

Forthcoming Events

Tuesday 24 November 2020 8 p.m.

***The Gentleman's Magazine: A Panorama of Georgian Surrey for Family and Local Historians*
Talk by Julian Pooley of Surrey History Centre
Via Zoom**

Founded in 1731, *The Gentleman's Magazine* was the world's first magazine, reporting domestic and foreign news, announcing the latest discoveries in science, medicine and technology, reviewing books and recording freak weather, births, marriages and military promotions. Its obituaries of the deceased laid the foundation for the later *Dictionary of National Biography* and are a major source for the lives and deaths of thousands of 18th century people. This talk provides an introduction to the magazine, explores its value for family and local historians and uncovers hidden stories of Surrey people and the county's history throughout the Georgian period. The talk will include examples relating to our locality.

The link for Julian's talk is:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/2125656313?pwd=ZTl1Y2JaZFpqR2dMa1o1OTlwdXVDZz09>

Meeting ID: 212 565 6313

Passcode: 009348

It would be helpful to us if you could please email Dave Jupp dave@thejupps.net before the meeting if you would like to attend, so that we have an idea of likely numbers and so that Dave will have your details in case he should need to contact proposed attendees. Dave is also happy to help you if you are new to Zoom. However, registration is definitely not compulsory, and you are very welcome to join us on the evening whether you have registered or not.

**Zoom Coffee Morning
Thursday 10 December 10.30 a.m.**

Our next Zoom coffee morning will be a virtual Christmas stroll down Pemberton Road on Thursday 10th December from 10.30-11.15 a.m. We will hear from Anthony Barnes about how Pemberton Road was part of an ambitious scheme to extend male suffrage in the 1850s and how its residents epitomised the rise of the enterprising, thrifty and self-improving Victorian lower middle class. On the way, we will also hear about the Hampton Court Laundry, the second Cottage Hospital and the lives of some of the people who have left their mark on Molesey. Norma Millard will tell the story of the people killed and injured by the V1 flying bomb that hit Pemberton Road on 8th August 1944. Please let Dave Jupp know if you are planning to join the Zoom coffee morning (or you can just click the link above and enter the password when prompted).

The link, meeting ID and password are the same as those for Julian's talk on 24th November.

**Wednesday 20 January 2021 8 p.m.
Victorian Life: Upstairs and Downstairs
Talk by Judy Hill
Via Zoom**

In 1851 there were over a million servants in Britain. This illustrated lecture draws on letters, diaries and autobiographies and provides a vivid insight into the day-to-day lives of country and town house servants. The lecture will also explain how the Victorian household operated with a large army of servants.

Judy is a freelance lecturer and researcher based in Surrey and previously taught history at the University of Surrey.

Once again, the link, meeting ID and password are exactly the same as those for Julian's talk on 24th November, and it would be helpful, but not essential, if you could please email Dave Jupp dave@thejupps.net before the meeting if you would like to attend.

Report of Zoom Meeting - Wednesday 23 September Objects of Empire

Talk by Amy Swainston, Exhibitions and Interpretations Officer, Elmbridge Museum
by Paula Day

I confess I was not going to log on to September's talk - "Objects of Empire" was not something that really grabbed me. But as my husband was interested, and I was curious as to how a Zoom talk would work, I decided to watch, and I'm so glad I did! It was an absolutely fascinating talk, really well illustrated, and it was so much easier to look at the artefacts and illustrations Amy was talking about when they were on the computer screen in front of me, rather than on the screen at the end of a school hall!



Amy started by asking us all to use the "chat" button on Zoom to say what we thought were the various objects that she showed us – this one, as she later explained, was a brass-plated tin containing tobacco and cigarettes, distributed to all members of the armed forces of the British Empire at Christmas 1914, as part of the Princess Mary Christmas Fund.

A map from the same period showed the breadth of the Empire at that time, but its origins can be traced back to the 1400s, the age of discovery. At its height, 26% of the land mass on the planet was part of the British Empire.



Closer to home, Amy talked about the impact of British colonialism on our local landscape. Mount Felix in Walton was built by Samuel Dicker, whose money came from his large sugar plantation in Jamaica. She also showed us a picture of the house in Thames Ditton that was owned by Caesar Picton, who had been born in 1755 in Senegal, enslaved, and bought at the age of six to be a pageboy for Sir John Phillips, a member of parliament who lived in Kingston.

On John Phillips' death, Caesar received a legacy of £100, bought his freedom, and set himself up as a coal merchant.

The talk was so full of interesting facts that it's difficult to pick out only a few. Amy acknowledged that it was a fraught topic, but particularly relevant today, and she was keen to stress that the exhibition and displays don't necessarily support the idea of Empire. They scrutinise rather than airbrush it. If you'd like to hear the whole talk, and have access to a computer, you can find it on <https://youtu.be/4XKucYxLOU0>

Alternatively, there is currently a small exhibition in Walton Library, which will remain there until well after lockdown is over – it contains only 20 items of the thousands of items in the Museum.

There is also an online exhibition page with further information, commentary, videos and booklists: <http://www.elmbridgemuseum.org.uk/online-exhibitions/objects-of-empire/>, and an audio trail (by car) around the borough for anyone interested in exploring some of these historic locations, which will be available in leaflet form at some stage, but is available online at: <https://www.youraudiotour.com/tours/867/>

In her talk, Amy mentioned a discussion with Dr Alison Smith, Chief Curator at the National Portrait Gallery, about her 2015 'Artist and Empire' exhibition and the various ways in which museums can approach the topic of Empire. This discussion can be found on <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yL45ZTiOGIE>

Report of Zoom Coffee Morning – 14 October 2020 Hurst Park Archaeological Dig

For our third Zoom coffee morning on 14th October, Anthony Barnes told the story of the Hurst Park archaeological dig in the summer of 1994. The site yielded some significant finds including an Early Bronze Age ring-ditch with associated Collared Urn cremation burials, a probable 1st-2nd century Romano-British farmstead and corn drier, and an Early Saxon settlement featuring a number of sunken buildings and pits of 6th/7th century date. We cannot say whether this Saxon settlement was Mul's island (from which Molesey derives its name) or whether it was the original site of Molesey. It may have been a precursor to what we call the old village (the area around St. Mary's Church). What we do know is that the Hurst Park site was abandoned at the end of the Early Saxon period.



The collared urn in the centre of the Early Bronze Age ring-ditch was in many small pieces – probably the result of the Hurst Park racehorses thundering overhead. It contained the cremated remains of a mature adult female and a younger male plus three segmented faience beads from a necklace or bracelet. Hurst Park is one of only a couple of dozen or so dated burials with faience beads.



Finding a cluster of Saxon sunken-featured buildings on the very slightly raised ground was another exciting discovery, adding to the few settlement sites then known along the Thames. The evidence for shallow features such as fences and the foundations of a hall house may have been destroyed before excavation began.

Childhood Memories of Molesey



Earlier this year, Gerry Howell, who lives in Victoria, Australia, was prompted to write to us after seeing this photograph of the Boleyn Drive VE Day Street Party in the Gallery section of our website.

Gerry is in the middle of the back row of the photograph, the boy with blonde hair standing between two taller boys. Gerry has since sent us the following recollections of his life in Molesey during and shortly after the Second World War.

“In 1933 I lived at the end of Cherry Orchard Road by the river. I moved into a new house at 30 The Crescent in 1936 until emigrating with my parents and sister to Australia in 1951. The years of the war have left interesting memories and I hope you will enjoy my recollections.

In late 1940 at 6p.m., my father had just returned from work when the sirens sounded. I looked up towards the south and said “Look, there are four birds up there just behind that aeroplane”. The swift reply was, “They’re not birds, they’re bombs!! Get into the shelter straight away!!” We soon heard three loud explosions. After dinner, we walked to the end of Faraday Road to see that two large trees were knocked over and a farmhouse was damaged. Father said “Hey, there were four bombs but only three have exploded. We had better go home as it could be a delayed action bomb”. He was right. At 11p.m. that night, the bomb exploded. It had lodged inside a hollow tree that we had been standing beside earlier on.

The plane we saw had been followed by two fighter planes. I don’t know if it had been shot down, but I received a nasty shock the next Monday morning when I returned to school. This was a brand-new infant school, but all the windows down one side had been shot out and the roof and the suspended ceiling were riddled with bullet holes. I had to dodge the broken glass to get my belongings and then return to the old school in High Street where we stayed until the glass was replaced. The senior school suffered the same damage, and the holes were still there when I left senior school years later.

My old infant school at the end of High Street was originally a church, then a school and afterwards, a fire engine station. It was also used as a teenagers’ meeting room after the war.

About 1942, when we were in the shelter one night, we heard a very loud explosion and my mother said, “Sounds like our house has gone!” The bomb demolished two houses in the middle of Rosemary Avenue, one street away from us. Later, an above-ground brick blast shelter was built on that site. Subsequently, after the war when digging the foundations for the new house, an unexploded bomb was discovered.

Early in 1944, Ronnie, my next door neighbour’s father, built a Canadian canoe and we were pushing it down the street to the river when we heard a doodlebug (V1 flying bomb). The engine cut out and it commenced its downwards path, so we ran for the safety of the above ground shelter but, as we did not hear an explosion, we assumed the bomb had glided onwards. Another time when I was cycling along Hurst Road by the Pumping Station, I heard another doodlebug and fell off my bike, hurting my knee. The kindly guide took me to the first aid room inside the Pumping Station to bandage my knee and I still remember the magnificent beam pumps, polished and shining – Victorian engineering at its best.

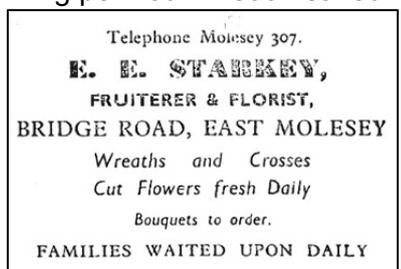
Perhaps the most significant event of my wartime memories was in November 1940. My grandfather, living in Bristol, invited the family to stay as London had suffered heavy bombing and Bristol had been quiet. Not for long, however. I remember my uncle running upstairs to warn us that the bombs were getting closer and to go

to the shelter immediately. As we were hastily getting ready, there was a very loud explosion caused by a landmine that blew out the landing window and took it through the front door and down the street. We made it to the shelter to see, the next morning, a big lump of shrapnel in the footpath outside the back door which was our route to the shelter. The damage from the blast demolished a nearby house and killed the residents. Looking out from the front window that night I remember seeing a panorama of the city of Bristol on fire.

With the advent of V2 rockets in 1944, it was decided that many London schoolchildren would be evacuated. So, my sister and I turned up at school one morning, complete with small suitcase and gas mask, to go to a destination unknown. We finished up at a university campus in Exeter where local residents volunteered accommodation for the children. We stayed with a local family for nearly a year until it was safe to return home. The family was very good to us and I was quite happy, doing well at school and enjoying the relatively safe freedom. I must admit I did a few boyish things that my parents would not have been too happy about, such as turning off the gas supply to the gas street lights then turning it on again, throwing carbide into puddles to watch it bubble, then igniting it and putting pennies on the railway line to flatten them.

On return to Molesey, I had some problems at school as the Devon and Surrey syllabi were quite different, although I did manage to get a scholarship to Kingston Day Commercial School at Hinchley Wood.

In 1947, my school arranged a trip to Switzerland but with a cost of £14.0.0 my parents put in half and said I could save up the other half. So, I found a job delivering greengroceries for E.E. Starkey & Daughters situated in Bridge Road, close to Palace Road, after school at the generous sum of one shilling per hour. I soon saved up the £7.0.0., although there was a café in Bridge Road which baked delightful cupcakes. And I had to eat all my dinner when getting home! The Starkey sisters were middle aged ladies but good to work with. They also had an assistant named Mrs Wellbelove, an interesting name that I have never come across since. Customers that I remember are Lady Pears in Hampton Court Palace, up 99 stairs of a circular staircase, Lady Baden-Powell the widow of Lord Baden-Powell of scouting fame and Roberto Inglez, bandleader of BBC fame in Palace Road. (*Advert from St Paul's Church News, January 1943*).



I have been involved in scouting since I was a young boy. In 1948, scouting celebrated 40 years since its commencement with a pageant at Cigarette Island. I was introduced to Coca-Cola for the first time. Delightful."

A Strange Thing in the Woods

by Claire Annable



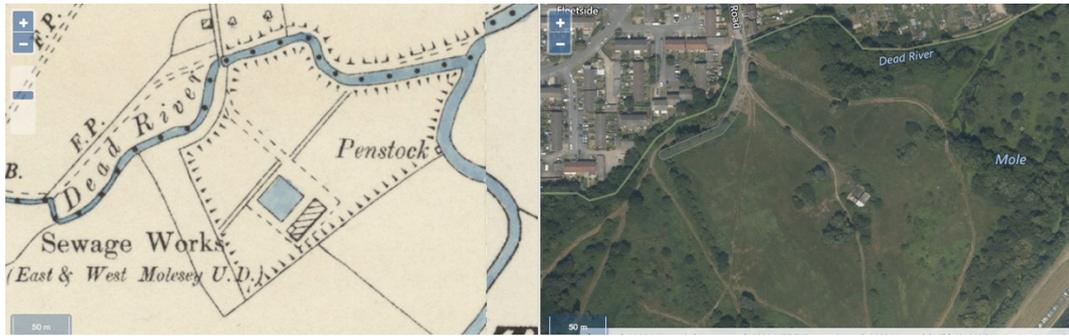
A strange thing, spotted by an eagle-eyed walker, hidden amongst trees and bushes on land between Nielson Recreation Ground and Island Barn Reservoir is not a lamppost, although you would be forgiven for thinking so. It is, in fact, another example of Victorian engineering in Molesey: a sewer vent pipe. Not of the same design as the tall stink pipes around Molesey, this thinner and shorter pipe was needed to ensure that flammable methane gas and toxic gases such as hydrogen sulphide were able to escape from underground drains. (*Photos: The sewer vent pipe near the Reservoir and a close-up of the base of the pipe*)

Why would there be a solitary sewer vent pipe near the Reservoir? Why is there another one on Esher Road by the bridge over the river Mole?

The 1800s saw a dramatic increase in population growth meaning that human waste also increased and that the existing unsatisfactory provisions for its disposal became even more insufficient. Until the second half of the 19th century, raw waste was discharged into rivers or taken to outlying farms for use as fertiliser. These methods of disposal allowed plagues such as cholera to spread even in rural areas. The answer was to build sewage pumping stations connected to underground drains and to use filter beds to remove waste. The resulting clean liquid was pumped into rivers.

The Surrey Comet in November 1871 reported that Parliament had given Kingston-upon-Thames the power to take lands in West Molesey for a sewage treatment works. The resulting works, the East and West Molesey Urban District Council Sewage Works, which according to Rowland Baker opened in 1894, were situated on land at Island Barn Farm.

Late 19th-century map evidence shows the sewage works before Island Barn Reservoir was built. It clearly shows the penstock (sluice gate) where treated waste was discharged into the Mole.



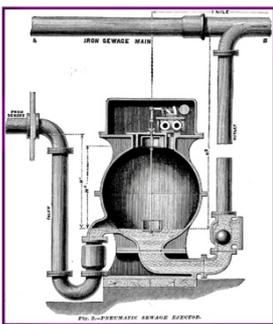
The strange pipe in the woods, and the one by the Mole, were connected to the drainage system.

In 1933, the Surrey Advertiser reported that there had been complaints about the smell in the neighbourhood, the whole area was waterlogged, arrangements at the works were inadequate and the drainage antiquated. Apparently, the mechanism in the old pumping station could be heard gently tapping across West Molesey in the 1950s. The Molesey sewage works became obsolete after sewage was pumped and treated at Weylands treatment works, Esher, from 1961.

Stink Pipes – Update by Claire Annable

Who would have thought that a quiet walk through Molesey would have stirred up such interest in sewerage! After our last newsletter, a MLHS member contacted us about a pipe spotted in Langton Road. Investigations followed and with help from Ray Elmitt, a local historian from Hampton Wick with an interest in drainage, we have discovered that we may not have ordinary stink pipes under our noses!

THE SHONE EJECTOR



Pneumatic Sewage Ejector of Isaac Shone designed to lift sewage from a low collection point into a main sewer at a higher level, 1887

Ray informs us that the pipe in Green Lane could possibly be the exhaust stack of a Shone Ejector. The Shone Ejector was invented by Isaac Shone in the mid-1800s to overcome the problem that, by relying on gravity alone to ensure the flow in a sewage main on flat ground, the required gradient of the pipes would mean they would be buried progressively deeper and deeper with consequent high construction costs. Shone's solution was the ejector, a simple but effective system installed at intervals on a long pipe run which used compressed air to raise the level of the sewage back up and thus reduce the required depth of the subsequent pipe run. The two elements of the ejectors were an underground chamber to house the equipment and a tall exhaust stack for venting the compressed air after each cycle.

Ray says he cannot be sure if the pipe in Green Lane and other stink pipes in Molesey were/are associated with Shone Ejectors as against being there purely for venting the sewers. In order to be certain, he would have to know that there had been an underground chamber to house the equipment, but he says that the pipe in Green Lane, because of its height and diameter, looks uncannily similar to two pipes on Hampton Court Road west of the palace which were definitely ejector pipes. So far, Ray has been unable to find any surviving pipes which still have both elements.

Grace's Guide to British Industrial History says:

"He (Isaac Shone) was the inventor of the Shone system of drainage, which, by means of his hydro-pneumatic ejector, combined with compressed-air, rendered low-lying districts as healthy as those where the sewage can be conveyed by gravitation. The system has been adopted in all parts of the world, conspicuous examples of its use being found in the drainage of the Houses of Parliament, Royal Courts of Justice, Hampton Court Palace, Eastbourne, Rangoon, &c."

It is doubtful that the Hampton Court Palace ejector still exists, but who knows?

Please let us know of any other vents you spot as we would dearly love to map our Molesey examples. We are aware of another stink pipe in Chestnut Avenue, Esher. We are very pleased that Ray has agreed to come and give us a talk in March entitled 'Down the Drain' which will explain in more detail the long and difficult transition from night soil men to public sewage treatment schemes. The date of this talk and further details about it will be confirmed in our next newsletter in January.

60 YEARS AGO - THE MOLESEY REVIEW

July–October 1960

July Review

The Methodist Church had committed itself to a three year plan to raise sufficient money to build a new hall in place of the dilapidated “hutments” (see *right*), and to pay for the new heating systems and woodworm and dry rot repairs.



East Molesey Police Station was going to close between 10 p.m. and 6 a.m. each night for a trial period of six months. The officers who were relieved from station duty would be employed instead on outside patrols.

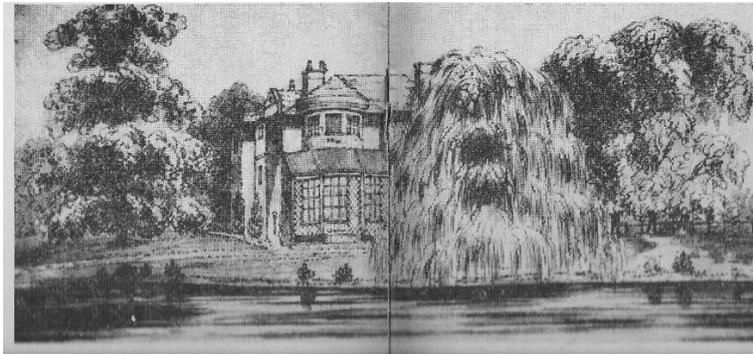
Esher Council was redeveloping Upper Farm by building 14 two-bedroomed semi-detached houses and a two-storey ‘Housemother’ block containing 32 bedsitting room units, ancillary rooms and a flat for the Housemother.

An outline planning application had been submitted for the construction of 25 houses on the site of ‘Mole Abbey’, New Road.

August Review

For the first time in its 94 year history, Molesey Boat Club won the ‘Grand Challenge Cup’ at Henley. The Review described this Cup as “the world’s most sought after rowing ‘trophy’”.

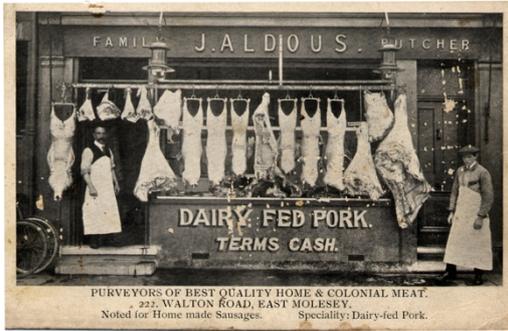
Rowland Baker published an article on the history of ‘The Grange’, a Georgian mansion with an ornamental lake which stood in grounds of about 15 acres, stretching from Beauchamp Road to Walton Road and from the site of the Lord Hotham public house to Priory Lane.



The Grange, or ‘Elm Grove’ as it was originally known, was probably built in the second half of the 18th century for Sir Richard Sutton, an Under-Secretary of State in three governments. The house had many different occupants until, in 1903, it was sold to the building firm of A. S. F. Jury of Tooting, who immediately commenced building houses in Walton Road, Priory Lane and in a new road which they constructed and named Grange Road. The development stopped because of the First World War. In 1928, about three acres of the estate were transferred to the East and West Molesey Urban District Council who continued the erection of houses in Grange Road, Beauchamp Road and Priory Lane. The Grange was turned into flats and the lake filled in. The Council bought the remainder of the estate in 1949, demolished The Grange and laid out the present housing estate. The site of The Grange is now occupied by Brende Gardens.

September Review

This Review included an article by Rowland Baker on Admiral The Hon. Sir George Cranfield Berkeley who is buried in St Peter’s Church, West Molesey. The Admiral was born in 1753, the second son of Augustus, fourth Earl of Berkeley. He joined the Royal Navy at the age of 12 and eventually rose to the rank of Admiral. He was also a member of Parliament for the county of Gloucester for 27 years. He was appointed a Knight Grand Cross of the Order of the Bath in 1815. In 1817, he came to live in retirement at Hurst House, West Molesey. He died in February 1818.



Described by the Review as “The Oldest Butcher’s Shop”, Aldous, the butchers of 222 (now renumbered as 284) Walton Road, celebrated its diamond jubilee. The shop was founded in 1900 by John Aldous, who ran the business until he retired in 1947. He was then succeeded by his son, Jack. *(We believe that it may have been incorrect to describe J. Aldous as the oldest butcher’s shop in Molesey in 1960 as A. J. Biggs’ butcher’s shop was established by the late 1880s, over ten years before Aldous.)*

Esher Council agreed in principle to Surrey County Council’s revised scheme for the development of Manor Farm off Hampton Court Way. The scheme provided for a Roman Catholic Primary school, a Roman Catholic church and presbytery and County Educational offices and playing fields.

October Review

Molesey Chamber of Commerce sent out a questionnaire to their members about the proposed development of Hurst Park. There was a very poor response and those that did reply were split into three categories; those that wanted to turn the racecourse into open space, those that wished it to be developed to provide homes for badly needed labour on the industrial estates and those that preferred that the racecourse should remain as it was. As the views of their members differed widely, the Chamber felt unable to take a specific line at the Public Enquiry held at the end of September into the development of Hurst Park.

The editorial comment in the October Review accused the people of Molesey of “appalling apathy to the Hurst Park Development scheme.” “Developing HURST PARK could be disastrous. Its disadvantages far outweigh the aesthetic principles which naggingly say to us provide homes for the homeless.” The comment referred to the strain which would be imposed on schools and public services and continued, “Overshadowing everything it will mean over 86 acres of ground in a river flood catchment area will be built up to above its last known flood level to protect the 3,500 new residents from this inevitable menace!”.....“Developing Hurst Park is a one sided gamble – guaranteed profits for a few against inevitable misery and unhappiness for thousands in the event of repeated disaster.”

In the Rome Olympic Games, the Molesey Boat Club coxless four who represented Great Britain won their heat in an Olympic record for the course but in the final could only finish fifth in a time that was eight seconds slower than their time in the heat.

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