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A neolithic arrowhead from Sanderstead

The arrowhead illustrated, Fig. 1a-c, was dug up by Mr Arthur G Searle in his back garden at 4, Essenden Road, Sanderstead, Surrey, in the early 1960s. The find site is 77m above sea level, on Chalk overlain by soil, on the east side of Croydon valley, just above the valley gravels. It was probably found during general gardening, fence-posthole digging or shed installation.

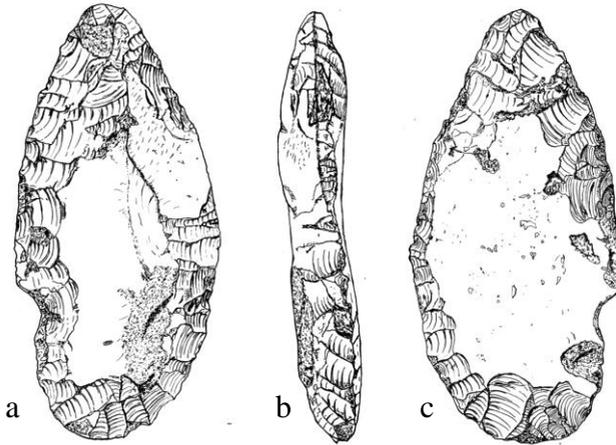


Figure 1a-c
Actual size - 58mm long, 9mm maximum thickness

Typologically, this is a leaf arrowhead although it is large for this type and may have been used as a projectile point. This design was used for almost the whole of the Neolithic period, ca 4000 until 2000BC, although it was more common in the early and middle part of the period.¹ It is patinated white but has been subjected to considerable rolling and battering and chips made after its use have re-corticated, leaving localised rough surfaces.

The implement is made from a flake with the original proximal end at the present point where the bulb of percussion is still clearly visible. This is usual for leaf arrowheads where the bulb of percussion is nearer to the point for strength.

The dorsal side of the flake, fig 1a, retains an area of cortex, shown at the bottom right. On one edge, fig 1a left hand side, there is a relatively large “nick” where a piece of the original implement has broken away. At this point the flake scars have been truncated as they approach the newly formed edge. Both surfaces have been invasively flaked but this only extends across the whole surface near the tip. The re-corticated flake scar at the proximal end, fig 1a top, at the present tip, seems to be an ancient one but not from the original shaping of the artefact; without it the point would probably have been sharper.

The arrowhead was kindly donated to the Croydon Natural History and Scientific Society museum by Mr Tony Searle and Cindy Hall, the finder’s children, in February 2011.

Chris J. W. Taylor

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1. Green S. (1984). Flint arrowheads: typology and interpretation. *Lithics*, No. 5, 19-39.

Saved or not saved

Many readers of the Bulletin know about the cuts in the Croydon Council’s Arts and Heritage Department’s budget to help meet the savings the Council need to make. Many will not know so I have drawn upon discussions at, and the minutes of, the meetings of the Croydon Local Studies Forum to give an account of what has happened so far or at least by the end of February. The Forum has representatives from about a dozen local history and associated societies in Croydon, varying from local history societies such as the Bourne Society and the Norwood Society to the Friends of Old Palace and the Croydon Theatre Club whose programme includes the historical aspects of the entertainment world. The Croydon Local Studies Library and Archives Service is represented by its librarian and its senior archivist. The Museum Service is also represented but its representative was unable to attend the last meeting of the Forum. I am the present representative of our Society. Before me, Ted Frith was the representative. John Gent was his own representative because of his unique contribution to furthering interest in Croydon’s local history, but unfortunately his health obliged him to resign last year.

The options put forward before the public by the Council were five in number from doing nothing to eliminating many, if not most, of the Arts and Heritage department's activities. The David Lean cinema, the Summer Festival, exhibitions, the Museum and its educational work, the Local Studies Library and the Archives were all threatened with reduced services, cancellation or closure. The Forum's remit addressed only the Croydon Local Studies Library and Archives Service and the Museum Service. Three of the options included them. They ranged from just reducing hours to, in option 4, the bizarre closure of the Library while keeping open the Archives Service. The Archives Service could not be easily closed because of some legal protection about it being a place of deposit for official records. However option 4 envisaged it being open to the public only by appointment. Though the Local Studies Library leads off from the Central Library in the Clocktower, it is not part of Croydon libraries.

To avert as much damage as possible, the head of the Arts and Heritage department, Councillor Sara Bashford, instigated a public consultation. By the time the period of consultation came to an end, on 6 January, there had been about 1,500 responses. Most of these concentrated on keeping the David Lean cinema open, but there were still several hundred responses defending the Croydon Local Studies Library and Archives Service. Among the responses were our own Society's official response, but many members sent in their own. In addition, members wrote to local newspapers, councillors, members of Parliament and national organisations. The Croydon Guardian launched a campaign to save the Library.

Key points raised included pointing out that the Library offered a unique service within the Borough, that archives were kept in both the Library and the Archives so that it was impossible to separate them logistically, that local organisations would be reluctant to deposit their own archives if the Service's future was under threat, and that both the Library and the Archives needed to retain professionally qualified staff. The question was also raised about how far the proposed changes might infringe the Freedom of Information Act. A reduction in the Museum Service would perhaps entail paying back grants from the Heritage Lottery Fund.

When the Croydon Council's Cabinet members met on 24 January they decided to choose Option 4, the most drastic of the five options, saving the largest amount of money. Losing so many of its staff, the Arts and Heritage department would no longer exist. The Summer Festival and

other arts events would cease, the David Lean cinema would close, the Museum Service and its educational work would be severely cut back. However, it was also decided to keep the Local Studies Library open. Local newspapers claimed a victory, but, in effect, it was the only possible outcome as one entrance door serves both. What was more crucial was to find out how the Local Studies Library and Archives Service would be maintained. What department would take it over? Would it be the Croydon Library Service as was the case some years previously or another department? What staff would be retained? What money would be allocated to it? Would the money be sufficient to employ professionally qualified staff? All members of staff, in any case, would have to reapply for employment, and the salaries offered might be insufficient to retain or attract professionally qualified staff.

Since 24 January one or two further details have become clearer. Specialised staff will still be employed for the Local Studies Library and Archives. It was hoped that, as the Cabinet decision was to go before the Council's Scrutiny committee, more could be salvaged from the cuts, but it did not result in any recommendation concerning the Local History Library and Archives Service or the Museum Service. Next will be a period of staff consultation, during which more details may emerge.

All these cuts were meant to be implemented by the end of March for the new financial year. However it is now clear that implementation will take another month while the cinema will only close at the end of May.

The future of the Croydon Local Studies Library and Archives Service is still in doubt. There will be staff cuts and possibly a further reduction in opening hours. The monies granted may not be sufficient to employ specialised staff. Another meeting of the Local Studies Forum is being planned for early March when more details may become known. Even so, by the time you read this, much may still be in doubt.

Brian Lancaster

100 years ago

In the Botanical Committee's report for the year 1911 Dr Henry Franklin Parsons provided a summary of the year from which this portion is extracted. [1912, *Proceedings of the Croydon Natural History and Scientific Society*, 7(3), xcvi] :

The latter half of February was mild, and vegetation made rapid progress, but was checked by cold weather in the latter part of March and first half of April. On April 4th-7th there were snowstorms with severe frost (18° F.) and a cold north-easterly gale. Snow lay on the ground in the shade until the 7th, and for thirty-six hours the thermometer was continuously below 32°. Much damage was done by the frost and cold winds to vegetation, the foliage even of winter flowering plants such as the Aconite, Sweet-scented Butterbur and Hellebores being shrivelled up. The early blossoms of pears and plums were cut off; but the fruit trees were not in general bloom at this date, and the crop thus escaped. Up to the middle of March the spring had been a somewhat early one. Of twelve of the earliest garden flowers eight had bloomed before, three after, and one at the average date of the previous eighteen years, the mean being eight days earlier. The Hawthorn was seen in bloom on May 13th, about the usual date. In May hot, dry weather set in, and lasted more or less until the middle of September, though there was a short cold spell in the middle of May, and again in the middle of June, when the thermometer on the grass went down to freezing-point on two nights, a very unusual occurrence.

The latter half of June was cool and somewhat showery at the time of the Coronation festivities [*of King George V, June 22nd 1911*]. The rainfall during the summer was very unequally distributed locally; thus, on May 11th, no rain fell at Croydon, though there were heavy thunderstorms all round, as at Reigate, Wimbledon, Camberwell, and Knockholt. Again on May 31st (Derby Day) there was a severe thunderstorm in the neighbourhood of Epsom which caused the loss of several lives; over 3½ inches of rain fell at Banstead, but at Croydon the fall was quite trivial, only some six or seven hundredths of an inch.

Book review – Cane Hill: The Tower on the Hill

Pam Buttrey has written the first published history of Cane Hill. It is a detailed account from the pauper lunatic asylum's beginnings in 1880 (it admitted its first patients in 1883) to the mental hospital's closure in 1992. The author, resident in Croydon, worked as an occupational therapist in south London and was a member of the team which prepared for its closure. The book derives from a Master's degree in local history.

The research is thorough and based on original records. It covers many aspects of Cane Hill's history - the patients, the staff, the building, the administration and the treatment of mental illness. Although patients' records have mostly not survived, there is still much about patients in general and also about individual patients.

There was much to surprise me: the farms rented and the variety of crops grown; the prevalence of typhoid well into the last century; the huge number of patients, at times exceeding two thousand; the transfer of patients from distant places, even Gibraltar; the extensive and changing acreage of the estate; the incursion of the railway, and the percentages of patients at liberty to walk outside the estate. The author does not forget to include the suicides, the thefts, the cases of fornication, even a murder, not forgetting Charlie Chaplin's mother. The author's research prompted Adrian Falks to alert the Commonwealth War Graves Commission to the unacknowledged burial of ex-servicemen from the First World War at Cane Hill and other asylums. The book is indispensable for anyone wanting to know about Cane Hill.

The writing is lucid, but the detail is sometimes excessive. She tells us, for example, about the various materials used for dresses; the number of panes broken in a storm; and the number of cows, sheep, pigs, horses and fowls on the estate in April 1893.

The book contains twenty four half page black-and- white photographs, the earliest from about 1905, and a most attractive coloured postcard for the front cover, all from the Croydon Local Studies Library. I could have wished for a better map or plan of the estate than the sketch provided.

Published by Aubrey Warsash Publishing, it costs £11 and is available from bookshops, including Farthing Books, the new bookshop in Chipstead Valley Road, Coulsdon. Its ISBN is 978-0-9549582-3-7. It can

be bought direct from the publishers by sending a cheque for £14, to include postage, to Aubrey Warsash Publishing, PO Box 3186, South Croydon, Surrey, CR2 6UW. Alternatively, a cheque for £11 payable to Pam Buttrey can be sent, and the book collected from the Local Studies Library, which is open Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays and every first and third Saturday in the month. These opening times may shortly be changed, so it is wise to check.

Brian Lancaster

The beginning of the end of the Croydon Canal at Croydon

2011 is the 200th anniversary of the canal's completion

The Croydon Canal, running nine and a half miles from near the Thames at Deptford, is generally said to have opened for traffic to and from Croydon on Monday, 23 October 1809. However at that date, although the navigable waterway was open for use, the canal as a functioning whole was not complete. The canal's construction had been authorised by an Act of Parliament on 27 June 1801, but two further Acts (which received the Royal Assent on 14 April 1808 and 4 April 1811) were needed to allow the raising of further funds for the completion of the work. The superintending engineer was John Rennie [1761 - 1821], with Dudley Clark [ca 1750 – 1823] overseeing construction certainly from 1801 to 1809 and perhaps to 1811.

The best sources of information for the canal as actually built are a detailed engineering plan made by John Grantham [1775 - 1833] in 1811, held by the Institution of Civil Engineers, and the deposited plan made by Joseph Gibbs [1798 – 1864] dated 1835 for the London & Croydon Railway, held in the Parliamentary Archives. There is a copy of the 1811 plan in Croydon's Local Studies & Archives Department, donated by our member John Collett whose considerable help with this research and article is gratefully acknowledged.

The problems in Croydon in 1809

At Croydon, the first problem was that the canal's terminal basin (the site of which is now occupied by parts of the bus and railway stations at West Croydon) was in the wrong place, and at the wrong altitude, to serve the

town's developing industrial district in the Old Town and Pitlake area, where the Palace had already by then been converted into a factory. That area was, by 1811, served by the world's first two public railways (horse-drawn freight-only tramways) to be authorised by Acts of Parliament. The Surrey Iron Railway (SIR) opened from Wandsworth to Croydon in 1803, and functioned until 1846. Its legally distinct extension the Croydon, Merstham & Godstone Iron Railway (CMGIR) opened from Croydon to Merstham two years later, and closed in 1838. The canal was bought by and in part used for the route of the London & Croydon Railway, which opened to West Croydon in 1839.

For trade to and from London, and to capture traffic from south of Croydon, the canal had to compete with the SIR. The canal terminus needed to be at Pitlake, not some distance away at the top of a hill in a non-industrial area.

On grounds of cost and in the interests of water retention, it seems, the Croydon Canal Company opted to complete their freight-carrying concern to Pitlake by means of a tramway, the route of which is now Tamworth Road. England's earliest railways, or horse-drawn tramways, were generally short extensions of this kind to longer canals.

The water supply problem

Ironically, the Canal's authorising Act of 1801 envisaged that the undertaking would, additionally to carrying goods, supply water to a number of places in what is now south London. In the event, it appears at times to have struggled to find sufficient water for its own primary purpose.

The water was primarily from small streams and springs on the Norwood Hills, collected into reservoirs at Sydenham and South Norwood, the latter surviving today as Norwood Lake. Its highest point was at the basin at West Croydon. And, of course, every time a boat passed through one of the 28 locks, water was lost northwards, eventually draining to the Thames.

The first 26 locks took the canal from the level of the Thames up to about the 150 foot contour at Forest Hill. From there to Croydon Common (now in part the Selhurst area) it was a long level stretch of water, supplied from the reservoirs. As far as South Norwood the canal was largely cut through London Clay, and so water-tight. But over Croydon Common (from around Tennison Road to St. James's Road) it had to be built

across gravel and, adding to the difficulties, on a low embankment. Although the embankment might have been formed by mounding up the gravel, a puddled clay lining would have been essential to prevent water loss. The clay would presumably have been dug from the formation of the canal at or north of South Norwood. The same would also have been required for form the water-retaining banks of the reservoir.

The embankment crossed the culverted Norbury Brook, but the canal's enabling Act prohibited that stream being used as a water source. That was to satisfy the demands of operators of water-mills on the Wandle, into which river the brook flows.

John Corbet Anderson [1827 - 1907] claimed, in 1898, that locks 27 and 28 were provided 'to enable the canal to pass over the Norbury Brook' although this is clearly erroneous from an inspection of the 1811 plan, as both locks lie to the south of the stream. This seems to be the source of the actually non-existent 'mystery at Norbury Brook' noted in Brian Salter's booklet on the canal. These last two sets of locks (sited on the east side of Gloucester Road) took the canal up to the level of the terminal basin. Obviously, the only way to keep the top end of the canal topped up with water was by pumping, and indeed two different pumps at two locations on the Common are known to have operated. The simplest option would have been to pump water up from the long level stretch from Forest Hill, that water deriving from the South Norwood reservoir. One of the two recorded pumping engines indeed stood close to lock 27. However, it appears an additional supply was needed, as a second pumping engine (north of the brook) seems to have taken water from an adjoining well.

There is, or was at the time, plenty of water a few feet down in the waterlogged Croydon Common gravel. So a shallow well and a simple lift pump might have sufficed. But that would have taken water that would otherwise have augmented the Norbury Brook, the abstraction of water from which was prohibited. Whether or not the Wandle millers' understanding of hydro-geology alerted them to this is not known.

A possibly larger and less contentious supply might have been taken from a much deeper well, sunk through the gravels and underlying strata into the chalk below. Our best guide to how deep such a well might have been is the record for the boring made for the American Steam Laundry in nearby Gloucester Road in 1896, where water was pumped from the Chalk at a depth of about 257 feet. This, recorded by William Whitaker,

was sunk through 19 feet of partially waterlogged gravel, 47 feet of London Clay, and 109 feet of clays, pebbles, and sands before reaching the Chalk. The laundry's well yielded about 1,000 gallons per hour. Unfortunately, we have so far traced no information relating to the depth or yield of the Canal Company's well. All else that can be said about it is that it would have called for a remarkably long pipe to take water over the brook and to beyond lock 28 where it was needed. It is unlikely that the well, and even more so the pump, predated the canal: there is no evidence in the Croydon Inclosure map of about 1800 that any building existed at this location, the nearest being Selhurst Farm some distance to the west.

The Company's first Act, of 1801, went to some lengths to spell out provisions for safeguarding the Wandle millers' water supply:

The canal between Croydon and Selhurst Wood should not be cut more than three feet below the mean level of the highest point of Croydon Common on the line of the canal, and the surface of the water shall be forever maintained to be two feet above the said mean level ...

[The Company] shall not on any pretence suffer water to be taken or diverted from the water-course .. [the Norbury Brook] ... which ... joins the river Wandle near Merton Mills, nor any water whatsoever from the said river Wandle ...

Both water-course and river where the same shall or may be crossed by the canal .. shall be well and effectually tunnelled and conducted under the said canal ... so as the whole of the said water-course ... may continue to flow into the river Wandle as usual ...

A pipe of sufficient dimensions [is to be provided] to be capable of conveying away from the canal into the river Wandle, half the quantity of water which the steam engine or any other machine may raise to the summit level ...

The canal as envisaged and as built did not, of course, cross the Wandle. Its nearest approach to the river was the terminal basin. Whether such as

pipe as that referred to was ever laid down alongside the tramway to the Wandle at Pitlake is not known.

The terminal basin

The basin was rectangular on plan, with its longer sides aligned approximately NE – SW. The canal entered on the north-west side. Buildings, presumably warehouses, stood at the London Road end. The tramway to Pitlake was laid alongside the south-east side. Three turntables allowed waggons to be wheeled up to the edge of the basin. Two of these short lengths of track appear simply to have terminated at the edge (presumably there was some arrangement to prevent them from rolling off into the water). Materials such as chalk, fullers' earth or lime might simply have been tipped into a waiting barge. The centre track seems to have continued onto some sort of staging projecting out over the water. This possibly had lifting gear to allow goods including squared blocks of building-stone to be raised and lowered more carefully.

The Canal Company's tramway

To have extended the canal from West Croydon a further quarter of a mile to Pitlake would have called for another flight of locks down the hill. Constructing these would, of course, have added considerably to the cost of the enterprise, and would also have resulted in water-loss southwards to the Wandle as well as northwards to the Thames. So a tramway extension was decided upon, although this again had its problems.

As can be seen by walking up or down Tamworth Road today, the route has two bends in it. Canal and railway plans of 1811 and 1835, and estate papers, show these bends to be original features of the tramway. Additionally, there is a relatively steep incline at the West Croydon end – arguably too steep for horses to draw waggons of stone or lime from Merstham uphill to the canal. We know from several sources that there was trans-shipment of freight from the Merstham tramway to the canal.

What is known about the tramway derives from a plan of the completed canal dated 1811, and from John Corbet Anderson's published histories of Croydon. Anderson stated that:

Nearing the wharf, the trucks used to be hauled by a windlass up a short incline, on to the platform, where their contents of lime, timber, stone, or fuller's earth, as the case may have been, were unloaded into barges, that afterwards came back from Deptford laden with coals.

As Anderson came to Croydon only in 1852, long after the canal had been purchased for its own purposes by the London & Croydon Railway, we must assume this information is from conversations with older residents of the town. An elaborated capstan or 'whim' turning on a vertical axle which could be rotated by horses walking in a circle seems a more likely device for operating the haulage ropes than a windlass, with a horizontal axle which could not have been worked directly by horses.

The question is further complicated by the two bends. Inclined planes worked by rope haulage are very much simpler to operate if dead straight! Making arrangements for the rope to change direction twice between the top and bottom of the incline would seem to be awkward and an unnecessary complication. The best guess, perhaps, is that the rope-operated arrangement was restricted to the steepest part of what is now Tamworth Road, with animal haulage at top and bottom. The 1811 plan shows a double line of rails along the section in question, with provision for waggons to be switched from one line to the other at top and bottom. But it contains no direct evidence for a winding machine.

Junctions with the two pre-existing railways

The 1811 plan shows clearly that the Canal Company tramway had one branch at the west end for traffic to or from the SIR, and another communicating with the CMGIR for traffic to or from the south. There was also an end-on junction for through traffic between the two older tramways.

Dorian Gerhold has published information on the extent to which northbound goods were transferred to the canal, which was in competition the Surrey Iron Railway.

The last word (in 1843)?

An anonymously published work, attributed to George Henry Robins [1778 - 1847], opined that ..

Canals in Surrey are proverbially abortions; the Basingstoke, the Croydon, and the Grand Surrey are unequalled for absorption of Capital, and minutiae of Dividend, whilst the Railway from Wandsworth to Mertsham [sic] is a monopoly to Messrs. Jolliffe and Banks.

The most complete and reliable modern source of information concerning the canal, drawn from primary sources, is our member Peter McGow's study (not a formally published document) held in the Local Studies & Archives Department accessed via Level 3 at the Central Library in Katharine Street.

Paul W. Sowan

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News and Notices

Programme updates – We now send out monthly email programme updates and extra information on talks. They are sent as blind copies and the list will not be given to any third party. We may add information about other events that may be of interest to members. To be included please email cnhssprogramme@btinternet.com

Facebook – There is now a dedicated Facebook page for the Society, to access the page there is no need to be a member. “Google” Croydon Natural History & Scientific Society/ facebook and it should lead you there. Here you will find comments about the societies events and links to other pages and websites as well as photographs and discussions. However if you wish to comment, post photographs and receive the Facebook updates it will be necessary to sign up.

Publication – By the time you read this the next in the series of the Society’s illustrated local history books edited by John Gent may already have been published. It is *Views of Croydon* and draws on John’s extensive collection of postcards of the Croydon area. Copies will be available directly from Brian Lancaster or you can enquire at Waterstone’s or WHSmith’s.

Museum Open Day – Don’t forget to come and see some of the Society’s archaeological and geological collections on Sunday, 26th June, 13:30 to 16:30. For directions contact Chris Taylor.

Synopsis of talk on Monday, April 4 – The villages of Beckenham and West Wickham rose from having a combined population in 1850 of less than a thousand to becoming, barely 80 years later, the second most populous and undoubtedly the richest municipality in Kent. The catalyst for this remarkable development was the railway and from the arrival of the Mid Kent in 1857 to the opening of the Tramlink at the start of the twenty-first century the train has transformed the whole area and still carries a sizeable proportion of local inhabitants to their places of work, education and leisure. The former Borough of Beckenham somewhat remarkably retains 11 out of its 12 stations, many still clearly retaining their Victorian heritage and the twelfth, closed in 1860, is now the site of a tram stop. Few suburban areas can boast such a record and the talk will cover the development of Beckenham’s railway network and its impact upon the area with a host of early and modern illustrations covering every aspect of its history.

Some lost Croydon habitats

1. The Croham Hurst orchids

When, in the early 1970s, I conducted a representative of what we now know as Natural England around Croham Hurst with a view to the woodland being designated a statutory Site of Special Scientific Interest, that gentleman arrived with an impressive list of species he expected to see, including not a few orchids. I had to tell him he had found a very old record, and no orchids remained (the last orchids I saw growing in the immediate area were a bee orchid at Featherbed Lane, and twayblades and a large white Helleborine in Selsdon Woods).

However, my visitor was still impressed by this fine specimen of ancient woodland developed on three contrasting geological beds and soil types (Blackheath Pebbles, Thanet Sand, and Upper Chalk), and the Hurst was designated an SSSI in 1975.

The old records were probably those of Daniel Cooper [? 1812 - 1842] and the Reverend William Wood [? 1768 - 1841]. Cooper's *Flora Metropolitana* was published in 1835, with a supplement in 1837. It was a list of plants to be found in selected places in and around London and the Home Counties, for the guidance of enthusiasts who, perhaps, removed many of the choicest specimens to add to their herbaria. The Society's copy of the 1835 volume has numerous handwritten additional records (perhaps in his own hand) which appear to have been used by Cooper in the *Supplement*. The printed 1835 lists include records for, *inter alia*, Coombe and Shirley Common (Addington Hills). Manuscript additions, many of them credited to William Wood (Rector at Coulsdon 1830 – 1841), extend the lists with new entries for Coombe Wood and for new locations including Croome [Croham] Hurst and surrounding fields and hedgerows, the 'road from Croydon to Sanderstead', and 'Purley Downs near Sanderstead'.

Orchid records for these locations, collected by Cooper and Wood, include (under older Linnean names) helleborines, autumn ladies' tresses, and the bee, fly, man, pyramidal and sweet-scented orchids, and ('in the woods') butterfly orchids and twayblades. Now, both sides of the Hurst, we have in place of grazed turf, wild thyme, and a wealth of orchids, a sea of houses.

Paul W. Sowan