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William Henry Campart 1796-1870 — Hatter of High Street, Croydon

The Museum of Croydon holds a photograph, taken *circa* 1873, of a High Street shop two doors south of *The Ship*, then number 23 and now 51, of 'W.H. Campart, hat manufacturer, established 1818'. The photograph also appears in the Society's *Victorian Croydon Illustrated*.[1] The double fronted shop advertises 'Superior Paris Hats in every style 8s/6 [42½p], 10s/6 [52½p] & upwards' and also 'felt hats, caps, Whitgift Caps [which may indicate an early contract with Whitgift School] and umbrellas'. Hats of various styles are crowded behind the paned square bay windows. Also discernible in the window is a sign proclaiming 'Ici on parle Francais'.

The shop's proprietor William Henry Campart was descended from Huguenot weavers of Spitalfields: hence the speaking of French. He was baptised in 1796 at St Dunstan's Church in Stepney, the son of John Campart a silk worker of Mile End Old Town and Elizabeth née Waller.[2] Hat making being a skilled trade involving many processes in the preparation of the felt alone,[3] he would have commenced a seven year apprenticeship around 1810. The establishment date of 1818 is corroborated by his first appearance in Croydon's rate books in 1819.

However in December 1821 William was declared a bankrupt.[4] Clearly he soon satisfied his creditors as his certificate of discharge was awarded a year later.[5] In December 1829 he was once again brought before the Court for Relief of Insolvent Debtors[6] but was released from Horsemonger Lane Gaol by 30th April 1830 after which the process of paying his creditors began.[7]

Despite these interruptions to his business his name appeared continuously in Croydon's rate books throughout this time. In 1849 his advertisement in Croydon's first local trade directory stated that 'every hat being made on the premises, by London hands, will ensure the work being well finished'.[8] This would have required considerable working space and the 1868 Ordnance Survey map shows the shop's depth to be twice as great as its frontage and the presence of rear outbuildings.

A later advertisement of 1869 (opposite), when William was aged 73, details his products.[9] As a hatter his main customers were men and boys: ladies' hats excepting riding hats are not much in evidence as ladies generally visited the milliner or increasingly the draper for their headwear. The differences of the styles available would have been understood by Victorians who would not leave home hatless. There are indications that many of the hats were still made on the premises, bucking the national

ESTABLISHED 1818.

W. H. CAMPART,

WHOLESALE & RETAIL

HAT AND CAP MANUFACTURER,

23, HIGH STREET, CROYDON,

(Nearly opposite the Town Hall,)

Solicits the continuance of the patronage of his customers, and assures those Families who have not yet favored him with a trial, that they will find all the Articles he supplies, as Good and as Cheap, and in many instances lower, than they can be obtained in London. His Hats are manufactured by first-class workmen, are Ventilated upon an improved principle, and have Patent Anti-Grease Bands, which prevent the perspiration passing through the body of the Hat; and gentlemen can be suited in every shape, texture, or quality they may desire.

W. H. C. especially recommends his HALF-GUINEA PARIS HATS, which are Light, Ventilating, and Durable: his other prices are, for

Strong Gossamer Hats.....from 4s.6d. to 7s.6d.
Paris ..... ,, 7s.0d. to 15s.
Extra Velvet..... ,, 15s.6d. to 21s.

LIVERY HATS, Extra Stout, at the above Prices.

Youths' and Boys' Hats from 4s. 6d. Beaver hats to order.

LADIES' RIDING HATS ALWAYS IN STOCK.

Scotch Caps in all shapes.

W. H. C. obtaining these direct from the manufacturer in Scotland, is enabled to offer a large assortment at very Low Prices; he also supplies them wholesale.

Two Thousand CAPS,

Of various materials and shape, for Youths and Men, always in stock, from One Shilling each.

Children's Trimmed Felt Hats. Boys' Caps of all kinds.

Lace Bands and Cockades of all kinds.
Leather Hat Cases from 3s.9d.
Hat, Clothes, and Ladies' Velvet Brushes.
Camphorated Hare Skins for the Chest.
White Oiled Silk and Varnished Lawn.
Cap Peaks and Trimmings.
Straw and Felt Hats. French Felt Hats.
Patent Elastic Cloth Mourning Bands.
Hat Guards and Umbrella Fastenings.
Ostrich Feathers and Rosettes.

Hats, Feathers, and Furs Cleaned, Dyed, and Altered.

Agent to the Farmers' and General Fire and Life Insurance Office.

1869 advertisement for William Henry Campart's business.

Courtesy of Museum of Croydon

trend of the move of hat-making into factories,[10] but that he was now also importing hats in some quantity from a manufacturer in Scotland. Other items available included clothing accessories and the rather incongruous camphorated hare skins for the chest, probably used as a warming decongestant. In common with other Croydon traders at this period he supplemented his income by acting as an agent for an insurance company. Such diversification was necessary for financial survival: Croydon's rapidly growing population brought greater custom but also greater competition, not only from other hatters but increasingly from outfitters and the more successful drapers. The reference to London prices demonstrates the fear prevalent amongst Croydon's shopkeepers that customers would take the train to London for its cheaper goods made possible by economy of scale.

In 1870 William died. His monumental inscription at Queen's Road Cemetery was quoted in *Croydon in the Past* as follows:

> Wm. Henry Campart, d March 19, 1870, a 74. Deeply respected by all his friends. An honest man is the noblest work of God.

The editor commented: 'Mr. Campart was a hatter in the High Street, for very many years. He was one of the good old-fashioned tradesmen who disliked innovations of any kind. He had a great antipathy to gas, and would never have it laid on even to his shop, though "Campart's hats" were as noted as "Budgen's clocks".'[11]

Courtesy of Museum of Croydon (cropped)

The business continued to trade under the name of W.H. Campart, as shown in Croydon street directories and in the above photograph which was probably taken shortly before the demolition of number 23 High Street in 1874.

Carole A Roberts

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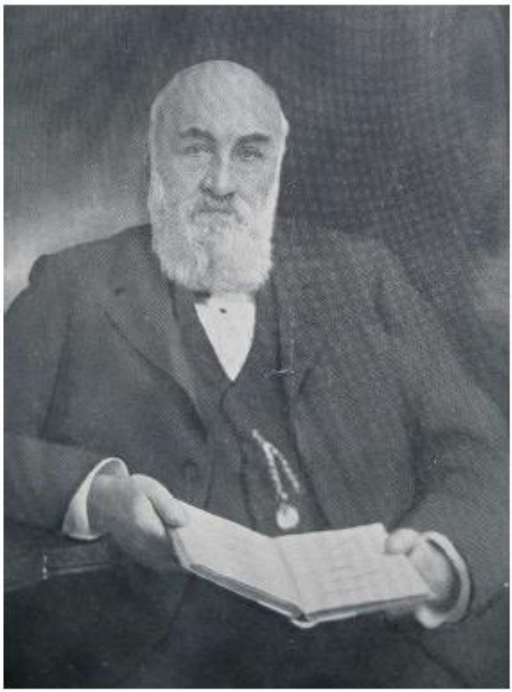
Baldwin Latham's 1868 Map of Croydon

Baldwin Latham, pictured below, was the engineer to the Croydon Board of Health. He published the map himself, at his own expense, printing five hundred copies, twenty-five of which were reserved for the Board. Of the

five hundred, only one is in the public domain, being in the London Metropolitan Archives, for which the reference is DC/ED//70; Map 13060. It is stored, folded, in a cardboard box, with many others: the folding may be the cause of some limited damage along the creases. If there is one in the Museum of Croydon, it has not been catalogued or perhaps even found. No other copies, it seems, exist. The map was printed by Kell Brothers, Lithographers, Castle Street, Holborn, and is made of parchment.

Its title is: *Plan of the Parish of Croydon in the County of Surrey*. The date given is March 1868. It measures 75cm x 92cm, including margins of up to 3.5cm. The scale printed on the plan states it is 8 chains to one inch [a chain is the equivalent of 66 feet or approximately 20.12m]. At one side is an inset showing a plan of the detached portion of the parish at Selsdon, on the other a numbered list of 226 roads, and each road listed is numbered on the plan itself in minute figures.



Baldwin's primary purpose was to assist the Board of Health and depicts the extent of the water-district, the area of the parish, which, strictly speaking, was the limit of the Board's jurisdiction. This district is encompassed within a large circle extending towards Purley, in the south; the station of Norwood Junction in the north; towards and including a part of the Beddington Irrigation Fields in the west; and including part of Shirley.

The plan shows the Special District, that area of the centre of the parish for which the Board supplied the supply of water, sanitation and sewerage. For the same purpose of assisting the Board, its own freehold and leasehold property is also shown, including Duppas Hill and two parts of the Beddington Irrigation Fields. Both these and the South Norwood Irrigation Fields were in neighbouring parishes, all of which are named on the plan. Since the Board was, in effect, the principal institution of local government in Croydon, the purpose of the plan is not limited to its primary responsibility as the wards and the boundaries of all the parishes in Croydon are depicted. A line also depicts the division between the Croydon and Crystal Palace gas companies. Crystal Palace itself is also marked.

Not the outer parishes but the inner one, namely, the parishes of St Saviour's, All Saint's and St Mark's are variously coloured, with a separate key showing the colours and what they represent. The rest of the plan, which included the parishes of St John the Baptist, St Matthew, St James, Christ Church, Shirley and Addington as well as the Selsdon inset are in white.

As can be expected, railway lines and stations, the principal buildings and, in the Selsdon inset, Selsdon Park and Selsdon Farm, are shown.

Whether made at the time the plan was made or later is uncertain but there are several pencilled additions, quite carelessly written. As nearly all of these refer to district chapels, namely those of St Mark; St John; Christ Church, Broad Green, and the 'New Parish Shirley', this particular copy may indicate an ecclesiastical ownership. This may explain the curious title given in thick black letters on the reverse side: Norwood St Paul's prop[rose] Distr't, co: Surrey, Dio[cese]: Canterbury, No 38451, a wholly misleading title. Someone has added below it 'Croydon 1868'. Fortunately the reference number enables the LMA's staff to find the plan.

Brian Lancaster

Remembering Frank Marshall Roberts, 1880 – 1917

This year is the centenary of the death of our sometime Secretary, Frank Marshall Roberts, pictured below, was killed in action in Flanders on 10 August 1917. He was born in Upper Norwood on 24 May 1880, lived with his wife at 48 Lebanon Road, and in 1910 joined our Society. Within a year as a member he succeeded G.W. Moore as our Hon. General Secretary. On the outbreak of war he resigned that post and enlisted in the 7th Royal West Surrey Regiment. Although wounded in 1916, and having spent some time convalescing in Reading, he returned to the front lines where, apart

from fighting the enemy, he made and sent home observations on the natural history of the war zone. A contribution on luminous centipedes in France was published in *Nature* in 1917 and reprinted in the *Bulletin of the South-Eastern Union of Scientific Societies*. The same periodical also printed his report of a prehistoric hand-axe found in the trenches.

Eleven days before his death he wrote, in a letter to G.W. Moore, his observations of wildlife in a water-filled shell-hole, in which he said ."A few days ago I had a quiet afternoon and strolled out to look at the shellholes scattered over the land where our quarters were. Some of these were probably nearly three years old, but Fritz still fired a few big shells from long range guns by day or night while we were there. The old holes had water at the bottom, forming pools from 1 to 4 yards across, and were well clothed with vegetation. If the war lasts many years longer perhaps we shall be able to gather water-lilies from the shell-holes, but so far I have not noticed Nymphea! ...[*Nymphaea alba* L. is the white water-lily.] ... Many of the pools, however had flourishing bulrushes (reed mace) and purple loosestrife (with its heterostylic flowers) was abundant. Other plants

growing there were creeping jenny, water mint, water plantain, marsh stachys, and various species of rush and horse-tail. ...[The plants named are *Typha tatifolia* (not the true bulrush), *Schoenoplectus lacustris*, *Lythrum salicaria*, *Lysimachia nummularia*, *Mentha aquatica*, *Alisma plantago-aquatica*, *Stachys sylvatica*, etc.] ...

In the pools were many beetles, whirligigs on the surface, and *Dytiscus marginalis* and smaller fry below, also many water boatmen and the other chap that swims on his back (Notonecta). But the most interesting species in the fauna was the frog, bright green in colour with a few blackish blotches mostly on the hind legs. They were the size of a full-grown common frog, but rather broader behind and with more pointed snout. They had a pale central furrow running backward from the snout and a raised lateral rib running backward from each eye. Half a dozen of these would be sitting in a shell-hole on the bank above the water, and as one approached, plop! they would dive in simultaneously, some to disappear in the depths and some to float with outstretched legs and with nose and eyes just out of the water."

Eleven days later, as we learn in a letter to Mrs. Roberts from Captain B.C. Haggard, Sergeant Roberts was shot in the head by a German sniper and instantly killed while advancing in an attack upon Invemess Copse on the Menin Road.

Roberts' resignation as our secretary had led to Miss Grace Bigby becoming our first lady officer. She served the Society in that capacity until September 1916 when she moved to Woolwich to take up scientific work at Woolwich Arsenal. Whilst in Croydon she was Head Science Teacher at the Mary Datchelar Girls' School in Camberwell. In 1916 she led an evening botanical ramble for our Society to inspect the flora of gravel pits at Mitcham. She had become a member of the Geologists' Association in 1909, some two years before the Geological Society of London decided to admit ladies. The Geologists' Association's obituary notice for her stated her date of death to be 24 November, 1953.

G.W. Moore, Roberts' predecessor, returned to duties as secretary for a second term after Grace Bigby's move to Woolwich.

Paul W Sowan

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Jane McLauchlin
Membership Secretary

British Empire Medal for Gwyneth Fookes

Gwyneth Fookes has been awarded the British Empire Medal in the 2017 New Year Honours List. This is in recognition of her services to local history and the environment in north-east Surrey. Gwyneth has been a remarkably energetic member of the Bourne Society since she joined them in 1970, and has been a member of our own Society since 1981. She was made an Honorary Member of this Society in 2006 in recognition of her published work in local and natural history. Gwyneth's contributions to local history, largely in the pages of the Bourne Society's publications, will be familiar to

many members. In natural history, her contributions include a study of chalk grassland ecology on four east Surrey golf courses, and an unpublished botanical list for Croham Hurst. She has also collaborated with Jane McLauchlin on a study of the flora of the Wandle, published in our Proceedings in 1996, and a series of botanical articles in the magazine of the Surrey Wildlife Trust. Forty or so years ago two or three of her children were active members of our then Junior Section.

Source

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Robert B. Slack — a pioneer aviator at Coulsdon

> "We want two things from the science of aviation. We not only want the machines; we want the men with the nerve and the courage and the skill and the judgement to fly them."
>
> *Colonel Seeley on accepting a Bleriot monoplane from I.C.S. for the nation.*

Postcard jg-pc-ca-302 in the John Gent Postcards Collection is a photograph of early aviator Robert Slack at Coulsdon. It was taken on either Saturday 24th or Sunday 25th August 1912.

Robert Bertie Slack, the son of a gardener was born on 14th April 1886 at Basford, Nottinghamshire. Showing an early aptitude for mechanics he was, on leaving school, apprenticed to Messrs R. Cripps and Co. Ltd motor engineers. An efficient, studious worker he subsequently learned to drive. He was gregarious and known locally as an accomplished billiards player and member of the Nottingham Institute. On leaving Cripps and Co. Ltd Robert Slack became chauffeur to Arthur Forman of the Forman Institute.

Sometime after April 1911 Robert Slack went to Hendon Aerodrome, entering the Bleriot School of Aviation. He was subsequently examined flying a Bleriot Monoplane and awarded flying certificate No. 157 on 14th November 1911.

The Imperial Correspondence Schools (I.C.S.), a home – postal tuition business originating in Pennsylvania, became established in Britain at Kingsway, London in 1904 and in 1911-1912 added an aviation course to its curriculum. Given that the first flight in Britain was undertaken by the American Samuel Cody on 16th October 1908, it is remarkable that such a course for flying what were primitive aeroplanes was readily available so early. Robert Slack had previously undertaken an engineering course with I.C.S. and they, claiming him as one of their students, commissioned him to undertake a number of demonstration flights by way of advertising in June 1912. The firm had a new, single-seated Bleriot monoplane with a 50 horse-power Gnome engine having a seven-rotary cylinder fitted to the aeroplane. It flew at a normal speed of around 60 miles an hour. A team of I.C.S organisers travelling by car and a supporting maintenance team in a lorry would follow the aeroplane by road.

Under the heading 'The I.C.S. Tour' in his book '*British Aviation 1908-1914*' R. Dallas Brett wrote 'Their [I.C.S.] confidence was not misplaced for Mr. Slack flew magnificently and covered a great area in the Midlands prior to coming south and giving exhibition flights along the coast.' For Robert Slack it was a point of honour to fulfil his engagements and to do so with little regard to prevailing weather conditions – he flew in winds of up to 50 m.p.h.

Robert Slack concluded a 1,086 miles northern tour – which had involved his flying to Birmingham and Carlisle – navigating by following railway routes, before finally returning to Rugby, on Sunday 11th August. From Rugby he flew to Hendon, taking off at 5.10 pm., the accompanying car leaving immediately after. The monoplane touched down at Hendon having completed the 70 miles journey an hour later at 6.10 pm.; the car to meet him arrived at 9.15 pm.

The I.C.S. had previously arranged a second advertising demonstration tour, this time of Southern England beginning on 24th August. In the meantime the aviator was to be the guest of I.C.S. Secretary Oswald Odell at his Smitham Downs home. Having met Robert Slack the team of I.C.S organisers and technicians left Hendon driving to The Florence Restaurant, Rupert Street where they had supper. Afterwards the team set off for Purley around 10.45 pm. The car carrying the organisers went ahead to arrange a reception for the flyer while the old-fashioned, chain driven, support lorry followed. The lorry driver, John Perry, was accompanied in the cab by Robert Slack and a French engineer. Four others were riding among the spare parts and petrol tins on the open back of the lorry as it proceeded on the journey to Coulsdon.

Shortly before midnight the lorry passed along London Road, Norbury under the railway bridge. It travelled along King Edward Parade at 12 to 15 miles per hour and was overtaking a Croydon electric tram when it apparently went over a pothole or hydrant cover. The mild jolt caused the drive chain to slip the cog wheel and this momentarily jammed the nearside rear wheel before shearing the spokes. The axle snapped sending the tilting vehicle into a skid to the left. The lorry struck a lamp standard and then rebounded, glancing the Croydon-bound electric tram. It continued on three wheels and the remnants of the fourth before coming to a stop some 30 yards later. The passengers travelling in the back of the lorry, Messrs. O'Dell, Hughes, Miller and Cox, were thrown out at the first impact; the latter pair sustaining serious injuries to head and a leg respectively. Police constable Thrush was soon on the scene and Dr. Dursley of London Road and Dr. Murphy of St. Finbar's were summoned. One passenger was taken to Croydon General Hospital by ambulance, while Miller and Cox were conveyed there by the tram that had been struck. Robert Slack and other cabin occupants were uninjured.

Although taken off the Danger List on Tuesday, Frank Cox succumbed to complications of the injury to his thigh and shock and died the following Friday.

On Saturday 24th August Robert Slack returned to Hendon in pouring rain, but fortunately the inclement weather eased off late in the afternoon. The I.C.S. Bleriot monoplane was brought out from a hangar and he began his 500 miles aerial tour of Southern England beginning at South Croydon. Because of rising mists and rain clouds the journey was at a low altitude – 600 ft. A telephone call some 35 minutes later announced the aviator's descent in a field at the top of Smitham Downs Road, which although pre-arranged, was signalled only with a white flag.

The following day Robert Slack made a local testimonial flight for Croydon General Hospital covering a circuit of 20 miles to an audience of over 2,000 spectators. The flight and landing were said by his entourage to have been his best. The collection for the hospital amounted to over £20. The Bleriot monoplane was kept in a meadow on the bank of the Trent opposite Clifton Grove, frequently being inspected by his fellow Nottingham townsmen. After the completion of the southern tour the Bleriot monoplane, subscribed for by I.C.S. students, was donated to the nation. Lord Desborough presided over a deputation of which Colonel Seeley accepted the gift on behalf of the Government.

In 1913 the French Morane-Saulnier monoplane with a 60 horse-power engine was the best in the world. The Grahame-White Co. ordered two; one a land plane, the other a float seaplane. Robert Slack went to Villacoublay to fetch the former. After making a trial flight on 24th June he left for England at 5 a.m. the following morning. Running into low cloud and heavy rain he was forced to fly blind, using only his compass. The forward fuel tank of the plane had a glass reservoir in which the petrol could be seen when being pumped from the reserve tank to the main one. This had cracked and when after flying for three hours it was necessary to pump up fuel, the petrol was blown into his face. With no idea as to his location, almost blinded and suffocating from petrol fumes, the engine stopped and he put the nose of his plane down through a parting in the clouds to see Folkestone a mile in front of him. He just reached the summit of a ridge in a small field where he made an extremely able landing having endured appalling conditions in covering 170 miles in 3 hrs 40 mins. Having repaired the cracked glass with insulating tape, he bought petrol and took off for Kempton Park after a stop of 1 hr 35 mins. He landed two hours later at Headley where again he bought petrol and set off for Hendon arriving at 1.41 pm. having flown 260 miles in 6 hrs 36 mins.

Considerable successes followed in 1913, including his winning a 16 mile race beating notable pilots such as Turner, Nardini, Verner, Noel and Sidney Pickles in May. In June he beat Eugene Gilbert in a race from Paris to Hendon, again flying a Morane-Saulnier plane. He flew the same type of plane in the 2nd Aerial Derby at Hendon Aerodrome on 20th September, and won third place in the Hendon to Brighton Handicap on 8th November flying a Bleriot.

Of the surviving pilots in 1913, Robert Slack was undoubtedly among the best. His flying career however came to an end on 21st December when, driving a car with three companions as passengers from St. Albans to Hendon, he was involved in an accident. This occurred at High Bridge, just outside Radlett where the road narrowed from 20 ft to 12 ft and passed over

a bridge, after which there was a sudden bend which the car failed to negotiate. The vehicle turned over pinning him underneath; when help arrived Robert Slack was found to be dead. He was 28 years old. An inquest found the accident to be caused by his travelling at excessive speed. Afterwards a friend remarked that the tremendous speed airmen could attain in the air made it difficult, if not impossible for them to judge their paces accurately when travelling on the road. In any event, from a relatively modest, obscure beginning Robert Slack became one of the leading aviators of his time.

John I Hickman

Acknowledgements

I thank Peter Skinner (Squadron Leader retired) of Croydon Airport Archives for information concerning Robert Slack and for allowing access to personal resources; also Ken Harman, (2002). Learning To Fly – By Post. *Local History Records. The Bourne Society*, **41,** 52-58; and Carole Roberts for newspaper searches.

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Body snatchers

'Monday, between twelve and one o'clock, William Palmer for forgery, with Anderson and Stephens for housebreaking, were taken from Kingston goal...and executed upon Sutton Common, near the town...In their way to, and at the place of execution, they behaved with decency, being attended by the Doctor and curate of the town, in their last moments; so far was all decency and good order; but a hearse appearing with coffins for the two last named malefactors, under pretence that they were sent by their friends from Croydon, where they formerly lived, the fallacy was detected, and proved to be a scheme of two surgeons to have the bodies for dissection; whereupon the populace put the bodies into the coffins, with all their cloaths and halters about their necks, and so carried and buried them in Kingston church-yard with their brother sufferer, the funeral service being performed by the Rev. Mr. Agget, the curate. The populace, whilst all this was doing, were not idle, for they cut the traces of the horses belonging to the hearse, and damaged the same; then fell upon the surgeons and their mob, cut the horsemen's bridles, and by pelting them with pebble-stones they were obliged to quit the field in great disorder, sorely cut and mangled, and altogether unpitied. The poor executioner also felt the weight of resentment of the populace, by imprudently following the bodies to the church-yard, claiming their cloathing as his lawful fee or perquisite, without which, however, he and his companions were obliged to decamp very precipitately.'

In the St James Gazette there is a letter claiming that part where the curate performed the service is false, till it be contradicted or confirmed, the writer maintaining that a burial service is never performed over persons executed.

Brian Lancaster

Source
Gazetter, Wednesday 20 April 1768.

Change of status for the Croydon Airport Society

The Croydon Airport Society, established in 1983, has hitherto operated as a registered charity. It organises public guided tours of the former Airport terminal building featuring two rooms in the control tower where relevant artefacts are displayed. It also has an impressive display of historic photographs in the former central departure lounge, where tours commence. Less visibly, there is also an impressive library and archive currently accommodated in rented commercial space in a nearby building. The Society has decided that, for the protection of its officers, it should acquire limited liability by converting to Charitable Incorporated Organisation status, and has set up the **Historic Croydon Airport Trust**, registered as a CIO number 1166732.

Source
Newsletter Croydon Airport Society, **43** (Winter 2016), 7-9.

A sad year for Churchill Road, Croydon – 1907

The June 1907 issue of the Sanderstead & South Croydon Review (issue 6), an Edwardian equivalent to today's Croydon Guardian free newspaper, reported that :

1907 was a sad year for Churchill Road, South Croydon. This back street runs in a loop from Brighton Road, behind the back of St. Augustine's Church, and back to Brighton Road. In 1907 four families, all living between 30 and 80 Churchill Road, suffered grievous losses.

Frederick Nowers, an altar server at St. Augustine's Church, had been killed on the railway, although the exact location and circumstances are not given. The news item goes on to mention `little Ethel Sullivan, killed by a motor car' and `Mr. & Mrs. Beck and Mrs. Ryder' although their fates are not specified. But the dangers of motor traffic are addressed at some length. The newspaper commented (citing the St. Augustine's Parish Magazine as its source) ...

... the Brighton Road at this point, especially in the long sweep between the Red Deer and the Royal Oak, is a death trap. There is not a day passes but a score of cars take this stretch of road like a flash. We hear of the fatalities, but nothing of the narrow escapes. Of these there are more than some fond parents imagine! Without holding any antediluvian opinions on the subject of motor cars, it is perfectly monstrous that the Brighton Road should be turned into a racing track which the inhabitants on the route have to cross with the same pleasant feelings they might experience when they cross the line of fire on a rifle range.

Of course, the sorts of motor cars driving `furiously' along the Brighton Road in 1907 are ,just those old crocks we now watch chugging along every November in the annual motor run to Brighton! And the 20 or so such vehicles a day in 1907 were greatly outnumbered by horses and carts. It is relatively well-known locally that Britain's very first fatal road accident victim was a Croydon resident. Mrs. Bridget Driscoll, aged 44, of Old Town was killed during a motor car demonstration at the Crystal Palace on 17 August 1896.

Ironically, perhaps, about seven years after 1907 Alban Crofts [1889 - 1957] from Somerset established his motor car coach building business on the corner of Churchill Road and Brighton Road, the firm being continued after his death by his son Louis until 1975. They did work for, amongst others, Trojan cars of Croydon. They were at 308 Brighton Road, on the corner of Churchill Road, where there is now a petrol filling station.

We learn of the deaths of Mr. & Mrs. Richard Beck, of 30 Churchill Road, from John Janaway's book `Surrey murders'. It seems they were accidentally poisoned with prussic acid (hydrogen cyanide) on 20 April 1907. They had helped themselves to some oatmeal stout from a bottle left in the sitting room by their lodger, Reginald Parker. parker had in fact been the intended victim, as the adulterated beer had been left by his visitor, Richard Brinkley, earlier that evening. Brinkley was tried and found guilty of the murder of the Becks and attempted murder of Parker, and hanged on 13 August the same year.

What became of Mrs. Ryder I have yet to discover, although the context suggests that she, too, died under the wheels of a car.

Interestingly, issue 6 of the Sanderstead & South Croydon Review may be a very rare or even unique survival. Presumably there were at least five

previous issues, and perhaps several from issue 7 onwards, but Croydon's Local Studies Library doesn't seem to have them, nor does the British Library. The publisher appears to have been the printing business of F.M. Smith & Co. of 321 Brighton Road (telephone number 90!) The Society's copy of issue 6 may be a unique survival. If any more copies of this ephemeral newspaper survive, they may turn up underneath some very old lino in somebody's kitchen!

Paul W. Sowan

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