LOUGHTON AND DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER 168

JANUARY / FEBRUARY 2006 Price 20p, free to members

www.loughtonhistoricalsociety.org.uk

Odds and ends

Loughton 150

Preliminary announcements have appeared concerning plans to celebrate the arrival of the railway in Loughton 150 years ago, on 22 August 1856. It is hoped that the celebrations will take place on the weekend nearest to the original opening date in August 2006. Special train services are envisaged together with other events. The Society intends to produce a book to commemorate the anniversary.

Lady Mary Wroth

CHRIS POND

Lady Mary Wroth is one of those Loughton figures who is often mentioned in the history of the town, but about whom relatively little is known. She is nevertheless a significant figure in English literature, one of the first women authors of note in our language, the first female author of a sonnet sequence. As the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* puts it:

'Freely adapting a traditional romance form to accommodate the experience and perceptions of a Jacobean woman . . . *Urania* has proven itself as a valuable text for feminist readings of early modern society.'

Modern commentators have indeed given ever more serious attention to Lady Mary as a notable writer. She is also the first of a significant number of Loughton-based authors, who included in later centuries Sarah Flower Adams, the poet and hymnodist, and novelists, Hesba Stretton, Arthur Morrison and W W Jacobs.

In a new booklet published last December at £2.50, Sue Taylor has taken the opportunity to record and distil what is known about Lady Mary Wroth from a range of sources, which include scholarly works by literary academics, biographical dictionaries, Wroth's poetry, and of course *Urania* itself. In doing so, she has added significantly to our knowledge of this early Loughton writer.

Mary Wroth's writing was not tame and inconsequential: Denny complained:

'Lady Mary Wroth . . . in her book of "Urania" . . . doth palpably and grossly play upon him and his late daughter . . . besides many others she makes bold with; and, they say, takes great liberty, or rather licence, to traduce whom she pleases, and thinks she dances in a net.'

F R Leavis would not have made a less trenchant literary criticism.

As well as the main text of *Urania*, Mary Wroth wrote 100 poems and 20 songs, printed in a sort of appendix to it, no mean achievement for a woman in the reign of James I. One wonders whether her sonnet 'Late in the Forrest I did Cupid see' was inspired by the forest that lay on her doorstep, and the myrtle bower in the grounds of Loughton Hall, perhaps near the Lady's Walk down to the Roding?

Late in the Forrest I did Cupid see
Cold, wett, and crying, he had lost his way
And being blinde was farther like to stray;
Which sight, a kind compassion bred in me.
I kindly took, and dry'd him, while that he,
(Poore Child) complain'd, he sterved was with stay
And pin'd for want of his accustom'd prey,
For none in that wilde place his Host would be.
I glad was of his finding, thinking sure,
This service should my freedome still procure,
And in my armes I tooke him then unharm'd,
Carrying him safe into a Myrtle bowre,
But in the way he made me feele his powre,
Burning my heart, who had him kindly warm'd

Maynard's Concise History of Epping Forest 1860

RICHARD MORRIS

This booklet was the first history of Epping Forest and the first counterblast in print against the arguments of those of those who wanted disafforestation and enclosure at that time. John Maynard wrote his history at a time when the problems faced by the Forest were at their height, owing to the Crown's decision in 1805 to sell its forestal rights, and the subsequent enclosure by the Lords of the Manors of much of the 'waste' in their manors.

Maynard did not have the benefit of many of the records and documents unearthed by the Epping Forest Commission of 1871, which spent four years researching the history of the Forest. This possibly led him to give a slightly one-sided view of the Forest's

history in the 18th and early 19th centuries. In 1854 George Palmer had addressed a pamphlet to 'The Freeholders in the County of Essex and those interested in the Forest of Waltham', drawing attention to encroachments on the Forest which were to the detriment of the 'Poorer Foresters', but Maynard was the first person to write a more detailed historical survey of the issues involved. They shared similar views and were vociferous during the same period in the nineteenth century. Although they came from different backgrounds, I am sure they must have known each other, or at least heard of the other's activities.

Maynard makes the occasional confusion between the three levels of forest courts, but this does not affect the story of their gradual decline, as the interest of the Crown in a 'royal forest for the pleasure of the monarch to hunt in', waned and had ceased by the end of the 18th century.

The Society has just republished Maynard's book originally written at Theydon Bois in 1860 (price £3). Hardly any of the original copies had survived and the Photostat copies produced by Brian Page, Hon Editor of the *Wanstead Historical Society Journal* in 1994 are no longer available.

The completely reset text has been left unaltered except where minor factual errors have been corrected by the addition of a correct name or source.

John Maynard's contribution to recording the history of Epping Forest and Waltham Abbey needs to be acknowledged and a note on his life, written by Stan Newens, has been included in the book.

RAF North Weald in the Second World War – II

ARTHUR MORETON

The Allies arrive

From the winter of 1940/41, the fighters of North Weald went over to the offensive with operations over occupied Europe. The majority of missions were flown by Allied and Commonwealth units who became resident at the airfield from late 1940 onwards.

Among the first to arrive were the 71 (Eagle) squadron of American volunteers, in June 1941, and initially equipped with Hurricanes. They were followed by the Spitfires of their sister unit, No 121, in December.

Between 1941 and 1944 Spitfires flown by British, Canadian, New Zealand, Czechoslovakian and Norwegian squadrons took part in numerous offensive operations such as: 'Rhubarbs' – attacking enemy airfields and ground targets; 'Ramrods' (bomber escorts) – supporting RAF Bostons, Ventures, Mitchells and the local USAAF Marauders from Andrews Field, Willingdale and Earls Colne airfields; and a 'Circus' – which was usually a large formation of fighters looking for trouble.

In February 1942 the three squadrons then at North Weald, Nos 121 (Eagle), 402 (Canadian) and 222, all took part in the bitter and costly fighting that took place in the sky above the English Channel when the German cruisers *Scharnhorst, Gneisenau* and *Prinz Eugen*, escorted by destroyers and large formations of Luftwaffe fighters, successfully forced their way through the Channel.

The North Weald wing played a major role in the RAF's support of the Combined Forces operation on Dieppe in August 1942. The air battles over Dieppe were some of the most intensive of the war, with 331 and 332 Norwegian squadrons claiming 16 kills and 14 probables. After the battle Wing Commander Scott-Maiden said: 'in my opinion the Norwegians carried out one of the finest jobs in the raids and there is no better fighting group in England.'

On 12 March 1943 the Wing met at least 24 of the Luftwaffe's FW 190s in battle over France, claiming six enemy aircraft destroyed and six damaged. The 500th enemy aircraft destroyed by a North Weald based pilot, a Norwegian, was celebrated on 9 October.

But as the threat to Britain subsided and fighter stations supporting the allied ground offensive were located closer to the fighting front, the value of RAF North Weald as a front line fighter base began to diminish.

The Norwegians, who were at North Weald for more than two years and forged a close and long-lasting friendship with the local community, continued to escort allied bombers on their missions until moving to the south coast in the spring of 1944. They were closely involved in the invasion of north-west Europe in the summer of 1944 and fought above the initial beach landings and the resulting push towards Germany.

In August 1944, two Czech squadrons, Nos 310 and 312, along with 234 squadron (equipped with Mustangs), moved to North Weald. They carried out armed reconnaissance flights over France, attacking rail, road and river transport, as well as acting as fighter cover to bombers attacking the V1 flying bomb sites. During the Airborne landings at Arnhem in September 1944, the squadrons provided fighter escort and anti-flak patrols for the gliders and tugs en route to the dropping zones.

Although the importance of UK fighter stations came to a rather sudden end in the final months of the war, when North Weald became the home of the Polish Transport Command squadrons flying Vickers Warwicks, the part that the airfield and community played in the defence of Britain and the victory over Germany was significant.

This significance was underlined by two of the major occasions that took place at North Weald in 1945. The first was on Saturday and Sunday 23/24 June when RAF North Weald hosted the first post-war Air Display as part of a rally of 1,800 Royal Observer Corps (ROC)

members. These represented every post operating in the country at the time when the Corps was officially stood down on 12 May 1945. Following the dedication of their new standard, the men and women of the ROC proudly marched past the saluting base with the assurance that theirs had been a difficult job well done. After this they watched a wide variety of aircraft put through their paces in the skies which had seen so much action in six years of conflict.

North Weald was again in the public spotlight on 15 September 1945 when the airfield played host to those taking part in the first post-war fly-past over London. 300 aircraft, led by the airfield's new 'Boss', Douglas Bader, celebrated victory and commemorated the fifth anniversary of the Battle of Britain.

This was a fitting tribute not only to the 223 people from seven nations who made their supreme sacrifice while serving at RAF North Weald during the Second World War, but also to the ever-changing community of service personnel and civilians who served, lived and worked on the airfield throughout the war.

A unique and poignant reminder of those epic times is the Norwegian Memorial Stone unveiled by HRH Princess Astrid on behalf of the people of Norway in 1952. It is dedicated to the 36 young Norwegians who gave their lives flying from the airfield, the Royal Air Force and the people of the district who welcomed them into their homes and community. Since 2000 it has been a prominent feature of the North Weald Airfield Memorial and Debt of Honour, commemorating all who served at RAF North Weald between 1916 and 1964.

Much of the material in this very brief history (the forerunner of a book and video on 'North Weald Airfield 1916 to 2006' which is due out early next year) has of necessity been extracted from many different sources: my grateful and sincere thanks to all concerned.

[Arthur Moreton is vice-chairman and immediate past chairman of the North Weald Airfield Museum Association, a charitable trust which runs the North Weald Airfield Museum at Ad Astra House (the former station office of RAF North Weald) near to the old main entrance of the airfield. The museum is open each weekend from Easter to the end of October between noon and 5pm (last entry 4pm). This article was first published in *The Hurricane*, the Association's newsletter in May 2005, and is published here by kind permission of the author and the NWAMA.]

Token Coinage in the 18th Century

RICHARD MORRIS

Lack of small change for day-to-day transactions was a longstanding problem in England in the 17th and 18th centuries. Elizabeth I felt that only gold or silver matched the dignity of the throne, a view that was held by several of her successors. In the mid-17th century the Crown grudgingly allowed a private issue of farthing tokens and a massive issue of private pieces emerged.

Businesses and towns began to issue tokens for trade. The tokens issued went beyond the basic need for a means of exchange for one specific company, firm or community. General trade tokens were made for anyone who needed a way to make change. By the middle of the 18th century tokens were being issued for collectors. Individuals began issuing pieces, 'vanity' tokens for themselves and to trade with other collectors.

The absence of small change was naturally most severely felt by the poorer classes, and greatly handicapped the shopkeepers; causing considerable friction between themselves and their customers. No copper money was issued by the government during the Commonwealth, and therefore small change was entirely supplied by tokens.

The tradesmen of Epping were among those who issued tokens and some 10 or more were issued between 1656–1667, including those by George Smith, a candlemaker; William Todd, a blacksmith; and Ebenezer Gollidge, a saddler. However, in 1672 the Crown issued copper farthings and halfpennies, and the making of tokens was strictly forbidden.

A century later tokens had become collectors' pieces and new issues were made for their intrinsic value as much as their declared value. One manufacturer in the late 18th century was Thomas Spence of Little Turnstile, High Holborn, London. In 1796 he issued a 1s token (5p) made of copper which on the obverse showed a stag and a tree; and on the reverse a star and garter, 1s value, one shilling; Epping Forest 1796 (see illustration). In fact the 9 and 6 figures were reversed. The edge of the token shows 'Spence + Dealer in coins + London'. The token was probably issued for sale to collectors and not as day-to-day currency.

While I have seen references to the Epping Forest token in books about coins, I have not yet found any collector who has one. Do we have a numismatist in the Society who can help?

Essex 1b (Rare)

Sources:

Dalton, R and Hamer, S: *The Provincial Token Coinage of the 18th Century* (1910–1918).

Gilbert, W: 'The token-coinage of Essex in the 17th century', in *Essex Archaeological Society Transactions* (1915).

Sworder, C: MSS Notes of the History of Epping (ERO: T/P 115/1, 212–213).

Book Review

William Alwyn, The Art of Film Music. By Ian Johnson. The Boydell Press (ISBN 1843831597), 368pp, hardback, £25.

Readers of this *Newsletter* may be surprised to see this book reviewed in its pages: it would appear to have no links with the local area. However, initial interest will be stirred when the author is revealed to be a Loughton resident and member of this Society; further interest will be rewarded by buying this very readable and full account of composer William Alwyn (1905–1985) whose centenary occurred in November 2005.

BBC Radio 3 marked the event by making Alwyn their 'Composer of the week', and an item on his work was included in 'Stage and Screen', broadcast on Radio 4.

Ian Johnson is highly qualified to tackle the subject. He read History at the London School of Economics and was, for many years, on the staff of the BBC. He has written articles for a wide range of magazines and newspapers, including *Films and Filming* and *Motion* which he edited. His background in historical study and broadcasting plus a detailed knowledge of the film industry has produced a book of great value not only to film and music students but for anyone interested in the fast-moving changes in society and culture in the twentieth century.

William Alwyn had the good fortune to join the British film industry near the close of the 1930s and be involved during the important years of the Second World War. He became one of Britain's most prolific composers for the screen: many of his 70 features are acknowledged classics, among them *Desert Victory, Odd Man Out, The History of Mr Polly* and *The Fallen Idol*. Those lucky enough to watch daytime TV (otherwise set the Video!) can often catch films of this era: *Odd Man Out* was recently broadcast.

A professor of composition from the age of 21, he was his own man, a romantic, with little time for atonality or serialism, which he considered a barrier to his communication with the public. Within the film industry he was respected for his professionalism and versatility. His judgment of the critical relationship between picture and music enabled him to get to the heart of his films and to make vital contributions to their subtexts. He made a major contribution to wartime propaganda films.

After the war, Alwyn's reputation was high as both a film and concert composer. Alone with Vaughan Williams, he was granted the distinction of a separate title credit; columnists mentioned him alongside Bliss, Bax and Walton. However, as the reputation of the British film industry declined in the 1950s, musical snobbery against those who were its leading lights took hold.

In recent years with sensitive performances of his film and concert music available on CD, this most appealing of composers has enjoyed a renaissance and overdue acknowledgment of his many talents: not only as composer (including opera and symphonies), but as flautist (with the London Symphony Orchestra), poet, translator and painter.

His deep intelligence and sense of fun are both captured in the book's frontispiece photo-portrait (face askance as was the fashion in 1960).

Any rumours that 'the book is dead!' are scotched whenever examples of high quality book-production like this are published.

Multi-media packages have many strengths and advantages, but a book – the original portable Random Access Memory device – is still ideal for the informative, entertaining, highly literate world of Ian Johnson's *William Alwyn ,The Art of Film Music.*

The excellent Index brings out not only the necessary name and title elements of the text but also subtler concepts: 'silence, in contrast with sound effects or music' – an important principle and practice in Alwyn's art. 'Mickey-Mousing' may be familiar but can be checked in the Glossary of Musical Terms along with 'Diegetic': 'music or sound that derives from a visible action on the screen . . . '

Headings indicate not only subject-matter but further insight: 'Music in the shadows' puns on the darkened cinema where music could be deemed subservient (a great mistake – as this book proves!)

These along with music quotations, photographs, footnotes – all generously and appositely placed within the text – detailed analysis of cinematic and musical techniques, a chronological filmography, a discography of books and articles by and about Alwyn, all make the book a scholarly joy. But, in case this bibliographical apparatus might be thought heavy-going, the very opposite is true: it allows for pleasurable 'dipping into' as well as focused study. Ian Johnson's style has a rewarding onward-leading rhythm while avoiding any simplification of the subject in hand.

The handsome dust jacket reminds us of the style popular in mid-last-century and makes reference to *Odd Man Out*, a film as powerful in its effect and relevant to current headlines as it was almost 60 years ago in 1947.

Copies of the book can be obtained from the author (020 8508 3313). JOHN STRADLING

Editor's Note: Another film music connection: John Addison, a composer in the same period, was the step-brother-in-law of Douglas Bader, fighter pilot and commander at North Weald after the Second World War. Addison composed music for among others, the film of Bader's life, *Reach for the Sky* and John Osborne's *The Entertainer.*

Loughton connections in Australia

Tony and I first went to Australia when my son settled there with his partner in 1986. Their bungalow was in a suburb of Adelaide called Blackwood which adjoined another suburb called Hawthornedene. When I was retyping my holiday diaries I came across the following:

'We called at the local corner shop, or as they say here "The Deli", and had a chat with the owner, Mr Pardoe – the brother of our old chimney-sweep in Loughton. The Mr. Pardoe here in Australia used to own Davis's Toy Shop in Loughton but sold it in the 1950s after he had a heart attack. He retired to Matching Green and recovered his health. He and his wife then retired to Cornwall but unfortunately she died of a heart attack. Mr Pardoe finally decided he had had enough of England and emigrated to New Zealand but when Britain joined the common market it caused a slump in the economy of New Zealand so he decided to move again and came over to Australia to Hawthornedene which is adjacent to Blackwood. Since coming here he has had major surgery but now looks fit and well. His whole family is here in Australia.'

This might interest people who still remember Davis's Toy Shop which used to be opposite St Mary's Church. We went there when our children were young. EVE LOCKINGTON

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Printed in Great Britain by Riverside Press Ltd., Ipswich