

RAYMOND GILL

Lawyer and local historian

15th February 1912 – 3rd April 2009

Raymond Gill's interest in his surroundings began just before the First World War when his walk to school took him past some of the fine old houses still standing in East Sheen. As they were torn down to make way for suburban development, he used his Box Brownie to begin a photographic record of the area. He expanded his collecting with enthusiasm, and by the late 20th century had acquired a treasure trove of reference material along with paintings, prints and other records of the old Borough of Barnes, bordered by the Thames and Richmond Park (which in 1965 was absorbed into the new London Borough of Richmond upon Thames).

Gill was a foundation scholar at St Paul's. As an articled clerk with solicitors in Essex Street, he studied as an external student at London University, taking a law degree and becoming admitted as a solicitor. He served in the Second World War with The Queen's Westminsters, fighting through the Low Countries and into Germany.

Settling in Richmond post-war, he resumed his interest in local history and was elected to the executive committee of the Borough of Barnes History Society when it was founded in 1955. He was to serve in that role for 30 years.

His wide-ranging scholarship was a big factor in the growth of what became the Barnes and Mortlake History Society; he wrote a number of booklets on local topics, was a regular contributor to the society newsletter and gave several talks.

His collection of material relating to the area was outstanding. The Richmond upon Thames Borough Art Collection at the Orleans House Gallery benefited when, in 2000, he donated 61 paintings and prints, including views of Richmond Park. In 2003 he gave another 100 works to the collection.

After living in Croydon for some years, but regularly making the trip to East Sheen to attend BMHS meetings, Raymond Gill settled in Northampton which had been his family's original home.