

# CNHSS Bulletin

Issue 150, March 2014

Bulletin of the  
Croydon Natural History & Scientific Society

ISSN 0309-6149

*In this issue:*

Football by electric light	John Hickman
A bishop recalls his childhood in Waddon	Brian Lancaster
Former member's bequest to the Society	Paul W Sowan
Our long-standing members	Jane McLauchlin
Obituary Tom Samson [1921 – 2013]	—
Visit to Billingsgate roman bathhouse	—
Know your faults: a faulty observation at Merstham	Paul W Sowan
From the Membership Secretary	Jane McLauchlin
Book reviews	
Butterflies of Surrey Revisited	Brian Lancaster
A history of Norbury	Celia E Bailey
Concretopia	Paul W Sowan
Two paintings of Croydon	—
Focus on Alfred Russel Wallace	—

Editor: John B Greig, 62 Boundary Road, Carshalton, SM5 4AD; [bulletin@cnhss.org.uk](mailto:bulletin@cnhss.org.uk)

Croydon Natural History and Scientific Society Limited

A company limited by guarantee registered in London No. 922278

Registered Office: 96a Brighton Road, South Croydon, CR2 6AD

Registered charity No. 260739

– For ways of contacting the Society online see the box on the last page –

---

## Football by electric light

---

Despite the bitterly cold weather during the second week of December 1878, the mean daily temperature recorded by Negretti and Zambra at Crystal Palace being - 5°C, about a thousand spectators turned out to see what the *Croydon Chronicle* described as 'a favourite although recent amusement', This was a football match by electric light; the local Grosvenor rugby club being the first in Croydon to engage in this method of play.

Enlivened by the band of the 2nd Surrey Rifles, the match between the Grosvenor club and the Vikings of South Norwood was held at Fairfield in sharp frost and a fog. Patterson's of Bedford Court, Covent Garden was engaged to illuminate the game using floodlight. This was achieved using four Serrens' burners, two being placed on each side of the pitch about fifty yards apart. Although all were exposed to the air two were shielded, and to a degree strengthened, by reflectors. Each of the lights was considered to be equal to eight hundred candles. The direct current electricity was provided by Bunsen batteries of fifty-two 1.9v cells to each of the lights.

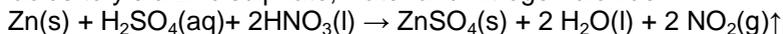
The kick-off was variously reported as being between 7.30 and 7.45 p.m. and by the light of the lamps the thirty players in their Guernseys 'appeared more like savages running about than human beings' according to the *Croydon Times* reporter. A fast game was played until shortly after 9 pm.

The lighting provided a spectacle in itself. When burning properly the illumination was dazzling in its brilliancy. On occasion it subsided to a mere red glow from a spark as the lights popped in and out, being described as 'rather fitful', by the *Croydon Advertiser*. This was claimed to be to the disadvantage of the Grosvenor team as the players lost sight of the soon slippery ball in some of the scrimmages; their side also being weakened through one of the team leaving the field having been incapacitated by a severe kick in the mouth. Other players also received unpleasant knocks, the frost having made the pitch as hard as iron.

By all accounts a very good game was played, but in the event no goal was kicked by either side. The Vikings were victorious having scored two tries and one touch-down against two touches-down by their opponents.

Another interesting feature of the event was the use of the Bunsen cell. This was an improvement on the earlier Grove cell. A feature of the Bunsen battery was the replacement of platinum for the cathode by the considerably cheaper carbon in the form of pulverised coal and coke. The

current continued to be derived from the reaction of zinc with sulphuric and nitric acids to yield zinc sulphate, water and nitrogen dioxide:



The sulphuric acid was in aqueous solution (dilute), but the nitric acid was concentrated. Had any of the players, or spectators been careened into these cells the consequences might potentially have been serious. Another disadvantage of the Bunsen cell, one that contributed to its discontinuation, was the liberation of highly noxious nitrogen dioxide as a by-product. At low temperatures this is a heavy, yellow to reddish brown vapour with a faint bleach-like odour. It is toxic at dosages as low as 5 parts per million (ppm), at levels of 100-150 ppm toxicity occurs within 30-60 minutes; exposure to levels of 200 to 700 ppm are rapidly fatal.

The five regular local newspapers had mixed reports on the event. Brief accounts were published by *The Croydon Advertiser*, *Croydon Express* and the *Croydon Times*. The *Express* held the view that ‘...some disappointment was expressed that the experiment was not completely successful’. The *Croydon Times*, in another brief article, remarked ‘The apparatus did not work at all satisfactory...’ and concluded with ‘...we should certainly say the first attempt at a football match by electric light in Croydon was a failure’. The *Croydon Chronicle*, gave details of the apparatus as well as the match, opening its piece with a prescient warning to shareholders in gas companies of the sure if distant danger threatening their remunerative investment. It also wisely commented ‘... [the] novelty certainly being the only charm, for the game could be played better and with more safety by day-light’. It is worth remembering that these newspapers were those for whom the Grosvenor club was local. The *Norwood News*, home paper of the Vikings was altogether much more enthusiastic. It gave a detailed account of the lighting apparatus as well as a descriptive commentary of the game. So enthused were the South Norwood spectators that the *Norwood News* exploited the inspiration of a local poet and celebrated the Vikings win by concluding their article with the following verse:

#### ANOTHER VERSION.

In Croydon when the sun was low,  
Like a blanc-mange lay th’ untrodden snow,  
And homeward turned full-well I trow  
Each roué rolling rapidly.

But Croydon saw another sight,  
When football teams at dead of night  
Commanded the electric light,  
To lighten up their finery.

By goal and touch-line fast arrayed,  
 The forwards ready stood displayed,  
 And furious every half-back brayed,  
 "Push up" in dreadful revelry.

Then struck the clock – it was eleven,  
 Then rushed the ball by drop kicks driven,  
 Or bolted upward t'ward the heaven,  
 As corks fly up from Sillery,

'Tis morn— 'tis noon! With midnight sun,  
 Nor yet their frantic rolling done,  
 Where panting Vikings still for fun  
 Shout in their slushy panoply.

The combat deepens, things look grave,  
 The Grosvenor smile and strive to save  
 The game:– with onward rush like wave  
 The Vikings scatter chivalry.

Few, few again, where many met,  
 Will come to shiver in the wet,  
 Bemoaning long their own poor feet,  
 And grumbling at the temperature.

**John Hickman**

### Sources

- Croydon Advertiser*, 14 December 1878, p5 c1.  
*Croydon Chronicle*, 14 December 1878, p5 c1.  
*Croydon Express*, 14 December 1878.  
*Croydon Times*, 14 December 1878.  
*Norwood News*, 14 December 1878, p6 c1-2.  
 Balfour Stewart (1872). *Physics*. London:MacMillan & Co..  
 Ellenhorn J & Barceloux D (1988). *Medical Toxicology*, New York:Elsevier  
 Science Publishing Company, Inc..  
 Kaye GW & Laby TH (1962). *Tables of Physical and Chemical Constants*,  
 London:Longmans, Green and Co. Ltd.  
 Parkes GD (1963). *Mellor's Modern Inorganic Chemistry*.  
 London:Longmans, Green and Co. Ltd.

---

Henry Bright, late of Croydon, in the county of Surrey, but now of Walthamstow, in the county of Essex, Coprolite Merchant, but now out of business, having been adjudged bankrupt under a Petition for adjudication of Bankruptcy, filed in Her Majesty's Court of Bankruptcy, in London, on the 30th day of September, 1862, a public sitting, ... on the 2nd day of December next, at the said Court, ... being the day limited for the said bankrupt to surrender. *London Gazette*, 11 November 1862, Issue 22680, p. 5383a.

---

---

## A bishop recalls his childhood in Waddon

---

The bishop is Edmund Arbuthnott Knox, Anglican bishop of Manchester from 1903 to 1921 whose autobiography is entitled *Reminiscences of an Octogenarian, 1847-1934*, published in 1935 two years before his death. The best known of his children is Monsignor Ronald Knox who translated the Bible for Roman Catholics. Edmund Knox was born in India in 1847 but spent, so writes Evelyn Waugh in his biography of Ronald Knox, 'his formative years in the seclusion of Waddon' where his father, George, a clergyman 'without cure of souls', was employed in London as an assistant secretary of the Church Missionary Society. Edmund's mother was born Frances Reynolds and her father Thomas Reynolds had an estate in Carshalton through which the Wandle flowed. Frances had been brought up as a Quaker, attending the Friends' meeting house in Croydon; and, as George was evangelical, Edmund's upbringing was spartan.

Waddon was then a hamlet consisting of a few cottages and substantial houses, a farm and a mill. The Knoxes' first home was one of the cottages. It had the reputation of having been a resort of smugglers. Indeed the back of a shallow cupboard could be removed to gain entrance to a 'good-sized room'. Because the cottage was too small, the family moved to one of the hamlet's substantial houses, large enough for a coach house, paddock and a garden, on the wall of which fruited peaches, apricots and greengages. They employed three maids, a cook, a housemaid and an old Cornish nurse. In 1861 the family included four sons and two daughters.

Thirteen of them attended the parish church in Croydon, but, despite St John's being commodious, more people attended than there were pews available. The Knoxes were only allocated six seats in the gallery. The family were living at Waddon when the church caught fire in 1867 and Edmund, seeing the flames from a window, ran to the church, by which time the tower was engulfed in flames. His autobiography also recalls the newly-built St Matthew's in George Street, financed by the Church of England Trust to ensure that the clergymen appointed were evangelical. The sermons at St John's were dull but 'unimpeachably orthodox'. Those at St Matthew's were preached extempore. Some of its congregation held a curate's sermon to be unorthodox. He was so worried that he consulted George Knox and he advised the curate to send his sermon notes to the archbishop. It turned out that the curate had planned it on one of the archbishop's own published sermons.

The Knoxes spent eleven years at Waddon but Edmund's autobiography omits further mention of it once he goes on to recount his school days at St Paul's.

**Brian Lancaster**

---

## Former member's bequest to the Society

---

Member John Stephen Brooke, who lived in Totnes and died on 28 September 2012, has very generously left the Society £10,000 in his will. He had been a member since 1963, and lived in South Croydon before moving to Devon in 1999. He was a great-grandson of Dr Henry Franklin Parsons who was born in Frome in 1846 and was twice our President, in 1893 and 1913; he died in Croydon in October 1913.

Dr Parsons had left his natural history collections to our Society, with the exception of the Somerset material which was left to the Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society. Parsons' bequest was 'for the Croydon Museum' and included 'some 10,000 fossils, rocks, and minerals; a valuable herbarium of flowering plants, ferns, mosses, liverworts, fungi, and lichens, and various miscellaneous specimens', and also a cabinet of microscope slides and a number of 'valuable scientific books'. The geological material was accepted by the County Borough of Croydon for display at the then Grangewood Museum in Thornton Heath. Sadly, the museum was closed at the start of World War I and not reopened until 1920. It was closed again, permanently, as a result of World War II when the Grangewood Mansion was made available for army occupation. The collections, uncared for, were partly lost and damaged. The museum never re-opened, and the mansion was subsequently demolished. The seriously damaged and depleted remains of the geological collection were last seen at the former John Ruskin Grammar School, then at Shirley.

Fortunately the Borough had in 1913 declined to accept the herbarium and other materials, which were then returned to us. The most important part of the bequest was the herbarium, now placed in the care of the South London Botanical Institute (initially on loan from us). The Somerset material is at the museum at Taunton. The books and microscope slides remain in our care.

H.F. Parsons is particularly remembered locally for his authorship of a paper, published in our *Proceedings*, on the flora of the commons near Croydon. Mr. Brooke's wish was that his own bequest should fund 'a project in memory of my great-grandfather'. The Society's Council contemplates the completion and publication of the Croham Hurst Survey with the assistance of the bequest, this to include the Presidential Address of Eleanor Redshaw, President for 1987–1989.

**Paul W Sowan**

### References

Parsons, Henry Franklin (1912). The flora of the commons near Croydon. *Proceedings of the Croydon Natural History and Scientific Society*, 7(3), 57-88. [Floral lists for Addington Hills, Croham Hurst, Farthing Downs,

Hayes Common, Keston Common, Mitcham Common, Riddlesdown, West Wickham Common, and Worms Heath]

Mennell, Henry Tuke (1914). Obituary. H. Franklin Parsons, MD, FGS, *Proceedings of the Croydon Natural History and Scientific Society*, 7(5), clxxiv–clxxxvi + plate.

Young, Donald Peter (1951). The Parsons herbarium, *Proceedings of the Croydon Natural History and Scientific Society*, 12(1), 76–77.

## Our long-standing members

One of our members sent me a card with her 2014 membership subscription saying that she had been a member for 50 years. I looked at my files and found that we have one individual member and one group member of more than 60 years, and seven individuals of more than 50 years. Congratulations to all and I hope that many more members will reach these milestones.

Forty-four percent of our members have been in membership for at least twenty years. I hope this means general satisfaction with the programme that CNHSS offers!

**Jane McLauchlin**

## Obituary

### Tom Samson [1921 – 2013]

Victor Thomas Samson was born in Leeds on 7 May 1921, and died in Wallington on 13 April 2013. He was apprenticed to Archie Handford's photography business in George Street in 1937, and in due course became Managing Director of Archie Handford Ltd (incorporated as a limited company in 1954). Tom specialised in aerial photography, and produced superb images of industrial and construction sites for their developers and owners. He also photographed business and industrial interiors and products for the firm's clients. He was an active member and supporter of the Croydon Airport Society and of our own Society. A number of his local aerial views have been published in our illustrated local history books, edited by the late John Gent, and have been added to the local collection at Croydon's Local Studies Library & Archives Service. The Society was represented at Tom's memorial service at St. Mark's Church, Woodcote on 3 May 2013. [PWS]

---

## Visit to Billingsgate roman bathhouse

---

On January 31 this year a group of 24 persons, comprising members of our Society, of the Surrey Archaeological Society and others, took part in a private viewing of this site, led by Jane Sidell of English Heritage with Jackie Keily from the Museum of London and organised by Celia Bailey.



© Copyright 2014 Croydon Natural History and Scientific Society Ltd, prepared with permission from a colour original copyright 2014 J B Greig

In the picture Jane Sidell is explaining the structures, in the background are the remains of the *tepidarium* or warm room. The bathhouse, of three in London the only one that can be viewed by the public, dates to the 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD and was discovered in 1848. Since then it has been housed in the basement of office buildings. The viewing was highly informative and well-received.

Afterwards, some of the group went on to All Hallows Church, Tower Hill and inspected objects, including a section of roman paving, in the museum in the crypt.

---

## Know your faults: a faulty observation at Merstham

---

The Croydon Natural History & Scientific Society's field excursions often find themselves at Merstham, the points of interest being some or all of the southern terminus of the Croydon, Merstham & Godstone Iron Railway, the Merstham Gap through which the pioneer horse-drawn mineral line ran (shared now by the A23 Brighton Road), the underground quarries which it served, or the church built with the quarried stone.

A number of members of what was then the Croydon Microscopical and Natural History Club were in the village on Saturday, 21 May 1887, attending an outdoor meeting organised jointly with the Geologists' Association. The weather was terrible! The printed and published report of the day tells us that ...

Seldom has the Association had to contend with more adverse meteorological conditions than befell the Members who took part in this excursion. Arriving at Merstham at noon, the party heard with regret that their old friend Mr. Gilford, who was to have been one of the Directors, was prevented by the illness of one of his family from being present.

William Gilford [1827 –1902] was the noted Redhill property speculator and amateur geologist whose main claim to fame is the creation of modern Woldingham. Amongst other speculations in 1899 he bought for development the 48 acres of Russell Hill Farm at Purley, an area now built over.

The field visit report tells us about the group's activities at lunchtime ...

After a bread-and-cheese luncheon at the "Feathers" the Members hurried southwards towards Redhill, the first halt being at a brickfield north of Battlebridge, where the faulted junction of the Gault and the Folkestone Sands can be seen.

This long-disused clay pit seems to have been on the north side of Battlebridge Lane near its junction with London Road South (the A23). The site was later Wells' nursery gardens, and then an industrial estate.

### **Slender evidence for the Merstham fault**

So dreadful was the weather that sheltering from the rain and keeping the spirits up evidently seemed more important than recording any geological details, as ...

Here, however, rain compelled the party to take shelter in a shed, and relieve the tedium of the delay by listening to some humorous verses on a recent excursion read by the author, Miss Forster. In a

lucid interval in the gloom-inspiring weather a slight advance was made towards Frenches, where another brickfield should have been visited; but rain, varied by hail, entirely prevented this, though the Members were able in consequence to have an interview with the Jolly Brickmakers [the second public house that Saturday lunchtime! It remains in business at the north end of Frenches Road]

So our only actual sighting and record of the Merstham fault amounts to noting that clay could be seen one side of a more or less vertical fracture in the earth's crust, and sand on the other: which side was which we are not told. Later geological investigations, including those of our former member Frank Newbury Gossling [1859 – 1945] suggest that the fault was more or less vertical, and aligned approximately north south, although regrettably neither fact was recorded in 1887. Neither the bottom of the Gault Clay nor the top of the Folkestone Sand seems to have been seen (the clay is younger than and overlies the sand). Gossling's work suggests the downthrow side of the fault was to the west, which our geological party might have confirmed for us, but didn't, that clay was observed on the west side of the fault, and sand abutting against it on the other side. The Gault Clay has a thickness in east Surrey of around 280 feet, and the Folkestone Sand 180 feet. But as the shallow clay pit revealed only a few feet vertically of the fracture from top to bottom, and did not reveal the junction of the older and younger beds, it was not possible to determine how large the vertical displacement was.

#### **Official recognition of the Merstham fault**

This sole sighting of a few feet of this displacement, despite the inadequate record, was adopted by the Geological Survey of Great Britain as a significant feature, and is shown on the published one-inch to the mile geological map for the Reigate and Dorking area. It appears on the map (published in 1932) as at least a mile and a half long approximately parallel with and west of the main railway lines, extending from Battlebridge Lane northwards across Quality Street to somewhere near Merstham's original parish church. The Survey officers' reasoning was that such a fault would explain the abrupt change in direction of the mapped outcrops of the strata in question between Gatton and Merstham.

Attempts to locate a fault at its north end, where the geology was revealed when the two parallel railway cuttings were made, proved inconclusive. Contorted strata and minor faulting was recorded in both cuttings (one opened to traffic in 1841, and the other in 1899), but evidently these have an east-west alignment rather than north-south. Gossling suggested the fault keeps to the west of the railway lines, and passes close to Henry Hoof's grave in the churchyard.

### **The importance of the Merstham fault** (assuming it to be real!)

The existence of a major north-south zone of faulting and fracturing through Merstham certainly makes sense in connection with a number of other features of this northern end of the parish. Such a zone of weakness in the Chalk may have initiated the erosion, with the help of a hypothesised very much longer river Wandle with a source somewhere in the area of what we now know as the Weald, the low gap in the North Downs (the Merstham Gap now followed by the A23). And such a fracture zone may well have acted as a pathway for groundwater issuing from a spring in Gatton Bottom Road, which once powered Merstham's watermill (from which Mill Lane in the village takes its name). An abundance of water in the rock either side of the railways explains why the underground quarries at Quarry Dean are flooded, and could be worked below the water table only by draining them via an alit driven for that purpose in 1807-1809, but long since fallen-in, blocked, and ineffective. Badly fractured water-logged rock in the same area would explain why there appears to have been no subterranean quarrying between the small mine working known between the two lines and the borders of Gatton parish around a half mile to the west. If the Gap seemed the obvious route for the horse-drawn railway, the Reigate turnpike, the two conventional main railway lines and their tunnels, the A23, and the northern end of the unfinished M23, all these features could well be the direct and indirect results of a dislocation in the earth's crust some tens of millions of years ago, glimpsed briefly on a very wet day between two pubs in May 1887.

**Paul W Sowan**

### **Sources**

*Proceedings of the Geologists' Association*, 10(4),154 –157 (1888); and 40(3),197 – 259 + plates 15 – 23 (1929)

Dines, Henry George, and Francis Hereward Edmunds (1933). The geology of the country around Reigate and Dorking. Explanation of Sheet 286. *Memoir Geological Survey of Great Britain*, vii + 204 + ix -xiv pp + v pls.

### **From the Membership Secretary**

Thanks to all who have paid the 2014 subscription. If you haven't paid you will receive a reminder with this mailing. Every year a few members don't respond to this reminder and CNHSS Council has agreed that you won't receive your Autumn mailing until you are up to date with your subscription. We have been sending 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.

**Jane McLaughlin**

---

## Book reviews

---

### ***Butterflies of Surrey Revisited***

The Surrey Wildlife Atlas Project is unique in Britain. The Project has published fourteen volumes in the Series so far, the latest being the volume with the above title. Graham Collins inaugurated the Series in 1995 with his volume *Butterflies* which is now sold out and the present volume replaces it.

Graham was the sole author of the earlier volume and it had 87 pages. In contrast, this new one has four named authors, with contributions from members of the Butterfly Conservation Surrey branch, and 240 pages of text, making it an entirely new book. As with previous volumes there are numerous photographs, charts, maps and tables. Their purpose is less to identify species than to chart their distribution and abundance within the county and to record changes since 1995.

Those changes have mainly been for the worse. Twenty four species are listed as being less abundant in the years 2000-2012 but only twelve more abundant. A few have become extinct. Surprisingly three species have more than doubled in abundance: the Chalkhill Blue more than quadrupled, the others being the White Admiral and the Purple Hairstreak. Greater abundance does not automatically entail a wider distribution. Loss of habitat has affected both the winners and the losers.

Although the bulk of the volume is devoted to describing the status of each species, there are chapters on butterfly ecology, photography and gardening. Seven of the key sites are described in detail, one of which is Hutchinson's Bank within Croydon Borough where the London Wildlife Trust and the Downland Countryside Management Project have co-operated to maintain and improve the habitat, one result of which has been the successful introduction of the Marbled White.

The volume concludes with a number of appendices, one listing food plants and nectar sources and the butterflies relying on them, another lists organisations and their websites.

**Brian Lancaster**

Ken Willmott, Malcolm Bridge, Harry E. Clarke and Francis Kelly (2013). *Butterflies of Surrey Revisited*; Woking:Surrey Wildlife Trust; Hardback, 240 pages, 110 photographs, ISBN 978-0-9556188-4-0

The volume is available direct at a price of £16 plus £2.75 postage and packing with orders addressed to Atlas Sales, Surrey Wildlife Trust, School Lane, Pirbright, Woking, Surrey, GU24 0JN.

<http://www.surreywildlifegifts.org.uk/collections/atlas-series/products/butterflies-of-surrey-revisited>

### ***A History of Norbury***

David Clark's book fills a much needed gap in the written history of Croydon. Just along the London Road and at the very north of the Borough, as its name suggests, it is often regarded as part of Streatham. The Streatham Society has managed to make the link by including this history amongst their publications. It is well illustrated and includes two reproductions of maps, always a bonus to the local historian. The centre one, being a reproduction of the 1896 Ordnance survey map, is conveniently placed for quick reference; it shows the rural nature of the area at the end of the 19th century. However, it would have been useful to have the sources of the illustrations and text listed or acknowledged.

The book follows the history of Norbury from its very beginnings, explaining the origin in Roman times, the wooded nature of the area due to the heavy clay soils, through to a short discussion about the Manor and, at the beginning of the 20th century, how and where the various estates were laid out. There is an extensive section on the origins of the transport links. The author also deals with themes such as shopping, churches, industry and entertainment. This section has a wealth of fascinating old pictures, some showing places that have long gone, whilst others are still recognisable, albeit altered. A nice touch comes at the end with short biographies of Norbury's more famous residents, including well-known celebrities such as Will Hay and Deryck Guyler, also the author Sir Kingsley Amis.



With the views of old Norbury and the interesting nuggets of information, it is a book that you will want to keep dipping into, and it will certainly give you an insight into the most northerly part of Croydon. At £6.00, it makes a good addition to the overall literature of our borough.

Clark, David (2013). *A history of Norbury*, London: The Streatham Society, by Local History Publications, Streatham. 48pp. Price £6.00 + p&p £1.20 from the Streatham Society.

**Celia E Bailey**

### ***Concretopia***

A new book published in 2013, '*Concretopia: a journey around the rebuilding of postwar Britain*' addresses our country's modern architecture. There are numerous index entries for Croydon in general and New Addington in particular where the author, John Grindrod (born in 1970) grew up in the 1970s. It is a very readable £ 25 hardback published by Old Street Publishing [ISBN 978-1-906964-90-0] and stocked at Waterstones' bookshop in the Whitgift Centre.

**Paul W Sowan**

---

## Two paintings of Croydon

---

Two watercolours of Croydon by the local artist Norman Partridge [1921–2002] have been donated to the Society's museum by the executors of the late Ruth Doreen Hobbs Sowan [1943–2006], the third wife of Frederick Arthur Sowan [1914–2006] and daughter of Doris Courtney Helmke Hobbs [1917–1987] a noted local historian and Society member.

Partridge was born in Thornton Heath and educated at the former Selhurst Grammar School for Boys and Croydon Art College. A number of his works are held in the London Borough of Croydon's Art Collection, including most famously 'Croydon Courageous', painted in 1945–1946. This very large work used to hang by the rather grand stairs just inside the Clocktower entrance to the former Central Library in Croydon, and is now displayed in the Museum of Croydon. It depicts Croydonians (immaculately groomed and dressed considering the circumstances) picking their way through the remains of buildings in bomb-damaged Croydon, including a party of smartly turned out school boys with caps correctly aligned on their heads!

The two donated paintings are depictions of George Street (looking east towards Thrift's clock-tower) painted in 1968, and Thornton Heath Pond painted in 1969. However, they represent the views from an earlier era. Doris Hobbs paid the artist £10 each for the paintings in 1971.

John Thrift [1833–1903] commenced a career in the grocery trade in Croydon in 1852, and in due course became a Croydon councillor and alderman. John Thrift & Sons Ltd's warehouse at 69 George Street was built in or about 1893 and stood where there is now an empty space (pedestrian access to Southern House) between numbers 67 and 71, which remain standing, on the north side of the road. It was of four bays, on four main floors, with the very imposing tower above the easternmost bay. The clock was from Croydon's second town hall which stood in the High Street from about 1808 to 1893.

There is a colour reproduction of 'Croydon Courageous' and a biographical note on the artist in a small booklet 'Museum of Croydon Art Collection', published in 2009, available in the Local Studies Library & Archives on the ground floor at Croydon Clocktower.

Visit the Society's museum on its Open Day, Sunday June 29, 2014 at 13:30-16:30, to see the paintings.

---

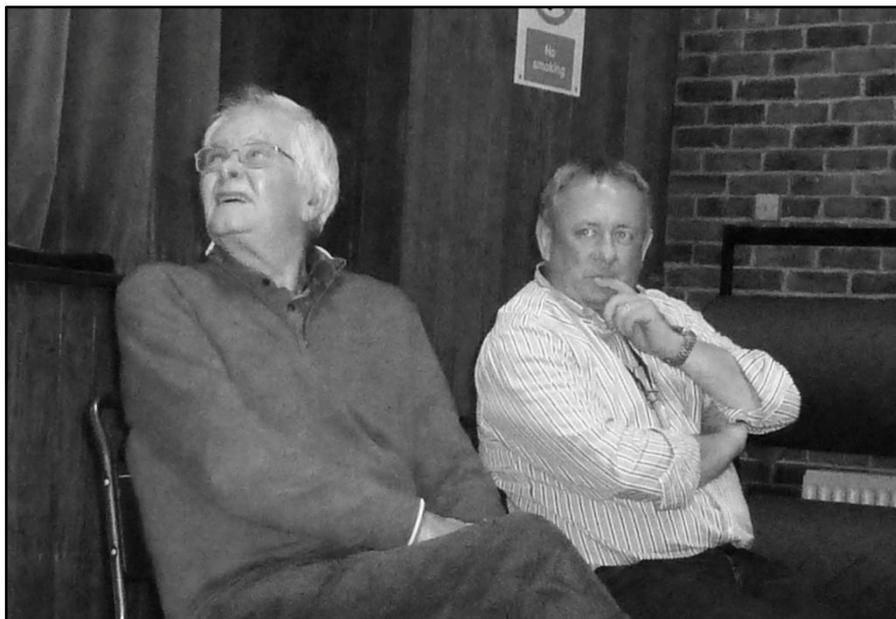
**Correction:** In Bulletin Issue 148 the late John Cunningham's middle name was given as Neville. He was 'John Neil Cunningham'.

---

## Focus on Alfred Russel Wallace

---

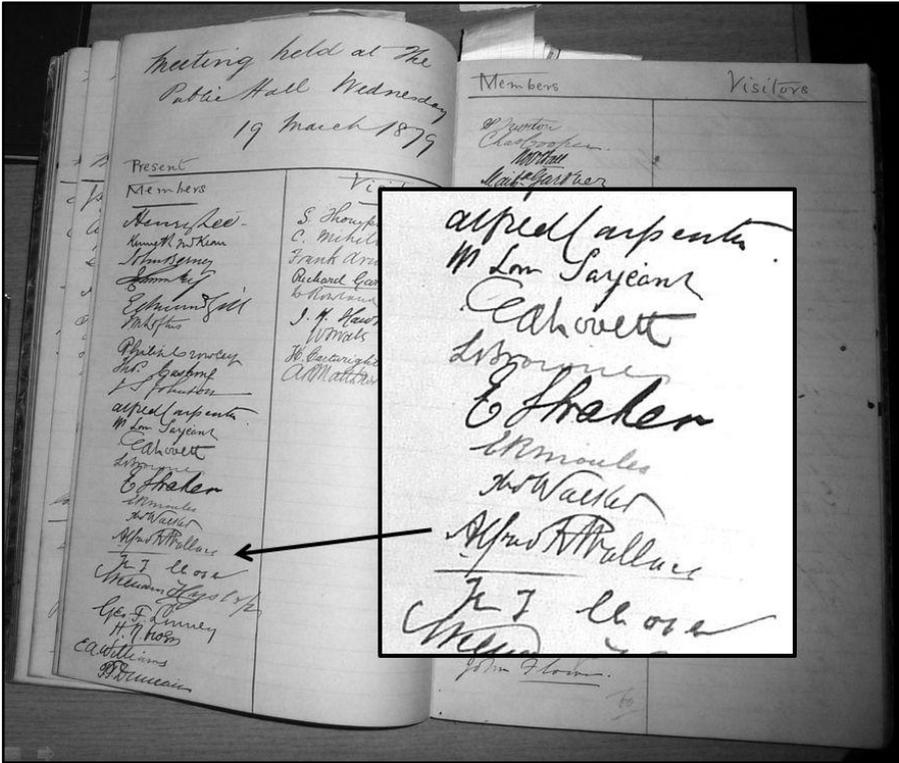
Members who were not able to attend the Focus meeting on Saturday, 30 November 2013 may not have realised that joining Professor Ted Benton as a speaker was James Williams of Sussex University, on the right in the photo below, who kindly stepped in at short notice to give a talk entitled “Alfred Russel Wallace and Natural Selection: the real story”, replacing the advertised speaker.



*Professor Ted Benton, Department of Sociology, University of Essex (left) and James D Williams, Lecturer in Science Education, University of Sussex, at the CNHSS Focus on Wallace meeting.*

*© Copyright 2014 Croydon Natural History and Scientific Society Ltd, prepared with permission from a colour original copyright 2013 C E Bailey.*

Both speakers brought for display some Wallace-associated items to which we contributed an item from our own archives - an attendance book of our earlier incarnation, the Croydon Microscopical and Natural History Club, containing the signature of Alfred Russel Wallace at a meeting held on 19 March 1879 (see below). The enlargement of a portion of the list of members' signatures contains those of Alfred Carpenter, W. Low Sarjeant, Ed. Lovett, L. Browne, E. Straker, E. R. Moules, Thos. Walker, Alfred R. Wallace and H. J. Close.



An Attendance Book from the Society's archives containing Alfred Russel Wallace's signature, displayed at the CNHSS Focus on Wallace meeting.  
 © Copyright 2014 Croydon Natural History and Scientific Society Ltd, prepared with permission from a colour original copyright 2013 C E Bailey.

Also on display were copies of Professor Benton's recent biography of Wallace: Benton, T (2013) *Alfred Russel Wallace : explorer, evolutionist, public intellectual - a thinker for our own times?* Manchester: SRI Scientific Press, 224pp., illustrd., ISBN 0957-453-027.

### Contacts

Twitter – <https://twitter.com/cnhssprogramme>

Facebook – <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Croydon-Natural-History-Scientific-Society/106522816087133?ref=hl>

Newsletter – <mailto:cnhssprogramme@btinternet.com>

(request our free monthly newsletter from here)

Website – <http://www.cnhss.org.uk/archives/index.htm>