

# Do You Know?



## Information Surrounding the Area

- Soon after invading Britain in AD 43 the Romans build an important road through the borough called Stane Street – a fast overland link between London and the Roman port of Chichester. The street crossed the border with Tooting, bridged the Wandle at Colliers Wood, passed under Merton Civic Centre, crossed Morden Park and continued on to Sutton.
- The names Mitcham, Merton and Morden are all Anglo-Saxon in origin. The name Merton dates to the 10<sup>th</sup> Century, and means 'farmstead by the poor'.
- The Domesday Book, published in 1086 for William the Conqueror, reveals Merton to be the largest community in the area. Mitcham was a small farming community and just 14 people occupied Morden.
- Merton grew in significance when Henry I granted the estate to a knight called Gilbert in 1114. Gilbert founded an Augustinian priory in 1117 at the point where the old Roman road crossed the River Wandle, where the SavaCentre and Merton Abbey Mills now stand. It became nationally important when it was used for royal councils and conferences.
- Henry VI, the only king of England to be crowned outside of Westminster Abbey in the last 1,000 years, held his coronation ceremony at Merton Priory in 1437.
- The famous Thomas Becket (later Thomas à Becket) was educated at Merton Priory.
- Nicholas Brakespear was also educated at Merton Priory, and was the only ever English Pope. Adrian IV (Brakespear) was the pope who granted the English king Henry II the lordship of Ireland in 1155. He was pope from 4 December 1154 to his death in 1159.
- In 1569, a Wimbledon woman was sentenced to hang for witchcraft. She was accused of killing three children and four pigs in the village by casting spells on them.