

NEWSLETTER 147

MARCH/APRIL 2001

Price 20p, free to members

The Historian – 1

William Chapman Waller 1850–1917: Loughton’s historian

Richard Morris has written a biography of William Chapman Waller which has just been published by the Society and Mr Morris has contributed the following article, based on his research, which is the second of the series.

Waller was very much involved locally with St John’s Church, the Lopping Hall Endowment and other charities. However, his interest in the history of Loughton is what he is most remembered for. Through his connection with the church he started in 1889 to contribute to the local Parish Magazine articles on the history of Loughton and this continued through to 1900. In those days there was only one Parish Magazine covering both St John’s and St Mary’s. William Waller attended St John’s and there is a memorial to him and his son Geoffrey under a window in the north transept. He also donated the lych gate to the church in memory of his daughter Vera. A small housing development built in the early 1980s on what was part of the grounds of Ash Green is called Waller’s Hoppett.

William Waller’s interest in history started at the time of his education when in July 1871 he was awarded a prize for “modern history” by the Department of General Literature and Science at King’s College London.

In 1887 Waller applied to the College of Arms for a Grant of Arms for himself and his sister Jane Elizabeth. He researched the family Pedigree and in consultation with the Bluemantle Pursuivant at the College of Arms this was approved and he was granted a Coat of Arms. Although no Arms had been granted to William Waller’s line of the family back to 1609, some other branches of the name do have Arms and William proposed some of the common features that appear in all Waller Arms for his own Arms. They include three walnut tree leaves and a griffin’s head.

Waller also kept a daily diary and some 20 years of these diaries are still in the possession of the family. For many years Waller also recorded separately his bicycle rides throughout Essex and further afield. He was often joined on these rides by his wife Emma (known as Minnie), daughter Evelyn and other friends including William Minet with whom he worked on many of his academic papers.

Two fine portraits of William Chapman Waller and his Aunt Jane are still in the possession of the family together with some of the furniture from Ash

Green. Emma (Minnie) was an accomplished embroideress and painter of porcelain and she took many photographs of the family, the house, Loughton and the Forest, some of which remain in various archives.

Loughton in Essex

William Waller is the friend of all current day historians in that in the preface to his book *Loughton in Essex*, published in 1900, he comments that, at the time his articles on Loughton were being published in the monthly Parish Magazine, he asked the Printer (A B Davis of Epping) to pull off a further 12 copies on large paper so that they could be bound as a single volume, containing some 250 pages, on the completion of the series.

He goes on to say that he is donating one copy of the book to each of the following institutions: the British Museum; Bodleian Library, Oxford; Cambridge University Library; Guildhall Library (City of London); Society of Antiquaries; and an American Library (subsequently identified as Harvard College). The remaining six copies were to have a nomadic ownership.

In checking with the British Library (British Museum) to see if they still have their copy, not only was this confirmed but in October 1942 they were given copy No 1 which was Waller's own personal copy. This could possibly have occurred following the death of Waller's wife in 1939. This copy has many manuscript notes made by Waller between 1900 and his death in 1917. The notes correct typographical errors, factual errors, provide additional information and update some details, for example, a building might have been demolished between publication date and 1917. Most importantly Waller lists on the copy number page all the recipients of the 12 copies. Apart from the six institutions referred to above Waller gave copies to three close friends: J C Challenor Smith, William Minet and the Rev J Whitaker Maitland. A special copy was bound in Morocco in two volumes and included many photographs taken by his wife. This copy was left in Waller's will to his son Ambrose. At present I have been unable to trace it.

Guildhall Library still has its copy (numbered 6) and there is a short manuscript note dated 23 March 1903 loose inside the front cover in which Waller hopes that Guildhall will accept the book. Similarly the Bodleian has copy No 8 with in this case a handwritten note: "Oxford University Library, from the writer, 1903." In addition there is a slip of paper in the front of the Bodleian's copy that reads: "For the Library, with Mr Waller's compliments, Loughton, May 11th 1903." Cambridge University Library has copy No 9 which was also donated in 1903. The first copy donated to the British Museum and now held at the new British Library building is No 5. This is of particular interest as it contains 17 photographs of Ash Green, other local buildings, the Forest and some local people, all taken between 1895 and 1900.

The Society of Antiquaries has copy No 11 which Waller did not donate until November 1911 but uniquely of the 12 copies it includes as a further section Waller's "Register of Marriages solemnised at Loughton, Essex, 1675-1812". This again first appeared in the Parish Magazine in the early 1900s.

The Essex Record Office has copy No 12 but there is no dedication which may suggest that this is one of the "nomadic" copies and in any event,

according to Waller, was an imperfect copy. The Loughton and Colchester Branches of Essex Libraries also have bound volumes which appear to have been made up from extracts from the published monthly Parish Magazine as they contain advertisements and the odd page from other unrelated articles.

The book is divided into two parts:

- (1) The history of the manor and Parish of Loughton from earliest times to 1900 with several appendices the principal one of which is an historical topographical survey of the district with references to many of the old buildings, streets and field names.
- (2) Details of the wills of some notable Loughton residents.

In his history of Loughton, Waller uses many sources including Morant's *History of Essex*, published in 1768, and quotes extensively from the Rolls of the Court of Attachments. This was one of the Forest courts presided over by two of the Verderers of Waltham (now Epping) Forest and which met every 40 days. In the eighteenth and first half of the nineteenth centuries, the Court met at the King's Head at Chigwell. The Forest Keepers "presented" reports of misdemeanours such as illegal hunting or taking of wood and illegal enclosures. Requests were made to the Court for licences to shoot in the forest (with the exception of deer) and for permission to legally enclose small areas where in the opinion of the Verderers no harm would be done to the King's "vert or venison". The Court Rolls provide a very good social history of events in Loughton over the past 500 years.

There is an interesting story as to how William Waller obtained a copy of the Court Rolls covering the period 1713–1848. In 1870 a Commission was set up by Parliament to look into the illegal enclosures of Epping Forest. To assist the Commissioners, the Rolls of the Court of Attachments were reprinted in 1873. One of the Commissioners was Henry Ford Barclay of Woodford. Following the passing of the Epping Forest Act of 1878, under which the Corporation of London became the Conservators of the Forest, and completion of the subsequent arbitration proceedings dealing with the illegal enclosures, Mr Barclay's set (3 volumes) of the Court Rolls was offered to the Essex Field Club. However, they already had a set and that well known figure in the history of the saving of Epping Forest, Edward North Buxton of Knighton, Woodford, obtained the set and donated them to the Lopping Hall Library, Loughton.

William Waller was for many years the Honorary Librarian of the Lopping Hall Institute. The set of Court Rolls donated to Lopping Hall now resides in the Loughton Branch of Essex Libraries. They are not on display but may on request be consulted in the library. In the front of the first volume is the original of a letter from Buxton to Waller explaining how he came to acquire the set and his offer of them to Lopping Hall.

Waller also examined the Court Rolls owned by the Rev J Whitaker Maitland. The Rolls of the Courts of the King's Justices Itinerant or Assize Rolls provided another source of information and Waller identifies Loughton as first appearing in these Rolls in 1234.

The detailed historical topographical survey of Loughton starts by referring to Loughton Hall, Debden Hall and Alderton Hall. The old field names are described and can be identified from the demesne survey map of 1739 which is

included as a frontispiece to the book. The many farms that existed and the origin of their names are examined. For example, North Farm, the remains of which are now owned by the Corporation of London and form part of the "Buffer Land" to the forest, probably takes its name from John North who was the occupier of the farm in 1717 and 1792 and should therefore properly be called North's Farm. In some 40 pages Waller perambulates the Parish giving detailed accounts of buildings, land and their ownership since the sixteenth century.

Other appendices include "an historic record of the Rectors of Loughton", "the progress of instruction [in schools] in Loughton", "minutes of the Loughton Vestry", and "abstracts from Charters relating to Loughton".

The second part of the book includes details of over 70 wills of such local notables as:

- (1) Extracts from several wills of the Wroth family, Loughton's most distinguished dynasty, together with the family tree from 1558 to 1745.
- (2) The Whitaker family, some of whom lived at Loughton Hall and were Lords of the Manor. The family contributed much to the church and local charities even if they did become embroiled in the enclosure issue in the nineteenth century.
- (3) Walter Sawel in a will made on 17 May 1414 asked to be buried in St Nicholas's Church and was obviously a practical man in that he provided for "team-loads" of gravel for the improvement of the King's highways within the bounds of the Parish.
- (4) John Stoner (Stonard) made a will in 1532 and was obviously wealthy with innumerable bequests. The family was well known in the area throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

An abridged version of the book was published as a pamphlet in 1913 with 100 copies printed. This was based on a paper read to the Club Literary Society in Loughton in 1903.

Between 1905 and 1912 Waller wrote a further Itinerary of Loughton recounting how the Parish had changed since he came to live there 30 years earlier. This diary of some 80 pages only exists in manuscript form and is in the possession of Mrs Anna Row, Waller's great grand-daughter. (*To be continued.*)

RICHARD MORRIS

Jacob Epstein in Loughton

There is no mystery as to how one of Jacob Epstein's paintings of Epping Forest ended up on display in the New Art Gallery, Walsall (see John Howes' note "A lost Loughton painting by Epstein found" in Newsletter, No 145). Epstein (1880-1959) lived on and off at Deerpark, 50 Baldwins Hill, for some 30 years between the 1920s and the 1950s (though the plaque on the wall claims only 1933-1950) with homes also at 18 Hyde Park Gate in London and New York where he was born.

Jacob Epstein's wife, Kathleen Garman (1901-1979), was born in Wednesbury, West Midlands, where her father was Medical Officer of Health.

The family lived in some style in Oakeswell Hall, a rambling medieval manor house. When she met Epstein in 1921 he was already married, but they became lovers and she had three children by him. A parallel Epstein household was established for this second “family”, and Epstein spent time quite openly with both his “official” wife, Margaret Dunlop, and his mistress Kathleen Garman. This situation was continued in some form right up to 1947 when Margaret Dunlop died, though even then Epstein and Garman were not finally married until 1955. Quite what the good folk of Loughton thought of these bohemian arrangements is not clear.

What is clear, however, is that Epstein was inspired by Epping Forest, no matter which of those ladies accompanied him on his stays at Deerhurst. According to *A Shared Vision*, the guide to the Garman Ryan Collection at the New Art Gallery in Walsall, Epstein made nearly 100 paintings of Epping Forest over the years, as well as many still lifes and other works while staying there. These were his bread and butter which guaranteed him a steady income. He specifically employed a gardener at Deerhurst in order to ensure a good supply of fresh flowers for his still lifes, and he is known to have painted other pictures, too. Even Loughton’s rain led to inspiration – in 1930, in a letter from Epping Forest, he wrote, “It is raining all the time. I have nothing to read except an old Bible. I keep reading Genesis and have made some drawings.” This was his “The Spirit of God Moved Upon the face of the Water” series of Old Testament illustrations. In another letter from 1940, he describes how the “silent and often fog-laden” atmosphere of Epping Forest inspired his creation of the sombre sculpture “Rima: Memorial to W H Hudson”, created in a shed in the garden of Deerhurst in 1923–1925.

Quite what happened to all his pictures of Epping Forest is the real mystery, though, as John Howes noted, most must be in private collections. Some may still be in local hands: longstanding residents of the Baldwins Hill area have told me that Epstein gave paintings and carvings to neighbours. There are also tales of a stash of his work left in a rented workshop – part of the paint factory in Wroths Path – after he left the area in 1955.

After his death, Lady Epstein, as Kathleen Garman had finally become, sold his vast ethnographic collection, but together with his “pupil” Sally Ryan (1916-1968), with whom she had formed a close relationship, expanded his collection of other artists’ masterpieces. It was this collection which was bequeathed – as the Garman Ryan Collection – by Lady Epstein in 1972 to the art gallery nearest her birthplace, which happened to be Walsall Art Gallery. For some years, this was actually one room over Walsall Library. Lottery funding transformed the collection’s surroundings in 1999, however, when the striking New Art Gallery was opened as a fitting home for the works of Epstein and other great artists.

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