ponds’. Soon after Simon’s arrival he saw a cavalcade of police and military heading towards his office, and was asked to arrange for a 6ft deep hole in which to explode a box of gunpowder discovered when clearing a house in Sussex but then driven by the finder to his London home before thinking it might be dangerous!

This was a most enjoyable and informative talk, and we are grateful to Simon for sharing his expertise and enthusiasm with us.

Peter Hopkins

LOCAL HISTORY WORKSHOPS

Friday 12 January 2018 – Six present, Dave Haunton in the Chair

- ♦ **Peter Hopkins** had received two emails, one from Bob de Chastelain whose ancestors ran a private school in Church House, Merton, from the 1840s to 1890s (see *Bulletin* 172). A son of the family, Charles Emanuel de Chastelain, was the director of the Empire theatre, Leicester Square, and Bob sent a poster and a programme for a show there called 'Around the World', a cast member in which was actress Kate Vaughan (who lived at Abbey Gate House at one time – see *Bulletin* 157). Bob had been trying to find the graves of Charles and his wife Eliza, but had so far not succeeded. Rosemary Turner suggested using the *deceasedonline.com* website.

Peter's second email concerned Serlo, once a canon of Merton Priory. The sender, Stanley Oldfield, lives near the church of St Andrew, Harberton, which was gifted to the diocese of Salisbury by Serlo. He wondered how Serlo came to have the right to gift churches. He was Dean of Salisbury from around 1111, although his family origins were artisan, not noble. Peter was unable to add to the information Stanley had gained from Lionel Green's publications.

Peter also brought to the meeting a book by Victoria Hutchings, curator of the Hoare's Bank museum (see *Bulletin* 205).

- ♦ **Keith Penny and Dave Haunton** had responded in different ways to a query from Robin Gill of New Malden about the holding of the Bath and West Show in Wimbledon in May 1933. Dave provided a map of where we deduced the location of the show ground to have been, between Copse Hill and the Kingston by-pass (nowadays roughly Colliers Wood United Football Ground), and a copy of an advertisement (*right*). Keith gave details from local newspapers: it was opened by the Duke and Duchess of York and 50,612 people attended. A reporter remarked: 'Never has Wimbledon seen such impressive chewing of the cud or heard such magnificent mooing.' The show was held in Wimbledon simply because the organisers wanted to vary their venues.



Keith had found in the *Mitcham Advertiser* of 5 March 1915 a lengthy article printed to mark the imminent formation of Mitcham Urban District Council: it drew on items from the Vestry minutes collected by R M Chart, both solid and curious. It was hard to imagine a local newspaper today going to such lengths to advertise an area's history.

- ♦ **David Luff** reported that excavations would shortly be made near to the cloister wall outside the new entrance to the Chapter House site.
- ♦ **Rosemary Turner** continued to work on biographical information about the individuals named in the 'First Hundred' of the Berkeley Temperance Society. She had now located Prospect House in Mitcham.
- ♦ **Judith Goodman** recalled that she had once written an article, for the John Innes Society, about Havelock Ellis (1859-1939) and his connection with Merton. Ellis was famous, or notorious, for his studies of sexual matters and for his irregular personal life. He was also a pioneer in publishing unexpurgated texts of Shakespeare's plays. He was born in Croydon, but, when he was nine, the family moved to Wimbledon, settling in Hartfield Road. He went as a day-boy to the de Chastelain's school in the old Church House, opposite Merton parish church, and also attended the church. In his autobiography (*My Life*) he describes the school as 'fairly good' and gives vivid portraits of the headmaster and the vicar. After three years, he went as a weekly boarder to The Poplars in Mitcham. An article is in prospect.

Keith Penny

NB The Workshop scheduled for Friday 2 March 2018 was cancelled at short notice, due to the most inclement weather introduced by the 'Beast from the East'.

Friday 20 April 2018 – 3 present, Keith Penny in the Chair

- ◆ **David Luff** had recently purchased on line a set of colour negatives of the interior and exterior of the signal box at Wimbledon station in the 1960s or 1970s. There seemed to be a lot of very large levers!

David has also been able to add to his Liberty collections some sample cards from Plumbs the manufacturers of loose covers for furniture. Merton Abbey Print Works used to print tens of thousands of yards for Plumbs. David recalled ‘striking off’ some test prints on one design, and decided to use some green ‘colour’ instead of blue and the print manager liked it so much he added it to the range! He also brought along a photograph of a very unusual fabric design of black and white newsprint with large blue roses for the ‘Miss Mouse’ range by Jae Cullen Spencer. He mentioned other unlikely designs – one that looked like chicken wire!

David also showed some photos he had taken of the new development at the Chapter House site, which was nearing completion.

- ◆ **Peter Hopkins** recently had received from a correspondent in New Zealand an interesting extract from some family history research into Henry and Amelia Pratt, who emigrated from Mitcham in 1858. In 1841 Henry described himself as a calico printer and Amelia as a milliner, living in Hancock’s Cottages, next to the *Three Kings* pub, but they had moved to Upper Green by 1851, when Henry described himself as a confectioner and shawl printer. He opened a grocery store in New Zealand.

A descendant of Joseph Pacy, the beadle of Mitcham in 1833, had pointed out that Monty had interpreted his abbreviated name as James in *Beating the Bounds*, The original document is lost so cannot be checked.

Peter had also received an enquiry about Samuel John Tracy who lived in Merton in the 1850s and then in Wimbledon to 1870s (see *Bulletin* 147 p.9). He was a leading dental surgeon at St Bart’s involved in the development of anaesthetics and Peter has found a portrait online from the Wellcome collection.

Further to his investigations into the Hoare family of The Lodge estate in Morden in the 19th century, Peter had received a photograph of the 1866 organ panel recording the donor, Charles H Hoare. Bill Rudd rescued it from a skip at St Lawrence during the 1980s’ renovation but we returned it to the churchwarden following eviction from our Store.



The churchwarden had also sent Peter a copy of a 2017 report on the east window of the church. Further documentary evidence has since been found. Peter will write an update for a future *Bulletin*.

- ◆ **Keith Penny** had enjoyed the article by Norma Cox on George Blay (*Bulletin* 205) and later read the relevant parts of Evelyn Jowett’s *Raynes Park. A Social History*. Mr Blay’s involvement with Merton and Morden Council was complicated and not always harmonious. He did indeed begin by building houses that qualified by a price of £600 for the £75 subsidy available via the Ministry of Health (then the department responsible for housing), but declared in May 1925 that he could no longer do so, and wanted to charge £750. The Council could not lawfully offer a loan for properties of that price, which probably explains why he arranged his own mortgages. He ran into trouble in April–May 1926 while building Greenway: the Council disapproved his application because he did not provide a full street plan or details of drainage. The density of houses exceeded the Council’s stipulation of no more than twelve per acre. Regardless, Mr Blay proceeded to build twenty-four houses without approval, and the Council then brought a legal action against him. This was adjourned, with a view to the parties reaching some agreement without court action, and by October it seemed that this might happen. Keith had not had time to continue reading the Council Minutes to see if the case ever came to court. There were other squabbles, for example, over the exact width of Grand Drive.

Merton and Morden Council was an early participant in the mortgage loan scheme authorised by the 1923 Housing Act, though there were no clear reasons, except demand for houses. In October 1923 there were 629 applicants on the list for Council houses, but these people were unlikely to be the ones who could raise even the small deposit required for a mortgage. Keith wondered who they were and where they lived, bearing in mind the low population of Morden, at least. There was more to be done in comparing the housing policies of Merton and Morden with those of Mitcham.

As a lighter item Keith showed some pictures that he had taken in a short walk in the streets around his home. Rather than looking up, he had looked at the pavements and the various utility inspection covers. Some were reminders of older commercial organisations or technologies, such as ‘Post Office Telegraphs’ (right), ‘MWB’ or ‘SEGB’. Others recalled





long-gone manufacturers, such as Blakeborough and Sons of Brighouse (fire hydrants) and, locally, W E Horsman of Mitcham (*left*), whose foundry was in Eveline Road.

Lastly, Keith showed an odd-looking piece of paving in Middle Road, with what looked like a turning circle, except that the road surface continued. This was explained by the extension of the road in 1976 when new houses were built on land sold by St Olave's church, so there are still indentations in the pavement line (*below*).

*Boundary
of housing
1928–1976*



- ◆ **Dave Haunton** was prevented from attending but had sent some items for inclusion. First he thanked all those members who had identified his mystery site from *The Case of the Mukkinese Battle Horn* (mentioned in *Bulletin* 205) as the Wimbledon School of Art in Merton Hall Road. The front entrance is much the same, but the railings no longer reach nearly so far along the street.

He apologised for having included, in the report of Sarah Gould's talk *There's More to Morden*, a photo of the current Wimbledon premises of R G Jones Ltd, sound engineers, instead of one of the old Morden site which was next to St Lawrence churchyard and Church Farm Cottage on land now occupied by the college. The firm has an excellent website at www.rgjones.co.uk, where Dave found this photo of a 1950s company van outside Morden Park house, with 'Morden' proudly prominent.



The Stretcher Railing Society was recently featured in *Current Archaeology*: Dave asked if we knew of any stretcher railings in our area, but David and Keith both said they were used within post-war LCC estates, none of which were built within our area.

He also sent a photograph relating to Windsor Floors Ltd (which will be the subject of a future *Bulletin* article).

Finally Dave sent a clip from a 1958 episode of *Scotland Yard*, cheerfully entitled *Print of Death*, as an example of Merton Park Studios supporting local industry with a 3-second shot of a Howards of Mitcham ditch-digger (*left*). He hoped the digger driver was paid at suitable acting rates, as well as his normal pay packet.

Peter Hopkins

**Dates of next Workshops: Fridays 1 June, 13 July, 31 August and 19 October
2.30pm at Wandle Industrial Museum. All are welcome.**

**ROSEMARY TURNER expands some of BILL RUDD's notes on
AUGUSTUS WILLIAM LOUIS SCHERMULY**

In 1970, when St Lawrence's Church was about to make some changes to the churchyard, Bill Rudd started researching some of the names on the gravestones.

One of these was Augustus William Louis Schermuly (known as William), inventor of the Pistol Rocket Lifesaving Apparatus, who was buried in the churchyard of St Lawrence in 1929. The memorial also commemorates his wife Susan (d.1949 aged 86), their son William Louis who died in action in 1917, their daughter Rose Sparkes (d.1966 aged 80) and a granddaughter Rose May Banks (d.1972). William and his wife only came to the area in later life: they were married in St Philips Clerkenwell 20 December 1881.

Last year Peter Hopkins received an enquiry about William. He was able to use Bill's extensive research notes to answer this. 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. He had been told that William and his family lived at 'Stonecroft' a house on Stonecot Hill, now demolished and replaced by a block of flats of the same name at 127 Stonecot Hill.

This was confirmed by a local newspaper article by Margaret Bellars (the name of the publication is not shown) dated 4 June 1982. The article starts by saying 'Discovery that a man whose inventions have saved thousands of lives at sea has a grand-daughter living in Merton has come from a photograph published in the *News*' Church Notes. The picture was of a tomb in St Lawrence's churchyard, Morden, of the late Augustus Louis Schermuly. No record of local descendants appeared to exist, so the *News* asked for information'. A grand-daughter, Mrs Alice Palmer, née Sparkes, was living in Morden and came forward. She told the story of her grandfather and said that the family home was Stonecroft on what is now Stonecot Hill. Several of the younger children attended Morden Infant school. The article included a photograph of Alice with her grandfather in the garden of Stonecroft, Stonecot Hill, Morden. The grandson who contacted Bill refers to it as being in North Cheam. The parish boundary runs along the road, so, for no.127, North Cheam is strictly correct.

The grandson had told Bill that William had carried out experiments on his later invention in the vicinity of Morden Common on the farm of Mr Mardsen, the area south of Garth Road, but Bill had not been able to find out exactly where. Peter remembered that in Local History Note 11, Lilian Grumbridge's *Memoirs of Lower Morden*, there is a photograph captioned 'Lower Morden Farm, home of Mr & Mrs Marden, later replaced by Hatfeild School'. Bill had noted Frederick and Mabel Marsden at Lower Morden Farm in the 1927 register of electors. In my *Morden in 1910: The Land Valuation Records*, the farm was occupied by Samuel Bartlett Symes (plot 9). Mr Symes also held plot 292, which was on the corner of Green Lane and Garth Road now occupied by the Cemetery and formerly part of Morden Common. Peter thinks it likely that Mr Marsden also held this land and allowed William to do his experiments there.

In 1970 Bill wrote that William senior was of Dutch origin but that he was born and baptised in Whitechapel in 1857. He had learnt the dangers of the sea whilst sailing the world on old wooden square riggers for nine years. He devoted the remainder of his life to the invention, development and perfection of a 'life line'. With no technical skills and meagre funds he struggled for ten years to solve the problem. In 1897 he demonstrated his apparatus in public at the Diamond Jubilee Exhibition and was given the highest award, the Gold Medal.

The equipment consisted of a large waterproofed cardboard rocket, to which a thin cord was attached, this was fastened to a stouter hauling cable. The rocket was fired by a portfire from a metal aiming trough attached to the top of the line box in which the throwing line was laid. It had a range of approx 300 yards and could be aimed with reasonable accuracy. Schermuly continued to improve his apparatus, as the early designs were effective but cumbersome. The rocket line thrower was ingenious because it could be used in almost any weather conditions while staying comparatively stable. A much more effective and lightweight form was produced and it worked. This was the Pistol Rocket Lifesaving Apparatus, demonstrated here by the inventor's 8-year-old grandson.



Schermuly's design won against all other manufacturers in competition, yet throughout the whole of this time official recognition was denied. In 1914 three shipping companies had voluntarily equipped their ships with the Pistol Apparatus: these were the RMSP, Union Castle and P&O. It was only later in the Great War that the War Office showed some interest in his devices for carrying messages, telephone lines and grapnels attached to rockets. In June 1928 a Bill was passed and from 1 January 1929 it became law that 'every British ship exceeding 500 tons register, when going to sea from any port in the United Kingdom, shall be provided with a line throwing apparatus approved by the Board of Trade'.

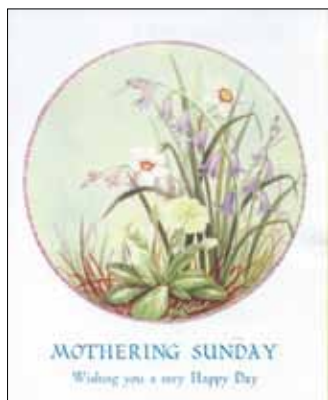
Schermuly died in 1929, so did not have long to enjoy his success. His firm continued to build on their reputation after his death. His brothers Alfred, a pyrotechnics expert, and Charles, a works manager, had joined Conrad Schermuly, the third son of William at the Company's Cheam office. In 1936 the factory moved to Newdigate in Surrey where there was space to expand. They continued to develop advanced devices which were used throughout World War II and beyond. Indeed, in 1972 a more advanced model of William's invention was produced, so the Schermuly name continued. The company was later bought by the British Match Corporation, who also owned Pains Wessex.

In the January 2017 workshop, Peter Hopkins reported that he had had a response to his earlier workshop report. Yvonne Smith, a volunteer who is working on the *Carved in Stone* project, had been researching the Schermuly family because of William's son, William Louis Schermuly who was killed in action at Salonika in 1917. He is buried in the Karasouli Military Cemetery there and is also recorded on the family gravestone in St Lawrence's churchyard. Yvonne sent Peter copies of William junior's entry in *Carved in Stone*, his naval records and many other documents from ancestry.com relating to his family. A 1911 census shows the family living at 7 Frederick Road, Gander Green Lane, North Cheam, but previous censuses show the family in London. The 1901 census shows William junior at Portsmouth.

Like William, Bill's name and extensive research material continues to be of help after he has left us.

Photos from C R Thompson From Ship to Shore: The Biography of William Schermuly and the History of the Schermuly Pistol Rocket Apparatus Ltd (1946) p.31, a copy of which, autographed by the inventor's son, Bill donated to our archives.

HILARY NETHERSOLE remembers SUNDAY SCHOOL AT HOLY CROSS

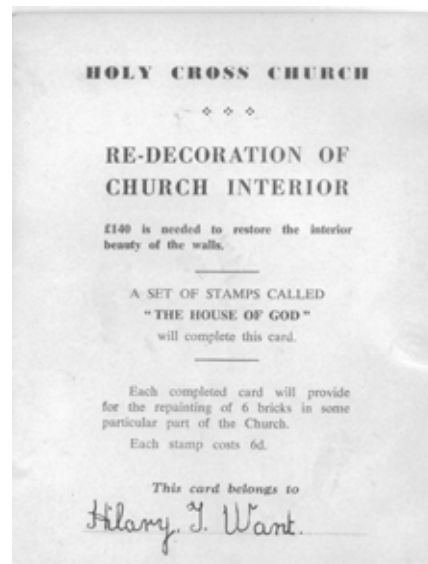
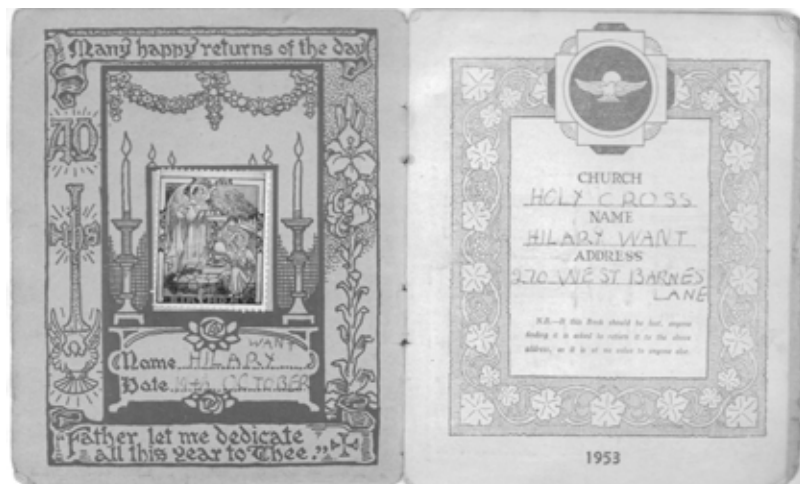


I was interested to see a reference to Holy Cross Church, Motspur Park, in the *March Bulletin*. When we lived at 270 West Barnes Lane, I went to Sunday school there, from 1952. I think the priest-in-charge was Rev Duval.

On Mothering Sunday we were given posies and a card to take home to our mothers – this one is from 1958 (*left*). There were also birthday cards (*below left*), special stamp albums (*right*) and special stamps to buy to raise money for the church (*below right*). I remember going on a Sunday School Outing by 'special' train from Motspur Park station, possibly to Littlehampton. I also



recall the Mission Hut (but didn't realise that it had been one). It was used as a Church Hall for parties, film shows, bazaars, etc. My mother and a neighbour used to cycle to whist drives there. Happy days!



1918 AND AFTER

The rather longer fight for the women's vote and an equal franchise

We have seen in recent months (and will continue to see throughout this centenary year), a lot of celebrations, events, debates and commemoration of the 1918 Representation of the People Act. This was a vital moment in the development of democracy in the United Kingdom. It was the first time all men in the UK gained the right to vote. It was also – and this has been much more the subject of the commemorations – the first time that women had the right to vote in parliamentary elections. The coverage has been careful to emphasise that the 1918 Act only gave the vote to some women, however. This article will look at the more complicated story that is the women's franchise, and how equality finally arrived in the UK Parliament.

It's not true to say that women did not have the vote before 1918. In fact, it seems that small numbers of women could vote long before that in parliamentary elections under certain (rare) borough franchises, although the examples are so select we have to doubt whether it was routinely done even when women technically qualified. It was the series of Reform Acts (1832, 1867, 1884) in the nineteenth century that progressively defined what a parliamentary 'voter' looked like – and that voter was long-resident, propertied and male. In the middle of the nineteenth century, Parliament's primary interests were money and foreign policy. These were felt to be appropriately male subjects.

The century also saw a flourishing of other institutions whose members were elected. These were the new institutions of a more domestic, local, government, more in keeping with what were seen as suitable areas of interest for women. From 1869, women could vote for and serve on poor law boards. In 1870, the first school boards were elected to run the newly-compulsory system of primary education; women could vote for and serve on these from the outset. In the years that followed, the franchise was extended to women for county and borough councils, and they were permitted to serve as district councillors from 1894, county councillors from 1907.

But the franchise for parliament remained obstinately male-only well into the twentieth century. Following a major petition campaign from women across Britain in 1866, John Stuart Mill first attempted to get a female parliamentary franchise, as an amendment to what became the 1867 Reform Act. It was to be over 50 years before that franchise was granted. The campaigns of suffragist organisations, and the radical, sometimes militant and violent campaigning of the suffragettes, saw waves of parliamentary interest come and go (with a House of Commons majority for women's votes as early as 1906). But governments remained resolutely opposed, and Bills foundered without their support.

It was during the First World War, when it became obvious that there would be a general election while troops were still in the field, and while servicemen would be unable to fulfil the qualifications of residency to allow them to vote, that some kind of progress could be made. A Speaker's Conference was convened in 1917, and successfully recommended that residency and property qualifications be abolished for male voters. At a stroke, 4.5 million men aged 21 plus were enfranchised across the UK; the male electorate grew to around 12.5 million. At the same time, a limited franchise for women, who were over 30 and property-holding or married to property-holders, was established.¹ This was much less comprehensive than the male franchise, but it still added 8.4 million women to the electoral roll. In 1919, logically enough, women were also permitted to stand for Parliament.

The sky did not fall in. The 1918 General Election returned a profoundly conservative result, with neither the newly-enfranchised mostly working-class men, nor the largely middle-class enfranchised women making much apparent impact. With an increasingly stable political climate re-established after the war, there was some appetite to go further. The largest of the suffragist societies changed its name to the National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship, indicating a broader interest than just the vote. Their campaigns included many social issues directly affecting women and the family, but they did not lose sight of their origins as a suffragist campaign group. 60% of British women were still disenfranchised. Could women now be given the vote on full and equal terms?

They could. The Conservative Home Secretary, Sir William Joynson-Hicks (*right*), stated in the House of Commons in 1925



that by the end of the current parliament (1929 at the latest), women would have the franchise on equal terms with men. This is a statement which now seems rather inevitable. However, it was not perceived as such by some of his colleagues – indeed, it does not appear to have been a decision by the whole Cabinet. Although the Home Secretary, and Prime Minister Stanley Baldwin, were comfortable with an increasing female franchise, the Cabinet contained a number of men who had been among the fervent opponents of the pre-war suffragists. Most famously, Winston Churchill, now a Conservative Chancellor of the Exchequer, had been a leading member of the pre-war Liberal government which had so infuriated the militant suffrage campaigners. It was far from a foregone conclusion that the Cabinet as a whole would accept more women voters. Nonetheless, it was a ministerial pledge while at the dispatch box, and the Cabinet decided that they had to abide by it. A Cabinet Committee was set up in 1926, reporting in 1927, and the outcome was a recommendation to extend the vote to all women over the age of 21: an Equal Franchise at last.²

Behind the scenes, this apparently smooth progress was bumpier than we might now imagine. The Cabinet Committee spent considerable effort in analysing the impact of giving all women over 21 the vote. It is clear that they were worried about the impact on the Conservative vote – fearing that younger and poorer women would not be their natural allies. They considered options for offering ‘equality’ that did not mean this major expansion of power for young women. Ideas on the table included an equal franchise for both sexes at 25, or a double franchise for everyone over 30, reducing the value of young votes. They also analysed, with concern, which constituencies would be most affected by the increased franchise. It is possible to read some horror into the note that the parliamentary seat which would see most new women voters was Westminster St George’s, probably the most Tory seat in the country, and a bastion of property-holding, male power. The reason? A high proportion of women denied the vote in 1918 were servants, as servants very rarely met the property qualification, owning neither their own homes, nor their own chattels and furnishings. But all these calculations could not find a more viable option than a full equal franchise.³

Once the Cabinet was resigned to the change, the 1928 Equal Franchise Act was passed by both Houses of Parliament with relatively little difficulty,⁴ with voting age set at 21 for all. Overall around 6.5 million women were added to the electorate. The press coverage of the Act and the election which followed in 1929 focused on the idea that irresponsible young women had been given the vote. The ‘Flapper Vote’ was the subject of many scornful headlines, picturing the typical new voter as a young woman given to jazz, cloche hats and cocktails. But scorn did not affect the legislative process. Women had, for the first time, been subject to a piece of legislation in which ‘equality’ was explicit in the title.

In Merton, the impact of the 1928 Act was significant. The local electorate was growing steadily already, with substantial housebuilding across the borough in the 1920s, particularly in Park Ward, Bushey Mead and West Barnes. That saw a 4% rise in the electoral roll between 1927 and 1928. But the roll leapt in 1929 with the new women voters: rising 30% in a year. Allowing for some of that increase being accounted for by more new housing, it still suggests that about half the adult women in Merton in 1927 did not have the right to vote.

It wasn’t yet quite an equal franchise, in fact. Business-persons were granted an extra vote around their place of trade, and university graduates could vote for a number of special MPs representing Oxford, Cambridge and the combined other universities.⁵ These special franchises would not be abolished until 1948. And it was not until 1958 that women could take their seats in the House of Lords, the very last step in equalising gender qualifications for parliament.

The 1918 centenary celebrations, commemorations and debates offer a fascinating reflection on the process of women’s emancipation. But if we want to cheer equality, we really should do it all again in 2028.

1 ‘Property-holding’ essentially meant homeowners or those renting unfurnished lodgings – enough chattels gave one sufficient stake in the economy, it was felt.

2 The parliamentary facts and figures in this article come primarily from the excellent Parliament UK briefing, *History of the Parliamentary Franchise* (2013). A pdf is available at researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/RP13-14/RP13-14.pdf. Parliament also produces introductory resources for general interest, under the Vote 100 banner: <https://www.parliament.uk/about/living-heritage/transformingsociety/electionsvoting/vote-100/women-and-the-vote/>.

3 The National Archives. CAB27/333

4 387 votes to 10 in favour, on its Second Reading in the House of Commons.

5 You couldn’t have more than two votes, however. A business owning university graduate had to opt to use their second vote via one or the other special franchise.

Members will be happily aware that a bronze statue commemorating Millicent Fawcett and the suffragist campaign was unveiled in Parliament Square on 24 April.



*Bill Rudd's photos of the George Inn.
Clockwise from top left, the sign and inn
in 1973, the inn in 1969, 1990 and 1986.*



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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