

**Tanners Bridge Painting  
in Molesey Library**



This is a detail from the painting of Tanners Bridge, which has recently been re-hung following the refurbishment of Molesey Library. The caption of the painting reads 'Bridge over the Mole 1905 by Arnold Helcke'. Tanners Bridge is the bridge across the Mole at the end of Spencer Road. There is a path between the houses to Tanners Bridge, leading to the new Ember Cut and a second bridge over the Ember, which brings one to Cow Common and the site of the Ember Mill at the end of Orchard Lane. This way was the original road from Molesey to Esher before Esher Road was built in the 1760s, so it is quite important historically. So far we have not been able to find any information about the painter, only an Arnold Helcke, who did paint Surrey scenes, but who appears to have died in 1898. It would be interesting to hear if any members know anything more about this painting.

It was donated to the Library by Miss Veronica Tudor Williams, who lived in Matham Manor for several years until the mid 1960s. Miss Tudor Williams took a prominent role in the 1965 protest against proposed development plans for high density housing, involving the Wolsey and Palace Road area and threatening Matham Manor. The concerted action by residents became the basis of the formation of the Molesey Residents Association.

Miss Tudor Williams was also renowned as a breeder of African Basenji dogs. These dogs do not bark, but 'yodel', and are considered to be highly intelligent. They were the pampered pets of Egyptian nobility, and the goddess Anubis had a Basenji head. In 1947, King Farouk bought four puppies from Miss Tudor Williams, and they travelled to Egypt by air in a style befitting their heritage, each with its own seat on the plane. She also provided the Basenji, named My Lady of the Congo, to star in the 1956 film based on the book *Goodbye My Lady* by James H Street, together with four additional dogs to serve as "doubles" for My Lady. At the end of the film, My Lady was adopted by the 13 year-old star, Brandon de Wilde, and the other four dogs were kept by members of the film crew. Miss Tudor Williams played a key role in the history of Basenjies in England and America and she wrote a book called *Basenjies: The Barkless Dogs of Central Africa*, which is now out of print, but still highly prized by Basenji lovers.

In 1959, Miss Tudor Williams travelled to the Southern Sudan and brought back Fula of the Congo.



FULA OF THE CONGO  
Brought home from the Southern Sudan.  
Height 16 ins. Weight 18 lbs.

Fula is said to be the single most important native Basenji ever imported and is in the pedigree of most Basenjies throughout the world even to this day. Fula was never shown, but just 9 years after her arrival the impact she had on the stability and improvement of the breed was such as to prompt the late Stanley Dangerfield, writing in the Daily Express, to pen the following: "No dog of any breed has ever made a more dramatic contribution to progress."

**Members' Evening  
Tuesday 19 January 2010**

There was a good turnout for our Members' Evening at St Paul's Church and we had the opportunity to have a leisurely look at material brought along by the Special Interest Groups and individual members.

There were exhibits from the Transport Group relating to the railways, a presentation on Molesey Lock and historical maps, which are always popular.

For their 'swan song', the Waterways Group wanted to make a final splash by displaying their booklets on all the topics that had been documented during the two and a half years of the Group's existence. It was therefore very satisfying to see many of the members avidly wading through the 32 booklets that were on show, whilst others watched the rolling projection of the extended version of Brian Smith's recent Railways and Leisure power point presentation. Their display boards also featured a few of their favourite printed pictures from the 1000+ digital images that are held on the WWG computer.

Contributions of additional information are still always welcome, and at the meeting three members offered additional pictures and information. Although Jenni and Roger Haile will no longer lead the Waterways Group, they still wish to be involved with the subject, and they will continue to hold and update the existing archives for the Group until a storage facility is found for all the History Society records.

Anthony Barnes talked about the activities of the People & Buildings Group, and its interest in collecting reminiscences. In preparation for our Society meeting in November on Molesey during the Second World War, Anthony talked about some of the diverse topics the group will be following, such as the Home Guard, military presence, POWs, manufacturing, childhood memories and loss of friends and family. With his enthusiasm in illustrating the various possible sources of information, he hoped to encourage as many members as possible to 'join the War effort' and help in gathering material for this important meeting in November.

The next meeting of the People & Buildings Group will be on Wednesday 26 May at 8 pm at the British Legion, St Mary's Road.

**Contact: Anthony Barnes, 0208 979 6744  
[agbarnes@ntlworld.com](mailto:agbarnes@ntlworld.com)**

David Turner discussed the Transport Special Interest Group, which has focussed mainly on the railway, and then gave a talk about some of the women who worked on the Hampton Court Branch between 1849 and 1922. He talked about three women, Ann Hammond, who worked as a charwoman at Hampton Court from the 1850s to 1893, Miss R. Meakes who worked as a clerk at Thames Ditton between 1919 and 1921, and Miss E. Mould who was a clerk at Hampton Court between 1917 and 1921. He stressed how patterns of female employment nationwide were replicated on the Hampton Court Branch and how women were always employed on men's terms and subject to summary dismissal.

**Contact: David Turner, 07940 016255  
[dat504@york.ac.uk](mailto:dat504@york.ac.uk)**

**Nick Barratt  
Imber Court  
Tuesday 9 March 2010**

Dr Nick Barratt gave an extremely entertaining and interesting talk on 'Family History and the Media' to an audience of about 150 people. Nick outlined his career; from obtaining a PhD in history from King's College London in 1996 by editing the 1225 Exchequer pipe roll, through working as a reader adviser at the National Archives to his current work in television. He explained that his move into television occurred by chance. He was working on the 'graveyard shift' one evening at the National Archives when a television researcher asked him for help in finding some information about a house he was researching. The following day he was contacted and offered a job by the BBC! Initially he worked as a researcher on the 'House Detectives' series. At that time the information for the programmes was largely gathered from the Internet, but Nick persuaded his employers to allow him to go and research in the local archives.

'Who Do You Think You Are' was initially intended to be a social history, rather than a family history show. The BBC decided to use celebrities in order to appeal to a wider audience and because they are used to working to camera. For the first series Nick and the rest of his team had to research the families of 20 celebrities in 12 months. During this period researchers talked to the family of the celebrity, but the family was sworn to secrecy and asked not to pass on any information. The star of the show knew nothing about what the research had unearthed, had no idea where he or she would be going and did not see the show until it was screened.

Filming for one episode of 'Who Do You Think You Are' takes place over 10 consecutive days, working for 10 hours each day and, as the celebrity is presented with one fact after another, it can be very tiring and emotionally draining.

Nick recalled the discoveries made by some of the personalities as they travelled back in time: the military background of Ian Hislop's family and the loss and mental illness suffered by Bill Oddie's mother, which helped to explain his own depression. He also wondered at the high incidence of a connection with the town of Doncaster in the families of these well-known celebrities, suggesting that those seeking fame should take up residence there!

Whilst Nick feels that 'Who Do You Think You Are' does not educate as perhaps it should, he does consider that it has inspired people to go and research their own family history. Viewers are shown what can be done to research family history and how this can be tied in with the social history background, for example what it was like to work in the factories in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Family research can be a starting point for a broader interest in history and Nick certainly does not agree with a media critic, who described family history as 'self-indulgent navel gazing'. However, he warned that today we are not leaving an archive for our descendants. Most of our communications are now by email, phone or text, and digital photographs have a limited lifespan. He urged us to ensure that we leave artefacts and records, so that our families may in future be able to build up a picture of us and of life in our time.

### **2010 AGM**

**Hurst Park Racecourse and my Life as a Jockey - Talk by Cliff Taylor  
Wednesday 21 April 2010, 8pm  
St Lawrence School, Church Road**

We anticipate that the business of the AGM will take no longer than 30 minutes. Cliff Taylor will then give a talk on Hurst Park Racecourse and his life as a jockey.

Cliff Taylor is a real character; a local man with a fascinating life story. As a youngster, he was determined to become a racing jockey. His involvement in horse racing took him to many racecourses in the UK, and also to Bermuda. He raced many times on his local racecourse at Hurst Park. His interest in local history, combined with his horse racing experience has enabled him to prepare an interesting talk. Why not come and hear the story of Hurst Park Racecourse from the horse's mouth!

You will also be able to renew your membership at the AGM.

Refreshments will be served

**'Getting By' at William III's Hampton Court  
Talk by Annie Gray  
Wednesday 19 May, 7.15 pm  
Clore Centre, Hampton Court Palace**

Annie Gray has a BA from Oxford, specialising in post-medieval history, and a PhD in historical archaeology, specifically investigating food and dining. She has worked as a costumed guide at Hampton Court for over four years. She plans to give us a guide to life within William III's state apartments at Hampton Court, highlighting what to wear, how to behave and the smells, tastes, sights and sounds of the Baroque Court.

As numbers are limited at the Clore Centre, this meeting is initially restricted to members only. If you wish to come, please let us know by 1 May, either using the form below or by email [historysociety@btinternet.com](mailto:historysociety@btinternet.com). Refreshments will be served.

### **Victory Street Parties**

Do you have any photographs of the street parties that were held to celebrate the end of World War II? Please let us know if you have and would be willing to allow us to copy them for display at the meeting on Wartime Molesey planned for November. Contact Doreen Freeman, 020 8979 0059.

**Visit to Woking Mosque and Surrey History Centre  
Wednesday 14 April, 12.15 pm**

The Surrey History Trust is organising a visit to Woking Mosque and to the Surrey History Centre to meet the conservators and see how they carry out their work. If you are interested in joining the group, please telephone Pauline Sieler on 020 8979 7556 or email [pauline@sieler.co.uk](mailto:pauline@sieler.co.uk) and we will send you an application form. The tour starts at 12.15 at Woking mosque (car parking available).

**Produced by:  
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## Surrey Museums Month – April

Surrey Museums Month is a time for celebrating Surrey County's rich and fascinating heritage throughout the whole of April. Whatever your interest, young or old, there really is something for everyone. Surrey's 42 museums have a busy calendar of exhibitions, talks, and workshops – and there are plenty of free fun children and family events. Keep an eye on local publications and go to the [surreymuseums.org.uk](http://surreymuseums.org.uk) website nearer the time for more details and a list of events.

### Easter Holidays Keep Calm and Carry On

Easter family activities.

Come along to the Surrey History Centre and learn about the Home Front during WW2 and have a go at some art and craft activities.

Available during normal opening hours.

Parents/Guardians are responsible for supervising their children.

6 April – 17 April 2010 .

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

Tel: 01483 518737

### Hampton Court Palace Live Tudor cookery

The Tudor kitchens at Hampton Court Palace are famous throughout the world for being those of King Henry VIII. In fact they continued to be used as Royal Court kitchens for a further two hundred years, feeding the tables of Tudor, Stuart and Georgian monarchs and their many courtiers. For the last five years

they have been home to a fascinating research project run by Historia food archaeologists who regularly bring the kitchens to life experimenting with traditional recipes, ingredients and cooking methods to prepare feasts fit for a king.

The live cookery will take place on the following dates:

27-28 March 2010

2-5 April 2010

1-3 May 2010

Telephone 01932 843573

### Painshill Park - Thursday 15 Apr 2010 Mrs Delany; A life in flowers & letters by Jan Clark

Thanks to her prolific letter writing, Mrs Delany left us a detailed commentary on polite English society in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century. Already well known for her embroidery, shell work and sketches, she embarked, at the age of 72, on a new venture and created almost 1,000 exquisite flower paper-mosaics – all botanically exact. King George III wanted these preserved in the British Museum 'as a standard work of art unparalleled for accuracy of drawing, form, and perspective, as well as colouring, truth of outline, and close resemblance to nature'. You can still see examples there today in the Enlightenment Gallery. An exhibition at the Sir John Soane's Museum, London, **Mrs Delany and Her Circle** runs from 19<sup>th</sup> February until 1<sup>st</sup> May 2010.

This is a **Free 30 Minute Lunchtime Talk** commencing at 1pm and no advance booking is required.

**Please note:** Admission charges apply if you also wish to visit the landscape.

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### 'Getting By' at William III's Hampton Court - Wednesday 19 May, 7.15 pm Clore Centre, Hampton Court Palace

**IF YOU WISH TO ATTEND THIS MEETING ON WEDNESDAY 19 MAY, PLEASE SEND IN THIS SLIP WITH YOUR REQUIREMENTS BY SATURDAY 1 MAY.**

**ALTERNATIVELY, EMAIL [historysociety@btinternet.com](mailto:historysociety@btinternet.com). IF SEATS ARE STILL AVAILABLE AFTER 1 MAY, THE EVENT WILL BE ADVERTISED TO NON-MEMBERS.**

You will not be notified, but you may assume that you have a seat, unless you hear otherwise. After 1 May, the meeting will be open to guests (£2 charge) if there are spare places

**NAME:**.....

**Please reserve a place for me/us at the Hampton Court Palace Meeting on Wednesday 19 May  
Send to Membership Secretary, Molesey Local History Society, 17 Matham Road, East Molesey,  
Surrey KT8 0SX**