

Then and Now



Thanks to Jean Page for solving the mystery of this 'then and now' photo. In the modern picture you can see part of Molesey Refrigeration Centre at 53 Walton Road. The company has been trading since 1968. In the picture from the 1870s, you can see the shop on that site which belonged to J. Kidman of 'East Moulsey' (as the handcart tells us); but what could you buy there? Jean traced a James Kidman, baker, in the 1881 census living in Wimbledon with his wife and three children, two of whom were born in Molesey (in 1875 and 1876). The bakery changed hands many times. Jean can remember Coombs and Turners bakeries in her lifetime.

**Wednesday 25 April, 8 pm
AGM**

**Dickens and the Thames
Talk by Dr David Parker
St Lawrence School, Church Road, KT8 9DR**

We anticipate that the business of the AGM will take no longer than 30 minutes.

Dr David Parker will give a talk on Charles Dickens' connections with the River Thames. David Parker was the Curator of London's Charles Dickens Museum for more than twenty years. The Museum's collections are particularly rich in material relating to Dickensian topography - material used by Dr Parker both to supply inquirers with advice, and to cultivate his own interest in the field. For many years he has given talks about different parts of the London of Charles Dickens, and led rambles over the territory. The talk he will be giving to the Society has evolved from a commentary he put together for a boat trip on the Thames arranged for delegates at the 2008 Symposium of the International Dickens Society, at Kingston University.

There will be an opportunity to renew your membership at the AGM

**Thursday 24 May
Drinks from 7.15, talk at 8 pm
Dining with Kings (and Queens): Eating at
Hampton Court Palace through History
Talk by Dr Annie Gray
Clore Centre, Hampton Court Palace**

You may remember that Dr Annie Gray gave us a very entertaining talk on the customs at Hampton Court during the time of William and Mary.

Dr Gray is a consultant and researcher on all matters relating to post-medieval food and dining. Her talk on this occasion will illustrate the changing fashions in royal dining at Hampton Court Palace.

Dr Gray describes herself as passionate about food and history, and talking! She has managed to successfully combine these into a career in food history, encompassing giving talks, demonstrations and workshops; working in costume; consultancy and appearances on TV and on radio.

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 Tuesday 8 May, either using the form below or by email.

Meeting Reports

Imber Court - A Stately Home for Horses Talk by Chris Forester 31 January – Imber Court Report by Paul Cunningham



Imber Court House 1790s

On a very cold January evening, over 100 people attended this most interesting presentation by Chris Forester. Chris started his career in the Metropolitan Police in 1972 and joined the Mounted Branch in 1975. In 1980 he was posted to Imber Court Mounted Training Establishment.

Imber Court was originally part of the ancient Kingdom of Wessex. It was included in the Domesday Book, when it was owned by Richard de Tonbridge. In the 16th century the Duke of Norfolk became the owner of Imber Court and in 1538 passed it to Henry VIII. By this time Henry was grossly overweight and unable to travel far. In order to enjoy his favourite sport of hunting close to his palace at Hampton Court Henry encased all the adjoining land and estates for some 30 miles around, removing all the inhabitants not necessary for its upkeep. It was not until 1551, some years after Henry's death that the original inhabitants were allowed back. The estate remained in royal ownership until 1630 when it was given away by Charles I to Dudley Carleton, Viscount Dorchester and later Baron of Imber Court

Carleton died in 1631 and Imber Court was inherited by his nephew, also Dudley Carleton. Carleton engaged Inigo Jones to design a new manor house, which stood until 1919 when it was demolished. In the 18th century the property was owned by Arthur Onslow who acquired the property when he married its owner, Ann Bridges. Onslow was Speaker of the House of Commons on five occasions.

Between 1793 and 1823 Imber Court was owned by Colonel Robert Taylor. At that time the property consisted of the manor house, a paddock of 60 acres, a water corn mill, a public house (The Marquis of Granby), Ditton marsh, various cottages, a duck pond, a croquet ground, an orchard, a kitchen garden, a smooth lawn, a fowl yard and an arable field.

In 1823 the property was acquired by Admiral Sir Charles Sullivan who made extensive alterations to the house and added a conservatory at the side. He also created ornamental Italian gardens. In the 1841 census, 22 servants appear on the records. The last residents of Imber Court were Charles Corbett and his family. Corbett acquired the property in 1862 and lived there until his death in 1882. His family remained at the property until 1899.

In 1905 Henry Hanson, a local entrepreneur, leased the land and built a trotting track. For the next five years there were frequent race meetings at the trotting track but due to widespread race fixing and other malpractices the sport quickly declined and the last race meeting was held at Imber Court in 1910.

From 1915 to 1919 the War Department took on the lease to create the Imber Court Proving and Testing Ground, part of the Munitions and Inventions Department set up by Winston Churchill, staffed by recruits from the military. Many inventions were tested here: for example a forerunner to the helicopter pioneered by Louis Brennan.

Having served in the Munitions and Inventions Department, Major William Smith bought the entire estate at the end of WW1, and immediately sold the southern and eastern edges of the estate for house building plots. He retained possession of the western area, which was later called the Orchard Lane Trading Estate and sold the remainder of the estate to the Metropolitan Police. Smith built factories on the Trading Estate for his new company, Triangular Concrete and Construction Company, which later became Trianco Limited.

Major Smith continued inventing and one of his best known inventions was the Smith Gun which was a cheaply produced small artillery piece produced initially for the Home Guard. He was the pioneer of the collapsing airborne pallet. Many of these pallets played a major part in the D Day landings. He also invented the "triangular brick". These bricks were designed to be fitted together to give constructions of great strength.

The current clubhouse was built in 1929 by public subscription. Overnight accommodation was provided for Police Officers in training.

Police officers from all over the world have been trained at Imber Court with the regular intake of recruits. It was here in 1971 that WPCs Margaret Goodacre and Ann McPherson were to make history as the first women police officers to join the Mounted Branch.

Imber Court today has facilities for the training of both horses and officers. It also houses a small museum documenting the development of Mounted Police and is the administrative centre for the Mounted Branch.

**Life in Molesey during World War II
Exhibition Friday 9/Saturday 10 March
Molesey Royal British Legion
Report by Jill Wilkins**

A well-attended exhibition was held over two days at Molesey Royal British Legion entitled 'Life in Molesey during World War II'. At the request of our members we were displaying material gathered for our meeting held in November 2010. We had received feedback that members would like the opportunity to have a more leisurely look at the information collected from residents, who had lived in Molesey during the War. Their experiences and memories brought to life the facts and events which occurred in the locality.

Many remembered the various types of air raid shelter at home and at school, the food shortages, the Home Guard and the Victory parties. Some children were evacuated to the country and abroad, whilst Molesey played host to refugees from Belgium and elsewhere. General Eisenhower planned the D-Day landings from his Supreme Headquarters in Bushy Park, and some remembered begging the Americans for chewing gum and sweets.

There were memories of tragedy too: fatalities and destruction in Pemberton Road and at Imber Court, when around forty people were killed in 1944 by a V1 Flying Bomb, including eighteen Welsh Guards who were taking part in an athletics meeting.

Members of the Society had used the memories gathered as a basis for further research to try and build up a picture of life in Molesey during wartime. There was a display covering the various topics researched and the interview scripts were available for people to read. A presentation of photographs was also shown, which included some film featuring the RSPCA Dogs Home, which welcomed animals who had lost their owners in the Blitz; and holidaymakers, urged to take their 'holidays at home', relaxing by the Thames at Molesey Lock.

The exhibition generated a lot of interest and brought back memories for some of the visitors, who were able to record them to be added to the Society's material.

Then and Now

Jubilee 'Time Capsule' Photo Project

One of our members suggested that we create a time capsule of Molesey to commemorate the Jubilee year. We have decided to take this idea forward in two ways.

The first is a 'Then and Now' photographic project. It is proposed to choose 100 historic photographs of Molesey and to take photographs as far as possible from the same vantage points, to create a picture of Molesey as it is in the Jubilee year and show how its physical features have changed over time. These photographs would provide material for talks, exhibitions, a DVD. In due course, the intention is to publish a book. The book could form the basis of a similar photographic project for future generations. Funding for the photography has been offered through the Molesey Residents Association, and the photographers selected are Mark Goodman and Emily Sieler. If any members have historic photographs that we could borrow to be included in this project, please let us know.

Secondly, to complete this 'time capsule' of photographs, we would like to make a collection of photographs of people, places and events to create a snapshot of life in Molesey as it is during this Jubilee year to pass on to future generations.

There will be special events, with Jubilee tea parties and crowds watching the Olympic cycling events, but we would also like to collect photos of the more mundane events of everyday life: shopping, sports, schools and church functions, club activities etc, to reflect the many facets of life in Molesey today.

What do you think is special about living in Molesey today? We should like to see as many members as possible contributing photographs of some aspect of Molesey life to give future generations a snapshot of customs, fashions, transport and architecture in 2012. Please get your cameras out and start snapping!

The Molesey Hundred

Following on the Elmbridge Hundred project, we thought it would be interesting to compile a 'Molesey Hundred'. So we have made a list of just over a hundred notable people who lived in Molesey, whose fame has spread beyond the immediate local area.

The only rule that we had in compiling this list was that everyone included has already died. This fitted in with the criteria that were used for the Elmbridge Hundred.

For instance, had you heard of Sir Henry Thompson the eminent surgeon, who was a prominent advocate for the introduction of cremation? There are also many titled people, sports stars of their time and politicians.

We would be very appreciative if any members would be willing to research any of our Molesey Hundred so that we could find out more about them. If you are interested please contact Pauline Sieler on 020 8979 7556 or pauline@sieler.co.uk

Special Interest Group People and Buildings

The next meeting of the People & Buildings Group will be on Wednesday 30 May at 8 pm at the British Legion, St Mary's Road, when the topic will be 'Charities of Molesey'.

Contact: Anthony Barnes, 0208 979 6744
aqbarnes@ntlworld.com

Surrey History Centre Wins Award

Congratulations to Surrey History Centre which has recently been voted outright winner, by a large margin, of the Archive of the Year Award 2012. Record offices throughout the UK were eligible for the Award; members of the public were asked to nominate and vote for the archive service which offered 'the best' – the best service from staff and facilities in the search rooms; the most accessible and highest quality finding aids and catalogues; best services online; widest range of documents available for consultation; strongest connection with the local community and the best facilities for disabled people. The Award was presented at Who Do You Think You Are? Live 2012 at Olympia.

Email

Over two thirds of our members receive information and newsletters by email, and this helps to keep costs down. Please let us know if you are currently receiving information by post and you would like to join the email list.

Produced by:
Molesey Local History Society
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Website: moleseyhistorysociety.org
Tel: 020 8979 3465

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Thursday 24 May
Drinks from 7.15, talk at 8 pm
Food and Dining at Hampton Court Palace
Talk by Dr Annie Gray

IF YOU WISH TO ATTEND THIS MEETING ON THURSDAY 24 MAY, PLEASE SEND IN THIS SLIP (OR SEND A NOTE) WITH YOUR REQUIREMENTS BY TUESDAY 8 MAY. ALTERNATIVELY, EMAIL historysociety@btinternet.com. IF SEATS ARE STILL AVAILABLE AFTER 8 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 8 May, the meeting will be open to guests and non-members (£2 charge) if there are spare places

NAME:.....

Please reserve a place for me/us at the Hampton Court Palace Meeting on Thursday 24 May
Send to Membership Secretary, Molesey Local History Society, 17 Matham Road, East Molesey,
SURREY KT8 0SX

EVENTS AT SURREY HISTORY CENTRE

Surrey Museums Month: Surrey Heroes

Every April, Surrey Museums Month celebrates Surrey's 44 amazing museums and galleries and their many fun events, exhibitions and activities for all ages and interests. For 2012, Surrey History Centre is also showcasing people around the county who have played an important role in shaping Surrey's history - our Surrey Heroes. From the very well known to those less so, the idea is to share different aspects of Surrey's history and encourage visits to discover more about Surrey's 'Stars'. Keep watch for updates on from March, and for further details of the Surrey Museums Month: Surrey Heroes popular launch evening is being held this year at the newly refurbished Watts Gallery.

Lost Voices from the Titanic – A talk by Nick Barratt

Saturday 21 April 2012, 2-3pm at Surrey History Centre, followed by book signing

April 2012 sees the centenary of the most infamous voyage in sea-faring history. Recapture the unfolding drama, tragedy and chaos of that fateful night through the words of those who were there, with Nick Barratt, TV presenter, expert genealogist from *Who Do You Think You Are?* & author of *Lost Voices from the Titanic: The Definitive Oral History*. Drawn primarily from the material assembled by Walter Lord for his classic 1958 film 'A Night to Remember', Nick will revive the forgotten stories, told by those who worked and sailed on the ship. Signed copies of Nick's book can be purchased on the day.

Tickets £5.00, including refreshments. Booking is essential. Places are limited. To book please call 01483 518737

To accompany this talk there will also be a small foyer display featuring sources for studying the Titanic held at the Surrey History Centre.

Surrey's Sporting Life 2012

Throughout the year, Surrey Heritage, in association with museums, libraries, sports clubs and local history societies across the county, will be celebrating Surrey's rich sporting heritage and sporting personalities. A programme of displays and re-enactments are already being planned. To give you a taste there are plans to repeat the very successful re-enactment of the first recorded baseball match near Guildford in 1755. Details of the displays and events will be advertised on Surrey County Council and Exploring Surrey's Past websites.

Surrey History Centre, 130 Goldsworth Road, Woking, Surrey, GU21 6ND. Tel: 01483 518737

EVENTS AT HAMPTON COURT PALACE

Henry VIII's Wives

From 22 April at Hampton Court Palace you will be able to see an exciting new film featuring all six of Henry's wives. The film will be shown in the Buttery in Henry VIII's apartments, where you can also see new portraits of each wife and learn more about their lives ... and fates.

As you walk in their footsteps through Henry's apartments, discover the visual clues left behind by his queens in these magnificent rooms and find out about the events in the palace that shaped their lives.

The Wild, the Beautiful and the Damned

5 April 2012 – 30 September 2012

A new temporary exhibition about the story of beauty, debauchery and decadent art at the late Stuart Court.

The Wild, the Beautiful and the Damned, explores the meaning of beauty, and the lives and loves of the courtesans and libertines who lived and died in the Stuart Court during the reigns of Charles II, James II, William III & Mary II and Anne (1660-1714).

The exhibition explores the story of how kings, queens and courtesans swept away the Puritanical solemnity of the mid-17th century, and attempted to rewrite the moral code of social behaviour.