

# **Mitcham Cricket Green Community & Heritage**

For the benefit of Mitcham Cricket Green  
Conservation Area and its environs

## **Annual review 2015**

**Presented to the  
Annual General Meeting  
26 April 2016**

2015 was another busy year for Mitcham Cricket Green Community & Heritage, and one in which we achieved two notable 'firsts'.

In July we received a national award. We were Highly Commended in the Civic Voice Design Awards, and were presented with a commemorative plaque at a ceremony held at Central Hall Westminster by Civic Voice President Griff Rhys Jones. This award was for our Lottery funded project to clean the Tom Ruff memorial stone and mile stone, and to clean, move and replant the horse trough at Cricket Green. Everyone who played a part in this project has a share in the award – well done to us all!

In September we coordinated the first Mitcham Heritage Day. This event, held on the same day as Open House London, allowed us to complement our now traditional work with Mitcham Cricket Club to open the pavilion with a range of additional heritage activities. We also worked with Mitcham Parish Church, Mitcham Methodist Church and Merton Council to coordinate five venues offering a range of activities, guided tours, exhibitions and events. We will build on the success of this event in 2016.

We continued to work hard on the Canons Lottery bid, which if successful will bring nearly £4 million into the Canons area. We are part of the Canons Partnership, which is made up of MCGC&H, Friends of the Canons (FroC), Mitcham Society and Merton Council. The final bid will be presented to HLF in late 2016 and if successful the money will be spent on The Canons house and on the surrounding green spaces.

We also contributed to the development of Merton Council's Heritage Strategy through our participation in the Merton Heritage Forum. This important document lays out the principles on which heritage matters are addressed by Merton Council. Mitcham features strongly following our input.

We were busy with a range of other events and activities throughout the year. In March we took a stand at the Heritage Discovery Day organised by Merton Council at the Civic Centre in Morden. In May our Pirelli Golf Tournament held at Mitcham Golf Club and jointly organised with Mitcham Society raised funds for Mitcham Cricket Club.

We took a pitch at Mitcham Carnival in June and also that month joined hundreds of organisations around the country in celebrating Civic Day with a guided walk. Our Community on the Green evening in July was held amid a heavy downpour, but this did not dampen the spirits of everyone who came

along to celebrate Cricket Green. We were delighted to be joined by the Mayor of Merton for this event.

Of particular concern throughout the year was the ongoing saga of the fate of the Grade II listed Burn Bullock pub. We saw the first anniversary of enforcement action on the owner to undertake essential repairs in August and repairs were still not completed by the year's end.

The Burn Bullock had a change of owner during the year. This also affected ownership of the cricket pavilion. We secured a grant of £10,000 as part of a Government supported programme on Community Assets. This has enabled us to work with Mitcham Cricket Club to build a stronger relationship with Merton Council and seek professional support and legal advice for the best way forward.

All of this sits alongside our more 'day to day' work. This includes keeping a watching brief on proposed developments in the area, commenting on planning applications and participating in a range of forums and meetings. Our own monthly open meetings welcome members and non members alike.

We simply could not do all this without the support of our growing membership, many of whom give their time generously to help us. Our membership is at record levels and I would like to close by thanking everyone who has supported us, in whatever way, during the year. A very big "thank you".

John Stover

Trustee & Chair, Mitcham Cricket Green Community & Heritage

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## **Trees & local natural environment**

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We continued to monitor tree planning applications, and report to the Council incidents of tree felling where no permission had seemingly been granted. Most flagrant act of tree vandalism in this category was at #39 Mitcham Park. This exposed severe weaknesses in London Borough of Merton's enforcement. Despite producing first-hand accounts of tree felling, with accompanying photographic evidence, no prosecution has yet been proposed. The property in question had also undergone major building works, again without authority, all this within the Cricket Green Conservation Area.

Problems brought on by LBM's budget and staff cuts were evident with failures to replace street trees that had died or been vandalised. Whilst we sympathise with the team whose job it is to maintain our street trees on an ever-diminishing

budget, we continued to criticise the short-sightedness of current policies, including the proposed outsourcing of Greenspace maintenance.

Further incidents of tree failure were evident on private land as well, notably in the avenue approach to The Birches. As a sop to felling a number of mature trees on the site, the NHS had had planted two silver birch trees. As so often happens, there was no tree maintenance plan in place. During the rainless spell both trees wilted and died, despite volunteers pouring buckets of water into each tree pit. A similar occurrence was noted by The Canons Leisure Centre.

The most worrying feature pertinent to trees this year was the alleged improvements made to Fair Green. Despite inputting professional advice on the plans to renovate this historic part of Mitcham, our ideas were ignored. Several mature trees were lost in the initial preparation works – a fact denied by LBM despite proof being submitted. Worse, thousands of pounds were wasted in consultancy fees to dream up fanciful plans.

This has culminated in having a series of high-cost, high-maintenance “pleached” trees planted around the market. These follies, viewed with the same disdain as topiary, will add nothing to the environmental and climatic controls that mature trees bring. Overall it has been confirmed that the Fair Green exercise has resulted in a 20% loss of green.

For the second year running the borough was blessed with superb autumn weather and stunning leaf-colour displays. The year ended with record high December temperatures leading to the bizarre sight of spring flowers in bloom, and even some trees bursting bud.

Friends of the Canons year was dominated by the Lottery Stage 2 bid to unlock the balance of nearly £4m granted in 2014. Along with FroC, MCGC&H, The Mitcham Society, LBM, and Southern Green (the appointed chartered landscape architects and design team) continue working towards a target date of October 2016 to submit details of how the money would be spent.

Although we met with Cllr Andrew Judge and LBM Greenspace Officers early in the year to update Council’s outsourcing plans, we were dismayed overall lack of transparency. FroC will be joining other Borough Friends groups in the formation of an independent green spaces forum to further our case with LBM.

As previously noted, the main thrust of Friends activities during the year was to advise on planting at Fair Green. Workdays centred around Bellamy Copse, and the walled garden in The Canons, as well as at Three Kings Piece fruit hedge. Removal of invasive pennywort from the pond was particularly entertaining, wading as we were into the sludge-filled bottom to drag this annoying plant that

has invaded many waterways, including the River Wandle. Removal will be an annual event.

Friends of the Canons meet once a month for a workday – on the 3rd Sunday of each month – at 10.00, usually by Canons house. Check the monthly MCGC&H notes for updates.

John Davis

Trustee & Vice Chair, Mitcham Cricket Green Community & Heritage  
Chair, Friends of the Canons

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## **Landscape & townscape**

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Throughout 2015 our efforts to obtain Local Listing status from the London Borough of Merton for local landmark structures of significance not carrying national listed recognition were sustained. The items concerned were the civic War Memorial on Lower Green West, (where a major civic ceremony takes place each year at Remembrance-tide), the Commonwealth War Graves Commission 'Cross of Sacrifice' Memorial, together with the individual war gravestones in the burial area which the Memorial acknowledges, the surviving base of a monument – also located in the burial ground – which explains the phases of expansion of the historic graveyard, and, on the edge of Three Kings Pond, the sloping paved ramps created to give access into the water for horse-drawn vehicles and livestock, both for the purposes of vehicle maintenance and for the welfare and refreshment of the animals concerned. We were confident that this work would be successful.

Over the years MCGC&H has campaigned to maintain the variety and interest of the various open space elements within the Conservation Area, valuing the spectacular views and contrasting landscapes provided by the juxtaposition of the Greens, the ornamental grounds of The Canons, the copse created to screen the potentially intrusive roofline of Canons Leisure Centre and the wide vista of the adjacent playing field. These contrasts need to be appreciated and replicated in the pursuit of grant aid for works of rejuvenation.

Meanwhile, every effort has been made to avert any further deterioration of the existing landscape; volunteers have sustained their work on various aspects of maintenance and on litter collection, including liaison with the leisure centre and sports users in an attempt to avert dumping of energy drink cans, water bottles and food wrappings.

Aware of the imminence of work to re-landscape the Upper Green areas adjoining Mitcham Town Centre and the prospect of works extending to Three Kings Pond, MCGC&H took care to ensure that the design team received background information relevant to the two commemorative trees in the vicinity: the oak planted in 1992 to celebrate the 40th Anniversary of the Queen's accession (a tree which had received scant respect in the redesign of the junction of Park Place access drive and Commonsides West), and the more recently planted black poplar planted to commemorate the Queen's Diamond Jubilee in 2012.

The Statutory Rights of Way within and near the Conservation Area, all designated footpaths – are very well signposted (as is required by law) at the points where they intersect with vehicular highways. They follow the routes of ancient bridleways, but have never been designated as such in modern times as their width and general character were deemed not to be appropriate for mixed use by walkers and riders. The recent adjustment at national level whereby bridleways are deemed to be suitable also for cyclists therefore has not applied to these routes, but pressure exists at the present time for them to become available for cycling, a situation in which their current use by young families for pedestrian journeys to school, shopping etc. is a factor requiring care.

In addition to the statutory footpaths serving the area, desire lines exist in conjunction with the location of such items as pedestrian crossings, traffic lights, road junctions etc. The application of hard surfaces to such lines, without thorough consultation (as happened at Cricket Green some little while ago) leads to the fragmentation of green space and consequent loss of recreational potential, an aspect which will require thorough consideration in ongoing discussion.

Having gained 'Developing' Awards in 'It's Your Neighbourhood' assessments organised by London in Bloom in past years, we entered the Conservation Area once again, this time receiving an 'Outstanding' Award which was presented at a ceremony held in Richmond Park. This magnificent result was due to the floral displays, hedgerows and shrubberies maintained by local commercial units (especially public houses) and local householders, who do so much to maintain the appearance of our area, as well as specific efforts by Merton Council.

A supply of entry forms for Merton in Bloom were distributed, with the result that many Mitcham entries figured in the eventual awards table. The awards were presented at a ceremony at the Civic Centre: many congratulations to all concerned.

Joyce Bellamy  
Trustee, Mitcham Cricket Green Community & Heritage

It has been a remarkable year of planning issues and projects affecting Cricket Green. Our small area of London certainly attracts intense interest. The biggest uncertainty has been the future of the Burn Bullock and Mitcham Cricket Pavilion. These are in the same ownership and we invested a huge effort to secure some action on restoring the Burn Bullock. It remains on the national Heritage at Risk Register. The new owners shared plans for developing the site which would demolish Mitcham Cricket Pavilion. We expressed our horror and have worked with Mitcham Cricket Club and Merton Council under a Government programme which has allowed us to access expert advice to secure the pavilion for the future. The whole situation remains fraught and we hope it can be resolved in 2016.

The long running saga of the Cricketers continued and the latest redevelopment plans received a red rating from Merton Council's Design Review Panel. We also raised serious concerns about the scale and design of new flats planned for the Kwik Fit site overlooking the cricket ground. We suffered from new Government freedoms for developers to convert offices into flats at both Justin Plaza and Brook House without planning consent.

This was the year when the success of the application for a multi-million pound Lottery investment in The Canons was to come to life. We have worked hard with Mitcham Society and Friends of the Canons on supporting Merton Council but it has been tough going. We organised a major survey of how people use The Canons grounds with 20 volunteers recording different users over a two week period. We remain optimistic that things will come together in 2016 so we can all benefit from a transformation of this special part of Mitcham.

More positively, we welcomed the decision to locate Mitcham's new local care centre at the Wilson Hospital and began to draw up a community planning and design brief to guide the Clinical Commissioning Group's plans. We also secured curbs over the intrusive lighting associated with the GP surgery although this has not yet been enforced by Merton Council. We remain hopeful that the old fire station can find a new life as a cultural asset and our vision for its development as a community arts centre attracted plaudits.

We are lucky to have so much green space in our area and welcomed calls to see London recognised as a National Park City. One local example was the National Trust's opening of Watermeads to the public for the first time in over 100 years. Unfortunately, concerns remain over the future maintenance of all Merton Council's green spaces which is being put out to commercial contractors. The Council has refused to release details of the specification despite earlier

promises to do so. We also watched as a small area of Mitcham Common still in private hands was sold at auction for an astronomical price.

Cricket Green is blessed with many community assets so we took advantage of new Government powers to give these extra protections by identifying over 30 candidates in a workshop run by our national charity Civic Voice.

Disappointingly, after our success in having Mitcham Cricket Pavilion recognised as Merton's first "asset of community value" we found Merton Council out of line with other local authorities when it refused to recognise the White Hart.

As well as commenting and involving ourselves in local issues we contribute to Merton-wide policies through Merton Heritage Forum. We were pleased to play our part in making Mitcham the most prominent part of the Borough in the new Merton Heritage Strategy. We also challenged the Parliamentary candidates in the General Election and received responses from them all offering commitments to support our cause.

Small details matter in the Conservation Area and we took quick action to have shelters erected at Date Valley School and the former Vicarage without planning permission rejected. We saw off a recycling facility which appeared on Lower Green West and secured a commitment from Merton Council to replace the "chalk stick bollards" installed after some of the green was used for caravans. We also flagged a growing concern about the lack of resources available to enforce planning controls in the area. The year ended with uncertainty over Merton Council plans which might see cycle lanes across some of the local green spaces.

Tony Burton  
Trustee, Mitcham Cricket Green Community & Heritage

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## **Communications & publicity**

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Effort and time spent on communications and publicity activities continued to raise our profile during 2015, and to cement our role as the civic society for Mitcham Cricket Green Conservation area and its environs.

Much of what we achieve in this respect is only possible thanks to numerous volunteers giving their time to help. For example those of our members who are not on email and live locally receive hand-delivered papers relating to our open meetings eleven months of the year (We don't have a December meeting) thanks to one very dedicated member.

Our Bulletin, of which we now print 4,000 three times a year, is delivered to local homes by a small and efficient army of volunteers. In addition members help at specific events, for example managing refreshments for and stewarding the opening of the Cricket Pavilion as part of Mitcham Heritage Day / Open House London, helping out at our Community on the Green event in July, and at other points during the year.

All of these activities are key parts of our communications function, and volunteers are vital to their success. So my thanks to everyone who helped during 2015.

We held the first Mitcham Heritage Day, coordinating events and activities provided by a number of organisations in the area. The date was set to coincide with Open House London on 19 September and so we were able to incorporate a number of Mitcham buildings opened for this event – whose participation we also coordinate. Among these is Mitcham Cricket Pavilion, whose opening we have arranged since 2011.

Mitcham Heritage Day was a great profile raiser for us and allowed us to encourage other organisations to celebration of all the wonderful heritage in our area and offer a range of activities and tours for interested people. We have included the poster at the end of this annual review.

Our Bulletin has for several years benefited from small grants. During 2015 we were extremely pleased to receive three years' funding from Mitcham firm M3 (based in the old Three Kings pub opposite Three Kings Pond). Their support will allow us to print the bulletin in 2016, 2017 and 2018, and we will be able to grow to 5,000 copies by the end of that time. This will allow us to tell a wide local community about our work.

Participation in two Merton Heritage Discovery Days at the Civic centre in March was an excellent opportunity for us to be seen alongside other heritage organisations. Our talk – entitled Cricket Green – Past, Present and Future was very well received.

Our Web site and Twitter continue to grow, and are both excellent ways of reaching a wider audience. Anyone can sign up to the website and receive an email every time we add a new post. We are [www.mitchamcricketgreen.org.uk](http://www.mitchamcricketgreen.org.uk) and @MitchamCrktGrn.

Meanwhile we continue to be a regular port of call for the local Guardian on all matters relating to our area. We were featured on average once a month throughout the year. Articles in which we were quoted ranged widely and included celebrating success in the first round of The Canons Lottery funding, Celebrating Mitcham Carnival and Mitcham Heritage Day, commenting on the return of the clock tower to Mitcham Fair Green, and continuing to press Merton Council on repairs to the Burn Bullock.

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## **Mitcham Cricket Club**

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2015 was an eventful 12 months for Mitcham Cricket Club on and off the field. Growth of the number of playing members was coupled with success for senior and junior teams. But the ongoing threats to the future of the pavilion continue to cast a shadow over the club's future.

This is the 330th year that cricket has been played on the Green going back to 1685. Although we continue to play some good if not outstanding cricket at age ranges from under 12 up to our 1st XI, two of our teams have stood out this year: our 3rd XI won their championship and our under 16 team were also league winners.

The 1st XI started slowly and struggled in mid-season before hitting their stride. They then convincingly beat the side that won the league and also the side that finished third. Almost all of the players are returning in 2016 and with good winter nets they should be able to start the season with much better purpose.

The 2nd XI, after their promotion in 2014, were competitive in their new division throughout the season and eventually finished fourth. They were never really outplayed and can look forward to 2016 with every prospect of being in the mix for promotion.

The 3rd XI had a remarkable season losing only once. Their highest score was over 300 and they bowled one team out for only 40 runs. They had a really good mix of youth and experience with Selvanyan Suganthan winning the league-bowling award.

For the first time ever a Mitcham team got through to the finals day of the Fullers 20/20 competition. In winning their group they beat two sides from a higher division and although on finals day we were not successful we were not outplayed.

In order to provide more competitive cricket for our growing number of playing members, we will be running a full Sunday fixture programme this summer. This will provide cricket for players who do not get a game on Saturday and provide a real opportunity for colts to get used to playing senior cricket.

With this new team there should be adult cricket on the Green on most Saturdays and many Sundays through the summer. Our junior teams will be playing on Thursdays and Fridays from May to August. All supporters are welcome.

Mitcham CC welcomes non-playing members. Honorary membership is just £10 and gives access to watch Saturday games from the comfort of the pavilion.

For the third year in a row we were able to field three junior teams. Our under 16 team jointly won their league. This fine effort bodes well for the club's future.

Our under 14 and under 12 teams again competed well without the same level of success but all these colts are learning and improving. Their efforts were recognized at the first ever Colts awards night in September.

Off the pitch the picture is mixed. We suffered two break-ins at the pavilion this season. The culprit was caught, charged and found guilty. We have increased the security measures in the pavilion including installing CCTV cameras with the aim of discouraging a repeat.

The 2015 "Open House" day was a success with the pavilion receiving over 200 visitors from across Merton and beyond with a wonderful display of information relating to our links with "Women in Cricket".

The club is working closely with MCGC&H to resolve the ongoing issues with the freeholder of our 110 year old pavilion and build a secure future for the club. The Club would like to thank John Strover and Tony Burton for their enormous support and expert advice at this time and we look forward to working together in 2016 to reach a successful conclusion.

The club is also indebted to MCGC&H for their many fundraising efforts on behalf of the club. The funds raised help the club to invest in colts cricket and keep the club alive.

David Bell  
MCGC&H Liaison, Mitcham Cricket Club

# Mitcham Heritage Day 19 September 2015

## Mitcham Cricket Green Community & Heritage

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### Mitcham Parish Church (CoE)

#### St Peter & St Paul

Open 10.30 to 4.30

Display of church plate & exhibition of church history

Display about Mary Tate's Almshouses (Mary Tate buried in church crypt)

11.00 and 3.00 cemetery mortuary chapel open

12.30 guided tour of Parish Churchyard

Bell Tower Ringing Chamber open to view

all day (spiral staircase access only)

Hot & cold drinks, snacks, cakes



### Vestry Hall

Open 10.00 to 1.00

Tour 11.00 to 11.45

Photographic exhibition 10.00 to 1.00

Hall and environs: 1887 to present day



Cricket will be played during the day



### Mitcham Methodist Church

Open 10.30 to 4.30

Tea, coffee, biscuits



### The Canons

Tour 10.00 to 10.45

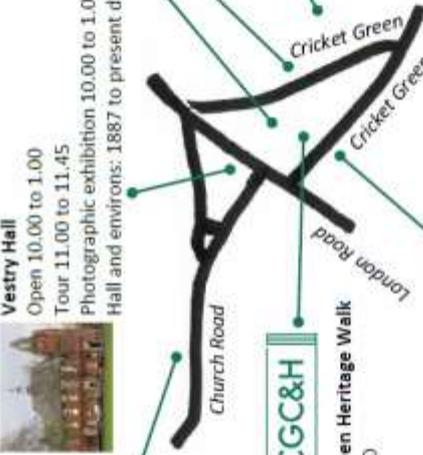
including house, pond & walled garden



### Cricket Green Heritage Walk

2.30 to 3.30

Mitcham Heritage Day organised by Mitcham Cricket Green  
Community & Heritage with thanks to volunteers and



### Mitcham Cricket Pavilion

Open 10.30 to 4.30

Cricketing memorabilia

Exhibition on women connected with the club

Watch cricket from the balcony

Hot & cold drinks, snacks, cakes



### Timed events:

10.00 to 10.45 The Canons guided tour. Booking required - 020 8640 3333.

10.00 to 1.00 Vestry Hall photographic exhibition. No booking.

11.00 to 11.45 Vestry Hall guided tour. Booking required - 020 8640 3333.

12.30 to 1.30 Parish Churchyard guided tour. No booking. Meet at front porch.

2.30 to 3.30 Cricket Green heritage walk. No booking. Meet at cricket pavilion.

11.00 and 3.00 Parish Church cemetery mortuary chapel open. No booking.

Mitcham Cricket Green Community & Heritage is the civic society for Mitcham Cricket Green Conservation Area and its environs

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