

### Remembering the 1968 Floods



On 19 September a packed Mole Hall enjoyed an evening of reminiscence on the 40th anniversary of the 1968 floods.

Four members described their personal experiences and it was fascinating to watch TV newsreels of the floods themselves and then film of a year later, when people were still suffering the after effects. Also on display were photographs and newspaper coverage of this memorable event.

Many stayed on after the main programme to talk about their own memories and experiences.

At the request of members, this meeting is to be repeated on Friday 6 February – please see details later in the newsletter.

### Sisley and the Thames at Molesey

On 18 November 2008 an audience of about 190 heard a quite excellent lecture about Alfred Sisley and his paintings of the Thames at Molesey in 1874 and his later paintings of the Welsh coast in 1897. The speaker, Nicholas Reed, had an encyclopaedic knowledge of Sisley and his paintings. He spoke fluently without notes and his enthusiasm for the subject was both obvious and infectious. His slides vividly showed the colour in the paintings and details, such as the man with a yellow straw hat, thought to be Sisley himself.

Our speaker also had a very comprehensive knowledge of Thameside Molesey and the changes that have occurred there since Sisley's visit. It was fascinating to see photographs of buildings that have disappeared relatively recently, including the Upper Deck Swimming Pool, the Watercraft Works and, topically, the Jolly Boatman. It was a privilege to have a lecturer of such high quality.

The Committee would like to thank Mike Guest, Tony Osborne and Roger Reynolds for the loan of projection equipment and Linda Melham for all her work preparing the Molesey Youth Centre Hall for us.

### Magical Molesey Fred Karno & the Karsino

In December, Tudor & Co Estate Agents hosted a small exhibition on Fred Karno and the Karsino at the Magical Molesey Christmas event in the Walton Road. There were some wonderful photos, notably a 1930s aerial view of the Karsino complex on Taggs Island, which clearly showed the stage, which could be viewed from the ballroom inside and from the gardens for outdoor entertainments. These photos will be on display at the Members' Evening.

### Members' Evening Tuesday 20 January 2009 St Paul's Church, Palace Road Doors open 7.30, Talks 8pm

The Members' Evening will follow a similar format to last year with stands for photographs and memorabilia of interest and also speakers from the membership. If you wish to speak, or have a stand please let us know as soon as possible as there are only a limited number of tables and speaking slots that can be allocated. Contact Pauline Sieler on 020 8979 7556  
[pauline@sieler.co.uk](mailto:pauline@sieler.co.uk)

**1968 Floods**  
**Friday 6 February 8pm**  
**(Doors open 7.30)**  
**Mole Hall**

At the request of members, we are repeating the highly successful meeting on the 1968 floods, which was held in September. There will be film footage of the floods, some personal reminiscences and a display of photographs. If you wish to come, please would you reserve a place, either by email to [historysociety@btinternet.com](mailto:historysociety@btinternet.com) or by sending in the form at the end of the newsletter by 20 January. Tickets will not be issued and you may assume that you have a seat if you have emailed or sent in a form. We will only advertise the meeting to the general public if seats remain available after 20 January and public admittance will be by ticket only.

**Visit to National Archives**  
**Saturday 7 February**

Ever wanted to do some research at the National Archives in Kew, but not known how to start? On Saturday 7 February at 11am David Turner will be running a tutorial on aspects of the National Archives. This will include how to become a member of the archives, access the catalogue, order documents and conduct research there. This will be held at the National Archives in Kew where there will be the chance to do actual document research. Anyone interested please contact David at [dat504@york.ac.uk](mailto:dat504@york.ac.uk) or call 07940 016255. PLEASE NOTE: Those interested will need to be computer literate and spaces will be very limited (5 maximum). In addition, proof of address and photo ID will be required to access the Archive's services.

**RESEARCH GROUPS**

**Sports Group**

The next meeting will be on Thursday 26 February at 7.30pm at 6 Green Lane.

**Contact: Pauline Sieler, 020 8979 7556**  
**[pauline@sieler.co.uk](mailto:pauline@sieler.co.uk)**

**People & Buildings**

The next meeting will be on Wednesday 28 January at 8pm at the British Legion, St Mary's Road. One of the topics we will be discussing is how our group can contribute to the Society's celebrations in September for the 160th anniversary of the railways coming to Molesey. All are welcome.

**Contact: Anthony Barnes, 020 8979 6744**  
**[agbarnes@ntlworld.com](mailto:agbarnes@ntlworld.com)**

**Transport**

**Hampton Court Railway Meeting**  
**Tuesday 27 January**  
**Methodist Church, Manor Road**

In September the Society will be holding a talk on the history of Hampton Court Station and the effect of the coming of the railway on Molesey. The planning for this begins on the Tuesday 27 January at 8pm at the Methodist Church, Manor Road. If you are interested and would like further information please email **David Turner** at [dat504@york.ac.uk](mailto:dat504@york.ac.uk) or call **07940 016255**.

**Waterways**

The next meeting will be on Wednesday 4 February at 8pm at the British Legion, St Mary's Road, when we will discuss any thoughts from the Members' Evening of 20 January. Look forward to seeing you then.

**Contact: Jenni Haile, 0208 979 0958**  
**[jennihaile@btinternet.com](mailto:jennihaile@btinternet.com)**

**FUTURE EVENTS**

**House History**  
**Thursday 5 March, 7.30pm**  
**St Lawrence School, Church Road**

A speaker from Surrey History Centre will give a talk on how to research the history of your house.

**2009 AGM**  
**Molesey Mills**  
**Thursday 23 April, 8pm**  
**St Lawrence School, Church Road**

The business of the AGM will be followed by a talk by Brian Smith on the Molesey Mills.

**War Memories**

We are thinking of having a meeting to coincide with the 70th anniversary of Battle of Britain. Do you have any wartime photographs or memorabilia of wartime in Molesey, or any memories of life during the war in Molesey that you would be prepared to share with us? Please let Doreen Freeman know if you or anyone you know can help us with your memories – tel 020 8979 0059.

**Access Requirements**

If you have any special access requirements, please let us know prior to meetings and we will make every effort to ensure that these are accommodated.

## The Crusade of the Tilbury Hope

The Thames pleasure launch Tilbury Hope docked at Westminster Pier and the ladies of East Molesey stormed ashore, carrying protest banners to present a petition to the Ministry of Housing against the Surrey development plan. So reported the Sun, and other national newspapers, in June 1965.

It had not all been smooth sailing. Although a dignified protest, with refreshments of tea and biscuits served by the ladies during the voyage from Kew to Westminster, there was trouble when the pier master spotted the banners decorating the boat. In breach of the Port of London Authority's rules on 'advertising' on the river, they were ordered to take their banners down and even to remove a Union Jack they had draped over the bows, or risk the penalty of a £50 fine. 'Typical bureaucracy!' snorted Miss Veronica Tudor Williams – who was then living at Matham Manor and feared the plan would involve her historic home.

However, as they chugged past the Houses of Parliament, where MPs were drinking beer on the terrace, a large banner proclaiming 'Hands off Molesey' suddenly unfurled. 'It must have been a gust of wind. I'm positive no one would break regulations', said Mrs Joan Wilson, who was supervising the picnic baskets.

This genteel protest, which ended in a picnic in St James' Park, was but one strand of the successful fight against high density redevelopment plans, which would have completely changed the nature of Molesey, making it a much less pleasant place to live.

A rousing editorial entitled 'How to beat Big Brother' appeared in the Daily Express in February 1966, when Surrey County Council abandoned the plans, complimenting the people of East Molesey for banding together and in the process finding their community spirit.

*Newspaper cuttings were found amongst papers relating to Matham Manor, undoubtedly collected by Miss Veronica Tudor Williams, mentioned above. The cuttings will be displayed at the Members Evening on Tuesday 20 January.*

Produced by:  
Molesey Local History Society  
[historysociety@btinternet.com](mailto:historysociety@btinternet.com)  
Website: [moleseyhistorysociety.org](http://moleseyhistorysociety.org)  
Tel: 020 8979 3465

.....  
**1968 FLOODS**  
**FRIDAY 6 FEBRUARY – 8 PM (Doors open 7.30)**  
**MOLE HALL, BISHOP FOX WAY**

**IF YOU WISH TO ATTEND THE FLOODS MEETING ON FRIDAY 6 FEBRUARY, PLEASE SEND IN THIS SLIP WITH YOUR REQUIREMENTS BY TUESDAY 20 JANUARY. ALTERNATIVELY, EMAIL [historysociety@btinternet.com](mailto:historysociety@btinternet.com). IF SEATS ARE STILL AVAILABLE AFTER THIS DATE, THE EVENT WILL BE ADVERTISED TO NON-MEMBERS. PLEASE INDICATE IF YOU WISH TO BRING GUESTS (THERE WILL BE A CHARGE OF £3 FOR GUESTS ON THE DOOR). PLEASE NOTE, YOU WILL NOT BE NOTIFIED, BUT MAY ASSUME THAT YOU HAVE A SEAT IF YOU LET US KNOW BY 20 JANUARY.**

**1968 FLOODS**  
**FRIDAY 6 FEBRUARY – 8PM (Doors open 7.30)**  
**MOLE HALL, BISHOP FOX WAY**

**NAME:..... GUESTS.....**

**Please reserve a place for me/us at the Floods meeting on Friday 6 February.**

**Send to Membership Secretary, Molesey Local History Society, 17 Matham Road, East Molesey, Surrey KT8 0SX**

**SEE OVERLEAF FOR OTHER EVENTS OF INTEREST**

## OTHER EVENTS OF INTEREST

### Elmbridge Museum

31 January to 12 May: 2009 marks 150 years since Charles Darwin published his groundbreaking book, 'On The Origin of Species'. Coinciding with this momentous anniversary, Elmbridge Museum presents a new exhibition – '**Adapting Darwin: Inspired by Evolution**'.

Additionally, the Museum hosts Family Fun events which are offered on the second Saturday of each month.

Finally, although details are still to be finalized, Elmbridge Museum will be celebrating its centenary with a "Party in the Park" on Saturday 27 June, 2009. A range of events and activities will be on offer to Elmbridge residents to explore and celebrate the history and future of Elmbridge.

For further information, log onto [www.elmbridgemuseum.org.uk](http://www.elmbridgemuseum.org.uk), telephone the Museum on 01932 843573 or e-mail [ebcmuseum@elmbridge.gov.uk](mailto:ebcmuseum@elmbridge.gov.uk).

### WEA Courses

The local branch of the Workers' Educational Association is running two courses that might be of interest - **Garden History** will discuss the reasons for and the ideas behind the design and planting of gardens through visits to five historic gardens in the area. It will consist of five meetings, each of two hours, at a cost of £34 (plus travel and entry costs) and will start on Wednesday 22 April 2009. **Church Architecture** will explore the practical and symbolic reasons behind the design and decoration of Norman and Gothic churches in Surrey. Five meetings, each of two hours, at a cost of £34, from Thursday 23 April at St Andrews URC, Hersham Road, Walton. For further information: [www.wea.org.uk](http://www.wea.org.uk), or pick up a copy of their programme at the library, or telephone Diana Symonds on 01932 847672 during office hours.

### Royston Pike Lecture

Councillor Nigel Cooper, Mayor of Elmbridge, will be giving a talk as part of the Royston Pike Lecture Series, on the **Battle of Gettysburg**. On a postgraduate scholarship to the University of Iowa, Nigel formed a deep interest in the American Civil War. Gettysburg, the turning point battle in July 1863, was fought over three days. As to which army won the battle, and its effect on the war, all will be revealed. The lecture will take place on 18 March at 8pm at the Riverhouse Barn, Manor Road, Walton. For full details of the lecture programme, contact [mlatter@elmbridge.gov.uk](mailto:mlatter@elmbridge.gov.uk) or call 01372 474584.