

Forthcoming Events

Tuesday 18 September 2018, 8 pm
Archaeological Treasures of the Thames
Talk by Malcolm Head - Dredger Master
St Lawrence School, Church Road, KT8 9DR

A talk by Malcolm Head on the archaeological finds he has made in a lifetime of working on the river. Our speaker is a keen amateur archaeologist and retired Dredger Master and has, over the years, amassed a fascinating collection of artefacts retrieved from the Thames during dredging.

He will bring examples along and provide the interesting and informative story behind them.

Thursday, 18th October 2018
The Weybridge Diggers
Talk by David Taylor
Hurst Park School, Hurst Road, KT8 1QS

David has written several books on the history of Cobham, Surrey as well as contributing to a variety of other publications such as the Surrey Archaeological Society Collections and Country Life magazine. It was David's early passion for local history that led him to research the history of the now internationally famous eighteenth century landscape garden at Painshill. A particular interest in the 17th century has led David to make a study of the life and times of Gerrard Winstanley and the Diggers, a nationally important revolutionary group which sprang up in the local area at the time of the English Revolution.

Friday 23 November 2018, 8 pm
'1968 and All That'
A History of Flooding in Molesey
Imber Court, Ember Lane, KT8 0BT



Over the years, Molesey has been flooded on many occasions and in researching for this meeting we have accumulated a huge amount of information. We have therefore decided that this meeting in November will look at flooding in Molesey from early times until the flood in September 1968 and that we shall hold another meeting in 2019 at which we shall discuss the aftermath of the 1968 flood, subsequent floods and the alleviation works which have been done to try and ensure that Molesey does not flood in the future.

At the November evening, we shall have a short talk about why Molesey has been flooded on so many occasions and about the history of flooding in Molesey, some personal recollections about the 1968 flood, films of various floods and a short dialogue based on memories of the floods performed by members of the The Barn Theatre Club. We shall also have numerous displays.

Although we do have a lot of information, we should still be grateful for more; if you have any recollections, photographs etc. which you would be prepared to share please contact Jenny Wood: jenniferwood@btinternet.com 020 8979 0889

Meeting Reports

Wednesday 23 May 2018

Tudor Fashion – Talk by Eleri Lynn, Curator, Hampton Court Palace

by Lynda McCarter

Our annual meeting at the Clore Centre this year was a talk by Eleri Lynn on 'Tudor Fashion'. Eleri previously worked at the Victoria & Albert Museum and is now Collections Curator of the Royal and Ceremonial Dress Collection at Hampton Court Palace. This collection consists of some 10,000 items, including underwear, which is Eleri's particular interest. Hardly anything survives from the Tudor period, as expensive and highly prized items would be recycled or passed down. The collection does include a hat, which may have been worn by Henry VIII.

The first Tudor, Henry VII, was insecure about his position, so he retained the tailor of Richard III in order to maintain a consistent image of royalty. Although having a reputation as a 'penny-pincher', he spent an enormous amount of money on his attire, equivalent to £3,000,000 in today's value, over a period of two years. Fortunately, there are plenty of paintings of Tudor dress and Henry VII is shown wearing a long gown on top of his doublet and hose.

In contrast, his son Henry VIII is always shown in a short gown to emphasise his shapely calves and enormous codpiece. He was the ultimate 'power dresser' in a bid to impress the ambassadors and his fellow rulers. Underwear consisted of a fine linen shirt, which was the only washable item worn. This could be changed several times a day if necessary and if you owned enough linen. Henry VIII even introduced sumptuary laws, which decreed what materials certain classes were and were not permitted to wear, under pain of fines or imprisonment.

Women's clothing was more complicated and involved being sewn and pinned into various layers. It would take about two hours to get dressed and would require assistance. Elizabeth I dressed very modestly before she came to the throne, as her life was constantly under threat. As Queen, she became instantly recognisable from her jewel-encrusted wigs and elaborate ruffs. Thanks to a 'bum-roll' and farthingale, her silhouette almost matched her father's. At her death, Elizabeth had more than 2,000 items of clothing. Most of this was kept in the Great Wardrobe, unfortunately lost during the Great Fire of London.



Eleri also told us about the recent discovery of the Bacton Altar Cloth. It was while researching a blog on Welsh connections to the Tudor court that she came across the Bacton altar cloth and paid a visit to the church. Bacton, a small hamlet in Herefordshire, was the birthplace of Blanche Parry, who was a personal attendant to Elizabeth I almost from cradle to grave. The use of silver thread implies a royal owner and the existence of several seams shows that it was obviously not made originally as an altar cloth. Eleri told us that the professional embroidery, in the style of the 1590s, is similar to a dress worn by Elizabeth in the 'Rainbow' portrait (left). After conservation, this unique item will be on show at Hampton Court Palace.

It was a packed meeting and Eleri's talk was fascinating and entertaining, giving rise to a multitude of questions from the audience.

Saturday 9 June 2018

Molesey Carnival

A hot and fun-filled day at Molesey Carnival saw so many of you visiting our tent. It was always busy, with an eclectic mix of visitors viewing our displays from the 'Then and Now' exhibition and our Education displays. We sold quite a few more 'Then and Now' books and several people came forward with useful information on a variety of topics. We would like to thank all of you who took the time to visit us and we hope you enjoyed yourselves.

Wednesday 25 July 2018, Wednesday 29 August 2018

Summer Stroll - Visits to Imber Court Museum

by Jenny Wood

On 25th July and 29th August, groups from the Society visited the Metropolitan Police Mounted Branch Training Centre at Imber Court. Imber Court was purchased in 1920 as a training centre for the Metropolitan Police Mounted Branch. There are now normally about 48 horses at Imber Court; we were told that the Branch has 122 horses in total. Our guide said that there are six stables – Great Scotland Yard, Hyde Park, Bow, West

Hampstead, Lewisham and Kings Cross. The best horses go to Great Scotland Yard as this is the area with the busiest traffic and most ceremonial duties.



We were shown the Class Stable. The horses in this stable are ones that have failed to make the grade for working on the street and they are used for teaching police officers from the beat to learn to ride. We were then shown the Remount Stable which houses young horses who are in training and the horse walker which is used to walk up to six horses at a time. The horse walker is normally used for young or sick horses.

We then went into the Feed Room. Each horse has its own diet; the grooms prepare the food according to instructions given by the horse trainers. We looked into one of the large police vans which are used to transport up to six horses at a time. If possible, the police officers will ride to a job but frequently this is not feasible because of the distance involved. *The photograph is of a model of a horse showing the protective wear worn by a horse on duty to protect its head and lower legs.*

In the school, we saw Upton, a young horse, who had returned to Imber Court for some more training with Adam his rider and Northumberland with his rider, Nina, an assistant horse trainer. They showed us some basic training manoeuvres such as walking over different surfaces. We were invited to throw tennis balls at them so that the horses became used to items hitting them, though fortunately tennis balls are softer than bricks. The August group was lucky to see five riders and their horses training for a horse show. The July group went into the Museum at the end of the tour. This contains lots of photos and memorabilia and was very interesting.

We met the farrier. He told us that the average shoeing cycle for a police horse is about 4 weeks; this is relatively short because they do a lot of road work. When a horse is shod it damages their feet but walking on a road without shoes would damage their feet more. Therefore, most of their horses are shod but many of the horses in the Class Stable do not have shoes on their hind feet as they rarely go on roads or other hard surfaces.

Many of the horses at Imber Court have been sick or injured and are there to recover. We met and were invited to stroke the horses, including the magnificent horse, called Viking who is the largest horse there at 18 hands. Fortunately, we were warned about those who might not be so friendly.

Many thanks to our guides, Linda and Jo, who made both mornings very enjoyable. If you would like to visit the stables, there are normally tours on the last Wednesday of each month. Places on the tours can be reserved by telephoning Imber Court Horse Division on 020 8247 5480.

The White Lady of Esher and the Bench Mark

by Claire Annable and Dave Jupp



Have you ever sat at the traffic lights at the junction of the Portsmouth Road and Station Road, Esher and noticed the large stone monument outside Café Rouge? This column is known as the White Lady and was built as a milestone. It also features a Bench Mark, a feature brought to our attention recently by Greg Martin. His Bench Mark is one that many in Molesey will have walked past without a thought.

More about Greg's Bench Mark below.

Back to the White Lady.

Milestones are both an important testament to the development of the transport network and a reminder of different perceptions of distance in a pre-motorised age. In the mid-eighteenth-century milestones became prevalent after turnpike trusts were encouraged to provide markers on roads.

Erected in 1767 possibly by the Onslow Family of Imber Court, the White Lady is made from a large cylindrical block of limestone and stands 2.5m high. The 'White Lady' was so called by sailors walking from Portsmouth to London as, being newly white; it showed up in the dark and mist. Quite an eerie spectre!

If you look carefully you will see the north side shows Ember Court 1 mile – also mentions Hampton Court, Walton and Chertsey. The east side shows Hyde Park Corner 13 miles, Westminster Bridge 15 and Southwark, Kingston, Ewell 6 and Croydon. The west side Guildford, Haslemere, Dorking, Reigate, Chiddingfold and Portsmouth 57 miles – all important places for the traveller.

So next time you sit in your car waiting for the lights to change, spare a thought for the sailors who, when seeing the White Lady, knew their journey from Portsmouth was nearly over!

What about the Bench Mark?



Ordnance Survey Bench Marks are marks made by Ordnance Survey to record height above Ordnance Datum. If the exact height of one Bench Mark is known, the exact height of the next can be found by measuring the difference in heights, through a process of spirit levelling.

Most commonly, the Bench Mark is found on buildings or other semi-permanent features. Although the main network is no longer being updated, the record is still in existence and the markers will remain until they are eventually destroyed by redevelopment or erosion.

As well as the Bench Mark in Esher, there is also one on the wall of the old Fire Station in Molesey, at the entrance to the car park (left). Both are worth taking a look at if you have a moment.

This is what Greg said: "I recall that at one time these marks were fairly common over most of Britain, but many disappeared when the buildings or walls they were etched into were demolished. The only other example familiar to me in the Molesey area is on the waterworks wall by the towpath beside the River Thames. Perhaps Molesey LHS members know of more survivors?"

Greg set us this little challenge and hence the **White Lady** and the **Bench Mark** found by Claire, who is a committee member. So, can you help with more local **Bench Marks**?

Please let us know - website@moleseyhistorysociety.org

Thanks to: Esher District History Society; Ancientmonuments.uk; Ordnance Survey for information and Greg for the photos.

Ghosts of the Past

by Stewart Nash – July 2018



Hurst Park Racecourse closed in October 1962 and just under half of the course was developed for housing and retail with the remainder laid out as public open space.

The undeveloped areas still provide some evidence of the former course but the recent spell of very dry weather has revealed the layout of part of the parade ring and pre-parade ring that has remained unseen for 56 years.

The photo shows the clearly defined outline of the pre-parade ring where the grass over the foundations of the ring has dried out more quickly than the surrounding area.

There is also similar evidence of part of the parade ring but this is less complete as it disappears under the nearby houses. Once the rains come the grass will grow and the path trodden by such famous horses as Colonist II, Monaveen and many others will disappear once more under the surface.

News from Afar

We recently received this email from Robin Gambrill.

'Recently I received the book Molesey Then And Now. I wish to thank the History Society of Molesey for an excellent publication. The book has brought back many happy memories, and a few not so happy,

One unhappy memory was when my sister, brother and myself were evacuated from 13 Hampton Court Avenue to Exeter during the last world war,

I attended Park Road School and also West Molesey Boys school. I also went to East Molesey infant school which was behind the police station, not mentioned in your book, along with big floods between Riverside Ave and Hampton Court Avenue during the late forties.

Page 59 in the book is a photo of Mr Hicks outside his shop. Over time I must have spent many hours in his shop. He was so nice to me as a young child. I was always impressed by the way he would place many small nails in his mouth, spit them out one by one into his hand and nail into a shoe, whilst talking to me at the same time.

I was a member of St Mary's church choir for seven years and Molesey Cubs and Scouts.



I became very keen on cycling and my club the Clarence Wheelers met in a shed behind the Cannon on Wednesday and Sunday evenings. My cycling career blossomed and I went on to represent the U.K and then rode as a professional for a while in France. (The photograph shows 1957 - Robin Gambrell as a member of the winning team in the 25-mile National Championships with his brother Mike and Allan Killick).

There is a site on the net now: <http://www.classiclightweights.co.uk/riders/ganbrill-beddington-riders.html>.

I retired from cycling and in 1962 emigrated to Vancouver then onto New Zealand to go farming. My wife and I bought a dairy farm which we sold a short time ago. I am now retired, but I have never forgotten my roots and Molesey. I have been back to the U.K. and Molesey a few times and always visit The Bell, as my brother lived at 16, Bell Road.

Again I thank all involved with the book. I shall read it often.'

Robin would be interested to hear from anyone from his school years who may remember him suttonroad4@gmail.com. There is an article about Robin's brother, Mike, in Newsletter 40, published in November 2017 <http://www.moleseyhistorysociety.org/IIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIII/Newsletter40November2017.pdf>.

60 YEARS AGO

THE MOLESEY REVIEW May 1958 –August 1958

May Review

- After only five seasons in senior football, Molesey Football Club were the 1957-58 champions of Division I of the Surrey Senior League. Molesey applied to join the Corinthian League, but the June Review reported that its application, together with those made by seventeen other teams, was unsuccessful. Leatherhead F.C was invited to fill the only vacancy.
- Quillets Royal Old Manor House in Bell Road was having "a plaque fixed to it, denoting that it is a place of historic interest. The manor is 16th century and was formerly part of Old Manor House. The name is derived from an area of riverside land known from the early past as "The Quillets."
- The West Molesey children's day nursery at Hurst Cottage was closing on 1st October.
- Esher Council was moving the pavilion from Nielson's Playing Field to West Molesey Recreation Ground. The pavilion had been continually damaged by hooligans.
- Esher Council turned down a proposal to use 1.7 acres of land for the erection of 8 houses, following the demolition of 'Glenlyn', Molesey Park Road. *(The proposed demolition did not take place).*

June Review

- Molesey Photographic Club was formed on 14th June.

June and July Reviews



• This photograph was given to the Review by Mr F. Cooke, Molesey's well-known taxi-driver. The Review believed that the picture was taken in the mid-1920s and that the destination of the coach was Southsea. Mr Cooke, with his daughter in his arms, is standing on the left of the photograph. The occupants of the coach included Mr & Mrs Hinds and their daughters, Mrs Humphrey, Mr Palmer, Mr Earl, Mr Fred Parratt and daughters, Mr Harry Palmer and Mr & Mrs Robinson and their son.

- The July Review refers to a Primrose League outing to Eastbourne in 1925. The coach was again driven by Mr Cooke, who told the Review that the journey took 5½ hours. One of those on the outing was Charles Williams. He was 5 at the time but remembered the trip clearly because when the coach made a stop on the way home he fell out of the door and broke his left arm. Mr Cooke gave him first aid and used a beach spade for a splint. We wonder whether this outing is the one shown in the photograph on P.77 of 'Molesey Then and Now'.
- Both Reviews referred to articles by Sid Barnes, the Australian cricketer, in the Sydney Sunday Telegraph. Barnes referred to "East Molesey" as a dump and said that "the 1953 Australian team was asked to play a picnic match" on a "corrugated cow paddock".

July Review

- Mick Gambrill of Clarence Wheelers Cycling Club was selected to represent England at the Empire Games. He had recently come third in both the National 25 mile Cycling Championship and the 50 mile Championship.
- Surrey County Council had agreed that the Court Cinema could be used for industrial purposes.
- Notice to quit had been served on the tenants of the allotment sites at The Forum, Walton Road, so that the area could be developed for housing. The tenants were being offered alternative plots in West Molesey.
- Esher Council sold part of the land of The Forum housing site to Surrey County Council for the erection of a clinic and library.

July and August Reviews

- On 14th June, over 1,000 spectators attended St John Ambulance Brigade's first annual horse show at Hurst Park Racecourse. Petula Clark, "Molesey's star of films, radio, television and stage", gave a Silver Challenge Cup, which was presented to the winner of the open jumping championships.
- Molesey Carnival was held on 12th July on Cigarette Island. The carnival procession was led by the band of the Women's Royal Air Force from Weston Avenue to Cigarette Island via Walton Road and Bridge Road. The Carnival Queen, Miss Margaret Tomlinson, was crowned at Cigarette Island by Esher's Member of Parliament, Sir William Robson Brown.
- After five years of organising the Carnival, St John Ambulance Brigade decided that it was no longer prepared to do so, because it could raise funds more easily through its gymkhana.

August Review

- From 15th September, there were going to be cuts to train services from Hampton Court Station. Rush hour services were not affected but outside peak hours there would only be two trains each hour.
- Richard Gabriel of 24 Kent Road won a rowing gold medal for England in the Empire Games as the cox of the coxed fours.
- The Rev. A. G. Le Masurier was retiring on 1st October as the Vicar of St Mary's East Molesey after 38 years.
- The printing firm, Clare o' Molesey, moved to a new factory on West Molesey industrial estate on 5th August. The firm was established in 1945 and expanded rapidly moving from Walton Road to Bridge Road and then to Island Farm Avenue. The firm's business was originally confined to business cards and letter-heads but by 1958 it was printing 12 national journals and carrying out a wide range of other work.

Help with Family History

A member of the Society has a store of letters written by her grandfather to her grandmother during the years from 1900 to 1917, when he went off to war. She says they are very interesting and romantic and she would very much like to have them put into order and transcribed, so as to preserve them for future generations. Please get in contact with us historysociety@btinternet.com, 0208 979 3465, if you, or anyone you know, would be interested in taking on this job – rate to be agreed.

Commonwealth War Graves Commission – Tours of Brookwood Military Cemetery

This autumn, visitors to the Commission's largest cemetery in the UK are invited to join a new series of tours to discover its history and the incredible stories of those buried there.

<https://www.cwgc.org/learn/news-and-events/news/2018/08/13/take-a-guided-tour-of-the-cwgc-largest-uk-site>.

The CWGC's experienced volunteer guides will be stationed at Brookwood Military Cemetery in Surrey one day a week from 2 September to share the cemetery's story.

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