RECTORY NEWS

FOR THE SUPPORTERS OF CARSHALTON OLD RECTORY

Editor: Sue Horne

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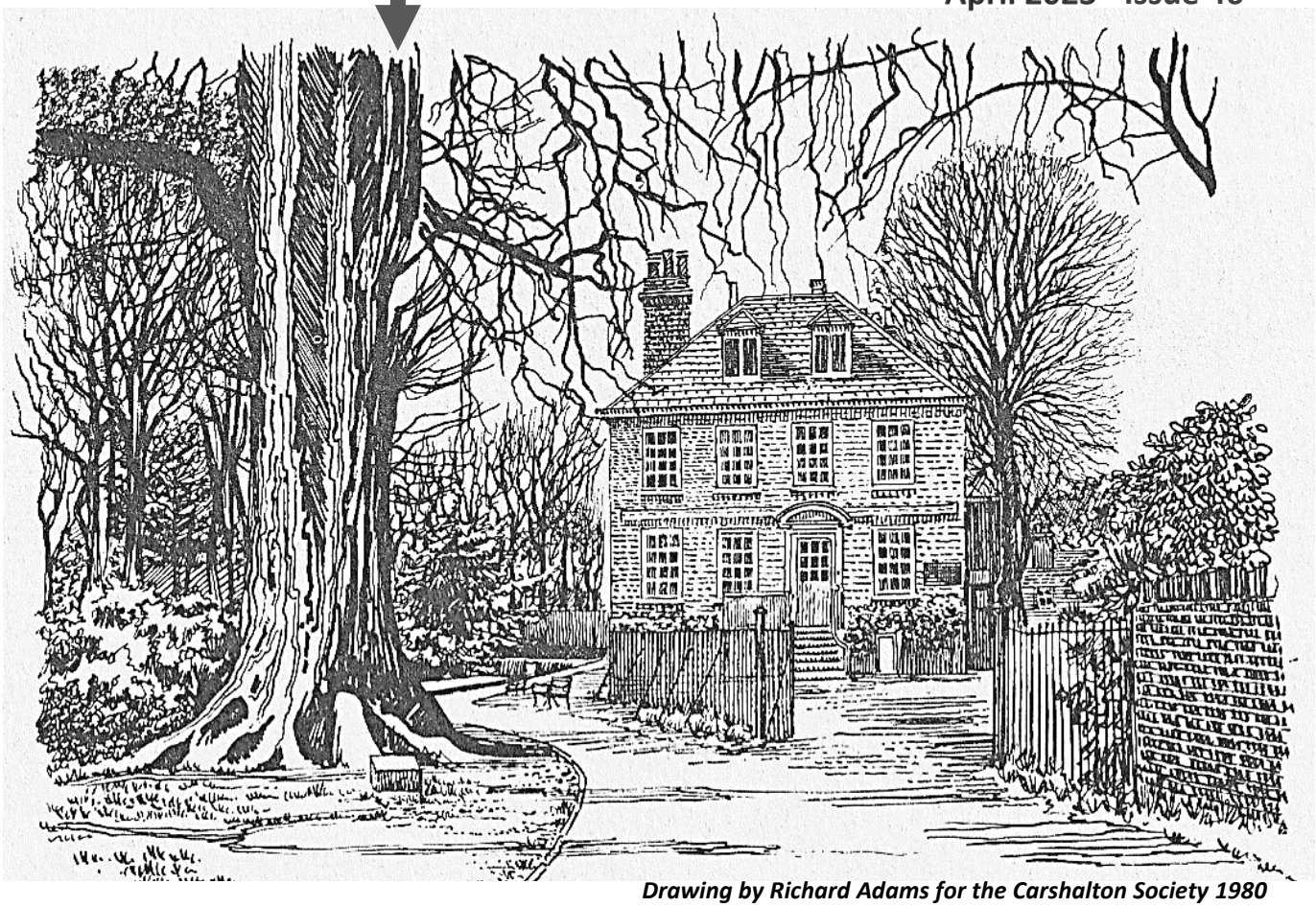


Drawing by Richard Adams for the Carshalton Society 1980

Annual General Meeting

This year's AGM will be on **Thursday 8th June 7.30pm** at the Carshalton Water Tower. Come and meet the committee, find out the latest news, and give us your feedback.

After the formal part of the evening, there will be light refreshments followed by a talk: **'Meet the Bynes – A 17th century Carshalton Family'**

17th century portraits of aristocratic families are not unusual but collections of portraits of the 'middling sort' are. The rare survival of 15 Byne portraits is remarkable: no other local family of the period is represented as comprehensively as this family – and as builders of the Old Rectory, they are particularly significant for us.

What a View!

Discovering new images of the Old Rectory is always a pleasure, as the delightful drawing on the front page shows - and this stunning photograph by Julian Heath.

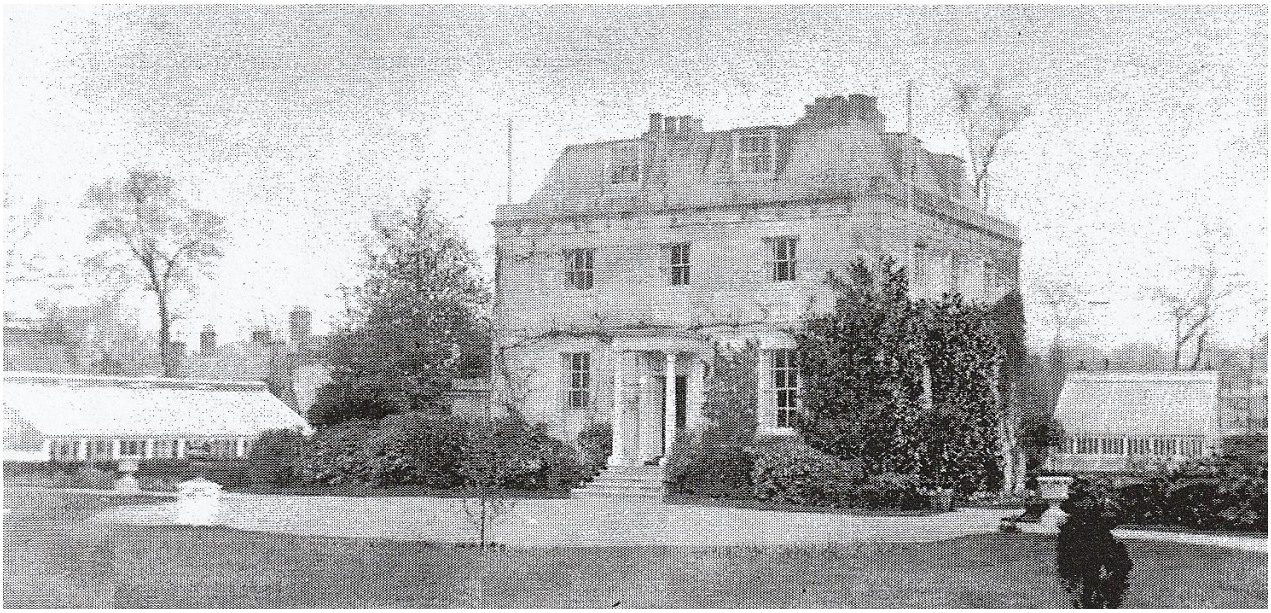
The subject of the photo, the glorious plane tree, is beautifully captured, whereas our focal point, the house, is tantalisingly hidden by the overgrown fir.

We'd like to see more of the Old Rectory but, if the greenery were to be hacked back, would the composition be quite so perfect? Probably not.

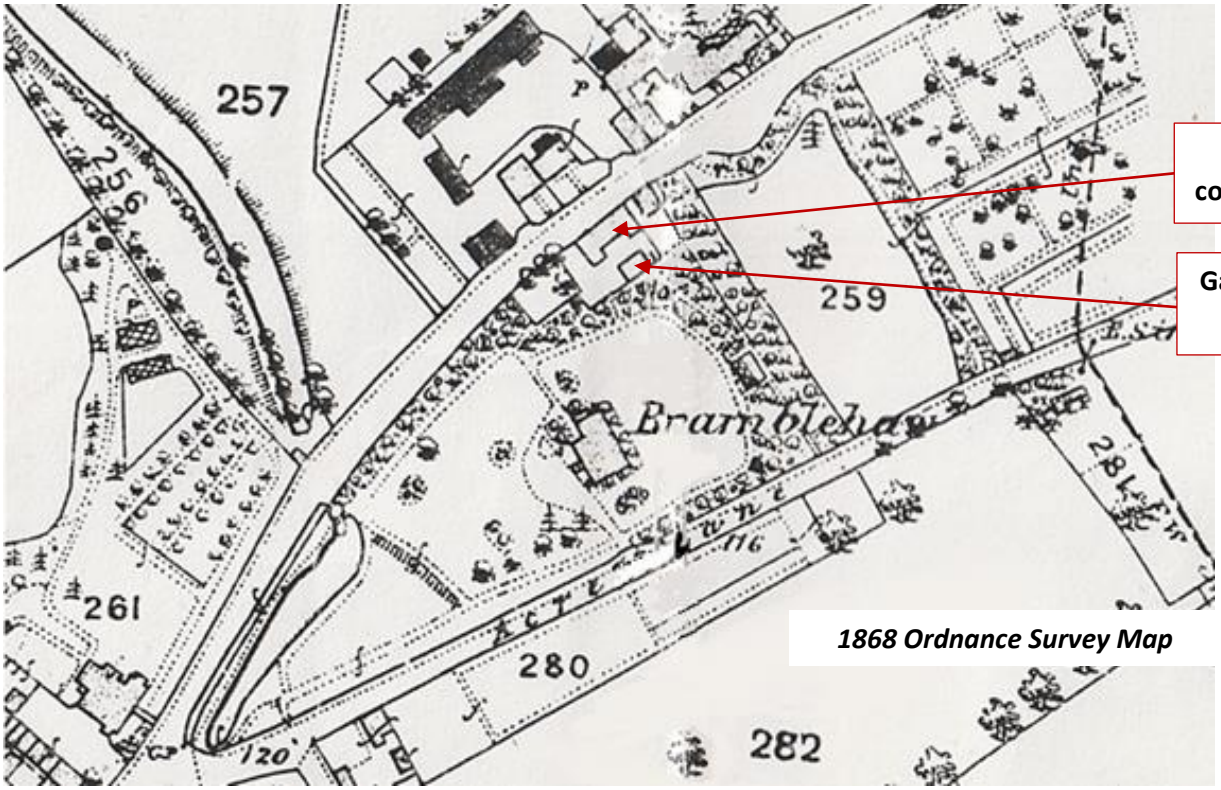
Is it heretical to want a man with a hedge trimmer to cut the vegetation back to the wall? Definitely not! We need the house to be seen.

©Julian Heath Photography

More about Bramble Haw



Following last month's newsletter, there is a lot more information to share about Bramble Haw thanks to long time CORA member, Anne Dodwell.



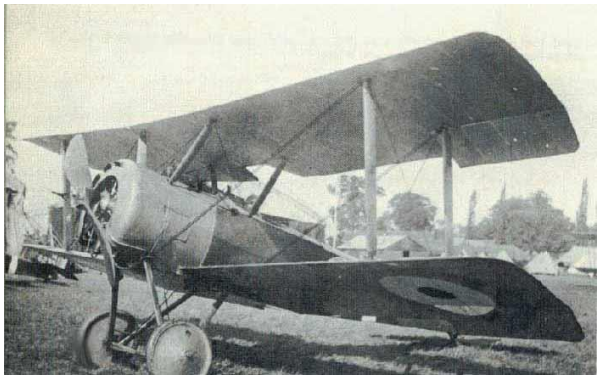
1868 Ordnance Survey Map

As the map shows, Bramble Haw had extensive gardens with several greenhouses as well as stables/coach house and a gardener's cottage (then a simple 'two up, two down'). We know that by the mid - 19th century an observatory was in the garden, followed sometime later by a summerhouse. But for me, it's an addition in 1923 that beats them all - a surplus WWI Sopwith Pup fighter plane.

Before the wash of suburbia overwhelmed the house, the last occupants of Bramble Haw were the Agazarian family. An Armenian by birth, Berge Agazarian fled his home country to escape persecution, arriving here in 1911. He successfully set up an electrical engineering company, married a young French student and had a family of four boys and two girls.

Modern youngsters are lucky, they have a wide range of outdoor play apparatus to entertain them, but the Agazarian children had something really special, the Sopwith Pup, which their mother bought for £5 at an auction at Croydon - and parked in the back garden. Scrambling over a real fighter plane must have fired their imaginations as four of the siblings went on to join the RAF and ATA during WWII.

Noel fought in the Battle of Britain and then in North Africa, where he was killed. His Battle of Britain spitfire used to be displayed in the Imperial War Museum. Levon flew Hurricanes



Sopwith Pup

in India and then P-47 Thunderbolts with 146 Squadron. They specialised in low-level strikes, contributing to the success of the 14th Army's campaign in Burma. He survived the war and set up in business in the USA.

Jack also joined the RAF but was then recruited as a wireless operator by the Special Operations Executive (SOE) and sent to work with the Prosper network in Paris. He became known to the Gestapo when the network was compromised. Returning to France to try to rebuild Prosper, he was captured, tortured, and eventually executed on 29th March 1945.

The final aviator of the family was Monique. At the beginning of the war she was nursing aircrew at RAF Uxbridge and at the burns unit at East Grinstead - but was desperate to fly. She was accepted for training by the Air Transport Auxiliary in 1943. The ATA ferried replacement aircraft of every type to operational squadrons,

a hazardous business, flying above blacked-out towns without navigation aids and keeping radio silence.

After the war, Monique became a commercial pilot and later managing director of Island Air Services, a small charter company based at Croydon. She later joined Graeme Percival's instrument flying school and together they developed a form of flight simulator which they installed in a room of the Grosvenor Hotel, Victoria. She was also the author of 'Instrument Flying and background to the Instrument and IMC ratings', a very well regarded manual. She died in 1993.

Monique Agazarian

Today, there are three structures left from the Bramble Haw estate to remind us of the lost house: the stable and coach house, now a dwelling called Bramblehaw End and Grade II listed; the gardener's cottage, extended and also listed, and the summer house which is in the garden of the cottage. These form a cluster of interesting buildings on the Westcroft Road boundary.

The ornate summer house is rather spectacular as the photo above shows. Brick built with a Welsh slate roof, it has many decorative features particularly the ornamental woodwork which includes two hollow wooden pillars.

Sue Horne

Sources: Anne Dodwell; Andrew Skelton; https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Noel_Agazarian; The Battle of Britain London Monument https://www.bbm.org.uk/airmen/Agazarian.htm; The Independent obituary of Monique Agazerian; The Times obituary; Ferry Pilots of the ATA https://www.ata-ferry-pilots.org/

KEEPING IN TOUCH

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