

### Thames Bridges, Staines to Kingston

Talk by Nick Pollard

Tuesday 26 April 2016

Report by Lynda McCarter

On 26 April members were given a talk by Nick Pollard on 'Thames Bridges from Staines to Kingston'. This was a well-illustrated talk, including some very interesting aerial views. Nick explained that until the 1869 Kew and Other Bridges Act everyone using the bridges paid a toll.

We started our journey at Staines or 'Ad Pontes' as it was known in Roman times. The Romans needed a crossing of the Thames here, as it was on the main road to Silchester (near Reading). Even today Staines High Street follows the same route. When the Romans left it fell into disrepair and is not mentioned again until 1208, when oaks from Windsor were used to repair it.

The bridge was broken during the Civil War to prevent movement of troops. As the main coaching route to Exeter used this crossing, it was soon replaced. A stone bridge was built by Thomas Sandby in 1797 which subsided and cracked pretty quickly. A replacement cast iron bridge by Thomas Paine was erected in 1803, which also did not last long and had to be repaired with timber. Finally George Rennie chose a new site which meant a realignment of relevant roads. The foundation stone was laid by the Duke and Duchess of Clarence in 1829 and the new bridge opened in 1832. During the War a Callender Hamilton bridge was added to cope with extra traffic. The original bridge was widened in 1959 and looks much the same today.

Chertsey Bridge is first mentioned in 1410. This was built by the monks of Chertsey Abbey and is shown on an Abbey map of 1432. A certain John Taylor is quoted in 1632 complaining about its state. Between 1774 and 1785 James Paine designed the bridges at Walton, Kew and Richmond as well as Chertsey. In 1782 the Earl of Onslow laid the key stone at Chertsey. Unfortunately, the original build did not span the whole distance and had to be extended to reach the banks. Chertsey Bridge underwent major works in the 1990s but the original structure was kept.

Two bridges were built over the Desborough Cut, which was opened in the 1930s to speed transport up and down the Thames.



At Walton the Thames was crossed by a ford and later by a ferry. Samuel Dicker paid for the first bridge in 1750. Due to the wooden lattice work, it was known as a mathematical bridge. For fifty years this bridge contained the largest arch spanning water. In 1754 Canaletto was persuaded by Thomas Hollis to paint the bridge. The artist himself can be seen in the foreground.

The bridge was rebuilt in stone circa 1784 bankrupting a relation of the original builder. This bridge was also painted by a famous artist; this time Turner in 1807. Unfortunately the bridge fell down in 1859, so E.T. Murray designed a cast iron bridge in 1864. Middlesex and Surrey argued over who should pay to maintain the bridge when it was damaged. In 1953 a 'temporary' Callender Hamilton bridge was erected and instead of being replaced was just repaired. Construction on the existing bridge began in 2012 and it was opened in 2013 after many millions had been spent.

The bridge at Hampton Court also replaced an original ferry crossing. It was built by James Clarke in the 'chinoiserie' style in 1752-3. A second wooden bridge replaced this in 1778. With the opening of Hampton Court Palace to visitors in 1838 and the arrival of the railway in 1849 an improvement was needed. The iron bridge was erected in 1864-5 and was painted by the artist Sisley in 1874. When the current bridge was constructed by W.P. Robinson the site was changed slightly to accommodate the new roads being built. Decorated by Lutyens to complement the Palace, this bridge was opened by the Prince of Wales in 1933. On the same day he also opened Chiswick and Twickenham bridges.

The wooden bridge at Kingston was known in the twelfth century. It was broken down during the Wars of the Roses and again in the rebellion against Queen Mary. In 1825 the Earl of Liverpool laid the foundation stone of a new bridge to be opened in 1828 by the busy Duchess of Clarence. It was widened to take trams in 1911-14 and widened again in 2001. From underneath the stages of construction can be clearly seen.

Members may be interested in 'The Empress and the Gardener' exhibition at Hampton Court Palace (until 4 September). This shows rare paintings and drawings of Hampton Court Gardens, including the second wooden bridge, by John Spyers, the draughtsman of Capability Brown. These were bought by Catherine the Great and are on loan from The Hermitage.

### **Warren House, Kingston Hill**

Thursday 19 May 2016

*Report by Jenny Wood*

On 19 May, 25 members and guests spent an enthralling morning listening to Vicky Good talk about the history of the owners of Warren House and Andrew Fisher Tomlin speak about the history of the garden and then walking round the garden and much of the ground floor of the house.

After her parents bought Warren House in 2005, Vicky's attention was grabbed by a photograph taken there on 22 May 1909. This photograph showed the then owners of the house, General Sir Arthur and Lady Paget, and various illustrious guests, including Edward VII and his mistress, Mrs Alice Keppel. It inspired Vicky to research the story of the inhabitants of the house and in 2014 she published a book 'The Warren House Tales' about their lives.

The original house was built in 1865 as the country house of a banker, Hugh Hammersley, on a plot of fourteen acres which he had leased from the Duke of Cambridge, the owner of the Coombe estate. About 1872 Hammersley leased an additional six acres, which was laid out by the Veitch family as a Japanese water garden, the first such garden in this country. This garden still exists and is open twice a year under the National Gardens Scheme; it will next be open on Sunday 9 October 2016.

After Hammersley's death the property was sold in 1884 to George Grenfell Glyn, second Baron Wolverton, who was at that time Postmaster General in Gladstone's government. He extended the house substantially. After the deaths of Wolverton and his wife the house was sold in 1895 to George Cawston, a barrister and a founder member and director of the British South Africa Company. Cawston did not spend much time at Warren House and in 1907 he sold it to Lady Mary 'Minnie' Paget, a wealthy American heiress.

Minnie had come to Europe with her mother about 1870 looking for an aristocratic husband as her mother felt that this was essential to improve their social standing in New York society. In 1878 Minnie married Captain Arthur Paget, a minor aristocrat and close friend of the Prince of Wales. Minnie quickly became a great society hostess and frequently entertained the Prince of Wales. In 1907, having inherited further money from her father, she decided to buy a country estate. Vicky speculated that one of the reasons that Minnie chose Warren House was because the property is quite flat. This would have been helpful to Minnie as, unfortunately, in 1904 she had broken her leg and kneecap falling down an empty lift shaft in her London home, an accident that necessitated her walking with a stick for the rest of her life. Minnie entertained lavishly at Warren House and on several occasions hosted King Edward VII. She died in 1919 of Spanish flu but Arthur, who was by then General Sir Arthur Paget, lived at Warren House until he died in 1928. During the period of their ownership the Pagets revitalised the garden; they were responsible for most of the garden features that are there today.

After Arthur's death in 1928 Warren House passed to Dame Leila Paget, the daughter of Arthur and Minnie. Leila was a very different character to her mother. She was married to a diplomat, Ralph Paget, who was her distant cousin and who was seventeen years older than her. During the First and Second Balkan wars of 1912 and 1913 the Pagets were based in Serbia and Leila ran a military hospital in Belgrade. She returned to the Balkans during the First World War and helped nurse wounded soldiers. After inheriting the property Leila and Ralph lived quietly at Warren House during the 1930s. When Ralph died in 1940 Leila, at her own expense, transformed Warren House into a convalescent home for the remainder of the Second World War, providing care for patients when they left Kingston Hospital. At the end of the War, Warren House reverted to a private residence and Leila continued to live there until 1954 when she sold the property to Imperial Chemical Industries, who used it as a management training centre.

In 1986 ICI appointed Molesey architect, Ivor Cunningham, to draw up plans for the enlargement and refurbishment of Warren House. To finance this work ICI sold off much of the land belonging to the property to Octagon Developments Limited. In 1999/2000 ICI sold Warren House to a consortium and the property was sold again in 2005. The property is now used as a conference centre and hotel.

Andrew explained that Coombe Wood has a very important horticultural history. In 1853 James Veitch bought a nursery on the King's Road, Chelsea, and three years later he leased 35 acres on the Coombe Wood estate from the Duke of Cambridge as he needed more growing space for his London nursery. The Veitch family was very interested in introducing new plants to England and over the years it was responsible for bringing over 500

different species to Europe, including the magnolia and Japanese maple. Andrew said that James developed the business so that his firm became the pre-eminent horticulturalist in the country. James was succeeded by his son, Harry, who continued to run the business until 1914, when he decided to sell everything as the lease on Coombe Wood was expiring and he had no-one to inherit the business. During a ten-day auction at Coombe Wood all the stock was sold, with gardeners travelling from all over the country in the hope of finding a bargain. Harry Veitch was knighted for his services to horticulture in 1912 and was one of the founder members of the Chelsea Flower Show.



Andrew took us on a tour of the gardens and in particular of the Veitch Heritage Garden, a walled garden which has been redesigned by Andrew to commemorate the Veitch nurseries and to celebrate the plant hunters who risked their lives to bring back exotic plants to Britain. The garden incorporates many of the plants that were brought back from around the world by the Veitch plant hunters, including a *Davidia involucrata* (the handkerchief

tree), a grove of fifty *acer griseum* (paperbark maples) and an extensive collection of magnolias. The garden also contains a spring-flowering bulb meadow and perennial borders. It can be seen to the right of the house in the photograph.

After the tour of the gardens Vicky showed us many of the rooms on the ground floor of the property. We were then treated to tea and coffee and warm pastries. It was a thoroughly enjoyable morning.

### **The Chocolate Kitchen – Hampton Court Palace**

**Talk by Marc Meltonville**

**Thursday 9 June 2016 at 8 pm**

*St Lawrence School, Church Road, KT8 9DR*

Royal Palace Food Historian, Marc Meltonville has worked on displays of historic cookery and the reconstruction of kitchens at many of the six Royal Palaces and countless museums and stately homes. His talk will take you on the journey that was the discovery and opening of the King's Chocolate Kitchen at Hampton Court.

Marc has worked in museums for the last twenty years. He trained in ceramic history and then went to work at a furniture museum specialising in Windsor chairs. He studied food history under the noted food historian Peter Brears and with him took part in numerous kitchen displays at stately homes all over England. This led him to his work at Historic Royal Palaces.

Marc lectures on food history all across the UK and North America and is well known on TV and radio in both countries.

### **Summer Stroll – Guided Walks through Kingston**

**Tuesday 12 July at 10.30 am or Wednesday 13 July at 7.30 pm**

The walks will be led by Kingston historic tour guides and will last about an hour and a half. The walk starts from outside the gates of All Saints church in the market place. You can see a photo of the location on <http://www.kingstontourguides.org.uk/>.

The tour covers the Church, the market place, the riverside, the Memorial gardens, the Guildhall and Coronation Stone and finishes in London Road. One of our members, Ian Smith, who is curator of the Frederick W Paine Museum in London Road, has kindly offered to open the museum for members to visit at the end of the walks.

There will be a charge of £2 for members and £3 for guests.

### **Cameras and Corsets – Dating Historical Photographs**

**Talk by Jane Lewis**

**Wednesday 14 September 2016, 8 pm**

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

Jane Lewis from Surrey History Centre will give a talk about identifying photographs, with particular emphasis on the change in women's costume through the years 1860-1920. The talk gives tips and techniques to use when dating or identifying old photographs or drawings, with hints on how to avoid some of the pitfalls that may be encountered.

### **Molesey Boat Club – 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary**

**Wednesday 9 November 2106, 8pm,**

**Graburn Way Barge Walk, East Molesey KT8 9AJ**

A celebration of the 150-year history of Molesey Boat Club, with illustrated talks and displays.

## People & Buildings

Please note that the People and Buildings group will not be meeting on Wednesday 27th July as previously advertised. We are continuing to research schools in Molesey and would like to hear from any members who have old photos or other memorabilia which we could make copies of and put on display for the exhibition we are planning next year. We would also like to interview people about their memories of going to school in Molesey. Please get in touch by contacting Anthony Barnes on 020 8979 6744 or by email at [people-buildings@moleseyhistorysociety.org](mailto:people-buildings@moleseyhistorysociety.org).

### MLHS Website

<http://moleseyhistorysociety.org>

*by Dave Jupp*

If you recognise the above, then you may well have visited the Society's web site, either recently, or in the past.

I have been tasked with trying to bring things up to date with all the Society's online information.

You will see that things are slowly starting to change, particularly with the addition of pictures relating to the 2016 Programme of Events.

Shortly, we hope to be adding additional pages such as:

**Places of Local Historical Interest** – with a write up by members who have visited and/or a link to the web site. If you would like to share information about places you have visited and enjoyed, please get in touch and let us know. The first to be added is the wonderful Dorich House Museum on Kingston Hill. Why not have a look and tell us about the interesting places that you have enjoyed.

**Newsletters** – the Newsletter is only distributed to members, however we have decided to make available past Newsletters on the website so that new and potential members can read about the Society's activities over the years. They contain a wealth of information and we also want to ensure that they are kept in a central location to be available for future Molesey local history enthusiasts.

**Research** – we hope to expand this page with more info on the research already undertaken and new areas that are being investigated.

**Accessibility for Members** - The Society has a lot of information stored in various places and it is hoped that most of the material, such as photographs, can be placed online and be made available for members: a Members Only section.

So I would just like to encourage you to take a look. If you have something that you think may be of interest to others or, should be added to the site, then let me know. Either at one of the events or by emailing me – [dave@quantum-analysis.co.uk](mailto:dave@quantum-analysis.co.uk) (Please head the email: **MLHS Web Site**, so that it gets through my company's mail/spam filter).

## 60 YEARS AGO

### THE MOLESEY REVIEW March 1956 – May 1956

#### Trianco Limited Automatic Boilers

In March 1956 Trianco Limited, which employed 400 workers at its Imber Court factory, had recently developed and produced the "Trianco Automatic Gravity-feed Boiler". Immediately after the Second World War Trianco had realised that the price of solid fuel would rise considerably and that it needed to find a method which would economise in solid fuel, so as to give the maximum heat at the lowest cost. Trianco carried out research in this country and elsewhere in Europe and produced the gravity-feed boiler.



"The general principle of operation is that sufficient fuel for a relatively long period is stored in a hopper integral with or on top of the boiler. The fuel falls by gravity through an aperture at the bottom of the hopper into the firebox below. As the fuel falls into the firebox, the natural angle of repose of the fuel maintains the shape of the fire bed.

As hot water is withdrawn, or when there has been a fairly heavy heat loss in the system, the forced draught fan is automatically switched on by a thermostat. As long as the water in the system remains at a predetermined temperature, the fire is kept just alight and the fan remains idle. When the temperature drops, the forced draught comes into effect and is automatically cut out when the required temperature is again reached in the system. By this arrangement considerable economy in fuel is obtained, while the consumption of electricity for operating the fan is negligible."

The boilers were being produced in all sizes from small domestic models to large installations for hospitals, blocks of flats etc. The production capacity at the factory had been increased due to a new method of production and large extensions to the factory.

## **St Paul's Church**

The March-May Reviews all contained articles about the history of St Paul's Church by James Williams. A postscript to this article mentioned that before the tower and spire were built there was a bell hung on the west end of the church. When a bigger bell was hung in the newly built tower, the Vicar and the churchwardens gave the old bell to the local Fire Brigade in 1889. This bell was hung above the Fire Station which at that time formed part of the property of Walton Road Garage. When the new Fire Station in Walton Road "was built in 1902 the bell was re-hung on the apex of the roof at the west end of the building. " It was later replaced by a fire-warning siren and was hung on the wall inside the Fire Station. When the Second World War broke out, "firemen remained on duty all night, and had couches under the wall. The brass bell, weighing at least two hundred weight, was considered dangerous, and it was removed upstairs. When the Fire Service was nationalised the historic bell disappeared."

## **March Review**

- The old fire station and mortuary, which for many years had formed part of the premises of Walton Road Garage, had been pulled down to enable new workshops, lock-up garages and showrooms to be erected.
- "Old Timer" welcomed a new service offered by the Hampton Court Laundry. The laundry would accept clothes for dry cleaning up to 11 a.m. on weekdays except Wednesdays and have them ready for collection by 6 p.m. on the same day.
- West Molesey industrial estate continued to expand. After eight years at 120 Bridge Road the Molesey firm of electro-platers and metal finishers, A. S. Hann & Co, was moving from its premises behind Kingfisher Garage to a new factory on the industrial estate. The new factory, which was over 1,200 square feet in area, enabled it to extend its stove enamelling services and required it to employ additional staff.
- St Barnabas Roman Catholic Church had formed a committee of parishioners to raise money for improvements and renovations, including the improvement of the church heating which was inadequate.

## **May Review**

- "Old Timer" reported that, "Island Farm Avenue is the name of the new cul-de-sac on West Molesey's industrial estate. It was known as "Spur Road" until officially named. It is adjacent to Central Avenue."
- Esher Council had entered into a contract to build two blocks of flats, one in the Eastcote Avenue/Central Avenue area and the other in the Faraday Road Estate.
- Representations had been made to the Minister of Transport and Civil Aviation for the widening and improvement of part of Walton Road, East Molesey.

### ***About Surrey in the Great War: A County Remembers***

*One hundred years ago Surrey was playing its part in the first global war between modern, industrial nations. It was a war which demanded unimagined sacrifices by the county's people, young and old, rich and poor. How did Surrey answer the call?*

*Surrey in the Great War: A County Remembers is a four year project, run by [Surrey Heritage](#) and supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund, which aims to discover how the 1914-1918 conflict affected those left behind, in the county, on the Home Front. The project team is on the look-out for stories about people and places:*

*How did the Great War affect your family/town/village/school/workplace?*

*How did communities meet the challenge of the ever-growing demands for men, money and arms?*

*How did they face food shortages and air raids?*

*How did they respond to the arrival of soldiers from across the Empire, refugees from war-ravaged Belgium and enemy prisoners of war?*

*How did they feel about the cause for which they were fighting? Did some change their mind??*

*The project will, over the course of the commemoration period (2014-2018), drive and coordinate new community-based research into the histories of individuals, communities, and organisations during the war years and will especially focus on engaging and inspiring people not currently actively involved in heritage to participate in and experience the thrill of exploring and understanding the past.*

Through this ambitious project people of all ages and backgrounds across the entire county will come together with the common aim of creating a global, accessible and enduring resource which will tell Surrey's story during the Great War. The project team will travel the length and breadth of the county to collect information about the impact of the war on the county. In addition, they will host research surgeries, roadshows and project showcase days, as well as hosting information stands at external events.

The lasting legacy will be the website, recording the lives and service of all the men and women whose names are on war memorials in Surrey. It will not only be a comprehensive 21st century digital memorial but also a resource to enable people to explore, discover and understand the impact of the war on their local area and community.

Other outputs of the project will include a commemorative book, bringing all of Surrey's Home Front stories together; a series of walking apps, giving users the chance to walk in the footsteps of Surrey's men and women during the war; and an educational pack, allowing schools to access the project's findings, and embedding knowledge of the Great War in Surrey in the minds of younger generations, keeping those war-time memories alive.

### **Volunteering**

Unlike in 1914 there are no age or height restrictions! Schools and colleges, community groups and local societies, experienced researchers and novices with a thirst to discover – all are welcome. Volunteers are needed throughout the county to help. Find out more about how to [volunteer](#).

Surrey Heritage, through this project, calls you to enlist and help create a worthy tribute to the courage, sacrifice and stoicism of Surrey's people a century ago. <http://www.surreyinthegreatwar.org.uk/>.

### **History of Gypsies in Surrey**

- Wednesday 1 June – Thursday 30 June 2016
- Free display in the foyer of Surrey History Centre during normal [opening hours](#).

Despite being one of Surrey's largest and oldest ethnic minorities, references to Gypsy, Romany, Traveller and Showpeople are often hidden in history. With a bit of detective work Surrey Heritage has found some of these histories in its collections which are on display throughout June, for Gypsy Roma Traveller History Month.

At Surrey History Centre, 130 Goldsworth Road, Woking, Surrey, GU21 6ND

### **Milk: The Milk Marketing Board and The Milk Crisis**

#### **Thames Ditton Library**

**Mercer Close, Thames Ditton, KT7 0BS**

February 2016 - Autumn 2016

Thames Ditton Library is hosting Elmbridge Museum's latest exhibition: a display charting the history of the Milk Marketing Board (MMB).

The MMB was founded in 1933 and, from World War Two until its closure in 1994, was based in Thames Ditton. 'Milk' not only exhibits photography from the Elmbridge Museum archive but also aims to bring the history of the MMB up to date through an [online exhibition](#). If you would like to find out more about the Milk Marketing Board, come and have a look at the display at [Thames Ditton Library](#). You can also see some of the fascinating items relating to the MMB and milk in Elmbridge Museum's collection on the [Collections page](#).

### **The Battle of the Somme Film Screening and Talk**

**Saturday 2 July 2016, 1.30pm - 5.30pm**

Surrey History Centre, 130 Goldsworth Road, Woking, Surrey, GU21 6ND.

This year, Imperial War Museums (IWM) and members of the First World War Centenary Partnership are working together to show the UNESCO listed film *The Battle of the Somme*, to audiences across the world.

The screening will take place alongside a talk by Dr Emma Hanna (University of Kent).

Tickets are free but places must be booked [online](#), in person at Surrey History Centre or any Surrey Library or phone 01483 518737.

An event organised by [Surrey in the Great War](#), an HLF project.

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