

# PAPERS READ AT THE 50th LAMAS LOCAL HISTORY CONFERENCE HELD AT THE MUSEUM OF LONDON, 21 NOVEMBER 2015: 'MIDDLESEX: OUR LOST COUNTY'

*The conference opened with an overview of the medieval county by Dr Pamela Taylor: 'Middlesex from first reference to Domesday Book'. Dr Taylor has agreed that this will be the subject of a future paper to be published in LAMAS Transactions.*

## **MADE IN LONDON: A REVIEW OF CERAMIC MANUFACTURE IN MIDDLESEX FROM THE MIDDLE AGES TO THE 19th CENTURY**

*Jacqui Pearce (Museum of London Archaeology)*

London has for many centuries been a major centre of ceramic production, with an astonishingly varied and rich output encompassing earthenware, tin-glazed ware, stoneware, slipware, porcelain and a great many other wares. In many of these, potters working in the London area took the lead in developing new ceramic bodies and decorative styles that were to have a far-reaching influence nationally. This paper focuses on evidence for production in the historic County of Middlesex and in the metropolitan area, although this is only a part of the wider picture, with potteries in Southwark and Lambeth, Woolwich, Deptford and other boroughs south of the Thames all playing a major role in the capital's ceramic industries.

The earliest direct evidence for production comes from two excavated kiln sites dating to the late 12th to 13th century. The base

of a kiln and a considerable quantity of wasters were uncovered in Potter Street Hill, Pinner, in 1970 (Sheppard 1977), with further kiln remains and wasters excavated by Museum of London Archaeology Service (MoLAS) in Uxbridge High Street in 1996–8 (Knight & Jeffries 2004). Although no documentary evidence for these potteries is known, they both form part of the south Hertfordshire/north Middlesex grey ware tradition (Blackmore & Pearce 2010). This was a major source of wheel-thrown, unglazed, sandy reduced wares used in London between c.1170 and 1350, mostly for everyday household forms such as jars or cooking pots, jugs, bowls and dishes.

Another important source of locally made medieval pottery was London-type ware. This wheel-thrown red earthenware was first made at the end of the 11th century and became a major source of domestic pottery throughout the rest of the medieval period (Pearce *et al* 1985). Although scientific analysis demonstrated the use of London clay sources, it was not until 2006 that the first kiln evidence was uncovered, in Woolwich (excavations by Oxford Archaeology), an area known to have played an important part in the production of London-area post-medieval red wares (Pryor & Blockley 1978). Further evidence for the manufacture of post-medieval red wares comes from Cheam, Kingston-upon-Thames, Lambeth, Hounslow and Deptford. There is

also a significant collection of 16th-century wasters found on the site of Moor House, in Moorgate (excavations in 1998–2004 by Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd (PCA): Sudds 2006). A potter named Richard Dyer is recorded as making his wares in an area outside Moor Gate in 1568, applying for patents to make ‘fire pots’ in 1571 and 1579. His death is recorded in 1586, and Stow mentions a pot-maker’s house located in the area of the site (*ibid.*, 84). It seems highly likely that the excavated wasters came from Dyer’s pothouse, one of the only examples to have been identified in the immediate environs of the City of London in the post-Roman period.

Development of the technology necessary for the manufacture of stoneware had been known on the Continent for many centuries before production started on a commercial scale in England, in John Dwight’s Fulham Pottery. Although there had been attempts to produce stoneware in London before (notably in Woolwich), it was Dwight who achieved success with a stoneware body to rival that of the Rhenish imports. The Pottery was in production by *c.*1672, situated near Putney Bridge, at the junction of New King’s Road and Burlington Road. It was run by members of Dwight’s family following his death in 1703 until 1859, with stoneware production finally coming to an end in 1928. Much of the Pottery was demolished in 1974–5, when it was also excavated archaeologically, yielding considerable quantities of ceramic waste and kiln furniture that have thrown light on production in all periods, but which are especially illuminating with regard to Dwight’s early experimental work with different ceramic bodies, including porcelain (see Green 1999). One of the bottle kilns remains standing on the site today.

As with all the other pottery industries considered here, pothouses situated north of the Thames present only a part of the wider picture. Stoneware was produced at major potteries in Vauxhall, Lambeth and Mortlake, and tin-glazed ware or delftware, the main focus of production, from the early 17th century onwards, was produced in Southwark and Lambeth (see Britton 1987, inside cover). There are two notable exceptions, which include the earliest commercially successful pothouse to make tin-

glazed ware in London (and indeed, in England). This was situated in Aldgate, and was set up by Jacob Jansen and six other potters from Antwerp, *c.*1571. An application for a royal patent to produce ‘galley ware’ was unsuccessful, but did not deter the potters from making tin-glazed ware in styles current in the Low Countries. Excavations in 1979 at Mitre Square, within the precinct of Holy Trinity Priory, yielded finds of biscuit delftware and sherds of finished glazed ware that must have been made at the Aldgate Pothouse (Britton 1987, 27–9; Blackmore 2005, 237–42). The famous ‘Rose is Red’ plate, dated 1600 and now in the Museum of London, was also made at the Aldgate Pothouse.

The only other delftware production north of the Thames was located at the Hermitage Pothouse in Wapping, started *c.*1665 by John Campion, working in partnership with William Knight from 1672. Knight ran the pothouse until 1700, when his son John took over. It was finally run by John Abernethy and John Livie from 1764 to 1773, after which production came to an end. Excavations on the site uncovered the remains of two successive bottle kilns and a rectangular kiln (Tyler 1999; Britton 1987, 31–2).

London not only took the lead in stoneware and delftware production in Britain, but also pioneered the manufacture of porcelain. Despite Dwight’s attempts in the later 17th century, the successful production of a soft paste porcelain body did not take place in England until the 1740s. Motivated by a desire to make ware comparable to the Chinese imports entering the country in ever-increasing quantities, one of the first pothouses was set up *c.*1743–5 by silversmith Nicholas Sprimont in Lawrence Street, Chelsea, making high-quality decorative items that catered chiefly to the luxury market. The business was taken over by William Duesbury of the Derby factory in 1769, and run as a joint venture until 1784, when the Chelsea works was demolished (Adams 2001).

Another early porcelain factory was founded in what is now Narrow Street, near Duke Shore, Limehouse, by Joseph Wilson and Co in 1745, offering ware for sale in early 1747. The factory experienced problems with its porcelain body, and had difficulty finding the right market, closing in 1748.

The products of this important pothouse had been provisionally identified by Bernard Watney through connoisseurship, before this was confirmed by the excavation of a kiln base and quantities of wasters in 1989 (Tyler & Stephenson 2000).

A more successful venture was the porcelain works run by Charles Gouyn, a Huguenot jeweller from Dieppe, in St James's, between 1749 and 1759, after he had left the Chelsea factory. Output was again concentrated on the luxury market, making scent bottles, figures and some tablewares. The most successful porcelain works in London, however, was that located at Bow, in Stratford High Street. In 1744, engraver and portraitist Thomas Frye and merchant Edward Heylyn filed a patent for a porcelain body. Commercial production started in 1747, with a second patent taken out in 1748. The main aim was to rival Chinese imported ware by making 'useful ware' to satisfy the demands of the rapidly growing middle-class market (Fig 1).

During its lifetime, the New Canton Works was the largest porcelain factory in Britain and most probably in Europe. Frye died in 1752 and the business was dissolved in 1775 (see Adams & Redstone 1991). Excavations on the factory site by PCA and Museum of London Archaeology (MOLA) in 2006 brought to light considerable quantities of wasters and kiln furniture.

One other porcelain works was located in Middlesex, at Isleworth. The Pottery was founded in 1756 by Joseph Shore, on the east side of Railshead Creek, making slipware, creamware and other fabrics. They also made porcelain from 1756/7 until 1787, although it is only recently that the factory's products have been recognised through the work of Ray Howard, collecting wasters from the foreshore close to the site of the pothouse. Excavations in 2002 in Hanworth Road, Hounslow revealed massive quantities of Isleworth porcelain wasters, deliberately dumped in quarry pits on a site that had



Fig 1. Plate in Bow porcelain, c.1760, diameter 206mm (© Museum of London, accession no. 68.147/3; photo: Torla Evans)

formerly belonged to the Isleworth Pottery, and to which they moved their operations c.1830, when the factory was run by John Abbott of Mortlake (see Massey *et al* 2003). Isleworth was the last of the London porcelain factories; by the 1790s production had moved out of the capital entirely.

Two 19th-century pottery manufacturers conclude this brief survey of ceramic production in Middlesex and London. The first is William de Morgan, who set up a pottery in Chelsea between 1872 and 1881, then moving his operation to William Morris's Merton Abbey Works, before finally relocating to Fulham from 1888 to 1907, after which the business was carried on by the Passenger Brothers (Godden 1992, 129–30). De Morgan was noted for his highly decorative tiles and studio pottery, with many fine examples in the Museum of London's collections. Finally, the Martin Brothers must be among the most innovative and imaginative of the various potters covered here. Walter, Wallace, Charles and Edwin Martin initially made 'Martinware' in Fulham from 1873 until they moved to Havelock Road, Southall in 1877 (*ibid.*, 213–15). The factory closed in 1923, but is celebrated for its decorated wares, including the wonderfully quirky 'Wally birds' made in the form of decidedly off-beat owls.

This review of pottery production in London has done no more than scratch the surface of a remarkably varied and rich part of the capital's industrial heritage, focusing particularly on Middlesex. If the potteries situated in Greater London to the south of the Thames were also included, the picture would be even richer.

### **Bibliography**

- Adams, E, 2001 *Chelsea Porcelain*, London
- Adams, E, & Redstone, D, 1991 *Bow Porcelain* 2nd edn, London
- Blackmore, L, 2005 The pottery, in J Schofield & R Lea *Holy Trinity Priory, Aldgate, City of London: An Archaeological Reconstruction and History* MoLAS Monograph Series 24, London, 227–47
- Blackmore, L, & Pearce, J, 2010 *A Dated Type-Series of London Medieval Pottery Part 5: Shelly-Sandy Ware and the Greyware Industries* MoLAS Monograph Series 46, London
- Britton, F, 1987 *London Delftware*, London
- Godden, G A, 1992 *An Illustrated Encyclopaedia of British Pottery and Porcelain* 2nd edn, Wigston
- Green, C, 1999 *John Dwight's Fulham Pottery: Excavations 1971–79*, London
- Knight, H, & Jeffries, N, 2004 *Medieval and Later Urban Development at High Street, Uxbridge: Excavations at the Chimes Shopping Centre, London Borough of Hillingdon* MoLAS Archaeology Studies Series 12, London
- Massey, R, Pearce, J, & Howard, R, 2003 *Isleworth Pottery and Porcelain: Recent Discoveries*, London
- Pearce, J, Vince, A G, & Jenner, M A, 1985 *A Dated Type-Series of London Medieval Pottery Part 2: London-Type Ware* London and Middlesex Archaeological Society Specialist Paper 6, London
- Pryor, S, & Blockley, K, 1978 'A 17th-century kiln site at Woolwich' *Post-Medieval Archaeol* 12, 3–85
- Sheppard, D, 1977 'A medieval pottery kiln at Pinner, Middlesex' *London Archaeol* 3, 31–5
- Sudds, B, 2006 'Post-medieval redware production' in J Butler *Reclaiming the Marsh: Archaeological Excavations at Moor House, City of London, 1998–2004* PCA Monograph 6, London, 83–100
- Tyler, K, 1999 'The production of tin-glazed ware on the north bank of the Thames: excavations at the Hermitage pothouse, Wapping' *Post-Medieval Archaeol* 33, 127–63
- Tyler, K, & Stephenson, R, with Victor Owen, J, & Phillpotts, C, 2000 *The Limehouse Porcelain Manufactory: Excavations at 108–116 Narrow Street, London 1990* MoLAS Monograph Series 6, London

### **'PROFLIGATE IN PRINCIPLE AS IN PRACTICE'? JOHN WILKES AND ELECTIONS IN MIDDLESEX 1768–90**

*Robin Eagles (History of Parliament)*

In the spring of 1768 Middlesex had been represented quietly for over 20 years by one MP, Sir William Beauchamp Proctor, and for around 18 by the other, George Cooke. The first was a Whig, the second a Tory – and their selection represented what was in many ways a familiar feature of the unreformed English electorate, with many constituencies balancing their returns with a member coming from each side of the political divide. All this changed in February 1768 when John Wilkes, the disgraced former member for Aylesbury, staged his return to England from his French exile, and set about seeking a way of settling his problems by securing a new seat in Parliament. It was the opening salvo in a campaign that would ultimately be

important in the reform movement and in the progress of a free press. And for much of this time, Middlesex would be at the heart of things.

Wilkes, the son of a successful London distiller, Israel Wilkes, had been advanced in life by marriage into a wealthy Buckinghamshire family and as a result of his contacts there had managed to secure election as MP for Aylesbury in 1757. His initial experience of Parliament was disappointing but the accession of George III in 1760 offered Wilkes a way out of his predicament. By then Wilkes had turned to journalism and in 1762, in partnership with the clergyman poet, Charles Churchill, had launched an opposition paper, *the North Briton*, a critical alternative to the government-sponsored paper, *the Briton*, edited by the novelist, Tobias Smollett. Obvious targets were royal and ministerial corruption – the feared influence of the king's favourite, Lord Bute, a Scotsman from the house of Stuart at the centre of affairs – and the new administration's questionable policy of extracting Britain from the Seven Years' War.

For the Grenville faction, with whom Wilkes was associated, *the North Briton* was, at first, a triumphant addition to their armoury in opposing the Bute administration. But in the spring of 1763 Bute resigned from the government and was replaced by George Grenville, Wilkes's former patron. When Grenville revealed his determination to continue the policy of the former administration and bring the war to an end Wilkes published his answer in Number 45 of *the North Briton*. The issue lambasted the ministry but also assailed George III overtly as well. The immediate result was the issuing of a general warrant seeking the arrest of all those associated with *the North Briton*, among them Wilkes, who was arrested and committed to trial for seditious libel. Arguing that part of his privilege as an MP protected him from arrest in such circumstances, Wilkes was successful in persuading the judges to order his release. The affair had already attracted the interest of a crowd and Wilkes walked out of court hailed by the mob (rather misleadingly) as a hero and champion of 'Liberty'.

If the general warrant had been rendered ineffective, it did not prevent the Commons from resolving that Wilkes had no right to

claim privilege in this case. Through November the Commons debated the matter, resolving finally by a majority of over 130 that in the case of seditious libel the author was not protected by parliamentary privilege. Facing expulsion from Parliament, a lengthy term in prison and suffering from a wound inflicted by a fellow MP in a duel, Wilkes opted to seek refuge overseas. The beginning of 1764 saw Wilkes living in exile in France; he was the subject of prosecutions for seditious libel and obscenity, massively in debt and the foe of a number of his former political associates. During the course of the year he was found guilty of the charges against him, expelled from Parliament and outlawed.

In 1768, in the fifth year of his exile, Wilkes returned home, planning to stand for Parliament in the City of London. Unsuccessful there, he declared his candidacy for Middlesex instead. This was a much wiser choice for a man with Wilkes's reputation. Although he failed to attract many votes from the more affluent inhabitants of the county, Wilkes was supremely successful in securing support from the lower orders, the shopkeepers and artisans who made up a large proportion of Middlesex's unruly electorate; he was able to appeal to their suspicion of the power of central government. Boosted by their support, Wilkes ended at the top of the poll. The Commons refused to accept the result. A fresh election was called at which Wilkes triumphed once more; the Commons rejected the return and requested that Middlesex try again. The poll in March 1769 repeated the result, and in April, when Wilkes was at last challenged by two other candidates, he was again returned with an overwhelming majority securing 1,143 votes to Colonel Henry Lawes Luttrell's 296 (a third candidate, William Whitaker, managed to secure just five votes). Tired by the Middlesex voters' failure to get the point, the Commons took matters into their own hands, declared Wilkes incapable of being elected and awarded the seat to Luttrell.

The continual efforts to settle the Middlesex election question proceeded over a number of months, for much of which time Wilkes was behind bars, serving a 22-month sentence imposed on his return to England relating to his earlier convictions.

Prison did little to limit his activities though,

and when he left prison in April 1770 Wilkes was at the head of a movement focused on London and Middlesex. The following year saw Wilkes's 'greatest triumph' according to his biographer, P D G Thomas, with the so-called 'Printers' Case' of 1771. Publication of parliamentary proceedings at this point remained an infringement of Parliament's jealously guarded privileges, but Wilkes and other radical colleagues encouraged certain London printers to challenge parliamentary privilege by printing records of debates from the relative security of the City limits. When Parliament sent agents to arrest those concerned the City magistrates responded by arresting the parliamentary officials on the grounds that they were in turn infringing the privileges of the City. There followed a predictable enough stand-off with tit-for-tat retaliation on both sides before both Houses of Parliament finally resolved to let the matter rest and – by default – ceded to Wilkes's associates the ability (if not the right) to publish parliamentary proceedings unfettered. The affair paved the way for the formal publication of proceedings by Cobbett and ultimately by Hansard.

Wilkes's progress in the City of London continued and in 1774 he was elected lord mayor. During his mayoralty some undoubtedly enlightened policies were pressed forward. He intervened to control the price of bread and supported charitable initiatives relating to debtors. The same year that he was elected mayor, Wilkes was also returned once again for Parliament as MP for Middlesex, and in 1776 he made his celebrated speech arguing for reform of the franchise. The effort was unsuccessful and Wilkes's ultimate motivation for such issues remains debatable. Wilkes used to insist after all that he was no 'Wilkeite'. Perhaps Edward Gibbon had been correct in his assessment penned in the late summer of 1762 that Wilkes, although a splendid dining companion, was:

a thorough profligate in principle as in practice; his character is infamous, his life stained with every vice, and his conversation full of blasphemy and bawdy. These morals he glories in, for shame is a weakness he has long since surmounted. (Namier & Brooke 1985, iii, 639)

Over the next few years Wilkes's popularity

in Middlesex gradually tailed off. Re-elected without trouble in 1780, at the ensuing election of 1784 he came in second place, and only 66 votes ahead of the third candidate. By then his reputation had been tarnished by his decision to back Pitt and reinvent himself as a loyal servant of the king. By the time Wilkes came to seek election for Middlesex once more in 1790 he had all but given up. At a meeting in advance of the election held at the Mermaid Tavern in Hackney, Wilkes was accused of neglecting his duties. He chose not to stand again and for the first time in 22 years the people of Middlesex found themselves represented by someone other than John Wilkes.

### *Bibliography*

Namier, L, & Brooke, J, (eds) 1985 *The History of Parliament: The House of Commons 1754–1790* 3 vols, London

### **A CINDERELLA SERVICE – MIDDLESEX COUNTY COUNCIL 1889–1965**

*Charlotte Scott (London Metropolitan Archives)*

The year 2015 marks the 50th anniversary of the abolition of the former London and Middlesex County Councils. The London County Council (LCC) has acquired an assured place of importance in the history of London, but less is known of and acknowledged about the Middlesex County Council (MCC).

The MCC was created under the terms of the 1888 Local Government Act – legislation which broke up the old counties of Middlesex and Surrey, and to a lesser extent Kent, to form the new County of London (Fig 2). London was made up of the area defined by the 1855 Metropolis Management Act, and the 'new' Middlesex was left as a rural, much smaller area. The new county councils as administrative units were created at the same time.

The MCC kept its headquarters at the Middlesex Guildhall in Westminster (and in the County of London), however, enlarging the site in the early 1890s and then rebuilding the Guildhall completely just before the First World War. When the MCC moved back into the Guildhall after the building works of the

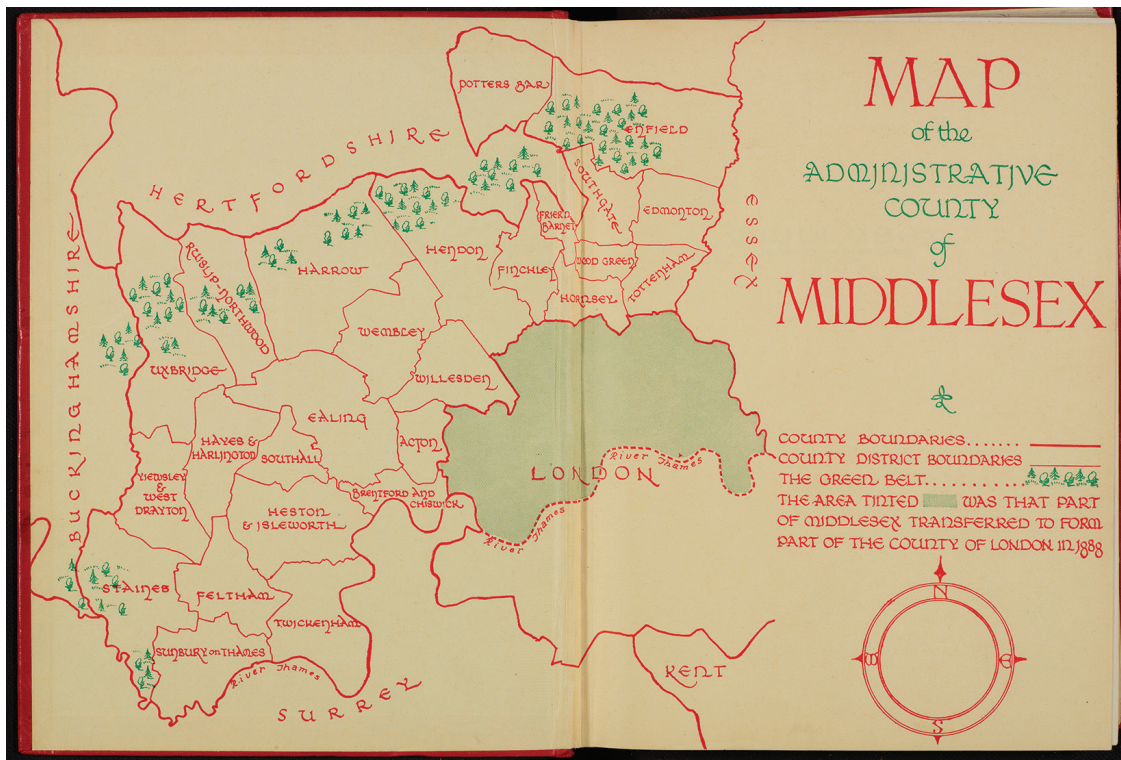


Fig 2. Map of the County of Middlesex, showing boundary changes following the creation of the County of London in 1889 (Radcliffe 1939, LMA Library reference 97.09 MID; reproduced by permission of London Metropolitan Archives (City of London))

early 1890s, a dispute arose with the LCC as to which of the two authorities should care for the archives of one of their predecessor bodies, the Middlesex Sessions. Both wished to 'claim' this history of the old County of Middlesex and the argument was only finally settled some years later in the High Court – in favour of the MCC.

The new County of Middlesex was at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century a rural place, very different to what it has become today. There was a two-tier system of local government at the time, just as there is today with the London Boroughs and the Greater London Authority. Then, there were the MCC and local authorities, which changed from sanitary districts to urban and rural districts in the 1890s. Up until the overhaul of the entire system in 1965 there were many changes here as rural districts became urban districts, and then some urban districts became municipal boroughs. Powers and responsibilities came and went as the MCC and its local authorities shared and shifted services at the decree of central government.

One of the biggest changes to Middlesex during the lifetime of the MCC was the huge rise in population in the inter-war period. The 1889 population in the new Middlesex was a bare half a million; after the First World War this rose at a rate of over 27% (five to seven times above the normal rate and more than any other administrative county). The rise was due less to a rising birth rate, although this did happen, and more to adult migration as people moved to Middlesex to work in the new factories and light industries which sprang up along the new arterial roads into London.

The MCC was pivotal in the planning, design and construction of these new arteries into the capital. The first of these was the Great West Road, which has left us with an interesting architectural legacy (including the former Gillett Factory, the Pyrene Building and the late lamented Firestone Factory). Lack of planning control at the time also meant that houses could be built very close to the new roads, something we can see evidence of today. Other arterial roads

built by the MCC include the North Circular, Western Avenue and the Cambridge Road.

The MCC also led on the West Middlesex Main Drainage Scheme, a major engineering project which aimed to solve the problems presented by the pressure of the rising population on the existing services (in 1930 there were 30 small sewage systems in the west of the county, serving seven boroughs and eight urban districts). The MCC secured hard won funding from the government to finance the construction of 70 miles (c.113km) of sewers and a new sewage treatment plant at Mogden in Heston and Isleworth, along with a sludge works at Perry Oaks. The cost was over half a million pounds, and at the time the scheme and Mogden, in particular, were highly praised for their efficiency and size. The East Middlesex Drainage Scheme followed and was opened in 1963.

The MCC worked closely with its local authorities on both these projects, a pattern which followed in the delivery of numerous other services. The most complex of these, as well as being the largest, was education. Education itself became a huge area of activity, responsibility and debate for local government in the first half of the 20th century. Under the 1902 Education Act the MCC became responsible for the delivery of all higher education in the county and elementary education for the least populated areas. The MCC greatly increased the number of schools and school places following this. After the passing of the 1944 Education Act the county council took responsibility for all education (much to the chagrin of those of its local authorities which had previously been allowed to run elementary education) and again, confronted with a post-war baby boom and continuing adult migration, had to provide many more new schools. During the 20 years after the Second World War the MCC built more schools than any other local authority in the country. It also worked with central government to pioneer new methods of education, such as the use of technology as a teaching aid.

By then, however, the existing model of local government in the 'greater London' area was under scrutiny. The Herbert Commission on Government in Greater London opened in 1957 and presented its report in 1960. The commission ran over a

hundred public meetings to examine and question the workings and effectiveness of local government. During this process very deep, and at times bitter, divisions between the MCC and its local authorities became apparent, far greater in fact than between any other equivalent bodies. Many of the municipal boroughs in Middlesex were clamouring for county borough status by this date; this would have taken them out of the county's administrative framework altogether and made the MCC's job of running services in the county around them difficult if not impossible.

The Herbert Commission sounded the death knell for the MCC and in effect the County of Middlesex itself.

The Middlesex County Council lasted for some 76 years, during a time of immense change to the country and of course two world wars (with aerial bombardment on the county for the first time). It was also a time of immense possibility, with local government at its most effective and empowered (to date). The MCC rose to the challenges of the time; it was committed to high standards of service; and it was not afraid to take risks and think on a big, strategic scale. It worked with its local authorities to provide Londoners today with infrastructures we still have today. So, in the sense that it has been given less attention than it deserves, the Middlesex County Council is a Cinderella service.

### *Bibliography*

Radcliffe, C, 1939 *Middlesex. The Jubilee of the County Council, 1889-1939*, London

### **A VISION OF MIDDLESEX: THE NORTH MIDDLESEX PHOTOGRAPHIC SOCIETY'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE PHOTOGRAPHIC RECORD OF ENGLAND**

*John Hinshelwood (Hornsey Historical Society)*

Between 1903 and 1920 the North Middlesex Photographic Society collected around 1,000 photographic prints as part of a project started by the National Photographic Record Association to create a Photographic Record of England (Owen & Hinshelwood 2011).<sup>1</sup> This project used photographs in much the same way as antiquarian collectors used



topographical prints and drawings, to record the landscape and the buildings deemed to be of historical interest and importance, and to record them for posterity.

Jerome Harrison, a founding member and vice president of Birmingham Photographic Society, had proposed a National Photographic Record and Survey of Great Britain in 1892, and the National Photographic Record Association was formed in 1897 on the initiative of Sir Benjamin Stone, MP for Birmingham and a keen amateur photographer, most famous for his photographic survey of the Houses of Parliament (Edwards *et al* 2006).

County photographic societies, whose members were both professional and amateur photographers, were considered best placed to undertake this work. The first survey was of Warwickshire, begun in 1896; the last two surveys, those of Norfolk and Northampton, were begun in 1913. By 1910 the number of contributions was declining, Stone's health was deteriorating and the impossibility of creating a complete photographic inventory of England was becoming obvious. The National Photographic Record Association collection of 5,883 prints, housed in 81 boxes was deposited in the British Museum, including four boxes covering Middlesex, which contained 175 prints, 37 of which also formed part of the North Middlesex Photographic Society collection. The whole of the National Photographic Record Association collection was transferred to the V&A Museum (London), Prints and Drawings Study Room in 2000.

The North Middlesex Photographic Society, founded in 1888, grew to become a pioneering society in all aspects of photography. The Survey and Record of North Middlesex was only a small part of its activities. In 1897 George Scamell, secretary to the National Photographic Record Association, invited the North Middlesex Photographic Society to become involved in the photographic record movement, but it was not until an appeal in *The Amateur Photographer* for help in 'systematic survey work in all parts of the country ... as the removal of old landmarks steadily progresses' that the society embarked on the project (Devon County Council, no page). The North Middlesex Photographic Society drew on the

collections of its members and friends, as well as organising field trips to take photographs of buildings and other objects of historical and archaeological interest across the county. A variety of other sources were used to form the collection, most notably those of antiquarians, including George Potter of Highgate, John Edmund Gardener of Swiss Cottage, Ernest Edward Newton of Islington and Henry Blackwell of Stoke Newington. By 1920 the collection was said to include a practically complete survey of the old buildings of Highgate and Hampstead and no further prints were added. The prints were deposited as they were collected in Hornsey Library until 2001, when the North Middlesex Photographic Society was wound up and the collection transferred to the Hornsey Historical Society (HHS).

The 175 prints of Middlesex now in the V&A Museum are identified as contributed by 12 people, six of whom were closely associated with the North Middlesex Photographic Society. The larger size of the North Middlesex collection, compared to that of the Middlesex section of the National Photographic Record Association, marks it out as a significant contribution to the record of England. Henry Walter Fincham became the chairman of the North Middlesex Photographic Society recording committee and its principal contributor, providing 234 prints (Fig 3). He was also the first librarian and archivist of the Order of St John and conducted his own photographic survey of all the properties held by the Order, some of which are to be found in both the National Photographic Record Association and the North Middlesex Photographic Society collections.

The prints in both collections are mounted in card frames with a pro-forma record sheet on the back. In some cases the information states categorically that the person contributing the print was different from the actual photographer. In other cases, such as the earliest photographs, it might be assumed that the contributor was not the photographer but on investigation it becomes clear that the person said to contribute the print was also the photographer. The information on the record sheets is highly variable and often needs to be verified, but in general terms



*Fig 3. Moor Hall, Harefield, photograph by H W Fincham, 1905 (HHS NMPS 9 293 & V&A E.4256-2000; reproduced with permission of Hornsey Historical Society)*

the North Middlesex Photographic Society's records tend to provide more historical information than the National Photographic Record Association's record sheets. Since the records were handwritten it is clear that only one or two people completed them, and not the contributors or photographers. A confusion developed over the photographic record: photographers selected what they photographed based on aesthetic criteria; the collectors selected according to their perception of what was historically interesting and important; and after this selection someone else wrote up, or not, a justification for the inclusion of the print. Perhaps not surprisingly the North Middlesex collection, like many other collections of the record movement, has been described as uncoordinated, unsystematic and sporadic (Gower *et al* 1916, 8–31).

Fincham and another society member, J W Marchant, photographed several prints and watercolours, which they found in topographical collections; one collection in

particular was Henry Blackwell's Collection. When Blackwell's collection was auctioned by the Fine Art Society in 1904, the catalogue entry could equally have applied to the North Middlesex Photographic Society's survey:

Many of the [images] can scarcely claim to rank high as works of art, and it is not intended that they do so. Their interest is topographical and historical, while many of them are probably the sole existing records of the place depicted in the appearance which they once were. (*Catalogue* 1904)

The 37 prints that are in both the National Photographic Record Association and the North Middlesex Photographic Society's collections covered only 11 places, and show a variety of public buildings, grand houses, churches and other monuments. In all but a few cases these structures disappeared by accident or design long ago; those that survive have undergone significant change in use and appearance since the photographs

were taken. Like the topographical collection they are the sole existing records of the place depicted as they once were.

### Note

<sup>1</sup> Hornsey Historical Society (HHS), Wood, Harold G B, 'The History of the North Middlesex Photographic Society', unpublished and undated ms notes.

### Bibliography

*Catalogue, 1904 Catalogue of an Exhibition of Engravings, Water Colours and Drawings of Hampstead & Highgate, also of Hornsey & Muswell Hill in the 18th Century and in the Early Part of the*

*19th Century: Held in the Rooms of the Fine Art Society, 148 New Bond Street, June and July, 1904, London*

Devon County Council, 'Exeter Pictorial Record Society: pictorial survey of Exeter' <http://www.devon.gov.uk/exeterpictorialrecordsociety> (accessed 24 November 2015)

Edwards, E, James, P, & Barnes, M, 2006 *A Record of England: Sir Benjamin Stone and the National Photographic Record Association 1897-1910*, Stockport

Gower, H D, Jast, L S, & Topley, W W, 1916 *The Camera as Historian, a Handbook to Photographic Record Work*, London

Owen, J, & Hinshelwood, J, 2011 *A Vision of Middlesex: The North Middlesex Photographic Society's Survey and Record of Middlesex*, London

