

## **NEXT MEETINGS**

### **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

**Thursday 24 April, 8 pm**  
**St Lawrence School Hall**  
**Church Road, East Molesey**

The business of the AGM will be followed by a talk by John Sheaf on 'The Thames and Riverside Houses from Hampton Court to Hampton'.

Refreshments will be available.

**Wednesday 21 May, 7.30 pm**  
**Clore Centre, Hampton Court Palace**

Drinks at the Clore Educational Centre followed by a talk on the Hampton Court Fire by Dennis Ashbourne.

### **REPORT ON HISTORY OF HOSPITALS AND NHS IN MOLESEY**

Over one hundred members and visitors came to the Molesey Youth Centre on 6<sup>th</sup> March to hear Dr Ken Brown give a fascinating illustrated talk about medicine in Molesey.

The first part of his talk was about the cottage hospitals, of which there were three, the first in Manor Road from 1890, then in Pemberton Road from 1894 to 1936, and the third, the present Molesey Hospital, which had been an isolation hospital from 1911, became Molesey's cottage hospital in 1936.

The hospital was a voluntary organisation, with patients being charged for treatment according to their means, but fundraising was essential. This was a major community effort and friendly societies organised events such as whist drives, an annual fundraising parade through Molesey, and the Molesey Carnival.

"Pound Days" were organised, in which girls dressed as nurses went round collecting money or gifts by pound weight. The first "Pound Day" yielded £21 6s 9d in cash, half a ton of coal, and over 1500 lbs of groceries!

Dr Brown then went on to give an engaging personal account of the NHS in Molesey in 1960, when he first came down from Scotland to join the practice of Drs Humble, Bowling, Rodger and Munro, all of whom held surgeries in their own homes. After a very tiring drive down from Scotland, Ken was asked to take surgeries from 8.30 the following morning! So he bought a street map of Molesey, and got on with it!

Ken told us interesting information about the League of Friends, the facilities at Molesey Hospital, and the personalities involved, and he talked about the spirit there was in the NHS in 1960. This gripping talk, packed with information and humour explained the special importance of Molesey Hospital to the people of Molesey over the years and gave a fascinating insight into the life of a local GP.

### **REPORT ON VISITS TO SURREY HISTORY CENTRE**

During January and February two groups from the Society visited the Surrey History Centre to take a tour behind the scenes. The History Centre, which is in Goldsworth Road Woking, was opened in 1999. The building was purpose built to provide the best possible conditions for the preservation of the historic documents stored there and for public access to these documents.

The tour started in the foyer where our guide showed us the 'Surrey tapestry' designed by Philip Sanderson. This tapestry extends along the upper part of the rear wall and depicts the history of Surrey from prehistoric times to the present day. Our guide pointed out to us the various items shown in the different panels of the tapestry – these included Nonsuch Palace, the Woking mosque, which was the first purpose-built mosque in the United Kingdom, Epsom racecourse and isobars representing the 1987 hurricane. The last panel contains the letters 'www' to represent the internet but with no dot as history is never-ending. In the foyer we also looked at one of two large engraved glass panels by Martin Donlin, which interweaves historical and archaeological subjects with text.

We then visited the Surrey County Archaeology Unit, which is housed within the History Centre and saw its storage room, finds room and small finds room. One of their archaeologists explained their work to us.

We moved on to the holding and sorting room where documents are stored when they first arrive at the Centre. The History Centre is entirely paper based and does not accept artefacts. The holding and sorting room has an attached drying room with racks to allow documents to dry. Documents then go to the cleaning room where dust is filtered out of them. Any insects that may be in the documents also have to be removed and, if necessary, the documents are wrapped in clingfilm and then put in a blast freezer for 72 hours at -32°C to make sure than any insects are killed.

After the cleaning room we went to the packing room where documents are packed after they have been cleaned and conserved. Boxes are made specially to size for documents and are tied at the side so that when the boxes are stacked the knot will not push into the documents.

We next visited the conservation room where paper and parchment are conserved. No photographic conservation is done at the History Centre beyond packing and storing at

low temperatures. The conservation room has filters along the ceiling because so many chemicals are used in the room. The only natural light in the room is from the north so there is no strong sunlight which might damage the documents. We watched an old map being painstakingly conserved and heard how, even if a document has been badly damaged by water so that the ink has disappeared, it can still be read with the help of an UV light reader.

We were taken into one of the three strong rooms at the Centre. These rooms are kept at a constant temperature of 16°C and at 55% humidity. If there is a fire, shutters come down and argon is released from pipes in the ceiling. People in the strong room have about 5 minutes to get out before the argon is released. The building incorporates a ventilated sunshade to protect the roof of the strong rooms.

Finally we were taken into the search room and briefly told about searching for and ordering documents. The whole tour lasted about an hour and a half and was extremely interesting. If anyone is interested in going on a future tour please contact us. It is normally only possible to arrange tours during the week, not at weekends.

### **SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL GRANT**

The Society has received a grant of £1500 to purchase a computer and digital projector – more news at the AGM, but in the meantime we'd like to express our sincere thanks to our local Surrey County Councillors, Ernest Mallett and Tim Oliver, for helping to see through our grant application to its successful outcome.

### **SPORTS RESEARCH GROUP NEXT MEETING**

Please note that the date of the next Sports Group meeting has changed and will now take place on Wednesday 16 April at 8pm not the 10th as previously advertised.

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