

## **FORTHCOMING EVENTS**

**Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> February 2022, 8 p.m.**

**TALK BY KEITH HATHAWAY**

**The Kaleidoscopic Life of Horace Walpole - Creator of Strawberry Hill**

**Hurst Park School, Hurst Road, KT8 1QS**

Son of Sir Robert Walpole, the first British Prime Minister, Horace Walpole was a writer, art historian, man of letters, antiquarian and Whig politician. He had Strawberry Hill House built in Twickenham, south-west London, promoting a Gothic style some decades before his Victorian successors. His literary reputation rests on the first Gothic novel, 'The Castle of Otranto' (1764), and his Letters, which are of significant social and political interest. Keith will talk to us about this 'renowned author, connoisseur, collector and inexhaustible gossip of the 18th century'.

**Friday 25<sup>th</sup> March 1 p.m. - 6 p.m.**

**Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> March 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.**

**MOLESEY EXHIBITION**

**Refresh Centre 129 Walton Road East Molesey KT8 0DT**

To celebrate the fifteenth anniversary of the foundation of the Society, we are holding an exhibition at which we will display much of the material that we have obtained and prepared during our research over the years. Information will be displayed on each of our major researched topics - the Floods, Molesey during the Second World War, the Carnival, Sport on the Hurst, Hampton Court Bridge, Molesey Then and Now, Molesey Boat Club, Education, the Flood Alleviation Scheme and Molesey's Enclosure story. Entry will be free for Society members and there will be a charge of £1 for non-members. Refreshments will be available.

We should be very grateful if anyone is able to help for an hour or two at the exhibition, either on the door or with the serving of refreshments. If you can assist, please contact Paula Day: [paula.gilder@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:paula.gilder@hotmail.co.uk) 020 8979 4397

**Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> May 2022, 8 p.m.**

**TALK BY ANITA ANAND**

**Sophia: Princess, Suffragette, Revolutionary**

Anita, a BBC presenter and journalist, will speak to us about the life of Sophia Duleep Singh, born into Indian royalty in 1876 but raised in England. Sophia, goddaughter of Queen Victoria, battled against injustice and inequality throughout her life and supported many causes including the Suffragette campaign for votes for women. Fittingly, the talk will be at

the Clore Centre, close to where Sophia had a grace and favour apartment and from where she sold copies of 'The Suffragette' outside Hampton Court Palace.

## MEETING REPORTS

### MOLESEY'S ENCLOSURE STORY: LOOKING FOR LOST FIELDS

St Lawrence Junior School Church Road East Molesey

Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> November 2021

*Report by Lynda McCarter*

Our November meeting, researched by members, coincided with the 200th anniversary of the implementation of the Act to enclose lands in East and West Molesey. This Act was passed in Parliament in 1815 but it took six years to complete the changes in Molesey. Numerous maps were on display showing Molesey before and after the Act. There was also a lot of information on the most prominent people involved.

Prior to the Act, Molesey consisted of two manors - Molesey Prior and Molesey Matham. Ordinary people worked the land for the Lords of the Manor in return for strips of land to work for themselves. Molesey consisted of three large open fields, some fields that had been enclosed earlier and three areas of common land - Molesey Hurst, Dunstable Common and East Molesey Common. As the names suggest, these were available for the common people to graze animals, collect firewood and forage. Obviously, without this free grazing you could not keep an animal without the means to feed it yourself.

This was a difficult time for agricultural labourers. It is probably no coincidence that a workhouse was opened in Molesey in 1822. This was situated in the Old Manor House and Quilleys Royal in Bell Road until 1834. After this people went to the workhouse in Kingston, situated where the Hospital is now.

Abraham Driver, a Quaker, was appointed as one of the Commissioners responsible for the implementation of the Act in Molesey. Most of the business was conducted in local inns, including the Red Lion in Hampton. Part of the job was to confirm public and private carriageways and footpaths and who was responsible for their upkeep. Most of these are still in use today having been adopted by the Local Authority. Only one footpath has disappeared.

Land was sold off in lots. Some examples are:

- Lot 1 Hurst House £12,550
- Lot 8 The Bell Inn £390
- Lot 14 Lower Mill £23,800
- Lot 31 East Molesey Park and Farm £10,350
- Dunstable Common sold for £55 an acre
- East Molesey Common sold for £68 an acre



*Lot 1: Hurst House - A very desirable freehold estate and residence (off New Road, demolished c.1900)*



*Lot 14: A capital water corn mill on the River Mole (from the Middlesex bank showing L to R: the Mill, the Castle Inn and the second Hampton Court Bridge)*

King George IV had been the owner of the Manor of Molesey Prior which he sold in the enclosure to purchase Claremont for his daughter, Princess Charlotte. The owners of the Manor of Molesey Matham at the time of the Act were Beaumont 3rd Lord Hotham and Sir George Henry Frederick Berkeley, both of whom had been at the Battle of Waterloo. They benefitted the most from the Enclosure Act although Lord Hotham did actually sell some land to enhance his estate at Dalton Hall in East Yorkshire.

Some of their land was let to tenant farmers including some familiar names such as Edmonds and Nightingale. Married women could not own land but widows and spinsters could and certainly did.

This was an informative meeting on an historic event in the development of Molesey.

### **AGM AND THE FIRST WORLD WAR INSCRIPTIONS ON THE WAR MEMORIALS IN MOLESEY**

**Talk by Norma Millard**

**St Paul's Church, Church Road, East Molesey**

**Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> January 2022**

*Report by Lynda McCarter*

The official business of the AGM, including reports from the Chairman and the Treasurer was concluded swiftly. It was followed by a talk from Norma Millard on the War Memorials of East and West Molesey. Norma has been researching this subject since 2014. As she was born and bred in Molesey, some of the families mentioned on the memorials were well-known to her.

The memorial at West Molesey originally stood at the junction of New Road and Walton Road. It was moved to its present position next to the Recreation Ground in the 1960s. Money for the memorial was raised by public contributions, and it was unveiled on 19<sup>th</sup> June 1921. Local dignitaries attended the ceremony and some people who had lost a relative were invited to lay a wreath, including Norma's future grandmother, aged 14, who had lost her brother. Norma's grandmother is indicated by an arrow in the photograph on the right.

The memorial at East Molesey stands on River Bank by the lock. It features the names of 104 men and two women. There is also a memorial plaque in the Chapel Royal at Hampton Court. The Post Office Sorting Office in West Molesey has a plaque



OPENING CEREMONY IN 1921

remembering a member of staff who lost his life in the First World War. St Paul's Church has a memorial altar under a painted canvas of St George in battle dress. 38 men are named on this. There is also an individual memorial to Frank Arthur Thompson by the Lady Chapel. St Mary's Church has a wooden memorial with 127 names. This was a well-illustrated talk with slides of all these memorials and some relevant gravestones in Molesey Cemetery.

Norma broke down the losses suffered by Molesey people in the First World War as follows:

<b>1914</b>	2 in France and Flanders		1 at sea		
<b>1915</b>	15 in France	1 in Gallipoli	3 in UK of wounds		
<b>1916</b>	22 in France	2 in Iraq	1 in Turkey	1 in Egypt	1 at sea
<b>1917</b>	33 in France	2 in Israel	2 in Greece	1 at sea	2 in UK of wounds
<b>1918</b>	19 in France	1 in Egypt	1 in Greece	1 in Italy	1 in Germany
	2 in India	1 at sea			
<b>1919</b>	1 in France	2 in UK	(These two were members of the Women's Royal Air Force at Hurst Park. A possible cause of their death was the Spanish Flu which goes to show pandemics are nothing new!)		

This was a very interesting talk. I had no idea the theatre of war was so extensive. It was also very poignant as East and West Molesey lost a generation of young men and their untold potential.

## **JANE SCOTT AND THE UPPER THAMES PATROL**

*By Jenni and Roger Haile*

Six months ago, MLHS was contacted by Jane Ellingham from Thames Ditton asking whether we had any information about her grandfather's boat "**JANE SCOTT**" and his involvement in The Upper Thames Patrol - a Thames branch of the Home Guard in World War II. Jane had discovered that the boat is featured on the Millennium Tapestry on display in the Sunbury Walled Garden Gallery. As we had no records of this in the Waterways Section of MLHS, we welcomed the chance to carry out some research.

We contacted local historians up and down the Thames and managed to obtain much information and many pictures. **JANE SCOTT** was home-built in 1942 in the front garden of a house in Seymour Road, Molesey, by George Percival (Jane's grandfather); after launching and testing (we now have video of this), George joined the local section of The Upper Thames Patrol. By 1944, he had become a highly commended member, Captain G. Percival - second in command of the number 2 Division patrolling the River between Teddington and Penton Hook Locks.



*George Percival on board 'Jane Scott'*



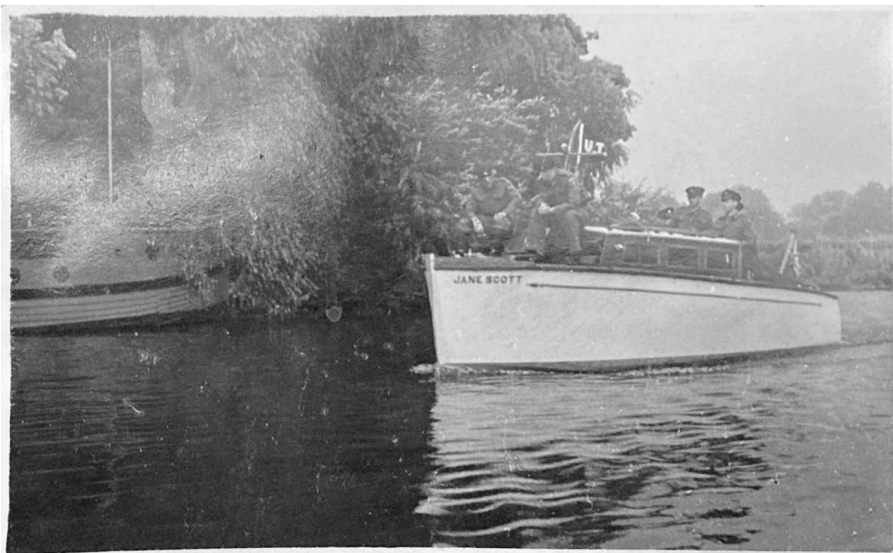
Articles have been published in "Sunbury Matters" and "Thames Ditton Today" telling the story of George and the **JANE SCOTT** and the UTP. Our research is continuing; it has already given us a great deal of pleasure to help Jane to find out so much more about her family history. If anyone can help to add to our knowledge - especially the boat's history after the war ended - please contact us on [rnmhaile@gmail.com](mailto:rnmhaile@gmail.com)

### UPPER THAMES PATROL

During the Second World War, anticipating an enemy invasion, a waterborne defensive group was established to patrol the Thames all the way from Teddington to Lechlade - the resulting volunteers were named the Upper Thames Patrol (UTP) - fondly known as "Up The Pub". UTP obtained over one hundred small boats; many of these were much prized by their owners, some of whom also joined the UTP. In total, 6000 able-bodied volunteers, both men and women, were recruited for these patrols. In our local area, some volunteers were lockkeepers, others were experienced boaters who donated their boats - some being members of the Thames Motor Yacht Club at Hampton Court Bridge

Volunteers were "paid" for a minimum of seven hours a week, receiving a token allowance equal to two pints of beer. Members received tuition in boat handling, water borne operations and Home Guard ("Dad's Army") training. Their key task was to ensure the safety of the river's locks, weirs and 48 bridges from enemy sabotage. They also patrolled looking for suspicious activity in the river's vicinity, sometimes embarrassing the occupants of covered camping punts! If an invasion were to happen, they were trained to destroy the bridges, disable the locks and flood the meadows, to make the river valley an impassable marshland for enemy troops. After the threat of a German invasion had diminished and finally passed, the UTP and the Home Guard were disbanded in 1944; very few records of the UTP remain but a growing number of photos and documents are coming to light. In 2019, a one-day

event was held at Abingdon Lock to commemorate the UTP - many exhibitors and re-enactors entertained and informed over 17,000 visitors. For full details see [www.thamesatwar.co.uk](http://www.thamesatwar.co.uk)



*'Jane Scott' patrolling the Thames*

## THE DEVELOPMENT OF WEST MOLESEY IN THE 1930s

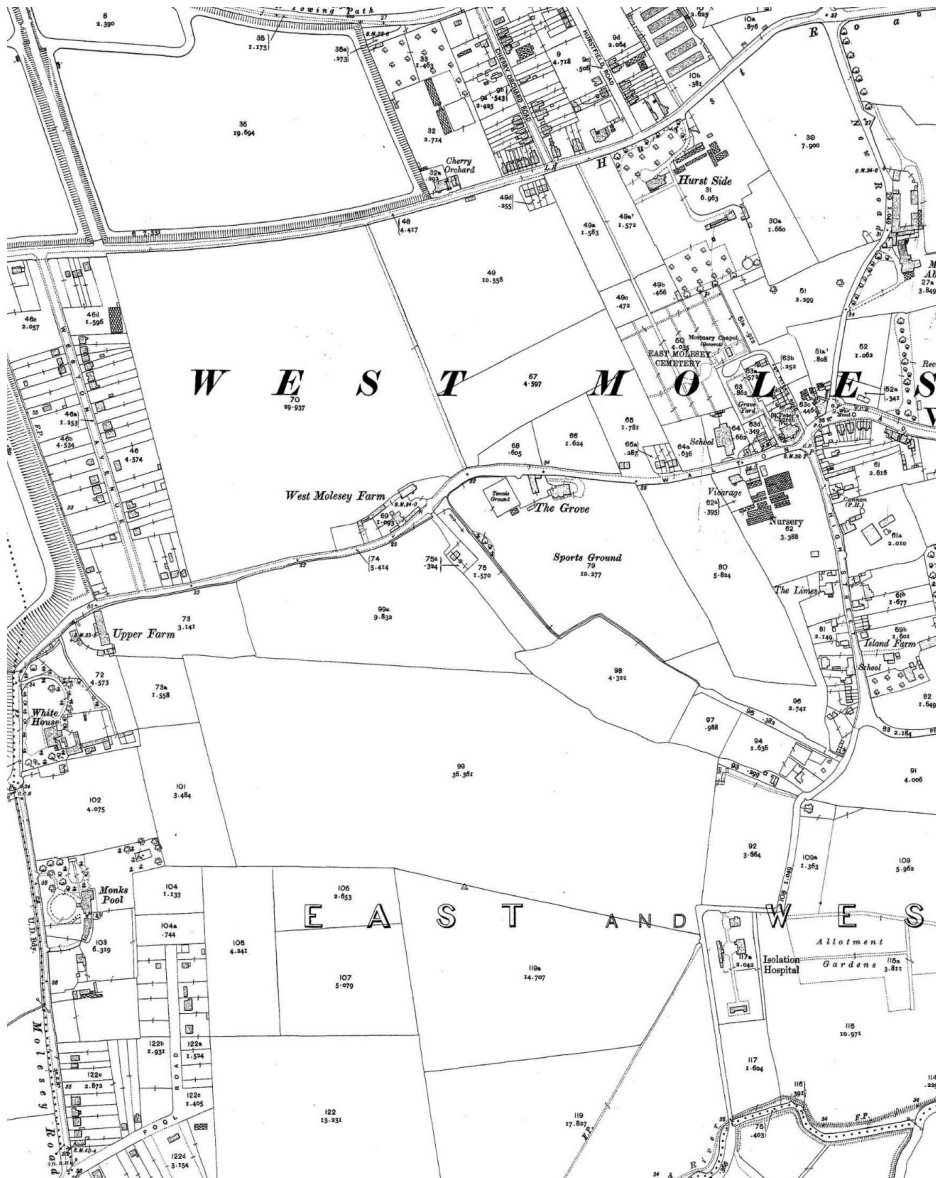
Until the 1930s, West Molesey was still largely a rural farming community as it had been for many hundreds of years.

But during the 1930s, the area west of St Peter's Church changed significantly, as is illustrated by the following extracts from the Ordnance Survey maps of West Molesey of 1932 and 1937. Within a period of five years, much of the farming land disappeared and was developed for housing. New housing estates were laid out to both the north and south of Walton Road. The parade of shops on the corner of Walton Road and High Street opposite St Peter's Church was also built during this period.



*Bernard Lens III, 1682-1740,  
A View of West Molesey near  
Hampton Court 1731-33  
Yale Center for British Art*

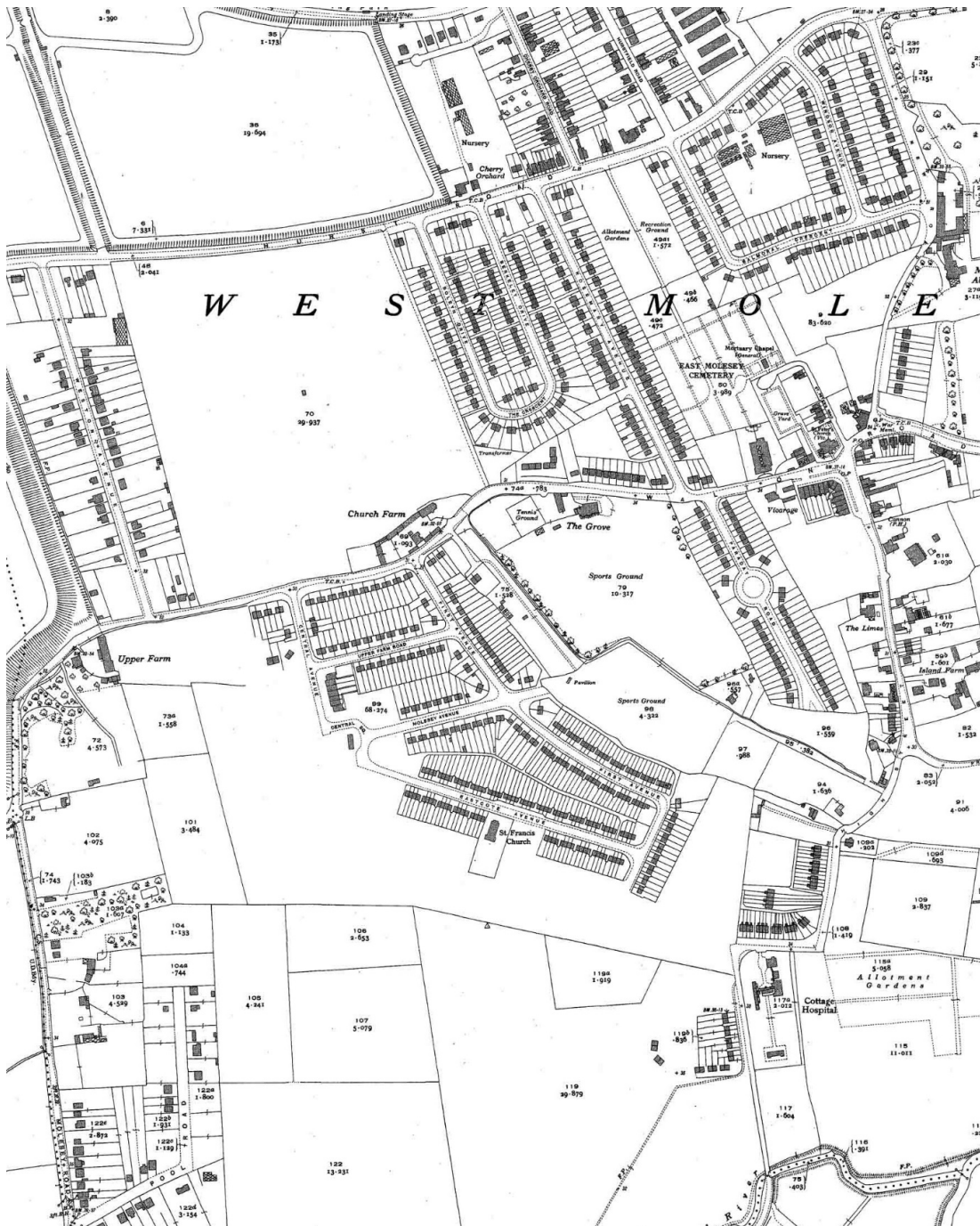
### MAP OF WEST MOLESEY - 1932



*Development is  
centred round St  
Peter's Church. The  
land to the west is  
mostly farmland.*

The population of West Molesey increased very rapidly. The 1931 census gave the population figure as 2,159. By the time of the 1951 census, it had more than trebled to 7,525. (There was no census in 1941 because of the Second World War but, in 1944, the population was estimated, on the basis of food ration books issued, at 5,393. (Rowland G. M. Baker 1972, *A Dictionary of Local History East & West Molesey*)

### MAP OF WEST MOLESEY - 1937



*The Upper Farm Estate has been built to the south of Walton Road. The large house called Hurst Side on the south side of Hurst Road has been demolished and there has been significant housing development between Hurst and Walton Roads.*



## WEST MOLESEY IN THE 1930s AND 1940s

*Memories of Doreen Freeman (née Hagan)*

*Doreen has used her own recollections and those given to her by her parents to recall West Molesey as it was in the 1930s when her parents moved into the area and in the 1940s when she was a child.*

My parents bought 8 First Avenue in 1933 but did not move in until after their wedding in August 1934. My father had seen at Waterloo Station an advertisement for an "Ultra Modern Sun-Trap Labour Saving Howard House" at Hampton Court.

Hillman cars met prospective buyers at Hampton Court Station and took them to view the houses. My parents bought a two-bedroom semi-detached house for the sum of £395.



When they moved in, this part of Molesey was very rural with many unmade-up roads. The single decker bus only came as far as St Peter's Church. Molesey Road stopped at Pool Road and was then a dirt track up to Field Common. Pool Road was unmade from Monks Avenue to the Hospital. The fields in Molesey Road to the east of Pool Road stretched to Molesey Hospital, there were no ballast pits then and you could walk to Esher Mills.

There was only one factory in Central Avenue (Bayer Products) until 1947 when the rest of the factories started to be built. Central Avenue had a newsagent on the corner of Upper Farm Road. The rest of the lower half of the building on the Parade was used as a factory for the war effort (I'm not sure what was made there but it was some sort of engineering as the swarf used to lie in the gutters at times). Opposite the Parade were fields which were ploughed for wheat. The prefabs were built on these fields, also about 1947. The prefabs were the height of luxury at the time with built-in fridges and all mod cons.

The shops on St Peter's Parade opposite the church were a greengrocer (Mr. Mitchell), a butcher (Mr. Dixon), a grocer, a Newsagent, Tobacconist and Stationery (Mr and Mrs Stevens), Wills the tobacconist (who sold everything for smokers including pipes), a Bata shoe shop and a Ladies Hairdresser. After the War, Mr Clutterbuck opened a hardware unit and sold furniture as well. A fish and chip shop came later but I'm not sure what year. There were two public houses, The Cannon in High Street and the Royal Oak in Walton Road. There was a sweet shop owned by Mr & Mrs Miller between the Royal Oak and the church. Mr & Mrs Chapman ran a small grocer's shop in the High Street near Walton Road. There was another grocer's shop in Walton Road opposite New Road run by Mr & Mrs Roubaud. There was a post office at one end of the shop where we bought stamps and wireless licence, the dog licence and postal orders (all things of the past).

I was born in 1939 when Molesey was still a farming community. There were many families that had a farm or small holding in West Molesey - the Coopers, Cliffords, Boremans and Walkers to name just a few. The farm nearest to where I lived was Church Farm owned by Mr Boreman. The farmhouse still looks as it did in the 1930s but the barns have been



converted into housing. The yard looks the same as when I was a child. Church Farm had many fields growing vegetables. When the War started, many farm labourers went into the forces and the farm used Italian prisoners of war to help with the picking of the crops. They came every day and were driven to the fields in a cart behind the tractor with an escort with a gun. As children this didn't upset us as it was the way it had always been. The farm also had a pair of white shire horses who went up Walton Road every morning and evening to plough or collect the crops that were ready for market. The man who was in charge of the horses was very short and slight and I was always amazed how he managed to control these beautiful creatures.

Cliffords Farm was in the High Street. It had pigs and cows and ran a milk delivery round. Coopers Farm was mostly cattle. The Walker Brothers had a smallholding off Walton Road, near Bentalls Sports Ground, and sold chickens, rabbits, kittens and vegetables. The brothers lived on the corner of Rosemary Avenue. This is where we bought our cat Tiddles who I used to dress up in dolls clothes and push about in my dolls' pram. The house at Bentalls sports ground, The Grove, was used as a British Restaurant during the war.

During the War, my mother put a blanket over the French windows of our house in case bombs were dropped. This saved us being hurt when a bomb did drop at the corner of Upper Farm Road and Central Avenue. The bomb demolished the houses and left a crater where the local children used to play. The girls would take their picnic lunch with them and play 'houses' whilst the boys used to build camps.

In 1945 an American Serviceman came along the road and told us children that the war was over and to go in and tell our mums. First Avenue was a friendly area where we all knew each other and worked together. First Avenue and Upper Farm Road had a Street Party to mark the end of the War. The children had their party during the afternoon with food on trestle tables set up in Upper Farm Road and in the evening the grown-ups had their own celebrations. My dad, Ronald Hagan, took all the furniture, except for the piano and stool, out of our living room and put benches along the walls. He invited all the local neighbours to join him and mum for the evening after the children had gone to bed. During the evening, after everyone had chatted for a while, the singing and dancing began and refreshments were served. My brother Ron and I were sent to bed but it got rather rowdy and we sat on the stairs and watched through the bannisters. We were promptly told to go back to bed. Being obedient we did but once our parents were out of sight we went down again. But, after

being reprimanded again, we decided to do as we were told and returned to bed.



*Upper Farm Road/First Avenue Street Party 1945. Doreen's father is seated immediately to the left of the clown in the front row and Doreen and her brother are in the third row behind their father*

## **60 YEARS AGO**

### **THE MOLESEY REVIEW November 1961 - February 1962**

#### **November**

"The new library at the Forum, West Molesey will be built and equipped for opening by April 1963. Building will commence in February next year."

#### **December**

The Surrey Education Committee had approved plans for part of the site occupied by the West Molesey Secondary and Primary Schools to be used as a Homecraft and Youth Centre. The total cost of the scheme was estimated at £49,205; the cost of £29,758 for the Homecraft Centre was to be met from the Parker Bequest. In 1934, Mrs Henrietta Parker left property then worth £20,000 on trust for founding and endowing a school for cookery, hygiene and laundry in East Molesey. In 1960, the bequest had been valued at £41,500. Surrey County Council was going to sell the Homecraft Centre site to the Parker Bequest trustees for a nominal £100. The income from the balance of the bequest was to be used to maintain the centre.

The architect of Guildford Cathedral, Sir Edward Maufe, attended the consecration of the cathedral in 1961. It was nearly 30 years since Maufe had entered an open competition to design the cathedral; 183 proposals were submitted, and his design was chosen. The cathedral was the first to be built on a new site in the south of England since the Middle Ages. The original estimated cost was £250,000 but by 1961 the structure had cost £540,000, a large proportion of which had been raised from people who bought a brick for half a crown (or more), on which their name was inscribed. At least another £200,000 was still required to complete the tower and build the garth at the west end.

#### **January**

Esher Council was planning to turn its depot behind the Fire Station in Walton Road into a car park. The Surrey Planning Committee had given permission for the Fire Station to be used as a Civil Defence Centre for the next five years. The upper portion of the Station would also sometimes be used as an instruction and leisure centre for the local St John's Ambulance Brigade.

Arthur George Biggs of 155 Walton Road died at the age of 72. He was reputed to be the oldest butcher in Molesey. The business above which he was born and lived was opened by his father in 1873. It was sold on his father's death in 1904 but was acquired again by Mr Biggs in 1925. Mr Biggs and his wife were then in business in Teddington; they returned to Molesey to run the family business in 1930. Mr Biggs was very active in local affairs and was a member of the Molesey Chamber of Commerce, the Molesey Wednesday Football Club, the East Molesey Cricket Club and the Conservative Club.

#### **February**

Molesey Youth Club had restarted and was meeting three evenings a week. It was hoped to find a full-time leader which would enable the club to be open all week. Work was due to begin on the new Molesey youth centre by March.

Molesey Local History Society  
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