LOUGHTON AND DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER 184

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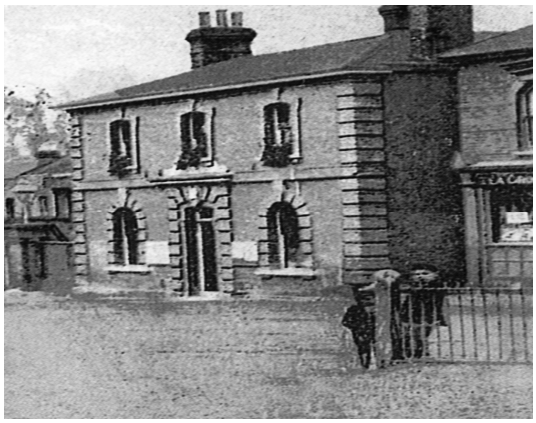


Loughton police station (left), erected 1861 and demolished 1963, has a twin at Ferry Road, Thames Ditton, Surrey (right). Loughton station was authorised in 1860 and opened in 1861, and cost about £1,600 including the land. Charles Reeves, the Metropolitan Police surveyor, obviously reused the Thames Ditton plan of three years earlier, down to the unusual window surrounds with strange sill-corbels and keystones. The lovely lower storey windows were identical to Loughton's and typical of the period; the only example of this type in Loughton now being at 23 Staples Road. The only difference between Loughton and Ditton was that the Loughton station had more pronounced quoins (at the corners of the building): the wisteria is, of course, a later addition. The Thames Ditton station was for sale this year at the very reasonable price of £675,000.

In last year's January *Newsletter*, the L&DHS Committee, in wishing all members and readers a Happy New Year, hoped that 2009 would be better than 2008. Nationally, as we all know, 2009 presented many difficulties, but perhaps there are early signs that 2010 holds rather more promise.

Our own promise is that we will continue our attempts to offer meetings and publications with as wide a spectrum of interest as possible. We thank all members for your support, whether you attend the meetings or cannot make it, and also all contributors to the *Newsletter*. As we often point out, to achieve the aim of offering something for all tastes, we need to keep the material flowing.

It is surprising how often we hear of overseas *Newsletter* readers, or visitors to our website. Through the Internet, some by old-fashioned 'snail mail', Australia, Canada, USA, Europe are all areas that we have reached.

So, Happy New Year to all from near or far!!

Essex and the bank panic of 1825

RICHARD MORRIS

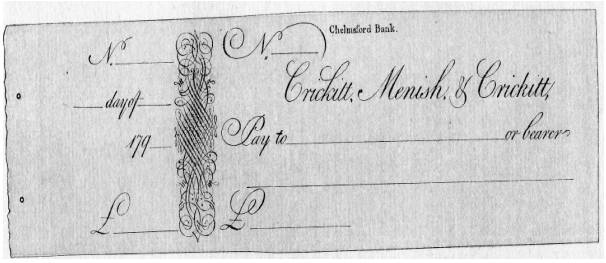
The global banking crisis of 2007–08 is not the first time that banks have run into financial difficulties. In April 1825 a chain of events began that was to change the face of Essex banking. Following the end of the Napoleonic wars Britain had entered a boom economy which coincided with the opening of investments in South America. Such was the popularity of these investments, coupled with a lack of knowledge, that many investors were encouraged to invest in the imaginary country of Poyais. When the fraud was uncovered, the scale of losses was so great that the stock market crashed. Many bank account holders were so alarmed that they queued to take their savings out of the banks which resulted in some banks becoming insolvent.

In the great bank panic of 1825 and 1826, some 70 or 80 English country banks came to grief. Among these were several Essex firms, three of which failed in a week.

The origin of local 'country' banks in Essex is difficult to trace. In London, banking began, on something like modern lines, early in the eighteenth century. In Essex, the system began to grow up somewhat later. None of the country banks started as a bank, but all grew by degrees out of the ordinary business operations of some leading county tradesman or merchant (such as a brewer, a tea-dealer, or a wood-stapler), who was obliged, in the ordinary course of his business, to maintain correspondence with a banker or some kind of financial agent in London. In some cases the original business declined and the banking business grew in importance until the firm became solely a bank.

In Essex the earliest bank was apparently that of Twinings and Mills, established at Colchester by Richard and John Twinings, the well known tea-dealers, and John Mills, also a tea-dealer and leading tradesman of the town. The bank probably commenced its operations between 1760 and 1770. Later the Twinings retired and John Bawtree joined the firm which became Mills, Bawtree & Co.

Another early Essex firm was Crickitt & Co of Chelmsford, Maldon and Colchester, and the bank was carrying on a regular banking business by 1774. After several changes of partners, the Chelmsford branch became known as the Chelmsford Bank.



Cheque and counterfoil dated 179– of Crickitt, Menish & Crickitt, Bankers, of Chelmsford

The early years of the nineteenth century saw the foundation in 1803 of the firm of Sparrow & Co in Braintree, which for over a century held the front rank as a provincial bank. At Billericay a banking firm styling itself Crisp & Butler was at work in 1808. Another firm which was founded at about the same time was Fincham & Co of Epping, described as bankers, dealers and chapmen, but the bank became bankrupt in 1816, when its business was probably taken over by the firm of Joyner & Co.

It was not until 1823, when the first issue of *Pigot's New Commercial Directory of Essex* was published that we get anything like full detailed information on banks in Essex. However, two years later the banking crisis saw Crickitt & Co stop payment on 24 December 1825. What remained of their Chelmsford business was probably taken over by Sparrow & Co. The Colchester branch seems to have weathered the storm but with great difficulty.

Three days after the failure of Crickitt & Co came the suspension of Searle & Co of Saffron Walden and Bishop's Stortford. The third firm which failed within a week was Joyner, Surridge & Joyner of Romford and Epping, who stopped business on 2 January 1826. Another failure at this time, but perhaps unconnected with the bank panic, was the small firm of William Jackson of Rochford which left the town without any banking facilities for two or three years.

The crisis was eventually solved by a large loan from the old enemies at the Banque de France. With the end of the bank panic in 1826, there ensued a long period of gradual development and by the 1840s the great London joint stock banks had begun their invasion of the county. The London & County Bank Ltd opened branches in Braintree and Chelmsford in 1839 and by the end of the century had 16 branches in the county. Five other joint stock banks came to the county including the London Joint Stock Bank Ltd which opened a branch in Loughton.

By the 1890s the private country banks were merging with each other or being taken over by the London joint stock banks, with the result that, by 1906, the only private bank remaining in Essex was the Romford branch of Messrs Hill & Sons of London.

Source: Miller Christy, *The History of Banks and Banking in Essex*, 1906.

From the archives

JOHN REDFERN *wrote to me as follows*: 'In this 70th year anniversary of the start of WWII, I thought that the enclosed photocopies of Joe Faulkner's (Town Clerk) ARP information, issued in August/September 1939, might interest some readers of the L&DHS *Newsletter*.' *For clarity, we have retyped them. Does any member have a wartime memory of any of these shelters or posts? – Ed.*

Public air-raid shelters
Visited Daily and, where necessary, they are pumped out regularly

	Position	*Accommo-dation*
B	Russell Road, Buckhurst Hill	300
A	On Epping Forest at end of Kings Avenue, Buckhurst Hill	300
A	Trench under bridge over Railway by Roding Valley Halt Station	200
D	Opposite the 'Jolly Wheelers', Woodford Bridge	175
A	Chigwell Station, Recreation Ground	150
E	Chigwell Station, Recreation Ground	150
E	On side of Froghall Lane by Grange Hill Station	150
B	Chigwell Row, Recreation Ground	150
C	Rectory Lane, Loughton	150
A	Loughton Cricket Field	300
D	At rear of Crown Hotel, Loughton	275
B	At junction of Forest Road and Smarts Lane, Loughton	300
E	On site of Brook Road, Loughton	150
	Construction recently started or about to start	
B	Palace Gardens, Buckhurst Hill	150
E	Hainault Forest	50
	Total	2950

A – Concrete lined and permanent.
B – To be concrete lined and permanent.
C – To be replaced by new concrete trench nearby.
D – To be refilled as soon as permanent programme allows.
E – Remain as timbered trenches during emergency only.

Air-raid wardens' posts (ARP)
Loughton
1. Englands Lane (Askews Field).
2. Goldings Hill (Stony Path).
3. 35 Church Hill.
4. High Road, Loughton (side of Woolworths).
5. Brook Road (High Road end).
6. Forest View Road and Connaught Avenue.
7. Grange Road (Upper Park).
8. Spring Grove (near Summerfield Road).
9. Roding Road (Senior School Grounds).
10. Roding Road (near Sewage Disposal Works).
11. Elmhurst Way.

Buckhurst Hill
12. Fairlands Avenue.
13. Russell Road and Amberley Road.

14. Princes Road and Forest Edge.
15. Loughton Way (Shrubbery).
16. Roding Lane and Alfred Road.
17. Buckhurst Way and Chestnut Avenue.
18.Bush Road and Hawthorn Road.

Chigwell
19. Vicarage Lane.
20. Brook Way.
21. Golf Course (Entrance).
22. Turpins Lane (Convent Grounds).
23. Fontayne Avenue (behind Manor Hall).
24. Recreation Ground (Chigwell Row).

Charcoal burners in Epping Forest

PETER COOK

It was back in 1995, whilst walking at High Beach, that my wife and I decided, on a whim, to visit the Conservation Centre. Among the many exhibits was one which included artefacts and photographs relating to a recent reconstruction of a charcoal burners' hut, and the fire or kiln. One of the photographs showed the two burners outside their hut at the Cuckoo Pits and, recalling my grandmother telling me of my – as I then thought – grandfather being a charcoal burner, I made some enquiries at the desk. A chat with Mrs Moxey explaining my interest ended with her kindly researching and forwarding to me copies of photographs and documents which had formed the basis for the reconstruction. From these I discovered that the gentleman in the photo was a Mr J Cook, obviously not my grandfather, William, but my great grandfather, John, with his colleague, George Bowtle. The photo, titled 'Charcoal burners' hut at the Cuckoo Pits', but with no names included, appears in Sir William Addison's *Portrait of Epping Forest* with John seated on what appears to be a small barrel.

Before expanding further on their occupation and life in the Forest, it would perhaps be worth spending a few moments to consider the history of the material that nowadays fuels barbecues on fine summer evenings, over which sausages are burnt, steaks go from blue to black and pieces of kebab fall into the coals, while the 'chef', glass in one hand, spatula in the other, is sure that he's giving his partner 'a day off from doing the cooking'!

Charcoal has been with us since prehistoric days and evidence of its use in Europe can be traced back at least 5,500 years. The first use of the term 'coal' in English referred to charcoal, the operatives were known as 'colliers' and Collier Row derives its name from the number of charcoal burners who occupied the area in times gone by.

It was the smelting fuel used in the Bronze and Iron Ages, no other fuel available at the time being capable of reaching the temperatures required for the process. Iron workings have been recorded in England which pre-date the Roman occupation and it was found to be more durable and effective than bronze. With the constantly improving methods in casting and forging, manufacturing on a larger scale became possible. When considering the arms and armour required by the forces of the great civilisations of the past, it is difficult to imagine the workforce required to produce the fuel before manufacturing could even commence. As a guide, long after the Roman army ruled, an estimate taken in 1282 suggested possibly 900 charcoal burners working in just four woods in the Forest of Dean.

By the early 1200s, England's forests – where once the commoners could seek food and fuel, and graze their animals – had been claimed by successive kings as their own. In 1217 Henry III issued, as a supplement to the Magna Carta, the little-known Charter of the Forest. This restored the traditional rights of access for free men and repealed the penalties of death or mutilation for stealing deer, although fines and imprisonment could still be imposed. Over the years a number of court cases were recorded for transgressing forest restrictions, not least 'destroying the Kings vert in the making of coals and selling them by the sack to the great destruction of all the covert' as perpetrated by Thomas Parker in Epping Forest in 1498! The demand for charcoal had become so great that large areas of woodland were threatened with deforestation. One charge levied at the time by the Charter was 2d per year on carts removing wood or charcoal from Royal forests which, while curbing exploitation, provided a source of revenue for the Crown. This Charter remained in force longer than any other, finally being superseded by the Wild Creatures and Forest Laws Act of 1971.

Throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the seemingly insatiable demand continued, and everything from cannon balls to the manufacture of wrought iron required charcoal. Not until 1709 when Alexander Darby successfully smelted iron ore using coke, thereby offering a more plentiful and efficient heat source, did the decline in charcoal production begin. However, it took around a further 200 years to die out, which brings us neatly back to John Cook and George Bowtle outside their hut at the Cuckoo Pits in the early 1900s, and so to the man who said of the industry, and of their knowledge and expertise, 'it is probably doomed to be utterly forgotten within a very short space of time'.

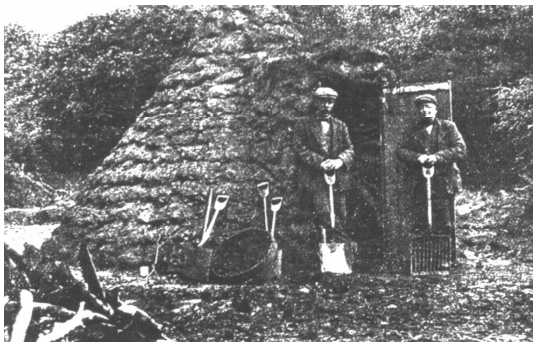
That man was Samuel Hazzeldine Warren who arrived in Loughton in 1903 and whose house in Forest View Road bears a blue plaque in his name. Samuel was a geologist and prehistorian who gained international recognition for the quality and extent of his work. Although he carried out fieldwork in many other counties, Essex, his adopted county, was where he preferred to work. There is no record of how he came to meet John and George but as they were living in Smarts Lane and he in Forest View Road, I like to think it may have been over a pint in the Victoria Tavern or the Carpenter's Arms which subsequently led to him joining them at the Cuckoo Pits, in 1908, to record in detail not only the construction and tending of the fire but also the hut, in which he showed great interest. The account of his time spent with our two colliers would, if recorded here verbatim, prove far too long, for it included among other things much

detail on the hut and its relevance to prehistoric pit-dwellings. I have tried to give a view of their life in the Forest, day and night in all weathers, building the fire, ensuring that it burned properly, raking and bagging and then starting the process all over again.

To begin the operation the wood for burning was cut into approximately one metre lengths and built up directly on the ground, the only preparation being the removal of any turf. A central chimney was formed by laying three pieces on the ground in the form of a triangle with the ends crossing, and continuing to build the triangle to about one metre high. The rest of the cut wood was piled vertically around the chimney to form a stack, or 'cord' approximately four metres long by one metre wide. The pile was lit down the chimney and then completely covered in waste ash ('hearth dust') from previous burnings. The covering seems not to have been specific as I have seen earth, straw and turves mentioned in other information sources. The object was to ensure that the 'burn' smouldered and did not burst into flame, and, to aid this, a wind break of hurdles or bundles of faggots would be placed vertically against a support rail where necessary as a shield. At the end of the burn – which would last several days – the pile was pulled to pieces and graded using a 'collier's rib shovel'. Although shovel-shaped it had bars about 1.5 inches apart and was used to remove the larger pieces which were bagged and referred to as 'the coal'. The next two grades, 'the charm' and 'dust' were separated through different mesh sieves, leaving the waste ash previously referred to.

Hazzeldine Warren was extremely interested in the construction of the hut, being in little doubt that generations of charcoal burners had preserved the simple prehistoric structure from the Stone Age. Built in the conical form of a tepee with twelve poles made from trimmed saplings, it was roughly twelve feet both in height and diameter at the base. The poles were tied together at the top and then fastened with cross-pieces and smaller pieces tied into the spaces to create a framework, onto which were placed turves (grass side in) and overlapping like tiles – cut from inside and around the hut. It seems the hut would be waterproof after a shower to bed the turves in, and they served to provide a relatively stable interior temperature. Inside were two rough beds about three feet apart, each made from three logs with smaller boughs placed across them and covered in straw. In the gangway near the door a small charcoal fire was kept burning which served only to provide a little heat and the means to boil a kettle. The need to tend the fire 24 hours a day for days at a time meant that their meals were brought to them by family members. He also mentions they apparently suffered no inconvenience living in this somewhat primitive shelter, in fact John Cook, who suffered from asthma while in his cottage, had no such problem when living in the hut.

It may be thought that the relatively close proximity of the gunpowder mills at Waltham Abbey would find a ready market for their product but this was not the case. Gunpowder requires charcoal of a much finer grade made from willow or alder, and Waltham Abbey had their own groves of these trees on site. There is, however, mention in Alfred Leutscher's *Epping Forest – Its History and Wildlife*, that the charcoal produced from hornbeam, which was readily available, was sent to the Mills. However, by the early 1900s the demand for charcoal had greatly declined and the two colliers abandoned the site at the end of October 1908. In February 1909 two men from Collier Row used the site for a short period but it appears that the results of their efforts were not very satisfactory, and they seemed to have no understanding of how to repair the hut. John and George returned in July for another brief spell but Hazzeldine Warren wrote at the time: 'Mr Cook does not seem disposed to continue the work any further, as he is not satisfied with the financial result of his labours.' The hut having been vandalised, and with the intention being only to work for a short while, they simply covered the frame with tarpaulins which served their purpose until the (as Mr Warren put it) 'last of the old school of charcoal-burners in Epping Forest' left for the last time. There was a brief renaissance in the opening months of the Second World War, charcoal being required for gas mask filters, but it was seemingly very short-lived.



Geo Bowtle and John Cook (with Colliers' Rib Shovel)

On 6 March 1909 Mr Hazzeldine Warren read his paper 'Charcoal Burners in Epping Forest; Their Primitive Hut and the Formation of Hut Circles', which was accompanied by lantern slides taken from his photographs, at the 271st meeting of the Essex Field Club, and it subsequently also appeared in the *Essex Naturalist*.

My great grandfather, John Cook, died in 1916 aged 64. The report of his death in the local press stated that he had been incapable of any work for the last seven years due to chronic asthma – the complaint that gave him no trouble at all while living in the hut in the Forest.

Have you got it?

The character actress Liz Smith, well known to TV viewers as a player of redoubtable mothers, grandmothers and very awkward old ladies, was a somewhat reluctant resident of Epping for about 18 years. In her book *Our Betty: Scenes from My Life* (Pocket Books, 2006) she describes how she loved to write and paint between acting jobs and how one of her paintings disappeared after an exhibition at Loughton Library. Mind you, she did leave it a long

time before asking for it back! If it is part of your garden shed you might be sitting on a valuable work of art.

'Years ago, I did go through a stage when all paintings had to be big. I used to buy sheets of hardboard and treat them. I painted a portrait of a mermaid, sitting there with her floating hair and fishes and with her trophy, the skull of a drowned sailor, on the rock beside her. I liked it. I sent it to an art exhibition and forgot about it.

Then, about ten years later, when I was sitting dreaming, I thought about it. So I wrote and asked if I could collect it. No reply. Now that was to Loughton Library. I mean to say, if you work in a library, you should be able to write a postcard to say, 'It's not 'ere'. But, of course, I expect the people who saw it have left, long ago. And I suspect by now it could be a partition in a chicken run or serving as a roof to an old shed.'

Although Liz did not really like living in Epping she says she will be eternally grateful to Essex County Council for helping with the education of her children after her husband had left her. TED MARTIN

'Air Loughton' – aviation in the 1930s

MIKE ALSTON

While Loughton didn't have its own airfield, there were several aerodromes within cycling distance, and enough aerial activity overhead to excite the air-minded youngster. I was one of that group and my favourite periodical, after moving on from *Modern Boy*, was *Popular Flying*.

The nearest aerodromes were at Abridge and, a mile or so along the A113, Stapleford Tawney. The former, on the road between Abridge and Theydon Bois, had one small hangar and was the location for two or three air displays during the mid-thirties. As few had cars at that time, many Loughtonians trudged the two or three miles across fields. I, and my family, survived this trek and thought it well worth while! At one of the shows a large three-engined Armstrong Whitworth Argosy airliner (ex Imperial Airways) was present and took passengers on short flights. This indicates that the airfield must have been extensive.

Stapleford was far more substantial, with several large hangars, and was opened as 'Essex Aerodrome' in 1933. It became the base for Hillman Airways which, in 1936, introduced a regular service between there and Paris and other continental destinations. However, after only four months, they moved their operations to Heston. Why they started at Stapleford in the first place is a mystery, as it was an isolated spot with no rail and only poor road connections to London and elsewhere. It operated De Havilland biplane airliners – DH Rapides and Dianas – and, for a schoolboy, it was thrilling to imagine these planes flying all the way to and from distant Europe! It also held at least one air display which I naturally attended.

On the military side, the large RAF station at North Weald was a major attraction (if further to pedal). While its greatest role was in the Battle of Britain, it was very active during the 1930s. At least three fighter squadrons were based there pre-war (nos 29, 56 and 151), and flying a variety of biplanes, including Bulldogs, Gauntlets, Gladiators and Siskins. They were often seen over Loughton flying in formations of nine and I wished, so much, that I was with them! Occasionally a mammoth Vickers Virginia bomber would land there and it was always a thrill for me when one of these large and noisy aircraft slowly and majestically flew *over* our house.

A rarer sight was the airship of which, in the early 30s, Britain had two – the R100 and the R101. After the latter tragically crashed in October 1930, it was decided that the R100 was too much of a risk to keep in service and she was broken up in November 1931. She appeared over Loughton one Sunday afternoon and it was an occasion I cannot easily forget as my parents allowed me to skip the customary Sunday School at St Mary's to witness the unusual sight. On a more sinister note, the German *Graf Zeppelin* visited Britain in 1930, 1931 and 1932. During one of these trips she gave flights from London at the then high price of £10 a head. One day she flew straight over our house, heading towards North Weald. There is little doubt that the opportunity would have been taken to photograph the layout of the major RAF base!

The nearest Loughton came to other aerial activity towards the end of the 30s was the opening of the massive barrage balloon maintenance hangars at Chigwell, leading later to the ring of balloons round the metropolis. Before that the only signs of 'war-like activity' were the occasional searchlight exercises around North Weald and which, to my childish delight, lit up our skies. However, both these were sad auguries for the immediate future and signalled the appearance of far more unpleasant activity in Loughton's skies as the new decade began.

The old printing trade – Part 2

TED MARTIN

The spread of literacy and the press

News sheets both regional and national had appeared since the 16th century. The government's official newspaper, the *London Gazette*, claims to be the oldest existing newspaper in the western hemisphere having first appeared as the *Oxford Gazette* on 16 November 1665.

The *Essex Chronicle* was founded as the *Chelmsford Chronicle* in 1764, and this weekly newspaper is said to be the longest in continuous publication in the country. On 31 December 1838 two newspapers were listed as publishing in Chelmsford: the *Chelmsford Chronicle* (Friday) and the *Essex Herald* (Tuesday). Colchester had the *Essex Standard* (Friday) and the *Essex and Suffolk Times* (Saturday). The *Essex and Herts Mercury* was published in London on Tuesdays.

It would seem probable that the 'county' newspapers were read by those in Loughton who could afford them until, in the second half of the 19th century, better communications by rail made national

newspapers easily available and the local press, exemplified by the *Waltham Abbey and Cheshunt Weekly Telegraph* (1870) and, in the 1880s, the *Independent*, the *Walthamstow and Leyton Guardian* and the *Woodford Times*, made their appearance.

The first ever London Sunday newspaper, *Johnson's Sunday Monitor*, appeared in 1778 and 10 years later came the first evening daily paper. *The Times* started as the *Daily Universal Register* in 1787 but was preceded by *The Morning Post* in 1772 which became part of *The Daily Telegraph* in 1937. *The Morning Post* was produced by John Bell who, in addition to commissioning the beautiful Bell typeface, designed by Richard Austin in 1788, and being an editor and publisher of note, was the first person to realise that newspapers had to be laid out in a different way to books, in columns with short paragraphs. He also introduced the use of the short 's', previously used only at the ends of words, for the long 's' (f).

By 1808 there were 15 morning and evening newspapers in London. Until 1836 there was a tax on newspapers of 4d for every copy; in that year it was lowered to 1d, which was a further stimulus to expansion of the press. The tax was not finally removed until 1855. In 1840 the total number of copies of newspapers published was just over 49m, by 1850 this had risen to nearly 66m copies.

In 1808 there were 216 printing firms in London, over 300 by 1826 and, in 1855, 423. Many of these new printers had been apprenticed in London, but some came from the provinces to set up business in the capital.

More education for the lower classes; the spread of literacy coupled with the demand for news caused by the Napoleonic Wars; and the demands of a new middle class for newspapers, books and commercial print caused an explosion in the production of printed matter of all sorts. These ranged from lurid handbills detailing the latest murder or execution to newspapers, magazines, academic journals, serialised novels published in parts, to bound books for entertainment and study.

Weekly periodical works issued in London on a Saturday in 1846 numbered about 73 and the weekly sale of the most important amounted to nearly 400,000 copies.

Another factor expanding printing in London was the rise of the City as a financial centre and the amount of printing required by business and financial institutions.

From this it can be seen that the printing industry had to expand to cater for the demand and also to specialise. Energetic journeymen became masters and some of their names are still around today. William Clowes founded his firm in 1803 and Jacob Unwin in 1828.

Trade unions

Along with greater expansion came the growth of the trade unions. The repeal of the Combination Acts in 1824 gave workpeople the right to combine in trade unions and the early unions were formed of skilled workers, which of course included printers. One early printing union was the London Union of Compositors which existed from 1834 to 1845 and was succeeded by the London Society of Compositors from 1845 to 1848. It was re-established in 1848.

In the 19th century, and for more than half of the 20th century, each trade skill had its own trade union in London. The provinces had the Typographical Association which covered all skilled workers. Some of the skilled, but predominantly semi-skilled or unskilled, were members of the National Society of Operative Printers and Assistants (Natsopa) which later became SOGAT when it combined with the bookbinders. The London Society of Compositors lasted until it became the London Typographical Society after an amalgamation with the Printing Machine Managers Trade Society and later the readers' union, the Association of Correctors of the Press in the 1960s. After amalgamation with the provincial Typographical Association it became the National Graphical Association (NGA).

The trade divided into product specialisations: (1) newspapers; (2) book printers and (3) jobbing (that is, commercial work of all sorts from magazines and brochures to printed paper bags).

The technology before the 19th century

Type design

The technology of printing hardly changed at all from the days of Gutenberg and Caxton until the 19th century. But there were great improvements in type design, led by the Italians who pioneered the change from the medieval Gothic or black letter to roman type. They went back to the Roman empire for inspiration and their first beautiful roman types were based on the capital letters on Rome's Trajan column.

The adoption of roman type in Western Europe was due to the business acumen of Aldus Manutius. He pioneered the use of roman type designed by Francesco Griffo. As well as being the world's first small-format paperback publisher Aldus commissioned *italic* type from Griffo just to get more words onto a page.

One of the earliest and greatest roman type designs was by Nicolas Jenson in France in 1470. Claude Garamond created classical founts[3] in 1531 which were used in French printing down to the end of the 18th century and Robert Granjon in 1557 created a fount which lasted in use for 200 years and was revived in the 20th century. Types derived from these founts are still used today. The Dutch were also masters of the craft. In England we had William Caslon and John Baskerville who gave us designs that we still use: type derived from Caslon's designs was used in children's books for decades.

Typefounding

In the earliest times some printers produced their own type, but by the 17th century typefounding and printing began to become separate businesses

The method of creating type was still basically the same as Gutenberg's and was a very tedious process. Each letter or punctuation point was engraved in relief on a hard metal punch which was then struck into a copper bar to make a matrix. The matrix was

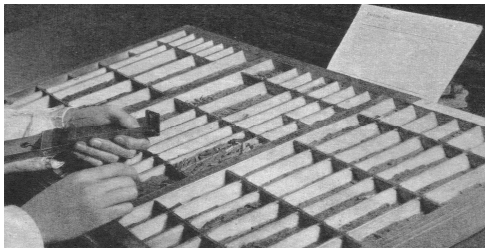
placed into a mould and molten type metal (a mixture of lead, tin and antimony) was poured in to produce just one character or punctuation point. Each character and size of type required a different punch and matrix.

A fount of roman type could consist of 253 basic characters at least for each size and the same again for italic and bold type. There would also be special characters and mathematical and commercial signs. There had to be multiples of every character because there must enough type to set a job completely.

The strain on the eyes in cutting punches was immense. In the 20th century typefounding was mechanised by transferring patterns to a punch-cutting machine.

Typesetting by hand

Type was set by hand into a composing stick, from type cases (compartmentalised trays): the capital letters in the upper case and small letters in the lower case – terms which we still use. Thin strips of lead were placed between the lines to create space between them: this process was called 'leading'– still used to decribe the space between lines. When the 'stick was full the type was transferred to an18 inch tray called a galley.



Setting by hand

Galley proofs were taken when the tray was full and these would go first to the reader to be checked for errors and, after corrections had been made, sent to the author for his corrections. On their return, the corrections were made and then a 'stonehand' made the galleys into pages.

Each type character was a single unit. One slip and everything would fall apart. This was known as printers' pie; type was 'pied' if it got out of order.

Because of the reversal which must occur for printing by direct impression, type was set from right to left. So the compositor had to visualise the line in reverse, and insert the correct amount of space between the words to make each line end flush with the margin. He had to make all of those end-of-line decisions which typists will remember. This why it was such a skilled occupation and once even referred to as the 'art and mystery of printing'.

Page make-up and imposition

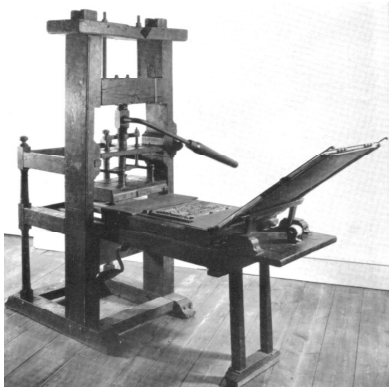
The stonehand split the galleys into pages of equal depth, adding headlines and page numbers and, in more complicated work, balancing text with footnotes. On newspapers, the compositor would have to build the page from many different stories (on bigger newspapers the plan was made by the chief subeditor).

When the pages were made-up the last operation was to 'impose' them: the method of laying out four or more pages (in multiples of four) so that when they are printed onto a single sheet of paper and that sheet is backed up with another set of pages and folded, the pages appear in the right order.

Pages were removed from the galley and then placed into an iron frame, called a chase, laid on an iron table, called an imposing stone (in the early days it was a completely level piece of stone). Pieces of pre-shaped wood of various sizes ('furniture') were used to build the page margins and hold the pages tight in the chase (later metal locks called 'quoins' were used). The type was levelled or 'planed' till completely flat. The chase with type in it was called the 'forme'.

Printing and printing presses

The presses used before and in the early 19th century were essentially the same converted wine presses that Gutenberg and Caxton had used. They could only print two pages on one side of a sheet in a large format called folio or four pages in quarto (quarters) or eight pages in a very small format (octavo).



Seventeenth century press

The forme was placed on the bed of the press and inked by hand using leather ink balls stuffed with wool or feathers. They were kept supple overnight by soaking in a bucket of the printer's urine. Just think what the ink in old books is impregnated with!

The paper was placed on a frame and lowered on to the type. The type and paper were moved under the press and pressure was applied by screwing down a plate attached to a central screw. There had to be consistency of impression between different sheets so that the finished publication would not look uneven. It was a very skilled job.

Binding

Up until the middle of the 19th century books were stored as printed sheets, either flat or folded, and bound up as required and sometimes to a bespoke order. It was quite common for the edges of the folded bound sheet to be uncut when the book was bound, to protect the pages from dust and dirt. The eventual purchaser had to cut the edges with a paper knife.

Apprenticeships

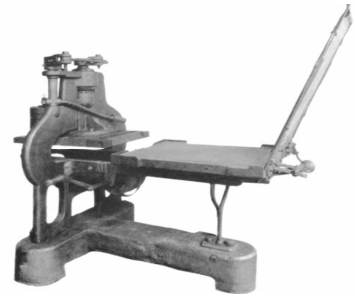
The apprenticeship system was used in printing until very recent years. In the early days you could be apprenticed until 24, which could mean 10 or more years. Later, it was about seven years. Previously, he would learn every aspect of the craft and then perhaps

take over from his master. Division of labour soon appeared and apprentices were trained either in composing, printing or binding. At the end of his 'time' he was usually dismissed because he would have to be paid a man's wage. The apprentice then became a 'journeyman' and 'journeyed' to get another job.

Changing technology

Printing machines

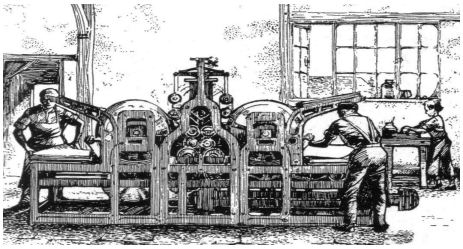
In the 19th century, the methods of production had hardly changed from Gutenberg's time. Type was still set by hand but change was coming in the printing department. The wooden press was still in use in 1800 but it was tiring to work and produced just 250 sheets per hour. In 1800 an iron press was perfected by Lord Stanhope. Stanhope did not patent his invention so it was quickly copied by others and it replaced the wooden press.



The Stanhope Press

The Stanhope Press gave ease of working with evenness of impression. It was followed by the Ruthven Press from Edinburgh and then, in 1817, George Clymer of Philadelphia perfected the Columbian Press and, not to be outdone, R W Cope produced the Albion Press in London. Although made of iron, these were still hand-operated presses.

In 1814 Koenig installed the first steam-driven printing press at *The Times* which increased output from 250 sheets per hour to 1,000.



Koenig's steam driven cylinder press

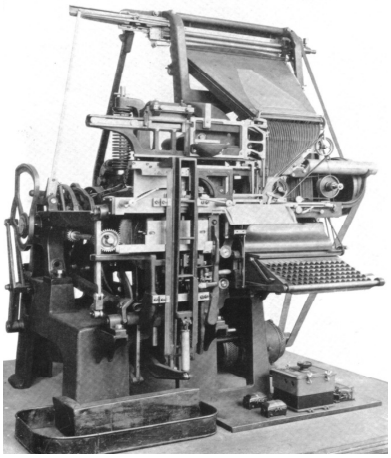
Newspaper offices spearheaded technical change but it was not until after the middle of the century that small, iron, cylinder printing machines were in general use in the book and general trade. By 1850 *The Times* was using a special rotary printing machine.

Printing machines continued to develop into flat-bed cylinder machines powered by electricity for the general trade and the giant rotary presses used by the newspapers.

Composing machines

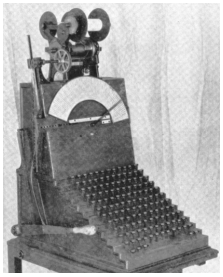
A patent for a composing machine was granted to Dr Church, an American, in 1822, but there is no evidence that it was built. Church's principle, that the machine was loaded with type and each character was released into a composing stick by depressing a key, was followed by almost all inventors of typesetting machinery for the rest of the century. These machines were unsuitable because of the amount of hand-work required and continually reloading the machine with type. The breakthrough came in America in two different ways from two inventors.

Ottmar Mergenthaler (1854–1899), a German immigrant to the United States, trained as a watchmaker and, in 1884, he produced the 'Linotype' which was used throughout the world for over 70 years to set newspapers and books. Mergenthaler used several brass matrices for each character which, when the key was depressed, came down channels to be assembled into a line. Spaces between words were made by using expanding spacebands. The line was sent to a mould, supplied with molten type metal, to cast one solid 'line of type'.

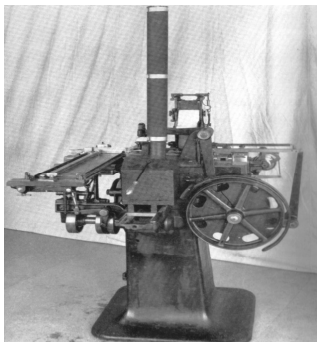


Early 'Linotype' machine

Tolbert Lanston (1844–1913) invented the 'Monotype' machine in 1887 which was used for bookwork and other work requiring excellent typography, again for over 70 years. Though invented by an American, the 'Monotype' found more favour in England than America.



Early 'Monotype' keyboard



Early 'Monotype' caster

The keyboard operator prepared a punched paper tape, about the size of a toilet roll on a separate keyboard. The roll was then placed on a caster which, cast one individual piece of type, or a space, at a time which was delivered onto a galley tray and assembled into a line.

Anglo-American point system and the 'em'

Until 1871 every typefounder used his own measurements for type, so type from different foundries could not be mixed and a printer was generally tied to one founder. In 1871 the Great Fire of Chicago burnt down the Marder Luse type foundries and they decided to produce type to a general standard. A type size called pica (12pt) measuring .16044 of inch was chosen, and this divided by 12 gives the base unit of the system: one point or 1/72nd of an inch. This system is still used to describe the type sizes on your computer. The adoption of the Anglo-American point system by the new composing machines hastened the transition.

The other unit of measurement the 'em' has a longer history. As the capital letter M is the widest in a fount of type it was chosen in the 12pt or pica size to be the standard for measuring the length of lines.

To be continued

Loughton house prices 1930s to 1965

REV JIM BROADBRIDGE

[In our previous edition, Newsletter 183*, we published an article 'House Prices Spiral', a light-hearted look at the state of the local property market in 1964. We are indebted to Jim's 1965 material, now available for L&DHS use, for this more scholarly review of the 35 years or so before that.]*

In 1925 there were 1,600 houses in the village, compared with 914 at the turn of the century. Loughton's first council houses were built in 1927 in England's Lane, and sold for £640 each. The Council bought 6½ acres of farmland and paid for the building of 32 houses for a total sum of £12,000! This was the first acquisition of farmland for residential purposes; but more was to follow, because by the start of the Second World War the land at the back of the Bus Garage had been used for the Harwater Estate, while the Brooklyn Avenue area swallowed up pasture land between the station and the High Road. Building went on apace in other parts adjoining the High Road, where shops, bus routes and railway station were all within five or ten minutes walk of each other. Several blocks of flats, a novelty in Loughton, were built at the south end of the High Road and in York Hill. Development also took place to the east of the railway between Loughton and Buckhurst Hill in Roding Road, Valley Hill and district.

The inter-war years saw little change in house-prices, save for a slight drop during the Depression. Houses were comparatively cheap, the largest ones available (in Alderton Hill) selling for £3,000, including a large garden. The 1965 price would be as much as £17,000. A list of pre-war prices is appended, together with this year's (1965) average price. The increases are startling, and illustrate the problem facing young married couples who wish to find a home in the parish.

A number of factors influence the house prices shown below. Whilst there are blocks of shops to serve most neighbourhoods, close proximity to a bus route for getting to the High Road shops doubtless affects the choice of road for many wives, unless the family has a car. The deterrent of Loughton's many hills on the pram-pushers has also to be taken into account. For the men, it is the accessibility to one or other of the stations which probably exerts most influence. Debden's station car park is of negligible size, whilst Loughton's is always filled by car-park season ticket holders, so that many vehicles have to be left in the adjoining streets where they are a nuisance, and sometimes an obstruction, to the residents.

Estimated Average House Prices

Road	*1930s*	*1947*	*1965*
Forest Road (old)	£250	£800	£3,250
Roding Road	£525–£700	£1,750	£5,000
Lower Park	£700–£800	—	£5,500
Harwater Drive	£750–£850	£2,100	£6,000
Hill Top	£800–£1,400	£2,900	£6,500
Spring Grove	£1,000–£1 ,500	—	£7,000+
Spareleaze Hill	£1,800–£2,300	£4,500	£12,000
Alderton Hill	£3,000	£5,500	£17,000

Those men without cars who live too far away to walk to either station must rely on one of the four buses (20, 20A, 167 or 254) to take them to The Crown (at the top of Old Station Road) whence they can walk down to the station in three or four minutes.

The apparent advantages of living in some roads are often countered by the inherent disadvantages. For example, being on a bus-route is convenient, but it can be noisy; houses near the forest have pretty views, but there is a risk of damp; there are extensive views from the top of the many hills, but it is a hard walk to get up there; roads leading off the High Road are useful for shopping, but there are always many cars parked there (this is a reflection on the laziness of most motorists, as the Council has provided two large car-parks, within a minute's walk of the shops.)

Thus do the prospective buyers weigh up the pros and cons. Most of them want a garage with the house, which is quite understandable in this day and age, but many of the pre-war houses lack this amenity, and front-gardens have to be used instead.

Since 1945 new estates have been built by the LCC at Debden, and by the CUDC at Hillyfields (near the Bus Garage), and along Valley Hill to the boundary with Buckhurst Hill. The completion of these estates concluded the development of Loughton to all intents and purposes. The dual settlement controls of Epping Forest and the flood-plain of the River Roding are proving invaluable to the residents, and insuperable to the property developers. Consequently the only building now in progress is the redevelopment of existing land. This has been particularly marked on the west side of Goldings Hill, and between Warren Hill and Upper Park. In these areas the owners of

large houses and mansions built in the late nineteenth century have found the rates and upkeep too much for them. Some have sold out completely: Hazelwood is now an Old People's Home, St Margaret's a Children's Home; some have sold out and the house has been demolished, to be replaced by flats or maisonettes (as with Newnham House at the foot of Buckhurst Hill); some have kept the house but sold most of the surrounding park or landscaped garden, leaving the way clear for new roads to be built, as at High Silver, Southern Way, and several other short 'closes' between Nursery Road and the High Road.

Redevelopment: Newnham Flats (J Broadbridge)

The frustrated house-hunter would say that these are merely two-bedroomed terraced houses, at twice the price they are worth, and twice the price they actually cost elsewhere. The builder's retort is that the land in Loughton costs twice the price it does elsewhere, and that is why £6,600 is the selling price. This, of course, is the crux of the matter. Where else can be found a town with a 'natural playground' such as Epping Forest occupying a third of its acreage, yet only forty minutes' journey from London's Theatre-land? Add to that Loughton's excellent shopping and parking facilities and its attractions become manifest, its land-prices prohibitive, its house-prices logical.

Apart from the Hill Top Estate most of which was erected immediately after the Second World War at the rear of St John's Church, the only private housing estate of any size is Goldings Manor at the top of Goldings Hill. This is a superb quarter of architect-designed houses adjoining the northern border of the Forest. On a spring evening the sound of the birds, the rank smell of the fox, and the peacefulness of the forest convince the visitor that he is lost in the country, and far away from London.

Down the Lane – with thanks to Will Francies

TERRY CARTER

I have a full page article from the *Gazette and Guardian*, dated 25 April 1969, written by Will Francies, the well-known writer on local subjects, particularly his memories of the Loughton of his youth. This piece was headed 'A quiet village called Loughton grows up' and he writes about the first two decades of the 20th century. As, like myself, Will was once a resident of Smarts Lane, I make no apologies for dipping into the article for an extract about what is arguably the most historical road in the town.

Will talks of pre-First World War days:

'when every weekday throughout the summer months, "poor Cockney children" under the auspices of The Ragged School Union, were taken to the headquarters of the Shaftesbury Society in Staples Road, given a hot meal, then "turned loose into the Forest", before returning to the Shaftesbury for tea. Then they made their way **. . .** marching, tired but happy**,** Station-wards, by way of Loughton's own poor quarters, . . . Smarts Lane.

The streamers and rock, the tadpoles and newts in jam-jars, the flowers, were destined for the unfortunate brother or sister left at home. They were a sad sight, for many were barefoot, ragged and filthy, but even when it rained, they sang lustily.

The Council water cart followed, at a not very respectful distance, spraying disinfectant on defiled Smarts Lane.

Smarts Lane is an interesting part of "old" Loughton. Cottages built in the18th, 19th and 20th centuries, some of boarded construction, others seemingly transplanted from a London East End street, line its narrow length as it climbs gently to the forest.

Loughton's first school buildings (numbers 40–46) still stand, and comprise the headmaster's house with classrooms adjoining. They were superseded by a new and much larger school built in Staples Road in 1888, the old buildings being used for many years for the manufacture of tennis racquets.'

[*Until 1965, I lived directly opposite the old British School, which was converted into a single residence a few years ago, and sold for almost half a million! – Ed.*]

Former British School, March 1958 (Broadbridge Collection)

Will continues:

'In the early years of the century poverty was rife; there were drunks, wife-beaters and barefooted urchins, and barrel organs and prancing cockney ladies outside the Lane's three public-houses [which] enlivened weekends in the summer.

Hawkers

Itinerant street hawkers did brisk business on Sundays, offering winkles and grapes (on the same barrow), muffins and crumpets, watercress. Saturdays brought wild rabbits, sweet lavender, the rag and bone man. Occasionally came that favourite of the Lane's children, the philanthropist who handed out a gay windmill in exchange for half a dozen useless jam jars.

On Sunday mornings the bird fanciers could be seen carrying a tiny covered cage. A cock chaffinch, trapped by the cunning use of a singing decoy bird and bird lime, was their miserable captive.'

Even in my days in the Lane elections, whether Parliamentary or Local, particularly the latter, would be of consuming interest, and my mother would hasten to the local Parish notice board to see the results as soon as they were pinned up. On the Lane's reactions to Parliamentary contests in the much earlier part of the 20th century, Will writes:

'Parliamentary elections woke up the village folk. There were crowded and boisterous meetings in Lopping Hall, where Liberal and Conservative harangued the electorate. Schoolchildren joined the fight, singing "Vote, vote, vote, for Colonel Lockwood, Knock old Simmons out the door", to a stirring tune, or:

"Tariff Reform means work for all, work for all, work for all,
Tariff reform means work for all,
Picking up sticks in the Workhouse!"

to the tune of "Here we go round the Mulberry Bush".'

National crises are no new happening!'

More about 'Doodlebugs'

I was delighted to receive this letter via e-mail from JIM CORDELL, *who like myself, is a former pupil of Buckhurst Hill County High School, but who was unknown to me. In conversation with him, I realised again how small the world can be, as I used to play football regularly with his cousin, Michael, from Forest Road. He asks a couple of questions at the end – I would be glad to pass on any responses. As Jim says, he has written up some of his local memories, so we will hear more from him in the future about those, including the ones mentioned below – Ed*

A wonderful picture of Goulds [in *Newsletter 182*] which I remember well and where my Dad worked. However, this is in reply to the item entitled 'Two Doodlebugs' in *Newsletter 182*, by Maurice Day. Whether it answers his query or is even relevant, I do not know – but for what it's worth . . .

I was born at 51 Southern Drive, Loughton, in 1935 and later, after a brief spell living in a flat above Rorke's sweetshop in Queen's Road, Buckhurst Hill, we moved to 10 Stony Path, Baldwins Hill, Loughton, about 1939.

Like many other people of a 'certain age' I deeply regretted not asking my parents and especially my grandparents about their past. So, I decided that (even if they weren't interested!) I would record as much detail as possible. This runs to many pages and would probably not be of interest, but in view of Maurice Day's plea, this particular section might:

In the latter stages of the war, the V1 Flying Bombs started to fall. We called them 'Doodlebugs'. They were fascinating – almost hypnotic. They had a pulse-jet engine which sounded like a slow-revving, single cylinder motor-bike. They were quite small and flew at around 400 mph which made them hard to hit with an anti-aircraft gun and difficult to catch with an aeroplane. They didn't fly very high and they could be heard from a long way off so you generally had time to take cover. If we heard these as we went to and from [Staples Road] school, we were told to go to the nearest house and ask for shelter. You must be joking! With no parents about we couldn't pass up these golden opportunities to see Doodlebugs going over. So we did. The best vantage point was at the top of York Hill and we had a lovely view of them from there. Suddenly the engine would stop and there was a deathly silence followed by a massive explosion. At night it became almost a communal sport. The locals would stand at the top of 'The Field' by the Forester's Arms (Baldwins Hill) and chat. It was never long before we heard the unmistakable sound of a Doodlebug's engine. Then, especially when it was dark, we could see the flames intermittently shooting out of its exhaust. Nobody spoke as we all waited and watched until the flames stopped – then silence . . . Suddenly the sky would light up as the bomb exploded and a big debate would begin as to who must have 'caught it' that time.

Twice our 'sport' nearly ended in tragedy as these flying bombs landed in the forest less than a mile away. We thought it was an odd thing that these bombs seemed to fall in pairs a few weeks apart, however, it was probably due either to laziness on the part of the Germans who couldn't be bothered to work out another setting, or a lack of time – they'd just repeat a previous one. The fact that they fell so closely showed how effective their targeting methods were.

On one of these occasions, the engine stopped when the bomb was almost overhead. One of the adults grabbed my step-brother, Derek, and hurled him into a ditch full of stinging nettles. To this day, I've never found out whether this really was for his protection or whether someone saw it as an opportunity not to be missed!

We certainly didn't miss the opportunity to gather souvenirs. We never managed to beat the army to the site of an explosion and they always had it cordoned off when we arrived – but we weren't about to be cheated. These flying bombs were a bit like mines and rarely made a crater. Instead they made what appeared to be a number of shallow trenches and the blast would hurl pieces over quite a wide area and many bits would get buried in the trunks of trees. And guess who found them? As with the shrapnel, if it had letters or numbers on it, it was highly prized. We were supposed to give all these bits to the authorities, but well, you know . . . I suppose we just forgot!

Based on my memory, the two 'Doodlebugs' referred to, exploded about 250 metres NNE of Blackweir Pond (Roughly, OS Ref: 423981). I went back there in 2006 and there was a distinct difference in the vegetation between these 'patches' and the surrounding trees. So were these the actual sites? I tried to verify this at the Record Office in Chelmsford who have maps showing the location of all V1 explosions in Essex, only to find that Loughton was included in the East of London Records Office, which I've yet to visit.

Meantime, I too have a couple of queries: One day, a large bomb just missed Baldwins Hill and exploded on the edge of Arewater Green, almost on Goldings Hill (on the opposite side to Lower Road). Does anyone have a date? Also, where can I get a list of those who were in the ARP in Loughton?

As an aside, I well remember the nights of 15 November 1940 when a landmine hit Lord Stanmore's house, 14 December 1940 when a Ju88 crashed near the Wake Arms, as well as the incendiary bombs, 'window' and supposed 'booby traps' dropped by the Germans. I won't bore you with the detail now, but if any of this is of interest, I'd be happy to send my reminiscences.

Many thanks for a fascinating *Newsletter*.

Regards
JIM CORDELL

(PS: I also used to play truant from Buckhurst Hill County High School to help push the bikes out at High Beech

Speedway!! and was in 'Loughton Cobras' cycle speedway team, writing their reports for the *West Essex Gazette* and achieving lasting fame at Loughton Fair. Those were the days!!)

[Many local residents have told me how the Gardener's Arms, York Hill, was an assembly point to watch not only the events Jim describes, but also, in the earlier Second World War years, the bombing of London in the Blitz. This, as with the flying bombs, was obviously a compulsion, but absolutely not a morbid one, as everybody tells of the great sympathy they felt for, and kinship with, those under attack – Ed.]

Millican Dalton (1867–1947): a notable Loughton eccentric – 'Home-made corduroy shorts' revisited

[Stephen Pewsey's article, 'Home-made corduroy shorts', first appeared in Newsletter 141, April/May 1999. It appears again in line with our policy of occasionally re-running selected past pieces. We have also answered the blue plaque question.]

The Forest has attracted many eccentric characters and individualists in its long history, and one of the most delightful seems to have been Millican Dalton, who died over half a century ago. Born in Cumberland in 1867, his family moved to Hale End in 1879. For much of his life, however, he lived in a cottage in Stony Path, where he became known as the 'Professor of Adventure'. He spent most of his time out of doors, camping in the forest. Come rain or shine, sun or snow, his was a familiar figure, to be seen climbing trees or tramping through the woods in characteristic Alpine hat, home-made corduroy shorts and a sort of plaid wrap slung over his shoulders.

Dalton's lakeland upbringing had given him a love of nature that came to rule his life. He briefly entered the world of insurance, but from the mid-1880s his life was dedicated to the great outdoors. He earned his living by acting as a professional mountain guide in his native Cumbria, as well as in Scotland and Switzerland, and by making customised tents. Together with his inseparable brother, Henry, he pioneered the production of practical lightweight camping equipment and they helped to found both the Camping Club and the Association of Cycle Campers.

His homespun appearance and his nocturnal forays into the Forest got Millican arrested as a spy during the First World War, though there was never a more unlikely secret agent. His background was Quaker and he was a strict vegetarian; his one indulgence seems to have been an occasional cigar.

The Willingale, Higgins and Reynolds families still dominated the Baldwins Hill 'village' in those days, living cheek by jowl in the little cottages of Wroths Path and clustered around the Forester's Arms. Dalton himself lived in the little row known as Forester's Cottages at the top of Stony Path, now five dwellings but then three cottages and a shop.

From his base on Baldwins Hill, Dalton came to know every nook and cranny of Epping Forest, where he often alarmed the unwary by abseiling down tree trunks, skating across dangerously thin ice on the Forest ponds, or even skiing down some of the steeper slopes. He was however remembered above all as a kindly and hospitable man, ever ready to teach children about nature, a happy companion at a camp fire and generous with his own extensive knowledge.

He spent his final years in Buckinghamshire close to the Chilterns, another area he loved, and died in the delightfully named hamlet of High Heavens in 1947. As one of a handful of Loughton worthies to appear in the *Victoria County History for Essex*, and as a nationally known figure in the world of mountaineering and camping, Millican Dalton surely deserves recognition as part of Loughton's new blue plaque scheme.

STEPHEN PEWSEY

[To bring L&DHS members up to date, Millican Dalton has not, as yet, been commemorated by a blue plaque. Perhaps he will be nominated for one soon? To view a list of Blue Heritage Plaques in Loughton, 'Google' Loughton Town Council: Blue Heritage Plaques. – Ed.]

Can anybody help . . . ?

This is a request for help, sent to Chris Pond, which we are happy to pass on to all our readers.

I have a friend, Cis Taylor, who lived in Loughton in the 1940s. She moved to the Midlands many years ago but would like to trace an article that her aunt, Victoria Stock, née Carpenter, once wrote for somebody in Loughton. It was called, she thinks, 'A Child of the Forest' and would have been written in the 1990s.

It describes the walk from Pynest Green to Staples Road School each day, and living in the forest. It may be an article in a newspaper or, perhaps, a contribution to a pamphlet. If you can help please contact me on 020 8508 2932.

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