



History Nugget for May 2017 : Mortuary Chapel in parish churchyard

In 1882, the parish church's burial ground was enlarged and a mortuary chapel was built by Crockett at a cost of £1,761, as referred to in an advertised tender in the Surrey Mirror. (Adjusted for inflation, this was the equivalent of around £200,000 today.)

An entrance from Church Road was made, opposite the post office (later 71 Church Road). A path led to a circular path in front of the chapel.

The new burial ground was consecrated on 15th January 1883 by the Bishop of Rochester.

Inquests were held at the Mortuary Chapel for example:

SUDDEN DEATH.

— *Mr. F. J. Nightingale, Deputy-Coroner, held an inquest at the Mortuary Chapel on Monday on the body of Miss Ellen Peerless, of the Ship Laundry, who died suddenly on Friday. She had been attended by Dr. McIntyre, and he stated that death was due to heart failure.*

—*The jury returned a verdict of "Death from natural causes."*

Source: Croydon Advertiser and East Surrey Reporter – Saturday 30 July 1910

Mitcham Cricket Green Community & Heritage

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Company registration no. 04659164 Charity registration no. 1106859

When Mitcham became part of the London Borough of Merton in 1965, the Coroner decided that autopsies and inquests would be performed at Battersea for both Merton and Wandsworth. This decision was recorded in the minutes of the Parks, Cemeteries and Allotments Committee minutes dated 26th May 1965:

612. Mitcham and Wimbledon Mortuaries

The Director of Parks reported

(i) that following the reorganization of the London boroughs, H.M. Coroner had decided that as from the 1st April 1965, he will hold all inquests for both the London boroughs of Merton and Wandsworth at the Battersea Coroner's Court and that consequently all autopsies on bodies will be carried out at the Battersea Mortuary; and

(ii) that no request has been made to use the Wimbledon and Mitcham mortuaries which had been kept in readiness since the 1st April in case local funeral directors wish to use them as Chapels of Rest, and

(iii) that consequently there seemed to be no necessity to keep the mortuaries available particularly as some financial arrangements would have to be agreed with the London Borough of Wandsworth for bodies admitted to the Battersea Mortuary from this borough.

Source: Minutes of proceedings of the council and committees, London Borough of Merton Council Minutes, 1965-66, volume 2, part 1.

Today, nothing is left of the chapel building, although the entrance and circular path remain. Graves have been placed within and around these paths, but not where the chapel once stood.

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