

### Forthcoming Events

Now that the Government has announced its roadmap out of lockdown we know that it is unlikely that we shall be able to meet in person before 21<sup>st</sup> June. We have therefore arranged the following Zoom meetings for March, April and May. We hope that it may be possible to hold a Summer Stroll at the end of June, but we are delaying a firm decision concerning this until nearer the time. We shall publish further details of our programme for the remainder of the year in our next newsletter.

**Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> March 2021 8 p.m.**  
**Down The Drain**  
**Zoom Talk by Ray Elmitt**

One of the most down-to-earth problems facing local communities in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century was how to deal with the human waste generated by their ever-growing population. It was a topic that occupied huge numbers of column inches in newspapers and fuelled lively and sometimes bitter debate. How did such an unprepossessing issue come to force itself to the forefront of the attention of so many worthy and capable local politicians? This talk will reveal how Molesey found itself the centre of attention for the whole Lower Thames Valley area, how it escaped unscathed and how it eventually solved its own local problem - with a solution which is still operating to this day.

Ray is a local historian who has written several books on the history of Hampton Wick.

**Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2021 8 p.m.**  
**In the Footsteps of the Impressionists**  
**Zoom Talk by Michael Robinson**



*The Regatta at Molesey*  
by Alfred Sisley

This talk concentrates on Alfred Sisley, perhaps the least known of the Impressionists and yet the only one who stayed loyal to the aesthetic qualities of Impressionism for his whole career. In the summer of 1874 Sisley came to stay in East Molesey. Here he captured the essence of leisurely life on the upper reaches of the River Thames.

Michael is an art historian and London Blue Badge Tourist Guide.

**Zoom Coffee Morning**  
**Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> May 2021 at 10.30 a.m.**  
**Hampton Court Village - Residencies and Residents of Renown**



*Hampton Court House*

Richard McHardy will speak about some of the historic houses still standing around or close to Hampton Court Green and will take a look at the life and times of some of their notable occupants, including the occasional Molesey connection. Richard is a City of Westminster Guide, and volunteers with the National Trust and the education department of Westminster Abbey. He is a long-standing member of Molesey Local History Society.

The link to join all the above Zoom talks is <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/2125656313>

Meeting ID: 212 565 6313 No passcode is required.

If you have any queries about Zoom or experience any problems when trying to join a meeting, please email Dave Jupp [dave@thejupps.net](mailto:dave@thejupps.net)

## **Victorian Life: Upstairs and Downstairs**

**Talk by Dr. Judy Hill**

**Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> January 2021**

*Report by Anthony Barnes*

Over 50 of our members attended Judy Hill's Zoom talk on Victorian Life: Upstairs and Downstairs. It was fascinating to hear how domestic service developed in the Victorian era -so different from how it had been in the eighteenth century.

Judy explained that the size of the household was strongly correlated with the income of the family. The big houses might have a small army of servants but every middle-class household aspired to employ one or two servants. One of the effects of this was that the wives and daughters in the family were kept in 'genteel idleness'!

It is in the big houses that we can really see how smoothly the system worked. Nathaniel Parker visiting from North America in 1840 described it as almost magical. It depended on a rigidly hierarchical and regimented way of life. Working conditions were harsh but, perhaps surprisingly, it offered decent careers and positions were much in demand.



Judy illustrated her talk with interesting and amusing details about servants' uniforms (how footmen needed a good pair of legs to wear breeches), household rules (how servants were expected to be invisible), meal habits (how service changed from 'à la française' to 'à la russe') and the friction that could break out between servants (how ladies' maids often clashed with the housekeeper)!

*Footmen at Petworth House*

We are lucky to have rich sources of evidence that survive including photographs, census reports, estate records, household manuals (such as Mrs. Beeton's) and newspapers but few diaries (Hannah Cullwick's is an exception). Judy mentioned a number of big houses with interesting backstairs stories to tell such as Calke Abbey in Derby, Erddig near Wrexham, Crewe House in Cheshire, Petworth and Uppark in West Sussex and Claremont on our doorstep. We look forward to being able to visit these places again before too long.

It is difficult now to imagine the size of this sector which peaked in the 1890s. Even in 1911, the census registered 1.3 million domestic servants, predominantly women, against 1.2 million in agriculture. Judy spoke about the factors influencing the decline of domestic service including the rise of alternative employment opportunities for women in sectors such as retailing and clerical work.

The enjoyable evening finished with questions and some members spoke about what they knew about the accommodation for servants and the servants that had been employed in their own Molesey homes in Victorian times.

### **Report of Zoom Coffee Morning – 10<sup>th</sup> February 2021**

#### **A talk on Platt's Eyot and its history of boat building**

**Roger Haile and Roger Day**

In an interesting, informative and well-illustrated session, we first learned about the early history of Platt's Eyot, an island on the Thames across from Hurst Park.



By the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Moritz Immisch was building electric launches there. Prior to the First World War, Thornycroft bought the island and began building a variety of leisure, commercial and naval craft, including Miss England III, which in 1932 won the World Speed Record; a fast day launch built for the Sheikh of Kuwait, and a large number of naval ships used in both World Wars, including Coastal Motor Boats, Minesweepers, Motor Torpedo Boats, Motor Gun boats and landing craft. *(Photo: Minesweeper M.M.S.2 launched from Platt's Eyot opposite Hurst Park Racecourse)*

Thornycroft moved away from the island in 1966 having been taken over by Vosper, and since then the island has had some light industry, boat repairs and mooring space. The island is listed as being of metropolitan importance for nature conservation, but is deteriorating, and a fire in 2011 partially burned down three large boatsheds. Various developments have been proposed but refused and the future of the island is still somewhat uncertain.

The talk is available on the Members Only section of our website, password Mlhs2017.

## **'Upstairs Downstairs' in East Molesey** **The story of a great aunt who worked for the Ward Family of Hampton Court Palace** **and Matham Manor House, East Molesey**

*by Rosemary Searle ©*



*Matham Manor*

In tracing my family history in Molesey, I came upon, on the 1901 census, my paternal grandmother's elder sister, working as a Parlour Maid in Matham Manor, East Molesey. This great aunt, Ellen Maria Heather, was born on 29 March 1880 in Avern Road, East Molesey, the first child of the marriage of my paternal great grandfather, George Heather, and his second wife, Elizabeth (née Haynes).

George had married his first wife, Hannah Perrin, a Molesey girl, on 4 July 1858 in St. Lawrence Church, East Molesey (now St. Mary's). She was baptised in St. Lawrence on 24 May 1835 and lived with her parents in Creek Road, East Molesey (1841 census) and in Bell Road, East Molesey (1851 census).

My great grandfather, and later two sons from his first marriage, ran a horse-drawn cab business, carrying passengers, so my father's brother told me, between Hampton Court Palace, some of the larger Molesey houses, and the railway station (opened in 1849) and I should imagine it was through passenger contacts that his daughter came into employment at Matham Manor House. George can be found living with his first wife and family in Hurst Road (1871 census) and with his second wife and family in Avern Road (1881 census). My grandmother was born here in 1881 but a few months later the family moved to Teddington where they lived for the remainder of their lives and are buried in Teddington Cemetery.



*Ellen Maria Heather*

Great aunt Ellen was aged only 21 at the time of the 1901 census and went on, in later life, to work as a 'Companion' to several wealthy unmarried ladies. With one she travelled extensively throughout Europe for many years, staying in some of the best hotels of the day and wintering each year in either the Italian Lakes or on the French Riviera in Menton ... rather like the second Mrs. de Winter in Daphne du Maurier's 'Rebecca', although Ellen, rather like most of us, wasn't fortunate enough to find herself a Max de Winter and remained technically 'in service' for the remainder of her working life! I have inherited some wonderful hand-painted postcards of great aunt Ellen's travels, passed down to me by her unmarried niece. Happily, thanks to Ellen's ministrations, her final 'Lady' lived until the age of 97 and rewarded her loyalty by leaving her very well provided for with an annual income and a lump sum, out of which she was able to purchase a very pleasant four-bedroomed detached house in Teddington. Almost a 'Rags to Riches' story! Ellen never married, but nevertheless was the envy of her six sisters, many of whom followed a more traditional route through life of women of their day and background!

However, back to Matham Manor in 1901 and my great aunt's employers.

Georgina Katherine Petronella Ward (1827-1902), and her younger sister, Jane Hamilton Julia Ward (1830-1901), were two of the daughters of Sir Henry George Ward, KMG, a diplomat and writer and his wife Lady Emily Elizabeth née Swinburne, who was an artist and illustrator. Sir Henry and Lady Ward were married on 8 April 1824 in St. George's, Hanover Square.

From: Edited Appletons Encyclopaedia -

*"WARD, Sir Henry George, English diplomatist, born in England about 1796, died in Madras, India, 2 August, 1860. He was the son of Robert Plummer Ward, juristic writer and novelist, and entered the diplomatic service in 1816. He was chargé d'affaires in Mexico and travelled extensively in that country in 1825-7, sat in parliament from 1832 till 1849, was afterward high commissioner to the Ionian Islands, and governor of Ceylon, from whence he was transferred to Madras, dying of cholera a few days after his arrival. He was the author of "Mexico in 1827" (2 vols, London 1828) which was enlarged and reissued under the title of "Travels in Mexico" - 1829). His wife, Emily Elizabeth, born in England about 1805 was a daughter of Admiral Sir John Edward Swinburne, and married Sir Henry Ward in 1824. She drew the illustrations for her husband's work on Mexico and published also "Views of Towns in Mexico" (2 vols. London 1829.)"*

Tracing the Ward family using the 1841 to 1901 British census returns, I have found the following:-

In 1841, Lady Emily and her six daughters were either living or staying with her brother, Admiral Charles Henry Swinburne and his wife Jane neé Ashburnham in East Dene House, Bonchurch, Isle of Wight. Emily and Charles were children of Admiral Sir John Edward Swinburne and Emily Elizabeth Bennet. East Dene House, a sizeable mansion now used as a hotel, was originally built in about 1800 and was later to pass into the hands of Charles' son, who appears aged 4 on this census return, and who became the well-known poet and writer, Algernon Swinburne (1837–1909).

The family does not seem to appear on either the 1851 or 1861 census returns, probably because Sir Henry worked overseas from leaving parliament in 1849, until his death in 1860, and his family were no doubt with him.

However, by 1871, Lady Emily Ward, now widowed, and her unmarried daughters, Georgina and Jane, had been awarded a Grace and Favour apartment at Hampton Court Palace and were living there together with four female domestic servants. Likewise, in 1881 they were living in "Lady Ward's Apartments" at the Palace, now with a complement of five servants. Lady Ward died in 1882.

By 1891, the sisters had moved across the river into East Molesey, where they can be found living at Kinnersley Lodge in Hansler Grove, before moving to Matham Manor House, where they ended their days. Jane died in 1901 and Georgina in 1902 and I assume that it was at this point that my great aunt left Matham Manor House and moved on in search of pastures new.

There is much of interest to be found from a study of the wills of Lady Emily Ward and Georgina and Jane.

Lady Ward died on 18 December 1882, aged 84, at Hampton Court Palace and although her will, with two codicils, contains much complex financial detail, mainly with reference to her late husband's estate, nevertheless it does tell us that three sons and seven daughters were still living when she made the will in 1867 and gives much information on their full names, spouses and careers, etc. Her executors were her solicitor and her nephew, Sir John Swinburne Baronet of Capheaton. Witnesses to the original will were William Ward (Gardener at Hampton Court Palace) and Francis Galliard (Verger at Hampton Court Palace).

Georgina died at Matham Manor House on 16 June 1902. Her will is short, being made when she was in poor health and unable to sign her name. She leaves a few bequests, one being to the Vicar of St. Mary's Church, but the bulk of her estate goes to her youngest brother and executor, Col. Henry Constantine Evelyn Ward, as her sister Jane had predeceased her the previous year.

Jane had died on 19 August 1901 also at Matham Manor House. Her will is a 'gem' as she mentions many people (including, once again, the Vicar of St. Mary's), both related and not, to whom she leaves small and very personal bequests, so that we glean a fair amount about her belongings and furnishings at Matham Manor, etc. To my delight she not only mentions my great aunt Ellen, thus:

"I also give and bequeath to Ellen Maria Heather the sum of Fifty pounds as a small return for her loving service."

but also, interestingly, leaves a bequest to a niece:

"I give and bequeath to my niece Frances Jane Pasbach the sum of One hundred pounds."

I recognized the surname Pasbach as being the maiden name of my sister Deborah's Godmother, Nora Frances de Sausmarez, who lived in Palace Road, East Molesey, the wife of Commander Ronald Philip de Sausmarez of the well-known Guernsey Naval family, and a friend of my mother since the 1950s. Commander de Sausmarez' uncle, Captain Lionel Andros de Sausmarez, was a one-time resident of East Molesey Lodge and is buried with his wife and daughter in Molesey Cemetery.

Further research has now uncovered the fact that Nora Frances was the daughter of Charles William Pasbach and Frances Jane Butler. Frances Jane Butler was the daughter of Sir Henry and Lady Ward's eldest daughter Frances Guadeloupe Felipe Maria Ward and her husband Edward Charles Butler.

Commander and Mrs. de Sausmarez were kind and attentive towards my sister and me as children, inviting us frequently for afternoon tea, listening to our progress on the piano and never forgetting our birthdays, etc. We knew of his background, but little of hers, so it came as a pleasant surprise for me to discover that Nora was actually a great granddaughter of Sir Henry and Lady Ward and that we had a closer connection than originally thought to this interesting family.



## **'Secret Stream' - The River Ember**

*by Claire Annable*

In his forthcoming autobiography, textile designer, Philip Jacobs, describes his life growing up in Molesey and how it has influenced his designs.

Philip grew up in East Molesey during the 1950s and 60s. In his autobiography, he describes the family house: "It was a very unusual house, since in the front it faced the busy Esher Road. But nearly all the windows were at the back, where the garden ran along a bend in the river Ember. The Ember was quite a small winding willow tree lined river that left the river Mole further upstream and then they both joined up again as they entered the Thames opposite Hampton Court Palace. So, whilst at the front we appeared to live in suburbia, when you came round the back it was like being in the depths of the country with hardly another house in sight during the summer."



Philip spent an idyllic childhood with his siblings in a rowing boat on the Ember, rowing across to Spa Meadow, upstream to Cow Common or downstream to The Splash. When they were older, they each had canoes in which they engaged in 'sea battles' with other local children which involved launching apples at each other, sometimes ending up through greenhouse roofs of local houses. *(Photo: the River Ember taken during Philip's childhood and before the Relief Works following the 1968 flooding).*

It was here, living by the river, that Philip first started to develop a love of nature, he says: "Sometimes on autumn evenings, a mist would rise upon the surface of Spa Meadow and then cascade down the bank like a waterfall onto the river. On several occasions, I rowed across the river to be in the middle of this mist."

He tells of darting dragonflies, a flash of orange and blue as a kingfisher sped down the river and of perfectly formed asymmetrical patterns formed by flower petals floating down the river.

Not all Philip's activities were as gentle as observing the river though. He recalls, "Another of our games took place at home usually when we had friends round. The game was called 'Fogey Bags'. It was at the time of the Great Train Robbery and everybody was looking for the missing mailbags. A quantity of money had been found hidden at a local shop just up the road by the police station. My mother was organizing the collections for Dr Barnardo's children's homes in our area and she had a large amount of paper Barclays Bank money bags for use when the collection boxes were emptied. We used to borrow some money bags, fill them with coal, place them strategically on the pavement then hide behind our garden fence to see what would ensue. After a while, someone would come along pushing a pram, it would crunch over the money bag, the person would move on a bit, look around, and then go back for the bag. Picking it up they generally moved on a few yards before looking around furtively and peering inside the bag, then throwing it down in disgust as we shouted "fogey" from our hiding place.

On one occasion, a friend brought round a large Barclays bank sack. We filled it with coal and put it on the pavement. It hadn't been there many minutes when an expensive Jaguar car pulled up, a man jumped out, picked up the bag, threw it in his boot and roared off, never to be seen again." *(Note: At the time of the Great Train Robbery in August 1963, one of the robbers, Roger Cordrey, lived in Hurst Road, East Molesey.)*



Today, Philip draws on those early days on the river, before the flood alleviation scheme changed his beloved river forever, as inspiration for a new collection of fabrics, entitled Secret Stream. The collection features bluebells, foxgloves, fish swimming through the cool green depths of the Ember, dragonflies and kingfishers and even pet turtles which escaped from his home into the river. He hopes that this collection will take you back to a bygone time when life was much simpler. Even if you don't sew, the images he creates have a magical impact and remind us of the nature still around in Molesey. *( Photo: 'Ember Brook' from the 'Secret Stream' fabric collection).*

**60 YEARS AGO**  
**THE MOLESEY REVIEW - November 1960 – February 1961**

**November Review**

- Molesey was waiting for the Inspector's decision on the development of Hurst Park. The Review urged him to consider the dangers of building on the Thames flood plain.
- The local Medical Officer for Health was urging parents to make sure that their children were immunised against diphtheria. There were cases of diphtheria among schoolchildren in the area and almost one child out of four was unprotected against the disease.
- Dick Emery was living in Ennismore Gardens, Thames Ditton, and was appearing in the 'Army Game' on television.
- The new Managing Director of the Casino on Tagg's Island launched plans to alter and redecorate the hotel. The Review said that he would have "to fight the 'hoodoo' that has made the Casino the biggest white elephant on the Thames."
- The October and November reviews contained articles by Rowland Baker on the history of Fire-Fighting in the Moleseys from the latter part of the 17<sup>th</sup> century until after the end of the Second World War.
- The Thames Hotel on the corner of Bridge and Hurst Roads had carried out extensive alterations to provide a new ballroom able to accommodate 180 to 200 people. In the December Review, the Hotel advertised a New Years' Eve Ball with "No Jazz or Jiving Ballroom Dancing Only!"
- The agent for the owner of the Upper Deck Swimming Pool had offered Esher Council the opportunity to purchase the Upper Deck and adjoining pleasure gardens.

**December Review**

- There were plans to extend and modernise the 'Royal Oak', West Molesey's oldest public house. The plans dated back to 1939, but the work to enlarge the Saloon bar, to provide inside toilets and a games room, to extend the Public bar and to make the living quarters more comfortable had only just begun.
- The Westminster Bank in Bridge Road was to extend its premises by taking in the adjacent premises at one time occupied by Stimson's.

**January Review**

- "It is reliably understood that the Upper Deck Swimming Pool has been sold to a private buyer for a figure in excess of that at which it was offered to the Council." The Review surmised that the Council would have been deterred "from making what to us would have been a sensible investment" by the cost of the pool's upkeep.
- Cannon Way and Molembur Road were both to be made up at the cost of the Council, but the February Review reported that, in view of the probable high cost of making up Molembur Road, the residents of that road, with the agreement of the Council, had unanimously decided to undertake the work at their own expense and to their own specifications.
- A speed limit of 40 miles an hour was likely to be applied to Hampton Court Way, which at that time was not subject to any speed limit.

**February Review**

- In view of fatal road accidents to pedestrians attempting to cross Hampton Court Way at its junction with Alma Road, the Council was considering the possibility of constructing a subway beneath Hampton Court Way.
- The Clubhouse of Molesey Football Club was officially opened on January 20<sup>th</sup> by Sir Stanley Rous, Secretary of the Football Association and later President of FIFA. Other guests included Johnny Haynes, the Fulham and England captain, and Jimmy Hill, the Chairman of the Professional Footballers Association.

- Rowland Baker recounted the only two stories which he had heard about ghosts in Molesey. The first related to The Manor House in Bell Road. "The ghost is supposed to be that of a nannie to some small children of a former owner, who, it was said, drowned two of her charges in the River Mole. Since which time she has roamed the house in her remorse, followed by the patter of children's feet." "The second story tells of the western district of West Molesey which is reputed to be haunted by the apparition of a carriage and four, driven by a former owner of Apps Court House."
- This Review contained an article by Rowland Baker on Ancient Customs in East and West Molesey. The article referred to the festivities that occurred on Shrove Tuesday and May Day and to the custom of Beating the Bounds. Shrove Tuesday was celebrated not only by the making of pancakes to use up food before the beginning of the Lenten fast, but also by games and sports. In Molesey, there was always a game of football on the Hurst. The log-books of the local schools show that the boys were given half a day's holiday from school "for football on the Hurst." This annual football game seems to have continued until 1884.
- The parish records of both East and West Molesey show that it was common for both parishes to beat the bounds, usually on Ascension Day or a day close to Ascension Day, although at East Molesey the ceremony appears sometimes to have been performed on Easter Monday. The purpose of the ceremony was to define the boundaries of the parish. It was usual for the parson, churchwardens and other parochial dignitaries to lead a procession round the parish boundaries, halting at various prominent landmarks on the boundaries to beat the bounds.
- On May Day or 'Garland Day', the children gathered spring flowers which they made into garlands. They took these garlands round the large houses in the village and sang or recited the couplet: "*The first of May is garland day, So please to remember the garland.*" In return, they received presents of cakes or money. Entries in school log books showed that many children took an unsanctioned holiday from school, for example on 1<sup>st</sup> May 1867 the log book of East Molesey school said, "*Very thin attendance, children carrying garlands.*" The centre of the May Day festivities in East Molesey was the May Fair in Bell Road, where the festivities included dancing round the maypole and donkey rides to Tanners Bridge and back.

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