

We wish all our members a happy and healthy New Year, and hope that we will see you soon at one of our meetings.

**Sport on the Hurst - 1
Friday 12 October 2012
Report by Steve Bax**

Mole Hall was the venue in October for a fascinating evening exploring the rich history of 'Sport on the Hurst'.

Sport, as we learned, has brought out the crowds in Molesey over the years and it was fitting to see the venue packed for a talk about sport.

Jenny Wood, in her introduction, listed some of the many sports that have found a home at the Hurst – among them archery, duelling, cock fighting and rowing – but with too much information to cover in one meeting, most would have to wait for another meeting.

John Hutton gave a talk on cricket's 280-year association with the Hurst, from the early eighteenth century, when it was a pastime of aristocrats, to the present day. The history of cricket on the Hurst is the history of cricket itself, he said.

The German-born Prince Frederick Louis, Prince of Wales was an enthusiastic early patron, and his death at the age of 44 was attributed to the impact of a cricket ball!



Prince Frederick Louis (1707-1751)

Decades later John Tufton achieved lasting fame at the Hurst in 1795 as the first person against whom an LBW (leg before wicket) was recorded. He lends his name to Tufton Gardens in West Molesey, and Graburn Way and Beldham Gardens were, we learned, also named for famous names connected to cricket on the Hurst.

Stewart Nash then evoked memories of horse racing at the Hurst, which only ceased half a century ago. Slides revealed a map of the course and its winning post where Hurst Park Tesco stands today.

When the course was created there was an outcry in Molesey at the loss of public access to the river, but the races created employment for local people as day casuals, cleaners and at the turnstiles.

Race-goers once numbered 42,000 – and were the cause of complaints from East Molesey Cricket Club whenever some took a shortcut across their pitch! Famous visitors to the Hurst included Sir Winston Churchill – who had a race named for him in 1946 – as well as Indian princes and British monarchs: Edward VII, George V and George VI all came for the races, as did our present Queen and her mother. Their first horse was called Monaveen, and lends its name to Monaveen Gardens in West Molesey.

In June 1913 when Emily Davidson was trampled to death in a vain attempt to attach the Suffragette flag to the King's horse at Epsom, the backlash was felt at the Hurst where a grandstand mysteriously burned down a few days later.

The audience was also treated to footage of the Olympic cycle races along the Hurst Road, reminding us how sport continues to make history in Molesey.

**How to Explore the History of Your House
Wednesday 14 November 2012
Report by Roger Haile**

Nick Barratt of BBC's 'Who do You Think You Are' and the History Channel's 'Hidden House Histories' came to MLHS at Imber Court to tell us that researching the history of your house could be far more interesting than your average family tree.

Since he is best known for the TV series "Who Do You Think You Are" it seemed that he was now exploring new avenues! But he explained that in fact, it was a local history lesson at school that had first kindled his love of history. He stressed that any house history research should begin by understanding the locality and its place in the local neighbourhood.

His presentation was full of information, tips and guidance on the huge amount of resources available to the house historian. He had started by warning that his lecture would be technical, and he certainly went on to convince the audience that such research, although challenging, is extremely rewarding.

Nick's enthusiasm was catching and a lively question and answer session followed. Many wanted to know more and the audience took full advantage of his expertise.

Could the research be done at home on line? Certainly not, he replied – whilst some use could be made of census records, most of the information was only available by travelling to the various historical records offices, with Kew and Woking being high on the list of venues to explore. In fact, it was surprising to hear the number of ways in which house history can be uncovered.

So - are you wishing that you had been at the talk? Or were you at the talk but found it impossible to take enough notes from the vast amount of data on screen?.....If so, do not despair; as a member of Molesey Local History Society, you can have Nick's presentation emailed to you – simply contact us on historysociety@btinternet.com, and we will send one to you. Also, for anyone who wants something a bit more in-depth, Nick has a few copies of his book 'Tracing the History of Your House' that he is offering to sell to members at a discounted price of £10 (instead of £15.99). Please contact admin@house-detectives.co.uk if you would like a copy.

Nick's agency undertakes personal research and would be happy to take on the research of your house, contact admin@house-detectives.co.uk for further information. His new website is <http://www.house-detectives.co.uk>, where you will find further details.

Magical Molesey Molesey Hurst Report by Jill Wilkins

We have taken part in the Magical Molesey Christmas event since it began five years ago. Tudor & Co are generous hosts to the Society's members and anyone else who drops in to find out about our activities. This year, we had a short presentation about the Thameside Heritage Marker and showed some of the displays from the Sports meeting, notably the 1953 cricket match between East Molesey and the Australian touring team and royalty at Hurst Park Races. As we were in an estate agency, we also showed information about the sportsmen and personalities who have given their names to the roads in Hurst Park.

We had a full house throughout the evening, with many members and guests coming in for a chat, and some of us could not resist another look at the TV footage of the Olympic cycling, which brought back memories of our sporting summer.

Forthcoming Events

**Tuesday 29 January 2013, 8 pm
Members Evening
Sport on the Hurst - 2
St Paul's Church, Church Road, KT8 9DR**

Those members who attended our meeting on Sport on the Hurst in October will know that the research for this topic yielded so much material that there was too much to be covered in one meeting. In order to do justice to the diverse sporting history of Molesey Hurst, we therefore decided to use our Members Evening to examine the many other activities that have taken place there. The earliest records tell of hunting in the time of Henry VIII, and we will cover archery, duelling, the bathing station and ballooning, to name but few of the sports over the years.

We will display as much information as we can about cricket and racing, which were covered in the October meeting, and there will be talks and displays about the other sports. We hope you will join us for our first meeting of the New Year, and can promise mulled wine and cake for what we hope will be an interesting and sociable evening.

Thursday 25 April 2013, 8 pm

AGM

Victorian Hampton

Talk by John Sheaf

St Lawrence School, Church Road, KT8 9DR

Although local historian John Sheaf lives in Hampton, he has been a member of our Society since it was established in 2007 and he has been very helpful with many of our research projects. John is an avid collector of photographs, old postcards, books etc. relating to Hampton and has kindly allowed us to use his material in many of our displays, particularly relating to the River Thames. Some members may remember that he gave a talk at our first AGM on 'The Thames and Riverside Houses from Hampton Court to Hampton'.

We anticipate that the business of the AGM will take no longer than 30 minutes, and John will then speak on 'Victorian Hampton'. Refreshments will be served, and there will be an opportunity to renew your membership at the meeting.

People and Buildings

The People and Buildings group are meeting on Wednesday 30th January at 8pm at the Royal British Legion in Saint Mary's Road. We take an interest in what Molesey looked like in the past and what life was like for people living here. Come along and share your interest in bygone Molesey and perhaps find out something new! All welcome!

Competitive Cycling in Surrey by Les Bowerman

Last summer the people of Molesey turned out in force to cheer on the Olympic cyclists, and the whole world could see the beauty of the river Thames, Hampton Court Palace and the Surrey countryside.

The following article was written by Les Bowerman, and is based on a talk given by him at the AGM of the Surrey History Trust. The talk described how cycle racing for both men and women on public roads developed to become the sport seen on our roads last July, highlighting some of the significant personalities and events in the Surrey area. We are grateful both to Les and to the Trust for their permission to include it in our Newsletter.

Cartoonist Thomas Tegg had fun in 1819 showing a hobby-horse 'match against time' on Epsom Downs, followed in 1869 by John Mayall Jr racing a wooden-wheeled pedal-driven velocipede from

London to Brighton in 12 hours. The next year John Keen of Surbiton rode a £10 challenge match between two milestones on the Fairmile, learning that a bigger wheel with a solid rubber tyre was much faster. As both manufacturer and racer he played a part in the development of the high bicycle, nowadays commonly called a 'penny-farthing'. On one of these H L Cortis was first to break the 20 miles an hour barrier at the Crystal Palace at South Norwood. There is a memorial window to Cortis in Ripley Church.

In 1883 67 solid-tyred tricycles were raced for 24 hours around southern England, finishing in Ripley where the Dibble family at the Anchor catered for the survivors, who signed the visitors books there. After police tried to stop racing on the roads, road sport, by the late 1890s on pneumatic-tyred safety bicycles, became secretive, with black-clad figures riding early Sunday morning time trials. A trial for the World Championship Road Race was held at Brooklands in 1934. This highlighted British lack of experience of this type of racing so, with little traffic on wartime roads, police permission was obtained in 1942 for a race from Llangollen to Wolverhampton, leading to a dispute with the British cycling authorities which was not resolved until 1959. In the meantime the 1948 Olympics road race was held in Windsor Great Park. Stages of the Tour de France were held in the UK in 1974, 1994 and 2007.

If men had difficulty having the new form of transport which was cycling accepted, it was infinitely harder for women, when convention and respectability decreed that dresses were floor length, strenuous exercise was regarded as unsuitable and divided lower garments were unthinkable. Tricycles with bench seats became acceptable by 1870, giving limited freedom and exercise. The high bicycle era 1870-1885 was a definite no-no for women due both to convention and practicability. The smaller-wheeled safety bicycle with an open frame to accommodate long clothing encouraged more women to cycle. By the mid 1890s the strong-minded began to adopt more practical clothing for cycling, not least on the Ripley Road, and Viscountess Haberton's challenge to convention at the Hautboy at Ockham in 1898 indirectly established the legal right to wear 'Rational Dress' in public places. By 1930 shorts were being worn by both sexes.

In the 1920s some women were time-trialling on the open road, but there was no road racing by the allegedly weaker sex until 1956.

Hampton Court Bridge

It is almost 80 years since Edward Prince of Wales opened the present Hampton Court Bridge on 3rd July 1933. We plan to commemorate this anniversary by researching and presenting a meeting in November on the history of the Hampton Court Ferry and Bridges from Tudor times up to the opening of the present bridge.

Can any member remember the current bridge being built or opened or remember being told any stories by family or friends about the building or opening of the bridge? If you can, we should love to hear from you. We should also love to hear from you if you would like to join a small research group preparing for the meeting or if you have any engineering knowledge which would help in explaining (in simple terms!) the methods of construction of the bridge.

Projector Screen

From time to time, when we use a venue without its own facilities, we have to provide our own projector screen for presentations. This has sometimes proved a problem when the venue is large. We do not wish to purchase a projector screen, because of the difficulties of storage. An alternative is to hire one, but we wondered if any of our members has access to a screen that could be borrowed occasionally. We can get small screens, and sometimes this is all that is needed, but would like to be able get a large screen (6 ft or more) for our bigger meetings.

If you are able to help, please contact us on 020 8979 3465 or email historysociety@btinternet.com. Thank you.

Produced by:
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Surrey Heritage and the Friends of Woking Palace present: Living Like Royalty in Surrey and Beyond

An exciting day of talks exploring the Medieval and Tudor residences and lifestyles of the elite in an era of change. Speakers will include Professor Martin Biddle, Rob Poulton, Professor Nigel Saul and Eliza Wheaton. 10.00am to 4.00pm Saturday 23 March 2013 at Surrey History Centre, 130 Goldsworth Road, Woking, GU21 6ND.

Tickets are £15 and will include refreshments. To book, please call Surrey History Centre on 01483 518737 or email shs@surreycc.gov.uk.

Concerts at the Chapel Royal, Hampton Court Palace

8 March, 2013 - 7.45pm: A concert in HM Chapel Royal to coincide with the arrival of Florimania in the Tudor Apartments - James Bowman singing English songs from Dowland to Britten.

28 June, 2013 - 7.45pm: Music for a Summer Evening – a concert of Chamber Music.

Tickets are on sale via the Historic Royal Palaces website www.hrp.org.uk, by calling 0844 4827799 or by visiting the Palace ticket office.

WOULD YOU LIKE TO GET INVOLVED WITH A REINVIGORATED HISTORIC BUILDINGS TRUST IN SURREY?

Surrey Historic Buildings Trust is looking for passionate, committed and dedicated people to appoint to Trustee positions and to help in the general running of the Trust in developing its aims into the future.

The aim of Surrey Historic Buildings Trust is to help conserve the historic architectural heritage of Surrey for the benefit of future generations, by purchasing, repairing and selling buildings, raising awareness of historic building issues, offering grants and providing advice to owners or other trusts or like-minded organisations. Recently SHBT has been restructured to help achieve these aims.

The Trust aims to use its funds to identify and invest in projects to conserve and improve the historic environment in Surrey into the future. It is looking for people with the appropriate skills to govern the Trust and volunteers to help with the general organising of events and management of projects. There are also opportunities for people to volunteer and sit on one or more panels within the Trust, which will manage various projects relating to the historic environment of Surrey.

The SHBT is looking to appoint new Trustees by the beginning of March 2013. The deadline for applications is 4 February 2013. If you are interested, further information is available on: www.cobhamheritage.org.uk