



History Nugget for October 2019: Fire Hydrants

A metal plaque, painted black, on the wall of the Vestry Hall has the initials "F P", with "Ft / in" underneath.



'F P' meant 'Fire Plug', an older name for a fire hydrant. The distance from the plaque to the hydrant is shown underneath in feet, and the size of the water pipe in inches.

Another example of this plaque can be found in Western Road, at the base of a brick pier, just south of the corner with Mount Road. This is in poor condition, but some numbers can be made out. The pier may have been part of the entrance to the Hadfields paint factory.

Today, fire hydrant signs are yellow rectangles, mounted on concrete posts, with the letter 'H' on them, and two numbers. The top number is the size of the water pipe and the lower number is the distance to the hydrant.

Mitcham Cricket Green Community & Heritage

General enquiries: info@mitchamcricketgreen.org.uk

Web site: www.mitchamcricketgreen.org.uk

Twitter: [@MitchamCrktGrn](https://twitter.com/MitchamCrktGrn)

Registered Office c/o MVSC, Vestry Hall, 336/338 London Road, Mitcham Surrey, CR4 3UD

This example is along the London Road near the corner with Cricket Green at the northern end. The numbers are in metric, the water pipe is 100 mm and the distance of 1 metre.



Given the wear on this cast iron cover, it is likely to be old. In addition, a number of fire hydrant covers have 'J Blakeborough & Sons Ltd.' stamped on them. This Yorkshire company patented a fire hydrant in 1875.



After the Second World War, responsibility for firefighting was moved from towns to the county, and so any fire hydrant covers with *Mitcham* on them are likely to have been made pre-war.