



History Nugget for June 2019: Mitcham Bridge

Also known as the Bishopsford Road Bridge, the Mitcham Bridge is around 250 years old.

Eric Montague, in chapter 1 of his book *Mitcham Histories: 6 Mitcham Bridge, The Watermeads and the Wandle Mills*, said that the present bridge was built between 1759 and 1789. The year 1759 was when an indictment was served on the parishes of Morden and Mitcham with regard the poor condition of the river crossing. It was in 1789 that it was mentioned by Edwards, the topographical writer, in his *Companion from London to Brighthelmstone* (Brighton).

An online search of the Surrey History Centre catalogue has revealed no more on when the bridge was actually built between those years. Early records show similar complaints of its state of repair, such as in 1714 an "Indictment for the decay of the highway lying in the parish of Morden near Mitcham Bridge, and leading from Mitcham", followed by a certificate of good repair, then in 1721 another indictment. In 1759 there was also "evidence of enquiries into whether the Bridge is a county bridge, and of its state of repair, including an indictment of the inhabitants for its non repair."

There is a parish boundary marker on the side of the bridge dated 1882. On page 110 of the book *The Snuff Mill Story*, published by William Henry Prentis in 1970, is the suggestion that this was the year the bridge was built. The author however didn't give a source and so this might have been his assumption.

A 'Beating of the Bounds' over two days that started on Ascension Day in 1879 was reported in the Croydon Advertiser and East Surrey Reporter. This 'perambulation' started at the Goat Inn and went clockwise around the boundary of the parish. The Mitcham Bridge was not mentioned, but the report ended with saying that the "overseers expressed their determination place iron boundary posts at various points decided upon during the perambulation."

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