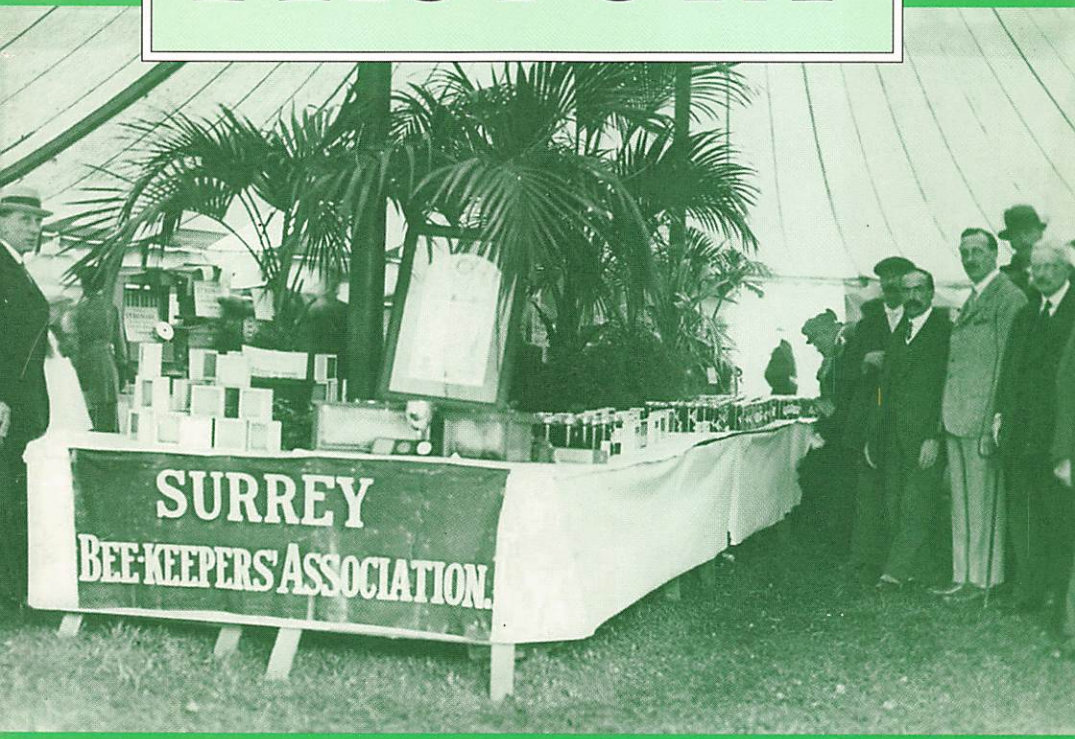
SURREY HISTORY



Some Notes on Early Methodism in Surrey

An Addendum to 'The Poll Tax for Shere and Gomshall for 1380'

Guildford Park

A Sea Wall in Surrey?

Violent, Unnatural or Suspicious Deaths in Kingston upon Thames & Thereabouts. Coroner's Inquests 1700-1750

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Some Notes on Early Methodism in Surrey

Joyce Banks

In the beginning, Methodism was an idea and a *movement* rather than a church. John and Charles Wesley and many of their associates were ordained clergy of the Church of England. The name was first used in derision for certain students at Oxford (including the Wesleys) who strictly observed their religion in the early 1730s. There was a general reaction to the low state of the Church of England in the 18th century, when services became increasingly formal and communion infrequently celebrated; thus various evangelical movements arose. There was the movement in the established church typified by *The Clapham Sect*; there was the revival in Wales whole followers allied themselves with other Methodists sharing Calvinist beliefs, such as George Whitefield and the Countess of Huntingdon, and there was Wesley's movement. The Wesley brothers intended to stay within the Church of England and did so in their lifetimes. They meant to form religious societies *within* the church, rather than found a new denomination. Writers about all three movements are (or were) somewhat inclined to treat each separately, but there were contacts and shared ideas. For example: Zachary Macaulay (of Clapham), on the eve of his departure for Sierra Leone, sent his fiancée a Methodist hymnbook which he said had been 'my companion in hunger, nakedness and distress. We must no doubt make allowances for the peculiarities of Methodism, but on the whole ... it pleases me much.'[1] The *Commentary* of Adam Clarke, a Methodist scholar, was much used for instructing the children of the Clapham Sect in the Bible. Zachary Macaulay gave Thomas Coke ('Father of Methodist missions') free passage on the ship *Calyso* belonging to his company, for Coke's missionary journey to Foulah, Sierra Leone. All were united in their opposition to slavery, and a *Direction to the Methodist Conference* (its governing body) in 1806

urged support for William Wilberforce's Abolition Bill. However, when the latter lived with his aunt, a friend of George Whitefield's, his parents quite soon withdrew him for fear of his 'turning Methodist'.

Methodism did not greatly flourish in the south-eastern counties in its early days. It tended to take hold in the regions which were either under-churched, or contained a large number of workers in the new industries of the Industrial Revolution, just then beginning. Very often the two coincided; as for example, the vast parish of Haworth in Yorkshire (spreading into Lancashire and present-day Cumbria), and in Cornwall, where an influx of miners in scattered communities and a remote diocesan administration in Exeter combined to provide fruitful soil. By contrast, in the 18th century, Surrey was predominantly a rural society, with compact and settled parishes, often ruled by parson and squire who had no time for irregularities, religious or political, and there was no secret ballot in the limited franchise until 1872.

To illustrate the comparative weakness of Methodism in Surrey: in the 1851 Religious Census, Surrey had just 55 Wesleyan Methodist places of worship and London 98. Compare this with 213 in Norfolk, 412 in Cornwall, 300 in Lancashire. In addition one must mention another 254 meeting places of Primitive Methodists in Norfolk and 182 of Bible Christians in Cornwall, whereas churches of the minor Methodist denominations in Surrey totalled 18 in all.[2]

However, one event during the lifetime of John Wesley (1703-91) gives Surrey a particular claim to fame. It was here that he preached his last sermon at Kingston House, Leatherhead (on the site of the later Wesley House, Bull Hill) (Fig. 1). He had travelled ceaselessly around England, Wales and Ireland, mostly on horseback, keeping his most interesting *Journal* and reading as he went. Only towards the end of his life did he use a chaise. His biographer, James Rogers,[3] recalled that in 1791 'He seemed much better (having taken cold at Lambeth a few days earlier, he would keep an engagement ... at Twickenham ... On Tuesday he ... preached in the evening at the chapel in City Road and seemed much better ... On Wednesday 23rd February he went to Leatherhead and preached to a small company on 'Seek ye the Lord while he may be found ...' This proved to be his last sermon ... On Thursday he paid a visit to Mr Woolff's lovely family in Balham, and seemed nearly as well as usual, until Friday ... 'about 11 o'clock he returned home extremely ill.' He died at his house, next door to Wesley's Chapel, City-Road on 2nd March 1791, aged 88. A legend has grown up that Wesley preached

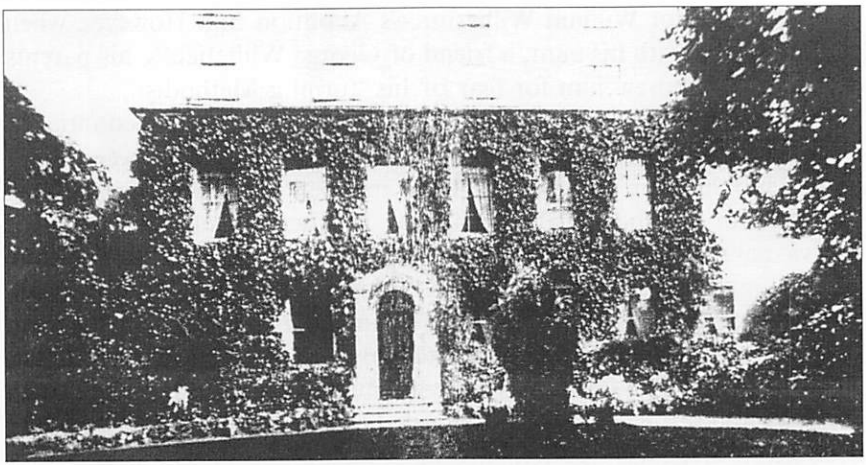


Fig.1 Kingston House, Leatherhead. By permission of Leatherhead and District Local History Society.

under a cedar tree, and although he may have given his congregation a blessing there, James Rogers gives the lie to this story. He writes, 'In less than two hours after our arrival our kind host ... sent his servants to invite the neighbours to hear preaching at his house. A considerable number soon assembled and *were ordered upstairs into a spacious dining room*, set around with fine mahogany chairs and covered with a beautiful carpet. (Fig. 2) The plain country people, who had come plodding through the mire, seemed rather out of their element; however, they all appeared to hear with great attention ...' The owner of the house was Richard Belson, and Wesley stayed the night with Mr Durnford, the curate who was in charge of the parish. The Vicar, Rev. Samuel Markham was a pluralist and absent during the greater part of his incumbency, so perhaps here again was an example of Wesley's preaching filling a gap in the spiritual needs of the poor.

John Wesley's visits to Surrey were not frequent compared with some other counties and were spaced out.[4] He went to Dorking and Reigate (often on the way to his friends the Perronets in Shoreham, Kent), always in the winter months, suitable for short journeys from London. Another short journey was to Wandsworth, Balham and Mitcham, sometimes going on to Shoreham and, in the case above, to Leatherhead. His longer journeys through Surrey, made in the summer or autumn, took in Kingston, Cobham and Godalming on his way to Portsmouth and the

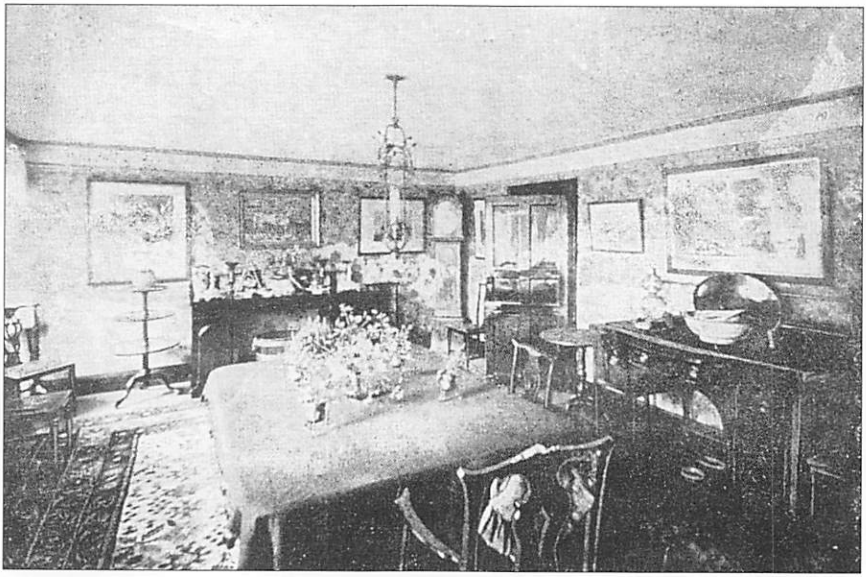


Fig.2 Kingston House: *Room in which the sermon was preached.* From Rev. A. Ward, *The scene of Wesley's last sermon* (1893). By permission of Leatherhead and District Local History Society.

IOW. Of these places, Wesley seems to have made most impact on Dorking; Wesley himself opening the first chapel there in 1772. It still stands in Church Street (Fig. 3). He first preached in Dorking in 1764 and by 1770 'the hearers were many and seemed all attention'. It seems probable that he preached in the wide part of the High Street where the market was once held and/or on Butter Hill. According to Andrew Kippis, Congregational Minister in Dorking 1750-3, 'Mr Rose introduced them (the Methodists) to Dorking'.[5] In later years Wesley was to write in his Journal, 25th January 1790; 'I went to Dorking and laboured to awaken a harmless, honest, drowsy people, who for many years have stood stock still, neither increasing nor decreasing.' Perhaps he was inclined to pessimism, as having once preached at Reigate Place to 'the largest congregation I have seen there' he still felt that 'we are ploughing on the sand; we see no fruit of our labours.' Mitcham had a preaching house described by Wesley as 'new' in 1789. It can hardly have had time to be in the 'declining state' recorded in Archbishop Moore's Visitation of 1788.[6] The latter says, 'about 30 people meet on Sundays at 11 o'clock and about 100 at 6 in the afternoon ... The teacher is Mr John Overton, a calico printer of Mitcham, 26 years of age, married and of good

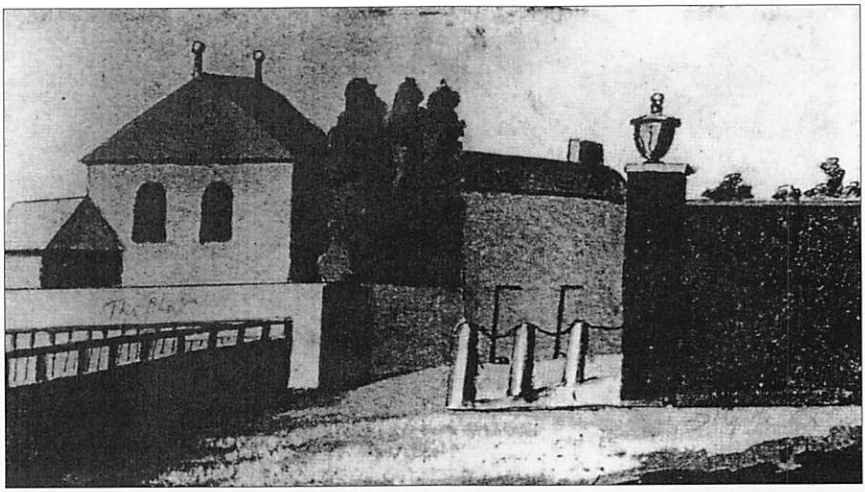


Fig.3 First Methodist Chapel, Dorking. By permission of Dorking Museum.

character. He is paid 6/6 a week; he is about to leave ... This meeting is supported by contributions and monthly collections, which together with £4 per annum left by a Mr Thomson amount to £40 more or less a year.' Although Kingston and Godalming were visited, Wesley does not seem to have preached there. However, a riot of 'Methodists' is mentioned at the former in 1760, and a Methodist society formed in Godalming in 1797 only lasted until 1811 (but was revived later). Welsey is known to have preached twice at Cobham. In many cases it was other individuals who spread the message and formed societies. An example is found at Epsom where the Episcopal Visitation of 1788 records 'a small and uncertain congregation of Methodists, founded by a preacher called Bugby' (a gardener) who had travelled throughout the kingdom to raise money for a meeting house.' He was said to have about 20 constant attendants 'and they are mostly people of the lowest class'.[7] Visitations were dismissive of nonconformists so the numbers may have been greater.

Surrey and London have always had an influence on one another, but in the rural districts of West Surrey the progress of Methodism was particularly slow *because* it was missioned from London. In the 1851 Religious Census, attendance at Methodist chapels in London (and church attendance generally) was revealed to be less than average, and the accommodation quite insufficient. In 1746 when Methodist *circuits* (regional preaching rounds) began to be organised, the London Circuit

included most of south-east and south-central England including Surrey. The evidence of the census inspired the Rev. William Arthur, secretary of the Methodist Missionary Society, to set up the Metropolitan Fund, thus stimulating the building of churches in London itself, but leaving the south-east counties as a so-called 'Methodist Wilderness'.[8]

They were becoming more accessible with the growth of railways, but it was almost entirely due to James Horne (1791-1871) that Methodism was implanted in West Surrey.[9] He had been a seaman, son of a Methodist mother living in Buckingham. After marrying Mary Chitty of Seale, they settled at Flexford between Guildford and Farnham. Although occupied with farming and a young family and also acting as schoolmaster, he held meetings in his own house and built a chapel on his own land. By 1829 he had managed to establish five or six Methodist chapels: Blackwater, Frimley, Bramley, Hambledon and Normandy were certainly in existence by then.

From 1822 Horne, who had been living at Normandy, was evicted for his all too obvious Methodist convictions, but was fortunately able to buy another property there, where he lived and died. He once walked 13 miles to Chertsey to look for a preacher, but found no-one there (though there *had* earlier been a meeting, which again flourished at a later date). In fact, Chertsey had pioneered Methodist meetings, Wesley having preached there twice in the open air. In 1750 the preacher at Mrs C's house there had to preach from the gallery of her summer house, as the floor of the house had given way!

James Horne formed a friendship with Mr Haynes at Perry Hill Independent Chapel where he sometimes worshipped, but was discovered there by two Methodists, Messrs Austen and Golding of Guildford. Mr Austen opened a Sunday School at Chilworth paper mills in 1825, after permission was obtained by Mr Hill, an excise officer, to hold services there. A chance meeting with the Rev. W. Toase, chairman of the Portsmouth (Methodist) District, led to the opening of a room at Godalming (cost £70) which opened on Good Friday 1826 (Fig. 4), but that cause again faded. Another accidental encounter, while travelling from Normandy to Chilworth, brought him into contact with Miss Jostling and Mrs Attfield who lived in Guildford. Mrs Attfield, a Londoner, was born in Lambeth where she came under the influence of the Corderoy family, then of Streatham, later of Dorking. In London she had worked for the Rev. Peard Dickenson, one of Wesley's early associates, but came to Guildford in 1810 to look after her mother. She had joined in a Methodist

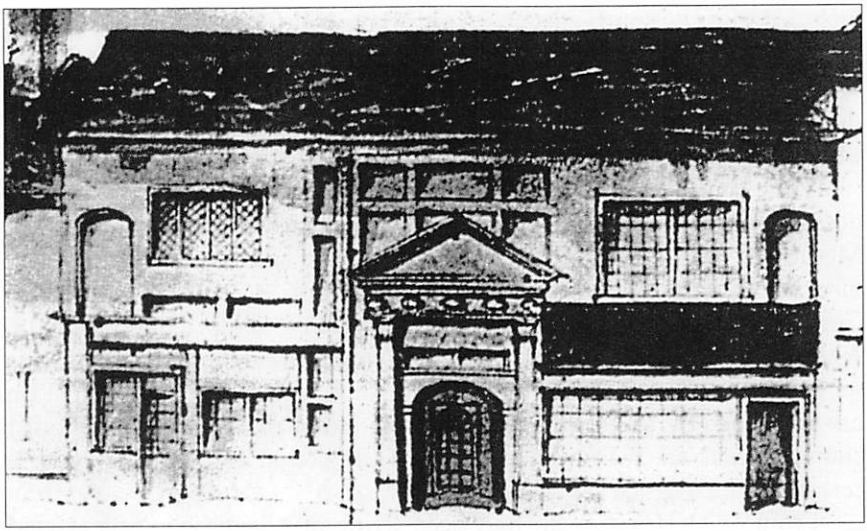


Fig.4 Methodist Meeting House 1826 on the site of Midland Bank, Godalming. By permission of Godalming Museum.

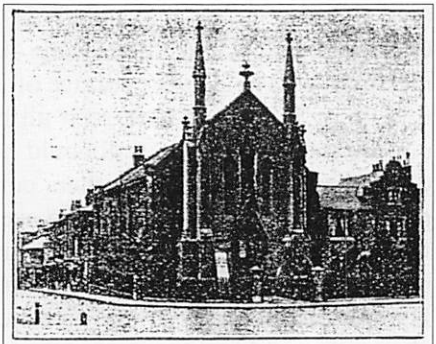
meeting, held in Guildford and attended chiefly by a few soldiers and their wives, then under the supervision of the Surrey Mission. The Mission ceased in 1812 and presumably the meeting as well. Also from that date she formed a friendship with the 'Methodistically inclined' Rector of Stoke-next-Guildford and attended his church. She still often walked many miles to attend a Methodist chapel, even after marrying a deacon of the Independent Chapel in 1826.[10]

Both Miss Jostling and Mrs Attfield had heard the Rev. W. Wilson preach at Godalming on Good Friday 1829 and they persuaded Mr Whitburn, Miss Jostling's friend, to lease his auction room for services at a rent of £10.10s per annum. This was the real beginning of Methodism in Guildford. In 1835 the Superintendent minister of the then Petersfield and Guildford Circuit became resident in Guildford, and after 1840 the Rev. Isaac Harding was the inspiration for the building of a chapel and minister's house, completed in 1843 (Fig. 5). This was on the same site as the later 19th-century church in North Street, itself now superseded. Mrs Attfield was supervisor of finances for the 1843 church and 'contributed many other services'.[11]

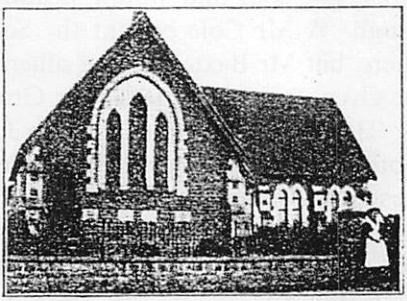
Another person from outside the area was Thomas Keeling from Runcorn. Although a Methodist, he came to study with the Rector of

Puttenham. The latter was often absent, so sent Keeling to read his sermons for him. Having acquired a taste for preaching, Keeling then started to hold services in homes and to preach at Pink's Hill Unitarian Chapel where Methodists were also allowed to meet. Not long afterwards, however, they were evicted by the Unitarians.[12]

During the life of the Surrey Mission 1809-12 the Portsmouth part of it included Farnham. Mrs Attfield was present at the opening of a chapel there, at which Dr Coke preached. It is reported that Methodists still met in the 1830s, using an upper room approached by a ladder in Hunter's Yard, West Street, and one Daniel Draper became a member that year, but Methodism then lapsed there until 1857.[13]



Old Wesleyan Church, Guildford.



Normandy Wesleyan Church.

Fig.5 Methodist Churches in Guildford 1843 and about same date at Normandy. From WW Pocock *History of Wesleyan Methodism in the Southern Counties of England* (1885).

The Rev. John Telford, editor of Wesley's *Letters* and author of many books and articles on Methodism, although born in Wigton, Cumberland, spent much of his ministerial life in Surrey. He was particularly interested in Methodist history, being President of the Wesley Historical Society from 1933 until his death in 1936. In an article in the *Methodist Recorder* of 9 July 1903 he chronicles Methodism in Ockley and Oakwood Hill, which by then was already history. A dwelling in each was registered for meetings in 1841; Robert Garard's at Old College, Ockley and Isaac Westbrook's house at Oakwood Hill. Negotiations for the purchase of land at Ockley to build a chapel seem to have fallen through. Nevertheless, 'the cause at Ockley was a flourishing one. Mr Lintott opened his house for preaching until Mr Baxter came to Ockley and started a boarding school.' (The Old School House, still standing?). He lent the school for Methodist services and was a Local

(lay) Preacher. He also acted as Sunday School Superintendent at Oakwood Hill where there were 40 to 50 scholars. At Oakwood Hill meetings were held at the cottage of James Groombridge. An old member told John Telford, 'I have seen all his three rooms packed; some could not see the preacher, but all could hear him. I remember Messrs Chitty, Cole, Coulson, West and others coming to preach at Ockley, and then going on to Oakhood Hill in the evening. They had cotton light candles, which were hung around the room; one was set on the corner of the mantelpiece for the preacher, with the snuffers beside the Bible and Hymnbook; sometimes the preacher would snuff out the light, which always caused laughter among the young ... Sometimes the grandfather clock got cold and would steadily groan out the strokes, making us laugh.' A Mr Cole bought the School House and continued meetings there, but Mr Baxter among others moved away, so that services had to be given up in April 1881. Mr Groombridge, still alive at the age of 92 or 93 recounted his memories to John Telford and had his photo taken both by the writer and a Mr Brigden, 'poring over his Bible ... above his head a missionary box and behind him, the old preaching corner.' John Telford also looked through photographs of preachers past and present, but only a small photograph of Mr Groombridge is able to be produced here (Fig. 6).

In 1867 a railway extension from Dorking to Horsham was opened and a station at Ockley (later called Ockley and Capel) built. Some of the workers in the brickfields of Ockley and Capel walked over to Oakwood Hill to attend Methodist meetings there. Isaac Westbrook and James Groombridge's son-in-law, who lived with him, were, among others, brickmakers. However, it was Mr Sewell (Fig. 6) the new stationmaster, already a Methodist, who started an evening class and a Bible class for young people, both held at the station house. They brought their parents, and accommodation being too small, a cottage with a small room attached was rented from Mr Jeal in Capel for £20 a year. Subletting, plus a generous private donation, helped to subsidise the efforts of the Methodist community. Mr Sewell moved to Horsham, but others came and a chapel was built in Capel which still stands. Prior to its opening some young people killed a snake opposite the station, and this was considered a good omen. 'We have scotched the one serpent to start with.'

In Wesley's lifetime Walton on Thames was essentially a rather isolated rural community with poor soils, and cut off by the rivers Thames and Mole. A new bridge was built in 1779 and roads began to be surfaced, but

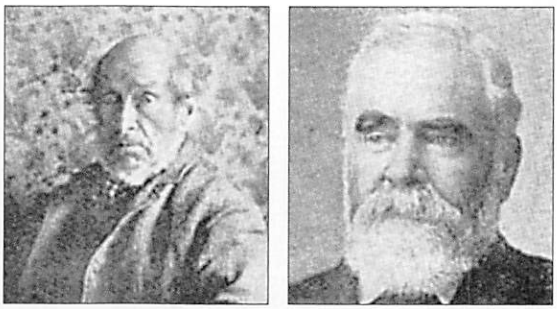


Fig.6 Methodists at Oakwood Hill and Capel *Methodist Recorder* 9 July 1903. (The Wesley and Methodist Study Centre, Westminster Institute of Education, Oxford Brookes University)

(left) Mr Groombridge, of Oakwood Hill, aged 92 (oldest Methodist in Circuit).

(right) Mr James Sewell, Stationmaster (ex-Circuit Steward, Horsham).

communications were still not good. Probably the earliest Methodist preachers here travelled from Croydon or Wandsworth, and before 1800 several unsuccessful attempts had been made to establish a Methodist society. In 1818 when Frederick Rogers, an excise officer, came to live in Walton, he held meetings at his house. Search for a more permanent meeting place in Walton met with much hostility, so the quest was extended to Hersham, then a separate hamlet. A barn was rented and refurbished, and this became the first place of worship of *any kind* in Hersham. In 1820 two new cottages were rented in Hersham, made capable, it is claimed, of holding over one hundred people, after a local Methodist builder gave advice on strengthening the roof to compensate for the absence of an internal dividing wall. It was this same builder, Mr Hooper, who was commissioned to build the first Methodist church in Kingston in 1836. Although many continued to walk from Walton to Hersham, the search for a site in Walton went on, and prayers were answered when Mr Joseph Steele was able to buy some cottages near the present-day Manor Road. Plans were drawn up for a chapel on adjoining land, but this ran into trouble from the local circuit, as it did not meet standards; also, work had started without permission. However, it was eventually opened on Easter Monday 1845 and the building formally vested in the New Model Deed of the Wesleyan Methodist church. (The previous properties had all been privately owned or rented.) Mr Steele became treasurer to the trustees, and his extended family and his employees became great supporters of the new church. The chapel at Hersham continued for some time with the help of students from the newly established Richmond Theological College; in 1851 it had a reasonably sized congregation, but eventually closed. The later history of Methodism in Walton on Thames was much influenced by the huge increase in population due to its popularity as a commuting base.[14]

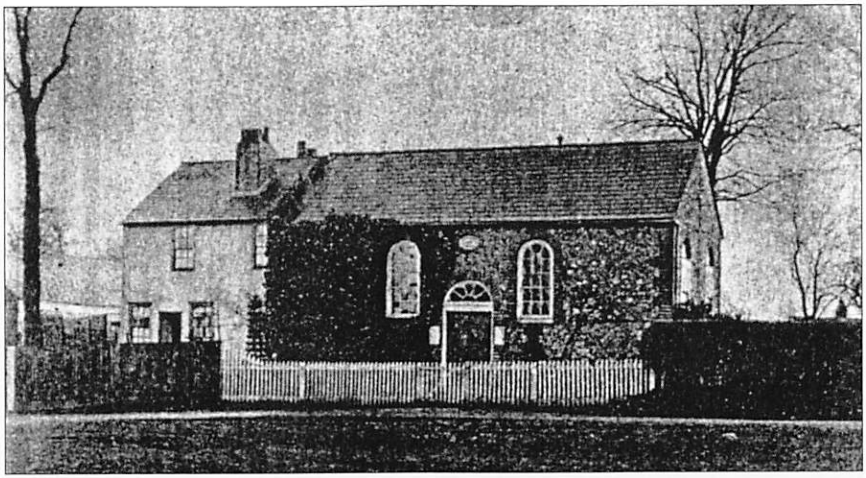


Fig.7 Warlingham Methodist Chapel, 1839. By permission of Wesley Historical Society.

Warlingham was another place where roots were put down early, but in 1826 it was an agricultural community of scattered cottages. In that year, William Gair, a veteran of the Napoleonic Wars, walked from Croydon and preached under an ash tree on the village green. He attracted a small crowd, some hostile, some impressed; among the latter was Richard Ward who had much to do with the establishment of Methodism in Warlingham. The minister in the newly formed Croydon circuit, the Rev. James Catton, formed a class meeting from the early converts, which at first met in small cottages, and then from 1830 in a converted barn, known as 'The Chapel House.' In 1839 the first proper chapel was built (Fig. 7).[15]

Walton on Thames and Warlingham are examples of rural Methodism later adapting itself to serve rapidly changing communities and ways of life. By contrast, in some places now looked upon as typical London 'dormitories', the growth of Methodism only came with their accessibility due to the railway and their consequent convenience as residential areas. For example, Purley, being on the borders of the parishes of Coulsdon, Croydon, Sanderstead and Beddington and thinly populated, had no churches *at all* until the 19th century. A population of 600 in 1841 grew to 4,500 in 1911, 6,500 in 1931, and had almost doubled by 1971. A Methodist mission at Gardner's Retreat (tea rooms) 1899-1903 and later in the Commemoration Hall was followed by the building of a large Methodist church in 1906, with a tower added in 1936.[16] Similarly in

Sutton and Cheam, the only dissenting place of worship in 1841 was a small chapel for Independent Methodists; by 1936 there were three Methodist churches.

The recently published *Dictionary of Methodism in Britain and Ireland*, referring to South-East England, including Surrey, says, '[It] was an area in which Methodism was, and remained weak.'[17] If one looks for spectacular lasting results this is perhaps true, but there are records of so many places where small meetings sprang up, far too numerous to mention here, all with their interesting histories.[18] Many village causes came and went without trace except in the hearts and minds of some families; a few churches flourish and others have entered into fruitful partnerships with churches of other denominations. This account leaves many gaps, and more recent times also demand a further account.

References and Notes

1. Rev. John Telford, *A Sect that changed the world* (*c.*1906), pp. 135, 191.
2. Religious Census 1851. Statistics from *Report and tables on religious worship in England and Wales*, Irish U.P. (1970). I have confined this account to *Wesleyan Methodism*. For an account of Primitive Methodism in East Surrey *see Wesley Historical Society Proceedings*, May 1992.
3. *Proceedings of the Leatherhead and District Local History Society*, Vol 2.9 pp. 265-9, quoting James Rogers, 1796.
4. *Wesley's Journal* ed. Nehemiah Curnock (1909-16), *passim*.
5. T.R. Grantham, *Dorking Congregationalism 1662-1912*, Rowe (1903).
6. Episcopal Visitation 1788. Parson and Parish in eighteenth century Surrey, *Surrey Record Society* Vol XXXIV (1994).
7. *Ibid.*
8. W.W. Pocock, *History of Wesleyan Methodism in the Southern Counties of England* (1885), p.4. (The term was coined by the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes, 1847-1902.)
9. Pocock, *op. cit.* p.38 and Introduction to the 1851 Religious Census, *Surrey Record Society* Vol XXXV, xxxvi – xxxix (1997)
10. *Memoir of Mrs Attfield*, Wesleyan Methodist Magazine (1864), p. 1062.
11. Pocock, *op. cit.*, *passim*.
12. Pocock, *op. cit.*, *passim*.
13. Pocock, *op. cit.*, p.31.
14. Rev. Leslie F. Skinner, *Methodism in Walton on Thames* (1979).
15. Rowland Swift, *Praise and Trust 1828-1978; an account of 150 years of Methodism in Warlingham* (1977).
16. *Bourne Society Village Histories 1: Purley*; and Rev. R. Resker, *History and development of Purley* (1916, rep.1994).
17. Dr John A. Vickers, ed., *A Dictionary of Methodism in Great Britain and Ireland*, Epworth Press (2000).
18. As e.g. at Hascombe, Normandy, Bookham.

An Addendum to 'The Poll Tax for Shere and Gomshall for 1380'

by Ann Noyes

By some mischance, the version of this article printed last year did not include the conclusions from additional research relating to Ewhurst and Cranleigh, the southern halves of the vills of Gomshall and Shere at the time the Poll Tax was taken.

Under the paragraph entitled 'The Names' (p. 137), it is stated that 'it is particularly interesting that some family names are familiar today as names of properties in the villages, suggesting settlement (or at least ownership) of a specific site at a time before any of the old houses were built'. The number of these names for Shere, Gomshall and Peaslake is quoted (16), but not those for Cranleigh and Ewhurst. These add considerably to the total: Ewhurst has 23 names which can be related to properties and Cranleigh has seven; they are shown on the map included in last year's article (map 2, p. 135). It is interesting that there are more of these names on the Wealden clay of Ewhurst and Cranleigh than in the Tillingbourne Valley, the slopes of the North Downs and the Hurtwood, the area covered by Gomshall and Shere.

The early lords of the manor of Shere had their capital mansion at Vacherie in Cranleigh. The name means 'cow pasture' and derives from the Norman French; there are still signs of the moated site on the ground. There is also a record in a survey of 1303, shortly after the division of the Shere manor, of a 'capital messuage' in Shere.[1] This is likely to have been on the site of 'Gallants' in the centre of Shere (No. 11 on map 2, p. 134). The lord of the manor in 1258 is known to have had his house 'next to the cemetery' or churchyard.[2]

The list of occupations from the Poll Tax document has created some interest, particularly concerning the number of tailors, a total of 16, in the vills of Shere and Gomshall.[3] Some men are recorded as 'tailors' and others as 'cissors' or 'sissors' and I had combined these

categories (see table 4, p.139). It is suggested that 'cissor' refers to a shearman who finishes the cloth and 'tailor' to the man who cuts it out and makes it up; thus these are two distinct trades. In separating the two, there are nine tailors and seven cissors, but three of the cissors and one of the tailors has the surname 'Taylor', so the distinction is hard to establish.

I attach as an appendix a list of the places in Surrey for which the Poll Tax record survives. It would be good if other local history societies or individuals would continue this line of research.

Appendix

Places in Surrey for which the Poll Tax record for 1380 survives.
PRO E179/184/29

Godalming
Chiddingfold
Haselmere
Hambledon Township
Catteshall
Farncombe Township
Witley Township
Puttenham Township
Compton Township
Hurtmore Township
Peper Harow Township
Artington Township
Godalming Township

[Blackheath]
Albury Township
Shalford Township
Shere Township
Gomshall Township
[Wotton]
Ockley Township
Wotton Township
Abinger Township
Paddington Township
Westcott Township
Miltin Township
West Betchworth Township
Dorking Township

Acknowledgements

To add to those already mentioned, thanks to Janet Balchin and Judie English for information on property names in Ewhurst and Cranleigh.

Notes

1. The Rev. Owen Manning and William Bray, *The History and Antiquities of the County of Surrey*, Vol. 1 (1804), p.510.
2. *Shere: a Surrey Village in Maps*, Shere, Gomshall & Peaslake Local History Society and Surrey Archaeological Society (2001), p.33.
3. Correspondence with John Pile.

GUILDFORD PARK

George Underwood

[Editor's note: This article was written by George Underwood in the late 1960s. Following his death, in June 1978, it was deposited, as part of an extensive archive of his historical notes on Guildford, at the Surrey Local History Library and is now housed at the Surrey History Centre, Woking. After he retired from the Midland Bank in 1967, George became the Assistant Librarian of Surrey Archaeological Society and worked voluntarily in the library at Castle Arch for five mornings a week. He had a remarkable knowledge of Guildford's history and topography and shared his knowledge freely but, unfortunately, published nothing. The Surrey Local History Committee is therefore very grateful to George's son Martin and the Surrey History Centre for giving permission for this particular part of his work to be published. No significant changes have been made to the original text but, where appropriate, more recent information has been added within square brackets. I am indebted to Alan Crocker for preparing this article for publication. See also Alan Crocker's article on Norden's 1607 Map of Guildford Park, Surrey History, *6(1), 1999]*

Today Guildford Park is the name of a corporation housing estate which occupies only a small part of the 1,620 acres of the old Royal Park of Guildford. However, the park, fenced in medieval times, still reflects its bounds in the modern road system of the town. Start at the corner of North Street and Woodbridge Road, go along Woodbridge Road to Ladymead, turn and go over the river along the Aldershot and Woodstreet [Broad Street] Roads to Woodstreet, at that point turn south and by footpaths, keeping to the east of Strawberry Grove, climb to the top of the Hogs Back, at the point where the Farnham Road crosses the bypass. From there, turn towards Guildford and, keeping to the old

road along the ridge of the hill, Strata Regia de Guldoun (1195),[1] once wide enough for 16 knights to ride abreast,[2] reach and go down the Mount, Montem de Geldeford (1195),[3] as far as Wodeland Avenue, turn and follow the avenue and passage to Farnham Road as far as Testard Road, turn and face the town – from here the eye must carry you over the railway cutting, river, bus station back to the starting-place in North Street. This perambulation may not be strictly accurate, but will give a good idea of the bounds of the park for practical purposes.

Within this area only one road, the Farnham Road, and one house, Manor Farm, are more than one hundred and fifty years old [also Wilderness Farm]. There were until recently two other houses, at opposite ends of Walnut Tree Close, and these houses and the farm were at one time lodges of the park.

At the accession of King Henry II (1154), the whole of the county of Surrey was deemed to be part of the Forest of Windsor and, as such, subject to the Laws of the Forest.[4] However, there are no records of eyres of the time and we cannot say how strictly these laws were enforced.[5] As a matter of political necessity, Richard I, in the first year of his reign (1189), disforested the whole of the county save for that part which lay north of Guildford Down and west of the River Wey. This area, known as the Surrey Bailiwick of Windsor Forest, included the enclosed Guildford Park. The charter of disforestation cost the men of the county 100 marks in fines.[6] In the fifth year of the reign of King John, this charter was exemplified for a further fine of 100 marks.[7] The Charter of the Forest signed at Runnymede by King John in 1215 did not alter the local position save to revive the common of herbage.[8]

The Surrey Bailiwick remained undisturbed until, in the ninth year of Henry III, the whole of the area was disforested save for the enclosed Guildford Park.[9] Later attempts were made by the Crown to revive this Bailiwick, the last being by Charles II, but the findings of an enquiry held in 1641 were to the effect that the Bailiwick consisted of Guildford Park only. As, however, in 1630 the Park had been granted to the Earl of Annandale and the grant included a declaration that it was no longer within the bounds of any royal park or forest, the findings of the enquiry were nullified.[10]

Unlike the nearby Henley Park (see appendix), there is no record of the date at which Guildford Park was established. In Domesday Book, the description of the Manor of Stoke, which was in the King's

demense, includes the words 'Silva xl porci et ipsa in parco Regis' – with woods for forty swine and is in the King's park – Manning and Bray say that there is now no trace of this park.[11] It would, however, not be inconsistent with later facts to assume that these words indicate the existence of Guildford Park at that early date. A reference in the Close Rolls of 1339 reads: 'foals in Guildford Park for the last year which were burned at Stoke near Guildford'.[12] Also, Norden's plan of the park made in 1607 includes land lying between the river and Woodbridge Road, land which until 1895 lay in Stoke parish. [About 10 per cent of the park west of the Wey was also in Stoke.]

The Great Roll of the Pipe for 13 Hen II (1166/7) provides the first clear reference to the Park, the sheriff's expenses for the year include: 'Et in clandendo parco de Guldeford £XL',[13] – and for enclosing Guildford Park £40. This is by far the greatest expenditure noted in connection with the Park listed in the Pipe and other rolls from 1155 till 1616 when an amount of £277 was paid to Robt. Tresswell, Surveyor General of Woods South of Trent for the reparation of the Park.[14]

Part of the Park was handed over by Henry III to the Dominican Friars who were established in the town by his consort, Queen Eleanor of Provence. The date of the transfer is uncertain but was probably 1259 or 1260.[15] The land was situated in the corner of the Park next to the town. It was bounded by the river, by the North Town Ditch (now North Street) and Woodbridge Road.[16] The land is now covered by the North Street bus station, the Friary Brewery site [the Friary shopping centre], new law courts, police station and sports ground etc. The actual area is uncertain but could have been 249 acres. There were also some rights over land on the other side of the river. A friary and chapel were built on land near to the town and the rest was used as gardens and a farm. On the dissolution of the Friary in 1538 the land reverted to the Crown and again became part of Guildford Park.

The Park was in the King's demense until in his 46th year (1262) King Henry III assigned the 'Manor and town of Guildford with the mill and park' together with other places to his Queen, Eleanor of Provence, as dower.[17] This assignment took effect in 1273 when King Edward I, in the first year of his reign, issued a Writ de Intendo.[18] After Eleanor's death in 1299 the grant passed to Margaret, Queen of Edward I,[19] and on her death to Queen Isabella, consort of Edward II,[20] who was deprived of her estates in 1324, when the Park reverted to the Crown. It was then held in demense by successive kings until 1630. In

1255	30 (Bucks); 40
1256	20; 21; 80 (Does)
1260	6 (Bucks); 8 (Brockets); Stolen number not stated
1262	8 (Bucks)
1263	Stolen number not stated.
1264	12 (Bucks); 3 (Bucks); 8
1267	10; 2 stolen (1 Buck, 1 Doe)
1269	5
Total:	253

From the Close Rolls as dated.

Table 1 Deer taken from Guildford Park, 1255-69.

*c.*1475 the size of the Park was increased by about 400 acres[21] but it is not certain where these were.

At first, sport was not the primary purpose of the Park, although in 1237[22] a mandate was issued to permit hunting by the Archbishop of Bordeaux and his assistant bishop who were staying at the castle at that time. A similar mandate was issued in 1337 in favour of the Count de Artois.[23] There are, however, many mandates to the keeper of the Park to allow persons (usually two at a time) to take deer for the use of the court at Guildford, Windsor and elsewhere. Occasional mandates call for the deer so caught to be salted before dispatch. From time to time, instructions are given to catch deer and send the carcasses to someone 'Ex dono Regis' and an order of 1213 calls for 100 live deer to be caught and sent to the Archbishop of Canterbury for the restoration of his park.[24] Between 1255 and 1269 at least 253 deer of all types were taken under a series of these orders (see table 1). If the King turned aside from the main road and hunted through the Park on his way to Guildford the records do not show.*

In addition to the deer there was a rabbit warren, first mentioned in 1235,[25] and a series of orders calls for the capture and dispatch of rabbits, some 30 or 40 at a time.** In 1250 there is a mention of ferrets being used.[26] Fishponds are mentioned and the Pipe Roll for 1295 states

*The sanctuary and special delight of Kings when laying aside their cares they withdraw to refresh themselves with a little hunting: there, away from the turmoils inherent in court, they breathe the pleasure of natural freedom" - Dialogus de Scuccario, 1.C.41.

**'The actual existence of a coneygarth in England, on the mainland, has not been confirmed until 1241 when the King ordered hay to be carted from his cunningera at Guildford' – E.M. Veale, 'The Rabbit in England', *Agricultural History Review* 5 (1957), p.85. She refers to Close Rolls 1237/42, p.381. Later she says that in 1241 live rabbits were sent for stock purposes to Windsor from Guildford (Cal Lib Rolls 1240/5, p.255).

that there was in that year no income from honey or nuts. This same Roll mentions both sales and purchases of hay and the cost of haymaking.[27] Salt was purchased in 1225 for the animals.[28]

Over the years much timber, mainly oak, was taken from the Park by royal order. Much of it was for use at Guildford Castle. An early order, taken from the Close Rolls of 1216 reads: 'Rex parcario Geldf' salutem. Mandamas tibi quod habere facias constabulario Geldf' maeremium in parco de Geldf' ad reparandum Castrum de Geldf'.'[29] This may be translated to read 'The King, to the keeper of Guildford Park, greetings. You are ordered to let the Constable of Guildford have timber from Guildford Park to repair the castle at Guildford', and in later years there are many similar orders. The records for the years 1251 to 1271 show that at least three hundred oaks were taken from the Park. Over half of this wood was for royal use at Guildford and other places, a small quantity was given by the King to various people as presents (see table 2).

Among the most interesting timber orders are two dated 1308 and 1354. In the first, Queen Margaret, who held the Park in dower, is ordered to deliver five oak trees to the Sheriff of Surrey. He in his turn is ordered to receive these trees and, with ten others received from Witley and Lockwood (Loxwood), to turn them into shingles for use at Westminster Hall.[30] In the second, 20 trees were to be cut and sent to La Redeclyve near London for the use of the King's ships.[31] An unusal order is that of 6 June 1263 in which: 'Magistero Conrado factori balistarum Regis' is to have 12 hawthorn trees for crossbow tillers.[32] A similar order of 4 May 1269 calls for the hawthorns to be taken to the Tower of London with the cost of carriage to be charged against the farm of the town.[33] A single entry of 1257 refers to brushwood to be cut in the Park for use at a lime kiln there.[34]

For 36 years horses of the King's stud were bred and kept in the Park. The Close Rolls of 1325 record an order to the Barons of the Exchequer to: 'Cause a suitable house for twenty colts to be made in the park at Guildford as the King wills there shall be Twenty colts running there yearly.'[35] The stud flourished and in 1337 there was a sale of second rate and old horses.[36] Two years later, seven colts were lost in a fire at their stable. An official enquiry was set up and the order for this mentions that the stable was at Stoke. It also instructs the court to discharge Menandus de Brocas, Keeper of The King's Stud South of Trent, if he was not at fault.[37]

1251	20 Oaks for King's Mill at Guildford; 40 Oaks for King's Hall and Mill at Guildford
1252	6 Oaks for King's Mill at Guildford
1253	? Branches for King's Mill at Guildford; ? Timber for New Chamber at Guildford
1255	? Timber for Castle at Guildford
1256	50 Oaks to repair fence of Guildford Park
1257	Brushwood for lime kiln in Guildford Park
1258	4 Oaks for the parson of Witley Ex dno R.
1259	2 Oaks for Robt Trear Ex dno R.
1262	10 Oaks for Peter de Sabandia Ex dno R.
1263	58 Oaks sent to Westminster; 12 Hawthorn sent to Tower of London
1268	80 Oaks Clerk of the Works at Guildford; Cablish for Park fence
1269	7 Tiebeams for New Chamber at Guildford; 10 Joists; 2 Old Hawthorns to Tower of London
1271	6 Oaks for Nicholuo Branche Ex. duo R.
Total: 298 Oaks; 14 Hawthorn	
From The Close Rolls, as dated	

Table 2 Timber taken from Guildford Park, 1251-71.

The stud was a source of trouble to the park keeper by over-grazing and we find records of his having to purchase fodder to feed the stud. Despite this, in February 1360 three stallions fit for the King's mares were sent to Guildford Park.[38] This appears to have brought matters to a head and John Brocas the keeper was unable to meet his farm in October of that year. The King granted him respite till the next January.[39] In July 1361 the horses, mares and studs – save ten of the best – were ordered to be sold.[40]

The matter of the farm was held over until, in June 1363, a commission was set up to enquire into the matter.[41] The jurors did not know when the stud was first in the Park and say that in the years 24 to 34 Edward III (1350-61), the park was used continuously by the Royal Stud. They did not know how many horses were there, but that the local horses and other animals could not be pastured there as much as they need to, so that John Brocas the farmer lost £8 in each of those years and that this was the greater part of the profit he could have had. They added that in 1362 the annual agistment was forbidden and that in that year the income was 7s. 8d. instead of £15. The findings of the commission do not seem to have been recorded but Brocas was still holding the office

of Keeper in 1370 when he is noted as being paid the sum of £3 0s. 10d. arrears of allowance. The record mentions that payment was for good service rendered by him to the said Lord the King.[42]

In addition to horses there are scattered references to oxen and pigs which most probably refer to the annual agistment. Agistment should have been made annually from Hockday (second Tuesday after Easter) till the Nativity of St John Baptist (24 June), but from time to time was cancelled for various reasons. The following agistments[43] are noted in the records of the Pleas of the Forest held in Guildford in 1270:

1257	Agistment for eight weeks with 10 horses and 100 cattle at 1d. per head.
	After 24 June 20 plough beasts at 3s. 4d. per week.
	Also 156 pigs the King taking one in three as pannage for the King. Those taken were valued at 2s. each.
1258 and 1259	Much the same but no pannage.
1260	No agistment for herbage owing to the war.
	Pannage for 240 pigs at 4d. per pig.
1261 and 1262	No agistinent for herbage or pannage.
1264	Agistment for one month with 56 plough beasts but no pannage.

At these same Pleas, there were presentments of two groups of persons for poaching in Guildford Park. One case referred to offences committed as long ago as 1263 by five persons of whom three were now dead. The other two were ordered to attend the court daily whilst it was in session. No other sentence is mentioned. The other, more recent, was on Whitsunday 1267 when seven persons, who either poached or harboured the poachers, were charged with taking a buck, a doe and 13 conies. Three of the seven were dead, the other four were sentenced to imprisonnent, but were released before the end of the Pleas on payment of fines of one or one half mark.

There were three officials appointed by the Crown who had the oversight and running of the Park. The major appointment was that of Keeper who held the Park for a farm which is quoted as £7 6s. 8d. in 1255,[44] £20 in 1363[45] and which had dropped to £10 in 1650.[46] He took as his profit the annual income of the agistment. However, by 1362, owing to overgrazing by the King's stud kept in the Park, the Keeper had not made his farm for some years and he was granted a daily payment of sixpence of which twopence was to come from the Park and the balance from the Exchequer.[47] The Issue Roll of the Exchequer of

1204	Rogeram Forestrium	1368	Thos Cheney (3)
1232	Peter de Rivallis	1369	Helmying Legat
1241	Gregorio de la Dune	1377	S. Bewley
1249	Alan	1384	S. de Bewley (4)
1251	Elias Maunsell	1390	P. Courtney (5)
1254	Eudomi filio Jacobi (1) de Guldeford	1405	Hugh de Waterton
		1409	John de Stanley
1256	Alan of Guldeford	1413	Earl of Arundel
1263	Bartlo de Sar'. Also known as	1414	Hugh de Waterton
(1269),	Bart. de Guldeford and Bart. le Parker	1458	William Lord Faconbridge; John Lord Berners
1272	William le Winche	1460	Rich Ludlow & heirs
?	Bart le Botiller (2)	1461	W. Elyat
1292	Thos de la Becke	1463	Thos Saintleger (6)
1294	Thos do Candoure	1486	Reynold Bray
1298	Simon Lowys	1527	Sir Wm Fitzwilliam
1302	Henry de Say		Anthony Brown or
1330	Thos de Uppnor		Survivor
1334	Thos at Gate	1553	Anthony Brown
1360	John Brocas	1607	Sir Thos Gage
1362	Simon Brocas	1609	John Murray

(1) Appointment cancelled in favour of reappointment of E. Maunsell
(2) Stated to be deceased in appointment of Becke. Otherwise not known.
(3) Also Constable of Windsor Park
(4) Constable of Henley & Guildford Parks and Manor of Worplesdon
(5) Constable of Windsor Park
(6) Removed on attainder

Table 3 Keepers of Guildford Park.

1389	J.Worship	1439	J. Jenyn
	J. Maudlyn (1)		Ric. Ludlow(2)
1394	J. Fekenham	1460	Ric. Ludlow (3)
1401	J. Witneys		(and heirs)
1404	J. Horsey	1581	Luff
1418	J. Jenyn	1607	Carter (4)

(1) Stated as deceased in appointment of Fekenham
(2) Grant in remainder also Knokkepynne
(3) Also held office of Keeper
(4) Described as underkeeper

Table 4 Parkers in Guildford Park.

1338 Thos de Walton
1360 Wm de Fremelsworth
1363 Wm de Brendewood

Table 5 Keepers of The King's Stud in Guildford Park.

1272	Wm de Winche
1377	John Blake
1381	Arnold Brocas
1388	R. Elmham
1407	R. Rollison
1609	John Murray (also of Park)

Table 6 Keepers of Buildings in Guildford Park.

1370[48] shows this fourpence as being paid at that date and in 1553[49] the then Keeper was still getting his sixpence a day though the source is not clear. The Keeper was responsible for the administration of the Park and all mandates were addressed to him. He was also responsible for the accounts. Frequently he was a court official or nobleman not resident in Guildford. A list of Keepers and other officials is given in tables 3-6.

The day to day administration of the Park was in the hands of two officials known as the Parker and the Paliser,[50] but after 1439 the latter is called the Knokkepynne,[51] – no doubt modern official jargon would call him Superintendent of Enclosures. These men were paid at the rate of twopence and one penny per day respectively. The source of this pay varied over the years and we find payment orders issued to the Sheriff of Surrey, the Keeper of the Park and to the Constable of Windsor. Appointment to these two posts was for life and often seems to have been given to a court servant as a reward for long service to the Crown. Occasionally, one or another of these three officials was removed from his post for some reason.

Other officials are mentioned from time to time but their connection with Guildford Park is only incidental to their other duties. For example, the appointment of John Blake as clerk of the works at Westminster, The Tower and Windsor in the year 1378 includes the care of the lodges in Guildford and other parks. Mention has already been made of the Keeper of the Stud.

There are scattered references to bridges and a garden in the Park. Houses or lodges are also mentioned but the earlier references probably refer only to keepers' accommodation. It is not until 1369 that we find mention of any building that can be said with assurance to be for royal use. In that year orders were given to build a lodge which was to have a hall, four chambers and a chapel. A separate building housed a kitchen and all construction was of timber. The cost of these buildings is given as £81. Two years later, in 1371, two further houses were built, material being

obtained from dismantled parts of Guildford Castle. Orders were also given for the lodge and its garden to be enclosed by a hedge and a ditch.[52]

From this time, records of the day-to-day running of the Park become scanty. Appointments of Keepers and other officials continue to be made. It is clear that the park-land was in a bad condition as all of the appointments of Keepers charge them with the provision of fodder for the deer. By 1581 the Park was almost run down. Correspondence between Viscount Montague and Sir William More preserved in the Loseley Manuscripts talks of abuses in The Park, the incompetence of Luff the Keeper, and that there are only 400 deer.[53] An undated but possibly later document in the same collection gives the number of deer as about 200.[54]

It is not until John Norden surveyed the Park and drew his plan in 1607 that we get the first true picture of the area. Two copies of his survey exist: one is in the Royal Library at Windsor and the other is in The British Museum.[55] This last copy is endorsed:

'This park hath 600 fallow deer, about 80 of antler and not above 30 bucks; the circuit of this park is 6¼ mile it palith 7½ mile; meanlie timbered it is not sufficient to mayntane the pale; it containeth in quantitie 1620 ac. the ground most reasonable good ground.'

Several of the names noted by him – Henley Grove, Stagsters (Stags Hill) and Strawberry Grove – still appear on the Ordnance Map. The names of the gates are no longer in use and the manor house which he notes as pulled down has been rebuilt as Manor Farm. Norden shows that much of the Park was at the time under cultivation. Land on both sides of the river from Woodbridge to the Town is shown as meadow and the north slope of the Hogs Back is marked as under the plough.

Some two years earlier, in 1605, John Murray had been appointed Keeper of the Park.[56] In 1608 he was instructed to detain the building material of the Manor House of Guildford Park,[57] and in 1609 he sells it by deed to George More – the consideration is not mentioned. In the same year, the Crown paid him £100 for repairs to the Friary,[57] and two years later (1611) some £277 was paid towards further repairs. Even this expenditure was insufficient, the neglect was so great that an estimate for repairs dated 31 May 1619 calls for an expenditure of £315 1s. 4d. of which £224 14s. 4d. was to repair four miles of the main fence, £68 15s. 0d. was for intermediate fencing and the balance was for repairs to the lodges.[59] The records do not show if this work was ever done. That some part of the Park was still used to preserve game is shown by a warrant

of 1623. In that year orders were issued for three bucks to be caught in Waltham and Guildford Parks and sent to Don Carlos de Colonna, the Spanish Ambassador, as a gift from the King.[60]

In 1620 the old Friary and its land were granted to John Murray, the then Keeper of the Park, and his heirs. It was to be held by fealty only in free socage against an annual rent payable to the Crown of 50s.[61] The grant adds that the Friary was the principal lodge of the Park. In 1630 by a further grant the remainder of the Park passed to Murray, by then Lord Annandale, for a consideration of £5,000 plus, being still payable, the annual rent of 50s.[62] On 21 January 1650 the 'Commissioners for selling Fee Farm rents belonging to the Commonwealth of England formerly payable to the Crown of England' sold all rights of this farm to James Pitson of Stoke, a prominent local parliamentarian, for the sum of £107,[63] thus finally terminating the Crown connection which had lasted for five hundred years or more.

From Lord Annandale the land passed by sale or death into the family of the Earl of Onslow, who still owns such parts as have not yet been disposed of. Once disparked, the land was used for agricultural purposes. An undated Rental in the Loseley Manuscripts gives some details of this but is not clear on the location of the fields mentioned. It does, however, mention that 280 acres were still maintained as a Park, and that a lodge with 'fair barnes and a gritty meadow' were reserved for the deer. The estimated rental value of the little park and deer meadow is given as £182 and the rents received for the meadows and ploughland amounted to £701 17s. 0d.[64]

The Park was split up into farms and the next 200 years show little change save the construction of the present Farnham Road, a turnpike made after the passing of a private Act of Parliament in 1796. By 1850 some development had taken place in the old Friary area. The Railway Station had been built in 1842 and the Royal Surrey County Hospital [Farnham Road Hospital] was built in 1866. Hilliers Almshouses which had opened in London in 1800 were moved to a site next to the hospital in 1870. The fact that the railway had built engine sheds at Guildford caused the building of several roads of smallish houses for their staff (1875-80) and by 1914 the built-up area had passed the hospital and had reached the line of Annandale and Agraria Roads. Development had also started on the south side of the Farnham Road.

After the war, in 1923, the Guildford Park (Corporation Housing) Estate was started. At the same time a company started to develop the

better class houses of Onslow Village and there was a certain amount of infilling. In 1933 the Corporation bought Mount Farm in order to preserve the view of the hill from the town and to provide an open space.

The Diocese of Guildford was founded in 1927 and Lord Onslow gave land on the crest of Stags Hill as a site for the building of a cathedral. The design of Sir Edward Maufe was chosen and in 1936 the foundation stone was laid by The Archbishop of Canterbury in the presence of H M Queen Mary. The cathedral is of red brick made from the hill itself and burnt in a brickyard which stood at its foot. Building was interrupted by the 1939-45 war and, although incomplete at the time, it was consecrated in 1961 in the presence of H M Queen Elizabeth II.

After the war, the building of houses was resumed. There was some infilling of the older projects and the estates at Westborough and Park Barn were developed. An industrial estate was built on ground near the river. What is probably the last large building project to be carried out on open land once part of the Park was started in 1966. Now the several blocks of the University of Surrey are showing their skeleton shapes on the north side of Stags Hill below the cathedral. When it is finished, little will be left of the ancient and Royal Park of the medieval Kings of England except recreation grounds; even so a deer was killed by a car just on its boundary in 1967.[65] [In practice there has been much further development since George Underwood wrote this paragraph. In particular a new Royal Surrey County Hospital, a University of Surrey Research Park, a hotel, a supermarket and a re-aligned Guildford by-pass have been built within the former Royal Park.]

Appendix: Henley Park

In his survey of 1607, John Norden says that the circuit of Henley Park was three miles and it had an extent of 420 acres. He adds that it was good ground but that the timber was decaying and that there were about 190 deer including 40 bucks (BM. MSS Harl 3749 art 14). In the Close Rolls under the date 10 July 1355, there are 11 entries of grants of land in Ash, made by various persons in favour of the Crown. Similar entries, to a final total of 30, appear on subsequent days. In most cases, the consideration given by the Crown was land elsewhere, mainly around Worplesdon. In 1357 a grant was made to Robert de Pernicote, rector of Ash, of 100s. per annum for the loss of 'Tithes, mortuaries, oblations and obventions'. Payment was to continue until he was appointed to a prebendary. This payment was still being made in 1371 when the Issue

Roll of Thomas de Brantingham records a payment of 50s. for the half year to Walter Herman the then rector. The Close Rolls of 1359 record that William son of John de Molyns Kt signed a release of all rights in the Manor of Henley in favour of the Crown. Meanwhile, work on conversion had been started by William of Wykham, clerk of the works at Windsor, and on 25 July 1357 John Henland was ordered to supervise payment for work completed. The Park remained in the hands of the Crown until, in 1633, it was granted to Robert Tyrwhit Esq against a payment of £850. It was finally disparked and assarted in 1639. (See Manning & Bray, *History of Surrey*, 1804, 3, p.69 ff.)

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CPR Calendar of Patent Rolls
CSPD Calendar of State Papers (Domestic)
GMR Guildford Muniment Room [Surrey History Centre]
LM Loseley Manuscripts

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A Sea Wall in Surrey? An Explanation of Some Wartime Activities on Hankley Common near Farnham

Chris Shepheard

The Second World War has left many physical reminders in Surrey, particularly as there was such a large number of troops billeted here just prior to D-Day. Most of this evidence is in the form of pillboxes and other defence works, but did you know that we have the distinction of having a sea wall many miles from the nearest coast?

Just what is the story behind this strange artefact in the middle of Hankley Common, between Elstead and Tilford? Many walkers in the area have come across the strange structure amid the silver birch trees, looking something like the ruins of Angkor Wat in Cambodia, but very little has ever been recorded about it. However, an article in the Ministry of Defence conservation magazine *Sanctuary* published in 1988 provides much information supplied originally by a Mr Wood who was involved in the wartime trials with the wall.

During the summer of 1943, Mr Wood, a Royal Armoured Corps driver/mechanic, was attached to the Fighting Vehicles Proving Establishment at Chertsey. His section was involved in the testing of assault equipment and was sent with a Churchill Mk II tank to Elstead where he was billeted in a hutted camp with Canadian troops.

The task, over a period of several days, was to take the vehicle, which was equipped with a device called 'The Onion' (or possibly 'Double Onion') across the common to the Lion's Mouth (SU883413). Here an area of obstacles had been set out to represent the defences thought likely to be found during a landing in Europe. These consisted of a large section of a reinforced concrete wall, approximately 100m long and 3m high by 3.5m wide. In the centre of this wall was a gap, 6m wide, closed by a three-section heavy steel girder gate running on rollers. To one end of the wall were several types of tank traps, including

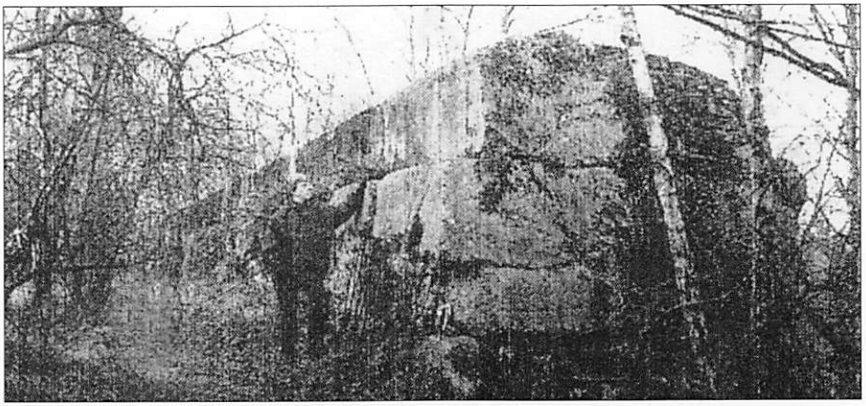


Fig 1. Photograph of part of the Atlantic Wall on Hankley Common, near Farnham.

'dragons' teeth', lengths of railway track set in concrete and wire entanglements.

Most of the obstacles were to be attacked with rockets hauling lengths of exposive-filled tube, known as 'Bangalore Torpedoes', and 'carpet laying devices' for the barbed wire. Mr Wood's Churchill tank, however, was designed to deal with the wall itself and the steel gates. To this end it was equipped with a steel frame measuring some 10 feet wide by six feet, fitted vertically in front and mounted on arms attached to the vehicle sides. On this framework were hung boxes containing some 1000lbs of explosive.

The tank was driven towards the wall and, on arrival, the framework was lowered to the ground against the obstruction. The vehicle was then backed off to a distance of some 100 feet, paying out an electric detonating cable as it went. The explosives were then detonated by the driver and the resulting effect can still be seen in the remains of the wall to this day, each of the two gaps created measuring some 3.5m in width. Obviously these resulted in considerable bangs which must have been heard throughout the district and it is thought that these could have led

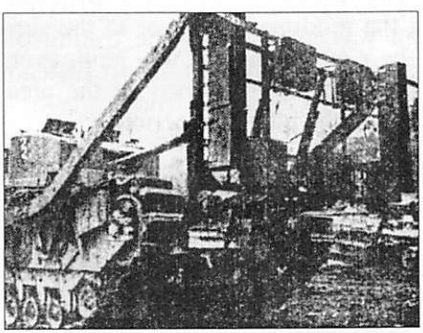


Fig 2. Churchill tank equipped with a steel frame capable of placing demolition charges at heights of up to 12 feet.

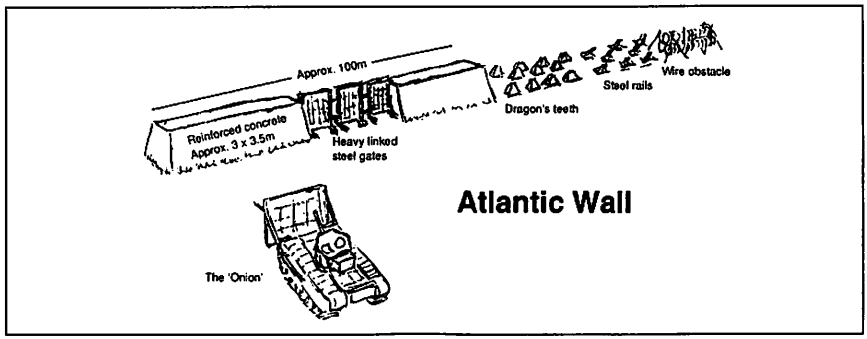


Fig 3. Reconstruction sketch of the Atlantic Wall and associated defences at Hankley Common, together with a Churchill tank and its steel frame, 'The Onion'.

to claims against the War Department, which originate at about this time, for ceiling collapses in nearby Tilford village.

Mr Wood believes that the Canadian troops were responsible for building the 'Atlantic Wall' here and the commandant of the Longmoor military training area, under which Hankley now falls, has reported that raiding parties were sent across the Channel to measure accurately the real thing and bring back samples of the concrete to ensure that the training version was as realistic as possible. This must have been quite an undertaking, especially as it was necessary to chip off pieces without being heard!

Another inland example exists in Stirlingshire (NN838037), near the 1715 Sheriff Muir battlefield, and again this was used in demolition tests. This second wall has recently been surveyed and found to be very similar in overall size although it tapers in section dramatically towards one end. The thickness varies from 3m down to 0.7m and a 2m deep ditch lies on the downslope side. Again, concrete is scattered back a considerable distance from a single explosive-created breach in the wall.

As well as two massive breaches blasted in the Hankley wall by the explosives there are also many marks made by shells spalling off concrete and snapping and twisting the reinforcement near to the surface. Other than this, the wall must be very much as it was built, even though several generations of troops have been active in the area which has provided military training since the inter-war period.

Editor's Note: This account was first published as a leaflet in 1995 by The Surrey Defences Survey, part of the Surrey Industrial History Group.

Violent, Unnatural or Suspicious Deaths in Kingston upon Thames & Thereabouts: Coroner's Inquests 1700-1750

John Pink,
Friend of Kingston Museum and Kingston Tour Guide

Coroners and their Juries have had the duty of inquiring into violent, unnatural or suspicious deaths since the 13th century. Down the years the majority of their verdicts have fallen under just a few headings – accident, suicide, unlawful killing and natural death.

The Royal Borough of Kingston Upon Thames' archives hold 130 sets of papers relating to Coroners' inquests that took place between 1700 and 1750 in the Kingston and Elmbridge Hundreds. These papers[1] are rare survivals from the past. Surrey has very few other records relating to 18th-century inquests.

My aim is to look at these records in greater detail than previously and to tease out more of the social history of Kingston and thereabouts in the first half of the 18th century. The picture gained from the inquests is revealing but there are two reasons for caution. First, we cannot be sure that all cases of violent etc. death were reported to the Coroner and, secondly, the archive record might be incomplete.

All the deaths were tragic and by today's standards were not investigated in great detail. Now, investigation of violent etc. deaths is usually aided by autopsies, police and/or social services reports. In the early 18th century Coroners and their Juries had little more than eyewitness accounts of death (or discovered death) to assist them in reaching their verdicts and, for reasons of public health, bodies had to be buried without delay. However, there is no reason to suppose that Coroners and their Juries were not conscientious in carrying out their duties.

This article gives the detail of 70 of the 130 inquests and takes into account the other 60 to piece together the general picture. Although 18th-century lifestyle was substantially different from now, the causes of death were much as they are today, for example: people drowned by

going out of their depth, were run over by a vehicle, committed suicide, were fatally stabbed in a fight or killed by an accident at work.

The Coroners' work continues today and the Home Office issues an annual report on it. In England and Wales for the year 2000 there were about 25,000 inquests and a Jury was employed at 800 of them.

Setting the Scene

Kingston was a centuries old market town. It had weekly markets for corn, malted barley and livestock. There were three annual fairs, two of which dated back to medieval times. The town's main trades were brewing, malting, tanning, coaching and inn keeping. Several inns, for example The Lyon and Lamb *(today's* Druids Head*) are mentioned in the inquest papers.*

The London to Portsmouth Road started at Southwark and passed through Kingston, Esher and Guildford. In the early 1700s it was a quagmire in winter and deeply rutted in summer. However, in 1719 the road between Southwark and Kingston was improved by a turnpike trust. Other trusts improved the road onwards to Portsmouth by 1749. Long-distance coaches and waggons made the journey to and from Portsmouth during this period. By 1741 Kingston had three or four stage coaches and the same number of stage waggons passing through its Market Place on most days of the week.[2] The inquests reveal that several carriers in charge of 'Portsmouth' waggons were killed in road accidents but there is no record of a fatal accident involving a stage coach. Those living on or near the Portsmouth Road were used to travellers but there was still a fear of strangers. Vagabonds seeking work, discharged soldiers or sailors were assumed to be people who would steal what they could.

Religion played a much larger part in people's lives then than it does today. The passions stirred by the English Civil Wars in the mid-1600s would have been within living memory as would have been the burning of a woman for witchcraft in Kingston Market Place in 1681. The Market Place, with its stocks, whipping post and pillory, was a place where punishment was meted out as it had been since the 14th century.

Medical knowledge was rudimentary. Coroners used only a few terms to describe the cause of death: apoplexy (stroke), 'fitte', 'bruising' and 'suffocated by water' (drowning).

Apart from a few lamps around a market place or outside an inn there was no street lighting. There were no police forces, no paramedics, no accident and emergency units, and no maternity wards to help mothers

cope with difficult or stillbirths. Those who were badly injured or seriously ill usually died.

Duties of Coroners and Their Juries in the Early 1700s

The duties of Coroners relating to deaths deemed to be violent, unnatural or suspicious were very much as they are today. Inquests looked into who had died, how they had died and when and where death had occurred.

However, the 130 inquests re-examined in this booklet had some features which made them different from today's inquests. First, Coroners employed Juries for ALL the cases they investigated. At present Juries are only used when a death occurs in prison, in custody, at work or if further deaths may occur in similar circumstances. Secondly, Juries did not return 'open' verdicts, ie. unresolved verdicts, as they do today. It is likely that in the early 1700s Juries felt that they had to come to a definite conclusion on the cause of death, knowing that there was little chance of further investigation and that corpses should be buried without delay. It was not unusual to have a death in the morning, an inquest on the death in the afternoon and a funeral in the evening.

The Coroners' principal duties were set down by statute *De Officio Coronatoris* from the reign of Edward I (1272-1307):

> The Coroner is to go to the Place where any Person is slain or suddenly dead, and shall by his Warrant to the Bailiffs, Constables Etc. summon a Jury out of the four or five neighbouring Towns, to make Inquiry upon View of the Body; and the Coroner and the Jury are to enquire into the Manner of Killing, and all Circumstances that occasioned the Party's Death who were present, whether the dead Person was known, where he lay the Night before, Etc. Examine the Body if there be any Signs of Strangling about the Neck; or of Cords about the Members, Etc. Also all Wounds ought to be viewed, and Inquiry made with what Weapons, Etc. And the Coroner may send his Warrant for Witnesses, and take their Examination in Writing; and if any appear guilty of the Murder, he shall inquire what Goods and Lands he hath, and then the Dead body is to be buried. A Coroner may likewise commit the Person to Prison who is by his inquisition found guilty of the Murder; and the Witnesses are to be bound Recognisance to appear at the next Assizes, Etc.[3]

As early as the 13th century Kingston obtained the right by Royal Charter to appoint its own Coroner. There were several inquests when one of the town's Bailiffs acted as Coroner, presumably because the appointed Coroner was not available.

Main Findings:

- The majority of inquests, about 80 per cent, related to the deaths of males
- The principal cause of death was drowning. Most of these were in the River Thames, but a significant number were in ponds, ditches and streams
- Those who committed suicide, or died in gaol, were not necessarily excluded from a churchyard burial
- About 15 per cent of deaths were related to horses or horse transport. The roads, as today, were places where people could be killed. A number of these fatalities were the result of being drunk in charge of a horse or horses
- There was only a handful of murder verdicts in the 50 years. This is perhaps surprising in an age usually regarded as violent and when there were no restrictions on the carrying of weapons
- There were several cases of death from exposure. These were very likely linked to vagrancy and homelessness
- There was one exhumation for a post burial inquest
- Then as now, people were killed at work; for example: a milkmaid was gored to death by a bull; a worker in a gunpowder mill was killed in an explosion; a carrier was run over by his own cart and a waterman drowned in the Thames
- There was one death from that very rare chance of being killed – struck by lightning! The inquest papers read:

> We the Jury Impaneled and sworne on the other side to Inquire how Thomas Russell now lyeing dead before us came by his death Do finde that the said Thomas Russell being yesterday between the houres of three and four in the afternoon under a stable in Richmond in the possession of Mrs Jones there hapned a very Great storme of Raine attended with Thunder and lightning which struck the said Thomas Russell stone dead And so we finde he came by his death by the hand of Providence and not otherwise Wittness our hands this 21th day of May Anno Domini 1711.[4]

About Juries:

- Juries were all male and, unlike today, employed at every inquest
- A Jury was made up of about fifteen to twenty men
- By law Juries had to view the corpse or corpses before a verdict could be reached [this requirement remained in force until 1980]
- There was one instance where a Jury made a recommendation on safety – that a well be stopped up.

- There were no indications as to **where** Juries performed their duties, although there is a clue, albeit some years distant from the early 1700s, that Juries met in public houses.[5]
- Unlike today, Juries named those who they thought were guilty of murder or manslaughter. A trial at the Assizes followed such a verdict.
- Some men served on a succession of Juries.[6] Whether they had an appetite for Jury service, or were conveniently placed to serve on Juries, is not known.
- The law required that Juries be recruited from neighbouring towns for an inquest. However in practice this did not happen; for example, Richmond deaths were considered by Jurors who lived in Richmond.
- About 15 per cent of Jurymen could not sign their own names on the inquest papers. They made their marks and the Coroner wrote their names against them. Most Jurors made a simple cross but a few put their initials.[7]

Stable and Riding Accidents

Out of the 130 inquests, 20 were associated with horses in some way. Two deaths resulted from stable accidents:
(Words in *Italic* are those actually used in the inquest papers).

> 1713 October 5th. Kingston. Thomas Binfield. Age about 13. A witness said that Thomas brought some hay into the stable belonging to Mr & Mrs Cox of Canbury, there a gelding called Diamond kicked him in the head. He *languished* for three months before he died. The Jury declared the horse **deodand**, ie. forfeit (see below). Thomas was buried at All Saints, Kingston Parish Church on the same day as the inquest.

(By ancient custom, Juries could declare whatever killed a person to be **deodand**. Although this might appear to be an award of 'damages', deodand was rooted in early Christian theology. *Jacobs Law Dictionary* (18th-century edition) defined **deodand** as follows: '(deo dandum) is a Thing given as it were to God, to appease his Wrath, where a Person comes to a violent Death by Mischance, not by any reasonable Creature; and is forfeited to the King, or Grantee of the Crown; and if to the King, his Almoner disposes of it by Sale, and the Money arising thereby he distributes to the poor: Also if forfeited to the Lord of a Liberty, it ought to be thus distributed. The Origin of deodands is said to come from the notion of Purgatory; for when a Person came to a sudden and untimely Death, without having Time to be Shrieved by a Priest, and to have Extream Unction administered to him, the Thing which has been

the occasion of his Death, became deodand; that is, was given to the Church, to be distributed in charity, and to pray for the Soul of such deceased person out of Purgatory. There are several examples of forfeiture in Cases of Deodands; as if a man is driving a Cart, falls so that the cart wheel runs over him, and presseth him to death; the Cart wheel, Cart, and Horses are forfeited to the Lord of the Liberty.' Deodands were abolished in 1846.)

> 1715 July 25th. Kingston. Joseph Scott. He was badly injured by a horse kicking him in the stomach. He died the day after the accident. The horse, a gelding, was declared deodand to the value of 30 shillings payable to the Bailiffs of Kingston on behalf of the Lord of the Manor for distribution as alms to the poor.

Stable accidents have happened ever since horses were domesticated by humans. Riding accidents are in a similar category:

> 1713 August 24th. Thames Ditton. John Price servant to Josiah Milner. He was riding his master's gelding towards Kingston when, *much in drink*, he fell from the horse and died. The horse was declared deodand to the value of 3 pounds.
>
> 1717 July 11th. Petersham. Alex Brandy. This man, described as a *gent*, was riding down Richmond Hill when his horse made a *fall and stop*. He fell from his horse and sustained a fatal head injury.
>
> 1732 May 15th. Hook. Isaac Roberts of White Friars London. He was riding across Surbiton/Norbiton Common and was violently thrown by his horse, a brown bay 14 or 15 hands. He *languished* for 5 days. The horse was declared deodand to the Lord of the Manor of Kingston.
>
> 1747 July 20th. Kingston. William Shorter aged 13 or 14 was riding a grey horse, about 14 hands, when he slipped from the saddle. One foot remained in the stirrup and he was dragged along and fatally injured.
>
> 1748 September 19th. Kingston. John Chalmers, a trooper of the Royal Regiment of Blues, was quartered at the *Lyon and Lamb* (today's *Druids Head* in Kingston Market Place). An ostler said that he helped the trooper to mount his horse and as he was going to clean the stable he heard the noise of a horse running away. He went back to look and saw that the trooper was thrown from his horse and *much hurt*. A surgeon said that John Chalmers had fractured his arm, leg and back and that he *lingered* several days before dying. The Jury declared the horse a deodand and forfeit to the Lord of the Manor of Kingston to the value of 5 pounds.
>
> 1715 March 28th. Richmond. Henry Chaire was desperately unlucky. He was standing by Richmond's Town Gate when a runaway horse charged

into him at full speed. He was so *bruised* that he died two hours afterwards. The horse was declared deodand and forfeit *to the King's most excellent Lord of the Manor of Richmond to the value of 3 pounds.*

Portsmouth Waggons

As mentioned earlier, stage waggons plied between London and Portsmouth via Kingston. Between 1700 and 1750, there were four inquests relating to 'Portsmouth' waggons.

1703 February 2nd. Kingston. Mary Tomms and Alex Beak in a Portsmouth waggon left Kingston by West By Thames Street (now called High Street) at about 4.30 in the afternoon. According to an eye witness the driver lost control of his horses and the waggon overturned into the Thames which was by the side of the road. The level of the river was exceptionally high. Although attempts were made to rescue those who were thrown into the water, Mary Tomms and Alex Beak were drowned.

1722 December 2nd. Esher. George Farley was driving a Portsmouth waggon on the High Road near the *White Hart Ale House* near Thames Ditton. The horses were startled by a person unknown to the Jury ... George Farley was crushed by the off-fore wheels. He *languished* from 7pm till 4am until he died. Doedand was declared to the value of 3 shillings and 4 pence. The Coroner was Thomas Nuttall, gent.

1706 April 19th. Esher. Joseph Wilson was driving a stage waggon owned by a Mr. Penfold of Southwark when he *fell under the wheels of the waggon and dyed instantly.*

Waggons and Carts

1740 February 6th. Kingston. John Brooks, hostler, died without obvious injury. *We the Jury Impanelled and Sworne to Inquire and Present how and after what manner John Brooks a Hostler liveing at the Red Lyon at Mr Forwards in Kingston upon Thames came by his Death doe Finde that on Thursday last the fifthDay of this Instant February about 5 or 6 of the Clock in the Evening the said John Brooks goeing with the Portsmouth Waggon (the Waggoner staying behinde some little time at the said Inn) and the said John Brooks sitting with his Feet on the shafts of the said Waggon near the House of Mr William Inwood in West by Thames in Kingston aforesaid he the said John Brooks being as we beleive in a Fitt or in Liquor did fall from the said Waggon and then and there instantly Dyed And there not appearing any Bruise or Wound on his Body we beleive and apprehend the said Waggon did not goe aver him And so we Finde the said John Brooks in manner aforesaid came by his Death Witness our Hands the sixth Day of February 1740.* Buried at All Saints, Kingston Parish Church.

1743 September 12th. Weybridge. Richard Addams, a labourer, was killed near Oatlands Park, Weybridge. He was leading a waggon drawn by two horses and holding the halter on one of them. The other horse fell, *and unaccountably and by misfortune he fell down under the wheels of the said waggon which went over him whereby he was mortally bruised and dyed three hours afterwards.*

1731 June 12th. Kingston. Sarah Page, widow, was knocked down and killed instantly by a carter up from Dorset going to fetch clay or earth. It was mentioned that she was deaf. The horses and cart were declared deodand.

1742 January 28th. Richmond. Dorothy Matthews, wife of Simon Matthews, Keeper of Richmond Park. She was killed instantly on Richmond Hill by a horse and cart travelling at a gallop.

1707 November 9th. Hersham, Walton on Thames. Richard Mechin, a labourer of Hersham, had a cart run over his left leg. He died of this injury three weeks later. An entry in Walton on Thames Parish Church register reads: *Richard an old man who got his death by a cart running over him.* The cart was declared deodand to the Lord of the Manor of Walton on Thames.

1709 June 26th. Claygate. Andrew Mansell, a servant, was run over by a cart loaded with timber. Deodand was declared to the value of 10 shillings.

Death by Drowning

Of the 130 inquests, drowning was the principal cause of death. Forty people were *suffocated and drowned by water.* About two thirds of drownings were in the River Thames. However, the Thames would have claimed more lives than this, because some corpses would have been taken out of the water on the Middlesex bank and dealt with by the Coroner who covered Twickenham, Teddington and Hampton.

Accidental drownings were in categories which are familiar today. People fell into the water, some from boats, who could not swim. Some went out of their depth and unsupervised infants strayed into the water with a fatal result. A significant number of people were drowned in ponds and ditches. Compared with today, there were probably more ponds and it is unlikely that they were fenced around. In the absence of drains to take water from roads, it is likely that roadside ditches were deeply dug. Thus a combination of ditches filled to the brim, no street lighting and perhaps intoxication after an evening at the local tavern, accounted for several deaths.

1738 July 4th. Kingston. Thomas Hutchins, a servant to Henry Pyke tailor of Hampton Wick, was drowned accidentally. On July 3rd at

about 8pm Thomas went into the Thames near Kingston Bridge to wash himself or learn to swim, went out of his depth and drowned. He was taken out of the river about half an hour later by the Low Pier of Kingston Bridge.

1740 February 11th. Kingston. Peter Elder a sailor from *HMS Victory* was accidentally drowned. His ship was the one in service before Lord Nelson's flagship of the same name. Among the papers for this inquest is the Navy Office pass, remarkably undamaged by water, which allowed Peter Elder be absent from his ship, anchored at Portsmouth, from November 25th until 7th December 1739. (Fig.1)

As well as granting him leave the pass safeguarded him from being taken by the Press Gang. The date on his pass indicates that he was absent without leave when he fell into the water in late December or early January.

The inquest papers read:

We doe Finde that the said Peter Elder being a Saylor or Seafaring man as appears by a Tickett found about him and belonging to his Majesties Shipp the Victory did about 5 or 6 weeks as we beleive fall out of a Barge or Bauck into the River of Thames at or near Thames Ditton Wharff and was this Day taken out of the Thames and layd on the shore in the said Parish of Kingston And we Finde the said Peter Elder was as aforesaid accidentally and by misfortune Drowned there being no other Circumstance whereby it may appeare that he came by his Death any other waies.

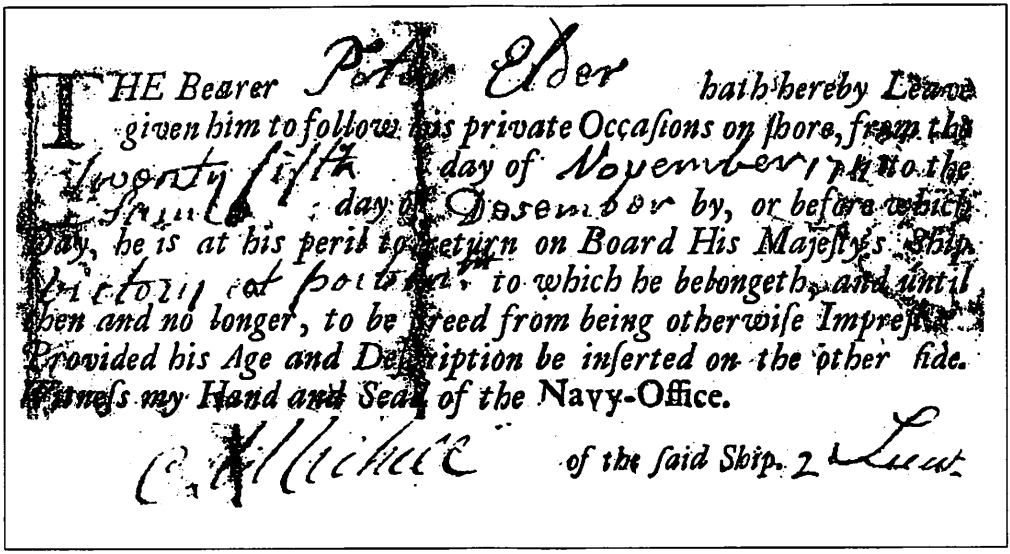
A sequel to this inquest is that Peter Elder's ship, HMS *Victory*, was wrecked with the loss of all her crew [over 1,000] on the Casquets off the Channel Islands in 1744. Thus had Peter Elder not been drowned in the Thames he might have been drowned four years later at sea.

1728 April 21st. Kingston. Carpenter Marsh, aged 14, son of Edward Marsh late of Kingston, accidentally drowned in a ditch. It was recorded that he fell into a ditch in Green Lane *that led from the Thames to Surbiton.*

1735 January 21st. Caleb Stacey of Kingston. He was a fisherman and fell into the Thames on December 23rd at 4pm. His body was taken out of the water between Richmond and Kew nearly a month later on January 20th.

1728 May 9th. Kingston. Thomas Challoner was a soldier of the First Regiment of the Foot Guards. He went out of his depth in the Thames and was drowned. B/KPC. In the Church register his name is spelt Thomas Chalcutt.

1711 June 13th. Richmond. David Breach, plumber of Richmond, was aged about 20. He went into *the Thames with the intention to wash himself was suddenly and by misfortune and against the will of the said*


THE Bearer Peter Elder hath hereby Leave given him to follow his private Occasions on shore, from the Twenty fifth day of November 1711 to the first day of December by, or before which day, he is at his peril to return on Board His Majesty's Ship Victory at Portsm. to which he belongeth, and until then and no longer, to be freed from being otherwise Impressed. Provided his Age and Description be inserted on the other side. Witness my Hand and Seal of the Navy-Office.

C. Hilchcut of the said Ship. 2 Lieut.

Fig.1 The Navy Office Pass of Peter Elder.

David Breach drowned in the water of the said river. He was buried in Richmond Parish Church, St Mary Magdalene, on June 13th.

1731 May 25th. Petersham. Joseph Page was a servant to the Rt.Hon. Countess of Harrell. *He went with other servants to wash themselves in the River Thames near the Earle Dysart Walks. As we believe out of his depth and not skilfull in swimming accidentally drowned. He was taken up dead.*

1735 January 5th. Ham. Unknown man. Accidentally drowned. He was found dead in the great pond in Richmond New Park. The body was clothed and had lain there for several days before being discovered. It was thought that he had mistaken his way and accidentally fallen in. There were no bruises on his body.

Until 1776/7 Richmond had no bridge over the Thames. The river was crossed by a ferry or small boats. This might have increased the risk of drowning but the evidence from inquests is that people usually got into trouble, with fatal results, by going out of their depth.

1728 July 3rd. Richmond. James Wright and Thomas Bank were accidentally drowned. Two witnesses (called examinants) gave accounts of this accident. John Croft said *he togeather with James Right and Thomas Banck are umployed by Wm Rice a cole merchant goeung with a cart from the Bankside to the River of Thames to fetch coales out of a Barge lying on the said River at Kew the fore Horse took some distract*

or freight and drawed the said cart into the River of Thames into a hole there called Hutley's hole and were all cast into the said hole and the other persons being out of their depths were drowned.

The second witness said that: *James Wright, Thomas Bank and John Cross servants to William Price a cole merchant were in a cart and he seing the Horses taking some distract or freight this Deponent swore to the carter that he was gone the wrong way and imediately he saw the said Horses draw the cart into the Thames there in a hole called Huckleyshole and that they were all three in the water and being no help near at hand dwelling the said James Write and Thomas Bank were drowned.* Thomas was buried in Richmond Parish Church.

1718 January 17th. Walton on Thames. William Wheatley and Stephen Cleverly were accidentally drowned. *Between the hours of 10 and 11 of the clock in the forenoon..being both in a punt loaded with six Barrels of beer and other empty Vessells.. and endeavouring to Cross over the said River Thames in the said loaded punt to Sunbury in Middx the said William Wheatley was guiding the punt from the shoar the Quickness of the Stream caused the said punt to Heal on one side and thereby the waters came in and sunk the punt and the said William Wheatley and Stephen Cleverly were drowned by misfortune.* They were buried at Walton on Thames Parish Church January 17th.

1739 May 15th Esher. John Maclesh, a gardener, was drowned at Claremont. A witness explained that he and John Maclesh, gardeners on the Estate, went into the Duke of Newcastle's pond [it exists today as a lake] at Claremont to wash themselves. They started to swim across the pond when John Maclesh had an attack of cramp, was unable to swim and drowned.

Nine children, mostly under five, were accidentally drowned in ponds or channels leading into the Thames. Eight of the children were boys. The inquests were probably distressing for Juries because by law they had to view the bodies:

John Jenkins aged 3, Kingston 1708 August 29th/Daniel Wilsher aged 3, Thames Ditton 1709 July 10th/John Baker aged 5, Kingston 1711 July 5th/Edward White aged 4, Thames Ditton 1713 March 5th/William Board aged 3, Kingston 1713 April 24th/Henry Dibble aged 9, Thames Ditton 1716 June 10th/Sara Bird aged 2, Thames Ditton 1716 September 14th/William Cope *a child*, Walton on Thames 1728 July 6th and Nathaniel Palmer *infant*, West Molesey 1749 October 15th.

The inquest on John Baker prompted a Jury to make a recommendation on safety. The Jury found that *the said John Baker, aged 5, at about two of the clock in the afternoon on 4*th *July was at a little well over against the Tenement in the occupancy of George Dibble did by misfortune fall*

into the said Well and was drown in the water thereof and so we find that he came to his death by misfortune and not otherwise And we further present the said Well to be dangerous to Her Majesties Leige People being near the Queens highway and ought to be stopped up to prevent any such like accident for the future.

Two adults were accidentally drowned in mill ponds. Mills were a common feature on the rivers and streams of this time.

1736 December 17th Esher. Matthew Kemp a labourer of Thames Ditton was accidentally drowned on a dark evening. He worked at a mill and *by misfortune fell off the footbridge ... into the mill pool and was there drowned in the waters of the said mill pool and was taken up dead the next morning out of the said waters.* He was buried at Esher Parish Church.

Guns and Falls

There were 14 fatal accidents considered by Juries that were neither drownings nor associated with horses in some way. There were four fatal accidents with guns, two where people who fell from upper stories of inns, two from other sorts of falls, two people killed at their workplace and four other sorts of accident.

Gun Accidents

1715 June 24th. Petersham. John Shorter, servant to the Rt.Hon. Lionel Earl of Dysart was accidentally shot and killed. The Jury *having taken a view of the body and examined divers evidences touching the deceased do find that on Monday last the twentieth of this instant June that the said John Shorter being in a passage going into the said hall of the said Manor house.. one John Price footman of the said Earl being in the said hall and taking up a Blunderbus that stood in or near the said hall that had been formerly charged and stood there for defence of the said house the said blunderbus went off and the said John Price confessed himself that it gave the said John Shorter a mortal wound in the head of which he languished to the twentythird of this instant and then dyed and we find that the said John Price was the cause of Death of the said John Shorter and that John Price did not try for it.*

1744 August 18th. Kingston. Richard Wainwright, a soldier in the First Regiment of Guards commanded by his Highness the Duke of Cumberland, was accidentally shot and killed. *Another soldier belonging to the Regiment saies they had a Billet to be quater'd at The Three Hawkes in Kingston the said Richard Wainwright was minded and proposed to Discharge his peece or Gun before he went into the said House but the same not goeing of(f) he blowed with his mouth into the Barrel of the said Gun happening to be charged with cartridge and Powder did accidentally*

go off whereby the said Richard Wainwright was shott in the mouth and face and very much wounded of which wound the said Richard Wainwright languished and dyed the next morning at 3 of the Clock.

Falls From the Upper Stories of Inns

Two deaths were the result of falling from an inn, one from a window and the other from a roof. The inquests probably did not discover the whole truth of what actually happened in these incidents.

1729 November 12th. Kingston. Josiah Nicoll a sailor fell from a window of *The Ram.* (There is still a *Ram* public house in Kingston but it is sited a few doors away from the *Ram* mentioned above.)

The Coroner's written statement on his death is missing from the papers; however, a deponent's (ie.witness) statement has survived.

The examination of Robert Hager Sailor taken the ninth day of November 1729 is viz this Deponent saith that he and Josiah Nicoll came from London together in order to goe to whre ships lying at Portsmouth..when they came to Kingston they both went to the sign of The Ram and hired horses in order to proceed on there journey on the next morning.. so they went to bed and about the middle of the night at this Deponent doth believe the said Josiah Nicoll gott out of the window and thereby gott a fall which this Deponent doth believe will be his death. He been found almost dead in the street about twelve o'Clock at night. Signed Robert Hager.

Josiah Nicoll, recorded as a man from Kent, died a few days later. His reason for going out of the window is not explained. Was it to leave the inn at midnight without paying for their lodging or for some other reason? He is buried in Kingston Parish Churchyard.

Today, the press would probably headline this inquest as, 'Widow Falls to Death from Inn's Roof in Sex Escapade'.

1712 August 1st. Kingston. Frances Jones, widow of Nash Jones, fell to her death from the roof of the *Dogg Inn*, Kingston Market Place in an attempt to escape detection in a man's room. The papers read as follows:

Wee the Jury Impanelled on the other side to Inquire how Frances Jones widdow now lyeing dead before us Came by her death do finde that last night being the last day of July 1712 between the houres of Twelve and one of the Clock the said Frances Jones was in a Garrett at the Dogg Inn in Kingston upon Thames together with one W[illiam] Horne who was to lye there and the said Frances Jon[es] and Wm Horne being locked in the said roome together there was a Key of a Lodging roome in the house which was wanting which the said Frances Jones had in her pockett (and

found there when she was dead) which occationed the Maid and Mistres of the house to make search all about the house for the said Jones who came to Hornes Garret dore and found the dore locked and the Key in the lock within the roome the said Maid Calling for the said Frances Jones and no person answering went downe for a pair of Tongs to break open the said Hornes dore to see if the said Frances Jones was in the said roome And we find that the said Frances Jones being in the said room <thinking to stand on the Jett of a Chimney which [was] out side of the roome undiscovered> and fell from thence to the ground in an entry paved with flint stones which fall gave her one mortall wound on the hinder part of her head of which she Instantly dyed and so we finde she came by her death by misfortune and not otherwise In witness whereof we have hereunto put our hands this first day of August Anno domini 1712.

Several people gave information at this inquest, they were: John Pope, a soldier quartered at the *Dogg Inn*; William Matthews, a hostler at the same inn; Ellen Mahon, wife of the landlord of the inn; Bates Glover, a chyrurgion (surgeon); and John Turner also a chyrurgion. But the key informant was the man in the incident, William Horne. The statement reads as follows:

The Examinacion of William Horne of Egham in the County of Surry Sheriffs Ba[...] of the County taken the 1st of August 1712 at the Dogg Inn in Kingston upon Thames before John Nuthall Gentleman one of her Majesties Coroners for the Town and Libertie of Kingston.

This Examinant saith that last night some time before he went to his lodging roome at the Dogg Inn in Kingston he was in a large drinking roome under his said lodging roome a drinkeing ther with Mr Nunelley and Francis Jones now deceased and this Examinant saith that afterwards Frances Jones brought the Key of this Examinants Chamber and lighted him into the said Chamber to bedd and when she was there he kissed her two or three times and some persons comeing up into the outer Chamber to bedd ther said Frances Jones clapt her shoulder against the doore and said they should not see her and afterward locked the dore softly and whispered to this Examinant and said she would stay till the Candle was out in the other roome and then goe downe but some persons calling for this Examinant or Mrs Jones at the doore this Examinant thought Mrs Jones had hid her selfe in the roome either behind the bedd or the Curtains but did not thinke she went out of the window.

There is a description of the scene when the mistress of the inn and her maid threatened to break open the bedroom door.

William Horne opened the dore and was in bedd after the dore was open And these Informants depose that they during the time they were in their roome heard no noise nor cryeing out in the next roome where William Horne was but the noise as above deposed of wakeing out of his sleepe and

particularly does not remember they heard any window in the room Clap and more say not.

After nearly 300 years the tragedy of Frances Jones' death comes vividly from the papers. But whose decision was it that Frances Jones should climb out onto the roof: her own, a joint decision or William Horne's before he got back into bed? We shall never know!

Deaths in the Workplace

Three people were killed at their place of employment, a worker at a gunpowder mill, a milkmaid and a farm labourer.

> 1706 December 6th. East Molesey. Thomas King was a gunpowder maker. He was killed in an explosion which happened at 7 o'clock in the morning of December 5th.

There were two gunpowder mills on the River Mole and explosions were not uncommon. In 1742 one blew up on the Hogsmill with such force that the explosion was heard in London. People there supposed that an earthquake had taken place.[8]

> 1714 August 21st. Coombe Nevill. Hannah Vincent was a milkmaid. She was milking cows in a pasture belonging to an Edward Harvey Esquire at Coombe Nevill when a bull which went with the cows *lunged or runn at the said Hannah Vincent and tossed her into the aire ... and gave the said Hannah Vincen t a mortal bruise on her left side.. She languished till the morning at 5 o'clock and then dyed.* The bull was declared deodand to the value of 13s.4d. (one mark).

The Coroners, 1700-1750

The job of Coroner was usually performed by Kingston's Town Clerk. The task was not onerous because the average number of inquests in a year was around three. The Coroner's pay was 13s. 4d. (a mark) for each inquest. This rate of pay was fixed in early Tudor times some 200 years before and not increased until 1751 when it became 20 shillings an inquest plus travelling expenses of nine pence per mile while on official business.[9]

From the late 1600s until the mid-1800s the Town Clerkship of Kingston was held by men from only three families: the Nuthalls, the Charlewoods and the Jemmetts. One of them, William Charlewood, presided over most of the inquests between 1727 and 1747. What is known about him? He lived in Kingston and became its Town Clerk in February 1727 and held the Office until his death. When he first took office he wrote the preambles

to the inquests in Latin. Towards the end of his tenure he wrote them in English. The Register for All Saints Parish Church, Kingston shows that he was buried on 7 May 1747.

Suicide

Unlike their predecessors in the previous century, and many centuries before that, Coroners and Juries in the 1700s drew back from bringing in a verdict of *felo de se*, ie. calculated self-murder. If they did, it brought secular and religious penalties and even the risk of pagan ritual. By ancient custom the Crown confiscated the property of a suicide and the Church could refuse a Christian burial. It was within living memory that the body of anyone who deliberately killed themselves was taken to a crossroads, a stake driven into the corpse and the body buried in an upright position. It was believed that suicide was the work of the devil and people who committed suicide should not be resurrected on Judgement Day. [NB. Suicide was not decriminalised until 1961.]

In the 17 inquests where it was decided that persons had killed themselves, the Jury used phrases such as, *dyed while disturbed in the mind* or *dyed whilst disordered in the mind and a lunatick,* or in Latin *non compos mentis.* The word 'suicide' is not used in the papers because it was not in common use at that time. It does not even appear in Dr. Johnson's 1755 *Dictionary.*

Of the 17 suicides, 13 were men and four were women. The men killed themselves by hanging, drowning or cutting themselves and bleeding to death. The women drowned themselves. Of the nine suicides recorded at Kingston, three were buried at All Saints, Kingston Parish Church. Where the others were buried is not known.

> 1747 December 22nd, Kingston. Sarah Thorpe was the wife of Thomas Thorpe a dragoon in General Hawley's Regiment quartered in Kingston. She drowned herself in the Thames and the Jury decided that she was *disordered in her mind.* A fellow trooper gave evidence that Sarah was frequently drunk and had several times before attempted to drown herself.

> 1735 December 10th Kingston. Richard Brandling was a surgeon. The Jury recorded that *he cut himself in the leg.* He bled to death and the Jury decided that he *was a lunatik and disordered in the mind.* He is buried in Kingston Parish Churchyard.

> 1737 May 17th Kingston. Edward Goater was a labourer of Kingston. He hanged himself in the loft or room belonging to the Workhouse. The Jury described him as being *disordered and a lunatik.* B/KPC

1742 June 21st Richmond. Charles Ewer Esq. of St Andrew Undershaft, London drowned himself in the garden pond at the house of his sister in Richmond. The Jury decided that he killed himself while of unsound mind.

1739 September 3rd Weybridge. Jane Frissell was a widow. She lived at Lady Hopson's house and threw herself into a pond. The Jury recorded that she was *disturbed in her mind and a lunatic.*

1718 January 30th Esher. Thomas Read was a stranger on a journey. He hanged himself from a beam at *the Bear* inn. The Coroner used the phrase *non compos mentis* to describe his state of mind.

Death While in Prison

The law required, as it does today, that when a prisoner died in gaol there must be an inquest with a Jury. Kingston had two gaols, one for debtors called the Stockhouse or Town Gaol in Norbiton Street, and the second for other types of prisoners (some held for trial at the Kingston Assizes) called the County Gaol in Heathen Street (now Eden Street). Gaolers at the Stockhouse Prison (several are mentioned by name in the inquest papers) had to give a bond undertaking to keep their prisoners in secure custody. They made a profit by renting rooms to the prisoners and selling them food. Prisoners with little or no money had a wretched existence. It is said that they begged from passers-by through the bars of the gaol's windows. The law on imprisonment for debt was eased slightly in 1759, too late for the inquests noted below.

The Debtors' Prison

1743 April 20th Kingston. William King, a baker, was in prison for debt. It was decided that he died *a natural death by the visitation of God.* He was buried at Kingston Parish Church.

1739 April 27th Kingston. William Nuthall, gent, was imprisoned for debt. The jury decided that he died a natural death in gaol. The Nuthall family was well established in Kingston. It provided a Town Clerk and a Coroner. Was this William Nuthall a black sheep in the Nuthall family? There is no record of him being buried at Kingston Parish Church where other members of the Nuthall family are interred, and have memorials there.

1739 April 13th Kingston. William Packer was imprisoned for debt. It was mentioned that he came from Ewell and was in the custody of Stephen Fray. The jury decided that he died a natural death.

The County Gaol

1713 July 23rd Kingston. John Powell was under the custody of John Darby *Keeper of Her Majesties Gaols for this County of Surrey.* He had been convicted of a felony and was under sentence of death. The Jury decided that he had died a natural death in gaol.

1739 August 23rd Kingston. Hugh Randall. Information said that he had *cut and wounded himself on the left arm with a razor and by doing this made away with himself saying that he would not be hanged or words to that effect.*

1741 October 31st Kingston. Susan Birch had been recently discharged from the House of Correction. Her body was *found near a hedge by Gallows Hill.* The Jury decided that she died from gaol fever.

Houses of Correction, or Bridewells (so called after the first one established in London during Tudor times), were used to correct idleness or loose living. People sent there included vagrants, the unemployed, prostitutes, unmarried mothers, and pilferers. People usually only spent a few days there at a time. Kingston's House of Correction was in Heathen Street adjacent to the County Gaol.

Death From Natural Causes: Exposure, Apoplexy or Excessive Drinking

About a fifth of all inquests brought to the attention of the Coroner were resolved, after investigation, as being due to natural causes. What would cause a 'natural death' to be brought to the Coroner's attention? After all, natural deaths occur all the time. The guiding principle seems to have been that, if a corpse was found in the open, or in an outhouse, there should be an inquest.

1729 November 7th Ham. A stranger was found dead in a cart shed in Ham. There is a comment in the papers that he was *a stranger who has been seen going up and down the County.* The Jury decided that this was a natural death.

1741 December 21st. Kingston. Thomas Pulpett. The verdict returned on Thomas Pulpett, described as a Surrey Yeoman of Banstead, was that he died after a heavy fall when drunk. *Thomas Pulpett being at The Crown Inn in the Markett Place in Kingston upon Thames in Company with some of his Neighbours the said Thomas Puplett [*sic*] did about 9 of the Clock in the Evening goe out of the said House leaving some of his Company there and that afterwards about 11 of the Clock same Evening he was found lying Dead in the said Markett Place near the said House And we doe Finde that he the said Thomas Puplett [*sic*] being in Liquor or in a Fitt and it being then dark did accidentally fall against a stall or Wooden Trussell and by the said Fall instantly Dyed.*

1728 October 3rd Kingston. David Lewis was a labourer. The Jury said *we believe that he drank an excessive amount of liquor called Geneva and being drunk therewith the said David Lewis did then and there die.* 'Geneva' was the original word for gin, which was the scourge of London in the early 18th century, helping to produce a death rate which exceeded the birth rate. A small amount of gin was being distilled in Kingston at this time.[10]

1732 May 31st Kingston. John Salter. He went out on a drinking spree and for a wager of a shilling he drank an excessive amount of cyder and died. He is buried in Kingston Parish Churchyard.

1734 October 15th East Molesey. Simon Coles was a blacksmith of Walton on Thames. *He fell from his horse, disordered in liquor ... could not get back on his horse ... put up overnight and found dead in the morning.* He had been drinking ale. He was buried at Molesey Parish Church on the same day as the inquest.

The *Lion and Lamb* (today's *Druid's Head*) was the scene of another tragedy in 1764. A newspaper of 10 March that year read:

last Tuesday morning the maid at the Lyon And Lamb *going into her mistress's bed-chamber [Mrs Piggot, a widow, who keeps the house] to call her, was surprised to find that she had not been in bed all night; she alarmed the family, and going down into the cellar, there found her dead, with her neck broken. It is supposed that she fell down stairs the previous night.*

Homicide

Nowadays, an inquest is not a trial. A Coroner must not blame anyone for a death. In the four inquests below, two for murder and two for manslaughter, the Juries did name the persons whom they considered were responsible for the homicides. These persons would have been sent for further judgement at the Assizes.

Seven murders and two manslaughters are recorded in the 130 inquest papers. Five murders were of female infants by persons unknown. Thus in a period of 50 years there were only four inquests where murder or manslaughter (not of an infant) was pronounced. These figures support the premise that homicide was not a common occurrence in Surrey at this time.[11] However, it should be borne in mind that not all corpses were brought to the attention of the Coroner. Also this was a time when there was no Missing Persons Register and plenty of common land for burying bodies!

1745 August 7th Esher. John Linnett was a tailor. He and a John Smith were drinking in an Esher alehouse, quarrelled over the sum of half a

guinea, and went outside to fight. During the fight John Linnett suffered *several Blows on his Breast and Ribbs whereby he was mortally bruised ... and immediately languished and dyed so we Finde the said Richard Smith ... Feloniously did Kill and Slay.* The inquest was noted as manslaughter.

1742 June 15th Walton on Thames. Thomas Clarke, a husbandman, died after a drunken scuffle. About two weeks before the inquest the Coroner William Charlewood, Kingston's Town Clerk, sent the Reverend William Gardner, Minister at Walton on Thames Parish Church, written permission to bury the body. The funeral was held. However, a few days later a complaint was lodged with the Coroner which pointed out that there had been a violent fight and threatened him with an action for *Misdemeanour of Office* unless he held an inquest. The body was then exhumed and an inquest held. The Jury decided that William Gray did *feloniously Kill and Slay and we find the said William Gray after this felony and manslaughter committed did not fly.* This last point might have told in William Gray's favour when his trial came up later at the Assizes.

1737 March 15th Kingston. The Jury decided that Mary Honour was murdered by her landlady Anne Barnett. The latter was heard to say, *Damn you – you are sulkish and won't take your stuff* and that he (the informant) heard *the said Mary Honour groane but did not hear any blows.* An apothecary gave evidence. He said that he found Mary Honour *very ill and out of order and that he let her blood ...* He later saw her being removed to the Workhouse in Kingston ... He went there ... and reported that she was ... *only likely to live but a short time.* He perceived she was black about the eye which he supposed *might be some Bruise.* Despite the Jury's decision that this was murder, Anne Barnett was later acquitted at the Assizes.

Murder in Richmond

1739 June 2nd Richmond. The Jury, all Richmond men, decided that John Pearce, a baker, was murdered by William Prestage, a hostler's assistant. The incident unfolds as follows:

At about 10pm. on Wednesday 30 May there was a disturbance at John Pearce's house ... John Pearce was *in liquor* ... his wife complained that he was often like this and abusive to his family ... Mrs Pearce and her daughter left the house ... Mr Pearce refused to go to bed ... he said he would go to Mr Fellow's House at the *Sign of the Angell* ... there a young man, whose name he does not know, wanted to play cards with him ... later this man goes away ... this man wore a striped woollen waistcoat and black cap ... soon afterwards a witness, Thomas Palmer, was told that John Pearce had been stabbed ... Thomas Palmer went to John Pearce's house ... who told him that a fellow came out of Mr

Fellow's house with a black cap on and had stabbed him ... later Thomas Palmer saw John Pearce again and asked him how this had happened ... John Pearce said that he was standing by Mr Michell's post over against Mr. Fellow's House and the man with a cap asked him if he could help him to a lodging ... but he told him to go about his business ... but the said man came up to him three times ... John Pearce pushed him away ... whereupon the man drew a knife and stabbed him ... John Pearce died the next morning.

That morning Thomas Palmer and Mr Wood, the Constable, took the man charged by Pearce into custody and searched him, and he declared he had no knife about him ... Thomas Pearce and the Constable went to the man's lodgings at Mr Childs at the *Feathers* and found a knife under his pillow which the hostler said belonged to the man. Thomas Palmer swore that this man was the man who was at Mr Fellow's on the Wednesday night.

William Robertson, a surgeon, said that in the early hours of Thursday morning he was called out to see John Pearce who had been stabbed in the belly ... the wound was about four inches above his navel ... two inches in length and four inches deep ... the wound had been made with a knife ... it proved to be mortal ... John Pearce told him that a man came out of the *Angel* with a black cap and stabbed him.

Henry Fuljam said that on the night of 30 May he heard two men quarrelling near Mr Mitchell's house against the *Angel*, there were blows ... He heard one man say *you have stabbed me* ... one of the persons was the man now in custody whose name is William and was a helper to the hostler at the *Feathers*.

William Prestige denied that he had assaulted John Pearce and said that he knew nothing of the facts with which he was charged. The knife was declared deodand to the value of twopence. Richmond Local History Society's Newsletter No.6/1987* continues the story:

> William Prestige was brought before a Grand Jury, but as he could not afford a lawyer he had to make his own defence. It was decided that the murder was committed in 'hot blood' and the judgement was, therefore, one of manslaughter, with the result that he was branded on his thumb and set free.

John Pearce was buried in Richmond Parish Church and his widow continued the bakery business.

Reported Deaths

Parishes were required to report deaths which appeared to be violent, unnatural or suspicious to the Coroner, who would usually then hold an inquest. However, there are instances in a Kingston archive (KE3/2/1-11)

where the Coroner received a report from a Parish which said, in effect, that there had been an accidental death, that there were no suspicious circumstances, and requested the Coroner issue a Burial Certificate; for example:

> *February 23*rd *1737, To William Charlewood, Sir, there is a young man here Drowned who must be buried by the parish. The accident is well known by the Neighbourhood and it is three weeks Since this day if you please to send an order for his burial we presume you need not take the Trouble of Coming – attested by Rich. Coleire (Minister) Peter Wickham and George Collins Church Wardens, Richmond.* (KE3/2/5). There is no record of an inquest on this accident.

Thus, the 130 inquests under study do not include a complete tally of all fatal accidents between 1700 and 1750.

Suicides were probably under-reported. This was because families were still worried that discovery of deliberate suicide might attract a verdict of *felo de se* and confiscation of property, the refusal of a church burial, or worse, would follow. Deaths in the home would not necessarily have been notified. Compared with today people were inured to premature death. About a quarter of the population died well under 50, infant mortality was high and many children and adolescents failed to reach adulthood. Medical knowledge was rudimentary and some fatalities, which might be considered suspicious today, for example: poisoning, battered babies and cot death, might not have been recognised.

In Conclusion

I have summarised three inquests, the first to show that a freak fatal accident can happen to anybody at any time:

> 1710 October 15th Claygate. Robert Dalley. If the man killed by the lightning strike (see page 227) was the unluckiest person in these inquests, then surely the second most unfortunate must have been Robert Dalley. He was a labourer on a farm in Claygate and is described as climbing over a hurdle *and the ground being slippery, slipped down the bank. His cravat caught in the hurdle and after he had slipped he was strangled by his own weight.*

The second inquest shows the bleak side of the early 18th century:

> 1737 June 4th Richmond. A male baby was stillborn. It was declared to be the bastard child of Sarah Benham. The papers show that the child was born in Richmond Workhouse and no other persons were present at the time of birth.

The third inquest reveals an act of true forgiveness:

1712 December 26th Kingston. Angell Sparkes was a soldier in Colonel Goring's Regiment. He was accidentally killed 'while fooling about' at sword practice by his friend and fellow soldier George Woolverson. The setting for this tragedy was *The Chequers*, Church Street, just off the northeast corner of the Market Place.

A witness said that Angell Sparks claimed that he could easily defend himself with a broomstick against his friend who had a sword. They fenced for a while then the friend lunged forward with his sword intending to pass under the arm of Angell Sparkes. Instead the sword went straight into his stomach. Angell lay wounded and in pain for two days before dying. Before Angell Sparkes died he said that it had all been an accident and he freely forgave his friend for what had happened.

Footnotes

1. RBK Archives KE3/1/6-135.
2. John Pink, *Stage Coaching in a Market Town*, p.28.
3. *Jacobs Legal Dictionary* – 18th-century edition.
4. RBK KE/3/20.
5. 'At that period, the 1830s, inquests were always held in the evening at a public house and mine host used to provide the jurors with a meal of bread, cheese and celery'. G.W. Ayliffe's *Old Kingston, Recollections of an Octogenarian.*
6. In the 15-month period, March 1738 to June 1739, there were seven inquests. One man served on all seven juries, another on four, and five men served on three juries.
7. These marks from KE/3/1/54
8. *Gentlemen's Magazine*, January 1742.
9. Coroners Act 1751
10. Joan Wakeford's papers at Kingston History Room indicate that at least one distiller was tolerated in the early 1720s.
11. A premise of J.M. Beattie in his *Crime and the Courts in England 1660-1800.*

This article is taken from the much more fully illustrated A5 booklet of the same name available from Kingston Museum.

Accessions of Records to Surrey History Centre in 2001

Michael Page, Jenni Waugh and Di Stiff

In the course of 2001 the History Centre took in 229 accessions of records from sources other than Surrey County Council. We would like to take this opportunity to express our thanks to the many donors and depositors who support our work in this way, and through whose efforts a vital part of the county's heritage and history has been preserved. The following are just a few of the highlights to illustrate the range of material we have taken in.

Maps

Over the course of the year, we were very pleased to be able to purchase two early and beautiful maps of estates in the county. The earliest dates from 1679 and shows the lands of John Gainsford of Crowhurst Place, in the parishes of Crowhurst, Tandridge and Lingfield, surveyed by Edward Bostock Fuller (ref 6960). The Gainsford family had held land in Crowhurst from around 1331, when John de Gaynesford purchased the manor of Crowhurst. Crowhurst Place was probably constructed around 1418 and the family continued to hold the estate until Mary Christmas, granddaughter of the John Gainsford for whom this map was prepared, sold it in 1720. In 1679, the whole estate amounted to over 945 acres and the map details the lands in Gainsford's own occupation and those held by tenants and includes tiny sketches of dwelling houses, trees, gates and Crowhurst parish church. Although Crowhurst Place itself is not illustrated in relief, the map clearly shows the layout of the formal gardens, with orchards and hop garden, which surrounded it. The family's arms and crest provide a spectacular flourish.

The second map, by the surveyor John Farley, was drawn up following a conveyance by Edward Marshall to Peter Cartwright of five

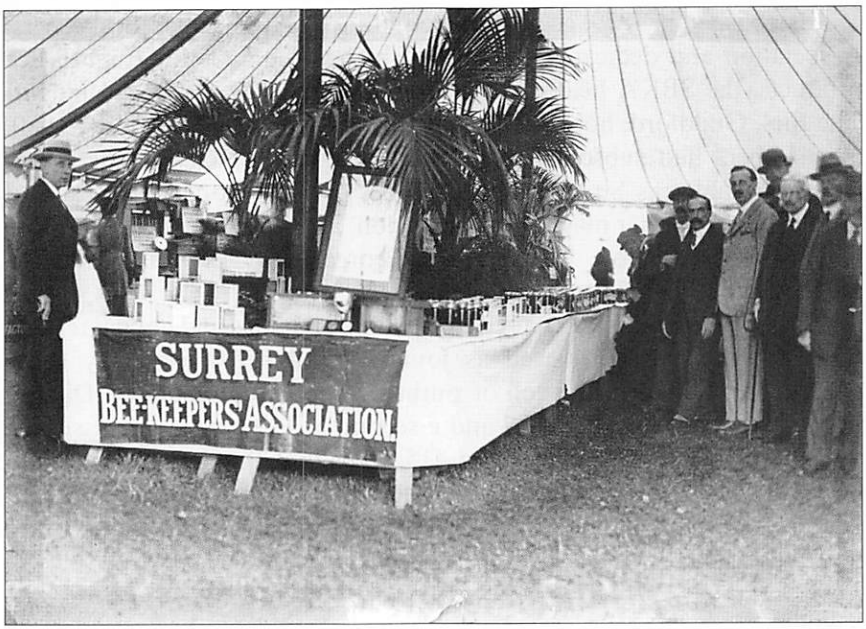
parcels of inclosed land within Walton on Thames and Wisley in 1720 (ref 7015). The lands were subsequently acquired by John Frederick of Burwood Park in 1749 and absorbed into that estate and we were delighted to have the opportunity to acquire the map as the Frederick family's archive, in our custody, includes the title deeds to the land, including the 1720 conveyance. The five plots in total measured 124 acres, a fraction of the size of the Crowhurst Place estate, but the map is highly coloured with a beautiful decorative border and it is in a very good state of preservation. Its significance is increased as the inclosure of Walton in 1802-4 transformed the face of the parish and we hold no other maps of any part of the parish which predate the inclosure.

Claremont Fan Court School and Burwood Park School for the Deaf

2001 saw the deposit of the records of two notable schools, Claremont Fan Court School in Esher (ref 6958) and Burwood Park School for the Deaf (ref 6994). Claremont Fan Court School, housed in the Palladian mansion built for Clive of India, is an amalgamation of two predecessor schools: Claremont School for Girls which was founded in 1922 as Clear View School, Norwood, for the daughters of Christian Scientists (moving to Claremont in 1931); and Fan Court School for Boys, Chertsey, which was founded in 1934 as a Christian Scientist boys' preparatory school.

The records deposited include log books, admission registers, a wealth of photographs and prospectuses, and a fine series of scrapbooks and magazines produced by the pupils themselves, who included the actress Joyce Grenfell (1910-1979). For the girls' school a series of wonderfully detailed photograph albums was kept in the 1930s which illustrate the full array of school sports, pageants and pupil activities, providing a valuable insight into pre-war life at the school. During the war the girls' school moved to premises in Llandrindod Wells, Radnor, Claremont mansion having been requisitioned for Hawker Aircraft Ltd, and the children's poems and stories reflect the trauma and subsequent joyful homecoming in 1945: 'We rejoice that the end of hostilities in Europe has come at last and we anticipate with joy our own imminent return to Esher. We are grateful for the peace and shelter we have known here in the heart of Wales. We may with justice feel proud of our achievements here in spite of war and adverse circumstances'.

Burwood Park School, Weybridge, was established in 1955 as a secondary boarding school for profoundly deaf boys. On average, the



The 1921 Surrey Beekeepers' Association Surbiton show (ref 6992/12/4)

school had around 45 pupils, though numbers rose as high as 74 following the creation of a mixed sixth form college in 1972.

The records were lovingly gathered after the closure of the school in 1996 by one of the former masters, who was concerned that the achievements of this exceptional institution should be properly documented. The accession includes minutes of the school governors and the Burwood Park School Association, admission registers and the results of a survey conducted amongst former pupils concerning their achievements after leaving. The records also provide a cross section of the life of the community and include material relating to several of the extra curricular societies including chess, computer, model-making and printing clubs, the school magazine, a library run by the pupils and the annual school play.

The Surrey Beekeepers' Association

In April we were delighted to take in on deposit the records of the Surrey Beekeepers' Association (ref 6992). The records reflect more than a century of beekeeping in the county and are the first to be deposited relating to this ancient craft.

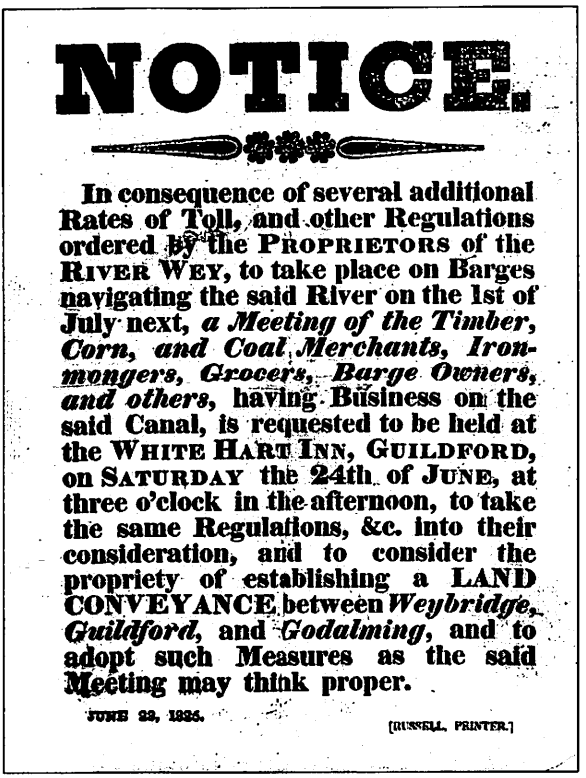
Established in 1879, as an affiliated branch of the British Beekeepers' Association and dedicated to securing higher demands for English bee products, the SBKA held its first show in July 1879, in the grounds of The Firs, Guildford, home of the vice-president Mr H. Parson. By 1880, 60 members had subscribed to the Association, which attracted such county notables as Sir Jeremiah Colman, Colonel Lord Beresford and W.E. Hamlin, former mayor of Wimbledon, as presidents; vice-presidents included the Rt. Hon. David Lloyd George, Lady Ebbisham and the Duchess of Marlborough.

The records include a near complete set of minutes and annual reports for the Association, as well as journals and bee and honey show programmes. The minutes tell of outbreaks of Bee Foul Brood Disease in the county, the first in 1897 and a second in 1900, which necessitated the inspection of 1,745 hives and 415 skeps and the destruction of 28 diseased stocks out of 79 in the county. The mysterious Isle of Wight Disease is mentioned in April 1910 but unfortunately the symptoms are not alluded to.

Canals

A major collection of canal documents and memorabilia came up for auction at Sothebys in November 2001 and we were very pleased to secure a fine body of material relating to the Wey and Godalming Navigations (ref 7105) and the Wey and Arun Canal (ref 7106), which supplement earlier deposits. Among the records of the former canals, of particular note is a book providing the earliest surviving record of the volume of cargoes on the Wey Navigation, dating from 1811 to 1821. Also of great interest is a petition of the proprietors of the Navigation to the Admiralty, probably dated to 1776, requesting that bargemen are granted protection from being pressed for service in the Navy; they lament that currently trade is stopped on the river as the men have gone into hiding. A certificate granted to a bargeman, George Wood, in November 1776, exempting him from being pressed, suggests the petition succeeded.

The Wey and Arun Junction Canal opened in 1816 but the Company went into liquidation in 1867 and the canal finally closed in 1871. The optimism attending its opening is reflected in a bill for the cost of the celebrations including 127 dinners and 128 servants' dinners, 'decorating Dinner Room at the White Hart, with the Guildford and Arundel Arms...', and bell ringers at Guildford, Bramley and Shalford.



NOTICE.

In consequence of several additional Rates of Toll, and other Regulations ordered by the PROPRIETORS of the RIVER WEY, to take place on Barges navigating the said River on the 1st of July next, *a Meeting of the Timber, Corn, and Coal Merchants, Ironmongers, Grocers, Barge Owners, and others*, having Business on the said Canal, is requested to be held at the WHITE HART INN, GUILDFORD, on SATURDAY the 24th of JUNE, at three o'clock in the afternoon, to take the same Regulations, &c. into their consideration, and to consider the propriety of establishing a LAND CONVEYANCE between *Weybridge, Guildford*, and *Godalming*, and to adopt such Measures as the said Meeting may think proper.

JUNE 22, 1826. [RUSSELL, PRINTER.]

Notice of a meeting of merchants and tradesmen to protest against the raising of tolls on the Wey Navigation and threatening to establish a rival 'land conveyance', 23 June 1826 (ref 7105/1/5)

The purchased records also include estimates and accounts relating to the building and demolition of windmill pumps and the only known photograph of the canal, which shows William Stanton, wharfinger, lock keeper and coal merchant, standing outside Bramley Wharf Cottage.

Guildford Theatre Company and the Yvonne Arnaud Theatre, Guildford

It was a cheering contrast for us, having in recent years had the sad experience of rescuing records from closed and deserted theatres, to be able to collect archive material from the still thriving Yvonne Arnaud Theatre in Guildford. With typical archival timing, we sorted the records in the Mill Studio attic during the coldest days of the year and then moved them out on the hottest!

In the main, the deposit (ref 7018) consists of the performance archive of the Guildford Theatre Company, 1946-1963, and the Yvonne Arnaud

Members of Guildford Theatre Company in rehearsal, *c.*1948 (ref 7018/1/34)

Theatre, 1965-1999, and complements our existing collections of archive material relating to the 20th-century theatre in Surrey, particularly in Guildford. It includes photographs, programmes, posters, press cuttings and production files which chart the development of theatre in the Borough from the weekly repertory of the Guildford Theatre Company, in North Street, to the glamorous pre-West End productions of the Yvonne Arnaud Theatre and experimental performances in the Mill Studio. The collection also includes material relating to the Yvonne Arnaud's star-studded fund-raising campaign of the early 1960s and to the Opening Gala performance on 2 June 1965 that featured Dirk Bogarde, Michael Redgrave and Ingrid Bergman.

The range of plays staged by both theatres is extraordinary. With the help of Arts Council funding from the 1950s, Guildford Theatre's repertoire was able to include both audience favourites by Oscar Wilde, Noel Coward and Agatha Christie, and challenging new works by playwrights such as Arthur Miller, Eugene Ionesco, Peter Schaffer and Sean O'Casey. Bryan Bailey, Artistic Director, regularly wrote programme

notes describing audience reaction to individual productions. After staging the first repertory production of Samuel Becket's *Waiting For Godot* in July 1956, the year after its London premiere, Bailey wrote:

> 'We were naturally gratified by ... the best [audiences] for a great many weeks ... Exactly 72 people left during intervals or during the second act of the play ... only 2 of these were moved to real anger or annoyance at the play ... [and] after their initial outburst, returned ... and engaged the producer in a long discussion about the play. They then asked the way to the nearest Saloon Bar to which, with infinite tact, they were directed.'

Business and private papers of the Broadwood family of Capel

Since the first major deposit in 1977, we have been steadily accumulating archive material relating to the Broadwood family of Lyne House, Capel, and their famous piano manufacturing business in London. In spring 2001, we received a further deposit of 19th- and early 20th-century family papers and estate records relating to the descendants of John Broadwood, founding father of the firm (ref 6975).

The accession includes a log book begun by John's eldest son, James Shudi Broadwood, which includes a description of the Lyne estate at the time he purchased it in 1801. Amongst the family papers are diaries belonging to James Shudi's daughter-in-law, Juliana Maria Broadwood (d.1898). The earliest of Juliana's diaries dates from 1849 and is particularly poignant since it contains references to the deaths of two of her daughters, Augusta Barbara and Henrietta Jemima, aged six and four respectively; as well as Juliana's mother-in-law, Margaret Schaw Stewart Broadwood, aged 71.

Augusta had been ill for some time and on 10 April 1849, Juliana wrote: 'Dear H [Henry, her husband] went to his poor mother's funeral at Rusper. I read the lessons of the day ... (one being the 15th of 1st to Corinth^{ns} which H was hearing in the burial service) as I sat by my dear little Augusta whose words were that day overflowing with love to God & man, joyful hope prayer & praise, full of such earnest & simple trust in the merits of her saviour.'

The following day, 'Our darling Augusta taken to the better world to which she longed to go.' Amongst an earlier deposit of the Broadwood papers are a lock of Augusta's hair and a small, decorated needlecase. Both are wrapped in a note written by Juliana which states that they were the 'dying gift of my dear little Augusta to my sister Kath M.A.

Birch who d.1868 leaving this with other things to me'. As more records come to light, so the pieces of the puzzle gradually fit together.

Meanwhile, on a more practical note, parts of the Broadwood business archive are literally being pieced back together. The company deposited a fine series of day books containing details of individual pianos manufactured and sold by the company between 1798 and 1958. Unfortunately, many of these volumes had suffered from the effects of damp and mould and were in a state of considerable disrepair. The History Service has been able to repair more than half of the volumes with the aid of grants from the National Manuscripts Conservation Trust. We have now made an application to the Heritage Lottery Fund for funding to complete the project. We hope to hear the result in October.

Millennium projects

The millennial fever which swept the country not only prompted an orgy of partying but also more introspective contemplation and taking stock by individuals and communities. Many millennium projects were undertaken to record towns and villages as they were in the year 2000, to freeze the frame as it were. Some projects also chose to investigate how change and the historical process had affected and transformed communities over time. Some of the books, photographs, recordings and films which resulted from these efforts, have been deposited with us: for example Walton on the Hill produced a book to record the village in the year 2000 (ref 6980); Byfleet conducted a series of taped interviews with residents (ref 6904); Langley Vale Women's Institute produced a book and also ran an oral history project to record their community (ref 7053); Reigate and Redhill mounted an exhibition 'Shooting the Past' celebrating the people of the borough (ref 7087). Together they provide valuable and intimate snapshots of several Surrey towns and villages which can be instructively compared with those produced to commemorate other 'landmark' events which have prompted a similar looking back: for example the Golden Jubilee of Queen Victoria and the coronation and Silver Jubilee (and no doubt the Golden Jubilee) of Queen Elizabeth II.

Welcome surprises

We are constantly amazed by some of the papers we are offered as gifts and loans, papers which have been hidden away in private hands, but which have now generously been made available for researchers to use.

For example at the beginning of the year we were delighted to receive a copy of the catalogue of plants for sale at Gertrude Jekyll's Munstead Wood Nursery, annotated by the great garden designer herself (ref 6950). It appears that only two other similar catalogues are known of the nursery from which Miss Jekyll supplied plants for many of her garden commissions and at which she developed and sold at least 30 new plant strains.

Another exciting donation was a small group of papers of May Mileham of Chislehurst in Kent who as a girl was befriended by the Rev Charles Dodgson, better known as the author Lewis Carroll (ref 6968), who lived in Guildford for the last thirty years of his life. The papers include two photographs sent to May by Carroll as mementos of visits to the theatre in London and also two letters from him: in one he asks May's mother to permit her daughter to be his companion on a 'little tour ... I need not ask you just now to nerve yourself for another great effort of trustfulness!'. In the other he pleads for May to visit him again saying, 'The best way to remind us of each other would be for you to come to one here for a week. See if your parents can screw enough courage to let you come.' The friendship flourished between 1884 and 1886 but in Carroll's diary for 7 January 1887 he records that he met May Mileham 'whose parents have now broken off our friendship'.

The catalogue and Lewis Carroll letters had clearly been treasured by their owners but other records are less fortunate. In January 2001 we were pleased to be offered six photograph albums which had been thrown in a skip. The albums were compiled by Edith Mary Platt, the wife of Mr Horace Frederick Platt, an advertising agent, who lived at The Orchard, St John's Hill Road, Hook Heath, Woking, with their three children. The photographs chiefly show a middle-class family enjoying their leisure at home, around the county and on seaside holidays in Sussex, Cornwall and the Isle of Wight and together they form an eloquent record of family life in Woking between 1914 and 1923.

Brookwood Hospital

Finally, on a different note, we were delighted to be awarded a grant under the Research Resources in Medical History grant scheme, administered by the British Library and the Wellcome Trust, towards the cataloguing and repackaging of the archive of Brookwood Hospital in Woking. The hospital was established in 1867 by Surrey Quarter Sessions as the second County Asylum and from then until its closure in 1994

served as the leading mental hospital for the western half of the county. The surviving records are extremely abundant and provide a very full and rich picture of the government and administration of the hospital and of the medical care provided, and also reflect the functioning of this vast institution as a self-contained community with workshops providing practical and therapeutic training, a farm providing food for internal consumption and sale and a constantly changing programme of entertainments. The records are currently scattered among four different, and only partially listed, accessions and the grant will permit a comprehensive and logically structured catalogue to be prepared and unlock the archive as a source for medical, social and local historians.

PUBLICATIONS

The Surrey Local History Council produced *Surrey History* for many years and the majority of the back numbers are still available. In addition the following extra publications are in print:

Pastors, Parishes and People in Surrey
by David Robinson
1989 £2.95

Views of Surrey Churches
by C.T. Cracklow
(reprint of 1826 views)
1979 £7.50 (hardback)

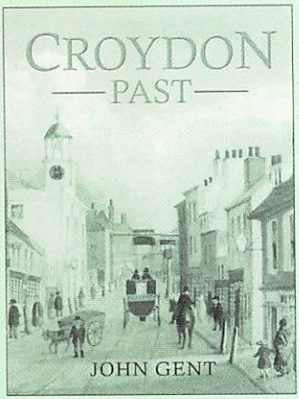
Old Surrey Receipts and Food for Thought
compiled by Daphne Grimm
1991 £3.95

The Sheriffs of Surrey
by David Burns
1992 £4.95
(Published jointly with the Under Sheriff of Surrey)

Two Hundred Years of Aeronautics & Aviation in Surrey 1785-1985
by Sir Peter Masefield
1993 £3.95

The Churches of Surrey
by Mervyn Blatch
1997 £30.00 (hardback)

These books are published for the Surrey Local History Council by Phillimore & Co., Ltd., of Chichester. They are available from many bookshops in the County. Members are invited to obtain their copies from the Hon. Secretary, Surrey Archaeological Society, Castle Arch, Guildford, GU1 3SX. Tel/fax: 01483 532454.

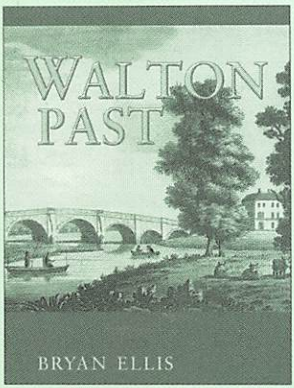


CROYDON PAST

£15.99

John Gent

For centuries a small but important market town, in open countryside and well separated from London, Croydon was the principal town in East Surrey … not least because its markets and fairs were granted by the archbishops of Canterbury, who happened to be the lords of the manor. Their 'near London' residence was there and by the 17th century their manor had become Croydon Palace. Enclosure of the commons in 1801 paved the way for development and the town began to expand. Railways, from 1839, made the place an ideal residential area for Londoners. Good water and drainage, by 1851, made the town one of the healthiest in England … and housing spread over the farmland until the population reached near 200,000 by the 1920s, by which time Croydon's suburbs were merging with London's. From the 1960s the town centre was transformed by a major scheme that made Croydon the sixth largest commercial centre in the country … this remarkable new book tells the entire story with original maps and truly excellent illustrations.



WALTON PAST

£15.99

Bryan Ellis

The town has a long history. Its ford was probably used by Julius Caesar and was later controlled by the monks of Chertsey Abbey. By the time of Domesday Book there was a church and, soon after, a riverside wharf; while its 14th-century manor house still stands. In 1540 the building of nearby Oatlands Palace brought royal patronage, though a century later Walton sided with Parliament in the Civil War. In the 18th century a bridge was built across the Thames and, when the next century brought the railway and easy access to London, the riverside became a centre for boating and the bridge fell down! Walton Studios brought glamour, adding to the impressive roll of famous people who have lived in Walton and, although, sadly, the town centre was rebuilt in 1960s style, dormitory growth was unabated in recent decades. In a carefully researched text, with superb illustrations, the author provides an enthralling account of Walton's past in words and pictures.

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