



## **History Nugget for February 2017 : Names and Numbers**

There are currently two roads called Cricket Green. The even house numbers are on the south east side of the green and the odd ones are on its north west boundary. Previously these roads were called Lower Green East, to complement the two roads on the west side of the Vestry Hall, called Lower Green West. It was Lady Robertson, the wife of the MP for Mitcham, who suggested they be renamed Cricket Green. The Highways Committee of Mitcham Borough Council agreed in February 1944 as it was said that a large number of people used Cricket Green rather than Lower Green East.

Other roads in Mitcham have been renamed in response to residents' requests. Annie Road, presumably named after builder Joseph Wilson's wife, was renamed St Barnabas Road in 1927. Some road names were suggested by builders and rejected by the council, who then either agreed to revised names or put forward their own. The names suggested for Raleigh Gardens, part of which was built on the site of Mitcham House, were Mitcham House Gardens or Fair Green Gardens. The council suggested Raleigh House, and the builder then asked for Raleigh Gardens. The builder of Glebe Avenue had asked it be named St Dunstan's Avenue, which the council rejected and it was the surveyors Chart, Son and Reading that suggested Westfield Avenue or Glebe Avenue, the latter being accepted by the council.

Most council minutes don't reveal the reason why some road names were rejected and others accepted. One exception to this was for the names of the blocks of flats on the Elm Nursery Estate, in Armfield Crescent, built in the early 1950s. Tom Ruff, later mayor of Mitcham, argued that the names suggested by the council didn't reflect local history. He put forward names such as Mizen and Carry (a nearby road was so named after the Carew family). The council voted against his proposals.

**Mitcham Cricket Green Community & Heritage**  
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In 1897 Mr Chart suggested a method to renumber houses in the parish. He said that there were 2,365 houses and that 'very many of these are scattered and do not fall into any system of numbering.' There were though, he said, many streets where numbers already existed but these were improperly applied causing confusion in the delivery of letters, preparation of voting lists, etc.

He recommended following the example in London, where numbers start at the end of the street nearest to St Paul's cathedral. For Mitcham the Vestry Hall would be the centre from which streets would be renumbered, with even numbers on one side, and odd the other. He listed 37 roads to be renumbered.

The Croydon Rural District Council, which included Mitcham Parish at this time, adopted his proposal for renumbering, and would serve the 'usual notices upon the occupiers' of the roads listed in his report.

Legislation to standardise road names and numbering was introduced in the 1930s for the London area, later the Greater London area, and after the abolition of the GLC in 1985, the individual London Boroughs. The aim was for a consistent approach across London, benefitting not only the public and postal services, but also to help the emergency services in finding properties. One of the guidelines was that the use of 'Terrace' or 'Parade' should only be used in roads of a short length. The Edwardian shopping parades in Mitcham along the London Road, such as Buck's Head Parade and The Parade, have thus lost their own identity.

Mitcham though has its own roads that don't fit in with such standards. Taffy's How for example, off Love Lane. Seaton Road where the houses are numbered sequentially, 1,2,3 etc. on one side and 1A, 2A, 3A etc. on the other. Attempts by the council to renumber houses have sometimes met with opposition. When Glebe Square was built, the council wanted to renumber the houses in the adjacent Glebe Path. The owners objected and the council backed down.

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