

Meeting Report

Summer Stroll – 11 July 2012 East Molesey Old Village – Bridge Road Area Report by Stewart Nash

This year's summer stroll was the sixth such event since the Society was formed in 2007. It was an event tinged with sadness as Tony Osborne who had designed and led the previous strolls died on 5 May this year. Fortunately Tony's plans for this year's stroll were well advanced and with his daughter Mary taking over the post walk presentation the stroll was a tangible and fitting tribute to Tony's efforts on behalf of the Society.

Armed with a specially drawn map strollers were able to visit the 18 places of interest in the East Molesey Old Village Area and with these fresh in our minds Mary Osborne was able to provide more detail in her presentation.

The walk started from what was the boundary of East Molesey old village. Keen's Alley originally a footpath across open fields but now hidden away behind the houses of Arnison Road as it winds its way from the junction of Manor Road and Vine Road eventually emerging into Bridge Road between numbers 79 and 81. Keen's Alley is named after Benjamin Keen a dairyman who used the path to link his farm to his shop.

Almost opposite Keen's Alley is Kingfisher Court a development of apartments constructed in the mid 1930s and designed by Guy Morgan in the Art Moderne style. The four blocks are arranged around a central area which includes a swimming pool. The site on the corner of Bridge Road and Arnison Road now occupied by Boleyn Court is where the vicarage for St Mary's Church stood until it was demolished in the 1950s.

Cedar Road is the site of East Molesey Lodge a grand mansion built by Sir Thomas Heneage a gentleman usher to Cardinal Wolsey and the road takes its name from the Cedar of Lebanon in the house's ground.

The final part of Bridge Road contained many fascinating properties including the old Forge and the former King's Arms Public House. We also had a wonderful opportunity to see behind the scenes of Fern Cottage whose roadside frontage belies what lies behind.



High House

High House almost opposite the Police Station may date back to as early as 1790 and shows signs of the impact of Window Tax. The front door has now been moved back to its original position as shown in the c1910 photograph (above), having for some time been repositioned in the centre,

Before exploring Walton Road we took a short detour to Summer Road where the widening and deepening of the river following the 1968 flood has resulted in the closure of the ford and the replacement of the original footbridge with a wider version.

Continuing to Walton Road and the opportunity to visit the rear of Holly Lodge where there was the chance to see what little remains of the River Caundle. Walton Road Garage is of considerable interest because much of it has been associated with the motor trade for as long as I can remember. The main building was originally the offices of East Molesey Council until the merger to form East and West Molesey Urban District Council in 1895 required the Council to relocate to a building in St Mary's Road (now part of the car park behind the former Fire Station). The Walton Road Garage site also included a council vehicle depot and a tiny fire station.

We were now nearing the end of our stroll with the sites of the former mansions of The Grove and Sandra House now replaced by the Grove Court maisonettes and Sandra House sheltered accommodation.

As well as covering the details of the places we had seen along the route Mary also told us about the work she and her father had done digging into the history of their own house. Using data from the Surrey County Archives at Woking and the National Archives at Kew Tony and Mary had managed to trace details of the property back to the mid 18th Century, identify previous owners and tenants of the property as well as its various uses as a school room, cobblers shop and bakers. Mary described the process as time consuming, frustrating but in the end very rewarding.

I must have walked past the buildings in Bridge Road and Walton Road many hundreds of times but apart from reading Rowland Baker's book of Molesey the detailed history of the properties we saw along the way had not been fully appreciated nor how they came together to paint a picture of the development of the old village area over the last 300 years. A fascinating evening.

Forthcoming Events

Friday 12 October 2012, 8 pm

Sport on the Hurst

Mole Hall, Bishop Fox Way, KT8 2JE

The Molesey area has been extremely fortunate to play a major part in the Olympic festival of sport, and this is why we have chosen sport as our major topic for research in 2012. We have a rich heritage of sport in Molesey, much of it centred on the Hurst. On 10th October it is the 50th anniversary of the last race at Hurst Park Racecourse and we hope you will join us to celebrate this anniversary and some of the many other historic moments that the Hurst has witnessed over the centuries.

Free of charge for members, guests welcome (£3 on the door).

Wednesday 14 November 2012, 8 pm

House History - Talk by Nick Barratt

Imber Court, Ember Lane, KT8 0BT

We are pleased to welcome Nick Barratt of BBC's 'Who do You Think You Are' and the History Channel's 'Hidden House Histories', for a second time. In 2010 Nick gave us an extremely lively and well-received talk on Family History and we look forward to hearing him speak on house history research.

In 2000, Nick founded SRA (Sticks Research Agency) and currently he is the CEO. He is a teaching fellow at the University of Dundee, and the Editor in Chief of 'Your Family History' magazine. His new venture is www.familyhistoryshow.com, an online vodcast (video podcast) and history resource.

There will be a cash bar for refreshments. Please note that parking is sometimes difficult at Imber Court, because of the number of activities that take place there in the evenings, so you may wish to plan to walk or share transport with other members.

Wednesday 28 November, from 5.30 pm

Magical Molesey

Walton Road Christmas Event

Look out for an MLHS display during the annual Christmas shopping event, and come and join us for a chat during the festivities.

People and Buildings Group



We are continuing to look into the history of the Howard Houses in West Molesey. Do you have any memories or old photos of Howard's ultra-modern, labour saving, suntrap homes that you would like to share with us? The original steel-framed windows have all been replaced but can anyone tell us if this door is an original one? We would also like to trace any of Howard's relatives (He lived in Cheam) Please get in touch if you can help (agbarnes@ntlworld.com). Our next meeting is at the British Legion on Wednesday 28 November at 8pm. All welcome!

Molesey Review

We now have an almost complete set of Molesey Review, the local monthly magazine that was published from May 1953 through to January 1969 and contains a fascinating mixture of local news, gossip, personalities, sport, ads and even local bus and train times. We're currently cataloguing them, and plan to scan and copy them all, so all our members can enjoy them. But we're missing one edition - August 1967. Can you help?

HELP PLEASE!

We are still looking for photos for the 'Then and Now' photographic project mentioned in previous newsletters. We should be very grateful for the loan of any old photos of Molesey so that we can scan these and possibly use them in the project. If you can help please contact us on: tel 020 8979 3465 or historysociety@btinternet.com ..

Alfred Sisley

'The Molesey Mystery'



Langland Bay

Most members will be aware of the paintings of river scenes by the Impressionist Alfred Sisley, which he painted during a stay at the Castle Hotel in Molesey in 1874. He also painted a series of paintings in South Wales during a visit towards the end of his life, when he also married his long-term partner and mother of his children, Eugenie Lescouezec, at Cardiff Registry Office at Cardiff Town Hall in August 1897.

The Society was contacted with a request for information about an intriguing painting, picked up at an antiques fair, with a very interesting inscription:



'UPON THE DIRECT REQUEST OF A MOTHER "FELICIA" TO HER SON ALFRED OIL/CANVAS BY ALFRED SISLEY LANGLANDS BAY 1897

Presented by the artist to Dr William Taylor Physician for the Parish of Molesey (sic) nr London. As a small token of our appreciation and great affection. In the grave matter of my mother's illness the care and consideration which you demonstrated is the reason she still blesses us now. Your kindness Touched our Hearts. Thank you.

Presented January 15th 1898. Afternoon Tea at Cardiff Royal Hotel, Wales."

The established facts are that during his short stay in South Wales in 1897, Sisley painted a series of paintings of Langland Bay. Dr William Taylor was an eminent physician and prominent in public life, who became Mayor of Cardiff. He was living in Cardiff at the time of Sisley's visit to Wales. The date of the presentation is 1898, so it is unlikely that it was presented by Alfred Sisley himself, unless there was a further undocumented visit, which seems unlikely.

We are grateful to several of our members who have worked hard to find evidence to confirm that Dr Taylor was living in Molesey, but this has not been possible.

There appears to be some confusion about the date of the death of Sisley's mother, Felicia (either 1865 or 1866), so the 1898 inscription clearly refers to a long overdue promise to repay Dr Taylor for his kindness.

We know that Sisley was in London between 1857 and 1861, studying business. Dr Taylor graduated in 1856 and was appointed House Surgeon to Cardiff Infirmary, so he would have been at the beginning of his career during Sisley's first visit to London. It has been suggested that it would be quite likely for Sisley's mother to visit him in England (she was English and had family here) and maybe they visited Molesey together. Dr Taylor may have been acting as a locum or in training in the Molesey area, or maybe even on holiday here, or he may have been a family friend.

We may never know the answer, but if anyone has any ideas for avenues to pursue, please let us know. However, it may be one for the Antiques Road Show.

Aerial Photographs of Molesey

Many of you will have seen the wonderful aerial footage on the TV broadcasts of the Olympic cycling events, which really showed the world how lucky we are to live in such beautiful surroundings. You may be interested to look at some historic aerial photographs, which can be found

on: <http://www.britainfromabove.org.uk/groups/molesey-surrey>

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Events at Surrey History Centre

The Journey's End Battalion – R C Sherriff and the East Surrey Regiment

A talk and book signing by military historian Michael Lucas at Surrey History Centre.

Saturday 29th September 2012 2pm - 3pm followed by book signing

The Journey's End is the most famous play on the Great War and its author, R C Sherriff, saw all his frontline service in the 9th Battalion East Surrey Regiment. Michael Lucas will tell how he came to write the book, making particular use of the records of the former East Surrey Regiment and R C Sherriff held at Surrey History Centre. The talk will be copiously illustrated, with photographs and other documents from the collections. Michael will examine the experiences of Sherriff and the battalion and aims to break new ground by making extensive use of German, as well as British, sources, to show the experience on both sides of no man's land.

Tickets £5.00 including refreshments. Copies of the book will be available for sale.

The Journey's End Display

RC Sherriff and Journey's End: the man behind the play

29 September – 17 November at Surrey History Centre

Around 9 million men served in the armed forces of the British Empire during the First World War. R C Sherriff was one of those who fought and survived and his experiences led him to write the epic Journey's End. A small display will feature letters from the trenches, play scripts and newly discovered sketches of some of Sherriff's ill-fated comrades.

Available during normal opening hours.

Surrey Heritage Celebration

Saturday 6 October 2012 10am – 3.30pm

At Surrey History Centre. Free

Come along and celebrate our [Archive of the Year Award](#) with a day of free events at Surrey History Centre. Including children's craft activities, a family history helpdesk, behind the scenes tours of the award winning archive and much more.*

The 'behind the scenes' tours will be at 10.30am and 12.30pm. The tours last 1½ hours. Places are limited, to book please ring 01483 518737. Free

** This year the Surrey History Centre was named Archive of the Year by Your Family History Magazine.*

The day will also include the Surrey Heritage Annual Lecture:

'Valuing the Past: Why Heritage Matters in the Modern World'

2pm – 3.30pm

A talk by Dr Joe Flatman, Head of Central Casework and Programmes, English Heritage.

Drawing on his experiences working as a heritage professional around the globe, Dr Flatman will explore the different values that societies place on heritage in the modern world. Using examples drawn from across Surrey, the UK and further afield.

Places are limited, to book please ring 01483 518737. Free.

Surrey History Centre: 130 Goldsworth Road Woking, GU21 6ND Tel:01483 518 737