CNHSS Bulletin

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Croydon Natural History & Scientific Society

Paul Wenning Sowan 1940 – 2021

For our programme of walks and talks
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Notices and Announcements

From the Membership Secretary

Subscriptions for 2022 are due on 1 January 2022, and remain unchanged.

Ordinary Members	£18
Associate Members	£10
(only for those at the same address as an Ordinary or Life Member)	
Group Members	£18
Life Membership	£175

If you pay by cheque, please make it payable to "CNHSS" and send it to me at CNHSS, 96A Brighton Road, South Croydon CR2 6AD.

You can pay by Standing Order so please request a form if you wish to set one up. If you already pay by Standing Order, please don't send a cheque as well.

Please pay before the Spring mailing, then I won't have to send you a reminder. You won't receive the Autumn mailing if you don't pay after this reminder.

I will be taking over distribution of the mailings, so will need some volunteers to help. This includes envelope stuffing and delivery, twice a year in March/April and September/October. Hand deliveries save us a lot of postage. If you wish to volunteer, please email to information@cnhss.co.uk, and for deliveries, which area you could deliver to.

Dr Jane McLauchlin, Membership Secretary

Do you have any Wrens in your family?

I'm not referring to the tiny, feathered variety in the garden but the indomitable ladies who joined the Women's Royal Naval Service. Specifically, ladies who joined up between 1946 and 1981 and did their basic training at Training Depot Burghfield, HMTE Burghfield, HMTE Dauntless or HMS Dauntless.

Dauntless Divisional Photos is a nationwide project, in collaboration with the Association of Wrens, to gather divisional photographs and memories from those training days but also to reunite ladies with old friends, share anecdotes and relive exciting moments.

So if you, your mum, granny, aunt, godmother or even next door neighbour donned a blue suit and headed for a life near the ocean wave, please get in touch on either ddpwrens@gmail.com or 07765 435295/0771 990 9844.

Mandy Powell & Janette Crisp
Project Coordinators

Copy date for submission of articles for our Autumn Bulletin is 1st February 2022: bulletin@cnhss.co.uk

Members' contributions are welcome.

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Editorial
by Ian Payne

Paul Wenning Sowan passed away on 4th June 2021. Paul had held almost all the Society's posts since he joined in 1960 including Honorary General Secretary from 1963 to 1981 and later Company Secretary and twice President. In June, the Society lost its Librarian and Archivist, but we had all lost a valued colleague, a great friend and a fount of knowledge on Croydon and on the history of our Society in particular. We will miss a great presenter, a great walks leader especially on industrial and archaeological rambles in Surrey and particularly on identification of his cherished Reigate Stone.

Paul was a foundation director and signatory of the Memorandum and Articles of Association of 25 September 1967 when CNHSS was incorporated. He knew the name of every officer since and could unearth every bit of obscure information about the Society. How we pick up the pieces it is difficult to imagine. But CNHSS was not his only interest. He was a member of more than 70 other clubs and societies most of whom counted him as a great friend, remembered his contributions well and many wrote obituaries in their own magazines – none more so than Subterranea Britannica of whom he was Chairman for many years.

To celebrate Paul's contributions and achievements and the affection in which we hold such a great character, this Bulletin has an article based on members' and friends' memories. In the Spring, we will be publishing an edition of our Proceedings with an obituary, eulogy and reprint of a selection of Paul's articles which we trust will give our readers a good overview of the breadth of interests and achievements of our erstwhile colleague and friend Paul Wenning Sowan.

Covid-19 has continued to wreck our normal programme and, in particular, our 150th Anniversary programme has had to be postponed for a second year. See page 59. On a brighter note, we were able to resume a limited series of talks which up to now have been by Zoom. More is in the pipeline – for details see the new programme issued with this Bulletin.

For those familiar with the Banstead Woods area, this month's 'From the Society's Museum Collection' is full of familiar places which will help us to mentally picture the locale of the Clay-with-flints and the finds within.

Finally, CNHSS needs more members to help fill some of its officer roles – see page 53.

Paul Sowan 1940 – 2021
Members' memories

Introduction

In June, our Society was devastated to lose Paul Sowan, our longest-serving member on Council. Paul joined CNHSS in 1960 and from 1963 was our Honorary General Secretary, a position that he retained to 1981. He was later our Company Secretary, Librarian and President twice. He is remembered with great affection as a fount of knowledge of Croydon and specifically of our Society, a colleague, an ebullient character and as an irreplaceable friend.

For a brief obituary, please see our website cnhss.co.uk. The Spring edition of our Proceedings will include reprints of some selected articles from Paul's substantial past contributions to our publications and to those of other societies.

Members' Memories

As a young man Paul was already active in local matters. Bernard Winchester knows of his early campaigning "in the fifties he marched to save the Davis Theatre and, I'm pretty sure, to Ban the Bomb."

Paul joined CNHSS in 1960, from 1963 was on our Council and by the late 1960s was producing our Bulletin. Jennifer Scherr recalls "In the early days of my membership, when I was still living in Croydon, I remember typing cyclostyled newsletters for him – 1969-70 or thereabouts I imagine – in the Brighton Road building."

Despite a busy working life Paul was running a Junior Section by the 1970s. Gwyneth Fookes recalls "Our family's first encounters with the CNHSS were via Paul in the 1970s. My five offspring were young then. We would meet him at East Croydon Station early on a Sunday morning and he would take three of them off with a group to do voluntary conservation work for the day. They would arrive home absolutely exhausted and happy. They are middle-aged now and remember the outings fondly."

Ray Wheeler says "My earliest memories of Paul date back to the early seventies when he was a teacher at Norbury Manor Boys' School. I had seen in the local paper an article about a proposed exhibition to take place in 1975 to celebrate European Architectural Heritage Year. When I wrote to the Society expressing an interest in getting involved, Paul quickly replied inviting me to see him at his school. So I found myself on the organising

committee along with other society members plus the Director of the Geffrye Museum, Richard Sword, and the photographer for the exhibition (Ann Roy) in the Sun Lounge of the Fairfield Halls in 1975."

As Bernard Winchester says Paul was very happy when researching in the Archive, the Society's library or his collection of books at home.

Paul at the Museum of Croydon © John Hickman

Bernard continues "he had an extraordinary memory and knowledge of local historical matters: who else could quote from the Whitgift School magazine of the 1890s? Little things like that took my breath away at times. He knew I was in the Croydon Astronomical Society, and remembered when it was a section of the CNHSS; he passed on some photos from the Advertiser of the CNHSS section, some of whose members I recognised, making observations with an 8" reflector at Trinity School in the early fifties."

Paul attended and gave many CNHSS talks. When in the audience he always sat in the front row and afterwards invariably asked pertinent questions or made acute comments. Paul gave many talks himself, usually

without the aid of technology except on occasion an overhead projector. Ray Wheeler remembers his knowledge and enthusiasm for so many subjects in particular Industrial Archaeology and his passion for the firestone mines in Merstham. As Bernard Winchester says “He had a particular fascination for artificial underground structures. He not only knew all the caves and mines locally in Surrey, but had gone to such faraway places as nuclear bunkers in East Germany.”

Members have fond memories of Paul’s CNHSS walks on which he displayed a huge amount of knowledge. Mrs. Eleanor Redshaw describes the variety of his walks – “I knew him, through CNHSS, for over 50 years. We have joined a multitude of fascinating walks, both urban and rural, tracing old industries and transport, investigating local geology and exploring aged military installations. He was keen to encourage sensible observations and finding geological specimens, but also tended to pose difficult questions. I was given a Mars Bar for finding the green spikey flints of the Bullhead Bed on Croham Hurst Hill. On another occasion I discovered a Sea Urchin fossil in the Upper Chalk, near Shabden Park, Chipstead and was awarded a Twix chocolate bar.”

Mrs. Redshaw describes the reality of a mines walk with Paul: “My sons particularly enjoyed going underground, led by Paul, into the Surrey Hearthstone Mines, north of Godstone. The instructions included old waterproof clothes, hard hats, head torch and wellies. We walked through some woodland, till Paul lifted a large metal slab, where we entered the mine. We were told to sit on the edge and slither down a large vertical plastic tube, with our arms braced against the walls, into the darkness. With our lights turned on, we followed Paul along the dark, waterlogged tunnels, which were only about four foot high, sometimes clambering over large jagged rocks, which had fallen from the roof above. If you attempted to stand up a bit, you got sharp pointed stalactites sticking into your back. In the mine we found old railway lines made from Surrey Iron Railway track. We looked out for score marks in the walls, where wagons used to remove the hard stone or ropes had worn away the rock face. The hearthstones, extracted from the Upper Greensand beds, were used by servants, to scrub and whiten front doorsteps, to welcome visitors. The exit from the caves was also bizarre – we had to climb up a vertical shaft, using metal loops in the wall, to come out of a manhole cover, in a layby, beside the fast traffic on the Caterham Bypass. The boys loved the adventure, because they were covered in mud from head to toe and Mummy could not be cross!”

Edward Hart also has fond memories of Paul’s walks: “On one occasion a group of us were standing outside one of the older houses in Quality Street, Merstham while Paul explained the mysteries of Reigate stone. He was an

expert on this subject even advising English Heritage and others carrying out building restoration. At this point the house owners returned home and were perhaps somewhat concerned at the sight of our group apparently taking such a keen interest in their property. Paul explained all and we were even invited to look inside the house. On another occasion we were at Gatton where the estate is now owned by the Royal Alexandra & Albert School and, apart from the public footpaths, access is limited. While we were looking at what we could see from the path Paul was greeted by one of his former pupils now at the school. He took us to see the original part of Gatton. Thus we were able to see the surviving buildings, including the 'town hall', of this rotten borough which until the constituency was abolished in 1832 was able to send two Members to the House of Commons with just a handful of electors."

Some of Paul's walks involved his passion for local railways. Edward says "One topic which interested both Paul and myself was the construction of railway tunnels and a particular topic which came up from time to time was the question of the observatory used to construct the original 1841 tunnel for the London & Brighton Railway through the North Downs. This is the tunnel used by trains via Redhill and not the Quarry line used by the trains fast from Croydon to Gatwick which was a later construction. Usually the observatory was demolished once its purpose to facilitate the construction of the tunnel was completed but this particular observatory survives to the present day. Needless to say, Paul did manage to get inside!" Patrick Dennison recalls "Sunday 24th July 2005 was the 200th Anniversary of the Croydon, Merstham & Godstone Iron Railway. Paul had arranged a walk starting from Coulsdon Public Library at 14:00. This was planned to be about 8 kilometres (5 miles) finishing at Merstham at 18:00. About midday the weather took a turn for the worse and the rain was still hammering down as I drove from Kenley to Coulsdon. About eight stalwarts turned up but decided it was too wet and left. We both set off south. Paul had produced three pages of A4 notes and we looked at nearly every nook and cranny of the railway."

Bernard Winchester remembers a railway-connected project: "About 2012 Paul announced that the Society would have to move some Surrey Iron Railway plate rails it possessed from Council premises in a stable block at a school in Coombe Road to new storage in Reigate caves. He called for volunteers, so some of us duly came to the premises a few days later. As it happens, the Railway was originally intended to go to Reigate, so as we loaded the car he quipped "Thanks to us, it is finally getting there: after two hundred years!"

Others of Paul's walks are also remembered. Yvonne and Richard Walker

recall a tour of the lime kilns site at Betchworth, and one of his 'Rolling Stones' walks on Shirley Hills. [In 2017 Paul started his 'Rolling Stones' series of walks stating 'Note this is a geological walk, not a pop concert!'] Kake remembers with affection "… the time he led a CNHSS walk around Hayes looking at the Blackheath pebbles, where we got lost at least twice but it was all excellent fun anyway. And another expedition – I forget where – when he described a plant as having a rather unattractive colour scheme before realising that his shirt and tie made up the exact same combination of colours."

Edward Hart reminds us that "Paul's walks were well planned, usually ending at a suitable place of refreshment before the journey home!". Bernard Winchester remembers him as a genial companion at a pub lunch, as anyone who accompanied him upon his many walks would know. Yvonne and Richard Walker say "we will miss his interesting comments following the talks, including after leading us on a tour of central Croydon, which ended up with four of us in the Dog and Bull!" [This was in 2018, 'The last walk of the year'.] Paul enjoyed visiting pubs and not only after walks. Sean Creighton always enjoyed chatting with him, especially on the occasions they bumped into each other in the pub next to the Town Hall (The Spread Eagle), and in the Reading Room. Kake last saw him in person in a pub – his "unofficial office" at the Crown & Sceptre South Croydon.

Paul campaigned in support of Croham Hurst, in which he was instrumental in its designation as a Site of Special Scientific Interest, and to save the Museum of Croydon Research Room from closure. Bernard Winchester remembers "he played a key part in persuading the Council to keep, and even expand, the Archive."

Paul was also supportive of the projects of others. Ken Baker says "he showed particular interest in South Norwood's ongoing Heritage Trail of blue and green historical plaques – initiated and researched by John Hickman, sponsored by *People for Portland Road* and designed and installed by me. He also attended the more recent unveiling of our plaque for William Walker ("the deep sea diver who saved Winchester Cathedral") on Portland Road in 2018. He was at the reception afterwards and travelled to Winchester later that year to the service of remembrance for William Walker.

Kake says "Paul always tried to come to at least part of the Croydon Fun Weekend, which is a yearly event I run each January. Everyone else would look at the schedule online; but as an internet-refuser, Paul got a printed-out copy posted to him. He skipped the craft sessions, pervasive games, and children's soft play, but came along to the walks, pubs, and restaurants."

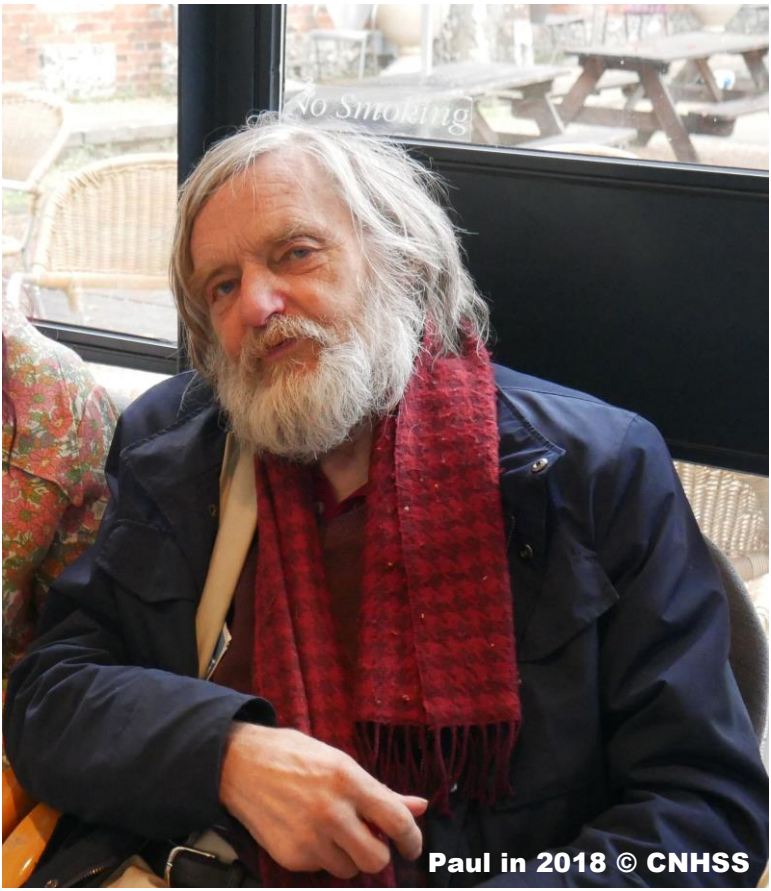
Paul pictured in 2012 at the unveiling of South Norwood's blue plaques for the Norwood Junction subway. © Ken Baker

Paul is remembered for his vegetarianism. Kake says "Food was never one of his major interests, but it is one of mine, and he was always up for trying new things. I remember he had his first ever vegetarian sushi during one of the Fun Weekends, at a restaurant on South End, after having rejected the idea of vegetable tempura for being too deep-fried. (He wasn't massively impressed with it, but was glad he'd tried it.) And another time we ended up in an Indian-run pub in Caterham after a CNHSS walk around Kenley. He always liked a good curry, but hadn't tried the more snacky sort of Indian food they do there, so he let me order for both of us and we had some of the best crispy okra and chilli mushrooms I've ever eaten."

Paul was also known for his environmentalism, which as Bernard Winchester says "manifested in his being a vegetarian and against not only consumerism (he led a very simple life) but also the internal combustion engine: he never travelled by 'plane or car, and even avoided buses; he went everywhere by rail, whether locally or when visiting places or attending conferences in Europe. He loved paper, not electronic media, preferring letters and books to emails and computer files."

Paul's former schools remained part of his life. Ken Baker tells us "Paul and I are 'Old Croydonians' (old boys of Selhurst Grammar School; he was just two years ahead of me) – indeed, Paul was the Old Croydonians Association Secretary for some time. We last met at the Parcel Yard, Kings Cross pub reunion in November 2019, where we were able to have a long chat." Paul was remembered by many as a teacher. As Edward Hart says "Paul was clearly remembered with affection and respect by many former pupils and that interest was returned. One of his lasting legacies will be all those lives which he influenced for good."

Paul will long be remembered in CNHSS. We will miss him for his friendship and companionship, for his contributions, for his wealth of knowledge, for what he taught us but also “he made you feel like he had something to learn from you and he really wanted to learn it” (Kake). There will be an empty pew at every meeting for a long time to come.



With grateful thanks to all who have shared memories of Paul, and especially to Bernard Winchester, Jennifer Scherr, Gwyneth Fookes, Ray Wheeler, Mrs. Eleanor Redshaw, Edward Hart, Yvonne and Richard Walker, Kake, Sean Creighton and Ken Baker.

From the Society's Museum Collection – www.cnhss.co.uk/museum
by Christopher J.W. Taylor, Museum Curator

The geology and prehistoric archaeology of Banstead Woods

Banstead Woods is an area of 250 acres of ancient woodland just over a mile south west of Coulsdon and a mile south of the village itself. It is within the CNHSS Regional Survey Area and of local interest to Croydonians as an important nearby recreational space and area of woodland wildlife. There are two woods: Perrotts Wood near Park Farm to the north, and Banstead Wood, but in this article I just make reference to "Banstead Woods".

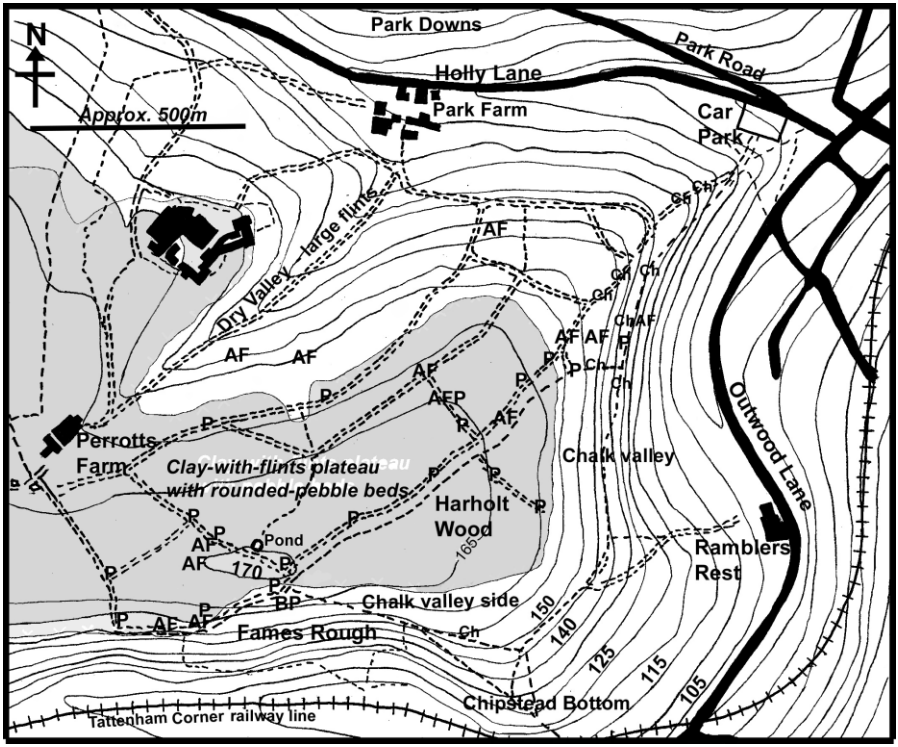


Figure 1. Topographical sketch map of the Banstead Woods and surrounding grassland, showing its geology. *Clay-with-flints as mapped by BGS is shown in grey*; Key: Ch = Chalky/Chalk; P = Rounded pebbles; AF = Angular flints often with brown/reddish soils; BP = Black pebbles (just N. of Fames Rough). Contours are at 5m intervals. Based on Ordnance Survey 1:25,000 map.

The article looks at the nature of the Clay-with-flints deposit in Banstead Woods and how the geological boundary of this with the Chalk, as seen “on the ground”, compares with that represented on the map. Also included is the topography and archaeology of the Woods some artefacts from which are in our museum collection.

In Medieval times the area was a royal hunting forest and deer park. It was owned by royalty from Saxon times until the middle of the 16th century. In the 1880’s a private mansion was built in the woods which was later used as a World War 2 POW camp and military hospital and subsequently became the Queen Elizabeth Hospital for children. It is now largely private accommodation. (This large cluster of buildings is shown unlabelled on Figure 1, between Perrotts Farm and Park Farm.)

The principal importance of the Woods now is as an SSSI and Local Nature Reserve.

The Woods, including surrounding grassland, are bounded by Holly Lane, the B2219, along the northern edge (Figure 1), the railway along the southern edge, a footpath running from Perrott’s Farm to Holly Lane on the west side, and Outwood lane, B2032, in the east. The highest point is in the south, just above Fames Rough, at 170m. From the western end of Chipstead Station approach the view south west is dominated by the steep, grassed and wooded side of the dry valley which rises over 60m, from the fairly level road, to the edge of the plateau at ca 160m.

The topographical sketch (Figure 1) shows a small dry, tributary valley cutting into the area, running down, north east, towards Holly Lane, the steep side of the main dry valley above Outwood Lane and the plateau just above Fames Rough.

The area shaded grey on the map is the extent of the Clay-with-flints deposit mapped by the British Geological Survey. This mantles the top of the plateau, overlying solid Chalk.

Geology

Clay-with-flints: nature and origin.

Clay-with-flints is a geological deposit covering a very extensive area of southern England. It is found as a capping, covering the Chalk hills of southern England, occasionally resting on Thanet Sand (Ellison, 2004, 52). An interesting feature of its occurrence is that its northern limits coincide approximately with the southern margin of the Anglian and subsequent glaciations (Scott-Jackson, 2000, 20).

Clay-with-flints is usually described as an heterogeneous and unbedded remanié deposit, 5 – 10m thick. It varies in texture, colour and content both laterally and vertically. This variability, within a basic mix of contents, can be over distances as short as 100m with no apparent reason or pattern (Ellison, 2004, 53, 55). For this reason its different variations are not indicated on geological maps which just show it as "Cf", shaded dark brown. It is not datable by fossil evidence and, as it is superficial (in contrast to solid rock) and apparently a much altered and unbedded deposit, neither is it is datable by reference to other deposits except in a limited way by basic geological succession. Typically the Clay-with-flints is comprised of a reddish brown or sandy clay containing flints. At the base of the deposit in many places is a dark brown to black clay containing relatively fresh nodular flints which may be stained black (Sumbler, 1996, 123, Ellison, 2004, 55, Dines and Edmunds, 1933, 144).

The origin is now agreed to be partly the residual constituents, mainly fine clay, from the dissolution of the Chalk, but by far the majority being derived from the remnants, much sorted and changed, of the younger, previously overlying Palaeocene and Eocene (Table 1) deposits. Avery, et al, classified the Clay-with-flints, distinguishing the two types above, as Clay-with-flints *sensu stricto*, i.e., a minor element formed from the dissolution of the Chalk, and Clay-with-flints *sensu lato*, the significantly greater part of the deposit, from the remnants of Palaeocene and Eocene strata (Scott-Jackson, 2000, 22).

Epoch	**Age – millions of years**	**Deposits**
Pleistocene, (Quaternary)	2m – Recent	*Formation of the Clay-with-flints*
Pliocene	5 – 2m	*Formation of the Clay-with-flints*
Eocene	58 – 52m	**Thames Group** London Clay – marine Harwich Formation – marine, brackish Well-rounded black pebbles plus some shells. (Includes formerly known as the Blackheath Beds with its rounded black pebbles.)
Palaeocene	65 – 58m	**Lambeth Group** Reading Formation – estuarine.

		Woolwich Formation. Has pebble bed crowded with shells underlain by marine pebble bed. Upnor Formation – marine; rests unconformably on Thanet Sand (below). Well-rounded pebbles. "Chatter" & crescent-shaped percussion marks present indicative of beach deposit (Sumbler, 1996, 100; Ellison, 2004, 27). Thanet Sand – marine
		Unconformity – Chalk exposed and eroded; later deposits above on to weathered Chalk.
Cretaceous	97 – 65m	Upper Chalk

Table 1. Approximate dating and order of succession of the deposit types relevant to the formation of the Clay-with-flints – see text. (After Sumbler, 1996, Tables 1 & 8, 99-103; Ellison, 2004, 25-27 & 33-42, Gallois, 1965, 46 & 59 – 60; https://www.geoexpro.com/articles/2012/10/the-geology-of-london)

Table 1 shows the order of succession of the Palaeocene and Eocene deposits previously lying unconformably on the Upper Chalk. It is important to note that at any one place these deposits will not necessarily be found in this complete succession. Ellison (2004,55) says that the formation of the Clay-with-flints probably took place beginning in the Pliocene, ca. 2m years ago, carrying on through the Quaternary, being sorted and mixed, especially during the ice ages.

The Palaeocene and Eocene deposits in Table 1, from which the major part of the Clay-with-flints was formed, were lain down by a sea and there are great variations in the deposit types depending on what the local conditions were in and around the sea. Thus deposits could be deltaic, fluviatile, beach or marine depending on where the location was in relation to the shoreline. The position of the shoreline moved considerably as the sea advanced and retreated (Gallois, 1965, 46). It is even possible that coastal erosion phases led to removal of some of the earlier deposits (Ellison, 2004, 36).

The constituents of the Clay-with-flints are representative of this prehistory in Table 1 with pebbles from the various formations including coarse pebbly beach deposits, and finer sands. (Gallois 1965, 46).

Harwich Formation pebble beds are found as far south as Caterham although these may be out of place, possibly transported by Quaternary solifluxion. The beds are found locally in the Croydon area and also consist

of sand and pebbles (Sumbler, 1996, 99-103). This formation encompasses the so-called Blackheath Beds which include black coated rounded pebbles (Ellison, 2004, 38).

Some of the pebbles mentioned above have possibly contributed to the contents of local Clay-with-flints at Banstead Woods.

The Banstead Woods Clay-with-flints

The extent of the Banstead Woods Clay-with-flints as mapped by the BGS is shaded grey on Figure 1. This Clay-with-flints plateau stands out as markedly different geologically to the surrounding Chalk downland. The feature which has considerable visual impact is the incidence of small and some larger rounded and sub-spherical pebbles all over this area. These are generally small, ca. 3 to 5 cm long. Some are cobbles, by definition, being up to 15cm. Of interest is Dines, (1933, 154) observation: “Around Banstead Wood cobbles are again an abundant constituent of the Clay-with-flints.” Ellison’s cross section of the Clay-with-flints on the North Downs notably shows sections containing “rounded flint pebbles” (2004, 57).

As marked on the map by “P” (”Pebbles”), pebbles are evident in the paths and at the base of fallen tree roots. Some sections are quite dramatic, for example Figure 2, just north of Fames Rough (marked on map) looking, for all intents and purposes, like a beach, strewn with well-rounded flint pebbles.

Figure 2. At NGR TQ 26380, 57388. Showing pebble bed.

These have the “chatter” and crescent shaped marks (Figure 3) over their surface which is consistent with those found on beach pebbles today. The area just to the north of Fames Rough, beside the path, has several conspicuous sections like this. The extent of this deposit coincides more or less with the BGS mapped Clay-with-flints. This is Clay-with-flints *sensu lato*. Above Fames Rough, just below the path, (marked “BP” on sketch map, Figure 1) I also found smoothed but nodular pebbles ranging from 2cm to ca. 7cm in length, covered in a natural black deposit. These are also found along the southern edge of and within Harholt Wood. These possibly relate to a section of Clay-with-flints sensu stricto which occurs at the base of the Clay-with-flints, near or on the Chalk, characterised by flints stained with black manganese (Scott-Jackson, 2000, 22, Ellison, 2004, 55, Dines and Edmunds, 1933, 144). The black deposit or coating is part of the pebble, not being removable by proprietary chemicals or scraping. An alternative possibility is that these are remnants of the black pebbles found in the Blackheath Beds (Table1). Peake (1982, 95 – 96) mentions Disturbed Blackheath Beds in scattered remnants within solution pipes in the Chalk and quotes Gosling on these beds at Worms Heath, several miles to the east. Dines (1933, chap. XI, 143-148) writes at some length on “Disturbed Blackheath Beds” in this area. He talks about the Clay-with-flints near Chaldon and Fryern Farm, White Hill having a considerable proportion of pebbles within the deposit. Dines varies his wording to also describe the incidence of pebbles, rather than as being part of the Clay-with-flints, as being more “of an irregular mixture of pebbles and Clay-with-flints.”, i.e., two separate but associated deposits. Whatever the precise interpretation, it seems likely that the pebbles at Banstead Wood are derived in some part at least, from disturbed Blackheath Beds as indicated by Table 1. The incidence of black pebbles, just mentioned, certainly strengthens the Blackheath Beds connection.

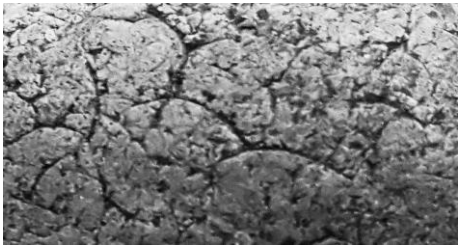


Figure 3. Close up (ca. x 4) photograph of chatter marks on a pebble from near Fames Rough.

The pebbles are possibly derived from one or more of the Eocene and Palaeocene pebbliferous sources mentioned in Table 1 above. It is important to point out that the likelihood of any or all of these being the origin of Banstead Woods pebbles is not known; some may not be

represented at all here, and some source formations may not have spread as far south as Banstead. Sumbler (1996, 123) comments "*the pebbles preserved in Clay-with-flints at any one location may be the only remnant left of a long lost deposit type*." So we cannot be confident in assigning the elements within Clay-with-flints, including the pebbles, to any one source found today as a bedded deposit, Eocene or Palaeocene, exampled elsewhere.

Clay-with-flints tends to have a feathered boundary and its edges on BGS maps, as for Banstead Woods area, are often shown as a line of dashes denoting uncertainty of the exact limits, so the mapped edge is an approximation. Steep, precipitous slopes, running down from a plateau, will tend to have a more precise sheared cut-off between this overlying deposit and the Chalk, as here above Fames Rough and on the eastern edge of the woods. On shallower slopes, in contrast, the deposit edge is feathered, giving way gradually to the local solid rock with a ragged, thinning boundary. It continues to feather downhill as time goes on. Another local example of feathering was found at Woodmansterne Street, just a mile to the north, where at one point the deposit was 2m thick, but within 150 yards only 1m and after a further 150m disappeared (Peake 1982, 94). This feathering is found in Banstead Woods on the gentler slope at the north-east edge of the mapped Clay-with-flints where pebbles are found strewn on paths outside the mapped limit.

John (1980, 1070), figure 4, mapped the main plateau deposit at Banstead Woods as Clay-with-flints as *sensu lato* and an abutting area, immediately north of this, as *sensu stricto*.

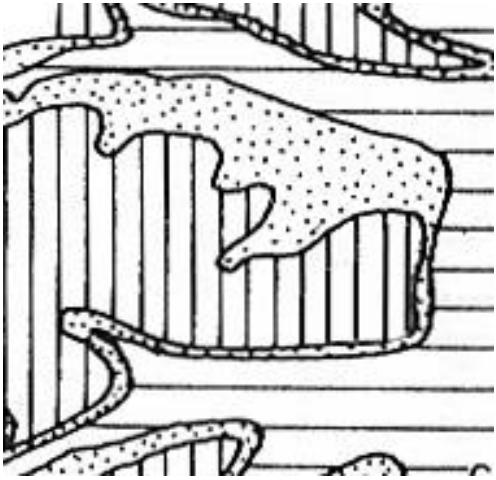


Figure 4. Extract from John's map showing Banstead Woods. Clay-with-flints *sensu lato*: vertical lines; *sensu stricto*: stippling; Chalk: horizontal lines.

Examination of the northern area, which is off the *mapped* Clay-with-flints, shows (excepting the sunken paths in gullies, with flint boulders) a greyish-red soil with sharper, angular (in contrast to well rounded) flints and only minor indications of chalkiness, typical of *sensu stricto*. This area is completely unlike that of the rounded pebbly-Clay-with-flints just above on the plateau and also different to the very chalky paths just south of the car park and towards the wood. The BGS maps this simply as Chalk bedrock. We can only assume that the area is considered a feathering of the main deposit and not capable of being mapped. The greyish-red soil with angular flints, also occurs along the footpath to the west of Fames Rough, alternating there with areas of rounded pebbles fitting with the way John shows Clay-with-flints *sensu stricto* curving round the southern edge of the woods at Fames Rough. In places, near deposit margins, patches of the well-rounded pebbles and angular flints alternate in close proximity, destroying any semblance of a nice neat order of one type of deposit or the other, a sort of blending or mixing.

Other examples of these pebble beds in Clay-with-flints are found locally; one good example is at the far eastern end of Ranmore Common above Denbies vineyards near Ashcombe Wood. There pebbles identical to those at Banstead Woods litter the tops and clog the gullies leading off the Clay-with-flints deposit.

Dry valleys

The main Outwood Lane dry valley is extensive, its numerous feeder dry valleys are some distance to the west and south, starting in the areas of highest ground around Walton–on-the-Hill and Reigate Hill, near the peak of the North Downs escarpment. This main valley then runs approximately north-east to the Croydon area past Banstead Woods. In the south, around Banstead and Walton, as elsewhere, these valleys cut into the Chalk, often through Clay-with-flints, which is left in brown coloured finger shapes on BGS maps, looking as if it was a liquid sauce poured or draped over the summits.

Two agents are invoked by writers (for example: Hinde, 1896, 233; Peake, 1982, 93b & 96, Dines 1933, 26) to account for the huge amount of energy required in the valley-forming process, are contemporary periglacial action and the result of ice melt. These are now generally accepted as the major shaping agents. This area was about 150 miles south of the last, Devensian, ice sheet, so was not glaciated, but it was affected by periglaciation. In warming periods solifluction sheets could have moved Chalk strata, previously much shattered and degraded by periglacial processes, wholesale down hillsides. Another important agent adding to

this process was probably melt-water being released in sufficient volumes in summers, and especially during the warmings at the end of and during interstadials of the Devensian. The local snow and ice fields (note: “fields” as distinct from “sheets”) were probably on the high points at Reigate Hill, Lower Kingswood (Figure 5) and the peaks of Banstead, including the Woods. This moved material into local small valleys and then, into the main Croydon valley from where it was then deposited under Croydon, probably at the end of the last glaciation (Peake, 1982, 96, 1971, 155-158).

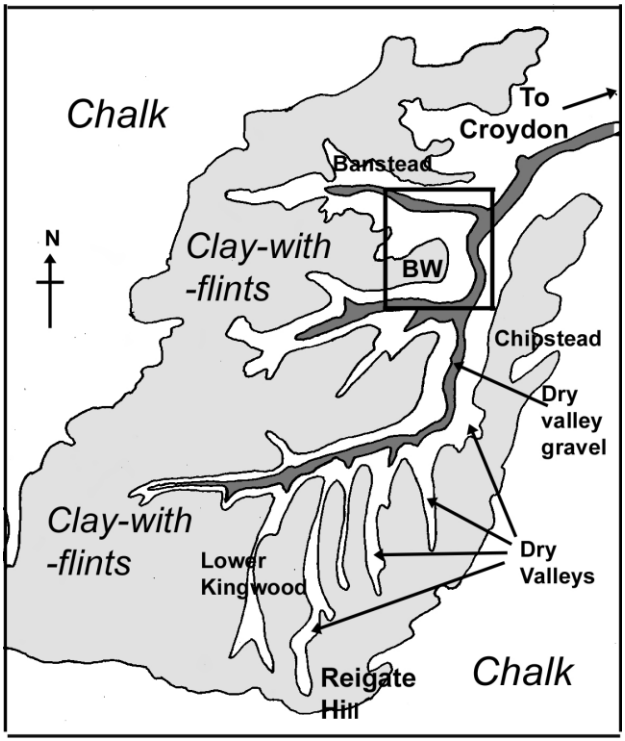


Figure 5. Tributary dry valleys to the main Croydon valley and local high ground. The area within the square is enlarged in Figure 1.

Dry valley’s at Banstead Woods.

The effects of these processes are well exampled in the valley at Outwood Lane including the hollowing out of the east side of Banstead Woods just below the plateau with the steep bluff created at Fames Rough as the valley turns north east at Chipstead Bottom. The minor dry valley mentioned above, starting near Perrotts Farm, leading north east to Holly Lane, has a footpath (shown, Figure 1) along its centre crammed full of large, compacted, angular flints worn from the Chalk bedrock into which the valley has cut.

Archaeology

The Heritage Environment Records (HER, see in References below, www.Exploring Surrey's Past) and archaeological literature record very little prehistoric archaeology for the wooded area; it is mainly recorded from the periphery from ploughed land and grassed areas. The 1866 XIX 6 inch and 1894 25 inch maps XIX.11 and 12 show no prehistoric archaeological features like barrows or earthworks. It may be that Clay-with-flints sites were not attractive to settlement. Thompson (1979, Figure 1, 246) mapped the distribution of hillforts in south east England. He specifically shows the areas of Clay-with-flints as "Land not naturally suited to primitive occupation." and this is reflected by the incidence of hillforts on his map which shows none on the deposit in Surrey. Unfortunately no LIDAR is presently available for the Banstead Woods area. LIDAR for this area is due to become available this year and if anything comes to light I will provide the Bulletin Editor with a follow up note.

I summarise in Table 2 the Romano-British and earlier archaeology of the Woods.

SHER number	**Period**	**Find Grid Reference, TQ:**	**Find spot & type**
4950 & 4663	Lower Palaeolithic	257,583; 247,581	Handaxes & fragments, Canons Farm.
967	Mesolithic	265,578	Flint axe. Stagwood (most likely Stagbury). William Wright Colln, BM
13888	Mesolithic or Neolithic	273,575	Outwood Lane area. Flakes.
965	Mesolithic	268,571	Flint adze in Kingston Museum. Stone axe in BM. Probably BM ref. 1935,1104.20 Chipstead Bottom.
Not Applicable	Mesolithic/Neolithic	"Banstead"	CNHSS Museum: 2 Mesolithic axes, 3 scrapers & some struck flakes. Accn. Nos. 15/3/279 – 286.

3026	Neolithic or Mesolithic	273,562	Flint axe. Chipstead, near Porter's Wood. (Taylor, 1985, 137.)
952	Neolithic	270,584	Flakes and a borer. Near Holly Lane
974	Neolithic	263,575	Six flint flakes, Banstead Wood
968	Early Bronze Age	258,576	Barbed and tanged flint arrowhead. Perrotts Farm.
BM refs. 1935,1104 & 1971, 601	Neolithic/Bronze Age	Not given	10 scrapers. "Banstead District"
14883 (See 953 below)	Late Bronze Age	256,581	Bronze axes and ingot fragments. Perrotts Farm. SyAC, 1992, vol. 82, 207
953	Late Bronze Age	2571,5806	Socketed axe Perrotts Farm 1954 & two BA axes in 1989 (Williams, 1991).
960	Iron Age	265,578	Pottery found 1965, Banstead Wood
944	Late Iron Age/Roman pottery	2618,5806	"Claudian pottery" (Frere, 1943, 154), Queen Elizabeth Hospital. NB, hospital foundations laid in 1936.
945	Romano-British/Iron Age	27640,57770	Small amount of IA pottery suggests a nearby IA village. Find site ca. 600 yards east of the Woods. (Frere, 1943).

Table 2. Prehistoric archaeology in and immediately around Banstead Woods. (Sources: SHER, SyAC, SAC, CNHSS catalogue, and BM on-line catalogue; see References).

In a 1940 article Frere (158) noted that A.W.G. Lowther was to publish some sherds of Iron Age pottery from Banstead Woods “shortly”. On the CNHSS Regional Survey Map which was prepared by Lowther, (1936) Index No. 65 of the Regional Survey, Iron Age pottery dated from 75 BC to 43 AD, is plotted at the centre of the Woods with a footnote by Lowther that the pottery is in his possession and unpublished. It is not known if this is the same as HER 944 but it seems likely given the dates of the reports and hospital foundation work.

Other artefacts recorded as from the Woods are a Mesolithic axe (HER 967), Neolithic/Mesolithic flakes (974) and further sherds of Iron Age pottery (960). A collection of ten flint scrapers (Table 2,) at the British Museum is unfortunately described as from the “Banstead District” so we do not know if these were from the Woods area. The paucity of prehistoric artefacts from the Woods itself is hardly surprising given the thick undergrowth, probably millennia old, that covers the ground, prohibiting archaeological discovery.

Forty years ago I remember substantially more land in the vicinity was under the plough. Half a mile to the south east, around Long Plantation, and Shabden Park (now sheep grazing), and Harholt Wood (now wooded again) was arable and the plough soil revealed prehistoric activity in the form of Neolithic and Bronze Age struck flakes. Figures 6 – 8 illustrate typical examples. Most struck flints from the area are patinated pure white and were “of the moment” tools, with minimal working. Flakes are usually struck from the edge of multiplatform discoidal cores (figure 9) with a very oblique angle between the striking platform and long axis of the piece as in figure 8a.

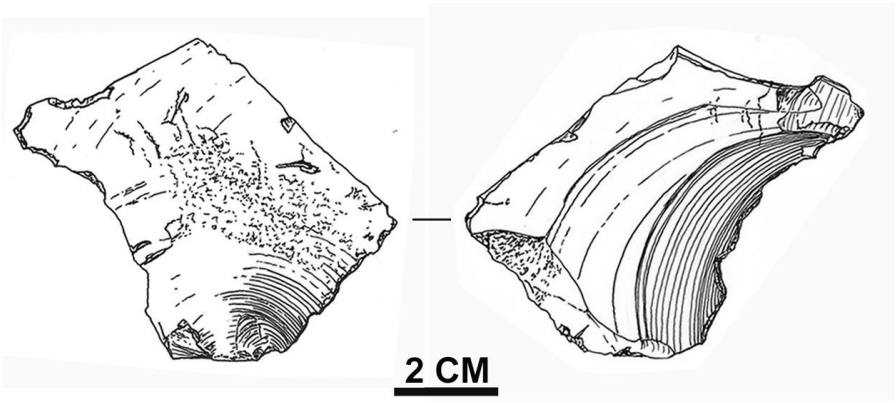


Figure 6. Awl. Point and bulb of percussion at bottom of drawing.

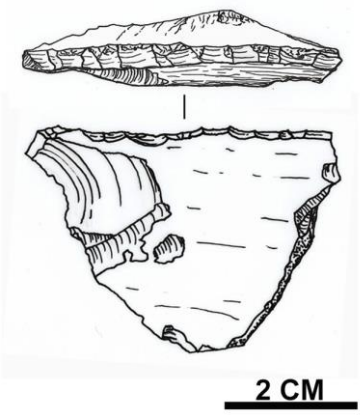


Figure 7. Side scraper with detail of the working edge.

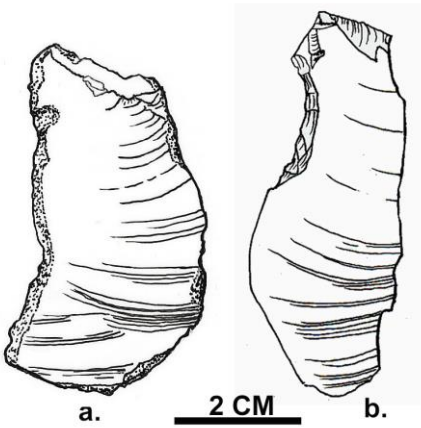


Figure 8a. Flake exhibiting typically oblique flaking angle between the striking platform and the long axis of the piece. 8b. Blade – ventral surface showing use/working on one edge.

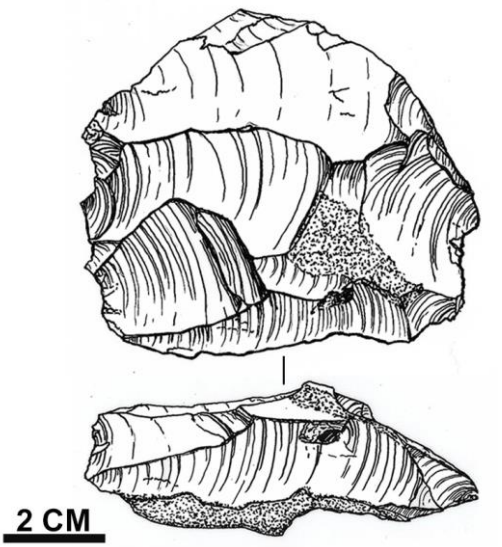


Figure 9. Discoidal bipolar core, with a white patination, from near Long Plantation TQ 2700, 5625, 6.9.1981. Shows flaking from two opposing platforms. Plan and (below) edge view.

Figure 10 is a small stub of an adze I found in 1986, on the footpath that runs along the south eastern edge of the woods, at TQ 2705, 5780. It is 67mm long and of very cherty flint and has been wasted near the butt, possibly to facilitate hafting, given its small size. A small impression of an echinoiderm spine, probably *Cidaris sp. or Micraster coranguinum*, is visible on its surface (Figure 8, left drawing, bottom, middle). The implement has no diagnostic features but is probably Late Mesolithic or Neolithic.

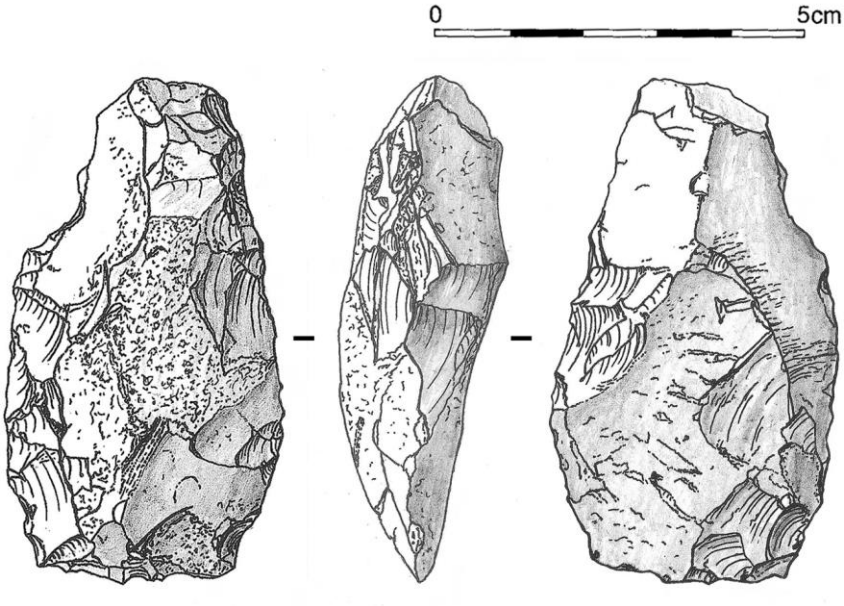


Figure 10. Stub of a small flint adze from Banstead Woods.

In our Museum there are two Mesolithic axes, three scrapers and a few struck flakes catalogued as from “Banstead” (Cab.15, Dr 3, Accn. Nos. 279 – 286). Unfortunately more exact provenances are not given so they could be from anywhere around or in Banstead including the village area, Banstead Downs, Heath, Park Downs, or the Woods.

The only Lower Palaeolithic finds from this locale are handaxes from a short distance west of the Woods, at Canons Farm (Table 1). No doubt, this is simply because Canons Farm is still ploughed and has been for decades.

An interesting place-name here which seems to have ancient connections is that already mentioned of Harholt Wood. I have only found this on the

1866 XIX Ordnance Survey map. The wood is on the south-east side of Banstead Wood (see Figure 1). The name is from two Old English place-name elements “Har” and “Holt”. The latter is well known to mean “wood”. The meaning of the former is less obvious. The only reference to the place-name prefix “Har” by Gover et al in *The Place-Names of Surrey* (1934, 243) is in the context of a “Hareholt Copse”, a small wood, one mile north-west of Ewhurst, Surrey. This is on a parish boundary and Gover says the meaning is “border wood”. A far more detailed and impressive study, solely of boundary place-names, is by Jepson (2011, 198) where he devotes a thirty-eight page chapter solely to this element “Har”. He also considers it is most likely associated with a boundary. Thus Harholt very likely refers to a “boundary wood”. Jepson refers (228) to the use of boundaries in deer parks which is relevant here because, as mentioned above, the woods were a deer park in the Medieval period. Such parks had, of necessity, boundary fences and earthworks. An alternative explanation is that the wood’s southern edge, on a steep part of the plateau, is a natural boundary. A further, particularly interesting possibility, is that it refers to boundaries of late Saxon origin.

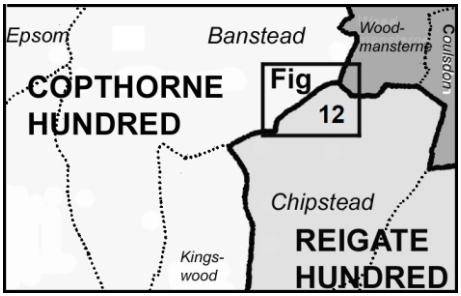


Figure 11. The hundred and parish boundaries. The darkest grey shading is Wallington Hundred. The area within the square is enlarged at figure 12. Based on Gover et al, 1934, map: Surrey Hundreds and Parishes. The dotted lines are parish boundaries; solid thick lines hundreds.

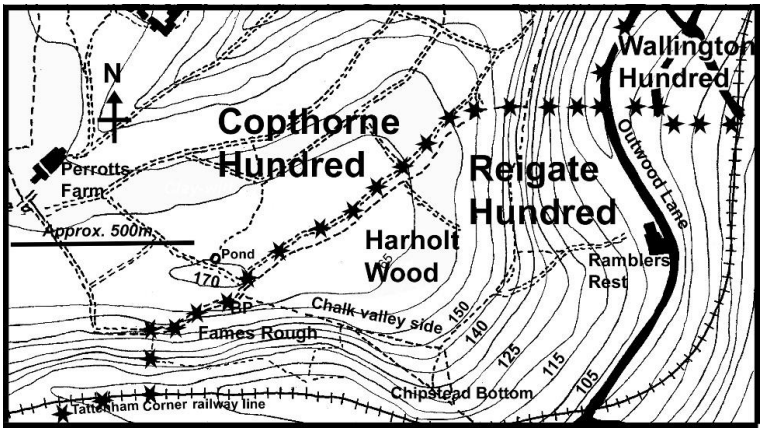


Figure 12. The boundaries (starred) of Copthorne, Reigate and Wallington Hundreds.

The north western edge of Harholt Wood, marked by the south-west, north-east orientated footpath, is the ancient boundary between the Copthorne and Reigate hundreds and the abutting parishes of Banstead and Chipstead (Figures 11 & 12). It seems a distinct possibility, given the ancient importance of these boundaries, that the “Har” refers to them.

Hundreds were a unit of local Saxon administration consisting of groupings of parishes with collinear boundaries, each, in the standard case, of 100 hides (Figure 11). Hundreds looked after the keeping of the peace and some taxation matters. England south of the river Tees was divided into shires and each shire divided into hundreds. According to Whitlock (1991, 137) this seems to have happened in the 10th century. The hundred system is not mentioned before the reign of King Edgar, 944 – 975 AD (Stenton, 1946, 289) although Ollard (1918, 46) says the hundred boundaries south of the Thames go back to slightly earlier, to at least 900 AD. By that time, according to Nail (1965, 44), the hundred Courts were well established. Hundreds were mostly active before the Norman Conquest after which their business tended to decline. More specifically the hundreds of Copthorne, Reigate and Wallington are included in the 1086 Domesday Book. Reigate was then, and for a while after the Conquest, known as Cherchefelle and Copthorne as Copededorne. In the modern era the hill and wood of Banstead Woods, are clearly marked on maps from the mid-17th century next to the marked Copthorne-Rygate (sic) hundred boundary.

On the ground the boundary seems to be quite clearly marked. There are, in effect, two footpaths, about 60 feet apart, running parallel, north east of Fames Rough. In between these is a distinct earthen bank running for hundreds of yards, about two feet high (Figure 12).

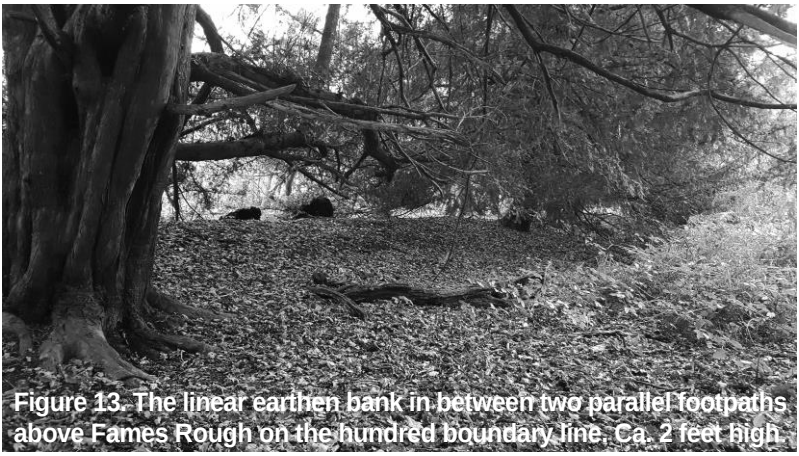


Figure 13. The linear earthen bank in between two parallel footpaths above Fames Rough on the hundred boundary line. Ca. 2 feet high.

This can be traced along most of the south-west to north-east footpath that runs along the edge of the woods. There are numerous yew trees along this, often on top of the bank. Yews are frequently used as boundary or route markers. Yews appear in other parts of the woods and their exact incidence has not been mapped so the seemingly regular occurrence along the boundary may or may not just be a natural phenomenon, spreading through their local range over the centuries. As mentioned earlier, the physical nature of the bank feature may also be connected with the Medieval and possibly later deer park (a “Deer Paddock” is marked on the 1866 XIX OS map) and the need to ring fence the livestock.

Even earlier, the footpath along the northern edge of Harholt Wood may originally have been part of a much older, prehistoric trackway from near the present car park. This would either be a diagonal shortcut avoiding a longer track along the bottom of the “dry” valley, possibly waterlogged in winter or simply as direct access to the plateau area, perhaps then inhabited. Intriguingly, “Har” is also linked to the meanings “Stoney ground” and “mound of stones” (Jepson, 181 & 189), possibly relating to the pebbly nature of the ground mentioned earlier in this article.

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Eileen Deste, Photographer 1909 – 1986
by Pam Buttrey

From about 1950, my mother was the receptionist for Miss Deste, a photographer, at Toc H House, 101 High Street, Hoddesdon, Hertfordshire, making appointments and there when people collected their portrait photographs, while Miss Deste taught her to take passport photographs when she wasn't there: Miss Deste drove up from London, where she had a studio, every Saturday and Wednesday, market day in the town, in an old green Land Rover containing a mobile darkroom.

Several times she photographed me for competitions, one apparently winning first prize in a national competition. In Hoddesdon, she used an old-fashioned camera set on a wooden stand, using glass slides. She was short, slim, always precise, and neatly dressed, usually in a brownish woollen jacket and skirt with her dark hair in a French pleat, pleasant and courteous but reserved with little small talk. I assumed her surname was Italian.

I occasionally looked online curious to know more about this woman from my childhood, but there was no mention of her. Last spring, during lockdown, with little to do, I looked again. Now, her name appears on several websites with her biography on Wikipedia, Historic England, which has over 2,000 of her non-commercial photographs in its collection, and the online *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography*.[1]

Eileen 'Dusty' Deste in front of Fulham Power Station, London 1965-8

The first surprise was that, born Eileen Olive Leach, she probably assumed the surname Deste when she began as a photographer, and was known to friends as 'Dusty'. The next was to find she was born in Croydon in 1909.

Her grandfather Alfred Godson Leach, a clerk born in London, moved to Croydon where her father Alfred Edward Line Leach was born in 1875. The family lived at 5 Landsdowne Terrace, Clifford Road, South Norwood in the 1881 census and were still there in 1902 when Alfred Edward, aged 28, a clerk, married Mary Olivia Rumball. In the marriage register, his father was a 'Gentleman'.

The young couple moved into 76 St. James's Road where Albert Gerald was born in August 1903 and Ernest Jack in December 1904. They lived at 14 Greenwood Road by 1908 until 1910, between London Road and Queen's Road, where Eileen was born on 16 June 1909. All three children were baptised at St James's Church, their father described as a clerk. In the 1911 census, the family were at 24 Battersea Park Road, in Battersea with six rooms. Her father was a bank manager. [2]

Eileen was five when the bank where her father worked collapsed, and he lost his job. The next mention of her parents is in 1921-26 in electoral registers: they lived at Crofton in Fareham, Hampshire. Her family remained in Fareham. In the 1939 Register, her parents and older brother were at 'The Patch', Hillhead Road, Fareham. Her father was Managing Clerk in the Ministry of Labour in Fareham and her brother Alfred a clerk in the same office. Ernest, married and living nearby, was a foreman carpenter: he enlisted in the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve, ending up as a lieutenant commander. Her father died in 1945 and her mother in 1954, both at Merton, Hillhead, Fareham.[3]

Eileen, said not to have got on with her father, left home before the age of twenty, intending to be a photographer. Her first job was at Cartier in London, photographing jewellery, while living in digs in Bloomsbury. Eileen Olive Leach and three other young female photographers sailed from Southampton on the *SS Rotoria* on 30 October 1931, for Wellington, New Zealand. Aged 22, she had lived at 68 Priory Lane, N6.[4]

New Zealand

Initially she set up as a photographer in Dunedin but settled in Wellington by 1933, specialising in weddings and portraits and known as Eileen Deste. Her social life was with a group of university students with 'artistic and literary aspirations [who] espoused left-wing political ideals' and used her studio for meetings. Her English speech, manners and her dress style made her seem very novel in pre-war New Zealand. Eileen made

Wellington her base, on Lambton Quay until 1934, then at Willis Street until 1940-1 when she returned to Lambton Quay.[5]

In 1936, Eileen put on an exhibition of about fifty portraits of adults, including well-known people in Wellington, and children, twelve of dogs and some landscapes. They were well praised, particularly those of children and dogs.[6] She worked elsewhere: in 1937, she advertised a permanent studio in Wellington but, for a short period, was opening another in Hardy Street, Nelson. She described herself as late of Bond Street, London, and 'one of New Zealand's leading exponents of modern camera art'.[7]

In 1938, Eileen won the contract to become official photographer to the New Zealand Centennial Exhibition to be held in 1939-40, to document all its aspects from its construction to its closure on 4 May 1940, including aerial shots from a small plane, the photographs appearing in the exhibition's souvenir book. She had a stall at the exhibition, employing a man to take many of the photographs, which she then developed, but there were complaints about the quality and style. Other photographers were appointed instead for specific projects. She complained, wanting compensation, but was unsuccessful.

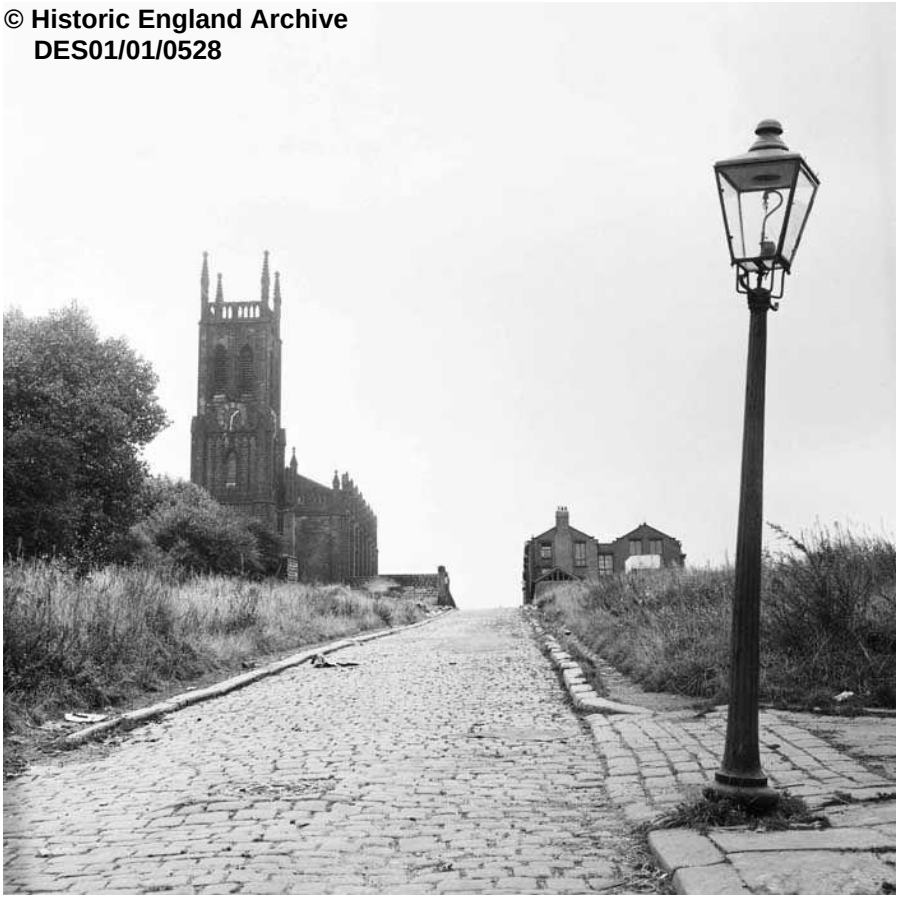
Probably in 1941-2, she was involved in a car collision. A farmer's wife, a passenger in the other car, was awarded £82 6s 9d in damages for injuries. Eileen's appeal in July 1942, in the Supreme Court, was dismissed.[8] In June 1942, she travelled in the Bay of Plenty area, booking a place for a day to take portraits, describing herself as the 'Official Centennial Exhibition Photographer'.[9] In December 1942, Eileen advertised the sale of her studio and equipment on Lambton Quay, with a turnover of £60 a week: 'This Studio is showing wonderful profit and business definitely has to be turned away each day . . . Reason for selling will be divulged to genuine buyer. Will be sacrificed at £750 as going concern'.[10] The following year, she returned to England, a potentially dangerous sea voyage in wartime.

London

The next mention is in London's electoral registers which recommenced in 1945 after war ended. For some years, Eileen seems to have rented a property with accommodation in fashionable parts of London, where she lived, had a studio and sublet rooms to sub-tenants or lodgers. She mixed socially with ex-patriate New Zealanders. In 1945-6, she rented at 20 Brook Street, her sub-tenants being Hugh Ferguson Robinson, and his wife Alison Joyce who grew up in New Zealand. The Robinsons, who married in London in 1931, returned to London from Wellington in 1938 with their young son. Hugh, aged 40, was described on the passenger list as an artist.

In 1947, Eileen was at 49 South Molton Street, a basement, with only Alison listed with her. The next year, Hugh was also there. In 1948-9, Eileen was at 88 Sloane Street, Chelsea with Alison and two others. Eileen and Alison returned to 49 South Molton Street in 1949, where Eileen remained in 1956, now with just a man listed at the same place, Samuel G Flitman.[11]

© Historic England Archive
DES01/01/0528



St. Mary's Street and the Church of St. Mary, Quarry Hill, Leeds

In 1948, her photographs were published in a book: *London day: a glimpse at the city*. She photographed art works for London galleries, was commissioned by the National Trust to photograph contents in its houses, and travelled around England photographing disappearing industrial

landscapes and manufacture, and barren urban areas where Victorian terraces had been demolished. The *Observer* published her photographs of industrial chimneys; other projects included old prison doors and Staffordshire pottery kilns. Overseas she took photographs in the USA, in India where she photographed Indira Gandi, and the Sahara from Algeria down to Nigeria.

Eileen was at 30 Thayer Street, Marylebone from 1959 to 1962, again with other names at the same property. 1965 found her at 6 Thayer Street with a Mr Hicks and Hugh Robinson, he and Alison having split up in 1959. In 1973, she had a studio at 163 Seymour Place, close to Edgeware Road, and a flat in Marylebone.[12] A long-standing friend lived in the flat above, an explorer and traveller, political writer and expert in African history, Guy Arnold 1932-2020, brought up in Croydon.[13]

With failing health, Eileen Deste gave up photography about 1980 and died in 1986 at St. Mary's Hospital, Paddington, being buried at West London Crematorium. She is described in her biographies as an eccentric unmarried woman, always with many friends and never rich as she either spent it or gave it away.[14] In England, her lasting legacy is the collection of over 2,000 photographs of now lost scenes now held in the Historic England archive and available to view online.

Notes

[1] Deste, Eileen, Wikipedia and Historic England websites, Dictionary of New Zealand Biography 2000, 2021 ed. https:/teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/5d18/deste-eileen-olive
[2] Parish register entries and census details from Ancestry.co.uk. 1881 census: RG11/819/80. 1911 census: RG14/26/2154.
[3] Electoral registers, 1939 Register and Probate index from Ancestry.co.uk
[4] Ancestry.co.uk
[5] Dictionary of New Zealand Biography
[6] New Zealand newspapers: https:/paperspast.natlib.gov.nz/newspapers. *Evening Post*, 17 Oct 1936
[7] *Nelson Evening News*, 4 Jun 1937
[8] *Evening Post*, 2 July 1942
[9] *Bay of Plenty Beacon*, 17 Jun 1942
[10] *Evening Post*, 18 Dec 1942
[11] Ancestry.co.uk. Electoral registers, passenger list
[12] Ancestry.co.uk
[13] Wikipedia
[14] Dictionary of New Zealand Biography

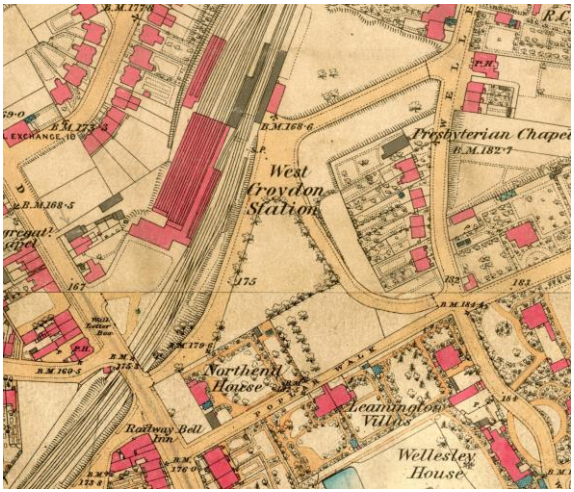
The east side of Station Road West Croydon . . . gone!
by Carole Roberts

In spring those of us visiting Croydon after the lockdown found that the buildings on the eastern side of Station Road Croydon were almost gone.

Eastern side of Station Road in 2017
© Google 2021 Image capture Apr 2017

Station Road in August 2021
© Carole Roberts

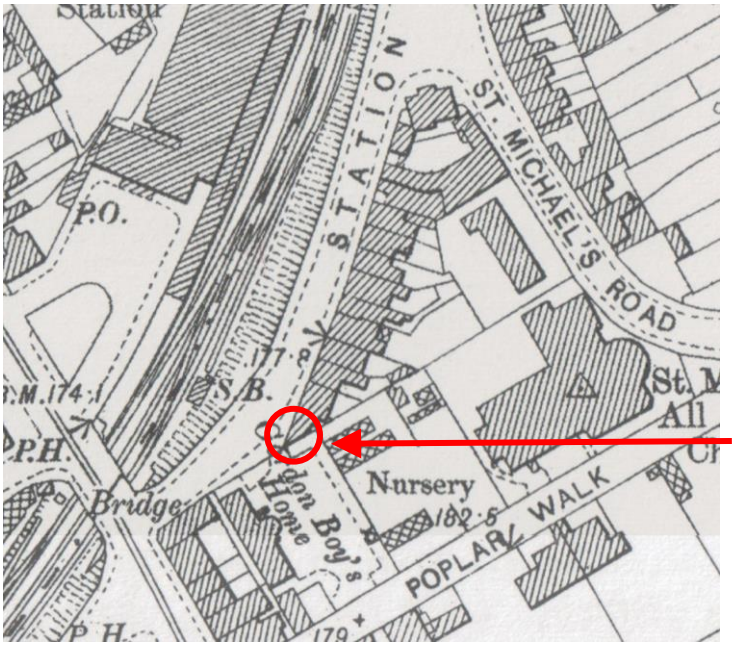
Sadly there had been a marked deterioration of these shops in recent years and work had started in February to demolish them. But what of their past? When were they built, and who occupied them?



West Croydon Station and North End House in 1868. From Ordnance Survey 25-inch maps Surrey Sheets XIV.6 and XIV.10, surveyed 1867-8. Courtesy of Tony Skrzypczyk

Although West Croydon Railway Station opened in 1839, until the 1870s the only building on the site of the future Station Road was North End House, which had its entrance in Poplar Walk.

The new shops that were appearing by 1874 were in what was known as Station Yard and accessed from Wellesley Road. Once this phase of building was complete the main access changed to the junction of North End and London Road, and the new buildings were renumbered from there as 1-17 Station Road. Number 1 was almost triangular as it abutted the land of North End House in Poplar Walk.



The Station Road buildings in 1895. Ordnance Survey 6-inch map London Sheet CLIV, surveyed 1894-5 published 1897

The new road included a collection of buildings at the northern end that were demolished in a 1980s enlargement of West Croydon Bus Station. The buildings that remained until this year on the eastern side of Station Road were originally numbers 1-11 which by 1934 had been renumbered as 14-44 (with gaps).

From right to left the original numbers 1 to 11 Station Road (later 14-44) pictured in 2009. Copyright and courtesy of Dr Neil Clifton

One early indication of occupation of these buildings was in January 1876 when Charles Isaac Smart announced he would be moving his piano making business to Station Road.

CHARLES I. SMART,
PIANOFORTE MAKER,
8, OAKFIELD TERRACE, WEST CROYDON,
WILL REMOVE to his NEW PREMISES,
when Finished, STATION ROAD, WEST CROYDON.
A large Assortment of Second-hand Pianos.
Pianos tuned, 3s. 6d.
Pianos Exchanged.
Pianos Repaired.
Pianos on the one, two, or three years system.
Old Instruments Bought or Exchanged.
All Musical Fittings.

Croydon Chronicle and East Surrey Advertiser, 15 January 1876, p1

By 20 May of that year Charles was advertising from the future number 8 Station Road. Within five years he would retire from the business which would be taken over by Charles Barker.

Meanwhile in 1876 Grace's Coal Offices moved into the future number 4 which would remain a coal merchant's premises for 40 years, benefitting from the proximity to West Croydon Railway Station which then had an entrance almost opposite. Others who soon moved into the buildings that remained until this year included Charles George Yarndley, watch and clock maker at the future number 11; Miss Allen, milliner and hatter at the future number 6; and butcher Henry Davis formerly of 2 London Road, who remained at the future number 5 until he died in 1907.

© The John Gent Collection reference jg-pc-cc-739

By 1878 John Barton Greey, sewing machine agent and Salvationist, was in Station Road at the future number 10 where he would remain trading for 26 years. By 1887 Edmund Hopwood, carver and dealer from Lancashire then Wandsworth, moved into the future number 9. His descendants would continue the business at number 9 down the decades adapting to the times, to be picture frame makers by 1934, fine art dealers by 1955 and picture dealers by 1967.

By 1891 Walter Jennings, son of Joseph Jennings newsagent of North End, had moved into number 1 Station Road with his own news agency business. Like his father's shop it was well-placed for speedy distribution of newspapers collected from the London trains. From 1904 Walter's sister Ellen took over the business. In 1908 she moved, making way for fruiterer Robert Mortimer, to number 3 where she remained until she died in 1930. The business carried on in the Jennings name until at least 1955.

By 1892 Charles George Yarndley was succeeded at number 11 by William Westlake Wilson, watchmaker and jeweller from Devon. In 1899 William announced that he had made extensive alterations to the premises and was showing entirely new stock. In the next few years he contributed silver prizes such as medals, cups or watches or clocks for local sports events. William's business was still at the same premises in 1939.

From right to left the original numbers 1 to 6 Station Road in 2009. Copyright and courtesy of Dr Neil Clifton

By 1874 the future number 2 was the premises of artist and photographer Henry Ward and his wife Susan. Henry Benjamin Ward was born 1837 in Deptford and married Susan Morrell in 1859. By 1867, in addition to photography businesses in South London, Mr and Mrs Ward were advertising a *cartes de visite* service from Alpha Lodge in Beulah Grove, Windmill Road. They moved into number 2 Station Road around 1873. A

drawing on the reverse of an early H. Ward photograph from there shows the building before a third storey was built:

After the third storey was added 'Ward's day & electric light studios' straddled the top of the building. This was rather misleading as for most of its existence Ward's Photographic Studios only occupied the middle shop of the building number 2, apart from around 1902-7 when it also occupied the adjoining shop number 3.

Numbers 1-4 (r-l) Station Road around 1909 showing Ward's Photographic Studios at number 2. © The John Gent Collection reference jg-pc-cc-735

By 1881 Henry and his family were living at Sanderstead, possibly because the Station Road premises was entirely used for studios.

Henry Ward's day and electric light studios was popular for portrait photography. In the below left image, typically for photographs of the time, the customer is leaning on a chair for stability during the long exposure time required for the photograph.

Photograph by H. Ward at Station Road Croydon

Photograph of Norah Feist by H. Ward West Croydon

A later customer was Norah Feist, who signed her photograph on 15th April 1911 (above right). In 1911 Norah was aged 16 of 320 London Road and a pupil of dancing teacher Mrs Herbert Drew. She appeared locally as a dancer and singer sometimes with her younger sister Joan. Norah would continue a career in entertainment for the rest of her life as Noreena Feist, being described in 1939 as a concert artiste.

About 1888 Henry and Susan Ward retired to Caversham in Oxfordshire leaving their son Henry in charge of the photography business, which continued at 2 Station Road until about 1937 after which Henry retired to Saltdean in Sussex.

During the years that Station Road was developing, North End House in Poplar Walk became a school. In 1878 it opened as the Commercial and Science School under Mr Henry Turner and in 1892 it became the Gordon Boys' Home.

In 1903 the Gordon Boys' Home moved to Morland Road, and North End House was sold and subsequently demolished. This enabled four extra shops to be built in Station Road that first appeared in the 1908 directory, initially as Railway Buildings numbers 1-4 and subsequently as 1-4 Station Buildings, and are seen here pictured in 2009.

From right to left: the shops originally numbered 1 to 4 Station Buildings (later 6-12 Station Road) in 2009. Copyright and courtesy of Dr Neil Clifton

Their first occupants were stationer A.R. Cleverly, possibly Alfred Robert Cleverly of Thornton Heath, and hairdresser Ernest Edward Sowerbutts. During 1908 they were joined by finance organisations and costumier by Louise Waters.

In April 1908 Emile Savage's Bioscope Pictures moved into 4a Station Buildings, which was an extension accessed through number 4. Although Bioscope films were increasingly being shown as part of the entertainment at theatres this was the first dedicated space for films in Croydon.

On THURSDAY NEXT, APRIL 16th.

OPENING AT

STATION RD., W. CROYDON

(Three doors from North End).

LIVING PICTURES. LIVING PICTURES.

The most wonderful Entertainment ever put before the Public for the modest sum of One Penny.

Take Note: THIS IS NOT a Penny Gaff, but a Refined and High-Class Entertainment for which a Shilling is charged in the West End.

Our price is ONE PENNY, and One Penny is all you are asked to spend.

Each Performance lasts about Half-an-Hour. Afternoon from 3, Evening from 7.

DON'T FORGET THE ADDRESS—

LIVING PICTURES,

STATION BUILDINGS,

Facing West Croydon Station.

Croydon Guardian and Surrey County Gazette, 11 April 1908, p2

During 1909 this expanded into number 4 Station Buildings where there was a frontage to Station Road and was renamed the Station Picture Hall. Within three years it faced much competition from newer picture halls which had improved equipment and fire precautions. In 1912 it became the King's Picture Hall and in 1914 it was chastised for opening on a Sunday. By 1916 it was under new management and there was investment in new equipment but in 1917 it closed.

The former numbers 3 and 4 Station Buildings retained ornate paned windows as shown below.

Station Road, West Croydon, London CRO by Kake, under CC Non-Commercial-ShareAlike licence

The similarity of design with the windows in the below photographs by Henry Ward makes it very likely that the restaurant shown was situated at 3 and 4 Station Buildings.

Photographs by H Ward West Croydon

This suggests that the restaurant was ‘The Creamery’ of 3 and 4 Station Buildings when it was under either Sebastian Longhi and family from about 1918 to 1928 or Francesco Semplici from 1929 to at least 1939.

In 1955 the businesses at 6-44 Station Road included cafés, a gentlemen’s hairdresser, an optician, a vacuum cleaner shop, a men’s American clothes shop and ‘The Captain’ sports goods, under Lily Kate Key following the passing away of her husband George in 1950. By 1967 ‘The Captain’ was a fishing tackle shop and there was also a travel agency, a piano shop, two turf accountants and two television shops. In the 1990s there were charity shops,

a vacuum cleaner parts shop, a hearing aid shop, a designer dress agency, a recruitment agency, a wholefoods shop, a record shop and a pet shop.

By 2008 F.W. Bowditch and Knitters' Needs were closed and the remaining shops were from left to right: on the corner Discount Furniture later Discount Beds; Swag Records; Solnishko Delicatessen; Mega Mall grocery; Electronics Exchange; Original Barber; Kendall Cars minicab service; Lycamobile mobile phone shop; A & S travel agent; Finger Licking African food shop; the Gypsy Tavern (numbered 12a being part of the former number 14); Home Sweet Home grocery store; Beauty Queen beauty salon; New Fashion Looks; and another Lycamobile mobile phone shop. In the 2010s Swag Records became Freda's Posh Hair & Nails, the Gypsy Tavern became The Phoenix, Home Sweet Home expanded into number 24 replacing Original Barber and Amaya Hair & Beauty replaced Electronics Exchange. By October 2020 several of the shops were vacated.

So that's the past of these shops in Station Road, but what of the future? The facades of the four former Station Buildings have been left standing, to be incorporated into the next development on the site. And at August 2021 certainly some of the paned windows are still intact.

Sources:

Ward's Croydon Directories accessed at Museum of Croydon or online at Google Books
National Probate Calendar accessed at Ancestry.co.uk
British Newspaper Archive accessed at Findmypast.co.uk
General Record Office Indexes accessed at FreeBMD
https://www.freebmd.org.uk/cgi/search.pl and GRO Online Indexes
https://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/certificates/indexes_search.asp
1881-1911 censuses accessed at Ancestry.co.uk
1939 Register accessed at Findmypast.co.uk
Station Road photographs at Flickr.com
Kake's and bob walker's website 'Croydon in the 2010s' at https://croydon.randomness.org.uk/wiki.cgi?Locale_Station_Road
Croydon and District Telephone Directory April 1950.

The First-ever Athletic Air Passenger?
by Trevor James

Neil Duncanson's celebration in *The Observer* [16 May 2021] of the achievements of Britain's first black Olympic medallist, Harry Edward, has struck a chord with Croydon Harriers.

Now celebrating their centenary, in its second year of existence, Croydon Harriers had a very early and exciting, newsworthy, encounter with Harry Edward. In 1922 Jack Lisney, the founder and first Honorary Secretary of the club, was in the crowd at Stamford Bridge on the memorable and unique occasion when Harry won the AAA 100 yards, 220 yards and 440 yards in the space of one hour.

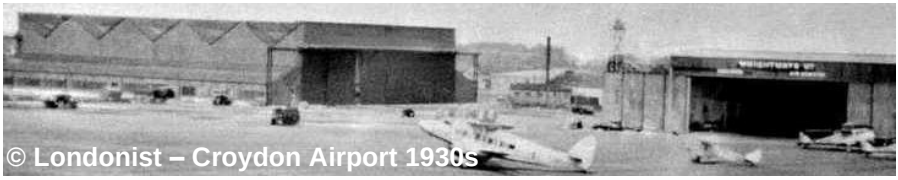
Having witnessed this remarkable achievement, Jack Lisney obtained Harry's signature on an entry form for a short limit 100 yards handicap to be held in Croydon on the following Saturday. Having achieved this 'coup' Jack and another club official, Mr Hughes, hurried back to Croydon and prepared a special poster announcing Harry's participation. The copy was rushed to the printers and by Monday evening 500 posters were being

displayed on hoardings and walls, and in windows, all over Croydon and the neighbouring area. The club was relishing this tremendous piece of publicity.

However, in a sudden intervention on the Tuesday, a telephone call from the AAA informed the club that, as Harry was already booked to run in Paris on the following Sunday, he could not compete at the club's event at the Plough Lane sports field.

In a state of crisis, with all the advertising in place and with this intervention by the AAA, the two Croydon Harriers rushed up to London to see Harry Edward who then explained that he had the previous year promised the French people that he would run at their meeting and had quite forgotten this when he signed the Croydon Harriers entry form. After protracted discussions, Harry agreed that, if the club could get him to Paris for Sunday, he would readily run at Croydon.

The Croydon officials were extremely conscious that the new Croydon Airport, in effect London's airport at that point, was the answer to this problem. At the Airport an aeroplane was booked to take Harry to Paris immediately after the race. They believed that they had solved this problem but, on the Friday, the day before the race, Jack Lisney received a letter from the Airport stating that as Harry Edward was to be the only passenger flying to Paris on Saturday, they could not fly the plane for just one passenger. Jack Lisney then rushed to the Airport to remonstrate with the officials and eventually, when the situation had been fully explained, the authorities agreed to carry the valuable sportsman on his own to Paris, as previously agreed.



This is a remarkable story. It is almost certainly the case that Croydon Harriers, with the unique opportunity presented by their famous Airport, were partners in the first ever piece of air travel by an athlete between competitions. It is also worth commenting that these voluntary Croydon Harriers officials were rushing about between Croydon, the AAA office and the Airport almost certainly by bus or tram, so the stress levels will have been so much higher than in our world of social media and fast trains to and from East Croydon Station.

Linguistic Musings
by Ian Payne

Linguistics – The scientific study of language in its widest sense, in every aspect and in all its varieties (Chambers Dictionary 13th Edition).

Fowler's was always at our fingertips when I grew up. 'A Dictionary of Modern English Usage' (H. W. Fowler, 1926), which was commonly referred to by its author's name, was always our first reference point for the use of English. Opening my volume (almost) at random: "Inversion is the deferral of the subject till after (especially in older English) the verb, or till after (especially in modern English) the verb's auxiliary only; *What saith he?*, *What does he say?*, are both inversions, the uninverted forms being *he saith*, *he says*. In questions and commands, as contrasted with the commoner form of sentence, the statement, inversion is the rule."

The reference to 'older' and 'modern' English immediately tells us that language changes with time. Shakespeare's English is very different from ours. The verb 'to do' was still emerging in Shakespeare's time, so a question would be formed as *What says he?* rather than *What does he say?*, and in the negative *He speaks not* rather than *He doesn't speak*. Similarly, the continuous form of verb *He is speaking* is in modern English an alternative to *He eats*. So grammar changes over time as does vocabulary and syntax. Chaucer's 'Knight's Tale' (late 13th century) begins "Whylom, as olde stories tellen us, Ther was a duk that highte Theseus." 'Highte' meaning to call or name is now archaic although I was recently reading Richard Burton's (the explorer) translation of 'The Thousand Nights and one Night' (1885). Its beautiful language attempts to reproduce the Arabic style and hence is full of explanatory notes. To further emphasise the milieu, it uses outdated words such as hight and wit (understanding) and the archaic second person singular.

Language is changing all around us and often (which I pronounce with a silent 't') one shudders each time one hears what sounds like an aberration. For example, it seems nowadays that adverbs are dying. An adverb modifies a verb or adjective or another adverb and, I was taught' ends in 'ly', but *Do it quick* is more likely now than *Do it quickly*. An irregular form is the adjective/adverb *good/well*. If someone asks me '*How are you*' I answer '*well*', but most younger people would answer '*good*'. I was taught, when shaking hands, that the answer to '*How do you do*' is '*How do you do*' and not '*I'm good*'. When receiving a cold call (if I've decided to accept it) I absolutely hate the salesman's opening words being '*How are you?*' I really dislike a complete stranger asking after my health and sometimes I tell

them so. And, of course, the salesman will address me by my first name until told not to do so.

But I'm wrong. Language is changing all the time and absorbing new words from the street *[are you woke?]* and from technology to describe our latest gadgets. But I can't stop correcting '*dissect*' each time it's pronounced similarly to '*bisect*'. The latter, *bisect* [bī-sekt'] means to divide or cut into two equal parts from the Latin *bi-* two- and ***sectāre*** to cut whereas *dissect* [di-sekt'] means to cut into pieces from the Latin *dis-* apart- etc. The pronunciation in brackets distinguishes between 'ī' as in '**eye**' and 'i' as in '**i**n' and the apostrophe within the brackets is placed after the stressed syllable. Another refence book always available was 'Chambers Twentieth Century Dictionary' (Chambers's Twentieth Century Dictionary 1901, Chambers English Dictionary 1988, Chambers Dictionary 1993). The latest edition is available as an app and it's my constant companion on my smartphone. Its clarity and comprehensiveness are complemented by its guide to pronunciation and etymology. Also, well-famed for its use for crosswords, this function is fully covered by a search with question mark function on the app. Actually Chambers give [dī] or [di] as alternatives for 'dissect' – traitors!

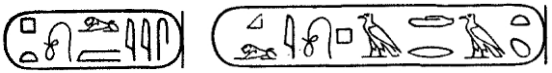
I'm not entirely innocent myself. Pauline is always correcting me when I drop my '*t*'s and pronounce '*button*' [but'n] as [buʔ'n] where 'ʔ' is the glottal stop instead of a dropped 't'. Also I sometimes drop my aitches in '*he*' and '*have*' if I'm not concentrating. Goodness knows where I picked up these disgusting habits. You'll remember learning pronunciation rules such as: if a consonant lies between two vowels then the first vowel becomes long, so '*tap'* is pronounced [tap] (short 'a') but '*tape*' is pronounced [tāp] (long 'a'). Another common rule is that 'c' and 'g' become hard before 'a', 'o' or 'u'. Thus '*cent*', '*civil*', '*gentle*', '*ginger*' have soft 'c' and 'g', [s] and [j] whereas '*cat*', '*cut*', '*goat*', '*gun*' have hard 'c' and 'g', [k] and [g]. But there are always exceptions. How about '*margarine*'? I'm sure you pronounce this [mär-jə-rēn'] with a soft 'g' but I pronounce the middle syllable as [-gə-], a hard 'g', because my father did and justified it with "'g' is hard before 'a'". I'm surprised to find that Chambers gives both as alternatives but the hard 'g' must be quite rare nowadays. I'm sure that you and I have often learned words from books and been surprised to learn their correct pronunciation much later.

Did you notice 'you and I' in the last sentence? Another of my bugbears is the incorrect use of 'you and I' or 'you and me'. The rule is quite simple. 'I' is subject case and 'me' is object case used as direct or indirect object. Examples: 'You and I are going for a walk', 'They gave you and me a present', 'He gave it to you and me'. It makes no difference which way round are the 'I and you' or 'me and you'. A simple way to see if you've got

it right is to leave out the ‘you’. If you’d normally say ‘I am going for a walk’, then it’s ‘You and I are going for a walk’. Similarly, if you’d normally say ‘me’ on its own, then it’s ‘you and me’. I think this all stems from ignorant teachers drumming ‘you and I’ into children perhaps with the thought that ‘you and me’ is impolite. What nonsense.

Writing was probably invented separately in Mesopotamia, Egypt, China and Mesoamerica. It can be shown that several other writing systems have evolved creating a succession of scripts that look quite distinct but have a common origin. Some writing systems, or even the concept of writing, may have been invented by societies aping what they had seen others do. A comparatively recent example is of the rongorongo script invented by the Rapanui people of Easter Island inspired by the Spanish visit in 1770 when the local chiefs each had to make their mark on the Spanish deed of cession. Deciphering this script proved problematic after the Rapanui were forcefully dispersed and lost the ability to read it. According to decipherer Steven Roger Fisher (Glyph-Breaker 1997) the subject matter of those wooden tablet glyphs turned out to be genealogical tables of the form X mates with Y having offspring Z. The clue was a phallus-like appendage (see below each ↓) to the first symbol in each group of characters.

Language scripts can be logographic (Egyptian hieroglyphics, Mayan, Chinese), syllabic (Linear B Mycenaean Greek, Old Persian Cuneiform) and alphabetic. A logogram represents a word or morpheme – such scripts typically have thousands of characters. Syllabic scripts have typically a little less than one hundred characters each representing a combination of a consonant plus vowel. Alphabetic scripts usually have less than thirty characters. A problem with logograms is homophones *(words sounding alike)* which is solved in all three examples above by the addition of a silent determinative *(additional symbol)* after a word indicating the nature of the word, e.g. divinity, person, plant. Alphabets developed by taking and usually stylising an image to represent the leading sound of its word. Egyptian hieroglyphics did, however, use almost alphabet characters within cartouches *(the oval in the examples below)* to represent gods and pharaohs.



(Doblhofer, 1973, 68/9)

Ptolemy Cleopatra

note □ = p, 𓏏 = t, 𓇋 = l in their appropriate positions in each cartouche – they didn’t use vowels

Comparison of cartouches and the Greek translation on the Rosetta Stone enabled Jean-François Champollion (1790–1832) to break the back of hieroglyphic decipherment.

Western alphabets are descendants of the Phoenician alphabet including Hebrew, Arabic, Greek, Latin and Cyrillic. The three Semitic languages, Phoenician, ancient Hebrew and ancient Arabic are closely related and had no vowels – dots have been added since to represent vowels. Latin and Cyrillic alphabets are derived from the Greek. English uses the Latin or Roman alphabet with a few additions but, in my opinion, two unfortunate losses. When William Caxton brought the moveable type printing press invented by Johannes Gutenberg to England in 1496, there were no blocks to represent eth (ð) and thorn (þ), so Caxton substituted 'th' and we've used it ever since. Icelandic still uses eth and thorn.

Samuel Johnson is credited with the standardisation of English spelling with his Dictionary of the English Language (1755). The spelling then represented the sounds of the London area. Of course, it never properly fitted the dialects of the regions and the development of the spoken language since has left many spellings not matching their current pronunciation. Take 'tough' [u], 'plough' [ow], 'cough' [o], 'brought' [ö], though [ō], 'through' [oo]. In middle English they were pronounced the same, but the sound has changed while the spelling has remained the same. There have been many suggestions to standardise the spelling, but southern 'bath' [ä] and 'shut' [u] don't sound like northern 'bath' [a] and 'shut' [ŭ]. And there's the dropped aitches and glottalized *(dropped)* 't's mentioned earlier. A new spelling in England wouldn't do for Scotland or Wales or America (which mostly has the same spelling as we have).

It's inevitable, therefore, that our difficult spelling is here to stay – or is it? Modern texting has brought new spelling and abbreviations at which we of older generations shudder. Icons have replaced words on the computer. I have to say that I'm partially dys-ikonic *(cf dyslexic)*, I much prefer words to pictures. The common use of emojis leaves me exasperated. Whole sentences in a single image. We're going native and returning to primitive picture writing. But we hardly write nowadays – we email and we text and schools are no longer interested in teaching how to hold a pen or pencil – 6000 years of progress come to nought.

I've mentioned several dictionaries, but I must mention one more. 'The Oxford Companion to the English Language' (Ed: Tom McArthur OUP 1992). It's one of twenty large volumes in my lounge bookcase for easy reference, except that most of them are now redundant due to Google and Wikipedia. The Oxford Companion has over 4,000 alphabetical articles

covering grammar, style and history of English but also, nations, accents, dialects, jargons, people and education. The articles are so interesting and fascinating. Of course one can dip into it, but it's readable as a book from cover to cover. 'Malapropism': an error in which a similar-sounding word is substituted for the intended one – after Mrs Malaprop in Richard Sheridan's play The Rivals (1775).

Unfortunately, The Companion was published too late to include 'Mondegreen': A demonstration that speech perception is not the same thing as fleshing out expectations, comes from an illusion that the columnist Jon Carroll has called the mondegreen, after his mis-hearing of the folk ballad "The Bonnie Earl O'Moray":

Oh, ye hielands and ye lowlands,
Oh, where hae ye been?
They have slain the Earl of Moray,
And laid him on the green.

He had always thought that the lines were "They have slain the Earl of Moray, And Lady Mondegreen." My discovery of the Mondegreen reminded me of a story my father always repeated whenever he heard the hymn 'O God our help in ages past'. As a schoolboy he had always misunderstood the line "Sufficient is thine arm alone" and therefore misheard it and substituted "A fish swam in thine arm alone".

What a wonderful thing, the English Language.

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CNHSS Post Vacancies

All our posts are rotated from time to time and we are very keen to attract our members to consider understudying any of those below with a view to taking a lead role in the future, perhaps as a member of Council.

Council Positions (elected at the AGM)
President, Vice-Presidents, Hon. General Secretary, Hon. Curator, Hon. Editor, Hon Librarian (**vacant**), Hon. Treasurer

Non-elected posts
Bulletin Editor, Company Secretary, Conservation Officer, Distribution Secretary, Membership Secretary, Programme Events Co-ordinator (**vacant)**, Publicity Officer (**vacant**), Sales Officer, Web Manager.

Anyone who would like to know more about any of our roles, whether shown as vacant or not, should contact the General Secretary at information@cnhss.co.uk or phone 020 8406 4676

Mr. Simon Barnett – an appreciation by John Hickman

Regular users of the Research Room in Croydon Clocktower will be sorry to learn of the loss of Simon Barnett from the team.

Simon's role has been lost as a result of cutbacks arising from Croydon Council's recent re-organisation. During his six years' service chiefly at the desk in the Research Room Simon became a familiar figure to users. He was always generous with help, not least being one of the few tall enough to retrieve maps from an overly tall and awkward map-chest – the location of the contents of which he was thankfully very familiar. Simon always gave polite and cheerful service; a gift sometimes put to good use at the public/Museum of Croydon interface. Although by no means a 'jobsworth,' he correctly adhered to the necessary rules and gave a very efficient service to both regular readers and visitors alike. During the Covid-19 pandemic Simon contributed online content to the Museum of Croydon website, for the Victory Day in Croydon event in May 2020 and on how an Ordnance Survey map can assist research.

Without doubt, Simon was a credit to the Museum of Croydon service. He will be missed, and we wish him all the very best for the future.

The CNHSS Museum archaeological collection of Walter H Bennett, FRS, 1892 – 1971 by Christopher Taylor, Museum Curator

This year is the 50th anniversary of the death of probably the most important benefactor the Society has had in its long history: Walter Hellyer Bennett.

In his will Bennett bequeathed his very considerable archaeological collection to the Society. His life-time donations and a financial bequest were used to create the Bennett Fund which financed the purchase of our museum and library buildings.

Figure 1. Walter Hellyer Bennett.

Bennett was a pioneer tin miner in northern Nigeria from ca. 1915 to 1922. He returned to the UK in 1922 and joined the CNHSS in the following year, subsequently serving as president in 1931/2. In the 1930s he travelled widely in North America and Europe. During his travels he collected archaeological, geological and ethnographical items.

Bennett was first to last a collector, but distinguished from the average by the grand scale and excellent quality of his collecting. His collection was so large it needed separate accommodation, and to house it he built a 60 foot long museum and three smaller sheds in the garden of his long time residence in Shirley, Surrey.

The museum collection is primarily archaeological and comprises over 2,000 items, all now individually numbered and catalogued; it is planned to place a summary of the main elements on the members' section of the Society's website so that researchers can see what is available for study. In addition to this resource the CNHSS library at HQ is possibly the most important resource on all aspects of the history and background of Croydon.

The provenance of the archaeology reflects Bennett's travels, and includes items from Australasia and the Pacific, France, North America, Egypt and Nigeria. Of note is a very large collection of Upper Palaeolithic flint artefacts from the now world famous caves in south west France (see our Bulletin 168 for full details). This was evidently collected by Bennett himself whilst in France in the 1930s.

Figure 2. Polished stone axes from New Guinea.

Of importance in the collection are also hundreds of items from the UK. These include several first class examples of Lower Palaeolithic flint handaxes (fig. 1) from Seven Kings and Leytonstone London and over 300 Lower Palaeolithic handaxes and flakes from named pits at the iconic Kent site at Swanscombe. It seems these collections were bought by Bennett at the 1948 auction sale of the Dr Frank Corner collection, at Puttick and Simpson, London.

Figure 3. Lower Palaeolithic pointed handaxe from Leytonstone London. 206mm long. Acquired by Bennett at 1948 auction of the Dr Frank Corner collection, Puttick and Simpson, London.

As well as the Bennett collection the museum has a huge number of artefacts from the Croydon area, dating from the Palaeolithic to the Roman period. These items have been generously donated over the last fifty years by local collectors.

If you have an enquiry about the material held by the Society's Museum and or would like to view the collection please contact the curator Chris Taylor on:

information@cnhss.co.uk

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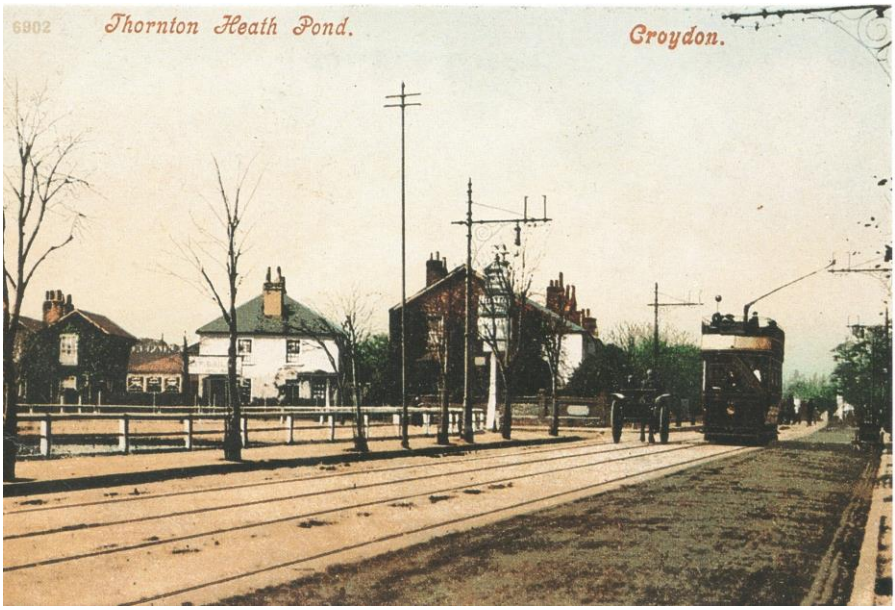
A Postcard of Thornton Heath Pond 1904
by Jane McLauchlin



Thornton Heath Pond about 1904. CNHSS "Old Croydon" Series 89/7

The view looks north to a tram travelling past the pond, just visible on the left behind the railings. Before piped water supplies, ponds were an essential feature of the landscape. At the beginning of the 19th century, Croydon was a small town with about 8000 inhabitants [1] in rural surroundings. Thornton Heath was a small settlement with a few buildings, detached from Croydon by fields.

Croydon was a centre for cattle markets until the last one closed in 1935 [2]. Horses provided transport, and cows and horses each need at least 50 litres of water a day to drink [3]. The location of ponds depends on local geology and/or the need for a pond. They may be artificially dug, or fed by streams or draining rain water [4]. Most of Croydon's streams have now been culverted, but G.M. Davies (1885-1973) remembered "*a small stream flowing through the garden of a house north of Thornton Heath Pond. It must have run from the Pond to Norbury Brook. Water level then was high in the neighbourhood, but now it is built over and most of the rainfall goes down the sewers to Beddington, so there is no water near the surface*" [5]. The name of Thornton Heath reflects a habitat which has almost disappeared

in London. Heathland and acid grassland once covered considerable areas of London's patches of gravelly and sandy soils [6], which were too infertile for good crop-growing but which would be rough grazing, which maintained a distinct community of plants, insects, other invertebrates and fungi. Today only 80Ha remains, including our own Addington Hills, Croham Hurst and Shirley Heath [7]. Many place names in London reflect heathland – Hampstead Heath, Hounslow Heath and Putney Heath retain the habitat to different extents, but Thornton Heath is a ghost name.

Ordnance Survey maps through the 19th century [8] show first ribbon development along London Road, then more building which made Thornton Heath contiguous with Croydon, whose population increased about 18-fold to 143,000 in 1901 [1]. The tram joined Croydon and Norbury via the Pond in 1901 [9], so was still quite new in 1904 when the original postcard was made. In the late 19th century, civic pride resulted in the creation of many public parks and monuments, and the Pond was urbanised with a concrete surround, railings and a fountain to commemorate Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee of 1897. Its appearance deteriorated in the 20th century, and in 1953 the fountain was removed and the pond mostly filled in [10]. Recently the dry pond has had a makeover and is now an attractive garden with trees and ornamental rocks.

Another postcard of Thornton Heath Pond, with the fountain, in summer
Postmarked 1907

Croydon doesn't have much surface water, but still has more than 40 ponds [11], from the magnificent South Norwood Lake, formerly a reservoir for the Croydon Canal, to formal ponds in parks and small natural-looking woodland ponds.

And the 64 bus still starts and finishes at “Thornton Heath Pond”.

Notes

1. https://data.london.gov.uk
2. Gent, J B (2002) Croydon Past. Phillimore, Chichester.
3. Cows: www.daera-ni.gov.uk. Up to 150 litres when in milk.
   Horses: www.bluecross.org.uk. More in hot weather or when working hard.
4. Rackham, O (1986) The History of the Countryside. J.M. Dent, London
5. Quoted in Gent, J B (ed) (1979) Croydon, the story of a hundred years, fifth edition. CNHSS.
6. Geological Map, 1:50 000 series sheet 270, South London. British Geological Society 1981.
7. London’s Heathland Heritage Sites (2006). London Biodiversity Partnership.
8. 1819 OS map reproduced in The Village London Atlas, Alderman Press 1986. 1871 onwards from the National Library of Scotland, https://maps.nls.uk.
9. Gent, J B (ed) (1981) Edwardian Croydon Illustrated. CNHSS.
10. Gent, J B (ed) (1987) Victorian Croydon Illustrated, 2nd edition. CNHSS.
11. Asquith, A (2020) the Croydon Ponds Project 2018-2020. TCV (The Conservation Volunteers) www.tcv.org.uk/croydon.

150th Anniversary
by Carole Roberts

The 150th Anniversary Committee felt it unwise to attempt to start the 150th Anniversary celebrations this year. We are however more hopeful of starting the programme in April 2022. This will be reviewed later in the year and the decision advised as soon as possible to those members for whom we have email addresses and permission to use them for updates. To be added to this list please email cnhss.info@gmail.com.

Whenever the celebrations start, seating for the opening event at the Old Palace is likely to be limited and will be on a first-come-first-served basis. Can any member who has not already provisionally reserved a space and wishes to do so please email cnhss.info@gmail.com or write to CNHSS, 96a Brighton Road, South Croydon, Surrey CR2 6AD, including your name, contact details and any special requirements such as wheelchair access. We will then contact you when the date of the event is known to offer you a place.

CROYDON NATURAL HISTORY and SCIENTIFIC SOCIETY LIMITED

Founded in 1870 as the Croydon Microscopical Club

Registered office: 96a Brighton Road, SOUTH CROYDON, CR2 6AD

SOCIETY OBJECTIVES

For the public benefit, to encourage the study of the sciences, especially the natural and local history and archaeology of the Croydon area, by organising lectures, members' talks, discussions, exhibitions, field meetings and surveys, by issuing publications, and by maintaining a library and a museum. The Society is concerned with original investigation, conservation, recording, curation, education, and incidental recreation.

MEETINGS

Unless otherwise stated, indoor meetings are held in the Small Hall of the East Croydon United Reformed Church, Addiscombe Grove, almost opposite East Croydon Station, at 19:45.

MUSEUM AND LIBRARY

The Society's own museum and library may be visited by arrangement with the curator and librarian respectively. Volunteers willing to help with cataloguing the geological and archaeological collection are welcome.

PROGRAMME

For further information and our full programme which includes a list of publications and directory, please go to our website www.cnhss.co.uk

Contacts

Information	mailto: information@cnhss.co.uk
Twitter	https://twitter.com/cnhssprogramme
Facebook	http://www.facebook.com/pages/Croydon-Natural-History-Scientific-Society/106522816087133
Programme	mailto: programme@cnhss.co.uk
Bulletin	mailto: bulletin@cnhss.co.uk
Company Sec.	mailto: co-secretary@cnhss.co.uk
Website	https://cnhss.co.uk

The Society's emblem is based on a bronze openwork disc found in 1893 in a Saxon cemetery in Edridge Road, between Croydon High Street and Park Lane. It is a rare example of a 5th- or 6th-century girdle ornament or amulet and can be seen at the Riesco Gallery of the Museum of Croydon.

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