

Forthcoming Meetings

Wednesday 23 May 2018, 8 pm (doors open 7.30)

Tudor Fashion

Eleri Lynn, Curator, Hampton Court Palace
Clore Centre, Hampton Court Palace, KT8 9AU

Eleri Lynn is the collections curator at Historic Royal Palaces, with special responsibility for the dress collection. Her talk will tell the captivating story of Tudor dress, its construction and symbolism, and the people who made and wore it. The Tudor monarchs and their courtiers are some of the best-known figures in history. They continue, even today, to spark our curiosity and imagination. Their enduring popularity is no doubt partly due to the iconic portraits in which they are depicted in magnificent style, in farthingales and ruffs, furs and jewels, codpieces and cloaks, and vast expanses of velvet and silk. Far from being mere decoration, fashion was pivotal in the communication of status and power. It was used as a tool in securing and holding the tenuous Tudor throne and as a competitive weapon in the factions, intrigues and love-affairs of the court. Histories of Kings and Queens complement stories of unsung dressmakers, laundresses, and officials charged with maintaining and transporting the immense Tudor wardrobes from palace to palace.

Refreshments will be served before the talk. Booking details are at the end of the Newsletter.

Wednesday 25 July 2018, 10.30 am
Wednesday 29 August 2018, 10.30 am

Visit to Imber Court Museum

Ember Lane, KT8 0BT

Police horses are a familiar sight around Molesey and this is your opportunity to see behind the scenes, with a guided tour of the stables and the museum at Imber Court. Numbers are limited, so please email Doreen Freeman on doreenfree@btinternet.com or telephone 020 8979 0059 to book a place.

Saturday 9 June

Molesey Carnival

We will be at the Carnival as usual and hope you will drop into our tent to see the displays and have a chat.

Meeting Reports

Wednesday 7 February 2018, 8 pm

AGM

Molesey Then and Now – ‘A Journey of Discovery’

Talk by Jenny Wood

The Society held its 11th Annual General Meeting at the new St Lawrence School on Wednesday 7th February. 68 members attended, with apologies from 13 others. The business part of the meeting took about half an hour, and was followed by a talk by our Chair, Jenny Wood, about the creation process, trials and tribulations of bringing the “Molesey Then and Now” book into being – more of that later.

The minutes of the previous year’s AGM were approved, as was the Financial Report; the election of officers and committee was very straightforward, as all members of the 2017/18 committee were willing to restand, and no formal motions had been received.

In her Chairman’s Report, Jenny reported that 2017 had been a memorable year, with the Society celebrating its 10th anniversary and the publication of our first book, “Molesey Then and Now”, with over 900 copies having been sold to date. Membership had risen to 266, and 111 members had already renewed before the AGM. She then reported on the Society’s events in 2017 – Laurence Shafe on The Power of Beauty in Restoration England;

Fiona Fisher on Kenneth Wood, a Molesey architect; Cherrill Sands on the restoration of Painshill Park; Alison Weir at the Clore Centre on her latest book "Anne Boleyn, A King's Obsession"; the summer stroll in Painshill Park; Kirsty Bennett's talk on Surrey in the Great War, and the Society's researched meeting, Educating Molesey. The Society had also had displays at Molesey Carnival and at Magical Molesey. The 2018 programme has been published, but suggestions for future topics would always be welcomed.

Jenny thanked the research group for Educating Molesey, and all the other members who provided information and memorabilia, and asked for information and photographs of floods in Molesey for an evening talk in November, which would cover not just the 1968 floods but others in the area. She also asked for volunteers to help research a future topic, Molesey Architects.

Three newsletters were produced during the year, and Jenny thanked Jill Wilkins for all her work on this. Any contributions from members would be gratefully received. Jenny thanked Dave Jupp and Laurence Shafe for maintaining and updating the website, through which the Society receives a number of queries, including one from a young man in the Netherlands who was converting a lifeboat originally built by Watercraft. Roger and Jenni Haile had been in touch with him, and there would be an article in the next newsletter about this. In regard to storage, there had as yet been no progress.

She went on to thank John Hutton for continuing to look after the Society's finances, Roger Haile for helping with the technology at meetings, and all the members of the committee for their continued support.

After the business of the AGM, Jenny gave an illustrated talk about the publication of the 'Molesey Then and Now' book. The idea behind the book was that 'now' photographs should be taken from exactly the same position as earlier photographs so that it is possible to see how much, or how little, a location has changed.



Jenny talked about the choosing of the 'then' photographs and the research which was carried out in order to obtain information for the text of the book. She mentioned some of the problems which we encountered, particularly the difficulty in finding a designer who could interpret our expectations of the finished project. The book was finally launched in July 2017. Since then it has been reprinted twice (*since the AGM further sales have brought the total to over a thousand copies*).

Many people generously gave us copies of photographs for use in the book. We were unable to use this lovely photograph, which was given to us by John & Rosemary Searle, as we do not know where it was taken. Is anyone able to help?

Thursday 15 March 2018

Sopwith Aviation and the Great War

Talk by David Hassard, Joint Project Leader of the Kingston Aviation Centenary Project

Report by Howard Freeman

On a cold evening in March an audience of some seventy people, a mixture of MLHS and friends and members of the public, including a number of motor cycling enthusiasts, gathered at the new Hurst Park School eager to hear David's talk on a subject not necessarily widely appreciated locally.

David has previously given many in-depth talks about Sopwith Aviation, on which he is an expert, but this particular presentation was the first which he has broadened out to cover the history of aircraft manufacture within the Surrey area during the Great War.

With this review I don't propose to recount to you the MANY numerous facts mentioned by David about aircraft types and descriptions, their performance, attributes, numbers and the dates that they were built, all of which can be found in various written references or on-line sources.



He naturally started with giving an introduction about Tommy Sopwith (photo) and how he came to start building and promoting his own early aircraft designs. He set up his first factory in an old roller skating rink at Canbury Park Road in Kingston-upon-Thames, which provided the large space that was needed to accommodate the aircraft construction. He mentioned his partner Fred Sigrist, a very clever engineer who lived at one time in Wolsey Road, East Molesey (note: who later also set up his own aircraft instrument manufacturing business also in Kingston). He also told us of Harry Hawker, an Australian, who became their test pilot and was a bit of a dare devil. He would push each aircraft to its limits, going on to achieve various performance records and take part in some famous air races.

He touched on the formative days of flying in the district with the building of the familiar Brooklands race track and aviation park, which was the location of the early flying schools and where all the notable manufacturers had hangars for aircraft assembly and maintenance. It was also the airfield where Sopwith Aviation would take their newly-made planes from Kingston by road transport for flight testing.

He explained the typical wooden, wire and fabric construction of the early aeroplanes and passed around the audience an example of a wing rib, which was extremely strong but very lightweight, recently made for Sopwith Tabloid replica floatplane.

As the Great War progressed, so did the performance of the planes, engines, armament and fighting power, with the introduction of forward firing guns through the propellers by means of synchronised interrupters. A lot of the planes were made for the Royal Naval Air Service (RNAS), some fitted with floats and some launched from platforms on capital ships.

With the ever-increasing demand for planes for both the Royal Flying Corps (RFC) and the RNAS, planes were being made by a number of manufacturers based in Surrey, including Martinsyde at Woking, Vickers at Weybridge, Bleriot & Spad at Addlestone and Whitehead, first at Richmond and Hanworth Park. These, along with engine manufacturers such as ABC Motors at Hersham, propeller manufacturer Lang at Weybridge, dope makers Cellon in Richmond and various other component makers, meant that production was active in Surrey. Sopwith-designed planes were also made by other subcontractors, the likes of Ruston & Proctor and Beardmore, elsewhere in the UK.



Manufacturing capacity was increased with four newly-built National Air Factories – No.1 being at Croydon and No.2 being located at Ham (which was used by Sopwith and eventually became Hawkers).

It was estimated that the nation would need 3,500 planes per month by the end of 1918. However, the War finished abruptly, meaning there was a huge surplus of built planes not now required and many large orders were cancelled. Sopwith (and others) were not paid and the firm was liquidated. The Ham No.2 factory was bought by Leyland Motors and

much later by Hawker Aircraft. *(The photograph shows Sopwith Salamanders (1918) in the Ham No. 2 Factory).*

David ended his informative and entertaining talk, illustrated with numerous archive photographs, production statistics and charts, with the usual audience questions and answers. From fewer than 200 aircraft built in Surrey before the Great War, an amazing 8,800 were built to wartime orders, with a further 10,000 Sopwith designed aircraft built elsewhere in the country and in France.

We all went home with a far better understanding of the impact the Great War had on the effort and the number of people employed in the aviation industry locally.

MEDICAL MATTERS IN EAST MOLESEY

Memories of John Searle (1922 – 2017) a member of the Society for ten years and resident of East Molesey for seventy-seven years.

Text and further research by Rosemary Searle

During WW2, the Molesey District Nurse 'headquarters' was located in our house (38 Manor Road).

My mother, during a chat over a cup of tea, had been asked by our family GP, Dr. Arthur Bowling, who lived and had his surgery at 5 Wolsey Road, if she could accommodate two of these ladies, Nurse Moore and Nurse Hunt, in our top floor rooms. They had their own telephone installed – Molesey 2434 - and made out visiting schedules based on requests from the Molesey doctors. Nurse Moore was the proud possessor of a Norton motorised autocycle upon which she would travel to her patients and which she stored in our conservatory, but this machine occasionally needed male attention to keep it running smoothly and so Mr. Frederick C. Kent, the owner of Kent Chemist in Walton Road, with whom the nurses were quite friendly, would come to the house and spend time both with them and with the bike ... also, of course, having the obligatory cup of tea and chat with my mother!

Dr. Bowling's surgeries were rather flexible by today's standards. He operated a 'sit and wait' system which didn't require a receptionist to take bookings. During surgery times, if one needed attention one would enter his house in Wolsey Road through the side door into the waiting room where seats were arranged around the perimeter of the room. Patients moved along seat by seat, in order, as and when Dr. Bowling called for the next

person to come into his capacious consulting room. In overall charge of proceedings was his large white Persian cat who sat disapprovingly in the window at the far end of the consulting room, monitoring the comings and goings. Dr. Bowling mixed and dispensed the necessary medication himself in his own pharmacy in a corner of the room.

During WW2 in 1944, I had the misfortune to develop a severe attack of shingles which required the frequent anointment of gentian violet and the application of a bandage around my middle, for which purpose we were very fortunate in having the district nurses on site! Unfortunately, my ailment did make playing the piano rather difficult and after a recital I gave for the Molesey Women's Institute in Vine Hall, a friend remarked ... "I enjoyed your playing, but you did seem rather less relaxed than usual"!

In 1964, at the advanced age of 42, I contracted Polio which paralysed both of my arms and necessitated visiting Kingston Hospital to be examined by a Harley Street specialist, who prescribed treatment at Kingston and later at Molesey Hospital in the form Galvanism and Faradism - electric shock treatment, named, of course, after Michael Faraday, the 19th century Chemist and Physicist, who lived at Hampton Court. The treatment was carried out at Molesey Hospital by Mrs. Wood and Nurse Robinson in the Physiotherapy Department and eventually the regime restored the use of my arms, so successfully that I was able to conduct performances of operettas with various amateur societies in Sunbury on Thames and Twickenham, during the 1970s and '80s.

During the early days of my illness, Dr. Bowling visited me at least three times a week at home in order to monitor my progress. Unfortunately the good Doctor died from a brain haemorrhage in 1968, but will be remembered as a truly dedicated family doctor who knew all his patients well. However, subsequent to the decease of Dr. Bowling, the care of his patients was taken over by Drs. Kenneth Brown, Michael Parry, Robin Browne and Ian Coxon, who all showed the same dedication, personal interest and concern for their patients and will be remembered with much fondness and gratitude by all in Molesey.

MLHS WATERWAYS GROUP REACHES THE NETHERLANDS!

Roger and Jenni Haile - organisers of the Waterways Group



We were recently contacted by a young gentleman from the Netherlands. Fabian told us that he is a member of the lifeboat rowing racing team "Seahorse". They have restored an old lifeboat, rescued from a Panamanian ship, and have uncovered a manufacturer's plate showing that it was built by Watercraft Ltd in Molesey.

On an Internet search Fabian had found, in a MLHS Newsletter, reference to a talk organised by the MLHS Waterways Group in 2009 at which an ex-employee of Watercraft, David Harvey, gave us lots of detail. Could we supply Fabian with any more information on his lifeboat and the company that built it?

We certainly could!



We have a file giving lots of details of the layout of the company's premises and pictures of its products and a list of its employees - even a genuine Watercraft sales booklet from the 1950s.

Copies of much of this data have now been emailed to Fabian, and in return he has sent us pictures of the restored lifeboat - you can see its identity plate proudly polished on the starboard bow.

His ambition is to bring the boat to enter in the Great River Race on the Thames between Greenwich and Richmond.

We look forward to seeing him in action there!

60 YEARS AGO
THE MOLESEY REVIEW
February 1958 – April 1958

February Review

Esher Council turned down a proposal to demolish St Mary's vicarage on the corner of Arnison Road and Bridge Road and replace it with a three-storey block of flats and maisonettes comprising 20 units, each containing three rooms, kitchen, bathroom and with garages. The Council felt that the proposed density of development was excessive and that a three-storey building was inappropriate on the site.

Old Timer reported that the grass verge on the south side of Wolsey Road had been badly cut up by horses' hooves.

March Review

Oxford University's Boat Race crew stayed at the Mitre Hotel for a few days while training for the Boat Race. Molesey Boat Club and Hampton Grammar School provided pacing crews during afternoon training.

The Court Cinema in Bridge Road was at risk of closure. Decreasing cinema attendances throughout the country had resulted in the closure of 70 cinemas, including the Odeon, Tolworth, and the Savoy, Teddington. Esher Council had recommended that the County Council should refuse an application for the conversion of The Court into a factory and offices, but plans had been approved for the cinema to be used as storage space.

April Review

Permission had been granted for the use of the Court Cinema for industrial purposes. Kadec Arts Limited wanted to use the first floor for administrative and drawing office accommodation and the ground floor for light industrial purposes and storage.

Designs submitted by Molesey architect, Kenneth Wood, were among the ten designs chosen in a competition among 450 architects, who were invited to design houses suitable for this country using Canadian timber frame construction. The successful designs were illustrated in a booklet published in March and had been exhibited at the Building Centre in London. Kenneth Wood was going on a study tour of Canada as the guest of the Canadian Government.

Basil Turner retired as the president of East Molesey Cricket Club after 11 years in the office, and accepted the office of Patron. During his presidency, both the Australian and New Zealand touring teams played at East Molesey.

There was an article on the Old Ember Mills by T. S. Mercer. The Mills were situated at the end of Cow Common, where the footbridge across the Ember leads into Orchard Lane, but all that remained of the Mills were the sluices. The earliest known reference to the Mills was in The London Gazette of May 15th-18th 1699. This said that there was "lately erected a Workhouse and Mill for Milling of Lead". When the Mills were sold in 1778, they were described in the auction catalogue as "the capital Imber Copper Mills". The Mills were demolished in 1837. Mr Mercer lists the owners and tenants of the Mills. One of the tenants was George Papps who died in 1785 and was buried in Thames Ditton Churchyard on November 15th 1785. On the following day, William Scott and Peter Pratt, were caught carrying away Mr Papps' body, which they had just dug up. At that time, surgeons were paying high prices for dead bodies on which to practise and teach dissection in the hospitals and many unscrupulous men, known as 'Resurrectionists', were prepared to meet this need by digging up newly-buried dead bodies. Scott and Pratt were tried in Kingston, found guilty and fined 6s 8d each. They paid the Sheriff and were discharged. Mr Pratt, who was the licensee of The Harrow, continued as such for the next four years.

The West Molesey industrial estate was continuing to grow. The workshops of J. M. Hargreave & Co. Ltd. had recently been extended by 4,000 sq. ft.. Hargreaves were sub-contractor manufacturers of components for control instruments, aircraft engines, aero accessories and similar industrial components, specialising in those requiring fine finishes and close limits. The firm hoped that the installation of new machinery and other reorganisation would result in its output for 1958 being double that of 1957.

Book issues from Molesey Library during October-December 1957 totalled 32,900, which was 109 more than for the same period in 1956.

'Curious Assault at East Molesey Church May a Man Embrace his Wife in Church?'

By Claire Annable

These were *The Illustrated Police News* headlines in September 1892. *The Illustrated Police News* was one of Britain's very first tabloids and one of the first periodicals to tap into the British public's morbid appetite for crime and sensation. It was once described as "The worst newspaper in England."

It was reported on 24 September 1892 that: Thomas Daines, a gentleman, of Raines Mansions, St Georges, London appeared at Kingston Upon Thames County Bench charged by his wife with assaulting her at St Paul's Church East Molesey. Mrs Daines said that she went to divine service and at the end of the service her husband, from whom she had been legally separated for some time, came into the pew, clasped her tightly round the waist and prevented her from rising. The curate witnessed the occurrence and remonstrated with Mr Daines who then loosened his hold. Mrs Daines also said that since they were separated the defendant had constantly annoyed her. Mr Daines replied that he had no ill-feeling against his wife. It was against her father, Mr Moore, with whom he had had several altercations.



Since the separation he had made many attempts to get his wife to come back to him and when he went into the church it was with the object of winning her over. He admitted placing his arm round her waist, but it was only an act of affection such he was sure the Bench would consider a married man was entitled to exhibit. This caused laughter in the court. The Bench were of the opinion that the defendant had no right to act in a church in the way described and bound him over to keep the peace for 6 months, fining him £10 with a surety for the same amount. Rev J Wainwright of St James's, London Docks, became the surety.

The Moore family was large and well-known in Molesey but it has not been possible to establish which Miss Moore was married to Thomas Daines, what the altercations with her father were, nor what happened after the curious incident.

MEMBERSHIP REMINDER

Subscription renewals became due on 1 January 2018 and we thank all our members for their subscriptions and donations. If you decided not to renew, your membership will now lapse and we will stop sending you information and newsletters. These are only sent out to members. Of course, we should be delighted to welcome you back the Society, should you change your mind.

Produced by:
Molesey Local History Society
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Tel: 020 8979 3465

Wednesday 23 May 2018, 8 pm (doors open 7.30)

Tudor Fashion

Eleri Lynn, Curator, Hampton Court Palace

Clore Centre, Hampton Court Palace, KT8 9AU

IF YOU WISH TO ATTEND THIS MEETING ON 23 MAY, PLEASE SEND THIS SLIP (OR NOTE) WITH YOUR REQUIREMENTS BY FRIDAY 7 MAY

ALTERNATIVELY, EMAIL historysociety@btinternet.com. THERE WILL BE A CHARGE OF £2 ON THE DOOR FOR MEMBERS.

BOOKING IS INITIALLY FOR MLHS MEMBERS ONLY. IF SEATS ARE STILL AVAILABLE AFTER FRIDAY 7 MAY, THE EVENT WILL BE OPEN TO GUESTS AND ADVERTISED TO NON-MEMBERS.

You will not be notified, but you may assume you have a seat, unless you hear otherwise. After Friday 7 May the meeting will be open to guests and non-members (£5 charge on the door) if there are spare places.

NAME.....

Please make a reservation for me/us at the Clore Centre meeting on Wednesday 23 May. Send to Membership Secretary, Molesey Local History Society, 17 Matham Road, East Molesey, Surrey KT8 0SX.