

## **Addiscombe Local History talk**

There have been settlements in the Croydon area, on Park Hill, and in the Wandle valley, since 1000 BC, and in central Croydon since Roman times, with a Saxon church in Old Town. The name 'Croydon' is of Saxon origin, meaning either 'crooked wooded valley' or 'the valley where crocuses/saffron grows'. The Domesday Book in 1086 records Croydon as belonging to Archbishop Lanfranc; it had a church and a mill, and a population of about 365. It was a large parish compared to others, sparsely populated and remained rural until the 20th century. The Archbishops of Canterbury were the lords of the manor, and used what is now Addington Palace as their country residence in the 19th century. 5 archbishops are buried in the churchyard. The Archbishops' Palace from at least the 12th century to the end of the 18th century was on the site of what became Old Palace School of John Whitgift, and had a number of royal visitors including Edward 1, 11, and 111, Henry 1V, V1 and V111, Mary and Elizabeth 1. The parish church of St John and Baptist, now the Minster, was originally built in the 15th century. 6 Archbishops are buried there. Croydon Fair was held for centuries on a large field called Fair Field, but was abolished in 1868. Main trades in Croydon were brewing, agriculture and charcoal burning.

Addiscombe means 'edge of the Coombe', a reference to a hollow in a hill on the edge of a valley. The oldest house in Addiscombe is Heron Croft, on Addiscombe Road (96) built 1493, owned by the Heron family. It is Grade II listed.

After enclosure of the common land (when it was sold off) began in 1801, the town began to expand. By 1809 it was served by two horse-drawn freight railways and a canal. Steam railways arrived in 1839 and this made Croydon an ideal commuter town. With the expansion of housing, the population grew to 191,000 by 1921, and is over 400,000 today. (409,000).

Addiscombe Place features on a map of William Marshall's farm, of 1779. Before that, a large Elizabethan house had stood on the site, at the junction of Mulberry Lane and Outram Road. It was rebuilt in 1516 by Thomas Heron, and again in 1702 by William Draper. It was described at the time by celebrated writer and diarist Sir John Evelyn as 'one of the very best gentlemen's houses in Surrey'. It was occupied by various figures such as Lord Chancellor Talbot in the 1730s, and Charles Jenkinson, later Lord Liverpool, a member of William Pitt the Younger's government. The owner in 1808, Henry Delme Radcliff, sold it to the East India Company for £15,000.

Addiscombe Farm 281 Addiscombe Road, was built 1676 (Grade II listed) and was part of the Ashburton Estate, (though originally part of the Addiscombe Estate). Ashburton House was situated where Northampton Road meets Addiscombe Road, in the 18th century. Lord Ashburton inherited the estate and married Anne Louise Bingham, who gave her name to Bingham Road.

### **The East India company military academy**

The EIC was established as a trading company by royal charter in 1600. It has been described as the largest multinational business in history. At its peak, the Company controlled half the world's trade and a quarter of its population. It ran its own army and navy, minted its own currency and traded across the world. The EIC ran a military academy at Addiscombe House between 1809 and 1858. Commissions were achieved on merit, rather

than being bought as with the Crown army. Its estate ran from Canning Road to Ashburton Road, but this was later expanded to include farmland for growing food.

The first entrants of the East India Cadets were in residence at Addiscombe by 1809.

Initially everyone was crowded into the mansion. But work soon started on the erection of barrack blocks, classrooms, hospital, laundry, bakehouse, brewhouse and other necessary buildings. All these were completed by 1828 at a total cost of £21,397.

About two thirds of the grounds were used as a farm, with the large area to the south of the college buildings laid out as woodland known as 'The Wilderness', including elm, lime, oak, walnut, ash, beech, chestnut, fir, hornbeam and sycamore trees. The remaining 30 acres of land formed the grounds of the college, including a parade ground surrounded by the flagstaff bastion and ditches. Another area of land to the north, now contained by Grant Road and Inglis road, was also formerly part of the estate, and was initially two meadows leased from a neighbouring farmer for the site of the 'coldstream', which the cadets used for swimming, bathing, practising bridge-building and pontooning.

The last building at the College was erected in 1851 - the large gymnasium which still stands today in Havelock Road, now converted into flats. The other remaining buildings that still exist from the days of the EIC are the semi-detached houses called the 'Professors' houses', Ashleigh 1 and 2, which stand on the corner of Clyde Road and Addiscombe Road.

Cadets at Addiscombe College, aged between 14 and 18, were given a wide education, with a focus on science and engineering, including practical work, including the classics, French and Hindustani. The course was two years, 4 terms per year. If they did not pass the 6-monthly exams they were barred from continuing. The intake was about 150 a year. Over the 52 years of existence, the college took about 3600 cadets who were later commissioned for service in India.

Following the Indian mutiny of 1857, the British government took control of India from the Company and appointed Lord Stanley as the Secretary of State for India. In 1861 the Royal and Indian services were amalgamated and the military academy at Addiscombe closed, being of no further use. The remaining cadets transferred to the Royal Military Academy at Sandhurst.

In 1861 the buildings and 88 acres of land that formed the EIC Estate were sold at auction to the British Land Company for £33,600. The BLC acted initially as freeholder, as individuals and developers began to lease and build on the parcels of land.

The roads were named after military individuals with a prominent role in the 1857 Indian mutiny. Sir Henry Havelock and Sir James Outram were commanders in the British army and Sir Charles Canning was Governor General of India. Lord Elgin (8th Earl) was Viceroy of India 1862-3. Lord Clyde was Commander in chief of the British forces in India - promoted during the 1847 rebellion, succeeding George Anson who died in the uprising. Mulberry Lane - well, you can guess what grew there originally - and there is a mulberry bush there now (at no.7).

Ashburton Road had already existed as a lane on the boundary of the Addiscombe and Ashburton Estates. In 1862 Elgin Road was the first new road to be laid out into building plots for sale by auction. It was stipulated in the sale agreement that no land should be used for manufacturing purposes, and there was a minimum value of £300-400 for each house, which ensured quality construction. Shortly after, Canning and Clyde Roads had lots for sale. Six roads replaced the Military Academy by 1863, but construction of the new residences were not completed until maybe 10 or more years later, with gaps filled in in the 20th century. Materials from the demolished college buildings were auctioned in the next couple of years following the sale of the college estate, and it's possible that some of the bricks, Portland and York stone, doors, window frames, floor boards etc were used in the new villas springing up in the area. Addiscombe House (demolished in 1911) Havelock and

Outram Roads and the western side of Ashburton Road were put up for auction in 1863, and the Ashburton estate from the 1890's.

Several places of worship were also constructed in the area in 1868 including the temporary church of St Mary Magdalene, built at the end of Elgin Road, and known as the tin hut as it was constructed from galvanised iron, and the large stone church of St Paul on Canning Road, now known as the Parish church of St Mary Magdalene. Clyde Hall was constructed as a Sunday school to the now demolished Christ Church (Methodist) that fronted Canning Road, the church replaced by the Chequers Court flats.

Addiscombe Road station, a terminus of the South Eastern Railway, was opened in 1864, built on part of the farmland previously owned by the East India Company, on the northern side of Lower Addiscombe Road opposite Canning Road. This encouraged businesses of all kinds.

Attractions advertised to prospective residents were good transport, good sanitation, and pleasant countryside and appealed to the better class of City businessman. Most households had a servant, and almost all residents were from London, not Croydon.

Other interesting residents of the HOME area: Frederick Creed (1871-1957) who has an English Heritage blue plaque at his former house 20 Outram Road. He was an electrical engineer and invented the teleprinter. Before him, William Sturgeon, an inventor who was also a lecturer in Science and Philosophy at the East India college. He made the first portable battery and designed electric generators and motors. Baldwin Latham was an engineer whose work gave us a safe water supply and sanitation, and the Park Hill water tower, and also designed a sewage system (1837 - 1917). Lord Ashburton's estate included the eastern side of Ashburton Road which was finally sold for housing after his death in the early 1900s. Josia Lafayette Bacon, who manufactured a hot water apparatus, lived in Bernhard House, on the corner of Ashburton Road and Lower Addiscombe Road. He installed a heating system in each room and corridor of the house!