

STRANGE CROYDON



This website forms part of [Project Albion](#), which aims to collate all the mysteries of Britain in a 'Domesday Book of the Paranormal'. This herculean task may eventually help us to find common denominators between, say, ghost stories, sightings of strange creatures, holy wells and winter customs around the country. Project Albion is just one of the activities of [ASSAP](#), a voluntary body and educational charity formed in 1981 to investigate and research the paranormal and related fields. There's also a helpful [glossary](#) on the ASSAP website that explains some of the more unusual terms used in Strange Croydon.

Few people looking at Croydon today would suspect it had a long and fascinating history. But Romans bathed in Beddington, Anglo-Saxons buried their dead under mounds on Riddlesdown, Elizabethans danced round the maypole on Crown Hill and Victorian mummers traipsed through the wintry streets of Thornton Heath.

So where is the evidence for all this? The remnants of Croydon's medieval centre were largely demolished during slum clearance in the 19th century. The ancient parish church burned down one snowy evening in 1867 and had to be rebuilt. Some walls were saved and these, together with the Whitgift Almshouses and the Archbishop's Palace, are the most ancient remains visible in central Croydon.

The town has spawned a great many amateur historians over the years, and their records contain a wealth of information about Croydon's past. These and other gems, such as newspaper archives, can be found in Croydon's Local Studies Library in the Clocktower on Katharine Street. Such sources have proved invaluable in the preparation of this book, as have field trips and open days.

My personal research began in the late 1980s after I moved to Croydon and attended an evening class on local history. This whetted my appetite for the weirder side of Croydon's history. My accounts of events are coloured by what I've read and who I am. My apologies for any bias or ignorance that I show! I am also not a trained historian, so my research may be patchy. If I say something took place in one year, it is because I have information from that year. It may very well have happened in other years as well. Please feel free to correct me!

All photographs were taken by me. If you see yourself in a photo and don't want to be on the web, please let me know and I'll remove your likeness. If you enjoy reading it or have any news and updates for me, you can email me at strange_croydon_nospam@dsl.pipex.com (removing the *_nospam* bit first!). Please use the material in any legal way. I'd be grateful for an acknowledgement for me and ASSAP, and would ask you not to break copyright legislation by claiming you wrote the huge chunks that you download!