

Meeting Reports

Victorian Hampton

Talk by John Sheaf

Thursday 25 April 2013, 8 pm

St Lawrence School, Church Road

Report by Jo Butler

Following the business of the AGM, which is reported below, we heard a talk by John Sheaf on Victorian Hampton. John, who is a well-known figure in local history circles in Hampton, gave an interesting and informative talk about our northern neighbour.

Hampton is an older settlement than Molesey by a long way and was the major settlement along the River Thames until the arrival of the railway at Hampton Court in 1849 to serve tourists going to Hampton Court Palace. The subsequent urban development of Molesey was in fact started by a Hampton man, Francis Jackson Kent, who laid out road schemes near to the station in what has been called the "first garden suburb" near London.

Hampton itself was an important road and river junction for many years before this, with many shops and drinking-houses being established in the triangle formed by High Street, Church Street and Thames Street and the surrounding areas near to St Mary's Church and the Bell Pub.

Hampton was important as a ferry point to take visitors from London across to the Hurst in Molesey in the early part of the 19th century. The Hurst was a favourite place for many entertainments – boxing, racing, cricket, ladies of the town and general entertainment and the main way to get there was by road to Hampton and thence to cross the river. The ferries were large, holding upwards of 100 standing passengers and were poled across the Thames. One shudders to think what Health and Safety would say.

The railway came later to Hampton, being part of the line serving Kempton Park, and the shops and other important buildings steadily moved to the new residential areas along the railway. As a result the area around the Church and The Bell declined relatively.



St Mary's church is home to the magnificent tomb of Mrs Thomas, which Harris, in Three Men in a Boat, was very anxious to see

However many buildings still remain – the old Wesleyan chapel is now being refurbished having spent part of its life as an "Electric Blanket Repair Centre". The very attractive balconied building next to the Church Hall, 1 Church Street, only dates back to the 1920s. Next to it is the oldest building in Hampton, the Feathers, built about 1540. This building became a pub in the early 16th century and remained an inn until about 1792. It was then divided into four tenements, one of which was occupied by the village blacksmith until about 1920. The building is regrettably now swamped by the traffic on the A308 and A311 roads. Slightly to the east is Garrick's Villa, where the famous actor of the late 18th century lived and across the A308 is Garrick's Temple on the riverside, which was built in 1756 to celebrate the genius of William Shakespeare.

Hampton was the first major water treatment and pumping station, bringing water from the Thames to London. The magnificent mock Venetian pumping house and chimney have been refurbished and remind all around of the past and present importance of Hampton in the lives of Londoners.

Hampton Court in Old Photographs
Thursday 23 May
Clore Centre, Hampton Court
An illustrated talk by Ian Franklin and
Robert Hoare ARPS
Report by Rosie Allen

The Society was informed and entertained by Ian Franklin and Robert Hoare in the fitting setting of Hampton Court Palace Clore Centre. Ian has been associated with the Palace as a local historian for over 30 years, and has been a State Apartment Warder for 16 years. Robert is one of the Palace's 'Tudor cooks' and a historic photography expert.

Robert talked about the methods and processes used by early photographic pioneers and how they adapted and refined the Georgian 'camera obscura' which had been used by artists and travellers on the Grand Tour. William Fox Talbot had produced the first negative in 1835 using chemicals to capture an image and had gone on to develop ways to stabilise the images. In 1840 he produced the first Calotype using paper coated with silver iodide. In 1845 the first picture of Hampton Court Palace was produced and, as other pioneers came in to the field of photography, the Palace became a popular subject for photographs. Robert told us of his own experimental work reproducing these early photographic techniques by restoring and rebuilding early cameras and using the same equipment and processes (chemicals, tents, the 'birdie'). He showed us the photographs he had produced of Hampton Court which were taken from the same stance as the early originals. These early photographs required very long exposure times and it was interesting to see how some colours were distorted by the process (e.g. pink appearing black).

Robert told us how photography was embraced by antiquarians, scientists and artists. Queen Victoria and Prince Albert were also enthusiastic and purchased photographic equipment. Talbot who had spent huge sums of money developing photographic processes became embroiled in legal battles to patent his work.

Ian told us how photography became increasingly popular and how, in the 1850s, Henry Cole and Richard Redgrave with the Victoria and Albert Museum sought to photograph all works of art and historic buildings to make them accessible to the wider public and to sell photographs as art work.

Many more photographers came into the field and between 1859 and 1872 there were many photographs taken of Hampton Court and the surrounding area. Individual photographs were produced for sale (precursor to the postcard) and pictorial guides were published. Ian showed us a selection of these and explained how such photographs were invaluable to historians who could use them to identify changes to the palace over the years.

Ian showed us photographs, which informed us of changes to the bridge, the moat, the paths, the Queen's Drawing room, the mini turrets, the chapel pews, the gates and the windows.



Hussar Guarding the Gate (*circa 1880*)

We saw an early photograph of a warder, the Hussars guarding the gates and a very interesting photograph of the tennis court with no windows and canvas blinds. It was also fascinating to see the Indian troops at Hampton Court for the Coronation in 1902.

We could see how old photographs are a rich and often unique source of information to historians. If you have any old photographs or memorabilia of Hampton Court especially of the Warders or the Tiltyard, or any cine film from the 1960s Robert and Ian would be delighted to see them.

Carnival
Saturday 1 June

Once again we put up a tent at Molesey Carnival, and for once, the weather was kind, with a record number of local organisations joining in the parade. In our marquee we displayed photographs and information from our Sport on the Hurst events, a variety of old maps, and information from the Waterways Group. The displays were as popular as always, with a continuous stream of interested visitors as well as existing members. A number of Molesey residents joined, and quite a few members took the opportunity to renew their membership.

Grateful thanks to Roger and Jenny Haile and to Phil Sayer who helped erect, man and dismantle the tent, and to John Clarke for organising the tables and chairs. It is always an enjoyable day and an opportunity to share interests with other members of the Society and our many visitors. If you'd like to help next year, please do let a committee member know.

AGM

Thursday 25 April, St Lawrence School

There was a good turnout for the AGM at St Lawrence School to hear the Society's Chairman, Jenny Wood, reporting on the events of the past year – the illustrated talk by Dr David Parker on Dickens' connections with the Thames from Richmond to Hampton; the Hampton Court Palace meeting, when Dr Annie Gray told us about eating at the Palace through history; July's summer stroll; our Sport on the Hurst evenings, Nick Barratt's talk on House History, and the Society's involvement in Magical Molesey and the Molesey Carnival. Jenny also reported on the ongoing "Then and Now" project, Surrey History Centre's "Surrey Remembers" project, and the People and Buildings research group.

The Summer Stroll had been tinged with sadness, as Tony Osborne, who had organised all our previous walks, had recently died. Tony's daughter, Mary, who had been working with Tony on preparations for the stroll, offered to continue with his preparations, and provided us with a fascinating walk and talk about the Bridge Road conservation area. Jenny also thanked Pauline Sieler, who had resigned from the committee, and was delighted to welcome Brian Smith onto the committee, with the other officers and committee members agreeing to re-stand.

Membership of the Society had increased yet again during the year, to a new record of 351. The accounts were presented and approved.

The Society's accounts for the year ending 31 March 2013 showed an excess of expenditure over income – clearly not a situation which can continue. Costs are constantly rising, the Society's main expenditure being the price of speakers, venues and printing.

Various options were discussed at the AGM, including raising the membership fee, introducing a 'Friends of MLHS' membership fee, and charging for individual meetings.

Everyone present agreed that the Society currently offered extremely good value for money, and gave the committee the go-ahead to raise additional funds in whatever way they felt was best.

Following the business part of the evening, members were able to enjoy a glass of wine or juice, and renew their membership, then John Sheaf gave a fascinating illustrated talk on Victorian Hampton, which is reported elsewhere in the newsletter.

Meeting Charges

After much discussion in committee following the AGM, it has been agreed that for a trial period there will be a charge of £1 per meeting for members (guests £3) and that charges and membership subscriptions will be reconsidered later in the year.

Membership Matters

We are grateful to all members who gave feedback on their renewal forms, and were especially pleased that many members used the opportunity to express their thanks for the work that the committee does for the Society. We also welcomed suggestions for topics for future meetings, which will be explored by the committee.

Many of you made suggestions which you felt might improve the membership renewal process, in particular suggesting greater use of the internet by offering internet banking for payments and sending renewal requests via email. We are looking into this and will be trialling this option for renewals and new members over the next few months.

Forthcoming Events

Thursday 4 July 2013, 7.30 pm
Doors open 7 pm
Houseboats – Talk by Toby Butler
followed by
Summer Stroll
East Molesey Cricket Club, Graburn Way,
KT8 9AL

Dr Toby Butler is a history lecturer at the University of East London and Birkbeck, University of London, and leads an MA programme in Heritage Studies. Toby was a houseboat resident on Ash Island for more than a decade and he created a 'Memoryscape' walking trail with Elmbridge Borough Council that combines historical information with oral history interviews to explore aspects of life along the river Thames in Molesey.

The trail runs along the towpath between Cigarette Island and Hurst Park. It was created by making a float out of the flotsam that collected behind Toby's boat, and following it downstream. Wherever the float hit the bank, Toby found someone to interview to contribute to the audio walk, which can be downloaded onto an MP3 device.

Toby will be giving a talk about the houseboats on this stretch of the Thames, and he will be bringing maps so that, after the talk, we can walk the route and see the sights he mentions.

Refreshments will be available from the bar at the Cricket Club from 7 pm.

**People and Buildings
Special Interest Group
Wednesday 31 July, 7 pm
West Molesey Cemetery**

The People and Buildings group have already started thinking about next year's summer stroll. The cemetery in West Molesey is a place that will evoke poignant memories for local people who have family and friends buried there. What is the story of Molesey cemetery and what can it reveal about the history of Molesey? The Group are meeting at the Hurst Road entrance on Wednesday 31st July at 7pm (please note the earlier time) to start planning the 2014 summer stroll. If you would like to be involved or have a story to tell, please get in touch with either Anthony (02089796744) or Doreen (02089790059).

**Tuesday 17 September 2013
8 pm (doors open 7.30 pm)
History of Frederick Paine, Undertakers
Talk by Ian Smith
St Lawrence School, Church Road, KT8
9DR**

One of our members, Ian Smith, is the curator of the Frederick W Paine Museum in Kingston, which was opened in 2008 to celebrate the firm's centenary at their listed premises in Old London Road. Ian will be telling us the fascinating history of the local undertakers, from its formation in 1884, through the first motorised funeral in 1913 to the present day, showing record books dating back to 1913, slides, maps and other displays. Despite the subject matter, it promises to be a "lively" evening.

**Friday 15 November 2013, 8 pm
The Bridges of Hampton Court
Mole Hall, Bishop Fox Way, KT8 2JE**

Help Please! Can you remember the current bridge being built or opened or have you heard any friends or family members talking about the building or opening of the bridge? Doreen Freeman would love to have a chat with anyone who has any information. If you can help, please contact Doreen on 020 8979 0059.

Elmbridge Hundred

Jonathan White of Elmbridge Museum has told us that the Elmbridge Hundred Steering Committee has decided not to pursue the idea of creating poetic portrait plaques for each of the Hundred. The Committee has instead decided to spend 2013 focusing on enhancing the Elmbridge Hundred Website, <http://www.elmbridgehundred.org.uk/>.

Since its launch in 2010, the website has received approximately 20,000 hits from 16,000 visitors and the Museum receives many enquiries from researchers wanting to discover more about members of the Hundred.

Improvements to the website will include new graphics, a blog, newsletter and an online voting system, enabling the public to vote for their favourite and least favourite member of the Hundred. It is also necessary to write more detailed biographies for several members of the Hundred. Jonathan would like to invite any members of the Molesey Local History Society who may be interested to help by researching and writing biographies for the website. One of the Hundred connected with Molesey that requires a much better biography, is the cricketer Billy Beldham.

To help with the research of biographies Jonathan can provide a list of the research resources available and where these may be found, e.g. Elmbridge Museum and the Surrey History Centre. A biography template can be provided to help with the writing of the biographies. Authors will be given full credit for their work.

If you would like further information please contact Jenny Wood on 020 8979 0889.

Hanged for housebreaking

by Anthony Barnes

On 11 January 1830, William Banks of the Moulsey Gang was hanged for housebreaking. It was the only public execution in the Surrey County Gaol that year. William Banks was a hardened housebreaker. He and his accomplices held up the Reverend and Mrs Warrington of Grove Cottage, West Molesey, in their home. Martin Baggoley tells the tale in *Surrey Executions: A complete list of those hanged in the county during the nineteenth century* (Amberley Publishing, 2011):



Grove Cottage

“In the early hours of the morning of Wednesday 19 November 1828, four men broke into Grove Cottage, West Molesey, the home of Reverend William and Mrs Warrington. The burglars made their way to the couple’s bedroom and burst in to find him asleep in his bed and his wife at her desk writing letters. She cried out ‘Good God, we shall be murdered, there are thieves in the house’. Her husband woke up and rushed to the mantelpiece, on which he kept a loaded pistol. He picked it up and aimed at one of the intruders but when he pulled the trigger nothing happened, and one of the men responded by aiming his pistol at William but when the trigger was pulled it flashed in the pan. His wife begged the men not to kill her husband and no further attempt was made on his life. The vicar and his wife were tied up and together with their two female servants, were taken to the cellar. After several hours, one of the servants managed to free herself and the others, before raising the alarm.

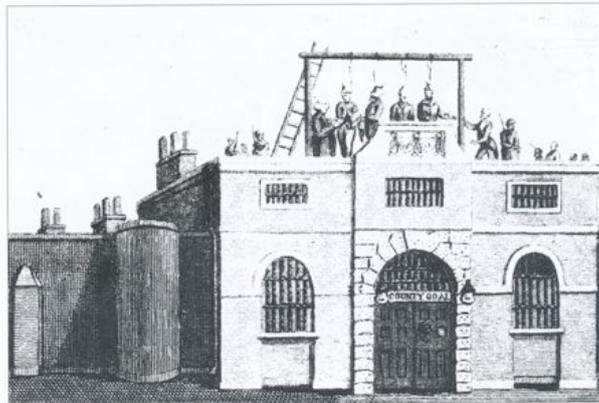
The burglars ransacked the house and made off with £30 jewellery and other valuable items. They also took a horse valued at £80 and a phaeton. Having been informed of the outrage at Grove Cottage, Constable Cook of Kingston tracked the men to Knightsbridge, where the trail went cold. Three Bow Street Runners, Ellis, Ruthven and Bishop visited the scene of the crime, and they immediately suspected that the burglars had been acting on information about the layout of the house, the habits of the Warringtons and the location of the stolen items. One of the servants, Fanny, had been called by her name by one of the burglars, and it was she who had managed to untie herself and release the others, long after the gang had left the scene. It was also believed that she had removed the bullets from William’s gun, which meant he could not put up any meaningful resistance. However, nothing could be proven against her and no arrests were made; it seemed that the crime would remain unsolved.

However, in July the following year, a burglar named Barnett was convicted of a burglary in London and was sentenced to be transported for life. Wishing to avoid such a fate, Barnett offered to provide information on the Moulsey Gang as the burglars had become known, in return for his freedom. Keen to solve this notorious crime, the authorities readily agreed to the offer, and Barnett gave five names: William Banks, John Smith, William Johnson, James Taylor and William Potts.

Banks was a well-known offender, who had said many times in the past that he would never be taken alive. An experienced Bow Street Runner named Craggs was given the task of capturing him. Craggs disguised himself as a butcher and for several days visited the known haunts of the suspect. Eventually, he spotted Banks and rushed up to him, putting a pistol to his head. There was nothing Banks could do and there was no struggle. As Craggs led him away, Banks muttered ‘I am a dead man’. The Warringtons were able to identify Banks as one of the intruders, but emphasised that he

All of those named by Barnett were arrested and despite it emerging that Potts had pawned a pair of Reverend Warrington's shoes which had been taken from the cottage, there was insufficient evidence against them and Banks was the only man charged with having taken part in the crime." (by kind permission of Martin Baggoley)

A Complete List of those Hanged in the County during the Nineteenth Century II



Executions on the roof of the gaol were seen regularly in Southwark. (Author's Collection)

Horsemonger Lane

Footnotes

(1) Surrey executions

William Banks was hanged in Horsemonger Lane, which is how people referred to the Surrey County Gaol in Southwark. It opened in 1799 and closed in 1878. Banks was executed in public - a practice which did not stop in Surrey until 1867. Six years after Banks was hanged, in 1836, a burglar named William Harley was executed, the last individual to hang for a crime other than murder.

(2) Grove Cottage

Robert Baddeley (1733-1794), the Drury Lane comedy actor, owned Grove Cottage. In his will, he wanted the house to become a home for aged and infirm actors and left enough money to pay the inmates a pension so that they would appear 'respectable in the eyes of their neighbours'. Instead, the trustees sold the house and gave the money to the Drury Lane Theatrical Fund.

Grove Cottage was later re-named Mole Abbey Cottage and was converted in the mid-1960s into sheltered accommodation for elderly people by the Rosemary Simmons Memorial Housing Association.

Events at Hampton Court Palace

Garden Tour

Thursday 29 August, 6.15 pm

The National Gardens Scheme, in association with Historic Royal Palaces, is holding an exclusive evening tour of the gardens at Hampton Court Palace entitled 'Celebrating 40 years at Hampton Court', on Thursday 29 August after the Palace and gardens have closed to the public. The tour commences at 6.15pm and lasts until 8.00pm and tickets cost only £10. The guide for the evening is Anthony Boulding, who is celebrating his 40 year career at the Palace. It is essential to book early as tickets are limited to a maximum of 25 people. For more information contact the National Gardens Scheme (not the Palace) at Hatchlands Park - telephone 01483 211535.

Salacious Gossip Tours Fridays and Sundays July, 19:30

See the Baroque Palace in a more intimate light and hear the scandalous stories of life in the Baroque court. From Charles II to George II, explore the tales of mistresses and the gossip that cannot be revealed during the day. Guides tell the risqué stories that are just too naughty for younger and more delicate ears, dealing with darker and more delicious themes. This is a chance to experience the palace out of hours and those areas of history that have been overlooked by more traditional historians. Tickets cost £25 per person, including a glass of champagne. Advanced booking is essential as tickets sold out very quickly last year. This is a walking tour (at least a mile) but the tour is wheelchair accessible.