

# NEWSLETTER 228

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58th Season

## Ian Strugnell, 1949–2021

Ian – who was such a familiar face at LDHS meetings – died in St Clare's Hospice in the early hours of 16 January, aged 72. He was taken ill suddenly and went into hospital just after Christmas.

Ian was born in Dagenham, where his parents were temporarily living with in-laws, in January 1949. They moved to Debden whilst he was a young child. He went to St Nicholas primary school and then Buckhurst Hill County High School; working later for Hilger and Watts, the scientific instrument makers in Langston Road.

Ian, a bachelor, was a long-standing LDHS attender since the 1980s, and perhaps was our longest-serving member. He joined the committee in the 1990s and had ever since then been a dedicated member of the team, and, since the retirement of Emilie Buckner in 1999, Membership Secretary.

Ian was the Society's researcher *par excellence*. He was a constant visitor to record offices, both the ERO at Chelmsford and the National Archives (TNA) at Kew. He did important research by transcribing and recording the minutes of the Chigwell UDC and Loughton UDC, plus the 1939 Registration. His research was meticulous and extremely well-ordered. This work will be of prime importance to future researchers. He was a leading member of the Great Eastern Railway Society, as railway history was his main other interest; he collaborated with Harry Paar, Chris Johnson, Ted Martin and me on the two railway books we published in 1997 and 2006. **Chris Pond**

I was in the same year intake as Ian at BHCHS. After the mixed-ability first year, we were streamed for years 2–5 and Ian and I were always in the A stream. However, whereas I just managed to scrape into the A stream each year, Ian was academically gifted and always seemed to achieve high marks no matter what the subject. Ian won prizes for achieving top marks in at least two O level subjects (one of which, I know, was French). With that academic record, it came as a surprise to all that he decided to leave school after O levels and start work as a trainee draftsman.

I had not encountered Ian between when he left school, in 1965, and when Lynn and I joined LDHS around 2010. He remained exactly as I remembered him from school – a very self-contained individual.

For your interest, I attach a photograph of Ian which I have extracted from the 1963 school panorama photograph, which is available on the BHCHS website.



**Peter Haseldine**

I was very sorry indeed to learn of Ian's death. He was a long-time supporter of the GER Society, particularly in producing maps and diagrams for the *GE Journal* and visiting TNA to summarise ECR and GER committee minutes.

**John Watling**  
(President of the GER Society)

We publish the article below in Ian's memory:

## Coronation Week 1937



'42 boys with their teacher from Melville College, Edinburgh, are spending Coronation Week in seven camping coaches at the LNER sidings at Loughton, Essex, station. They sleep and breakfast in the coaches and spend the rest of the day sightseeing in London. Photo shows a view of the camping coaches at Loughton showing some of the jolly coronation visitors.'

Photo taken 13 May 1937, courtesy of [www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk), 16 January 2021

They are former six-wheel Great Central carriages. Fortunately, one can be identified as CC67 which was a former Manchester, Sheffield & Lincolnshire Railway, third class, five compartment, latterly number 51089 built in 1891. In all, over 30 of this type were converted.

My knowledge of camping coaches is mainly limited to former GER vehicles but fortunately an article in the autumn 1988 issue of the *British Railway Journal* describes the LNER conversions. The following paragraph explains their presence at Loughton:

During that year (1937) there occurred a novel use for camping coaches. In Coronation Week fifty-two were made available at stations in the London suburbs including High Barnet (5), Woodside Park (5), Alexandra Palace (4) and Loughton (6). The cost of £10 included free travel into London for each member of the party. Most coaches were transferred from the north since the Southern Area only had 10 vehicles.

**John Watling**

The location is the down side of the old (1865) Loughton station. The coaches are parked in the little-used cattle- and horse-dock siding. The signal is the Loughton down starter, and the grid-like structure behind it is the station lattice footbridge. The signal post is very tall so drivers could see the signal behind it. The site today is the main running line just as a train enters platform 3 at the present Loughton (1940) station. The camping coaches had to be positioned near the station WCs as the LNER did not make them en-suite!



This picture is of the north-east end of Loughton Station in 1938, and shows exactly the location of the camping coaches, which is where the loco (a 2-4-2 GER tank engine) is standing. They would have been placed alongside the cattle dock platform – the short stub in front of the loco – for ease of access. The signal post and footbridge can clearly be seen, though the photographer has lopped the signal arm here. The layout of the pre-1940 station is depicted well; the photo may have been taken from what would become the London end of the present platforms a year or so later. The loco bears a headboard 'Ongar'; it is presumably waiting time to collect and draw out a 4-car train countrywards.

**Chris Pond**

## *The Loughton Idyll:*

The ancestry of George Bacon, farm boy at Goldings Farm

*The Loughton Idyll*, published by the society last year, reveals that it was farmer John Dalley's friendly and sympathetic farm boy George Bacon ('Jarge') who showed Ruddy and Trix the small door into Goldings Farm's large barn, where they could play on rainy

days, and which also provided a venue for Rudyard's early attempts at story-telling.

Mr David Porter, a descendant of the Loughton Bacons, has written to me to advise that the farm boy whom the Kipling children came to know so well, and whose family was long established in the forest village, has distinguished ancestors, both scholarly and literary, linked to the Elizabethan royal court: Mr Porter says:

I have established that 'Jarge' is my second cousin twice removed. Jarge's father was John Bacon (1837–1907). His grandfather was Henry Bacon (1797–1887) and his great-grandfather was Henry Bacon (1770–1845). Henry is my great-great-great grandfather. Tracing the family back I have discovered that my eleventh great-grandfather was Sir Nicholas Bacon (1510–1579), Lord Keeper of the Great Seal to Queen Elizabeth I. He married twice. Jarge and I are descended from his first marriage. His second marriage to Lady Anne Cooke produced two children. Their second child was Francis Bacon (1561–1626), Lord Chancellor and philosopher.

The first connection I can trace with Essex goes back to the late 1600s, when Henry Bacon (1675–1730) married Rebecca Savill. Rebecca was born in Little Easton, Essex. They married in Good Easter, Essex, in 1692. The first of Jarge's and my direct descendants was James Bacon (1700–1758). He was born in Aythorpe Roding, and was the seventh child of Henry Bacon.

I am grateful to Mr Porter for kindly giving me permission to quote this correspondence.

**Janice Lingley**

## Rallying around

In *Newsletter 216* I wrote about the history of the now closed Brown's Garage. When one edits a newsletter on vehicle registrations one has a wonderful network of contacts who are experts on different aspects of motoring. Through one of my readers, Adrian Tranmer from Hull, I have found out about a car that Frank Brown, the company's founder, acquired to participate in the Monte Carlo Rally and which still survives.

In 1957 Frank Brown bought a 3.4 litre Jaguar to take part in the 1958 Monte Carlo Rally and registered it with his private plate, FWB 1. The importance of this rally has now diminished, but in the 50s and 60s the event, held each January, was an important one in the motoring calendar. There is now also a 'Rallye Historique' with period cars commemorating the glory days of the event as well as the main rally. In 1956 a Jaguar works team won the rally in a Jaguar Mark VII, a somewhat larger car than Frank Brown's 3.4 litre. There was no rally in 1957 because of the Suez petrol shortage. Thus, 1958 saw the resumption of the rally after a year's gap and Jaguar had had recent success in the event.

Though not referred to as such at the time, Frank Brown's 3.4 litre Jaguar would now be called a Mark I Jaguar. The model was introduced in 1955 and was initially just available with Jaguar's famous XK engine in 2.4 litre guise. In February 1957 it also became available with the 3.4 version of the same engine as a result of pressure from American Jaguar dealers for a more powerful car. Frank Brown's car was made in



September 1957. Brown's were not Jaguar dealers – at the time they were agents for Austin, Morris, Wolseley, Standard, Triumph, Volkswagen and the BMW Isetta bubble car. Thus the car was sourced from R P Powell Motors Ltd of Forest Gate. Although Jaguar were major participants in motor sport at this time, they did not compete with the 2.4 or 3.4 litre saloons in a 'works' team (i.e. a team with drivers and mechanics financed and run by the company) but seemingly were keen to encourage private entrants using them as Frank Brown obtained a 12.5% discount on the list price from Powell's. The car was fitted with optional extras: overdrive, disc brakes, wire wheels and lead-bronze bottom-end bearing shells. Further additional equipment was subsequently fitted to facilitate its participation in the rally.

Unfortunately, the car did not complete the rally after going off-road and damaging its suspension. Frank Brown's co-drivers in the rally were Graham Arnold and Edwin J Snusher. Graham Arnold was, I think, working for Ford at the time but he went on to become sales manager for Lotus and was largely responsible for making the Lotus Elan a success by targeted marketing. He founded Club Lotus, the club for Lotus owners. He ended up running a donkey sanctuary! Edwin Snusher was an engineer and racing driver. His particular claim to fame was building his own sports car, called the EJS Special. To achieve minimum weight, he constructed as much as possible from scratch and the process took him two years, from 1954 to 1956. He did not race the car much and soon laid it up, selling the engine and gearbox. In 2001 it was restored and fitted with a replacement engine. Like Frank Brown's Jaguar this car still exists.

Frank Brown subsequently continued to use the Jaguar for sprints and hill climbs for the next two years. In 1960 he sold the car to Edwin Snusher. The car was re-registered as 4938 VW, so Frank Brown could transfer his number to his next car. Bonhams website says the car was not registered in Snusher's name and the number was not changed until 1962, although Snusher owned and used it from 1960, but as reversed VW was issued from March to May 1960 this would seem to be wrong (my friend Adrian Tranmer first found details of the car on Bonhams, the auctioneers', website as they sold the car at Goodwood in March 2017). The sequence of events does, however, seem to be somewhat confusing as Snusher used the car in the 1960 Monte Carlo and Tulip Rallies (the Tulip Rally took place in Holland from 2 to 7 May). Presumably it was still owned by Frank Brown and registered FWB 1 when it took part in the Monte Carlo Rally. Snusher used the car to tow his EJS Special on a trailer, so a tow hook was fitted.

Snusher seems to have kept the car in storage from 1967/8 to 1982 when he sold it to a historic racer, John Young. He used the car for racing and rallying and also for everyday purposes. In 1987 he had the chance to purchase a racing E-Type Jaguar and part exchanged this car for it. It was then sold to a Japanese collector who kept it for 20 years but he does not seem to have used it much. It was returned to the United Kingdom and auctioned after his death and repurchased by John Young. The Bonhams website

indicates he raced it at the Nurburgring, Spa Francorchamps, Zandvoort, Snetterton, Castle Combe, Donington Park, Silverstone, and Brands Hatch.

In 2013 the car was acquired by Terence O'Reilly. When he died the car was, as previously mentioned, auctioned by Bonhams at their Goodwood Members' Meeting sale in March 2017 where it achieved a remarkably high price for a car of this type, age and condition of £190,000 total price. The pre-sale estimate had been £70–100,000 and at one point the bidding leapt from £75,000 to £100,000. This high price seems to have been because the car was in a very original condition, not having been significantly modified or restored and still having its original rallying equipment. The car is currently SORNed (subject to statutory off-road notification, i.e. not taxed) according to the DVLA database, but it is MoT'd.

I used to see FWB 1 regularly around Loughton on various cars. He also had FWB 2. FWB 1 appears to be on a retention certificate at the moment and FWB 2 is on a BMW. The numbers are still owned by the Brown family. The picture, courtesy of Bonhams, has Frank Brown in the centre, Graham Arnold on the right and presumably Edwin Snusher on the left.



John Harrison

## Exodus for the Vicar

After 19 years as vicar of St Mary's Church, Loughton, Rev Kenneth Vine is to move on.

He is to take over the parish of Barnburgh with Melton on the Hill in Yorkshire, on September 3. Asked why he has decided to move at the age of 64, he said 'I think this parish could benefit from new leadership, and my new parish does present a challenge'.

He has some fond memories of his years at Loughton: 'I suppose the most notable achievement was when we decided to build an extension to the old church hall and expand the building at St Michael's, the other church in the parish. That was in 1970. The work cost £43,000 and we raised it all within a year. Thanks to the hall we were able to start the Citizens Advice Bureau which was entirely my own idea.'

The hall also houses a day centre for the elderly and the lonely. Said Mr Vine, 'They come every day to sit and chat and drink coffee. I am told they are grateful for the chance to come out and talk to people.'

The other milestone in Mr Vine's time at the church was reached when he invited the Bishop of Chelmsford down

for half a day to look over the parish. He said, 'I had long thought that this parish – we have 16,000 to look after – is really a parish without a heart. Between St Mary's and St Michael's there is just one road and a lot of fields and schools. The bishop saw at once that we needed more help and he appointed an incumbent curate to St Michael's. We were lucky to get Rodney Matthews and Tony Johnson has proved a worthy successor.'

Reading occupies most of Mr Vine's spare time. He took a degree in economics at the London School of Economics before changing to divinity. One of his main interests is the socio-economic history of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and the other is the Elizabethan period.

Mr Vine is married and has three children. His eldest lives in Loughton and she has three children. His son is a lieutenant-commander in the Royal Navy and has just taken up an appointment with NATO in Lisbon. The officer's wife and two children are staying at the vicarage at present. Mr Vine's youngest daughter was a keen trampolinist. She is married with one child and now lives in Guernsey.

Unidentified local newspaper, 18 September 1978,  
*Submitted by Jane Jones*

## Loughton hymns

Following the service on New Year's Day a few years ago, Stephen Murray told Tony Morling, then Minister of Loughton Methodist Church (LMC), of the Loughton origins of *Born in the Night*, *Mary's Child*, and I then chimed in with some other hymns written in Loughton. Tony suggested this be written up for the *Grapevine*, the church's newsletter at the time, and this I undertook to do provided he used his ingenuity to weave them into a service, with appropriate readings and sermon! In fact, some of them are Christmas songs.

### 1. Sarah Flower Adams 1805–1848

*Nearer My God to Thee*, possibly the most famous hymn in English, was written in the 1840s by Sarah Flower, who was of Baptist stock and came from Harlow. She lived with her husband, William, in the old Sunnybank Cottage, Woodbury Hill (where there is a blue plaque to them both). Sarah was a poet and hymnodist, a prolific writer of poems on social, political and religious subjects; William was a railway engineer and pamphleteer. Anyone who travels on the Central Line (for instance) should know that the clackety-clack of the wheels over the rails is a result of William Bridges Adams' invention, the fishplate, which links together the rails to provide a continuous surface.

Many of Sarah's hymns were originally set to tunes by her sister, Eliza. *Nearer, my God, to Thee*, was apparently written in November 1840 at Loughton, and is based partly on Genesis 28: 10–22, Jacob's dream at Bethel. It is the expression of her mind and faith, and represents her feelings during the ravages of consumption. It was published in *Hymns and Anthems*, 1841, compiled by William Fox, the minister of the Unitarian church at South Place, Finsbury, where the author attended. It is said to have been played by the band as the *Titanic* capsized, and it was the favourite hymn of US president Kinsey, and of King Edward VII.

Few hymns have so attracted musicians as *Nearer, my God, to Thee*. Altogether, there are eight well-known tunes, the best known perhaps that by Dykes. The favourite tune in America, and one which has been arranged for orchestras, is that by Mason, *Bethany*. This is played by bands the world over. I think perhaps the best tune is *Propior Deo*, by Sir Arthur Sullivan.

Another beautiful hymn by Sarah is *He sendeth sun, he sendeth shower*, which is sung generally to the tune, *He Leadeth me*. Another is *Part in Peace: is day before us?* – *Praise His Name for life and light*, which can be sung to the tune *Lucerne*.

### 2. Edward Pope 1836–1917

Edward Pope was the founder of Loughton Methodist church (LMC), and of most of the Wesleyan chapels in south-west Essex. He was a keen Wesleyan Methodist, whose brother (Henry) became president of conference, and was for many years the secretary of the chapels committee. Edward, born in Hull, was a local preacher, as well as hymnodist and translator. He lived at Clynder, Albion Hill, 1872–93. In politics, he was a Liberal/radical activist. By profession, he was an Australia merchant, and his wife, Caroline, was an Australian. They emigrated to Geraldton, Western Australia in 1893.

He had worked among the German community of Hackney and his hymns were often translations from the German. Most were published in periodicals, and not collected, but one, *Jesus, still lead on*, became No 622 in the *Wesleyan Methodist Hymn Book* of 1906. It is a translation of a hymn by Nikolaus Zinzendorf (*Jesu, geh voran*), and is sung to the tune, *Spire*. No doubt as more and more 19th-century periodicals are digitised, these uncollected hymns will become accessible again.

### 3. Emily Chisholm 1910–1991

Emily was a longstanding member of Loughton Methodist Church. She taught French and German at Loughton County High School for Girls, and lived in Lower Park Road.

She was associated with the ecumenical community at Taize, and translated much of their liturgy chants and music. She took part in numerous groups concerned with Methodist and ecumenical prayer and music, and attended the Hymn Society. Her hymns are in the modern idiom, such as *John came a-preaching by the Jordan River* – 'People! You've just got time! and the Advent carol, *The holly and the ivy are dancing in a ring*.

*The Holly and the Ivy* supplanted the older traditional form of this carol in *Hymns and Psalms*. I have to say, speaking personally, I prefer the traditional form, which we usually sing whilst singing in the streets for NCH!

Emily also composed a hymn (*Easter Eve*) in 1987 for the opening of the new church. This had a somewhat obscure first verse!

### 4. Geoffrey Ainger 1925–

Geoffrey Ainger is an Essex man, born at Mistley. He was educated at Brackendale School, Norwich; Richmond College, London; and Union Theological

Seminary, New York. He has held various posts as a Methodist minister and lecturer, including four years as the minister here at Loughton (1958–62). It was at Loughton in 1959 that he wrote *Born in the night, Mary's Child*. The author, interviewed as part of Radio Essex's carol service from the LMC, in 1995 explained that the carol had been written incidentally to a church play for teenagers, which sought to set the nativity in a modern context. Accordingly, Joe and Mary, an unmarried couple who have arrived from London late at night one Christmas Eve at Loughton Station, being unable to find accommodation in Loughton, use a room in Brown's Garage, where she gives birth. The shepherds are bus conductresses and the Three Wise Men, off-duty East-End social workers. The carol was one of two composed for the play, the other being *Men from the East came to Mary*, which were originally performed by teenagers with very loud guitar accompaniment.

From 1962 to 1971, Geoffrey Ainger was a member of a group ministry at Notting Hill, where the carol was first published (in *Songs from Notting Hill*, 1964, a collection of songs by the Notting Hill Music Group (based at the Methodist Church there).

### 5. The hymn-tune *Loughton*

I do not know if this tune is named from our Loughton, or Loughton, Salop, or Loughton, Bucks. It appears to have been written by Benjamin Milgrove, a draper and toy and fancy goods seller, who lived at Bath in the 1780s. Milgrove was a member of the Countess of Huntingdon's connection – associated in the early days with the Methodists, but I've not been able to trace anything that links him to any of the Loughtons!

It is not much used nowadays, but was published in *Hymns Ancient and Modern* (editions between 1875 and 1924) as a tune for No 299, Isaac Watts' great hymn,

Come, let us join our cheerful songs  
With angels round the throne.  
Ten thousand thousand are their tongues,  
But all their joys are one.

The tune was rather supplanted in later hymn collections by *Nativity*, which is the one we sing this hymn to today. It is in common measure, so any four lined common measure hymn could be sung to it. The tune, *Loughton*, can be found on the Internet on [cyberhymnal.org](http://www.sfu.ca/~eddie/Bhb/bhb26_50.html), and at

[http://www.sfu.ca/~eddie/Bhb/bhb26\\_50.html](http://www.sfu.ca/~eddie/Bhb/bhb26_50.html)

So, you will see that Loughton has made a respectable contribution to British hymnody. I'm pleased to point out that all these contributions are of nonconformist origin, and two of the five are from the LMC.

**Chris Pond**

## The man for the moment – a personal view

*Pete Relph gives a personal view of current events, and a man who rose to the occasion in the past...*

Aspects of history are now under the media's microscope, encouraged by the now well-heard slogan 'Black Lives Matter', as never before in the

United States of America and across the globe. Millions of Americans – 'black', 'white', 'brown' – a cross section of their population demonstrate, usually peacefully, by the hundreds of thousands, to make their 'revolutionary' demands regarding a cross-section of important issues including 'policing' where it seems, miscarriages of justice including 'shootings' and 'death sentences' are apparently par for the 'racist' course.

One aspect that demands particular attention by historians amongst others, is the importance of statues gracing public spaces which commemorate the sometimes questionable past 'fame' and fortunes of persons, especially those who profited from the slave trade in the USA and Great Britain.

Ruling elites have habitually erected statues as an 'everlasting' emblem of their recognition regarding the important influence certain characters had in their contemporary historic times, but, are not necessarily so favoured after decades or centuries of reappraisal of their real and actual moral value in a far different society that now realises, surely, the inhumanity of man against man that prevailed in those long gone days when slavery was the accepted norm.

Many families, now considered members of our contemporary and hierarchical elite in 'Great Britain', owe their inherited wealth and power to their slave-owning ancestors and have apparently been receiving, until recent years, compensation as recompense regarding their ancestors' loss when slavery was finally abolished. Because of the breaking political and social upheavals across the world, people are getting better educated about long-accepted past 'histories' – 'glorious and imperialist' – 'Britain ruled the waves', etc. What is required is a transparent and re-investigated history to be taught to our youth in our schools, something that was lacking when I studied history years ago – that seemed to figure too much about 'royals' and too little about 'folk'.

Loughton and District Historical Society has long been interested in celebrating former luminaries who've resided in Loughton – within the Epping Forest District – by installing plaques at their former homes. Now, we can go one step further, as statues generally are hitting the headlines in the media – for and against them according to vying viewpoints? A democratic and productive debate should be launched regarding the protection or otherwise of existing statues or for the installation of new ones if we so wish.

An interesting recent example from the East End of London: Louise Raw, author\* and campaigner, is proposing that the statue of William Gladstone, a former Prime Minister, disliked by the impoverished working class, including the famous Bryant & May Match women (who got organised – trade union wise), should be replaced by one to celebrate the Match Women themselves.

So, do we want 'change' where necessary in this respect in 'sleepy' Epping Forest District? Perhaps even a new 'statue' if we choose to re-popularise a suitable candidate – one who shines brightly, half hiding in the annals of local history, perhaps within the saga pertaining to the long campaign to save the

remnants of Epping Forest as a haven of peace and tranquillity for the public to enjoy for posterity? That particular battle was eventually won. So many joined the fray – middle-class and upper-class gentlemen and ladies along with the working-class activists as in Loughton who fought to retain their commoners' rights to lop, that is, to gather kindling and fuel from the forest's trees. A wonderful unity of purpose was born and matured to fruition over 15 years of struggle.

A proposal. One that doesn't necessarily coalesce into a 'statue' but to a recognition, somewhat belatedly, that one particular stalwart, a politically liberal person of means who lived close to his beloved forest; a keen naturalist and a leading member of Essex Field Club should be acknowledged. And for a time, he was also Liberal Member of Parliament representing Walthamstow. He also wrote the eminent book *Epping Forest* – many editions printed – which I read in my miscreant youth. This book included useful maps and routes which I and my mates used in order to explore this wonderful forest far and wide.

Of course, if you haven't already guessed, I above described some of the many virtues and interests of the redoubtable Edward North Buxton – a singularly unpretentious and 'modest' man. He was *the* 'Man of the Moment' although he only received scant



recognition in the conventional historic records published but did receive a one liner. He was described as 'the leading spirit' of the 'newly formed Commons Preservation Society', the collective that ensured that 15 years later, victory was won. Epping Forest was saved!

For centuries, enclosure was effectively piecemeal in England. In Scotland it was more drastically carried out as 'clearances'. Lowly working-class Highlanders scraping a living from their small crofts had limited livestock, raised some crops, such as oats and potatoes, and fished. The wealthy aristocratic landowners declared that the future Highland economy would be based on raising sheep (not labour intensive) and by creating extensive grouse moors and deer forests for the enjoyment of the 'sporting' and wealthy elite. The expendable Highlanders were shipped out, as were the Irish, to America and other distant colonies. Many died on route, crammed up, as they were, in grossly unhygienic conditions.

So, in 1877 our Lord of the Manor of Loughton, residing at Loughton Hall, later to be one of the best community centres in England and now a very expensive care centre for the elderly, acted decisively as he was legally entitled to do. He held the Rights to Enclose that part of Epping Forest in the Parish of Loughton, his domain which he had purchased. The Very Reverend Maitland was particularly ambitious and brooked no opposition as he proceeded to plan the division of all the remaining forest in the Parish of

Loughton between the village and the Epping New Road – the western boundary of Loughton Parish.

I've no doubt Maitland hated Buxton's guts as events moved in favour of the Commons Preservation Society. At least 50 plots, large and small, were enclosed and for sale – approximately 1,000 acres in total. The Reverend Maitland planned to allocate two-thirds of the total for himself and offer the remaining third to existing 'commoners', otherwise described as larger existing tenants.

Right to the end Loughton loppers, led by the Willingale family and personally supported by Buxton and company, continued to lop at the appointed time as per custom and practice on Staples Hill, that is at precisely midnight on 11 November each year. Maitland attempted to prevent this happening by erecting fencing, but the local lads, with support, tore them down, thus ensuring they enacted their annual practice and thus retain their rights to Lop. And guess who helped? I quote:

E N Buxton loved a fight just as he loved a close finish in the days of the struggle (15 years) for the opening of Epping Forest to the public. He fought in the front rank and [felt] that he must himself pull down the fences and smash the locked-up gates.

Perhaps we could learn from his example in order to right some of today's wrongs?

The local Loughton loppers continued to act and were 'criminalised'. The Reverend Maitland took them to Waltham Abbey and Epping court. Sam Willingale, Alfred Willingale and William Higgins were fined. They refused to pay their fines and were imprisoned for several days but soon released. Presumably someone paid the outstanding fines for them. Have you seen the 'photograph' of William Higgins? He certainly appears an outstanding and 'romantic' figure dressed colourfully in Romany gypsy style. I presume he was related to the many Romanies that formerly stayed on the forest in those days. Many of them later (after 1878) settled in Loughton village in considerable numbers and were separately listed on censuses at that time. I've had the privilege to have known a number of their descendants to this day – interesting characters!

In retrospect, we can imagine the battle lines at that time (1877) and the fury of the Reverend Maitland, Lord of the Manor of Loughton, aimed at E N Buxton and company who had warred for 15 long slogging years and were approaching the winning line – to gain victory in their long-held quest to preserve this precious forest for public use and for posterity. Can you sense how bitterly enraged Maitland must have felt as his best laid plans to 'make loads of dosh' were brought to nought? However, I understand he did receive some financial compensation.

My final proposal. Not to erect a statue at all, but, more importantly, to educate our youth and future generations (in local schools?) how important it is to know about local characters of historic importance like Edward North Buxton who gave so much energy and time over those 15 years (he led from the front) to achieve what we all now enjoy – Epping Forest!





*Edward North Buxton's grave is the smallest of the group*

I suggest that one particular school – St. John's Buckhurst Hill Primary – the school (and church) that Buxton supported in his lifetime be asked to adopt him as a model for present and future pupils to emulate and be allowed to study and research. His grave is in St John's graveyard close to the school, Knighton Woods is nearby and children could visit to discover how Buxton enhanced his property by planting exotic trees, shrubs and plants and also created a fine pond with islands and a rather natural looking rockery. His 'garden' when opened to the local public was always announced from St John's church – his beloved church!

I rest my case. Education is the key to our having a rational and sustainable ecologically sound future for Planet Earth. Another battle to be won. Many 'Buxtons' required!

*\*See her book *Striking a Light – the Bryant and May Matchwomen and their Place in History* (Continuum, 2009).*

**Pete Relph**

## The Buck Family – the way it was: part 1

### Introduction

*Linda Kidd (daughter of Lily May, aka Peggy BUCK) writes:*

This series of articles tells of all my memories and stories about the Buck and Pegrum families, so this information can be passed on to my cousins and their children, and not just be lost forever in the annals of time. It has been a great adventure, to remember and re-visit some of the events in the lives of the BUCKS, and their family. Please note: When I refer to Grandad, I am meaning, OUR Grandad (that is the Grandad of Mark, Sandra and myself, etc).

### The Buck family – the beginning

George Buck, the eldest of five children, was born in Belton, Suffolk, on 8 September 1895. (This village was in Norfolk until the county boundary was moved in 1974.) He grew up in Belton and then worked on a farm in the village, probably from when he was about 12 or 13. Market gardening was the main work in that area.

Alice Pegrum was born in Loughton on 3 January, 1896. She was the second of nine children, and had

three brothers and five sisters. There were two other babies (we think), probably twins, but I cannot find a record of their births:- Georgie – died 14 December 1920 and Bobbie – died 4 January 1921.

Nan was sent into 'service' (another name for a glorified servant), at a very young age and worked at The Warren Wood Public House and Coaching Inn (still there) on the Epping New Road, Buckhurst Hill. This is where she met George. She lived in a small attic bedroom there, and every Friday her mother would come to collect her wages off her.



Sometime around the time of the First World War 1914–1918, the Buck family moved down to Buckhurst Hill, to 108 Princes Road. Not sure what George did then, as he would have been around 20 years of age, but by 1921 he had met our grandmother, (Nan), Alice Pegrum, and they married on 27 August 1921.

Their first child, a son, Billy, was born in January 1922. Looking at that date, it was obvious that Alice (Nan) was already pregnant when they married, and in those days, George (Grandad) would have been duty bound to marry her. They went on to have five more children, all girls. First born were the twins, Dot and Peggy, then Marjorie, Kath and Bette. It was hardly a happy marriage, as you will read later.

So, they first lived at 108 Princes Road, I can only assume with George's parents and siblings. First son, Billy was born here. Then later they moved a few doors up to 112. This is where the sisters were born. George and Alice lived here until 1972, when George died. Alice was then moved to a new warden-controlled complex, Buckhurst Court, next to Buckhurst Hill Station. Ironically, this was built literally on the site of some old houses that other Pegrums had lived in, many years before. She lived here until she passed away, one Sunday morning in May 1976, after a heart attack. Two of her two daughters, Peggy and Bette, also lived in Buckhurst Court, many years later, until they too passed away.

### Billy Buck – the only son who died aged 14

Billy died before his sisters married and nearly 20 years before I was born, so I only know what I was told of him. It was said Grandad didn't treat him well but I don't know any details. It was 9 December 1934 and he was cycling home from work (the school-leaving age was 14 in those days) when he had a terrible accident. It's only recently I have found a report of the accident in the local paper records. He is described in this as a 'houseboy'. Apparently, a houseboy looked after the other servants in the house and I know he worked in a large house in Loughton.

It was reported that a hole in the road, excavated by workmen, was not lit, and Billy crashed down it fracturing his skull. The newspaper report differs slightly and sounds much worse. He was taken to Whipps Cross Hospital. I don't know if he was dead on arrival or died later.

His body was eventually brought home in a coffin, to Princes Road, as was normal then, and put in the front room at 112. I was told that Nan sat him up and dressed him. Also that Dot and Peg, who were about 11 years old at the time, used to creep into the front room and look at him in the coffin (the lid was off) and lift up what my mother described as a 'little lace cloth' that was covering his face. It's only now that I can appreciate, as any mother could, how terrible it must have been for Nan to open the door to a policeman on the doorstep and be told this news! Someone said that Bette was conceived/born soon after to 'replace' Billy and help Nan cope with the loss. No-one really talked about it but, obviously, I was told at some time, so it wasn't kept a secret. Indeed, when I was quite young (pre-school age), I used to regularly go with Nan to St John's churchyard, Buckhurst Hill, to tend Billy's grave. We used to get water from a tap at the side of the Church and borrow the watering can there. I remember this clearly and we often left flowers. There was a marble urn on the grave with 'Billy' inscribed on it. I could still find the grave today, I think, although apparently the urn has gone.

Newspaper report entitled 'Boy Cyclist's Death':

An inquest was held at Walthamstow on Monday on William George Buck, 14, house-boy, of Princes Road, Buckhurst Hill, who died in Whipps Cross Hospital from a fractured skull, following an accident on his pedal cycle in Upper Park, Loughton, where he was employed.

Mr Frank J Green, Lambourne Road, Barking, a drainage contractor, said he was laying pipes across Upper Park in connection with a house under construction. Half the trench had been completed and filled in. The other half was ready by midday on Wednesday. Before filling in he had to get the trench approved by the local authority. At 12.30 the Council were notified that it was ready to fill in. No one came and about 3.15 he tried to get some red lamps, but his man was told at the Council Offices that all the lamps were out. He then 'phoned to the Architect, Mr Upson, who was at Romford, so that he might get some lamps. Meanwhile witness guarded the place. About 5pm he saw the lamp of a cyclist coming down the hill, and shouted and waved. The cyclist, who was coming 'terribly fast', did not stop, and hit one of the pipes at the end of the trench, and was thrown with a complete somersault 30 yards down the road. Mr Frank M Upson, High Road, Loughton, architect and surveyor, said he employed Green to lay the pipes. Witness obtained some lamps at Romford, but was delayed by fog, and did not arrive back at Loughton until about 6 o'clock.

PC J Atkinson said the arrangement of the lamps in Upper Park made it very dark at the spot.

The jury returned a verdict of accidental death, and said they felt very strongly that red lights should have been placed on the obstruction. If that had been done, probably the accident would never have happened.

## **Mabel Buck**

Mabel was the sister of George (Grandad) Buck. Mabel married Cecil (or Cyril as Grandad used both names) Gurton in 1923. They lived in Kent initially and had two daughters, Yvonne (known as Bonnie) born in 1925 and Kathleen, born in 1926. When the girls had grown up, Mabel and Cecil moved to Bournemouth, apparently because they were keen golfers. They lived at 28 Kingswell Road.

We (my mother, Nan, Grandad and myself) visited and stayed there when I was about nine. It was a 'free' holiday, but I had to share a single bed with my mother. I remember Mabel was an awful cook! A horrible fatty stew one day and pig's liver another. I probably never ate a thing! I was more affronted when, at one meal, she said to me that she hoped I 'wasn't wetting myself on her chair'. I was only 10 years old! Yvonne never married and died less than ten years ago. She had dementia.

Kathleen married John Camden-Woodley in 1955 in Bromley, Kent. I think he was a US soldier. They separated at some time, but did have one son called Paul born in 1956. I traced him to Newton Abbot, Devon, and sent a few old photos to him, but he wasn't interested in keeping in touch, although he did email me a photo of himself and his two children.

## **Family conflict**

I am not sure exactly why Nan (Alice Buck, née Pegrum) and our mothers stopped speaking to some of the Pegrums (well, it was just Olive really, who was ostracised in this way and she was married to John Pegrum – Nan's brother) and the fact that they never ever spoke again!

It was something to do with Bette (Nan's youngest daughter) being pregnant, before she was married in 1957. It sounds quite crazy now, but you must remember these WERE different times! From what I was told, Nan was in the queue at the fish and chip shop in Queen's Road one Friday evening, and Olive in same queue, must have said something, which caused a big row – I do not know any other details, but it must have been serious to cause such a rift! All I can say is, that, as us Buckhurst Hill children (Linda, Geoff, Billy and Julie) grew up, we knew that we didn't speak to Olive and she didn't speak to us. This was quite awkward at times, as she was often with Auntie Madge (one of Nan's sisters), who DID speak to us, but only if she wasn't with Olive!!

I can clearly remember my mother, Peggy 'bristling' with annoyance, and/or crossing to the other side of the road, when our paths crossed, which was fairly regularly, as everyone shopped in Queen's Road and went to local jumble sales, etc. I can remember talking to Madge who was friendly enough, but Olive just sort of looked at us, and said nothing. She had a very bitter hard face. She lived with John, on the High Road in Buckhurst Hill for many years, in the maisonettes next to St John's Court, where Bette lived, and they all used the corner shop there, but they NEVER, EVER spoke.

*To be continued*

**Linda Kidd**



## Cars in High Road, Loughton

**Chris Pond** writes: John's expertise may help, but I personally reckon this is 1960–61, noting the reverse number plates on the duo-tone Prefect 100E and the newer Anglia. The older car must be an Austin. Note also the delivery push bike, without basket, so 'running light' ...



I'd agree with that. I think the Ford Anglia would be 1711 VW. Reversed VW was commenced in March 1960 starting at 1001 (to avoid duplication with trade plates). My car spotting skills started around 1950, so cannot confirm the Austin is such, but it probably is. There seems to be another pre-war or early post-war car beyond the 'Austin' and such cars started to disappear fairly rapidly when MOTs were introduced. I suspect the bloke on the delivery bike was returning after taking somebody a box of something. I rode a bike like that in 1968 when I worked for Warrington Co-op as a holiday job – Keith Ward fixed the job for me. I think the car behind the Esso sign is a Vauxhall E-series (my father's first car was one of these and I collect models of these) and that style of grille was discontinued in 1955. Assuming Brown's were selling it and the photo dates from 1960, it would seem a relatively old car for them to sell. I think the scooter is a Series I Lambretta, production of which, from memory, stopped in 1958. I had a Series II which I bought for £18 whilst at college and ran for 3½ years. I did keep something from it and that is now worth over £2,000. I will leave you to work out what it is!

**John Harrison**

## Some events of 1968

### Put God First, Self Last, says Headmistress

Children should be taught to 'put God first, other people second and themselves last,' headmistress Mrs L E Sharpe told parents of Daiglen School, Buckhurst Hill, at the annual speech day in the Hawkey Hall, Woodford Green, on Thursday last week.

'The standard of behaviour of the boys here is very good', she said. 'This is because you in your homes and we in this school train not only their minds but their spirits as well.'

Mrs Sharpe reported that 19 boys passed their selection exam at 11, and for the first time in the history of the school three boys had won scholarships, one to Chigwell School, one to Forest and one to Bancroft's.

Guest of honour Mr P W Rowe, headmaster of The College, Bishop's Stortford, warmly congratulated the school on these results which he described as 'quite staggering'. He continued: 'Because we are both small

schools, we both value the part played by individual children within the school community. As in a large family they are allowed to grow as only they can grow, in their own different ways.'

Prizes were presented by Mrs E W Turner, wife of the school's Parent Teacher Association chairman. After the prizegiving the parents were entertained by the pupils with performances of *Peter the Rabbit*, *King Alfred*, and *The Seventh Dungeon* as well as a percussion band.

### Record Entry Hallmarks Golden Jubilee Show

Hundreds of visitors flocked to the Centenary Hall, Buckhurst Hill, throughout Saturday afternoon for the Golden Jubilee Show of Buckhurst Hill Horticultural and Allotments Society. A record entry of 540 exceeded last year's by more than 150.

Winner of the Jubilee Trophy for a vase of cut flowers was Mr C L Boyden, who also took the RHS Banksian Medal as the biggest money-winner in the show.



*This photo shows the famous television gardener Peter Seabrook (born 1935) and Mr A W Taylor (right) looking at a floral entry in the Golden Jubilee Show in 1968 (photograph courtesy of the 'Gazette and Guardian', 26 July 1968)*

Two silver challenge cups went to Mr A W Tilley, one of the society's patrons. He won the cup for the most points in section one of the show and the cup for the best Buckhurst Hill resident in this class.

Winner of the British Fuchsia Society blue ribbon was vice-president of the Buckhurst Hill Society, Mr F A Skerry. The Tilley salver for a floral arrangement to celebrate 50 years of horticultural shows was awarded to Mrs B Reed.

*Gazette and Guardian, 26 July 1968*

### And more on gardening ...

*Long, long odds against success but Kath's alpinists win*

Lively Kath Dryden is the kind of lecturer who will fill a hall on a January night, but on one occasion, two ladies walked out on her. Mrs Dryden had taken along a sample of cow manure and was busily showing how to separate the worms from the good bits when two squeamish members of her audience departed. Well, they couldn't have been gardeners – must have strayed in from the floral art group.

But that is the Alpine Garden Society's Kath Dryden, an ex-WAAF who brings the Battle of Britain spirit to gardening. Her garden at Loughton, Essex [3 Roundmead Avenue], is a dahlia grower's paradise – rich clay which never dries out because of an underground stream. So, what does Kath grow? Alpines – which need poor soil to keep them in character, and often a restricted amount of water.

'Once alpinists get their roots down to the clay, they 'blow-up' – become gross – so we have to counteract all the time to keep the scale of the plants right', Mrs Dryden told me. 'We do this mainly by repropagating a plant which has become over-large and replanting in poorer soil.'

Kath (for Kathleen) also experiments with growing plants in an 18–24 inch-deep bed of pea shingle. 'Not altogether a success, though', says Kath. 'The plants take a

long time to get established, and once they do get their roots down to the clay – well, you're back to square one!



Other beds are made up of mixtures of peat/leaf mould/Cornish river sand, and loam/sand/peat. Apart from landscaping the garden into its present attractive series of curves, this building up of special beds has formed the bulk of the heavy gardening. 'Once screes are made there is no heavy work in alpine gardening,' Kath says. 'No bedding, no ground preparation in winter, no bonfires. All the work is smaller in scale, easier to handle.'

'For your visitors, there is so much to tell about the plants because you move around the world as you move around the garden – the Himalayas, Japan, Middle East – and I am now trying to build up a collection of plants from the New Zealand Alps. But this means that you have to get a knowledge of the moisture requirements of plants as opposed to the amount of exposure to sun they need. And you've got to learn it in your own garden; what I do in Essex would be of no use to someone in Surrey or parts of the Midlands.'

'Most people withdraw water from their alpiners in winter for the rest they need. But I go against this. I start withholding water in July and August. If there are few frosts, I give a little water from November to January and by February I am pouring it on. This mirrors the natural conditions of many of the plants, with a dry summer and being under snow in winter with the moisture trapped in.'



No heating would normally be needed in the alpine house in winter as the plants need a period of vernalisation to gain the vigour to produce their blooms, but the Dryden garden is on the fringe of Epping Forest. In the winter months, the forest fogs roll down and envelop the garden in a clammy cold, so a low power fan heater has to be used to deep dry air moving in the greenhouse.

In spite of all the difficulties, Mrs Dryden, who is assistant show secretary of the 8,000-strong Alpine Garden Society, would not like to garden far from where she is now. But she thinks a square garden would be easier to plan than her present long narrow one. 'It would be easier to hide the alpine house and frames – all the working side of the garden', she says.

The joy of an alpine garden is in small details, not in a showy glamorous display. But there is no month of the year without flower of some kind, and, surprisingly, spring is not the peak of the alpine year, according to Mrs Dryden. 'Midsummer brings the really interesting alpine plants, with the campanulas following on to the gentians.'

There is a chance, too, of planning colour schemes more completely than in an ordinary garden. For the lovely tones of the rocks, stones, shingle and slates which can be used to top dress screes add an exciting extra dimension which the creative gardener can use.

**Ken Lauder**

From *Garden News* of 29 March 1968 price 9d. From the archive of Buckhurst Hill Horticultural Society, with thanks to Pat Thompson, Joan Francies, Diane Webb and the Committee.

Kath Dryden (1925–2009) moved from Loughton to Sawbridgeworth just as this article was published. She went on to a fine 'career' with the Alpine Garden Society, who have an award in her honour. She received the great accolade of the RHS's VMH (Victoria Medal of Honour), and a detailed obituary can be read in the *Alpine Society Journal* of 2009, which is available online.

## History in the Baking

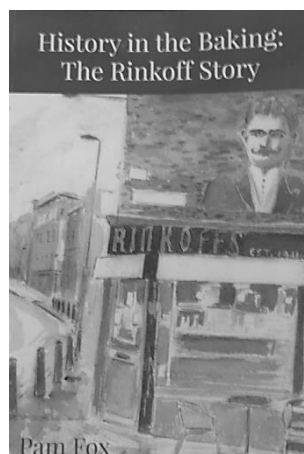
Trying to get some exercise in these challenging times, we decided to walk from home (Snaresbrook) to the City of London. The first part of the journey took us through Leytonstone and Stratford (great to meet psycho-geographer John Rogers on the way), to Bow Church.

Resuming on another day, we started at Bow Church and continued through Stepney. This was on a Saturday, and, feeling like we needed a coffee, we saw an A-board on the pavement advising us that Rinkoff's Bakery was open. Never having heard of this establishment, we turned left, though the alley

and . . . there it was!

Superb coffee, pastry and a delicious-looking sourdough loaf purchased, I was delighted to see a history of the Bakery for sale – not something one normally sees in a bakery. *History in the Baking: the Rinkoff Story* can be recommended.

Written by Pam Fox, this is not just a very detailed and interesting history of



the bakery and its products. It is also an excellent social history, covering the arrival, settlement and careers of the Jewish Rinkoff family, from their arrival in England from Ukraine in the early years of the 20th century to the present day. There is a family tree, and good illustrations. Anyone interested in the Jewish East End would enjoy this book.

*History in the Baking: The Rinkoff Story* by Pam Fox, published by Rinkoff's Bakery, 224 Jubilee Street, London, E1 3BS, price £12. ISBN 978–1–5272–4885–4. Available from the bakery, which has a website.

**Lynn Jones**



## More on *Newsletter* 226

### The McPherson murder

Further details of the McPherson murder have come to light. The house involved was No 9, The Croft. The rest is correct, save that Edward was a foreman pipe fitter rather than a ganger. Interestingly, this was during the couple of years when Loughton was part of the Chingford registration sub-district and the Coroner operated from the very short-lived Chingford Courthouse in the Ridgeway.

Chris Pond

### Views by the Rising Sun

There were two items of interest to me in this October/November 2020 edition of the *Newsletter*. From 1948 to 1957 I attended Forest School although I lived near Gants Hill and thus travelled daily usually on the 144 bus along Woodford Avenue, changing at the Waterworks. There I usually caught the 38A bus or the 581 trolleybus mentioned in the article 'Views by the Rising Sun'. As it was only two stops it was also possible to walk through the forest although, as I have never been an early person, I was usually at the limit of my time in the morning; however, after school in the afternoon I often walked to the waterworks either beside the road or else through the forest. Whichever way I went, I passed the tea hut which featured in the article. The photograph, which your correspondents date to the 1950s, is exactly as I remember it. The site now seems to have completely disappeared and the forest grown up where it was.

For part of that period sweets were rationed but I often used to spend a few of my pennies there, almost always on a packet of Trebor refreshers or Rowntree's fruit gums. My favourite sweets were sherbert lemons but I do not think that I got them there for some reason. On the other side of the road beside the Rising Sun there was a pond, known I gather as the Bulrush Pond, but in those days there were boats available for hire at certain times of the year, although I never took advantage of that opportunity. However, I do remember that we boys used to investigate if it froze during a cold spell to see if one could venture onto the ice. Even in those days I think that there was a lot of vegetation round the edge so that it was rare to be able to get onto the more open areas where the ice looked more inviting.

### Tram tracks

I was also interested in the article 'A new meadow in Epping Forest' which mentions that tram tracks last used in 1939 were discovered during the works to recast Whipps Cross roundabout. At school at that time in winter, if sport had to be cancelled because of cold, frosty weather, some kind of physical exercise was organised. One of the forms which this took was what I believe was called 'roadwork' when a squad would have to run around local tracks and roads where one of the regular routes was along the road to Whipps Cross roundabout. I remember seeing these old tram tracks along there in those times; as a child I had only ever known the trolleybuses (including the turning circle at the Napier Arms), so I was fascinated

by this evidence of an earlier world. As my parents regularly referred to the trolleybus depot in Ley Street, Ilford, as the tram depot, I was not unaware that trolleybuses had replaced the trams which one had to travel to central or south London to see in the 1940s and early 1950s.

Roger Gibbs

### Loughton High Road: 1940s–1960s

Jane Jones's article as a newspaper girl in Loughton in the 1960s brought back many memories (*Newsletter* 226, page 12). Jack Street was indeed a familiar figure, always immaculately dressed in tweed jacket and leather gaiters. He was still delivering milk directly from his magnificent copper and brass churn into doorstep jugs in Staples Road, when I was at primary school there in the 1940s. Later, he graduated to wide-necked milk bottles with cardboard stoppers. Radbourne's dairy shop and yard at 112 High Road (next to Heyward's the greengrocers) also used horse and cart delivery in the 1940s, eventually changing to battery-operated floats, which the driver controlled from a long handle whilst walking at the front. The two cottages adjacent to Radbourne's and owned by them were eventually turned into Loughton's first self-service grocery shop.

Waterlow's paper shop was previously owned by a Mr & Mrs Johnson and together with G & M E Charlton at 235 High Road and W H Smith at the station, handled all of the newspaper deliveries in the village. Charlton's even did an evening delivery service for the early editions of the London evening papers.

My Uncle, James Duncan Smith owned the Ellis Shoe Stores in Loughton and also a similar shop in Queen's Road, Buckhurst Hill. After his death, they were run by his widow, my Aunt Marjorie, who eventually sold them to R P Ellen. They continued as shoe shops, before the Loughton shop became a bookshop.

I wonder if readers will recall Barton & Son, ironmongers at 132 High Road, a family business run in the latter years by Mr Brian Barton and his genial manager, Mr Woods. Brian Barton's son Peter was at Forest School when I was there. Barton's stocked almost everything in the way of ironmongery, lawn mowers and tools as well as paraffin for lamps and stoves. In the 1940s most of the shop floor was occupied by oil stoves, ostensibly for sale but were lit to heat the premises. I can still recall the pungent smell of burning paraffin in the dimly-lit premises on a cold winter's day!

Philip Shaw

### *The Essex Journal*

Readers are recommended to take a look at a copy of the Autumn 2020 issue of the *Essex Journal*. Not only is it much larger than usual (138 pages), but Loughton, and our own Richard Morris, feature prominently. The 'Richard Morris Special' edition includes a tribute to Richard by Chris Pond, and a review of no fewer than four of our publications, two written by Richard. In addition, there is an excellent article on the Loughton Blue Plaque scheme by Chris, giving the background to the scheme and a full list of

plaques as at the end of 2020. There is also a most interesting article on Bishop Edmund Nathanael Powell (1859–1928), son of Nathanael of Buckhurst Hill; and an article on the travels of King Edward I in Essex, who is now known to have visited Chingford and Walthamstow.

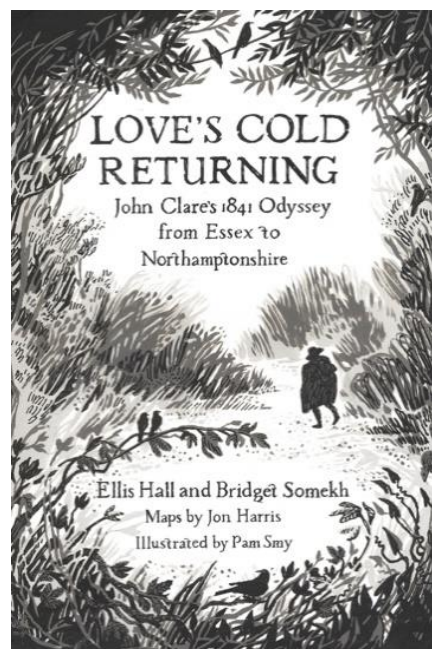
Two editions of the *Essex Journal* are issued every year, in May and November; subscription is £10 and details are at [www.essexjournal.co.uk](http://www.essexjournal.co.uk) **Editor**

## John Clare – a new book

I am writing to you on behalf of authors Ellis Hall and Bridget Somekh whose new book: *Love's Cold Returning: John Clare's 1841 Odyssey from Essex to Northamptonshire* may be of interest to Loughton & District History Society. We hope you may be able to help us spread the word about this important new work.

On 20 July 1841, John Clare (1793–1864) – ecologist and outsider poet – fled a lunatic asylum in Epping Forest and embarked on a four-day journey across five counties to find his adored 'wife' and

muse, Mary Joyce. But Mary had died three years earlier, a spinster. Without money or provisions, and lamed by a broken shoe, Clare endured extreme hardship to be reunited with Mary. Clare was toiling home to a truth he would struggle to acknowledge – that his memory of their marriage was a delusion.



Part detective story, historical adventure and meditation on love and loss, the book has recently received a wonderful review in *The Times Literary Supplement*: 'Clare enthusiasts will appreciate the equal measures of passion and factual precision that Hall and Somekh pour into their hybrid, multifaceted book', and also from other social historians and literary experts.

The Cambridge Centre for John Clare studies, at a Zoom talk with Ellis and Bridget, declared the event to be 'profoundly moving'.

ISBN 978-0-9926073-1-9, £20 paperback. Available from Amazon or directly from the publishers

[www.thirteeneightyone.com](http://www.thirteeneightyone.com)

**Claire Sawford**

For more on John Clare see *Newsletters* 175 and 197.

## Barbara Harmer



Late last year Loughton Town Council commemorated the UK's first female supersonic pilot, Barbara Harmer, with the installation of a Heritage Plaque at 91 Staples Road, Loughton, her place of birth.

Born in 1953, and moving from Loughton just a year later, she achieved her ambition of making history in 1993, when she was first officer on a BA Concorde flight from Heathrow to New York. She later retrained to fly Boeing 777s. She died in 2011. The full story is told in *Think Loughton*, No 90, Autumn 2020.

## The Woodford Hunt



A view, posted in Woodford Green, in February 1922. The recipient was Loughton-born George William Gould, who lived at Chigwell Lodge for many years. The message says – 'Congratulations and all good wishes for a Happy Birthday and many of them, W and W – I expect you have one of these.' The building is thought to be the Bowls, Chigwell. **Editor**

## The 'Big Top' returns?



At the beginning of November, the Victoria Tavern erected a big canopy between the pub and their garden. This was Loughton's circus field, and Gertrude Green relates in her memoirs that once, an elephant was used to move trucks onto it. Sir Joseph Lowrey built cottages about 1910 and the fair and circus field ceased, leaving just the garden of the Victoria. The pub's enterprise was thwarted on 5 November, however, by the Covid lockdown phase 2, as the new tent was part of the licensed area, which had to close.



## Weather vanes and cobblestones: the story of Braeside Stables

As a horse-mad 10-year-old growing up in the middle of Loughton, the discovery that there was a stable yard and actual horses just five minutes from my house was exciting beyond words. I had been riding my bike round the neighbouring roads when I noticed a small sign which read 'Braeside Stables' on a wooden five-bar gate under a tree at the bottom of Connaught Avenue, just where it joined with Ollards Grove. I stopped my bike and turned back to the gate and saw that beyond it was an unmade driveway that led to the most lovely little stable yard with an arch and a weather vane, and I could see a horse's head over a stable door. I must have stared down that driveway for a good 10 minutes; obviously I didn't go in, I think it said 'guard dog loose', but I wouldn't have anyway.

'Braeside' was built as a substantial red brick Victorian family style house in the 1890s with an attached coach house and stable yard, and was designed by local architect Rex Foster. Its location at the bottom of Connaught Avenue where it meets Ollards Grove, and just off the High Road opposite what was then the Crown Inn, made it a desirable residence and convenient for local amenities. When it was built it had road frontage of 50 metres which took it to the boundary of what is now 5 Connaught Avenue and the plot was 47m deep.



*Braeside in the early 1900s*

The coach house and stables were built on three sides of a cobbled yard which drained to the centre, it had three loose boxes, and a number of stalls on two sides and on the third, two rooms for saddlery and harness on the ground floor and a large room on the first floor which could have been originally living quarters for the grooms. The two-storey part was joined onto the main house. The stables were large and airy with vented roofs and paned windows. There were cobbled floors throughout each with a central drain and a cast iron manger. Each stable had an iron ring for tying up the horse and outside there were further tie rings with adjoining hooks where horses were tied up. The archway gave access to the rear of the building where there was a brick-built pit area for manure.

The first recorded residents that I can find were Alfred and Sidney Kemp who lived there at the turn

of the last century. They may even have had it built. I found a description of Alfred Kemp in a book entitled *Leaves from a Hunting Diary in Essex* as he was a subscriber to the Essex Hunt; it says he was a fine horseman, winning point to point races in 1888 and 1889 and was a regular polo player with the West Essex Polo Club and when he stopped riding following an accident, he was elected Chairman of the Royal Epping Forest Golf Club at Chingford with its 500 members. There was a photograph of him on his grey mare 'Dolly' who was probably stabled at Braeside. I couldn't find anything about his brother Sidney.

From the census records I discovered that subsequent residents of Braeside included a Mr R Simpson-Shaw who lived there in and around 1905 and then Mr J F Gray who lived there from 1910 until the start of the First World War in 1914, at which time the house was vacant and accepted by the War Office for use as an auxiliary military hospital.

The Braeside VAD Hospital was opened in January 1915 run by volunteer members of the Essex/36 Volunteer Aid Detachment (VAD). It had 15 beds and was fully equipped and over 84 patients were treated including seven operations in the first year. By 1917 it had 25 beds increasing to 33 before it closed in 1919. (A blue plaque commemorating this was installed in 2012.) From 1919 until 1923, Braeside was an annexe for Loughton County High School for Girls whilst an extension was built at the main school in Alderton Hill.

In 1927 Ellen Giblett (formally of Beech House Farm) acquired the property and retained it until at least 1939 and during some of that period ran it as a guest house. Various members of the Giblett family retained ownership until 1956 and used it as a family home. Betty Pearce, who lived in Ollards Grove during the 1940s, was friends with Joan Giblett and remembers helping to arrange a treasure hunt for Joan's 21st birthday at Braeside.

With the introduction of the motor car, the stables were no longer used by the family and they were let out to various tenants including a local dairy for the horses that pulled the milk carts; and later on to a man called Freddy who kept horses for use in films at Elstree. When Freddy was looking for someone to take care of the horses while he was away after Christmas 1948, local greengrocer Nin Howes introduced her friend Lyn Westby, who was looking for some part-time work and she agreed to start work after Christmas. Lyn was 24 with a husband, Alan, and two very young sons and lived in Lower Park Road in half a rented house. She received a call on Christmas Eve to say the horses seem to have been abandoned and could she go and attend to them, so she rushed round there and was met by a yard of starving horses and nothing with which to feed them. She used her housekeeping and what she could borrow to buy hay, straw and feed and spent most of that Christmas running back and forth to Connaught Avenue. In spite of police enquiries Freddy was never found.

With the Giblett's agreement, and in spite of having no money, Lyn took over the tenancy of the

yard and came to an arrangement with the owners of the horses so that they paid her cash to look after them and, when they were back in full health, Lyn started to give some lessons and take out rides in Epping Forest. In spite of its ramshackle appearance with doors hanging from their hinges and in a state of disrepair, it was the start of the most memorable and important time for the little yard and it became known as Braeside Livery and Riding Stables, with Mrs Lyn Westby as the proprietress.

The riding school became enormously popular very quickly. It came at a time after the war when motorised transport was taking over from horse-drawn vehicles and both adults and children who had never previously been involved with horses decided they'd like to learn. Men and women would come to the stables after work, often in their work clothes and shoes and pay for an escorted ride in the forest. There being no enclosed arena in which to learn the basics, clients were taken out in groups with a new rider being led on a leading rein by the mounted instructor and taught to ride along the forest paths and grassland until they became proficient enough to control the horse adequately on their own.

There were also young girls and boys who could walk to Braeside after school and in the holidays, and spent all their spare time indulging their passion in riding and horses. Some even had their own ponies that were also used in the riding school. They learned every aspect of stable management including mucking out, sweeping, feeding, grooming and tack cleaning. They knew every horse and pony and all had their favourites. At one time the riding school had 20 horses and ponies, some were kept in fields in Nursery Road.



Clients of the riding school were treated to picnic rides, treasure hunts, paper chases, tea rides and Sunday morning rides to a Forest pub. In those days you could ride where you liked in Epping Forest and didn't have to pay like you do now. Riders at Braeside took part in the Debden Carnival and local horse shows and gymkhanas including one at Linder's Field in Buckhurst Hill, Fairlop and Chigwell, and even the opening ceremony for the Bank of England Printing Works in Debden. There were several organised trips to prominent horse shows, point to points and other outings, usually in Lyn's 1928 Austin Seven which as

well as the dogs, took up to ten passengers at a tight squeeze.

Many people who later went on to become prominent figures in the horse world, both locally and nationally, discovered their love of horses at Braeside. Gloria Taylor, now the proprietor of High Beech Riding School (which is one of the few remaining riding schools in the forest) learned to ride at Braeside, and Bobby Stone who set up Pine Lodge Riding School in Lippitts Hill was also a Braeside graduate. There are many more.

In 1956 the stables and gardens were separated from the house and sold to a man called Harry Turner, who applied for planning permission to develop the stables, which was refused by the council, but the gardens were developed and the existing maisonettes were built in 1958. Also in 1958, the main house was sold to White and Miles, local architects, who obtained permission from Chigwell UDC for commercial use and moved their business there in 1960. Around that time, the stable yard was given a significant makeover, changing the old stalls to loose boxes with new doors and windows and it was painted white for the first time.

In 1958 Lyn had her third child, Sharon, and with her family commitments, the riding school, her very successful dog breeding and showing, Lyn's life was very busy and by 1962 she and Alan decided it was time to give up Braeside so that she could spend more time with the children. They bought a house in Toot Hill and rented some land and took two of the horses with them.

Lyn's decision to give up the yard came as a bombshell to the many people whose lives revolved around the riding school. Nobody wanted it to change and to save it from closure, Sonia Cooper took on the tenancy and ran it as a livery yard, she had been one of the original owners from when the riding school opened.

Many of the established clients stayed at Braeside after the riding school closed and three such people, Terry Taylor, Linda Thorpe and Lynn Ware have many enduring memories of their time there. They told me how it took two days to get rid of the muck heap when it was full, men came on one day and barrowed it through the arch and dumped it onto the yard and then forked it onto a lorry, the next to be taken away. In the big freeze of 1963, all the roads were frozen solid and at the stables, the water froze for thirteen weeks and supplies had to be carried down in buckets from Sheila King's house up Connaught Avenue for the nine horses. They remembered the noise of the machines from the room above the tack room which had been let as a little factory that made jeans and a little van coming weekly to pick them up. The soft red bricks inside the archway were engraved with names of people and horses by those who were there during the yard's busy heyday.

Sonia kept the tenancy for some seven years until the late 1960s when it was sold to Warner Estates who had plans to develop the site, and, when she gave it up, it was let to an acquaintance of hers called Lenny Cavallo. The buildings by this time had once again

fallen into disrepair and in due course the tenancy was taken over again by a group of three concerned people who called themselves the JBD Partnership, including Elizabeth James, who was a retired school teacher and widow and lived off Upper Park and owned an elderly mare called Gazelle, which had lived at Braeside since the days of the riding school. The members of the partnership were primarily concerned with the welfare of the horses and had no money to improve the buildings.

When I left school in 1975, I moved my own horse to Braeside while it was under the management of Mrs James. It took less than five minutes to walk there from my home in Station Road and having started work in London, I used to ride my horse in the evenings and in the winter rode round the residential roads of Loughton with flashlights on my stirrups. My fascination with the yard had never diminished and in fact I had become even more interested when my best friend at school, Sharon, turned out to be Lyn Westby's daughter and I spent hours talking to Sharon's mum about the riding school when I was invited to their Toot Hill home. I was fascinated by the photographs of Braeside at the height of its fame and loved the little water-colour Lyn had painted. See page 16.

Mrs James announced in March 1976 that the JBD partnership was to be wound up as they no longer wanted to manage the yard so had decided to give up the lease. Never being one to miss an opportunity, I discussed it with my father (Alan Witts) who agreed that we could take on the lease for me to run it as a livery yard. We met with Mr Plummer of Warner Estates and he told us that they were intending to develop the site with the land behind it which they had already purchased, when the time was right, but in the meantime we could have a short-term lease with a monthly rental of £25 and so it was agreed and I finally had my dream of running this lovely little yard.

Dad took on the lease in April 1976 (I was only 17 at the time) and one of his stipulations was that we tidied it up and gave it a coat of paint before opening for business, so we spent that very hot summer clearing out years of rubbish, making repairs and painting the walls white, the doors and windows green, and Dad even got up on a ladder and painted all the louvred roofing black and white. It was probably the smartest it had ever looked. The first horses came in on full livery (which meant I had full responsibility for their care) in the September and we were full straight away.

I ran Braeside Livery Stables until 1982 and made many friends during that time, with different horses and owners coming and going. Being tucked in behind Loughton High Road, there was no grass turnout for the horses, or an exercise area on which to train them and by this time, schooling horses on the forest had been prohibited by the Corporation of London. This meant there was always a turnover of customers because many owners would take their horses elsewhere for a holiday at grass during the summer, or to have better training facilities.

We had a good relationship with White and Miles, the architects in the 'big house' next door, and also with Sheila who lived in the upstairs flat on the other side of the drive. Sheila used to give us water via a hose out of her window when our taps froze up in the winter and let us know if a horse had undone its bolts and escaped from its stable in the night. Thankfully that didn't happen often.

The large room above the tack room and feed room was let separately by Warners to various small manufacturing businesses and we eventually took over that lease as well to gain control of who had access rights through the yard after an unhappy encounter with squatters. After that, we let it to some very nice people who made car seat covers.

As time went on, however, it was becoming more difficult to safely ride horses out from Braeside with the increased traffic generally travelling at greater speeds and many drivers unwilling to slow down. We could still ride up Connaught Avenue to the forest but, by then, the horse-riding restrictions imposed by the Corporation of London only permitted horses on the network of sandy tracks. This prevented us from riding across Strawberry Plain during the winter months and we could only join the sandy tracks at Earls Path Pond or at the end of Nursery Road by the Warren which involved riding on busy roads to get there and wasn't popular with my liveries.

In 1982 I went away to take my British Horse Society instructor exams and Braeside continued to run as a DIY yard with people renting a stable and looking after the horses themselves. We gave up the lease in 1983 and it continued as a livery yard but had become tatty again as little maintenance had been carried out for a long while.

Unsurprisingly, in 1986, the yard closed and it was sold to a developer who obtained permission to convert the buildings to a private residence. The building work was completed in 1988 with a fourth side being added and large wooden roofed gates installed at the bottom of the driveway. There was also an additional wing built at the back (where the hay and straw was previously stored). The archway became integral to the house with its inscriptions plastered over and lost forever, and a glass entrance hall built across that corner of the yard. The cobblestones were however retained, with its central drain, and the louvred roof remains a feature from the old building, together with a lone tie ring on an outside wall. It is now called 'The Old Stables'. See page 16.

To date, the house has changed hands three times, and in 2013 it was bought by my brother-in-law Keith Parker and his wife Lisa and their family who have made many further improvements. I am so pleased that it was never demolished and that the building has been preserved for the future as a family house in the middle of a very changed Loughton. I am also pleased that I have been able to make a record of how it used to be.

**Alyson Parker**





Lynn Westby's watercolour of Braeside Stables



'The Old Stables', 2021

## Diana Joan Waller (1923–2019)

Diana Waller, the granddaughter of Loughton's great Victorian historian, William Chapman Waller (1850–1917), has died at the age of 96. The Waller family has



been traced back to Thomas Waller of the parish of Brough in Westmorland, who was born in the latter part of the 16th century and died in 1609. Diana, was the last of the family to have the Waller name, never having married, although another three generations have continued on the distaff side.

Diana, always had an interest in Loughton, visiting her grandmother in the house at Ash Green in her younger days, and later when she visited the Whitaker Almshouses to distribute to the residents the annual benefit from the Waller family trust.

On these occasions she would also spend some time in the churchyard at St John's, tending the Waller grave in which seven\* members of the family are buried. She would have entered the churchyard through the lychgate re-built in 1895, in memory of her aunt Vera Waller who died at the young age of eight years. Inside the church, in the north apse, beneath the window of St Nicholas, are the memorials to her grandfather and his eldest son Geoffrey Francis Waller.

Diana was born in July 1923, and brought up in the small village of Boxted, north of Colchester, where her father, Ambrose Waller, had purchased a delightful house after the First World War. During the Second World War Diana served in the WRNS and saw active service in the Far East and East Africa. After the War

she graduated from St Andrew's University which led her to teach English in Italy. Later in her life she shared her time in Kensington, where she taught at a local school, and was PA to a Professor at Imperial College, and rural pursuits at her cottage in West Bergholt. She always took an interest in natural history and local conservation where she worked as a volunteer.

In 1945, Diana spent some time at the Essex Record Office preparing *A Bibliography of Epping Forest from 1640 to 1945*. This is now in the collection at the ERO (Ref. LIB/E/EPPF13).

On a summer day in June 2011, Diana visited Loughton with her niece Anna Row and her two daughters, and I was asked to show them the various buildings and other links with the Waller family, as well as the Forest. This included the house at Ash Green, where the south-west part of the garden is now the small development of eleven houses called 'Waller's Hoppet'.

In 2016 Diana moved to a care home at Bembridge, on the Isle of Wight, to be near to her niece Anna. She died in September 2019 and is buried in the Churchyard at Bembridge.

The Waller Coat of Arms shown at the heading of this Memorial, was granted to William Chapman Waller in October 1887, by the Garter and Clarenceux Kings of Arms. The Arms are described as

'Argent a bend engrailed Sable surmounted of another plain Or charged with three walnut leaves slipped of the second on a Chief per pale Gules and Azure a Gryphon's head erased between two Saltires of the third And for the Crest On a wreath of the Colours In front of a Saltire Or a Gryphon's head erased Sable gorged with a collar of Annulets interlaced also Or.'

(Taken from Certified copy of the text of the Letters Patent granting arms to William Chapman Waller, made by D V White, Rouge Croix Pursuivant, October 2000).

\*Jane Miller Waller (1881), William Chapman Waller (1917), Emma (Minnie) (1939), Vera Waller (1895), Geoffrey Francis Waller (1908), Evelyn Waller (1945), Ambrose Waller (1972).



Waller Grave, St John's Church, Loughton

**Richard Morris**

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