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Jean-Baptiste Say's day trip to Croydon

As a nineteen year old the future French economist Jean-Baptiste Say (1767-1832) and his younger brother spent some time in Croydon in 1785 learning English. He stayed at Alexander Bisset's school in George Street but as a lodger, not a pupil. How long he stayed in Croydon is uncertain. He then followed a young lady to France but it was an unrequited romance. He returned to England not to live in Croydon but in Fulham so that he could gain some commercial experience in the City. He returned to his parents in Paris after accompanying his sick employer on a sea voyage only for him to die at La Rochelle late in 1786. Over a century later the street plan he sketched of Croydon came into the public domain, the first such plan of Croydon, now held by the Museum of Croydon. [See *CNHSS Bulletin* 144, March 2012]

When he returned to Paris in 1787 he was, shall we say, a nonentity. When he returned to England in 1814 to report to the French government on Britain's industrial and commercial success, he was well-known both in France and in England as a political economist, the then term for an economist, and as an author of a treatise on political economy. He visited industrial towns in England and Scotland but also political economists and other intellectuals such as David Ricardo (1772-1823), James Mill (1773-1836) and Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832). He did not visit Croydon.

Returning for a third visit to England in 1825, lasting from 25 May till 16 August, he did visit Croydon but the purpose of his coming to England, with his wife, daughter and son-in-law, was to be honoured by the Political Economy Club in London and to renew acquaintances. One of them, Ricardo, however, had recently died. Say stayed with Mill. His son, John Stuart Mill (1806-1873), had stayed with the Says in Paris and Mill wished to return the hospitality.

The Political Economy Club had been founded in 1821 to discuss and debate the subject. It was a select body and membership was limited to men of education and talent. Say was the first honorary member. It still exists. The subject was relatively new and attracted young men but its leading members included older men such as James Mill and Thomas Malthus (1766-1834), himself a professor of political economy at the East India Company's college in Hertfordshire. Non-members could attend the Club's meetings as visitors but otherwise, to learn about political economy, public lectures elsewhere in London were a popular alternative. The City of London Literary and Scientific Institution was the principal venue.

John Ramsay McCulloch (1789-1864), political economist, lecturer at Edinburgh University and editor of the Scotsman, came to London to give such lectures and he attracted large audiences. He was in England when Say came and so he wanted to meet McCulloch. James Mill made the arrangements: Say was to accompany him to meet McCulloch at Croydon on Saturday 11 June.

The visit took place; there is no further reference to it other than in a letter James Mill wrote to Say on 28 May 1825. I need, therefore, to make three assumptions: first, that it did take place in the town of Croydon or somewhere in the immediate vicinity, second, that McCulloch was staying in a private house and, third, that he had been invited as a guest by a member of – or visitor to – the Political Economy Club. What is apparently clear is that Say was not making a sentimental trip to renew memories of Croydon.

Around the town of Croydon were several modest estates. Two such were at Shirley and Sanderstead or rather that part which is now Selsdon. Selsdon Park was the home of George Smith (1765-1836) of the leading banking firm, Smith, Payne and Smiths, based in Lombard Street. The Shirley estate was owned by John Maberly (date of birth, in Scotland, not known – 1832) who also owned neighbouring estates such as Coombe. He, too, was a banker though his bank was not in the same league as Smith, Payne and Smiths; he had made his wealth as an army contractor. Both men were Members of Parliament.

Maberly's son, William Leader (1798-1885), also a Member of Parliament, was among the original members of the Political Economy Club. George Smith had several sons, one of whom, the eldest, George Robert (1793-1869), had married one of John Maberly's daughters, Jane, and lived at Woodside Cottage. The second son, Oswald (1794-1863) became a banker. A close relative was John Abel Smith (1802-1871), elected a member in 1826. McCulloch could have stayed at Selsdon or Shirley House.

Bromley is not far from Croydon and at Bromley Common lived another original member, George Warde Norman (1793-1882). Though not strictly speaking a banker but a timber merchant, he was a director of the Bank of England. His close friends included George Robert Smith. Norman visited George Smith at Selsdon in 1825. This opens the possibility that McCulloch was staying with Norman and begs the question whether Selsdon House was the agreed meeting place for Say to meet McCulloch.

That McCulloch was staying elsewhere in the vicinity cannot be ruled out. George Grote (1794-1871), the historian of Greece, was working for the banking firm of Prescott and Grote, and hence he is listed among the members of the Club as George Grote jnr. He lived at Beckenham, but, it seems that, as his wife was then ill, they were living temporarily elsewhere about the time of Say's visit.

Surrounding Croydon were a number of estates which London bankers bought as weekend country retreats. They were shooting estates where meetings could be arranged in more agreeable surroundings than in the houses they had close to their businesses in London. Just such an arrangement may have been the reason for McCulloch staying near Croydon. Say's visit to Croydon was brief. His wife, daughter and son-in-law probably stayed in London: they were more interested in sight-seeing. He may not even have bothered to revisit the scenes of his youth. What is clear is the link, geographical and intellectual, between Croydon and the Political Economy Club.

Sources

Evert Schoorl, *Jean-Baptiste Say, revolutionary, entrepreneur, economist* (2013), replaces all other biographies but does not mention Say's meeting with McCulloch. The principal source for the meeting is: Professor A. Heertje (1970), 'Two Letters from James Mill to Jean-Baptiste Say' in *De Economist*, 118 Nr 5, pp435-39. For George Warde Norman and other members of the Club including the Smiths see: D. P. O'Brien (2010), *Darwin's Clever Neighbour: George Warde Norman and His Circle* and *The Correspondence of Lord Overstone*, edited by D. P. O'Brien, Vol. 1, (1971). For the Political Economy Club see: *Political Economy Club: founded in London 1821*, (1980), a facsimile, printed in Tokyo, of the edition published in 1860, containing the Club's minutes. For Maberley see also the entry in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*.

Brian Lancaster

Croydon's Conservation Officer

Sarah Freeman is taking a 1 year sabbatical from Croydon Council. Her role as Conservation Officer has been taken over by Joanna Hughes. Joanna studied Architectural History at Oxford University and Architectural Conservation at Oxford Brookes University. She has a very similar background to that of Sarah; she can be contacted at mailto:Joanna.hughes@croydon.gov.uk.

A very special Founder's Day

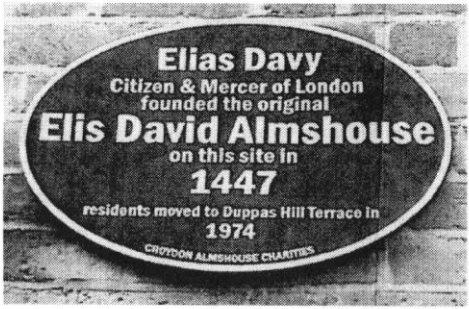
Every year on 27 April the residents, staff and trustees (now directors) of the Elis David Almshouse celebrate their founding on that day in 1447 with a tea party. A few days prior to that a small group visit Mercers' Hall in Ironmonger Lane, Cheapside, for a short service in the chapel and the placing of flowers in memory of Elias Davy, their founder. This year the almshouse was 567 years old and is Croydon's oldest existing charity.

Elias Davy, Citizen of London and member of the Mercers' Company, traded in luxury fabrics, lived in the Bassieshaw area of the City and attended St Michael's Church, just behind the Guildhall. The church is no longer there but roses are also laid on that site on the same day.

The site of the original almshouse building can he seen next to Reeves shop where, together with a wing added in the nineteenth century, it was renamed Ramsay Court when the Residents were moved to a modern building in 1974 on Duppas Hill Terrace. Ramsay Court is the site of one of Croydon's historic treasures and at long last a carefully placed plaque will felt you so!

At 3.00 pm on 27 April this year members of the almshouse, staff, trustees, friends and supporters (including some who now work in Ramsay Court) all gathered in Church Street where a plaque was unveiled on the east wall of the north wing by the Master of the Mercers' Company, Mr Simon Wathen. He was introduced by Noel Hepworth, chairman of the Croydon Almshouse Charities, who described the original piece of marsh land (called Delles) with the river Wandle running through it, purchased by Elias Davy for fifteen pounds. He drained it and built his almshouse for seven poor people of either sex together with four cottages, orchards and gardens. Over the centuries the building had undergone various repairs and today sports a Victorian exterior.

The ceremony concluded with a blessing of the plaque by the Vicar of Croydon, Canon Colin Boswell, and everyone retired to Duppas Hill Terrace for the tea party. More speeches were made, Mrs Wathen was presented with flowers, the Ordinances read and the Master, who was given a very warm welcome, was reminded that although it was a requirement that the Master of the Mercers' Company visit annually to see that the almshouse was properly governed, one had not visited since 1846! Mr Wathen is known for his sense of humour and responded accordingly!



Grace was said by Canon Boswell and past residents remembered. In accordance with tradition, the residents were given ten pence allowance and Mr Wathen sixty nine pence for his costs; (a change of horse maybe?)

Elias Davy founded his almshouse in Perpetuity - a rare thing in 1447. It is still going strong and now has a plaque, a book, a history room, a lot of records and many very happy people.

Sue Turnbull

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A newshound's lament at Reigate in 1840

Reigate in 1840, some nine years before it had acquired a railway station of its own on the Redhill to Reading line, seems to have been a quiet place. A Mr Apted, of Reigate, appears to have been the local correspondent for the *Sussex Agricultural Express* in that year. In the 30 May edition his submission ran as follows:

> In a town containing 4,000 inhabitants to face a whole week without births or marriages, accidents or offences, arrivals or departures, interesting intelligence or remarkable events is such an affliction to the poor reporter that he appeals to the generous feelings of the inhabitants to spare him the pain of such another week, or what the awful result may be is not for him to hint at ...
> *Sussex Agricultural Express*, 30 May 1840, page 6.

The Apteds were a numerous family in the town and are, I believe, still represented locally. In pursuing the history of the town's mineral industries I

have encountered another 'Mr. Apted' whose reportedly smelly brickyard at Earlswood was much complained about; an A.B. Apted whose premises in Doods Road were damaged by fire in 1909, as were those of O.C. Apted next door; Arthur Bacon Apted, a builder, at 25 Doods Road was possibly the same man; and perhaps also the same as the A.B. Apted who was proprietor of the 'Reigate Sandworks' at 86A Doods Road in 1925; Mrs. E. Apted was at 1.01 Reigate Hill in 1935; E.E.B. Apted was a grindery dealer at 12 Reigate High Street in 1911. James Apted was in 1863 a member of the Holmesdale Natural History Club. Job Heath Apted was the first Chief Officer of the Borough of Reigate's fire brigade in 1864. Oliver Cromwell Apted had a brick and tile works at Dean's yard, Earlswood, in 1911 and was also the Mayor's Auditor and Overseer for Buckland the same year. Finally, the Misses W. and M. Apted, also in 1911, kept a 'ladies' school' at 20 Birkheads Road.

Just possibly the splendidly executed graffito HAA 1862 on the wall of the Tunnel Road West sand mine in the town centre may be the initials of yet another member of the family?

Paul W Sowan

Stories my father told me

Memories of my greatgrandfather and Wilford Road

One story was that my father's Grandfather George William Goss was a Blacksmith running his own business and was supposed to be the strongest man in Croydon, he wasn't a very nice man, frequently he used to get drunk and hit his wife Louise, and if he didn't like his dinner he would throw it out of the window. One day he threw a punch at Louisa who ducked and he put his fist through a 1 inch oak door. Louisa used to grab his horse whip and drive him off.

Another is that:

There used to be a very tough road, Wilford Road, near us in Croydon that mainly had gypsies living there and they used to gamble in the street, against the law, but the police wouldn't go down the Road as they sometimes got murdered and their bodies put down the drains. They also used to keep their ponies in their houses. The road's residents wouldn't pay the rents, so the police would get my grandfather to go down the road, and he would climb on to the roofs of the houses and block up the chimneys and smoke the residents out.

Terence Pilgrim

Rochester in Selsdon

Geographical inexactitude does not account for the title, as will soon be apparent. In a previous article '*A bishop recalls his childhood in Waddon*', (*CNHSS Bulletin*, Issue 150, 2014) I drew upon the autobiography of a bishop of Manchester, but in this article I draw upon a biography of a bishop of Rochester, Anthony Thorold, who occupied the see from 1877 to 1891. '*The Life and Works of Bishop Thorold*' was written by his chaplain, C H Simpkinson, and published in 1896, a year after Thorold's death as bishop of Winchester. When I read the book I was unaware that Ted Frith, a former president of the CNHSS, had also done some research about him when compiling a history of Selsdon. Ted kindly sent me photocopies of the relevant pages of his typescript.

The diocese of Rochester is an ancient foundation, having been founded in 604 by St Augustine as a suffragan see of the diocese of Canterbury. However, the diocese Thorold took over was a new creation formed out of the dioceses of Winchester, Rochester and London. It was an awkwardly shaped diocese, resembling the letter S, without an evident centre, stretched as it was from West Kent to mid-Surrey. Thorold's problem was to find a home 'near Croydon, which is the exact centre of the Surrey part of the diocese' where he could 'sleep in my own bed every night, and may be at Richmond and Rochester all day'.

He was living at 17 Cornwall Terrace, Regent's Park, when he was appointed bishop. He found temporary residences at Oxted before finally finding a permanent home at Selsdon Park. The much altered Selsdon House is now a hotel but it was formerly the home of the Smiths, a family of leading London bankers. George Smith had bought the estate and it had passed to his descendants. However, in 1877, the owner was Mabel Smith, but, as she was not yet 21, trustees were responsible for the estate and they decided to let it until she came of age.

Simpkinson relates Thorold's occupancy thus:
'While they were still at Oxted, Selsdon Park offered itself. At first it appeared too large and expensive; but by letting out the shooting and home farm they found it would be possible to reduce the rent to £500 a year. The house stood on one of the highest ridges in Surrey, 531 feet above the sea, close to the Archbishop's country residence at Addington ... It appeared to both of them as an ideal place to invite overworked clergymen for a short holiday. It would secure the Bishop's necessary quiet; while a morning each week in his secretary's office at 28 Great George Street, Westminster, would give his clergy every opportunity for personal

interviews. The Thorolds took possession of the house on February 14, 1878'.

In fact his wife did not, as she had died in December. Simpkinson then quotes Thorold: 'It is very solemn to me coming to this new home without her. But I like to feel that she has been here and approved of our taking it. The lawn seems very big. The children are perfectly delighted. It is the first garden they have ever had of their own.'

Thorold left Selsdon in September 1890.

Brian Lancaster

100 years ago

Council's Report, 1914

During the early part of 1914 the usual activity was shown in the work of the various sections of the Society, but there has been a marked falling-off in the number of meetings held in the autumn months. This is not surprising, considering that several members, the Hon. Secretary among them, are on active service ...

At the beginning of the year a considerable number of new members were elected. In spite of this, the large number of resignations during the last three months has caused a decrease in the membership ...

The check to the work of the various sections on account of the war has been felt by none more keenly than by that engaged in Regional Survey ...

Summary of Proceedings.

EXCURSIONS

August 3rd (Bank Holiday).—Whole day. Limpsfield and Westerham. Conductor, C. C. Fagg.

On the eve of the declaration of war by England, only six members and friends came to this excursion.

MICROSCOPICAL COMMITTEE

During the early part of the year 1914 the Microscopical Section held several interesting meetings, but during the latter part the war unfortunately interfered with the arrangement of papers.

The remaining meetings have been for the purpose of going through the large collection of slides left by the late Dr. Parsons, a large percentage of which have perished past recovery. A considerable amount of work, however, still remains to be done, not only in sorting out the bad from the good but also in classifying the latter.

ZOOLOGICAL COMMITTEE

The Section temporarily lost its Secretary, Mr. K. P. Keywood, in August, owing to the war, and no meetings have been held since.

President's Address

Our Society was established in 1870, when the former war between France and Germany was still in progress, and now that less than fifty years have passed, not only are those countries again at war, but other nations including our own, have necessarily become involved...

My, and our thanks generally, are specially due to Miss G. Bigby, who at once came forward to fill Mr Robert's [*sic*] place [*she thus became our first lady officer*], he having considered it his duty to enlist ...

I only hope that before the lapse of many months the war cloud will have passed away.

[*Proceedings of the Croydon Natural History and Scientific Society*, Volume VIII, part 1]

Fatal accident on the Central Croydon branch line – September 1885

The unfortunate death of 15-year-old Walter Bone in September 1885 is described in some detail in the following month's issue of *The Croydon Review*, in the following terms:

> An accident of a peculiar character, and which unfortunately terminated fatally, occurred at Central Station on Thursday, the 10th *ult.* It appears from the evidence given at the inquest, held at the Croydon General Hospital, on Tuesday, the 18th *ult.*, that the deceased, a boy of 15 years of age, named Walter Bone, son of William Bone, of Gloucester-road, got into an empty train at New Croydon with some companions for the purpose of having a ride to Central Croydon Station. The train started, and when under the bridge stopped for the purpose of uncoupling the engine from the carriages. The deceased got out of the carriage and was sitting on the bottom step with his arm over the top step. As the train was going down the incline something caught deceased's foot or leg, and he let go the upper step. After being turned round several times as the carriages went along, when the end of the carriages was reached he fell back on the line, and whilst falling exclaimed that he had broken

his legs. He was then taken to New Croydon Station in the East London train. From there he was at once taken to the hospital, where it was found that he had sustained a dislocated hip and two lacerated wounds on the left thigh, as well as one or two bruises on the left arm. He seemed to progress very satisfactorily, but at 8.45 pm on the following day of his admission, expired. Nothing but very severe crushing, the medical officer stated, could have produced such injuries. It was elicited during the enquiry that permission for the boys to go by the train had been refused by the porter at the station, and that their presence in the train was unknown to the guard. The jury returned a verdict of "Accidental Death".

The London, Brighton & South Coast Railway Company opened Central Croydon Station on 1 January 1868, but on account of poor patronage, closed it on 1 December 1871. It was re-opened to passengers, re-branded as Croydon Central Station, on 1 June 1886, and finally closed (to make way for the new and present Town Hall which was built in its site) on 1 September 1890. It appears from this report that the station, at the end of a very short branch line from New Croydon Station (the local services station on the west side of what we now know as East Croydon) was retained in railway use during the 15 years or so it was closed to passengers. The station and its approach lines, running across what was then the gravel pit at Fairfield, seems to have been used to stable empty coaching stock. The gravel pits are now the site of Croydon College, the Fairfield Halls, and the sub-surface car park between them. The lines to Central Croydon Station passed under Park Lane, and entered the station by way of a cutting which since the 1890s has become the northern part of the Queen's Gardens (formerly the Town Hall Gardens). The original railway brickwork remains in place along the Katharine Street boundary.

ANON,1885, Fatal accident at Central Croydon Station. *Croydon Review,* October 1885, page 30.

Paul W Sowan

Obituary – Mary Verena WHORLOW, FRCO [1921–2013]

Former member Mary Whorlow, whose interests were mainly in the Society's botanical and ornithological meetings, died aged 92 on 8 April 2013. She was able to continue living independently at her cottage in South Croydon to the end of her days. Mary was born near Harrogate on 20 February 1921, and trained as a kindergarten teacher specialising in music and singing. Her teaching posts were at a school at Berkhamstead, and

then at Croydon High School. She was for 40 years or so organist at the former St. Matthew's Church in George Street, and then at St. Paul's United Reformed Church in Croham Road.

Paul W Sowan

From the Membership Secretary

Thanks to all who have paid your 2014 subscription. Any member who hasn't paid won't receive this Autumn mailing until they are up to date. We send four Bulletins with reminders before we remove you from membership, and this costs us in printing and postage. You won't lose out because as soon as you pay we will send you anything you have missed.

Subscriptions for 2015 are due on 1 January. They remain unchanged at £15 for Ordinary Members and Group Members, and £9 for Associates.

Jane McLauchlin

The CNHSS Newsletter

An electronic newsletter is sent out each month to those who request it. This contains supplementary information on speakers and venues and is much appreciated. It also conveys additional material of local interest and news of other forthcoming local events. Below there is a link through which you can request that it be sent to you.

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