

Middlesex

VCH author, Dr Francis Boorman used social media to gather suggestions.

Butcher's hook

Butchers were very important for the economy of medieval Middlesex due to London's huge demand for meat. Animals were led along droving routes from other parts of the country for slaughter in the city. One of the most important routes came through the county, via Islington, to West Smithfield market. Butchery also encouraged the 15th century land market: wealthy London butchers bought up Middlesex fields to provide pasture for livestock headed for market.

Suggested by Dr Charlotte Berry (@stickybears).

Fabric swatches from Petticoat Lane Market

Middlesex also covered the area to the east of the City of London and in the 17th century, Petticoat Lane was a commercial district on the border with Middlesex. The area attracted Spanish and Huguenot immigrants and was a centre of clothing manufacture and sales. It became known as Middlesex Street around 1830 and eastern European Jewish immigrants in the 1880s kept the clothing industry and market going, which only gained official recognition in 1936. African and Asian immigrants came to the area from the 1960s and Petticoat Lane Market still sells cloths and clothing.

Donated by Gimbiya Textiles (Instagram: @gimbiyatextiles).

One penny piece

Middlesex contains the centres of the three pillars of the British state: crown, church and Parliament. The symbol of the crowned portcullis featured on the one penny coin has links to them all, although it is now most associated with the Palace of Westminster. The portcullis was only adopted quasi-officially by Parliament in the 20th century and became prominent in Charles Barry's designs after the building burnt down in 1834. Its original association was with the

Beaufort family. Margaret Beaufort was mother to Henry VII and the portcullis became a Tudor badge, adorning such landmarks as the Henry VII Chapel in Westminster Abbey and Hampton Court Palace.

Suggested by Dr Francis Boorman (@boorman_francis).

Stethoscope

The Middlesex Infirmary opened on Windmill Street in 1745 and became the first hospital in England to have lying-in beds in 1747. A second Middlesex Hospital was opened in 1757, which finally closed in 2005 and was demolished, though its former chapel still stands. The Middlesex Hospital Medical School dates back to 1746 and has been absorbed by the UCL Medical School. The North, West and Central Middlesex Hospitals still bear the county name.

Lent by Dr Jennifer Marin MD.

Cap of liberty

The electoral culture of Middlesex and Westminster (the latter a borough within the county) came to national prominence in the 18th century, famed for their boisterous contests and fervent radicalism. John Wilkes was elected MP for Middlesex, but in 1769 was expelled from Parliament three times, only to be repeatedly returned by his defiant constituents. The cap of liberty became a symbol for Wilkes' supporters, as it was subsequently for the French and American revolutions, and English campaigners at Peterloo.

Suggested by Dr Francis Boorman (@boorman_francis).

Miniature gavel

The Middlesex Quarter Sessions heard criminal cases and undertook administrative functions for the county. Based in Clerkenwell from 1601, it slowly subordinated the overlapping Westminster Sessions, even though the lowly Middlesex justices were described by Edmund Burke as 'the scum of the earth'. The Sessions moved to what became the Middlesex Guildhall when the London

County Council was formed. The Guildhall was rebuilt in 1913, but the Sessions were abolished in 1965. The building was refurbished and has housed the Supreme Court of the UK since 2009.

Suggested by Russell Grant (@THERussellGrant).

Cricket ball

Cricket was played in Middlesex from as early as the 16th century, but a team representing the county first emerged in the 18th century and Middlesex County Cricket Club was established in 1864. The Club has played at Lord's Cricket Ground since 1877. Lord's has occupied its present site since 1814 and is actually owned by the Marylebone Cricket Club, which is the custodian of the laws of cricket. England won their first Cricket World Cup at Lord's in 2019. Wembley and Twickenham are also in historic Middlesex.

Donated by Middlesex County Cricket Club (@Middlesex_CCC).

Oyster card

The Metropolitan Railway was the first underground passenger railway in the world, connecting the termini of Paddington, Euston and King's Cross. It opened in 1863 and was soon extended at both ends. Its expansion north-west into the Middlesex countryside facilitated suburban sprawl and London's spread into the county. Continuing the innovative history of London transport, contactless payments on the network were introduced with the Oyster card, first issued in 2003. 43 million cards had been distributed by June 2012.

Suggested by Dr Charlotte Berry (@stickybears).

***Mind Your Own Middlesex*, pamphlet**

Middlesex was required to produce a formal Development Plan by 1951. With a local consultation imminent, *Mind Your Own Middlesex* combined the burgeoning fields of town planning and public relations to illustrate the County's planning challenges. Unable to resist the growth of London, by the late 1940s

clogged roads linked Middlesex's suburban mess of housing, industry and commerce. The planning challenge was immense, yet policymakers would increasingly focus on solutions for Greater London as a whole: Middlesex's days were numbered.

PDF supplied by Ian Pleace (@lccmunicipal).

***Passport to Pimlico* DVD – first released in 1949**

Ealing Film Studios is the oldest continuously operating film studio in the world, active from 1902 to the present day. Many classic British film and TV series were made here including Monty Python and Dr Who. Today, Ealing Studios hosts dramas such as Downton Abbey and films including The Darkest Hour. The studios point to the importance of creative industries to the economy of Middlesex, where Twickenham and Shepperton studios are also based.

This film is one of the classic “Ealing Comedies” made after World War II. The story concerns the finding of documents that lead to Pimlico being declared a part of Burgundy and therefore exempt from rationing and other bureaucratic restrictions. It is typical in its concerns with post-war British life and communities.

Suggested by Rebecca Read, VCH and Layers of London (@beccameriel).

Kathak jewellery set from Southall Broadway

Since World War Two, immigration to the area of historic Middlesex has resulted in an increasingly diverse population. Southall, part of the London borough of Ealing, is sometimes called “Little India”, and is known for its South Asian shops and restaurants. Over half of Southall's population is of Indian/Pakistani origin. It is home to one of the largest Sikh gurdwaras outside India (the Sri Guru Singh Sabha), two large Hindu mandirs, several mosques and Christian churches.

Lent by Rebecca Read, VCH and Layers of London (@beccameriel).