

### Membership Renewal

Membership renewal forms were sent out in March, prior to the AGM. If you have not yet renewed your membership, you will receive a reminder with this newsletter. Memberships lapse at the end of June and, if you have not renewed your subscription, you will cease to receive newsletters and other communications. We do hope you find something of interest to you in our programme and will decide to continue your membership.

### Dining with Kings (and Queens): Eating at Hampton Court Palace through History Talk by Dr. Annie Gray at the Clore Centre, Hampton Court Palace. 24<sup>th</sup> May 2012

#### Report by Brian Smith



Jenny Wood with Dr Annie Gray

At the end of Dr. Gray's talk, and before questions, a long time member of the audience congratulated her on the best presentation he had heard. This view was echoed by everyone there.

Dr. Gray started off by disabusing us of the Charles Laughton view of medieval dining with diners tearing at their meat with their bare hands and tossing the bones over their shoulders for the dogs to fight over. Certainly people at that time did not have forks, and used their knives and fingers to cut up and eat their meat but the need to keep themselves and clothing clean meant that there was a code of etiquette and manners. We should also

remember that in the Middle Ages a knife was a necessary part of everyone's attire and people would be expert in their use; much more so than we are today.

Before Tudor times, as we know, there had been a Templar establishment on the site, but it was the coming of Wolsey and later Henry VIII that started the spectacular development of the Hampton Court kitchen. The large kitchens and associated preparation rooms were constructed by Henry and these included an area along the river where butchery and the disposal of animal waste into the river was carried out. All the cooks and food preparers were men.

This was "power dining" on a massive scale, where Henry was able to display his wealth and also to keep tabs on his courtiers who had to be there and not away plotting against him. It was a massive factory style of dining, with something like 1,000 people to be fed three times per day. Apart from the enormous amount of labour needed to prepare and serve the food, the logistics of obtaining, storing and paying for the supplies of food for that number were clearly complex and time-consuming and required many more people, often with a better education.

Henry would often eat separately from the main crowd and there was a strict pecking order concerning service. Some nobles would have their own plates, others would share in twos, fours or eights depending on their status. For all the others plates were simply placed on the tables and everyone helped themselves. This was obviously more messy and not such a polite method. The word "mess" derives from this.

The Great Hall where most people ate was designed to impress. Dr. Gray pointed out that the roof was impressive with its beams, but was excessive, as the building did not require them. Higher nobles ate in the Great Watching Chamber often with Henry.

Dining was, for Henry, a way of flaunting his power and the pavilion built and set up on the Field of the Cloth of Gold near Calais, with its fountain of wine and other excesses, was aimed at impressing the French King. To little

effect it seems, because England and France were at war again some two years later.

The actual provender was essentially game and meat from England. The main sign of luxury with a foreign ingredient were the sugar figures etc that adorned the tables - sugar being the first "exotic" food to be available on a reasonably large scale. These were usually made by women.

During the Restoration period, from 1660 onward, Royal feasting continued but on a much smaller scale. The king did not support a large retinue who had to be fed. However it was still a public performance and people still could watch the king dining. There was still a need for Charles II to show he was King. By this time the spices from the Orient were being shipped in, as well as tobacco and other delicacies, including potatoes, from the Americas. Coffee and tea houses were becoming more common and the diet was considerably more varied. The fork was introduced during this time and this also helped the growing refinement of eating. Small dining rooms and parties of people rather than the grand banquets of the Tudors became the norm.

This trend towards smaller, more intimate groups, essentially private in nature and often family oriented continued throughout the eighteenth century. William III built a new separate kitchen at Hampton Court near to where the Real Tennis Court is located. This supplied meals to the royal families and senior courtiers in the East Wing – or "Selfridges" as Dr. Gray called it. The kitchen boasted multiple spits driven from a single source and dishes became elaborate in their design and pastry work.

Victoria was not over fond of Hampton Court and opened it to the public in 1838 – an event which was one of the key elements in the development of Molesey after the railway was extended to bring the tourists down to the Palace.

During the Victorian period dining again became part of the power game. People would vie to get invited or be seen dining with important personages. The friendlier, more family oriented and intimate fashion of the 18<sup>th</sup> century was replaced by formal dining, often with people one hardly knew. Etiquette became a driving force and the example set by Edward VII was copied.

During the twentieth century, whilst formal banquets continued sometimes, as a recent

Royal occasion showed, with having to include some unpopular guests because of their "status", dining has become much more relaxed again and is almost certainly much more popular. Hampton Court Palace has adapted to this – provision of special meals to Grace and Favour tenants died out a while ago, but the current aim now is to support and strengthen the tourist potential of the Palace. This is a long way from Henry VIII's ambitions to overawe people and demonstrate his power.

In answer to questions Dr. Gray developed these themes. She said that from the 18<sup>th</sup> century onward French Chefs dominated in the kitchens of the great houses and if you could not get a French Chef at the very least you had to have someone who had worked under a French Chef. Astonishing in a way, because for most of that century we were at loggerheads and war with France.

The Society is very fortunate to be able to hold an annual meeting at Hampton Court Palace and we are grateful to Rita Ashbourne for arranging this very popular event. Although situated across the river, Hampton Court has its address in East Molesey and its rich history adds a broader dimension to the Society's local aims.

### **Molesey Carnival Report by Paula Day**



### **It's Carnival Time!**

Indeed it was, and our array of photographs and information collected for our talk about the Carnival last November was on display for a whole new audience, as well as numerous familiar faces. Our marquee was constantly full of people trying to spot friends and family in the photographs of the floats, learning about the history of the Carnival, and enjoying the friendly atmosphere. We gained some valuable information and some new members, and have been informed that ours was the best stall at the Carnival!

## 'Then and Now' Photo Project

We are busy selecting photos for the 'Then and Now' photographic project mentioned in our last newsletter. We have lots of old photos of Walton Road, Bridge Road and the River Thames, but we should be grateful for the loan of old photos (preferably from the 1960s or earlier) of various other locations, including:-

Court Cinema  
Dundee Villa  
King's Arms Public House  
The New Inn  
Prefabs in West Molesey  
West Molesey Parish Pump  
Any side road  
Industrial estates in both East and West Molesey  
The Menzies gates and the previous pavilion at East Molesey Cricket Club

If anyone has any old photos which they would be happy to lend us for scanning for use in this project we should be obliged if they would please contact [historysociety@btinternet.com](mailto:historysociety@btinternet.com) or Tel: 020 8979 3465

### Facebook

The Society has recently joined Facebook and you might like to follow us on:  
<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Molesey-Local-History-Society/355914481102053>

### DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

**Tony Osborne Memorial Summer Stroll  
East Molesey Old Village/Bridge Road  
Wednesday 11 July 2012**

**Maps available from 7 pm, Talk 8 pm  
Molesey Royal British Legion, 4 St Mary's  
Road, East Molesey, KT8 0ST**

Tony Osborne has organised a Summer Stroll for the Society every year since it was established and this year was no exception. As you may know, sadly Tony died in May and this year's walk will therefore be designated the 'Tony Osborne Memorial Summer Stroll'. There will be an opportunity for members to make a donation to his favourite charity at the meeting. Tony had been working on this year's stroll and we are very grateful to his daughter Mary, who has kindly completed Tony's work and will give the talk following the walk. Our thanks are also due to Ken Cooper, who has drawn the map for us.

One of the houses that is featured in the walk is Holly Lodge, 20 Walton Road. Ernest and Brenda Mallett have kindly offered to leave the gate open for members to have a look at the front of the house, and to go round to the back to see where the underground river Caundle runs into the river Mole.

Maps will be available outside the British Legion from 7 pm, with the talk at 8 pm.

**Special Interest Group  
People and Buildings  
Wednesday 25 July, 8 pm  
Molesey Royal British Legion, 4 St Mary's  
Road, East Molesey, KT8 0ST**

The date of the next People and Buildings is Wednesday 25th July 8pm at British Legion. We are still collecting stories about the Welcome Club - a social club for the over 60s set up in 1948 that used to meet at what is now Vine Hall. Please get in touch with your memories. We are also about to start finding out more about housing in West Molesey. Please get in touch if you can tell us anything about the Howard Estate, pre-fabs and new roads and what they replaced.

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

**Friday 12 October 2012, 8 pm  
Sport on the Hurst  
Mole Hall, Bishop Fox Way, KT8 2JE**

**Wednesday 14 November 2012, 8 pm  
House History  
Talk by Nick Barratt  
Imber Court, Ember Lane, KT8 0BT**

**Wednesday 28 November, from 5.30 pm  
Magical Molesey  
Walton Road Christmas Event**

**Produced by:  
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**Tony Osborne**  
**1930 - 2012**  
**Obituary by Helen Osborne**



**Tony sketching with one of his grandchildren, Great Dixter, 2006**

Tony was born in Mill Hill, the second of four sons. who all graduated from University College. London. As a small boy he was always busy and occupied with something constructive and he never changed! In 1941 he joined the Scouts and life became full of camps and knots, maps and putting up Morrison shelters for the elderly. After he left school in 1948 he went on to the Bartlett School of architecture. Some students were ex-servicemen but in spite of the differences of age and experiences they integrated well and Tony became part of a group of four, all keen and hard working and determined to get on. His friend Chris Arnold wrote from America::

*“Tony was the quiet one who got on by himself. He would retreat to the studio to work quietly on his projects. And he would nearly always get the top marks. He was a born architectural designer and his works seemed to flow from him without effort. In the summer of 1950 we purchased a London taxi for £15. We designed an add-on shelter and were completely self-supporting and embarked on a trip around Europe. The planning of the trip was rudimentary. It targeted various architectural sites, both old and new, in which we were interested, so we meandered from Calais, south as far as Switzerland, Austria and with a flip of a coin ended up in Venice. Our adventures were all minor and delightful and the friendships continue to this day.”*

This trip changed Tony’s outlook so that he determined to know what was going on in building around the world. He read the architectural magazines avidly and his great interest in history widened his understanding. At the end of the course he was awarded the Soane medallion and a scholarship to France, having been the outstanding student of the year.. He enrolled at the Beaux Arts and widened his vision. Living in the centre of Paris he enjoyed the work and life and made pocket money teaching English. The irony was he hardly learnt a word of French. What he learnt instead was a love of classical music from a teacher who was supposed to give him French lessons, but gave up in despair and played gramophone records instead.

Following on from the French experience Tony had to do National Service. Having got his commission he applied to be sent abroad where he found himself as an Army Planning officer in Kuala Lumpur. His job was to design a school for children of army families – which was cancelled after 18 month’s work. The worst test came when he was in charge of military trains carrying soldiers through the jungle in the middle of the night . Luckily they weren’t ambushed but he won a service medal anyway.

Tony and I married in 1955. Then working in Richmond, a house in Molesey, with river frontage, was ideal. In the early days the house was very dilapidated and our parents became worried as Tony pulled down walls and generally re-worked it. My mother once asked: didn’t I want to have a proper house with doors and windows? The endless DIY at Fern Cottage has always been a source of great amusement to our friends. We have four children who are now grown up with their own families and the dear old house manages to accommodate them all for visits.

Tony's career started with a small firm in Richmond but his flair for design led him to accept a job with Culpin and Partners where he eventually became senior design partner, although he never enjoyed administration. He was disappointed that some modern buildings strayed from common sense; but he wanted the client to have a beautiful building that actually worked and didn't cause future problems. He won *Grantham Civic Centre* in open competition. Another highlight was the re-development of the Tynemouth fishing village of *Cullercoats* where he was instrumental in keeping many of the older buildings and much of the character of the village in spite of the Council's objections. The master-plan for *Martlesham Heath New Village* in Suffolk was a huge project lasting over 25 years. There was also a housing scheme in *Hampton* with a village green. Tony spent time in Saudi Arabia and Egypt studying and building homes for desert dwellers to give them the basic needs of a roof over their heads, water, cooking facilities and sanitation. Back in England his work included housing estates, army barracks and *Laing Homes*. His final project was the *Oceanographic Centre* for Southampton University. It is a vast building round three quads on the waterfront for use by government scientists and students at the university. It incorporates laboratories, vast tanks for study of sea creatures and a great deal of complicated equipment. It also has the Research ships based there. Tony's love of sailing and the sea and his ambition to design something of great use to the world made his dreams come true. He actually enjoyed working all hours of the day and night. He couldn't believe his luck.

In his retirement Tony continued painting. He immersed himself in local planning issues, the Conservation Area Advisory Committee and the Campaign for the Protection of Rural England. He tried to keep our church buildings in repair, he took his grandchildren out, played badminton for 61 years, wrote a book on the structure of music, and over the years we had at least twenty very special walking holidays abroad with friends. The fate of Molesey was ever on his mind, especially the wonderful views of the Palace, and he did all he could to help keep Molesey beautiful and interesting with its buildings, trees and open spaces.

### **TONY OSBORNE** **Tribute by Jenny Wood**

We were very sorry to hear of the death of Tony Osborne in May. Tony was a stalwart supporter of the Society from the time of its foundation in March 2007. He was a member of the first committee but resigned after a year as he preferred to devote his talents and time to research, and in particular to organising a 'Summer Stroll' for us.

The first walk on a very wet June evening in 2007, reminiscent of many June evenings this year, was round the East Molesey Old Village Conservation Area. In his talk Tony illustrated how the area had changed since the days of Henry VIII, pointed out remnants of buildings and other structures which still remain and showed photographs of buildings which are no longer standing. The second walk was round the Bridge Road/Creek Road area and along the riverbank to Molesey Boat Club where Tony told us about this area and, in particular, spoke about early 19<sup>th</sup> century proposals for a Thames Canal and 1913 plans for a Molesey Boulevard. The 2009 stroll was over Molesey and Cow Commons. A highlight of this walk was that Tony had obtained permission for us to go into the garden of the Old Manor House and see the very fine south elevation of the house. In 2010 we strolled round the Kent Town Conservation Area before listening to Tony tell us about the development of the area in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century and its near destruction in the 1960s when Surrey County Council wanted to redevelop the area by demolishing many of the buildings and replacing them with multi-storey apartment blocks. The 2011 walk at Island Barn Reservoir was a walk that Tony had been planning for 2 or 3 years beforehand in order to celebrate the centenary of the opening of the reservoir in 1911. He encountered several problems during the planning stages of the walk but his perseverance overcame these and with the co-operation of Thames Water and the Sailing Club he arranged a very enjoyable evening with a walk at the reservoir followed by an interesting talk at Chandlers Field School.

The hand-drawn maps which Tony prepared for each one of his talks illustrate not only his artistic talent but also his deep knowledge and love of Molesey history. Tony's summer strolls have been a hugely important part of the Society's programme since it began in 2007 and we are really grateful to him for the hard work and enthusiasm that made his strolls so successful. Tony was a pleasure to work with as he was very knowledgeable and always cheerful and enthusiastic and we shall miss him greatly.

Before his death Tony had partly prepared this year's walk. We are delighted that his daughter, Mary, has very kindly agreed to complete the preparations for the walk and to talk to us.