

NEWSLETTER 220

FEBRUARY/MARCH 2019

Price £2, free to members

www.loughtonhistoricalsociety.org.uk

56th Season

Joan Hughes: Loughton's ATA pilot



Joan after her first solo

While working on the Society's recent book, *Loughton Air Park – Abridge Aerodrome*, I noticed the phrase in the blurb, relating to Joan Hughes: 'Britain's youngest female pilot awarded the MBE for her wartime flying activities', and I wondered if this referred to her service in the Air Transport Auxiliary (ATA).

My interest in the ATA was sparked by a book I was involved in during my last years at The Eastern Press before I went into publishing. A lady had come to the works with a book previously published by a commercial publisher, but they had declined to publish a second edition. She was Lettice Curtis, a former member of the ATA and author of *Forgotten Pilots*, the history of the ATA in the Second World War and more particularly of its women pilots.

The ATA was formed to ferry aircraft from the factories to front-line RAF stations, unarmed and in all weathers. Miss Curtis was prepared to put her own money into a second edition to keep their story alive. We duly printed the second edition in 1982, well before TV documentaries told the stories of ATA pilots such as Mary Ellis, who died recently at 101.

Lettice Curtis was born in Devon on 1 February 1915 and educated at Benenden School in Kent and St Hilda's College, Oxford, where she read Mathematics and captained the women's lawn tennis and fencing teams; represented the university at lacrosse, and was a county tennis and squash player. Learning to fly in the summer of 1937, she gained 100 hours solo to get a commercial B licence.

Working for CL Aerial Surveys in May 1938 and flying a Puss Moth fitted with a survey camera, she photographed areas of England for the Ordnance Survey. In June 1940, she joined the ATA, flying light aircraft at Hatfield but soon graduated to more advanced trainers and from summer 1941 flew operational aircraft.



De Havilland 82A Tiger Moth trainer (photo, BAE Systems Heritage) similar to the type Joan would have delivered in her early service with the ATA.



Hawker Hurricane Mk1, RAF R4118. The only Hurricane from the Battle of Britain still flying (photo, Adrian Pingstone, July 2008, in the public domain.)



Miles M.27 Master III (W8667). British official photographer. Photo COL198 from the collections of the Imperial War Museums, in the public domain.



Miles Magister (www.pinterest.co.uk)

With just a printed pre-flight checklist, she ferried a Hurricane to Prestwick and soon flew fighters regularly, including Spitfires, to front-line squadrons. In September 1941, women pilots' duties were extended and Lettice Curtis started ferrying light bombers – the Blenheim and the Hampden and then converted to the more demanding Wellington, observing: 'it was simply a question of reading the Pilot's Notes'.

In September 1942, she trained on the Halifax bomber and in 1943 was authorised to ferry other heavy bombers, including the US B-17 Flying Fortress. In 1944 she was the first woman pilot to deliver a Lancaster. By 1945, Lettice was probably the most experienced female pilot, having flown more than 400 heavy bombers, 150 Mosquitos and hundreds of Hurricanes and Spitfires.

To get back to Abridge Aerodrome and Britain's youngest pilot: Joan Hughes was born on 28 April 1918 at Eversley, Glengall Road, Woodford, which might have been a maternity home. Her family had lived in Buckhurst Hill at Hayburn (later 13), Russell Road from 1910 till about 1932 when they moved to Eastdene (later 23), Sparelease Hill, Loughton.

She was educated privately and was 5ft 2ins tall with hazel eyes. She and her older brother, Douglas, were bitten by the flying bug and Joan was determined to be a pilot so that, at 15, her parents allowed them to have flying lessons once a week at the East Anglian Aero Club, at Abridge, at £2 10s per hour. Her father, Arthur, a woollen braid manufacturer was wealthy enough to finance it – a workman's weekly wage at the time.

She flew her first solo at Abridge in January 1934 at the age of 15 after only 12 hours 30 minutes dual instruction, but, when a 16-year-old boy was killed in Scotland, a legal limit of 17 for solo flying was imposed. This slowed Joan's ambitions, but on 1 May 1935, Joan Lily Amelia Hughes gained her Royal Aero Club's aviator's certificate at Abridge Aerodrome at the age of 17 in a DH Gypsy Moth.

Joan then obtained her first job as a flying instructor at Chigwell Flying Club and, but for the war, she would probably have remained just that. The Civil Air Guard (CAG) was formed in October 1938, providing cheap subsidised flying for anyone of either sex between the ages of 18 and 50. This resulted in hundreds of people applying, many of whom could not otherwise obtain a pilot's licence. So flying clubs had more work and instructors were in demand and, at the outbreak of war, Joan was instructing in the women's corps of the CAG at Romford and had amassed over 500 flying hours.

She was one of a small group of women instructors who applied to join the Air Transport Auxiliary (ATA), which at this time was composed of older men and those unfit for combat duties with the RAF. The ATA was not considered to be suitable for active young women with hundreds of flying hours to their credit!

Lobbying from these young women and from Pauline Gower, who used her connections as the

daughter of MP Sir Robert Gower, enabled a women's section to be included in the ATA.

Pauline was appointed commandant of the women's branch, and started selecting and testing women pilots, and the first eight were appointed on 1 January 1940. They included ice-hockey international Mona Friedlander, Margaret Fairweather and former ballet dancer Rona Rees and Joan Hughes. So, this small pool of women based at Hatfield started to ferry *only* De Havilland Tiger Moths from factories to storage units around the UK for what was, at the time, thought to be just an experiment, but soon became essential to the war effort. Later Amy Johnson and former Olympic skier Lois Butler joined.

So who was the Commandant, Pauline Gower? She was born on 22 July 1910, and educated at Beechwood Sacred Heart School. She flew first with Alan Cobham and was fascinated by flying. With Dorothy Spicer in August 1931 she started a joy-riding and air taxi service in Kent. They hired a plane and later bought a Gypsy Moth, but could not make a living with it so joined the Crimson Fleet Air Circus and later the British Hospitals' Air Pageant with which, in 1932, they toured the country giving shows in 200 towns to support British hospitals. Pauline wrote for *Girl's Own Paper* and *Chatterbox* and published poetry, *Piffing Poems for Pilots*, in 1934. In 1935 she was appointed a council member for the Women's Engineering Society. In 1936, she was the first woman awarded the Air Ministry's Second Class Navigator's Licence. In 1938, Pauline was appointed a civil defence commissioner in London with the Civil Air Guard. That year her book on women in aviation – *Women with Wings* – was published. She received the MBE for her services in 1942 and received a Harmon Trophy award posthumously in 1950. She married Wing Commander Bill Fahie in 1945. Sadly she died on 2 March 1947 giving birth to twin sons, who survived.

Joan Hughes was the youngest of the first eight selected by Pauline Gower. They were selected because they had been instructors and had more than 600 flying hours. Joan signed her ATA contract on 1 January 1940 when she was 21, but she did not remain the youngest pilot for long – Jackie Sorour joined from South Africa at the age of 20.



In her sound archive at the Imperial War Museum¹ Joan recalled that women who flew were considered to be 'not quite the thing, a bit fast'! She also recalled that at the beginning there was no training and they were not allowed to wear trousers! They had to fly the Tiger Moths wearing a Sidcot flying suit with 'a terribly rumpled skirt' underneath or try to change behind the aircraft or in a dark corner of a hangar. She also said that the authorities soon realised that you could not wear a skirt with a parachute! They were always given a friendly welcome at the RAF stations, 'here come the girls', and flying the open cockpit 'Tigers' in the very cold winter of 1940 meant that they were frozen and

their faces were so cold they could not talk properly when they landed.

For much of Joan's time in the ATA she played to her skills, working as an instructor, at first on Tiger Moths and then Miles Masters, Magisters and Harvards.

By the end of hostilities she and 10 of her contemporaries were flying four-engined aircraft and Joan herself was instructing both sexes at the Advanced Flying Training School (AFTS) at White Waltham. She was the only woman instructor on all types of aircraft (including Oxfords, Harvards, Hudsons, and Wellingtons), with the exception of seaplanes and four-engined types.

In the early days, Lettice Curtis recalled:

One day . . . I was sent off with three of the older pilots, Joan Hughes, Mona Friedlander and Lois Butler, to take Tigers [Tiger Moths] from Cowley to Kinloss. Our first refuelling stop was at Speke and here Lois got a puncture and we all had to wait until it was mended. We then pressed on to Silloth for the night. Next day when we got into the vicinity of Glasgow we ran into haze and Mona who was leading the gaggle at the time became unsure of where she was and decided to retire from the lead. She therefore throttled back in the hope that someone else would pass her and take over the lead. The other two, however, didn't get the message and slowed up too which left me bringing up the rear, flying just above the stall [stalling speed] trying desperately to avoid breaking away as I didn't know where we were either.

They managed to keep together and after refuelling at Perth went on to Kinloss.



Some of the members of the women's ferry pool at Hatfield, Autumn 1940, Joan Hughes second from the left

In June 1940 Joan trained at the RAF Central Flying School at Upavon and in July 1941 women pilots were cleared to fly operational aircraft. A Hurricane was flown from White Waltham to Hatfield for the girls to practise landing. Four of the eight original female pilots were chosen and Joan Hughes was among them. They each did a circuit and although it was not much of a step up from their daily routine work, Curtis says that the political implications were great

since there were still many men who kidded themselves that only ace pilots could fly fighters. These first four and those who in the next few weeks came after them carried therefore a heavy responsibility, because the future of all women pilots depended on them . . . It is doubtful, however, whether at that time even they imagined, in their wildest dreams, that within two years all four would be flying all types of operational aircraft, including heavy bombers.

At the start they had to return by train after delivering their aircraft, unless they could get a lift from someone flying near to their base. Later, an Avro Anson 'taxi' aircraft was provided to pick up pilots and they all took turns to fly it.

In her six years' service with the ATA, Joan never lost an aircraft, though she did have one or two hair-raising experiences. Towards the end of August 1941 Joan Hughes and Lettice Curtis flew a pair of Miles Magisters from Cowley to Prestwick, a trip which took six hours. After spending the night in Ayr they were told they had to fly two Canadian-built Hurricanes south from Silloth. They hitched lifts in a Hudson to Kirkbride and a DeHavilland Rapide to Silloth. The Hurricanes carried just over 90 gallons of fuel which was about enough for two hours flying – just enough to get them to Hatfield. They were cautious and the weather report was not good with cloud and rain down the west coast, so they changed their usual route, to cross the Pennines via Penrith, Appleby and Barnard Castle, to fly east of the hills and land at Finningley near Doncaster to refuel.

Lettice continues:

I took off first and went on my way. Joan followed almost immediately behind but, when she came to raise the undercarriage found that she was unable to move the selector lever . . . Joan, afraid that if she returned to complain they might attribute it to her small stature and lack of strength to cope, put her foot on the lever and gave it a shove. It moved and the undercarriage retracted but now the lever would not return to neutral. Still struggling with it she flew on to Finningley where I had landed as per plan. From the ground I watched Joan approach the field and then to continue to circle, undercarriage retracted. She was still struggling to move the lever from the 'up' position and from this direction her foot could not be used to help. Moreover, since the same lever working in an H-slot was used to select flaps as well as undercarriage, these could not be used either. After circling for some time . . . Joan had no option but to come in for a flapless belly landing. In fact the aircraft slid smoothly over the grass with propeller blades bent under but virtually no other damage. Luckily all . . . ended happily. Joan was exonerated by the Accident Committee and we continued to fly Hurricanes and, very shortly afterwards, even progressed to Spitfires.

In early 1942 Joan was posted to the ATA headquarters at White Waltham to instruct on Magisters and Harvards.

In February 1942 White Waltham was visited by the King and Queen and Joan Hughes was introduced to their Majesties. A landing accident occurred in June 1942 when she was instructing Jocelyn Hotham in a Hart, which swung and tipped over onto a wing.

In 1943 Joan completed a conversion course on the Short Stirling heavy bomber. By May 1943, 400 heavy bombers a month were being produced, so there had to be a rapid expansion of ATA pilots and flight engineers cleared for four-engine aircraft.

She had been instructing on Airspeed Oxfords since March 1941, to help with the training of the large new intake of less experienced women pilots, and some specially selected men at White Waltham. Then Joan went to Luton to instruct on Magisters and Harts and then moved on to Barton-le-Clay in Bedfordshire.

She felt she was falling behind in experience of new types and ferrying, even though she had courses from time to time on the Blenheim, Wellington and Hudson. So Joan approached the Chief Instructor who arranged for her to return to White Waltham from where she went to Stradishall for training on the Stirling. On her second take-off with the Stirling a tyre went flat and the aircraft went off the runway

to the delight and amusement of flying control and all who were watching. It was all exactly what they had expected because a girl they knew would never be able to keep a large aircraft like the Stirling straight. But as Joan progressed with her course the laughter faded and on the day she went solo the Wing Commander Flying even gave a small party for her in the Ladies Room of the Mess.

She ferried her first Stirling on 4 April, four days after returning to White Waltham.

Her second ferry Stirling was a repaired one from Bourne to Stradishall, not far away. Soon after take-off there was a loud bang, Joan and her engineer checked but all seemed to be well. There was another loud bang so the engineer went aft to check the main door which might have come loose. With intermittent bangs continuing they landed at Stradishall wondering what the problem was. It turned out to be a strip of fabric which had come loose from the nose and had beaten against the side of the fuselage.



She had a forced landing in a Stirling in December 1943, due to a 'No 12 cylinder induction elbow blowing off', but continued to ferry Stirlings whenever she could get away from instructing.

Joan, dwarfed by a Stirling (Brief Glory)

They always flew during the day and in very bad weather training and ferrying

officially stopped but pilots were able to make their own decisions whether to fly in bad conditions. They had no radio, no armament and flew under the cloud base, navigating by map and compass.

On 18 May 1943 the matter of equal pay for ATA women pilots was raised in the Commons and it was announced that from the beginning of June, female pilots on full flying duties would receive the same pay as men. This reversed an earlier Treasury ruling that women, as a matter of policy, could not be paid at the same rate as men doing the same job because it was contrary to Civil Service practice! This was indeed a very early victory for gender equality.

Joan's flying was always highly praised:

First Officer Hughes is an exceptionally good and level-headed pilot. She has worked extremely hard and conscientiously . . . a capable pilot on the Stirling; of above average ability, who, in spite of her small stature, handled the aircraft in a most satisfactory manner. She is to be complimented on such an excellent performance.

There was one small criticism: 'her technical knowledge is a long way behind her flying ability and she should spend more time in study of this branch'.

Joan continued instructing and ferrying with the later rank of Flight Captain until 31 December 1945 when she left the ATA and received the MBE for her service.

The ATA flag was lowered for the last time on 30 November 1945 and as Lettice Curtis wrote 'with only a few lines here and there in the press, the Air Transport Auxiliary, unnoticed and unsung, ceased to exist, for by now, everybody was far too busy planning their post-war world to notice the passing'.

From 1940 to 1945, 166 female pilots passed through the ATA as against 1,152 male. Fourteen female pilots lost their lives while flying (12 British, 1 from the US and 1 from New Zealand), 1 female flight engineer and a nursing sister also died in accidents. One of the pilots lost was Amy Johnson. 129 men pilots also died.

After the war, in May 1946, Joan, was posted to the ferry pool at Andover and then returned to civilian flying as a flying instructor at the West London Flying Club at White Waltham, with her wartime colleague Margot Gore who was chief flying instructor. She was in the RAF Volunteer Reserve for a while until that closed but was able through the VR to gain her RAF wings in 1954, of which she was very proud.

At White Waltham she taught many Air Training Corps cadets who later became RAF pilots. After Margot left, Joan became chief flying instructor for a short time but she did not like administration so

moved on to the British Airways Flying Club at Booker in 1961.

She was featured in 'Special Investigator Flies Solo', an article on page 61 of the 1953 book *Eagle Special Investigator* by Macdonald Hastings.



It was during her years at Booker that Joan's reputation and ability to fly anything

gave her a new career as a stunt pilot for films. She coached Kenneth More in his role as Douglas Bader in 'Reach for the Sky' (1956) and when a small light person was needed to fly a tiny replica of the 1909 Santos-Dumont Demoiselle, she did the flying sequences for 'Those Magnificent Men in their Flying Machines' in 1965. She also flew replica First World War German aircraft in simulated dog-fights for 'The Blue Max' (1966) and was as a stand-in pilot for Lady Penelope in the 1968 film of the TV series 'Thunderbirds'.

For 'Thunderbirds' she had to obtain permission to land a Tiger Moth biplane on a motorway near High Wycombe, *taxi* under the bridge and then take off. But she *flew* under the bridge and found herself on seven charges of dangerous flying at Buckinghamshire Quarter Sessions. In her defence she pleaded that turbulent weather made it safer to fly straight

through. After a three-day hearing she was acquitted on all charges.

She was awarded the British Women Pilots Association's most prestigious trophy, the Jean Lennox Bird jade vase, in 1962 and in 1967 the Royal Aero Club awarded her the bronze medal for outstanding service to aviation in every sphere.

Joan Hughes was one of the display pilots at the Shuttleworth Trust in Bedfordshire during the 1960s, and said: 'These aircraft are wonderfully removed from scientific aircraft. Everything depends on the pilot's skill, so you feel more personally involved. Apart from that you are open to the weather.'

Joan visited the US where she appeared as herself in the 20 June 1966 episode of 'To Tell The Truth' (a CBS TV panel show) and two of the four panellists correctly picked her as the contestant.

After 50 years of flying Joan Hughes retired with 11,800 hours in her log book. 10,000 hours were spent instructing. She then moved from Wargrave to Somerset but returned to White Waltham in 1991 for the unveiling by Prince Michael of Kent of Roderick Lovesay's painting 'Tribute to Women Aviators', in which she was one of the 12 women pilots depicted.

After retirement Joan devoted herself to tennis, music and country walks. She died aged 74 of cancer on 16 August 1993 at Musgrave Park Hospital, Taunton.

After the war Lettice Curtis worked as a technician and flight test observer at the Aeroplane and Armament Experimental Establishment before she became the senior flight development engineer with Fairey Aviation in 1953. She flew as a test observer in the Royal Navy's Gannet anti-submarine aircraft and regularly flew Fairey's communication aircraft. Her love of flying never ended, and she regularly took part in the National Air Races organised by the Royal Aero Club, later buying her own Wicko aircraft, to compete in a number of *Daily Express* Air Races.

Lettice left Fairey in the early 1960s for the Ministry of Aviation, and worked for a number of years on initial planning of the joint Military and Civil Air Traffic Control Centre at West Drayton. After serving with the Flight Operations Inspectorate of the Civil Aviation Authority, in 1976 she took a job as an engineer with Sperry Aviation.

She was a strong supporter of Concorde (her Concorde Club number was 151), she made two flights in the famous airliner. In 1992 she gained her helicopter licence, but three years later decided that, at the age of 80, her flying days were over. Strong-willed and determined, Lettice Curtis always felt that the ATA did not receive the recognition it deserved, and in 1971 she published *The Forgotten Pilots* which was subsequently reprinted privately by my firm. Her autobiography, *Lettice Curtis*, was published in 2004. She never married and was in great demand on the lecture circuit and as a guest on RAF stations. She was one of the first patrons and supporters of the Yorkshire Air Museum. She died on 21 July 2014 aged 99.

—

The last surviving woman ATA pilot was Mary Ellis (née Wilkins) who was born on 2 February 1917, in Leafield, Oxfordshire, to a farming family. Fascinated with aviation from a young age, at the age of 11 her father paid for her to have a joy ride at a flying circus, and she decided she wanted to learn to fly. When she was 16 she started lessons at a flying club in Witney, successfully gained a private pilot's licence and flew for pleasure until the start of the Second World War in 1939, when all civilian flying was banned.

She joined the ATA in October 1941, and was posted to a pool of women flyers based in Hamble in Hampshire. In the war she flew over 1,000 planes of 76 different types, including Harvards, Hurricanes, Spitfires and Wellington bombers. After the war, when the ATA was disbanded, Mary was seconded to the RAF and continued to ferry aircraft. She was one of the first women to fly the Gloster Meteor, Britain's first jet fighter. Mary later moved to the Isle of Wight. In 1950, she became the manager of Sandown Airport and Europe's first female air commandant, managing Sandown for 20 years, during which time she also founded the Isle of Wight Aero Club. In 2016, she published her autobiography: *A Spitfire Girl*. In 2017 a plaque was unveiled at RAF Brize Norton in recognition of Mary's and fellow pilot Molly Rose's 'contribution to the ATA' and in 2018, she was granted the Freedom of the Isle of Wight. Mary was featured on the BBC in 2018 highlighting, among other achievements, solo flights where other teams consisted of eight crew members. She married fellow pilot Don Ellis in 1961 and they had a house next to the runway at Sandown. Don Ellis died in 2009. Mary Ellis died at her home in Sandown, Isle of Wight, on 24 July 2018 at the age of 101.

So in a very small way I contributed to keeping the story of the ATA before the public in 1982 (*Forgotten Pilots* was again reprinted in 1998), by handling the corrections for the second edition, but I never met Miss Curtis as everything else was dealt with at Reading. It also occurs to me that, if my eye test had not ruled me out, I might have been one of the ATC cadets instructed by Joan Hughes at White Waltham in the 50s!

Note

1. Can be found at <http://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/80008455>.

References

- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joan_Hughes
- <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/obituaries/10991463/Lettice-Curtis-obituary.html>
- <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt5817158/> (To Tell the Truth)
- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/To_Tell_the_Truth
- <http://www.afleetingpeace.org/the-ata/index.php/2-uncategorised/31-w011-joan-hughes>
- <https://www.rafmuseum.org.uk/research/online-exhibitions/air-transport-auxiliary/joan-hughes.aspx>
- [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mary_Ellis_\(pilot\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mary_Ellis_(pilot))
- All accessed 6–7 August 2018
- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pauline_Gower, accessed 27 August 2018

Further reading

- Curtis, Lettice: *The Forgotten Pilots: Air Transport Auxiliary 1939–45* (2nd edition, self-published, 1982). A history of the ATA and particularly of the women pilots, it includes 19 chapters, 29

illustrations and 22 appendices + index and is the source of the main quotations in this article.

de Bois, Enid: 'Hughes, Joan Lily Amelia (1918–1993), airwoman', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (OUP, 2004).

Nichol, John: *Spitfire: A Very British Love Story* (Simon and Schuster, 2018) – a very detailed account of the aircraft and the stories of the people who flew it, including some ATA women pilots who are given generous treatment, but not Joan Hughes, probably because she only flew Spitfires occasionally.

Simpson, Alan: *Loughton Air Park – Abridge Aerodrome* (LDHS, 2018) – a detailed record of this local airfield and the people who flew there and the inspiration for this article.

TED MARTIN

A story of a postcard

'Dear Grace,

Hope you are getting better. Will come to see you on Sunday with love from all with love and kisses, Mother.'



The card was addressed to Miss Grace Griggs, at the Village Hospital, Buckhurst Hill, Essex, and posted on Friday, 2 November 1906 (at 9.30pm – it was obviously expected that it would be delivered the next day. Visiting at the Hospital was allowed for two hours on Wednesdays and Sundays only; for more about this hospital, see *Newsletter 191*). The postcard shows the row of houses known as Oak Cottages, on Roding Lane, looking up towards the junction with Albert Road, and beyond towards Bridge Terrace, the bridge over the railway, and, in the distance, the large house known as Farnborough (used as a doctor's surgery for some years, it was demolished in 1963 and the site is now the station car park). All these houses have disappeared and the view today is shown below.



The recipient of the card was Grace Ethel Griggs, who would have been 11 years old at the time. She was born in 1895 (21 April), one of at least nine children of Edward William Griggs and his wife Mary Ann. They were married in 1879, some months after the birth of their first child (Kate Alice, whose birth was registered under her mother's maiden name of

Boyton). Her father, normally known as William, was a house painter and decorator, who had been born in Woodford. He and Mary Ann first set up home in Buckhurst Hill in Lower Queen's Road, moving to Albert Road North by 1891 and to 8 Oak Cottages, Roding Lane, by the time this postcard was sent, as it shows their own house, the first of the row on the left. Grace's mother, who sent the card, died a year later aged just 46 (her father died in 1920).

The treatment Grace received at the Hospital was obviously effective. She appears in the 1911 census as a domestic servant in the house of Walter Frederick Litty, a Berlin-born dealer in inked ribbons and carbon papers. He and his wife Lilian had two children. The address was 1 Grafton Villas, Queen's Road, now the shop, 'Fine Doors'.

Grace married Henry George Pridham (1882–1948) in 1924 and had a son Leslie in 1925 (died 1988). She remarried in 1949, her second husband being William Ernest Charles Egan (1883–1969). Grace passed away in May 1987, in Suffolk, at the good old age of 92.

With many thanks to Terence Atkins, who found the postcard, and Ian Strugnell for help with the 1911 census.

LYNN H JONES

Loughton in 1861

Loughton is a large and delightful parish, with a very picturesque village, and ground of a remarkably undulating character. The views and scenery in this village are equal to almost anything of the kind in this part of England, the former extending to the Thames and the Kentish hills in one direction, to Hampstead and Highgate in another, and to the immediate vicinity of Navestock, twelve miles off, on the eastern side. The walks in or near the forest are of such a character as to invite large parties of Londoners to fill numerous excursion trains to Loughton during the summer. W Whitaker Maitland Esq is lord of the manor, the estate having been purchased in 1745 by William Whitaker Esq of London of the Earl of Rochford for £24,500; and to this family that of Maitland afterwards became united by marriage.* The Hall, a fine edifice of the Elizabethan style, was unfortunately burnt down in 1836. It is said to have been, in 1688, the residence of Princess Anne of Denmark, afterwards Queen Anne, who retired thither before the revolution in that year. There are some other good family residences in the parish, as Debden Hall, Gouldings Hill and the Warren. The health of the place is generally above the average, and the condition of the poor is much ameliorated by local charities, as well as by the general attention to their education, sanitary condition, and improvement. There seems, however, to be a want of energy, and an unwillingness to move from their native place, which greatly characterise the inhabitants, not only of this village, but of this part of the county generally, and which certainly impedes their advancement in the social scale. The proximity of the forest, and the pretext of procuring firewood by means of the loppings of the trees, which the inhabitants claim a right to cut during the winter months, encourages habits of idleness and dislike of settled labour, and in some cases gives occasion for poaching, all of which are injurious to the morals of the poor. Enclosures however, seem to be commencing in the neighbourhood, which will probably check these irregular and, to a certain extent, demoralising tendencies.

The parish church, a handsome Norman building, stands nearly in the centre of the village. It was erected in

1846, at a cost of £6,000, raised by subscription, in lieu of the former church, which stood near the Hall, at an inconvenient distance for the inhabitants. It will accommodate about 500 persons, and is adorned with several painted windows by Wailes and others. At High Beech, an elevated and forestal part of the parish, a handsome district church has been erected.

There are some garden allotments of six acres for the poor, set apart for them on an enclosure of waste; the rent of the Poor's Piece, one acre, is distributed in bread, with £1 from Rampston's charity; and the poor have the dividends of £49 17s 3d stock, left by Nicholas Pearse, in 1821. The dividends of £2,700 stock were left by Ann Whitaker, for the support of the Sunday-school, and distributions to the poor.

*On the final page (640) is the remark 'The manor and estates at Loughton passed, we find, from the Whitaker to the Maitland family by will, not by marriage.'

From: *The People's History Of Essex, comprising a Narrative of Public and Political Events in the County, from the Earliest Ages to the Present Time; the Hundreds and Boroughs; with Descriptive Sketches of their Antiquities and Ruins, the Seats of the Nobility and Gentry, and an Epitome of the Parochial Charities*, by D W Collier, published in Chelmsford in 1861.

Follow-up on Newsletter 218

I was intrigued and fascinated by the article on Loughton in 1925 in *Newsletter 218*. Three items took my interest for, although I did not move to Loughton until 1934 aged one, the name of the Postmaster rang a definite bell. My first teacher at Staples Road infants' school where I went on Monday, 4 September 1939, was a Miss Haestier. I decided to research the family, and the Postmaster Mr Emile Henry Alphonse Haestier had three daughters and a son. They lived at 49 Queens Road. In the 1939 enumerated census Winifred was an uncertificated teacher and Mabel a certificated teacher. Which one was mine I do not know but my Miss Haestier had a calliper and large boot on her right leg and foot.

Another item mentioned the Rev Cyril Gell in 1925. He christened me at St Mary's Church in 1935.

The final link with the item was that regarding the *West Essex Gazette*. Mention is made of a broadsheet weekly which sold for 1d. This paper was still in circulation at 1d in 1950. My Scoutmaster of the 39th Epping Forest, St Mary's, Joe Cornell, was a compositor and printer at the Print Shop in Old Station Road and he got me a job there, making tea and setting up posters.

On the subject of refugees, I remember the Dildick/Asplagh family. We had Alice Dildick and her youngest son François billeted with us probably late 1939 or early 1940. They were brought to the door by the WVS lady who incidentally lived up our road (Habgood Road); I was at the door with my mother when they arrived. They stayed for a year or so and then went to live in a large house in The Avenue alongside the Asplagh family who they knew from Ostend. François later married an Asplagh daughter. We still keep in touch with our generation who came to Loughton as refugee children and subsequent offspring.

TOM GILBERT

I think the daughter who taught at Staples Road School was Mabel; as you say, she was disabled.

Nice memories of being the tea boy at the printing works. Unfortunately, there is no local file of the *Loughton Gazette* and local historians are much hampered by that.

CHRIS POND

George Bowtle

Can any of our readers assist with this query?

I am intrigued by the reference I have found on the internet to George Bowtle, who, with his partner John Cook, had a charcoal burning business in the 1800s and early 1900s at the Cuckoo Pits, as mentioned in your *Newsletter 184*, January/February 2010.

I would like to make more enquiries about this and the Bowtle family in the Loughton and Woodford area. My interest has been fired by the discovery of a distant relation and the grandson of William John Bowtle, a stoker who was killed on 4th January 1918 and is buried at Tillingham church, Essex.

I live, and work, in Ongar not so far away and have been interested in tracing my family history since I was a teenager and have discovered that my family originated from Wethersfield in north Essex.

I look forward to hearing from you and thank you for your help.

ANDREW BOWTLE

My Hutt ancestors and life as a Victorian policeman

One Saturday in January 2005 my mother and I drove over to Loughton to see the home in which our ancestor William Hutt had been born in 1836. 109 York Hill is at the crest of an escarpment facing London, offering a stunning view. In front of the house is a small green with a village pump. Below and to the left is the Gardener's Arms, a very old traditional pub. The steep front path of No 109 leads through a small front garden to the side porch. A young couple invited us in and were delighted to give us a little information on the property which they had recently bought and were busy renovating into a most desirable home which five years later sold for £500,000. Built in 1807 it is a grade 2 listed timber framed tarred weather-boarded cottage. The black weatherboards were originally white. Inside, the extensive modern refinements do not disguise the 19th century structure which comprises small rooms and a tight stairway.

The small upper bedroom has a window placed uncomfortably low, but the view is remarkable. From this high viewpoint, looking over the tops of the houses arranged below, is a panorama of the London skyline with the Millennium Dome, Docklands and the City clearly visible on the horizon.

William's family was poor, but their lives in this rural setting must have been far removed from the squalor of the city-dwellers only a few miles to the west.

William's father, John Hutt, was a blacksmith, born in Essex around 1800. On 12 March 1828 John married 22-year-old Sarah Bacon at St James's, Paddington. The fact that they did not marry in their

home town of Loughton suggests family disapproval, perhaps because Sarah was six months pregnant! However, a John Hutt did marry an Ann Mawbray in that church in 1799 so maybe there was a family connection.

John's forge was a short walk down Pump Hill at the junction with Church Hill. As yet I don't have much information about him. Evidence suggests that his parents may have moved to Loughton from elsewhere.



Sarah, on the other hand, has a lineage that can be traced back into the 17th century. Names and dates are all I have at the moment, but it is clear that she and her ancestors had never moved far from a fairly tight radius of Loughton.

Sarah was born in 1805. Her father, agricultural labourer Henry Bacon of Loughton (1770–1845) married Mary Hammond (1770–1859) of Theydon Bois on 19 January 1794. Mary Hammond was the daughter of John Hammond (b1740) and the wonderfully named Honour Marriage (c1745). They married in Epping on Boxing Day 1765.

Henry Bacon was the son of James Bacon (b1731) and Anne Ingold (b1735) who married on 29 October 1758 in Loughton. As far as I can see, Anne Ingold's parents were John Ingold (b1713) and Sarah Sparrow (c1714), married in Saffron Walden in 1734. John Ingold's father was probably another John Ingold (born Kelvedon Hatch c1677) who married Mary Chaulk (1680–5 September 1761, Elsenham) in Kelvedon Hatch on Christmas Day 1702.

In Loughton there were only 119 houses in 1801, when the population was 681. That population increased steadily so by 1821 it was 979 and there were 166 inhabited houses. In 1831 there were 1,269 inhabitants, but the population subsequently remained stationary until the 1850s when the railway was built. Consequently, between 1851 and 1871 the population doubled. The Hutt's were part of a thriving agricultural community.

John and Sarah's family grew apace. First was John, three months after their wedding. The following year Richard was born, then in 1831 their first daughter Rachael. Sadly little John died aged 4 in 1832, the same year Rebecca was born. Ellen was born in 1834 and then our ancestor William on 20 March 1836.

The *Chelmsford Chronicle* on Friday, 10 November 1837, carried this tragic news:

CORONER'S INQUESTS. Before C C Lewis Esq: Yesterday, on the body of Rebecca Hutt, aged 4 years, daughter of a blacksmith, who died yesterday, her clothes having accidentally caught fire in the absence of her mother on Tuesday. Verdict accordingly.

Seven months later, *The Essex Herald*, on Tuesday, 22 May 1838, carried an account of another terrible tragedy that befell the family – this time involving Sarah's niece Eliza Bacon. This story is recounted in *Newsletter* 219.

The following year Mark was born and lastly Reuben was born in 1839.

The 1841 census shows the family living together at York Hill. The group of six properties was then known as 'Forest'. In 1844, however, disaster struck. John died of a liver complaint at the age of 44. The next few years must have been a great strain on all the family. Sarah's father died on 25 May 1845, leaving his wife Mary in financial difficulties. Sarah's home was sold to a new landlord in 1847 but she remained a tenant. The blacksmith's business was taken over by William Enever and his family.

Having worked as a gardener, oldest son Richard joined the Metropolitan Police force on Christmas Eve 1849 and the 1851 census shows him sharing a house with other policemen at Tooting Graveney, Surrey. Sarah was now one of six laundresses in York Hill with just Ellen, Mark and Reuben.

William was a page in the house of two elderly spinsters called Frances and Anne Hamilton. These wealthy ladies lived at 19 Orchard Street, Portman Square, near to the present location of Selfridges store. William was one of a large retinue of servants.

Near to Sarah in 1851 at Baldwins Buildings in Loughton was Mary Bacon, widow, aged 78, officially a pauper (agricultural labourer's wife). Undoubtedly Sarah's mother Mary née Hammond, she seems to have subtracted three years from her true age.

At Baldwins Hill in Loughton were Sarah Hutt's brothers Henry Bacon and John Bacon with their families.

Richard resigned from the Metropolitan Police on 22 May 1853, applying immediately to join the City of London Police.

At 10am on 7 February 1854 two girls came knocking at Sarah Hutt's door. One was a neighbour, the daughter of a local gardener. She had brought with her an attractive 16-year-old girl called Ellen Welch. This sad story is recounted in *Newsletter* 179 (November/December 2008).

This first-hand experience of the law in operation in the Welch case would have a profound effect upon William and no doubt influenced his future career decisions.

William followed in Richard's footsteps, joining the Met on 9 July 1855, giving his occupation as a servant; Frances Hamilton was his referee. Rachel was wed in July 1856 to Oxfordshire greengrocer Edward Green in Southwark, and Ellen married York Hill blacksmith Henry Eke on 5 October 1856 in Loughton. William resigned from the Met on 17 November 1856.

By January 1857 both brothers Richard and William were serving in the City Police at Bow Lane Station (Bridewell). Within a couple of months William embarked on a liaison which would have far-reaching consequences, as we see from this newspaper report of 7 March 1859.

William Hutt, a constable in the City Police Force, was summoned before Alderman Finnis and Alderman

Humphery, to show cause why he should not be adjudged the putative father of an illegitimate female child, of which the complainant was the mother.

Louisa Barnaby, the complainant, said she lived in Maidenhead-Court, Moor-Lane. Her child was born on the 19th of December last in St Saviour's Union [workhouse], and the defendant, William Hutt, was the father.

Cross-examined, she said she had not been intimate with a great many policemen.

The defendant was the only one. She never had any intimacy with a policeman named Hodgson, but she had seen him round St Paul's at night, when she was looking for the young man Hutt.

William Hutt, the defendant, was then examined, and said he had known the complainant about two years, but the intimacy which had existed between them ceased for about 11 months, and recommenced on 14th April. She told him she had been intimate with other men, and when he said he would bring up several to prove it, she said there was one he could not produce, as he was dead.

Police constable Johnson, 134, was then called, and said he knew the complainant, and had been intimate with her at various times during the last three years. He had also seen her with other policemen. Alderman Humphery said it was not very reputable for either the defendant or the witness to get into the witness box to make such statements. Witness said he had been summoned and was obliged to attend.

Alderman Finnis thought it was the duty of policemen to bring all prostitutes plying their calling before the magistrates; but it would appear they made it their duty to corrupt the morals of young girls. If twenty policemen came up and swore the same thing it would not alter his opinion in the face of the defendant's admission and the girl's oath. Even if it were true that she had been intimate with so many, she must know best who was the father of her child. The order for 2s 6d per week was then made.

In fact, Louisa was going by the maiden name of her mother – her true name was Louisa Catherine Pepperell. Louisa was admitted to Saint Saviour's Union Workhouse on 16 December 1858. According to the record she was already in labour, yet the birth record of her daughter Annie is three days later. She discharged herself and the baby on 8 January. In 1862 Louisa had a son, John, with George Ridpath, who she married in late 1865 at West Ham. On 9 June 1879 William and Louisa's daughter Annie, now aged 20, married William Hogg at St Bartholomew, Moor Lane. Seven months later she gave birth to a son William, 9 January 1880. Annie's second child was Henry, 10 February 1883.

William and Richard's grandmother Mary Bacon died in Epping at the end of 1859.

In 1860 Inspectors Duddy and Shelford wrote a formal letter to Commissioner Harvey about Richard Hutt:

Bow Lane station, February 1860

We respectfully submit to you a report affecting the character of PC466 Hutt, of whom it is alleged that his conduct upon several occasions has been mean and discreditable and we beg to state that from enquiries we have made we have reason to believe the accusations against him are substantially true.

In October last we were informed that he had asked a waiter in the employ of Messrs Morley & Powell, warehousemen of Friday Street to save him some stale crusts of bread for his rabbits. Also that a young man in the employ of Mrs Clunie, a baker of Watling Street and also a

waiter at a commercial boarding house in Bow Lane alleged that Hutt had borrowed money off each of them and that they had had great difficulty in getting their money again. Hutt's conduct in these cases appearing to us to be highly censurable we removed him from the beat.

At about 10 past 5 in the morning on or about the 7th January last, a man called Eagle, a cobbler, who had a stall in Bow Lane, saw Hutt (who was off duty in plain clothes) removing some square pieces of wood called 'quartering' from inside a hoarding round a house which was being repaired in Watling Street. Hutt upon being spoken to with regard to it said 'the wood was given to him by the builder, Mr Wills, of Sparrows Corner, Bermondsey', who in answer to his inquiries stated that 'Hutt had asked him for some pieces of wood to do a little job with, and he had told his foreman to give him what he required in reason.'

We have recently been informed that about a week after last Christmas Day he asked George Edwards, a boy in the employ of Mr Young, butcher, 31 Watling Street (on Hutt's beat), to give him a piece of meat for his cat which he gave him. At that time three chops – two pork and one mutton – were lying on a block in the shop. Hutt said to Edwards, 'You may as well give me a chop.' Edwards said 'No, I can't do that.' Hutt resumed, 'Oh yes you can, it is Christmas time now and it won't be missed.'

In justice to Hutt we feel bound to add that he has a good knowledge of the duties of a police constable, and that he has been successfully vigilant in the detection of offenders. J Duddy, Adam Shelford, Inspectors

Commissioner Harvey noted on the margin of the report a suspension of [something] for one month. Duddy and Shelford had probably only expected a severe reprimand rather than this harsh response and sent a further letter pleading reconsideration. Richard was moved to Smithfield. Shortly afterwards he was dead from certified meningitis.

William resigned from the force on 21 June, three days after his brother's death. Richard was buried at Tooting, South London, on 23 June; his widow Maria remained in Tooting with her four children, later re-marrying a gardener.

Richard's uncharacteristic behaviour may well have been caused by his illness, so William could have felt that his brother's treatment was harsh and unjustified.

PAUL BARTON

To be continued

Epping Forest in tickets

Those interested in transport tickets may wish to know of an article recently published. Keith Romig has written about tickets issued for various purposes connected to Epping Forest. He begins with the visit of the Lord Mayor of London with a large party of dignitaries on 14 October 1875, and continues with excursions by Londoners, both individuals and parties, such as Whitefield's Tabernacle Sunday Schools, and the Primitive Methodist School of Wood Green. Also illustrated are tickets for the Golf Club, Boy Scouts and, as the Forest was used for military training, tickets for the use of the London Rifle Brigade and the Honourable Artillery Company. The illustrations are crisp and very readable.

The Journal of the Transport Ticket Society, issue 658, November 2018, pp 444–445.

Contact www.transport-ticket.org.uk

EDITOR

The Francies family and transport, part 2: the motor-cycle years

When 'Bob' Francies died in 1915 as well as a daughter, Kitty, he left two sons – Will, born in 1902 and Henry, born in 1904.

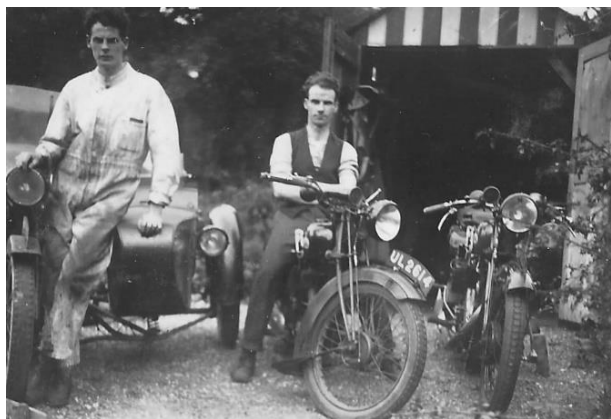
In a talk that Will gave in 1949 he said that on the death of his father he had to leave school and go out to work, aged 13. 'I became crazy over the internal combustion engine and motor cycles in particular. I thought, talked and dreamed motorbikes, to the despair of my mother and my unfortunate guv'nor of those days.'

By the mid-1920s both Will and Henry owned and rode motorbikes which they worked on and garaged at their mother's new rented home, Enderby, No 12 Habgood Road.

The earliest motorbike photo I have is an out-of-focus 1925 one of Will on a Scott 2-stroke. In 1926 the photo (left) was taken of Will on a Royal Enfield, a flat-tanker of the 1920s.



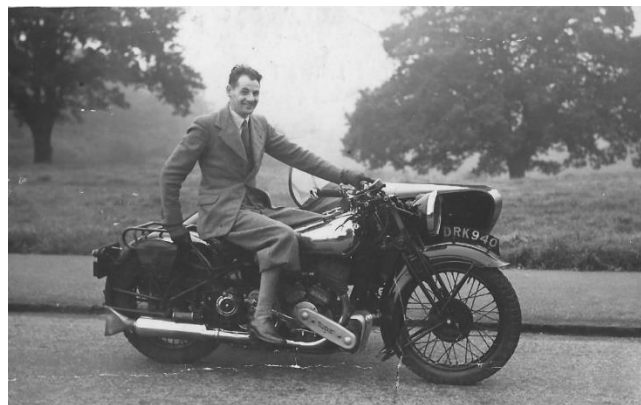
In 1929 (below) we have the brothers with two BSA bikes on the right and an unknown sidecar on which Will appears to be working.



By 1930 (above) Henry was riding a Levis bike – a flat-tanker style.

I have no date for the picture of Will (below), resplendent in his plus fours and shiny shoes, riding a Brough Superior SS80 with sidecar in which he transported his wife and daughters Valerie and Carol.

I'm told today the Brough would be worth between £150,000 and £200,000.



Henry gave up motorbikes in the 1930s but for Will it was a life-long interest. At one time Will was President of the West Essex Motorcycling Club. When, as a widower he moved back to Loughton from Heybridge he came on his motorbike (by then he was around 80 years old).

I am greatly indebted to Brett of Woodford Motor Cycles in George Lane, South Woodford, who identified the bikes shown in the photos.

JOAN FRANCIES

On the way to Loughton station: in the snow



This photo shows the approach to the second (1865–1940) Loughton railway station, taken in one of the three years after 1936, from outside Hetton House, No 58 Station Road. Although it looks familiar, little in the scene exists today. If you stand on the same spot now, you will see the road to the station is leading, beyond the cart, to the station demolished in 1940. Today, there is a large Sainsbury sign and then, still, the avenue of limes that leads to the old station site, what is now Great Eastern Path. The present station and yard will be built to the left, behind what is a thicket on the photo. The building (which is unfortunately behind the notice board) on the extreme right is a goods office that I think started life as the excursion station. The building beyond the cab is Henry Burbidge's Station Café, opened in 1936.

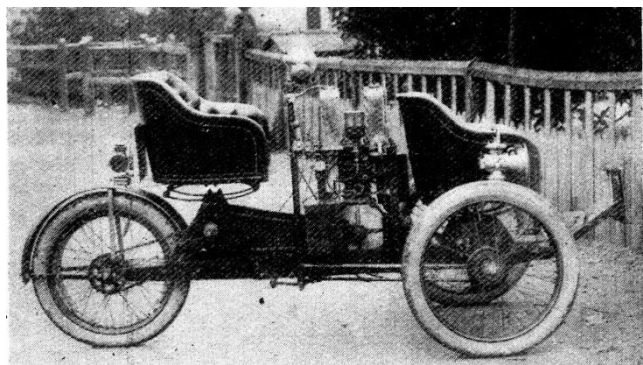
Lighting and snow clearance on Loughton streets do not seem to have been up to much 80 years ago: so what's changed?

The horse-drawn vehicle – could it *really* be a hansom cab, ekeing out its last days ferrying people to

Loughton Station, 30 years after such vehicles disappeared from the streets of London?

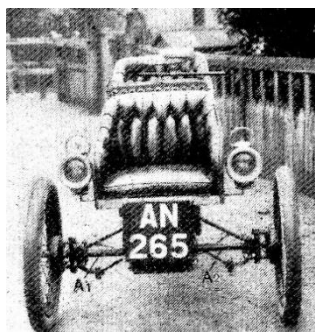
CHRIS POND

A good idea at the time?



A side view of the complete machine

I came across an article in *The Motor Cycle* magazine of 13 March 1905 entitled 'A Collapsible Tricar' about a car built by a Leytonstone man, Mr W P Mackay. 'Tricar' was the word used in the early 20th century to describe what we would now refer to as a 'three-

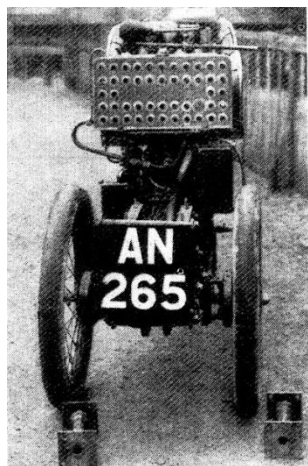


wheeler', though three-wheeler cars have now virtually disappeared from our roads.

Left: An end view with intermediate axles in position. Mr Mackay was a marine engineer and conceived the idea for his car whilst at sea and prepared plans for it on board his ship.

Though the term would not have been in use at the time, the unique selling point of the car was that its width could be reduced so it could be wheeled through a narrow gateway for storage purposes. This was achieved by removing a section from the front axles and the front seat.

It is a significant feat to design and build your own car, though some readers will be aware that in nearby Walthamstow Frederick William Bremer (1872–1941) built his own tricar in 1892 and a four-wheeled car in 1894. The latter car is preserved in the Vestry House Museum in Walthamstow. It was one of the first cars to



be driven in Britain, possibly the first.

Left: The frame collapsed, note the intermediate axles in the foreground

Despite the achievement of building his own car, Mr Mackay's car seems to have had a fundamental flaw; to reduce the car's width took 15 minutes: 'I'm just popping down to the shops, dear; it's only a five-minute drive; I'll be back in 40 minutes!'

Nevertheless, the article concludes, 'One of the chief disadvantages of the present-day tricar is the question

of storage, and we welcome this attempt of Mr Mackay to overcome this difficulty.' I do not agree with that conclusion.

Readers might notice that the car was registered in West Ham (code AN) although Mr Mackay lived in Leytonstone which was then in Essex (code F). Before the Roads Act of 1920 came into force it was possible in 1921 for drivers to register their cars with any local authority and I presume Mr Mackay considered it more convenient to go to West Ham to effect registration rather than travel the longer distance to Chelmsford.

JOHN HARRISON

Can anyone identify the man in this photograph?



I have attached a photo of the original photograph which is 40 x 53cm – please excuse the reflections, I couldn't find a way to get rid of them. The original was taken by the Lyddell Sawyer and Ernest Dunn studio in Maida Vale. Lyddell (Lyd) Sawyer was a well-known photographer (1856–1927) who photographed many famous people. When I first found the photograph, I thought it might be of George Bernard Shaw but I can't quite reconcile it with other photographs of GBS. The first owner of our house was Nan Margaret Dorothy Ridley. She bought it from the builders (Hanley Peachey) who were redeveloping the site of Ormonde House (off the High Road in Buckhurst Hill). The conveyance was to her although it states she is the wife of Douglas Ridley. At some stage she remarried and was called Nan Margaret Dorothy Collier when the house was sold to the Trents in 1958. Therefore, I assume the photograph belonged to Nan Ridley/Collier. Does anyone know any of the history of this family?

We also hold various title deeds relating to the house and an Abstract of Title to Ormonde House drawn up in 1932 which presents a history of ownership from 1902 when it was conveyed from the Pritchard family. It includes a plan of Ormonde House and its gardens.

DAVID LUND

About Nan Ridley: she was born on 14 November 1894, as Nan Margaret Dorothy Chilcot. She married

Douglas Farish Ridley in Willesden in 1921. In the 1920s they lived at 27 High Road, a house called Southview (still there). He died in 1940 aged 47 and she remarried in 1943 to Charles R Collier. He died aged 69 in 1960 and she married again in 1961 to Alan W Bunch. She died as N M D Bunch in 1976. There is a lot on the internet on Captain Douglas F Ridley at: <https://2ndww.blogspot.co.uk/2015/07/captain-douglas-f-ridley-mc-ma-1893-1940.html>

Nan Chilcot's father was an accountant. His name was William Chilcot and he was born in 1856 – could the photo be of him?

EDITOR

Motor outing for cripples

Some sixty crippled children belonging to the London County Council School at Mansford Street, Bethnal Green, were taken under the auspices of the Beaumont Cycling Club, for a day's outing in Epping Forest on the 6th inst, in motor cars kindly lent by Messrs Humber, Brown Bros, the Daimler Co, Mr S F Edge, and Mr A G Reynolds.

The Motor Cycle, 17 July 1907
Submitted by JOHN HARRISON

The weather brightened from the East – *Radical Essex*

Radical Essex is the title of a book, published last year, which contains a number of essays on various aspects of our county. One in particular may interest members, by Ken Worpole who, you may remember, gave a talk to LDHS in November 2014. His essay is 'The Road to Othona – communitarian settlements in Essex 1880–2018'. Beginning with the Othona Community in Bradwell-on-Sea, he discusses various communities who have chosen Essex for their experiments in living, such as the Salvation Army Land and Industrial Colony in Hadleigh (opened in 1890), Britain's first nudist/naturist colony at Wickford (1924), the Girls Bungalow and the temperance hotel, *Ozonia*, on Canvey Island, and the work of Muriel Lester, and many more.

The whole book covers 'radical' aspects of Essex; how the proximity to London and yet the remoteness of the landscape has encouraged those with alternative ways of looking at life, in terms of politics, religion and architecture. In fact, it is in architecture that the book particularly shines. It covers the development of Modernism in Essex, through Frinton-on-Sea, Bata in East Tilbury, Gidea Park, Harlow, Silver End and the University of Essex. Gillian Darley contributes an essay 'From Plotlands to New Towns'. In one aspect, though, the book is 'radical' in itself – the font used contains at least four versions of the letter 'o' and other letters and numbers appear distorted – the effect is a little disorientating, for this reader at least!

The book will intrigue those with an interest in the wider subject of Essex, particularly those with an interest in modern architecture. It is published by Focal Point Gallery, ISBN 978–1–907185–21–2, price £20.

Another recently published book which may be of interest is *A People's History of Walthamstow* by James Diamond, The History Press, 2018, ISBN 9–780–750–97899–6, £12.99.

EDITOR

'After Saturday's Blitz'

Robin Greenaway was inspired to submit this article in response to 'War Damage in Buckhurst Hill 1939 – 1945' in Newsletter 219.

This is a poem hand-written by my grandmother Ellen Greenaway on Sunday, 22 April 1941, when Buckhurst Hill and, in particular, Palace Gardens, suffered some Second World War bomb damage. Ellen lived at 29, Palace Gardens, Buckhurst Hill, with her husband, Alfred.



Ours is a nice house ours is,
We are safe and sound and friends all around.
Bits of glass and chimney pots, big holes in allotment plots.
Black windows and door, cracks galore
Plenty of work, no need to shirk.
Ladders rung up and pails full, keeping the women alert.
Small lights very pretty till the big ones light up
with a bang making holes and scarring our fair land.

Pretty flowers hanging heads among the bricks and mortar,
making a rockery that's not admired.
Sightseers gasp at the mischief done by a night prowler
afraid of the Sun.
But by forethought of one who is helping the cause
we were able to cook and keep dry from the storm.
Ground sheets are useful to cover the beds
when daylight appears on top of our heads.

It's all very nice in the morning to hear the choruses
of birds so sweetly clear
The sun rising gay on a Sunday morn
but some of its beauty for others to scorn,
for loss of their homes through the night they have borne.

But God in his Mercy has kept us all safe in limb
And we are able to rejoice in the wonders
that are springing up around.
Primroses and daffodils wild flowers are out in bloom
and me so thankful we have still our home.
So carry on Palace Gardens Buckhurst Hill.

A brief history of Alfred and Ellen Greenaway. Alfred Thomas Greenaway was born at 28 Stony Path, off Baldwins Hill, Loughton, in 1884. He married Ellen Banner, born in Swaffham, Suffolk, in 1909 at Holy Trinity, Hermon Hill. Ellen had been a domestic servant for a family close by.

They rented the Palace Gardens house at what was No 6 from the date of their marriage until Ellen died in 1956 and Alfred in 1965. The house number was changed at some stage from 6 to 29.



Alfred was one of eight children born to Alfred Greenaway Cornell and Maria Sear at their house on Stony Path.

Left: Ellen and Alfred Greenaway in the back garden of 29 Palace Gardens, Buckhurst Hill c1950.



The left window at 29 Palace Gardens, about 1950

The Greenaways were a fairly well-known family in Loughton, having moved from Lambourne in the 1850s. At Lambourne they were known as the Greenaway Cornells. The origin of this surname is too complicated to relate here.

Before Lambourne the ancestors resided at Stapleford Tawney and earlier at Waltham Cross and Cheshunt in Hertfordshire where they are recorded on the parish register back to the early 1600s.

Alfred Thomas Greenaway was a professional gardener employed by the more wealthy occupants of Buckhurst Hill, and for a long time he was head gardener at Forest Hospital. Ellen was a homemaker giving birth to six males and one female.

One of the sons, Horace John, born 1913, was my father who at the time the poem was written had recently married my mother on 4 January 1941 at Putney. He had been given leave for two days for the wedding before having to return to army training at Pontefract Barracks in the Yorks and Lancs Regiment and shortly afterwards being sent abroad to fight in the war.

ROBIN GREENAWAY

More on Staples Road School in the 1940s

I was at Staples Road school from 1946 until 1950 and I should be in this photo (see *Newsletter 219*, page 14) but the detail is too indistinct to be sure. I well remember the name of Valerie Eagles! The location is indeed strange and I cannot recall it. Most of the

school photos were taken in the school playground with the school buildings as a backdrop and included photos of school plays. There appears to be only one teacher included as far as I can see. The principal teachers at the time were Miss Penny, Miss Pask, Mrs Worsnip, Mrs Gittins, Mr Reece, Mrs Witherick. The infants' school was, of course, separate.

I am certainly not in this group so I think that it is of a different year and I do not recognise any of the pupils. The teacher fifth in the penultimate back row is Mrs Witherick who taught mainly pupils in their final year there. Her son David also attended the school and maybe went on to Chigwell. Although I recall the name Valerie Eagles I do not think that she was ever in my class.

PHILIP SHAW

Loughton in *Wartime Diaries**

I found this a very interesting read particularly as the diaries covered a period when I was a child and living in Loughton. Although the writers moved in different circles to my family nevertheless, there were mutual experiences recorded in the book.

What I found most intriguing was the way in which the writers balanced the macro happenings of the war with the minutiae of their everyday lives.

This brought back to me how I, as a child born in 1934, experienced the Second World War. I was too young to understand the wider military implications of the war but the day-to-day experiences were normality. Despite bombing, sleeping in air-raid shelters and the British Restaurant, school, choir and cubs brought a sense of stability. I feel that this also was why both the authors and my father so loved their gardens and allotments and in terms of the diary they played a crucial role.

Although our families moved in different circles, I feel sure my father would have known the Norman brothers. My father was Treasurer of the Loughton and District Allotments Association.

Of those individuals mentioned in the book, two particularly spring from the page – the first is Sergeant Marrable who was the manager of the Co-op butchers. He lived in Habgood Road and I used to have as a friend his son Ivan. The other person was Sergeant (Mr) Bartlett who lived opposite our house; he had a son Bobby who was much younger than me. After Mr Bartlett was demobbed he bought a 15 cwt canvas top Army truck and used to sell vegetables and fruit from door to door. I started working for him as a Saturday job and more frequently in the school holidays. Quite often I would go to Stratford Market with him in the very early hours of the morning to buy supplies, presumably from the Norman brothers.

Mr Bartlett eventually opened a small shop in Church Hill almost opposite the Plume of Feathers. It is now a take-away I think.

Two other names dredge up from the past but I cannot put them into context. They are Ernie Rule (I think his son) and Mike Wardle (St Mary's Church?).

TOM GILBERT

* Henry and Richard Norman, *Loughton in Wartime: Diaries for 1944 and 1945* (LDHS, 2018).

German Schoolchildren in Buckhurst Hill in 1949: can anyone help?

The Friends of Durham County Record Office (FODCRO) are currently researching the story behind the respite visits of groups of German children to various locations in England and Wales in 1948/1949. While we are particularly interested in two groups that visited villages in Durham County, we are trying to unearth any information relating to other areas.

One such visit was made to Buckhurst Hill in March 1949. Their trip was organised in this country by a charity called British Aid for German Workers, in collaboration with *Arbeiterwohlfahrt* (a workers' welfare organisation) in Germany. The charity had a Local Reception Committee in the area, whose secretary was Mr Scott Bayliss. The 20 or so German children stayed for three months and were 'fostered' in local homes.

I wonder if your Society, or any of its members, has any knowledge of this event?

DAVID INCH (Chairman – FODCRO)

This matter was mentioned in an article by Ian Strugnell in *Newsletter 207* (November/December 2015), page 8 – can anyone add more information? (Ed)

'Snapping the Stiletto – Essex Women: Adversity, Adventure and Aspiration'

Snapping the Stiletto is a two-year, county-wide project from Essex County Council to explore how women's lives have changed since the extension of the right to vote to women (aged 30 and over) in 1918. In addition to the centenary of some women being given the right to vote, 2018 also marked 90 years since the Equal Franchise Act which granted women the same voting rights as men, and 50 years since the major strike by women machinists at the Ford plant at Dagenham in Essex which led to the 1970 Equal Pay Act.

The project is funded by a grant from the Esme Fairbairn Collections Fund to work specifically with 11 museums and galleries across the county to use material from their collections to discover – and share – the hidden stories of the lives of Essex women. The project also specifically aims to challenge out-dated stereotypes – hence the title.

The forthcoming exhibition *Essex Women: Adversity, Adventure and Aspiration* is one of several outcomes produced by the project and highlights various aspects of women's lives in Essex during the last century. Exhibits are organised around a number of over-arching themes including 'Women at Work', and 'Women in Wartime'. Material includes an exploration of the role of women such as Adelaide Hawken and Rosina Sky from Southend who were prominent in campaigning for the vote, as well as the experiences of many (until recently) less well-known

Essex women whose lives have been equally innovative and inspirational.

It is also an opportunity to learn more about the key role many Essex women played in events of national importance. As an example, at the start of the Second World War Essex was largely agricultural and, as a consequence, the Essex Women's Land Army (WLA) was the third largest in the country – playing a key role in keeping England fed during the wartime shortages. This included the contribution of many women from the Epping Forest area and North-East London. When writing the interpretation for this theme I was particularly inspired by the enthusiasm with which many young (Essex) women joined the WLA, sometimes against the wishes of their families. They endured both challenging working conditions and prejudice with determination and perseverance – relishing the new-found freedoms and independence that life in the WLA gave them.

Essex Women: Adversity, Adventure and Aspiration will tour the partner museums and galleries throughout the year – launching with Epping Forest District Museum (EFDM) in Waltham Abbey from 12 January to mid-March. Each partner museum will also be specifically highlighting the experiences of women local to them so the residency at EFDM will provide an opportunity to learn more about the lives of women in the Epping Forest area in particular.

Essex Women: Adversity, Adventure and Aspiration is at Epping Forest District Museum from 12 January – 16 March 2019. See *Snapping the Stiletto*

<https://snappingthestiletto.com/> for more information on the project, and Epping Forest District Museum's website: <http://www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/index.php/component/eventlist/details/21754-exhibition-snapping-the-stiletto-100-years-of-change>

for more information on exhibition dates and opening times. See also page 16. SUE CARRETTE

Laboratory wrecked Wanton damage by Buckhurst Hill boys

At a Juvenile Court, three Buckhurst Hill boys were summoned for damaging glassware, chemicals and scientific instruments, to the value of £200, and stealing a dynamo, gas mask, etc, value £13 17s 0d. Dr Oswald Silberrad, Dryads Hall, Loughton, said he was a Doctor of Philosophy, engaged in research work. On July 28th he left his laboratory at Buckhurst Hill securely fastened, and went abroad. On returning on September 18th he found the skylight had been forced, and the place was in a state of indescribable confusion, and many of his instruments were broken or missing.

Detective Sergeant Hopkins said he went to Stag Lane, Buckhurst Hill, where Dr Silberrad had his laboratory, and found the place in great disorder. He made inquiries, and on October 9th, in High Road, Loughton, met one of the defendants, who admitted taking some of the stolen property. A second lad admitted breaking several things, and taking the key of the front door so that they could go back again. The third boy made a similar admission.

John Sargent, school attendance officer, stated that the boys had excellent characters at school, and Mr B J Stanley, probation officer, bore this out. The lads were placed under probation for three years. The Chairman said it was very

distressing to see boys with good school records doing such foolish and wicked acts. Two of the lads would also have to pay £3 each towards the damage.

Woodford Times, Friday, 23 October 1931

The Queen's visit – as the papers saw it

Of the various accounts of Queen Victoria's visit to Epping Forest in 1882, some of the most informative and interesting appeared in two contemporary newspapers – the national daily paper, *The Times* and a local weekly, *The Walthamstow and Leyton Guardian*.

The Times reporter set out from the East End of London to join the throngs of cockneys, taking advantage of a day's holiday to travel to the forest for the celebration. 'Four in hands and private carriages, rubbed wheels with omnibuses, waggonettes and picnic vans and the humbler coster's barrow', he observed:

Having left Windsor at 3.13, the Queen arrived at Chingford station in an hour, where she was met by the Duke of Connaught, the Lord Mayor, the Lord Lieutenant of Essex and other dignitaries from the Corporation of London and the railway company. The scene here was described as 'pretty in the extreme'. The platform was 'a floral temple with thousands of roses and other flowers' and around the iron columns were 'bougainvillea, stephanotis and Japan lilies'. But perhaps the most striking adornment at Chingford was a wooden triumphal arch, built to resemble a Gothic castle keep, and completely spanning the entrance to the station yard. With square embattled towers each side, it was surmounted by banners and bore the inscription 'The Forest Welcomes the Queen'.

Incidentally, this arch survived until August 1901; an indication of the abiding loyalty of the Chingford folk.

Amidst rousing cheers, the bands of the Coldstream Guards and the Royal Artillery struck up the National Anthem and, having given her gracious permission for a tree to be planted at High Beech in honour of the occasion, the royal cortège set off for Chingford station.



As the great day drew to a close, a display of fireworks 'a contribution by the proprietors of the Royal Forest Hotel', took place; several set pieces having been supplied by that well-known 'pyrotechnist, Mr Brock'. The press noted that even after many thousands of visitors had entrained for London and many more by every sort of wheeled vehicle had left the forest over a period of two hours, there were still sufficient numbers to occupy a space

nearly equal to the south slope of Primrose Hill. 'Only then it was possible', they said, 'to realise the thoroughly popular character of the occasion'.

As a postscript to the account of the celebrations *The Times* reminded its readers that 'the possession by the public of a forest of 5000 acres' was a 'startling contrast to some half dozen poor recreation grounds suggested in 1870'. It praised the efforts of the Corporation of London in leaving 'no stone unturned to perfect the gift of the forest to the public', but cautioned that 'the almost romantic story of its rescue ought not readily to be forgotten by those who enjoy its cool shades and sylvan recesses'. CHRIS JOHNSON

from the *Souvenir Programme of the Forest Centenary Festival*, 8 May 1982.

Keep yourselves warm

No one knows, unless he has tried it, what a capital railway rug a big newspaper will make; and few people are aware what an excellent substitute for paucity of blankets can be contrived from a few of our daily penny papers. It is not generally known that a brown paper lining will make an ordinary coat as warm as a great coat, and that an under-waistcoat of the same material is equal in service and value to a flannel shirt. Cotton wadding can also be got in sheets for a few pence, and if quilted in between the lining and the cloth of our garments, we have something as good as the costliest furs to keep Jack Frost away.

Home Words, February 1899

Some Essex Wills

Joan Fuller of Chigwell, widow, 1 December 1582

To Joan Deanes my goddaughter 2 beasts, ie Nut and Nan, and my biggest cauldron. To Adam Hill my cousin 2 beasts, ie Lily and young Whitelock, and a table in the hall with a form. To Elizabeth Jenins daughter of Richard Hill 2 beasts ie Old Whitelock and Hart, and £4 in the hands of my cousin Henry Fuller, to my sister Miles a coverlet, a blanket, and a bushel of wheat meal. To my cousin Harry Fuler my powdering trough, my boulting tun, the best spit and the table in the kitchen with the form by the wall. To Elizabeth his daughter my little cauldron. To my brother Thomas Hill 1 bushel of wheat. The rest of my household stuff to my cousins Adam Hill and Elizabeth Jenings, children of my brother Richard Hill, equally divided. To every godchild that I have which were my servant's children 3s 4d apiece and my other godchildren 2s 6d apiece. The rest of my goods to Adam Hill whom I make executor, I make Harry Fuller overseer. Witnesses John Pressen, Harry Fuller, 5 February 1582.

Thomas Harboure of Chigwell, 9 May 1585

I will that John Preston of Chigwell shall sell all my sheep, ie wethers, ewes and lambs, and £5 of the money to Nicholas my son to be delivered to some honest man whom John Preston shall think well of to bring him to learning, ie to write, read and cast accounts, also to keep him to some good trade or else to bind him prentice into some good trade and occupation. The rest of the money that the sheep be sold for to Joan my daughter at 21 by the discretion of John Preston; if she die before, to Adam my son. The rest of my goods to Joan my wife, whom I make executrix. Witnesses Mr Ralph Hill of Ilford, William Hill of Ilford, Adam Hill, John Hill, John Johns of Chigwell. Inventory exhibited at 18s 6d.

Cows in my Front Garden



In July 2018 an exhibition was held at the Loughton Arts Centre at the Lopping Hall, of works by Karen Humpage. Paintings, prints, cutouts and cow poo paper were on display with the theme of the Epping Forest cows, which I am sure many readers will remember wandering all around the district. For those who missed the exhibition, Karen's works can be seen on her website, www.karenhumpage.turnpiece.net

EDITOR

SNAPPING THE STILETTO

Essex Women; Adversity, Adventure and Aspiration

12 January - 16 March 2019

Epping Forest District Museum

Free entry

39-41 Sun Street, Waltham Abbey, Essex, EN9 1EL

Tel: 01992 716882

www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/museum

Facebook: [facebook.com/efdmuseum](https://www.facebook.com/efdmuseum)

Twitter: [@efdmuseum](https://twitter.com/efdmuseum)

Open: Mon, Tues, Weds, Fri 10am - 4pm
& Sat 10am - 5pm



Epping Forest District Museum

A touring exhibition produced by Essex County Council exploring the inspirational stories of Essex women since 1916.

See page 14

The bells of St John's Buckhurst Hill

I recently repaired one of the bell hammers for the set of eight hemispherical bells and replaced the ropes for the Ellacombe Chime apparatus in the tower. These now ring again on Sunday mornings. These bells are referred to in the Whitechapel Bell Foundry catalogue

of 1910. Below is a screen shot of the page. We are hoping for the same response from the locals as was received in 1910!

50

HEMISPHERICAL BELLS.

For quality of tone and carrying power, the ordinary shape of Church Bell is unrivalled, but for small Belfries, where space is limited, Hemispherical Bells are most suitable. These have been designed to produce great depth of tone with comparatively light weight of metal, and we can, with confidence, recommend them as the best and cheapest substitute. A Chiming Apparatus is attached which enables one person to chime a full set.

A set of eight, Tenor weighing about 3½ cwt., erected complete with Framework and Chiming Apparatus, would cost about £425.

The following is a copy of a letter received from the donor of the set of eight erected at Buckhurst Hill.

GENTLEMEN, Jan. 14th, 1910.

It gives me very great pleasure to be able to confirm after a year's interval, the favourable report that I gave you before, of our complete satisfaction with the octave of Hemispherical Bells which you erected for me in St. John's Church, Buckhurst Hill.

The intonation is perfect, and the quality is so pure and soft that the residents in the immediate vicinity of the Church not only are not annoyed by the chiming of the bells, but express themselves without exception as delighted in hearing them.

Considering that several of these residents were decidedly unfavourably disposed to the proposal beforehand, in anticipation of discomfort from their proximity, you may certainly accept their conversion as a flattering testimonial to your excellent work.

In spite of this softness and delicacy of tone, the bells have great carrying power, reminding one in these particulars of the characteristic qualities of the most perfect examples of stringed instruments.

I have no hesitation in strongly recommending such a chime for any tower where space or other consideration forbids the erection of a swinging peal.

Believe me to remain,
Very faithfully yours,
CHAS. E. ADAMS.

MESSRS. MEARS & STAINBANK.

I have been working to get the clock going again. It is now working and appears to be keeping reasonably good time. I am investigating fitting a regulator so that it keeps correct time. The clock mechanism dates from about 1871. At some time, I guess in the 1950s, an automatic winding system was fitted. If anyone would like to see the clock mechanism and the bells, do contact me. To reach the belfry it is necessary to climb two steep ladders so it is not for everyone.

DAVID LUND

West Essex Motorcycle Club



This was Will Francies' badge (see p 10). It would have been fitted to the front of your motorbike to signify your membership of the club. It is probably an alloy casting, typical of pre-war club badges. The fixing holes can be clearly seen in the centre of the badge.

With thanks to Sue Golding and Carol Warren.

JOAN FRANCIES

LOUGHTON & DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY (Registered Charity 287274)

www.loughtonhistoricalsociety.org.uk

President: Professor David Stevenson

Chairman: Dr Chris Pond, Forest Villa, Staples Road, Loughton IG10 1HP (020 8508 2361)

Treasurer: Antony Newson, 17 Highland Avenue, Loughton IG10 3AJ (020 8508 5014)

Membership Secretary: Ian Strugnell, 22 Hatfields, Loughton IG10 1TJ

Newsletter Editor: Lynn Haseldine Jones, The Lodge, Snaresbrook House, Woodford Road, London E18 2UB (020 8530 3409)

Newsletter Production: Ted Martin

All rights reserved. © 2019 Loughton & District Historical Society and contributors.

Printed in Great Britain by Blackwell Print, Great Yarmouth