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In this issue:

The Croydon rabies outbreak of 1895

John Hickman

A map in the Society's Collections ...

Paul W Sowan

John Maberly of Shirley Park

Brian Lancaster

In the footsteps of William Hadden Beeby,
on Croham Hurst in 2014

—

The Zeppelin bombing raid of 1915

Paul W Sowan

A new website for the Society

Mark Tyson

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The Croydon rabies outbreak of 1895

“During the autumn of 1895 rabies became prevalent in the Home Counties and led to the enforcement of the Muzzling Order.”

Leonard Wilde, M.D., M.R.C.P., D.P.H.,
Assistant Medical Officer of Health.
August 1896.

“The Veterinary Inspector reported that since the last meeting five cases of rabies had occurred in the Borough and that the diseased dogs with other animals they had been in contact with had been slaughtered.”

The Diseases of Animals Act 1894.
Minute of Meeting of Executive.
Page 118, item 3.
Friday 13 December 1895.

At 4 o'clock in the afternoon of Sunday 27th October 1895 John Riches, a 53 year old solicitor. was entertaining Mrs Laura Coles, a guest at his Woodside Green home, when the family pet, a lively fox terrier, bounded into the room. John Riches happened to touch Laura Coles during convivial conversation whereupon the dog leapt up and fastened its sharp teeth into the solicitor's left hand between thumb and forefinger; leaving four small punctured wounds on the ball of his thumb. He bathed the wound in warm water and Dr. Green, the family physician was called. Arriving an hour later, Dr. Green 'courageously sucked the wound' and then dressed it. The dog was chained and muzzled, but on the following day escaped and on Woodside Green bit a girl on her left hand through a flannel-lined kid glove. The wound was bathed by her mother, who sucked it and encouraged bleeding. The wound rapidly healed. On hearing of this incident, Dr. Green informed Dr. Philpot, the Croydon Medical Officer of Health. Until now the dog wasn't thought to be mad, however on 29th October it bit John Riches son, Edgar through his trousers and undergarment. The boy was taken by his mother to Dr. Green in whose surgery the slight abrasion was cleansed and cauterised with silver nitrate.

A veterinary, Mr. R. A. Thrale M.R.C.V.S., of Croydon called the following day, pronounced the dog mad and it was subsequently shot. After a *post-mortem* examination the dog was certified to have had rabies. The head

was sent to the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons for experimental inoculation. Three weeks later the diagnosis was confirmed.

On the announcement of this news, John Riches was advised to go to Paris for treatment at the Pasteur Institute. This he declined to do saying he did not believe in it. He maintained good health until December 10th when he returned from work in London early that afternoon with influenza like symptoms. The following morning he awoke early and feeling thirsty, but had difficulty swallowing. This occurrence was repeated when he tried to take his coffee at breakfast which resulted in his having spasms in the throat. After an incubation period of 44 days the symptoms of hydrophobia had made their terrible appearance; the diagnosis being confirmed by Drs Ferrier and Victor Horsley. John Riches succumbed on 17th December, the duration of his illness from onset to termination being eight days.

Meantime, the Croydon Corporation Sanitary Department having been notified, it discussed whether treatment by antirabic inoculation would be efficacious in the cases of the other people bitten; in this case children, given the length of time since injury and that one person had died of hydrophobia. Statistics and information provided by the Medical Department of the Local Government Board being in favour of such a course of action, a telegram was sent to the Medical Director of the Pasteur Institute requesting an opinion. A rapid reply urged the bitten people to be sent immediately. The children who had been bitten had already been sent when the issue was discussed on 13th December 1895 at an Executive Committee of the Diseases of Animals Act. Dr Leonard Wilde, M.D., M.R.C.P., D.P.H., Assistant Medical Officer of Health, took charge of arrangements and accompanied the party to Paris.

Dr. Wilde had the advantage of reading the Reports of the Medical Officers of Health for Hyde and Stockport who had previously made similar visits to the Pasteur Institute. He learned that the Institute was conducted along lines similar to the out-patients department of an English hospital, and that it had no accommodation for patients. On the recommendation of Dr Sidebotham, Leonard Wilde wrote to M. Suarez, the proprietor of the Grand Hotel de l'Institut Pasteur at Rue Edmond Guillout, 8 Boulevard de Vaugirard and booked rooms for the party. It was commended on grounds that M. Suarez spoke English well, and his hotel is chiefly used by people undergoing treatment at the Pasteur Institute. Furthermore, because the hotel was patronised by English-speaking people, those of the working class preferred to stay there. The charge was from 3 to 5 francs a day per head. Alternatively a more suitable hotel for children with their mothers or nurses was the Hotel de l'Univers, situated in Rue Gay-Lussac, 9, opposite the Gardens of the Luxembourg; here the proprietress was English and accompanied and interpreted for the patients at the Institute and met all

trains on request. All patients in other circumstances were advised to find residence on the other side of the Seine.

The journey was by the Newhaven-Dieppe route and was straightforward. In this case the mother of one of the children kindly undertook the domestic supervision of all; otherwise a nurse would have been provided. Dr Wilde had requested of M. Suarez an omnibus to meet them at the station and convey them to his hotel. They were advised to provide a few household or juvenile necessities, and as no one at the Institute spoke English, the particulars of each case were written out beforehand.

The Pasteur Institute was located in the Rue Dutot, off the Boulevard de Vaugirard. The patients assembled every morning, including Sundays and holidays (Saint's Days) in a large waiting room. On the walls were conspicuously displayed notices :-

“All persons bitten should take a bath on the day of their arrival and every two or three days during the treatment.”

The hotels in the vicinity were not provided with bathrooms. There was, however a good public baths nearby in the Rue de Vaugirard.

Another notice announced : -

“The anti-rabic treatment is gratuitous. The Institute has been founded and is maintained by voluntary contributions. Gifts and donations of persons treated are received from 10 am to mid-day at the Secretary's Office.”

The new cases were seen first by a physician at half-past ten. Their names and details of an examination were recorded and a decision taken as to the length and strength of treatment.

The patients then returned to the waiting room from where they were summoned to the inoculation room in groups corresponding to their days of inoculation. The new patients were treated first, followed by those who were to receive their second and third inoculation, and so on until the final one. Once the course had been completed a certificate was issued to the patient stating they had received the course of antirabic treatment.

The flanks (the area between the lowest rib and the hip, or possibly the thigh) were sites selected for inoculation. These areas are easily accessible, the skin being fairly loose and absorption rapid. The skin was cleansed with mercury perchloride (mercuric chloride $HgCl_2$) solution, and 3-5 cm^3 of the inoculating fluid injected under the skin. During the first five days patients received two injections, one in each flank, then one alternatively in the right

and left. Afterwards they passed into the surgery where their wounds were dressed, or they walked home. Those receiving intensive treatment attended again at 3 p.m..

The side-effects of treatment were mild, if any. Occasionally there was redness and tenderness around the site of inoculation, sometimes with considerable stiffness of the muscles and glandular enlargement. These usually subsided after the fourth day – generally considered the worst, and in any case could be very effectively alleviated by hot baths and rest. It was advised that care should be taken to avoid chills, and sobriety was strongly recommended in all things.

The walls of the waiting room displayed maps showing places where branch stations had been established. These showed a thick scattering all over Europe and Asia, and North and South America. Britain however remained apart and it was reported that English, Scotch and Irish patients regretted having to come so far for a treatment that would likely prevent a terrible death.

The inoculation regimen at the Pasteur Institute consisted of injection of the virus of rabies which had been modified through transmission through rabbits, and subsequent exposure to dry air.

The virulence of rabies virus was found during experiment to be modified by its successively passing through conspecific animals until it reached a final fixed degree of virulence. The rabies virus causing the disease in rabbits on the seventh day and resulting in death on the tenth, or later, was the one selected for human inoculation.

The virus is chiefly located in the brain and spinal cord. If the spinal cord of a rabbit so inoculated was removed and exposed to a current of dry air, it was found that the activity of the virus became significantly attenuated according to the length of time it had been exposed – up to the fourteenth day, after which it became inert.

The procedure was to suspend a number of spinal marrows in flasks in which the air had been kept dry using potassium hydroxide. Apparatus was arranged such that allowed a series of fourteen marrows each undergoing successive stages of desiccation. The fluid for inoculation was prepared by triturating a small portion of one of the drying marrows in sterilized veal broth. The first inoculation would be made by injecting under the skin some 3-5 cm³ of the preparation of a marrow that had been dried for fourteen days. The next inoculation was with a similar preparation that had been exposed for thirteen days, and so on until the strongest preparation was injected. Successive daily injections conferred protection against the next stronger one, until the patient was finally inoculated with the most virulent

preparation which had been dried only three or four days. This last injection would be equal in intensity to the virus present in a rabid dog.

Those bitten through the clothes or who had single bites on the hand were administered fifteen days' treatment, bites on the face or multiple bites elsewhere received eighteen to twenty days. The 'intensive method' was reserved for those bitten by wolves, injections being repeated twice daily with the strongest preparations being reached more rapidly. Sometimes fresh marrows were used. Risk attended the intensive method, and some resulting deaths had been attributed to it.

In the early 1890's approximately 40% of those bitten by a rabid dog went on to develop hydrophobia. Pasteur described the treatment as prophylactic rather than curative, and of no use once the symptoms of hydrophobia had manifested themselves. The period of incubation, being the time taken for the virus to travel along nerves from entry at the site of injury to the brain, can range from 1 week to a year, but is typically 1 to 2 months. The inoculation treatment was, however very effective prior to the manifestation of symptoms. After which it was useless.

In 1894, 1,392 persons were treated using the antirabic inoculation method; twelve died of hydrophobia, but five already displayed symptoms less than a fortnight after the final injection. Removing these from the statistics, 1,387 people were treated during 1894. Of these 7 died. This amounts to a mortality rate of 0.50% and the avoidance of a potentially terrible death by the remainder.

John and Elizabeth Riches' son Edgar was denied the journey to the Pasteur Institute for treatment by his parents. He died at Honiton, Devon on 29th April 1935.

None of those sent for antirabies inoculation at the Pasteur Institute at the expense of Croydon Corporation suffered hydrophobia.

John Hickman

Sources :

Wilde, L. (1896). *A Report upon an Outbreak of Rabies in the County Borough of Croydon in the Autumn of 1895, and an Outline of the Antirabic Treatment by Inoculation at the Pasteur Institute.*

Much of the account of the arrangements at the Pasteur Institute including those domestic, preparation of and administration of antirabic treatment is modified from the report of the Assistant Medical Health Officer presented to a Meeting of Animals Executive Committee (The Diseases of Animals Act, 1894) held on Monday 6th July 1896.

Anon., Doings Of A Mad Dog At Woodside. *Norwood News*, 21 December 1895; p6,c6.

Kaplan, C. *et al.* (1977). *Rabies: the facts.* [London]:Corgi.

Borough of Croydon Council Minutes and Incidental Papers 9th November 1894 to 28th October 1895. Volume XIII. Tables of Mortality.

Borough of Croydon Council Minutes and Incidental Papers 9th November 1895 to 26th October 1896. Volume XIV.

p. 118. Report of Diseases of Animals Act Executive Committee 13th December, 1895.

p. 176. Report of Diseases of Animals Act Executive Committee 7th January, 1896.

p. 566. Report of Report of Diseases of Animals Act Executive Committee 6th July, 1896.

p. 801. Report of Assistant Medical Health officer with reference to outbreak of rabies in the Borough in autumn of 1895.

Tables of Mortality.

These reports show that between 13th December 1895 and 9th July 1896, 17 cases of rabies were reported. There was 1 death from hydrophobia and 5 persons sent to the Pasteur Institute for inoculation treatment. No cases of hydrophobia were recorded in the 1896 Tables of Mortality.

Reynolds, D. M. *Rabies in a Human Patient*. Microbiology Teaching Film No. 4. University of California. Supported by The National Science Foundation. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EZbrNN9KeUI> (accessed February 2015).

Some might find this film, showing the course of hydrophobia in a human patient, distressing.

A map in the Society's collection and the 200th anniversary of the first geological map of England and Wales

The Society's Library contains a large number of topographical and thematic maps relating to Surrey and neighbouring areas, of mostly 19th to 21st century date. The collection includes Ordnance Survey maps and plans at scales as large as 1:500 (10.56 feet to the mile), these being some of the 'Town Plans' series for 1890s central Croydon.

The rarest map in our collection is probably the 1821 reprint of William Smith's 1819 geological map of Surrey. William Smith [1769–1839] had, in 1815, published the first true geological map of England and Wales, the 200th anniversary of which event is being celebrated this year. He was professionally a civil engineer and surveyor who concerned himself largely with canal-building, coal mining, and land drainage, in and around the Bath/Bristol and Somerset coal fields, and later in Yorkshire. In directing the digging of cuttings for canals, and sinking colliery shafts, he noted the several rock beds passed through, and the fossils each contained. We owe to Smith the beginnings of the science of stratigraphy, and the first true

No. 153, March 2015

geological maps. Being an engineer, rather than a 'gentleman', he was never elected a Fellow of the Geological Society of London (GSL) (founded in 1807), but is now celebrated by that body, his bust standing in its rooms at Burlington House, Piccadilly, and his map hangs on the wall. The GSL in modern times has an annual William Smith Lecture, and this year is holding a two day 200th anniversary celebratory conference.

Smith's geological map of our county is surprisingly accurate within the limitations of its scale, especially as it was more or less a one man job and resulted from observations made during his journeys around southern England on horse-back. We published a hand-coloured reprint of the 1821 edition in our 'Regional Survey Atlas of Croydon and District' in 1952. This was accompanied by some account of Smith and his map written by former member and noted amateur geologist Arthur George Davis [1892–1957].

As a true geological map, Smith's represents, by colouring, more than simply the nature of the soil and subsoil at particular places, such as 'pebbles on the top of the Addington Hills'. Correctly interpreted, it informs the reader that, passing below those hills there are in order below them clay beds, sands, chalk, and even older rocks at much greater depths, and that all those beds including the pebbles pass northwards below the London Clay at Woodside and South Norwood. Soil maps, which cannot be read in this way, were published in 1805 and 1809 in James Malcolm's 'Compendium of modern husbandry' and William Stevenson's 'General view of the agriculture of the County of Surrey'. Both of those rare books are also in our Library. The next geological map of Surrey after Smith's was the work of our former Honorary Member Joseph Prestwich [1812–1895] issued to accompany J.A. Brewer's 'Flora of Surrey' published in 1863 by our sister society the Holmesdale Natural History Club at Reigate. The Geological Survey of Great Britain also issued the first geological map for Surrey in the 1860s. All the maps referred to were published hand-coloured, long before anything resembling modern colour printing was invented. And all the maps and books mentioned are held in our library. Interestingly, the colours chosen by Smith in 1815 to represent strata of particular ages and compositions are still in use on modern geological maps today.

Paul W Sowan

John Maberly of Shirley Park

That the dates of birth and death of a nineteenth century Member of Parliament are not known may well be a unique circumstance, but such is the case with John Maberly who was successively M.P. for Rye and

Abingdon between 1816 and 1831. Much else about him is uncertain. He was apparently born in London as his father, Stephen, was either a carrier, dealing with tanned leather, or a coach painter, both businesses being based in Little Queen Street near the present Kingsway, the uncertainty arising because of there being more than one Stephen Maberly. John Maberly's original business interests are also uncertain. John Maberly and Co. was registered in London, apparently manufacturing linen, but it is certain that Scotland was where his business interests were mainly located. They included linen and soap manufacturing and banking.¹

When and where he began as a banker is also uncertain. He may have started banking in England or Scotland. The Aberdeen linen factory, Broadford Works, was acquired in about 1811, but earlier than that, in 1809, he was trying to interest the War Office in the pattern of greatcoats. By then he was an army contractor dealing with uniforms. Aberdeen was where the soap manufacturing business was located but here other members of his family were partners and John Maberly's interest in the business may have been marginal. The same may have been true about linen manufacturing.

His bank was the Exchange and Deposit Bank, started in Edinburgh but with branches in Aberdeen, Dundee, Glasgow, Montrose and London, and, according to Maberly, it was founded in 1818. I will only summarise the subsequent history of his bank. It seems that he tried to undercut the leading Scottish banks by offering a reduced rate of exchange on bills of exchange, but they outmanoeuvred him and his bank stopped payments in 1832. He appears to have speculated in foreign loans on the London Stock Exchange and it may have been these speculations rather than the competition he faced from other banks that led to his bankruptcy. One newspaper states that he owed £170,000 while his assets were only worth £69,000;² another source puts his firm's debts at £149,082 and his assets at £76,669.³

In the House of Commons he spoke mainly on financial matters such as government loans and taxes. Initially he voted with the government led by Lord Liverpool but later more often with the Whig opposition led by George Tierney. In 1819 he voted against the government's repressive legislation. In Croydon, too, he evidently played some part in the politics of the day, for in May 1832, when the issue of Parliamentary Reform was at the forefront of politics, he chaired a Reform meeting in which the Rev. Courtney moved a resolution supporting Earl Grey's government against annual parliaments, universal suffrage, the secret ballot and political unions.⁴ No indication is given of Maberly's own views but he would have supported the motion as it was directed at the radicals such as Thomas Attwood, founder of the

Birmingham and other political unions demanding a more democratic franchise.

In 1796 he had married Mary Rose, the daughter of William Leader, the Prince of Wales' coachmaker, and he and his wife inherited some £35,000 from his father-in-law. Mary Rose died in 1810 and John next married Anne Baillie. There were children from both marriages, one of whom, Jane, married George Robert Smith, the son of George Smith of Selsdon Park, in 1818.

John Maberly was already by then ensconced in Shirley. He had become John Claxton's tenant of Shirley House, initially rented from about 1804 but its owner by 1812 as Claxton had died in 1811. His widow sold it to Maberly. The sales advertisement states that it was a freehold estate of 120 acres, with thriving plantations and clear water, and the land surrounding the mansion as having been designed by Humphry Repton.⁵ This was his country seat but his town house was in Grosvenor Square. He had a pack of foxhounds but it, together with his stud, was sold off in 1821.⁶ However, he owned at least one racing horse in 1827 as one, Middleton, raced at Epsom and it seems that Maberly was also involved in the management of the racecourse as it was hoped he would improve it.⁷

Croydon's Vestry chose him as surveyor of the roads from September 1823, an office held annually,⁸ and he held the office again from September 1825⁹ and from September 1827.¹⁰ In October 1824 the Vestry minutes record that he was thanked for having greatly improved the roads.¹¹ When he diverted the road to West Wickham so that it did not pass in front of the mansion is not recorded. He is also listed as one of the Vestry's commissioners from 1829 to 1832. There were initially twelve, then twenty, and their duty was to prepare the accounts.

When he went bankrupt in 1832 the Shirley estate was not the only estate of his that needed to be sold. The newspapers described it thus: 'Valuable extensive freehold Estates, Mansion, Park, Cottage and other residences, barns and woodlands in all 1,240 acres...consisting of Shirley, Spring Park, Ham and Coomb Estates'. The Shirley estate comprised about 300 acres. Shirley House had been 'lately occupied by the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Duke of Richmond' and the estate included Shirley Cottage within its own park occupied by J.W. Farrar, together with four other cottages, and the 'Homestead and Farming Buildings, called Coopers'.¹² Maberly's furniture was sold on a separate occasion.

The Spring Park estate consisted of 270 acres of cultivated land and 250 acres of wood and plantations, together with the main residence, two entrance lodges, farm buildings and a newly built kennel occupied by the Surrey Staghounds. In addition there were paddocks with deer and

'singular sandpits' producing a good revenue. The sandpits referred to may be those of the Old Sandpit Field, comprising sixteen acres.



Shirley House

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The Ham estate contained 300 acres, farmhouse and homestead and two entrance lodges. The Coomb property consisted of 114 acres, cottages, stabling, homestead, farm buildings and an entrance lodge.

Other properties belonging to these estates included the Fox beer shop, Shirley Inn and thirteen freehold cottages in Spring Park Lane.

The whole was recommended for any nobleman or gentleman of fortune or sportsman for keeping hounds, preserving game and as a capital investment. It commanded the London, Bromley and Croydon markets so making the farms always desirable. Anyone interested was to apply to Hewitt Davis of Spring Park, or Mr A. Gordon, 57 Old Broad Street. Davis had been Maberly's steward. The estates were sold off in lots and not all at once.

What happened to Maberly after his bankruptcy remains a mystery. That he went abroad is certain as he was reported as being a correspondent of the *Morning Chronicle* in Madrid in 1834. For his death, the year 1840 is the one usually given as an educated guess but 1845 has had some credence. Whether he died in Spain or France or elsewhere on the Continent is not known. He may not have been without some support as he had surviving children, one of whom, William Leader Maberly, was an M.P., and there was also a brother-in-law, John Temple Leader.

Brian Lancaster

Sources :

¹ This and the following paragraphs are indebted to the following sources:

- a). Lamb, A. (1997). *Shirley House to Trinity School* , Fullers Wood Press:Croydon.
 - b). Bulloch, J.M. (----). *The Banking Pioneer – The Father of Maberly Street*, originally as a newspaper article. From <http://maberly.name/documents/jmaberly.htm> - visited 24-02-2015.
 - c). Symes, P. (1998) *The Exchange and Deposit Banks of John Maberly, International Bank Note Society Journal*, 37(3). Reprinted as <http://pjsymes.com.au/articles/maberly.htm> - visited 26-02-2015.
 - d). Article on John Maberly: *The History of Parliament: the House of Commons 1790-1820*, ed. R. Thorne, 1986. Reprinted as <http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1790-1820/member/maberly-john-1840.htm> visited 26-02-2015.
- ² *Morning Chronicle*, Thursday, 4 August 1833. [This and the other newspaper references are taken from the British Library's database of British Newspapers 1700-1900. News items should be searched by name and/or date as the same news is repeated in other newspapers.]
 - ³ This figure is given by Bulloch.
 - ⁴ *The Times*, Monday 30 May 1832
 - ⁵ *Morning Chronicle* Wednesday 5 August 1812
 - ⁶ *Ibid.* Wednesday 14 November 1821
 - ⁷ *Derby Chronicle*, Wednesday 7 March 1821
 - ⁸ Vestry Minute Book August 1816-September 1833: 22 September 1823 refers to Maberly having served the office for a year with Charles Penfold.
 - ⁹ *Ibid.* 22 September 1825
 - ¹⁰ *Ibid.* 22 September 1826
 - ¹¹ *Ibid.* 28 October 1824
 - ¹² *Morning Post* Friday 23 March 1833 - for this quotation and the following descriptions of the various estates.

In the footsteps of William Hadden Beeby, on Croham Hurst in 2014

William Hadden Beeby [1849–1910] joined the Croydon Microscopical Club, as our Society was then called, on 15 March 1871, and was an energetic recorder of plants growing wild in and around Croydon, and also in the Shetland Islands. He was the author of numerous short papers in our own *Proceedings*, in the *Proceedings of the Holmesdale Natural History Club* (which still flourishes in Reigate), and in the *Journal of Botany*. He was also one of the authors of the Botany part of the *Victoria County History of Surrey*. Beeby's herbarium, containing specimens of around 68 plants recorded on and around Croham Hurst, passed to Alan Octavian Hume [1829–1912], and is still in the care of the South London Botanical Institute (SLBI), founded by Hume in the year of Beeby's death. Images of the specimens can be seen at www.herbariumunited.com.

SLBI member John Hewitt, recalling visits to Croham Hurst when a pupil at Whitgift School, organised a field meeting of Institute members on the Hurst in May 2014, assisted by Paul Sowen who has known the woodland since the 1940s. Croham Hurst was designated a statutory Sites of Special Scientific Interest in the 1970s at our Society's suggestion on account of its ancient woodland status and biodiversity reflecting its chalk, sand and pebbly soils. Plants of special interest or significance noted included wood anemone (*Anemone nemorosa*), sanicle (*Sanicula europaea*), yellow archangel (*Lamiastrum galeohdolon*), wild arum (*Arum maculatum*), goldilocks buttercup (*Ranunculus auricomus*) and bilberry (or whortleberry) (*Vaccinium myrtillus*). The opportunity was taken to remind members of the party that the author of the very readable Collins New Naturalist book 'Lords and ladies' (one of many vernacular names for *Arum maculatum*), was Cecil Thomas Prime [1909–1979], a former President of our Society, and Chief Science Master at Whitgift. The book was published in 1960, and has more recently been re-issued.

Source :

HEWITT, John (2015). In the footsteps of W.H. Beeby: a field outing to Croham Hurst, South Croydon. *South London Botanical Institute Gazette*, Series 2, **21**, 6–7.

The Zeppelin bombing raid of 1915

A little after 9 p.m. on 13 October 1915 Croydon suffered bombing from a Zeppelin (an airship designed by Count Ferdinand von Zeppelin [1838-1917] in or about 1899). Houses in Beech House Road, Chatsworth Road, Edridge Road, Morland Road, Oval Road, and Stretton Road were damaged, and nine lives lost as a result. A seventh bomb fell in Howard Road, but did not explode.

An intended Society visit to the Museum at the Public Record Office was reported, on 19 October 1915, to have been postponed on account of 'the dismantling of the Museum in consequence of Zeppelin raids'. At the same meeting it was resolved to 'write to Dr. Major expressing regret to the damage done to his house during the recent Zeppelin raid'. H.G.T. Major RN FRAS was our treasurer for the years 1915–1916 and 1919–1926. He lived at 24 Beech House Road. Photographs of ruined houses in Beech House and Edridge Roads were published by Moore and Sayers.

On 18 January 1916 Dr. Major reported on the sum paid for fire insurance, and 'the cost which would be incurred to insure against aircraft ... the books, etc, at the library were already insured against bombs'.

Paul W Sowan

A new website for the Society

The Society's Council has, for some time, been contemplating a new look for its website. We are pleased to let you know the launch of the new site is imminent.

For some time, we have maintained an archive site from which you can view past issues of our Bulletin as well as the Croydon Bibliographies for Regional Survey, which details our library acquisitions over an extensive period. The information on this site is useful to researchers, but Council felt that a more engaging 'front door' was needed to put the Society's work more prominently before the public and to engage people in our activities.

We are therefore about to launch our new site at "www.cnhss.co.uk". The archive will remain at "www.cnhss.org.uk", and we will make sure that there are links between the two sites. You can expect the new site to have a fresh new look (see the greyscale screenshot preview below), with information about our events, talks and walks, as well as details of how to join the Society. In time we will also use the site to showcase some of the items the Society holds in its collections, and the particular project work

that our members are pursuing under the Society's banner. We will continue our Twitter and Facebook activities, linking them up to the new site, and if you are signed up to our regular newsletter email, we are looking at ways of delivering that through the new website.

When we have put the finishing touches to the new site, we will email out to everyone who is subscribed to our email list to let them know that it is now available. We hope that you will find it a great way to keep in touch with all that the Society is doing.

Mark Tyson

The screenshot shows the homepage of the Croydon Natural History & Scientific Society. At the top left is a circular logo featuring a stylized bird or dragon. To its right, the text reads "CROYDON" in large letters, with "Natural History & Scientific SOCIETY" below it. A tagline lists "Local & Industrial History • Archaeology Geology • Entomology • Botany • Ornithology". A "Founded 1870" badge is in the top right. A navigation bar contains links for Home, Latest News & Events, Event Programme, Join the Society, About the Society, Publications & Archives, and Links.

Three main content blocks are visible:

- Next talk: 11 March 2015:** Features a photo of an empty lecture hall and text about Jane Sidell, Inspector of Ancient Monuments for English Heritage, discussing her research on the lost Bronze Age forest and surviving stumps and roots.
- Join the Society:** Includes a photo of a quill pen and text stating the Society relies on members for support and encourages new members.
- About our Logo:** Shows a photo of the society's logo and explains it is based on an Anglo-Saxon find from 1893.

Below these blocks, a paragraph states the Society has been concerned with the study of science, local history, and natural history for nearly 150 years. Another paragraph describes the Society's activities, including maintaining a museum and library, issuing publications like *Proceedings*, and running a programme of talks, lectures, walks, and seminars. A note mentions that events are open to non-members.

The footer area contains three sections:

- Our mission:** A text block describing the Society's goals for public benefit, including promoting the study of natural and local history and archaeology through lectures, talks, and publications.
- On Twitter:** A tweet from CNHSS (@cnhssprogramme) dated 26 Feb, mentioning a lecture by John Adams FSA at Syon Abbey and providing a link to the event.
- Search our site:** A search bar with the text "Search ..." and a message below it: "You are signed up to get updates by email - thank you!"

Trial new website of the Croydon Natural History and Scientific Society
The predominant colour of the website is red.

The CNHSS Newsletter

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

Contacts

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

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

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Web addresses will be updated when the new website is operative