Roman/Saxon period Mitcham was identified as a settlement ring before the Roman occupation of Britain, and by the 1CHC was the site of a thriving Saxon settlement. It is thought the inhabitants may have been encouraged to settle in the area to protect the approaches to the city of London from sax- borne raiders. Settlements in the late Saxon and early Norman periods centred on the current greens – Upper Green (Fair Green) and Lower Green (Crick Green) which even then were central to road networks then leading to surrounding villages.

Medieval/Tudor period By the 1ICH period there were six main estates in Mitcham held by tenants of King Edward the Confessor. These Saxon landlords were dispossessed by Norman nobles rewarded with English estates for their part in the Conquest. From the mid 1ICHC there is evidence that wealthy merchants and bankers from the City of London were seeking estates in Mitcham, as a means of attaining the higher status of landlords. Thus by the 1ICH Mitcham was becoming renowned for its good company. Also in its favor was its closeness to London and Royal Palaces, and its reputation for fresh air and pure water – both scarce in Tudor London. By the end of the 1ICH period many notable people had estates in Mitcham – too many to mention here, but important enough for Queen Elizabeth I to visit on five separate occasions. By the 1ICH Mitcham was a prosperous agricultural village with open fields in strip cultivation, extensive commons and water meadows. By the mid 1ICHC Epsom had become a spa much favoured by Londoners. The road system had been improved and Mitcham was a busy thoroughfare for travellers and coaching parties, with many inns with stabling facilities for horses.

Georgian Mitcham became known in the 1ICH for the cultivation of medicinal and herbal herbs which had actually started in the 14ICH but increased on an industrial scale through innovative methods used by Ephraim Potter and William Moore. By 1852 nearly 500 acres of land in Mitcham supported herb growing. At the same time, textile processing industries in the River Wandle area with mills, printing and dye works were flourishing in the increased demand for coloured and printed fabrics, alongside flour, paper and coal mills. Transport for goods and coal to serve the various industries was a problem, so the Sunny Iron Railway, the first public railway in the world, was opened in 1825 – running from Wandsworth through Mitcham to Croydon.

Victorian The mid-Victorian period saw Mitcham thriving. The local gentry were active in philanthropic activities to alleviate the lot of the poor. Mitcham Cricket Club, the oldest in the country, could field a team to take on all comers. The annual Mitcham Fair had to be charged to cover expenses. It was also involved outwardly by everyone. Gypsies attracted by the Fair and employment in the herb gardens came to Mitcham in droves and many settled in the Phipps Bridge area, in what is still known as Redkin Village. But Mitcham had been altered by the expanding railway network, and was losing its popularity amongst the upper class, attracting instead, more than its fair share of offi ce workers – past, present and those from similar background industries – taxi drivers, chemists, and grocers – until the 1ICH period.

20/21st Century The old ecclesiastical parishes of the Church of England were being divided into smaller parishes, plus the growth of the Free Church and non-conformist movement saw other churches and chapels springing up. New parishes were formed to serve the spiritual needs of the many more suburbanites being developed across Mitcham. In the first decade of the 20ICH, the population doubled, reaching 29,000. The growth of civic awareness, and the increasing complexity of local government responsibilities, called for an advance in administrative status, and the area of the ancient manorial parish was created the Urban District of Mitcham in 1915. Mitcham was granted Borough status in 1934, and by 1965 joined Wimbledon and Morden to form the London Borough of Mitcham (named after the 1ICHC Mitcham Priory – often confused with the borough). Historically, Mitcham has always had a reputation for mineral mining, and was also the birthplace of a number of important occupations. In the 21ICH, Mitcham continues to use any excuse to hold a celebration, and many events still take place throughout the year, including the Mitcham Status Fair and the Mitcham Carnival in June.
Margaret Cranmer married Henry de Strete in 1360 at the Church of St Peter, Cranmer Green and her tomb is said to have been located in the private chapel which he built for her. Margaret died in 1377. The church was demolished in 1547 and the remains of the chapel were incorporated into a house which was the residence of the Prior of Wandsworth. The house was demolished in 1944 but the remains of the chapel are still visible in the base of the present day Cranmer House. (The present Cranmer House was built in the early 20th century and now houses the Cranmer School and Cranmer College.)

**BENEFIT PRIMARY SCHOOL**

School (closed 1987) - Benedict Wharf on Church Road - formerly Lower Mitcham Board School - erected 1877 by benefactor Richard Cranmer. The School was chartered under the provisions of the 1858 Educational Act and was opened in September 1859. The site was originally a brickyard owned by Richard Cranmer. The School was originally a two-roomed brick school with a main room 15.7m x 6.8m and a small room 6.3m x 4.8m. The main room was used for the classrooms and the small room was used for the office and storage. The School was closed in the 1980s and subsequently converted into offices and residential accommodation.

**THE WHITE HART**

The White Hart is a Grade II listed public house on the corner of Church Road and the High Street, Mitcham. The White Hart is believed to have been constructed in the late 17th century and was originally a coaching inn. It has been owned by various landlords over the years, including John Finden, who was the painter of the portrait of Charles II in the Queen's Gallery at Buckingham Palace. The White Hart was closed in 2010 due to structural problems and was subsequently redeveloped as a Toby Carvery restaurant.

**BENDEK TOLL PLANK**

A toll plank was set up in 1737 by Richard Cranmer on a road running from the High Street to the south end of Cranmer Green. The toll plank was used to collect tolls from coach and horse traffic passing through the area. The toll plank was removed in 1930, and the site is now occupied by a restaurant called Cranmer's.

**BENDEK MILL**

Bendek Mill was a water-powered mill on the River Wandle, located on the corner of Cranmer Green and Bearsden Road. The mill was first recorded in 1291 and was in operation until the late 19th century. The mill was used for various purposes over the years, including flour milling and corn grinding. The mill was demolished in the 1930s and the site is now occupied by a residential development.

**BENDEK TIPLING STATION**

Bendek Tipling Station is a railway station on the Croydon to Chelsham line, located at the junction of the A24 and A23. The station was opened in 1863 and was originally called Mitcham East. The station was closed in 1963 and subsequently reopened in 1983 as a heritage railway station. The station is now operated by the Tipling Valley Railway Society.

**BENDEK TIP**

A tip was located in the area of Cranmer Green in the 19th century, where waste materials from the surrounding area were deposited. The tip was later used as a rubbish dump and the site was eventually developed into a residential area.

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