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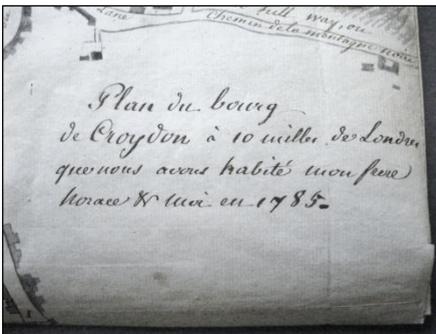
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Jean-Baptiste Say's 1785 Croydon street plan

A French teenager staying in Croydon drew its first street plan. Say's pen and pencil 'Plan du Bourg de Croydon' is little more than a sketch but nonetheless detailed enough, depicting roads, some buildings and a few topographical features. Earlier maps there are, but, covering a wider area, none are street plans. For that reason alone Say's plan is important.

The plan is important for another reason. Say became one of the leading economists of the nineteenth century, author of *Traité d'Économie Politique*, first published in 1803 but running through several editions till Say's death in 1832 and translated then and since into many languages. His ideas are still the subject of numerous publications. He spent two years in England, from 1785 to 1787, to learn English and prepare him for the commercial career his father intended for him



Detail of Say's plan - Title. Reproduced from the original with the permission of Croydon Local Studies Library and Archives Service. (Catalogue No. AR47/1)

The Croydon Local Studies Library and Archives Service holds the original plan in its archives (ref. AR47/1) and a photographic reproduction in the library. The reproduction was donated in 1912 by Henry Wyndham, a civil engineer, then living in Thornton Heath Lodge, 12 Parchmore Road. The original plan was not donated by Henry Wyndham but some years later by his son, Henry Saxe Wyndham, who wrote on the back that the reproduction had been donated by

his father who was given it by Andre Raoul-Duval, his cousin and a descendant of Say. The father died in 1913. The evidence that it was donated some years later is the accompanying headed notepaper as it belongs to the Guildhall School of Music whose address and telephone number is given. The exchange did not come into use till after the First World War. Henry Saxe Wyndham was the School's secretary.

There have been two descriptions, together with the plan's reproduction: first in 'The Reader's Index' in 1913 and next in the Society's Regional Survey Atlas of the Croydon District in 1936. It is not my purpose to

describe it again. Croydon's former archivist, Oliver Harris, wrote a short archival report in 1992; a copy is available at Croydon Local Studies and Archives Service.

While the plan itself has a key in its left-hand corner, Henry Saxe Wyndham also donated a separate key, written in Say's handwriting, on a folded sheet of notepaper intended to accompany a map that appears not to have survived. The key indicates that the map covered a wider area, reaching to the Thames, that Say may have drawn himself. The above mentioned headed notepaper has the translation.

Say came to England with his younger brother Horace. He need not concern us: he died in the French revolutionary wars after being injured in 1799. Say also fought. The plan identifies the 'house and garden' in Pound Street, now called George Street, where they lived. It was a school, the Croydon Academy, run in rented premises, by Alexander Bisset, who had opened his school there only a year or so before the brothers came. Previously he had been senior assistant at the private Royal Military Academy, established by Lewis Lochée in Little Chelsea, (the far west of Chelsea) to provide military training at a time when there was no official training for the army's cavalry and infantry. Bisset's Academy also offered military training for 'young gentlemen' intending to serve in India. There was no longer a war in Europe: Britain had concluded peace with France and Spain in 1783. The peace afforded the opportunity for the brothers to come to England in 1785. The Say family had a commercial background and it is likely that the two brothers were intended for a career in banking, insurance or manufacturing.

But why Croydon? The French published sources offer no clue, but Say's draft and incomplete memoir does. When they left France the brothers were accompanied by a Miss Child, a women in her twenties, so Say estimated, who had been living with one of his relatives in France and was now returning home. It was convenient that the brothers should have someone with them who could help them find somewhere to stay. The intention was that they should lodge with a family in London, but Miss Child, it seems, could not find anyone willing to take them. She must then have read the advertisement for the school in one of the London newspapers. It stressed the importance of the hitherto neglected subject of English grammar. As private schools often offered to board pupils, Bisset's school was no exception.

A school was not Say's choice as he, now nineteen, did not want to be treated as a schoolboy. He hoped, still, to find a family where he would be a guest. Nonetheless he admitted that being at the Academy was useful as, even though they would eat with the Bissets, they would learn to fend for themselves. The brothers were given a room upstairs, probably a garret, one with two windows. As there was a new window tax, the unnamed landlord sent in masons to block off one of them much to Say's chagrin. He lost a window but the Treasury, so he liked to tell, gained nothing. But it did make him reflect on the economics of taxation.

Alexander Bisset was a Scotsman, the father of the Rev. John Collinson Bisset who, after being master of the Whitgift School, was many years vicar of Addington. Bisset had been educated at Aberdeen University where he had learnt French himself. He liked to come up to the room to speak French, so Say felt he was not making enough progress in learning English. Whether Say attended any lessons other than for English, he does not mention. However, I surmise that the plan (and possibly the map) he drew suggests less of his own personal initiative than of Bisset's prompting, map-making being part of military training. Their purpose was to let family or friends know something about the place they lived in, but the plan and the keys are more informative than you would expect from a nineteen-year old.



Detail of Say's plan - The Surrey Street triangle. On the plan 'A' indicates the house where Say and his brother stayed and 'D' indicates the first Town Hall. Reproduced from the original with the permission of Croydon Local Studies Library and Archives Service. (Catalogue No. AR47/1)

The independent key has not been described. It lists eighteen places they had visited. Say was impressed by Croydon's 'smiling' landscape so much more varied than Picardy. While the plan shows topographical features immediately around the town, the other key shows that he and his brother walked to Beddington, the 'pleasantest' village, and Carshalton, with its ponds and streams. From one vantage point they could see St Paul's and the clocks on the tower of St Peter's, a building more usually called Westminster Abbey. I think the

vantage point is Farthing Downs. They also walked, as the plan indicates, on Duppas Hill, using its then familiar spelling, Dubbers Hill, while Park

Hill is called Black Hill because of it being covered in a 'sort of brown thistle'. They also went further afield to London with Miss Child where she introduced them to some well-known people, but I leave London aside.

Two persons are named in the independent key. At Bromley, a village too far away for frequent visits, lived (and here Henry Saxe Wyndham could not read the name) someone called Baour, a recognisable French surname, and, as only the surname is given, I suspect it is that of a youth. The other name belongs to 'Mr Jenkinson', namely Charles Jenkinson, a member of William Pitt the Younger's cabinet, whose mansion and estate was at Addiscombe, created Lord Hawkesbury in 1786 and later Earl of Liverpool, the father of the Prime Minister, the second Earl.

Say was probably familiar with the estates at Addiscombe and at Beddington Park since they afforded some public access: he had, it would appear, never come across stiles before. On the whole he was pleased with the pretty villages, the greenery and the well-kept roads. However he was less pleased with, or at least ruefully amused by, English prejudices. People found their French clothes ridiculous and a man he met at the Croydon Assizes asked if the French ate anything other than frogs.

Some of the French sources suggest that Say would have been exposed to the Industrial Revolution. That is unlikely, certainly in Croydon and almost as certainly in London at that time. What can be said with more confidence is that Say admired the English press. The London newspapers and journals were on sale in Croydon and his first published work when he returned to France was on the freedom of the press. I think the suggestion is made because the writers were somewhat ignorant about what Say did do at Croydon. They add that he worked as a clerk for a merchant in Croydon, but as yet I have found no primary evidence for this.

If, as I suspect, there is more about Croydon, let alone London, in the pages of Say's memoir that I have not been sent, I shall write some more about Say in a future Bulletin. Meanwhile I would like to thank Oliver Harris, Croydon's former archivist, now working for the Bentham Project, and Emmanuelle de Champs of the University of Paris 8 for obtaining photocopies for me. I also thank Yvette McKinnel for help with translation.

Brian Lancaster

***Croydon Society Gossip* – a nineteenth century newspaper**

Ask many of the more mature inhabitants of Croydon for the names of Croydon pay-for newspapers and the responses will most likely include such names as the *Croydon Advertiser*, still being published, and the *Croydon Times*, sadly defunct. For those researching the local newspapers held on microfilm in the Local Studies and Archives in Croydon they will know of many more, including such titles as the *Croydon Chronicle*, *Croydon Review* and *Croydon Guardian*. However, there is, as far as is known, one name they will not find there or even upon checking the British Library Newspaper Archive at Colindale and that one is the *Croydon Society Gossip*.

There was a host of local newspapers born in the late nineteenth century that were short-lived and, as stated in the book on Jesse Ward published by the *Croydon Advertiser* in 1951, which he founded in 1869:- “notwithstanding these failures, there were those who thought they might succeed where others had failed. Such was the spirit of enterprise in the '90s. Croydon, therefore, was called upon to read all about itself in *Croydon Society Gossip*, but it seems to have been unresponsive, so the paper spread its wings and became *The Croydon and Surrey Gossip*. It ran for about eighteen months.”¹ The book has an engraving entitled NEWSPAPER GRAVEYARD – a cartoon of 1912, on the occasion of the closing down of *The Croydon Chronicle*. In that graveyard a tombstone in memory of the *Croydon Society Gossip* gives that it was born in 1896 and died January 5th 1898.²

The first edition of the *Croydon Society Gossip* was dated November 18, 1896 and it was to be published every Wednesday at noon at the publishing offices, 106, George Street.³ From edition No.2 it was given as printed by the Carleton Press (no address given) and from edition No.31 for September 8, 1897 onwards, it was printed by the “Free Press” Co. (no address given), but the publisher’s address remained the same. From the edition of November 9, 1897 the name changed to *Croydon and Surrey Gossip*.

The size of the paper measured 11½" x 8¼" and comprised sixteen pages. The cost was 1d. (½p) and on the title page of the first edition it was sub-titled “A Mid-Weekly Illustrated Miscellany of Social, Literary,

Artistic, Dramatic, Sporting & General News”. In the Fore Words, it stated that it would be a journal devoted to gossip of every description. Taking the word “Society” to its broadest sense it welcomed to its columns items of interest to Croydonians of every class and station. It would have no politics, no fads, no prejudices, and no personal antipathies; no object except to interest and amuse; no axes to grind, and no grievances to make itself a nuisance about. It would run consistently on its own original lines, and like each of its numerous contemporaries, but with more truth than most would at once claim to have “the largest circulation in Croydon”.

A typical edition may have an article on a leading member of Croydon society; an item such as ‘Is the Croydon Library mismanaged?’; Social Chit-Chat; Amusements in Croydon, what was on at the New Grand Theatre, the National Palace of Varieties, the Theatre Royal and other places of entertainment and what was coming; Interviews with the actors and actresses; Sports and Past-times; Cycling Notes; Reports of Council Meetings on such matters as the Fire Brigade and Police Force; Croydon Camera Club Notes; A page entitled ‘Things I Hear’ written under the name of Tom Collins⁴ – snippets on what was or what was not happening in Croydon, such a snippet among many could be as to the poor state of the roads – the Council have a list of the roads in poor repair, write and ask them if your road is on it, and if not, why not?; Articles on the history of Old Croydon; advertisements, births, deaths and marriages and much, much more.

The Society has inherited from the late John Gent a bound volume of copies of the newspaper which is now held at the Society’s library – for reference purposes only – that is sure to be of interest to those researching the period and complements other newspapers held in the Local Studies and Archives Service. Although it is not a complete set it does include the first and last editions. Some editions have not been numbered and some are incorrectly dated. The print is clear but the paper in some instances varies as to thickness and it has most likely been compiled from printer’s proofs before final printing. It is a gem to read. It is just like today, people wanted to be entertained, to ensure they were getting value for money from their rates (today the Council Tax) and that it wasn’t being wasted, to know of the past history of Croydon, to read of what was happening in the town at that time and what was to happen in the future. As said, a gem to read.

Ron Brooker

References

1. Anon., (1951). *Jesse Ward*, Croydon:The Croydon Advertiser Ltd, p.42.
2. *ibid.* facing p.43.
3. The *Ward's Commercial and General Croydon Directory* for 1897 gives 106, George Street as occupied by 'School of typewriting, shorthand and language – Hunt, G.B. and Davies, Henry C. accountant'.
For 1898 it is given as 'Croydon Camera Club; Typewriting Office – Hunt, G.B.; Croydon Drawing Club; Davies, Henry – accountant'.
4. A Thomas Collins who may have been the publisher is listed in the 1898 *Ward's Croydon Directory* as residing at "Alfriston", 8, Edridge Road.
The street directories were compiled during the August and September and published in the December of the preceding year, and a Thomas Collins is not listed in the 1897 or 1899 directories.

Ornithology

Birds seen or heard at South Norwood Country Park on 21st February 2012 were as follows:-

- | | | |
|------------------------------|----------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Grey Heron | 14. Herring Gull | 27. Blue Tit |
| 2. Mute Swan | 15. Woodpigeon | 28. Great Tit |
| 3. Canada Geese | 16. Green Woodpecker | 29. Magpie |
| 4. Mallard | 17. Wren | 30. Crow |
| 5. Shoveler | 18. Dunnock | 31. Starling |
| 6. Pochard | 19. Robin | 32. House Sparrow |
| 7. Tufted Duck | 20. Blackbird | 33. Chaffinch |
| 8. Kestrel | 21. Fieldfare | 34. Goldfinch |
| 9. Pheasant | 22. Song Thrush | 35. Siskin |
| 10. Moorhen | 23. Redwing | 36. Feral pigeon |
| 11. Black headed Gull | 24. Goldcrest | 37. Greenfinch |
| 12. Common Gull | 25. Long Tailed Tit | Coot |
| 13. Lesser Black Backed Gull | 26. Coal Tit | Parakeet |

Mavis Barber

with addenda from **Gill Rundle**

Heritage Lottery Funding for the Living Wandle Project

It was reported in *The Guardian* of 1 August 2011 that the Living Wandle Project (a restoration scheme) is one of 11 to be awarded Heritage Lottery Funding, receiving a share of £ 18.3m.

Deaths

Gordon Starling [1922 – 2011]

Gordon Sydney Starling, a long-standing member, died on 30 November 2011. Although he took little active part in the Society's management, he always took a keen interest in our work, and could generally be relied upon to ask searching questions at the Annual General Meeting. We are especially indebted to him for his question about our investments two or three years ago, which resulted in our making changes very much to our advantage just before recent financial problems materialised.

Gordon, whose father was associated with Starling Foundries Ltd (established in Croydon in 1918) was born on 3 January 1922, was educated at Selhurst Grammar School for Boys, and became professionally a teacher of geography at Croydon College. He was secretary to the Croydon Geographical Association in the early 1970s, and subsequently an active member of the former Croydon Society and of the Mid-Croydon Conservation Area Advisory Panel. He was the author of a number of short articles and letters in *Croydon Focus* (the journal of the Croydon Society) and the *Croydon Advertiser*. He is survived by his wife Hazel, also a member, and children and grand-children, to whom our condolences are tendered. The Society was represented at his funeral.

Death of Lord Croham [1917 – 2011]

Lord Croham [Douglas Albert Vivian Allen], a South Croydon resident, died on 11 September 2011. In retirement he had, amongst other duties, presided over the Annual General Meetings of the Croham Valley Residents' Association, and of the Friends of Croham Hurst Woods.

He was born on 15 December 1917 in Beddington, and educated at Wallington County Grammar School and the London School of Economics, pursuing thereafter a career in the Civil Service. From 1974 he was Head of the Home Civil Service. He was knighted in 1967, and made a Life Peer in 1978. He is credited with a key role in the origination of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (2000, c. 36).

His wife Sybil pre-deceased him (in 1994), as did his younger son Richard. He is survived by his older son, John, and by his daughter (a member of our Society and active member of the Friends of Croham

Hurst Woods) Rosamund Sulyak, to whom our condolences are extended.

Selected references

CROHAM, Lord, 1978, Less secrecy in Whitehall will lead to a strengthening of Parliament, Lord Croham says. *The Times*, 17 August 1978, page 2.

CROHAM, Lord, 2011, Obituary: Lord Croham. Whitehall mandarin and proponent of greater openness in government. *The Guardian*, 16 September 2011, page 46.

Kenneth Magnus George Newbury [1912 - 2011] – a correction

The first middle name of the late Ken Newbury was Magnus, not Marcus as printed in *Bulletin* 142 (September 2011), 9 – 10 [Information from his son Peter Newbury in *Bourne Society Local History Records* 69, page 53]

Paul W. Sowan

LB Croydon's Museum and Local Studies and Archives Service

The management of the borough's Local Studies & Archives Service has now reverted to the public libraries, under the overall administration of the Department for Children, Young Persons and Learning (the cumbersome new name for what we once knew as the Education Department!) Further administrative changes may follow if Croydon Council goes ahead with privatisation of the public library service, currently under consideration.

The Council has been seeking to recruit voluntary helpers with effect from January 2012, able to offer a minimum of four hours per week following training, with Local Studies & Archives, and with the Museum. Volunteers will assist with front-of-house and supervision and with assisting visitors, not with professional archives, library or museum functions.

Paul W. Sowan

Scheduling of the CMGIR embankment, Lion Green Road

In 1978 the Society wrote to what was then the Department of the Environment calling for the Croydon, Merstham and Godstone Iron Railway embankment at the rear of Lion Green Road car park to be scheduled as a statutory ancient monument and this case was supported by subsequent letters from Croydon Council, who actually own the embankment. This important relic of the 1805 CMGIR was eventually scheduled on July 27th, 2009 by what is now English Heritage in conjunction with Department of Culture, Media and Sport.

The Official List Entry includes the reasons for designation followed by a description and history. The following is a quotation from the first part of the Site Specific Assessment:

“The Surrey Iron Railway marks a crucial early stage in the rise of railway transport, as the first public railway, and using the developing iron railway technologies for new uses in an area not dependent on mining. It is believed to be the first fully independent public railway in the world. Unlike other railways, built privately and with use restricted to the sponsoring company, the Surrey Iron Railway significantly allowed a general use of the tracks. The railway company provided the track, and wagons could be hired for a toll. It therefore represents an important diversification in the application of railway use, as well as consolidating the technological development of other early iron railways.

The embankment south-west of Lion Green Road represents this key early transport network. The scale of construction is significant - it is a feature of some considerable height - and is one of the most spectacular sections of surviving earthworks from this railway line.”

If development takes place on the car park site, the embankment might be more obscured than at present, but some form of interpretation plaque should be provided.

John Cunningham

The John Gent Collection

In his will dated 15 December 2009 John Bannister Gent [1932 – 2011] bequeathed to the Croydon Natural History and Scientific Society Limited, for its general charitable purposes, all his books, postcards, photographs and slides relating to the Croydon area. During the summer of 2010 he deposited a collection of slides of the Croydon area with Chris. Bennett of the London Borough of Croydon's Archives & Local Studies Service. It appears that those slides are possibly the ones willed to the Society (although this was not clear at the time of deposit) as only five slides of Croydon views have been received direct from the executors after the benefactor's death.

The Society has accepted the bequest and taken delivery of the material, and it is proposed that the postcards, photographs and slides should be deposited on loan to the Croydon Local Studies & Archives Service. It is further proposed to scan the majority of this material for electronic storage to facilitate public access as images on screen, and to protect the originals from handling and theft. Heritage Lottery Funding will probably be sought by the Society to finance this project. In the immediate future there is no public access to the material, as it has to be fully catalogued and a funding bid has to be made, and there are copyright and other issues to address.

Books and pamphlets have been added to the Society's library or, where surplus to our own needs, are being sold for the Society's benefit.

Material relating to the transport history of the Greater London Area is willed to the Friends of London Transport Museum, and will be transferred to that body. This will include material relating to Croydon as there are many duplicates amongst the photographic prints.

Paul W. Sowan

'Is what true, Madame?' Her voice, a jews' harp with a Croydon accent, came as a shock to some of them. Champion, who knew from experience that the beauty of porcelain lies too often in the glaze, was not so much surprised as regretfully confirmed in an opinion.

Margery Allingham, (1950). *The Fashion in Shrouds*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Ltd, Chapter 4, page 40.