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George Baker and Baker's Stores Ltd of Surrey Street, other places in east Surrey, and Horsham

A small collection of documents (dated from 1870 onwards) and photographs (1910–1957) relating to commercial premises in Surrey Street, Croydon, and elsewhere has been received by the Society from the executors of the late John Bannister Gent, and deposited on loan at the London Borough of Croydon's Archives Service. There appears to be no family connection between the Baker and Gent families. John simply collected all and any historic photographs of Croydon that came his way and, in this case, associated documentation.

The Surrey Street property was at numbers 5 and 6 (later re-numbered 52) on the west side, adjoining Croydon's former gaol.

The documents

George Baker was, certainly in the 1920s, a resident of Blackberry Lane, Lingfield, and Angleside, East Grinstead Road, at the same place. His printed 1920s bill-headings describe him as a fruit grower with orchards and a 'model factory' at Lingfield, and as a manufacturer of 'high-class lemon curd', jams, mincemeat, pickles and sauces (presumably the lemons were not grown in Surrey!) His business is stated to have been established in 1906, although not in Surrey Street as Ward's Directories indicate 5/6 Surrey Street to have been unoccupied for several years before he moved into them in 1910.

The earliest documents in the collection are sale particulars and an abstract of title relating to 5/6 Surrey Street, late the property of George Matthews, dated 10 and 18 March 1870. The 12 manuscript leaves are accompanied by a detailed plan which shows the property to have been immediately to the south (left-hand side) of the old Croydon gaol building, which old-established Croydon residents will remember in its last days apparently used as a vegetable warehouse. There was access to the rear of the property via Matthews' Yard, which may or may not have been named after the family of George Matthews, by then deceased. The abstract is annotated to the effect that the purchaser on 10 March 1870 was John Bates, accompanying sale particulars confirm this. Bates evidently sold the property to George Baker on 20 April 1910.

Annotations also indicate that the business was in due course continued by other members of the family, and that G.T. Baker was the father of George Baker and K.F. Baker, and grandson S.J. Baker. In due course

the business was incorporated as a limited liability company, Baker's Stores Ltd.

Other papers relate to additional shops acquired and subsequently disposed of at 5 Purley Way Crescent, Mitcham Road, Croydon; 353 Lower Addiscombe Road; Lacey Green Parade at the corner of Coulsdon Road and Waddington Avenue, Coulsdon; 88 Limpsfield Road, Sanderstead; 203 High Street, Sutton; and 127 Crawley Road, Horsham. There is a conveyance for the Horsham premises dated 4 February 1875, with a much later Baker company stamp on it, date-stamped 12 February 1870.

Documents other than property deeds include several 1920s school reports for children of G. Baker of Angleside, East Grinstead Road, Lingfield, in attendance at Sutton Valence School in Kent, and an otherwise unidentified St. Michael's School.

The photographs

The photographs show the Surrey Street premises, and the shops at Mitcham Road, Whyteleafe, and Sutton. Several include members of staff, and there is an interior view.

Paul W Sowan

100 years ago

1912, April 16th.— At an evening meeting Mr. C.C. Fagg read a paper in which he put forward the suggestion

“...that the Society should undertake the ambitious task of making a comprehensive Regional Survey of a considerable area including Croydon and the country south, east and west of it, and the further suggestion that a Sociological Section be added to the list of Sections of the Society.” ... “A discussion followed the paper, in which Messrs. W. Whitaker, F.R.S., F.G.S., E.A. Martin, F.G.S., J.E. Clark, F.G.S., F.R.Met.Soc., R.R. Martin, F.M. Roberts, and others took part, and showed themselves in favour of the Society undertaking the proposed Regional Survey.”

1912, May 21st.—

“The following two resolutions were carried after being proposed by the Secretary [F.M. Roberts] and seconded respectively by Mr. N.F. Robarts, and Mr. G.W. Moore:—

(1) That a Sociological Section be formed, with Mr. C.C. Fagg as Secretary.

(2) That a Committee be formed to consider the proposal for a Regional Survey on the lines set forth in the paper read to the Society by Mr. C. C. Fagg at the April meeting.”

1912, December 17th.—

“A very successful meeting, arranged by Mr. L. Stanley Jast with the co-operation of the library staff, was held at the Public Library. Mr Councillor Pelton, J.P., Chairman of the Libraries Committee, described a recently discovered MS. Map of Croydon, by Jean Baptiste Say, dated 1785.”

[Anon., (1913). Evening meetings. *Proc Croydon Nat Hist Sci Soc*, 7(4), cxxxvii-cxli.]

Earthenware flagon issued by D.H. Weston – wine-merchant of North End, Croydon

One of the sadder items in our museum collection is an earthenware flagon lettered ‘WHITGIFT GRAMMAR SCHOOL CROYDON’ and sporting a depiction of the then North End school buildings, which had dated from the early 1870s.

The base of the flagon is lettered: D.H. WESTON / WINE MERCHANT / NEARLY OPPOSITE / WHITGIFT SCHOOL / CROYDON beside the maker’s stamp: DOULTON / LAMBETH.

D[aniel] H[all] Weston is listed as a wine merchant at 25A North End in 1880,¹ and at 59 North End in 1890.² The different numbers probably reflect a street re-numbering, rather than a change of address. Weston, who advertised his wines, spirits, liqueurs, ales and stouts in the *Croydon Review*, appears to have had no formal connection with the Whitgift School³ and may have used the name and an image of the establishment opposite his shop simply to guide or attract potential customers.

Sadly, on the morning of Tuesday 26 March 1895, Weston had got up early, as was his wont, and when he did not appear for breakfast the premises were searched and he was found by James Tearle (cellarman) hanging from a beam. An inquest was held at the Fox & Hounds Hotel (opposite West Croydon Station) on that afternoon before the Borough Coroner - Dr T Jackson. The body was identified by his cousin Benjamin Francis Weston, auctioneer of 245 Brighton Road, Daniel's wife feeling unable to attend.⁴

The inquest jury heard that he had "about six months previously been 'attacked by the deepest melancholy with suicidal tendencies', and was admitted at his own request to the Bethlehem Asylum ... and at his express request put under restraint ... he gradually improved and his religious delusions lessened ... as did his unfounded belief as to his 'committal of great crimes and financial embarrassment' which faded away ... to the point at which he would admit it was all, more or less, mental derangement ... At length the authorities allowed him home a month on trial ...".

"An undated letter was found in his purse, which read as follows ...

My memory's gone, and I cannot do my work. It is very dreadful, but you will all do better without me than with me. Oh, dear, what shall I do? Excuse me just now. Through my folly the reins have fallen from my hands, and I can't pick them up again. You, my poor Lily, have been a good wife to me. I never thought it would come to this, but that demon suicide has haunted me for the last six months or more. It is seldom from my mind. Why? Because of my sins. Then, again, the business worries me. Oh, God! Why was I born? The Lord hath formed all things for Himself, even the wicked for the day of evil. I have been an awful hypocrite, yet I thought I was seeking the right way. Now everything is a burden to me. My mind is quite correct to know what I am about, but as to figures it seems quite a blank. No one is to blame but myself. I must close and wait for the opportunity, but I am such an awful detestable coward DHW "

"After the letter had been read, Mr. B.F. Weston asked permission to be allowed to repeat that the deceased's financial position had been found to be perfectly sound."

"The jury at once returned a verdict of 'Suicide while temporarily insane'."

"The well-attended funeral took place on Friday afternoon, 29th March, at the Croydon Cemetery ... Mr. Weston's workmen attended" ⁴

The business was continued by Messrs. Stansfeld & Co.⁵

The flagon, in the museum collections with the accession number N14, was received from the executors of the will of the late Ruth Doreen Hobbs Sowan [1943 - 2006], daughter of Doris Courtney Helmke Hobbs [1917 - 1987].

Paul W Sowan

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5. Anon. (1896). *Ward's Croydon Directory for 1896*. Croydon:Ward & Co.

The family of George Jennings Hinde

Queries come into the Society by a variety of routes, often they are triggered by items that we have published, whether in print or on the web. In either case they may refer back to material published some years ago. Earlier this year it was a pleasant surprise to receive an extended phone call from Australia from Marion McNaught, a greatgranddaughter of one of our members: George Jennings Hinde (GJH). Back in 2004 we had had a professional query about GJH from Canada, at that time we had no contacts with family members but an article from the Bulletin¹ went up on the web.²

Marion is descended from GJH through his younger daughter Annie Jennings Hinde, who herself was a junior member of the Society, elected on December 15th, 1904.³ One outcome of her phone call was that, during a holiday in Europe this May, Marion and her husband Ian visited the Society's museum and saw the published and unpublished documents that we hold referring to GJH and also the microscope slide that he presented to the Club (as we then were) on February 9th 1885,⁴ before he became a member (this was a product of his doctoral studies at Munich University⁵).

Before their visit, Marion's sister Joy Fox sent me a print-out of the descent of the family from GJH's Hinde grandfather.

Various items associated with GJH are held by family members in Australia. These include a letter, dated February 22nd 1881, to him from

Charles Darwin thanking him for sending a copy of his thesis on *Fossil Sponge Spicules*.^{5,6} There are also letters from various individuals congratulating him on his election as a Fellow of the Royal Society (on June 4th, 1896⁷). One of these letters is from Horace Bolingbroke Woodward of the Geological Survey, also elected a Fellow on that date⁷ – later he became a Croydon resident and was elected to our Society in 1910.⁸ The repository of the documents that GJH received from the Royal Society on his election is currently a 100-year time capsule deposited in Lane Cove, Sydney, New South Wales, to be opened in 2088.⁹

Copies of some of the family photographs and correspondence of GJH held in Australia were presented to the Society by Marion during her visit. Amongst these are a picture of GJH and his wife, Edith Octavia CLARK, sister of our former President James Edmund Clark, they being children of James Clark of Street, Somerset, co-founder of the Clarks shoe company. Also there is a picture of a family group which may have been taken at the Hindes' South Croydon home, 24 Avondale Road, *circa* 1898 (date based on an estimated age of the youngest child in the photo). The five children were, in birth order, Karl Alfred, Bertha, Wilfrid George, Annie Jennings and Eric Clark. Of the seven in the family group, four were at one time or another either junior or senior members of the Society. Of particular interest are a photograph and photocopies of letters originating from GJH's period of sheep-ranching in Argentina.

All-in-all a very fruitful day and our sincere thanks go to Marion & Ian and Joy for making the contact and extending our knowledge of the Hinde family.

John B Greig

[An illustrated summary of this article is in the Society's September Newsletter]

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5. Hinde, G J (1880). *Fossil sponge spicules from the upper chalk. Found in the interior of a single flint-stone from Horstead in Norfolk*. Munich: Dr. Ch. Wolf & son [printer].
6. On making an enquiry at Down House, Downe (10 Aug 2012) I learnt that they do not hold the copy of Hinde's thesis.
7. The Royal Society, the Sackler Archive; <http://royalsociety.org/about-us/history/>. Visited 4 Jul 2012.
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9. McNaught, Marion, *Personal communication*.

Pugin's pupils at Old Palace

For better or worse three generations of the Pugin family are associated with Croydon: Augustus Charles Pugin (1762–1832), his son Augustus Welby Northmore Pugin (1812–1852) and his son Edward Welby Pugin (1834–1875). All three were architects, architectural draftsmen or lithographers. The most famous is Augustus Welby who, with Charles Barry, designed the interior of the Houses of Parliament. One of the best known drawings of Old Palace, showing the collapsed east wall of the hall, is sometimes attributed to him. To this drawing, or rather lithograph, I shall come later.

Architects customarily employed pupils to whom they delegated work and this is no less true of the Pugins. Edward Welby is credited with designing over a hundred churches, including St Mary's Roman Catholic Church in Wellesley Road which was opened on 10 March 1864 but there is no surviving evidence to show whether it was Edward or one of his pupils who actually designed it. It is quite likely that Edward Welby told one of his pupils to use an existing design that he, Edward, had drawn and to modify it to suit local circumstances.

The same applies, more or less, to Augustus Charles. He was an architect but also an architectural draftsman whose drawings of historic buildings are to be seen in his own publications and in those of others. I am now only concerned with those drawings about Croydon.

The drawings are of both the Old Palace and Croydon Parish Church but, for reasons of space, I shall confine myself to those of the Palace, which, in any case, are the more interesting. Also, since Augustus Charles's pupils did the drawings, this article is really about their drawings.

My attention was drawn to the existence of drawings of Old Palace several years ago by Andrew Bradstock, now in New Zealand, but then the tour organiser of the Friends of Old Palace and who is still a member of the Croydon Natural History and Scientific Society. He sent me a photocopy of one drawing and told me there were others. It is only recently that I tried to locate them. They are at the Guildhall Library, where I saw them, and in the British Library as they are included in volumes of architectural drawings published under the authorship of both Augustus Charles and of Augustus Welby Pugin.

The first publication, in three volumes, is entitled *Examples of Gothic Architecture selected from various Ancient Edifices in England*. Both

father and son are named as the authors, but only the third volume is solely the son's. Augustus Welby Pugin accompanied his father on some of his architectural expeditions, but none of the architectural drawings in the first two are attributed to him. It is quite possible that both men visited Croydon.

The first volume was published in 1831 but, as Augustus Pugin died in 1832, the publication of the other volumes was delayed. However, we need only concern ourselves with the first volume. Its contents include 'habitable Gothic' buildings from other counties besides Surrey.

For Surrey it has 75 plates and, besides those of Croydon Church, they include drawings of Beddington Manor House and Beddington Church. For Croydon Palace there are four plates, those from 38 to 41.

These are strictly architectural drawings, but they are also accompanied by text, written by Edward James Willson (1787–1854), a fellow architect, and comprise both a description of the plates and of the Palace itself. Both the drawings and the text date from before 1830. The plates may have originally been sold separately as they were 'published' in three separate months in 1829. The text, however, has a footnote, about the collapse of the gable on 8 June 1830. The drawings are of both the hall and chapel, but within each plate there are separate, smaller drawings of individual features, such as of the mouldings on one of the principal arches in the hall, parts of a bay window, the ceiling of the chapel, as well as a plan of the guardroom. Even some of the larger drawings are subdivided. The simplest and, from our point of view the most important, is the first, being a transverse section of the hall, looking east. It therefore shows the east wall before the collapse. George Belton Moore (1805–1875) did the architectural drawings. The sculpture with the arms of King Henry VI is depicted separately in some detail in the top left hand corner and sketched on the middle of the wall. Who drew the sculpture is uncertain. The name given is E. Kennion, but I suspect it was drawn long before 1829 by Edward Kennion (1744–1809) as I know of no pupil with that surname.

The drawings are too detailed to describe here, so I shall revert to the text by quoting some passages from it. They are interesting enough in themselves. The first is of the Palace itself:

There was certainly a mansion, with a chapel attached to it, in the thirteenth century; and it had probably been an occasional residence for the archbishops of a much earlier period. From some passages in the registers, it has been inferred that the buildings were at first constructed entirely

of timber, and that the mansion was only of very narrow dimensions; but the expressions on which these opinions are grounded appear to have been misunderstood ...

The whole pile nearly resembled a college, being composed of stone and some bricks, arranged around a quadrangular court, of an oblong, irregular plan, about 52 yards wide from east to west, and 72 from north to south. The principal gate was on the north side, opposite the hall, which occupied the centre of the southern range of buildings, in which were the chief apartments. The palace appears to have been anciently surrounded by a moat...

The section representing the east end of the hall, together with one of the timber arches supporting the roof, which is framed in four bays. The porch, which projects from the north side towards the court, has a vaulted roof, over which was formerly a chamber, with a chimney in one corner ... The three arched doors in the eastern wall led to the buttery, kitchen, and cellar; and above them was originally a lofty window overlooking the music gallery, which has been entirely removed, together with the screen that supported it. In the place of the great window, a very curious piece of sculpture has been inserted, which appears to have been removed from another part of the palace, when the hall was fitted up by Archbishop Herring. The royal arms of France and England, quarterly, are impaled with those ascribed to King Edward the Confessor. The shield is supported by two angels ... A square tester, or canopy, projects over the whole sculpture. This piece of ornament is probably of the same date as the hall itself, as may be inferred from the mouldings attached to the lower part, which correspond exactly to those in the cornice surrounding the hall...

These shields were probably new coloured at the time the hall was repaired by the prelate last mentioned [Herring], when the louvre in the roof, over the hearth in the middle of the hall, was destroyed, and other alterations made...'

The three arched doors were not replaced when the east wall collapsed, but the curious piece of sculpture was recovered whole and is now on the opposite wall.

As interesting is the description of the chapel:

There were formerly two chapels attached to the Archiepiscopal Palace, of which the larger ... served for the

use of the household; and several ordinations of clergymen were also held in it; the smaller chapel served for the archbishop's private devotions; but this has entirely perished. The present chapel is an oblong building of brick, finished with remarkable plainness. No part of its architecture appears older than the middle of the sixteenth century, though it is free from any admixture of the Italian style; and from the frugality of its construction, so unsuitable to the ancient magnificence of the metropolitan prelates, it seems more probable that the chapel was rebuilt after the impoverishment of the see of Canterbury in the reign of Edward VI. The papal badge of the cross-keys, twice repeated in brick-work on the western gable, certainly could not have been set up by Archbishop Parker, nor any of his Protestant successors: perhaps the chapel was built by Cardinal Pole, who held the Archbishopric of Canterbury during the reign of Queen Mary. It received some embellishments from the unfortunate Archbishop Laud, but was desecrated in the Commonwealth...'

There is also a description of the Guardroom:

'It was one of the chief apartments of the palace, after the hall and chapel. It is said to have been erected by Archbishop Arundel, in the beginning of the fifteenth century, his arms being found on two corbels within the chamber; but the bay window here represented is certainly of a later date, by nearly a century, if not more.'

Augustus Charles Pugin was also the author of *Gothic Ornaments, selected from various Ancient Buildings, both in England and France, during the years, 1828, 1829, and 1830*, published in 1831 which includes two plates relating to Old Palace, Plates 56 and 71, one depicting a wooden string-course and the other the sculpture mentioned above, but, the supervisor being other than Pugin, the lithographers were not, I think, employed by him.

I shall now concentrate on one of Pugin's pupils: Joseph Nash (1808–1878). His link with Croydon was more direct as he was a pupil, a schoolboy, at the Manor House Academy or School in North End. Contemporary newspapers state that the Academy was leased to Alexander Bisset (1753?–1821)* in October 1807 and was 'to be let' in

* Alexander Bisset was referred to in the article on Jean-Baptiste Say in Bulletin number 144.

1813. Its proprietor, however, was the Rev. Okey Nash (1779?–1862), then holding a curacy in London, but who lived in Croydon as several of his children were born in Croydon. Joseph, himself, was born in Buckinghamshire. It seems his father took over the running of the school himself sometime after 1813. So, of all Augustus Charles's pupils, Joseph Nash was the only one who knew Croydon well.

Thus he drew, 'from nature and on stone', the well-known drawing of the collapsed gable of Old Palace. He would have seen it soon after the collapse in June 1830 as the lithograph was published by Augustus Pugin in that year. It depicts not only the rubble from the eastern gable and the somewhat dilapidated interior of the hall, but also about a dozen people gathered around the rubble. Some are removing the rubble or searching among it. Two men, obviously gentlemen from the evidence of their dress, are directing the work and there is also one lady watching the men searching the rubble. Two other men are in conversation beside the porch. The porch is the same porch to be seen today but it has one feature now missing, and that is a chimney.

I knew that the Museum of Croydon possessed a copy of the lithograph. I hoped that the Museum's copy had further information on the reverse side. Because of staff shortage, I was unable to see the copy in the Museum's store, but this turned out to be fortunate as otherwise I might have ended my search there. Instead I looked for a likely publication by Joseph Nash where it might be included. This turned out to be *A Series of Views, illustrative of Pugin's Examples of Gothic Architecture: sketched from nature and drawn on stone, by Joseph Nash, Pupil to Augustus Pugin* since it was published in 1830. It is not in the British Library but in the National Art Library at the V & A and in the Guildhall Library where I saw it. To my surprise it had more. In all there are four pictorial drawings of Old Palace. There is also a preface by Augustus Charles and a text or 'letter-press' by W[illiam] H[enry] Leeds, [1786–1866], an architectural critic.

With one exception the lithographs depict contemporary scenes. The exception commemorates the visit of Queen Elizabeth's visit to Archbishop Matthew Parker on July 14, 1573 and shows the interior of the crowded hall and gallery. There are exterior views, one showing the hall, porch and chapel, one the chapel seen from the churchyard and the third a view of the small courtyard below the bay window of the 'guard chamber' or guard room. It shows workmen loading or unloading cloth from a barrow: the Old Palace was then being used as a calico

manufactory. It also shows a water wheel half hidden in what looks like a large shed.

The text explains each lithograph but the author also refers to the event on June 8 as a catastrophe making the Palace a complete ruin. He refers to improvements made by Archbishop Wake from 1715 to 1736 including the rebuilding of the great gallery leading to the garden. The interior view of the hall, Leeds writes, 'shows the whole extent of the apartment, looking from the west end, where the floor is raised a few steps above the general level, forming a dais ... Above the screen and gallery ... is seen a lofty and elegant east window; this, however, had been blocked up for many years, and against it were placed the arms of Henry IV...' Leeds criticises the dimensions of the hall as not being well adapted to ceremonies of state as the length does not correspond to the height and width, and the length is so restricted by the screen as to make the floor space square. This description is hardly from nature but he does add that the fine timber roof has since been impaired by a boarded ceiling, nearly excluding it from view.

Of the interior views Leeds tells us that a portion of the building is used as a school-room. He seems to mean the eastern 'extremity of the hall' as the entrance to the school-room is 'through the small archway in the adjoining porch'.

The volume is also interesting in other ways. The title page depicts the gateway, now standing at the corner of Howley Street, with the caption 'Parsonage House, Croydon – Entrance' and the date 1450. Yet, oddly enough, there is, between the Old Palace plates, and those for Eltham Palace, a further title page giving as an alternative: *Views Illustrative of Pugin's Examples of Gothic Architecture* and it is this page which has the lithograph of the collapsed east wall.

One of Augustus Charles's pupils, Benjamin Ferrey (1810–1880) complained about the custom of architects attributing to themselves the work done by their pupils, but at least Augustus Charles named them underneath the drawings they made and encouraged Joseph Nash to publish a volume under his own name.

Brian Lancaster

Authors wanted

If there are any persons, whether members or not, who have knowledge of some topic on the natural history, geology, archaeology or local history of Croydon which they are prepared to write up, please get in touch with the editor (as on the front cover).

Radon survey in Reigate's 'caves'

The Reigate 'caves' are man-made excavations into the Folkestone Sand in and around the town centre, ranging in date and purpose from the so-called Barons' Cave, possibly a wine cellar, under Reigate Castle (first mentioned in 1596 in William Camden's *Britannia*) to late 18th and early 19th century sand mines for glass-sand. Since mining ceased in or about 1860 they have been used as wine and beer cellars, World War I military material stores, World War II control centres and air-raid shelters, and so forth. Currently, the Tunnel Road West mine is occupied by a rifle club, and the East mine is being developed as a museum and tourist attraction by the Wealden Cave and Mine Society (WCMS), who organise public guided tours of the East and West mine and of the Barons' Cave on the second Saturday each month from May to September. Paul Sowan is one of the tour guides. Items of industrial archaeology interest from our own Society's museum collection, on loan to WCMS, are on display.

During the last year or two Professor Gavin Gillmore and his students at Kingston University, assisted by Paul Sowan and Malcolm Tadd, have been monitoring radon concentrations in the air in the Tunnel Road East caves. This is not because the amount of the radioactive gas here is at anything like dangerous levels. The caves are simply a convenient and safe environment in which to train students in the use of radon monitoring techniques. The quantity of radon present would only be considered a serious hazard to health if persons lived in them permanently throughout the year.

Radon is a radioactive but chemically 'inert' gas (grouped chemically with helium, neon, argon, krypton and xenon), with the half-life of the longest-lived isotope (^{222}Rn) being less than four days. It derives from minute traces of uranium minerals found in the Folkestone Sand, itself derived from the erosion of much older rocks such as, possibly, the granites of Devon and Cornwall.

Paul W Sowan

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Gillmore, G, Khan, A, Tadd, M and Sowan, P W (2011). Reigate Caves, UK: a historic sand mine system – real-time radon concentration survey results and time-averaged SSNTDS. *Geophys Res Abstr*, **13**: 2pp.

Book review

The River Wandle Companion and Wandle Trail Guide by Bob Steel with Derek Coleman was published as a hardback (ISBN 978-0-9572582-0-4 £25) and paperback (ISBN 978-0-9572582-1-1 £15) by Culverhouse Books in 2012.

You would expect a book review to begin by first telling you what the book is about, but I am not going to do that, because the photographs and the maps are so many, so colourful and so clear that their effect is to claim prior attention. It is such an attractively produced book.

Yet it is not a picture book but an in-depth description of the river's history, industry, geology, natural history and reclamation. And that is just the first half as the second half, between pages 115 and 226, is entitled 'Walking the river' in which there are separate chapters covering the different sections of the river such as 'The Carshalton Wandle', 'Morden Hall Park' and 'Wandsworth'. The book also deals with notable people, such as William Morris and the Carews of Beddington, and buildings, past and present, in the immediate vicinity of the river, such as Beddington Park House, Old Palace, Merton Place and Carshalton House. Some of the people named owned mills or breweries which depended on water supply.

Bob Steel, a geographer, is the author of all but one of the chapters – Derek Coleman is the author of the chapter on wildlife. He is an active member of our Society and has taken members on visits to bird-watching sites. The foreword is by Theo Pike, chairman of the Trustees of The Wandle Trust, originally founded in 2000 with the strange name of the Jet Set Club, but given its present name about 2005. Its mission is to 'restore the Wandle to full health and biodiversity'. The account of the river's reclamation is taken up to September 2011 when the Environment Agency named the river as one of the five most improved rivers in the country. In the 1960s it had been designated an open sewer.

Among the numerous illustrations, mostly photographs, many of which were taken by Bob Steel, are reproductions of paintings, including Reinagle's 'Croydon Parish Church', showing riders navigating the narrow path between the church and the river. Insets, some of which occupy a whole page, provide information about particular topics, one giving information about relevant local societies, archives and organisations. One inset is on water pollution in Victorian Croydon, but the book's emphasis is on the Wandle as it is today.

The normal prices of the hardback and paperback editions are given above but Derek Coleman will be selling copies at discounted prices of £20 and £12 respectively at this year's 'Focus on Birds' meeting on the last Saturday of November, when he is one of the three speakers. The book would fit more easily into a handbag than a pocket, but, whatever it is carried in, it is very companionable.

Brian Lancaster

Byron misses Croydon

From *Lord Byron* :

Dear Reader,

I trust (but dare not hope) that the following stanzas, accidentally omitted during the printing of my 'Don Juan', and here rescued by Mr. *David Hicks* of *Shere* (alias *Shiere*, &c.), a near neighbour in C^o. *Surrey* of my son-in-law Lord *Lovelace*, will be permitted to clarify my unhappy life-long absence from *Croydon* and its environs.

There are some places which I must avoid on
 Principle, as their names are hard to rhyme,
 And I prefer my pen to be employed on
 Verses that don't take too much toil or time.
 Because of that, I've never been to *Croydon*,
 Although I hear that borough's keen that I'm
 Counted among it's worthies. Such a pity
 When I must deny myself to an whole city !

I've not seen much 'twixt *Rochester* and *Reading* town
 (I must take care that here my verses scan);
 I've never gone from *Shirley* west to *Beddington*;
Purley's 'Diversions' I've found duller than
Wordsworth; and though I was aware of *Addington*,
 That wasn't from the place, but from the man;
 While though I've travelled far afield as *Hellas*,
 I don't know what is meant by '*Crystal Palace*'.