



History Nugget for September 2018 : The Cricketers Garage

The Cricketers Garage stood opposite the old Mitcham Fire Station, on Lower Green West, and was in business for most of the 1930s. The site is now occupied by the London Box Sash Windows Company.



At each end of this art deco style building can be seen a recess, where petrol pumps were once installed. The three windows, which are now used to display examples of sash window frames, and the doorway on the right, were once the garage shop. The entrance to the current premises is via a gate seen on the right of this structure, with the pair of white, locally listed, Cricketers Cottages on the right of that. These are used as offices by the company.

Mitcham Cricket Green Community & Heritage

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The garage was probably built in 1929 as it is first mentioned in the electoral register for that year, with occupants Reginald Lambert Gandy, whose abode was in Bedford Hill, SW2; Ernest Owen and Agnes May Davies whose abode was Tooting.

The Cricketers Garage was mentioned in adverts and news items from 1931 to 1938, as obtained from the British Newspaper Archives. The news items were mostly about motorcycle clubs that had a club room there, e.g. this report from the Norwood News of September 1936:

Streatham and District Motor Cycling Club ... leave the clubroom at the Cricketers Garage, opposite Mitcham Fire Station, at midnight. Club nights are held every Wednesday and Saturday.

In April 1938, Davies was advertising to let the workshop and office, of 1,000 sq. ft., with all services, for £80 a year.

The garage was bought by the Mitcham Borough Council in 1939 by compulsory purchase, under the Fire Brigades Act of 1938, for use of the premises by the Mitcham Fire Brigade. The brigade's chief officer wrote to the council describing what he intended to do with the site. He said that the motorcycle club had use of the upper floors, which he intended to convert into a staff recreation room. The Challenge Case Co. was using the garage for storage, and there were various lock-ups.

After WW2, the site housed various businesses such as Sid Hoare potato merchants, Brian Wells printing, a dustbin repair company and in the early 1970s, a maker of crossbows.

The latter were produced by Bob Ekins who had been a draughtsman at Genyk Products in Miles Road, (the 'Wire Works'). He left to start his own business and subcontracted to his old employer making parts for Ford cars. He started to design what he thought would be an improved firing mechanism for machine guns, especially as he had been a conscript into the British army and had to deal with the then current design of guns. He informed the M.O.D. of his developments and they gave him a firearms licence. The improved firing mechanism came to nothing, but as part of his general business he used the licence to deal in shotguns, rifles etc. He gave up the licence when the amount of weapons he was trading became uneconomic. Later he moved on to crossbows, and traded under the name R.A. Ekins & Sons, crossbow makers.

John Ellis started his joinery business in one of the small workshops on the site in 1980. His business expanded into making box sash windows and in currently, in 2018, his London Box Sash Windows Company is the sole occupant of the site.

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